

These articles were copied on 30 August 2011 from the GUMC website created by Stewart Whiting.

## A Deal with the Devil - Diana Hunter

It all began one Old Firm night, long, long ago, as the days grew shorter in the year. The expectation of the Hogshead being full with Huns and Tims had resulted in us forgoing our usual haunt in favour of the honourable establishment five minutes further on the road.

Upon entering Uisge Beatha, all manner of fantastical sights entered our vision. Strange beasts festooned the walls and guarded the upper reaches, where an extravagant collection of single malts marched rank on rank down the length of the bar.

As the tenth hour of the evening approached, more company of the GUM Club found their way to our circle. All grew merry and boisterous until at last a hunched shape at the end of the bar slammed his tankard to the wood and demanded peace.

Our din and racket, declared he, had progressed far enough and his ears had taken offence to our innocent fun. Seeking to pacify him, some few of our fellowship engaged him in conversation over several more tankards, and discovered his occupation during our discourse. He held the rank of Bar Manager to an establishment in Glen Coe known as The Clachaig Inn.

Now by happy coincidence, this place is commonly frequented by our club at diverse times throughout the year but most regularly at the beginning of September when the uncountable hoards of the newly initiated descend. Upon realising this he lost no time in admonishing us on our sever lack of foresight and manners as we had never given him warning of our arrival in Glen Coe. Promising never again to display such a lack of regard, we set about repairing the GUMC/Clachaig relations with yet another round of finest ale.

Feeling then that perhaps an olive branch was required, we offered him a choice of garment from our stock of such things. He, saying this was uncalled for, declared that a mutual exchange would be far more appropriate and so set about drawing up an agreement to be signed by both parties detailing the particulars of this exchange.

And so, surrounded by witnesses, we hammered out a document to the satisfaction of all parties involved. The mainstays of this agreement

revolved around the exchange of ten GUMC shirts for twenty of the equivalent Clachaig attire, with the proviso that during the following Fresher's Meet, the serving staff would be clothed in our design and our Boat Race team would be dressed in Clachaig garb. Also the pledge would be honoured to provide the ale required for the Boat Race gratis.

Our deal completed, we toasted our alliance with foaming tankards and promised to meet again when the Old Firm clashed once more. Accordingly, the pact would be fulfilled when next we happened by the hallowed portals of The Clachaig Inn, our noble blue steed bearing us there.

All that remains of our tale is to hope that our unbroken record of Boat Race wins remains and our freshers outdo themselves in drunken debauchery the Clachaig Inn this year.

## ALL SPORTS - Lindsay "The Beast"

### Warrack

Once again I have succumbed to writing a journal article about the craic and not about the hills, climbing, walking, mountaineering, whatever. As I am in my final year I suppose I am entitled to write a sloppy, sentimental, poetic piece about my time in the club but that's not really my style, nor, more to the point is it something I'm capable of doing justice to. I blame this on the fact that I chose to study engineering and whatever brain cells are filled with creative writing bumph have been pushed to the deepest darkest recess of my brain and they are inextricable at this particular point in time. There, nuf excuses.

Believe it or not, I do occasionally dabble in various mountaineering related activities but I thought I would bring to light some of the other aspects of club life which to me play almost as big a role as mountaineering. Maybe that's where I'm going wrong... So in no particular order, here is some of the non-climbing/walking banter that I have had with you guys:

**Skinny Dipping** This is a fairly regular feature of GUM Club meets. My first experience of skinny dipping en mass was in Kintail in my first year, after that I stuck to summer dipping, much more 'pleasant' and yes most of the

time we are "really really naked" (OB). Reiff is a great place to go skinny dipping apart from the fact it never really gets dark in summer - go on a cloudy night and beware the slippery slipway.

Boat Racing Possibly the most competitive sport that the GUM Club participate in but that's probably only because Edinburgh are the opposition. I have no personal experience of racing myself but where would our elite team be without the support they receive from a bunch of over enthusiastic, pissed as farts club mates of which I am one.

High performers of my generation: Mr Joe Glennie (he's a man of many hidden talents, see crazy golf), Miss Gillian Culshaw, Mr Andrew MacIntyre, Miss Becky Dye.

Buckfast Drinking A pass time which is widely participated in thanks to a certain doctor who brought his teenage drinking habits to uni and managed to infect quite a few unsuspecting and impressionable people with a phenomenon which can only be described as jakieism. He (who will remain anonymous just in case the BMA get their hands on a copy of this) still hasn't really managed to shake the habit despite hitting the big QC.

Volley Ball/ Unihoc/ Scout Games/ Football/ Wrestling etc A regular occurrence in village halls, no skill required in anything just the ability to stand(ish) especially if games commence after the pub. The activities can occasionally result in severe bruising and torn muscles (not mentioning any names, Tanis and Alasdair).

Tennis I am particularly rubbish at this sport which I have seemed to have played a fair bit in the company of my GUM Club friends. Passed the dry parts of a few stormy afternoons in the Dolomites wielding a tennis racket desperately trying to make contact with the ball. Kelvingrove Park courts also make a good venue in the event of a dry afternoon in Glasgow.

High flyers (in the sense that they can actually complete a game in decent style): Franco, Lizzie Miller, and Tom Marshall

Crazy Golf Once again this was a bad weather day pass time in the Dolomites although the golf, as I remember, was not exactly the craziest.

Mr Glennie scored the highest out of a field of about 12 GUM Clubbers.

Ice Skating An ice skating disco provided a great night's entertainment

just outside Cortina on the club trip to the Dolomites in summer 2001. There was a bar at the ice rink that gave an interesting slant (almost literally) to the experience. Everyone apart from Perry got the hang of it eventually despite being half cut. Alexis just got more and more angry at his lack of ice skating prowess and the more angry he got the more pissed he got (or maybe it should be the other way round) and the more the barrier was required for existence in the vertical world.

Despite this not even a finger was lost.

Go Carting Whilst swimming at our favourite spot while on holiday in the Bregalia (Swiss Alps) we often eyed up the neighbouring go-cart track with eager eyes. As the holiday drew to an end we booked a group session on the scorching tarmac. Pulling out onto the track I felt like I was in a formula one car I had never driven with my bum so close to the ground in such close proximity to a plastic petrol tank and it took a bit of getting used to.

As the boys lapped the girls, they pulled some dirty tactics on one another vying for the lead. I managed to narrowly miss a three-car pile up right in front of the garage where the stewards were sitting. The corners sometimes proved a bit of a challenge so a few visits to the grassy banks were had, I did however manage to avoid the walls of stacked up tyres round the outside the.

In the end we reckoned Toby was the fastest with the boy racer from Ayr in second, Cheese blamed his lack of pace on his cart.

Luge d'ete For those of you who don't know the luge d'ete in Chamonix is basically a summer version of a one man bobsleigh. The concave concrete track, situated on the hillside above the city, is almost a kilometre long, with the top being gained by chair lift. The day we went was very much a typical valley day off in the Alps, warm and sunny low down but with a big storm brewing over the peaks. The first go was a tentative affair just getting a feel for the track on the 'easy' run and sussing out the mode of transport.

The carts were not difficult to control, they were basically just robust plastic sledges with a lever in the middle between your legs. The lever was pulled back to brake (I use this word hesitantly as it was more of a device to slow you down marginally) and pushed forwards to go faster. After the first go it was on to the 'hard' run and the behaviour went from polite stopping-in-order-to-let-kids-go-down to, dare I say it, Brits on

holiday...

Relatively near the top of the 'hard' run there was a kink or chicane in the track, this occurred slightly before a small bump, now, this kink was obviously there to curb speed before the bump, as the carts are not really designed to 'get air'. However, the discovery of this potential jump started initiated of mayhem as slowing down for the chicane became out of the question if logging flight time was the intention.

The first person on a take off mission set off down the track closely followed by the rest, if the chicane was taken badly then it could dislodge person and cart from the track causing bruising and the occasional grass burn. However if the kink was passed at speed without any hitches then the person hit the jump with momentum still carrying them not only forward but also veering left from the exit bend in the chicane. The result of this was the carts being thrown into a turn of anywhere between one and 180°. I think it was Lynda who ended up going down sideways with cart grating along the lips of the track, MacIntyre managed to do the 180 and was thrown into a state of confusion when trying to work out how to brake.

Anyway an immense fun was had by all and by the end of the afternoon various injuries had been sustained by a number of our party. These were mainly in the form of friction burns due to departing with the sleds at a high velocity and continuing to travel to travel down the track on knees and elbows.

The winner of the friction burn competition was Curly Andy closely followed by Lynda.

A health warning should be attached to this particular sport but if you ever go to Chamonix it is a must try activity - possibly even before you go climbing.

Over and Out These are just a few examples of random fun and games had by GUM clubbers over the years I have been in the club. In reality though the list is endless and that's what makes the banter. Whoever said we were just a mountaineering club!

Warning: Most, if not all, of the above sports are dangerous (especially when alcohol is involved). Please participate in them with regard to your own and others' safety.

Disclaimer: In the event of trying any of the above sports as a consequence of reading this article you do it at your own risk. I will not be held responsible for any injury sustained whilst trying these sports.

## An Evening by the River - Becky Dye

I'm writing this article for three reasons. Firstly I wanted to contribute a little bit to GUMC history by appearing in this fine publication and had hoped to do so slyly by being mentioned in Diana's article-unfortunately she forgot she was my route to laziness so I have to actually put some effort in myself! I hope to clarify that anyone now in possession of a stylish (XL) Clachaig T-shirt is also indebted to me. Secondly I wanted to write an article based on non-mountaineering exploits because quite frankly I'm not a very good mountaineer. I tend to get lost on paths and once forgot one rock shoe and tried to hop up a climb. Thirdly it's quite interesting for me to actually piece together what happened on the night of the 11th/morning of the 12th of October!

