

THE FORTNIGHTLY FAFF

The Periodical Journal of the Mercian Mountaineering Club

Sept 2016

Limited
edition
protest
cover

ARE YOU NOT
IMPRESSED?

Norway's national mountain

Land's End to John O'Groats

I can't believe it's not Buttermere

The Reluctant Alpinist

The Moseley Festival of Chips

Photos from The Roaches meet

...and a whole lot more



A word from the editor

How do you like my protest front cover? There was a lack of photos submitted this time round and, as you know, I was reluctant to put myself on the cover climbing a Diff at Harborough Rocks. In fact that route was so non-descript that I can't even remember it's name, despite it being my 1,000th climb. The only contender was this one from Lou of Joel sitting outside a pub with his head torch around his neck. In a strange way I'm slowly warming to it, he has an enigmatic smile that piques the interest. No weekend warrior photos either this time [sniff!], so I'd ask you to please find the time to email me in the odd photo of two for the next issue.

Anyway, let's move on. Thanks for your contributions Julie, Malcolm, Lynn, Alan and Lou. It's a big issue and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Whilst I've got your attention please don't forget these dates which are coming up this year. We've got the:

- Annual Dinner (1st October)
- Photo Competition (20th October)
- AGM (10th November)

words and photos
by Alan Hardie

NORWAY'S NATIONAL MOUNTAIN

Northern Norway, land of the midnight sun, dramatic granite mountains and spectacular coastal scenery. Myself and two ex Mercian's Jon Massey and Ian Archer have spent the last two years having a week there. Our attention was first drawn to the area by a picture of Stetind.

In 2002 it was voted "Norway's National Mountain" rising impressively from sea level, steep on all sides to a chisel point at 1391m. There are a number of fairly hard routes (severe and upwards) on it and also the easier Normal Route via Halls Fortopp, a subsidiary mountain. Jon decided that this would be a fitting objective for his 50th birthday treat. So, last year we boarded the plane to Oslo and then flew on to Bodo where a hire car awaited. We drove up country some 150 miles to a small town called Ballangen. Although we did camp a few nights we quickly realised that a small cabin could be had for a few kroner more. We also quickly realised that the late arrival of summer meant a rock climbing ascent of our mountain was not on. We did however make an exploratory trip and before long were up to our knees in snow. So last year's trip became a sort of Nordic Munro bagging exercise and with sunny but cool days we had a really good time.



Fast forward to this year and we had a cunning plan. Instead of June we would go in August when most of the snow would be gone. So we arrived again and climbed Stortinden, a dramatic looking peak some 847m high but rising clean out of the fjord. Fortunately there is a “back door”, a tourist path that climbs steeply and brutally from a high point on the road to the main summit.

Suitably warmed up, two days later we were ready for Stetind. An eight o’clock start (none of your Alpine starts here) and soon we were walking through birch forest on a narrow but distinct path. Climbing higher above the tree line we eventually arrived at the lake which last year was completely snow covered. The path now climbed more steeply up the side of the mountain and eventually pulled out onto the large boulder strewn summit area of Halls Foretop. This is a large rounded mountain and from its highest point a connecting ridge leads to Stetind.

We stood there feeling somewhat intimidated by its appearance and I for one was not completely sure I wanted to go for it. Jon was bolder and insisted we should try it. First came a very straightforward bit of climbing along the connecting ridge, a short abseil down a block and a little more scrambling. There it was. The hand traverse. A rising crack behind a flake with nothing for the feet and then, after about ten feet, an awkward manoeuvre gets you onto the mountain proper for a scramble to the very summit. At Hard Severe we should have been able to manage it. Jon persuaded me to lead. I



clipped a couple of in situ pegs and with my hands in the crack stepped out onto the slab beneath. It swept down for hundreds of feet, the exposure total. At first I was all right but I found the slab very slippery and my feet didn’t seem to find any friction at all. I moved across and as the one crack finished another began but then I couldn’t find anything else for my hands and couldn’t make the awkward step. I felt if I tried to place some gear I would come off and pendulum, so on tiring arms I scurried back from whence I had come. It was frustrating because I knew I hadn’t been too far away from doing it but after a second attempt I knew the game was up. The others declined to give it a go, presumably rather perturbed by my antics, and so we were left with no alternative to return to the safety of Halls Fortopp and ultimately back to the car.

