

# HMC

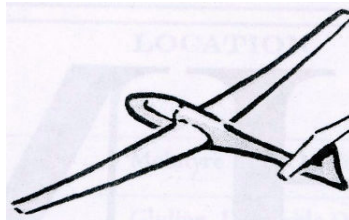
HERTFORDSHIRE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB



40TH DINNER

## CRUX

MAY 1998 - VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1



Gliding has been arranged at Dunstable downs on Tue 2nd June for a cost of £19.00 per person. Contact Jane

### DIARY OF A CLIMBER (FEBRUARY)



Hi,

There's been plenty of activity since the last Crux in December. The highlight being the 40th Dinner which took place on the 18th April with 60 people attending. We have a couple on articles on this, one from Balders the other from Albert. I hope you all enjoyed the 40th Anniversary Crux.

The AGM took place on the same date with Albert being elected Chairman. The minutes with full details of those elected are included with this edition.

Following a months holiday in Chile in February I have now finished my stint in Ireland and have returned to these shores full time.

Plenty of articles this month, in fact too many to include, so some will be delayed till the August edition. If you have anything to include in the next Crux please let me have them by the first week of August.

Last weekend being extremely hot and saw 8 of us down in Cornwall enjoying Bosigran. Sennen Cove, and Chair Ladder. Allie also had a Chunder in Pendeen much to the amusement of the A-Z's.

We now have a meets list extending in 1999 and I hope it satisfies your needs. Please contact Charles White if you have ideas for alternative venues to those shown.

Phil

#### February 21

We all got up to a gloomy, wet day, and decided that the Moelwyns would be a good idea, since the rock was rough and clean enough to be climbable in the wet. We met Charles, Dawn, Gary and Bill at Clogwyn yr Oen, and set about trying to make the guidebook's descriptions match the crag. We knew we were at Oen, because Norrnan had been here before, but that didn't deter Charles from attempting to find **Africa Rib**, even though that particular route was on Clogwyn y Clipiau, and about two miles distant.

Justin and I settled on **Kirkus's Direct S\*\***, because we could find the start of it. We took the thrutchy chimney start (VDifl), and I led off up to a pillar and a few moves across a slab to the foot of a steep crack. Justin swarmed up this and ended up on a huge stance. I set off up an easy left to right rake on the wall behind the belay, and ended up perched on top of a large pinnacle. A good runner and an enjoyable but scary pull over a bulge led to easier slabs and a good stance after about 80 feet. Justin romped through up more cracked slabs, and a quick scramble took us to the top of the crag. The guidebook doesn't make any mention of this part of the climb, so we either did an extra route unknowingly, or we really were on the wrong crag!

Charles and Bill were gearing up at the foot of the climb





### Jon Adams 1998 Climbing Diary

January 24,

Fell into my bunk at the Stair Hut at about 3 a.m., and got woken up 4 hours later by people quietly packing their gear. I felt rather fragile, and decided it was definitely owing to lack of sleep rather than the quantity of Bass I'd consumed at the Swinside Inn. We went to Shepherd's Crag, and geared up. I decided to put on my helmet to keep my throbbing headache on the inside. I feared that if I took it off, the pounding in my skull would cause ripples on the millpond of Derwentwater, and spoil the view for everyone else.

I groggily started up *Crescendo* - S \*\*. A steep chimney crack led easily past a chocks tone to a platform and a blank, gearless wall. Polished holds were frequent and sizeable enough, but the lack of protection and the finger-numbing cold rock pushed the hangover to one side. I got a wobbly Rock 2 half into a pocket. It was unlikely to hold it's own weight, let alone a fall, but I clipped it anyway, because it made me feel better. 20 ft higher, a fine crack on the right gobbled up a Friend 2.5, and the route plain-sailed to a large tree belay.

I arranged my anchors expertly, but as the hangover returned, I settled back and sat comfortably to one side of the tree, lit a fag, and had a chat with Phil who pulled onto the same large ledge. In the midst of our civil and enjoyable conversation, I was pulled out of my comfortable stance by Justin, who, for reasons

best known to himself, had decided to fall off. My braking hand locked the rope instinctively, and my helmet smacked into the tree as I swung round it, the rope insisting on making a straight line between force and anchor. It was all so terribly sudden and dramatic that I nearly dropped my cigarette.

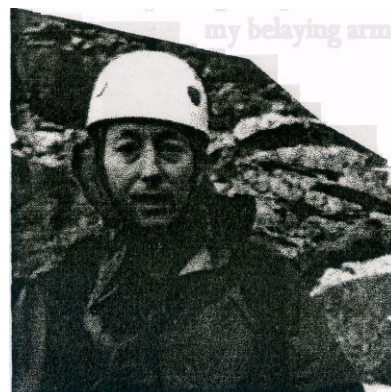
Phil raised his eyebrows - almost with alarm. His deep concern showed in the broad grin on his face. "Has he come off?"

