



## Membership cards and Subscriptions 2006

Please bear with us if you haven't received your membership card or, apparently, not had a cheque presented – we have had some difficulties with the functions of the Hon. Treasurer and Membership Secretary during the year. Neil Brindley has agreed to take the posts over, but it will take a bit of time to sort things out. We shall endeavour to get the missing cards to you as soon as possible

## AGM and Dinner

The AGM and dinner this year (the 56th) will be held at the Glan Aber Hotel, Betws-y-Coed on Saturday 21st October 2006. The AGM will begin promptly at 6pm with the meal at 7.30pm. The agenda is included with this newsletter. The minutes of the 2005 AGM were circulated with the November 2005 newsletter.

The hotel have exceeded themselves once again and have provided us with a wonderful choice of locally produced food, except for the puddings, sadly, which this year come all the way from Yorkshire. The cost will be £15 per person.

For those deciding to "rough it" in the hut there will be a minibus service provided, organised to arrive at the hotel just in time for the AGM. For those not wishing to walk, a return journey may be negotiated. Cost, a ridiculous £5 round trip to be paid on the night.

If you would like to stay at the hotel please contact the proprietors on 01690 710325 as soon as possible to make a booking. Otherwise, please book with Keith for places in the hut asap. There is a spot for this on the dinner booking form which is included with this newsletter. Thanks, Keith Mott. (Please book by Saturday 7th October)

Gwesty Glan Aber Hotel, Holyhead Road,  
Betws-y-Coed LL24 0AB  
Tel: 01690 710325, Fax: 01690 710700

## Forthcoming Meets

### Norfolk Mountains (Camping) 15th – 17th September 2006

Whilst not the highest meet of the year - the Mott house sits on the 50m contour – so no-one is going to get altitude sickness on the walks. The Norfolk Mountains weekend will have all the usual attractions, walking, cycling, sightseeing, train-driving and, last but not least, eating (and drinking).

Everyone is welcome, most people arrive on Friday but if you want to turn up earlier just let us know. And stay till Sunday or Monday or..... as usual, there is plenty of room to camp in the garden but there is also some bed space in the house. Give us a ring to book a tent space or a bed.

This year I have reached the big 40 and will be celebrating for the weekend and would really like everyone to join us for a birthday bash.

Contact Frances Mott: Tel: 01379 677238  
email: [ulgmc@mellon.demon.co.uk](mailto:ulgmc@mellon.demon.co.uk)

### Fallcliffe 22nd – 24th September 2006

Rather than autumn – how about an Indian summer?

Contact Les Bailey: Tel: 023 9266 0208  
email: [les.bailey@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:les.bailey@ukonline.co.uk)

### AGM & Dinner 20th – 22nd October 2006

Contact Keith Mott: 01379 677238

### Bonfire Meet Fallcliffe 3rd – 5th November 2006

Please bring fireworks. Neil will be organising the food and would appreciate your help. Between all concerned and particularly Neil and Frances Mott, there was lashings of good honest nosh last year. Let's hope for the same again!

Want to submit a report?  
end-October 2006 latest

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# Meets Programme 2006

Date	Location	Meet	Organiser
Sep 15 - 17	Norfolk Mountains	Camping	The Motts
Sep 22 - 24	Fallcliffe	A sniff of Autumn?	Les Bailey
Oct 20 - 22	Caseg Fraith	AGM & Dinner, Glan Aber Hotel	Keith Mott
Nov 3 - 5	Fallcliffe	The Bonfire Meet	Neil Brindley
Dec 8 - 10	Fallcliffe	TBA	
Dec 22 - 2 Jan	Caseg Fraith	Christmas & New Year	Elsbeth Howell

## Past Meets

### Caseg Fraith 14 - 17 April 2006

Sarah Batten (aged 10) reports:

The best thing that I can remember about this meet was the climbing, a whole day's worth of it outside. It was my first time, so you can imagine the excitement the night before! Anyway, we were a group of five, Elanor, Rachel, Lizzie, Ruth, and me, Sarah. Our instructor was Mark, a lively Scottish man who was very persuasive! The day started by driving (at 9:00 sharpish!) over to Plas y Brenin to be fitted up with our climbing gear. Then, we drove back to the hut as we had decided to do the climbing on the London Rocks. First we did some scrambling to get our balance. After that, Mark put up some ropes so we could have a go at the real thing. I bravely volunteered to go first and



have to admit, the buzz that you get off it is phenomenal!!!

Soon it was lunchtime and we enjoyed eating our sandwiches outside in the sunshine. In the afternoon, it became very cold but we did some abseiling. Rachel was hopping down the slope at a very great speed! My overall view of the day was very positive and I had a really good time. I would encourage all other children to have a go!

### Fallcliffe

29 April - 1st May 2006

Neil Brindley reports:

That he was the only person to turn up for this meet - which has prompted a change in policy concerning Club meets - see Keith Mott's report in the AGM section of this newsletter.

### Crianlarich

6 - 13 May 2006

Sue Esten reports (after arm twisting by one WHB):

Still one of the club's most popular meets! Keep it up Willie! Some 20 members participated in a week of unbelievably wonderful sunshine - were we really in Scotland? Sadly one of the main objectives of the meet wasn't accomplished - Willie did stagger up one of his three remaining Munros, Sgurr nan Coireachan on Knoydart with the aid of a considerable dose of painkillers, but was too incapacitated by his wonky hip to attempt the remaining two. Nevertheless we partied - any excuse - in this case celebrating 60 years since Willie's first Munro!

