



NEWSLETTER
Spring 2021



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Message from the president

Paul Sagar

To say that 2020 was a difficult year is of course an understatement. Even for those of us who experienced nothing worse than being forced to stay at home and watch too much TV, it was all pretty rotten. For many of others, it was of course significantly worse than that.

However, this newsletter comes at a moment – the first one in a long time – when optimism finally seems warranted. With restrictions on travel eased, and overnight stays back on the agenda, climbing is once more an option. Soon the pubs will be properly open, too!

I write this message after having just come back from working on the Club properties, with a skeleton crew of Covid-compliant volunteers. The Barn and the Cottage are in excellent shape, and we all owe a big thanks to former hut warden Chiz Harward, whose long-term vision and planning have now really borne fruit. Thanks also to current hut warden John Wallbank, who has stewarded management of the club properties through the most bizarre of times, as well as having overseen the completion of many of Chiz's projects.

As most of you will know from my recent email updates, the Barn and Cottage are being reserved for club members on a booking basis until 21st June. After that, we plan on going back to normal. Having spent an April weekend basking in glorious Snowdonia sunshine, I very much hope to see as many club members as possible up in Wales this coming summer. There really is no better place to be (well, unless it's raining).



All in all, the NLMC has weathered the Covid storm as well as I think we could have expected to. The club finances are in solid shape, morale was kept high via online socials (for those who could stand any more Zoom time!), and our fantastic Committee has ensured that we are raring to go as the world opens up once more.

Accordingly, the final weekend of June (26-27th) is our first scheduled post-Covid meet, a triumphant return to Cornwall. OK, we're a bit late for the summer solstice this year, but it's close enough! A full meets calendar for the rest of the year is being planned, hopefully with trips to Devon, The Lake District, Peak District, and beyond. Finally, a date for all your diaries: the AGM will take place on 31st October, at the Cottage. The Tyn-Y-Coed is booked for the night before, where I intend to celebrate in traditional style, ie by generating a stonking great headache for the next day.

It's been an honour to take over as Club President, even in these most challenging of circumstances. Fresh from Snowdonia, it's easier than ever to remember why I love the Club so much. Fingers crossed, there are better times ahead for all of us, that we'll soon be sharing together. ■



Tom Richardson saved my life

Alison Stockwell

Last year, former NLMC member Tom Richardson was nominated for one of The Great Outdoors Reader Awards 2020 ('The extra mile award'). What was not mentioned on his nomination, was that if it weren't for an extraordinary and highly dangerous act of courage of Tom's part, I (Alison Stockwell) would not have seen my 30th birthday. Here's what happened...



It was late winter of 1985 and I was in my Advanced year of the Bremex Mountain Expedition Training scheme. The scheme was a mountaineering skills course run through Brent council by the unique Hugh Freeman MBE, an energetic octogenarian with a passionate belief in the value of outdoor adventure.

The course was essentially a Mountain Leader training course, and each level ran for a year, with weekly evening meets and monthly weekends away. There was a Basic level for complete beginners, but I had joined the year before, at Standard level, as an experienced but not very knowledgeable fair-weather hillwalker.

Living outside the M25 in St Albans, I didn't qualify for NLMC membership under the strict rules of the time, but there was a connection between the two organisations, with several NLMC members also participating in the Bremex course and some acting as instructors. One of these was Tom Richardson, who had an infectious enthusiasm for mountaineering and a reputation as an experienced Alpine and Himalayan mountaineer.

I was in my twenties, and until I discovered my passion for mountaineering, my life had felt

pretty aimless. I had a weird feeling that I might not be destined to live very long, and sometimes wondered if everyone my age felt that way.

My first two years as a mountaineer was also the time in which I had all my epics. Maybe that was due to inexperience, or maybe it was because it was all unfamiliar and my perception of danger has since changed. Or maybe the two things are the same; after all, getting caught out in the dark in a snowstorm is no big deal if you have the right gear and can navigate confidently.

At just over 5'1" and female I was both proud, and acutely conscious that I might be perceived to be weak or less competent, so I put a lot of effort into being physically and mentally capable and never showing any weakness, to the point of bluffing it if necessary. An aspirant female instructor once asked me if I never felt scared and I said, "Yes of course, but somewhere between thinking 'Oh my God I'm going to die' and my mouth, it gets translated into 'Hmmm... this is a bit tricky isn't it?'"

I found the Bremex course challenging. The Advanced course was broadly similar to Summer and Winter Mountain Leader training combined, but without any grade limitations and with a ▶



► bit of climbing too. We always camped, and often high-camped so we had to carry a lot of gear. Winter in those years started early and finished late.

