



Bullstones Lower Small Clough 06/12/87

Editorial. (Last Date for next edition 28/12/10)

This edition is a two month one to cover December and January, and as might be expected things are a little quiet at this time of year, however we do have Christmas and New Year celebrations to look forward to. From the climbers point of view the “walls” are getting some use. With a little luck and a fair wind the snow and ice will begin to form on the Scottish hills and hopefully in Wales for the New Year. This month we have Chris Radcliffe’s -L’Etape du Tour and Richard Hopkinson’s Kalymnos. We are very fortunate, as a club, to have members who can do, and write, about their exploits like this. Great stuff!! The next year’s meets list is attached, to wet your appetite for some great adventures. We do, however, have a shortage of meet leaders, so come on and try leading one. It’s not difficult and can give you the satisfaction of being a leader instead of one of the led! Give it a go. Contact Steve on 01629 825292 or 07824 623945 with which one you can do. Like the magazine articles it’s only as good as the effort put in by the members.

On another front, Mike Hayes is looking for a caving ladder for Heathy Lea, to be used as a fire escape. If anyone has one they no longer use and would like to donate this to the club, he would be most grateful.

Winter Lecture Programme 2010/11

Tony Howard

Dear Oreads, friends & countrymen, I hope you enjoyed Alan Hinkes’ lecture last month. I did. Clearly his style borrows a lot from TV comedians & draws on his Yorkshire roots – making for a less formal presentation than one might expect from such a committed mountaineer. I would like to publicly thank

Sally Dipple for facilitating this event. Without her personal contact with Alan, this talk would not have been possible – at least at a price we could afford. Thanks Sally.

Despite the knockdown price & the higher entry fees, we did of course make a loss on this one – as we have usually done with professional talks. So we need your support for the remaining lectures in the programme. Keep coming, it makes for an enjoyable evening, as well as supporting Club funds. Our aim is to make a small profit on the winter programme, rather than draw on Club funds to keep it going.

The next lecture in the programme is in fact two lectures – each of 45 minutes! **Jack Ashcroft** will talk about his '**Tour of Monte Rosa (TMR)**', some years back. This should be a delight: Jack is always worth listening to. **Steve Christian** will also speak – in his case on his '**Ice Climbing**' experiences. This should include some exciting pictures & tales of derring-do. It will take place on Tuesday 7th December – at the usual time and place; Ockbrook 8pm.

The January lecture will be on Tuesday 4th – again at Ockbrook as usual. It is in fact once again two separate 45 minute lectures! Ben Bransby will talk about his ascent with James McHaffie of the Voie Petit on the Grand Capucin. You can get a preview of this climb by looking at the magnificent photographs on Adam Long's website: <http://www.adamlong.co.uk/gallery/capucin.html>. This ascent was billed by the Alpine Club as the hardest rock climb in the Chamonix area by a British team for many years and should make an excellent talk. In the second half of the evening Adam Long will talk about his ascent of The Lotus Flower Tower - a peak in the [Cirque of the Unclimbables](#), [Northwest Territories](#), [Canada](#). The route is 800m, 19 pitches long, rated E3 5c and included by [Steve Roper](#) and [Allen Steck](#) in their book: '*Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*'. There are numerous references on the web, e.g. <http://www.climber.co.uk/categories/articleitem.asp?cate=4&topic=66&item=138> and

<http://www.adamlong.co.uk/gallery/cirque.html>. This talk should also be excellent and feature some superb photography.

The February lecture is not yet fixed because I am waiting for the intended speaker to return from abroad. I will announce this talk next month.

In the meantime, I hope to see you all at the December and January lectures: the more the merrier and the better for Club funds.

7th December

2010 **Jack Ashcroft / Steve Christian** The TMR (Tour de Monte Rosa) / Ice Climbing

4th January

2011 **Ben Bransby & Adam Long** Voie Petit - Grand Capucin & Lotus Flower Tower

Bullstones 10th -12th December 2010

Rob Tresidder.

Ah! It's that time of year again. The time when the club's bogtrotters get together with the alpinists honing their bivi techniques and the winter climbers consolidate their training for those long Scottish walk-ins. So, roll up for an epic weekend on your doorstep.