Early mornings found the members with distant Munros to do getting into their cars and off, with or without bicycles to aid access. Then a second quantum of folk left with more local summits as their objective, whilst a third made full use of the proximity of the railway to do sections of the West Highland Way. Groups two and three combined on one day for an outing by train to Mallaig to indulge in a wonderful fish meal (see illustration!). Rannoch Moor, the Ben and viaducts provided the backdrop to one of the most spectacular rail journeys in the UK. And on the Friday of the meet, ULGMC helped Sue E's brother celebrate a significant birthday in a local hostelry - a very pleasant end to very pleasant meet.



## Scottish contemplation



## Lands End Camping 26 – 30 May 2006

Geof and Margaret Batten  
report:

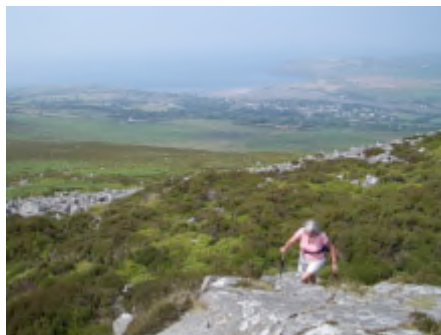
This year 22 adults and eight children assembled at Trevedra Farm for the club's annual visit, Tuscany and Australia proving greater attractions on this occasion for Pat Owens/Pauline Oppenheim and Sue Darling respectively. There was heavy mist for the first couple of days but then it rolled away and it was warm and sunny for the rest of the weekend. All the usual walking, beaching and eating was undertaken, the children particularly enjoying an expedition to the Logan Rock under Keith Mott's careful supervision. Three other members joined the camping party for our communal dinner with splendid spaghetti bolognese and moussaka followed by strawberries and cream- thanks again to Jo the cook for this.

## North Pembroke 30 June – 2 July 2006

Sue Esten reports:

Just seven members assembled at a new venue in N Pembs – a camp site with a wonderful view over Newport Bay, run by a colourful Welsh octogenarian on the outskirts of Newport between Fishguard and Cardigan. No climbing was done (surprise, surprise!) – the most difficult enterprise undertaken was the erection of the Patsy and Tref awning! However 2 good walks were had – the first round Dinas Head and on to Fishguard on the Saturday and the second on Sunday up Mynydd Carningli on the south side of Newport. Once again we used the

excellent bus service of the area to get back to the camp site from Fishguard. The challenge for next year, if we use the same camp site, will be a traverse of Mynydd Preseli – any takers?



## Fallcliffe 21 - 28 July 2006

Frances Mott reports:

A rapid exit from the playground and a quick visit to the next village to pick up two friends, saw us on our way to Fallcliffe for the end of summer term meet. Keith joined Elanor, Rachael and me later on the Friday evening. Climbing was to be the order of the day on Saturday, but the start was delayed when, on reaching Burbage, we had to shelter in the rocks whilst a magnificent thunder storm raced up the valley. The rocks soon dried and all 4 girls did several climbs and some abseiling. In the evening we were joined by Neil Brindley, a friend and her daughter. Gaby, 14 - same age as Elanor, was in for some shocks over the next few days. She had never done most of the activities before but coped fantastically (particularly with the lack of a phone signal in the hut).

Over the next few days the very hot weather continued and saw a range of activities undertaken

– climbing, walking (not very far!), running (Neil only and there was a pub at the end!), shopping (this was a mainly female meet).

And for the first time in memory – swimming in the river below the hut!!!

A sunset visit to Burbage on Tuesday was livened up by some bouldering. Gaby had never done any before and was really enthusiastic, saying she would try out the local climbing wall when she went home.

Bill Towlson and John Parsons joined us overnight later in the week for two days of climbing.

A massive and very necessary clean of the hut took place and thanks are due to Elanor (14), Alice (12) Rachael and Lydia (11) for their help.



## Welsh Borders 4 – 6 August 2006

Sue Darling reports:

Another great camping weekend chez Towlson was enjoyed by 20 adults, 2 children and 2 dogs. The weather was generally kind, the hospitality superb and discussion as usual ranged from the cosmic to the mundane. On Saturday most of the group took to the Long Mynd, with a few interesting diversions en route to investigate heather conditions. Health and Safety would not have approved the steep post lunch haul from the NT tea shop in the valley back on to the hill (where were you, Clive?) but we enjoyed an unexpected bonus in the valleys, woods and fields of the Shropshire way on the way back. The flies were less welcome.

Saturday night's feasting was – enhanced – shall we say? by champagne and cake celebrating a certain birthday of a certain member.

Sunday saw most of the group walking over Corndon Hill and Stapely Common, with some good views and ancient and post industrial history evident in the landscape. We diverted for 'refreshment' and lunch to the Old Miners pub, much to the chagrin of the landlord, who had planned to watch Formula 1

racing rather than make a quantity of filled rolls (which were as good as ever). After lunch an unsuspecting group followed Bill ('just a short walk') to view stone circles on far flung hills while others retreated to Shirley Lodge or set off for home. Pimms on the lawn made for a relaxing close to the day's activities.

Many thanks to Pam and Bill for their hospitality and all the work it entailed.

