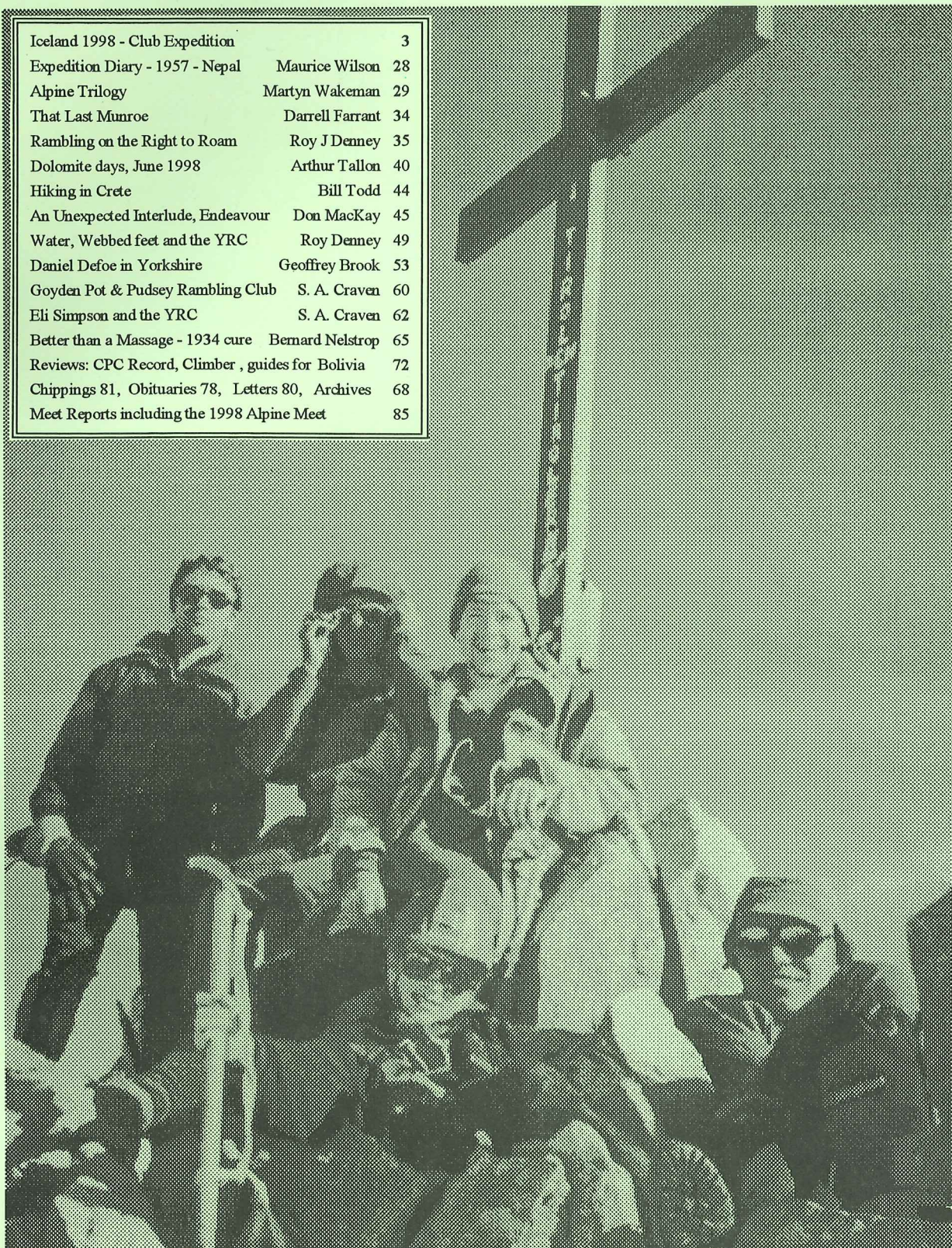


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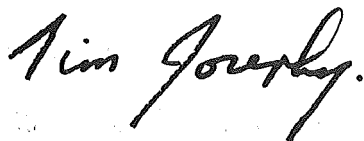
Alan Fletcher, David Smith, Michael & Richard Smith and Alister Renton on the Wilder Freiger in the Stubaital during the 1998 Alpine Meet - photographer Euan Seaton

Foreword by the President

You will find rather a lot about Iceland in this Bulletin. For this I make no apologies. It was a highly successful Club expedition- and you can judge from the articles how much enjoyment and fulfilment members gained from it. It is an ideal location for future trips and perhaps others will be inspired to follow in the years to come.

With all the Club and individual world-wide activities, the Bulletin is one of the most varied and informative of any of the mountaineering club publications, but let us not forget our home patch. Snippets of interest on and under our own hills, as well as longer articles are much appreciated. You don't have to have set the world on fire to have something interesting to say!

This is the last foreword I will have to write and I cannot let the occasion go without expressing the appreciation of all the Club for the hard work and expertise of the Editor. Our Bulletin is something we can be proud of and only by the efforts of the few will it be able to continue into the future.



