



# York Alpine Club Newsletter

November 2003

## YAC AGM: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November

This years AGM will take place on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2003 at the Brewery Club on Toft Green, starting at 8pm.

### Proposed Agenda:

- **Election of the committee.** If you wish to stand for a committee post, you need to be Proposed and Seconded. If you wish to stand for one of the posts: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Social Secretary and 3 ordinary members, contact Peter Evans. Nominations will also be taken on the night.
- **Meets List and Organization.** A discussion of the Meets List for 2004 organized by Debra H. Suggestions for 2005 will also be taken.
- **Financial Report.** Jonathan will present a report of the club's finances. This will include a discussion of the membership fee. The outcome of the BMC EGM to discuss the rates charged to Members and Member Clubs will also be presented.
- **Newsletter:** A proposal to deliver the newsletter by electronic means (email or web download) will be discussed. This will make preparation of the newsletter easier and also make substantial savings for the club.
- **A.O.B.** If there is any other business you feel should be discussed at the AGM then contact Peter Evans before the 13<sup>th</sup> of November.

Peter

### Contents:

Chair's Report .....	2
Social Sec's Report .....	2
Hut Sec's Report: Meets Lists for 2004 + 2005.....	3
YAC Christmas Meet 2003: Lagangarbh, Glencoe.....	3
Glen Etive Trip Report: 20th - 22nd February 2003.....	5
Bethesda Trip Report: 14th - 15nd March 2003.....	6
Eskdale Trip Report: 2nd - 4th May 2003.....	7
Braemar Trip Report: 23rd - 26th May 2003.....	8
South Shropshire Camp Report: 18th - 19th July 2003.....	9
Duddon Valley Camp Report: 19th - 21st October 2003.....	10
Costa Blanca Diary: March 2003.....	11
Caption Competition.....	13



## Chair's Report

Another summer has come and gone, and it's time to sharpen our crampons in time for December's heavy snowfalls (dream on). We've had a number of successful meets over the year, with attendances well up on last year, even the camping.

There have also been several ad-hoc climbing and mountain biking trips, but one thing we haven't seen much (any) of is the Sunday walk, for the simple reason that nobody has

organised any. Volunteers welcome!

There has been some interest (chiefly from me) for some extra camping meets, particularly over the winter. So if you have anywhere you'd like to go, let us know and we'll try to fit it in. This will be discussed further at the AGM.

Next Chair's Walk is on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January.

**Simon C**

## Social Sec's Report

### YAC Pub Crawl 26th July 2003.

Andrew, Karen, Gordon P, Simon C, Carmen, Rich, Dave E, Graeme, Annie, Duncan, Dave Cowling.

A trip to some of the best real ale pubs in York including 3 of the York Brewery pubs. Rich entertained us (and innocent bystanders) with his 'name the route' picture competition (you really need to have seen the pics to appreciate this!). Dave Cowling inadvertently joined us by being in the Tap and Spile when we arrived. The hardy members among us who hadn't yet drunk enough, headed off to Andrew's for a wee bit more - contact Andrew for an account of the later proceedings (though he'll probably claim he doesn't remember)!

### Forthcoming events:

**Bowling/curry:** Sat 28th November 2003  
Details to follow nearer the time.

### Christmas Meal - Saturday 13th December

After last year's successful outing, the venue is once again The Ship Inn, Acaster Malbis, 7pm for 7.30pm.

Menu to be confirmed (i.e. they still haven't decided on one so they're coming up with some suggestions!)

**Winter Pub Crawl:** Saturday 17th January 2004

### YAC Bike Ride – May 12<sup>th</sup> 2003

Dear 'Yacites',

This is a brief note to record how much I enjoyed the cycle ride around Ryedale which I shared with some current club members back on May 12<sup>th</sup>. It was fantastic fun, the group a great bunch of people. Clearly the club is in good hands.

Yeah, I know I am writing this a good month (*Ssssh! Don't say that! Ed*) after the event, but I've not had a weekend at home in London since! I just travel so much, and have cycled in the Fens and Spey Valley and hiked in Somerset, East Sussex, Shropshire and the Cairn Gorms in the intervening time. But after such an enjoyable weekend in York I do hope to meet up with YAC again - both the current active members, and those I knew from the early '90s. Feel free to contact me on: [stevegarnsey@hotmail.com](mailto:stevegarnsey@hotmail.com).

Meanwhile, some food for thought: I find London drivers much more considerate to cyclists than York drivers. Yorkies are much more aggressive to cyclists than their Cockney counterparts. Why?

**Steve Garnsey**



## Hut Sec's Report: Meets lists for 2004 + 2005

### Meets List 2004

Date	Area	Location	Hut
31 <sup>st</sup> Jan - 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Lakes	Coniston	Stair Hut
20 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Scotland	Feshiebridge	Mill Cottage
March	Spain	Costa Blanca	
19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> March	N.Wales	Capel Curig	Tan-y-Garth
8 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> April (Easter)	Arran		Camping
30 <sup>th</sup> April- 2 <sup>nd</sup> May (BH)	Lakes		Little Langdale
23 <sup>rd</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> May (BH)	Scotland	Torridon	Ling Cottage
25 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> June		Wye Valley	Camping
23 <sup>rd</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup> July		Northumberland	Camping
26 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> August	N. England		Camping
August-September	The Alps		
August - September	Lundy Island		Camping
24 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Peaks	Grindleford	Fallcliffe Cottage
22 <sup>nd</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> October	N.Wales		Lletty Llywd
19 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> November	Lakes	Borrowdale	K Shoe Hut
26 <sup>th</sup> Dec. - 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Scotland		TBC

The 2004 Meets List is shown above as it stands before confirmation at the AGM.

