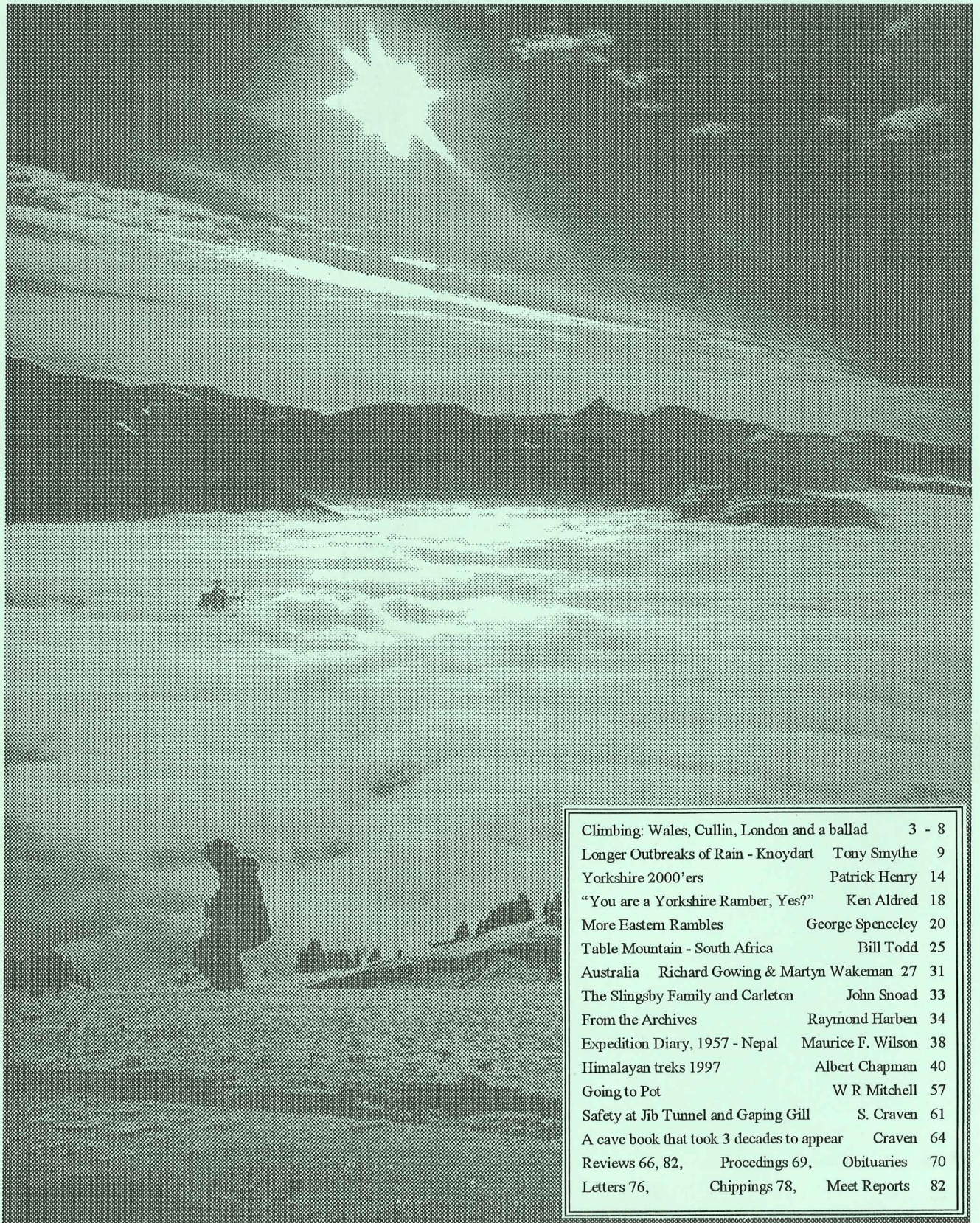


# Yorkshire Rambler



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Moving gear and covers by helicopter, to near the entrance of the Mirollda cave, Montagne de Criou, Samoens, Haute Savoie

## Foreword by the President

As I sit down to write this page I realise why the Presidential term is only two years. By the third and fourth forewords it becomes more and more difficult to find inspiration...

It shouldn't be that difficult really, because a glance through the index reveals a truly global range of articles, including a report on the world record breaking descent of the Mirola cave system. Of particular interest to me, and I am sure to others who completed the Yorkshire 2000s six years ago is Patrick Henry's account of his walk. It seems he too has joined the select band of people who, having reached the summit of Middle Tongue wish never to see it again in this life!

Once again could I make a plea for meet report writers to try to get them out early, whilst memory is still fresh.

Enjoy your reading!



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necessarily those of the Y.R.C nor its Officers.

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# A Wet Day In Wales

## Tim Josephy

August is high summer in Wales. The rain comes down in stair rods, but at least they are warm stair rods. Lou didn't want to walk because he had a broken big toe and I didn't want to climb because I had a broken arm.

So that was why we were strolling up the Snowdon Ranger path on our way to Cloggy. At least I was strolling, Lou was stumping along, with one foot in a mountain boot and the other in a cut away trainer - admittedly an all terrain trainer. The landscape slowly merged into the grey cloud but there was no danger of us getting lost; all we had to do was follow the remains of Lou's disintegrating plaster cast back to the car park.

We crossed into Cwm Brynog and fetched up under the Far West Buttress of Cloggy. Waterfalls poured dismally out of green chimneys and livid mosses sprouted from every crack. Lou cheered up noticeably. Somewhere in the middle lay the start of Primitive Route, a V Diff (yes, there really is a V Diff on Cloggy!) the description of which we had found in Herbert Canis original Snowdon Guide.

I led off (why do I always fall for it?) up slabs streaming with water. All was going well until I stopped to put a runner in. I had racked our few pieces of gear on my right as usual, with no thought of how I'd undo a karabiner with my broken arm; the resultant feat of balance and twisting would not have disgraced a member of the Royal Ballet. We progressed up the cliff-details of the route have thankfully drowned - successfully proving once again that Gore-tex is the finest material known to man for absorbing ten times its own weight in water.

Eventually we arrived at the foot of an overhanging comer some ten feet high. Near the top an ancient piece of tat hung down, with green slime dripping off the end. The guide airily said "a steep comer is passed on small holds." Now several things should be understood about the pioneers: one, they were extremely economical with the truth, two, they had no morals at all when it came to getting up routes and, three, they were astonishingly inventive in circumventing difficulties. Naively though, we tried to climb the comer. I couldn't pull on the tat. Lou could pull on the tat but couldn't jam his foot in the comer. Impasse. Lou tension traversed left across a slab towards a grassy crack. There was no way of climbing it without inserting the toes in the crack. As he rose, so did the pitch of the strange ululating noise emanating from his mouth, passing top C and disappearing beyond human healing. All over Snowdonia sheepdogs raced out and brought flocks down from the fells.

The last pitch fell to me. Visibility was by now only a few yards and all that could be seen was a rib leading up to overhangs vaguely discernible in the mist. On reaching the overhangs I found a cunning traverse to easy ground but by walking back over the pitch I was able to run the rope to make it seem I had climbed a particularly repulsive chimney. Sadly I had reckoned without Lou's warped sense of enjoyment and he declared it the best pitch of the climb.

Sitting in casualty at Bangor Hospital later that day, waiting for Lou to have his foot replastered ("I went to sleep in the bath, nurse, honest!") I pondered on the stupidity of it all. Still if we hadn't done it we would only have watched the football or something and you could hardly write an article about that!

## My Best Mountain Day...

A Traverse of the Cuillin Main Ridge

F David Smith

Chance plays a very important part in ones life. In 1947 a college friend, Harold Wiseman, persuaded me to accompany him on a climbing holiday with him in Glen Brittle, With some trepidation I agreed to the adventure, for that is what it was to me. In those days it was a twenty six hour journey by bus, train, boat and finally a bus down the green road from Sligahan to Glen Brittle Lodge. The total cost for the nine days including transport was the enormous sum of £ 9:3:9d. This was my initiation to mountaineering and to something much more important than money or career for it was for me the source of so many wonderful friendships and endless happy memories,

Looking back over the fifty years I have had the good fortune to have enjoyed many trips to the Scotland and the Alps, to Wales and Ireland, to Norway and Nepal but still for me the Cuillin hold pride of place. Every weekend in the summer of 1952 Douglas Spray, a one time YRC Member, and I would be seen on the Lakeland crags with a view to a return visit to Skye and an attempt on the Cuillin Traverse; which was to become my best mountain day.

We stayed at the Glen Brittle Post office, which from early days has been run by the Chisholme family. Our decision to attempt the ridge was well received until we suggested a 4am start, there was no question that they would get up to provide us with breakfast. Morning of the attempt dawned fine and in the kitchen we found little notes telling us where breakfast things were to be found. There were double packed lunches waiting for us on the table. At

4.05am we commenced the trudge across the boggy moor towards Gars-bhienn in the semi-darkness along the Corie Lagan path passing Corr'a'Grunnda and Coire nan Laoch and up the steep slopes of that western most summit.

Gars-Bhienn top was reached at 6.20, still only half light but we enjoy the solitude and the dramatic views down to Loch Coruisk, It had decided to spend 5 minutes on each top taking a photographic record and to relax. SgUIT a' Choire Bhig and SgUIT nan Eag were soon behinds us then came the rock castle of Caisteal a' Garbh-choire climbed by a moderate rock climb on superb rock, this provided us with a pleasant interlude before scrambling along the ridge to SgUIT na Da Bheinn which provided a warm up for the more exciting section, Sgurr Alasdair to the Inaccessible Pinnacle.

One of the high-lights of the day must be the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap. First pinnacle is climbed on good holds before a 30ft abseil into the gap followed by a 80ft polished chimney, about V Diff, and is probably the hardest part of the expedition. But for someone brought up on Yorkshire gritstone, it did not present a problem SgUIT Alastair is not actually on the main ridge but it would have been wrong not to include this, the highest summit.. We ascended this mountain by its South East ridge, The spectacular Great Stone Shoot can be seen wending its way down to Come Lagan. I had memories of the 1500ft scree-run I made in four minutes by this route on my first visit in 1947. We proceeded to SgUIT Thearlaich by its west wall, up a groove before an interesting scramble to the main ridge,

The descent is by a crest to the Bealach Mhic Coinnich has sheer drops on both sides. From this bealach leads to a short

but step wall and Collies Ledge. We decided that the formidable, though not especially difficult, Kings Chimney offered a more exciting route. The previous time I climbed it I remember water ran down my sleeves and into my boots; but this time it was mercifully dry. All this took a further 50mins, then followed a loose rocky section leading to An Stac. Our youthful and purist approached to the mountains demanded that we kept to the ridge at all times taking in every little top despite the fact that they could be easily bypassed on obvious paths. I am sure we made the expedition as difficult as it was possible, but it is a very special group of mountains and it needs to be savoured. It was 10.25 before we actually reached the shattered summit of An Stac, quickly followed by the spectacular Inaccessible Pinnacle by its North East Ridge, then the 40ft abseil down the West ridge by the classic method, Figures of eight and the other aids had not been invented in those days.

Sgurr Dearg, from which the celebrated pinnacle projects, was our dinner stop, we decided on a thirty minute rest. We consumed between us one of the two small tin of mandarin oranges, the only liquid that we had brought with us. What had become for us a tradition, was to feed the seagulls with the revolting black crust of the 'Scottish' loaf from our sandwiches before leaving the summit taking a path at right angles to the obvious but dangerous false ridge to the light. Sgurr na Banachdich has four tops, which has some easy but exposed scrambling en route; this took us 25 minutes which was followed by our obligatory 5minute photo session and then off again to Sgurr Thormaoid by its steep west flank. We continued along the exposed ridge to Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh and along its knife edge crest, possibly the finest arete in Britain, The 'Black

Notch' of Eag Dubh is then encountered where one can look down the famous An Doilus gap which provides a route between Coriusk and Glen Brittle,

Next comes Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, before descending to the top of a steep gully named Deep Gash, with more steep scrambling on loose rock to the middle summit; the final top was easier. Descending now to Bealach na Glai Moire where an escape could be made. Things were going well and before us was the next major obstacle the triple summited Bidean Druim nan Ramb with its long tail stretching down to Coruisk, The easy South-West peak was the followed to the exposed slabs into a deep gap prior to ascending the Central Peak by a series of cracks. Descent from this top is the most confusing section of the whole ridge. The escape is by the unlikely north ridge, keeping to the crest and scrambling down to a steep step. An exposed gap comes at this point. But concern is alleviated by good views of the Harta Corrie and Glen Harta adding to the trip expedition.

Without any real problem Bealach Harta is reached and then along a good ridge to An Caisteal. An exciting jump across a steep sided notch adds more tension. It was then 2.05pm the weather was holding up well, just a few wisps of mist came and went. The whole ridge could then be seen and it was now nearer to the finish than the start, so morale was indeed high. Sgurr na Bhainich was just 10 minutes ahead followed by the disappointing summit of Bruach na Frithe and on to Sgurr a' Fioill Choire where water can be found, but we had no luck.

The incredible prow of the Bastieir Tooth appeared an hour later. The usual route taken is Naismiths but we climbed it by a much more demanding route; Shadbolts Chimney, This route bores its

way into the inside of the tooth. The best way to start it is in a spread eagled stance facing outwards, or at least that is how I overcame the awkward start to the climb. We sat on top of the Tooth from 3.50 - 4.05 in sunshine to enjoy the remains of our sandwiches before the last lap to Sgurr nan Gillean. It only took :five minutes to climb Am Basteir by way of a loose nose and over an overhanging boulder.

The spectacular West Ridge of Gillean is a delightful last phase, Then came the Gendarme on the crest of the ridge (this parted company with the ridge in 1986). Once clear of the Gendarme and the shoulder above, a fine crest is followed to a narrow arete which is reached through a hole in the ridge. Perfect rock lead to the summit which we gained at 4.35pm Neither of us felt inclined to take in the Pinnacle Ridge but it would have really made a 'day of it'. Descending the track to Sligahan we discovered a bottle filled by a single drip of pure crystal water, without doubt there has never been such a drink. We were down in Sligahan at 6.20, the Glen Brittle bus normally leaves at 6.30, but our luck had run out, there was no bus, because it was Thursdays and the bus time table said 4.30pm

We telephoned the Post Office and discovered PO Staff, Mary, the proprietor and her cousin Ruby, a descendant of Rob Roy were arranging a special dinner of venison for us. But before that was the tiresome trudge over the Bealach back to Glen Brittle which we completed in good time despite our tiredness. We sat down to our dinner at 9.30pm Tired, yes, very-happy most definately. The top to top time was IOhoUl's 15 minutes which we learned afterwards that it was a record, however we also learned that our record only lasted one week.

Twenty years later with Roger Allen and Richard Gowing the top to top time was Bh 50min. Almost forty years later with John Devenport we had to call a halt just before Gillean because of rain, a bad decision, the rain did not persist, though it was about 10.30 before we reached Sligahan. But increasing age and longer times did not detract from pleasure of the expedition.

The times:

Glen Brittle Post Office	405
Gars-Bhein	620
Sgurr at Choire Bhig	635
Sgurr nan Eag	700
Caisteal a'Gharbh-choire	729
Sgurr Dubh na Da Bhein	745
Sgurr Alasdair	845
Sgurr Thearlaich	900
SgUIT Mhic Coinnich	950
An Stac	10 25
Inaccessible Pinnacle	1035
Sgurr Dearg	10 45 - 11 15
Sgurr Banachdich	1140
Sgurr Thormaid	1150
SgUIT a' Greadaidh	1215
Sgurr at Mhaidaidh	12 35
Bidean Drium nan Ramh	125
An Caisteal	205
Sgurr na Bhaimich	215
Brauch na Frith	230
Sgurr a' Fionn Choire	245
Basteir Tooth	350 - 4 05
Am Basteir	410
SgUIT nan Gillean	435 - 4 45
Sligahan	620 - 640
Glen Brittle Post Office	930
Total	17h25min



Sgur Beag, Sgurr Nan Gillean, Am Basteir, Sgurr a'Fionn Choire and Sgurr a'Bhasteir from Sligahan

## A Climber's Farewell

*A man, while walking home from work,  
Saw something gravely untoward.  
His house stood there completely dark;  
And fear transfixed him like a sword.*

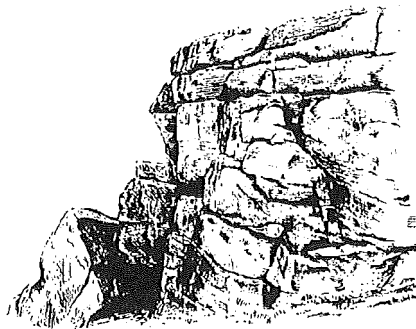
*He went up to his daughter's room  
And found her hanging from a beam.  
Taking his knife he cut her down  
And on her breast these words were seen.*

*My love was for a climbing chap  
Who sailed away to mountains wild.  
He swore he'd only gone to make a map,  
But perished, leaving me with child.*

*So all you climbers list to me.  
A maiden's love is hard to find.  
And if you find one good and true  
Remember what she means to you.*

*And when you roam on mountain high  
And see a move that might go free,  
Look well before you have a try,  
The view may be the last you'll see.*

**With** sincere acknowledgements to the  
'unknown soldier' who composed the original.



The Calf Face



## An Afternoon Climbing in North London

Arthur Tallon

My daughter phoned me on Saturday night, November 1997, from her home in Brighton. 'I am going climbing at Finchley tomorrow with some friends. Do you want to come?'

I ought to explain that when my two daughters were young they showed no interest in mountains or climbing or camping or indeed any of the things that had interested me when I was younger. I know that Fenella (the daughter in question) occasionally went with some friends to climb on indoor climbing walls. To be invited to join three people all about half my age I took it as a compliment and I agreed to meet them at the climbing wall in Finchley. I was also pleased that Fenella actually wanted to share her new hobby with me.

For those readers who have difficulty with the geography of the country south of Rotherham I should point out that Finchley is situated deep in north London.

It is only about 15 miles from where I live in Epping and on a Sunday a mere 40 minutes away by car. The first half of the journey was through Epping forest which at this time of the year looks magnificent with the Autumn colours, then it was through less interesting scenery in Walthamstow, turn left at Tottenham, up Seven Sisters Road and I was there at the Castle Climbing Centre, Finchley.

The building was originally used as a pumping station or processing plant to do with a nearby reservoir but has now been developed as an indoor climbing centre. There was free parking, always a plus point for any

London venue and the entrance door carried a notice of the dangers of climbing as a sport. So far, so good! Inside on the ground floor there was a branch of a well known London climbing equipment shop and lots of children being taught to climb on fairly short artificial climbing walls. A sign pointed to the Reception up a system of metal stairs which ascended the equivalent of some three storeys. The large room upstairs was the main climbing area and once one had become accustomed to the greyness of the place, the crowds and climbers, the noise and in spite of the height and length of the room, a feeling of claustrophobia; one had to be impressed with the planning and the layout of the facility.

When I spoke to the woman on the reception desk she asked me if I had coped with the stairs all right. I took this as a test of fitness to use the climbing wall rather than a reference to my age and shortage of breath at the time. She then went through the prices and arrangements and offered me an OAP concession reducing the cost of a visit from £6 to £2.50; almost as good as the reduction that I get on my allotment from Epping Town Council. She did not feel the need to question my claim to be over 65 - a sure sign to me of the onset of Old Age in myself! I had to fill in a registration form and sign to state that I knew how to tie on a rope, how to put on a harness and how to use a belaying device. I was able to do this having been on an instructor's course for the ATC to qualify me to take cadets climbing and hill walking, so I could honestly sign to say that I know about 'figures of eight' and 'sticht plates' and how to use them.

I had to hire a harness from the shop in the basement. This cost me another

£1.50. No concessions this time! I had my own rock boots having bought them some years ago and used them in the Lake District with the ATC when we did some top rope climbing on a small crag in the Helvellyn area. This had made them look used and made me feel more experienced.

One side of the climbing area had a climbing wall about 15 ft high and a padded floor (there is no way down from this wall other than by climbing down, jumping or falling off) This was the boulder area where one can climb without a rope and generally loosen up while waiting for a climb on the main climbing area on the other wall. I was told that this area is also used for 'bouldering competitions'. At one end of the main wall was an area reserved for 'lead climbing'. The angle of this ranged from vertical to seriously overhanging with running belays fixed at close intervals up the climbs. The climbs were graded and the holds colour coded so that any combination of difficulty could be attempted. The rest of the wall had top ropes at around two metre intervals and every rope was in use. ('The busiest Sunday of the year so far!" said the lady on reception). I was instructed on the procedures of climbing walls by Angela who is a competitive climber, i.e. she enters competitions and last year was the South of England Ladies Bouldering Champion. when I was younger I considered myself to be competitive but not like this! What a difference 40 years makes to the climbing scene!.

When a rope became vacant my new mends leaped in and claimed it. This was a vertical wall in a corner so, when it was my turn, I was able to use both walls and to my delight and surprise I was able to complete the climb, if not with ease, at least with

enjoyment and without too many long pauses. After that we got a rope on another vertical wall and I managed a slightly more difficult climb on this. Next we tried a near vertical slab which proved more difficult partly because there was some competition for the best holds from the young man on the adjacent rope but mainly because my arms were getting tired. There is no respite on these very steep walls and there is a need for more upper body strength than I possess at the moment.

I came away feeling pleased at having passed a pleasant afternoon with my daughter and her mends and having proved to myself that in spite of living miles away from any real crags for the last 36 years (time really does fly) I can still manage to make progress towards the top of a climb on fairly small holds and also enjoy the experience albeit on an artificial climbing wall in north London!

What I would like to do now is to visit the centre during the week when it is not so crowded but I need a fellow OAP or someone else who is free during the week to go with. (You need someone to hold the rope and lower you down after the climb). I cannot think of anyone in Epping who would be free during the week and who would also be willing to have a go at climbing or at least hold the end of my rope. Perhaps I will have to put an advert in the next Saga magazine along the lines of 'climbing companion (m/f) wanted by Epping pensioner. GSOH required together with enough strength to lower a 12 stone climber down the climbing wall in a reasonably controlled fashion. Transport provided'. Or perhaps it would be easier to encourage my daughter to take me climbing again.

## Longer Outbreaks of Rain

Tony Smythe

As I sit in my van at Kinlochhoun listening to the machine gun rattle of gusts of rain and mulling over the previous 36 hours, I could give this piece the title, 'Trench Foot in Knoydart'. This peninsular must be the wettest place in the mid-west. It wasn't as though it rained huge amounts - just enough to keep an anorak on, hood up, most of the time - it was the splosh factor. That rich green, thigh-deep grass concealing an all-absorbing sponge underfoot, extending right up to two and a half thousand feet. Nice for the myriads of frogs, not so good for leather boots.

However, to go back to the beginning. I had not previously ventured along the 25 mile single track road from Invergany. Next time I shall keep the speed down to save the vehicle contents being flipped like a pancake at various points.

Mrs. Margaret Potter at the farm at KH took a couple of quid off me for parking, but I couldn't grumble. She chatted cheerfully and noted my Reg. No. and checked my likely length of stay, 'for the safety' she said. I couldn't help feeling though that it only meant that if I came to grief my corpse might be searched for sooner rather than later! It was still early September but cold windy weather with hailstorms was forecast - good for keeping midges grounded but definitely unfavourable for waiting to be rescued.

I set off at 7.20 next morning with 3 days' provisions and a tent (more about this joke later). The seven mile path alongside Loch Houm to Barrisdale has plenty of interest - crofts down on the seashore, herons at

frequent intervals suggesting that the fishing is so good each bird is settling for less territory than customary, and a few ups and downs to test the fitness of the intrepid wilderness seeker with his big pack.

Barrisdale is a flat open glen making an estuary with Loch Houm. The sense of peace and solitude is wonderful. Cloud hung low denying me a view of 'Larven' (Ladhar Bheinn) described as one of the finest mountains in Scotland, with views from it among the best in the land. Ian the Ghillie assured me that no stalking was taking place that day so I decided to head first for a pair of peaks which might be affected by this activity another day - Luinne Bheinn and Meall Buidhe, which lie to the south and make a good circuit from the pass of Mam Barrisdale. On the sheltered side of the pass I pitched my tent - sheltered however, is a relative term, I ought to explain that my tent is more of an embarrassment than accommodation for the night. I think of it as a 'cornflakes packet' tent - 2 tokens plus £4.99 (plus postage and packing). I wasn't sure that it would survive the hefty gusts and stowed its contents in a dustbin bag as a precaution.

Within 5 minutes of setting off a squall of rain and cloud drove in, but just as my morale had reached a low ebb the peaks cleared - it was going to be one of those variable days and well worth perseveling. The first peak, the 'Loony Bin', I reached in more thick cloud but potential navigational cockups on the descent to the col were saved by a perfectly timed clearance. After that, ten thousand Munro seekers had beaten a groove in the peat between the crags up to Meall Buidhe and its dinky cairn then I made my escape down the grassy Coire

Tore. Mistake! This was an exhausting ankle-wrenching battle with lumpy soggy ground deeply buried in lush grass and my temper was hardly improved when an hour later I found that the tent, still standing was full of water. I scooped it up (the tent) and retreated to the bothy at Banisdale. The only other occupants were a German couple and a girl called Lucy who had run out of food and gazed at my supplies so wistfully that I shared some with her.

This was the first time I had used a bothy. As shelter for the night they're an awful lot better than being outside if it's blowing and raining, especially if you have only a tent like mine, but the accommodation was austere - no fire (removed for 'insurance reasons') and bunks a mere hard platform like a mortuary slab on which you arrange your mattress (I had none, having expected to be cushioned by best Knoydart turf). However, after such a strenuous day I slept well - although the following afternoon when I called to collect my tent etc. and was packing up completely on my own I heard footsteps in the sealed loft above. Strangely I did not feel scared, just curious]

My second day started clear and after donning clammy wet boots and clothes I set off for 'Larveu'. A stalkers' path leads conveniently round into Coire Dorcail but I decided against the classic traverse of Stop a Chearcail first as it looked wet, greasy, steep and honible. I headed for the easier north-east ridge, although the bum crossing was excitingly acrobatic. The summit was magnificent - a roof top from which a magical clearance gave me a view of the Cuillin. Then 5 minutes later I was battered by a hailstorm that nearly

blew me off the ridge, a real taste of winter.

So, eventually, later that day there I was on the path back to Kinlochhourn, soggy, numb from a fairly intensive 36 hours and counting my steps in twenties on the up parts of the ups and downs. I must go again in the summer.

---

## For members who like to go out in the wet

Next time you pass through a pine forest spare a thought for the not so humble pine cone.

It may hold the key secret to a fabric which could change its breathability depending upon your temperature and sweat rate. Research has shown that the scales of the cone bend when wet due to bundles of fibre "cables" within an outer shell and having different rates of hygroscopic expansion function like a bi-metallic strip, "The difference lies in the way the cells are constructed. The fibre cables are composite tubes in which stiff cellulose microfibrils are wound around a core. The angle at which they are wound is the key. If the winding angle is changed the amount of water they absorb is changed. It should be possible to mimic the pine cone by making an artificial fibre in which two different fibres having different rates of hygroscopic expansion are co-extruded, If the temperature changed the fibre would bend like a bi-metallic strip, thus clothing made from these fibres would change its breathability." The research did not say whether you will bend left, right, forward, back or sway gently in circular motion.

Found by Alan Linford in Professional Engineering, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1997.

## Moving Mountain - Roving Road

Bill Todd

How a self styled Lakeland expert  
got his come-uppance.

Waking up in Eskdale on a sunny January morning it seemed a natural thing to go for Halter Fell. The day would be too short for the Scafell Group but Halter should be manageable even with a 4 pm dusk. I had been up twice before, albeit from the other side, so did not expect any route-finding difficulty. A glance at the map, a super duper waterproof, tear resistant 1-25,000 showed a track running south east past the fell then a branch going left to the summit. All we had to do was to get onto this track from Boot. I had to turn the map over to see Boot, where we were staying, but it looked reasonably straightforward.

This impression was confirmed when Tony Foster, our host, said *"Oh yes, go down to the Church then up river to Doctor Bridge and you'll be alright. You've been around a long time and not got lost yet."*

So from Doctor Bridge we turned light for Low Birker then found a path uphill past a wood with spectacular Birker Force over on the right. As we rose Juliet noticed what was coming into view. *"What's that Billy?" "That'll be Scafell". "What's that?". "That's Bow Fell, a perfect cone from this dale"* cetera and cetera me showing off my knowledge for all I'm worth. The path developed into a wonderful set of zigzags climbing the fell side relatively easily as ID Crag, Esk Pike and the Crinkles came into

view, all with just a sprinkling of snow.

In due course, as expected, the track turned south and before long a rocky eminence was noticed on our left front. *"That'll be Harter Fell"* I said. *"Let's go straight to it and cut off a corner."* This we did but as we gained height another hill came into view some distance away to our left. *"It must be Grey Friar, the only thing it can be"*.

So ignoring 'Grey Friar' we continued toward the rocky height and to my joy soon joined a cairned track coming in from our left. This confirmed my opinion that we were really heading for Harter Fell. The trouble was that everything we topped had another, higher thing behind it and at the third disappointment I looked at my watch and the weather. It was 1.15, the mist seemed to be creeping towards us from Bow Fell, and I remembered my duty to get the party off the hill safely. So we turned and followed the cairned path back, I was hoping it would go to Hard Knott Pass. The mystery hill was on our right now, but I gave it no further thought and followed the path till we got to a field gate with a 'No Access' notice. A diversion left brought us to Penny Hill Farm, Doctor Bridge and home. Funny enough the mystery mountain was still visible from Boot and Tony's answer, when I asked him about it was *"Harter Fell"*.

When I had wiped the egg off my face, I realised that I had been three fifths of a mile, a line on the map, out in my map reading. I had been looking at vertical line 19 on the top fold and gone straight to line 20 after turning the map over.

The next day I would sort thing out properly. Juliet fancied a trip to IDgill Head to see some of the Wasdale fells we had been up in the last four years. No problems there, no folds on the map, indeed no map required, there was only the old Corpse Road going over Bum Moor to Wasdale and hadn't I been over it in 1951 when the world was young?

The day was dry and clear as we crossed the bridge and toiled up the zigzags of the old drove road out of Boot. On the open moor were the stone circles I had photographed forty six years before. This time they got colour photography. Further on the path got unpleasant and icy so we left it and skirted Boat How till we could see Burnmoor Tarn.

After coffee a gruelling ascent brought us to IDgill Head with fine views of Wasdale to go with lunch. The straight line on the map leading to the col between IDgill Head and Scafell is misleading. The way turns and twists but you do get there and we turned right for Eskdale. The track goes past Burnmoor Tarn and Lodge then eases down toward the valley. Juliet said *"We didn't come this way"*. *"Of course we did"* said I *"There is only one route over this moor and this is it"*. *"Well, where are the stone circles?"* *"Over on the right here"*. But they weren't.

Suddenly the ambience changed. The evening chill became colder and the gathering dusk became sinister. The hitherto friendly landscape took on a menace. Had we been translated to 2000 BC? Should we have made a sacrifice at the sacred circles? There was nothing for it but to continue on the path which got narrower and closer to the valley on our left. *"When*

*we came up we were not so near to that farm"*, said Juliet, rightly, I kept quiet.

We were nearly at the village when I realised how I had been wrong. We debauched through an insignificant looking gate onto the zigzagging drove road we had gone up in the morning. There was no sign post or other indication that it was the Corpse Road. In the event we enjoyed a better day than if we had gone up the Corpse Road. Perhaps there is a providence that looks after conceited old hill goers provided their love of the hills is genuine.

Our short break finished with a walk through the rain via Stanley Gill Force to Devoke Water and back by Forge Bridge. At eleven miles this was our longest walk and longest day. Even then we had a small hiatus before finding the footbridge at Gill Force. It was a good job it was still light enough to cast around a bit as the stepping stones by the Church were well under water.

