

CRUX

50 Years of the Hertfordshire Mountaineering Club

Thehmc.co.uk
Spring 2008 issue



If you have wondered at all where the HMC Logo came from, then we can reveal that it was drawn by Steve Johnson in the mid 70's.

Steve was a very talented artist, who worked for British Aerospace as an analyst Programmer. He was also an excellent climber with the HMC in the mid 70's, and prone to drawing cartoons in the most unlikely of places. Steve was also epileptic. Unfortunately this deteriorated into MS, and he eventually died in the late 80's. However we do have the Logo to remind us of him.

The older members, who were around at the time, may also remember Steve picking the occasional fights with strangers, some much bigger than himself, and Steve coming off the worst. This behaviour was normally a precursor to one of his fits, which usually

occurred a few days later.

Compared to Steve, the club members seem quite staid these days. We have not been banned from a pub for a few years now. Our thanks and memories go out to Steve for the Club Logo.

Dear HMC'ers

Congratulations to the Hertfordshire Mountaineering Club on reaching it's 50th anniversary! I'm proud to have shared the last ten years with the club having made many good friends and enjoyed mountaineering experiences in the UK and overseas.

The club was formed in 1958 by Peter Spence together with Robin King, Geoff Clough, Herrick Thwaite, Reg Boot, Graham Brown and Graham Daniels. They originally met in Peter Spence's house in Shephall, Stevenage, but in 1960, moved to the Marquis of Lorne, Stevenage Old Town, where they were joined by Tim Farnell, Bob James and Ian Robinson. Peter Spence negotiated the rental of the upper floor of a coach house beside the Watkin Path in Nant Gwynant, North Wales. We now know this as the Herts Snowdonia Centre where the club still meets once or twice a year.

Since it's formation the club has grown to over a 100 members and enjoys meets across the UK and overseas with members participating in activities including walking, climbing, scrambling, kayaking and mountain biking.

Here's to another 50 years of the HMC and more....

Pete Durkin
Chairman



Congratulations are in order to Pete and Derina, on the birth of Thomas Owen Durkin!

We also have two HMC couples who have recently announced their engagement, so congratulations to both Leigh and Mike, and Andre and Lucy.



For those of you intrepid members that made it up to Scotland for the New Year (Gerry's Hostel), here is the long overdue trip report.

Me (Simon) and my wife Amy are over from the US for the year and so decided to look up the HMC via Carolyn (Dent). Myself and Carolyn, ran "Rock rendezvous" in San Francisco for a couple of years... in fact some of you came to stay and climb with us some years ago (you may remember). But I digress... Gerry's Hostile! (of course I did not realise when I first arrived there that the name Gerry's Hostel was a mis-spelling).

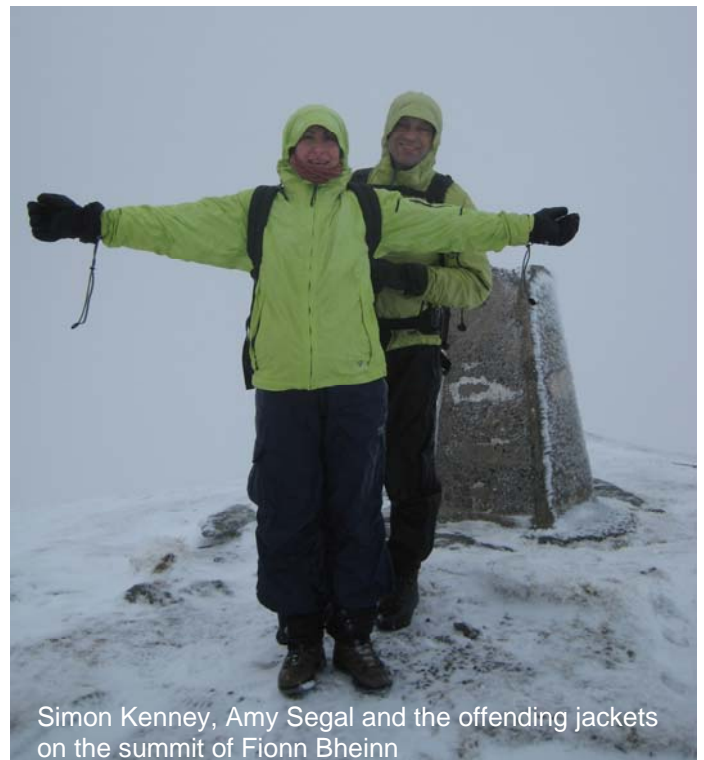
The hostel was a cosy (quirky) little cottage, situated on A890 - 95 miles north of Fort William, 50 miles west of Inverness, 2 miles east of Achnashellach Station... in other words in the middle of nowhere.

