



a year of ups and downs

Advertisement

EGCC AGM

It on the 1st February 2005 at Dorset Arms, East Grinstead.

Starting 8-30, upstairs. See you there

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Welcome to the Christmas /New Year/ January Newsletter! I trust everyone's packing in the indoor training to emerge like beautiful butterflies on the outdoor scene come the spring? And I hope that some will also be creeping out this winter to attack the ice... Anyway I do have a couple of things to say this time so here it goes!

With this edition we are presenting to you a new Club Constitution that the committee will be proposing to adopt at the forthcoming AGM (1st February, Dorset Arms). The honest reason for the new constitution is that we couldn't find the old one! It was only once we were almost finished writing the new one that some bright spark remembered that the BMC hold it and they kindly sent us a copy. The old constitution was written around the time of the Club inauguration, 23 April 1986, and is admirably brief. The executive overview of the new one is as follows: basically as the old one but including a minimum age limit for members, the concept that major decisions by the committee should be endorsed by the membership at a general meeting, committee responsibilities are added and the concept that the constitution contains the club rules (i.e. hardly any). If you feel there are minor changes required or glaring gaffs please let me know.

The second thing is we recently received a request from the BMC to assist with management of Stone Farm (owned by the BMC). We discussed this within the committee and agreed that in principle we would like to take this opportunity to contribute to UK climbing. To begin with the task identified is to replace the Victorian iron fencing at the Isolated Boulder end. What I need to make clear is this is totally separate from our club funds. We will seek funding from the Access & Conservation Trust or Mid Sussex CC and possibly English Nature and we will be using a fencing contractor. We are proposing to have a subcommittee to manage this work which I will join, Louise has also volunteered so I think we need probably one other. If anyone is interested please let me know. If anyone can recommend a fencing contractor, that would also be appreciated. It would be nice if everybody in the club could assume a small sense of responsibility for the place and make it our own contribution to that which we tend to take for granted.

That's all from me, enjoy!

Tony

Editor's piece

Well, once again those soft words have been muttered in my ear, 'wouldn't it be nice to have another newsletter...and before Christmas would be great?' And who am I to refuse, especially having consumed a few glasses of mulled wine, a few bottles of some bizarre organic beer, and a belly full of soup, stew and chocolate cake.

I'll be the first to admit that I have not done as much climbing as I could have this year, and there have not been as many issues of the newsletter as there could have been, but nonetheless...At the risk of rambling on its been a funny year, with many of the club flying off to some strange and exotic location to work and play, and with a good variety of UK climbing under our belts. Some of us have been pushing the E grades, some the baby's cot and some the dodgy flacks that we've abseiled off half way up a climb. Despite one or two accidents we've had an interesting year, and next year will be better, so don't over do those mince pies.

Congratulations to the two cover girls, Alistair and Neil (for receiving the prestigious *Pinnacle Award* and *Wings Award* respectively at the annual Christmas Curry), even if the Pinnacle Award is craftily camouflaged by Alistair's shirt. Thank you to all who turned up and enjoyed lots of curry and chat. A good night had by all.

We have a number of interesting bits and pieces for you in this edition, especially with two articles on the Ireland Trip...honestly, it seems as if it were an essay completion, 'in no more than 500 words write about your favourite holiday'. But that's fine as that's what the newsletter is all about, we each write interesting stuff to make everyone else jealous.

I should like to thank all those that have supplied articles this year. Enjoy.

Phil

The Constitution

As Tony has said, we have argued long and hard over the constitution as to whether or not it should be left justified, or justified on both sides, size ten font or size twelve. In the end we came up with a document that we think fits the bill, though it should be said that no matter whether you wanted size 11 font with double justification or not you can't help but thank Tony for pursuing this in the course of his reign. As he said, we only came across the old constitution by accident, and have included this early translation for your pleasure as well as the updated version on the page after that.

