



edinburgh JMCS

club circular

busy bees...

Despite the somewhat erratic weather we've had this winter, there certainly seems to have been a lot of meets activity going on.

We've got a report from our winter new members' meet, which seems to have gone down a treat - more to follow, for those who want to break out (or should that be in?) those rock boots.

By way of introducing a bit more fun into the proceedings (yes, I know, climbing's not supposed to be fun....) this circular sees the launch of our Girl's Go Cragging column - yes, it's official, girls have more fun!

A reminder of last year's 'sun rock' trips has also slipped into this edition - a full round up of all the sun-cream and euro outings taking place this year next time!

Ruth

Contributions, meet reports etc. for the next circular can be sent to Ruth McArthur (ruthhmcArthur@hotmail.com). Please, please, please try to keep them short, ideally no more than 800 words - don't want fellow club members dozing off...

NEWS

Electronic communication

The AGM agreed that the club would, where practical, make full use of e-mail/web technology with the objective of improving communication between members. Therefore, some of you will have received notification of this circular via e-mail.

If you do not want to receive the circular electronically via the club website please contact the Club Secretary by e-mail or phone. We'll then make sure you receive a paper copy in future. Obviously, if you don't have e-mail and have received a paper copy of this circular, you need do nothing.

International Year of the Mountains

In case you hadn't noticed - 2002 is officially the International Year of the Mountains. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland has a number of events planned throughout the year. Details of these, along with information about other events and courses planned by the MCofS can be found on their website at www.mountaineering-scotland.com.

Smiddy charges

It was agreed at the January Committee meeting to increase the hut fees for the Smiddy to £4 for non-members and £2 for members.

AGM minutes

A copy of the minutes from the 2001 AGM is included with this circular.

RIP New Heights

For those of you who haven't noticed, New Heights is no more. The shop ceased trading in March after its highly successful (not surprisingly!) half-price sale. We're sorry to see them go.

Circular contributions

Apologies if your contribution has not been included in this circular - we had a lot of input this time round, but didn't want to make the content too unwieldy. Any unused contributions will be included in the next circular at the end of the summer.

girls

go



In which we discuss the imprudence of frostbiting and how to take the pain out of gain...

Well, girls don't actually go cragging all that much in winter, but this girl - in a fit of illusional crag-sickness on a cold wintry Saturday back in January - felt moved to go for it. When I used to go dinghy sailing years ago, stoic but unseasonal sailing activity at this time of year was known as 'frostbiting', a reference obviously made to the condition or near-condition of extremities induced by the sub-zero temperatures of UK waters between approximately October and April. Rock isn't all that much different, I find. Limited as my UK winter rock experience might be, (and I've made sure it's limited), I've always found it to go from plain 'cold' to 'scary-loss-of-sensation-in-critical-digits' to 'totally-numb-WATCH-ME!' and thence to the terrible pain of 'the burn', as somehow, lumbering in a vaguely vertical direction, blood manages to seep back to the fingers. Generally you wish it hadn't.

So, being sensible girls and therefore knowing that there will be gain without pain if you only plan in advance, 'winter rock' has become synonymous with 'winter sun' for the GGC team. Come November, December, us girls (and I hasten to add - if organised for them - many of the lads), are to be spotted milling about amongst the baggage carousels at Alicante airport amongst the blue rinses, the shell suits (yes, they are

still de rigueuer in some outposts), the beer guts and the flying fag butts, in irritated pursuit of circulating rucsacs stuffed hopefully with sleeveless vests and suntan lotion - oh and er, ropes and racks of course. Not that we haven't ever been caught out with insufficient fleece layers or no waterproof on some of these weeks. But hope reigns eternal, and over the last few years has been fuelled often enough by the clear vestiges of suntan marks and triumphant cries of 'it was so hot we couldn't climb between mid-day and four!' to perpetuate the firm belief that a week in the Costa Blanca will provide 6 days of uninterrupted ascents of sun-bleached, sun-baked limestone.....I can't go on. The mere recollection is enough to have me keying in 'Go-Fly.com'. GGC representatives, since they first met three years ago, have clocked up no less than 21 winter sun holidays between them (often with other JMCS lizards), nearly all in the land of blue rinses but adding a new 'spring into summer' version in Finale Ligure at Easter last year.

