

The  
Ceunant  
Mountaineering  
Club



Newsletter  
Spring 1982

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## EDITORIAL

I think the sudden appearance of this newsletter needs some explanation. Most of the work in preparing it was done some time ago by Mike James who was preparing a Ceunant Journal for 1981. I sincerely apologise to Mike and members who contributed articles for the far less grand format in which their work appears.

I believe the membership needs to be more regularly informed of what is going on in the Club at the moment so some form of regular newsletter is more important than a very much delayed Journal.

We have had to quit the "Vine" at short notice although the writing has been on the wall for some time. The Club is now meeting at "The Bull's Head" in Bishopsgate Street near Five Ways. There is a very good upstairs room and a pleasant enough bar downstairs. Whether this becomes a permanent meeting place depends on the members and the landlord.

While we were meeting at the "Vine" we had a kind of newsletter called "The Grapevine" but I have reverted to "Ceunant Newsletter" to avoid problems if we have to move again soon. I did think of 'THE BULL SHEET' but there's plenty of that in the articles already.

It has not been possible to include all the writings which were prepared for Mike's Journal in this newsletter so I have saved some for a later issue - but still need more - especially recent material.

So much for the newsletter and the pub, now about things in general. The Ceunant Club seems to be in a healthy state in a lot of ways but does need pulling together a bit. The most important thing, I think, is to improve meetings on Wednesday evenings so that more members will want to attend regularly. It is now so late before most people arrive that some of the regular and active members have had to rush off to other pubs to get a few late pints in. For people who cannot attend regularly on Wednesdays I hope I shall be able to get a regular newsletter out even if sometimes it boils down to a single sheet of info.

At the A.G.M. Henry Folkard made some very sensible remarks as retiring Chairman - I understand he is now living near Curbar and people climbing there are welcome to 'drop in'. Anyway Henry reminded the members of the importance of our image in North Wales especially with the locals in Nant. As he said the most important way in which we can preserve Tyn Lon from an unseasonal bonfire is to make sure we stay as respectable as possible in the eyes and ears of local inhabitants. The most successful way of achieving this - according to Henry is by contributing to Nant Peris Church funds but I'm sure that rescuing sheep, buying beer for farmers and returning glasses to the bars are also likely to go down well. Seriously though he has a good point.

On the subject of huts we now have reciprocal rights with Lancashire Cave and Craggs and their hut Tranearth near Dow Crag. Further details about this appear in this newsletter. The meets secretary is hoping to arrange an inaugural meet at Tranearth soon so that as many members as possible can get to know the place. There is also the possibility that next year's club dinner could be held in Coniston with accomodation at the hut.

At the first meeting of the new committee John Beddard, the chairman, made it very clear that he is determined to act on the wishes of the membership as much as possible and it is hoped that members with opinions, criticisms and suggestions will make them known by contacting anyone on the committee. A list appears at the end of the newsletter.

Because of the difficulty many members have in remembering to pay their annual subscriptions the Treasurer has been asked by the committee to make it possible for people to pay by standing order. This is obviously a good idea because people who just forget can complete a form, forward it to their bank and their membership fee will be paid annually. Those who still wish to avoid paying for as long as possible will still be able to do so. Club Membership at £5 a year must be a bargain.

Finally, a plea for support for the Club. It would be a pity if it became just an association of independent groups of climbers who happen to use the same hut sometimes wouldn't it?

The freckle stiffens again with anticipation!!  
"Kill..... Death.....Blood"

## THE FLYING FRECKLE

With a blinking flash of light its streaks along the A5/M6. Is it a plane? is it a bird? No, it's supermick.

His mentor (once banned for seventeen years) would smile benignly to see him on Friday nights stalking up and down the groove in his lounge carpet, like an anthropoid guardsman, waiting for his passengers (victims) to arrive.

They assemble and prepare. The front seat passenger bruises his chest tightening the seat belt and settles low down, feet braced against the scuttle. The rear seat passengers snuggle deep below the front seats, surrounding themselves with sleeping bags, rucksacks and tents, staring in vain at the hand straps above the doors, which disappeared previously at 5G.

The six cylinder fires and deceptively slowly it menacingly slides out of the suburban cul-de-sac.

Rush hour traffic jams in the city prevent the brutal approach. The freckle waits quietly brooding, muttering profanities un-intelligibly to himself.

