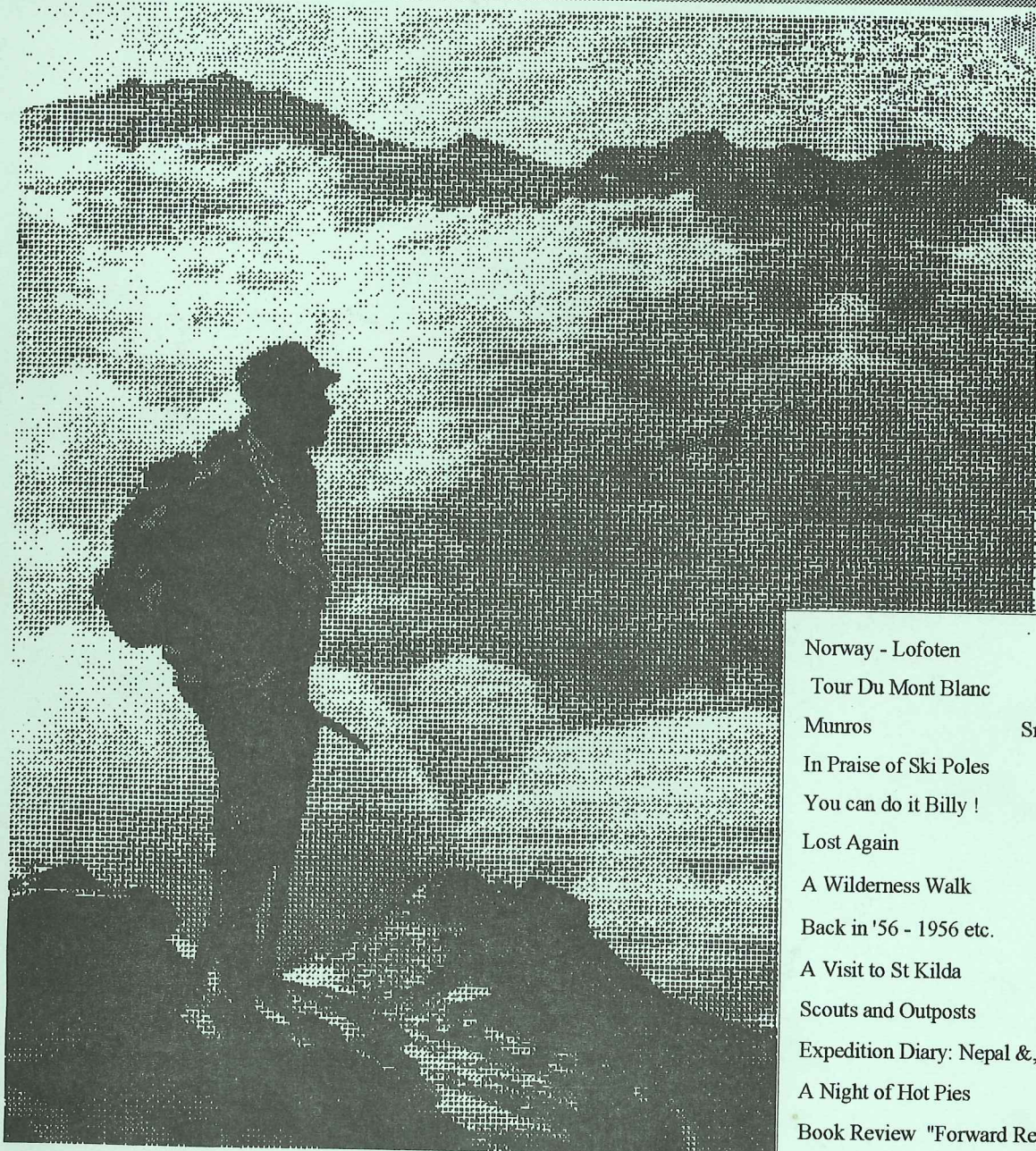


Yorkshire Rambler

The Bulletin of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club



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Foreword by the Editor

The first issue of The Yorkshire Rambler was greeted with interest and much comment. Almost all of it positive and encouraging. The club committee was impressed by the material produced by the members and the fact that it had proved to be less expensive than the Journal despite appearing more frequently. Some suggested improvements have been incorporated.

This issue appears because members responded to the request for sketches, articles and chippings. Much of the copy came from turning out old files for articles that had been sitting around waiting for a final polish. Please 'do your bit' by putting pen to paper or finger to keyboard and produce something. Try to keep the articles short. Copy on paper should be sent to Arthur Salmon, disks to me, preferably well before the deadline for the next issue, which is March 1995.

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Y.R.C. its Officers or those of the Editor. An information sheet entitled 'Notes for Contributors' is available to anyone considering submitting material for inclusion in subsequent editions.

The Løva(640m) a mass ascent

Peter Price

An account of the ascent by John Devenport, Cliff Large, Neil Pomfret, Jason and Howard Humphreys, Graham and Arthur Salmon, Peter Price and Roy Pomfret of this peak as part of the Lofoten groups contribution to the Norwegian Meet of 1992.

This was our first day on Lofoten. The day dawned wet and low cloud shrouded the hills, but we were eager to start. The party comprised the whole Lofoten group except Paul and Pam who had not yet arrived. We found a lay-by at the north end of the ridge which we believed would lead to the summit. We donned our waterproofs and struggled up a steep slope covered with dwarf birch and attained a ridge which looked clearer. This revealed a 'path' which followed the ridge. Following this, the gradient soon increased, the birch trees thinned out and the rain fell! We were soon on a lower summit where food and liquid were taken while waiting for the members of the group who were feeling the long drive from Bergen more than some of us.

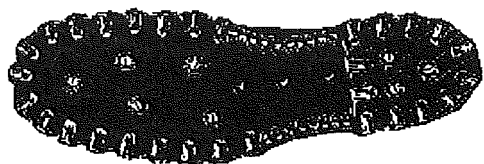
After regrouping, everyone was convinced/ bribed/ blackmailed into continuing up. Eventually we were met by a rock face which looked very wet and which was covered in loose moss. First impressions were that this tower could not be circumnavigated, however, Arthur was convinced that it was possible to go round the left-hand side of it (and rightly so, as it turned out).

Howard led up this with Graham following. By this time everyone else

was getting wetter watching the climbing on the mossy wall and possibly because it looked more desperate than it really was may have contributed to the decision of all but four of us to return to the cars. Arthur climbed this section followed by myself and this led us after about 100 feet to the top of the tower. This was followed by a free hanging abseil into a gap where it was established that an easier route would have been to have gone around where Arthur had suggested. The next step was a further climb on a slightly easier, but still moss covered rock for about 150 feet. This was climbed free and took us to the summit. The view from the summit was minimal due to mist and rain.

The way down was uneventful, apart from stirring up a hornet's nest, which resulted in Arthur being stung on the eyebrow. On the way down, it was noticed that the small path we had followed up had grown larger and large amounts of moss had been dislodged; large sheets of it simply peeled off when stood on. The path actually continued back to the cars following a much easier route by a stream (actually in the stream for much of the way) and avoiding the birch covered slope we had battled up.

It was raining constantly that day, but everyone felt well and ready for the rest of the peaks, hopefully in better weather and after time to dry out a little.



Bisplua or Bishop's Mitre

Howard Humphreys.

An account of the ascent by Howard, Jason Humphreys, Cliff Large and Paul Linford of this 597m peak as part of the Lofoten groups contribution to the Norwegian Meet' of 1992.

"What's the weather like?"

"Damp."

"Again!"

"Yes, but it looks bright down by the fjord, but black out to sea."

"Should we go and have a look at Bisplua?"

"Yes, we might as well."

So, from our wet tents on the sandy col between Bunesfjorden and the beach at Buneset, we set off

"What's the route?"

Slingsby did it from
Vindstad."

A ridge from Vindstad runs West in a continuous curve turning North and meets a large rock face at the base of the Bishop's Mitre, ie. vertical. The ridge looked interesting and logicalat least it did from a distance!!

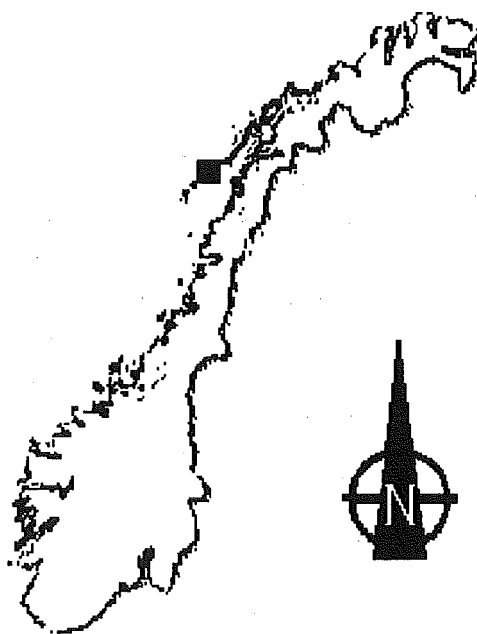
The cloud was low on the ridge as we made our way round the North side of the Mitre to start the ridge. A long

grass rake tempted us as a short cut, eliminating most of the ridge, but closer examination revealed the start and finish to be possible, - but for another day. At the ridge we roped up and on to the rock. No go! The rock just crumbled away.

On the way back the cloud lifted and the col to the West of the summit looked promising. Following a stream up a steep grass scree with much loose rock and blocks, we reached the col, roped up and after half-a-dozen short pitches and much gardening, we sat on a feather bed of moss, perhaps 18 inches deep, on the small flat summit. It must be years since it was last climbed. Four abseils down to the col and a steep descent took us back to camp.

Bisplua 597m.

Take track from Vindstad up Bunesfjorden for 2 km. Turn left up river and steep grass and rock slope to col. Turn left and up several short rock pitches to summit. Descend by same route. 6 hours. Easy.



Hermannsdalstinden (1029m),
Klokkaattetinden (869m) and
Brynliskardtinden (798m).

John Devenport

Ascended by Arthur Salmon, Graham Salmon, Peter Price, Neil Pomfret and John Devenport as part of the Lofoten groups contribution to the 1992 Norwegian Meet.

From the delightful wild campsite on the beach at Buneset, a short walk over the low col took us back to Vindstad where Howard used his persuasive skills to secure a trip for the group round to the next fjord in a small motor boat belonging to one of the few inhabitants in this isolated hamlet.

In no time we were clambering up the jetty at the small hydro-electric power station at the southern end of the Forsfjorden, somewhat apprehensive of what lay ahead of us on our first real day in the Lofoten mountains. As we started round the west side of the fjord, it was immediately apparent that we were going somewhere where not many people had gone before. There was definitely no path. We had to make our way as best as we could over the boulder strewn slopes, covered in thick carpets of sodden moss and lichen, and just to make things really interesting, entwined in dense birch scrub. We seemed to have been on the go for ages as I looked back towards the power station . . . and there it was, still only a couple of hundred yards away! Progress was slow.

After crossing the jumble of large boulders beneath a spectacular foss, we actually started to go uphill, slithering over the rocks and finally breaking out of the birch scrub, only to find ourselves having to force our way through a dense carpet of six foot ferns. Progress was slow!

It was difficult to see where we were placing our feet as we fought our way through the ferns up a steep, prominent rake leading north across a slope of steep slabs, towards a distinctive col to the north of Kringeldalstinden. What started off as a wide rake soon became a narrow, slippery ledge, less than a boot width wide, with a long drop to our right over steep slabs. We each made our way tentatively across this narrow ledge to safer slopes, then continued up moss covered slopes to the col where we stopped for lunch. By now we must have walked just over a mile and climbed about 400 metres. Progress *was* slow!

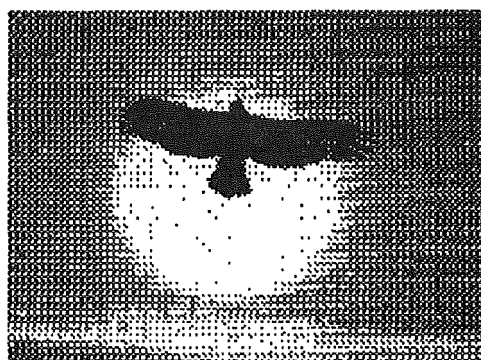
At last we were now able to see our objective for the day, from our lunch spot on a large flat slab, providing an excellent vantage point to study the precipitous slopes of Klokkaattetinden and Hermannsdalstinden plunging down very steep slabs into the two lakes on their eastern flanks.

Making our way across the broken rocky slopes of the south-western flanks of Brynliskardtinden, a broad, steep, mossy gully led Graham, Neil and John up a slippery staircase to the west ridge of the mountain, along which we scrambled over large blocks to the summit (798m). There was no cairn, so we built a small one, before

making our way back down the ridge towards Klokkaattetinden. A delicate traverse round a loose rocky corner led to easy slopes towards the summit (869m). A slight descent to the south took us round the top of a snowfield to an impressive col, with a steep brown slab barring our way to Hermannsdalstinden. On the right hand side a gully plunged steeply to the rollers of the Arctic Ocean, while to the left another gully sliced the great eastern precipice of the peak. Here we needed to rope up to ascend the airy arete along the top of the slab, to follow in the footsteps of Slingsby's first ascent of the north ridge of the mountain. Once above the slab, the ridge became almost Skye like, with some excellent exposed scrambling over blocks and slabs. At one point on the ridge, an awkward step onto a mossy ledge called for combined tactics, with the rest of us using Graham's foot as a hold to haul ourselves onto the ledge. Eventually we reached some huge granite blocks forming the summit. What we originally thought was the first sign of any litter turned out to be a polythene box containing a visitors book, which revealed just how few people make the ascent of the mountain, mostly by the easier south-west flank, which was to be our descent route. The summit provided an excellent viewpoint of the stunning ridges on Breidtinden and Ertnhellinden, some of which had been climbed by Slingsby, but which looked incredibly difficult and serious routes. In all directions there was a seemingly endless panorama of impressive peaks and huge cliffs. After signing the visitors book and documenting the reason for the YRC's ascent, we made our way down the broken slopes, and even had the luxury of an intermittent

path - the only one we ever saw in these wild mountains.

After an attempted short cut down to the Ternnesvatnet lake, steep slabs forced us back onto the broad ridge, which was definitely the correct line of descent. From the lake, a temporary wooden staircase alongside a new hydro-electric pipeline provided us with a direct and very quick descent of the 700 feet back to the power station at the Forsfjorden as heavy rain started to fall. From there it was just a case of fighting our way back round the fjord, through the boulders, giant ferns, moss, lichen and birch scrub for the second time in the day and two and a half hours later we had managed to "walk" the couple of miles back to Vindstad, arriving back at our beach camp at 11.30pm, still in good daylight. But progress had been slow!



Altogether an enjoyable day in the Lofoten mountains, but one note of warning. The very loose nature of the moss covered mountains meant that even the passage of just five pairs of feet had left visible scars along the route, so that we ought not be encouraging frequent ascents of peaks in this stunning wilderness. Perhaps these mountains should be left to the Trolls.

Munken (805m)

Cliff Large

An ascent by Cliff Large, Howard Humphreys and Roy Pomfret as part of the Lofoten group contribution to the Norwegian Meet of 1992.

The second group, Howard, Roy and I, transported by boat from Vindstad to the hydroelectric station at the head of Forsfjorden, aimed to follow the path marked on the Vest-Lofoten tourist map round to the new (1991) Munkenbu hut west of Munken. This appeared to be a gentler approach than that described by Spilsbury which started further north from Kjerkfjorden. Ascent to the col at Rergate was eased by the use of 560+ wooden steps constructed to assist in the installation of new water pipes for the hydroelectric station. The path climbed quite steeply to near the top of the 448 metre top between Ternnesvatnet and Krokvatnet. It turned in an easterly direction close to rock outcrops at the north end of Moldtinden. Small cairns marked the route but at times they were widely spaced and difficult to find, particularly in boggy parts.

From near the hut, the three peaks of Munken are clearly visible. The main peak, the height of which is not marked on the map, is a pyramid of sound granite about 150 metres in height, vertical or overhanging to the east, very steep on the north and south, but with a gentler-sloping west ridge which appeared to be the easiest route to the summit. The direct route to the base of the west ridge is steep with dense vegetation on slabby rocks. An easier route which we followed was to transverse across the slope in a northerly direction before

turning south east to cross a small boulder field and a large snow patch to the base of the ridge. Some parts over vegetation can be climbed easily. Overall, the climb required about six short, roped pitches which were ably led by Howard. The hardest and most exposed (D to VD), about two-thirds of the way up, involved a traverse round a nose on the ridge mainly using hand holds to reach an easier slope with much vegetation. This is probably the same move described by Spilsbury as a hand traverse even though he approached the peak from a different direction. The actual summit with a small cairn is a large block about two metres in height, climbed via a wide crack.

Apart from the summit cairn the only sign of previous ascents was two slings round a belay block which had been used for abseiling. One sling, in good condition, was used for the first abseil. The descent involved four abseils, each of about twenty metres. Good belay points for abseils were found after some gardening. Each required a sling to be left behind as it was impossible to pull the rope round the rock due to its surface roughness. The total time for the ascent and descent of the final peak was about 4½ hours. This could be shortened with a smaller, fitter party.

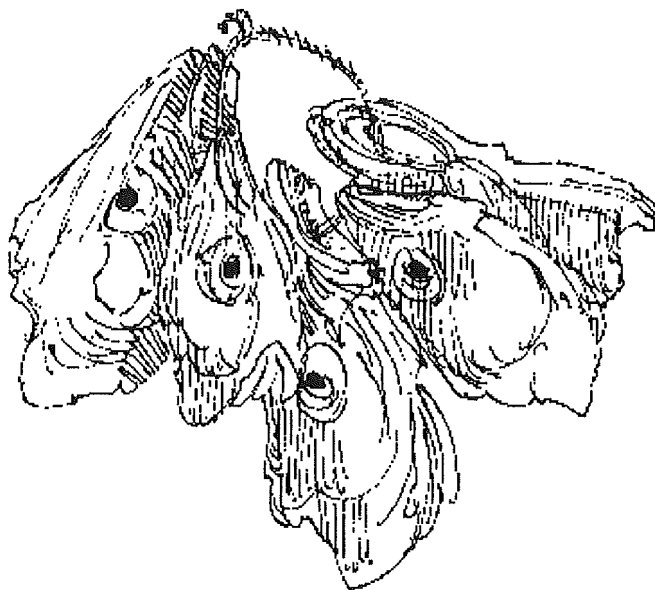
The return journey involved retracing our steps to the hydroelectric station then walking along the north side of Forsfjorden to Vindstad and back to the camp site. A traverse round the west slopes of Munken and Veinestinden to Rergate was considered, but ruled out due to the unknown nature of the terrain and the rain which started just as we finished descending the summit peak. The maxim was "better the devil you

know". The final sting in the tail was the walk along the side of the fjord. This started about midnight when, although it was daylight, it was not bright enough to see the depth of the vegetation-filled gaps in the boulder field. Much stumbling and clambering through wet vegetation, at times head-high, and over, round and even under boulders in what Howard described as horizontal climbing eventually brought us to more open ground. About 3½ to 4 hours was taken to travel about 1½ miles, a measure of the difficulties of going over such ground.