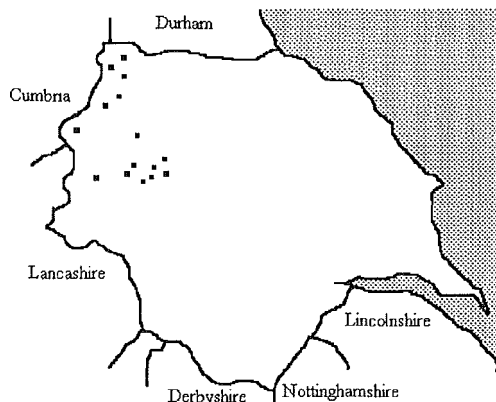


# Yorkshire 2000'ers

## Patrick Henry

Every May I become afflicted by a primitive urge to go on an intemperately long walk. I recognise the symptoms and have tried to suppress them; I have even fancied myself cured, but the urge has only been dormant. When I limp home and contemplate the wreckage of what had been a perfectly respectable pair of feet I always vow that I will never do it again, but, having a selective memory I recall only the pleasure and blot out the pain.

A couple of years ago I decided with my brother-in-law, Peter, who can be persuaded to do anything, to attempt what are rather grandly known as the Yorkshire Two Thousanders, although all the tops are within the North Yorkshire boundary. The walk follows a rough circle and the distance, I am told, is "roughly" 115 miles. I take it that the "roughly" allows for becoming lost in cloud or blundering hopelessly in the dark wondering whether you are on Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent, Whernside or any of the three. The walk passes through much familiar country, the Three Peaks, and the hills of Wharfedale as well as the almost untrodden ways between the head of Bishopdale and Dodd Fell, and the remote and beautiful country to the north of Swaledale. The going underfoot is good for much of the way but there are longish stretches of the very worst that Yorkshire has to offer - high, almost flat and featureless expanses of tussocks, peat hags and heather which sap the energy and across which you crawl like an ant on wrinkled velvet. We were very fortunate to hit the middle of a long rainless spell, as I think wet feet and



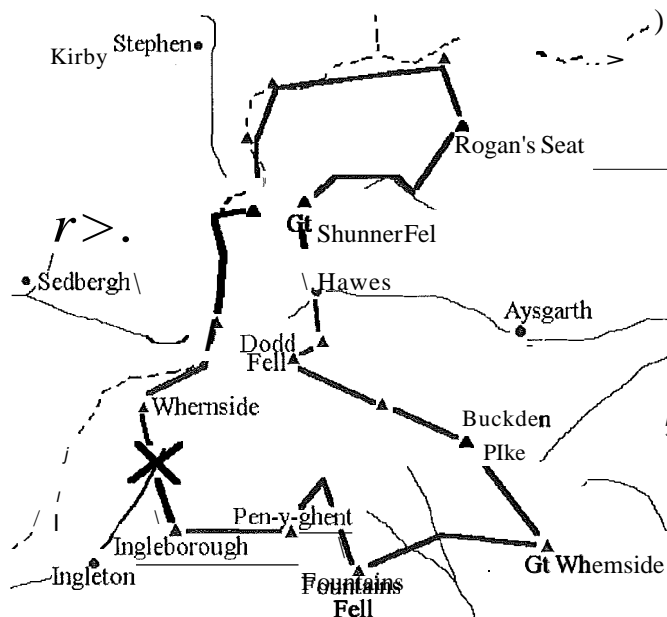
waterlogged ground would have defeated us.

I decided to attempt it, **if** not in two days, then two unbroken sessions. I realised that it must involve walking through at least one night and chose midsummer night when they will tell you the sun barely dips below the horizon and that you can read the telephone directory at midnight, though I know better having spent the early hours of the morning stumbling around in inky blackness.

I decided that it would help to choose a familiar and straightforward stretch of country for the night time section and what better than the long ridge of Great Whernside, down to the head of Coverdale and the length of Buckden Pike to the head of Bishopdale, guided by an obliging wall for much of the route. Although, as the route is circular, we could have started at any point I calculated that **if** we were to start at the Hill Inn at three in the afternoon and walk to the East it would bring us to Kettlewell at nightfall.

We left the Hill Inn at 3.00pm on 21st June. The first part was easy and Ingleborough and Simon Fell were soon behind us as we raced through Horton over Pen-y-ghent; Plover Hill, Fountains Fell and Darnbrook Fell followed, and in failing light we dropped into Litton and straight into

the pub followed by clouds of midges intent on draining our last drop of blood. So confident was I at this point that I was wondering whether the walk was too easy and should we have attempted something rather more challenging? Had I been right to drag Peter 300 miles from his comfortable home in Dorset simply to romp over a few paltry hills? We met a party of other walkers in the pub who had walked from Amcliffe, and we breezily mentioned that we had come from the Hill Inn and that our next stop would be Muker.



Rejoining the midges waiting in the car park, we set off up Birks Fell all of 200 ft. We soon shook off all the midges who, deciding after all not to join us for the next leg of the journey, turned back to Litton, leaving us to walk the length of Old Cote Moor Top.

We came to Kettlewell around midnight and still bursting with optimism, set off up Hag Dyke to the top of Great Whemside, and as we laboured over the shoulder an uneasy feeling came over me that perhaps this

wouldn't be quite such an easy walk after all, and that we should rein in and start to pace ourselves for the long hours stretching ahead. The fact that Great Whemside is shaped like the back of a whale and has several summits, each indistinguishable from the other in the dark, is no help to navigation, but with the help of a compass before too long we arrived at the head of Coverdale and set off over Buckden Pike.

For the first time Peter, who had been giving off noises like an Italian coffee machine for some time, announced rather gloomily that only a complete blood transfusion and three weeks in intensive care with round the clock nursing would save his life, but after a mixture of threats and cajolery he agreed to carry on. It is always darkest before the dawn and, as we approached the top of Buckden Pike, the sun rose on a glorious day with absolutely clear views west to the Lake District and east to the North Yorkshire Moors. Peter was revived by a five minute sleep on a patch of damp heather and the remains

of a sandwich from the day before. I woke him with a reminder that life is not all pleasure; he leapt to his feet and set off with indecent haste to the head of Bishopdale. We then started what proved to be the most exhausting and dispiriting part of the journey.

On the map the section of country between the head of Bishopdale and Dodd Fell looks innocent enough. The land is flat, free of any prominent features and rises to barely 2,000ft, at a point I had never heard of previously and hope never to again, called, I



think, Middle Tongue. There are no tracks and it is an almost flat expanse of tussock and heather with hags and long *fulTOWS* in the peat. There is nothing more tiring than walking across such country either knee deep in heather, goose stepping over tussocks or weaving between peat hags. The top itself is insignificant, a single white pillar of concrete like a whale's tooth on a flat moor visible from miles around. Walking towards it is like marching on the spot, as time seems to stand still and one gets no closer. By now the day had become hot, the slight tenderness in my feet had become much more painful and the twingeing pain in both knees distinctly uncomfortable. Each ridge promised to be Dodd Fell but proved to be something less significant, and miles still lay ahead.

We eventually reach Dodd in mid morning, the weather still glorious and the hill covered with cotton grass. From there was a short step to Drumaldrace and then down into Hawes to a cafe serving chips with everything, giving off a rich smell of frying which I had until then always passed with a shudder. It was after midday when we set off footsore, hot and tired for Lovely Seat and from there down by the Butter Tubs and on to Shunner. The squelchy, liquid peat which usually coats Shunner was, in the middle of this glorious summer, dry and springy and having finished the long slog to the top, the gentle decline to Muker in the cool of the evening was a delight. We must have looked a sorry sight as we walked into the pub as a woman, clearly deeply moved by our pitiable condition, gave up her seat to me. A pint of beer followed rapidly by two more and a plate of sausages had a magical effect, reviving me like a watered flower.

We were to spend the night in a camping caravan which we had left the day before in the car park in Muker, and I barely remember removing my boots before falling asleep. I woke early feeling stiff and sore, realising that a day's walking of almost equal length lay before us. Having looked at my feet, both decorated with weeping blisters and swollen toes, I really doubted whether I would be able to finish; but half an hour's walking is marvellous therapy, and as we made our way up Swinner Gill the discomfort evaporated, I began to feel quite elated and almost persuaded myself that I was enjoying it.

Rogan's Seat is scarred by a hideous yellow road now, after some years, beginning to take on the colour of the surrounding moor. For once I was grateful for this road which led us from close to the top of Rogan's Seat most of the way to Water Crag. From there to Coldbergh Edge is a long stretch of remote, high and beautiful moorland where you may be lucky, as we were, to see a hunting short-eared owl. To the North you can just see traffic crawling nose to tail over Bowes Moor on the road from Scotch Corner to Penrith. There is no trace of any path here, the ground is rough and uneven making for painfully slow progress. The morning, fortunately, was clear and cool and above all the ground was dry and we were able to walk for much of the way along dry beds of peat between hags, sticking our heads up from time to time to make sure that we were heading in, more or less, the right direction.

The ridge of Coldbergh Edge seemed to get no nearer and it was already late morning. Had we continued at this speed we would never have finished but eventually, arriving at the top around noon, we came to a well

trodden path which led down to the very top of Swaledale where the land falls away sharply to Kirby Stephen. From there the climb to Mallerstang Edge is short and steep, but the remainder of the ridge is a long and undulating walk over good ground with magnificent views of Wild Boar Fell and the comforting knowledge that all 2,324ft of it are firmly planted in Cumbria. We now made rapid progress and it seemed no time at all before we dropped down from Sails in time for tea and scones at a farmhouse at the bottom of Swarth Fell Pike.

I now began to feel that we were in sight of home, and the short steep climb to the top of Swarth Fell Pike was easy, followed by the long gentle decline to the Moor Cock. I burst into the pub with my tongue hanging out longing for a drink, to find myself queuing at the bar behind a man ordering six of the most obscure cocktails for a party of women, and who couldn't make up his mind whether to have mild or bitter. I would cheerfully have strangled him to get to the front of the queue. It is a mistake to sit in a pub in the early evening when you still have several miles ahead of you, as it saps your enthusiasm and you have to fight down the urge to fall asleep. We left, however, after half an hour and about eight in the evening stopped at a telephone box to ring my family to say, with incurable optimism, that we had nearly finished and would be home soon. I had not reckoned with the hideous stretch of road which lay ahead, with a short but tiring walk to the top of Great Knoutberry Hill, then down past Dent Station, almost into Dent and onto the steep road up Deepdale. I was wearing the most comfortable boots with a padded insole but they presented no barrier to the unyielding surface of the road.

We reached the foot of Gragareth at about midnight hungry, thirsty and tired and for the first time the weather, which had been perfect until then, broke producing a gentle drizzle. Stumbling around on Gragareth in the dark is no fun at all. On clambering to the ridge I lay down exhausted, heedless of the gentle rain pattering down on us. This was the shortest night of the year and by the time we were down Gragareth and starting up Whemside it was almost daylight. Whernside was in cloud, and as we were now very tired seemed to go up for ever, but eventually we came to the top at about four in the morning leaving only the walk along the ridge, down the hideous wooden staircase on the North side, and a further mile to the Hill Inn. From there we drove back to the caravan in the car park at Muker, and this time I did not even remove my boots before my eyelids clanged shut and it was all over.

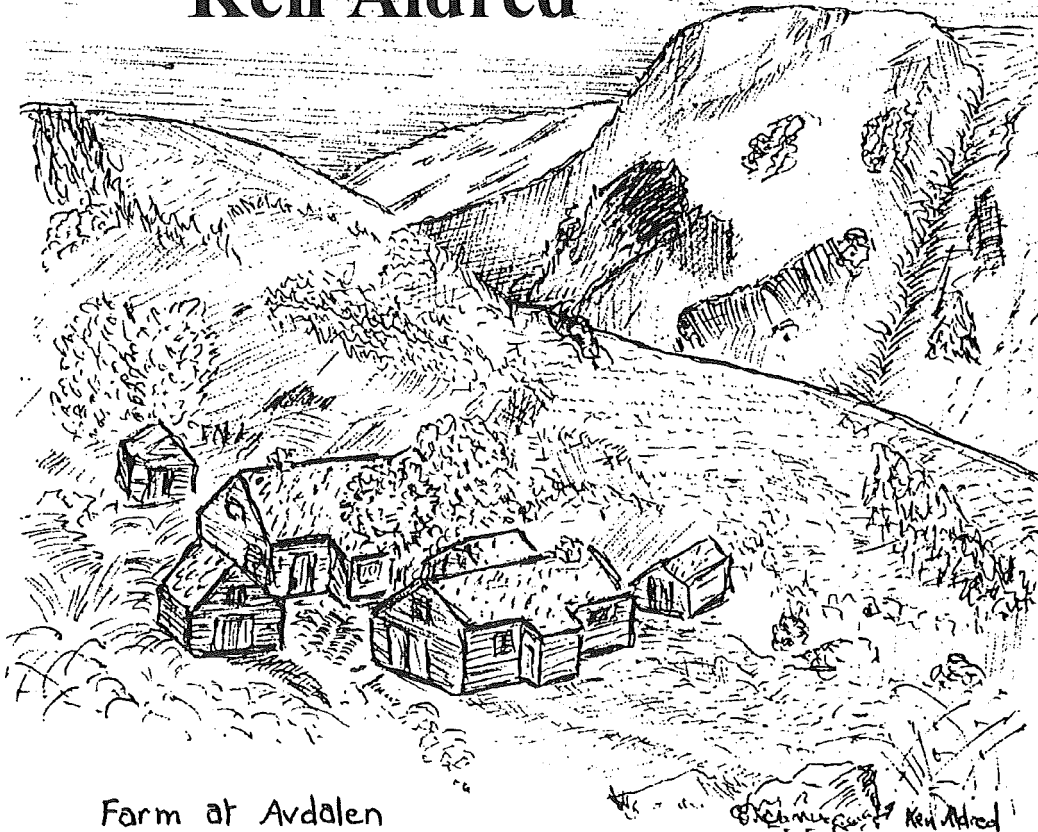
I thought I was reasonably fit to undertake this walk but I found it a major test of endurance, and the worst part was wear and tear on my long suffering feet which took a week to recover. Most people to whom I mentioned it thought I had finally taken leave of my senses, and that I should know better at my age. The walk took a total of 52 hours, which sounds a long time to walk 115 miles, but at times because of the difficulty of the country, we moved very slowly, and had the ground been wet we would have taken much longer. It is, however, a marvellously satisfying feeling to have walked up every top in Yorkshire over 2,000ft. I am told there are 26 - if I am wrong and have missed one out, please do not write and tell me - because I shall have to do it again!



# “You are a Yorkshire Rambler, Yes?”

Norway 1992

## Ken Aldred



Farm at Avdalen

While Derek Smithson, David Hall and Kjetil Tveranger went on to climb Storen I stayed overnight at the Stolsmaradalen Hut, feeling disappointed that I wasn't with them but being realistic enough to accept that I couldn't have kept up with them. A Norwegian couple were the only occupants of the main hut while I had the annexe to myself, so having had a reasonably comfortable night and after saying farewell to them at 8.00am I set off back to Ardal. The path ran through dwarf willow along the rim of the valley with a 600 metre drop on the left and a more gentle rise to the hills on the right. The overnight rain had resulted in the trees holding a lot of water so that in-between the

showers the going was just as wet with the low thin branches causing an uncomfortable obstruction for much of the way. The streams crossing the path were more full than during the previous afternoon, probably giving spectacular views of waterfalls when seen from the other side of the valley.

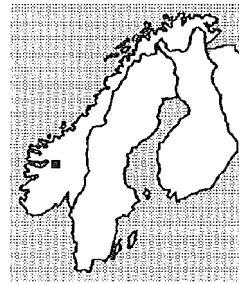
At 1.00pm I decided to stop for some lunch at the deserted farm at Avdalen. Leaning in the rain against a retaining wall near a small waterfall I had just begun to enjoy a tin of sardines when the farmhouse door opened and a face appeared. Although this was the first face seen in five hours it wasn't too surprising. However, the face disappeared without a word and it was

several minutes before it reappeared. This time the whole person made an appearance and slowly came across to me. He spoke. *"You are English, yes?"* As I was using a battered old Joe Brown rucksack and was wearing an English kagoule and boots the question didn't really surprise me so I merely nodded and answered, *"Yes"*. *"You are a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club?"* This question did surprise me. I wasn't wearing any YRC centenary clothing, not that it would have been visible under my waterproofs, and there was nothing to distinguish me from any other smartly dressed English walker. I did have a climbing rope slung over my rucksack but as it was nearly new it couldn't have been recognised as belonging to the club.

Again I nodded and muttered *'Yes'*. His next question, or statement, really did take me aback. *'Your name is Ken Aldred, yes?'* Imagine the situation, this was my first visit to Norway, we were more than half an hour from the nearest road and I'd seen no one since 8.00am yet here was someone who seemed to know a fair bit about me. My reply could have been so hesitant that my interrogator must have

thought that an explanation was necessary.

He was a local man who had been born at the farm on the 8th August 1962.



Some years ago the family had abandoned the farm but he and his twin sister were cleaning the main building in order to hold a 30th birthday party for family and friends the following week. On our way up to the Stolsmaradalen Hut the previous day we had stopped at the farm and had entered an outbuilding which was being renovated as accommodation for a local mountaineering club. (See Jotunheimen Avdalen, page 59 in the club handbook). Here, unbeknown to me, Kjetil had entered our names in the hut book. As the farmer knew Kjetil and had met both Dave and Derek on previous skiing trips he had merely eliminated them and arrived at my name as being the only stranger in the area.

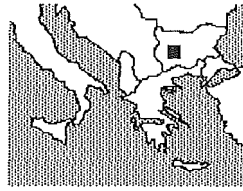
A very simple explanation but I was glad that the meeting was not at dusk when the Trolls appear in the forest.



Stolsmaradalen Hut, Photo: Ken Aldred

## More Eastern Rambles

George Spenceley



"Don't go to Bulgaria," people had advised. "The economy is in chaos, the infrastructure has collapsed, crime and corruption are rampant." Even the Yugoslav border control officers seemed doubtful and marvelled that one so old should be so foolish as to enter a country seemingly in such total disorder.

Certainly at the Bulgarian border we felt not all was well. Our enquiry about motor insurance was received with a nod of the head, meaning precisely the opposite of what one expects; a shake of the head here means yes. If not pre-warned this reversal of custom can wreck your sense of reality. We pointed to the insurance office across the road but there were more vigorous nods and indeed the place was barred and bolted as if unused for years. We never did get insured - this in a country of manic drivers.

We were, during 1997, to travel in our VW Camper round the Sofia ring road with its ill marked crater-like potholes in search of an official camp site. To camp wild in Bulgaria is to risk severe penalties although no doubt a few dollars would settle the matter. The camp site had ceased to exist, as had most of the others we were soon to learn. It was late and dark, but a friendly police officer - yes, they can be friendly, no longer the stony-faced officials we earlier had learnt to avoid - directed us to a guarded TIR park. Here we were given a corner beside a suburban railway platform, much to the curiosity of the early morning commuters.

The next morning we drove to the Rila Mountains, a popular area for both skiers and walkers. We were fortunate in having a large scale map of the range, with Cyrillic lettering of course, but with trails and mountain huts (or *hizhu*) all clearly marked. If you require the best available map of almost any obscure place in the world, Pacific island or Polar coastline, it's likely you'll find it in The Map Shop, unlikely situated in the small town of Upton-on-Severn, Their world coverage is enormous but while you may buy a map of Crozet Island or a town plan of Kano, of Romania, our next country, they had nothing. It seems the legacy of Ceausescu's paranoid security lingers on.

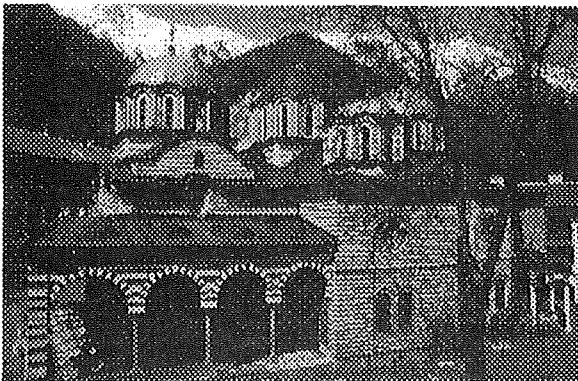
We drove to Borovets, once a place of lavish villas and hunting lodges, the exclusive playground of the rich, Later it was to become nationalised for the benefit of union leaders and Party members. Now in early June it was almost deserted, suffering between-season gloom The skiers had departed, the walkers and climbers had yet to come. Again it was to be a case of ambitious plans reduced to modest achievements. Rising steeply above the town are the slopes leading to Bulgaria's highest mountain: Mount Musala, 2925 metres; but the *hizhu* was closed and the snow soft and wet.

Instead we crossed to the valley of Cemi Iskar where village life, with its bullock carts and donkeys, has hardly changed through the centuries. At its head is another resort, Malyovitsa, likewise suffering between-season gloom By way of a reconnaissance we walked to the *hizhu* of the same name through several miles of silent pine forest; such is the rather gloomy prelude to any mountain walk in these

parts. When we did break out close to the hut it was to see extensive snowfields beyond, bounded on each side by substantial rock buttresses. These offer good rock climbing for we were later to see photographs laced with dotted lines marking the routes.

A poster beside the hut showed us that we were now on the European 'E4' trail starting an unthinkable way to the west in the Pyrenees. Who has the leisure and enough dedication to complete the lot, we wondered? Patrick Leigh-Fennor, absconding from King's School, Canterbury, had of course done a similar trek, and then we thought of Nicolas Crane's recent journey, Much harder on himself Crane walked Europe's mountain backbone from Cape Finisterre to Istanbul, splendidly described in *Clear Waters Rising*. Perhaps Crane had stayed in this very hut. We remembered too that Bulgaria was the only country where someone took a pot shot at him.

The classic trek from Malyovitsa is across the range to Rila Monastery. It was only when a very tired trekker slowly plodding toward us said that it had taken him five days to cross, and pointing to his knees indicated the depth of snow, did I accept that another ambition must be reduced to a more modest achievement.



Rila Monastery

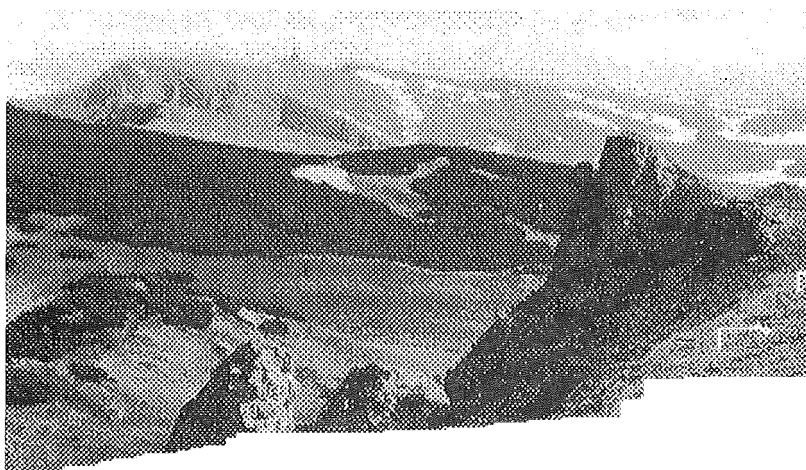
This more modest achievement was to be the summit of Sahtrovitsa, a good viewpoint but a mere 1650 metres and, if it was the first British ascent as almost certainly it was, it can only be because of its almost total insignificance among a profusion of peaks more glorious. Above the forest and on the lower pastures we met a shepherd who for some obscure reason was raking out molehills. Delighted and surprised to learn that we were English he warmly shook our hands, and did so again when we departed. The warmth and friendliness of the Bulgarian country people are qualities we have noted many times over the years.

A mountain range rather less in height but greater in length is the Stara Planina. This is the real backbone of the country, extending more than 500 miles from the Serbian border to the Black Sea. On the way to it we paused in Kazanlak to change money. The Balkanbank was closed but we met the English-speaking former manager, now the night-watchman. The bank had gone bust.

We camped at the summit of the Shipka Pass where, in 1877, a combined Russian and Bulgarian force had fought against the massive Ottoman army below, throwing boulders and even bodies at them when their ammunition was exhausted. The top of the Pass was a splendid base from which we made long excursions both east and west along the undulating ridge, following the waymarks for the European 'E3' trail. Here's another trans-continental route for anyone with a year or so to spare.

Border crossings in East Europe can be a prolonged ordeal. Crossing into a Baltic State a few years ago we found ourselves at the end of an almost stationary line of traffic 12 km

long. At another crossing a \$40 bribe was demanded. We had been warned of honific delays at the Romanian border and need for more bribes. In fact all went well except that we had to pay \$7 toll, \$5 for disinfection of vehicle wheels and, finally, \$6 ecological tax - this in Europe's least ecologically minded country,



With our Romanian friend Cristina it was a relief to escape without damage from Bucharest where the drivers act like kids with new toys and, for many, that is just what a car is - a new toy. The Carpathians which divide the country rarely rise much above 2500 metres, but they can offer a wilderness area the equal of anywhere in Europe. Central and highest are the Fagaras mountains, and if my ambition was to climb Moldoveanu, this was discouraged by a mountain guide friend of Cristina for reasons that were not made entirely clear: soft snow perhaps, or because he considered me too old. Instead we were to make for the Apuseni, further west but on the way visiting the Bucegi Mountains. In early war years this was the playground of our late member Harold Watts. They rise up from the Prahova Valley in giant limestone cliffs that

would seem to bar any easy approach to the plateau above. But there are gaps, one of which took us in a long day to the Cabana Piatra Arsfl at 1950 metres.

In spite of many protestations we suffered the unfair discrimination so often inflicted on western guests, paying heavily for our basic accommodation, while Cristina paid only a fraction for her share of the same room. On the other hand our dinner for three with wine was only 78000 Iei, or a mere £6. With inflation rampant, prices rise almost on a weekly basis, to day there might be another nought on the bill.

The Apuseni, our next location, was a long day's drive to the west.

It's an extensive limestone plateau, a little below 2000 metres, riven by great gorges and divided by forested valleys. This is classic karst country with all the associated activities, as yet hardly developed, of long distance ski touring or trekking, climbing and caving.

Our approach was through the Aries Valley, the lower reaches of which are served once a day by a narrow gauge railway. It's not to be recommended; it takes five hours to complete the 93km journey. Minor steep-sided valleys extend into the mountains on either side, all inviting exploration. On another occasion we drove up to a village called Rimetea. That is the name given to it on the map but once there you would be well advised to call it Torocko for this is a Hungarian village, a little pocket of Hungarian craft and culture. Sadly, nationalism has reared its ugly head and there is



Walking up to the Cabana

little love between the two communities.

This village would make a splendid location for a few days, lying as it does below spectacular limestone spires and ridges offering a wealth of walks, scrambles and climbs. But the main Aries Valley offers attractions too, in addition to the scenery, "It's real ethnic," as the Americans would say. There are lovely villages and wooden churches and you'll see itinerant gypsy families camping along the way, ragged, poor and dirty but highly colourful, the women with a wild dark-eyed beauty. Also you'll see something of Romania's heavy haulage industry: covered wagons pulled by teams of horses. They lack any form of brake and on the descent tow behind them heavy boulders balanced on old tyres to slow them down.

The focal point of the Apuseni region is the Padis plateau. Given time you

can reach it on foot over several days following trails from east or west; with less time we reached it in several hours following a rough stony track just possible by car. The Cabana Padis was officially closed but Cristina had somehow gained permission for its use and, making it our base, we enjoyed several high level circular walks. One day we visited Cetatile Ponorului where the Ponor river flows through a massive gorge a full 200-metres deep before plunging into a great cavity. It was a seven-hour walk for us; given easy access this could be one of Europe's great natural attractions with car parks and all the attendant tourist trivia. This is real caving country, with sink holes everywhere, streams vanishing and reappearing, all promising access to the huge systems that lie below the plateau.

Rather surprisingly the practice of caving owes much to a Romanian. This was Emil Racovita who, it is



claimed, founded the world's first speleological institute at Cluj University. There are several active caving groups in the country who would be delighted to cooperate with competent foreign visitors, particularly if they could help with gear. Members interested should write to the Racovita Institute, Str. Clinicilor 5, 3400 Cluj.

The plateau, high though it is, is not unpopulated for this is the home of the Moti people. They are highlanders who moved into the hills in the 18th century to avoid conscription into the Habsburg army. They now live throughout the year in scattered communities at up to 1400 metres, the highest settlements in Romania. We called at one such dwelling to buy goat or sheep's cheese. The couple, their faces weathered and creased far beyond their years, welcomed us into their squalid, smoky one-roomed thatched hut. The man later came for payment to our camper and marvelled at its orderly interior and the wonders of sink and stove, taps and water.

Cristina departed for Bucharest but we made more forays into the mountains. We made an attempt on

Viegyasza, the highest peak in the Apuseni but unusually the Cabana was unwelcoming and lacked food. We returned to the head of the valley to find an idyllic camp site. Wild camping is now legal in Romania and only once were we disturbed. A police car stopped but only to ask if we had problems, a complete reversal of previous police practice. With a few exceptions organised camp sites are best avoided in Romania. You may be deafened by pop music or political speeches booming across the camp; the looses are places of unspeakable horror, and packs of wild dogs may forage throughout the night.

We had more months of travelling and more mountains ahead, but that's another story. We visited both the Low and the High Tatras of Slovakia, and the High Tatras again in Poland. A long traverse of the main ridge above Zakopane gave me my best mountain day.

Our final ascent, not a first British ascent I'm sure but one of the few, and this at last the highest top in the country, was Suur Munamagi: 367m in Estonia!



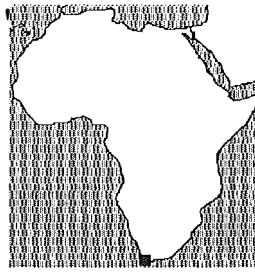
A Ridge of the High Tatra

Photographs by George Spencely

# Table Mountain

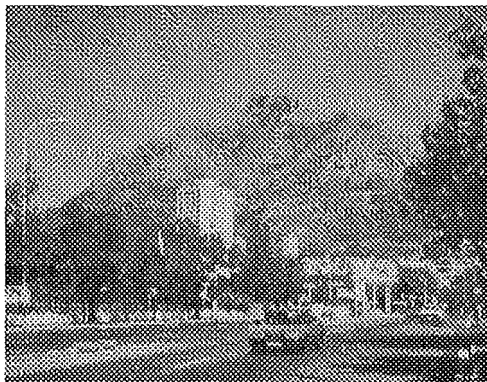
Bill Todd

'Yes sir, you can get a taxi to the Lower Cable Station' and 'but we don't want to use the Cable Car we want to walk up. Can you supply a map showing the footpaths?'



Our intention to ascend the mountain on foot created a certain amount of consternation in Cape Town's Tourist Advice Centre early in the November of 1997. However we got a footpath map on the ground floor and found out where the taxi rank was.

I had a Table Mountain Guide book, published in 1944, but the difficulty was connecting the streets of Cape Town with the paths on its sheltering mountain. With adequate maps Juliet and I believed we could have walked up the mountain from our Hotel, the Holiday Inn, Garden Court de Waal. But the mysteries were such that we thought it best to get a taxi to the starting point of our walk.

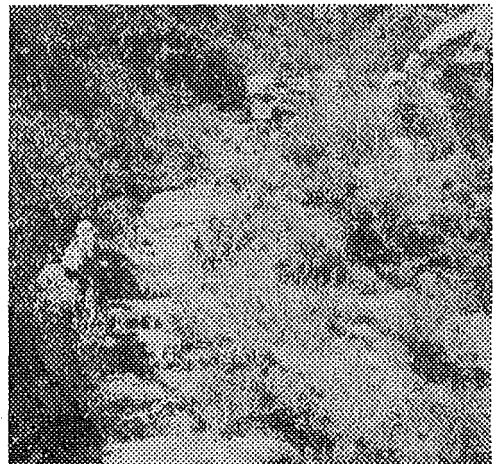


Devil's Peak from Capetown

'John and I went up by something klip Gorge' said my friend Gordon a couple of weeks before we went. 'People were a bit surprised at our having done it but it wasn't that bad'. Study of the map indicated that Gordon and John had gone up by Platteklip Gorge, little information as to degree of difficulty was given in our

guide. From a man who could out-climb me in Wales and Lakeland forty years ago 'not too bad' might be quite testing.