Rough outline: we'll bivouac on Friday night atop Lantern Pike. On Saturday, we'll walk to the Grinah Stones for our second bivi. This is a mere 17k so if that feels too soft, I suggest front loading your pack with a couple of rocks. On Sunday 14k to Edale.

Logistics: There is a train at 18.28 from Derby via Chesterfield to Sheffield where change to the Manchester Piccadilly train leaving Sheffield at 19.14. I shall be driving to Edale station (free parking for train passengers) and joining the same train at 19.47 arriving at New Mills Central at 20.00. From there I'll lead you to the Waltzing Weasel pub in Birch Vale. www.waltzingweasel.co.uk We'll need not to dawdle as the kitchen stops taking orders at 21.00. It all looked a bit posh and plastic beamed to me but comes recommended by Snod and there is a warm welcome to ramblers advertised outside. If you intend to travel by car, please get in touch with me to offer/accept lifts.

Extras: we'll be passing a lot of stones so a pair of rock shoes in your pack might be handy for a bit of gentle bouldering, maybe before breakfast. I'd like to suggest that we "appoint" next year's Bullstones meet leader. Come prepared with a pitch or just remind us of the super meets you've led in the past. If you can't come on the meet, send me your spiel and I'll pitch for you.

Rob61.Tresidder@virgin.net 07951 625 378

Black Rocks. Wed 15th December 2010.

Rob Tresidder.

Ah! It's that time of year again. I'm sure I've written that somewhere else recently! I first turned out for this meet in 1977 and have never missed one since. It really is that good. Come with a partner or come prospecting for one. Usual format. There are usually folk on the crag from after work until 9 though that's pushing it if you want your pie. Afterwards (from around sevenish for some) there will be pie and peas laid on for a fee at The Rising Sun PH at Middleton Cross. See ya there!

Rob61.Tresidder@virgin.net 07951 625 378

Christmas at Tan yr Wyddfa. Sat 25th to Mon 31st December 2010

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 me. On 01159 333031

New Years Day Walk to Royal Oak Wetton. Sat 1st January 2011

Clive Russell.

The Royal Oak continues to be the preferred hostelry in this area, our former watering hole now seeming to prefer the lucrative motorised and dining clientele.

We shall meet at Ilam Cross (in the village, but **not** up the youth hostel drive), at about 10.45, ready to move off a few minutes later, for a leisurely stroll up the Manifold, this year up the East bank, via Castern Hall and the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust ground near the old mines. The view over the river by this route, should the lighting be favourable, is in my opinion especially pleasing. Should it be possible to assemble a team for the return, ready to set off roughly at the same time, there are other paths passing close to Stanhope Hall to provide a little variety of route, at least as far as Castern.

Tan yr Wyddfa Meet sat 8th & Sun 9th January 2011.

Steve Christian.

In January this year, the first weekend of the year was blessed with snow and ice draped cliffs in Snowdonia and an exciting time was had by those fortunate enough to make the effort to travel there, despite the threat of closed roads by the inclement winter weather. This year we have our own delightful and comfortable hut to stay in for the first weekend of the year following Hogmanay. So if you are looking for the ideal opportunity to blow away those Christmas blues and burn off an excess of turkey and trimmings, then contact me to book a place on 01629 825292, 07824 623945 or climbersteve@hotmail.com.

Winter Climbing Meets January 2011.

Steve Christian.

If the colder temperatures are putting fire in your heart, dreaming of ice falls, gullies and snowy ridges, then read on. During the coming winter there are a series of weekends pencilled into the

meets calendar, for which an assessment of winter climbing and weather conditions will be made during the week preceding. A communication by e-mail will be made, notifying of any proposal to travel to the mountains in the pursuit of winter climbing the following weekend. Accommodation will be hut, hostel or bunkhouse. All possible climbing locations will be up for review, including Scotland, Wales and The Lake District. Those members not on the e-mail circular can obtain further details

nearer the day by telephoning or texting the meet leader for the specified weekend. Last

year we experienced two fine weekends climbing on Creagh Meagaidh and Liathach. Steve Christian 01629 825292 or 07824 623945 for January and Simon Pape 01629 822450 or 07813 61653 for February.

Easter 2011 -April 22nd-May 2nd 2011.

Simon Pape.

Thanks to our wonderful government, this period now includes 4 public holidays (for those of us at work anyway). My plan is to head south for some warm rock, probably flying and booking a gite/apartments.

