

CHAIRMAN'S T(W)ALK

Welcome to the Crux, the official organ of the HMC. And a fine organ it is too!

A reminder to all to go to the AGM if you can. It is really pain free, you just put your hand up a few times and drink a beer and I promise you will not be coerced onto the committee. We try to run the club for the members, and we have a number of people on the committee that you can speak to, to have your views aired. Someone asked what the "walkers Rep" did on the committee. I replied, exactly as it says on the tin... he represents the walkers (I was going to put he/she, but that would be unfair on Geoff, who doesn't look like a he/she at all). Similarly we have a climbers rep, and a chairman, and at present I am a man and I sit on a chair. Which is nice.

I also keep the peace, ask people to NOT throw food at the Bangers and Mash Meet and other important things, that are just too detailed to go into in the space available! And if I did tell you, then you would all know, and information is power.

The Christmas dinner was a success, the new year, January and February Meets were all full and the next Meet in Scotland is going to be popular.

The number of keen mountaineers/walkers is growing, with a trip to Majorca organised and a trip to Switzerland in the summer to whet everyone's appetite.

FREE MEMBERSHIP.* Pay the HMC £12, you get free associate membership of the BMC, a discount at Cotswold and Countryside which you can easily save your membership money. This crux is also sponsored by Countryside and would be pleased to have us fondle their gear.

**shopping is a dangerous sport and should only be undertaken by those who look like they can afford it.*

So, remember, talk to your committee, and if you want to talk to someone about chairs, then you know the man.

Happy mountaineering
Bill Burt

Edwards Brothers spotted in pub shock!



Club members could not believe their eyes last weekend as the Edwards Brothers quite literally walked into a pub and sat down at the bar.

After shock

The unprecedented event happened in the Lake district at the Newfield Inn. The stunned landlord said 'I have no idea who the two men are, they just came in and ordered two pints'.

To Absinthe Friends

Other club members were even more stunned at the revelation, one recent member remarking 'I had no idea they didn't normally come to the pub'. So intense was the frenzy caused that another club member managed to photograph the event.

A COLD NIGHT IN

We had been discussing the possibility of staying in a snow-hole over the New Year Cairngorm trip for some weeks, and now the decision,

'Creagh Meaghaigh?'

'Lochnager?'

'Two nights?'

'No one will be enough'

'I'll come...'

The comments went on.

There was only one thing for it. Geoff and myself sat down and thought of a suitable, route and announced our plans, there was only one other taker out of the original group, Phil Cherry who was going to join us for one night.



Gary and Geoff hole-hunting

On the morning of the 2nd of Jan 2002, at 0700 we were in the car and ready to go. We only had to pick Phil Cherry up from the other chalet. Phil loaded his gear into the car and I tried to pull away. Nothing. Oh Poo! The handbrake must have frozen on again we were now holding up the Lyn, Adrian, Pete and party. The car was blocking their way, they were going out to the northern corries to do some climbing and an early start was essential. An ominous start.

A potentially disastrous day was narrowly avoided, a bit of push and shove got the car going on. THREE wheels. Dho! As

soon as I was on the snow cleared road the wheel released itself and off we went. Phew!

From the Ski centre we tracked SSW over snow covered ground trying to follow a vague path towards the northern corries, occasionally stumbling around and falling knee deep into drifts. As we neared the corries the wind picked up we were walking straight into it, spin drift stinging our eyes and distorting our vision. This, combined with the terrain underfoot made this hard going.

We continued up onto the plateau trying to find somewhere in the lee of the wind for lunch. No such luck. We stopped briefly for a snack. It was very cold minus 8 to minus 12. plus the wind chill. Three and a half hours from the ski centre we reached a top at 1169m just north of Ben Macdhui. From here we veered SW and descended steeply into the Lairig Ghru. As we neared the bottom we could see a number of potential drifts which could be our home for the next two nights.

We identified a suitable spot and started digging. This was a first for all three of us and luck was on our side as the drift was about 3m deep.