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

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Iceland 1998



By air direct to Iceland:

John Schofield, John Sterland and Denis Barker
circumnavigated the island clockwise in a hired car
see *Impressions of Iceland* on page 4
and *The First Division* on page 6

Tim Josephy, Derek Smithson, Martyn Wakeman
travelled by bus with the occasional lift in members cars;
climbed at Skaftafell and backpacked at Þórsmörk
see *Iceland - Premier League* on page 10

Adam Genster, an American joined them for one trip
see *An Icelandic day with the YRC* on page 16

By boat via Shetland and Faroe:

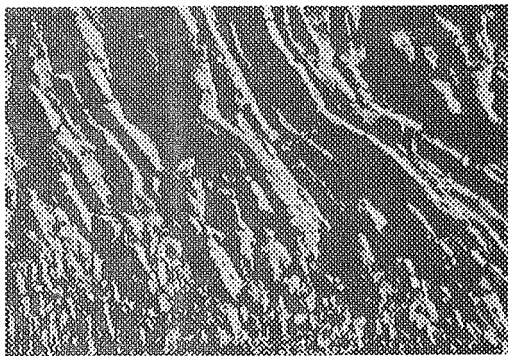
Rory Newman and Sue Thomason
'wandered about the island'
see *Icelandic Adventures* on page 18

David Hick, Christine Marriott and David Martindale
circumnavigated the island anti-clockwise in their own car
see *Travelling Hopefully* on page 24

Impressions of Iceland

John Schofield

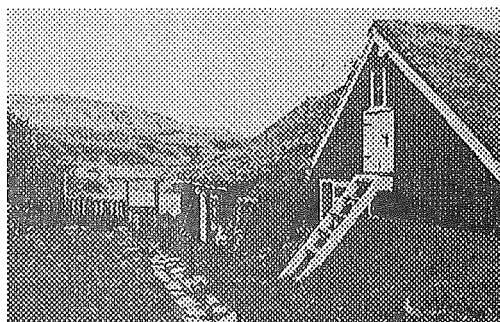
Iceland ! The sheer scale of this small island beggars description. Most of the rivers crossed on the coastal road are either raging torrents or deltas half a mile or more wide. The clarity of the atmosphere is so deceptive that one can look at a ridge and walk to it in 10 minutes, but the next time one can walk for an hour or more and the ridge is no nearer. No photograph can convey the feel of actually being there - it is a country of incredible contrasts. It is difficult to escape from the icecaps, they can be seen almost everywhere as a backdrop to distant views because of the incredibly clear atmosphere. Place names on the map are as deceptive as in Scotland. For instance Akureyri in the North of the island is a major town, and incidentally is the same size, population-wise, as my home town Otley. Otley, however, does not boast a botanical garden which compares favourably with Edinburgh's botanical gardens - and this within 50 miles or so of the Arctic Circle. Below the Vatnajekull icecap is an enormous delta-like expanse of black ash and cinders. This dreary area is 50 to 60 miles long and over 10 miles wide. One huge cinder-track with breathtaking glacier outfalls from the Vatnajekull icecap. Many mountains look simply like mine spoil heaps with a crag of volcanic rock poking out of scree-slopes of slag. Where the Icelanders have "tapped" the thermal resources of an area the appearance is that of the industrialised areas of South Yorkshire or Lancashire with steam issuing from various sources and pipework above ground almost everywhere.



Patterns frozen in the lava

Many of the roads in the west and south of the island are metalled. Most of the roads in the north, east and south-east are not. This is not to say that they are dirt roads. They are, for the most part, elevated from the surrounding countryside and properly graded a bit like our old macadamised roads were before they were tarred. But one's speed is quite limited (perhaps 25 to 30 mph) because of the loose gravel surface which, going downhill, gives very little adhesion especially when braking. Many of the vehicles outside Reykjavik have up-rated suspension and massively oversized tyres, these would loom large in the rear view mirror and overtake at twice the speed we were travelling. Also many vehicles bore signs of collision - this despite the fact that the roads were virtually empty outside the towns. Nevertheless driving in Iceland is not a problem simply because of the lack of other vehicles and the very long straight roads.

Much of the interior of the island is desert or near-desert. There are many

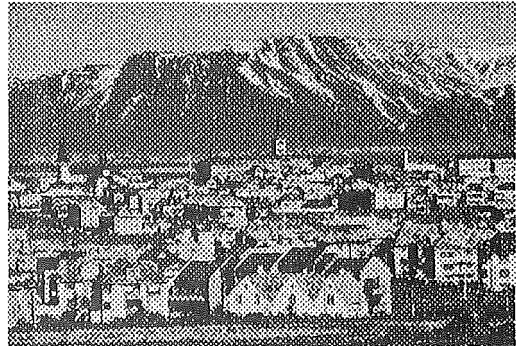


miles of undulating stony hills with no growth whatsoever - presumably where volcanic fall-out has sterilised the local vegetation. There are also lava-fields where previous eruptions have covered the ground in black concretion in all manner of shapes and configurations. Walking any distance over lava-fields is a virtual impossibility. Iceland is a new land and the feeling in these areas is one of total unreality. It's said that they trained the American astronauts in Iceland in order to accustom them to conditions on the Moon. Having been there this does not surprise me one little bit.

