

HMC SMASH WORLD RECORD

On the weekend 11/12th May, in an audacious piece of organisational genius, the HMC walked the **WHOLE** 166 miles of the Herts Way in 48hrs. At the same pace they could **WALK** to the **MOON** in **ONLY** 195 years. It involved 15 immensely fit mountaineers, who meet **EVERY** Tuesday at the Sun Inn for tactical discussions on how to cheat **DEATH** on the mountains, often in **FREEZING** conditions, usually after **MANY DOZENS** of **PINTS** have been drunk. The team finally smashed the **WORLD RECORD** for walking the Herts Way, by coming home in 2 minutes short of 48 hours. The Chairman of the HMC said after the epic struggle "It was teamwork what done it." The team, consisting of mainly men and women from Herts, spent hundreds of hours training in North Wales, Scotland, the Alps, and even Nepal to achieve the required fitness. Many of the team suffered many privations in the attempt. Phil Whitehurst, who finished his mammoth 19 months training session in March this year, was spotted covered in mud in Baldock, said "it was better than the Taj Mahal". Eddie, (65), spent many hours convalescing in the Swan Inn in his local village by writing a poem of the adventure, said; "I am glad we broke the record, I hope it will give inspiration to everybody in the world, to show what can be done". A statement we can **ALL** agree with. Phew what a scorcher, HMC, well done.



Albert (left) passes the baton to Phil to the sound of the dawn chorus

Get away from it all Jubilee weekend in Majorca



HMC girls enjoying themselves on a walking holiday in Majorca. (Guess whose knee in foreground. Obvious clue!)

Geoff was far too busy organising hotels, buses, taxis, routes and nine HMC-ers to keep a diary, but if he had, it would have gone something like this:

Thursday

8pm: manage to rendezvous successfully at

Luton. Lucky I called Dave yesterday as he'd arranged a lift to Stansted. Rescue Albert from Malaga check-in (does he know something we don't?) and head for Palma.

1am: How come the girls 'accidentally' get the best room? They have a 2-room suite, while I

have to make do with a z-bed. And I wondered why Debbie was so eager to make the hotel bookings.

Friday

10:30am: bus drops us in Valdemossa, and my expert navigation means we instantly take the right road out of the village. Being a kindly soul, I stop to share my expertise and map with two confused Germans, who turn out to be heading in completely the wrong direction. James is busy 'twitching' -bird spotting to you and me - and over the weekend identifies black vultures, rock pippits and what he thinks is a blue rock thrush. He explains you can identify a chaffinch because it sounds like a fast bowler. Not totally convinced:

1pm: reach the summit of Teix. Great views across to the sea, and we see the local equivalent of the Red Arrows practicing turns and loops. But as soon as the photos are over there are loud demands for food and shade - some people are never satisfied. Don't they realise food comes second to hardcore walking?

3:30pm: heading downhill towards Soller, which we can see below us. The path isn't very well trodden, so Anne leads us into the undergrowth when we discover how tough Spanish grass and thistles are. Fortunately she gets as scratched as everyone else, or I think she'd be lynched.

4:30pm: this T-junction isn't on the map. We turn right but the path ends at a fallen tree. Someone apparently hears me mutter 'looking



'Who said anything about walking?' wonders Debbie

at the map-we could be anywhere', but I'm sure they imagined it. James and I get out our GPSs, but there aren't many satellites around. Back to the junction and the other fork- as I confidently expected it soon heads in the right direction and we're back in the known world. Even so, it takes another three hours to get to Soller. Water bottles are empty so it's time for a cold drink or two.

8:10: find tram station, but the next tram to Port de Soller is at 9pm. Suppose we'll have to wait in the nearest bar. Albert gives the local brew his seal of approval.

9:30pm: collective sigh of relief as we arrive at our hotel. Right on the seafront, balconies with sea view on all rooms -this is the life. Glad we have two nights here.