We worked from two entrances and in a couple of hours we had a comfy shelter, high enough at its highest point for Geoff to stand up. At 5pm we were inside and cooking dinner and with nothing much to do, in bed by 6.30pm. I woke a number of times during the night and thought we had over slept.

'Geoff what s the time?'

'Uhhg! Er? 8 o'clock'

'Only 8 o'clock. Is that all? I new I hadn't slept well'

'Not 8 o'clock in the evening, 8 o'clock in the morning. We've been in bed for nearly fourteen hours, time to get up.'

By 9am we were ready to set off for the day, we said our farewell to Phil who was

heading back to Aviemore. The sky was relatively clear so we headed east through knee-deep drifts in the direction of Braeriach and started up the west-ridge. As we approached the top of the ridge the wind speed increased, spin-drift stung our eyes and we donned our goggles. Near the shoulder of the ridge in very gusty winds we struggled to put on crampons then set out towards the summit. We had great difficulty standing up and within 10m decided to turn back. We struggled over the brow and made a hasty retreat back to the valley and the comfort of the snow-hole. We spent the afternoon improving the hole, the ceiling had sagged a little and needed to be supported by ski poles. Another early night.



Gary builds a home for two

By 8am the next morning we were packed and ready to leave. The cloud was starting to build from the south and was glowing red as the sun rose, the moon was still high in the sky and was reflecting on the snow giving it a surreal, silvery sheen. Following the Lairig Ghru north past the pools of Dee we scrambled over rocks bearing east towards the Chalmaine gap from where we could see the ski station. Th wind had displaced most of the snow so the going was relatively easy and within 6hrs we were on the bus heading back to Aviemore and a much needed shower.

Ed's little column

Bangers & Mash, Christmas Parties, Annual Dinners, Fondue Evenings. What more could you possibly want from a mountaineering club? Why, we've even added a cookery section especially for our female members by our very own Naked Chef, who shall remain clothed for obvious reasons. Seriously, our Meets are so popular that it is essential you book and pay early. Even the Scottish trips get fully booked these days. So book early to avoid disappointment. This happy bunch enjoyed Arolla in the Alps so much they are returning this summer, this time to Saastal valley and is bound to be popular so see Ann Peden for details.

Bill

Bill Marsh (Politically incorrect) Editor



— Sketches of España —

Cast (in order of appearance) Lyn Dodds, Sheri Waddle, Pete Calahan, Adrian Jones, Ian Gibbon, Denise Morgan, Rupert Priestnall

Subject Matter - Foreign rock climbing

Language - Spanish: Infrequent and mild

Sex / nudity - None available

Violence - None necessary

Weather - Scorchio!



The cast from left to right

2001 saw the sequel to last year's long weekend on the rocks. The cast had changed slightly from the original, as Pete Durkin had failed to find a job that supplied sufficient holiday vouchers to cover the trip and so was replaced by a different kind of Pete: Calahan. Ian and Denise also joined us this year to bring the total to a nice odd number.

My limited experience of air travel meant that I spend valuable dollars in the airport bar before realising that alcohol would be administered free of charge on the plane. This also went for the food, which made my carefully prepared sandwiches redundant, especially as everyone else had decided to eat before flying, thus releasing extra rations.

The following day dawned on a gloomy breakfast. The country of oranges provided us with weak squash, somehow they had also got hold of Safeways savers cornflakes, which were washed down with a watery liquid that was allegedly milk. The weather however was lovely, as it would be for the next three days. We headed off for the crag full of sugar and artificial colours. Our first venue was a crag out in the hills whose name I forget now (I probably never knew anyway). I believe in taking a largely passive interest in the locations and names of things and so will be unable to reference any climbing spots for the reader to check up on.

