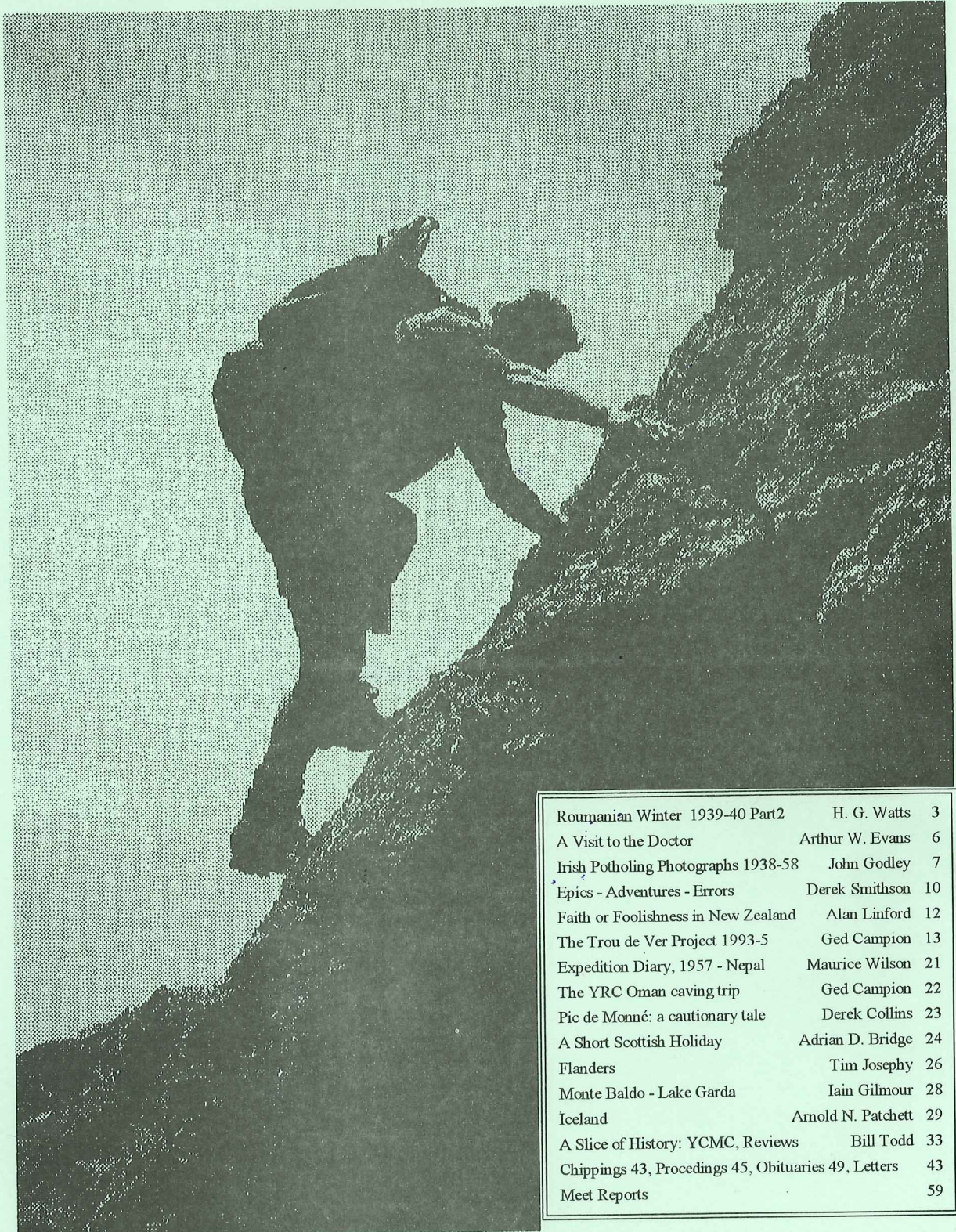


Yorkshire # Rambler



Photograph by Bill Todd of Alan Linford scrambling in Mallorca


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Foreword by the President

How pleasing it is to see the way the Bulletin has continued to flourish and even expand over the few years it has been going in its present guise. The mixture of historical and contemporary articles continues to demonstrate the wide variety of activities indulged in by our members. **If** some of the articles are rather controversial, so much the better! Let's hope they stir more members into airing their own Views.

It is no discredit to the producers of this excellent publication to say that the weakest part is the reproduction of photographs. Included in this edition are two pages of photos reproduced using upgraded computer equipment. **If** the experiment is successful, it is intended to acquire a good scanner for Michael Smith to use so we shall be needing more photos with your articles for the next Bulletin.

The YRC has always managed to have members scattered in remote places all over the world and this trend seems to be on the increase. Perhaps this is partly due to the articles in the Bulletin, so read on and, who knows, you may find the inspiration for the trip of a lifetime!



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The opinions expressed in this publication are not
necessarily those of the YR.C nor its Officers.

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Roumanian Winter 1939-1940

Part 2 of 3

H. G. Watts

SINAIA.

Sinaia was the playground of fashionable Bucharest. Besides King Carol's country residence, Pelesh Castle, there were several large hotels, a casino, the teashops where nostalgia could be nurtured on hot chocolate and creamy cakes.

The village lies in a steep-sided narrow valley, and there are few good ski-slopes near Sinaia itself. For practice we used to climb for an hour to a clearing in the woods, Poiana Regale. Another hour and a half canying ski up a steep and rocky path beyond this brought us to the Cabana Regale Carol II, a military hut on the track leading to Pesteră in the Islomitsa valley. From this point there are three good tours; south to Varful cu Dol', 5580ft, westwards across the high ground and down to Pesteră; or north to Omul, 8209ft, one of the highest peaks in the Carpathians.

We more frequently took the easier but longer three hour climb direct to Varful cu Dol'. The S.K.Y. hut, about 500ft below the peak, was rather like the old Parsenn hut before it was rebuilt. The slope from the summit to the hut was used by the locals as a slalom course. The run of 2000ft from the hut down to the tree line, where the road from Sinaia ends, is shallow gullies and ridges, somewhat akin to the Lauberhorn - Scheidegg run, and lovely on the right day, but with little protection from the wind, often spoilt by unbreakable CIUST. The rest of the run to the village was either down the road, fast going in frosty weather, or steep. rough and difficult

wood-running which we did not attempt.

We did the round Hip from Sinaia to Omul and down to Busteni, a village 5 miles higher up the railway than Sinaia, on the last Sunday in April under glorious conditions. Three hours of climbing got us to the hut on the Varful cu Dor at 11 O'clock, and over a glass of wine and a map we decided it was a fine day to do the 13 Km to Omul, and run down to Busteni by the Valea Corbului. We made the mistake of consulting the man who looked after the hut, and had to listen to about ten minutes of true "nu se poate" (Roumanian for it is impossible): There wouldn't be any snow - It was a long way and would take six hours - We shouldn't be allowed to go down the Valea Cerbului as there was a concourse de ski on the mOITOW. We wondered how a concourse was compatible with absence of snow and left the hut at 11.30.

Half an hour's climb brought us to the Munte Fumica, 6900ft, from which we had 1000ft of running over perfect spring snow, to the Cabana Pegele Carol II. Then came an hour's steady climb across the plateau behind Caraiman, a mountain of steep icy crags, with an 80ft stone cross on the top, a memorial to the 1941/18 war. We had another short run after passing the head of the Valsa Tepilor; then the 2½ hour climb to the hut on the summit of Omul. We reached this 4½ hours after leaving the Varful cu Dol'. The last half hour was in deep snow across the steep slope at the head of the Valea Cerbului.

The hut, Casa Mihai Haret, was manned by the T.C.R. so they were in no hurry to serve us and we had to wait half an

hour for soup and a bottle of wine. This was annoying because while we were waiting the sun went off the valley and the spring snow crusted up for our run down. The top 2000ft of the Valea Cerbului consists of long steep slopes, perfect for a long schuss under good conditions. After that the valley becomes narrower but rather less steep and we were glad to find that the snow had not crusted at the lower altitude. This is undoubtedly one of the finest runs in the district. The way through the woods at the bottom of the valley leads beneath the northern bastions of Varful Castila, pinnacles of rock rising straight out of the ground like the Dolomites, and surely wonderful places for rock-climbing. We calculated the distance from Sinaia to Busteni, via Varful cu Dor and Omul, to be about 30 Km.

We never explored the country to the east of Sinaia on ski, though one day early in May after the snow had gone I climbed on foot with Robin Hankey, First Secretary at the Legation, to the Varful Vornicul, 5400ft. We reached it up a side valley leaving the main road 5 miles south of Sinaia, and found good slopes at the top, with plenty of scope for exploration at some future date.

PREDEAL.

The village of Predeal is 10 miles north of Sinaia, and lies at the top of the pass, 3400 ft, where the road and railway go over into Transylvania. Until 1918 it was the last Roumanian village before crossing the frontier into Austria-Hungary, and even in 1940 the change in the look of the houses and the people in the 5 miles between Predeal and Timisul de Sus gave one the feeling of having crossed an ethnographic boundary.

We were told in Bucharest that Predeal was a marvellous skiing resort with wonderful practice slopes and even a ski-lift, but we hadn't then become wise to the native delight in hyperbole. The village had that untidy, slightly unstable look which characterises so many Roumanian villages, a look with which we in England are now becoming increasingly familiar, thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

The villages in the Regat only really look as if God had put them there during the lovely but all too brief fortnight when the blossom is out.

The ski-lift operated over the 500 ft from the bottom of the nursery slopes to the restaurant at the top. "Operated" was quite often a euphemism. The contraption consisted of endless rope to which, to the accompaniment of much loquacity and gesticulation, the victim was attached by 9ft of tow-rope, which dragged him upwards by a belt round his behind. The tow-rope usually came off half-way up, where the endless rope went round a sharp bend. When this happened the victim fell over, and traffic was delayed for twenty minutes because other people coming up fell over him, and it took a long time and a lot of talking for the man in the black woolly hat who worked the thing to unravel the heap and deal out the blame to everybody's satisfaction. The lift was made by Brown-Boveri and was a noble effort, but we found it quicker to walk.

The best skiing at Predeal was on a hill of about 5500ft called Diham, two hours climb south-westwards from the village. With plenty of trees on it, and higher mountains fairly near, the

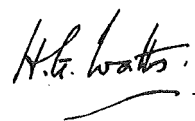
Diham gets more protection from wind and sun than does the higher ground above Sinaia, so the snow is often in better condition. There were two huts, one Roumanian, the other German, about one kilometre apart. The German one belonged to the Reichsdeutscher colony in Bucharest.

There is quite a broad stretch of country at the top of the Diham, and although it was popular there was always plenty of room. There are numerous short runs offering a wide variety of types of snow, hard or soft, steep or gentle. The run back to Predeal is by way of another hut, the Forban, - memorable for poor heating and much garlic - through wide glades between woods, and finishing with a mile of wood path leading to a "carciuma" (Tavem, strangely the word is the same in Romany) noted for its hot tsuica.

We found Predeal quite a good place for practice, or for short runs when the weather was poor, but it lacked comfortable hotels and restaurants, so we stayed in Sinaia or Brasov and came to Predeal by rail or car. There was however a good hotel called the "Gaiser" at Timisul de Sus, but it was run by a German and nearly always full of them. It was here that Robin Hankey and another Englishman nearly got involved in a scrap on New Year's night 1941. This was after the Germans had

occupied Roumania, but before our Legation had been withdrawn. There were 80 Germans in the hotel, and a handful of other nationalities. At midnight the Germans all sang "Deutschland Uber Alles" and the "Horst Wessel lied". Robin and the other Englishman succeeded in collecting six Roumanians, one Swiss and two various and sang "Auld Lang Syne" in English, Roumanian and Schweizerdeutsch. When we got back to their table they found a forbidding looking Nazi throwing their glasses of wine one by one into a corner and saying that was what the Germans were bound to do to England. On being told he'd better learn to swim first he accused them of stealing his revolver, and they were only saved from having to fight their way out by the proprietor, the jolly type of south German with a red face, who pacified the mob in their own tongue, saying "Nein, nein, bitte heute ist Neujahr, wir sind alle Freunden hier".

Actually in the huts and on the hills generally we found the Germans perfectly civil, and indeed ready to help with spare ski-points and straps in the event of trouble. Not even Hitler could kill the friendship of high places.



*"Look upward: thought, unhindered, soars apart
in still pursuit upon a loftier course.
Climb but a little hill: you too may find
the clouds ebb surely from your clearer mind. "*

GeofJrey Winthrop Young

A Visit to the Doctor

Arthur W. Evans

I was busy getting ready for my annual visit to the Alps. The venue that year was Cortina in the Dolomites. One thing, however, was worrying me.

The previous year I had attended the Cleveland M.C.'s meet in the Oberland. We'd spent a week at the Concordia Hut climbing on the neighbouring peaks. Our last climb was the Gros Grunhorn and I was climbing with Maurice Wilson. Part of this involved a couloir in full shade. Maurice led bombarding me with chunks of ice as he cut an excellent ladder of steps though, as usual, too far apart for my short legs. During this my hands went numb despite woollen mitts and over gloves and they were still numb the following day when we all wandered back up the Aletsch glacier to the Jungfrau Joch. Maurice and I decided to stay the night at the climbers' hut and climb the Jungfrau the next day. The rest of the party started for home.

Overnight the weather became cloudy with a strong Fohn wind and, after receiving a weather report from Zurich, the number of patties intending to climb dwindled to one rope of two Swiss guides and four Swiss climbers. Maurice and I decided to follow them.

The climb was straightforward, across the glacier to a short steep ice slope with large bucket steps up to a col and then cramponing up hard snow to the top. After a photographic session we started down only to find the snow had softened and we floundered down thigh deep, one rope length at a time,

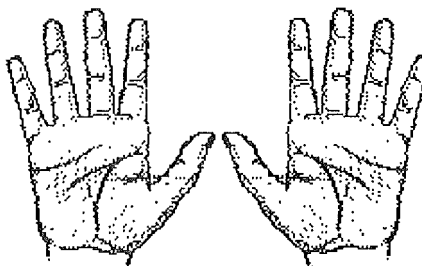
to the col. There we found the other patty still there. The ice slope had avalanched and all the steps had gone. One of the guides solved this by driving his axe into underlying hard snow and fixing an abseil rope.

At some time during the climb my fingers thawed out but on arriving back at Wengen, where my wife and family were staying, I took off my gloves to find all my fingers decorated with large grey blisters. Ever since, my fingers become numb and useless in slightly cold weather and it was this that was worrying me as I prepared for my visit to the Dolomites.

I decided to seek medical advice and took my problem to my doctor. He was most helpful and said there were some pills which would deal with the problem. He had to send away for them and they arrived two days before we were due to leave and I called to collect them.

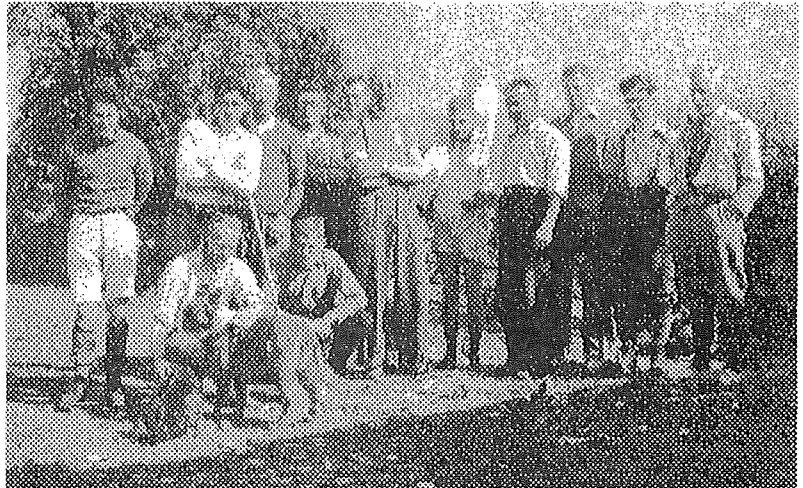
I thanked him and he wished me a good holiday. The, as I was leaving his consulting room, he called after me and said: "Oh, by the way, they'll make you dizzy!" I thanked **him** again and left.

The weather was good at Cortina and I had an excellent and very successful holiday, but that is another story. As for the pills, they were never used and somehow were mislaid.



Irish Potholing group
 photographs 1938 - 1958
 John Godiey

This 1938 photograph John remembers as probably having been taken with a small box camera. It is the party at Polnagollum into which Bernard Nelstrop had forced a way through a boulder jam. They are Fred booth, Geoffiey Gowing, Stanley Marsden and Roberts after Bernard had returned home.



The 1939 photograph taken at Killesher has on the back row Nelstrop, King, Roberts, Armstrong, Godley, Chubb, Stringer, Mr Barbour, Marsden, Bowling, Davidson the then President. On the front row are D. BUITOW and F. S. Booth.



In 1959, again at Killesher there are on the back row Tony Reynolds, Jack Holmes, John Lovett, John Godley, Mr Barbour, Stanley Marsden, Cliff. Downham, Brian Nicholson, Frank Wilkinson, probably Michael Selby and Trevor Salmon. In front are Peter Harris and probably Peter Hurte II.
 VARWEY TREVOR SALMON JOHN

The President's Report from the 104th AGM

1996 has perhaps been a quieter year for the Club after the excitements of 1995.

This has not proved detrimental to the meet attendance which has increased by over two to an average of twenty four per meet. Despite not being able to please all the people all the time it is satisfying to record that well over a quarter of our active members attend our monthly meets. It is significant that when a new venue is placed on the meets list it evokes considerable interest, witness the recent Ennerdale meet suggested and organised by Andrew Duxbury and attended by twenty-six members and guests. This site based on a Scout hut is excellent and has been booked for our Christmas meet next year.

Mention must also be made of our Long Walk week-end held over the Brecon Fans organised by Harvey Lomas which introduced myself and quite a few members to an area not often visited by the Club. This week-end as in 1995 was again blessed with good weather.

The Alps meet for those attending was again highly successful, not apparently favoured with consistently good weather as some previous ones but certainly sufficiently fair to give an Alpine novice like myself two of the best weeks walking and climbing of my life.

At the Joint Meet with the Wayfarers at R.L.H. in Langdale the Y.R.C. outnumbered the Wayfarers by nearly five to one. We have in the past suggested to the Wayfarers that we give this meet a rest for a year or two only for them to insist very positively that they wish to continue. It is flattering to have this positive and

friendly relationship with a Kindred Club.

Finally as always we must record our thanks to all the leaders who make our meets such enjoyable events. Our meets whether at home or abroad are the bedrock of the Club. We should not forget it.

The Club now has six Munroists. Iain Gilmour and ROY Newman joined the ranks this year and I am sure there are one or two more lurking in the wings who are keeping their ambitions and intentions quiet. I know many of us have mixed feelings about Munro bagging but we cannot decry the commitment, dedication and downright tenacity which is required to achieve their objectives. Our man doing the Corbetts which appear even harder than the Munros is also not very far off completion. These members demand our respect especially as many of the hills are climbed in winter conditions requiring a high degree of mountaineering and navigational skills.

Our huts continue to be well maintained thanks to the hard work of our two wardens David Smith and Mike Godden. The installation of storage heaters, a de-humidifier and extractor fans at Lowstem have helped eliminate the humidity problem. The two wardens will report in greater detail later in the meeting.

The Bulletin continues to thrive. It has become a focal point not only of members recording their experiences but also of members propounding their views on the way the Club should go forward. We may not always agree with the sentiments expressed but healthy and open debate within any organisation can only be of benefit. Our thanks once more must be made to our Editor, Michael Smith for making it all come together.

Last year I expressed to the AGM quite considerable concern and anxiety about the difficulty of recruiting Officers of the Club. I am pleased to say that the key positions have now been filled and will be in place when my successor Tim Josephy takes over. The Secretary will outline the new structure of the Club later in the meeting but may I without pre-empting what John has to say give a heartfelt vote of thanks to all the members taking up these offices. I might also add that our Treasurer, Alan Kay is staying on for one more year and for that we must be extremely grateful.

Recruitment remains a continuing subject for discussion at our Committee Meetings. It has been said that the only people who can bring young people into the Club are young people themselves. Acting on this theory I then spoke to every young and not so young member and asked them to make every effort to recruit one young member per year. I would not like to say how successful this plea has been but certainly in the potholing/caving area there are currently three potential members plus at least another three other sources which hopefully will be translated into six new members next year. This if fulfilled is well above the recruitment level of the last few years.

Membership stands at 184: one down on last year. There were three deaths in the year, Honorary Member Clifford Downham who gave outstanding service to the Club as Secretary and President. Cliff was also a founder member in 1935 of the C.R.O. and it's Secretary and also a founder member of Ambleside and Langdale Mountain Rescue Team and their Secretary. A truly remarkable record of service to the

Caving and Climbing world. We must also remember Alton Hartley, a much loved member and also our Honorary Member Sir Charles Evans, of Everest and Kangchenjunga fame. There was one resignation Simon Goodwin.

Membership figures are now:

	1996	1995	1994
Honorary	4	6	6
Life	62	64	65
Ordinary	117	114	116
Junior	1	1	1
Totals	184	185	188

Finally I return to the subject of Lowstern. The Committee have started preliminary discussions about a Lowstern extension. This is deemed necessary because of several factors:

- Lack of washing down/sluicing facilities for the potholers.

- Insufficient space where members can relax if the main room is being used as a dining area. i.e. there is no CommonRoom

- No private facilities if members especially potholers wish to use it on non Club week-ends when other Clubs are using the cottage.

I must emphasise that these discussions are in the very early stages and no detailed plans have been finalised and until these are presented to the appropriate authorities we cannot obtain detailed cost and estimates. When this information is available we shall get back to the Club immediately with proposals on how we are going to fund the operation. It goes without saying that we shall be asking for some contribution from the membership.

C.D. BUSH

9th November, 1996

Epics - Adventures Errors

D.A.Smithson

The last two bulletins have seen attempts to make epic adventures seem quite reasonable: David & Co. in the Alps; John & Co. in Spain. These attempts to spoil a good story by providing facts will be ignored by all of us who enjoy affectionately laughing at mends whose tents blow down. This only applies to 'adventures', where the participant survive intact, not to 'disasters' where they don't. I spend much thought and effort to avoid adventures, but on solitary journeys the gap between an adventure and a disaster is much narrower. On a first day out on mixed snow and rock, to have been travelling on snowshoes for ten hours, light fading, and no hut in sight must have been an adventure because I was carrying winter bivouac equipment. There never seem to be places to bed down when the unplanned time arrives. I knew a long first day was a mistake and accommodation problems had delayed my departure and all I could do was just force myself onward towards the hoped for goal. And I made it. As so often, I just made it. The remaining days of the trip showed that I didn't need the stove, the extra sleeping bag and the food for an escape to civilisation. I only needed the ice axe on one occasion, but that is enough, and the medical kit and spare clothing were just extra weight. I might have managed without the Walkman but not without the books. Eight days alone is a long time,

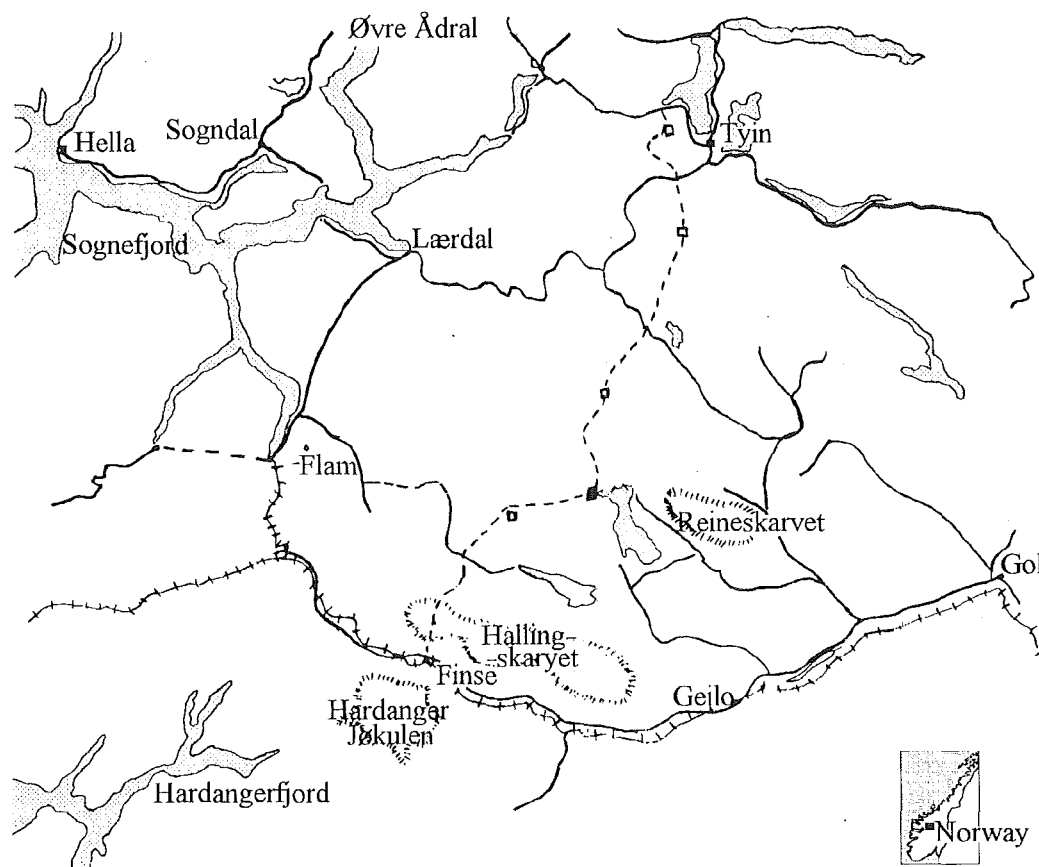
especially in the huts when weighed down by silence, if one only has the thoughts one carries with one.

