



SWMC Newsletter

Winter '09

[**www.southwalesmountainreering.co.uk**](http://www.southwalesmountainreering.co.uk)



Hello from your editor

Happy new year, and welcome to the first newsletter of 2009.

Hope you've all had a great start to the year. This quarter we have an article from Steve Lucocq on some Welsh ice that's been recently in condition, and an account of Chris Wyatts incident in the Dolomites a couple of summers ago.

Deadline for articles for the next newsletter is March 31st

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Welsh Ice

Steve Tree Lucocq

OK it went a little something like this.....New years eve in North Wales myself and Rob Howell wanted a long day on the mountain to earn a few drinks that evening. Super keen or super stupid we decided on a 5am wakeup and out by 6. And to be fair we managed this somehow. I drove down to Nant Peris and the thermometer on the car reading -2 so we were hoping for some ice to climb. We had planned to climb Sergeant's gully on Cynr Las. On leaving the car in the dark there was plenty of moving water from the stream so hope slowly faded. A good stomp up to the start of the route and it was a non-starter. The sun started to show itself and we stared in awe of the golden disc in the sky. We then continued up into Cwm Glas and Parsley Fern Gully had a good streak of ice and some good-looking snow at the top. We decided to do the first pitch of Sinister Gully that was a branch on the left of the gully. This was a good pitch of solid ice with little stepped sections (Perhaps grade 2). We then traversed right into Parsley Fern Gully and an ice stomp to the top where we finished on some great neve to the top of Crib Y Ddysgl. We then went over to the top of Snowdon where there were many people mostly on their mobile phones (this was not to Robs taste). Snowdon summit was a complete reverse to the morning in Cwm Glas where we had not seen a sole. So we dropped back down to Pen Y Pass and then Nant Peris where we talked about how we need to get back out to the Alps. A short visit to Pete's for two of those, one of these and a few more of the other. Then back to the hut for shower, drinks, cranium, new year fireworks, mulled wine and bed by 12.15am!



Rob Howell on Parsley Fern Gully

Back to Swansea on New Years day (Via the RAC boulders) and I get a call from Rob Eagle that's he was keen to do a route in the Brecon Beacons. He would not give me much data about it, but told me he had had his eye on it for a few years. Ok 8.30am start (a bit tamer) and Rob picks me up with still good cold weather. We shoot over to Brecon and Rob points to Craig Cwm-Du on the OS map. We drove as close as we could and parked in a suitable place. A quick walk of half an hour and from a distance it's looking good. Four or five pitches of good-looking ice with interest. We sorted the kit and dumped the bags. Quickly we got to the start of the route and had no knowledge of the route and if it was even do-able. Both chomping on the bit to get on with it we decided Rob with good experience of Ice climbing would lead anything that looked tricky. Off he went and the first pitch was soon complete and was good. The second pitch was a steep column of ice and a slabby section of ice to follow. Fair play to Rob he led it with style and panache. Then there was the third pitch! There was an old fallen tree across the waterfall covered in ice. Again Rob shot off

and dealt with the pitch very nicely. This pitch felt like the real deal with good ice climbing to the left of the ice covered fallen tree a little tricky move across it, then up onto a plateau and a very good steep section of perfect ice to finish. We were both beaming when I came up to the top of the third pitch. A quick easy forth pitch that I led for the tick and we were at the top. It was such a perfect day where there were so many variables that all came together at the right time. Days really don't get much better than this!

It turned out that I think the route was called Virgin Falls above Blaencwm and has been climbed before. It is a National Nature Reserve so should be respected.