The Committee has suggested Corsica as a possible destination, but I'm open to other suggestions. If you're interested, please get in touch so I have some idea of numbers.

Simon.pape@eon.com 07813 616465/01629 822450

News, Articles and Reports from Meets.

Potential New Member!!

Baby Weatherstone has arrived! The "baby boy with no name yet" arrived at 5pm on Sunday 21st November via c-section after a 57 hour labour. Baby is perfect and doing well and looks like a mini-Neil. Tracey seems a little tired for some reason, but is recovering well.

Not in Guide Book Time

Dave Appleby

The Thursday group chose the Welsh Hut for their October Fest and occupied Tan yr Wyddfa for a few days in October. Varied excursions were made, but the most notable was to the summit of Snowdon. Although 9 people of the group was staying at the hut. 6 of us decided to see what the cafe was like on the summit...not notable or exciting, except for one notable member of that 6. Digger Williams made it to the summit, ALTHOUGH...not in guide book time. At 88 (and a half, he says the half is important to him !!). it was a cold but sunny day, however when we came out of the new cafe we were in a snowstorm. Very atmospheric, but it cleared again on the way down. The most wonderful of days to be with Digger on this memorable day of his. the five of us with him were rewarded with a pint from the robber down at the Cwellyn and Digger purchased us all a beer! Those accompanying Digger were Jack Ashcroft, David Weston, Chris Bryan, Ron Chambers and David Appleby.....all of the above did not mind that it was not done in guide book time!! (reference to R.G. Pettigrew).

P.S...Jack Ashcroft was 79 last month...and he bought us all a whisky. (I don't believe this! Ed)



Tan Yr Wyddfa Curry Meet: 30th – 31st October 2010.

Tony Howard.

We had a near-full hut for this year's Curry Meet, but the weather was not as good as expected: Saturday was supposed to be sunny! The weatherman had promised Sun! I had promised Sun! It rained on both days, but was kinder to some than to others. On Saturday the A team went cragging at Castle Inn Quarry near Old Colwyn; that is the Pres, VP, John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster), Gil Male & SNOD. The Pres & SNOD climbed Mogadishu (F4+) and Finale (F5) under an overhang, while the rest practiced voyeurism & did nothing. Further rain resulted in a subsequent retreat to the pub. Meanwhile the Duchess of Lancaster & Mrs Pres went walking on the Great Orme. Richard wisely went running – from the hut. Angela and Roland went to Tremadog in an ailing motor and finished up in Majestic Wine in Bangor – which made them and the car feel much better. The Pikes and little Pikelets set out to combine a family excursion to Holyhead with some climbing on Holyhead Mountain – but rain stopped play before the climbing started.

The Fat Boy's Team, including guests Vicky & Martin, plus Annegret and Roy went a-walking up Cnicht. Rain thumped onto the windscreen as we drove round there, but as we approached Croesor it cleared to give that superb yellow light that comes in autumn, when the low sun shines through gaps in thick black cloud, illuminating the subtle browns and greens of a shining damp hillside. We walked the normal route from Croesor, up & over Cnicht, then returned down Cwm Croesor. As we did so we watched thick black clouds and squalls of rain pass over to our left and to our right, but we the *kinder* to whom the weather was kinder, stayed dry. On the way back we stopped at the Prince Llewellyn, where the English drank Welsh and the German went Dutch (Grolsch).

All walkers, climbers and drinkers were back in good time for the apparent *mêlée* that is communal meal preparation and by 7:30 the eating had begun. Everyone enjoyed a convivial though relatively sober evening that finished well after 1:00 am with Gil playing tunes for those still awake.

On Sunday SNOD, Richard and The VP went to Tremadog in the sunshine and climbed those magnificent classics, One Step in the Clouds and Valerie's Rib. Angela and Roland did much the same, climbing Kestrel Cracks and the wonderful Merlin Direct. Gil led Mr & Mrs Pres on the Male Trail in the mist up the north ridge of Tryfan and on to Glyder Fach. The Duke and Duchess looked at slate. The Pike family went round Betws-y-Coed.

We, the Cnicht team of Saturday walked up Yr Aran, in conditions similar to the day before – though we were deprived of the magnificent views that Yr Aran can offer on a clearer day. All in all it was another excellent Oread weekend away.



