

South Wales Mountaineering Club



Winter 2011 Newsletter

Welcome to the Winter 2011 newsletter of the South Wales Mountaineering Club. Well that's the first easy sentence over with. I'm now like a rabbit caught in the headlights, faced with the task of filling up the rest of the editorial. I won't bore you with any personal details, that'll be in the next issue when I humiliate the whole committee en masse. Obviously I'm always looking for articles of any length on any subject that might be of interest to members, so basically that's anything related to climbing, mountaineering or the great outdoors. Climbing, bouldering, mountaineering, skiing, ski mountaineering, running, walking, fell running, nature, geology... The list goes on, I really will accept anything. On that note, if you're ever unhappy with the content of a newsletter, the answer is simple, just submit your own article.

This newsletter is mainly focused on the club's recent 50th anniversary and the recent AGM. However as I was sent it I've included a trip report from club trip to Sardinia in 2008, something to keep you going through the dark winter months. I hope to have a schedule of meets in time for the next newsletter sometime in the spring. If you want to discuss anything related to the newsletter, website or any general PR issues, please email me at comms@southwalesmountaineering.org.uk. I will provide a postal address for those without an email address, but I'm just about to move house soon, hopefully. And with that I'm finished for now. I hope you all have a wonderful festive season and all of us on the committee wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please note that Subscriptions are now due

SWMC Subscriptions are due for 2012 they are due on 1 January each year and if you wish to remain a member now is the time to pay. The fees are

£15.00 Full

£13.00 Concessions

£11.00 Children between 7 and 17

You can either pay John Custance, 35 Gwenfo Drive, Wenvoe, Cardiff, CF5 6BR. Or Steve Hill, 60 Huntingdon Way, Tŷcoch, Swansea. SA2 9HN.

Or there are full details of how to pay using a standing order on the website - www.southwalesmountaineering.org.uk

If you have a standing order, please make sure that you are paying the right amount.

Chairmans AGM Report 2011 by Ian Goudge

The start of the year saw a repeat of the previous year with good winter climbing conditions. Many club members were out climbing in North and South Wales, as well as the Lake District and Scotland.

In the early spring a small group from the club headed to Malta to grab some sunshine and sports climbing. During the spring and early summer the club was at its busiest time for meets and events. There were lots of the regular trips and meets, from beginner days to the annual first lead weekend. These trips were a mixture of the "official" club trips and ones organised ad-hoc amongst friends. There was a return to Lundy this year, thank you to Chris Wyatt for organising the excellent accommodation and transport to the island.

There was a repeat of the trip to Skye, again organised by Jules Stephens. This is establishing itself as a regular and popular club trip. The summer also saw club members making trips to the Alps. It is good to see that the mountaineering genre of climbing is still alive within the club.

Club members have been truly international this year with members climbing in South America, USA, Thailand, Norway and New Zealand.

A welcome return to the meets fixtures this year was a weekend of rope safety, covering techniques such as escaping the system and rescuing injured climbers. I would like to see this weekend repeated every year as the skills learnt are invariably (and hopefully) required very infrequently. I thoroughly recommend that people attend this weekend to either learn new skills or for the more experienced people to refresh their knowledge. There has been a few accidents in recent years, thankfully with no fatalities, which highlights the importance of such skills.

Led by the likes of Alan Rosier and Dafydd Jones the re-equipping of fixed gear on sports routes in South Wales has continued with a variety of grades and venues getting the make-over.

The club hut in North Wales is in good shape and running smoothly. The bookings for the year have been steady with several over-subscribed club meets being held at the hut. Whilst it is fantastic to see that there are many club members using the hut, it is disappointing to see such a small number putting their hands up to help out at the work weekend. It is up to club members to help maintain the club's hut, after all it is our main asset. The hut does not maintain itself and requires input from the members to ensure that it continues to be kept fit for use. Contractors for the bathroom work remain illusive, but it is hope that this can be resolved soon and work started. Once this is completed and word is out of the new bathrooms then I hope the popularity of the hut will increase again.

