

THE FORTNIGHTLY FAFF

The Periodical Journal of the Mercian Mountaineering Club

SEPT 2017

BORROWDALE

A WAINRIGHT BAGGING
MISSION

PEAK DISTRICT

CLIMBING ON THE GRIT AT
BAMFORD EDGE

MAP FAFF

THE THIRD ARTICLE BY
FABIAN MOORE

60TH BIRTHDAY

A JOLLY GOOD KNEES UP

BANK HOLIDAY

A LAID BACK FEW DAYS IN
SNOWDONIA

SNOWDON SUNRISE

THE QUEST TO BIVVY ON THE
SUMMIT CONTINUES...

NORTHUMBERLAND

WALKING ALONG HADRIAN'S WALL



A word from the editor

Greetings good people, and welcome to the 16th edition of the Fortnightly Faff. It's a bumper issue packed full of photos of the summer seasons. If you want to see all previous editions they are all on the website - fill your boots.

We've had some good meets over the summer, and we've had some wet meets, and we've had some meets that didn't really happen. It's been a mixed bag really. But it looks like a lot of you have been getting out and about on your own trips which is good to see. If you do happen to discover a great new camp site, or climbing venue, or hill to walk up that the club has yet to discover then don't hesitate to drop the meets secretary a line and give him the details. That's exactly what Naomi did after she and husband David had a week long trip to the south west of England, bagging routes in Cornwall and Devon. Who fancies a trip to Dartmoor, to climb on the granite Tors? That's Naomi in action on the front cover.

Let me tell you a few things that are coming up in the next few months. In chronological order we've got:

- 8-10 Sept : The Roaches Meet, Staffordshire.
- 29 Sept - 1 Oct : Dinnas Mawddry Meet, mid Wales.
- 20-22 Sept : The Annual Dinner Meet, Froggatt, The Peak, Derbyshire.
- 10-12 Nov : Llanberris Meet, Snowdonia, Wales.
- 1-3 Dec : Agnes Spencer Meet, Patterdale, The Lake District

You can see all the other meets stretching out into 2018 by looking at the calendar on the club's website; www.mercianmc.org.uk/meets/

Also coming up will be the annual photography contest in October, and the AGM in November, and the Christmas meal in December. The dates for these are to be confirmed, but will be shared in the next few weeks. So there's lot's to look forward to before the end of the year.

Stew.

A typical British Bank Holiday

With a few of the Mercians off to the continent to enjoy some sunshine climbing, PF2, PF3, Joel and I still wanted to get out and enjoy the May bank holiday weekend. Plans loosely were formulated and because I had to work on the Saturday morning we set out from Birmingham later that day with the car filled to the brim of useless things we wouldn't end up using, and ventured to north wales with hope and joy.

Sarah and PF3 enjoying themselves on a rope swing. PF2 provides the propulsion.



Soon our positive thinking faced its first test... the typical traffic that comes with bank holiday weekends! With several hours taken to just get to Shrewsbury we stopped for a supermarket shop, for barbeque items (more positive thinking for the weather) and Joel's mountain of gin and tonic, and we were on our way again. Planning some Chairman's Challenge point ticking with a late afternoon ascent of Tryfan we headed to our first choice campsite in Ogwen, which saw our second test of our positive thinking... it was closed due to a wedding! So we headed to the campsite in Nant Peris instead. As we arrived our third test of positivity came... it started raining! A panic putting-up of tents saw us abandon our thoughts of a late afternoon scramble and we headed to the pub instead.

As the weather got worse we realised a barbeque wasn't going to happen either so we ordered food in the pub and introduced Pierce to the game Scrabble – if there is a board game to be played, I will always find it. When Pierce started to struggle he managed to befriend an older lady sitting next to us who basically played the game for him. With the rain still hammering down we retreated straight to our tents for a restful nights sleep....oh wait.... I then found out that my trusted old tent is no longer waterproof and spent most of the night shuffling my things round and eventually fell asleep at about 3am when the rain stopped.



(L-R) Sarah, Joel, PF3 and Pierce on the walk to Llanfairfechan. Sarah took the selfie but it's such a good one that clearly Joel must have been giving her pointers.

