



*EGCC Magazine And
Newsletter
January 2008*

A Very Happy And Prosperous New Year To Everyone

We finished the year with another very enjoyable meet in North Wales. The weather and forecast agreed with each other for once and we had the promised strong gales and driving rain. Deterred, Vojta and I decided against the heights on Saturday and undeterred went for a gentle stroll around Idwall lake where I literally got blown over twice! Another superb meal - thank you Lars and his many helpers - and lots of after dinner fun. I am always amazed at how flexible some people are. I can just see them in Tescos, nonchalantly picking up fallen cornflakes packets in their teeth..... I've seen ordinary tables encircled by straining climbers, but not something as small as a coffee table. You didn't touch the floor, did you Trevor?

Sunday started out with a pleasant stroll in warm sunshine around the flanks of Moel Siabod (whilst others went to Snowdon or went biking). My knee felt great and the scramble to the ridge and summit was so, so tempting, so up we went. As we arrived at the ridge we had a classic Welsh Winter Welcome - a sudden blast of wind and driving rain and those beautiful views we had promised ourselves for the descent blotted out by clouds and mist. An excellent first taster of Wales for Vojta.

Now to the AGM. It was very disappointing to have so few members turn up to this, the most important event of the club year. AGMs do tend to be a bit dull but they are the vital means by which a club ensures its continued existence and a special effort to turn up is expected. If attendance is not possible an apology is most welcome.

Sarah has stepped down as Social Secretary after a year of organising many well attended and greatly enjoyable social events. I would like to thank her personally not only for the fun she gave us but also by the way she responded when I started the monthly newsletter by volunteering to revive the club's social life.

The AGM voted in a working committee of Secretary, Treasurer, Meets Secretary, Social Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster - see minutes below - but we are still without a Chairman to provide us workers with that all important leadership. So once more;-

Your Club Needs A Chairman - Will You Be Him/Her?

Secretary's Report

Minutes of the East Grinstead Climbing Club AGM held on the 27th November 2007 at the Dorset Arms, East Grinstead

Members present:- Secretary - Adrian Botting, Treasurer - Lars Singleton, Meets Secretary - Jim Clarke, Newsletter Editor - Reg Clarke and 3 non-committee members.

Apologies: Social Secretary - Sarah George and Website Editor - Trevor Clarke

1. Chairman's Report

Lacking a Club Chairman, the Secretary delivered the Chairman's report, commenting on;-

- The levels of activity within the club, which has been sporadic but nevertheless some meets were reasonably well attended. Those who did attend had a great time and the 2006 Dinner Meet in Wales was the best attended meet of that year. The various other activities in which the club engaged were popular, mountain biking in particular. There was a regular presence on sandstone both at weekends and on Wednesdays.
- Activity levels at the local climbing walls has also been sporadic, given the proximity of three walls, each of which has their devotees (or not in the case of K2). This has had a severe impact upon the cohesion of the club, making it more difficult for members to meet each other on a regular basis and for new members to find and join the group.
- Special mention was made for Reg Clarke's sterling efforts in publishing the newsletter on a regular basis.
- The very low turnout at the AGM was a disappointment, with the committee outnumbering the members.

2. Treasurer's Report

Draft Accounts for the year were presented by Lars. 35 members have paid their subscription giving the club an income of £455 for the year. The main expenditures were the BMC subscription, the web hosting and the magazine. Costings have yet to be finalised but the club is expected to make a small loss leaving the club with a balance of well over £500. When completed and approved the accounts will be published in the newsletter/magazine

Some small savings are anticipated next year so it is recommended that the annual subscription remains at £13. This is outstanding value for money, providing discounts at local and national shops (see back page) and BMC insurance and services.

Membership subscriptions are now due. Everyone has been posted a copy of the renewal form. Please return it ASAP with your £13 as we must pay the BMC subscription shortly.

Some members belong to more than one club affiliated to the BMC and will therefore have paid their BMC dues more than once. You can claim a refund from the BMC by emailing them at office@thebmc.co.uk or writing to BMC, 177-179 Burton Rd, West Didsbury, Manchester, M20 7ZZ telling them which clubs you belong to.

3. Membership

How to attract and retain new members was discussed, a perennial problem given the indoor wall problem. The chalk bag EGCC badges have helped to identify members. It was agreed that it would be necessary to redouble efforts to attract new members: this would inevitably impose a burden upon members who would have to take beginners under their wing, but a number expressed their willingness to do so.

Further attention should be given to social meets and other activities (mountain biking) to

sustain interest over the winter and during bad weather.