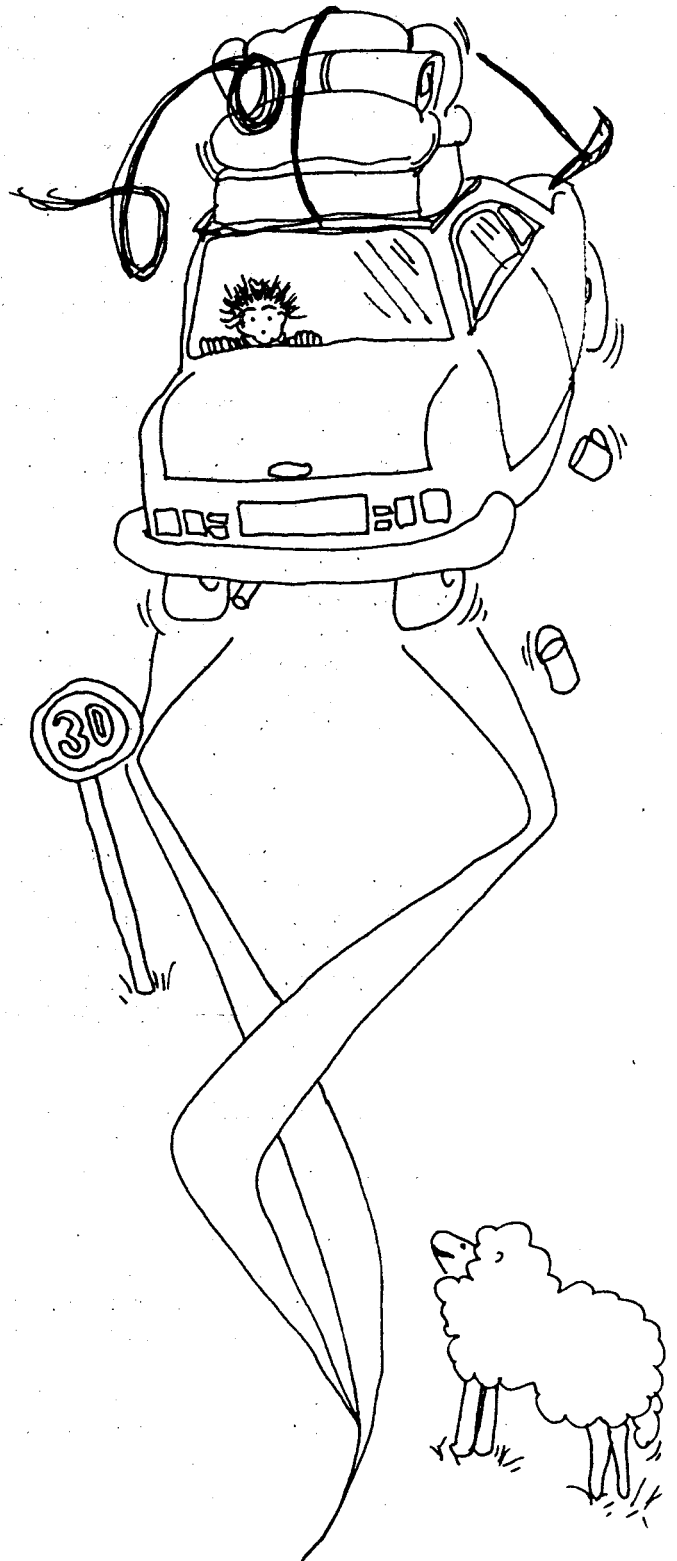
Straight down the slip road into the fast lane. Bloodshot eyes bulge, shoulders hunch, forearms and teeth lock and his surgical right boot hits the deck. Je--sus, I've heard that speed leaves you high - they should try the real thing. All four lanes of the three lane motorway for overtaking - french style.

He spies a fellow club member in the outside lane overtaking another car in the centre lane. He rocks back and forward in the seat urging the car yet faster into the inside lane. They jointly overtake the poor sod on either side at 110, followed by a weaving lane switch.

Soon the other club member is left behind - pathetically emasculated and our here is out front again. The stereo comes on at 150 decibels - late 60's rock, betraying his advancing years. One of the braver passengers unfolds from the foetal position and tries another approach to stem the hysteria, "Yer slowing down you withering old spastic - what's happened to yer backbone?". Our here slows 5 mph! "Well, there's no competition around - just a bleating trail of caravans and trailer tents". It works; the spell is broken - not for long though. Another "competitor" (club member) is located at 90° ahead.

We take him, sweeping within an ace of his offside and cutting in sharply. An island approaches. We take it very slowly, go round 360° and take the "competitor" a second time.