EAST GRINSTEAD CLIMBING CLUB

Constitution

1. *The name of the Club shall be 'The East Grinstead Climbing Club' hereafter referred to as the Club.*
2. *The aims of the Club are to provide an introduction to climbing and/or mountaineering for those interested and a centre of interest and activity for those already acquainted with mountaineering/climbing.*
3. *Membership of the Club shall be restricted to persons interested in climbing and mountaineering.*
4. *The running of the club and general administration etc. shall be in the hands of a committee, elected annually at the AGM. It shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.*
5. *The Committee shall meet at least twice a year and the Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings.*
6. *Each member shall pay to the Treasurer annually a subscription which will be fixed by a simple majority at the AGM. Membership shall be deemed to have lapsed if subscriptions are unpaid within three months of the due date.*
7. *The AGM will be held once every calendar year within three months of the end of the financial year, which will be from 1st January to 31st December inclusive, only paid up members shall be entitled to vote.*
8. *The Treasurer shall present his accounts at the AGM.*

EAST GRINSTEAD CLIMBING CLUB

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

1.1 The name of the Club shall be the East Grinstead Climbing Club (EGCC). Hereinafter referred to as "the Club".

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CLUB

2.1 To promote the interests of climbing and mountaineering amongst the Membership.

2.2 To provide an opportunity for the Membership to meet and participate in climbing and mountaineering activities together.

2.3 To act on behalf of and in the interests of the Membership.

2.4 To promote awareness of the need to maintain access, conservation and protection of the cliff and mountain environment.

2.5 To take part in the work and activities of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC).

3. MANAGEMENT OF THE CLUB

3.1 The Management of the Club shall be entrusted to the elected Club Committee, herein referred to as "the Committee".

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLUB

4.1 Membership of the Club, herein referred to as "the Membership", shall be open to anyone of 18 years or over from whom the annual subscription and a completed EGCC Membership Form has been accepted by a member of the Committee.

4.2 Renewal of existing memberships will lapse if payment is not received within 3 months of the required date.

4.3 In addition to 4.1 above membership of the Club shall only be open to individuals who recognise that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Members shall be aware of and accept these risks and agree to be responsible for their own actions and involvement by means of a signed statement on the EGCC Application Form.

4.4 All matters associated with membership shall be at the discretion of the Committee. The Committee shall have the right to suspend the membership of a person whose conduct is considered to have been detrimental to the interests of the Club or its members. The person concerned must be informed, in writing, in advance of the Committee meeting of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to reply in advance of the Committee meeting.

5. THE COMMITTEE

5.1 The Committee shall comprise the Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Members Secretary, the Meets Secretary, the Social Secretary, the Newsletter Editor, the Website Editor, the Librarian (also holder of club equipment).

5.2 Election of Committee members by the Membership shall take place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

6. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual Responsibilities

6.1.1 The Chairman of the Club will normally preside at and chair all meetings of the Committee and shall be responsible for reporting to the Membership at the Club's AGM.

The Chairman shall ensure that at least two Committee Meetings are held in the year.

6.1.2 The Club Secretary shall be responsible for all correspondence relating to Club affairs and for announcing Committee meetings and AGMs and for the production and distribution of minutes from those meetings.

6.1.3 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of subscriptions and will account for any other income and expenditure made on behalf of the Club by providing a financial report to Club members at the AGM. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the payment of the Club

subscription to the BMC.

6.1.4 The Members Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of the Membership of the Club and shall report to the BMC on Membership details. The Members Secretary will be a primary contact for new members.

6.1.5 The Social Secretary will be responsible for social events.

6.1.6 The Meets Secretary will be responsible for managing meets and the meets programme.

6.1.7 The Newsletter Editor will produce the Club newsletter.

6.1.8 The Website Editor will manage the Club website.

6.1.9 The Librarian will manage the Club books and other equipment.

Collective Responsibilities

6.2.1 The Committee is responsible for organising General Meetings.

6.2.2 The Committee shall nominate a representative (or representatives) of the Club to attend BMC Area meetings and represent the views of the Membership and shall nominate a representative to attend the BMC AGM and vote on behalf of the Club.

