



LESS

STUDY

MORE

CLIMBING!!!

2009-10

CAKE!!!

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**Dear Reader,**

**This is my last GRIP (hopefully evar, cos it takes time). I hope you all enjoy it! Also I hope everyone has had a fantastic year, I know I have. And if you haven't... well... try harder!!**

**See you all next year!**

**Love and KissEs**

**Holly**

## Chairman's Report of 2009

Good evening and welcome to the LSMC Annual Dinner 2010. Many things have happened since last time we were all gathered here in Wales. Some are regular occurrences and some are new additions to the calendar. I shall do my best to document them here for your enjoyment.

I will start by mentioning the clubs competitive bouldering success of 2009: three of our top boulderers (Ben Freeman, Alex Salvadori and Lauren Foster) managed to place 9th in the BUCS (formerly BUSA) competition out of a total of 76 teams, only to be beaten by University's with big walls from notorious climbing areas. We also took home the overall winning club prize at the 2nd Annual Nottingham University's competition, along with top uni, top male (Ben Freeman) and top Female (Lauren Foster).

The next major event in the clubs calendar was the infamous Fontainebleau expedition, organised by Mr Paul Dewey and kept relatively low key compared to previous years. As usual lots of bouldering was done, and a far proportion of a very reasonable standard. Many a 7a was tried, a few were conquered. The quote of the week goes to a man that shall remain nameless: When asked by the passport control people on the way home "Is it just you two in the vehicle sir?" he replies with "There is a child in the boot". Words escape me, the customs person was not amused.

Pembroke 2009 was all about close calls. On the Saturday morning the majority of the club were at Porthclais showing Red who is boss as usual Wall (S 4a\*\*, as if you didn't already know that ex-members). As the afternoon drew on someone noticed a police helicopter in the sky, then a life boat, then another lifeboat, then an ambulance on top of the crag, then the big yellow Sea King arrived. We were all very interested and assumed that this was some sort of training exercise as they appeared to be doing a lot of faffing about and not much rescuing. Eventually a body was lifted up into the helicopter and off they went, much to everyone's interest. Once the excitement had died down a rather out of breath Scott came jogging down the coastal path, "Did you see the helicopter?" we all proclaimed, Scott answered with "That was Rob (Harrison), I need to get to the hospital!". There was a general exclamation of "Shiiiiit". Rob spent a week in hospital with a chest infection and made a full recovery. I am eternally grateful that it was not a current club member, imagine the paperwork. The Sunday of the Pembroke was also rather eventful. I took a group out coasteering, as we had done last year to great success. However we were marginally underprepared with only one buoyancy aid between the six of us (it will be 'reet was the verdict of the morning). To cut a long story short we were about two thirds of the way from the beach to Craig Caerfai and on crossing an inlet Holly, Ben Hanson and Myself (none of whom were wearing the buoyancy aid )were hit by a freak wave and came very close to drowning. A minor rescue took place to retrieve Holly from

a ledge and a swift retreat was made. This year we will be borrowing some more buoyancy aids from the canoe club.

That was quite a long section on Pembroke, I am going to have to keep the rest of this quick. An expedition was mounted to go in search of the homeland of little miss Sammut, a few of us got some cheap Ryan Air flights and headed out to Malta for a week. Deep water soloing and long sea level traversing really are something else and should you ever get the opportunity grasp it with both hands and get out somewhere sunny and climb over the sea. But watch out for those jelly fish!

Ok then, Summer is over, I have a job (placement year), and it is time to recruit some more freshers. The Bazaar cracks off as usual, but numbers are down, numbers are *really* down. Due to a number of factors our past performance of selling out by the Sunday Lunchtime was not going to be replicated. We sold 64 (out of 100) memberships by closing on the Sunday. I was worried. However, sales did not stop when the bazaar stopped. Students are obviously becoming more careful with their money, the sales kept dripping in and by the Roped Pub Crawl we had about 85 members and by the daytrips that weekend we had almost filled our quota with 95. The roped pub crawl was eventful as always, I was especially impressed by my ability to talk my way around campus security and the Police whilst being tied to a rabble of freshers and standing on top of an 8' wall, playing the health and safety card can work in mysterious ways.

This was the first year in the last 4 that I have not been able to make the Capel trip. However I can report that due to an organisation error it was held in a different hut. Due to the reduced numbers it managed to sell out in the record time of half an hour. Everything else went to plan as far as I am aware.

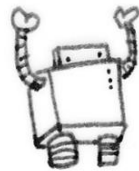
The Lakes Trip this year was especially wet and soggy, we had to wander around the campsite for a good 20 minutes in the dark before finding enough grass that was not under water to be able to pitch the tents. One especially special fresher decided to sleep in a bivibag in the pissing rain for reasons unknown to the rest of us. However as usual, the pub was exceptional.

This years Christmas dinner fancy dress theme was "Anything beginning with C, except climbing". A trio of old people arrived dressed as Creeky, C15 (the van) and Caravan (Yes, Creeky owns a caravan, but that is another story). The dinner took place during the Lake District flooding, but we managed to get through ok. This was the second year in a row that we have had loads of snow atop Helvelyn, our alpine ascent of the ridge next to striding edge on the East Face was snowy enough that we had to kick proper steps to gain any height.

The early part of 2010 saw the club send 12 people up to Scotland for a winter skills course lead by none other than Ex-Chairman Guy Wilson. This was during the heavy snow of the new year, one group got snowed in and the other had to spend a night in the car at many degrees

below zero, apart from that everything went swimmingly well and we now have a dozen members of the club with some real winter experience, and some idea of what to do which can hopefully be used to get more people out doing some real mountaineering. We are the mountaineering club after all.

By Phil Baxter



ROBOTIC SOMERSAULTS...

## Climb Europe: Destination Guide

OK, so I haven't climbed everywhere in Europe, in fact I've barely scratched the surface. I did however spend 4 weeks on the road, covering 4000 miles through 8 countries, climbing everywhere we stopped. So here's a quick round-up of where I went, what I recommend and where I'll go back!

It all started with an idea concocted in lectures 18 months beforehand, to prevent the boredom of gas turbine design. The plan, epic as it may be, was to drive from Fontainebleau all the way across to the black sea and back again. The plans were scaled a little, and myself and Bob Young set off on a little adventure to sample the European climbing pedigree.

### FRANCE: Fontainebleau

God's gift to Boulderers apparently. Definitely good but it's seen an awful lot of stickies. And pof. And chalk. And trainers. There are some classic problems, its amazing scenery and there's more climbing than you can possibly imagine. Overall, it's great for everyone, but don't forget there are other places out there.

### SWITZERLAND: Cresciano & Chironico

In southern Switzerland there's a valley containing a little village called Cresciano. On the sides of this valley are huge granite boulders hidden in the forest. Hundreds of these boulders offer gems of problems across the whole grade range. The best bit about it - its relatively unheard of, difficult to find and amazing rock to climb on. It's cool in the summer because of the trees but doesn't dry off quickly. Best bouldering of the whole trip.

