



sussex mountaineering federation

issue
0552
autumn
2013

Editors Ramble.

As we go into the winter months our mode of camping changes from tents to Camping Barns which we book for our sole occupancy . You will know already of the two forthcoming locations for these. The November trip to St John in the Vale is now fully booked and your £30.00 should be forwarded to Ron as soon as possible. I am led to believe that there are still two or three vacancies for this months trip to Brompton on Swale also priced at £30.00. See further on for more info. Also coming up fast is the SMF Christmas social, seems a long way away eh !! well bear in mind that you need to book by the 5th of November at the very latest. There is work to be done in organising it so a) Please do come, it really is a lovely evening among friends old and new complimented by a sumptuous buffet. b)Please help Clive the organiser by booking early, you can phone him as soon as you receive this Newsletter, the earlier the better, see more details further on.

We advised in the last Newsletter that Sully(Richard Sullivan) and Louise had created a new website, this is now available with only a few small additions to be made such as introducing some of the recent Newsletters. You can access it on www.Sussexmountaineeringfederation.org.uk events have transpired against us with the ambition of a recruitment drive, however this will definitely take place commencing within the next few months.

The SMF BBQ went extremely well in July, it was the perfect evening, warm, not even a breeze to ruffle the feathers, We sat beside Chris and Andy's pool whilst Fred and Neil did their usual hot coals cuisine and Paul supplied a range of differing salads and fresh french bread. We could have done with a few more people attending (there were 12/15 of us) however it was still extremely pleasant. Thanks to Andy and Chris for allowing us the use of their home once again, it is really appreciated.

Now is the time for you to don your thinking caps and put forward some ideas for next years meets. The programme is put together at the AGM which is usually held at Neils house on the second Monday of January, this date and location to be confirmed in the next Newsletter, but provisionally book it in your new diary.

Hastings Rock & Fell club report in their Newsletter that Mike Dennis who is well known to many SMF members has now completed an ascent of every Munro on the list. I am sure that we all add our congratulations to those of the Hastings club. well done Mike.

Hope to see you all soon.Frank, (Editor).

Cover Picture.

Fred Berwick belays Neil Atkinson at Pontisford Rocks, Pontisbury. on this years meet to Bishops Castle, Shropshire. Out of camera is Paul Giles waiting his turn.

Photo:- by Clive Jackson.

Forthcoming Meets.

25/27 Oct Brompton on Swale, Yorkshire,

This is a camping barn which sleeps 12 in bunk beds on the first floor where the toilet and shower is located (Hot water @10p per minute). The ground floor has the lounge and fully equipped dining area and a kitchen with cooker, fridge, microwave (all on meter) crockery, cutlery, pans etc. Electric light is included in the cost of £30.00.

There is a second toilet located in another building.

A shop and a Pub are located just 100yds away and the site is just half mile from Catterick Bridge.

Map required is OS Sheet 99 Landranger, MR 216997. Should you get lost the farmers contact details are:- Mr & Mrs Wilkin, Phone 01748 818326

Book now with Clive.

If you have never been to this area before you will wonder why once you have seen it. Walking from rugged to easy, Rock climbing including Kilnsey within easy driving distance. beautiful river side walks that take you past the ruins of abbeys and castles, rocky gorges and fells.

21/24 Nov St John in the Vale (Lakes).

Another camping barn meet which is now fully booked, however there is an element of doubt I believe with two of the bookings ,so if you are interested contact Clive to see what the latest information is.

30th Nov SMF Christmas Social.

As per last year to be held at the Brewers in Lewes. You should aim to arrive between 7.15 and 7.30. As stated in the Editors Ramble this is a lovely evening where you get to meet members old and new. The Buffet which is really scrummy is free, You are welcome to bring your partners along and you only have to buy your own drinks. If you have not been before then the best place to park is:- coming from the Brighton direction, turn right opposite the Black Horse Pub and enter the civic car park , bearing left you can park in the bottom corner from where a footpath leads you back up to the main road, turn right down the hill and the Brewers is located in the main road where it narrows and is controlled by traffic lights.

Book with Clive before the 5th of November Please do come and join us.