6.2.3 The Committee shall be responsible for setting membership subscription levels on an annual basis.

6.2.4 The Committee shall have the power to propose changes to the Club Constitution/rules. These will be ratified with the membership at a General Meeting.

Significant decisions of the committee (Constitution/rule changes, suspensions etc) will be effective immediately following the Committee Meeting but must be ratified with the membership at a General Meeting, the need for an additional General Meeting for this purpose will be at the discretion of the Committee.

7. RULES OF THE CLUB

Club rules are contained as part of this constitution.

8. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be 5.

Voting within the Committee shall be by simple majority with the Chairman holding the casting vote (if necessary).

9. GENERAL MEETINGS

9.1 Ratification of decisions will be passed by a simple majority.

AGM – Annual General Meeting

The Secretary shall give at least 30 clear days notice to the membership of such a meeting and its agenda. Items for inclusion should be submitted at least 45 days prior to the AGM.

A minimum AGM agenda is as follows:

- *Chairman's report
- *Ratification of Major decisions by the Committee
- *Financial report
- *Voting for new Committee positions
- *Membership subscription

EGM – Extraordinary General Meeting

The Secretary shall give at least 21 clear days notice to the membership of such a meeting and its agenda.

10. DISSOLUTION OF THE CLUB

10.1 The Club can be dissolved by two thirds majority vote carried out in accordance with Article 9 whereupon the Committee will arrange to discharge any assets equally amongst the Members. Any liabilities at the time of dissolution shall be the joint responsibility of all Members.

Gatwick, Guinness, Granite, Grime, Guinness, Granite, Guinness, Gatwick

Mountains, green hills, superb granite and oodles of Guinness are for me the highlights of the recent Irish Incursion. The hut from hell is another significant memory, we won't be staying there again folks!

The trip was planned, booked and full up by the end of March - a good omen I thought. June seemed to lie far ahead in the distant future; so I have to say that I had a slight panic the week or two before we were due to fly out, I had not booked the car hire! Argh, help Alistair, can you share the load? Such a gentleman..

We arrived late on at the hut on Wednesday evening, to find Derek and Gill huddled together in their hire car in the darkness. I was rather happy to find them as I had forgotten the hut directions, but not so happy when we actually made our way into our lodgings. Well, I daresay you can't plan for these things, on paper the hut sounded great. But they omitted to tell us that no spring cleaning had been done that year because renovations were due to start the following month. Let's not dwell on the grimy details; a few of the party headed off to the hostel (luxury from all accounts, gits!) the next day, and I wasn't jealous, honest! Och, never mind. The rest of us die-hards remained for the length of the trip, and got to grips with lighting fires to heat the water to wash up and the like. The like being aching backs from the lack of mattresses and sleeplessness brought about by snoring companions :)

Over the next few days, the group splintered off into climbing clusters with the majority aiming for the Glendalough Valley. Now this valley is a beautifully glaciated basin, and a spiritual area, thanks to St Kevin (A monk who lived in a tree - that's the really short version as this is a climbing club article). At first I thought that the walk in would be nothing too strenuous, looking at where the path followed. Hmmm, don't be fooled folks! You are looking at an hour, with ascent equivalent to that of say, Left Wall in the Pass..Phew! But then, you are nicely warmed up for some some delightful lines. It started to rain more persistently, a few of us decided to do the tourist bit and motored off to Avoca (AKA Ballykissangel) to sample the Guinness and to recruit a new member for the club - Spike. The more keen amongst us motored up to Dalkey Quarry (outside Dublin) to climb in sunshine, and then the more experienced (Derek wouldn't be amu! sed if I said veteran) stayed on the main buttress which actually dried up an hour or so later. I remember being cajoled into climbing a chimney (wet, dark and by the looks of it, awkward) but my arm was more severely twisted by Heather to accompany her on an important visit to the local woollen mills, en route to Fitzgerald's Bar in Avoca.