### ITALY: Lake Como

We were attracted to Lake Como just because we thought it would be a nice place to visit, turns out there is some stunning climbing available too. Climbs that are right on the shore of the lake, to high up on the valley side. We went when it was far too hot, so visit in either spring or autumn. Plenty of sport routes for everyone, multi pitch and single pitch, and absolutely stunning scenery. Close to Cresciano, Milan, Val De Mello and plenty of other good places.

### ITALY: The south

OK, so we didn't climb here, but I have a guide book and it looks like there is some nice stuff. We drove down to Bari to get a ferry across to Dubrovnik, but unfortunately the weather and some locals using the quarry as a fly tip prevented us from climbing. Sounds like there is some good bouldering near Potenza but it's a long way to go to find out it's rubbish.

### CROATIA: Dubrovnik area

Dubrovnik is cool. Fact. However, it's tiny and you can see it all in a day or so. When your missus drags you on a romantic trip over there for a week, take your stickies because there are a couple of places to climb. We did a few sports routes up above Dubrovnik very near the Bosnian border. We also set out to find a second place near the airport, however it was rubbish and far too hot.

### CROATIA: Split area

Where to start? There is so much climbing around split, enough for at least a fortnight to just visit every venue. We stuck with the bouldering after nearly a week of sport (Bob's scared of heights). Both places were found by ringing a Croat whose number had been given to us by the owner of the Split climbing shop, both places were stunning and relatively untouched. We climbed unmarked (possibly unclimbed) routes in both places, there is no guidebook currently but we managed to find the venues with an OS style map and the Croat's directions.

**SLOVENIA:** Bled area

WOW! Although relatively popular, this area offers absolutely loads of sport routes from 3s (Bob's first lead) to 9s and it's all pristine. Routes up to 40m in places and all the crags within a few miles of each other. Of all the places visited, this was by far the favourite.

**BEST BOULDERING:** Cresciano. Idyllic and amazing rock!

**BEST SPORT:** Bled. Stunning views, huge climbs, quality rock, sunshine!

**WHERE TO STAY?**

Camp! There are campsites all over the place and they're all really easy to find. Buy a country map with sites marked on. Worked out on average around €7 per person per night. Wild camping is off the cards in most places.

**TIPS**

Don't drive as far as we did or don't attempt to tick off as many places, we spent too much time on the road and only had time to sample the areas. I'd suggest picking a country and basing yourself there. In south east Switzerland there is loads of bouldering (Magic Woods, Cresciano and Chironico are all within an hour). It's also close enough to Italy to nip over the border and climb there. Croatia also offers masses of sport, bouldering and trad across the entire country. A car is almost a necessity unfortunately.

Pick your time of year carefully, it gets very hot in Italy and Croatia even in late September when we went, though we did come back with a tan.

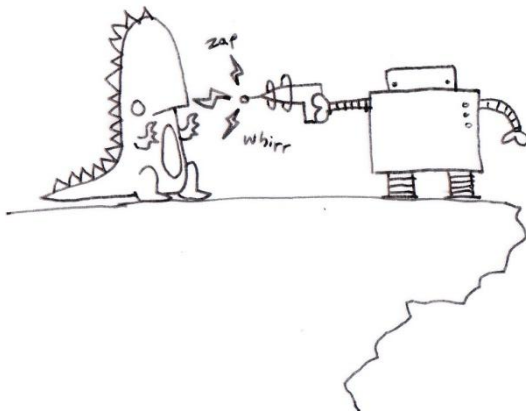
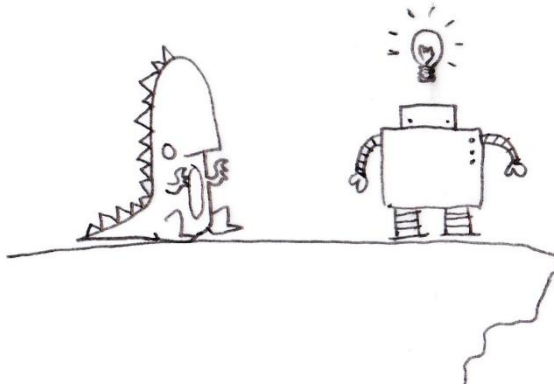
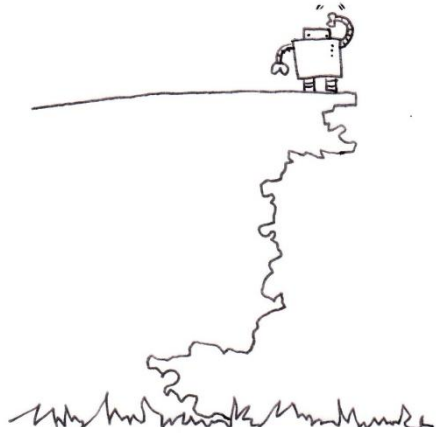
Check out <http://www.climb-europe.com/> for guide books and information on some of the hundreds (thousands?) of venues across Europe.

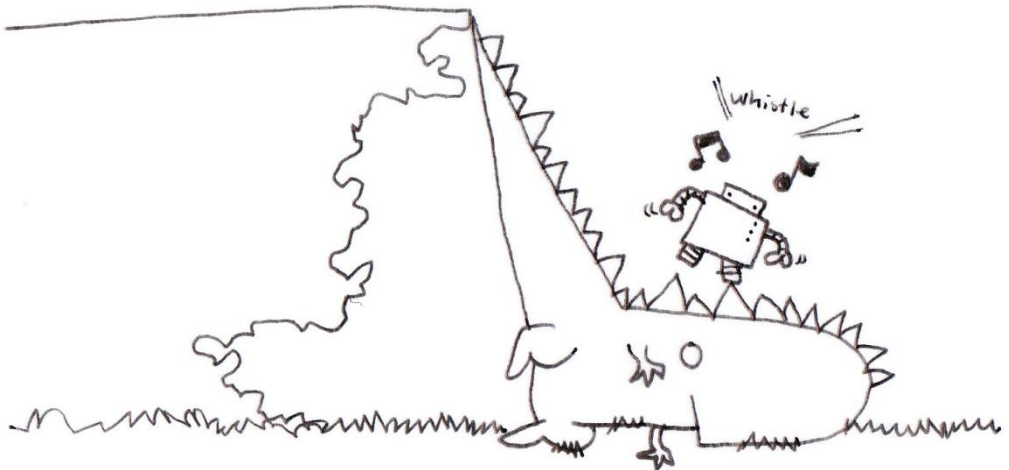
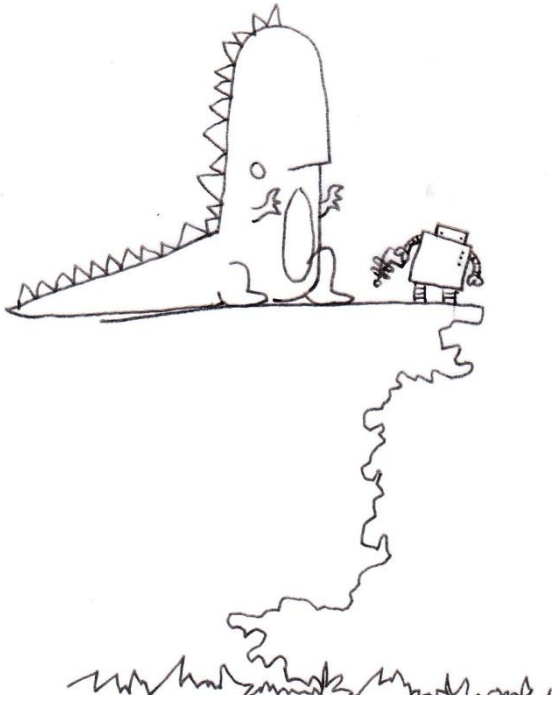
**FINALLY**