HUT Summary 2008

By Sara Davies

[Ed Note - The SWMC hut in Deiniolen has seen several improvements in the last year, which have been summarised below. Massive thank you to Sara Davies and Ian Gouge for giving up lots of their time in taking the initiative and making all this happen. The below is a summary of the detailed report Sara went through at the AGM]

A summary of works on the hut is below. These were mostly done during three love the hut weekends in spring/summer last year:

- Fridges and microwaves replaced
- Amazing deep, deep clean of the kitchen
- Drying room and kitchen painted
- Rusty drying room radiators painted
- General clean through
- Drainage trench dug across track and garden
- Dry stone wall repaired and made higher
- Grass/weeds cut
- Furniture non-compliant with fire regs removed
- Bedrooms deep cleaned (including removing big spiders!)
- Bed sheets laundered (hasn't been done for 4 or 5 years – yuck!)
- Floors repaired
- Ceiling T&G removed by the sparky replaced
- Septic tank checked (that was a lovely job!)
- Post box fitted
- BMC hut guidelines and regulations checked from legal perspective
- All priority tasks in the Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan completed
- More deep cleaning
- Planed fire door in non-members room and re-painted
- Fixed broken chairs in the kitchen
- New coffee table and comfy chairs
- Leaking pipe in male bathroom repaired
- First Aid box attached in kitchen
- Shower curtain replaced
- Bolt on toilet door fixed
- Strimmer bought and outside area cleared
- Toilet doors sanded and re-varnished
- Electrics Re-wired
- Boiler Fixed!! [Ed This last improvement was managed with hours to spare before a large SWMC group arrived for new years eve. Thanks again to Ian & Sara for their time and effort in this. Finding tradesmen willing to drive down the track has proved to be a lengthy process!]



A big thank you to everyone who got involved. There are a number of people willing to put time into the hut, but no-one is yet willing to take on the role of Barn Warden since Bryan Smith had to retire last year. Any takers?

Dolomite Trip Report

By Chris Wyatt

[Ed - not exactly a full trip report, more an account of Chris's epic out there from 2007. Should whet everybody's appetite for the 2009 trip!]



The "Tissi" route on **Torre Venezia** was for many years rated as one of the classic Extremes in the Dolomites. It was helped to the reputation by the crux pitch, the "40 metre traverse" (actually only 30 metres). Traverses are always just the thing for justifying a route's reputation, particularly when they take such a steep and exposed bit of wall as this one. What at first glance looks hard, turns out to be merely airy gymnastics on splendidly positive and solid holds. You just have to take care not create too much rope drag. In addition to this celebrated traverse, interest is also to be found on the steep corner preceding it, to say nothing of the rest of the climb. Indeed the difficulties are pretty sustained right up to the last pitch, which deposits you, a little the worse for wear, on the "Circular Terrace". The rock quality is excellent, if a little grassy on the initial pitches.

Well it looked pretty good to me. One last route to cap off a brilliant couple of weeks.

We had travelled all over the Dolomites ticking off classics on the Tofana di Rozes, Tre Cima de Lavaredo, Sella, and Pordoi. Throughout the trip I had been forced by the youths I was with to sleep in the open, get wet, climb, climb climb and I had hated every moment of it. Now it was time to get a little of my own way. I had persuaded Mike (Barclay) to sleep in a hut, and have a proper meal and a glass of wine. And here we were on the morning of the last day looking up at this amazing tower; 500m and 16 pitches of brilliant classic climbing.

By now we were slick machines. The first 12 pitches ran like sand in a timer. The traverse was a cruise. The 13th pitch looked straight forward enough on the topo. I led off

The problem with a 16 pitch topo is that there are not too many details. I followed the rock up to a tape, clipped in and decided to go slightly left. The rock deteriorated and the protection ran out. In areas of loose rock there is not much point in putting in too much protection anyway. It pulls out

bringing the mountain with it. What you need is a cool head. You go up slowly, testing the holds. Well that's at least how I was thinking at the time and was actually quite proud of myself when I realised I had climbed 20m of rock that resembled skin after a long bath. There above me was a large flake, firmly attached to the mountain. At last I would get some gear and could take a proper look at the situation.

I got my hands behind the flake, pulled gently while extracting a sling. That rock had been sitting on that face for a couple of thousand years just waiting for that gentle pull and freedom! Of course I went with it.

During the fall, I had plenty of time to think.

Would I make peace with God? Would my life flash before me? Well the truth is that the words "When will that bloody rope go tight?" Went through my mind. At that point it did and I found myself 5m to the left and below Mike.

"You OK?"

"Yeah!"

"Want to try again?"

I noticed my foot hurt. I put weight on it and it hurt more.

"No!"