On other days we were Nordic Munro Bagging again and again apart from one day the weather was kind to us. So a good time was had by all. Shame about Stetind though. Next Year?

one for the

list



by julie taylor

Over 1000 miles of pedalling. Mile after mile of open road, amazing scenery, wild camps, hostels, fresh air, wildlife, highs, lows, plenty of jolly nice people and an indecent consumption of cake. This one's for everyone's bucket list.

And so, faced with a couple of weeks of unemployment I took the train to Penzance, armed with my trusty hardtail mountain bike, a change of clothes and a fancy new GPS. And a hangover after my work leaving do. 15 days later I arrived in John O'Groats after 1050 miles of cycling... it's one way to cure a hangover!

Lands End was fairly daunting..... despite arriving early doors I was still told by some official looking person that I'd have to pay to take a photo in front of the sign. Pardon??! So after a sneaky photo in front of the barrier I was off, at a blistering average pace of approximately 10 mph (and slower on the hills), slightly nervous but excited about how it would all pan out.

95 rain soaked miles later that day, at dark o'clock and after some ridiculous Cornish hills I decided that a) my fancy new sat nav had added on another 25 miles to my intended route and was therefore useless and b) LEJOG was a flipping stupid idea. Luckily this was the hardest day, as everyone had said it would be. Cornwall was surprisingly the hilliest part of the route and thankfully it all got slightly easier after that. And so followed 15 days of adventure...

Some of the highs:

- 1) Waking up and having only 3 things to worry about for the day: how far shall I go, where shall I stay tonight and where will my cafe stops be? I never got bored of this.
- 2) The lovely lady in the spar in Clitheroe who took my battery pack to her own house to charge so that I could pick it up at 7.30 am on a Sunday morning.
- 3) Pedalling through some amazing parts of the UK. Mingling with the wild ponies over Dartmoor, taking in the Bristol sights, creeping slowly over Rannoch Moor with gloomy rain clouds hanging over the mountain summits, cycling north of Inverness through miles and miles of Scottish wilderness to reach the north coast of Scotland.
- 4) Winning a protracted stand-off with 2 swans on a towpath near Gloucester (it's the small things).
- 5) Bumping into new found friends several times along the route to find that they were infinitely more miserable than I was each time.
- 6) The gaps in the rain.



And some of the lows:

- 1) Hitting a large pothole and face planting onto the A82 at Tarbet in the pouring rain. Thank you to the nice gentleman who managed not to run me over and stopped to pick me up. An afternoon of whimpering and severe self-pity followed, not helped by arriving in Tyndrum to find the long awaited fish and chips from the Real Food Café were, in fact, less than average. And the midgies were on steroids.
- 2) Pushing my bike up a narrow off road track in my socks. After my fancy pants new GPS took me up a back road which got steeper and steeper, I resorted to taking my cleated shoes off just to be able to grip. Pushing a heavily laden bicycle up a farm track in your socks is not particularly efficient when you are trying to cycle the length of the country so after a significant amount of appropriate language, I resorted to Google maps, guide book and some 'this road is going north' common sense.

“an afternoon
of whimpering
and self-pity
followed”



- 3) Waking up in a soggy tent to don soggy socks, and washed but not yet dried soggy cycling shorts and top. Urgh.
- 4) Endless rainy days. In my (very limited) planning I hadn't accounted for rain nearly every day. My overriding memory will be the vision of rain dripping off the peak of my helmet, a lot. Still, at least I didn't get sunburn.