It goes on ..... mercifully ending at Tremadoc. Nausea, stomach pains, cramp and pounding hearts fall out of the car to the bellow: "Who fancies a hard route?" - here we go again ..... Oh! death where is thy sting?



The Calanques by Joe Brennan

The rock was still in its winter mantle of slime. Fingers were frozen to the armpits. Above, the last remnants of snow hung like gobs of snot in the gullies. Easter in Wales. A no-man's land between two seasons and a long way down in my order of things.

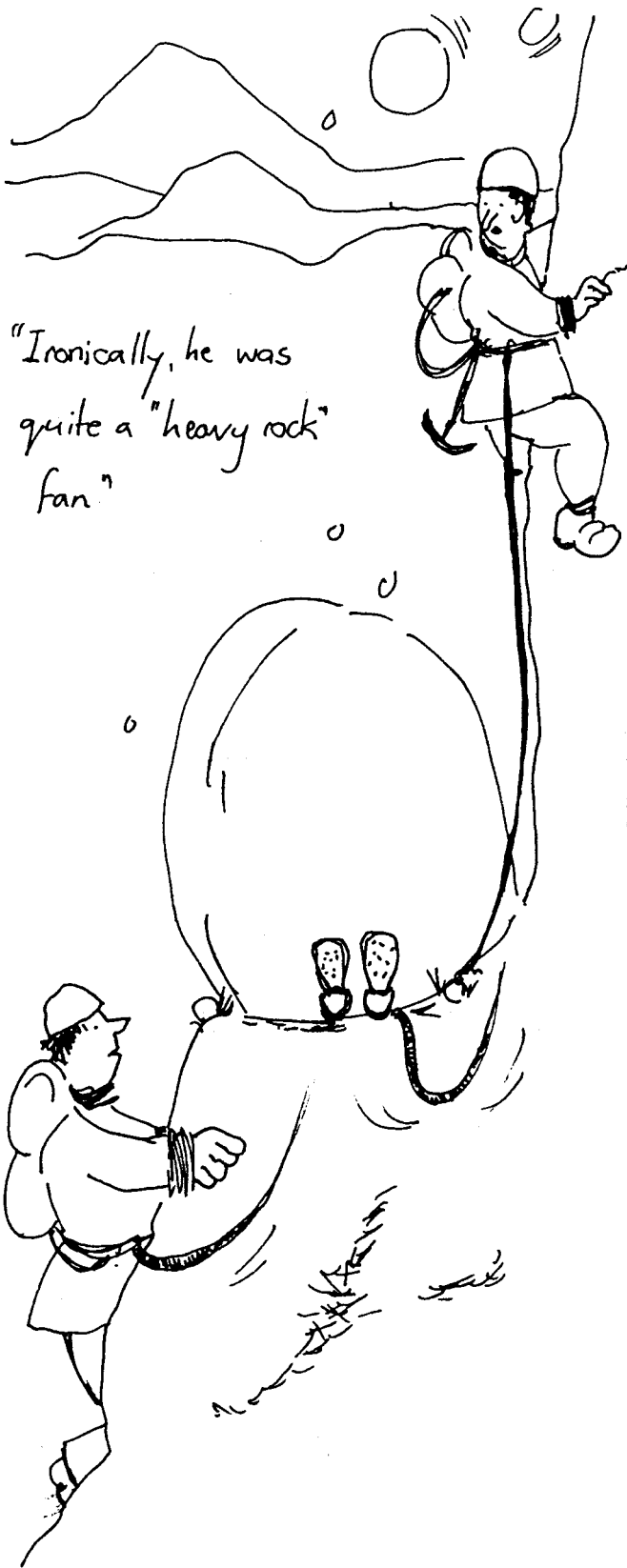
The line of tall white cliffs east of Marseille facing towards Africa and the southern sun promised instant transformation from sodden British reality. Why not a fortnight here instead of a summer holiday in the Alps?

The journey is long and expensive but fast and easy, the only problem being the quaint French habit of on-the-spot roadside fines. Just remember two things: don't pay cash and plead ignorance. A prior arrangement with the Bank not to cash cheques made out to the Gendarmerie is excellent for the excitement and the cash flow. But it is illegal and I only mention it in passing. Gendarms thundering in pursuit, like Sicilian bandits on BMW's braking across the bows with guns at the ready may look intimidating but shrink to size in a tangled financial world.

We got done twice. Wailing sirens and flashing lights precede tremendous incomprehensible bollockings with the word 'travesty' figuring prominently. And that was just Christine driving.