## News from Members

### Ski-Mountaineering - The Uri High Level Route April 2006

Mike Esten writes:



Dave enjoying the view

This route, running through Central Switzerland from Realp in the South to Engelberg in the North looked so tempting that this year saw the usual team of decaying oldies hyping themselves up for it. The plan was for four of us to start from Realp, to be joined a few days later by Richard Morgan as we passed through the summer rock-climbers' Mecca of Goscheneralp. However, whilst I was

away in NZ, plans changed. Two of the team due to start from Realp dropped out leaving Dave Lindsey and I to do the most difficult first section as a twosome. The other change was however a bonus in that that Richard, entering at Goscheneralp, would now be accompanied by his son Jon .... who just happened to be a guide coming along for the fun of it, and just happened to be fresh back from a winter ascent of the Eiger North Face. Well, that would certainly be a help !

Dave and I had a pleasant ski up from Realp to the Albert Heim hut although the following 5am breakfast didn't appeal. The route from there climbed steeply up to the Winterlucke but it was a pity about the view from the top ! The weather was crystal clear with exciting views all around .... until we looked westwards toward the Lochberg where we could see our route leading up from an bottomless couloir where it would be crampons and skis on the rucksac. It looked very exposed and .... we chickened out ! Had there been a third member in the team we would probably have gone on (a twosome is a bit lonely for ski mountaineering) ..... and had it been a misty day obscuring the view we would certainly have gone on ! Having neither of these advantages we skied back down the 1500m of descent to Realp, caught the train round to Goschenen, and walked up to Goscheneralp where we met up with the Morgans.

The following day's pull up to the unguarded Chelentalp hut carrying our food etc went well enough until the last few hundred metres where it was skis on sac and miserable steep scrambling over rotten snow and rotten rock. Not surprisingly we had the rather spartan hut to ourselves. Next morning saw a continuation of the same terrain until we could get our skis on to climb through a beautiful glacier basin to the Sustenlimi col from where a glacier

designed perfectly for ski-tourers led comfortably down between seracs towering dramatically on either side to the comfortable Steingletscher bunk-house and therapeutic beers.

A steep climb the following morning led up through the elegant rock architecture of the Funfingerstock where in worsening weather an unusually steep descent (i.e. an enforced lengthy sideslip for normal people) led to a complicated traverse line to the Sustli Hut which fortunately was guarded.

The following day led past the summit of the Grassen from where, in bad visibility, Jon unerringly picked out our route to the next col, the Wendenjoch where a cornice with a drop of some 10 ft on the other side awaited us. Great stuff ! A wet ski in the mist and sleet down the glacier on the other side under the massive walls of Tiliis led to Engelberg and a chance to clean up.

It was a really good quality tour. After leaving Goscheneralp the Swiss Alpine Club ski touring guidebook graded all days between alpine AD and D. And what about the day which Dave and I chickened out on? Well, that was graded D + and at my age I don't feel too embarrassed about being chicken at that level ..... but given a bit of mist and we would probably have done it !!!

### Ski-Mountaineering in Gran Paradiso National Park

16th to 22nd April 2006

Stephen Olivant writes:

This year's trip was to the beautiful valleys and quiet peaks of the Gran Paradiso National Park. It used to be a huge hunting reserve for the King of Italy and it has more alpine wildlife than anywhere else I have been in the Alps. We were south of the Mont Blanc massif, so we had better weather than the Chamonix valley. It is easily reached from Chamonix, via the Mont Blanc road tunnel, and I would recommend a visit in winter or summer.

Graham Ball and I joined a Ski Club of Great Britain party led by Bruce Goodlad IFMGA accompanied by Guy, an aspirant guide who had decided after finishing medical school that the NHS didn't offer enough exciting outdoors work for him. Both Bruce and Guy are smashing chaps and I have signed up for Bruce's tour in the Silvretta next year. There were three other members of the party including Roger Hobbs, who was on his ninth consecutive week of ski-touring trips... what a marvellous way to spend retirement!





We drove from Chamonix through the tunnel towards Courmayeur and, because the weather forecast was poor, we spent our first day off-piste skiing at la Thuile. I had stayed in this nice little resort on a family skiing holiday years ago, but I was quickly lost when Bruce took us up from the top of the highest lift into clouds and deep snow like well-cooked porridge. Roger broke one ski pole during the ascent but, amazingly, seemed to be able to ski up and ski down without it. He must have been practising during the preceding eight weeks.

We stayed overnight in a splendid old style hotel just off the main road to Aosta and had the biggest meal I have eaten since I was a student. It was a special Easter feast and we lost count of the number of courses the elderly non-English speaking owners loaded onto our table. How they smiled when we held our stomachs and rolled our eyes after each course.

The second and third days were in the lovely Val di Rhemes. We drove past the hamlet of Rhemes Notre Dames to the valley head and then skinned up to the Benevolo hut in the morning. There, we dropped off our overnight stuff and went peak bagging during the afternoon and



the next day. The snow was much better than at La Thuile and we had some beautiful skiing down 1,000 plus metre routes chosen by Bruce and Guy.

After staying overnight at Rhemes Notre Dames, we drove round to Pont in the neighbouring valley and set off up a long track up to the Vittorio Emanuele hut in burning sunshine. Whilst enjoying lunch on the terrace of this amazing 3 storey curved aluminium hut, I left the skins on my skis in the sun, so that some of the glue on the skins transferred it itself on to the skis. Everyone on the terrace enjoyed the sight of me rubbing the skis with my fleece gloves for the next hour or so to get the amazingly sticky skin glue off. It's a mistake I shall only make once in my life.

