

Summer is here? Is it Really?

Yes it is and our away meet in the Lake District saw fine camping weather and two days successfully going upwards in Borrowdale. Shepherds Crag was in excellent condition and uncrowded so we were able to choose routes to satisfy everyone. Charlie's 9 year old son is a keen climber and it was great to see him following Charlie and Martin or myself, steaming up a range of V.Diff's, including the three star 'Little Chamonix' multi-pitch route. An aged fella (age is relative you must realise) explained to us that the famous picture of Little Chamonix being climbed in boxing gloves and roller skates was semi-posed. It was climbed wearing those things but the glove's pads were cut so that the climber could use his fingers and the wheels were jammed so they could not turn and, being rubber, gave a good firm grip. Ah well, another climbing myth exploded.

The next day saw us at Bowder Stone Crag. It's some years since I've seen the huge Bowder Stone and I was quite surprised to find it has become a mecca for mini bouldering routes since Ben Moon and others showed what could be done. Chalk spots everywhere with wiry muscular fellas falling onto crash mats. We turned up our noses to the sky and clambered steeply upwards to the crag to have a very pleasant day with it virtually all to ourselves. Superb.

The new campsite that Jim found last year was as good as I remembered it save for one thing - this time the farmer's cat didn't sleep with me. Oh, love is but a fickle thing!

Thanks to Jim for organising another most enjoyable away meet.

Meets Secretary - Jim

Well, so far this year we have had two good meets Baggy was great - a definite place to return to, and The Lakes: two beautiful sunny days with plenty of climbing on a remarkably un-busy Shepherds Crag, then Bowder Crag - combine that with a pretty traffic free trip either way can't be bad!

The next three meets are:

5-6 July at the Gower. Unfortunately I can't make this one as I'll be in The Lake District with the family, but if anyone is interested, please let me know. Note the date and venue may change - watch out for emails.

9-10 August - North Wales, camping at the Vaynor Arms near Llanberis.

23-25th August - North Cornwall, camping again at St Just Rugby Club.



*EGCC Magazine And
Newsletter
July 2008*

So anyone who is interested in any of these trips, please let me know as soon as possible at jim.clarke@systemsensor.com. This is particularly important for the Cornwall trip since we'd probably need to book the campsite.

As usual, on Wednesdays we will meet at Stone Farm unless emailed otherwise.

Social Secretaries-Ann & Will

Due to a flood of 30th birthdays and consequent BBQ's we have decided on a small change of plan, so please note you are all invited to commiserate with Andrew on the **19th July** at Eype, 36 Weatherhill, Smallfield, Horley, Surrey, RH6 9NQ instead of a BBQ at Harrisons

Please let Andrew know if you will be shedding tears with him at **Andrew-jess@tiscali.co.uk**, so that he can lay in sufficient kleenex tissues. After drying your crocodile tears you will be able to cheer-up with fine food and drink. So come along and join in the commiseration fun

The Harrisons BBQ will be postponed to the **6th August**, details to follow.

EGCC Magazine

I think most of you know Andrew and Jess and those who came to Wales in December met their delightful dog Pippin. Here's a picture of them for those who missed out on the great Annual Christmas Feast last year. This is a sort of thanks to Andrew for writing up the Baggy away meet.



Baggy Point, Devon, April 2008.

Sitting at home, regularly checking the weather forecast things looked dubious; Saturday, South East England, cold, heavy snow showers and weather warnings. Devon, cold, snow showers some sun. So in favour of the sunny part of the forecast and risking the four hour drive at some early hour of the morning that most of us never knew even existed, we packed the car, jumped in and headed for the West Coast of our beloved country. (God save the Queen and all!).

William and Anne left about the same kind of hour, Will this time though not forgetting his sleeping bag and denying the opportunity to drive all the way home again just to be warm at night - big girls blouse!

So by about 10:30am we were all (nearly) at Baggy Point National Trust car park, non-members paying the £3.50 parking fee for the day and gaining odd looks from holiday makers and locals as we all began to kit up at the back of the cars. Well, I say all, but Pippin, our dog refused to put on a harness and carry the kit, but instead opted for tying the rope around his neck despite repeated warnings that we would not take him climbing as if he fell, this would surely hurt.