10:30pm: dinner. Starters arrive and you can cut the silence with a knife as everyone tucks in ravenously. Matt and Christine choose the largest mixed grill anyone has ever seen, and we try to identify the various items of seafood. 3am: sitting outside a seafront bar. Debbie is ecstatic to discover they serve Baileys in buckets not glasses. Think we'd better call it a day while she can still walk unaided.

Saturday

10am: rendezvous for a walk along the coast. Great views and some interesting overhangs on the cliffs. It's really scorchio, so lots of suncream over yesterday's scratches. Matt opts out to sample local café society.

4pm: some people go swimming, but as leader I have to look after their wallets so can't venture in myself. The local bar seems the best place to wait, and it's a good venue for James' bird spotting. We check Matt's paper for the football scores. After the 5th person has said to Christine: 'Did you hear the French result?' her smile starts to slip, but she endures it bravely.

1am: back at the hotel, some ants have invaded

our room. We spray them but can't go back into the room until the fumes die down. The girls next door are snoring already so we seek solace in a quiet bar.

Sunday

9am: split into three parties today. Fast Eddie, Christine and Anne opt for the scrambling route up Massanella. Five of us head over to Lluc and start our ascent from the other side. Albert checks our excess luggage into the monastery before setting out on his own.

10am: pay park fees to the warden and ask about the right hand route on our map. At first he won't admit it exists, but when Matt grills him in a mix of Spanish and Italian he gives in, describing it as 'bad'. Feeling intrepid, we set off. However the path bears no resemblance to the map -it keeps branching off into dead ends - so we retreat and take the other route.

11:30am: Albert stops at a tree with a view for some peace and quiet with his kitchen sink - sorry rucksack - and has just got settled when he hears English voices and the rest of us arrive to disturb him. [Editor's note: a parable about the hare and the tortoise comes to mind!]

1pm: they insist on stopping under the last tree before the summit. The excuse is shade for lunch but radios and phones are out and there's a frantic attempt to get the England football score. Luckily Richard Bailey helps out so we set off again.

2pm: sweating at the summit. It was a hot climb with the sun beating down and reflecting back off the rocks. There's rosemary and juniper everywhere underfoot so the air smells good even if we don't. If this was the 'good' path, I'm glad we didn't take the bad one.

Matt phones Eddie and there's an echo before the phone cuts out. We look down and see the others several hundred feet below us. That isn't where they're supposed to be! Are they coming up or going down? Anne tries shouting but we can't hear her. We look for a route down to them but decide against the climb and retrace our steps.

3pm: reconvene under same tree. On the way down Dave and I saw the Font, so did Matt and James, but Debbie missed it completely! She swears she was following cairns the entire way!

5:30pm: all meet up at the first café. Eddie, Christine and Anne had a long exciting scramble along a ridge and are very happy despite lots more scratches. Swap stories about the inaccuracy of the maps.

8pm: excellent dinner at the one and only restaurant in Lluc. The monastery where we're staying has an 11pm curfew so it's an early night.

Monday

9am: arrange taxis to take us to the start of the track up Puig Tomir. Two groups depart and I collect sandwiches from the café for all of us.

10:15am: oops, looks like the taxi has forgotten to come back. Maybe my directions weren't very clear!

11:15am: finally start walking with Anne and

Christine. The others have left a note to say they've gone on ahead. It's a short sharp ascent with chains on the two steep sections.

12:30: meet the others on the lower summit and share out the food. After lunch they head down, we carry on to the top. Great views, you can see sea all around and look down to our evening destination some 20km away. Back via the forest to the monastery, then bus to Port de Pollensa. Time for a few quick zzzzzs.

6pm: swimming for those who feel energetic, bar for the rest of us. Matt and Eddie come out of the sea dripping blood - no teeth marks though, just underwater rocks.

11:30pm: seafront cafe says no more sangria, we're closing. A few of us find another bar where we can sit outside and reflect on a good few days' walking.

Tuesday

4am: still in bar - where did the last four hours go? Hope Albert didn't lock the room door!