Towards the end of each year, we had an assessment weekend. Passing that was a prerequisite to elevation to the elite Post Advanced course the following year. That was the cream of the Bremex courses and where all the really challenging training took place. I look back on it as one of the best mountaineering courses I have ever done.

The Advanced assessment weekend was preceded by a pre-test weekend. Performing well at the pre-test was important and I was paired with fellow student Ken Crowhurst, with Tom Richardson as our instructor and assessor.

Conditions were quite snowy but not enough for crampons. We hiked from Bethesda, up onto Carnedd Dafydd and from there our route would lead on towards Carnedd Llewellyn. Shortly after leaving the summit of Carnedd Dafydd I excused myself for a pee break. This done I hurried back to join the other two, anxious to not fall behind. I found Ken on his own looking over an edge where Tom had just descended. Tom was out of sight and a thick layer of clag obscured the slopes below. Later, Ken said that Tom had told him to wait there, but determined to be keen and bold, I hurried to follow Tom. Turning to face inwards as the slope became a gully, my bendy leather boots and single walking axe gained poor purchase in the mixed rock and snow. Then, suddenly, my feet shot off and I was sliding.

Moments later I was out of the gully and on an open slope plastered with hard, wind-blasted snow. Desperately, I arched over my axe to try and drive in the blade, but obstinately it skittered over the surface and refused to follow textbook. From above, Ken watched as I accelerated towards the bank of cloud below. Then, when things seemed almost beyond control, my fall came to a sudden and unexpected halt; and my body felt encased in a warm and heavy cocoon.

Ken describes how Tom raced towards me across the snow and how he, Ken, held his heart in his mouth half-expecting to witness both of us collide and tumble into the mist and whatever lay below. Ken watched in alarm as Tom leapt across the snow and onto my accelerating body. At the same time, Tom drove his twin axes and the toes of his rigid boots as hard as he could into the snow, and in that way, and against the odds, he arrested my fall.

Tom risked his own life to save mine that day, with no thought for his own safety. What lay below? Most likely the Black Ladders. Realistically, the chances of surviving a fall over those are slim. After that I was more honest with myself and took a lot more personal responsibility for my own safety. I learned that bravado is a dangerous thing and puts others at risk as well as oneself. That odd feeling that I might not live very long withered away and was replaced by the assumption that I could probably expect to live as long as anyone else. I am thankful for the life I've had, grateful to Tom for being brave, and glad I stopped having epics. ■

Ice and mixed season in the Alps

Rob Powell & Vittoria Camisassi

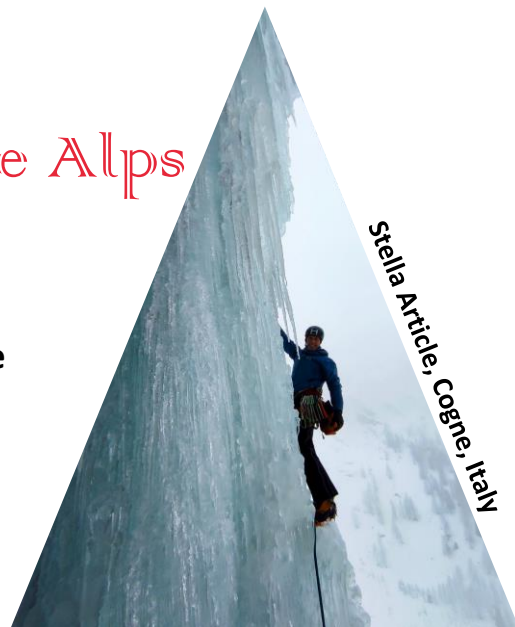
I was 10 metres above my last protection. Really pumped. I was certain a fall was imminent. Technique started faltering and my feet blew out of the ice. God knows how I managed to hold onto my tools and get my feet back on. I started retching. I scolded myself. “Come on! Keep it together!” This is a recollection from my last ice climb of the 2020/2021 season and after that, I am glad the season has ended.

[Rob]: Perfectly on time, the snow arrived on the 1st December and it wasn't long before a prolonged cold spell created good ice-climbing conditions.

There are excellent and accessible high-altitude venues just over the border in Switzerland. Along with various mates, I went on two trips to Arolla and another two to Zinal, where the early season ice conditions were excellent. I climbed with Joanna from Sweden, Gareth from Chamonix, and Vittoria Camisassi, who impressed me with her natural ability, climbing her first ice-fall, a WI4 (about Scottish V/5), with ease and a big smile.

Zinal was the area that impressed me the most and has now moved into my top five ice-climbing venues. On our first visit, Gareth and I climbed Cascade de la Lé WI5, and Cascade de la Mine WI4. It wasn't long before we were back, and we climbed Cascade des Givres WI6. This latter route begins with two long and sustained pitches of WI5 followed by an easy pitch and then the pièce de résistance, a steep overhanging pillar of WI6 – an excellent and pumpy outing.