Our cosy (quirky) host (a veteran of the Scottish Highlands, who had been running the hostel for the last 40 Years) ran his hostel in military fashion and would while away many of his evenings with us, enthusiastically making sure that all ice axes and crampons were left outside, stacking the log fire and playing his LP's (normally Baroque choral chants)... "What Fun!" I hear you say. Not half as much fun as when one of the more adventurous members of our group decided to try them at different speeds, and even DJ Mixer style (kindly performed as part of our New Years celebrations).

Again I digress... Of course the main reason for our being there was to get up some of those Munroes, and experience the "dramatic" Scottish weather, and in our case to discover how woefully inadequate our equipment was. (For this endeavour both my wife and I wore unbreathable "Leaktech" jackets - basically ancient Goretex).

Our first outing with Caroline (Cook), Matt and Geoff, and Dave (Allen) was to the summit of Fionn Bheinn. Starting from Achnasheen, we gained altitude in the rain, which then turned to snow slightly higher, and finally to driving snow when we reached the top (I'm sure the view is

fantastic from there in the summer!). Our first Munro! (We have a complete whiteout photo to prove that we were there!)



Simon Kenney, Amy Segal and the offending jackets on the summit of Fionn Bheinn

The following day I tried a Corbett with Dave (Hall) and Adrian. Walking directly from the hostel we summited Sgurr Na Feartaig, with pretty much the same weather on the approach except this time it was a full on blizzard on the top (I thought Corbetts were supposed to be easier?). This was the first time I had been in weather I could barely stand up in (a 12 mile hike in the wet and snow... now I definitely need some new waterproofs!)

Other trips that week included the Old Man of Storr on the Isle of Skye; a pretty hike with dramatic beautiful skies and misty lochs, as well as some lower level hikes around the beautiful lochs and lakes. Oh yes and one icy scramble to the summit of the Corbett Beinn Bhann (which virtually

overlooks Plockton), with perfect cold/sunny weather, and stunning views of the reds browns and greens of the surrounding glens. ...and shopping in Edinburgh for new waterproofs!

We celebrated New year in fine style with fireworks (thanks Geoff), and beer at the local pub (where there were more fireworks!), and rolled in back to the hostile where we continued to the wee hours of the morning.

Everybody lent a hand with cooking and clearing, and the idea of losing weight after Christmas soon went out the window when we were confronted with Haggis, or pasta, yummy cakes and more chocolate then you can shake a stick at.... These HMC meets are proving to be an immense stress on my body... err from the food and beer that is:)

Simon Kenney
(Photos Amy Segal, Adrian Dobson and Carolyn Dent)



Fionn Bheinn hiking team: Adrian Dobson, Dave Allen, Simon Kenney, Caroline Cook, Geoff Deans, Amy Segal and Matt Taylor



The Old Man of Storr



WHERE ADVENTURES BEGIN

Simone Moro, Courmayeur, Italy. Photo: Scott Markewitz

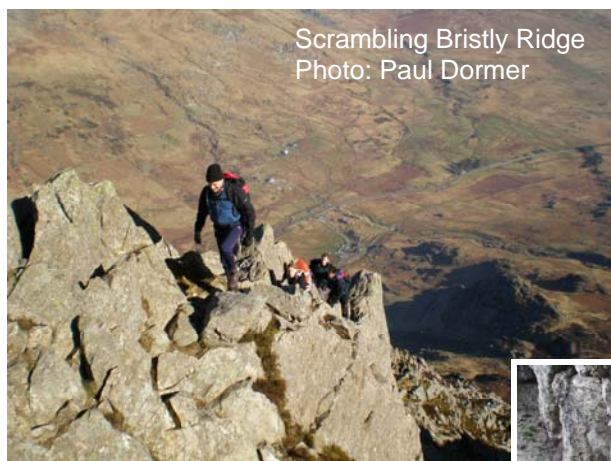
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Members Photo Gallery