As we returned to the camp, fields around Vindstad were being mowed and hay gathered. A local, apparently returning from an all-night party, insisted on taking a photograph of Howard and Roy using a Kodak fun camera (the local offer on cornflakes).

A total of about 17½ hours was taken between leaving the hydroelectric station at the start and returning to camp. In retrospect the ideal starting point would have been the new hut at the base of Munken. Even starting from Servagen and following the footpath shown on the tourist map would most likely have been easier and quicker. However, once committed to camping above Bunesfjord we had little alternative to the route used.

Finally, some mention of the wildlife seems appropriate. The commonest birds on the mountain were ptarmigan with one flock of seven seen on the snow patch. Other birds which could have been sea eagles were heard but not seen. A single large hare ran across the same snow patch and a solitary otter was seen swimming in the fjord.

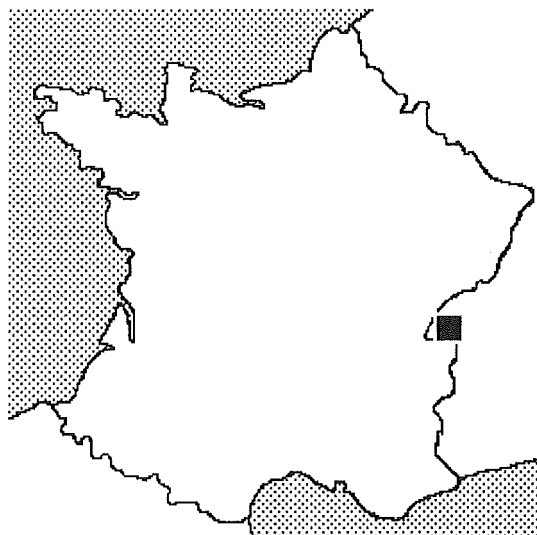


Tour Du Mont Blanc

Jeffrey Hooper

The Tour du Mont Blanc is not really mountaineering but it enables one to be in close proximity to the high mountains. If the weather is good as it was when I was on the route the views of the Alpine peaks are unbeatable. There can be no doubt that this is a fine mountain walk.

It was September 1st. 1987 when Michael[†] and I left York to travel to St.Gervais le Fayet. We had considered the various available means of transport and had decided train and hovercraft as the best. It is possible to get out of the train at le Fayet, take the mountain tram from the station to the Col de Voza and start the walk within about forty minutes of arriving at the station. If one also takes a sleeper from Paris time and money can be saved by not having to find other accommodation. So at 9.15a.m., on September 2nd. 1987. Michael and I were standing on the route with heavy rucksacks, feeling rather over loaded, but full of enthusiasm for the walk ahead. The sun was brilliant, the peaks of the Mont Blanc massif contrasted with the dark-blue sky, alpine flowers bloomed in the grass, grasshoppers were whirring, and we were on our way. A new bridge had been constructed over the torrent from the Bionnassy glacier which we used to reach the steep and narrow footpath that zigzagged through the pine trees to emerge at the terminal of the glacier. The path continued along and



eventually above the glacier to the Col de Tricot (2120 metres) leading to a steep winding 600 metre descent followed by a climb to the Col du True. By then it was mid-afternoon and the effect of the heavy rucksacks and ascent were starting to be felt. By the time we had booked in to the CAF refuge at Les Contamines and had been allocated our shelf space one of the party at least had had enough for the first day. So much so, that I could not eat my dinner at the local restaurant, for which, Michael gave thanks and ate mine as well as his own. In the morning before leaving Les Contamines, which is the village from which Mont Blanc was first ascended in 1786, we bought supplies for the next few days as there would be no further chance before we reached Courmayeur. Michael suggested that we bought rillettes, that mixture of fatty pork which tastes delicious, lubricates dry bread and restores flagging energy.

A broad stony track led from the village past Notre Dame de la Gorge through fields and woodland climbing all the time. Through and over the pines it was possible to see, at intervals, the mountain peaks ahead and to the side. After the chalet at la

[†] Michael Starling, a Pharmacist from Tadcaster who tragically died of cancer in 1992

Balme, where we ate excellent omelettes, and re-filled our water bottles with "l'eau potable", it was possible to see the area around Col du Bonhomme but at this stage of the walk we were not sufficiently well acquainted with the terrain to be able to identify anything with any accuracy. (The demand for "l'eau potable" was constant throughout the walk; we carried one-and-a-half litres each and drank at least that amount every day filling up at refuges or stand-pipes along the route.) An hour or so further in to the mountains, when we reached an area of snow before Bonhomme suddenly dark clouds billowed in from the South and we experienced half an hour of rain with thunder; the only rain in twelve days of glorious unbroken sunshine.

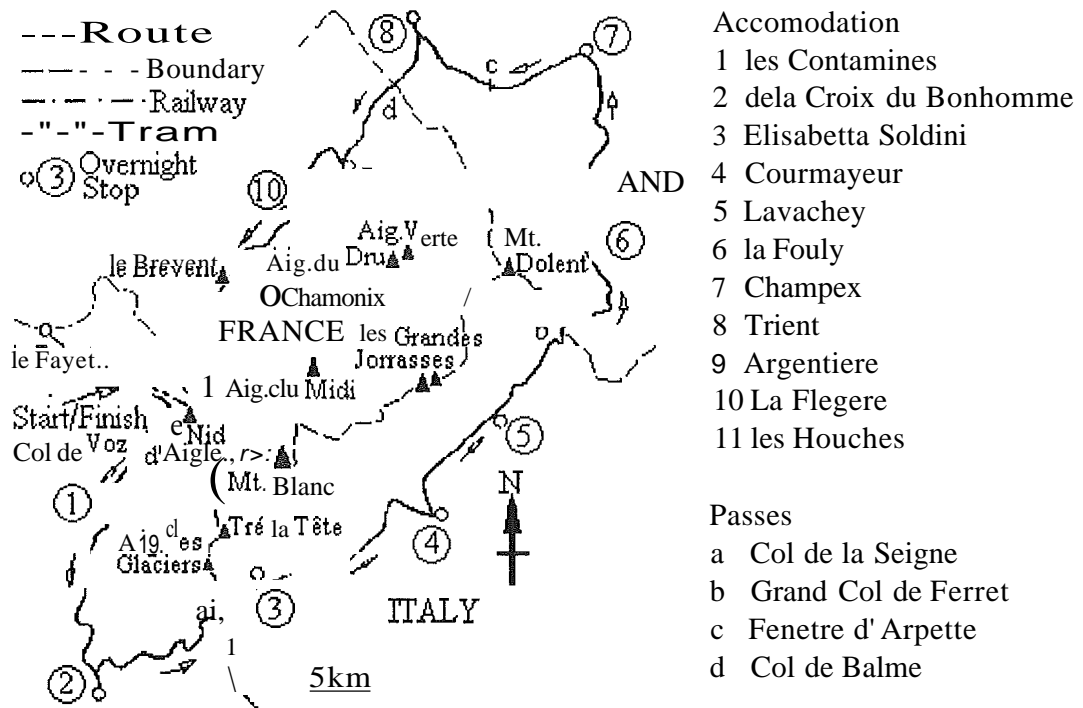
Ask anyone who has walked this route what was the most memorable stopping point and they are almost certain to reply "Bonhomme". The refuge is a tall angular stone building three stories high on a plateau which comes into view as one drops from 2483 metres at the Croix du Bonhomme. The building looks as though it has grown from the rocks rather than having been built. The washing facilities outside the refuge are a hollowed out log trough that, when the water is not frozen, has an overflow directed ten metres or so under a small shed at the edge of the plateau to provide permanent flushing for the toilet. All the supplies have to be carried to Bonhomme in a five hour haul on the backs of the guardians. It is the height (2443 metres), isolation, mixed nationalities in close proximity, conversation and the feel of generally "roughing it" that gives the atmosphere to this unique place. Everyone there has the same object in view and one never knows

whom one may be meeting. It was here during dinner we gradually realised that we were privileged to be in the company of Lord Hunt of Everest who was now on the second half of the route with Lady Hunt and two other companions, having started at Champex six days before.

Most people walk at approximately the same rate and stopping places on the route are such a distance apart as an average walker can cover in a day. Because of that, after several days walking we were getting to know the others who were on the route. Even if we did not see them during the day it was very likely that we would find that we had booked in at the same accommodation. I found that meeting people of different nationalities was one of the most interesting facets of the walk.

By the time we arrived at Refuge Elisabetta Soldini (2035 metres), built as a memorial to the Italian mountain troops, adjacent to the terminal of the glacier de la Lex Blanche we had got to know most people and had suffered one or two minor disasters. The first had occurred soon after leaving Bonhomme, descending from the permanent snow on the Col des Fours (2665 metres), when my camera fell into a stream I was crossing. Then Michael lost the guide book on the approach to the French/Italian border at the Col dela Seigne (2516 metres) and I lost the detergent for sock washing, but the magnificence of the surroundings put everything else into perspective.

At Elisabetta that night at dinner we were seated opposite a Frenchman and his younger wife. For a start conversation was difficult then the wine increased the fluency.



The Frenchman was a teacher and his wife was Dutch, they lived in Nice. He and I conversed in German, Michael and he in French, the lady spoke to us both in English then the refuge guardians joined in in Italian. The conversations became so complex as the languages mixed over the dinner table that at times I almost forgot which one I was attempting to use.



On reaching Courmayeur I had hoped to buy another camera but there was not much choice and I was unwilling to pay for what there was; instead I relied on Michael for the pictures. In Courmayeur there was no refuge or dortoir accommodation available but we found excellent value at the Hotel Svizzero. We had had a day of superb scenery, the Miage

glacier from l'Arpvielle Superior, the summit of Mont Blanc early in the day and the Brenva glacier. I just managed to stay awake until the end of dinner, then at 9pm fell into bed and slept for 10 hours. Early nights were a feature of the Tour and it became a battle to stay up later than 8.30 each evening.

From Courmayeur we took an easy route to La Vachey following the sparkling green waters of the Doire arriving there at mid-day. After making sure of a bed for the night in the dortoir we left our loads and climbed to Alp Superior di Malatra at about 2250 metres. Following the returning path we had the most glorious scenery before us. We were facing the Mont Blanc range in blazing sunshine and the clarity of the air was such that every small detail of the glacier and the rocks surrounding it could be seen. Later when I checked on the map it was hard to believe that the area that had been in front of us had been 5000 metres away, we had had the impression that

one long stride would have taken us there. That night we ate at the restaurant, next to the dortoir, with our new friends again sharing a table with the French couple from Nice. It was another complicated conversation of the English, French, German variety. The man had fought in the war through Algeria and France under General Giraud and recalled how he had heard Winston Churchill broadcast over the radio his "blood, sweat and tears" speech. Early the next day as we came out from a breakfast of half litre bowls of coffee and bread the sun touched the top of Mont Blanc turning it a delicate rose colour.

Mid-day saw Michael and me sitting on the Grand Col de Ferret at 2537 metres soaking in the unforgettable views. The sky was ultramarine blue and the snow and ice glistening white against almost black rock as we sat on the green grass looking back along our route during the previous two and a half days. We could pick out the position of Elisabetta but Courmayeur was hidden by Mont Chetif. Slightly behind us on the right was the summit of Mont Dolent, if we turn about 140 degrees left there was Mont Rosa and a little further round I could see the Matterhorn looking very different from the usual steeple-like pictures. Although the sun was so bright there was a cool breeze and we had to wear jacket and trousers whilst eating our lunch of stale baguette and Oxo. We stayed two hours at this incredible view-point. Eventually dropping down into Switzerland through the grasshoppers and flowers it became warmer and then hot. At Ferret an ice cream revived us, then just before La Fouly we overtook Lady Hunt. Their party had crossed the Petite Col de Ferret, a more strenuous route than

ours, then as she had fancied a bathe in the river the others had walked on to the village.



It was at this stage of the walk that I began to feel hungry. We had now been on the trail for six days carrying about fifteen kilograms and on some days had climbed possibly 1600 metres. We had eaten as much as we could find but sometimes that had been not much, one of our standard phrases became "Encore du pain, s'il vous plait." Following a night in a comfortable small hotel in La Fouly; because the Swiss Army on manoeuvres had booked all the dortoir space, a hazard in September, our route was to take us next to Champex and then, by taking what is classed as a variation, over la Fenetre d'Arpette to Trient. After Trient the route had numerous variations along the valley towards Chamonix and our intention was to stop at either Montroc or Argentiere then Flegere with a final night in Les Houches.

The fine weather held for our crossing via the Fenetre and we had made a good choice of route. As we walked along the valley amongst the boulders we could hear the prolonged rumble of avalanches on the other side of the ridge parallel to our route. Sometimes this noise would go on for minutes but we saw nothing move on our side of the mountains. Earlier in the day we had met a group of walkers who seemed to be an unlikely set of characters to be in the mountains. Two couples, the men neat and tidy and the women with their hair done as

for town but all in climbing gear with rucksacks. One man greeted us confidently in bad French to which I replied, "You're not French, you're American". "Sure," came the reply "but I've got to practise when I can." Over the next few days as we got to know them better we heard stories of mountaineering in America, climbing Mount Rainier and ferocious winds that had blown one lady out like a flag on the rope: of going into the desert from Idaho were they lived; of how they preferred to meet grizzlies rather than stray Doberman dogs and how inward looking and maddening life can be in the wealthy American suburbs.

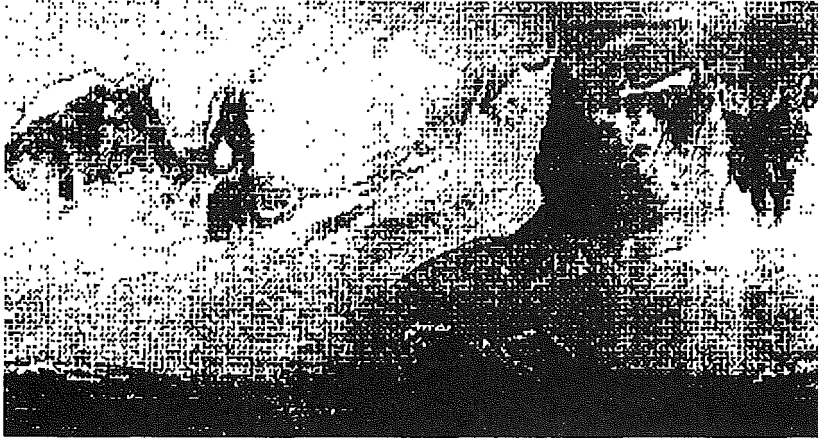
In the early afternoon after ascending the ever steepening slope amidst house size boulders we arrived at the cleft that gives this pass its name. As we sat at 2671 metres, the highest point on our route, looking at the awesome sight of the Trient glacier below us we had a brew-up and ate our bread and cheese whilst chatting to some Swiss people we had met the previous evening and four Americans who now caught us up. The path alongside and above the glacier was not difficult to descend but it took us two hours of constant movement to get to the bottom. When we did, looking back, not for the first time we realised the deceptive scale of the Alps. Although the cleft of the Fenetre now seemed tiny it appeared only to be a short distance away.

That night in Trient I was so hungry that I did not know how to wait for dinner at 7pm, then when we sat at the table nothing happened. I waited an eternity of another twenty minutes convinced that I could never be satisfied again but when it came at long last the food was memorable.

Thick soup and crusty brown loaves arrived then lasagne, cheeses of various varieties, fruit and of course, red wine to complement it all. On the climb from Trient to the Col de Balme we had the good fortune to walk through bilberries with which we filled a pan and cooked them at mid-day to supplement the bread and cheese which we ate in the sunshine, sheltered by the ruins of a building from the cold wind, where we could see the length of the Mont Blanc range. It is hard to describe all that we saw; in what ever direction we looked there was magnificence: glaciers, snowy peaks, pine trees, flowers, distant views of the Bernese Oberland and all under a blue sky.

For the rest of the walk I felt too close to civilisation. The ski lifts obtruded into the hills and made it possible for anyone to share the rewards of the heights without paying the price in aching joints and muscles and also increased the density of population. That night we slept in Argentiere. The squalor of the accommodation was relieved by watching the sunset glow on the summit of Mont Blanc through the window during dinner.

By mid-morning the next day we were approaching l'Aguillette d'Argentiere. It was here that a little excitement began for humble walkers such as we. We started on the part of the route referred to as "passage dangereux". The book had referred to climbing inside a chimney for about twenty metres assisted by fixed ladders. Either the author was remiss or we took another route, as there was no mention of the three hundred or so metres we ascended on logs pegged to the rock with iron spikes,



or using fixed ropes and handrails, or vertical iron ladders, or the narrow paths along the rocks where at one point the first stop would have been Les Chosalets 1000 metres below. The scenery was superb, including a view of the Mer de Glace winding into the heart of the Alps between the Aguille Verte and the Drus on one hand and the aiguilles des Chamonix on the other, like a giant motorway constructed of ice.

Flegere was influenced by the ski lift. A group of us stood outside in the chill wind talking and examining the scenery, waiting for the guardian to arrive from the lift, to open up. He then proceeded to play discordant noise amplified to an unacceptable level by a ghetto-blaster for the rest of the evening. The evening meal was served in the restaurant of the ski lift when the lift had stopped. For me this was the wrong atmosphere, not what I am looking for when I go into the mountains. The leavening factor was the enjoyable and informative conversation we had with the four Americans we had met briefly, three days before. As we left in the morning, rays from the rising sun were shooting into the sky from behind the Aguille Verte in a spectacular manner. As we packed

both of us noticed how light our sacs felt and checked to see if anything had been left. The weight was the same as at the start but now we could walk and not notice them. At Plan Praz a stop

was made for a drink on the terrace at the cable-car station which enabled us to admire the view and visually explore routes on the other side of the valley below the aiguilles. The telepherique route to the Aguille du Midi could be seen soaring upwards on the first stage of its journey across to Courmayeur. We followed the tourists to the summit of le Brevent (2526 metres) scrambling up the rocks for the final few feet to the top past snow patches. The top was disappointing as building work was being done on the ski-lift and the terrace was spread with litter. Towards the Col de Voza the sky had darkened and the gathering cloud was moving in our direction, so spending no more time on the view we lost height as rapidly as possible to avoid a wetting. Fortune was with us the clouds travelled the length of the valley between us and Mont Blanc and we stayed dry. As the clouds blew away we could see the range of mountains across the valley covered from end to end with a fresh fall of snow. Descending from le Brevent was hard on the knees and the route was contrived as it skirted the wild life park at Merlet and followed narrow dirt roads used by wheeled traffic. Approaching Les Houches the track cut across the hairpin bends on what had now become a regular

motor road. When the time came to cross the river Arve we had descended about 1600 metres in a short time. To cross the bridge we first had to cross a dual carriage-way and care had to be taken, as even though by now I was accustomed to the load on my back, so much so that I could normally forget it, I was not really fitted to skipping through lanes of fast moving vehicles.

