



SWMC Newsletter

Winter 05 / 06

www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk

So, how are the resolutions going? Lost that kilo? Managed that extra pull-up? Rolled your last rizla? All very laudable, though in my experience most climbers are quite fitness-obsessed, goal-driven and fanatical enough already.

Perhaps the life / work balance needs reassessing. For an unfortunate few this means trying to get out more. For the rest of us, it's about working just hard enough to not get sacked while waiting for the weekend to come around.

Which brings me neatly to my personal slackness. My resolution is not 'lead an E in the summer' or even 'top rope a 7 by easter'. No, I'm happy in the severes and the sixes. My training is all working towards one goal - no more late SWMC newsletters.

You may have noticed the issue / month relationship has been slipping like sheath over core on old rope. I've already used the devious method of moving from a specific month to the more forgiving seasonal approach. Next is the editorial equivalent of rail companies banning timetables, a guaranteed method of never being late.

But before it reaches that, I will try harder. Train, visualize, diet, train some more. I will try harder, I will try harder, I will...

Simon Williams
Newsletter editor

Wear your club with pride

You may have seen hoodies or polo shirts with the club crest worn by some of the longer standing members. Now you too can own such a garment. Prices are on a sliding scale - the more we buy, the cheaper it gets. For instance, t-shirts range from £7.49 to £12.99, but for the cheapest price we need over 36 orders. Women's and children's sizes are available.

Listed below are some of the options. Initial interest should be registered with **duck.waddle@gmail.com**. When there's some idea of numbers, prices can be worked out. When we're in a position to order, it'll be cash up front!

Polo Shirt	£9.00 - £15.00
Short-sleeve t-shirt	£7.50 - £13.00
Long-sleeve t-shirt	£10.00 - £16.00
Sweatshirt	£12.00 - £22.00
Hoodies	£15.00 - £27.00
Fleeces	£15.50 - £25.00
Rugby shirt	£26.00 - £16.00
Shirts	£11.00 - £27.00

Membership fees due

It's that time again. The club wants your money, but you get a new laminated, credit-card-sized membership card in return. And of course all the usual benefits too numerous to mention.

If you've paid already, the new card will be on its way soon. If you pay by standing order, please change it to the new rate of £12.75 or £10.75 concession. If you didn't pay before the end of January, your membership will have ceased, but it's easy to rejoin by filling out another form.

To get a form or for any other queries, get in touch with the membership secretaries, Tim Hoddy (membership@swmc.ath.cx) for west, John Custance (membership.east@tiscali.co.uk) for east.

Annual General Meeting report

Attendance was good at the 2005 Annual General Meeting at the Royal Oak, Whitchurch, in November. There was little change on the committee, as all members who chose to stand were re-elected unopposed. Sylvia Noorbhai stepped down as Membership Secretary East, and is replaced by John Custance. Chairman Nigel Lewis announced he would remain as chair for only one more year, after which he will stand down.

Proposed changes to the constitution designed to create a Youth Section were passed without opposition, with John Goodwin appointed as the club's first Child Protection Officer.

Nigel Lewis clarified an earlier decision of the committee to consider funding the replacement of worn fixed gear on climbs in the SWMC area. Nigel reported it had been agreed this was a valid idea, but as it was necessary to first explore liability issues the committee had decided members need not be informed until any policy was drafted. An AGM vote was then taken among members, and it was decided the club should continue to consider a fixed gear replacement policy. On a further vote it was agreed that members should be consulted again before any policy is agreed, after advice concerning legal liability has been sought from the BMC and club insurers.

In keeping with the spirit of the BMC's 'Adopt a Crag' scheme, it was decided that the club should hold one or more 'Clean up a Crag' days. Suggestions for crags that deserve some TLC (one east, one west) should be sent to Ordinary Members Paul Rogers (west) **fathorsepig@yahoo.ie** and Nik Goile (east) **Nik.goile@cdsm.co.uk**.

Annual dinner

The club event of the year was a great success again. Sketty Hall in Swansea provided an excellent dinner, while Bryan Smith thoughtfully waited until after the meal to describe in graphic detail and with photographic

evidence the impressive 'snotsicles' he grew during his Polar Challenge success. The club's thanks go to Bryan for the entertainment and Nik Goile, Ordinary Member West, for arranging a fine evening.