I walked a recognised route from Hardanger to Jotunhiemen, Finse to Ardal. A summer route of 5/6 hours each day from hut to hut and also a winter route. But I went in spring, when some of the huts are closed, but when in previous years I have repeatedly had good weather and good snow. This year it was different. The weather was mostly good but the snow was bad, even though all the route was over 1000m. I had hoped for and expected a good covering of snow to make the travelling easier and to have fun and adventure with route finding, with nearly all the waymarks out of sight. As it happened most of the waymarks were visible with the snow patchy and deep and wet, which raised the fears of stream crossings. Most of the streams I met turned into rivers as soon as I tried to cross them. The most feared stream was frozen but an unexpected one gave me a 'thrill'. I edged forward thinking to jump the narrow deep channel even though with my heavy sack my jump was only a little longer than my stride, but much more committing. The crack went round behind me and before my footing dissolved and floated away, I fell over backwards so that I lay on my rucksack with my feet and legs over the torrent. I thought of sheep and of beetles as I struggled to get to my feet. This is a move we do not practice and, in the company of others, simply amusing. Another 'thrill' was when the combination of heat and cold produced snow like quick sand. To have the snow shoe sink to knee depth without meeting resistance and then to try to lift it out carrying a full load of wet snow. The first time was exciting but then it was

just hard work which fortunately only occurred for two or three steps at a time.

It is not a route to recommend. The scenery was similar throughout and it is difficult to tell where photographs are taken. In summer the lakes will show up and there will be greenery and wildlife. In the winter, on ski, it will be travelled more quickly and with varying terrain on which to exercise skill and route finding. With the patchiness of the snow, ski would have been no help to me, though quick release bindings on the snow shoes would have been. I walked quite long distances over the rocks with snowshoes on because it became such an effort to bend to remove and replace them. A lighter rucksack, as usual, would have made the travel

easier and with most of the waymarks in sight, maybe I was over cautious, but the best way to make sure one does not need emergency equipment is to take it. As usual, I was warmly greeted in Ardal, though in Norway there seem to be plenty of warm welcomes and kindnesses. A man was repairing one of the huts I visited and commuted from his home by snow mobile. He came in to talk a while and to give me an apple and an orange, all of which were very welcome. I travelled to Bergen on the last Express boat to do the full journey from Ardal to Bergen. If the anger of the locals lasts then it would be advisable to use the direct bus the whole way in future to deny the express boats the business. Ardal still remains one of the easiest places to visit using public transport,



'Yorkshire'

F. D. Smith

*'Never whilst the waves recoil,
Beaten from her rugged coast,
Never whilst the hills do stand
Shall she cease to be our boast.'*

Our Club song was first sung at the Annual Dinner in 1909 and was a joint effort of Barran, Slingsby and Calvert. The pseudonym used being Alfred Cecil Calvert. The difficulties in the musical composition may be attributed to the musician, the Reverend Samuel Calvert, a member of the Handel Festival Chorus.

My own collection of menus shows that the song was first printed on the 1937 menu. Somehow the penultimate line was lost and replaced by *'Never whilst the waves recoil'* from 1959 to 1984. The original line returned in 1985 but got lost again in 1986. Back again between 1987 and 1990 but lost again in 1991. Back again between 1992 and 1994. Wrong again in 1995 but right again in 1996.

Worse to come, in the years 1971 to 1973, verses three and four were interchanged on the menu.

Surprisingly the problem does not seem to have been aired until this year's Dinner when, unwittingly, Ian Crowther sang the unauthorised version whilst members read the true words.

Claude E. Benson produced an alternative club song in 1911, *'What a fine rambling day'* sung to *'Tis a fine hunting day'* and in 1913 came John Arthur Green's *'Who are the Ramblers'* to the air *'The Yeomen of England'*.

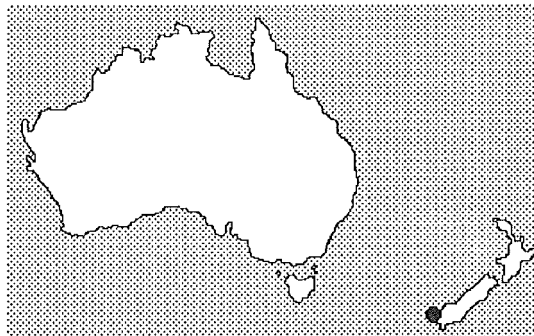
No doubt *'Yorkshire'* was sung annually between 1909 and 1937. It certainly was at the Club's coming of age in 1913, when the following were sung: *'Here's a Health unto His Majesty'*, *'Yorkshire'*, *'Ourselves'*, *'West Country Lad'*, *'On Eekla Moor Baht 'at'*, *'The Ramblers of Yorkshire'*, *'Ho Jolly Jenkins'*, *'Mr Booth'*, *'The Floral Dance'*, *'Auld Lang Syne'* and *'God Save the King'*. With ten speeches breaking up the singing it lasted from 6.45 to 11pm. Those were the days!

Faith or Foolishness in New Zealand

Alan Linford

Angie and I at Milford Sound found that the Milford Trail was restricted to one way traffic, we were at the wrong end and you have to make a reservation] Where can we get a boat to cross the sound and climb Mitre Peak? - You cannot, for this you need a helicopter and a guide, We beat a hasty retreat to Hollyford, a small settlement 10 km north of The Divide with a new objective to reach a hut above Moraine Creek and attempt The Twins, a peak of 1867m.

The Hollyford valley is deep, heavily forested, reaches from the Divide to the West Coast and provides the start of the Hollyford and Routeburn Trails. On the way up the valley we gave a lift to two lads and dropped them off at a camp site, whilst we pushed on a few kilometres up the valley and found a park for the campervan about 3 km from the start of the Hollyford trail. A quick reconnoitre was essential to find the start of the trail up Moraine Creek and more important the bridges across the Hollyford River and the Creek since fording is impossible. We were overtaken by a battered mini van, which surprised us, but even more amazed when we came across the van,



at the end of the track, and the driver erecting a Dipole aerial. We were 25 km from the nearest road. What was it all about I asked, "I'm checking on my deer" said Lewis.

Lewis was a deer hunter, deep in the forest he had corralled deer, fitted them with transmitters and, using his aerial and observing the response on his oscilloscope he could tell if his deer were stressed. Just the man to direct us to the Moraine track. Well it was there, but very faint and he would advise us against an attempt alone, especially since the hut was unusable.

So we opted for the Hollyford trail, the least popular of the trails in the Fiordland National Park. Away early along a trail through mainly sub-tropical forest. Fly catchers were busy round our heads as we came upon hidden creek falls and then went into the hut for a brew. Surprise; in occupation were the two lads we gave a lift to yesterday. How had they passed us? They had had a lift up river by jet boat. By now we had had enough to damp jungles and decided to return and head for the open hills, when in walked Lewis, the jet boat skipper. Would we like a trip down the river in his boat? The river was only half a mile away and we would soon be back. We set off for the river. After a while Lewis disappeared into the jungle and returned with a rifle, collected from a dump of his, and before we reached the river repeated the process, arriving with another rifle from another dump. Eventually we reached the river, gear and guns handed down into the boat. At this time we had not taken stock of our position. The two lads knew where we were but not who we were and they were off into the wilderness.

The campervan might be found, eventually, nobody knew where we were and here we were in dense forest on a fast flowing river with an armed man we had just met.

The trip down river was exhilarating, under or over huge trees fallen over deep pools and shallow gravel beds round boulders all at high speed, swinging left and right. A stop for Lewis to dash off into the forest to check his deer whilst we minded the boat.

Another exhilarating ride with expert handling and we were soon at his boat ramp. The ramp, needed to lift the boat several metres to make sure that it was above flood level, was made from timber and it's winch driven by a Qualcast Lawnmower engine. By dusk we were back in the rain and over a brew we realised that we had taken a risk in accepting the trip. It was a good day out. Our faith in human nature and judgement in first impressions were right but were they justified?



Mitre Peak above Milford Sound, South Island in the Fiordland National Park

The Trou de Ver Project 1993-1995 Ged Campion.

In the Combe des Foges, high above the cliffs of the Torrent de Salles, a small, rather insignificant hole emits a strong draught. Indifferent to the ferocity of winter storms, the draught is just warm enough to keep the cavity open even in the heaviest of snows. The hole is the entrance to the Trou de Ver, discovered in 1974 by Richard Maire of the 'Speleo Club, Lyon', and pushed to a somewhat inconclusive depth of minus 522 metres in the winter of 1976.

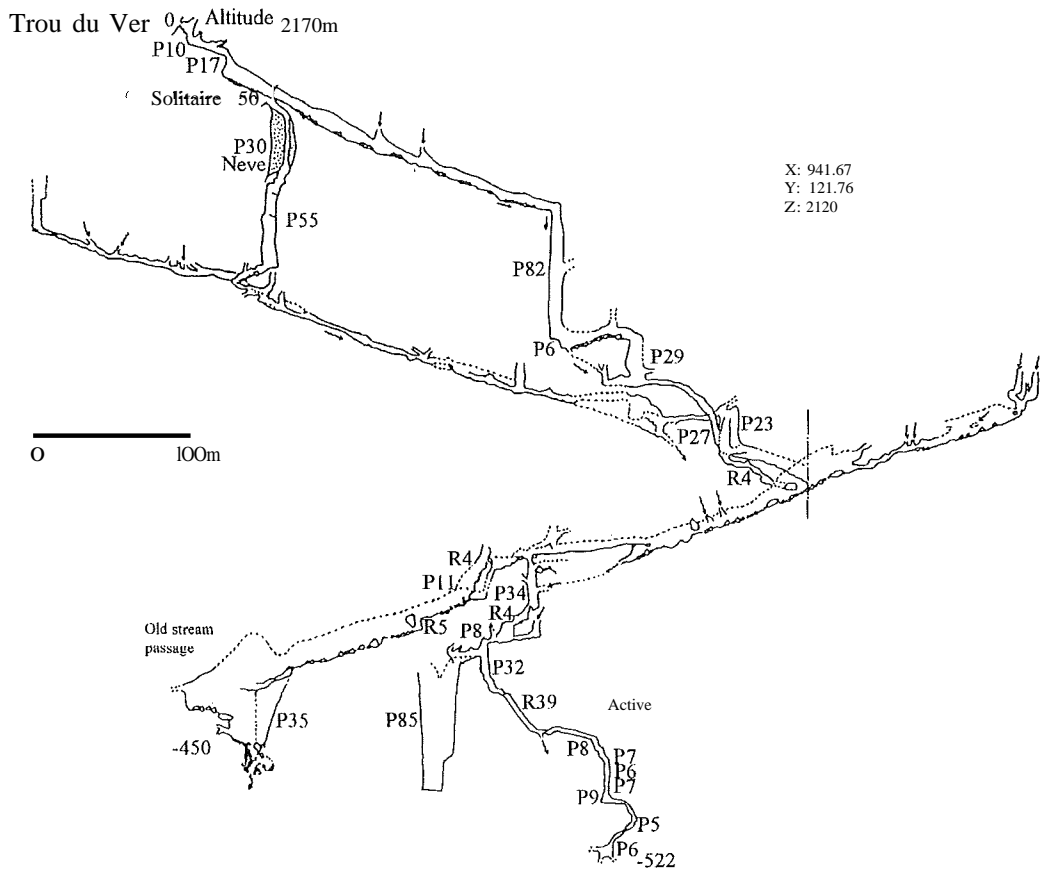
It had never been our original intention to explore this cave system, but in 1992 plans to make a winter descent of the Gouffre Mirollda were thrown into turmoil when Anglo French relationships reached an all time low. The 'Club Ursus of Lyon' somewhat insistently refused to grant us permission to explore the Mirollda. This had been a grave disappointment to all concerned since a considerable amount of time and effort had been spent preparing the expedition. Even a reconnaissance had been made in November 1993, to locate the exact whereabouts of the entrance so that no time would be wasted searching the mountainside in difficult winter conditions.

It was during this reconnaissance that Stewart Muir and Jon Riley ventured onto the cliffs above the Torrent de Salles for purely speleological interest and decided to locate the entrance to the Trou de Ver. In fact two entrances were located at that time, the other being the Puits de Solitaire. It was from that moment that the exploration of the Trou de Ver would inspire Stewart Muir and, the

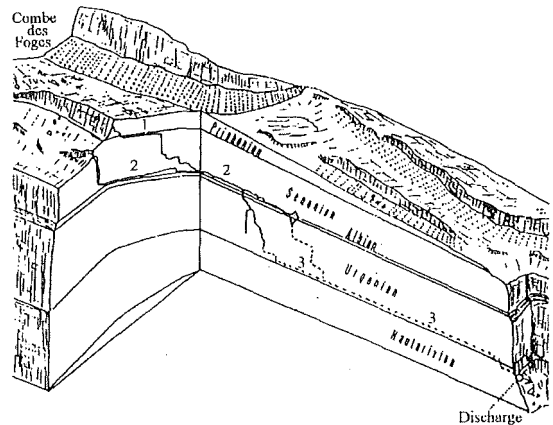
following year, the rest of us to plumb the depths of this relatively unknown system. Although at first viewed as second best to the Mirollda, the Trou de Ver quickly became a tour de force itself - and so the saga of its exploration unfolded.

Many of the cave systems on the Grand Massif south East of the Mont Blanc chain have to be explored during the winter. Their high flooding potential caused by melting snow from glaciers during the summer months makes exploration impossible. The only safe time to descend these systems is during freezing winter conditions when there is virtually no danger of flood waters entering the systems.

In January 1994, therefore, two well equipped teams headed for the snowy Grand Massif. Even as they left England some members of the team were still unaware of their actual objective, believing that our focus would be on the Mirollda, others more aware of the Anglo French problem were safe in the knowledge that any attempt would be folly. Two chalets were established as a base camp in Samoens - the first a rather old French alpine house and the second a purpose built, though stylish, studio belonging to Madame Rouge. In the ensuing days the team made various journeys from Samoens to Flaine. This approach was chosen because of the dangerous avalanche conditions above the Torrent de Salles. From Flaine the route was made even easier by accessing the Telepherique des Grandes Platieres, which gives access to the Desert de Plate. Once on the summit of this plateau ski mountaineering is the only effective method of venturing to the Combe des Foges where the entrance is situated.



1. Drinnue on Priubonien sandstone
2. Drainage on Albian sandstone
3. Main drainage on Hautcrivien quartzite



After Speleo-Club de Lyon 1975-6

This requires traversing the col between the Tete Pelouse and Les Verdets. Once through this col the ski down through the Combe des Foges was idyllic over untrodden snow to the entrance of the Trou de Ver precariously perched above spectacular cliffs.

Back at the Trou de Ver enough equipment was assembled to enable Stewart Muir, Graham Salmon and myself to descend and at least rig the

first 2 vertical pitches. The entrance pitch had already a rope in place, faded and worn by ultra-violet rays over the years, clearly too dangerous to rely on. We descended through the awkward entrance slot on our own rope. The 10 metre shaft quickly bells out to reasonable proportions to a level floor. Although we did not realise it at that time, this was to be an ideal storage place for our equipment for many months to come. The way on slid away under the chamber wall

requiring crawling to a passage of larger dimensions, ending at the top of the second pitch. Ten metres below a large breakdown chamber slanted away ramp-like into the darkness. This was the start of the long descending gallery that would take us to minus 100 metres and to the top of the 'big pitch' of 82 metres, jealously guarding the access to the lower reaches of the Trou de Ver. With a few rope bags assembled at the top of this pitch, this was to be the limit of our exploration that day.

Conscious of our return journey we headed back to the surface to make the most of what daylight we had left. Our companions anxiously awaited our return at the entrance, already firmly attached to their skis and ready to leave. After a short debate, a somewhat unwise decision was made to descend the Combe des Foges to its lowest reaches and eventually reach Samoens by a series of ridges and interlocking valleys. The epic nature of this descent is a story in itself. The journey was to take some 8 hours through avalanche hung country and traversing precariously in darkness on cliff edges high above the Giffre Valley. Like a small army in retreat we ebbd our way through snow clad pine forest to a horrendous steep descent to Samoens itself. When we eventually arrived back at the chalets we discovered that the team on the Aiguille de Briou had barely forged a trail halfway to the Chalet de Criou. The sheer depth of snow and absence of skis had made their progress impossible. They had to bivouac out in goat sheds near the Chalet de Trot and had planned to return to the village the following day.

After a good days rest and with the two teams reassembled, it was decided that an all out assault would be made

on the Trou de Ver. With equipment in place, it seemed that we had every chance of success and by caving standards a depth of minus 500 metres did not seem unreasonable. Those individuals without skis or unable to ski were equipped with snow shoes to combat excessively deep snow. The following day therefore, saw the teams assembled at the summit of the Grande Platieres, But to our bitter disappointment the weather had deteriorated to such an extent that it was felt unwise to attempt to find a way over to and down the Combe des Foges. The trip was therefore, abandoned and everyone returned to Flaine. Storms raged for the following 2 days and the prospect of our being unable to retrieve our equipment in the cave quickly became reality. Running out of time, we left the snowy Samoens to return to England with virtually half of the caving arsenal still in the high Alps.

In May the same year a small but determined group of cavers returned to the Grand Massif. Inexpensive but luxurious lodgings were secured in the village of Les Carroz and the team anxiously made preparations to return to the Trou de Ver in the hope that the equipment would be still in place. In due course we were ascending through green sunny alpine meadows that only months ago had been suffocated by snow. Above an altitude of 1600 metres the slopes were still snow bound and skis were necessary to climb up to the col guarding access to the Combe des Foges. On arriving at the entrance we anxiously descended the first pitch elated to find our equipment had not been removed. Indeed, everything has been left in place, although we were a little surprised to discover that a rodent had been nibbling through numerous pairs of Wellington boots

yet had left our food supplies untouched!

Although we knew it would be virtually impossible to descend the cave at that time of year, we forlornly made our way to the top of the 82 metre pitch to assess the water levels. As expected the pitch was taking a steady flow of water and making any prospect of descent suicidal. To be caught on a pitch of this size with even a slight increase in water would be a very daunting prospect.

With only 4 in our team, carrying the equipment back up the Combe des Foges and down to Flaine was a Herculean task to say the least. Even the most seasoned skiers in the team were experiencing difficulty in making stylish telemark turns with such heavy packs.

The Trou de Ver had defeated us quite decisively and the humiliation of having to abandon our equipment was a bitter pill to swallow. However, like many exercises in climbing and caving, the experience of defeat can often strengthen resolve to return better prepared next time. Therefore, completely ignoring the old adage of 'once bitten twice shy', rather than being dissipated, interest in the Trou de Ver increased.

Therefore with the onset of another year came new hopes and in the Christmas of 1995, a smaller, light weight and more refined team were assembled. Equipment was kept to the bare minimum, 8 mm ropes were chosen in preference to 9 mm ropes, and 9 mm ropes in preference to 10 mm ropes. Accommodation was arranged in Flaine itself to reduce any need to travel snow bound roads. Almost carbon copy like and like an offering to the Gods, all the equipment was ferried up to the cave entrance on the first day. The Combe des Foges

seemed even more enticing and magnificent than the previous year. Snowy hillocks had welled up above the interlocking canyons and runnels forming ways through the terrain.

A route was carefully chosen and we skied across to the cave entrance. This time it required a degree of excavation but the blow hole feature of the Trou de Ver remained true to form. Pleased by our day's progress, we returned to Flaine to make preparations for the grand descent.

We woke the following morning to a beautiful day. Spirits were slightly dampened by threats of further snow later on in the day. Would this render the Combe too dangerous we feared - not allowing an escape either down to Samoens or back up to the Tete Pelouse? But too much time, sweat and preparation had already been invested in this project and success was feverishly close if we could just focus in on the caving aspect of the trip. While we caved deep into the night we would be indifferent to the alpine storms raging on the surface.

Myself, Bruce Bensley and Graham Salmon arrived at the entrance that afternoon mindful of the arrival of more snow. We -anchored our skis near to the cave entrance and quickly descended the entrance pitch. Our progress to the top of the 'big pitch' was swift. Once through the slot at the top, the enormous size of the shaft exceeded all expectations. We had dreamt of this place for a year but had been denied access to its secrets until now. The void was huge, an incredible 82 metres free fall - the sides of the shaft at times barely discernible in the inky darkness. This huge drop had been forged through the Senonien Shale, a stratigraphy which seemed to be reminiscent of brick work lattice. On arriving at the

bottom of the shaft only the faint glimmer of the caver's light above could be seen as he embarked on a spiralling journey.

Unfortunately our raptures over the pitch were quickly brought to earth by the toil that lay ahead. A less grand passage led on to a pitch which was to herald the beginning of a succession of muddy shafts. The often less than vertical nature of these drops hampered progress causing rope bags to snag. Pitch after pitch caused problem after problem. Re-belays were often difficult and at times ropes from previous French expeditions left in place, became entangled in our own ropes. It was with relief therefore that we dropped out of a small window eventually in to the Collecteur, the main stream passage - though absent of any sizeable stream at minus 288 metres. At this point we established a bivouac and brewed up.

The potential for flooding at this depth was evident - a place a caver would not want to venture during the summer months. In winter you were at least safe in the knowledge that only a drastic rise in temperature outside could cause difficulties and this was highly unlikely in the snow bound Grand Massif in January. Nevertheless the caving had taken its toll on us and the weight of caving rope bags had required a redoubling of our efforts to reach this depth.

The morale of the team was low - our situation seemed remote and our backup was negligible. Slightly refreshed by food and drink we ventured on crossing deep pools and strange but beautiful mud formations at a depth of minus 300 metres. We soon encountered huge drops that required awkward traversing without the aid of a safety rope. It was decided that I would continue alone to

try and find the top of the 34 metre pitch which would mark the beginning of the more constricted part of the cave.

After approximately 10 minutes and with seemingly little effort, I reached this exact spot. An old French *in situ* rope was belayed at the top and disappeared into the darkness below. In the circumstances I was not prepared to descend alone and decided to return to my companions who had by this time already made the decision to return to the surface. It was therefore with a mixture of feelings of disappointment and relief that we slowly started back up the series of muddy pitches. At the bottom of the 82 metre pitch we drank soup and cooked a meal before embarking on the vertical climb above us. The actual pitch turned out to be less tiring than we had anticipated but pulling the tackle up behind us was. With an intricate method of pulleys and stops all rope bags were successfully pulled to the entrance pitches. Weighed down with rope bags it was like climbing the side of a mountain.

