

Pembroke 2014

On Friday 6th June, the start of UBMC annual summer trip began. One of the most exciting trips of the year, this year we returned to Pembroke, home to some of the best sea-cliff climbing in the UK. After loading up the cars at the Munrow (helped massively by Joe's trailer, the absolute hero), we descended upon Pembrokeshire, eagerly anticipating the week to come.

Unfortunately, Emma's car was an early casualty, making it no further than the Selly Oak Sainsbury's – thankfully this proved to be a temporary setback, as despite a few stressful hours, Emma was able to get her car repaired, and joined up with the rest of us late on Friday evening.



Getting the leads in at Saddle Head

On our first day of climbing, the majority of climbers headed to Saddle Head, making the most of the weekend opening of the ranges. Despite a chilly and cloudy start to the day, the weather soon brightened up, and a great deal of climbing was achieved on the first day. The highlight route of the crag was probably Sea Mist (HS 4a), which saw many ascents from club members early on in the trip. This was also a good chance for some of the less experienced committee members to gain valuable experience leading trad.



An exemplary abseil setup at Initiation Slabs

Saturday evening saw the much anticipated return to the infamous Paddles – Pembroke's finest and grottiest nightclub. Definitely the highlight of the Pembroke 2012 trip, tales of Paddles had spread throughout the club since. The club seemed to have changed little in the last two years, and once again we had a great time – although perhaps marginally less disgraceful than the last visit! Tragically, Sweaty Steve did not make another appearance, but Dan still managed to bring back a local (also named Dan) back to the campsite!

The following day, a number of Stoats headed back to Saddle Head to tick off more routes there, whilst others headed over to Flimston Bay, and got a taste of the faff of hanging abseils - not for the last time this trip!

On Monday, we headed up to St Davids for the first time, with the groups split between Initiation Slabs, and Craig Caerfai. After much deliberation over various potential anchor points, abseils were set up, and some great climbing was had. Craig Caerfai was one of my favourite crags that we visited on the trip, with a number of really enjoyable routes: Armorican (VS 4c) was one

of the choice climbs of the trip, and saw many ascents by Stoats throughout the week.

After a full day of climbing, we headed back to the campsite for the traditional summer barbeque, picking up a vast quantity of Tesco's finest, cheapest meat (and vegetables). Back at the campsite, cooking commenced, overseen by the culinary experts Henry, Dan and Patrick, resulting in a fine feast.

Tuesday was the only day of climbing that was cut short due to the poor weather. Still, this didn't stop Ray from making a quick ascent of Grab the Slab (E1 5b) at Porth-y-Ffynon, certainly in less than ideal conditions! Chris Hitches also got his first trad lead in, again in poor conditions, which was a commendable effort. After a handful of ascents, the planned climbing at Porth Clais and Porth-y-Ffynon was aborted, and instead we headed into St Davids to experience the selection of ice cream and chocolate, and grab some lunch at the pub.

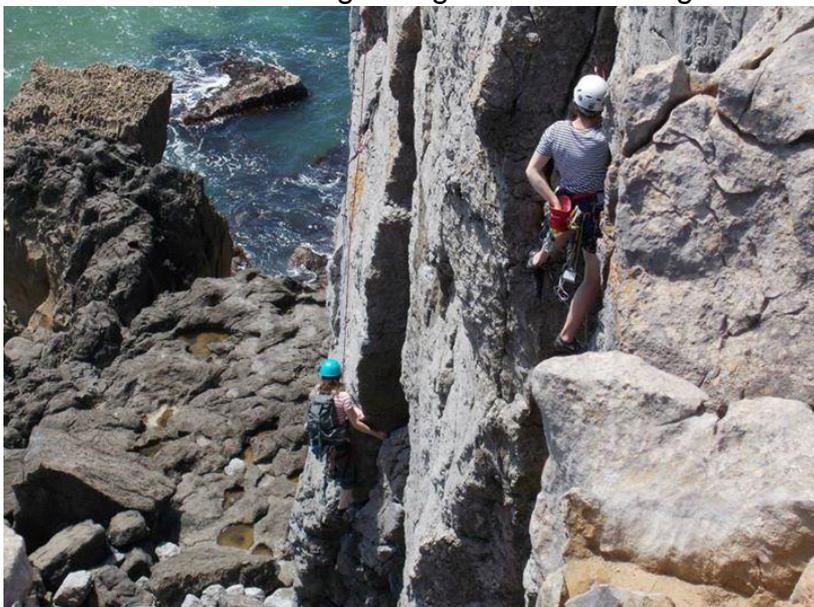


Paddles!

While most headed back to the campsite, Henry, Ray, Lizzie and I headed to Craig Caerfai to see if any climbing would be possible. Unfortunately, the rain showers did not relent, and we were eventually forced to return, all the wetter for our efforts.

The next day, greeted by much improved weather, we headed back to Initiation Slabs and Craig Caerfai all the more eager to get some climbing done. It was great to see Steph, Nora and Steve

getting some trad leads in, all of whom did an excellent job.



Shevy (left) and Hazel on Army Dreamers and Bombay at St Govans

On the penultimate day of the trip, with depleted numbers due to the Gradball crowd leaving, the remaining climbers headed to St Govans. This proved to be another top crag, and I personally enjoyed the steep, juggy nature of the crag. A few classics went down, with multiple ascents of The Arrow (E1 5b), The Butcher (E3 5c) and Army Dreamers (HVS 5a). Unfortunately due to the weather climbing became difficult around midday, with it simply being too sweaty to climb hard. Despite this, a great day of climbing was had.

Meanwhile over at Mother Careys, Dan and Patrick's Pembroke crushfest continued, as they put an "epic link up of Deep Space, Inner Space and Threadneedle Street", which they named Space Odyssey. Aside from its unique style the route notably featured a fulmar, which in order to protect its young vomited on both Dan and Patrick. This no doubt raised the grade. A very impressive route, hopefully it will see many repeats over the years.

After Mike's car left on Thursday evening on the long drive back to Birmingham, just two cars remained. To top off a fantastic week, we decide to scare ourselves at Mother Carey's. Henry and Ray tackled the classic Rock Idol (E1 5a), with Shanka J taking a mighty whipper, and getting a hex stuck in the process! Charlie, Lizzie, Hazel and I took a slightly friendlier route to the top, tackling the atmospheric Threadneedle Street, while Brian and Elena took on the The Cracks.

It was a fine end to not only a great trip, but a great year for UBMC as well. A huge thanks to everyone who took time out to help during the trip! Whether it was teaching and taking less experienced climbers for a day, helping with the BBQ, or just making sure others had a good time, I really appreciate your efforts. A final thanks to the committee, who all did brilliantly, and a particular mention to John, who did a fantastic job keeping track of and organizing the club gear all week, which is definitely not an easy task! I hope everyone enjoyed the trip as much as I did, and I'm sure the next year in UBMC will be a great one.

Sam Hockley