

Newsletter - Autumn 1998

Fylde Mountaineering Club



Intro

It has been a pretty steady year by FMC standards. Not that I can really define 'steady' since in recent climbing parlance 'steady' has not meant the absence of disco knees or a full body shake, but something akin to a continuity of challenge. This has largely been the story with the challenges to be found on brief excursions into winter weather and even briefer excursions into summer rain. Definitely a vintage year for the gear shop owners.

But just before you get into the 'it was nowt like this when I wor a lad' routine cop an eyeful of the following - "The August weekend meet was poorly attended, only four being present....Coach meets suffered greatly from the bad weather. One meet when the coach was cancelled, the most common reason given for not going was that it might rain". (Extract from Club newsletter 1951 - courtesy of Sylvia Legge).

I can report that Captain H.T.Jackson has been located. Unfortunately he is no longer with us. Some might think he would not have wanted to be a trustee of the huts, but solicitors these days have an optimistic view of life expectancy and it is certainly the case that people are living longer..

The Club Dinner went off with its usual panache. The absence of mobile Brussels Sprouts meant that the catering staff could leave on time but this didn't help the DJ who turned out to be a boring old fart. Dennis Carrigan got 'Mug of the Year' for alternately being impossible to find and impossible to ignore (massive gully fall and total loss of 'Hob Nobs' on way). Hal and Jenny shared 'Lush' for exhibiting their competitive attempts to hit the deck in clearing several bottles of

the best Moet Chandon at Glenn and Lou's wedding. Dave Earle picked up the Newsletter prize for his true life account of epic mishaps on Waymark holidays all written on the back of back of his usual day to day correspondence. Mr Superfit Wrigley won the fell race or at least got the best handicap time whereas the fastest time went to Chris This.

This year's AGM didn't pull as many people as expected. Mike Tolley flaunted a thinly disguised bike shed plan as 'a porch renovation with boot rack annexe.' This immediately catapulted him into The Dome construction league. On more mundane issues, the possibility of upgrading the douches at Langdale was given an airing. The AGM struggled to elect a full committee - a problem which has stayed with us throughout the year. Despite this, Club membership has picked up although not all who join stay the course.

In addition to the loss of Captain Jackson, we will also miss Geoffrey Dawes who passed away (aged 90). Also, I have to report the death of Gretel Mackeson, probably known only to older members of the Club. Jack Jowett has written an obituary which appears later in this newsletter.

No births have been registered although I hear that Stuart and Pauline have a baby. I haven't heard from the boy recently so Stuart are you alive or has ferrous oxide got the better of your thighs?

And finally best wishes to the Tolleys on Danny's wedding.

Dave Wood Editor

News

Club Membership

Full Members

Rae Hughes, 240 Central drive, Blackpool. FY1 5HY

Introductory Members

The Club welcomes the following introductory members:-

Mellisa Bock,
35 Sandgate Road,
Blackpool. 01253
401659.

Richard Hartley,
58 Park Road, St. Annes.
01253 714799.

Andrew Margrave,
37 Sefton Ave, Poulton.
FY6 8BL. 01253
885560.

Rau Simpson, 164 Breck
Road, Poulton. FY6 7JZ.
01253 882910

Julie Sumner,
15 Vermont Grove,
Thornton. FY5 3RL.
01253 867027.

Peter Webster,
28 Oldfield Road,
Bispham. FY2 9NE.
01253 590501.

Ian Whyham, 39
Meadow Crescent,
Poulton. FY6 7QX.
01253 882175.

Changes of Address

Steve Wrigley, 15 East
Cliffe, Lytham. FY8
5DX. 01253 731710.

Trevor Atkinson
1 The Glen, Oakdale,
Blackburn. BB2 4HN.
01254 693660.

Mark & Viv Broughton,
185 Saxmundham Road,
Aldeburgh, Suffolk. IP1
55PE. 01728 452143.

John & Jayne Cushnie,
Dallam Barn, High
Haverflatts,
Milnthorpe, Cumbria.
LA7 7DG. 015395
64582.

Derek Reynolds, The
Lantern, 2 Cranbrook
Ave. Bispham. FY2 OB2

Phil Lee, 111A Chery
Street, Sheffield. S2
4FF. 01114 2751516.

Roy Turner, 68A South
Clifton St., Lytham. FY8
5EW.

Andy & Sue Lewandowski,
157 Eccleshill Rd South.
Sheffield 01142360386

Access

Witches Quarry. -Care
needed with access. No
dogs and no more than 6
cars in the quarry. Don't
park in the limekiln.
Probably not a good idea
to go mob handed.

Funicular Railway -

Planned for Cairngorm
but the travelling public
will not be allowed to
disembark fully so as not
to get lost.

Raven Ban - Has made
an appearance on a
British crag. Cometh
the sparrow.

Access for disabled-
the BMC have recently
written to clubs to
access to club huts.
Contact secretary for
information.

Hut Squalor

We have had some
complaints from other
users about the state
of the huts (particularly
stair). Records show
FMC to have used the
hut the weekend
previous. Please do all
you can to ensure the
huts are left clean.

Committee Business.

Glencoe MRT request
donations for new HQ.
£50 offered.

*Photographic Record of
Club history* for 50th
anniversary - still being
pursued.

Langdale Washrooms -
plans drawn up for
renovation. Builders
being consulted.

Web Site for FMC -

Mark Harding is drawing up a page to take us into the 21st century.

De-humidifiers - After some research and discussion, industrial de-humidifiers are to be purchased for both huts. Described as good for restaurants, bars and animal enclosures. Should be OK!

Lundy - booked for 1999

Langdale Weather

Info about weather and crag conditions each morning.
(www.johnwhite.vnetuk.com)

Pembroke 1999

It looks as though we will have to change venue for next year's meet since the chances of getting Green Grove look slim. I am thinking of booking a better place at St.Florence but I need some idea of numbers. Places may be limited. Please let me know if you want to go. - Woody

Coach Meets

Reference to the syllabus shows the re-appearance of the coach meet. The November meet led by Jenny Tolley will be an end to end walk/climb/bike and will take place in the Peak District. Another one, led by Gary Bird, will take place in March.

**~ Obituary ~
Gretel Mackeson**

The name of Gretel Mackeson will be known only to older members of the JMC. They will remember the work she and her husband, John, did for the Club in its formative years. With slender resources but a wealth of enthusiasm, a few members embarked upon the ambitious project of acquiring the Club Hut at Little Langdale. Gretel and John's house in Poulton became a second home to the Club and their kindness and hospitality to everyone who called will long be remembered. I have happy memories of a holiday in the Dolomites with John and Gretel which ended with a brief stay at her mother's home in Switzerland.