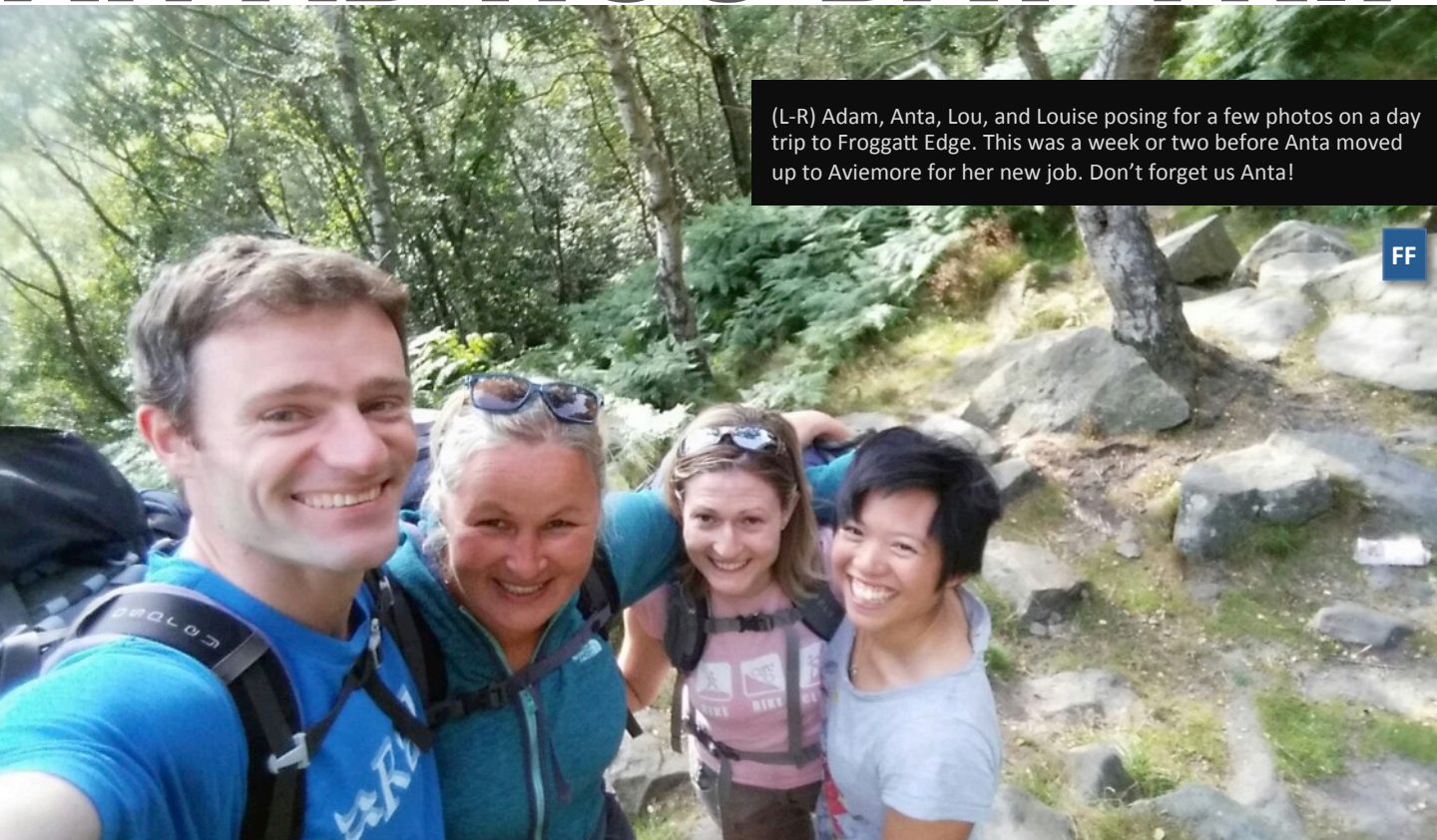
Altogether, the End to End was a trip to remember forever. A true challenge and so many different experiences. I met lots of different people, some on a similar epic and some who thought I was slightly mad. Every day was different, but cycling through the British landscape with the ability to make a plan then change it depending on the weather, legs and where I fancied staying that night was fantastic. Everyone should do this at some point in their lives, just pick a couple of rain free weeks and avoid the café in Tyndrum.

And for anyone who fancies the challenge, I have a swanky, only used once sat nav for sale.....



FROGGATT

AN AD HOC DAY TRIP



(L-R) Adam, Anta, Lou, and Louise posing for a few photos on a day trip to Froggatt Edge. This was a week or two before Anta moved up to Aviemore for her new job. Don't forget us Anta!

I can't believe it's not Buttermere (again!)

Back in August 2015 we went on a meet to Buttermere. Geoff Taylor recommended the campsite for its proximity to a pub of unrivalled value where beer reputedly cost a fraction of that of other Lakeland inns. The itinerary was greeted with enthusiasm. The reality didn't quite measure up though. The pub was actually several miles from the campsite and the beer was only cheap before 6pm. Furthermore the campsite was a good 15-minute drive from Buttermere. The weekend became affectionately known as the Not-Buttermere meet. Despite all of this a good time was had.