Having ferried our equipment back to the base of the entrance pitch, Bruce was the first to ascend the rope. He was greeted at the surface by swirling spindrift and howling wind. We later discovered that it had been snowing for almost 12 hours! Our moist caving suits soon began to chill and our damp harnesses around our waist froze to a cardboard consistency. The prospect of hypo-thermia was ever present in our minds. The weather was so bad that we only had limited visibility. For a moment Bruce thought that he could see the Tete Pelouse appearing and disappearing in the distance through swirling mist. On closer examination this apparition was nothing but a small snowy hillock only

yards away from the entrance! We were faced with a dilemma. If we decided to sit it out we would have insufficient food supplies and warm clothing to last indefinitely. Besides, how long would it continue snowing, hours or days? The more snow that fell the greater the prospect of avalanches on the Tete Pelouse, the obstacle that separated us from our warm beds in Flaine.

In a spirited fashion we donned our skis and only carried light weight emergency packs. We would retrieve the rest of our equipment during the following days. Therefore rope bags were left at the bottom of the entrance pitch. It has snowed so much that it appeared to have changed the very terrain with which we had become familiar - the small intricate system of snowy canyons were difficult to identify in the almost white-out conditions.

Choosing a line and leading off I cut the side of a seemingly innocuous easy angled snow slope. Almost instantaneously, but in slow motion, the whole slope slid nonchalantly away, taking me with it.

Only metres down the slope the slide stopped as quickly as it had started, I was unhurt and my head and shoulders were still above the snow. I was bent over by the sheer weight of snow and my skis had acted like belays on my feet, locking me into a position where I could not move my legs. The very article that could lead me out of this snowy hell had trapped me. I feverishly dug towards my feet to release my bindings but my contorted position prevented me from releasing the binding on my left ski. Bruce and Graham appeared to be looking on helplessly like shocked bystanders. I surveyed the slope above me hanging in deadly silence. Would it continue

to slide and completely engulf me I thought? By now Bruce and Graham had jettisoned their skis and waded into the deep snow and began furiously digging at my feet. I was free in a second but one of my ski sticks was still missing. To continue without it would seriously impede progress but this wasn't the place for a stop and search. Luckily in minutes Bruce located the missing article and we both struggled back to a position of relative safety.

We were all visibly shaken by the experience, Bruce and Graham never having witnessed an avalanche victim before! Again we were faced with a dilemma, should we carry on up the Combe or go back to the relatively safety of the Cave? We were only 10 or so minutes away from the entrance but it was snowing so furiously that our ski tracks were completely covered. We had visions of wandering too close to the slopes adjacent to the cave entrance which hung precariously above the cliffs of the Torrent de Salles. It was with this in mind that we decided to continue up the Combe to take on the challenge of the Tete Pelouse and attempt to cross the col to Flaine.

Fatigued by twenty-four hours of caving and ski mountaineering, somehow we accelerated up the centre of the Combe with purpose. Despite the poor visibility I felt I had visited this place often enough to know its intricacies, moods and deceptions. Before long I could just make out an old wooden post, perhaps a marker from bygone days: a detail we had all remembered. It was still high above the snow line, unchanged from the day before. Immediately I thought, this augured well because it meant that the snow on the slope above us had not been subject to the same accumulation

that we had witnessed lower down in the Combe. We confidently climbed towards the top of the col and in reaching it experienced a great feeling of relief. All that remained was to find our way along the small ridge and then the route down onto the piste which would lead us to Flaine. Far below us we could hear the sound of explosions, an attempt by piste workers in Flaine to create controlled avalanches to avert the accumulation of snow above the village. We gradually descended below the cloud line and could see the village below. Piste workers were bemused to see us ski by in such appalling conditions. However, after questioning where we had been and realising that we were Speleo's, they were satisfied by the explanation.

Graham crashed out in the apartment and Bruce and I fell asleep over a beef burger in one of the cafes. The rest of the team had gone shopping in Cluses.

For the next two days the weather continued unsettled and avalanche risk closed the piste. Going to the Combe des Foges was out of the question. As for the equipment left in the cave, we felt confident that we had a plan to secure its return. After our experience the previous year we were not going to be caught out again. Discussions had taken place to use the services of a local helicopter pilot since the weather forecast was for an improvement on the Saturday of our departure. We felt that we could just do it in time. The ignominy of having to leave our gear again was unthinkable and we were adamant that the cave would not deny us what was rightfully ours, or so we thought.

On Saturday morning we awoke to a beautiful alpine day, not a whisper of wind or a flurry of snow. The mountains were clad in a deep pristine

cover of snow. The helicopter seemed ready and the cash payment had been settled but then, to our absolute horror, the pilot casually announced that it would be unsafe to attempt to land or even hover in the Combe des Foges. There was simply too much snow around. The deal was off and it would be with disbelief that people would listen to our story when we returned to England, and indeed they did.

In the following May we returned to France as in 1994. The gear was retrieved and the project's stalwart members agreed that they could not subject themselves to this humiliation again. With some sadness the Trou de Ver project was definitely over. Time and effort expended on such an apparently small hill in retrospect seemed quite puzzling. The full might of two well equipped expeditions had been completely thwarted.

The dangers of high alpine caving in winter cannot be emphasised enough. The remoteness of entrances and the commitment to venture deep underground with minimum support is more than most cavers would be prepared to take on. Those involved need not only to be cavers but mountaineers experienced in the full range of winter skills. It remains to be seen whether the Trou de Ver will ever receive a descent from British cavers and if any of the members of this expedition will be amongst them.

I suspect the latter is unlikely.

Those involved in the project were:

Ralph Atkinson	Stewart Muir
Bruce Bensley	Shaun Penny
Ged Champion	Peter Price
Joel Corrigan	Ion Riley
Alan Fletcher	Graham Salmon
John Maltin	Mike Wooding

Expedition Diary

1957- Nepal

Maurice Wilson

May 4, Camp 3 to Base Camp.

Once more there had been lots of snow overnight, and the tents took a lot of digging out. We had our porridge raw but the scene outside was beautiful. It is hard to realise that our three friends lie entombed in the glacier above.

Arthur and I left to do some surveying at Camp 2 loaded with all our usual gear. We got several rays and elevations at this station which were helpful. Avalanches continue to fall all round with great frequency. I have never heard so many in one area. As cloud enveloped us we moved down to Camp 1.

We found it very difficult to find the route through the icefall in the mist, combined with a perfect crescendo of stonefalls from the cliffs on our right. Certainly, the icefall had altered a good deal and needed every care. Dan and Ang Temba met us at Camp 1 and escorted us back to Base. The route across had altered considerably. The stone couloir was a perfect menace and more grass was now exposed on the slopes. It started to rain just before we got in and I got rather wet. The rain has continued for several hours and life about camp is muddy and unpleasant.

May 5, Base Camp.

There was a little inclination to turn out this morning. Nine days away from Base Camp makes one appreciate its relative comforts. George was making his final preparations to leave for Kathmandu. We all took a number of photographs and George, Murari and Pasang got away in due course. We then set about making the camp more ship-shape.

The tent in which I was sleeping was moved to the position formerly occupied by Arthur's 'Pal-e-Mine'. I shall occupy it tonight, alone. A tent

flysheet was then erected in the vacant space to serve as a dining-room. Personal boxes and food boxes make excellent tables and seats. As usual it started to rain in the afternoon, turning to hail and then back again to rain. The weather really is appalling after each mid-day.

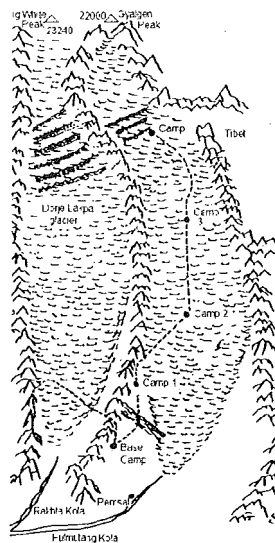
May 6, Base Camp

We were all up at 5.00 a.m. and I was pleased when Andy informed me that he and I were to reconnoitre the way down to the Dorje Lakpa glacier. Arthur and Dan, with sherpas, are going down to Camp 2 to retrieve equipment. I had no desire to go, again, to that glacier. The others left just before we did.

We left at 6.00 a.m. and got up the steep slopes above the camp and reached the pass in 2½ hours. From there we went down the snow slopes on the other side, looking for a suitable way down. Clouds interfered with our total view of the Dorje Lakpa ridge. On our return, we glissaded down the snow slopes on this side and inspected the ruined shacks in the corrie above Base Camp. At the former Scottish Ladies camp, I found an old basketball boot. Nima and his brother awaited our arrival.

They brought bad news. They gave us a note from Arthur to the effect that Dan had broken his arm and Lakpa Tsering had broken his leg while on the traverse.

All were at Camp 1, so, Andy went across with morphia and other medical supplies. I remained at Base Camp with Nima Lama and his brother. (Exchanged Ryvita tin for flint etc and some food for potatoes.) Soon after, we had a terrific thunderstorm with lots of snow. I was amazed to see how these two padded about the snow in bare feet. Eventually, they installed themselves, complete with a fire, behind a boulder. I hardly expected Andy's party to return from Camp 1, but they did turn up just as the storm drew to its close.



The YRC Oman Caving Trip Ged Campion

This caving expedition proved to be a complete success. Four members of the Y.R.C. caving contingent, Ged Campion, Harvey Lomas, Bruce Bensley and a prospective member Alan Fletcher, joined with other cavers, some already living in Muscat, to travel to the Selmeah area in the mountains of northern Oman. The base camp was established on 1st February 1997, on a limestone plateau, 1500 metres above sea level. Local support was given to the expedition by the Navy and Police services, supplying equipment, food and water to the camp.

The Oman "winter" (25° C) made it possible to move around reasonably comfortably but local knowledge suggested that rainfall, albeit infrequent, is more likely to occur in the winter! We quickly realised that given the very hard, arid land surface, flooding in the caves would be virtually instantaneous making the exploration very serious indeed.

Four existing caves were known and originally explored to a limited extent by a small American team in 1985. However, the team was too small to make a significant impact on extending the caves. All the caves discovered had leads that just needed pursuing.

Over a two week period, the caves Three Window Cave, Funnel Cave, Arch Cave and Seventh Hole, were linked creating a super system some 12 kilometres in total length. The cave passage discovered was no less than spectacular. Huge phreatic tunnels with beautiful formations were found and the caving was very spotting.



Despite the small amount of precipitation in the Oman mountains, the caves hold a considerable volume of water stored from one year to the next. The exploration often required swimming along canals and across small lakes! The temperature in the caves was warm enough to utilise cotton boiler suits etc. All access to the system except the resurgence, some 7 kilometres from the base camp was via deep shafts. The Seventh Hole for example, involved 250 metres of abseiling before one was able to arrive at the horizontal passage.

The Selmeah system is now the longest in the Middle East and certainly the deepest. There is still much potential for caving in Oman and the amount of limestone in the area holds much promise for the future discovery of caves. The team would like to thank the Y.R.C. for providing funding for this expedition.

A full report will follow soon.



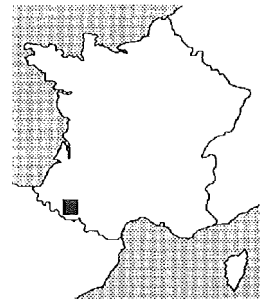
Pic de Monné: a cautionary tale

Derek Collins

I had not had a day out for several weeks so Pic de Monne, a few miles south of Lourdes, seemed a good idea. From the roadhead I followed a path marked on the map. Nobody had told me about paths in the Pyrenees and I could not understand why the path was so faint and why there was no one around in mid-August. In fact when I approached a nasty looking snake lying on the path it was a bit peeved at being disturbed. I clambered up off the path!

Effectively the route was up a very steep field which became scree. The track almost disappeared and the scree became large boiler plates but I was able to scramble up gullies and began to feel lonely. After a bit, a scrambly line to the ridge could be made out. I felt better as I was fairly confident there would be a ski-station at the top. I clambered towards the ridge looking back to ensure I could reverse the lot if required and after a few moves up a little chimney, popped out onto the ridge.

To my horror the other side was overhanging, then vertical, going down for miles to my car. Ugh! I thought and started scrambling up the ridge. Three large vultures wheeled nearby demoralising me still further. The tiny exposed top of Pic de Monne - 2724 m, harboured no ski-station or cairn or litter just a few vultures overhead. I opened my rations, two mars bars and 0.5 litres of water. By the way I was wearing shorts, no sweater and a lightweight cagoule. After all I was out on a quick few hours bash, I even had a date with my wife and others in the Brancardiers bar in Lourdes in a few hours.



The ridge ahead was spiky in best Skye style except it was a lot bigger and the gaps were impassable. I fiddled about for a long time - Brashers are not good rock boots - and finally got down into a combe in which, according to my map, there were ski trails. No doubt there are in winter. At this juncture I looked at my map very carefully and did some serious prioritising. My wife was with a group who had the clout to get out the French Army so I even had to face that possibility consider the embarrassment!

The worst forty minutes of my mountaineering life ensued. I went at a 500 ft, steep slippery scree slope like a headless chicken and felt poorly at the top, another col. However, there were two tiny tarns just like the map said and the ski paths cut through the main ridge and down to the car. No problem I thought! Even getting to the first gap required two or three attempts. 'Good luck' I thought to any skier going down there. The next gap looked better, there was even a tiny locked hut. I clambered down hanging onto a waste pipe and finally got onto steep grass. The marmots and choughs mocked as I sat there thinking. After this it was an interminable walk down dusty roads gouged out for the winter skiers.

I made it for the beer, lots of it and nobody knew any different!

A cautionary tale? Leave your timing flexible when making dates.

A Short Scottish Holiday

Adrian D. Bridge

Having made the briefest of arrangements, Andy Wells, Ian Bridge and I arrived in Thurso on a Saturday afternoon during August 1996, in time to camp explore the town and get a fish supper. Next morning, drove to John O'Groats, (which was surprisingly attractive), and then Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the British mainland and which has magnificent vertical cliffs, before catching the noon ferry from Scrabster to Stromness on Orkney.

The two hour journey was most enjoyable, with fine views of Hoy and the Old Man, itself dwarfed by the 300+m high St. John's Head just north of it.

A short drive to Houton, a ferry south to Lyness on Hoy and a bit more driving, brought us to Rackwick Bay, where we camped for a couple of nights. An evening stroll for a couple of miles over the cliff brought us to the stack we'd come to climb. The way down to the base of the Old Man of Hoy, whilst not too difficult, required reasonable balance on narrow zig-zag paths across steep grass on crumbly sandstone cliffs.

In the clear evening light, with a strong sea crashing against rocks, plentiful seals, gulls, cormorants, fulmars and skuas, and just us three around, the place had a sort of elemental magic about it. Next morning, the weather wasn't quite so good, but dry and windy. Andy and I prepared to climb, whilst Ian checked for a seal pup we'd found, seemingly trapped in some rocks the night before. (I hadn't realised that they have such long claws under their soft

flippers, nor that they have so many sharp teeth). It was gone.

The first pitch wasn't bad, the second, an overhanging crack at 5b, was not too pleasant, being damp, with rounded sandy holds and huge wooden wedges banged into the crack (perhaps left from the 1967 filming). Third and fourth pitches were easier, but with very sparse gear, owing to the friable rock. The final pitch was probably the best, a vertical corner of good rock between two massive pillars that formed the top section of the Old Man. It was a bit disconcerting to be climbing up looking at the sea between one's feet 400 ft below, looking through the gaps in the corner to the sea the other side and hoping that the pressure of bridging up wouldn't push the pillars apart!

On the top, the wind was blowing too strongly for it to feel safe to stand up. We wrote in the summit book and then abseiled down the top pitch before stopping to eat in relative calm. It had taken 4½ hours to get up, and took nearly two to get down. Each ab was from a mass of indeterminate tat, threaded round the rock, knotted to old pitons and itself. Anyone piece looked quite suspect, but we gambled that collectively they'd be OK - and they were. Nevertheless, I was glad to get down without incident.

Our next venture was to The Old Man of Steer. We had only a vague location and a brief description of the route at Hard Severe. Having survived Gust) a fierce midge attack, we set off from close to the lighthouse in thick fog, on a northerly bearing hoping to hit the cliff edge after a couple of miles where the Old Man stood.

Well, you know what it's like trying to walk on a bearing over rough terrain, you never are quite where you hope to be - and we didn't even know quite where that was! So after about three hours and a lot of, shall we call it 'prospecting', we found what could be a faint outline of a sea stack. Just to be sure, we dumped our bags and went north to find the end of the Point of Stoer which, half a mile away, was out of the fog below about 100 ft. This allowed us to be more sure that what we had found was the right stack. Back at it, the fog was beginning to clear and we found a tentative 'path' down the two hundred plus feet of cliff. Roping up gave an illusion of safety to the descent.

Andy stripped off and swam across. I threw him an 11 mm rope and we fixed up a traverse line. Bit by bit, clothing, gear, Ian and I got across, dry shod and set about the climb. The photo accompanying the route description (in the guide we'd left in the car by mistake) showed men on the light side of the stack on the first pitch. by no means was this HS (later found to be 5c in another book). We traversed left and then up in four pitches at about VS, passed fuhner chicks who rose up on their nests, squawked and made puking motions. It seems as if the technique doesn't develop too early, as only one managed to project liquid at me and I was able to twist so it missed me. fortunately, as on Hoy, the parents left us alone even though they were flying all around us.

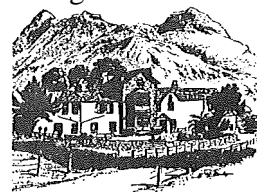
Climbing and abseiling three on a rope takes some time: with the tyrolean to set, the route to find and not starting to climb until possibly two pm, it was quite late by the time we were ready to get back to the mainland. We had hazy schemes about abseiling on a

slant on double ropes so that none of us would have to swim and spent too long trying to rig up such. At one point Andy, retreating from an unsuccessful foray, was unable to prevent himself being lowered into the water whilst fully dressed. We eventually settled for a simple reverse of the way across, and I swam

As darkness had fallen, so the fog blanket returned. We stood on the mainland cliff top at 11 pm with a vague idea of walking south to the car. After an hour and a half of stumbling about in trackless peat bog terrain we covered the two miles (as the crow could have flown - perhaps) and got to the car. Midges were still a problem so we slept in the car. The midges were still a problem in the morning so we drove off straight away to Lochinver for breakfast.

Next stop F01t William, where we set off to look at - and hopefully climb - Centurion on Cam Dearg buttress above the CIC hut. When we got there it was dripping with water and slime so we settled for Ordinary Route 1 or some such nondescript way up the buttress. A walk over the top and round to Cam Mor followed before a descent to F01t William where another fish supper finished the day.

Next day brought rain, so we left Scotland. Passing the Lakes, the weather was beautiful, so we detoured into Langdale and walked up to Gimmer Crag. Both Andy and I had long had a desire to climb Kipling Groove, so we did. Yet again we stumbled off the hill in the dark, but not too late for a pint in the ODG. It rounded off a great week.



Flanders

Tim Josephy

We first saw it on one of those magical occasions that you never really believe unless you were there. Walking along the Black Ladders in freezing cloud late one winter afternoon, our white world slowly turned to one of orange fire and then the clouds sank below the high peaks to reveal a spectacular sunset over Holyhead Mountain. There in front of us, soaring out of the depths of Cwm Llafar and glowing in the evening light was a slender arrow of rock, boldly outlined against the snow. It was too much to hope for that it was unclimbed, and sure enough, perusal of the guidebook that evening confirmed our fears. Nevertheless, once seen, it had to be climbed.

We went up several times during the summer, but always the rock was streaming with water and we ran away. Finally, after the driest August in living memory we were there again, and this time we had a secret weapon. He was a youth, reared on the Llanberis slate, full of terms like "rockovers", "dynos" and "6b moves". We had told him he was there to learn about real climbing but in truth he was our insurance policy.

We reached the huge boulders under Llech Ddu to find the shadiest spot occupied by a Carneddau stallion. He eyed us malevolently, broke wind volcanically, and having thus ensured vacant possession of his shelter, wandered off to bully his harem. We stayed out in the sun and gazed up at the vastness of the Black Ladders, surely one of the finest mountain walls south of Scotland. The youth was appalled; he'd never had to walk so far before.

He was even more appalled at the foot of the crag as he watched Ray scooting up dripping ramps of vegetation. By the time we arrived at the foot of Western Gully he was peat stained, sweaty and shaking. When he found out he had been carrying both ropes in his sack he really knew the world was out to get him. He was distinctly unimpressed with the day so far.

Ray led off up steep grooves in the arete. After 70ft or so he ground to a halt and in no time was back at the start. "Here you are, youth," he said "I've put the gear in, you should be OK now." The youth climbed so fast we didn't see how he did it; nor did we realise he'd left his sack behind. "We'll have to split his load" I said, as I retired to take a photo. By the time I got back, Ray was on his way and the sack was still there. Muttering serious imprecations, I stuffed the sack into mine and followed. The initial grooves were reasonable until they ran out on the edge of the arete, whose sharp edge suckered you into an irreversible layback to nothing. A desperate lunge into a shallow corner and some frantic pedalling left me glad there was no one around to watch.

The second pitch crossed a steep wall to a corner with a big roof. Ray led off, showering the youth with mud and stones as he rooted for protection; the youth was deeply unimpressed. Eventually, Ray spreadeagled himself across the roof at full stretch, right leg shaking magnificently. "He's going to fall" said the youth. "Never!" I replied, "He always climbs like that." Seconds later, Ray was dangling, six feet out from the rock, upside down and revolving slowly. "Oh bother" he said, or something. With a violent effort he righted himself and rushed back to the fray. This time it went

easily and he disappeared from view. It was only when I reached the roof that I realised I still had the youth's sack. Under the circumstances I think the tight rope was entirely justified.

I led the third pitch floating on air without the extra weight. It was sheer delight, the inevitable overhang giving onto steep eat's tongue slabs and ending on a splendid pulpit, just big enough for three. We stopped for lunch, only three pitches done, but already 700ft up the crag. Far below, our friend the stallion and his mares were the only signs of life in all the world. The youth unpacked his sack. Out came fresh rolls, filled with smoked ham and salad, a bag of peaches and a thermos of freshly squeezed orange juice. "No point in us all opening our sacks, there isn't room" said Ray, helping himself to a roll. The youth looked mutinous but held his peace.

Lunch over we turned our attention to the rock once more. A cunning tunnel behind a vast flake brought us to a mighty groove running up the left wall of Western Gully. Ray led it in style, making light of a terrifyingly rounded layback at the top. So did the youth, so perhaps it's just me. Airy ribs and steep walls, all on the very arete eventually landed us on a little turret, connected to the main crag by a rickety bridge of boulders. Across the gap a horrible V chimney leered down at us.

"You're kidding!" said the youth, aghast. Secretly I agreed, but loss of face was unthinkable. Setting off across the bridge I could have wished to be almost anywhere else. The base of the chimney was filled with loose blocks, bound in place with spidersweb and pennywort. I levitated past the blocks, trying to push them into place as I went and threw myself

into the holdless chimney. Pretty soon it was evident that my upward progress had a small but inexorable westward vector. Just as this vector was on the point of increasing exponentially, my hand fell into the most magnificent jug imaginable and I was saved. Somehow or other, sitting on the belay, my leg dangled over the edge, unintentionally concealing the crucial jug; the youth fell off three times and has held my climbing ability in awe ever since,

It was clear the serious climbing was over and we solo'd up a couple of easy ribs to arrive on top of the ridge. As we lay watching the setting sun even the youth had to admit he was impressed. "I'm impressed," he said, "but I'm hungry too." "Oh I never carry food on the hills " said Ray. "But if you're quick you can buy me a pint in the Dougie." And with that he was off, bald head twinkling in the evening sun as he raced down to meet the rising tide of night.

