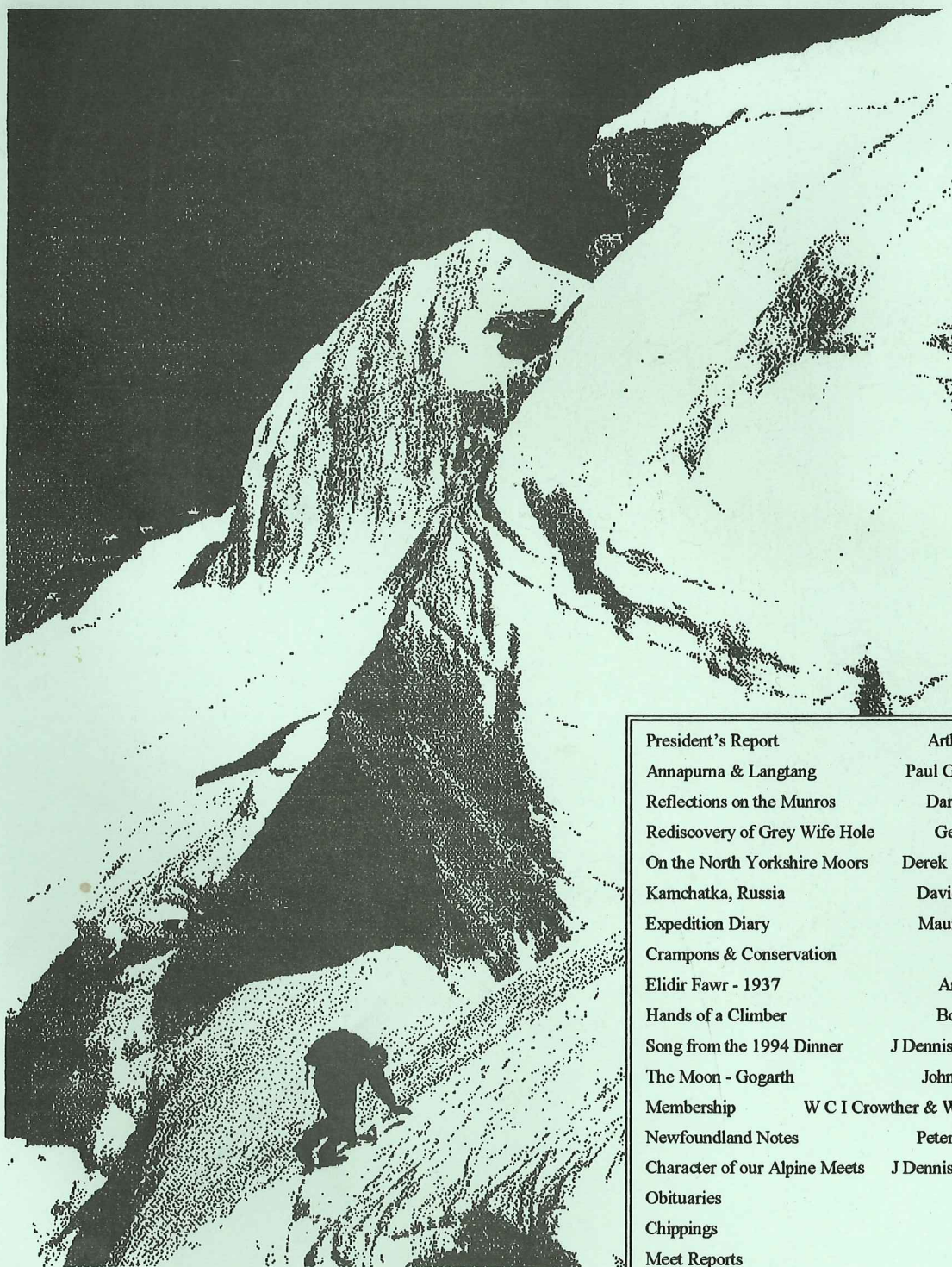


# Yorkshire # Rambler



Photograph: John Devenport

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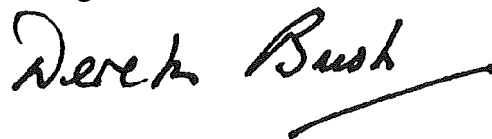
## Foreword by the President

This, the third issue of The Yorkshire Rambler will I hope be the best to date. The articles range from a 1937 fist ascent, via the reopening of Grey Wife Hole, to Nepal, plus some poetry and both sides of the should we have women in the Club' controversy. I can't wait to read that one.

Also included are the meet reports, hopefully as up to date as printing deadlines will allow. There have been comments made that the advent of the Bulletin has meant that meet reports are not received by members as regularly as previously. This may be so but the other side of the coin is that we are getting a publication which is acting as a catalyst for members to record their own and the Club's activities on a regular basis. This is certainly preferable to receiving a journal every five to six years. Even the obituaries are being produced more or less to time.

Finally, no foreword would be complete without our sincere thanks to the Editor for putting all of it together. Only previous Editors can appreciate how time consuming and demanding his job is.

Have a good read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek Bush". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

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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.

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## President's Report 1994

Last year's Committee report suggested that 1993 was a period of consolidation, however, as I look back on 1994 I see that in many ways the Club is changing and reacting in a healthy manner to the circumstances of the mid-nineteen nineties while still remaining true to our past.

Central to the Club's activities is our programme of meets. Excluding the Dinner and After-dinner Meet, your Committee organised 16 meets, five of which were open meets. All the major activities of the club were catered for within the programme including rock climbing, potholing, fell-walking, Nordic skiing and the opportunity to tackle major alpine routes. Average attendance at meets was 22, marginally up on last year's 21. The Ladies' Weekend was the best attended with 43 members and their ladies present. This was followed closely by the December Meet at Blencathra House with 42. In spite of the 900 mile round trip, 10 members and a guest attended the sea cliff climbing meet at Bosigran near Land's End. I can only regret that, due to my domestic circumstances, I have been able to attend only half the meets on the calendar. All the meets have been an undoubted success and this is due in no small part to the efforts of the meet organisers and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all of them for the work they have done. I should also like to remind members that the committee very much welcomes receiving suggestions for new meet venues.

Thanks to our Editor, Michael Smith, the discussions of last year on the introduction of a bulletin produced by desk-top publishing methods came to fruition with the first issue of The Yorkshire Rambler. This has been well received by the Club and seems to have stimulated a previously hidden desire by some members to write about their mountaineering and potholing activities. I'm sure the health of the

bulletin will depend on members continuing to make the effort to write about their excursions. Please keep up the good work.

Planning for the expedition, which commenced in 1993, is now well advanced. The Committee took the decision that the expedition should take place in October/November of 1995 and should follow in the footsteps of the 1957 expedition and visit the Jugal Himal in Nepal, with the main objective of climbing Dorje Lhakpa. Alan Kaye has been appointed planning co-ordinator and Ged Campion the leader of the climbing party.

The Club Huts are both in excellent condition and are continuing to be well used and also financially profitable.

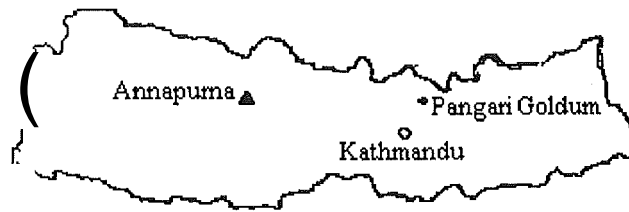
During the year, the Committee has given much thought to the future of the Club and, as a result, established a sub-committee to look at the current state of the Club and to prepare a plan for the next 25 years. One statistic of interest to emerge was that the average age of the membership is 56.6. The sub-committee's deliberations have been circulated to members and will be considered at the Special General Meeting following this AGM.

Regretfully, I have to announce that our Honorary Member David Cox, a one-time President of the Alpine Club and Editor of the Alpine Club Journal, died in October while in Cyprus. Two new members were admitted to the Club, Ian Potter resigned and a member resigned by non-payment of subscriptions. Total membership, including our members, which had remained constant for the previous two years, thus declined by one to 188. This is broken down as follows:

	1994	1993
Honorary Members	6	7
Life Members	65	59
Ordinary Members	116	122
Junior Members	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	188	189

# ANNAPURNA and the LANGTANG NEPAL 1990

Paul Glendenning



I went to Nepal with a friend from the mountaineering club at university. We had no clear objectives and hoped to team up with some people to climb a trekking peak when we got to Kathmandu. Apart from an obscure Irishman who ducked out at the last minute we didn't find anyone willing to accompany us with our ambitions. However, we had a great two months trekking and climbing, including Yala Peak (5500m) in the Langtang valley.

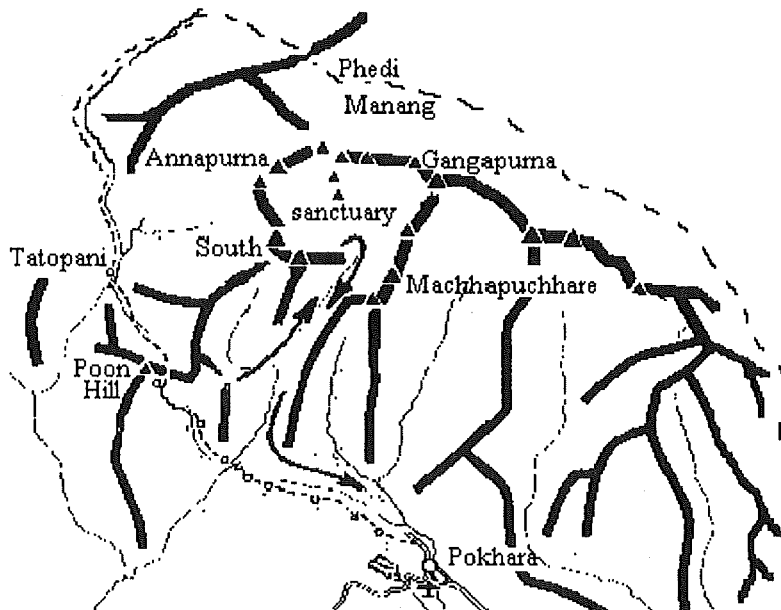
15th Oct - 6th Nov: The Annapurna Circuit & Annapurna Sanctuary  
A truck took us from Dumre on the Kathmandu-Pokhara road up to a village called Bhoite Odar. The mud was in some places about 3 feet deep, the truck was overflowing with bodies (mostly alive I think) and it kept breaking down. Five hours after setting off we reached the village in the dark. The first five days walking are along

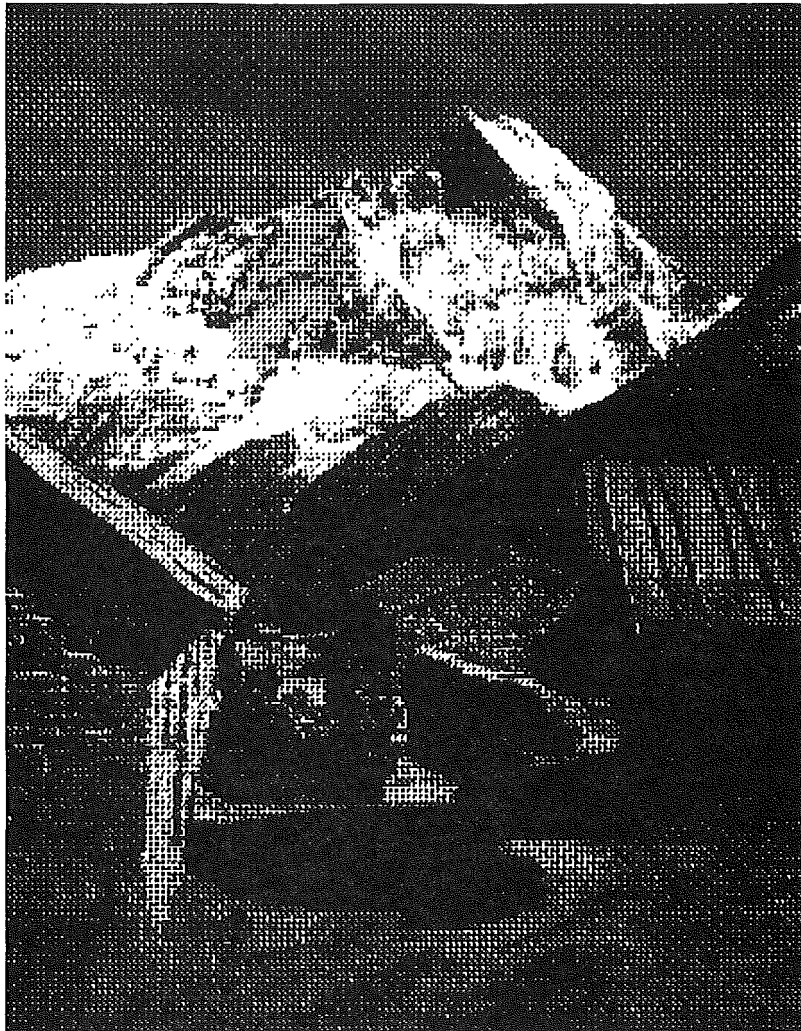
beautiful green valleys with spectacular rivers and the occasional glimpse of the high mountains. It was warm and at least for the first 2 or 3 days we were walking in shorts and T-shirts. We carried all our own gear and stayed at Nepali lodges or "tea houses" along the way. On 21st October we reached Pisang (3000m).

Our stay at Pisang was one of the more memorable nights of accommodation. Our room had a hole in the floor dropping into a cattle shed and the window (very small) had no glass in it. However, the view out of the window of Annapurna was superb. We ate our evening meal of dhaal bhaat (rice & lentils) by the light of a small wood-burning stove whilst we sat cross-legged on stools about 6" high. The smoke from the stove went out through a hole in the roof and the meal was cooked by an old Nepali woman while

her husband listened to a battered-looking transistor radio and tried to sell us some "lucky buddhas" which he said were carved out of Yak bone.

The following day we took the high route along the side of the valley to Manang (3500m).





Machhapuchhre from Annapurna base camp

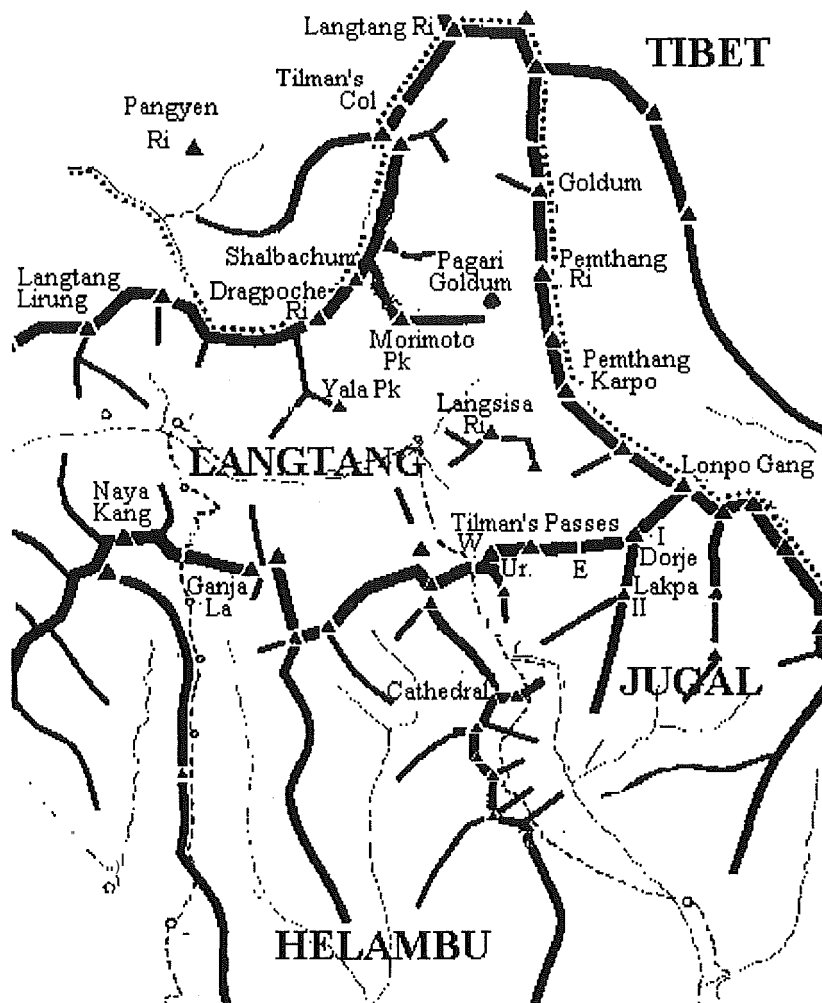
humping your snow & ice gear up there. At Muktinath a day was wasted while I was violently ill with Giardia but the next day we made it to Jomsom where I could see an Indian doctor.

On November 2nd we bivouacked on top of Poon Hill (about 3000 m) from where we watched sunset and sunrise on the Annapurnas. By now it was quite cold at night and I had to shake the ice out of my bivouack bag in the mornmg.

After a day acclimatising at Manang (during which we went for a walk up a ridge above a nearby small lake to gain some altitude) we headed on up the valley to Phedi (about 4000m). The lodge at Phedi was chaos, overcrowded with trekkers and porters, and a place we were pleased to leave early next morning to climb up to the Thorung La pass. The porters all wanted to leave at 3am to reach the pass before it got windy. This didn't go down well with the rest of us and in the end the two of us set of walking at about 5 o'clock.

We reached the top of the pass (5400m) at 10.30am and descended to Muktinath on the other side. There are a couple of peaks you can climb from the top of the pass if you feel like

From Gorepani (near Poon Hill) we cut across to Chomrong on the Annapurna Sanctuary trail. After about 18 days trekking we were now feeling very fit and we made it to the Sanctuary in three days. This is a slightly steeper and narrower trail than the walk round the Circuit and cuts through a green valley with bamboo forest to come out at Machhapuchhre base camp and Annapurna base camp a couple of hours beyond. We didn't stay in the Sanctuary but in a lodge at Machhapuchhre base camp. Although you can now buy chocolate cake at a lodge in the Annapurna Sanctuary (sad but true) in early November the sun goes down at 3pm and the temperature plummets.



16th Nov - 6th Dec : The Langtang valley and Yala Peak

The Langtang is different in character to the Annapurna area; less green and more rocky. We hired a porter for this trip as we had a tent, rope, ice axes, plastic boots and crampons to carry. He carried all this and wanted more.

Three or four days took us to Kyangjin Gumpa (3800m), the end of the trail for most trekkers, where we stayed in a lodge called "Hotel Yala Peak". The plan was to base ourselves there for ten days or so and to explore up the valley possibly climbing something in the process.

On the 23rd November we camped at Yala (about 4600m) intending to climb Yala Peak in the morning. Yala is a small group of empty Yak huts. The view of the fluted snow face of Ganchempo from the tent was beautiful. By now it was very cold - the best way to secure tent pegs in the loose earth there was to pour water over them so that they froze in place.

The next day we were both suffering from altitude symptoms and spent the day exploring the area above the camp. On the following morning it was all we could do to carry our gear back down to the lodge. (Our porter, Ram, had helped us carry our equipment to the camp site and then returned to the lodge

where he was helping with the cooking.)

Back at the lodge, the news that Margaret Thatcher had resigned finally filtered through to the top of the Langtang valley and we ordered some beer to celebrate along with another English bloke.

Two hills near to Kyangjin Gumpa were useful for acclimatising. One is near the airstrip and the other is nearer to the lodges. Both are around 4500-5000m.

A day or two later we made another trip up the valley and camped near the head of the valley at Pagan Goldum and lower down at Langshisa. From Pagari Goldum we went for walks further up towards the Tibetan border alongside the Langtang glacier and up the moraines above. The area is very spectacular with several peaks in the 7000m range and a number of steep-looking glaciers. There was no habitation, just the occasional empty or ruined Yak hut. The only other living creatures that we saw were some small furry rodents.

On 1st December we returned to Yala and camped higher up on a flat grassy area next to a frozen pond just below the moraines. We climbed Yala Peak (5500m) on 2nd December setting off at 7am. After some boulder scrambling up moraine it is a up a glacier followed by a 40° snow slope to the summit ridge. We were on the top at 11.15 and back down by 2 o'clock, greeted by Ram who had come to meet us with a chocolate cake in a carrier bag. We'd asked him to order one for us at the lodge as a celebration but hadn't intended him to carry it up there!



On Yala looking down into the Langtang Valley



## Reflections on the Munros

### Darrell Farrant

It was with the greatest pleasure that I read in the second issue of the excellent new Club Bulletin that two of my oldest friends in the YRC, Peter Swindells and David Smith, had recently completed the Munros. In his article Peter kindly referred to my own ascents which were completed in 1974, and about which I wrote in the 1976 edition of the Club Journal.