When John secured a post at Bristol University, the family moved to south west England. It was here where Gretel recently died.

We send our sincere condolences to her family.

Jack Jowett

Celidh

With the Mooncoyn Dance Band-24th Oct 1998
Preston Mountaineering Club in association with Preston Harriers are organising a Celidh at the West View Leisure Centre, Preston on Oct 24th @ 7.30 pm. Hot Pot supper and raffle. Tickets £6.00 for adults, £3.00 for under 16s. £15 for family ticket (2+2). contact Fliss Barton on 01772 712215

Hut Availability

19/20 Sept - Stair
26/27 Sept - Stair
3/4 Oct - Stair
10/11 Oct Langdale
17/18 Stair
24/25 Langdale
31 Oct/1 Nov
Chester Swap
7/8 Nov - Langdale
14/15 Nov - Stair
21/22 Nov - Langdale
28/29 Nov - Stair
5/6 Dec - Langdale
12/13 Dec - Stair
Both huts to end of year
9/10 Jan - Stair.
16/17 Jan - Langdale
23/24 Jan - Stair
30/31 Jan - Langdale.

Working Weekend

To Clean up Stair on
Oct 17/18th. Please
lend your support

For Sale

Ladies Leather Boots.
Size 38. Used once. £30.
Les Ward. 01772 684681
Pod Sac (70+20Lts).
Used Once - Accept half
price £80. Also RAB
'Ladakh' sleeping bag
650, extra wide right
hand zip, was £190 -
accept £95. Contact
Martin Dale. 01253
772073.

Equipment Failure

Not so Clever -
Failures have recently
been reported of the
gate of Genius Krab.

Meets

Lagangarbh Feb 98

A big team . Poor snow. A few members went up Ben Starav. Meanwhile Phil Lee & Mike Sissons had an epic, long hard struggle in soft snow on The good Friday Climb

Les Ward

Pembroke May 1998

The usual tale, lots of good climbing under blue skies and all washed down with the best tincture of golden throat warmer. Plenty routes were done with Trevalen Cliff and Bosherton South popular. Weather deteriorated mid week but picked up in time for a foray into Mother Carey's kitchen on Friday. A pretty full meet again although some regulars couldn't make it so next year's fling could be very busy. Early booking is recommended, particularly since we may not have Green Grove.

Dave Wood

Peak Camping June 98

The weather report promised a window in the grim wetness of June. Wrong!! The grit team (Dave Cundy, Phil Lee, Mike Sissons, Steve, Kath, Joanna and Chris This) went to the Roaches. Martin, Melissa, Hal, Rae, Nick, Phil Collinson and I went towards Wildcat. A detour to Hathersage for wet shopping preceded shower dodging at Stanage. Sunday saw the Grit boys off north whilst the slimy lime crew ticked off the classics at sunny Beeston Tor.

D. Wood

Gogarth July 98

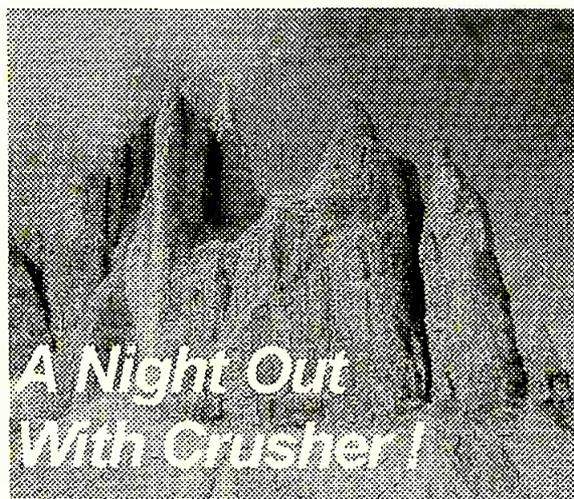
Another camping meet. This time at Treadur Bay - a brilliant spot. The weather report was really grim, consequently many people stayed away. Saturday was OK and the team (Rae, Steve, Joanna, Phil, Dennis, Hal and myself) got pick of the routes on the Main Cliff and Wen Slab. Joanna, Steve and Dennis went home on Saturday night with Dennis muttering 'floods promised for Sunday'. Wrong!! Sunday was OK and a deserted Wen Slab saw more action. Sorry Dennis you missed your Dream! DW

Wye Valley Aug 98

A poorly attended camping meet (it's not that far - honestly!) but despite showers on Saturday, we all got something in at Shorncliffe followed by a unique real ale experience in Tintern and an exciting time at Wintour's Leap on Sunday. See you next year!!

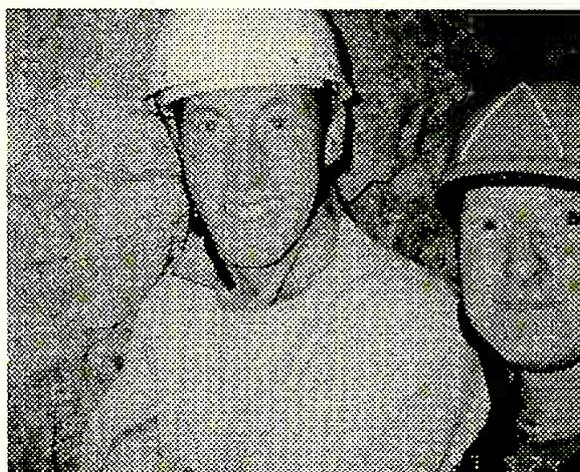
Dave Wood.

The eastern Dolomites surround us, limestone spires reaching up like fingers to catch the final rays of the sun. Slowly the sky darkens and the Milky Way appears, like a mirage at first, then brighter in the cold dry air. Arranging things on our ledge, we prepare for the hours ahead; it's going to be a long night....



Didn't Woody and Mr. T manage to do this on the Puig Campana a few years back - set off at tea-time so the rumour had it? And didn't Jerry and Simon spend a night out on The Ben? The conversation drifts from epics to holidays to jobs and finally, to silence. To maintain our physical (or do I mean psychological?) well-being we settle into a routine - twenty minutes doze, ten minutes exercise - do that twice, get the cigarette lighter out, look at the watch.