We were away early next morning and skinned up the huge shoulder of the Gran Paradiso, before using crampons and ice axe for the last steep snow field. We kept our crampons on for a scramble to a rocky summit with a famous statue of the Madonna. The 4,000 metre summit is the highest (wholly) in Italy and gave a wonderful sunny panorama of the whole Mont Blanc massif and the descent chosen by Guy was the best continuous skiing of the week. The next morning was cloudy, so Bruce and Guy used their excellent mountaineering to find an excitingly steep ski descent to the main valley. From there, we slalomed around boulders and a scary half-hidden torrent back to the cars at Pont.

Three weeks later, on a 1,200 km cycle trip from Geneva to Venice, and I was able to look across a valley at the Gran Paradiso and have the quiet satisfaction of having shared its summit for a few minutes with the Madonna

## Letter from New Zealand May 06

Nigel Bowen writes:

Tim, can't resist catching up with you! Do you remember our youngest son, Jamie? - the one that beat you at pelmanism in Caseg Fraith many, many years ago; well he is now a pilot. He spent a year in China trying to teach Chinese airline pilots how to fly; most frustrating, smog & bureaucracy making the task almost impossible. Since returning with a lass that he met out there (Liz is Canadian) he has had a fabulous contract flying wealthy o'seas clients around the Southern Alps, landing on the beach in the Milford Sound, down to Stewart Island & up around the Marlborough Sounds: visit their website [www.flyinn.co.nz](http://www.flyinn.co.nz) We stayed with them in their ramshackle farm cottage in Tarras, which is situated in the heart of Pinot Noir vineyard territory, between Wanaka & Cromwell. Jamie used to keep the plane tied down in his back garden & one day flew us around Mt Cook. I never realised the turbulence is so extreme in the mountains - sometimes trying to descend, with the propeller feathered, the plane is still ascending at 500 ft per minute! But the air flow is much smoother close to the mountain ridges, so we were flying within 30 ft or so of the mountain face; whilst Penny was sitting in the back having kittens! A memorable flight, and, at my age, the nearest that I am likely to get to standing on top of Mt Cook!

I was out at Cape Brett a couple of weekends ago (still recovering from the arduous tramp!) and have it in mind to return by sea, as there is a fabulous rock face just offshore, perhaps 300 or more feet high, that is crying out to be climbed; probable standard, a flakey VS, protection uncertain - any takers?!

That youngest son, Jamie, has returned from Canada & has a job in Queenstown as a "meat bomber" - the jargon for the pilot of a plane carrying parachutists! So, if you know of any members who want to try parachute jumping during your coming winter, just let me know!

## The Battens in the Vanoise June 2006

Geof and Margaret Batten report:

Having read John Parson's account of his and Joy's hut-to-hut walking in the Vanoise last year (see Newsletter No 207, September 2005), we were encouraged to spend a week there at the end of June on our way back from a stay at our caravan in the south. We decided to base

ourselves at the Refuge de l'Orgère which stands above Modane at 1935m close to the GR5 and which is accessible by road. It offers beautiful views of Aiguille Doran behind and across the valley to the Point du Fréjus on the French-Italian border. All this plus comfortable bunk rooms and superb food, especially for those of us staying for more than one night.

We did three walks from the hut: along the GR5 to Col Barbier; up to Lac de la Partie with a good view of the snow-covered Col de Chavière and a half-day 'nature walk' around the head of the valley above the hut. Our other walks involved moving the car: to above Aussois to visit the Refuge de la Fournache with good views back across to the Col Barbier and down to the two hydro-electric reservoirs Plan d'Amont and Plan d'Arval; to Vancendières above Bessans and then by foot to the Avérole refuge at the head of the valley and, finally, up to the Bellecombe parking above Termignon to walk to the Refuge du Plan du Lac and on to the Refuge d'Entre-Deux-Eaux with the massif of La Grande Casse (3855m) behind it. On every walk we encountered the most amazing range and quantity of wild flowers- we think the most spectacular we have ever seen in the Alps- and all in virtually unbroken sunshine.

Like John Parson, we would heartily recommend the Vanoise: easy to get to, great scenery and a network of attractive huts. As always, please contact us if you would like more information.

## 'Have you brought your sun cream?'

### June 2006

Stuart Elliott writes:

'Have you brought your sun cream?' she said as the warm sun appeared momentarily from behind a concrete grey wall of cloud that loomed angrily next to our bright blue sky. 'No I forgot!' I replied waiting for the familiar bark. 'Stupid!' she said.

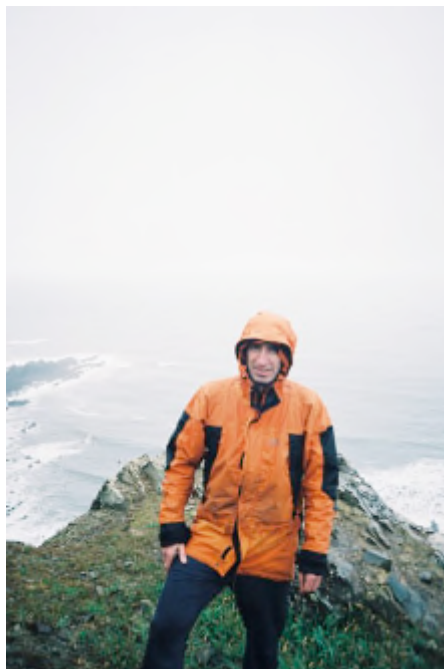
We were on our way to visit Rem the fisherman of Clovelly and to meet his beautiful family. As we arrived Rem was outside leaning over his car boot depositing some fish in it. We enjoyed several hours of Rem's animated tales before departing for the cliffs at Cornakey.

