

THE FORTNIGHTLY FAFF

The Periodical Journal of the Mercian Mountaineering Club

Jan 2017

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF CRUXY DRAW

A Kalymnian tragedy by Tom Morris



Fabian's 2nd Faff Article

What will he come up with to
beat his A v's B Team classic?

A round up of recent meets

A selection of photos from
England, Scotland and Wales

And a whole lot more to boot

Chairman's Challenge, Photo
Faff, etc...



A word from the editor

Have you heard about the Chairman's Challenge yet? You should have, it's happening right now. The challenge dates back to the days when the club was under the custodianship of CJ, that most learned of men, who thought a bit of friendly competition amongst club members would get people out and about in different ways, doing different things with different people. Well, the time has come for the challenge to ride again in this, the club's 60th year. I see that Vicky Higgins has already bagged 10 points for summiting a Munro and Vicki Cox has got 5 points for helping out a newbie at the wall last Thursday. There are loads of things that you can do to net points. Take a look at the last couple of pages for a copy of the score sheet which I'd encourage you to print and fill in over the next 6 months.

Also in this issue we have Fabian's much awaited second article; the difficult second article. Who can forget his A-team/B-team article from a few years ago? It's not often he puts pen to paper but when he does it's usually well worth reading. I hope you like Vic's cover photo of Sarah at Kaylnos. It wasn't all sunshine though, there was tragedy too. Read all about it in Tom's article about the life and death of Cruxy Draw. We also have a round up of some of the recent meets and the usual other bits and bobs.

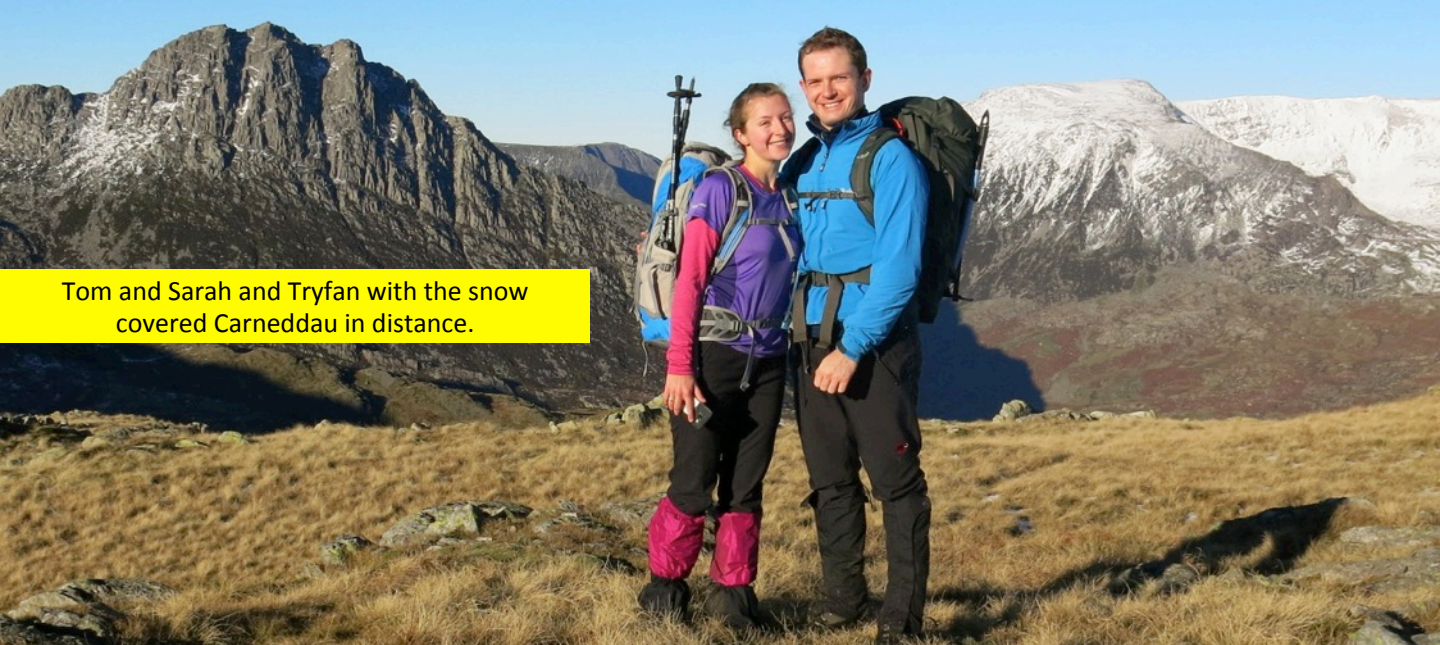
Enjoy.