Strangely Pippin did not seem to care and on the rather nice, if not cold and intensely windy walk to the cliff he decided that no rope would in fact be a better option and rounding up the troops would be far more fun than climbing, as he later demonstrated by his non-stop barking as we all went over the edge of the cliff on a down climb that was worthy of being renamed "Hillary's Step Baggy Point Stylee".

This consisted of the clubs 100 metre abseil rope (still immensely large, stiff and dirty - the rope that is!) that had been unlovingly butchered by Jim to become two 60 and 40 metre abseil ropes, being tied off to two of the metal stakes at the top of the climb and thrown over the edge into the sea below (maybe in an attempt to clean it?). I think the idea was to use the rope as an aid to climb down, however, seeing as it does not fit into anyone's belay device without the aid of a two tonne press, the rope became simply a guide to the route down, and a friendly trip hazard!

By the time everyone was down and now looking up at the climbs with the sea some good twenty feet or so below us, the sun was shining, the wind was conveniently on the other side of the cliff and blue skies were above. This was going to be a good day.

The guide books were studied intensely, looking for that elusive five star classic route, and quick enough everyone had their ropes laid out on the warm rock,

and located their chosen route. I decided I would lead the first route, choosing a route from description only that the guide book said was a V. Diff. Simply 'take the line to the right of the seaward arête, under the overhang and follow the crack to the top'. Simple enough I thought, which suited me fine having not led a route for many years following a rather unwanted gravity lesson and shock lecture in how easy gear comes out of a wall when flying through the air in a downward motion at speed!

All was going perfectly, as I began my ascent up the crack and under the overhang. I placed a nut and a large cam just before negotiating the featureless slab of rock that lay in wait above me. Continuing upwards I became increasingly concerned as the crack mentioned in the guide book did not seem to exist on 'this' part of the climb and looking down, I could see that my last piece of gear, the cam, was quite some distance below, and although I was confident that the cam would not escape its vice like grip in the crack, I was no longer confident that the ratio of rope between myself and the cam was in fact any different to the ratio of rope between the cam and the jagged rocks below.

I wondered if I should be concerned that Will and Anne were looking up at me with blank faces, and no longer seemingly too bothered about holding on to the rope anymore! Remembering the wise words of my good friend Ross Jenkin, with whom you may be familiar with in such climbs as 'Going round the bend' page 104, Tower Ridge Ben Nevis winter climbs, who once said to me "when I am leading I just remember not to fall" I gained enough confidence to stop my right leg from its 'shake rattle and roll' that it was cleverly performing on the featureless face below me and I carried on climbing up until finally I reached a crack, allowing me to hastily stick in a nut and another cam and clip in to both ropes.

Interesting V. Diff I thought, as I carried on to the top without any further problems but ensuring that I dislodged a few boulders on the way to catch out Will and Anne on their ascent. On my small perch or belay stance as I believe they call it now, tied in to the wobbly metal stake and with a sling making a secondary back up around a rock, more for aesthetics than actual functionality, I began bringing up Anne on one rope.

Completely out of touch with anyone above or below me due to the wind blowing all around, I just hoped that all was well below. Soon enough Anne popped her head over the top with a big friendly smile. A real achievement seeing as she was still suffering from a nasty cold that was refusing to leave her. Next up was Will, taking a little longer as it was up to him to free up all the gear left behind on the rock.



Back at the top of the climb, my wife, Jess, and Pippin the dog (he's not my wife!) had wandered off due to a combination of boredom and frost bite. Meanwhile Anne had also disappeared and was having a lovely warm cream tea, or so I am told, because by the time I arrived they had shut up shop!

Will and myself then abseiled back down the cliff, this time remembering that we both had figure of eights in which the club rope could just about be persuaded to squeeze into. The rope had now been thrown over the near vertical cliff to the rocks below and was being held in place by a rather unfriendly looking sharp spike of rock, resembling a shark's tooth, which was acting as a guide to keep it out of the way of the climbs.

