

FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

NEWSLETTER - September '80.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

First let me announce myself as the new Editor of the F.M.C. Newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENT:-

"Eddie Craig is the new Editor of the F.M.C. Newsletter." Secondly, may I thank my predecessor Mike Tolly for his work in the past and hope that he enjoys his retirement. What this means in practical terms is that the flood of articles and news items which used to inundate Mike should now inundate me. My address is on the Club card, but as you should all have lost yours by now, it is as follows :- E. Craig, 12, Burnside Ave., Calder Vale, Nr. Preston, PR3, LES. Telephone Garstang 4169. Start sending your stuff.

New Members.

We welcome the following as introductory members :-

Julie Christine Gough
Paul Reid
Glen Shirley
Dave & Diane Westby
Chris Hawkins
Alan & Susan Bousfield
John & Margaret Dowsing
Thomas Knowles
Keith Rogers
Gary Huttall
Carl Stocks

The Committee owe an apology to members of the above for the long delay in confirming their introductory status. Liz Rawcliffe is now the membership Secretary and it is hoped that delays of this nature, should not occur again.

SOCIALS: - To be held at the Victory Hotel, Caunce Street, at 8-30 p.m.

The immediate programmed arranged to warm the cold winter nights is as follows :-

3th October	Slide Show
22nd October	Film
12th November	Quiz
26th November	Lecture

FUTURE MEETS:

5th October - Coniston/Langdale Coach Meet. Liz Rawcliffe & Pete Roscoe. Please support this Meet. Liz can be contacted at home, Preston 22028 or Blackpool 64162.
11th-12th October - Beginners Rock Climbing Stair Hut, Roger Brookes.
18th-19th October - Pot Farm. Keith Lockett.
N.B. Working weekend 27th September now re-arranged for October. Please contact Pete Roscoe, B'Pool 43970.

COMMERCIAL BREAK: (THE ADVERTISEMENTS)

For Sale - two 'Blacks' Junior Sleeping Bags suitable for up to 10 year olds. £5.00 each.

Walking Boots - size 1 & 2 £2.00 & £3.00.

Mike Tolley .. F'Wood 6680.

Climbing Boots - Lionel Terray Boots by Galibier, size 8-9, with fully rigid soles. These boots are in good condition and have been little used. Offers around £30. These boots would cost £70 today. N.B. These are climbing boots not walking boots.

Dave Cryer, Garstang 4020, or call at 64, Meadowcroft Ave, Gatterall.

CLUB DINNER.

Reminder that the Club Dinner will be held this year as last, at the Derwent Water Hotel, Portinscale, on the 29th November. Regrettably, further details cannot be furnished at present as the Hotel have not yet given us a price for the meal.

The next Newsletter should contain full information and bookings slips.

WANTED: Typist for this Newsletter.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

It will be part of my policy as Editor, to encourage the literary aspirations of contributors, in the hope that this Newsletter will become an action packed thrill a minute, supremely professional publication which will have readers gripping the edge of their seats, in an attempt to stay awake. In this respect, I am particularly pleased to feature in my first issue a couple of sure-fire cures for insomnia by two of the Club's literary giants Paul Clarke and Dave Earle. The discerning reader will no doubt note the abundance of fluted ridges, orange glows, and micro-cosms which proliferate these articles, not to mention the staggering amount of consumption which takes place. Have both writers taken the same correspondence course? However, on this occasion, Paul just takes the points with his observations on international brotherhood, hauntingly brief encounter with the beautiful german girl and superb metaphysical finish. However, take not my word for it, read on

A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE VERDON GORGE :- A superb climbing and walking area in the Provence region of France. Grenoble looked its usual affluent self. In the high Alps the winter snows still stand. The Vercours change from gold to silver as the moon replaces the sun. It's Sunday night. The streets are quiet, the only people in evidence are a pair below the cliffs of the téléphérique are waiting, tired and attired from skiing, for the non too frequent buses. A leisurely coffee then off again over starlight hills. The venue had been Cornwall but the inclemency of the weather, a telephone call, a dash to Newcastle for my passport and it became changed to the Gorge du Verdon in Provence.

Two O'Clock in the morning, and we slipped into the sleepy market town of Castellane and into the entrance of the gorge, the moonlight embracing the limestone walls and making it seem ten times its' depth. The van slides deeper in, our necks crane to take in the full scale of the place. As the road climbs out of the gorge, it reaches the compact village of Lapalud, at this time of the morning dark walls hung together around an old church and chateau. Up goes the tent and a vow to return after a hitch hiking visit eight months previously, is fulfilled.