SMF AGM Provisional booking Jan 13th (Monday) 2014

Usually held at Neils house in Lewes, but confirmation to follow with location directions in the next Newsletter. This is the evening when we create the programme of meets for the coming year, your input would be most welcome.

You may also like to consider playing a roll in running the club, how about editing the Newsletter ? Your current Editor has now been in the job for 14 years which equates to around 55/60 editions which has required to hand writing some two and a half thousand envelopes. may be you could give him a rest ?!!.

Meet reports.

The Bishops Castle meet at the end of June was held in our usual good weather and was attended by Paul Giles, Fred Berwick, Clive Jackson, Neil Atkinson and Frank Edwards. The first meet for a while that we are able to claim that the majority went rock climbing. we also did a very attractive ridge walk the "Stiperstones" exploring an old mining village site called "The Bog", having very nice tea and cakes at the visitor centre.

The end of July saw us unusually in Breckles, Norfolk. on the edge of the sprawling Thetford Forest. The weather was extremely hot which slowed the walking down somewhat, among places visited was the interesting Grimes Caves, not caves at all but three thousand year old flint mines which you can access via a vertical ladder!. on this meet was Dan Hopkins, Ron Scroggins, Clive Jackson John Goble, Paul Giles and Frank Edwards..

The following meet was in august at St Minver in Cornwall, three of us ,Clive Jackson, Pete Berry and Frank Edwards did some interesting walking including the Rocky Valley near Tintagel, Gribbin Head,(west of Fowey)This was a lengthy but extremely attractive circular walk right around the headland. Looking down from the cliffs into one bay we observed that the only occupants were two canoeists and two seals both sets completely oblivious of the others presence. Another walk took us from the busy Polzeath around the Pentire headland, offering really rugged cliff scenery, learning that the exhortation "We gave our today for your tomorrow" was written whilst sitting here on the clifftop.

Cheddar in September followed, again we were favoured by good weather when it mattered. Pete Berry, John Goble, Ron Scroggins, Clive Jackson, Mitch Miles, Richard Miles and Frank Edwards came along. One brilliant walk from Axbridge took us over Wavering Down, Crook Peak, and Compton Hill. The views in all directions are just stunning. We did note that at the National Parks car park there was a warning about Tick infestation a subject we have warned about in a previous Newsletter.

SMF Contact Details

Trasurer/Membership:- Ron Scroggins, Upper Flat, 3, Tennis Road,
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Secretary:- Clive Jackson, 2, Valence Cottages, Valence Road, Lewes.
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Chairman:- Paul Giles, Fairstead, Coopers Green, Uckfield, E Sussex
Tel 01825 733358

Newsletter:- Frank Edwards, 7, Stirling Court Road, Burgess Hill, E. Ssx
Tel 01444 247249

Haxstings Rock & Fell contact numbers:-

Dick 07990 897504. Nick 01424 813678 (Mob 07942 880858)

Jane 01424252684 Ruth 01424716276

Hastings Rock & Fell Diary dates

- 11/12th Oct:- Wales, staying in a cottage
15th Oct:- Committee meeting, 8pm at Jeans
9th Nov:- Fungi Foray, 10.00/13.00 at Brede High Woods, book with Martin Felsted on 0845 2935734.
12th Nov The AGM, Venue to be confirmed, does anyone have a projector and a Laptop they can lend for the night ?
16th Nov A walk (Volunteer required to lead) and the annual dinner at the Black Pearl Restaurant, George Street Hastings.
18th Jan 2014 Winter BBQ, to be held at Mike & Trish's home.
22nd Feb 2014 Scotland for a week in cabins at Admair Point, cost per person £70.00, deposit of £25.00 required. For details contact Dick.

Members of SMF will be fully aware that they are free to have articles and views published in this Newsletter. These do not necessarily reflect the official views of the club nor of your Editor who more than once has got into trouble being blamed for other peoples prompts.

However on a purely personal basis I do find myself in complete sympathy with the following article by Fred Berwick. Indeed I am not isolated in that opinion, which incidentally is occupying the minds of the Austrian Alpine Club which has launched a campaign to halt all further Ski development in the Alps, other national clubs have joined in.