The travel restrictions imposed due to the ongoing pandemic forced us to focus our attention on more local ice climbing venues.



Stella Article, Cogne, Italy

They are a bit lower in altitude so tend to require more sustained cold periods and thus are less consistent. Fortunately, the temperatures were low and many of the local areas were ‘fat’ – meaning they had lots of ice.

One stand-out venue was Mont-Saxonnex, a steep cliff with mixed rock routes and hanging icicles. Most routes are protected by a mixture of trad gear, ice screws and bolts. It was rather daunting racking up at the bottom of the crag and even more so stepping off the rock and committing onto the hanging icicles. The rock is limestone, and does not have many crack systems. The technique required is hooking on pockets. These can be desperately insecure as they tend to be a bit slopy. The bolts could be closer together as well, so there were some scary moments. Fortunately, after a couple of routes we got used to the style of climbing and things became a lot more fun. Safe to say, this is not a venue for less experienced ice climbers. I felt a bit guilty as Vittoria was new to this type of climbing! Fortunately, no one had told her that, and she proceeded to flash almost all routes on second. We climbed four mixed lines from M5+ to M7 (about Scottish VII to VIII) and a stellar ice pillar at WI5/M5 (about Scottish VII). ▶

► After a bit, the travel restrictions between European countries were eased and it was possible to travel to Italy for some ice climbing. Vittoria wanted to go ice climbing in Cogne. Having been there more than 10 times, I felt like there wasn't much left for me to climb, but I was wrong.

On our first day we climbed Stella Artice, arguably the most famous WI5 in Cogne (I've done it twice before). The second pitch climbs a long and steep freestanding pillar, but because of its classic status it is generally 'hooked out'. It was a pleasant warm up.

Another Cogne classic is Lau Bij WI5+. I have twice climbed the 'voie normal', both times with David Barlow. The first pitch starts on the left up a steep wall and the second pitch traverses rightwards along hanging icicles to a mixed top-out. There is a direct start on the right (WI6) that only forms under exceptional conditions and requires good stable ice conditions. The ice-fall

can be clearly seen from Lillaz and the direct looked in, so we woke up early and slogged up for a look.

It was in excellent condition and virgin ice; no one had climbed it meaning there were no steps or hooks. I nervously started up the pillar as it was -10 °C and I was concerned about fracturing the pillar. I climbed slowly and delicately. About halfway up I placed a tool and there was a loud 'CRACK'.

Concerned, Vittoria shouted, "What was that?"

I lied, "Nothing, don't worry".

It was a trouser-filling experience. Not much you can do at this point besides think light thoughts. I teetered upwards to the belay. Vittoria followed without incident and we continued onto the excellent and atmospheric top pitch. By now a bunch of teams arrived, with several following us up the direct. ►



Mont Saxonnex, France



Cascade du Ports,
Zinal, Switzerland.



Pattinaggio Artistico Direct,
Cogne, Italy

► For our last day, I had a set my mind on something a bit spicy. We walked into Pattinaggio Artistico Direct. Some years this forms as a long freestanding pillar at WI5+/6, but most years this is a mixed line – it starts up a lower ice pillar, then blasts out through an overhanging wall onto delicate hanging icicles before finishing up a steep ice wall with the angle easing towards the stance, M6+ and WI5+/6. Unfortunately, this route has been the scene of fatalities, which really sinks in when racking up at the bottom. But the seed had been planted.

I gingerly headed up the bottom pillar on complex ‘cauliflowered’ ice and reached an intermediate stance 25 metres up, at the start of the overhanging wall. I could see no protection besides a lonely bolt about 10 metres higher up. I started up but soon changed course and I reversed back to the stance. I tried again and retreated again. I was having a real internal battle.

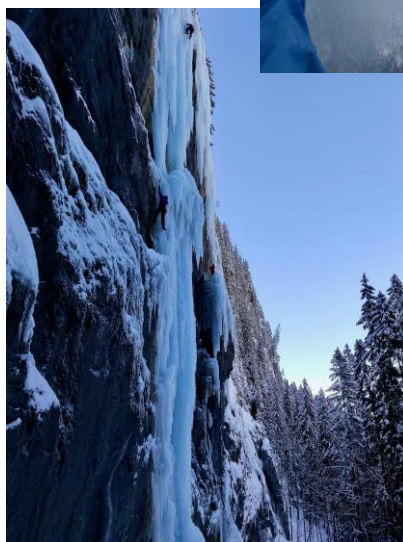
On my third try I spotted a peg and that proved enough for me to commit. The climbing was steep and insecure. I took off my gloves so I could use my hands on the cold rock. Making good use of my 6’3” frame, I managed a long reach and got a solid axe placement in frozen turf above an overhang. This allowed me to commit to cutting loose and then bridging over the void to the icicle. Terrifying! I continued bridging up the icicle and the overhanging wall and, after what seemed like an eternity, I reached the sanctity of the bolt where I gathered myself.