Over the past 12 months the club's Wiki has developed significantly and is proving to be a very valuable and popular tool. Details for many of the climbing venues have been updated including new routes and new venues. A big thank you has to go to Tim Hoddy, Alan Rosier and all that have helped them in developing this resource. The new guidebook is making steps towards publication – more later.

Work by the committee continued on resolving the legal status of the club. Again we will come to this later. There is now generic email accounts for each committee position, this will aid in the continuity of running the club when there are changes in personnel. The possibility of a new club website is currently being looked at and developed. The aim of this is to make the availability and distribution of club events and activities easier.

Finally a thank you to the current committee for all their work over the past year.



SWMC 50th meet in North Wales by Sara Davies

On September 25th 2010, seventeen current and former members descended on Lletty Llwyd for the SWMC 50th anniversary weekend meet in North Wales. Most people arrived Friday evening, with Alys and Nik contributed to the weekend celebrations by going to the local supermarket and sherpaing enough food for a monster buffet on the Saturday night – thank you both!

The weekend's activities represented the varying interests, diversity and broad spectrum of climbing, mountaineering and general rock-related stuff within the club. Oh, and a bit of alcohol, and many swapped tales of mountaineering and

climbing adventures.

On Saturday, Hayden Griffiths, Dave Ewing, Phil Thomas and Paul O'Neill went to the big sea cliffs of Anglesey. Sylvia Noorbhai and Nigel Lewis had a monster mountain adventure on Lliwedd, with its usual route finding shenanigans. They reported feeling reassured by sweetie wrappers and chewing gum on the stances, as this meant that there had been people there before them, so they weren't lost!?! Lowri Roberts, Sandra Hurley, Liz Corcoran and Lisa Elliot had a successful, but very, very chilly day on the shady classic Hope (VDiff) on Idwal Slabs. Nik Goile and Alys Rook did some classic VS mountain routes in Llanberis Pass. This somehow turned into a long day, with Alys turning up back at the hut wearing a head-torch and very hungry – at least she's predictable!



In case Mrs Evans is reading this, Gwyn didn't climb at all in Llanberis Pass with Mick Leroyd! Ian Goudge, Joe Gallagher and Jayne Hoskins (team buffet!) stayed local to the hut ready for their responsibilities later in the day. Ian led two routes he'd been eyeing up for a while in the Serengeti area, while introducing Jayne and Joe to the delights of "smear and disappear!". Team Buffet later moved to Bus Stop Quarry where they met up with a SWMC former member Garan Comley. Garan says a big hello to many of the Westies – Tim Hoddy, Mike Danford, Kim Collis, Jo Ellis, Anne Pitman. Mid afternoon Team Buffet retreated back to the hut to, well, make the buffet!

Saturday evening everyone returned safe and sound to Lletty Llwyd to fill their bellies and consume just one or two alcoholic beverages (ahem!). SWMC even had a 50th birthday cake! Sunday was a slightly fuzzy start for a few people, but after the obligatory hut clean-up, the North Wales adventures continued. We even had wall-to-wall sunshine! In North Wales!?! Liz and Lisa got themselves together for an early start and enjoyed a day walk up Snowdon. Nik, Mick, Alys, Sylvia, Hayden, Dave and Phil went to Tremadog. Nigel, Lowri, Ian, Joe, Jayne and Sara enjoyed the Moelwyns.



The Four Amigos (Chairmen)

Thank you everyone for making such a fun meet with such a diverse range of current and former members. It was good to hear Phil Thomas' tales of his trips with the estate agent to buy the hut when it was a simple run-down farm animal barn, complete with cow sh*t, but no electrics, water, windows or roof! In total there were three former chairmen, which with the current chairman too, represented fourteen years of SWMC. We're glad to hear that Gwyn recovered from his injuries relatively quickly. And in response to Paul O'Neill, it's your turn to cook the dinner next time!

Sardinia climbing trip by Dave Payne

On the last night in South Wales, we stayed at Dylan's luxury apartment in Cardiff. Bizarrely we needed a security code to get into a shopping center before gaining the door to the flat. In the morning we were treated to smoothies made with the worlds loudest blender, which probably woke up half of Cardiff. We caught the Terra bus to London to catch the inexplicably cheap Ryan airplane. For the price of the ticket, I thought we might be winding up rubber



bands to get off the ground.