Llety Llwyd, the club hut

The shower cubicles are in dire need of rebuilding, and hut warden Bryan Smith is proposing to end the division of the washroom into male and female areas. This is not to encourage dubious Scandinavian style love-ins, but to better use the available space. Anyone with strong views on this matter should make them known to Bryan **bryan@bhsmith.fsnet.co.uk**.

In view of the notorious chilliness of the dorms, Bryan is considering the practicality of putting a radiator in each sleeping room. If the strict ascetics among us are opposed to such molly-coddling, they should register their discontent with Bryan. Your editor, having visited over Christmas and packed only an old two season bag, believes it is an excellent idea.

Remember, all hut bookings are still through Steve Lucocq, contact **hut@swmc.ath.cx** or 07789 551 591.

The committee

Chair

Nigel Lewis [nrlal@aol.com]

Secretary

Alan Rosier [alan.rosier@capita.co.uk]

Treasurer

Llio Elgar [lloelgar@yahoo.com]

Barn Warden

Bryan Smith [bryan@bhsmith.fsnet.co.uk]

Newsletter Editor

Simon Williams [williamssj6@cf.ac.uk]

Membership Secretary, East

John Custance [membership.east@tiscali.co.uk]

Membership Secretary, West

Tim Hoddy [tim.hoddy@ntlworld.com]

Ordinary Member, East

Paul Rogers [fathorsepig@yahoo.ie]

Ordinary Member, West

Nik Goile [Nik.goile@csm.co.uk]

Upcoming...

The next newsletter will be Spring 06, due out in March / April, if I try harder. If you have anything to contribute - trip reports, news items, letters, photos, rants etc - email Simon Williams [williamssj6@cf.ac.uk]

Climbing for young people

SWMC members Linda Jensen and Gary Lewis run a club for young climbers on Saturdays at the Welsh International Climbing Centre (WICC). Linda, also BMC Area Youth Coordinator for South Wales and Gary, BMC Climbing Wall Rep, hold the climbing and coaching session between 10.30 and 1 pm for youngsters who've learnt the basic climbing skills and are keen to improve their wall climbing with a view to entering the BRYCS.

The BRYCS is a friendly competition run by the BMC for seven to fifteen-year-olds, consisting of three local rounds followed by a national final. Young climbers at the Saturday club don't have to enter the competition, as anyone keen to develop climbing skills and fitness is welcome.

If a youngster wants to go along on Saturdays, they need to first do an introductory course at a local climbing wall, learning how to put on a harness, tie onto the rope and maybe how to belay. If afterwards they're still keen, they should call Gary or Linda (see below for contact details). Kit can be hired to get started, and Gary and Linda can advise on buying new or help find second hand gear.