This was it, commit or bail? I had another internal battle. On one hand I had managed to onsight the crux, but I knew the next bit was going to be difficult and on scary ice. There

would be no protection for a long time, as placing ice screws in hanging icicles is a very bad idea. After regaining by breath and slowing down my heart rate, I committed to the overhanging icicle.

After about ten metres of steep and delicate climbing on virgin ice I reached the vertical section above the icicle. I was both terrified and pumped. So much adrenaline was pumping around my system that I felt like I was going to throw up. I had to pull together all my reserves to remain calm and not fall off. I hooked my elbow around my ice tool while I retched and managed to get just enough of a rest to get a screw in. ►

Pattinaggio Artistico Direct Colgne, Italy



Mont Saxonnex, France



**Mont
Saxonnex,
France**

▶ Then the ‘don’t blow it now’ feeling kicked in. I climbed the remaining section, which fortunately eases towards the belay. A rope stretching 60 metre pitch. There may have been reports of loud whooping around the valley!

I didn’t feel comfortable asking Vittoria to second this pitch, and frankly I was knackered. I abseiled down to the intermediate stance, pulled the ropes and brought Vittoria up the first WI5 pillar, which she thoroughly enjoyed as it was her first experience climbing ‘cauliflowered’ ice.

Then it got warm, everything melted. Phew!

Then it got very warm...season over? A perfect opportunity for a short rock-climbing break so we headed to Gorge du Verdon (in winter, really?).

[Vittoria]: First time for me in the Gorge (Rob has been there about 6 times!). My first impression was one of awe – arriving there, you drive directly to the top of the gorge, which is 700 metres at its deepest point. Simply amazing!

However, then I remembered that we must go over the edge and abseil down, and I was a bit scared!

We dedicated our first day there to what is called ‘sky cragging’, ie climbing single pitches at the top of the gorge. It was beneficial for me to get used to the abseiling at this height and the

‘Verdon rock and style’. We did a bunch of 6a to 6a+ routes starting from just right of the Dalles Grises abseil, five minutes walk from the Belvedere de la Carrelle car park. A perfect day, almost too warm on the wall. After the first route I understood what Rob meant by ‘Verdon rock and style’: bolts quite far apart with some tricky moves for the grade thrown in.

Day 3 was a big day – time to do a proper Verdon route – Ticket Danger, a classic of Verdon that Rob had not climbed. It ticked all the boxes! The route is seven pitches long, but it is usual to skip the first two pitches (F6c+ and F7a/A0), as these are newly added and not the classic route (and they are too hard for me).

We abseiled to the top of the third pitch and enjoyed five pitches of F6a/6a+ to the top of the gorge. We loved every single pitch. Rob led the whole route and each time he arrived at the belay he kept repeating, “this is the best pitch – amazing climbing”. Overexcited and happy at the bottom of the last pitch he just started climbing without realising he was heading up a F7a! Ticket Danger was the pitch to the left. He quickly realised the harder grade and, after a fight, managed to onsight the route and come back down (I can’t lie, I was relieved!). We continued up the final F6a+ pitch, which was, of course, the best one of all! Perfect balance between technical and physical climbing.

One of the things I love about climbing is that there is something to do every day, no matter what the weather is like. Sunny day – let’s go rock climbing. Chilly and icy – time for ice climbing. Rainy day – time for drytooling (Rob introduced me to this type of climbing earlier in the year)! ■

The Secret Lockdown Training Diary Matt Grange



...aka you'll do anything if you're bored enough

In March 2020, lockdown training began...

All sorts of thoughts meander through one's mind when one is hanging off the hangboard staring at the fridge for the 5th day in a row. Although if you're doing it properly the only thoughts tend to be 'Christ, how long can 5 seconds take' and 'I'm pretty sure my A3 pulley just fell off'.

I was actually quite enjoying the thought that I might get slightly less puny fingers if I did this much hangboarding for the couple of months or so we expected lockdown to last. Various apps were installed, chalk was strewn everywhere, and impromptu weight belts were fashioned. Unfortunately, as chilblains, rapidly disappearing skin, and the realisation that lockdown was going to last a lot longer than expected took their toll, I decided I'd better branch out into slightly less hermetic forms of training and give my skin a chance to grow back.