The Editor suggested that I might write some reflections at a distance of twenty years, and I am happy to do so. On rereading my earlier article and comparing it with Peter's, I was struck by their similarity. We both looked for some explanation for our quest - as if to brush aside possible criticisms of mere Munro-bagging - we both explained how an undeniable determination had got into the blood, we dwelt upon our favourite memories of the best days and paid tribute to some of the very special friends who had enabled us to accomplish our goal.

I recognise now that with the commitments of my present job I would never be able to achieve the Munros these days. Living in Edinburgh was a huge advantage for the nine years that I took, and it is perhaps worth recording that then petrol was 30 pence per gallon! Nevertheless the memories remain surprisingly fresh, and I still regularly go out on the hills with the same mountaineering companions. I also quite unashamedly regard the Munros as a very special achievement.

What memories still stand out even at this gap of time? Certainly a long and bitterly cold Easter Day along the Cam Mor Dearg Arete and Ben Nevis, followed by a sudden fall on the snow slope whilst abseiling into Coire Leis; only a brilliant piece of ice-axe braking by my companion saving us from a possibly fatal plunge to the floor of the corrie. Then, only a couple of days later, there was a superb winter traverse on An Teallach in breathtakingly beautiful conditions of warm sun, firm, crisp snow and endless visibility.

I remember my fifth visit to Skye - on the previous four it had rained most of the time - when we climbed all the exciting things on the warm, abrasive Gabbro: the Cioch, the Round of Coire Lagan, the Inaccessible Pinnacle, the Clach Glas-Blaven Traverse and the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr Nan Gillean. There can be no better climbing in Britain than conditions like these.

There were three consecutive Easters in an idyllic cottage in Glen Affric which enabled me to climb all the peaks in the area, again in the most superb winter conditions. One Easter Monday was spent on Sgurr Na Lapaich and we sat on the summit in shirtsleeves for over half an hour in glorious sunshine with views of diamond clarity all around us.

It was a pity, for my final ascents, that I chose a rather poor weekend towards the end of May. We walked into Shenaval on a glorious evening, and whilst we had good weather part of the next day, the rain and mist



Skye, Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr Thearlaich viewed from the slopes of Sgurr nan Eag, to the south

came flooding in from the west to deny us the spectacular views of Strathnasheallag and the Fisherfield Forest. That evening finished with an ascent of A'Mhaighdean, so that on the Sunday we had just Ruadh Stac Mhor to complete. It was a long, wet trek, but our navigation was good, and my companions were in fine spirits. By early afternoon we were

having a modest celebration with chocolates, oatcakes and a dram of whisky, and I treasure the dark photograph of four bedraggled figures sitting beside the cairn in the pouring rain with an infectious grin on all their faces. In some respects it was the end of the odyssey, but in a wider context it was merely part of a longer-lasting love affair with the hills.



# The Rediscovery of Grey Wife Hole

G. Champion.

The large shake hole of Grey Wife, above the West Branch of Cote Gill was first excavated by Harry Long and friends around 34 years ago. Their dig was more or less at the point where the stream sank. Unfortunately, the excavation became blocked by a large boulder and the project was abandoned. In November 1968, members of the Kendal Caving Club adopted a more systematic approach to the site and chose an opening in the south-east end of the shakehole of a couple of metres above and away from the stream sink. Two weekends of persistent work revealed a narrow rift which eventually allowed access to 400 metres of passage comprising of two streams, a sump of modest proportions and impressive formations.

This was a both unique and significant find on Newby Moss, revealing the highest horizontal streamway in the whole of the Ingleborough drainage. Not long after the exploration of Grey Wife was completed the initial narrow rift became silted up and the entrance collapsed making the prospect of re-opening the hole and keeping it open, a major project. However, ready for the major project, the YRC decided to re-open the cave. It was felt that not only would this constitute a worthwhile rediscovery but further investigation of its sump and adjoining passage might go some way towards solving the mysteries lying below the slopes of the South Ingleborough area. Permission was obtained from Ingleborough Estate

Office and the necessary scaffold, tools and general equipment were carried up to the entrance. Locating the exact site of the old entrance dig was difficult at first but artefacts of the late sixties soon gave clues to the direction of the excavation. After only two weekends of hard work a breakthrough was made, the direction probably slightly different to the KCC route. In less than half an hour, two of us were at the base of the entrance rift confronted by a blockage at the bottom of a steeply inclined crawl. Records indicate that it only took the original explorers 20 minutes to break through this section, however, it took us four hours to clear the crawl. Once through this we were into the stream passage and after decades of dormancy, the cave was once again wide open.

Easy passage leads to a 2 metre drop, the way below continuing as a high twisting rift with a few constrictions. After 60 metres an impressive aven is reached with a 12 metre pitch straight into the sump. The sump, (paradox pond), appears to be more like a canal and forms the confluence of two streams. Across the sump, the upstream section of Grey Wife sports the most interesting and well decorated part of the cave. Small cascades lead along the twisting streamway through a larger passage ending suddenly in a large chamber. The stream spouts impressively from a small passage 7 metres above. Access to this passage can be gained via a leftwards tending traverse (Jim's Traverse) but getting to the traverse line is quite difficult having to overcome a overhanging wall with little protection at the start. Once up the initial crux however, a sling was threaded which protected the more exposed section of the traverse.

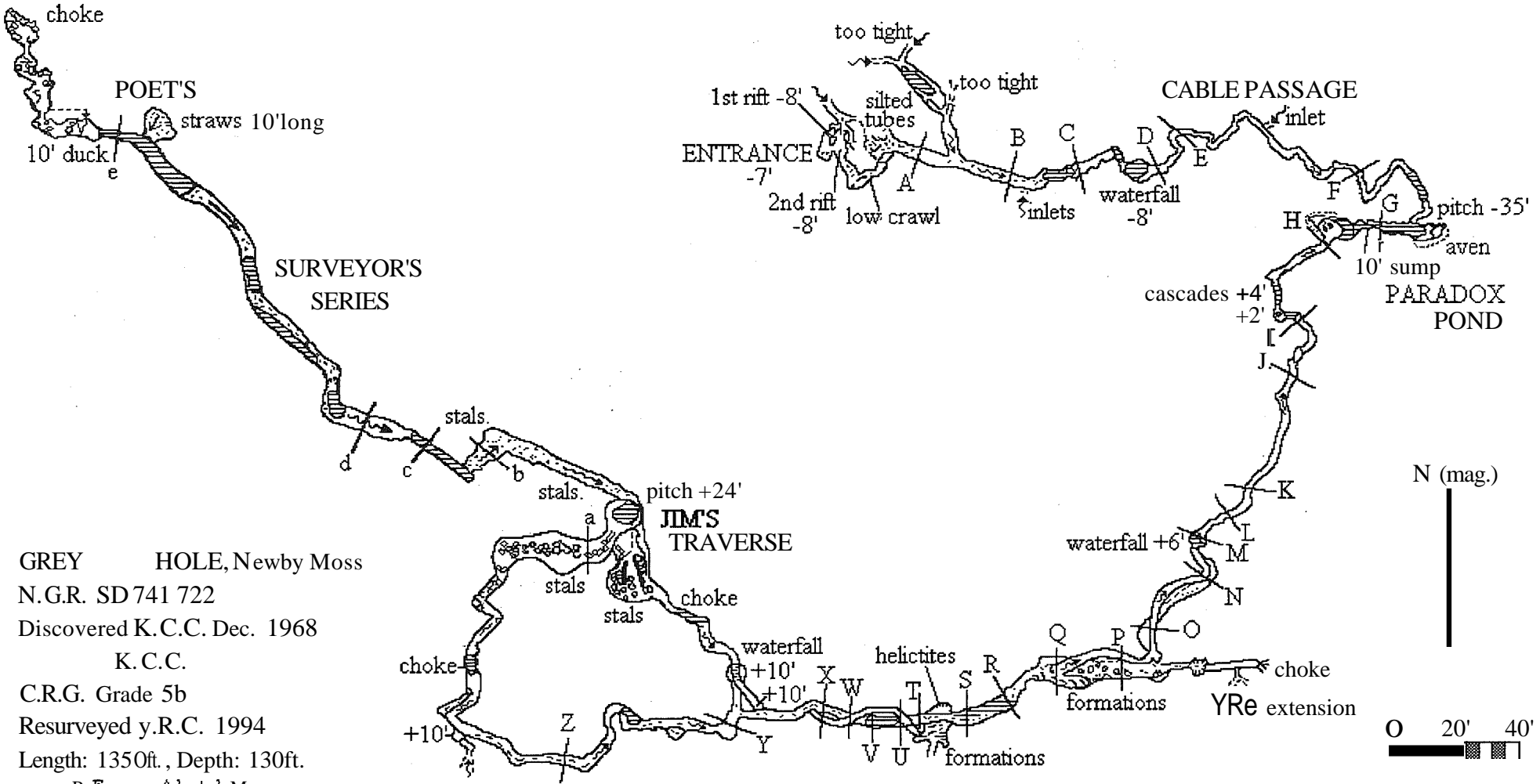
Sizeable ledges can be used as hand-holds but they need to be treated with care due to their friable nature. On the otherside of the traverse, a low wet but decorated crawl leads after 80 metres to a chamber adorned with incredible straws 2 metres long! The way on is a 3 metre duck and beyond the passage rises steeply but ends disappointingly in a mass of large boulders from where the stream flows.

Back in the late 60's a diver from the University of Leeds Speleological Association made two attempts at the sump in Grey Wife but only got down 4 metres and penetrated 10 metres horizontally because of the lack of visibility. In 1971 further dives were made by Geoff Yeadon and Olivia Statham and a low wide bedding was entered and followed for approximately 20 metres until it became depressingly low with poor visibility.. In June this year, Joel Gorrigan, of Mendip Caving Group, also an active caver with the YRC, was easily persuaded to enter the sump after 20 years in inky stillness. Everyone including Joel was optimistic that the technical advancements in cave diving over the years might help unlock the secrets deep in Grey Wife. Unfortunately, the sump proved to be considerably more full of silt than previous dives had recorded. A possible product of gripping on the Fells. He estimated only being able to get down for 3 metres with virtually no horizontal penetration. In December this year, Dave Morris of the Craven Pot Hole Club, agreed to give a second opinion. Unfortunately, his dive only confirmed what Joel had already reported.

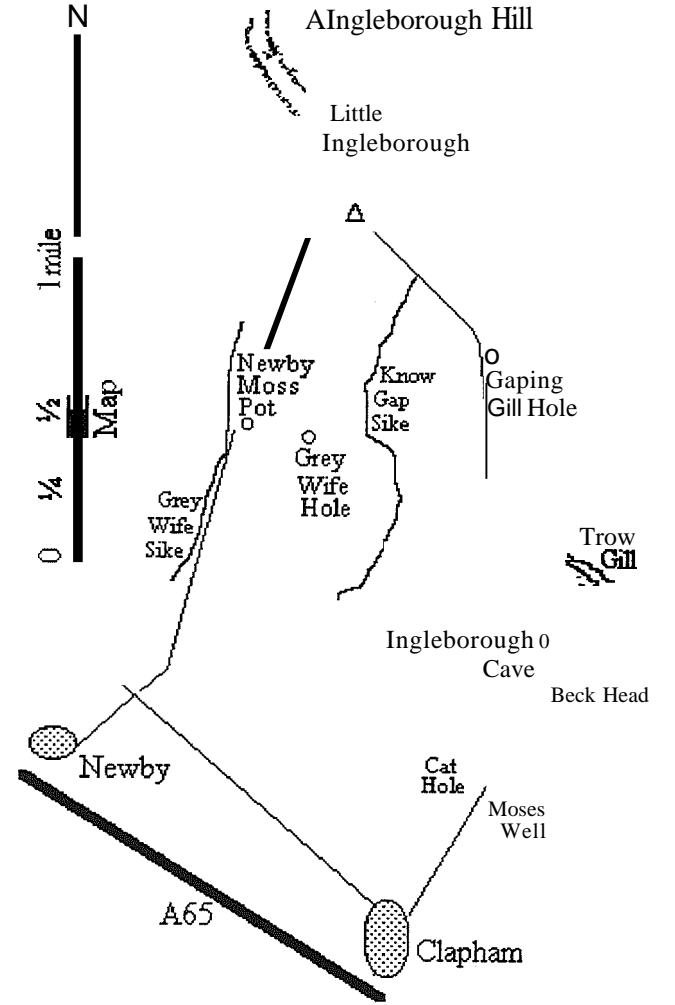
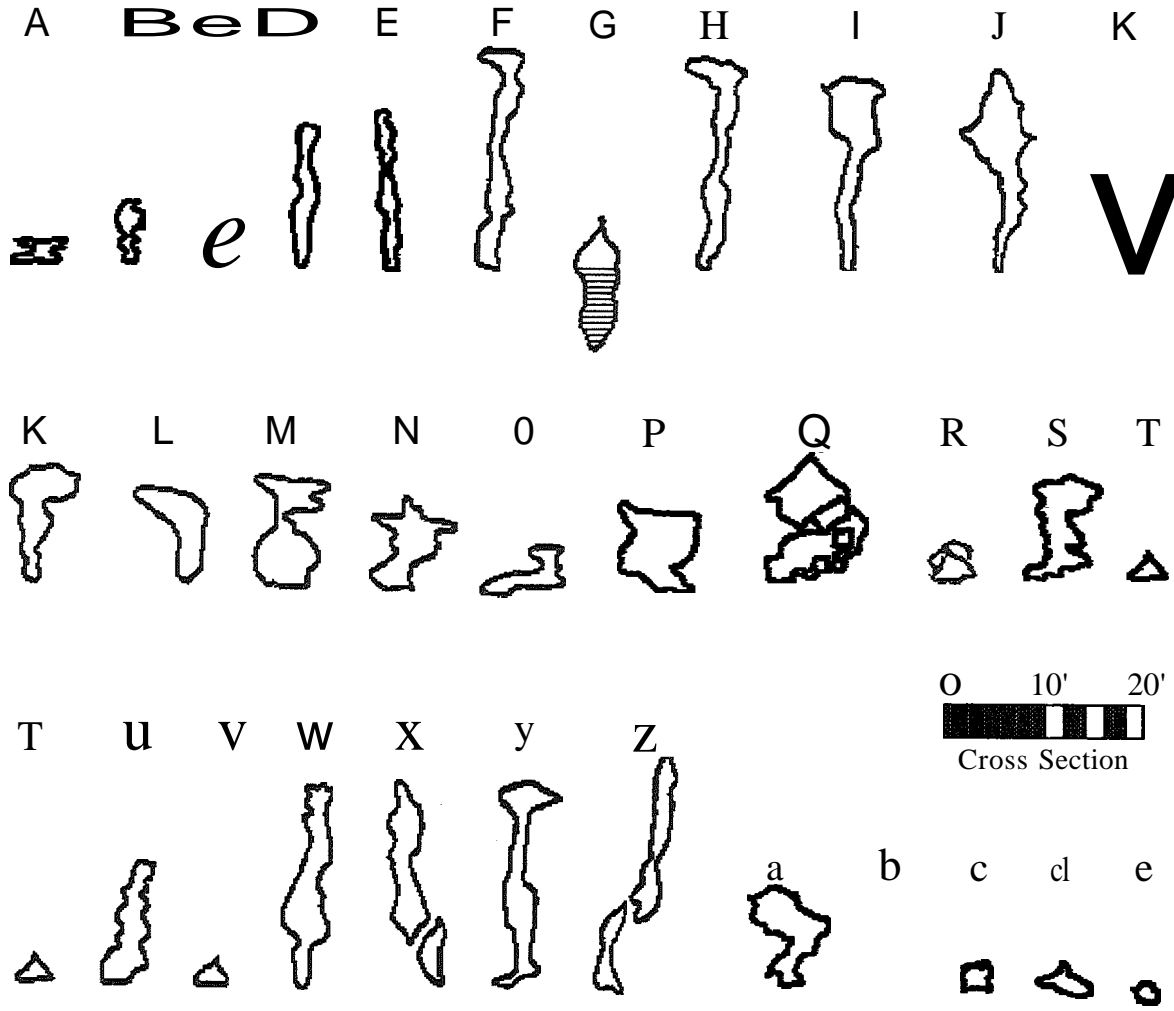
The upstream passage of Grey Wife trends Northwest and its source is still a mystery. Looking at the topology of the area logically, P2b, 60 metres north-west of Grey Wife would seem to be the source. This sink taking a sizeable stream but no significant cave development, has been dye-tested to Moses Well and Clapham Beck Head with no proven connection with Grey Wife.

The sump of Grey Wife, paradox pond, still lives up to its name, at such a high altitude at 387 metres is probably a perched sump. It has been positively dye-tested to Moses Well and Clapham Beck Head and during times of excessive flow, Cat Hole. According to D. Brook, Moses Well may have a flood relationship with Cat Hole similar to that of Brants Gill Head to Douk Gill over in Horton-in-Ribblesdale. During flood Moses Well increases in flow to about  $1\text{m}^3/\text{s}$  but continues to run clear, whilst Cat Hole, 300 metres distant and 20 metres higher, suddenly discharges a torrent of turbid water. It is likely that the waters of Grey Wife follow a southerly route towards the Newby Moss fault and then take a south-easterly direction, possibly using the fault towards Moses Well.

If there is a master cave beneath Newby Moss then clearly the Grey Wife sump may hold the key. Theories expounded in the past attempting to explain why the area has been so reluctant to yield more cave passages have concluded that a link between sump and resurgences may be paraphreatic in nature. Indeed, it has been argued that the bulk of the Newby Moss drainage may have originally accounted for the advanced nature of the White Scar cave system, now with only a small



GREY HOLE, Newby Moss  
 N.G.R. SD741 722  
 Discovered K.C.C. Dec. 1968  
 K.C.C.  
 C.R.G. Grade 5b  
 Resurveyed y.R.C. 1994  
 Length: 1350ft., Depth: 130ft.  
 P. Farrow Adapted: M.



stream flowing from the entrance. At a later time the watershed probably shifted to the west and this could partly account for the large flow size emerging from Moses Well. However, the generally consensus in the YRC team developing Grey Wife is that a master cave does exist. Although this might be inspired romanticism, it hasn't stopped productive thinking about how the sump may be eventually turned sometime next year.

A dig site has also been established upstream of the sump and already 30 metres of new passage has been found. The aven above the upstream side of the sump has sported an impressive climb but sadly no horizontal passage was found. Although efforts have been made to climb the aven "this side" of the sump, the attempt was cut short when the cave suddenly started to flood!

The reopening of Grey Wife Hole has already caused quite a stir in caving circles further developments will hopefully take place over the next few months.

YRC members of the team.

G. Campion

G. Salmon

B. Bensley

R. Sealey

A. Renton

Non club members

S. Walker

E Edkins

H. Green

M. Green

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Geomorphology of the Carboniferous Limestone of the Ingleborough District, by M. Sweeting.

## On the North Yorkshire Moors

Derek A Smithson

Recently, I went for a walk along the northern edge of the moor, below the skyline and in the woods, out of the bitter cold wind. I had been here with some friends about two months earlier and was delighted to find that grass had grown over the forestry road. Since then we have had rain and the road was now liquid mud from side to side, marked with hooves, bicycle tyres and feet. As I went further, I turned off the 'main road' onto a path that had been turned into a gutter by tyre marks all following the same smoothest route. The pleasant walk in the woods had been turned into a 'greasy pole'.

This is 'popularity' for you! I left the path and followed a buried pipe line which has grassed over, but still creates a gap through the dense pine trees. This is not a right of way, there is no path on the map or on the ground and there is a gate to climb. A good route, if you don't mind a little trespassing. In the North Yorkshire Moors, we have forestry roads, we have fire fighting/access roads for the gunmen and we have paths. Among the more interesting of these are the remains of the paved ways created by the monks on their popular routes and now, popular paths are being paved again. So the human race progresses.