To avoid similar confusion this year the campsite lined up for the August Bank holiday meet was plumb in the middle of Buttermere, we'd even had members recce it in advance. And indeed there is not just one, but two good pubs within a three minute walk. There was just one unforeseen problem. By the time folk arrived late on the Friday evening the camp site was full. The meet was destined to become the 2nd Not-Buttermere Meet in as many years. Frustrated by mobile phone signal black spots frantic calls from the vanguard to those in transit on the M6 were made and the hunt for alternative accommodation was on, but sadly not in Buttermere. The accommodation that we enjoyed on the Friday night was far from first class...

**“The meet was
destined to
become the 2nd
Not-Buttermere
Meet in as
many years”**

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Price range

Price from

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Facilities

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Accommodation Type

☐

Star Rating

☐

Buttermere Hotels

Showing 1 hotels in Buttermere on Fri 26th August for 3 nights

Sort by: [Recommended](#) [Price](#) [Distance](#) [Desperation](#) [Stars](#)



Keswick NCP

1 ★

Pretty shit



1 guest reviews

CA12 5FJ, 16 miles from your location

1 night

£ 1

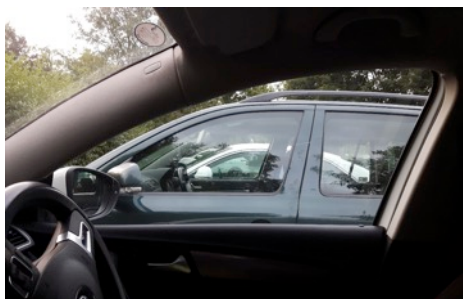
Luxury accommodation located in one of Keswick's finest parking areas, within easy walking distance of local attractions.

This comfortable accommodation offers single, well-lit rooms, reclining beds and electric windows. All units are fully alarmed and come in various colours and engine sizes. Toilets are al fresco and wash facilities are wet wipe based.

Offer includes full night of accommodation for only £1 (coin only). Price increases after 7am and can be paid for via a meter, giving the flexibility every camper needs.

No bookings are required but the area becomes very popular in summer months, arrive early to avoid only the dogging spots being available.

Customer feedback



"Rates right up there with the worst digs I've ever had, and I've slept in some real shit-holes"

Julie Taylor

NO MORE SEARCH RESULTS

But hey, it's great to be in Borrowdale

...and once again victory was snapped from the jaws of defeat. After a crap night in the car park a decent camp site was found and club morale steadily rose. Here are a few photos Louise took:



(Above) Louise on top of Shepherds Crag after an ascent of Little Chamonix (Vdiff) with Adam. (Right) Sarah, Adam and Julie at Castle Rock of Triermain

FF



SUPER INDIRECT

STORIES OF NAVIGATIONAL INEPTITUDE AND MISFORTUNE ON AND OFF THE MOUNTAIN

Being a mountaineer isn't only about navigating whilst on foot. It can be as important to get it right when you are in the car too, how else will you arrive at the right hut in the middle of night? But even the advent of GPS doesn't make getting to your destination a certainty.

I thought I'd recall a story that centres around Joel (or Jerl to his friends). I'm pretty sure that it was the Easter meet of 2015 and we had booked Lagangarbh in Glen Coe. As usual everyone made their way up very late on Thursday night. Joel, being in a bit of a rush quickly Googled the hut, punched in a postcode he found into his satnav and hit the road. Many hours later his TomTom proudly announced he'd arrived at his destination. He wasn't in Glen Coe. In fact he wasn't even in the right County. He was sat in a suburb somewhere to the south of Glasgow. Evidently he'd used the postcode of the hut warden's house. Oh dear Joel, how did you ever think you'd done Birmingham to Glen Coe in four and a half hours?

But to cap it off, and this is why I love the story so much, there was more to tell. I spoke with Pete about it the following morning expecting him to guffaw at Joel's navigational gaff. It turns out that Pete, a proud Scot who should know the geography of his own country better than any Englishman was actually lift sharing with Joel that night. And was also the one doing the driving. He gave me a sheepish shrug of his shoulders and a smile. Priceless. You just couldn't make this stuff up.



