

LMC 06/07

LOMOND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB YEARBOOK 2006 TO 2007

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF MOUNTAINEERING



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Bridgestock, Carol Cairney, George Christie, Danny Church,
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DEC 06 - MILEHOUSE

JAN 07 - BRAEMAR

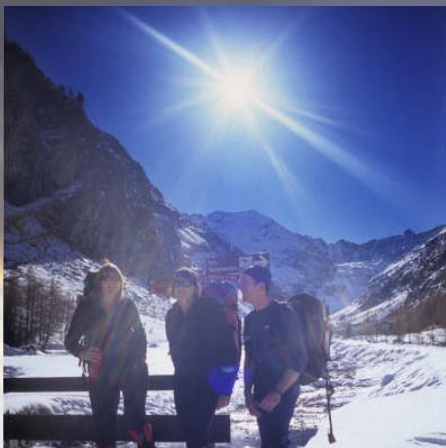
FEB 07 - RAE BURN

MAR 07 - CIC HUT

APR 07 - SKYE

JUN 07 - ARRAN

SEPT 07 - WALES







Corrie an Sneachda

MILEHOUSE CHRISTMAS MEET

Despite the weather reports, nine of us met up at the luxurious Milehouse hut this year. A very sociable and expensive meet which should next year be sponsored by Braemar Mountain Sports and cafe given the amount of money spent in each.

On Saturday morning (which was supposed to be the better day) 7 of us walked into Coire an Lochain in a howling gale. Gale force winds on icy summits in a whiteout did not appeal to anyone. Helen and I headed back to the comfort of the cafe and 'Christmas market' (I came home with a few tree decorations, Helen came home with a brussel sprout tree!), the boys did some ice axe arrest practice and then also felt the strong pull of the nice warm cafe. Russell and Karin very sensibly did a walk further down in the valley and then went to the cafe! On Sunday we got up late, had a look at the Aviemore climbing wall - which doesn't look that appealing in comparison to Ibrox for normal climbing, but looks quite good if you're into dry tooling. We then went back to the cafe.

Catherine

CAIRNGORMS TRILLOGY

Day1, rode up to corrie cas hoping roads weren't too icy. Arrived at late hour of 12:45 but walked in to corrie and met park ranger who told me of solo climber killed on Fri. This made me lower my sights to the Runnel and Crotch Gully before heading back to hostel before roads became too icy for bike.

Back at car park 15:30

Day 2, Met Matt and Chris at hostel and you already know about their adventures. I left Chris and Matt to do Aladains Coulior as I choose to go on the route solo. Then went up Sprial Gully where I met Martin and Jules who were on the top having soloed as well. All the easy gullys had excellent neve which made for quick ascent.

Day 3, went in with Aussie Jules to fiacal buttress and did Fiacal couliour which was more banked out with softer snow and chossy ice. Chockstone was well banked out which made it easier exit.

Harry



Chris at top of Aladins Couloir

PINKIE POINT HYPEREXTENSIONS OR “OUCH THAT HURT”

My wife, Jane, is doing a PGDE. This means that the opportunities to get out are even fewer and farther apart than normal. However, careful negotiation meant that one such window opened on Sunday. Matt volunteered to climb with me and we arranged to meet Harry at the Youth Hostel on Saturday night. The journey, Saturday evening and Sunday morning first thing were uneventful. I had even had time to pack the day before, instead of the usual mad scramble. Such smooth progress should have been a warning. Two minutes from the car park, I realized that I had left the guidebook behind. Ho hum. Thirty minutes from the car park, while I was reminding myself to tighten my boots before climbing, I realised that I had forgotten my crampons (a pattern is emerging here). Perhaps not surprisingly, when I got back to the car having left Matt and Harry to continue, I discovered that they were by my front door. Such is life I thought, as I wandered forlornly off to the corrie, at least I was out on the hill and it was a nice day.

Now, the walk in to Corrie an Sneachda has often been quite eventful for me. I've fallen into the burn more than once, both on the way and coming back and been blown over. Now I can add dislocating my little finger.....Thanks to the boulder field. I have to say that there is something rather peculiar about seeing your pinkie sticking out at 40 degrees from the first knuckle. The effort required in putting it back was quite an eye opener too. It took me three goes and at the last one, I wondered if I was going to have to pull it off (plus there thoughts of hospitals, amputations and other such nastiness).

After that, climbing Aladdin's Couloir was a bit of an anticlimax, but then Matt got stuck on Jacob's Ladder.....