# Kamchatka

David Laughton

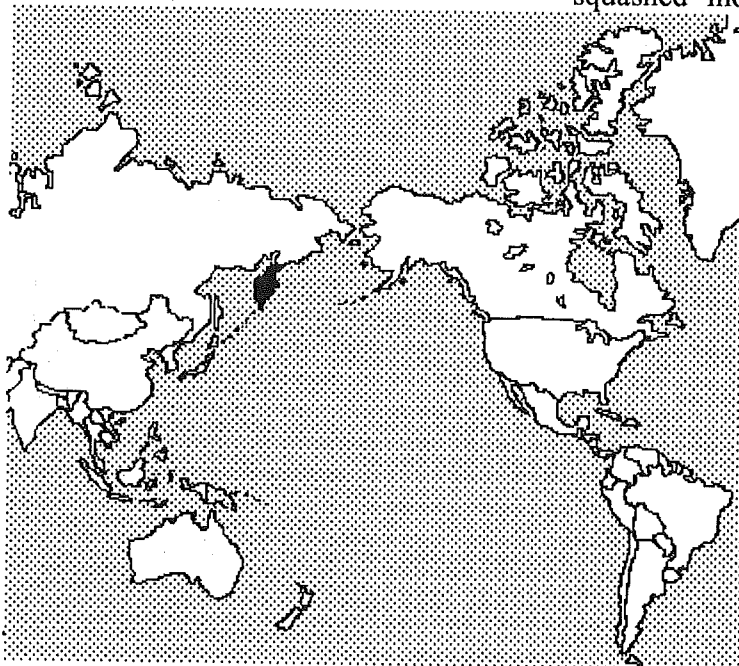
Kamchatka is that elongated, pear shaped peninsular dangling from the N.E. corner of Russia above Japan. Situated on the Pacific "Rim of Fire" it is extremely volcanic with ice clad peaks rising to almost 16,000 ft. Until four years ago no foreigners, nor ordinary Russians were allowed there. The main city is Petropavlovsk, situated on Avachinska Bay, one of the finest natural harbours in the world and an important Russian naval base.

Ever since I first saw that brilliant TV series "Realm of the Russian Bear" I have wanted to visit Kamchatka and eventually found a suitable looking package run by a company called Exodus, going there for three weeks in August, 1994. A three hour flight by B.A. brought our party of nine to Moscow (3 hour time change), a hair-raising drive across the centre of town and some 20 miles further south to one of the other airports then check-in for a

nine hour overnight flight by Aeroflot, due east with a further nine hour time-change. We arrived at Petropavlovsk early afternoon to be met by our young fit English leader, who had just led a 3 week trek in the Altai Mountains and by our transport. This was a 6-wheel drive Ural truck comprising cab and bus body with some 16 forward facing seats. Gear loaded, we repaired to one of the few hotels in town, good when built but now rather run down, for a much needed sleep. We learnt that our party of 10 would be supported by a driver, two "guides", a cook and an interpreter; four of them local, one from Moscow.

After spending a full day in P.P. seeing the town and its excellent museum we headed North in our truck first on metalled, then dirt roads and finally down a very narrow, muddy track along the banks of the Kamchatka River to find a campsite. This first day not only showed the versatility of our truck but also introduced us to one of the major problems of the holiday - mosquitoes. Before long the truck windows were almost covered with squashed mossies as were our tents

into which we retreated rapidly once up, even a smoky fire did little to keep us free. On getting up next morning, sleeping bags damp with a heavy dew and too small tents, we were intrigued to find the footprints of a large bear across a mud bank just below our camp site. Unfortunately this and some later indistinct prints were all we saw of the famous Russian bears.





Another longish drive, still heading North gave us superb views of the high peaks we were aiming for crystal clear in the pure air. Our aim was to a camp high for three nights in an area covered by ash from a huge volcanic eruption in 1976 and, if possible, to climb up to the crater of one of the group of volcanoes, Tolbachic, at around 10,000 ft, The highest nearby peak at 15,800 ft was way beyond the capabilities of our party and would be a major expedition, particularly in view of the problems associated with active volcanoes. I have since learned that a British party reached the summit of Klivchovskoi a few weeks before our visit and that there was a spectacular eruption shortly after we left.

Our vehicle soon proved its worth when the rough track we were now following ended in a 6 ft drop cut by recent floods. We got out, the driver engaged 6 wheel drive and rove down it with no problem, crossed the wide, rock strewn river bed and climbed an equally high and sheer bank on the other side. Then up over ash, lava and snow fields to our camp site amid a dead forest of large birch trees which had not been able to survive the few feet of ash deposited by the 1976 eruption. Although the site was bleak, without water and very cold (at some 3,000 ft) we could have large wood fires on each of the three nights spent there. Happily there were no mossies, only a small vole to keep us company. Whilst up there we explored the area on foot, descending through scrub, lava and mud to a 259 yard long lava tube just high enough to crawl through and climbing a series of high cinder cones one still warm enough to provide a cozy lunch spot. Unfortunately on the day of the planned ascent to the main crater it poured with rain and the

clouds covered the mountain so we walked elsewhere.

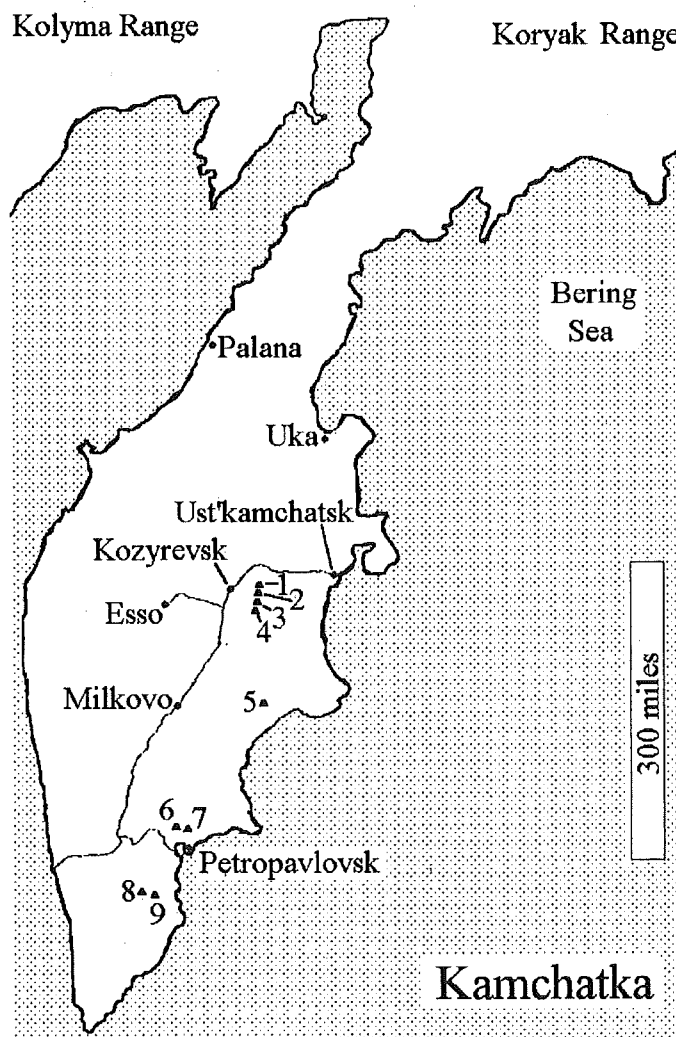
A different route took us back to our riverside camp for one night to find the insects worse than ever. Next morning we were picked up by helicopter for a magnificent flight in perfect weather over the tundra like plateau, then over another group of volcanoes giving spectacular views down into the craters. We were put down in a beautiful area some 30 miles from P.P. where there are hot springs and a few cabins catering for people who walk or helicopter in - there is no road or track. We camped there amongst birch and alder trees for four nights each day walking through the forests and up to hot springs, mineral pools or view points all the time under the gaze of a couple of magnificent, gleaming, ice encrusted peaks. On the fifth day we were helicoptered out flying between the two teaks, again in perfect visibility.

After a night recuperating in the P.P. hotel we were reunited with our truck for a long drive S round Avachinska Bay and up increasingly bad roads around the boot of yet another volcano to a beautiful campsite beside a small stream with a grove of alder bushes providing shelter and a profusion of wild flowers. A walk in late afternoon saw us crossing a pass and descending via an impressive waterfall to an old gold mining camp, now trying to establish itself as a XC ski centre and a nearby hot pool in which we soaked. Next day was a big one, an attempt on a volcano (Mutnovsky), quite a distance from camp. We were away by 7.30 for an extremely rough drive. The track had been churned up by geologists and surveyors planning the route of a pipeline from the volcano to

carry hot water and steam to the town below, our Russian friends assured us it would never be built! We eventually reached a large sloping snowfield with a deep, bergshrund like crack below. We walked across, the truck eventually made it by letting down the front tyres (automatically) and reinflating them once across. Long ash slopes, lava fields and more snow were crossed before even our driver admitted defeat in a very rocky, steep stream bed. Our climb now began. The usual mixture of mud, ash, lava and snow led us pleasantly upwards giving ever expanding views over the moonscape-like surroundings. I got far enough to see into the crater with its serac'd

glacier and fumeroles belching steam at regular intervals but a bad knee prevented me going down with most of the others into it. They got back to the truck a couple of hours after me at 7 pm for a two hour drive back to camp. Next day it rained so an early retreat was made, this time to a lodge owned by the Truckers Union some miles outside P.P. The attraction was a nearby swimming pool fed by natural hot water just cool enough to swim in.

Our final walking trip was an attempt on Avachinsky, 9,025 ft one of the volcanoes dominating P.P. Again a very rough drive, mainly up the bed of a river obviously regularly flooded with



Volcanoes	ft.
1 Klivchovskoi	15 584
2 Kamen	15 197
3 Bezymyannaya	10 121
4 Tolbachik	12 080
5 Kronotskaya	11 575
6 Koryakskaya	11 339
7 Avachinsky	9 025
8 Mutnovsky	-
9 Viluchinsky	-

an occasional track, breached in many places. After a couple of hours we reached base camp, a collection of some twenty huts in various stages of decrepitude with a few resident vulcanologists. Fortunately we didn't need to pitch tents as we were able to get into a couple of the huts, equipped with a sleeping bench. That afternoon we climbed a Suilven like peak up above camp, en-route descending into a large ice cave at the foot of a permanent snowfield. Next day the fit ones planned an ascent of the peak now clearly seen as a huge cinder cone, still active.

Although born in slag heap country and spending much of my childhood running up and down them I am not now daft enough to spend hours slogging up such peaks so decided on a more gentle walk. It soon started to rain and, as the climbers were on the final cone, to snow heavily so they had to retreat some 300 ft below the summit. Another night in our cabins then back to the fleshpots.

After a final day spend sailing around Avachinska Bay, fishing and watching White-tailed and Stellars Sea Eagles we flew back to Moscow for a days sightseeing.

I had found Kamchatka to be an unusual, fascinating area but not feeling as remote as expected. Petropavlovsk is a large town (300,000 population) with an important Vulconology Institute. It seems that staff from this Institute get around into most of the areas on a regular basis thus keeping tracks upon. I feel with a more "reliable" way of getting there (possibly via Alaska, thus avoiding Aeroflot) Kamchatka could become a very popular area for adventure tourism.

## **Expedition Diary**

### **1957 - Nepal**

#### **Maurice Wilson**

April 22 (Easter Monday)

We had a fair amount of snow during the night. It was cold but, eventually, I realised that it was striking at my buttocks through the Lilo. By simply dragging the Duvet suit further beneath me, the trouble stopped.

Breakfast was served through the tent flaps fairly punctually and I quite enjoyed the porridge. I much prefer our breakfast to the scant dinner of pemmican and ryvita.

I emerged from the tent to find a beautiful morning and an enchanting view. Our small camp was by majestic peaks. The one to the North West, especially, captures my imagination. I feel I would like to climb it. The so-called 'Ladies Peak', fills the background, finely. I took several pictures, thought I suspect my shutter has frozen.

We collapsed the tents and weighted them down with stones. Then we roped up and fairly romped down the glacier. I left lilo, duvet and one sleeping bag behind, to save weight. The lower icefall looked grand at close quarters and, soon after reaching Camp One, the 'Ferry Party' joined us. On the way to Base, Dan took some movie pictures in colour, for which I 'played' various parts.

Had chicken and dehydrated raspberries for dinner.

April 23.

We all had a lie-in this morning. Had a discussion on equipment to be returned home and what could be left. Had a pleasant session with the Sherpas regarding their songs. They gave me

the words of one, but it is difficult to write down the tunes satisfactorily. They spent most of the morning playing a game with dice, called Swazo. Arthur and I had a game of Patience and then sorted out a few extra rations for the High Altitude boxes, mainly meat bars, sardines, and soup. these were then placed into three polythene bags, one for each Camp. I started on a book called, 'Communism and Christianity', rather heavy going.

This evening was quite good fun. I went down to the kitchen and got the Sherpas singing. They would sing a song and then I sang the English equivalent song. Eventually, Crosby, Arthur and George, attracted by the din, joined us and we continued for some time. We finished off our part of the show with a rendering of 'Ilkla Moor', and an improvised 'Sunhoss Sherpa'. (Sunhoss is my own pronunciation of the Sherpa work for 'Goodnight', and seems to cause them much amusement).

The smoke from the wood fire in the kitchen was painful to my eyes and I had to get a pair of goggles, though they didn't make a great deal of difference.

April 24.

This morning we all set out for Camp One with varying loads, leaving at 6.40 a.m. and arriving about 8.50 a.m. I went rather better, though I only carried 20 lbs. Still, this is easily my best time for the trip. A good deal of snow has gone from the lower slopes and the higher track is well beaten down. Arthur and Dan stayed behind. I took my time coming back with George, who was unwell.

Had salmon for lunch. The usual clouds came down rather early today, about 10.30 a.m. and the afternoon brought a fairly long shower of snow. We spent the evening, as usual, just talking in the tent.

Marari.

This young student is our Liaison Officer. Probably about 20 years old, he is very intelligent and well-read. His is absolutely invaluable to us as an interpreter, both with the coolies from Tempathang and the Sherpas. He usually feeds with us but, as often as not, prefers the company in the kitchen. He came out with us once, on our first recce. of the route to Camp One.

The 1958 Journal

the full expedition report.

## Song for the Beloved

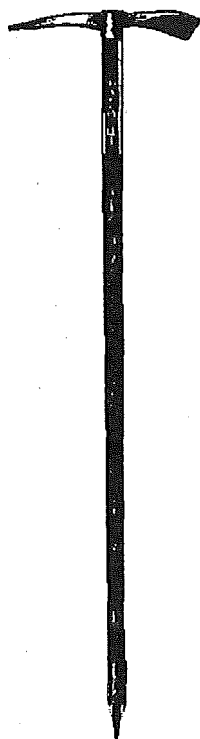
Translated by I. C. Ravalde

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: 'Chung di la mi gab la la. Tu le ea di do go go'. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics: 'Da la mi gab la la Ni ma lo le ring chung chung'. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Chung di la mi gab la la. Tu le ea di do go go

Da la mi gab la la Ni ma lo le ring chung chung

CRAMPONS AND CONSERVATION  
Bill Todd.



They laughed at me at Lowstern when I turned up on the meet,  
"His ice-axe is old fashioned, there are hobnails on his feet",  
But none the less, the President said, pleased by that shining morn,  
"I'm fed up with the Clapham way, but, let's climb the Inglehorn,

I had the bright idea of going up to Raven Scar,  
Across the clints to Devil's Pass, it wouldn't be too far,  
So off we went to Chapel-le-Dale and mounted up the fell,  
There was Arthur, David, Alan Kay and Juliet as well.

We got into the Devil's Rift and Arthur found a way,  
Which steepened up in solid snow just by a little bay,  
Our leader went with great aplomb but soon stopped in his tracks,  
"It's just a little awkward here, I ought to have an axe"

I felt a little diffident with my old Aschenbrenner,  
It hadn't cost an awful lot, at Pool's in Leeds, a tenner,  
But all my bold companions, now fearful of a fall, Had come onto  
this mountain without an axe at all.

So up it went from hand to hand our leader used it well,  
He must have had some practice in the land of William Tell,  
The party used the axe in turn to beat the yawning drop,  
And came out on a milder slope not far below the top.

We stopped and had a bite to eat close by the summit shelter,  
Up till then, in spite of cloud, the day had been a belter,  
After lunch we headed west and onto Simon Fell,  
Getting soon below the mist things seemed to be going well.





When suddenly a steep slope loomed, and with a wild surmise,  
The party stopped and looked around, concern in all their eyes,  
For nobody had crampons except your careful poet,  
lilt's only Ingleborough" they said, and they came to rue it.

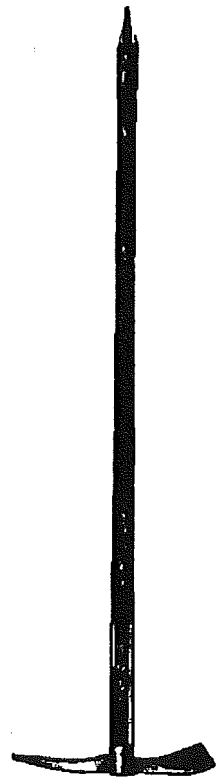
Our leader wasn't worried much, his legs were like tree trunks,  
He just kicked steps and went on down, leaving behind three funks,  
Then Alan took a walking stick to help him on his way,  
And David used the ice-axe to get down as best he may.

He cut some steps for Juliet, all well spaced out and neat,  
While I sat on a tussock and put crampons on my feet,  
I caught up with my comrades and bent down to quick release;  
When suddenly we were cordoned by a posse of police.

They'd had a wireless message through it gave them pain to tell,  
That dire unlawful happenings were going on on Simon Fell,  
We stammered, pitifully, that we really weren't so bad,  
The Club had walked on Simon Fell since Slingsby was a lad.

In fact we always had behaved with every due propriety,  
"Irrelevant," the bobby said "Complaint is from the Society",  
Four of you are in the clear, get moving, on your bikes,  
The one in real deep trouble is that fellow with the spikes.

The NSPB does not like the use of any gear  
That's liable to hurt wild creatures, which they all hold dear"  
This prompted me to speak up clearly in my own defence.  
"That crampon spikes can harm the birds does not make any sense",  
Replied the cop, "Your notions need a strong dose of correction.  
NSPB exists to offer BEETLES due protection".



# Elidir Fawr - 1937

## Arthur Evans

On the first ascent of the 'Corrugated Cracks' climb, I found the final crack by far the hardest. Near the top a number of pieces of rock were jammed in the crack and were obviously very loose. They protruded and getting over them without dislodging them was quite tricky. I was wearing boots (tricounis). My second was not so lucky. He touched them and they all crashed down leaving him dangling on the rope. I had thought of calling it 'Avalanche Crack'.

The climb was a consolation prize. I had wanted to find a route up Elidir Slabs which then had no climbs on them. I'd arrived at Idwal Cottage a day ahead of my friends, met Peter Smith who had done some climbing and he agreed to come with me to explore them. The route I chose is now called 'Janus' or close to it. The start is the same. I brought Peter

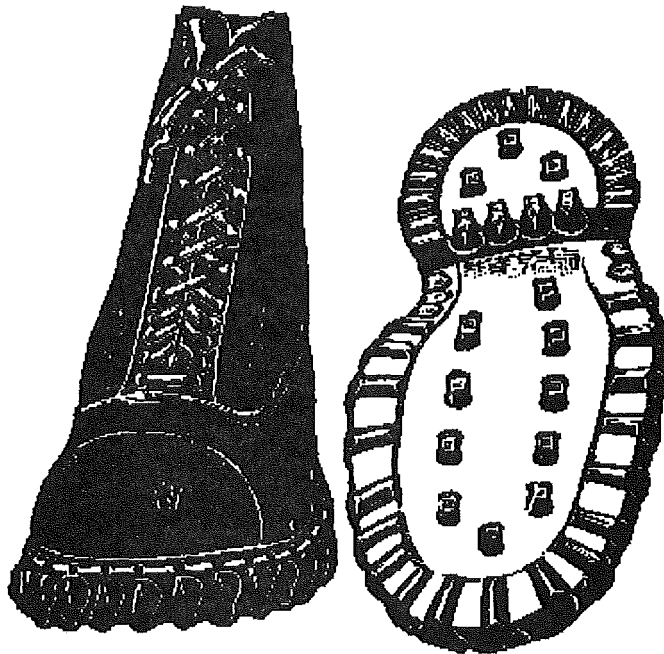
Smith up to a stance under an overhang (a globe flower was in full flower there) and then climbed easily over the lip of the overhang by a move to the right and then stepping up and to the left.

From there I ran out nearly all of the 150 ft. of alpine line we were using, moving straight up. The slabs gave interesting climbing on small holds (I had changed to plimsolls) but found no stance or belay where I could bring up my second. I finished when the slab steepened forming a wall, and had to climb back down.

My friends arrived that evening and one of them suggested that a piton should be used but I disagreed saying that it should be left to someone capable of climbing it clean.

The slab route ('Janus') was climbed thirty years later in 1967, using two pitons.

*A. W. Evans*



## "Hands of a Climber: A Life of Colin Kirkus" by Steve Dean

Reviewed by John Lumb

For anyone interested in the history of British rock climbing the name Colin Kirkus stands proudly alongside those other great names in the sport's Pantheon.

