

Sept 05

Been a long time since the last newsletter I am afraid, and this one is going to be shorter than normal, but thanks again to those who have sent articles and photos. Especially big thanks to Julian for this articles and photos on Bamford and Mashy's Stag Do.

I have again enclosed the list Lynn drew up of previous Scotland trips, and was wondering do we have any old photos of young looking member's of the club they would rather forget? Talking of Scotland, Richard has kindly drawn up a list of suggestions, see below for more info.

[Nigel](#)

October Trip 21st-23rd October, Trawsfynydd, Central Snowdonia

This trip is now fully booked, but details of finding the hostel can be found at;



http://www.llysednowain.co.uk/index_files/Page460.htm

If you are interested in still coming along then I am sure there will any number of local Bed and Breakfast open for business.

The area longs for the exploring of the nearby Rhinog Mountains, offering the toughest hill walking in England and Wales – a fractured and convoluted

landscape. Rhinog Fach and Rhinog Fawr are the two highest and more accessible peaks in the centre, with Diffwys and its ridge the easiest at the southern end. The Rhobells, are somewhat protected by forests, and the Arenigs lie to the east. Unfortunately the popular Roman Steps and Cwn Bychan are awkwardly placed in the Rhinogs from the Trawsfynydd side.

Nearby attractions include Ffestiniog Railway, Harlech Castle, Port Merion or those feeling brave and warm the nudist beach at Morfa Dyffryn.

Christmas-European Trip

Mark and Tim again are organising this trip and the trip this year is to Nice, so contact them for more details

Scotland Options – vote for your choice now!

[Richard](#) is currently canvassing opinion on for a trip to Scotland and I am sure he would love to hear from you all on what is the best option;

Dear Shot(ers), OK so we have failed miserably to secure the use of a bunkhouse or hostel for this year's trip. This is not for the lack of trying as we have checked a number of places on the internet and on the ground. Pretty much everything is booked up now. However, we have a couple of suggestions which may be of interest and these are, in no particular order of preference;

Option1

Crianlarich YH - we can't get exclusive use of this for NY as it already has some folk (but not many) booked in and it is too big anyway. We could, however, book in individually but

organise group cooking, expeditions etc. This would maintain the NY trip continuity, allow people to come & go as they please (I'm guessing that 27/12-1/1 is about the maximum that people could make it for), but we would not necessarily have rooms exclusive to SHOT. The YH is pretty well equipped, within a gnats whisker of the railway station, superbly endowed with Munros round about and it also has a range of accommodation available including a couple of family rooms. Oban, Fort William & Glasgow are all within day trip distance as is the Ice Factor at Kinlochleven for those that crave civilisation and swimming pool and shops. Details of YH on www.syha.org.uk

Option2

We abandon the idea of a NY trip and go for some other time year, such as February, and go to Fort William to coincide with the Mountain Film Festival (10-18 Feb 2006) <http://www.mountainfilmfestival.co.uk/> We went to this in 2005 and it was excellent including a talk by Chris Bonnington. Lets call this Option2a. We would have to see what accommodation options were available for this time and I guess they will fill up pretty quickly. Option 2b, would be even more radical and go for some other time such as the May Bank holiday which would have the advantage of longer day length, better weather (maybe), no midges but still some snow around (hopefully) on some of the tops. Venue could perhaps be more flexible and even (heaven forbid) more child friendly.

Option3

Abandon this year's trip altogether and start planning for 2006-07 now and see what we can get in the Fort William area

News, Weddings, and Births

Congrats to Lynn and Craig on tying the knot, below is a short note from Lynn about her grand day and a couple photos;

As a lot of you are already aware, Craig and I got married on August 19th at Highbury, a Victorian mansion in South Birmingham. We had a civil ceremony followed by a sit-down meal and then an evening do with a (somewhat chaotic) ceroc dance lesson and a buffet for the evening guests and anyone else who was able to work up an appetite again after the first meal! I may be biased but I thought it was a fantastic day, and I hope that everyone else enjoyed it too. Thanks to all the SHOT people who came along or sent good wishes; it was great to spend such a special day with so many friends. Thanks also for your generous gifts, both to us and to various charitable organisations on our behalf.



The wedding was preceded by my hen weekend in Edinburgh, just at the beginning of the Festival Fringe. In a moment of insanity I volunteered to make yukata (summer kimono) for all the girls to wear on the hen night; that took me the best part of a fortnight but we looked fantastic!