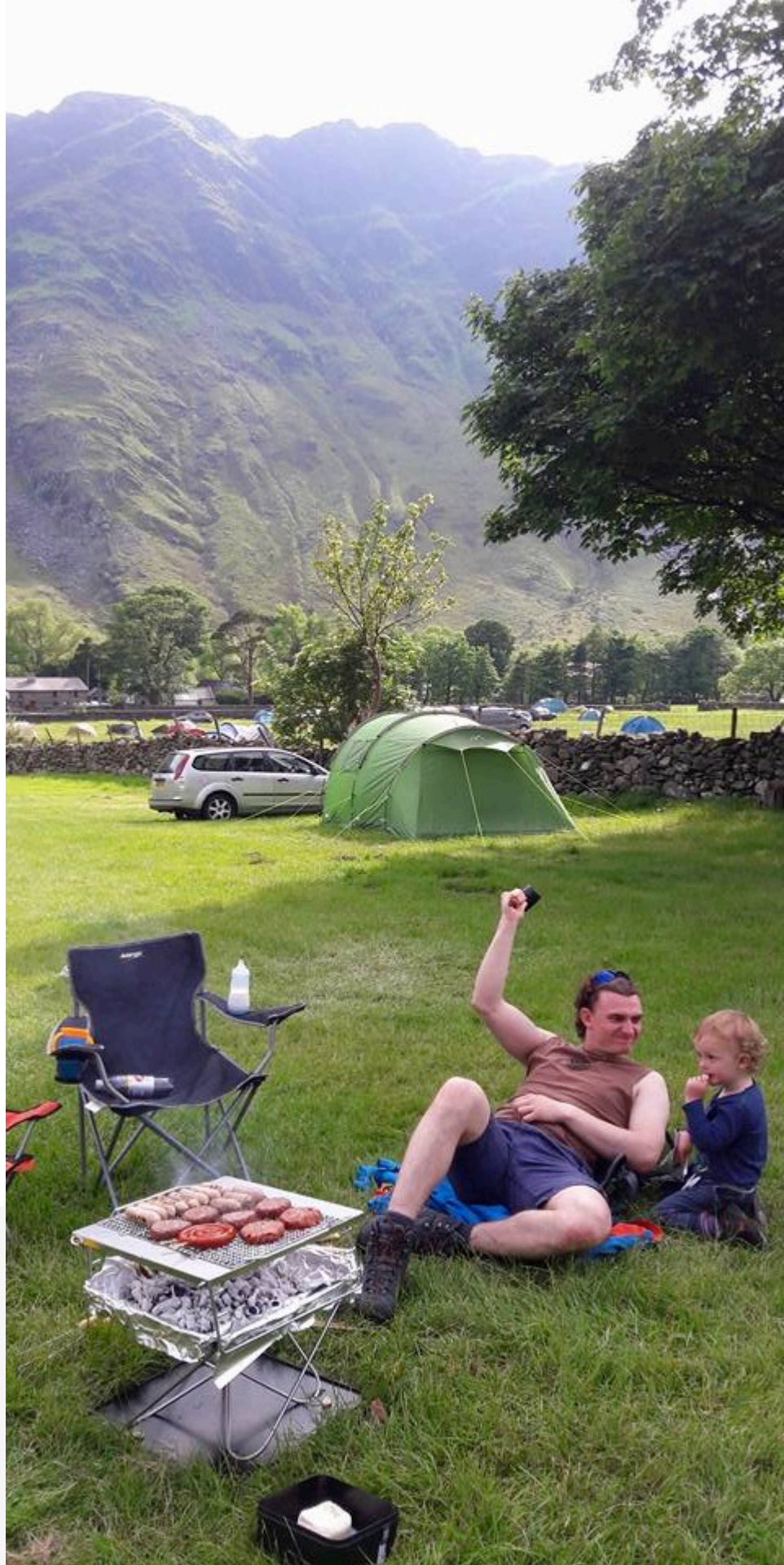
With a new day ahead positive thinking was reset with breakfast and we started planning our day's walk. Hang on. Its Wales. Midges!!!! Breakfast was eaten swiftly and a plan created quickly to head to the coast due to the low cloud in the valleys and do a 12 mile walk to Llanfairfechan in search of a tea room for more Chairman's Challenge points.

Here we actually managed to see out our plan with a fantastic walk with a tree swing find and some time on the beach with a well deserved tea and cake at a tea room. Walking back little PF3 started to tire and with him asleep in the baby carrier we finished our walk and headed back to the campsite to try doing our barbeque plan again. The clouds started lifting and we lit the coals, but of course with stillness comes more midges. We checking the weather forecast for Monday and with it being wet we decided to bail on our long weekend, leaving on a high.