During the 1930's Kirkus pioneered a series of climbs that remain some of the finest middle-grade outings in Britain. Indeed, there can be few climbers who have not delighted in 'Nose Direct', 'Great Slab', 'Mickledore Grove', etc. Yet despite the fame of his climbs little has been written about the man himself.

Now, with the publication of 'Hands of a Climber', the man behind the glories is revealed.

In this meticulously researched biography Dean has unearthed a wealth of fascinating interactions of the period, such as Kirkus' preference for the bonhomie of Ogwen Youth Hostel compared to the somewhat more stifled atmosphere of Helyg. Here also is revealed the mutual respect between Kirkus and that other dominant figure of the time, John Menlove Edwards. It is poignant to recall that both these great, yet vastly different men would ultimately die in tragic circumstances.

But greatness is not measured in achievement alone. Complementing the many observations of the period are comments from those contemporaries Dean interviewed for this book. Names such as Longland, Hargreaves, Pallis. All, past and



AB.Hargreaves

present, speak with a common emphasis on Kirkus' simple joy of being amongst the hills, combined with a rare modesty for one at the cutting edge of the sport.

Superbly illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs unearthed from the Alpine Club, this book is a fine addition to the history of the sport.

Ultimately, what Dean has achieved in this book is a compelling portrait of a shy, modest yet great man.

"Hands of a Climber" by Steve Dean, £14.95  
Ernest Press, 1 Thomas Street,  
Holyhead, Gwynedd



The Song from the 1994 Annual Dinner      J. Dennis Armstrong

*chorus*

Oh Dear what can the matter be,  
O dear, what can the matter be,  
O dear, what can the matter be,  
The YRC's gone to the dog!!

The name "Yorkshire Ramblers" 's now up for emporium,  
The name that was made by a passing historian,  
So think of a name that will sound less Victorian  
To bring the Club out of the fog!

*chorus*

O Dear, what can the matter be .....

Its age has increased at a rate geometric  
For prostates and grey hairs and bald heads, we've a hat trick,  
We've won the gold medal as Club Geriatric,  
What other Club's gone the whole hog?

*chorus*

Oh dear, what can the matter be .....

They say there's a female who'd now like to join us,  
The Pinnacle Club has expelled her unanimous,  
gentlemen must we be macho magnanimous,  
And hope for a clandestine snog!!

*chorus*

Oh dear what can the matter be .....

Now guests, do not think that this song is sedition,  
To pot hole and climb the big hill's still our mission,  
So whatever our age we'll stay true to tradition,  
We'll add to our glorious log!

*chorus*

Oh dear, what can the matter be,  
Oh dear, what can the matter be,  
Oh dear, what can the matter be,  
THIS Club will NOT go to the dog!

# The Moon

**John Middleton**

Awstruck, I gasped for breath and searched the surrounding cliffs for relief. Nothing! Nothing but impending overhangs and, 110' below, the roaring, foaming sea sucking at the base of the cliffs. My heart pumped harder, sweat ran freely from the palms of my hands, my right leg shook uncontrollable. What a place! How could I possibly launch myself out there and survive on this the second sensational pitch of "The Moon".

Whilst not hard by modern standards "The Moon" has managed to retain its reputation as one of Britain's classic rock adventures. It was the controversial Ward-Drummond, some 23 years ago, who produced this audacious route which finds its way through the overhangs of Gogarth's Yellow Wall. It starts as a full ropes length abseil down the cliff to the left of Castel Helen landing on a sloping ledge some 60 feet above the sea. The diagonal rock beddings combined with the profusion of overhangs above create a dizzying, glassless 3D effect. Three pitches daringly challenge this seemingly impregnable scenario.

I had to make the move now, my seconds face held a "you are afraid" smirk. I was, I lurched upwards and rightwards aiming for two small finger pockets, my feet scraped along the edge of nothingness searching for any friction. The holds were too small, I had to move again, this time into a series of desperate diagonally upward lunges, past two pegs and onto a short term out of balance stance, again on the edge of the void - "spacewalking" Ward-Drummond called it. Nothing but sea between my legs, nothing but

bulging rock all around, I know now why there were no birds here, its even too steep for them! Adrenaline coursed round my veins as more undignified lurches took me around an arete and up onto the traverse line of Creeping Leema. With difficulty I reversed this to a stance where, after placing numerous belays, I settled down, dangled my feet over the edge, put a smirk on my face, fed Peter some slack, and then waited to see his expression.

The final pitch proved to be equally as breathtaking, breaching the overhangs directly above the stance. Its slightly easier grade enables time for composure, allows a better technique, and gives a fuller appreciation of this truly amazing route.

Gogarth is situated on the north western side of Holyhead island. Its great cliffs rise from the sea for over 400'. The routes, some 500 of them, are of all grades from V.S. upwards. Most have to be reached by either exciting abseils or even more exciting sea level traverses and it is these which turn a rock climb into an extraordinary rock adventure. On early acquaintance the not inconsiderable "Gogarth Grip Factor" should be taken into consideration as this may up the grade by at least one! But ... *"Whatever your experience long after you are back in the warmth and safety of your home part of Gogarth will remain with you in the years to come far away from the west you will feel its compelling call which will speak to your inner soul. Then one day you will return"*. I do, every year!

The Moon. E3. 50' 4c. 110' 5c. 95' 5b.

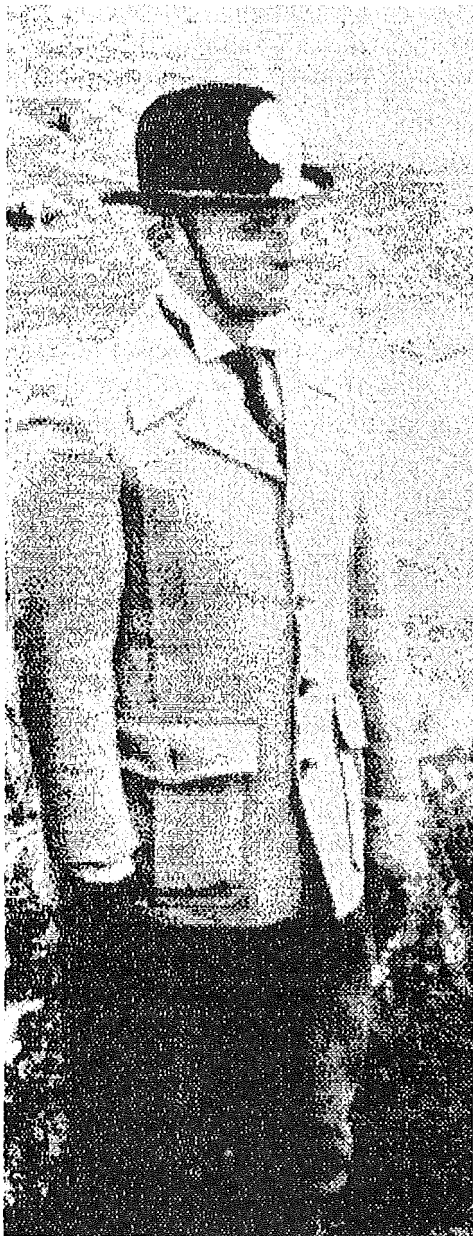
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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the editor's introduction to the Gogarth Guide, published by the Climbers Club 1990.

## A Case Against Mixed Membership

Ian Crowther

As members will by now know, that part of the committee's plan for the next twenty five years which pivoted around the introduction of mixed sex membership of the YRC was substantially defeated by those present at the special general meeting following the 1994 AGM.



WCIC at Rowten Pot during the Centenary Year, 1992

I am not so blind as to be unable to see the point of the plan. I well understand that the committee are concerned that, whilst we have been able to replace our membership losses at the upper age range reasonably adequately so far, the fact still remains that it is inevitable that our losses through natural causes will accelerate by the turn of the century.

My objections to female membership are more philosophical. We can't ignore the practical, and we'll no doubt see what our new keen recruitment secretary can do in this respect. I nevertheless think that we ignore our gut feelings at our peril, because if we do then we ignore the fact that our club has always been just that bit different from other clubs. I don't think that most of us really want mixed membership in our hearts, although I believe that some of us think that it would be expedient.

I think that these latter delude themselves. All we could seriously expect to get would be a few girlfriends and wives of members. We have been assured that membership criteria would be no different than for male members. I retain some cynicism about this assurance, but I don't think that it really matters all that much, because by far the majority would be brought along as guests, never joining the club, but affecting the ethos of our meets by their very presence. Some might attend frequently enough to be almost accepted as members without ever actually applying for membership - becoming 'part of the scene' without having to put their bona fides to the test, and how long would it be before young children appeared on the scene with their parents, further disrupting our equilibrium?

The 'pro' lobby will no doubt argue that the acceptance of girlfriends, even as guests, would permit us to better facilitate the intake of young male members, possibly from university sources, and we might even get some good female members also in course of time.

This would be a disgracefully patronizing attitude toward the female sex. If I wanted to join a mixed club, then I'd apply to join a proper one & so would any sensible woman - unless she chose to join one of the all-female clubs, amongst whom I detect no enthusiasm for admitting men. Such evidence as I have is quite to the contrary - they intend remaining as they are and have said so firmly. One leading member of the Pinnacle Club is reputed to have advised us to 'stay as we are'. They are a mirror image of the YRC and good luck to them!

I've asked myself whether or not I would have joined the YRC had it been a mixed club in 1962. After 32 years I really don't know. Possibly I would have, but what I definitely do know is that like all of us I willingly joined this all-male club, which I subsequently learned to value & grew to love.

The great majority of YRC members are and have always been married men, and are privileged in that they can go onto the hills with their families whenever they wish AND they can follow their hobby with the YRC away from their womenfolk on meets.

In my view (and that of my wife) it psychologically benefits us in normal circumstances to spend time with our friends away from our nearest & dearest. I think we are the better for

doing so & owe it to ourselves and our loved ones to continue cherishing our eminently sensible & life enriching facility. Ladies with a proper sense of self-esteem will ensure that they have similar benefits available to themselves as well.

I hope that those of you who are not yet in permanent domestic partnerships, or have very new ones, appreciate the wisdom of this because, if you don't, then I think that your lives will be the more restricted, a situation that you may live to regret.

Regarding our average ages I think that we merely reflect the ageing society in which we live, but rather than radically change the nature of our club I would, albeit regretfully, prefer to contemplate a smaller membership. If we shrunk to as low as 100 members it would mean some financial re-thinking, but so long as we had a hard of active fellows, it wouldn't mean the demise of the club any more than did two world wars.

In my address to the members at the special meeting I begged them to join me in rejecting this move which, although an experiment, would be irreversible, would damage the nature of our club & thereby impoverish our lives in pursuit of the delusion that it would solve our problems as they are perceived by the middle aged officials of the club. Our destiny lies elsewhere, and I was very gratified to note that amongst the substantial majority against the motion were most of the keen younger members present at the meeting.

I sympathise with incoming President' Derek Bush & his committee in their dilemma, but can we now please drop the matter and get on with our lives?

# SGM Blues

Alan Linford

The discussion and voting at the 1994 SGM on recommendation one of the forward plan gave me cause for concern and some thought.

When members vote at the SGM, do they vote for what they as an individual need from the Club or do they vote for what is best for the Club?

What causes members to remain silent or abstain and then discuss the issue afterwards?

In the 'Case Against' it was suggested that members joined because it was an all male club. I wonder how many joined *because* it was an all male club. 'Positively obscene' HR might say. I joined in 1957 because I wanted to climb and cave and my sponsors had transport. A purely selfish interest. It was only later that I appreciated the depth of fellowship and comradeship so elegantly described in the 'Case Against'.

On the issue of what best for the Club, selfish needs must not be allowed to dominate. I felt the sub-committee had managed to separate emotion from reality and personal (selfish) objectives from what is best for the Club. It cannot have been an easy task and I was disappointed at the SGM to hear little support for the sub-committee (who received majority support from the full committee) and any in-depth questioning of how the proposal would be applied. The rejection of the recommendation amounted to a vote of no confidence in the Officers and committee.

What exactly were the sub-committee asking for?

◆ Females as automatic members?  
No.

◆ Children on meets?  
No.

◆ Thin end of the wedge?  
No.

We, the members have *total* control of who is proposed and elected. Certainly not the open door that the 'Case Against' suggests. I see little chance of a non-climbing, non-caving rampant feminist being proposed, seconded, notified to the membership and being elected after gaining at least 75% of the votes cast in a ballot of the committee.

It seems that all that is likely to happen is that *some* younger members *may* have females with them and the females may feel that they can contribute to the Club activities better as members, be proposed and elected. Likely numbers? I suggest perhaps five within ten years with it being unlikely that they all turn up on meets just as with other, male, new members. In reality it is not a problem. The sub committee seem to be saying we need this facility as a contribution to the future prosperity of the Club.

I hope the issue will be raised again - preferably by the younger, more active members. Then it will again receive my support.

Socrates was asked by a young man 'Is it best to be married or remain single?'. The great man replied 'Whatever decision you make, you will repent.'

We will repent the '94 SGM.

## Newfoundland Notes.

P. Lockwood

The island is equal in size to England and Wales. Population approximately 500,000. St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula is equal in size to Wales and is very similar to Telemark (Norway) or Sutherland. The majority of the population lives in the Avalon Peninsula. There are general tourist facilities here.

Access to the wilderness is difficult. One needs trails to go through the woods which are otherwise impenetrable generally. There is also a lot of bush which is mainly alder, cherry, rowan, birch etc. approximately eight feet high and completely impenetrable. In fact visibility can be lost 100 yards from the road. There are also barrens which are walkable but there are lots of bogs. Vegetation consists of blueberries, azaleas etc. approximately two feet high.

Around St. John's there is good coastal walking trails, which are very pleasant and can be followed for many miles. As the cliffs are 4-500 ft, there is quite a bit of ascent and descent in summer. In winter we have cross country ski trails, which provide skiing very similar to Norway. We also have a cross country and alpine ski clubs in St. John's. About 110 miles away at Clarenville we now have a downhill ski resort though the vertical height is only about 600 to 700 feet. It has become quite popular with St. John's "Townies".

In spite of the cliffs there is little climbing. 'Old timers' like myself and a few other immigrants felt that we could be a menace to the local society in case of accidents. In recent years, however, a few university students

seemed to be getting interested. There is lots of rock!

The west coast is a different story. The hills are approximately 2500 feet and quite spectacular. There are many fjords with 2000 foot cliffs and these have recently attracted the attention of university students at the Corner Brook College. Quite a bit of ice climbing is now being done on near vertical cliffs. This *the* skiing centre, 'Best Skiing East of the Rockies!' Marble mountain near Corner Brook is now the official site of The '99 Canadian Winter Games and development is now taking apace. There is also unlimited Nordic skiing and heli-skiing on the Lewis Hills.

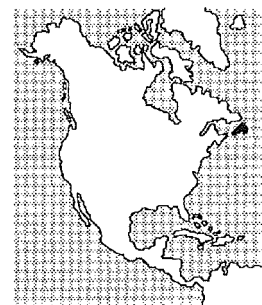
Geologically, this area is now a national world attraction being very old, approximately three billion years, and is much studied. It corresponds to the hills west of the Great Glen in Scotland and the Norwegian series.

Access on the island is by roads and these are excellent. However, when we arrived in 1958 access was only by coastal boat.

Labrador is part of the province, but here access is very limited indeed. The Torngat mountains in the North are fascinating--gabbro but require a major expedition to get to them unfortunately! Access to Labrador is by air only to the interior or coastal boat to the coast.

Finally, although the province is now broke with the collapse of the fishery, the people are the most friendly and helpful, one could wish to find.

Newfoundland is worth a visit!



# The Character of our Alpine Meets

Dennis Armstrong

It was in the September of 1984 that a motion was passed in committee to hold an Alpine Meet in the Summer of 1985. It was not possible to organise one for that summer and consequently the first one was held at Arolla in 1986. Since then there have been eight<sup>1</sup> Alpine Meets and it has established itself in the club's calendar. It is a regular as much as the Spring Bank Holiday Meet in Scotland, the Long Walk or Glen Etive. Regular meets take on their own character, partly formed by the location, the season and the members who seem to be regulars. So it is proving with the Alps Meets. It is the purpose of this article to try and describe what that is.

First, by definition the meet is out of the UK, and to make the expense worthwhile it is usually for two weeks, twice as long as the Spring Bank Meet Holiday in Scotland. Because of the distance and the expense, many of those attending take the meet seriously: most have done homework on the region, bought maps beforehand and come prepared. Also the meet is longer, so there is time to get to know one another, no matter whether that person spends the meet front pointing up ice or photographing flowers in the valleys. Not that those activities are mutually exclusive, some do both.

Second, again by definition, the mountains are big. They often entail a heavy carry up to

a hut, early starts and long days. The sense of achievement after reaching a 4000m summit is something special. There are a number of older members who, led and encouraged by younger members, have climbed to heights they never thought possible and have experienced days they will never forget. Fathers and sons have climbed together and found the normal order of things reversed and both are the wiser for it.

Third, the meet has a wide appeal, catering for all kinds of activity. Its appeal is not just to the '4000m' men, the Alpine equivalent of Munroists. There are lesser peaks, still entailing huts and the like, but not requiring ice climbing. These are referred to as 'snow trudges' and are quite exciting enough for some. There are walks over the passes, climbing to 3000m and seeing the big peaks from the foothills. And there are usually interesting low level valley walks, of differing lengths and character, for the 'off days'.

Fourth, usually the weather can be relied on to be good. Though not always, the 1987 meet at Saas Grund was unfortunate. The probability of good weather has its effect upon the meet. Plans can usually be put into action without fear of hitting storms. People are out doing things, and the atmosphere in the evenings is warm, relaxed and pleasant. This year, the camp site was lower down than usual, and at 800m in the Lauterbrunnen valley at midday it was often too hot to be comfortable. You had to get out of the valley, up to 1500m to reach the refreshing air.

Fifth, there are women and children there: wives and partners of older members mostly, because they realise that to go away alone, for two weeks, such a distance, is not really 'on'. It is not a normal meet. One president brought his active daughter, but she unfortunately has not been again. One member regularly brings his two small children and they all fit in without difficulty. For the most part the younger members do not bring their girl friends. I am tempted to say that they do not want to be encumbered. It is also true that without wives some members would do more. They have to consider what is realistic and accept that it is better to come and do something rather than not come at all.

Usually there are twenty to thirty people on the meet - about average attendance. The camp sites are inevitably crowded as it is the peak holiday season at the end of July and early August. The snow is supposed to be at its best and everyone is trying to take advantage of it. It would be nice to report that the camp sites are isolated, away from the maddening throng, but alas it would be untrue. Those planning the meet have worked hard to make sure that the YRC party is together. The more popular the spot the more difficult this is. Argentiere in 1989 was probably the most chaotic. This year, at Lauterbrunnen, the coach parties of young students drastically overcrowded the facilities, and there were queues for the showers up to midnight and beyond. The site manager apologised but said that if he accepts block booking from the YRC then why not from others too. The young students wanted to enjoy the

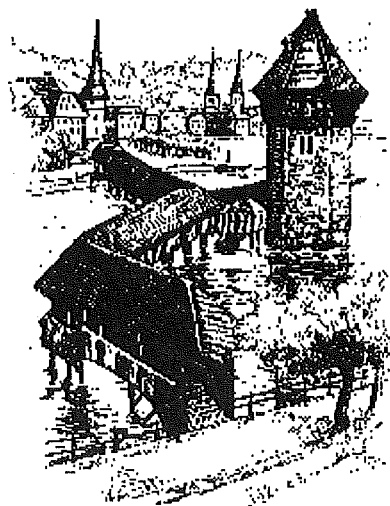
Alps as much as the YRC and he had to earn his money during the peak season. 'Why not come at another time,' he asked 'and have the site to yourself?' The problem for the YRC is that as more members want to come the harder it is to find good sites at peak season. We may have to consider the Pyrenees, or the Dolomites, which may be less crowded. Alternatively change to another period, say the last two weeks in August.

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true success of the Alps Meet is that it has attracted younger members, possibly more than any other single move. Archaic overtones in our club's name become irrelevant once the guests arrive. There are perhaps ten younger members who have joined the club as a result of the challenge and the opportunities of the Alps Meet. It would be wrong to end this article without referring to David Smith. Not only for all the sterling work he has put in to establish this meet by organising most of them, but also for his involvement with the guests and younger members on the site and, above all, in the highest places.

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eight including Norway





## Obituary

# Jack Ratcliffe

(Member 1962 - '75 & 1977 - '88)

Jack was a likeable character who was very easy to get on with. He will be best remembered, perhaps, as a good companion on the hills and also as a good friend of his fellow teacher, our one-time hut warden, Denis Driscoll. Together they built the Lakeland stone fireplace at Low Hall Garth and the floors in the washroom areas.

