

Sussex Mountaineering Federation



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Editors Ramble.

Welcome to the spring edition of the club Newsletter.

The weather is improving and the ground drying out from its winter soaking so now is the time to walk off those winter calories !!.

For starters we have the trip to the Brecon Beacons coming up, making use of my caving club Welsh Headquarters. This is a comfortably furnished ex- 19th century Inn located in a splendid position, see details further on. Please do try and attend as it would harm our future possible use if only a few turned up thus depriving the cavers of their weekend.

Also a programme of local walks has been put together by Neil Atkinson, these are mainly designed to be mid-week and the dates given are core dates where a little flexibility can make the best advantage of the weather conditions. The walks can be flexible according to individual capabilities. The idea is that you phone the co-ordinator a couple of days prior to firm up all the arrangements which can then be mutually convenient.

Our treasurer Ron Scroggins has felt the need to resign and will hand over with immediate effect to Louise Sullivan who has offered to take on the job.

Ron has done a wonderful job over the past 15 years of so, his efforts have been really appreciated by the club. Never rattled despite money being thrust at him from all directions he would plod on and always have the accounts ready for presentation at the AGM. Our sincere thanks to Ron for a job well done, we hope to see him on many meets to come.

Our thank also go to Louise for stepping into the breach. As a part of the re-organisation Clive will add Membership secretary to his jobs of Secretary and Meet Secretary. If you have not paid your subs yet (shame on you !) then forward your cheque for £8.00 direct to Clive.

It is with sadness that we report the death of Ian McNought-Davis. Many of us were privileged to talk and climb with him at Harrisons Rocks where he had time for anyone that cared to make his acquaintance. For the BBC he was the producer of those epic climbing films featuring Joe Brown, Hamish McInnes et-al. He would represent the BMC/CCPR at the Harrison Rocks wardens dinner and besides giving a humorous after dinner speech, prior to dinner he would demonstrate a mantle piece move on to the Fuse Box of the Pub at Groombridge, a feat that few others have ever achieved.

As you may know, Brighton has a major new climbing complex at Withdean Stadium. I had the privilege of a conducted tour and was extremely impressed by the whole set up. A lot of money has been invested to make it one of the finest in the country, read my report and details further on.

Regards:- Editor

Front Cover Picture

A Cold Day in February

Taken on Mam Tor, Derbyshire during the Dinner weekend, from left to right Andrew, Charlotte and Sully brave the cold wind on the summit as a part of a pre-dinner walk

Forthcoming Meets

April 24/27th Brecon Beacons, Penwyllt

Accommodation is at the Stump which is the Welsh Headquarters of the Wealden Cave and Mine Society, Penwyllt, OS Map Explorer OL12 MR 854154, Accessed via track from MR 855157.

From the Heads of the Valleys Road A465 to Glyn Neath/A4109/A4221 to Abercraf (the junction with A4067 (sp Sennybridge) On the A4067 look out for a RH turn just after Pen-y-Cae, SP Penwyllt, Drive to top of road and look for gated track on RHS, if you reach the quarry entrance you have gone to far.

Bunk beds in three rooms, hot showers, open fire in lounge, Gas cooking (Bottled) electric lighting (Generator) .

Walking, cycling, climbing direct from building 360 degrees. Dan-Yr-Ogof show cave nearby
Book with Frank Edwards, 01444 247249.

May 23/26 (Bank Holiday Buckfastleigh, Dart Valley.

One of the best camp sites that we go to, ideal for children with loads to do nearby.

Steam railway, Otter Sanctuary, Butterfly farm , river, Walks on the moors, climbing in various locations.

Site offers good clean facilities

Book with Clive, 01273 478941 Mob 07710 724018. who will supply the necessary directions.

June 27/29 Bishops Castle Shropshire.

Another excellent camp site, walking in all directions and climbing to all standards within easy reach.

Book with Clive, Details as above.

