# DMC Alpine Meet – Italian Dolomites, July 2012

The Dolomites were chosen for the club's alpine trip this year, swayed easily by the sumptuous coffee table book found in the Agnes Spencer hut on a cold January evening. Having searched high and low for an affordable chalet without success we opted for Camping Rochetta on the outskirts of Cortina D'Ampezzo. This is a great base with easy access to mountains all around and a fantastic climbing area, the 'Cinque Torre', just up the road.



11 members, travelling by different means met up for the 2nd week in July. An additional large tent was brought out by car for those travelling by plane and this also became the mess tent for cooking and socialising in the evening. The campsite had good facilities, constant hot showers ( with piped music, appropriately Bob Marley's 'I'm Jamming '), grocery store for our daily bread, and a covered table tennis table for the evening's entertainment with Mike putting in an impressive appearance one evening after washing pots.

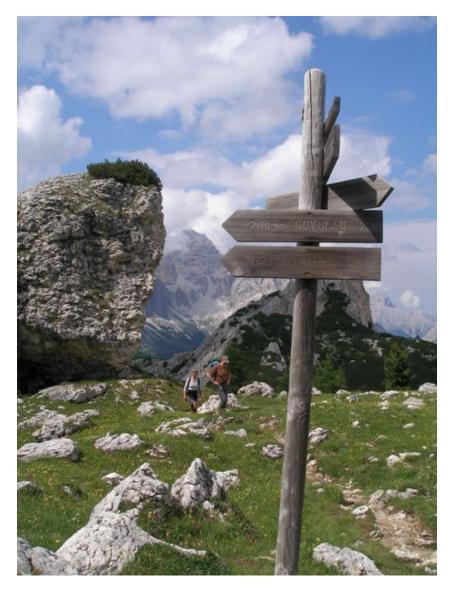
Weatherwise the Dolomites seemed to be suffering from the uncharacteristic pattern that we had left back in the UK. Other than the first 2 days the weather was unstable resulting in it being very difficult to plan anything major. However as can be seen below everybody still managed to get something worthwhile done every day.

### Thursday 5 July 2012

Mike Dowsett, Ruth Gordon and John Baxter arrive by car, locate Mike Lea and family (who had flown out the day before, miraculously with tent, push chair, bouldering mat and climbing gear etc. all within their baggage allowance) and put up the tents close by.

# Friday 6 July 2012

Mike, Ruth and John begin to learn the weather pattern as they sit out the thunder and rain and start their walk at lunchtime. From the Cinque Torre hut we walked across to the foot of the Ra Gusela ferrata and made our way up to the Rif Nuvolau and back to the car, but not without first having a quick tour around the impressive climbing area. At this time of year it is possible to drive up to the Cinque Torre. Otherwise it would mean a long walk in or the expense of the cable car for each visit.



John Shields, Jon Harrison, Steve Ebbens and Eddie James arrive in the afternoon by hire car from Venice airport and made themselves comfortable in the tent.



Colin Harper, Dean Jones and Jamie Bomber arrive late by car from the UK. Following Jamie's satnav they appeared to have completed a grand tour of Europe in 3 days.

# Saturday 7 July 2012

A reasonable forecast; Mike L and John H go and climb Cima Del Lago, SW Corner and Jon, Steve and Eddie as a team and Mike and Ruth as a team head for the NW Corner ('Comici') VS 4c on the Punta Col de Varda. From Misurina, Eddie talks his team into walking up to the col whilst Mike talks his team into taking the chairlift. The route was excellent. A wide vertical crack/chimney line, where it paid to be bold and not bury yourself in the crack, ending at 150m beneath the top head wall up which the VS continued whilst the HS variant slinked off to the left along a rising crack line. The descent down a gully was steep and loose.



Colin, Jamie and Dean tackled the Michielli Ferrata up the Punta Fiames 2240m. Dean nearly cuts short his week by taking a stumble down the loose scree descent path.





#### Sunday 8 July 2012

The second of the best two days, stable enough for those fit enough to head for the S Face, (Dimai/Eotvas) of the Tofana di Rozes 3,225m. The advantage of an early start, for Jon, Eddie and Steve, however was lost through trying to locate the start of the route. "Route finding is a big issue on this, and with belays lower down being single threads at best, rather than the pegs elsewhere, feels quite serious. We found traverse pitches to be much longer than the guidebook suggested. The key section was around the second "little" amphitheatre, which we gained low down by a very exposed traverse. Exiting this to gain the final traverse line (with route book and pegs), involved some very loose poorly protected pitches, and then some steep moves, around 4c/5a. We escaped the summit ridge to the left where the rock deteriorated, but this meant ascending appalling scree to the top. Started at 7 am, topped out around 8.30 pm, got down to easy ground just at nightfall. Proper adventure! Over 20 pitches of climbing!



Meanwhile Mike, John, John and Ruth chose the Giovanni Lipella Ferrata, which also climbed the Tofane Di Rozes. Leaving later than the climbers we passed beneath them shouting abuse when we

spotted them at the top of the first pitch. This ferrata commences in a WW1 cave complete with old compressor room and continues through a tunnel to the north face. The route makes it way up the mountain by a series of steep walls interspersed by ledge walking, eventually exiting onto the final summit cone at 3027m. John H and Ruth continued to the summit.

Colin, Jamie and Dean have plans to get altitude fit for an ascent of the Gran Paradiso later in the week so they catch the cable car to stay overnight in the Rif. G Lorenzi 2932m in the Cristallo group.