It was drippingly hot by the time we started to climb. Almost unable to cope in the heat I chalked and sweated my way up the first route, a 6a I think (*surely 4+? - Ed*). Relatively, for the rocks we visited this first crag was quite well populated. Just down the road was a refugio stocked with cold beer which probably acted as a good magnet. At the bottom of the crag we came across a wandering American. To begin with, it seemed like he was with the other party but as it turned out later, as we sipped beer in the refugio, he was there on his own. I think the drill was as follows: find a climbing group, lull them into a false sense of apathy with spiritual-traveller type language combined with implausibly sycophantic examples of their nations greatness; then, tie-on quick and hope they are too polite to refuse!

But I'm digressing from the trip. Back in Benidorm, the hotel redeemed its' breakfast performance with an all-you-can-eat extravaganza. Out of general principle I felt it my duty to try and eat enough for three, but was embarrassingly beaten back by high fat contents. Unable to get fully into the drink after such a weighty feast, I made the best of the walk into town in the hope that it would clear some space for the cervessas. (*Stick to English, Rupert, I nearly took his to be a mis-spelling of crevasses! - Ed*) We found a good bar on the sea front with an open frontage and extremely good taste in music. The sea was calm and the sand clean and soft, it was a pity we never got any daylight hours on the beach - but we weren't here for that.



Sheri and Lyn - lost in Spain

It's quite unnatural to be in a country that's over 20 degrees in December, but that's just what we had to climb in. The settings were nice too, traditional rugged Spanish countryside peppered with olive groves and orange trees. The other interesting feature is that changing protection, ranging from shiny new bolts every meter to machine nuts drilled straight into the crag with three links of chain behind it. If the British were to endorse bolts on crags these would be the compromise.

Same time next year?

Lentils and leeches: the quest for Mardi Himal

by Debbie Smith and Albert Sillwood

‘What’s that on your leg Debbie?’ ‘What....aaaaaaarrgh!!!’ The brown slug-like creature was firmly attached and from its size was clearly well into its meal. Always eager to help a lady in distress, Julian tried to grab the offending creature but he was no match for it. Our Sirdar, Prem came to the rescue and scraped it off, leaving everyone checking themselves for any more unwanted visitors in between laughing at Debbie. Day 2 and we’d arrived in leech country, where warm western blood was top of the menu. However he who laughs last...although we spent several days in leech territory, the creatures quickly decided that men were tastier. Dave and Eddie suffered but top favourite was Harry, who even found one in his sleeping bag...so he was Harry the Leech for the rest of the trip.

This was just one of many formative experiences on October’s HMC trip to Nepal. Something should have told us it would be an interesting trip when Gary, after making most of the arrangements, declared himself unable to go due to work commitments. Funnily enough he was still in Hertfordshire when we got back ...did he know something we didn’t?

So Gary handed over to Geoff, and the team of Dave Allen, Eddie Cornell, Geoff Deans, Julian Macdonald, Harry Marshall, Albert Sillwood and Debbie Smith met at Heathrow not quite sure of what we’d let ourselves in for. First challenge was to test the new security arrangements, and Albert managed to have his penknife confiscated, much to his disgust. To cheer himself up, he proceeded to try to empty the plane of white wine, accompanied and soon surpassed by Geoff who was taking his group leader duties very seriously.

Kathmandu is a small airport where you suddenly emerge from the terminal into a hot, humid night to find yourself surrounded by masses of people all offering accommodation, taxis or to sell you something. We managed to spot the Kanjiroba Trekking board in the crowd and headed towards it trying to ignore all the other offers. Our Sirdar Prem welcomed us with garlands of marigolds around our necks, then our bags were whisked away and we chased after them to squeeze onto a battered minibus for the trip to our hotel in Thamel, the shopping and eating centre of Kathmandu for tourists.

As we were checking in, we found a note from Phil Whitehurst (currently going round the world for 17 months) saying he’d just arrived and would meet us for a drink in Sam’s Bar ‘opposite our hotel’. After sorting out the next day’s plans and some currency,

the six ‘lads’ headed into the dark streets and tracked down Sam’s bar. No Phil, so after a beer they headed back to the hotel for a late dinner. We later discovered we’d missed him by just 10 minutes! Debbie meanwhile braved potholed streets, traffic chaos and manic taxi driving to head for another hotel and collect gear left by an expedition that had just departed. The Ibuprofen they left would come in useful...