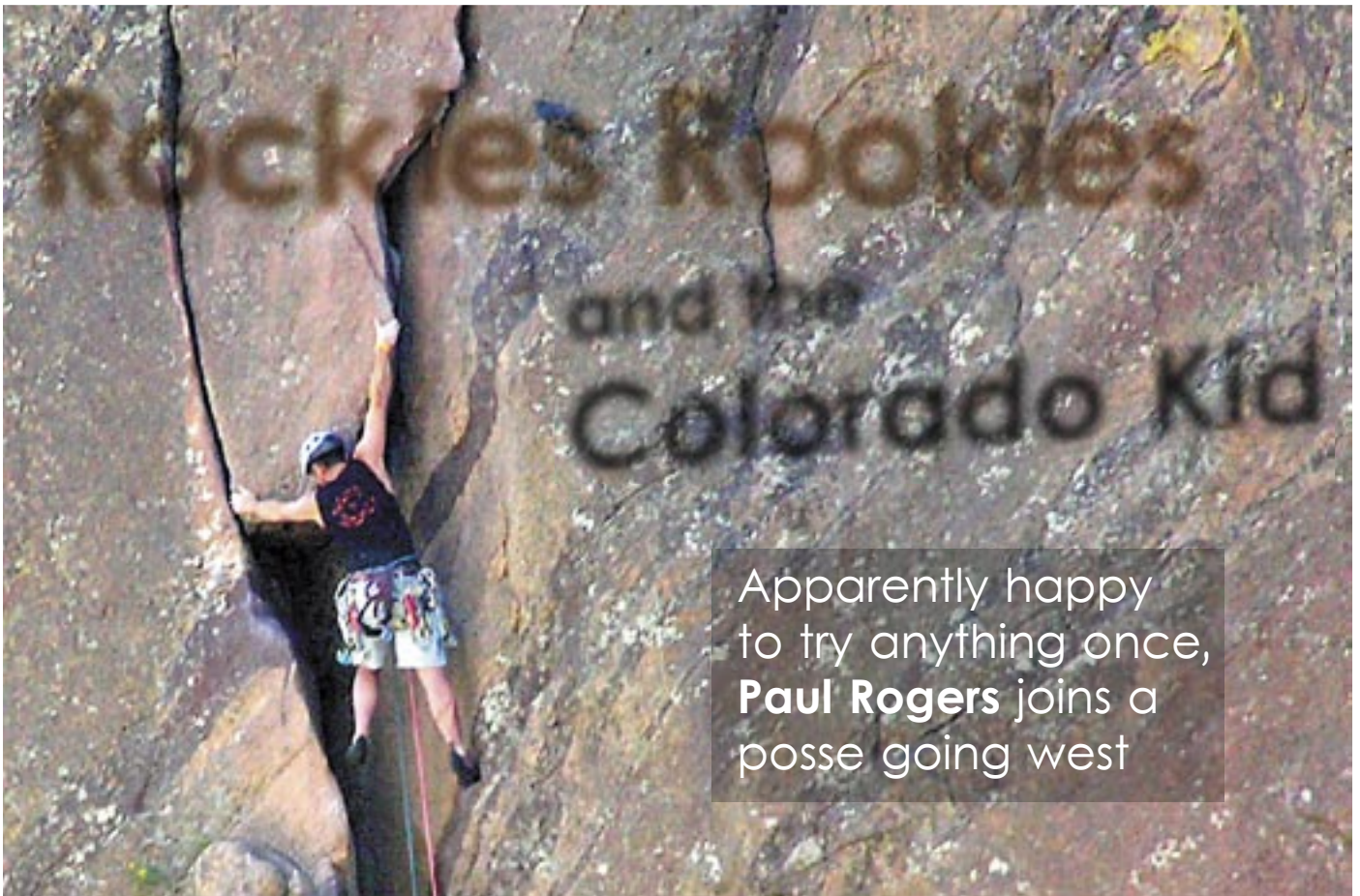
As most of the youngsters are keen to gain some independence, the Saturday club helps them learn

the skills to do this safely. Over a training period of anything from weeks to months, dependant on age and ability, new members introduced into the group eventually pair up and climb independently. They'll belay each other while an adult keeps a watchful eye, usually one of the parent volunteers will be able to do this after a short training session. Gary and Linda are always keen to include parents and experienced climbers as belay bunnies.

As confidence and fitness grow the youngsters can start to lead climb. Young climbers who become established members of the Saturday morning climbing group may be invited to become Youth Members of the SWMC, and able to take part in various outdoor sessions. These include a few all day or weekend meets a year, and most sunny Saturday afternoons after the indoor session there's climbing on one of the local crags. A helmet is essential for all outdoor climbing.

If you would like to join the SWMC Youth Section but can't attend the Saturday morning club, you may still be eligible - call to make special arrangements.

Gary Lewis: 029 20214677; gary.lewis2@ntlworld.com
Linda Jensen: 029 20652992; Linda.Jensen@ntlworld.com



Dave Wiltshire on Bastille Crack (5.10)

America had never been top of my list for climbing destinations, so I was sceptical about joining Dean Howard, Dave Wiltshire and Niall Campbell for three weeks climbing in Colorado. Then I remembered the wise words of Oscar Wilde, "Try everything once except incest and country dancing." "What the hell?!" I thought, packed my Stetson and chewing tobacco and set off.

Colorado is bang in the middle of North America, straddling the great continental divide of the Rockies.

We flew in to Denver, hired a Dodge Viper with impressive looks, appalling performance and the turning circle of a ship, and drove the 45 minutes north to Boulder. A cosmopolitan place right at the edge of the Rockies, Boulder must be America's fittest town with everyone we met training for a marathon or triathlon.

Yellow Spur is eight pitches long and an absolute joy from start to finish

The first day was shopping and rest. We had breakfast in Dot's Diner, highly recommended with loads of great food, both healthy (Greek omelette) and more typically American (pancakes with lashings of syrup). The Chinese on University Hill is also recommended. At \$5 a meal, it totally rocks. At Neptune sports we bought half the shop, footwear prices being comparable to over here but clothing half price.

