

THE  
YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS'  
CLUB JOURNAL  
1979

Edited by  
A. B. CRAVEN

VOLUME XI · NUMBER 38

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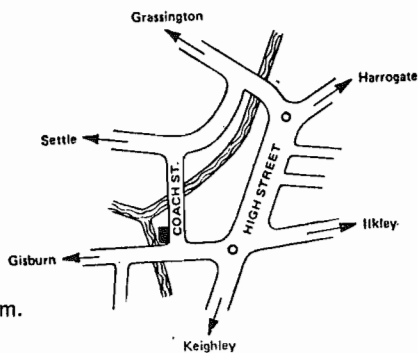
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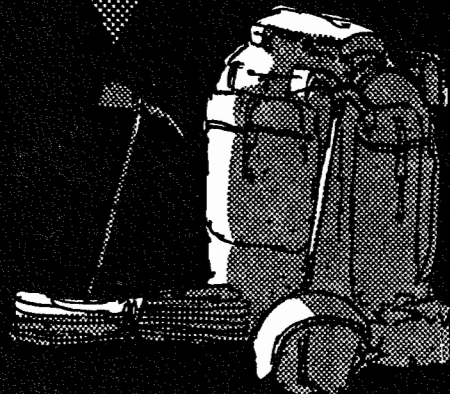


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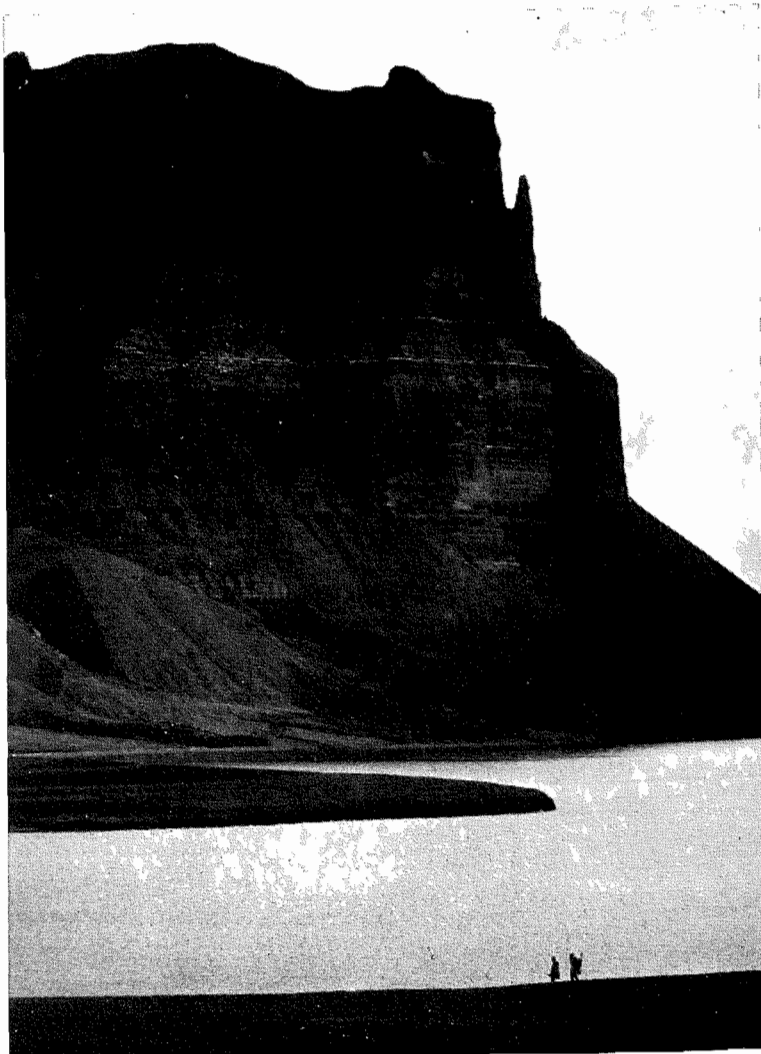
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SPITZBERGEN: TEMPLE MOUNTAIN

*Duncan Mackay*

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THE  
**Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal**

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A LONG RIVER THROUGH A LONELY LAND

by G. B. Spenceley

IT ALL STARTED ON WINDERMERE. It was Tom's suggestion that we spent the week-end on the water rather than the mountains. As Warden of the Outward Bound Mountain School in Eskdale, Tom Price had made a courtesy visit to a similar establishment in Minnesota and had learned the rudiments of Canadian canoeing. On his return, he bought a canoe of his own and was anxious for more. As he explained: "You don't have to hump your kit around; the canoe does it for you."

We launched his boat into the Brathay and headed for the lake. It was a hot and sunny June day and, as we gently paddled through the placid waters, leisurely skirting islands with near-naked beauties sunning on the banks, I agreed with Tom; this was a delightfully relaxed mode of travel, admirably suited to more than middle-aged mountaineers. It was then that I fell for his suggestion of a river in the Canadian North.

But Canada is a long way to go merely to find good canoeing. If we were to travel so far, it must be no ordinary river. We must pretend it was an expedition, if not of genuine exploration, at least a challenge of wilderness travel: a long river that would give five or six weeks of travel through remote, wild and little known country. Anything less, we could find much nearer home.

Naturally, it was Northwest Territory that fired our imagination; thirteen times the area of the British Isles and with a population of no more than a medium-sized English town, there was remoteness and space enough. We corresponded at length with Nick Nickels, Canada's leading authority on wilderness canoeing, being careful to give no hint of our lack of skill. No doubt taking us to be experienced canoeists, he



guardedly suggested the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers. Later, he was to retract his recommendation when he learned there were only two in the party—perhaps also he was beginning to suspect our amateur status. But by then we were committed and anyway we believed in the sound principle of planning boldly and executing prudently.

Having said that, I think we were both secretly worried. We were not so much concerned by the length of the journey and its remoteness, but with wild water and our limited ability to cope with this unfamiliar element. A few minutes' immersion in water where last winter's ice might still be lingering could be serious. Even worse, with the loss of the canoe and its cargo, the chances of survival would be remote indeed. Possibly we were being too ambitious, but I pinned great faith in Tom's judgement and the measure of skill he had already acquired. No doubt Tom held some unjustified faith in my ability to learn lessons quickly.

That immense stretch of tundra that extends across the top of mainland Canada from Hudson Bay almost to the Mackenzie is usually called the Barren Grounds. The name suits it well. Except for the few weeks of high summer when the land bursts into colour and life, it is an endless empty space of rolling plain, shattered rocks, countless lakes and twisting rivers. For most of the year, it is held in the terrible desolate grip of winter.

Of the many river systems that give some pattern to the Barren Grounds, one of the longest is the Hanbury and Thelon. Together they form the best west-east canoe route through Arctic Canada; only the Back River compares in length and remoteness. The Hanbury River rises just over the watershed north-east of Great Slave Lake and, in the very heart of the Barrens, joins the Thelon which continues east, linking a series of considerable lakes, to empty into Chesterfield Inlet. In selecting this route, we should be following in the footsteps, or rather paddle strokes, of some earlier British travellers of unusual interest.

David Hanbury, now an almost forgotten English explorer, arrived on the Canadian scene in the late 19th century and, among a series of remarkable journeys, mostly with Eskimo

companions, was the first to canoe the Thelon and the river which now bears his name. Of more poignant interest, the Thelon will always be associated with the name of more recent British travellers: John Hornby, an eccentric Englishman who, in his own lifetime, became a legend in the North, and a schoolboy from Dover College, whose deeply moving diary documented the story of a tragic winter that would otherwise have gone almost unnoticed. But more of that later. Of recent parties down these rivers, there have been quite a few Canadian and American, but no British since John Hornby's party. No, it would not be exploration, but certainly a far cry from Windermere!

I was on the scene some weeks before Tom's arrival, but I was not long alone. The Thelon has a reputation in the North and, when news got around that two Englishmen were bound on a venture so apparently bold (or foolhardy), much help was offered. In Edmonton, I bought six weeks' food and, to a carefully considered ration plan earlier worked out, packed it in six 14 man-day bags, each item doubly waterproofed. This was dispatched the 1,000 miles north to Yellowknife.

Our chief concern was air transport. This was essential, for to start from Fort Reliance at the east end of Great Slave Lake and paddle and portage over the watershed, as the pioneers had done, would take too many weeks of an all too short summer, with the awful prospect of being frozen in before journey's end. The pioneers had been prepared to winter and survive, if but precariously, on the profits of net, trap and rifle. Some, as we shall see, had not survived. Our journey was to be modest in comparison with those of earlier days. A light float plane could lob us down on some lake near the Hanbury's source thus, in a few hours, cutting out some 300 miles of difficult and tedious travel. It would leave us just 500 miles of canoeing to the Eskimo settlement of Baker Lake which, even with the prospect of many unnavigable rapids and delaying winds, was a reasonable journey in the weeks available. Our concern was not over the necessity or availability of air transport, but the high cost of charter.

But friendliness is endemic in the Canadian North; opportunities offered, doors opened more readily than elsewhere.

Gateway Aviation agreed that \$800 was a lot of money for the impoverished British and suggested I try the Army. Major Sprule was helpful. Yes, they had a Twin Otter and would be delighted to fly us out just as soon as the schedule permitted. Sadly this was not soon enough. It seemed we were committed to heavy expenditure. We would have been indeed if, by some favourable chance, I had not got off the lift at the wrong floor on my way up the Federal Building. I found myself on the floor below the one I required and met the one man in Yellowknife who could help us. This was Doug Mackie, Air Transport Officer for the Indian and Northern Affairs Department. Surprisingly he seemed satisfied as to our fitness for the enterprise and casually remarked that he had a single engined Beaver on Charter. "Would that help?" he asked. "It should be available at the week-end."

It was with this glad news that I was able to welcome Tom to Yellowknife on the 15th July, looking as if he were ready to step straight into a canoe. Instead he was swept into the social whirl that I had been enjoying for some days. We took off from Yellowknife on the 19th July, the 17-ft. Grummon alloy canoe lashed to one float, a practice the illegality of which is ignored by the bush pilots. We refuelled at the tiny Indian settlement of Snowdrift, hand-pumping the fuel from drums. Another two hours of flying over a vast water-laced wilderness and we landed on Hanbury Lake. We made camp at the head of the first rapids, where the Hanbury River exits from the eastern shore.

Until that moment, I think we had forgotten that devastating curse of the North: insect pests. They rose from the lichen at our feet and hung like a malevolent mist around us, both mosquito and black fly, the latter, not merely biting but with each bite taking a lump of us away with them. They flew into our mouths and nostrils, they found their way through the tiniest rift in our clothing, but their favourite place was the ear where they spun and tumbled deep down near the drum. Repellents and nets offered limited protection, and we could only arm ourselves with that most important of weapons: sheer resignation.

We cooked our meal and, like any novice in the North, we

picked out black fly from food and drink, a futile task we soon abandoned. While Tom made a reconnaissance of the rapids, I fished at their head with a spinner almost as large as any fish I had previously caught. With my first cast, I hooked a monstrous lake trout (or salmon trout here) that leapt out of the water and promptly broke the line. This sad end to my efforts was to be repeated many times in the days ahead. These waters may offer the best sport fishing in the world, but required more skill, or stronger line, than I possessed.

The last but inescapable extremity of the canoeist is to portage, and on our first day there were more hours of this than paddling. Each required three relays of 80 lb. loads, the most unmanageable being the canoe. Carried inverted and balanced on two shoulder pads, one was highly vulnerable to wind. At other times we lined the canoe down on ropes fore and aft, through fast water we dared not yet run. Less confident in a canoe than on a mountain slope, and with more at stake, we were very cautious in those early days. We did run one rapid that first day and the outcome was not encouraging. Unskilled in swift control, we hit a rock, the canoe tilted and Tom fell out. The output of that first day of travel was a mere 10 miles. We would have to do better than that!

We did indeed do better on most days: 17 miles the next, and 27 the day after. There were still portages and rapids, but we were gaining some small degree of confidence and skill—or at least Tom was. At all difficult or dangerous places, he was the captain of the vessel, taking the rear position where he could exert more control. My task in the front was to shout directions as to route. It was exhilarating travel. Once committed to the current, there was no escape; one was swept inexorably forward at a speed which, from our low kneeling position, seemed highly alarming.

We delighted in our remoteness from human life, although perhaps privately a little fearful lest something go wrong. Nowhere on the Continent is there a place more isolated than the heart of the Barrens through which we now travelled. The nearest settlement, occupied cabin or tent, must now be some hundreds of miles away. Or so we thought until one day we swept round a corner and saw a canoe on the shore. On the

bank behind were two wild and ragged Frenchmen crouching amid the bloody remains of two dismembered caribou.

Their enterprise in length and boldness put ours to shame. The convenience of an air lift was not for them, nor the security of adequate rations. No doubt inspired by the tales of the pioneers, with little more than a bag of flour, a rod and rifle, they had set out to cross the Barrens as few had done before, and none now ever did, relying entirely on the fruits of their hunting. Some weeks earlier, with ice still in the Lakes, they had left Fort Reliance. Twice they had capsized in stormy waters and swum ashore, narrowly escaping death from cold. They had meagre luck with their fishing and less with their hunting. Only the day before, weak with hunger, they had managed to shoot two young caribou. They were now resting up and regaining strength while drying slices of the flesh on stones in the sun. We exchanged porridge and potato flour with them in return for tender caribou steaks, and went on our way feeling rather humbled. We were to meet once again at Helen Falls, where a disaster befell them that might easily have ended their journey and their lives.

Our two hardest days of travel, and least rewarding in distance, were still to come. On one we covered only five miles—although we walked twenty—and on the next day a mere seven. It was portaging that delayed us. The longest of these was Dickson Canyon, a narrow and deep cleft through which the water furiously boiled for over three miles. That night, too tired to seek a better site, we camped in a place more than usually plagued with pests, the black fly pinging against face and tent like lead shot. By now, we were almost unrecognisable. We peered through narrow slits in faces grossly bloated and our bodies were mottled with a pattern of itching, swollen sores.

The fifth day of travel, with more portaging, brought us to Helen Falls. We approached them cautiously, which was just as well, for they were preceded by a five-foot step. We carried round this, then lined the canoe down in water increasing in speed to the head of the falls. There the river narrowed and leapt 25 feet into the canyon below where it continued at high speed along a boulder-strewn floor.

We had hardly established ourselves in camp above the falls when the Frenchmen came into sight. Paddling at a furious pace like veteran Voyageurs, they failed to see the step until too late. They were swept over it and capsized. Somehow they struggled ashore to the opposite bank but the canoe and its load continued at increasing speed down the centre of the torrent to plunge over the falls into the gorge below. So deep was the fall, so wild the water, we did not doubt it would be a total loss. The ultimate disaster, the nightmare that haunts the thoughts of any wilderness canoeist, had occurred, not to us thank goodness, but to two others for whose survival we must now be responsible.

But by a miracle we were to be spared this duty. Some distance down the canyon, dented but otherwise undamaged, we found the canoe wedged between boulders on our bank. We easily recovered it, one pack still intact inside. Others tied together were stuck between stones some way out from the shore. Tom lowered the canoe out on a rope and, using this to brace myself against the current, I was soon able to recover them. By a freak of fortune, we had all been saved from an unpleasant if not also serious situation.

Another portage and perhaps 25 miles of pleasant fast paddling and we reached the junction with the Thelon River. It had taken us six days to travel the first 100 miles, but there had been many portages and more miles of lining in rapids too perilous to run. We had 400 miles still to go, but the main difficulties were over; our chief concerns now were delaying winds and swell and surf in the big lakes further east.

At the junction with the Thelon and for 50 miles beyond, there was a strange change in the clothing of the landscape. Where elsewhere it was tundra bare of all but tiny growth, now on both sides of the river there was a line of sturdy spruce. This is that strange oasis of the Barrens, an island of comparative fertility, where tundra and tree line merge. This is the place for which John Hornby, our last British predecessor, was making for his winter quarters fifty years earlier.

On our second day of travel down the Thelon, we found the remains of the cabin, a rectangle of rough hewn logs set back a little from the river. It looked down on a grand sweep

of the broad Thelon beside which musk ox now grazed. Small colourful arctic flowers grew in fantastic abundance. It was a peaceful and beautiful scene, but this was the stage on which was played the tragedy of that long drawn out winter and delayed spring of 1926-27, a human drama in which all the qualities of fortitude, courage, self-sacrifice and devotion were fully displayed. Three mounds of earth and stones and the three crude wooden crosses told of the final outcome.

Everyone north of Edmonton has heard of John Hornby. The son of a well known Lancashire and English cricketer, he went to Canada in 1904 and became obsessed with the mystique of the Barren Grounds. For years he wandered alone in the North like an animal, wintering in caves, living off the land. Prodigious in endurance, he sought hunger and hardship for their own sake, as others would comfort. In twenty years of travel, he had become a living legend.

But Hornby, with all his wealth of experience and uncanny knack of surviving, lacked foresight and judgement. This fatal weakness was all too evident on his last journey. In the summer of 1926, he appeared on Great Slave Lake with two unlikely companions: one Harold Adlard, an ex-RAF pilot, the other his second cousin Edgar Christian, an 18 year-old schoolboy from Dover College. With these two novices he proposed to do what not even the boldest trapper would consider: to winter on the Thelon. They left Fort Reliance in late July; they were never seen alive again.

The lifeblood of the Barren Grounds is caribou. Back and forth, from timber to tundra, the herds flow like a great tide. But the caribou are fickle. It is an unpredictable flow even if rhythmic. The caribou may pass the same spot in the same month for a dozen years running and the next year not come at all. For good reason it is sometimes called the land of feast or famine.

For the three men who built their cabin on the banks of the Thelon, it was a land of famine. A little meat and fish they found, but the caribou migration on which they depended had passed them by. An R.C.M.P. patrol found their bodies two years later, two rolled in blankets outside, one on his bunk within the cabin. The details of that tragic winter would only

have been surmised, their deaths quickly forgotten, but for the labour of the schoolboy Edgar Christian. From October onwards, he kept a daily diary, a remarkable record without trace of fear or self pity, showing only concern for his companions. We learn that John Hornby died, exhausted by his efforts to find food, in April, and a few weeks later Adlard died too. Somehow, for another month, alone and with no hope, Edgar Christian remained alive, keeping the diary, recording in meticulous detail an account of each day's search for food. This diary, which was later published, is now housed in the library of Dover College.

The bulk of our journey was still ahead of us, but there were fewer difficulties; only the need to cover distance before the coming of the worsening weather of autumn caused some concern. But the broad Thelon, now less troubled by rapids, gave us fast and relaxed canoeing. Such swift water as did occur we could usually run after an initial reconnaissance. On a good day we could cover 40 miles and still allow time to photograph and fish and observe the wealth of animal and bird life. Every day, we saw solitary wolves and caribou and small herds of musk ox. This area contains the world's greatest concentration of the latter animals, now happily protected. Regrettably we failed to see the Barren Ground grizzly, although their tracks were clear and fresh on the river bank. Perhaps it is as well, for we had no defence against them unless we could frighten them off with flares. After many initial failures, we were now having some luck with our fishing and a 20lb. lake trout or pike was a welcome addition to our otherwise rather dreary diet.