Since this story does not really come from personal experience and memory I shall refer to 'my friend' as these are all stories I heard about her-it also makes it slightly less embarrassing!

I'm going to be a bit backwards and begin at the end with my friend sitting in the Clachaig on an uncharacteristically lazy Sunday afternoon. She was with three hardened Sunday skivers and a couple of freshers they were recruiting to their ways. My friend hobbled back from the bar still wondering exactly how she had acquired the scratches that made her look like she had been involved in a sado-masochistic ritual and the debilitating thorns imbedded in her feet. The previous evening my friend had finished a hard days walk and was relaxing with a glass of wine with her dinner before bed. She was feeling quite unwell and probably not in a fit state to be downing large quantities of alcohol ridiculously quickly but was swayed by-'you have to do it, we need a girl, it's in the rules.' So she found herself in the inter-uni boat race for the second year. One needs to be sufficiently drunk in the first place to be involved in these things, so naturally a fair amount of beer had to be consumed before this. Of course Glasgow won, again, although Edinburgh didn't seem to be able to grasp this simple fact and even asked the band to announce the false result! Then the error of attending the freshers meet just before her 21st birthday was realised as dirty pint action followed. Months afterwards she was still recognised "you're the girl who drank that horrible green thing in

Glen Coe-you actually drank it-in one". Immediately following this an unknown source thrust a pint of snakebite (I know in this part of the world they call it diesel but I'm set in my ways) into my friend's hand. This has been known to cause bad reactions in the past and many errors of judgement have probably been at least in part to this foul mixture of lager, cider and pinkness. Luckily at this point the pub closed and the long walk home began-this is the point where blackness takes over. At some point during this night a girl was refused a hot chocolate by the landlord and was made to cry (this is important).

And so it was suggested that a refreshing swim in the river would be a good idea. My friend was not going to take part and even brought a towel along for those who did. As in a previous life she had been a lifeguard, she felt a responsibility towards them. Then somehow she had climbed over the wall and landed painfully (probably) on the matrix of thorns and brambles on the other side. She staggered to the river dressed in only her underwear with no shoes amidst a large quantity of swearing. Upon reaching the river there was a rescue to be performed and my friend dived in, risking life and limb to save the Cheese's shoe. This done she found herself being swept halfway down the river and had to battle with the current to get back to the rocks where the other bathers were swimming in quieter waters-most of them wearing slightly more clothes and having the sense to bring footwear! Returning to the bridge climbing over the wall was not an option and my friend had to be lifted the 8 feet or so to the road. On arriving there it was discovered that the swimmers clothes had been removed and my friend had to walk back to the hall in a borrowed jumper (thank-you Graham).

Well in the Clachaig the next day, bruised, scratched, battered and hungover, Becky was in no state to actually do anything and she met the owner for the first time and the hot chocolate issue became a partial crusade.

Some months later myself (I can refer to me again now because I remember this bit) and Diana met the Clachaig owner again and I decided he must compensate us for his meanness in ways that are told in another story. And for me that was (loosely) how we ended up with Clachaig T-Shirts.

## British Summer Time - Geoff Cooper

It was Sunday morning March 30th 2003, and I'd stayed in bed far longer

than intended. Nothing unusual there except that I was engaging in my favourite form of escapism, camping alone in a bealach between Creise and the north ridge of Stob Gabhar (NN230485). I'd had an exhilarating walk the day before from Glencoe, having arrived on the morning bus and made my way up the snowless and rather soggy lower slopes of Meall a' Bhuiridh to the deserted ski centre where I'd stopped for breakfast. Although it was cloudy and there was a brisk wind, I had every faith in the BBC forecast of "clearer weather over the weekend". Above the ski centre buildings there were still large patches of snow and the walking was more pleasant to the summit. It's most notable feature was that the rock was a red colour which made a striking contrast with the surrounding snow. Another munro collected, I'd crossed the sharp west ridge onto the Creise plateaux and briefly walked to the north summit (collecting again) but then immediately returned south to the more interesting south top with its cliffs which still held an impressive cornice. From there I'd followed the broad south west ridge and descended to Bealach Fuar-chathaidh where I'd made camp. The weather had cleared but the wind had become quite strong and I'd had to pitch the tent with my rucksack inside to stop it from taking off! Even in my relatively sheltered position, behind some rocks, the wind had kept me awake until the small hours. Consequently, I'd overslept and still had no real desire to get out of my sleeping bag.

Several things had changed overnight, the most obvious of which was the weather. The wind had dropped and the cloud had lifted - it was going to be a very nice day. Fuelled by the sunshine and a good breakfast, I got my tent packed up and made my way up onto the broad grassy ridge leading south to Stob Gabhar. It had looked interesting on the map but now, snowbound in the morning sun, it looked magnificent. On reaching the summit, I could see the mountains of Glencoe clearly with Ben Nevis and the Mamores just visible behind as a hazy outline.

I'd have been happy to sit there for hours but I'd decided to catch the afternoon bus home. That entailed getting to Bridge of Orchy by 15:20 and it was already nearly midday. I had three and a half hours to get over Stob a Choire Odhair, down to Clashgour and out along the road to the bus stop. The south east ridge of Stob Gabhar is narrow and rocky in places and made for an exciting descent to the bealach. The following ascent of Stob a Choire Odhair was comparatively uninteresting, although the views back to Stob Gabhar were stunning. I didn't stop for long at the top, the traverse from Stob Gabhar had taken an hour and it was going to be tough to get to Bridge of Orchy in the remaining time. My descent route took me directly down the broad south ridge to the Clashgour path

from where the going was easy and I quickly covered the remaining two kilometres to the legendary club hut. It looked surprisingly small after all the stories I'd heard about it and I wished I'd had the forethought to get the key so I could get inside.

An hour and forty five minutes left; I got going again and soon found my way onto the road at the Victoria Bridge. By now I'd been in a hurry for a good few kilometres and it was starting to get irksome. I could hear a car approaching and a decision had to be made; walk for another hour on the road or hitch a lift and spend an hour sitting in the sun somewhere. It wasn't a difficult decision, I stuck out my thumb. The car slowed and stopped, there was clearly space for another passenger, excellent! And so it was, that at 14:10, I was dropped off in Bridge of Orchy. I had a little over an hour before I had to be at the bus stop so I stopped by the bridge, made some coffee and sat with my feet in the river for a while.

An hour later, I decided it was time to wander up to the bus stop to wait. 15:22 came and went and for the first ten minutes or so, I wasn't bothered. However, after half an hour on the dusty lay-by, I was starting to get a little concerned. Buses came, and each time I watched in hope, but they were all tour buses and none of them stopped. I sat on my rucksack, sent some sympathy-seeking text messages, and waited. A train passed through the station a few hundred metres away up the hill. That puzzled me; I was sure the afternoon train ran later than this. Another bus on the road put all thought of the train out of my mind. As the tenth "Lochs and Glens" bus cruised past, I realised that after an hour and a half waiting, it was decision time. I looked at my timetable; the next bus wasn't until 20:04, just over three hours away. I didn't much like the idea of staying on the roadside so I had to find something to do. I wasn't feeling tired and the weather was good so I decided to walk along the West Highland Way to Tyndrum. After about half an hour I became aware of a strange buzzing from the top of my rucksack; my phone was ringing. I raced to find it before it stopped and, after much digging, extracted it and answered the call - my mum. She'd had received my message and "just wanted to check" that I'd remembered to change my watch. After all, it was now British Summer Time. SHIT!! Suddenly it all made sense. I rang off and silently recited all the expletives I could think of - twice. I'd been in time for the bus but I'd missed it because I was sitting with my feet in a river. I'd then waited patiently for an hour before going to the bus stop. I felt very, very stupid.

I was still eight kilometres from Tyndrum and suddenly I only had an hour

and forty five minutes to get there. The logical thing to do would be to go back to Bridge of Orchy. However, that felt far too much like an admission of defeat so I continued towards Tyndrum. I made good time over the next few kilometres and was starting to think I'd arrive well ahead of the bus when, rounding a bend in the path, I came to a solid wall of highland cattle. As I approached, most of them moved aside but a few decided to run ahead of me along the path. This continued for a hundred meters or so until there were two distinct groups at which point I noticed three things. Firstly; that the path was quite narrow with steep embankments on either side. Secondly; the cattle in front were predominantly calves whereas those behind were fully grown. Thirdly; that this was not a good situation! The two groups were bellowing to each other and it wouldn't be long before the adults would want to get back together with their young. There was only one route by which they could get there, and I was standing in the middle of it. Cattle don't usually bother me, but in my previous experience, they don't usually have foot long horns and the path certainly wasn't wide enough for them to pass me comfortably. As the adults started to move along the path behind me, I quickly scrambled up the embankment cursing prolifically. As soon as I was off the path, the cattle surged forward and regrouped. Now I was back to square one; the whole herd was in front of me again and now they were spooked as well! I had to get around them somehow but as I tried to pass them they kept moving along the path below me. Slowly picking my way along above the path was wasting time I really didn't have. However, with the malicious herd of cattle keeping me off the path, I had little choice. And then, finally, a fence. Probably the only time I'll ever be glad to climb over barbed wire!