Notifying members of events is still best done by email, but SMS was also very handy

4. Newsletter Editor

The monthly newsletter is seen as a key to communication in the club. Currently 21 are posted to members each month, the rest are emailed. The club would make significant cost savings if more members elected to receive email copies of the newsletter.

Twice a year the newsletter it is planned to expand this to a full magazine carrying tales of members activities to entertain and amuse. So keep sending those stories etc. to Reg.

5. Meets Secretary

Jim Clarke has prepared an outline meets list for next year:

April - North Devon/Baggy
 May - Easter Peak District
 June - Lakes
 July - Gower
 August - North Wales or Cornwall
 September - Wye Valley
 October - Swanage/Portland

Consideration was given to running attractive meets that required earlier commitment, overseas meets in particular eg. Fontainebleau, El Chorro and Freyr. There was also agreement that these meets could be opened to other neighbouring clubs.

6. Election of Committee

It was proposed and passed that the post of Librarian be cancelled and that the library henceforth be held by the Meets Secretary as the person who needs it for his role.

The new committee was duly elected as follows:

Chairman	-----
Secretary	- Adrian Botting
Treasurer	- Lars Singleton
New Members Secretary	-----
Meets Secretary	- Jim Clarke
Social Secretary	- Will and Anne Hellyer
News Letter	- Reg Clarke
Website Editor	- Trevor Clarke

As there were no candidates for Chairman or New Members Secretary, it was agreed that the posts of Chairman and Secretary to be combined and of Treasurer and New Members Secretary to be combined until these posts are filled.

8. Any Other Business

Our retiring Social Secretary was given a vote of thanks for the organising frequent and most enjoyable social events during the past year.

Trevor would like some new photos for the website and the Yahoo group address list needs to be updated with the new committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

Wednesday Wall Meets - Jim

Last year I tried out a weekly wall meet programme between Craggy, High Sports and K2. This was not as successful as hoped. This year I'd like to try a different strategy. The club does need to have regular winter get togethers involving climbing and socialising at a place which is accessible to all. So I propose that on the **first Wednesday each month the club should meet at High Sports at 7.00 (or earlier) for a couple of hours climbing and then repair to The Mill House to arrive there at 9.30 for a couple of hours socialising. Start date 6th February 2008. See you there, Jim.**

Hopefully those who cannot make the climbing session might be able to join us in The Mill House at 9.30 - see 2008 Socials below. This will mean that the club can have a regular monthly get together, where we can talk about up coming trips and any other activities (and maybe make spontaneous plans as well when the weather gets warmer!).

For the club's other Wednesday climbing nights members should arrange wall climbing amongst themselves - but please continue to use the **EGCC2005@yahoogroups** email address so that everyone knows what is on offer. (Let Reg know if you are not receiving at this address - ignore the 2005 date - it is problematic to change it each year).

2008 Socials - Ann

Thank you firstly to Sarah for all her work as Social Secretary last year. Also it was great to see everyone who made it up to Wales for the 2007 Christmas dinner, where Lars cooked up yet another fantastic array of nosh, including a now legendary soup, which if the recipe isn't published in this magazine, could lead to some sort of revolt. There was also The Inaugural Christmas Games, so if you didn't make it in 2007, pencil in Wales for 2008!

As well as the climbing/socialising meeting at theThe Mill House on the first Wednesday of each month, I will try to arrange something a bit different every other month, although I'm not going to make any promises! If anyone has any specific requests, please let me know (ann.hellyer@hotmail.com). To get us started:

Sunday, January 13th - by popular request a mountain bike ride in the Surrey Hills - meet 10.00am. at the Abinger Hatch public house.

Wednesday, February 6th - in The Mill House 9.30pm a short quiz to coincide with

the Inaugural Wednesday EGCC Wall Meet at High Sports.

Saturday, March 1st - Adventure Film Festival, Imperial College, London.

EGCC Magazine

This summer I had to expand the June magazine to include all the very interesting and well written articles submitted. This time I had several promises for scripts but, I guess it being that time of the year, it looks as if those scripts will arrive in time for the next issue. Now, when I took on the editor's job, I wrote up the very successful Alpine trip I had just done - only to find there has been no room for it in any of the issues so far. Hurrah, there is space at last in this issue.

For those of you who were unfortunate enough to miss the hugely enjoyable Cornwall trip, Adrian tells us a little of what went on.....

August Bank Holiday - Cornwall

The discussion about who should drive to Cornwall did not take long. Egan's car was at the time the only petrol-cooled vehicle in the UK - petrol passed briefly through the engine before being deposited on the road behind. Making the distance between petrol stations would be an issue, especially in August Bank holiday traffic. Bruce had some friends to stay for the weekend - millions of them, little bugs who were adamant that he should not stray more than ten yards from the loo. Thus Egan and I piled into my little car and pointed it at the traffic. As I drove away, the brownie point indicator dipped sharply into the red.