First target was Pokhara, which is 6 hours from Kathmandu by bus. We wanted to start trekking ASAP, so somehow forced ourselves up to meet Prem and team in the lobby at 7am. The minibus couldn’t get up the street to our hotel so was neatly parked on the local rubbish dump alongside a cow searching for scraps. En route we stopped for the first of many dhal bhats - lentil curry and rice - at a riverside restaurant which we later discovered to be owned by one of the owners of the trekking company. Family ventures are the norm in Nepal! The monsoon was just ending so the river was very full and fast-flowing and brown with silt. Women were breaking stones by the side of the road; battered lorries drove down to the river’s edge to collect gravel and larger rocks.

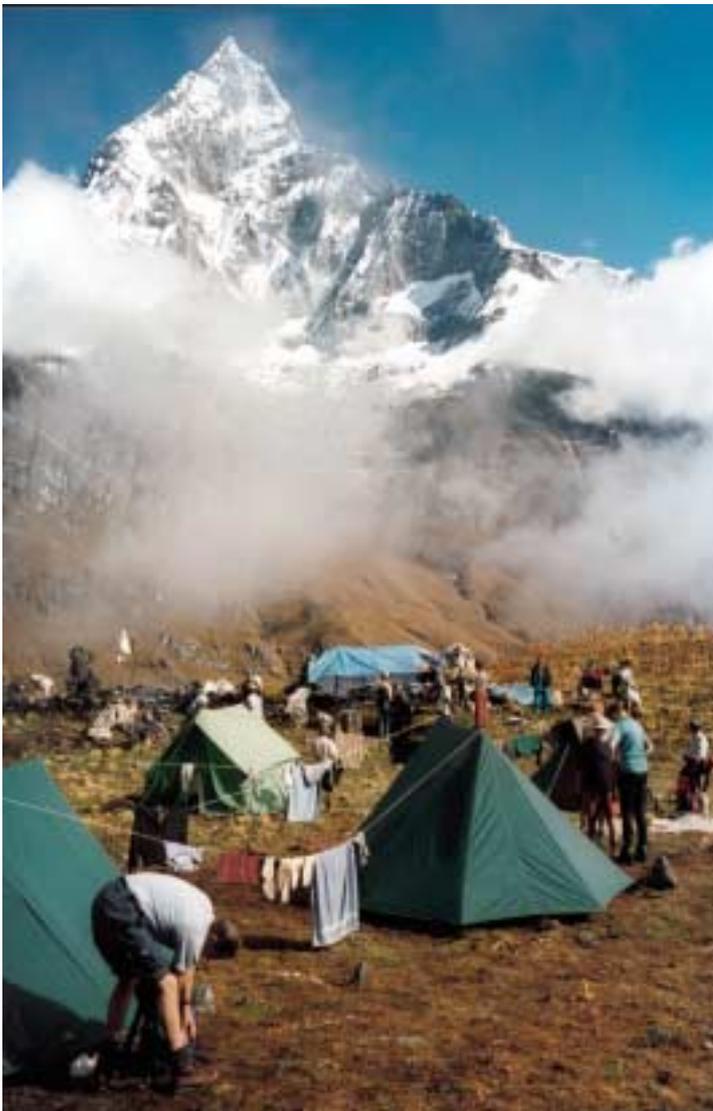
We continued through Pokhara up the western highway to Hyangja, where the bus turned off on a track through fields until it could go no further. A 24-man team of porters, kitchen boys and Sherpas takes some organising and for a while all we could do was watch the fun, but eventually we began walking. At the river we had our first encounters with Nepali bridges, including one of three round, wobbly bamboo poles, and then headed off through paddyfields for our first campsite at Ghachok. Not far, but we still managed to lose Albert—he eventually turned up ahead of us, much to the confusion of our Sherpas.