Will was first over, making it look like child's play as he bounced down the rocks to the bottom. I was next over the top without the aid of anyone holding the rope onto the tiny tooth of rock. As I descended I watched as the rope slowly ran itself up and down the tooth, my mind playing tricks as to the condition of the internal functioning and condition of this prehistoric artefact that we call our abseil rope. However, when I got to the bottom safely, Will reminded me that the rope is so thick and hard that it would take a whole shoal of sharks to get through it!

Our next climb, and sadly our last for the weekend, was another crack. This time though, the guide book actually showed a picture of the climb, helping enormously to settle the dispute of which line to take. Will was first up this

time, whilst Reg took a rather relaxed belay stance on the rock below.



The sea swirled and was rising below me as Reg disappeared up the rock and I was left alone getting colder and colder and wetter and wetter, the sea now beginning to break over the rock that I was sat on and over my head, collecting in an ever increasing puddle next to my nice new rope. William steadily progressed up the rock above, putting in various pieces of hardware as he went. Ensuring Will's safety at all times, I took time out to snap a few shots of him and make a phone call or two from the bottom. Well, progress was a little slow!

Will eventually reached the top, and I was eager to follow as my time on the rock below was coming to an end as the rock was now rapidly becoming smaller and smaller under the ever rising sea water. Back at the top we decided, although we would have loved to carry on and make the most of the excellent weather, which because we now both have other halves, it would possibly be appropriate to go and find them and spend some time with them. (Who said men were not caring?).

Back at the car, I donned my new wet suit, costing very little from Liddles, and made my way to the beach where Jess and Pippin had been playing, only to

find them both asleep tucked away in a sand dune!

A quick dip in the ice-melt sea water and a few games with Pippin playing 'jump-a-wave' had me running back to the shore with frost bitten fingers and toes. The wet suit seemed to work though!

Later that evening, we all retreated to the pub next to the camp site (why are all camp sites on the side of steep hills? (Answers to EGCC) and had a jovial discussion about the days climbing and whether in fact the V. Diff was in fact an E2.

We never came to any firm decision on this, but instead tucked in to our hearty pub grub, in true outdoors adventure style. The fresh air of the day soon caught up with us all and we took off back to the camp site where we all tucked up for a good night's sleep. Well, I say good night's sleep, but in fact, that's not entirely true. For, laying next to me in my rather small two person tent, was not only my wife, who I haste to admit was using my 4 season sleeping bag, whilst I had her summer bag, but also Pippin, who decided that he would rather the door was open between us so that he could lie on me.

So at some unearthly hour in the morning, I wake to hear zzzziiiiipp, and look up to see Pippin with his paw on the zip of the door, actually unzipping it! Next thing I know is Pippin nuzzling his way into my sleeping bag, in which my feet are already like ice packs, never fully recovering from the swim in the sea! So now not only am I awake, but I am now aware of having very cold feet, having a wet dog in my sleeping bag and having a very cold back as the outside air fills the tent around me!