No sounds emanated from below. "Are you okay?", I shouted down.

"Yes. Fine thanks", came the reply. "Sorry. I ... err ... slipped".

My comfortable seat had been turned into a semi-hanging stance, and with my head stuck in the tree and my right leg trapped between the live rope and an ill-placed tree root, I was having considerable difficulty in smoking my cigarette. As Justin's 28 stone cut into my leg, I was beginning to wonder what was going on. The numbness spread from the toes up, and alarmed by the prospect of pins and needles, I thought I'd try and chivy things along a little. "Any chance you could get back on the rock - preferably before it gets dark?".

Alfie came up on the other rope, and sort of led through. I say sort of, because he couldn't find the second pitch. He went up this way, then that, then another, mumbled something to himself, and finally came back down to read the guidebook



Justin

before repeating the process. A cobweb started to form on my belaying arm. After quite a while I turned to Justin to make some sort of boredom-relieving comment, but he had dozed off, and hung limply from a sling, fast asleep. I didn't remember 'him having a beard when Alfie started his search for , pitch two, and felt my own I chin for

confirmation.

My eyes lazily wandered back to Alfie, who appeared to be stepping up onto a hold, and then stepping back down from it. It was a bit like watching a geriatric doing aerobics, and my mind wandered off to thoughts of ladies in lycra leotards.

I can't be certain, but I think night fell a couple of times, and I have a vague recollection of Justin mumbling in his sleep - something about getting a tent and some food. I was taken by surprise when I noticed that Alfie had actually moved above his *Reebok Step* hold, and Justin momentarily woke up in all the excitement. Though his krabs were rather stiff and probably too old to be safe by now, Alfie managed to clip a few runners, and, swearing and panting, wandered elegantly up an exposed slab, leaving a few bits of torn flesh and several expletives behind.

He disappeared round a corner, and before long, was taking in the ropes. I followed up to the crux, and having spent so long on the ledge, wondered if I was now simply too old to climb, and should be thinking of a less-taxing leisure pursuit, like watching telly.

Naturally, I wondered what all the fuss was about, and emerged from the moves in fine shape. Sure, I couldn't walk properly and my hands were shaking, but that's



James Hargreaves & Chris Bail - *Little Chamonix*

normal when you're 33 and self-employed. I found Alfie belayed to a dead and insecure tree. The poor thing was probably alive when we started the route all those years ago. He had decided not to hang his bandolier of gear from it, because he didn't think it would take the weight. Convinced that Justin was going to fall off again, I backed up his belay to a stout sapling about 20 yards away. It bent and swayed with health and vigour as I tightened the rope around it, and Alfie felt much happier.

Justin swarmed up the crux with all the skill and delicacy of an old man with too many fried eggs inside him, and made splendid progress by grunting and moaning loudly. I wandered up to the top of the crag to watch this display of climbing finesse, and met Phil and James, who had only *just* finished Little Chamonix. I decided that the HMC is the sort of club that likes to take its time on a route. Indeed, why rush things when you can savour them? Why drive at 90, when you can pull on a trilby, get in your Morris Minor, and tackle the blaze of existence at a cool 25? Yep, in the HMC, it's *always* Sunday Afternoon.

Alfie and Justin duly arrived, and we all stumbled and fell down the unrecommended but pleasant leafy descent path, hanging on for dear life.

Back at the foot of the crag, we organised the rack for the next route. Phil and James, clearly phased from their ascent, excused themselves, and loped off to the cafe talking in loud voices about The Greater Ranges. At our insistence, Justin chose to lead the first pitch of **Little**

**Chamonix** - VDiff\*\*\*, and Alfie and I watched eagerly from below, waiting for him to fall off. To our disappointment, he didn't, and flew up the 80 ft pitch in only about three hours.

We all got to the tree belay just as a light drizzle gently bathed the crag. The second pitch took on the guise of a waterfall, and as other parties fled talking of canoes and life jackets, we decided it might be fun to have a bit of abseil practice.

A mild, quiet evening of philosophical debate was enjoyed in the Swinside Inn, and Albert was so engrossed in the spirit of the soiree that he couldn't remember the walk back to the hut - even while he was doing it. Not long ago, Albert called me Dave, and confessed that he had a bad memory for monikers. This particular evening was no exception to this trouble with names, because he was having considerable difficulty in remembering his own.