Our first dinner was just concluding with a kettleful of coffee mixed with local whisky when we discovered the disadvantage of camping near a village: a group of local women arriving to dance for us, expecting a donation for their village in return. Fortunately heavy rain intervened, but the women were not deterred - they returned the next morning. After giving us each a garland of marigolds, and putting a red paste dot on our forehead, they sang while one lady danced with each of us in turn. An interesting experience - and one we decided not to repeat! So Geoff politely told future visitors that we didn’t want to dance and offered them a donation to go away. He has a way with women...

Our first full day on trek dawned clear, giving us our first views of Machapuchare (6993m) in the distance, with our peak Mardi Himal (5588m) just to its left along a snow-covered ridge.

But the monsoon hadn't quite finished, and as we gained height, it clouded over and started to rain. This was the point where we spotted little brown slug-like creatures which moved along in a concertina motion, crawling up boots and hanging off leaves trying to attach themselves to passing objects - leech country! Just in case we hadn't seen them, Prem took us on an overgrown track through wet bushes and trees which turned out to be full of the little beasts...Someone suggested that we should keep an eye on the legs of the person in front of us and alert them to danger - it made for interesting walking!

The days soon settled into a pattern. We were woken by Dipak, one of the kitchen boys, with a cheerful shout of 'morning! bed tea'. Almost before we'd replied he was unzipping the fly sheet and seeing how many spoonfuls of sugar he could persuade us to have in our mug of tea. A bowl of washing water each followed, which most of us used, then we packed our kitbags either quickly or with lots of faffing depending on individual style, so they and our tents could be made into porter loads and the porters begin their journey while we ate breakfast. Sometimes it was cereal,



sometimes 'rice porridge' which was basically rice left from the night before - not too bad with lots of sugar and honey. This was followed by some combination of eggs and chapatis. Typically there was then a race to the toilet tent before it disappeared - Julian was lucky not to have it taken down around him one day - before we set off.

The weather was usually good in the mornings, but clouded over by lunchtime. We met up with the kitchen team for lunch, and either continued to our destination or stopped if the kitchen team told Prem this was the best site for camping. It was quickly

clear who was in charge! Once we stopped for the day, there was time to read, doze or explore, drink a kettleful of tea and eat biscuits before dinner in the mess tent with candles for illumination and head torches ready to check boots ready to repel leeches. The cooks did an excellent job on their thundering primus stoves, even producing cakes twice during the trip. Most of the time the meals started with vast amounts of soup, followed by rice, curry, dhal and vegetables and then a sweet. Dipak constantly encouraged us to have extra helpings, and took a personal pride in making us eat seconds, thirds and fourths

Several days in we reached Mardi Himal Base Camp at 4120m, arriving shivering in cold heavy rain. Dry clothes helped and the kitchen boys covered a stone walled enclosure with tarpaulins to make a cosy shelter, much to the envy of the porters who quickly gathered round. There is a clear hierarchy for trekking staff and the kitchen boy is a job to aspire to.

The following day was spent acclimatising - most of us walked up the ridges surrounding the camp and enjoyed the views until the clouds descended yet again and it was time to think about our attempt on Mardi Himal. At our usual evening meeting after dinner, Prem announced in his casual manner that he had not done the peak before and did not have any crampons. We then discovered that the climbing guide we had hired for \$300 had not done the peak before either! After much discussion Eddie, Debbie and Albert decided to go up the 1000m to High Camp and then return to Base Camp, whilst Geoff, Julian, Harry and Dave stayed at High Camp before making an alpine start to attempt the peak.

Next morning dawned clear and sunny with a frost on the tents. This was the morning Albert announced 'I did it seven times last night' - lucky man! Those staying high packed up minimum gear and we began a long traversing walk across rocks and grass to the bottom of the rock gully that led up to High Camp. We were feeling the effects of altitude now - general fatigue and heavy breathing all round, Geoff had blurred vision and Julian was feeling spaced out and disorientated. A dose of diamox and lots of water helped and we carried on. Albert decided to stay at the bottom of the gully next to a big rock, got out his sleeping bag and bivvy bag and settled down for a nap. Finally we realised why he was carrying such a big rucksack.