So there I was in Kyloe in January ("why?" I thought), dangling uselessly on a Severe I had led effortlessly last summer, complaining bitterly to my long-suffering partner that I could feel neither feet nor hands. Dave, above, sighed heavily. Well, I didn't actually hear him above the cooing of the glacial wind, but I can imagine that that would have been the only truly appropriate response.

True, I was wearing thick socks, brand-new clog-like rock boots (one size too large to accommodate said socks) and enough clothing to compete with an ice-hockey goalie, and was getting about as much sensation as an armadillo in a titanium condom, but nonetheless I was disappointed by my performance and proceeded to attempt to ruin the rest of Dave's day by repeatedly saying so.

That evening found me straight on the phone to Ruth earnestly discussing the next sun-rock expedition.

Thus it is that the GGC team will be lolling on stances in Sardinia in May, on a 'recce' (ha ha) whilst Ruth has even managed to squeeze in yet another week in the well-known and much-loved valenciano region beforehand. (Treatment to be taken at least every two months, we advise).

Meanwhile, what about all the other dark, cold weeks we have to be earning the necessary for the winter sun forays..? Well, I've come to the conclusion that if you have to climb over-dressed with a runny nose and freezing hands and feet, you may as well be winter climbing.

So last Saturday, my first time ever in Scotland, saw me dangling under the bulging crux of Patey's Route in the Northern Corries, silently weeping over my throbbingly painful fingers as the blood, which had drained out of them completely whilst I tapped uselessly yet innocently above my head, gushed back into them. Ouch, ouch ouch. Did I say silently weeping? From just above I distinctly heard a heavy sigh. "OK Dave, one, two three, PULL!"

Next issue, GGC representatives will report on hunky lycra-clad men with bare torsos expected to be encountered on the Emerald Isle, (ooh, well hope so anyway), and chunky Gore-Tex clad climbers expected to be encountered on Skye in June, and in any other venues representatives will doubtless clock up before the next issue. Girls have more fun, it's official.....

SALLY



meets - may 2002 to october 2002

weekends

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT	NOTES
Sat 11 May	Meikle Ross		day meet
17 to 20 May	Smiddy Wester Ross	John Fowler	Long Weekend
31 May to 3 June	Isle of Rum	Sally Dipple	Jubilee Weekend
7 June to 9 June	Pol Dubh Glen Nevis	Neil Cuthbert	New members' rock climbing meet. Camping
14 June to 16 June	Lagangarbh Glen Coe	Patrick Winter	8 places
28 June to 30 June	Isle of Arran	Sally Dipple	Camping
Sat 6 July	Clifton Crag		day meet
Sat 20 July	Glen Clova		day meet
26 July to 28 July	CIC Ben Nevis	Patrick Winter	6 places available
16 Aug to 18 Aug	Jock Spot's Newtonmore	Neil Cuthbert	New Members' Meet
30 Aug to 1 Sept	Jock Spot's Newtonmore	TBA	
Sat 7 Sept	The Cobbler		day meet
13 Sept to 16 Sept	Brimham Rocks Yorkshire	Sally Dipple	Long weekend.
25 Oct to 27 Oct	Langdale Lake District	Sally Dipple	Raw Head Hut 4f and 6m places

With hopefully no foot and mouth restrictions this year and perhaps better weather than last summer (we are due good summer aren't we?), we hope folk will be able to attend some of the following meets and get some good climbing in. We have retained most of the usual venues but added a few new ones as well, one of which is already booked up (Rhum meet, Jubilee Weekend)

Apparently, the club used to have Saturday meets which we have revamped this year and may suit those who want to get out on a club meet but can rarely spare a whole weekend.