The mid-Atlantic ridge runs right through the centre of the island and as the European and African tectonic plates move away from the Americas so fissures open up and the lava boils out over the landscape. We saw this above lake Myvatn at the Krafla fissure where we actually walked over a healed-over crack in the Earth's surface. The lava was still warm, steam was issuing from various cracks and fissures and a smell of sulphur pervaded the air. The feeling was of being back at the beginning of creation and we all felt a tremendous sense of awe and wonderment at being there. In short we were totally gobsmacked! We stayed at Reykjahlid and drank a pint in the local bar (cost £4.50!). It was like a scene out of Star Wars - a frontier bar at 11.45pm and still broad daylight. It got darkish at about midnight and started getting light again at 2.30 or so in the morning.

Even small towns have a thermally-heated swimming bath and the one at Reykjavik is much the finest pool I have ever visited. After having showered and washed thoroughly one walked out into an overcast day with a fine drizzle and a cutting wind and

immediately immersed one's-self in a hot bath at 37-40 degrees centigrade. The Olympic swimming pool was at least 30 degrees, *hot pots* at 37 to 40 degrees or 40 to 45 degrees were available and a steam room at, I would guess, 50 degrees plus. After ten minutes or so one did not feel the cold.



Apart from the centre of the old town around "The Pond" Reykjavik can best be described as an architectural disaster. Indeed all Icelandic architecture is functional to a degree - houses being timber framed and clad and roofed with corrugated iron, but painted in a host of attractive colours - different fashions being apparent in different areas of the country. Contemporary church architecture, however, is stunning - it is called "glacial architecture" and is like nothing seen anywhere else. All of concrete, and presumably built on massive concrete rafts and reinforced. One feature of the town is the proliferation of fire hydrants at every street corner. Fire follows earthquake and Reykjavik is said to have a major earthquake every 80 years or so. It has now been perhaps 100 years since the last major tremor and there were those members of the party who said that, architecturally speaking, a serious 'quake would be no bad thing.

Of the population of two hundred and fifty thousand or so over sixty percent lives in or around Reykjavik and,

indeed, the whole of the South West of the island is where the landscape is least hostile and most people live. The people are lovely. Quiet, mannerly people of good bearing and they all seem to speak good English, which is no doubt as well!

The south-west is where holiday homes are seen in the most unlikely spots and this is where most of Iceland's population of horses lives. These horses are super animals - quite small and with flowing manes and proud heads they come in all colours - piebald, skewbald, chestnut, palomino. They are as lively as can be, trotting round the landscape and sporting with each other, apparently wild. They are used, we are told, for trekking and recreational purposes, but there seem to be far too many for that. However, I refuse to believe that the Icelanders eat the surplus.

There are areas which are virtually deserts and there are other areas where alpine flowers abound. Above Skaftafell the National Park is like an alpine garden and elsewhere there are fields of lupins as far as the eye can see. Not the dreary purple lupins we see in this country but lovely blue ones with a white eye. Photography is compulsory. I took over 160 photographs in three weeks which is thought to be quite modest. There is so much to photograph - particularly where the waterfalls are carving their way through the landscape.

Well, there we are. I have tried to give a feel for the country rather than a narrative of what we did. I can only hope that this article will whet members appetites to visit this fabulous island.

I shall certainly go back.



Iceland 1998:

The First Division

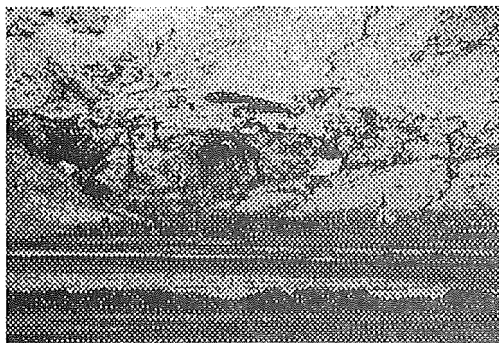
John Sterland

The YRC expedition was, like ancient Gaul, divided into three parts. The Premier division of stalwart members attacked the Vatnajokull glacier, the largest in Europe, in the South-east of Iceland, and a separate report will be written on their activities. The three somewhat aged members of what they would like to be referred to as the First division comprised John Schofield, Denis Barker and John Sterland. Their role was to circumnavigate the island in a hired car, with occasional excursions on foot into the semi-interior of the country. The third part consisted of a more independent party which risked taking their private cars, and basically covered a similar itinerary to the self-styled First division, the peregrinations of which are covered by this report.

Although Iceland's dimensions are only about 490km by 350km, the geology and landscape are on a vast and superlative scale, and three weeks is not long enough to adequately explore the whole of the country - hence John Schofield's intention of returning some time. Iceland was reached by the members of both the Premier and the First division by air from Glasgow to Keflavik, and the expedition started and finished at the youth hostel at Reykjavik.

