

THE UK'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR THE OUTDOOR PROFESSIONAL

Mountain PRO

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OCTOBER 2013 VOL.1 ISSUE 4

MOUNTAIN HEROES:
EDWARD WHYMPER

CLIMBING
ON
PABBAY

THE ALPINE
CLUB

Ramsay's
Round

GEAR REVIEWS: WINTER TROUSERS, ROPES FOR CLIMBING CENTRES, WINTER GADGETS
ADVANCED NAVIGATION WITH LYLE BROTHERTON

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WELCOME



It's been a year since the first issue of *Mountain Pro*, and in that time we've covered everything from packrafting in Finland to first aid training in Berkshire; we've reviewed belay devices, sleeping bags and a whole load of footwear; Lyle Brotherton has explained everything from the brace position to emergency beacons, and I've made a lot of tent videos. Rather than announcing a huge shake-up, the rapidly increasing number of people subscribing to the magazine shows that you seem to like the way we do things – which is nice. But we won't be resting on our laurels – despite plans for a busy winter season, over the next year Lucy Wallace will be reviewing everything from ice axes to rucksacks; our regular contributors are walking, climbing, canoeing and mountain biking in the UK and abroad, and I can't even begin to understand what Lyle is getting excited about at the moment. So, to this issue: autumn is a wonderful season for backpacking, and David Lintern describes an excellent high-level, multi-day route in the Highlands, Will Nicholls emulates Ben Fogle by travelling to a couple of particularly remote islands and Andrew Mazibrada is allowed access to the hallowed ground that is the Alpine Club archive. We've got the usual news, views and reviews, as well as another of Polarworld's atmospheric Mountain Heroes portraits. As ever, if you have any comments or feedback we'd love to hear from you via our Facebook or Twitter pages.

Phil Turner
Editor



Will Nicholls' passion for climbing and skiing has taken him across

the UK and overseas. He's been climbing for ten years and lives in North Wales, where he runs his own company, Gaia Adventures. Will is a qualified Mountaineering Instructor, Winter Mountain Leader and ski instructor. It's a hard life...! See more from Will at: www.gaiaadventures.co.uk



Andrew Mazibrada is a freelance adventure travel and outdoor writer and photographer. Seduced by the

freedom of independent travel and the wilderness of the outdoors beyond his day-to-day existence, he has been hillwalking and hiking in the United Kingdom, Europe and Scandinavia in particular for years, often favouring ultralight kit selection, and recently began to move towards mountaineering and Alpinism. His travels have taken him into South East Asia, New Zealand, the US and Canada, India and Nepal. See more from him at: www.jourmeymantraveller.com.



Mountain Pro's Gear Editor **Lucy Wallace** is a freelance Mountain Leader and

Wildlife Guide based on the Isle of Arran, Scotland. Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions, itchy feet and a passion for wild places mean that she is rarely found indoors, whatever the weather. Testing kit to destruction in the British climate is an occupational hazard, she is happiest with her nose in a muddy puddle looking at animal tracks, or on a winter journey in crisp, virgin snow.



A former Scottish MRT member, today **Lyle Brotherton** teaches 'Advanced SAR Navigation'

to Mountain Rescue and Search & Rescue teams and the Special Forces. He also advises the US and UK Governments on navigational strategy in emergency management planning and works with international governments after major disasters. His *Ultimate Navigation Manual* led to an award from The Royal Institute of Navigation and required working with over 130 Search & Rescue teams in 24 countries.



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IN THE NEWS

THE MOUNTAIN TRAINING COACHING AWARD SCHEME GAINS FURTHER MOMENTUM



Following the successes of pilot course delivery, Mountain Training have passed another crucial milestone in the development

of the Coaching Award Scheme. The Coaching Management Working Group set out to select 19 providers to meet the predicted demand across Britain and 45 high quality applications were received by Mountain Training UK by the deadline of 9th September.

The process of selection has involved the Coaching Management Group's Screening Committee, an impressive team of nine people from the technical staff of the training boards and representatives from each home nation. The Coaching Management Working Group has selected the providers who will now attend an induction course on 26th September in order to gain approval to deliver the Coaching Award Scheme from 1st October onwards.

The competition was fierce, and the standard of applications

was incredibly high for this first round of providers. Looking ahead, the great news is that there is another list of equally talented coaches and well respected climbers lined up to get involved in the delivery of the scheme in the future – as soon as the demand grows.

The induction will be hosted by Jon Garside of the BMC, Belinda Fear of the Mountain Training Association, and Martin Chester (Coaching Development Officer) who says:

"I can't wait to get all this talent together in one room. After such a lot of work over a long period, by so many people, it is great to finally be able to hand the scheme to such a talented bunch to roll it out across the country. Each one of them brings some extraordinary specialist skills and a wealth of expertise. It is now important that we get together to agree the plan to deliver a consistent and high quality product, on behalf of Mountain Training UK."

An induction event will take place on Thursday 26th and Friday 27th September at the Manchester Climbing Centre. Once the induction is complete, the Coaching Award Scheme will go live for registrations from 1st October.

The team of providers should be delivering courses in your region, throughout the autumn and into the winter, at both Foundation and Development Coach level. See the details on the pages of the Mountain Training website (<http://www.mountain-training.org/award-schemes/coaching-scheme>) to find out how you can get involved in this exciting new award scheme.

SHERPA ADVENTURE GEAR PRESENTS EVEREST UNCOVERED WITH KENTON COOL AND LAKPA RITA SHERPA

Join Sherpa Adventure Gear for a free-ranging discussion of life at the top of the world with internationally-renowned mountaineer and Sherpa Adventure Gear athlete Kenton Cool and brand ambassador Lakpa Rita Sherpa, 2013 Outside

Magazine Adventurer of the Year. Between them, these men share a total of 28 Everest summits and a unique outlook on the history and future of the world's highest peak.

Hosted by Ian

Parnell; featuring Sherpa brand ambassador, Heather Geluk. You couldn't ask to be in better climbing company.

Lecture details:

- Tuesday 22nd October 2013 – George Square Lecture Theatre, Edinburgh
- Thursday 24th October 2013 – University Place, Manchester
- Friday 25th October 2013 – Royal Geographical Society, London

Doors open at 6pm, lecture starts at 7pm. Edinburgh doors open 6.30pm, lecture starts 7.30pm.

Bar available.

Tickets £10; to order, visit www.sherpaadventuregear.co.uk, or for more information telephone 01572 772504.



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OUTDOOR INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION WELCOMES £1M FUNDING BOOST FOR WALKING



The Outdoor Industries Association has welcomed the Department of Health's announcement of a new funding stream to promote walking in urban areas. During 2013/14 and 2014/15, the government will invest £1m into walking initiatives in some of the Cycling Cities in England.

In August, the Department of Health (DH) invited the eight Cycling Cities (Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Birmingham, West of England Partnership, Newcastle, Cambridge, Norwich and Oxford), to submit applications for funding for walking projects over the next two years. The DH intends for the walking initiatives to be promoted alongside cycling in each city. The opportunity has been extended to all eight cities, and it is expected that at least four will each receive around £250 000, split equally over two years. In the documentation that it sent to the Cycling Cities, the department strongly encouraged applicants to engage with campaigns or organisations linked to walking, specifically citing only five - Britain on Foot, Ramblers, Sustrans, Living Streets and Beat the Street.

The news of investment in walking followed an announcement by Tourism Minister Hugh Robertson that the government will invest £3m to support 'adventure tourism' in Britain.

Andrew Denton, chief executive of the OIA, comments:

"The OIA is delighted that the Department of Health has started to allocate money to promote and support walking, and it is really significant that revenue funding is being ring-fenced for this initiative. In the greater scheme of things, £1m is a very small sum, but the simple fact that major cities are being asked by central government to apply for it to support walking-related projects is of huge importance, as is the specific reference to Britain on Foot and the OIA in the instructions sent to the cities.

"However, while this development is extremely welcome, we have to ensure that this commitment is just the start. The investment was confirmed at the same time as £143m was allocated to support cycling - securing funding of a similar scale for walking has to be our long-term objective.

"The lobbying that the OIA and its partners have been undertaking for some time now is starting to pay real dividends. Britain on Foot is clearly on the radar at the highest level of central government and that is starting to cascade to regional authorities, which can only help the campaign. Walking is now also formally linked to cycling as a health promotion focus for the government and everyone operating in the outdoor sector should view that as a major opportunity.

"The OIA will be making contact with all eight cities to explore how we might work with them on initiatives. Beyond that, it is now up to all of us who work in the industry to use this development to push our case even higher up the national agenda, encouraging more of the public to get active outdoors and benefiting the whole sector in the process."

The eight Cycling Cities have until Friday 20 September to submit their bids for funding for walking initiatives, and successful applicants will be notified by the Department of Health a month later.

For more information about the OIA, visit www.theoia.co.uk, email info@theoia.co.uk or call 01539 445 558. To find out more about Britain on Foot, visit www.britainonfoot.co.uk, email bof@theoia.co.uk, or follow @BritainonFoot on Twitter.

KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL NEWS



Kendal Mountain Festival is stepping up a gear this year with the involvement of Channel 4, which is collaborating in the creation of a new film competition for 'short form' films.

The KMF Short Film Competition aims to encourage and promote creative outdoor filmmaking. Winning films gain both prize money and significant exposure; Channel 4 has revitalised its short-film TV series *The Shooting Gallery*, and later this year a special edition will feature Kendal Mountain Festival, with nominees and winners gaining the potential opportunity for their films to be broadcast.

Kendal's main film programme is announced later this October, but there is already news of two big premieres - the Hotaches Productions film, *Distilled* (which, we are reliably informed, involves mountaineer Andy Cave and whisky), and Alastair Lee's much-anticipated, spectacular Antarctica film, *The Great Last Climb*. Which undoubtedly involves whisky too.

Speakers at the Festival this year include US alpine hot-shot Kelly Cordes and Everest man-of-the-moment Kenton Cool. Top women climbers are well-represented, with Shauna Coxsey, Lucy Creamer, Mina Leslie-Wujastyk and Spanish big-wall soloist Silvia Vidal. It's not all about climbing, with ultra-athletes Jez Bragg and Lizzie Hawker, pro-kayaker and National Geographic Adventurer Of The Year Erik Boomer, and ace Swiss skier Samuel Anthamatten all on the speaker roster. Plus this year there's a new Underground Session; calling all cavers...

Together with the art exhibitions, literature, the RAB Party plus the Boardman Tasker literary prize, it promises to be another unmissable year. Dates are 14-17 November - news as it happens at mountainfest.co.uk.



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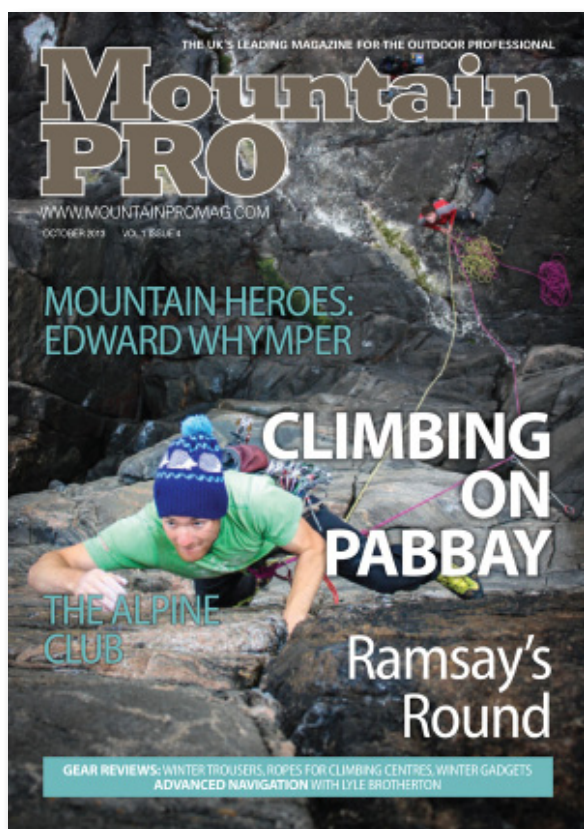
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REEL ROCK FILM TOUR STARTS OCTOBER 2013

An annual tour of the world's greatest adventure and climbing films, the Reel Rock Film Tour is one of the world's fastest growing short film festivals and is ready to once again thrill audiences across the UK this October with more than 25 screenings.