The Calanques strictly refers to a succession of strange fiord-like sea inlets but the whole area is a National Park lying between Marseille and the small port of Cassis in the east, a distance of about 15 miles as the crow barks. It is formed out of a heavily eroded limestone plateau which provides a vast range of climbs on both sea cliffs and inland crags. Real death rattle gulch country. Sadly most of the vegetation, characterised by the beautiful Parasol Pine, has been destroyed by fire, but the actual climbing has not been affected.

Seven main guidebooks cover the area and can be readily bought in Cassis where most climbers base themselves. Don't bother with Livesey's joke book. Understuffed and overpriced, with suspect gradings and information of doubtful origins, it takes guidebook writing back ten years in one effortless leap. A 6b climber with a 2b guidebook.



The French guides are well produced, reliable and amazingly easy to follow, even for an illiterate in French like myself. It is true that aid is too readily used at the highest grades, but you don't need to be led by the hand. You don't have to use it. Each route has an individual clear-cut diagram and a small vocabulary of climbing terms will go a long way. (eg Fissure, arete, col, piton, rappel, traverse, couloir, surplom, mon dieu). The climbing is brilliant, steep and clean on solid massive limestone.

En Vau, overpegged and overcrowded, is the most popular and least serious area in the Calanques but the climbing is nevertheless very pleasant and accessible. To avoid the walk-in, many climbers take a one-way trip on one of the tourist "see the Calanques and die" boats and bivi on the beach, which is alright if you don't mind being knee deep in shit. Good routes here include Sirene Liautard (VS), Voie Saphir (MVS), Voie de la Calanque (S) Super Calanque (VS), Voie de la Passerelle (VS), Pilier Droit de la Passerelle (HVS). We can testify to the quality of all these routes except for the final ten feet of the last, from which point we took a couple of flyers. There are masses of other good routes here, both in the easier and harder grades but we did not/could not do these.

Many of the other areas give better climbing and do not suffer from the overcrowding and overpegging of En Vau, although this is the only place mentioned in the Livesey guide. This is equivalent to writing about Snowdonia and mentioning only Bwlch y Moch.

The curious badlands like region of Les Goudes St Michel, with its strange mesa formations contains some excellent climbs. Particularly good are the Arete de la Cordes (VS), Voie de la Lezarde (VS), and the Arete Victor Marting (VS/HVS). A sudden electrical storm produced a literally hair raising experience on the exposed upper reaches of the last route. Bennett looking like a demented sea urchin is not a pretty sight. Thankfully this type of weather is unusual.

The tiny fishing villages of Sormiou and Morgiou are accessible by car. Just ignore the no entry signs and the other notices promising dire consequences for an exciting drive over the narrow pass roads. Cars riddled with bullet holes and tipped over the edge are a reminder of the local Marseille method of dealing with bad debts. On second thoughts it may be as well to pay the camping fees.

The beautiful inlet of Sormiou, with the best small beach in the Calanques, is the site of the "Garden of Eden" episode in Diemberger's 'Summits and Secrets', but we could not find sight of all those naked women which so disturbed Diemberger's faint heart. On the Sormiou Bec the Couloir Tanner (HVS) with the right hand start to avoid the aid pitches, is a superb route and the best we did in the Calanques. The others did not agree with this assessment, which shows how wrong people can be. Steep, sustained and hardly used, it gives 700 feet of lush climbing, an orgasmic succession of sensual cracks, pulsating slinky grooves and electric stretchy wall climbing. A worthy substitute for the Garden of Eden.

At Morgiou, the fine large cliffs of Cret de Saint Michel forms an irresistible wave of rock along the skyline ridge. The Paroi Noir (VS) gives a very steep route in big situations, but on the largest and most huggable jugs in creation following a vein of aragonite. The ubiquitous St Michel himself would have approved. A bit like a 500 ft Guts Ache Groove. There are other very juicy looking lines on this crag awaiting a further visit.

The great crest on the Grand Candelle dominates the view from many directions in the Calanque. The Marseille Arete (HS) is one of the classics of the region and is a must. After an initial thigh stretching groove the route follows the crest of a narrow arete, giving about 400ft of steep and delicate slab climbing in tremendous positions. At the other end of the face is the Cassis Arete (S), at 1500 ft the longest climb in the area. In between is a big mean face, a gymnasium on which to act out all your fantasies and if this is the kind of thing you fantasise about, well, medical therapy can be arranged.

Possibly the most impressive area of all is the region of great amphitheatres and wild sea cliffs round the centrepiece route the Baou Rouge (VS), where the cliffs rise straight from the sea, sheer or overhanging for up to 1000 ft. This, the most remote area in the Calanques, is as impressive in its way as the Verdon Gorge.