Our only cause for worry were the 100 miles of travel through the big lakes, Beverly, Aberdeen and Schultz, where we would often be forced to paddle in open water far from shore and highly vulnerable to wind. Many days were to be lost lying up while heavy surf broke upon the shore, sometimes still concealed by banks of last winter's snow. We thoroughly frightened ourselves in the first lake. Crossing between two headlands, we misjudged the size of the swell. Fortunately, Tom in the rear showed much skill, heading us into the waves, for otherwise we should have been lost; even so we shipped

much water over the bows. We learned our lesson and laid up for four days after that, until the wind dropped sufficiently for us to dare travel again. At the east end of Beverly Lake, we were surprised by a light aircraft which came in low over our canoe and circled. We were to learn later that this was the R.C.M.P. Officer from Baker Lake, who had chartered an aircraft for a 350-mile round trip just to assure himself of our safety. It was comforting to know we were not forgotten.

After another day and a half of lying up in windy weather, we made the link between Beverly and the much larger Aberdeen Lake, threading our way through a complex pattern of islands which caused us some difficulty. Even with good maps, navigation was not easy, for the low, uncertain shore gave us no conception of distance or shape.

It took us four days and a night to cover the 60 miles length of Aberdeen Lake, our progress being further interrupted by idle hours of waiting for calmer wind and waves. Although hardly mid-August, the brief summer was seemingly over; the cold and storms of autumn had begun. But one night at about 9 p.m., the wind dropped abruptly and, anxious to cover distance before the weather worsened more, we broke camp and pushed off into the lake to paddle with only a blood red backcloth to give us light. On a surface now quite still, we slid swiftly forward, the silence only broken by the dip of the paddles and the gentle murmur of water beneath the bows. With no light to read the map, we could but travel vaguely, skirting bays, rounding capes, threading our way by islands which rose before us like surfacing sea monsters.

We worked with unusual energy, but the rhythmic swing of arms alone was not enough to bring us warmth. Too numb to paddle further, we pulled ashore and for an hour or so lay in sleeping bags beneath the unpitched tent, listening to the unearthly howl of nearby wolves. We got up with the rising sun, frost thick on the ground and, with brief halts for food, paddled through the day. At 6 p.m. we made camp at the outlet from the lake by a cluster of ancient Eskimo cairns.

It was warmer the next day. Summer returned for a brief spell and, with it, the season's last harvest of black fly. They hung in a cloud over each sun-baked rock like a pall of smoke.

The next 25 miles of minor lake and river was pure delight. We glided almost effortlessly over a glassy surface that made us feel as if we were suspended in a replica of the sky. Two more days of canoeing along the northern shores of Schultz Lake and an evening paddle in open water steering by compass and we reached the outlet of the Thelon.

We had now a mere 67 miles to go to the Eskimo settlement of Baker Lake. In a river with a constant current of six to eight miles per hour, and only one portage, this should only have taken us two days; in the event it took us five. Perhaps after nearly five weeks of almost continuous effort, we were tiring, but the real cause was the wind. Perversely, it blew hard against the flow of the river, whipping waves up through which we had had strenuously to force our way. When we entered Baker Lake, great blocks of last winter's ice were stranded on the shore and, as we reached the settlement, the first snow of the next winter began to fall.



## THE OGRE

by Clive Rowland

AT 23,900 ft. Biantha Brakk, or the Ogre, as it is known in climbing circles, is the highest peak in the Biafo glacier region of the Karakoram.

Although the glacier had been tramped several times by Westerners in the last 100 years and mapped by Shipton's party in 1938/39 very little was known about individual peaks and good photos were virtually non-existent. In the late fifties Pakistan closed the area to foreigners and it wasn't until 1970 that it was re-opened.

In 1971 I was a member of the Yorkshire Karakoram Expedition. We applied to attempt Gasherbrum IV, then the highest unclimbed peak in the world. Three weeks before we were due to leave Britain we learned that our application had been turned down but we could attempt Biantha Brakk, "if we wished." The next two weeks were frantic to say the least, meetings with Shipton and others who had been to the area and visits to the Alpine Club library. All produced surprisingly little. One photograph taken about 1610 from 1,000 miles away on a Brownie! However from information gleaned it seemed that the North Ridge was our only hope as the rest of the mountain was "appallingly steep."

My first view of the Ogre came after six days of walking. First we walked along the Shigar and Braldu valleys for five days and then during the first day on the Biafo there it was. Most of the south side could be seen. Magnificent granite walls, beautiful blue ice and steep, steep snow.

After another two days' walk we bypassed the South Face and carried on up the glacier to Snow Lake. Here we turned right and headed for the North Ridge. We never did reach this ridge. After days of floundering in wet, often chest deep snow, falling into hidden crevasses and rivers, we gave up.

Our only hope was to return down the Biafo and look for a route on the South Face. After negotiating the tortuous Uzunn Brakk Glacier the whole of the south side came into view—it was indeed incredibly steep apart from one weakness. A 3,000 ft. spur, rather like one of the Brenva Face routes, ran to a

huge saddle (S.W. Col 20,500 ft.); from here the angle eased slightly and there looked to be several possible routes to the top. Unfortunately my enthusiasm for a "go" wasn't shared by the other team members and we came home.

In 1975 another British team attempted the Ogre from the north, but alas they shared the same fate as ourselves. They failed to reach the ridge because of the atrocious snow.

Doug Scott, Ronnie Richards, Rob Wood and I met this team on their way out in Askole, the uppermost village in the Braldu Valley. We were on our way to attempt the beautiful 21,000 ft. Sosbun Brakk also on the Biafo. "Well," I told the lads, "after we've dealt with Sosbun let's do a proper recce of the Ogre's South side. I'm sure it's the way it will go first."

No, we didn't deal with Sosbun Brakk, it's still not been dealt with. Have you ever tried swimming up a glacier with 70 lbs. on your back? We did and our three porters (Crosby, Stills and Nash) did and they couldn't even swim. After three days and still a mile from the peak, we conceded and returned to drier lands. At this point our Balti friends decided to desert us. Of course we couldn't blame them—we didn't pay 'em either.

For four days four men ferried forty kilogram loads. They were fed up! A camp was set up on the Uzunn Brakk at about 15,500 ft. from which we intended to recce the Ogre and attempt some of the beautiful peaks to the south.

A majestic 20,000 footer which we named the Biafo Spire was attempted by the four of us. Being opposite the Ogre and offering what promised to be excellent climbing it was an obvious choice. We climbed alpine style and carried no tents. Digging snow holes was hard work but they are usually warm and safe. I don't much care for camping on those big eastern hills. They have a tendency to keep falling down carrying tents and occupiers back to base which, when one is intent on going upwards, is a bit frustrating.

At the end of the second day's climbing a storm blew in. We were only about 800 ft. below the summit but had to retreat. This venture had not been in vain however—from our high point we ascertained that indeed the centre one of the

Ogre's three summits was the highest and there was a feasible route to it.

Six days of snow and a million brews later, found Doug and I up under the Ogre's south face oggling and boggling at the magnitude. "Shall we have a go?"—eventually—"No, we'll come back in '77." It was during this walk about spell that we decided to have a closer look at the Lattoks—three superb mountains between 22,000 and 23,500 ft. Not thirty minutes walk away from our camp was the conflux of the Uzunn Brakk and Lattok Glaciers. There to our amazement, tucked in the V of the Junction was a beautiful alp, an oasis amidst all this rock and ice. Gentians and edelweiss were everywhere and a crystal clear stream flowed through the meadow into a small lake.

"And to think, we've been camping on bloody ice for three weeks," I remarked. Doug and I and my piles were pleased with this find; it was an excellent site for our future plans.

Later in '75 and again in '76 Japanese teams attempted the Ogre. The latter attempt reached 21,000 ft. and their route to the South West Col was via the same spur we reced the year before. Good news, at least the Ogre's lower half will go. Bad news, they had two camps swept away by avalanches!—Good news.

Doug and I picked our team carefully. Chris Bonington, because he could get as much free Bovril as we'd need. Mo Anthoine because he manufactures ice axes and other useful gear. He also knows everyone at our embassy in Islamabad. Paul (Tut) Braithwaite because he has a gear shop and he's a painter and decorator by trade, which would be very handy for marking a route up the glacier. Finally Nick Estcourt because he likes Bonington and Bovril.

The 10th June '77 saw us setting up base camp. It was pleasing to realise the Japs hadn't found the meadow during their two previous attempts. Not a can or grain of rice to be found anywhere. Captain Aleem, our Liaison Officer was very pleased for just round the corner were the British Latok team. Their Liaison Officer and he were old friends. I was happy too, all this team were from Sheffield and I'd known and climbed with them for years. On the 12th, Doug and I started



*Clive Rowlands*

*THE OGRE: S.W., MAIN and N.E. SUMMITS*

to blaze the trail to advanced base. It was still early in the season and the deep snow was very hard going. We reached the proposed site after eight hours—later, we did this walk regularly in two and a half hours carrying big loads.

After three days of humping loads to advance base, Chris and Nick attacked the spur whilst the rest of us continued to ferry loads. They climbed 600 ft. which they fixed, and then returned to camp. Two days later Chris and I pushed further up in search of a site for camp 1. There was only one possible safe place, a niche in the ridge under a vertical wall. As our route at this point was on the left flank avoiding the steep crest, it meant a 200 ft. detour to reach the camp, and so obviously a 200 ft. abseil every morning before climbing could commence. However it had to be, there was nothing but 50° / 70° ice and rock until the South West Col.

Chris and Nick, Mo and I climbed, jumared and abseiled for seven days until eventually Mo and I reached the Col on 25th June. The past week had been trying but gratifying. Awake at 1 a.m., shivering until the first brew goes down. Trying to force down unpalatable, plastic that expeditions have to live on and eventually donning all the paraphernalia. First descending then ascending the ropes to the previous day's high point, then at last starting to do some proper climbing until about 9 a.m.—then dropping the gear and fleeing—trying to reach camp 1 before noon. The express trains are roaring down the line by then, the grand pianos are being hurled from the summit and "God am I thirsty."

At the outset of this trip, Doug and Tut had decided they wanted to try the South rock pillar of the peak, alpine style. It was away to our right and soared vertically for 2,500 ft. A gigantic icefield above led eventually to the summit rocks.

Occasionally we four would catch glimpses of two small figures climbing the steep couloir to the foot of the wall, or trudging up and down the glacier. One afternoon we saw them descending, very very slowly. Something was wrong, no matter how tired, these two guys move faster than that.

On the 26th June Chris and Nick left camp 1 with five days' food. They were hoping to make an alpine style push for the summit. Having pushed to the col the previous day, Mo and I



FROM S.W. SHOULDER OF THE OGRE

Clive Rowlands



were tired. We decided to go down for a rest and see how our two friends were. Advanced base was deserted, which was very odd indeed. Doug and Tut weren't on the hill but why should they go down to base when all the food and equipment for their climb was now up here? We had no choice but to go down and find out.

We ran down the moraine into base camp. Doug and Tut were there along with Pat Fearnough and Tony Riley of the Latok team. They told us the sad news that Don Morrison, their leader, had fallen into a crevasse and disappeared. The three Yorkshire men had been ferrying supplies up to camp 1. Paul Nunn and Pat Green were still pushing out the route around 20,000 ft. unaware of the accident. They descended three days later when they ran out of food and rope and realised something was amiss.

Our assumption that something had happened to Doug and Tut in the couloir was proved correct. Tut had been abseiling, when a large boulder came down and crushed his leg against the wall. He and Doug were resting at advanced base when our camp cook brought up the message about Don. Obviously they descended straight away to offer any assistance that might be needed. Tut's leg was now very swollen and bruised, he could hardly walk. This was, in fact, the end of the climbing for him—it never got any better. It was only after the trip, when he returned home, that he discovered he had a blood clot.

Doug, Mo and I now joined ranks. I proposed that, instead of heading for the summit "the easy way" that Chris and Nick were attempting, we should climb direct from the South West Col to the South West shoulder, straight up the pillar to the West Summit and then traverse to the main summit—this was accepted. Three days later we were at the Col. We dumped our loads and abseiled back to camp 1. The following day we dismantled the camp and prussiked back to the col. "I'm sick of the sight of these ropes," Mo said. "Thank goodness that's the last time we'll be climbing 'em." I, the pessimist added, "Don't bet on it mate." Two days later, back in advanced base, I reminded him of his words. His reply was a terse imperative.

Chris and Nick were three days overdue on their climb. Meanwhile we three had pushed from the col to the South West shoulder and made a tent platform and dump there. However we were worried about our two friends and decided to abandon our attempt to search for them, starting the next morning. Whilst still snug in our pits, there was a knock at the tent door—enter Bonington and Estcourt. "Well did you get up it?" says Scott. "No" says Bonington. "Good" says I. Mo laughs.

They had in fact made a fine effort. They'd been climbing for a week and had got to the foot of the 700 ft. summit tower. Then they decided they hadn't enough gear or woomph to tackle it, so traversing left they had ascended the easier South West Summit.

Chris and Nick were still keen to have a try for the main summit via 'our' route. From what they had seen, it was obvious that we neither had enough food nor gear with us at the col, so once again we all descended to base camp. Nick decided eventually that he was still too tired to attempt the summit again but he would help carry gear back to the col. Tut also agreed to do the same, his leg was feeling a little better.

Mo, Doug and I set off once more for the three day climb to the col. The others were to follow two days later, when they should have been fully rested. Four days out, we three reached our previous high point, the South West Shoulder at 22,000 ft. The following day we started work on the steep 1,000 ft. pillar above. The climbing was very steep and strenuous, mainly chimneys and cracks full of ice. After three days' work, Mo and I eventually reached the top of the pillar and climbed a 500 ft. ice gully which led to easier ground. Elated, we set off down the ropes to the shoulder.

The day after, the three of us were festering in the camp, watching a weary solitary figure prussicking up towards us. It was Chris; Tut and Nick hadn't been fit enough after all, to make the carry. Chris had carried as much food as he could manage. However that, plus food in camp, only came to four days' supply. With a bit of luck we estimated we could just about do it, three days up and one down—optimists.

Next morning we were off. It was 11th July and not a cloud to be seen, sacs not too heavy yet. We left the tents behind, intent on snow-holing. Moving quite swiftly up the fixed ropes on the pillar picking up gear which we'd cached on the way, we reached our previous high point by mid-morning. At 5 p.m. after climbing easy, yet exhausting snow, we were under the South West Summit and dug our first cave.

No need for alarm clocks here—no doubt even brass monkeys would suffer. Mo and I led off across steep, hard water ice, after the traverse, directly upwards to the ridge, 500 ft. below the South West peak. Time for a brew and a smoke before Doug and Chris took over to climb the steep broken rocks to the summit. This summit is around 23,600, a personal height record, it felt good. No time to linger though, we had to descend the ridge, traverse the snow field and hope to find the cave that Chris and Nick had dug two weeks earlier. We found and enlarged the cave, cooked, then slept.

“Do you know what today is?” said Mo. “Pay day?” I asked sarcastically. “It’s the 13th” and—“You don’t believe in that do you” cutting him off in his prime. “No, but I usually don’t move from the fire and telly on a 13th!”

We were traversing the slope to the foot of the final tower. Doug and Chris were an hour or so in front. We were deliberately so far behind, for Mo, who was making a film for the Beeb, wanted some film of them on the final tower.

At four in the afternoon, Doug was pegging up a vertical wall 200 ft. below the summit. A hundred feet lower down Mo and I realised that, even if Doug and Chris reached the top, no way would there be enough time for us to get there in daylight. Sadly we started to descend but determined to have a go the next day.

Eight p.m., I was lying in my sleeping bag, it was nearly dark now. An hour earlier Mo and I had seen Doug and Chris reach the summit. “I’ll just go out for a final call and see how they’re doing,” Mo announced. He was standing in the cave entrance, then “Oh God no—he’s gone” he screamed. “What, who’s gone?” I yelled but I didn’t want to know, I feared the worst. Joining Mo in the entrance I could just pick out two figures in the gloom. Fortunately “he hadn’t gone.” It was

Doug—in descending he had traversed about 130 ft. when he slipped on ice. He penduled at great knots and smashed into a gully wall. In the fading light Mo hadn’t seen the rope, hence his immediate reaction. We could hear them talking very clearly now. Doug, quite correctly as it turned out, diagnosed two broken legs. Mo and I returned to the cave, our friends dug out a ledge where they were, it was dark now.

The morning of the 14th was clear as usual. At 6 a.m. Mo and I were off across the snow field laden with ropes to fix a hand rail for Doug. Having spent the night without down or tentage, they were frost-bitten and tired.

It took us six hours to get back to the cave. Mo out in front fixing lines and hacking buckets across 60° slope for Doug to crawl in. Me behind clearing the ropes and retrieving the pegs. The peg situation was critical, when Doug took his fall he turned upside down. The bandolier carrying nearly all our gear was lost. We now had only four rock pegs, two ice pegs and eight karabiners and 1,200 ft. of abseiling before we reached the fixed ropes.

It was an odd sight inside the cave. Mo’s feet up my jumper, Chris’s feet up Doug’s jumper and me massaging Doug’s feet. And all the while brews and yet more brews were consumed. We had one meal left and decided to eat half now and the other half the following evening, when we should be well on our way back to the South West Shoulder. “What time is it?” Mo asked, shaking me awake. It was pitch black and I could not be bothered. “Christ, I can’t breathe. Put on the torch” he demanded. I was fully awake by now, I couldn’t breathe either. No wonder, the cave entrance was blocked solid with snow. We cleared it away and to our amazement and utter dismay, there was a raging storm blowing. Our curses awoke our friends and after a confab., we decided we should try to descend.

Of course, the Ogre being what it is, in order to descend, we first had to ascend the 500 ft. 60° slope to the South West Summit. I volunteered to try and break a trail. Stepping out of the cave I was hit by a horrendous wind, with spindrift making it virtually impossible to see. Within minutes my goggles were iced over. I removed them but my eyelashes iced and welded

my eyes together. I tried to keep moving upwards but in this raging storm and chest-deep snow I was losing and knew it. I returned to the lads. One hour I'd been gone and only achieved eighty miserable feet.

The rest of the day was spent playing cards. Every 45 minutes or so we had to unblock the entrance as the storm raged on. That evening we ate the last of our food, instant potato and soup mixed. All we had left now was tea bags and curry flavoured stock cubes (revolting).

When I ventured out early on the 16th, the weather had slightly improved. The wind was still blasting but it wasn't snowing, though the continuous spindrift was troublesome. Leading on a 300 ft. rope I reached a rock buttress after a two hour struggle. The rope was anchored and Mo jumared up. I led off again as Doug set off from the cave. During my frequent rests, I'd watch Doug jumaring on his knees.

At last the South West Summit—it had taken me four hours to reach it. It would be another four before Chris at the back arrived there. From now on it was all down hill. Mo went first rigging the abseils, chopping off the ends of the ropes for spike and chock belays, rather than leaving the precious rock pegs.

At around 6 p.m. we found our snow cave of the 11th but it was virtually full of snow and had to be re-dug. The weather had steadily worsened all afternoon and the cold was soon unbearable. None of us could wait any longer and we abandoned the digging and piled in. The roof was far too low and the stove's heat melted it. Mo and I, under the lowest part, had our sleeping bags soaked.