Justin's fall had a strange latent effect on him, for not only did he mysteriously manage to lose his entire rack of very new and very shiny climbing gear, but he was also reported to be prancing about in the ladies' shower waving an ice hammer and wearing a crash hat, mumbling senselessly about the location of his rope.

#### *January 25*

We returned to Shepherds Crag for an early start the next day and were ready to start climbing at about 11 a.m. We decided to finish what we'd started, and Alfie led up to the very familiar tree belay. Democratically, I sent Justin out to dispose of the second pitch. The hardest part involves surmounting a block under an overhang, and gaining a polished slab just beyond. Justin performed a prostrate pirouette on the block, which would have been an exceptional manoeuvre were it not for the fact that he emerged arse- first, and was facing in completely the wrong direction.

He eventually righted himself, laughing jovially about the incident, and was enjoying himself so much he forgot to put any more runners in.

Perched on the edge of a rib, 30 ft above his last bit of gear, he beamed down at us, and, wiping the tears from his eyes, gently enquired in a quaking voice what would happen if he came off. Alfie looked at me. I looked away. It's not so much the sight - I hate the *sound* of a 60 ft arcing fall on a half rope, with a pendulum smack into a wall of jagged blocks. The good news was he'd only clipped Alfie's rope - my one hung free, and trailed in an elegant loop from harness to belay, so I didn't see the position as anything particularly serious.

"It'll be better if you don't fall off, because if you do you



will certainly die", Alfie hinted. The problem with men from the North of Ireland is that they're always so serious. I'm sure all the troubles in the Province would be sorted out overnight if everybody lightened up a bit...

Though Justin was now in bright sunshine, it was clear that he was still feeling the cold, as both his legs were shaking rather violently. Being an expert on anxiety control, I told Justin to take a deep breath. Alfie deflated my helpful comments by suggesting if you've only got one more breath left, you may as well make it a deep one.

Justin shook off his concerns, and sobbing gently, strode confidently up the slender arete, looking like a four-limbed sewing machine. Sitting astride the ridge, he brought Alfie up, who clambered over him, and disappeared from view. It was my job to remove the gear and lead through on the final pitch, and I was impressed by his considerate gear placements, as each one fell out and slid down the rope before I even got near to them.

I got to the sun splashed arete, and poked my head around the corner. Justin, on his *a cheval* belay, complained quietly about piles, and Alfie, with nowhere to stand, simply hung off the cliff with his eyes shut. I could see a good ledge directly beneath him, but unfortunately, it was 200 ft away. He was talking rapidly to himself. With his Northern Irish accent, I couldn't really make out what he was saying, but the first bit sounded like "Our Father..."

Justin draped a couple of slings around my neck, and pointed up the vertical wall above. "Up there ... *Please.*" Unfortunately, because the two bodies in front of me occupied every available hold, I had to tread on both of them to establish myself on the wall. We all found this wonderfully entertaining, and everybody was laughing. A hearty but too-short pitch of big holds and spikes led directly to the top. Being old hands now, we avoided the desperate leafy descent to the left, and decided we'd earned the right to walk down the simple path on the right instead.

Eager to make the best of the January sunshine, we decided to do a route on Brown Slabs next. We don't know what route it was, but the large gathering of young ladies at the bottom ensured us it had at least two stars. Worried that the young ladies might fall into difficulty on the dangerously flat ground at the foot of the crag, I selflessly allowed Alfie to lead and Justin to belay, while I lounged in the sun chatting to Jane from Bristol (22) about some of the really hard

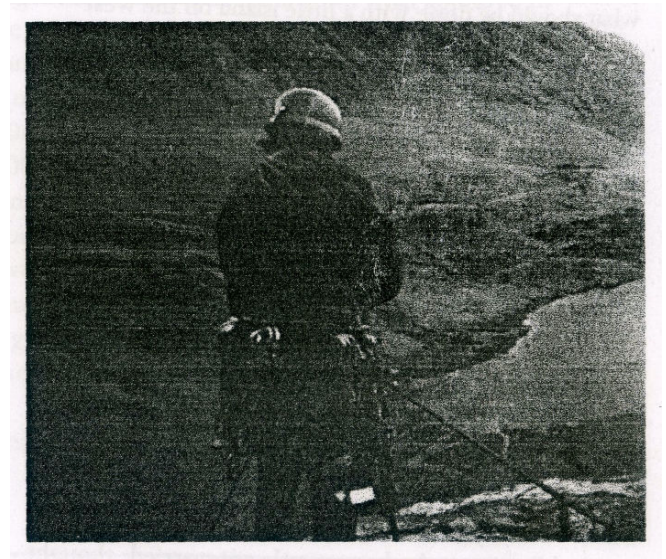
routes I'd done.