9am: meet Anne in breakfast and she asks if I know my T-shirt is inside out. Women are so fussy about these things. Dave's looking a bit green but cheers up when his English breakfast arrives. Does he realise we've got an hour's bus ride back to Palma?

2.30pm: get off bus at airport. Eddie puts his hand in his pocket and announces his wallet and passport have gone. The two of us head off to check the bus and the café where we had lunch. No joy.

3.15pm: Eddie and Debbie grovel to Easyjet and discover they have a special arrangement with Luton immigration so will let him on board. He checks in and heads for the airport police station to report the theft.

6:30pm: back at Luton. Eddie makes it safely through customs, much to the relief of his wife Carol.



HMC men on a walking holiday. Eddie, Geoff and a knee ponder their next walking holiday. Do I hear Crete?

8pm: phew, back home. Maybe it's time to sample the brandy the others gave me.

10pm: perhaps it wasn't such hard work organising this after all. Maybe we could go somewhere else in the autumn? Log onto the Net!mmm, Crete looks like it has some good walking!

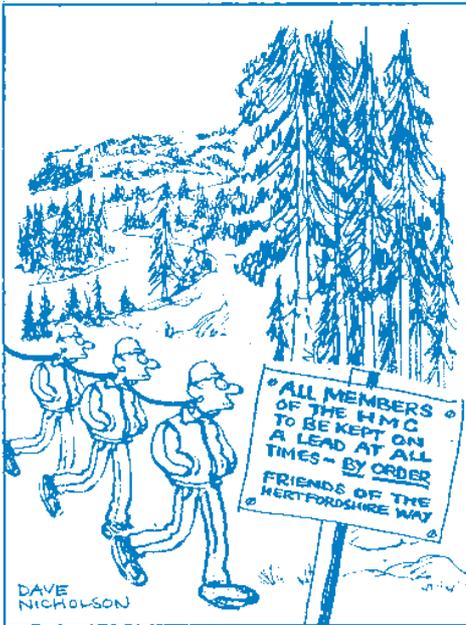
Geoff's Diary ghosted by Debbie Smith, presumably with his permission!

HMC and the HWW

The Hertfordshire Way in a day!
Or in 48 hrs should we say
The task HMC themselves set
Some said was not worth a bet.

Fifteen legs to be led
Volunteers needed Bill said
A short six miles unlit
Or 15 miles for the super fit

Three and half miles per hour
Meant no time to admire the cow
Especially for those walking at night
Who had to take along their own light.



The final pre meeting in The Sun
Was not to be so much fun
After much quenching of thirst
The last leg was to be first.

Richard and Debbie got things rolling
From St Albans to Markyate a strolling
Then Bill picked up the baton, a mobile
For his little canter a, 10 mile.

To the Greyhound at Albury he went
Then to Anne Noon the mobile was lent
With her was Elspeth and Mark
But now it was getting dark

With head lamps and torches aglow
They set a pace far too slow
Finding their way wasn't easy at night
And losing the mobile hindered their plight.

At Bourne their End was near
Geoff Deans had had time for more beer
Off to Kings Langley he was racing
Jogging to catch time he was chasing

Steve Waters from Geoff was to follow
But he felt the police touch his collar
"Do we need to speed walk at night?"
As he had Shenley's Black Lion in sight

Pete Ambrose and wife Lynn rose early
Slim Lynn and Peter more burly
To walk the 10 miles to sortie
At Cuffley at seven forty.