I always feel there is an advantage to arriving in any place at night. The morning comes with light filtering in through curtain or canvass, and the full light of day reveals sights long thought of at their morning freshest. So it was in an orange glow through the tent walls that I awoke to the sound of familiar voices.

"Hey, that's Andy's van, isn't it?"
So I stuck my head out, "Mornin' Stuart. Don't these Cornish talk with funny accents?"
"You mischievous b.....d!" I thought you were supposed to be going to Cornwall."
Dragging my pit I joined Andy, Christine and the cool morning sunshine, for breakfast.

Later on in the day, we drove up to the Belvederes above the Palais des Escalles, and for the first time glimpsed downwards to

however, and soon to become very familiar, was the scent of this partial forrest, spicy and alive, warm and fragrant. Livesey has described his feelings for the area as akin to a love-affair, which seems an over romanticism - until you have been there, I fail to see how any person with a degree of sensitivity could fail to be moved by the medieval grandiose beauty of the place.

Further along the clifftop we located the situ bolts and joined two young Austrians for a six hundred flight through space accompanied by numerous butterflies which flitted about our heads to match the feelings in our stomachs. The landing is an aforrested terrace perched half way up the cliff and fading into over-hanging rock to left and right, a green oasis, though one without water as your throat begins to tighten with thirst, and apprehension. A short wander rightwards brought us to the base of a prominent prow, the Eperon Sublime, which we followed via slabs and cracks, wild traverses into thin air, and airy walls back to the cliff top, my own personal romance with the gorge by now consummated into a happy marriage.

We had been delayed on the route by catching up with some Swiss lads, missing so much dependent on tries yet they enjoyed their personal style, their own affair. The delay gave plenty of time for reflection, and I couldn't help my feelings of stupidity as the previous day's travel had shattered my already dented views of a bland khaki France. The dry summer dust and the brashness of Chamonix soothed by the greenness of Spring.

At nights, the atmosphere in the Cafe at Lapalud was interesting and alive, with French, German, Swiss, Austrians, Italians, Dutch, Finns, Norwegians, and so many more people who had travelled from America and the Eastern Block united by an interest to feel alive in moving over vast sheets of rock as freely as possible, but with boring talk of routes thankfully absent. Competitive people yes, but how much more friendly than the route tickers in the dark corners of the Bar Nationale. How many times I cursed my limited two languages.

We climbed all week, apart from a rest day, and yet though the routes were hard and good, it doesn't seem very important now.

Variety they say (cornily) is the spice of life, so off we went to St. Tropez (a couple of hours away). Following the coast round to Antibes for two days frolic in an altogether different world. Expensive clothes, shops full of coloured boiler suits, expensive drink, cheap food, big boats, and lots of small fish covering the pavements in a green and silver sea. And now the weather started to change; dinner-time and the mistral sends the less hardy of the sunbathers on a small beach near Juan les Pins heading for the environmental constancy of their hotels. As evening approaches, we are at the pinacled twelfth century church of Guerdon, and snow starts to fall. Pass follows pass, and the snows gather at Lapalud, five inches of snow fell in three hours. People return from epic retreats from the cliffs. Some don't return until next day worn and frozen.

In the bar that night everyone is there. Forced away from the usual campside bonfires early by the snow. The place heaves, the Landlord and his wife with their two ageing helpers soldiering through demands for wine and beer. Some Germans lead a healthy chorus in the back-room. The English fall about laughing loud at tales of false bravour and awkward situations. I sit quietly watching the candlelight play on the face of a beautiful German girl, each time we pass, we smile "hello" like tongue-tied children at school, and I add German to my vow to learn Italian.

Later, outside, Andy and I fight a Northumberland team at snowballs, falling around and laughing like a bunch of drunken kids, but not in the least ashamed as an old French woman watches on more than a little amused.

Everywhere is white and chocolate box cover. A Sheffield University team frolic almost naked in the snow and heat. So very hot, so very white, brilliantly so. We go for a walk up winding tracks and flowered fields of receding snow, up to a village perched raven-like on a white pinnacle. Why is it here? Perhaps inspired by nearness to God, the village clings to the fringe of an ancient and ruined Church? One can believe that theory on a day like today, it's like stepping back, in time, yet a war monument centres the town and shows that the troubles of the world penetrate even to here.