As we parked near Cornakey by the tearoom 'The Rectory' I fondly remembered the copious rather lovely cream tea that we had consumed the day before after our energetic recognisance of the right cliff. Gathering up our gear, we crossed the car park and climbed over the stone stile into the churchyard. As we walked through the graveyard I noticed a cluster of the same family names on the

gravestones. Nearby a fresh posy of sweet peas whispered of grief, but we did not listen, we had a purpose. We strode past the bleak black shuttered church and past the old vicarage with a sign saying something about being a private vicarage. The footpath wound and descended through a densely wooded copse and as we entered we felt the warm moist air and smelt the pungent wild garlic, wet moss, rotting wood and sickly sweet hedgerow flowers.

We emerged and crossed the meadows, walking up and down a couple of valleys and there in the distance was the enormous cliff of Cornakey. Clean rock sinking into an oozing mass of loose rock and landslide. After taking in the view, we ascended to the top of the cliff and set about gearing up ready for the descent. The cliff top was deserted apart from a distant farmer on a tractor turning the hay. The wind had picked up and the hay field was alive! My eyes attracted by the movement darted towards the swirling grass as wild coarse clumps rose and danced before flying off with the wind forever.

It was 4 o'clock and the tide was now out. We started to descend leaving our water and emergency gear in our bags, which we secured to a bush. It soon became apparent that what had looked like a simple descent was complicated by very loose rock. We hopped from one massive rocking boulder to another. The boulders appeared to be held in place only by a loose network of brambles. Where the rock ran out we jumped into and waded through the brambles, which tore at our clothes and tried to steal our shoes and murder us. With every step our options were diminishing. There seemed to be no prospect of a retreat back up this



overgrown no man's land .... the adventure had begun. The wind was really howling around us now as we finally reached the last 40 feet of the descent. We were standing on what looked like a pile of builder's rubble and dirt with landslide all around us! We found a ragged in situ nylon rope and inched our way down the pile of dirt as it disintegrated around us.

At sea level we were rewarded with an amazing rock formation. The earth had spewed up rock platelets that had folded over on themselves forming huge black waves. Some of the crests of these waves had fallen and were smashed into the ground around us. We moved carefully away to the beach and safer ground. The beach was covered in wreckage, bright coloured buoys, twisted and mangled wood, metal and plastic tossed like used toys up against the cliff, waiting for the sea to come back and play again. The rocks on the beach were pumice grey and perfectly rounded and as we prepared to climb I enjoyed their cool smoothness under my bare feet.

As we surveyed the gigantic cliff towering over us, we argued about the correct start. There were 3 pitches of about 150 feet each, the first pitch having no technical grade, the second 4B and the 3rd 4A. I was to climb the first 2 pitches and Reiko the last. I set off as the sky turned black, feeling a renewed sense of urgency! The rock was loose and I could not find any protection. However, the climbing was easy and I made good progress. At about 120 feet my nerves began to trouble me as I traversed around the arete and into a chimney. I managed to place a nut but the softness of the rock was worrying and every hold seemed to move. I was searching for gear when I was relieved to see a couple of old pegs up at the top of the chimney. I made a belay and Reiko quickly joined me. The next pitch started well and at about 30 feet I found 3 good bolts, which I realised were the normal anchors for the first belay. This was a little worrying, as I knew that there was a possibility of running out of rope before reaching the next anchor. However, this worry was soon trumped by the beginning of the storm.

Reiko shouted 'Don't worry about those spots of water it is only the sea spray!'. I knew she was just trying to reassure me. I moved quickly finding better gear and by the time I arrived at the anchors the rocks were thoroughly wet. I looked back down at the beach and was dismayed to see that the grey white pebbles had now turned glossy black! Reiko climbed easily and reached me as the full force of the storm was on us. 'I can do the top pitch as well' I heroically shouted in the howling wind. Reiko

thought for a moment then bellowed, 'No, I'll do it!' I felt a double-edged relief as Reiko's one and only major leader-fall had been in the wet and I was worried that the memory of the trauma may affect her or me. However, Reiko made steady progress stopping only to wait for a gap between gusts of wind to place her gear and once to discard a hold that came off in her hand.

I felt very cold as the rain had found a way into my jacket along with the wind and my body was shaking and my teeth were chattering. I had to sing and dance to keep warm and control my nerves. When Reiko was finally safe, I made my escape and was surprised at how good the wet holds were until my foot slid along an edge like an iron on a wet shirt! I carefully replaced my foot and respectfully continued up to the top.

We made it! We felt exhilaration at the top to have taken on the 'wreckers' storm in what felt like one of the wildest and loneliest places on earth. Sun cream was not required.

We made our way back across the field where the wind was strong enough to blow you over. We got back to the car (by now the only one in the car park), changed into dry clothes and very soon found a pub that had a wonderful fireplace, wonderful food and beer. Joy!