Flanders 715ft HVS
Brown, Crew, Alcock and Lowe, 1969

Bothy & Campsite at Dundonnell

Mike Hartland recommends these to members wishing to walk, climb, 'Munro bag' or simply 'get away' to this mountain wilderness. The converted stone byre sleeps 9-12 with a peat stove, gas lighting, hot showers and toilet: all for about £2.50 per night. A metalled road from Dundonnell House runs six miles to Badrallach Farm. The view across Little Loch Broom to An Teallach alone is worth the fee. Let's hope that accommodation such as this and Inchnadamph Lodge can revitalise club meets in the far North West.

Contact Badrallach Bothy, Croft 9,
Badrallach, Dundonnell, by Garve, Ross-shire IV23 2QP
Telephone: 01854633281

Monte Baldo - Lake Garda

Iain Gilmour

When you discover that special delightful place, the temptation is to tell nobody, and to keep it to yourself. However, since no YRC man would dream of idling by a crystal clear trout lake and eating heavenly peach flavoured ice cream, or attending an outdoor opera in a Roman arena, I feel free to tell you about it.

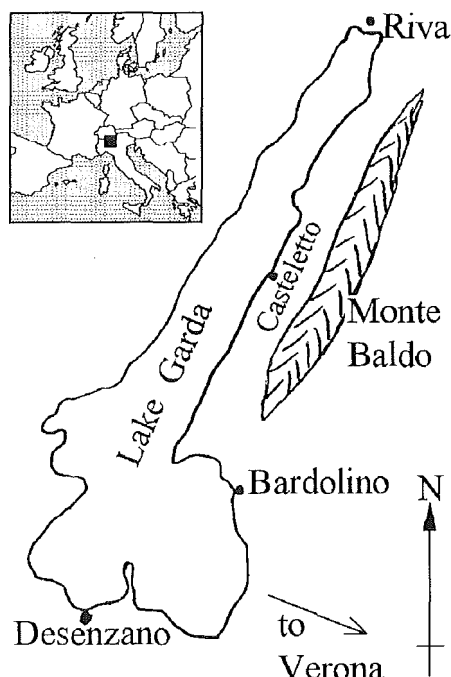
Lake Garda is the largest of the Italian lakes, and is fed with clear pure water from the limestone mountains to the North, from the West and from Monte Baldo to the East.

A good 1:50,000 map is published by Kompass, "Lago di Garda, Monte Baldo", and this is quite adequate for mountain trips and for information on mountain refuges.

A typical route from Castelletto rises by ancient tracks through leafy hazel woods for 3000 feet to a public road through Prada. The 654 marked path then rises to Rifugio Telegrafo at 7000 feet, passing through dramatic limestone scenery. There are up to a dozen refuges which could be used.

The ridge of Monte Baldo is around 7 miles long, and includes sections described as "suitable for climbers only" but mostly with good paths. Ascending from the level of Lake Garda, one would ideally like to stay at least one night at a refuge, but ascending from one of the higher roads, the ridge could be explored in day trips. The views of the lake and the mountains to the north are superb.

We stayed at a hotel in Bardolino on the lake shore, a pleasant little village with marina, cafes and near by camp sites. In the evening, a promenade around the streets was an entertainment in itself



Lake Garda is 30 miles long by 11 miles wide, and can easily absorb the many yachts and fast motor boats which the Italians enjoy. The water buses or the fast hydrofoils will take you to explore other parts of the lake.

Verona is 15 miles away, and the old Roman arena has nightly performances of opera. To join 10,000 other people under a starlight sky and watch Aida with a cast of some 200, is quite a spectacle! There are two types of tickets for the opera, the numbered seats low down in the arena, and the un-numbered terrace seats where you take pot luck and sit on a marble slab. If you have a terrace ticket and go into the arena early, you will experience a stream of cushion hirers, and people selling beer, ice creams, and sandwiches. Performances start at dusk, and as the overture commences, the audience light up thousands of tiny candles, contrasting with the stars overhead. The sense of occasion was magnificent, and it was midnight before we left the arena.

If you feel like a lazy holiday with an odd hill thrown in, then why not give this a try?

A remarkable country - a population of only 270,000 but with it's own Parliament, Universities...

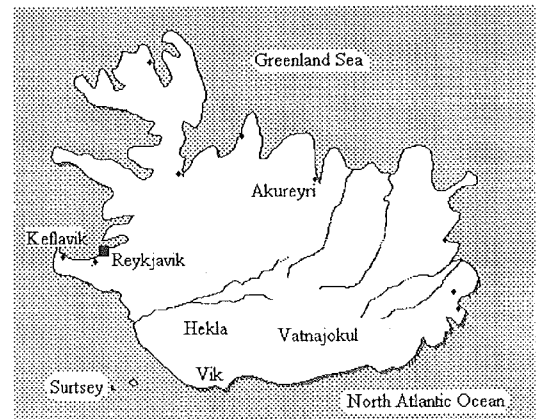
Unless one takes part in a northern cruise, the point of arrival must be Keflavik International Airport, because any visitor with a sense of adventure is in great haste to arrive as quickly as possible, and then take a coach to Reykjavik, the capital city. It must be the cleanest, unpolluted capital of note in the world. It's streets are spotless and litter free. Most of the hot water used there is piped from natural sources. I saw no chimney stacks.

A good start is to drive, or be driven, along the south coast to Vik, the most southerly place in the whole country, passing on one's left the very high cliffs over which a series of waterfalls tumble no less than 200 feet. We made a special stop at Skogafoss, the largest (it is about 20 yards wide).

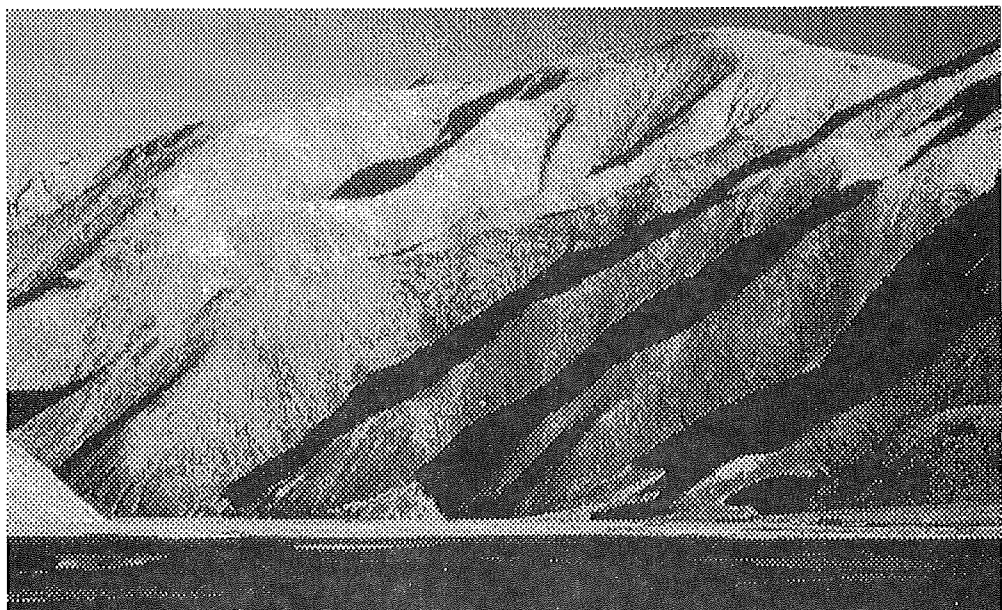
It looks near to the road, but once off the coach, it took all of ten minutes to reach within 100 yards of it... To get

Iceland

Arnold Patchett



nearer, one risks getting drenched with spray. From the base of the cliffs, up to which sea came in the dim past, to the present sea shore varies from 35 miles to about one mile until the town of Vik is reached... From thence the coastal strip widens and one reaches Shafterfell National Park



the rugged coastline



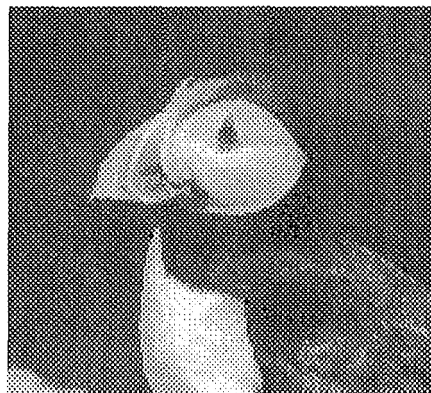
hot mud pool

after crossing a very wide outwash of black lava sand by means of a wooden bridge (partially destroyed during November 1996 when part of the Vatnajokull icecap melted through volcanic eruption and caused damaging flooding). Whilst staying for a few days at the Shafterfell Hotel, my companion and I arrived at Jokuksarlon lagoon. A tongue of glacier descended into the lagoon and we took a boat trip among the icebergs suitably clad in red lifejackets. Fairly near here, we were taken by a fanner to Ingolfshofdi across the sands, and climbed up a very steep slope of dry black sand to reach the grassy summit. It appears to be an island, but at it's base a long and narrow strip of lowland joins it to the mainland. On the summit we encountered countless sea birds. It is no exaggeration to say that there were tens of thousands of puffins, with their gaily coloured beaks, perched on perilous ledges along the cliffs.

From the visitors' centre of the National Park of Shafterfell, we

climbed several hundred feet to Svartifoss, a spectacular waterfall which pours over the ends of horizontal basaltic columns which lie on uptight columns of the same rock. From there a moorland path eventually led us to an enormous glacier descending from yet another point of the Vatnajokull.

Our next objective was Akureyri, Iceland's second city, almost at the head of the long inlet from the Arctic Ocean. A most attractive city it is too. To get there we took a plane from Reykjavik international airport. It took less than half an hour. We spent a pleasant morning in the town,



or should I say city. The main shopping street is pedestrianised, and what smart shops there are, The waterfront is delightfully arranged. Colourful gardens abound. The church is an unusual one and very modern: about fifty years old. We were thrilled to learn that the central panel of the east window came from the old Coventry Cathedral: it was rescued from the remains of that cathedral following the World War II blitz. The other windows of the church were designed by a firm in Exeter, Devon, J. Whipple & Co.

Whilst in Akureyri, we stayed at what was once a farm, but the farmer had developed it into a very attractive hotel with en suite facilities and a licence. The drinks were far cheaper than we had met elsewhere.

Our first trip from Akureyri was to Husavik, one of the most northerly fishing centres in the world. I stood alongside a huge vat of fish and held up a large herring and shouted 'Any advance on fifty Kronur' and an array of photographers appeared from nowhere!



Husavik has a unique church and a very polished and up-to-date museum with a centre-piece of one of the few and indeed the largest polar bears ever caught in Iceland.

However, up the river is another famous waterfall, Godafoss, with to its south a lake, Myvatn, dotted with weird volcanic formations, June and July

are good times to visit Iceland, but not Myvatn as it is often plagued with midges at that time of year. It is nevertheless a fantastic drive around the lake. A short distance from the lake speleologists will be interested to note, is a special cave: Grojtagoa if I remember rightly. It was entered down a twelve foot rocky slope to a 'path' of s01ls. Alongside the path is a stream of lovely hot water. Wouldn't it be delightful to be able to wade along Lost John's master cave in hot water after having drenched in the Thunderstorm Depot.

In the north-east again is the Asbyrgi Gorge which leads through a wooded area down to a crystal clear pool complete with ducks. It had, though, no apparent outlet. A lovely circular walk took us about an hour.

Then, still in the northern area, is Namaskard with its colourful mud pools, the centres of which are thrown up every few minutes by means of a natural steam vent. These we watched at close quarters. Some of the most violent ones were roped off

The piece de resistance in this area is, of course, Dettifoss, the most powerful falls in Europe. It is almost breath-taking - the warmer and sunnier the weather the more water roars over the oblique precipice. We had enjoyed ten days of sunshine so far with only the odd white cloud now and again but no rain. As we approached Dettifoss though, black clouds came over and extra large rain drops' fell but not for very long. However, that Sh01l spell of bad weather added greatly to the awesome

power of nature. Below, the river winds its way down a magnificent canyon for several miles.

A long and fantastic trip by a mini-bus took us from Akureyri to the long peninsula of Snæfellsnes on the west coast, where we spent three nights at Stykkisholmur. Its colourful harbour is protected by a huge outcrop of fluted rock bathed in the sunshine for eleven hours a day - at least in the summer. We climbed Helgafell just south of the town to get a wide view of the many islands in the bay to the north, then visited them at close quarters in a large passenger boat. Whilst we are getting close-up photographs of cormorants, puffins and the like, some of the crew have dropped nets and before returning to harbour we taste generous portions of a great variety of shell fish straight out of the sea. Glasses of white wine are handed down and we drink to the health of all.

The south coast of the peninsula is very wild, and we explored its abundant spectacular basaltic formations. In parts the land is literally sandwiched between the sea and the high ground. The latter rises to the ice cap.

When I look back on our journey so many attractive places come to mind such as the original cottages and tiny churches, all with roofs of turf. Secluded gardens full of gay flowers, coniferous forests and a hill we climbed without looking back, the promise of good luck and good health provided we walked to the grave of Gourun Osvifursdottir and made the sign of the cross over it. Then walk in silence up the mountain looking neither right nor left. Finally, having reached the top, walk into the rocky quarry and whilst looking towards the east, quietly and sincerely make three

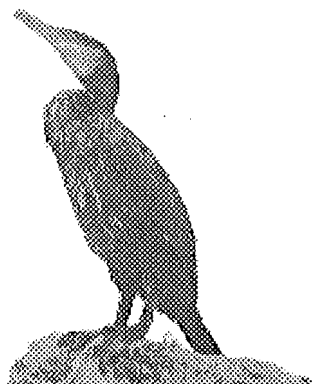
wishes. When we first climbed this hill, Helgafell, we did not realise it was the place which could make our wishes come true... so we had to climb it again.

I have found it difficult to convince friends in England that every day we had a picnic lunch outside, sitting on dry grass or heather and even warm rocks.

These lunches were provided by our guide and consisted of coffee, tea, mineral water, lashings of superb bread, butter, slices of ham, tongue, cheese and fish paste with perhaps a custard and sweet biscuits. At lunch times we were always 'far from the maddening crowd'.

On our final day we journeyed back to Reykjavik and visited the Pearl, a comparatively new domed construction high above the city centre. It contains a miniature geyser with a great column of water spouting up from time to time. Of course there is a bar and restaurant and it is reached by a lift.

At the huge duty-free shop at Keflavik airport I got some much better bargains than I've found at many other places abroad, but perhaps I'd better keep quiet about that.



A Slice of History:

The Yorkshire Climbers
Mountaineering Club.

Bill Todd

When Ron Hirst was active in the Y.M.C. thirty odd years ago he told me proudly "I was in the proper Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, Bill, I'll show you some of our old dinner menus." And sure enough next time Joan and I visited his house at Buckley Avenue he showed us a menu for the Yorkshire Climbers Mountaineering Club Annual Dinner at Horton in Ribblesdale in the late forties, What he didn't mention was that Agnes, his wife, had baked a cake which was enjoyed by all the members as part of the festivities.

This last piece of information I have gleaned from a YCMC. Meets Report Book which has been sent up by former member from Ransley of:-

Westcott, Orchard Gate, Esher,
Surrey, KT10 8HY.

With the book, an imposing 262 page hard back "Minute Book", was a few old letters and papers which are most interesting.

These include.-

- (i) list of officers and syllabus (horrible word) for 1942
- (ii) Undated letter from Charles to Donald with list of 24 members
- (iii) Letter from Mr. Kilbum of the Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale offering dinner at five shillings (25p) plus two shillings (10p) per head.
- (iv) Letter from Leeds University Mountaineering Club dated 8 Dec 1948, accepting an invitation to send two guests to the YCMC Dinner and signed by John Ball, almost certainly

the same John Ball who was last man on the N.W. Girdle of Almscliffe.

(v) Five letters from people interested in joining.

The quantity of information yielded by the Meet Reports Book is not consistent with its weight. There are less than twenty meets fully reported. I find it hard to believe that these were the only meets that took place between the 23 March 1946 and the 3rd June 1950. Perhaps there was a failure of communication between meet leaders. I would hesitate to suggest that, like a well known club at the present day, half the members couldn't read and the other half couldn't write. Certainly some of the meets on the 1947 programme are not mentioned in the meet reports book.

But it does contain some gems, The first entry gives details of two new routes at Hebden Gill led by Ron Hirst and J. Greaves respectively. These have been lost in the mists of time and are not even mentioned in Brian Evans' 1957 Gtistone Guide. I expect they have been renamed and claimed by a subsequent ascensionist.

Quite a lot of the meet reports describe pot-holing. Ginglyng Hole and Hardrawkin Hole feature in 1947, Sell Gill and Disappointment Pot in 1948. Meets were held at Coniston, Ogwen, Skye and Glencoe. The Glencoe meet was at Christmas 1947 two of the meet members staying on for Hogmanay. Two magnificent days relieved the general bad weather and members grabbed Bidean and Aonach Eagach.

One of the most successful meets was the January 1947 walking meet where the leader, P.B. Thomson had circularised members and booked

accommodation at Malham Youth Hostel. The walk went over Fountains Fell and via Dambrook House to Grassington to catch the bus home. No cars and vans in those days, not even motor bikes. Youth Hostels insisted on travel by 'own energy'.

The last entry in the meet reports book is for 3rd June 1950 and the meet is described as the 'first meet of the now re-formed YCMC' Perhaps the club suffered a temporary demise, hence the fact that there are no meets recorded in 1949, an exceptionally good summer incidentally. Something similar happened with the Rock and Ice I seem to remember. It would appear however, that the reformed YCMC. did not rise from the ashes like the R&I because I can find no entry after this June 1950 meet.

Of course, there was National Service in those days, at least one meet was ruined because the leader, P. Thomson again, was called up. The people I have talked to seem to think the YCMC. just faded away. Many came back from National Service and joined other clubs or no clubs at all. A pity perhaps but our own club has lasted over those crucial years and we should be grateful to those whose efforts kept it going.

Please accept my apologies for any bricks I may have dropped and I would be most grateful for any additional information.

Appendices:

1. Climbs done on Hebden Gill Crag. 23/3/46
2. Summary of Meet Reports Book.
3. List of members, number of times their names appear in the book and what I know about their present whereabouts.
4. Officers and Programme for 1947.

Appendix 1

Extract from Meet Report of the Hebden Gill Crag meet on 23 March 1946.

New Routes Climbed.

"Friction" 60' V.S.

1.22' A slab is climbed for 10' on meagre holds followed by a fine balance move onto a large ledge. Slight traverse to left and the rest is climbed on two footholds. Belay round large jammed block.

2. The crack is climbed to the summit of the falling/filling? block. Belay round tree.

3. Semi layback to the bottom of overhang which is climbed direct. Very strenuous. First ascent R. Hirst.

"Jerry Wall" 80' V.DifJ

1.55' The wall opposite Jerry & Ben's to large tree belay.

2.25' Direct climb up the wall and traverse right for 10'. Awkward move to the end of the overhang. Belay round tree at top.

J. Greaves led Messrs Shaw and Hirst up this one.

Appendix 2.

List of members & number of appearances in meet reports:

H.Almond (1), M.Barmforth (nil), I.Bloor (12), H.Drasdo (2), D.Fowbert (1), D.Gibbons (1), L.Gibson (1), I.Greaves (4), I.S.Harris (nil), I.Hartley (2), Agnes Hirst (1), Ron Hirst (4), G.Hocken (nil), D.Hopkin (16), Miss I.Batt (1), I.Jenkin (1), C.Kay (8), G.Kay (4), D.Kaye (nil), A Lewis (1), R.Long (nil), K.Meekley (nil), D.Morrell (7), M.Morrell (5), N.Morrell (1), N.Newman (4), A.Parker (8), F.Poulter (1), T.Ransley (6), K.Reid (2), C.Rhodes (3), M.Robinson (1), A.Savage (nil), H.C.Shaw (1), D.Speak (3), P.B.Thomson (4), M.Turner (3), I.Wheeler (2), D.Williams (1), G.F.Williams (1).

Of the above Agnes Hirst, Dick Fowbert and Jack Bloor are sadly no longer with us. As far as I know Ron Hirst is still going strong working three days a week at 78 years; Charles Rhodes is still wardening the BMC Hut in Skye.. Neville Newman was at the YRC dinner last week. I was talking to Harold Drasdo recently, members may remember Neville Drasdo who is working at Cardiff now.

Appendix 3

Summary of Meet Reports Book

date	venue, leader, number
23.3.46	Hebden Crag, 1. Greaves, 11
6.4.46	Novices Meet, ,, ..
20.4.46	Novices Meet, -, ..
4.5.46	Novices Meet, ,, ..
19.5.46	Widdop, C. Rhodes, 9
2.6.46	Novices Meet, ,, --
9.46	Douk Cave, D. Hopkin, 6
Christmas '46	Coniston Youth Hostel.>, 6
5.1.47	Fountains Fell, P.B. Thomson, 12 plus
19.1.47	Novices Meet, ,, ..
Whit. 47	Idwal Cottage YH., ,, 5
29.6.47	Gingling Hole, Fontains, D. Hopkin,6
5.10.47	Hardrawkin Hole, Chapel le Dale, Mrs. Morrell, 10 plus
20.11.47	Golden Lion.Horton, Annual Dinner) 1
Christmas '47	Glencoe YR., ,, 6
4.1.48	Almscliffe Crag, N. Newman, 12
8.2.48	Simons Seat, D. Hopkin, 9
7.3.48	Kinderscout, G.F. Williams, 3
Easter '48	Coniston.v.>
Easter '48	N. Wales, 1. Bloor, 6
18.4.48	Sell Gill, D. Hopkin, 4
2.5.48	Widdop, D. Hopkin, 4
Whit '48	Esk Hause, ,, ..
11.7.48	Disappointment Pot, 1. Bloor, 6
August '48	Glen Brittle, ,, 5
3.6.48	Holmfirth, ,, 6

Appendix 4.

Officers & Syllabus for 1947

President:	G. Hocken Esq. "Moorhouse", Burley Woodhead.
Hon. Secretary:	C. Rhodes Esq. 97 Burley Lodge Terrace.
Hon. Treasurer:	D. Hopkin Esq. 18 Westwood Avenue, Eccleshill
date	meet, accommodation, leader
1947	
2 Mar	Walking, Wood Cottage YR, A. Savage
16 Mar	Walking Novices Halton East,D.Speak
5/7 April	Easter at Langdale, Wall End, -
20 April	Potholing, Novices, Bingley, D.Hopkin
11 May	Climbing.Widdop.Wainstalls YR, D.Hopkin
24-6 May	Whitsuntide Lakes, Arrangements later
15 June	Climbing Novices Ilkley, ,, C. Kay
29 June	Potholing,Ribblesdale,Camp,D.Hopkin
12 July	Climbing.Novices.Almscliffe.-, R.Hirst
27 July	Climbing, Stanage, Camping, D.Hopkin
August	GrindelwaldGlen Brittle, ,, .
30 Aug	Club Gen.Meeting, Burley W'Head YR,
7 Sept	3 Peaks, Walking, Dent YR, K. Meekley
21 Sept	Climbing Novices Ilkley, ,, -
5 Oct	Potholing, Ingleton Hardrawkin, ,, Mrs. M. Morrell
19 Oct	Novices Laddow, Walking /Climbing, Wood Cottage YR,C.Kay
2 Nov	Walking Pateley,Hole Bottom YR,L.Gibson
25 Dec	Xmas, Borrowdale, -
1948	
4 Jan	A.G.M., Burley Woodhead,·
18 Jan	Walking, Jerusalem YR, D. Speak



Lyngen

Book Reviews by Bill Todd

Walking More Ridges of Lakeland

Bob Alien with Peter Linney

Michael Joseph Ltd., London, pp 192 HE £17.99

Here is another well written and informative book on Lakeland from Bob Alien's pen and camera. Diagrammatic maps, like spider's webs, and route cards are contributed by Peter Linney, author of 'The Official Wainwright Gazetteer.' It covers the fells dealt with in Wainwright's Guides 4-7 i.e. those west of a line through Mungrisedale via Borrowdale to Coniston.