In an effort to keep out the driving snow, I piled all the rucsacs and any excess gear up to the entrance. We awoke the following day under a foot of snow and half the gear buried. Mo lost a crampon which we never found. Doug crawled on. At mid-day we reached the gully at the top of the South West Pillar. Only 200 ft. below was the start of the fixed ropes, which went all the way to our tents on the shoulder. I drove in the last peg and fed the double rope down the gully. Mo, Doug, then I abseiled. Nearing the bottom of the ropes, I noticed neither end was tied off to anything. One however was twenty feet or so longer than the other and reached the first

fixed rope. I penduled across to a spike on the left and tied the long rope off, then continued down to the fixed rope. I waited for Chris to warn him about the short rope. In the driving snow he didn't notice it and my shouts were lost in the wind. He shot off the end, bouncing twenty feet until he was pulled up by the one I had tied on the spike. This act definitely saved his life. As I told him later, it was just an impulse, I could easily have left it and scrambled down to the fixed rope below but I decided "No, just in case Chris doesn't see it."

Later that day when we were all re-united in the shoulder camp, we learned of Doug's incredible escape at the same place. Abseiling down the ice on his side, he flew off the ends of the ropes. The first fixed rope was in fact a horizontal one and Doug just happened to flop over it! (He never waited to warn me though).

The 18th July dawned worse than ever, the tents were virtually collapsed with the amount of snow that fell in the night. I ventured out with a shovel to clear it. This little episode cost me frost bite in the fingers. Chris's voice had virtually disappeared overnight and he started croaking at me from the other tent (occasionally coughing up bubbles). He wanted to set off down. "We'll die if we don't." "We'll die if we try," I told him. "I'm going back to bed to suck an oxo and smoke a tea bag!" and I did.

The 19th, our fourth day without food; strange how one's body gets used to it after a while. Not like tobacco, I could murder a fag. Cloudy but not snowing, we packed the tents and headed down to the col. Mid-day found us at our old camp site digging for a bag of food we'd left there. After two hours all we had found was a bag of rubbish—exhausted we gave in. By now the clouds had disappeared, the sun was blazing down, the storm was done. We pushed on, it was half a mile across the col to the top of the 3,000 ft. ridge. Wallowing in deep wet snow it took us four hours. There we camped. Doug was still strong despite his legs. Chris on the other hand was getting weaker. His left hand had swollen, he had pains in his chest and he was coughing more bubbles than ever; in fact he had pneumonia, brought on by two broken ribs which he

got during his fall. In addition, his hand was broken in two places.

We left early the next day, hoping to make advanced base. Mo went first to check the ropes and anchors and to assist Chris. Doug and I followed an hour behind. As we got lower down the ridge I kept looking for the advanced base tents far below. I couldn't spot them and I was convinced the storm had carried them away. I then saw Mo and Chris arrive at the area of the camp, they lingered around a few minutes, then continued down the glacier. Doug and I arrived at the site some four hours later; there was absolutely nothing to be found. Roping down the ridge, Doug had been nearly as fast as the rest of us, but now, on the relatively flat glacier, having to crawl on all fours, he was painfully (literally) slow. Occasionally there was a steep section where I could run down with the rope pulling him along on his backside. Generally though I couldn't help and it was his own strength and determination that kept him going.

Around midnight Doug crawled and I staggered into the meadow. It had been a long day, in fact it had been a long week, six days of it without food. Base camp wasn't there any more. Just a pile of nougat bars and a note giving us up for dead. It was to be two weeks before we got back out of the hills, but that's another story.



## THE LOS TAYOS EXPEDITION (or Close Encounters of the Ecuadorian Kind)

by J. C. Whalley

IF THERE IS AN EPICENTRE, or wellhead, of British caving endeavour overseas, then surely the Craven Heifer at Ingleton could lay strong claim to fulfilling such a role. Many an expedition has been conceived on the back of a cigarette packet within the overcrowded austerity of its public bar. Certainly our involvement in the Los Tayos affair, itself a Scottish/Ecuadorian venture, stemmed from a chance meeting there between David Judson and John Frankland, the CRO doctor, one Saturday evening in 1976. John spoke of being invited on an expedition to South America.

The picture emerged of a huge undertaking of soldiers and scientists being airlifted to a remote Amazon Headwater location in order to descend a deep shaft. Apart from John Frankland and Jim Campbell of the Grampian Speleological Society, both of whom would be committed to scientific duties, the only caver was Pete Holden of the Army and so, with only seven weeks to departure, the feeling developed that a few other cavers might be useful. Dave promptly telephoned the expedition leader, Major Chris Browne, with the offer to form a caving team. This was accepted, the team comprising Judson and myself with Arthur Champion of C.P.C., Dave Checkling of L.U.S.S., and Pete Cardy and John Harvey of S.W.C.C. None of us knew much about Ecuador, least of all its whereabouts, but we did have certain pertinent skills and a hunger for adventure in far-away places so we jumped at the chance.

A briefing meeting was held at Redford Barracks near Edinburgh. Our objective was Cuevas de Los Tayos, the "cave of the oil-birds." The entrance shaft had been descended on a previous occasion although there appeared to have been little lateral exploration. We were shown slides taken of other slides projected onto the floral wallpaper of a Quito hotel, so the quality left something to be desired. The cave was situated by the Rio Santiago in the Cordillera del Condor, where the first foothills of the Andes rise above the Amazon Basin. The locals are the Jivaro Indians who acquired a reputation during

their head-hunting past and managed to expel both Inca and Spaniard in their turn.

The scientists on the expedition were mainly zoologists and botanists, over twenty in number with an equivalent contingent of Ecuadorians. The job of getting them there was undertaken by the army who, no doubt, viewed the exercise as a valuable opportunity for jungle training. There were various other individuals: a village constable, a peer of the realm, the "Nurse-of-the-Year," a film crew, an expert in thermo-luminescent dating and, as President, none other than the first man to step onto the moon, Professor Neil Armstrong.

Professor Armstrong had been invited to be the expedition's figurehead, partly because his ancestral roots lay in Dollar, Clackmannanshire, which was the home of Stanley Hall, the amateur archaeologist who first mooted the expedition. Hall himself emerged as a somewhat enigmatic figure and when we listened to him it became clear that, however sound and prosaic were the various motives of the rest of the expedition, he personally was drawn to Los Tayos for wilder, more eccentric reasons. It transpired that a number of quite fantastic claims had been made for the cave by various people including Erich von Däniken. In his book, *Gold of the Gods*, he asserted that the caves were artificial, stretched the whole length of the Andes and were made by a race (probably extra-terrestrial) who had thermic lances and nuclear weapons. Of course, as we could see from the photographs, there could be other interpretations: the "molten rock" could be merely flowstone and the "gigantic masonry" the joint-pattern to be expected in limestone. In fact there were several other points in the book which were open to question. Nevertheless it was a sensitive area. Certainly Hall was still looking for a major archaeological revelation and yet to be associated with the Däniken account would make a laughing stock out of the expedition.

There was a further meeting, in London: a cocktail party for the purpose of cajoling financial backing from big business and then, for the remaining week, we were on tenterhooks as the expedition's viability lay in the balance.

The day arrived. After a long day at Heathrow Airport, relieved only by a ferocious bout of eleventh-hour inocula-

tions, we were in the air, riding a Jumbo westwards. Breakfast stop was at Cali, Colombia, which I am told, has the world's most beautiful women (and more than its share of muggers and pickpockets). We only saw the airport. Memorable were the humidity, the lyre-birds, the hazy, incredibly high horizon of the Andes and several huge beetles and locusts crawling purposefully across the concrete. I shuddered inwardly, wondering what the jungle had in store for us.

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, immediately impressed us. Situated high in the Andes it is nevertheless dominated by volcanoes, particularly Cotopaxi and Antisana. Our stay was a brief one; 24 hours split between a diplomatic garden party and our accommodation in an Ecuadorian Barracks.

Ecuador has three regions. Quito is situated in the Andes and their associated intermontane valleys. Despite its location on the equator (Spanish: el ecuador), this region is cool due to its elevation. On either side the Andes fall away to tropical jungle regions: the coastal one has a climate tempered by the cool Humboldt current. Our objective, however, lay in the Orienté, the jungle region to the East. The contrast between the dry exhilarating mountain air of Quito and the hot, heavy humidity of the Orienté was total.

Most of us travelled by bus to our base at Pastasa near Puyo. The scenery we passed through was extremely impressive, particularly the Mera gorge. The journey was not without event, the driver being somewhat cavalier. He was especially good at reversing into lamp-posts and upsetting banana stalls. At one point the road was blocked by landslide, apparently a frequent occurrence.

At Pastasa little time was lost in packing men and equipment into Aravas (short-take off aircraft of Israeli manufacture) for the next stage of our journey deep into the roadless jungles. Our aircraft droned alarmingly under its payload but we were rewarded by a superb view of Sangay soaring above cumulus clouds and deceptively tranquil. (It was to vent its anger on another British party shortly afterwards). Looking to the green carpet far below we could see the small clearings and huts of the Jivaros and finally we caught sight of the Rio

Santiago meandering towards the Atlantic through the eternal jungle.

Santiago base, Teniente Ortiz, gave us our first taste of the jungle and of the incessant polyphony of the insect legions. Despite its great width the Rio Santiago had a very swift flow and it was obvious that we would need the army inflatables to make headway upstream. After several attempts, one of which resulted in the indignity of being rescued by a dugout canoe, a reconnaissance party forced its way through rapids to the Coangas tributary to reach the cave site.

A huge airlift followed as soon as helicopters could be spared from their normal flood-relief duties. The destination was a ridge consisting of three platforms. This was substantially cleared of trees and afforded excellent views across the jungle to the thickly vegetated cliff-scarred hills of the Cordillera del Condor. There was a water hole nearby fed by an active stream and this was ideal for washing and bathing, as well as a supply of fresh water. The cave was reached by a steep muddy track. If one imagines Gaping Gill overgrown with jungle one has a very accurate picture of the entrance to Los Tayos.

The first descent was made by Judson and Champion virtually as soon as the "chopper" had landed. They found the entrance to be a vertical shaft of about 150 feet, with the weird noise of the oil-birds echoing up the shaft like manic laughter. The remains of a vine ladder was in place and this they cut down. The local Indians climb these free-hanging pitches on ships' ladders of stakes and twisted lianas, or shin down poles on shorter pitches, in order to harvest the oil-birds (Spanish: los tayos). The oil-bird is a fairly large, handsome bird which occupies an equivalent ecological niche to the bat. They emerge from the cave each evening (someone said always at 9 p.m!) to forage for palm nuts etc. which they store in their nesting places in the cave roof. They emit a series of audible clicks in order to navigate underground.

The entrance series led to an impressive square-section passage and then came a huge indeterminate chamber of highly complex topography. From the bottom of this smaller passages led to the sump while a lateral route led to a stream-

way and the Amphitheatre, an extremely impressive chamber, the floor of which gave rise to its name. Arthur and David did well to explore all the above on that first trip, but it was a disappointment to reach the sump so soon and those of us who had been cutting wood, erecting tents, etc., were a little chagrined.

This was alleviated by the discovery of Commando Cave by Cardy and Dr. Jefferson. Work now concentrated on rigging a gantry and winch on the main shaft but sufficient resources could be spared for trips into this new cave. In essence it was rather like a Yorkshire pothole with classic vadose fissure-passages and interconnecting pitches. The fauna was different of course and on my first trip we encountered tail-less whip scorpions, bats and freshwater crabs. The cave ended as a pitch into the Los Tayos Amphitheatre. Another branch, Shovell Pot, was explored as far as possible and provided a very wet trip.

The cave exploration in the main cave developed mainly into following inlets, some of which provided great sport, from the Amphitheatre region. It seemed that one could go on indefinitely finding lateral connections into parallel streamways. A major find was M6 series with its awesome stalagmite near the far end. This formation alone compensated for the general dearth of formations in the system.

Downward exploration was halted by the sump which was about 600 feet below the entrance and at the expected saturation level relative to the Rio Coangas.

During the course of the expedition the cave was visited by virtually all the scientists and soldiers. The safe handling of this traffic was the caving team's primary function and, to this end, an electric window-cleaner's hoist was used as a winch capable of lifting two persons. I remember the time when I was on gantry duty for the first time and secured a diminutive Ecuadorian geologist into the bosun's chair. He was lowered a few inches to enable me to clip his colleague, an enormous rotund man who had been fitted out with a Whillans harness, into the eyelet above the bosun's chair. It was a very comical sight: the big man was obviously quite beside himself with fear, and neither of them had any English. After what seemed

like an eternal moment I pushed his feet off the planks and signalled "Down."

The quality of life in camp was governed completely by the weather. It rained rather more often than not, and the large number of people in camp quickly turned the ground into a quagmire. Much of the soldiers' time was spent cutting wood to create duck-board walkways. When the sun did shine through there was barely time for the mud to dry into a stiff paste and then the rains would come again.

We had many visits from the local Indians who did a roaring trade in ironwood spears, blowguns and tooth necklaces. It must be said that the quality of the products deteriorated as the Jivaros tried to keep pace with the demand. They lived in bamboo-and-thatch huts in garden clearings, pursuing a "slash-and-burn" agricultural policy. They provided a lot of our food, including a pig which kept the camp going for three days. One of their specialities was manioc beer which starts out as a tuber chewed by the old women and ends up tasting like a mildly alcoholic buttermilk which provides the staple liquid intake of the Jivaro. If any remained long enough to reach maturity, according to one authority, they had an excuse for a big celebration which was the reason for the spacious huts.

The Indians were great collectors of our refuse. Discarded tin cans, even the bosun's chair, when we had finished with it, were eagerly salvaged and, no doubt, put to effective use. The expedition doctors were kept busy attending to their minor complaints and full advantage was taken of the Ecuadorian military presence in settling their various feuds and disputes.

Wildlife was legion of course and provided an endless source of specimens for the scientists and fascination for the rest of us. One of the images staying with me is of Colour Sergeant Orr charging across the base camp landing strip with a huge butterfly net. He collected nearly a thousand different types (not all at once though!)

Practically all the life in the caves consisted of either surface species which had "dropped-in" and adapted or had simply "dropped-in." Notable in the latter category was a python and several bootlace-type snakes encountered near the entrance.

Further into the cave were the rats. We could hear their squeals and see pairs of pink eyes darting furtively from boulder to boulder. Their prey was the defenceless young oil-birds. Not yet able to fly, the fledglings could be dislodged from their precarious perches in the roof.

Beyond this zone one entered the domain of the tarantula; the giant hairy spiders or mygalamorphs. One of these, which was brought out to study and then released, had an abdomen the size of a duck-egg and weighed in at half a pound.

Particularly interesting were the beds of etiolated seedlings encountered throughout the cave. These developed from palm-nuts etc. dropped by the birds into guano-banks where they germinated and grew to a height of up to a metre, reaching towards a sun they would never know. The beds were quite dense and gave refuge to the occasional giant transparent cockroach, and other sundry delectabilities.

Towards the end of the expedition a major archaeological find was made in a small passage at the foot of the second daylight shaft. Various shards of pottery and seashells were unearthed and estimated to be thousands of years old by the resident archaeologist, Padre Porras.

Neil Armstrong was flown in to Santiago base after the cave had been de-rigged. Consequently the cavers stood by with ladders and rope (the latter 1,000 ft. of "Bluewater" prusiking rope, had in fact been donated by Professor Armstrong). As soon as he could be separated from his entourage of V.I.Ps. and autograph hunters we were whisked up to the cave site which was by then only occupied by Major Browne and a small party who were out of radio contact and knew nothing of this development.

We had to work quickly to ladder the shaft and be on our way down before the next helicopter arrived and the ground became thick with generals, embassy staff, military attachés, newsmen etc. In the event Pete Holden and I were privileged to accompany Neil down to the sump. Neil is a quiet man and gave us an impression of not being one for small talk, rather he had an air of being capable, observant and self-possessed. As may be imagined he took the trip in his stride. From the sump we elected to go out a different way which neither

Pete nor I had been along before but which we knew in theory would bring us into Stanley Hall, the big chamber. Having to crawl over a dead oil bird was not too good a start but when we became faced with a row of climbs up dodgy boulders with no indication of which was the right way, we became anxious not to lose Neil's confidence (at least I was, Pete is never anxious and kept up a constant stream of irreverent wit). By either luck or intuition we did select the right climb however and emerged into the hall below a superb stalagmite. We set off at a cracking pace so as not to miss the last helicopter. Pete warned Neil that he may find us a little possessive as he constituted our insurance for the airlift. It was a superb line up the shaft: John Frankland had organised a team of squad-dies into the best lifelining team I've come across. The helicopters had gone so with our bedding at base camp, we were faced with a cold night in the camp. However, there was a large fire which we sat around on logs in the still evening air, roasting potatoes and drinking firewater. The moon was out overhead when we listened to Neil talking about his voyage there in the Apollo spacecraft. Major Réal made a long emotional speech which kept branching off along philosophical tangents to such an extent that we feared he would never be able to finish.

It was quite an evening. There was a week left for us to see a little of the rest of Ecuador, and for Arthur Champion and Dave Checkley to piece together the survey on which they and D. M. Judson had worked so hard in the cave; and yet surely that evening round the fire, with the forest stretching all about us, was the true and fitting conclusion to our adventure.



*HEADING FOR S.W. SUMMIT*

*Clive Rowlands*



## OUTDOORS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

by A. J. Reynolds

THE MIGRANT TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA who is keen on fell walking, climbing or potholing has plenty of opportunity to follow his sport if under very different conditions to Europe.

Firstly the problem of distance—South Australia is several times the size of England with a population of only one million, most of whom live in Adelaide.

Then to go into remote areas a four-wheel drive vehicle is useful and sometimes essential. As I write thirteen people in ordinary cars are being rescued from the north of the state after heavy rains have turned the main roads into thick mud.

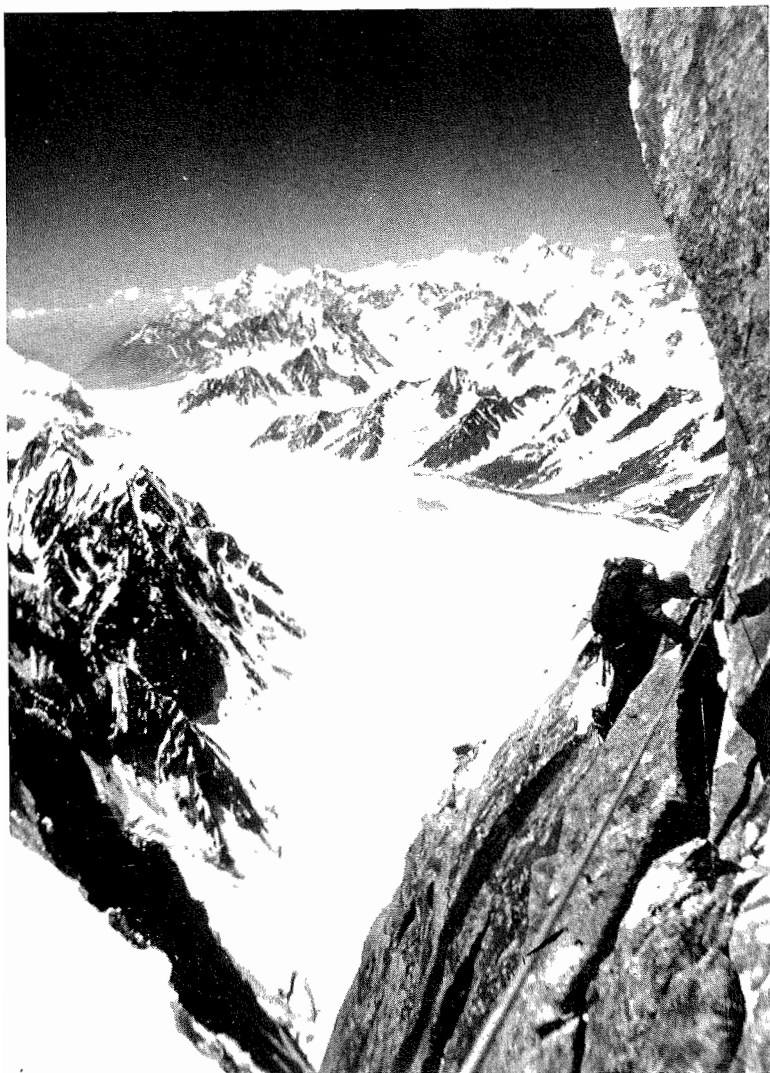
Finally a major obstacle is provisions, particularly water. This is the driest state of the driest continent and rainfall in Adelaide is about 20 in. each year but in the north this may be as low as an average of 5 in. per year, with rain only falling every other year. This week's rains in the desert are the first for over twelve months!