I remember very little of the final kilometres to Tyndrum except that they were hard. In the end I walked on the road because I could go faster even though the traffic made this quite unpleasant. I made it to Tyndrum with only five minutes to spare. The bus, of course, was late by twice that and when it arrived it was full. The driver told me that there would be no seats after Ardlui because some people had booked in advance. I didn't care; "Ok, I'll sit on the floor then!" I said. The driver seemed to be about to protest but in the end just muttered something unintelligible and gave me my ticket.

An hour and a half later, sitting on the floor of the bus as we came into the West End of Glasgow, I felt the pleasant mixture of tiredness and satisfaction that comes at the end of a good adventure. I was also looking forward to telling the tale and the inevitable well meant abuse that would follow! It had been a thoroughly good weekend.

# Chasing Midas - Toby Floyer

In re-reading the rag-bag collection of memories and thoughts which masquerade here as a journal article I feel compelled to defend myself by letting it be known that I couldn't think of anything else to write. If the diverse experience of the GUM Club can indeed be reflected in merely a few perspectives, then these are mine. In the interests of the truth I leave out the epics (wot epics? ed.), the contribution to club life (?? ed.), and the achievements (???) of my time here in its capacious bosom. It once struck me powerfully what the point of climbing, of gaining height, was. Since at that moment, however, I was improvidently halfway up one of the steepest switchback roads in Greece, in the mid-forties heat with no shade, and dying of dehydration, I shall spare the hallucinatory drivel and admit that the feeling has never come back. But cycling in Greece did affect my attitude to hills. The Greeks possess lots of mountains, many taller than ours, but they are more modest about them and with the honourable exception of those who work the tortured high slopes, in the main they prefer to live in the shade at the bottom near the kafenia. This leaves a kind of void at the top, and while there is little of the Alps about those mountains in summer, they hold a vast hazy desolation broken only by the odd clanking goat (they have bells which make them clank; they also climb trees: don't ask me why), ruined settlement, and bullet-riddled signpost. This is a different scale of things, and it decreases your sense of movement. But it increases somehow the drive to get there, and I came to enjoy the reduced priorities in the endless world of going uphill.

Sitting on the train from Milan to Chiavenna on my way to Bregaglia, watching Lago Como creep past, I wondered if this idea would survive the walk-ins. It did, and was a similar sort of thing: sweating in the sun; a kind of emptiness in the known way. Thinking with your mind came later, in sorting out the route and your timing, feeling embarrassed about the spectacle of you safely geared up for glacier travel while a load of Belgian trekkers skipped about up ahead armed only with walking poles and Pentaxes; later contemplating the sometimes gigantic rockfall that devastated the glaciers below, forcing avalanches through sheer weight of rock on the otherwise dry surface. I remember the marmots, large brown crosses between a badger and a squirrel, streaking like fat nudists caught in a spotlight between rocks, there to pretend you couldn't see them. Perhaps, apart from the mountains, the most enduring memory is

of the warm evenings in Bondo. The sun having gone early into the gap between Switzerland and Italy and leaving behind a long twilight, inevitable GUMC meet traditions emerged; an al fresco mess of dinner and argument and alcohol blending seamlessly into darkness, the toys MSR flamethrowers and boules at the café, the subjects of ingenuity tarpaulin sheets and candle windshields - the craic, well, enough said. Dawn brought hangover and a site bestrewn with the nocturnal detritus of people's possessions, rubbish, maps and guidebooks flapping quietly in the breeze, and the early bus growling away down the valley. Who knew what wild beasts had been foraging in the night? I did: they were from Glasgow and they were looking for buckie. I have a great grandfather who must, I suppose, be reckoned among the early Scottish mountaineers. Allan Arthur was climbing from about 1898 onwards; he was an early member of the SMC. There are photographs of him climbing on Skye with hemp rope, wearing a tweed suit, a necktie and hobnail boots with puttees. There is a photo of an SMC meet, the men holding shoulder-high alpenstocks, slung with rope and scarves as they stand in deep, long-lying snow, gazing solemnly through you. There is snow on the trees in the background; snow on the roof of Glenmore Lodge beside which they stand. It looks cold. The photo is dated Easter, 1917. In an article he wrote for the SMC journal in around 1910, Arthur recounts skiing in the Alps, and with Naismith on Ben Nevis. He describes snow conditions at times of the year that seem utterly alien to our Scotland: Tyndrum and Pitlochry are good bases for skiing until March; one can often expect to ski back to one's hotel. Springing out of bed on a February morning in 1906 he reckons on twenty degrees of frost - whether Fahrenheit or Celsius this is pretty bloody cold. His climbing diary again records almost incredible conditions for the time of year. The climate has changed, the winters are shorter and milder, and I think in some ways we are worse off for it. One last image: the same SMC members stand in an almost identical line, still grasping the tools of their trade, still festooned with scarves and comforters, with the same snow underfoot. But all is white, and the solemn look is replaced by slow grins and glints: now they are at the top of their hill.

Rum is surely one of the most extravagantly arduous of the club's methods of travelling to a hill. After fiddling with survival bags and tarp on the roof of the bus in the pouring rain outside the GUU, lurching all the way along the roller-coaster ride that is the road to Mallaig, sleeping in the dismal carpark at the ferry terminal in the now freezing bus, energetically and deafeningly revved from time to time by the seemingly impervious driver for an elusive bit of warmth, competing with a crick in the neck for a ticket at the CalMac booth, throwing gear into the cargo

nets, scrambling for benches to sleep on the boat... several islands later you are deposited on Rum via a tender, where you put up a tent which you will spend approximately five minutes actually sleeping in, and then you wander up Hallival and Askival in the cloud. So it was sunny when you set out; what now? A ceilidh full of barmy islanders and a bear, a self-proclaimed bluesman and an Irish poet fuelled by whisky and political invective. Thus did Sean (I forget his name) captivate his audience with drunken recitation and booze from the island shop. Megalomania is catching; the Victorian owners previous to Natural Heritage had built a castle for themselves out of stone quarried at vast expense on the other side of Scotland, and filled it with antique furniture and debauched guests. Despite this they retained enough of a sense of propriety to try and avoid any alcoholic connotations by calling the place Rhúm, a name as genuinely Gaelic as I am. King Midas once did a favour for the god Dionysus, and in return he was granted a wish. He said 'pray grant that all I touch be turned into gold.' He soon regretted his wish and begged to be released, as he was dying of hunger and thirst; for as well as everything else he laid hand on, the food he ate and the water he drank turned to gold too. But he has left something to mountaineers which I last saw in December whilst ambling about on Stob Coire Sgriodain: Midas' light is the name given to the low sun streaming across snow, and during a break in the weather I felt enveloped by a more solid kind of light; a more permeable kind of gold. So much is about people: the pub, the expeditions to the Garage, the characters, the awful music which is always in the background, the stories and the drinking games, the triumphs and the tragedies that occur as the club wends its way through the world. Sometimes, though, I am reminded of the fact that all these things are just a part of the picture; that we are all, one way or another, chasing Midas.

## Death, Risk and Climbing Alasdair

### Buchanan

Mountains have always been part of my life, my family's main focus on holiday and climbing a personal passion since I was able to adventure under my own steam. Up until this year the risks associated with these high, wild places have always been abstract or at worst once removed. My brothers, best friend's two uncles and a cousin, members of my Mum's Ptarmigan walking club going through a cornice, friends of my dad's falling and dying on Ben Nevis in poor conditions.

This year it's been my friends. First I heard about two climbers I admired enormously in Canada, lost on the North face of the Devils thumb. Then in September Caroline's death came like the proverbial bolt out of the blue.

Other people are writing about Caroline in this journal and will do it far better than I can but I miss her calmness and serenity so much.

Guy Edwards and John Millar were fast becoming one of the most respected alpine climbing teams in North America. They were both wild free spirits. I first met Guy at a Halloween party, I arrived late to meet him in the street dressed as a Tibetan spinning monk leading an impromptu moon worship. Among dozens of first ascents around the Vancouver area his most legendary climbing capers were the speed record for the Squamish Grand Wall in 1hr 45 min and a 12 minute ascent of pigeon spire in the Bugaboos, naked. Guy always maintained that his favourite route of all was a massive red cedar in the coastal rainforest of North Vancouver. It was there that the Vancouver climbing community came to pay its respects in a memorial service for John and Guy.

John Millar was very different. I only met him a couple of times as he was usually of climbing somewhere more exciting. He was a big, quiet almost bearlike presence. Very private he was totally secure in his own choice and direction in life and an encouragement to other people in theirs. Everyone's climbing was respected by both Guy and John. When one of his friends planned to second his girlfriends lead wearing approach shoes John asked him to take it seriously rather than belittle her efforts and put on rock shoes. His friends considered him the most considerate man they had ever met.

Their exploits as a team were extraordinary, with Leena Rowat and two others they made the first ski traverse of the entire Coast Range of western Canada. An 8 month, 2015km ski odyssey from near Vancouver to Skagway, a town at the top of the Alaskan panhandle. In the summer of 2002 they travelled to the Garwal Himalaya and climbed the West Face of something or other. Their route was described by the authors of High Info as the most significant climb in that area for at least ten years.