Looking at my copy of Bob Alien's 'On High Lakeland Fells' I see that it was published in 1987 and reprinted in 1988 at £10.95. Surely inflation since 1988 has not been 63%. Is this massive price hike because we are back in the Wainwright industry?

Having said that it is a well produced book with lots of good ideas for walks and up to date information as to their feasibility. I was interested to learn that the West Wall Traverse route into Deep Gill, Scafell is not recommended. I have been wondering for a year or two whether my misgivings over something I made light of 40 ago were proof of cowardice or prudence. On the other hand Mr. Alien's description of the Gascale Gill horizon walk has filled me with enthusiasm to do it at the next opportunity,

The photographs are just about as good as we have come to expect from this author, particularly those of Mirk Cove and the Great Slab of Bow Fell. It is only carping to suggest that they do not overall reach the uniformly excellent standard set by 'On High Lakeland Fells'.

A very acceptable present or a good buy if you can get over the price,

Discovery Walks in the Yorkshire Dales: The Southern Dales.

David Johnson

Sigma Leisure, Wilmslow, pp 200 £6.95

There were only five of us at the usual meeting place, Ashley and Audrey, Jim and Joy and me. When the question of where to go came up I said 'I've got a little book called 'Discovery Walks in the Yorkshire Dales'. We can park free at Street Gate and this book describes an interesting looking walk we can do from there with lots of things to see.'

Unfortunately when we got to Street Gate and began booting up it started raining in no uncertain manner, blown on a strong south west wind. So to save getting the book wet I didn't study it properly but just glanced at the map on page 55 and led the party up the track straight -to the tarn instead of the one going to Middle House. When we realised this mistake we made another one and missed Tarn Foot coming directly back to the ice cream place. Yes, I know I should have had the book in a plastic bag but it had been lovely weather at breakfast time and I didn't know my suggestion would be accepted.

Things improved from then on. We got on the bridle-way that goes to Langscar Gate and found the Iron Age homesteads and enclosure by Locks Scar. A bit further on at Dean Scar we got a lesson in botany centred on a limestone boulder then the remains of a Middle Bronze Age hut circle, a thousand years older than the previous one.

We lunched while enjoying the view down Watlowes, this is the dry valley going down to Malham Cove. The rain had stopped by now and the walk back north to Water Sinks was not unpleasant. Here we turned sharp right over a stile and after crossing

the Pennine Way the points of interest came thick and fast. First was another Iron Age settlement bigger than the first one then, following the compass bearing in the book we jumped three thousand years to two Norse farmsteads.

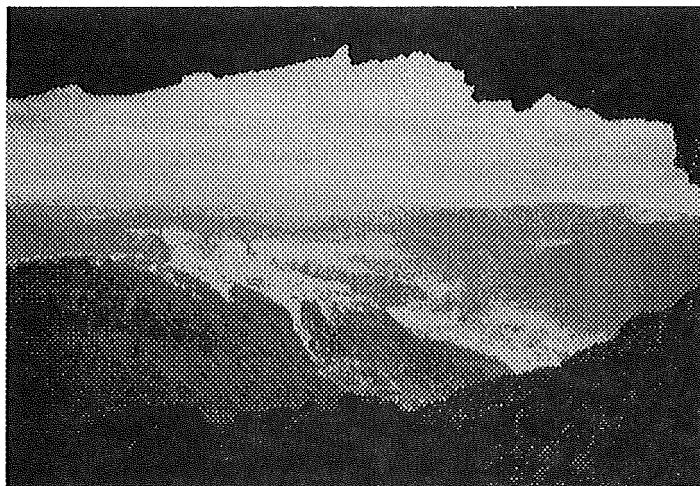
Some of the party had been walking the Dales for a lifetime but still hadn't known about these remains so they reckoned Bill's idea had been a good one. One member said 'What a good idea to give a wet day walk a bit of interest,' another 'What an interesting thing to research on a fine hot day.' You takes your choice.

The last thing we saw was a monastic sheet house at Prior Rakes. The book gives both a plan and a reconstruction by Dr. Raistrick of this medieval site. This enabled us to trace the outlines onto the ground with little difficulty.

With our newly acquired archaeological insight we noticed several more ancient huts and enclosures as we made our way back to the road considerably wiser for a day's discovery walking.

This book is simply a mine of information about the countryside we all love and is well worth the modest price asked.

Dove Cave photographed by Derek Smithson



Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk.

Photographs by Deny Brabbs.

Michael Joseph Ltd., Revised Edition
1996, pp 204, Soft Back £13.99

Readers of the 'Yorkshire Rambler' will have no doubt as to my opinion of A. Wainwright. He was in my view a self opinionated old curmudgeon only redeemed by a talent for drawing and a love of high places.

And it must again be said that the photographs here are absolutely breathtaking; I particularly enjoyed looking at the ones of Great Gable, Striding Edge, Measand Force and Falling Foss. Mr. Brabbs has this time avoided the undue prevalence of greenness which I remarked on in an earlier review.

I have not done the Coast to Coast but the book called up many happy memories of places I have been to which lie along it. We visited Surrender Bridge on a recent meet and further up Swaledale there is Swinner Gill which we had a look at in 1993? I have only sketchy knowledge of the start and finish points. I visited St. Bees with my late wife in 1984 on an off day from a holiday near Buttermere, we chatted with some successful east to west coast to coasters. The only time I have been to Robin Hood's Bay was to lead a walk from there by our local rambling club. Both places are done more than justice to by this book.

The North York Moors are perhaps unjustly neglected. The excellent pictures, both photos and drawing of Wainstones called to mind a recent walk round that way. Someone asked me if I

had ever climbed there. 'Yes' was the reply 'in 1956'. Good heavens that's forty years ago, using our own Maurice Wilson's guide book. This got me to thinking about the chaps I was with that day and was delighted to realise that of the four of them I am still in touch with three and have in fact seen them in the last year. It is truly said that a friendship which is tied with a climbing rope is one that lasts.

The other function of a guide book is of course to arouse interest in places the reader may not have heard of. In spite of having been edited down since the first edition which has resulted in a lack of detail, Mr. Wainwright has made me keen on visiting the ancient settlement at Castle Folds near Orton in Westmorland, sorry Cumbria. Mind you he climbed two walls on his original visit and seems aggrieved that the farmer showed resentment. This edition makes it clear that the farmer's permission must be obtained but doesn't say which farm to apply to.

Even in this posthumous edition we get evidence of the author's dislike of motor cars and their users. A scornful reference to motorists wishing to exercise their 'atrophied legs' on page 158 is followed on page 165 by the suggestion that readers beg a lift from Clay Bank Top to the nearest shop. Motor cars are a bad thing except when they are canying me or my readers.

Still, like non union-labour, motor-car hypocrites are an essential part of a free and diverse society and I can sincerely recommend this book to any member who is interested in the walk or in exploring some of the country along it.



Best Pub Walks in and Around Leeds

Colin Speakman

Sigma Leisure pp 136 £6.95

When it's late November and the cloud is low it seems a waste of time to drive up to the Dales for a walk. What better therefore, than to leave your car at home and catch a bus for one of Colin Speakman's linear walks. There are twenty described in this book ranging from two to nine miles in length but mainly around five; they are described as 'half-day' in the preface but some of them have so much of interest to see that you will want more than a day to cover four or five miles.

While the title mentions Leeds there are walks described at Otley, Morley, Micklefield and Wetherby. But the core of the book and what I found absorbing is Leeds itself with its long arms of green stretching tight from the centre to the open country. There are also some wonderful buildings which most of us haven't time to notice when we drive into town for business.

Juliet and I did the walk in from Kirkstall on a bad snowy day but the beauty of the canal side trees made it all worthwhile not to mention a very good lunch at the Prince of Wales pub. The first walk in the book is short in miles but long in interest. As they say in Cumberland '*Good stuff laps up in lile bunn'les*', Incidentally, we were too late for lunch at the 'Grove' at 2.15 pm although the notice 'Food Serving Now' was on display. Perhaps I should also mention that the 'Fox and Newt' has temporarily suspended its brewing operation pending re-equipment.

All the walks are planned to be done using public transport and the book would make an ideal present for anyone who likes a walk and is interested in things to see.

Why on earth do we do it?
*'The Undiscovered Country,
The Reason We Climb.'*

Phi! Bartlett,
The Ernest Press, pp18, HJB £15.95

My elder daughter told me recently that she had no idea why anybody could possibly enjoy climbing mountains. This in spite of the fact that she had, a few years before, insisted on her husband going with her over the Langdale Pikes; probably to illustrate her dreadful childhood.

Gallons of ink have been spilt trying to explain why we climb, probably there are as many reasons as there are climbers, but the nub of the matter is expressed in one of the chapter headings of W. Kenneth Richmond's *'Climber's Testament'*. Somewhere in the middle of the book a chapter headed 'Sport or Religion?' gives the author's ideas which as I remember, are somewhere middle of the road, giving equal emphasis to both aspects. Better known authorities have emphasised one aspect. Was it not Leslie Stephen who said "The Alps are my religion"? There is also the probably apocryphal story of a member of a senior Manchester Club, not a churchgoer, who entered RC. as his religion on joining the forces.

On the other hand in *'Let's Go Climbing'* C.F. Kirkus points out that even without its poetic aspect, climbing can hold its own with the ball games which the general public know as 'Sport'. "Instead of human opponents you fight against the natural difficulties of the rocks, instead of playing another team you do a different climb and instead of playing a return match you do the same climb under different weather conditions".

Mr. Barlett has climbed since boyhood, like this reviewer, he was lucky enough to climb with the late Jim Cameron. He has also been to the

Alps, the Arctic and the Hirmalaya. He has read widely and thought deeply so that the reader feels the continuity between Logstaff's and Tillmans expeditions and his own.

Most of the great names of mountaineering are mentioned' and some of their ideas discussed in the course of the book. Also a great name of anti-mountaineering, one John Ruskin whose strictures re 'soaped poles' and 'screams of delight' are quoted under his picture on page 31.

The chapters deal in turn with aspects of our sport, exploration, living dangerously but gloriously, simple life, religion and nationalism. The photographs are excellent, many have not appeared before and the author's captions go far beyond the usual 'Me on the top' simplicity. The picture of Sir Christian has a comment on Brian Blessed's *'The Turquoise Mountain'* which warms my heart. The picture of F.W. Bourdillon on the Matterhorn also tells us that he wrote the famous line "Night has a thousand eyes." The scenic pictures include the gentleman's side of Girmmer, I was looking at it last week, Coruisk as well as the author below Kunyang Kish.

There are very many ideas discussed. My own clearest impression after one reading is the comforting one that it does not matter if you are not the best climber and don't climb the biggest mountains. You can still benefit fully from the mountain experience without being a Brown or a Bonnington. To return to Kenneth Richmond's book mentioned above 'The old lady who toddles up Orrest Head may have something which eludes the conqueror of the Karakorurn'.

Read this book, it is the '90s equivalent of, and in every way fit to stand alongside Frank Smythe's classic *'Spirit of the Hills'*.

'Snowdonia Rocky Rambles.

Geology Beneath Your Feet'.

Bryan Lynas.

Sigma Leisure. pp 273 *PIB* £9.95

Like its predecessor, 'Lakeland Rocky Rambles', this book is an absolute mine of information. It is a useful walking guide and unique in the way Mr. Lynas explains the formation of the planet and how events millions of years ago left their imprint on things we can see today.

It is difficult to avoid being swept up by the author's enthusiasm for this subject and as in the Lakeland book he does not restrict himself to geology, but points out some of the most interesting plants to be seen, like the insect eating sundew and the stinkhorn fungus (*phallus impudicus*). There is a very lucid timescale with a guide to its use in appendix one and a bibliography in appendix 2. There is a glossary of technical terms and a list of Welsh topographical words with their English equivalents.

Ten rambles are described and from my experience of the country covered they are all well worth doing provided, of course, that you are able to 'pick a good day' where the author says. Chapter 1 describes a walk in the Rhinogs and Cader Idris is covered in Chapter 6, the rest of the book is nearer the actual Snowdon massif. Most of the illustrations are black and white photographs taken by the author. Where necessary writing on the pictures tells you what to look for e.g. 'bedding plane' and 'funny hat'. A lot of the photographs include Mrs. Lynas; dare I suggest that a lot of her husband's drawings in the Lakeland book didn't show her full beauty? He does admit this in the Lakeland book but to change over to photos seems a drastic way of making amends. Be that as it may the book is better served by photographs. With them there is

less doubt that you are looking at the same bit of rock that the author is describing.

Mr. Lynas is a great mountain lover. He camped near Yr Wyddfa one night during the preparation of the book and dawn saw him on top to see the sunrise. In a whimsical moment he admits to thanking the mountain for having him. I think that is absolutely marvellous and connects up well with some of the points discussed in '*The Undiscovered Country*', While not professing formal religion Mr. Lynas is clearly fascinated and awed by the story of our wonderful planet and is very good at communicating his own joy to his readers.

One thing though, as I warned last time, don't **think** you are going to do any of these walks in quick time. There is so much of interest pointed out that you may well find yourself 70% through the time available and 30% through the walk. But do the walks anyway you couldn't have a better guide and I am eagerly awaiting his book on the Yorkshire Dales.

The Craven Pothole Club Record

No.45

January 1997

Yet another bundle of interesting and sometimes thrilling tales of adventure underground and contretemps above it. I am sorry for the poor people who camped at Brothers Water last September and got washed out. Last time I saw Dick Espiner, who has been installed as President, we were both camping in Duddon valley but on different sites. Reminiscences from 1947 brought back memories and quotes from our own 1947 Journal are featured. That must have been one of the last links with the club's infancy with obituaries of Martel, Brodrick, Lowe, Parsons and Puttrell.

The Craven Pothole Club Record

No. 44 October 1996

Here is another quarters worth of adventure above and below ground from the Craven Pothole Club. Above ground includes Crianlarich and North Wales, where they got wet like we mountaineers do. Topics include an interesting article on Mountain Tables', as well as Monros there are apparently Donalds, Corbetts and MacLeods.

The Gaping Gill meet is fully covered, it is good to know there are still new passages being discovered.

The abroad activities include a fascinating article by Nigel Graham on the Meet in Norway. May I quote *'The top 50ft into the gorge looked impossible from above (how often have we all faced that?) so the Bear's Cleft is was. It started decently, steep but steadily ... then ... a fantastic ruckle of angular granite boulders ..'*

They really live in the C.P.C. but they are not too hot on Theology. Page 39 claims that Zeus was supposed to have been bom in a cave on Mount Ida. I always thought he had been bom in Dycti Cave by the Lassithi Plateau, at least that's what we were told when my late wife and I went there ten years ago.

Altogether a jolly good read now in the Club Library for your enjoyment.

Editor's Note: I believe that there are various myths relating to the birth of Zeus.: this is one I came across. By the birth of Zeus, his Titan mother, Rhea, had 'wised up' to his father Cronus' habit of swallowing his children lest they grow and dethrone him and developed a ploy to preserve Zeus. It had though taken the loss of Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Demeter, and, finally, Hera for Rhea to reach this point. She fobbed off Cronus with a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes while hiding Zeus in Bill's Dycti Cave, Crete, to be reared by nymphs. Zeus, when grown forced Cronus to disgorge his, Zeus's, siblings, who were predictably annoyed and sought revenge. Dysfunctional families are not new.

Review by Michael Smith

Journeys into the Unknown:

An illustrated lecture on Expeditions to the Himalayas, Tibet and the Arctic. March 1997

by Professor Keith Miller

This event being the part of the University of Sheffield's contribution to the fourth National Science Week there were many references to the technological aspects of the work carried out on his twenty or so expeditions. Miller's thesis was that for success an expedition must achieve harmony between it's members, finances, purposes and the culture and environments in which it operates while still being able to cope with unpredictable emotions and politics.

If that sounds academic then the delivery was not with his warmth and sincerity obvious in each anecdote. Starting with a slide of climbing a steep buttress in the Lake District at a time when some of our members knew him we were treated to snapshots from the expeditions. With alpine guides arrogantly removing one of his belays on the Matterhorn, sabotage and a 20km roped walk-out to escape a white-out on Iceland's Vatnajokull while searching for volcanic hot-spots under the ice, glacier snouts bursting to release destructive floods in the Karakoram, earthquake-proofing buildings and the similarities between the cracks in failing turbine blades and crevasses there plenty to think about.

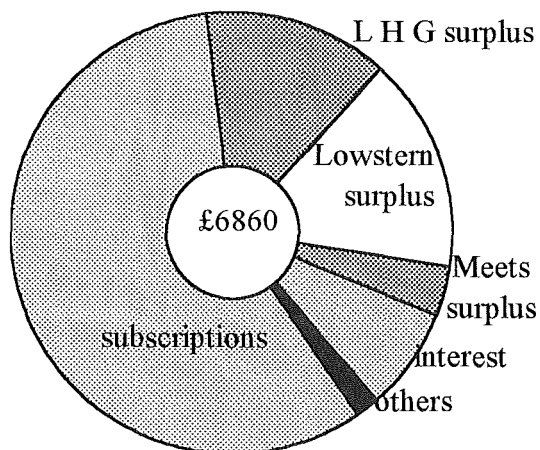
Miller, branded a CIA agent and later a communist spy, had his camp buzzed by both US and USSR war planes when his powerful radar equipment, used for measuring the thickness of glacial ice, started transmitting.

The audience of several hundred, aged from five to around eighty-five, appreciated this RGS gold medallist sharing some of his many experiences.

Ins & outs of our Club finances

a look at the Club's income and expenditure for last year as presented to the last AGM by our Treasurer, Alan Kay

Where does it all come from?

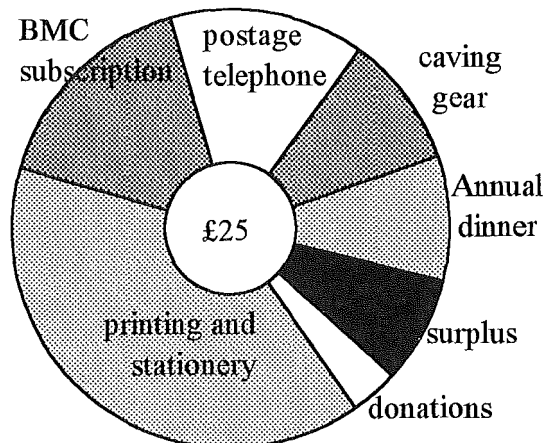


The surplus from Lowstem and most of that from L H G was used to purchase and install electrical heaters at Lowstem. Our Treasurer reminded us that a L H G rent review is due in 1997, there are plans to extend Lowstem and rates, insurance, etc. are bound to rise.

So apparently small items such as interest and meets surpluses are vital in balancing the books.

Where does your £25 go?

(assuming you pay the full £25 subscription that is)

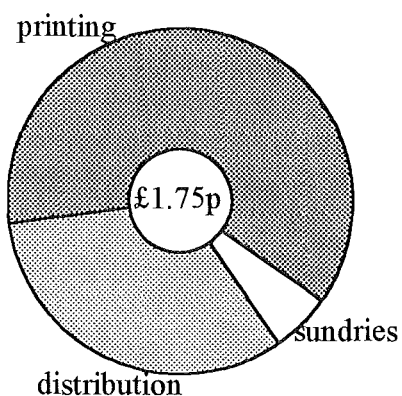


Are we in a healthy financial position?

"It all depends on what you mean by healthy. There is no need though to put up the subscriptions just yet."

Alan Kay has served as Treasurer for six years and feels that it is time to step down at the next AGM - are there any offers from other members to take on this role?

...and the cost of producing the Yorkshire Rambler?



Since the cost of producing anyone issue varies depending on such factors as the number of pages and whether the stock of envelopes ran out these costs are based on an average over four issues. The cost of binding extra copies for kindred club libraries has been spread between members.

This page has cost you 3p. It varies between issues from 2½ to 3½p. The printing costs £1.10 per copy, distribution 55p, stationery and sundries 10p; making the cost to you of a typical issue £1.75p. To increase the 'value for money' simply submit a more interesting piece or two yourself!

Chippings

At the 104th AGM last November Derek Bush's report was heard by several fewer members than anticipated as the change of date caught out five potential attendees, including the President Elect, who were planning to be there the following weekend. As it turned out the new date secured the better weather. Reports on the huts included a request from Alan Kay for members to make concise, complete and accurate entries in the hut books. David Smith reported that there was no charge for electricity at Low Hall Garth as there is now no meter. Mike Godden informed Lowstern users that the newly installed electrical heaters cured the condensation problem provided that the extractor fans are on when showering.

Our representatives on the BMC Area Committees, Ken Aldred, Bill Todd and Gordon Humphreys reported on opposition to a funicular on Cairngorm to replace the chairlift (no rucksacks allowed!), a BMC Internet web site and Ken Wilson's bid to the Millennium Fund for support for a Mountaineering Museum. In connection with the last was an appeal for donations of ancient equipment. Access and anchor points appeared to take up almost all the Lakes committee's time. The York's & Humberside committee asked Cayley Crag users not to do U-turns on the narrow main road. And finally, the Council of Europe has now dropped their plans to ban climbing.

The Rev Jim Rusher had, to use his own description, cobbled together for the Dinner a special Grace which drew favourable comments.

God bless our club,
God guide its ways.
May we enjoy
The meal this day.
So always may there ever be,
A strong and talented Y.R.C.

Dr Stephen A. Craven adds a post script to references to the Leeds Savage Club (see Bulletins 3 and 4) confirming Jeff Hooper's suspicion that this was a dining club founded by the romantic topographer, Edmund Bogg and loosely modelled on the North American Indian tribal system. Bogg was the 'Chief, the secretary the 'Scribe', committee members 'Braves' and ordinary members were 'Savages'. In reply to an enquiry as to how he came to research the early history of caving and the YRC, Dr Craven has been brave enough to reveal the truth, He had just qualified 25 years ago and enjoyed the quietest house job in the Leeds General Infirmary. Despite having little to do he had to be around in case something went wrong so he spent long hours, on call, in the YRC room in the Leeds Reference Library and reading the newspaper collections. Thankfully the Infirmary telephonists were very good and if the unsuspecting boss telephoned they would divert the call to the Library for Stephen to give a prompt reply.

Bernard Nelstrop has noticed significant omissions from the list of caving and potholing activity in the last issue (Bulletin number 6, pages 35-42) due to the list only including activities in the Craven district. He points out that there were two important meets to Marble Arch caves, Enniskillen, Ireland, where, through a narrow passage a group discovered Pollnagollum, a huge new cave with an underground lake. Also Geoff Gowing and Bernard joined up two entrances to Marble Arch cave by swimming, out of their depth, across a stretch of water. His recollection is that the team also included Fred Booth, Harold Booth, Stanley Marsden, John Godley and possibly others.

Perhaps someone will offer to compile a list of overseas caving achievements.

The walk from LHG round Lingmoor Fell is usually done in wet weather - it is worth an afternoon in better times. Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, Kestrel, Green Woodpecker and either Mink or Polecat are among the residents.

Alan Linford passes on a few tips for anyone planning a trip to Ireland. Kerry Mountaineering Club can be contacted on 06661127.

The ferry to Skeelaig is no more but phone Seanie Murphy on 06676214, the day before a crossing is required, for use of the local boat.

The Ordnance Survey of Ireland, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8, produce a 1:50,000 Discovery Series of maps printed on highly absorbent paper.

When you read the meet reports and find the one dated 1995 do not think it is a typographical error. The text of the report has been lost in the complexities of the Club's systems over the intervening years. My apologies to Arthur Craven for the delay.

The Killamey Tourist Guide to the tourist route up Carrantuohill (1039m) in McGilly cuddy Reeks says 'it is extremely easy to loose direction on the top. If you lose your way do not move until the weather has cleared'. This could be days! There is a 20ft cross on the summit presumably for commemoration to the missing.