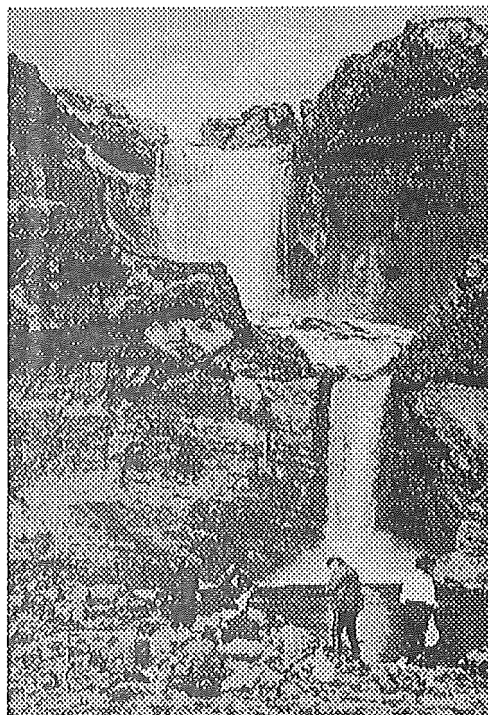
On the first operative day we, the First division, drove straight to the camp site at Skaftafell at the southernmost extremity of the Vatnajokull glacier, ostensibly to offer help to the Premier division. This proved (predictably) unnecessary, so the First division members spent the night at the nearby Bolti farmhouse. Many overnight

stops were made at farmhouses, which offered very good value for sleeping-bag accommodation, with adequate facilities for self catering, at a cost of about 1200 Kroner per night (about £11). Our first excursion from Bolti was through the Skaftafell National Park, visiting our first waterfall, Svartifoss, which was flanked by unusual overhanging basalt columns. This was on the way to ascending Nyrðrihnaukur, from which there were somewhat misty views of the precincts of the Vatnajökull glacier, some of the arms of which extended almost to the sea, where they culminated in impressive ice floes, particularly at Jokulsarlon. It was near Jokulsarlon that considerable repair work was still in progress to the coastal road and bridges following the devastation resulting from the volcanic eruption under the glacier in 1996.



Our next overnight stop was at a farmhouse at Stafafell, which was the base for a walk up the rather barren Jokulsa i Loni valley, skirted by hills which the guide book informed us consist largely of rhyolite. Perhaps we missed something in by-passing the Eastern fjords, but we were anxious to maximise our stay at Myvatn, situated firmly on the Mid Atlantic ridge and renowned for the Krafla volcanic fissure and numerous thermal springs, sulphur and mud pots etc. En route to Myvatn, in the middle of the lava desert of North-eastern Iceland, we visited one of the major waterfalls of

the country, Dettifoss. As previously mentioned, Iceland is a land of superlatives, so that Dettifoss discharges on average the greatest volume of water of any waterfall in Europe, with an average of 200 cubic metres per second falling over its face.



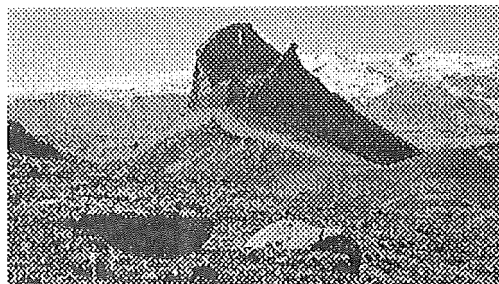
At Myvatn the Iceland superlative took another form in that we were privileged to occupy a private residence owned by the proprietor of the Elda camp site. He was the president of the local tourist board, and was away attending a conference at the time: his house was an excellent base for us to explore the surrounding area, which is one of amazing thermal activity. Steam issues from the ground at innumerable sites, particularly to the east of Lake Myvatn: the continuous sulphur eruptions at the Namafjall fissure are an incredible sight. All this amazingly interesting geological activity, however, is almost insignificant compared to our exploration of the Krafla volcanic area just five or six kilometres from Reykjahlid, and the centre of one of the most awesome

lava fields in Iceland. The smell of sulphur is all-pervading, with mud and sulphurous water boiling and bubbling up from pools all around, and lava piled high on every side as far as the eye can see. The last eruption of the Krafla fissure was in 1984, but the surface activity gives one the impression that another eruption could occur at any time. Indeed it is officially expected that Krafla will erupt again within the next few years as the magma chamber fills.

The natural thermal resources of the area, and indeed other areas in Iceland, are harnessed for domestic and industrial purposes, such as the giant geo-thermal power station below the Krafla fissure. Various industrial uses are made of the hot springs at Bjarnarflag flats, three kilometres to the east of Reykjahlid, including the underground baking of bread. Then, of course, the thermal springs supply hot water to all houses and buildings in the area. The only downside is the smell of sulphur when one turns on the hot-water tap.

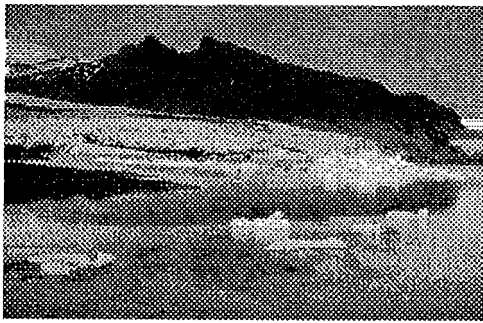
There is something of interest for everyone around Myvatn, including the fisherman and the ornithologist. Waterfowl and ducks of many species abound on the lake. In fact the bird life in Iceland in general is fascinating. Denis was able to identify most of the species we saw, including oyster catchers, northern divers, ptarmigan, arctic terns, snipe, skuas, snow bunting, plovers, wheatears, whimbels, plus hooper swans, eider and mallard duck. On one occasion, when travelling in the interior we must have passed very close to a tern's nest or colony, because our car was attacked by two very irate terns. Thank goodness we were not walking or I am sure we would have sustained severe injury. A day's walk enabled

us to explore the dominating extinct volcano Hverfell near Lake Myvatn. Its crater is 1040 metres wide, and the route over black volcanic ash led us on to inspect the convoluted black lava "castles" of Dimmuborgir close by - an area of natural lava arches, caves and pillars visited by many tourists to the area.