Saturday morning dawned bright, clear and sunny. Egan and I set off for Astral Stroll near Gurnards Head, one of those classic Cornish routes that had been on my tick list for many years. We found the top of the crag without too much difficulty and picked our way gingerly, very gingerly, down steep, dew-soaked turf towards the sea. The guidebook made reference to down-climbing a Diff crack, or abseiling if it was wet. Unfortunately between us and the top of the crack was a tilted black slab, glistening like iced glass in the sunlight. 'Slab' is perhaps overgenerous; 'pavement' is better, but could we stand on it? No, and not eight feet away was the edge, a big drop and jagged rocks. I'm sure you know where this is heading. We pitched it, still failed to reach the foot of our route, and fled to Bosigran, turning our early start into an idle lunchtime one.

Bow Wall gave me a sound kicking at Easter 1982. Revenge is a dish best served cold and I decided that the time was now right for a sneak attack. One of the reasons I rather took against Bosigran in the 80's was that it always seemed to be damp even in full sun. And so it proved this day - shining, damp in the burning sunlight. Still, Egan picked his way up the intimidating first pitch and lashed himself to an assortment of bits on a mostly hanging stance.



Egan on the third pitch of Bow Wall

Looking at the water sitting heavily on the overhanging granite of the second pitch, I gulped. I touched it, tried to dry my hand and gulped again. Two failures in one morning would have been too much and so I placed some decent gear and applied maximum effort at the dripping horror in front of me. I found a bit more gear and then I was faced with a ludicrous high step to get some sort of purchase on the wet rock, which led to a spot where I could jam my shoulder against the rock, slam a Friend under the big pancake flake, have a grope around, call for tight and sit down. "B****ks!" I've been here before! Never mind: I tried again, slipping and sliding all over the place, and sat down again. I tried once more and, to my considerable alarm, made irreversible progress. I left my gear some way behind, but found some dry rock and made a big rockover onto a slab below an overhang.

This was a fine lurking point. I looked back towards Egan to find that he was gone, replaced by the densest of sea mists. I was instantly alone in a little world of murk, but chortling to myself, arranged a high piece of gear, made some fine moves over the roof and found an uncomfortable stance from which to bring Egan up. He made easy work of the bit I fell off, but fell off the bit I did not. Honours even. He led up the third pitch, which was a classic of its genre. 'Classic of its genre' is code for 'harder than it looks'. This genre was an awkward step up and layback up a slopy-overlappy-rampy thingy.

At this point, the top, our troubles began. The mist was thicker than ever: in every direction lay the cliff edges and certain death. Also in the mist lay the way home. We

worked on the principle that the road lay uphill from the cliff and that if we walked uphill we would therefore find it. Twenty minutes later we were standing in heavy mist on some grass, hopefully part of a large field, but wholly unfamiliar to us. We needed to find brambles, because brambles lay between the crag and the car. We found brambles that also covered old mine workings, pit shafts and all manner of traps. After much stumbling and scratching of thorns and barbed wire we eventually found the car and crept slowly back through mist-shrouded lanes to the campsite, where Jim and Reg were to be found, crouching in the mist, ripping the flesh from a carcass and dropping it into a cauldron.

Sunday dawned fine again and Egan and I set off towards Land's End. Egan wrung his hands in woe at the thought of all the parking fees he had passed to the Land's End Company over the years: parking is free for climbers at Land's End, all you have to do is ask. Not a lot of people know that.

We left the crowds behind and saw no-one for the rest of the day until we were packing up to leave. We climbed a few delightful routes, entirely uneventfully, basking in the sunshine and generally watching the world go by. We started with Stone Boom. The beginning of this was the cause of much chuntering and moaning: loose and awkward and generally unsatisfactory. However, this led to a fine base camp from which to contemplate the traverse, which has two options; high or low. I opted for low and was hard-pressed to stop laughing with glee as move followed move. The second pitch has a few small holds. Unfortunately it does not have any big holds to compensate, but that was Egan's problem, for which I was grateful. We then did Vietnamerica, which has a brutal start, and is very pleasant thereafter.

As we strolled back through Land's End, we fancied an ice cream, but all the stalls were shut. We fancied a pint, but took one look at the fizzy pee-yellow pop in plastic glasses and fled. We stopped at the first proper pub and bought a proper pint. As we sat in the sunshine, we heard music start up, and in the field next door was a music festival, free for all. We wandered in, sat down on a bale of straw and chilled in a very rural way. A sheepdog wandered onto the stage and lay down on the feet of the man with the guitar and went to sleep.