I See You Are No Stranger to Pain

For some reason I decided that running a long way repeatedly would be a great idea and decided to sign up for a half marathon in June as

this would be brilliant training for the Alps in July. You can see where this is going. I started out feeling like Rocky Balboa at the end of the 'Gonna Fly Now' training montage and finished up looking like Rambo at the end of First Blood. Having panted myself into the ground running for well over an hour three times a week, my legs sent me a note entitled 'What The Hell Do You Think You're Doing Idiot', everything was cancelled anyway, and I gave that up.

So perhaps a more general fitness routine was needed, because doing physio for multiple leg injuries is boring and you need things to do in between waddling around with a Theraband tied round your ankles to rehabilitate your torn hip flexor. Thus began...

Core Part 1: The Obsession

The Constant Plank

Planking is, to quote a reliable academic source (...Wikipedia), "...an isometric core strength exercise that involves maintaining a position similar to a push-up for the maximum possible time." It's also an excellent way to hurt yourself a lot in a very short (ie the maximum possible) time, so obviously I recommend it. If you get ►



▶ really good you can read a book while you're doing it as long as someone turns the pages for you. The current world record is over 8 hours and is not surprisingly held by an ex-US marine who presumably had all his brain cells replaced with more abdominal muscles.

In between planking I did all the usual push-ups, star jumps and mucking about with dumbbells, but this was more to kill time and keep warm than anything meaningful. After many weeks of staring at my floor making funny noises, my lower back sent me a note entitled 'For Heaven's Sake Stop It You Fool' and I had to admit that perhaps this was another dead end (although I did manage over 9 minutes so probably the world record is safe from me for the time being).

Strange Devices

During this time, the manufacture and proliferation of strange devices for the purpose of training became quite endemic amongst the keener members of the club. Highlights including Mark's cottage industry in parallettes, Paul's amazing surprise detachable hangboard, Guy's appropriately Scottish subterranean torture chamber, and a variety of repurposed rolling pins for doing forearm endurance. Suffice it to say that all these things have their uses but tend to consume more time in the conception and construction than they do in the using. If you are going to persist in the notion that you will use them, positive environment and motivational music help a lot. For example, Gareth pointed me at Eric Prydz's Call On Me, the video for which has to be one of the most motivational pop videos of all time while not being distracting at all.

A Digression on Nutrition

Any good training article should mention nutrition. I can highly recommend eating food, food is awesome and I love it, I generally eat several times a day. I really like eating Cadbury's Oreo Cookie chocolate bars and cappuccino flapjacks. If you follow my nutrition tips and get really fat blame yourself and not my weasel-like metabolism, which lets me get away with that sort of thing.

Everything is Just Fine

At this point lockdown ended, summer began, climbing was allowed again and everything was wonderful and awesome and I didn't have to spend 23 hours a day in my flat anymore. Did any of it work? Well, actually yes. Once the endurance came back, I probably climbed, indoors at least, harder than I did before lockdown and was definitely a better boulderer (although I still got thrashed at Winspit but doesn't everyone). This was all very heartening and I promptly contacted a climbing coach and planned an ambitious training programme to take me into the New Year...

Fast forward to November...

Back in jail again. In sheer desperation I decided that training in the park would be a good idea. A number of local parks have pull-up bars and various other constructions designed to facilitate exercise. So far so good. The principal detractions included increasingly cold and wet weather, encroaching darkness and, depending on the location, multitudes of small children indifferent to the fact that you are trying to train dammit. ▶



► Puny in the Park

If you are going to do something as daft as training in the park in November, you need two things. Gloves, and a similarly motivated partner. Luckily, I have an entire drawer full of gloves and Christoff proved agreeable to joining me, presumably because he is Austrian and therefore doesn't really feel pain or cold and could be relied on to shout motivational quotations like a smaller version of Arnold Schwarzenegger. In a more modern spirit, we eventually coined the notion of shouting 'MEGOS!' at points of extreme effort. Many, many pull-ups were done by the light of headtorches and bike lights as evening training superseded lunchtimes, this being the best way to avoid children and being sacked for taking two-hour lunch breaks. On the plus side, this was probably the most effective training I did over all of lockdown, taking in a wide variety of horrible but profitable exercises and spawning a vast lexicon of amusing motivational abuse, mostly directed at Christoff by me because talented people have to be kept under control lest they make the rest of us look bad. On the downside, my motivation disappeared faster than Liverpool's title chances once January weather rolled around and Christoff moved to Manchester. Eighties dole era methodology to the contrary, the sheer number of pull-ups proved unsustainable and I had to take a break before I got yet another desperate missive from my elbows. I am (not) Jerry Moffat.