The Devils thumb is a Patagonia-esque lump of granite close to the Arctic Circle. John Krakauer made it famous as the opening story in his collection -Eiger dreams. The face attempted by Guy and John had never been seriously attempted and it was their third trip to the area. The first time they summited a satellite peak in telemark boots. On their second visit the weather was too awful to seriously contemplate anything. The final time they went in as a three with Guy's long time climbing partner Kai. He decided it was too dangerous with overhanging seracs on the steep approach. John and Guy left with four days food, planning to cross the

danger zone at dead of night and were never seen again. It was weird for me discovering a friend's death sitting at my computer in the bowels of Glasgow Caledonian. They weren't special people beyond an intensely close community of adventurous West Coast climbers, but they were the two most talented alpinists I had ever met and they died doing exactly what I want to do but rarely have the courage for. Fortunately there was no shocking discovery for their parents who knew exactly what they were up to. Climbing was both their lives. Both had degrees from UBC. Guy had one proper job in the two years I knew him and was just starting to get the sort of recognition that his sheer ability deserved. John was much quieter, climbed for adventure and refused to record his climbs. His renown was sufficient however for a WI 6 freestanding pillar in Lillooet to be named Millar's pillar.

Not sure how to conclude this piece apart from with special memories of Guy and John. The VOC banquet and Guy asking whether I was around in the summer as 'we need some good climbers for the alpine season', a compliment that meant an enormous amount to me. Climbing with John, Matt and Jacqui on a sunny, cold day in Squamish. I onsighted my first ever 10c, John was going to lead me up something when a frightened shout brought us running to a shaken Matt sitting at Jacqui's feet after giving them both a fright. Falling, flipping upside down and ripping gear from a bouldery 5.11. Maybe a good job Matt wasn't wearing a helmet as he swept the ground with his hair. John made no fuss, apart from checking pretty carefully that they were both fine. Then leading the pitch retrieving the gear and setting a top rope so Matt could jump straight back on it!

They lived beautifully.

## Hogmanay on Hoy - Amy Singleton

A few days in a wee cottage on Hoy seemed like a perfect way to see in the New Year with some close friends. We understood that the Orkney Islands were pretty far north and that it would take a fair while to drive there, but we had no appreciation of the epic journey that was to ensue...the mission of making it before the bells!

It began deceptively easily with an early morning drive up to Scrabster, a few miles east of John-O-Groats. Beautiful blue skies, sunshine and snow-covered scenery made it an easy drive, despite constant warnings on the

radio to stay off the icy roads unless journeys were absolutely necessary. The ferry crossing to Stromness was also pretty uneventful, comfortable armchair, coffees and Christmas-time catch-up chats.

As we docked in Stromness the weather changed for the worse. The winds picked up and the seas became rough. We bundled off together with our bags of gear - warm clothes, games, lots of food, and loads of booze (oh, and of course Nick was also weighed down with his climbing gear as he and Alasdair were obviously going to climb the Old Man of Hoy.... yeah right, in the freezing cold and most likely pissing rain ...they just needed to be seen to have the intention of climbing it!). Anyway, things weren't looking good for getting a wee boat across from Mainland Orkney to Hoy. The helpful tourist office lady kindly informed us that the big ferry we had just taken had cancelled its return journey back to the mainland and ALL small ferries heading to the islands further north were also cancelled. "Noooooo!". We had to make it to Hoy; Lynda, Tristan and Alasdair were already there - we couldn't spend Hogmanay freezing our tits off in Stromness. We had to make it to our cosy cottage. So the kind lady phoned Stevie of 'Stevies Boat' who was due to sail to Hoy in 2 hours. We were told we'd just have to watch the weather and see what happened.

We set up base camp in a pub at the harbour to begin our wait. Beer was drunk and news came from Hoy (the wonders of mobile phone technology) that candles were needed as they were now experiencing an island-wide power cut. We watched and waited (I know it was only 2 hours, but I'm trying to make this sound a bit dramatic!). The weather worsened as the storm blew in. It was blowing a hooley! The boats in the harbour were all over the place, waves were crashing over the sea walls onto the road and passing cars.

Half an hour before the boat was due to sail, Nick ran out to do a recky. Stevie informed him that it was pretty bad (yeah, even us city slickers could see that) and the hardest thing would be docking on Hoy where the pier was really exposed to the storm force southerlies. But he said in his thick Orkney accent, "Aye, well we'll give it a go".

So at 4 o'clock we dragged ourselves and our assortment of bags down to the boat. Apprehension was definitely rising inside me, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to have all that beer sloshing around inside for this part of the journey. The boat was bobbing rapidly in the rising swell as we jumped on and secured ourselves to a seat.

What ensued was one of the longest half hours of my life. We rocked and

swayed and dipped and dived our way across the sea. You could see everyone's faces slowly turn paler and paler as they calmly tried to focus their attention on anything other than the pre-vomit feelings they were experiencing. There was no hope in hell of steadying our gaze on the horizon, all you could see was blackness, the pitch dark of a winter's night in the far north. Then it began to snow.

It took Stevie several attempts to steady the boat alongside the pier and we had to act quickly to get off as it was too risky to keep the boat there for long. We chucked our bags up to these mysterious hands that appeared from above - people who had come to help, wrapped in waterproofs and absolutely soaked from waiting in the torrential rain. Then we had to jump to the land - quite a scary manoeuvre - balance on the slippery wet edge of the boat and just leap onto the pier as the boat went up and down, up and down. It was pretty chaotic getting everyone and all the bags off, so it was quite a while before I realised that the helpful hands were those of Lynda, Tristan and Alasdair. Yippee - we had made it and we were all together!

But we still had to get from the pier to the cottage. Lynda persuaded a local Orcadian with a big land rover to drive us to the cottage. He was pleased to help and it wasn't till all 7 of us were crammed into his vehicle that I realised the situation we had gotten ourselves into. He now had to reverse back up the icy pier that had no railings, in the pitch black, in the rain and sleet to get to the road...and did I mention he was drunk.

Anyway, to give the guy credit, he made it onto the road and drove us to safety, (even without windscreen wipers) constantly chatting in his totally incomprehensible Orcadian accent. We ran into the cosy warm cottage to a wood stove, candlelight, dinner on the go and open wine just waiting for us to consume.

Phew! We had made it. What an adventure. A great way to end 2003 and now the only pressure was to enjoy ourselves for the next 3 days. Oh, and then contemplate the journey home....

## Iztaccihuatl and Popócatepetl- Sabrina

### Das

In the land of Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the ancient civilization of the Aztecs, there lived a princess, Xochiquetzal. Her name was Nahuatl for "Beautiful Flower", for indeed the fame of her beauty was known throughout the land. Xochiquetzal was in love with a handsome young man named Popócatepetl. Popócatepetl had the dark eyes and strong hands which made Xochiquetzal's legs melt like butter, and of course Popócatepetl held the heart which she gave him as close and as precious to him as his very own heart.

The two lovers approached the father of Xochiquetzal for his approval in their marriage, but the King had already planned Xochiquetzal's marriage to another. His plans for her marriage to Tlaxcalteca, the powerful prince, would unite their kingdoms and strengthen his land. The King did not tell his daughter this, but instead insisted that Popócatepetl prove himself first by fighting for the Aztecs in a battle with the Zapotecs.

And so it was that Popócatepetl left Tenochtitlan for the lands of the south. The beautiful yet strong princess Xochiquetzal said goodbye to her lover. Though the journey was long and dangerous, she knew that his strength and honour would carry him through until he could finally return to her arms.

For two lunar cycles she heard no word nor sound from her beloved. Her father then broke the news to her, that Popócatepetl had died in battle. One army had returned to Tenochtitlan, utterly defeated, eyes to the ground with grief and shame. They had brought the news of Popócatepetl's death. Xochiquetzal felt as if she had died, herself, and eventually agreed to her father's wishes - that she be married to the prince Tlaxcalteca.

One week later, a second army returned to Tenochtitlan. Xochiquetzal watched another defeated group of soldiers enter the city, backs hunched over dragging their weapons behind them. There was, however, one soldier who stood tall above the rest. His eyes remained calm and arrogant in the knowledge that his sword was soaked in the blood of his enemies, and that he had fought hard and brave with the strength and will that only true love could provide. Xochiquetzal gave a wail of astonishment, as she recognised the man she had pledged eternal love to before she married another. Her anger at her father's trickery soon turned into grief, as she realised she could never know true love ever in this lifetime, and shame, for her betrayal of her pledge of eternal love and fidelity to Popócatepetl.

She drowned herself in the lake, and as her body floated to the shores Popócatepetl was waiting. He carried her into his arms and cried with all his soul. He lay her marblesque body down on the soft earth and covered her in the sweet smelling petals of Xoxocotzin flowers. He made a crown for her with Yolochochitl flowers, the "Flowers of the Heart", and sang a sweet sad song for her whilst kneeling by her side. His song was carried by birds and sung four hundred times until it was heard by the gods in the heavens, who looked down upon the lovers and turned them into two volcanoes. In this way, Popócatepetl, the "Smoking Mountain", is able to stand guard by the side of his beloved "White Woman", now called Iztaccihuatl, forever.

Popócatepetl is the second highest mountain in Mexico, at 5452 metres, and Iztaccihuatl is the third highest at 5286 metres. They lie where the ancient city of Tenochtitlan used to be, about 70 kilometres southwest of present-day Mexico City. On a good day, the silhouette of a sleeping woman and her warrior standing sentinel with a smoking torch can be seen from Mexico City. Till this day, the two volcanoes inspire awe in both Mexicans and the numerous visitors to Mexico, especially when the romantic legend of the two lovers is retold.

Popócatepetl has been displaying more volcanic activity recently and has been closed to climbers for this reason since 1997. In fact, it continues to emit smoke and the Mexican Army and geologists are on constant alert lest it suddenly becomes necessary to evacuate the numerous villages in the areas surrounding the volcanoes. In fact, about 30 million people live in this area, including the city of Puebla, the second largest city in Mexico.

