

# NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 2009

## Editorial.

October is a time to look back on what we have achieved over the glorious weeks of summer (that was the dry week at the end of June). This month has a round up of pictures and info supplied by members on the Covara meet. We shall, with luck, have a nice Autumn, with the 60th Annual Dinner not too far away. Tony's Curry meet is always well supported and a new twist on the Heathy Lea Bonfire party by Mike Wren should have us out there climbing. My thanks to all those who sent photos for the Covara article, it really helps keep the interest going. Next month I intend to publish Sally Dibble's article on the South Devon Meet and probably a small article on my trip to Rum.

## **Indoor Meet: Royal Oak Ockbrook 13th October 8pm 'At the Forefront of British Alpinism: on the Eckpfeiler and Croz Spur' by Pete Holden. Tony Howard.**

In this lecture, Pete will describe his ascents with Chris Radcliffe of two of the most formidable Alpine climbs of their day. At my request, he has provided some background to their ascents of these routes:

*'The Bonatti Gobbi on the Eckpfeiler had a reputation for seriousness because of its remoteness and technical difficulties high on Mont Blanc. As far as I know Ron Lake and I made the first serious British attempt on the climb in 1970 when we reached the top of the chimney line in a snowstorm, endured an enforced bivouac on top of a large flake and made a very difficult retreat the next day enduring avalanches, rockfall and storms. We reached the foot of the Eckpfeiler but it was too warm to cross under the Brenva Face on the Brenva Glacier, so we bivouaced on different ledges in another snowstorm and managed to get to the Trident Hut on the Frontier Ridge the next day in a somewhat emaciated state. This attempt seemed to cause a bit of a stir amongst British Alpinists at the time as the route was held in some awe. Ron was the instigator of our attempt on the climb as he was a very experienced alpinist by then whereas I had never climbed on Mont Blanc at all. Ron made the first British ascent of the route in 1971 with Alan Dewerson in fine style. Paul [Tut] Braithwaite made what was probably the second British ascent in 1973 with Gordon Hibberd. Chris Radcliffe and I made our ascent in 1974 which was probably the third British ascent. Even then the route had had very few ascents.*

*The Croz Spur ascent climbed under winter conditions [made just outside the normally accepted period for 'winter' ascents]. Chris and I first attempted this route Christmas 1975 and retreated in a storm. This was in the early days of winter Alpinism for Brits other than the Eiger Direct 'International' fixed rope affair. And no British winter ascent on the Grand Jorasses Norwand had been made despite various forays. We retreated in a huge storm and came back much wiser about the game. Another Christmas attempt fared no better when we got in a snarl up with Patrick Valencenne and his young companion on an overhanging rock pitch which stalled us all. We all retreated. It was not until 1980 at Easter that Chris and I returned to the climb and made our successful ascent. It felt very much like winter to us. It is*

*interesting to note that in all those five years no British party had made a successful ascent on the Grand Jorasses Nordwand in winter.'*

I am sure this will inspire you to attend Pete's talk, and I look forward to seeing you on the night. Please note that this is on the second Tuesday of October, not the first as might be expected.

### **Tan yr Wyddfa Curry Meet, Sat 10th & Sun 11th October Tony Howard.**

I would like to invite you to Tan Yr Wyddfa for our annual Curry Meet. The weather could be anything the UK can offer; wet, dry, sunny or not! Nonetheless we should have a good time in our 'home' in North Wales. The hut has seen much repair work & treatment against dry rot, since the Curry Meet of last autumn & should be even more homely now.

The cost for the food will be about £5-6/ person, for everyone who signs up. This will be payable on the weekend! I buy the last of the food on the preceding Friday, so if for some reason you cannot make it, please let me know by Thursday 8th at the latest, to avoid being charged for the food. An earlier notification would also allow me to offer your place to someone else. Bring your own wine, beer and whisky. If you would like to come & join me and if you would be willing to do some cooking, please let me know ASAP

### **Heathy Lea Cycle Meet, Sat 24th & Sun 25th October Colin Hobday.**

For all those who voted for a cycle meet on the questionnaire about Heathy Lea this is your chance. It is intended to make it an easy ,relaxing social get together. Meet at Middleton Top, Wirksworth, car park at 10.15 on the Saturday. ( I have permission to leave the cars there overnight.) A lunch stop in Elton before continuing via Youlgreave, Bakewell. Finishing with a bar meal at the Robin Hood in the Evening. Sunday we will make our way back to Middleton Top To reserve your place please contact me.