It's Anne Noon again off to Hertford
With Mark and wife Jeannie on board
At halfway point they pick up Eddie
But there's time to make up already

Good news, the mobiles been found
A postie heard its musical sound
Bill's going off to retrieve it
To return it to the handover kit

Meanwhile Eddie's got his foot down
Pushing them on to Hertford Town
Where Bill Marsh, John Parrot and Dave
Nicholson
Were waiting to do their long section

The weathers good, the sun is shining
The trio are to Widford flying
The timing is going to plan
As they arrive at the Green Man

Geoff Sharpe now takes over
To Bishop Stortford is his rover
Where Bill Carr takes the baton
And onto Hare St by the Station

It's dark now for Steve Mead
And "buffy" he thought he might need
Was it vampires? He had suspicion
winding his way to Royston

Albert's time had now come round
And a short cut he had found
So time was not on his mind
As on to Wallington he did find

Phil Whitehurst at the Village Hall
As the sun rose he walked tall
Too early yet not to be sober
To William's Fox Inn for a hand over

Then there was Elspeth and Eddie
Two previous walkers again at the ready
The Goat at Codicote was on their mind
Hoping their time didn't get behind

The final leg was about to go
As the baton was given to those from Glaxo
Bob Edwards, Susie, Val and Carolin
Joined by Ann Peden and Pete Durkin

They had on there best walking socks
As they strode off the Fighting Cocks
A St Albans finish with 2 minutes to spare
HMC now ready for the next dare.

CHAIRMAN's T(W)alk

Summer is here, so get those mountain boots on. Walks and climbing in sunshine, long days, lots of trips, we have been to Pembroke, Majorca, Cornwall, Lakes. Soon we are off to the Gower, Kings Langley! Alps!

We also have a new committee. Debbie Smith is our INDOOR MEETS REP. To try to organise some extra curricular activity. Ian G is our CLIMBING REP, so speak to him if you want to find out about what is happening climbing wise and where the hot climbing wall is. Peter is our new TREASURER so if you have any treasures you wish to donate!

AWAY WITH YOU

Ann is carrying on as our outdoor meets rep. If you know a place you think we should go, have been to a good campsite or bunk house or YHA then let Ann know. Ann has booked up a great chalet in Switzerland for our annual trip to some serious mountains.

EXPEDITION 2003!

We are thinking of organising a trip perhaps to S America next year, so to give you time to save your holiday allocation!!! If you want to help organise then get in touch.

Happy Mountaineering

Bill Burt



Ed's smaller column

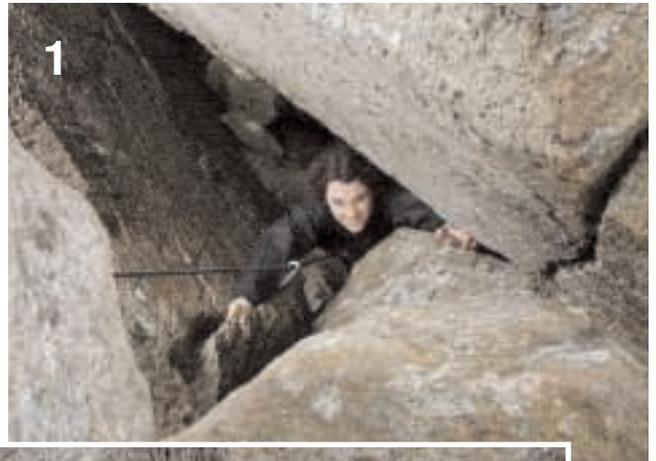
This is me, your editor, aka Lobby Lud. If you see me out and about in Hertfordshire in month of August beat me about the head with a copy of Crux and say 'You are Lobby Lud and I claim my FREE HMC T-shirt'. It's girls, girls and more girls this issue. Not only fashion tips and recipes for you but editorials from a womans angle. Keep it up ladies.

Apologies for the delay to this issue: this was caused by the wrong kind of lifestyle.

Bill

Bill Marsh, Editor-in-Chief
(I've promoted myself!)

The very best photos from HMC Members



1. Jo, Lady climber, emerges from the bowels of Chasm Route, Ogwen.
2. Ian and Marion give each other support while Bill waves on.
3. Lady climbers Anita and Ann off-duty.
4. Stu Pullen, in night club bouncer mode at the Annual Dinner.