Iztaccihuatl, however, remains a popular climbing destination amongst both international and Mexican alpinists. It is commonly undertaken as a weekend's endeavour by local climbers from Mexico City, though this is not recommended unless you are already well acclimatised to altitude. The approach to the summit on the usual route (from the "feet" to the "breast") involves crossing a small glacier. If your head is not too sore and your mind is not too delirious from the lack of oxygen, you will notice the view on both sides is truly amazing, with Mexico City to the left and Puebla to the right, Pico de Orizaba (North America's third highest peak at 5610 metres) in the distance, and the warrior Popócatepetl to your back, watching over as always.

## MINIBUS MUSIC compiled by Claire

# Acheson

Music is an important part of GUM Club culture. We all like a few cheerful tunes to pass the time on the long journeys or to liven up a post pub party. Our combined tape collection is wide and varied. From easy listening to Cheese's dance; Dan's rock to Neilo's tapo di formaggio; we've got it covered. The songs in the chart bring back memories of people and places - the never ending repeat of "nah nah nah na na na nah" after the pub in Torridon, a girlie sing-a-long in Reiff, and just about every Sunday night journey home this year - are just a few for me.

So here it is:

THE GUM CLUB TOP 10 As voted for by YOU the members....

10. Madonna Like A Prayer
9. The Proclaimers 500 Miles
8. Chris de Burgh Lady in Red
7. The Beatles Hey Jude
6. 2 Unlimited No Limits
5. Bonnie Tyler Total Eclipse of the Heart
4. Dougie McClean Caledonia
3. Survivor Eye of the Tiger
2. Gary Jules Mad World
1. S Club 7 Reach for the Stars

Tune in next year to see if the S Club can hold on to the coveted no.1 position and remember guys: Don't stop movin' to the GUM Club beat. Two Trips to Spain Liz Miller

Nothing beats Britain but Spain's ok. Twice I've been lured there with the promise of warmth and chorizo. The first trip was at New Year a couple of years ago when Alexis and I went to the Costa Blanca to climb on limestone that wasn't sopping wet in January and to clip a few bolts along

the way.

Soon after arriving in Alicante we had left the tower blocks of the coast behind and were winding our way up a road lined with orange trees in a rented corsa, aiming for the hills. Some car wrecking dirt track later we arrived at an idyllic refugio that had no space left. With a house booked for the last week of our 10 day trip we thought we wouldn't bother bringing a tent and chance it for the first few days.

- tent + (- refuge space) = corsa

We wanted to climb at Sella, the area near the refuge, in our first few days because it involved a bit of a drive up the hill and there were other places we could go when we were staying down on the coast for the rest of the holiday. Sella was great, pine forests, olive trees and friendly cats at the bottom of the cliffs and sound limestone single pitch routes as well as multi-pitch stuff throughout the valley. After a couple of nights sleeping in the car we managed to get a night in the refuge and then it was time to go to the coast. Climbing guides seem to be in demand here; ours got nicked off the car roof when we were moving some stuff into the refuge.

The house seemed pretty cheap for two of us and yet there was enough room for six to stay, it was in Villajoyosa, a small town with narrow cobbled streets and brightly painted houses. From there we went to Calpe and the Penon di'Fach as well as some crazy inland crag with loads of tufas and a massive barking Alsatian. The climbing was good and the weather was intermittently so, with a few dreary days. At the end of the trip we were glad that we'd come to Spain to try something different for New Year, and at least in Spain the rain is slightly warmer than Scotland and the beer's cheaper.

My second trip was to Madrid at the end of summer. This was a bit more like it, public transport and tent, none of this house and car malarkey. About 40km away from Madrid is Manzanares el real, a small town at the foot of some higher ground, The Parque regional de la cuenca alta del Manzanares. La Pedriza is part of this park and consists of massive granite domes, friction slabs with the occasional hold and the occasional bolt. The climbing here was great, a massive granite play park, but a long slog to any of it if you are staying at the campsite near the park entrance. Part of the fun is finding the area that you are trying to get to as the multitude of small paths all look very similar to each other, as do the many granite boulders lying around. It would be a great place to bivvy but if you were staying for more than a few days you'd have to go down for supplies.

There are a few water springs around but they aren't always easy to find when you want one. If you aren't good at trusting your feet then go here because there isn't any other way of getting up anything.

La Pedriza sticks in my mind because of the warm granite domes, the cows that may or may not chase you, cooking whole sea bream in a tranguia lid, vultures, snakes and not being able to communicate well; learn some Spanish before you go.

Spain is good for a holiday but if you like to feel a bracing wind and get ruddy cheeks, drink pints and moan about the weather, then stay in Britain.

## North ridge of the Piz Badile - Iain "The Cheese" Rudkin

Whilst not being the highest mountain in the Bregaglia region, the Piz Badile is without doubt the the most alluring due in part to its illustrated history and picture postcard appearance. It towered above the GUM club campsite at Bondo and as such became an objective for many of the people assembled on the Swiss Italian border last summer. There are a number of routes up the Piz Badile, varying in difficulty, though the easiest route from the north was via the north ridge. It was essentially no more difficult than severe apart from a few VS pitches, but at 800m it was not a short route so we were preparing for a decent day out. Four of us set off from the campsite one afternoon; Andy and Tom had their sights set on the harder Cassin route whilst Waz and I were aiming for the north ridge. I won't dwell on the walk in, because it was wank. We reached our bivi site in the early evening and watched the sunset as we lay in the shadows of the monolithic north face, cooked pasta and set our alarms for 6 am - sod alpine starts. Getting up from a bivi in the Alps is not normally hard for me as I'm usually freezing and ready for some kind of movement. I don't remember being that cold, but the morning rush from paying punters staying in the hut soon had me and the beast rapidly forcing food down our throats and gearing up simultaneously. Despite mastering this skill relatively quickly we still found ourselves behind five or six parties on the route, most of them guides and two clients, and thus slower moving than us. It was seven-o'clock when we started climbing and conscious of time I suggested to Linz that we alpine style the initial easy sections to try and get past some of the muppets who were pitching it. Climbing alpine style is one of the most refreshing ways to do a route. As you move together neither is inactive for any long period and you also get this amazing pleasure in burning up past people. Such was the case on this day as we raced a guide up before he grudgingly had to let us overtake

him, as his clients were to slow. I would be lying if I said I didn't feel smug. The climbing was on amazing granite and the sun was shining down on us as we motored up the route. Moving together, pausing only to swap leads, we overtook party after party, but the ridge kept coming and soon we were out there in front on our own. We had the ridge to ourselves and with exposure increasing with every metre gained I have to admit it is one of the most exhilarating experiences I have ever had in the hills (apart from maybe slinky lizard at Auchinstarry). After what seemed like an eternity of climbing we saw the summit cross ahead and shortly after were stood looking into Italy on one side and Switzerland on the other. "What time is it Waz?" "Fuck, its only half ten, we've done it in three and a half hours" she replied. The guidebook said five to seven hours. It is true to say we felt like mountaineers at that point. We had outpaced everyone on the route, climbed quickly and confidently and more importantly thoroughly enjoyed the whole mountain experience. We ritualistically shook hands with each other, and in doing so committed a mountaineering faux pas. After eating bars of chocolate and drinking most of our water we turned our minds to descent. It had only taken us three and a half hours to get up; descent was via the north ridge which we had just ascended. We knew the way and we had just become mountaineers, besides getting down is the easy bit, isn't it? After some tricky downclimbing and ridge straddling, we encountered the first party behind us still on the way up. They told us that the first abseil ring wasn't far away. A short while later we reached it. Easy, just follow these all the way down. I don't see why the guidebook makes such a big deal of the descent. I for one had become complacent, the route was in the bag, and the descent was just a series of abseils, what could possibly go wrong. The answer nothing, as long as we don't get the ropes stuck.... The high abseils were straightforward, and we sped down them in good style, pausing to exchange pleasantries with the guide we had overtaken at the start of the day. About half way down the ridge we came to a ring belay, but being unable to see the next bolt we assumed it must just be hidden from view. The abseil crossed a scree ledge and then descended a chossy gully. We never did find a bolt and in pulling the ropes through we had to do a bit of rock dodging as all the shit of the day followed us down the gully. Looking about we could see that we had strayed off the north ridge onto the north face and we would have to traverse across a narrow ledge system to regain the crest of the ridge. Even with protection, the traverse wasn't straightforward and we were both relieved to be at the next bolt and back on track. We had lost time and were eager to make that up, so without further ado we both abbed down the crest to the next bolt. The bolt was in an odd position but the reason for this didn't become apparent until we tried to pull on the ropes. No movement, not even an inch. Bugger, is a word which sums up the moment for the purpose of the journal, though I believe I used rather harsher language at the time. We tried everything in the book to get the ropes down culminating in an attempt to prussic back up the rope, spinning in mid air over the void of the north west face. It is fair to say we had now been stuck there a while and progress was effectively non-existent. "How's it looking cheese" called the Wazzer. "It's all fucking shite" was my restrained reply. Then came one of those moments that only happens in make believe stories

where an angel floats in from above and performs a miracle. It started with a voice from another world "Is that you down there cheese". There is a god and his name is Tom. "Maybe" was my humble reply. After some negotiation and not an insignificant amount of piss-take, Tom freed the ropes and we waited for him and Andy at the belay station so that we could descend as a four to speed things up. Once again out of the woods, but with a bit less of the youthful exuberance that we were exhibiting earlier. Anyway, you learn more when things go wrong, and it is character building. So when the ropes got stuck for the second time we should have been glad. This time Andy gallantly led up on half a half rope to free them whilst Beasty and I set about setting up the next ab. This led us to a bit of old tat attached (?) to the rock. No ring bolt in sight so once again we appeared to have gone off route. Meanwhile to our left our guide and his two clients happily abseiled passed and whilst I can't speak Italian, I believe he said "haw, ya fanny" whilst clipping in to the bolt that was sadly way out of line with our descent. Some interesting down climbing and some shorter Abseils later we were back at the col. "What time is it Waz" I enquired optimistically. "Fuck, its seven-o-clock, It's taken us eight hours to get down" she replied. The guidebook said four to five hours. If I had a tail, it would have been between my legs. The mountain had taught us not to be so cocky, and also to remember not to shake hands until the route and the descent are in the bag. We were too cool for school; though sadly not cool enough to go into higher education. A lesson learnt.