But we only had one day left in Cape Town so we got a taxi and explained to the driver that we wanted to be taken a mile east of the Lower Cable Car Station. I was a bit unhappy when he took third exit at the roundabout above the city. But he was on his native heath and it took Juliet's self confidence to challenge him, 'Hey, you're going to Signal Rock'. Deliberately or not he had misunderstood us so we got him to turn round and drive past the Lower Cable Car Station to the start of the Platteklip Gorge walk at 365m above the sea.

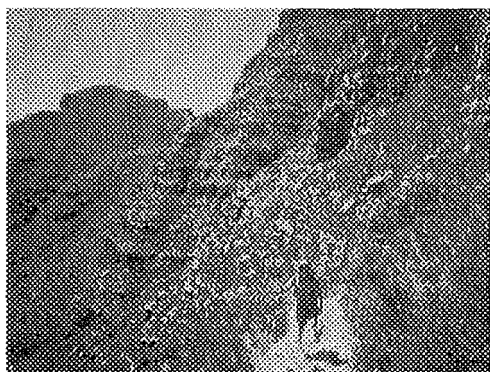


The start of the Platteklip Gorge Path

Our testing journey started with a well engineered path of stone blocks, quite sylvan really with green bushes on both sides. It was very pleasant and we wondered how long it would be before we got onto the real rough stuff, this in spite of a notice warning us not to create erosion by wandering off the path.

A stream came down on our right with little cascades and pretty flowers. The path was steep but continued to be firm and safe. We did not enter the gorge proper until half way up when the path bends to the right. You get

the best view of Cape Town and Table Bay before this bend and then you are walking under the precipice of Platteklip Buttress. I am pretty sure there are climbs on this but there were none described in our book. Bentley Beetham was in South Africa in the thirties and I am convinced he wrote up some routes he had made in the Fell and Rock Journal, Be that as it may, some young climbers on top of the cliff were offering supervised abseils to the general public at 100 rands a time (7.9 rands to the £ then). Two young ladies abseiled down as we walked up and caught us up on the path glowing with pride of conquered fear. Our path kept on being good and easy to follow right to the top of the gorge.



The Gorge Path with Devil's Peak behind

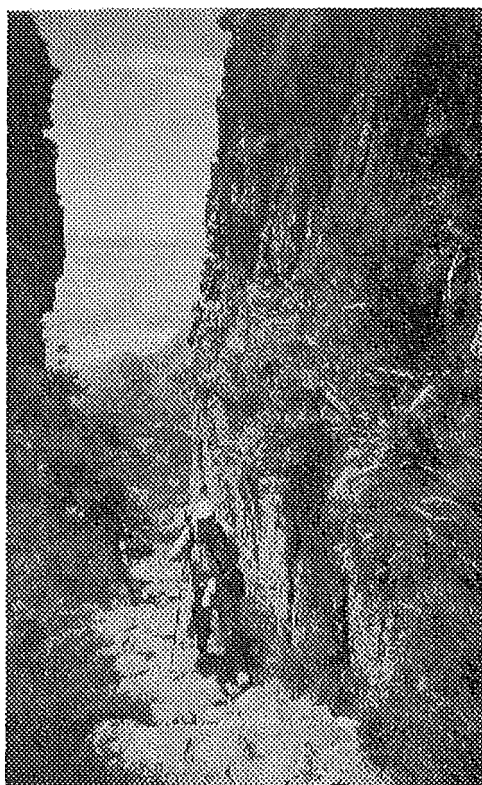
On the plateau, not absolutely flat but a bit undulating, we found a signpost pointing left to MacLear's Beacon, the summit, and right to the Upper Cable Station. We had to take the former, of course, which is just over a mile as the crow flies. The path was easy to follow over the rocky surface and we noticed for the first time the strong north west wind. The views of the Cape Peninsula were magnificent. We had driven round it the day before and we could see Rout Bay where we had taken a boat trip to Seal Island. Cape Point was further south but quite distant west of False Bay.

The summit cairn was up a little scramble not unlike Simon's Seat and

when we had had a look round it seemed like a good idea to go back as clouds were welling over the middle plateau to join the smoke of a bush fire by Kirstenbosch Gardens. This was the hardest part of the day with the north west wind blowing strong and cold right into our faces. We didn't stop for lunch until we got to the dip before the Western Table. It proved an easy stroll over the rise to the Upper Cable Station where we took the newly installed cable car back.

When we later saw Gordon it turned out that the path must have been considerably improved since his ascent seven years before which had involved a lot of screes and loose stuff.

Even without the cable car assistance the day would have been no more arduous than Snowdon from Pen-y-Pass and a lot easier than Ben Nevis from Fort William. We were very lucky to get clear weather for our one chance of an ascent.



Bill finishing the route (Photo: Juliet Todd)

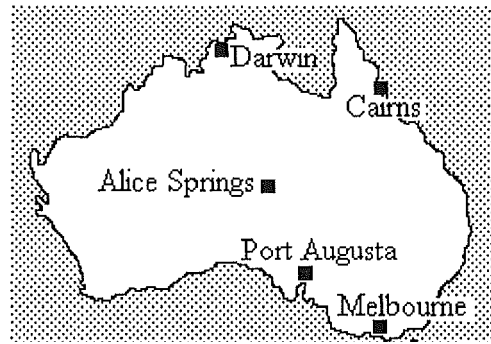
## Out and Around in Australia

Richard Gowing

After a week, in September 1997, with my cousins on their farm in Victoria we joined a 31-day camping safari coach tour operated by Australian Pacific, entitled "Red Centre, Darwin and Barrier Reef". Although this did not entail any particularly energetic or adventurous outings, the coach using only tarmac or major dirt roads, we did pass right through the middle of Australia from Port Augusta to Darwin and across via the gulf of Carpentaria to Cairns, giving us a good feel of the size of the country and the sparseness of habitation in the Outback.

We enjoyed the sunset and dawn colours on the great sandstone monolith of Ayers Rock, but high winds prevented us from making the ascent, the route being closed by the park ranger as unsafe. Walking half-way round the base partly compensated for this disappointment, the rock formations and Aboriginal paintings being well worth seeing. I passed a quiet pool at the foot of a steep rock wall where a young Aboriginal was sitting quietly, as she said, taking in the abundant energy of the place. Ayers Rock, or Uluru to the native people, is very sacred to them and they prefer people not to climb it.

The Olgas or Kata Tjuta, 25 miles west of Ayers Rock, are a jumble of sandstone conglomerate lumps, the highest of which, Mount Olga, at 1069 feet is 200 ft higher than Ayers Rock. This again is an Aboriginal sacred area, and ascents are forbidden,



though there are some interesting walks among the lumps. We did the half-hour Olga Gorge walk, following the creek up nearly to its source below the col between Mt. Olga and Mount Walpa, very impressive between the sheer conglomerate walls.

To the east of Ayers Rock we had good views of the third of these sandstone mountains, 2,500 ft Mount Conner. This is a plateau surrounded by 300 ft cliffs above a 500 ft high talus, not often visited by tourists; there is an account of an ascent of it, with a visit to Ayers Rock and the Olgas, by M. Hosford in *AJ* Vol. LXVII (1962) page 313.

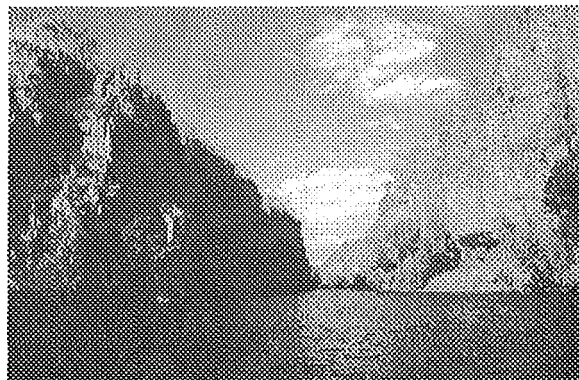
Moving towards Alice Springs we travelled below the escarpment of the George Gill Range to Kings Canyon, a fine gorge which runs south-west out of the range. The rock is Mereenie Sandstone which is porous and holds water, supporting a wide range of relict plants - in fact it has, in places, much of the appearance of karst. We did the two tourist walking routes, starting before lunch with the one-hour Kings Creek Walk which follows the stream up towards the waterfall at its head, flowing out of the "Garden of Eden", with many attractive trees and plants including ghost gums and desert oaks. (The early settlers tended to name plants and sometimes animals after those with which they were

familiar in the "old country"} The path ends at a pretty rock pool near the canyon head, with cycads growing nearby and fine views up the canyon walls. After lunch at our nearby campsite we did the 2½ hour Kings Canyon Walk, which climbs up to the plateau on the north rim of the canyon which we followed to the oasis of the "Garden of Eden", lush and green with pools surrounded by cycads, ghost gums, pandanus palms and other-tropical plants. This is crossed by a boardwalk which returns to the desert environment of the south rim, which we followed, with impressive views of the sheer north wall of the canyon, to the edge of the escarpment where the path leads back down to the start.

On the way from Kings Canyon to "The Alice" we passed below the Western MacDonnell Ranges, which are the highest hills west of the Great Dividing Range, with Mount Zeil at 1510 m. the highest in the Northern Territory. These are penetrated by a number of gaps or nicks; we visited the Standley Chasm, a dry gorge which cuts through the main ridge with high cliffs as little as 2 metres apart; among the talus at its entry we saw rock wallabies. Further on we visited Simpson's Gap which is blocked by a pool, and entered Alice Springs through the Heavitree Gap, which the Stuart Highway shares with the "Ghan" railway and the Todd River; the following day we sampled camel-riding in its dry bed - there are some good expeditions to be made by this mode into the desert outback.

Further up the Territory, after a long day-and-a-half's drive of some 760 miles, towards the end of which we passed one of Australia's isolated areas of karst, with the Cutta Cutta

Caves noted for wildlife, we came to the Katherine Gorge. This, with nine stretches separated by rock bars, offers up to twelve km of canoeing between high sandstone cliffs, with fine scenery and interesting wildlife and Aboriginal rock paintings; our "taster" consisted of a trip in flat-bottomed motor-boats up and down the first two, which are separated by a nice little walk: past some good rock paintings. The campsite is pretty, with wallabies and other small kangaroo-type creatures; we had our only direct encounter with a snake when Elizabeth trod on the tail of a 2 metre tree-python while on the way to the facilities. We can speculate who got the biggest shock!



The Second Katherine Gorge

The northern part of the Territory includes the Kakadu National park, with wetlands of world importance teeming with saltwater crocodiles (the nasty sort) and a wide range of birdlife. We had a beautiful view of this area when we climbed up onto the Arnhem Land escarpment, in itself very pretty with extensive sandstone plateaux and escarpments.

Travelling from Darwin to Cairns through the Barkly Tableland via the Gulf of Carpentaria, we passed through the Atherton Tableland which forms the northern end of the Great Dividing Range. This, the world's second-longest mountain range, keeps

not very far from the east coast, down through Queensland, with the spectacular monoliths of the Glasshouse Mountains (David Atherton could probably fill us in on these), into New South Wales with the Blue Mountains, past Canberra to the Snowy Mountains, Australia's highest hills culminating in 2228m Mount Kosciuszko, and then running through the "Victorian Alps" to end at the coast with fine cliff scenery. Our member Tony Reynolds lives near this southern end, among the "mountain ash" forests of the Dandenongs.



Crystalline deposits and, below, typical formations in the Yarangobilly caves showing soot deposited from bush fires



After our tour we hired a car at Albury airport and drove up the Murray to follow a forest road through the northern end of the Snowies to the little fishing resort of Adaminaby. From there we spent a day at Yarangobilly, a forested area of karst housing some very fine show-caves. There are quite a number of caves which one can visit as tourists, some guided, some "self-guided". We joined a guided tour of the Jersey Cave, full of very fine formations of every kind, well lit and explained. A particular feature of the caves in this part of the world is the effect on them of the bush fires, which periodically deposit layers of soot on the formations. We also did a "self-guided" cave, the Glory Hole. This is entered through a fine arch, reminiscent of Marble Arch but on a much bigger scale. The route is provided with low level lighting supplemented by high intensity lights activated by one's passage through, and gives the satisfaction of a through route which emerges unobtrusively at the carpark. Another attractive feature of this park is a thermal pool; unfortunately the day was rather wet and cold so it held little attraction even if we'd had the time.

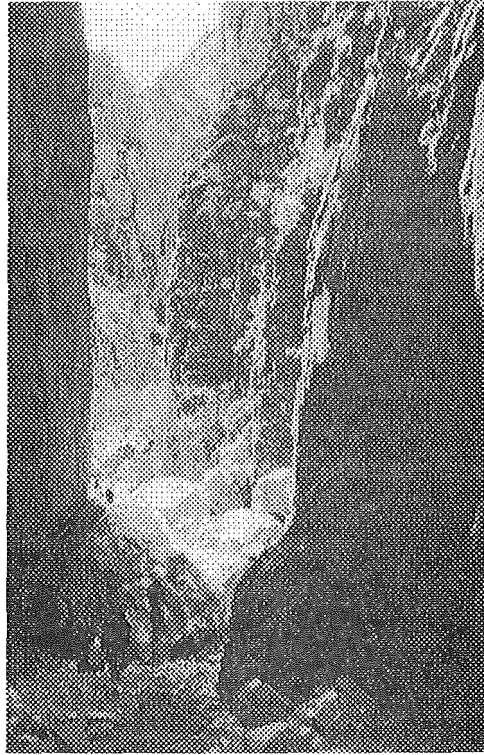
From Yarangobilly we drove south to the Snowy Mountains resort of Jindabyne. This quite pretty resort was relocated some years ago when the Snowy River was dammed to form Lake Jindabyne, beside which it now lies. It is well provided with accommodation of various grades, a fine park visitor centre and a good selection of outdoor gear shops.

We drove to Thredbo, the main ski and walking resort. The disaster area was still unrepaired and barriered off pending the completion of the

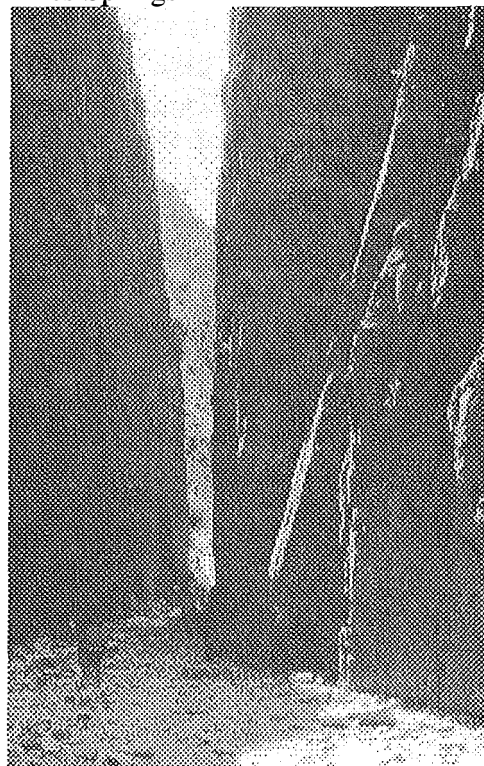
inquiries and inquests. We rode up on the Crackenback chairlift to the "Eagles Nest" on the edge of the valley and followed a mesh pathway, slightly elevated to allow the vegetation to flourish uninterrupted beneath, towards the lookout which gave us a good view of Mount Kosciuszko and the uplands which feed the Snowy River. Parts of the pathway were snowcovered and, without ski or snowshoes, it was not practicable for us to complete the four mile walk, which is easy when clear of snow, to Australia's summit.

Our final few days in Australia were spent with YRC member Tony Reynolds and his wife Doreen who live in the upper Yarra Valley, not far from Melbourne at the edge of the forests of the Dandenongs, the tail-end of the Victorian Alps. These forests consist largely of Eucalyptus Regnans or Australian Mountain Ash which, growing to 100 metres high, is the tallest species of gum and the world's tallest hardwood and flowering plant. Tony drove us along some of the forest roads and we sampled some short walks, following trails among the tree ferns for which the Mountain Ashes provide the necessary shade.

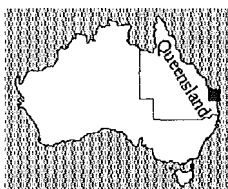
Our trip concluded with visits to the Healesville Animal Sanctuary where we were able to see all the Australian birds and animals in a natural setting, and to Sovereign Hill at Ballarat, an open air "living history" museum covering gold-mining in the way that Beamish deals with the life and industry of north-east England.



Standley Chasm in the Western MacDonnells some 50km west of Alics Springs



## Conferring Down Under Martyn Wakeman



If someone offered you the chance of a conference down under, would you only go to give the paper? No, thought not, or at least I hope! Well, my thoughts were, excellent - the chance for a nice restful summer holiday, to make a change from charging up snowy spikes in the Alps. Just the job to recover from a PhD.

So I have just returned from four weeks in Queensland. The conference was at Surfers Paradise - a metropolis by the sea. The sky scrappers and high apartments shade the beach by mid-afternoon, but the sea was warm (for us Brits), thundering surf and excellent food. It was a good conference as well! (I have to put in that bit!)

A coach to Hervey Bay and Fraser Island was the start of the real fun. Upon leaving the coach I expected to walk to the nearest YHA to find a doss for the night - being a "backpacker" rather than rich suitcase tourist. Well, down under things were a little different. Six minibuses were waiting for the coach touting for business. It turned out that they even took you to Woolworths (a supermarket in Aussie), the bar, etc. free!

Fraser Island is world heritage territory and consists of an island composed entirely of sand covered in sub-tropical rainforest. It has several perched lakes - fresh water lakes above sea level - which made for excellent swimming. You are not allowed to wear sun tan lotion and swim or use soap or bicarbonate of soda tooth paste at the campsite as it will damage the environment.

Most folk tear around the island in hired 4x4s. For half the price I jumped into a six-seater aircraft and was flown to the 75 mile-long shark-infested surf beach, never mind the jellyfish! Off I set down the "path" towards the first perched lake where the 4x4s had parked up. After this I didn't see anyone for nearly 19km. The rainforest is a place to be respected, and I treated the faint path as a walkway with glass walls between the jungle. Local wildlife has a different idea and goes where they will. So upon meeting a Brown Snake (one of the worlds most poisonous) it was off the path to leave snaky basking.

Other interesting beasties were the indigenous dogs called Dingoes. They like human food and decided to rip open the inner of an Aussie couples Quasar. They were the only other walkers on the island so the next three days were bliss, exploring the lakes, and sleeping under the stars. Tropical hardwood fires were enjoyed each evening with this Aussie couple & tails of endeavour in the outdoors exchanged. The other interesting creature was a Goanna lizard about four feet long wandering through the woods. These eat snakes and were therefore friends! Jurassic Park eat your heart out!

From here I flew north to Cairns, which is above the Tropic of Capricorn, currently in the dry season, that means about 27°C, relatively dry, no box jelly fish and a lack of flies. Cairns was a tourist mecca, so I used it as a base from which to organise tours, etc.

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the wonders of the world, so this was a must. Swimming with the fishes was like being in a different world, a myriad of colour and texture totally alien to the surface. Not just the



occasional fish, but shoals of them in vivid colours and bizarre shapes. Giant clams and sea turtles were also enjoying the warm winter water at 22°C. Thankfully no sharks or sea snakes!

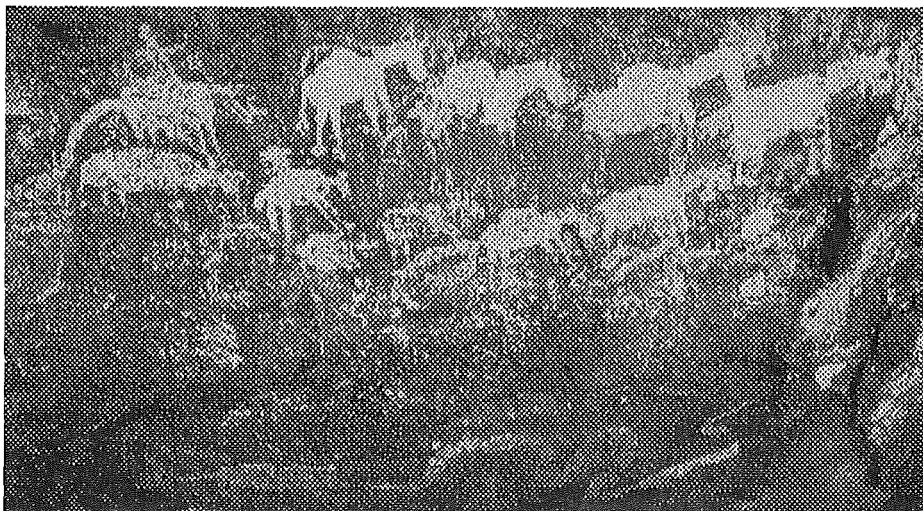
It was then onto Cape Tribulation and a YHA in the middle of the tropical rainforest. Buildings were on stilts and covered in mesh and canvas. Wild boar rummaged around looking for roots. Birds sang and the stars shone. Once the generator went off it was as dark as a cave and I truly "Couldn't even see my hand in front of me". Here I joined two guided walks, a night walk, and another in the light of day. A lesson in flora and fauna that I will never forget. Ever heard of Jack and the bean stalk? Well, a bean grows in the forest up from the floor about as thick as a skinny leg to the canopy. Here it travels for 1km before returning to earth! Well, it impressed me.

After spotting some crocs in a creek on another tour it was back to Cairns to plan the last week. I had had enough rainforest so joined up on a 4x4 safari into Cape York. This is the area of the UK with the population of Beeston plus loads of crocs! Roads were dirt tracks and it was a days

drive to Cooktown were Lieutenant Cook landed. We then headed 100km in land to the outback. Here rainfall is ½m rather than 10m in the forest. A dry place covered in termite mounds and Eucalyptus trees (from which the didgeridoo is made). Swamps, like those in the film "Crocodile Dundee" have fantastic bird life, with birds of amazing colour and variety, and mad cows bathing in croc infested waters.

The bush camp was one of the highlights of the trip. Food and water heated over fires, loads of scrumptious Aussie beef, and the milky way wafting across the sky. The remainder of the trip was a couple of bush walks visiting Aborigine rock art sites before driving back via the in land route - dirt roads again.

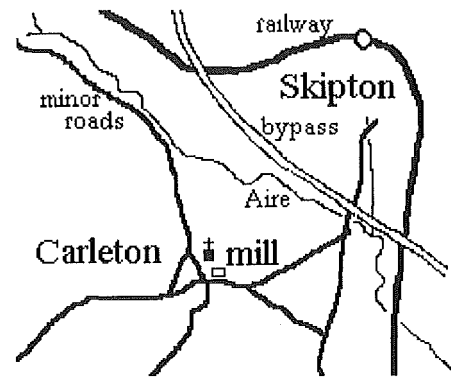
To finish off the holiday a visit to an island seemed in order, so the ferry to Fitzroy was joined where an enjoyable two days were had ambling around and swimming amongst the rocks. Backpacking in Aussie could be done with a suitcase - only the adventurous need bother with a rucksack! A chilled out and stress-free place, friendly people and an amazing variety of nature - a must for those who can find an excuse to go! All in all it's a shame to be back!



# The Slingsby Family and Carleton

John Snoad

The Slingsby family owned and ran cotton spinning and weaving mills in Carleton from 1849 for a period of eighty years'. Founded by John and William Slingsby, the brothers built the New Mill in 1861, passing on the company to their sons John Arthur and William Cecil<sup>2</sup>. The influence of the family on Carleton was all embracing as was the dominance on the appearance of the local landscape of their mills and the resulting additional housing. William Cecil inherited his partnership first in 1897 but retired and moved away from Carleton only twelve years later in 1909, soon after he reached the age of sixty. John Arthur inherited his partnership in 1901 and continued with the business until the autumn of 1930, when economic conditions in the cotton trade world-wide made it no longer profitable. John Arthur was known for his business and public service interests, whilst William Cecil, although an effective business man on

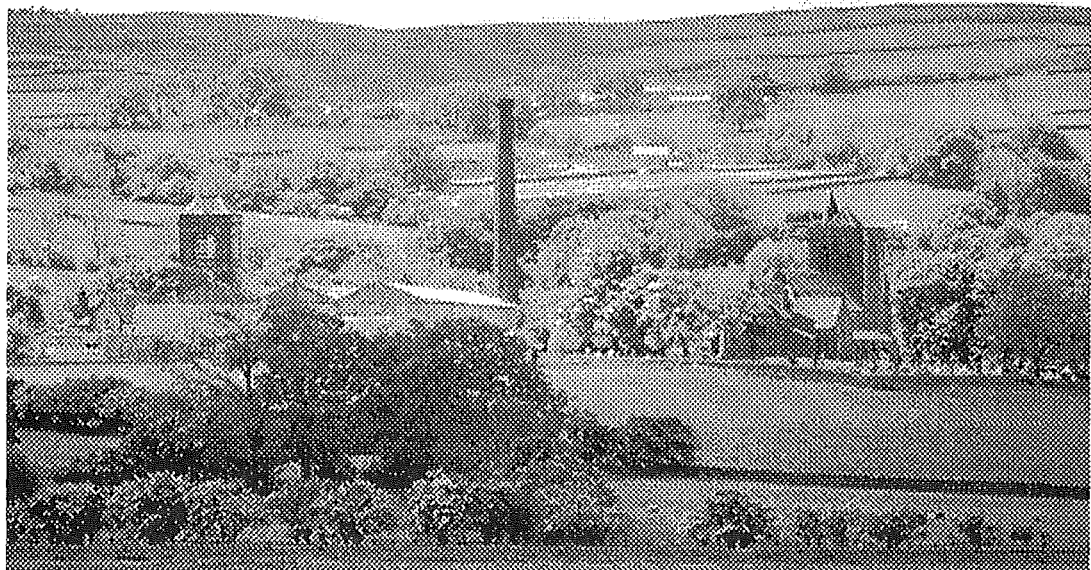


behalf of the mill, was known for his enthusiasm for mountaineering and his exploits in Norway, for which he had become famous. As the industrial Revolution, the demise of the cotton industry and the memory of John Arthur fade into the past, the memory of William Cecil Slingsby lives on as an outstanding pioneer in the world of mountaineering, especially in Norway. All four members of the family, and their wives, are buried in Saint Mary's churchyard.

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<sup>1</sup> They did run a mill in Carleton before 1849 but little is known of this other than where it was and what it did.

<sup>2</sup> William Cecil used the name Cecil. The photograph is of Slingsby's New Mill and Saint Mary's Church taken from the the embankment of the modern bypass road.



# From the Archives

by Raymond Harben

One of my final jobs as archivist was to recover the last batch of material from the cupboard in the old City Librarian's office now converted into a computer room. At long last I have managed to go through and record the papers/documents held by the Club and now passed to the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Leeds. From the following you can see that the material covers a wide variety of items of which the Whymper papers and the Newscuttings and Scrapbook are probably of most value.

## Folder 1

List of Easter & Whit meets  
from 1954 to 1971

Typewritten manuscript - Daniel Defoe in Yorkshire by Geoffrey Brook

4 N° original line drawings by Hal Yates & used as end pieces in YRC Journal in 1960 et seq.<sup>1</sup>

8 N° original pen and wash drawings by Hal Yates & used as end pieces in YRC Journal in 1966 et seq.

Music for "Yorkshire"

In memoriam - list of YRC members at the time of death 1892 - 1972

Typewritten manuscript - Reminiscences (Part 1) by E.E. Robetis.

## Folder 2

Correspondence - E.E. Roberts and Robert de Joly 1932 - 1947!

Reminiscences - E.E. Roberts

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<sup>1</sup> Two of these drawings are used as illustrations in this article.

## Wallet 3

YRC meet reports July 1956 to July 1962.

## Wallet 4

(labelled "Miscellaneous")

Blueprint of Gaping Ghyll Cavern  
dated May 1896

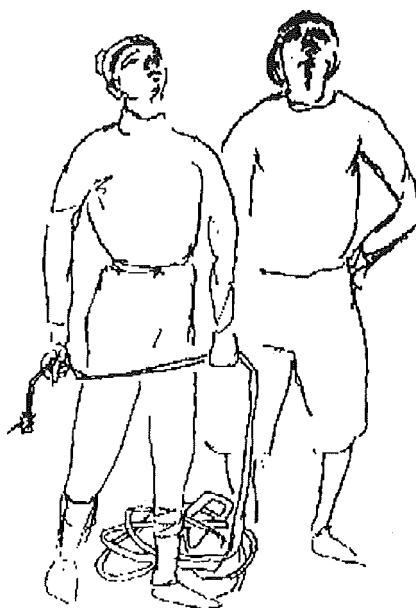
Blueprint of Descent du Gouffre  
Gaping Ghyll from "La Nature"  
20th January 1896

Various drawings/blueprints of Gaping Ghyll

Newspaper cuttings re caving and E.A. Mattel:-

- La Depeche 27th January 1893
- Le Temps 9th February 1896
- Le Petit Journal 27th April 1898

Extract from the Bulletin of the Societe Belge de Geologie :-  
Constatations a Han-sur-Lesse by Broek and Martel.



## Envelope 5

(Whymper material)

Publication for private circulation. - A

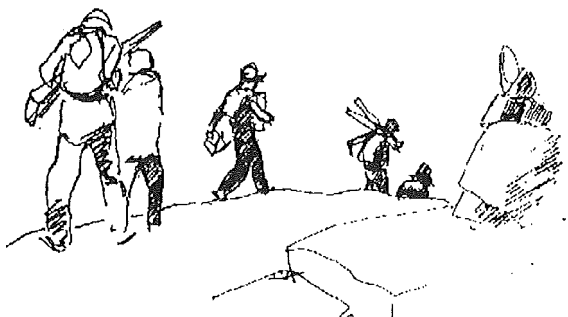
Letter to the Members of the Alpine Club - London 1900. Cover endorsed by the author - "With Edward Whymper's compliments"

This concerns a debate as to whether a jump by Christian Almer on the Pointe des Ecrins in 1864 recorded by Whymper ever took place. Horace Walker who was in the party confirmed that it did.

3 N° memoranda (very brief) from Edward Whymper to T. Gray dated 1st May 1899, 22nd. April 1902 and 20th October 1908.

Copy of letter from Horace Walker to Edward Whymper dated 21st March 1866 re the Matterhorn. Mr Walker's mother had referred to the route above the Hornli "as a mere stroll" which Walker puts down by saying that "in spite of her experience does not understand much about the high alps". He goes on to say that "3 brothers named Parker did in 1858 go some way in that direction but as they took no guides, did not sleep out or even took a rope I should think it hardly worth your mention. "

Article by Edward Whymper from the proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries dated 8th December 1898. Cover endorsed - "With the compliments of the Author"



## Envelope 6

(ex H.L. Stenbridge)

Annual Reports 1933 - 1949

Annual Dinner Menus 1933 - 1964

Envelope 7. (ex G.T. Lowe bequest)

Sketches re Savage Club (See YRC Bulletins Issues 3 and 5)

## Envelope 8

Typewritten manuscript - E.E. Roberts' memoirs - pages 36 to 113 (end)

## Librarians File

Correspondence 1956 to 1962

## Photo Album

55 N° postcards of British castles (including southern Ireland)

## YRC Newscuttings and Scrapbook

Various newspaper cuttings dating from 1871 through to 1962.

Includes :-

Liverpool Albion 4th September 1871 - Descent into a Yorkshire Cave.

The Times 6th April 1929 - Climbing Ben Nevis including a photo of Frank Smythe and Ernest Roberts on Tower Ridge.

Yorkshire Evening Post 30th June 1956 - Leeds BSc. Injured in Pothole with photo of Frank Wilkinson.

Various newspapers 1957 - Articles on the fatal YRC Himalayan expedition.

## Miscellaneous

Photograph of library room of 13 Well Close Place, Leeds - January 1898?