There was frost on the tent last night and its starting to feel bloody cold now, can't be much above freezing. As the exercises become more frequent Crusher mutters something about getting too old for this. A sing-song is mooted but immediately vetoed unless things get really desperate (so which of us is crap at singing then!). Jupiter appears but its slow progress across the sky only serves to underline the interminable passage of darkness.



The alarm on my watch goes off - its half past four - Crusher perks up a bit, he reckons we've cracked it, surely sunrise can't be more than a couple of hours away? But oh! how those last few hours drag by.

Finally it's here, the suns rays brush the highest peaks and then reach slowly down towards the sleeping valleys below. As nearby towers gradually emerge from the shadows, the hint of reflected heat entices us to get moving. We share out the last three biscuits (or bits thereof!), wash them down with a swig of water and rearrange the pile of gear until some semblance of order returns. Abseil follows abseil down a narrow gully (a horrible stone chute!) until sunlight bursts through into the gully itself. As the warmth envelopes us we can't help smiling with relief, it's been an epic twelve hours!!

Mined Games

It's not the air that's been the attraction this year (I've hardly touched my paraglider - too many trees !) but an obscure stretch of coastline near the fleshpots of Bournemouth. Swanage is a mile long, 120 feet high and has more routes than you can shake a stick at, so why does it remain so perennially unfashionable ? Casting fear aside, Phil and I went in search of the truth.

Final Moves

It's a glorious Sunday afternoon, three weeks after our first visit, and we've been in the bar celebrating Chelsea's successful passage into the FA. Cup Final (well, I was anyway). Beer talk has got the better of us and a big free abseil has brought us back to the Boulder Ruckle. Some fool is trying to traverse past some ridiculous looking overhangs using a technique which appears to have its roots in outdoor caving. It's good cheap amusement until Phil leafs through the guidebook and realises that our route goes up next to it ! Curiously, he volunteers to lead off in spite of an awesome looking first pitch.

After bridging up a five foot wide entrance to a cave, moves right lead to the base of a badly undercut, overhanging, jamming crack. Looking down, he's a bit concerned to see me shuffling around to make myself really comfortable (there's no point in missing the good bit is there ?). A few choice words in my direction followed by some determined grunting and Phil's cracked it first time - he looks on top form. Thereafter the jamming crack is too wide to take much gear but, being merely vertical, can't impede our intrepid leader. As he takes in the rope, I can't help noticing how far out it seems to be hanging (one of Swanage's recurrent themes !).

Bridging up to and then past the undercut crack I start to realise why 'Jo' is a three star route - twenty feet up, ten feet out and jugs appearing out of nowhere. By now I'm in such a good mood that I'm singing "Stamford Bridge to Wem-ber-ley, We'll keep the blue flag flying high....." on the way up. Fortunately no-one can hear me. The next pitch sees me in the lead and demands a little more concentration - teeter up to an overhang, clip the ancient tat, pull round, up the corner to the top and they think it's all over. Wrong ! Peering over the top, I've just realised why Phil was so keen to lead that first pitch. This is 'The Swanage Finish' - fifteen feet of steep, dry, loose mud lying between me and safety.....

Now just how far below was that last runner ?

DAVE CUNDY

Come into my Parlour

Calmed by the rhythmic motion of the swell, I'm suddenly shaken by a giant 'BOOM' as the sea explores the innards of a nearby blow-hole. Looking back up at the roof of the zawn, Phil is still resting in a spiders web of rope and, as the sun sinks towards the horizon, I'm beginning to wonder whether we might have bitten off slightly more than we can chew.

The guidebook described 'Mars' as one of the Swanage adventures, a three star E1 with 'just one' 5b move. Clearly, it needed to be done. Unreachable from the Boulder Ruckle, we couldn't see the route until we'd abseiled down an impending wall, placing the odd runner to keep in, to a hanging belay six feet above the sea. It was only then that we realised what we were doing - the route ascended an overhanging corner between the impending wall and the back wall of the zawn (back wall ? roof more like !). "Oh ****!" A major sandbag - just as well it was Phil's lead again.....!

Some time later my battle hardened rope boy has struggled up the first forty feet before grinding to a halt. Fifteen long minutes pass without movement save for a few extensions to the spiders web and a few unsuccessful efforts to progress. "Watch me !" He bridges across the overhanging groove, desperately trying to make that extra few inches, but it's just too thin, too overhanging. "I'm coming down, take in on blue - no red - I SAID RED !!". Tension.

Out on the water a small fishing boat putters back to harbour. Soon it's gone, its wake gently lapping the rocks below me.

Sounds from above signal that Phil's returning to the fight. This time there's more urgency in his movement, more determination as he cracks the next bit of the puzzle. And then he's gone, out of view, communication now limited to fitful tugs on the rope. Then nothing; five minutes pass, maybe ten. Patience. Then it's off again until it pulls at my waist beckoning me upwards.

There's no sense of time on the way up, just concentration and unending effort as one overhang gives way to another. The forearms begin to ache. The crux, festooned with small wires, is passed with a pull on gear, no time for etiquette now. Above, the angle relents to the merely vertical, more grooves, more bridging, the forearms now screaming for rest. Phil's looking down at me. Haven't the breath to speak. Got to rest, need to keep moving. One last groove, then the belay, the time honoured beached whale impression.

Bathed in a serene glow from the setting sun, Phil's standing over me with an understanding grin. "How did you find it, Nob?"

DAVE CUNDY

Grit Sunday

Brimham Rocks 30th November 1997

Sunday morning earlyish, found eight of us sitting around a table in Patley Bridge ordering the special breakfast fry-up for £1.50 each. I had been informed by Martin that this was a club tradition, so who was I to argue. It was raining outside as it had done all day Saturday, for every day of the previous week, and as I remember, for most of the month so far. Spirits were high though, Peter had found a cash dispenser opposite, and being flush with cash, had ordered an extra plate of toast, 2nd mug of tea and paid Martin his membership fees. Before long however, the food had disappeared, the sky was blue and sun shining. We poured out into the sunshine and were up at the car park by 11.00am. where Steve Holloway joined us.

The first part of the crag we came to was Cubic Block. We decided on a mass ascent of routes on this, and despite the damp quality of the rock managed multiple ascents of four or five routes, with the descents being almost as entertaining. The fact that I was lowered a rope to help me off the top of a V.diff. did nothing for my confidence.

