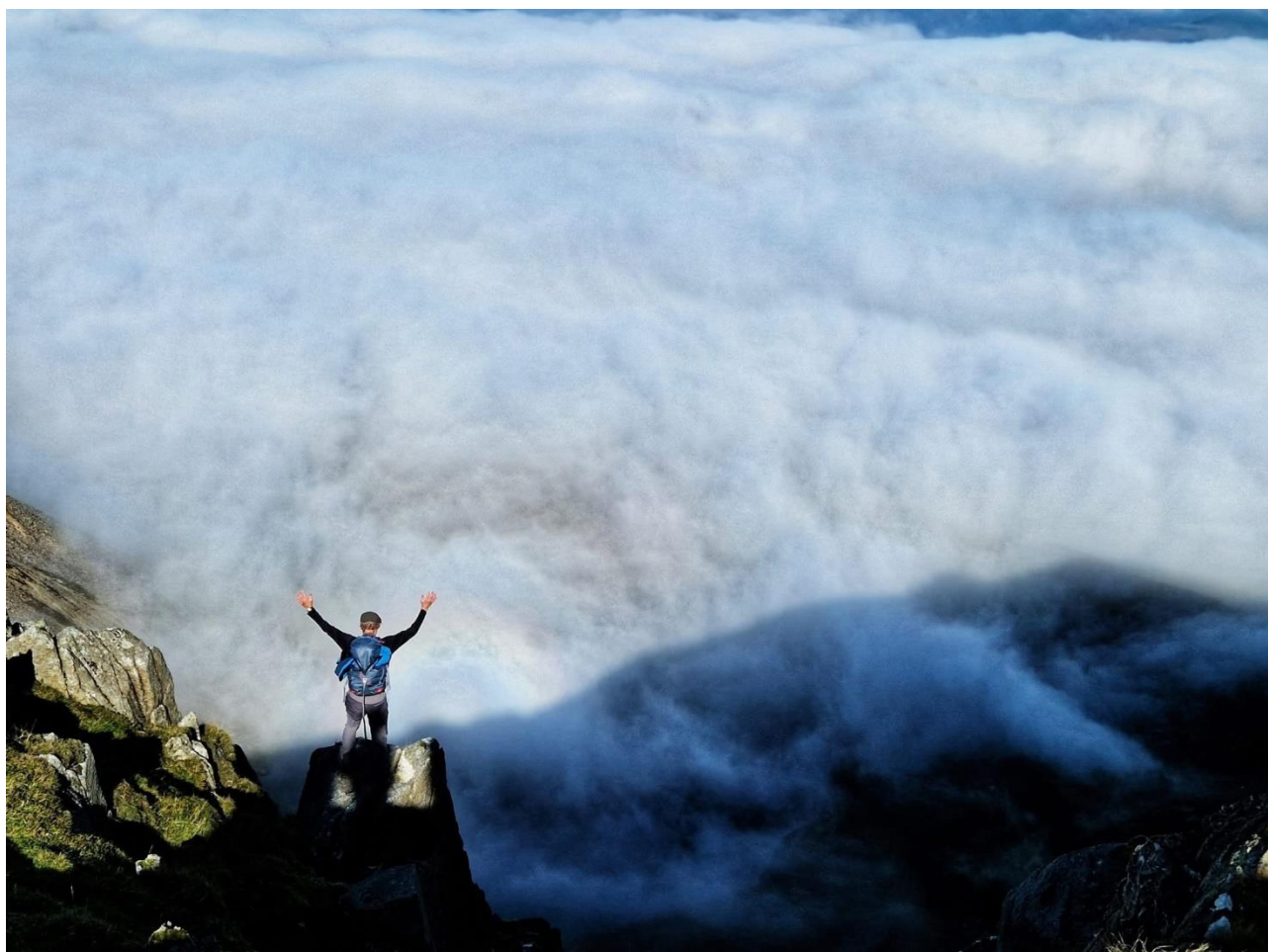


NOVEMBER 2025



From the new editor, Jan Campbell

Graham Daly is a very hard act to follow and I'm sure that few people realise how much time and effort he has put in to the newsletter over the last 7 years; many, many thanks.