Determined to climb the next day, we took the scenic route to a crag called Hollywood, and get this - a minute's walk from the car. A minute! The crag was small and er, was conveniently located near a couple of pubs. It was pleasant climbing as most of the group were there ticking off routes. We did a couple short, sharp routes of HS standard and then two & a half pints of the black stuff. Er, that was, Heather and I headed off to the pub for

Saturday dawned and we had arranged to start early down in the Glendalough Valley. Heather & I had our eyes on a starred HS classic on Hobnail Buttress, it deserves a mention - Pyramid Route. I am not sure who coaxed who onto this interesting route, but we racked up and Spike decided to join us; he is rather good company actually when you get to know him a little better. The crux move lived up to our expectations; well actually, it exceeded our expectations and Heather chivalrously allowed the lads to do it first. Next came another starred VS classic; I persuaded Rob to take a rest from leading poor Bruce up awkward

chimneys and hold the rope whilst I acquired some granite gashes on my forearms. Climbing is not glamorous at times, is it girls? We had decided to push off up towards the main buttress after this, and as we set off a few of us heard a distress call (six whistle blows, continuously blown). This seemed to be coming from down the valley on the opposite side of the lake. A hasty call was put through to mountain rescue, and a few of our party went off to try and help. It transpires that two girls had fallen down the hill across the lake whilst out walking; no serious injuries incurred, the emergency services located them and dealt with the incident as they know how. Help from our party was appreciated and we were informed that the rescued couple were grateful too.

After that, the pub was voted to be the best venue to be at and with little deliberation we descended onto Lynhams in Laragh. Good Guinness and grand chat.

On Sunday, our day for returning back to Sunny Sussex, we ventured into Dalkey Quarry where we were bathed in sunshine for a few hours, allowing us to tick off a few interesting routes (and we'll say nothing of Bruce's gear, shall we Heather?). There are some lovely routes within this quarry, short bit worth a visit if you have time to spare whilst in Dublin. At Dublin airport, madness descended and I was really rather glad to sit down in the departure lounge - I must be getting old! Spike kept us amused at the other end in Gatwick; he seems to have a liking for baggage reclaim carousels. But then, I think he was just missing the green hills, a bit of adventure and fresh air. Anyway he certainly made us double with laughter and Heather glow. Good luck in England, Spike!

There are rumours of another trip across the water next year; possibly to the West Coast, and possibly a large house rental - a case of watching this space.....

Lou

June 2004

PS. I have it on good authority that the cycling is superb in Glendalough (precise words: 'a tad necky'); cycle hire is en route to Laragh and very cheap to boot....

Turkey

Enter, Stage right:

I am, when it comes to climbing, an optimist. Thus, when the family decides that this year's summer holiday will be spent somewhere hot, I get on the internet and go and find the nearest crags to the chosen destination. This year did not look promising. The best I could find was a potential four hour round trip to a scruffy bolted crag, with 40 degree temperatures. Undismayed, I packed a full rack of gear. There was a stern look and, dismayed, I unpacked a full rack of gear, but left a chalk bag and shoes firmly wedged into the bag. If snorkels and flippers can go on holiday, so can my shoes.

Exit, Stage right:

Enter, Stage left. A hotel pool in Turkey. Hot. Not a cloud in sight.

Lots and lots of rock, of sorts. There was lunatic volcanic stuff, twisted into all sorts of shapes and covered in scrub, but in the next valley along there were strange ridges of perfect limestone running up the hillside. I bided my time. 'Just off for a little explore' I said.

Exit, Stage Left

Enter Stage right. A nice bit of roadside limestone

I had a quick scramble and bouldered a bit. Perfect gouttes d'eau, flakes and jugs from heaven. 'More', I thought.

Exit, Stage Left

Enter Stage Left. A ridge of limestone running up a steep hillside in the sun:

The ridge started a bit of a way up the hillside, and I climbed up through the pine trees. I picked my way through some thorn bushes. I scrambled up a rocky step, up through some more thorn bushes, and some more, and some more, and then I was stuck. And bleeding. There was no way I was going to get back down through that lot, in just a pair of running shorts and sandals. There's no way up to get to the ridge either, but if I could just squeeze through there.....