We have chosen venues which have a good spread of routes and are not unreasonably far -flung in our view, but some might disagree!

wednesday evenings

When	Where	Notes
May 15th	Auchinstarry Quarry	
May 22nd	Aberdour	LT 18.12
May 29th	Trapain Law	
June 5th	Bowden Doors	
June 12th	Auchinstarry Quarry	
June 19th	Dunkeld	
June 26th	Trapain Law	
July 3rd	Kyloe Crag	
July 10th	Aberdour	LT 21.28
July 17th	Dunkeld	
July 24th	Rosyth Quarry	
July 31st	Trapain Law	
Aug 7th	Aberdour	LT 20.29
Aug 14th	Ratho	Rosyth if not open
Aug 21st	Aberdour	LT 20.47
Aug 28th	Trapain Law	
Sept 4th	Salisbury Crag	followed by meal

N.B. All Wednesday night sessions are followed by visit to local pub by all surviving members, agreed at the time (usually when darkness falls)

If Saturday meets prove popular we will include them next year as well.

Throughout the summer we will try and make a point of reminding people of an imminent meet via email and provide any further information that we may have.

Check the website also for up to date information and also for any meets that might be organised for late autumn eg annual coastal walk and possible mountain biking weekend.

If interested in attending any of these meets please contact whoever has agreed to co-ordinate the meet.

As usual the choice of venues for mid -week meets is quite limited. We had hoped to include a number of visits to Ratho Quarry which would offer of course an in-built wet weather alternative, but heaven knows when this place will be open. It is down as a possible venue later this summer but this now looks quite unlikely.

I read with interest recently that Limekilns Crag in Fife which has been strictly closed off to climbers for years by its owner, Lord Elgin could possibly be re-opened if the Land Reform (Scotland) Act has the teeth to resolves access problems to places like this. Next year perhaps, but we would have to watch out for the grease which the owner cynically smeared over the lower sections of the crag to deter climbers.

Mid week meets are usually followed by a pub visit to a local hostelry eg The Drovers Inn, East Linton after Traprain.

Please note that the wet weather alternative for mid week meets is Alien Rock and afterwards the Star Bank Tavern.

Many thanks to Tom Leatherland for kindly supplying the Tide tables once more.

Patrick Winter and Sally Dipple

meets reports - winter 2001/2002

Inbhirfhaolain, Glen Etive

Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th December 2001

Eddie Gillespie and Thomas Beutenmuller

On Saturday we climbed Aonach Eagach, "the long way": Clachaig-Sgorr nam Fiannaidh-Am Bodach and back. It was a bit windy up there, we had the odd shower of rain, but apart from this it was quite warm. Not a morsel of snow or ice to be seen....

Sunday we went up Ben Starav and Glas Bheinn Mhor. The top of Ben Starav had an icing of snow. It was a sunny day and we had magnificent views down Loch Etive, across to Mull and the back of Glencoe. There was not enough daylight to go up the third Munro of the 'classic' round.

Thomas Beutenmuller

Jock Spot's, Newtonmore

Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th January 2002

Eddie Gillespie and Thomas Beutenmuller and nobody else!

After the discovery that we still can front-point during a short blast up Sunshine Gully on Beinn Udlaih just before New Year, we were now ready for a 'big' route. However, the weather wasn't. So we went up Beinn a Chaorainn via the East Ridge, an entertaining Grade I. There was fresh snow on the route, but only some ice and frozen turf quite high up.

Sunday we walked up to the CIC hut, but could only watch the snow flow down the Allt a'Mhuilín. It was also exiting to see the waterfalls being blown up the hill. As our objective Castle Ridge was bare of snow and the wind so strong, we agreed to retreat to Nevisport for a cup of tea and a sticky bun.

We still didn't give up after this, but when we listened to the forecast on Monday and they talked of 'plus ten degrees', there was only one option left: Pack up and go to Alien Rock! The conditions there were great: Warm, wind-sheltered and dry plastic...

Thomas Beutenmuller

Jock Spot's, Newtonmore

Saturday 9th February & Sunday 10th February

Friday night began with a big downpour which continued on and off for most of the way into the night, plans were hastily made for a spot of munro bashing. On arrival at Jocks however talk quickly got round to winter routes, forecasts were mixed. . .