Whether you have chosen to read this as a hard copy or on your phone I hope you will find items of interest; I plan to include an 'archive spot' each time and also more member profiles on a regular basis to help us get to know each other better.



Calling new members who joined in 2025! If you would like to submit a member profile to introduce yourself please do. Julie's is in this newsletter but if you would like to see some other examples please email me.

Calling all meet coordinators! Send full details of your meet to Catherine and Lee (mail@shrewsburymc.com) ready to go out as an email to all members.

Calling all members; a note from your Chairman, Mike Blakemore: I write to ask you to consider becoming part of the Committee next year. This year a couple of Committee members are standing down. The Committee is an essential element of the Club and although a lot of stuff is done by the Committee throughout the year, the work is shared out amongst the nine members and so isn't individually onerous. It is the Committee that ensures the club runs smoothly and all the things we enjoy doing happen. It is interesting work and it's rewarding to see plans come to fruition. The Committee meetings, which are a couple of hours once a month on Zoom, are fun and productive. The Committee is elected each year at the AGM, a nomination from a Committee member, or yourself, and a seconder is all it requires. This can all be done on the night of the AGM or in advance, and if you cannot make the AGM email Julie Tight as Hon Sec (mail@shrewsburymc.com) and express an interest. There is a strong core of Committee who are standing next year with a wealth of experience and enthusiasm. There is an exciting and expansive meet card already planned for next year and the Committee are looking forward to making sure this programme runs smoothly. Please consider supporting your Club through joining us.

All members: Please note that instead of receiving your 2026 meet card alongside this November newsletter your printed meet card will now be combined with your membership card and will be issued when you pay your subs in January. Meanwhile check the website calendar for meet information.

Cover photo: Tom Cave above the clouds on Cadair Idris. *Photo by Ali Jones*

Deadline for the next newsletter is **10th January**.

Shrewsbury SMC First Aid Course, *Mike Creese.*

On a rainy Saturday (20th September 2025) 16 members of SMC (and my daughter gate crashing) attended a ½ day first aid course (Michael Creese, Chris Wood, Tom & Barbara Cave, Adrian Wilcock, Rachel Jones, Katherine & Graham Baldry, Mark Bayliss, Heather Smith, Jan Campbell, Larry King, Tracy Whyte, John Howard, Sam Lloyd, Graham Dale). It was very well presented and reflected that even in the best circumstances, particularly in remote locations; the chances of success in CPR are unfortunately limited.

Topics covered included DRABC, CPR, defibrillators, recovery position, and a fast passed Q&A session on other topics (wounds, hypothermia, hyperthermia etc.) Thanks to Alpkit (www.alpkit.com/foundation) that sponsored the event with £250 and SMC that supported 50% of the remaining cost to help keep us all safer! Did I mention the exam?

- * What does DRABC stand for?
- * What is the maximum time to check breathing for an unresponsive patient?
- * When do you make the SOS phone call if alone?
- * What is the depth and rate of heart compression for CPR?
- * What is the ratio of compression to breaths in CPR?
- * Where are defibrillator patches positioned?

The British Red Cross First Aid app is recommended.

Watched by Larry, Katherine is practising CPR on Resusci Annie who was initially presented as a teaching model in 1960 by a Norwegian toymaker and a couple of American and Austrian- Czech physicians.

Annie's face was apparently based on the death mask of an unidentified woman who reputedly drowned in the R.Seine.



The Tour du Mont Blanc, July 29th -August 7th 2025, *Maud Nicolas.*

In late July, with a heavy pack filled with plenty of food, I set off solo to Chamonix for the Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB).