The official description of the state is "generally of low relief, the inland area being largely featureless plains, sand or stony deserts. Even the highest mountains are below 1,200 metres." This makes poor reading as it does not give a true picture of the state's countryside.

What is there to do and see in this vast unpopulated area? Our camping trips have taken us to several of the more interesting areas, both to the south and to the north, as well as walks in the local national park areas.

### *Camping in the Flinders Ranges*

The ranges start about 150 miles north of Adelaide and stretch in a north-easterly direction for about 500 miles, finishing in the Simpson Desert. We have camped twice at Wilpena Pound, a natural amphitheatre with a twelve-mile diameter surrounded by hills from 2,000 to 3,600 ft. high. St. Mary's Peak (3,600 ft.) has been climbed twice, once in the cold drizzle of a Lakes autumn and once in Australian heat. Leaving the camping ground, past the warnings not to leave the paths, to take plenty of food and water, not to set off after



CLIMBING S.W. PILLAR

Clive Rowlands

10 a.m. and the list of what can happen if these warnings are ignored, the first two or three miles are along a sandy track through the gum trees until the path turns left and sharply upwards. This is a slog of 1,200 ft. to the col where the track divides; left to lower hills, right to the summit and straight on down into the Pound and along the floor back to the camp site. Our first visit in the rain forced us to go to the summit along a ridge where the route varied from parts like Striding Edge to walking through tunnels of small trees and shrubs.

At only one spot is there any danger, where a long downwards and outwards sloping ledge has to be followed. Fine in fine weather but decidedly stretching the nerves when wet and greasy. A fixed line would be a great comfort. From the top the Flinders can be seen away to the north and Lake Torrens (salt pan) and other smaller salt pans are also visible. It is difficult to realise that looking north there is over 1,000 miles of flat sandy, stony countryside until the north coast is reached. To the west the same is true, except it is 1,500 miles to Perth and to the East there is possibly 500 miles of rough country to the nearest big town.

On a second visit we went to the summit and then back and through the Pound. On the top the wind kept the temperature down but in the Pound, protected by trees and shrubs, the mercury shot up and the water we carried was only just enough to last the trip. It's easy to see how people get lost in this area, once on the floor of the Pound all landmarks vanish, hidden by the undergrowth and trees. This undergrowth can be twenty feet high and impossible to walk through. Only a few months before a middle-aged man had walked off the path and was never seen again. Reported to be carrying only a Nikkon camera, by now this is all that will be left, the foxes will have scattered his bones over a wide area.

Other walks we did in this area were mainly to look at Aboriginal art, cave paintings, rock carvings, etc. These trips usually involve tramping along dry stream beds with occasional pools of water in them; not to be compared to "becking." These pools of water are dirty but warm. The hazards are not slipping on wet rocks, but snakes, scorpions and centipedes.

To the average Australian camping is just an extension of home life and caravans are used much more than tents. These caravans have air conditioners, fridges, T.Vs., radios, etc. etc., and only the spartan use tents. Camp sites all have flush toilets, electricity points for caravans to plug into, hot and cold showers and, in many cases, small shops open to sell food and drink. Particularly drink. During our first visit to Wilpena we were mystified on the first day to see people leaving the camp site in cars about five o'clock in the evening, returning an hour later loaded down with dead wood. This was our introduction to the Great Australian Camp Fire. Everyone seems to try to outdo his neighbour with the size of his fire. The largest would be suitable for ox-roasting. We cooked on ours so we had to limit its size. But what a sight in this wooded twenty to thirty acre camp site to see many fires burning through the trees. As the evenings wore on our fire got bigger and bigger as the temperature dropped from around 90°F. during the day to very near freezing.

It is of interest to note that all these fires were illegal and subject to a £300 fine. Virtually the whole of South Australia has a total fire ban from November to April. During this time no fires, wood, coal, gas or electric are allowed outside. Cooking is supposed to be done inside tents or caravans only but the ruling has been relaxed on this particular camp site at Wilpena. All these precautions are to stop bush fires which burn out thousands of acres of bush each year.

Out on the hills the Australian camper is much like the British casual visitor to the hills. High-heeled shoes, mini-skirts, tennis shoes, T-shirts, seem to be the order of the day. No-one wears boots, or carries a rucksack. Insulated containers are carried in the hand, and if the beer or coke gets much above freezing point, it is only consumed under protest. So festooned with cameras and containers the Aussie heads for the summit. Long queues form when hands are needed to ascend a cliff. Bags are passed up or down, cameras likewise. Partly clad bottoms are in evidence as short-skirted girls go up the rise. Ample bosoms show on their return. Blisters develop, first on the feet and then on the face if the day is warm. All of which shows that camping in the Flinders is very similar to England.

*The Mount Gambier Camp*

Mount Gambier, 250 miles south of Adelaide, is renowned for its Blue Lake. The area is one of limestone with sink holes several hundred feet deep all filled with water. Scattered around the district are several extinct volcanoes, Mount Gambier being the biggest with two large lakes and Mount Schank being the next most noticeable.

The Mount Gambier lakes, although separated by only a short section of volcano wall, are completely different. Brown-bows is shallow in a basin with fairly shallow sides. The area has a park and is used for swimming, fishing and water-skiing. The Blue Lake is fairly small, contained by vertical sides and it is used for the water supply for the town. There is no connection between the two lakes. In November when the weather starts to get warm the Blue Lake turns bright blue. Reckitts blue is almost the colour, this colour stays until the end of the summer in April/May when the water turns to a more normal blue/grey.

No official reason is given for this change, micro-organisms, solubility of copper or cobalt salts are suggested, but rumour has it that the local council buy lots of blue dye during the winter and dump it in the lake when the weather gets warmer.

But, joking aside, the colour is really an intense blue quite unique throughout the world.

We made visits to the local caves about fifty miles away, Tortanoola to the north and Princess Margaret Caves to the East. Tortanoola was discovered fairly recently within a few yards of the main road. In best Yorkshire tradition, a dog was lost and when they dug it out they found a small cave but filled with formations. The most interesting section shows evidence of a large land movement, most possibly an earthquake, where a broken column stalactite has a twelve-inch crack in its mid-section.

The other caves are much more extensive with ample formations of all sorts. Strangely, colours are not so evident as in English caves.

Visits to the sinkholes were most uninteresting. The biggest called Piccaninny Ponds are only a mile or so from the sea but

contain only fresh water. From the surface there is a general impression of a big pond with weeds growing around the edges. Underneath the water it is a different story. Divers have gone to 350 ft. and still haven't bottomed yet. Side branches have been explored but not taken to their limit. Several people have drowned over the years, trying to find what the mystery is of these holes, such as where does the water come from, why doesn't the level change. Diving is now forbidden except with Government permission. These holes and caves appear to be very isolated, although the whole area is covered in several hundred feet of limestone. I would think that only freak discoveries or a massive digging programme will expose any more of underground Mount Gambier.

*Kangaroo Island Camp.*

About five hours' boat journey from Adelaide lies Kangaroo Island, forty miles by fifteen miles, and what we thought would be a good spot for a week's camping. How right we were! Completely unspoilt, with scurvy, wild animals and bush land, this was one of the best camps we have had.

During our stay we saw dozens of very tame seals on one very long beach. Tame, that is until you got too near. To get to the beach involves a scramble down a fifty foot sandy cliff with clumps of shrubbery scattered along the whole length. Seals had managed to climb up the cliff, moderate for humans, very difficult for seals, and were lying on the sandy sections, basking in the sun. Being almost the same colour as the rock very often the first sign of a seal was a growl and a show of bare teeth.

Down on the beach the bulls had their harems of maybe a dozen cows, with a sprinkling of pups. The bulls looked very fierce, but it was still possible to get to within three or four feet before any reaction set in.

Further along this coast are the Remarkable Rocks, enormous granite boulders that have been eroded to incredible shapes by the wind. Another ten miles along, the cliffs gave way to sandy coves and a three mile walk got up to one that had obviously been a sea cave in the long past. The cliffs on both sides of the cove contained small caves with dozens of

weather-worn stalactites and stalagmites.

Camping in the bush at Smoke Lagoon was all part of the fun. Fortunately we could get water from the Ranger's house, about ten miles away. No snakes appeared but wood collecting was done with care because of the scorpions that lived in the dead wood.

At meal times kangaroos and emus appeared on the scene to collect scraps of bread, although emus are supposed to be able to digest tins and plastic bags. The wild life on the island is most varied, but includes the world's most poisonous snake. We saw eagles, parrots of all colours, snakes, koalas, as well as the roos and emus. Although we looked, we could not find any duck-billed platypus in the rivers; no doubt it is an early morning or late night search.

Well, that's part of our outside life in Australia. It's a big place and we've only scratched at the surface of a very, very small corner. Trips being planned are to the Nullabor, to see the cliffs and caves, Alice Springs for the Olgas and Ayers Rock, Victoria for the Snowy Mountains and New South Wales for gemstone hunting. There's a lot to do and so little time to do it in.

Finally, to anyone who plans to go bush in Australia, the following recipe is designed to keep you from starving:

*Take a Galah—a white and pink parrot found all over in large numbers.*

*Boil a billy of water.*

*Place Galah with six or seven round pebbles in the boiling water.*

*Leave in the boiling water until the stones are soft.*

*Then the Galah is tender enough to eat.*

## DOING THE DONALDS

by D. J. Farrant

IN MAY 1974 my Odyssey around the Munros was completed on Ruadh Stac Mor and in an article for the 1976 Journal I reflected on the question of what to do next. To some extent this had already been settled because earlier in 1974 I had had a most enjoyable day on the hills in the Scottish Borders and thus got started on the ascent of the Donalds.

These are very much less well-known than the Munros and owe their classification to Percy Donald who compiled a list of "all hills in the Scottish Lowlands 2,000 feet in height and above." A distinction between hills and tops is established, as in Munro's Tables, which provides a total of 86 hills and 133 tops, but this is much less clear than with the larger mountains and most of those setting out to climb the Donalds would surely regard 133 as the realistic target. In addition there is an appendix section of a further 15 areas that do not merit inclusion as tops but are nevertheless enclosed by an isolated 2,000 foot contour. The metric conversion is fast doing away with the special distinction of a peak above 2,000 feet but such a change can fortunately do nothing to destroy the beauty and solitude of these most attractive hills.

It took me four years and two days to complete the ascent of these summits and 34 days were required on the hills. The longest took eight hours but I was out for more than six hours on only six occasions. The total walking time was 147 hours 30 minutes (an average of about 65 minutes per peak) and the distance covered was 320 miles. I was accompanied by fifteen different companions whose total of Donalds on these days came to 129.

These statistics carry their own interest but it is the topographical details that spring more readily to mind. These hills, unlike the Highlands, have very few areas where one feels any real sense of remoteness. Roads and towns are near, yet never intrusive, and the county and parish boundaries which so often take the line of the ridges are frequently marked with dykes or fences, so that even in the thickest weather it is virtually

impossible to get lost. Similarly, apart from certain well-known danger spots like the Grey Mare's Tail, there are few steep drops so that safety is usually assured. In case of trouble, help is quite near and with the hills not being so high, the extremes of weather are only rarely experienced. That is not to say one should underestimate these (or any) hills: I have frequently taken an ice-axe on them in winter (though I cannot recall an occasion where it proved to be essential), and men have died here in a sudden winter blizzard as the cairn to Ralph Forlow beneath the Rhinns of Kells testifies. Nevertheless these are not areas for which a fully-equipped mountain rescue service is necessary—or available. Having said this, though, I must recall an incident when a pupil of mine (fortunately not on an expedition in which I was involved) collapsed from exposure on the Merrick range in a July rainstorm and was spectacularly snatched off the ridge by a helicopter.

Despite a few steep faces here and there, the contours of these hills are fairly gentle and there is little opportunity for rock-climbing. Perhaps as a result they do not very often attract mountaineers and are thus invariably open and lonely. Galloway is different, having always had its corps of devotees, but elsewhere I can hardly recall ever meeting another soul.

Donald has catalogued his hills in twelve sections from the Ochils to the Cheviots (where there are two peaks on the Union Boundary) but in my experience the large group in the middle of the region tended to merge without an appreciable division. The distinct groups are the Ochils, for which one has to cross the Forth, and the Galloway hills which, as I have suggested, have a quality all their own that is more reminiscent of the Trossachs or the Lake District than part of the Southern Uplands. This latter phrase is the title of Andrew and Thripleton's admirable guide to the region in the S.M.C. District Series and I found it invaluable both as a source of interesting local information and as a starting point in route preparation.

I had no particular strategy in climbing these hills—this would have spoilt the spontaneity of arranging occasional days out in areas that suited certain companions. Indeed, the very lack of planning was different from the Munros where the exercise in logistics was often quite complicated. My days on

these hills were usually single ones and on only a couple of occasions did I make a weekend of it and take the tent. I found all of the hills easily accessible from my home in Edinburgh, the farthest point being Glen Trool about three hours away. A further consideration here is the present price of petrol which was about 30p a gallon when I was rushing off to the north-west Highlands; I doubt whether I could afford to attempt the Munros now.

With this unplanned approach to climbing the hills, I thus have a kaleidoscope of memories that can easily be stirred by turning the pages of my diary. Several of the days were spent in hard winter weather with plenty of snow on the ground and a crisp frost in the air. On an ascent of Dollar Law we found horizontal icicles almost a foot long protruding from the fence posts; on another December day on the round of Great Hill from Talla Linnfoots it was so windy with the spindrift being flung in our faces that we almost had to abandon the route and in fact were able to make any progress only when we began to swing round the horseshoe and get before the wind; then early in the New Year was the day when we failed to complete the round of Glenholm and were driven valleywards by a stinging blizzard. In contrast, however, are the memories of some marvellous summer days. There was an evening trip to the Ochils in May when the head of Dollar Glen above Castle Campbell was alive with the call of the cuckoo and when I watched a hen harrier voraciously quartering the higher ground. I had another evening walk from Moorbrock at the head waters of the Ken which began with a pair of buzzards circling over Beninner and ended in the last glimmer of daylight with the first drops of a heavy rainstorm that had obligingly held off until I had pitched the tent.

In these hills there is an abundance of wild life. As I went up the Bowmont Water one rich December morning to climb into the Cheviots, I was thrilled to see my first kingfisher flash upstream in a blur of silky blue. On almost every expedition in the Manor and Moffat hills I saw a fox. The best day, though, was undoubtedly one of continuous interest on Cairnmore of Fleet. The morning had begun unfavourably with drenching rain and it looked as if these conditions were in for

the day. We drove down to Clatteringshaws Loch in a mood to abandon all ideas of a walk when lighter streaks started to open up the western sky and within ten minutes the sun was shining. We went down the forestry track to Dallash, beneath the northern flank of the mountain, and were soon away up the slopes. Within minutes we had put up a pair of stags and then we found a most handsome peacock butterfly on a boulder beside the track. As we climbed higher we saw a small herd of feral goats—so much more attractive than the roadside scroungers in the artificial enclosure on the main road at Murray's Monument—and then beside the twisted metal of the wartime German bomber on the summit slopes we saw a lizard dart into the rocks. After a traverse of the tops we dropped down over some refreshingly bilberry-strewn ledges into the glen and suddenly as I was in mid-stride an adder flicked between my boots. I leapt upwards—more in surprise than fear (or so I claimed)—which sent the snake darting into the heather but it was an attractive specimen of about two feet long.

Another of the pleasures to be derived from the Donalds is that one can so often enjoy a magnificent view from the summits. The prospect from Cairnsmore of Fleet, especially following the rapid clearance of the belt of rain, was particularly fine, displaying the long reach of the Antrim coast and the Mountains of Mourne, the spine of the Isle of Man with Snaefell in the centre, and the stretch of sandstone of the Cumbrian Coast down to St. Bees Head and Black Combe; then to the north were Ailsa Craig and Arran as well as all the Galloway Hills. There is another fine panorama from the Ochils reaching as far as Lochnagar and Ben Macdhu in the north, while in the west are the magnificent mountains of Perthshire, surmounted by the pyramid of Schiehallion. Yet my favourite viewpoint was Queensberry, the most southerly peak in the Lowthers, which I climbed on a beautiful August day from Mitchellsacks, where James Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd, was once a herdsman. This summit has the advantage of a central position with clear sightlines in all the interesting directions. Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Cumbrian coast were all clearly visible again but we also had the full stretch

of the Lakeland fells from Buttermere to Skiddaw, inland were Cross Fell and the Pennines and slightly further across was the big bulk of the Cheviots; to the west was a clear view of Goat Fell on Arran, whilst to the north, beyond a huge expanse of flat lowland country, could be seen Ben More, Stobinian and Balquhiddier.

The days that especially cling to the memory, though, must be those spent in the enchanting corner of Galloway. The full ridge of the Rhinns of Kells from Loch Doon to Loch Dee was the longest day and from Coran of Portmark to Meikle Millyea we traversed nine peaks in eight hours, skilfully dodging the showers that seemed to be falling everywhere else. The quintessential section is the sharply defined ridge on either side of Carlin's Cairn, and it was here, with a well-developed faculty for the art of strange meetings, that I encountered a man with his wife and daughter and discovered after some general cross-talk that we had been at school together. The other long north-south traverse of the region is over the Merrick from Shallock on Minnoch to Benyellary and this works out best if one can afford the luxury of a car at each end. The route from the summit of the Straiton road begins in rather unexciting manner but the way gets grander at every step, culminating in the Spear of Merrick and the final plunge to the Bruce's Stone in Glen Trool. In between these long ridges lie three incredibly rocky little peaks: the Dungeon Range of Mullwharcker, Dungeon Hill and Craignaw, none higher than 2,270 feet but possessing all the character one would require of a mountain. From Glen Trool we climbed up beside the Buchan Burn to the remarkable configuration in the rock known as The Grey Man of Merrick. This is a strikingly life-like facial resemblance but one has to look quite hard to find it unless its exact position is known. From the little col behind it we came down to the clear white sands of Loch Enoch, the grains of which are so abrasive that this is immediately evident to the touch. They used to be very popular with knife-grinders in days of old. Mullwharcker, the hill of the hunting horn, stands behind the loch and its ascent is made much easier by the granite pavements that are overlaid amongst the tougher heather. The view northwards to Loch Doon is very fine and one's blood

boils at the serious threat that has been made to this area to use it as a deposit ground for expended nuclear fuel rods. Our route now lay back to Dungeon Hill which meant dropping almost to loch level before climbing back to the rocky summit plateau that rises above the encircling shoulder of crags and which gives a view down to the sinister grey criss-cross of the Silver Flowe, a marsh that has claimed more than one life. The final stage of the ridge onto Craignaw is the most exciting part and involves a sharp descent to the steeply defiled cut called The Nick of the Dungeon and then a testing little scramble up a Skye-type gully to another summit plateau. This was great fun on a clear day but I should not relish the route-finding in mist. The way down lay at first over the welcome granite pavements but then across treacherous slopes of heather in which large unstable boulders are cunningly concealed. However, the final run-out down the Gairland Burn is sheer joy and made a delightful finish to the day.