Founded in 2006 by groundbreaking filmmakers Josh Lowell (Big UP Productions) and Peter Mortimer (Sender Films), the annual 'Reel Rock Film Tour' has grown to over 400 annual screenings in 30 countries. The gripping and captivating films regularly receive widespread acclaim and awards at film festivals around the world, and are seen by more than 100 000 devoted followers annually.

The Reel Rock films toured the UK for the first time in 2012. Due to popular demand, the Tour is returning in 2013, with the latest installment of films – 'Reel Rock 8'. Reel Rock 8 will showcase Alpine legends, amazing adventurers and climbing icons (including Britain's own Hazel Findlay), as they break the boundaries of what is possible high up in the mountains.

Audiences will be transported across the globe to witness these incredible feats and will see first-hand the inside story of one of the most controversial climbing incidents to occur on Everest in recent years.

The Reel Rock Film Tour offers audiences so much more than just a film night (albeit with the best new adventure films around!). The screenings are inspiring and spirited events, where outdoors lovers and climbers alike can come together to celebrate adventure and the great outdoors. While the inspirational films are incentive enough, audiences also have a chance to win some fantastic prizes provided by the Tour's sponsors.

The Reel Rock Film Tour welcomes and encourages the involvement of Mountain Rescue teams, climbing gyms/clubs



and other organisations local to each event, which fosters a strong festive feeling and community participation.

This year the UK Reel Rock Film Tour is delighted to be working with The North Face, Ellis Brigham and Clif Bar. For Reel Rock Film Tour tickets and further information go to www.reelrock.co.uk.



MOUNTAIN LEADER SUMMER AWARD UPDATES

Mountain Training would like to officially announce the revised updates to the Mountain Leader Summer Award.

Many months of discussion have resulted in some important changes to the Mountain Leader Award. These changes are part of a wholesale review of the all the walking awards, as we approach the 50th anniversary of the Mountain Leader scheme.

The following updates to the ML Summer Training and Assessment have been agreed and are now in place:

- The training and assessment of the use of a rope in the water hazards (river crossing) section of the syllabus will be discontinued.
- The guidance on training and assessment of the use of the rope on steep ground has also been modified. Mountain Training feels that the emphasis needs to be on 'real life' steep ground situations, rather than the potential 'lowering' of participants down vertical crags.
- There is acknowledgment of the role that site/organisation-specific training and management can have in determining the

operational remit of any award holder.

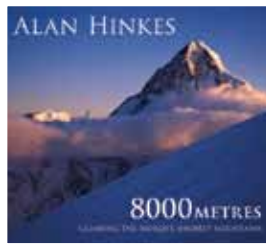
To clarify we will:

- Not be expecting candidates to be trained or assessed in the use of the rope in river crossings.
- Be expecting that the use of the rope on steep ground reflects common practice - i.e. 'safeguarding' rather than 'lowering' - in both training and assessment and that complicated rope harnesses will NOT be required.

These changes have been revised in the ML Handbook, which is available on the MT website at: <http://www.mountain-training.org/award-schemes/ml-summer>.

With what many will see as a simplification of the rope work, all future training courses from 1st October can be delivered at the Providers/Course Directors discretion at a ratio of 1;6, instead of the normal 1;4 as it has been in the past. This does not change the requirement to have a second member of staff on both training and assessment courses, as we believe it is important that all candidates are able to observe different teaching methods and course delivery.

MOUNTAIN BOOKSHELF



8000m: Climbing the World's Highest Mountains by Alan Hinkes RRP £25.00

A true mountaineering hero, Alan Hinkes brings us the story of his life, one ascent at a time.

He is the first Briton to summit all of the '8000ers', which consists of 14 mountains in the Himalayan and Karakoram ranges of Nepal, Tibet and Pakistan over 8000m, a feat that has taken him 18 years to accomplish.

Each chapter tells the tale of each one of the different mountains Alan has climbed; labelled with the height and date it was ascended.

The crisp imagery used in this book is worth the cover price alone. Although Alan himself gives very detailed accounts of each ascent, the pictures also give you a great insight into the challenges he faced on these sometimes life-risking epics. It also needs to be noted that a lot of these images were taken in the pre-digital age; therefore Alan would have had to carry and protect numerous rolls of films to load into manual cameras in frigid temperatures.

Brian Blessed contributes a moving foreword to the book, stating: "How does one appraise such a character? Such people are our dreams made flesh and blood. Alan fits the bill perfectly; he is the personification of the spirit of adventure."

Alan's acknowledgements are very poignant, and bring it that little bit closer to home when he states: "My grandma deserves a mention, she put up with her grandson risking his life for months on end. As does my daughter, Fiona whose Dad kept disappearing."

Published by Cicerone. **ESB**

The Modern Explorers Edited by Robin Hanbury-Tension & Robert Twigger RRP £24.95



We ask, has every inch of the world been explored yet? What with exploration being more popular than ever, this theory is strongly supported by contemporary explorers whose adventures are beautifully portrayed in this book.

The Modern Explorers contains thirty nine first-hand, dramatic accounts, and within it we discover some of the most isolated places on earth through the eyes of the explorer.

The book is divided into geographical areas of the world, including: polar, desert, rainforest, mountain, ocean, under seas and land, and lastly the lost worlds. Contributors include explorers such as the legendary Chris Bonington, who talks us through 'climbing the unclimbed'; we also read Rebecca Stephens' account of being the first British woman to summit Mount Everest.

Robert Twigger himself shares his experiences in Egypt; in 2010 he became the first person to make a foot crossing of the Libyan/Egyptian Great Sand Sea, stating: "For me, exploration is about being the first to bring back news of some distant and intriguing place, either by travelling in a new way or by being a rare visitor to such a place."

From the frozen poles to the hottest deserts, from mountaintops to the depths of oceans and underground caves, this book certainly has a little something for anyone who likes taking a leap into the unknown and making some unforgettable discoveries. **ESB**

Adventures in mind: A personal obsession with mountains by Heather Dawe RRP £12.99



Heather Dawe was 17 years old when she began her love affair with running.

Having always enjoyed the rural and

wild countryside, when she moved to Leeds she decided to take up fell running.

Beginning to take part in fell races and mountain marathons, Heather quickly became a serious fell runner. In her book, Heather remembers how when she was getting merry in the pub one night she joked that she was going to compete at the highest mountain running level possible. However, this was no joke; her hazy prophecies came true, but as her novel tells, she overcame a lot in order for this to happen.

Tragedy struck in 2000 and Heather was involved in a car accident; she was hit by a car travelling at 40mph, and although fortunately she fully-recovered from her injuries, this incident arguably pushed her further than if she hadn't been hit.

After this, Heather conquered her goals, including winning elite mountain marathons, winning the three peaks cyclo-cross race, as well as completing the Bob Graham Round in less than 22 hours and being the first female to take part in the Fred Whitton Challenge.

Heather also brings us along for her 2 745 mile adventure along the route of the Continental Divide in North America, where her emotional heights are reached. *Adventures in Mind* leads you through every single one of Heather's trips and achievements. It's an incredibly thought-provoking and intense read; you never know...this book might even encourage you to get running up mountains and follow in her fell running shoes. **ESB**



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ADVENTURE GEAR

BARBARA SWINDIN



As outlined in your book *All But One*, you have spent a significant chunk of your life summing the Alpine four-thousanders – why choose this path?

My husband climbed with a man called Peter Fleming, and between the two of them they had both climbed a significant amount of mountains. They then decided to compile a list of mountains they were yet to climb, and this is where the idea of the ‘four-

thousanders’ was born. I personally wasn’t even considering doing this, but just ended up going a lot with them; I then began to compile my own list, what with my fitness improving and my skills strengthening, and decided that I would attempt to ascend the four-thousanders. I began to gain confidence and it became apparent to me that no other British woman had taken on this challenge before.

How much did Peter Fleming help and influence you?

He was a truly wonderful person, very quiet and unassuming. I felt totally safe with him and he never let me down. He would climb with Les and I regularly and we made a great team. While Les would stride ahead, Peter and I would take regular breaks and just take in the scenery. He pushed me and motivated me through all our treks and he really encouraged me to write my book, it’s just such a shame he never got to see it. When we attempted to climb the Aiguille Blanche we found that three was a good number for safety, but unfortunately the weather got the better of us and we didn’t make it.

In your book you talk about some of the problems that women face while climbing - could you please elaborate on this?

There were numerous hygiene issues as expected with the basic facilities that are provided; there were also larger issues to consider for women who took mountaineering seriously, such as the decision to start a family. Some women can do both; I didn’t. I would consider mountaineering ‘a man’s world’, especially when I was in the thick of it, purely because of the obvious lack

of women who did it. However, the men would never make me feel any different; we were a group of people from all different backgrounds who shared a passion.

You also highlight several female Alpinists from history - how influential were these women to you?

When I was climbing they were not specifically significant to me as I didn’t know much about them; I knew the name Lucy Walker loosely and that she was climbing from 1871-99. I remember thinking, if they can do it then I can!

As I began to write my book I wanted to put it into historical context, they were exceptional ‘elite’ women for their time, and it was interesting comparing their achievements with my own because we summited some of the same peaks.

What advice would you give others looking to ascend the four-thousanders?

My advice would be: only do it if you really want to - you must consider the weather and acclimatisation, as well as your companions, safest routes and most importantly, you’ve got to be fit enough.

Your husband Les has always been a big part of your mountaineering achievements - does he go on all your trips with you?

Yes, for the first 10 years we went everywhere together. My marriage is extremely important to me and I wanted him there. In the years to follow when I had improved in the late 70s and early 80s, I considered possibly climbing with just women to strengthen my leading skills. Although I did this, developing independently and coming across new challenges, I decided ultimately that I wanted to climb with Les. Women were in the minority on the climbing scene at that time; it was hard to have a female climbing partner for long periods of time due to the fact that they might be in the throes of starting a family, which would put their mountaineering pursuits on hold.

What do you do in your spare time?

At 71 I’m still pretty fit and active and love hill walking but not so much mountain climbing nowadays. I still ski; Les and I have discovered Nordic skiing, which is great, but I tend to dedicate a lot of my time to art. I am currently working in an art studio following up *All but One*, by painting a series of the Alpine peaks. This summer I took three weeks to take photos of all of the peaks I climbed; I did this by going on cable cars and sketching them. In the next two years I hope to complete this and would love to exhibit my work.

Barbara Swindin spoke to Emily Sexton-Brown.

CASTAWAY CLIMBING

South of Barra in the Outer Hebrides lie the serene islands of Pabbay and Mingulay, all but forgotten in today's fast-paced life. **Will Nicholls** and a small group of friends had the privilege of visiting them.

O ban's colourful harbour grows steadily distant as we commence our journey to Barra, at a very reasonable £25 return as foot passengers. It's a beautiful bluebird day, the sky mirrored in the mill-pond ocean, stirred only by our passage. Several dolphins escort the ferry, moving effortlessly through the water. As the sun sinks softly, opulent rays of red and pink highlight the jagged mass of Skye's Cuillin Ridge. Scotland, in good weather, is simply stunning. Specks in the distance grow larger, the globes of orange revealing remote communities. Barra beckons; a scattering of white buildings, windswept hillsides and a sense of peaceful isolation. The weather is so perfect we don't even bother with a tent; we slide into our sleeping bags and look forward to the next day, excited.

Dazzling sunlight wakes us, the sunrise surprisingly early compared to the one we are used to. A salty sea breeze and the gentle lapping of waves make us jump out of our bags, not wanting to miss out on the island's waking; a wonderful contrast to the fumes and throbbing of cars we're used to. We could have fallen into a *Famous Five* novel. Shortly after breakfast our boat arrives, taking us from Barra to Pabbay. A return trip with an island swap to Mingulay costs us £100 each. Apart from food, it's the only cost of our trip. Not bad.

Donald is a local fisherman and clearly quite the entrepreneur, seemingly the only outfit ferrying climbers around the islands.