Starting in Les Houches, the route took me through Italy and Switzerland before looping back to France.

The rain on the first night was rather unwelcome, but the weather soon settled. Temperatures ranged from below 5 °C at night to over 25 °C towards the end of the trip.

For an added challenge I took a few variants:



Maud at the Fenetre d'Arpette

- Col des Fours (France) - avoiding Les Chapieux from the Col du Bonhomme, this variant offered the largest section of snow on the trail, at ~2700 m elevation.
- Testa Bernada (Italy) - despite the TMB being a popular trail, this variant was unusually quiet, and the wildest - I finally spotted marmots.
- Fenêtre d'Arpette (Switzerland) - this variant offered some of the best views of the trip, including the closest the route gets to a glacier.



The Col de la Balme.

Alternating between bivouacs and campsites, I enjoyed the freedom of choosing my spot for the night.

The terrain along the trail was quite varied, from single track to scree, scrambling, and ladders, the variety was nice to change things up a bit.

Several ibex crossed my path, with day 9 proving particularly rewarding for wildlife spotting. Passing through Les Contamines-Montjoie, Courmayeur, and Argentière provided convenient opportunities to resupply fresh food along the trail, a welcome boost after several days eating dehydrated food. For the final night, I chose to bivouac near Lac du Brévent, soaking in a beautiful sunset.

With near-perfect weather and good company along the way, the trip finally came to an end. 10 days later, 170 km covered, and 10,000 m elevation gain, I arrived back in Les Houches, with a pack 4 kg lighter.

If you ever find yourself in the area, I highly recommend doing the French and Italian sections, if not the whole route!

(Well done Maud. A brilliant solo adventure by our youngest SMC member! Being fluent in French must have helped! Ed.)



The Archive slot.

One of many pictures from the Club's 50th birthday dinner held at the football club in September 2009.

120 people enjoyed a good meal and an entertaining speech from Mike Blakemore. Tim Tindle had also spent many hours putting together a DVD of photos set to music giving a flavour of what the Club is about...fun and friendship. Richard Pugh commented "that was great; it made us feel young again".

That was also the year Jackie Eyre et al. produced the Clwt y Bel Way, a walking route from Shrewsbury to Clwt y Bel.

50 copies of the book were distributed ...just ask me if you wish to see one.

Jan

Harry Gregory Trophy: nominations invited

This trophy is presented to a Club member for **either an outstanding achievement** in an outdoor mountaineering related activity **or for a personal best**. It has been awarded for such things as an ascent of Ben Nevis, a 7a sport route at Llanymynech and a completion of the Munros. So, put your ear to the ground and think about who has put themselves out of their comfort zone this year...and then nominate them please! The committee can only go on what information they are given.

Walking (and Falling) with Dinosaurs, *Jeff Morton*

When we were young, we used to fall about laughing now we just fall about!

For many years, we walked on a Tuesday evening with SMC, summer and winter to keep fit until it was decided it was too dangerous to walk in the dark

Guess what?

It is just as dangerous to walk in the daylight too!

One Thursday, I slipped whilst descending Corndon in the wet and severely bruised my right buttock (no photograph enclosed so as not to scare the horses)

Luckily, I didn't damage my spine or anything else - apart from my pride!

It is a slow painful recovery but gives me plenty of time to reflect: Do I give up or continue to walk in the hills?

Answers on a postcard (PC) please

Snail mail NOT email



David, John, Ali, Mike, Jeff, Stef, Jenny

Most of the 'dinosaurs' are still SMC members and walk on Thursday mornings. I love the slower pace and constant banter with reminiscences of days when we were climbing mountains. New retirees welcome! (Ed.)