Stew.

Helyg Hut meet, Ogwen

Tom Gape perched happily on one of the many rock spikes near the summit of the Glyder Fawr after a long slog up from Capel Curig. Many felt they had been mis-sold by Stewart Moody who described it as a new way to approach the peaks that we'd all summited so many times before. Still, it was a fine crisp day and there were great views of Tryfan that none of us had enjoyed before.





Tom and Sarah and Tryfan with the snow covered Carneddau in distance.



(L-R) Julie, Stew, Sarah, Tom, Adam, Adam's man leg, Tom Gape, Lou, Becky, Vicky.



Group shot as we reach the snow level with a lot of uphill still to go, moral is still high.

The Life and Death of Cruxy Draw

by Tom Morris

Kalymnos - the land of clear blue water, tufa monsters, Mythos and mystery (not a lot of mystery, mostly how Au Revoir at Ghost Kitchen gets 5+!).

Back in 2014 I took my first trip there with Vic, Stew and Luke. Bright eyed and bushy tailed with stories of glorious orange rock and soft-ish grading ringing in my ears I decided I'd try and push my grade a little. Being still fairly new to outdoor sport climbing I'd only ever climbed 6a and so resolved at some point during the week to get up a 6a+ (this has since been bettered I hasten to add).

After a magnificent week of Mythos and seafood and Mythos (and a bit of climbing), I led the fabulous Free Style at Arginonta. A wonderful route wholly reminiscent of Kalymnian climbing being bright orange and slightly overhanging all the way.

Before beginning the holiday, we'd agreed that anyone who managed to push their grade could reward themselves with a new quickdraw to celebrate. Therefore, flush with excitement, I took myself off to the gear shop opposite Snack Bar Fatolitis and returned clutching a shiny new Black Diamond sport draw. This was no ordinary quickdraw however. This was a symbol...a monument to human endeavour. It would never fail me, never let me down and always be there when I needed it. It would be reserved for the most harrowing moments when the next bolt seems leagues away and it takes all of your strength, will and courage just to reach for the clip. It was to be named....Cruxy Draw. Obviously this required a theme tune (to the tune of O Christmas Tree):
O cruxy draw,
O cruxy draw,
You're definitely going to hold this fall.

And so began the illustrious career of Cruxy Draw. It went up many climbs although was only rarely clipped and was my steadfast companion through many trials...Kalymnos 2015, getting that nut out at Tremadog 2015 amongst others. There were also some dark times. Lending Cruxy Draw to Matt Kettle was a mistake not to be made twice. Clearly sensing its potency and mystical power, Kettle took the draw and kept it for his own. For a sixmonth I searched, feeling that a part of me was missing. High and low, gear draw to...other gear draw (realistically where else is it going to be?!) until finally, word reached my ear of its location. "By the way, I've still got that quickdraw of yours shall I bring it down the wall?". Finally, Cruxy Draw had returned to its true master. Obviously this can clearly be blamed for every climb I failed to get up during this time. Ahem.