This was to be the last night on the walk, in the morning all that would be left would be the few hours to the Col de Voza thus completing the circuit. Strolling around Les Houches we could see that many of the hotels were closed as it was already the finish of the season, but the Belevarde Hotel was an excellent choice. After a bath I discovered that I had lost so much weight during the walk that the trousers that I had worn to travel out in had to be taken in several inches at the waist with safety pins to make them stay up for the essential visit to the elegant restaurant. When Michael and I came out of the lift into the reception hall the receptionist did not recognise us as the people to whom she had been showing rooms less than an hour previously. I do not remember what we ate but we had *encore d'everything*, bread, water, soup, vegetables, the lot!



It was Sunday morning when with mixed feelings we began our last few

miles. As far as I was concerned it had been a marvellous experience, one to think back on for many years to; come but I regretted not having my own photographic record to help my memories. I had set out with quite a number of doubts and all of them had led to nothing. I had never before walked for so many consecutive days; I had never before carried that sort of load day after day; Michael and I had seldom walked together before and did not know each others abilities.

The villagers were going to church as we departed to find the track to the Col de Voza. Under the hot sun it became quite steamy until we were clear of the trees, then suddenly we emerged on to grass and it was all but over; the circuit was completed.

Having first set up the camera we shook hands then we sat and enjoyed the scene of glistening mountain peaks whilst drinking a beer, on the cafe terrace. The tram stop was only yards from the cafe which was full of people but no one had any idea of tram times. After waiting for two and a half hours with out seeing one going either up to l'Nid Aigle or down, rather than wait longer and have an almighty last minute rush to catch our sleeper for Paris, because there might not be a Sunday service, we set off again on foot to la Fayette. There was a tram of course. We caught it at St. Gervais three hot and dusty hours later to ride the final 800 metres through the streets to la Fayette.

On the train home, in spirit we were still on the walk. In fact we ate the remains of our rillettes and stale baguette and drank l'eau potable from our bottles. We were still wearing boots as we crossed Paris having found that training shoes with squashy

heels did not give sufficient stability with our high heavy packs.

Since finishing the walk I have read a review of the long distance trails in every country in the world. The Tour du Mont Blanc was

awarded the accolade as the finest of them all. I have not walked the others, nor am I ever likely to have the chance, but I am prepared to believe that the review was right.



Postscript for photographers. My camera was retrieved from the water and the film which had 32 exposures on it was wound back into the cassette, the camera was then opened and emptied of water. The film cassette was tied inside a polythene bag and 14 days later sent to Fuji laboratories with a note explaining events. I received back 32 transparencies 31 perfect and one slightly discoloured. The camera was a write-off.

Life after the Munros

David Smith

Little did I think when climbing Ben Nevis in July 1947 on route to Skye for my first mountain holiday that I would ever contemplate climbing all the 3000 ft mountains in Scotland. It was not until the YRC Munro meet of 1983 that it first crossed my mind. Being very much involved with the original feasibility study and then the basic planning with Derek Bush and Peter Swindells I began to realise that I had already climbed a good number of these mountains mainly on Whit Meets. I had done more than half, thus there was no turning back.

In no small measure the listing and planning carried out by my wife over the past eight years played a vital part in the completion on Beinn Dearg on the 15th July, some 47 years on. What were the highlights I have been asked, well my best day was undoubtedly the traversing of the Skye ridge from Gars Bhienn to Sgurr nan Gilleann, tip to top in 10 hours in 1952 with Doug Spray a one time member of the Club.

Or was it that wonderful long day on the Fannaichs with John Gott and Roger Allen, or even one of the traverses of Aonach Eagach on an icy February meet; each expedition had its own character from scorching sunshine on Beinn Alligin to wind, mist and heavy rain on Bidein Choire Sheargaich and Lufg Mhor in June of this year. I must admit that my final summit Beinn Dearg of Atholl with its pleasant cycle ride in, the steadily ascending path and that stone built trig point now has a very special place.

The great bonus obtained from the venture is that new areas of Scotland are discovered that would otherwise be missed are visited and a wider appreciation of the country results. There is life for me after the Munros without resorting to the Corbetts, I will be accompanying my wife on her remaining 118 which she hopes to complete by the year 2000.

Some Reflections on Becoming a Munroist

Peter Swindells.

On March 19th 1994 I reached the top of Cruach Ardrain and became a Munroist. With me were eight relatives and friends, five of whom were members of the Y.R.e., who had walked the hills with me, most of them on many occasions. We were lucky in our day, there was plenty of snow and, apart from about half an hour at the top, we had blue skies and excellent visibility. We based ourselves on the O.M.C. hut at Crianlarich and I had limited the numbers present so that we could sit down in comfort in their kitchen which, for the uninitiated, doubles up as their dining area, and there we had our party.

I then asked the S.M.C. to include my name on their register fully expecting that they would ask for some more information which would include, so I hoped, the name of my club. Not a bit of it, almost by return I received their confirmation, with no questions asked, that I had been

enrolled as a Munroist and that my number was 1274. This shows the growth in popularity. The first YRC. man to complete was Darrell in 1974 and his number was 118, second came Eddie in 1988 and his number was 589, an increase of 33 per year and now me, 6 years later showing an increase of 114 per year.

The questions I am most often asked are 'How long did it take you' and 'Why did you do it'. I went up Ben Lawers on my honeymoon in 1946 and in 1958 on a family holiday I went up Ben More, Mull and that was about all until I joined the YRC. in 1964. During the next twenty five years I was a regular attendee on Scottish meets and I suppose I climbed about 130 Munros and then, in 1990, we had the Cairngorm meet during which I climbed a further 23 which meant going up and down, about 25,000 ft, walking 100 miles and cycling 40 miles. And it was at that point that I became hooked and decided to go for gold. That answers 'how long did it take', to answer 'why' is not so easy. The short answer is that it was a challenge, had I got enough residual energy to climb 30 or 40 Munros a year for the next 4 years which was the time span I set myself. But there was more to it than that. when I was president my theme song had been 'physical activity' as well as 'attendance on meets' and when I ceased to be president I wanted to show, to myself if to non one else, that I practised what I preached and to spend a Whit meet up on the Cairngorm plateau and to climb all the Munros in that area that I had not yet climbed seemed to me exactly to fit the bill. I remember mentioning the idea at the meet we held at Ballachulish in the Autumn of 1989 and it met an immediate and

enthusiastic response from David Atherton. This marked the beginning of a partnership which was to prove invaluable in the months to come. I had already climbed nearly all the really interesting hills and the majority of what remained were either rounded and grass covered or were isolated and inaccessible and none of them presented any technical difficulty. What was needed was time and persistence and it was of the greatest help both in the planning and the execution to have a companion who shared the same enthusiasm and commitment. I don't recall us ever failing to complete our target, nor do I recall us ever failing in our navigation.

But all this represents a complete change in attitude. In the past, in common I believe with my other YRC. friends, we went on a hill that attracted us, or that had an attractive route, or was in an attractive location, the height of the hill was of secondary importance. The rougher the ground the more we liked it and paths were man made and therefore to be avoided except as a means of access. Yet from 1990 on, it was the summit which mattered and I always chose the easiest and quickest route to get there. In my opinion the two are complimentary. Its like the Cuillin ridge. You can spend days enjoying the different facets of each individual peak, but come the day when you are after the traverse, nothing else matters but to cover the ground and to do it as easily and quickly as possible.

What are my main memories? Of the hills, much that gives me personal pleasure but nothing that is worth retelling except perhaps one thing. The normal route up Beinn

Sgritheall is from the South. Don't take it. If you can, approach the hill from the North, it is an excellent walk up one side of Coire Dubh and down the other, and the great merit of this route is that the panoramic view, for which this hill is famous, bursts upon you as you reach the crest.

In my opinion a great deal of pleasure is got from planning a Scottish visit. Finding out which estate a hill is on and who to ring for access permission (in the close season), who to ring for permission to drive up estate roads and arranging where to spend the night if we were not camping brought me in contact with many different people. They were nearly always friendly disposed and I look back on these contacts with much pleasure. There was the head stalker on the Killilan Estate, a man with formidable reputation who would be not unlikely to open his gate to a couple of Englishmen. He succumbed to David's charm to such an extent that he, himself, drove us down again. Then there was the stalker at Forest Lodge in Glen Tilt who was so beguiled by my blarney on the telephone about the spirit of Christmas that, one Christmas Eve, he let me and my daughter drive up without charge. After we had done our climb we called at Forest Lodge to thank him and offer him a dram. It was our lucky day, he refused the drink saying we had found the only teetotal stalker in the Grampian region.

On the other hand there were the odd ones, such as the stalker who opened his gate OK in the morning but then forgot so that, just as we were getting ready to wet our whistles and were in a nice relaxed

condition, we found ourselves locked in with not a soul for miles around.

My last memory is of a February meet when Mike Godden and I set out to climb Gulvain. We had walked some way up the glen when the stalker appeared and, in a perfectly polite manner, requested that we keep off that hill as they were deer counting. It was very irritating but we could do nothing but agree and, in return, beg a lift in his van back to the car at which point the following conversation took place. Stalker: 'Are you after the Munros?' Mike: 'Yes, I've just started but he (indicating me) is near his end'. Stalker: 'Aye, I can see that.' That put me in my place.

But to end on a cheerful note. I strongly recommend anyone who is seeking the remote and the unexpected in the Highlands to arrange to eat their supper in Morgan's Den, in the signal box with its 360 ° view. If you left Roy Bridge by the morning train the evening and climbed the 3 Munros round Lock Ossian you will have time to kill before catching the evening train back and how better to kill before catching the evening train back and how better to kill time than to eat your supper. Mrs. Morgan will let you use her equipment. We fed there and what's more we entertained a young French girl who was on her way from Skye to Exeter. Also present was a young Dutch couple and a couple of Spaniards lurked somewhere downstairs. I thought it all a bit grotty but not so my companions; they all thought it had atmosphere and provided a fitting end to a memorable day.

In Praise of Ski Poles

David Smith

Whilst crossing the Glacier D'Argentiere in 1989 I observed two climbers heading for the hut up a stony path at a rate of knots propelling themselves with ski poles. At the hut I discovered that they were telescopic and could be secreted away inside a rucksack.

Disastrous memories of crossing Scottish bums in flood gave me the thought that these poles could assist a crossing either when balancing on rocks or as vaulting poles. The President and I duly purchased pairs. I soon discovered that in descent on snow, rock or grass a great load was taken off my knees, the worse for ware after many stupid gallops downhill in earlier years. Why are young people not warned of the impending discomfort of later years?

In an interesting article by Dr. Gottfried Neureuther, a mountain doctor, the following figures are quoted. 'Each ski pole placement takes between 5 and 8 kg weight off the lower part of the body, which is equivalent to a total of 13 tons during a one hour walk on flat ground and an amazing 34 tons total load reduction when walking downhill'.

The shearing force on the knee has a long term effect, on those joints. 'Apart from the protection afforded to the joints this partial load transfer from the lower to upper extremities results in more even stress distribution; the mountaineer tires less quickly, a fact which is highlighted when one considers that during an average excursion with four hours ascent and three hours descent the employment of telescopic ski poles will reduce the total load exerted on the lower limbs by approximately 200 tons'.

Ski poles can be of great help on wet or slippery ground, on snow or ice, on windy ridges or on scree and boulders in bad weather. One could even use them as tent poles. When traversing horizontally each pole can be set to different lengths to accommodate the particular slope of the ground. Used in a similar manner as when ascending on ski, either walking speed is increased or much of the effort is transferred to the upper limbs.

Poles are available in two, three or four pieces and one variety has an ice axe blade above the usual ski pole handles. Cost £40-£50. Each pole weighs about 10½ oz, the four piece variety are 22 inches long and can be extended to 54 inches.



Misunderstood Change.

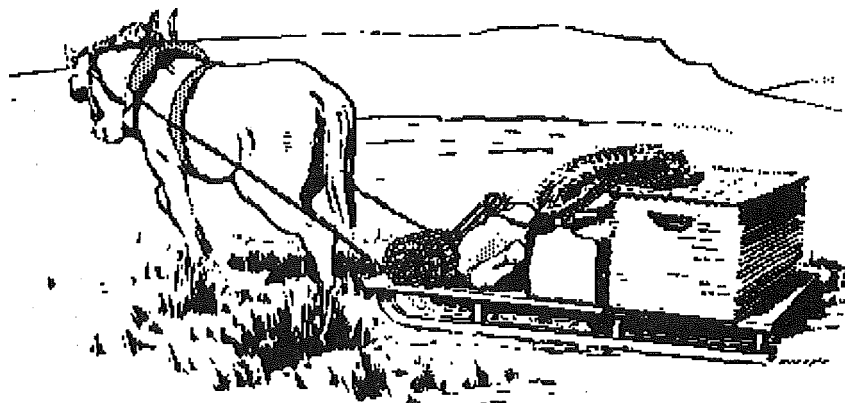
Derek A. Smithson,

A landowner's representative explained to me that my petty vandalism, an expression of disapproval, could have very serious consequences. He had the wisdom to widen the conversation and I'd like others to hear the things I learned.

We talked of an industry with a more serious risk from uncontrolled fire than any other. The loss of life would be large, because of the loss of future generations. It is the industry that preserves the habitat of many species on the North Yorkshire Moors. It is the grouse rearing, preserving and killing industry, whose bi-product is preservation of the moors and many other species that livethere. Urban people like me don't see the serious risk from moorland fires in the way we can see the risk from fire in the local chemical industry. Some peoples' lives are at risk from fire in these chemical plants and the equipment would take up to five years to replace. The people working on the moors have the fires of 1935 and 1960 in their minds where no amount of money can repair

the damage done. It requires hundreds of years of natural regeneration. A period of time beyond my mind to grasp. The loss of life in these fires must have been enormous but the value of non-human lives is not easily reckoned.

My disapproval of roads damaging the natural beauty is put into perspective by some better realisation of the size and complexity of the moor preservation and grouse killing industry. Like I.C.I. and B.S.C., the moors need access roads for fire fighting. No one builds roads for three or four days shooting each year. One does build them as fire breaks and for access. The access needs to be from the centre of the estate, not through other people's property on the perimeter. One of these centres is at Bransdale for an estate which extends from Famdale to Bilsdale and a long way south of the Lyke Wake walk. Anyone thinking of taking steps to stop grouse shooting must accept responsibility for the costs of fire precautions or risk the loss of the North Yorkshire Moors for ever. And I must learn another way to dissipate my unreasonable anger at changes I don't understand.



"You can do it Billy"

Bill Todd

It was a showery mixed up morning as we parked in the picnic car park up Glen Brittle and set off to explore Coire na Creiche. The idea of the trip was to introduce Juliet White to some of the higher delights of the Highlands and Islands. Today we were using the Walk 12 notes from Wilson Parker's book as a guide.

The cloud level was about 2,000' making it a good day for low levels. Following the River Brittle the first remarkable thing we saw was a sort of miniature Strid. This proved the easiest stream crossing of the day albeit only for photography. Continuing, the Alt a Mhaim was difficult; the book said "a large stride", some stride. Turning into the Coire the gorge and water scenery was magnificent right until we joined the path from Bealach a Mhaim near Sgurr an Feadhain. We started to realise at this stage that the water levels were way above normal due to heavy rains and melt water. After lunch we ventured up to where the Alt Coire a Mhadaidh "falls pleasantly between rocks, further progress may be impossible under wet conditions." It was impossible for us and we used the scree gully on the left to attain the floor of Coire a Mhadaidh. Here a hailstorm prompted us to return to the car via Bealach a Mhaim. We met two chaps who have been on Gillean and decided we had missed nothing by keeping low "hailstones like cricket balls".

I had been up two of the Sky Munros but not Broach na Frith, supposed to be the easiest. Juliet

wanted to climb a Black Cuillin so on the next fine day we walked up to Fionn Coire from Sligachan. Here we fell in with a fellow guest at the hotel, David Clark. The augmented party soon got up to the start of the Fionn Coire snowfield, extending about 600' up to the ridge. I started off in the lead but was soon superseded by David and before too long we got up to Bealach nan Lice and enjoyed the view over Lota Coire to Blaven Group. Turning right a traverse over snow brought us to a rock eyrie where we met Jill Aidersley coming down from the Broach. I knew I'd seen her before and of course it was at the 1992 dinner. From here it was just the final snow and rock ridge to the summit, magnificent.

Anywhere else but Scotland subsequent days would have been an anticlimax but they all turned out well worthwhile. We climbed up the shoulder of Sron na Ciche the next day coming down by the Sgumain Stone Shoot. This was new to me and when we arrived at a cairn on a flat boulder halfway down I thought I had better check so I asked some nearby climbers "Is this the easy way down?" They must have thought we were in some distress because the cry was "Don't move. We'll come up to you". In fact as most people must know below the cairn is a pleasant scramble for a score feet before resuming on scree. I felt like some sort of tourist who gets halfway down Broad Stand and asks "Does the path go down here".

Again with David we had a splendid day in the Quiraing, a real wonderland of pinnacles and gorges with the famous table where they hid the cattle from sea raiders. I don't know whether the cattle grazed on the

Table, I had all on to get myself up and down the loose steep gully.

If Skye was magnificent Dundonnell was no less so. Juliet was particularly impressed with the Summer Isles, shimmering in the sun on a perfect day. This was a sentimental journey for me because thirty years before Joan and I had had a holiday at Achiltibuie and done some climbing on the sea cliffs at Reiff, now the haunt of some of the top operators.

Glas Meall Mor was the only mainland peak we climbed, going up by the fabulous Ardessie Falls, again in peerless weather. The glen proved admirable as a gradual means of ascent and the climb would have been even more effortless without the snowfield in Coire a Mhuillin. Unlike the Skye snow this was hard and in default of crampons we had to walk round it. The last stretch to the summit was fun with scrambles over outcrops and red sandstone like piles of biscuits, but steadier.