A Digression on Yoga

Yoga in lockdown is awesome because you do it on Zoom with your sound and video off, so if you break wind loudly or fall over due to being crap no one can see or hear you at all! This is a marked improvement on committing either of these atrocious humiliations in a live class full of attractive young women. It's also good for your

joints and balance and blah blah blah.

New Year, More Core

Following a brief period of freedom in December we now find ourselves in 2021 just where we found ourselves in 2020, ie still not out of the bloody woods. This has led to the final culmination of all the training I have done, all the things I have learned, all the many, many injuries I have somehow managed to collect.

Core Part 2: the Return of the Core

A Lever to Move the World

And so, in recognition of the fact that this latest lockdown would very definitely last for several months, and that I had exhausted or crippled almost all my available body parts, I set myself the goal of doing a proper front lever before the climbing walls open again and I can get on with my actual life. The great American 'father of bouldering', John Gill, was famous for his front levers, and it is in fact difficult enough to be rated (as admittedly the easiest rating) on the gymnastic scale of points. I duly chose a YouTube video by a climbing coach which presents a 4-stage process to achieving this and lashed on a routine of core and push-ups courtesy of Jon Redshaw at OnSight Coaching.

This really hurt a lot and I can definitely feel my abs getting stronger, unless maybe it's an incipient hernia or something.

The End is in Sight...

As we prepare to return to the crags and climbing walls it would be nice to report that, at the time of writing, I can now do a front lever. That would be a good end to this tale of pain, sweat, tears and boredom wouldn't it?

As Mark Twain probably didn't say, never let the truth get in the way of a good story... ■



A Climbing Quadrathon

Yvonne Sell

A climbing quadrathon, spread over 3 weekends.

Well, we all know not much has gone on, but with a Canadian definition of 'local' and a lucky spell of good weather we managed to ice climb, trad climb, sport climb, and boulder between February 13th and March 6th.

A week of cold weather meant we were fairly confident the 'downfall' would be in. With temperatures predicted to rise during Saturday, we grabbed a couple hours of sleep (Dale was on late shift Friday) and were in the car for 4:30 (ish). We arrived at around 5 and set off on the walk in. The air temperature of -5°C felt much, much colder with a very strong wind.

First lesson – check your headtorch batteries when you haven't used them for a year or so. I was stumbling everywhere between the uneven terrain, my very dim torch, and the wind (it was actually pushing me around). Thankfully, Dale had a backup torch and we started moving quicker.

Second lesson – crossing creeks in the dark is tricky. Thankfully, Dale is a hearty bloke and voted to continue despite the very strong wind and his dip in the creek.



We arrived shortly after sunrise to a rather crowded base. But everyone was super polite and kept a good distance. The climb was the climb, the descent was more intriguing than the climb! On the way out we met a journalist, whose article was published with the ever so amusing description of ice climbing as 'balancing on icicles'.

Two weeks later, our fingers had almost recovered from the frost nip (did I mention it was really, really windy on the downfall?) and the sun was shining. We headed off to one of our favourite early season, easy crags. With no one else at the parking we risked walking in and had a delightful, sunny, no wind day of sport climbing. We remembered how to belay! We remembered how to clip bolts and lower off!

The Sunday remained gorgeous, so we headed off to Castle Naze and got a few routes in, t-shirt weather and again a lack of crowds. We think we remembered how to place gear. We remembered how hard gritstone is!

March 6th was only about 3°C as we headed off to Windgather for a bit of bouldering/soloing, but warmed up to a balmy 7°C. We ran up and down 20 or so routes until our fingers and toes once again threatened frost nip.

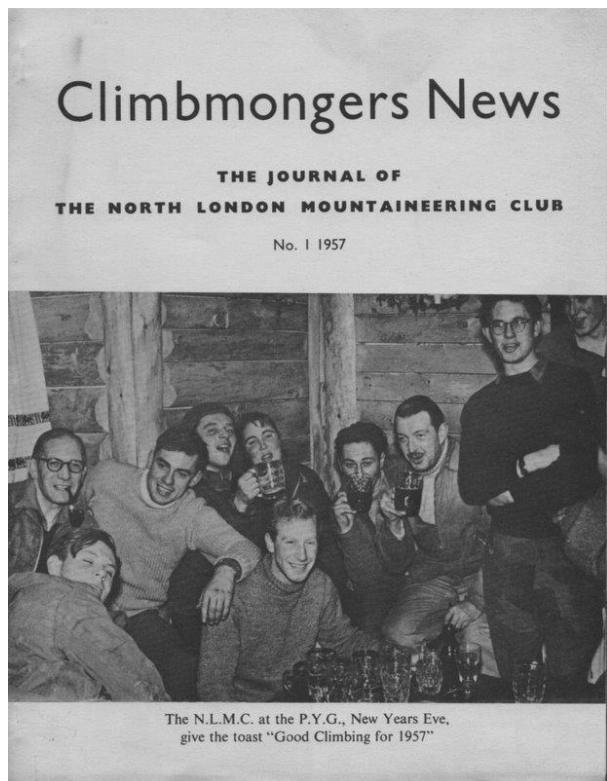
The last couple years have been early seasons in Cuba and Corsica, but after weeks of rain and lockdown misery, these few 'adventures' have been a balm for the soul. Here's hoping to some adventures further afield. ■