## Obituary: Caroline Walker, 1978 - 2003 -

### Compiled by Catherine Jones

Caroline Walker died as the result of an accident on Ben Arthur (the "Cobbler") early in September 2003. Caroline had been a very enthusiastic and active member of the GUM Club since 1997 when she came to Glasgow University. Although she graduated in 2002 with a degree in Botany, she was still an active member of the club and a familiar face in the pub on Tuesday nights.

The following contributions for this obituary are from various GUM Clubbers, both present and past, who knew Caroline primarily through the GUM club.

Caroline had a great love for the mountains and I know from speaking to others that she was famous for always managing to have a good day out, whatever the weather.

Having known Caroline for only a couple of years, I, however, only have one personal memory of a day out in the hills with her. It was on one of the GUM clubs freshers' meets when we had a beautiful day to do the Ballachulish horseshoe. I remember as we climbed up to the first Munro, I was "bringing up the rear" with a large bottle of Irun Bru and a couple of other "more experienced" members. Caroline, on the other hand, who had no doubt indulged just as much as I had in the Clachaig the night before, was, typically, up at the front showing a large bunch of keen freshers that at least some of the GUM club members had true enthusiasm for the hills.

The place I probably knew Caroline better was back in Glasgow where I was fortunate enough to find out about one of Caroline's other big passions- cooking. On numerous visits to her flat, whether it was just for a cup of tea and a piece of the latest home baking or for dinner with a few friends, I always looked forward to the tasty food which was undoubtedly on offer. I particularly remember one pancake party at Caroline's and Pete's flat where the number of fillings on offer forced us all to have at least a ten course meal, helped along by some unique combinations of alcohol.

Caroline was also an excellent scientist and I, doing my PhD and theoretically a couple of years ahead of her in terms of academia, would enjoy discussing with her our latest experiments or how a particular plant protein functions, usually totally bamboozling whoever else we may have been talking to.

Caroline had a great enthusiasm for life and I, for one, will fondly remember, but sorely miss, her company. Andy Fielding

The most abiding memories I have of her are her being happy. I don't think I ever had a conversation with her that didn't involve laughter somewhere along the line. She was always ready for a chat, always had answers to questions (even if they were stupid ones I really shouldn't have needed to ask), and was so full of vitality it made everything she said count.

I remember having long conversations with her about the John Muir Trust and coming away from them with the feeling I should be out there helping do more to affect and improve the environment we live in. That's probably one of the things that made her so much larger than life - her complete enthusiasm and commitment to all things ecological, and determination to get everyone else involved too.

I'm really glad I had the chance to get to know her a little, and I'll miss her a lot. Diana Hunter

There's not much to say about Caroline that hasn't already been said, she was kind, committed, cheerful, just a little bit eccentric and almost always late! I'm glad that she was one of the first people I met in the GUM club when we shared a square metre of Glen Coe village hall and a few cans of tennants on our first freshers meet. It was the start of a friendship which I miss that gave me lots of adventures, a big pile of hugs, the odd glass of wine and the best birthday cake I've ever had! Frances Bain

A sunny Easter weekend in Knoydart, with many toads for amusement. Climbing at Reiff, at Pooh corner. Eating many pancakes cooked on the legendary enormous frying pan whilst drinking "milk-liqueur and whisky" shots. A very wet week camping at Slig on Skye, drinking lots of tea. The cooking of vast quantities of curry at Becky's cottage for my 21st birthday. Eating lots and lots of pudding at the annual dinner and dancing the "basket dance" (or whatever it is called), and, inevitably, ending up on the floor. Crossing a torrent of water in the Monadhliath, barefoot in February to get to the hill. Playing at being stick insects at Loch an Eilean. Fungus spotting on a GUMC freshers' trip up Ben An.

A jumble of memories that I seem to have of Caroline. However, this misses out so much of her. I only knew a small part of Caroline's ever busy life. She always was up to something, be it working out how to get to a John Muir Trust meeting entirely on foot and by train, to making some new cake recipe she had just acquired or seeing Pete's band play, amongst other things. You sort of slotted into her life and saw her when she wasn't doing all the other things she did.

I miss the fungus spotting on the hill, the weird and wonderful conversations and a friend that was keen to go to the hills and have fun there; not necessarily to push your grade, but just to get out there and enjoy it all, be it raining, snowing, windy or lovely warm sunshine. Catherine Jones

Where does one begin when asked to contribute to a friend's obituary? Caroline's passing is a tremendous loss to a great number of people. The easiest option would be to wax lyrical about the old days; harp on about how we had the best of times. In actual fact, I discovered only after her death that there was a whole side to Caroline of which I knew very little

about. I knew the climbing club Caroline, full of enthusiasm and drive, the more attractive half of the Caroline and Peter double act. I also knew the West Prince's St. flat Caroline, sharing a flat with Roz and Kate, poaching stolen fish and discussing novel philosophies of unfeasible self sufficient farming utopias. I knew that she was heavily involved with the John Muir Trust but I did not realise quite the extent and level of commitment that she gave, but it did not surprise me.

Caroline was one of the first GUM clubbers I met and midweek trips to the Ibrox climbing wall soon became a regular feature of my first year timetable. Slowly but surely Caroline, among others, watched me progress from scrabbling on sticky plastic holds on the indoor wall to scrabbling for cake whilst moaning about the rain at the bottom of dripping wet V.Diffs at several of the more salubrious locations around southern Scotland. I have been walking with her on many occasions where all of my mutterings about rain, snow, and if I am to be honest, everything else, were greeted with a cheery "Ach!" followed by some cheery indisputably logical comeback and a grin. Then there was her more devious side. I am absolutely sure that, given Caroline's infinite capabilities in the mountains, she could not possibly have dragged me halfway to Ben Macdui by accident on our way into Corrie an Lochain whilst swimming through chest deep snow one December. The fact we had agreed on a climb at least three grades harder than either of us could do after drinking a bottle of Advocaat had nothing to do with it at all...

Another lasting memory I have of Caroline is her love of good whisky, I sincerely hope she actually knew something about whisky or I have been regaling my English counterparts with nonsense for the last six years, but every time I take a drink of Glen Morangie it will stir a few memories.

I last saw Caroline in May last year and I had lost touch a bit. She had become one of those people from university who I saw maybe once or twice a year but I found that we could just pick up exactly where we left off, as if it was the day before.

I feel that I could write a great deal more here, but for fear of overwhelming the journal I will stop. There are so many stories to tell, I am sure others will recount them far more eloquently than myself. We all have our memories and I am sure at reunion meets in years to come we will share stories of, among others, giant frying pans, haggis and the size of snowmen's bits, whilst debating the presence of water in a good single malt.

Absolutely gutted.... Martin Smith

It should be mentioned how much Caroline liked our lovely wee Clashgour! I know last time we were all up there for the works and Christmas parties we read quite a lot of her entries in the journals and had quite a good laugh! Lindsay McGowan I can't remember first meeting Caroline. I suppose this is unsurprising as she was very easy to get to know, to get along with and it can't have been long until it felt like I had known her for years.

When I think of her no one image springs to mind, but a jumble of memories. In particular there was the Rum meet back in 1998 before the onset of my gammy leg and slide into old-man hill walker status. Caroline and I decided to head to the Northwest face of Askival, the biggest mountain crag on the island, and climb it. The guide book description bore no resemblance to the route and from below it looked dark and forbidding with a steep loose approach slope. With Caroline's good-natured enthusiasm, however we pressed on to the base of the crag. Once we got onto the rock it was wonderful; the rock consisted of perfect gabbro slabs with the odd arête giving variety as well as quality to the climb. We topped out at the summit and the views of Skye, Eigg and a jumble of blue hills stretching eastwards on the mainland were like a crowning glory on a perfect day.

Recently, after she returned from Canada I started to get to know different sides to Caroline. She devoted a great deal of her time not only to the hills and the GUM club but also to various environmental and conservation groups. She helped me look for work, giving advice and forwarding job adverts, always eager to help.

I became more aware recently of Caroline's social and political views as well as environmental concerns. Her journal article about land access leaves no doubt as to her views in that respect and I remember first reading it and looking forward to taking part in the "mass trespass" to reaffirm out right to roam.

The last full day that I spent with Caroline was not your average GUM club meet. The annual Dinner Meet coincided with the massive anti war demonstration in Glasgow last year on the 15th of February. I wanted to be a part of it but I didn't want to miss out on the Dinner Meet. Luckily I wasn't the only one to feel this way. Sheila and I drove to Glasgow and met up with Pete and Caroline where we became four of the 100,000

people who took part in what was a truly historical event, before heading up the road in time for the legendary dinner and ceilidh.