### **Dovedale Dash, Sun 1st November Rob Tressider.**

For the third year running, I have my sick note already: plantar fasciitis and that does have something to do with fascism but I won't go into that now. It IS that time again although of course years ago, it would have been held a week later. Start is 11 o'clock. You are strongly advised to try and arrive by 10. That gives you loads of timer to queue in the village, enter the race and enjoy the craic. Entry is £4 per runner with "no reductions". It'll cost you a couple of quid to park. Chris and Gill successfully flushed out some secret runners with their revival of the Heathy Lea Fell Race, so let's hope we'll see lots of you at this event. 4.75 miles, sometimes deliciously muddy. The winner gets round in about half an hour usually. Traditionally, we have repaired to The George at Alstonefield after the race, but there have been mumblings about the inn's transformation to gastro-pub. So let's go with the flow on the day. The race has a website, here <http://www.dovedaledash.acwager.co.uk/> It also has a Wikipedia entry, a bit slapdash and inaccurate but interesting none the less.

### **Heathy Lea Bonfire Night Sat 7th & Sun 8th November. Dave Roscoe.**

A repeat event, by popular request, following the successful summer festival. On Saturday evening, there will be bespoke beers from the Roscoe and Weatherspoon breweries. Details

in the next Newsletter. Mike Wren will be bringing a guitar, with a view to a bit of impromptu music in the barn. Any other musicians coming? If so, let him know.

## **News, Articles and Reports from past meets.**

### **Winter Lecture Programme 2009/2010 Tony Howard**

I hope you enjoyed the Lecture Programme last winter and are looking forward to the forthcoming one. We have, I hope, another exciting series of talks for you. They will all be at the Royal Oak in Ockbrook, starting at 8pm - as usual. The first is by Pete Holden and is entitled: '**At the Forefront of British Alpinism: on the Eckpfeiler and Croz Spur**'. This will take place NOT on the first Tuesday of October, but on the second Tuesday: the 13th October. This is described in a separate article within this Newsletter. The full programme is as follows:

Tuesday 6th October No lecture

Tuesday 13th October Pete Holden 'At the Forefront of British Alpinism: on the Eckpfeiler and Croz Spur'

Tuesday 3rd November Mike Wynne 'Trekking in the Simien Mountains of Ethiopia'

Tuesday 1st December Members' Evening 9 Speakers. Titles TBA

Tuesday 5th January Mike Mortimer 'New Routes in Morocco'

Tuesday 2nd February Nick Evans + A N Other 'Hot Rock: Four Italian Volcanoes' + climbing in the Med?

Tuesday 2nd March Paul Bingham 'Svalbard, days without nights at the North Pole rim'

The second talk features the return to Derby of Mike Wynne, an 'old' Oread who now makes a living guiding around some of the most interesting places on earth. His talk on Ethiopia will be fascinating! Please get this in your diaries as well. We will have our Members' Evening on the 1st December. Let's make this a bit of a Christmas celebration! If you would like a 10-minute slot to talk, please let me know ASAP. I still have a couple of places left. I will describe the remaining talks closer to the times - but please note that I am still looking for a speaker to do half an evening on climbing in the med in February. If you fancy this, please make me an offer? I think this should be an exciting programme. I hope you are looking forward to it as much as I am.