Chris

BRAEMAR MEET

Chris, Matt, Jamie and I headed up to Braemar on Friday night and met up with Russell. An early, if not exactly Alpine, start in the morning had the four of us heading for Lochnagar, with Russell heading for a walk somewhere closer to Braemar.

The wind was ferocious on the walk-in to Lochnagar, but the sky was bright and the day was looking promising. Coming over the col into the coire felt akin to standing in a wind-tunnel, but it dropped off rapidly as we descended down towards the start of the route. Feeling cold after the sweaty walk-in and icy blasts meant a quick gear-up and straight onto the route (Central Buttress, II), with Chris partnering Jamie and Matt and I roping-up.

The initial section is a straightforward snow plod. The snow was a week or so old and had transformed to sugary stuff with a bit of a crust, but nothing that would hold an axe or crampon. Matt lead up, following the line of an increasingly narrow gully before exiting at the top onto steep, boulder-strewn terrain. A few moves up, the realisation struck that this was clearly not grade II terrain and we hung around (literally in Matt's



Bumsliding down Cairnwell at New Year

case) while Chris and Jamie explored a broader gully running parallel to ours. With the correct route found, our next problem was to get Matt out of the fix he'd climbed himself into.

Above the gully, the climb turned steeper and more technical. Plunging axes into sugary snow gave way to decent pick placements in mostly-frozen turf, although the thin conditions remained occasionally worrying. A solid belay lead to a narrow but simple traverse with exposure on both sides, bringing us to what proved to be the crux of the route. Fortunately, another good belay was at hand to calm the nerves, allowing Chris and Matt to lead the iceless, turfless rock step in good style.

Above, a short ridge with double fall-lines lead to a steady slope of snow and scattered boulders all the way to the summit. With time moving on and the wind back bringing cloud, reduced visibility and stinging shrapnel, nobody was in any mood to hang around at the top so we headed down quickly. Too quickly as it proved, as we ended up on the path following the Glas Allt burn down to the far end of Loch Muick rather than picking up our walk-in route from earlier in the day. Darkness had firmly set-in by the time we reached the shore of the loch.

Sunday morning's alarms were spectacularly ignored for a leisurely start which saw us parked-up just short of the Glenshee ski centre at around 10:30. Mild temperatures and a scan of the surrounding summits saw us leave the crampons in the car and head up. The summit of Cairn an Tuirc was reached in short order, with a ferocious following wind helping us up the hill, but making standing upright on the summit problematic. The easy stroll from there across to the top of Cairn of Claise, barely a kilometer or so distant and with little more than 100m vertical drop in between made it surprising that these are classed as separate munros, but it's an easy bag for the tickers out there. The planned walk out along the ridge over-looking the Coire Ffion ski runs was abandoned due to the incessantly fierce wind and we dropped down to walk out along less-exposed ground.

All in, a good weekend, two winter-climbing cherries popped and good company throughout.

Stevo



Wed Day 1: Mass assault of the cascade. Pitch 1 was by passed on the left as the top looked thin. Various pitches of the Cascade were done by the group, our pitches ended after Alasdair's fall (don't agree with Jules about me being calm).

Thur Day 2: Harry, Danny and Helen did Senterio dei Troll nice short pitches with easy ground between and we carried on up to 7 pitches around Scottish 3/4. Mark and Catherine first pitches of Grand Val 3, Martin and Jules did Valmiana II 3

Fri Day 3: Helen and Jules went to look for Fenilliaz I 2 but we think we couldn't find it because the sunny weather stripped it! Martin and Harry went to do Chandelle de Levure, first pitch was breaking up and went at a dangerous mixed III. Walked off at the top of second non existent pitch, last pitch looked to dangerous in the afternoon sun which gave conditions of circa 12 degrees? Danny and Jules did Patri first 3 pitches, whilst Alex walked in with them and continued along the valley

Sat Day 4: Sking trip to Courmayeur for Helen, Jules, Alex, Martin, Catherine, Mark and Danny. Harry and Jules (H) went to do Pattinagio Artistico. Harry storming up to be first on the route only to find Jules arriving minus helmet which he left at Apartments. Aborted and went to Cascades by which time the first two pitches were missing due to heat. Did two pitches on the third tier.

Sun Day 5: Catherine and Helen went to do Gianduiotto by Night II 2. Danny, Alasdair and Harry arrived. Danny lead the first pitch a ramp then 3m of vertical crudy snow on which his feet popped out a few times with very poor axe placements. Danny tried to place a screw in this near non existent protectable terrain. This pumped him but he managed to abort safely leaving Catherine with the decision that we weren't going to be next! Up in reserve came Harry who did the first pitch with Helen and Alasdair seconding. Harry led on the second pitch but time was getting on so a decision was made to abb back down.