On landing in Alghero airport, I got the first hint that cars may be an issue for me on this trip. The car hire place would not accept debit or my credit card for the deposit. With some help from Nick and patience from the hire car guy, we eventually got our cars.

After a few hours driving south west, it was getting late and less than ideal place was found to bivvy. Since it was dark and late a car park off the road seemed good enough.

In the morning the view was surprisingly good with a valley and crag looking down on us.

We headed off again towards Cala Gonone and got our first taste of busy town traffic. In one of the towns, while looking for a supermarket we got separated. Nick, Tucker and Rob were in one car and Myself, Dylan and James in the other. I ended up heading out of town on the wrong road with a barrage of conflicting directions from Dylan and James. I then turned the wrong way up a one way lane and bumped an on coming car. Fortunately no one was hurt, and the car slightly damaged. Dylan called the others, laughing at what I had done, and heard the others had just been stopped by military police for driving the wrong way up a one way street. We spent most of the day explaining our selves to the police, the hire company and apologising to the couple we hit. Thanks to the generosity of Nick and Tucker I didn't have to foot the whole bill for the fine and insurance excess. While waiting outside the police station I received a call from the bank, informing me some one tried to use my credit card to hire a car in Sardinia. It seemed even the bank wanted to take the piss out of me too. The day was not lost to all, and Tucker, Dylan and James managed to get some climbing done at La Poltrona, the crag near where we bivied the night before.

We found a better bivy spot on the beach at Cala Fuili that night. One so good we were to return to it most nights. The beach was a bit stony and the therma-rest owners probably got more sleep. The beach again had a brilliant view, being in a valley with trees, more cliffs looking down and small waves crash on the shore. In the evening team Sardinia walked to Cala Luna from Cala Fuili, with 'Captain' Tucker and 'Para' Rob competing to carry the huge water container.

We drove down some bumpy roads to an area which may have been Settore El Chorro. Nick and Tucker went to do one long multi-pitch route which sounded run out and Dylan and James went to do another long multi-pitch route. Rob and I went in search of a single pitch crag, and found it apparently fallen down. This crag was described as a popular sports crag, but looked to have had a recent rock fall, and now had one sling insitu. An attempt at some trad climbing was made before we headed back to swim in the river and cook food.

On the sixth day we walked to Cala Goloritze passing goats with bells and ferrel pigs without bells. The pinnacle was busy and we had to wait a while before starting the climb. The route was about six pitches long. After the first pitch, which I knew to be the easiest, I decided to go back down to join Tucker. Nick surprised Italian climbers by climbing trad with Dylan and James in order to over take them and rejoin the route above.

While sun bathing at the base, I was rudely awakened by shouting and rumbling. I legged it and got chased down the path by rocks. I decided to sun bath at the beach, since the girls were better looking then the German with weird eyes, and less likely to bomb me. We walked back to the car in the evening and bivied again at Cala Fuili.

After the excitement of the previous day a more chilled out time was had at Budinetto slabs. This provided some relaxed climbing in the morning shade, until the sun came round and began to cook us. With the sun came a crowd from Benidorm beach, with kids, parasols and poodles.

We headed into town for a break. After a few beers, climbing for the rest of the day was called off. By this stage James was getting quite friendly with the waitress in the pizza restaurant and even forgot his hat so he could go back and see her.

We visted a crag I forget the name of on the penultimate day, which was too hot in morning, so we clambered around on some rocks on the beach. At one point we were trying a steep bouldering problem, which started in deep water, and hence slightly slippery.

On the last day we made the journey back to South Wales with out event, but felt slightly sorry for anyone sitting near us on the plane. The trip all in all was a good laugh with a great bunch of guys. Since I started lead climbing in Pembroke, I was initially skeptical about sports routes. This was my first time, and after the initial shock of climbing harder then VS 4c on rock, I actually enjoyed it. Having said that I was still looking forward placing nuts on Limbo, Stenis Head.