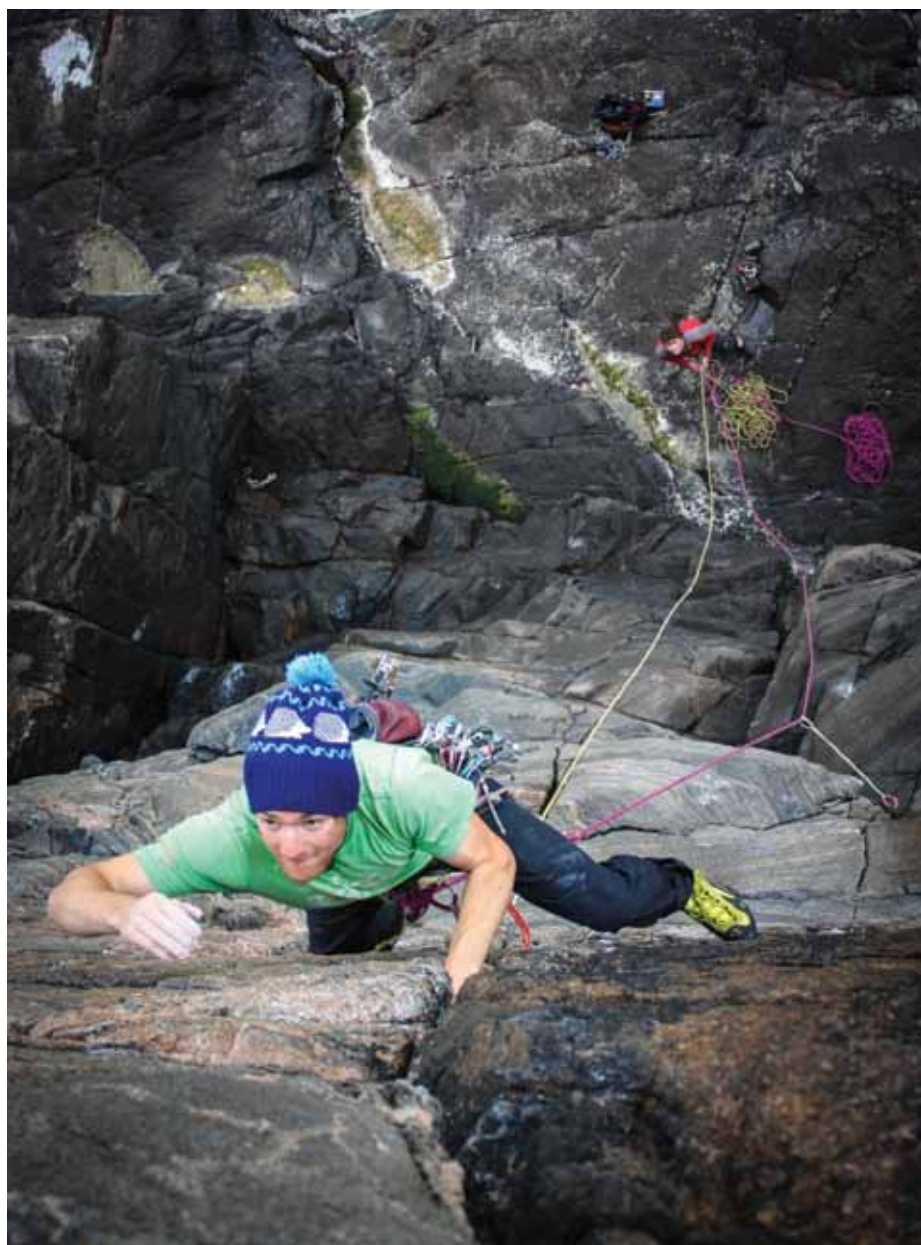
He and his two colleagues quickly load the boat, laughing and joking as they do so, their native tongue playful and new to our unaccustomed ears. Arriving in the dim light the previous night saved the surprise of the islands till morning; motoring out we pass remote homes and abandoned buildings, golden beaches and deep coves - you could imagine the *Black Pearl* sailing round the corner. A heavy green carpets the hillsides, disrupted only by dark greys revealing the multitude of small buttresses poking out for a chance to enjoy the sun.

We soon arrive at the bay, the 1.5 hour journey having raced by, and begin carrying our heavy loads to our campsite. Luckily it's only 300 metres away - ten days' worth of food, climbing and camping kit isn't light. We pitch our tents on a

knoll overlooking the crescent-shaped beach, gracefully curving for a kilometre. At its southern end a narrow peninsula protrudes; behind it, an expanse of open sea. The hill rises gradually above us, its top a modest 171 metres above sea level. The boat leaves, its engine's bass notes fading, leaving us in splendid isolation. Fortunately I didn't have to ponder the meaning of life in this tranquil moment, as I was sharing a tent with possibly the loudest person you could ever meet. His best Scottish accent boomed across, informing me, "there's nae crumpet here laddie!" Well, that was putting it mildly. In fact, there wasn't much at all. A derelict building, no trees and strangely, it seemed, no wildlife. But what Pabbay did have in abundance was world-class rock climbing. I won't bore you with the trivialities of

route descriptions, but can safely say that every route was adventurous, memorable and brilliant. The rock, Lewisian Gneiss, is the oldest in the country, and some of the oldest in the world at 2.5 billion years. I was once told by my geology teacher that if the world's six billion year history was represented as a 24 hour clock, humans have been around for the last second; quite astounding to consider. The rock is steep, often overhanging, rough, and endowed with a plentiful supply of big handholds and good protection. Accessing some of the cliffs required a 100 metre abseil into free space (it being so steep your feet can't touch the wall), which is pretty exciting, even if you've abseiled a lot before. The routes all felt solid and we encountered very little loose rock, though due to their size, their difficulty and the remoteness of the

continued on page 17 ►



island, they all felt committing and as a result, supremely rewarding.

In fact, should any accident have occurred, it could have been interesting to affect a rescue. Mobile phones didn't work; escaping the relentless beeping for ten days was a holiday in itself. The lack of trees quickly resolved the prospect of building a raft. A message in a bottle could have worked, though may well have been deciphered by someone on America's East Coast. Furthermore, there were no carrier pigeons, so that too, was out of the question. What we had was a VHF radio; left by Donald to get in touch should a problem arise. Only we'd accidentally left it turned on and it had run out of power. I think had anything have happened, our hopes were firmly planted in Sam's ability

to swim for it. No pressure then.

Every day melded into the wonderfully simple pattern of waking up, eating, walking to the crag, climbing, returning, eating and sleeping. There was nothing else to consider. Apart from remembering to use sunscreen, as several of us found out to our detriment - each day was in the low 20s and sunny, perfect conditions for climbing. Bathed in sunshine and with very light winds, just enough to keep the midges away, it was hard to even consider the island in inclement weather. Those brave enough (I was only once) could run into the sea for a wash. Had a picture been taken of the beach and sea, most folk would guess the location to be somewhere exotic; the white sand and crystal water reminiscent of the Caribbean

or Maldives. The temperature however, was not. My sole excursion into the enticing water ended almost as quickly as it started, yelping embarrassingly as it sucked all the warmth from my body, making my chest heave. It was certainly refreshing.

The distinct absence of anything growing taller than 15 centimetres or permanent human habitation, point to the stark reality of life in these outposts of the British Isles. Atlantic storms, unabated, must crash into the islands with ferocity hard to conceive. A fierce storm broke while all of the island's able-bodied men were out on a fishing trip, tragically killing them all. The island was then deserted in the early twentieth century, the decayed building the only mark of their toil. After seven days on Pabbay we shifted to neighbouring Mingulay for a further three. Equally charming, it was slightly larger and home to more wildlife. A vibrant palette covers the islands, the rich greens of mosses and grasses offset against the lurid purples of heather and brilliant yellows of tormentil and bog asphodel. As the sun grows stronger, so too does the fragrance of wild thyme, small eddies holding pillows of earthy odour. A colony of puffins provided great entertainment as they flew with seemingly reckless abandon, torpedoing into the sea at high speed. The same area was used by hundreds of seals, lying idly at the water's edge, making the most of the sun's final shards of warmth before sunset. During our trip we witnessed a whale jumping out of the sea, a spectacle we'll never forget. As we fished off some rocks, a basking shark appeared close by, its fin still scary to behold, despite its non-Jaws like reputation!

I sometimes forget that wilderness exists in the UK. The Outer Hebrides are that and more. Get out there and have an adventure!

FORCE TEN MTN 2 TENT



CICERONE: KEV REYNOLDS - THE MAN WITH THE WORLD'S BEST JOB



A CHALLENGE IN THE ROUND

35 years ago, Charlie Ramsay became the first man to summit 24 Munros in 24 hours. Ramsay's Round is still the benchmark Scottish ultra-distance marathon at over 90km, with 8600m of ascent. **David Lintern** took a slightly more leisurely pace, and discovered a muscular and exciting backpacking route worth every ounce of extra effort.

After a few years in the mountains, it's not uncommon to seek bigger challenges. I still enjoy the simple pleasures of camping and walking, but I'd be lying if I didn't admit to wanting to push the odd personal boundary and extend my limits a little, however modest those may seem to others. On first discovering Ramsay's route I experienced a now familiar sense of excitement and trepidation - sooner or later I would have to try it for myself. I'm

certainly no fell runner, and so packed for four days. Even at my snail's pace, taking the high line around Glen Nevis exceeded my expectations.

Ramsay's original route is actually an extension of another record. Meeting Charlie before my attempt in an Edinburgh coffee shop, he told me the development of his round was bound together with two other marathon runners - Phillip Tranter and Chris Brasher. Tranter was the first to join all 18 Munros around Glen Nevis in a

continuous round in less than 24 hours. Charlie ran for the Lochaber club, and had successfully completed Tranter's Round twice. On holiday in the Lake District he helped pace Chris Brasher (later the originator of the London Marathon), on his first attempt at the Bob Graham Round. Charlie started as part of the support team, but ended up finishing successfully. Chris challenged him to develop the first Scottish '24 in 24' round. The logical place to explore that possibility was on

home turf - his familiar training ground of Lochaber.

Could Tranter's Round be extended? Indeed it could. On the 9th July, 1978, Charlie returned to his starting point at the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel with two minutes to spare. Ramsay's Round was a reality. He travelled anti-clockwise along the Mamores, heading east then north to add the five Loch Treig Munros to Tranter's Round, then west again over the Grey Corries, the Aonachs, and finally, finished with a flourish on the Carn Mor Dearg arête leading to Ben Nevis. These are no ordinary Munros - they include 10 over 1100m summits, with some of the most challenging ground in the country. Carl, a ski tourer and alpine mountaineer I met on the way, called it 'mountaineering with a backpack'. It's certainly a step beyond regular hill walking, and best left for a clear weather window and the long hours of summer light that bless the north.

Within minutes of beginning my attempt, I came up against the first of the difficulties Charlie had warned me about. Forestry Commission trees brought down by gales made for some uncomfortable bushwhacking through deadfall and earthworks. Once beyond the obstacle course of logjams and tree stumps, I made for the first tops of Mullach nan Coirean and Stob Bàn, with shadows lengthening

in golden evening light, and then a late camp at Lochan Coire nan Miseach. I had made a late and inefficient start, but I was on my way.

I had chosen a weekend of dazzling summer weather to make my modest walker's attempt, and even at 9am the following morning the heat on the Devil's Ridge towards Sgurr a' Mhàim was intense. The two spurs that make up the 'horns' of the Ring of Steall add a good distance to the route and should not be underestimated. Today though, the scrambling was easy on dry rock, with barely a breath of wind to trouble my clambering, and at least I was able to leave my bag at each bealach and hop along unencumbered. Water was going to be more of a challenge and meant close attention to the map, as well as to the early signs of dehydration. After the easy summit of Sgorr an Lubnair (now demoted to a subsidiary top and not a Munro, but still officially on the route), a long pull up to Am Bodach was followed by a steep descent on loose rock and earth towards Stob Coire a' Chàirn.

Water is next available below the bealach between this summit and the ridge towards An Gearanach, and I collected this on a vague path that contours around towards Na Gruagaichean.

I climbed slowly, with the mid-afternoon sun reflecting uncomfortably off the Binnein Quartzite on the path, and almost lay fully down on the top, tired and very thirsty. How many tops was this - seven? Eight? The next hour or so was easier, along a wonderful narrowing ridge that led towards the grandstand rocky jumble that is Binnean Mor. The views here across the entire round are phenomenal and the heat of the day had begun to dissipate. Descending on the northern spur was initially easy, but dropping into the corrie on steep grassy slopes towards the first of three lakes was plain uncomfortable. I was still overheating and needed to stop.

The lochan under the outlier of Binnean Beag is simply a beautiful place to camp. I again caught up with Carl, who was recovering from mild dehydration and had decided to abort his two day attempt on Tranter's Round. Discretion being the better part of valour, I put up my shelter, ate and took on fluid. I tackled the outlier after dinner and saw the sun go out over Ben Nevis. That, incidentally, is one of the joys of this trip - you get to see the UK's highest summit from so many different angles and really appreciate its scale, before tackling it as the final top on the round. Later that night we heard fell runners coming in and bivvying at the lake. Many had chosen to bail



due to dehydration, and even the support teams were suffering in the heat.