I don't know what Alfie and Justin were up to, but I was just describing the hard bit on the Abruzzi Spur on K2, when the rope came tight. "Climb when ready" in grating Irish echoed throughout Borrowdale, and I was unceremoniously pulled towards the crag, just as I was about to check the security of the buckles on Jane's leg loops. "Climbing", I yelled back, in what I must say was a rather manly voice.

I climbed as slickly as I could up the slab, trying to find places where I could smear with one foot, lay away on one hand *and* glance downwards at the same time. I've been practising the outdoor-type-rugged- smile for years, but my efforts fell on blind eyes as Jane was talking to some whelp with a bad excuse for a beard. Though I did my utmost to make it look hard, the climb was an easy and pleasant V Diff, and we romped down the descent just in time to wave goodbye to Jane and her singularly unattractive male companion...

*Editor's Note: The author of the above is occasionally prone to exaggeration.*

EUSTON THERE IS A PROBLEM.....



*Norman Belaying at Ogwen*

**'Euston, there is a problem.....'**

This was the first sentence of the note left on the front door of the Helyg hut one very sunny Sunday morning in March 1998.

The club was staying at the Helyg hut for the weekend, basking in the excellent location in Ogwen, with all the photos and memorabilia of the various Everest attempts scattered about the walls and in glass fronted cases.

*(Continued from page 5)*

Saturday had been very overcast, but the cloud base stayed about 4000', so the tops were clear. A mass climb (of 10 climbers) took place on a low crag about 40 mins walk from the hut. Unfortunately Norman took a 20ft peel and sprained an ankle.

Geoff & Tony Edwards walked up Tryfan, Bristly Ridge and Glyder Fach, and Albert pottered up the Carneddys, before returning early and driving to Capel Curig to buy a paper and read it in the Bryn Tyrch. This was a fortuitous move, as the knowledge that a shop was being renovated next to the Cafe in Capel was to come in handy on Sunday.

Saturday night saw a group drinking and eating in the Bryn Tyrch, and everyone except Norman being served their meal. Eventually a hobble into the Kitchen, and a verbal assault by Norman on the staff resulted in a generous over-refund, and a free meal as well. Norman was still not chuffed.

The drinking continued at the Hut, waking a few people who had stayed behind, with light banter discussing what should be done with a little island off the west coast of Great Britain.

Sunday dawned with a brilliant blue sky, the twittering of the birds, and the groaning of Alfie Conn, leader of the banter.

Most people breakfasted outside in the sun, and gradually packed for a good day on the hills. Tony headed for the Carneddys, Geoff headed for Bala, Norman headed for a hospital, Albert packed the car, thinking about the ridge up to the Glyders, and all the climbers left the hut to drive to Tryfan, and climb Pinnacle Rib, starting from Heather terrace.

Unfortunately, the last person out of the hut, an unnamed Barrister who has recently got married, thought Norman was still in the Hut, and pulled the door closed, leaving the key safely locked inside..

So a note was left on the door by Albert, starting with – 'Euston, there is a problem.....', and explaining the situation. A grand day on the hills followed for everyone.

Returning to the hut Sunday afternoon, and finding no one there, Albert drove to Capel Curig and purchased some putty from the man decorating the shop next to the Cafe, and returned to await the climbers, just in case they had the key with them.

They did not. So with the assistance of Bill Savage, Bill

Burt and Stepan Ptacek from Slovakia, the putty was taken out of the window next to the door, the glass removed, the door opened, the key retrieved, the glass replaced and the window re-puttied.

A successful end to an excellent day. Just hope the hut warden thinks so.

Albert Sillwood

#### DIARY OF A CLIMBER (FEBRUARY)

when we got back down, and had decided on the severe start - a tricky vertical crack that pulls onto easier slabs. After placing a runner, Charles thrutched up the crack and charitably decided to test Bill's new found belaying skills by falling off. Bill, standing back from the foot of the crag and chatting to no one in particular about the striations in the bedding plane of metamorphic slate, was lurched forward, and expertly fielded Charles by clinging on to the dead rope, and digging a furrow in the ground with his nose.

Charles arced through the air with all the grace of an old television set that has been discarded from a tower block window, and emitted a little gasp on the way down. He bounced with the stretch of the rope, and missed a series of sharp spikes and boulders on the ground by a generous margin of 2 inches. Charles uncurled himself from the foetal position he had adopted, and, grinning like a Cheshire cat, gently put his feet down. Bill, utterly unfazed by the drama, wiped the peat from his nose, spat out a few bits of turf and heather and explained that unlike most other rock types, slate splits on the perpendicular.