FRIDAY 2016
10TH SEPT

FABIAN
MOORE

HOSTED
THE

INNAUGURAL MOSELEY FESTIVAL

OF CHIPS TO CELEBRATE
HIS BIRTHDAY

AND THE HUMBLE FRIED SPUD
FRESH FROM FLAKES FISH & CHIPS

HIGHFIELD CHIPPY YARDELY WOOD FISH BAR

DAD'S LANE FISH BAR & THE

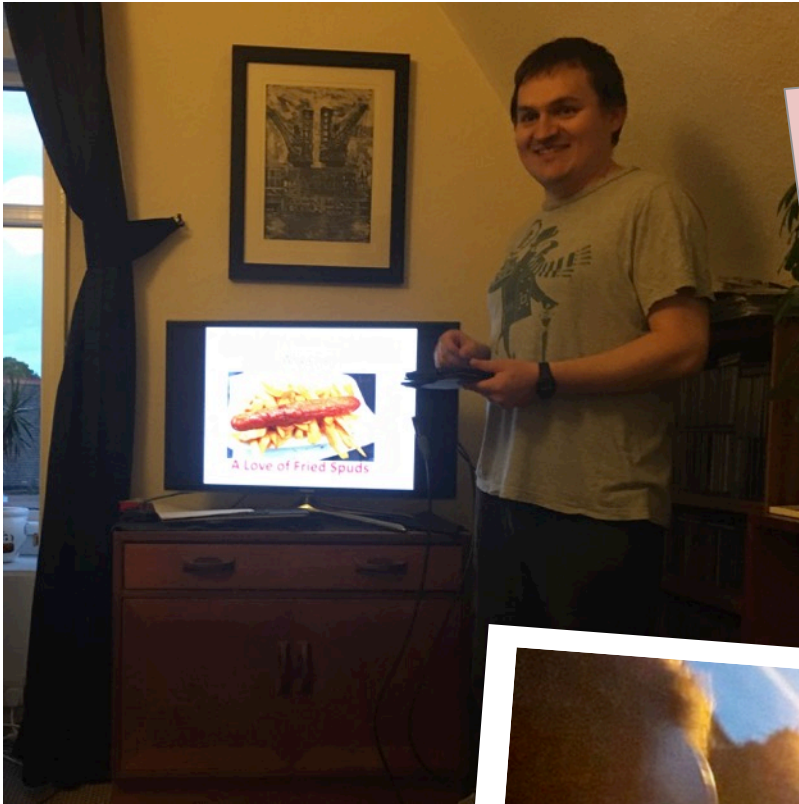
PRINCE OF WALES FISH BAR

FEATURING THE LARGE HADDOCK SPRING ROLLS
BATTERED TINNED COD ROE FISH CAKES CURRY
SAUCE BATTERED SAUSAGE & SEVEN HUNGRY
MERCIAANS WITH NOTHING BETTER TO DO
TOMATO SAUCE COURTESY OF TOM AND SARAH

THE RESULTS WERE...

...CONTROVERSIAL

1) Flakes fish and chips 2) Highfield Chippy 3) Yardley Wood Fish Bar 4) Dad's Lane Fish Bar 5) Prince of Wales Fish Bar



Fabian lays down the framework of the evening and whips the crowd into a frenzy with his engaging PowerPoint presentation and enthusiasm for the simple fried potato.

Not sure what Tom and Sarah are doing here, but I don't think there are any rules against it. Each person (or couple) were tasked with retrieving a portion of chips and side from one of the local chippies.





The Greek owners of the chippy Lou was tasked with visiting. It scored well for advertising the type of spud being fried on a chalk board outside the shop.

Let the fun begin. Tasting and scoring was thorough and stimulated much debate on the nature of a great chip. The scoring system was thorough and pretty complex for such an unassuming meal.



Fabian blows out the candles on the awesome banoffee that Julie baked for the occasion. Good times.



the kissing gate

Mercians may or may not know that Maggie and I had a kissing gate made and installed to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in 2010. At the time we had a battle with the Friends of the Lake District who said at the last minute that they would not allow a plaque to be placed on our gate. There is now a brass plaque on M&M's kissing gate! It is ideally situated at on of the access points onto The Helm, just outside Kendal so well used by walkers and locals making a circular walk on the hill.

- Malcolm



THE RELUCTANT ALPINIST

by Stewart Moody

I pondered calling this article Euro-climbing, or something similar to give myself an opportunity to waffle on about my summer holiday in the Alps and recite the raucous Americanisms that we used to describe our vertical accomplishments. But then I saw this photo I took of myself at a mountain hut in Switzerland after climbing the Dent Blanche and recalled how I felt before, during and after that climb.