Bleeding heavily now, I popped out onto the ridge, sat down on a little platform and contemplated my predicament. The view was nice – yachts in the bay not far below, sunshine, crickets chirruping happily away, and the bleeding had just about stopped. I decided that if I climbed all the way up the ridge I would be able to scramble down the big gully to the right; it had lots of trees which were easy, after all. Or perhaps carry on the top of the hill, as I knew there was a path of sorts up there. On with the shoes, and off I went.

Up and up I climbed, nice and easy at about Diff to V Diff level. The ground dropped way dramatically on each side and the views were fabulous. The climbing was lovely, perfect un-polished (indeed un-trodden) limestone. Very Commando Ridge. Eventually, I got to the top. The route to the top of the hill was barred, completely, by thorn bushes and brambles. To the left were near vertical brambles, thorns and loose earth. By definition, therefore, the way down was to the right, with all its brambles and thorns, but with a tiny goat track.

It was definitely a track for tiny goats, however. By the time the path really disappeared I had covered 20 yards, and was bleeding in some new places. The way ahead was through a thorn bush. I knew that was the way because all the other thorn bushes had brambles in them. Ten yards later I found another twenty yards of goat track. I sat down to try and stem some of the bleeding. I stood up, removed the thorn from my backside, and re-considered my new predicament. Only half a mile to go. Oh joy.

By the time I reached the car I was dripping in sweat, covered in dust, grit, cobwebs, dried leaves, grass, scratches and blood. At least I hadn't lost the car key.

Exit, Stage right.

Enter, Stage left. A hotel swimming pool with reclining sunbathers and families happily splashing in the water.

'What the hell happened to you!'

'Oh. I, er, um, had a little adventure. Would you like a beer? I've earned mine'.

Collapse of injured party. Lights.

Adrian

Advertisement

All EGCC subs are now due
Contact Lars and he will provide you with a variety of ways to pay.
A bargain at £13

Ireland Revisited

Ho ho, to the shores of the ol' haunt. Every time I pass through Dublin's airport I see a change. Be it a new wing to the building, a new brace of departure desks or just the addition of another adhoc bar that facilitates the tipping of a 'dark one' down the screech by means of a welcome. I did do so between aircraft and baggage reclaim. It's only right. More of a rite of passage than the declaration of the Passport!

I was thoroughly delighted at Lou's instigation of a trip to the Teddy Bear. I left Ireland, having been resident for two and a half years with three regrets. Firstly, having never done a Xmas week there, always having chosen to spend time with my family in the UK. Secondly having only once climbed in Glendalough, which quite simply is not enough. And thirdly, her name will remain anonymous. Number two I was going to put right.

Out of the airport and dinner was sought at Jonny Fox's. A tourist trap of a pub on the foothills at Stepside, on route to the bunkhouse at Glendalough. At least the grub is plentiful and assured at the rather late hour. Unfortunately Irelands' mass rate of change had not been so progressive on the completion of the city's ring road, M50. The road was still stopped at the site of a megalithic tomb, a problem encountered before I left the country and still not resolved. They, as a nation can talk through any problem to resolution and talk a resolution to a problem. The detour left some of the party lost and me as navigating 'local' on the receiving end of a cell phone conversation, which went something like this. Them to me 'where are you?'

'At Fox's in Stepside. Where are you?'

'Don't know, we're lost.'

'So how can I help you?'

'Tell us how we get there'

'Tell me where you are coming from and I'll be able to give you directions'

'But we don't know where we are'

'I know. You're lost. Find a sign post on a junction and phone me back'.

Brilliant. I should work for the Ministry of Tourism; such is my clarity of vision!

The bunk house was, err... difficult. Officially I snore for the Away Team. Next night I checked out to the hostel. How did I ever forget the brilliance of comfort that is the Irish Hostelling network. Enough of my bookmarks are their publicity flyers. Still, the morning shone bright, by Ireland's standards. 'Hopeful' by English. Last out of the bunkhouse, ensuring everyone was up, away and headed in the right direction, Eddie and myself made a B-line for the crag proper. Three quarters of an hours walk and some how the party was not about. Mystified Eddie and myself went vertical. Only for the heavens to open and a hasty retreat made by ab under duress of myself begging Eddie to remain and go higher. Go higher. He was right. The place was sopping within the hour.