Hut maintenance at Clwt y Bel, Sept 26/27th 2025. *Jan Campbell*

A surge of interest in our hut in recent years has certainly led to some noticeable improvements but it is still a work in progress. By early Friday afternoon, John, Graham, Andy T and Mike B had arrived in time to direct a truck load of stone (7 tonnes?) and rake it into position on the car park area while, in the absence of sheep to do the job, Jan got on with some strimming. Heather and Rob made their appearance after some had gone to bed but all were ready to throw themselves into the jobs on Saturday morning except poor Mike who was stricken down with a lurgy and went home. Rob did some rewiring so the UV water filter is now on continuously whilst Andy T and Miles' repaired the wall by the picnic bench. Heather, Jan and Julie set to work on cleaning the windows, cooker and bathroom respectively. Much to everyone's delight, Rachel arrived with an excellent LUNCH! A new heater on the common room wall was also fitted. I can't list everything but so much was achieved and many thanks to everyone who chipped in and especially to Chris Wood who took the lead in creating the jobs list and sourcing the necessary materials.

And then there was Sunday. John and Jan went off to do a short walk in the hills above Conwy with stunning views out to sea while Heather and Rob headed for the fine sweep of Atlantic Slabs above the Nant Ffrancon.



Andy Tetsill admiring his handiwork.

Chris & Graham fitting the new heater in the common room.



Cadair Idris 12th October.



With a forecast that was unusually fine, half a dozen people decided to camp or van locally on the Saturday night, with 5 of us travelling from Radbrook, and prospective member Ali Jones being in the area anyway, a party of 12 assembled at the foot of the Pony path expecting valley fog leading to clear summits. We were however initially disappointed as the valley was clear but (as we thought) the tops were not. Nevertheless, as we started the walk it became evident that the cloud was thinning and we were indeed going to be in the sun, not only that but as we approached “the saddle”, we were treated to a cloud inversion and a Brocken spectre!

Graham B, Matt, Mike C, Chris Lee, Adrian L, Ali Jones

One member of the party (Tom) felt that he was required to pose for photos at this point with a keen photographer probably hoping to win the competition at the AGM.

After a spectacular but uneventful ascent to the summit we then descended to the south over Craig Cau and Craig Cwm Amarch and the long ridge to Mynydd Pencoed. This area is not well travelled at all, and we only encountered one other person on the rest of the walk. Although stiles did exist at critical points, the paths on the ground were not entirely obvious, and the navigation would have been much more interesting in normal Welsh weather. Going this way however meant that we lost a lot of height, crossing the Afon Cadair at Gwastadfryn (C.78M), only to have to climb back up to rejoin the Pony path at C.560M. It should be pointed out that a “rogue team” of 3 decided that they were going to ignore the fact that the rest of us were going to be responsible and stay on access land and take a cross-country route. Did they encounter an irate farmer? We’re not so sure; however they did arrive back at the cars before us.

One other interesting point to note, we did discover a weird jelly- like substance on the grass descending Mynydd Pencoed, the jury is out on what this was but the internet says “star jelly” or a form of slime mould... although a wag on UK climbing has claimed it to be “elf placenta”.

For those interested in the statistics the “proper” route length was 18.1Km, with 1295m of ascent, as measured on my Garmin.

Graham Baldry.

Member profile, Julie Tight, (SMC Secretary)