A photo I took of myself when we got back to the Dent Blanche hut after climbing the south ridge (AD III). I was knackered, a bit dazed, satisfied, a little bit sunburnt, and pleased to be back down. The picture in the frame above me is of the Dent Blanche. The south ridge is the skyline to the right of the summit.

Someone once told me that to be a half decent alpinist you need to be durable. Maybe that's a quality I don't have because I can spend most of a climb in various states of anxiety. Most people I see on these routes seem to cope very well, having a laugh with their climbing partner and drinking in the atmosphere. I guess I do those things too but in a superficial way that belies what's going on inside. Given the risks and objective dangers I'm never happy until I've got back to the hut and have a drink in my hand.

My friend Dan and I had arrived in Chamonix a week before I took that photo. It was August and we'd planned a trip with some pretty big objectives; The Frendo Spur on the Aiguille Du Midi, The Matterhorn, and the Dent Blanche. On the days running up to the trip I had felt my confidence waver, and as we warmed up on a few smaller and easier routes I kept asking myself one question – "Do I really want to try to climb those big mountain routes?" The answer finally dawned on me as we exited the Midi cable car and descended the snow ridge onto the Vallee Blanche - the answer was "No, not really". I'd rather do technical rock routes on subsidiary peaks than lock horns with the mixed rock and ice terrain of our big objectives. Right there on the Vallee Blanche I had a bit of an epiphany as it dawned on me that Alpinism, or at least what I loosely call "big mountain Alpinism" wasn't something I wanted to do much of anymore, or at least for the foreseeable future. Up there amongst the snow and ice I couldn't help but think back to Good Friday in the Cairngorms and the events of that day; the hard ice, the blue skies, the fun we were having, the banter, and the ease with which an accident can, and did, happen.

We didn't climb our objective that day. It was a multi-pitch ice route on Mont Blanc du Tacul but there were several slow moving teams already on it who were knocking lumps of ice down the couloir. We didn't want to join the back of that queue and be in the firing line. Half of me was relieved as the stress levels went down; the other half was disappointed for it was a great looking line.

We opted instead for a link up of Arete a Laurence (PD) and the Cosmiques Arete (AD) which tops out back at the Midi cable car. We moved together well, snow conditions were good, the sun was shining and we were well within guide book time despite congestion at the cruxes. It was a good day and it bolstered my confidence just enough to reconsider the big objectives. We thought long and hard about what we really wanted from the trip and threw loads of ideas around as we sat by the tent drinking wine. Dan had longed to climb the Dent Blanche for many years, and I wanted to help him claim his peak. I was nervous about the whole thing, but deep down I wanted to enjoy the feeling of summiting such a peak once more .

We rang the Dent Blanche hut and part of me hoped it would be fully booked, the perfect excuse to do something else. They had space so I booked us in. No turning back now, I thought and we drove to Arolla in the Swiss Alps that afternoon. We needed more time to acclimatise so we spent the next day hiking up to the Bouquetins hut (2,980m) in a nearby valley.

The following day we made the 6-hour walk in to the Dent Blanche hut (3,507m). It was a tough plod in the hot sun and the 1,600m of vertical ascent passed slowly. Views of our objective were incredible and my sprits were buoyed by the seemingly shallow gradient of the south ridge that we'd be climbing. "It looks pretty benign" I said optimistically; Dan nodded in agreement. We passed trough forest and meadow, and then into vast boulder fields and onto the dark grey ice of the lower glacier. Eventually we crossed the snow line, and the last few hundred meters were a massive effort. Dan was running short of water so we shared mine, and the altitude was probably playing a role too. It was about 3pm when we walked into the cramped gear room of the hut and threw down our packs.

Dinner was a pleasant affair in the company of some nice folk from various corners of Europe. We told stories of climbs we'd done over recent days and woofed down big bowls of pasta and tuna. As the sun dropped behind the mountains the temperature dropped and people ambled off to bed.

The Dent Blanche only sleeps 30 or so people so it has a nice intimate feel. Everyone was in bed by 9:00pm. The dorm room was warm, people got up regularly to go the toilet (which was mercifully clean and indoors), and we were crammed onto communal platforms like sardines in a can. I can't sleep in these places and I was staring at the dial of my watch when it struck 3:15am. I was relieved that the wait was over. I'd slept a total of 2 hours. I'd been awake most of the night trying to decide whether to climb in soft-shell or hard-shell trousers. I didn't think it mattered much either way, but I couldn't stop my mind racing.