2002 Committee contacts

Position	Member name	Phone No	Email address
Chairman	Bill Burt	01582 842982	BillB@thehmc.co.uk
Secretary	Albert Sillwood	01462 490173	Secretary@thehmc.co.uk
Treasurer	Pete Durkin	01727 838889	PeteD@thehmc.co.uk
Outdoor Meets	Ann Peden	01727 838889	AnnP@thehmc.co.uk
Indoor Meets	Debbie Smith	01442 265883	DebbieS@thehmc.co.uk
Climbing Rep	Ian Gibbon	07796 264084	IanG@thehmc.co.uk
Crux Editor	Bill Marsh	01920 830435	BillM@thehmc.co.uk
General/Walking	Geoff Deans	01727 810032	Gdeans3@csc.com

See the HMC website for latest Meets/Events details

www.herts-mc.swinternet.co.uk

www.thehmc.co.uk

Essential items for the discerning lady climber

To look 1st class on those sun kissed crags take note of our top ten tips

The sparkly helmet

A safety helmet is a must but keep it fashion with a sparkly helmet in one of the new seasons colours, to add glamour to your look.

Karabiner earrings

Useful to identify you as the serious but fun loving climber when other accessories are removed. Load tested these earrings will perform a double function as they can be used in an emergency

Criss-cross your top

A lady can be seen to be wearing any top, short or long sleeved, but it is the crossing of the slings that gives the overall desired effect. To get the correct look equal numbers of slings should be draped over each side, making a cross effect between the lady's bosoms. Only use the new seasons colours and leave last seasons clashing ones at home.

All-in-one harness hot pants

To avoid the need to carry excess equipment these new shorts provide you with the perked buttock look, whilst giving the ultimate safety protection. For the larger lady or those climbers who do like to leave something to the imagination then there are alternatives to the 'harn-pant', trousers with integral harness and cycling shorts with in built harness, all in this seasons fantastic colours.

Chalk bag

The chalk bag to be seen with this season is the one with the lower compartment for storing those compacts, mobile phones and lippy. 'Powder and paints' is the title of the new range and is in all good climbing shops now. With this nifty little chalk bag you can ensure that you look your best even when you've just climbed that HVS.

Nail designs

Unfortunately the manicured look is very difficult for the climbing lady to keep. But with ladies now rushing to keep their nails filed short and using ravishing colours on the lower halves of their nails, it is a trend catching on fast. Remember to keep to this season's colours to give the overall co-ordinated effect.

Knee pads

The latest kneepads available made by top names such as Red Chillies, Prana and Montane have only just hit the shops. These kneepads have added benefits as they are made from a revolutionary material, which enables the lady climber to use her knee on those difficult 'foot to ear manoeuvres. This is a special tip as these pads are not yet available in men's sizes.

Colour co-ordinated shoe coats

To allow the lady climber to wear the full seasons colours, new velcro covers have been developed with the help of Vivian Westwood. They are only available in two colours for this season, but if they are found to be in demand other colours may be seen in the future.

Quick release heels

As the media has portrayed, slim-line delicate heels are a must have. Unfortunately for the lady climber this is not always desirable on certain climbs, so new quick release heels have been designed on certain climbing shoes to allow the lady climber to walk on and off the climb in style. One size only: 3". Ask in your local climbing shop for more details. These heels have an interesting double feature as they can be used for a tiny heel jam in case of emergency.

Finally this season's colours are- They were last seen together in

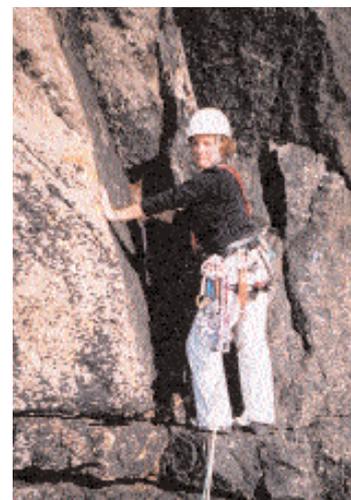
1972, the Purple Fox Glove and Buttercup Yellow give the overall summer glow. It is not the first time we have seen this cycle of change. For those lady's who would not normally be seen in these luscious colours please think again and maintain your reputation!