## The Mercantour June 06

### Sue Esten writes:

Gentians, more gentians and yet more – combined with hillsides of alpenrose and masses of pansies to name but a few of the wild flowers we saw – these were the memories of an energetic wander through the Alpes Maritimes. Mike and I started

our walk in Tende, on the French side of the frontier and home to a magnificent museum dedicated to the Merveilles, the Bronze Age graffiti. Don't miss it if you are in Tende! Our route took us to Casterino and then on to the Valmasque hut from which we climbed the Baisse de Valmasque to descend into the Vallée des Merveilles. The Merveilles hut, which has 4x4 access, was heaving with noisy French and we decided to plough on over the Pas du Trem to the Relais des Merveilles in St Grat. The western side of the Trem was chaotic – massive boulders, through which we threaded our way on a faintly marked path. That led to a beautiful valley with the inevitable steep descent through woods to end the day. We then crossed to the Refuge de la Madonne de Fenestre, another hut at a road head, but quite uncrowded and with a superb chef! From Madonne de Fenestre we went to Lac Boréon – a day punctuated by some navigational errors simply due to not paying attention! We spent a couple of nights in the gîte de Boréon and climbed the Cime de Mercantour (2772m) at whose top we were greeted by some cold squally weather. Check out the summit record book if you get there and you will find our names! The day was the longest of the year – which the French celebrate as the Fête de la Musique and the patron of the gîte marked the occasion by offering his clients an aperitif accompanied by 'la musique', a large cow bell! Next day saw us crossing back into Italy – we had flown to Turin and 'trained' to Tende - in order to start making our way back towards the Italian transport system. We crossed the Col de Salèse and then the Pas du Préfouns, a dramatic col enclosed by towering cliffs. Our destination was the Rifugio Questa. Next day was a hard one

and involved crossing the Colle di Valmania (2922m), the southern side of which had fantastically engineered mule tracks, but only a faint path on its northern side. We should have crossed the Colle della Paur, which has permanent snow; its southern side had a lot of snow too – hence the opt-out to the Valmania – a very long way round to our destination, the Rif Livio Bianco. We had a great welcome from the hut guardian and from a party of 'Bolognese' who were going to reverse our route of that day. It was a fun end to a very enjoyable trip. Our last day saw us walking down to St. Anna Valdieri from which we caught a bus to Cuneo and so on by train to Turin and the flight home. The flowers were magnificent – the wild life too – lots of ibex, marmots and chamois. Each hut seemed to have its resident chamois population! Oh, and plus tumbling streams, rivers and waterfalls.....



## Appointment with Cemetery Gates July 2006

### Reiko Elliott writes:

3 AM, got to Caseg at last! Traffic on the M25 was not good and Stuart had to have a nap before we set off from Croydon. The weather forecast was good for both Saturday and Sunday in North Wales, but arriving so late, doing anything hard on Saturday did not appeal. "Well, we'll see how we feel in the morning." I thought as we crawled into our sleeping bags.

John Hampton walked into our room looking for a bat. "Crikey, what time is it?" I thought and opened one eye to look at my watch. "Goodness, it's only 9.30 AM! That's it....doing anything hard is out of the question and anyway, Stuart won't be up for it. Damn!" I thought.

It was a glorious morning. A perfect day for doing something hard. Stuart announced that he felt that a cold was coming on and that he was not up to going for Cenotaph Corner but would be happy to second Cemetery Gates if I was thinking of doing it.





Cemetery Gates. Yes, I've been wanting to do it for the last couple of years but the weather was never right. Often we would drive past it with me straining my neck to look at it thinking, "One day, I will lead it!" and today, on this perfect day for the climb, I felt groggy, my body felt sluggish, and the feeling of frustration was slowly building up inside!

We decided to go to Dinas Cromlech anyway to have a look. We could even do something like Sabre Cut we thought and if it's too hot we could always do something on Dinas Mot.

Got to Llanberis Pass at around midday and we were lucky to find a parking spot near Dinas Cromlech. We began the long steep approach to the bottom of the routes. Half way up, I noticed someone on Cemetery Gates. Wasn't sure if it was a man or a woman but as we got closer, I saw that it was a young woman leading. Suddenly, my earlier thoughts were replaced with "If she can do it, so can I! It's a perfect day to do it....I would be stupid not to give it a go....Okay, I've only just recovered from a lower back ligament injury and my physiotherapist did say that he preferred that I didn't climb this weekend....but if I can't do it, I could always retreat.....I've got to give it a go.....I do feel strong enough ...I've got to give it a go!". By the time we got to the bottom of the Cenotaph Corner Area, I had convinced myself that I was up for it....that it was going to be today....my appointment with Cemetery Gates.

After lunch, we geared up and made our way to the start of the climb. Stuart was not pleased about my decision at all! He had allowed himself to feel relaxed about the day as he thought that we were

going to take it easy....he no longer liked the idea of seconding Cemetery Gates... it was not his idea of taking it easy! I ignored his moaning noises. I'd already made my mind up.

The first pitch felt surprisingly do-able...I was really enjoying it. "This is great! It doesn't feel half as hard as Manzoku (at Stennis Head, Pembroke) that I did last year!" I thought.

The young woman before me had done the route in one pitch choosing to go directly up joining the last few moves of The Grim Jim and Right Wall. When I got to The Girdle ledge, it made sense to go straight up, so I carried on as well after letting Stuart know of my intentions. A guy was struggling on the last 10 metres of Cenotaph Corner, grunting and talking frantically to his belayer...he eventually made it by pulling up on a cam and I think the relief of getting to the top made him go into a ranting overdrive ... he just carried on babbling loudly. By this time, I was wondering why on earth I had opted for the direct route...for I had reached a tricky point ....a man was babbling loudly.....I could not hear myself thinking ....I need to focus...oh God, my arms are getting pumped...quick, I need to put something in....oh, please, shut up, I need to focus....."Stuart, can you hear me, I can't concentrate...I can't hear myself thinking!" I bellowed down, hoping that the man would get the message....I heard the second say "I think she's having a hard time there ...". "That's it!" I thought, "I'm going up. I'm not going to put up with this!" I somehow found renewed energy at that point and I powered myself up to the top.