The meets highlighted in blue are "hut" meets and the two orange meets are proposed trips abroad.

Trip organizers will be required for all these meets and will be decided at the AGM.

Here's the draft list:

### Proposed Meets List for 2005

Date	Location
January	N Wales
February	Scotland
March	Lakes
April	Scotland
May BH I	Lakes
May BH II	Scotland
June	N.Wales
July	N.England
August BH	Ireland
September	Peak District
October	S. Wales: Brecon Beacons
November	Lakes
December (Xmas Meet)	Scotland

Debra H.

## YAC Christmas Meet 2003: Lagangarbh. Glencoe

This year's Christmas Meet is at the Lagangarbh Hut at the foot of Buachaille Etive Mor. The club has 14 places booked for the 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> and a lesser number of places until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January.

In order to ensure the club does not make an excessive loss on this booking the numbers of people planning to attend this meet need to be known by the date of the AGM, the 13<sup>th</sup> of November.

More information on the hut is available online at:

<http://www.smc.org.uk/huts/lagan.htm>

and a map is available at:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/streetmap.dll?G2M?X=222055&Y=755930&A=Y&Z=4>

Simon C

## Glen Etive Trip Report: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2003



**Present:** Carmen, Dave Meigh, Debra, Graham, Nigel, Peter, Rich, Rob, Simeon, Simon C, Simon F, Tom.

### Inbhirfhaolain Hut, Glen Etive

This was the second club trip to this isolated hut towards the southern end of Glen Etive. The composting toilet, and stream 50 m away providing only cold water are accepted as part of the package when you visit such a remote spot. The place has the luxury of electricity, a well equipped kitchen, open fire and pleasant dining/sitting room. However, before we left, we requested in the hut log book that the Grampian Club install some sound attenuating baffles in the bedroom - some of the snoring was atrocious. If the custodian does not oblige we will have to think again before returning.

Pressure of laziness has prevented me from writing this report until 4 months late, so the walks which members of the group went on have faded into a distant memory. From what I do recall, Nigel, Graham and Rich arrived by lunchtime on Tuesday and enjoyed three days of freezing temperatures and unbroken sunshine before the others arrived. They climbed Bidean nam Bian, Buchaille Etive Mor and the Aonach Eagach. Someone had to retreat from one of the walks due to a severe hangover - setting a precedent for the weekend. To spoil their isolation Tom, Peter, Rob, Dave and Simeon arrived on Thursday evening.

On Friday Rob, Peter, Tom and Rich climbed summit gully on Stob Coire Nam Beith, while the others went somewhere else. The rest of the party arrived on Friday evening just in time/just too late for a communal meal and a large quantity of alcohol. The following morning there were various accusations of

snoring and spontaneous cuddling. Excuses for the latter were put down to "not usually sleeping on that side of the bed".

More mountaineering exploits the following day saw Simeon, Dave, Nigel and Peter traversing the Aonach Eagach ridge and Carmen, Simon, Debra and Simon climbing a gully from Coire Nan Lochan and then (even though it was getting late) continuing all the way round the horseshoe ridge to descend via the Lost Valley in the dark. The other four who started out later were back at base by 4pm. Having made a fire and cooked the evening meal, there was nothing left to do but start on the alcohol. Much had been consumed by the time the remaining 8 returned after 8pm. Things quietened down while the food was consumed, but after the meal a bottle of whiskey appeared. Amongst much vociferous discussion the whole litre was consumed before bed time. Those



*A Happy Climber: Rob Stone (Photo from Rob's Website)*

who had gone to bed early (well relatively early) were woken intermittently by more discussion, and later on by lots more snoring.

I don't remember much about Sunday, but I think it rained and nobody walked very far.

**Tom**



## Bethesda Trip Report: 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>nd</sup> March 2003

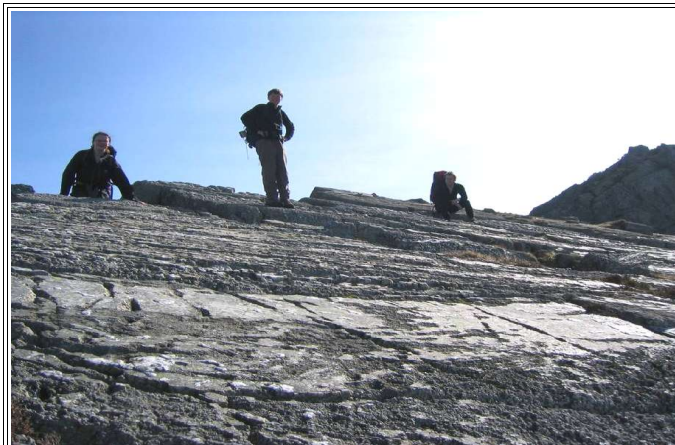


**Present:** Simon C, Carmen, Annie, Peter, Simeon, Margaret S, Simon F, Debra H

We were staying in Glanafan Cottage (owned by the JMCS) and it's right in the centre of Bethesda. I think the consensus of opinion was that it was a bit grotty! But as hut's go I'm sure we've all stayed in worse.