Ask me anything about the trip, I love talking about it! There are plenty more foreign venues that I can't talk about, but want to try out. Ask Jay for more info on Switzerland and Austria, or our resident Malteser for info on that climbing paradise. I'm also considering going to Norway this summer for a slightly more temperate (and traditional) climbing holiday, so there will be more news next year!

**By Duck**

# HOW TO GET DOWN OFF THE TOP OF A CRAG





## MY CHRISTMAS DINNER AS SOCIAL SEC

### I do not like cooking no more

Once upon a time, I became social sec. I was not fully aware of the horror of the responsibility of cooking for 40 people at the Christmas dinner when I signed up for this role.

After a night of drinking too much cider, I woke up to have to go do the food shopping for the meal that me and Duck were to prepare for the Christmas Dinner meal on the Saturday night. Me, Creeky and Duck bimbled into Loughborough town centre and haphazardly slung bits of food into bags, guessing at the quantities we needed. Most measurements were in the units of 'some'. The turkey had already been sourced and paid for by Creeky, and I was assured it would be easy enough to cook.

We arrived Friday night; there was much drinking and table bouldering, and doodling on certain fast-asleep ex-members. Much jollity was had. (Mice may have been spotted in the hut, so we hid the food in the fridge and the oven, in an attempt to keep it safe).

Saturday morning:

Around abouts 9 0'stupid' clock:

I awoke to more cider induced pain, and had to cook sausages and bacon for the troops that were raring to go out onto the snowy hills.

Around about 10am:

Once the troops had left to throw snow at each other on the top of hills; I was left to cook a Christmas dinner... alone... as Duck had decided to leave me on my own to drive people around in the mini-bus.

So I began!

First: the TURKEY (which was hidden in the oven over night to prevent mice contamination.... was discovered to have been nibbled in places...) the most important part of a Christmas dinner. The oh so informative Creeky, before he left to enjoy himself, told me "it'll take 7 hours to cook, we're eating at about 7 o'clock, so put it in around 12pm and it'll be REEEEEET".

I gave the HUMOUNGOUS turkey a rather lovely oil massage and haphazardly covered it in many layers of foil. Rather proud of my masterpiece, I proceeded to place the turkey on the side, and went to cut up some veg.

Nikki, who was unsure of Creeky instructions for the cooking of the turkey, came back from a very long phone call to her parents in which they told her that, to cook a 3 stone turkey (the size of the turkey we had) it would need 16 hours, and that we should have started cooking it the night before if we were planning on eating it that evening.

Oh S#!&E^.

So, with Duck still missing, me flailing around pretending to know how to cook, Sarah and Nikki the helpful kitchen fairies, we began to HACK the turkey apart with much vigourousity. With blunt knives...

After much hacking and screaming, it was done. The turkey was in many pieces, which we wrapped in foil and threw in the oven. With that done, me, and the helpful kitchen fairies began to cut up carrots (also majorly nibbled by mice), potatoes, sprouts, and more. Duck returned, impressed with our efforts and began to help out.

This took many hours. But not as many hours as the wrapping of 40 layers of pass the parcel presentness!

Many hours of hard labour later:

Roast potatoes and parsnips were cooking. Veg was boiling. Turkey was cooking (we hoped). Everything was on it's way to being done.

Skip the boring bit where we served food and...

Everyone ate happily ever after.

And that was how Christmas dinner really happened. I will never cook again~

The End. Thank goodness~

By Holleh teh AWESome

## Ripper, Rayan and 'Ron's Alternative End Of Term Party

As a result of a slightly alcohol induced conversation at the Christmas Dinner, I decided to forgo the usual end of term festivities and leech on to Byron and Rayan's wee jaunt up to Scotland for the weekend. As a result I found myself in a bivvy bag on a verge, counting shooting stars and slowly shivering myself to sleep, long after Duncan had passed out from Skittle vodka back in Loughborough. But the weekend was to prove this a sacrifice worth making.

After all too little sleep, finally managed to pry myself out of my sleeping bag to the promise of a brew and fried pig. Following an amount of gear faffing and defrosting of the local foliage we managed to get to the Cairngorm Ski Station at the first hint of daylight. During the drive up to the latter we discovered much to our bemusement that we had spent the night in a temperature inversion as the thermometer climbed from -6°C.

Reached Coire-an-Sneachda (Never know how to pronounce it) after daybreak, just as my feet no longer feel like they are full of slush puppy and are greeted with pretty damn close to A1 conditions underfoot. With the coire well splattered with the white stuff (Not in that way!) we ascended the headwall in order for Rayan to get some ice axe arrest practice which later proved to be a good idea.

After adequate consumption of chilled Haribo (Byron is right, cold Haribo does taste better!) and donning of crampons we made a start on the first route of the day, 'The Slant' (Grade I/II). This given the conditions proved to be a nice introduction for me and Rayan to the whole Scottish Winter Climbing experience, with lots of firm foot and axe placements due to snow cover. Topped out to a clear view of the entire Cairngorm plateau and following the consumption of Cornish pasties and yet more Haribo we made our way down.



*A glimpse of things to come!*

During the decent the rather self-explanatory 'Arse Over Tit' (AOT) Award was finally gained in a spectacular fashion. As suddenly from behind Byron and I, we heard the voice of Rayan exclaim "Help Meeeeeeeeee!" Turning around we see the small blue form of the latter skidding down the Corrie at a fair old pace. No longer in possession of her ice axe (being stuck in the snow where she slipped) the halting of her progress was painfully slow, coming to rest on the edge of the boulder field below. It comes as a relief when she shouts back she's okay and is met by a group of local climbers (one of which stating he did the same thing a day before) who ran up from below. So as Byron scurries down the slope to Rayan I trudge back up the slope to retrieve her ice axe, which is still obstinately stuck in the snow. Much to my confusion, when I finally get to Rayan I am greeted by a Cheshire Cat like smile stretched across her face. She explains that this is her default 'setting' under stress or trauma; assuring us she wants to continue to do another route. In fact the only injury of note she sustained was a sprained thumb, which proceeded to go through a variety of different colours over the next day.