Derek Collins writes... 'I always try to solo one particular route every year just to check my powers are not failing too much. Like many climbs the first part is steep and unforgiving, but taken slowly watching the rock and concentrating, it always succumbs. There is a slight easing for a few yards and then the long gradually steepening middle section. This bit always worries me as there is no escape. The last few moves over steep ground bring one to the ridge proper, but there is no relief. At this point the route swings right and steepens again. About here I start thinking about other sports, but it is not far. Concentrate, dig deep and choose your route with care! I know I have energy for only one attempt. Up to now it has always worked and it is with a real sense of satisfaction that I can sit back in the saddle and move up through the gears. Birdy Brow conquered yet again!'

Club Proceedings

The following summaries of the Club proceedings bring these records up to date and continue from their predecessors in the YRC Journals.

1992: The meets were: January 1, Gaping Gill; January 10-12, North Wales; 1-3 February, Low Hall Galih; 21-23 February, Glen Nevis; 13-15 March, Birkness; 3-5 April, Lowstern, Rowton Pot in 1892 dress; 17-21 April, Lowstern, Yorkshire 2000's; 1-3 May, Ladies' Weekend, Thorpe, Dovedale, Derbyshire; 22-30 May, Skye; 19-21 June, Long Walk, Wasdale Skyline; 19 July-15 August, Norsk Project; 4-6 September, Lowstern, Rowton Pot; 18-20 September, R.L.H Langdale; 9-11 October, Southern Highlands; 30 October-1 November, Punchbowl, Swaledale; 4-6 December, Hill Inn; 26 December, Hopper Lane Inn, Centenary of the first meet in 1892; Average attendance 22 (excluding the Dinner, Ladies' Weekend or Hopper Lane).

The 100th Annual General Meeting was held at Randall's Hotel, Skipton, on 21 November 1992. The following officers were elected for the year 1992-93:

President: Dr. G.A. Salmon;
Vice-President: H Robinson;
Hall Secretary: C.D. Bush;
Asst. Secretary: M.I. Kinder;
Hall Treasurer: T.A. Kay;
Hall Editor: M. Smith;
Hall Librarian: R Harben;
Hall Auditor: D. Laughton;
Hall Huts Secretary: D.M.Martindale;
Hut Wardens, LHG: F.D. Smith,
Lowstern: F. Godden,
Committee: P.A. Elliot, F.M. Godden,
HA.Lomas, HM.Papworth, F.D. Smith

The 79th Annual Dinner, The Centenary Dinner, followed at the same hotel. The retiring President, D.A. Smithson, was in the chair. The Principal Guest was the Lord Chorley of Kendal. Kindred Clubs were represented by their Presidents, Lt. Colonel (Rtd) HRA. Streater OBE, Alpine Club; I.W. Clarke, Bradford Pothole Club; Jancis Alison, Climbers Club; A. Smith, Craven Pothole Club; Professor Finlay Swinton, Grampian Club; P.W. Green, Gritstone Club; M. Shaw, Midland Association of Mountaineers; .B. Rhodes, Rucksack Club; I.H.M. Smart, Scottish Mountaineering Club; B.T. Cook, Wayfarers Club; Jill Aldersley Past Vice-President Fell & Rock Climbing Club; Jan Schwarzzott, P.A. Lovdahl & R Valsvik, Ardal Turlag of Norway. The attendance was 162. The after-dinner meet was held at Lowstern where there was a display of old slides and pictures at the hut and followed by high tea.

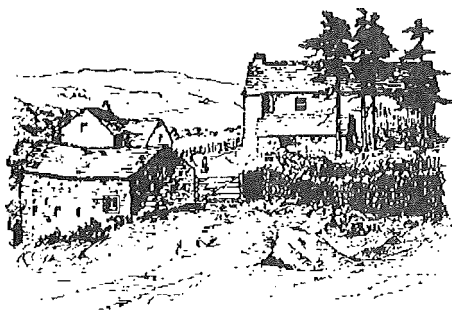
1993: The meets were: 8-10 January, Lowstern, Alum Pot/Long Churn; 29-31 January, Low Hall Garth; 19-21 February, Llanberis; 18 February-3 March, Colorado, U.S.A., Skiing; 12-15 March, Achintee, Glen Nevis and Kingshouse, Glen Coe; 20-27 March, Le Tour, Chamonix, Skiing; 2-4 April, Lowstern, Lancaster Hole to Easegill; 23-25 April, Kirkby Lonsdale, Ladies' Weekend; 30 April-3 May, Upper Eskdale, Camping Meet; 28 May-5 June, Loch Duich; 21-23 June, Threlkeld, Long Walk, Mungrisedale to Troutbeck; 2-4 July, Nidderdale; 24 July-7 August, Randa; 3-5 September, Hagg Dyke, Wharfedale; 10-12 September, R.L.H. Langdale;

17-19 September, Wasdale; 8-10 October, Wye Valley, Chepstow, Rock Climbing; 29-31 October, Lowstem, Joint Meet with Gritstone Club; 20 November, Annual Dinner, After Dinner Meet, Lowstem; 10-12 December, Blencathra.

The 101st Annual General Meeting held at Randall's Hotel, Skipton, on 20 November. The following officers were elected for the year 1993-94:

President Dr. GA. Sahnnon;
President Elect: C.D. Bush;
Vice-President: K. Aldred;
Hon. Secretary: IA. Schofield;
Hon. Asst. Secretary: M.I Kinder;
Hon. Treasurer: T.A. Kay;
Hon. Editor: M. Smith;
Hon. Librarian/Archivist: R Harben;
Hon. Auditor: D. Laughton;
Huts Secretary D.M. Martindale;
Hut Wardens: LHG, F.D. Smith,
 Lowstem, GR Sahnnon;
Committee: LF.D. Gilmour, D. Hall,
 HA. Lomas, I Riley, F.D. Smith.

The 80th Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel, the President, Dr. GA. Sahnnon was in the chair. The Principal guest was Robert Petigrew. Kindred Clubs were represented by Presidents, M.H Westmacott, Alpine Club; M. Jackson, Craven Pothole Club; D.W. Bateman, Gritstone Club and by M. Vallance, Climbers Club; R. High, Midland Association of Mountaineers; W. Cooper, Rucksack Club; R.H Jacobs, Wayfarers Club.



1994: The meets were 7-9 Jan., Lowstem; 28-30 Jan., LHG; 18-20 Feb., Glen Etive; 11-13 March, Pen Wylt, South Wales, Potholling; 8-10 April, Ladies' Weekend, Broughton-in-Furness; 6-8 May, North Wales; 28 May-4 June, Ardgour; 24-26 June, Long Walk, Northem 2500's; 8-10 July, Hathersage, 23 July-6 August, Bemese Oberland; 26-28 August, Lowstem; 16-18 September, RL.H Langdale; 7-9 October, Brosigran, Cornwall; 28-30 Oct., Hubberhohne; 19 November, Annual Dinner; 20 November, After Dinner Meet, Lowstem; 9-11 December, Station Inn, Ribbleshead.

The 102nd Annual General Meeting was held at Randall's Hotel, Skipton on 19 November. The following officers were elected for the year 1994/95:

President: C.D. Bush; *Vice-President:* K. Aldred; *Hon. Secretary:* IA. Schofield; *Hon. Asst. Secretary:* M.I Kinder; *Hon. Treasurer:* T.A. Kay; *Hon. Editor:* M. Smith; *Hon. Librarian/Archivist:* R Harben; *Hon. Auditor:* D. Laughton; *Huts Secretary:* D.M. Martindale; *Hut Wardens:* LHG, F.D. Smith,
 Lowstem: GR. Sahnnon,
Committee: LF.D. Gilmour D. Hall,
 HA.Lomas, G.R.Sahnnon, F.D. Smith.

The 81st Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President Dr. G.A. Sahnnon was in the chair. The Principal Guest was John Cleare. Kindred Clubs were represented by Presidents, M.Hartland, Bradford Pothole Club; H.Jacob, Wayfarers Club and by I Curran, Alpine Club; G Workman, Craven Pothole Club; P.O'Neill, Fell & Rock Climbing Club; C. Duckworth, Gritstone Club; G'Adshead, Rucksack Club; R.Campbell, SMC. The After Dinner Meet was at Lowstem.

1995: The meets were 20-22 January, Plas-y-Celyn, NOlth Wales; 16-19 February, Kinlochleven; 10-12 March, Lowstem; 31 March-1 April, Eskdale; 22-29 April, Mallorca; 12-14 May, Llanberis; 27 May-3 June, Long Walk, Southem Uplands; 23 July-5 August, Picos de Europa; 18-20 August, Lowstem; 1-3 September, Ladies' Weekend, Holmfirth; 15-17 September, RL.H. Langdale; 29 September-1 October, Crianlarich; Midweek Meet, Low Hall Garth; 27-29 October, Low Row, Swaledale; 18 November, Annual Dinner; 19 November, After Dinner Meet, Buckden; 8-10 December, Blencathra.

The 103rd Annual General Meeting was held at Randall's Hotel, Skipton on 18 November. The following officers were elected for the year 1995/96.

President: C.D. Bush;
President Elect: TW. Josephy;
Vice-President: K. Aldred;
Hon. Secretary: I.A. Schofield;
Hon. Treasurer: TA. Kay;
Hon. Editor: M. Smith;
Hon. Librarian!Archivist: R Harben;
Hon. Auditor: D. Laughton;
Huts Secretary: D.M. Martindale;
Hut Wardens, LHG, F.D.Smith,
 Lowstem, F.M. Godden;
Committee: IF.D. Gilmour, D. Hall,
 HA. Lomas, G.R Salmon.

The 82nd Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President, C.D. Bush was in the chair. The Kindred Clubs were represented by M. Esten, Alpine Club; P. Brookes, Climbers Club; I. Richardson, Rucksack Club; H Jacob, Wayfarers Club; D. Bateman, Gritstone Club; E. Whitaker, Craven Pothole Club; R High, Midland Association of Mountaineers. Attendance 85.

1996: The meets were 5-7 January, Low Hall Garth; 26-28 January, Llanberis; 16-19 February, Glen Etive; 15-17 March, Lowstem; 12-14 April, Joint Meet with Gritstone Club, St. John's Vale; 10-12 May, Gaping Gill, Centenary of First Y.R.C. Meet; 21-23 June, South Wales Fans; 5-7 July, Dove Crag Cave; 2 July-10 August, Alps Meet, Allfroide; 23-25 August, Cwm Eigiau, North Wales; 20-22 September, RL.H Langdale; 11-13 October, Ennerdale; 9 November, Annual Dinner; 10 November, After Dinner Meet, Kirkby Lonsdale.

The 104th Annual General Meeting was held at Whoop Hall Hotel, Kirkby Lonsdale on 9 November.. The following officers were elected for the year 1996/97.

President: TW. Josephy;
Vice-President: IF.D. Gihnour;
Hon. Secretary: RG. Humphreys;
Hon.Meets Secretary: I.H Hooper;
Hon. Treasurer: TA. Kay;
Hon. Editor: M. Smith; *Hon.Librarian!*
Archivist: M.P. Pryor;
Hon. Auditor: D. Laughton;
Huts Secretary: R. Josephy;
Hut Wardens, LHG, F.D.Smith,
 Lowstem, F.M. Godden;
Committee: IF.D. Gihnour, D. Hall,
 HA. Lomas, G.R Salmon.

The 83rd Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The retiring President C.D. Bush was in the chair. The Chief Guest was Bill Mitchel MBE. Kindred Clubs were represented by I. Lovatt, Alpine Club; F. Croll, Bradford Pothole Club; E. Whitaker, Craven Pothole Club; R Precious, Fell & Rock Climbing Club; S. Grace, Gritstone Club; I. Fowler, Scottish Mountaineering Club; K Rigby, Wayfarers Club. Attendance 94.

New Members,
Members' Resignations
and Deaths since
Journal No. 38

New Members

- 1992 Chris J. Joint
Shaun Penney
Peter St.J.Price
- 1993 Stephen Beresford
Richard J. Sealey
WilliamLee
Neil Pomfret
Alister Renton
- 1994 J. Bruce Bensley
Martyn D. Wakeman
Michael Wood
- 1995 Michael N. Haltland
Frank Milner
Mark M. Pryor
- 1996 Nicholas Welsh

Resignations

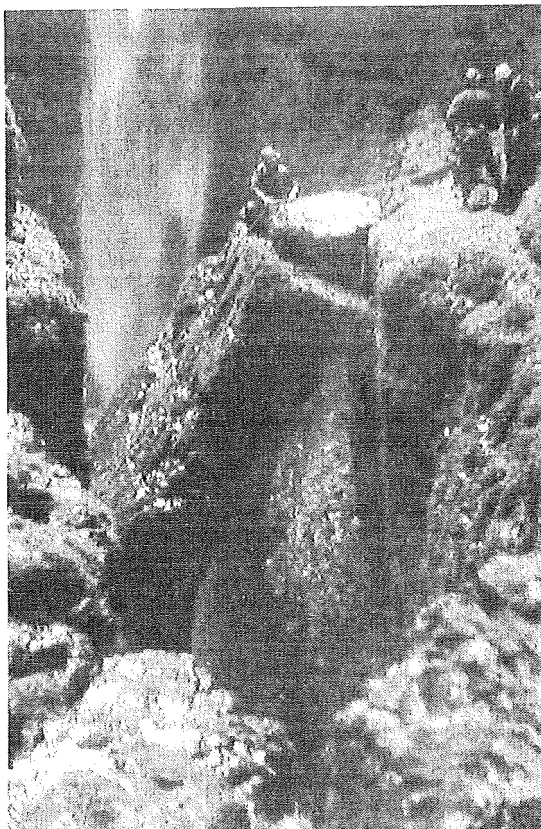
- 1992 Peter Armitage
David W. Dyson
- 1993 Anthony G. Bames
Ian M. D. Potter
- 1994 Geoffrey B. Bates
- 1995 Stephen A. Goulden
Andrew Wells
- 1996 Simon J. Goodwin

Deaths

- 1993 Denis Adams
C. Roger Allen
A. David M. Cox, Hon. Member
Jack B. Devenport
Ralph W. Hobson
Harry Piercy
- 1995 Geoffrey B. Bates
Geoffrey P. A. Scovell
- 1996 E. Clifford Downham
Alton Haltley
- 1997 Peter Swindells
Hany L. Stenbridge



Flanders



Alum Pot

Obituaries

Clifford Downham 1950 - 1996

Cliff who has died at the age of 85, played a major role in the "engine room" of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club as Secretary and as President for two years - 25 years in all between 1954 and 1979 - nearly a quarter of the life of the Club.

Ernest Clifford Downham was born on the 14th October, 1911 in the small village of White Ash, near Oswaldtwistle and educated at Accrington Grammar School. After school he soon became a very good rock climber and tough potholer, and a founder member of the Northern Cavern and Fell Club, a small body of hard potholers which was formed in 1929.

It was in 1934 when an accident, perhaps worse than any previous one, certainly from the rescuers point of view, happened in the final chamber of Gingling Hole on Fountains Fell where a member of the Moor and Fell Club severely fractured a leg. Cliff played a major role in getting the injured man to the surface through extremely difficult pitches and continuously restricted passages, in what must have become an epic rescue. The accident might have had grave results but for the happy chance that an experienced and determined party (none other than the Northern Cavern and Fell Club) was found at the first shot. It was obvious that some action was imperative and so in February 1935 the Cave Rescue Organisation was formed with E. E. Roberts as first chairman and Cliff as its secretary for a time.

Cliff joined the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club in 1950 and quickly made his mark as a competent, hardworking secretary with a friendly nature and a natural concern for others. A modest man, he never sought the limelight and was reluctant to accept the Presidency in 1966. He was elected as an Honorary Member of the Club at the 1968 annual dinner, with acclaim.

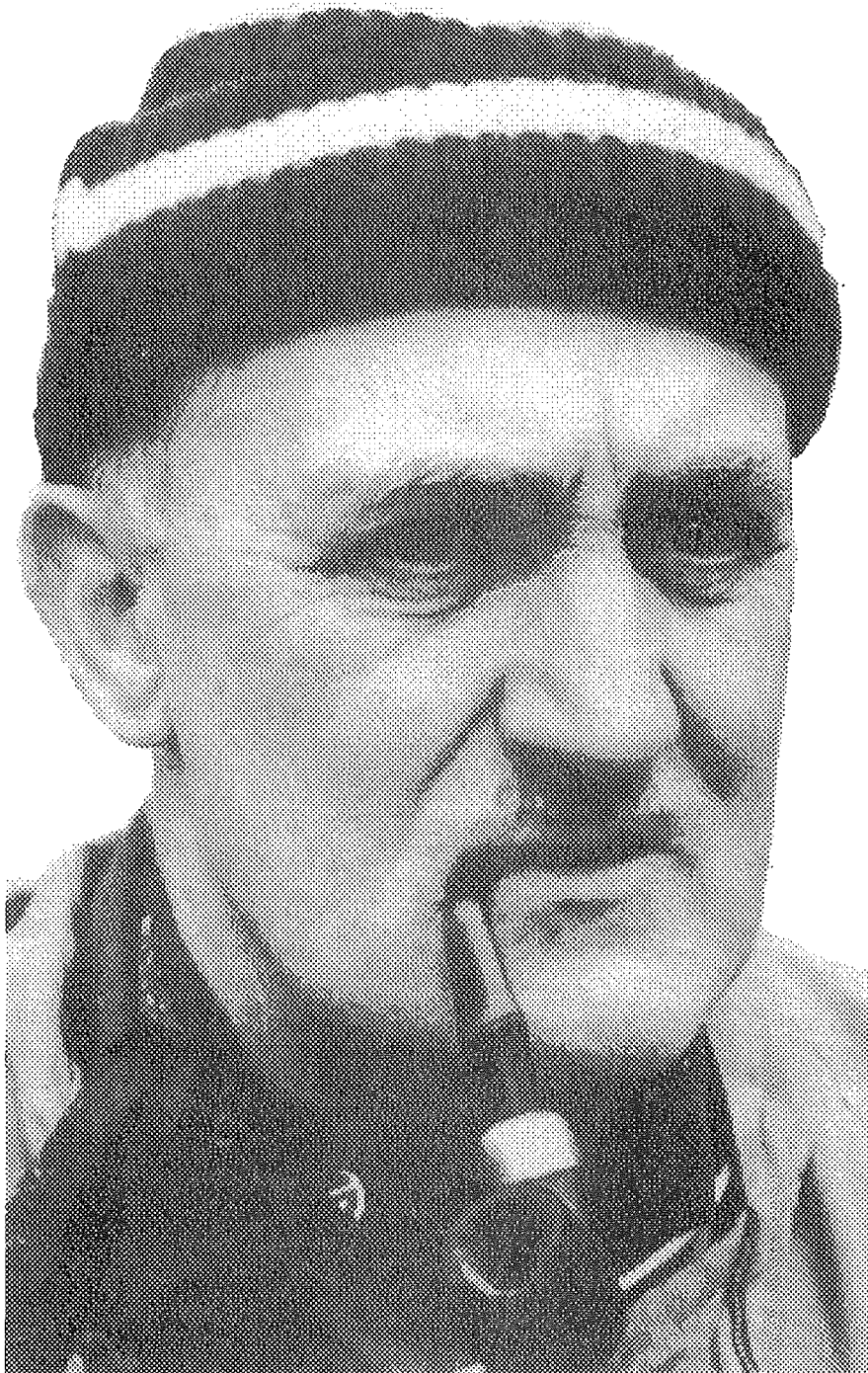
During his service as secretary there were two major events in the Club. First the 1957 Himalayan Expedition, in the organising of which Cliff took a prominent part, and the other was the Lowstern Club Hut. There is an interesting account in the Y.R.C. Journal 9, page 20 about the early days of the hut, but there is no mention of what Cliff did in organising the work force of members in restoring and renovating the "Old Golf House" during 1958. He was on the site nearly every weekend after Easter until the Hut was opened in November. It was a splendid effort and he insisted on obtaining all materials "at the right price", thus saving the Club a lot of money. To mark the occasion Frank Stembridge wrote a song "Lowstern or Downham's Folly" which was sung at the 1958 Club Dinner.

The year 1937 was an important one for Cliff, he married Nellie and afterwards lived in Huncoat, near Accrington until 1947 when he came to live and work in Bradford. He moved to Ambleside as secretary to the Climbers' Shop and when he retired in 1977 went to Grasmere, finally returning to Ambleside again in 1987. Whilst living in the Lake District his concern for safety on the hills helped in the formation of the Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Service and he was its second secretary.

A warm personality and a loyal friend, he set a fine example of service; few men could have measured up to him in his concern for others and the energy he put into all his activities in the Yorkshire Ramblers'. We shall long remember his rich Lancashire accent and his personal friendship with us all.

Nellie was a most welcoming and generous hostess to all those who visited them in the Lake District and we offer her our sincere sympathy.

Stanley Marsden



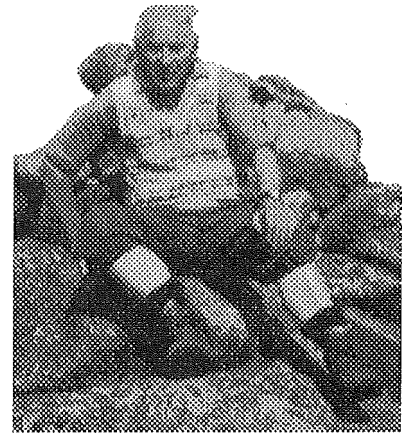
Peter Cawley Swindells

Member 1964 - 1997

Peter was a member of the Club Committee from 1967 to 1970 and from 1973 to 1979. The gap in 1971 and 1972 was due to his absence in Ireland. He was Vice President from 1980 to 1982 and President from 1986 to 1988.

When he joined the Club in 1964 he was living in Bradford. In 1976 he moved to Nantwich. The move made very little difference to his regular attendance at Club Meets but improved his acquaintance with the Welsh hills.

He was a friendly, entertaining and generous man with an impish sense of humour. He was also a strong walker who, given a choice, always opted for the more demanding route and for the more testing distance. There was no bravado about this. He was a competent and reliable navigator. He had completed the Scottish Munros and was involved in preparing to tackle the Irish equivalents. On any reckoning he was a good man to be with on the hills.



He also had a strong and beneficial effect on the Club's policy and well being. Moved by the trend towards more walking than climbing and pot holing (which used to be the other way round twenty years earlier) he inspired the Club to put a man on every Scottish Munro in the course of the 1983 Whit Meet. A record sixty-four members, plus guests, tackled this enterprising venture with complete success and the event gave a great deal of pleasure to all those involved. He also argued for one major Club expedition every four years and the first of these was the Bolivian Expedition of 1988. The difficult business of demolishing and rebuilding Lowstern was started when Peter was President and he devoted much time and energy towards keeping this important project rolling.

On meets Peter could always be relied upon to turn up with a selection of well researched activities. In his later years in the Lake District he drew inspiration from the geriatric scrambles described in RB.Evans 'Scrambles in the Lake District'. Only a few months ago, at the September Joint Meet, he took us up Crinkle Gill on to Crinkle Crag, over Bowfell to Angle Tarn, thence down Rossett Gill to the Old Dungeon Gill Hotel where an evening pint was always an occasion for Peter to discourse enthusiastically on Club affairs, his latest book, future meets and

holidays to come. He will be most sorely missed, the more so because his many friends shared long days with him on the hills so very recently. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow Seon, to his sons Robin and David, and to his daughter, Claire.

Arthur Salmon & Alan Brown



Harry Leighton Stembridge

1902 - 1997

Harry was born in Leeds in 1902. He was educated at Harrogate Grammar School and afterwards joined his father's firm of garment manufacturers, William Stembridge & Sons, which specialised in women's wear. With the outbreak of the Second World War his younger brother Frank was 'called up' for the Armed Forces. Harry was required to keep the family business going fulfilling contracts for forces' uniforms. During this time he was in the Home guard and received a commission.