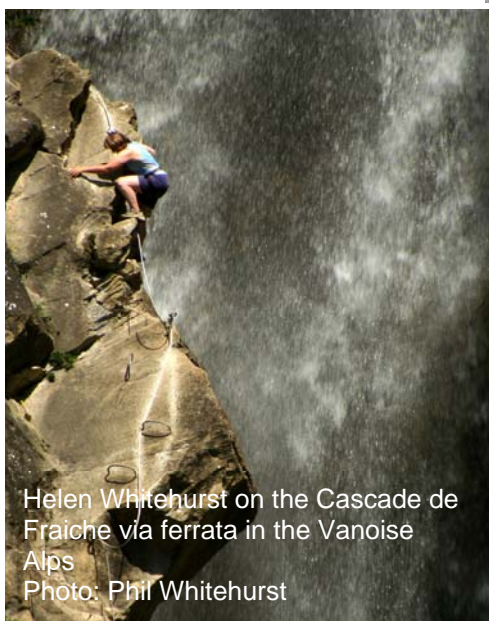


Scrambling Bristly Ridge
Photo: Paul Dormer

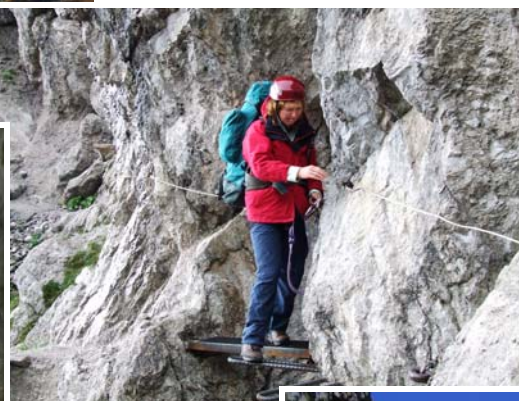
Sarah Moore trying not to
look down on Via Ferrata...
Photo: Steve Moore



Belaying in Wales
Climber: Steve Moore



Helen Whitehurst on the Cascade de
Fraiche via ferrata in the Vanoise
Alps
Photo: Phil Whitehurst



Climbers: Charles White and
Dave 'Snorbie' O'Gorman
Photos Dave O'Gorman

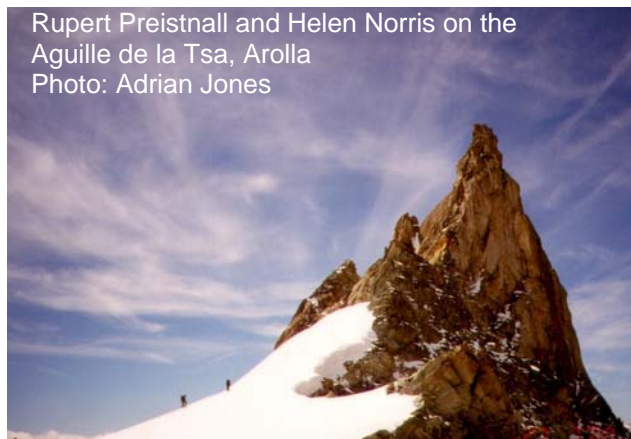


The Dibona, a rock spire in the
Ecrin (France) climbed by John
Parrot in 2004.
Photo: John Parrot

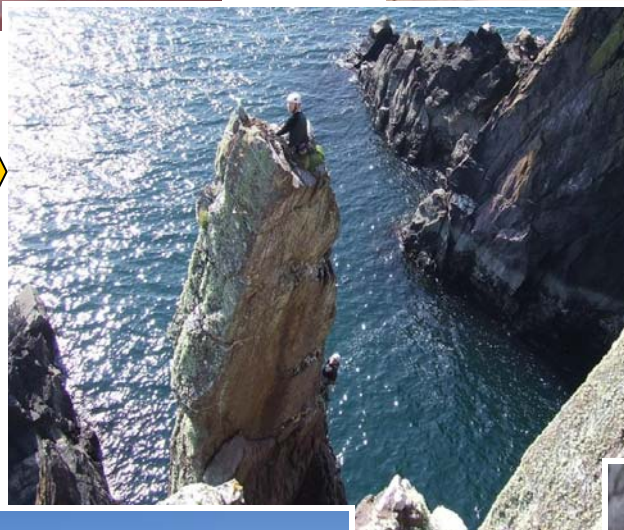




'Gary where's your keys?'
Photo: Jenny Forster



Rupert Preistnall and Helen Norris on the
Aiguille de la Tsa, Arolla
Photo: Adrian Jones



Tim Gledhill and Steve Moore
at Dunshean, Ireland
Photo: Carolyn Dent



Bill Burt, Pete Durkin and Richard Franklin living
it up in the Alps
Photo: Adrian Jones



Barry in Pembroke



The Old Man of Hoy
Photo: Tim Gledhill



Easter Sunday snow in the
Lakes
Photo: Adrian Dobson

Gorgeous snowy day in
the Brecon Beacons
Photo: Geoff Sharpe



Scotland Trip, Easter 2008

I was initially planning to go to the Lake District. The Lake District would have been much closer. The Lake District would have been much easier. It would probably have been warmer too. But the Lake District doesn't have Munros...