At the top, I came face to face with a familiar face. "Libby?" "Yes" "Stuart, Libby's up here!" "Yes, I know" he said. Libby Peters, she taught us gear placement five years ago on one of our ULMC meets....what a coincidence to bump into her again at the top of Cemetery Gates!! Now it was my turn to start babbling with elation!

My Cemetery Gates project was complete. Strangely, I did not feel as overjoyed as I did when I "conquered" The Sloth (Roaches) last year. That's probably because The Sloth project involved several months of continuous roof traversing training in the Monkey Room at Mile End and there was a build up of emotion of anticipation before the day of the climb (23 July 2005) unlike today when events simply crystallised per chance....but I was happy....what's my next target on Dinas Cromlech....Left Wall, maybe.

## An Italian Summer

### Shaun and Shelagh West write:

We've been doing our best to visit the entire arc of the Italian Alps this summer, stretching from the Val d'Aoste to the Dolomiti (still to come). The arrival of Jakob in May has kept walks shorter than usual - Shaun has discovered that carrying 5kg or so of baby on his front is quite tiring but at least it slows him down enough for Shelagh's unfit legs to keep up. The Italian Alps are beautiful and the food, well you'll get jealous if we say too much. The other reason for the frequent escapes to the mountains (only 2 hours from Milan and visible from the office) is that it is rather cooler and fresher up there than at home with dodgy air-conditioning. The mountaineering highlight of the summer was probably Valsavarenche in the Gran Paradiso National Park. Scenery rating - stunning. Wildlife - tame chamois everywhere. Mountaineering - an ascent of the Gran Paradiso is "do-able" in a weekend (if your family doesn't mind being abandoned at their hotel for 25 hours) although your knees might ache afterwards.

Shaun's birthday present for this year was a night of peace and quiet away from Jakob - which he chose to spend in a refuge at 2700m in a dormitory with another four people ALL of whom got up at 3am. Foolish really since this is when Jakob tends to wake up anyway.

The reason for all this was that he wanted to climb the Gran Paradiso. Since Shaun wasn't due at the refuge until late afternoon we spent the morning trying the off-road potential of Jakob's pram - and then deciding a walk down the road might be an easier option. Shelagh and Jakob then spent the rest of the weekend enjoying the scenery from a largely recumbent position until it was time to collect Shaun.

Meanwhile Shaun having galloped up 900m to the refuge was almost felled by a dodgy tum. Luckily having to spend the evening talking to three Belgians and an Italian in FRENCH provided enough of a cure to get him out of bed and up the mountain the next day. 2000m of descent were tough despite meeting the almost tame chamois on the way back to the car





park, which in early July was bristling with ice-axes, crampons, large rucksacks, heavy boots and smelly mountaineers (it was hot) representing all European nations.

## Gran Paradiso in 25 hours

Shaun West write:

The walk up 900m to the Refugio di Chabod (2750m) had a guidebook time of two hours so as I was feeling groggy I was please to get there in the set time. My climbing partners (a small group of Belgians) were a good chatty bunch and luckily they were happy with my terrible French, which was no worse then their English. Still feeling 'iffy' I managed to eat my dinner (mostly) and then got off to bed only to be woken at 3am for breakfast, oh joy.

The morning was wonderful with a cloud inversion over the valley below. The walk from the hut to the glacier went very quickly but we were the last party, which was good as it meant that we could pick our own speed (slow as I was still feeling 'iffy'). We climbed the lower glacier roped up, moving together. The route is easy and nowhere is it too steep. In due course we joined up with the normal route from the Refugio Victor Emanuel and turned a little to the east and joined the queue of



people en route for the summit. The queue was amazing so many people trying to summit and such a small way to the top. The view from top was stunning from the Ercins, across the Vanoise, to Monte Bianco, Grande Combin, Mont Cervin, Dent Blanche and Monta Rosa.

The way down to the Victor Emanuel Refugio was good, a mixture of glissading and walking, slipping and sliding. At the

refugio we shared a beer before going our separate ways. I 'only' had another 1000m of descent down a desperate zig-zag route to do to get back to the car park. The way down was full of wildlife and would have been very quick without the previous 1000m from the summit!

It is a great route with wonderful views and well worth the effort of a weekend's trip.

## Club News

### BMC

#### Working at height (from the BMC website)

On 1st August 2006 the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) launched a consultation document on the Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations intended to apply to those paid to lead or train others in climbing or caving activities.

So it would seem that the regulations do not apply to club situations where leaders are unpaid

Sue Esten has a copy of this consultation document - if anyone is interested.... A 'skim read' seems to indicate that the adventure industry will be largely exempted from the regulations governing other industries where working at height is an issue.

### Ministry of Defence Land

Much of MOD land is to be found within National Parks, AONBs, National Scenic Areas and Heritage Coast. There is a useful web site detailing access opportunities to MOD land to be found at [www.access.mod.uk](http://www.access.mod.uk)

### (Other) Club News

#### A warning from the Hon Meets Sec (copied from his AGM report)

Although we have had some excellent turn-outs for some of the meets this year we are still having problems with others. Some meet leaders have been left high and dry in some cases having travelled great distances. We have come up with a plan to avoid this happening again. If you are interested in being at a meet contact the leader even if you are not certain you will be able to attend. At least, then, you can be contacted by the leader. If no calls are received by the leader by the Friday, a week before the meet it will be cancelled and the hut offered to other clubs. The upshot of all this is, if you do not contact the meet leader do not expect the hut to be open when you arrive. I am sorry that these steps are necessary but fuel is becoming a significant factor in the cost of weekends away and travelling 300 miles plus is no fun if no-one turns up!