He joined the Y R C with his brother Frank in 1933 and served on the committee from 1933 until 1938 when many of the Club's activities closed as war was imminent. After the war he again served on the committee until 1949 when he became Librarian for the next nine years. From 1954 to 1956 he was the President, and was elected an Honorary Member of the Club by acclaim in 1977.

Olive, his first wife died at Huby in 1952, where Harry lived until 1967 when he married Betty and moved to Craighall, Bedale. Hall Farm, their new home, was virtually a ruin but they transformed it wonderfully. He quickly became a supporter of village life, including the local cricket club of which he became President. Added to this he continued an active life fishing, painting, skiing and mountaineering both at home and abroad.

Harry was agile on the crags and while at Huby produced an illustrated guide for the Y R C Journal of all the then

known routes on Almscliff Crag. On a visit to Rhum with his son David they put up new rock routes. He climbed abroad, in the Lofoten Islands and in the Tatras, also in Austria and Switzerland on several occasions. With a group of friends and David he skied the Haute Route from Saas Fee to Forclaz. In 1969 he joined a trek to Everest Base camp.

One of his more ambitious trips was to Peru with Alf Gregory in June of 1963 where they spent six to eight weeks in the Andes (Cordillera Blanca). He and Alf made three first ascents over 18,000ft including Nevada Pisco over 19,000ft in the then little known country. They also searched for the rare 30ft. Puya Raymondii plant to photograph whilst they were there.

Potholing and caving were of course another varieties of climbing and one remembers the happy and eventful days in the early fifties spent at Mr. Barbour's farm in Killesher, N.Ireland and the late evenings at The Black Lion across the Border. These were the early days of Marble Arch, Reyfad and several other potholes and caves. Marble Arch is now advertised as a tourist attraction for coach parties.

The Scottish climbing meets were usually attended by Harry; if he wasn't climbing he would be off fishing. He was always a great example to the younger, less experienced members of the Club, whether at Almscliff or wherever the Club happened to be.

At the Y R C annual dinner of 1955, inspired by Charles Evans, the chief guest, the idea of the Y R C being the first regional club to mount an expedition to the Himalayas was born. Harry provided much of the enthusiasm and was the driving force along with

Stanley Marsden and Cliff Downham. In 1957 the expedition set out for the Jugal Himal with the 23,256ft Lonpo Gang (The Great White Peak) as the principal objective.

He was a man of many parts; a very capable artist in water colours, wrote poetry and watched birds and was interested in wild flowers. Shortly after his retirement in 1960 he took on the role of Liaison Officer for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and then was appointed County Commissioner for the Scouts in Central Yorkshire. He was also on the Board of the Outward Bound School in Eskdale.

Harry had an endearing cheerful personality, he was rarely upset and was always there to help. It was fitting for his final journey to be from the little church in Bedale to the Cemetery nearly a mile away. Most of the congregation, walking, followed the four bearers in a mixture of driving rain, high winds and blue skies. The reception was held in the 'Stembridge' room in the village hall, the village that had become his home for the last thirty years.

Harry was a remarkable man in so many ways, he will be greatly missed by members of the Club and his friends in the mountain world, the villagers of Bedale, but most of all by his wife Betty, and the two families they made into one so successfully, David, Patrick, Madeleine, Katherine and his grandchildren.

R. E. Chadwick & J. A. Holmes



The Climber

How steep the slab above the overhang
 seems from my little stance beside the lip.
For forty feet, so far as I can see
 the holds are slight, mere shadows on the face.

Below my heels the crag drops to the scree.
 Far, far below the stream glints in the sun,
sending faint murmurs through the quiet air.
 Shadows of clouds chase across the distant hills.

Once on the slab of butterflies
 that gnawed my stomach fade
and calculating calmly I can weigh
 each move unflurried by the grip of nerves.

Smoothly I shift my weight from toe to toe.
 Splayed finger tips now near, now reaching far
for sustenance, until, by movement
 imperceptible, I gain a little height.

Now comes the crux, with nought but pressure holds,
 a balanced lift by muscles smooth and slow,
a gentle press of fingers on the rock.
 My whole world centred on the next few feet.



I do think of all the years when I,
 on training bent, made my reluctant limbs
go where I willed up crag and sliding scree
 until they ached and threatened to give in.

This is my harvest. Here on this sunny day,
 poised upon meagre holds, high on the slab
with sinews, balance, nerves working in tune
 I would not change my place with any man.

H L Stembridge

A. B. Hargreaves 1904 -1996

Many members will have seen the obituary notices in the national press to the death, aged 92, of Alien B. Hargreaves. 'AB.' as he was better known to the climbing world, although he was never a member, retained for the Y.R.C. a long and lasting affection and by marriage had a link with the Club. In 1935 he married Maud Gordon, who was the granddaughter of our own Cecil Slingsby. I am grateful to John Snoad of Ilkley for reminding me of this relationship and sending me a copy of the Slingsby family tree.

Following his cremation on November 20th 1996, four members of the Club attended the Wake held at the Farmers' Arms, Greenodd, which we will remember as a joyous social occasion as 'AB.' would have wished. It was rather like a multi-club joint meet, with good food and wine, the company of old friends and the sharing of many memories.

My own first meeting with 'AB.' was I suspect earlier than any attending the Wake. It was in August 1938, shortly after my 17th birthday, and I was enjoying an extended stay at Idwal Youth Hostel. The warden then was Connie Alexander, who looked kindly on any budding youthful climbers. Lacking any regular climbing partner it became my habit to loiter at the foot of Milestone Buttress or Idwal Slabs, with a 100 ft. of Jones' Alpine line, eager to cajole any chance companion up any climb within my modest ability. It was on one such day that I met three climbers at the foot of Idwal Slabs who invited me to join them. We did Tennis Shoe, Holly Tree Well, Devil's Staircase and Devil's Kitchen; no big deal today perhaps, but it was in nails

and for a 17-year-old beginner a day long to be remembered. The three climbers were Colin Kirkus, Alf Bridge and AB. Hargreaves.

I was not to meet 'AB.' again until 1947 when I was then living in the Lakes. Along with Eric Arnison, James Joyce and joined sometimes with Harry Griffin, Tom Price and **Bill** Peascod, we formed a group that met with some regularity, Never a natural climber, and hardly bold, I was often grateful for 'AB.'s tuition and guidance, for chiding me for clumsiness and hesitation or, when leading, giving me some confidence. This, of course, was years after his great days when, along with Kirkus, Jack Longland and Menlove Edwards, he had pioneered some of the great routes of Snowdonia and the Lake District. By comparison my climbs with 'AB.' were modest indeed.

Many other members will share memories of 'AB.' In the fifties and sixties he was a regular attender at the New Year parties that I then arranged, and as John Lovett will confirm he was an enthusiastic member of the annual private pot-holing parties based at Harden. 'AB.' was also a frequent guest at our Annual Dinners, sometimes representing either the Climbers' Club, the Wayfarers', or the Fell and Rock, of all of which he had at some time been president. His last appearance amongst us was as my guest at our Centenary Dinner and, but for his last illness, he would have been the guest of Mike Hobson at our most recent dinner.

I feel greatly privileged to have known 'AB.', a superb climber in his day and, to the last, one of the great characters of British mountaineering.

George Spenceley

LETTERS

Mountaineers, Company Directors and Bimbos

Dear Editor

I don't know for certain if my friend Dennis Armstrong's report on the 1996 Ladies Weekend (Bulletin issue 6, page 51) was aimed at me but in view of the final paragraph, and bearing in mind the fact that I am to be the leader of the 1997 Ladies Weekend, I suspect that it was so directed, particularly in view of my well-known & strongly held opinions regarding the masculinity of the YRC!

I think that Dennis' report was probably written with tongue firmly in cheek, but calculated nevertheless to provoke some response. If so, then it has worked. No matter whether Dennis meant the tenor of his article to be flippant, serious or both, I intend to respond fairly seriously to what I believe to be a serious subject. If Dennis is able thereby to sit back and laugh at me for rising to his bait then so be it.

I have previously explained my views concerning the YRC remaining a men's club, and how I feel that it does our lives and our relationships good to be able to follow our pursuits with our Club and temporarily away from our womenfolk, so I won't repeat them; suffice it to say that they haven't changed. So I will stick to the matter of the Ladies Weekend, so-called 'political correctness' & how it

relates to the ethos of the YRC as I see it.

I'm not sure how much reliance I would personally place upon Ernest Robert's alleged approval for Ladies Evenings; I believe that he was a lifelong bachelor! I cannot however, see anything wrong in permitting ourselves the luxury of entertaining our Ladies now and again without having to apologise for it. If my wife (Yes, she is my *wife* and I am her *husband* with all that this implies) invited me to a Men's Evening at her Women's Institute I would have no ethical problem with that. If she were a good mountaineer and wished to be in a Ladies' Climbing Club (or a mixed one, if that were her inclination), I would have to accept that also.

As for political correctness, this is a phrase that recalls the views of the late unlamented Hen Doktor Goebbels, indicating as it does the concept that you can hold any view on any subject just so long as it is acceptable to the "party". Every tyranny relies on political correctness to maintain itself. That aside, I think that Dennis shoots himself in the foot here. On the one hand he suggests that the Club no longer "patronises" its "partners" whilst on the other hand stating that there are other meets at which we can test our "grasp, endurance & sinews". We can't have it both ways. Either we have a proper open weekend during which we organise a major caving trip, rock or ice climbing, hard fellwalking or perhaps a high camp, or else we have a pleasant social weekend with activities to please our womenfolk who are, for the most part, wives who happen to have outdoorsmen as husbands. I'm sure that no sensible Women's Club would

be so silly as to hold a mixed event at which there were to be activities likely to underwhelm, or be beyond the competence of, most of the menfolk present.

So don't hold your breath whilst waiting for any "reconstruction" or "new politics" in the 1997 Ladies Weekend. So far as I am concerned it will be another welcome opportunity to entertain our wives and ladyfriends in a way intended to please as many of them as possible irrespective of whether they are mountaineers or needleworkers, company directors or housewives, bimbos or grandmothers or any permutations thereof

By the way, a few bimbos would be especially welcome, even if they do have their hunky blokes to look after them.

W. C. 1. Crowther



To the missing 1950s & 1960s Members

Dear Editor

I had the happy experience of being introduced to Jack Williamson at a Club lecture in Leeds. Jack had not been on meets for many years due to business commitments. He felt that he would not know anyone. However I persuaded him that it would not be a problem as even the newer members were the same sort of men as those in his active days.

He came along to a long walk and helped with the support making friends with Ralph Hobson and subsequently joined us on many meets. Two weeks before he died in 1979 he wrote to me to say how much those last ten years of association with the Club and his two years as Vice President, 1976-1978, had meant to him.

The 1960s and 1970s were, for me, wonderful years of activity. Now looking through the handbook I see a number who were, like me, young in those halcyon days. Sadly we don't see them on meets these days: perhaps their reasoning is the same as Jack's.

I, along with others of the same vintage, would be delighted to see them on meets again: they would certainly be most welcome.. We would ensure that they would feel part of the meet and they could renew old friendships and make new ones. The Club is going through another great phase: why not be part of it?

David Smith

No ulterior motive...

just a sense of humour

Dear Editor

It is always pleasing to have proof positive that someone has read your writings and indeed flattering when that someone believes he has discerned an ulterior motive behind the writing. Alas I have to inform Ian that in putting two and two together, he has made four and a half. I am afraid he did not enter my mind when I was writing the Meet Report.

I do confess, Mr Editor, that I did have a motive in the way I wrote the Meet Report. For after all, to report on the Ladies Weekend is hardly serious stuff. A Meet Report should be there to record what was done, and to be consulted by those who may come after. The chances that my meet report would be consulted because of 'something new' was frankly remote. One can write that we were in area ABC, that we walked around XYZ and we were all thankful to PQR for arranging it so well. Two lines and the facts are complete. I am reminded of the schoolboy who, in a history examination, was asked the question: 'In the sixteenth century, the Spanish Monarch had a

crown of gold upon feet of clay." Do you agree?' And he answered 'Yes, I do.' Full marks for brevity and succinctness; nought for logic and imagination.

What could I add when I had run out of facts? Then I recalled that I had heard at least two members say in years gone by that they could not possibly come to a Ladies Weekend because their wives thought the concept was an insult. And I sought to say, in a flippant way: Please Mrs Modem Woman, do not be put off by the title. Come along and join us, and you will have a very enjoyable time. And be tolerant of the YRC, it is not easy to think of another title. But alas in my attempts to gain marks for logic and imagination, and to inject some humour into a routine kind of Meet Report to make it readable, I gave Ian the impression that I was opening a discussion to change the format of the whole weekend. Sorry, Ian, but thank you for responding, and Joan and I look forward to coming to your Ladies Weekend in 1997.

Yours very truly



Dennis Armstrong

A Song for the Yorkshire Ramblers

by Bill Todd

Inspired by the Ennerdale Meet October 1996.

To be sung to the tune of 'Pretty Polly Perkins'.

*We're the York shi re Ramblers, a hill walking club,
We lunch in high places and never at the pub,
We go out when there's a meet on come shine or come rain,
And stagger back at tea-time with rheumatic pain,
We're the old Yorkshire Ramblers, an outdoor society,
We behave at all times with the utmost propriety.*

*We went up to Ennerdale to have a club meet
The rain was so heavy that we all got wet feet,
But we came back to the Scout Hut and Andrew's good cheer,
To finish off the evening with a glass of cool beer,
We're the old Yorkshire Ramblers, we never say die,
We just keep on hoping for a patch of blue sky.*

Lowstem

10-12 March 1995

Twenty members and their guests attended the meet and three future members arrived to discuss the Himalayan meet. There was a fifty-fifty tally between potholers and others. Saturday was a day of intermittent rain and Sunday a day of continuous sunshine.

On Saturday ten potholers entered Easegill Caverns by way of county Pot. The stream was in spate. Some distance beyond Poetic Justice seven of the party turned back because of the flooding. The other three managed to traverse above the waterline to Eureka Junction. Upstream there was deep water in the main stream to Stop Pot.

The party visited Carrot Chamber, then returned via Manchester Bypass, a tortuous high-level route avoiding the flood-prone stream passages. Emerging at 3 o'clock they found the entrance to Wretched Rabbit Passage and descended a sporting steam passage leading again to Eureka Junction and then out by the entry route.

There were two walking parties of four members each. The party playing away went up to the Lake District, parked at Dovedale and walked up via Dove Crag to Fairfield. The home party set out to visit three outstanding features of the area - the Norber Erratics, the ancient juniper forest and a single but outstanding fossil embedded in a rock face somewhere near Moughton Scars. The erratic presented no problem and in due course several acres of juniper bushes were traversed, as was a large areas of disintegrating and slippery clints, but the party failed to find the fossil.

On Sunday the trio of potholers descended Lancaster Hole via Cape Kennedy, the President and two other members climbed on Twistleton Scar and one member went paragliding. Three others walked up Pen-y-Ghent.

The commissariat was highly effective.

A.B. Craven.

Attendauce:	The President - Derek Bush
Ken Aldred	Arthur Salmon
AlauBrown	Graham Salmon
Ian Carr	DavidSmith
C1iffCobb	MartynWakemau
Arthur Craven	Andrew Wilkinson (G)
Ian Crowther	Frank Wilkinson
Mike Godden	
Mike Hartlaud (BPC)	Himalayan Meeting
Bill Lofthouse	GedCampion
Kelvin Nutmau (G)	Alan Kay
Peter Price	RoryNewmau
Alister Renton	DavidSmith

RLH Langdale

Joint Meet with Wayfarers

20-22 September 1996

The threatened break in the dry weather did not occur making for excellent conditions on the hills with the exception of Saturday morning which was too windy for the proposed climbing trips.

Friday 20th

The President and two members visited Cliff Downham in Westmorland General Hospital to convey fraternal greetings from the members.

A number of small parties of YRC members were able to arrive at the meet early and get out onto the Langdale fells via the traditional route to Pavey Ark with two members enjoying the pleasures of a scramble up Jacks Rake. A lone member scrambled up via the environs of Scout Crag.

A most enjoyable meal and conversations were had in the evening - the RLH is a superb hut.

Saturday 21st

A rapid sorting out of YRC and Kindred Clubs saw a YRC party at seven make for Helm Crag via a route skirting Raw Pike and down into Easedale to then ascend Helm Crag. The route across the somewhat confusing area around Carrs is not known to many, being away from the more popular routes. However, it is well worth while to arrive at High Raise where it is challenging to identify the far ranging familiar shapes of oft climbed hills and crags. The sun broke through the fast moving clouds to illuminate Bowfell buttress and the Great Slab of Bowfell across the valley with dramatic effect. Footpath maintenance has made the descent of Stake Pass into Mickleden much easier than in recent years of erosion. Refreshment was taken at the Old Dungeon Gill Hotel where a number of parties came together.

A mixed group of YRC and Kindred Clubs had made their way to Crinkle

Crags by going up Oxendale and gill scrambling out onto the tops to go over Bowfell and down to the ODG whilst a small party of Wayfarers had ascended Esk Pike by way of Rossett Gill and then made their way to the ODG over Bowfell and Hell Gill.

All parties made it to the RLH with little time to spare for the pre-meal socialising.

A most enjoyable evening with many invitations between friends to take wine. Talk of forthcoming trips to Scotland, the Alps, the Himalayas and the possibility at a cross glacier expedition in Iceland was heard all around. In the latter case, events a few weeks later when the volcano erupted beneath the glacier may well have caused a rethink!

Sunday 22nd.

Fortunately the wind had dropped to enable the President and an ex-President to make for Bowfell where two ropes enjoyed that most classic of classic climbs - Bowfell Buttress by the direct route. From experience it is known to increase in difficulty as the holds become more polished by wear as years go by.

One YRC member made off to join friends on a cross Morecambe Bay walk whilst four other skirted Scout Crag with its resident mountain goat and gill scrambled up White Gill and then went over Pavey Ark to the Langdale Pikes.

After the hard work of cleaning the hut the remaining Wayfarers scrambled over the Tarn Crag to Stickle Tarn before descending down the blue route to RLH.

A most enjoyable and successful meet helped by good weather but not possible without the hard work and organisation of the meet leader and members of the host Kindred club to whom on behalf of the YRC I most sincerely thank them.

Mike Hartland

Attendance:

YRC Members

J. Alderson (G)
Ken Aldred
Denis Armstrong
Denis Barker
Alan Brown
Derek Bush (President)
Cliff Cobb
Arthur Craven
Mike Godden
Richard Gowing
Eddie Edwards
David Hanley
Mike Hartland
David Laughton
D. Raylton (G)
Alistair Renton
Harry Robinson
Jim Rusher
John Schofield
David Smith
Derek Smithson
Peter Swindells
Mike Wilson

Wayfarers

S. Auty
G. Chambers
A. Furgerson
M. Gee
H Jacob
J. Jacob
D. Wood

Rucksack

N. Cocville
W. Ryecroft

Alpine Meet
Ailefroide,
Dauphine Alps
July / August 1996

Compiled by John Devenport from contributions supplied by members and guests recounting their experiences on the meet.

The President's Overview

by Derek Bush

The Club last visited Ailefroide in 1991. In John Devenports excellent introduction to that meet report he described in detail the location, the camp site, the maps and guide books required and even the weather! I have no intention of plagiarising John's report and will merely remind readers that Ailefroide lies at the head of the Gyronde {Vallouise} Valley at a height of 1500m.

For some of us towing caravans, the most exciting, perhaps I should say terrifying part of the whole holiday was the ascent {and decent} by road from L'Argentiere. This is ignoring the one way tunnel systems which still seem to be operating on the east side of the Lautaret pass! It is hoped that next years Alps meet is more caravan friendly. Older members will scoff and say the Club is becoming too soft. I am sure there is scope for an article, humorous or otherwise, in a subsequent bulletin.

The only other variation to the 1991 account was of course the weather. 1991 seemed to be better. The first week or our 1996 meet was excellent but mixed weather arrived the second

Monday onwards although this did not deter several parties having excellent mountaineering and rock climbing days as the reports will reveal.

We had as guests of the Club, brought by Tim Bateman, Jennie Allen of the Rugby MC and Pete Hardy of the Hinchley MC. They were assets to the party both on the mountain and socially back in camp. It is only when you are sharing a rope with much younger people, on what for the writer are serious mountains do you realise that Anno Domini is catching up with you.

As a first visit to an Alps meet I was somewhat apprehensive. Would I cope in the huts and the early starts? 3.30 am was never my best time of day, never mind thinking about donning plastic boots, gaiters, climbing harness, head torches and all the other paraphernalia of the 'modern' climber. Did I cope? You had better ask my companions but I can only say my holiday would have been far more traumatic and therefore much less enjoyable without the help, assistance and cajoling of all my companions young and old alike.

I thank them sincerely.

Maps and guide books

The most useful map was Cartes IGN 3436ET 'Meije and Pelvoux' which covered the whole of the Parc National des Ecrins at a scale of 1:25,000. Walking and ski-touring routes, together with the refuges were clearly marked.

The Alpine Club Guide 'Ecrins Massif - Selected Climbs', though not giving all of the routes, was more than adequate for the mountaineering needs during the meet.

The attendees

The following members and guests sampled the delights of this part of the French Alps for all or part of the meet:

Jennie Allen
Dennis Annstrong
Joan Annstrong
Tim Bateman
Derek Bush
John Devenport
Marcia Godden
Mike Godden
Pete Hardy
Katrina Holt
Mark Pryor
Alister Renton
~~Chris Renton~~
Neil Renton
Arthur Salmon
Graham Salmon + Sally
David Smith
Elspeth Smith
Frank Wilkinson

KEVIN RENTON
SITENA RENTON
ALEX RENTON
ELLEN RENTON

Montagne des Agneaux

by Neil Renton

This mountain was to be the first peak of the Alpine Meet and my first major snow peak. The first Sunday of the meet trip saw the departure of Alister, Alex and Mark, Jenny, Tim and Pete, and finally David, Derek and myself, for the Glacier Blanc hut. The two hour walk to the hut gave us all fabulous views of Mount. Pelvoux and Ailefroide

Upon arrival at the hut we booked in, finding the small self catering room. Dinner lived up to the usual standard - all appreciating David's culinary expertise. Everybody rose at four to find horrendous weather conditions - the majority headed off back to bed,

but Mark and Alister kept a look out for any improvements in the weather. After a slight improvement in conditions we departed from the hut at approximately six o'clock.

The peak provided a varied route, initially over moraine leading to a snowy col. The col enabled me to put on my strap-on crampons, for the first time, in extremely windy conditions - it was almost inevitable that they would come off on descent. The second part of the ascent was in cloud, over a forty five degree snow slope. This was an excellent experience, although traffic on the slope was bad, from those people who had begun an early descent. At the second col we removed our rucksacks for a fifty metre rock climb, which Alister impressively led. The final part of the peak was a scramble over rocky terrain before a second snow slope leading to the summit cairn. The view from the 3663m peak was poor but the pleasure of reaching the top subdued this disappointment.

The descent was, for me, surprisingly rapid - although the clear in the weather was untimely - giving a view of the exposed abseil. Arrival back at the hut saw better weather and enabled a dry walk down to the car park - where David and myself saw a marmot which, according to David, had been tamed at the circus! The mountain was a thoroughly enjoyable day out that gave me the desire to have a go at the Barre des Ecrins.

A bivouac in the Ecrins

by Pete Hardy

It was hard work ascending the winding path from Pre De Madame Carle toward the Glacier Blanc. Each of us was hampered by the 40lb. pack

we shouldered under the hot afternoon sun. Every step an agony, the Refuge Du Glacier Blanc seemed to take an eternity to reach. We had travelled this way before, yet we each still revelled in the fantastic views afforded us; Mont Pelvoux its summit partly obscured by cloud with the Glacier des Violettes draped over its northern flank; L'Ailefroide massif clearly visible showing its East summit, scene of our earlier adventures closest to us. If hard labour was the price to pay for all of this, then it was surely worth it.