On Saturday Simon C and Carmen tackled some of the slabs on Carnedd Y Filiast.

In typical fashion Simon F and Debra H turned up late afternoon to find everyone in the kitchen discussing whether it was too early to go to the pub. Once we'd got to the nearest pub and started eating our food we decided that it definitely was "too early" to go the pub! Where's Rich when you need someone to complain to the management? Thankfully Annie seemed to be



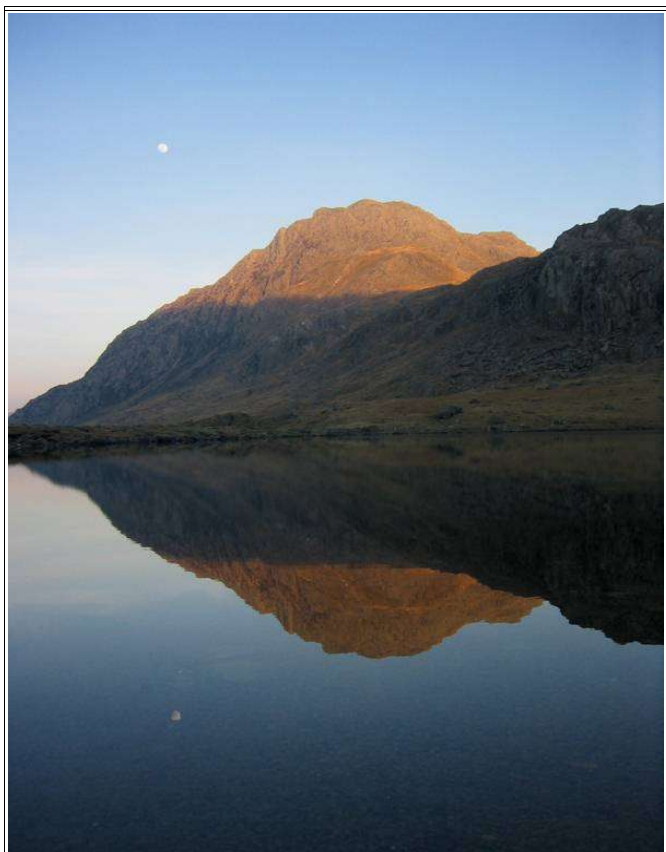
Debra H, Carmen and Simon F: North Ridge of Tryfan (Simon C)

on first name terms with some people in a pub further up the road and this rescued the evening!

The following day was an excellent still and sunny day. Simon's F&C and Debra and Carmen dumped cars at Ogwen and set off round Llyn Ogwen to tackle Tryfan and the Glyders via the "usual ridges". Simon F raced round Pinnacle Ridge instead of "doing it" and had an excellent hour's sunbathing whilst the others did it "properly" (see Simon C's website for proof....). Once on the ridge it seemed a shame not to carry on so we ended up coming down the (now excellent) path past the Devil's Kitchen. Once down it was time to join the traffic jams on the A55.

Most of the rest of the group walked from the hut along the ridge on the south side of the valley across Carnedd Y Filiast and Mynydd Perfedd.