On the ascent to the next route, the smile finally breaks but after a quick hug from Byronium and more Haribo, 'normality' is restored and we proceed onto Aladdin's Mirror (Grade I). This time as Tail-End Charlie I finally discover the joys of getting covered by snow from the person above and after little incident top out once again onto

Coire-an-Sneachda. After consumption of much more Haribo and an encounter with some Marines we decided to call it a day with less than an hour's daylight left.



*Top of Coire-an-Sneachda, romantic or what!*

their feet probably have the right idea.

After checking in to the Glen Nevis hostel for the night, a shower, several brews and a curry we decide to call it a night even before the end of 'Strictly Come Dancing' for some well earned shut eye.

After waking up at 5 O' Bloody-too-early-in-the-morning and yet more bacon and tea we start our trudge up to the Ben from the 'Extreme' car park (It is called the North Face car park after all). Part way up through the plantation Byron points out Ben Nevis. After a case of mistaken identity ("I thought it looked so small!") and change of vantage point I finally spot the looming hulk of the Ben silhouetted against the starry sky. We make good time across the moraines making the mountain rescue hut after daybreak.

The conditions underfoot are once again amazing as we make our ascent to the start of the route proper of Tower Gully (Grade I). At one point up the snow slope, ahead of the other two, I get the 'willies' by realizing I'm all alone and stood unprotected on basically a natural toboggan run. My way of dealing with this was simply to bash up the slope at an increased pace, thus fear increases performance. The downside of this by the time Rayan and Byron have caught up, my arse is pretty numb sitting in my bucket seat.

Coming to the edge of the snowline we decide to remove crampons. A fact which my brain is slow to respond to, promptly proceeding to step onto a frozen stream. Then before I can utter, "Ooh this is slippery!" I fall flat on my arse. Almost simultaneously Rayan carries out the same actions leading Byron to quip "It's like climbing with the Chuckle Brothers". So with my pride in tatters and a small bruise on my forearm we continue the descent back to the car park before the drive to Fort William. During which I think that the folks whizzing past with planks strapped to



*Byron on the traverse*

The route proper started from a belay stance with a long traverse of almost alpine proportions. Progress was made at a steady pace through mainly daggering and front-pointing over the consolidated snow with the rope at full extension as we moved together. During which we were frequently bombarded with bits of ice from the group on the crag above, making the characteristic 'whizzing' noise as the ice plummeted past your head. In the inevitable event of one hitting you square in the face, even the small ones twanged a

fair bit. The traverse gave ample opportunity to work out different ways of resting limbs with knees seeming to be

quite useful in this respect all the while wishing I had changed out of my now sodden gloves back at the belay. The snow conditions started to deteriorate slightly in the final section of the route, with the surface cracking away to reveal unconsolidated powder in parts. The solution to which was to bash through it as quickly as possible using as much of the body for purchase, allowing us to top out to the most epic sunset ever and the consuming of celebratory Haribo.

After a little wander round the ruins of the old observatory and the obligatory group photo we started our decent down the zig-zagging tourist route. At the Lochan we left the tourist track in order to take a short cut back to our car park. This was on the auspices that there would be a prominent path to follow as "people must do this all the time, right?" However as darkness fell the path was nowhere to be found, but under the more than capable navigation skills of Byronium, we 'handrailed' our way down a stream in order to intercept a track which would lead us back to our start point. This unfortunately took us through an expanse of frozen vegetation (I hate Bracken!) and partially frozen bog before finally reaching the track much to our relief. It was then the simple task of walking back to the car getting chips from the coldest chip shop in the world and driving the massive distance back to the midlands.

In short the weekend was epically brilliant and much thanks to Byron and Ray for making it so. It was well worth the lack of sleep and epic drive. On the peak bagging front I finally climbed Ben Nevis with the added benefit of doing it in winter and not by the tourist route, making it all the more satisfying. Also it further compounded the fact that 'fun' usually happens on the descent!

**By Ripper**



*Sunset on the Ben*

## **LSMC WINTER SKILLS WEEKEND IN SCOTLAND (PART ONE)**

### **Journey Up**

Most of us began our journey to Feshie Bridge near Aviemore in the Cairngorms on New Years Day from the other end of the country (being Southerners). We met up in Loughborough and stayed the night preparing for the eight hour stretch in the car that awaited us. The journey started off with a lot of anxiety with weather reports of wide spread snow and tales from Grandparents that us Southerners would go blind if we stared at it. Shortly after leaving Loughborough we encountered our first flakes of cold, white stuff (what Northerners call “snow”) and were amazed at it, though we would soon be getting used to a great deal more.

The journey up was slow and eventful due to the amount of snow increasing and England’s ability to keep the roads clear decreasing exponentially the further North you went, which gave rise to a few near misses on the motorway. Once we crossed the border to Scotland though the roads were magically clear again despite having even more snow. Our car went via Edinburgh Airport to pick Ex-Chairman Guy Wilson who would be our “Guyde” (one of his jokes) and run the course and we arrived at Mill Cottage hut first. It was still daylight when we arrived so we could clearly see that our rear wheel drive BMW was not going to get down the track to the hut. The only option was to dig out a parking space on the roadside, which just happened to be ideally placed at the bottom of a hill with plenty of opportunity for cars to lose control and crash into our car at the bottom. The driver wasn’t particularly happy with the parking arrangements.

The cottage was a good size with a nice coal burner stove to keep the cold out, with lovely warm showers, and excellent jigsaw facilities. The other car would join us shortly. Once all together the course started. We were taken through equipment and its uses that evening.

### **Day One**

The first day saw us starting from Glen Coe Ski Resort and promptly introduced us all to walking in deep snow and soon realised what Guy meant when he said there was too much snow. Some members of the group found walking through the deep snow a great deal harder than others. Jake was constantly sinking thigh deep into snow that the rest of us could walk across the top of (a few too many mince pies maybe?!). The agenda for the first day was to cover ‘moving on snow’ and included: proper use of boots, the ice axe and (after a great deal of hunting for some exposed ice) crampons and we learnt how to ascend, descend and cut steps. A lot of fun was had sliding around practicing ice axe arrests and I quite often ended up with a face full of snow either from tumbling around whilst trying to arrest, or stopping too near someone’s feet who then decided it would be too good an opportunity to miss and

would promptly cover me in snow, which would inevitably ended up down my jacket too.