We stopped off at the refuge and each of us paid 16 Francs for a can of cold pop and we sat in the sun watching Choughs gliding in the mountain air for a while. We resumed our journey; upwards over the moraine heaps above the refuge at first, and then onto the glacier itself. This late in the season there was no problem with deep layers of snow hiding crevasses, and so we did not rope up. We travelled along the northern edge of the glacier, avoiding impressively contorted crevasses as we did so. It was approaching 7pm by the time we reached the point at which Mark, Derek and Neil would depart for the Refuge Des Ecrins. By now the Glacier was mostly in shadow as the sun dropped low behind the surrounding peaks.

We carried on along the glacier for a short distance, and could already see one party bivouacking on the ice ahead. Tim suggested we did likewise, but I said we might be wiser investigating the rock spur above us. I let Tim go ahead of me - his energy seemed boundless even now - whilst Jennie and Alister waited on the ice below. I was almost up with Tim when he shouted his enthusiastic approval to the rest of us.

What a lucky stroke! We were clearly not the first to spot the sites potential. There were already stone shelters erected for the siting of two bivi bags (Alister and I) and there was ample room for Jennie and Tim to erect the tent they had carried up between them. This was a site made in heaven; flat (relatively), free of stone fall or avalanche danger, close to a supply of clean snow (for drinks) and even with a supply of wood. (There were about a dozen small planks of wood scattered over the platform, some partly buried in snow). Quickly realising the potential, and ignoring the rule about open fires, we built a small fire over which to cook.

The fire was fantastic. We melted the snow I had dug from deep in the snow field and prepared drinks. We cooked the usual dehydrated meal (rice and curry or something similar) and used rocks warmed by the fireside to fend off the night chill. We were in great spirits, taking photographs aplenty. We were amazed at 9pm to see two parties descending the north face of the Barre des Ecrins. The first was quite fast, but the second was desperately slow. We watched them descend as far as the col des Ecrins, but failing light caused us to lose sight. We could only assume they had bivouacked high on the glacier or that they were descending to la Berarde (rather than us!).

It was close to 10pm by the time we turned in; I slept in my thermals, my fleece, my four season bag and a Goretex bivi bag. The muffled sound of running water kept me awake for a while, the imagination running wild, but after about an hour I managed to get to sleep.

3.30 am next morning and I was awake to my alarm. I donned my contact lens, grateful that I did not drop it onto my bivi bag which was

covered in a thick layer of frost. I sprang promptly out of 'bed'. The valley below was full of cloud but at 3,300m we were cloud free. Ten minutes later as Tiro. emerged from his tent we were enshrouded in the cloud from the valley. Another ten minutes and it had receded again - a reminder of how quickly things can change in the mountains.

It took about an hour to melt snow for drinks, to eat a frugal breakfast and to get roped up. As we descended towards the glacier Blanc the Barre des Ecrins was free of cloud and hopes were high.

Dome des Ecrins

by Mister Renton

After successfully completing Montagne des Agneaux and Ailefroide we decided that we were ready to go for the big one. Ecrins is the largest peak in the area and as such it had to be done.

The party included Neil, Mark, Jennie, Tim, Pete, Derek and myself. We backtracked up the path to the Glacier Blanc hut passing the large number of tourists who were giving our massive rucksacks very funny looks - due to the plan of bivi-ing I was carrying about 17.5 kg.

Once at the hut the President treated the team to a well earned can of coke. I will not tell you how much the drinks cost!!! Once refreshed we headed on what was now the glacier. The going was quite easy but the size of the pack made it difficult. Once near the hut the party split in two. The more wealthy members stayed in the hut, having all meals provided, while the rest of us had a rather nice bivi.

I slept very well that night after spending a little while looking at the stars and spotting the passing satellites. It was soon morning and the weather was initially good. We walked down to the path to meet the others from the hut.

We made good progress up the path but there was a large number of parties on it. The whole team was doing fine - Neil and Mark had not before scaled a 4000m peak but they had no problems. After a while cloud started to form over the summit and it was not long until we could see no further than the end of our noses!!! The weather gradually got worse and it started to snow!! We finally arrived at the col where you turn left for the real summit and right for the dome. We at first turned left but soon turned back as the route was very unclear and the weather was getting worse. We decided it was unwise to travel much higher and as such we visited the dome and descended as quickly as possible.

Once back down onto the glacier Neil, Derek and Mark moved off down while I headed back to the bivi site to collect my gear. It was still snowing and moral was quite low!!

I moved off down the glacier and bumped into Tim, Jennie and Pete so I duly waited for them as I did not fancy walking down by myself!!

Quite quickly the snow turned to rain. Before we knew it we were at the Glacier Blanc. From then on the path was never ending!!

The trip was an excellent experience and not to be missed. It was a shame to have missed the real top but it will be there another year.

A First Alpine Ascent

by Katrina Bolt &

John Devenport

It was all rather different to the rolling countryside of the North Downs in deepest Kent and even higher than the Lakeland Peaks. It was Katrina's first attempt to climb in the Alps, but we hoped that during the course of our stay in Ailefroide we'd make an ascent of one of the surrounding peaks.

After a few 'warm up' walks during the first few days, we took the plunge and set off after lunch for the Glacier Bland Hut. A steady plod brought us to the glacier snout from where the hut seemed tantalisingly close, although in reality there was still some way to go. A very heavy shower in the late afternoon kept the hordes away, so the hut was surprisingly quiet, and after a filling meal we retired to the luxury of a whole row of bunks to ourselves. However, I still didn't sleep!

Our intended peak was the Pie de Glacier d'Arsine {3368m}, so we were not woken by the hut guardian until 5 am. From the hut, we made our way up the broken ground to the glacier, where we roped up, strapped on crampons and picked up the ice axe, all of which were new experiences for Katrina.

Progress along the side of the glacier was steady, before we cut up to the right, initially through rocks, then up a broad cwm towards our mountain. We made slow but steady progress winding our way around short bands of rock, to keep to the snow slopes almost the whole way to the col, with frequent stops to catch our breath in the rarefied atmosphere.

From the col, a rocky ridge led towards the summit in just a few minutes, where we took a well deserved rest amongst the magnificent scenery. Highlight of the panorama was the north face of the Barre des Ecrins, looking absolutely pristine at the head of the valley, covered in a generous coat of new snow, which was captured on film, of course.

We did not hang around too long, as a cloud was now starting to swirl around us, and it looked most impressive as it boiled up from the south side of the Barre des Ecrins.

It was a straightforward descent back to the hut, where we stopped briefly to rest and eat, then back down to the campsite, where Katrina partook of another fine YRC 'tradition' as Elspeth very kindly greeted us with a bottle of cold beer each, to celebrate a successful first alpine ascent!

East Summit of

L'Ailfroide (3847m)

by David Smith

This being my third visit to the area it becomes increasingly difficult to add another major peak when others have their eyes on different ascents. My luck was in when a group of us decided on L'Ailefroide. The mountain is a particularly complicated massif and I am not sure which of the three summits we were aiming for, but in the end fate took us to the top of the east summit.

It is quite a pleasant walk to the new Sele hut, about a mile nearer than the old one, from our camp site through beautifully wooded country following the liver Celise Niere for about seven miles. Then the path divided, a zig-zag track heads off northwards to the

Pelvoux hut, whereas our track skirts the Coste de Sialouze moraines to what appears to be an impregnable wall 300m high. A spectacular path picked its way up the wall with exposure at places demanding extreme care. At some points the path is protected by wire cable covered with green plastic garden hose.

Over the ridge the final track to the Refuge Sele soon appeared at 2511m, the most modern hut in the Massif. It had good facilities for self-cookers unlike the pathetic situation at the Glacier Bland hut. The temperature in the dortoir was not oppressive, so for once we all had a reasonable night's sleep.

All too soon it was 4 am and time to depart, we were the last away and confused by other climbers' head torches we followed the wrong lights. After a map check we changed for the alternative route. The track took to a gap between the snow and a rock wall where an overhang and our rucksacks made the transfer awkward. Good rock scrambling followed until we came to an open gully dropping hundreds of feet steeply below us. It was a potentially dangerous place and a fixed rope was used.

The route followed a descending traverse to rocky couloir which is climbed on the lift until a series of snow fields is gained. Relatively steep snow in good condition led us to the 3847m Orientale summit where we were lucky to have excellent views down the Glacier Noir. The president and the writer were the last to gain the summit and had the mountain and its magnificent views to ourselves until the mist took away the vista.

The snow condition had deteriorated with snow balling up dangerously under our crampons. The younger

members were now well out of sight but as soon as we were off the snow we found them basking in the sunshine. We had little difficulty retracing our steps as it was well cairned. Back at the steep gully we had no problem in crossing it without rope as all the holds seemed to be in our favour in this direction.

There were threatening clouds in the sky, the younger members having escorted Derek and lover the difficult bits were very soon out of sight. We took our time, at one point misleading information painted on a rock wall caused us some unnecessary ascent. The rain came before we reached the hut where we rejoined our friends. After a brief rest we set off down the steep wall track to regain the valley.

We were certainly glad of the protection of the rope on the wet slippery rock. Before we reached the valley the rain stopped for the last stage of the expedition. It was a first class climb with much variety in the terrain and in the make-up of the team which did much for the enjoyment of the trip.

Team: Jenny Allen, Derek Bush, Tim Bateman, Pete Hardy, Mark Pryor, Alister Renton and David Smith.

Pelvoux South Face

by Mark Pryor

With just a few days of the Alpine Meet left, Tim Bateman and I decided to round off an excellent fortnight with an ascent of Mont Pelvoux, via its South Face, pioneered in 1828 by AADurand and party.

The peak is one of the most majestic in the range, at 3946 it is also one of the highest. We had both been impressed by the sight of its awesome

north face, which dominated the skyline on previous trips to the Glacier Blanc and Ecrins huts.

In his book 'Outline sketches in the High Alps of Dauphine' T.G.Bonney described the locals: "The people in many parts are stunted, cowardly and feeble, and appear to be stupid and almost cretins". With this in mind, we decided not to stay in the Pelvoux hut, but to bivouac on a large hog's back of scree about twenty minutes' walk further on. This also gave us the chance to see where the route went for the following morning. After a quick meal of soup and bread, we were in our bags, staring up at the cloud filled sky. "I want to see the stars when I wake up" said Tim, hopefully. We pondered this remark in our own separate ways as the first spots of rain hit our bivi bags.

In the morning the weather had not improved, a light drizzle joined us for breakfast, and great swathes of mist obscured the route ahead. In the hut below, nothing stirred, As we drank our tea, we decided to make an attempt on the peak anyway. There was no way we were going down to the campsite without at least giving it a try, after spending such a wretched night out in the open!

The first part of the route went along the left bank of the Clot de l' Homme glacier, across snow slopes which had failed to freeze overnight. Her the difference in our relative experience showed. Tim striding purposefully ahead, a blend of confidence and ability, me blundering along with all of the attributes of the 19th century French peasantry mentioned earlier. It wasn't long before I slipped clumsily on the snow and fell. To my surprise I braked well with my axe, text book style, and thus served to boost my confidence for the rest of the route.

With these treacherous snow slopes out of the way, we made good progress, scrambling up greasy, wet rock to the edge of the Sialouze glacier. Here, we decided to rope up as we looked at the next part of the route. You have a choice at this point; either climb the Rochers Rouge, a great mass of rock which takes you right up to the Pelvoux Glacier, or climb the Coolidge couloir, also to the Pelvoux Glacier, where the routes rejoin. Being British, we chose the couloir, first climbed by W.A.B.Coolidge with the famous Christian Almer father and son combination as guides. Halfway up the couloir, I wasn't feeling so patriotic. In fact, as I stood bent over my axe gasping for breath, I was thinking where Mr Coolidge could shove his stupid couloir. However, we were soon on the top, and it was only short walk along the ridge to Pointe Puiseux, the summit of Mont Pelvoux.

The weather, meanwhile, had improved all the way up the mountain. It had long since stopped raining and patches of blue had even appeared in the sky. But when we reached the summit, it was in cloud. We agreed that this must be the top, but both of us had nagging doubts as we began the descent. Suddenly, the clouds parted and all around was clear, so we hurried back to the top, just to be sure. There was no need for concern, however, and soon the cameras were out for heroic summit poses.

The descent was largely uneventful, stopping once to coil the rope, and again at the hut to buy a drink. We were hoping to be greeted with fanfares and rapturous applause on arrival at the campsite, but the place was deserted. Elspeth was there though, and she rewarded our efforts with cold bottled beer.

83rd Annual Dinner, Whoop Hall, Kirby Lonsdale 9 November 1996

No two dinner weekends are quite the same but this one must be unique. At the moment of hand over of power the President looked round for the new President and there was no sign of him. Well he might hand over to the new Vice-President but there was no sign of him either. It is a pity we no longer have a spare Vice-President as in the old days. Members who did not attend the dinner will be relieved to learn that they had both got the date wrong and were enjoying their last days of freedom.

At the Annual General Meeting there was considerable interest in the forthcoming activities of the Club. Trekking in the Himalaya, potholing in Oman, traversing the Icelandic glaciers and the twelfth consecutive annual Alpine meet.

The new dinner venue was a great success in the eyes of the majority. The only real adverse point made was that the ventilation could have been improved. Next year we will ask for

that to be changed. Whoop Hall is located in that four-mile tongue of Lancashire that divides Yorkshire from Cumbria. The landlord asked us, tongue in cheek, which county we would like it to be in for the weekend.

Whoop Hall is wonderfully placed to give easy access to Gragareth, Ease Gill and the Barbon Fells, a new area for after dinner walks. There were walks for all abilities. It turned out a beautiful day with bright clear skies. We took the cars back to Cowan Bridge to avoid a dangerous stretch of road and headed off up to the Three Men of Gragareth before taking in the summit cairn. From this vantage point all the local hills could be picked out. However there was not enough time for them all.

Having traversed the eastern edge of this offending tongue of Lancashire our next objective was Ease Gill which skirts the western edge of the tongue, we dropped down into this most interesting stretch of water passing by many pots and sink holes along the way. As the river meandered its way we inspected the entrances of those famous holes of the Ease Gill System and the spectacular cliffs of Ease Gill Kirk.

Over the weekend many of us had in our minds that much loved and respected former member, Cliff Downham, who had spent many an exciting time under and over the ground hereabouts. No doubt he was with us in spirit. The weekend concluded with an excellent high tea back at the hotel. Our guests, to a man, expressed great satisfaction at the first-class weekend.

David Smith



Attendance:

87 sat down for the Dinner¹

Ken Aldred
Iain Anderson (PM)
John Barton
Bruce Bensley
Adrian Bridge
George Burfitt (G)
Derek Bush
Ged Champion
Albert Chapman
Derek Clayton
Cliff Cobb
Arthur Craven
Frank Croll (BPC)
Robert Crowther
Ian Crowther
Andrew Duxbury
Eddie Edkins (PM)
Eddie Edwards
Derek English (PM)
Arthur Evans
John Fowler (SMC)
Derek Gamble (G)
Mike Godden
Richard Gowing
Stuart Grace (Grits)
Ralph Hague
David Hall
David Handley
Raymond Harben
Mike Hartland
Colin Hawkin
John Hemmingway
Mike Hobson
David Holmes
Jeff Hooper
Gordon Humphreys
Jason Humphreys
Howard Humphreys
Raymond Ince
Graham Jones
Alan Kay
Mike Kinder
Will Lacy

Cliff Large
David Large (G)
David Laughton
Alan Linford
Bill Lofthouse
Tim Lofthouse
Harvy Lomas
Jerry Jovatt (AC)
John Lovatt
Stanley Marsden
Don Mackay
Bill Mitchell (Chief Guest)
Peter Moss
Nevil Newman
Rory Newman
Shaun Penny
Mike Pitt (PM)
George Postill
Roy Precious (FRCC)
Mark Pryor
Alister Renton
Neil Renton
Chris Renton
Keith Rifby (WC)
John Riley
Harry Robinson
Jim Rusher
Arthur Salmon
Graham Salmon
Roy Salmon
John Scholfield
Michael Smith
David Smith
John Snoad (G)
John Sterland
Pat Stonehouse
Peter Swindells
Teny Temple (G)
Mike Thompson
Bill Todd
Martyn Wakeman
Sidney Waterfall
John White
Frank Wilkinson
Maurice Wilson
Eddie Whitaker (CPC)

¹ Five others failed to materialise due to illness, work or mistaking the date.

Scottish Winter Meet

Braemar

20 - 22 February 1997

Braemar was a refreshing change from our usual Glen Etive or Glen Nevis base, and it makes a good starting point for the Eastern Cairngorms, Lochnagar, and the hills around the Caimwell

Our accomodation was in the Village **Hall**, where ample floor space could have taken a patty of double the size. The hall had a stage at one end, with curtains and floodlights, making a suitable platform for one of our guests with the gift of the gab to entertain us on Saturday night.

Press reports of snow causing difficulty on the Glen Shee to Braemar road might have worried the intrepid, but there was no difficulty in reaching Braemar on Thursday night. Friday dawned to a fresh fall of 1 1/2" of snow in the village. Strong winds also raised doubts about the main Cairngorm plateau, so a route was suggested up a long mountain track to Cam Bhac, 946m, a remote Munro West of the Caimwell. This proved to be a popular objective, for two parties of six set off on the 15 mile round trip from Inverey. The stalkers track leads for 5 miles to a col by Cam Liath, followed by a 3 mile Southerly ridge walk to reach the named SW top of Cam Bhac. The true summit is three quarters of a mile to the NE. Conditions were difficult at times, with 40 MPH winds and occasional wintry showers of fine ice particles reducing visibility to 30 yards. One patty returned over Cam Creagach and Creag an Lochan to Inverey.

A second party of three started at Linn of Dee, passed Derry Lodge and Glen Luibeg to the vicinity of Corrou bothy, then turned South to White Bridge and back to Linn of Dee. This route climbs to 2000 feet, and the strong wind with

snow under foot, made the conditions heavy going.

The amount of snow was disappointing for February, and the skiing area at Glen Shee had no snow other than small patches. There may well have been good snow above 3,500 feet, but wind strength over the weekend was too great for the higher tops.

If the wind seemed strong on Friday, then Saturday was significantly worse. Average wind speed on the Caimwell summit was 40 knots, with early morning gusts of 100 knots, reducing to 80 knots (92 MPH) later in the morning.

The President's party set out to traverse Lochnagar in one direction, exchanging cars with another party heading in the opposite direction. Starting at Spittal of Glen Muick, a path leads by Loch Muick to the waterfall where the Glas Allt bum runs down from Lochnagar. The route over Lochnagar then leads back to Invercauld bridge by the old Military Road.

One party reached Lochnagar by almost crawling the last part of the route to avoid being swept away by the wind. The other party settled for the lesser pleasures of Meikle Pap before deciding that discretion was the better part of valour.

A party of five climbed to Cam an t-Sagairt Mor and the White Mounth. Two members set out from Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge and returned via Creagan nan Gabhar, the Corbett Sgor Mor, and Sgor Dubh.

Another patty of five started from Glen Shee, and picked their way through the assorted ironmongery which seems to grow on ski slopes. The Caimwell and Aosda were climbed in the gusty conditions, by waiting for each gust to pass, and then lurching forward a few yards at a time. To atone for climbing

two such easy summits, the party then climbed" "Morrone, a Corbett near Braemar, only to find that it also was topped by sheds and telecommunications ironmongery.

Sunday was indeed sunny, and parties set out on both sides of the Devils Elbow, before returning home.

The meet was a great success, and credit must again go to Derek Bush our meet leader. There is a rumour that those who attend Braemar next year will have to rehearse a 5 minute music hall turn, but surely we cannot be soft enough to forgo camping two years running for a centrally heated meet with running hot water?

Iain Gilmour

Attendance:

Tim Josephy - President

Ken Aldred

Tim Bateman

Derek Bush

Iain Gilmour

Robin Hudson (G)

Stuart Thomson (P.M.)

Richard Gowing

Jeff Hooper

Gordon Humphreys

Howard Humphreys

Frank Milner

Stan Bradshaw (G)

Vie Maloney (G)

Mark Pryor

Arthur Salmon

Graham Salmon

David Smith

Derek Smithson

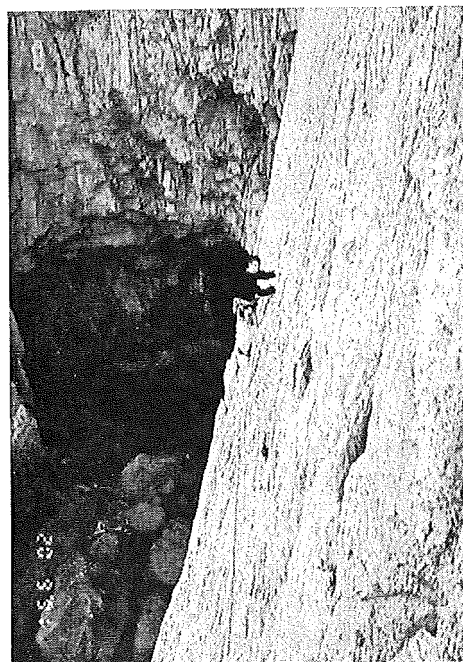
Frank Wilkinson

Banie Wood

Daniel Wood (P.M.)



Cwm Glas



Dream of White Horses

Lowstern 14-16 March 1997

The weather forecast for the weekend had been reasonably decent, so it was with hopes for a good meet that members foregathered at Lowstem On The Friday Evening, some to go out for pub meals and pints, others staying in the hut to yam. Two members erected tents outside to avoid the snores, only to be awoken at about 5.00 am by the rooks in the plantation, who were in fine voice.

Saturday morning was pretty horrible - drizzly, cold and miserable, not promising at all. Nevertheless, plans had been laid for caving, so two underground parties set off for their respective holes in the ground, whilst a walking group set off in the 'mizzle' to traverse Norber Scar and on to Horton-in-Ribblesdale before returning via Austwick to recover from a soggy day.

The President's caving party walked up to the G.G. area to tackle Disappointment Pot, but after struggling for some time in the entrance series made the decision to leave the field to the water and silt deposits, and maybe return another day with some digging tools. "Dis." isn't entered too often these days, and quickly builds up quantities of silt which, whilst quite readily removable, make for a very difficult passage without a digging implement.. They then moved over the fellside to Christmas Pot where they had a satisfactory descent.

The other caving party comprising three fairly veteran members plus one novice had a moist but pleasant gentlemanly trip through Calf Holes/Browgill Cave, and then went for a libation at the 'Golden Lion' in Horton, where they spent a pleasant hour or so chatting to various other veteran cavers!

Another pair went off looking for a reputed meet of the Lunesdale Foxhounds which they failed to find in spite of the fact that they looked into dozens of pubs! Perhaps foxhounds have given up going

into pubs and have very inconsiderately taken to going up onto remote and inaccessible fellsides ! Who knows?

Our meet leader and his team provided us with large plates of chicken dinner and an enormous 'bread & butter pudding' which they constructed on the spot with their own fair hands, and which was very well received, all washed down with copious quantities of 'vin plonk'

After dinner, Harvey showed us a few of the slides that were taken during the recent Omani caving expedition.

Sunday morning wasn't really much better than Saturday, so some members went off home quite early. Not everyone, though. Some keen cave explorers went to have a look at one of their current 'digs' to at least update themselves on the situation there whilst the President and two others went off to Dentdale for a fellwalk in the drizzle which persisted for most of the day. Others also probably went off doing other things that must go unreported because your scribe simply doesn't know about them.

In spite of the poorish weather it was an enjoyable, if not especially significant meet. Everyone got out on the hill to do something at least, and there was much discussion about the developing plans to extend Lowstem.

W.C.I.Crowther

Attendance:

The President - Tim Josephy

Ken Aldred
Tim Bateman
Bruce Bensley
Alan Clare (G)
Derek Clayton
Tan Crowther
Mike Hartland
David Hick
Harvey Lomas
David Martindale
Alister Renton
Graham Salmon
John Schofield
David Smith
Frank Wilkinson
Philip Wilkinson (G)