Last seasons clashing colours are definitely out. Lots of you will have the oranges and reds from the winter collection on their racks but leave those at home.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THE DISCERNING LADY CLIMBER NEEDS TO LOOK HER BEST AS SHE NEVER KNOWS WHEN A ONCE IN A LIFETIME PHOTO OPPORTUNITY MAY COME HER WAY.



Marion, Lady Climber



Claire, Lady Climber

Tasmanian Devil



After reading Richard Bailey's dispatches from Down Under, telling of epic bike rides in all weathers and solitary long distance walks in the wilderness, our intrepid CRUX reporter headed south in search of the intrepid travelling Doctor. She quickly discovered that you should never believe all those traveller's tales!!

An Irish heartbeat in County Kerry

Outside the gulls screamed and beyond the window clouds tumbled in a shining sky. I sat at a small round table in a bar in Dingle, a bowl of garlic mussels, home made bread and a pint of Guinness. Life was for that moment perfect. No future, no past, just a feeling that in this moment I was content. Life flowed through and around me. Just being, was as natural as breathing, and curiously enough I wasn't drunk.

I had driven that morning over the Connor Pass from Castlegregory. Stopping where the road narrowed and curved upwards. A small waterfall fell into a pool and trickled away under the road. Easy angled slabs rose up to the right. Scrambling up them I came to a hidden lake. Smooth dark water and high crags. Loch an Pheidieara. A place to be quiet, where in the still air, the magic that lives within these hills weaves itself around you. There is an ancient feel to the Brandon Mountains, somehow different to Wales or the Lakes. Hard to explain, I could wander on prosaically in a kind of Yeats celtic twilight but that would be foolish. Words cannot describe it, although all of us who have spent time in the mountains have felt its touch. I felt it there and again the following day. Walking up Brandon Mountain the path drops off the long ridge leading up to the top of Coimin nag Cnamh, and bends down into a valley of small lakes that runs towards the sea. It was Good Friday and yet the mountain was ours. I sat for a while in a haze of March sunshine and listened to the silence. Then up a steep path to the top. On the summit there were quite a few people who'd walked up the path from Dingle.

Though considering it was Easter, fine weather and the second (I think) highest mountain in Ireland it was remarkably uncluttered. On two sides the sea shimmered. To the northeast Brandon Bay with its long beaches of empty sand blurred into the distance. To the west was Dingle Bay where lines of surf could be seen rolling in. To the north a path of sorts led again to the sea. And south an unpeopled wilderness stretched to Brandon Peak and beyond.

I hadn't come to Ireland for the mountains, but to go windsurfing off the Maharees. A long peninsular of sand that stretches out from Castlegregory, and divides Brandon from Tralee Bay. A place of windblown dunes, rolling seas and two quite wonderful pubs. From our cottage the mountains rose up enticingly and I was glad to be up there. It was the first mountain over 3000ft that my 7 year old daughter had been up and I could think of none better. I hoped a little of the day's magic stays with her as it stays with me.

Whether you come to walk, climb, sail, surf or to simply leave footprints on its empty beaches, There is something about Ireland that makes it difficult to leave and impossible not to return. On a boat in Dingle Bay I overheard a Yorkshire man saying that he had come on holiday the previous March and had not yet got around to going home. I

was telling his story to an Irish- American I was talking to in a bar called The Green Room out on the Maharees. 'Ah', he said, 'That's nothing. I came here from New York in 1987 and still have the return part of my ticket'!!

I finished my pint and walked out into the brightness of a spring afternoon. Perhaps life should always be this good.

John Parrott, 2002

February 2002

I had forgotten,
The touch of rain
The sigh of the wind.
Rock beneath my fingers.

