

Stanage; A trip designed to introduce freshers to the marvels of British trad climbing, and what better way to do that than by dragging them up low quality routes in the pouring rain on a cold and windy October Saturday morning?

Despite the cold and wet the Stoats returned to Thorpe Farm Bunkhouse on Saturday afternoon with smiles on their faces. Some had taken their first steps in the world of outdoor climbing, others had returned to familiar routes only to face new challenges in the rain, whilst some had enjoyed the comfort of the minibus for it provided shelter from the periodic rain.

All that climbing had called for a feast, and who else provides a feast like a UBMC social sec? With a little (a lot) of help from the other Stoats, Tom and Alex dished up their take on the famous Stanage 'Ming' to the delight of the awaiting climbers. "The best Ming I've had so far" said some, "I'm amazed the pasta isn't a congealed mass like usual" said others, but everyone ended up saying "I'm full" by the end of the delightful meal.

A swift clearing of tables made room for the evening entertainment which began with suspended sock wrestling – a game involving two climbers hanging from a wooden girder ending with one a sock lighter than they started with. A fine collection of one arm lock-offs dazzled the crowds as the Stoats cycled through to get everyone involved in the suspended fun.

The night was still young, and the Stoats were getting thirsty but this was swiftly relieved by the introduction of UBMC's world renowned Meanie. Like a fine wine, Meanie has gotten better over the ages and this year was no exception to that trend. The Meanie bin was bought into the room and young Daniel was dunked in true Stanage fashion to christen the new batch of the drink. Before long an elegant pink liquid filled the vessels of every club member and social activities were in full flow.

"Commander says have a little Fiddle" echoed around the bunkhouse as the Stoats embarked on a game of Commander Says, perfectly run by our ex-presidents Dan, Henry and Alex. The Meanie bin quickly emptied whilst playing the fantastic drinking game featuring classic stories of UBMC members most embarrassing moments. The 54 club members on the trip and the numerous Old Gits in the bunkhouse were a sweaty and poorly clothed bunch by the end of the game, but things could only get weirder.

Back to sock wrestling it was! This time without the beam but with the addition of a slippery tarpaulin sheet. Cries of horror, admiration, and everything in-between were heard around the room as the Stoats watched one another wrestle for yet more socks in true Gladiator style. Injuries were miraculously avoided, but few left without an impressive collection of bruises.

After all the excitement came a period of relaxation, but the drinking continued for a long while more! The Stoats are sure to have a number of fine tales from the Saturday night social, but remembering them all may be a challenge after both bins of Meanie were consumed by the thirsty climbers.

Groggy eyes were a common sight on Sunday morning, but morale was high as the day broke with dry weather! The Stoats wasted little time dwelling on their hangovers and made straight for High Neb and Popular Area, with an impressive 53/54 of the climbers leaving for the crag before 10:30 AM!

Sunshine and mild weather isn't always what you expect from an October day, but it wasn't wasted by the keen climbers. A fine selection of routes from Diffs to E3s were sent in the sunshine, leaving the Stoats in high spirits at the end of the weekend. A true contrast to the previous day's rain proved to be the perfect hangover cure and freshers and experienced members alike climbed until the first signs of evening were showing.

A thorough clean of the bunkhouse and a quick taste of Thorpe Farm's ice cream concluded the weekend. From shivering in the rain and slipping off the grit on the Saturday, to heel-hooking in the Sun and enjoying those sweet first outdoor climbing steps on Sunday, it was clear from the tired faces at the end that Stanage 2017 had been a resounding, if not messy, success.





