



# SWMC Newsletter

## Summer 2005

Welcome again from a new editor, a position only marginally more coveted than Leader of the Conservative Party.

With a new editor comes a new-look newsletter. And for those of you who receive it electronically, you'll have noticed the new format. I hope you've had no trouble viewing it, but this is to allow the fancy design, faster download and more predictable printing, and you don't need Microsoft Word. You will need Acrobat Reader, but it's free. See the SWMC website for more details.

[www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk](http://www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk)

Simon Williams

### Lead weekend

Based at Lletty Llwyd, the club hut in Deiniolen near Llanberis, on 13th and 14th August, this will be a weekend of developing skills under the watchful eyes of the more experienced club members (some of whom even have qualifications to prove they know what they're talking about).

The instruction will be aimed at both those who are competent seconds and want to move into the scarier territory of leading on trad gear, and those with some experience of leading but who wish to know more about systems and safety.

Please email Simon Williams [williamssj6@cf.ac.uk] if you wish to take part in the weekend, as either student or teacher, including details of the level at which you wish to be involved.

### Novice days report

The last couple of months saw two Novice Days of varying success. Saturday 23rd April began with rain and high winds, enough to send the Cardiff softies scurrying to the sanctuary of the wall. But the hard folk of Swansea were undeterred, and led their flock of novices up a wet and windy ascent of East Ridge on Great Tor.

May 14th stayed dry enough to take half a dozen or so beginners to Box Bay, Porthcawl. After their previous defeat by the weather, the Cardiff faction were determined to put on a good show and turned out in force.

Cardiff novice Andrew Bye summed up the experience: "It was fantastic, and a wonderfully scenic location. I really enjoyed feeling my way up rock, so different to seeing your way up the wall."

Thanks to all who gave their time and wisdom to initiate the innocent into the mysteries of rock and knots.

## The Committee

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## Membership cards

Arriving soon in the wallets of all members will be brand new SWMC membership cards. Not only will they be in a durable, crag-friendly laminate, but being credit-card size will actually fit in the wallet, so you need never be caught without yours again.

## Questionnaire

The greatly anticipated questionnaire should be reaching you now. This is your chance to say what you want from the club, and for the club a chance to find out a little more about its members. The questionnaire covers many aspects of club activities including meets, talks, socials, member's interests, information etc.

For the club to be successful, it needs to offer what its members want. Do fill in and return the questionnaire (anonymously if you wish) - the committee don't know what you want unless you tell them.

## Polar Challenge completed

SWMC hut warden Bryan Smith came an incredible third place with Team Deliverance in the 320 mile Polar Challenge Arctic race.

"It was very cold and quite a long way," says Bryan, who promises a full report for the autumn newsletter.

## SWMC members guilty of perverse behaviour

Recent months have seen a worrying outbreak of non-climbing related activities.

Sian Hutchinson almost completely forgot how to climb whilst training for the London Marathon, which she finished in a very creditable 4 hours 46 minutes.

Vicki Cummings and SWMC secretary Alan Rosier took up not one but three non-climbing activities. Both completed the Brecon Triathlon, and are training for another in Rhayder in October.

Des Devlin's team finished 189th in the Saab Salomon Mountain Mayhem. This result sounds more impressive when it's noted that, unlike Team Unicycle.com, the 188 teams ahead of them all had two wheels on their bikes.

Club treasurer Llio Elgar went to one of the rockiest regions of the world, the Sinai Peninsula, and spent the whole week windsurfing.

The Committee is considering possible sanctions.

## Lletty Llwyd, the club hut

Bryan Smith is now fully responsible for all things hut. He is the Keeper of the Keys, and booking enquiries should go to him [bryan@bhsmith.fsnet.co.uk]. That said, in order to be able to give as much time as possible to working on the fabric of the building, Bryan is asking for help from a 'Bookings Warden'. All the role requires is someone with email, a phone and a little bit of time able to organise bookings and post keys out and get them back. Anyone able to help, contact Bryan.

Boiler and shower issues continue. It seems the main problems with the boiler are down to pilot error – make sure to read the instructions before lighting it, as the ignition mechanism is being damaged by incorrect use.

Both shower cubicles need replacing, with damp causing problems to wood and masonry. Anyone with special shower building skills, talk to Bryan. Indeed, Bryan would be delighted to hear from anyone willing to join a hut working party weekend. If midweek is easier, that can be arranged too. Anyone interested, get in touch, giving details of skills and ability eg competent DIY plumbing, professional painter and decorator etc. Qualifications are not necessary, as enthusiasm goes a long way, but the club will pay the going rate for people with appropriate professional skills.

Bryan would be interested to hear members' views on a couple of subjects regarding the running and maintenance of the hut. The question of whether the hut should continue to be available to non-members has arisen again, as it appears that the damage done to the boiler has been mostly by non-members. Also worthy of debate is whether money should be spent on upgrading the track to the hut, to create a better walk way, or even to allow access for vehicles.

Anyone with views on these matters could let Bryan know, or post to the bulletin board at [www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk](http://www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk).

Lastly, we're still struggling to find reliable trades people local to the hut. Does anyone have contacts in the area who might help?

## Upcoming...

The next meeting of the committee will be on 10th September. If there is anything you would like the committee to consider, contact any member.

The next newsletter will be in September. If you have anything to contribute - activity and trip reports, news items, questions for members, letters, photos, rants etc - email Simon Williams [williamssj6@cf.ac.uk]

# Nine go mad in Spain

Sun, sea and hot rock.  
Vicki Cummings reports  
on a SWMC climbing  
adventure in Tarifa



**Ralph Giles on Mosaico (Fr6a+)**

Nine members of the SWMC ventured out to foreign climes at Easter, in search of sun, sea and some nice warm climbing. The chosen venue was Tarifa in southern Spain, a cheap and easy flight from Cardiff to Malaga airport and then a one and a half hour drive.