### **Day Two**

We awoke to day two to find even more snow had been dumped overnight. A lot more. The avalanche forecast wasn't looking too good but we manned up and with expert guidance walked out towards Coire an t'Sneachda with more plodding through deep snow and Patrick ploughing through a snow covered river on our way there. Once there we saw classic ice climbing routes such as *Jacob's Ladder* and admired them fearfully whilst we caught our breath. Guy wasn't stupid enough to let us too near them, instead we looked at avalanche awareness, and tried our hand at fashioning emergency shelters and ice huts. Topping out anywhere wasn't practical with the high winds and deep snow so we took a slightly different route back and had some fun glissading down the piste at the end of the day.

### **Day Three**

On the final day we tried to avoid the deep snow, and we were fairly successful in doing this, walking out past Glen Coe lodge towards a bothy. On our way we came across a frozen lake and decided to investigate. The lake was pretty solid and everyone walked on and off fine. Everyone apart from Steve who decided it would be a good idea to write his name in yellow snow on the lake. The lake didn't like this so took revenge and gave way under him as he was walking off causing him to plunge knee deep into the water. It was at this point Guy decided to tell us about how to identify and treat cold injuries, though Steve was fine. Once we got to the bothy we dumped our bags and went outside to learn some useful techniques including various types of snow anchors and ways to reinforce them, some useful rope work and anything else we wanted to know. Once we got back to the car we discovered it to be somewhat snowed in due to it having snowed all day so were forced to put the snow chains on for the first time that weekend to get back to the hut.

### **Nightlife**

The nightlife in was excellent and varied (though it was no Hey Ewe), with multiple jigsaws to attempt. Dan becoming particularly addicted to one, which he never managed to complete due to four missing pieces, though we must be the only University Climbing Club to get so far with a jigsaw! Jake would often disappear for naps and Steve would always be the last person ready for a meeting. Discussions about the day's happenings and what to expect the next day were had throughout the evening. They managed to last so long due to Guy constantly changing his mind about what we could do! Eventually though with a belly full of food and alcohol and exhausted from a long day on the hills and the warmth of the fire sending us to sleep we would turn in for an early night.

## **Journey Home**

The first attempt at going home didn't go quite as well as we were hoping. Due to massive snow fall, all of the roads were shut in and out of Scotland so the furthest we got was Perth before having to return back to a nice warm and comfortable hut for the night. The next morning we left Guy wondering if the other group would actually make it and managed to get out of Scotland through freshly ploughed roads and started the long journey home. The roads may have been open though this wasn't helpful if you couldn't see them! Due to salt on the roads and a frozen washer the windscreen of the car would become incredibly dirty within minutes of getting on the faster roads and reduce visibility to roughly zero meters. This was a problem. We had to keep stopping to clean the windscreen but finding somewhere to stop when you can't see is quite difficult! Eventually we devised a well oiled routine of pulling over, jumping out, pouring water on the windscreen and driving off again as we were having to do it every five minutes. In slightly wetter areas we came up with an excellent time saving tactic of driving close enough to the vehicle in front to collect the spray they gave off and use that to clean the windscreen. This was of course in no way dangerous.

Eventually we arrived back in Loughborough knackered late on the 6<sup>th</sup> having driven through snow all the way back. The trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all and a great deal was learnt and some great experiences had. It was an excellent course which hopefully will be running next year for those who missed out this year.

My only regret was that we never made a snowman.

By Darren McMaster



SOMERSAULT  
FAILURE...

I am paul and i am a boy. Holly has asked me to write sumin for grip. So here is sumin that i have written that can go in grip. Nuff said.

Paul



3

1

2

2

3

4

4

5

6

5

6

7

7

9

8

8

9

10

11

## Down

1. An object used in for a certain activity that uses part of the name for the item used to carry shopping.
2. A letter you get for A levels.
3. A thin bit of chord tied in a certain way used to ascend and descend a climbing rope.
4. Using a climbing shoe on the edge of footholds.
5. The name of a song by Queen or willingly exposing ones self.
6. An action used by a person on the ground to either let the climber ascend or descend safely.
7. A technique used by placing legs apart to create more stability.
8. Numbers that are real.
9. The act of using hands and feet to gain altitude.

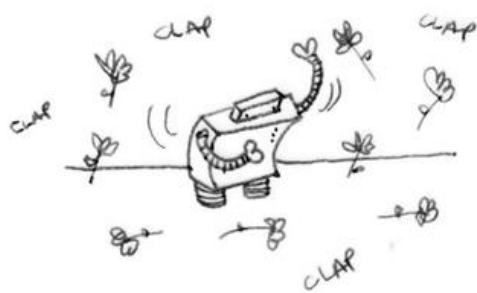
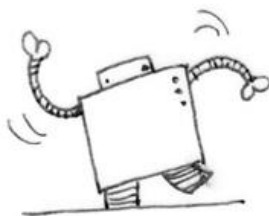
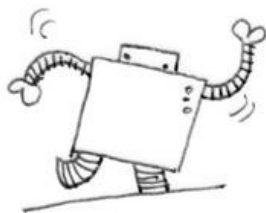
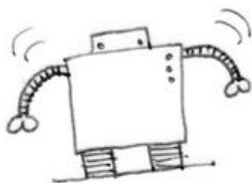
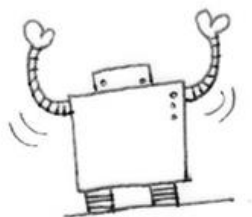
## Across

1. The part in the middle of a song with no singing.
2. This thing is used as a house but doesn't look like one.
3. The piece of equipment the rope is tied to.
4. If this breaks then being used could lead to some serious pain.
5. Something used to unlock cashews.
6. The art of falling down a rock face gracefully.
7. What you do when you go to sleep from sitting on your bed.
8. Universities that are not in the centre of town are generally this.
9. How high or low a musical note is.
10. A rib of rock.
11. The people who built big pointy things in the desert and did a funky dance.

*Note all words are something to do with climbing!!!*



# INTRODUCING... ROBOT DANCE...



## Brief Introduction to

### 'Crag and Rock Ascension Practices' Climbing

So you have all heard of Trad climbing, Sport climbing, Bouldering, Aid Climbing, Free Climbing but now there is a new climbing discipline to add to the mix. Originally starting as an underground movement by Klaus von Hindenblatt in Bavaria circa 1983, as a means for him and like-minded individuals to push their climbing potential. This would later evolve into what would become the 'Steigen Hart Immer Technik' or to give the English moniker 'Crag and Rock Ascension Practices' Climbing. This is a complex and all encompassing discipline including training, technique, nutrition and mental preparation. But in order to give a glimpse into this avant-garde facet of the climbing community here are several techniques heavily used below:

#### 1. Gesichtsplatz

In order for the climber to increase friction with the rock all the limbs of the body are usually in contact with the surface. But to supplement this, the head, with impetus on the squishy cheeks, is used by firmly planting the face against the rock surface. This is illustrated in *Fig.1* with zone of optimum

friction indicated.