**Simon F.**



Not many days better than this in Wales! Photo by Simon C



## Eskdale Trip Report: 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> May 2003

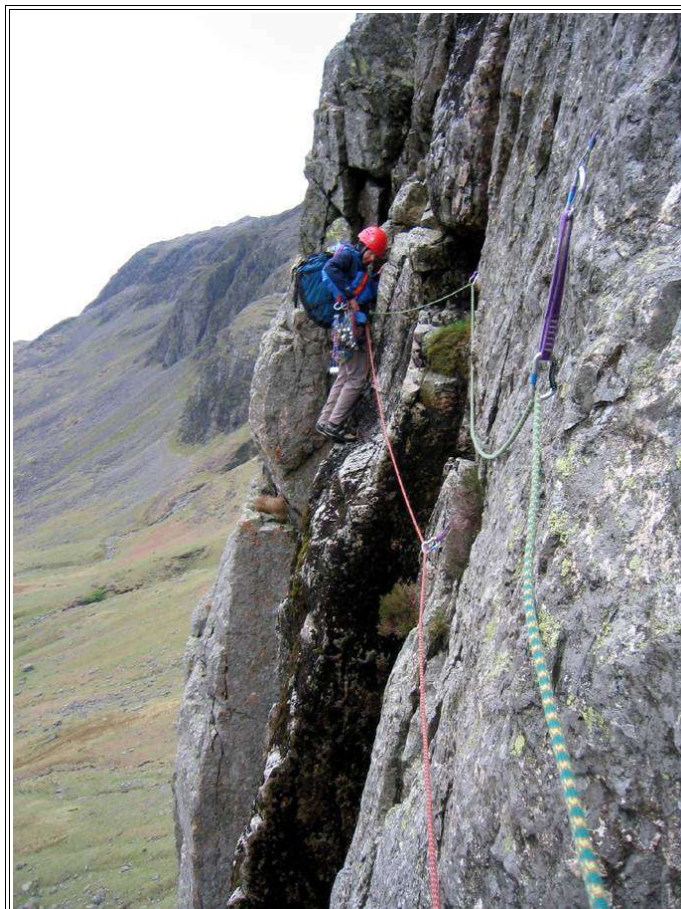


**Present:** Peter, Gordon T., Gordon P., Margaret, Margaret S., Simon C., Carmen, Rich, Per, Andrew, Karen.

**Saturday:** Everyone made an early start to make the most of it before the impending rain arrived, leaving Margaret S. somewhat surprised to arrive and find nobody still loitering around at the campsite. Therefore also missing Andrew having his tent shaken in an attempt to obtain the campsite fees from him. Margaret went up Bow Fell. Per, Rich, Simon and Carmen walked to Esk Buttress. The latter climbed Bridge's Route a classic multi-pitch HS with an airy traverse, finishing just as the promised rain arrived. In contrast, Rich and Per embarked on the hardest pitches of their E2 in the rain – which meant that they arrived somewhat late in the pub. Gordon & Peter went to Wallabarrow for a couple of routes (not sure which) and after abandoning in the wet headed off to examine Gate Crag. Andrew & Karen went to do a scramble on Esk Buttress nr Thor's cave – but abandoned due to the slippery rock. Gordon P. and Margaret had gone to look at some stone circles on the fell above the campsite. Once the rain started it carried on pretty relentlessly until Sunday morning. We returned from the pub to find a tree blocking the road through the campsite, which had narrowly missed a car and tent.

**Sunday:** It was good to have a lie in, encouraged by the heavy patter on the tent. The forecast was for rain all day – which was sufficient info to put off any ambitious plans. That is except for Per & Rich who set off to do Napes Needle in the afternoon. Peter & Andrew were spotted pushing their bikes toward Ravenglass – apparently they did mount them at some point and even went for a cycle in the sea (as you do). Gordon T., Margaret S., Simon, Carmen & Karen went for a circuitous walk through Eskdale and then Karen went on a navigation exercise on her own (so she can train and help Andrew out in the future), whilst the

rest of us headed through Mitterdale Forest and along Illgill Head (above Wasdale Screes) and back to the site. Gordon P. & Margaret went to Muncaster Fell.



Carmen on Bridge's Route (Photo by Simon C)

**Monday:** Per, Rich, Simon & Carmen went to Wallabarrow in the hope that it would remain dry – it didn't. However, undeterred, we climbed in the pouring rain – with water running down the rocks. Rich & Per did the first pitch of Digitation – MVS, whilst Simon & Carmen did all 4 pitches of Wall and Corner – VD. Gordon T., Peter, & Margaret went to Great Gable and Kirk Fell. Andrew & Karen headed off to the Newlands Valley to check out the campsite for later in the year.

**Carmen**





## Braemar Trip Report: 23<sup>rd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> May 2003



**Present:** Nigel, Peter, Annie, Margaret S, Donal, Gordon P, Simon C, Carmen, Karen, Andrew, Helen and Duncan.

**Guests:** Ged Hemblade, John Evans, Rob Linney and Tim Whitcombe

Mountain biking was the main activity of this meet with all but three of the members and guests taking cycles along. The weather for the whole weekend was fine with the occasional heavy shower that fell as rain or snow depending on the altitude of the place that you were at the time. All members managed to get a good soaking at one time or another.

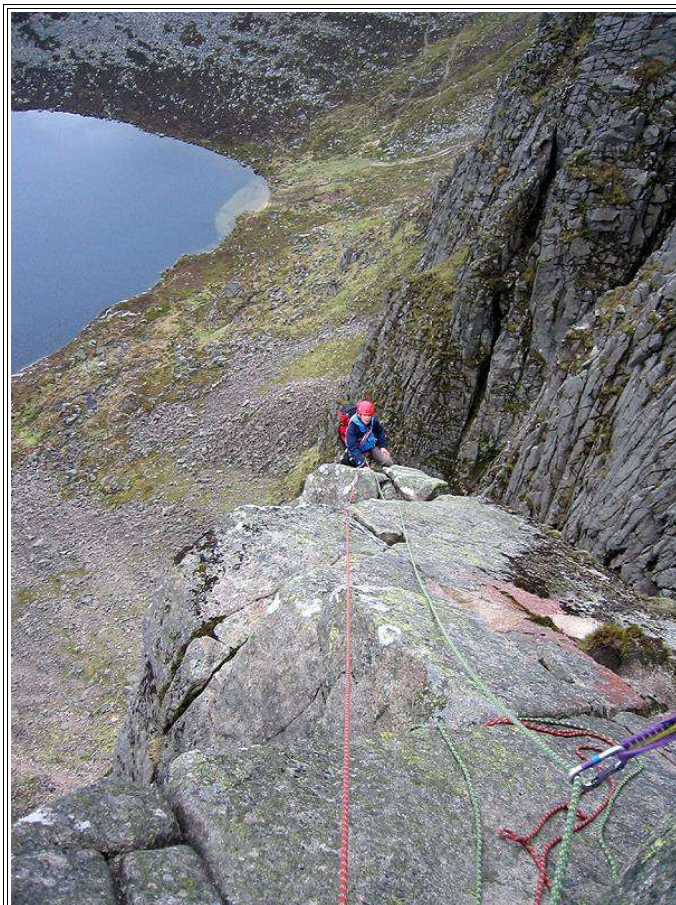
Birthday celebrations were held for Andrew on Saturday night and prematurely for Donal late on Sunday night. Some picture of the meet can be seen on <http://uk.msnusers.com/braemar> and also on Simon C's website.