Charles, having established that his runner was safe, leapt up the crack like a man possessed, swarmed up the slab above and grunted to Bill about the various methods climbers employ to seat their runners. We gently enquired whether Bill had a nut key...

Bill, the newcomer, nipped up the crack with little difficulty, and was followed by me and then Justin. Indeed, had there been more members of the HMC in attendance, I'm certain that a queue would have formed to discover why Charles had opted to test his gear on this particular move, but we all graciously told him it was undoubtedly the hardest thing we had ever done...

A brief flurry of light hail swept over Snowdonia, just in time to deny Justin the chance of leading an E6 he was manfully eyeing up, and we decided that a few pints in Beddgelert might be a good idea. And it was.

## ALBERTS KNICKER ELASTIC?

*Sillwood's knicker elastic? to the rescue*



The February Meet in Snowdonia had started quietly enough. Anne Berk, Bob Armstrong and I had set out Friday morning and stopped for a bumble up Pole Hill on the Long Mynd in Shropshire. After renewing acquaintances with a few of the Club's Old Farts at the Hut a good day was rounded off with a pint or two in the Tanronnen Hotel.

Saturday saw Anne Berk, Bob Armstrong, Brian & Alistair Monk, Dave Goodey, Jane from St Albans (the one with the pink heart shaped patch on her breeches!) and me attempting a circumnavigation of the Nantlle Ridge. A good day on the hills was only slightly marred by not listening to Albert's route instructions and having a bad walk off through streams, barbed wire fences and sheepfolds. Earlier in the day Anne did her best to keep us on route and with some unerring compass work saw us safely up and over Craig Cwm Silin. After a hurried meal at the Tanronnen we all enjoyed Simon Yates' lecture in the evening.

Fortified by the previous night's alcohol and spurred on by Simon Yates' tales of derring-do, an intrepid band crept gingerly from the Hut on Sunday morning to attack Yr Aran. Sunday's party consisted of Anne, Albert, Bill Burt, Bob, Jane and me. A gentle stroll up the Watkin Path saw us exchanging chit chat with the lads doing anti-erosion work by turning the Path into a Snowdonian equivalent of the M1. Blissfully unaware of the drama that was about to unfold, we plodded gently onwards and upwards.

At my suggestion we stopped off at the old mine on the side of the ridge leading up to Yr Aran. In Joe Towe's absence we speculated on what had actually been mined there; blue slate? copper? gold? lead? In the end Albert pronounced that it was an old copper mine and nobody argued with him! The more adventurous souls in the party quickly donned headlamps and pulled out torches and bravely entered the black hole. Having safely reached a section of the tunnel with a partially collapsed roof and glimpsed through into a large gallery that opened up to the sky above, most of us retreated back to the entrance to the mine.

Not so Anne, after muttering all weekend about "doing some scrambling" she had other plans!

Unbeknown to the rest of the party Anne had decided to climb up through the gaping chasm of the mine and come out way up the mountain side. No doubt spurred on by Simon Yates' epic tales and the relatively incident free Friday and Saturday, she started her scramble up the greasy wet rocks with enthusiasm. To her dismay she found herself completely alone, stranded on a narrow grassy ledge unable to move up or down. The rest of us dispersed, some climbing further up towards the ridge, some guarding Anne's valuable rucksack awaiting her return from the depths.

After some minutes of waiting our heroine's plight became apparent! After much head scratching from the assembled worthies a decision was urgently needed. The RAF Mountain Rescue helicopter was hovering over Lliwedd and we wondered if the Winchman would be able to be lowered into the gaping chasm. Suddenly a cry of "eureka" broke our reverie. Albert was seen tearing at his rucksack and pulling out what appeared to be pieces of knicker elastic knotted together (another of Albert's fetishes we wondered?). On closer inspection the knicker elastic turned out to be 30m of emergency cord with a breaking strain of 500 lbs. This was quickly doubled to allow for Anne's dead-weight and lowered into the chasm by our hero! Albert and Bill took the strain and after two delicate moves Anne was back on safe ground much to everyone's relief. After all the excitement a gentle circuit of Yr Aran ended an eventful but excellent weekend on the hills.

Keith Hirst

**Desperately seeking tent,  
must be able to take two  
and keep out rain and  
other undesirables**

***Contact: Suzanne Murphy  
on 01442. 243170***



## 40TH DINNER



The Hertfordshire Mountaineering Club was started in Stevenage Old Town in 1958. To celebrate the club's 40th anniversary, the usual Annual Dinner was combined with a 40th anniversary dinner, and held in Tewin village hall, Hertfordshire, on Saturday 18th April 1998.