To Dalkey, the little rain shadow on the coast, to overlook Bono's pile. I dropped off Eddie, Ag and Tony and went and visited me old office on Fitzwilliam Place to sniff

around Emma. Number 3 remains anonymous! Time I got back I was so nearly in tears. I do miss the place and the people so mightily.

Next day the weather wasn't so great either but it was fine by the Wicklow's standards. No one would believe me that the weather was indeed adequate so we reduced elevation by visiting the crag at Hollywood. This crag I had passed on numerous occasions but had not grappled with. No regret. The grottiest, scruffiest pile of limestone I'd ever seen. (I mean, Chudleigh is a polish pile of shite but at least it has interesting lines.) Utterly bland in nature, every route was the same. The crag being constituted of shoebox size blocks, stacked to a poxy height. Hollywood's pubs are lovely but thanks, I didn't come here to drink away the days. Massive, massive thanks and gratitude's to the willing and spirit of Ag and Tony who were game to venture to Glendalough. That walk in, again, Tony set forth. Cabbage patch here had left his rock boots in the car. Though the day had slipped away. Having completed two pitches, we backed off to the pub. At least we had tried and therefore remained sober.

Day three and everyone believed the sun was ours. What a day. What a crag. Ag and Tony were buzzing away on lines. Eddie and I swung leads to remain one step ahead of the pursuing midges. Gee, they had sharp fags! I had left the guide book below which prevented Eddie from discovering the line of some 'past-vertical' horror and saving myself from an three hundred foot high 'air show'. Early evening, a little fatigued by the routes and trip we two were on the Nightmare ledge. Two hundred foot up, clipped to seven pegs of seven shades of decay, the air still, the sun beating down. Absolute heaven. I set off on the route of the Guide Book's cover shot. This shot shows the guy on a top rope. I was on the lead, out of sight of Eddie basking on the ledge below. 'Damn this route is run out'. It's slender but 4C. The gear I was hoping had to come but I still couldn't see from where. The slab although not fully vertical was utterly blank. A group of four appeared at the crag base and watched in silence. Am I going to make this or will I sail passed Eddie testing the seven shades to their fullest? The party below remained stony silent and transfixed as I edged upwards, carefully. I made it. Eddie's words at the top I shall always remember. 'Blimey, that was run out. I wish you'd let me know for I was nearly asleep on that ledge'. Where other than Ireland would you have an E2 4C? And as a cover shot?

Thanks Lou, thanks club. Next end of May, early June, I propose the Mirror Wall of the Burren, County Galway/Mayo. All meet at the ferry at Pembroke Dock for a mid week night sailing with full base camp supplies for this place is remote. A drive east to west of six hours minimum on some of Europe's most difficult and fatiguing roads. Lisdoonvarna and Lahinch for the craic (think Father Ted country), the Mirror Wall to draw awe. Straight out of the sea, behind you lies New York and nothing in between. Follow me.
Alistair O'McNicol

From Tarantulas to Humpback Whales, Pelicans to Conga Ants.....

My life and times have recently been sparse on the climbing activities front, except for a few social occasions, but life has been far from dull..... I'll spare you the details of regular work visits to an Algerian construction site. I'm sure you won't be impressed by stories of our AKA-carrying guard escorts, or indeed details about the terrorists routinely captured in the mountains to the south of our site. What you want are stories of climbing: shear fear on the rock face and terror surmounted. Well.....all I can offer

are memoirs of our recent holiday in Ecuador. The tenuous link being that Ecuador offers, I'm told, some superb climbing and mountaineering opportunities.

