

## **Trip Report: Chamonix 10th Anniversary**

**Date:** 9th-16th August 2014

**Group:** Les and Mike Arrowsmith, Lynn and Tony Quinn, Delia and Mike Hiscock, Amanda and Colin Christie, Selina and Mike Willis, Lynn and Jeff Ewin

**Route:** see below

**Total Distance:** see below

**Total Ascent:** see below

**Weather:** Unknown

2014 was always destined to be that special year for BUMs. It is our 10th anniversary year and needed to be celebrated in style. Following our tradition of making an overseas trip every other year we decided to rein act the inaugural trip to Chamonix in the French Alps. Ten years ago Jim Grant, Colin Christie, Tony Quinn, Jim Walker, Bob Capes and others decided to climb Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe at 4810 metres or 15781 feet.

Now those of you who remember Bob Capes will suspect some glitch here and you would be correct, for Bob and heights do not marry well. Bob was, however an excellent domestique for the climbers cooking and supporting them, but realising his limitations. Alas, poor weather stopped the virgin BUMS in their tracks and, having climbed all the way to the Tete Rousse hut they were forced to abandon their quest for the summit. Sense prevailed as each year many climbers die on their attempt to summit the mountain. Jim Walker did manage to win his age category in the Mont Blanc half marathon. Those were the days!

10 years on; this time there were no plans to climb the mountain, merely to enjoy walking in the mountains, the sunny skies and the food and drink. Staying in catered chalets in Chamonix, right at the foot of the Bossons Glacier the group assembled on the 9th August 2014- with thousands of others tourists from all corners of the globe. Chamonix was full! What a scrum.

Unfortunately The Grants has to cancel last minute due to family illness. This left the planning to the rest of us. No problem, except that is, for the weather which had a mind of its own much to the ruination of our planned escapades.

The highlight of a very chilled out week was the visit to Aiguille du Midi - 3842 metres, just below the summit of Mont Blanc. The day was unpromising early on but after a long queue for the cable car the skies cleared, the sun came out and we basked in the glory that is the highest mountain in Europe. The station is amazing with viewing galleries cut into

the ice and wind chill to freeze as well. This mountain is permanently capped in snow. At this height and, having arrived so quickly by the cable car, altitude issues are recognisable and some of the party found themselves quite light headed. But, in the true tradition of the BUMs we managed to enjoy our lunch and flasks of coffee. Nothing changes!

XXXX TONYS PICTURE HERE

Descending via the cable car at times intervals we exited half way down to make a traverse of the Plan De L' Aiguille leading to the famous, and very long glacier, The Mer de Glace, where we hoped to meet up with Amanda Christie and Delia Hiscock who were coming up to that point on the mountain railway. This duly happened and we were all astounded that, with Delia's support, Amanda had managed to visit the ice caves (being challenged by a very serious vertigo issue this was an amazing feat). Amanda was the recipient of the new, Braveheart award for acts of courage.

Returning on the mountain railway we all agreed the day had been fantastic and worth celebrating with a round or two of rehydrating beers. We made full use of the local trains in Chamonix incorporating them into our walking schedule, enabling us to explore the Chamonix valley. Sadly the weather was not kind to us. We did spend more time enjoying local coffees and beers than we normally would- well the coffee bit is true. Walks had to be lower level than we would have wanted due to heavy rain and clag, not age and infirmity.

No prize for guessing who won the Golden Marmot award for daft behaviour- yes, Colin Christie once again has the cuddly marmot on his mantelpiece - what for, you ask? For hurling his coffee flask onto his double bed, without the stopper- oh Colin!

Tony