We followed it all up with a fabulous two-week honeymoon cruise to the Azores (Portuguese islands in the middle of the Atlantic), Madeira, the Canary Islands and the Portuguese and Spanish mainland. Came down to earth with a bump when we got home and both had to go straight back to work! Once we get ourselves straightened out we're going to be living on Baldwins Lane, so no change to my address, but I'm taking Craig's name so will be Mrs Davis from now on.



Anyone who's interested will be able to see photos from the hen weekend, wedding and honeymoon on the wedding website at www.craiglynn.co.uk.

Bamford (Peak District) Trip 18th-20th March.

I arrived (late as usual) in time to take nearly the last slot in the car park for the barn. The process of parking was made more difficult by the presence of a small dog which insisted in taking a close interest proceedings by wandering about behind my tyres whilst reversing and by a large stone trough strategically positioned in the centre of the yard. After a visit to the wrong pub I found everyone else in the Angler's Rest in time for last orders. The guest ale had already sold out, thanks to the efforts of SHOT members. I also found that Donna had



Bridge over upper reaches of the River Derwent

been less successful than I in avoiding the stone trough, and had a scrape down the side of her car to prove it. The barn was sited on a working dairy farm, not exactly much of a change for Dave, Ness & Lucas, though it did give Dave the opportunity to find out the subsidy opportunities available to farmers in National Parks. Dave concluded that you get more money, but that it then disappears trying to satisfy the bureaucrats.

Next morning Nigel departed for a spin on his road bike leaving me with

the choice of a flower-picking stroll up the valley to the pub in Edale or an altogether more energetic walk round the headwaters of the Derwent with Gus & Neil. For some unknown reason I chose the latter. This involved a drive up the side of the Derwent reservoirs, taking advantage of this being the last Saturday for six months that the road would be open, followed by a walk up the side of the river towards Bleaklow. Towards the top of the valley it was time for hostilities to recommence in the Seeley – Dobrzynski debate on the usefulness of GPS. After the unfortunate events surrounding our visit to the geographical centre of the United Kingdom (when it didn't work) Gus had been somewhat ahead. Gus and Neil stood for a few minutes trying to work out where we needed to turn across the moors to hit a ridge. I got my GPS out and told them where it said we were. "Rubbish !" came the instant riposte "We're at least 300 yards from there". We set off walking and, a few minutes later Mr Postans admitted that "maybe your GPS was right, after all". Neil was involved in a more frightening confrontation a few minutes later. We were strolling along a 7 ft deep peat grough minding our own business when a grouse, which was sat at the edge of the grough, took flight and nearly decapitated him. The walk then proceeded uneventfully along Howden Edge in bright sunshine. Towards the end we noticed a group of teenagers, with grossly overloaded rucksacks, looking hopelessly lost, near High Stones. One approached us, "Can you tell us where we are ? we're doing our Duke of Edinburgh's". As if we didn't know already.

The flower-pickers returned, having done their best to lose Nick, Susie & Daniel along the way. Apparently the path divided at some point (before joining up again) and the two groups took different routes, one deciding to wait for the others before the paths rejoined. We returned to the pub for dinner and managed to empty the second barrel of the guest ale – is this a record ?

On Sunday morning Mr Whelan's frazzled appearance after a sleepless night indicated that he wouldn't be going away with the kids without Fiona again anytime soon. Meanwhile Emily, Tom, Lindsey, Michael & Lucas were having a great time with bouncy balls & a rather splendid rocket launched by pressing on a foot pump. Gus then set off with a few others to meet Jo & Ian, who'd come across from Hull, to rent bikes for a ride round the Derwent Reservoirs. Most of the rest of us went to Eyam. For those who don't know the story, Eyam is famous as the "Plague Village". In 1665, at the same time as the Great Plague of London, there was an outbreak of plague in Eyam, allegedly caused by the delivery of a package of

clothing containing fleas from London. Under the influence of their rector, William Mompesson, the villagers isolated themselves from the rest of the world for 14 months, until the plague ran its course. The village has plaques on many of the houses detailing which of the 260 victims died there, and when. We took a walk out to the boundary stones, which have holes cut in them, where money was placed in vinegar, to pay for the food which was left there for the villagers. A visit to the local bakery/café followed where we sampled some excellent Bakewell puddings before we set off homewards.

Mashy's Stag Weekend in Budapest

Young ladies of a sensitive disposition should probably stop reading now. Those who aren't should be warned that there's very little in the way of scandal or revelation in what follows: - Just ask your



other halves if you want filling in on the details.