Studio photograph of 6 N° businessmen - no date (ca 1900)

Dear Scovell  
E. E. Roberts

*Some five years before his death Ernest Roberts, aged about 80, penned these two letters to Geoff J Scovell....*

12 Southway  
Harrogate  
11 Nov. 1955

Dear Scovell

I have at last had the energy to hunt up my postcard of Gaelic. I hope you will get half in your memory before next summer. It is easy to get "continental vowels". but useless without knowing the blank consonants which disguise the actual spelling.

I have suggested to the President that in some address he shall make the assembly release itself from the tyranny of the Scot by chanting T-R-E-TRAY, B-E-BAY, D-E-JAY, S-E-SHAY, T-E-CHAY. He was quite vigorous on the matter after the 2nd Skye Whitweek.

I have also put in a p.c on Welsh & have expresses my indignation over a language which has no alternatives & alter the spelling when it alters the pronunciation.

I am not quite sure about Gaelic, but it is correct for Welsh that we are alike in using the phrase "I am writing" in place of "I write". A linguistic oddity.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely  
E. E. Roberts

12 Southway  
Harrogate  
11 Nov. 1955

30/9/55

Dear Scovell

I am sorry I was away when you called the other day. I fear it has happened before through sheer ill luck.

I have had no real mountain holiday this summer. When I was free it was obvious that I must be treated for lumbago, which treatment left me like a washed out rag, sitting down every ½ mile.

I thought Pen y gwryd would cure me, but the most I managed in a day was 5 miles in 3 goes. The hotel is very good, expensive, & frequented by manymotorists, passagiers. The road is a maselstrom of motors, driven by cads & hooligans with a few lorries driven by gentlemen.

Rescue work seems to be quite a casual business nowadays. Rusher mentioned he had been out twice but seemed to think it semi-serious. The big search is embarked on with great reluctance, since a party at the old Royal Hotel came in late & went out early secretly to avoid doing chores.

I should think next summer the Llanberis Pass may be a complete deadlock as the parking space is hopelessly insufficient & the crowd will be larger still.

I have been very unlucky about getting to meets this year.

Do come again

Yours sincerely

E.E.Roberts

## WELSH Pronunciation

V annoying as it is always the same & does not swop about.  
Mutations are used as in Italian & French but then the spelling is corrected to the right letter e.g. Cader Idris or Pen-y-Gader

W = OO (Eng) as in Eng TWO & older English

l = U e.g. Alun = (Eng) ALEEN or ALIN

As there is no u y does duty for it in all syllables but the last  
e.g. FFYNNON = (Eng) FUNNON

LL = HL or THL as in Spanish etc.

We have 2 th sounds one spelling. Welsh has 2 spellings th & dd

So-called diphthongs are as spelt :first vowel short not long

## GAELIC

- (1) Most important DH = nil  
GH = nil  
Final G=K SH & TH=H  
GH appears to be  
(2) AD = vowel sound of Eng TURN consonant Y

Mucked up consonants

- (3) D is J before e & i  
S is SH " " & i  
T is CH " " & i  
RT is RST or RSJ

(4) Continental vowels

ea, eo, ia, iu, ua are double syllables  
ib, if, im, ip are distinctly  
eeb, eef, eem eep  
Otherwise 2nd vowel is faint or nil

### Minor Trouble

- 0ll = (Se) all      0ll = (S)ou1  
(1) aun = (S) awn    ann = (S)oun

(2) Gaelic can only say l.n,r before b.gfkj.m.p as an extra syllable  
e.g. **Film** is filum, **Dearg** is Jyarak (as in Durham & Yks)

# Expedition Diary

## 1957 - Nepal

### Maurice F. Wilson

*May 10. Camp 1 to Base Camp.*

Dan woke up feeling much better and the stove worked without any trouble. As soon as I sighted the other patty at the chortan, Dan started to get ready for the journey. He was much more active today and was out of the tent in five minutes. I started to pack up when the transport patty arrived. Dan was a bit unsteady to begin with but soon improved. We had him roped between Andy and Arthur.

All went well until we reached the main stone couloir. He was got over to the fixed rope but, just as he was starting the traverse, some stones started to fall. I shouted, Dan ducked, and lost his footing while doing so. Ang Temba and Arthur laboriously

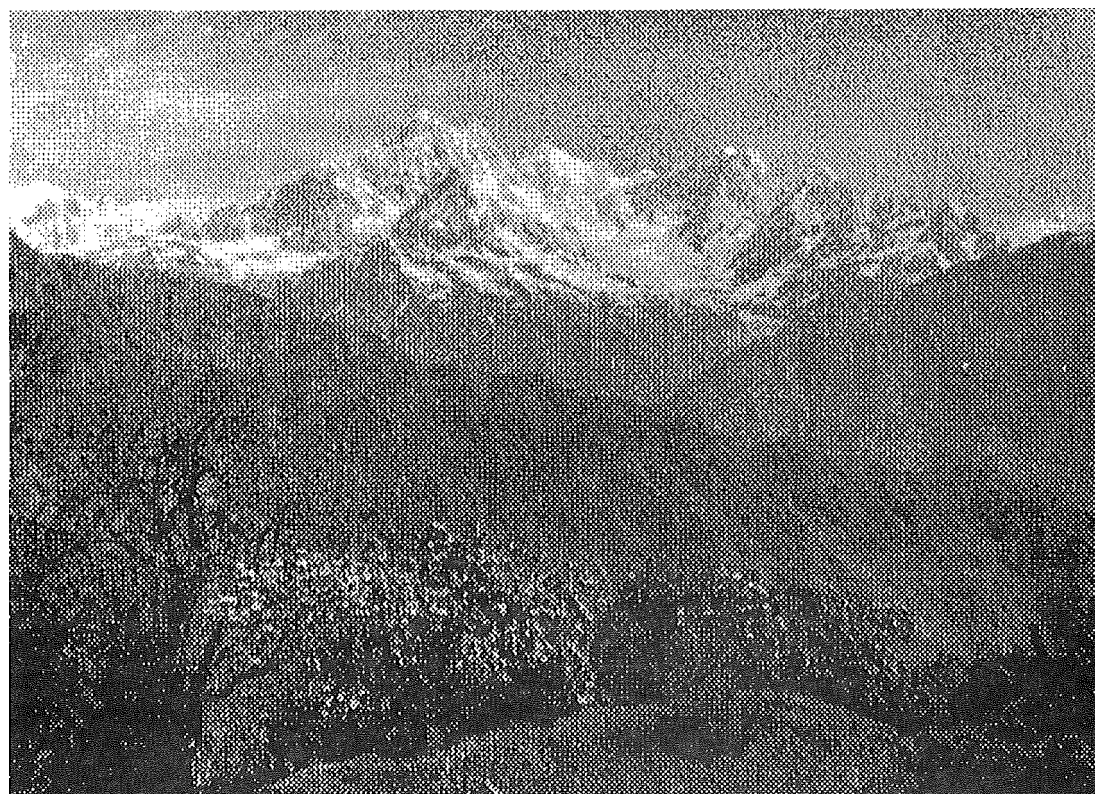
helped him to his feet and the traverse was completed.

My own traverse was quite exciting. I was just below the very large boulder ... a recognised danger spot ... when the others started shouting a warning, I looked up to see several large stones coming over the top of the boulder. I ducked and weaved and managed to avoid them. My only injury was a scrape on the back of my left hand and my beloved Kangol beret had been whipped off my head into the gully. The remainder of the sherpas got across without any trouble.

The rest of the journey was slow but uneventful. I must say it is a relief to get back to Base Camp with all safe and well. Gave Ang Temba some 'fielding practice' with cheese tins. They can't catch!

*May 11, Base Camp.*

Spent the morning packing up. Pemba



The Jugal Rimal with the expedition objective, Big White Peak, in the centre

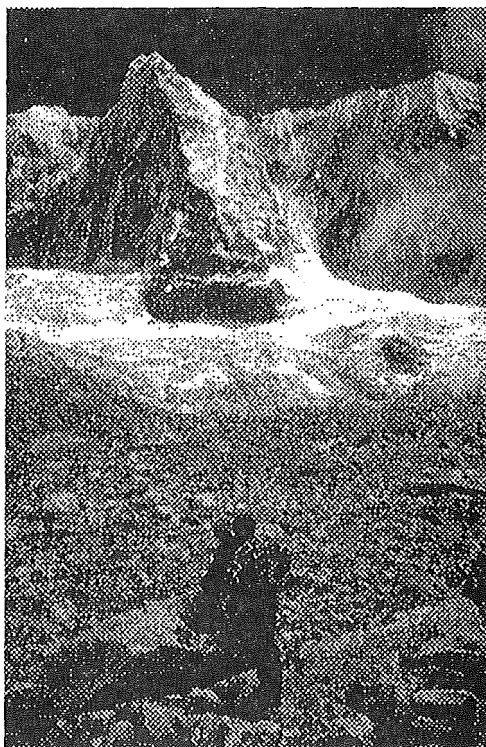
Photo Arthur Tallon

helped me to pack into a box those things not needed for the journey and into a kit-bag those things I will need. It was quite amusing the way things tumbled out of the large kit-bag ... especially tobacco, which I have seldom had the chance to smoke. Organised the food required and think we shall need eight loads, plus four men to act as stretcher bearers. This should be about right. Repacked Dan's medical box. The Tempathang men, who arrived yesterday, strengthened the stretcher on which we are to carry Lakpa. Last day at Base Camp spent with mixed feelings. It has been 'home' for a while and there is a long journey ahead.

*May 12. Departure from Base Camp.*  
Awoke to find the camp covered with snow. Started to get things together for our departure but, during breakfast, it started to snow again, with intensity. Preparing two injured men for transport ... one with a broken leg ... under these conditions, was most trying. Even more trying was Nima Lama, who kept up a running banter indefinitely, thereby handicapping our progress. What he was saying I never discovered, but he seemed to be picking a quarrel with Ang Temba. His brother Tensing Lama is much better. Eventually, the patients were prepared and we got away about 9.30 am.

It was still snowing lightly but much brighter. Andy and Arthur accompanied the party as far as the Elephant Rock. We then embarked on the long descent down to Pemsall. Lakpa, who started off strapped to the stretcher, was transferred to a carrier on the back of one of the sherpas. It was a steep slope, so I held Dan on the end of a rope.

It was a long, slow descent, but the weather improved and we reached Pemsall in 3½ hours. After a rest and some biscuits we continued into the woods. These were delightful, but by now Dan was getting very tired. I must say the Tempathang men were most helpful. Lakpa, now back on the stretcher looked like a king, riding on high and smoking a cigarette. The Tempathang men use bamboo stalks as cigarette holders. Finally, we reached and camped for the night in a big cave at Tongshung. We did not use the tents, just lay on a lilo in front of a big log fire. We had a fine view, a burnt tree framed the entrance to the cave, we sang songs and it was a lovely atmosphere. The potters drank out of their hats, and cooked and moulded tzampa into a ditty, stodgy looking paste. by now, Nima has become very subdued. I saw Ang Temba pouting generous helpings of tzampa to a boy who had brought none with him.



Dorje Lakpa III Photo from the 1995 expedition



# 1997 Himalayan Treks in the Rolwaling and Khumbu 5th October - 1st November

*"But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes you dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?  
We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go Always a little further  
It may be behind that last blue mountain barred with snow."*  
. *The play of Hassan by James Elroy Flecker.*

## The List of Characters

### Members of Rolwaling Trek

Albert Chapman Leader & Organiser  
Derek Bush  
Ian Crowther  
De'ek English  
Finley Gilmour  
Howard Humphreys  
Alan Linfoord  
Frank Milner

### Chewang Motup Rimo Expeditions

Lal Tamang Lama Sirdar  
Kusang Sherpa  
Pasang Sherpa  
Dawa Sherpa  
Norbu Sherpa  
PUIIle Cook  
Pasang Laki Sherpani  
Nawan Phuti Sherpani  
Dawa Tsechum Sherpani  
Pemba Yagzen Sherpani

### Members of Khumbu Trek

Ken Aldred Leader  
Alan Brown  
Mike Hartland  
Vic Malloney  
Mike Godden  
Om Sirdar

### British Embassy Kathmandu

Peter Heigl Charge d' Affaires  
and Deputy Head of Mission  
Dan Bahadur Head Steward to Ambassador  
Sheila O'Connor Secretary  
Maire Hilley Secretary  
Drobo Administrator

### Dwarika's Hotel

Sangita Daughter of late Dwarika  
Robin Marston Manager of Summit Hotel  
Bikrum Pandy M.D. of Himalayan  
Expeditions Inc.

### Carlton Beach Karachi

Nassem Camel  
Fazila Camel

## The Prologue

### Albert Chapman

On our return from the YRC successful Jugal/Langtang Treks in 1995 it was suggested that the Club organise a similar expedition every four years. This to me was unacceptable. Four years is a long time. The club had been in limbo between the unsuccessful Jugal Expedition of 1957 and the successful Bolivian adventure in 1988. I define

a successful trip as one in which the same number as set off return!

The autumn of 1996 was too early to organise a YRC Trek so I spent a month in Upper Dolpo to the west of Dhaulagiri.

I was given (or took) a free hand to organise a month Himalayan visit in the latter half of 1997. To have complete autonomy was a delight and plans began formulating after the YRC Dinner in November 1996.

Initially 22 members expressed interest which was too many on one trek. It was decided therefore to have one in the Khumbu visiting Gokyo Lake and Kata Patar under Everest. The second was to visit the Rolwaling valley, climb Ramdung as an acclimatising peak, cross the Teshi Lapcha and climb Parchemo before crossing into the Khumbu and meeting up with the first party. So began the interesting and rewarding preparations..

The YRC is a tight knit club where young and old mix well together. To promote this I asked Harry Stembridge to be our Trek Patron. This he accepted with delight and offered to finance a dinner in Kathmandu for both parties on their return from the hills

The flights to Kathmandu and insurances were organised with Himalayan Kingdoms of Bristol as was the Khumbu Trek. The Rolwaling Trek however had Rimo Expeditions of New Delhi as its ground agents.

The main reason for this was the inclusion of Chewang Motup who we had befriended two years ago when he had lead the Jugal/Langtang Trek. He is a great personality, very bright and his mountain competence is such that I could be with no one better on a mountain. The minor down side was that he had visited the Rolwaling only once and had never seen Ramdung. Everything being equal we would have more chance of climbing our Peaks with Himalayan Kingdoms who had climbed in the Rolwaling for the last eight years.

For the Rolwaling Trek I changed Motups suggested itinerary to begin at Dolka instead of Barabise as it was at least a day shorter. This would allow more time to exploring

Ramdung and was insurance against bad weather.

Sadly our Patron died early in 97 and the planning of our proposed dinner became more important as it was to become a celebration of Harry's life. Dwarika's Hotel was chosen and booked, dare I say more for its Newari wood carving and ambience rather than the sixteen courses of Nepali food.



Ambassador Smith of the British Embassy was invited as was Lord Hunt, Alf Gregory and a few notables in Kathmandu.

At last our day of departure arrived and on Sunday 5th October the first of the final thirteen members boarded the hired bus at Skipton and were given a super send off on our way to other pickups and Heathrow Airport,

Our overweight climbing baggage went through Pakistan International Airlines without hitch or payment and after a stop at Dubai and plane change at Karachi we arrived Kathmandu on time late Monday afternoon, Each party was met by its different ground agents with flowers and katas. Motup took the Rolwaling party to the Utse Hotel in Thamel and Ragu bused the Khumbu five to the Summit Hotel on the hill in Patan.

To keep the two groups together whenever possible we all dined at the Summit Hotel that evening.

## Kathmandu to Simigoan

Derek Bush

There was a growing excitement as the party touched down at Kathmandu. Those of us who had been before felt like old "Himalayan hands". The new boys were perhaps, like the writer two years ago, apprehensive of what lay before us. If this was so, events were to prove they were the wiser members of the party,

It was great meeting Motup again. He introduced us to Kusang one of the climbing sherpas who was coming with us. Kusang turned out to be a real character, always cheerful, chasing the Sherpanis who accompanied us for a significant part of the trek. However there was a serious side to him for he had summited Everest twice from both directions; the South Col route and from the North through Tibet.

As last time, we were staying at the Utse and although there may be more upmarket hotels in Kathmandu it would be difficult to receive a warmer welcome from the hotel owners who look after their guests with such hospitality and dignity.

Arriving at tea time we had a quick reorganisation of gear to be ready for an early start in the morning by bus to Dolkha. Our party then went over to the Summit hotel for a convivial meal with the Khumbu trekkers.

The journey to Dolkha started off on the "Friendship Highway" that connects Kathmandu to Lhasa. At Lamosangu we crossed the Sun Kosi and followed the Swiss built road that leads eastwards through the foothills. It was typical of all road journeys in Nepal; huge drops and hairpin bends of one vehicle width, both of which nevertheless do not deter the drivers

from overtaking or passing. The only remedy, if you are of a fatalistic disposition is to sleep!

The camp, as our first site in 1995, was on the village green and it was a hive of activity. We were introduced to the remaining Sherpas and allocated our personal tents which we were to keep for the duration of the trek

The whole team thus comprised:

Motup Chewang Rimo Expeditions

Lal Sirdar

Purne Cook

Kusang Climbing Sherpa

Pasang Climbing Sherpa

Dawa Climbing Sherpa

Other Sherpas Three

Kitchen Staff Six

Plus twenty five porters

All to look after eight trekkers!

Lal the Sirdar acted as the cook with the climbing party on the 1995 DOIje Lapka expedition. He turned out to be extremely competent, always cheerful and justified completely the faith Motup had placed in him.

Tea and biscuits were served in style at 4.00 pm and afterwards Motup sent a sherpa into the village to buy umbrellas - 135 Nepalese rupees (approx. £1. 40. each)

We had an excellent evening meal and most of us were in bed by 9.15 pm. The whole party slept fitfully. There were dogs barking in the village and at about 5.00 am all hell let loose. Lonies and buses tooting their horns; someone was blowing on a trumpet and because of this we were all up well before six o'clock. Motup said it was a festival day and village was away to festivities

We knew that once we were out of Dolkha our nights would be more restful provided the dogs would be quiet. Dolkha lies at 5250'.

We were walking by 7.30 and descended over 2500' to the river. Firstly through the village past a butcher, surrounded by a pack of hungry dogs, as he used what looked like a blunt woodcutter's axe, to chop up some poor animal... You have to forget you are an animal lover when you are in the East!

There were magnificent views of the distant peaks on the descent. At 10.15 we stopped for lunch, chips and tuna salad and cheese sandwiches! The meal was taken very leisurely and afterwards we walked for another two to three hours on an undulating track by the river past the small settlement of Suri Dovan to a camp site at river level at a height of 3360'. The "low" point in our trek! It was a sobering thought that we had to climb another 15000' to get over the Teshi Lapcha pass!

The whole party seemed tired after our first day but the heat probably accounted for some of it - over 80°F late morning and afternoon. The umbrellas certainly came in useful.

We had our afternoon tea break whilst waiting for the porters to arrive with our tents.

We thought the porters were having a hard first day also. They were, but not as we would have expected. They had been given money to buy rice and other food for the journey but could not resist the lure of the many chang houses spaced at convenient intervals along the side of the track. The kitchen staff, who were probably more disciplined under Purne, arrived and were able to cook us a meal which we ate on the floor of the mess tent. Some of our tents and personal gear didn't arrive until after 9.00 pm. We were usually in bed long before this!

Pasang had gone back to round up the stragglers but he missed one wide boy who had sold all his load including some of our milk to the local traders at Dolkha and managed to get on the last bus out of town that night. The local sheriff may have missed him but there would be retribution when his mates got back to his village after the trek!

We were not yet in the Rolwaling valley but the sides were very steep and heavily wooded which made a pleasant change from the deforestation which has taken place in other parts of Nepal. However there was very little sign so far of any wild life.

The next morning saw a very subdued bunch of porters complete with hangovers set off for the village of Jagot. The walking was pleasant although at this comparatively low altitude still very hot. On the way up we met a French couple with guides and porters coming down from Na. They had been a fortnight in the Rolwaling with continuous rain. We couldn't decide what that meant for us.

We set up camp by the river on the village green. The villagers made us welcome and we were able to buy beer at 100 rupees a bottle. Frank produced his family photograph album including some wedding shots. It was an instant success, the villagers were fascinated particularly the young maidens who giggled and chattered amongst themselves especially over the picture of Frank kissing his wife in a wedding car - please note it wasn't Frank's wedding. The only jarring note we had noticed so far on this trip (as distinct from the Jugal) is that every child we met was begging for a pen. We had a stock of pens with us but they were being saved for later to

give to the schoolmasters at Simigoan and Beding.

The following morning we continued along the river until it narrowed to almost a gorge near the village of Checet. We had another very pleasant lunch stop in glorious sunshine. The leeches were around and Ian had pulled five from his legs during the morning's trek.

In the early afternoon we crossed the gorge by a suspension bridge and were faced with a steep climb described by Himalayan Kingdoms as 1500' straight up the hillside to a police post. The 1500' was actually 1950' and it only took us an hour considerably faster than the guide book time. We felt quite pleased with ourselves, as we signed in at the police post. There was then a further 500' plus to the camp site on the school playing field in a wonderful position with steep drops on three sides and fine views all round.

We were next door to a Tibetan monastery that meant we had left the Hindu religion behind and were now in the land of Bhuddism. For those who take an interest in such matters we were still able to buy beer at 150 rupees a bottle, 50% more than at Jagot but then we were 2500' higher! We met a young schoolmaster who spoke very commendable English and most graciously accepted the gift of a few pens.

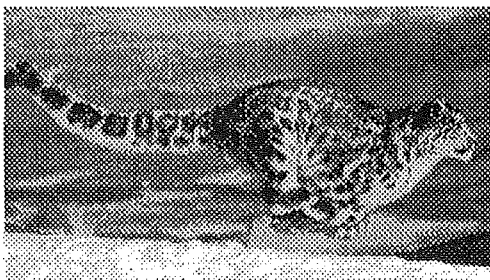
Motup earned some kudos by treating a small boy who appeared to have a bad eye infection. It turned out only to be dirt but his mother was most grateful. I met her later in the local chang house where the porters were encouraging me to imbibe. I drank as little as I could within the bounds of politeness and for one of the few times in my life I was sensible (my wife will

not believe this) and made my excuses.

There was rather a pungent notice outside the monastery which asked all trekkers to "respect the village of Simigoan and please do not shit in the surrounds of the monastery" A similar notice could well be put up outside the C.I.C. hut on the Ben!

After dinner we got the first indications that we would be sharing the Rolwaling with other parties as a considerable crowd of Germans and Austrians gathered to watch the Sherpas and Sherpanis dancing and listening to the sound of then' beautiful haunting music. We would be fortunate to witness this several times on the trek but this first night in such a beautiful inspiring situation, perched on the side of a mountain, the moon and stars in a Himalayan backdrop made the occasion memorable.

We realised then that the trek had really begun. Tomorrow we enter the Rolwaling.



## Simigoan to Namche

### Albert Chapman

Today Saturday 11th October we left the leech country behind and entered the Rolwaling. Rolwaling means "the furrow left by the plough" a suitable name for this steep valley.

The two German parties obviously knew that space at the next two camp sites was very limited and therefore we caught their first smile as they left Simigoan the following morning a

good half hour before ourselves. They obviously didn't know Motup had sent Pasan two hours before sun rise to put our towels on the choicest site for that night

After contouring round a hillside we ascend through a forest and descend to a small clearing with a few huts by the river. Two German groups and ourselves were crammed in the confines of this small clearing called Dongang at 16170'.

As usual I inspect Purnie's kitchen every day and marvel how he produces good clean food from such apparent squalor. He is proud of the way he prepares our meals such that not one of our party can identify any stomach upset to his cooking. I note his concern however when we buy beer and coke from the occasional sherpa house and drink from the bottle which as no doubt been cooled with untreated water and the neck wiped dry with a dirty rag.

While Frank and I sat with him and the porters in the low hut of this small habitation he respectfully advised me not to drink chang as it had been fermented with unboiled water. We were not allowed to eat any food prepared by his kitchen staff before washing our hands in his bowl of warm potassium permanganate solution. Most stomach upsets occurred once we arrived back in Kathmandu and on our journey home.

Our journey continued up this beautiful forested valley. A short swim in the cool waters of the Rolwaling Chhu certainly reminded me of the winter dips in Glen Etive long ago. Splashing close to the bank prevented the strong current assisting a quick retreat to the Bhote Kosi

The weather changed to a light rain as we approach Beding (usually called

Rolwaling by the locals) the last small habitation this side of the Teshi Lapcha. The lower part of this village by the river were protected by gabbions which might provide some shelter from the monsoon swollen Rolwaling Chhu but would have no effect against the threat they all fear, the breach of the large moraine lake of Tsho Rolpa which we are to pass in a few days time. During the worst of the monsoon we are to believe that Beding and lower villages temporarily leave the Rolwaling because of this very threat.

Rain in Beding meant snow higher up and new snow on bare rocks and trees gives a delightful lacework pattern which in the evening sun light enhanced the valley.

Beding we were told was renowned for having sixteen of its Sherpas reach the summit of Everest.

Here we met a small Austrian party whose female doctor was suffering from oedema.

Also the head man of the village promised to take any letters or postcards to Simigoan where he would personally have them posted. They have yet to arrive!

We chose Na as an acclimatising two day stop which we trekked to the following morning. Here the valley widened out around Na which is a summer Karka comprising about one hundred walled enclosures.

Plenty of space for the now four trekking groups each being inspected in turn by a large Lammergeier.

Rest days are ill-named as on this Motup believed in 'climb high - sleep low' and proceeded to take us that morning north to the Tibetan border one and half miles distant but 7000' higher.

The afternoon however was spent lazing and gently ambling about this most delightful of camp sites surrounded by high snowy mountains friendly Yaks, good company and the prospect of climbing two demanding trekking peaks.

As previously mentioned, Purnie provided good food and ample hot lemon wherever we stopped. We did supplement this at meal times by adding a jar of cracked pepper and just as important free flowing salt and sachets of sauce and mustard. Also we had previously organised each member to take at least two "treats" one of which we could enjoy each night to help the dark evening pass. These varied from Dundee Cake and Salami to blocks of Fudge and French Cheeses.

Early next morning we left the main Rolwaling valley and heading south up towards the Yalung La and the attempt of our first peak. The weather was good and the warmth accentuated the aroma of the azalea leaves as we pressed through this low scrub. It was here we met one of the Germans suffering from Oedema of the brain as he was helped down by two sherpas. Yes, the German party had climbed Yalung Ri that morning and were on their way to cross the Teshi Lapcha and climb Parchemo.

Meadow camp as it was referred at 16000' was a pleasant, flat site surrounded by mountains but with no sight of our objective Ramdung.

We identified it by climbing a ridge above camp that evening. It was here that I should have done more homework and studied Bill O'Connor's book (which I did not then possess) and not left the route finding to Motup.

A light snow fall occurred during the night although our ascent the next day was in bright sunshine.

I personally did not identify the actual Yalung La and we certainly did not cross it. Our route lead over a rocky ridge down to a small lake and up an unstable rocky slope to our so called advanced base camp at 17000' adjacent to a spectacular ice fall.

Our Sherpas went ahead to reconnoitre the route. I was not surprised therefore on their return Motup came to my tent with the bad news that Ramdung was not on as the way ahead was barred with too many time consuming crevasses. It was suggested however that we climb to approximately 18000' in the morning to view Ramdung and these perceived difficulties,

The night was clear, we shared tents for the first time, and the views of the Gaur Shanka and other peaks were fabulous.

It was also the 16th October night of the full moon and this gave an ethereal look to our surrounding mountains. It was here that my omission of an "out" bottle became inconvenient. One does not relish the idea of vacating ones tent during a cold night at 17000' however Sh01t the reason.

I had therefore acquired a large empty hot chocolate tin whose volume and generous diameter were indeed more than sufficient. The down side was my broken nails as I tried to take off the bulged lid when taken short at a subsequent camp.

We left our tents long before sunrise next morning and were rewarded by superb views of Ramdung in perfect weather.

I perceived the difficulties to be slightly dubious not that the way

ahead beyond our vantage point was difficult but that our ascent camp was 1000' too low and our route too much to the east. The day did however help in our acclimatisation amid stupendous mountains.

Motup suggested we make full use of this saved day by returning for lunch at meadow camp and pressing on to Sangma where we camped below the Tsho Rolpa moraine dam. From there again enjoying perfect weather we trekked along the safer southern side of the dam even though this entailed climbing 1000' up to by pass unstable rocky cliffs and down almost the same height to a convenient flat lunch stop before meeting the Trakarding Glacier. This morning we met an Austrian n Patty who had crossed the Teshi Lapcha but sadly one of their Porters had died of Oedema.

This was one of the slowest and most demanding sections of our trek. The glacier was really an unstable moraine of varying depth covering old ice interspersed with deep water filled crevasses - described by Ian as the most horrendous landscape on earth.

We were obliged to camp in the middle of this and it seemed to take hours for the sherpas to hack out sufficient level stone covered ice to make room for the tents we shared that night.

I noticed for the first time our porters were supplemented by four sherpanis from Beding who were to prove invaluable in raising morale during the next few days. I asked Motup to issue boots and windproofs for them but he explained these Sherpanis were mountain women and required nothing other than their own clothing complete with long black skirts

The following morning the slow journey along this dry glacier

continued. The route always a compromise between sticking close to the northern side where stonefall was a hazard, or keeping about one hundred yards into the glacier on the unstable stone and ice. Motup always chose the latter.

By mid day we reached the end of the glacier and began the ascent up good rock safe guarded by the occasional fixed rope provided for the Porters, Halfway up this climb we emerged on a projected rocky spur adjacent to the snout of the Drolambau Glacier. Motup referred to this as the eagle's nest or Noisy Knob. It was a superb vantage point protected from stone falls and avalanches.

The day was sunny and as we lunched we observed avalanches on Biphera-Go Shar and stones and ice falling from the glacier snout nearby. Also looking west down the Rolwaling the dusty haze of constant stone falls on the north side of Tsho Rolpa.

In normal circumstances we would have camped here at Eagles Nest but having made good time we decided to climb onto the Drolambo Glacier where there would be more space for our tents and the Porters, Kitchen Staff and Sherpas numbering forty in all.

We were in good spirits and looking forward to crossing the Teshi Lapcha and ascending Parchemo. The route from Eagles Nest seemed straight forward, Once up a narrow loose stone filled gully we would be on the wide flat Drolambo Glacier.

Nearing the top of the gully we felt relatively safe from falling stones.

There is never a complete guarantee amongst mountains however and at that moment a huge stone came cart-wheeling over the edge of the ice



above and down into our gully. Those of us in front had a split second to push ourselves against the rocky side as the projectile passed within a foot. Those below had a second longer and Frank dived into a pile of rocks.

Our relief at being missed was tempered by the site of Frank upside down with blood gushing from a head wound.

Within two minutes Derek English had a pressure bandage on Frank's head. Within five minutes Frank was pulled up into a sitting position and we took stock of our situation.

We were at 17000'. The apparently severe head wound suggested fracture concussion and shock. Frank needed airlifting to Kathmandu. We immediately sent two Sherpas Norbu and Pasang to cross the Teshi Lapcha at 18800' and go to Namche Bazaar.

The ceiling of the available Nepalese Army Helicopter was 16000' we would have to carry Frank over the Teshi Lapcha and down to that height.

The proposed ascent of Parcharmo was off.

After about an hour Frank was able to stand and with the help of Kusang and Dawa walk slowly forward.

We were fortunate at being near the top of the gully. In small groups under a brilliant blue sky we followed the Porters tracks in the snow to our camp on the Drolambau Glacier.

Frank was made comfortable in his tent and administered to by Ian and Derek. The eldest Sherpa, Pasang Laki, sat in vigil near by. Never have I seen such a look of concern, compassion and beauty.

Motup suggested I select two trekkers to sleep either side of Frank for the night in case he developed

hypothermia. Frank however declined our body warmth and not wishing to compromise our Sherpas decided to sleep alone.