For me, after gaining my indoor Ski Leadership certificate whilst managing Sport & Leisure in North Street Brighton and being sent by the owners to gain experience in the Alpine Resorts, I quickly came to the conclusion that being in an environment akin to Blackpool beach on a Bank Holiday was definitely not for me. For one who has always liked adventure, queuing up for a ski lift just was not my scene. Nor did I find the company in the Apre Ski Particularly stimulating. So over to Fred:-
Frank Edwards.

Have you ever thought about ski ing ?.

February 2012. The final evening of a Ski trip to Chamonix...' Have you made up your mind' was the question. 'Yes was my reply 'I'm going to jack it in'.

I'd had enough of being programmed through the factory machine of Ski resorts, of being disgorged from gondolas and Chairlifts in an endless conveyor belt of people jostling in line to partake of the equivalent of a fairground ride. Apart from the basic sensations of sliding downhill, I had gained little satisfaction from the overall experiences and my environment.

I could no longer rationalise my contribution to the visual violation of the landscape and degradation: the swathes cut through the wooded slopes, the Pylons and Cables criss-crossing the hillside, the lift stations and hotels dominating the skyline and spreading inexorably over summits and into every remote plateau. Mountains had metamorphosed into giant ski machines, huge theme parks to process les punters.

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Contd.....

A year passed.....

I find myself in Bulgaria, with Neil once more. The resort is Borovets, primarily constructed during the period of Soviet administration as a winter recreational facility for workers in nearby cities. Capital investment has been limited compared with the mainstream Western European resorts, which leads it to be often condemned as crude and dated; an unfair comparison, and to my mind a total misunderstanding of its concept and a failure to identify the qualities it has retained through that lack of development.

The original main Ski areas are below 2000M. Set among forested slopes. A simple 4 person gondola was later installed to give access to an upper region, above the tree line at 2550M. Serviced by a couple of chair lifts and 1 "Poma". This area is a broad basin with a variety of gradient and offers quite good Off-Piste tracking. I felt that a sympathetic balance had been achieved here between the policies of conservation and the requirements of resort ski-ing. An upper cwm beyond this area is accessible only by snow-shoe or cross country ski. The summits surrounding the cwm are retained as wild mountain reserve. We discovered that the main summit, Musala (2925M.) has an observatory that will unofficially accommodate an overnight stay, so we were quite disappointed not to have packed cramps or axes. We skinned up into the upper cwm but it was all on foot from there.

I believe that there is a clear differentiation between providing limited convenient access into a natural environment for non-obtrusive recreational purpose, and the development and restructuring of the environment solely for the purpose of commercial venture. Criticism of this resort on the basis of under-development simply displays the arrogance that our western affluence is not being adequately pampered and illustrates a lack of empathy for financial disparity across parts of our world.

"What is the chance of this place surviving the pressures of development" was the topic of our conversation as we walked up through an eclectic collection of wonderfully colourful ad-hoc buildings. It was nearly 05.00 and we were heading towards the village hub and the base of the slopes. It was the morning that we were due to return home. Our transport was booked for 10.00. It had snowed quite heavily the previous evening and the prospect of missing the opportunity to ski the fresh snow initiated the early start. The village was silent. With all the machinery not running the natural order of peace is restored to the mountain. Time to kit up.

Touring equipment essentially comprises of skis with a boot binding that is hinged at the front allowing a walking action and skins that stick along the ski allowing them to slide forward yet resist backward movement. It provides a surprisingly efficient method of travel, even up a considerable gradient...

It was early morning, there was total silence except for the crunch of snow underfoot as we moved up through the forest. Once you have developed a steady pace its almost a state of meditation. We arrived at our designated high point within the scheduled time, and after a brief breakfast of juice and fruit, prepared for the descent. Take off the skins, lock the bindings and you have an Alpine downhill ski. A mountain to ourselves, cruise wherever we please, only our trails in the fresh snow. Far too soon its all over and we are back in the village that is just starting to wake up. We walk the kilometre back to our 1 star hotel in time for breakfast. A fine end to the week trip.