Thomas Beutenmuller, James Stephens, Patrick Winter, Stewart Bauchop.

Saturday morning saw mild temperatures after an evening of heavy rain, an abnormally early start was made for the Coire an T-Sneachda due to an alarm clock error. . .

SB and PW did " The Haston Line " (III / 4)

Crusty unconsolidated snow and thin ice gave "a sporting ascent". Delayed awhile behind a team of two abseiling off the first pitch. Conditions improved with hieght.

TB and JS did " Red Gulley " (II / III) and " Broken Gulley " (III)

A good day with both routes reported to be in fine condition.

All returned to the Northern Corries, SB and PW went to Coire an T-Sneachda, TB and JS headed for Coire an Lochain. . .

SB and PW did " Hidden Chimney " (II / III)

2 parties on the direct start, traversed in from above along "the slant". Perfect neve made for fine climbing in two long pitches up to the crux chimney. Found the chimney to be in excellent condition with thick plastic ice giving solid placements.

TB and JS did " Sidewinder " (III)

Thomas continues the report from Coire an Lochain.

"... had a go at Sidewinder, Grade III. The first two pitches went without any problems, despite not so good conditions with a lot of sugary snow on the route.

The last pitch turned into a major epic: Instead of staying on the crest of the buttress I went up a chimney further to the right. It felt quite stiff for a grade III, but as I found the odd nut and peg runner in place, I was sure this was the route. I also could see the plateau and thought I would be up there in no time! Just below the exit of the gully there was a cave, where I managed to get a good peg in. However, the last move over that bulge was far harder than anything I have ever climbed before! I just could not do it. I tried two other corners, but they were also desperate, especially with that crap snow. I wasted hours up there and was not sure what to do! Only when this guy Marc came up and had difficulties as well, we decided to use 'combined tactics'. We rigged a sling (one to pull on and one to stand in) and with both of us pushing and shoving he made it up to the top. Marc tried to give me a very tight rope, but it took the help of another climber who came up the 'ordinary' route on the left before I finally summited! By that time it was quite late and we tried to get James and Marc's two lady-friends up as fast as possible. When they all were up we had to throw the gear in the packs and descend as fast as possible. The day ended with a good heather bashing session with headtorches on before we found the Sneachda path. We made it back to the car park for seven!"

Patrick Winter

Invercroft, Achnasheen

Saturday 16th February & Sunday 17th February

Friday evening's weather stayed settled combining with quiet roads and clear skies to make the mammoth drive to Achnasheen that wee bit easier. . .

John Fowler, Helen Forde, Patrick Winter, Stewart Bauchop.

meets reports - winter 2001/2002

Saturday: Low cloudbase, mild temperatures and driving rain, - "welly boot weather"

SB and PW set off for Coire Lair

Walked up to Sgorr Ruadh to look at High Gulley, nothing in condition. Continued up the Central Couloir on sugary snow and took a bearing off the top. Dramatic scenery, miserable weather.

JF and HF went to Coire Lair.

Helen walked out to "The Tea House" (bothy).

As the weather boomed around outside the hut, inside a fine evening was had with a roaring fire, gallons of tea and at least three selections of whisky.

SB and PW drove South East to The Northern Corries.

Very mild, drizzle, headaches and low cloudbase. Overspill carpark busy with skiers, went home to do some gardening instead.

JF and HF

Helen went to Plockton.

Patrick Winter

Blackrock Cottage, Glen Coe

Saturday 2nd March & Sunday 3rd March

Blackrock Cottage, Friday night, and the black silhouette of the Buachaille stands against a backdrop of even darker clouds, inside a good fire is crackling away . .

Patrick Winter, Francis Winter, Stewart Bauchop, Dave Amos, Bryan Rynne

Mild temperatures, low cloudbase, and more light snowfall on Saturday morning, all made an early start for (Stob) Coire an Lochain.