Plans were made during the evening for a 6.00 am start next morning with Frank strapped in a wicker basket being carried in turn by our Sherpas. Again Frank declined my offer, presumably not wanting to be photographed as a chicken in a basket, and at a very slow pace supported on either side by Sherpas set forth at the scheduled time to begin our crossing of the Teshi Lapcha.

The weather was beautiful as we initially headed north along the slowly rising Drolambau Glacier towards the Tibetan Border.

After two hours with our forty eight strong party straddling a mile long we left the almost level Drolambau and entered a steep narrow Glacier joining from the right. Crampons were fitted and the pace slowed. Frank was given an oxygen mask and with Kusang carrying the cylinder continued the steady pace. A few of us hovered around hoping to get a sniff of the energy producing gas. To our left an occasional stone fell from Tengi Ragi Tau and to the south the deep snow covered ridge led into the clouds and the summit of Parcharmo.

At noon on Monday the 20th October I attached our Kata to the Prayer Flags flying on the summit of the Teshi Lapcha (18881') and crossed into the Khumbu. A spectacular view of the high snowy peaks rising above the clouds.

Our descent from the pass involved easy snow slopes until reaching the rocky flank of Tengi Ragi Tau where we skirted along rocky terraces before reaching a narrow steep rock filled gully. Here we Jigged a rope as a

hand hold and to assist if the gully was raked by falling stones. At the bottom seemed endless scree interspersed with snow fields. Mist descended and our route was confused with many cairns indicating varied directions.

It had been a long day and it was almost dark when we at last arrived at a superb camp site. The helicopter had been and gone long before Frank made camp.

Snow fell during the night blocking the pass and next morning we watched small snow avalanches fall off the peaks opposite as we awaited the return of the helicopter.

Potters left for our next camp at Thame and while waiting we made good use of Howard's skill as a botanist collecting and observing all manner of flowers and plant, Gentian Depressi being the most eye catching.

At about 10.30 a message came that the chopper was at Thame, a good four hours away. Those remaining at camp therefore burst into action and set off down valley as fast as Frank was able. While passing through Thengpo, our first village since Beding nine days ago, the helicopter came under the clouds and landed on the flat ground below Thengpo. It was an exciting and emotional moment as Sherpa Norbu alighted and Frank was hurriedly loaded into this small French built helicopter.

I'm sure we all felt more pleasure in seeing Frank being flown down the valley en route to Kathmandu than standing knee deep in soft snow on the clouded summit of Parchemo behind us.

Our Journey continued through Rhododendron Scrub and grazing Yaks towards the village of Thame, which was the birthplace of Tensing Norgay. When at last I looked down upon the village a rectangular reservoir stood out nearby and a little of the magic that had built up in the Rolwaling left me.

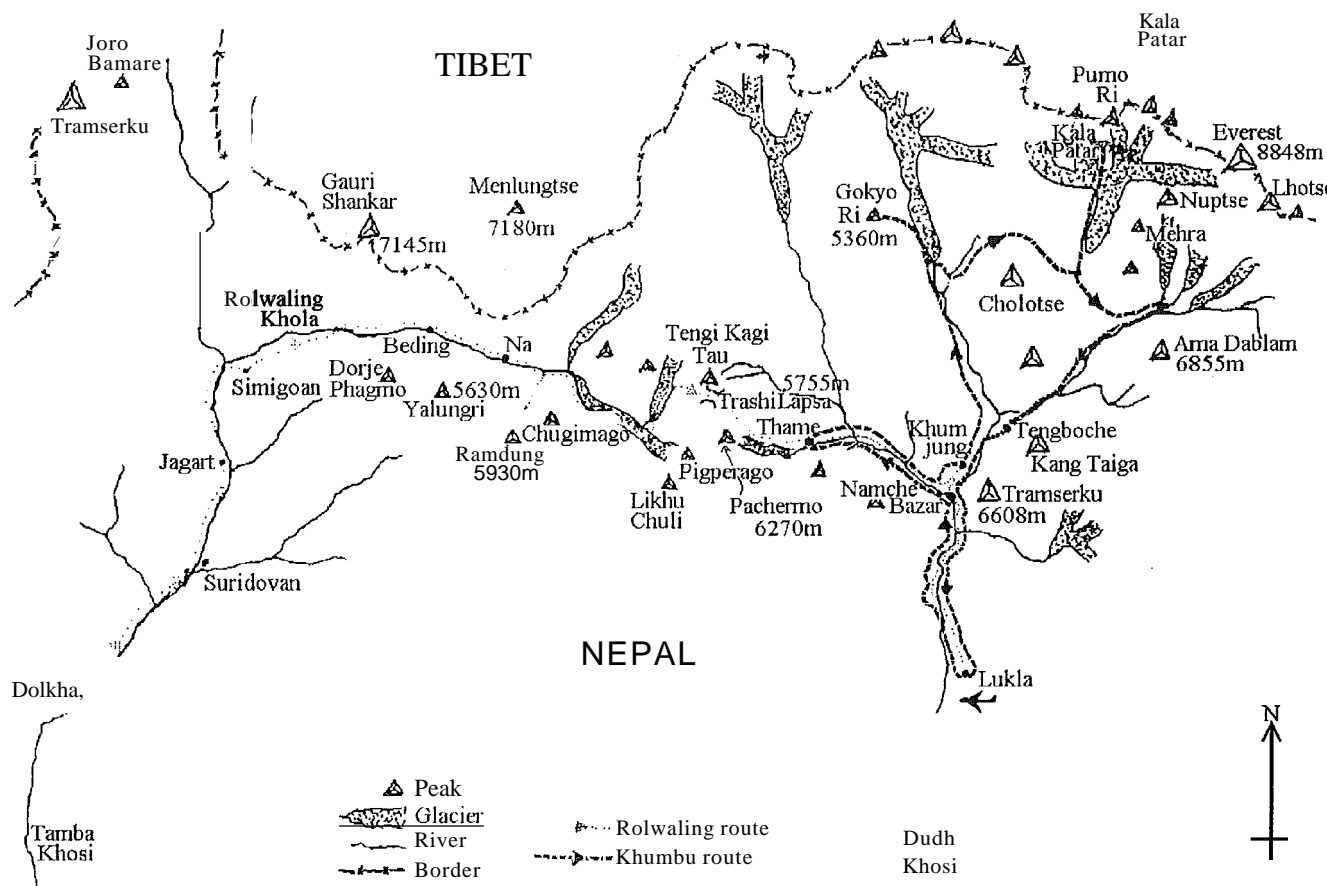
A Buddhist Monastery was visited before descending to our camp within the walled enclosures of Thame.

Motup left for a short time to hunt out his Wife's relations but to no avail. Yangdu's father was a relative of Tensing.

We partied that night in the upper floor of a village house above the Yak stable. Trekkers, locals, porters, Sherpas and Sherpanis, all were singing, dancing and drinking San Miguel, Coca Cola and Chang.

The four Sherpanis far out drunk the Sherpas in chang and showed more stamina on the dance floor. The singing was great once the words were interpreted.

Ad lib words were first sung to the catching tune by the Guys followed in turn by the Girls. Roars of laughter after each if the words were funny or cutting. Such as the Guys would sing to the girls "You don't look much but spread some more cream on your face and we'll take another look" to which the Girls would sing "Don't know who you think you are as you haven't more than two rupees to rub together." The loudest laughter always followed the lines which in this journal are unprintable.



And so ended the celebrations of our crossing the Teshi Lapcha and the airlifting of our companion to Kathmandu.

We tipped the four Rolwaling Sherpanis as is the custom before we left the party which continued long after we slept.

The following morning we tended to the wounds and scratches sustained by Kusang and Pasang who had helped the Sherpanis out of their sleeping bags before breakfast. Pasang Laki and her three friends came to say goodbye before departing clothed in long black skirts to cross the blocked Teshi Lapcha on their journey back to Beding.

A gentle walk down valley to cross the Kyajo Dranka and then steep climb to Syangboche and on to Kumjung. Although spending two nights at this

village I found it lifeless and without character. The views however of Ama Dablam were spectacular particularly during the evening as it appeared ethereal above the cloud. On our next day a visit to Everest View Hotel without a view of cloud covered Everest. A visit to the local bread shop was more productive.

On the second night I considered changing to my light tropical gear but this was put on hold by the six inches of new snow falling over night.

Our short journey to Namche was nothing like the books I'd read. In the mist and snow I was reminded of a winter descent from the Haworth Moors down into Hebden Bridge,

The unwelcome snow had played havoc with the schedules of the many Trekking Groups within the Khumbu. Rescue helicopters flew through out

the day. The camping space was overcrowded so Motup lead us to a basic Trekking Lodge which was central, wann and dry, We met up as planned with Ken and his Khumbu Group and told our many tales.

## Khumbu Rimal 1997

### Ken Aldred

On a number of occasions I've been advised where to go and what to do by members of the YRC but none of that advice was as valuable as that given by Alan Kay. After reading his report in the 1985 Club Journal I decided to follow the suggestion in the last sentence of the article...

*"...but it was nevertheless a superb experience and I would recommend eVel)l member of the club to go to the Himalayas once at least before finally hanging up his boots."*

After several training and planning meetings, five of us eventually travelled to Katlunandu with the more ambitious Rolwaling group led by Albert. Whilst they set off to Dolka we had a spare day in which to visit the ancient city of Bhaktapur, a trip in itself which almost made the PIA flight from Heathrow worthwhile. Alan Kay described his flight to Lukla in a Twin Otter but we had the excitement of a lift in a second hand Russian troop helicopter. From Lukla at 9000ft it took us two days to arrive at Namche. This part of the journey followed rivers with a fair amount of climbing and descending twisting paths when we came to tributaries, although it was the last 2000ft climb to Namche where Alan's advice was really useful. We had argued that as we were all in the middle-aged-plus

category we would go slow naturally but were told that no matter how slow we thought slow was, it was unlikely to be slow enough! Perhaps it was a coincidence but all the people we saw suffering from altitude sickness on the trek appeared to be much younger than us, their distress possibly the result of being too enthusiastic and travelling too fast!

In order to acclimatise we followed the Bhote Kosi river to Thame, at 12,467ft a village on the way to the Nangpa La, the 18830ft pass into Tibet. A police post prevents trekkers from continuing in that direction but we did climb the 500ft to the Thame Gompa where, after an interesting talk with one of the monks, the early evening fading light and a thin mist provided a perfect ending to the day as we very slowly descended back to the tents. A track from Thame crosses the Tesi Lapcha into the Rolwaling Valley, a trip done in reverse by the other YRC group. A cold night was spent at Thame before returning towards Namche and then Khumjung.

Our Sirdar was invaluable with his advice on acclimatisation. We had planned to walk from Khumjung to Gokyo in two days but he suggested four, a sound recommendation because even with the halving of the distance, and more importantly the height gained, we still tired more easily than at home. We were abnost completely surrounded by very large mountains during this part of the trek but Ama Dablam was by far the most imposing as it appeared every morning for several days as a magnetic view from our various camp sites. After

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! Most of the people not suffering from altitude sickness also appeared to be younger than us.

our tents were pitched at Gokyo and after the high tea had been enjoyed we climbed the moraine at the back of the village and found ourselves overlooking the Ngozumpa Glacier, an enormous mass of ice and rock which thawing over the years has melted into a jumble of fantastic shapes. From the enormous amounts of moraine deposits high above us it didn't need much imagination to see how large this glacier had been in the past, before climatic changes had caused the shrinking.

An early start, before first light, to climb Gokyo Ri was our first real test of acclimatisation. While I had felt tired during the trek up from Khumjung it was nothing compared with the climb to the summit. The hill itself was not much more demanding than climbing Helvellyn but the effect of altitude was incredible. A dozen or so steps, then a rest in order to gasp for breath, then another dozen steps. After a while I found myself feeling proud because I'd managed to set up a rhythm of twenty paces between rests! Then the rewards. The views were magnificent, Cho Oyu to the North was an obvious focal point; then the long snow ridge to Gyachung Kaug, and way over to the east was Everest. The summit of Gokyo Ri had its share of weather beaten prayer flags, providing a foreground for some of the numerous photographs taken of the surrounding mountains. I think that we all agreed that this was the highlight of the trek, and I couldn't help thinking that as we stood and admired a 360 degree panorama, every thing which followed was likely to be an anticlimax. Not far below the summit we saw a few examples of the beautiful alpine flower Saussurea.

When we descended in euphoric mood back to our camp at Gokyo we were

met by our cook with a supply of egg and chips. They wouldn't have sold well in Huddersfield but at 15,580ft they were delicious! After lunch we crossed the Ngozumpa Glacier, camped at Dragnag, and then the following day climbed the Nyimagama valley to camp at the foot of the Cho La. This pass proved to be the hardest part of the trek but the rewards were worth far more than the effort. At 17,777ft the crossing was blocked with snow and impassable when Alan visited the area a few years ago but we didn't set foot on snow until we reached the Khumbu side. The descent was gradual at first over a snowfield which soon gave way to a steeper scramble over rocks and then a gentle track to Dzongla. Here the remote village with its tea house is overshadowed by Cholatse, a mountain we could photograph only by a perspective defeating tilt of the camera.

From our camp at Lobuche we followed the Khumbu Glacier to Gorak Shep where the tea house notice claimed that it had the best food in the area. With the next nearest building being about two hours walk away it is unlikely that they will be prosecuted under the Trades Description Act. Whether best or not the tea house is an automatic stopping place for parties going on to Everest Base Camp. Instead of visiting the base camp, however, we chose to climb Kala Patar, a magnificent viewpoint at the end of the southern ridge running down from Pumori. From here the views of Nuptse, Changtse and the Everest ice-fall compensated for the fact that Everest itself was mainly in mist. Also the sight of the Canadians' base camp seen below us through binoculars gave a better idea of the sheer scale of their

attempted ascent on the mountain than if we had visited the camp.

Our final peak was Chlmkung Ri which we climbed only one day before the weather broke. We had been enjoying very fine mornings followed by a clouding over during the early afternoon. However, by the time we arrived back at our tents at Dingboche the weather behind us was worsening and the following day's camp near Deboche was decidedly more unpleasant with the conditions up the Khumbu valley looking very uninviting. One sad feature seen between Periche and Dingboche was the large number of cairns and memorials built to the memory of Sherpas and others who had perished in the area. It snowed during the night giving some wonderful scenery as we approached the Tengpoche Monastery set in Alpine-like woodlands. However, as the trail continued down further to Namche some of the attraction was lost as the snowfall increased and we concentrated more on keeping on our feet on the icy track. With camping spaces looking unattractive in Namche, our Sirdar obtained a dormitory for us where we left our kit before wandering round the town until we met up with the Rolwaling party. Exaggerated stories were then exchanged.

**In** conclusion I can only repeat Alan Kay's words given at the beginning of this article. Go when the opportunity arises and if it doesn't arise, make it.

Members of the Khumbu party were:

Ken Aldred  
Alan Brown  
Mike Godden  
Mike Hartland  
Vie Maloney

## Namche to Kathmandu

### Albert Chapman

The following morning still in deep snow we climbed above Namche to view Everest in beautiful sunshine. The trek to our Phakding Camp was busy but the weather warm and clear, the many bridges were exciting and, later, a delightful camp where we took tea with our Khumbu members.

The final day of our trek took us along crowded paths to Lukla with the excitement of a busy airstrip with old Russian helicopters and twin-engined Otters constantly taking off with satisfied clients or landing with passengers full of anticipation and excitement

**In** blight sunshine on our campsite behind the main street of Lukla on the morning of our flight to Kathmandu trekkers, Sherpas, kitchen staff and porters, gathered for the last time.

The sadness of our imminent departure from these beautiful mountains was balanced by the pleasurable anticipation of our Nepalese friends. Together with well-deserved tips in sealed envelopes I tried to say something special in thanks to every one of them. To Kusang, Pasang and Dawa I suggested they spent their money on Holy Books and forsake Beer, Chang and sharp Sherpani finger nails. Roars of laughter confirmed they would take no notice of my wise words.

And so as our De Haviland Otter gathered speed on this steep airship, our friends for three whole weeks passed in a blur of smiling faces.

The short flight was spectacular with views to the west of Gauri Sankar showing above the clouds of the Rolwaling.

Our Khumbu group followed an hour later by helicopter.

All safely back in Kathmandu we were delighted to meet Frank whose skull was not fractured but his ann was.

I arranged for both groups to dine at the Kathmandu Guest House that evening. A delightful occasion in the open courtyard with all thirteen present plus Motup. Where else I wondered could you have a sizzling steak with all the trimmings and as much beer as you could drink all for less than £4.

Back to our respective Hotels the Khumbu Five taxied to the Summit Hotel on the hill in Patan overlooking the haze of diesel fumes over Thamel where the Rolwaling Eight walked the Sh01t distance to the Utse.

The following two rest days were spent exploring the Kathmandu Valley with visits to Pashupathmath straddling the Bagmati River where the Napalis, swam, drank, washed and disposed of the funeral ashes from the Cremation Ghats on the bank.

Also the two important Buddhist Stupas of Swayambhunath and Bodhnath and, a little further up the valley, the medieval town of Bhaktapur.

## The Epilogue

### Albert Chapman

Wednesday 29th October was our last full day in Kathmandu. In late afternoon we all assembled at the British Embassy and were hosted to a delightful reception on the terrace of the Ambassadors Residence

Dan Bahadur was the Junior

Steward in 1957 when Boyd Tollington was Ambassador and members of our ill-fated Jugal Himalayan Expedition made welcome. Now as an elderly Head Steward, dressed immaculately in a red and white uniform he supervised the Reception.

Peter Heigl had invited a number of guests from the trekking world together with representatives of the press and so as the sun went down we ate and drank and conversed in delightful surroundings

As darkness fell we left the Embassy in small groups by numerous taxis, each taking a different route to the little known Hotel at Dwarika's. Many of the taxi drivers did not know of its location in the outskirts of the City.

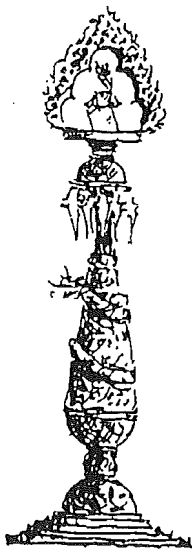
We were met on arrival by Sangita the daughter of the late Dwarika and drinking hot punch round a wood fire in the open court-yard she told how this magical hotel had been built by her father.

She then led us into the Krishnarpan Restaurant where, after removing our footwear we sat at a long table on low cushions.

After eating and drinking at the Embassy only three hours before I realised a sixteen course dinner was a little ambitious even for my capacity.

It was however a beautiful location to celebrate the Life of our Patron Harry Stenbridge, Calved wood work dating back eight hundred years fitting in with modem architecture. Gorgeous Nepali girls served the food

I had apologies from his friends John Hunt who wrote that at 88



years old he regrettably would never visit Kathmandu again.

Also a fax from Alf Gregory stating that he had now emigrated to Southern Australia but had spent a night with Harry the month before he left.

Ambassador Smith thanked us but said sadly he would be in Paris attending a World Bank Sponsored Nepal Aid Meeting and hoped I would appreciate attendance at the Conference had to take priority,

I decided the many speeches should come between the many courses.

Ian Crowther toasted Our Queen  
and the King of Nepal

Peter Heigh proposed the YRC

Finley (Iain) Gilmour responded

Our Guests was proposed by myself

Robin Marston responded

The main speeches were to the memory of Crosby Fox, Mingma Tenzing and Lapka Noorbu (who were killed in the ice fall of 1957)

by Alan Linford

and

Harry Stenbridge by Alan Brown

As an Epilogue Howard Humphreys outlined a brief history of the Club mainly for the benefit of the Embassy Staff who were not aware that the YRC had been in existence for sixty-odd years before our 1957 Expedition

With a mixture of joy and regret we flew out of Kathmandu early next morning leaving behind all the people and places that had given us such pleasure over the last few weeks.

Our stay over at Karachi that night was due to the schedule of Pakistan

International Airlines. The Hotel was smart and comfortable and most members relaxed within the Hotel grounds.

Indeed only two joined me in the journey to Carlton beach for Camel racing! The fact that we had to leave our passports at the airport, had no visas, were told to stay in the Hotel and the recent street shootings had something to do with their reluctance

At last the day of our flight to Manchester. As the plane lifted us into the sky above Pakistan I reflected, in the light of our experiences, on what changes I should have made:

I relied too much on the Sherpas finding the route up to Ramdung;

We should have climbed Yaling Ri when Ramdung was off;

We should have camped at Eagles Nest instead of Drolumbau Glacier;

I should have stopped slapping Frank on his arm when asking how his head was and not being aware that it was broken;

I should have organised the six course menu instead of the sixteen at Dwarika's; and

We should have kept some of our antibiotics instead of donating them all to hospitals in Nepal as our aircraft in part looked like an air ambulance.

I would not, however, have changed anyone of the group I had the privilege and pleasure in leading and the delight I felt when all thirteen landed at Manchester.

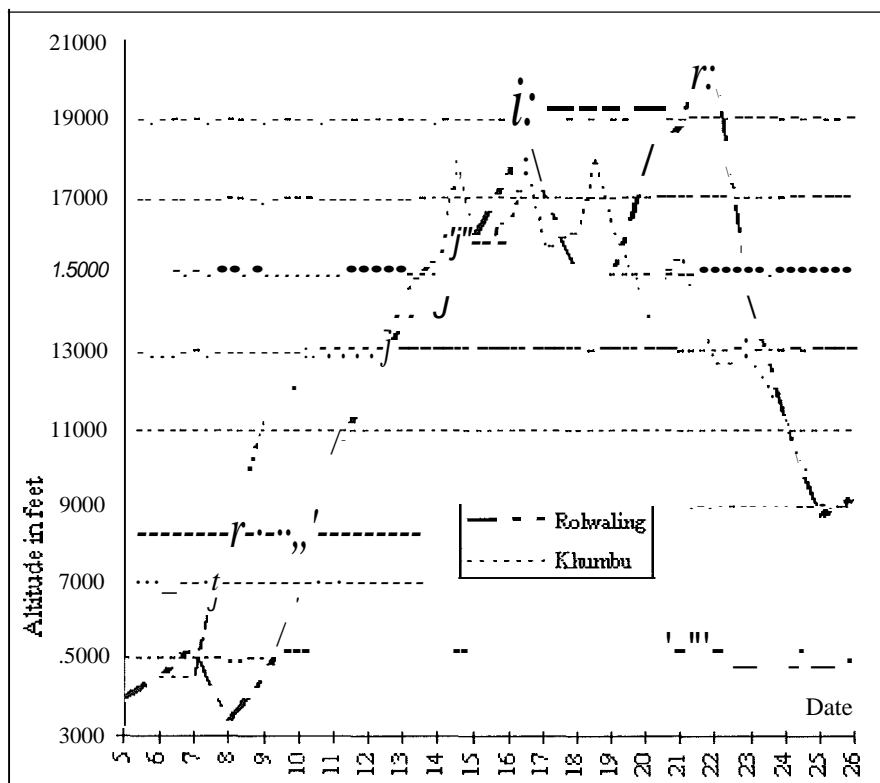




### Altitude and distance log for the Rolwaling Trek

Day	Oct.	Night Camp	Activity	Alt. m	Gain m	Miles
1	6	Hotel Utse		1658		
2	7	Dolkha	Drive & walk	1600	-58	2½
3	8	Suri Dovan		1024	-576	?
4	9	Jagot		1400	376	5
5	10	Simigaon		2019	619	11
6	11	Dongang		3100	1081	5
7	12	Beding		3693	593	6
8,9	13,14	Nagaon	Rest day (14th)	4183	490	4
10	15	Base of Yalung		4877	694	2½
11	16	High Camp		5390	513	2½
12	17	High Camp	Climb Ramdung	5930	540	4
13,14	18,19	Tesho Rolpa Lake		4534	-1396	5½
15	20	Base - Tashi Lapcha		5395	861	5½
16	21	Tashi Laptsha		5755	360	1
17	22	Tashi Laptsha	Climb Pharchamo	6273	518	1
18	23	Thangbo				6
19	24	Namche		3400		5½
20	25	Phakding				5
21	26	Lukla		2800		5
22	27	Kathmandu				

### Altitude log for both of the Treks



## Going to Pot for Fine Port and Fat Cigars

**W R Mitchell remembers the life and times of Ernest E Roberts, the last of the gentleman pot-holers...in** an article first published in the Dalesman, Vol.59, No.1Q, January, 1998.



Roberts (left) officially opens Lowstern, in 1958, with Chubb looking on

It was a grizzle-grey Ernest E Roberts who, some 40 years ago, officially opened the Lowstem Hut of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, within sight of Ingleborough. As a potholer, Roberts knew this mountain both outside and in. He was exploring our Yorkshire underground until his 82nd year.

Everyone called him Roberts. I like to think of him as being "the last of the gentleman potholers." He was a survivor of the time when potholing had style, grace and that delicate quality we call charm. In the ranks of the YRC were men of means and leisure who took their time to plan an excursion. They would liaise with a Dales landowner and virtually take over a tract of land for the duration of their Meet.

Two other delightful Ramblers of what Roberts called the second phase of pothole exploration were Clifford Chubb and Fred Booth, who died in 1967 and 1972, respectively, and ended their potholing careers much earlier than Roberts. Another great Rambler, Stanley Marsden, is still to be found on the hills though he celebrated his 90th birthday in April last year.

Roberts, who died in the summer of 1960, aged 85, while on holiday with

Hugh Slingsby in Scarborough, was born at Salford, educated at Manchester and Oxford, and became a schools inspector, most of his distinguished career being spent in Yorkshire. What proved to be a long, enchanting retirement began in 1935.

He was fond of recalling incidents from his early days of energetic outdoor sport, such as the climbs from Wasdale Head by Oppenheimer and the Abraham Brothers of Keswick. In 1908 Roberts became a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club and also the Alpine Club, to which he was proposed by Geoffrey Winthrop Young (who married Eleanor, the young daughter of the celebrated Cecil Slingsby, a member of a textile family at Carleton, near Skipton. She gave to the club hut a copy of a famous photograph of her father in a Norwegian mountain hut).

The YRC, which became his "spiritual home," had been founded by 13 fell-walkers in 1892. Roberts joined when potholing was interspersed with frenetic climbing in the Lake District and the Alps. Whymper had been an honorary member. Slingsby reigned for ten years until 1903.



Cecil Slingsby in a Norway mountain hut, an image given to the YRC by his daughter

In Yorkshire, the gentlemen potholers found there were so many open systems awaiting exploration that nobody had to dig a hole, much less use a charge of explosive. Also, crucially for their image, they were great notetakers and wrote well-balanced accounts of their expeditions. The Journals of the YRC are among the treasures of the outdoor movement. Roberts had clear memories of the days when potholers included a sprinkling of men who were fond of cigars and vintage port. They were inclined to have their own ladders. They took to the underworld trunks or hampers containing such food as salmon or half-chicken. Most looked middle-age even when they were young, spotting beards and bushy moustaches which became clogged with mud, so they emerged from comparatively clean caves looking filthy.

An idea of the gentlemanly way of life may be deduced from a story told of Stanley Marsden, who in 1933 for a Club Meet, walked from Clapham

railway station to the village, where he proposed to lodge in a cottage. He carried a small paper bag. Calling at the New Inn, he found Alex Rule and A H Bellhouse, who were undoubtedly gentlemen, puffing on large cigars and imbibing good wine. They told the young member what time to arrive at the hotel the following morning, when it was expected he would help to carry their gear.

Clifford Chubb wore Savile Row clothes, complete with spats. He changed into tweedy clothes for potholing and when descending a pothole had his food stacked neatly in a picnic basket. Chubb was President of the YRC during the years of the Second World War. John Lovett, of Austwick, who began potholing in the 1950s when Roberts was still active, told me: "He out-potholed people who were two decades younger than himself" Grey-haired and moustached, with a thin face and luminous eyes which stared through finirimmed spectacles, he became

something of a sage in Yorkshire's oldest outdoor club.

When the YRC held one of its first post- second world war meets, some of the old boys of the Club said it was about time a return was made to Mere Gill. Each had memories of how the pothole was laddered in their time. Consequently there were ladders going down the same relatively Sh0lt pitch for five different gentlemen. A member had to get permission to use one of the private ladders.

It is related that Roberts was going down the pitch when a new member got on to the wrong ladder. Roberts, hearing the second man arrive, said: "Will whoever is on my ladder get off" Which he did promptly, stepping on to a convenient ledge. He was then banished from the pothole.



Roberts and Chubb at Lowstern Hut

John Lovett recalls that heavy duty equipment, of the type which became available after the 1914-18 war, was still being used more than 30 years later. At Mere Gill, young members had a ladder which they were manning for the sole purpose of lowering the veterans' frame rucksacks, Primus

stoves and lunch boxes. Down below, a fire was started, to roast some potatoes. The fire was a great mistake as choking smoke filled the pothole.

Roberts, one of the men who opened up the Dolomites, brought climbing techniques to potholing. Roberts knew the giants of this sporting-science - Booth and Calvert, Lowe and Parsons, Broderick and, last but not least, Blackburn Holden, the textile manufacturer who had cotton ladders made in his mill and shortly afterwards made an amazing solo descent of the 340ft shaft of Gaping Gill. On the return, he was hampered by their elasticity. He trod on about 20 rungs before he felt himself leaving the floor of Yorkshire's most spacious underground chamber.

The subterranean career of Ernest E Roberts began in the company of Frank Payne and his wife, who in 1905 had "camped and hunted" caves in upper Edenvale and then "blundered" on Mere Gill Hole, Ingleborough. In the following Easter, they led Roberts "into the potholing and climbing game," which was to occupy him for upwards of 60 years. He took part in the siege of Mere Gill and saw the narrower, lighter type of ladder replace the massive 12-incher with which the first potholing reputations had been made. It had been observed that a potholer never put two feet on one rung at the same time, so ladders of half the width went into production.

John Lovett and others, young Ramblers who in the 1950s infused new life into Club activities, found Roberts an inspiration. There were still traces of that old gentlemanly approach to potholing. In pre-war days, a Ramblers' weekend on Ingleborough would start on Thursday and finish on Tuesday. The potholers hired workers on the Farrer estate to

sledge material up to the chosen pothole.

They took with them commodious provisions, including half a sheep or half a pig, Stilton cheese and, in the case of one member, vintage port or claret. The cost to each member might be 17s.6d "and for that they had eaten like lords."

Roberts insisted that the new members should perpetuate his type of potholing. A newcomer's first experience of a YRC Meet might be when Roberts asked for volunteers for Sunset Hole, adding "you, you and you."

Each volunteer shouldered whatever equipment was allocated to them and trooped, without a word, to "do" Sunset Hole, which is a relatively easy stream passage, situated a mile and a-half from the Hill Inn. The actual hole was a terminal 50ft pitch where the century-old YRC had their only accident. The victim had a leg broken in two places. It took days to get the injured man out, using as a stretcher a leaf taken from a table. Cliff Downham, a former president and long-time secretary of the YRC, played a great part in the rescue and became the first secretary of the Cave Rescue Organisation, with Roberts as chairman, in 1935.

Modern potholers saunter to their chosen pot in lightweight clothing and equipment. They have brought abseiling to a fine art, even in such a spectacular setting as the main shaft of Gaping Gill, where a man in descent looks to his waiting companions like a spider on a thread under the dome of St Paul's. The year 1909 was one when Gaping Gill was observed in terrifying flood conditions.

Roberts was one of those who descended by bosun's chair. He was to recall standing on the East Slope of

the main chamber and seeing "a sight simply of spray." While waiting for the effect of the storm to moderate, those still down the hole were miserable, unable to sleep, though Roberts found that **if** he sat on one of the Cornish miners' bowler hats and leaned against the wall, he was able to doze off for a few minutes at a time.

It was to be the protracted siege of that great fissure, Mere Gill, which led Roberts and others to a great rethinking of potholing techniques and made it possible, 20 years later, for him and Frankland, with four ladders and four ropes, to descend Boggart's Roaring Hole in an hour.

In the mid-1930s, still hale and hearty, Roberts would set off for the wilds of Scotland in an old car, following rough tracks, lacking detailed maps, climbing or caving alone. Years later, when the young lions of the YRC were talking of caving in Sutherland, Roberts could give them detailed information about where they could go.