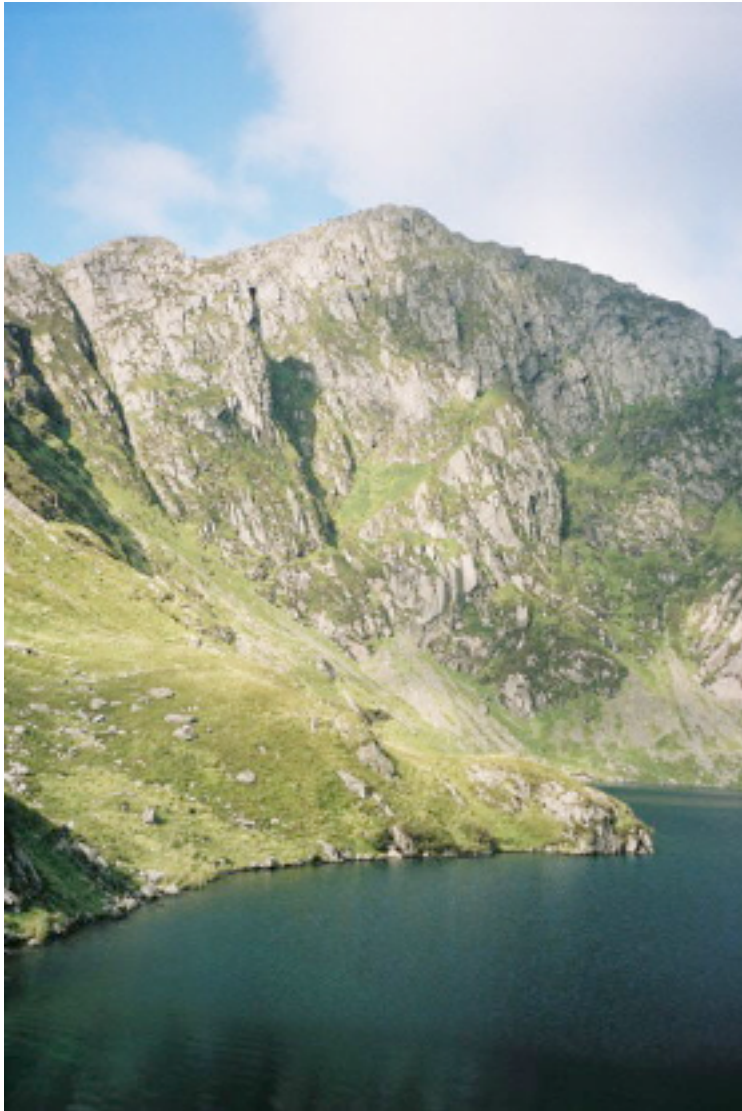
Morning comes, and as we all emerge from our tents (or camper vans - some have all the luxury) the snow begins to fall. Although there would have been the possibility of a little more climbing, the thought of freezing cold rock and cold fingers and climbing in snow showers gave way to thoughts of freshly made fudge and cream teas in local villages, before a leisurely drive home to see the two or three inches of snow covering the rest of the South East.

So all in all, a very well turned out EGCC meet was had by all, good climbing, good company and good food was all topped off by the best in weather that the UK could offer in April, and thoughts of the next EGCC meet are now on all our minds. So if you could not come this time, why not come next time - join us for some climbing, get fit and have some fun.

Andrew Brett

When Jo's article below arrived it took me back to my Scout Leader days and the time when we took our Scouts to Wales to climb Cadair Idris. We Scouters did a reece trip. Arriving at the camp site uncomfortably near closing time, my frame tent went up in double quick time and we just 'made it'. That night a strong wind started blowing and the tent began moving in a decidedly worrying fashion. So we all got out of our sleeping bags to put the tent pegs in! We never dared tell the Scouts what had happened. Well would you have?

Pencoed Pillar on Cadair Idris, Mid-Wales, August 2007



Firstly, apologies for not joining the official club meet in Cornwall (in August 2007). However life is too short to keep going back to the same place - there are so many places on my wish list that I still haven't been to. One of those is Cadair Idris in mid Wales, it is such a beautiful name that conjures up images of a majestic rocky summit, and I knew it was reputed to have some brilliant climbing on it. The area is also something of a mecca for mountain biking so Stuart and I decided to have a multi-activity weekend.

We arrived on Friday lunchtime and spent a lovely sunny afternoon cragging at Bird Rock - the ultimate roadside crag, and deserted bar one other pair of climbers. We did a Vdiff and two severes, all rather tricky for their grade, but I guess we should have expected that as we had stepped out of the car straight to the base of the crag.

The next day we drove south of Machynlleth for some mountain biking. Our selected route had some glorious views (for me) and some pretty hairy descents (for Stuart, I had to walk!), and we only saw a handful of people all day. Amazingly despite being in Wales on a bank holiday weekend the weather was stunning and I nearly got heat-stroke!

The plan for the next day was "the big climb". There are two long mountaineering style routes on Cadair Idris - Pencoed Pillar and Cyfrwy Arête, both classic mountain excursions according to the guidebooks. We had initially decided on Cyfrwy Arête, but then we realised that from where we were camped we could do Pencoed Pillar, a three star HVdiff, without having to drive.

The approach to the climb was a steep but fairly pleasant walk up to Llyn Cau which was surrounded by some seriously impressive cliffs. Pencoed Pillar was the dominant feature and is one of the only routes up for mere mortals like me who don't like E numbers. The final approach to the climb was a steep scramble up a scree slope and then a rising traverse along some rather tenuous grassy ledges. I remember thinking that it had better be good after all the effort it was taking to get there.