Thus at the Christmas period of 1977 I found myself with just a handful of Donalds remaining and on a cold day in the New Year, following a night of heavy snowfall, I set out with two of my most regular companions to walk over the final three peaks from the Megget Stone to Broughton. We began with a hair-raisingly unsuccessful attempt to get my car up the icy hairpins of the 1 in 5 above Talla; as we slid backwards out of control I realised that some error of judgement had been made . . . However, that is another story, and we walked the extra four miles along the road instead. The route over Clockmore, Cramalt Craig and finally Hunt Law was pleasantly exhilarating on a cold, clear windless day and we were down at Stanhope a comfortable hour before dusk.

It was pleasant to have completed a different aspect of Scottish mountaineering—less dramatic or arduous than the Munros but having a charm all its own. The inevitable question of what next could be posed but I am just about to go and live in British Columbia so it looks as if I shall be poised—and spoilt for choice—between Mount McKinley and Mount Baker or Mount Robson and Mount Waddington. This is indeed a prospect to gladden the heart.

## RADIO BROADCASTS BY J. W. PUTTRELL

by Raymond Harben

YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE CLUB can be forgiven for thinking that local radio stations are a new phenomenon but in fact local radio stations were broadcasting prior to the Second World War. One such station was situated in Sheffield and listeners, as well as being able to hear tea-time music relayed from the Grand Hotel or Children's Stories read by Uncle Algy, could listen to talks given by historians and the like on topics of local interest. One of the regular broadcasters was J. W. Puttrell, an early member of this Club. Mr. Puttrell was variously described by the press as the well-known Sheffield cragsman, the well-known Sheffield cave explorer and geologist or the well-known Sheffield mountaineer. His talks ranged from climbing and potholing to ancient customs.

One of his earlier talks given in September, 1926 on the Great Barmote Court at Wirksworth in Derbyshire is somewhat reminiscent of the Club's Christmas meets especially when it gets round to drinking punch.

Mr. Puttrell said he was honoured by the King's Barmaster with an invitation to attend the Great Barmote Court at Wirksworth—a town of great antiquity. When the great cities of Sheffield and Manchester were mere hamlets, Wirksworth was the metropolis of the lead-mining industry. Every reader of George Eliot's "Adam Bede" knew that this upland town was the home of Dinah Morris.

"It came therefore as an agreeable surprise," he went on, "to receive an invitation from the King's Barmaster to attend at the Moot Hall at 12 noon as the chief guest of the Great Barmote Court, one of the oldest institutions in Britain. In 1287, for instance, or 330 years before the Cutlers' Company was founded, the miners desired of Edward I that their former privileges might be confirmed under the Great Seal.

The Barmote Court, of which King George (as Duke of Lancaster) is head, is composed of a Steward, Barmaster, Bailiff and twelve jurymen, who account it an honour to appear at the call of the Barmaster, and are immune from

detention or arrest whilst going to and from the Court.

Welcomed at the Moot Hall by Mr. Eagle, the Barmaster, I walked into the ante-room and was immediately recognised by several miners whom I had met underground. There was bread and cheese on a wooden table, a seeming irregularity, but I was told that it was usual for the King to regale the jury on arrival with refreshment, solid and otherwise.

To test the exact measure of two wooden ore-dishes in use locally, about 28 inches long and 4 inches deep, the Miners' Standard Dish was brought from its box by the wall, a heavy brass dish, placed here, as the inscription says, in 1513, "so as the merchant and mynours may make the tru mesure at all tymes." For the test rape seed was run into the standard dish, and the surplus removed with a strickle. The contents were then emptied into the wooden dishes, and as both were found "under measure," a joiner was called to adjust them. Satisfied with the test, the Barmaster replaced the brass dish in the box and rechained it to the wall.

The jury, a fine set of men, now filed into court and into the jury box, some white-haired, whilst others, young and swarthier, completed a study in both character and colour. Soon the King's Steward entered, in wig and gown, and took his seat as head of the Court. "Are you ready," he asked, and immediately the time-honoured call of the bailiff rang through the hall, "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons who owe suit and service to the Great Barmote Court of our Sovereign Lord the King, held this day, draw near and give your attendance.

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! You good men who have been summoned at this Court of the King and the body of the mine, answer to your names and save your fines." The jury were admonished "to do equal justice between the King and miners in all disputes," and signed the jury list. After other formalities, again the old Norman-English cry was heard, "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" followed by the steward's invitation to dinner at one of the oldest inns, and after enjoying "ye olde English fare," including plum pudding, the cloth was removed, and the final stage reached. Long "churchwardens," plates of tobacco and matches were brought in, and the company were asked as to their liquid preferences, but in keeping with ancient usage,

the miners' partiality for punch prevailed. Bowls of piping hot punch were now produced, and filling our glasses (some with a lighter drink), the steward proposed the old toast of "Our Sovereign the King, Duke of Lancaster." The toast of "The Miners" was given for the first time, followed by a general talk about fluor spar, lead, etc. The rough, honest outspokenness of the Peaklander was pleasing to hear, and my knowledge of the local dialect and its possibilities were greatly increased thereby."

The Great Barmote Court still meets twice yearly. Members of the public can visit the Moot Hall and inspect the Miners' Standard Dish by arrangement with the caretaker.

Another of his broadcasts in 1927 described the climbing of the "Matlock Matterhorn"—High Tor.

"When strolling through the beautiful Matlock Dale in my early climbing days," said Mr. Puttrell, "the grand bastion of the High Tor seemed to challenge me at every glance. The climbing literature of the day contained no record of its precipitous cliff having yielded to the skill of a rock-climber. Cragmen had attempted to climb it and had failed. As a local paper then remarked: "The High Tor was for long both the hope and the despair of rockclimbers, and everyone began to regard its ascent as well-nigh impossible."

"I tried several times, the last occasion with a well-known climber, but the goddess of victory would not be wooed and won. It was easy work climbing the first few yards, although holds were scarce and required clearing and testing. Chatting one day with a fellow-member of the English Climbers' Club of the many attempts on the Tor, it was agreed to join hands with another enthusiast, and again try to win through. It was a raw December day, but favourable for our purpose because of the absence of wind and snow. Skirting along the base of the cliff, several cracks and chimneys were ear-marked for trial later. Arrived at the great rift which splits the rock in twain, the rope was uncoiled, and two of us "roped" in regular Alpine style, the last man standing down for a time to photograph the climb. The route led up the face to the left, on ledges and finger-holds imperceptible from below, and arriving on the chockstone, I pulled in the slack, and called on the next



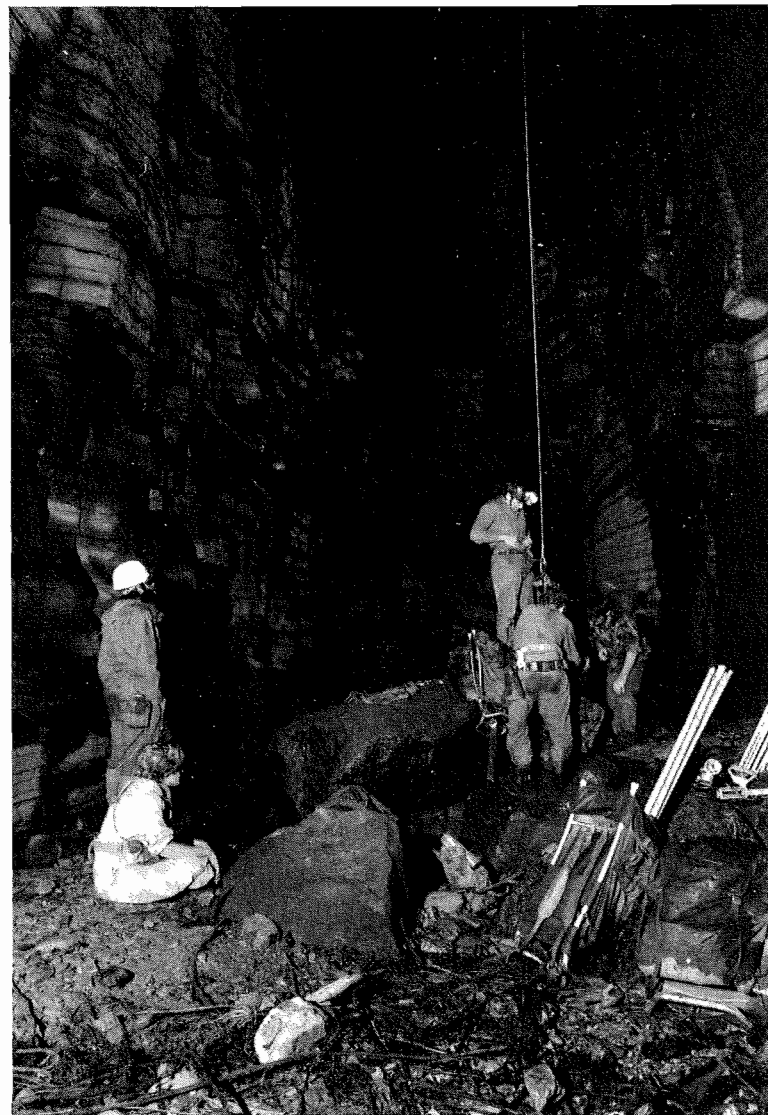
man. Soon he was beside me, and I recommenced the ascent."

"After the first few feet there were in sight no hand or footholds worth the name, and I returned to my companion. Again I tried to overcome the difficulties, and failed, tried again, and still without success. My friend now braced himself for an attempt, but returned beaten. After a short "council of war," we called down to our anxiously-waiting friend, hinting the possibility of having to return defeated. "Have another shot," came the cheery reply, and thus encouraged I resolved upon one more effort. I started upward again, and managed to beat my previous "best" raising my body right on the top of the overhanging rock."

"The situation was a perilous one, as it was impossible to retreat, with my feet dangling in space! To make matters worse, everything was smeared with mud, and as there were no sound hand-grips, I had to lurch upward an inch at a time on my stomach, until well on the top of the awkward overhang, in the bed of the gully. "No. 3" started, and quickly joined "No. 2" on the narrow bridge, who, in turn moved upward again, over ground with which he was familiar. Even now, with the support of the rope, he found it hard to advance, and without any warning twisted the rope round his arm and pulled over on to the slope above, a procedure fraught with danger, as I was insecurely fixed, but, fortunately, all went well. We now hauled up the whole-plate camera and placed it aside until the arrival of its owner. The gully was cumbered with loose rocks, deceptively masked with mud, and as I climbed over these and up several "pitches" it was impossible not to send miniature rock-avalanches down to my friends, who, in turn, threatened to pay back in kind on the first opportunity."

"A ledge on the right was now gained, truly a "haven of rest" after the excitement of the last hour. "The camera has gone!" someone cried, and looking down, I saw it disappear over the edge into some trees, 200 feet below. We were naturally sorry at the loss sustained, especially as it contained interesting souvenirs of our climb."

"Keeping to the right we now tackled our last problem, a curved chimney, which proved easy, thence by way of some



*LOS TAYOS CAVE: ENTRANCE SHAFT*

*J. C. Whalley*



LOS TAYOS CAVE: STALAGMITE

J. C. Whalley

grass ledges, the windswept summit of the Tor was eventually reached, where I was astonished to see the keeper of the High Tor Grounds, who advanced to congratulate us on reaching the top safely. He then explained that he had watched us for a couple of hours, first from one side of the rift, then from the other, all the while keeping himself from our view. The keeper finished his "address of welcome" with a sigh of relief at our "providential escape from that dreadful place."

Five years elapsed before the High Tor Gully was again climbed, this time by Manchester cragsmen. They also were greeted by the keeper on arrival at the summit, but on this occasion the unlucky climbers were met by a demand for the usual admission fee to the High Tor Grounds!

What would have been of greatest interest to the Club was his broadcasts on his descent into Gaping Ghyll. Unfortunately the Sheffield Daily Telegraph of November 22nd, 1927 briefly records it as follows:—

#### DOWN GAPING GHYLL

Mr. J. W. Puttrell, F.R.G.S., of Sheffield, continued an interesting talk on his experiences down Gaping Ghyll, Yorkshire, from the Sheffield Relay Station last night. "I never saw a more remarkable sight underground," he said. "The waterfall, the highest in Yorkshire, seemed to spring out of the heavens. It was the scene of a lifetime."

Regrettably the B.B.C. Sound Archives has no record of the broadcasts, so what was said to the listening public will never be known unless of course any of our older members were tuned into Radio Sheffield, Call Sign 6FL on 306 metres.

FOOTNOTE James W. Puttrell was a member of the Y.R.C. from 1900 until his death in 1939. He was a pioneer of climbing on gritstone and was also involved in the exploration of caves and potholes in the Peak District. The part he played in the early exploration of the Peak District is recorded in the book *High Peak* by Eric Byne and Geoffrey Sutton. Puttrell's climbing was not restricted to the Peak District. His exploits further afield included the first ascents of Keswick Brothers Climb and Crowberry Ridge, both routes climbed with the Abraham Brothers.

Puttrell wrote two articles for the Y.R.C. Journal—"The Eisriesenvelt" and "The Royal Grotto of Postumia" (Adelsberg) in Volume VI.

He also had published in *Caves and Caving* Nos. 2, 3 and 4 details

of the exploration of Speedwell Cavern, Castleton, Derbyshire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT The author wishes to thank Sheffield Newspapers Ltd., for their permission to quote from articles in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph.



## TREKKING TO TOUBKAL

by Michael Smith

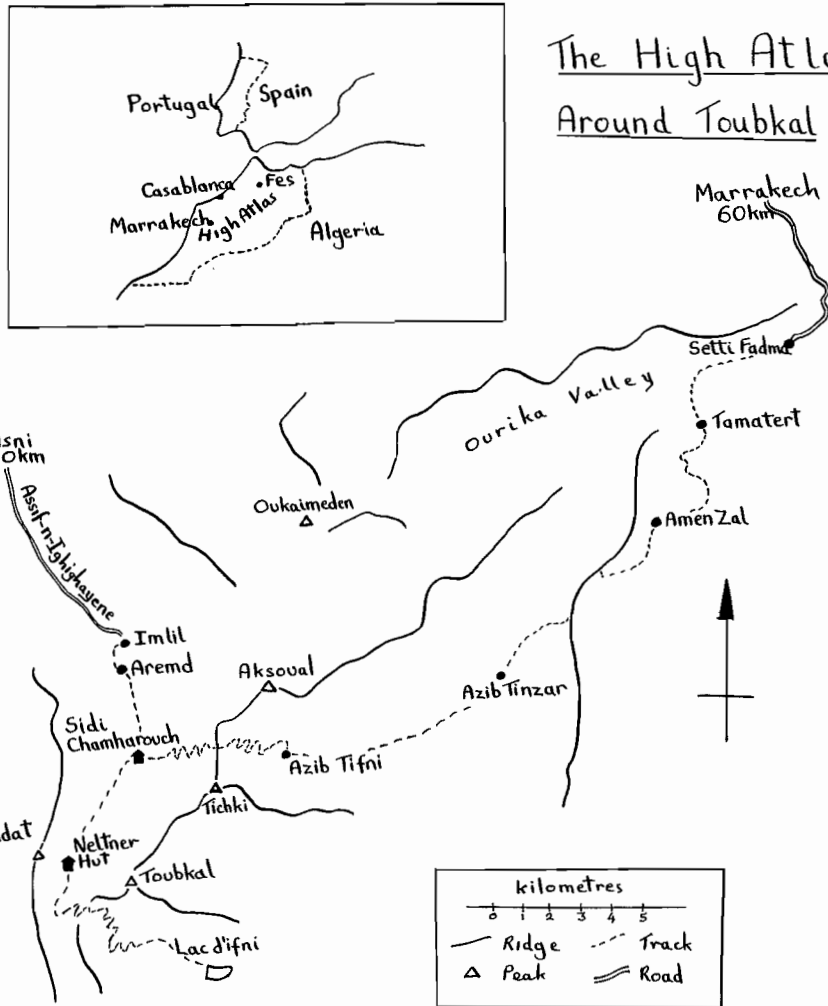
DURING AUGUST OF LAST YEAR I was a member of an international trekking party of ten, rambling and climbing in the High Atlas region of Morocco. No peak to be conquered, no hard rock to be scaled, no depths to be plumbed, merely two weeks spent in the mountains amongst the fascinating Berbers only rarely meeting other Europeans.

Our hired mini-bus dropped us at Setti Fadma after following a dirt track for several miles up a narrow gorge. After a lunch of tomatoes, olives and oranges with fresh bread we watched the mules being loaded. Then with shouts from the muleteers we were off, up the Ourika valley, climbing the well trodden terraced path up the valley side and striking off southwest towards Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa. Two hours brought us to a hillside village of a score or so wood and clay buildings called Tamatert, a mint tea reception and we were shown to the flat earthen roof top that was to be 'home' for the night. Seemingly providing endless amusement for all the local children, who quickly assembled on the roof overlooking ours, we cooked and crawled into our sleeping bags exhausted after two days almost continuous travel. Then it started, the drums, tambourines, the stamping of feet and a chorus of nasal chanting. All the village adolescents were dancing in our honour by the light of several torches.

The next morning we waited for dawn, and for the sun to rise over the high valley sides for the warmth it gave. We cooked, packed and shouldered small sacks and set off, leaving our gear to be loaded and the muletrain to catch us up. Then followed the routine that was to be our way of life for the next week, along a mule track rising a couple of thousand feet over scree to a col, descending gradually to the valley bottom at the far side and then following the stream up the valley to the next village, by which time our mules were already there. Even taking a break of a couple of hours during the hottest part of the day we still arrived at the villages in the early afternoon, leaving time for exploration of the area's gullies, crags and peaks.

In this way we made steady progress through the villages of

### The High Atlas Around Toubkal



Amen Zal, Azib Tinzar, Azib Tifni to Aremd in the Assif-n-Ighighayene valley, this being the valley with Toubkal at its head. Each night was cooler as we gained height, and the days didn't seem so hot as the wind increased, though still the sun beat down from a deep blue, cloudless sky. The vegetation, already sparse, was soon down to only thistles and thorn except near the villages where irrigation allowed the cultivation of guinea corn, maize and even wheat. The villages became smaller the further we went from the road that was our starting point, the villagers poorer and the houses smaller and made of stone, almost indistinguishable from the scree slopes on which they were perched.