Mon Day 6: Harry and Alasdair did Acherone (8 pitches of II 3). Helen had a rest day.

Tues Day 7: Helen and Harry did Pattinagio Artistico (5 pitches II 3). This turned out to be the best route of the week for us. A small steep pitch of III/IV on hooks was a tester for nimble fingers putting in and taking out ice screws without dropping them. The rest of the climb was III. The ice was good in most places due to the overcast conditions giving chewy ice. But the long top pitch, where I expected easy ice, was rock hard again which I found exhausting (Helen). A surprisingly easy walk off. Martin and Jules done Acherone, whilst Mark, Catherine and Alasdair done some pitches on Senterio dei Troll.

The conditions were not the greatest for ice climbing, far too hot in the afternoon on the sunnier side of the valleys meant aborts if climbing late afternoon. Otherwise great weather cold starts, hot afternoon and no wind.

Alex managed to get to the highest point via cable car and snow shoes. Others managed cross country skiing, whilst others went to Pila.

Helen



Catherine on ????

RAEBURN MEET

Harry , Helen, Martin, Jules, Carol, Simeon, Russell, Karin, Matt Alisdair and Catherine made the journey to the SMC's comfortable hut near Dalwhinnie. Harry and Martin decided on a mushy route on Creagh Meaghaidh, for Saturday, claiming a mention on the SIAS website and narrowly escaping with their lives (refer to Harry for graphic details of sketchy abseils and shoddy ice). Matt, Helen, Karin and Carol walked over the same hill oblivious to the drama unfolding in a damp gulley on the cliffs below them. A tricky navigation leg through a snow shower led to a warm sunny descent. Matt and Alisdair left early on Sunday morning, through a heavy frost to find a route on Corie an Lochain, Ewans Butress. We started a bit low doing the optional sugary section, with Alasdair doing a good breaststroke up to the first belay. The top pitch was a lot firmer with a large step to add entertainment. Topped out in sunshine and had a leisurely amble back to the (very full) car park past herds of winter skills lessons. The others had been out on the two hills south of Creagh Meaghaidh, and much fun was had by all.

Matt

GREY CORRIES AND RING OF STEALL

Took the train to Corrour on Thursday and walked into the bothy at the foot of Stob Ban, the wind rattled the roof of the bothy all night.

Come the morning and I set off along the Grey Corries and was being blown about on Stob Ban and Stob Choire Claurigh, there was nobody to be seen on the ridge and arriving at Sgurr Chonnich Beag I descended to Steall where I bivied out watching a full moon pass, in the morning my boots were just about frozen solid and the Rab survival biv bag had a lot of condensation and ice inside.

Next morning I started the Ring of Steall, the distance and the weight of the pack were getting to me but the views were good, I eventually arrived at Nevis Youth Hostel about twelve hours later.(Ouch)

Garbhanach



Approaching the window on the Raeburn Meet



Harry's up there somewhere



Alistair gearing up for his E1 ascent



Carlos and Nikki

FIRST WET WEEKEND OF THE SUMMER

The weather forecast promised mixed weather for the weekend, unfortunately it was absolutely spot on. Saturday there was a gathering of LMC members at Anoch Dubh. Lots of routes undertaken, Catherine, Carlos, Nikki, Alasdair and Harry climbing routes from S to E1. Matt learnt not to drop gear, Nikki learnt where Glencoe was located, Alasdair learnt that a 'soft' E1 is not a pushover and Harry learnt about midges at the Glencoe Campsite. The biggest disaster to befall the party was that all the pubs in the area were full, luckily the Onich hotel had space and we ended the evening around their fire. Sunday I climbed Ben Nevis with a friend, Stephen, in the pouring Rain, resorting to Plan C, the Tourist track. This was to mark the 75th Anniversary of the British Schools Exploring Society. Monday, Stephen and I met up with Alex to climb Ben More, once again we found the forecast spot on with heavy rain and strong winds on the summit. Typical bank holiday weekend all round!

Matt

THE SUMMER SO FAR

As I write, the rain is still falling and the promised sunny weather has failed to materialise. Is it going to be another wash-out Wednesday? Time will tell. The summer began brightly enough with a day at Aberdour, that was recounted earlier and continued with a day at Dunkeld and a few Wednesdays (largely as inadvertent joint meets with the Langside Club). In fact, the sun shone so brightly that an expedition to Rannoch Wall was achieved, my earliest ever and at the end of the month, Robin and I explored the concept of what was possible in a short day with two good routes on the East Face of Aonach Dubh and home for 2.30.

