

# The University of Sheffield Mountaineering Club Newsletter 28/10/2015

Hello everyone,

I would like to start by welcoming everyone back to Sheffield who is returning, I hope everyone crushed this Summer and had a great time!

I would also like to welcome any Freshers to Sheffield, and I hope that you've settled in and are enjoying your time at university!

This is our second newsletter, which is full of stories of what our club members have been up to over Summer and all the club events that have happened over the past month.



Congratulations to **Harry Lewis**, for winning the photo competition with his picture of **Shaun and Micki** on Cream (E4) at Tremadog. Please email me at [usmc.publicity@gmail.com](mailto:usmc.publicity@gmail.com) to organize collecting your prize.

# Freshers Weekend Report:

## Dawn Brinkman

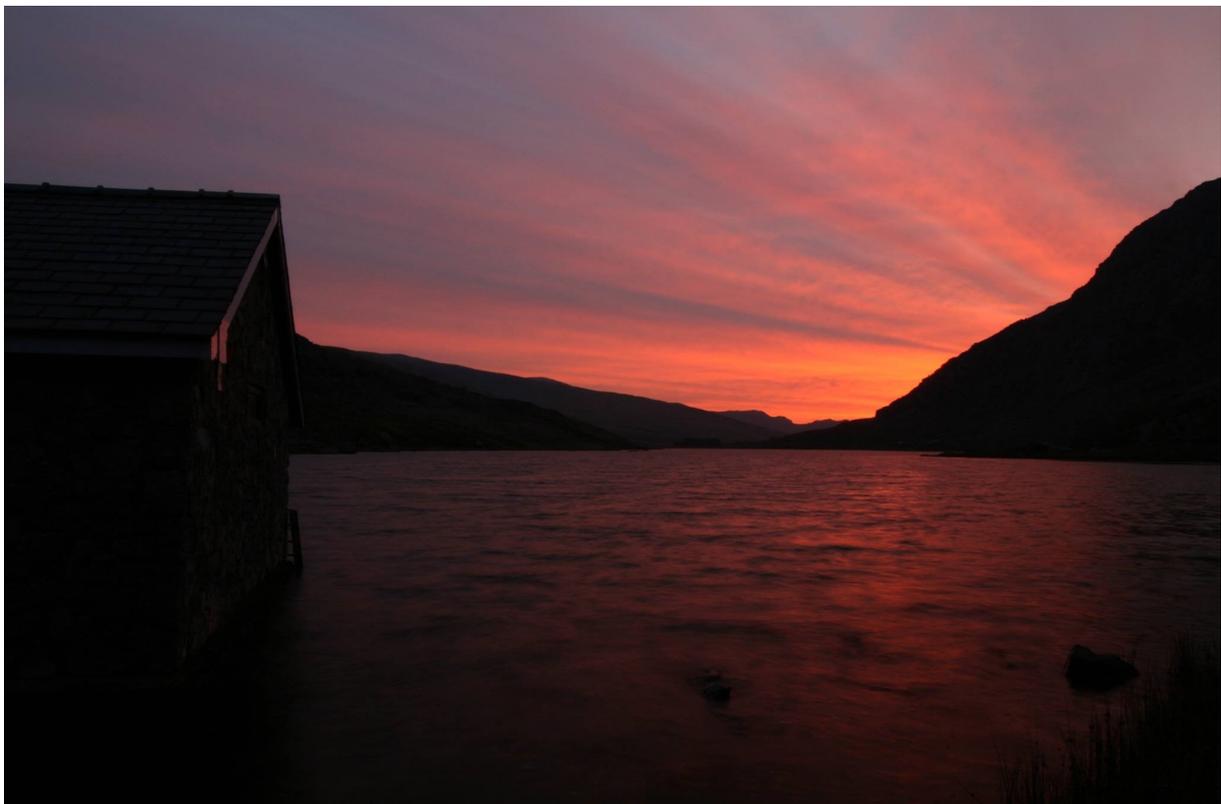
Freshers weekend was once again a massive success! Almost 70 USMCers decided to escape the industrial North of England and descended upon the picturesque crags of Tremadog in Snowdonia to spend a weekend crushing everything.

For some on the trip it was their first taste of multipitch rock, and for others it was a much anticipated return to one of the best climbing spots in the UK. One Step in the Clouds saw approximately 2,000 ascents on Saturday, and reports of ledge parties filtered back to the hut amongst calls for a Club portaledge and soundsystem to improve this experience. On Sunday, climbers were sustained solely on psyche (and flapjack), and many harder climbs such as Vector and Cream were ticked.