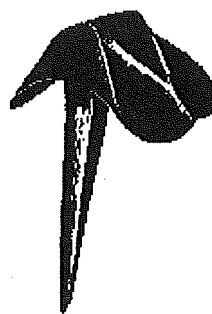
Our final day out was a walk up to Coire Toll an Lochan, the heart of An Teallach. We started from the Coire Hallie Car Park as recommended in "The Munros", crossed the Chaorochain Burn and joined the quartzite ridge that runs up Coire Guibhsachain. This proved very pleasant in cloudy but dry conditions. At the top we turned right and went over the shoulder of Sail Liath towards the coire. Here we found a sandstone boulder balanced on a plinth of three small stones like a Norber boulder.

The cloud lifted as we got into the coire and gave us good views of Corrag Bhuide and Sgurr Fiona while

lunching. The walk back down the glen was uneventful until near the end. First I slipped into the AIt a Glas Thuill and soaked my feet then I led the party to an impasse when less than 100 yards from the road. The path led between rhododendrons but stopped at the Gharb AIt, swollen and swiftly running this was a real facer, although the path continued on the other side. The map showed a footbridge but there was no sign of it. I'd been there last year but couldn't for the life of me remember how I'd crossed the stream, the myth of Todd-like infallibility took a real tumble.

Casting about among the trees and bushes we crossed a subsidiary stream by a log then climbed a fence to get back to the road. A serious search established that there was no footbridge and a look at my diary showed that the AIt must have been much easier to cross last year a bit above this year's impasse.

Thus ended one of the best Scottish holidays I have had for many a year. Oh, what was it that Billy could do? I've quite forgotten!



Lost Again

Derek Smithson

In 1994 a party got lost after the early start for the 'Long Walk'. They had maps, compasses and even an altimeter. They had well over a hundred years of mountaineering experience between them. They managed to miss the notable features by a small distance, but in mist, however they travelled far and in many directions before they were convinced they were lost. It reminded two of them of another early start for a 'Long Walk' when a good sized party of walkers found themselves in the middle of a misty moor without any accurate knowledge of their whereabouts. The excuse that time was that in such a large party everyone was sure there was someone who knew where they were going. How do we achieve this mismanagement? Where do we repeatedly find the high level of skill to extract ourselves from situations that a very little skill would have avoided?

The one I like best was the occasion when I was not among the lost sheep. When the club was attempting the Lakeland 3000's, a large leading party failed to turn right into Rossitt Ghyll and spread themselves all over Bowfell. I remember thinking at the time that they must know a better way because they were all familiar with the area and there was no mist, only darkness. So they added Bowfell to their list of summits.

A Wilderness Walk

T.E. Edwards

A walk through the Fisherfield and Letterewe deer forests from Dundonnell to Poolewe has been described as long and strenuous across an uninhabited and mountainous wilderness. To combine it with an ascent of five Corbetts seemed to be an appropriate challenge for two members of the YRC.

The middle of May was selected as it appeared to offer the best chance of settled weather, a matter of some importance since there is virtually no shelter and no escape routes in the event of adverse weather or other difficulty. This time of year also offered relative freedom from midges and from conflict with deer stalking interests in an area hitherto known for its apparent antagonism towards visitors. Possible camp sites were selected beforehand to minimise the carrying of full packs over summits.

Come Hallie, our starting point, is not quite the place it used to be. Gone is the small shop for purchase of the final things one forgot, and parking is quite a significant problem. Such appears to be the attraction of A'Mhaighdean and its satellites, but also for Shenevall Bothy. We actually met two German visitors who assured us that a visit to the bothy was a must in their tourist guide books!

The track to Shenevall is now wide and worn and easy to follow. Pausing

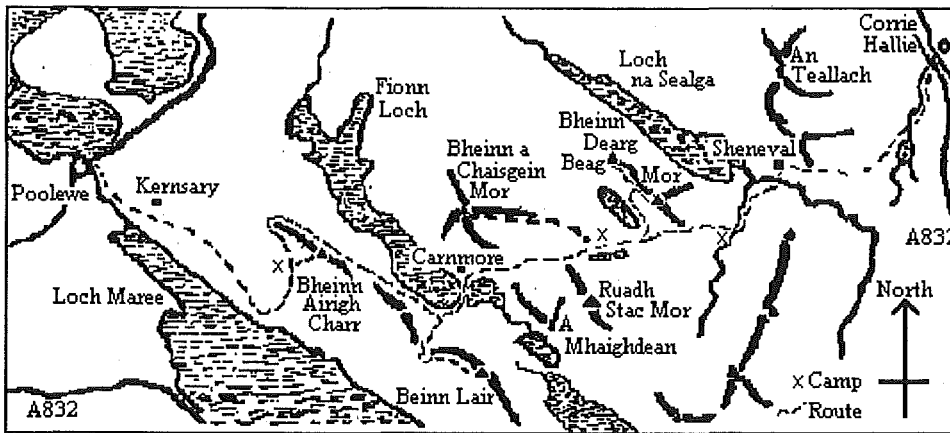
on the tiresome downhill section to the bothy we had a superb view of two of our Corbetts - Bevinn Dearg Mor and the lower Beinn Dearg Bheag - the next day standing majestically across Strath na Sealga with its two potentially problematical river crossings. The bothy was busy so we moved on to the first river crossing which in the event caused us no problem - our feet were dry. A way across the second river crossing had to be teased out but eventually a camp stop was made at the Gleann na Muice and Gleann na Muice Bheag junction of the paths. The isolation of the area was underlined by the plaque commemorating the death of two walkers in an explosion which destroyed the old bothy near Larachantivare. The open tent flap revealed the majestic An Teallach glowing red in the brilliant evening sun. The cold clear night was uneventful apart from an hallucinating experience of the deer making off with the bread supply.

Day one proper saw us decamp to haul the rucsacs up to Loch Bheinn Dearg. Having dumped there, fairly rapid progress up the steep hillside put us on the bealach and after a still steeper scramble over rough ground brought us to the substantial summit cairn of Bhein Dearg Mor magnificent viewpoint and almost a Munro. This is perhaps fortunate in that it has few visitors despite its splendid appearance. Standing at the cairn on a magnificent spring morning brought to mind the contrasting experiences of another YRC member

who fought for the summit in deep winter snows of a February visit.'

At the summit we met the only two people on any of our hills; they appeared to be doing the opposite of our route but with the addition of "a few Munros thrown in for good measure". After repeatedly drinking in the astonishingly clear views we descended steeply to the bealach and re-climbed steeply over rocks to the narrow airy summit of Bheinn Dearg Bheag our second Corbett. Here by contrast with that of its bigger neighbour the cairn consists of approximately four small rocks - not very convincing as a summit in bad weather or a white out.

Reluctantly a descent was made to collect the sacs at the lock and a very steep ascent made on the Carnmore track westwards. After some huffing and puffing the level section was reached and a camp site chosen for our second night at Lochan Feith Mhic Ilean. With the day still young and the sun shining from a cloudless blue sky easy walking uphill in a strong chilling wind brought us to our third Corbett of the day with its ancient looking cairn hidden amongst the summit rocks. Beinn a'Chaisgein Mor has a dramatic Jekyll and Hyde character - compare the easy easterly route of our ascent with the precipitous eastern faces of Cammor and Sgurr na Laocainn climbing crags. It also affords a dramatic view of the coast and the islands together with views of the A'Mhaighdean and our hills climbed earlier in the day.



Day three began with minor excitement, the water reserve inside the tent had frozen. This perhaps wasn't surprising as one of the occupants with an inadequate sleeping bag had risen several times during the night to don extra clothes. Another surprise on opening the tent door was a dramatic view of the 400 metre high crags of Beinn Lair's north east face. Somewhere at the top of those cliffs was our summit of later in the day.

The next stage of the walk was pure delight - a downhill section on a well-made Victorian stalkers track which led us down to Carnmore and the causeway crossing between the Fionn Loch and the **Dubh** Loch. A curious feature of the causeway was movable spiked railings presumably to keep the deer on Colonel Whitbread's patch. They could easily be replaced to keep out today's visitors. The pressure exerted by human visitors to a wilderness area was clearly seen at Carnmore with several tents pitched nearby, which was a far cry from the days when visiting climbers tents were vandalised. The fashion nowadays is said to involve hacksawing of mountain bicycle frames! One hopes that this is not true. Despite the presence of humans we had an excellent sighting of an otter

swimming freely near the shore of the Fionn Loch.

We were jolted from our lethargy by the thought of the next objective - the summit cairn of Beinn Lair. Leaving the sacs again we set off by the initially steep and eroded path over the Bealach Mheimidh, the old supply route from Letterewe on Loch Maree to Carnmore. Nowadays supplies go in by boat along the Fionn Loch. From the summit of the path fine views across Loch Maree to Liathach, Ben Eighe and the peaks of the Flowerdale forest unfolded. We followed the edge of Beinn Lair's dramatic cliffs over stony ground to the huge plateau-like summit of Beinn Lair with a very fine tall conical cairn topped with gleaming quartzite rock. What a fine place on a fine day; being on this mountain on a day of gales and storms with rescue at least 20 kilometres away made us reflect on our good fortune. Putting this thought behind us we descended by the path to our rucksacs and lunch.

After lunch with the sun high overhead and a deteriorating path under our feet, we made slower progress high above the Fionn Loch towards our fifth Corbett - Beinn Airigh Chaff. Part way along the path the significance of even the smallest

of cairns in Scotland was brought home to us - a junction of routes which we wanted to find. A couple of Mars bars at this point enabled us to admire the profusion of spring flowers and more dramatically the steep side of Martha's Peak. Martha was a legendary figure who fell off the Peak while tending a herd of goats. We decided to give the corrie at the side of the crag a miss and to continue around the north side of the Corbett to our previously identified final camp site. This was a good site with a stream nearby and a stalkers track for the morrow. After a very windy night, sleep being at a premium in a flapping tent, the stalkers track was followed in a south easterly direction to a wide bealach, then finally very steeply up a slag-strewn slope to the sharp summit of the hill. Being nearer the coast than the other Corbetts and standing in a more isolated position we expected a grand view, and we got it through 360°. The view even included 'The Hebridean Princess', erstwhile the Caledonian MacBrayne 1St. Columba', at anchor off the National Trust's splendid Inverewe Gardens. We reflected on the cost of a weeks cruise on this boat in the high season of £4000 per person. Our land cruise by comparison seemed to be a very modest affair in keeping with Club tradition. Before leaving Beinn Airigh Charr we were reminded of the looming fate of ordnance survey triangulation stations i.e. trig. points, so reassuring in uncertain circumstances. A wrecked stone trig point and a cannibalised circular concrete one in bad shape completed the summit furniture. Satellite surveying may be all very well in the future but the reassurance of the Trip point will be missed, unless one can find a sponsor for the one on Beinn Airigh Charr for example!

Filled with the enthusiasm of having collected our five planned Corbetts we set off at a pace to pack up the tent and head for Poolewe. With the spectacular mountain scenery now behind, we were rewarded on our walk-out with amazingly beautiful and luscious vegetation and the brilliant springtime colours of the rhododendrons and azaleas in the vicinity of the finely situated house of Inveran.

In a couple of miles we were there, Poolewe and the public road. Though this sounded fine we reminded ourselves that the car was still 26 miles away on a road with no public transport. However, Tuesday was the day after, just time for liquid refreshment at the oh so convenient hostelry and mutual congratulations, Wullie arrived as usual on Tuesdays in his white transit van. He travelled the Highlands delivering electrical components and I suspect had several times helped stranded across-wilderness travellers. After a speedy journey to Carrie Hallie along the spectacular coastline road with a full commentary worthy of a coach tour we were relieved to get to our car.

In summary a magnificent 38 mile walk in dramatic surroundings under what turned out to be brilliant and settled weather. In fact the walk was so successful we thought a winter traverse might be challenging; then again it might not, when one thought of a climber not found for eight months less than three miles from a main road.

One final thought: nowadays it is not a wilderness, one hopes that the fate of Knoydart in recent times will not befall Fisherfield and Letterewe.

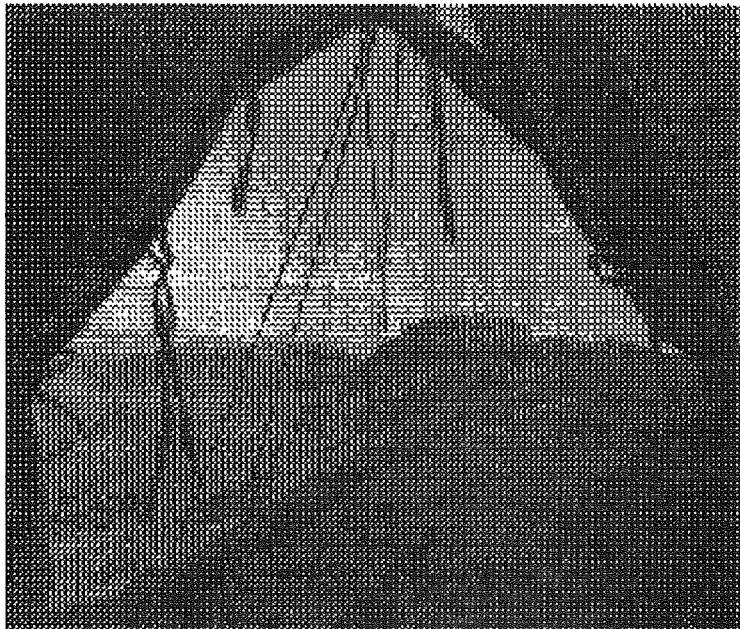
Back in '56 - 1956

Derek A. Smithson

Following this first paragraph are almost exact copies of a log written shortly after some weekend outings in the Lake District in 1956. I found them interesting to read because they illustrate our views and attitudes in those days. Vibrams were the new thing for us to climb in. Tents were sold without sewn in ground sheets. Mountain accidents were recorded but it was not normal to dwell on the detail as we do now. We helped carry down a man who had been pulled off a climb on Kernknotts and who was dead. The man who pulled him off, through no fault of his, was nearly hysterical. We walked away from our rucsacs, full of camping and climbing gear, quite certain that they would be there untouched for us to retrieve. For me there is the bonus that it reminds me of when I was young and fit and travelled on foot in the lakes was still an adventure. The original record was made as a reminder of the problems of travel in the dark.

On Friday, early in June, we drove to Seathwaite, arriving there at about 11.00 pm. We followed the normal path via Stockley Bridge to Sty Head. Though it was cold, we found we were then above the mist and the Gable traverse was fairly easy to follow on this moon lit night. We did, however, lose the path below Sphinx Rock and not find it again until we were almost on Beck Head. Even in daylight the path can be lost here. At about 2.00 am, we pitched the tent behind a boulder on Beck Head, hoping to find some shelter from the cold wind. I was on the windward side and did not sleep very well for the wind seemed to blow straight through my sleeping bag.

We made coffee, ate some Vita Wheat with honey and packed up at about 6.30 am. We traversed the Northern side of Kirkfell and walked along Looking Stead and the High Level route to Robinson's Cairn. Here we pitched the tent and had a meal. By this time, the clear cold morning had developed into a beautiful sunny day and the wind had disappeared.



Pillar rock looked wonderful and too tempting to resist, even to sun bathe. We followed Green Ledge to the waterfall, stopping only to look at Walkers Gully with the thought of doing it the next day. To the left of the waterfall we found a well marked route, of about difficult standard, which led us to the bottom of the New West route. We had both climbed the New West route before but enjoyed doing it again, as one must always enjoy such wonderful routes. At the top we finished the climb by going up the rough slabs, instead of following the correct route into a short chimney. A glorious climb and ideal conditions!

We sat and smoked and talked on the top for some time before descending Slab and Notch. It was late afternoon, so we returned to the tent for a proper meal. After idling in the sun for some time, the rock again attracted us and back we went. This time we climbed the North Climb. We were both repulsed by the Nose and I descended into Savage Gully to carry the rope round to safeguard Cliff on this fantastically exposed place. Our weary descent was by the Old West Route and back to our camp for 11.00 pm, too tired even to go for water for our morning coffee.

The next morning, it was still windless and sunny, so after a quick breakfast we were back on Pillar. Walkers Gully did not seem very attractive to our inflexible muscles, mine at least. We climbed the N.E. climb, which we found to be as pleasurable as the two more famous climbs done the day before. On descending by the Old West route, we were surprised and pleased to meet Reg Goddard, who had come up late the previous night. Having failed to

find us, he had slept under a rock and slept late. To allow him to climb before returning home I carried his framed rucksack round to the camp whilst he and Cliff turned back to the crag. Back at the camp, I packed up the tent and put water on to boil so that when my friends' yodels announced their approach the water was boiling. After a meal the three of us returned to Sty Head via Aaron Slack. About half way down to Stockley Bridge were stopped by a man descending more quickly than us and told of an accident on Great Gable. We lowered our packs and returned to the Sty Head box in time to help with the carry which finished at Seathwaite where an ambulance was waiting.

. We drove home feeling very tired but prepared for another week confined to industrial Teesside.

In the middle of October, Cliff and I again left Seathwaite at 11.00 pm. This time our intention was to walk to Hollow Stones, below Scafell, and set our tent up there. We walked towards Stockley Bridge and then turned right, across the stream and up the shoulder on the right hand side of Taylor's Ghyll until we struck the path. We followed the path to the Sty Head box. The night was cold and clear. There was light enough to distinguish the well worn path but the inability to judge the size of stones made walking difficult. We did not know the Corridor Route and lost the path soon after leaving the Sty Head box. With the help of a torch and a certain amount of hard work, we found the track again but lost our night sight. From this time on we used a torch continuously. We did once try to do without it but, though I think our night sight returned, we had

lost the patience to stumble along in the dark. At about 2.30 pm we dropped down into a valley. Having already crossed Piers Ghyll and Skew Ghyll, we thought it might be Hollow Stones so we turned off the path and pitched the tent.

The next morning was misty but we could see enough to know that we were not at Hollow Stones. We knew we had travelled for about two and a half hours from Sty Head, so the question was, had we passed Hollow Stones or not reached them. After coffee and Vita Wheat, we walked up to the ridge at the head of the valley. The mist did not clear but we found a well worn path along the ridge. This path, we reasoned, could only exist at Mickledore, and we weren't there, or between Broad Crag and Scafell Pikes. Our lack of judgement of the distance moved in the dark had given us a walk of about two hours over Scafell Pikes instead of twenty minutes round the bottom. Having crossed the summit of Scafell Pike and having resisted the impulse to pitch the tent on top of its big cairn, we made camp just above Hollow Stones. We then cooked a meal, wondering if the rock would be in a fit condition to climb in Vibram.