Hitherto the Northern and North-eastern road had a fairly loose, gritty surface, but great efforts are being made to upgrade the sub-standard stretches to the general quality of the Iceland perimeter road. Soon after leaving Myvatn the road improved, and en route to Akureyri we viewed Godfoss another awe-inspiring waterfall formed by the glacial waters of the Skjalfandaflljot, fed from the Tungnafellsjokull in the centre of the island. Akureyri is the second largest town in Iceland - a very pleasant place at the head of a deep sheltered fjord, and which derives most of its income from the fishing industry, as of course do most of the ports and small villages on the coast of Iceland. Enjoying an ice-cream, as we did, one would never imagine that it is located only about 50 kilometres from the Arctic Circle. Here we decided that we must indulge in some tough walking, and embarked on a hike up the Glerardalur valley to the Lambi hut. The climbing huts, of which there are many in Iceland, are very well equipped, and are available for the use of anyone who ventures into what quite frequently is very inhospitable and rough mountain

territory. We estimated that it was about 15 miles to the Lambi hut and back to Akureyri, but it took us ten hours of almost non-stop toil and sweat. The terrain was pretty rough, with enormous tussocks not easily negotiated by someone with short legs like John Sterland, and it was necessary to make frequent diversions to avoid snow gullies and to cross rushing streams. As Denis said, "it sorted the men out from the boys". We were so tired on our return to the town that we decided to treat ourselves to a Pizza instead of self-catering.



We were conscious that we had "leap frogged" that very interesting thermal area around Geysir in the South-west of the island, so we hastened along the Northern coast road, which seemed to present little of scenic or geological interest. After spending one more night in Reykjavik we speeded on to Geysir, the name given to it because of what is now an extinct or moribund geyser. However, the nearby Strokkur geyser, which erupted or spouted about every five minutes to reach a height of about 100 feet, was a magnificent sight, and a spectacular hors d'oeuvre to a visit to Gullfoss, perhaps the most impressive of the trio of megga waterfalls we visited. Certainly it is a photographer's joy, with magnificent views from almost any angle. At normal times it disgorges over 100 cubic metres of water per second, but according to the

guide book its maximum outflow is about 2000 cubic metres per second.

Wishing to get away from the normal tourist attractions we drove from Geysir towards the interior with intent to drive hike to the Langjokull glacier. We "abandoned" the car half way to the glacier from the unsurfaced approach track, How we could have used a fourwheel drive vehicle - essential if journeys across Iceland or into the deep interior are contemplated. The rest of the journey and return to the car was accomplished on foot, but due to the lack of time (and perhaps exhaustion) we terminated the hike at the well-sited climbing hut located just short of the glacier, and returned to the dust-covered car. In fact dust was everywhere, including about a sixteenth of an inch in the boot, such that it required an hour of cleaning at the Esso service station.

Our final day's hike was based on the youth hostel at Hveragerdi, an expanding township which has harnessed its thermal springs to heat acres of glasshouses for flower and vegetable production. We had no detailed map, but used a rough diagram of the walking area provided by the tourist office. This proved to be almost useless in identifying hills and tracks. The members of the First division usually had three different opinions of the correct way back to Hveragerdi over some very rough terrain, but with the constant use of the compass, and I believe to everyone's surprise, we finished up at exactly the intended place. And so, back to Reykjavik, reunion with the Premier division, and the flight back to Glasgow.



Iceland - Premier League

Derek A. Smithson

Long journeys across ice-caps, longer even than on the Jostedalsgreen, have been the subject of conversation on Club meets, at least the ones I have been on, for a few years now and Iceland's Vatnajökull being the largest in Europe caught our attention.

Coos Townsend's book's description of a horrendous trip in the area we had chosen and at the same time of year is typical in describing tent shredding winds and poor conditions underfoot (in a recent article though he rates it as one of Europe's best backpacking routes). We were loathe to accept such counsel as it did not match our *many* experiences in the mountains but in the end we had to accept that this was our first trip there and we must heed the warnings that a full crossing of the icecap was beyond our party. June was chosen to minimise the chance of strong winds.

Instead of planning an expedition for a particular route, we (Tim Josephy, Martyn Wakeman and I) decided to go and explore the possibilities. Before July access to the central area of the island would, at best, be on foot, so a crossing was only possible with a multi-day walk back to the perimeter road. The summer heat makes crossings more hazardous or even impossible. We were told ski were essential to travel on the glacier but knew our limitations and skiing roped while towing sledges was beyond our abilities. We took snowshoes designed for walking on anything from soft snow to ice. I had experience of these, proving that any idiot was safe on them, so we were confident of