An early start and a long 3½ hour approach some of it exciting diff traversing high above the sea, leads in to a magical and remote region far from the sight and sound of humanity.

We had one memorable day here after failing on the crux pitch of the Baou Rouge. According to the guide this pitch goes at V+ with five points of aid. All the pegs had been chopped however, giving a pitch of about 7c which we could not quite make. A pity on a 1000 ft route of otherwise VS climbing.

We tried various grooves and tottering aretes without much success, some too deadly loose and stimulating by far. Even in the Calanques there may be areas of loose rock off the recognised routes. New route potential here must be unbelievable.

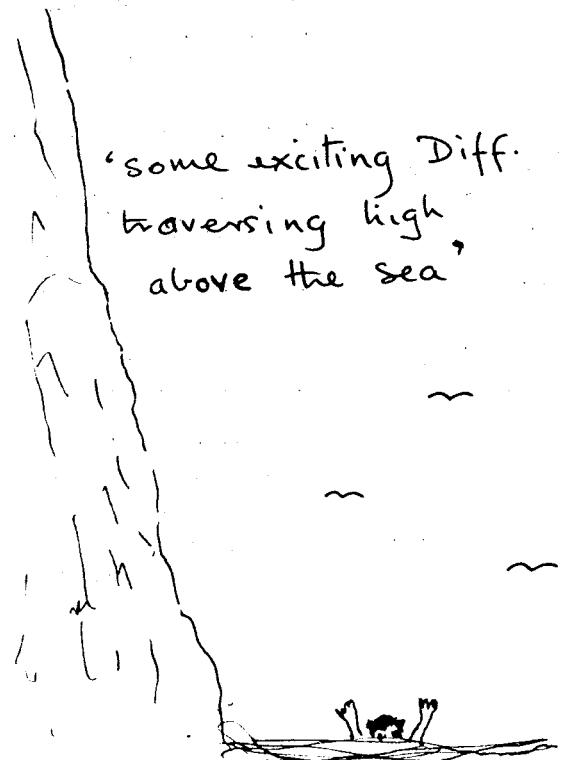
The day was hot, really hot with the sun beating in off the sea and never berating the amphitheatre. After a long and exhausting epic we eventually emerged at the top towards dark. I at least was suffering from sunstroke or heatstroke and dehydration, with arms and legs burnt raw and tongue stuck to the top of my mouth. We carried nothing other than climbing gear and training shoes clipped to the harness. Burn all bridges. I noted with some satisfaction that Roger was also staggering as we made our way back to our sacks. Protected all day in our heat locked amphitheatre we were not aware that the wind had been rising throughout the day and as we walked back over the ridge of Marseille Mountain it reached incredible ferocity. The stronger gusts literally blew us off our feet and made it difficult even to breathe. With potential hypothermia to add to the day's catalogue of woes we stumbled on down through the darkness towards a few welcome jars of 'bierre a la pression' and revival of sorts.

The mistral wind would appear to be the main weather problem at this time of year. After two Easter holidays the impression we have is that the weather can generally be relied upon to give dry sunny days with unclouded skies of the deepest blue, good enough to climb in as little as you like, but for perhaps three or four days in a fortnight it will blow hard. And I do mean hard. It is best to get into the lower and more sheltered part of the Cassis campsite as the tents will be wrecked otherwise. (And were). Climbing will still be possible in the sheltered inlet of En Vau. Out of a total of four weeks we had two wet days.

There are a huge number of routes of all standards suitable for a ll ranges of ability or commitment. Unlike British limestone, the routes are still good below VS standard. As a bonus it is good if rather complex walking country. Inland Provence is a facinating and beautiful land. The French guides are accurate as long as it is remembered that the gradings are a little harder than the Alpine equivalents. A pitch of (V) would be VS rather than the HS/MVS to be expected in the Alps.

Cassis is a pleasant small port and is not crowded apart from the Easter weekend. The local campsite is of typical continental standard ie, a dump. There are no other official sites within reasonable distance but one could camp anywhere in the Calanque. This may be a little risky as some of the local lads have a reputation for living off the land. Valuables should not be left in unattended cars. Take standard precautions as if you were visiting Deinolen. Perhaps the best solution, following the example of some French campers, is to persuade one of the local farmers to let you camp in his vinyard by the water tank.

For off days there are some entertaining sea level traverses immediately west of Cassis round into little secluded caves crowded with naked female sunbathers. There may have been the male equivalent but I didn't notice. If you can't beat them join them. At last something to rival my overexposed nose. Sunburnt dick.