The Annual SMF BBQ, Sat 12th July.

Again to be held in the beautiful garden of Andy & Chris Baileys at Kingscot, London Road, Sayers Common BN6 9HT, if in doubt phone Andy on 01273831861 who will supply you directions.

Book with our Chairman Paul Giles who will advise you the price near the time.

Bring your own two plates knife fork and spoon (I suggest a tray to eat off) a cup and glass and your own choice of drink.

Pauls phone number 01825 733358. Book at least one week prior to the event

July 25/27 Kingsdown, Deal Kent

A new location for the walkers, Situated right on the cliff top just west of Deal, Kent Downs Camping Centre is an ex-scout camp site now purchased and run by the on site owners. Quick to get to keeping travelling costs down this is an overlooked area for the outdoor enthusiast, it does however boast one of the top ten coastal walks in the country. It is also designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Reasonably priced at between £5 to £8 a night

Access from the M2/A2 or the M20/A20 signposted towards Dover

. Follow the A258 towards Deal. Turn right towards Kingsdown 200yds after the Five Bells Public House. When entering Kingsdown pass the childrens play area on your left and take the third turning marked The Avenue. The Camping Centre is at the end of the Avenue marked with a dead end sign. Do not go as far as Victoria Road or Kingsdown Hill.

Family camping welcome.

Proposed Day walks

These outings are envisaged as supplementary to the monthly meet programme and are scheduled to fit between them. They are a mix of single day and half day events taking place locally in Sussex. They are based on the principal of providing sociable exercise and where possible a splattering of exploration and adventure.

Most of the outings are designed to allow for a degree of flexibility to cater for varying levels of physical fitness and realistic personal aspiration

Co-ordinators details:- Neil, Tel 07879996885 Fred:- Tel 01323 811619

14/5 Fred, Friston Bus. Bus from Seaford. Return walk via Friston Forest, West Dean, Cuckmere Haven, 6/10 miles

Alternatively, Return walk from Friston via the Seven Sisters, Cuckmere Haven, River to Alfriston. Food and drink available on both walks.

11/6 Neil, Wivelsfield Station, Franks for coffee, Walk to Lewes (Neils) Return by train. Fish & Chip supper, Franks. 10 miles

2/7 Neil, Arundel,...start car park TQ020070. North Arundel Park East to Amberly. Possible visit to museum, return via South Stoke, River and The Black Rabbit to Car Park. 6/8 Miles

12/7 (BBQ) Fred. Cycle trip from Sayers Common via Downs Link Path to Shoreham, Train return to Burgess Hill, on to BBQ. 10 Miles

6/8 Fred, Neils (Lewes) to Freds (Berwick) using Lewes and Berwick stations 10 Miles

10/9 Neil, Start Withyham, Groombridge, Pens Rocks, Fishersgate, return to Pub at Withyham. 7/9 Miles

8/10 Neil, Start Car Park at the Anchor Inn Barcombe, TQ 442216 South via river to Barcombe Mills, west to Barcombe Cross, north to Isfield return to Anchor Pub via river. 5/7 Miles

Two further walks are planned with the dates to be advised:-

Get on Bike, Introduction to non-bike users to off road routes, Car pick ups if required. Beachy Head, descent to the foreshore at Cow Gap, walk undercliff to Birling

Gap (Subject to repairing the steps at Birling Gap.

Both proposals contact Fred.

For further information on SMF refer to

www.sussexmountaineeringfederation.org.uk or phone the secretary Clive Jackson on 01273 478941, Mob 07710 724018. who will advise accordingly.

Brighton & Hove Climbing Centre

I was very kindly given a tour of the centre by the manager and have to say I was very impressed. The project must have been a major investment for the company. The first level consists of a Leading Bay, a Top Rope Bay and a bouldering bay, the latter also has a central flake which reaches to within approx 4' of the floor, this allows practice for starting undercut routes such as we have at Harrisons. Upstairs there is a training area designed to help with any particular weakness such as undercut holds on an overhang. The floors are covered with built in soft landing foam.