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Reflections of Kalymnos.

Richard Hopkinson.

Its late November it's 4 in the afternoon, its dark the curtains are drawn, its cold it's wet, it's depressing! My mind drifts back to early October, it seems light years away.

Kalymnos – sun kissed rock, climbing in shorts and T shirts, meals outside in the evening.

Kalymnos, and in particular the village of Missouri is the climbers equivalent of a purpose built ski resort with loads of cragging within walking distance of the town as well as lots more just a short drive away, and in May and October most people staying there are climbers, and contrary to a lot of places the locals make climbers most welcome.

We went for a fortnight which flew by with loads of climbing, loads of laughs and loads of eating and drinking – what more could you ask for.

For the middle week we were joined by the Flying Pope, and the end of the trip saw the arrival of the Emperor, with the Empress and the 2 Princes.

Our trip started at Manchester airport. Where's Compo the Chemist? said the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner, who having travelled to Manchester airport from Geordieland thought Compo from Chapel en le Frith could

have been there earlier and not kept him, the Grumpy Engineer, and the Teletubby Pres, waiting an hour to check in. Ratty and Minnie, and the Wigan Dumpies had gone through “hours” ago.

The journeys are a bit of a nightmare, literally, but we did manage to have some laughs. After a night flight to Kos you are dumped at a café at 4am to wait for the first ferry at 8.30. We half expected this, but some “normal” tourists were horrified. Everybody claimed not to have slept a wink, but the camera cannot lie (see photo).



On the return you have to wait until 4am to catch the plane home. Ours was an hour and a half late! There are ways of avoiding these night flights which will be looked at next time!

Once there we all got into a climbing, eating and drinking routine. The 4 Grumps, staying at a hotel just outside the village, went for 4 days climbing followed by a rest day routine. Ratty and Minnie were more relaxed and interspersed climbing with drinking coffee whenever possible. The flying Pope alternated between groups to maximise climbing and beer drinking, whilst not adding to his air miles. The Wigan Dumpies who were staying at a hotel in the centre of the town went for 4 days sitting on their hotel balcony waving to, and talking to the passing crowds of Brits, whilst drinking

Mythos (Greek beer), followed by a days climbing. The climbing whilst nearly all single pitch, is varied, generally well bolted and of good quality. Climbing used to be straightforward, you either got up it or you didn't, and you cheated or you didn't. Sport climbing has added a completely new approach, vocabulary and vastly complicated the situation, especially for grumpy old men. Since the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner left the Peak he has been infected by a Geordie obsession for correctness and detail. One can be forgiven for wondering about the sexual orientation of Geordies or sport climbers when grappling with the modern terminology of “flashes”, on sights, red points, pink points and dogging. Especially when the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner complained about the quality of the hotel soap, and went out and bought Pink Camay. Only to be followed by the Teletubby Pres and Compo, who must have thought it would improve something.



The only other complaint about the hotel was the quality of the Muesli, which appeared to be purchased from the local builder's merchants. A raisin was spotted during the second week, although it could have been a goat turd.

As the hotels rooms had televisions the Teletubby Pres was able to fuel his addiction and spent many nights watching Chilean miners appearing from a hole in the ground, inter dispersed with Greek cooking programmes.

Back to the climbing. Three minor hazards were encountered. The first involved the heat which if the right crag had not been selected could be a problem in the afternoons. The hazard however was not the heat per-se, but that it turned the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner into an extremely Grumpy Piano Tuner. The only solution found to this was to go to the nearest bar and consume large quantities of Mythos. The second was the goats. Most local goats seem to be able to climb at least 6C (French), which meant there was always the risk of goat shit on ledges at the grade we climb. Plus they have realised climbers have food with them, which is more tasty than Mediterranean scrub. This caused much amusement to all except the Grumpy Engineer when a goat was spotted making off with his banana in its mouth. Thirdly since Ryanair are now flying from Milan to Kos there had been an autumn migration of fit Italian birds which could prove most distracting.

Crags not within walking distance of the hotel were accessed by bus or scooters. Scooters are readily hireable and good fun, as long as you stay upright, which even the Teletubby Pres managed to do this time. They also enabled a rest day tour of the island, which was not without incident. The Grumpy Engineer fell foul of a large Greek waitress, after having the audacity to comment on the quality of Greek coffee, and Compo Agostini nearly ran out of fuel.