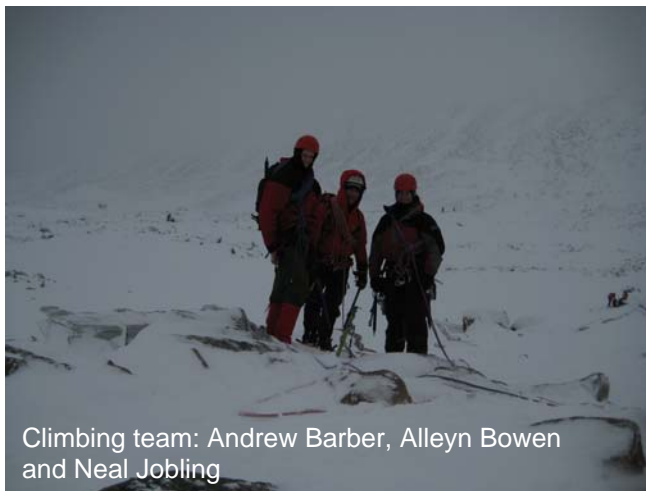
The first mission was to get to Glen Feshie, which would have taken seven hours if we had not got lost. We chose to go by car, driving through the night and being greeted by an amazing dawn at five in the morning. Ultimately this is still better than the train, even thanks to Gordon Brown's latest fuel extortion. We had a lie-in on the first morning, and then we were going to try for a few Munros but for the gale that nearly blew us back into Glen Feshie.



Insulated from the elements

The second day was to be my first proper ice climb, which scared me at first. We set off to the Cairn Gorm area, which was busy enough with beginner climbers practising ice axe arrests. The northern corries are beautiful when the weather clears, which it just about did, to reveal sheer cliffs of icy granite – beautiful but deadly. Armed with ice screws and other useful stuff such as ice axes, Jon Molding lead a grade 2 winter climb which should have been done in three pitches. You do the maths; a 150-metre climb with a 60 metre rope. However another 50 metres swooped in from nowhere, and it was half six by the time we topped out, to yet another life-threatening gale. Then followed a descent in the dark with head torches, sliding about the place on well-polished paths with many expletives. Still, aside from not being able to feel my extremities for a while, this was a valuable experience and I would possibly consider doing it again after much persuasion and perhaps some alcohol. The best thing about the whole day was arriving back at the hostel to a Chilli that

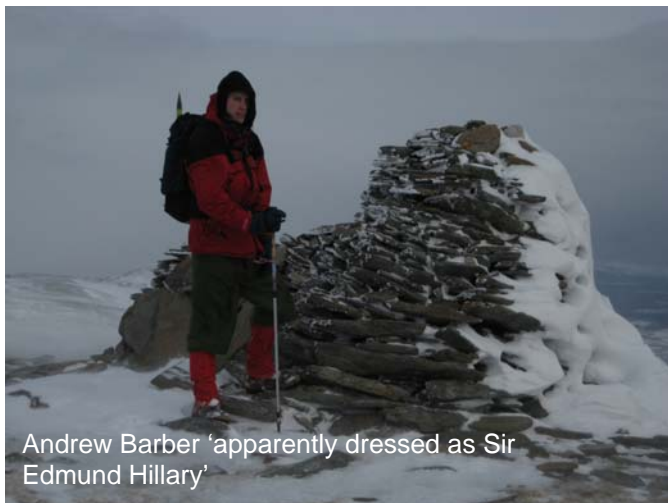
Andre and Lucy had lovingly crafted, trying to replenish our well-earned 5000 calorie deficit. Now that's what I call perfect timing.