The following day and together with Carl, I headed out on a beautiful switchback track and then tackled the slog up the scree slopes of Sgùrr Eilde Mor. Type 1, followed by type 2 fun. At the 680m contour we parted company, and I headed for an early lunch and a wash near the ruins at Lùibeilt. This can be a difficult river crossing, but after weeks of dry weather there were no issues. I made reasonable progress through a hot dry glen towards Loch Treig, down past picture perfect waterfalls and outcrops of native woodland, a wonderful window into how less intensively grazed highlands might look.

At the derelict Creagauineach Lodge, I wavered. I began to walk east but turned back after a few minutes. I simply didn't have the time - or was it the energy? - to complete the full round in four days. I also knew I wanted to be on the CMD arête early on day four to maximise the chances of clear weather and reasonable photos. Time to swallow my pride and head north, making this attempt a Tranter's Round, albeit augmented with some rather lovely glen walking.

I followed a long and winding path alongside the Allt na Lairige. The glen was airless and horseflies made mincemeat of exposed limbs. The second Stob Bàn on the route and my tenth Munro so far was a joyless and exhausting ascent at the end of the day, and the weather seemed to change as I reached the top, but at least the bugs were gone. Coming down off the summit was steep over very loose rock, but the bealach reached soon enough. How on earth did people run this in 24 hours?!

By late evening my high camp was utterly still and shrouded in cloud. After a

slow start, I descended to collect water and then headed into the mists for what seemed like forever to the highliner Stob Coire Claurigh. From here, I was on compass bearings for an hour or two, checking progress as I went. The Grey Corries were indeed grey, but nonetheless impressive for that. Wind howled over the ridge from the south, but lifted the cloud enough to expose dramatic cliffs near Caisteil.

I made a bad route choice at Stob Coire Easian and decided to ascend rather than tackle the scree. This took me around the

“The next two hours I spent in pure mountain bliss, relishing my slow daunder along this spiny dragon’s back, then up over talus to the tallest place in the UK.”

back of the hill and wasted valuable time, but by then the weather was clearing and I descended on blocky slabs under clearing skies towards the lovely narrowing ascent of Sgùrr Chòinnich Mór, a truly beautiful mountain. I rested there for a while, chatting to a forestry worker on her day off. The steep scree slopes before Stob Coire Bhealach were hard work, but the exposed muddy scramble directly afterwards was vertiginous and a little uncomfortable, even in this fine weather. This was quickly followed by a slow and simple walk to the summit of Aonach Beag, reached at 6pm. Descending the horribly eroded path off Aonach Mor (16, or was it 17? I'd lost count) to the headwater of Coire Guibhsachan, the last of my high wild camps awaited. I ate soupy couscous and watched alpenglow

rise and fall on the Ring of Steall.

The home stretch is in what feels like genuine alpine territory. I climbed above the inversion that had swamped my camp and was up onto the easterly ridge of Carn Mór Dearg and the summit by 8.30am. The infamous CMD arête stretched out in front of me, cloud again billowing over from the south but much clearer today, the shattered ridge snaking up to Nevis, a summit I'd be saving for just this occasion. The next two hours I spent in pure mountain bliss, relishing my slow daunder along this spiny dragon's back, then up over talus to the tallest place in the UK. Nevis is big – if this were an alpine journal I'd be obliged to call it a 'snarling edifice' or similar, but suffice to say it took a while and was strenuous! The summit was busy, with tourists either woefully over, or woefully under-equipped. Consequently the descent on the main track was a little surreal, but the last 82 hours had made it all worthwhile. It was a very fitting grand finale to a demanding, exciting, world-class route. And I wasn't even running.

Charlie Ramsay will be speaking about 35 years of the round at:

- Glasgow SYHA Conference Centre, Monday 11th October 2013.
- Cumbria Shapwells Hotel, Friday 10th November 2013.

I used the Harvey's Charlie Ramsay Round 1:40k map of the round, which usefully covers the whole route on one waterproof sheet: http://www.harveymaps.co.uk/acatalog/Charlie_Ramsay_Round.html

Harvey's are offering a £2 discount on the map to readers of Mountain Pro until December 2013, quoting the unique code MAP013.

VIDEO PREVIEW: RAB LATOK ULTRA



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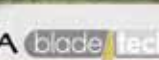
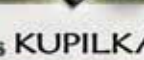
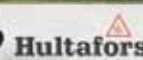


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THE ALPINE CLUB IN 2013

In December 1857, shortly after Sir Alfred Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn sparked the beginning of the Golden Age of Alpinism, a group of influential British mountaineers convened at Ashley's Hotel in London and the Alpine Club was conceived. Over 150 years later, **Andrew Mazibrada** paid a visit to their home at 55 Charlotte Road, London, to find out what they're up to today.



The idea of forming a national mountaineering club had been mooted between E. S Kennedy and William Matthews during an ascent of the Finsteraarhorn on 13 August 1857. After its formation, the Club moved to the Metropole Hotel and mountaineering began to thrive as a sport. Of the twenty-eight 4000m peaks around Zermatt, nineteen were climbed for the first time in the seven year period between 1858 and 1865. The Golden Age of Alpinism concluded with Edward Whymper's ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865.

The First Circular of the Alpine Club in 1857, in the florid language of the time, stated the object of the Alpine Club was "...to facilitate association among those who possess a similarity of taste, and to enable its members to make arrangements for meeting at some suitable locality whence they may in company undertake any of the more difficult mountain excursions, and to give to all an opportunity of consulting the maps and books to be placed in the rooms which it is expected the Club will eventually possess." It went on to say that "...members will occasionally dine together at their own expense, but the funds of the Club will be made available when on suitable occasions the Club is favoured by the presence of geographical

explorers, or by that of other guests of celebrity."

For many years the Club would be likened to an elite London Gentlemen's Club. Its exclusivity was certainly part of the mystique, as was the fact that climbing was the preserve of those of a certain financial means. The first presidents included a judge (Sir Alfred Wills himself) and a publisher (William Longman). Thomas George Bonney was a geologist. And science has always had a tremendous importance in the objectives of the Club. There existed also some ambiguity in the qualification for membership, said to have been 'a reasonable number of respectable peaks'. Eventually, however, the Club became the country's premier mountaineering club, with a clear qualification for membership, for both men and women, and an 'aspirant' grade for those working towards full membership.

When the Alpine Club was conceived, the Alps were experiencing a Romantic bloom in popularity. As literature, science and tourism developed, the perception of the Alps slowly evolved from one tinged with fear and scepticism; it was at one stage deemed a barren wasteland populated by demons. In the 17th century, John Evelyn described the landscape as a collection of "horrid and fearful crags and tracts". But, during the 19th century, Rousseau, Shelley, Byron and Wordsworth

all extolled the allure and majesty to be discovered in the Alps, while the golden age of science persuaded scientists such as JD Forbes and John Tyndall to ascend peaks to gather knowledge about the forces which crafted the Earth's vibrant landscape. The Industrial Revolution created wealth and, with it, the concept of tourism. Inns and guesthouses appeared in Alpine pastoral villages and the Alps were no longer to be feared. Quite the reverse; conquering them became an object of desire.

The core values of the Alpine Club remain essentially the same. And to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Alpine Club in 2007, Switzerland Tourism took out nearly a full page ad in the *Telegraph*. A photograph of the Matterhorn draped with a huge flag on which was written; "A big thank-you to the British for introducing us to climbing 150 years ago." And in Zermatt, a town with which the Club shares a passionate history, stands a bronze statue of a climber with the inscription: 'Marking 150 years of friendship between Zermatt and the pioneers of Alpinism.' It was unveiled that year with 300 members of the Alpine Club in attendance.

Alpine Club Rule 2, as revised in 2001, sets out the core objectives of the Club as "...to promote mountain climbing and exploration throughout the world,

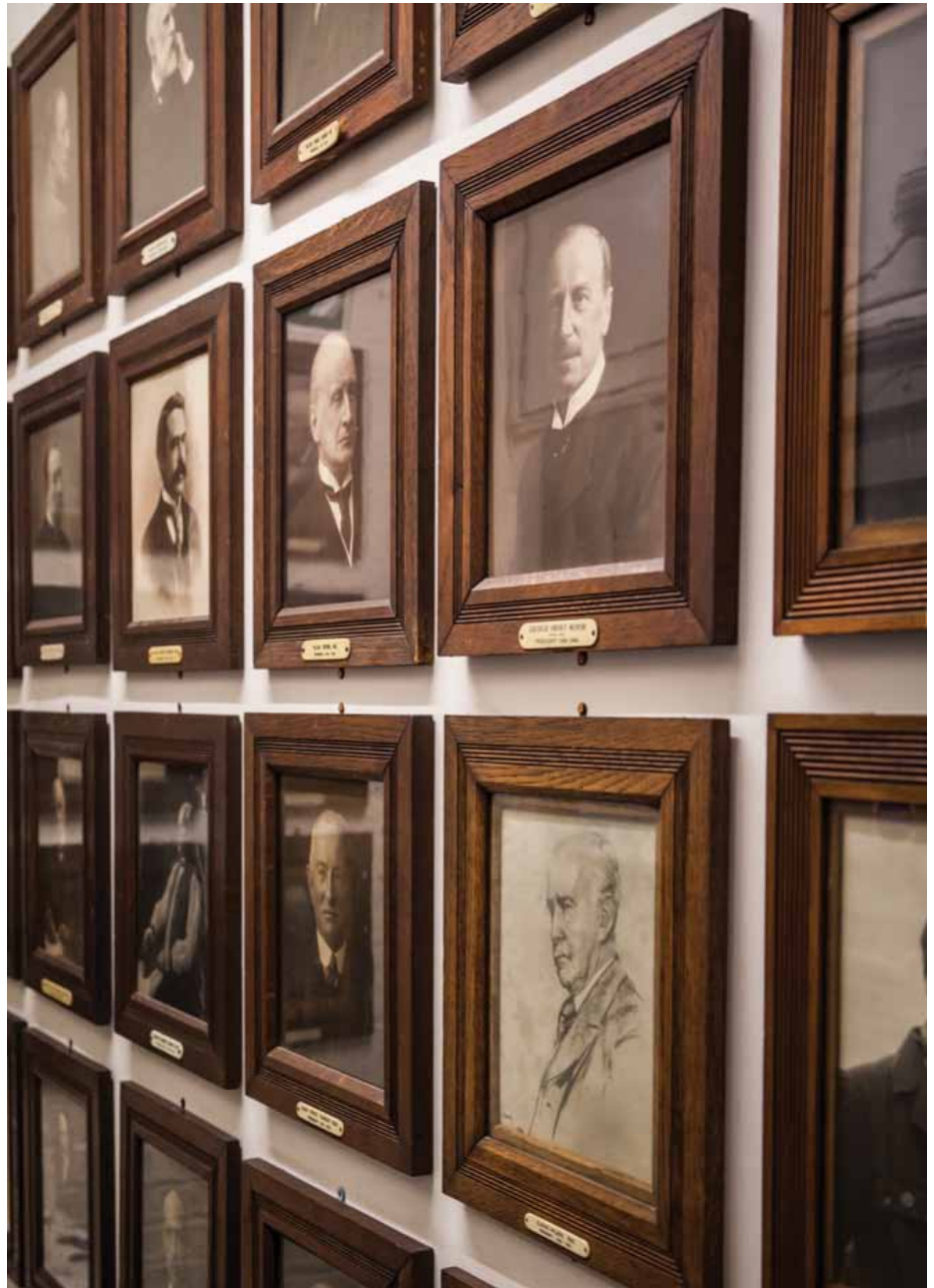
develop a better knowledge of the mountains through literature, science and art and through its meetings and publications, encourage protection of the mountain environment, and conserve the Club's heritage."

Glyn Hugh, the Club's archivist, welcomes the recent evolution of the Club: "We are less introspective. When the Club first started, you couldn't climb in the Alps unless you were well-heeled. It was socially exclusive as a result. It became less exclusive from a purely practical point of view, as climbing became more popular. Happily, we are far more accessible now." The senior members of the Club have changed; younger members have begun to exert their influence more. Social media and the internet have become important ways for the Club to get its message across. "A big influence in the last few years has been having Mick Fowler as president, particularly as far as the outside world is concerned. He is highly-respected by young climbers; that is a major change for us." Fowler was awarded the Piolet d'Or and Golden Piton with Paul Ramsden for their 2002 ascent of Siguniang (6250m), and was voted the 'Mountaineer's Mountaineer' in a poll in *The Observer*. Bonington described him in 1981 as "...the most successful innovative mountaineer of the last twenty years".