### **Bouldering Weekend 27th/28th June Rob Van Beek.**

The first and hopefully not the last Oread bouldering meet took place at the end of June. Half a dozen people meet up at the boulders on Cratcliffe Tor on a beautiful evening and climbed, scraped and hopped around well into the dusk. Four people stopped over at Heathy Lea. The next day was warm and increasingly humid. We visited the boulders at Burbage South and Stanage. Our impression of the most recent bouldering guidebook (Davies and Barton) was that it offered less easy problems than earlier efforts. Just two of us stayed over on the Saturday night. Heathy Lea was an excellent base allowing both a leisurely start to the day and reasonably early contact with rock. On the way home on the Sunday I explored the lower tier at Harborough Rocks. I have not been able to get out rock climbing over the last couple of years and I found the bouldering weekend built my confidence considerably. I don't know why, but when I fail on a boulder problem I want to have another go but when I fail on a rock

climb I want to go home... I think another meet would be a great idea, perhaps with just an overnight stop at the hut. It would be good to find out what's within reach of Tan-y-Wyddfa? Exploring is the best part. Then what? Fountainsbleau perhaps?

### **Buildering in Derby and the Peak District.**

Finally, with the weather turning unsettled I've been exploring stone embankments around Nottingham, where I live, for traversing and boulder problems. (There are some good places, cheaper than a climbing wall too...) Do you know places in Derby or the Peak District that are worth a visit? It would be good to know some sheltered spots in the Peak for wet days. Please send any intelligence to Rob Van Beek Relevant details include: location, type of structure, type of rock/material, height/size, difficulty, aspect, privacy etc.

### **Climbing and Curry Meet 16th September. James Tubby.**

The pre curry climbing was at Black Rocks, following Rob Tressider's efforts to have the area tidied up. The combination of less trees and 2 weeks of wind & no rain meant that the rock was unusually dry and even more pleasant to climb on than usual. As it got dark there was just enough time to help a stuck and embarrassed damsel in distress. I don't think the lack of practical help from the lad she was with did his chances with her much good. For some reason that I can't work out, some members decided to climb on a lesser form of rock at Wildcat before going for the curry. In total there were 25 of us in the curry house and the waiters were their usual helpful selves. Plenty of curry including several vindaloos were consumed and I can only imagine the extra strain on Derbyshire's water and sewer system the next day. An enjoyable end to what has overall been a reasonable summer for evenings out despite a large amount of rain in July & August.

### **Joint Meet with the JMCS 5th & 6th September Sally Dipple.**

The joint meet with the JMCS Edinburgh Section at TWY took place in a modest way as planned on the weekend of the 5th-6th September. The idea of it was to celebrate our recent agreement for our respective clubs to share kindred status and thus make our huts available to each club. Unfortunately the forecast was poor, so only two determined souls descended from Edinburgh, and only three from the Oread. Therefore, we were just five - from the JMCS, Bryan Rynne and Ruth Love, and from the Oread, Simon, Sally and Tim.

The weather wasn't as bad as anticipated though - we got a full day at Tremadog on the Saturday and we ensured we 'intermingled' in the spirit of the joint meet. Ruth climbed with Simon (One Step in the Clouds VS 4c and Grim Wall Direct E15b), while Tim Bryan and Sally climbed together on Scratch (VS 4b), and then Sally and Bryan also took on Grim Wall Direct. Bryan and Ruth made the most of their trip on the following two days, taking in more of the classic VS at Tremadog, before the rain came on the Sunday and Crackstone Rib in the Pass on Monday, still climbable in the damp. They were very impressed with TWY (resplendent in its recent redecoration) and took away good reports to the rest of the JMCS.

### **Oread Alpine Meet - Corvara - Dolomites July/Aug 2009.**

The Oread Camper Van Appreciation Society set off for the Dolomites at various times around the end of July. Hopes were high that most of the vans would actually make it across

five countries and several mountain passes to Corvara in the Alta Badia. When your correspondent arrived an English ghetto had already been established, along with a contingent from the camping wing of the club. The campsite had a distinctly German feel to it, with the searchlights and rigidly enforced 10pm curfew, despite the fact that we were actually in Italy. The position, midway between the beautiful twin villages of Corvara and Colfosco, giving views of towering limestone peaks, more than compensated. Various teams got early runs on the board with ascents of the classic South Face of Sass da Ciampac (V). This gave a long day but everyone enthused about the route's quality and position, not to mention the pleasant walk off. As the whole team assembled more plans were hatched, more ice creams consumed and more wine drunk (some of it really quite keenly priced.)