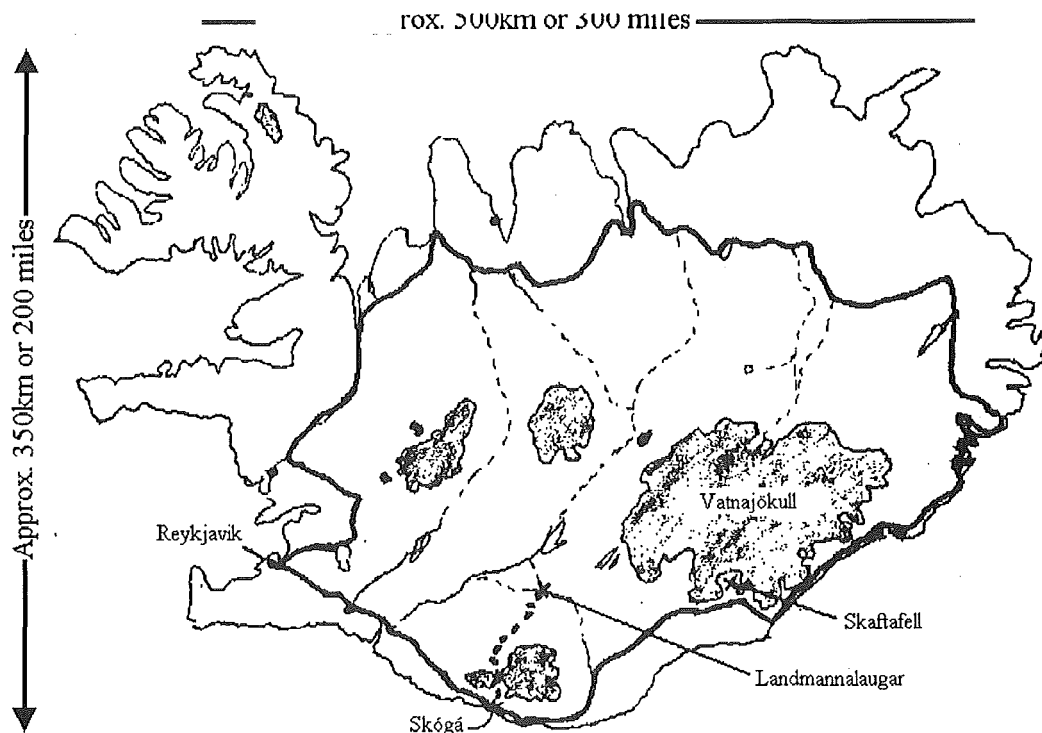
covering normal hiking distances.

Going guideless over Icelandic glaciers and mountains requires persistence and stubbornness bordering on the pigheaded because so many things are discouraging. The Icelandic Alpine Club were very helpful but not encouraging and we came to suspect that they'd had a lot of trouble with enthusiastic foreigners getting into difficulties.

Our successful three week holiday in a small area of Iceland indicated that Iceland is a mountaineer's island, not really open to the *tourist* until late June. It is not a rock climber's island nor a one day router's (the many peaks are neither close to the roads nor the huts) and we saw no other climbers. We climbed three mountains, managed a five-day journey through mountains towards the interior and tried two *tourist attractions* but we did not experience the predicted bad weather. In fact we only donned our waterproofs for short periods. This and being before the big influx of visitors mean we would recommend the first three weeks of June as ideal.

It was not expensive for campers whose entertainment was provided by nature. We found there were long distances to travel and so early in the season there was less public transport and the camping and hut facilities were not fully operational. So it was necessary to be self sufficient and we would have been at a disadvantage relying solely on buses to get around but thankfully those members with cars came to our assistance.

It was stressful expecting facilities that turned out not to be there. Some of this was because the season had not started but



also some of the pamphlets we had were wrong. There were not food shops where we expected them, but, when they knew our problem the Icelanders helped us. This may not happen so easily when there are many visitors. We were sold some marvellous bread at Skoga that they baked themselves in wax paper milk cartons, however their muesli failed to meet our expectations. The bread kept for four days in the bottom of a rucsac - undamaged and tasty.

The most troublesome problem was fuel for the stoves. Despite books and pamphlets claiming that 'white gas', an equivalent of Coleman fuel, was readily available at garages, we couldn't even find people who knew what it was. Tim's stove, running it on ordinary petrol blew up in flames and proceeded to set light to the supporting picnic table. Tim as a highly trained mountain man required a fire extinguisher to put it out while Martyn displayed remarkable poise by photographing the conflagration rather

than risk the flames to move my rucsac to safety. We had favoured petrol stoves because of the predicted availability of fuel. Martyn worked carefully to keep his stove operating well throughout the trip and, having once said that he liked cooking, managed to cook for everyone using it alone most of the time. There are small cylinders of gas and bottles of meths available. Everything could be obtained in Reykjavik, so with a car, a day's shopping there may be the answer.

Socially the trip worked well despite our ages ranging from Martyn's almost thirty to my almost seventy. Martyn and I are notable trenchermen leaving Tim constantly in awe at our ability to consume food. At one point he came to us diffidently to suggest that we stretch our food supplies to accommodate an American who wanted to join us but did not have sufficient food. He'd worked it all out as possible as we changed the six-day trip to just five, only he failed to

account for the half bottle of whisky no longer being his and mine alone. Tim was a weather forecaster and judge of progress, which he used in true officer fashion to encourage his men. Towards the end he was being asked to continue forecasting bad weather to maintain the unbroken spell of good weather.

Skaftafell

Just to arrive at the Skaftafell National Park, our first area, we had been driven past a fairly barren, distorted land with large areas of ice but failed to realise how very big this island is: its land area is greater than Ireland or Austria; the glacier Skeitharajokull is 15km wide at its snout as was Breithamerkurjekull, the glacier we ascended to Esjufjoll.