## TWO YOSEMITE CLASSICS

Elaine had decided that three on a rope was going to take too long and had elected to go sunbathing. It was, therefore, Henry and myself who were thrashing through the bush in the mid-day heat, cursing the mosquitoes and wishing we too were sitting by the river, taking photos of imaginary bears!

The start of the route was easy to find. As its name implies, The Good Book, follows a huge open book corner, up the right side of a typical yosemite pinnacle, called The Folly. The route is again typical of yosemite climbs as it goes only to the top of a feature - The Folly pinnacle is a 750' high buttress on a wall at least four times that high, descent from the airy "summit" being by abseil.

Eventually we reached the foot of the face and stared at the very un-British crack snaking its way up the equally foreign looking corner. I gulped and started sorting gear, Henry took photos of flowers. The previous evening in the Camp Site, Tom Jones had told me how, on the crux pitch, he has put a runner at the bottom of the crack and then "just gone for it" finding he couldn't stop to arrange further protection. Not being very brave and at the same time being appalled at the prospect of having to lay back 140' with no runners, I put my newly acquired Nol Friend in prime position on my gear sling.

The first pitch was a joke - 200' long! I had to belay in a constricted corner and bring Henry up to a bolt 50' up and then continue the pitch. We assembled at the bottom of the LONG pitch. Henry looked for more flowers. Just go for it, Tom had said, I placed a good nut as high as possible and made a half hearted move upwards. The lower section of the crack was wet and so I slithered down and placed another runner just above the first.

One move above the wet section was a really good flinger jam - stop, runner, dry hands out with plenty of chalk and then lay back and enjoy it. Every move was a lay-back, with feet on a completely smooth wall but with the best finger locks in the world.

Eventually, a minute ledge appeared on the wall with a good hand jam just above - a rest. This was about 100' up the pitch and Tom's second runner!! I looked down and counted nine on my ropes, and I still had the friend. Another 30' or so of laybacking led to a stance. Henry climbed up and complained about the lack of flowers.

An easier pitch led via a mind-blowing overhanging flake to a hanging stance below a very vicious looking jam crack. This was the second crux - about Gritstone extreme, but a friendly ledge complete with bolt anchors appeared just as my arms failed.

"It's in the bag" we thought as we looked at the guide - we'd done a 5.10d, 10a plus 2 5.9 pitches and there's just a 5.7 to the top. Great - until it went "off width", it turned out to be the toughest on the route. Now for the abseils. About halfway down, Henry, spinning in space, and trying to swing into the ledge below the overhanging jam crack remarked, wistfully, "you know there's something nice about looking at flowers!"

It's strange how a lot of Yosemite routes are characterised by one particular climbing technique. If its laybacking, you lay back; if its jamming, you jam; and if its face climbing then its generally very scary indeed as there are no cracks to layback, jam or put runners in! Freewheelin' on Middle Cathedral, falls into the latter category. A few days earlier I had done Freewheelin's easier sister route, Quicksilver, with Elaine. It was given the humble grade of 5.9, which usually means about HVS in English. It was in fact 5 pitches of good extreme with only 2 bolts per 150' pitch for protection.

"a very vicious looking  
jam crack"



So, with the memory of Quicksilver, still very clear in my mind, Chris Addy and I were stumbling up to the start, playing the usual game of trying to give each other the hard pitches. Unfortunately, the pitches are so arranged, that whoever seconds the hard 5.10c wall, has to lead both 5.10b friction pitches.

Eventually Chris managed to persuade me that the 10b's were, in fact, known to be much harder than the 10c and that we would be "hero of the day" and so it was that muggins got the 10c wall!

Chris led the first pitch - 5.7, then I had a 5.9, with a typical "Quicksilver" crux move, and so to the first masty: 10b friction. If you ever do a 5.9 friction pitch you'll know that 5.10 friction is impossible! Chris complained about his new E.B's being too stiff, but he led it beautifully. It was hard alright, but I was thinking more about the next pitch.

Grabbing some gear, I set off on my hard lead - it seemed easier, there were runners too. Suddenly, all the holds disappeared and I retreated to a bolt about five feet down. I convinced myself I couldn't do it, and abseiled back down to Chris, who romped up it. Addy one, Montjoye nil. I followed it. It was quite straightforward really - must switch my brain off for the next pitch!