Kalymnos 2016 rolled around and our spirits were buoyant. The week passed as weeks in Kalymnos as wont to do. A blur of grey slabs, orange tufas, Mythos, sunshine, calamari and mercifully projectile vomit-free. All good things must come to an end however and it was when climbing Pornokini 6b. As chance would have it just next door to Free Style, where Cruxy Draw was first earned. I was nearing the chains, and the ground seemed far more than the guidebook 25 metres away. My arms were pumped, my grip failing and one more clip separated me from glory. There was only one thing for it. I reached down and pulled Cruxy Draw from my harness, "once more unto the breach old friend". It was then that tragedy struck. Some force beyond mortal comprehension wrenched Cruxy Draw from my grasp (well, a force beyond mortal comprehension or the fact that I was pumped and sweaty as hell. One of the two).

I watched, transfixed in horror as Cruxy Draw pinged off down the rockface before finally striking the earth 25 metres below. I finished the climb, clipped the chains and descended as quickly as possible. By the time I'd untied my knot Sarah had already found Cruxy Draw. She bore him unto me but the spark of magic was gone. I knew then that he could never again be clipped (again spark of magic or the fact that there's no way I'm trusting a draw that's smashed down 25m of rock). Solemnly we carried him from the crag and re-patriated him to England. Soon he will be laid in his final resting place. Probably as a racking krab, or maybe to hang my gloves off. Who knows what awaits quickdraws beyond the veil...

The moral of this story is don't drop expensive quickdraws off long routes .




BIRMINGHAM

FESTIVAL



BEER



A night sky filled with stars and a bright light reflecting on water. The sky is dark with many stars of varying brightness. A bright, out-of-focus star is visible on the left side. In the lower center, a bright light source, possibly a lighthouse or a small town, is visible on the horizon, with its light reflecting on the water below. The foreground shows a dark, textured surface, likely a beach or a field of low-lying vegetation.

Photos from various climbing trips around the north of England
by Ned and Anna



Presented by Stewart Moody and Vicki Cox at their house from 7:30pm



REEL SUTTON MOCK FILM FESTIVAL

Films will be featuring none of the splendid Mercians in any of the photos on this poster

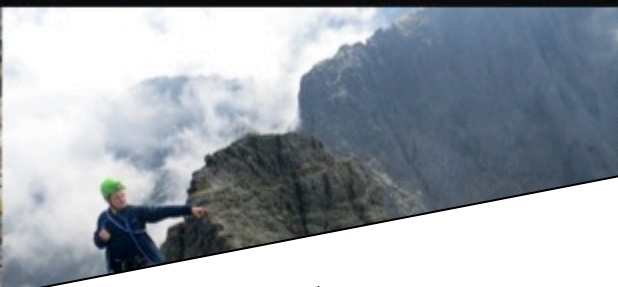
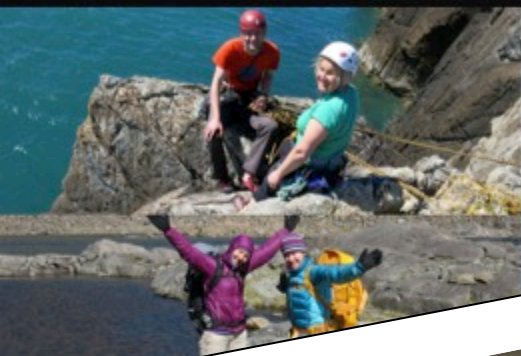
Rab

PETZL

GOALZERO



Please bring your own booze and sleeping bag if you want to stay over. A curry (or something similar) will be provided by your hosts



Good company, snacks, and climbing films - it's the year's best film festival. If you weren't there you missed out. Then again if everyone came we wouldn't all fit in the lounge!



FILM TOUR RETURNING TO SUTTON DECEMBER 2

The Annual Dinner, Coniston

(L-R) Lou, Sarah and Vic put on their glad rags and hiking boots for the walk into Coniston from the Irish Row hut. Scrub up well don't they? We had dinner at The Sun Inn and auctioned Pete's gear to raise money for Coniston MRT.





(L-R) Sarah, Joel, Joe and Adam enjoying pre-dinner drinks in the Sun after a day on the hill.



Jules show's she is hard-core by doing a local 'run' of some description. It looked hard.



(L-R) Adam, Mike, Vicky, Joel and Malcolm enjoying their meal.