From the top of the block we could see Phil Lee, Philip Collinson and Martin Bennett attempting Frensis, (a classic VS), on Cannon Rock. They joined the rest of us as we gravitated over to the Lover's Leap area which seemed to be the highest and sunniest part of the crag. The rock was also bone dry. Kevin Hindle was quick to ascend the famous Birch Tree Wall followed by Paul Dooney and Andy, after which a queue quickly formed at it's base, but after an hour of bringing people up on his ropes Kevin got fed up and cold and pulled them up, only to be left at top to sort out the knots while the others ate sandwiches and had hot drinks in the sun at it's base.

While this was going on ascents were made of routes nearby on Cracked Buttress; Martin confirming that **Right-hand Crack** was definitely not V.Diff. as printed in the guide book but should be VS. Amend your copy now!

The sun sets at about 3.30pm at this time of year, so shortly after, as the light was fading I stripped my gear, changed out of my rock boots and meandered back towards the car park watching the changing colours of the sky, as sun melted into the distant horizon. I arrived back at Cannon Rock to find Kevin had just topped out on Maloja, a classic VS **. A group of others were packing up, and as the light had virtually gone now, I had no intention of following. That was until someone handed me a rope end and said " You had better go up and get the gear."

It was dark as I pulled up onto the top. I could hardly see where my feet were going, but Kevin's smile was obvious as my head appeared above the edge, "Glad that we have done a route together," he chirped as he checked to see that I had managed to retrieve his friend. "Good that we have kept up our tradition of finishing in the dark," as he unclipped the rest of his gear from my harness.

Back at the cars it was 5.00pm and the car park was about to be closed. As we hurriedly packed away the equipment, two head torches wobbled towards us. It was John Hickman and Martin who it seems, were the last on Birch Tree Wall. By now we had missed the cafe in Patley Bridge and the promised chip butties, (apparently a tradition), and so managed a couple of drinks in the nearby Bell before finding our way back to Lancashire in the dark.

As we drove back, the last of the food was consumed and the conversation gradually faded until Derek swung off the main road into a small farm track. Andy followed down the lane into the night and all eight occupants emerged to practice the traditional ritual of standing in silence and observing the stars in the inky black, clear sky for a few seconds. It was only as we walked back to the cars that we noticed the other car parked in the lane. They wouldn't have had a good view of the night sky though as the windows were steamed up, so we left them and continued on our way home. When I awoke for work on Monday morning, it was dark and pouring down again.

A Thought

When I first joined the club in the early sixties it was because of the need to find a climbing partner. Up until then I had haunted the bar of the Old D. G. in Langdale and climbed with anyone I could find.

One of the things I like most about the F. M. C. is that generally people do not have fixed climbing partners and everyone climbs with each other depending on what routes people fancy. As a confirmed second this means I can hitch hike between leaders sharing the privilege of my company as wide as possible!

Initially names like Wig, Fingers, Little Mick, Lurch, Rog & Charly were prominent in my diary of climbs. The nicknames given were not always what they seemed; Little Mick could still get half price bus fares when he was 21 and Fingers did not get his nickname from the strength in them, but from an incident in the Little Langdale hut. In those days the toilets were outside and round the back (the good old days!) and the norm in the gents dorm was to perch on the back window sill and wee into the snow! Fingers was in this position when Dad Whiteley kicked the window shut trapping Finger's fingers and depositing him in the yellow snow below. He jumped back up and mantle shelved back to the window where Dad again kicked the window shut on Dave's fingers and again dumped him in the snow---- hence the name Fingers. Dave Morris (real name) was tragically killed in a domestic fall in the year that he and John Yates were the only team to climb the north face of the Eiger and the only club member that I know of who has done this. Wig was just a shortened version of his surname but turned out to be most apt as he finished up as a barrister in Manchester.

Later a young Andy Dunhill, Paul Clarke, Rupert Greenwood and Dave Archer gave years of amusement and Andy still is. Martin Dale appeared about this time and just gets better and better. Ken Martin, Doc Robin, Shaver, Crusher all provided the required rope for me. Action man Mark Harding showed us all how to climb and if he faltered we were in for a hard time. Then came Jerry Evans and Simon Fenna, you have to learn a new language to climb with these two as well as be able to laugh all the time. Martin Bennett seems to have been there all the time since he cadged a fag from me on top of Dow one day and then joined the club. Phil Morris, Kev Steven's, the Brookes brothers and who could forget Tatts, all provided great days out. Lately we have George Nesbit and Mike Sissons who both have the potential to take me up lots of good routes yet!

I remember doing Centurian on the Ben with Dave Earl on the rope below!! I have even climbed with Pete Roscoe, Derek Smith, Willy Wonka and George Parker. Without too much thought I have probably many partners and the list is definitely short of females but the club obviously provided me with my most permanent partner Jenny.

The reason for this sentimentality is the start of yet another year of fun climbing with new and old friends visiting new places and doing new things. Over the last 35 years the Club has provided me with a tremendous amount of pleasure and this is just a way of saying thanks.

THE TOAST IS THE FYLDE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.....CHEERS!

MIKE TOLLEY

Coast to Coast

Mainly By The Leeds Liverpool Canal

Training

Mike's idea was born during the latter stages of the Lancaster canal based boozy bike ride of 1997. So it was fitting that our final training session should be Mike Sissons boozy bike ride in May this year. The first, second and third training sessions were also included in this ride.

Organisation And Planning

The hot sunny Saturday prompted a B.B.Q. in the Tolley garden. Whilst Mike burnt bits of meat, Sue poured the wine and I did a little tossed salad. John spread out the 5 maps needed on the lawn. When an enquiry was made as to the route, John literally paced it out. As this was 5 strides it amounted to a stride a day (i.e). Goole - Leeds, Leeds - Skipton, Skipton - Blackburn, Blackburn - Wigan, Wigan - Preston (via the tidal river Douglas)

Departure

Packed bikes and panniers into the car and talked the son in law into driving us to Goole on the Friday evening (he will do anything for a glass of coke) where the four of us had a bed and breakfast booked. One of the advantages of travelling to Goole is that the traffic is light as no one else ever goes there. Have you?

Stride One:- Goole To Leeds

When we eventually located the way out of Goole docks onto the canal bank it was to discover that the long grass had been recently mown. We then had ten miles riding that necessitated frequent stops to extract grass from the gears. An orange peeler on a Swiss army knife seemed to work well. The remaining 33 miles were on B roads as the tow path was non existent (thank goodness).