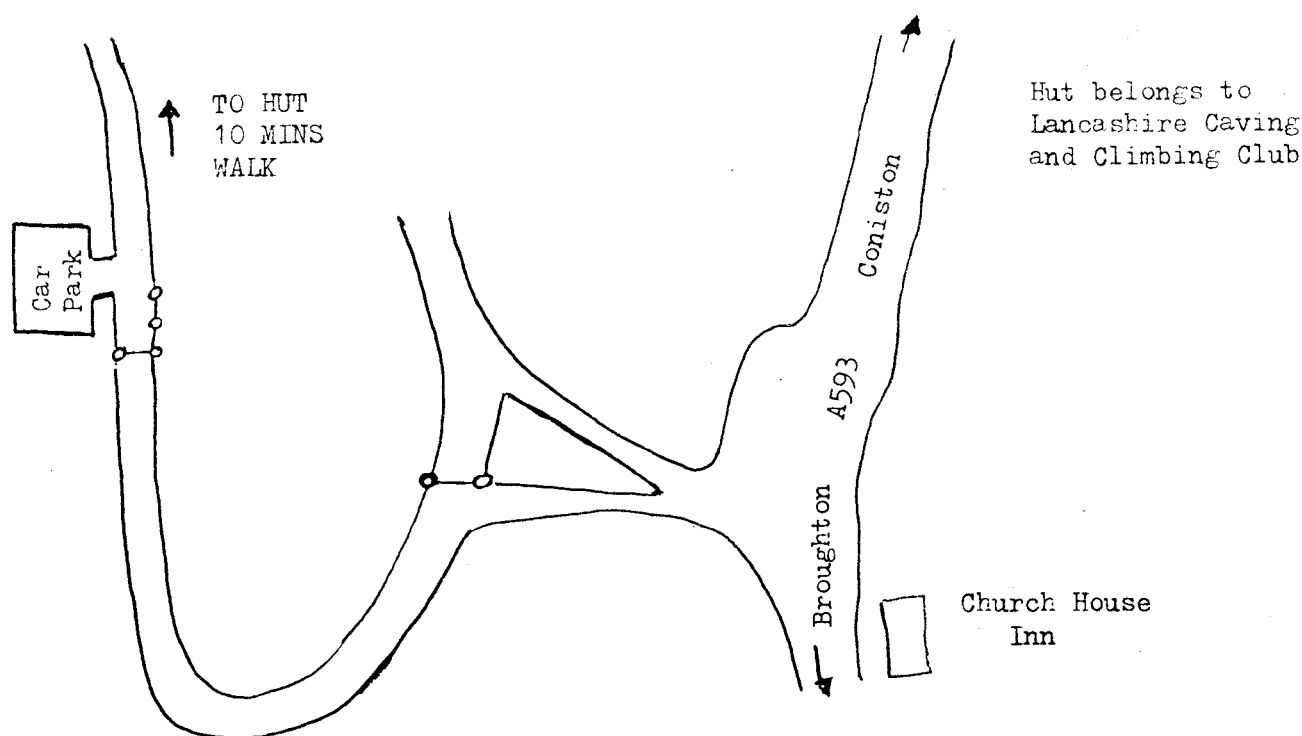
This change of lead, had, of course, swopped everything about and I got the last hard pitch. Determined not to balls this one up, I reached the top of the pitch thinking "Jesus, I wonder what 5.11 frictions like!" Chris followed and called for a tight rope on the crux traverse!

Montjoye one, Addy one!

A brilliant route!

## TRANEARTH HUT

Tranearth, Torver, Nr. Coniston, Cumbria. Situated approximately 1 mile up the fell track from Crook Farm, Torver. G.R. 281957



Accommodation consists of barn and cottage joined by linking kitchen. Barn sleeps 20 men upstairs and flush toilet, shower, washbasins. Downstairs is large common room/dining room with coke stove heating.

Cottage sleeps 12 women upstairs (+ room for use of L.C.C.C. members only). Downstairs is toilet, shower, washbasins, drying room with fan heater.

Here are the main extracts from Hut Rules. L.C.C.C. seem to be much keener on these than the Ceunant and we must respect their rules when using their hut especially as L.C.C.C. members are likely to be a bit suspicious of strangers from the Ceunant at first.

### 1. BOOKING

- (f) Except in cases of extreme emergency due to bad weather, illness or accident, persons staying at the Hut may not offer the use of the Hut to any casual visitor.