The hall was chosen because of its flexibility in terms of numbers (max. 100) and arrangements. A bar was also planned to be available from 5pm.

On the afternoon of the 18th, Doreen Goodey, Dave Whitrow and some of the committee members set up the tables, the PA system, the pictures of old members and a slide display of past members, ready for the evening.

The photograph displays were set up in the Bar area, together with a continuous play projector, on which slides of the old members were shown. This caused some amusement, especially trying to recognise the members in their earlier youthful days.

James Bedford, of Casino Caterers, Letchworth, arrived at about 4.30pm, to start to prepare the meal for the evening (and an excellent meal it was too).

The balloon lady arrived at the same time, with 24 helium filled blue balloons, and the flowers for the tables.

Graham of the Goat also arrived to set up the bar, which we thought was arranged to start at 5pm. Wrong. He was not returning till 6.30pm (about 7pm in reality), so we were in for a sober AGM, which is why it went smoothly and quickly.

At about 4.50pm, an abundance of members (I jest) arrived for the 1998 AGM, which started at 5pm, but we still had a quorum. Previous minutes were discussed, the chairman gave his report, the treasurer explained how he had cooked the books, and Committee members were elected for the following year. The AGM finished at 6pm, and some thirsty members went next door to the pub, to celebrate their election to the committee (as the bar people had still not arrived).

Jim Curran arrived during the AGM, and left some books and video's in the bar area, for sale later, before going off to Doreen's mums to get changed.

People for the dinner started arriving before 7pm, and the bar was quickly buzzing, with some members meeting for the first time after 20 odd years. Luckily the meal was delayed until 8.30pm, giving everyone plenty of time to relax and chat to people they had not seen for ages. Many members looked the same, but a few had enjoyed their lives, and had put on the odd couple of pounds

So the evening progressed. An excellent meal was followed by speeches by Michael Baldwin, the outgoing chairman, and **Jim Curran** the guest speaker. Unfortunately there was not time for any





speeches from other current and ex-members. However everyone seemed to be quite happy chatting to their fellow table companions, and assaulting the bar, causing some frustration to the harassed barman.

A 40th cake had been delivered earlier in the day, made by a friend of Doreen's, and an excellent cake too, with crags and climbers around the edges, and skiers on top. During the evening it fell to Dave Nicholson, having been a continuous member since 1970, to cut the cake.

As usual, it was left to Doreen and some of the committee members to clean up the hall, take down the PA system, slide projector, photo displays, table clothes, etc., etc..

From discussions on the Tuesday after the dinner, it seems that the evening was enjoyed by everyone, and there was even a follow up meeting arranged for Wales at the P-Y-G, over the weekend of the 16th May.

All of this was a far cry from that eventful weekend 14 months ago, when on the 1st of February 1997, Duncan & Helen Wilson were married at the Merewood Hotel near Windermere in the Lake District. On the Sunday Michael Baldwin, Tony Edwards and myself (Albert Sillwood), were walking in the Snow towards High Street, when Balders calculated that our combined ages were 146 years. This lead on to a discussion of how long we had been in the HMC, who was the longest serving member, and that it would probably be the HMC's 40th Anniversary in 1998.

So with great aplomb, Balders & Tony agreed that it would be a good idea to have a 40th Anniversary dinner. Balders then went off to become a ski rep in Courcheval, and Tony retired to Birmingham. Guess who was left to organise the event (with a lot of assistance from the rest of the committee, and Doreen Goodey). Many thanks to everyone for all their help.

For posterity, there follows a list of the current and ex-members who attended the 40th Anniversary dinner on 18th April, 1998.

Albert Sillwood,  
HMC member from 1969, but with a 10 year break in Baghdad and South Africa.

Alastair Monk  
Albert Sillwood  
Alison Daniels  
Anne Berk  
Bob Bone  
Brian Arnopp  
Brian Monk  
Carolyn White  
Charles White  
Chris Bail  
Christine Sharp  
Collette Williams  
Dave Gibbon  
Dave Goodey  
Dave Nicholson  
Dave Walton  
Dave Whitrow  
Dick Enstone  
Doreen Goodey  
Duncan Hector  
Duncan Wilson  
Geoff Edwards  
George Rae  
Graham Daniels  
John Colley  
John Sharp  
Joy Daniels  
Keith Hirst  
Leo Daniels

Mary Burnett  
Michael Baldwin  
Mick Cuneen  
Mick Bail  
Peter Wesley  
Phil Holmes  
Phil Whitehurst  
Ray Howes  
Richard Sheldrake  
Robin King  
Stepan Ptacek  
Steve Mallon  
Sue Gibbon  
Sue Hirst  
Sue Monk  
Susan Chapman  
Susannah Moss  
Suzanne Murphy  
Tom Burnett  
Tony Edwards  
Tony Northcott  
Trish Howes

## OLD PICTURES



The Secretary on Kinder Scout in 1982

Got any old pictures of members to embarrass them with? Send your prints for inclusion in the next Crux

Simon Yates gave an interesting lecture in the evening, and showed us slides of many daunting, exposed faces and towers. Charles, however, was unimpressed, as Simon, in recounting his entire life-story, made no reference to the fiercest crack in the Moelwyns.