I forced down a disappointing breakfast of stale bread and jam, a few spoonful's of corn flakes with UHT milk, and a litre of appalling tea. With that done I went to the gear room, pulled on my hard-shell trousers, put my harness on, clipped my head-torch to my helmet, pulled on my boots and gloves and walked out in to the ice-cold mountain air. Given how far we'd come I was feeling determined and a smile from Dan signaled that he was ready too. I wanted to get to the summit and back as quickly as possible. And with that done I wanted to go back to the camp site and drink beer and fall asleep with that warm glow of satisfaction that comes from succeeding in the mountains.

We arrived back at the hut precisely 12 hours later; 6 hours up to the 4,357m summit, and 6 back down. We were right on the outside edge of guide book time. It was a memorable ascent made sweeter by the fact that it might well be my last summit of that scale on a route of that difficulty. I remember shivering on a predawn belay as Dan lead the first crux up steep neve. I recall willing the sun to rise above the horizon so that it would up my hands. I shudder as I think back to a traverse we made across a 40 degree slope of bullet hard ice that neither axe nor crampon would adequately penetrate. But then there were those last few steps up the narrow snow ridge to the summit, that first glimpse of the huge metal cross at the summit and the feeling of triumph as we grabbed it. And what a view! It was truly incredible. But getting up is only half the battle and in descent we made 10 abseils to overcome the same obstacles we'd ascended and crossed a section of rock we later heard translated in English as "the little death". I sat inside the hut with the 1,000 yard stare whilst Dan fuffed with his gear on the terrace. I was

Relieved beyond words to be back at the hut and the anxieties of the day were already fading as we enjoyed a beer; not so high value as I'd hoped at €6 per can but after that climb who really cares. At 6pm we left the hut and retraced our steps back down to the valley floor. It was dark when we got back to the car.

The following day we drove to Arco, a sport climbing mecca by Lake Garda in Northern Italy where we spent the remaining 5 days of the trip basking in the sunshine on hot rock and clipping into bomb proof bolts. They were good days in Arco, but when I think back to the trip climbing the Dent Blanche was a demanding and rewarding experience that I'll not forget. I'm grateful to Dan for doing such a fine job of leading and route finding. He tells me that we both shouldered our share of the burden but I think it's his nature to be so kind. On the Dent Blanche he was a total boss. I wish I had the appetite to do more routes like the south ridge, and maybe in a few years time I will, but I don't think anything will change the fact that they just scare the hell out of me.



Dan and me at the summit cross at about 8:30am with the Matterhorn behind

THE RELUCTANT ALPINIST'S KIT LIST

Waterproof jacket. Hood flapping outside the down jacket and generally getting in the way. No time to stop and faff; just deal with the annoyance and get on with it.

Head torch left on the helmet all day because it's just too much hassle to take it off and risk it plummeting 2,000m to the bottom of a crevasse, never to be seen again.

1 litre of "tea" in a Camelback. Provided by the hut, it doesn't taste anything like you would recognise as tea. It's quite foul and a litre is totally inadequate for a 12 hour day.

#6 Black Diamond hexcentric. Missing in action on the Dent Blanche, presumed to be wedged somewhere and probably mentioned in the new guide book as in-situ protection.

Sun glasses. Smearred with factor 50 sun cream which always finds it's way onto the inside of the lenses and obscures the view. Try rubbing that off with synthetic gloves. Futile!

Ropeman and pulley just in case Dan falls into a crevasse and I need to winch him out. Wouldn't that be a barrel of laughs!

Down jacket on top of 3 other layers is pretty standard. It might look sunny and warm in the photo but stood still for a minute in the shade I turn into a shivering wreck.

Gaiters pock marked with dozens of small holes. The holes are a result of tripping over them in crampons but are a useful, but ineffective way of airing your feet to make them sweat less. See B3 boots.

Gore-tex trousers for sitting in the snow when belaying in a freezing cold breeze at 5am when the sun is still well below the horizon.

Crampons. Nothing hinders rock climbing more than strapping metal spikes to your feet. No you can't take them off because you move from rock to snow to ice every few minutes.