The crags around Tarifa are not as well known as El Chorro, but they offer climbing for all grades with everything from short bolted routes to multi-pitch trad climbs.

We climbed in a couple of areas around Tarifa, the majority in the San Bartolo area. The crags at Zona de Arriba were easily accessed, and offered a range of different grades. This climbing was all about smearing, and the rock felt suspiciously like Peak gritstone. The grades were generally harder rather than easier, with the weaker climbers (i.e. me!) finding some routes very hard for the grade. Even the super Pete Wardman was seen throwing himself off one climb!

The next venue visited was Tajo del Búho, still in San Bartolo and again only a short walk in. These rocks were perfect for everyone, with grades from easy 4s up to more testing 6bs and 6cs. The whole lot was bolted, so we whizzed up lots of climbs each day. The highlight was undoubtedly the Mosaico wall, a lot higher than those lower down the hill, and included two 5+s that we all climbed (creating a big queue behind us!). Next up was

a 6a+ that Pete bravely led with the rest of us following up at differing speeds. And finally, Pete showed up all the local boys by whizzing up a 6b, no probs.

While most of us were playing on the Mosaico wall, Al (your club secretary) and Bruce Danby were off trad climbing a multi-pitch on the Placas Grandes wall in Zona de Arriba, having already conquered the 6s at Mosaico.

We left San Bartolo for a very brief climb on the El Bujeo crags, with some proper mini-routes (5m). We would have stayed longer, but the heavens opened, proving that even in Spain there is no escape from the rain.

For those of you tempted to head off to Spain, we'd certainly recommend Tarifa, as it's a nice town to stay in. It may be near the Costa del Sol, and only a short distance from Gibraltar, but it's nothing like the typical resorts. It's primarily a windsurfing location, so there are lots of surfy shops and people looking very cool.

Tarifa is a town catering not for British tourists (hurrah!) but for Spanish ones. This means there's a wide range of places to eat, but with an emphasis on Spanish food, and no Irish theme bars in sight. The climbing is really pleasant and accessible with many of the routes shaded from the midday sun and suitable for all abilities. In fact we may well go back next year for more!



# Chin up

Gwyn Evans passes on the tao of rock on a family outing to The Gower

After 26 years of being the son of a rock climber and only ever having touched rock twice in all that time, Rhys has decided that he wants to go climbing, properly, out in the open air, with ropes and things.

The preparation consists of many visits to The Castle climbing wall in North London. Reports back range from "I just missed getting up a 4c" to "will 5b be OK?". I disabuse him of the vagaries of the grading systems in use and that Font 5b doesn't equate to rock 5b. For Christmas he gets some clips and a belay device. He buys some boots, Dad's hand-me-downs don't cut the mustard in the "cool" of the Castle even if they have been up West Buttress Eliminate on Cloggy. A harness and the must have of a chalk bag complete the attire.

"I'm coming home next weekend can we get a day out on rock?". His mother says "You always said if he asked you'd take him out".

Saturday dawns bright, unfortunately he still has his student days problem with Saturday mornings, they don't exist. Eventually the car is loaded and we're off to Fall Bay, arriving about midday - at high tide. We did know, honest.

People on just about everything in sight, then Tim Hoddy arrives so we have a chat and suddenly there are free routes. Gethsemane is a nice start and he seems to cope with it, even if the belay device doesn't let the rope out too evenly. I must admit I have a similar problem (ask Haydn).

Devil's Truck looks inviting so we pop across. Tim and co are well ensconced. A boulder problem Severe followed by a nice little hand-jamming session on The Nose sees us on the ledge, where we talk about nut placements, tying in to belays, clove hitches, figures of eight and suchlike.

As we walk up the terrace the wall above takes my eye, I tried a route on this about twenty years ago but backed off for some reason. Why not give it another go? "Try making a belay here." Fair play the boy's learning and he sets up a decent belay on a natural thread. I augment this and set off.

Interesting, steady as she goes, keep pulling down on the holds, that's a good solid crack, nice nut, check rock, move up. A piece of rock is sitting in what looks like a hole, poke it and it drops away leaving a natural thread, put a sling round it, clip in, move up. Almost at the top, very loose, find the solid bits, edge up. Got the ridge and



Evans - Man and Boy *pic Tim Hoddy*

it's done. Belaying on an almost knife edge ridge is interesting. "OK you can untie now".

Looking down things don't seem to be quite right, there seems to be a rope end lying on the ground and he is still tied to the crag. "Well there was a lot of knots and I untied the figure of eight". Tied back on and untied from the crag he sets off.

**"Well there was a lot of knots and I untied the figure of eight"**

The nuts (he calls them bolts in deference to his climbing wall experience! Well nuts and bolts go together so perhaps the geographer has picked up some engineering jargon) come out

alright, except for the one he climbs past in his hurry to get to the Friend. Swing out left from the corner onto the face, almost at the thread. Laying away on a flake, I don't remember doing that, suddenly everything explodes, rock is flying everywhere, he's on the rope, he doesn't go too far but one of the rocks and his chin end up at the same point in time and space. It's only a scratch and he doesn't have to worry about taking the thread out. A couple more moves and he's sitting on the ridge. "How did that happen? Why didn't it happen to you? What would I have done if it had?"

"Just put it down to experience".

Back home I give him one of my old ropes to practise his knots. He takes it, I think I could see him doing some more on the real rock.