There were delightful moments at the Skaftafell site. David Hick and Christine Marriott's tent was pitched within one metre of a snipes nest but the bird persisted in hatching the chicks and Sue saw her leading them away to safety.

Within the Park we found a mountain, Kristinartindar, 1126m, a modest walk with a scramble to the top, and a chance to see our surroundings. It also seemed, on the map, to provide a route to the ice cap from which to gain our first experience of these snow conditions but the summit took longer than expected and the ridge to the ice was too frightening to attempt. Later conversations revealed that the locals believed it had not been traversed in summer conditions.

Esjufjoll

Esjufiell is where an old volcano rim of mountains breaks through the icecap about 16km and 800m height from the glacier snout. Rory Newman

and Sue were to join us but ate something unpleasant the night before and said they would follow the next day, but their car took us as close as possible to the glacier. We traversed across to a central moraine which could lead us to a campsite and emergency hut. It seemed a long way even on this fairly good going and by the time we reached the moraine it was becoming misty and the glacier resembled a continuous series of peat hags caused by water channels in the ice, interspersed with obvious but obstructive crevasses, some of enormous dimensions. The glacier also had 'mole hills' sometimes more than half a metre high. Quite common they looked like good loamy soil extruded through the ice and then frozen, though they always looked as though they would be soft underfoot. The struggle to cover this short distance continued for nine hours before we sighted the hut and possible camping area. The ice, all hard and spiky, gave a good grip for bare boots but would tear a tent groundsheet to ribbons. The hut was not just for emergencies and had a charging system so we stayed in there.



Snowshoes on Lungbrekkutindur

This route was supposed to provide us with access to the top of the ice cap and we now realised that we would have to carry a camp for another full day to achieve that and we hadn't come prepared. We had missed any good snow conditions for reaching the

icecap. We found a way up the BOOm Lungbrekkutindur by linking the snow patches and avoiding the rock and scree. There was less security on the crumbly, shattered rock than there was on the steep scree so we traversed in on snow patches to a short distance below the top, climbed the 'rock' to the summit and then found a continuous snow field to carry us down, first on boots and then on snow shoes. The ridge from this summit towards the top of the ice cap looked very fragile. It had been beautiful weather, but the next day we took six hours to descend, firstly in falling snow, then rain and finally in fine weather. Rory and Sue following us were less fortunate in that Rory broke through the ice into a glacier pool with almost total immersion, so they camped and descended early the next day. There may have been a source of heat under the glacier at that point.

This outing convinced us of the inaccessibility of the icecap this June without a series of carries or using motorised vehicles. Neither of these appealed to us.

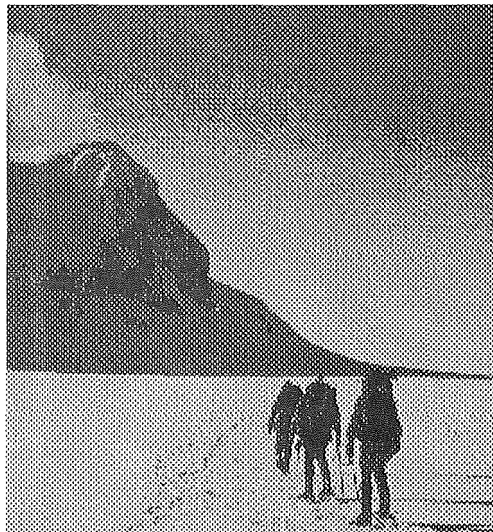
Hvannadalshnoekur

We then decided to climb the highest mountain in Iceland which looked so impressive from our campsite, the 2119m Hvannadalshnoekur. The times given for this mountain varied from four days to twelve hours so we decided to carry a camp and planned to stay one night.



Hvannadalshnukur on the Orrefajokull glacier

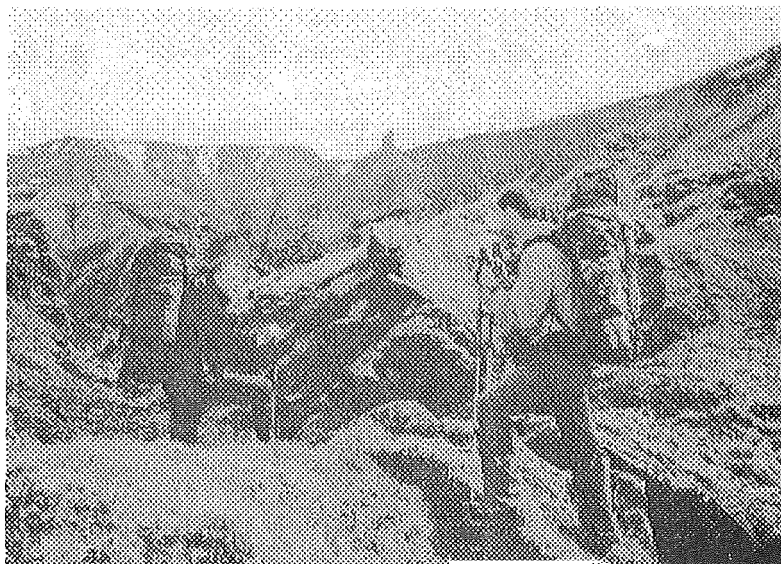
Conditions were good and we had an exhilarating outing, joined by Rory, during which we established our camp and then finished climbing the mountain in evening light on a route which left us still excited after regaining the camp. We had heavy loads, over 20kg., but because we were on a recognised route, there was an encouraging trace of a path on the lower slopes. It was hard work and we were all ready to stop when the glacier levelled at about 1500m after six hours. About half the height was gained on scree and compacted gravel, then a snow field and finally the glacier where we roped. Snow shoes were essential on all the snow and snow-covered glacier. On the steeper section near the summit the dry powder snow on top of hard snow was too deep for the snow shoe spikes to pierce so we used crampon in descent.