Kitting up on a small and already rather lofty ledge, the exposure spooked me enough to get Stuart to lead the first pitch. I was rather glad of this as although the climbing was quite pleasant it was rather delicate, with few opportunities for protection and a very elusive belay.

We knew from the guide book that the next pitch was going to be a bit vegetated - "stroll along and admire the flowers". In fact I got rather closer than I had bargained for, as my feet kicked through the thick undergrowth to find the steps made by previous explorers, my hands burrowed into the roots

and soil to try to find some purchase, which meant more often than not my face was buried in greenery. This continued for a full 60 metres, I gave up looking for gear placements quite quickly as the rope drag through the undergrowth was a nightmare - I just had to hope that if I slipped I wouldn't slither too far. I was very relieved to finally reach the belay and solid rock.

The next pitch started with a greasy chimney that was far easier than it looked, but was soon followed by more thrashing through undergrowth. Stuart managed to run a few pitches together, and got the best climbing on the pillar - a rising traverse on excellent rock right out onto the arête with fantastic exposure. My next pitch sounded straightforward, "ascend directly up the wall on good holds", however the good holds were punctuated by narrow grassy ledges, with loose rock and heather as holds. After several failed attempts to overcome one of these obstacles I finally held my breath and went for the move, convinced that on a HVdiff there must be a good hold fairly soon. I was very relieved to pull over the arête to see a huge crack just waiting for a large nut. However once I looked a bit closer I realised this crack was behind a block the size of a wheelie bin, that didn't appear to be attached to anything! Oh well, who needs gear, more frantic scrabbling, bushwhacking, and burrowing for handholds until I finally reached the security of a large ledge and a rock belay.



Stuart managed to find some impressively steep rock to take us finally to the top of the pillar, and then a short scramble got us onto the main ridge of Cadair itself. I can't remember how long the climb took us, but despite our early start, by the time we had packed away the climbing gear and had something to eat it was quite late in the day, so we had the summit of Cadair to ourselves. It was a glorious evening and the panoramic views were fantastic. From the summit we could see our alternative route, Cyfrwy Arête; it looked

very impressive and not the slightest bit vegetated - I suspect we may have made the wrong decision. Although Pencoed Pillar did have some nice climbing, it was a shame it was interrupted by so much bushwhacking, and I would describe it as more of an experience than a pleasure. Overall though we had a fantastic weekend and we saw very few other people except in the campsite.

Jo Campbell

Those who are blessed both with the ability to read and memories will recall that Lars had crash-landed his bike in cow slurry and himself in hospital. Thankfully he has recovered sufficiently to tell us what happened and give us some advice .

And, Trevor, where was the camera when it was needed!

Friday night's all right....for cycling

Sunday morning 7am - "How did you do this?" the nurse says, wrinkling her nose and taking my arm pinched between forefinger and thumb as if it was in some way slightly less appetising than cat vomit. "On my bike" I said trying to look nonchalant. I thought health professionals were supposed to look....well, professional when examining their patients!

"Well I think we can safely say you wont be riding your motor bike for a little while, we will admit you now, prep you for surgery and start the intravenous antibiotics....how long has it been weeping that colour?. Do I say it was a mountain bike? The last nurse had turned away, smirked, turned back and said (poker face) "oh that was unlucky, well at least you are not left handed".

I respond "It's been a bit greeny colour since yesterday, but I was more concerned about the smell...and I am left handed". In fact my elbow, aside from feeling as though some trash metal drummer was in full flow on it, was starting to smell worse than my cats breath (mental note...take Cat to vet to get his teeth done). My nurses smile is not as bright as it had been, which I somehow feel is not a good sign.

Rewind to Friday night. Myself, Trevor and a couple of others had cycled out with high hopes of conquering Westerham Hill, a familiar 10 miles of little on and a lot off-road, then a gentle roll down to the pub...Just what Friday nights were made for. The excitement as ever was 45 seconds of a 1 in 3 bridleway that drops off of the North downs, twisting and turning through mud and flinty ground and finishing in a farm yard rich in mud and cow slurry.