Two weeks of Latin American adventure.....'From the Andes to the Amazon' was our tour title. Arriving at Quito, the world's second highest capital at 2800m, our adventure started. With two days based in Quito to explore the phenomena of the equator line, sample the cloud forest, and acclimatise before heading higher we set out on Day 1 to a local Indian market. Our guide was keen we left all valuables behind, and warned us of thieving hands..... We seasoned travellers scoffed; hey Oxford Street is no safe place these days. But in amongst the live guinea pigs (a speciality when roasted) and exotic fruit which looked more extraterrestrial than South American, Tony experienced a 'slice of the action'. After leaving the market we discovered a neat knife cut through 2 layers of trouser pocket and into his flesh. Proudly bearing his war wounds, Tony declared the adventure had truly begun.

The Andes contains a huge number of 'climbable' peaks, some of which are dormant or active volcanoes, for those who like a climb with some extra spice. Our guide was a keen climber and talked us through the peaks she's 'bagged', including some in Peru and Bolivia. Our mission was to climb a section of Cotopaxi volcano to a refuge at 4800m. That day was Tony's birthday, and as the snow started falling outside the hut the guide lit a candle and we sang 'Happy Birthday' – the candle, however, was struggling more than us for oxygen and glimmered briefly then went out.

Onwards we travelled, taking a train through the Andes. This proved to be a breathtaking 6 hours sitting on the roof of a steam train descending gently through though fertile valleys before reaching a sheer granite face. With no way around or through this obstacle, the 19th century engineers had designed a series of switchbacks to allow the train to descend safely. I'd grade the climb up the side of the train wagons onto the roof as HS 5a!!!

Now in the rainforest we strolled through the jungle. Dressed in special protection wellie boots and covered in insect repellent we were warned to look before putting out our hands if we slipped. You see the jungle is no friendly place.....tarantulas, conga ants, snakes - they can all take a nip, with at best a painful sting (luckily we only observed these).

Conservation is being promoted by various agencies although it's a difficult task; for example, sadly the locals kill around 50 parrots to make one traditional shaman's warrior headdress. We visited an animal refuge in the jungle so indulge me as I list some of the animals seen, I'm unlikely to do this for climbs!! Capybara (World's largest rodent - pig sized), Kinkajou, Ocelots, Spider Monkeys, Jaguarundi, White Caiman (Armoured Alligator), Boa Constrictor, Anaconda, Toucans, Parrots, more Parrots, and the Grey Winged Tropicbirds. Our 'relaxing' canoe trip back to the lodge was interesting: negotiating the innumerable white-water rapids in a traditional vessel with none of the flexibility usually associated with white water rafts. Later that day we met a Shaman who showed us his 'rituals', he offered to clear my aura but I'm not a girl who's that easily won over.

The last few days on the coast were a welcome rest. Time for the mosquito bites to heal, and the road-jarred body to be rocked in a beach-side hammock. Happy hours were spent watching the magnificent pelicans and frigates swooping for fish from the

traditional fishing boats, and a glimpse of some Humpback whales soon to journey back to the Antarctica. On a local island, known as the 'poor man's Galapagos' we made acquaintance with the famous 'blue footed' and 'masked' boobies (a speciality gull with a quirky dance routine).

No more trips on the horizon this year (somehow a day raid on IKEA doesn't quite fit the bill) but Namibia and Botswana are on the shopping list for 2005.

PS We did the tourist bit on the equator line and watched a cheesy demonstration of water being poured down the sink. With a foot in both the northern and southern hemisphere I can confirm that over the equator line water goes directly down the plughole, and on either side anticlockwise or clockwise respectively. Amusingly, 'egg is on the face' of the French explorers who identified the location of the equator line in the 19th century. With the advent of GPS the real line has been identified 230m away and the exhibition now spans 2 locations

Mary (and Tony – formerly of EGCC!)

Tremadog

What a choice – the weather forecast said it would be fine and sunny in North Wales and Cornwall. Which way should we go? My favourite crag beckoned and so we duly pitched the tent at Eric's under glittering stars and went to the pub in Tremadog. The rain started. Surely some mistake, I thought, but oh no - God looked down on the people of Wales and said 'I'll make the buggers suffer – rain, rain, rain, rain rain!'