Stride Two:- Leeds To Skipton

This 32 miles was excellent along the tow path from Granary Wharf in Leeds. It was as you would imagine it in ideal conditions, warm and sunny. Lunch at the Boat House Inn at Saltaire Bridge. Stops for ice cream and a few more pints at the Bridge Inn followed by a very concentrated last six miles into Skipton for baths, huge pub meals and yet more good beer at the Woolly Sheep (a good pub find)

Stride Three:- Skipton To Blackburn

This seemed a long 46 miles. The intermittent drizzle gradually became constant rain and the route became exposed with little tree cover. We also had a head wind which stayed in position despite the direction of the canal. The first ten miles were picturesque but then we ran close to motor ways and there was a constant traffic noise. The diversion around two tunnels (no tow path) was interesting and the novelty the canal crossing over the motor way twice oddly exciting. We passed through Nelson and the spread of Burnley to finish with a two and a half mile up hill section to our next B & B (not advertised) at Martin and Magi Bennetts. We went out for a curry (what else) and then drank most of Martins whiskey.

Stride Four:- Blackburn To Wigan

The two and a half mile downhill stretch gave us a flying start through the rain. The canal section was pleasant if rather rough around Addlington and the rain only lasted about an hour. This was a more leisurely day (26 miles) and we had time for a tourist visit to Botany Bay. We had a pleasant pub lunch and there was lots of downhill past the 23 Wigan locks. We joined in the pub quiz that evening but our brains had sunk to our bottoms.

Stride Five:- Wigan To Preston

Only 17 miles to our destination at Tarleton where the canal finishes at the tidal River Douglas. This wasn't an easy ride as it was very overgrown in places. We stopped for coffee and cakes at Rufford Old Hall, very pleasant. The ceremonial finish was accompanied by champagne in real glasses at Tarleton lock (produced by John and Sue out of their panniers) and lots of photographs. We then rode to the Dolphin for beer and sandwiches to then follow the Ribble Way back to Avenham Park, Moor Park, Plum Pudding Hill and home. We decided on an alcohol free evening!!

Many thanks to John Denmark who carried the tools and repair kits, it was generally voted that he needed slowing down to keep pace with the rest of us.

IT WAS A FUN TRIP

JENNY TOLLEY

The South West Way 1998

We are following the South West Way coastal path guide 1994. 'Great Britons Longest Trail'.

I have a picture of me standing under a sign in Minehead which reads: "The South West Way Coastal Walk - 500 miles", but even in the 1994 guide-book, it says the walk is 618 miles. I'd like to complete the walk by next year - before the millennium, and before someone extends the walk to an even longer trail! I would like to say I have completed it to get the sort of satisfaction you get from being able to say I did it.

Each section of the walk has been unique and satisfying in its own way: spectacular and splendid scenery and each day remarkable in its own right. A walk not to be rushed but enjoyed, which is why it has taken us years and years to do.

We did the Clovelly, Hartland Quay, Bude section before we found the existence of the complete walk in the form of a walking guide. Having started it by accident we decided to do more of it.

If you wish to do the walk efficiently and without undue expense you would need to backpack, but as my marriage vows included "and never carry a heavy rucksack" then this is a pledge I find difficult to break. We started the walk using the car and our mountain bikes to get us from the beginning of each section and to be able to bike back and retrieve the car. Camping was at a site central for a few days walk. This proved exhausting, like doing the walk twice. We rethought our strategy, bought some bike panniers and decided to bike it instead. That plan lasted one day. The first six miles floated by covering ground speedily but then it came to steep stepped ascents and descents with about 100yds forward momentum between. Frustration and irritability quickly took over and the overwhelming desire to throw the bike into the sea. Mike chatted up a barman into storing the bikes for a fortnight and we continued on foot bed and breakfasting it. We completed this section at Penzance having done 170 miles in 12 days. However, the "full monty" English breakfasts, Cornish pasty lunches and usually pub accommodation (the good beer guide was closely followed), bar meals with accompanying chips and umpteen pints, meant that at the end of the walk we had gained a half stone each despite all the exercise.

The guide-book alone is insufficient, we also needed the relevant O S map of the area (we now have 13) a tide table, information about the local ferries and the telephone number of a local taxi firm. The camp in the middle for the next three days gave us a variety of sites but we tended to shun the caravan club ones, having little interest in the eating facilities, games room, clubs and children playing loud games of football until dark, when we would be in bed by 9 pm knackered. The actual logistics of sorting out the beginning and end of the walking was always problematical, Mike sorted the plan of action based on local bus service or lack of

them. The one bus a week was always on the wrong day and at the wrong time. In some areas we had to rely on taxis and occasionally hitching. We did some sections according to the guide-book and some in reverse. This depended on the time of the ferry, state of the tide (we waded some estuaries) and the time of the first bus in the morning. We were very honest and avoided cheating although the two days effort along the paths to Barnstable and back out to Westward Ho! were of stupefying boredom, flat, featureless and without distinction. Groups of family cyclists passing and re-passing in the heat along the cycle way seemed to make the walk go on for ever. If we could have caught a ferry at the mouth of the estuary it would have been a worthwhile cheat.

Each section in the guide is split into small units varying in length, sometimes we would join several units together for a reasonable days walk, even splitting some units so the next days walk would not be discouragingly long. The grading in the guide-book was strenuous, moderate or easy. On the north coast of Cornwall strenuous meant ascents and descents of up to 1000ft, whilst on the south coast these were more like 400ft. The amount and distance of the strenuous sections obviously influenced our plan for the days walk, but on average we did about 16 miles a day. We also tried to plan to have the car at the end of the walk rather than have the pressure of having to rush to catch a bus. If Mike sorted the plan of action, my contribution was to sort the food and for him to benefit from my delightful company of course. Some sections would get extended when hitching didn't work out or we had to walk inland to the nearest road or town. If the tides were right beaches could be walked and could include boulder hopping and scrambling round rocky headlands which can slow you down but makes for an interesting diversion. Walking across sandy beaches is not all its cracked up to be either, especially in soft sand its very tiring.

A taxi driver told us that he had picked up a group of marines doing the S. W. way as an exercise (he drove them round an estuary as the tide was in and with full packs they would have sunk). They were planning to complete the 618 miles in 30 days!

OUR TIMETABLE SO FAR

Minehead to Clovelly	August 1996	98 miles
Clovelly to Penzance	July 1994	171 miles
Penzance to Dartmouth	August 1998	199 miles
Sidmouth to Poole	May 1997	81 miles
	Total	549 miles
Still to do:-	Dartmouth to Sidmouth	69 miles

You will have to wait until next year or later for the exciting conclusion. Will we complete the walk before they extend it to Dover or before the millennium ?