The rest of us carried on plodding slowly upwards until finally, as we approached the snow line, we saw tents, heard voices and knew we'd arrived. After a hot drink Eddie and Debbie said farewell and headed down in search of Albert. We soon found him but the traversing back seemed to go on for ever before we reached the short sharp ascent into camp. 1000m of ascent followed by 1000m of descent make for a tiring day at these altitudes. The evening meal was quiet with just three of us, and it was an early night.

The next morning we walked up the ridges around the camp, admiring the views and looking over towards Mardi Himal until Albert spotted Geoff and Jules heading back towards camp. It was far earlier than we'd expected, so we suspected the news wasn't good and rushed down to hear the news.

The original plan had been to begin descending immediately, but after Prem's accident we decided to stay until the next day. We provided Prem with bandages and Ibuprofen and he was soon limping around wearing his Tubigrip with pride!

Next day we started down along a different ridge, which Prem didn't know but the kitchen boys did. Prem's plan was to stop halfway but the kitchen team said there was no water nearby, picked up their loads and carried on down. So off we went, taking the direct route through long tussocky grass with a mixture of groans and laughter as we fell over. It was a long day. The porters had a much worse time and we lost a couple of them until

late into the evening. It later transpired that they'd been also intercepted by Maoist guerrillas en route, but with no ill effects.

We were now back in civilisation and next day descended through the village of Takra to the valley below accompanied by most of the local children who were on their way to school. They chatted away in English, asking 'What is your name?' 'Where are you from?' 'How old are you?' 'Give me a pen.'

So it was down to the river and the first little village shops for many days. A few chocolate bars were purchased to help the local economy. Everything in the shops had to be carried in on peoples' backs, as the main road was at over a day's walk away. No donkeys here. Prem's plan was to stop for lunch, have a swim in the river and relax. But true to form the kitchen boys decided they wanted to carry on and rapidly disappeared into the distance. So we followed them, eventually camping by the river which provided excellent washing facilities for trekkers and porters alike and some body surfing for Eddie. A local man was wandering up and down the river bed selecting suitable stones, knocking off the ends and shaping them into stones of house walls, all with the aid of a lump hammer. That night Prem selected two Sherpas as guards for the tents, due to all the locals wandering around in the night despite the pouring rain. We lent them umbrellas to keep the rain off.

After a safe night, we walked down the river valley, through the paddy fields and waded across a river as the suspension bridge had broken. Up the hills on the other side, through more paddy fields to the village of Astam, where we took over the local school playing field. We were a source of great amusement to the children. Julian borrowed one of their books containing drawing of various animals and entertained the assembled mass by acting out the actions and noises of the animals.

The next morning dawned sunny and we descended to the main road to get a bus to Pokhara. Unfortunately there was a bus strike that day, so one of the Sherpas walked a few kilometres up the road and persuaded a local bus driver to take us to Pokhara camp site. We eagerly headed off for our first beers for almost two weeks, so eagerly that Debbie jumped off the campsite wall and

sprained her ankle! But little things like this don't stop the HMC so we carried on and eventually found our happiness at a hotel with a beer garden, cheap beer and - sheer luxury - clean western toilets.

Back at camp the Nepali solution to the ankle was a massage in kerosene. Having endured this with gritted teeth, Debbie reclaimed the Ibuprofen from Prem and asked Harry to practice his bandaging technique. Then it was party time. Geoff and Debbie presented money and beer (if they wanted it) to each of the trekking staff in turn, before the porters started singing and we were soon all dancing with various degrees of style and panache depending on beer and whisky consumption.

Time to return to Kathmandu and after a hairy drive we said goodbye to most of the trekking staff. Prem invited us to his home for dinner, where we met his wife and other members of his family and gained a little insight into life in Kathmandu. After a busy final morning shopping and sightseeing, we were minibused back to the airport where we said our final goodbyes to our Sherpa team. Prem solemnly draped each of us in a ceremonial silk khatak (scarf) as he said goodbye.