**Activities:** Nigel and Ged traveled up Braemar three days prior to the meet and did some wild camping in Glen Ey and Glen Quoch. Mountains climbed were Beinn Lutharn Bheag, Glas Tulachean, Carn an Righ, Mam nan Carn, Beinn Lutharn Mhor, Carn Bhac, Beinn Bhuid and Ben Avon.

**Saturday:** Donal, Ann, Rob and Helen took bikes on a circular route past Derry Lodge and on to the Devil's point, then following the Dee back to the hut. Peter and John climbed Eagle Ridge (Severe) on Lochnagar. Nigel walked up Mount Keen after dropping Ged off at Aberdeen station. Simon and Carmen cycled past White bridge up Glen Dee, then walked up Glen Geusachan on to Monadh Mor (where it snowed for a while) and Beinn Bhrotain. Margaret walked up Sgor Mor via Derry Lodge. Gordon and Tim cycled up Glen Ey and did Beinn Lutharn Mhor and Beinn Lutharn Bheag.

**Sunday:** Donal, Anne, Rob, Helen, Andrew, Duncan, Peter and John took part in a 25 mile linear cycle ride from the hut to Blair Athol via Bynack Lodge and Glen Tilt. They returned to the hut by car via pub at Moulin. Donal, Andrew and Helen did a short walk up Carn Mor. Simon and Carmen cycled up Glen Ey to the ruined lodge and then walked up Carn Cruinn, An Socach, down to Loch nan Eun, then Mam nan Carn and Beinn lutharn Mhor. Margaret walked up Gen Quoch to Beinn

Bhuid. Nigel went bagging around Glen Muick taking in Lochnagar, Carn a Choire Bhaidheach, Carn an t-Sagairt Mor, Cairn Bannoch and Broad Cairn.



Carmen on Eagle's Ridge (Photo by Simon C)

Gordon and Tim cycled Derry Lodge and then walked up Beinn Bhreac.

**Monday:** Peter and John walked up Beinn a Bruird. Simon and Carmen had another long day climbing Eagle Ridge then walking on to summit of Lochnagar. Margaret walked up a mountain with two names; Top of the Battery and Carn Damhaireach. Nigel did more bagging on Carn an Tuirc, Tolmount, Tom Buidhe, Cairn of Claise, Glas Moal and Creag Leacach.

**Tuesday:** Peter and John went climbing on the Pass of Ballater, taking in routes: Jumble Blocks Crack, Ping Pong, Aftershave and Giant Flake. Simon and Carmen cycled to Derry Lodge, then walked up Beinn Bhreac, across the Moine Bhealaidh to Beinn a' Chaorainn Bheag and Beinn a' Chaorainn. **Nigel**



## South Shropshire Camp Report: 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> July 2003



**Present:** Andrew Taylor, Ann Gostling, Rob Linney, Duncan, Noble, David Epstein, Peter Evans (and John Evans, local guide and Peter's brother)

Six members from YAC made the trek down from York to the mountains (*Oi! Watch it! Ed*) of Shropshire for the July meet. Each carload made last orders in a different pub with a minute to spare before setting off into the inky blackness for the campsite. After a few wrong turnings we spotted a field containing several caravans and with no better idea we pitched the tents. After a few tinnies, under the stars, we retired to our tent in the early morning.

Next day we awoke to find that we had camped in an idyllic spot on the banks of the River Clun. We were the only tents in the field and the nearest caravan was 100 metres away.

Peter had big plans for the mountain bikers he had researched a black (steep and dangerous) run at the nearby Hopton Castle, Rob, Annie, Duncan and Andrew promptly set off and much to Andrew's chagrin Peter himself opted to climb at Ippikin Rocks with David and John.

Ippikin Rocks are a bit like Peak Scar, 25m high limestone cliffs in a jungle however the rock had more features and was less loose. Six routes from V Diff to HVS 5a were climbed. David managed a first lead.

The climbers returned to the campsite and put on a brew. Soon the bikers turned up to berate Peter about the hills of Shropshire with tales as diverse as an exhausted Rob and the Clun Londis with the giant walk in

Fridge, where Rob was able to stock up

After showers for some and bathing in the river for others we set off on bikes for the Pub in Clun about a mile and a half away where we were joined by my brother John and his wife Phi. After pooling our resources we selected our chosen tippie either 'Posh' (Strong) or 'Becks' and knuckled down to a night of heavy drinking and intellectual discourse. The topic of extreme sports came up with particular reference to snorkelling up Snowdon, after someone had said that bylaws prevented biking across the mountain. The Pub Landlady would not let us leave until 1.20am whereupon we got on our bikes for an unsteady ride back to the campsite.