A further highlight of the climbing and eating was visiting the Island of Telendos, a 15 minute ferry ride away. A ferry took us directly to the crags, and then collected us to go to a bar and restaurant. After a very convivial evening a ferry took us back to Kalymnos with Pink Floyd blasting out.

The ferryman amused us with his mobile ringtone, a donkey baying. Having heard a very loud real one the previous day, a successful rest day mission was carried out to obtain our own ringtone. (see photo)



As the hotel was bed and breakfast we ate out each evening. The “Geordie” system of restaurant appraisal, as devised by the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner, was adopted by the 4 Grumps for choosing the evening hostelry. To explain this would require an article in itself. The others joined from time to time although full comprehension was never attained. We did visit some very good restaurants, which provided prodigious quantities of Greek food. Suspicions were aroused at one venue, known as the Goat restaurant (for its superb goat stew), as to what Compo had been up to on our previous visit 4 years ago. Compo was welcomed like a lost friend (or more), and the waitress could not do enough for him. His aversion to anything containing cooked cheese was immediately recognised and special dishes prepared just for him. This was a family restaurant and some of the party did comment on the looks of one of the kids running around. Another revelation on the eating front was Minnie. As everybody knows the Grumpy Engineer can out eat most Oreads (except Radders), however being grumpy about losing his grumpy crown to the Very Grumpy Piano Tuner, he then lost his eating crown to the diminutive Minnie. Her party piece being to order vast quantities of chips with every course of her meal.

As we got towards the end of the second week clean T-shirts etc did become a bit of a problem for some. However Compo, true to form, stunned the whole dining room at breakfast one morning, Italians and Jarmains included, with his “clean”, “tie dyed” off white, grey and fawn T-shirt, and off the knee road mender’s trows.

Overall it was a good trip. We laughed so much we cried at times, and still the 4 Grumps managed 80 routes on 14 different crags. Ratti and Minnie were a bit behind on the pitch count but made up for this by venturing into grade 7’s. The Wigan Dumpies won on the Mythos count, and the Flying Pope stayed in contact.

I expect we’ll be back as there’s lots more to do, a new guide book due soon, and more being developed all the time.

L’Étape du Tour.

Chris Radcliffe.

Although climbing remains my main passion, retirement has offered me the opportunity this year to spend more time cycling. In part this was to preserve grungy knees, but mainly because I was concentrating on cycle training so I could participate in the 2010 Etape du Tour.

The Étape du Tour is a stage of the Tour de France that is open to the general public. It is invariably a big mountain stage and held a few days before the professionals go through the stage. The first Etape was in 1993 when there were 1700 participants and it has grown each year so that in 2010 there were 10,000 entrants!

For 2010 the chosen stage was from Pau to Col de Tourmalet to celebrate the centenary of the first time the Tour visited Tourmalet in 1910. The stage is 181.4km long (113.4 miles) and there are three major climbs – the Col de Marie Blanque, 1035m; Col de Solor, 1474m and finally Col de Tourmalet, 2115m. Four days after we reached the Tourmalet this stage became the final showdown between Contador and Schleck in this year's Tour de France.



The decision on which stage is featured for the *Étape* is taken in October and that is when I decided to participate, with help from a friend from Ashbourne – Hereward Tresidder – who had successfully completed three previous *Étape*'s. We were also joined by David Ward after others had dropped out for various reasons. Although 3,000 of the 10,000 entry places were reserved for foreigners, it was very difficult to get a solo entry so we joined up with a specialist French cycle tour operator – Rohan Pensec Travel. This had the benefit of ensuring we got an entry, a hotel quite close to the start and transit from airport to hotel and also back to the hotel from the finish area.

It is never too soon to start training for the *Étape*, but last winters snow didn't help much (although it ensured I had an excellent winter climbing season) and I also had an operation on my hand deferred to April which curtailed training for a while. There are plenty of hills in Derbyshire, but of course they are quite short so it is difficult to replicate the sustained length of climbs in the Alps and Pyrenees. It is also very time consuming to put in the time on the bike necessary to be fit enough for such a long stage. However, I was now retired and benefited from a lot of fine weather earlier in the summer.

