



SOUTH WALES  
**MOUNTAINEERING CLUB**  
**CLWB MYNYDDA**  
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# Winter 2013

Another year, another newsletter. We've got quite a bit in this one. First things first, is the foreword from our illustrious chairman. Russell's obituary is next. He'll be sorely missed by all of us I'm sure. Then we've got another one of Steve's adventures, this time he's been out to Spain. Finally Olly regales us with tales of his summer in the Alps. The confirmed dates for meets are below. We've got a number of meets that don't yet have dates, but as soon as we have them, they'll be on the website and forums. As you may have noticed, we've changed the names of the beginners day, to New Members day, to under line that it's for all and not just for beginners, we've also added sport climbing and bouldering to the line up.

There's also the advert from Up and Under. If you're new the club we get a good discount with them and they're by far and away the best local climbing shop. Great advice and a good range of kit. As always I'm looking for articles for the newsletter. So if you have a good story or a trip report, please email me - [comms@southwalesmountaineering.org.uk](mailto:comms@southwalesmountaineering.org.uk)

Thanks for reading, Matt

## List of trips and meets for 2013

2- 3rd March - Hut Work Weekend - Ian Goudge  
13 April - New Members Day 1, Box Bay - Mary Eggins  
27 April - New Members Day 2, Three Cliffs - Chris Wyatt  
11 May - Tony Penning Rope Safety Day - Ian Goudge  
18 May - New Members Sport Day, venue tbc  
4- 6 May - New Leaders Weekend, North Wales - Paul Griffiths  
8 June - New Leaders Day, venue tbc - Joe Gallacher  
15- 22 June - Skye - Jules Stephens  
June tbc - Bouldering Day, Huntsham - Paul Griffiths  
22- 23 June - North Pembrokeshire - Ian Goudge  
June/July tbc - Dartmoor - Ian Goudge  
6- 7 July - South Pembrokeshire - Tim Boothby  
July tbc - BBQ meet with Lincoln, North Wales - Mary Eggins  
24- 26 August - North Wales - Paul Griffiths  
September tbc - Peak District - Tim Boothby  
Date tbc - Hut Work Weekend, North Wales - Ian Goudge  
Dates tbc - Lake District - John Custance  
13 November - AGM, Cardiff (venue tbc)  
22 November - Annual Dinner, Swansea (venue tbc)



## Russell Riseborough - July 1964 - November 2012

After a short illness we are sorry to announce the death of Russell Riseborough.

Russell or Russ to his friends, was a well liked and valued member of SWMC for the last 5 years and was a determined climber who would push himself to his body's limits. Even a bad fall some 2 years ago didn't stop him from doing the sport he loved. A keen walker and swimmer, ironically Russ was the fittest he had ever been in the last few years. Although he was still partial to the odd fried chicken and chips after a few drinks.

He had a quick wit and a unique sense of humour which both amused and baffled in equal measures!

Unknown to a lot of people he was a talented artist and musician and even wrote and recorded his own songs. In the past he would spend many an evening in his local, the Albany, playing the guitar and singing in a local pub band. He also loved to attend live music gigs and festivals. He had a keen interest in history and had a great knowledge of historical past times and events. A good conversationalist, he could more than hold his own in discussions on a huge variety of subjects and issues.

Last but not least, Russ was a good 'drinking buddy' with a unique personality who is and will continue to be missed greatly.

by Christos Gauci



## Words from the Chairman 2013

Hello and a warm welcome to members new and (old) to the SWMC 2013 .

We have a full complement on the committee this year and there's a potent mix of hard- core , youth , experienced & new committee & climbing activists. In addition there's also lots of adhoc social support and advice so there's every reason to believe this will be a very healthy year for the club.

This is my 3rd year on the committee and to be honest I'm hoping to take a bigger share of the workload than in previous years when it's all kind of just gone on round about me due to the very hard work of others.

I'm keen to put back into the club what I've had out of it in some small way & in particular the help I've had to become a safer more competent climber. The "funny" thing I've noticed about the club...the more I put in...the more I get out in terms of learning, meeting new people , climbing with more and better climbers , just generally having more fun being in the club that not etc etc...

To this end , we are discussing and scoping out a club buddy system , to hook new members up faster with the contacts and or support they need to move them along the path to becoming more active climbers (and more active clubbies). We have some very very long standing members who have a wealth of knowledge of climbing and the climbing scene to be shared and used by new members...we just want to speed up the sharing process.

Also this year , the very experienced and very active committee have put on a cracking events programme ...use it , add to it , drag your buddies along & make these trips even more inclusive and enjoyable. Same goes for the social events...what's the worst thing that can happen ???