The final descent into the valley was down a 3,800 ft. incredibly steep scree slope, with a well engineered zig-zag mule track leading to a large white-washed boulder topped with three coloured prayer flags; a shrine to Sidi Chamharouch, a hermit who lived beneath the rock, and is buried there. Around the shrine were tiny shops catering for the pilgrims and a foul stench from a pile of chicken entrails, the past lunches of the shop owners. Arriving at Aremd we were served the inevitable sweet mint tea followed by a goat meat couscous dinner, then spent the night in the home of our chief muleteer. One room was plastered and was used to entertain us, but was normally their bedroom, the other room was the kitchen and below was a small pen holding his two cattle, mule and chickens for he was the richest man in the village. For some days he had been boasting about his toilet though in very vague terms; this had caused much amusement amongst the group but the last laugh was with him when it turned out to be partitioned from the kitchen by a 'curtain' that reached down to knee height and consisted of an eight inch diameter hole in the ground with a tiled surround, a candle in a niche in the wall, and a short stick whose function I will leave to your imagination.

After a day spent at the local market in Asni buying new stocks of fruit and bread we headed up the valley to the Neltner Hut. Run by the French Alpine Club, this hut forms a good base for Toubkal and the surrounding ridges, providing simple accommodation at a height of 10,600 ft. From this

base we made daily excursions along the rocky ridges at either side of the valley.

Firstly to Toubkal itself, a slog up scree then skirting a steep corrie to reach 14,750 ft., a summit snack of pilchards and crispbread, followed by a long laze in the dessicating sun's heat and the chilling breeze. The party by now had split into twos and threes and our route of descent took us down a steep sided gully, climbing down dried up waterfalls that in spring run fast with the melted snow that lies thick over this area each winter.

Next on our list was an eighty foot pinnacle called Tadat, or thumb, which provided some interesting climbing, with spectacular views as it rises from a sharp col at 12,650 ft. The ridge was then followed south over the rocky face of Biiguinoussene, which involved some tricky climbs on the loose granite which is typical of the area. This leads to the more difficult Clocheton gendarmes where we left the ridge and returned to the hut. On the way we passed through a herd of about two hundred barbary goats being driven from one meagre pasture to another.

The most spectacular trip, though, was over the col, Tizi-n-Ouanoums, and down a valley to the south, a wild rocky valley with eagles soaring above, into the scorching heat of the lower valley floor that is wide, flat and covered in rocks and pebbles. A mile over this brought us to Lac d'ifni, the only lake in the area which is held by a scree dam through which the water slowly percolates. All set for a refreshing swim we noticed the water snakes and decided not to bother. Clearing the larger stones we prepared to bivouac on the lake shore for the night. We made the return journey the next day, stopping off to climb on a sun-drenched crag on the way.

Too soon it was time to head back for Europe, rising early to start the journey, we saw the pre-dawn glow drench the coastal plain in a pink light that burst into gold with the rising sun. Leaving behind us the peace and grandeur of the High Atlas, we headed for Marrakech, with all the bustle and colour of the Medina with its snake charmers, beggars, dancers, souks and mosques.

Returning by Royal Air Maroc we knew we had reached Britain as there was the typical total cloud cover, no more scorched earth or haggling over purchases. But one more surprise was in store, the next weekend I attended the meet in the Lake District and stayed at Low Hall Garth, where browsing through an old tattered magazine, I came across an article by Doug Scott, 'The High Atlas' and I could 'visit' again Tadat, Toubkal and the rest.

Yet my memories of this trip will not be only of the gullies, peaks, corries and pinnacles, but also of the people and their poverty, generosity, simple way of life, happiness and helpfulness. An unforgettable experience and an area that is suitable for ski-mountaineering earlier in the year, as one of our party put it "just like Skye but bigger and dry."



## SPITZBERGEN

by Duncan Mackay

THERE WAS A GREAT GRAUNCHING SOUND as the propeller hit the bottom. The next wave carried the inflatable onto the rocks that stood like a row of teeth along the shore-line. By some fluke the boat did not puncture and we managed to scramble ashore practically unscathed. We were the scientific team of the Leys School Spitzbergen Expedition, arriving at our study area at the mouth of Gipsdalen. This was a continuation of our experience of the immediate past and an omen of what was in store for us. We had left London airport in a thunderstorm, our little DC9 flying through dark storm clouds amidst great flashes of lightning. As we flew north from Norway the whole of the Arctic was clothed in cloud as bad weather moved up from the Atlantic. Our landing at Longyearben was a little dodgy. The plane was the largest ever to have attempted a landing and theoretically the runway was barely long enough. The pilot slammed the plane down with a crash and slewed through 90° as the end of the runway and the fjord loomed closer. We were all very relieved to get on to terra firma, though we were still only half an expedition. The airline company had messed up our bookings, and as a consequence only twenty of our forty members had come on this plane. The rest were to follow on the next available flight. Our plans were modified to accommodate these changes and Ray Ward our leader altered his master plan to ensure that the flow of essential supplies suited this situation.

Ray was an economist by trade and the masterplan was a glorious tangle of technicolour arrows passing between squares which represented phases in the expedition. The master plan gave the ten members of the scientific team the first week in Spitz to complete their study of the vegetation of Gipsdalen. The supply team would continue up Isfjorden and prepare supplies at our main base camp, Brucebayen, ready for the arrival of the remainder of the expedition and also for our sledging trip across the icecap to the Atomfjellet peaks. A converted trawler called *Copious* had carried us all from Longyearben and now it chugged away from Gipsdalen, leaving

Richard Hocking and me to run the various projects. Richard was an instructor from Brathay Hall and had a good knowledge of mountain plants in Britain. I had read a lot of papers on the arctic flora and between us we hoped to cope with the identification of most of the plants. Our main project was the mapping of the types of vegetation in the mouth of the valley. We hoped to find some pattern in the distribution of the plants which could be explained by the environment of the valley. Our site was ideal in every way. The little trappers' hut on the headland gave shelter for cooking and driftwood on the beach provided fuel for the fire. We had a freshwater spring only a few yards away and could walk easily to Brucebayen if the need arose. Across the bay Temple mountain towered above the blue water of the fjord.

Our week went quickly and we rapidly found that we had undertaken more than we could deal with in the time available. The plants were all new to us and quite unlike anything we had seen before. Some of the species did not occur in Britain and those that did were inevitably great rarities. It was with some amazement that we discovered that the buttercup-like plant, found growing in the marsh near our hut, in a great yellow carpet, was none other than *Saxifraga hirculus*. In Britain it is recorded in only a few sites, and is a real rarity, yet we found it everywhere in Gipsdalen. The same was true of the Oyster plant, which pushed its little blue flowers through the debris all along the tide line. Some of the plants, particularly the mosses, we could not identify at all. These we collected and brought back to England to study.

Amongst the moraine we came across other inhabitants of the Tundra. Ptarmigan squatted between the rocks feeding on *Dryas octopetala*, the mountain avens. Whole families of these birds allowed us to walk up and photograph them at close range. We found signs of arctic fox long before actually seeing them. Dead guillemots and scraps of fur showed where these voracious carnivores had made a kill. Yet they seemed far more wary of our presence than other animals and we only caught glimpses of them in the distance. Reindeer were the only large animals that were present and their antlers littered

the beach. We came away with a number of fine specimens with as many as twelve points.

Other studies included the collection of invertebrates from the bog pools, the measurement of energy capture by algae in the various freshwater pools and a host of observations about the environment generally. Each evening we returned from some part of the Gipsdalen valley with bags of samples and further recordings. We relaxed around a driftwood fire and talked about the day, the place and the future. We wrote our feelings and the events of each day in our diaries; even those not normally accustomed to such pastimes had so much to remember, there was no alternative but to take some notes. Our food was also eaten around the fire, as the hut was far too small to hold all ten of us. Pieces of driftwood were used to form a barrier against the wind that blew from the north, cold heavy air chilled by the icecap.

*Copious* returned at the end of our week, bringing the second half of our party, fresh from England. She anchored off the headland and the inflatables came over to collect us for the next stage of the expedition. We had spent a happy and relaxed week at Gipsdalen and would have liked to stay longer. Yet the lure of the icecap drew us away and up to Brucebayen. On board *Copious* once more we all chatted furiously, the news from home, our adventures, the flight up, all came out in a bundle of eager words as the Nordenskiöld glacier drew nearer.

Ferrierfjellet and Terrierfjellet, the twin peaks at the head of the glacier, guarded the route on to the icecap. In several days we were to haul our sledges past these peaks and on to the main ice fields that lay between them and the Atomfjellet range. This range of granite peaks lies in the middle of the icecap and contains the two highest mountains in Spitzbergen—Newtontoppen and Perriertoppen. Ray was pleased to announce that the supply team had done their stuff and established Half Ton Depot at the foot of Ferrierfjellet. We had several days to transport the remaining supplies up the glacier before setting out with the sledges.

At Brucebayen we found the supply team living in the luxury of four wooden huts, built at the turn of the century by

the Scottish Spitzbergen Syndicate. They had come to Spitzbergen to prospect for coal and had drilled a number of bore holes close to huts. They did not find the coal seams that they had hoped for and left at the end of the first winter. Remains of their prospecting still lay around Brucebayen, even the old gas engine that powered the drilling rig stood rotting in a hut with its gas plant. Between the huts and the beach a small length of railway track survives. We made use of the little trucks to bring our gear up from the beach.

The huts had been repaired by the supply party, the leaks in the roof of each hut patched up with roofing felt. In the communal hut a log burning stove brought the temperature to an uncomfortably high level, that induced a drowsiness in the occupants. It was always a hard task to brave the rigours of the outside world after a snooze in the mess room. But wood had to be collected, supplies sorted, loads packed and the general odd jobs around camp finished. At the end of the day the large dustbin full of hot water, heated over a wood fire, gave us our first opportunity to get clean in comfort. Then to sleep in the spacious luxury of the wooden huts.

The carries up to Half Ton Depot were completed in two days. We then established our first ice camp below Ferrierfjellet about ten miles from Brucebayen. The intention was to load up the sledges here and haul them up the ice ramp that led to the flat ice fields beyond. Unfortunately we soon found that the hummock ice at this low level made hauling impossible. So the supplies were unloaded and carried to better terrain higher up. We had not expected the difficulties to begin so soon and when we found that the sledges would only move on the steep ramp, with twelve people pulling at once, we became seriously worried about our prospects. The ramp took three days to overcome and we were only four miles from Half Ton Depot when eventually the sledges began to run smoothly.

Ray decided that something had to be done to catch up with the schedule on the master plan. We had no hope of completing the Atomfjellet traverse unless we could make up the time we had lost. Eventually the party was split in two and a climbing group was sent ahead to establish a base camp at the

start of the traverse. The remaining group would follow behind more slowly with the bulk of the food supplies.

One Two Three Heave . . . became the familiar cry as we started our overladen sledges. A big initial tug set the load in motion and as long as it kept moving a much smaller force could be exerted. But inevitably somebody stumbled or the sledge hit a bump in the ice. Everything would come to a sudden halt and had to be set in motion again. In this way we slowly made progress, stopping now and then to eat or rest for a few moments. Each sledge was pulled by three people, the fourth member of each team walking behind and pushing when necessary. In this way everybody had a break at regular intervals.

Two events stand out from this period, which was otherwise just a matter of plodding onwards into the white horizonless mist ahead and setting up camp each evening. Both events occurred close together, though they were not really related. The first was the sighting of two Russian helicopters, flying low across the ice. We had no idea what they were doing up on the ice cap until we got over the next rise in the ice. We saw a small hut which was evidently being evacuated before our arrival, though we never discovered what it was used for. At about the same moment as the helicopters appeared, a figure came skiing towards us from the horizon. We assumed that this was a Russian coming to see what we were doing. We were quite wrong. The figure turned out to be a Japanese explorer who was completing a solo traverse of Spitzbergen. He had been alone on the icecap for three months and in Longyearben they had assumed he was dead. As he came towards us exposing his teeth in a broad grin, it was obvious that he was in very good shape. He marvelled at our overloaded sledges and wondered how we could pull them along at all. Then after he had photographed us we exchanged some Mars bars for some Japanese sweets and went on our way.

After three days' hauling over more or less flat ground, the ice began to rise upward, slowly at first. Then suddenly it steepened and we could go no further. This was the start of the Atomfjellet peaks we reasoned, not knowing our exact position on account of the thick mist which had not cleared



for several hours. We turned to the west and contoured along the side of what we assumed to be Saturnfjellet. After two further changes of direction we calculated that we must be under Jupiterfjellet and in the area where we intended to site our ice base camp. Everywhere the ice sloped away to the west and it was with some difficulty that we found a camp site which, though not perfect, was adequate for our requirements.

We had attempted to make radio contact with Ray's party every evening. But we had had no success whatever in contacting him. Just as we were sitting down to our reconstituted beef stroganof that evening, the radio in the back of one of the tents crackled, followed by an indistinct voice: "Come in, Lima Hotel Sept Severn Juliette, this is Lima Hotel Sept Severn India." Ray had at last made contact by mistake. We greeted him warmly and gave our position. "In that case we should be with you in twenty minutes" came the reply. We put on an extra brew and waited for their arrival.

The next few days were a real trial, as the weather worsened and we saw our chances of completing the traverse diminish. Snow, driven by a strong wind from the north, fell continuously. The whole camp vanished as several feet of snow built up around the tents. The wall we had constructed against the wind simply collected snow which pushed in on the tent walls. Periodically we had to dig this snow away as the tent walls sagged inwards under the weight. The penalty for failing to do this was ultimately the collapse of the tent. Several tents suffered in this way and the occupants had to move in with neighbours. All the movement in and out of the tent door let out the warm air and allowed flurries of spindrift to enter. Our problems were made worse by the fact that we were sleeping in hollows. The ice directly below each sleeping place melted leaving a depression in which condensation collected. Our sleeping bags became soggy and we became cold.

The storm left us as quickly as it had come. After three days a pale weak sun filtered through the mist. The first priority was to dig out the food supplies and search the snow for buried equipment. We dug out the collapsed tents and salvaged what we could of their buckled poles. Several people working along the lines of "When in the Arctic do as the

Eskimos do" built two large igloos. Inside we managed to fit twelve people for lunch. The thick walls cut out all sounds from outside and we had at last a quiet sanctuary from the howl of the wind and the flapping of canvas.

The time had come to make a move and attempt to climb at least a few of the surrounding peaks. Eighteen of us set off to climb Newtontoppen and the sun came out from behind its haze just as we crossed the col above our camp. A glorious view opened out in front of us—Phoebe, Jupiter, Wainflete and Astronom lay on either side of this remote and icy valley. Ray decided to go back to camp and persuade the rest of the party to come out with us as well. Meanwhile Steven Bugg and I climbed Jupiterfjellet and gave the Y.R.C. flag, that his mother had made, an airing at the summit. When we returned Ray appeared over the col bringing the rest of the party and a sledge with spare equipment.

Our journey to the summit of Newtontoppen was a shattering experience. Everybody started off in a poor physical condition, having spent long cold hours sitting out the storm. The mist didn't take long to return and with it that cold wind from the north. I climbed the final snow slope to the summit relieved that it was all over. In fact our problems were just beginning. Jerry Jason, a student from Oxford, had become very cold and now he was unable to stand upright. Several of us carried him back down to the sledge whilst Ray waited for the tail end of the party. Somehow in our effort to help Jerry we managed to miss the top of the snow gully that led to the glacier. Our detour took about an hour longer and by the time we got to where the sledge should have been the rest of the party were about a mile away heading for home. They assumed that we were ahead of them but fortunately noticed us before it was too late.

We put Jerry in a sleeping bag and tied him to the sledge inside a bivi bag. Eight of us hauled the sledge whilst the rest went on ahead. We reached the first col and stopped to eat some of our meagre rations. Ray worked out a short cut across Fantastiquebreen, a quicker route to the camp. So we cut between Wainflete and Jupiterfjellet and then turned south. Continuing until we estimated that we should be close to the

camp, we then spread out and searched for signs of the tents. We found none. Further on we tried the same technique, with the same results.

Now we were really in a bad way. Almost all of our food was gone and so was our strength. Fortunately we all carried sleeping bags and bivi bags so we stopped to get some rest. Two hollows were dug out of the snow slope and in these we waited, hoping that the mist would clear. We lay there for several hours as water trickled in and fingers of cold came up from below. Our plan was to remain where we were for twelve more hours and then, if the weather didn't improve, we would head south and search for the camp in that direction. As we made this resolution our prayers were answered. The mist cleared for just a few moments. Huge towering cliffs were exposed that could only belong to Eddington riggen. This was exactly the information that we needed. We now knew that we were three miles to the north of the camp and we set off at once.

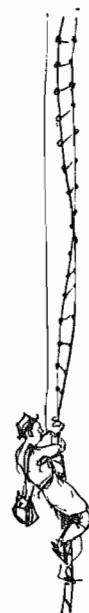
We found the tents without much difficulty and everybody was relieved when we arrived. I can remember sitting in a tent and being fed Ryvita butties with golden syrup and endless mugs of tea, feeling lucky to be alive.

Nobody wanted to stay much longer in this uncomfortable place. We spent a day resting and then began the long journey home, looking like an army in retreat. It was only when Terrierfjellet appeared on the horizon that our spirits rose and we hauled our sledges with enthusiasm. But the icecap was to play one last mean trick. We tried to cut down between Terrierfjellet and Ferrierfjellet, in a direct line towards Brucebayen. The first obstacle in our path was an area of soft slushy snow. We floundered for several hours before escaping from the other side. Then after running down a steep ice slope, we found ourselves hemmed in by crevasses covered with unstable snow. We were forced to leave the sledges and head on down to Brucebayen.

Half the expedition were now due to return to Britain and *Copious* lay anchored off Cape Napier waiting to take them to the plane. For the rest of us who remained the rescue of the sledges occupied some of the final week. A small group also

managed to visit Gasoyane, the small island home of many sea birds, in the middle of Isfjorden. My final two days on Spitzbergen were spent photographing puffins, purple sandpipers and arctic plants. These two days were pure delight, without responsibilities, surrounded by the beauty of unspoilt tundra.

In complete contrast, two days after leaving the rocky beach of Gasoyane, we were stuck in a traffic jam, trying to get out of London, in the sweltering heat of that "seventy-six" summer.