Our first climbing was on the immaculate sandstone of Eldorado Canyon, a 15 minute drive from Boulder. First route was **Yellow Spur**, a 5.8 three star classic with a 5.10 crux pitch. We never got to make much sense of the grades. 5.9 is meant to be HVS but some felt like E2. Yellow Spur is eight pitches long and an absolute joy from start to finish. The route wanders up a large wall with increasing exposure until the top pitch, which follows a lovely gritstone-esque arête to finish with a fantastic view, Denver far in the south and the Rockies to the north.

Back at the bottom we discovered chipmunks had gnawed two



Way to go yet (see next page)

large holes in the bags and made off with our lunch. Dave had watched them playfully scampering around from his stance on the first belay, but he'd no idea of the destructive power of the filthy vermin.

Most of our trip was spent climbing in the canyon. There were plenty of other places to try but the quality of the rock was too good to leave, and we soon had our eyes on some projects.

The first of these was a 5.10 half-trad half-sport route called **Bolting for Glory**. I decided to have a bash at this on the 2nd day in scorching sun with dicey guts. The route began with a steep traverse into an immaculate layback/jamming crack, up to a large ledge with as much gear as you'd care to place. On the second pitch things got tougher and the bolts began, with the first uncomfortably high. I sweated my way up and clipped the loose 8mm homemade hanger, then pressed on up insecure crimps and rounded polished holds with polished nubbins for feet. I just managed to clip the bolt before resting on it to wipe away the sweat and curse myself for an act of jessory. I finished the route with another rest and put it down to poor conditions. A few days later Dean and Dave climbed the route clean and spent the rest of the holiday reminding me that I hadn't.

Too many great routes

It's hard to pick a favourite route so here's the top three. **Rose Crucifixion** is a classic of the area. You scramble up a huge ramp and over some large boulders in a very precarious position to a sloping ledge. From here you launch into the traverse with the instant exposure of a 100 foot drop snapping at your heels. The first move is the hardest, then sustained fingery climbing leads to a hanging belay. Then two vertical pitches lead to the second massive ramp, where you can descend or carry on up the excellent **Alice in Bucketland**.

An awesome name for an awesome climb. The first pitch involves a long reach for a blind hold over a steep roof with protection below your feet. Niall did an excellent job of this

and swung around the roof before making his way diagonally up and left to the hanging belay. Interestingly he managed to miss out most of the buckets and followed a lower thin seam, which made the climbing harder but better protected.

The second pitch was my lead. From the belay I moved up and right to the crux roof and tried to fiddle in a wire. The position was amazing with the second ramp a long way below us and the valley floor way

"Similar to So Uncool at The Gap"

below that. A few wires under the roof, one of which might hold, and off I went. I found a couple of crimps and pulled hard and was soon on the main face. Unlike most of the climbs we'd done there was no obvious wear on the rock indicating where to go. The holds consisted of huge incut bowls that were great for hands and feet but useless for gear. Eventually I reached an old peg in a layback crack that told me I was on route.

Probably the most memorable pitch was the **Western Buttress**. The crux is a thin layback crack at the bottom to reach a narrow ledge beneath a gently overhanging crack. The crack is ascended until a few powerful moves lead to a rest on easier angled rock. The next move, although not the hardest is certainly the boldest. With a peg some way below your feet you have to pull on a very small crimp (similar to the one on So Uncool at the Gap) and smear with your feet until better holds can be reached. After this the climbing eases but is still bold to the top of a huge flake where you can lie down and belay.

A Long walk

In the last week of our stay Niall and I explored some of the surrounding area and went for a walk up Long's Peak, a 14,000 foot mountain. An easy-to-follow trail leads from the valley bottom up through a pine forest to the start of the mountain proper. From there you follow a well-trodden path through boulder fields and continue around the back of the mountain to emerge onto a gentle



Dave and Dean on Outer Space, The Bastille

rock slab that takes you to the top. The terrain is never technical and the views from the top are well worth the effort. In the visitors' book on the summit Niall noted he was the first person from Ebbw Vale to conquer the peak.

Every one a classic

All in all, a very worthwhile trip. If any of the climbs were around here they'd be instant classics. Taking two ropes is recommended, as some routes would be very awkward to protect with a single, and it certainly made abseiling off the routes quicker and easier. Like all new venues it takes a few days to get into the style of the climbing, and it will certainly improve your jamming skills without trashing your hands.



Rucksack chomping chipmunk



Niall climbing West Face on the Bastille



Dean climbing the direct start to Bastille Crack, 5.10d



Paul nearing the end of the crux traverse on Rose Crucifixion