We walked up to Scafell crag and spent an hour or so looking for a climb. In the end, we allowed the wet mist to drive us down to the drier level at our tent. Whilst I was lying in the tent, Cliff disappeared into the mist towards Pikes Crag. After a while shouts and whistles persuaded me to leave the tent and guided me to the foot of Grooved Arete. The rock was reasonably dry here. The climb was strenuous, partially because of the nature of the climb and partially because of our insecure footing on the

greasy rock. Having started the climb about 4.00 pm we had to keep moving because we knew darkness would fall about 6.00 pm. We reached the top just as darkness really fell. The sunset we saw was of the type read about. Below us at about 2500 ft, there was a continuous layer of white fleecy cloud extending into the golden band of the setting sun. Showing as black crescents against this light were the summits of Great Gable, Pillar and Steeple. It was a sight I hope never to forget, but a sight I don't expect to see again. We set up an abseil down the eastern side of the crag only to find that the darkness had deceived us. After ten feet we were on easy ground. During the meal that followed, we remembered that it was the weekend of the Wasdale Fair and decided to go down to the hotel to join our friends. It was a hard journey back to the tent.

The following morning was fine and sunny but we were not at our best. Even though it was comfortably warm we avoided the harder climbs. We by-passed the bottom pitch of Deep Ghyll by a route on its left and continued up Robinson's Chimney to join the West Wall Traverse. We then climbed Old Professor Chimney, which only has one real pitch, and on the Pisgah, Highman and Lowman of the Pinnacle. After this look round, which I particularly enjoyed because it was my first clear day on Scafell, we returned to the camp to eat and pack. Then we walked back along the Corridor Route in our shirt sleeves on the beautiful October day. Another enjoyable, if not very successful weekend.

A Changing View

Derek A. Smithson

A weekend in the Lakes left me contented and relaxed from the bustle of a busy life, if my log is to be believed. My mind had been distracted by the fairly straight forward task of completing the outward journey and then had a couple of days with good friends and finally there was a contemplative, short return in good weather. Now I am retired, I don't have the bustle of a busy life, but I do have time to repeat journeys and I have the time to go mid-week to miss the crowds. So, one Monday in June 1994, I arrived in Keswick by bus at lunch time and set out. I had in mind to check the fit of my plastic boots and I fancied a solitary trip in the mountains.

I set off under a clear blue sky, with a hot June sun and a cooling breeze. My journey was to take me over Cat Bells and Maiden Moor to camp at Black Beck Tarn. Then across Haystacks to Red Pike, a descent into Ennerdale and then up to camp at Scoat Tarn, as I had in 1985. The plan for the third day was to traverse Pillar, Kirkfell and Great Gable to a comp at sprinkling Tarn. Followed by a morning descent via Glaramara to start the bus journey home. In the event, the deteriorating weather took away any pleasure in traversing the mountain tops, so I traversed the Ennerdale side of Kirkfell and Gable, descended Aaron Slack and traversed Glaramara so as to sleep in a club hut at Rosthwaite. Heavy rain the next morning put me off the walk to Keswick which would have made a pleasant concluding outing.

The hoped for solitude was elusive. On a fine day, even mid-week, Cat Bells and Maiden Moor can be expected to draw a crowd, but not the haystacks or Pillar Mountain before 9.00 am. On these latter places it seemed reasonable to expect solitude in the early morning particularly mid-week. The marks made on the ground by others were unacceptable for most of the route and the major highways marked out between Esk Hause and Styhead were thronged with people. And these people were there on a day when the cloud was down to 1200 ft and there was a strong cold wind. The path along Glaramara was not crowded but was clear to see even in the misty conditions. The gusty wind skewed the rucsac and sometimes I had to brace myself to avoid being blown sideways. It was along here that I formed the view that mountaineering is finished in the Lake District. Gone is the need to see more than 10 m it is enough to have the strength to follow the path. It brought a great sadness to me. The beauty is still there. The journey through the trees to the foot of Cat Bells gave delightful scenes and the views across Borrowdale and Buttermere are difficult to better. There is still a joy in seeing the sigh rise in the evening at Black Beck Tarn.

This journey did not lead to quiet contentment, but I don't have a stressful life. And then it is well known that old people are excessively critical of change. The journey in May 1985 that did lead to contentment was described as follows:

"There was a struggle to get disentangled from work and a family problem, but finally I was on the road

clear of normal daily life. However I was later than intended and drove towards the Lakes weighing the chances of erecting a tent at Black Beck Tarn before dark, and wishing I had packed a decent torch. It was 8.20 pm when I left the car at the top of Honister and 9.00 pm when I off loaded at the Tarn. Just enough light left to erect the tent.

The night was totally still and rather humid. The absolute silence was welcome. With lambing in progress in the valleys there were few sheep on the hills to disturb the silence. It rained lightly in the night and these conditions continued constant throughout the next day. There was hardly a breath of wind, a very humid atmosphere and occasional showers. The walk over High Crag and High Stile was taken very steadily. There were no views through the cloud and few people. A staggering lamb showed that some lambs are still born up here on the hills. I felt the only objective in this steamy, enclosed world was to get to Gatesgarth, in Ennerdale, and sit without the rucsac eating lunch. The often spoke of 'brew up' was in my mind, but, as usual, when the time came I drank cold water rather than unpack. The rucsac seemed unreasonably heavy as I was carrying climbing gear.

The path up to the pass between Haycock and Scoat Fell does not start where the map indicates, but after the heather changed to grass there was no need of one. The steep boulder covered slope, camouflaged with heather was exhausting and exasperating. After a second total collapse, I explored without the rucsac and found a good path and stile, one hundred yards to my left. It

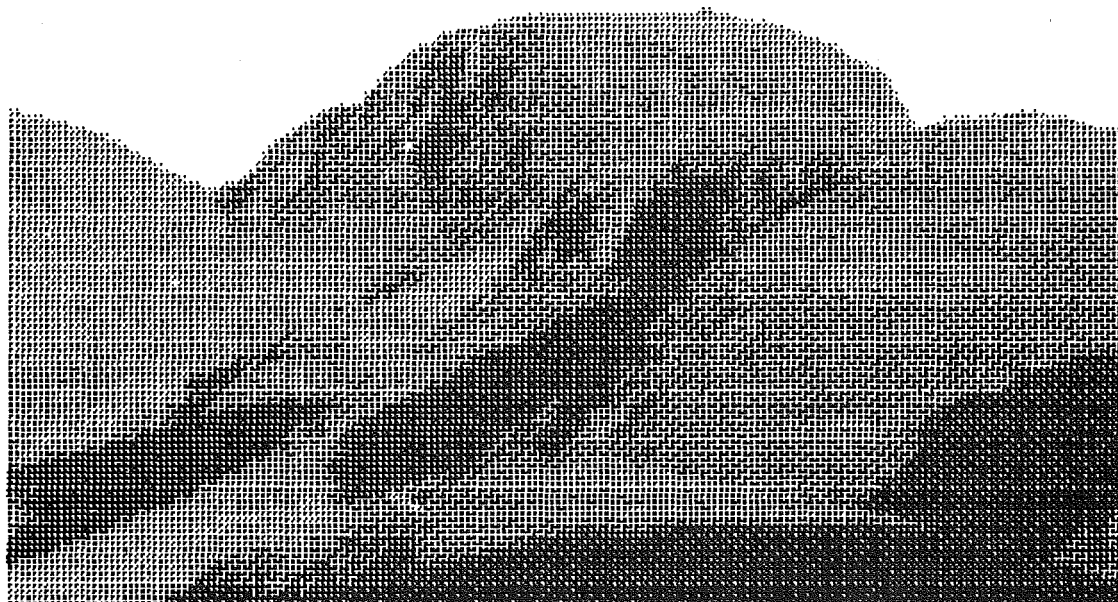
proved to be an attractive route to Steeple and would have eased much of my journey. It did ease it for about a mile, until it started to descend a small valley before the north ridge of Steeple. At this point, I turned south again across fairly level short heather which became grass all the way to the pass. The traverse round to Scoat Tarn was comfortable even in the limited visibility and the sight of the four tents very welcome. No one was in camp so I could concentrate on getting the tent up, a long hot drink and a little lie down, before being sociable.

Two days later.

The cloud was clear of all the tops by morning. The wind had eased and the tents were nearly dry. I roused myself at seven and was packed and on my way shortly after eight o'clock. Ron and I walked up from the Tarn onto Coat Fell and across Pillar Mountain to Black Sail Pass. We met a man on the top of Pillar who was as shocked as us to see anyone else so early. The cloud stayed high and the day seemed to be improving. In fact, by the time I reached Keswick there was blue sky with only patches of cloud. Ron and I parted at Black Sail. He went back to the camp via Wasdale. As he was already retired, he could remain in camp another day. The route from Black Sail was a reminder of weekends spent climbing on Pillar Rock and returning this way. I traversed the side of Kirkfell and round the head of Ennerdale to Fleetwith, above Honister. The path is fairly level and, if more obvious than in the past, is still in good condition. There was a little hail and a little rain, but warm with walking, an anorak did not seem necessary.

I reached the car at mid-day, glad to lower the rucsac but sorry to have to leave the mountains. I pondered. Why were there only nine members wanting to experience what is the

essence of mountaineering. The solitude of the hills, with select company. The possibility of steep mountains and long distances or gentle walks to the pub for lunch.11



Snow Shoes.

Derek A. Smithson.

Travelling on snow shoes is one of the few methods of mountain travel neglected by the YRC.

I had used them in Norway on steep deep powder snow and I had used them to cross local moors in deep snow, but last February in France was the first time I had seen modern design snow shoes. These, I saw, would work as well as my traditionally designed shoes in deep snow. I saw people walk up steep compacted snow without difficulty. Snow that our ski could only just manage with skins. Snow that would almost support ones weight without ski and on which the traditional snow

shoe would not be able to grip. This sold me on the idea and I have bought some.

Now I am waiting for next spring when I will be able to travel, solo if I wish, in the mountains of Norway. I see them as being useful anywhere where the snow allows the foot to sink in as far as the boot top. One of their virtues is to have a lifting heel, like a cross country ski binding, which makes them easier to walk in. They have spikes and narrow edges to bite into compacted snow and they will relieve me of the necessity of taking the additional risks that I associate with ski in the mountains. One needs to be a capable skier to venture into the mountains where as my experience of snow shoes tells me that any idiot can use them. Hence their appeal to me!

A Visit to St. Kilda

by David Laughton

September 1993, I was sitting on the summit of Chaipaval a 1,200 ft peak on the S.W. corner of Harris. To the east I could clearly see the Cuillin of Skye almost 60 miles away; to the west the sharp rock spires of St. Kilda, 40 miles out into the Atlantic just pierced the horizon. I know the Cuillins quite well and decided I must visit St. Kilda in 1994.

After making extensive enquiries I found a suitable trip going out there Spring Bank holiday week, unfortunately it clashed with the Club's Ardgour trip.

I sailed from Oban aboard the 67 ft ex fishing boat, Kylebahn at 6 a.m. on Saturday morning. My fellow passengers at that stage were a young Swiss couple plus the owner/skipper Jim Kilcullen and his wife/cook Grace. The weather was perfect, except for the very cold breeze and we had a wonderful sail up the Sound of Mull, round Ardnamurchan Point, up the S.W. coast of Rhum, across to the S.W. coast of Skye and across the Minch to Lock Maddy. All the mountains were crystal clear and we saw the peaks of the Western Isles from 35 miles away. The night was spent in Lochmaddy Harbour and

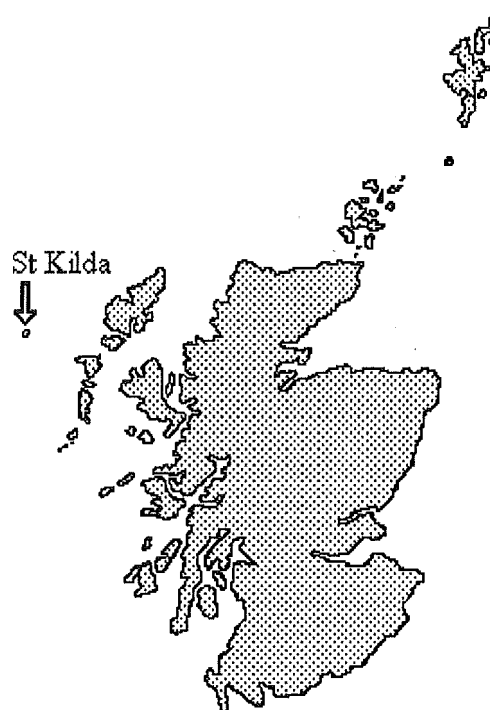
next morning we were joined by an assorted group of seven people on a package organised by a Benbecula company called Celtic Quest, led by the Morgan like proprietor Ray Burnett.

We left at 11.30 on Sunday morning, passed through the Sound of Harris, again in perfect weather and began the 40 mile plod due west. Very soon the peaks of St. Kilda began to appear ahead but it was 8 pm before we arrived. Approaching the islands we were captivated by the impressive 1,400 ft cliffs on Hirta, the main island, and by the off-lying rugged island of Boreray with its two nearby stacks, one 645 ft high, the other 560 ft. On entering Village Bay, our anchorage, however I was dismayed to see the conglomeration of grey army buildings, the radar domes and masts on two of the hills and the intrusive concrete road going up to them. The object of this permanently manned army post is to track rockets launched from the range on Benbecula.

The population of St. Kilda was evacuated from the island in 1930. Their houses, strung out in a long row are, of course, now derelict except where they are being renovated by volunteers from the Scottish National Trust. Some of these volunteers were in residence at the time of our visit as

also was a Nature Conservancy Warden. That first evening we went ashore to explore the old village and to visit the Puff Inn, the army's bar. Village Bay faces east and is very open so that is virtually impossible to remain there in strong onshore winds. During our 3 day visit we were very fortunate that although the winds did reach gale force they came from the west.

On Monday morning we commenced our exploration of the islands, the leader of the Celtic Quest party agreeing that we other three could join them. In fact we were told that it was a requirement of the Nature Conservancy that visitors do not go off individually. It is almost impossible to land on the islands of Soay, Boreray and the stacks and quite difficult to land on the nearer island of Dun except in very calm weather. Accordingly, so far as walking was concerned, we were limited to the largest island - Hirta. All the hills of this island can be covered in a circuit of some 8 miles with 3,500 ft of climbing so could easily be done in a single day. However, we had three days at our disposal and there was much of historical interest to see as well as a profusion of birds and flowers. The night we landed on the island marked the end of some three weeks of good weather and, besides the easterly



gales, we experienced low cloud and some drizzle but very little real rain. In fact, despite the island's reputation for bad weather, there was currently a shortage of water and the volunteer workers were limited to two minute showers - the Army regarded their situation as an official secret.

Naturally on our first day we chose to climb the highest peak Conachair, 1,400 ft, and should have liked to have completed a horseshoe by going via the eastern-most peak Oiseval. However, the Conservancy Warden had asked us not to go up the latter as Peregrines were nesting close to the summit. Instead we followed the almost dry stream up the shallow valley above the village. The sides of this valley, as also most of the island, are littered with stone built cleits,

built by the locals in which they stored their food-seabirds and eggs, plus turves for their fires and fodder for their cattle and sheep. These cleits are usually turf roofed and some 10ft in diameter, 6 ft high, some have been renovated by the volunteers, some are still in good repair and some in ruins - there must be many hundreds of them. The cattle and some sheep were evacuated with the villagers but a flock of Sory sheep were left and are now completely wild and are found all over the island.

Reaching the col at the head of the valley we found the wind so strong that we had to crawl on all fours to peer over the edge. The cliffs dripped away sheer for some 600 ft and were full of nesting seabirds - fulmers, kittiwakes and guillimots mainly. Steep, rough grass slopes now led us to summit, where it was impossible to stand by the cairn in the wind. Keeping below the ridge we came to our next summit Mullach Mor and one of the radar stations. The clouds were now down on the tops but most of us continued along the ridge getting occasional views down into Glen Bay on the other side of the island. Descending back to Village Bay we were dive-bombed by a group of Bronxies (Great Skuas) nesting on the slopes.

Bright sunshine greeted us next morning but the wind was as strong as ever. The Skipper was concerned at the possibility of a change in wind direction in which case we may have to move out so it was agreed we would come back after the 2 pm shipping forecast to see if there could be a problem. In the morning we had a very pleasant climb up a small rock crowned peak Ruaival. Back down to find the forecast OK so climbed back up to the main ridge, unfortunately now in cloud, for an attempt to reach the eastermost point of Hirta - The Cambir. After many up and downs now in drizzle we decided that without a view it wasn't worth it so retreated.

Wednesday saw a delayed start as some of the party had over-indulged in the Puff Inn the previous night, not getting back aboard until after 3 am. In a damp mist we again plodded back up to the Main ridge and descended the other side into Glen Bay, necessitating an ankle aching long traverse across a steep hillside. From here we looked down on the ruins of the only other settlement on the island which may predate the Village Bay settlement. One of these ruins is known as the Amazona House, giving rise to fanciful stories of a race of early women settlers. Our immediate objective was 'The Tunnel', a passage 160 ft long cut through an arm of the

bay by the sea. To reach it we had to scramble down a steep ramp in the cliffs, passing a female eider calmly sitting on her nest, to a fixed rope which led down a very slippery smooth rock to the entrance. A ledge then led right through to the other side. After braving more Bronxie attacks around the old Glen Bay village a ridge walk back over the Cambir completed our explorations of Hirta.

We sailed for home very early on the Thursday morning diverting to circle around the Boreray group between the two stacks Stack Lee (560 ft) and Stac An Armin (645 ft). Both were dazzlingly white not only with guano as I and assumed but many thousands of gannets crammed together on the steep slopes. There were over

100,000 of these birds there in 1973 and there must be many more now, in fact over one quarter of the world's population of gannets nest here. The crossing back to Lock Maddy, where we dropped off the Quest party, was rougher than on the way out but not bad and we continued across the Minch to anchor at midnight in the superb harbour on Canna. We were back in Oban by teatime on Friday.

I had enjoyed the visit immensely but some of the glamour was destroyed by the obtrusive presence of the army - they were even water skiing in the Bay one day! Hopefully defence cuts will eventually cause the removal of their camp and associated radar beacons etc (and the Puff Inn) so that the island can revert to its natural remote and spectacular state.



Scouts and Outposts

Michael Smith

Arthur Evans brought to my attention Lehmann Oppenheimer's 1908 book 'Heart of Lakeland', in response to a query concerning a 'Scouts and Outposts' activity on a meet. In one chapter Oppenheimer describes his experiences and those of a few friends on one such meet.