Letter from America

It's true! There's more rock in California than you can shake a stick at. We catch an eyeful out of the left side of the plane as we head westward over Yosemite to San Francisco. Half Dome looks diminutive and it's hard to imagine spending three days up there glued to the face as was my last memory of the Valley in 1990.

For Grateful Dead fans and lovers of the easy life, Frisco is the place to be, but we've got other ideas and head out eastward towards Merced on highway 120. Just short of Modesto we hit a library for the stomach - a Mexican restaurant with a full complement of southern beers. The enforced motel stop prepares the way for Sunday morning TV worship ('praise the Lord - pledge your money now - credit card details.....') and a drive to the Park gates. Always impressive how the clarity of California light adds vibrancy to the sage grass and trees. Slowly the granite domes come into view and at last round bend after bend lies Stately Pleasure Dome, casting its shadow over the ever blue Pywiack Lake. Familiar ground lies ahead and in twenty minutes we pull up outside the tented store of Tuolumne Meadows. The layout is reassuringly the same indoors, but the refreshment section now has acquired Samuel Smith's Old Brewery Brown Ale. - a long way from Tadcaster, but nice to see the Americans picking up a trick or two.

Outside on the notice board we see a message from Mark and Judith "FMC - We're Here! Booked in on site 158 -space for more tents". We meet and exchange travel tales then someone suggest going climbing. Lembert Dome seems the obvious choice since it overlooks the campsite. In a moment of ill-considered haste, I point out the water runnel ('Left Water Crack 5.7') from a distance, saying we could always have a team ascent if we were scratching around for something to do.

The sudden rise to 8700 feet makes itself known as I breathlessly pound up the slopes at the base of the crag. I am beginning to have some dim and distant recollections of the water runnel and walk on past suggesting that a classic 5.6 (hard severe) three star route on the north west face might just the ticket for a pleasant evening's outing. Mark reaches the base of the route some time later having lingered to inspect the demented varicose rock vein that we had previously had in view. He is inspired by the line and thinks we should engage the trench. Since I have promised so much of Tuolumne and this is Mark's rehabilitation to climbing, I can hardly refuse but as we begin to approach the cable TV-like digging, I have that uneasy feeling in my bowels.

Mark moves confidently up the first thirty feet to a bolt on the right. He casts around for while but retreats unable to see any further protection. I follow his footsteps until I find myself awkwardly groping towards the same bolt. The trench is now about two feet wide and three feet deep. Upward movement involves either precarious giant steps up the three foot indentations within the channel, or bridging the outsides on two thirds of bugger all. I use my knees. But before I am far past

the bolt I too throw in the towel and we retire wondering if we might just achieve VS before the week is out. I feel a particular sense of personal failure since having extolled the virtue of the High Sierras, I now find I am unable to get up them.

Despite the fire, the night is cold and it is not long before we hear the clash of pans from a nearby site orchestrated to scare off The Bear. We had been alerted by the Parky to the growing aggression of the bears and is true; Yogi does like to come down for supper!.

Jerry and Erika arrive at midday and we head off to a friendly dome to do some easy 'sport' routes. It's a simple matter -the feet need to show the brain that they will stay where they are put so that the brain can tell the feet where to go. A 5.7 and 5.8 (VS/HVS) are ticked off easily. As I climb I think that anywhere else 'sport routes' would mean ten to twelve bolts in a 150' pitch, here it means 5 to 6 bolts. I remind myself of some of the telling route names on other domes:- 'Edging Skills or Hospital Bills' and 'Smear or Disappear'. Later I study Mark's new guide. The 5.7 to the right gets a PG rating (protection good). Hal and I head for this but I am twenty feet up before I reach my first loose, rusty, quarter inch bolt. The second is up there somewhere but the sun is in my eyes. Awkward moves lead up a dike intrusion. The third bolt is missing. The fourth and last bolt comes into view forty feet away. Afterwards we read the guide again and note that the main difference between the two editions lies in the size of the disclaimer on the second page. We decide that Mr Falkenstein tells monster lies and have some late lunch.

The sun is off the face so Jerry announces he fancies a return trip to Dike Route on Pywiack (the 'aesthetic plum' of the area) on the opposite side of the road. Although Dike Route is given 'run out' in the guide and has somewhat of a reputation, Jerry says he has done it before and the crux has a couple of bolts. It's a pleasant late afternoon and too early to head for home so Hal and I follow after a while. Jerry does something nasty to his ankle on the approach but decides to continue anyway. He is with Mark and Judith at the top of the approach pitch as we set off. Jerry slowly picks his way up to the right of the basalt dike intrusion seeking the best advantage on the knobs and crystals that protrude slightly from the slab. At 70 foot he moves left to clip the first and only bolt and mutters something about climbing better the last time he was here. Soon it is my turn to take the lead and I'm glad we have had some practice across the road.

The climbing is very absorbing, not overly hard, but falling off just doesn't bear thinking about. The second pitch is well protected by comparison (4 bolts) and we soon find ourselves sharing a belay on the last pitch. The sun has now left the face and the light has flattened making it much harder to pick out the best holds. Jerry has managed the crux without much difficulty and is bringing up Judith and Mark. I follow quickly as the light is fading and it is getting colder. The 5.9 section passing the two bolts is tricky but a two move wonder; moving over the roof fifteen feet past the gear presents more of a problem but that goes quickly and the next bolt is

clipped. It's all going well but now the nature of the climbing has suddenly and disconcertedly changed from standing on knobs to small edges of exfoliated lips of granite. Careful footwork in dimming light leads to the abseil station and safety. I vaguely remember the account in the old guide of Tom Gerughty trembling up the route, unable or unwilling to stop, with his drill dangling uselessly from his side while his partners waited for the 200 foot slab splashing fall - which luckily never happened. We return to the camp fire and tales of bears up trees. Later the old fellow puts in an appearance and we all chase it away.

As the week unfolds we take on some harder, better protected routes and do some walking across the meadows and by waterfalls and domes. Mark and Judith do battle with the long Meadows-to-Valley walk (25 miles) which gives us all an excuse to gross-out in the Pizzeria in the Valley. But soon it is time to leave this beautiful and most spiritual of places.