All is well, the hill is conquered and down the bridleway we go, Trevor first as, when it comes to down hill, he has a removable brain and a need for speed. Now most people I know who come off of a bike do so when the speed and danger is at it's highest not at the end of it when all you can say is "oh that was unlucky". But, there I was lying upside down having tried to aquaplane on my hands through the flint and cow slurry, with a bike pretending to be a rucksack...and some so called friends pretending to be Hyenas...until they see my elbow.

Each wrinkles his nose and looks at it as if inspecting Cat vomit. I can't help but I feel that this might be the end of the cycle as I can't move it and even the adrenaline is not masking the fact that this is not a graze. I call Georgina and explain. There is a hint of irritation..."again!"

Fast forward - Sunday afternoon. I wake up after a general "scarfing". My kindly nurse beams at me, handing me one set of pills after another, she says "did they try and clean it out on Friday night?". "Erm...yes" I distinctly remember a pint sized Scottish nurse scrubbing with what I could only describe as a nail brush for a couple of hours before crocheting my elbow, whilst I swooned (and not in a good way). "Oh...because we found a twig in your tricep" my beaming carer proudly says. "But don't worry, we will take you back down to theatre Tuesday, clean it out some more, set the elbow right and stitch the tricep to tendon to bone. You won't be able to use it for a while because you've some ligament damage. We're pretty sure the nerves will come back...a bit and the infection could have been worse, but we got it early enough and will keep you here for a couple of weeks to get it under control. Oh and don't worry, you had a fit in surgery but they sorted it out"

"Oh!" I said and not being able to come up with a pithy James Bond quip asked if I could go to the toilet. My carer's smile is now in danger of meeting at the back of her head. "Of course, your bottle is down there". She points, I reach with my right and find that there are 4 tubes coming out of my arm. I reach with my left and quickly decide that this was not a good idea either. I refrain from asking my carer for anything further and feign passing out. She is not taken in by this and asks me if I need any help. "No thanks, I think I'll have a short nap" (please take the hint)

Now I have heard many bad things about the NHS, but frankly I felt like royalty. I had an en-suite room to myself, TV/Radio/Internet and they even brought me food à la School dinner style/quality. The next week is summer outside but goes by for me in a blur of boredom. Daytime TV really does suck and after 5 days of Radio 4 I actually want them to take me to theatre for the third time. My only light moments are visits by Georgina and my children and when Trevor pops in to say hello. He kindly leaves me a book about some

chap who while out hiking managed to get his arm stuck under a rock and rather than doing the decent thing of dieting nobly there, decides to cut it off with a blunt/rusty pocket knife he happened to have...I start to feel a bit of a fraud lying there with people fussing around me.

Day 7 comes and they fit my elbow with an evacuation pump, which is a pump that draws "stuff" through a sponge that is set into the wound and sealed Blue Peter style with sticky backed plastic. I am sickly fascinated as the "stuff" is pulled through the tube to the 0.5litre pump reservoir, no longer green but still smelling like poor Molsen's breath*. Day 8 they tell me the reservoir is full and they are to change the sponge, then without hesitation say that it is going to hurt...a lot!. The nurse pulls out a new sponge that is cut to the shape of my wound a comma shaped 7.5cm long, 3.5cm wide and 2 cm deep. I am slightly disturbed but reassured by the nurse who shows me the biggest size of sponge catered for, which was the size of the one I clean my car with.

Fortunately, I am male and cannot take pain so I was issued with Codeine, Paracetamol, Diclofenic (?), Oramorph, Medicane and my very own canister of Nitrous Oxide (which I thought they put in cars to make them go fast!)...to say I was "high" just does not do justice to how good these drugs are and my sincere regret that only the first two of these are considered benign enough to be legal to buy on ebay (and I HAVE looked). Any way I now know how recreational pharmaceuticals helped with many of my favourite songs.

By day 14 my infection is cleared enough to allow them to release me and I go home. My shoulder/arm muscles have wasted and so even if I could bend it, I can't bend it. I sit at home rummaging through my carrier bag of drugs/dressings considering the next month where I have 14 appointments for fracture clinic, dressing changes and a possible skin graft and a strange thought occurs to me, surely I would have been safer Rock Climbing on a Friday night.

Lars Singleton

* Molsen is Lars' cat.

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