On Monday, we went to do West Face Direct at Chair Ladder. As we drove down the lanes the car's engine was burbling happily. "Brrm! Brrm! Sounding racy this morning!" I thought. "Is your exhaust blowing, Adrian?" said Egan. Upon inspection at the car park, there was indeed a small hole at the front of the silencer. Never mind, perhaps it will be a bit noisy on the way back, but nothing to worry about.

The first pitch of West Face Direct was damp. It was also steep, and it also got harder the further up one climbed. It also had a trench full of water at the foot and was unwelcoming. Egan tried, placed gear and sat down. He tried again, placed more gear and sat down again. And tried again. And came down. I had a go, and sat down too. We could see the hold to go for, except that it was a long way, and out of reach. The rock was drying now and so I tried again, and again, and got the hold and found, to my considerable alarm, that it was a lot worse than it looked. There was no respite in sight. In the absence of better ideas, I forged on and arrived somewhat chastened at the belay, below a large overhang.



Figure 0 Egan on the 1st pitch of West Face Direct

Egan made light work of this but I floundered and needed a pull. Throughout all of this, a large seal lounged in a pool below the crag, watching us idly and no doubt tutting to itself. The next pitch had a boulder problem rockover onto a very airy slab and then no more gear for a long way, with a carpet of crunchy lichen to hide all the holds. The final pitch was big and blocky and a pleasant end to the day.

We made our way back to pack up camp, filled up with fuel in Penzance and headed off home. Fifteen miles later, there were enormous banging and roaring noises from under the car. The exhaust pipe and silencer has parted company and the silencer was flailing around under the car supported only by a rubber bush at the rear end. The exhaust was now a straight tube from the engine and was roaring and bellowing with its new-found freedom. After much cursing, we eventually removed the hot silencer from the car and dumped it twenty miles up the road in a MacDonalds bin. We drove home at a steady 62 miles an hour, this being the speed at which the noise and vibration were just tolerable. Let us just say that conversation was limited and it was lovely when it stopped.

For those who are interested, all of the above mentioned routes are E2, bar Vietnamica which is E1. And Astral Stroll is E1 too, apparently.

A Week In The Alps Summer 2006

For several years my Dutch climbing friend, Joop, has wanted to have a go at the Lyskamm traverse on Monta Rosa as it has no fewer than 7 off 4000m peaks and he is collecting them.



Friday - my old friend Don and I drove in my 35 year old MGB to Pont to meet Joop and Astrid at the camp site at the foot of the Gran Paradiso (a 4000m peak with possibly the finest views in all the Alps). This is a good place to start an Alpine week as it sits at 2000m so acclimatisation starts in the local bar!

Saturday - a fitness check and more acclimatisation needed. From the campsite there is a pleasant, rather steep, walk up to the Col Grand Collet at 2829m with truly delightful views over some of the best ski mountaineering fields in the Alps (happy memories). From the Col three scrambling peaks can easily be reached. As we had previously climbed Mont Gianzanaz (3038m) and Mont Servaz (3067m) we made for the Pointe de la Roley (2996m). The sun saw us, ran away and hid behind a large cloud spitting sleet. The large, loose rocks were flaked with marble and were very slippery when wet. I knew I should have changed from shorts into trousers when a rock moved and I banged my shin

against another rock. Skin, tight against bone, had little option but to tear and release some of the precious haemoglobin I was intent on building up.

We reached the summit and I stood on the summit cairn, stretched as high as I could and claimed to have reached 3000m again. Scrambling down in the wet was worse than going up. Then, after an amble along the bottom of the valley we took the steep descent back into our own valley which led straight into an establishment supplying 95% water.

Sunday - we drove into the Gressoney Valley under Monta Rosa. It was my first visit since skiing there several years ago. In summer it is a truly beautiful place and the Walser people, who come from Swiss/German areas of the Alps, had decorated their houses and villages to give a lovely welcoming atmosphere which was matched by the inhabitants warm greetings wherever we went. We set up camp in Gaby, the only campsite in the valley.

Monday - the weather forecast was good so we packed our gear, drove to the cable car and enjoyed a leisurely stroll up to the fixed ropes and then a bit of a scramble to the Sella hut at 3585m.

This hut has an all year testing site for Ferrino equipment with tents, sleeping bags etc. available free for the night in exchange for telling them what you think of the gear. Joop hates sleeping in huts and so was delighted to get the last tent available that night and so he paid nothing whilst I paid lots.