Steps kicked in the snow
A slope falling away.
Whiteness beyond the edge of the world.
The sky opens,
And I giddy with the joy of it
Remember.

John Parrott

Run Away!



*Photo of Rupes on Kelly's overhang 'I'm not f***ing doing that. Lower me down!'*

A regular event of each HMC climbing weekend is the embarrassing retreat. This is where one or more club members attempt to climb something two grades harder than their abilities allow. Traditionally this ends in being lowered to the ground. However, on choice occasions, humiliation is heightened by rescue from above. This Saturday the scene was Kelly's Overhang at High Nebb, where an impressive total of five retreats were made by Pete, Rupert and myself. The gear retrieval abseil was, as ever, a joy.

Why not buy the new HMC guidebook, '100 back-offs from classic climbs

Volume 1: Gritstone', featuring retreats from The Peapod, The Mincer and many more.

A Drinking Club with a Climbing Problem!



Autumn in California Part II - Joshua Tree

I knew I had come to the right place when my inquisitive e-mail to Rock Rendezvous was answered with a reply that started with the sentence 'welcome to our drinking club with a climbing problem'! After a couple of forays to Yosemite with various club members, I couldn't help but be tempted when the next suggestion was made to spend Thanksgiving in Joshua Tree.

Joshua Tree National Park is a place I have always wanted to visit, and a large group of us congregated there for what promised to be a party! The climbing there is very abrasive granite, mostly single pitch, with quite a gritstone feel to it. The superb rock, combined with the stunning desert scenery made for a brilliant weekend. We laid our sleeping bags out on the desert floor under the stars, and had a campfire feast for Thanksgiving, which was livened up by my contribution of a bottle of Lagavulin! There are wonderful hot springs near Joshua Tree, which proved to be the most amazing place to spend the evening soaking away the aches of a days climbing.

Winter – Ice Climbing and Snow Slogs

January brought with an unexpected pleasure – the Californian ice climbing season. I only got out on the Ice once unfortunately, at a place just east of Yosemite called Lee Vining, but it was SO good! My first climb was a small easy angled slab, and I found it NERVY! I was gripping on to my (borrowed) axes so hard that I had the most excruciating hot aches when I finally got down and let go. By the next climb I was starting to improve. It was steeper, longer and more difficult, but I found it much easier, and by the end of the day was trudging back down to the car exhausted, but with some satisfying climbing behind me.

Once more the Hot Springs habit emerged. This time a bunch of us drove down to what looked like the middle of nowhere. The temperature was at least -10oC as we walked the half-mile or so to a natural hot spring

Julius Crack, Joshua Tree

nestled in amongst the snow and ice. The springs are taken 'skinny' so I was quite pleased it was dark and the moon was not out! Especially when I balanced carefully across the slippery ice, and relaxed as I stepped into the water – on an extremely slippery step. I shall leave the rest to your over-active imaginations.

In February I had my first snow camping trip, and thought I was going to regret it! We walked in to the base of the 10,000ft Lassen Peak, a reasonably gentle 5-hour hike, to set up camp in a blizzard. I had traveled light – I HATE carrying gear – and only had my _ length thin thermarest (duh!). My old 4-season sleeping bag is now about 3-season rating, and I was huddled in the tent, with all my clothes on, cooking in the vestibule in a blizzard wondering what on earth was I doing here. Fantasies about turning round to the others in the morning and saying 'I'm off back down' went through my head as I curled up in my sleeping bag, down jacket, and all my clothes to attempt to sleep...

Luckily the next day dawned clear and sunny (and COLD) and I took one look out of the tent door up at Lassen Peak, and decided that I was not going anywhere except up that! We had a stunning day, first snowshoeing, then cramponing up the remaining 2000ft or so to the summit (we were camped at about 8000ft). I have not got a lot of snow and ice experience, so I spent far too much nervous energy wondering about the consequences of a slip, and how I was going to get down. On the way down I realized how I was going to do it... on my bum. The effort it took to keep moving while bum-sliding with my hands frantically pushing to get as much speed up as I could made me realize that if I had slipped I would have been going nowhere!