Sunday got off to a slow start for the reasons described above. The group set off for Pontesbury. Duncan, David and Peter climbed on Pontesford Rocks, which were more crowded than Ippikin so the choice of routes was more limited. We climbed a three pitch V Diff and a shorter severe. Andrew, Rob and Annie biked around Pontesford Hill.

Although the area is not mountainous it is well worth a visit, the campsite was in an excellent location and there were not many other people about.

Three days after the meet, John's wife Phi gave birth to a baby boy.

**Peter**





## Duddon Valley Camp Report: 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> October 2003



**Present:** Andrew, Graeme, Jenny, Simon C, Carmen, Rich, Helen, Peter, Rob.

### Turner Hall Farm

**Summary:** It were very liquid.

**Friday:** Indoor meet at the Newfield Inn until 2 am. Afterwards, Graeme gave a running commentary to the whole campsite in his well-known stentorian whisper on the progress on erecting Jenny's tent.

**Saturday:** Rained most of the day.

Simon C, Carmen, Rich, Graeme, Jenny, Helen and Peter scrambled up Tarn Beck, grade 1/2. Everyone took different lines, varying from easy (Carmen who took the footpath) to very silly (Rich and Simon who took the hardest and wettest lines up with boots regularly topped up by the waterfalls). By this time the rain was falling persistently. Then moved on to what might have been Little Blake Rigg (grade 2), though the route followed (and even the crag) bore little or no resemblance to what was in the book.

Then walked to Seathwaite Tarn and sheltered underneath (!) one of the reservoir buildings for lunch. The rain was getting even heavier so everyone returned to the campsite, dried off, and went to the pub.

Rob and I (Andrew) reconnoitred a possible mountain bike route in the River

Lickle valley, but got bushwhacked by a nice looking- but wrong- track, so never completed the circuit. Rob winged on about the difficulty and dangerousness of the terrain encountered on Andrew's shortcut. *What's new?*

Indoor meet at the Newfield from 4.00 pm until 1 or was it 2.00 am? *Couldn't read my watch.* Rich and Graeme provided the evening's entertainment; Rich by quizzing us on the definition of 'friendship' and the probability of crashing in an airplane, and Graeme by regaling us about his Moby Dick style quest for THE BIG CARP (*or was it 'Snark'?*)

### Sunday

Simon, Carmen, Rich and his date walked to Wallowbarrow Crag, but only climbed 2m up the first route because it was pouring with rain. Walked back to camp site and spent the afternoon climbing at the Kendal Wall. Jenny and Graeme got going somewhat later and couldn't find the bottom of the climbs at Wallowbarrow. Did manage to get some climbing done on the Kendal wall.

Helen, Peter, Rob and I (Andrew) went on a mountain bike circuit from Eskdale village to Miterdale. Got bushwhacked by nice looking –but wrong- couple of tracks, but saved the day (and our faces) by shortcutting straight across country to arrive back in Eskdale on the correct track. Peter refused to entertain us with his famous cycling tricks.

**Andrew (Kamp Kommandant)**



## Costa Blanca Diary: March 2003

"Hi Simon, I am interested in joining YAC, can you give me some details?"

"Sure, we meet on Thursday night in the Brewery, do you want to come to Spain next month?"

That was pretty much my introduction YAC and after some nifty negotiations at work I found myself exiting Alicante airport looking for Simon, Carmen and Pete. Aboard our hire car with the spoils of an uneventful shopping trip (minus Pete's soap, he was determined to avoid it) we execute a few unplanned laps of Finestrat before settling down and emptying the car into a heap in the living room of Roland Edwards' flat and heading for the crag.

Sella (say-ya) is widely regarded as the mecca for Costa Blanca, with a huge selection of routes, across all grades, in a variety of lengths, with easy access, good bolts and shade for those hot days – oh and the crowds. Pete and I spent most of the time uncoiling his new rope, S+C picked off a starred route. Despite being short single pitch and easy access we still managed to get benighted, finishing our last route by head torch! No wonder they called us 'loco'. The local bar supplied us with a pile of bones that used to be a rabbit and wine and a long day ended with the sleep of the just.

Sunshine greets us on day two and we leave the bolts for trad climbing in 'Echo Valley' a new crag for me, with the usual pot-holed approach road and a good view of the imposing cliff of the Ponocho. S+C started up a pleasant 4+ with a tricky looking first pitch and Pete and I head up Via Esther a 3 star grade 5 (about VS) with an interesting start. Despite belaying out of place we got it together, the crux pitch involved an airy traverse on excellent holds but distant gear across a hugely exposed face to a perfect thread ... just out of reach. The route exudes quality from start to finish, is always interesting and never too hard, with adequate protection throughout. S+C had bad case of Mistaken Identity bailing out after the first nasty pitch. Pete and I tackled a much harder 2 pitch 5, with a delightful first pitch, a run out second and a troublesome abseil to conclude, but fun nonetheless. We even got back to the car before the sun went down.