We took the tents down, ate and escaped back to Birmingham with PF3 and I sleeping all the way back while Pierce and Joel complained about the slow drivers on the A5 and debated UK politics. Despite day 1 not going quite to plan, day 2 more than made up for it.

FF

Joel - "Yes, midges are a problem young Pierce, but this is how you deal with them, you hit them with this big rubber mallet whilst pulling your war face. Now come on Pierce, show me your war face"





Weekend Warriors

Vicki Cox looking very European on a day hit to Doverstone Tor in The Peak. It's a much overlooked crag due to the 45-60 minute walk in, but there are some great routes, including the moorland classic of Great Buttress (HVS 5a), which weaves its way up the overhangs immediately above Vicki's head.

Photo : STEWART MOODY



Weekend Warriors

Pierce Ferris points to the top out on Direct Route (HS, 4c) on Glyder Fach Main Cliff. A great route with an incredible sting in the tail, the last pitch was, by Pierce's reckoning 5a, maybe even 5b due to a loose crucial hold that will likely be gone within a year. Siege tactics were employed.

Photo : STEWART MOODY



Weekend Warriors

Adam Butler in a fantastic position on Via Ferrata Col dei Bois/Degli Alpini (3B) on the Mercian trip to Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomites in June.

Photo : STEWART MOODY

A man with grey hair, wearing an orange t-shirt and dark blue jeans, is climbing a large, dark, textured rock face. He is using his hands to grip the rock and his feet to push off. A black crash pad with a yellow logo is on the ground below him. The background shows green foliage and trees.

Weekend Warriors

Stewart Moody struggling to get off the ground on one of the easiest problems at Cratcliffe in Derbyshire. He described it as “a humbling few hours of climbing on rock with very few holds.

Photo : Vicki Moody

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Snowdon Sunrise Bivvy

Photos by **Stewart Moody**

The fate of the club's first attempt at a Snowdon sunrise bivvy was sealed by a dreadful forecast - nobody went to Wales! Two weeks later and armed with a decent forecast a merry band of Mercians went for it. On Saturday we climbed in Llanberris Pass for the morning, and then, in the late afternoon we packed our bags, had a swift one in the Vaynol, and then headed up to Pen Y Pass. It started well, with Pierce "the Irish Machine" Ferris (pictured) setting a blistering pace despite being weighed down by PF3, their bivvy gear, food, water and two bottles of Doom Bar. As we passed Snowdon's Trinity Face on the PYG track, the clag came down and Adam made the mistake of going online and looking at the forecast... things had changed for the worse.





(L-R) Vic, Lou and Adam looking quite pleased as they head away from the Pen Y Pass car park.

"Hmm, where did the sun go, and why is the air so heavy and damp? Things will improve, I'm sure of it".



(L-R) Adam, Pierce, and PF3. It's not raining, but everyone is certainly starting to get wet.



Near where the PYG track meets the tourist path. Adam has dropped the bombshell that's the forecast has changed and it is now due to rain all night. That said, PF3 is clearly loving every minute of it. As well he might, being carried up!



It's 10pm and raining as we reach the summit. Being sensible people we sack off the bivvy and brew tea and heat up some milk for PF3 before heading down.



Whilst most of us just want to hit the road, Lou forces us to pose for a photo at the side of the cafe. The camera lies; it's darker than it looks.



We head back down to Pen Y Pass the same way we came up.



The never ending slog down the Miners Track seems endless. Head torches light the way.

BORROWDALE

MEET

7-9 July 2017

When the first 60th anniversary camping meet was cancelled I was gutted. I'd carefully planned it so that I could do the Snowdon walk, bivvy and, most importantly, tick the Alpine Start aspect of the Chairman's Challenge and still participate in Tradfest. Seeing my despair, and looking at what left I had yet to do, David came up with this idea that we could venture up to the Lakes, bag 4 Wainwrights and then drive up to Scotland to bag a southerly Munro, such as Ben Lomond. We could even fit in an Alpine start. How stupid can you get? I dismissed it. A couple of weeks later I booked a long weekend that coincided, by chance, with the Mercian meet to Borrowdale. Yep, this 'for fun' thing had become an obsession.



After weeks of planning we devised a route where 4 Wainrights could be found within reasonably easy walking distance: Cat Bells (451m), Maiden Moor (576m), High Spy (653m) and Castle Crag (290m – and according to Wikipedia, the only Wainright below 1000 feet). These 4 fells lie above Grange in Borrowdale, just south of Derwent Water and Keswick. We'd do that on the Friday, climb on Saturday and head to Scotland on the Sunday.