Matt Moore or Mary Eggins stuff you at the ten pin bowling (they have pretty much predicted that that's what they'll do)

So have a safe , busy and successful 2013 with your climbing & with your SWMC  
cheers & best regards

Joe



# 4 days of mountain madness by Steve Kedward

I was looking for a new challenge, something physically demanding with a hint of seriousness about it. This was when I stumbled across “Los Integral Tres mil”, a walkers route that takes in all 3000m peaks within the Spanish Sierra Nevada mountain range (around 27 in total). That was it, the flight was booked and preparations started. The plan was to complete the traverse of the main ridge (known as the high level route) in 4 to 5 days, wild camping on route, carrying enough food and provisions for the trek. Water was apparently readily available providing there had been sufficient recent rainfall.

A late flight got me into Malaga around midnight on the 4th October. Onto Granada then Jerez del Marquesado the day after got me to the start of the trek. The village sits at an elevation of around 1200m. With the first peak being at 3088m there was some hight to be gained. A night was spent at La Lomilla bunkhouse where I encountered a bunch of Spaniards drinking cheap imported Scottish whiskey. Being polite I accepted their offer of a Whiskey before setting off to bed after I was warned that one of their group is a prolific snorer. I have never heard a person snore so loudly as this whiskey saturated Spaniard and little sleep was had that night.

The next morning everyone was up early and the usual bunkhouse faffing about began. Breakfast was early and I was setting off by 8am, first light at this time of year in the Nevada's. The start of the trek was an easy mountain path leading up to the Penon del Mojo which was where I had my first encounter with the local wildlife, a young bullock who was determined the path was his. Not wanting to argue with it I stepped aside as it nervously walked past.



The local wildlife

From here on the rest of the path was a wide fire track that lead up to the Refugio Postero Alto. A quick stop for refreshments and I was on my way again. From here the plan was to head over to Picon de Jerez then onto Puntal de Juntillas. From here I would drop down into the valley and camp next to Laguna de Juntillas. By now the sun had made an appearance and temperatures had risen sharply to around 25 degrees Celsius. The walk up to 3000m was a hard push with regular water and rest stops due to the mid day sun and a heavy pack. Not one for hanging around too long I pushed on and reached the first peak, Picon de Jerez. There was a party of three in front of me who also seemed to be finding it hard going with the heat. A quick detour over to the second peak “Puntal de Juntillas” then I dropped down the scree slope into the valley to make camp next to Laguna de Juntillas, a small mountain lake. The other party had also set up camp here and were already making the most of the cool mountain water, not a sight I wanted to see.





**Looking back toward Camp 1 from Atalaya**

3000m peaks I had reached Atalaya del Cuervo

From here on the ridge got quite steep and loose in parts. Luckily I was feeling quite fit and acclimatised.

The ridge although obvious in its direction and route finding now threw up a few unknowns. Many of the peaks along the ridge are unnamed or names differ depending on which map or guidebook you read. I had now started to notice many discrepancies between the guidebook and map I was using, peaks referred to in the guidebook were called something different on the map and vice versa. This sometimes made it confusing as to which peak I was on. Despite the confusion I had reached the huge summit crag of Alcazaba by around mid day. The summit is unreachable from this point and the route follows a traverse around the Gran Vasar "Great shelf".

The week prior to my visit there had been heavy snow fall in the Sierra Nevada's which meant that the Great shelf was laden with snow. Not having any winter gear with me the other option



**Steve on the summit of Mullacen**

Lunch was basic but welcoming after a hard day, a dehydrated meal with some dry fruit for desert. The sun set quickly and temperatures dropped, meaning it was time for bed and only 8PM. With nobody snoring around me I slept quite well and awoke early. After collecting some water from a nearby mountain spring and having breakfast I packed up and set off again. The other party were slightly ahead of me. I made my way up the scree and picked up the main ridge line again. It was much cooler now and I was moving quite fast which meant I had caught up with the other party quite quickly. After bagging some other unnamed

was to make a descending traverse around the toe of Alcazaba. A descent through masses of scree put me at the foot of the crag at its south eastern extremity. Waterfalls along the way posed a welcome sight as I was now running very low on water. The water was clean and had a sweet mineral taste to it. It was now late afternoon and still quite a way off my planned camp 2 so I decided to miss summiting Alcazaba in favour of making camp before the sun set.

Camp 2 (Las Siete Lagunas) is described in the guidebook as one of the most popular and best locations in the Sierra Nevada's. I have to say its not far wrong. I arrived

Day three began with the ascent of Mullacen, Spains highest peak at 3478m. The ascent was a long slog up a winding path but I was at the summit by around 10am.