(L-R) Geoff, Alan and Mike all looking quite dapper and happy in the bar area.

Thanks to your generosity we raised £647.50 for Coniston MRT at the annual dinner meet last autumn when we auctioned Pete's climbing equipment, maps and guide books. We received this letter of thanks back from their treasurer. Thank you all for showing your support to such a good cause.

CONISTON MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM

(FORMED 1947) A voluntary organisation

Registered charity No. 504923

*Affiliated to Mountain Rescue (England & Wales) (MREW) and
The Lake District Search & Mountain Rescue Association (LDSAMRA)*



Mercian Mountaineering Club
c/- Vijay Korotane

Dear Vijay

Donation – Coniston Mountain Rescue Team

Many thanks for the kind donation of £647.50 received recently from Mercian Mountaineering Club with regards to Pete Nielsen. Please accept this letter as acknowledgement of receipt.

This donation will be put to good use in training and equipping Team members to deal with all incidents we are requested to help with.

You can also read about the Team's work that your donation will be helping to support. Our website is at <http://www.conistonmountainrescue.org.uk/> with the latest news of team incidents, events and local weather information.

As Coniston Mountain Rescue Team is funded entirely by donations from the public and charitable grants, your support is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Kennelly
Team Treasurer
treasurer@conistonmountainrescue.org.uk

Coniston Mountain Rescue Team, Old Furness Road, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8HU
www.conistonmountainrescue.org.uk

Team Leader: Rob Ingham **Chair:** David Coxon **Treasurer:** Greg Kennelly **Secretary:** Simon Honeyborne-Sharp
Team Patron: Stuart Maconie

Patterdale Meet, Oct '16

(L-R) Naomi and Nima in dazzling sunshine on the summit plateau of Helvellyn after a rather windy and intimidating ascent of Striding Edge (SG1). We were lucky to have such great weather on the Saturday as Sunday was a soggy affair.



Vicki wrapped up warm against the bracing wind as she picks her way along striding edge.



Pierce (3 hoods) Ferris and the ladies near the summit of Helvellyn.



Everyone poses for a group shot. We are out of the wind and moving at pace towards the pub.

[Horse Play Faff] A very fluffy looking Pierce stops to stroke a horse whilst Munro bagging on the New Year Meet at Scotland. I'm not sure how he reconciles the hardcore "je suis une Apliniste" statement of a karabiner/sling hanging from his pack with his decision to stop and pose for a photo of him being friendly to the local thoroughbred. Hmmm!

photofaff by VICKY HIGGINS



Look At All Those S*dding Contour Lines!

Fabian Moore's second Faff article by focuses on the new year meet

Four fifths of the uphill team. (L-R) Adam, Fabian, Chloe, Ed, at the Nevis Range ski centre at 10am on New Year's Day.



It all started for me after a few too many drinks on Christmas Eve. I had just returned from a meal out with my family, and in a slightly merry state decided to log on to the MMC forum to remind myself of the plans for the New Year meet in Glencoe. Jules had posted suggesting we sign up for a 4k run on New Year's Day, and described it as the perfect hangover cure. I have shown previous form with hungover running at the weekly 5k parkrun events* and thought cockily to myself, "4k should be easy!" and posted a reply along those lines in the forum.

A couple of days later I received texts from Julie about needing to sign up for the race before the deadline. Adam and Julie had already done so, and soon enough Ed and Chloe had also been press-ganged into taking part. It was at this point that I should have questioned people further, and fully researched the exact nature of the event. However, knowing that Adam had already signed up put me at ease. I reassured myself with the thought that if Adam (a man who hates running) had so eagerly signed up, it would probably be a doddle. I bowed to peer-pressure, and without any further enquiry, signed up too.

These are the facts as I understood them when I agreed to take part:

- The race entrance fee included a lift in the Nevis Range gondola. Soup, a roll, and tea were also included.
- The race was only 4k long.