Not forgetting the evening activities this weekend which were on top form as usual. After an ace meal and some beers, table bouldering of course took centre stage, with side-shows of extreme monkey bars and some excellent displays of sharking.



**One Step Ledge Party, taken by Naomi Pimblett.**



**Sunrise at Ogwen on the Saturday morning, taken by Lawrence Beesley-Peck.**

Walks were led on both days, with over 30 members ascending Moel Hebog on Sunday. The route had views of most of Snowdonia, as well as a couple of really big holes, and a forest that may or may not have been in Lord of the Rings. This was followed by the obligatory excessive ice cream eating in Beddgelert.



**Walkers on Crib Goch, taken by Tamsin Moran.**

We successfully navigated our way back to Sheffield with almost 70 USMCers who had had an excellent weekend. A massive thank you to all Club members who took freshers out both climbing and walking, the weekend relies heavily on this so it literally couldn't have happened without you! Also thanks to the drivers, including the minibus and the van (limited at 60mph sorry), caterers, and anyone who cleaned up!



**Landscape shot, taken by Louis Chen.**

PS. I heard Mr. Morley had a good time too, he did mention something about cake/keys though.

# What Happened Over Summer:

## Tour de Mont Blanc — Jenny Armstrong

When, in January, my friend Christos asked if I wanted to walk the Tour du Mont Blanc in July 2015, I said “Why not!” We roped in a third person, booked the flights and then I pretty much forgot about the whole thing. University work and exams took over until the week before we flew to Geneva. With 2 days to go I started frantically packing a (rather large) rucksack. Having never done anything like this

before, I ended up taking way too much gear, including a down jacket....in the south of France...in July. Anyway, after two trains, a plane and a coach ride we arrived in Les Houches (near Chamonix) ready to start the TMB.



Les Houches (Day 1 and 11)



Refuge de la Croix du Bonhomme (Day 3)

The atmosphere was great; everywhere we went we met people at different stages of the Tour. Everyone was very friendly and most had stories and advice about other good places to walk. The refuges we stayed in were mainly high up in the mountains; the highest at around 2000m, and so had supplies helicoptered up to them. The evening meals were very impressive three-course affairs where everyone crowded around big tables and got to

know each other. My (fairly rusty) French came in handy for meeting new people who either couldn't or wouldn't speak English at the dinner table! The dorms, too, were communal. The biggest we found slept 45 people, so someone was guaranteed to be snoring! But after a day's walking in 30 degree heat that really didn't matter.

The TMB is the most popular long-distance walk in Europe and passes through France, Italy and Switzerland. It is 100 miles long with over an Everest of ascent (10,000m). So it goes without saying that the views were spectacular. Every day was different and brought something new. Forests, rope bridges, glaciers, ridge lines and stunning mountain trails. Even the occasional town where we stocked up on salami and fruit before continuing our journey. For most of the trip the weather was hot and sunny; fortunately we had only 10 minutes of rain whilst we were walking. We did witness three incredible electric storms in the evenings. But thankfully we were warm and dry indoors when these were taking place. I wouldn't have wanted to be in a tent!



**Italian-Swiss Border (en route to La Fouly)**

Ten days went far too quickly and before we knew it, we were looking over Chamonix Valley where the TMB officially finishes. Very annoyingly, I sprained my ankle with one mile to go. I managed to hobble over the finish line though, with two good friends who I'd been lucky enough to share the whole experience with.

On the very last day we decided to take a cable car up to Aiguilles du Midi and over to Courmayeur (Italy). This allowed us to get within 1000m of Mont Blanc's summit and also see some of the route we had walked over the last 10 days. It was a great way to finish the trip. For anyone who is wondering whether long-distance walking is for them, I'd say go for it! The TMB is a good challenge to start you off and, after that, the possibilities really are endless.



**Bellevue**

## Alps — Calum Wadsworth\*

Having done most of my climbing this year on short stuff I decided that a break from the peak/dales/moors etc was long overdue. I have done first ascents and repeated popular test pieces all over the world since I found myself atop the international climbing scene a few years ago. However one place I have often wished to leave more of a mark is in the alpine ranges. With this in mind, I dropped my German wench a line. He said he would be “honoured” to come and hold my ropes whilst I ripped Austria a new one. With that sorted I jumped aboard a flight to Munich and we smashed down to Austria.



**Micki (the German wench) in a photo sent to me in his climbing partner application form**

I was keen as mustard to commence the crushing, so on day one we rocked up and casually did what may have been the first on sight free ascent of Blue Moon. The route was of the highest calibre, 14 pitches of beautiful limestone. Micki begged me to let him lead the crux pitch and I was reluctant to let down one of my biggest fans, however I also wanted the crux badly.