Many variations of this are used, including the use of the nose and tongue (saliva acts as a further v power.



Maximal Friction

*Fig.1- Friction between face and rock* ent staying

#### 2. Der Wal

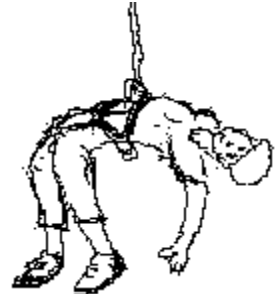


*Fig.2-Transfer of Body Weight*

This method utilized on top outs involves transferring the bodies centre of mass as far over the top of route as possible. This relieves weight on the legs while further progress is gained by a 'fish out of water motion'. This transfer in weight it greatly augmented with a build up of abdominal adipose tissue gained through a strict nutritional regime.

### 3. Der Aufzug

In order to allow the second to conserve energy as much as possible, friction with the rock is then reduced to practically nil. The second, while adopting a limp posture, is then pulled up the remainder of the route by the lead with energy expenditure from only one person making it very efficient in team strategy terms.



*Fig.3-Correct Limp Position*

*Reprinted With Kind Permission From 'Climber' Dec 1991*

**by kipper**

## The Wrong Way Round

*When I started writing this I thought I would fit in to a couple of pages, my apologies for the length of the article...*

I forget the exact date. It was most probably the freshers day trips back in 2008 and myself, Paul, and Alex had ended up in the back of a van cooking dinner. The conversation flowed as freely as the beers, and it wasn't long until the topic of what to do in the summer arose. We had all heard of the Mongol Rally and thought we knew what it entailed. So there we were in the middle of a field in the Peaks agreeing that the most sensible thing to do with our summer would be to drive to Mongolia. This is our story.

There are a number of things you need to have or do before you think about driving to Mongolia. A car, Visas, Money, Vaccinations, insurance, a route... In the Autumn of 2008 we had none of these, and time was ticking away fast. Maps were purchased, websites designed, charities chosen and it felt as if progress was being made.

When trying to plan something as stupid as driving to Mongolia most people would tell you that a team member moving to the Alps for five months may hinder planning, which is exactly what I did at the end of November.

Over the next few months our route developed, we learnt some important lessons. For example Russia's southern border with Georgia and Azerbaijan is very much somewhere you don't want to be. In the end we settled on the route shown below.



In the depths of winter a suitable car was spotted on auto trader, it was a 9 year old Skoda Felicia that had covered ninety thousand miles. It was located in Ashbourne, and within a few days it was ours, and from that point on was known to us as Felicity. With a route and Felicity sorted we thought



Preparing the car

we had done the difficult part, but we were about to be shot down by the visa application process. Once out of Europe we needed visas for eight of the countries we were passing through. We had the fortune of being able to use “the visa machine”, an online application service. We sent off our passports in April and in some cases we didn't see them again until the day we set off. In the months leading up to the start of the rally we spent time preparing the car and ourselves. In both cases problems were diagnosed and solutions found. By the time we had finished with Felicity she was a fully fledged rally machine complete with a roof rack, extra lights, multiple spare wheels, uprated suspension, snorkel, a mega sump and engine guard. She ran beautifully.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> July we met up at Goodwood, the home of motor racing, for the festival of slow! We were just one of 350 teams starting from this historic race course, and it was the first time we would meet some of our fellow ralliers and their machines. We were pleased to see we weren't the only team with a Skoda Felicia. More importantly we were all reunited with our passports complete with all the visa's we required. After lunch we found ourselves lined up on the start line, and then we were off. The lap of the circuit was taken at a fairly sedate speed, and as we neared the end of the track we filtered off onto public roads. Next stop Dover.

As we headed towards the M23 it became clear that one or more of the wheels was not quite balanced. During our preparation we had swapped most of the standard tyres for commercial tyres and we had picked up some spare rims, but we hadn't got the wheels balanced...oops! We decided the best thing to do was to stop at a garage in Dover and get it sorted whilst we waited for the ferry.

Dover is a strange place and driving through in Felicity certainly raised a few eyebrows. We found a garage that could help us. The drivers wheel was tested and only needed a bit of work, but when it came to the passenger wheel it was not only unbalanced but also buckled. We couldn't do anything about the buckle but we got it balanced. The cost of all this work was nothing, the guys in the garage thought we were mad trying to drive to Mongolia in a 10 year old car with a buckled rim, and at that point so did I.

Our ferry seemed to be full of Mongol rally cars, everyone had a different plan for the night, as we left the docks our little convoy got separated and we found ourselves heading towards Belgium on our own. Trying to find a discrete place to stop and put up a tent was harder than expected and we found ourselves spending the first night in a field as the rain continued to fall. Was this what the Mongol Rally was all about?

The following day we were up early, and in the dawn light our discrete camp site turned out to be in full view of the road, our next stop was due to be Heidleberg, Germany to meet up with Katja, Alex's friend. This should have been a short day, but almost straight away felicity decided not to co-operate. We put this down to the damp air.

As we made progress through Germany all was well, the weather was improving and we thought we had left the problems of the morning, then as we began to descend a hill the engine cut out...SHIT.

As quick as she had cut out she came back to life, we stopped at the next services and came to the conclusion that we had no idea what was wrong. But now we had a bigger problem, she would not start at all, we checked everything and used every spare part we had, but still nothing.

This was a pretty low moment, we were only a few hundred miles into our journey and already we had a car that refused to turn over. We tried the engine once more and it started, it was running rough, but at least it was running. We made it to Katja's and spent the rest of the afternoon in and around Heidleberg, (*Thanks Katja for letting us crash at yours!*).

After the problems on the autobahn the previous day there was a sense of relief in the car when Felicity started first time. Our target for the day was the Czech Republic and the famous Mongol Rally Czech Out party. Despite repeated problems with the car we made it to the camp site and the castle for the Czech out Party, we agreed that if there were still problems with the car the following morning we would find a garage and get it sorted-we were of course back in Felicity's home country.

The Czech out party was always going to be a big night, and with free gin and tonic's, a live band and 500 teams it didn't disappoint.

The morning after the night before dawned to fuzzy heads and a general reluctance to move, other teams seemed to be doing a better job of getting up and on the road, we still weren't even sure felicity would want to start. We packed up the tent and went to start felicity and she started first time. Perhaps this was the end of our problems.

Over the next few days we put in some fairly epic days as we passed through Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria finally entering turkey and driving over the Bosphorus Bridge. That was us out of Europe.