Climbing team: Andrew Barber, Alleyn Bowen and Neal Jobling

The objective of the last day was to 'do a couple of Munros', which I just about did, apparently dressed as Sir Edmund Hilary, and with a crippling knee injury that appeared from nowhere. The initial sleet was eventually replaced with a clear view of most of the cairngorm range, rewarding us for our efforts. There was supposedly the promise of frothy coffee in the bothy on the way down, but this was really a rather disappointing tin shack with a distinct lack of coffee making facilities. The others raced off ahead, meanwhile I limped back with a couple of borrowed ski poles. Ultimately I'm glad that I did it though; it's not very often you get a view as clear as that.

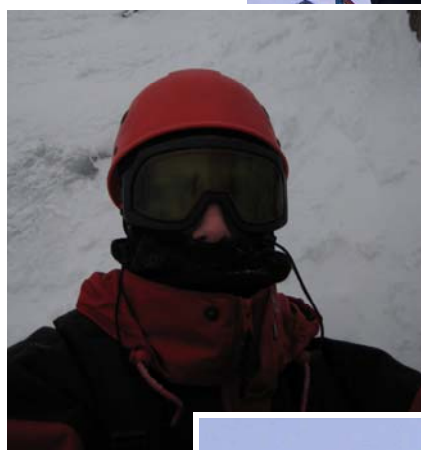
Andrew Barber



Andrew Barber 'apparently dressed as Sir Edmund Hillary'

Spot the Climber!

Easter 2008 in the Cairngorms saw cold conditions with lashings of wind and snow. This gave many members the chance to hide behind a cunning disguise comprising many layered fleece, goretex and ski-goggles. How many members can you recognise from this rogues gallery?



Answer: My guess is as good as yours!



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Hertfordshire Mountaineering Club:

Meets 2008

Date	Location	Organiser
Tuesdays	Climb at Hatfield Wall 7-9pm, social meet at the Sun Inn, Lemsford	Climbing contact Deborah Cole
May 17th	50 th Anniversary dinner. Quality Hotel, Hatfield	Geoff Deans
Bank Holiday May 24-26	Gower Peninsula, camping at Three Cliffs Bay Camping and Caravan Park	Ann Blandford
June 13-15	Herts Snowdonia Centre, climbing, biking, walking at Nant Gwynant, North Wales	Gary Bebb
June 28 – July 5th	Italian Dolomites, staying in self-catering accommodation in Arabba	Bill Marsh
July 19- Aug 3	Alps Trip: Camping in Bernina and the Bregaglia Alps	Gary Bebb
Late July	Camping trip to Llangollen, Abbey Farm Caravan Parks	Eddie Cornell
Aug 8-10	Sport climbing at the Horseshoe Quarry, Peaks	Deborah Cole
Bank Holiday August 23-25	North Devon camping trip	Linda Powell
Aug 30 – Sept 6	Lundy trip, staying at 'The Barn' bunkhouse	Carolyn Dent
Sept 18 - 20	Lakes trip	tba
October	Yorkshire Meet	Eddie Cornell
Oct 31 – Nov 2	Bangers and Mash at the Snowdonia Centre, Nant Gwynant, North Wales	Gary Bebb
Dec 12 - 14	Christmas party meet, Peaks	Andre Knirsh

For Sale

I have an unused Vango Rucksack (still in its plastic bag), for sale for £20. It is a Vango PUMORI 70 + 10, dark green, with built in rucksack cover.

I also have a pair of Galibier boots free to anyone who wants them. These are a full mountaineering boot, with a rigid insole, able to take crampons. Used, but recently re-soled, they should last for years.

If anyone is interested, please call Albert Sillwood on 01462 490173.



So that's it, another issue of Crux!

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed articles or photographs. The spring issue covered our winter trips and so it biased towards our exploits in Scotland. Over the summer (assuming we get one this year) we have a varied schedule of meets, with trips to Snowdonia, Scotland, Cornwall, South Wales and the Italian Dolomites, amongst others... So please keep your articles coming, and keep Crux alive!

Have you liked the photo montage? If so then why not send me some of your more inspiring photos from your summer trips.

I had meant to reprint some historical articles from the archives of CRUX for the 50th issue, but – thanks to you guys – we had plenty of new material. If you are interested in delving into the history of the club then an archive of newsletters is available on our website, thehmc.co.uk.

And, of course, HAPPY 50th to the HMC! Enjoy the celebrations, and think of me, I'll be in a tent somewhere in the mountains of Wales...

Happy Mountaineering!
Carolyn

February in Snowdonia:
Tess Turner and Alex Pender on the
Cantilever, Glyder Fach