The game was developed by the Climbers' Club from some sort of man-hunting sport pursued by 'Cambridge men'.

The Rules:

Duration: 10am to 3pm though Outposts may move into position earlier.

Players: Several Scouts, about two dozen Outpost 'men'. Outposts wear white arm bands. Scouts wear red arm bands.

Aim: Scouts make their way to a target point without being 'captured' by the Outposts. Outposts seek to capture Scouts on the way to the target point without being put 'out of action' by the Scouts.

Areas: A fixed target point is designated, normally a peak top.

The three quarters of a mile (1.2km) radius circle around that point is the exclusion zone. The zone is only open for access to Outposts after 2pm or when in hot pursuit of a Scout.

A range of possible start points, well outside the exclusion zone, is agreed. Maps are supplied with the target, exclusion zone limit and start points all marked.

The playing area should be wild, rough ground to include ample cover and lookout points.

Organisation: The Captain of the Outposts deploys the Outposts, initially outside the exclusion zone. Scouts may work individually or in groups.

Capture: A Scout is captured when two Outposts, both within 100 yards of him, simultaneously call on him to surrender. A captured Scout plays no further part in the game but may make his way to the target.

Out of Action: An Outpost is put out of action by being touched by a Scout. An out of action Outpost plays no further active part in the game but follows the instructions of the Scout.

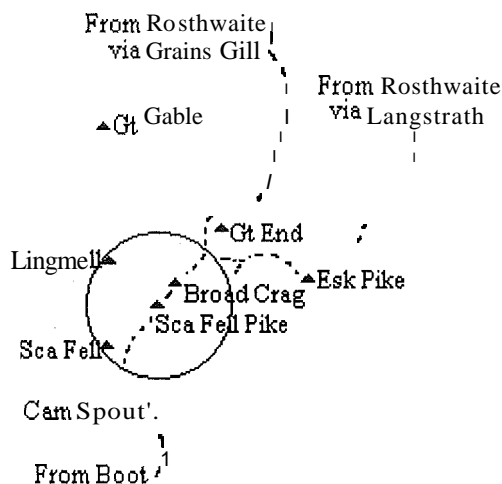
Strategies: If all the Outposts are close to the circle round the exclusion zone then they are about 300 yards apart. The use of some Outposts as lookouts sent towards the Scouts increases that separation but may give warnings that allow redeployment of Outposts to higher risk areas. Lookouts would identify Scouts and then fall back, ahead of the Scouts, to communicate with the other outposts.

Lone and isolated Outposts are at greater risk of being put out of action. Scouts need to balance cautious movement making use of available cover and unexpected routes with the need to move quickly enough to reach the target in time and allowing time to lie low if spotted but not captured.

Concerted action by Scouts can weaken one part of the circle so reducing the risk of capture.

The weather affects visibility and communication and thus the strategies to be employed.

Scoring: Points are awarded:
 To the Scouts
 3 points for each uncaptured Scout reaching the target
 1 point for each Outpost placed out of action
 To the Outposts
 3 points for each out of time or captured Scout.

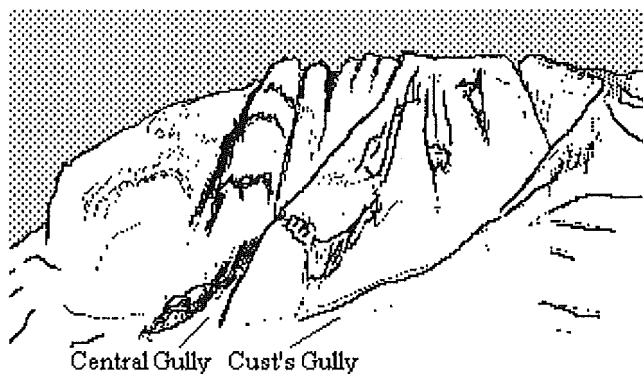


Oppenheimer describes an event with Sea Fell Pike as the target and Wastdale Head, Boot and Rosthwaite as the start points. The weather was, unfortunately for the Scouts, bright and clear, a sunny day.

He set off from Rosthwaite, heading for Great End, an obvious Outpost lookout point, with the sun directly into his face. Making use of what cover there was he went up Grains Gill, round the west shoulder of Great End and took the broken ground between the head of Skew Gill and the middle Pike

On reaching the top of Grains Gill he waited, below the edge, for a large party to come along and fell in with it. Unfortunately they soon stopped for lunch.

Hearing whistles near the west shoulder of Great End he realised that had been spotted and headed for the cover of Cust's Gully. Near the top



he met ice that, without an axe, he could not cross so descended and moved nearer to Central Gully. Resting at the top of this he peeped over the brim ready for the rush to the top of Great End.

Immediately on setting off he surprised a single outpost who had sent others down in search. Putting the outpost out of action they moved together along the path to towards Broad Crag.

The Captain who made for them as if to berate them for neglecting their posts then realised the situation and dashed off to avoid being put out of action and to start calling in support.

Well before the 2pm deadline he was within the circle and beyond all outposts except the Captain who was, of course, harmless on his own. Pushing on quickly he made the target with 1½ hours to spare.

The other Scouts from Rosthwaite took too long in going via Lang Strath and Esk Pike before splitting up before the exclusion zone then running out of time. The two from Boot sneaked past Cam Spout within earshot of Outposts and made it unchallenged to the top. So the score was 10 to the Scouts and 6 to the Outposts.

Is it practicable nowadays?

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice Wilson

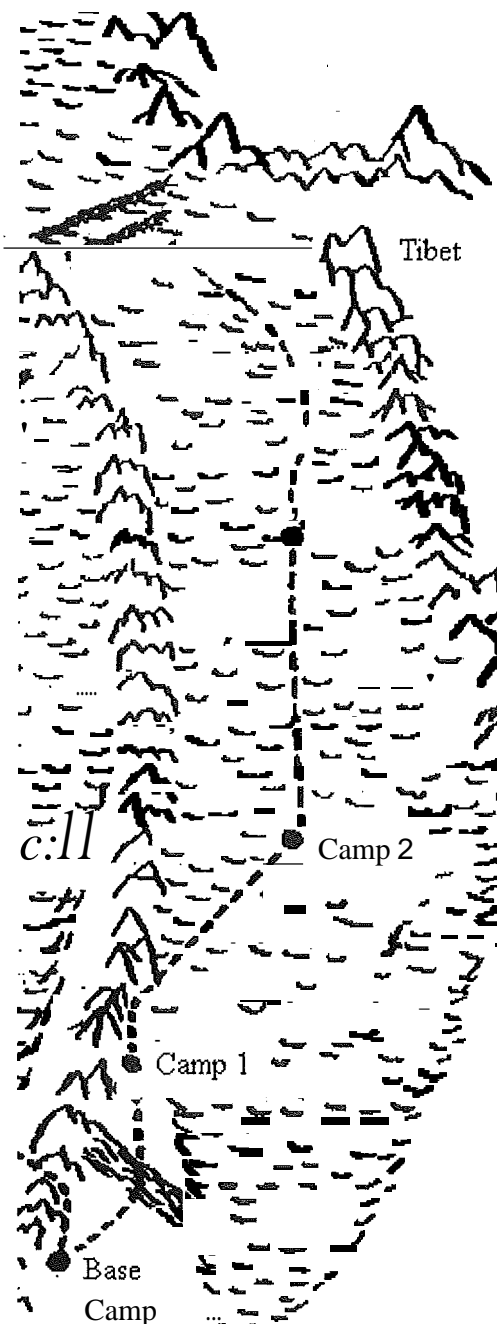
The previous extract left Maurice searching for a site for camp one.

April 17

Much better night and kept warm throughout. Up at 5.30 a.m. and the usual activity. Left camp at 7.00 a.m. probably carrying about 30 lbs. Went quite well. Crossed the Pass and eventually found the others peering into an enormous snow couloir, the first of three running parallel to each other. I was for taking a low route well below the line of fire, on the glacier. However the general feeling was to cross higher, so we ascended over rather tricky snow. High up on the flank of the gully a rope was fixed as a hand-rail. Two more gullies were crossed before we were able to descend the snow slopes to a reasonable site for camp one. We had some lunch and then set off on the return journey. Having erected the tents, Crosby and Arthur with two Sherpas stayed there the night. It was a bit of a pull coming back in the soft snow, but got back to base about 3.00 p.m. At high altitude, my cold does not bother me but I feel it immediately I get back to a lower level.

April 18

George was to have gone up to Camp One today with Dan, but was too unwell. I too stayed at Base Camp and went up to Base West with Andy to do some plotting. We found certain discrepancies in the position of Base. Andy went down to tell



A map covering a wider area was included in Issue One. See the 1957 Journal for details.

George, who later came up and confirmed the correct position. I tried to work out the height of Base from a known mountain across the valley. I have the angle of elevation, and from it deduced the height of 12,839 feet for Base West. Surely, we are living higher than that! In the evening the Sherpas taught me two of their songs, which I have tried to write down.

Potatoes from the Field

(Myla's Song)



April 19 (Good Friday)

George and Andy set out for Camp One this morning in good weather. Both seemed a good deal better. I went up to the top camp and retrieved the various oddments of food lying there, brought it down and made it up into a High Altitude box. It was a day-off for Dan and I and we spent most of it in our tents until Crosby and Arthur arrived from Camp One. They both seemed very pleased with themselves and after some soup we drew up some plans for the future. Put on a good menu for the evening meal.. pemmican, corned beef and vegetables, jelly, coffee. Unfortunately the jelly had not been allowed to set!

April 20

Up at normal time but with rather more activity. Dan and I with Pemba and Ang Temba left camp at 7.20 a.m. It was a nice morning and we took things leisurely. However I soon found the going hard, although my sack only weighed 28 lbs. Getting up to the highest point on the hump took more energy than ever and I had to stop every few minutes. I must do better than this. The weather

deteriorated, clouds came over and it got cold. Arrived at Camp One about 11.30 a.m., having taken more than four hours.

Crawled at once into tent and lay for a long time. Had lunch of pemmican and biscuits. Read a bit, dozed a bit, and then had pemmican again for dinner. Started to snow about 6.00 p.m. My watch is wrong again. Trying to read Van Loon's 'Story of Mankind', but not getting on too well with it.

April 21 (Easter Day)

We were a bit slow off the mark this morning and did not get away until 7.20a.m. I roped up in front so that I could go at my own speed. We were soon on to the rock pitch which, in spite of the fixed rope, was a bit awkward near the top when carrying a heavy load. We were then faced with the ice fall which was quite impressive. After crossing one or two snow bridges we landed out on to the broad glacier and the grind was on. I think we stopped twice before reaching Camp Two. To our surprise the tents were still standing, though sleeping bags had been taken. This perplexed us, until Ang Temba suggested that they were probably

returning for the lilos and tents. This proved to be the case as George and two Sherpas turned up to collect the tents, paraffin and other gear. It is cold and windy up here. The wind buffets the tent canvas and the sleeve

entrance balloons inwards. Wish I had something to read. The boys periodically make mugs of Bournvita and pass some in to us. Small things become important.



Expedition Diary 1988 - Bolivia

Harvey Lomas

Harvey was left spending the night wrapped in a tent, on his birthday, in a disused classroom in the Apolobamba. We rejoin the diary during his stay at base camp.

The ten days spent there impressed me with the long nights and intense cold. Daytime temperatures rose quickly, streams melted and came alive. The glaciated landscape was strewn with rocks and little vegetation except large clumps of hard moss grazed by herds of llamas and alpacas. The grey-green of the lakes contrasted with the light brown of the low hills.



The mess tent's central pole had failed during one of the regular afternoon gusts of wind and a makeshift paddle was borrowed from a local fisherman's boat to effect a temporary



repair. Despite this our helper, Francisco, lived in the tent and managed to cook our sardines and soupa!

On one of the days I walked round the upper lakes to the head of the valley. A small glacier straddled the col, I climbed its left side and scrambled around the moraine to look at the seracs above. Slowly I was regaining my strength and made several more short forays to other parts of the valley. Michael Smith and Dave Hick reached the summit of Cololo the day before Dave Martindale and I had to start our journey home.

Cololo scaled, Dave and I packed gear for our departure the next day. Supplies of staple foods and fuel were diminishing fast so a journey to the town of Pelechuco became a necessity. Our map did not show the route and we had to rely upon a satellite photograph that did not show much detail. Ian Crowther and John



Sterland accompanied us to Pelechuco to collect more food and return by an alternative route. Our super hi-tech rucksacks, that some designer had strived many weeks to perfect, were unceremoniously wrapped in blankets and slung across the pack animals back. One last look at the mountains, cold and wild yet wonderful and we set off on the first steps of our homeward trek. I made a point of remembering the scene.

As we turned away a strange, lovely song filled our ears. It was sung by a little girl making her way along a path. The notes filled the prevailing silence, pure and undistorted in the still air. We advanced silently in the direction of the songster. She appeared over a ledge, saw us, and immediately stopped singing. Five or six years old she had worn and dirty clothes and a crumpled hat covered her face. I advanced towards her and held out some sweets from my pocket. A quick glance, a word from one of our guides, she took them quickly, as if sensing danger, speaking no word of thanks. I managed to get a glimpse into eyes that expressed toughness tinged with hardship. Around her shoulder she carried a blanket that probably contained food for the day's wondering with the herd of llamas and alpacas. She moved past us and out of sight. The enchanting song continued again and blended with the scenery like a wind mixing with waves at sea,

For several hours the path was followed as it climbed out of the valley and then across a featureless expanse of open, barren ground. We walked on at a brisk pace and I found difficulty breathing as despite the altitude of 16,000 ft it was very hot. Eventually our way took us over the spectacularly winding Katantica pass at 17,500 ft then the road descended in a series of sharp bends then through a narrow gap opening to splendid views of the steep eastern slopes of the Andes. From this point the altiplano gave way to a gradual descent into the Amazon basin. Below the town of Pelechuco was not visible beneath the rising heat haze. I remember coming across a cool stream and bathing my feet before applying plasters to my blisters. We hobbled on through the brief twilight and into the night. We passed under a wrought iron archway that said "Welcome" in Spanish with the first letter B hung upside down, it was seven in the evening and we had arrived in Pelechuco.

We entered the quiet main square, our breath condensing in the cold air. An official beckoned us over to him with a "come and see me later" expression. We drifted across to the only Inn. The roughly painted sign above said "Pension Mexico" but implied "abandon hope all ye who enter here". It had one room and was lit by a feeble gas lamp. The walls were covered with flaking green paint and tables were scattered around the room, draped with sticky oilcloths and partly consumed meals. We were viewed with some suspicion, but the proprietress, Maria, had an aura of command about her and was businesslike. She had no available beds but quickly produced a meal from behind a curtain. Later, outside

in darkness we negotiated a room, which was situated above a garden and was reached through a labyrinth of creaking passageways and somebody's kitchen.

Next morning the light came quickly and the air was cold. The view across the roof tops showed the town nestling in a deep sided valley at the confluence of many raging rivers. A quick wash of hands and face in an icy cold stream was followed by breakfast at the Pension Mexico. Besides meals they also sold dynamite, it was stacked under a case of oranges. Afterwards we went about the town to buy camp supplies for transportation by the returning packhorses. The tiny stores in the town were well stocked but offered little variety, mainly having flour, eggs and sardines.

Later in the day we were told that a lorry departed on Saturday morning for La Paz at 02.30 hours. We rose at 01.30 hours having said our farewells to John and Ian the previous evening. In the deserted square it was totally dark and very chilly. We waited for an hour by the side of an empty lorry then, slowly, people emerged from buildings with their baggage. The driver started sounding his horn. After what seemed an age we moved off up the winding cobble street only to stop twenty minutes later by a hamlet where the process of horn, people and commotion was repeated.

Between short bouts of sleep I could see pink glaciers that changed to blue in the pre-dawn light. Aboard the swaying lorry, the ever changing engine note and my sleepy state left me in a state of suspended consciousness. All came to an abrupt

halt. An empty lorry we had been towing became wedged broadside to the road with the nose pressed firmly up against a steep embankment. There was much shouting, pulling and pushing at the lorry but little co-operation until it was bounced free and driven off down the hill and we continued on our way.

At the top of the pass, a lone woman sat waiting. We stopped and she climbed on board with her sack. Other stops were made along the route including a stop to repair the steering with a length of inner tube! The lorry became full of people who sat on bundles of wool and other objects. The close proximity of the Peruvian border ensured a lively trade in contraband goods. In the back of the lorry there was no escape from the intense sunlight, dust billowed off the road by our forward movement and engulfed us. More people joined and we became tightly packed together. I could not move my feet or legs and loss of circulation became a problem. Another stop and a bowler hat and a menacing face climbed over the side. She glanced around, looked at me, then made her way through a thicket of people and sat on my head. There was immediate darkness. I imagined remaining in such a ridiculous posture when my fellow travellers came to the rescue and insisted she move to the back of the lorry; There must be some unwritten rule on lorries that states that one's place is one's place.

From time to time, the word "gringo" was heard and followed by hoots of laughter. Some youngsters pointed at me with my wide brimmed hat, "Clint Eastwood" then "gringo" pointing at my beard. More hoots of laughter.

The Apolobama could be seen only a whitish strip now, their snow tops slowly merging into the deep blue sky. Visibility was good as there was little haze. Mid-day gave way to afternoon and the surprise sighting of a condor on the ground some 200 yards away. Later in the afternoon we reached Escoma, close to Lake Titicaca, and made a prolonged stop. The local militia refused to let us continue until some money was paid by the driver. There followed a long series of loud exchanges between driver and militia. In the meantime, the lorry was searched several times. Eventually payment was made and we continued our journey.

Night-time and keeping warm was now the priority. There were many stops and shouts of "vamoose" into the freezing air. All journeys do come to an end, ours lasted until 02.30 hours when we drove into La Paz. We had been travelling for twenty-four hours. Some passengers disembarked whilst other unrolled blankets and prepared to sleep on the lorry. With difficulty we off loaded our gear and took a taxi to a hotel where we persuaded the janitor to let us have a room.

Several days later as we sat on a beach in Rio sipping drinks, we kept asking ourselves if a woman really did sit on my head?



The Night of Hot Pies Aii Renton

I was recently reading through old Climber and Hillwalker Magazines in the college library when I came across an article 'Classic Climbs in the Lake District' by Bill Bricket.

The route was located in Black Hole Quarry and followed the line above the large cave entrance. It was graded at EI, Se, very strenuous but well protected.