So what now? To lose a good friend is sickening, shocking. I still sometimes can't believe that it has happened, that such a thing can happen to a well liked friend who was just going for a walk. Do I value friendship more now? I think so. Do I respect the dangers of the hills more now? I don't know. Joe Glennie

I should of realised when I was cleaning the tiles in the bathroom, it should definitely of hit me when I was re-coiling all our ropes to make them look neat, but it wasn't until I found myself polishing the silver teapot that I really faced up to the fact that I was procrastinating, big time. I've been actively avoiding writing this article all day. It terrifies me.

I know I'm being ridiculous, I know I'm being a complete coward, but it doesn't change the fact that I'm still terrified. Whatever I write here, however many times I use the computers thesaurus to find the perfect word with just the right nuance, it isn't going to work. I'm terrified because this is something I should get right, something I badly, desperately want to get right, but yet I've known all day that I'm going to get it wrong.

I'm trying to write about Caroline, but I can't begin to find that one story, that one event that says what I want to about her. You never experience things thinking you'll have to relate them again like this and it just won't come together neatly in my head. . Pancakes, generosity, Botanic Gardens, Wales, rain, determination, Cleopatra, tea, fungi, and inspiration are all jostling for a place on the page but still they won't tell you about Caroline. That's what's terrifying me, it's my chance to tell you about this incredible person in my life but I know that I can't put the words together to do that the way I want to.

Caroline is dead, and for the first couple of days after her accident that idea was so impossible that I was scared of telling other people in case it turned out to be a weird kind of joke. A few months on and it's not so impossible anymore I can write it, read it, hear it, say it and know that it's true. What's equally as true though is that being dead is not the important thing about Caroline. It's not what I think of when I hear her name, it's not what appears in my head when I talk about her, and it's not what I feel as I write this. How I think, and how I feel about Caroline today is the same as what I felt and thought a year ago when we were both trying to find a direction after graduating, or two years ago as when we were stuck together in the flat preparing for finals. My sense of Caroline as a valued and constant friend hasn't changed at all and that, I guess, is why this

article is so hard to write. I usually talk about my friends over a pint, or a pot of tea, not via a computer screen, so I can only suggest that if you really want to know about Caroline ask me there. Lisa Adamson

## Pooh, Piglet and Spilled Custard - Daniel

### Campanile

After their finals some people choose to go on a week long liver destroying binge to celebrate and help them forget the stress of the build up to the exams. Others take it easy and relax the exhaustion and sudden relief of finishing suddenly over coming them with fatigue. I found myself sitting behind the wheel of a university minibus four hours outside Glasgow, somewhere to the North of Ullapool on a narrow and twisting single-track road. In front of us the great bulks of Stac Pollaidh, Suilven and Canisp rose as isolated islands from the flat plains of Wester Ross, their sharp black outlines clearly visible in the fading light. In the distance the Atlantic lapped around the crinkled coast distorting the smudged reds, oranges, yellows and pinks of a northern sunset in the darkening blue sky. We had arrived in Reiff at last and it was going to be a good week.

The following day I was doing what I came all this way to do: climb. Well not exactly, I was suspended across a causeway by a rope waist deep in the pulsing cold waters, bobbing up and down in the lazy swell. Behind me cliffs rose steeply up to a flat grassy headland and in front the narrow, exposed pinnacle of the Old Man of Stoer projected out of the gently rocking sea. At its base my climbing partner was doubled over with laughter at my unexpected submergence, I swore at him in return for not tensioning the ropes enough, it only made him laugh even more. When I started climbing a few years ago I never seriously thought I would ever be experienced or good enough to do this historic classic climb. It was just another picture in a book with a good story attached to it, nothing more than an aspiration. A few hours later I was hanging from a rope once again, slowly rotating in space as I descended the abseil from the top. The climb had been four pitches of delightfully steep climbing on warm sandstone in the sun with the smooth black water below us. By the time we got to the top my trousers were dry and no fulmars had been sick on us, as good as it gets, my aspirations suddenly realized and new ones already forming.

The campsite at Reiff is a strange and beautiful place. It sits on a flat featureless expanse of grass save for a fenced huddle of trees bent over by the wind and a small draughty toilet block made out of plastic and corrugated iron. Beyond the campsite is a spit, covered when the tide is in but otherwise forms a natural bridge linking the land on the opposite side. The fine-grained sand on the beach is the colour and texture of oatmeal and the water rolling up it in soft little waves is clear and greenish blue. It is not how most people would imagine Scotland. The stepped profiles and jagged ridges of the ancient sugarloaf mountains form the backdrop to this, stretching out into the distance. The layered rocks forming these unusual mountains gently dip down to the coast where the sea has slowly carved out a long serrated line of cliffs and conveniently left behind flat wave cut platforms no longer under the influence of the tides. These are the crags of Reiff stretching out from the tiny cluster of white houses along the coast for several kilometers and became our playground for the week.

One of the things that make Reiff such a great place isn't just the sheer volume and range of climbs, but the setting. In the hazy distance you can see the outline of the Outer Isles and often there are groups of seals poking their curious heads above the water, watching you as you climb. Whether you're there to undertake a small personal battle on a tougher climb or just to enjoy the excitement and thrill of moving on the rock, there is something for everyone. There's slabs, steep walls, cracks, corners, in fact just about anything for the beginner just learning to lead or the more experienced climber. When we weren't climbing (a surprisingly large amount of the time) the platforms made brilliant spots to eat, chat and watch the breeze whip up the spray from the waves crashing on the rocks.

Although the last trip was good, it wasn't all perfect. One of the days as a result of my impatience and over eagerness I got split up from the rest of the group on our way to the crags. We spent several hours looking and missing each other in the dips and hollows of the moorland above the crags thinking one of us had slipped off the cliffs. It set the tone for the rest of the day, when we did eventually reunite it was probably the worst we climbed all week. To make matters worse, that night we were sitting in the minibus keeping out of the wind howling through the campsite. We decided to make some custard to cheer us up but the pot got tipped over spilling its steaming contents over the grimy floor of the bus, easily the lowest point of the trip.

Nightlife in this part of the world is slightly different from Glasgow. There's no Garage or Hive; there isn't even a more familiar Highland pub with its collection of friendly but slightly odd locals standing beside a badly stained and ripped pool table. There is however, plenty of drink, a comfortable seat on the sand and a night sky packed full of stars. You are so far north it really only gets completely dark for a few hours when the dying ribbon of light above the sea disappears, re-emerging a few cans of beer later glowing above the nearby hills. I learned three things from nights out at Reiff; dried seaweed doesn't burn well in a bonfire, the North Atlantic is much warmer when you're drunk, and climbing is only half of the best parts of these trips. The perpetual light means that you can climb well into the evening and not even realize, creating a distorted 'Reiff time.' You eat at funny times as well, dinner very late at night and breakfast when you should have lunch. All this adds to the feeling that you really are in a completely different place where time has no significance any more and it doesn't matter when you do things.

Something I've struggled (and still struggle) to accept is climbing or walking in its own right just for the sake of it. It's difficult not to get bogged down in grades, route times and individual expectations when all you should be doing is having fun and enjoying yourself. A few times at Reiff I found myself doing exactly that, forgetting where I was and what I was doing. Climbing on the cliffs in the early evening with the low sun behind you turning the rock into a fiery golden wall makes any lack of achievement seem insignificant. So, if you want to do something a bit different this year after your exams then take a trip up to Reiff, you won't regret it.

## Presidents bit - The Cheese

Becoming president was very much like being asked to shag the queen, sure it would be an honour, but did I really want to do it. The short answer is yes, and I quite fancied being president as well.

I've read the presidents spiel at the beginning of GUMC journals for a while, but now it's my turn and I'm finding it hard not to repeat what's already been said. Then I figured that there are so many new folk in the club, that most probably wouldn't have read the older journals, and I'd be able to get away with it.

Life as the pres, top dog, or just plain god is an altogether enjoyable experience. I had been led to believe that it was a stressful job. But after four months in office things were going swimmingly and I was wondering

what all the fuss was about. Then you guys came back to uni or arrived for the first time, and I was required to do stuff. I too now get that sinking feeling every time my phone goes on a Friday afternoon, and try to hide when I hear "that guy over there will talk to you".

The year started off with Glencoe freshers meet as it always does. Traditionally a chance for new folks to get introduced to the club and older members to try and scare them off (unintentionally). Everyone seemed to get off to a good start, and I think that the meet gave as realistic impression of the club as it could.

Fun days on the hill followed by sometimes funnier nights in the local tavern have been the sketch for most meets this year. The meets, which stick out in my mind from this year, other than freshers, have to be Kintail and Torridon for different reasons. Kintail is one of the most scenic places in Scotland and an amazing place to visit. This year didn't disappoint and apart from doing three Munro's with a particularly heavy sack I had a good day out in the hills followed by a Halloween fancy dress party. The weather in Torridon did the area justice on the Saturday making it one of my more memorable days on the hill with everyone going out and having a good day and the party after for Genis' birthday was performed in good GUMC style.

I suppose I have to mention the dinner meet, though I'd rather not. I hope you all had a good time. I was told I had a good time, though when my mum saw the photos on the Internet, she was more shocked to see me smoking a cigar than by the fact that I was dressed as a dirty tranny. The only excuse I have for my behaviour is it does a man good to cut loose once in a while and discover his feminine side.

The future of the club looks bright, and with so many youths around it should remain bright for a while. I hope you've all enjoyed the year so far, and are looking forward to hot days in the hills throughout the summer, or at least those of you going abroad are. Myself, I can't wait for the midges.