The time has come for us to leave the Verdon, I don't believe it pays to stay in one place for too long lest familiarity spoil the fascination, so we head off for another jewel; Cassis. Other climbing areas were to follow, but that is another story.

Our last climbing day in the grove was to take us to a less visited area. The omnipresent turquoise river, white rock, fragrant trees, and everywhere a carpet of yellow primroses, about which flit yellow butterflies. I apologise for the weakness of my descriptive powers. I remember sitting waiting and collecting one of these butterflies on my hand, as I watched spring-loaded lizards scamper across the rocks, and knowing this is not a place one can tell about; just advise a visit.

Little in the way of climbing or walking is described here, and, though the area abounds in both, for that I need make no apologies, for is it not the nature of the area in which these activities take place, which is of primary importance?

PAUL CLARKE.

TORRIDON MEET.

It has long been an ambition of mine to lead the F.M.C. away from the bristly young upstarts (geologically speaking), of Skye, to that most treasured glen of ancient rocks, supremely elegant mountains and fluted ridges; Torridon. After several tries, we were able to book the Ling hut for the week before Whitsun, so the bullying, arm-twisting, and cajoling so necessary for a successful F.M.C. Meet was underway, with reasonable results, as we had enough to fill the hut.

Any hopes of running a well-organised Meet were dashed when we met Mr. Crooks' party in Callander Saturday morning on their way back home for the key! Barry had awarded himself "Mug of the Year and Bar" by leaving it in Fleetwood. The Custodian told us the only remaining key was his own, but a "Geologist" was in residence and all would be well. Unsuspectingly we sunbathed by the river bank drinking beer provided by our errant partner before moving the sun bathing spot to Loch Oich.

Eventually, by early evening, the charming village of Plockton was reached, a well sheltered bay, girt round by steep craggy hills and warmed by the Gulf Stream as the profusion of beautiful flowers and palm trees showed. The views down Loch Carron and over to Apple Cross were at their best, lit by the slanting light. Cameras were soon in action recording the scene, utilising the many attractive foregrounds of gardens and bobbing boats to frame the mountains. A microcosm of all that is excellent on the West Coast.

More beer and food at the quay-side pub, excellent by English let alone, Scottish standards, and away to Torridon. Slumbering giants lay at peace at the head of the Loch, a ruddy orange in the after-glow. Thin wisps of mist interlaced their ridges protecting them from our earthly gaze like some bridal veil. We wondered whether the good weather would last long enough for us to consummate the marriage in full as we gazed on in quiet awe

A search at the Ben Damph bar revealed no geologist. A trip to the hut revealed no geologist. Two other lads arrived in search of our petriactic friend, but at quarter past mid-night we realised there was going to be no geologist and no hope of forcing an entry so we bedded down for an uncomfortable night. As Barry kept reminding us, it could have been worse, it could have been raining.

Not suprisingly we woke early. The low sun lit up the mural precipices of sandstone to perfection. Liathach rose above us like the bronzed hull of an upturned Viking Longboat with a sky cleaving crenollated keel. We were soon away and followed a bikini clad Barbara in scrambling up the rock terraces which form the mountain into a shallow corrie and onto the ridge, with the exception of Mr. Craig who, having done Liathach, decided on Sgurr Rhuadh. Big Liz decided to remain at the col while the rest of us scrambled along the narrow ridge to the Eastern end where the Treasurer found his camera wouldn't work, as usual. Should cameras be insured against George Parker? Dave Greenhaugh's camera genuinely broke at the same time, an unfortunate occurrence so early.

To the North of the ridge, the Mountain dropped away near vertically for two thousand feet to the corrie floors. Opposite, Ben Dearg rose in splendid isolation to the same height, steep and rugged on all sides and with the traditional narrow, wind scoured ridge. Eastwards, Ben Eighe heaved its bulk, walling in the main glen from here to the junction at Kinlochewe. Its narrow quartzite clad ridge glistened like snow as it arched through the azure heavens from peak to peak. We retraced our steps, collected a sunbathing Elizabeth and scrambled along the narrow spine of our mountain, with giddy drops on either side, to the main summit. From here the ridge curved slightly, breaking out into the Faserian Pinnacles before gathering itself for its culmination in Mullach an Rathain Peak. Another ridge swung up from the Coine Mhail in a cascade of stone, shattering into the Northern Pinnacles as it abutted against the said peak. Our way ran over the easier pinnacles which provided excellent scrambling.