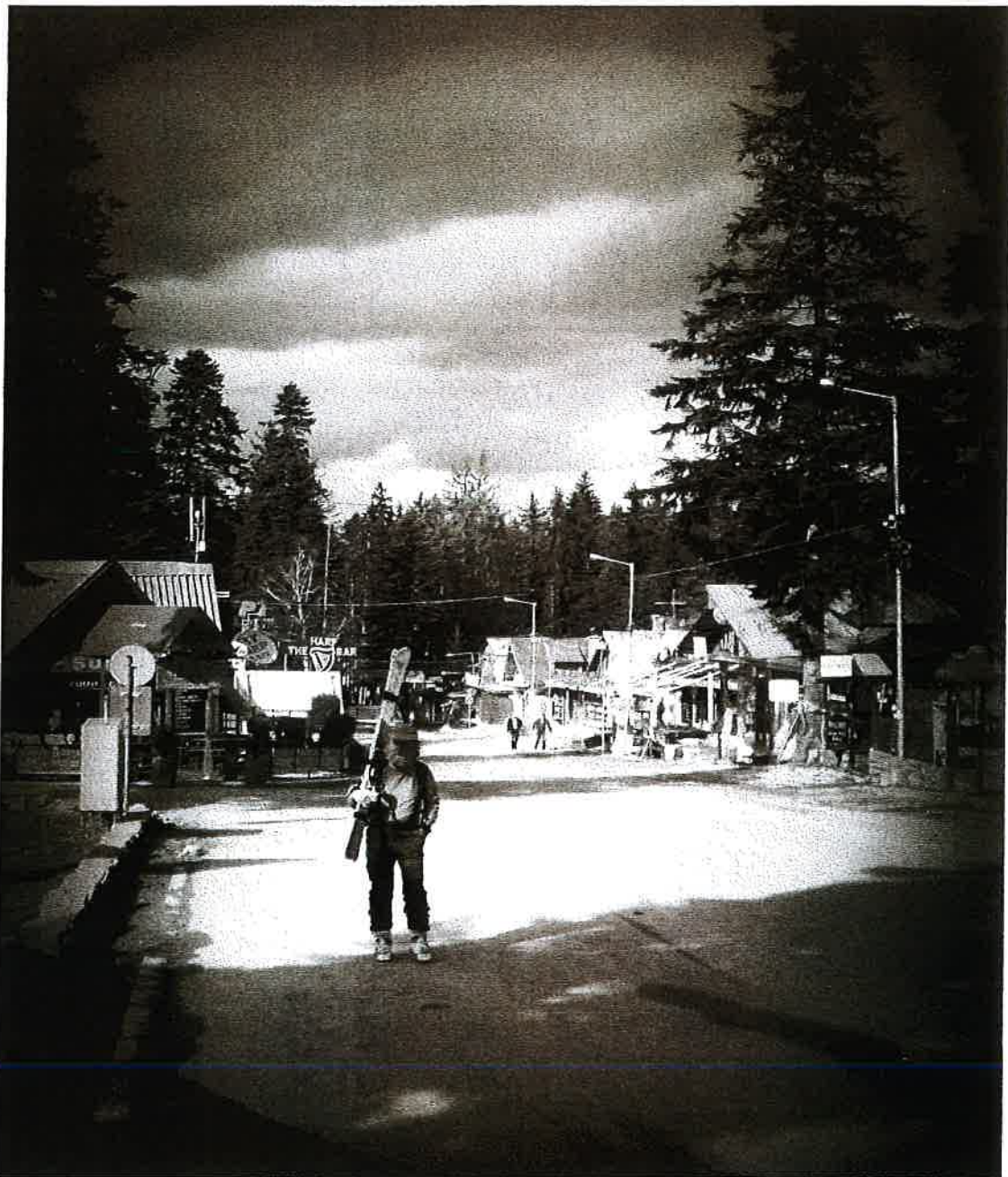
A trip that re-awakened my enthusiasm for the activity of ski-ing, alongside helping me reach some personal conclusion to my evaluation of the pastime in its broadest aspects.

SO.....am I to jack it in.

Authors warning:-

You aint going to gain any credibility among skiers or pump up your status within any peer group by stating that you've had a holiday in Bulgaria.
Remember that you are assessed by where you have been, how high you have gone, and the grade of what you have done. NOT by how much you have enjoyed yourself or how you feel that you have benefited as an individual by your experiences.

Fred Berwick. July 2013.



Fred heads for the pub (whoops) I mean the slopes !!!.