Myself, Andy B., Mark S. and Chris T. travelled down on the Friday night to Harpenden in order to spend the night at Mashy's house so we could catch the ludicrously early EasyJet flight the next morning to Budapest. We were greeted by Kate and Lisa, who were planning a quiet weekend in, unlike Mike and Steve. We also found out that the weekend had not got off to the best of starts for Mr Ashton as his flight from Stansted had been delayed for 8 hours. The brothers Dobrzynski then arrived, soaked to the skin, having not wanted to pay for a taxi from the station. We then ventured out to the chippy and for a swift pint at the pub where we extolled the virtues of a good satnav system to Gus.

The alarm clocks having been set for 4:25 a.m., we took to our sleeping bags – your correspondent getting the sofa on account of his bad back. I awoke at 4:22 a.m. and got to the bathroom first. The bad back

also put me in a good position in the “how can you fit 6 people in a BMW 5-series” puzzle. The answer being 2 in the front and 4 in the back. Fortunately we only had to travel 5 miles and no members of the Hertfordshire Constabulary were awake at that time in the morning. After arriving in plenty of time to brave the seething mass of humanity that is an EasyJet check-in queue we had a too-leisurely breakfast which resulted in Mr Stevenson being the last person to board the aircraft. An on-time departure, comedy cabin announcements and early arrival followed before the lottery that is the taxi ride to the centre of town. Andy, Chris and Mark got the maniac whilst Gus, Dennis and I didn't have to shut our eyes once.

After checking in at the “Mellow Mood Hostel” we found the Friday arrivals eating breakfast at the inevitable Irish bar. A number of us had been concerned by the emails we'd been receiving from Mike's non-SHOT friends which indicated that they were overly fond of alcoholic refreshment. However, their performance the previous evening (on the great white telephone before 8 p.m.), had already led to them being dismissed as “lightweights” by Mr Hows. To add insult to injury, Chris Hesketh was completely unimpressed too.

We then set out to explore Budapest; visiting the inevitable funicular railway, the Fisherman's bastion and the Cathedral before chancing on the Labyrinth. This is formed from the sandstone caves dug out under the castle and has variously been storerooms, a place of refuge, air-raid shelters and a Cold War bunker. It is now quite possibly the oddest tourist attraction in Europe. It tells the story of human evolution through replicas of the Lascaux cave paintings, oddball statues, a fountain

flowing with red wine (or, more accurately, vinegar) and illustrates man's final evolution from Homo sapiens to "Homo consumerensis" (i.e. us) with a burial. A skeleton laid out with his grave goods: - a mobile phone, a laptop, trainers and vending machine cups.

Ascending into the light we found a convenient bar, ordered a round of beers and enquired about food. "I only have sausages served with bread" replied the proprietor. "That's fine" we replied "We'll have eight lots then." Panic then passed over the man's face "But my grill will only do four at once!" "Don't worry – four of us will wait" we replied. Half an hour later we'd eaten our sausages and drunk our beer and it was time to return to the Irish bar and watch the FA Cup final; a disappointing game for non-Arsenal supporters.

After a pause for a lie down and a shower we set off for our meal. During our walk to the restaurant the groom described to me the rather alarming devices to treat a bad back he'd encountered during his visit to the Turkish Baths. The phrase "kill or cure" sprung to mind and I made a mental note to avoid the place. We were also accosted by various representatives of Budapest's more dubious entertainment venues including a gentleman who claimed a young lady in his establishment bore a physical resemblance to the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy's Eccentrica Gallumbits.

Hunger being a more powerful instinct at this point in the evening we proceeded to dinner at an excellent Borlabor Étterem, eating at a long table under a brick-vaulted ceiling. The meal was completed with a sampling of the local digestive drink "Unicum" a product of the equally oddly named Zwack empire. It's absolutely foul, bearing a strong resemblance to the Italian Fernet Branca. At this point in the evening the combination of the 4:30 a.m. start and bad back made me decide to bale out and return to the Hostel. This means I'm unable to give a first-hand account of subsequent events though I understand

that Michael behaved impeccably throughout.

A disturbance at 3:00 a.m. marked the return of Messrs Baker, Stevenson and Turton to my room: - a considerable feat of endurance, even considering the hour's time shift. Mark suffered for it when he awoke, however, having to go for what he described as a "technical chunder". Quite what this meant, compared with a "tactical chunder" (© N. Postans), he seemed unable to explain.