The Summit view held the eye as all around us were ranged mountains of stark and savage beauty, each like some man o' war riding at anchor so steep sided and individual were they. The gracious curve of Loch Terridon led the eye down to the Apple Cross hills, and so across to Syke. At long last, and with considerable reluctance, we made for the road as we had a key to collect from Strath peffer.

Monday too dawned fine. We managed to persuade Big Liz she was up to the traverse of Ben Alligin. Approach was by the Allt Coine Mhail Mhail and then Northwards on to Sgurr Mhor. The ascent went easily enough with so much spectacular scenery around to take our minds off the ascent, and we were soon bowling along the narrow ridge, taking in what scrambling we wished at will. The main summit was reached with ease to give the usual excellent views and a photography session got under way, as we passed the savage gash in the ridge, so obvious from the road.

Tuesday was a bit dull, and some of the group demanded a day off. Lunch was taken at Gair Loch, and the party divided into Botanists who visited Inverewe Gardens, and excellent they are too, and walkers who plodded in towards Cornmore and coastal potteries, led by G.P.'s Red Army on the look out for seals to stone in the absence of any little old ladies. We arrived back to selcone Chris and Kath who had called into Auntie Shirley's at Fort Bill en route. Mike Howe and Chris Ward buried the bog with due ceremony.

The heavens again shone the next day, and the entire party, except Eddie, decided on Slioch. We failed to locate the gillie to row us across Loch More and so approached from Kinlochewe along a delightful riverside path, and subsequently along the lochside before turning up Glen Bannisdale, a route which gave

excellent sunbathing opportunities. Throughout the day, Kath set up the most funereal pace imaginable, which gave the rest of us hours of glorious sunbathing. Herds of deer were passed, and we enjoyed close up views of a herd of wild goats fighting for territory. The views were not as extensive as we would have liked, being narred somewhat by heat haze, but we gazed in envy at the mountains that stretched before us to the North East through to An Teallach and the Maiden, and the cliffs crowded round Connmore, Whitbreds, justifiably famous wilderness.

Chris and Kath went skinny dipping on the way back, while the rest of us went to the pub, where we met Eddie. He had gone to a shapeless lunny called Fionn Bheinn, against advice, on the grounds that it was nine feet over the magic figure, and spent all day in mist. He had a tick in his book but precious little else to remember the day by! Such are the trials of "Munroe baggers!"

Thursday brought a tripartite split. Dave G, Liz, Chris and Kath, sunbathed the day away on Ben Damh, after Dave had kindly driven the Ben Bighe party of Barbara, Chris W, Mike and myself to Kinlochewe. By all accounts, they had a superb day; the sun burning through the morning mist much earlier at the end of the valley.

We set off in cool weather, under a grey sky along the Allt A Chuirn and quickly made the first summit. The mist dispersed in front of us, gradually opening up the vista of the main ridge curling away Westwards, and of the many subsidiary ridges sweeping to the North. We were soon to grips with the shattered Black Pinnacles. The devastation hereabouts seems almost lunar in scale. Everywhere the eye meets tottering pinnacles skewering into the sky, and huge crags of the most savagely split and fissured rock imaginable, seemingly poised for a moment in a headlong tumble to destruction. One expects the whole thing to slide away into oblivion before one's eyes.

The ridge went easily after this, but at all times narrow, until the next summit was reached. The sun burst through and sunbathing time was here again. Eventually we moved on to the fork in the ridge, and sunbathed again with the crags of Gail Mhor in full view, and a view out to the Gairloch Coast. The Northern arm contained Ben Eagles' highest peak, so we eventually be-stirred ourselves to climb it and then scrambled down to Coire Mhic Fhearcmar where the sun was hot and the breeze practically non-existent. The Triple Buttresses, some one thousand feet of stone, normally glower down darkly on to the steely loch; a picture of gloom and despondency; with the mist racing through their upper towers. Today the high summer sun lit up the buttresses and softened the whole scene. Three benign old men sat at the head of the corrie taking their summer ease.

A wealth of bouldering enlivened the walk back to the hut. George, Barry and Eddie had previously done Ben Bighe, and opted for An Teallach.

Friday, was a bit cloudy. Kath and Chris went to Inverewe, (Wonder Woman) Barbara who doesn't know when to, or cannot stop, visited Ben Damh and had an excellent day, while the rest of us visited Diabog at the mouth of Loch Torridon and climbed and scrambled all day.