He died suddenly on the 1st December 1994 at the age of 82 while collecting logs and loading them into his camper van in preparation for constructing a rustic garden seat. His wife relates that he left home earlier and looked the happiest man on Earth. A man who always kept busy despite the warning of a slight heart attack while playing bowls; he played on to the end of the game.



Jack atop Conical Hill, New Zealand, 1989



Jack enjoyed walking, fishing, stone walling, woodworking and making walking sticks from carefully selected wood collected on walks. He loved the Lakeland hills and indeed mountains in general. He married Lillian, at the age of 76, after the death of his first wife. Together they fulfilled his long standing ambition of visiting New Zealand and walking the Routeburn Track. Jack climbed alone up to the summit of Conical Hill. They again visited New Zealand in 1993 but a back pain denied him further exploration of the hills.

Lillian very much enjoyed being introduced to the hills by Jack. He took her to some frightening places but left her with wonderful memories. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. His son and grandson are both climbers. Many of his contemporaries will, like me, have happy memories of Jack.

F.D.Smith  
1995

# Obituary

## A. David M. Cox

(1913 - 1994)

In 1949, the first tutorial I ever had at Oxford was with David Cox. When I went to his rooms I found the walls were hung with photographs of Himalayan mountains. I had already become interested in mountains and I can remember gazing about in admiration, my essay forgotten. I noticed that his bookcases had rows of Alpine Club and Climbers' Club journals, along side the professional historian's usual journals. I asked (stupidly) did he climb? So this first tutorial started rather late as he seemed more interested in what I had done, than telling me what he had done. I was to discover that this was the hallmark of David Cox. He had a way of making young people valued, admiring your achievements and rarely mentioning his own feats.

He was born in Plymouth and began to climb as a boy on the Dartmoor Tors. He went up to Oxford in 1932 and by Easter 1934 he was good enough to do Longland's Climb on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu. That summer he went to the Alps and climbed Pointe Albert and Aiguille de l'M. In autumn 1934, Robin Hodgkin (later the Headmaster of Abbotsholme) arrived in Oxford and they became climbing companions. In 1936 they climbed Climbers' Club Direct Climb on Dewerstone in Devon. In June 1937 Hodgkin and he camped under Clogwyn Du'r Arddu with the daughters of George Mallory, Clare and Berridge. They made several significant new variations on that crag and at the end of the week, he led the first ascent of Sunset Crack. In July 1938, he made the first ascent, solo, of

two routes described as 'delicate, and difficult', in the Amphitheatre of Craig yr Ysfa. He called the first route Sodom - 'because there was no looking back' - but the guide book editors regarded that name as too strong. Its name was changed to Spiral Route. A pity, because the second is still called Gomorrhah, After the war he wrote the guide book for Craig yr Ysfa.

We were talking one day about the pre-war climbers. Yes, David knew many of them. He remained quiet, and moved his pipe from one side of his mouth to the other, a gesture I knew he used, if he did not wish to be drawn. I pressed to ask him more. David then went on to indicate that he thought some of them were a little too boastful. One day some luminary was boasting about climbing Lot's Groove, a Colin Kirkus VS on Glyder Fach. 'He said it could only be done in rubbers; so next day we went and did it in boots.'

During the war, he joined the Royal Artillery. When the War Office was looking for mountaineers to teach commandos, David was transferred to the Mountain Warfare School then run by John Hunt, and spent the rest of the war as an Instructor. He taught rock climbing to soldiers in the Middle East on the Golan Heights and in Canada. Towards the end of the war, he was back instructing in Wales. It was during that time he produced another breath-taking first ascent, Sheaf Climb on the west buttress of Clogwyn. In 1986 he was interviewed by 'High' about that first ascent. He described how his companion on the climb had injured himself, light was fading, and things were getting desperate. He knew he had to find a way up the last pitches. For once David sounded like Whillans. In 1957 he used a period of

sabbatical leave to go to the Himalayas with Wilfred Noyce. They climbed to within 150 feet of the sacred summit of Machapuchare, (6997m), near Annapurna. Noyce wrote later: 'At this point, two respectably married men decided they should leave the mountain to her stormy privacy.' David was typically frank: about their achievement: 'To say we climbed it was a plain untruth.'

When he returned, he began to feel unwell. His breathing became increasingly difficult. It was in fact the onset of poliomyelitis but he thought he had influenza. He decided to shake it off by cutting the lawn, the worst thing he could have done. While pushing the mower, suddenly he stiffened.. He was rushed to the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, where he spent nearly a year in an iron lung. He was never to regain full use of the chest muscles and the controlling nervous system. But he remained as serene as ever, continuing to teach and research at Oxford and to play an active part in mountaineering circles. He accepted the Editor of the Alpine Club Journal in 1962 and was President of the Alpine Club from 1971 - 1973. Although conservative by instinct, he accepted the changes of the time, and during his presidency he prepared the ground (in the face of many die-hards) for the club's amalgamation with the Ladies Alpine Club. He retired in 1984 as Vice-Master of University College.

David's connection with the YRC took root when he was the Principal Guest in 1974. Thereafter, Cliff Downham regularly asked him to the dinner, and a real friendship grew between many members of the YRC and this quiet unassuming don. In 1981 he was the Principal Guest a second time, when due to backward, he stood in at the

last moment. I remember him saying before the 1981 dinner, when he saw Douglas Milner's name among the guests, that Milner would have done it much better. And he was probably right, for in truth, David was too modest a man to be assertive as an after dinner speaker. The YRC was the sort of club he enjoyed. It had standards. Knowing how much David valued this contact with the club, in 1985 I had the pleasure of proposing his name as an Honorary Member. He regarded it a great honour to be included officially in our proceedings, particularly as he could now tell Cliff that he could pay for his own dinner in the future. He came out on the After Dinner Walks, using his sticks, enjoying the conversation, happy to be there, among the hills, the company and the friendship of the YRC.

Anyone meeting David during the late 1980's would be excused if they found it difficult to imagine him in his youth, in North Wales, or the Alps, at the forefront of pre-war climbing. He had a good brain, (he had gained first class honours and was elected a Fellow of All Soul's College in 1937), he was strong, and he had the build and balance of a gymnast. He was also meticulous and determined. When these qualities were understood, it was not difficult to imagine him on a rock face, in nailed boots or plimsolls, out on a long lead, when protection was in its infancy, assessing the possibilities, and when ready, making the move without haste. If others were better known, then that did not matter. He had had his sport. He had achieved what he set out to do and unlike others, he had survived. Despite his disability and the tragic death of one of his daughters, he moved through life without any rancour or malice. It was as though the mountains had



given him an inner strength. This contentedness communicated itself to those who knew him and we would come away feeling the better. David Cox was an outstanding climber, but

more important he was gentleman, whom to know was a privilege.

Photograph  
Jim Perrin

Dennis Armstrong  
6 December 1994

# Chippings

Ged Campion and Graham Salmon spent part of the Christmas period in France continuing their explorations of the same cave system. For the second time they had to return home minus much of their gear which remained at the foot of the first pitch. After one long period underground they emerged to find a blizzard raging. In the course of the ski trip back to the village Ged was engulfed in an avalanche and buried in one metre of snow with only his head sticking out. He was quickly excavated and suffered no serious injury.

Arthur Evans has written with more details of the Liverpool University Club. He has since learned that the LURCC did not peter out but was voluntarily closed down. This came about after it had been run in such a way that there were no women members. This was contrary to the rules of the University Clubs. They were told either to admit women or close down and they chose the latter. The formation of the LUMC arose when a number of climbers met while at Helsby and North Wales and decided to form a club. Arthur was chosen as the first treasurer. Our summary of Arthur's climbing was inaccurate. A clearer version appears elsewhere in this issue.

The unacknowledged cover photograph on the last issue of the Bulletin was one of John Cleare's.

Dr Stephen Craven of the Mountaineering Club of South Africa is seeking information. He has read - in the Craven Herald review of Mitchell's, Ingleborough, The Big Blue Mountain, 1994 - of a Miss Mary Booth and her brother Harry, of Ben Rhydding, descending Gaping Gill. He is researching a possible link between these two and people of the same name he knew in Ben Rhydding but did not associate with the YRC or caving. he remembers as being 'a stooped, round and full-faced man'. Dr Craven is interested in any connection between the Booths he knew and the YRC, Fred Booth or the Singleton Booths.

A most senior member of the club, who knew the Booths well, assures me that there is no such connection.

Some members of the MCSA are intending to reprint the early MCSA Annuals (1-13, 1984 - 1907) in two hard-back volumes bound in vinyl. The cost is likely to be £30 (R150) and the edition limited to 250 numbered copies. If you wish to secure a copy contact Dr. Craven at 301 Huis Vincent, Ebenezer Road, Wynberg 7800, South Africa.

Finally he recommends the warm dry caves of the area and offers to effect introductions for any of our members visiting the area if they want to cave or climb.

**Bill Todd** and Jack Wilson have been making a name for themselves on Raven Scar (on the Northwest face of Ingleborough, across the valley from Twisleton Scar) or at least a little to the north of it. Fiddle (V.Difi) is a prominent chimney and Fun (Difi) is a prominent mushroom shaped block still further to the north.



**Michael Smith** has paid a recent visit to Mallorca and having walked part of the Torrente de Pareis, watched sea turtle from Formentor and visited several watchtowers, is looking forward to the meet report from the Club's visit there this year.



The above sketch is part of an invitation which read...

149A, Briggate, Leeds,  
15th February, 1901,

Dear Bro. Savage,  
I have much pleasure in informing you that three anonymous and unanimous Savages have decided to give a Pow-Wow at the Wigwam of the Chief, 3, Woodhouse Lane, on.....

By order of the Chief,  
C.Scriven,  
The Scribe.

The faces have been enlarged and copied here.

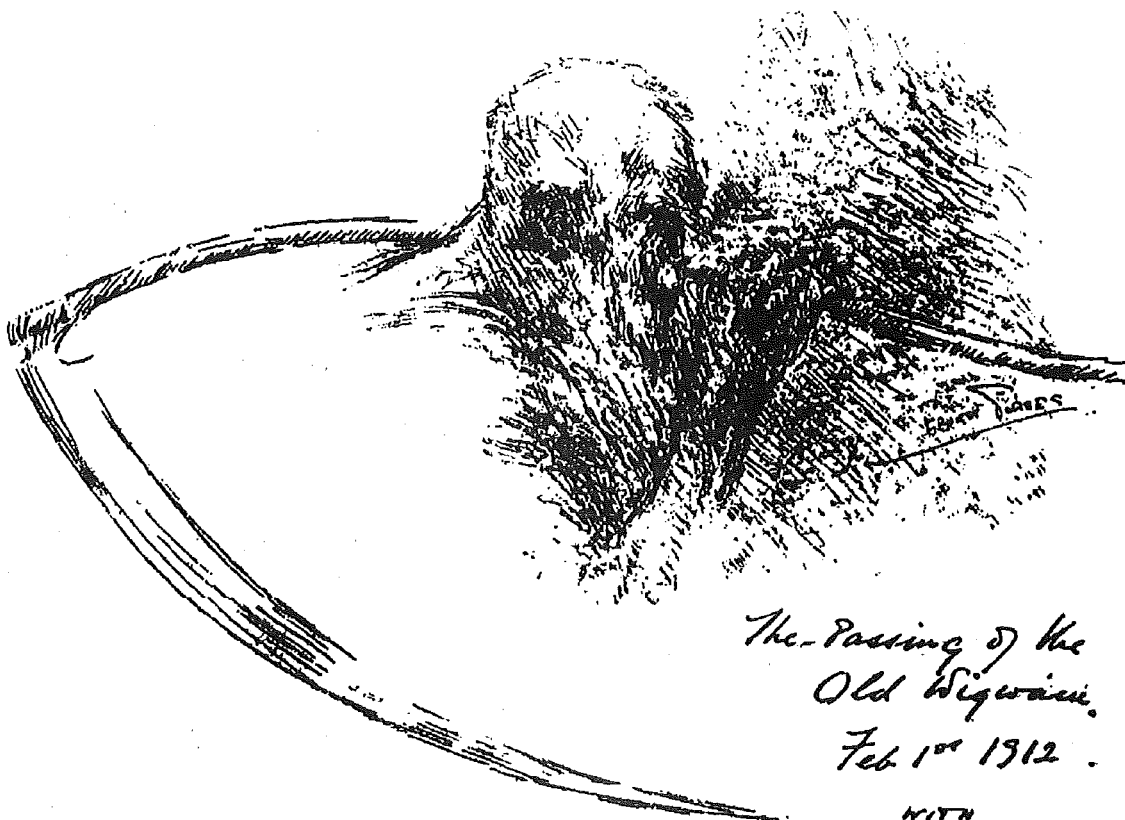


The invitation comes from material which formed part of a bequest to the Club by George T. Lowe, our first President.

Along with the invitation was a sketch entitled 'The Passing of the Old Wigwam' and dated 1st Feb. 1912. The sketch has been signed on the back and many YRC names are recognised amongst those attending.

The sketch and signatures are copied on the next few pages. The less obvious signatures have been enlarged.

If any of our older members can shed light on the 'Savages' or the 'Wigwam' the Editor will be pleased to publish the information in a future bulletin. Any help with identifying the signatures would also be appreciated.



The Passing of the  
Old Wigwag.  
Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 1912.

WITH  
HOT POT DE LUXE.

1	W. T. Lowe	18
2	J. Allison	19
3	Camie Brown	20
4	Vegeta Cole	21
5	Bowen	22
6	Chas. W. Harding	23
7	W. Lester	24
8	W. Seaman	25
9	R. Cross	26
10	Antiquary	27
11		28
12	R. C. Ordham	29
13	Temple Robinson	30
14	F. M. Cannon	31
15	Frank Dean	
16	W. H. Lewis	
17	John Williams	

The sketch and the signatures  
which were found on  
reverse.

The numbered signatures are  
shown, enlarged, over the  
next two pages a  
names which are known.

2 <sup>1</sup> ~~John Lowe~~  
 J. Allerton

3 ~~Lewis Moore~~

4 ~~Walter Gale~~

5 ~~Howard~~ <sup>6</sup> ~~Charles W. Harding~~

7 ~~W. Lester~~

8 ~~W. Sewall~~ <sup>9</sup> ~~ER Crosse~~ <sup>10</sup> ~~Antiquary~~

11 ~~RC Oldham~~ ~~Percy Robinson~~ <sup>13</sup>

14 ~~J. M. Curran~~

15 ~~Frank Dean~~

16 ~~William H Lamb~~

17 ~~John Althaus~~

18 ~~W. T. Bailey~~

19 ~~J. M. White~~

1 George T Lowe M I

2 ? on

3 Lewis Moore M f

4 ? Walter

5 ? J. Curran

6 Charles W Harding

7 ? W. C. Cole

8 ? r I

9 ER Crosse?

10 Antiquary?

11 Jester? S ens

12 RC Oldham

13 Percy Robinson M I

14 ? J. Althaus

15 Frank Dean? M I

16 William H Lamb?

17 ? W. T. Bailey

18 ? W. T. Bailey

19 ? Miles White



20

Ernest Forbes.

20 S? Forbel? *Ernest Forbes*

21

~~Paula North~~

21 ? *R Abbott m*

22 *Geo Barber*

23 Mark Senior

22 George Barber?  
23 Mark Senior?

25

24 Edmund

24 Edmund Boggs ?

25

Edmund Boggs

25 ?

26

Edwin Tindale

26 *W* Edwin Tindale ?

27 Charles W Wilkinson

27 Charles W Wilkinson

28

Joe Sheard

28 *Joe* Sheard?

29

AF C?

29 AF C?.

30

John Jones

30 ? *J*

31

John Jones DRW.

31 Jones? *DRW*

32

Ernest Forbes

32 Ernest Forbes ? (From the actual sketch entitled 'The Passing of the Old Wigwam')

## THE W I E R D S I G N A T U R E S

Although some may think that I have always been a member of the YRC I regret I have not and the best I can make of the signatures from The Passing of the Old Wigwam are as follows:

1. George T.Lowe. One of our founder members 1892 - 1942
2. J.A.Moxon.
3. Lewis Moore. A great member 1892 -1933
4. Walter Yale.
5. Joseph Towers 1892 -1893
6. Charles W. harding
7. William Carter
8. W. Seuriato
9. E.R.Cross
10. Antiquary
11. K.E.Stephens
12. R.C.Oldham
13. Percy Robinson The inventor of communal catering in the YRC
14. F.M.Cuttriss We had S.W.Cuttriss in 1894
15. Frank Dean
16. W.H.Lamb We had a Percy H. Lamb In 1894
17. Frank Atthaise
18. George T.Bailey
- 19 F.Miles Waite
20. Ernest Frobes
21. R. Smith Could be Ralph Smith 1892 - 1904
22. George Barber
23. Mark Senior
24. Edmund Boggs
25. Fred
26. W.Edwin Tindale
27. Charles W.Wilkinson
28. Joseph Sheard
31. W.N.Jones
32. Ernest Forbes

The Grampian Club Bulletin, 1994 (46pp, AS), contains articles on New Zealand, the rapidly opening area of Tien Shan, Ballooning in Tuscany, Pyrenees, Israel, Hell's Lum, Glen Carron, Crete and snow scooters in Norway. Their membership is 226 with 18 new (associate) members joining to maintain a steady number.



Plans for the 1995 YRC expedition to Nepal are taking shape. The dates have been finalised as the 1st Oct. to the 10th Nov. Financial support will probably have been secured by now for some of the team from a charitable trust. A commercial sponsor is backing the venture with £250 in addition to the British Mountaineering Council's £800 grant and an award of £700 from the Mount Everest Foundation. Alan Kaye will be pleased to hear from you with further money raising ideas or a donation.

An article, 'Climbing up the wall' in the Economist of 11 March is highlighted by Dennis Armstrong. It contrasts the safe climbing races possible on an indoor wall, injury only every 18 600th visit, with the free climber high on a cliff seeking 'to overcome his natural fears by using his rational mind to mitigate the dangers.' With the safety has come popularity and the 'sexier and glitzier' face of the indoor scene. The number of USA climbing gyms, each averaging 200 members, is 170, compared with the 500 British indoor walls. There is some consolation in the remark that 'outdoor free-climbing remains a liberating and unconventional activity. The men and women who free-climbed routes for the first time used a combination of sinew and nerve unknown to indoor climbers' with their protection and crash mats.

Le Pic du Midi d'Ossau  
2885m Pyrenees



Just before the start of the official Alpine Meets a large group of members and guests visited the Pyrenees. This was one of the peaks visited. One party camped by the tarn having walked up in shorts only to endure several hours of violent thunderstorm through the night. The remaining low cloud robbed them of the superb views as they scrambled the next day to reach a lightning shattered summit.

# See Yoo at the Meet?

## Iain Gilmour

You may see a particular fellow member on a meet, but probably only if he is one of the fifty or sixty members who attend more than one meet in a year.

Recent discussions about club membership posed questions about recruitment and average age, and the following statistics were produced to

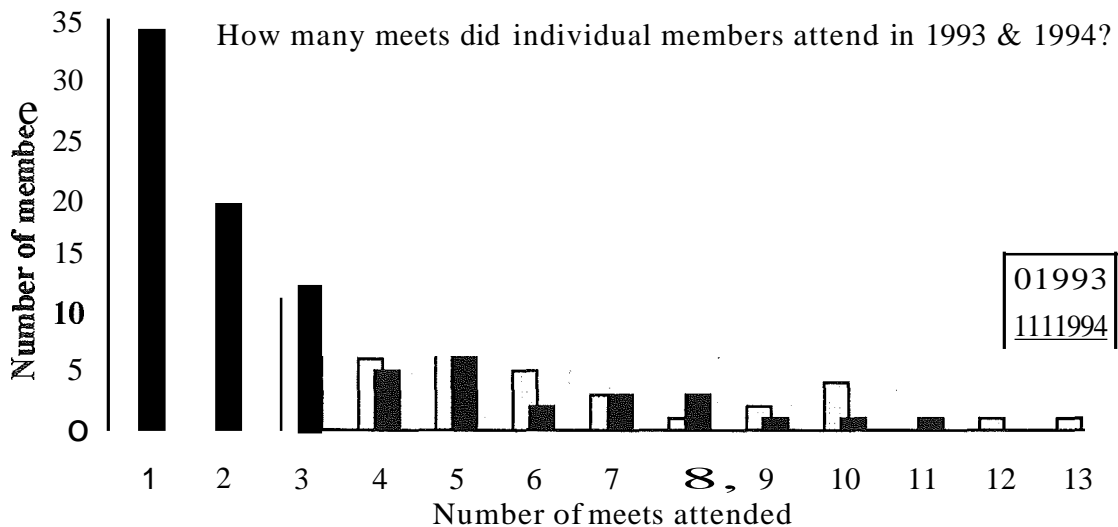
provide some facts. These figures are rather heavy going, and most of us will skip to the next article, but probably not before checking where we ourselves would fit into the table.