Lowstem gave the Club a hut in the potholing country. Prior to that, all the administration and the equipment were kept at Fred Booth's place in Leeds. When needed, it was railed to Clapham and then moved by various means to the head of the chosen pothole.

A few weeks before his death, Roberts was at a joint meet with the Fell and Rock Climbing Club at Clapham. The last of the gentleman potholers died peacefully. The old tradition of doing things in style did not immediately die with him. A young member of the YRC, on an expedition to Lost Johns', observed: "I'll show the beggars." He went underground wearing evening dress.

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## Safety at Jib Tunnel and Gaping Gill

S.A. Craven

Gaping Gill, above Clapham on the southern slopes of Ingleborough, is well-known to every Yorkshire potholer and to thousands of fell walkers. Less well known is the adjacent inconspicuous Jib Tunnel at the end of which is a 120m pitch into the Main Chamber of Gaping Gill.

Gaping Gill must have been known ever since the locals fanned on Ingleborough. The first man to enter Jib Tunnel was Thomas McKenny Hughes, Professor of Geology at Cambridge. He had no light, but moved slowly, throwing stones in front of him. He returned later with friends and candles, and found the pitch into the Main Chamber'.

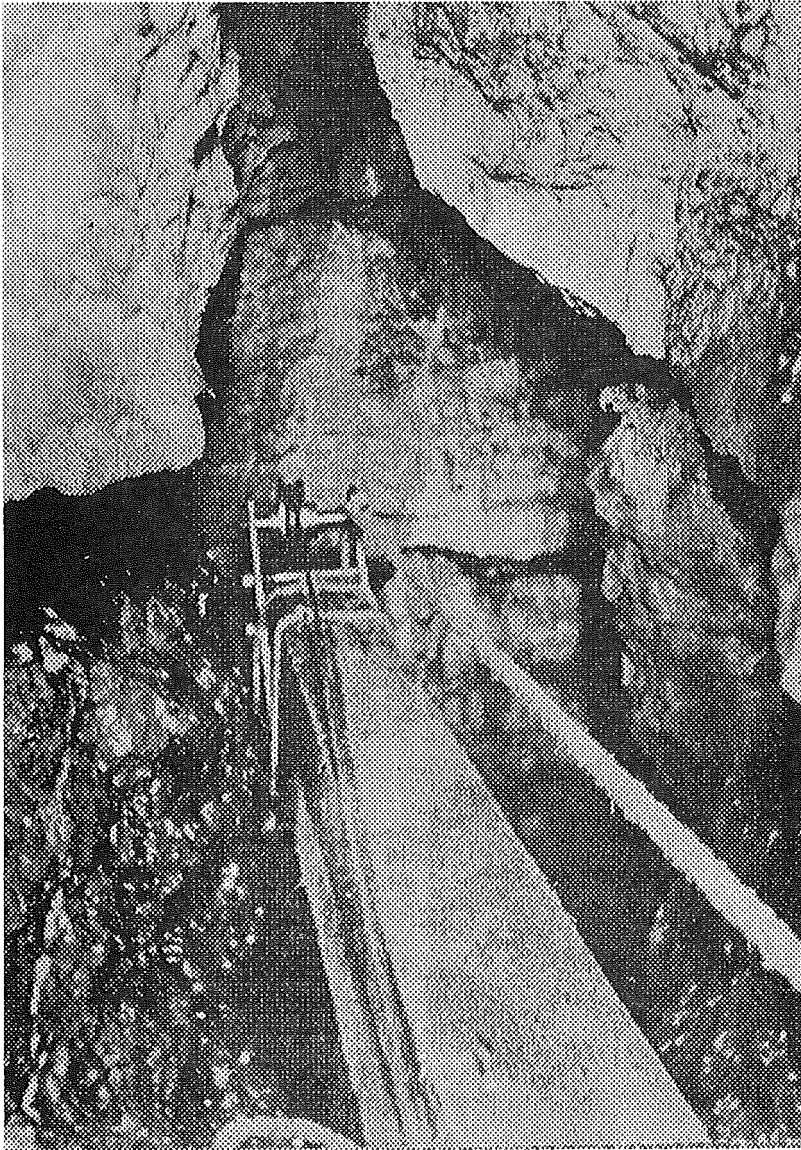
In 1894 a Or. IR. Robinson of Dewsbury walked past Gaping Gill which he regarded as being "exceedingly dangerous". This prompted an anonymous correspondent to write the following week suggesting that it, "be reported to the Lord of the Manor that this dangerous opening should be enclosed?".

Although not a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, Robinson then wrote a letter to the Committee offering financial assistance towards the cost of fencing the hole. On 26 October 1894 Committee decided to write to the landowner, Mr. Farrer of Ingleborough Hall. On 27 November 1894 was tabled a letter from the

agent. It listed the names of all the tenants and other interested parties whose consent would have to be obtained before a fence could be erected. Presumably because of the effort involved in contacting all the commoners, Committee resolved to let the matter lapse, and to inform Dr. Robinson that if he wished to take up the matter himself, the YRC would support him. Nothing more was heard in Committee about the proposed fence".

To return to Jib Tunnel, the YRC members were there on 5 October 1895, and decided that the planned descent of Gaping Gill would be easier via the Tunnel. This would avoid the ledge and other obstructions which might damage the rope. What little water which approached Gaping Gill was sent down the Main Shaft, leaving Jib Tunnel dry. The hauling rope passed from the windlass, under the large stone block at the entrance to Jib Tunnel, along the passage and over a pulley fixed at the end of a projecting beam of wood", Thereafter descents were made via the Main Shaft; but in June 1906 so many people were at Gaping Gill that Jib Tunnel was also

ngged<sup>6</sup>. The YRC were not the only people to use Jib Tunnel. In August 1904 members of the short-lived Leeds Ramblers' Club descended by that route. The first two to descend were so dizzy that they were nearly rendered unconscious, Thereafter steel guide wires were installed. One subsequently broke; and the guide wires were then abandoned?



Jib Tunnel, August 1908.

Clearly showing the substantial wooden "jib", pulley, wire hauling rope and hemp safety rope.

The photographs were taken by Miss L.E. May Johnson of the Derbyshire Pennine Club, and are in the collection of her nephew J.W. Kay Esq.

In August 1907 members of the Yorkshire Speleological Association descended by hand winch connected over a pulley in Jib Tunnel to a bosun's chair, at the bottom of which was attached a long rope so that all except the first man down and the last man up could be pulled away from the waterfall. In August 1908 the YSA members were joined by some from the Derbyshire Pennine Club for descents via Jib Tunnel<sup>8</sup>.

Although Gaping Gill was not fenced at that time, Jib Tunnel was regarded by the landowner as dangerous. In 1902 the YRC published a warning about the dangerous pitch"; and the following year the Ingleborough Estate agent prevailed upon the YRC to make the entrance safe. The passage was "permanently obstructed with part of the jib timber?".

Unfortunately timber in a wet cave is not permanent, or subsequent visitors to Jib Tunnel failed to replace the obstruction. On 28 July 1995 a 11-year old boy

crawled into Jib Tunnel with an inadequate light, and fell to his death in the Main Chamber. The Coroner returned a verdict of "accidental death", with the comment that "the group ... could not have anticipated the danger at the end of the tunnel". He called on "police, cavers and landowners to devise a warning to prevent further tragedies". The Chairman of the Craven Pothole Club said that the entrance to Jib Tunnel is inconspicuous. A spokesman for the Yorkshire Dales National Park said

that if Jib Tunnel were to have a warning sign, so would every cave and pothole entrance; such notices may well attract curious people. The most sensible comment came from the landowner, Dr. I.A. Farrer: "During the last 50 years a million people have been past Gaping Ghyll and this is the first accident that we have had<sup>11</sup>."

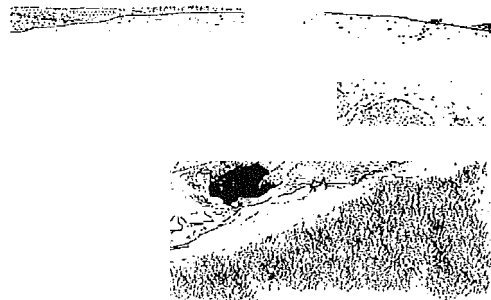
However, this last comment is not true - but to be fair to Dr. Farrer the next incident to be described occurred before he inherited the estate. In the summer of 1947 the Craven Pothole Club held its first post-war meet at Gaping Gill and found a decomposing and incomplete corpse in the Main Chamber. It was never identified; and an open verdict was returned<sup>12</sup>.



Eh Simpson in Jib Tunnel, August 1908  
Simpson was the co-founder,  
and dominant member, of the  
Yorkshire Speleological Association.

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## **The Modern Yorkshire Cave Book that took Three Decades to Appear**

**S.A. Craven**

At the beginning of this century there were few books about the Yorkshire caves and potholes. John Button's "Tour to the Caves" was first published in 1780, ran to a second edition the following year, and soon went out of print. There followed a century's hiatus until Martel's "Ireland et Cavemes Anglaises" was published in 1897<sup>2</sup>. It was concerned more with Ireland than England and, being written in French, was inaccessible to most Englishmen. In 1907 there appeared a chapter on Stump Cross Caves in Baker and Balch's "The Netherworld of Mendip"<sup>3</sup>. There was clearly a gap to be filled; and the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club attempted to fill that gap.

At the YRC conunittee meeting on 10 March 1908 a letter was tabled from Past President George Lowe, "suggesting that a book be written and published by the Club, on Yorkshire Caves and Potholes. Mr. Lowe said that publication had appeared on a similar subject dealing with other parts of the COWlty, & that there was a rumour that the Yorkshire Caves were to be similarly dealt with. Mr. Lowe suggested that if this was true, we ought to be the first in the field, and take up the matter without delay.

This rumour would not have been without some foundation. Lowe was clearly referring to Ernest Baker who, in 1903, had written a book largely about caves in the Peak District". His second cave book "The Netherworld of Mendip", has been mentioned above, and may have prompted Lowe to have written to the Committee.

Past Presidential recommendations have to be taken seriously. The conunittee responded, as all bureaucracies are wont to do, by appointing a sub-conunittee of the Rev. L.S. Calvert and Messrs. James Buckley, Thomas Booth, Samuel Cuttriss, Thomas Gray, George Lowe, Lewis

Moore and Waiter Parsons to consider the matter and report.

The sub-committee met on 7 April and recommended, "that such a book be published & that steps be taken to collect the matter & to invite the cooperation of the Club members". A further meeting was held the following month at which two quotes were tabled for printing 500 copies of 500 pages in a format similar to that of the YRC Journal, viz. 7s. Id. and 5s. 11d. per copy to which would have to be added the costs of illustrations, blocks and authors' corrections. Committee accepted the recommendations, and resolved to solicit contributions from members.

It is, of course, easy to make such a decision. The problem lies in persuading the members of a voluntary organisation to make the necessary effort. Fourteen months later letters from Harold Broderick and Arthur Dwerryhouse about the proposed book were tabled. There is nothing in the minutes about the content of these letters; but it is not unreasonable to postulate that they expressed concern about the failure to make any progress.

On 12 January 1909 Thomas Gray wrote to the committee that he wished to discuss the proposed cave book with the sub-committee. The following month he, and Arthur Dwerryhouse, were appointed joint editors. In July 1909 there occurred another delay: Dwerryhouse resigned from the Club. The President wrote asking if he were still prepared to edit the book. On 21 December 1909 was tabled a reply from Dwerryhouse. He was unable to oblige because he was no longer resident in Leeds. At the same time Gray resigned from the Club for an unrecorded reason, but was subsequently persuaded to withdraw his resignation.

The loss of one editor, and the disaffection of the other, did nothing to expedite publication of the book. Two years later, on 23 May 1911, "a letter was read from Mr. Slingsby & enclosure, one from L.H. Bennett & Co. of Sheffield, with reference to publishing a book on caves &

potholes." IH. Bennett & Co. were publishers of 99 Broomspring Lane, Sheffield<sup>5</sup>. Correspondence with a publisher suggests that some manuscripts may have been forthcoming.

It was decided to let the matter lie on the table where, to this day, the matter still lies as far as the YRC is concerned.

The story now moves to 20 November 1928 when, "a letter was read from Mr. A. Mitchell of Skipton, asking for information with regards to joining the YRC The Secretary reported that he has sent this information to Mr. Mitchell from whom however no further reply had been received."

Albert Mitchell had just left Ermysted's Grammar School in Skipton where, in one of the classrooms, there had been a large photograph of Gaping Gill Main Chamber by Cuthbert Hastings. It had been given to the school by William Cecil Slingsby in 1908<sup>6</sup>. This, and a complete set of YRC Journals in the school library, prompted Mitchell to take a serious interest in caves. Mitchell used to say that the YRC members did insufficient cave exploration to satisfy his enthusiasm, so he formed his own club - the Craven Pothole Club - in 1929.

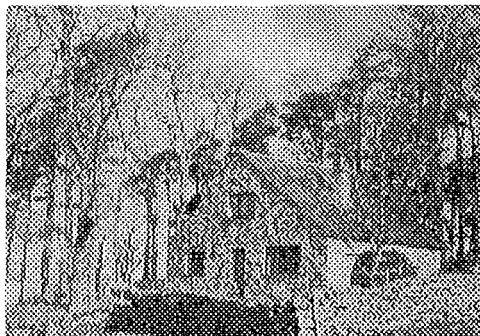
After leaving school Mitchell joined the Craven Herald as a junior reporter, and remained with that Skipton newspaper until Hitler's War required his services elsewhere. The combination of journalism as a profession, and cave exploration as a hobby, ensured that the literary gap was eventually filled.

Mitchell's "Yorkshire Caves and Potholes No. 1 North Ribblesdale" was published by the author in 1937, and reprinted in 1938 and 1948. The 1948 edition sold for 3s. 6d. His second (and last) book appeared about 1948: "Yorkshire Caves and Potholes (2) Under Ingleborough", selling for 4s. 6d<sup>8</sup>, again published by the author. Thereafter Mitchell moved to the south of England; and he never completed the intended series.

The honour of writing the first modern comprehensive guide to the caves and potholes of the northern Pennines went to Norman Thornber of the defunct Northern Cavern & Fell Club in 1947<sup>9</sup>. In his "Pennine Underground", published by Dalesman, he listed all the known caves in the area. This commenced the continuing publication of cave guides by Dalesman, which continues to the present day.

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Lowstern before the extension work started

## Book Reviews by Bill Todd

### Craven Pothole Club Record

No. 47 July 1997.

Another record of adventure both above and below ground here. Unusually there is only one short meet abroad, a reconnaissance at Bad Urach. But the higher activities are a little more in evidence. A good Mayday meet at Nether Wasdale saw lots of people on Yewbarrow, Red Pike and Pillar.

Tom Thompson's account of a week in Skye is hilarious and seems truthful. It is refreshing to know that the Pinnacle Ridge and the Clach Glas-Blaven routes are not a walk-over even to active potholers. Definitely not the carefree scrambles some guide book writers would have us believe.

Most interesting is the reprint of the late Winston Farrar's account of his adventures in Gaskell's passage of Goyden Pot. He did not know about Gaskell at the time.

This is reprinted from the Journal of the Pudsey and District Rambling Club of August 1931 and helps to make up a well rounded 'Record'.

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*'Because it ;su 't there '.*

### Craven Pothole Club Record

No. 48 Oct 97

Mallory's answer to 'why are you going to climb Mount Everest?' is well known. A reflection on page 12 of the C.P.c. Bulletin suggests that this would be an inadequate answer to 'Why do you go caving?' As a cave is by definition a hole or space it cannot be 'there' ill any factual or material sense. Now, whether a caver can still

say 'because it is there' and be thinking of the complex of rock formations and underground wonders that make a cave worth visiting, is a question I will leave to wiser heads.

As usual there are many articles on potholing at home and abroad and in addition the great above ground is acknowledged by a meet report on Skye and an article, nearly a poem, by a member who has retired to Edendale.

The record is in the Club Library for your delectation.

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### Craven Pothole Club Record

No. 49 Jan '98

An aspirant to membership of a Climbing Club was heard to say he didn't mind the climbing but objected to the 'infernal dangling'. Reading C.P.C. Record No. 49 I find myself thinking that they go to some splendid places but why on earth do they keep disappearing below ground when they get there?

Six Britishers had a wonderful time in Meghalaya, India, with teal11S form Germany and from the Meghalaya Adventure Association. Their achievements and underground fun are graphically described by Estelle Sandford.

At the other end of the scale the President's Meet consisted of a walk round Attermire Scar. I thought I knew the country round there but I finished reading the article in a state of utter confusion.

The usual accounts of underground adventure in the UK make up forty pages of entertaining reading.

PS. New Goyden Pot, Nidderdale is in a dangerous condition due to a mud and clay slump.

**Walks in the Silverdale /  
Arnside Area of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty**

**R. Brian Evans**

Reprint with amendments 1996  
Cicerone pp 160 pb

Cycling to Lakeland as a youth from Lancaster my mates and I used to wonder about the conspicuous limestone hill on our right as we crossed Hale Moss. But our ambitions were on bigger game like Harrison Stickle and the Kentmere Fells.

It was not until much later that my wife and I were introduced to the wonders of Hutton Roof and Farleton Fell by the author of this splendid little book. It has been around for some time and indeed its first addition was a local best seller in the Preston area. The issue of the 1996 revision together with recent expansion of my own knowledge of the area has prompted this review.

The well planned introduction includes a general description of the area, short walks, the woods, geology, historic buildings and churches. A short section also tells you where to climb rock. Some of the crags are most attractive in the firmness of the rock, absolutely first class limestone.

The walks are described in twenty four chapters mainly circular but one deals with linear walks. The cross bay walk is described but, of course, this must be done under Mr. Robinson's guidance. Illustrating the text are a dozen colour photographs and scores of line drawings many featuring dog Beck, sadly no longer with us.

It seems to me that members should know what this area has to offer because it represents a handy retreat from bad weather in Lakeland and/or a half day's fun on the way home. This book will guide you at first then give great pleasure, as it has just given me, browsing, looking at the pictures and reliving some good days out.

**Short Walks in Lakeland.**

**Book 2 - North Lakeland**

Aileen & Brian Evans *sib* pp.271 £10.99

I have known Aileen and Brian Evans long enough to know there will not be any misdirections in this book so I am giving an opinion based on its coverage and its quality.

Like all Cicerone products it is to handle and easy to use; covering Mardale as well as Borrowdale and Bassenthwaite it should have perhaps been called 'North and East Lakeland' but this may have been considered an unwieldy title.

The area covered is divided into six sections; Borrowdale, Newlands and North West, Northern Fells, Thirlmere and St. John's, Patterdale and Eastern Fells. There is a sketch map illustrating each of the 57 walks (no connection with Heinz) though readers are advised to carry a proper walking map as well. The sixteen colour photographs and numerous drawings add greatly to the charm of the book.

As far as the walks are concerned, - well! How often have we visited Castlerigg Stone Circle and regretted that there was nothing else to do but go back to the car and drive away? No longer, walk 28 takes us from Castlerigg past the old Y.M.C. hut at Dale Bottom to Shoulthwaite valley and its ancient hill fort, and back via Walla Crag. At nine miles this is one of the longer walks in the book. Other walks I can't wait to do are Trusmadoor, Walk 22, next to Great Cockup (I am not joking), where Derek Clayton and I lost the hounds in 1991, and Combe Gill Horseshoe where Juliet and I had an icy epic in 1995.

People who want to stride over the ridges in fifteen mile days are catered for elsewhere but if you have walked over all the summits long ago and are looking for something less exacting and just as enjoyable this is a book for you.

Eric Shipton, Everest  
and Beyond,

Peter Steele

Constable, pp. 290 £18.99 hlb

*"Framed between the dark walls  
of a canyon or standing above  
autumn tinted woods these peaks  
are lovely beyond belief"*

This quotation is from the penultimate paragraph of Eric Shipton's report to 'The Times' on the Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition of 1951. Would it be too fanciful to conclude that some of the Mount Everest Committee members would shake their heads at this sort of writing? 1953 was going to be the last chance the British would have to climb Everest for the next four years. 1954 and 1955 were reserved for the French and the Swiss. Perhaps we needed a thruster to get to the top rather than some pale faced aesthete. Shipton's experience of Everest was unrivalled. He had been a member of five previous expeditions; five failures?

Most people will be too young to remember when it was announced that the 1953 Mount Everest Expedition would be led by a Major John Hunt. Most males had served in the forces at that time and the appointment of a military man to lead was no guarantee of success to a lot of us.

It was well known at the time that Shipton favoured small, lightweight expeditions and like Bourdillon thought that the main requirement about food was that there should be some. A few members of the 1952 Cho Oyu Expedition had expressed dissatisfaction with his leadership and at a meeting of the Committee on 28th July 1952 Shipton himself said there could be a case for a change of leadership. In fact that meeting

unanimously confirmed that Shipton would be leader.

After much behind the scenes discussion, however, at a meeting on the 11 September he was sacked in favour of John Hunt. Read all about it in what seems to be a very fair assessment of the situation.

Read all about Eric Shipton too, I had no idea what he looked like till I saw the cover photograph. I know now what people are talking about when they refer to his deep blue eyes. The picture also conveys something of a 'little boy lost' sort of look, quite the antithesis of his friend Tilman who had given up on mountains in 1951.

The book of course, is not primarily about mountaineering politics. It is full of good things. Read how Sid Cross treated a hypothermic outward bound student and what Shipton said to the youngster who claimed to spend all his weekends with his girlfriend.

It was fortunate that Shipton was President of the Alpine Club when the merger with the A.C.G. took place, master minded I believe by Yorkshire's own Dennis Gray. There was a long debate about this but the merger went through with a 93% majority.

Every reviewer needs to find a mistake if only to establish that he has read the book. Surely Dr. Steele does not believe Halter Fell is at the head of Eskdale. We all know that there is a lot of Eskdale higher up including Hard Knott, Brothelkeld and Throstle Garth. It must have been a slip of the pen.

Be that as it may this is a book that needed writing. The black and white photographs are excellent, it is well written and I thoroughly recommend it.

## Club Proceedings

1997: The meets were 10-12 January, Low Hall Garth; 31Jan-2 February, Glan Dena, North Wales; 20-23 February, Braemar; 14-16 March, Lowstern; 11-12 April, Crianlaraich; 25-27 April, Ravenstonedale, Ladies Weekend; 9-11 May Wasdale; 22-27 May Outer Hebrides; 6-8 June, Pembroke; 20-22 June Buttermere Round, Long Walk; 4-6 July, Forrest of Dean; 26July-10 August, Saastal Alps; 15-17 August, South Wales; 5-7 September, Cader Idris; 24-26 September, LHG Working Party; 26-28 September, RLH Langdale; 17-19 October, Derbyshire; 24-25 October, Lowstern Working Party; 15-16 November, Whoop Hall, Kirby Lonsdale, Annual Dinner; 12-14 December Ennerdale, Christmas Meet.

The 105th Annual General Meeting was held at Whoop Hall, Kirby Lonsdale on 15th November. The following officers and committee were elected for the year 1997/98.

*President:* T W Josephy;

*Vice President:* IF D Gilmour

*Hon. Secretary:* R G Humphreys

*Hon. Meets Secretary:* JHHooper

*Hon. Treasurer:* TA Kay

*Hon. Editor:* M Smith

*Hon. Librarian/Archivist:* MP Pryor

*Hon. Auditor:* D Laughton

*Huts Secretary:* R Josephy

*Hut Wardens:* LHG, F D Smith

Lowstern, FM Godden

*Committee:* IF D Gilmour, D Hall,

HA Lomas, G R Sahnnon.

The 84th Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President T W Josephy was in the chair. The Chief Guest was Douglas Laing of the SMC. Kindred Clubs were represented by Hunter Johnson, Alpine Club; Mike Berk, Climbers Club; Jeff Cowling,

Craven Pothole Club; David Bateman, Gritstone Club; Brian Walters, Midland Association of Mountaineers; John Arkell, Rucksack Club; George Chambers, Wayfareres Club. Attendance 89.

## New Members, Resignations and Deaths

### New Members

1997 Derek English

H. Alan Fletcher

Frank Platt

Michael I. Pitt

Steve Richardson

Kjetil Trevanger

1998 Christopher N. Bird

Keith Raby

Vic I. P. Maloney

Jeffrey I. Halford

Martyn B. Trasler

### Resignations

1998 Christopher I. Newman

### Deaths

1995 Sir R Charles Evans

1997 E. Mark Haslam

Stanley Marsden

Hany L. Stenbridge

Peter C. Swindells



## Obituaries

### Sir Charles Evans 1955 - 1995

Charles Evans will no doubt be remembered as deputy leader of the successful Everest expedition and the first ascent of Kangchenjunga he led in 1955. His association with the YRC began at the 1955 Annual Dinner when he was chief guest. Sitting between the President, Harry Stenbridge and Crosby Fox, he planted the idea that the YRC should be the first English regional club to mount an expedition to a major Himalayan Peak. By acclaim he was elected an honorary member of the Club during the dinner.

Robert Charles Evans was born on 19 October 1918 and died on 6 December 1995. Born in Liverpool after his father was killed in France, he was brought up in North Wales speaking no English pre-school. He climbed extensively in Wales and the Lake District before going to the Alps in 1939. Shortly after his appointment as Principal of University College of North Wales at Bangor he contracted multiple sclerosis and a few years later was restricted to a wheel chair. This did not prevent him attending the 1969 Annual Dinner as chief guest.

F D Smith

Evans as portrayed in Hunt's Ascent of Everest and below with Bourdillon (left) returning to the camp on the South Col during the first assault



## Clifford Fielding

1927 - 1998

Cliff Fielding died of liver cancer not long after his 70th birthday and a month or two after his son had taken him to Las Vegas as an early birthday present. This illustrates his continued enjoyment of life, people and razzle.

He lived with an enthusiasm for doing things and for knowing the other people involved. For about ten years he climbed intensely in the UK and the Alps. To do this he drove long distances which allowed him to enjoy his driving skill and in all he did he was happy to help others to improve their skills. Going into a pub with him often resulted in making friends which he did quite naturally and which was perhaps related to his experiences at work. In those days, on behalf of the Post Office, he had to persuade people to avoid creating interference to television, before there was a law requiring this. So he had to create a relationship quickly with people of diverse interests, from the householder with an electric drill to directors of ICI. It was during this period that he became a founder member of the Cleveland Mountaineering Club and a member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club and the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. It was also during this period that he is reputed to have said, "If the gap seems wide enough to drive through at 20 mph then it is wide enough for 60 mph" and "If you cannot nm out the whole 120 feet of rope without a runner, then you are not confident of your capability to do the climb."

I met him when we were both desperately looking for a climbing companion. I had pressed an office colleague to come and hold the other

end of my hemp rope on a local outcrop one February day, where, out of the mist and gently falling snow Cliff appeared. He had a part share in a motor car and gave me many years of good companionship and a series of adventures which were not limited to climbing" Our last trip together was just after he married when we repeated a route of mixed walking and climbing which took us into three of the valleys in the Lake District.

His energy and enthusiasm became directed towards his family and even included helping to run an ice hockey team. He also became involved with the Masons and became a Justice of the Peace. The last reported sighting in the mountains was skiing with his son. That was downhill skiing using lifts in contrast to his boasted 10,000 feet of skiing in Cairngorm using heel-free ski and no lifts.

Derek A. Smithson



Cliff Fielding in the Alps

## Stanley Marsden 1936 - 1997

Stanley Marsden died on the 3rd December 1997, remaining fit and vigorous to within a few weeks of his death.

After leaving Wheelwright Grammar School he joined the Midland Bank in Leeds, later moving to Huddersfield branch, then the Head Office. Next he was appointed manager of the Brighouse, finishing his career at the Hillsborough Branch in Sheffield, having had a break during the war where he served in the navy in minesweeping. He was promoted from the ranks to Sub-Lieutenant.

Stanley's love of the outdoors began with cycling in the Yorkshire Dales before he became a member of the Club in 1936. After his war service he was elected to the YRC committee in 1947, was Honorary Treasurer from 1951 to 1978, was Vice President 1950/52, and President 1956/58. He was elected an Honorary Member in 1968.

His other interests included membership of the Manchester Pedestrian Club, where he was president in 1990. He was a member of the Bradford Straddlebug Touring Association, (which, like the YRC, was founded 1892), the Brighouse Borough Club and the Rotarians. Stanley was also a keen birdwatcher and travelled widely in pursuit of this interest.





Stanley was a very strong walker and keen potholer. He had a strong personality and was a born leader. He regularly attended the Whit meets, usually held in those days in Skye, Rhum, or Northern Ireland, where he was the organiser for several years of 'Grand Hotel' with Bob Chadwick, Harry Stembridge, Jack Holmes and Jack Dosser.

In Northern Ireland, before the war, the highlight when potholing with Roberts, Fred Booth, Godley, Nelstrop and others, was the discovery of Reyfacl. Amongst his pioneering exploratory potholing expeditions before and after the war, extensions were made to Pollasumera and PollnagoHun, using boats. Some will remember his potholing training meets in the early sixties from Lowstern.

Stanley was very much an allrounder, taking part in annual Alpine Expeditions with Edward Tregoning and Geoffrey Turner in Switzerland, Italy and Austrian the fifties, sixties and seventies. His modesty may have prevented him from writing about these activities in the journals. He was a regular attender at the annual Long Walk Meets.

The YRC Jugal Himal Expedition of 1957 was perhaps the highlight of Stanley's Presidency. He was also active in the acquisition of Lowstern and demonstrated a surprising skill in stonewalling during the refurbishing work, and he was pleased to be invited to open the new Lowstern in 1988.

I recall my long friendship with Stanley, as we were both members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club and the Manchester Pedestrian Club. Here are some of my recollections:

Stanley always had a steadying influence on his more enthusiastic friends, and I recall when, in the Ben Nevis area, he advised me against attempting a steep

snow filled gully. On reflection later, I thought this had been sound advice.

Stanley was a convivial soul, and would always make sure when in a pub that you had a drink in front of you. He was, however as we all know, a stickler for having things done properly. He was a meticulous keeper of records and memorabilia relating to his outdoor activities and dinner attendances.

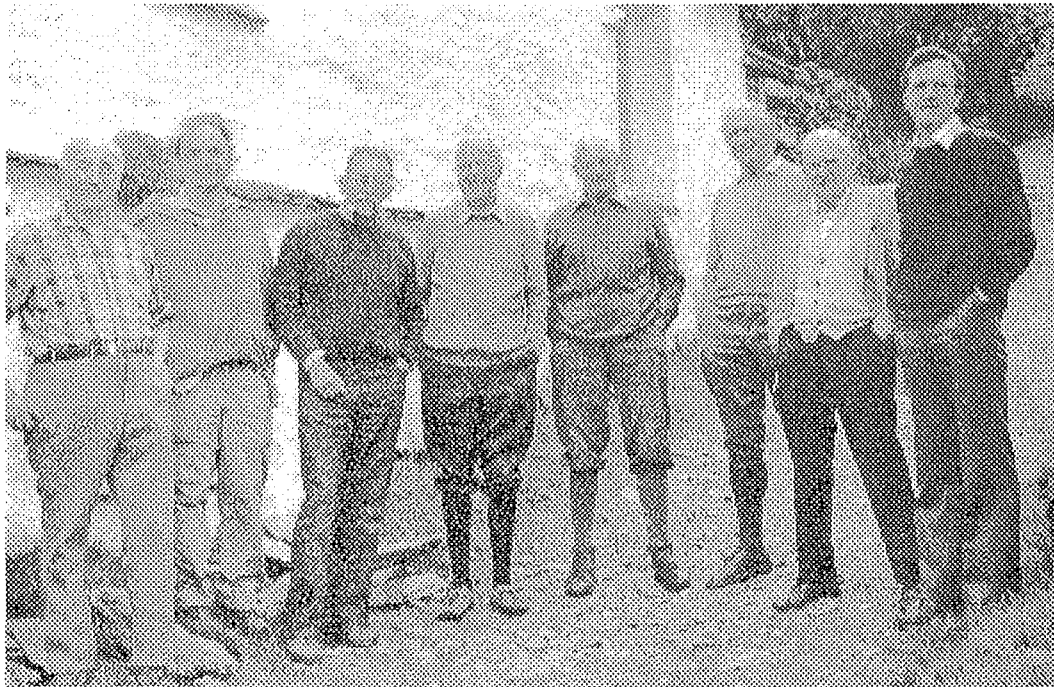
I remember Stanley speaking highly of the good ship 'St.Tudno', which used to sail between Liverpool and the Menai Bridge. The St.Tudno's Master was never allowed to leave the dock at Liverpool without authority from the Chairman of the shipping line, who would come to the dock personally with a large chronometer watch and give the signal to leave. - Stanley thoroughly approved of such proper behaviour.