- Favourite mountain:** impossible to choose only one: Buachaille Etive Mor (Great Shepherd) for her shape and position, standing watch over the vast expanse of Rannoch Moor and Glen Coe, Liathach (The Grey One) for the way he looms over Torridon, bulky and aloof from the road, but delicate and complex on the ridge, and finally Ingleborough, who has stood sentinel over me for most of my life, and has given me many memorable mountain days with family and friends.
- Winter or summer?** Each season has its joys. Again, impossible to choose.
- Walking poles or not?** The state of my knees makes walking poles essential on steep descents, but they can be a blithering nuisance on scrambly ascents.
- Solo or with friends?** Love to share a mountain day with friends, but also love the solitude and sense of immersion that walking alone can bring
- Favourite drink after a day out:** rooibos tea is my go-to post walk drink. Later in the evening I enjoy a glass of red wine.
- Grid reference or what3words:** each has its place
- Favourite bit of gear/kit:** Rab cirrus flex hoodie; packs small and punches above its weight for warmth.
- Watch/phone/Garmin or paper map?** Horses for courses, but would I sit on the sofa studying a digital map? No. Do I sit on the sofa with a paper map on my lap? Yes, I do. It's just a sheet of intrigue, the more you look, the more you see. Plus, they are works of art.
- Tent or hut?** Love the craic of a mountain refuge or hut, but for a good night's kip definitely a tent or our beloved caravan.
- Mountain based aspirations:** At my age my skill and fitness probably won't improve, but there are many, many mountain areas I still want to explore
- Favourite rock climb.** I don't climb anymore but I used to love a climb called Woodbine at Brimham Rocks, N Yorkshire. It doesn't need strength, just balance and a belief that if you move stealthily enough gravity won't notice.
- Most precious moments in the hills:** Had so many it's difficult to choose but a common denominator for most of them is that it's been a shared day with a person or people that mean a lot to me, and who also love the mountains. If I had to pick one moment though it would be looking west over the Hebrides from one of the Torridon giants as rain clouds scudded inland, bringing shifting light over the islands and sea. Just heaven on Earth.
- What piece of mountaineering advice would you like to pass on?** Fitness can only enhance your pleasure on the hills.



Moel Emoel circuit – Bala meet October 26th

8 of us started with 7 completing the full route – Jan, Miles, Julie, Chris W, Heather, Rob and myself. Catherine peeled off early on to take her own route around the lower slopes to save Annie Dog's little legs from having to commit to the whole circuit.

Once we found our way from the A4212 uphill through fields and woods we emerged onto a vast moorland with views over to Llyn Celyn and the Arenigs and Aran mountain ranges

Although the initial forecast was grim, the weather turned out to be much better than expected and only the highest tops had cloud on them. The loop took us around to Moel Emoel via Pen y Bwlch Gwyn and after a bit of glacial bouldering practice by Chris we ascended Emoel to a superb sheltered lunch spot just below the summit. Afterwards, we didn't linger as the wind suddenly made its presence felt, but the route down the other side offered stunning views of Llyn Tegid and Bala. Once we had managed to navigate our way down, a delightful riverside walk brought us back to the cars and we adjourned to the pub. (*The New Inn, Llangynog in case you are wondering, Ed.*)

Cheryl Foster



Jan, Julie, Chris, Heather, Miles, Rob



On the way down to Llyn Maen Bras



Nether Wasdale meet Sept 6-14th.

No meet report but apparently 6 people including new member, Liz Reeves, had a good time. Some photos have emerged and are in the SMC archive.

Katherine, Graham, Annie.

Photo by Liz Reeves

2025 Club Photographic Competition

This is a reminder about the annual club photo competition. As usual there will be two categories

- 'Mountaineering' (people active in a mountain landscape)
- and
- 'Landscape' (the environment/landscape/nature).

There is also a new competition organiser this year so keep reading for details.

Photographs do not have to be from a club meet, just so long as they were taken **during 2025**, by a club member.

This year the former newsletter editor, Graham Daly, has taken over the organisation of the competition from Gareth Egarr.

There is a maximum of **four** entries per category per member. There is no need to wait until the deadline to submit entries. Entries can be e-mailed at any time up to the deadline, see address below. **Please add them as attachments rather than embed them in the e-mail.** Only standard sizes are accepted, e.g. compositions of non-standard dimensions created on a 'panorama' setting are not permitted.

The deadline for entries is the **5th January 2026**. A selection of entries will then be short-listed by a professional photographer and former club member. The short-listed photos will then be displayed at the AGM on January 27th where attending members can vote for the winners.

There is a £25 voucher for Go Outdoors/Millets/Blacks as a prize for each category.