The most likely reaction to the data below, is to remind ourselves that we need to continue attracting young members, and providing the sort of meet which appeals to them.

	Year 1993	1994	
Number of Members	186	187	+1
Average Age	57.1	57.5	+0.4
Number of Active Members	95	88	-7
Av. Age of Active Members	52.9	55.4	+2.5
Av. Meets per active Member	3.27	2.88	-0.39
Number of Reported Meets	18	14	-4
Av. Number attending a Meet	17	18	+1
Av. Age of those on a Meet	54.3	55.8	+1.5

N.B. Only reported meets are included and the Annual Dinner has been excluded from the calculations.

The number of active members and the average number of meets attended by an active member may have been affected by the smaller number of reported meets.



### Editor's Note:

There is an ancient Chinese proverb along the lines of "You can't fatten a pig by weighing it", However if your

record of weights for a pig indicates a steady loss of weight then it might be worth considering a more fattening diet and the health of the pig!

# Alpine Meet 1994

## Bernese Oberland

### **The meet**

The Bernese Oberland in the Swiss Alps was the venue for the 1994 YRC Alpine Meet, held between 23rd July and 6 August. The valley base was on the outskirts of Lauterbrunnen, near Interlaken.

### **The attendees**

The following twenty two members and guest sampled the delights of this magnificent part of the Swiss Alps:

Ken Aldred  
Dennis and Joan Armstrong  
Dennis Barker and Anne Edwards  
Tim Bateman  
Alan Brown  
John Devenport  
Mike and Marcia Godden  
David Hick  
Alan and Angie Linford  
Harvey Lomas  
Alister Renton  
Graham Salmon  
David and Elspeth Smith  
Graham Steine  
Martyn Wakeman  
Barrie Wood  
Daniel Wood

### **The Location**

Lauterbrunnen was an ideal centre, providing easy access to Interlaken, and the nearby villages of Kandersteg, Grindelwald, Murren, Wengen and Stechelberg, with a comprehensive network of paths linking many of these, providing a paradise for walkers of all ages and abilities. The area is steeped in climbing history with the mountains of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau forming the north wall of the Bernese Oberland and trapping the largest glacial in the Alps just behind them.

Access into the high mountains was not particularly straight forward, with many of the routes to huts proving to be substantially longer than in other parts of the Alps visited by the Club on previous meets. The difficulty of penetrating the north wall from the valleys meant that the only practical means of getting up high was to succumb to the mechanical delights of the exorbitantly priced mountain railway to the Jungfrauoch, which provides an excellent gateway to the heart of the Oberland.

With hindsight, the best arrangement for those wishing to climb high would have been to have taken the Jungfrauoch train and done a hut to hut tour taking in some of the stunning peaks en route.

### **The campsite**

Alan Linford did a marvellous job in arranging camping and caravan places in our own corner of TCS Camp Site Schutzenbach on the outskirts of Lauterbrunnen, run by the amiable Chris von Allmen, whose staff looked after us well. Alan even managed to negotiate a group discount, including a further discount for those nights when members stayed up in the mountains. Although quite a large site with a large transient population of youth groups, mainly from the USA and the Far East "doing Europe", the facilities just about coped with the numbers. The staff even telephoned huts to book places for us when we were planning trips into the mountains, at no charge, which was most welcome! (Telephone 036 55 12 68, Fax 036 55 12 75)

The location of the campsite was spectacular, with vertical and even overhanging cliffs soaring above the lush valley bottom, broken only by the

waterfalls that fell uninterrupted for the full height of the cliffs. The end of the valley was dominated by the precipitous north face of the Breithorn that provided a beautiful backdrop. There were even sounds as well as sights, with the peel of the church bells often providing a tuneful echo around the rock walls of the valley.

#### The weather

Despite most of the party arriving at the campsite during or just after a very heavy storm on the first Saturday, on the whole we were blessed with remarkably good weather, especially when we were in the mountains when we were generally accompanied by windless days and azure skies. There were the regular thunderstorms as is common in the Alps during the summer months. One particularly bad day in the mountains saw a large fall of new snow, probably about a foot deep on the summit of the Jungfrau. In the high mountains, the snow usually froze during the night, although the high daytime temperatures did soften it considerably by late morning.

#### Maps and guidebooks

Several maps were available for the area, with sheets 264 (Jungfrau) and 254 (Interlaken) at 1:50,000 covering the areas visited by people on the meet. In addition, there was the composite sheet 5004 (Bernese Oberland) covering a larger area.

The best climbing guide covering the whole area was 'Bernese Oberland Selected Climbs' by Les Swinden and published in 1993 by the Alpine Club, which included both the mountain routes and also a selection of rock routes. There was of course a good selection of guide books and topo guides in French and German to be found in the book and gear shops to be found in most of the and villages.

For walkers, probably the most comprehensive guide book was 'Walking in the Bernese Oberland' by Kev Reynolds and published by Cicerone Press, which provided many ideas for excursions undertaken during the course of the meet.



Mönch, summit ridge, John Devenport

The Tschingelhorn (3577m)  
by Alister Renton

It was on the Welsh meet that the thought of going to the Alps this year entered my head. Barrie Wood was going and had a spare place in the car. Before no time at all I found myself sat on the ferry on the way out to the Alps. We drove right the way though and arrived in Lauterbrunnen at about 10.30 am on the Sunday morning.

Heading out of the campsite were Graham Salmon and Martyn Wakeman on their way up to the Mutthorn Hiitte with a view to doing the Tschingelhorn the next day. "An easy peak for acclimatisation " they told us at 3,655m.

Next day saw our team of Daniel, Tim, Barrie and myself getting our gear ready. We tried to book the hut up by telephone but were unable to get a reply so we opted to go up there in the hope that we would not be turned away. The bus arrived and we boarded and paid the fare to Stechelberg.

Once we had arrived in Stechelberg, we found the path and started the 4 hour walk. The sun was beating down on us. The temperature was just too hot for me. We stopped a few times and drank plenty of water. It seemed to take ages to get onto the moraine but even then the hut was still a fair distance away. Just before we got to the snow line we came across Graham and Martyn on their way back down. We stopped and talked with them for a while before it was time for us to continue up to the hut. When we arrived at the snow line we roped up initially as one party of four, but a little further on we split into two groups. We continued up what

seemed a never ending snow slope. Luckily, they had plenty of room for us and the hut warden muttered something in German about the telephone. We ate well that evening and went to bed as we were all quite tired.

Next morning we woke at 4.00 am and had a warm chocolate drink for breakfast. Only two of us set out. The morning sunrise was quite spectacular, something I had not seen before and so early in the day. We walked over the pass and continued downhill to the foot of the couloir. There were a number of parties in front of us as both myself and Tim were feeling the altitude. The going up the couloir was tough, quite steep and people were passing us on their way down. Once at the top of this section we paused for a rest before continuing up the rocky ridge to the summit snow slope. On the top we were rewarded with splendid views of all the peaks around.

We spent quite a while at the summit before we made our way back down. The couloir took quite a while to negotiate as the snow was getting soft. Anyway we got down safely and walked back to cross the pass. A helicopter had landed in the snow so we watched this before continuing. Once over the pass we went back down the snow slope to the hut. By this time we were both very tired. We had a long deserved drink at the hut and sat down on the veranda. We could not decide whether to walk down to the valley because we did not now the times of the last back down to Lauterbrunnen. Anyway we thought that we would risk it and go down. We collected our belongings and started off. The snow was very soft and this made the going difficult.

We did not stop until we had below the snow line. Once below the snow we again had a rest as by now we were having to carry a wet 11mm rope and it weighed an absolute ton!!

All was going well on the descent until a threatening thunderstorm hit us. It absolutely poured down. We sheltered under a tree. Not the best place!!! We sat there for about 20 minutes before we made the decision to go for it. We kept on passing signs for the valley but the time seemed to be getting longer.

We arrived in Stechelberg. We were hoping that there would be a bus or if not we would have to walk. Luckily there was a bus in about 30 minutes so we sat down to wait. Then I noticed a note at the bottom of the timetable, Tim came over. "Alister and Tim, a car will come at 9.00 pm to pick you up. David" - the time was 8.58 pm - what timing. Barrie's car arrived and we got in and headed for the camp site. It had been a very long day but it was an excellent peak and I would not have missed the experience.

### The Morgenhorn (33612m)

by John Devenport

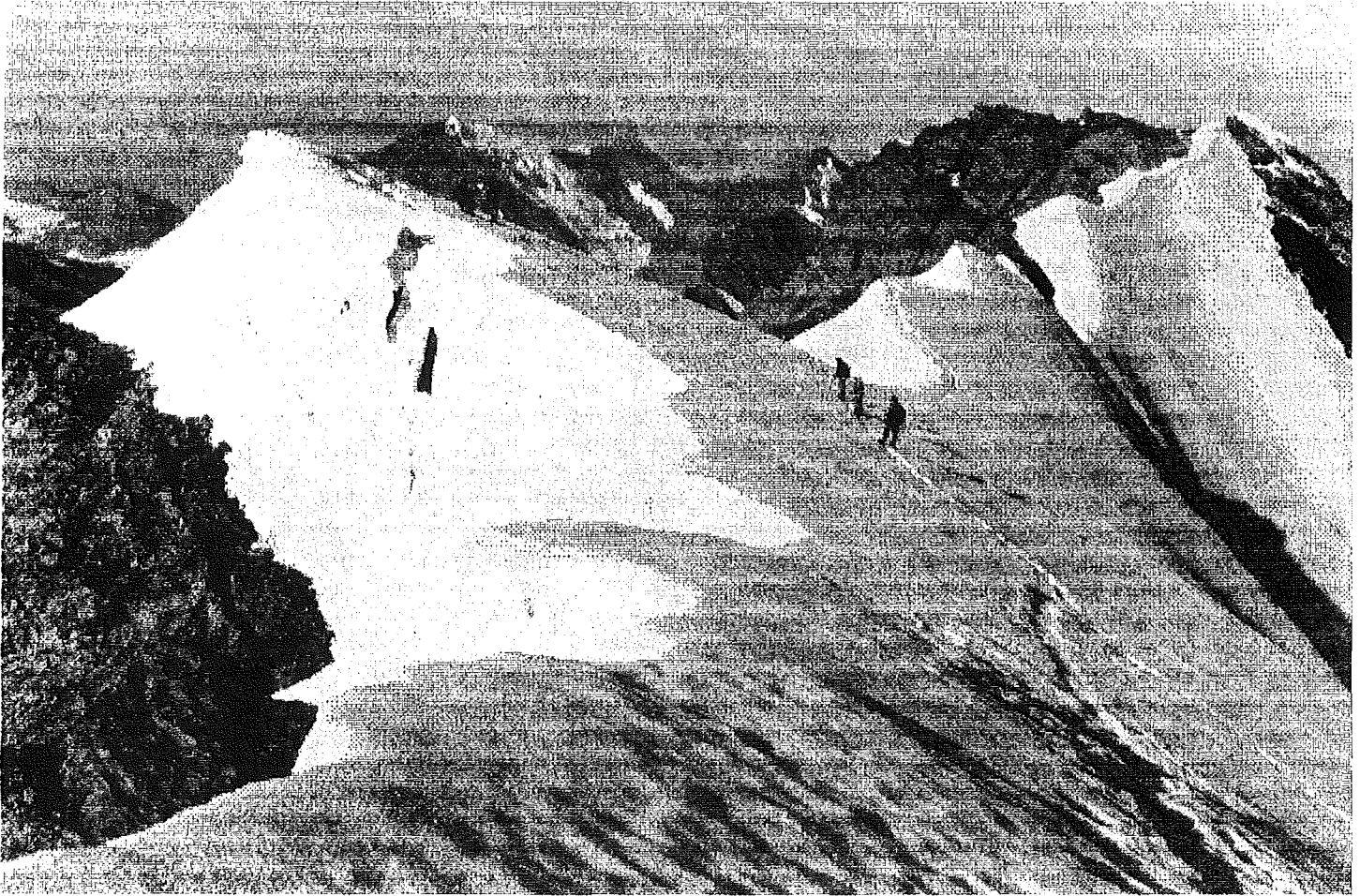
Several years ago, after an alpine meet in another part of Switzerland I had ventured to the Kandertal and walked up to spend a night at the Blumlisalp hut. The hut is in very impressive surroundings with a line of three peaks forming a spectacular snowy backdrop. One in particular caught my attention, the Weisse Frau, which formed an almost perfect snow pyramid, and I thought at the time that it looked a possible candidate for further attention on a future visit to the Alps.

This year after a successful warm up trip to the Tschingelhorn with the two Davids Smith and Hick, we were looking for our next route, when I remembered these beautiful mountains, and it was soon agreed that this would be the area for our next venture. A fairly long drive took us round to Kandersteg, from where we were able to let a chair lift relieve about an hours uphill slog. Before long we were walking through the forest above the stunning blue waters of the Oeschinensee, a truly beautiful lake set amongst precipitous cliffs. The Blumlisalp hut was clearly visible located prominently located just above the pass at Hohturli, some four hours walk away.

All the time I was conscious of rather ominous clouds heading towards us from the west. It wasn't very long before the first drops of rain hit us, so we decided to seek shelter under some smallish trees, but to no avail. The storm crashed around us and the force of the rain ensured that we got a good soaking. The two Davids found a novel use for their orange bivvy bags i.e. standing upright in them to form (rather silly looking but probably quite effective) portable shelters. Eventually the rains ceased and we continued our journey, walking not more than a couple of hundred yards to find the path passing under a huge overhanging cliff that made Kilnsey look quite tame, and to add insult to injury there was a large wooden seat located in a perfectly dry part of this huge natural shelter!

Continuing upwards the path left the forest and passed through the lush meadows of Unter Bergli before rising steeply through a line of cliffs, complete with lots of safety chains and cut steps, to the higher meadow





of Ober Bergli. At this point we were given a spectacular introduction to the Blumlisalp range, whose spectacular peaks and tumbling glaciers would accompany us on our right hand side all the way to the hut. The views compensated for the rather tedious and quite steep slog, which was interrupted by yet another heavy thunderstorm, so out came the two Davids orange bags again, this time in the middle of the path - much to the amusement of a group of Swiss workmen repairing a fence. I decided to get wet again - after all I did have some pride!!

We arrived at the hut in glorious sunshine and our gear soon dried out. We had taken our own food, but unlike every other Swiss hut I have stopped in, we had to cook it ourselves in the cosy little kitchen

There was plenty of space in the large, well appointed hut, so a relatively comfortable night was enjoyed.

A cloudless night sky greeted us when we set out up the glacier towards the base of the Weisse Frau. By first light we were fumbling our way up an uncomfortably loose rock ridge, and we were also wasting a lot of precious time. It was obvious that progress would be slow in reaching even the bottom of the long, steep snow/ice slope leading towards the summit, and we were unsure about what sort of condition it would be in so we decided to cut our losses and headed down the rotten rock ridge and across to the broad snow/ice slopes of its near neighbour, the Morgenhom.

All of the other parties were heading this way, many making slow progress and it wasn't long before we caught many of them up as we all wound our way up the spectacularly crevassed broad face of the mountain. The higher we went the steeper the slopes became, and the higher we went the thinner the snow cover became, so that eventually we were climbing up a steep slope of water ice. In front a French rope of three included a young teenage girl, who was only just coping with the steep icy conditions.

Suddenly, we emerged onto the amazing summit ridge of the Morgenhorn, with its highly corniced, contorted ridge leading towards the summit of the Weissefrau some half mile distant. The views into the heart of the Oberland were breathtaking, and we stayed on the summit ridge for quite a while, having a late breakfast and capturing the images on film.

It was obvious that the intense heat of the sun would be turning the crisp snow to mush, so a quick but cautious descent was made down the steep snow slopes back to the glacier below, then to the hut. The peace of short refreshment break in the blazing sun on the terrace outside the hut was rudely interrupted by the first of the many day visitors arriving at the hut, so it seemed an appropriate time to leave.

The cooling, soothing waters of the Oeschinensee refreshed my tired, hot feet near the end of the descent to the valley. And I felt glad that I'd returned with my two friends to sample some of the delights of these beautiful mountains.

## The Wetterhorn (3701m)

by Barrie Wood

After, much discussion about the various merits and difficulties of the surrounding peaks we decided that the Wetterhorn from the Dossen Hutte offered an interesting and not too difficult route up this classic summit.

Some height was gained driving up to the car park at Rosenlauri from where the hut could be seen on the distant skyline. Initially the path took us through pine woods and over limestone slabs that, promised an interesting descent in the wet. As we approached the moraine the path steepened and ladders and wires appeared - so did the afternoon thunderstorm. Fortunately we were close to the bivi hut and spent half an hour or so sitting underneath it out of the rain. Sitting in a metal cage watching the lightning was quite atmospheric, but Daniel explained that this was the safest place to be as it formed a gaussian cage. It was not until the storm had passed that we discovered that the hut was open and could have passed the time in comfort, so much for the guide books! The rock steepened as we neared the ridge and gave a very airy and slippery half hour.

The warden seemed puzzled on the arrival of three people when only two had booked in and had some difficulty in understanding the concept of poverty and the British student, obviously not a Swiss problem. After worrying about this for an hour or so, she invited Graham in free of charge. Could this be a first in Swiss alpine climbing?

The following morning we started out under a blue sky up the glacier to the Dossensattel. The route from here to the Rosenloui glacier was down an avalanche prone couloir, so we traversed further along the rock ridge to join it further up. We reached the Welhornsattel after about three hours and turned north to gain the crest at the bottom of the final slope, where several other parties from the Gleckstein Hutte joined the route.

We reached the top in four hours which was a narrow ridge about 30 metres long and after eating and admiring the view we retraced our steps. The snow had by now become very soft in the sun and crampons were no longer required. This led to a careless slip on some ice which removed a large area of skin from my forearm, the only mishap of the outing.

We detoured slightly to look at the Dossen with a view to doing it the following day. It did not inspire us and the condition of the snow which had deteriorated further in the heat and the general poor quality of the rock in the area we decided not to bother. Later that evening we witnessed a huge rock fall from the same peak which added weight to our decision.

The walk back to Rosenloui was achieved in hot sunny conditions concluding a very enjoyable outing.

A first visit to Heidi-land  
by Anne Edmonds

Aged eleven, Heidi by Spyri was my favourite book. Fifty years later, my first ever visit to Heidi-land came

when I accompanied Denis Barker to the Alpine Meet.

The Lauterbrunnen valley, a narrow canyon carved out by a glacial torrent, was under heavy cloud when we reached the campsite - nothing like the sunny upland meadows with sweet flowers and soft cowbells of my expectations. Nor did the thousand foot high cliffs looming on either side and pierced by sheer falls of water look very promising to a geriatric with recent walking experience. of the Pentlands and Southern Uplands (apart from an attack of vertigo on Snowdon at the YRC May Meet). Alan Linford's assurance that the area was filled with walks tailor-made for me was delivered against a soundtrack of thunder, roaring water and the sharpening of crampons, so was met with scepticism. The idea of a flight from Geneva back home to Edinburgh became attractive.

But the next day up came the sun over the cliff (as it did at precisely 10.27 am for the next fourteen mornings) and the beauty of the scene, crowned by the Breithorn lining up to its name at the head of the valley, lifted the spirits. A little exploration and map reading proved that Alan was not just being kind; the cliffs were indeed networked by circular paths, steep and sometimes precipitous but well maintained, which enabled the steady walker to rise up above the Lauterbrunnental to Heidi-like villages whose carpets of Alpine flowers far exceeded my expectations. And these meadows gave views of the great peaks, Jungfrau, Monch, Eiger and, most awe inspiring of all, Schreckhorn, unbelievable in their power and beauty.

The villages could be reached by train; we did ascend the Schynige Platte (above Interlaken at the northern entrance to the valley) at enormous expense and visited an alpine garden which, to the non-botanist, seemed inferior to what we saw on our walks. The walk down from Schynige - four hours on a circular path through thick, unnatural forest with no glimpses of the lakes below was also a disappointment. After this we left the trains to the non-walkers on search of views and to the serious climbers taking a short cut to their starting base. Our walks used the paths to the villages and areas served by trains - Grindelwald, a wide and fertile valley, Heidi territory and pleasant walking but over-touristed; Wengen, a very smart resort east of our valley, Gimmelwald and Murren to the west (approached by the usual steep winding path giving more distant views of the great peaks), also smart but with a workaday element too. It was reassuring to find that the Swiss practice traditional farming, reaping the steeply sloping hay meadows by scythe and turning the hay by hand fork, as well as the traditional craft of ripping off the tourist.