## ARABIAN CHIPPINGS

by John Lovett

*Qatar February to September 1977*

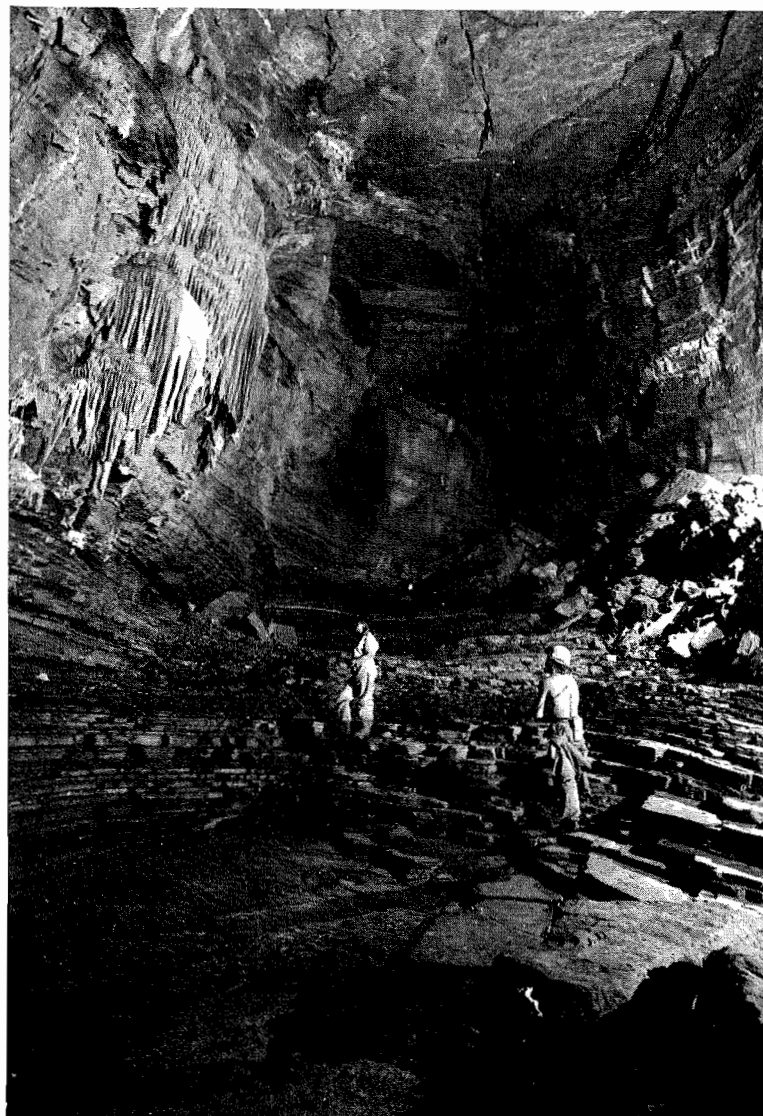
QATAR IS A fully independent sovereign state the size of Wales, lying midway down the Arabian Gulf on the southern side and it is mostly composed of limestone. The North West was of most interest, having a much indented shore line and sea cliffs, extending some 30 Kms. in length and about 70 metres in height. Technically the climbs were less than difficult standard but local conditions made even the short routes exciting. Imagine climbing in clothing more suitable for the Cuillins in winter as protection against the heat, rather than shirt and shorts, with no cool breeze as a relief when you get to the top. The hinterland is rich in archaeological finds, where evidence of settlements dating back to 2,000 years B.C. have been found. This is also an area where the rare Arabian Ibex is to be found.

*Saudi Arabia, Al-Hassa Province September 1977 onwards.*

This area has some of the best examples of the Turkish dominance up to their overthrow by Lawrence of Arabia. There are the remains of important fortifications and irrigation systems and the Al-Hassa Oasis is presently being developed for modern agriculture. Over large areas are the remains of the massive sand deposits hardened by the sun and shaped by the wind. It is best described as a mini-Colorado landscape and one can easily imagine John Wayne riding out of any of the numerous valleys.

Ascents of these very unstable outcrops call for unusual climbing methods. After a scree scramble the main wall of average height of some 30 metres has to be tackled. One starts up the many fissures and literally quarries upwards rather like the final climb out of Great End gully in good snow conditions. Of great interest on the summit is the minute plant life and ants living without water on bare ground in extreme temperatures.

South of Hofuf many of the sandstone outcrops have been

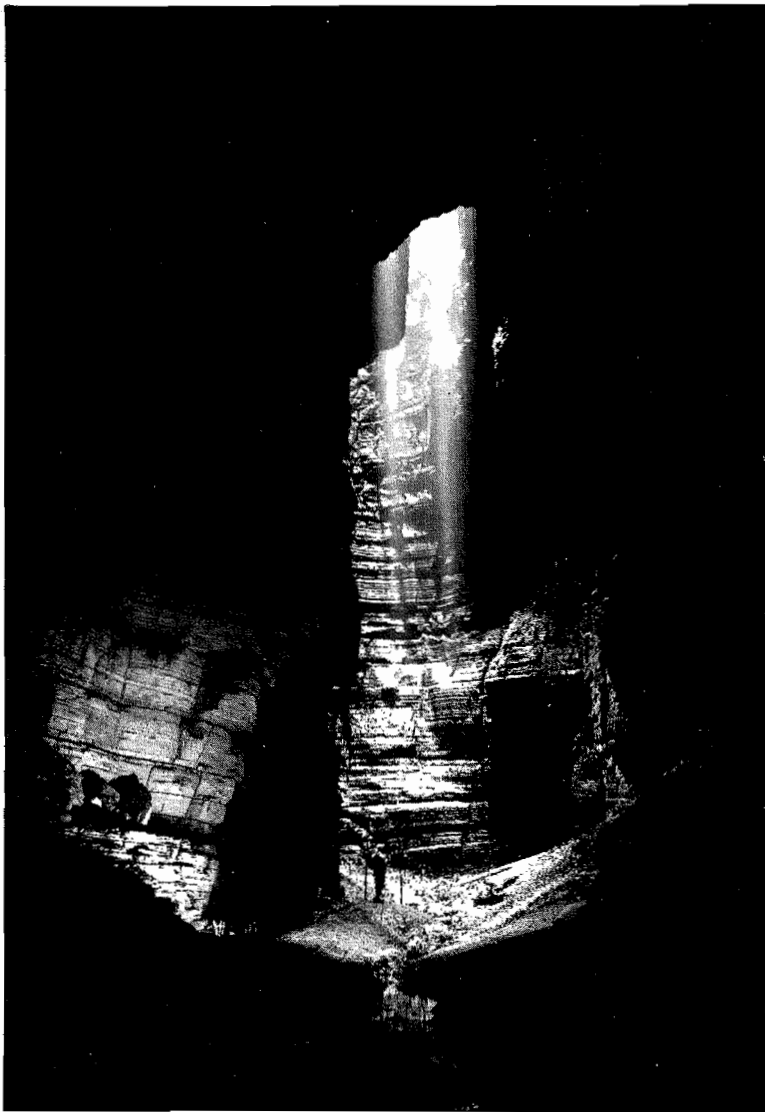


LOS TAYOS CAVE: AMPHITHEATRE

J. C. Whalley

developed into living quarters and judging by the amount of excavation have been in use for centuries. Whole communities literally live inside the mountain, along with sheep, goats and camels, and what looks most inconsistent are modern four-wheel drive vehicles parked outside cave entrances. One must not be seen taking photographs, and an Arab guide is essential.

Rule two of the Club has in part been fulfilled by my 'Chippings.'



*LOS TAYOS CAVE: DAYLIGHT SHAFT*

*J. C. Whalley*



## KINDRED CLUB JOURNALS

The Librarian gratefully acknowledges receipt of journals from the following clubs:

Alpine Club

Appalachian Mountain Club

Bristol University Speleological Society

Cairngorm Club

Cambridge Mountaineering Club

Climbers' Club

Club Alpin Suisse

Craven Pothole Club

Deutscher Alpenverein

Federation Française de Spéléologie

Fell and Rock Climbing Club

Gritstone Club

Japanese Alpine Club

Midland Association of Mountaineers

Mountain Club of South Africa

National Speleological Society

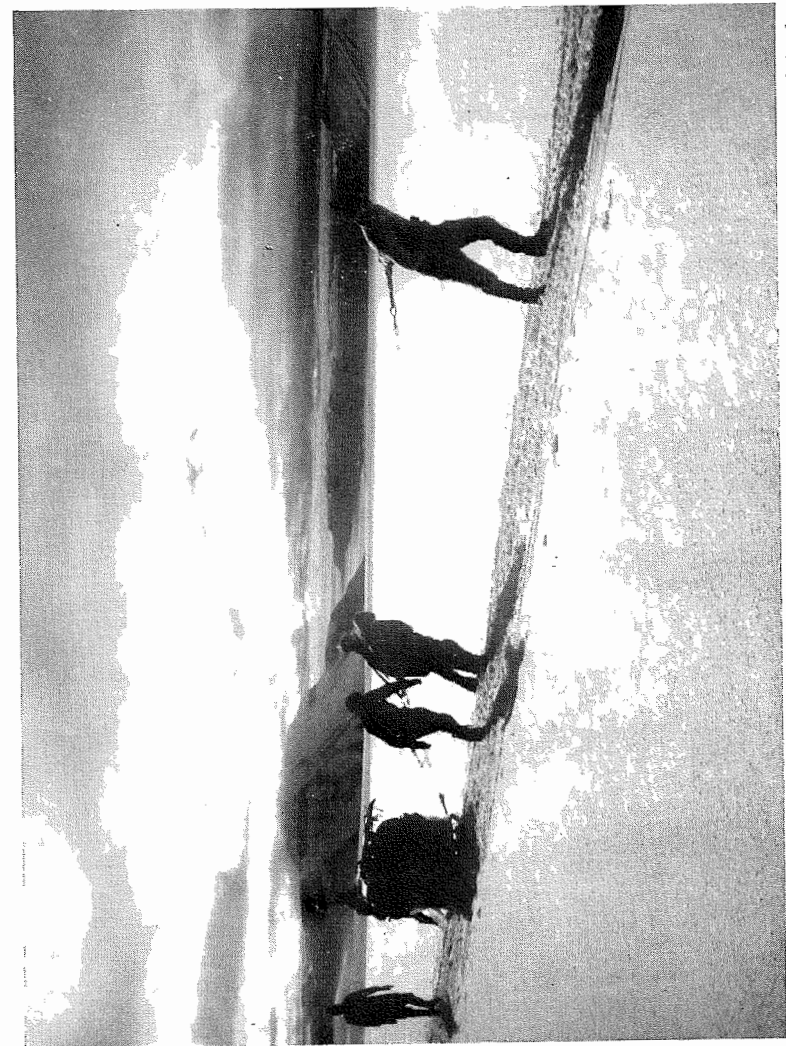
Pinnacle Club

Rucksack Club

Scottish Mountaineering Club

South Wales Caving Club

Speleo-Club de Paris



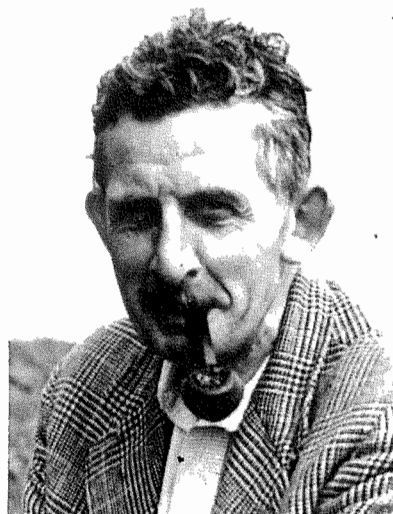
*Duncan Mackay*

*SPITZBERGEN: HAULING TO NEWTONTOPPEN*

## IN MEMORIAM



*Douglas P. Penfold*



*John C. Appleyard*



*Albert Humphreys*



*John Williamson*

## JOHN C. APPELYARD (1920—1978)

John Appleyard, a Life Member of the Club, died on the 4th December '78, aged 82. He was born on the 27th December 1896 at Westwood, The Grove, Ilkley, Yorks. He left Ilkley at the age of one, and lived in Far Headingley, Leeds and later at Huby, near Leeds. In 1903 he moved to Hull where he lived until the First World War. He was educated at Hull Grammar School and on leaving school he entered the National Provincial Bank in Hull and was there from 1913 to 1920. He served in the 26th and 10th Royal Fusiliers in England and with the 12th Middlesex, 18th Division in France. There he was declared unfit for the line and served as Quarter Master Sergeant in various native labour corps. He was previously managing an army laundry in Abbeville and was discharged from the army early in 1919. Afterwards he left the National Provincial Bank and became a secretary for a year when he had a breakdown and was advised to live in the country. He then came to the Misses Ransome, Emlin Hall at Torver, Coniston on the 2nd September 1920 and lived with them until he was married to Evelyn Florence Harland at Hawkshead Parish Church on the 28th August 1926.

John Appleyard was an accomplished climber but after leaving Yorkshire he became active with the Fell & Rock Climbing Club and held several offices with the Fell & Rock, viz. Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Vice President, President and was made an Honorary Member in 1953 for services rendered. He was also a founder Member of the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team.

E.C.D.

## EDWARD HUGH CROFT (1914-1978)

Edward Hugh Croft, who died on 15th January, 1978, was elected to membership in 1914 and had been a member of the Club longer than any other living member.

Interested in geology as a young man, his election followed a chance encounter with Arthur Horn, then secretary of the Club, in Goyden Pot, but he attended only one Meet before the Great War broke out. After the war he was living in Manchester, subsequently moving to the Midlands and although he never attended another Meet he much enjoyed receiving the Club circulars and reading the various activities of members.

S.M.

## ALBERT HUMPHREYS (1920—1979)

Albert Humphreys died on February 5th, 1979, at the age of 92 years. He was born on the 9th April, 1886, in Manchester, the fourth of a family of five boys. Elected member in 1920, he was Vice-President in 1937-46 and was our oldest member.

Albert was a man of wide interests, with a great capacity for comradeship, a zest for life and an infectious sense of humour. He will be missed, not only in the Y.R.C. but in many other spheres. He was a very loyal member of our Club and always retained his interest in its activities. He was too frail to attend the 1978 dinner, but otherwise had an almost unbroken record of attendance, and was delighted to receive the signed menu card sent to him on that occasion.

It is obvious from reading his diaries, that his interest in the hills started before the First World War, and there are accounts of walking tours in the Pennines and the Lake District, but soon there are references to caves and to potholing—for example, Belgium in 1912, and by 1917 he was engaged in cave photography. Shortly after the end of the 1914-18 war his interest had become so great that he and his eldest brother, Harry, built a hut, made out of a surplus War Office Mobile Workshop at Rowter Farm, Castleton, to house their potholing gear, and serve as a centre for their potholing activities. Blackburn Holden, a Y.R.C. member, and subsequently the first President of the C.P.C., another keen potholer and cave photographer, was a friend and also had his own hut at Rowter. A menu card survives, undated, but probably from this lighter-hearted period, of the A.A.O.L.—the Ancient Antediluvian Order of Lumpyeads. 'Lumpyeads' was an appellation bestowed on them by a countryman who saw them pulling their heavy potholing tackle by sled over the Yorkshire moors. He and Harold Armstrong were responsible, in 1921, for the designing and making of the winch, constructed from all sorts of improbable spares, which proved such a success in the Gaping Gill meets of that period.

Albert visited the Alps on a number of occasions, climbing in Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria, usually accompanied by his niece, Grace Humphreys. He was an inveterate traveller, even in his old age, and somehow always seemed to find something unusual to do—a visit, for example, to the summit of a not very quiescent Etna, or to a stream in Cephalonica, whose waters flow inland from the sea, to disappear down a swallow hole. In 1925 he visited the White Sea and Norway, in a trawler, and in his eighties undertook a safari type holiday in East Africa, and some bell diving in the Caribbean. He had other outdoor interests. He was a first class rifle shot, with two golds and five bronzes to his credit, and in 1912 became President of Lydgate Rifle Club. He enjoyed fly fishing and was a good shot on a grouse moor.

Above all, however, he was a true scientist, with an enquiring mind

and wide interests that embraced both physical and biological subjects. He was President of the Oldham Microscopical Society and was in 1972 the oldest member of the United Field Naturalists Society at the time of the Centenary of that club. He was interested in geology and became a member of the Yorkshire Geological Society and attended a number of their lectures and field meetings. During the Second World War, whilst on Fire Duty at the family engineering works in Oldham, bored by inactivity, he bought a four-inch refracting telescope and became a keen amateur astronomer.

He played a big part in the development of the family engineering firm, started by the two eldest brothers. This was at first a minute enterprise, carried out in the cellar of the family home and later expanded to the basement of a small chapel, before moving to Oldham. At first they made small electrically powered toys, charged batteries and installed electric wiring, including that of Stretford Town Hall. After the move to Oldham they made dynamos and finally magnetic chucks. Some of the toys and one of their first dynamos can be seen in the North West Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.

Members, however, will remember him for his courtesy and kindness and his great sense of humour. Quiet and unruffled, he nevertheless had a capacity for quick and decisive action when necessary, as when Jack Woodman was taken suddenly and seriously ill during a Gaping Gill meet; and, on a lighter note, when, arriving at Southampton, from abroad, he found a rail strike in progress and immediately hailed a taxi, ordering it to proceed to Uppermill, the Yorkshire village where he lived.

Jack Woodman writes that 'he was kindly and thoughtful and, like all the seniors, made sure that no undue risks were taken and checked all knots and belays, etc. He gave one confidence and had a fine sense of humour. He was a great potholer, a man of wide experience on the hills and leaves many happy memories.'

Our condolences are extended to his niece, Grace, and the other members of his family.

W.P.B.S.

## DOUGLAS P. PENFOLD (1960—1977)

By the sudden death of Doug Penfold on 27th October 1977 at the age of 57 the Club lost one of its most loyal and devoted members. He died at Blea Tarn in Langdale at the end of a day in the mountains with his daughter, Julia.

A kindred club was on hand and we are indebted to them for their assistance.

Doug was a man with many interests, reserved about his achievements, who had met adversity in many forms. Those who knew him well will remember him for his strength and determination to recover

from repeated setbacks to the pursuit of his interests. Lesser men would have retired.

Doug was born in Birmingham and moved to Leeds around 1957 and I have no doubt Yorkshire benefited from his move. All his life he was a keen hockey player/referee/selector. He held, for many years, high offices in the administration of Yorkshire County Hockey. In the year he died he realised his greatest ambition when he was elected President of the Yorkshire Hockey Club.

He had climbed extensively before joining the YRC in 1960, having served his apprenticeship on the classic routes of Almscliff and Cow and Calf. A very relaxed rock climber and popular companion I remember well a fine summer day on Troutdale Pinnacle. Upon finishing the last pitch I looked down to see him stretched out on the pinnacle, feet crossed, hands behind his head, thinking, he said, what a grand day it was.

My first encounter with Doug was a YRC meet en route to the Alps. His first visit. Another ambition achieved. The long drive in an open car followed by the long haul up the Loetchental took its toll and he was unable to climb on the first day. Upon our return to the hut he had recovered and against all sense set out with David Smith and me to climb a ridge of the Mittoghorn. Soft snow prevented great progress but we reached an unnamed pinnacle which from that day was known as Pic Penfold.

W.A.L.

#### JOHN WILLIAMSON (1931—1979)

A Yorkshireman from Ben Rhydding, Jack joined the Club in 1931 and in the early days of his membership potholed with Roberts, Yates, Hilton, Marshall and Fred Booth, before going to live in Galloway. During the war he served in the RAF.

As he himself said, he had never stood on top of an Alpine peak but his membership of the Club meant a great deal to him and he much appreciated his election as Vice-President in 1976-78. In recent years his kindness and willingness to do all kinds of jobs very well, but quietly, was a part of his character and meant a lot to his friends. He knew the companionship of firelighting, cooking and washing up on Meets, especially on the Long Walks, but it was all done without fuss. It was typical of his generous and kindly disposition and his love of his fellows made him a delightful companion.