### 2. ON ARRIVAL

- (a) Parking facilities are provided at owners' risk in the small field on the left at the foot of the Hut track, approx. 100 yards above Crook Farm, above the first gate. This is approximately one mile's walk from the Hut. There are no parking facilities at the Hut, and vehicles must not try to drive up the track.
- (b) In winter turn on the water supply according to the frost precautions notice.
- (c) All Hut users must enter their names and date of arrival in the Hut Register and see that others do the same. Members should identify themselves to others using the Hut and diplomatically invite reciprocation. In the case of non-members, members should ask them to produce their booking authority.
- (d) Switch on electricity under stairs in cottage. All 3 switches to be on.

### 3. IN RESIDENCE

- (a) Men are expected to sleep in barn and women in cottage. The back bedroom in cottage must be reserved for L.C.C.C. members even when the full hut has been booked by other clubs. It must not be used by mixed parties unless other arrangements are not practical.
- (b) All persons must provide themselves with sheet or other sleeping bag.
- (c) Playing of radios, telivisions, tape recorders, gramophones etc. in the Hut or its grounds is not allowed.
- (d) Camping in grounds is permitted but full Hut fees are payable. The Campers must note the fact in the Hut Register.
- (e) Remove all Rubbish.

### 4. ON DEPARTURE

- (a) Enter date of departure and fees due in Hut Register and place correct cash/PO/cheque in one of envelopes provided with details of names, dates, fees and place in safe by front door (or post if large amount to Booking Secretary). Hut Fees are stated in Hut Register and on Notice Board.
- (b) Empty dustbins, clean and tidy Hut, leaving it as you wish to find it.
- (c) Check that all windows and doors are closed.
- (d) From 1st November to 31st March turn off and drain water system as stated in frost precautions notice.
- (e) Switch off electricity (three switches in Cottage) and lock up.
- (f) Close all gates on way down the track.

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TO CEUNANT M.C.C SECRETARY We would appreciate an entry in the Log Book at the Hut and prompt return of the Hut Key.

### SUPPLIES

Milk can be obtained at Moor Farm (First lane on right past Torver PO) and small quantities of food at Torver PO. All food supplies can be bought at Coniston CO-OPERATIVE - please quote the Club's number 7, when making purchases there. Coke and wood are stored in outbuilding at rear of Hut.

### BREAKAGES AND PROBLEMS

Please leave cash for breakages in safe at rate of 15p per cup or plate. Report large breakages or other problems PLEASE to:-

David G. Oliver,  
Fox Field,  
Kem Mill Lane,  
Whittle-Le-Woods,  
Chorley, Lancs, PR6 7DZ  
Tel: Chorley 74910

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### TO THE LEADERS OF ALL PARTIES USING TRANEARTH

We are concerned about the poor housekeeping of many parties that use our hut and draw your attention to the following list of duties. It is particularly important to empty the dustbin. In the past, unsuccessful attempts to burn rubbish have encouraged rats and mice. We believe we have got rid of them now. Please do your bit to keep them away.

THE COMMON ROOM:

The stove should be emptied and the ashes well riddled and only dust and clinker put on the path. Too much useful coke is thrown away that could be re-used. Then sweep the floor including underneath tables and chairs. Mop the floor if it is very dirty. Tidy away all books and magazines. Wipe down the tables and window sills.

THE KITCHEN:

Sweep the floors especially under the cookers. Mop up any spills especially greasy ones. Clean all cookers and hot plates, wash the grill pans. Check that all washing up has been done. Don't forget the pans. Clean the sinks. Wipe down all working surfaces.

Do not attempt to burn any rubbish, but put it all in the dustbin and empty that as instructed on the notice board.

BEDROOMS AND BARN DORMITORY:

Fold all blankets and put them in the bedding boxes. Sweep the floors, not forgetting under the beds.

STAIRCASE AND HALL:

Sweep these.

WASHROOMS:

Clean the wash basin, sweep the floors.

FINALLY:

Take away your empty milk bottles. There is no collection of these from Tranearth. If there is any left-over food that is non-perishable, leave it in the high kitchen cupboards. Wash the tea towels or at least rinse them out.

STOP PRESS:-

We are hoping to hold a meet at Tranearth  
on May 8th Weekend. Details from 'The Bull'  
on Wednesday 6th

COMMITTEE 1982-83

Chairman:- John Beddard.

Vice Chairman:- Gordon Orme,

Secretary:- Derrick Grimmitt,

Treasurer:- Graham Dyke,

Hut Warden:- Ian Sayers,

Hut Secretary:- Bob Lockett,

Outdoor Meets:- Lew Devlin,

Indoor Meets:- Ros Fenton.

Members

1. Garth Fenton - as above
2. Mark Hellewell,

Newsletter Editor:- Roger Lavill,

The Club Librarian is Ron Ellis. We have yet to make definite arrangements for the library because of the move.