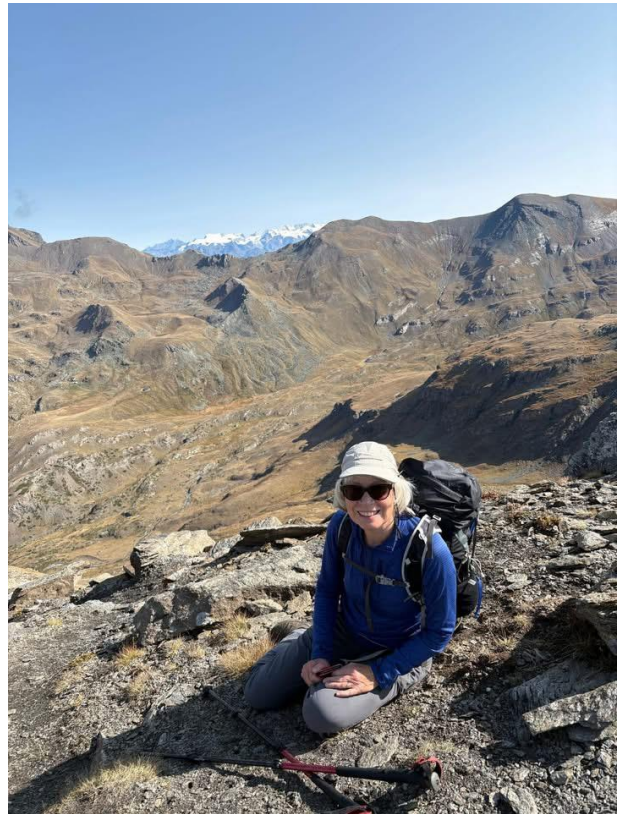
I look forward to receiving your entries.

Graham Daly.

Perambulations in the Gran Paradiso National Park, Italy, *Miles Tight*

Julie and I decided to head to the Gran Paradiso National Park in the North Italian Alps this September for a couple of weeks walking. Allowing for the drive down (Google suggests it is possible to drive in just over 10.5 hours from Calais) we were away for 3 weeks in all, taking a more leisurely drive down and back (made slightly less leisurely and longer by an unforeseen closure of the Mont Blanc tunnel).

We had been to this area before and were keen to return given the stunning scenery and quality of the walking. We based ourselves close to the small town of Cogne (a ski resort) on the northern edge of the park which gave good access to a part of the park we had not visited before and also the surrounding areas, as well as having basic services. The park contains the only 4000 metre peak entirely in Italy (Gran Paradiso) as well as a multitude of peaks slightly below that magic height, which (in my opinion) have the advantage of being quiet and without hordes of guides leading their clients to the top as fast as possible. Strangely the area seems to have few British visitors – we saw no other British number plates in the whole time we were there and only spoke to one other English couple – Dutch, German, French and Italians were much more plentiful.



For those potentially interested in visiting there did not appear to be any via ferrata and only one short lift (which shut until December the day after we arrived!). Basically, if you want to get up high then you have to do it under your own steam – the road at its highest goes up to about 1700 metres, though most of the walks we did started from around 1500m. There are a number of huts (Refugio) which are open to around end of September both in the park and in the surrounding areas as well as a number of bivouac huts. While we were there the

weather was perfect, blue skies and low 20 °C temperatures, though we did come across frost high up.

On the drive up to Cogne from the Aosta Valley it was clear that there had been some recent significant weather damage as the road was being completely rebuilt in places.