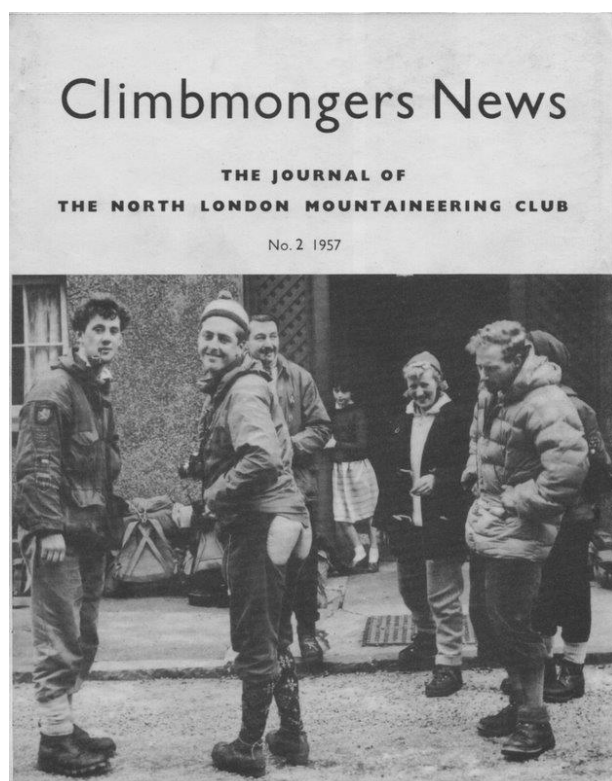
Photos from the early days

Allen Bordoley



The first Journal of the North London Mountaineering Club (left) came out in 1957, and shows members in the Pen y Gwyrd Hotel at New Year. They were camping at Cromlech Boulders, Llanbeeris Pass. The Editor of the 'Climbmongers News' was Harry Kilingback, who can be seen 3rd from the right with a moustache. His son is Tony, who is 3rd from the left in the picture (with a pint glass under the chin of his wife to be, Mavis).

The photo on the front of the second Journal of the North London Mountaineering Club was taken in early 1957. This issue came out early September of the same year, and contained a notification of the death of Fred Alan Messer, who can be seen on the far left of the photo (with his pipe). The photo was shot outside Ogwen Cottage, which was then a café and Bed and Breakfast. Those pictured are (from left to right): Fred Messer, Peter Rechlin (a founder member, with his leather patches and Austrian lightweight climbing boots), Harry Kilingback, Kay Kilingback, Trevor Panther (founder member), and a bit of Jose Gardner.





The Annual Dinner 1957.



Above: Snowbound outside the P.Y.G.

Time off at Harrison's.



Top: The first annual dinner, held 17th April 1957, at The Fishmongers Arms, Wood Green (N22), where members met each Wednesday. Three members were missing from the photo, Peter Rechlin (who took the photo), and Bern Juby and Fred Messer (who were buying beer at the bar). The photo was changed a few years back to include the missing members. The guest of honour was J.E.B. Wright, the first mountain guide in the UK and founder of the Mountain Association.

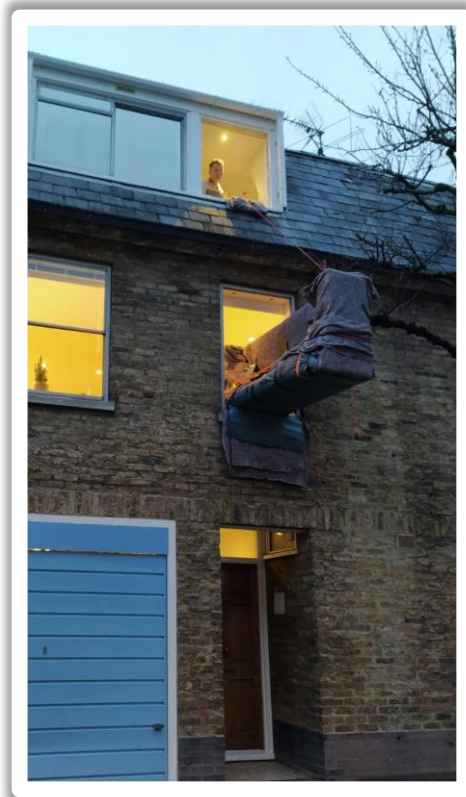
Middle: Taken outside the Pen y Gwyrd pub. Bob Adams is 2nd from the right, and is still a member of the NLMC. Bob Cheesewright is on the far right, and is still around but not a member.