We had a little think and decided we had three options:

- 1) Finish the climb with Mike leading
- 2) Call the helicopter
- 3) Abseil off.

Option one was clearly impossible. My foot was swelling and I could not put any weight on it. Option 2 was just not British – and I had forgotten the Italian emergency number anyway. So we settled for option 3.

It was a long Abseil – but Mike did the Job brilliantly. He even managed to get a line down the traverse. I remember being extra careful with the rope as the pain waves came in. 3 hours later we were down and I decided to have a rest while Mike went for help.

I called Jenny (My wife) – to tell her not to worry but that there had been some complications. And then started sliding down the screen on my backside.

Soon a couple of Yankee hikers arrived. An amusing conversation followed which went something like this:

"Hi!"

"Hi"

"How are you!"

"Injured"

"You're kidding"

"No!"

"Can we have a look?"

"Sure"

(To each other) "I would say that's a fractured Calcaneus" Bla Bla

(To me). "Doesn't look good!"

I reply. "Are you guys Medics or something?"

“Yes we’re trauma specialists back home”

Well I was thankful to be in good hands. Then Mike arrived, closely followed by the cavalry. They loaded me on to the stretcher and two ox men walked me and the stretcher down the loose scree. – It really was amazing how tough these guys were. I actually got quite a good feeling from the respect they obviously had for us when we told them we had abseiled the traverse pitch.

Then came the Landover tour down into the valley, the night in Agordo Hospital. The carry through the airport in Venice, the 10 days in hospital back in Swansea and the 8 weeks before I could climb again.

I’m not 100% sure how many lives I’ve used up – but there is definitely one less in the bank. My thanks to Mike for getting me down safely, two American doctors, the Agordo Mountain rescue team and the rest of the crew for getting me home.

Misc News

Trustees

Guy Richardson and Dave Parsons have retired from the role of Trustee. This was to enable the trustee role to be handed over to members who are more actively involved with the club. Chris Wyatt and Nigel Lewis have offered to take over this vital and responsible role, so a big thank you to them.

Rams Tor

Adrian Berry and friends have replaced the bolts at Rams Tor, so a big thanks to everyone involved. This west facing crag is just round the corner from mumbles in Swansea, and is the ideal venue for a winters afternoon or summers evening

Club Subscriptions

By John Custance

As membership secretary (east) it is one of my duties to welcome you to 2009 by reminding you that not only is your subscription now due: they've gone up too!

- 1) New rates: Adults, £15.00, Concessions, £13.00 and Juniors £11.00.
- 2) Please ignore this reminder if you have already sent off cash or cheque.
- 3) Because of the new rates and changes being made to the standing order mandates if you pay by standing order you will receive personalised information about this.

Please note

- 1) Subscription runs from 1 January to 31 December each year regardless of when you join but if you first join after 1 November your subscription lasts to the end of the succeeding year.
- 2) Standing orders: Please observe the instructions in the personalised email you may have already received or in the mailed pack you will receive.
- 3) It goes without saying that if your subscription lapses then you will lose all the advantages that being a member provides, and two of these are, to name but many: access to the website Bulletin Board and British Mountaineering Council Third Party Indemnity.
- 4) The constitution gives one months grace and the BMC insurance has two months grace, both from 1st January. Please note that if you are registered with the BMC before end February you will receive an invitation to the annual dinner and AGM, those over 18 may vote at the AGM.

johncustance@googlemail.com

Dates for the diary

In addition to the meets listed below, club members are active throughout the year. Look at the SWMC bulletin board www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk for more details

North Wales

10th -13th April,

Contact nikgoile@gmail.com for details

Dolomites

Week of Saturday 18th July

Contact Chris Wyatt for more details

The Ruckus

Dynamic Rock Winter Bouldering Series 2009, Swansea

www.dynamicrock.co.uk

21st January 2009

1st March 2009

29th March 2009

Registration at 12pm

"Obsession" a talk on sports climbing by **Gary Gibson**

Friday 20th March, 8pm

Boulders Climbing Wall Cardiff

Proceeds of the evening will go to the South Wales Bolt Fund, further details on

www.southwalesboltfund.co.uk

If you have anything to contribute to the newsletter, email [tuckergd@hotmail.com]