This all sounded easy enough, but as the time for the race approached, and we discussed the race more information on the event came to the fore:

- The lift in the Gondola, included in the race fee, was to get runners back DOWN the hill. I had actually paid good money to get a ski lift down!
- The run included 610 m of ascent. At 4 km in length, with 610 m of ascent, the average gradient is just over 15%!
- As if that weren't enough, the route for the run goes up the world cup downhill course, forcing runners to clamber over rocky obstacles and the steep wooden jumps & drops intended for mountain bikers heading in the opposite direction.

Thinking back, the clue was in the name - Aonach Mor **UPHILL** Race. I had clearly overlooked this key word. How had I been so stupid? Approaching the Nevis Range on a New Year's morning, wearing shorts and a t-shirt, I felt thoroughly ill-prepared. "You aren't running in those clothes are you Fabian?," Ed helpfully asked. Everyone else had full-length leggings or tracksuit bottoms on, and fancy light-weight running jackets. The instructions provided on the event website were written in some strange language, that I imagine is well understood by the target audience: hardened fell runners, and lycra fetishists. The event small-print suggested "Full Body Cover Must Be Carried or Worn" whatever that meant. I presumed that it meant I should take a full pack, containing a change of clothes, adding a heavy pack to my growing list of concerns. Although this seemed a little excessive, when I badgered Jules for guidance she would impatiently bark angry monosyllabic answers to my increasingly desperate questions. She was clearly in impatient army officer mode. What exactly had I signed up for!!?

We collected our race numbers and approached the starting area where hardy fell-running types were gathering, including:

- An underdressed man (given the icy conditions) wearing very short shorts, a vest top, with a shaven head and 3ft beard.
- A man with "Hard Work" tattooed across both of his legs.
- More bum-bags than I had ever seen before.

Chloe attempted to reassure me by pointing at one of the other runners, "She looks slow, I think we can beat her!" she said, perhaps a little too loudly. The race started and the pack of runners set off around couple of gentle switchbacks. However the terrain soon steepened until it was simply too steep and rough to run. At this point the race became a queue of solemn looking people in lycra marching uphill in silence. I soon lost sight of Ed, Julie, and Adam who were at the competitive "A team" end of the Mercian Scale. I was less ambitious – it was obvious that I risked being overtaken by the entire field - all I wanted to do was avoid the shame of last place in the race! I looked back and spotted Chloe a couple of turns below me, but she appeared to be catching up. I had to press on. For the rest of the race, all I did was try to push myself hard enough to keep the asthmatic octogenarian chap behind me off my heels. It turns out that that was actually painful enough!

I do intend on returning to the Nevis Range centre, to repeat the course. However next time I will take the gondola uphill, and take my bike back down. Although this is somewhat unimaginative, I believe it was how the course was (correctly in my view) intended to be used!

* You still need to eat that candle Jules.