Simon finds the panaderia and fresh bread greets us, or those who managed to drag themselves out of bed. Enough of this thinking about wires and friends,

slings, hexes and all that malarky, we head off for some mindless bolt clipping at Marin. Quite a long drive past Alicante finds us with sun, a wealth of lower grade slabby routes and the crag to ourselves. Marin is as tall as it is wide, being compact with good two pitch routes, requiring a walk-off the back reminiscent of the Idwal slabs, except dry and warm. A dedicated team could tick all the routes here in one day, we of course managed but a handful but they were all good, if a little lacking in variety. S+C and Pete and I swapped routes and leads, and snoozed in the sun (well maybe that was just me). Post siesta I led a 6a, which provided much sport and plenty of belay practice, and later spotted an undocumented route starting over a bulge before easing into a reasonable 5+. For nosh we cook an enormous pasta fest.

Weds finds us driving to Calpe, home of the outstanding Penon D'Ifach and Toix East – one of the first Costa Blanca crags to be developed now surrounded by the huge Maryvilla complex. Starting out on a warm up climb turned out to be an exposed and quite a frightening affair, and I angrily lowered off from the crux after extensive and vocal faffing. This route required a certain approach involving brute force, a lack of subtlety and an unfailing trust in rotten bolts, and I knew just the man for the job. Pete dispatched the route with some firm grunting, one or two special words and a pair of blinkers. S+C had a similarly challenging outing and we called it a day and drove to Toix Placca, where the routes are far less scary than the approach drive. We had a very pleasant sunny afternoon on a pair of easy (4+, 5 about MVS) long slabby routes, watching the comings and going of the dumper trucks and the relentless hammering of the drills. An evening rock shoe shopping and a meal in Calpe saw us home late but satiated.

From the sublime to the ridiculous: in contrast to the lazy bolt clipping relaxed atmosphere of Marin, Tuesday found us up at most un-holiday 7am to get pole position an early start on the 14 pitches of the towering Puig Campana, visible from the flight in and conveniently, our balcony. All four of us were going to climb the classic Eposlón Central Direct about MVS with a natural gear. Arriving at the foot of the climb in 45 mins from the car, we were well warmed up, but more importantly just ahead of another party. Pete led off at 9am and I took the second, so called

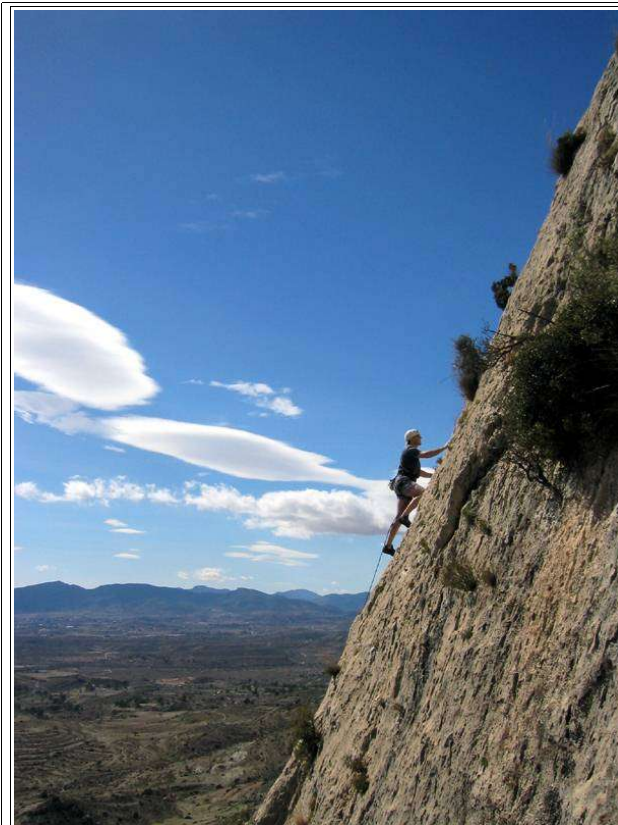


crux pitch, which turned out to no harder than many others. Constant movement, consultation with the hand copied route notes and banter with S+C found us approaching an arête from a somewhat novel direction, only to reveal a magnificent view over the huge face. 3 pitches of fantastic arête climbing on big holds and small stances follow - real quality. The route follows a varied sequence of chimneys, open faces, cracks, blocks and arêtes. The sun shone and a breeze helped to avoid over heating and a reasonably leisurely pace with comfy belays, most with fixed anchors, meant a relaxed approach and a smiley face. We alternated leads all the way until Pete reached the top of the last scrambling pitch. We hadn't seen S+C for some time and as we sat scoffing our food and drinking the water we packed up and pondered their delay. The descent is a very airy via-ferrata and loose stone shoot, which takes its toll on tired legs. Arriving at the car we waited for any signs of their descent, knowing they had head torches (and probably spare batteries to go with their nocturnal reputation), but none was forthcoming.

We were only about a mile or two from the apartment, and we drove back showered had a cup of tea and returned to see ... nothing. A drive around checking the bars and back to the car park just, spotting the lights from afar a mere 2 hours after we had arrived. Relieved we quickly returned and had a celebratory beer or two, or three...