Security isn't too hot at Kathmandu airport, but they managed to spot another knife in Albert's hand baggage and confiscate it. He never gives up...at least it gave us something to talk about, as well as the group of tall blond muscular men wearing identical expedition T-shirts which Debbie decided had to be checked out. We found they were a Norwegian Army expedition to Cho Oyu - no-one had the nerve to ask if they'd actually summited.

There was still one final hiccup: at the stop-over in Bahrain, Albert and Eddie decided they had better behave like gentlemen again, and let two nurses go ahead of them in the check-in queue. Unfortunately the nurses then got the last seats on our Gulf Air flight to Heathrow! After much debate Albert and Eddie were transferred to a BA flight, and two hours of chaos ensued before their bags were tracked down - time for others in the party to enjoy a much-needed drink in the café before we finally headed home.



Top dog

No, not one of the trekkers, but a Nepalese sheep dog who befriended us. Day 4 of the trip saw us heading up and up, leaving all the villages far behind us, when we suddenly came into a clearing with lots of sheep, a shepherd, two dogs and a grotty looking shelter. One dog quickly decided that his chance of getting food was better from a part of 30 than from one man, so from then on we had a follower. He was right too, for he got lots of scraps and leftovers, even pinching my soap on one occasion! He managed to eat half but much to our disappointment he didn't foam at the mouth.

Being a male dog, he was partial to visiting Debbie (the only female on the trek), but his advances were rebuffed as were all the other male advances. In the cold and rain he just curled up and went to sleep, his thick coat protecting him. Going up to High Camp he started to come with us and but for a quick kick in the ribs from the Sherpas which sent him back to Base Camp I think



Dog & loo with a view

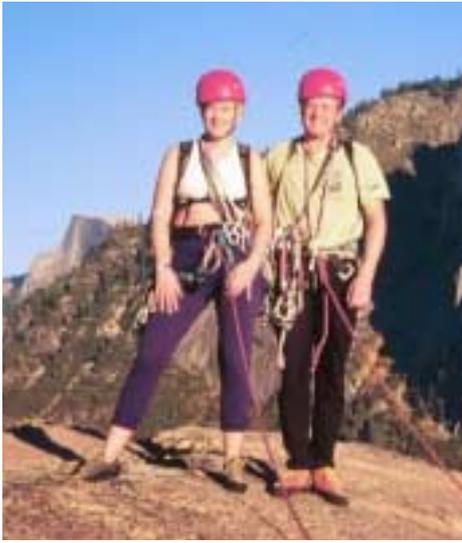
he may well have summited. He did eventually leave us when we got back to the grazing sheep. I wonder what would have happened if we had gone back a different way...

Eddie Cornell

A letter from America

Hi,

Just thought I'd update you on what I am up to these days. Life was pretty disrupted for quite a while when I first arrived here. Everything seemed like pretty hard work - finding an apartment, getting a bank account, buying a car. It is all made much more complicated by



After 6 team-with Scott

the reliance on US records for credit history - so at the moment I am not even entitled to a credit card, which seems pretty amazing!! I am getting by without reasonably well though. Had to sit my driving test again - which seemed really strange. I was actually quite nervous, hoping all those bad habits I have picked up over the years would not surface at the wrong moment. Now I finally have an apartment and a car, and my belongings (ropes, rack etc) have arrived from the UK life can begin properly.

Climbing-wise, I have not been as active as I would like to have been over the last 3 months or so. I have only managed 3 outings onto rock in 3 months. Is that the Carolyn you know?? Well, I suppose it is taking time to meet other climbers, and until I had the car getting around was a major issue, so I

couldn't even climb at the wall. Now I am getting down to the wall a couple of times a week, and have climbed in Yosemite for 2 weekends. I have teamed up with a club called Rock Rendezvous (they do have a website for anyone who is interested, but it is nowhere near as informative as the HMC or TWMC websites). They seem like a good bunch of people, and I am gradually getting my face known, so hope to have a network of climbing partners soon.