Breakfast at the Irish bar was followed by a shift of rooms. Chris and Andy weren't happy with sharing their room with a well-known Ipswich supporter whose snoring had caused Nigel to make an earlier than anticipated start to sightseeing on Saturday morning. (yes I was up at 5.30am, but I did make it to the famous Budapest flea market would you buy another from old KGB badges, fake rolexs, Star Wars figures and the strongest coffess I have ever drunk)

Betraying our anorak tendencies, a group of us set off to tick off several of Budapest's public transport highlights. First up was the Underground. We bought our tickets, validated them and set off down the escalator. At the bottom we were greeted by some staff on revenue protection duties. We showed our tickets



and passed through. A few moments later came a shout "Perce! What have you done with my ticket?" Mr Millard, having been unable to locate his ticket, took the obvious step of blaming the last person who, apart from him, had been anywhere near it. A few more minutes of desperate

fumbling through pockets was followed by the inevitable penalty fare. On arrival on the platform Steve then decided to put his penalty ticket in his bumbag. What was the first thing he saw upon opening this? You guessed it, his ticket. Ever the optimist, he then returned to try and get his money back. He failed.

Next was a trip on the cog railway with a load of mountain bikers and their equipment. As I was the last on I was presented with "how do you validate your ticket?" problem by my companions. Two minutes of hilarity followed before I admitted defeat and was shown the unusual, manual, operation of the punch.

The top cog railway station was a short walk away from the start of the unique "Children's Railway". A narrow gauge (2ft 6in), 7½ mile line which, apart from the engine drivers, is operated entirely by children. This was to cause more than a little confusion as our non-existent Hungarian met the children's minimal English and the alien concept of the return ticket. Chris Turton was the only one who got what he asked for but ended up having it treated as a two-person ticket with me. By the time we'd reached the terminus we'd more or less sussed out what was going on and that we would need to purchase tickets for the return leg to the halfway point where we'd decided to get off. Steve, however, remained unconvinced. "What's the worst that could happen? I could get told off by a 12-year old" he opined. The ticket inspector came round and Steve handed over his ticket. A short pause whilst the lad looked at the ticket from several angles then followed. He then drew himself up to his full height of 4 ft 10 and said in his best English: - "This ticket is not valid." Andy then intervened and bought 4 tickets for those sat around him. He then handed them over to his companions as the train entered a tunnel. The lad then wanted to punch the tickets he'd sold. Guess who'd managed to lose his – Mr Millard. After a few moments he decided to give up on the idiot foreigner and move on. The ticket turned up in Steve's wallet a few minutes later.

We got off at the nearest station to János Hill, one of the best viewpoints over the city. After a walk up to the summit and a refreshing drink we took the chairlift down to the bottom. I'm never very happy with these things at the best of times and my back problems meant I was even less confident. As me and Steve got on the operator said something in Hungarian that sounded non-too complimentary but quite what I done wrong I couldn't work out. I did, however, manage a textbook dismount. A bus ride back to centre of town and a walk to a riverside bar followed. As I didn't fancy a litre of fizzy lager I decided to try a Tokay – A Hungarian dessert wine described by Louis XIV of France as "The King of wines, the wine of Kings" – as it seemed to be the same price as a beer would take from the



kitty. The glass did seem a bit big when it arrived but the truth only became apparent when we settled the bill and it turned out that I'd had 200ml and the price was for 100ml.

Mr Turton was then despatched to negotiate a price for an evening cruise on the Danube. This was successfully concluded and we ordered meals whilst everyone else arrived. This meant I fell

into conversation with some of Mike's non-SHOT friends including Mark, who's obviously lived in Germany long enough to have gone native. He repeated the Euro-twaddle about the "EU having prevented war in Europe for 60 years". I then went into rampant Eurosceptic mode and pointed out that the peace in Europe was more to do with NATO and the continuous presence of over 100,000 British and American servicemen on the territory of the country that started the last three major European wars. At this point another one of Mike's friends, Patrick, a former resident of the Emerald Isle intervened: - "I don't understand why the British hate Europe so much". "That's probably because, unlike the Irish, we have to pay for it" I replied. "But I'm from Northern Ireland." He answered. "Don't get me started on how much you lot cost the rest of us!" - how to win friends and influence people.

An hour's cruise on the Danube in the twilight followed. This gave us ample opportunity to demonstrate our ignorance of the identity of Budapest's buildings and to experience the remarkably strong current of the Danube - the upstream legs taking about three times longer than the downstream ones.