With Low Hall Garth being so close I just had to go and do it. I showed the article to a fellow student and climbing partner, Ian, and we decided on a date.

The next Monday evening saw us driving up the A6S towards the Lakes. I was really looking forward to just seeing the route. This was going to be the first slate and hardest route I had attempted.

Tuesday, we were up and ready to go, We entered the quarry and looked up at the route. Wow - it was a long way. We geared up and set off. There are two bolts on the route and then a long thin crack which was ideal for placing rocks in.

The route was very trying and sweat was pouring out of me; many times I had to reach for my chalk bag. The article said there were plenty of tree belays at the top and this was in fact the case.

On arrival at the top we congratulated each other then as the day was still young and everything else in the quarry looked more difficult we opted for Lower Scout Crag in Langdale before driving home. A memorable day

Forward Regardless!

by Mike Morgan

Reviewed by Maurice F. Wilson

This cryptic title is the motto of the 5th Green Howards and typifies the life of our distinguished member Will Lacy. At the outset, Will challenges us all to build the best life we can and achieve goals in life irrespective of age or adversity. He's certainly done that himself and for him, one might say, that one life is not enough.

One of the milestones in his life was when at the age of six, in the road at Hawsker, a man handed his mother a parcel with the words, "Keep this for t'lad and tell him they're from Scott." That man was James Skelton who went South with Captain Scott and the parcel simply contained a thick woollen undervest and some rock crystals from the Beardmore Glacier. Yet, these simple souvenirs proved to be a source of inspiration to the young Lacy

He joined up early in the War and was sent to France. In his very first patrol into No-mans land, armed only with a walking stick, he captured a German Officer and kept his revolver for his personal weapon. He and a soldier, among the last to leave

Dunkirk, were given the impossible task of trying to hold up the entire German Army. Back in 'Blighty' he met 'Monty' who, subsequently was to become his G.O.C. in the Western Desert for, the following year Will was posted to the Middle East. It is generally conceded that the Battle of Alamein was the turning point of the war. It comes then, as no surprise, to learn that Will was one of a small group who had to pinpoint in detail, the defence line against which Rommel's drive ground to a halt.

Back Home in peacetime, Will was taken with the wanderlust and sailed to St. Kilda and Iceland. He longed to cross the Arctic Circle and eventually, an opportunity arose to get a lift on a boat of Norwegians and trappers bound for Spitzbergen. A trip to Greenland, that most northerly land, was inevitable and he writes eruditely of its' people, nature, and history.

I knew that Will was an expert photographer and has judged several of our competitions at after-dinner meets. What I didn't know was his ability to recognise a masterpiece of painting when he saw one, and his chapter on 'Delving into Art' is one of the most fascinating.

Most of our members will already have heard and read of Will Lacy's journeys to the North Pole and the South Pole when he was well over eighty

years old. Each of these trips is recounted in graphic detail with accompanying illustrations. I advise everyone to read this book. It's a cracker!



This is part of a caricature of Will which was drawn, by Gibbs, during training for the D-Day invasion. It is one of the many illustrations in the book

Forward Regardless! by Mike Morgan, the life and adventures of Major Will Lacy is obtainable directly from the publishers. It costs £10.50,

plus a charge of £1.50 postage and packing, from Caedmon of Whitby, 128 Uppang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 3JJ

Chippings

In reply to the query about 'Scouts and Outposts' Arthur Evans remembered reading about this type of event in OJ Oppenheimers 'Heart of Lakeland' and had gained the impression that such events formed a commonplace part of clubs activities during the early part of the century. As a result of Arthur's information and other researches the short article 'Scouts and Outposts' appears in this issue. It all sounds like a lot of fun and could transform a dull day at a quiet time of the year. Over to the meets subcommittee?

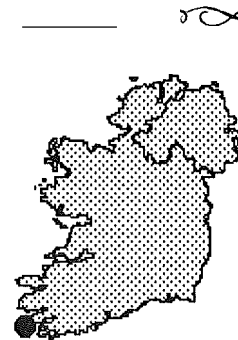
Arthur recalled incidents from his climbing in the 1930's. His route, Corrugated Cracks (180ft, severe, 1937 with P. Smith) on the pillar of Elidir, Elidir Fawr above Marchlyn Mawr has to the right of it a slab. Arthur was in the area with some inexperienced climbers and rather than tackle the known routes which might prove too difficult he decided to try a line on the slabs. He ran out the full 150ft of line with two pebbles and a length of line with him but no chance to use them. He had no alternative but to reverse and give up. Thirty years later that route was to become Janus (1967, C. T. Jones and T. Moulam) using two pegs for belays.

Also as a student at the University of Liverpool, Arthur re-established the LUCC on a firm footing. An earlier attempt to get it started was masterminded by one J Menlove Edwards. An inaugural meeting was

held and attended by IM.E, a couple of fellows and a hoard of females who were not climbers. It was not considered an auspicious start and soon petered out.

— — — — —
'Nobody, not even Brian Lara or Wayne Gretzky, has set such impossibly high standards in his sport as Reinhold Messner' starts an article in The Economist, (25 June 1994 p114) brought to our attention by **Dennis** Armstrong. It describes the now fifty year old Reinholds contribution to mountaineering as being the introduction of alpine style ascents to the Himalayan peaks.

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Arthur **Salmon** and the team in the Lofoten area on the Norwegian meet produced the articles which have graced this and the last issue. Their complete report includes valuable information for anyone thinking of going to the area.



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The Beara Peninsula, in County Cork, Ireland certainly impressed **Don Mackay** with its splendid walks along mountain ridges, impressive scenery & coast. Add this to its interesting history and folklore and he suggests it as a possible place for a future meet.

The 1994 Alpine Journal contains an article by **Alan Blackshaw** based on the paper he was requested to present to the Union of Alpine Associations (UIAA) General Assembly at Santiago during 1993. Entitled 'Competitions in Mountain Areas' it considers the position of the UIAA with respect to mountaineering-related sports. The UIAA is considering proposals that it should take responsibility in ski-mountaineering competition for the European Cup and recognise as a model for high-altitude competitions the Republic of Kirghizstan's Kang Tengri competition. Alan, as Chair of the UIAA's Mountaineering Commission, identifies the following as some of the key questions:

Is competition compatible with mountaineering?

Would involvement compromise the mountain environment or safety?

Would UIAA involvement be welcomed by its membership?

Is world-wide control needed?

A programme of work to assess these issues and the different competitions on the ground was agreed; and proposals are to be put to the UIAA General Assembly this year.

Those who climbed La Meije in the Ecrins might be interested to learn that the old tat and rappel gear which used to cover the mountain has been removed and sound anchor points established. This is part of a tightening up by the National Park authorities which includes the requirement to secure prior approval before equipping routes.

Forty five 'mountaineers' descending from Mont Blanc were overtaken by a storm and sought refuge in the Vallot Hut and had to be rescued. Not one of them felt capable of descending in the poor visibility as they had no map or compass.

Ian Laing has been off to the Canada this summer. **Cliff Cobb** and **Alan Linford** who have been there previously have passed to him all their maps and guides for the country. Ian will hold these for anyone else who might be interested.

The idea of pooling information and listing who has information on which areas could well work to everyone's benefit. Can anyone see a way of making it work?

In May **Ian Crowther** visited the Picos de Europa in the northern



Spanish provinces of Cantabria and Asturias. He describes them as magnificent, startling even, and a suitable place for a meet.

Mike Godden and **Derek Smithson** were in Norway during early September. Derek is looking for company to go back in May or June 1995 possibly to Jotunheimen or just north of Stavanger. For the moment though he passes on news of developments.

They used the Norsk Tindklub hut in Skagasteldalen and found it

comfortable. Other members may be able to use it.

The D.N.T have opened a posh new hut at Eidsburgarten but only for summer use.

No contact was made with our kindred club, the Ardal Turlag and the Slingsby Institute did not hold a syposium. It did however arrange for some students to meet Norwegian students in Ardal.

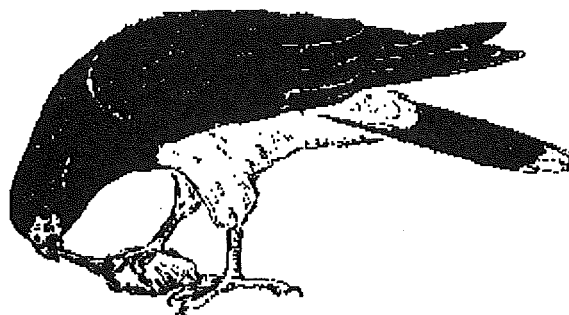
Mountain and Wildlife Ventures have two interesting developments. One is skiing for beginners who are over fifty, with snow shoes as an alternative. The other is their hut in eastern Norway with open canoeing, walking and birdwatching.



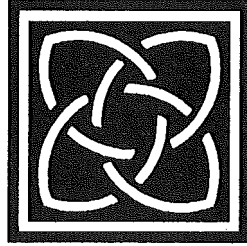
The summer saw your editor, **Michael** Smith, off to the East coast of the USA watching cardinals, osprey and pelican from the beach of North Carolina, failing to see beaver round their lodges in upstate New York but spotting plenty of wild turkey.



Family walks in the Shenandoah based on Big Meadows Lodge took us to the highest point, Hawksbill Mountain, 4051ft, waterfalls and the scramble up to Bearfence Mountain. The deer being so close, eating Millom apples straight from the tree and finding ten centimetre long millipedes were the highlights.



Following the fatalities of two Austrian climbers trapped, by bad weather, above 6000m on Illimani the Club Andino Boliviano are no longer able to assist visitors beyond supplying bus tickets to Chacaltaya. In fact, they have been fined 1000 Bolivianos (about £150) by the Ministry of Tourism for organizing transport without a licence and forbidden to deal with foreigners. Their fluent English speaking tourism coordinator, Senorita Maria Laura Prommel, has now set up on her own, nearby, as Colonial Tours, Calle Mexico 1733, La Paz, post to Casilla 5108, La Paz, telephone/fax on La Paz 316073. Yossi Brain is working with Colonial as a guide and has wide experience of the Bolivian ranges. The Quimsa Cruz, with its 5000m peaks, sounds as if it is worth a visit for new rock routes.



Letters to the Editor

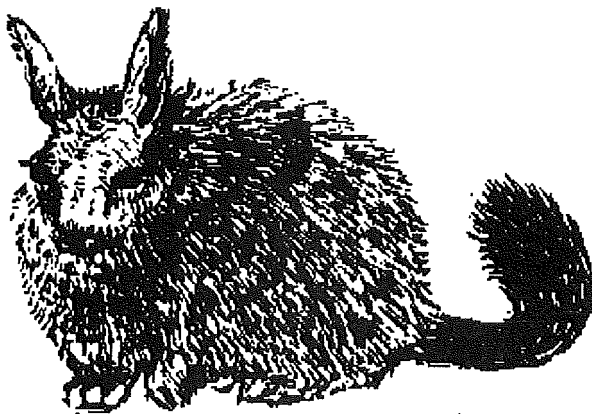
Dear Sir,

Who is Derek Smithson getting at in the fourth paragraph of his article headed 'This is Rambling' ?

I am an older member and I received my education in a traditional British manner. The cap fits and I don't like it.

It is precisely because I do not wish to be thought of as a boastful Munroist that I was so reluctant to agree to write the article you requested.

Yours faithfully
Aug. 1994 Peter Swindells



Derek replies:

Dear Sir,

My words were not intended to upset, not Peter of all people, and I am sure he recognised my fifth paragraph as representing my doubts about the generalisation. Peter's reputation for doing needless, even heedless, things for his own amusement in the mountains counteracts his devotion to Munro bagging.

My views, however badly expressed, are a development from my early days, climbing without guide books, when we could enjoy a good days climbing without reaching the top of a crag. When, following marks, we did the bottom half of one route and the top of another. Having guide books robbed me of the pleasure of discovery. How I relate this to the Public and Grammar School systems preparing us to serve the Empire is a much more complex and maybe fallacious matter.

When Mount Everest first permitted a British party to reach its summit it was welcomed as the 'Conquest of Everest'. Captain Scott, who killed himself attaining a goal, has been revered as a hero whilst those who survived similar conditions without attaining such a goal have not been presented by our educationalists as people to emulate. These were unfortunate attitudes.

Yours faithfully
September 1994 Derek Smithson

1995 YRC Himalayan Expedition

Leader - Alan Kay

Dorje Lakpa, 22,930' 6989m, in the Jugal Himal was chosen, for the 1995 YRC expedition, for these reasons:

Every description that one reads is in; glowing terms such as "jagged ice summits are certainly some of the most impressive in the Himalayas" "The Jugal is a superb area and little frequented"..."This magnificent peak", etc.;

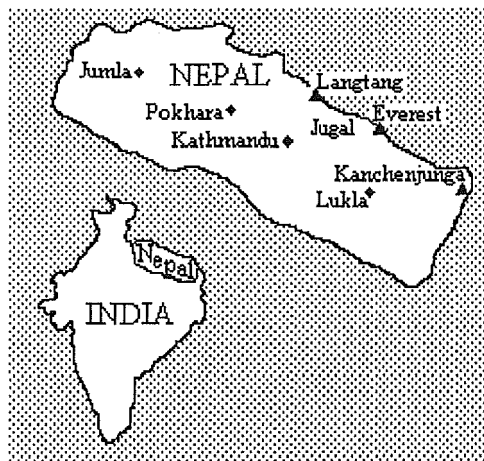
The Club has an affinity with the Jugal - George Spenceley and Maurice Wilson were on our 1957 expedition to the Jugal and have been encouraging;

Dorje Lakpa and the adjacent peaks should provide a challenge which is within our capabilities;

The Jugal and adjoining Langtang should provide excellent 'trekking' of an adventurous nature which should also be within our capabilities.

The peak was officially ascended in 1981 although its first real ascent was made without permission, secretly and in good style by a two strong British rope in 1980. They climbed in alpine style with one bivouac by the obvious and excellent west ridge rising from Tilman's Pass East. It was a fine climb quite within the powers of experienced and competent alpinists. The mountain seems to have been climbed on five occasions since the first official ascent, on each occasion by the same west ridge.

I have received much detailed information from climbers who know the area and from the British Mountaineering Council. We shall be applying for a grant from the Mount Everest Foundation.



Some eighteen members and two others are intending to join the expedition, half of them climbers. Contacts have been made with agents in Nepal and costs are firming up. October has been chosen as the weather is then more dependable, with skies clearer than during the pre-monsoon period.

The approach march from Kathmandu will probably take ten days and will be an essential part of team's the acclimatisation.

The intention is to approach Jugal from the south up the Langtang valley and approach the peak from the north west. Ged Campion is the climbing leader.

If you wish to be well informed about the area the following books are recommended:

Tents in the clouds, Monica Jackson;

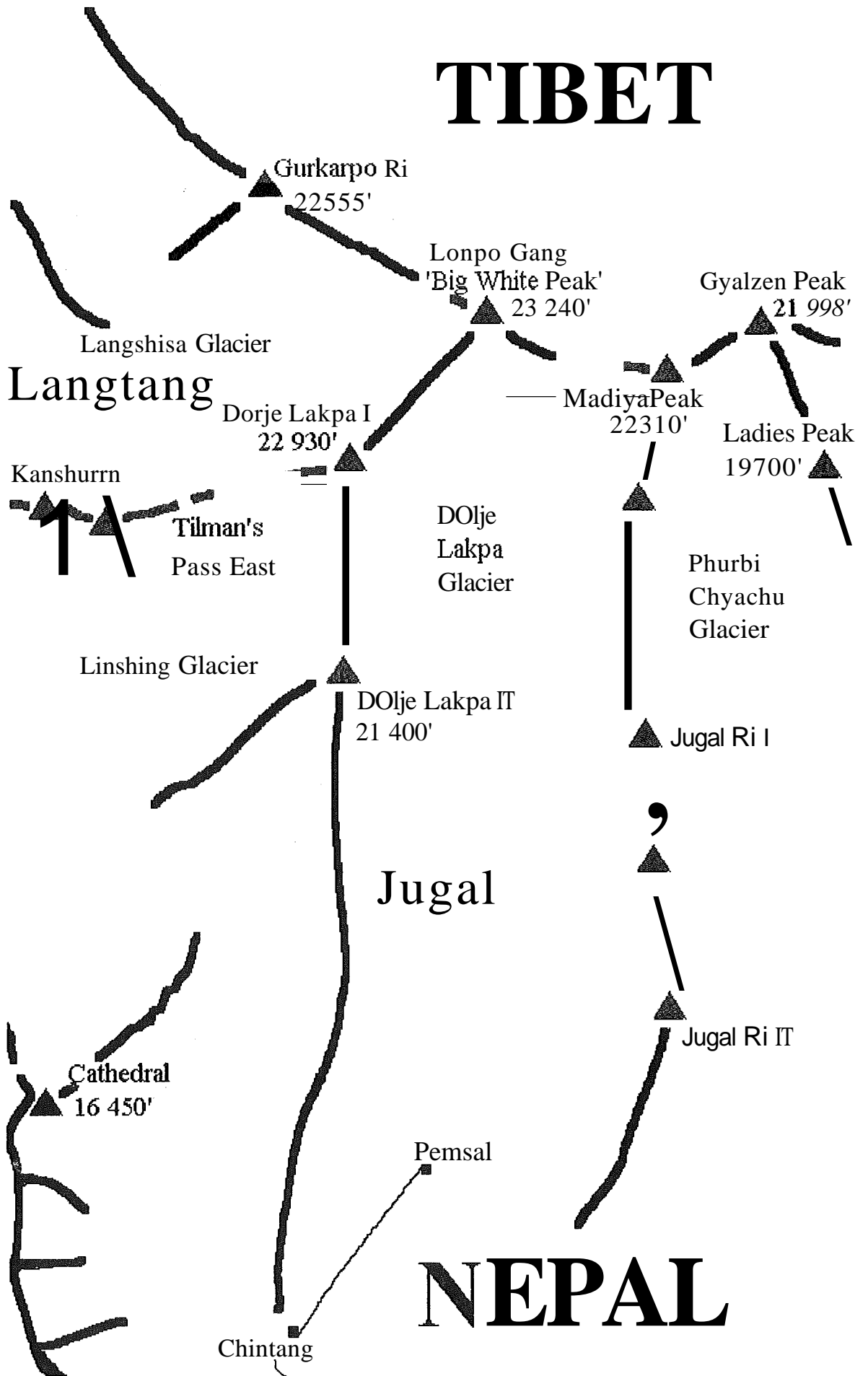
1958 YRC Journal;

Nepal Himalaya, Bill Tilman;

Collins guide to Mtns, John Cleare.