Hugh continues: "The real issue is that we want to be representative of the climbers using the Alps and Greater Ranges. If you are not appealing to the younger climbers, then you are not representative in that area."

The headquarters of the Club currently sit at 55 Charlotte Road, on the outskirts of the City of London, in Shoreditch. The club purchased the freehold of this five-storey Victorian warehouse in 1991, and the club's lecture room, small four-bed bunkhouse (including the 'Bonington memorial shower'), library and archives are all ensconced within.

It is with some pride that the Club remarks that its members are active in virtually all mountain regions, with recent expeditions to Alaska, the Andes, China and the Himalayas. The Club offers, it says, an "...international forum to share information and experience." Its primary focus has always tended towards mountaineering overseas, and it is associated more with exploratory



mountaineering than with purely technical climbing (the early Club was once derided as engaging in very little climbing but instead 'a lot of walking steeply uphill'). Technical climbing occupied an offshoot - the 'Alpine Climbing Group' (ACG), founded in 1952. One of the real benefits of membership, envisaged by the likes of Kennedy and Matthews 150 years ago, is access to leading climbers and therefore a wealth of experience.

To this end, the Club holds lecture programmes in London, the Peak District and Bristol. Subjects range from difficult new routes to exploratory expeditions into unknown ranges. Recent speakers include Mick Fowler, Simon Yates, Johnny Dawes and Madeleine Sorkin. The Club has also produced guidebooks to cover some of

the most popular Alpine mountaineering regions. It also retains an extensive on-line map collection.

Its members' wide-ranging activities are chronicled annually in the Club's now legendary publication, the *Alpine Journal*. The *Journal* is free to members and is a 400 page annual record of mountaineering and climbing, covering expeditions, exploration, environmental issues, mountain art, literature and history.

The library itself, at Charlotte Road, has a breathtaking collection of over 30 000 books, magazines, club journals, expedition reports and rare historic material. It also includes guidebooks and a photo library with over 20 000 images. Yet its most important and inspiring



acquisitions are far more special. The archive, housed within the library, contains the collected notebooks, letters and

thoughts of climbers throughout the 150 year history of the club, including diaries, press cuttings and correspondence dating

back almost to the club's conception. Whymper's handwritten diaries, for example, and the last letters of Mallory which have now been reunited with the one inch long pencil found on his body two years ago. Whymper's tent was given to the Club in 1965 by Guido Monzino, a leading Italian mountaineer and explorer having lain in a barn in Valtournache since the 1860s. The Club asked the Royal School of Needlework to restore it in the 1990s. When members pass on, their invaluable collected treasures of the mountains are often bequeathed to the Club and retained. Some, in need of restoration, get the care and attention they need. That 1854 ascent by Wills was described in a letter to his mother on 18th September which was displayed at an exhibition in honour of the Club's anniversary in 2007.

"The archive is used for family histories as well as uniting families with the stories written by climbers who were past members. We keep collections of handwritten histories collected and then used, enjoyed and families united with it," says Glyn Hugh with some understandable pride.

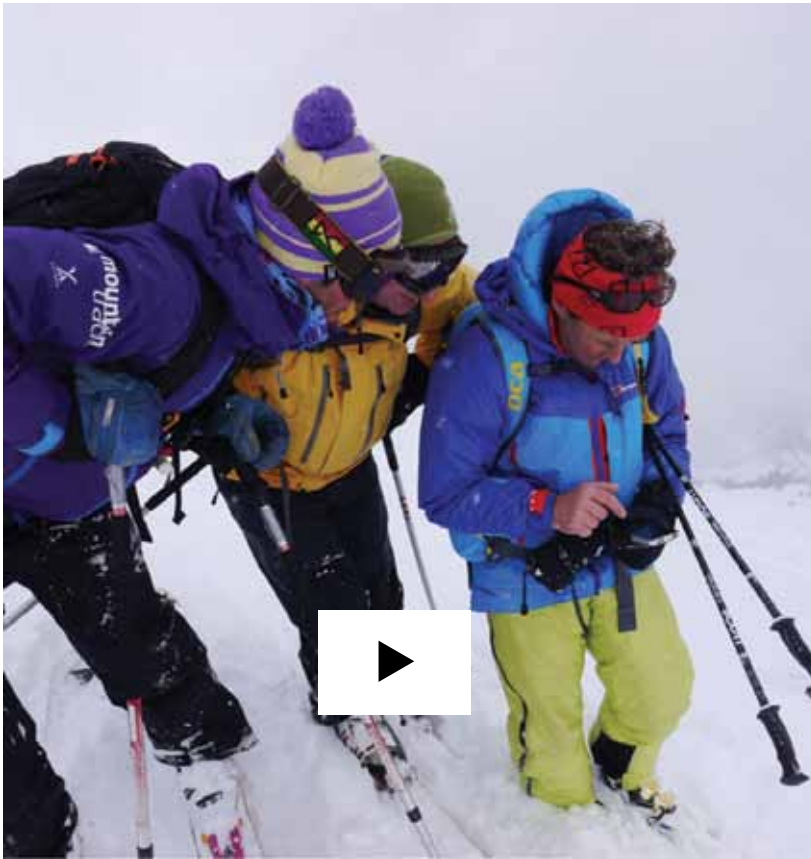
The Club also offers financial assistance. The AC Climbing Fund offers grants to members' expeditions, with preference given to students and younger members. Alpine Club members can use Swiss huts at member rates. There are informal arrangements at some huts owned by the CAF (France) and CAI (Italy). The Club is fostering closer links with the BMC, with which affiliation provides further benefits.

To become a full member, the Club insists that applicants have climbed a minimum of 20 alpine peaks or routes at an average grade of PD or above, or the equivalent in other ranges and wilderness areas. Ski mountaineering ascents and Scottish winter routes are taken into account, as are contributions to mountain literature.

To become an aspirant member, the Club asks for at least one trip to the Alps or other high mountain area, where the aspirant will have ascended some routes and/or peaks. Aspirant members normally qualify for full membership within five years or so and may apply to be upgraded when they have reached the full member standard.

See <http://www.alpine-club.org.uk> for more.

VIEW RANGER GETS MAJOR APP UPDATE



ViewRanger, the gps navigation app and trail guide publishing platform, has released a major update for Apple iPhone and iPad. The app has been completely redesigned and optimised for use on-the-go, based on feedback from the app's global user community. The new user experience within Version 4.0 of ViewRanger means that advanced navigation, access to trail guides from across the world, and the ability to record and share adventures are all just a finger-swipe away.

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EDWARD WHYMPER

Edward Whymper perhaps did more than any other individual to bring mountaineering to wide public prominence, thanks to his skill as a writer and illustrator, and a burning ambition to achieve renown on the highest peaks of the Alps. The fact he was at the centre of the most notorious mountaineering accident of the Victorian period also helped enormously. His tragedy-packed ascent of the Matterhorn was a tale of high drama, which precipitated the world's first global mountaineering media story.

Whymper began his career as a lowly young wood engraver in London. But he harboured a dream: impressed by the glorious adventures of the Royal Navy's polar explorers, he too desired to become a national hero in the mould of a Ross or Franklin and saw alpine climbing as a means to this end. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he served no apprenticeship in climbing, instead flinging himself at unclimbed summits right from the word go and was soon chasing trophy peaks, especially the charismatic Matterhorn. In 1865, following several abortive attempts, and feeling he had

been betrayed by his former partner, Jean Carrel, who was now mounting his own assault, Whymper cast about desperately for a means to beat him to the summit. This resulted in a hastily assembled party featuring three climbers of vastly different experience and four guides all speaking different languages. It comprised the eighteen-year-old rising star of the Alpine Club, Lord Francis Douglas, and his guides the Taugwalders, together with the great guide Michel Croz plus his client Charles Hudson. Fatefully, Hudson insisted on bringing along his young friend: the inexperienced novice climber Douglas Hadow.

The unwieldy party set forth from Zermatt and despite the oddball mix they made triumphant progress to the summit, beating Carrel's Italians. But while descending Hadow slipped, pulling off all but Whymper and the Taugwalders who were tied to the rest of the chain by a weak sash line – which broke under the strain. The accident resulted in a press furore with some dark mutterings about Whymper's role in the affair.

Following this trauma Whymper switched attention to pioneering climbing

in Greenland and the Andes. But he remained trapped in a terrible paradox; sensitive to reminders of the 1865 accident, he was nevertheless compelled to constantly tour and lecture about it. In 1894 alone he gave forty-eight lectures to over 50,000 people. Like a soap opera celebrity doomed to becoming typecast, he had to recognise the terrible truth that his fame rested on a single memorable role that everyone was keen for him to reprise.

To give Whymper himself the last word: "There have been joys too great to be described in words, and there have been griefs upon which I have not dared to dwell, and with these in mind I say, climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste, look well to each step, and from the beginning think what may be the end".

Extract taken from *Mountain Heroes: Portraits of Adventure* by Huw Lewis-Jones and published by Polarworld. www.polarworld.co.uk



London, 1910

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A SPACE ODYSSEY

The compass remains the most popular tool to determine north; the degrees of the azimuth and the science upon which it is based is truly remarkable. Magnetic compasses are cheap, durable, dependable and require no power source, plus they are very simple to use. But how many of us really understand how they work? **Lyle Brotherton** explains.

Millions of pounds are spent on developing the latest 'must-have' fabrics and many of these new and novel fabrics are great, yet how many of us still rely on wool for warmth? Billions of pounds are spent on developing state-of-the-art Global Satellite Navigation Systems (GPS, GLONASS, Galileo and BeiDou), yet how many of us still rely on our trusty compass to navigate?

HOW IT WORKS

This reads like an Arthur C Clarke novel.

4.54 billion years ago, from the accumulation of a massive nebula of exploded stars, Earth was created and the final, non-burnable stellar nuclear ash, containing the heavy particles of iron, nickel and cobalt, all sank to the core of the Earth.

These three elements are very special, as the electrons in their outer shell spin, creating magnetic moments that are not cancelled, which is why they are called ferromagnetic. So it is not just iron that is magnetic.

Since this time the Earth's core has remained molten, due to heat from ongoing radioactive decay and the motion of molten alloys containing these three elements generates a massive magnetic field, extending thousands of kilometres into space; it is this magnetic field that we use to navigate!

This field is called the magnetosphere and is vital to life as it protects the ozone layer from the solar wind, which in turn protects the Earth from dangerous radiation. It also helps protect us from solar storms that would make our compass needles go haywire.

Essentially there are several giant

(dipole) magnets inside the Earth's molten core, which produce more than 90% of the Earth's magnetic field; the rest coming from electrical currents flowing within the Earth's crust and in the ionised upper atmosphere.

Remember all those experiments at school with iron filings, paper and a magnet? Knew I should have listened!

HOW WELL DO YOU REALLY KNOW HOW YOUR COMPASS WORKS?

The magnetic needle in a compass points to magnetic north - No it does not!

The magnetic needle of a compass aligns itself with the Earth's local magnetic field and not to any single point. This field varies enormously across the Earth in intensity and orientation, and the compass actually points to the sum of the effects of these giant magnets at your location.

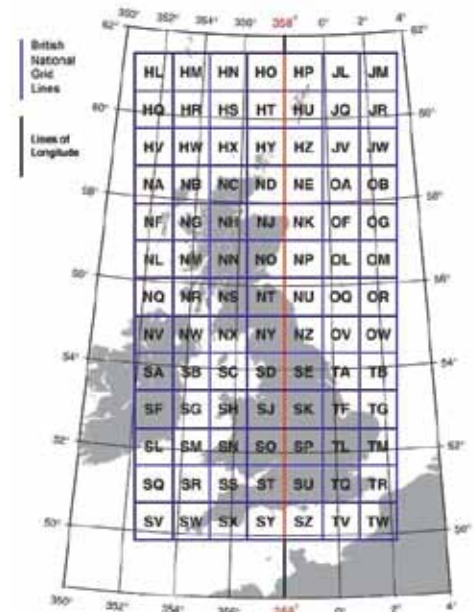
In other words, it aligns itself with the magnetic lines of force and we can measure these lines. These are called Isogonic lines.

The magnetic needle is attracted to the magnetic north pole - No it does not!

Thinking about it, if this were the case, the magnetic strength of the magnetic North Pole would have to be extremely powerful to be able to attract a little compass needle to it all the way from Great Britain, and then the North Pole would no longer be accessible because of the vast quantities of iron pots and pans deposited there!

Magnetic north is near True North - No it does not!

