

CARLISLE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2007

PENRITH Climbing Wall out of action until later this month when bouldering wall completed.

Hope you have been out and about and had some good climbing if you have been lucky enough to catch the dry days. Scafell was unbelievably dry and warm towards the end of August which was a wonderful surprise. Sometimes the mist in Borrowdale floated away from Black Crag and Quayfoot and Shepherds but it created a certain anxiety and speed.

Vital Dates for your diary

1.**** A 3 star event: November 6th , Tuesday, Tullie House; IAN PARNELL, a TOP photographer and mountaineer(with Ranulph Fiennes on the Eiger) giving us “Journeying from British crags to the World`s toughest peaks”.Bar. Tickets £6 only.

Further details next time.

2.November 30th Friday AGM Morton 7.30p.m.

3. Annual Dinner December 1st Saturday Details in next newsletter.

Plans

1.Rescue techniques/ follow up or new session to be held in the spring by Allan and Phil , probably at Armathwaite. (Is this for Jo? I don`t think many of us would have known what to do with a firmly stuck Italian hitch and a body suspended on it! There is always excitement with Julie around.She completed a graceful severe on Jackdaw this week: the 23rd climb of her climbing career!)

2.The 1st Aid course could do with a few more people and then it can be arranged, again for the spring term.

3.Members` Night in early December so time to concoct a disc of any of this years epics or interesting crags, new or old.

2.Sports Climbing

We found a lovely area near Foix in the foothills of the Pyrenees, just over an hour`s drive from Carcassone airport. The crags contained all that we could want from 3b to 6a (to be honest we only got to the hard corner on the 6a) in scenic locations with a choice of excellent granite at Auzat to very good limestone at Roquefixade, Sinsat and other places. There were a lot of much harder climbs around 7a etc and some multi pitches but we were content to enjoy 46 single pitch routes of up to 30 metres in our 7 dry, warm days in this beautiful part of France. No queueing to bag a route; just enough climbers for company on some days. Our French came back quickly as the Guide book was in French, with very clear topos and access plans. Highly recommended if you like Sports Climbing on crags without having to hump your bag far at all.

Dave,Sue,Ruth Greenwood and Dinny.

Real Climbing! Dolomites 2 weeks; Phil W and Sue G

Rifugio N.W.Ridge July 16th

Pitch 13: Belay in a niche, somewhat off route, but on a good thread.

Below, a hotch-potch of pitches from grades 5 to 2 but mainly 4. A lonely no.2 friend dangling below a broken yellow roof, evidence of another off-route retreat! A well-named mountain...the Refuge (Treviso) appearing as a tiny box 1500 feet directly below. Would a return to the hut be possible within the day?

The 2 young Italians, pitching more directly on the ridge and struggling a little, offered us welcome handfuls of nuts at the belay, delaying the need for a full rest stop, even though breakfast was 9 and a half hours ago at 5 a.m.

Pitch 14: On 3+ ground slanting up a groove and short walls to a big ledge on the right. At least 4 parties ahead, now out of sight and sound, once sharing stances, ducking and diving, then strung out and gone. Only the Italian boys below and soon to join us.

Rucksacs off, sandwich time. Hard to determine where we are on the route. The walls across the valley and at its head still overlooked us, but remembering the "Rifugio" was a mere shoulder of the mighty Ortiga, it wasn't a reason to worry. The pitch above our lunch ledge looked better with some tat on a thread about 5 metres up. The Italians' rope came past us and began to wrestle with the wall. Their thin 60 metres giving the edge over our 50 m ropes. 2 good pitches and some scrambling and we stood on the summit. An ebullient group whom we knew from the hut celebrated along with us, having done a route on the south face. (They had descended on our red path the previous day, so they preferred dodgy abseils rather than face it again)

4 p.m. Left alone on the summit! The guide book "follow red markings down to col(2), descend and traverse North face to gap between Dente de Rifugio and Sasso d'Ortiga, down gully on South side, then horizontal path to cable assisted descent on wall into gully. Re-ascend to path and follow it to Passo Mughe summit, then down to hut =3 hours!!!"

5.30p.m. at the col "We'll need the rope out" Delicate down climbing, traverse round a corner "Oh good a peg" and down again. My God, now on pitch 20...get some gear in. Wet slabs, hundreds of feet of steep choss and cliffs await a slip. Another long pitch to safety, through the window and on to the sunny south side. Easier now, maybe a late dinner possible? The aided cable descent! You've got to be kidding! Loose bolts on a vertical section! Out with the rope again for a safe abseil, more tension, the path ever more exposed and tricky. The pass reached and all the delights of the Dolomites can be enjoyed. Sunken clouds in the valley to the East, grey and orange towers rearing up into a crystal sky with a hint of emerging stars as the sun gradually loses its strength and releases a last

gasp of light and warmth. The wrist watch firmly rooted inside trouser pocket –time seemed unimportant. Past the tent nestling in the hollow below the Punta Disparazione, our route of yesterday, certainly not disparate now, although the German lads by the tent couldn't hide their astonishment as we chugged slowly past. (They would have given us a torch if necessary)

One head torch out, only 200 feet to go, through roots and trees and herbage all without a slip or a trip (at least for Sue!) to the safe haven of the Treviso Hut.(11.30 p.m.) Soup, tea and cake, then bed with a head full of images of a million steps to lull us to sleep as the seconds drained away from Saturday and into a new day.

The remaining 11 routes and 81 pitches of our trip were much more amenable, even (occasionally-editor) allowing time to relax before dinner!

Phil Wilkinson

It was a great adventure and I do like to have a full day! I was admiring thousands of stars while I was “chugging” down... Sue, editor.