Although I have been cycling most of my life, it has never been my primary activity and I have never been in a cycle club or done any racing. So I was quite unsure whether I was making sufficient progress. I did all the training on my own and gradually increased my mileage until I was routinely cycling 50 – 60 miles in a session, but only once did 100 miles. In mid June I participated in a cyclosportive – the Tour of Lancashire, 100km, which gave me some confidence I would be able to complete the *Étape*.

We travelled out to Biarritz from Stansted on Friday, July 17th. I had an excellent bike box that I had acquired in USA 20 years ago, but it was heavier than my bike and the combined weight exceeded the 20kg

that Ryanair put on sports boxes, but in the event I didn't have any hassles. Rohan Pensec did arrange the transfer to the hotel, but we had rather a long wait for a flight from Dublin with other Étapeurs. The hotel was basic, but very friendly and accommodating to our needs.

On Saturday we took a bus into Pau and hired a car to drive the route. First we had to register at the race HQ at the Hippodrome (race course). The administration was pretty slick and after looking at a few of the stalls and being tempted to buy a few expensive accessories, we were ready to look at the course. The weather was poor, all the cols were in cloud and it was quite cold and miserable. Hereward did all the driving which was quite tedious and for him it was a tiring day. I'm not sure I gained too much from seeing the course. All the major climbs were signed every kilometer with the grade of the climb – in each case knowing how far there was still to go could possibly be a bit dispiriting. I knew the grades were not as steep as some of the hills I climb in Derbyshire, but the length would be the major challenge.

I didn't sleep much and in any case we were up early to leave the hotel at 5:40. It was 25 minutes gentle cycling to the start, so we had over an hour to wait before we could start. It was a bit misty but looked as if it would be fine later. My race number was 9729 and we were lined up in pens according to our race number. Hence we were well towards the back of the field in the last pen. I was very apprehensive about this as I knew it would take some time before we could cross the start line, yet the "broom wagon" would start 40 minutes after the start and begin to sweep up the stragglers. A friend made a steady start to last year's Étape after waiting for 40 minutes to cross the line and was infuriated when he was swept up after only 20 km. I was determined this would not happen to me this year, so I was ready to make an extra effort at the beginning if necessary.

In the event the start was quite wide and downhill, so the huge field got away smoothly at 07:00 and I crossed the line just under 25 minutes later. Immediately cruising along with this huge number of cyclists I found tremendously exhilarating. It didn't feel particularly crowded and I was able to get into a good pace moving ahead of slower cyclists. I could see Hereward's distinctive bandanna under his helmet just ahead of me, so I kept him in sight as he seemed to be moving steadily through the field. I didn't catch sight of David at all and quite soon I had passed Hereward and just concentrated on maintaining a good cadence. I was moving up the field so I never felt threatened by being swept up. Of course it would have been different if I was unfortunate enough to get a puncture or some other mishap.

The field briefly ground to a halt as we approached a village with narrow streets, but the cycling was mainly straightforward over the first 55km to Escot, with just one short climb – Cote de Renoir at 13.5km. It was pleasant rolling countryside, but I didn't take a lot of notice although even at this early stage there was plenty of vocal support from onlookers. It was still a bit chilly, but the weather was improving as we started the climb up to the Col de Marie Blanche at Escot. The climb was mainly through wooded hillside and it was becoming hot and sweaty as we toiled up the hill. Easy at first the gradient gradually increased up to 13% at one point. Inevitably this meant that the huge field ground to a halt – partly because an ambulance was forcing its way through. As a result I must have walked close to 2km since there was no other option. Eventually the field opened out and we could start riding again. It was still quite steep and it was tough getting going with no room for manoeuvre - some kind soul gave me a push which helped me on my way.

Over the top and then a fast descent down hairpin bends – quite a few accidents occurred here. I found it exhilarating to have the whole road to ride on free of all traffic, apart from the officials on motor bikes and the occasional ambulance. The first feed station was on the descent and I had a decent stop here to refuel.

Down in the valley I maintained a fast pace, moving from one group to another – it was a great experience. After 112km there was another food stop at Ferrieres. This marked the beginning of the climb to Col de Solour – 12km with an average gradient of 8%. It was wooded at first, but it was getting very warm and I was wearing too much clothing, but was reluctant to stop to strip off. I just ground away at a steady cadence increasingly aware the kilometer signs were taking much longer to pass now. We emerged from the woods into mountainous country, with the sun beating down and very warm conditions.