*February 22*

Having backed off **Creagh Dhu Wall (HS\*\*\* 4a,4a,4b)** in high winds with "Ab-Off" Alfie, I convinced Justin that we should go and do it. I led the first pitch because I'd done it before, and tied off at the tree belay, happy that my bit was done. I lit a fag, brought Justin up, and handed him the gear. My state of contentment evaporated when he handed it back to me, and no matter how I protested about a bad arm and a dicky heart, I was unceremoniously shoved out towards the hand-traverse to hell. "But it's your turn", I sobbed, from halfway along the line of flakes. I heaved up onto the pinnacle at the end of the hand traverse and stuck in a bomb-proof hex. I looked up. The wall reared vertically above, straight up for at least a hundred feet. I looked down. Between my feet I could see my rucksack - a little red dot 100 feet below.

I heard a strange whimpering sound and looked around to see where it was coming from. Unfortunately, I discovered it was coming out of my mouth, which was lolling open. I looked back over to the belay. Justin had erected some razor wire and had employed armed guards on the ledge to prevent my retreat.

"How does it look?", he asked. I smiled weakly and put a bomb-proof sling around the pinnacle I was standing on.

"Steep" I mumbled. Tentatively, I stepped onto the wall. A line of good holds, invisible from below, gradually revealed themselves as I gained height. Things went slowly but smoothly, until I got to a large flake. I could see a big hold about five feet above me, but only the edge of the flake would allow me to get there. Between my feet, my sack had got noticeably smaller below. I placed yet another runner, took a deep breath and laid away on the flake's edge, smearing my foot on the blank wall. Miraculously, my foot stayed on, and I arced my left hand over the top to grab the jug. I pulled up and over, and emerged on a ledge about 8 inches wide. Bloody hell! This was the guidebook belay. A selection of unsound blocks, just like the ones in the scree a few hundred feet below, were piled up behind the ledge. I didn't rate their chances of staying on the cliff under load, so I carried on knowing the crux was awaiting me at the very top.

I could hear some children in the distance, and had the sensation that their laughter was at my expense. With your second out of sight round the corner, and a lot of

space all around, it's a lonely lead up the wall. Especially if you climb as slowly as I do.

Everything was straightforward, until I got to a very polished groove. I placed a small wire in the crack running up to it, and slowly bridged my feet higher to get a better look. Before long, I slowly bridged back down again. I placed another runner, and clipped in the other rope. I repeated this process several times, and began to realise why the entry to this groove is so polished compared to the rest of the route. It's probably climbed and down-climbed about six times per ascent, with people like me nervously calculating fall factors. A fingerlock with the left hand, combined with high smears with both feet, enables you to grab a half decent and virtually unused pinch grip high on the right. Thus, you simply lever into the groove. Easy, apart from the space between your legs, which drops away vertically to your sack 200 feet below. And it's all over!

I've let out a few sighs of relief in my time, but this was a big one. I even thanked god, which is an exceptional compliment to the chap considering I'm an atheist. Justin romped up it without any hiccups, and then had the nerve to tell me he wished he'd led it!

The route's reckoned to be the best of its grade in Wales, and I can't argue with that. It's an absolute corker!



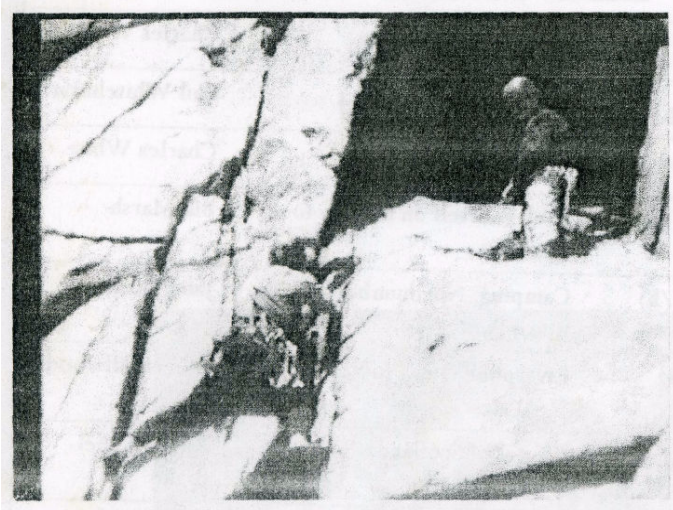
*Our Indoor Meets Rep demonstrates how to chip holds*



## CLIMBERS PHOTOS

A few pictures from the climbing over the past year. The most recent are from the Bosigran meet on 8th / 9th May. The meet was attended by Phil, Charles, Gary, Adrian, Steve, Alfie, Albert & Norman and saw some glorious hot temperatures.