**Busy doing nothing**

Trying to find places to stop in turkey was hard. We drove through the heat of the day to the coast hoping to find a nice little beach where we could pitch the tents and go for a swim in the black sea, our map even had a camp site marked. Perhaps we were looking the wrong place but we just couldn't find somewhere suitable, long after it had got dark we stopped to cook some dinner, but there still wasn't anywhere suitable to sleep. That night we slept in the car in a lay-by close to the Georgian border.

The following morning we ate the remainder of the bread we had bought the previous morning and made our way to the border. As we passed along the coast road we passed hundreds of trucks all waiting to leave turkey. We assumed that we didn't have to wait with them and pulled a sneaky overtaking manoeuvre. This was a smart move otherwise we would probably still be waiting.

We considered, this border to be the first of our "difficult" borders, there was the obligatory paper work checking and exchange of US dollars, the officials took a close look at our Russian visas, and then before we knew it we were on the road again. After a quick petrol stop we were heading towards the city of Batumi, where we got lost and the tarmac ended, we drove around and eventually found a helpful taxi driver that pointed us in the direction of a tarmac road and our next stop Tbilisi. After a couple of days of bad sleep and generally roughing it we decided to get a hotel in Tbilisi, and went out for dinner. One of the advantages of staying in a hotel is the shower facilities. In Tbilisi we realised that a shower also doubles as a washing machine. The following morning we had succeeded in washing the clothes but now had a bathroom full of wet clothes. Attaching wet clothes to a roof rack proved an effective way of drying them.

The border with Azerbaijan was in a state of disrepair, it consisted of a couple of huts and lots of gates. Paul being the vehicle owner was paraded around all of the huts, marched up the road and then returned to us with fistfuls of paperwork. We had been allowed in.

Azerbaijan is a prosperous country, and is investing heavily in its infrastructure. Unfortunately building a new road involves removing the old road before building the new one, as a result temporary tracks are used. Anything over 20mph shakes the car so violently the trim falls off. As we neared Baku we stopped for a few hours sleep.

The following morning we awoke to the sight of oil refineries as far as we could see. We had a busy day planned, we needed to find and book transport across the Caspian sea. The port was pretty different to what we were used to, the ticket office was a shed and the guy behind the desk had no idea when the next boat was. We were told come back at 17.00. We headed into the city and stumbled across a Mongol rally car, we left them a note and went to find food.

On our return to the port and found the car we had seen earlier was there too. Ross and Ian introduced themselves. Our man in the hut said there may be a ferry the following day. We spent the evening with Ross and Ian, and stayed in a hostel they found.

Day two of waiting for a ferry didn't start well. Straight away we were told to come back at 13.00. We went for a wonder around the city to pass the time.

At 13.00 we received the news we had been waiting for there would be a ferry leaving that afternoon, our man in the hut explained the pricing structure for the ship. \$50 per meter of vehicle plus some more \$'s for a driver and even more \$'s for a passenger. We were given more paperwork and then went too see more men in another office for more paperwork and stamping. Finally we went and visited another building and handed over some more dollars. That was it we had some bits of paper that we assumed were tickets, and some other paperwork that we assumed was customs clearance.

As the sun began to set we drove onto the boat, and were shown our cabin – it was much better than I expected.



**Sunrise on the Caspian Sea**

The following morning we were up early, off the side of boat we could see oil rigs on the horizon, the sea was still and there was no breeze.

Felicity had taken a bit of a battering on the Azerbaijan roads, we decided to investigate the damage. We jacked up the car but the rear wheel on the passenger side stayed on the ground. We had snapped the mounting for the rear shock. This was bad news.

The ship's engineer came over and had a look at the problem, he thought he could do a temporary fix for \$50. In the end we settled for \$20. He disappeared for a bit and came back with a long cable. We moved the car away from the thousands of gallons of oil we were parked next to and took the shock off the car and placed it on the deck. Welding the shock in the middle of the Caspian sea was one of the stranger parts of the trip. Sparks flew and rubber bushes caught fire but our shock was back in one piece.

We arrived in the port early in the afternoon, but it took several more hours before we docked.

What followed was the most elaborate display of bureaucracy. We visited a dozen people in a dozen different offices, we got dollars changed into a national currency, routes were calculated, cars were searched, currency changed hands, national currency was changed for local currency. Just as we were completely confused we taken back to the car and sent on our way. It was about 23.00 so we wanted somewhere to stay. We had covered less than 5 miles before getting pulled over at a check point. Turkmenistan was living up to its fierce reputation. We spent the night sleeping at a police check point, and were even given a water melon by the police.

Days on the road have a habit of merging together. It is the little problems that are remembered. After leaving a city called Mary we were looking for somewhere to sleep and in the fading light spotted a patch just a short distance from the road. We headed towards it and sunk. The sand was so soft it ran like water. We tried to drive it out but just got deeper and deeper.

At this point it was dark and we were pissed off for getting stuck in such a stupid place. We dug the sand out from under the wheels and found the car was beached on the engine guard. More digging in the sand followed, and the car was jacked up and placed our sand mats under the wheels. The Wheels span and with a bit of a push we were back in the road, and shortly found a firmer place to pitch the tents!

One of the benefits of Turkmenistan being an oil and gas producing country was the cheap petrol, the cost per litre was about \$0.04. The tanks was brimmed before leaving the country.

Entering Uzbekistan involved a lot less paperwork and passport stamping than Turkmenistan. Better still they didn't try and extort any dollars out of us. We spent a lot of time in the historic city of Samarqand, and found time to look at some of the older parts of the city. Whilst in Samarquand we met a team of Italians in Fiat Pandas who had taken the northern route down through Kazakhstan - the roads were apparently awful!

As we continued north through Uzbekistan towards Toshkent and the Kazakhstan border we thought we were making good progress. As we arrived at the road that would take us to the border there was a police road block. The border was closed. The helpful policeman explained that there was another border open back in the direction we had just come from. Better still they would escort us there, We drove into the night following a copper not knowing where we were being taken or when we would get there. As we were driving along we discovered a small problem. We were ahead of schedule and our Kazakh visas didn't start for another two days. Turning up at a border without the correct visa's seemed like a recipe for trouble but how could we ditch the copper that we were following.

We arrived at the border town and pulled over, the policeman we had been tailing came over and pointed out the border post and we thanked him and watched as he drove back to the city. A few minutes later we were heading in the same direction.

Two days later after laying low in a hotel we were back at the border and before we knew it (only 4 hours later) we were across and into Kazakhstan. The Kazakh roads were by no means the worst roads we encountered, but were certainly not the best, it was a case of avoiding the abandoned cars and driving round potholes that could quite easily swallow Felicity whole!