When we started walking we discovered that a large number of footpaths had been formally closed by the authorities as a result of damage from this storm, including some of the most popular and scenic. To my mind the obvious thing to do when seeing a footpath closed sign is to ignore it and see how far it is possible to get (usually there is a way around things) – in some cases the closures seemed to be a little over the top – the authorities covering themselves. In others we could see their point – whole cliffs had

collapsed taking the path with it and leaving precipitous loose scree slopes with piles of balanced rocks ready to fall from above. In some cases we managed to pick our way carefully across such slopes, trying not to look up, in others we gave up. In terms of walks – we got out every day but spending one night in a refuge or, as it turned out, in a shed outside the refuge, grandly described as a ‘Starbox’. This meant you could pull back the roof and lie there staring at the stars. However, we decided to leave the roof on as the centimetre thick plywood of the walls and floor was not conducive to a warm night’s rest given the below zero temperatures outside – the warden kindly gave us three duvets each as compensation.

Our walks took us to a number of 3000m plus summits and a number of high passes between valleys. The wildlife was plentiful and spectacular – on the first day a group of 10 or so Ibex ambled over close to us feeding on the sparse grass – they weren’t bothered by our presence, but the size of their horns did give us pause for thought. We also saw Chamois, vultures, marmots, lizards and a brief glimpse of a snake. The geology of the area is interesting – a lot of volcanic rocks, but also a lot of very brittle and broken up metamorphic schists which mean that some of the summits seemed to be composed of loose piles of choss which didn’t inspire confidence. The area has a lot of glaciers too, adding to the spectacular scenery. Climate change seemed to be leading to drastic reductions in the extent of these (it was possible to compare old photographs in the local tourist office with the view from the window). In one case we walked to a point where we were sure from my 15 year old map we would be able to reach the bottom of a glacier, but on arrival there was a deep trench bounded by moraines where the glacier had been, but no sign of the glacier.

Overall we had a great time and would recommend the area for a future club trip. There is plentiful accommodation (we stayed in a small but very comfortable old ski chalet), including a couple of campsites in spectacular locations which would take motorhomes (and in one case caravans, though given the state of the road up from the valley at the moment I am very glad we didn’t take ours!).

Stair hut meet, Nov 7th – 9th

In the end, 8 of us turned up at the Fylde Club's hut at Stair and contemplated why they had changed its name from 'hut' to 'cottage' ; after all, we had taken a decision some years ago to stop calling Clwt y Bel 'the cottage' and settled for 'hut' as likely to give visitors more realistic expectations! Sadly Emilie and Catherine didn't make it due to ill health.



Larry on Blencathra. Photo: Steve Lowe.



Steve Lowe and Larry King had arrived early enough on Friday to take in Blencathra via Sharp Edge and then joined the rest of us being very indecisive about what to do on Saturday. Eventually Miles, Julie, Liz and Larry headed for a loop via Dale Head and Robinson while Chris, Steve and Andy T went for variations on the Coledale circuit via the steep Causey Pike. With an iffy knee Jan plodded into Keswick, caught a bus to Grange and had a delightful walk back along the 'terrace' path on the lower slopes of Cat Bells. The day ended with a meal in the Swinside Inn and, later, an enjoyable group effort to complete the Jumbo general knowledge crossword in the newspaper.

Miles and Liz doing a penguin impression. It was a bit breezy on the tops.

Sunday was wet with a terrible forecast and equally terrible lack of enthusiasm so we cleared up and headed off. This was a shame as the meet had originally been planned to coincide with Remembrance Sunday and an opportunity to join hundreds of others on an ascent of Great Gable for the 2 minute silence at the site of the Fell and Rock Club's plaque dedicated to the 20 members they lost in the first World War. (The M6 southbound was dire).

Jan Campbell

Upcoming meets/events

Sunday 30th November. A walk in the Denbigh Moors area taking in part of the Brenig Way. Meet at Radbrook coop car park for car sharing and an 8 a.m. departure.

Meet coordinator: Andy Bentley

Friday Dec 5th – Sunday 7th The annual Xmas gathering and dinner at Clwt y Bel. The Saturday evening meal, along with mulled wine and mince pies at 4pm, stays the same price as last year at £15 pp (cash on the weekend). **PLEASE let Jan know if you wish to come.**

Sunday 21st December, sunrise, walk and pub lunch! Three in One!

