

CLUBS

Ceunant Mountaineering Club

Described as “a mixture of all sorts: big range mountaineers, rock climbers, sports climbers, skiers, ski tourers, walkers and scramblers”, the Birmingham based **Ceunant MC** is a brilliant club with something for everyone. **Martin Kocsis** continues his exploration of British climbing and mountaineering clubs with an enjoyable trip to the Midlands.



Like many clubs, the Ceunant was formed in the 1950s. The name was taken from the cottage 'Pen Ceunant' near Llanberis, which was a favourite haunt of the club's founder members. The original object of the Club was to “provide facilities for the pursuit of mountaineering in all its aspects”. One look at the meets list for 2008 confirms that the 21st century Ceunant is fulfilling its obligations to history with aplomb!

The club has two homes. The first is the gloriously named 'Spotted Dog', on Alcester Street, Digbeth (every Wednesday evening after 9.30pm) which was recently subject to a noise abatement order for having too much fun: the Ceunant deny all knowledge of this! The second is the club's home from home 'Ty'n Lon' in Nant Paris, next to the Vaynol Arms, and close to the main climbing and walking areas. This five star accommodation with all mod cons (including central heating) was acquired in 1957. The club is rightly proud of the cottage, which underwent extensive renovation in the 90s. It's a fantastic place where sitting outside after a long day, relaxing with a beer and gazing up The Pass is the Ceunant's definition of “heaven”!

The club's membership is around 150, with an inspiring list of venues either visited or in the pipeline. Being in the middle of the country, nowhere is inaccessible or, put another way, everywhere is equally accessible! Average attendances hover around the 20 mark, with occasional world records

being set...currently standing at 46 for the recent Peak District meet. The meets list evolves from year to year as the membership of the club changes. The list is designed to encourage maximum participation, and it appears to be working. The meets list reflects only a fraction of what people do, many trips being arranged informally at The Spotted Dog on an ad hoc basis. UK meets range from Scotland to all the way south to Devon & Cornwall, with mountain biking, scrambling, snow and ice, and rock meets springing up wherever there is interest and enthusiasm.

In previous years, meets have included Chamonix, the Alps, Lundy, the Italian Dolomites, Corsica and the Canadian Rockies. The club also has an active program of social events throughout the year like canoe trips on the River Severn, curry evenings and slide shows.

The club produces a great newsletter, which serves to keep everyone in touch with



club life, and it's an opportunity for members to express themselves in whatever way they feel appropriate. Some of the best articles being great reportage from Patagonia and Annapurna, and “unusual” articles by folk such as the world famous Liz Asquith writing about “The Art of Climbing Avoidance”.

On the social side, the photographic evidence of the Ceunant's club dinners suggests either general lunacy or a finely tuned sense of fun. First timers should make sure they know what they're letting themselves in for! One recent dinner featured gay cowboys, Mexicans, horses and cross-dressing saloon girls. In other words, don't expect a sedate weekend!

The Ceunant welcomes new members at all levels of ability and in all fields related to climbing and mountaineering. You don't have to be a great alpinist to join! They have members who climb at various grades, and in various styles from bouldering to mountaineering, so you'll certainly find someone to climb with. If you're completely new to mountain sports, you will be very welcome: you couldn't find a better place to start!

Essential info

Website: ceunantmc.co.uk

Email: Fiona Devine secretary@ceunant.org

Pub: The Spotted Dog, Alcester St, Digbeth, B12 0NH.

Membership: Open to anyone over 18. Young people are welcome if they come with their parent or guardian. Membership rates this year are £20.



If you would like to see your club featured here then get in touch at climbercomments@warnersgroup.co.uk or go to climber.co.uk