We walked to Wengen twice - the second time from near Trummelbach Falls (a spectacular but commercialised waterfall complex south of the campsite); we walked (almost climbed in places) up a very steep cliff, descended into an eerie gorge, then ascended through woods and meadows with stunning views of the waterfalls down the south-west side of the Jungfrau to the Wegernalp - I was too exhausted for more than the walk into Wengen, coffee and the easy path down. We had used this path on our first trip to Wengen

when with thousands of others we went over the meadows to Kleine Scheidegg, a railway stop akin to Blackpool sea front, and then across the ridge, losing the crowds as we went and revelling in close-ups of the four great peaks, to Mannlichen - then down a steep but varied path, past avalanche stoppers through woods and meadows back to Wengen and home again. When Denis, from the safety of the tent showed me our route down, I was horrified to see that I had descended a precipice. But over the fortnight I found familiarity with the heights led to a lessening of vertigo; I was not even put off when Harvey witnessed a fatal fall from a path I had walked.

The best was from Stechelberg, the village at the head of the Lauterbrunnental, up an easy path which took us through hanging valleys in front of the Smadrigafalle. This long, high waterfall could be seen from the camp as it comes off the Breithorn glacier to create the Weisse Lutschine, the torrent that dominates Lauterbrunnen. This walk had everything that makes Switzerland so lovely; high snow covered peaks, glaciers, torrents, waterfalls, natural forest of fir and broad leaf, alpine meadows starred with flowers and farm chalets from which the emergence of Heidi herself would have been no surprise. The scramble up a steep cliff at the head of the final valley so exhausted me that I could not make it to the Oberhornsee but consoled myself with Ken Aldred's description of it as just a tarn, really, despite its grand sounding name. The long walk back across the Obersteinberg ridge with yet another view of the Jungfrau and a man delivering wine by mule to the hill top restaurant was much enjoyed.

Strangely enough the finest views of the grand peaks was achieved with the least effort. On an excessively hot day we took the shady track to the village of Isenfluh, stopping frequently to drink from wayside water troughs and drink in the sight across the valley. We inspected the devastation made by a recent avalanche, enjoyed unfamiliar views of what had become our valley and descended to meet the Weisse Lutschine near its confluence with the Schwartz Lutschine, which flows through Grindelwald. I had originally found the Lutschine rather grim with its terrifying force of dead white water, but the chill of its banks was as welcome as shade in the hot walk back along the valley to the camp.

Lauterbrunnen the village offers everything the tourist can need and, although pricey, all the meals and drinks we had were excellent and served very pleasantly. We also enjoyed the bonus of Swiss National Day on 1 August with a jolly procession (including a monster cow bell band), a speech from the Mayor (long and in German but seemingly all about peace and fellowship, and finally a magnificent firework display. I felt like an extra in the last shoot-out of a Hollywood western as the rockets zoomed across the valley reverberating off the cliffs while Murren and Wengen joined in a thousand feet above us.

The campsite was fine- well-equipped, crossed by a cool stream and peopled by pleasant folk of all nationalities. The atmosphere changed when coach loads of moral majority American teenagers appeared; the women spent their days showering, washing their hair, applying anti-wrinkle cream and creating noisy

queues at all hours in the washrooms while both sexes chanted to Jesus throughout the evenings. The bars outside the campsite probably profited.

Altogether a most enjoyable fortnight which proved that the Bernese Oberland can be rewarding even to the nine-mile-a day-and-nothing-over 3,000 feet-please type of walker. And we could have reached the Jungfrauoch by train!

### **Traverse of the Lobhorner (2566m) by Daniel Wood**

A trip by Martyn Wakeman, Graham Salmon, Barrie Wood and Daniel Wood

Graham had twisted his knee on the Monch a few days earlier, so it was decided not to risk a trip to a high hut. Much rifling through the guide book resulted in us trying persuade Dad that despite not having climbed for about ten years a traverse of the Lobhorner was within his capabilities. The following afternoon we set off up the funicular railway towards Murren and then by foot to the Lobhorn hut. This would have been a pleasant three hour walk if the weather had held out.

On arrival at the hut, we found we had it to ourselves, it being the 1st of August and the Swiss national day. That evening the mist cleared to reveal spectacular views of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau, also our first glimpse of the Lobhorn. As we sat on the veranda waiting for the fireworks to start, the hut warden pointed out avalanches on the Geissen glacier opposite. The following morning the weather had cleared and reinforced my opinion that hut wardens have an

unusually pessimistic approach to weather forecasting.

We arrived at the bottom of the climb at around eight o'clock; the walk in taking over an hour. The Lobhorn is nothing like to be found in Britain; a strange lump of limestone perched on top of a grassy ridge. From the side, it resembles the teeth of a saw with four distinct teeth. End on it is pear shaped, being very undercut at the bottom. This led to some quiet trepidation on my behalf as it reminded me of the Old Man of Storr on Skye. That trip had not been a successful one.

The start of the climb turned out to be much easier than it looked, taking a line up a vague gully. The route was confirmed by the presence of numerous bolts. Graham and Martyn set off first leaving Dan and I to do some last minute preparations, i.e., introduce dad to these new fangled sticht plate thingies! The climbing eased considerably after the first pitch and after a short while found ourselves on a sharp ridge with superb views to the huge mass of mountains to the south. The rock was generally sound but care had to be taken due to the rubble that seemed to occupy every ledge.

From the top of the first pinnacle, we found a way down to the foot of the next by a series of loose ledges. The way up from here proved harder than it looked; a short steep step protected by two marginal pegs. The way up was more painful than difficult, the rock in the cracks being razor sharp, making jamming almost impossible. The climbing soon eased and after some spectacular abseils and some exposed, but largely uneventful

climbing we arrived at the summit and the last pinnacle.

Graham and Martyn had taken an alternative route up the last pinnacle and had arrived first. They found a tin box hidden under a rock, which contained a summit book and pencil. We all signed this and after some exciting dangles landed back on the path feeling very pleased with ourselves. We had chosen the right route on the right day.

### Flowers of the Oberland

by Ken Aldred

The fingers of his left hand were pushed deep into a vertical crack in the rock. His left boot had a dubious hold on a loose moss while the toe of his right boot gave more security after an uncomfortable twist of the ankle. He nervously brought the camera up to his eye and then used his forefinger to focus on the Saxifrage retusa which appeared to have a hold as precarious as his own on the rock face. Satisfied with the focus he operated the shutter and carefully drew breath again. A second photograph from a different angle would have been desirable but without any fancy gadgets on the camera it would have meant descending before he could use both hands to wind the film on. Carefully he straightened his left arm and lowered his right foot back onto the path nine inches below. Being a botanist on a YRC Alpine meet was not an easy option.

While younger and more active members on the meet were rushing up to huts and dragging themselves up impossible ridges, some of us had very enjoyable days in the hills and in

the valleys searching out and attempting to identify some of the flowers for which the area is famous. A large group of us visited the Alpine Gardens at Schynige Platte to see a very wide range of plants, although some of the spring flowers were well past their best. These gardens are well worth a visit, for while somebody remarked, not accurately, that all the flowers could be seen on the hillsides, such a range couldn't be seen in such a relatively small area. Also by carefully selecting the positions and by judicious changes to the growing medium, the gardeners have been able to allow visitors to see groups of plants not normally seen together in one locality. An example of this was the Rhododendron hirsutum next to R. ferrugineum. The former normally grows on limestone, while the latter being a calafuge prefers acid soils. Having praised the garden it must be admitted that the most exciting flowers seen that day were the masses of Gentiana verna and G. bavarica and two small groups of Soldanella alpina seen bordering snow patches on the grassy ridges crossed on the way to the Faulhom. Many Gentians were seen when we visited Mannlichen. The masses of Gentiana acaulis were at the seeding stage but G. lutea and G. purpurea were in flower. Later in the week a single flower of the smallest genus G. nivalis was found just below the Schreckhom Hut. The gentian, Gentian campestris was common in the meadows around Wengen.

On the wettest day of the meet two past Presidents and myself enjoyed a walk to the top of the valley as far as the Oberhom See. On the way we stopped in a hanging valley for lunch by the side of a babbling stream with wide scree beds covered with

Epilobium fleischeri, the Alpine Willowherb. Their masses of pink flowers contrasted beautifully with the greens of the various conifers. However, a more exciting find was a single Primula acaulis growing near the lake. This plant is one of the parents of the many colourful show auriculas seen on display in Alpine Flower competitions. Our find in its wet environment surrounded by mist hung rocks was more evocative than anything seen on a show bench.

### **Bietenliicke via Soustal**

**by Mike Godden**

A superb Alps meet was drawing to a close, and Marcia and I planned to spend our last night in Lauterbrunnen on the Thursday using our small tent. This meant that our last walking day would be Wednesday, as on the Thursday the large frame tent would have to be taken down and stowed in the car.

We duly caught the funicular to Griitschalp in the company of Dennis Armstrong and duly commenced our walk north through the woods, gradually gaining height until we reached the junction of several paths at Souslager. We had traversed a semi-circle and were now heading south-west up the Soustal valley. The weather was fine and sunny and the weather good.

Climbing steadily, we passed a Swiss family who appeared to be making their way to Oberberg, the only habitation between us and the head of the valley. They had no packs and were obviously were enjoying their walk. As we approached Oberberg we met two pack horses and their attendants on their way don the track.

Presumably they had delivered supplies to Oberberg, and the encounter seemed to answer questions previously raised en route that we were following horse tracks.

Beyond Oberberg there were good views back down the valley, and forward to Schilthorn whose aspect seemed very close. The Lobhorn to the north west did not look so intimidating from 2000 metres, and clearly provided good rock climbing opportunities. At an area called Schlacht Matti, we stopped for lunch.

The track continued forward to the Chilchfluepass, but our route crossed a stream and headed east and then north-east up the mountain side. As we passed a receding snow patch we were pleased to find a plant called Soldanella Alpina, an example of which had been pointed out to us on an earlier walk from the Schynige Platte to the Faulhorn. The terrain appeared to hold plenty of moisture and plenty of plants became more abundant. In particular, there were large tracts of a thistle like plant, Gentians of varying shades of blue and further examples of Soldanella.

As the path became steeper and began to arc to the east, we met the only other people we saw on our route, enjoying their lunch. They had obviously come down from the ridge, presumably traversing our route in reverse. We then started the slow process of following a steep zig-zag path across scree and rocks to take us to the ridge. Dennis led the path and was observed finally scrambling on all fours onto the ridge. The usual shout "This is it" was heard, but he did not disappear from view as all good Yorkshire Ramblers may be expected to do. I then began to wonder what I

had let myself in for - gammy leg and all. I finally arrived on the ridge with Marcia following. The effort was rewarding as the whole of the Bernese Oberland came into view, with splendid views of all of the mountain tops in an arc of almost 360 degrees.

There then followed a brief rest and discussion, after which I unanimously decided that Dennis would go first, I would potter in the middle, and Marcia would encourage me from behind. However, there were no problems, our ski sticks being used to the full as additional legs. In a very short distance we found the way down. This was far worse than the ridge and I had to resort to having five slippery points of contact with the ground.

Very soon we were at the Schilthorn Hiitte enjoying refreshment, and from whence we set off back to Grutschalp via the main path towards Murren, then to Mittelberg and Winteregg following the railway line.

The weather was good throughout the day and we all felt we had achieved something on our final walking day.

#### Low level rock climbing

by Graham Salmon

At first sight the steep walls of the Lauterbrunnen Valley would appear to offer ample scope for rock climbing, however, very little appears to take place. This might be due to the poor quality of the rock, the unrelenting steepness or the proximity of far better developed areas nearby.

Our first outing turned out to be more of a forest, off the track, stumble. The guide book listed the minor crag of



Wilderswill, just outside Interlaken, as having about forty routes in the grades VI to X (VS to Extreme in the English grading system). We eventually found the crag after a one and a half hour slog through the thick undergrowth and were not impressed by what we found. Due to the waning enthusiasm with the crag, only one climb was attempted and we soon retreated from the crag due to the poor quality of both the rock and route.

A few days later we were again tempted by the prospect of rock climbing and this time were much impressed with the situation. We had chosen a large granite slab called Gelmerfluh in the Grimselpass, just below the Gelmersee. We completed one route, the Via Birra. This was equipped with bolts and pitons, though we also supplemented these with our own equipment. The route consisted of three fifty metre pitches and the descent was via abseil. Unfortunately before we had the chance to attempt a second route, the usual afternoon storm arrived and we abandoned climbing for the day.

After being impressed with our previous visit to the Grimselpass, we again returned, on this occasion to a crag called Oelberg. Two routes were completed on this occasion, Egeliweg (V) and Quartz Rossi (VI). Both the routes were very well protected, with bolts appearing always just after the hard moves. The afternoon storms failed to materialise and we were forced to depart only due to the lateness of the day.

The Grimselpass offers a vast amount of climbing, at all grades and on fine granite slabs. There is enough scope for a complete holiday and only short visits not doing justice to the area.

## **The Jungfrau (4158m)**

**by David Smith**

The Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau dominate the skyline from the alp above Wengen. The massive structure of the Jungfrau reaches up from the valley floor to its lofty 4158m top, exposing complex rock formations surmounted by two spectacular snow peaks, the Silberhorn and the Schneehorn as foreground to its wonderful ridge and summit.

Way back in 1960, John Varney and I made an attempt on the celebrated Guggi route, a 10 to 12 hour expedition when conditions are good and with a knowledge of the route. Our youthful endeavour was no match for these requirements and as there was much ice on the route we prudently returned to the Guggihutte. Now 34 years on I had not thought that I would see that exalted summit, but I had not reckoned with the friendships built up over the past seven alpine meets, and John Devenport and David Hick very kindly invited me to join them on an attempt.

To minimise the enormous cost of the rail fare to the Jungfraujoeh, we caught the 'Good Morning Train' at £47 return rather than the £70 normal fare. Two hours later at 9.30 am we were at the joch where we met Harvey and later Alister and Tim returning to the valley after their success on the Monch. A wide snow piste littered with tourists leads to the Monch joch hutte, but the clear weather was rapidly being replaced by thick mist. We spent the remainder of the day looking through the window at thick mist and falling snow. Also trying to figure out what the lawn mower in the doorway could be used for!

It was quite a relief to be awakened at 3.00 am, the hot and stuffy dormitory was not conducive to sleep. To our relief we looked out to see a crescent moon hanging in a clear sky, it was cold and the crisp snow was all that we could have wished for. We made our way down the freshly beaten piste to the Sphinx rock before heading south-west across the heavily crevassed Jungfrau Firn passing round the rocky north-east spur to an impressive huge bergschrund. George Abrahams refers to this in his 1911 'Swiss Mountain Climbs'; he explains that it is impassable one day, the next day a large frozen block of snow falls from the upper lip to form a bridge. We were in luck, there was such a block.

A climb up a steep snow slope for a rope length brought us to the Rottalsattel. This was followed by a rising traverse, possibly the most exposed section of the climb. Half way across however, there was an iron spike some 10 to 15 feet below the track across the snow giving the confidence to proceed. It was quite a relief to see John pass this point. A steep snow and rock arete follows with more of these comforting spikes, albeit just too far apart for three men on a 55 metre rope.

Looking back we saw the fabulous 4000m peaks of last years meet; the Weisshorn, Dom, Monte Rosa and Matterhorn. We also saw Mont Blanc, and nearer to, the King of the Oberland, the Finsteraarhorn. It was great to be alive hereon the Jungfrau, the Queen of the Oberland. Now came the ice pitches, which to our delight were covered with about a foot of crisp new snow from the previous day, reducing the danger considerably.

The ascent had taken us 5 hours, just within the guide book time. I was well satisfied with my performance; I was sure that the five weeks in Scotland since Easter had ensured that I was not a burden on my companions. Numerous pictures were taken; John must have an exhibition winner amongst them. The snow conditions were deteriorating but we were able to move quickly down the mountain and across the glacier. We were amazed to find parties still arriving at the Rottalsattel preparing to climb upwards.

With little difficulty we crossed the bergschrund again to reach the lowest point of the trip. It was a hot plod across the Jungfrau Firn, but we could see the dangerous crevasses as we made our non-stop return to the hutte and to the excellent hut meal that evening. Our hopes were high for a successful day on the Monch next day!

The (4099m)  
by John Devenport

After an exhilarating but tiring day on the Jungfrau, an ascent of the Monch by the South-East ridge provided a short, sharp and highly enjoyable route from the Monchjoch Hutte.

From the Monchjoch Hutte, David Smith, David Hick and myself crossed the crisply frozen snow slopes to the foot of the ridge under a brilliant moon illuminating the night sky. From here, it was initially a somewhat confusing scramble/fumble up the broad ridge of broken rocks in the half light. Although it hadn't been a particularly early start we were the first party on the ridge, so had all the problems of making sense of the

countless route variations on what was obviously a very popular route!

Very soon, the route became totally obvious as the ridge narrowed and steepened, leading upwards towards the shining white summit ridge above us catching the first rays of sunlight. We became well practised in putting on and taking off crampons on the middle sections of the ridge as it varied between delightful warm rock and steepish snow aretes,

Before long, a steep snow slope of just over a rope length took us onto the spectacular summit ridge, a very beautiful and sharp snow arete, with pronounced cornices freshly enhanced by the recent snows, leading for about a quarter of a mile to the tiny summit at the junction of three prominent ridges.; truly an impressive mountain. Many photographs were taken to try record the beauty of the place and the marvellous panorama of Oberland peaks, including the very long and difficult rock ridge leading to the Eiger. By now, we were being joined by other parties from the hut, and we could also see the first parties arriving

at the Jungfrauoch on the first train of the day. To minimise possible delays at the bottlenecks on the narrow ridge, we thought it prudent to start down, which also meant that we could take advantage of the still firm snow.

By the time we reached the lower parts of the ridge the numbers of climbers had increased substantially, with people of all shapes, sizes, nationalities and abilities making their way up the tourist route (literally) up the Monch .

A quick return visit to the Monchjoch hut to collect the rest of our gear was followed by the descent to the totally surreal world of the Jungfrauoch station from where we were whisked back down to Lauterbrunnen. As we had the last view of the Monch from the train, it seemed barely conceivable that we had been stood on its airy and spectacular summit only a couple of hours earlier!!

*The 1994 YRC Alpine Meet report  
was compiled by John Devenport*

Mönch, summit ridge, John Devenport



## Lowstern August 26-28, 1994.

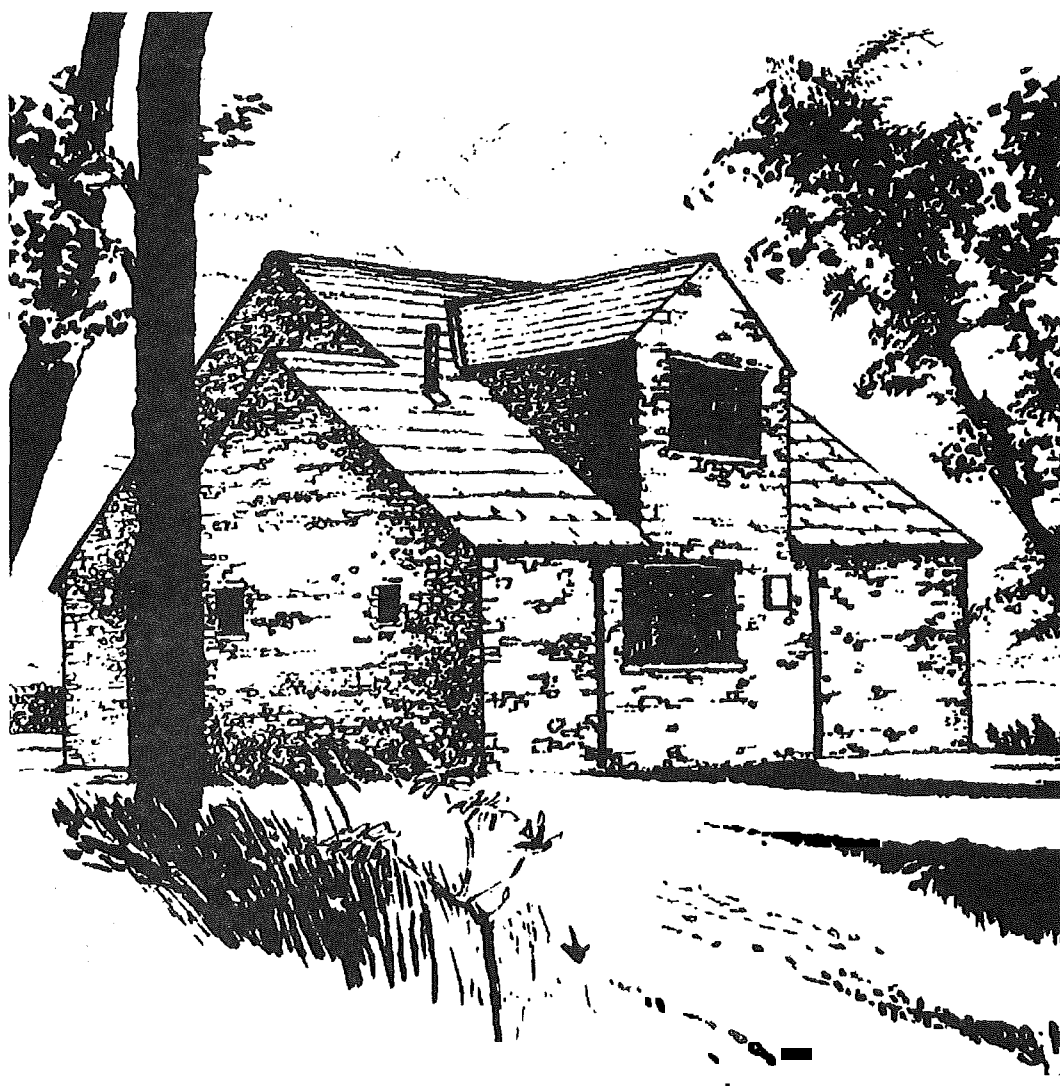
Saturday saw both walking and caving activities. The planned descent of Grey Wife Hole was thwarted by the accumulation of shingle in the low entrance crawl. This resulted in the caving team splitting into two groups, one going to the allotment to explore Long Kin East and the other stayed at Grey Wife to clear the blockage. A wall was built which it was hoped would hold back the shingle in the future. Dinner was four-course, followed by a trip to the New Inn.