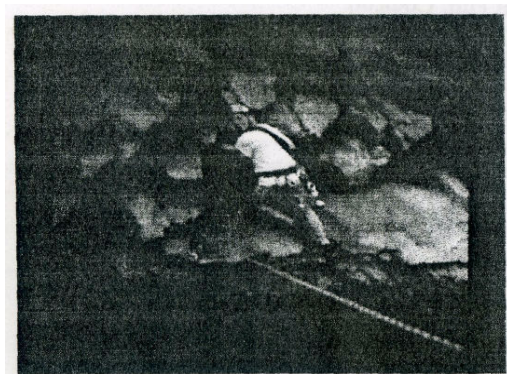
Got some recent photos send them for inclusion in Crux (they will be returned)



*Doorpost (2nd Pitch), Bosigran , Charles & Phil*



*Gary Bebb on Kinky Boots, Baggy Point, Aug '97*



*Phil Leading Kinky Boots, Baggy Point, Aug '97*



*Charles on third pitch of doorpost*



*Garv & Alfie toss for the lead of the second pitch of Doorway*



*Phil leading Urizen, Baggy Point, Aug '97*

## Chairman:

Albert Sillwood

Tel: 01462 490173

Email: albert.sillwood@cwcom.co.uk

## Secretary (+Crux):

Phil Whitehurst

Tel 01438 367935

Email: hmc@climbing.force9.co.uk

## Treasurer:

Jane Whitrow

Email: Jwhitrow@Merlin-Ventures.co.uk

## Outdoor Meets:

Charles White Tel:

01992 509619

## Indoor Meets:

Dawn Wyllie Tel:

01923 235596

## Climbing Rep:

Stepan Placek Tel:

01438 798130

## Web Address:

http: \\www.climbing. force9.co.uk

## Email:

hmc@climbing.force9.co.uk

## NOTICE

Contrary to what a large number of club members seem to believe, the crockery at the Snowdonia Centre is quite ordinary and has

## NO SELF CLEANING PROPERTIES

Please remember to wash up what you have used as soon as you have eaten

Thanks

DATE 1998	LOCATION	REDCOAT
May 22nd-25th	McIntyre Hut, Onich, Scotland	Phil Whitehurst
June 2nd	Gliding, Dunstable Downs	Jane Whitrow
June 19th-21st	Camping, Pembroke	Dawn Wyllie
MBA	Chelsea Flower Show	Charles White
July 10th- 12th	Camping, Peak District	Phil Whitehurst
July 31st- Aug 2nd	Camping, Lake District	Charles White
Someday Soon	Book yourself on the trip to nowhere	Bill Marsh
Aug28th-31st(b/h)	Camping, Northumberland National Park	Jane Whitrow
Sept 11th- 13th	Liverpool M.C. Hut, Ffestiniog, N. Wales	Albert Sillwood
Weekly tours (with early starts)	Castles of Scotland	Richard Sheldrake
October 2nd-4th	TEA	Charles White
October 23rd-25th	Lake District	Dawn Wyllie
November 14j-44iir GM-S&	Bangers & Mash, Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	Dawn Wyllie
December 4th-6th	Christmas Party, Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	Jane Whitrow
1999		
Jan 16th- 17th	George Starkey, Lake District	TEA
Jan30tn-31st	Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	TEA
Feb 20tm-21st	Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	TEA
March 13th-14th	Annual Dinner, Yorkshire Dales or Moors	Dawn Wyllie
Tue 13th April at 20. 00 i	Annual General Meeting, Goat Pub, Codicote	Phil Whitehurst
April Willr-HUH, /ey^. //nQ	Don Whillans Hut, Roaches	TEA
May 8th-9th	Cornwall	TEA
May29tli-31st	Glen Brittle, Skye, Scotland	TEA
Nov 5th-7th	Bangers & Mash, Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	TEA
Dec11th-12th	Christmas Party, Snowdonia Centre, N. Wales	TEA
Easter 2000	Trek / Climb, Morocco	Contact Gary Bebb if interested