It is actually a whopping 11° off True North



British National Grid

Lines of Longitude: In this diagram the blue lines represent British National Grid Line, the black lines represent Lines of Longitude and only one line is the same.



Magnetic north on the move

This is the most up to date diagram available because I updated it from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration tables!

— the axis about which the Earth spins and all lines of longitude meet. This means that the north and south geographic poles and the north and south magnetic poles are not located in the same place.



The North Pole is static - No, it is not!
 Because the Earth's magma is a swirling molten mass, Magnetic North is currently heading towards Russia at 65km per year!

The Magnetic North Pole will always be in the north - No, it will not!
 The Earth's magnetic field has reversed, where a compass needle will point south instead of north, several times over the millennia. Reversals occur at apparently random intervals, ranging from less than 100 000 years to as much as 50 million years. The last time this happened was about 750 000 years ago.

There are only three Norths: Magnetic, True and Grid - No, there is a fourth north!

The North Geomagnetic Pole is the north-end of the axis of the magnetosphere (the geomagnetic field that surrounds the Earth) and that extends into space. It is the centre of the region in which the Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis can be seen.

Magnetic north is the Magnetic North of the Earth's giant magnet - No, it is not!
 Essentially the needle in a compass is a bar magnet with a North Pole at one end and South Pole at the other. The north end

of this needle can only be attracted to the South Pole of another magnet, in this case the Earth's, so the North Pole is actually a South Pole magnet!

We correct our compasses for Magnetic Declination - No, we don't!
 We (me included) tend to use, as mountain navigators, the term magnetic declination or magnetic variation (which is a synonym) when correcting a grid reference taken from a map to a compass, and vice versa.

Actually this describes the angle between True North and the horizontal trace of the local magnetic field and it is not the value we need to use in Great Britain when working with the British National Grid, as used on Ordnance Survey and Harvey Maps.

True North tends to be mainly on global mapping systems, which project large areas of the curved surface of the Earth on to flat surfaces. However, the level of spatial distortion caused by this, across relatively small areas of the Earth such as the British Isles, can be significant. As a result, we (and many other countries) have developed our own local rectangular grid systems to reduce this degree of distortion. Consequently the north meridian lines on OS and Harvey maps do not point to True

North, they instead point to Grid North. The only north-south grid line that actually points to True North is the one which coincides with the longitude meridian 358°, making Grid North west of True North to the left of this line and east of Grid North to the right. So we need to adjust for the angular difference between Grid North and Magnetic North when converting between magnetic and grid bearings. This is called GRID MAGNETIC ANGLE or GMA.

This is difficult to take in - No, it most certainly isn't!

When you think about it, it's just common sense, which is often not that common unless you think about it. The great news is that for us to calculate what adjustments we need and where for Grid Magnetic Angle, these have all been computed by the British Geological Survey and the US National Geophysical Data Center, to create the World Magnetic Model, and it is this information that is displayed on the bottom.

When the batteries have failed in your smartphone and your handheld satnav (GPS) has been jammed or spoofed, reach into your pocket for the most advanced, yet reliable piece of kit you carry – your woollen gloves – oh, and your compass.



ROPES FOR CENTRE USE

We took four of the leading brands' most hard wearing and durable ropes, designed for use in climbing walls and other high wear activities, and gave them to an outdoor centre for a month to put through their paces. North Ayrshire Council's Outdoor Education Centre on the Isle of Arran test-drove the ropes in a wide variety of situations, including on the hill, top roping/abseiling at their local crag, and on a purpose built climbing tower. **It is important to point out that these tests were carried out in real-life situations and are by no means scientific measures of durability or longevity.** The instructors who used them were asked to score and comment on handling, knotability, and perceived resistance to wear. All the ropes performed well in the tests, particularly when scored on wear, which is excellent news both for the manufacturers and outdoor centres. We'd like to thank the instructor team who tested the ropes for their insights and hard work. Visit their website on <http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/resident/education-and-learning/AOEC>



BEAL APOLLO II 11MM £160/50M



The Apollo II has a reputation for durability and toughness. The 11mm diameter means that this will be a particularly hard wearing rope. Our testers found it heavy and bulky whilst it scored highly for handling and knotability in the comparison tests. With a 7.7kN impact force this is a rope that will

feel flexible and dynamic enough for occasional lead climbing as well as sturdy and dependable for top roping and abseiling. It comes with Beal's Dry Cover treatment, which protects the external surface of the rope and increases longevity. It is a great all rounder, suitable for a wide range of activities, indoors and out.

Although pricey when compared to the others on test you do get a whole lot of rope for your money. The test panel was split on which rope to award the coveted Editor's Choice. Inevitably, it was down to the editor to decide and the Beal Apollo II pipped the others at the post due to its versatility and low impact force. (£3.20/metre) ■ www.bealplanet.com

MAMMUT GYM ROPE 10.1MM £140/50M



Developed for high wear situations such as climbing walls and working routes, the Gym Rope from Mammut was the favourite with our test team for overall handling and wear. At 8.7kN the impact force is fairly high, and this was noted by our testers who compared it to a static rope in their comments. It is quite a narrow diameter for a centre rope which will make it less tolerant to misuse over edges, and even potentially slick in certain belay devices. However, for general centre use, particularly top roping on the climbing tower; the instructors felt it was the ideal compromise of toughness versus handling, and available at a good price. Although not the least expensive rope tested, we felt the Mammut Gym Rope was more versatile in use for outdoor centres than the Edelrid O-Flex, and were happy to award it with Best Buy. (£2.80/metre) ■ www.mammut.ch

EDELWEISS O-FLEX 10.2MM £95/40M

Made using a unique braiding system developed by Edelweiss, the O-Flex was by far the most flexible and supple of the ropes tested. It is worth pointing out that Edelweiss have tested the O-Flex extensively and found the braiding system to increase durability significantly. Our testers commended its handling and easy knotability. However, there does seem to be a higher than expected level of movement between the core and the sheath. The rope had a tendency to flatten and even kink when used with an Italian Hitch. The impact force is 8.2kN, (only the Apollo II is lower). Edelweiss recommends this rope for indoor use and top roping. The 10.2mm diameter is only available in 30m and 40m lengths, which will limit where it can be used, but it is long enough for most indoor walls. It seems ideally suited as a dedicated personal rope for indoor training, thanks to the superior handling, low weight and very competitive price. (£2.38/metre)

■ www.edelweiss-ropes.com/en/



EDELRID TOWER 10.5MM £150/50M

Developed for walls and extensive top roping, the Tower received praise from our test team who appreciated its solidity and hard wearing feel. The sheath is rough and firm to touch, which our testers found less pleasant on the hands, and it scored lower than the others tested on knotability. The impact force at 8.4 kN is marginally lower than the Mammut rope, meaning this rope will transmit a slightly lower force to anchors and climber in the event of a leader fall (an unusual occurrence in most outdoor centres). It is also a wider diameter, making it heavier, but with 39% sheath, this is a very abrasion resistant rope; a bonus when used in high wear conditions such as at the wall or top rope and abseil sessions at the crag. It is a great all rounder that will work well in a wide range of centre activities. (£3.00/metre)

■ www.edelrid.de



WINTER TROUSERS *for her*

Winter is just around the corner. This is an exciting time for fans of snow and ice. Choosing appropriate leg-wear isn't perhaps the hardest kit choice a winter mountaineer will make, but with so much variation in price and design, choosing the right trousers isn't always straightforward. **Lucy Wallace** and **Phil Turner** take a look at a range of winter trousers, from softshell to hardshell models, designed to be worn all day.

SHERPA ADVENTURE GEAR KALA PATHAR PANT £80



These stretch soft shell trousers are solid, hard wearing and comfortable. Whilst not perfect, this is an excellent winter pant. A minor niggle is the waist belt, which is quite thin and stitched in so you have to live with it. The zip on the hip pockets works from bottom to top, which took a while to get used to. On the plus side there is attention to detail with the gusset design, giving excellent range of movement for climbing. The cut is roomy, and zips allow for adjustment of the leg at the ankle, again great for climbers. These trousers lack luxury features such as knee and ankle reinforcement, but are a simple and well priced option for trekking and climbing in cold climates.

■ www.sherpaadventuregear.com



KEELA IONA TROUSERS £114.95



The Iona trousers from Keela are full zip waterproof shell pants with a subtle stretch and a soft lining that makes them quite warm to wear. The cut is generous, with elasticated waistband, high waist and articulated knees, plus a good range of movement. I like the full length Velcro baffles over the side zips, but the zips themselves are fabric, a potential weakness in driving rain if the baffles are not sealed. The roomy hip pockets have reverse water resistant zips. The trousers come with a belt, with inside zip pocket that will take a £5 note. They also have loops for braces (not supplied). As a result the waist area is bulky, which put me off wearing them as an over-trouser, but the lining means they are comfortable next to the skin or over thermals. These trousers would suit someone looking for burly no-nonsense four season waterproof trouser at a reasonable price. ■ www.keela.co.uk

COLUMBIA BACK BEAUTY PASSO ALTO HEAT PANT £80



This pant vied for Best Buy with a great price tag and some clever warming technology in the form of Omni-Heat reflective dots on the inside of the stretch soft shell fabric. They certainly feel cosy to wear and the fabric is warm and wind resistant if a little heavy. Features include low profile zipped hip pockets and generous zipped ankle adjusters. The fit is figure hugging, but clever tailoring (highlighted in the name) means they do not ride down at the back and are surprisingly flattering. The designers are so confident in the cut that they do not supply waist belt or loops, leaving little room for adjustment. This wasn't a problem when testing them as the fit worked well for me. ■ www.columbia.com



FJALLRAVEN KEB TROUSERS £170

A winter trouser made from cotton based fabric? It's an anathema to most mountaineers in the UK. Built from zoned areas of Fjallraven's G-1000 fabric (65% polyester, 35% cotton) and lightweight stretch polyamide, these trousers are designed for all weather use in the Swedish backcountry. On test the fabric feels heavy-duty and warm. It dries surprisingly quickly, and this was even before I applied the optional Greenland wax that improves water resistance. They are wonderfully functional too- with myriad spacious pockets, calf and thigh vents and adjustable ankle cuffs. The fit is long and generous with freedom of movement aided by the stretch panels. Application of the wax is straightforward, the key being to add several light layers rather than one heavy layer. It does help the fabric shed water, but be prepared for waxing to affect the colour. I'd avoid wearing them in typical British winter conditions of sleet and gales, but they are a superior pair of bomb-proof trekking pants for cold dry weather. ■ www.fjallraven.com

PARAMO ASPIRA TROUSERS £220



Designed for extreme conditions, it was tough to fully test these over one of the finest summers in memory! However, I have owned a pair of the men's Aspira trousers for years, so here is what new users need to know; Nikwax Analogy fabric works, although there is no membrane, active people in grim weather will pump the moisture away from the skin and breathability is exceptional, so you stay drier. I had initial concerns about snowy bucket belays but Paramo supply removable foam inserts to protect the backside and knees from melting snow. However, there are drawbacks, particularly interaction with gaiters. I prefer to wear gaiters under my shell trousers, which often means next to the skin if using Paramo. It just doesn't work for me. There is an internal snow cuff, but it's not tough enough to withstand contact with crampons and rock. The heavy fabric is also quite restrictive. The women's version is very short in the leg, I'm tall and it stops mid calf when my knees are bent, making the gaiter conundrum even more pertinent. Useful features include full side zips and two roomy hip pockets. ■ www.paramo.co.uk

PATAGONIA ALPINE GUIDE PANTS £170



Aimed squarely at alpinists, these trousers might actually make you climb harder. Ok, maybe not, but they certainly do everything you could realistically ask of a mountaineering trouser and don't skimp on features or quality. The main body is constructed from hard wearing Polartec Power Shield soft shell. This does a great job of keeping out wind and light rain, assisted by a DWR treatment that is genuinely durable. These are not the warmest trousers, but are more versatile for this reason, suitable for summer alpine and winter wear. The attention to detail is phenomenal, from the smooth low profile belt and stretch tailored lumbar area, to the beefy crampon patches and adjustable ankle cuffs. Hip spacious hip pockets sit nice and flat against the body and the thigh pocket is big enough for a small guide book. Of course, for the price, you wouldn't expect anything less than perfection, which the Alpine Guide Pant delivers with style. ■ www.patagonia.com



CRAGHOPPERS AIRA STRETCH TROUSERS £60

These are fully waterproof stretch trousers that offer great value for money. Its a "jack of all trades" pant appealing to winter walkers looking for all day comfort with minimum fuss. They're warm, with a cosy fleece lining. They're also very stretchy, feeling more like soft shell. The two layer membrane is designed to flex with movement and is combined with taped seams and a water repellent finish to keep the elements out. Features include zipped pockets and Velcro ankle tabs. This trouser falls down (literally) for two reasons, both based on fit. Firstly, the cut is stingy in the places that matter. They are low-waisted, and sitting down causes an embarrassing case of builder's bum, a deal breaker for anyone on the hill. Secondly, although snug-fitting stretchiness is great for freedom of movement, this increases pressure on the membrane, compromising waterproofing in wet weather. When the going gets tough, I prefer a more roomy shell further from my skin. ■ www.craghoppers.com

TEAM PHARMA NORD SCALES NEW HEIGHTS

People break down on mountains. Physically and mentally. How do successful climbers fuel their extreme habit?