Solstice Sunrise, We plan to be on Top of Earls Hill to greet sunrise with a raised glass. The great thing about the Winter Solstice is it marks the point from which the days start to get longer and the great thing about the solstice sunrise is that it isn't that early, 8.15a.m. ish. You **MUST** let Mike know if you are intending to be on this part of the day.

Christmas Walk, meet at Stiperstones Pub at 11.15a.m. and order lunch, if eating. At 11.30a.m. we will start wandering over the Stiperstone Hills to work up an appetite which will be assisted by some Stones of the warming liquid variety.

Christmas Lunch at the Stiperstones Inn. A Festive Feast of Christmas Fayre, a lovely time of year to catch up with friends and chat about the year past and make plans for the future year. Friends and family welcome. Christmas menu at Stiperstones Inn is on their Website with 2 courses and a coffee under £23, 3 courses and other food available as is a selection of reasonably priced drinks. **Meet to eat at 2.30pm and please pre order food** earlier in the morning.
Meet coordinator: Mike Blakemore

Thursday January 1st. New Year's Day walk and Social Alfresco Food Share.

Meet at 11.30a.m. at the Bog car park. Bring food to share and extra warm clothes for standing around in.

Meet coordinator: Mike Blakemore

Sunday January 4th Glyderau. Full details by email later but hoping for winter conditions.

Clwt y Bel is also booked for members if you wish to make a weekend of it.

Meet coordinator: Simon Moore

January 23th -25th Low House, Coniston. This meet coincides with Burns Night.

Meet coordinator: contact mail@shrewsburymc.com

Tuesday January 27th. The AGM at the Cock Inn. 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30pm start

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD to 2026: (Also see email that was sent out on Oct 27th 2025)

February 21st-28th 2026 is the Scottish winter trip to Killin staying at Morenish House which sleeps 18. £160 pp for the week's luxury accommodation. You can secure your place with an £80 deposit with the balance due in January. At the time of writing 12 have booked.

Meet coordinator: Jan Campbell

EVEN FURTHER AHEAD:

May 16th -23rd 2026 Killarney/Kerry, Eire. This is primarily a camping meet but alternative accommodation is available nearby. Everything from big mountains such as Carrantoohil to woodland trails.

Meet coordinator: Lee Campbell

June 20th - July 5th, Picos de Europa. This meet will be based near the town of Potes in a stunningly beautiful area with a great variety of mountain based activities. Camping La Viorna is within walking distance of the town.

Meet coordinators: Miles and Julie Tight.

Sept 12th - 19th Ballater, Royal Deeside . Based at the Ballater Caravan park on the edge of the town. (<http://www.ballatercaravanpark.com> Early booking is advisable for those with vans; pitches 7-22 are nearest the tent area.

Meet coordinator: Tim Tindle

More details of meets will be circulated by email nearer the time; keep an eye on the website calendar.

Tuesday evening walking programme

Meet at 7.30pm for the walk

Contact Michael Creese for further details .

When?	Where?	Grid Ref	What3Word
2 nd Dec	A49 lay by (The Pipes)	SO470961	dine.fights.expecting
9 th Dec	Cardington village hall car park	SO506951	income.metals.nudge
16 th Dec	Bridges	SO393965	like.yacht.blacken
23 rd Dec	Corbett Wood car park	SJ524237	poppy.scenes.bullion
30 th Dec	A49 layby, Little Stretton	SO443913	juggles.musician.workers
6 th Jan	Ashes Hollow	SO442919	landlords.audible.horizons
13 th Jan	Hope Bowdler layby	SO468932	sneezed.chased.diplomats
20 th Jan	Snailbeach Village Hall	SJ 373023	think.radiates.nest
27th Jan	AGM Cock Inn Hanwood	SJ442095	square.year.indicated