There are approx 170 routes, 58 of them extending to the height of 13 mtrs, The grades extend from 4 to 8a/8b (sport). Bouldering V0 to V8

There are boards at 45*, 25*, 15* designed for either Campus or finger.

Opening Times 12 - 10 weekdays and 9 - 6 weekends. Peak time applies after 5 week days, weekends and public holidays

Costs:- £12.00 annual membership, plus £8.95 Peak times, £8.10 off peak

A large car park and a smart cafe is available for use by members

Access at the Withdean Sports stadium via the car park on the north side, pass through the cafe and turn sharp right down the stairs, follow the corridor to the end and take the door on the right leading down the back of the tennis courts

This wall is one of the largest in the UK, the staff are friendly and knowledgeable and intend to ensure that it is the social meeting place for climbers in the Sussex area. Go and have a Look for yourself !!.

Walking Boots

Size 40, free to anyone who can make use of them. Contact Frank, 01444 247249.

Hastings Rock & Fell Club

Dates for forthcoming trips

April 18 Day trip to Swanage.

April 27 Castle cycle challenge.

May 24 Fontainbleau with an alternative trip for those staying in the UK.

July 5 Ecrins National Park, France

July 26 Peak District

Aug 9 Beach BBQ. with firework display

Aug 23 North Wales.

Sept 6 Ladies weekend, possibly the New Forest.

Sept 20 Cornwall Camping at St Buryan.

Oct 11 North Wales, the Ceunant Club cottage in Nant Peris.

Nov 15 Annual Dinner in Hastings area.

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

Ruth 01424 716276. Jane:- 01424 254270.

The Barenchutzklamm Ravine, Austria.

The Austrian Alpine Club to which many of us belong maintains the ladders in this gorge so that it is possible to appreciate the beauty of the Gorge and its waterfalls.

Tom Harrison found himself in the area and sent this report.

It is rare for me to have an opportunity or time after my meetings around Europe to have a day in the mountains, but a sustainable Buildings Conference in Graz, Austria was a too good an opportunity to miss. Out from my case went my computer and in its place went boots, my coat was replaced by an anorak and off I went to Graz. A search on the web showed that I was spoilt for choice but the Barenchutzklamm Ravine appealed to me. This gorge rises 350m in height over a 1300m distance using 164 ladders and walkways. It is open between May and October.

With no map or any idea where this gorge was to be found, the hotel provided help on train times and the station to alight. So on a dry Saturday morning I took the train to Mixnitz and was the only person leaving the train at this station. Following signs led me up minor roads to where a wide track started. There were a few parked cars so this indicated that I would not be alone on this venture. The track led up by a forested river valley to where the Ravine started. As I passed a Kiosk a woman appeared and asked for money. The charge was just a few Euros but when I saw the work and cost of maintaining this route, it was a very reasonable cost.

The ladders and walkways started and went on and on. As each one was numbered, I had no excuse for thinking that they had miscalculated or that I had ascended more than reality. It was an interesting route with little opportunity to overtake (or be overtaken). About two thirds of the way up there was a tiny hut where parties before me had stopped to rest and admire the view. As it was crowded I Pressed on. By the time I had reached the last five ladders my legs confirmed that I was not as fit as I thought I was and I decided that it was time to have frequent stops to admire the view and particularly the plentiful waterfalls. At the top of the gorge it was a 15 minute walk to the Gasthaus Zum Guten Hirten where I stopped for tea and a cake (some things never change then!! - Ed).

A decent walk through a forest led me back to the start of the Ravine and my original track. Crowds of people were heading towards the Ravine and I was glad that I had completed the route before it became too busy. On returning to Graz, I decided to walk a couple of miles to my hotel as it gave me another excuse for a tea and cake break.

In summary it was a most enjoyable day in the mountains.

Tom Harrison.