The valley was encircled with fantastic lumps of rock and we were all inspired by the new (2008) German guidebook, which was about the size of a telephone directory. The new bumper book of fun was clearly too large to be lugged up a route so armed with a photocopy from the site office and a dodgy German translation from the Hayes family various teams set off for adventure. The Vinatzer route on the North face of the Grosse Rodelheilspitze (6+) gave a fantastic line with fairly consistent climbing and easy access from the Grodner Joch. The route was deserted despite the perfect weather. The descent led across a beautiful high-level plateau, past the hut and down a straightforward tourist path back to the campsite - highly recommended for those with creaky knees. A big team ticked the Via Demetz on the Grosse Cirspitze (5) and were met on the top by a more traditional pair who had battled the man (and woman) eating chimneys of the Via Camerun (5+) on the South Face. The Brugger/Walde route (6) on the North face of the Ostlicher Meisules Dla Biesces Turm gave some exciting moments when one senior club member wandered off route. The crux pitch was superb and only a little damp from overnight rain. The walk off looked terrifying but turned out to be reasonable, as long as one didn't contemplate the consequences of a slip!

A short trip gave access to the classic Hexenstein on the Saas de Stria (4+) which provided more family adventure as more of the younger club members became proficient and competent climbers in the mountains in their own right. There was never any doubt about the horsepower, now they've got the cunning and nous too - watch out!

Less traditional offerings were found on "Oltre la Porta" (8-) on the Brunecker Turm and "Via Tridentina" (8-, A1, allegedly free at F7a+ for tall people) on the East Wall of Pisciadu. This genre of route is of a more modern idiom and they often don't follow obvious lines. Bolt protection is more frequent, but they are certainly not sport routes, with some alarming run outs on compact rock (as your correspondent can attest!) Both these routes stitch together fabulous bits of rock and superb moves in a gob-smacking situation. Long pumpy pitches are the order of the day. Tridentina has an abseil descent as the rock deteriorates a little after pitch 6 while Oltre exits easily onto the plateau for a reasonable walk off, handy if you've been caught in the afternoon thunderstorm! Another large team headed for classic terrain and the Big Micheluzzi on Piz Ciavazes (6/6+) as thoughts started to move on to the big drive home. Other teams stayed on longer and ticked classics like the Tissi on the First Sella Tower (6) and the North West Arete of the Torre Firenze (4+).

A tremendous trip with the traditional highlights of Tom's birthday bash, lots of sunshine and great company! Add in a strong family side with walks, biking, via ferrata and lots of coffee bars and you can be sure we'll be back! - Rog, Chris and Richard.

**60th Annual Dinner 14th November 2009. Neil Weatherstone**

Just a reminder that the 60th Annual Dinner will be held at the New Bath Hotel at Matlock Bath. If you haven't received the order form already, it will be with this newsletter. Simply fill in the form with menu choices and return to me with the payment (£22 inc starter, main, dessert and tea/coffee) before Monday 2nd November. I have quite a few bookings already, so don't put it off, do it now rather than at the last minute. Your guest speaker is Richard Mayfield. Richard is a professional climbing instructor who last year completed the Hard Rock challenge, climbing all the routes from the Hard Rock book during the course of a very wet British summer (watch out for the DVD). He has an interesting and varied climbing career, starting out in the hills of North Wales, followed by a stint in the Armed Forces which included his escape from the Army's near-disastrous Mt Kinabalu expedition which disintegrated into chaos in Low's Gully. Richard escaped but only after an eight day solo period with no food in remote Borneo. Richard has been working as a climbing instructor for many years and guides for The Orange House in Spain ([www.theorangehouse.net](http://www.theorangehouse.net)). Accommodation is available at the New Bath Hotel. The cost is £45 per person, which includes breakfast. Please state that you are attending the Oread Dinner when booking. If anyone has any questions please call me.