Sunday again saw walking and caving, with some minor entrances on Newby Moss being investigated.

Meet Organiser, Graham Salmon.

### Attendance:

Arthur Salmon (President)  
Alister Renton  
Bruce Bensley  
Jon Riley  
Ged Campion  
Graham Salmon  
Ian Crowther  
Richard Sealey  
Richard Josephy  
David Smith  
George Postill



Denis Barker

## Camping Barn, Hubberholme 28th to 30th October 1994

This Dales Meet was organised at a venue new to the Club, the very well converted and superbly equipped bunkhouse barn at Grange Farm, Hubberholme. It was very comfortable and camping was available in an excellent field nearby, which was nice and flat, and accepted tent pegs without complaint! Car parking too was quite adequate for the numbers, although some members did have to park in a nearby pull-in on the road.

The weekend commenced on the Thursday morning for one member, who decided, good chappie that he is, not to add to the world's pollution, but to walk to the meet from his home in Leeds, bivouacking in a wood near Thruscross reservoir over the Thursday night. He arrived at Friday teatime to find a fair number of members already in residence at the bunkhouse, enjoying the organiser's scrambled egg supper and engaged in what was the weekend's conversational topic - the recently circulated plan for the next 25 years from the specially appointed sub-committee. The possibility of female membership provided endless scope for dispute, ribaldry and hot air generation over the entire weekend, to say nothing of a politically correct revision of the Club's song composed on the hill during Saturday.

Saturday was a fair day, with occasional light showers and some hill mist, but really quite good, with Upper Wharfedale resplendent in its autumn coat. A duo

comprising a senior member and a junior one investigated Crook Gill for rock routes, but it did not look at all inviting, so they moved on to Hawkswick Crags where they enterprisingly completed seven routes on good clean limestone. Nearly everyone else joined one of the several groups who all completed some variation of the Cray, Yockenthwaite, Beckermonds, Halton Gill, Littondale and Old Cote Moor circuit. One fit party extended it to include Amcliffe, Starbotton, Buckden Pike and large quantities (they said) of beer. Another party had had the brilliant idea of leaving a jacket complete with car keys in the pub at Appletreewick on the previous evening, thus enabling them to enjoy Friday night minus their sleeping bags and other gear. Not only was this good for souls, but it also enabled them to make a return visit to the same pub on Saturday during a riverside walk designed for just this purpose.

Dinner was an enjoyable curry provided by the meet leader, plus non-curry for the unadventurous or weak of stomach, followed by fruit pie and cheese, visits to the local and more verbal diarrhoea about the desirability of female membership.

Sunday started thoroughly wet and miserable, only encouraging people to set out on modest valley walks, although it did pick up as the day wore on and actually ended up as a pretty decent day, though windy.

A first class meet in general, at a venue that we might well choose to use again in future years. W. C. I. C.

### Attending:

Arthur Salmon (President)	Derek Clayton Jim Rusher	RoyDenny Derek Smithson	David Hick Bill Todd
Alan Brown	Tan Crowther	Andrew Duxbury	Jeff Hooper
David Martindale	John Schofield	Tony Smythe	Frank Wilkinson
Alan Kay	Robert Crowther	Eddie Edwards	Raymond Tnce
Alister Renton	David Smith	George Spenceley	Alan Clare (guest)

## The 51st Annual Dinner, held at the Randells Hotel, Skipton, on the 19th November 1994

103 members attended this year's dinner, well up on the 91 who were there last year. This increase was, no doubt, attributable to the Special General Meeting which preceded the dinner at which club members were asked to vote on the proposals submitted by the committee on the subject of 'A Forward Plan - The Next 25 Years.' Two of these proposals were contentious, namely that we should modify the name of the club and also that we should open eligibility for membership to anyone who is interested in the aims and objects of the club. A report on this meeting and on the results of the voting will, no doubt, appear elsewhere, suffice it to say in this article that it needed firm control by the President to close the meeting at approximately the correct time, thus allowing club officials to welcome our guests in the traditional manner.

The chief guest was John Cleare, member of the Alpine and Climbers Clubs, and a professional photographer, film camera-man and photo-journalist whose work has been widely published in Britain and abroad. He gave us an interesting talk on his climbing trips and professional expeditions amongst the mountains of the world, some of them with our member Tony Smythe. The pity was that he was inaudible to many on the far tables. The dining room must be poor acoustically and those of us who are getting on in

years are all becoming a little deaf and I would suggest that, in future, all speakers are firmly requested to use the microphone, regardless of their confidence in the carrying power of their voice.

The reply to the toast to the guests was given by Jim Curran of the Alpine Club, who, despite being in imminent danger of losing his voice amused his audience with a string of witticisms.

The evening was rounded off by the LD. Armstrong Ensemble. The subject of their song was predictable and we all enjoyed it..

The After Dinner Meet was based on Lowstern and, weatherwise, it was not much of a day although the rain did manage to ease off by about 3 pm. A caving party was out, engaged upon necessary work above ground and the walkers, or should I say ramblers, went onto Ingleborough and various destinations on the Allotments. One party went to visit The Three Men of Gragareth which meant that the oldest member on the meet had to climb countless stone walls, each of them in an advanced state of decrepitude. Everyone got back to Lowstern on time and the day ended with good fellowship and a fine supper, thanks to David, Mike, Harry et al.

P.C. Swindells

Attendance:

G. Adshead Rucksack Club	R Harben	N. Newman
K. Aldred	M. Hartland Badford P C	R. Newman
ID. Armstrong	f.C Hawkins	P. O'Neill Fell&RockCC
J.B.Bensley	I Hemingway	G.P. Postill
AD. Bridge .	D.A Hick	P. St. I Price
B. Brookfield	D.Holmes	A Renton
AC. Brown	IA Holmes	C.G. Renton
C.D. Bush	IH. Hooper	N. Renton
AD. Bull	IH. Humphreys	H. Robinson
G.D. Bull	H. Humphreys	I V.F. Rusher
V.Bugg	R G. Humphreys	G.A Salmon President
R. Campbell Scottish MC	G.R.Ince	G.R Salmon
G. Campion	C.W. Jorgensen	RT. Salmon
P.RP. Chadwick	TW. Josephy	IA Schofield
RE. Chadwick	H. Jacob Wayfarers' Club	G.P.A Scovell
AR Chapman	G. Jones	RC. Scovell
I.E. Chapman	T.A Kay	I Short
C. Cobb	M.J. Kinder	F.D. Smith
J. Cleare ChiefGuest	W. Lacy	M. Smith
AB. Craven	C. Large	AG. Smythe
R Crowther	D. Large	G.B. Spenceley
W.C.!. Crowther	I.G. Laing	D.W. Stenbridge
J. Curran Alpine Club	D. Laughton	IH. Sterland
AI Duxbury	f.O. Lee	W.P.B. Stonehouse
C. Duckworth Gritstone Club	W.A Linford	P.C. Swindells
G. Douglas	TR Lofthouse	T. Temple
T.E. Edwards	W.R Lofthouse	S. Waterfall
A Eamshaw	H.A Lomas	f.C. Whalley
D. Gamble	A Lovett	f.C White
I.F.D. Gilmour	D.RH. Mackay	F. Wilkinson
R Gowing	S. Marsden	M.F. Wilson
F.M. Godden	D.M. Martindale	R Wilson
D.I Handley	F. Milner	M. Wood
R.G. Hague	TP. Moss	G. Workman Craven P C
D. Hall		



## Christmas Meet - Ribblehead December 1994

Ribblehead is an isolated moorland community well known to Three-Peak walkers, the caving fraternity and railway buffs with the Ribblehead viaduct of 1872 the main attraction to them. Its Station Inn with a long history of providing shelter and sustenance to travellers was the venue of the 1994 YRC Christmas Meet. Some members having heard the grim weather forecast for the week-end, chose to get their exercise on Friday; this included a fine walk over Simon Fell and Ingleborough, returning deviously via Twiselton Scars and the Hill Inn to Ribblehead, whilst another chose the Fairfield Horseshoe enjoying fine views and early snow on the higher fells. By evening a high proportion of members and their guests had arrived, taking up the well-appointed accommodation in the Inn, the cottages and the bunkhouse, and hardier souls in the Gritstone Club hut at Gearstones.

Saturday arrived to see members enjoying a huge Dales breakfast more than sufficient to combat the desolate scene outside - cloud base at road level, torrential rain: and a gale-force wind. Such a scene must have been witnessed many times by the railway navvies from their bleak lodgings on the desolate moor.

Here the ingenuity of YRC members was demonstrated. In extremely poor weather a Presidential party rallied forth for the Three Peaks only to be driven back to the Inn after a valiant assault on and by Penyghent.

Another party traversed Whernside via the Wolds Way and another group explored sections of the Pennine Way and Dales Way in the High Birkwith area. Several parties visited the Ingleton waterfalls and a strong caving party entered Long Kim West. It is also rumoured that one group visited the Antiquarian bookshops of Hawes!

By early evening the inclement weather had been forgotten with a warming Presidential punch and other liquid refreshment. Forty seven members and their guests sat down to a fine Christmas feast served by pleasant staff in comfortable surroundings, the serving of Yorkshire pudding with turkey being a novel experience for some as was the "loo with view". The conviviality of the evening continued in the bar with the usual topics of conversation and argument, and especially of the forthcoming 1995 Himalayan Expedition.

Sunday dawned to the same dismal scene, although a repeat performance of the gargantuan breakfast of the previous day fortified members for another soaking.

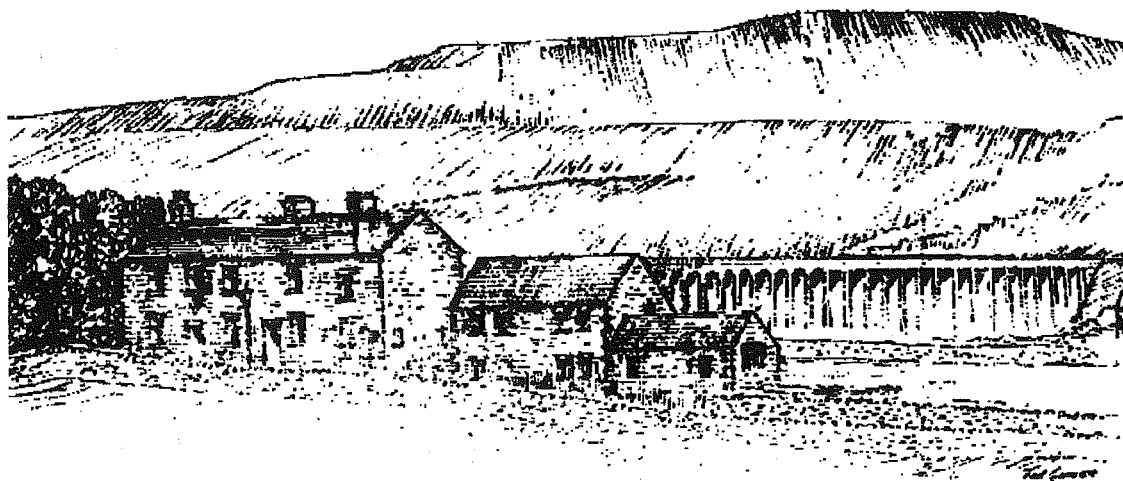
Despite the atrocious weather this was a meet to savour for the excellent food and accommodation and the valued company of members. Our thanks are due to Harvey who masterminded such a fine occasion for us. So far as is known no-one went home with a German Shepherd dog pup as a Christmas present.

T.E. Edwards



Attendance:

The President - Derek Bush	Mike Godden	Craig Murray
Ken Alfred	David Handley	George Postill
David Brook (G)	David Hall	Ken Raby (G)
AlanBrown	John Hemingway	Alistair Renton
Ged Campion	David Hick	Harry Robinson
John Caspston	Tim Josephy	Arthur Salmon
Ian Chapman	AlanKaye	Graham Salmon
Albert Chapman	Mike Kinder	John Schofield
Derek Clayton	Ian Laing	<b>Bill</b> Todd
Alan Cleare (G)	David Laughton	Michael Smith
Robert Crowther	Gerry Lee	Derek Smithson
Ian Crowther	Alan Linford	David Smith
RoyDenney	<b>Bill</b> Lofthouse	Frank Wilkinson
Andrew Duxbury	Tim Lofthouse	A. Wilkinson (G)
Eddy Edwards	Harvey Lomas	John White
Iain Gilmour	David Martindale	



NORTH WALES MEET  
20-22 January 1995  
Chamoix Mountain Centre  
Plas y Celyn

Some presidencies have predominately wet meets and some predominately dry. The current president decided to get all the water out of the meets system for his two years in his first two meets. It was an appalling Saturday high winds and incessant rain. The much hoped for snow was there but wet and soggy. Undeterred parties set out firmly believing that it could not get worse.

Several groups drove down to Beddgelert, each group finding different routes through the forest separating the car park from the mountains to the West. Two such parties had their sights set on Moel Hebog with a nostalgic thought for one time president Brian Nicholson whose ashes were scattered there.

Once on the ridge every col had successively winds of greater intensity. Gaining the summit of Moel Lefn, the only summit reached by any group that day, was a fight almost to the death. One member of the group delayed fixing his hood found movement quite impossible and floundered a few feet from the summit awaiting the slightest lull before rejoining the group.

The Llanberis slate quarries were visited by some of the hard walkers while a sensible party kept low and circumvented Lyn Dinas. Another party proudly announced that they had reached the snow line in Llanberis. A lone attempt was made by a prospective member to scale Snowdon by the Miners track. All in all it was not the most successful of days. One member arrived early on the Friday had an excellent day with

good snow conditions on Moel Siabod.

Sunday came, it did not look much better. Four members tried out the excellent climbing wall a few yards away from the hut enjoying five hours of extremely strenuous activity. The presidential party buoyed up with their relative success of yesterday set out for Snowdon and were magnificently rewarded for their effort by clear views and good snow, descending mist blanked off the final few feet to the summit.

Tim Josephys meets always draw a good attendance, the inner man is always well catered for, we were not to be disappointed, roast beef was on the menu. The president on returning from a pastoral visit to the Nicholson home with two others missed out on the soup course returning a little late. It was always home made soup too. How could they start without the president? A serious breach of etiquette.

An excellent meet despite the weather on Saturday. Tim and Richard were the luckiest with perfect snow conditions on the Glyders on Sunday. It was nice to have three worthy prospective members present, hopefully they will not b'e put off by the weather falling below standard.

F.D. Smith.

Attendance:

The President - Derek Bush	
Dennis Armstrong	Alan Linford
Denis Barker	Harvey Lomas
Steve Beresford	Andrew Lovett (PM)
Ian Crowther	David Martindale
Eddie Edwards	Frank Milner(pM)
Iain Gilmour	Mark Pryor(pM),
Mike Godden	Alister Renton
Raymond Harben	JimRusher
DavidHick	Arthur Salmon
Raymond Ince	David Smith
TimJosephy	Derek-Smithson
Richard Josephy	Peter Swindells
AlanKay	Frank Wilkinson
Mike Kinder	

# Kinlochleven

16-18th 1995

After the successful meet at the bunkhouse the Glen Nevis in 1993, it was decided to hold this year's meet at the bunk-house accommodation at Kinlochleven. In anticipation of fine snowy weather, new accommodation and good company twenty-three members and their guests arrived mostly by Thursday evening.

Despite the small size of this Highland community, several members had difficulty in finding the bunkhouse. This was previously described as having a red roof and black walls; in fact it has a black roof and red walls! These members arriving in the dark were additionally confused by the need to carry their belongings and food up a steep track in the dark. Woe betide anyone who forgot some essential requirement. For one member this was all too much and he was last seen heading towards Fersit early on Friday morning.

An indifferent weather forecast confirmed by Friday morning, led members to change their plans for the day. Nevertheless, a large party made for Creag Meagaidh only to be repelled at the window. Creag Meagaidh is rapidly becoming a bogey mountain for some YRC members. Other parties closed in on Sgurr Eilde Mor and Coire an Lochain. A party of two was forced

back from Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin by adverse weather.

For something completely different one member traversed Allt Glean Coire Mhorair and Allt Glean a' Chaolais under the northern corries of Aonach Eagach, repeated by another pair the next day. Another lone member circumnavigated Beinn a'Bheithir from Ballachulish via Glean an Fhiodh and Glen Duror returning to Ballachulish along the disused Oban-Ballachulish railtrack, observing seals at play in Loch Linnhe and getting fine views of the snow capped hills of Ardgour.

Friday evening saw the usual culinary skills being practised and some members visited the period piece Arthur Bar, having been unable to come to terms with the cool spartan 'lounge' arrangements at the bunkhouse.

Saturday's forecast was rather worse than that of Friday though most members were able to enjoy a spell of dry weather in the morning. One Munroist with a new partner from the previous day reattempted Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin only to be repelled yet again. A party climbed Stob Coire a' Chairn in the Mamores, another made the steep, snowy ascent of Beinn na Caillich, which surprisingly is neither a Munro nor a Corbett! Other members explored the Nevis Gorge and the wire bridge at Steall, others the ridges of Bhein at Bheithir and one member did some langlaufing. The treacherous weather and snow condition of the week-end were graphically confirmed by an

accident on Sgurr Eilde Mor to one of our guests.

By late Saturday afternoon the spare accommodation in the bunkhouse had been taken by a noisy mixed party, which effectively destroyed any prospect of a convivial YRC evening of discussion and pleasantries. A retreat to the Arthur Bar was re-enacted. Many members commented on the undesirability of sharing accommodation on Club Meets as has been the case on the last two meets. Welcome back Inbhirfhaolain all is forgiven!

Sleep on Saturday was interrupted by the sound of hail and wind hammering the windows - a weather pattern repeated by daylight. Most members took the obvious option and headed south, only to find the sun shining from a cloudless sky in the East. The journey gave time to lick wounds, metaphorically for most and unfortunately, literally for one of us.

Since returning home members will have had time to reflect on the poor weather of the week-end and particularly on the large number of accidents necessitating many searches which occurred throughout the Highlands. To summarise, although the weather and the accommodation were generally disappointing, this was a worthwhile trip, and one had to admire the ingenuity of members in making the most of the conditions.

Eddie Edwards.

Attendance:

The President - Derek Bush,  
Ken Aldred,  
Ian Crowther,  
Eddie Edwards,  
Nick Fellows(G)  
Iain Gilmour,  
Mike Godden,  
David Hall,  
Gordon Humpreys,  
Howard Humphryes,  
Cliff Large,  
Harvey Lomas,  
Frank Milner(PM),  
Neil Pomfret,  
Mark Prior(PM),  
Alister Renton,  
Euan Seaton,  
David Smith,  
Derek Smithson,  
Andrew Wilkinson(G),  
Frank Wilkinson,  
Daniel Wood(PM),  
Barrie Wood.