We walked back to the hostel, had a shower, a drink in the upstairs bar and then out again to pass the evening drinking at the outdoor tables of one of Budapest's many bars, returning around midnight for a relatively early night before a hard day's sightseeing on Monday. Sadly one of my roommates, the aforementioned Patrick, along with his buddy Paul, had different ideas. As Paul was taking an early flight in the morning he decided, in the sort of stunning display of drunken logic usually associated with 19-year old students, that he'd stay up all night. Obviously he needed like-minded people, i.e. Patrick, who could appreciate his brilliance, thus keeping Mark S and myself awake for most of the night. Meanwhile, Mr Musson stayed silent, giving Andy and Chris a good night's sleep.

Monday started with a trip up St Stephen's Basilica for a view over the city from the dome followed by a complete wild goose chase of the sort Gustav specialises in. "I want to see the New York Café" he said "It's an Art Deco masterpiece and it's on the way to Heroes' Square". "Fine" we replied. On arrival at its supposed location it was nowhere to be seen. Much searching of guidebooks followed before it was concluded that Gus's map was wrong and the building was half a mile away. We decided to persist, only to find the place closed for refurbishment. Over a beer Andy suggested a less highbrow target - "the biggest Burger King in Europe". Unfortunately, and unaccountably, I fell behind and lost sight of the pilgrims and had to eat a superb meal in the tree-lined courtyard of the "Premier Étterem" served by an attentive waiter in a starched apron. The B.K. was subsequently described as "disappointing". A visit to Heroes' Square and a walk round the City Park in the sunshine followed before the final public transport highlight - a trip on the original Underground line. Unfortunately this has acquired some new rolling stock recently, so the original 1890's polished wood and brass is no longer in use, though the stations are still very nice.

I then went back to the centre of town and spotted Gus, Dennis (a.k.a. the bike-bomber) and Steve in a café near the hostel. Conversation turned to my previous comments about Europe and Seeley, SHOT's answer to Nostradamus, made the following prediction "The result of the French referendum will be 50.1% Yes, 49.9% No - you heard it here first - they'll never allow a No to happen!" Soon the others returned and we said farewell to Gus and Steve, who stayed on for an extra day, retrieved our bags and took the taxi to the airport. An uneventful flight and a certain amount of messing about at Luton followed. Dennis made it back to Shooter's Hill on the last train and we arrived in Wimboldsley at 1.00 a.m.

Thanks a lot to Steve for organising the trip and to Mike for inviting us.

View from St Stephen's
Basilica

SUHC/SHOT New Year trips history – since 1988

<i>Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organiser(s)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1988/9	Torridon		
1989/90	Crianlarich – Skye (Sligachan) – Glasgow	Darren	Toga party Very cold accommodation
1990/1	Rowardennen YH – Inchree, Onich	Chris T	Highland theme Terrible weather Landslides in Glencoe
1991/2	Gairloch	Mark H	“Foreigners” theme Accommodation a bit cramped
1992/3	Nethybridge	Jane/Lisa?	“Famous people” theme? Very nice hostel; shared with another group. Very cold week, mostly below 0°C
1993/4	Aardgarten YH – Skye (Sligachan)	Pete	Children’s TV theme
1994/5	-		No official trip; small group went to Fort William
1995/6	Blackwater Hostel, Perthshire	Rachael H	70s bands theme Lots of snow. Water supply frozen for the entire week! Heating oil ran out on 31 st Dec so accomm. was freezing for last few days (only had electric heaters in main hall).
1996/7	Inchnadampf	Mark H	James Bond theme Outstanding hostel! Shared for a few nights.
1997/8	Kenmore (Loch Tay)	Neil	Cartoon characters & superheroes
1998/9	Grantown on Spey	Mike A	Sci-fi theme Very nice hostel (just lacked a drying room), right in town centre, but unfortunately no longer open.
1999/2000	Braemar	Dave S	Black tie for Hogmanay
2000/1	Kinlochleven	Mike A	National stereotypes theme
2001/2	Tobermory YH, Mull	Darren	Family-friendly hostel. “Circus performers and sideshow

			freaks" theme Very convenient for amenities but not so much for big hills.
2002/3	Tarbert, Isle of Harris	Neil, then Lynne	Surprisingly good weather
2003/4	Plockton	Chris M	Snowy at beginning of week
2004/5	Weem, nr Aberfeldy	Lynne	Good, family-friendly bunkhouse. Shared for some of duration. Mild but wet week; a little snow at beginning and end.
2005/6		Richard	

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Or of course you can visit the web site

<http://www.shot.org.uk/>

Contact [Mark Hows](#) if you have any articles or pictures you would like to add to this site

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If you have received this by email, and also by post, please contact me so that I can remove you from the postal group to save the club money on postage, and so you don't get two copies.