Saturday was dull. The railway children set off for home and Rainhill; Eddie for Ben Damh, inspite of it not being a Munroe, and the rest of us for the fabled Sgurr Rhuadh, about which so much had been heard, at Wednesday night Socials. Were others about to be initiated into the wonders of this mystical mountain? In the gloom and the fog, who knows? Perhaps we visited the summit, perhaps not. D and C., E and Eddie maybe

We did avoid walking over Rawburns Buttress which was fortunate, as it is rather large and we successfully found the start of, or rather, the end of the Stalhus path, and followed it down, out of the mist into Corrie Lair, a most beautiful Corrie, second only to Uhic Fhearchair in the area, though not in the same league. A valley walk was called for, so we followed the Easan Dorcha path past Loch Coulin and Loch Clair, and more Herons than I have ever seen before in one place. A fishing path provided an amusing short cut as it was completely overgrown in places, and kept disappearing! The views through the trees across Loch Clair were however, excellent.

Croydon H.C., arrived a day early with news of better weather South of the Ben. Sunday was again dull, so myself, Chris and Barbara, set off South hoping for better things. Edie and Liz went straight home, and Kath and Chris went to Skye. The promised good weather failed to materialise, but the odd breaks in the cloud gave more than a hint of the heart-stopping beauty of the Western seaboard, a land of rugged mountains threaded by silver lochs in perfect scale and harmony, exquisitely modelled by the clear northern light.

We arrived in the vicinity of the Cobbler during a break in the rain. The castellated summit ridge loomed gloomily and menacingly over us, hunched against the last of the storm, a perfect foil to the intervening sun shot Loch Lang. The spectacular ridge was all the invitation we needed. Pausing only to consume ice-creams and soak up yet more sun, we were seen to grips with the massive overhangs of the North Peak, flanking them via a gully. Views were clear and extensive as we romped along the summit crest scrambling up every rock oblique we could. As the evening shadows began to creep across the loch, we made our profoundly happy way back to Arrochar, and a fish supper, and the rest of the journey home.

Thanks are due to the S.H.C., for the use of their splendidly situated hut, and the rest of the Meek for the unfailing good humour that prevailed throughout, and Big Liz survived ten days without Martin Dale to work for her by living off tinned puddings! You too, can be replaced by a steamed pudding! (Or, was it, a micro chip?).

D. A. EARLE.

GLEN DOLL MEET. Easter 1980.

The Club has not been able to put many members into the field at Easter in Scotland, for some time, and this Meek was no exception.

Those that went, enjoyed the palatial comforts of the Carn Dearg H.C. Hut and four days of hot sunshine.

Throughout the four days, Glen Doll and its subsidiary valley were explored, and all the surrounding tops visited. Some Members shied across the summit plateau, and on another day, drove round to Glen Shee for some piste bashing, and to shie "the Tiger", which was beaten by one fall each to a submission.

The views across to the Cairngorms were excellent throughout the holiday, and everybody enjoyed the excellent local scenery, and the quiet nature of the glen, five tents on the site, on the Saturday night.

Evening entertainment was courtesy of the Ogilvy Arms, where on the Thursday night, we nearly copped for the entire Kirrie Muir Ladies' Doninco Team, and where all Beverages were 44p a pint, including bottles of Newcastle Brown, and Draft

Guinness! A bit of late drinking, and singing, helped the weekend along.

Nobody went near the soggy gullies, but all enjoyed the area, immensely.

D. A. EARLE.

W.B. :- Thoughts from the typist:-

Dear Ed-hit-er,

(And you will after reading the above!)

After going through your mountain of typing, scrambling up and down crags, in and out of Corries, two men are on their way at this very minute to take me away! I hope they can do me some good, perhaps even help me to regain my senses after my long long trek through Scotland!

Should you require any more typing doing, please could you see your way to giving me at least 1 year's notice, but if Scotland is involved, then 2 years are preferred! I'm afraid I may have changed the face of Scotland, the laces are still there, and the same, only the names have been changed!

If Scotland is required, help! Please could you send an Atlas, a large box of sedatives, and a straight-jacket?

One thing is puzzling, however, - how did D.A. Earle KNOW that the two girls went skinny dipping? My husband thinks, this is a question which needs looking into, and if no one knows the answer? Well.... my husband would like to join the club, to research this!