SB and DA did "SC Gully" (III)

Mild temperatures and deep snow made for hard work on the approach. SC Gully in good nick (once established on the route) with plenty ice. Took the left-hand variation on the second pitch, fantastic scenery.

PW and FW did "Twisting Gully" (III)

The route was not in the best of condition, and the crux pitch quite testing, heroically led by Francis on his first winter route for a few years. At the top, soft powder and a cornice required careful negotiation. . (PW)

BR went corbetting.

Walked up Stob Dubh (Corbett about 2 miles N of Loch Etive in Glen Etive). Pouring with rain when I parked the car, but by the time I got my boots on it had stopped. The hills were shrouded in mist when I set off, but the mist seemed to rise at the same rate I did (slowly!). Steep ascent through very soft snow, but excellent, clear view at the top, from the Buachailles, covered in snow, in the north to Loch Etive and the Etive slabs, glinting in the sunshine, to the south. Very rapid descent, slithering down the soft snow with ice axe flailing. (BR)

Awoke to poor weather on Sunday morning; low cloudbase, squally rain and very mild. An off day for most, DA and SB returned to Stob Coire.

DA and SB did " Ordinary Route / Central Buttress " (III)

Misty with persistent drizzle in the corrie, deep wet snow forced a circuitous route to the bottom of the climb. Short debate about the condition of the route however the first mixed chimney / groove provided reasonable turf where required and conditions improved with height. Fine variety of open situations with dramatic views across the North Buttress face disappearing in and out of the mist.

Patrick Winter

JMCS New Members Meet - Jock Spot's

Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th March

Members Attending:

Callum Milne	Neil Cuthbert
Calum Wilson	Rob Eyton-Jones
David Amos	Sally Dipple
David Small	Stewart Bauchop
Derek Hunter	Susan Marvell
Karl Winkler	Thomas Beutenmuller
Linda Corlett	Trevor Carpenter
Mark Greenwood	

Two things to note about this winter's New Members Meet at Jock's - it wasn't held at Jock's, and it wasn't just for New Members. Ten originally planned to spend the weekend at Jocks whilst the "overflow" had found rooms at the Craigower Lodge in Newtonmore. In addition to introducing new members to the Club the meet was also intended to be an opportunity for some of the established members to try out some winter climbing with those more accustomed to the "white stuff".

The main accommodation was changed at the last minute to the Braeriach Hotel in Newtonmore. This was not an entirely bad thing as it turned out this was where quite a bit of the most notable action of the weekend (more later) took place.

Why the last minute change of venue? Despite rumours to the contrary, it wasn't just that some of the members attending relished the idea of spending the weekend in the pub. No, the alternative sleeping arrangements were forced on us after we arrived at Jocks on Friday evening to find it was occupied by a sizeable group of Fifers from the "Eight Mile High Mountaineering Club". I thought the name came from an activity that occasionally takes place on aeroplanes, but Stewart B explained it with a reference to a Birds track in the sixties (I didn't think he was that old).

After discussing the issue with the Fifers it was clear they were not going to move, and anyway they had made the booking fourteen months ago and got there first! It was clearly up to us to find somewhere else to stay. A hastily convened meeting at the Braeriach Hotel was interrupted by the friendly (and very drunk) owner.

meets reports - winter 2001/2002

"Who's the Boss here" (fingers point at me) "I've twenty rooms in this Hotel and naebody staying in them."

Derek H "We'll take them for £10 a night B&B".

The owner " I cannae let them go for that price. £15 and they're yours."

The Boss "Meet us halfway at £12.50 and we'll take them."

The owner "Done!"

So the deal was done. A shared room in the Braeriach Hotel and full Scottish Breakfast at the Newtonmore transport café (the owners also owned that) for £12.50. What the owners lost in the accommodation deal he soon made up at the bar, but I think he knew that before the deal was done.

Plans for Saturday matured over Bacon & Eggs at 0630 in the transport café. Derek H and Karl W headed off to the Ben for the North-East Buttress whilst the rest of us took the Northern Corries option with a day in Coire an t'Sneachda.