The move towards Mammoth Lakes is as much in response to a need to find respite from the 'out there' head game that is climbing in Tuolumne, as it is to find some showers and facilities. In Mammoth we find a condo to share (condominium - house) and life takes on a more laid back style. Our East Side Sierra article points us in the direction of Clark Canyon which we discover after an hour of wrong turns on dusty roads. This gem of a place is set against a backdrop of the snow covered East Sierras and gives steep, bolt protected routes on volcanic welded tuff with a plethora of positive pockets. Hal and Judith lead a couple of 5.7s and dispense with another 5.8. We all tackle some 5.9s but soon move on to the 10a's, 10b's and 10c's. Sadly there are no 10d's or 11a's to try our hand at but the climbing is good and the place has a sort of secretive feel about it. We need to return.

As successive late night gross-outs begin to distort our finely-honed athletic frames, we decide it's time for the *burn*. An early start finds us buried in the depths of Owen's River Gorge. Classic 5.9s and a 5.10a are sorted before the sun hits the face and its time to head for shade..... quickly. We find a north facing crag with an arete ('Gorgeous' 5.10a) which the local guide gives five stars. As with so many aretes, the climbing feels precarious but a series of long reaches and balancy moves each side of the arete leads to the end of a brilliant and satisfying route. Next day a visit to Warming Wall, Mammoth's local crag, signals that the time has come to move on.

As Judith and Mark head back towards San Francisco for their homeward flight, Erika, Jerry, Hal and I journey northwards along highway 395, past the shores of Mono Lake towards Lake Tahoe. The radio is playing the right tunes and the open road and expansive views give off feelings of freedom and anticipation.

The little town of South Tahoe lies half in Nevada and half in California. The Nevada side is dominated by casinos and the Californian side by small roadside

motels with attached wedding chapels. We opt for neither and set up camp at Fallen Leaf Lake. With the guide book out of print we take photocopies from the local climbing shop and decide upon a hike before cragging the next day. Mt. Tallac beckons with a swim in the beautiful and cold Lake Gilmore on the way. The summit (9875') is reached at 6pm and offers stunning views. Now we have to leg it down full speed not to get caught out in the dark. Hal insists on a visit to the micro brewery we saw on the way in, so we spend some time talking to the French guy who runs the place while we sample some of his ten real ales. The only thing out of place is a Double Diamond sign on the wall but we haven't the heart to mention it so we depart determined to return mob-handed the next night.

On the advice of the Gear Shop owner, we head up to Eagle Lake Crag. The views are superb but on first site the crag looks neglected offering only a selection of pokey 'trad' routes. Jerry spots some bolts up the inside of a detached pinnacle and we begin an entertaining chimneying and bridging exercise, clipping on the way. The route (Vulture 5.10a) puts us in the mood so a rope is lowered over the other side for the 10c slab. The sun is now round on the face and the trad routes look more inviting. Sadly time is against us and we head off for tucker and more of our French friend's beer.

Lured by descriptions of climbing at Lover's Leap, we head south only to find ourselves in a big road works jam. On this job the women are part of the gang as well which must be hard work since 90+ degrees is hot for laying tarmac. We pass big shiny trucks. One has "Haul Ass" emblazoned on the back. I forget to tell Jerry. We pitch up in time for a hot evening climb. Jerry takes Erika up a 5.8 groove and Hal and I try to find our way up 'Surrealistic Pillar' (5.7). We all descend in failing light.

Next day we resist the temptation to sit around in the picturesque campsite since we know the sun hits the face at 2.00pm and this signals meltdown time. Jerry and Erika go for 'Haystacks', a classic 5.8. Hal and I put the ropes below 'The Line' (5.9) and the classic of the east wall. For some reason I feel uneasy about this climb and hesitate a while before setting forth. Maybe it is the description of continuous laybacking and jamming (which I always try to avoid) or the reference to the sharp dikes playing havoc with the ropes. In any event I unload my rack into the first pitch and after another pitch we're craning up at the intimidating finale'. The roof is turned on the left with less effort than we expected. Another storming route is in the bag!

It's time to move on again. Jerry and Erika head north and pick up the coast road. We head back through Bishop and tick another brilliant 5.10a at Upper Rock Creek before heading south for the sunset fry-up in Death Valley. Two days left so it's got to be Mt. Charleston and Red Rocks with a night on the tables in Vegas in between. Then it's L.A. and the big silver bird ✈️. But there's always next year.

DAVE WOOD

Last of the Summer Mountains

The Everest Retirement Home was planning its millennium celebrations, but Matron realised it could come too late for some in-mates. In the Nanga Parbat suite alone four residents hung on the very brink of life.

Scruffo dreamed only of neck deep snow in the Old Tent Road back in '47 when a well-placed Tricouni could bowl a maiden over, while he listened to interminable Vivaldi. Huntley on the other hand, was a true born country bumpkin who had revelled in pig muck and alpinism all his life whilst Cleudo spent all his spare time grovelling down mine shafts when not doffing his cap to the Duke of Westminster. And then there was the balding and the bespectacled, hirsute gentleman known only as the leader.

So it was that a holiday was arranged for these four decrepits at Ullapool, the scene of so many of their mountaineering triumphs in the past and an area of scenic delights on small hills. Under the capable leadership of the chief social worker known only as Young Edward with nurse Rheena and nurse Krissie in attendance, they made their way north via a whole string of disabled toilets scattered along the A9. Excitement was at fever pitch when they finally arrived at Suilven, Royal Park, Ullapool, a warm and beautiful house.

Sunday dawned fine and the four were wheeled into the front garden in their bath chairs to recover from the journey. In order to amuse the natives, Scruffo organised an exhibition of old age and soon the front hedge was festooned with sundry teeth, glass eyes, prostheses of various shapes and sizes, pace makers and a cascade of brightly coloured pills and potions, all vital to life itself. A pleasant young man came across to say hello. He had been now't but a lad when they had first come to climb. "At least our hills have got nothing to fear from now", he quipped kindly. But he was wrong. In the afternoon they punted their wheelchairs along to the new Safeways for some much needed shopping and marvelled at how wheelchair -friendly it was compared to the pokey old Presto's it replaced.

Monday was the day for the 'big one'. Young Edward had sussed out a route up a Corbett entirely on tracks or stalkers' paths. with Scruffo's arthritis, Huntley's glass eye, Cleudo's broken shoulder (occasioned by tripping over a jigsaw puzzle of Wengen) and The Leader living in a fantasy world, moving bits of British Steel around the world in his head, they all needed all the help they could get.