After the usual photos and bite to eat I was off again and descending Mullacen's west flank. The descent was full of scree and hard on the knees. I almost felt sorry for the walker I had passed who was ascending this way. At the bottom I picked up the dirt track road that winds up to



Veletta. The road was long and arduous with a gradual ascent up to around 3100m where it meets the Elorietta hut. I stopped here for a late afternoon lunch with some Germans who were staying there. The hut is a unmanned stone building.

I could have easily stayed here in comfort but had already decided on camp 3. I was going to drop down to lagunillas de la Virgen and find another spot next to a lake. From the Elorietta hut the descent follows an old Olympic ski run down the valley. This was vaguely marked out with old damaged red poles. A short descent on scree brought me to a small and peaceful lake under

**Elorietta hut**

the summit of Tajos de la Virgen.

Camp 3 - lagunillas de la Virgen



This side of the ridge the sun set was much later and the afternoon sun was still very hot. The lake was taken full advantage of for a wash and freshen up at this point.





After relaxing and sunbathing in the evening sun I collected some fresh water and cooked dinner, as it was my last night camping a feast was had with whatever was left in my sack. The sun must have gotten to me a bit that day as I became complacent, it was going to be an eventful night. Just before bed I emptied my rucksack into my tent, left the bag outside and settled in for a good night sleep. Later that night I was awoken again by foxes scratching outside the tent, as before I yelled and they ran off. Thinking it was the

end of it I went back to sleep. Later on I was awoken again by scratching and then in a state of sleepiness heard a strange sound of something being dragged along the floor. I quickly realised what it was and jumped out of my sleeping bag and tent brandishing a walking pole in one hand and torch in the other. I was stood there at 2am semi naked watching two foxes drag my bag off down the mountain. As I gave chase the one fox ran away and the other circled around back to my tent, I quickly grabbed my rucksack and ran back to the tent. Whether it was stunned or purely courageous the other fox stood there and just stared at me, no amount of yelling would deter it until it finally got bored, turned tail and ran off. I now put my bag in my already crammed tent and went to sleep, there was no more trouble off foxes.

Sunrise was late this side of the ridge and I decided to skip breakfast in favour of setting off early for the long descent down the valley to the village of Lecrin. The walking was relatively easy but very long. I followed a man made stream for around 5 miles until I met a network of mountain roads. After another nervous encounter with a bull I dropped down the fire track for about 4 miles to the small village of Niguelas.



Fire road down to Niguelas

Another few miles and I got into Lecrin by mid afternoon, after a very welcome coffee I caught the bus back to Granada.

# Alpine Dreaming by Ollie Burrows

After surviving the sweaty coach to Chamonix and pitch after pitch of brilliant granite in the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Envers, we were after something a bit meatier. Something we could get committed on. Something to test us.

So after 2 weeks in Cham, living in the woods that were once known as Snells and surviving self-inflicted food poisoning, we headed back into the hills. We talked of the Gervasutti Pillar but we were going to strip our kit down as far as we could. Just to see what would happen more than any desire to go super fast (although not carrying anything does help with that). We took only one 8.1mm rope, 6 wires, 4 cams and 7 quickdraws, less than we would on a British crag. Only taking this stuff we reasoned would stack the odds in our favour of getting up the route in a good time. Either that or back us into a corner depending on your point of view.

Getting to the pillar bottom at 5am we saw 3 lights ahead. A guide and 2 clients had managed to squeeze past our glacial bivvi in the early hours but still seemed to be hanging around at the base. The topo had added confusion to the situation as it definitely said go right. We went left and found a simple ramp that led onto the pillar proper and the climbing began to flow past us. With the guide faffing off route we clambered on past him, much to his annoyance. Paying little attention to the stream of Frenglish expletives that floated up to us we ploughed on, quickly passing the half-way point. Well we'd got our commitment alright, with not enough gear to abseil the 500m to the glacier our only option was up. The final section continued in the same vein with acres of HVS stretched out above our heads to the skies, but nearing the end snow had accumulated across the route which made things a little tougher. Climbing VS with boots, crampons and a walking axe is never easy. Character building as they say.

It was a haggard and hungry pair that hauled themselves into the midi toilets for a drink and a sleep. 20 hours we'd been on the go with not much water and a few cereal bars for sustenance. It was definitely time to crash. Getting rudely woken up by the lifties kicking us out at 6 just didn't seem fair.

As the weather seemed to be holding we had a decent meal and a few beers and went to bed. The next day we headed back up. A shorter route was judged to be on the cards. At only 300m long, routes on the Grand Capucin provide perfect quick hit extravaganzas on the south side of Mont Blanc. Running out of the lift station after catching the first lift we quickly got underneath the Swiss Direct / O Sole Mio combo on this granite spire that should be on any aspiring climbers wish list. We had 9 hours to get up, down and trudge the 2 hours back to catch the last lift down to be in time for a few more beers. With a fair few pitches up to E2 game faces were firmly on.