Unfortunately things didn't go quite to plan. Instead I headed up to Borrowdale by myself on the Friday morning as David was not well. The weather forecast was not great for Friday but thankfully I pitched my tent in the dry. I also took the opportunity to do a recce walk from the campsite at Stonethwaite to Grange. The weather is fine I told Vijay by text, just a little drizzle, hoping that he wouldn't be put off from driving up. Fine drizzle turned into heavy drizzle that just persisted for my entire 20,000+ step walk. It wasn't pleasant and there are no showers at this campsite. Adam was quite right in his description, cold and cold water. My recce did do a few important things: built my confidence in map reading, found the path for the Saturday, established that the pub was within walking distance (unfortunately no opportunities for bagging more points for being a designated driver) and I also found a café. When I got back to the campsite, Vijay and Pierce (with young Pierce too) were setting up their tent. "I hear you've picked out a nice long walk for us" Pierce mentioned. Phew, I wasn't going to do this on my own. "What time are we setting off?" they both asked. "When I wake up" was my response.

Saturday morning came and it was cloudy. Where was the fine weather that we were promised? Was it just another false promise from the weather folk? With lots of daylight ahead of us we didn't rush to get up. Amandeep appeared from nowhere, having arrived around 3am and luckily finding Pierce and Vijay's tent. We did wonder if she regularly camped out in the porch of tents belonging to strangers? We set off at 10am. Around 10.10 we stopped to give parent Pierce a break



From carrying child Pierce. And so the pattern was set for the rest of the day. We would redefine 'Team A'.

Using my new found confidence in map reading we took the wrong path up towards High Spy. As we gasped up the hill, we found ourselves surrounded by fell runners. What the <****>? As we approached the first motorway we checked with some other walkers and found our way to the correct path. Well, I learned something that day. An initial false summit before High Spy and we stopped to have lunch. Child Pierce was exhausted from his walking and fell asleep on the rock. Bless him. We walked onto the proper summit of High Spy, then across to Maiden Moor. These are pretty established walking routes so getting lost wasn't likely but I used lots of opportunity to improve my navigation skills. Cat Bells was a popular peak but then given how accessible it is it wasn't surprising. Just be warned that it isn't peaceful but, at least it's not as bad as Snowdon.

Descending from Cat Bells towards Grange we all dreamed of beer/ice cream/cold drinks. No one was really paying attention to the fact that we had been in blazing sunshine all day and that we were all sunburned (tut tut). The previous day's recce came in handy as I steered us towards the café that I found and we had a break. Next stop Castle Crag. Not really realising where it was, we nearly missed it. It is a bit of a slog up to it but it is so worth it for the views. It reminded me of walking through the Llanberis slate quarries, probably because it is a slate quarry. Bored with my navigation, Vijay and Pierce found the path down to Rosthwaite and eventually back to the campsite. We all agreed that it had been a type 1 (with elements of type 2 for the uphill slogs) fun day. The following day's promise of going climbing didn't materialise as the A team overslept (it had been a long day and I clocked up 44, 000 steps) and were hungover. Still so much to see and do and I can't wait to go back.





60th Birthday Party, Corris

Photos by **Stewart Moody**

Naomi Walker looking suitably pleased after winning the 2017 Chairman's Challenge. Naomi won by the narrowest of margins, with Sarah Laight hot on her heels in second place - it couldn't have been closer! The announcement of the Chairman's Challenge results was only one of many fun events to take place on the club's 60th birthday party meet at the Corris Independent Youth Hostel in mid Wales. The meet was heavily subsidised by the kind donation that Norman Wright left to the club, and the committee ask you to join them in remembering Norman and his kindness.

Saturday morning, 8am, and Tom Morris is hard at work in the kitchen cooking sausage and egg rolls for everyone



The drive from Corris to the car park at the foot of Cadair Idris where many folk went walking for the day. (L-R) Helen Colson, Emma King, Becky Nicholson, Tom Morris, Stewart Moody.



(L-R) Duncan Simpson, Malcolm Imhoff, Murray Papworth, Nick Tulley, and Mike Hogg enjoying the keg of Enville Ale in the afternoon sunshine.



Lou distributed the new club t-shirts featuring a special edition club logo on the front and Khyati Patel's 60th birthday drawing of Peter Nielsen on the back. (L-R) Louise Bullock, Tom Morris, Fabian Moore, Julie Taylor, Stewart Moody.