Pharma Nord UK Managing Director Bent Henriksen OBE and his team might just have the secret. Their recent trip to Monte Rosa was safe and successful thanks to expert guidance and preventative nutrition.

Having already faced the Three Peaks Challenge, Everest base camp, Mont Blanc and Mount Elbrus, the Danish-born, UK-based, former North East Businessman of the Year knows the recipe for 'peak' performance.

At 75, Henriksen puts his money where his mouth is when it comes to his supplements business. "I'm proof that you can prepare your body for extreme challenges with good nutrition, whatever your age."

Renowned Irish endurance athlete, World Record holder and Monte Rosa expedition leader Noel Hanna, 44, met Henriksen several years ago. They hit it off when they swapped training and equipment knowledge for vitamin supplement expertise.

Other Monte Rosa team members included Henriksen's son Rasmus, 37, and Lorenzo Gariani, 55; both of whom have completed Elbrus and Mont Blanc. Gariani's credits also include Denali in Alaska, Lhotse in the Himalayas and the much closer Matterhorn. He has also summited Everest from Tibet.

In January 2009, having scaled Vinson Massif on Antarctica, Gariani became the third Italian to have completed the Seven Summits challenge - climbing the highest mountain on each of the World's seven continents. It was this same challenge which earned Noel Hanna his World Record.

The Monte Rosa climb began on Wednesday 10th July. The team travelled up to Chamonix and their arrival coincided with the first night of the European

Climbing Championships.

On Thursday 11th July, they took cable car up to Aiguille du Midi at 3,842m (12,605ft) to spend a few hours for acclimatisation. Hanna recommends that if you go up to altitude in the day and then rest back at a lower level, it triggers altitude response, helping you cope with the altitude later.

The next day, the team drove through to Valle d'Aosta on the Italian side of the Mont Blanc Tunnel up to Stafal Tschaval where they got a cable car up to the start point. On Henriksen's recommendation, they fuelled up with Pharma Nord's renowned coenzyme Q10 supplements. All body cells require Q10 for their energy supply, with muscles using up huge volumes of the vitamin-like substance during exercise. Hanna considers it one of his key 'endurance tools'.

The hike then began up to the base of the rock fall below the Mantova Refuge. Hanna suggested they forewent crampons as the snow was slushy from a full day's exposure to the sun. When they reached the refuge at 3498m, the temperature was cold enough to justify crampons, ensuring more security under foot. Arriving at the Gniffetti Refuge at about 1830hrs, they ate pasta and took Q10 to refuel muscles for the hard day to come, also adding in bio-available selenium, plus a fish oil supplement to combat oxidative stress, fatigue and control inflammation. They then retired early in a dorm room with poor ventilation and high altitude - not ideal for sleep.

Saturday 13th July saw breakfast at 0400hrs and departure 30 minutes later. This early start was important due to the hot conditions. With the heat comes an increase of soft ice and exposure to avalanches. It's also key to maximise sunlight hours to allow for a trouble-free return from the summit.



"It's hard work getting all your kit together, crampons strapped on properly and pay attention to detail when you're sleep-deprived and operating at high altitude," Henriksen says.

"We've seen the dangers on Elbrus and Mont Blanc, where people ahead of us lost their lives. Working as a team and keeping your energy levels high is key. I think we do this exceptionally well."

Pressing on to finish the hard climbing before sunrise, they reached the plateau at the base of the Vincent Pyramid. It was a bitterly cold morning, but they were lightly dressed, to avoid over heating in the expected sunshine. They stopped and had a drink of warm tea, plus more Q10 (muscles need plenty at altitude) and magnesium (to reduce cramping).

To avoid the intense midday sun, they set off quickly and reached two peaks - Zumsteinspitze (4563m) and Cappana Margeritta (4554m), which is topped by the highest building in Europe. On arrival back down to the plateau, they took a well earned rest and had some lunch before setting off on the long journey back.

"At 1800hrs and after 13 hours walking we reached the cable car, which took us back to the base to enjoy a well-earned beer, plus Valle d'Aosta speciality cured meats, cheese and bread. It's hardly preventative nutrition, but we all need a treat from time to time," jokes Henriksen.

Noel says: "I simply would not set foot on a challenge without Bio-Quinone Q10 GOLD 100mg. Every cell in the body needs coenzyme Q10 for energy supply and we produce less and less as we age. We also deplete supplies when exercising. The heart cells and muscles need huge volumes of CoQ10 to function normally."



Noel Hanna, Endurance Athlete
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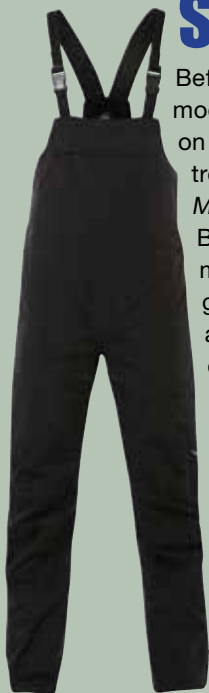
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*Consumer survey, 2198 users, Pharma Nord Feedback Cards

WINTER TROUSERS *for him*

KEELA MUNRO SALOPETTES £130



Before spending time in the Keela Munro model, salopettes haven't really been on my radar, preferring normal softshell trousers for winter use. Encouraged by *Mountain Pro's* navigation expert Lyle Brotherton, I was intrigued. Salopettes make sense for winter use, with no gap to be exposed at the lower back and almost no chance of them falling down or filling with snow in the event of a tumble. Keela have used their non-membrane waterproof System Dual Protection fabric – reinforced at the seat, inner ankle and knee – which is pretty thick and can lead to overheating if worn in anything other than winter conditions. It does prevent condensation build-up very well though. There are full-length side zips to help with donning over boots, as well as ventilation, but given that removal requires taking off your upper layers, they should only really be worn if they'll be staying on all day. Integral gaiters help to seal the bottom, along with a Velcro tab, a zipped fly and chest pocket. Worn over a baselayer, these are perfect for really foul conditions, but a softshell/over-trousers combination is more flexible.

■ <http://www.keela.co.uk>

FJÄLLRÄVEN KEB TROUSERS £160



For anything other than the warmest summer conditions, the Keb trousers are wonderful. They're the most stylish trousers in the review by far, but come at an eye-watering price. The seat, front of the legs, knees and inner calf is made from G-1000 Eco – reinforced where necessary – a blend of organic cotton and recycled polyester, which can be treated with wax to customise the level of waterproofing and assist with abrasion resistance. It's a tough fabric that requires a bit of breaking in. Elsewhere, stretchy polyamide offers good freedom of movement and breathes well. Two hand warmer pockets accept an OS map, and the two thigh cargo pockets are gusseted to swallow items without affecting mobility. Behind these is an unbacked, thigh-length zipped vent. There's a lot going on in the upper leg area, and some users will prefer more streamlined trousers, particularly when moving over complicated terrain. I love the clever tightening mechanism at the ankle, which uses a webbing strap and metal poppers. Very neat and secure. The price is high but durability is assured. ■ <http://www.fjallraven.com>

PATAGONIA ALPINE GUIDE PANTS £170

For winter and Alpine use, these trousers are almost perfect. The durable, stretch-woven, weather-resistant Polartec Power Shield softshell fabric: perfect. The close yet non-restrictive cut: perfect. The reinforced articulated knees: perfect. The adjustable ankle cuffs with zipped gussets and press studs to provide a reassuringly-tight fit over boots: perfect. The feature list goes on, all implemented almost perfectly. I like the pockets - two zipped hand warmer pockets and a thigh pocket (though none will accept an OS map – niggles number one), and the double-zipped fly which makes access easier when wearing a harness. The waist is fastened by a small strip of Velcro – there's no button involved (niggles number two) and the smart, slightly-elasticated belt with metal buckle is sewn in and can't be removed (niggles number three). However – this does make a nice flat waistband that won't dig in when over-layered by a harness or rucksack belt, and it hasn't popped open yet. These have had a lot of use in the Alps this year and I can't see them being usurped this winter either. ■ <http://www.patagonia.com>



MARMOT HIGHLAND PANT £100



More general mountain trousers than a winter specialist, this lightweight softshell model lacks some of the reinforcement and ruggedness of others in the review, but not everyone wants a pair of winter-only trousers that will only get a few outings per year. The thin fabric doesn't insulate as well as others, but when combined with a baselayer, has enough wind-resistance to cope with winter use. Water-resistance is also decent thanks to a DWR coating. The knees and seat have reinforced panels, but the ankle is only protected by a shallow patch at the back. Crampon users will need to be careful, or wear gaiters to prevent snagging. A slight flaring allows boots to be accommodated, but the excess fabric can be cinched in and secured. At the waist the metal button and zipped fly closure is supplemented with a drawcord for fine adjustment. Pocket-lovers are catered for by five pockets – two hand warmer, two zipped thigh pockets and a zipped rear pocket.

■ <http://marmot.com>

MAMMUT BASE JUMP ADVANCED II PANTS £145



The Base Jump Pants are a modern classic, and in their most recent incarnation – the Advanced II – this heritage of excellence is continued. This is thanks to the schoeller stretch fabric, which is just the right weight for colder-weather use and dries extremely quickly, coupled with a sensible cut and feature set. Starting at the bottom (the ankles, not the seat...), a zipped gusset permits the use of larger boots – they'd be ideal for ski touring – and a simple Velcro tab means the ankle cuff can be secured around the boot tightly. A large crampon patch extends high up the inner calf, reducing the possibility of snagging and the knees are nicely articulated. There are two zipped slash hand warmer pockets and a thigh pocket deep enough to swallow an OS map – plus a zipped rear pocket. All have glove-friendly zip pulls. The seat is reinforced and the waist secured by double press studs and a zipped fly. There are wide belt loops for further fit refinement. A classy pair of trousers.

■ <http://www.mammut.ch>

TIERRA ACE PANT £125

A late entry into the testing pool, Swedish brand Tierra are new to the UK, but have a 30 year history supplying equipment to high altitude expeditions. The Ace Pant was designed for ice climbing – the thick, softshell fabric offering excellent freedom of movement, with a relatively close cut to prevent flapping. Despite a no-frills appearance, there are some neat features, including double-layer knees which will accept pads and waterproof fabric areas at the lower leg and seat. The two thigh pockets are fleece-lined and protected by a reversed zip with positive zip pulls, similarly the mesh-backed slit vents at the thigh. At the ankle a zipped gusset arrangement accommodates higher-legged boots and cinches with a bungee and cordlock. There's also a lace loop to secure the ankle cuff to the boot.

■ <http://tierra-products.com>



SHERPA ADVENTURE GEAR HIMAL PANT £120

Sherpa state that these are made from a “three layer bonded softshell” fabric, which I assume includes a membrane, in addition to the face fabric and inner brushed lining. This would account for the particularly cosy feel and high level of wind-resistance at the expense of breathability. The fabric also isn't quite as stretchy as the stretch-woven fabrics in the review. All the usual features are present – zipped gusseted ankles which fit over wide boots but tighten using a Velcro strap, plus a large crampon patch on the inner calf. At the thigh the two deep pockets are protected by external storm flaps secured by a press stud, and there are two zipped hand warmer pockets, along with two rear pockets. Interestingly, the zips on the hand warmer pockets are operated in reverse – pull up to unzip and vice versa. I assume this is in case the top of the zip is obscured by a harness, but this isn't a problem I've encountered before. The Velcro and press stud at the waist is secure, and reinforced by an integral webbing belt with flat plastic buckle.