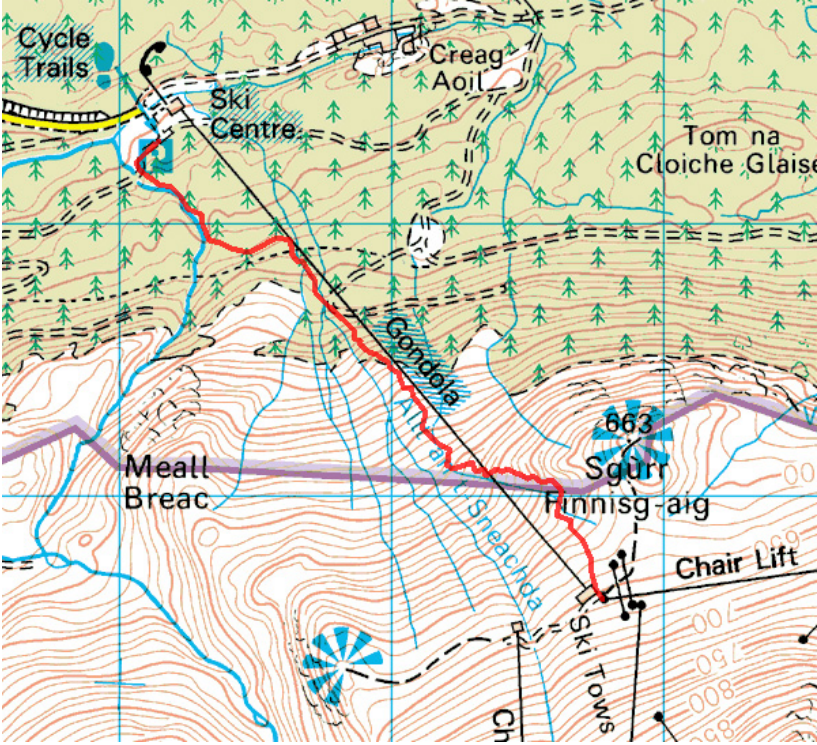


Figure 1: The Race Route (Look at all those s*dding contour lines!)

Position	Time	Mercian	Race achievement
47	31:20	Ed Shaw	Quickest Mercian
78	35:01	Adam Butler	Beat Julie
80	35:21	Julie Taylor	Deprived everyone of a nice New Year's Day lie-in
115	44:08	Fabian Moore	Survived
119	48:21	Chloe Russell	Wasn't last and managed to blag extra soup

Table 1: The Race Results



Adam (I'm not smug) Butler looking mighty pleased with himself



The summit team (if we can call them that) looking pleased to emerge from their ordeal. (L-R) Fabian, Julie, Chloe, Ed, Adam. Well done guys, you smashed it.

You probably already know that Norman Wright, one of the club's founder members who passed away in 2015 left the club a generous donation in his will. Norman's solicitors have now sent Vijay a cheque for £1,317.79. The committee intend to use a lump of this gift to commemorate the club's 60th birthday on Saturday 22nd of July 2017 - put the date in your diary, we'll be putting on food, some drink and a ceilidh and we'll be announcing the results of the Chairman's Challenge. We are sure Norman would have loved the idea.

* clarke
willmott

Mr V Korotane (Treasurer)
c/o Mercian Mountaineering Club
4 Dunchurch Crescent
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
B73 6QN

Our ref: PC063/1760/1763/418277.00001

Your ref:

13 December 2016

Dear Mr Korotane

The Late Norman Wright

Further to our recent email correspondence, I am pleased to confirm that we are now in a position to finalise the distribution of the estate of the late Norman Wright.

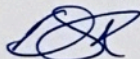
Accordingly, please now find attached our cheque in the sum of £1,317.79 representing your share of the estate, as shown in the enclosed copy of the signed estate account.

I should be grateful if you would please sign and return the enclosed form of receipt for our records.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely



Felicity Rackstraw
Paralegal
Clarke Willmott LLP

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The 2017 CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE

to celebrate the 60th birthday of the
Mercian Mountaineering Club

Your goal is to collect and log as many points possible between the 3rd of January and the summer party on 22nd of July, where you can submit your form to demonstrate your awesomeness and perhaps even be crowned the winner.

There is no "I" in team, but there are 5 in "individual brilliance" (Tom Morris, 2010)

Challenges need to be completed individually except cooking, where you can split the points with another member. The white number shows the points you get for completing a challenge. Do something once and bag the points. Yellow numbers denote a maximum, where you can repeat something more than once. Fill in the grey letter-boxes with details of your completed challenges and then work out your subtotals, and then your grand total.

meets

Attend a meet 5 20

I had a splendid time at (list meets):

Cook a meal on a meet 10

I whipped up a feast of:

Do the morning tea run 1 10

I got one measly point for each cup I served to their bedsides (hut/no. cups):

Travelling to a meet with a different Mercian (2pt each) 2 10

I enjoyed the company of (names):

Be the designated driver back from the pub 10

I was altruistic at (pub/passengers):

SUBTOTAL =

climbing

Climb something in fancy dress 10

I looked ridiculous on the way up:

Make a predawn 'Alpine' start 10

I got up at the crack of dawn to:

Climb a route whose first ascent was made in 1957 10

I was followed in the footsteps of our ancestors when I climbed:

Climb 20 different routes at the wall in a single session 10

I got totally pumped on (date/wall):

Lead a route above your grade 10

I was a total boss on (route/crag/grade (or wall)):

Second a route above your grade 10

I sweated blood and nearly pulled my belayer from their perch whilst climbing (route/crag/grade (or wall)):

Climb a route from Classic Rock or Hard Rock 10

I kicked ass today, and sent (route/Grade):

Spend half a day bouldering 10

It's not all beanies and tea! I saw how the other half really live at (venue/date)

SUBTOTAL =

karma

Pitch somebody else's tent (as well as your own) 5

I did a good deed for (name/size of tent):

Learn a new skill and teach it to another 5

I taught a lesson in (skill/pupil):

Provide home made cake or snacks at the wall or meet 10

I laboured in the kitchen to produce a batch of (food/diners/venue):

Carry a bag of rubbish (not your own) out of a crag or walk 10

I wiped the nose of (crag/hill/date):

Help a newbie 5

I gave something back when I (date/newbie/gesture):

Take the rubbish or recycling away from a hut meet 10

I loaded my car with everyone else's empty alcohol receptacles on (meet):

SUBTOTAL =

selfies

Tea shop selfie 10

I shot myself today (tea shop/date):

Gear shop selfie 10

The staff looked at me like I was a flippin' lunatic (shop/town/date):

SUBTOTAL =

promotions

Write an article for the Faff and submit it to Stew **5**

I put pen to paper and wrote about (meet/route/day-hit/social):

Get the club publicised in printed, audio or digital media **10**

I got us a shout out in/on (media/date):

Post a photo of yourself in action wearing club merchandise **5**



I threw some shapes in my hoodie and posted the shot on social media:

Provide a sketch to the promotions secretary for the 2018 merchandise run **10**

I learned loads from watching Neil Buchanan's Art Attack on ITV, so I got my pencil case out and drew a picture of:

Recreate a photo from a guide book **10**



I got someone to pap me on:

SUBTOTAL =

grand total

I scored:

out of a possible 305 points

walking

Walk 10 miles or more in a day **10**
I blazed a trail up/near/around (hill):

Bag 4 Wainwright's in a day **10**
I was knackered after the second summit, but dug deep and prevailed the day I bagged (Wainwright's x4):

Bag a Munro **10**
Now I understand why there isn't a challenge to bag 4 Munro's in a day. It took me all day just to get to the top of:

Nail a Welsh 3,000 foot summit **10**
I refused to do Elidir Fawr as it is the World's worst hill, so instead I plumped for an ascent of:

Do a graded scramble **10**
I moved quickly and efficiently over rock the day I scrambled up (route):

Recommend a campsite / pub / crag (or hill) combo for meet **10**

I emailed the committee about an undiscovered gem, shhhh, don't tell anyone, it's...

SUBTOTAL =

Notes on daisy-chains

One of the most efficient ways to rack up lots of points is to complete challenges simultaneously. Here's an example.

Go on a meet to North Wales, climb Grooved Arete, top out at Adam and Eve on the summit of Tryfan.

You'd bag 25 points in total because you went on a meet (5 points), climbed a route from Classic Rock (10 points), and also bagged a Welsh 3,000 foot summit.

You could daisy chain even more points in. Were you to descend Tryfan by the North Ridge you could argue that you down-scrambled a route for a further 10 points. Were you to belay a newbie up behind you you'd get 10 karma points. Were you to get up before day-break to avoid queues on the route you'd also get 10 points for an Alpine start (though your fellow Mercians would thank you for not daisy chaining in the morning tea run too).

Notes on photos

Where you see the camera icon you must submit photographic evidence by one of the following (in this order of preference):

1. Posting the photo on the Mercian (not your own) Facebook page.

2. Tweeting the photo and including @MercianMC

3. Emailing the photo to the chairman

HIKE | BIKE | CLIMB