#### Did you know.....

#### Way-markings (England and Wales)

Local authorities are obliged to sign paths and the system of arrows for marking away from roads is

yellow - footpaths - open to walkers only

blue - bridleways - open to walkers, horse riders and cyclists

red - byways open to all traffic - open to all classes of user including motor vehicle use

....and later this year

purple - restricted byways (what were all remaining roads used as public paths) - open to people on foot, horses, pedal cycle and horse-drawn carriage.

#### Club website

#### ULGMC.ORG

The new club website ([www.ulgmc.org](http://www.ulgmc.org)) is now up and running. It has a news section and a blog section for your reports, photo album of club photos as well as links to your old colleges. Also there is a ULGMC Yahoo forum that will help us keep in contact. Email Shaun West [editor@ulgmc.org](mailto:editor@ulgmc.org) for more information or visit the website.

To access the members area the user name is london and the password is caseg (in both cases lowercase). It is best here to click right on the link and save the newsletter to your PC rather than view it on the web as it is a little small. The club documents will be put in the folder "club\_documents" and past newsletters in the folder "newsletter archive".

## Obituary

### Michael Holton - Mountaineer, civil servant and mountain rescue

Geof Batten sent your Hon. Sec. an obituary for Michael Holton culled from 'The Independent' by his brother. As well as attending Finchley County Grammar School, which the Batten brothers also attended, Michael Holton was at L.S.E. There he was a member of the L.S.E. Mountaineering Association and became its President. During WWII the RAF Mountain Rescue Service was formed, and its overhaul in the early fifties by Holton followed the incident of a Lancaster crash on Beinn Eighe in early March 1951, when it took until August to recover the last body from the crash site. Holton wrote a new

hand book on mountain rescue procedures (then Air Ministry Pamphlet 299) - which is still used, updated regularly and recently has seen its seventh edition published. Our professional and efficient Mountain Rescue System is his legacy - he was a major contributor to safety standards in the hills.

## New address

Last minute news: with effect from 2nd October Tim and Caroline are moving:

Tim + Caroline Marshall  
Orchard Cottage  
8 Old Harker  
Low Harker  
Carlisle CA6 4DR  
01228 672 442

[timstatsmarshall@aol.com](mailto:timstatsmarshall@aol.com)  
[cazcookmarshall@aol.com](mailto:cazcookmarshall@aol.com)

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## More from Monty Avis' songbook

### Climbers' Clementine

*On a Clogwyn, close to Ogwen,  
Where the clouded cliffs incline,  
Clung a climber, fine old timer  
and his daughter Clementine.*

*She was leading like a fairy  
On a hundred feet of line,  
While her father anxious rather  
Fast belayed here Clementine.*

*From the cliff top I was watching  
Thinking, Oh that she were mine,  
She's so lovely from above-ly  
Is my climbing Clementine.*

*Saw her groping, vainly hoping  
For a handhold mighty fine,  
But alack, there was no crack there  
To support my Clementine.*

*Then the climber, fine old timer,  
Anxious for his Clementine  
Shouted, "Hi Sir, you up there Sir,  
Can't you drop my girl a line?"*

*Quick as thought I hitched my nylon  
To a belay crystalline,  
Standing firm as any pylon,  
Dropped a rope to Clementine.*

*Arid she grasped it, swiftly clasped it,  
Round her slender waist devine,  
Up I drew her, quite secu-er,  
So I saved my Clementine.*

*Then she rose up, cocked her nose up  
And with, a glance that chilled my spine,  
"I'd no need Sir, on that lead Sir,  
of your help", said Clementine.*

*So I parted, broken hearted,  
From the dreams that once were mine,  
Gave all hope up, coiled the rope up,  
Said goodbye to Clementine.*

*Then the climber, fine old timer,  
Stood me lots and lots of wine,  
Now I'd rather climb with father  
Than his haughty Clementine.*

Intentionally Left Blank  
(so you can make a note of your choices)

Cut-----here

**2006 AGM Dinner & Hut Booking Form** (please book by Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October)

Weekend Friday 20<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2006

I, ....., would like to book \_\_\_\_ places at the dinner

**@£15.00 per person**

I enclose a cheque for £.....

Please indicate number of choices:

Chef's Home Made Soup of the Day	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roast Topside of Welsh Beef & Yorkshire Pudding	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>or</i>		<i>or</i>	
Chilled Melon with Fruit Sorbet and a Raspberry Coulis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roast Chicken with Stuffing	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>or</i>	
		Welsh Leg of Lamb	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>or</i>	
		Brie, Courgette and Almond Crumble	<input type="checkbox"/>

To be followed by: Sherry Trifle, Cream filled profiteroles with chocolate sauce, fresh fruit salad or Cheese and biscuits. Tea or coffee to wash down the chocolate mints !

I would like to book \_\_\_\_ places in the minibus (£5 on the night)

I would like to book places in the hut for	Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please indicate number of places	Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	More	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please make cheques for the meal payable to **KEITH MOTT** and send to:  
Lincolns Meadow Cottage, Hales Street, Tivetshall St Margaret, Norwich, NR15 2EE.  
Please write your name and address on the back of your cheque. Hut fees will be dealt with separately. If you have any enquiries please phone 01379 677238 (H), 07973 747756 (P) or email [kmott@helgroup.com](mailto:kmott@helgroup.com).  
Thank You.