Then it began to rain and rain as May arrived. This is the fourth May in succession to have bad weather, so it shouldn't have been a surprise really. Never mind, stolen days at Aberdour again and Clifton last Sunday have helped to keep the fire burning. Here's hoping for better weather.

Chris

SAAS FEE, SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is a beautiful place – the sun glints off the distant peaks and glaciers. It is also a cheesy old place, from the high dairy content in most of the meals which saw Matt defeated by a salad, to the little cast concrete gnomes which adorn the lower slopes. Powered by cheese we managed to scale 3 4000 footers; Lagginhorn, Alallinhorn and Wiesmies, all accessible from the Saas Fee valley. Mostly we took the ‘normal’ route with only the Alallinhorn presenting a heightened challenge in the form of a little rock step near the top of the Hohlaugrat ridge.

We also had to contend with lots of fresh snow which made the approaches rather tiring. The snow half covered up the crevasses on the glaciers – a snow-covered white crevasse in a white glacier in a whiteout is quite difficult to spot and we all discovered some beauties. Matt claims first prize for disappearing up to his waist and claiming he ‘couldn’t feel anything’ with his feet. He didn’t look too happy so we hauled him out.

Other highlights of the trip include a Via Ferrata with the wire bridge from hell (authors italics) and a nice little acclimatising rock climb for Matt and Al up the Jegihorn. Our London Kiwi member Andy ‘solid scent marked’ all his exploits with amazing regularity (I blame the cheese). Liz remained cheerful throughout, apart from the bit where she couldn’t feel her feet. Switzerland has good wine! And cheese....

Matt, Alasdair, Kiwi Andy and Liz Yeates





Kiwi Andy on the way down from the Lagginhorn



MONTA ROSA AREA, SWITZERLAND

After an epic drive through Germany we arrived in Saas Fee. Lois and I did some fine walks around the Saas valley then headed off to Lake Maggiore for some swimming and food followed by some good walks in the Macugnagua area with superb views of the south side of Monte Rosa. We then headed back round to Zinal, which is relatively undeveloped, it was good to camp at the head of the valley with no sign of a cable car or chairlift. Did a traverse round the valley to the Petite Mountet hut and saw no one till we got to the hut. Impressive views up the Mountet glacier and of the West side of the Weiss horn. Went back to Saas for a traverse of the Weismies from Almergeller Alp down to the Weismies hut with Enrico who was up for a day trip from Milan, good snow conditions, the trail ploughed by Matt and Co is still there, then a long slog up to the Mischabel hut for the Nadelhorn. Was a bit worried about crossing the glaciers solo but it was a doddle compared with driving on the autobahn! The huts were much more welcoming than I remembered from previous visits. Drove back through Alsace to get some wine and quiet roads. Did not make it to the Dolomites as planned!

Kevin

THE HAUTE ROUTE

1st day walked in to Albert Premier hut – a big soulless place with the worst food we had on the trip. Early start next day up the Tour Glacier to the Plateau de Trient via the S peak of the Aiguille de Tour – the N peak was my first Alpine climb about 30 years back with my mate Mike who was killed ten years back on the Midi – Plan. I got quite emotional...descended to Champex in CH, we had planned to get the La Braya chair lift down but missed it and had to walk. Fortunately this took us to a Swiss Alpine Club hostel where we had a cosy night. Bus from Champex to Bourg-St.-Pierre where we spent a pleasant afternoon and stayed in a walker's hostel type place. We had wonderful food that the hotelier had shot and prepared himself. Here we met an English climber whose partner had gone home, we offered him to join us as he was a good bloke and he did! Next morning walked into Valsorey Hut on the Grand Combin. Very early (4am) start next day to the fearful Plateau du Couloir, unfortunately our new friend fell off on the upper slopes (about 50 degrees) and slid and tumbled about two hundred meters to luckily come to rest on a rock/scree out crop. We and he