**Me feeling rather wet after a morning crush**

Thankfully my outstanding intellect provided us with the perfect solution. I let Micki lead the pitch and then untied to solo it instead of second. Micki was incredibly grateful for my generous nature (I even carried the bag) and so rewarded me later that evening. Sadly the next day it was weeeeeet so I swiftly boshed out the first pitch of strong willy. Sadly Micki didn't want to continue in the rain and I was forced to realise some people aren't quite cut out for the sort of shit I pull off!

**\*Disclaimer: The views and stories expressed here are solely those of the author in his private capacity, and are not officially endorsed by the University of Sheffield Mountaineering Club.**



**At the bivy with bellies full of goat**

Next we moved on to the Wetterstein, a place where many a famous alpinist has left their mark. I had my eye on a couple of pretty insane lines. On first acquaintance they looked like they could be French 8c ish but on mainly trad gear, so a challenge but nothing too tricky. As hoped we smashed out the easier looking of the 2 lines with no problems. The difficulties came after the route as we had no food for our bivy (I am a firm believer in the 'light and fast' style of alpinism). Micki was starting to cry a little because he was hungry, as usual I took control of the situation. Having picked a vantage point high on a boulder I was able to lure the goat in with my exquisite yodelling. When it was in range Micki let go his bum bazooka, thus knocking the goat out and allowing us to go all Bear Grylls on its ass. We went to bed happily with full bellies.

The next day we polished off yet another brilliant route but Micki had a bit of an epee on one of the easier pitches. I felt pleased that with my encouragement he was able to get through one of the hardest leads of his life and we were able to top out the route. I remember pushing through similar barriers early in my climbing career, maybe one day he will be as good as me!

The next three days thankfully provided less goat murder and more amazing climbing. We aided the German military in an exercise, had fun on a strong willy and ate a hell of a lot of peanuss butter (German for peanut butter). To end the trip Micki persuaded me to have a night at Oktoberfest back in Munich as he is well aware of my legendary drinking prowess. I was a little reluctant at first that news of our trip would have got out and I would be met by a storm of climbing media and pestering fans. But after a lot of pleading I slipped into some rather alternative leg wear and showed the Bavarians how it is done!



**Micki having a bit of a break down... (with a 200m clean drop below him)**



World famous climber, Calum Wadsworth, wearing traditional Bavarian dress.

## Dragons Back Blog —Matt Harmon

For this newsletter we'll be featuring a blog post by **Matt Harmon**. This blog was written by Matt about his attempt at the **Dragon's Back Race** over Summer which left many of us regularly checking up on a GPS tracker, watching his progress across Wales.

A segment of the blog will be shared here, and the rest can be found online at:

<http://awholelotofrunning.blogspot.co.uk/>

Approximately 8pm, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015, I entered Carreg Cennen castle and conquered the dragon. For those not in the know, the Dragons Back race is a 300km race, over 5 days, with 16000m of ascent along the spine of Wales. I was one of the lucky ones- out of 300 entries, 140 were deemed to have suitable experience for the race, and 128 made the start line- of those only 65 finished the whole 5 days. It was without a doubt the toughest thing I have ever been a part of and I am proud to have had the opportunity to participate in the event and even prouder that I just about managed to hold it all together enough to make the finish.



Looking back at Conwy Castle

As the race goes on it consumes all, the only thing that matters is eating enough to keep moving forward one step at a time. This is the story of my race and forgive me for it being long- it was rather a long way!



Runners on Crib Goch

**Don't forget to check out Matt's blog for the rest of his story on the Dragon's Back Race!**

## Upcoming Events:

### Festive Weekend:

On **Friday 6th November** we will be heading to the Yorkshire Dales for another weekend of climbing and walking! Sign up has already been released and I hope to see many of you there.

### Uni of Vs Hallam Leading Comp:

From **Thursday 12th November to Thursday 26th November** The Foundry will be hosting a ground-up lead climbing competition, with score sheets being available from the desk at The Foundry for £3 with a raffle being drawn each week for anyone who has entered. Make sure to come down and get involved to support our Uni!

### Progressive Meal:

On **Wednesday 18th November** we will be meeting at the Cobden for a drink before wandering between club members houses having a different meal in each until we've been served a three course meal, when we will go for punch in one final house before making our way to Corp!

This should cost around £5 and is definitely not to be missed!



Thank you for reading

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