Winter rock is available here at a place called the Pinnacles, about 2 hours drive south of San Francisco. The rock there is an unusual volcanic conglomerate, with holds made from

protruding stones, or holes left where protruding stones have fallen out (a thought that I try not to think about when I am 10 feet about my last piece of gear!). It has a mix of trad and sport routes, and is a sheltered warm venue that had me climbing in only a long sleeved thermal even in winter.

Spring

So now spring is back, and the Yosemite season is back in full swing. I have managed a few trips there this year, led my first trad 5.7 at the base of El Cap, only a single pitch, but the feeling of climbing at the base of that monumental wall was amazing.

Soon it gets too hot for The Valley, the snow melts up in the highlands, and we abandon the Valley for climbing up in Tuolumne Meadows. I have not been there yet, but am signed up for two trips in July, which I am really looking forward to.

Generally I have found the climbing harder here than in the UK. I am leading 5.6, pushing 5.7 – which I am finding about equivalent to the HS I was doing on a good day back at home. There are not many routes available at 5.6 and below, and I can see only one solution to that...

A Final Word...

I would LOVE to show some of the places I have found off to some of you guys! If anyone is interested in getting a group together to come and get some climbing in get in touch



Yosemite, Scott Churchbowl

with me, and I can do the organizing from this side. Suggestions would be Yosemite in September/October, or J. Tree in November, and flights are cheap around then too. I would need to do a certain amount of advance planning, as campsites in both of those places need booking up well in advance. If Ice is what you prefer then the best conditions seem to be January and February...

So, TTFN, and happy climbing!

The Back Page

The Climbers Guide to Puddings and cakes, Part 2

***Fudge 45 mins. V.Diff (when was sugar invented?)

Whether you like great slabs, or fine crystals, you just can't ignore Fudge.

Approach is via the pantry, the fridge and the pan cupboard in that order. Take the 1lb bag of sugar and a small tin of condensed milk, followed by the 4 oz of butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk, then locate a heavy bottomed pan. The route starts by the cooker.

1. 5 mins. Gently melt up the butter with ease, then reach for the big jug and continue with the milk and condensed milk. Boldly add the whole bag of sugar, and belay to a medium heat.

2. 40 mins. Continue traversing easily at the simmering level. This can and should be frequently protected by a wooden spoon runner. The crux is in deciding when to step off the heat; look for a thickening consistency when 'balling' and crystal formation become apparent. The next sequence is strenuous. Having left the heat, beat vigorously (heavy whisk runner), until a stiff, crystalline formation is reached. Quickly turn into a greased dish and flatten out (spoon runner). Continue on easily to the fridge and chill out!

***Chocolate Fudge 50 mins. V.Diff

A well worthwhile variation on the basic butter Fudge.

Approach as for Fudge, but take a bar of Lindt Excellence 75% cocoa chocolate.

1. 10 mins. 4a. Delicately take the chocolate slab in sections, carefully melting up using the obvious bowl in the pan of boiling water. Move into the butter of Fudge and continue as per that route.

***Bailey's Fudge 45 mins. Severe

Possibly the best route hereabouts.

Start and proceed as per Fudge, but on reaching the jug on the first pitch, take $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of Baileys liqueur instead of the condensed milk. Some people find this difficult, but the result is well worthwhile. Continue on as per Fudge.

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PURCHASE DISCOUNTS

HMC has discount arrangements with these outdoor clothing, climbing gear and camping equipment shops:

Cotswold, St Albans

Countryside, Stevenage

Culverhouse, Watford

A current Membership Card must be shown.

Ingrowing toenail forces sale

Salomon Super Mountain 9 Guide boots for sale. Only used twice but unfortunately the wrong size (44). Excellent Alpine and winter boots. Boxed, half price at £80. chris@modelsolutions.net or 01923 829455.



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