This hut is very good for its route options. From the hut it is an easy walk up the glacier to the Col Felik (4088m). There a decision must be taken. To the left is the easy track up to the Felik (4174m) and on to Castor (4228m) and, with a bit more effort, Pollux (4092m), all quite easy and the poor weather option(s). Turn right for Lyskamm and/or the traverse. This has long sections of very narrow ridge-top track and very steep snow slopes and is definitely not recommended in windy or icy conditions.

Tuesday - breakfast in the hut starts at 4.30 am however we had the aim of starting out at first light which was about 6am. and so had a bit of a lie-in.

The weather looked good so it was crampons on and we crunched the up glacier to the col (greeting some 4.30am starters already on their way down from Castor). The weather looked promising - cold, a little cloud with good visibility and most important of all, only a light wind. We decided to go for the ridge and turned right.

The route started by going straight up a steep snow slope that got steeper and steeper forcing us to zig zag. We met a guided party coming down that had been to the first summit (West Lyskamm) and they confirmed the good snow conditions we were experiencing continued to that summit. At the top of this steep slope we were on the ridge. The route was straightforward with several quite exciting traverses of some very steep snow slopes to negotiate until you arrive at the easier of the two main summits, West Lyskamm (4479m). This is relatively broad and on a pleasant day is the place for lunch and admiring the views. It is also the place to turn back if circumstances are not optimum.

The guide book gives 2 hours for the relatively short distance between the two main summits and this becomes understandable when you see the very narrow rocky ridge followed by a number of even narrower and steeper snow ridges that lead to the East Lyskamm summit (4527m). This summit is a very narrow ridge with a significant cornice and long steep snow slopes on both sides. The track goes just below the crest and there is no place for summit photos - we took these on the small col before the summit.



Reg below the summit of East Lyskamm (4527m)

For me the most difficult section came after this summit. Up until then all the snow traverses had been on one side or other of the slope ie. there was a form of 'hand rail' or a place to plant your ice axe. Here there were sections where the track went right on top of the ridge - quite daunting as it was about a foot wide and the snow slope seemed to drop away almost vertically on each side. (The theory is that if one falls off to one side his partner jumps down the other side. I'd be interested if you know anyone who has tested this for real).



Joop enjoying the view before tackling the another 4000m peak

Examining the photographs afterwards I can see they slope at about 50° but when you have a 1000ft drop on each side it really does feel they are vertical). A final very steep down snow slope saw us on the Col del Lys (4248m) and the relatively flat glacier with an agonising choice. Do we sprint for the last cable car and the flesh pots of the valley or detour to the Ghifetti hut for a cup of tea? We detoured.

Wednesday. We strolled down to the cable car (I confess we knew the hut had draught beer on tap!) and met the others for lunch in the valley and more celebratory beers.

Thursday A beautiful sunny day; perfect day to go topless over the Great St. Bernard pass to Chamonix (the car, not me). I have driven and been driven over this pass many times in modern tin boxes. Functional yes, particularly in poor weather/winter, but when the conditions are right a classic British open top sports car is THE way to cross this pass.

Friday A dull, cloudy day in Chamonix doing things one does on such a day.

Saturday Don and I woke up with rain beating on the tent and a 4 day forecast of heavy rain and storms over most of France. We threw the wet tent into the boot and arrived home in Horsham at 9pm that night. 2000 miles of most enjoyable motoring and the completion of one of the finest ridges in the Alps - all in one week. A truly superb holiday.



That beer did taste really good!



Joop's free accommodation and mascot

Special EGCC Discount



Peglers, tel 01903 883 375, website www.peglers.co.uk, give EGCC members a special discount of 20% on climbing gear and clothing on production of a current EGCC membership card. This discount does not apply to maps or books. As proof of membership is required this special discount cannot be given for on-line purchases.

BMC Discounts

As a BMC member you are entitled to a discount, usually 10%, on production of your membership card. A full list is given in the Member Handbook you will receive direct from the BMC. Some retail outlets of likely interest to EGCC members is given below.

<u>Store</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Website</u>
High Sports	Salfords	www.high-sports.co.uk
Cotswold Outdoor Ltd	Nationwide	www.cotswoldoutdoor.com
Field & Trek	Nationwide	www.fieldandtrek.com
Joe Brown Climbing Shop	Capel Curig	www.joebrownsnowdonia.co.uk
Needle Sports	Keswick	www.needlesports.com
Outside (5%)	Hathersage	ww.outside.co.uk
Snow & Rock	Nationwide	www.snowandrock.co.uk
The Climbers Shop	Ambleside	www.theclimbersshop.co.uk
Ultimate Outdoors	Betwys y Coed) Keswick) www.ultimateoutdoors.com