### Monday 9 July 2012

With an easier day in mind and a less than favourable forecast most headed for the Cinque Torre. Eddie and John B continued up to climb Averau, 2649m by the VF (2A), Eddies first VF, followed by two easy VFs/scrambles over Nuvolau and Ra Gusela 2,595m 1A. Jon and Steve climbed Myriam whilst after a long wait for other parties Mike, Ruth and John H climbed Via delle Guide. Both routes ending atop towers just as thunder started to roar not too far away followed by rain. After abseil descents we



were fortunate enough to reach the refuge just as a heavy hail shower hit us.

Colin, Jamie and Dean see the sun rise over the Dolomites before setting off on a fantastic day in the mountains.



They started by crossing the longest bridge in the Dolomites at the start of the Ivano Dibona VF which was followed until Forc Alta, passing some WW1 ruins on the way. Returning the same way they then summited Cristallino (3008m) and then returned to the rifugio for a spot of lunch. In the afternoon the Marino Bianchi VF was used to summit Cima di Mezzo(3154m) before descending back to the campsite.

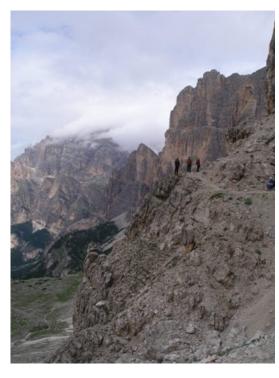




### Tuesday 10 July 2012

Mike, John B and Ruth caught the cable car from the Falzarego Pass up to the Lagazuoi. Eddie choosing to walk up met us just as the heavens opened. We found shelter in a WW1 cavern. Our plan was to climb to the summit of Punta Fanes Sud 2980m, via the Tomaselli VF,5C and VF descent 3C. After the rain we continued the walk thinking that the VF was out of the question and we would make do with a circular walk. We reached an IAC bivouac amidst rocky spires (a great place to spend a night). Eddie and Ruth decide to reach the summit whilst Mike and John chose to extend the walk. The rain held off!

Meanwhile Jon and Steve headed back to the Cinque Torre and climbed Torre Lusy and Torre Quarta alta getting caught on the summit in a lightning storm!



Colin, Jamie and Dean commence a planned circular walk from the Falzerago pass by climbing through the Lagazuoi tunnels and then down by the Col dei Bos to stop overnight in the Rif Dibona.

#### Wednesday 11 July 2012

The forecast was poor for the afternoon but we were learning that pinpointing where the poor weather was going to be was difficult. Some of were experiencing sunny afternoons whilst a valley away others were in pouring rain. Ruth and John H teamed up to climb Mazzorana above Misurina. Steve and Jon climbed Mazzorana/Adler on the same crag Piz Popena Basso. An experience with all getting caught on the routes in a heavy shower. We were also learning that the water ran off very quickly and the rock dried very quickly. Eddie and Mike decided to walk the Sentiero Bonacossa from Rif. Col de Varda (Mike caught the chairlift whilst Eddie walked up) to Rif. Fonda Savio. Eddie then shot away to do the Merlone VF whilst Mike waited in the Rif. Eddie got caught in the same storm half way up ladders so had to retreat!





Colin, Jamie and Dean completed their circular walk, the much longer leg, by walking down the Travenanze valley and back up along the Val de Fanes, back to the Falzarago pass. This is a mega walk —take a look at map.

# Thursday 12 July 2012

Forecast to be the worst day of the week. Whilst Colin, Jamie and Dean sleep off their endevours the rest of the group decide on a mass ascent of the Col dei Bos Ferrata graded 3B. This was followed by a walk to the summit of the Lagazuoi 2835m, (across WW1 no man's land covered with barbed wire, shell casings and shot), and a descent of the Lagazuoi tunnels. No rain to be seen, c'est la vie. We had a group meal in the pizza restaurant opposite the campsite.







# Friday 13 July 2012

The weather is terrible and Eddie, John H, Jon and Steve head for Cortina shopping. Eddie and John then return early afternoon to VF Merlone & Cima del Cadin de NE 2,788m; this time a successful attempt, reaching the summit with some views in patchy cloud. Mike, Ruth and John B sit out the rain in the campsite and by midday decide to do a walk in the Fanes valley which includes some small 1A VF's which take you up and behind several waterfalls. The rain stops as we start the walk. Colin, Jamie and Dean pack up and make their way to the other end of the Alps for an attempt on the Gran Paradiso but not without first visiting the industrial areas of Venice and Treviso courtesy of Jamie's sat nav.



# Saturday 14 July 2012

Eddie, John H & B head towards the VF Brigata Tridentina 3B on the Sella group to Rif Pisciadu. Eddie and John H continued onto Cima Pisciadu 2,985m.



Jon and Steve, Mike and Ruth head for Cinque Torre again. Torre Barrancio NW corner, Torre Inglese and other bolted routes are climbed.



Colin, Jamie and Dean make their way up to Rif Vittorio Emanuele II on Gran Paradiso and spend the night in the winter room as this is the only room available.





# **Sunday 15 July 2012**

Steve and Ed headed for Chamonix climbing three Alpine routes over the following weeks, Domes de Miage, Midi-Plan Traverse, and Mont Blanc via the Gouter Route and Chapel de Galiere on the Aiguille Rouges. Jon and John H flew home, Mike, Ruth and John B commenced their drive home, Colin, Jamie and Dean successfully summit Gran Paradiso 4061m and descend to the valley.

# **Monday 16 July 2012**

The last word should go to Jamie's satnav which led them home via the centre of Geneva. Yes Geneva! Well they didn't visit it on the way out.