thought he was gone but fortunately when we reached him he had regained consciousness and had relatively minor injuries. Had to call in a chopper to get him off and to hospital, as it was now too late we descended back to the Valsorey hut the warden said the weather was closing in and the Plateau du Couloir was no go for next day so we went back to the valley to spend a night in the worst hotel in Switzerland. Next day we bussed and hitched to Mauvoisin Dam and walked in to the remote Cabane de Chanrion. It was a cold and windy day though and the Vignettes hut was closed for refurbishment so we descended to Arolla for a slap-up nosh and a cosy bed. Next morning we walked in, past our 2004 avalanche site, to the fantastic Bertol Hut. An early start next day to cross the Glacier du Mont Mine, climbing the Tête Blanche on the way before crossing the Col d'Herens and descending to the Schonbiel Hut. Descended to Zermatt in the morning to buy some more climbing gear then knackeredly walked in to the Hornli hut on the Matterhorn. Got there just in time for dinner but no time for the recommended recce of the first part of the ridge. Another middle of the night (5am) start saw us making a pathetic attempt of the Hornli Ridge; we got about a 100m above the hut and retreated due to tiredness, cold and route finding difficulties. We went back to Chamonix and had an easy and relaxing following day walking to Lac Blanc with amazing views of the Mt Blanc Massif. Next day (9/11) we went home, the airport security was intense and my feet still hurt...

Russell and Karin

UNPLANNED HUT WEEKEND

Saturday: Karin, Cate, Beau (the dog), Dave (the dog) and me walked Stob Ban and Mullach nan Coirean from Glen Nevis on Saturday whilst Harry and Martin had adventures on or maybe not on Ravens Edge on the Buechaille and Jules, Danny and Simeon climbed Tower ridge via the Douglas Boulder. We later had a beach BBQ and inevitably went to the lacklustre Hotel, we were the only ones. Russell who was feeling unwell in the night accidentally let Beau out in the middle of the night. After some panic and about 30 mins later Cate found Beau near the beach after Karin and I had done a car search up and down the road. Phew!

Sunday: Harry and Cate (with “out on the tiles” Beau) went home, Karin, Martin, Jules, Simeon and I walked up Sgurr Eilde Mor - again in the Mamores – at Martins unforgiving pace from the Ice Factor in just under three hours following and including a bit of faffing about at the start. Jules, Martin and Simeon bombed down whilst Karin and I ambled down at a more sedate rate. Later we came across Sir James Saville in the Onich...

Very good weekend that was entirely unplanned, sometimes things just happen that way.

Russell

POETRY AND CLIMBING, A HEADY MIX

A rare ridge of high pressure, sunshine, warmth and some inspired creative writing including doggerel, prose and even a haiku or two led to a convergence on the Whangie. Much fun was had on the three usual suspects, Ivy Crack, Vampire Crack and Back Step Chimney, but other brave souls ventured onto less frequented (and looser ground) including one or two ascents on the dark side. Just to be quirky or because it is more solid, who knows?

We’ve had some well attended meets this summer, but last night has probably been the best. The half moon at dusk was a beautiful sight, just like the pint of fruit beer at the Carbeth

Chris



Richard on Arthurs Seat



Karin on Arran



Bill on Unicorn



Bill and Martin on the Soutar



Bill on Centurion

RING OF STEALL

A long but thoroughly rewarding day around what is possibly the most dramatic inland ridge walk in Scotland. It was well worth the 6am alarm call to complete the 8km, 1200m of total ascent over the four Munros and three tops in seven-and-a-half hours - and leave plenty of daylight at the fag end of the day. Jamie (Davies) and I travelled up to the Onich hut on Friday, the weather was forecast to be broken sunshine. We set off at a pace from the road end carpark at Polldubh and made good time to the Steall bridge. The long slog and the zig-zagging path at the top to get up onto the ridge and the first Munro (An Gearanach 982m) seemed never ending, but once we'd broken the back of the ascent we made good going hoofed it over the top of Stob Coire a' Chairn (981m). We then picked our way along the sinuous ridge to Am Bodach (1032m) before descending quickly down a long quartz covered broad ridge and up and over Sgorr an Iubhair top at 1001 metres before heading northwards over some ankle straining ground to the last Munro, Sgurr a' Mhain (1099m). From here it was downhill all the way to the climbers' car park near the Polldubh crags and a brisk walk back to the car for 3.30pm.

Jules

THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAIN MARATHON 2007

Three intrepid Lomonders competed in the Original Mountain Marathon on the last weekend of October. Held in the Lowther Hills in the Scottish Borders, the course was set over some steep and testing terrain. The weather was suitably foul, low cloud and rain on Saturday (lots of micro navigation sections) with a proper Scottish Hoolie on Saturday night Sunday was cold and clear leading to some faster racing and easier navigation. There was considerable success, Robin Whitworth and Andy Heald teaming up to come 28th in the Long Score category. My partner Tim and I came 75th in the B Class (50km).

Matt

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