I crested the col and refilled my water bottles at the drinks station, and then another magnificent descent followed.

Down in the valley at Argeles-Gazost I stopped for another re-fuel at the food station. Now at 144km from the start, 525m, there is still another 38km to the finish and 1,600m of ascent. The real climbing begins 18km from the finish, but this section through the Gorge du Luz was beginning to feel very arduous. The air temperature was over 30 degC and I was drinking copious amount of water.

At Luz Saint Sauver, the climb of the Tourmalet really begins. It is 18km to the finish with an average gradient of 7.4% and many hairpin bends – the classic mountain stage. All the way along the route there had been spectators encouraging the cyclists, now on the Tourmalet there were rows of camper vans lined up and hundreds of onlookers. The atmosphere was great. They had come to see the Tour go past in a few days time, but they were hardly less enthusiastic for us. I was focusing on keeping going, but it was certainly encouraging to hear shouts of “Allez!” and even more the shouts of “Courage!” and I worked hard to keep the pedals turning.

I could see the Tourmalet way up the mountainside ahead, but the peloton was moving pretty slowly now and it didn't seem to be getting closer. The temperature was over 33deg. and I couldn't drink efficiently as I was moving too slowly. I found it was more efficient to stop every couple of kilometers and have a good drink before continuing. Quite a few cyclists were walking at this stage, but I did manage to keep going. I pulled in to the last water stop at Super-Bareges, for a last refill just before the finish. Then I kept on going until finally I crossed the line at the Col.



My position was 5260 and my actual time was 10:10 – roughly twice the time it took Contador and Schleck to do the stage. A total of 6,890 riders crossed the finish line and I was really pleased to be among those to have completed the stage.

I had to cycle another 4km to La Mongie to collect a medal and some freebies, then another 20km to the point where the Rohan Pensec coach would pick us up for transfer back to the hotel. Here a beer and pasta meal was waiting for me and I could finally relax after a memorable day.

The Sleeping Bag Poem

Captain Scott's second expedition to the Antarctic (1910-1913) used sleeping bags made from reindeer pelts. These naturally had a hard-cured leather face and a fur-covered face.

TAN-YR-WYDDFA 2010**TAN-YR-WYDDFA 2011**

Dec. 3/5th.	Yorkshire M.C.	16 beds.	Jan. 7/9th.	Oread meet.	
Dec. 10/12.	Wrekin M.C.	16 beds.	Jan 14/15th.	Southampton Rats	(to be confirmed)
Christmas	Oread	Vacant	Jan. 21/22nd.	Hinkley MC	16 beds
New Year	Oread	6 beds.	Jan. 28/29th.	Croydon MC	16 beds.

THERE ARE STILL SOME HUT FEES THAT HAVE NOT BEEN PAID PLEASE PAY A.S.A.P., THANKS, COLIN.

Forthcoming Meets

December	Tues 7 th	Royal Oak Ockbrook	Tony Howard	01332 273307
	Sat 11 th Sun 12 th	Bullstones	Rob Tresidder	01629 823953
	Tues 14 th	Committee Meets Royal Oak Ockbrook		
	Wed 15 th	Black Rocks	Steve Christian	01629 825292
	Sat 25 th Mon 31 st	Christmas at Tan yr Wyddfa	Rock Hudson	01159 333031
January	Sat 1 st	New Years Day Walk	Rusty Russell	01335 390369
	Tues 4 th	Royal Oak Ockbrook	Tony Howard	01332 273307
	Sat 8 th Sun 9 th	Tan yr Wyddfa	Steve Christian	01629 825292 07824 623945
	Tues 11 th	Committee Meets Royal Oak Ockbrook		
	Any January Weekend	Scottish Winter Climbing Meet	Steve Christian	01629 825292 07824 623945
February	Sat 5 th Sun 6 th	High House Borrowdale	Steve Christian	01629 825292 07824 623945
	Tues 1st	Royal Oak Ockbrook	Tony Howard	01332 273307
	Tues 8 th	Committee Meets Royal Oak Ockbrook		
	Sat 19 th Sun 20 th	Little Langdale	Volunteer Please?	
	Any February Weekend	Scottish Winter Climbing Meet	Steve Christian	01629 825292 07824 623945

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