(L-R) Maggie Sweet, Clive Sweet, Karl Stewart, Duncan Simpson, Lynn Taylor.



It's Saturday night, which means it's curry time. (L-R) Jane Gilmour, Harry Conway (of Mercia), and Andy Armstrong.



The ceilidh begins and there are far too many folk in this shot to mention to by name. Needless to say that for many it was the highlight of the weekend.



A big thank you to David Simmonite for scuttling up a ladder, ably assisted by hostel owner Michael, and shepherding everyone into shot to get what might be the biggest group photograph in the history of the Mercian Mountaineering Club. It was great to see so many folk kitted out in the 2017 club t-shirt.

In approximate order from left to right we have Becky Nicholson, Lynn Taylor, Andy Armstrong, Naomi Walker, Sarah Laight, Karl Stewart, Ned Redmore, Adam Butler, Vicki Moody, Tom Morris, Harry Conway, Alan Hardy, Mike Hogg, Anna Flemming, Rabia Islam, Malcolm Imhoff, Geoff Taylor, Fabian Moore, Julie Taylor, Helen Colson, Simon Dulku, Duncan Simpson, Maggie Sweet, Clive Sweet, Jane Gilmour, Joel Taylor, Brian Carter, Pauline Carter, Jim Leavy, Louise Bullock, Stewart Moody, Nick Tulley, Vicky Higgins, and Joe Norris.

SMILE EVERYONE



Bamford, Pindale

Photos by **Stewart Moody**

So, the Llangollen meet didn't quite pan out, did it! The forecast was rubbish, and a plan-B was desperately needed. Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Adam stumped up a Peak District based alternative based at Pindale Farm Camp site in the Hope Valley. Folk did their own things on Saturday and pitched up at the camp site in the later afternoon sun for a BBQ and beers whilst contemplating the big questions that always need answering, such as "where are we going to climb tomorrow". Bamford was chosen for it's proximity and (hopefully) lack of crowds. Here is a shot of Adam on perhaps the hardest HVdiff on grit. A few moments after this shot was taken he admitted defeat.





BBQ and beers on Pindale Farm campsite.
(L-R) Adam Butler, Vicki Cox, Julie Taylor.



Vicki enjoying a bit of rope faff on top of Bamford Edge. It was cold but sunny. And we bumped into Ben Moon (top climber) who, halfway up a route, realise he had no quickdraws, "Tut-tut Ben, tut tut".

MOUNTAIN-FAFF

Cutting-edge photojournalism from our intrepid reporter **Fabian Moore**
Starring **Adam Butler**, **Anta Misina** and **Julie Taylor**

*July 2017, Somewhere in Scotland,
we find some Mercians on a bold
mountain adventure...*

Where are
we then?

Erm...

I can't rely
on these
muppets...

I think we
need to
open it up
more Adam!

I'll get my
neatly folded
map out...

Anta, is it
the right
way round?

Yep...there
we are.

Did you
fold this
Map
Adam?

What a
mess!

Why
couldn't
you fold
the map
neatly like
Julie did?



Now then,
where are
we?

Beats
Me!



Do you
want me
to show
you?



Just a
little bit
to the
left
Adam

Ah I see.
There we
are!



Right...
help me fold
this back up
Anta

Who is that
laughing?



FABIAN !!
Have you been
taking photos
THE
WHOLE TIME !?!?



At least people will
see what faff I
have to put up
with!

Northumberland Meet

Photos by Louise Bullock, Vicky Higgins and Stewart Moody

Ok, so those of you who were there will know that Vic didn't actually go on the Northumberland meet. But she was there the weekend before to recce of the crags, including East Woodburn which features in this photo. And this is the only picture that the Editor of The Faff could find of recent trips to the north-east of England that was of the resolution required to occupy a full page. So without further ado, lets see some photos that were actually taken on the meet.



(L-R) Julie Taylor, "Scottish" Bob Ellis, Adam Butler's Man Leg, and Adam Butler, on Hadrian's Wall.



(L-R) Malcolm Imhoff, Adam Butler, Bob Ellis, Sarah Laight, Vicky Higgins, Roland Clark, Julie Taylor, Lynn Taylor under the Robin Hood tree.



Another group shot courtesy of Louise Bullock.





Adam Butler strikes a pose at the Winshields Farm Campsite, home for the weekend.



Nice views of Hadrian's Wall and the wide open spaces of England's north-east.



A Mercian meet just wouldn't be the same without a ride on a steam train.

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