Block leading 3 pitches at a time we quickly came to the routes junction leaving a pair of singing, smoking Frenchies to aid the normal way (we cant aid, we're British after all) we headed out left managing to get in another 2 difficult pitches before the slabby scramble to the summit. No time was wasted as we were in a hurry and clichéd or not I don't like summits. Getting down is the scary, unfun bit.

Abbing station to station on the stretch saw us back at the bergschrund with an hour and a half to go before last lift. This was going to hurt. Ever one for a challenge Tom began jogging along the glacier. Bridges and narrow slots were hurdled and the occasional face plants saw us below the final obstacle. Now those of you who have walked up or down the arête leading to the midi will know what I mean when I say it's the Alps equivalent of purgatory. 2 boots wide and 50m long its dimensions do nothing to express its never ending length, especially if you've just run from the other side of the Blanc. Step after painful step saw us burst into the station.

Crampons and ropes hurriedly gathered in wilting arms and we were again running through the mountains tunnel to catch the last lift. We made it. We did have to go in the lift with the bins but nevertheless we got down with easily enough time to spare for beer.

Back in the woods, chomping down on the stale bread the boulangerie man had begrudgingly given us we plotted our next assault.

It was to be a biggie. At 100 Rebuffat points, the Freney Pillar is the perfect alpine route. A 2 day approach up an Italian Valley and unstable glacial bowl see's you poised for one of the highest rock routes in the Alps, summiting Mont Blanc itself. With the weather being a little unsettled and us needing a rest we spend 4 days eating, bolt clipping and scheming.

Driving through the tunnel we felt the weight of the Blanc above us. The history of this route lines the pages of many alpine books. The tale of Bonattis attempt where 7 went up to try and only 3 came back. The others perishing in a storm high on the face. The first ascent race won by Brits Bonington, Whillans. Clough and Duglosz a week after made news around Europe. And yet here we were, going up to face the alpine giant.

Armed with the same kit as on the Pillar we reached the Eccles Bivvi hut early on the second day. After sleeping and eating a few snacks we went to investigate the approach and take a look at the route in person.

Before heading up here we had tried to get as much information as we could find on the route and the approach. Getting to the Eccles col from where, we had been told, a simple 20m abb would put us on the glacier under the pillar, we found a massive gully of tottering choss at least 100m long. F\*\*k.

What were our options. Try and frig it, descending on our limited gear leaving none for the actual ascent. No chance. Ask other people if we could borrow one of their ropes or use theirs. We did try this but understandably no one was forth coming. F\*\*k.

The day was whiled away, boiling in the metal tin shed that is the Eccles Bivvi hut. A hut that was made to sleep 9 (uncomfortably) ended up having 11 adults. The image of 2 bearded Italians spooning on the tiny table in the middle will forever be stuck in my memory. At 6am the following day we headed down. The route lost and our morale low. Time for some liquid confidence back in the woods.





On dropping our bags in the woods we looked at what to do next. The weather would hold for 2 more days then be bad for a while, snow dropping down to 1500m. Not ideal. So instead a guerrilla plan was hatched. Head upto the midi- mid station. Do the Frendo Spur. Then get out of here.

It looked horrendous. The ice/snow at the to of the spur was grey and the sound of stonefall echoed across the bowl we were sat in. It didn't inspire confidence. Ah well. Last route, can't bail before we get on it. Camping on a large boulder near the spurs base we set our alarms early and settled down for a good but short sleep.

Racing up the rock section of the spur. Legs burning. Constant movement. We were able to reach the top of the rock at a shoulder platform just 3 hours after setting off. A pair were up ahead of us, who as we got closer it transpired were mates from North Wales.

Small world really. They'd started the day before and had had an up close and personal view of the rock fall-

mostly as they'd been trundling a fair few of the bigger ones. With the first bite of crampons on the ice you knew it was going to be knacker. What is normally a snow slope with lovely big steps already put in for you, had been replaced by melty, gravel impregnated slush. Brilliant. Add into this flexible boots and walking crampons you've got a real treat. Reaching the top 300m later was ace. No more pain.

And that was it. We got a lift in a transit to Font the next day after an evening of revelry. I learnt a lot this summer. Don't eat food that's green. Always take 2 ropes. And have a bit of confidence, get committed once in a while. What's the worst that could happen.





**up and under**

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Up and Under outdoor gear Ltd.  
490 Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff, CF5 1BL  
Tel: 029 20578279, Email: [info@upandunder.co.uk](mailto:info@upandunder.co.uk)

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