On one YRC pothole meet in Ireland I recall when the hard men had been down a deep and difficult pothole for some 4 to 5 hours. The other members waiting in the pouring rain at the entrance, watched the returning potholers climb out of the pot, and then proceed to pull up the several heavy wet rope ladders and roll them up. One member then unfortunately let go of the expensive, long, wet, hemp safety line, and it plunged into the depths, all the members fell silent, knowing the pot would now have to be completely re-laddered to retrieve the rope.

Stanley broke the silence, saying in his loud clear voice,

"Well Done, That Man - re-ladder!"

Stanley was decisive in a crisis, On one occasion I was at the wheel of his car, driving across Rannoch Moor in a snowstorm at 3am, when the car skidded into a ditch. Stanley's only comment was "I see some boulders, I think we can build a ramp". The car was on its way again shortly afterwards.



Maurice Wilson, Jones, George Spenceley, Stanley Marsden, Harry Stembridge, Jack Holmes, Cliff Downham and Arthur Tallon outside Low Hall Garth at a 1957 Himalayan expedition re-union.

The Club was a very great part of Stanley's life. He was greatly upset when it was decided at the AGM that former Presidents should not be, *ex officio* Members of the committee, but I also know that he hugely enjoyed the last dinner he attended in 1997, all who met him recall his vigour and apparent health. He drove me to the meet, in Kirkby Lonsdale, with remarkable competence and at some speed.

His death at the age of 90, due to cancer, occurred only a few days after learning that he had terminal cancer, and was quickly followed, four weeks later by that of his second wife, Kathleen, after a fall.

His ashes, and those of his wife, were scattered at a short service held on the track up to Pike O' Blisco from the Blea Tarn road on 9th March 1998. Those present included myself, Stanley's sister Hilda, Her husband Eric Gibson, their son and daughter and friends from the Yorkshire Ramblers, Manchester Pedestrians and Straddlebugs.

The weather was closing in but never had the hills looked so fine with snow in the high conies.

Pat Stonehouse

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### **Mrs Ruth Spilsbury**

Mrs Ruth Spilsbury, the widow of our former Honorary Member Harry Spilsbury died peacefully on Christmas Day 1997 at the age of 106. She was active until the last few months of her life. Older members will have happy memories of Harry, who looked after us so well at the RLH meets, and will remember his fine rendition of 'Yorkshire' at our dinners in the fifties and sixties. He was multi-talented but so was Ruth, who was a linguist, a competent pianist and a good public speaker. Harry fell on Ben Aligin in 1970, his head struck a rock and he was instantly killed.

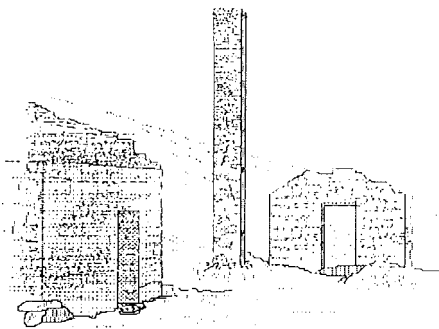
At the Club's Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1952 Ruth was transported in an armchair on the back of a Landrover to the Crummockdale YRC camp to light the fuse which set alight the bonfire. Mrs Winthrop Young, Slingsby's daughter, also attended the celebration.

## Sid H Cross MBE

1913-1998

Sid Cross died suddenly on 31st March. He was a good friend of the YRC. He was a past President and Honorary Member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, but he will be remembered most as a leading member, along with Cliff Dowham, of the Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team. No doubt many will also remember him as landlord of the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel where he would often be seen wearing a YRC tie! He would affectionately refer to us as the 'Yorkshire Puddings'.

He was a first class rock climber with many first ascents to his credit. Two amusing names of these climbs were 'Half Nelson' a climb he did with his future wife, Miss Nelson and 'Double Cross', a climb they made together after their marriage. He is survived by his wife Jammie and two sons, John and Edward, to whom we offer our condolences.



## The President's Report from the 105<sup>th</sup> AGM

1997 has been a year both of achievement and forward planning for the Club. Members were involved in a major caving expedition, two very successful Himalayan treks have been completed and planning has been going ahead for two future expeditions. On the home front, much work has gone into the proposed Lowstern extension.

The Oman caving expedition took place in the spring and its' success was largely due to the efforts of the YRC contingent who spearheaded most of the exploration. Members will, I know, be gratified to see Cliff Downham remembered in the naming of new parts of the system. I hear rumours that a repeat visit to the area is planned for the not too distant future. Looking ahead, plans are just about finalised for the Iceland Expedition next summer, which will involve a crossing of the Vatnajokull icecap and an ascent of the highest mountain in Iceland en route. An expedition to Chile is being proposed for two or three year's time; it is envisaged that it will involve a climbing and a trekking party, along the lines of the Jugal Himal trip. although the trekking party may not be as well pottered as the Himalayan ones have been.

Excluding the Dinner weekend, 16 meets were organised. Sadly, one, the Costa Blanc climbing meet had to be cancelled due to lack of support, but on the other hand the Spring Bank holiday meet in the Outer Hebrides was well attended, providing a memorable week for those lucky enough to be there. Other meets as usual ranged the length and breadth of the country. Of particular note is the increase in rock climbing activity - 011

checking my log book I see I have done 26 routes with other members on meets alone. This is a very welcome trend and I urge our climbers actively to continue it by attending the climbing meets whenever they can. Average attendance on meets this year was 24. Thanks are due as always to the Meet Leaders for their organisation and excellent standards of catering.

Turning now to the Club huts, the news is mixed. The National Trust is intent upon raising the rent for Low Hall Garth by a considerable amount, forcing an increase in fees charged to non members. Receipts this year are down, although it remains to be seen if this trend will continue. Inevitably the time will soon come when we will seriously have to consider the future of our tenancy at Low Hall Garth,

Lowstern, however is thriving, with plans for the extension coming to fruition and building work expected to start in the very near future, When completed, we shall have a facility second to none in Yorkshire and comparable with the best in the whole country. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who have been involved so far, particularly Albert Chapman for the idea and John Whalley for producing the plans, and to thank in advance all the people who are going to be inveigled into giving their time and effort in the future.

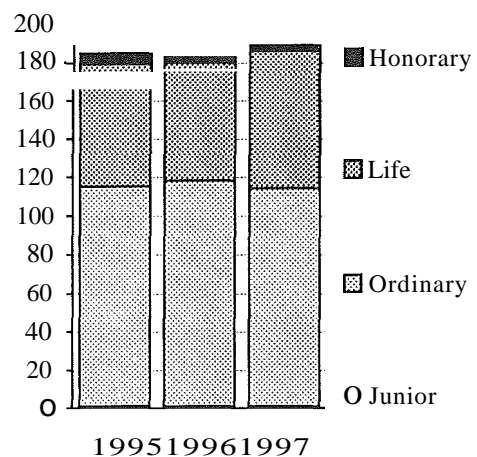
The Bulletin, one of the best innovations the Club has made in recent years, continues to thrive. It is a never ending source of amazement to me how so many of our members manage to reach far flung corners of the earth. This, combined with the historical articles and the meet reports, makes for highly entertaining reading. The Editor, Michael Smith, now has updated equipment to improve the

quality of photographic reproduction and we owe him a debt of gratitude for all his hard work and dedication. Nevertheless, the Bulletin is nothing without it's contributors; our thanks are due to all those who have put pen to paper in the past, and please keep the articles coming in the future.

On the membership front, I am pleased to report a positive improvement in recruitment. Eight people have been elected to membership this year and several more are in the pipeline. I would ask all members to put their minds to maintaining this trend and to introduce suitable prospective members on meets throughout the coming year. Membership now stands at 189, five up on last year. Regretfully I have to announce the deaths of three members; Mark Haslam and past presidents Harry Stembidge and Peter Swindells. There were no resignations.

Membership figures are now

	1997	1996	1995
Honorary	3	4	6
Life	72	62	64
Ordinary	113	117	114
Junior	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>185</b>



# LETTERS

## A Letter from Bill Todd to his MP

Dear Mr. Best.

### *Access to mountains and other matters*

Belated congratulations on beating Keith Hampson, I never thought you would when I met you on Edale Way two or three years ago. Now that the Government should be settling down to the tasks in front of it may I draw your attention to some ways in which the total happiness of the nation may be increased at minimal cost.

### *Access to Mountains.*

The Government is politically committed to introduce legislation providing for free public access to uncultivated moorland. The known wishes of the late John Smith make this a moral commitment as well. I am aware that landowning interests are making loud noises about the cost. I enclose, for the consideration of the relevant department, a scheme for assessing financial compensation in a fair manner. I am copying this to the mountaineering press.

As well as the County Landowners other bodies which pose a threat to the legitimate interests of outdoor lovers are the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and English Nature. The latter body has placed notices on the approaches to Ingleborough purporting to welcome visitors and pointing out that access is freely available on the public footpaths (it always was) and by permit elsewhere. To people like my friends and I who have been walking over Ingleborough for over fifty years and who were serving in this country's armed forces before English Nature was invented these notices are a gross impertinence.

Similarly my friends and I have been turned back from Upper Walclendale

because peregrine falcons were nesting on the crag up the dale. Firstly I have yet to be convinced that a few people walking past would do the slightest harm to the peregrines and secondly if it did I fail to see why the access rights of fifty million English people should be prejudiced to protect the interests of a bird which lives by preying on other creatures.

The power of these two bodies, which represent nothing more than a noisy if influential minority, should be seriously curbed in any access legislation.

Lastly, it would be a good idea to stop using the phrase 'Freedom to Roam'. This only helps to spread the view put out by some writers that the outdoor groups are demanding the right to trample people's crops and disrupt country sport.

### *Summer Time.*

I believe that it has been demonstrated that the putting back of the clock every October lends to an increase in road accidents due to tired drivers coming home in the dark. I have seen no rational explanation for this practice except that without it it will get light too late in Scotland. I see no reason why the Scots should not carry on with the present system and have a different time in winter. Perhaps their own assembly will have power to do this.

### *Bank Holidays.*

The contrast between the early part of the year with Easter, May Day and Spring Bank Holiday and the latter half with late Summer and Christmas is too great. There should be a balancing holiday in October.

The foregoing proposals will in my view be a more constructive use of parliamentary time than abolishing hunting and of money than building a dome which most of your constituents will not see.

Yours sincerely, Bill Todd  
Leeds, February, 1998

## A SCHEME

For the assessment of financial compensation due to Landowners and occupiers adversely affected by the Access to Mountains Act.

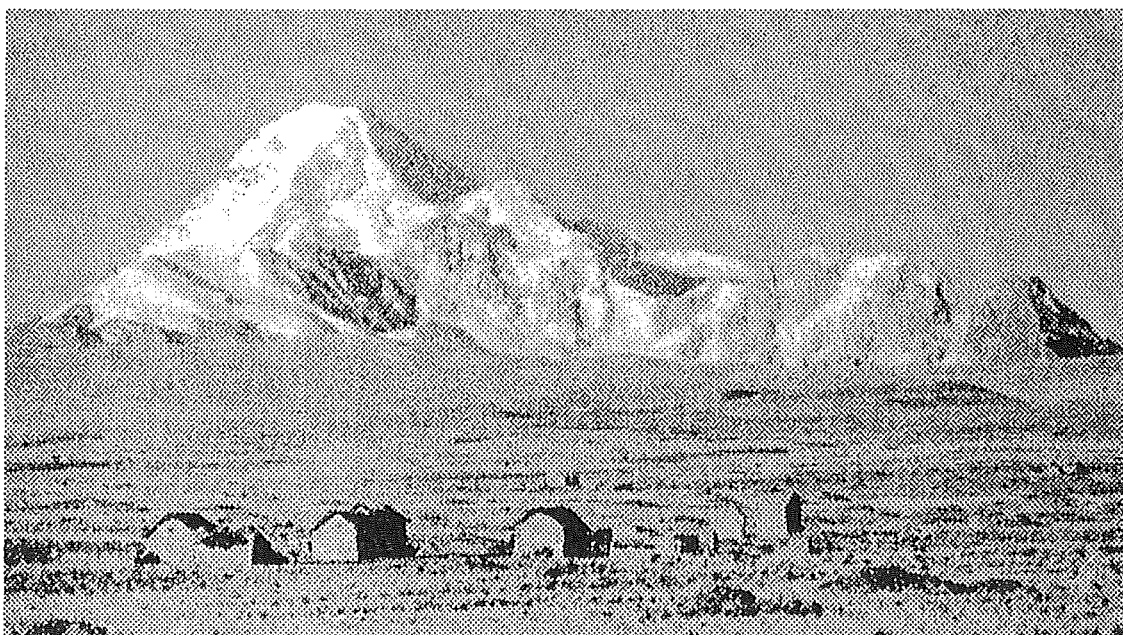
Prologue. The Government is committed to introduce legislation providing for free public access to uncultivated moorland. The Country Landowners Association is reported to have claimed that substantial compensation should be paid to those landowners concerned, As the legislation will take away an existing right, that to require trespassers to leave, it is difficult to deny this claim. The object of the following scheme is to assess compensation in a fair manner according to the frequency with which the right to access is exercised.

Method. An annual sum should be set aside out of public funds for this purpose.

This should be allocated to the owners/occupiers of uncultivated moorland according to the number of visits per year. Claims would be submitted annually showing dates and numbers. Landowners and their employees would be empowered to require visitors to disclose their names and addresses; which would enable the National Audit Office to make random checks of the veracity of claims.

Rationale. The virtue of a scheme on these lines is that for those stretches of open country so remote and uninteresting that no-one went, nothing would alter. On the other hand for those areas near to urban centres and popular, it would be reasonable to expect the land owner to employ staff time monitoring visitor numbers.

Financial hardship could be mitigated by allowing interim claims or more frequent payment. £1 per visit is suggested as a starting figure.



*Cololo, Bolivia*

# Chippings

In his first adventure surfing the world wide web David Smith, perhaps predictably, searched for the acronym 'YRC' and was rewarded with the URL of a page which has since been removed from the University of Lancaster server. Referring to Dan-yr-Ogof the text, contibuted by the South Wales Caving Club, included...

It was not until 1936, when cavers from Yorkshire and Somerset arrived on the scene, that speleology "took firm roots in Wales.

The names of Ernest Roberts and Gerard Platten are prominent in the early explorations, during which members of the Mendip Exploration Society, Yorkshire Ramblers' and Wessex Cave Club declared, their interest in Welsh caves by forming the 'Dragon Group'"

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Dr. S.A. Craven writes after recently consulting our archives...

The romantic topographer, Edmund Bogg, has featured in several recent issues of the Yorkshire Rambler (numbers 3, 4, 5 & 7). Readers will remember that Bogg and the YRC had a symbiotic relationship which lasted until the first YRC Journal appeared in 1899.

On looking through the YRC minutes I was surprised to discover that on 9 December 1924 Bogg was proposed for honorary membership. The motion was lost after "considerable opposition".

In retrospect this was a wise decision. Bogg may well have been a

successful author and businessman, but his mountaineering and caving exploits hardly matched those of other honorary members such as Edward Whymper, Cecil Slingsby, Martin Conway, Edouard Martel and others.

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On offer at just £1 each are tax-disk style, full-colour car stickers in the traditional rose design with the Club's name and, optionally, the words 'a mountaineering and caving club - founded in 1892'. They are available from Ian Crowther either on meets or by post on strictly cash-and-stamped-addressed-envelope-with-your-order terms.

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For a number of years Jack Holmes has been organising a monthly pub lunch in Appletreewick for senior members and their wives. At the January gathering a unique anniversary was marked when John Barton and Irene celebrated their Golden Wedding, and John clocked up 50 years with the YRC. 'A Golden Double' reports Alan Brown.

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The letters from E. E. Roberts to Geoff Scovell, which form an article elsewhere in this issue, were passed to David Smith by Mary Scovell at another of these monthly meetings.

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Kjetil Tveranger, our Norwegian member, spent four days, with two friends, rambling in the Jotunheimen based on a camp placed at 2100m on a glacier on Galdhopiggen and recommends the tour.

"It was a wonderful place with splendid weather. Sunshine all days. The view was terrific, and we could see the mountains in Hurrungane with Store Skagastolstind and in the north-east Lodalskapa. We were upon all the mountains and climbed all the ridges in the area."

Before dismissing it on grounds of age and lack of fitness, note that Kjetil started by driving to .uvvasshytta at about 1800m and the summits surrounding the camp are at about 2300m, which makes it all much more manageable. Running out of fuel they resorted to a fire made from the timbers of an abandoned hut, so it had all the characteristics of a good outing.

Next year Kjetil is thinking of repeating Slingsbys route from the coast across Alfotbreen (1895) to Straurnbotn which [ think can be split into two days by using the Floro Turlag hut, Blabrebu, By all accounts it is an interesting route.

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The early spring saw various members active in Norway, Kevin Brown, David Hall and Howard Papworth were thwarted in a plan to ski a long route from the far north by an accident which injured Howard's leg and unsuitable fuel for their stove. Derek Smithson was moving from hut to hut on cross-country ski and a week later Michael Smith was skiing around Geilo.

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The Ernest Forbes, member of the Leeds Savage Club, mentioned in issue number three and the ensuing discussions was featured, by Bill Mitchell the principal guest at our 1996 Dinner, in the Dalesman. See the September 1997 issue for the story of this solitary, handsome and athletic newspaper cartoonist from Leeds.

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Under the title 'Going to Pot for Fine Port and Fat Cigars', in the January 1998 issue of the Dalesman, Bill Mitchell remembers the life and times of Ernest Roberts, 'last of the gentleman pot-holers'. It includes the tale of a fire in Mere Gill and draws on the contributions of John Lovett and Stanley Marsden. Since this is likely to have been of interest to many members the article has been reproduced in this issue.

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Dennis Armstrong draws our attention to a review of a book which appeared in the Economist Review on 6 September 1997, p17-8. It is the story of the disastrous Everest expedition of May 1996 on which nine died. Racyly written and already selling well in America, it explores the combination of chaperoned, fee-paying clients and the problems of high altitude ascents. The book is Into Thin Air, by Jon Krakauer (Macmillan, 387 pages, £16.99).

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To walk up and down is less wearying than to walk on the flat. *Aristotle*



Five years of visits to the Haute Savoie have paid off for some of our leading cavers. At first the local French cavers were not **very** keen on having them about but last winter the diver Jean Bottazzi made contact with them. They subsequently went to the Savoie area caving with him and he also accompanied Ged Campion and others to the Oman last February. Eventually they were asked to join up with the French team to help out as they have difficulty finding people with the ability to descend the cave, especially as they had to ski to it! Graham Salmon reports that once they got the call that conditions were

right for an attempt they left England by plane from Luton Airport, about 7am, bound for Geneva. By about Lunchtime on Friday 23rd January they were in a cafe in Samoens having hired a car. Two hours, and a helicopter trip, later they were by the cave entrance on the Montagne de Criou.

Over 100 hours underground included our members reaching the 'old' bottom (1520m down), grvmg assistance moving the diving gear, a bivi c1050m down) and Graham's first experience of sleeping in hammock. A translation of the French cave diver's press release is copied here.

## 1610m World Depth Record

in the Mirollda cave. Montagne de Criou, Samoens, Haute Savoie

On 22 January, weather conditions looking good, we decided to launch a winter descent of the Mirollda. In just two days, we gathered sufficient experienced people and were ready to embark for a week with an ambitious objective: to dive the final sump, 1070m down from the entrance. Part of the cave diving equipment was already 600m down from a previous exploration (a previous trip was made in 1997 and a preparatory trip in 1998 having cleared the entrance and placed oxygen 300m down made our task easier). To give us a fighting chance of success we hired a helicopter to save effort and keep safely in the good weather window. Everything went to plan with the caving gear and team arriving in good condition at the objective. The descent could begin.

The short siphon could, after rigging, be passed by perhaps four of us so each new metre of cave could be closely observed. The low passages led to a drop of 20m and a climb of 4m. After a descent a vertical cleft was cleared of obstructions to allow further progress.

We came to a fall in the river where, via a hole by the side of a waterfall, we reached a beautiful dry passage which led us to a new siphon with a strong flow. The constriction separating us from our air bottles drove us to look for other possibilities first. The river disappeared into a fault and we followed it to finish in a constriction not far from the deepest point. Another branch stopped at a ISm pitch whose the crack couldn't be safely descended so we left it for another time.

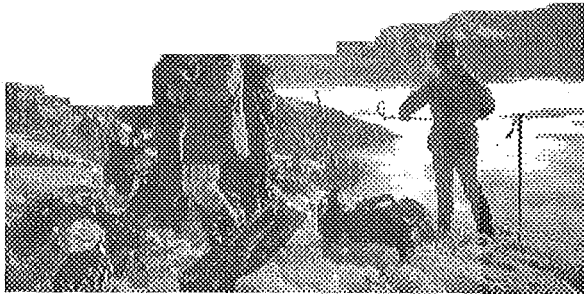
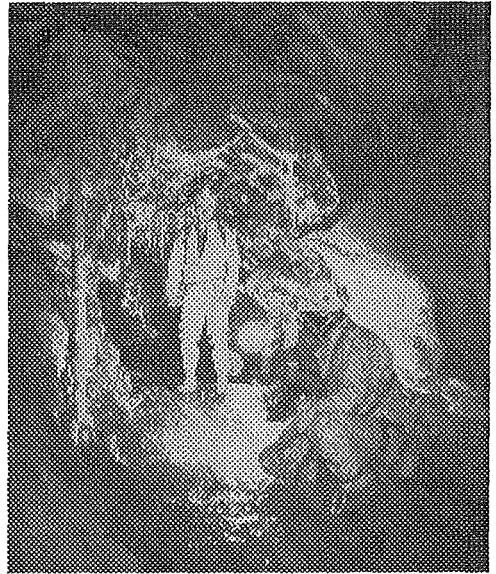
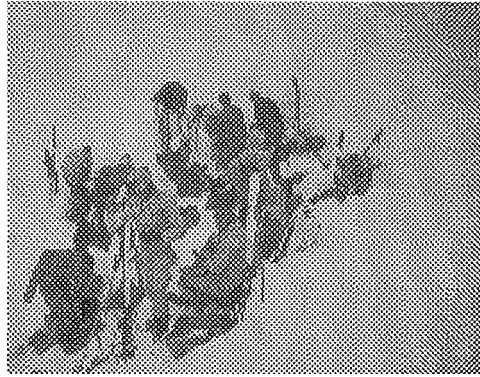
Finally, exploring a dry upstream passage ending in a choke where we were surprised to find plant debris. The idea of an inflow of water directly from the lower parts of the Criou is therefore increasingly probable.

Eight hours beyond the sump, far from our base, and the job was done, with only the climb out remaining. In total we were 103 hours underground and arrived back in the valley on the 29th.

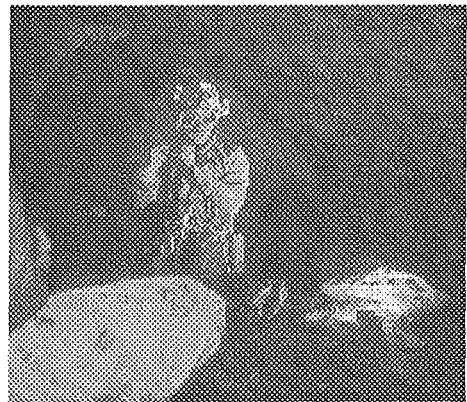
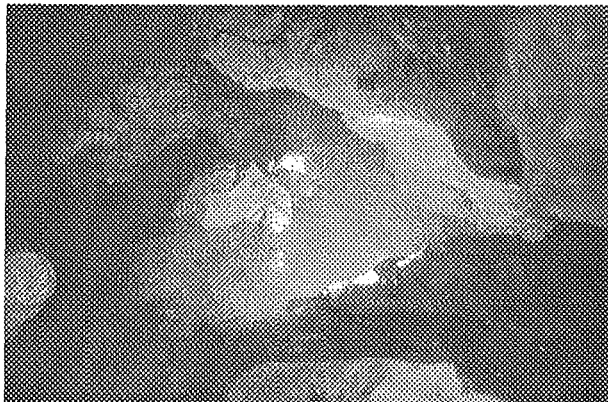
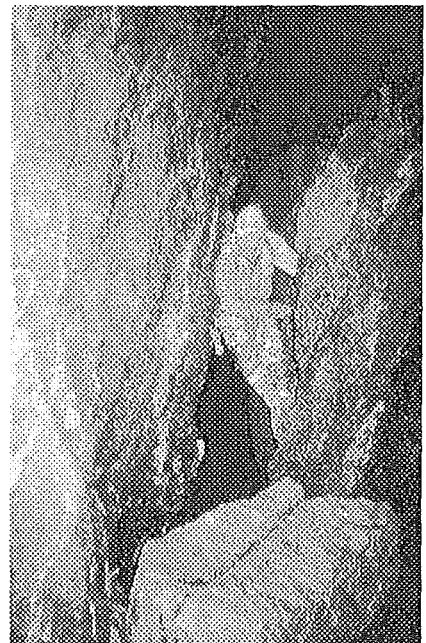
After examination of the 397m of survey data, the Mirollda reached 1610m of explored depth from the highest entrance. So it takes top place in the list of the world's deepest explored cave. Undeniably a great achievement but still only the latest stage in 25 years of work here. Our success is due to the help and generosity of the local people of the high Vallons, in particular the Deplace family. The prospects for further exploration are encouraging and we will be working on those next.

### Team:

D. Colliard (cavernicoles)	1. Bottazzi (URSDS & SCS)	Bruce Bensleigh,
S. Lextrait (troglodytes),	Gerard Campion	Voghan Thomas, and
N.Faure (URSUS),	Stewart Muir,	Lynn Robinson.
F. Daniere (cavernicoles),	Graham Salmon,	



Some photographs from the Mirolida trip



## Book Review by George Postill

### Some Unique Yorkshire Towns

by Arnold N. Patchett  
Pentland Press Ltd - ISBN: 1-85821-499-8  
124pp bib £12.50 available from the author

This is a fascinating book by an author who has researched his subject well. It is illustrated by photographs and some lovely sketches by Ruth Patchett. Even

though one may feel that they know some, if not most of the places and things



described, one is sure to come across nuggets of information to make one say, "I didn't know that!" For instance, I have lived in the Leeds area all my life and conditioned by the days of coal, steel, heavy industry and the old A1 pre motorways, I tended to avoid places like Pontefract, Castleford and Rotherham like the plague, and reading this book has brought it home to me what I have missed. Similarly, Cawood was on the back route to York and the East Coast and Selby had the dreaded Toll Bridge. I suppose a lot of us may have missed great historical and other treasures by thinking on the same lines.

It is not what to include in this review which bothers me but what I may be leaving out. It has certainly stimulated my desire to visit the places described with new eyes and I heartily recommend the book to all who would wish to extend their knowledge of the treasures of our beloved county.

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Recently returned from a week out bivouacking in the wilds of Knoydart is Peter Chadwick, who topped all the mountains despite having to navigate through almost continuous mist.

## Welsh Meet - Glen Dena 30 Jan - 1 Feb 1998

That Friday night most people went to Cobdens in Capel Curig to discover that Mike Godden, arriving early in the day, had decided to go up Moel Siabod. With the weather outlook being good for the weekend everybody was sorting out, over a drink, where they intended to go.

Saturday morning came so it was the usual rush at the breakfast table. Frank Platt and I went up the Heather Terrace path up to the Glyders and down to the Ogwen Valley again. Other parties went up to the various tops round Camedd Dafydd and some went rock climbing in the Ogwen Valley.

Saturday evening saw an excellent meal being organised by Tim and the arrival of a female visitor from the Lancashire Caving and Climbing Club. On Sunday we drove to the foot of Moel Siabod and ascended an enjoyable and interesting route to meet Richard Josephy and Frank Wilkinson approaching the summit. The Presidential party were on the Snowdon Horseshoe with some descending an iced over Miners Track. Another good meet with good, if misty, weather.

Alan Wood.

### Attendance:

The President, Tim Josephy	
Dennis Armstrong	Duncan Mackay
Denis Barker	Frank Platt
Adrian Bridge	Jim Rusher
Alan Brown	Arthur Salmon
Derek Bush	John Schofield
Eddie Edwards	Euan Seaton (G)
Ian Gilmour	David Smith
Mike Godden	Derek Smithson
Richard Josephy	Anthony Toon (G)
Ian Laing	Martin Wakeman
Gerry Lee	Frank Wilkinson
Harvey Lomas	Alan Wood
Don Mackay	Daniel Wood (PM)

## Low Hallgarth 10 - 12 January 1997

This was an enjoyable meet, but one where the pleasures were more subtle than obvious. It gave further evidence of the triumph of hope over experience, which, as a newcomer to the YRC, strikes me as being one of its most endearing and I hope enduring qualities. Whilst we are on early impressions and experiences, the other thing that has always struck me about the club is the capacity of just about everyone to talk a lot about almost anything. The sound of many people talking, generally in groups but there may be one or two who are in fact only talking to themselves, is something that will remain with me for a long time: as I came back with a bucket of water the hubbub of the YRC in full conversational swing was lovely.

The weather for the meet was frankly tedious. Very damp and very misty, and once any height had been gained you could have been any where. With this in mind, the President and his companions decided on Sunday that Crinkle Craggs would be a good idea. It was not surprising that the same views as Saturday prevailed; 10 - 20 metres visibility and views of wet grass and rock. As I said, the triumph of hope over experience.

The descent by the Band reminded me of what a long haul it was, but this was no deterrent to Bill Todd, John Stirling, Alan Brown and Ken Aldred who on Saturday took this route to Bowfell. They probably had better success with their navigation than the group that had to abandon their plan to go climbing and then go to the top of Wetherlam to find out where they

were. In fact most other groups walked over Wetherlam and Conniston and I suspect all saw the same view - yes, cloud, wet snow and rock. Not exciting perhaps, but it had its own rewards. We got to know our compass quite well.

However, Gerry Lee, and Ian Long took a low level route around Tilberthwaite, Rydal Water etc. And Ian Crowther said he went shopping in Conniston, which I find intriguing; what can a man who has everything find to buy in Conniston?

The arrangements, organisation and catering were splendid, and our warm thanks go to David Hick for this.

NW.

### Attendance:

Ken Aldred  
Alan Brown  
Derek Bush  
Ian Crowther  
Roy Denney  
Eddie Edwards  
Ian Gilmore  
Richard Gowing  
David Hick  
Richard Josephy  
Tim Josephy  
Ian Laing  
Gerry Lee  
Alan Linford  
David Martingdale  
Steve Richardson (g)  
Arthur Salmon  
Michael Smith  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
John Sterling  
Bill Todd  
Martyn Trasler (pm)  
Nick Welch  
Frank Wilkinson

**Joint Meet  
Robertson Lamb Hut  
Langdale  
26-28 September 1997**

On Friday the three clans gathered for this joint meet. After various minor sorties including the Dungeon Ghylls they assembled for a splendid dinner, the highlight of which was stuffed fillet of pork, to celebrate Will Lacey's 90th birthday, Sadly Will was indisposed and was unable to attend, but the company wished him a speedy recovery and best wishes for the future.

As I crawled into my sleeping bag I felt that I was fuelled for at least twenty four hours and would need to eat nothing until dinner time the next day. However my notions would never be put to the test. Next morning we assembled for a Robertson Lamb breakfast which led me at least, to fear that the fells were going to suffer a severe trampling before the sun went down.