### **Annual Dinner Photo Competition**

The winner will grace the front of the annual dinner menu. In recent years there have been some excellent submissions. All entries to be in by 2nd November. Either digital or ye olde worlde style photographs are fine. Hint: pictures, which have space for text have been winners in the past. **Neil & Tracey Weatherstone** will judge, and the judges' decision will be final!!

### **Membership: David and Victoria Mawer.**

Applications for membership have been received from both the above, who are also BMC members. Both candidates are proposed by Graham Weston, seconded by Derek Pike and supported by MH, SP, Roy Eyre and Pam Storer. They have both recently attended meets at Lochnagar, Heathy Lea WP and Dolomites. Dave's summary of experience modestly states "Bouldering, trad and sport rock climbing throughout the UK with many trips further afield. Winter mountaineering in Scotland and summer mountaineering in Europe."

Victoria states "I began climbing about 12 years ago, which began down a climbing wall and soon extended to the great outdoors. .... First the Peak, then Wales ... before I knew it , amazing coastal climbing, Gogarth, Cornwall and big routes in the Welsh mountains. I even dip into a bit of Scottish winter mountaineering and managed to bag a few 4000 m peaks in the Alps." She adds that "some may say that I've even lead Mr President up the garden path but I think it was Great North Road". Their applications were welcomed and resolved that they should be advertised in the newsletter.

### **2010 Meets List**

I will be publishing a provisional list of meets already proposed for 2010 in the November newsletter. It is still looking rather thin for some areas and periods **All members prepared to lead meets in 2010, send your ideas in to me for consideration / inclusion / co-ordination a.s.a.p** Meets Secretary

## **Doug Scott Events.**

On Saturday 17th October Doug Scott will be hosting two fund raising events where monies raised will be divided between PHASE and his charity CAN.

The first event is really something special. Doug is going to host a late lunch for just 15 people in Wickersley Rotherham. Guests will be able to get to know him and ask about his climbing career. The exclusivity of this event means that tickets will sell quickly. The cost is £30 a person.

The second event is that same day (Saturday 17th Oct) Doug will present an evening lecture at RCAT in Rotherham on his climb and fall off the Ogre. In 1976 he broke both his legs near the summit of the 24,000ft (7,315m) Ogre in the Karakoram and had to make an agonising eight-day crawl back to base camp. His photographic presentation is inspiring. Ticket price £10 He will be signing his books and posters at both do's Obviously the lunch will book very quickly so if you would like me to hols places for you just call me. Marie Cragg.

## **Early Notice - Christmas and New Year at Tan yr Wyddfa. Rock Hudson.**

The end of another year! Come along for a few days at Tan yr Wyddfa, it's an informal meet, you can do whatever you like. There will be a buffet meal on New Years Eve. Please bring along some food and drink. Book your place with Colin Hobday until 15th December and me after this.

## **Hut Bookings. For October.**

*Please note that hut fees should always be paid to me and no one else. Colin Hobday.*

## **HEATHY LEA**

Oct. 2/3rd R. Larkam Cottage/barn  
Oct. 16/17th. Liverpool University. Cottage/barn  
Oct. 23/24th. Oread Meet.  
**TAN-YR-WYDDFA**

Oct. 2/3rd. South Cheshire M.C. 16 beds.  
Oct. 9/10th. Oread meet.  
Oct. 16/17th. Vibram M.C. 16 beds.  
Oct. 23/24th. J. Green Whole Hut.  
Oct. 30/31st. Clitheroe M,C, 16 beds.

## **Forthcoming Meets**

### **October**

Tues 13th Committee Meets Smithfield Derby  
Sat 10th Sun 11th T-y-W Curry Meet Tony Howard  
Sat 24th Sun 25th Heathy Lea Colin Hobday

## **November**

Sun 1st Dovedale Dash Rob Tresidder  
Sat 7th Sun 8th Heathy Lea Bonfire  
Tues 10th Committee Meets Smithfield Derby  
Sat 14th 60th Annual Dinner Neil Weatherstone  
Sun 15th Post-prandial Walk

## **December**

Sat 12th Sun 13th Bullstones Derek Pike  
Wed 16th Black Rocks Rob Tressider  
24th to 31st Christmas & New Year at TyW Rock Hudson