However, Mr. grumpy arrived on an A.T.V. and bad them go back. Cleudo, a one time land agent, cranked into action but his negotiating skills were naught against the raving 'Gazzer' look alike ranting at them and they retreated to a cross country route to the summit. This caused them much pain as they jumped across the peat bogs, and the temporary loss of Huntley's glass eye in the mine.

Tuesday saw a leisurely start followed by a coastal walk led by Ian and Val, two volunteer helpers at the home, who had come along to assist. By now Young Edward's manly bearing had become very obvious to all as he strutted through the house organising all and sundry like a Highland Laird and the Leader nicknamed him Lord

Edward of Colgach; not to be confused with any other Lord Edward you may have read about of course.

Wednesday was another tough day with Inverewe Gardens on the agenda, with possibly the longest distance between disabled toilets in the country between Ullapool and these world famous gardens. Still with only the teeniest of accidents en route the party was soon cleaned up and had a wonderful day in glorious surroundings. Particularly impressive were the views into the Wilderness, Carn More, Ben Lair and the Maiden, where they spent their youth walking, climbing and bivouacking on top of the remote Munro's. It was wonderful to see these old friends again and to remember the vigours of youth. "Precious few maidens about these days to kip on top of", quipped Scruffo as his wheel chair was lifted back into the bus.

Thursday saw a trip to the cinema where some enjoyed The Titanic and some did not. But what had become obvious was Young, now Lord, Edward's titanic appetite for Single Malts, and every evening finished with an expose' of the latest bottle. Back in Kirkham, assistant social worker Kath Furrowing, had the hots for Edward, but she had been quite unable to find out if he was already courting and had sought Scruffo's help. Perhaps under alcoholic overload he might have let slip the situation? Perhaps he would reveal to whom he poured out sweet nothings down the telephone every night? Perhaps not.

Perhaps, thought Scruffo, Mistress Furrowing might take me as second best, as he pondered her matronly charms and long drawn out Burnley accent. "Eh, I dawnt know, but it's pretty unlikely", he concluded.

Friday dawned superb. A target was selected between the Fannichs and An Teallach to give superb views of each range as the high clouds scudded across and the shadows cast an endless Kaleidoscope of shapes and colours over the scene. It was superb, up there between heaven and earth, with Murray's celestial vision trembling into view, but alas it was all too real and it was all too much for our gallant band.

As nurse Rheena took round the cocoa that night she found they had all gone to that last great bivouac from which there is no return. Ever. The Leader, gaunt with exhaustion but still hirsute, stared unseeingly into a land of virtual ingots. Cleudo, still smart and dapper, lay dead to the world and all creation with the pain of the day etched for ever on his face. Huntley's glass eye stared back at Rheena with as much enthusiasm as his real one. Only Scruffo seemed at peace with a gentle smile playing across his lips. But then he had been fantasising about nurse Rheena in her new skimpy uniform at the moment of his final seizure.

Any resemblance to a recent trip to Ullapool by Barry Crook and his Gentleman's Eleven is, of course, purely illusory.

The Times.....They Are Not The Same

A sideways look at historic and contemporary views of climbing

Number 2 -TECHNIQUE

"In touching a leader's foot with the hand or anything else, great discretion and judgement are necessary - except by definite request this should never be done. To take hold of a climber's foot when it is swinging in mid air and thus attempt to place it on a foothold may prove fatal. The balance of the man overhead is almost certain to be upset. Another less dangerous, but equally tantalising habit is far too frequently used - that is, the shouting up of advice regarding available holds that seem, from below, to be the very things needed. Such advice is generally useless. The man up above is in the best position to select and should be trusted to judge his needs. Unless he asks for advice, it should not be given by those below.

Real help may be rendered to the leader on some holdless step or stretch by 'giving him a shoulder.' This is common aid, and especially on new or pioneer routes it may prove almost a necessity. With the second man standing on some firm ledge, preferably belayed by the rope near his waist to some projecting rock, the leader can stand on his friend's shoulder or shoulders and thus gain a higher range of hand holds from a comfortable stance. The writer has sometimes found the cranium of a hard-headed second impervious to nailed boots; whilst his own nose bears slight record that once the late O.G. Jones found a foothold thereon." *Extract from 'First Steps to Climbing' George Abraham 1927.*

"The most strenuous dynamic is the one started with the feet already dangling. Say you're hanging on the lip of a roof and the next hold is a knob three feet above you. You can't mantel on the lip; your only hope is to fire for the knob. That means you must generate enough boost to hurl yourself three feet straight up. Anyone would be hard-pressed to do so using only his arms. The trick is to bring the lower body into play.

The standard technique is this: Get your hands situated on those spots from which you can generate the best hoist. Hanging from straight arms, gently swing the body in and out. When the feet swing out perhaps two feet past the vertical, or whatever feels right, it's time to fire. Remember that as you swing, the torque on your hands changes: the more you swing out, the less secure your grip is, so you don't want to swing more than necessary. In short, as the legs swing inwards, prepare yourself. As they start to swing back out, start to initiate the hoist with the arms, simultaneously using the momentum of the swinging legs to aid the upward movement. On longish dynamics you may even draw your legs up and immediately extend them again in a controlled little kicking move. It's all a matter of momentum and timing. Once you start to fly up, the common mistake is to stop yarding with the arms. This can leave you short of the mark. Keep cranking, and even at the dead point, when your free hand lets go to flash up for that knob - particularly at this point - keep trying to chuck that handhold to the ground. Keeping constant power on the initial holds means when you do latch that knob, you won't have to shockload it because you stopped cranking on the lower holds" (Got that??) *John Long 'Sport & Face Climbing' 1994*

LATE NEWS.....

New Routing

Mr. Dale achieved success on his Langstrath project on September 23rd. The route, which is yet to be named, involves precarious climbing with dubious protection up a steep 80 foot wall on Cam Crag. Martin has given the route a tentative grade of E7 6B to reflect the seriousness of the ascent. Good un Nob! Any second ascentionists out there?

Old Routing

We hear from Colorado that Andy Blaylock has succeeded on 'Sunkist' in Yosemite Valley. Whilst this is not a new route it is a serious aid proposition and demands a high level of commitment. Well done Andy!

Photo History

Dave Earle has agreed to assist with compiling a photo history of the Club activities for the 50th anniversary. Get your pics ready !!

~~~~~  
**REMINDER - Working weekend -Stair -be there Oct 17 /18**  
 ~~~~~

AND FINALLY

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