The ski road was late opening so we had a fairly late departure from a very windy car park on the approach track. Once in the corrie the wind died down however and it was the familiar "Gorillas in the Mist" scenario. Visibility was down to 10m so even locating the Mess of Pottage was problematic. A grade 4 avalanche warning didn't do much to instil confidence either.

After some wandering in the mist Rob E-J, Sue Marvell and Mark Greenwood found The Opening Break (III,4) in good condition and had a pleasant time on the ascent. Linda Corlett and David Small opted for the Haston Line (also III,4) but found it "rather wet soft and manky". With Trevor Carpenter, I opted for Hidden Chimney via the interesting direct start (Grade III). Stewart B and Callum M chose to follow us up the same route. Sally Dipple and Dave Amos (despite a late start owing to a 2 hour wait on the stance) managed the hardest route of the day with an ascent of Patey's Route (IV,5) over on Aladdin's Buttress.

Over on the Ben Derek and Karl scored their first success of the day by finding Calum Wilson and Thomas Beutenmuller. They had arrived at Jocks and after encountering the in-situ Fifers had headed over to Tulloch Station Bunkhouse near Roy Bridge. Search parties had failed to locate them at the pub in Lagan and abandoned the search after that.

Anyway conditions were also misty on the Ben so Derek and Karl decided to head for the lowest rocks on the Buttress that leads to the First Platform and just start climbing. As the day wore on it was clear that the technical nature of the ground they were on was not making for the necessary fast ascent required for NEB. The decision to retreat by abseil was taken about a pitch below the Mantrap. Thomas and Calum were meanwhile fully occupied by Tower Ridge. Helping a fellow climber at Tower Gap caused an hour's delay so it was not until 2200 when the successful team returned the North Face Car Park and decided to return to Edinburgh.

Saturday night was spent at the Braeriach Hotel for much needed food and liquid refreshment. Unfortunately some of the local had too much of the latter and the last JMCS

members to bed had to sneak past a fight that broke a couple of windows and soon spilled out on to the street.

Sunday was mild again with better weather. Rob E-J with Sue M returned to Sneachda to climb Red Gully (II/III) and Goat Track Gully (II). Derek, Mark and Karl made a speedy ascent of Patey's Route whilst Dave and Sally settled for a Munro walk - Geall Carn from Dalwhinnie. The rest of us (possibly nursing the worst hangovers and/or injuries) chose to make an early return South.

Despite the accommodation troubles the weekend was judged a success by all those involved. The next New Members meet is being held at Glen Nevis campsite on the weekend of 8/9 June. Aspirant members wishing to attend and full members able to be climbing partners should contact me as soon as possible.

Neil Cuthbert

And as a wee reminder of summer past....

Orpierre too

10-17 September 2001

Bryan Rynne and Patrick Winter

We went to Orpierre about a month later than Sally and Ruth so it seemed worth comparing the two times for anyone else intending to go (very good, accessible crags - worth going).

Orpierre is a very small village with a campsite, a food shop, a climbing shop and a bar, surrounded by crags, and with many others within easy driving distance.

In August the campsite was very busy, and the bar did meals (very good pizzas) all week. There was also a bar doing meals on the camp site. In September the campsite was very quiet with, basically, only climbers on it. However the campsite bar was shut, the one in the village only did meals on Friday night, and shut early some nights. The nearest restaurant is over 10 miles away.

In August it was very hot - too hot for climbing in early afternoon. In September it was too cold for climbing before about 10.00 and after 6.00 if you were in the shade, however it was much more pleasant during the rest of the day.

Bring a good sleeping bag if you camp in September! Also, at any time, the ground is very hard - forget tent pegs and bring 9in nails and a lump hammer (this won't do your baggage allowance much good but you will be pleased when you get there). The climbing shop sells heavy duty tent pegs but they were sold out when we were there.

Highlights: Quiquilion bolted multi-pitches. Lowlights: missing the flight home... (mmm - I sense a trend developing here - Ed.)

Bryan Rynne