I knew that the tent was long past its best, and it looked distinctly less than waterproof when morning came. I wrapped the sleeping bags up in a groundsheet, just in case, and stomped off into the rain to go for a walk up Snowdon with Al (No. 1 son). We got to the llyn, saw a bit of a view and jointly agreed that hill walking in a gale and driving rain is not fun – never has been, and never will be. We turned round and went to the Beacon wall, via Pete's Eats.

Al did well, and led his first proper route (steep, and requiring some thought and ability). We rounded off the day with a rather fine dinner in Beddgelert. The tent, however, was a disaster. Not only was it raining outside the tent, it was also raining inside the tent. We slept in Eric's climbing wall that night – quite comfy on all the mats actually.

On Sunday, things looked rather better. Just a flat, grey Autumn day, and definitely dry. Al and I trudged off to Pant Ifan to do Scratch Arête (a HVS that used to be VS). The boulders were very slippery, and the first 30 feet was running with water, but all the holds were properly incut and we soon found ourselves perched in the tree half way up. The sun started to come out as we picked our way up the slab and over the roof. Nice route. Three stars for quality and a couple more for position.

We ambled back down to Eric's café and a nice catch up chat with him – I was one of his regular lodgers soon after he set up there. It made me feel very old to introduce Al to him – I was just a teenager myself when I lived in his barn at the weekends.

The next tick was Valerie's Rib (HS), one of those routes I should have done years ago but never did. Lovely route, highly recommended. The guide says it's poorly protected,

but that's a lie. After that, it was time to drive back, in a car steaming with minging wet gear.

Adrian

Access news

To update you all, this is the latest BMC access news on High Rocks:

'To tackle the twin issues of a recently implemented £5 climbing fee and encroaching vegetation, the landowner is being approached with a number of proposals, whilst a conservation plan has begun subject to an ACT funding bid'

Access News, Summit 36

Public apologies

The editor would like to formally credit Miss Heather Smith for the photos that he kindly provided for EGCC 51, which the editor callously left out during the editing process. The editor should also apologise for the loss of any words at the bottom of a page or two in also in EGCC 51.

Wordsearch

You're all familiar with the concept of doing a word search right? Well here you go it's the inaugural EGCC word search. But as you're all adults all I'm going to tell you is that I put 16 climbing phrases that you may or may not have heard before / words you might hear on a climbing weekend. The prize is five minutes of childish bliss...

B	S	Q	S	U	A	I	S	I	R	E	B	N	A	L	L
R	R	R	B	W	K	A	A	G	I	O	U	U	C	S	O
C	S	A	S	M	I	T	N	P	O	F	S	T	U	N	T
C	A	Y	U	C	C	Y	D	A	F	U	Q	Y	U	I	O
G	S	A	M	H	U	T	S	G	F	W	X	E	I	H	R
E	O	L	O	E	E	K	T	T	O	P	R	O	P	E	T
R	O	E	W	A	D	E	O	S	G	R	I	T	H	L	Y
H	Y	B	A	T	M	A	N	I	N	G	W	B	W	I	C
D	U	N	J	I	B	V	E	V	I	M	E	Q	W	C	A
A	K	A	U	N	F	A	J	Z	K	C	U	H	X	O	Y
S	L	H	H	G	Q	C	E	U	C	A	K	E	H	P	L
J	A	K	R	S	X	O	T	E	A	G	O	X	H	T	A
R	H	Y	D	D	U	E	T	A	B	S	E	O	S	E	A
Y	C	S	A	R	M	C	B	F	S	Z	G	E	A	R	?

Any rude or inflammatory words are purely coincidental, and the club takes no responsibility for stress caused in finding such words. Any Editor worth his salt would have check this wouldn't he.....

Notes....

Advertisement

Don't forget the EGCC AGM

It on the 1st February 2005 at Dorset Arms, East Grinstead.

Starting 8-30, upstairs. See you there..