The map opposite shows the relationship of Dorje Lakpa to Lompo Gang, the revised name for the 1957 objective, Big White Peak.

TIBET



South Wales

11th to 13th March 1994

Ten members and guests congregated at Pen Wyllt, the SWCC hut, on Friday night. The problem of damp kindling was attacked with such determination that the resulting blaze was wondrous to behold. No one felt inclined to leave the warm fireside so the hostelrys remained unvisited.

As Saturday dawned with the promise of rain, a trip into Ogof Ffynnon Ddu was organised. This magnificent cave is many miles long, has a vertical range nearing 1000 feet and can be entered from several places. The poor weather ruled out much of the cave, so we entered at roughly the mid point and went upstream into OFDIII. The black limestone and scarcity of formations make for a rather gloomy atmosphere, but the sheer size of the place and the vast rock surfaces are almost overwhelming.

Once the intricacies of the entrance series are over, the route is basically in one huge rift, in places over two hundred feet high. The interest lies in the countless climbs and traverses required to negotiate the passage - never really difficult, but everything covered in a film of mud and the consequences of a slip all too obvious. A couple of ropes sufficed to safeguard the worst places and the only real problem came towards the end of the traverses where an upward squeeze through boulders caused at least one member to remove clothing.

More traverses followed until at last the stream was met in a fine river passage. Progress in the swollen stream was clearly going to be strenuous, so the party split, half to

return the way they came and the others to continue to the end of the cave via cascades, deep water and much evidence of flooding on the roof.

Both parties surfaced after about six hours of very fine and sporting caving to find a typical Welsh downpour in progress. Thankfully the hut was nearby and the most efficient hot water system was thoroughly tested, several people being able to shower at the same time.

Saturday dinner lived up to the usual YRC tradition of quantity, quality and noise although unfamiliarity with the cookers made the cherry pies a little crisper perhaps than intended.

Sunday dawned brighter, but a proposed trip into Tunnel Cave was abandoned due to the water levels. Half the meet decided on another trip into Ogof Ffynnon Ddu to do battle with more of the sporting traverses and passages, whilst the rest enjoyed the rare March sunshine with a walk round the local area.

This was an excellent caving meet in an area not well enough used by the YRc. Our thanks to Ged for the meet and to Harvey for his guidance underground.

Attendance

Ged	Campion
Ian	Crowther
Eddy	Eddkins (G)
Claire	Hewick (G)
Tim	Josephy
Harvey	Lomas
Jon	Riley
Graham	Salmon
Richard	Sealey
Steve	Walker (G)

Ardgour Spring Bank Holiday 28 May - 4 June 1994

Friday.

Members lucky enough to travel on Friday (i.e. the "non-workers") arrived to find a beautiful camp site on the very edge of Loch Linnhe, out of sight of the road and with views ranging from the Ben to Glencoe, all bathed in warm sunlight.

The dry spell was the longest in this part of Scotland for many years. Would it last? Read on.

Saturday.

Members who had arrived on Friday and early Saturday set off along Coire an Iubhair, at lunch some returning having business in Fort William, while the remainder traversed Gharbh Bheinn, (2903 ft) returning over the ridge of Scron a' Gharbh and Choire Bhig with minor deviations. A fine sunny day.

Sunday.

Most members were now established and divided into three parties.

a. One party motored to Ardnamurchan to stand on the most westerly part of the mainland of Great Britain. The lighthouse, no longer being manned, was already beginning to lose the immaculate appearance such buildings once had.

b. The second party returned to Gharbh Bheinn where there was some confusion between the Great Ridge and Pinnacle Ridge with the result that most members (wisely) returned, while two continued to complete a climbing route of considerably greater difficulty than anticipated and which it is hoped to register as a new route.

c. The third party motored to the nature reserve north of Strontian and climber Sgurr Dhomhnuill via the beautiful walk-in along the Strontian

river. This peak is the highest in the Ardgour region at 2914 ft and is one of a group of almost equally high peaks set in a remote and wild area.

Monday.

Four members motored to Morar in search of associations with Bonnie Prince Charlie (the 18th century one) and from the hamlet of Bracorina on Loch Morar walked across the peninsular to Stoul on Loch Morar. The excellent views across the loch to Knoydart unfortunately were mist enshrouded.

A second party using two cars, walked from Ardnastang to Ballneselich, near Pollock, along the old miners' track. Ruins of the mine workings are very obvious with excellent examples of the large scale of the machinery used.

The remainder visited the fleshpots of Fort Williams for essential supplies.

Tuesday.

Today was a day of mist and motoring - I believe the Scottish term is a "dreich day". The sunshine of the weekend gave way to rain on the preceding night and continued most of the day.

Two climbers cycled (yes !) into Fort William disporting themselves on the overhangs of the indoor climbing wall at Nevisports.

Others visited Fort William and Glencoe Visitors Centre, including a video re-enactment of the infamous massacre.

The remaining two after 'pottering' and 'tidying the tents' lunched at the Strontian Hotel and took tea with Alan and Angie Linford in their caravan. A splendid way of passing a wet day when advancing years makes the exploration of mist less attractive.

(Maybe this report should not be sent to the 'under 40's').

Wednesday.

In improving weather the whole meet assembled near Conaglen House to walk up Glen Scaddle to the derelict

cottage of Tighnocomaire where one party turned north to explore a lovely waterfall high on the hillside, returning leisurely to the cars, while the hard men continued along Gleann Mhic Phail and finally down to Strontian, a fine cross-country walk. Study of the map will show that this area has many such excursions which, while not attaining peaks, give excellent mountain working, involving good map work.

Thursday.

The two climber/cyclists went to Gharbh Bheinn and climbed the Direct Route on the Great Ridge, ensuring that they got the correct one.

The remainder of the meet attacked Beinn Resipol (2775 ft) a remote peak, using the miners' track from Ariundle to the Col and then west across trackless terrain to the foot of the peak. On the summit the party again split into two, the majority returning the same route, two members continuing the traverse to Resipol village, there to be picked up by a person making a very swift descent to his car.

Two senior members relying more on intuition than the compass completed an interesting detour on the return, arriving in camp just in time to allay any anxieties concerning them.

Resipol is an excellent peak remote, rocky and rugged with interesting approaches.

Friday.

A number of people left for home and those remaining regarded Beinn Resipol as having been a fitting finale to the high mountains, once again took to their motors, taking the coast road to Lock Moidart and the ruined castle of Tioram (un-named on the map, ref. 663 724). The rootless castle, reached by a short causeway at low time, is a grey and grim place in stark contrast to such beautiful surroundings that there is sufficient of the interior remaining to allow one to realise the harsh

conditions of living in by-gone ages. A short excursion into the interior completed the exploration of the area.

Saturday was the usual breaking of camp and goodbyes.

If there appears to be too much motoring during the week this can be excused by the rather scattered location of the mountains and also the couple of wet days and perhaps just a little by the above-average age of the meet. Where are all you young members? (with one notable and welcome exception).

To sum up, Munro-less it may be but Ardgour is an area of rugged peaks only marginally below the 'M' figure, with superb coastal scenery and wild moorlands. While a car is useful, back-packing would be wonderful. I shall certainly return.

Finally, our thanks are due to John Barton for finding such a beautiful camp site.

C.c.

Attendance:

Denis Barker
John Barton
Alan Brown
George Arnold (G)
Cliff Cobb
Arthur Craven
John Medley
Alister Renton
Harry Robinson
David Smith
Mike Godden
John Schofield
Bill Todd
Frank Wilkinson
Maurice Wilson
Alan Linford Visitor
Angie Linford Visitor
Roy Salmon Visitor

Long Walk 1994 - Northern Pennines

It was a dark, murky, but mild morning when we set out, around 3.45 a.m. It stayed dark and murky due to thick cloud above about 1000 ft, but became quite a bit colder. There was one brighter spell of about 30 minutes duration around midday, but nobody saw much.

Our walk instructions were tantalising but basically we were invited to walk from the base, Murton Centre, to Cross Fell, Cow Green Reservoir and back to the centre. Most ascended Murton Fell, didn't see High Cup Nick, floundered past Little and Great Rundale Tarns, located the Pennine Way around Knock Old Man, and felt pleased to stumble across a large brown tent containing, among other things, bacon butties and tea.

From here it was over Great Dun Fell - I didn't see the golf ball - Little Dun Fell and Cross Fell which were straightforward, though in my case I accepted advice from a club member on the whereabouts of the trig point on Cross Fell. I should know much better, and tramped around doing a sweep for some time.

From here, some went east, then south, to the Upper Tees, some retreated to Tees Head and down, some plodded back over Little and Great Dun Fells - I still didn't see the golf ball - and down Trout Beck. [I did hear that one group did not do any of this and were a bit miffed and they had wet feet!]

Anyway, we all started meeting up at Cow Green Reservoir for further food and drink while some put their feet in plastic bags!

The cloud was down almost to water level while people plodded round the east side of the reservoir and up Maize Beck, one either side and fairly uncomfortably. Some thought Mickle Fell part of the route, though there was confusion about the precise position of the top, while others carried on up Swarth Beck and over the top into Hilton Gorge (my name).

Suddenly we were off the grit and bog and in superb limestone cliff scenery. It was then a simple plod back to the centre for showers, food and talk.

The last group arrived by 8 p.m.

I thought it an arduous, testing walk considering the conditions and compass work required, and feel that one group of two, total years over 125, can consider they upheld the best traditions of the club.

The Hilton bar was a jolly place with about the right amount of rubbish talked, i.e. a lot, but, as normal, not all went there.

I suspect that after such an arduous day, some felt they needed 8 hours hard snoring. They got it.

Eventually morning arrived and after breakfast the party dispersed. Halton Gorge was revisited as well as other walks, a caving party to Knock Fell Cavern was repulsed by barbed wire and some crag-rattled in Borrowdale. I came home for a sleep!

As we have come to expect, the organisation was relaxed and efficient. Our Meet Leader directed his large team of helpers with almost Napoleonic calm, and we were well fed and watered when we needed it.

Thanks Harry.

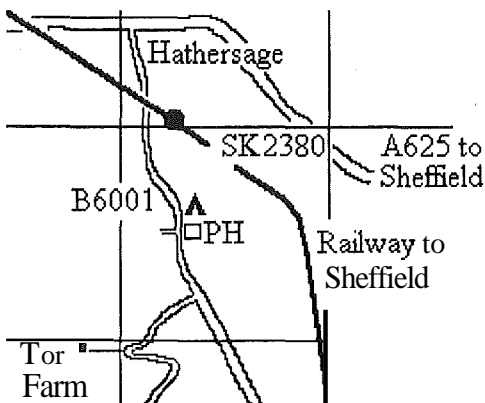
D.e.

Alan Linford	Steve Beresford	Frank Wilkinson	Ian Crowther	Harry Robinson
Derek Bush	Richard Jones	Alister Renton	Derek Clayton	
Derek Smithson	Iain Gilmour	Tim Josephy	John Sterland	
John Schofield	Derek Collins	Alan Brown	Mike Kinder	
Mike Godden	David Hick	David Smith	John Casperson	Michael & (0)
Richard Gowing	Arthur Salmon	Bill Lofthouse	Albert Chapman	Alan Wood (0)

Hathersage, Peak District

8th to 10th July 1994

The Derwent valley is always busy in summer and this meet coincided with the Hathersage gala weekend. The campsite down by the river was packed. We though were up the hill at Tor Farm enjoying the space and views. It is a site worth noting, open all year and £1 per night for a tap and a toilet.



The weather was perfect for camping, warm, dry apart from a shower in the night and with a slight breeze to keep the insects down. The youngsters were kept busy maintaining a camp fire which provided a focal point for the others.

On Saturday, while others walked the gritstone edges we walked up to High Neb and climbed a few of the easier routes. Walking back along the top of Stanage Edge we failed to spot two of the others climbing below. This was not difficult as there appeared to be a rope every couple of metres all the way along the edge. They finished off with three ice-creams each and we stopped off at the open-air pool for a swim - it was that sort of a day.

The next morning saw the Davids off in search of breakfast, their cool box having failed to keep their meat fresh. They and others headed up the valley we were camping in and then North towards the Hope valley.

We went South to Stoney Middleton, climbing, walking along Coombs Dale visiting the quarries and looking for fossils. To end the day John took us on a tour of the crag scrambling up the left hand end, walking along the top then down to a cave at half height which wound sixty or so metres through the cliff to emerge on a ledge on the face.

A grand end to a meet, the type of which we can encourage others to attend. While not the best supported meets, camping meets must rank among the highest quality ones.

MS

Attendance

The President - Arthur Salmon
Frank Wilkinson

Arthur Tallon

Jeff Hooper

Mike Godden

David Hick
David Martindale

Michael Smith & Richard

Peter Elliott & Daniel

Iain Gilmour

John Middleton day visitor

RLH Langdale (Joint Meet)

16- 18th September 1994.

Forward Regardless could have been the motto of this meet as well as the title of Will Lacy's recently published biography. Several members had read or were reading this and Will received many favourable comments.

The two octogenarian members on the meet had busy times, the younger having two full days on the hills, the elder being given an extensive tour of his old Lake District haunts by car.

At the other end of the age scale our youngest member, despite lacking climbing companions on the Saturday pressed on regardless and climbed a range of routes on Scout Crag, Raven Crag and Gimmer. Fortunately on Sunday other climbers had arrived. Those between the two age extremes walked extensively despite a variety of knee, foot and weight problems.

We all managed to consume vast amounts of food and a fair amount of drink. The weather the whole weekend was perfect for the hills, cool and breezy but clear and dry. Had it been bad I am sure Will's motto would still have been followed.

As usual these days many YRC members were out on the hills on Friday, one doing the Fairfield Horse Show, others, not setting out until mid-afternoon, climbed steeply up onto Blea Rigg and returned by Stickle Tarn and the N.D.G. Ken Aldred's 'light' meal on Friday evening proved to be a full three course dinner and at £1.50 must be the deal of the century.

Saturday saw the YRC members as usual up early. The more civilised Wayfarers, who were now catering, had planned breakfast for 8.30 and it was 9.30 before we had finished. It has been well worth writing for; fresh grapefruit, porridge, cereals, full fry up, toast, lemon marmalade, tea or coffee! In true Joint Meet style most people headed out with their own club members or alone.

The majority of YRC members were up on Bowfell (several via the Slabs), the Crinkles and Pike of Blisco. Views were extensive with the Isle of Man prominent and one member claimed to have been able to see the hills of North Wales. A homeward bound drink in the a.D.G. was spoilt by a folk band but the N.D.G. proved more amenable. Two members, following the course of duty, walked via Blea Tarn to L.H.G. finding it cold and empty but in a good state of repair. The only wild life reported by our members were croaking ravens, a red squirrel and a dead fox. Most of the Wayfarers ascended Browney Gill returning via Little Langdale and Elterwater.

Saturday's dinner did nothing for our waist lines! A menu had been posted up showing six courses, *paté*, soup, pork chops, baked potatoes etc., blackberry & apple crumble, cheese, coffee and After Eight Mints. Those of us with a conscience thought of the starving as we tucked in. Wine and beer flowed freely which perhaps contributed to a rather noisy discussion amongst the YRC about the new method of circulating meet reports and the Bulletin generally.

Sunday's breakfast was as extensive as Saturdays but a more leisurely affair. Many people stayed on and had a full day in the hills. The small YRC climbing group headed for Scout Crag, whilst a largish party ascended the Pikes ridge via Jack's Rake.

Many thanks once again to the Wayfarers for the use of their hut and particularly to John Jacob and Ken Aldred for their fantastic catering. Where else could you get two days dinner, bed and breakfast for £12.50?

It was disappointing that only two Rucksack Club members could attend (the meet clashed with an important committee meeting) but there was a good turnout of 11 Wayfarers and 16 YR.c.

Unfortunately no-one was staying at LHG and the thought of our hut standing empty only a few miles away was the only dampening thought on the weekend.

D.L.

Attending:

YRC

Ken Aldred
Alan Brown
Derek Bush
Albert Chapman (Dinner)
Cliff Cobb
Arthur Craven
Eddie Edwards
Mike Godden
Will Lacy
David Laughton
Alan Linford

Alister Renton
Harry Robinson
Peter Swindells
Trevor Temple (G)
Maurice Wilson

Rucksack
Meville Coluille
Bill Ryecroft.

Wayfarers

Mike Adam
Mike Alan
George Chambers
Bernie Cook
Peter Donovan
Mike Gee
Bob Hughes
Hal Jacob
John Jacob
Colin Smith
Dave Wood



Bosigran, Cornwall October 6th to 9th 1994

A month of cold unsettled weather cast a shadow over the viability of this long distance meet but in the event eleven hardy souls took the gamble. These were rewarded with perhaps the finest weekend of the year. The moors, which flow to the seas edge, were just past their best but still contained contrasting hints of heather's deep purple, the brown of dead bracken, and patches of the vivid yellow Western Gorse. Buzzards and a reported Hen Harrier wheeled overhead, Rock Pipits rose and fell underfoot, and a variety of Gulls filled the air with their raucous reveries. The sky was an unbroken azure blue, the sea just a shade darker with contrasting white swells breaking against the cliffs. It was as good as paradise.

But it was to the cliffs that the meet was all about - the great granite, greenstone, slate, and sandstone sea cliffs of unparalleled quality. Sennan, Lands End, Chair Ladder, Bosigran, Carn Glouce, Gurnards Head, the Baggy Point were all visited. Routes fell in profusion to the clubs unceasing onslaught; classic severes, very severes, hard very severes, and even a couple well up in the E grade. The Guide Book stars mounted spectacularly and given a couple more days we should surely have equalled the real ones which appeared with such bright intensity in the crystal clear night skies.

One ex-President, who shall remain nameless, went in search of his favourite crag only to return thwarted and confused. Another took to the coastal path and found that the few

straight miles on a map increased dramatically when each cove had to be navigated.

No daylight hours were wasted and each sad return to base was amply compensated for by a typical mouth watering Tim Josephy spread. Our energy was much due to his efforts. Many thanks.

Our thanks must also go the Climbers Club for allowing us the use of their Bosigran Count House Hut (misnomer!). Its convenient and idyllic situation was much appreciated even though major rebuilding was being undertaken of the washrooms. Visitors in previous years may have used the nearby Gurnards Head Hotel but this has now closed down, instead an extremely friendly hostelry was found at Zennor, the Tinnars Arms.

The quality and variety of the south west's crags must ensure that this region will again feature on the clubs meets agenda. JHM

Attendance:

AndyHall
David Hall
Chris Joint
Tim Josephy
Simon Goodwin
Steve Goulden
John Middleton
Clive Mitchell
David Smith
Derek Smithson

Phil Eastwood (G)