He showed the greatest courage and fortitude during his last illness, and to us remain the happiest memories of a good Christian, of his charm and happy disposition, of his modesty and tolerance, and of one who by his life and example, left the world better than he found it.

E.J.W.

## CLUB MEETS

1975-76. Excluding the Annual Dinner, the Ladies' Evening and Working Parties the Club held 14 meets during the year with an average attendance of 25, the same figure as in the previous year. Because of a misunderstanding over the booking of the Grampian Club Hut the Glen Etive Meet in February had to be switched to Low Hall Garth. The August meet in Cleveland was transferred to Hutton-le-Hole through lack of suitable accommodation at Levisham. The joint meet at the Robertson Lamb Hut in September had to be cancelled because of the severe drought of this exceptional summer and autumn, though in the event very heavy rain fell two days before the date of the meet. Working parties were held at both huts and the Ladies' Evening was fully subscribed. The 83rd Annual General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on the 18th November, 1975, and was followed by a Special General Meeting and by the 62nd Annual Dinner. The President, J. B. Devenport, was in the chair and the principal guest was Tom Price. 140 members and guests attended and 79 of these were present at the after-dinner meet at Sparth House, Malham. The Christmas meet was held at the Horseshoes Hotel at Egton Bridge from the 5th-7th December. 28 members and guests sampled the Cleveland Way between Whitby and Ravenscar or the Rosedale Circuit to Westerdale or climbing at Wainstones. Astute members took full advantage of shoppers' trains to return in good time to sample the hotel's real ale, an excellent dinner and Mr. Sam White's informative talk on the history of the area. 48 members and 9 guests attended the New Year meet at the Marton Arms, Thornton-in-Lonsdale. Gale force winds and heavy rain made difficulties for those who attempted the Three Peaks, and for a sizeable party down Ireby Fell Cavern. Well-being returned with dinner and a witty, expertly illustrated talk by the Hon. Secretary's friend, Harold Eccles, on the Pyrenees, the Dolomites and the Alps. The traditional February meet at Low Hall Garth attracted an attendance of 50. Hard ice on the by-roads was unfortunately not matched in gullies or on the tops, though all parties found exercise and entertainment. The catering by Dennis and Margaret Driscoll was, as always, four star, and so was the after-dinner talk by Peter Boardman. L.H.G. was the venue for the next meet in lieu of Glen Etive at the end of February. It was warm enough to have brought out an adder on the track up Greenburn, and 13 members on the meet. It was too wet for enjoyable climbing but walkers had a good circuit from Glenridding. Two members only camped high and snugly on the Haystacks in March despite low cloud, high winds, water-spouts over Bleaberry Tarn, and intermittent rain. At the Easter meet at Glen Lyon six members and two guests had four long and strenuous days in good hard conditions. For the first pot-holing meet of the year, based on Lowstern in May, 19 members made the through trip of Easegill and Lancaster Hole. 11



members and 2 guests made light of the carry-in at Spring Bank Holiday for a vintage meet at Fionn Loch. Parties ranged from Slioch to An Teallach, the weather was splendid with views as far north as Foinaven, the situation remote and magnificent. The Welsh Threes attracted 24 walkers and a hard-working support party of 8 for the Long Walk in late June. The grind up Elidir Fawr was over before the sun got at it but later the sun won and temperatures were high to be followed by evening sunlight over cloud-filled valleys. Strategically placed cans of beer helped 19 walkers to the finish. The weather for the July meet at Lowstern was also superb. The potholers tackled Dale Head Pot, walkers were on Ingleborough and Pen-y-ghent, a party visited Attermire Scar, the cooks opted for the New Inn, and the first lot back prepared dinner. 11 members assembled rather improbably in the Tea Shop at Hutton-le-Hole on Saturday the 21st August. Severe moorland fires precluded moorland routes. All parties therefore honourably took to the valleys—a pleasant interlude if hardly vintage Y.R.C. Drought cancelled the joint meet in September. The October meet was held in mid-Wales at Llanbedr. There were Chinese pheasants, peacock and pea-hens, goats and croquet hoops on the lawn of the hotel. This gracious impression was dispelled next day by the traverse of the Rhinog ridge, which though not as high as some Welsh hills, proved rough and tough, especially in the prevailing mist, which rapidly obscured the one narrow trod through crutch-high heather. Sunday was sunny—some went to Rhinog Fawr to see where they should have gone the day before, some canoed and surfed, some went up Cader Idris. After a lapse of ten years the Club returned at the end of October to High Force, High Cup Nick, Cauldron Snout and Cross Fell. The meet was greatly enjoyed by 20 members and guests.

1976-77. The Club held 13 meets during the year excluding the Dinner, Working Party Meets and the Ladies Evening. Average attendance at meets was 26. The 84th Annual General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on the 20th November 1976, and was followed by the 63rd Annual Dinner. The President, J. B. Devenport, was in the chair, and the principal guest was Peter Boardman. 139 members and guests attended the dinner. The after-dinner meet was held at Sparth House, Malham. The Christmas meet was held at Kentmere with a generous covering of snow. Saturday started clear and sunny with a keen frost and slowly deteriorated into soft snow and low cloud, this milder weather persisting on Sunday. 55 members and guests enjoyed the Driscoll's superb catering and even more superb tolerance. Heavy snow and reports of chaotic road conditions did not deter 58 members and guests from assembling at the Marton Arms in January. The summit of Ingleborough and the bottom of Bull Pot of the Witches marked the extremes with some skiing midway between. Dinner was followed by a talk and slide show by John Whalley and Dave Judson on their expedition to Ecuador. An enjoyable and energetic Himalayan re-union weekend was spent by

survivors of the 1957 Jugal Himal expedition at L.H.G. in February. 5 expedition members, the 1956 and 1957 Presidents and the 1957 Secretary made up the party. The Glen Etive meet at the end of February was notable for excellent weather—low temperature, good visibility, some sun and no wind. Ski-ing conditions were first rate, the Aonach Eagach was in superb condition, and the only peak that was perhaps neglected was the Buchaille. Three members canoed down Loch Etive and camped two nights to climb Cruachan and several of its satellites. Attendance was 28. The high level camp in March was scheduled for the cave in Dovedale. Very heavy rain on Friday night confined the six members who graced the bar at the Brotherswater Hotel to the shelter of their cars. The cave was occupied for breakfast on Saturday, and proved not entirely comfortable in a strong north wind. 8 members took part. The Easter Meet at Lowstern was not a success, only five members putting in an appearance over the weekend. For the Spring Bank Holiday Meet the Club returned to Kintail, but to a new camp site at Achnagart. The weather was poor, with low cloud, stiff winds, snow, sleet and rain and there was a great deal of snow even on the blunter hills. The ridges north and south of Glen Shiel were visited along with outliers like Ben Attow and Ben Sgriol. 25 members and guests attended. The Long Walk in July was the Wasdale Skyline. 46 members and guests were involved. The majority were based at L.H.G. and were ferried across Wrynose and Hard Knott for the start and finish at Wasdale Hall. A smaller group camped in Wasdale adjacent to the widest selection of malts outside Scotland. The morning started damp and cloud remained low until evening. Because of this and since there were no feeding points parties tended to be dispersed throughout the day. The Gaping Gill meet in September was a great success, enjoyed by 24 members and guests. The Craven Pothole Club kindly allowed the use of their winch for the descent of the main chamber, Bar Pot was also rigged, South East Pot and the Whitsun Series were visited and the Pool Traverse completed. The October meet was held in Galloway, at the White Laggan Bothy. This involved a carry-in of about one-and-a-half hours. The area is rugged, liberally sprinkled with small lochs, and boggy and has a feeling of remarkable remoteness. The bothy is excellent and was comfortable on Friday for eleven Club members who all made over the Merrick next day. On Saturday night there were 36 in the bothy including 6 more Club members, and a mixed party of 13 architectural student which did little to encourage the acceptance of a mixed club. The Working Party meets were hard-working and successful: the day climbing meets at Attermire and the Roaches less successful.

1977-78. The Club held 11 meets during the year excluding the Dinner, the Ladies' Evening and Working Parties. Average attendance at meets was 28. A Special General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on the 19th November 1977 to amend the rules by the addition of Rule 20 which defined temporary membership. The 85th

Annual General Meeting followed and was in turn followed by the 64th Annual Dinner. The President, F. D. Smith, was in the chair and the principal guest was Peter Livesey. 124 members and guests were present. The after-dinner meet was held at the Fell Hotel, Burnsall. A round fifty members and guests turned up for the Christmas meet at the Coledale Inn, Braithwaite, a new venue which was much acclaimed. The obvious route taken by many was the round from Causey Pike via Grasmoor to Grisedale Pike. After venison for dinner Jack Woodman was presented with a suitable bottle to mark his fiftieth year of membership. The Marton Arms at Thornton in Lonsdale seems to be taking over the mantle of the Hill Inn for the January meet and 42 members and guests assembled there on this occasion. Cavers tackled Lost Johns including the Old Roof Route and Ireby Cavern. Walkers were on Gragareth and Whernside, climbers (despite the cold) on Twistleton Scars, and at least one member maintained tradition by completing the Three Peaks. There was snow in plenty for the Low Hall Garth meet but not the kind to tempt one into gullies. A strong head wind and blown snow made the round from Wetherlam to Coniston Old Man something of an effort. 40 members and guests more than filled the hut but failed to outreach Denis Driscoll's catering. For the Glen Etive meet in February the Club were again allowed the use of the Grampian Club Hut. Glencoe was comprehensively frozen, the day was clear, the wind fresh and very cold. One party skied, another tackled the North Buttress of Buchaille Etive, two others made the circuit of Sgurr Dhonuill by different routes and with superb views from Jura to Skye and north across Ben Nevis. 30 members and guests had a memorable weekend. Although the attendance was only 12, staggered between Friday and Sunday, the Easter Meet in Glen Feshie had a good camp site at Ballintean, good snow, and plenty of activity on Cairn Gorm, Carn Ban Mor, Sgor Gaoith and Sgoran Dubh Mor. 16 members and guests camped at Blackbeck Tarn on Haystacks in April. The site offers a splendid choice of tops—Green Gable, round to Steeple, Red Pike and High Stile, Dale Head and Robinson, with climbing on the Napes ridges, on the north side of Great Gable, Gillercombe and Birkness Combe. The late April meet at Lowstern was greatly enjoyed by 26 members and guests. The pot-holing party bottomed Sell Gill, the walkers had a good day on Pen-y-ghent and Ingleborough, the new pot-belly stove was much appreciated. The Spring Bank Holiday camp was at Loch Clair, Torridon. 29 members and guests had a superb week with almost continuous sunshine. All the main peaks of Torridon were traversed, the Munros on the Coulin Estate were all the more attractive for their remoteness, a party visited Slioch, and two others climbed on the triple buttresses in Coire Mhic Fearchair. The Long Walk in June was back in Yorkshire and covered the 7 peaks. The start was from Whernside Manor near Dent (camp or bunkhouse), the finish was at Hag Dyke a few hundred feet below the summit of Great Whernside, which was kindly

made available to the Club by the Scouts who own it. The day was perfect for walking, sunny but not too hot, with firm going underfoot. Albert Chapman at breakfast, and the support party for the rest of the meet, provided superb service. The venue for the July meet was South Wales where seven members made the through trip in Ogof Fynnon Ddu from the top entrance to the bottom entrance. For the joint meet with the Wayfarers' Club, 17 YRC men were splendidly entertained at R.L.H. and 15 more entertained themselves at LHG. The President of the Wayfarers led a mixed party from both clubs from Cockley Bridge via Mosedale and Scafell Pike back to RLH. The LHG contingent were out on the Crinkles, Bowfell and the Langdales. Parties were climbing on both days on Dow, Scout Crag and Tarn Crag, Middle Fell and Pavey Ark. The October meet in Derbyshire in October eventually found a base in the Derwent Hotel at Bamford. There was low cloud and rain on both days. The main party traversed Kinder from Yorkshire Bridge via Crookstone Knoll and Blackden Edge, returning via Jacob's Ladder and Edale. Hardier spirits sampled Stanage and Dovestones Tor. 23 members and guests participated.



## CLUB PROCEEDINGS

1976—The week-end meets were: January 9th-11th, The Marton Arms, Thornton-in-Lonsdale; January 30th-February 1st, Low Hall Garth; February 27th-29th, Low Hall Garth; March 26th-28th, High Level Camp, Haystacks; Easter, April 15th-20th, Glen Lyon; May 7th-9th, Lowstern; Spring Bank Holiday, May 28th-June 6th, Fionn Loch; June 25th-27th, Welsh Threes; July 16th-18th, Lowstern; August 20th-22nd, Hutton-le-Hole; October 8th-10th, Llanbedr and the Rhinogs; October 29th-31st, High Force Hotel, Teesdale; December 10th-11th, The Grove, Kentmere. Average attendance at meets was 25. Total membership was 194 made up of 169 ordinary members, one junior member, 30 life members and 4 honorary members.

The 84th Annual General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on the 20th November, 1976. The following officers were elected for the year 1976-77: President: F. D. Smith; Vice-Presidents: W. R. Lofthouse, J. Williamson; Hon. Secretary: E. C. Downham; Asst. Hon. Secretary: J. Hemingway; Hon. Treasurer: S. Marsden; Hon. Editor: A. B. Craven; Hon. Asst. Editor: D. P. Penfold; Hon. Librarian: J. G. Brook; Hon. Huts Secretary: W. A. Linford; Hon. Hut Wardens: Low Hall Garth, G. Postill, Lowstern, J. Varney; Hon. Auditor: G. R. Turner; Committee: J. D. Armstrong, D. J. Atherton, C. D. Bush, M. P. Hobson, P. C. Swindells, R. Pomfret.

The 63rd Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The retiring President, J. B. Devenport, was in the chair. The Principal Guest was Peter Boardman, Kindred clubs were represented by C. D. Milner, Alpine Club; S. Thompson, Scottish Mountaineering Club; H. Mellor, Wayfarers' Club; G. Adshead, Rucksack Club; J. Carswell, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; C. Duckworth, Gritstone Club; S. E. Warren, Craven Pothole Club; D. Castleden, Bradford Pothole Club. The attendance was 139. The after-dinner meet was at Sparth House, Malham.

1977—The week-end meets were January 14th-16th, The Marton Arms, Thornton-in-Lonsdale; February 25th-27th, Glen Etive; March 18th-20th, High Level Camp, Dovedale; Easter, April 7th-12th, Lowstern; June 3rd-12th, Spring Bank Holiday, Kintail; July 1st-3rd, Long Walk, Wasdale Sky-line; September 16th-18th, Gaping Gill; October 21st-23rd, White Laggan Bothy, Galloway; December 9th-11th, Cole-dale Inn, Braithwaite.

Average attendance at meets was 26. Total membership was 197, made up of 162 ordinary members, 1 junior member, 30 life members and 4 honorary members. A Special General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on Saturday, 19th November, prior to the Annual General Meeting. Due to potential tax implications of lettings to non-members a new rule, Rule 20, was agreed defining temporary membership of the Club. The 85th Annual General Meeting followed.

The officers elected for 1977-78 were: President: F. D. Smith; Vice-Presidents: J. Williamson, N. Newman; Hon. Secretary: E. C. Downham; Asst. Hon. Secretary: J. Hemingway; Hon. Treasurer: S. Marsden; Hon. Editor: A. B. Craven; Hon. Librarian: J. G. Brook; Hon. Huts Secretary: W. A. Linford; Hon. Hut Wardens: Low Hall Garth, G. P. Postill, Lowstern, J. A. Varney; Hon. Auditor: G. R. Turner; Committee: J. C. Whalley, D. J. Atherton, C. D. Bush, M. P. Hobson, P. C. Swindells, J. A. Varney.

The 64th Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President, F. D. Smith, was in the chair. The Principal Guest was Peter Livesey. Kindred clubs were represented by P. Lloyd, Alpine Club; A. B. Hargreaves, Climbers' Club; D. G. S. Smith, Midland Association of Mountaineers; J. A. Martinez, Wayfarers' Club; A. Earnshaw, Gritstone Club; E. Whittaker, Craven Pothole Club; C. J. Radcliffe, Oread Mountaineering Club. The attendance was 124. The after-dinner meet was held at the Fell Hotel, Burnshall.

1978—The week-end meets were: January 6th-8th, The Marton Arms Hotel, Thornton-in-Lonsdale; January 27th-29th, Low Hall Garth; February 17th-19th, Glen Etive; Easter, March 24th-28th, Glen Feshie; April 7th-9th, High Level Camp, Haystacks; April 28th-30th, Lowstern; Spring Bank Holiday, Loch Clair, Torridon; June 16th-18th, The Long Walk, 7 Peaks; July 7th-9th, Ogo Fynnong Ddu; September 1st-3rd, Joint meet with Wayfarers R.L.H. and L.H.G.; October 20th-22nd, Bamford, Derbyshire; December 8th-10th, The Grove, Kentmere. Average attendance at meets was 28.

A special General Meeting was held at the Cairn Hotel, Harrogate, on the 18th November, Rule 16 was rescinded and replaced to clarify the Club's power to purchase or lease property.

The 86th Annual General Meeting followed. The officers elected for 1978-79 were: President: J. P. Barton; Vice-Presidents: N. Newman, J. Stuttard; Hon. Secretary: E. C. Downham; Asst. Hon. Secretary: J. Hemingway; Hon. Treasurer: D. Laughton; Hon. Editor: A. B. Craven; Hon. Librarian: J. G. Brook; Hon. Huts Secretary: W. A. Linford; Hon. Hut Wardens: Low Hall Garth, N. Newman; Lowstern, G. P. Postill; Hon. Auditor: G. R. Turner; Committee: J. C. Whalley, D. J. Atherton, C. D. Bush, M. P. Hobson, P. C. Swindells, J. A. Varney.

The 65th Annual Dinner followed. The retiring president, F. D. Smith, was in the chair. The Principal Guest was Sir Anthony Rawlinson. Kindred clubs were represented by The Lord Chorley, Alpine Club; G. Ward, Scottish Mountaineering Club; Charles Pickles, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; W. Atkinson, Wayfarers' Club; N. Kirkman, Rucksack Club; E. Hodgson, Gritstone Club; A. Bridge, Craven Pothole Club; J. Ackroyd, Bradford Pothole Club. The attendance was 122. The after-dinner meet was held at Sparth House, Malham.

## NEW MEMBERS SINCE JOURNAL NO. 37

1976

J. M. Armstrong   F. Fitzpatrick   L. Morgan   C. Murray  
 M. J. K. Nosworthy   L. Rush   A. J. Wickett

1977

G. Jones   T. A. Kay   J. Ratcliffe   M. Smith  
 J. P. Wright

1978

P. R. P. Chadwick   J. R. Lofthouse   C. J. Newman  
 H. Robinson   J. R. Sykes   M. J. Thompson

1979

K. Aldred   R. Lee   A. K. Maude

## RESIGNATIONS

1976

T. Bowker   J. B. Harding   M. A. Huggup   O. Stonehouse

1977

G. C. Gaunt   J. Hatfield

1978

J. Richards

1979

J. M. Armstrong

## DEATHS

1977

D. P. Penfold

1978

R. F. Butler   E. H. Croft

1979

J. C. Appleyard   A. Humphreys   J. Williamson