Kazakhstan is a massive country, it is over ten times the size of the UK and we needed to drive across it. There is also not a lot there. Often we would be the only car on the road with nothing, and I mean nothing in any direction as far the we could see. This made wild camping easy, we would find little tracks heading away from the main road and follow them for a bit, usually this led to a good place to camp. One night we stayed near a farm and spent the following morning eating and drinking local dishes with the farmer, and his extended family. We were still making very good progress and as we neared the Russian border we began to look for somewhere to stop for our last night in Kazakhstan. Perhaps 30 miles from the border we found a track heading up to a forested area, it looked good. We parked just off the track and took time to relax and enjoy the sun setting. After about an hour a 4x4 with half a dozen men in full cammo outfits turned up. These men were clearly not happy with our choice of camp site. Passports were taken and maps scrutinised, our inability to speak Kazakh did not help the situation. A mobile phone was given to us and on the other end was a translator that explained that we were camping in a military area and we must leave immediately. We didn't want to hang about and ask too many questions so we headed to the border and out of Kazakhstan. Our problem now was that our Russian visas didn't begin until midnight. At this point we were stranded in no man's land unwelcome either Russia or Kazakhstan, we settled down for another night in the the car.

In the early hours of the morning we woke up and headed towards the Russian customs buildings, by this stage in the rally we were well practised at filling in forms stamping documents and visiting numerous offices. All went pretty well and we were on our way towards Biysk to stock up on food and anything else that looked like it may be remotely useful in Mongolia. This area of Russia was almost alpine in appearance, the views combined with roads without potholes made it a thoroughly pleasurable country to drive through. We stopped for one night before heading towards the border. Being a Sunday we didn't expect the border to be open, and it wasn't. So we headed back out of the border town and set up a camp. It was mid afternoon at this point and as the day turned to evening a steady stream of ralliers joined us, including the Great Balls of Fur team that had a 1983 Dennis fire engine. As the sun set the camp site turned into a mobile workshop with grinding, drilling, and the sound of success filling the air. As you would expect one or two beers were consumed and the

obligatory flares set off. The following morning we got up and drove the mile or so to the border to find a massive queue.

It was only 8.00 but already there were about 20 cars in front of us, being used to the bureaucracy that went with border crossings we went to the customs office and got all the stamping and documents signed, then rather than getting back in the car we walked to the front of the queue to find out what was next, the guard looked at the paper worked and signalled to being the car forward. Result.

More paperwork and stamping occurred and the predictable search for “Drugs, narcotics, Weapons?” ensued.

There is about fifteen miles of what can only be described as “no mans land” between the Russian and Mongolian Border, we followed the fire engine, only stopping once when a pair of batteries fell out from the fire engine and exploded on the road....ooops.

As we crested the summit of the hill we gained our first glimpses of Mongolia and we dropped down to customs. We made it past the first hurdle which appeared to be a some sort of disinfection pit. We then had to wait two hours whilst customs went to lunch. We started the process of importing Felicity but as with all things the paperwork was taking forever and we found ourselves being held in a secure compound overnight. This was not a problem, the nice customs man had allowed us to leave the compound and visit the local shop for beer and vodka.

When you lock thirty teams in a compound with beer and vodka you have a recipe for mischief. I don't remember what happened but I remember flares, and flags and watch towers. It must have been a good night because I woke up in my sleeping bag in the middle of the compound. I felt rough.

Everyone seemed to be suffering, and to add insult to injury the head of customs had decided that drinking in the compound was a misdemeanor and every team would need to pay a twenty dollar fine. This seemed a small price to pay for what must have been a good night!

Before leaving the compound, the fire engines starter motor packed up. This was rebuilt and after buying insurance we were back on the road.

The term road is generally associated with smooth tarmac. Mongolians seem to make do with dirt tracks. When these get too rutted or flooded, a new track is made to the side, this is great in theory, but in reality it means that maps are almost useless, and tracks can be miles wide.

Early on in our drive we came across a very steep hill. As we went up, we dropped down the gears. Third, second, and then first, we carried on crawling up the hill hoping not to stall or lose traction, the revs were getting lower and lower, we just about crawled over the summit and stopped to wait for the guys in the fire engine. There was no sign of them. In a moment of madness we headed back down the hill we had struggled to get up, they were not stuck they were just taking it slowly, but now we were stuck facing down the hill. We didn't have the power to turn the car round or even try a hill start, instead we took a series of zigzags and snaked our way up the hill. Felicity was never going to be the same again, we feared that we may have just killed her.

We were still a long way from the finish line but whilst we could still drive we would continue. Other teams were not as lucky. The Skoda's had a habit of smashing the gear box on rocks, several teams attempted repairs with various levels of success.

In between driving we found time to eat sleep and occasionally wash in the freezing lakes. With just a few days to go the car was really struggling. Starting was a particular problem, and one of the drive shafts required regular attention and greasing. The top speed had dropped to 40mph and fifth gear worked well as a means to slow the car down!

Just a few hundred miles from the finish we lost third gear, we stopped at the next town and looked for a solution, our gearbox and developed a slow leak, a bottle of oil soon sorted this out.

We spent the final night camped with several other teams and we decided an early start would ensure we would make the finish line in day light. We hit the dirt for one final blast into the city. Just an hour into the final day our wishes came true and the dirt turned to smooth tarmac. All we had to do was cruise to the finish. Thirty miles down the road the tarmac ended and the dirt and dust started again, this was soul destroying. We were so close but still so far. Every bump and bang was another nail in felicity's coffin. By the time we reached the city the car was in a really bad way. There was grinding and a clunking noise coming from the depths of the engine and drive train. We drove around looking for the finish line. We had made it to the end but had still not finished. Eventually we admitted defeat and asked for directions and were guided to the end and at last the finish line.



**The Finish Line**

It had taken us 28 days, 18 countries, 2 ferries, 26 police stops, 3 speeding violations, 3 punctures, 989 litres of petrol, 18 rolls of toilet paper, 3 boxes of porridge, and one squeezable bottle of golden syrup, but we had driven to Mongolia and in the process raised £1190 for charity.

Would I do it again? No, it would never be the same the next time around, but I would definitely recommend it to anyone.

The English and **PROPER** way to clean a SIGG bottle  
(Or a cheaper alternative)

**Step 1:** Obtain a SIGG bottle

**Step 2:** Decide to clean

**Step 3:** Consume the remaining liquid

**Step 4:** Refill

**Bish bash Bosh**

By a-nonny-moose

**Thanks to:**

Duck for "Climbing Europe"

Ripper for "Rippers, Rayans and 'Rons alternative end of term party" and "Brief introduction to 'Crag and rock ascension practices' climbing"

Darren for "LSMC winter skills weekend in Scotland"

Mike for his article on the Mongol Rally "The Wrong Way Round"

Dunk for his photo ensemble and the cross word

Paul and Sarah for the Sigg bottle piss take

Sarah for her awesome Tablet drawing

Me for ignoring my work and bumming out with a pot of nutella to finish editing this magazine.  
And my most AwesLome doodles.

Robots will rule the world





Blew



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