Bottom: This photo was taken at Harrisons Rocks, where we went most Saturdays and Sundays, camping out under a bush. We used to go down by steam train, getting off at Groombridge and stopping for tea and toast at Les Saxby's café before trogging off to Harrisons. Sometimes we slept in a parked-up railway carriage at the bottom of Harrisons railway track...! Picture from left to right are Bob Adams, Jose Gardner, Ian Stuart, unknown, Trevor Panther, me (Allen Bordoley).

Can you tell we climb?

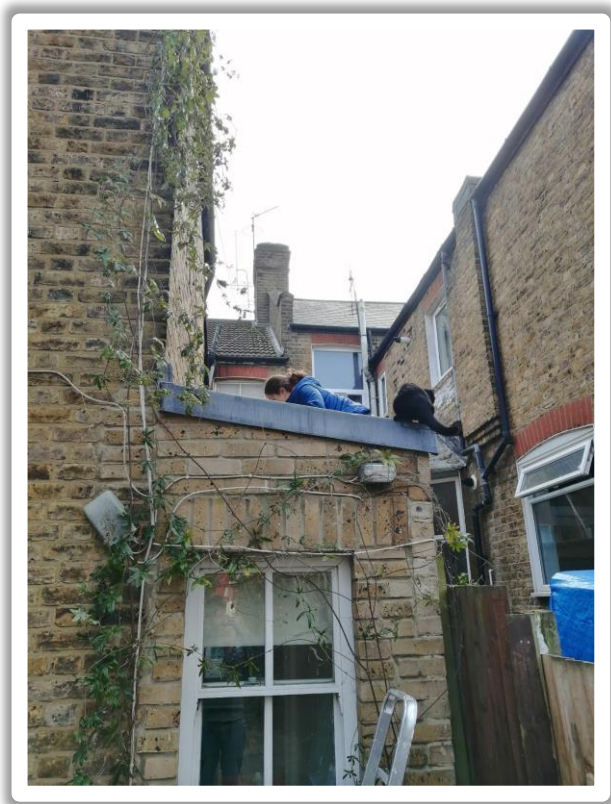
Moving house? Can't get your sofa down the stairs? No problem for a climber! Simply use your belaying techniques to gently lower your sofa out of your first floor window. Easy!

The picture to the right shows Khalid Qasrawi beautifully demonstrating this technique.



Dirty windows? Trying to clean your skylights but your ladder isn't tall enough? No problem for a climber! Use your bouldering (and mantling) skills to elegantly climb onto your roof. We also advise having a member of the North London Meowing Club to supervise these kind of activities.

To the left, we have a Skylight First Ascent by Laura Piovani, overseen by Pesto.





Notifications

Obituaries

It is with sadness that I report the death of Jack Wrightman, one of the original NLMC club members. I know that many members have fond memories of Jack, and there is a thread on the NLMC Chat forum if anyone would like to share memories. In addition, if anyone wishes to, Jack's family have reached out to say that donations are being accepted for the Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation.

It is also with regret that I report the death of Andy Reid, who was a crucial part of the Mile End Climbing Wall team for over 20 years. Many people have shared their memories of Andy on both the NLMC Chat forum and the UKC forum. Andy's family have set up a Just Giving page (www.justgiving.com/fundraising/1-andy-reid) to raise money for the Charitable Trust section of the Mile End Climbing Wall (Development Through Challenge), if anyone wishes to contribute.

Hut and barn

At the end of April, two small teams went up to the Club's properties over the course of two weekends to ready them for reopening. Both the Barn and Cottage have been deep cleaned alongside the usual maintenance work and progress with property improvements. A huge thank you to John Wallbank (the Club's hut warden) and the small teams of committee members who carried out the work.

Editorial

Jessica Williams

As we meander our way out of lockdown, with both the indoors and outdoors slowly opening up again, I for one am thoroughly enjoying being able to climb again. With meets being put back in the diary, and the Cottage and Barn open for bookings, I hope that you are also able to don your climbing shoes, get back to the crags, and that we'll be able to gather as a Club soon.

Thank you to all those who contributed to this newsletter, and thank you to you for making it to the end of my first newsletter for the NLMC, I hope you enjoyed it!