Our well attended joint meet was added to on Saturday by a formidable group of day visitors. They not only showed the flag but were getting into trim for the Himalayan Meet.

For the outset the directions of Pavey Ark and Bowfell were the most favoured, although Mark set off for Swinescar Hause with the intention of doing the Langdale circuit. One of the parties headed for Pavey Ark and then crossed Mali Crag Moor on their way to Rosset Pike and Bowfell. The other Pavey Ark party went from Stickle Tarn by Broad Crag and Raw Pike to Chapel Stile and then enjoyed the riverside walk with a better viewing of this delightful valley than those of us on the fells.

Meanwhile the President's party climbed on Raven Crag, Pavey Ark

and Gimmer Crag. The Archaeological Group - I call them that because they seem to find routes for which all written record has perished and carry tackle that should be in, or might have come from a museum - went to Bowfell by the gully west of the Buttress. They drifted apart on Crinkle Crag and, via Little Langdale, arrived back at RLH (by various means) within minutes of each other.

Saturday's dinner was again a feast. Among Sunday's sorties the Archaeologists did Meg's Ghyll and the President's party climbed Bowfell Buttress.

Although the weekend was set fair, the presence of intermittent hill fog and drifts of low cloud, even though these were shot through with shafts of sunlight, were to prevent us from enjoying the grand vistas.

**Attendance:**

Tim Josephy, President

Ken Aldred

Denis Barker

Denis Barker

Alan Brown

Albert Chapman

Cliff Cobb

Arthur Craven

Derek English

Mike Godden

Mike Haltland

Jeff Hooper

Alan Linfoord

Bill Lofthouse

Frank Platt

Mark Pryor

Steve Richardson (PM)

Hany Robinson

Jim Rusher

John Schofield

David Smith

Derek Smithson

Bill Todd

**Rucksack Club:**

N. Coleville

W. Rycroft

**Wayfarers Club:**

S. Auly

B. Cook

G. Chambers

B. Hughes

H. Jacob

J. Jacob

H. Mellor

## South Pennines Meet Saddleworth 17-19 October 1997

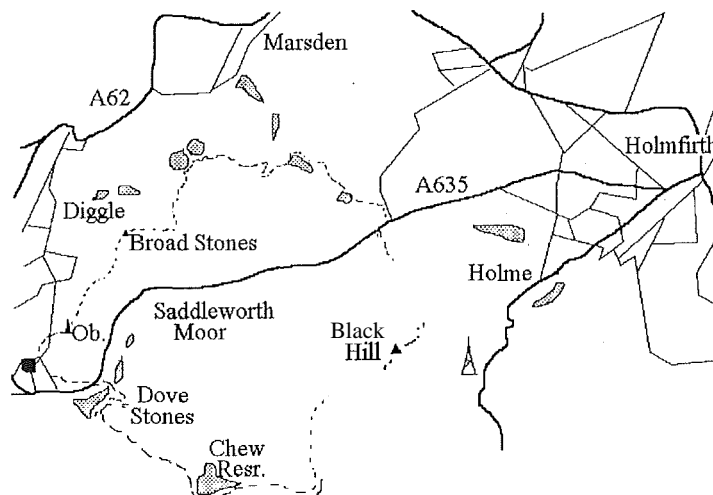
Greater Manchester doesn't sound the ideal location for a Club Meet. However that is only the official location of the Saddleworth Outdoor Pursuits Centre which proved to be our ideal home for the weekend. The Centre is located on a steep hillside above Greenfield, just east of Oldham. It is surrounded by beautiful stone-built houses/mansions and has extensive moorland views. The attendance of sixteen (plus one day visitor) was good considering the number of the Clubs regular attendees away in Nepal.

On the Friday evening we were all introduced to our host's base, the Cross Keys Inn, some 1½ miles away but well worth the journey for the friendly welcome and the excellent beer and bar snacks.

Saturday morning brought a clear blue sky and all day sunshine with a cool breeze. We split into four main groups tackling different walks, broadly based on the local big one - the Ten Reservoirs Walk. Two groups including the Presidential party, headed north climbing steeply to a prominent Obelisk, over Broadstone Hill (454m) and on above Diggle Reservoir. The larger, and faster party continued past Black Moss Reservoir to the Wessenden valley the Pennine Way then taking them over Black Hill to Laddow Rocks returning via Chew and Dovestone Reservoirs. The slightly less fit did a similar but rather shorter route still covering both sides of the A635 including an atrocious stretch of

the old, unimproved Pennine Way south of Black Moss Reservoir. This was little more than a morass of bogs and peat hags - I am sure they are deeper, steeper and wetter than they used to be! Two of the three members of this latter group then made a long diversion east to include two pubs before heading back - guess who!

The other two groups, one including our local member, Pat Stonehouse, kept south of the A635. The younger ones included Black Hill, Laddow and all the southern reservoirs whilst the slightly older pair contented themselves with Laddow via the Chew Valley.



Every one was back at the Centre in time for hot showers before Roy Denney's excellent dinner, with a particularly good choice of beer and wine. This was followed by Roy showing slides of his recent Nepalese trek from Lukla to Kalar Pattar above the Everest Base Camp. Virtually everyone then repaired to the Cross Keys, encouraged by a very generous offer of a free first pint from Pat to celebrate his recent birthday,

Sunday again produced a perfect morning. A meeting had been arranged to discuss next years Club expedition to Iceland which eight

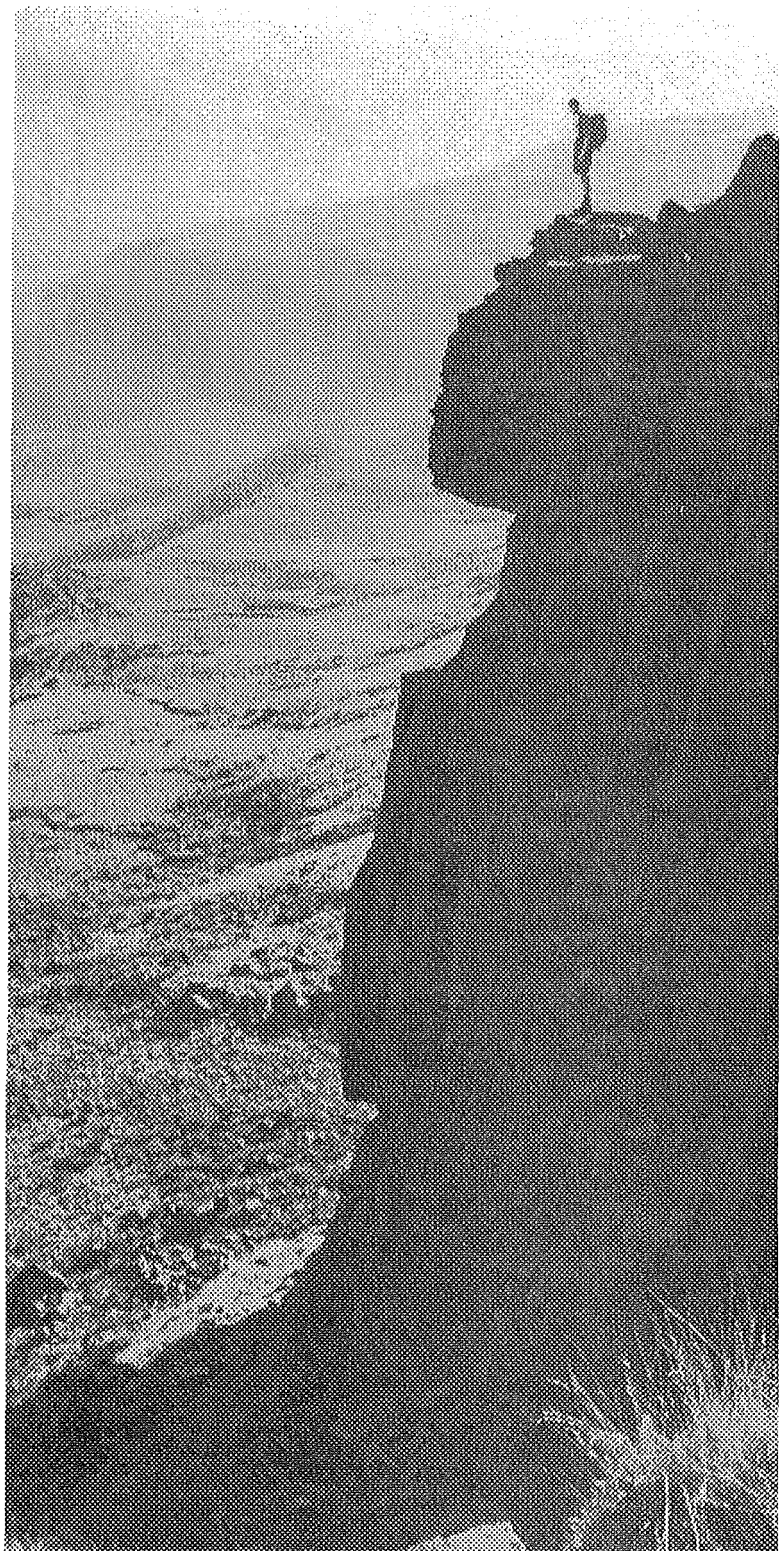
members attended. This broke up mid-morning freeing us to again enjoy the sunshine, As we left we got a reminder that this was autumn as a large skein of geese flew overhead. As usual Sunday's activities are not easy to record but the President and one member climbed on Dovestones a local crag. Those heading back to Yorkshire were met by valleys full of fog as they crossed the Pennines. This encouraged at least one member to park and enjoy a sunny walk over West Nab before descending into the murk.

Thanks to Roy and his helpers and the Centre's owners for an excellent weekend.

DL

Attendance:

The President -  
Tim Josephy  
Chris Bird (P.M)  
Alan Clare(G)  
Derek Clayton  
Roy Denney  
Jeff Halford (G)  
John Hemingway  
David Hick  
David Laughton  
Dave Martindale  
Keith Raby (P.M.)  
John Schofield  
Michael Smith  
Derek Smithson  
Pat Stonehouse  
Maltyn Trasler (P.M.)  
Martyn Wakeman



Laddow Rocks photographed by David Hick

## The 84th Annual Dinner Whoop Hall Hotel Kirby Lonsdale 15 November 1997

Some 86 members and guests attended the annual dinner weekend, centred on the Whoop Hall Hotel. This proving to be a popular venue for this important meet in the Club calendar. The accommodation, both for the AGM and the dinner, is well suited to our requirements and the surrounding countryside provides for the varied activities of members and guests. The business of the AGM was conducted with the usual competence of our officials and the good humour of the members we have come to expect on the occasion. The increase in the annual subscription generated some discussion but the general consensus was that an increase was timely. The future of Low Hall Garth seems to be a regular item on the agenda each year for one reason or another. The clear message came across - use it or lose it. It would be a sad day in the annals of our Club if it was to be the latter.

The dinner was the usual convivial affair with the President Elect leading us in a spirited rendition of "Yorkshire". For those of us who for one reason or another do not attend as many meets as we would like to, or should, it is a welcome opportunity to recharge friendships.

Sunday morning produced grey skies but did not dampen enthusiasms. After the usual discussions about who was going where, patties headed out in several directions with various activities in mind. A large group set out in the direction of Cowan Bridge, then following the valley of Leeh Beck

to its upper reaches. One adventurous member came to grief ascending a waterfall but seemed little the worse for a crack on the head and a soaking! This patty fragmented on the tops, returning to base by various routes. One small group returning to base via Casterton, encountered several newly built penfolds, each with a large boulder in the centre. Several theories were advanced as to the purpose of the boulder, showing much originality of thought. It eventually came to light that these structures were works of art financed by the Arts Council!

A smaller party headed for Farleton Fell that grey whaleback eminence overlooking the M6. This fell is of considerable geological interest, not least for its limestone pavements and an abundance of fossils. The going underfoot was treacherous in places due to what was described as a black ooze issuing from the ground. I have experienced similar conditions in the Howgills. apparently this soft jelly like substance is a product of some fungal process in the top soil.

Several members headed for Barbon Fell and Scales Moor. The caving party had an energetic day, first abseiling into Pool Sink, thence to Holbeck Junction, Stop Pot, Manchester By-Pass, finally emerging at County Pot.

High tea of ham and eggs back at Whoop Hall put a fitting conclusion to an excellent weekend.





## Christmas Meet Ennerdale

12-14 December 1997

While sitting in my office in Leeds on a cold, dark January morning it is easy to allow one's mind to wander back to a very pleasant Christmas meet in Ennerdale only a few weeks before.

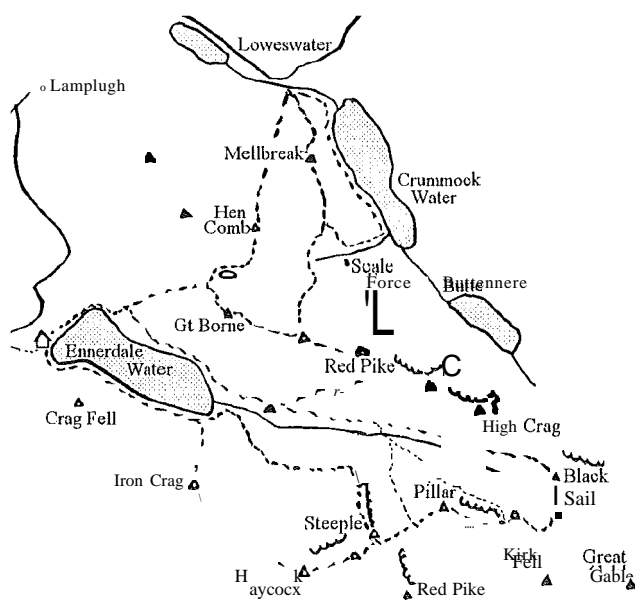
For those of us who hadn't attended a YRC meet in Ennerdale before it quickly became apparent that it was a very long drive from almost anywhere in the UK to get to Ennerdale, and not made any easier by Friday evening traffic. Having said that I think that all would agree that this permanent hutted scout camp is a splendid place to hold a Christmas meet.

On arrival members found that there appeared to be a sale of Christmas trees taking place on the site. This caused a little difficulty with regards to parking cars and to those hardy chaps who wished to camp, because much of the flat ground amongst the trees was occupied by a fine display of hundreds of cut Christmas trees. However, we were soon well dug in around a log fire nursing a bottle of

whisky. The Presidential party quickly found it's way to a local ale house to consume a pint or three of supper.

Members and guests were awakened on Saturday morning by the pleasant smell of bacon flying in a large pan and during the day many different routes were taken all round the local fells. For most of the day misty, damp conditions persisted. One party set off to climb on Pillar Rock but took so long to get there that it left no time for actual rock climbing before having to set off back in order not to be benighted or miss the evening meal which turned out to be the highlight of the weekend. Forty four members and guests sat down to a five course meal at superbly set tables. Our thanks must again go to Mike Godden, David Smith and all their helpers, who surpassed themselves.

During dinner the President in proposing the toast to absent friends particularly mentioned the late Stanley Marsden, member for 61 years, Past President, Honorary member and legend in his own lifetime, who will be deeply missed and long remembered by the club.



Following dinner David guided us through a show of slides from the recent Himalayan trip and Ged Campion showed and spoke about slides taken on the caving trip to Oman earlier in the year.

Sunday came with a brighter start, and after a leisurely breakfast members set out in all directions for the day's activities, leaving a meeting of the members proposing to go on the expedition to Iceland next May and June to discuss their plans.



John Schofield, Ralph Hague, Michael, Alan Linford, Derek Smithson, John Sterland and others - Tim and Gordon studying a titanium ice-screw

A very successful and well attended Christmas meet.

RC

Attendance:

Tim Josephy, President

Ken Aldred

David Atherton

Denis Barker

Bruce Bensley

Alan Brown

Derek Bush

Ged Campion

Cliff Cobb

Arthur Craven

Ian Crowther

Robert Crowther

Andrew Duxbury

Eddie Edwards

Alan Fletcher

Iain Gihmour

Mike Godden

Richard Gowing

Ralph Hague

Ray Harben

David Hick

Gordon Humphreys

John Jenkin (G)

Alan Kay

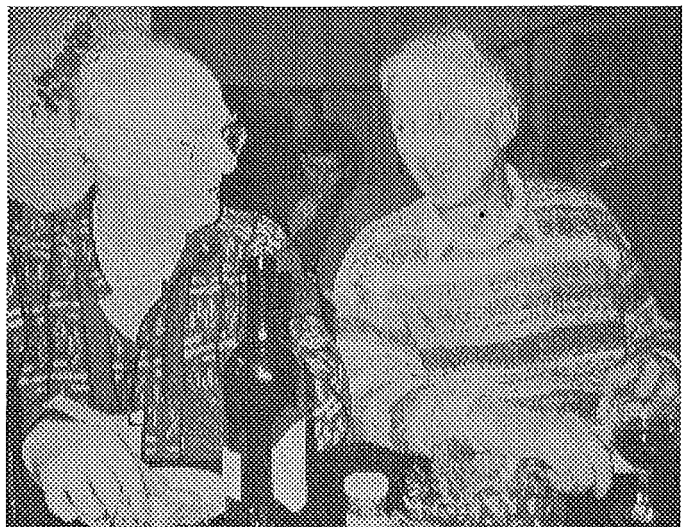
Alan Linford

Vic Maloney (PM)

Dave Martindale

Frank Milner

Martin Milner (G)



John Schofield and Iain Gilmour (Photos: Bill Todd)

Rory Newman

Frank Platt

Robin Price (G)

Mark Pryor

Alistair Renton

Arthur Salmon

Graham Salmon

John Schofield

Michael Smith

David Smith

Derek Smithson

George Spenceley

John Sterland

Mike Thompson

Bill Todd

Frank Wilkinson

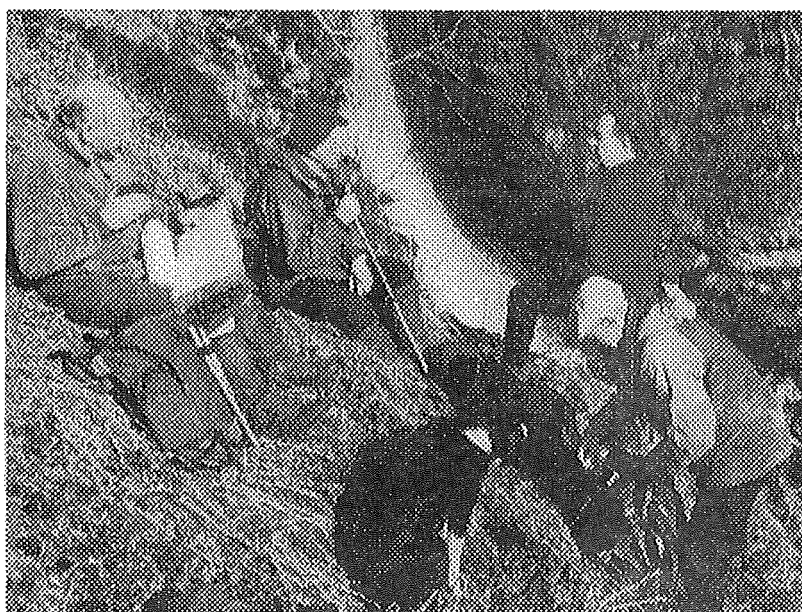
42 members and 3 guests

## The Punch Bowl Inn, Low Row, Swaledale 13-15 March 1998

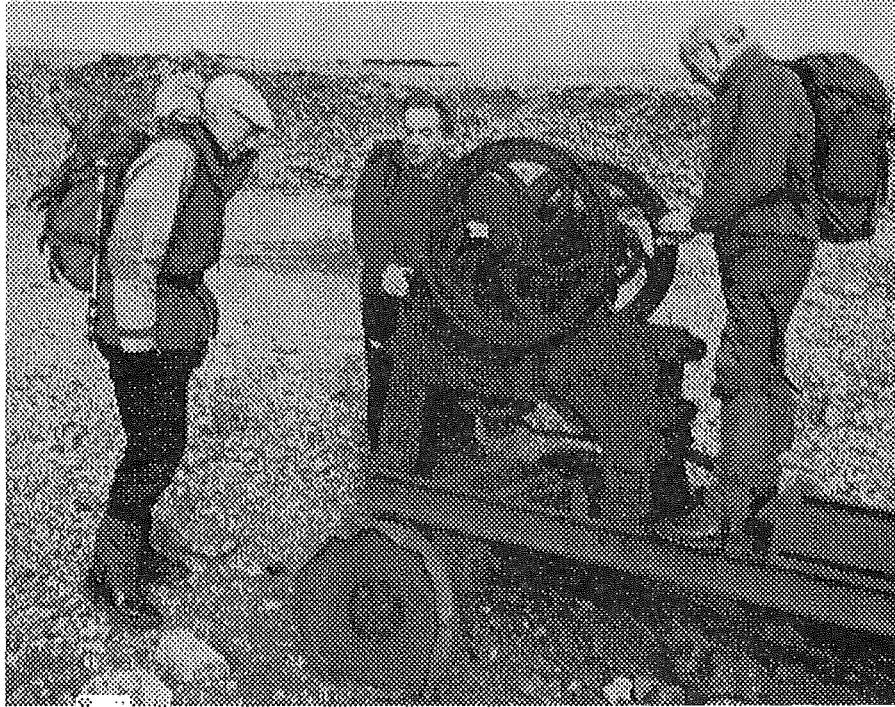
About twenty years ago it would have been easy for a new member to think that the most exciting days of the club were in the past. With no regular alpine meet and little talk of any overseas expeditions the meets programmes were interesting, varied and enjoyable but not much different from those of a number of other clubs, except of course, we seemed to have more than our fair share of characters. Arriving at the Punch Bowl Inn late on Friday afternoon your reporter hadn't even had time to persuade someone to buy him a drink before he was approached with a request for information on an alpine guidebook. During the next hour or so before dinner the conversation covered recent trips to Oman, Norway, the Alps and the Himalayas while photographs and slides were passed round and exchanged. My planned trip to Borrowdale didn't appear to interest anyone. After dinner the conversation covered the future expeditions to



Iceland, Norway (yet again), the Andes and Kashmir. Checking the British Rail timetable for Fort William now seems to be replaced by close examination of the Wells Fargo timetable to Quito.



Jeff, Eddie, Tim and Derek Smithson enjoying the sunshine on a bank by the outflow of the reservoir, Gunnerside Gill

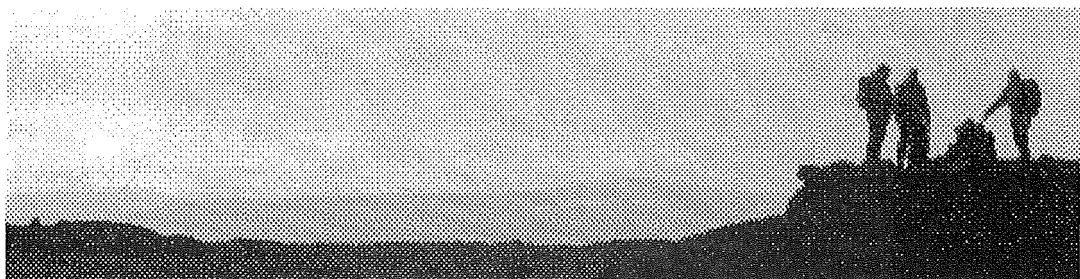


Derek, Tim and Jeff inspecting the remains of a rusting stone crusher, manufactured in Leeds, above Gunnerside Gill

On Saturday morning a group of sixteen set off from Muker car park for Swinner Gill. This must be approaching a record for the number of members moving together in the same direction and after well over five minutes the group was still roughly together. After some scrambling up the gill, lunch was taken basking in the sun at the old mine buildings at East Grain, after which most of the party continued to scramble up the top end of Swinner Gill to the shooting cabin. The weather was perfect as the party made its way back to the inn over Melbecks Moor. Two independently minded members chose to go searching for the ancestral home of

one of them. This they eventually found in a row of cottages in the valley and not, as one unkind friend suggested, in the tumuli on the top of Brownsey Moor. Other groups travelled to the south side of the valley taking in Whitaside Moor and Gibbin Hill.

Sunday's activities were the reverse of those of Saturday. Instead of a large group breaking up we appeared to have parties of two, three or four setting off at different times from different locations but joining up and dividing all over Whitaside Moor. We met the President and President Elect (I was told that if I said that we caught up with them I wouldn't be



Rogan's Seat

allowed to write any more Meet Reports) near the summit of Apedale Head, but they soon turned south for Castle Bolton where they had a vehicle waiting. The final six headed north and again split into two groups, one making for their car at Grinton while the other returned to Low Row.

It sometimes isn't easy to discover there each individual went during the day, especially of those who are not sure themselves, but everyone appeared to have had a very enjoyable and well organised weekend, thanks to John Sterland the meet leader.

Ken Aldred

Attendance list:

The President, Tim Josephy

Ken Aldred

Dennis Barker

Alan Brown

Albert Chapman

Derek Clayton

Alan Clare (G)

Cliff Cobb

Arthur Craven

Ian Crowther

Roy Denny

Eddie Edwards

Jeff Halford (PM)

Mike Hartland

John Hemmingway

Cliff Large

David Laughton

Bill Lofthouse

Hany Robinson

John Scofield

David Smith

Michael Smith

Derek Smithson

George Spenceley

John Sterland

Trevor Temple (G)

Bill Todd

Frank Wilkinson



Arthur, Derek Smithson, David, Ken and Alan in Apedale, below Gibbin Hill (Photos Michael Smith)

## Scottish Winter Meet 19-22 February 1998

Jon Halliday (honoured guest) and I arrived at a car park in Linn of Dee late on Wednesday evening. We bivvied in the car park and woke to the sound of some others venturing into the Cairngorms on their mountain bikes. This has got to be the way to tackle those long walk-ins!

Having navigated ourselves across a couple of Munros in the mist, carrying our ice axes, our worst fears were confirmed. There was no snow! Little did we know that the week afterwards heaps of snow would fall on Scotland, but we must have been there during some of the mildest Scottish February days ever.

Arriving at the village hall in Braemar, we moved into the exclusive annex room along with Derek Smithson, Alan Loom'd, Martyn Wakeman, a friend of Martyn's called Steve, and a number of others. The following morning, the main hall had filled up and it was apparent that there were about thirty of us there.

Friday was a windy, wet & cloudy day. The intended Iceland expedition camping/snow practice session was aborted in favour of some wet hill walking or bird watching (depending on your preference). Derek Smithson, Martyn, Jon & I climbed some more Munro's near the ASS. Martyn's navigation was 'spot on' as we couldn't see anything except the ground and each other once we'd left the road.

The next three days saw people venturing into Lochnagar, the high Cairngorms and around Ben Avon.

The weather made a quantum improvement for Saturday with

sunshine. The four of us teamed up again and had an excellent day climbing Glas Tulaichean from Dalmunzie.

On Saturday night it finally snowed. This enabled some of us to enjoy a pleasant walk over the Cairnwell and Cam Aosda on Sunday morning before departing homeward - the best time to climb these two mountains as there was a light snow covering and broken cloud but no skiers!

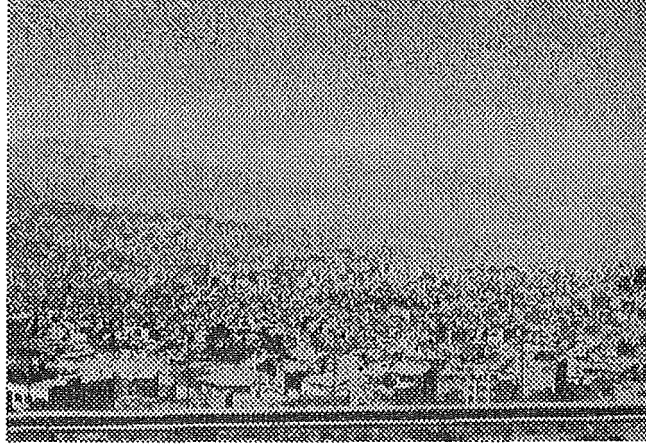
Paul Glendenning

### Attendance:

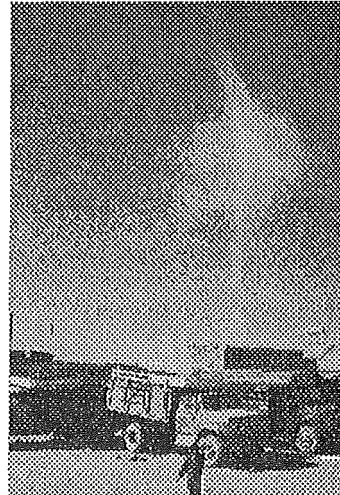
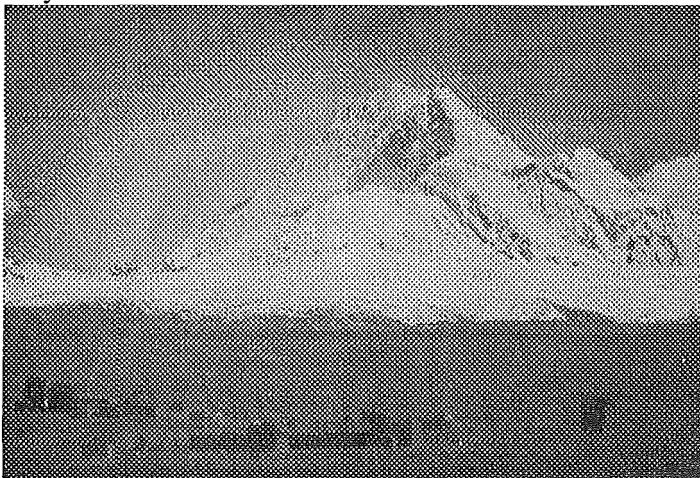
The President, Tim Josephy  
Chris Bird (PM)  
Derek Bush (Meet Leader)  
Steve Carter (G)  
Ian Crowther  
Iain Gilmour  
Paul Glendenning  
Jon Halliday (G)  
David Hick  
Gordon Humphreys  
Howard Humphreys  
David Large  
Alan Linford  
Harvey Lomas  
Don Mackay  
Duncan Mackay  
Dave Martindale  
Roy Pomfret  
Mark Pryor  
Alistair Renton  
John Schofield  
Euan Seaton (PM)  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
Martyn Thomas (G)  
Martyn Wakeman  
James Whitby

## Snapshots from Bolivia

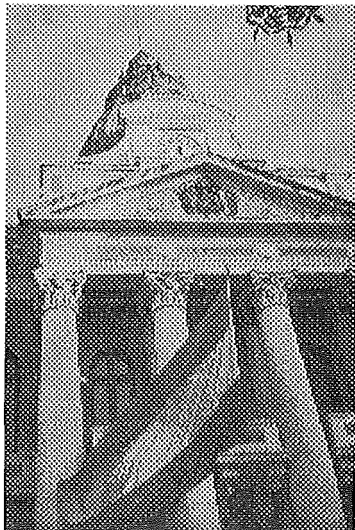
Ilimani and La Paz



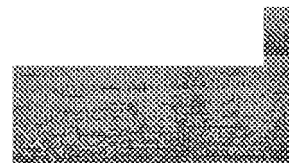
Huyana Potosi in the Cordillera Real from near Miliuni



An altiplano tornado



The Capitol Building in the Plaza de Murillo, La Paz, guarded by automatic weapon carrying, menacing uniformed soldiers, who dislike being photographed. Opposite is a cathedral with a stained-glass window showing the Virgin Mary showering blessings on



On 26 May this year 44-year-old Bernardo Guarachi, born in an adobe hut in the Andean foothills and organiser of logistical support for our 1988 Apolobamba expedition, became the first Bolivian and the first Native American to scale Everest. Climbing with a Singaporean team he took 8½ hours to reach the summit from the South Col. The Bolivian Vice President, Quiroga, hailed Guarachi as "easily Bolivia's premier international climber". It was his second attempt the first having ended in bad weather at 8200m Earlier, Guarachi had scaled Makalu peak with the Russian, Anatoli Borken, who later disappeared on Everest in December.