Thanks to you all for being there and big up to the committee for making my life easier than it would be without them. This year has been one of the best years I've been in the club and you guys are the reason for this...aye right, I only do it 'cause this is the only place I can drink bucky without being accused of being a total ned jakey.

Take it easy, luv cheesy (Iain for anyone who doesn't know my real name)

# The Afterlife - Alexis Perry

The minibus door clangs shut behind you for the final time (least you don't have to hear S-Club ever again); a sonorous death knell to cruelly end your undergraduate climbing career. You were a larval fourth year, you briefly enjoyed the chrysalis of that final, loooooong summer only to emerge, a damp, bedraggled moth in the autumn of unemployment. Metamorphosis complete, and now you have to pay tax. Thankfully, help is at hand, many of us have been through it my son, and useless advice from grumpy old cunts is better than no advice at all. This article seeks to highlight the viable options open to you, a climbing graduate, to maximise your climbing time amongst awkward things like jobs and money that unfortunately get in the way.

1. Become a climbing bum Think Bodhi in Point Break (except possibly without the whole bank robbing bit, and less of the drowning), half of Sheffield's population, that dude who wrote the Dharma Bums and countless lost souls still on a gap-year. Superficially, this sounds like a perma-holiday but I reckon it's possibly a hard one to pull off (sorry). Aside from moral qualms about scrounging dole and putting nowt back, apart from having no money, away from the fact that five days of every week will see your social viewpoint gradually converge with that of Robert Kilroy-Silk (oh yes it will) and excepting the monstrous ganj (well it might start there, but the cash crisis will force you back onto resin like you were 14 all over again) chonging you'll need to fuel your lethargy, disregarding all of this, the level of self-motivation required to actually do anything with no structure in your day for week after week with no-one hassling is nothing short of miraculous. All the days of middling weather you would turn your nose up at 'cos you can just go out tomorrow instead, all the directionless drifting round crags without the brevity of the weekend to motivate and focus you. I guess it takes a certain type of laconic, laid-back person to make this work. If that ain't you, read on...

2. Become a guide It would seem that this is quite popular amongst ex-gum clubbers, appropriate seeing as competence rather than exceptional talent is the important thing here. Let's not forget quite how competent mind you; being avalanched down the Ben, bickering about navigation at 11pm on the cairngorm plateau (and, as I remember, being wrong), falling arse-first onto a large rock spike in Ratho (dangerous back then, it

was), falling 50 ft off a wee highland ridge-walk, falling off Buachaille Etive Mor's north buttress leading to the exciting situation of two lives resting on one hex and getting lost on the way down and, possibly most amusing, having to climb a large Tremadoc tree to retrieve a whole load of dropped wires after having already lost five of the buggers in the previous three days of climbing. Unfortunately, I can't think of any dirt on Dr. Bain (excluding the Glen Clova incident or falling off on film), so feel free to add your own here before I start to think he's the competence daddy. Anyhow, it's employment involving a lot of climbing so I guess it's got to be good.

3. Become a post-graduate Embrace the pain my friend, for this is the way of the warrior. You know you like the student life, you don't mind your degree subject, having "Dr." in front of your name is bound to impress the laddeeeez..... Well it isn't the student life, you grow to loathe your subject and the only impressed people are your grandparents. All your friends have more money than you yet work less hours, then once your funding has ended you have to write a large book about your pain which gets put in the cellar of a university library and no-one looks at it ever again. And people will never tire of asking you if you work in a hospital. On the bright side, you're liable to become obsessive about anything else in your life (providing that there is anything else left); very good for your climbing. That or you can focus more on your drinking and so....

4. Become a Jakey The real world is distinctly uphill work and if university has taught you one thing then it's that you're damn good at drinking. You're a recent graduate of the gum club and have appreciated that drinking prestige earns a good deal of respect. You can clearly see that you're funnier when you're drunk, and you must be more attractive because you've pulled more often in that state. Not only this but you can eat hotter curries and get in fights because you're harder and braver when pissed. More subtle too, given the sleight of hand required in stealing, say, a traffic cone. To become a Jakey would only be playing to your strengths and allowing you to become the better person you know you can be. Plus you get to hang around with your PhD mates.

5. Rope access / Tree surgery Because us climbers are so adept at having abseiling accidents we are clearly the obvious choice for employment in the construction of vertiginous buildings. It does look quite fun, you do get to build cool stuff (and won't your grandchildren know it; "not the millennium dome story again granddad; it's shit"), the pay is reputedly

not bad and you get very good at prussiking for the next time you end up at the bottom of a sea cliff without a climbing rope between the pair of you (yes, really, and it isn't the only time it's happened). However, of the four people I know who've done it only one still climbs and at that only bouldering. This makes me somewhat worried about the safety of climbing ropework. As for tree surgery, I like trees, I like saws, I like trees and saws. Couldn't be clearer.

6. Work down the wall / climbing shop You'll either get tendonitis or have an unhealthy depth of fabric knowledge. You might even consider pertex boxers as an essential item. You'll also get to say, "No, it was always that way up" and, "no rucsac is 100% waterproof" quite a lot. Short people will harangue you because the holds are too far apart, fat people will harangue you because the holds are too sweaty, crap people will harangue you because the holds are too small and slopey and everyone will have an opinion that you must hear about the grade. Other climbers will ask you questions about gear so they can tell you about their favourite taper angle on their favourite size walnut, all your mates will try to scrounge free gear off you and you will feel a sense of injustice at how many neds you've clothed in better waterproofs than your own. Okay, you get cheap climbing wall access / climbing stuff but then you don't get paid very much either. I used to work at a prawn factory and thus could get cheap prawns; you ain't never going to beat that here.

7. Other options I 'spose getting a real job figures here somewhere but I guess only after you've tried all the other flavours first. Teaching would seem to be a favourite amongst ex-student climbers, primarily as you can teach anywhere and you get stupendous holidays to go climbing in. Before you do your PGCE I recommend that you pulp the fingers of one hand by battering them with a lump hammer held tightly in your other hand, then go away and find a different career and don't do it again. Capische? Other good but unlikely stuff would be get really good so people pay you to climb all the time or to somehow make enough money from the climbing media to live on, like making a film about winter climbing for instance. The only other option I can think of is to go abroad "for a couple of years". Remember who The Machine is, anyone?

## Winter Sun - Lynda Fenton

A year in London makes you appreciate the finer points of Glasgow, one of which is that it is easy to escape. I spent winter weekends down south looking out at the rain, wishing that I could get out to the mountains and experience all they have to throw at you; the wind, snow and rain, and the hope of an occasional view opening up. The weather even taunted me

with snow fall, but a couple of inches of powder on Hampstead Heath didn't quite give me the wilderness fix I was looking for. So whilst languishing in the deep south I made a promise to myself to get out and about as much as possible once I got back to Glasgow. Once back here though, old habits were quickly re-instated. Saturday nights proved a major impediment to Sunday activity, and that coupled with five weeks in Ireland meant I didn't get out in the Scottish hills as much as I'd intended. Reflecting on this winter though, not only did I realise that I had failed to keep my promise to myself, but it seemed that the winter hills that I had been dreaming of in London had been transformed. When I did get out gone was the buffeting wind, low cloud and drifting snow; replaced by blue skies, clear views, crisp neve and hot rock. The high pressure that dominated February became too much to bear in the city. The sun drove me from lectures, and into a mid-week dash for the Ben. Three of us set off early one Wednesday, with Alasdair in particular feeling the effects of Tuesday night. The sun rose over Rannoch moor, turning the wisps of cloud hanging over it a beautiful orange-red. Slogging up the path and into Coire na Ciste wasn't exactly a wilderness experience; English half-term and the fine weather ensured that it felt like a staff training day at a Sheffield comprehensive. After considering a route few options we decided on Comb Gully (IV, 4), with the lads leading up a couple of pitches of great snow-ice, and me following on getting a first taste of proper steep winter climbing. Topping out we emerged into the sun and views all round, to Torridon, Skye and the Cairngorms. The beating sun meant that the walk to the summit was done in short-sleeves, and the number of people wandering about the plateau in the sun made it feel a little like Kelvingrove Park on the summers afternoon. At the same time as feeling slightly ashamed that I hadn't climbed Ben Nevis in four years of living in Glasgow, I was glad that I'd saved it for a quality day and a quality route - I guess the company was ok too. A week or so later Sunday morning saw another early Glasgow start, with a fine forecast and our sights set on the Ben. The start wasn't quite as early as intended, so as we crossed Rannoch Moor the sun was fully up, and rounding the corner towards Glencoe revealed the Buchaille glowing golden in the morning light. The thought of a rushed day on the Ben after a late start wasn't that tempting, and the Buchaille car-park drew us in. Although February, there was barely a drop of snow to be seen, and the rock was so tempting that we opted for the scramble up the North Buttress. This day there was solitude; we didn't meet a soul until the summit. Solitude, sun, views and hot rock - save for the odd bit of verglas in the shade to keep things exciting. So this Scottish winter didn't bring quite what I had expected; more sun-burn than hot-aches. Not that I'm complaining, I'll happily replace my woolly mitts with a bottle of sun-tan lotion. I do fear, however, that it may have turned me even more soft-core. The thought of going out in anything more than a 10mph wind, with anything less than coast-to-coast views, or facing any sort of precipitation, just doesn't cut it. And I'm confident that having written this article I doomed never to have such a fine a day again; the hills surely have plenty more weather.