Super-warm B3 boots. I sweated into so much that the car windows still had to be left open 5 days later to let fresh air flush the pong out of the car. Disgusting doesn't begin to describe it.

Anti-balling plates for the crampons. The left one is missing, last seen somewhere on the ascent of the ridge. I've know idea when it tore itself off.

THE LYNN TAYLOR GALLERY



Here's a painting I did of Rockhall Cottage (The Don Whillans Memorial Hut) at The Roaches



I had a chance meeting with Alan Hinkes on Leamington station. He was the first Briton to summit all fourteen 8,000m peaks in the Himalaya. He obviously lived to tell the tale, and as he was wearing sandals I noticed he still has all 10 toes unlike most famous mountaineers! He came over to chat while I was sketching. I assumed he was one of those annoying amateur art critics. Luckily I wasn't rude and when I realised who he was we had a pleasant conversation.

(L-R) Stewart, Naomi, Becky, Lou and Adam posing outside
Rockhall Cottage after a spot of lunch and gallons on tea.
Photo: Ed Shaw

The Roaches Meet in photos



HORSING **AROUND AT** *The Roaches*

It seems to have become tradition that the hut meet season be kicked off with a trip to The Roaches. It also seems that doing an easy route by head torch is gaining in popularity at single-pitch venues. Adam had the bright idea of climbing Flake Chimney (Diff) at 9pm, and Sarah, Becky and Stew all thought it sounded like a splendid idea. Sarah was second up the route and the top out was bathed in moonlight.

Photo : **Stewart Moody**

INSET

(L-R) Sarah, Becky and Adam at the base of the route. Torches on, guide book consulted, monster-cam at the ready. Go!



A man wearing a blue helmet, sunglasses, and a bright green hoodie is climbing a rocky hillside. He has a large orange and grey backpack and is holding a green bag. The background is a lush green hillside with ferns and rocks. A large yellow arrow graphic points from the top right towards the man.

HAULING **KIT AROUND AT** *The Roaches*

The morning light didn't strike the hut or the picnic tables outside, so a few of us took our breakfasts and trotted down the hill a little way to a large rounded boulder that was in the sunshine. Joe turned up 15 minutes later, doing the walk up from the car in one. Sleeping bag, ropes, rack, clothes, baguettes and croissants. We were clearly more interested in the baked goods than the hardware.

Photo : **Stewart Moody**



So technically speaking this isn't The Roaches, it's the three pitch Central Route (VS 4c) on Hen Cloud. Naomi is eyeing up the crux moves of P3 before going for it. Meanwhile Tom and Sarah were on Modern (HS 4b) just around the corner, and everyone else was over on the Skyline. We all met up for lunch at Rockhall Cottage which we were lucky enough to have booked for the weekend.

Photo : **Stewart Moody**

**CLIMBING
STUFF AT**
The Roaches



BBQ SPATCHCOCK
CHICKEN & CHILLI AT
The Roaches

(L-R : Joe, Adam, Tom) Tom kindly offered to cook a pair of spatchcock chickens on the BBQ for dinner on Saturday evening. This was served up with veggie chilli, mint raita and followed by sticky toffee pudding and custard courtesy of Joe. About 2 hours after this photo was taken Adam was at it again with his climbing in the dark fetish, this time plumping for the epic squeeze (not a good idea on a full stomach) of Sifta's Quid (HS 4b).

Photo : Stewart Moody



All good things come to an end. After lunch on Sunday Stew, Naomi and Becky went to bag a few more routes. Inverted Staircase (Diff) pictured here came first, but by the time they'd thrutched and wriggled their way through the rock window on P2 they decided enough was enough and headed back to the hut for more tea and the inevitable drive home.

Photo : Becky Nicholson



ONE LAST
ROUTE AT

The Roaches

HIKE | BIKE | CLIMB

P H O T O F A F F

[Clipstick Faff] Pierce used his clip stick to hook a third quickdraw onto his 6b “project” during the Swanage meet on the May Bank holiday. After nearly an hour and having rotated through two belayers his progress was deemed glacial but he persevered and made it to the lower off in the end.

photofaff by VICKI COX



DREAM

Weekend Warriors

Alan Hardie on a bomber belay (quite literally) made of a Lancaster bomber that crashed in 1951. The route, quite fittingly, is called Fuselage Gully and is on Beinn Eighe in Torridon. Grade I/II depending on the conditions.

Photo : **IAN ARCHER**