■ <http://www.sherpaadventuregear.com>



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JÖTTNAR AIMS TO CONQUER GIANTS

In a market already crowded with titans, Cardiff-based Jöttnar launches its first collection of specialist mountaineering clothing this month. With the tagline ‘Conquer Giants’, the gear is inspired by the Norwegian wilderness and designed for the most extreme conditions. The ex- Royal Marines behind the brand know a thing or two about challenging weather, but will hard-won experience in the field give them the edge in a tough market? **Lucy Wallace** and **Phil Turner** take a sneak peek at two flagship jackets in the range.

Built for comfort and speed, the Fjörm is a down jacket that challenges the concept that light must mean minimalist. At 647g for a man’s large, there are admittedly lighter-weight garments out there, but this is a fully-featured expedition jacket with a box-wall construction, not a modest stitch through garment designed for single-day forays. When measured against others in its class, it is phenomenally luxurious. Made from 20 denier ripstop nylon, it’s filled with 217g of 850 fill power down with hydrophobic Down-Tek treatment that keeps its loft better in damp conditions than ordinary down. The jacket has lots of lovely touches, including micro-fleece lined cuffs with Velcro tabs and generous chin guard. There is a stout quilted zip baffle, protected from the two-way zip by a strip of nylon tape. The zip tabs are big loops of nylon, reinforced and chunky enough for even the most be-mittened of hands. The hood is helmet-compatible and has a wired peak with a mouldable laminate insert. Two hand warmer pockets sit relatively low on the jacket (my only gripe) and a large internal mesh pocket

is designed to take a water bottle - a useful feature in persistently freezing temperatures. The Fjörm is a fabulous piece of technical down insulation that is bound to make the competition sweat.

LW

• This is a wonderfully versatile garment – suitable for use as an outer layer in spring and autumn or as a cold weather midlayer. The torso is effectively a synthetically-insulated gilet – using ADVANSA Thermo°cool insulation within a DWR-treated windproof 20 denier nylon ripstop shell. The sleeves are cosy Polartec Power Stretch Pro, with thumb loops and enough length to protect the back of the hand. Excitingly there’s a really good hood (designed to go under a helmet), which combines the two materials – Power Stretch with a strip of Thermo°cool across the top. The collar is high, so with the hood up the lower face is totally protected, with the zip pull kept out of the way. The two zipped hand warmer pockets are high enough to be clear of a harness and use a reversed zip to offer a degree of weather protection. The cut is athletic – a slim fit to make over-layering easy, but the fabric choice ensures that movement is unrestricted. The bottom hem is finished with a one-handed, elastic drawcord. Jöttnar make no apologies for the price – this is a premium-quality, specialist, and technical jacket, though my initial concern that it will only appeal to a narrow band of users appears unfounded – I’ve been surprised how often the Alfar has fitted into my layering system over the last few months.

• **PT**



WINTER GADGETS

The harsh conditions encountered in the winter mountains require a change of mindset when compared to the carefree days of summer – aside from the need to keep warm, factors such as shorter days and avalanche risk means correct equipment choice becomes paramount. **Phil Turner** selects items to enhance both safety and enjoyment in the outdoors this winter.

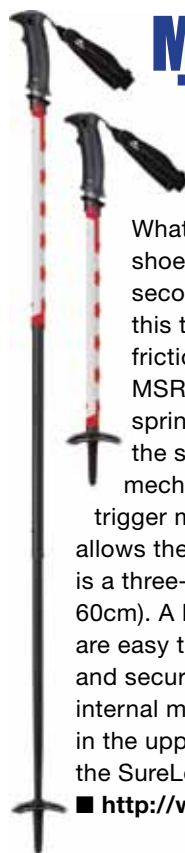
LED LENSER SE05 £50



Given the shorter days of winter, longer routes

will require a twilight start or a walk out in the dark. This isn't a huge problem; you'll just need some illumination. The SE05 is a ridiculously bright LED headtorch – so bright that it requires a safety warning sticker – yet still weighs a paltry 105g in a compact package. The single white LED throws out 180 lumens, with a seven hour battery life (from three AAA batteries), but there is a dimmer function for close-up tasks, that will also help to conserve battery life. In addition, a small, red LED has been included to 'preserve night vision'. Sadly it's not particularly useful for map reading, as OS map contour lines disappear in red light... The beam can be focused from flood to narrow beam by twisting the lens – it's easy to use with gloves on, unlike the on/off button which can sometimes be hard to find. A high performance headtorch at a good price. ■ <http://www.ledco.co.uk>

MSR DEPLOY TR3 TREKKING POLES £100



Whatever your opinion of trekking poles, snow-shoeing is much easier with a pair. This is MSR's second attempt at a positively-locking pole, and this time it really works. Rather than relying on friction in the form of a twist or flick lock, the MSR range uses a ratchet system that pushes a spring-loaded pin through one of several holes in the shaft. There's no chance of slippage or a twist mechanism jamming; it's solid. A one-handed trigger mechanism at the handle releases the pin and allows the pole to be dismantled for travel (the TR3 is a three-section pole which packs down to about 60cm). A lot of thought has gone into the straps, which are easy to adjust to suit large gloves and feel stable and secure. At £100 a pair they aren't cheap, and the internal mechanism adds some weight, though it's all in the upper shaft, but where total security is required the SureLock adjustment system is a definite winner. ■ <http://www.cascadedesigns.com/en/MSR>

ANYGLOVE (ORIGINAL & LEATHER) £20

Like it or not, touchscreen technology is becoming a common sight in the hills. Now a feature on GPS devices as well as smartphones, there have been numerous attempts to create 'touchscreen-compatible' gloves through a rubberised print on the fingertips, but these tend to wear quickly and are aimed more at the fashion end of the market. AnyGlove is a liquid polymer supplied in a small dropper bottle that can be applied to any glove to make it function with a touchscreen. The standard solution will work on wool, fleece and fabric gloves, though there's also a formulation for leather gloves. To apply, squeeze the liquid onto the glove fingertips and wait for it to dry (a hair drier speeds this up) – I've used it on a selection of gloves, from leather gauntlets to merino liners, and it works incredibly well. There are about 55 applications in each bottle, so it can be reapplied when it inevitably wears off, but so far I'm impressed – no more fingerless gloves this winter!

■ <http://anyglove.com/>



CTR HEADWALL ADVENTURER £55



A warm hat is recommended mountain equipment throughout the year, but in winter it becomes absolutely essential. The humble balaclava has a lot going for it, covering the lower face, neck and ears, as well as tucking into your jacket for a nice warm seal. This can be taken further with the Headwall Adventurer, which adds wind, snow and water resistance to the arrangement, plus 70g of Thinsulate insulation and a pleasing fur lining. A split peak keeps precipitation (or perhaps even sun)

away from the face, yet folds flat for easy storage. A simple mesh-lined vent in the face panel prevents condensation build-up. Velcro tabs on the side mean the balaclava can be tightened to suit, and there's a cordlock and bungee on the rear, to keep everything snug. Toasty. ■ <http://www.chaoshats.com/>

BLACK DIAMOND ALIAS AVALUNG PACK £199



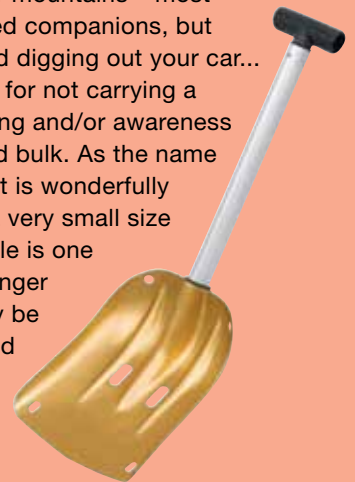
Black Diamond's Avalung system is primarily designed for backcountry skiers, but would also be of benefit to anyone that ventures into avalanche-prone terrain. The system is designed to allow a buried avalanched victim to breathe fresh air from the snowpack, through a rubber mouthpiece and tube contained in a zipped pouch on the shoulder strap. This draws air through a vent near the shoulder and exhaled CO₂ exits via a vent at the lower rear side of the rucksack. It's not a complex idea, but it obviously adds some weight and cost to

the rucksack. The pack itself is excellent for winter, based around a stripped-down climbing pack, with few external features bar ice axe and ski attachments and compression straps. Incongruously there's an insulated hydration hose sleeve on the right shoulder strap, though. I like the basic back system, which is just a hydrophobic stiffened panel with thin aluminium stays – simple and lightweight. Through the use of lightweight yet bulletproof 210 denier Dyneema fabric, the resulting 35l pack weighs in at 1.7kg despite the AvaLung tubes, and the floating lid can always be removed to reduce this weight further. Not just for skiers, the AvaLung makes a lot of sense.

■ <http://eu.blackdiamondequipment.com>

MAMMUT ALUGATOR SUPER LIGHT SHOVEL £45

A shovel is invaluable in the winter mountains – most crucially for digging out avalanched companions, but also for building snow shelters and digging out your car... I would guess that a prime reason for not carrying a shovel – other than a lack of training and/or awareness – is the additional pack weight and bulk. As the name suggests, the Alugator Super Light is wonderfully light at 600g and packs down to a very small size that'll fit into a daypack. The handle is one piece and for sustained use the longer reach of an extendible handle may be appreciated. Nonetheless, the solid handle locks positively into the blade to give a feeling of strength and security missing in lighter plastic shovels. In addition, the shovel blade is drilled to permit use as a snow anchor. ■ <http://www.mammut.ch>



MSR LIGHTNING AXIS SNOWSHOES £265



Nobody likes postholing – the novelty of proper, deep snow quickly wears off, so unless you're a skier, snowshoes will make life a whole lot easier. Traditional snowshoes with a tubular frame are great, but the aluminium 'blade' used by MSR makes far more sense on variable terrain, biting into the slope for increased traction. This traction is enhanced by a crampon beneath the swivelling toe, which pivots through the sturdy flotation deck. The deck is available in a range of sizes, based on combined body weight and rucksack load, though the addition of clip-on 'tails' gives more flexibility – leave the tails off for manoeuvrability and add them when fully loaded. The binding is really clever: a wide toe band that should be adjusted for size at home, allowing you to just step in and tighten the rear strap when on the hill. There's a third removable strap included, which is essential for anything other than completely flat ground. And it might be a bit of a gimmick, but the whole binding can be swivelled to accommodate those that walk with a toe-in gait to avoid clashing snowshoes.

■ <http://www.cascadedesigns.com/en/MSR>

TRIED & TESTED

Outdoor professionals put their kit through hell and expect it to perform day after day. In this issue, wilderness guide **Hendrik Morkel** reveals the kit he relies on.

HYPERLITE MOUNTAIN GEAR ULTAMID



I've got a host of shelters, though for trips with clients and on climbing weekends I prefer the Hyperlite Mountain Gear UltraMid 2. Made from cuben fibre, the same lightweight material used for sails on sailing boats, the UltraMid 2 weighs less than 500g, while offering a superb amount of room - indeed it will comfortably accommodate two inflated packrafts, or one person with a full trad rack spread out on the floor in search for the #2 Nut. It withstands high winds thanks to its pyramid design, so can be pitched high on the mountains, and during wet mornings you can comfortably sit upright in it and drink your coffee while waiting for better weather. It pitches with trekking poles, skis or paddle, or you can hang it from a tree with the hoop on the top. On sunny evenings you can open the doors and store them away to the side, with fine views on the landscape. I pitch it high with the top vents and doors open on sunny evenings or low to the ground on exposed and grey hilltops. A palace for two people, this durable and lightweight shelter is a royal ballroom for one climber/ backpacker/ packrafter.

ARC'TERYX ALPHA FL JACKET

I live in the sunniest city in Finland, but my trips take me to much less sunnier parts of the north. Always with me is the Arc'teryx Alpha FL Jacket. This minimalist hardshell weighs under 300g in Size S and has one chest pocket which can hold a map and a couple of muesli bars. The Gore-Tex Active Shell material does a good job of keeping the rain, snow and ice out and makes sure that I don't overheat while ice climbing, packrafting or hiking in the rain. The hood is exceptionally good, keeps wind and rain out of my face and turns with me wherever I need to look. The Velcro cuffs keep icy water out when hiking, climbing or paddling and the long sleeves keep my hands warm if I don't have gloves with me. For packrafting and ice climbing, where light is right, this jacket replaces for me a heavy drysuit or heavier hardshell. But light doesn't mean flimsy - hanging ice tools over the shoulders while placing a screw or swimming through Class II+ rapids is no problem for this jacket. And because of its light weight, it's no problem to carry it in my backpack on sunny days!



Hendrik Morkel is an outdoor guide and freelance journalist. When he is not writing for outdoor magazines or working on his next book he usually teaches clients the art of lightweight backpacking and packrafting in his adopted home of Finland.
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