Yosemite is a pretty amazing place to climb. The climbing there seems quite hard (apparently Yosemite grades are quite tough) with technical cracks etc. Last w/e I climbed a gorgeous 6 pitch route, stealing the lead of the top 3 pitches, with gorgeous views of the valley, El Cap, Half Dome etc. I seem to be leading about 5.6 here, which is about severe UK grades. Most Americans seem to be climbing quite a bit harder than that, so I am also enjoying being dragged (quite literally in one or two cases) up some harder stuff too. On Sunday, while I was sitting around at the bottom of the crag (having refused to join in on the ascent of a particularly dark looking chimney - yes some things never change), I was alerted to a black bear walking through the trees about 10 metres behind me. Ulp! Luckily it wasn't taking too much notice of us climbers, just padding along on its way.

The social life here is pretty good. There is a fairly solid drinking team here at work, based around a hardcore of Brits. I have been getting to see the odd band here and there (San Francisco is quite good for that kind of thing) and am off clubbing this w/e. I just hope it turns out to be a bit better than the last time I went clubbing here - which was DIRE. Local beers are not too bad actually. I have found one called Petes Wicked Ale that I am pretty addicted to.

Right, must dash as one of my

climbing partners for the night has just stuck his head round the door with a gentle nag for off. Hmm... I'm quite tired tonight, but will give it a go anyway. Desperately in need of a quiet night



Leading-After 6

curled up on the sofa with a good book. Tomorrow maybe.

Hope everything is good back in old blighty. I do actually miss the place. I even miss the rain - last week it rained for the second time since I got here and I actually opened the doors onto the balcony of my apartment so I could



Joshua Tree rocks

listen to it. The wet season is starting nowish though, so I have a bit more rain to look forward to over the next few months. I promise any replies to my e-mail will receive a more personal reply from me! Carolyn Dent

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See the HMC web site for latest Meets / Events details

www.herts-mc.swinternet.co.uk
www.thehmc.co.uk

The Back Page



The Climbers Guide to Puddings and Cakes, (including the updated Sweets supplement)

***Lemon Layer Pudding 75 mins. Severe (1980's - Barbara Gibbon)

This is a delightful little outing which will titillate the novice and expert alike. It is best enjoyed as a short but refreshing finale to the day, particularly if preceded by a more serious undertaking. At Tesco's go straight to the fruit & veg. section and take the 1st lemon, follow on round taking milk, butter, eggs and castor sugar. Turn the aisle at the 'home baking' sign, and take a bag marked 'self raising flour'. Avoiding the checkout if possible, follow the long winding road to gain the kitchen. The main ingredients of Lemon Layer Pudding can now be seen emerging from the carrier bags. Start from anywhere on the large, flat ledge next to the sink.

1. 10 mins. Easy smearing up 2 oz of butter with 4 oz sugar will reach a creamy consistency in an oven proof bowl, (wooden spoon runner). The separated yolks of the 2 eggs can now be quickly incorporated, followed by 2oz of flour and the zest of the obvious lemon. It is possible to find a stance here, but it is usually better to continue straight on by carefully mixing up the well protected half pint of milk, and belay with the juice of the lemon. Which ever option is taken, things will now appear curdled, and a high degree of exposure is often felt at this point. This is quite normal, and in any case becomes unimportant, as the main difficulties now lie ahead.

2. 15 mins. 4a. The whites of the eggs should now be visible in a bowl just off to one side. Gain these and beat until stiff. Strenuous, but not technically difficult, (large whisk runner). This is followed by number of very delicate moves, folding in the egg whites to reach an even consistency.

3. 50 mins. 4b. This pitch contains the crux. Reach for a shallow dish, and stand the bowl in it. Add cold water to the dish to a depth of about 1.5 inches, (possible jug belay). Too much or too little water will make it impossible to gain the desired layers, forcing an escape on to the easier, but far less enjoyable Lemon Sponge (Diff). Finish in a pre-heated, moderate oven (180C).

In all but the worst conditions the top should be firm and slightly golden.

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