After a long day we decided a short walk in and wide choice of routes was the order of the day so we drove back to Calpe to visit Toix West. Another well-established crag close to our previous visit to Toix Placca where I had spotted some quality routes worth a return visit. On arrival we were greeted by the sight of an ambulance and a very stressed young woman. A group from Rhyll were climbing and one of them had taken a bad fall. After offering

our help and chatting to some ex-pats we decided to move on. At this point I had intended to mention the incident of Pete driving headlong at the oncoming traffic and scaring us witless, but as Simon said "Why single out that occasion rather than all the others ;-)".



Rob getting a suntan. Photo by Simon C (probably)

So after an eventful and more roundabout than magic journey we arrived in the Jalon Valley famous for its wine and almonds. Font D'Axia is given a mediocre write up in the guide as it's quite small (single pitches up to 25m) with a limited number of mostly lower grade routes, but its idyllic location, well-protected natural lines and enjoyable moves make it a great venue for the not-so hard team. We ticked many routes, a highlight being Perrell el cacolat, a delightful 5+ (VS+) with good holds, excellent but spaced gear and no stars! While scoping out the rest of the climbs we came across some crag swag left by socially challenged bunch of brits who'd vacated earlier - and we pocketed it! We got back to the car before it got dark, and S+C arrived,

predictably, just after.

Before we left York Simon had mentioned that he wanted to walk the Bernia Ridge, which stretches for about 5 miles northward from Calpe and dominates the skyline from miles around. A web site provided a detailed topo (although it could have just said, follow red dots from start to end with occasional scrambling) and with the local walking guide we were well versed in the challenge. A beautiful if rather early start and enough bends to keep a rally driver happy saw us parked and wandering up the track away from the start of the ridge. Not that we were lost (for a change) just the guide takes a very devious approach. We were on the ridge in about an hour and a few pints lighter, with fantastic view over the delightful architecture of Benidorm! Here we had the first of our reckonings. Carmen was struggling under a huge rucksack that we lightened to even up the paces, ie gave Simon the heavy stuff to slow him down! The route follows the sharp ridge and you can



# York Alpine Club Newsletter

choose your level of exposure (including a rock bridge and gap for posing in) . Perfect limestone with drops of a few hundred feet for the whole length is more akin to the A'Chir ridge of Arran than lakes or Wales, complete with the rescue helicopter flying beneath us practising touch downs.

We were making good time, the guide claiming anywhere between 5 and 9 hours, on mostly easy interesting walking with the odd Grade 2 scramble along the way, usually down! There are a few roped sections on the topo but we

didn't bother with the early ones, a steady head for the traverse and careful movement on the chimneys kept up the pace. A couple of summits and 'bad steps' all adding to the experience and with one eye on the clock we soon reached an airy down climb and traverse, which we roped as a handrail, and Simon then ignored! The main barrier to the complete ridge traverse is a steep 15m abseil, Pete quickly had the rope uncoiled and tied it into the

huge bolts and sent him down first, obviously. Carmen was introduced to a using a sling as a backup and packed off with minimal fuss. Safely down, the route continued with a fine open slab and a short wall (climbed before realising it was a grade 2 pitch!). The final major obstacle is a short grade 4+ pitch, arriving early I soloed the first 10 ft (crux) and returned while the rope and rock shoes were sorted (for those that had carried them). After drawing straws I led up the ladder of shiny bolts, providing convenient holds and pointing the way (it is easily friggid for those not wanting to lead it). Lunch, more chorizo, and we were off on the final section. Dropping to a col, we debated leaving sacs but moved on, rapidly reaching the ridge top (where we did leave some sacs!), a few more small pitches and we were off on the final slog. The summit afforded splendid panoramas, plenty of photo opportunities with clouds spilling over the ridge and view along the coast and inland for many miles. Post obligatory group photo, summit book signing and banana eating we retraced our steps to the abandoned sacs.

A long descent with weary legs brought us through

the leg eating gorse bushes and back via a gentle path past a natural spring with washing facilities and to the car, a bar and eventually the drive home. Our final day dawned overcast and after packing we left for Penna Roca, north of Alicante, and quite few degrees cooler than the coast. Being a Saturday it was quite crowded with some talented locals showing us how to climb 7a, and a caterpillar train (see Simons pictures) about a meter long with very nasty hairs. A rather butch 5+ with a rock over onto a slab with very poor finger holds felt like HVS wasn't

the greatest start, a clutch of 5s and 6s and dogs and we packed up when the weather turned distinctly Welsh.

The sun was shining at the airport as we ate the last of the food and an uneventful trip home saw me back in London when the others were landing in Leeds. A great trip with lots of new crags, not much hard climbing but plenty of great routes, some adventures and a fantastic walk, so good I did it 10 days later when I was back in Spain.

Highly recommended for anyone into sunbathing easy climbing and interesting walking.

**Rob Stone**

**Piccies available:**

<http://psycwww.york.ac.uk/~rob/pix/climbing/yac/>

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/simonjcalldwell/CostaBlanca/page1.htm>



"I knew I should have packed that Pork Pie!" Photo by Carmen