The top block of Hvannadalshncekur

Setting up the camp and having a hot drink and rest took about an hour and a half and we were enveloped in light cloud by five o'clock when we set out again for the summit. The cloud cleared shortly after we started. To avoid crevasses we went round to the

east side of the summit block and there found a trail made by an earlier party who had not used ropes so we removed ours. There was a trail, zigzagging up the steep snow of the top block, but just below the summit was a crevasse for which we roped after our leader made it look difficult. Since our predecessors' trail



Tim and Martyn descending to the Basar Hut on the first day

took no account of this hazard perhaps it was newly opened. The top block had numerous good climbing routes, both gullies and ridges of ice which on days such as we had would be worth a closer camp to permit attempts. We were enthralled. The summit was reached almost exactly twelve hours after leaving the car and on this clear evening we could see everything in the twilight. We descended quickly and easily, unroped and on snow shoes, to the tents where we ate and turned in after midnight.

The next morning, when we emerged from the tents we were greeted by mist and falling snow, but we had our upward tracks to follow and the weather cleared as we descended. We were back at Skaftafell for lunch and to plan a change of venue. We had almost windless conditions which were to continue for most of our trip, but what wind there was, was very cold.

Skoga to Landmannalaugar

We took a bus to Skoga which is the start point for a recognised,

waymarked route into the interior which we were curious to see. We were already aware that the scenery of Iceland was different to any previously seen and the interior was said to be the place to see more of it, including hot springs and lava beds. There were so few visitors that it was an opportunity to do this route without the distractions of crowds. The first day was long, up a landrover track to just under 1000m where we met what seemed like endless snow fields of wet deep snow without snow shoes. These, together with our climbing gear, had been packed into a car bound, eventually for Britain. Descending from the snow across the compacted gravel through grotesque scenery led us into a relatively lush valley with beautiful wild flowers and finally the Basar hut. The hut warden telephoned to confirmed that we did not need to return the same way but could continue to Landmannalaugar and catch the first bus of the season.

The second day gave us more grotesque moss-covered scenery with fascinating gorges and distant views of mountains and ice caps. We now

started to meet rivers that had to be forded and again proved that gaiters with rubber rands are not effective at keeping water out. Tim had wisely brought trainers to change into for these crossings. Not a long day but at the hut the water system had not been connected.

The next day included a long stretch of black desert-like ash which give no firm footing and must make life unbearable when there is a wind. There were still distant views of mountains and the moss and wild flowers were reached again later in the day. The hut was poorly equipped but would not be when the season started. The fourth day was a beautiful sunny day with a cold wind and we walked up to about 1000m where we were in a world of snowy mountains and walked on compacted gravel, on which a few wild flowers managed to survive. There were patches where the water made the gravel fluid but these were rare and illustrated the problems if this journey is made too early. Seemingly impossible boiling water bubbled out of the ground next to snow and the accustomed mountain scenery changed to ochre hillocks with snow drifts in the gullies. A long snow field led us to a centrally heated hut which felt stiflingly hot on entry. Here we enjoyed the company of a couple of Swedish men who were following the same trail. Before the evening meal we went up onto a local mountain to see other hot water springs.

We left very early the next morning to make sure we were in time for the bus without having to hurry. After about an hour across a snow field we had a gently descending route through more hot springs and more multi-coloured hillocks of shale. We stopped to admire an upward thrust of magma

(we guessed) before a lava field and to admire the lush area around the hut at Landmannalaugar. The hut was closed, a bulldozer worked noisily and the insects were biting so we moved down the road to await the bus. The cheerful bus driver, encouraged by one of the Swedes who spoke Icelandic, and the scenery, made for an entertaining journey,

Our attempt at tourism was nearly a disaster. We found Geysir itself a great disappointment with a very public campsite and again no shop for food. We managed to move to camp near Gullfoss where it rained necessitating cooking in a partly renovated toilet. The whole of this part of our visit was saved by an easing of the rain the next day, a pleasant walk to Gullfoss and the magnificence of these falls. In a series of tumbling falls the torrent turns through ninety degrees and then falls over the side of the end of a canyon which carries the foaming water in its original direction. We spent a long time just looking at the light on the water, the foam and the upsurge of spray from the final fall. But there was nowhere else of interest to us, so we rushed about and caught a bus which took us to Reykjavik for a day before we flew home.

Tim and I benefited from offers from members with cars to transport some of our gear from, and back to, Britain so avoiding hernias and excess baggage charges. Martyn was not so lucky, having to travel from Switzerland, and my last sight of him was of a disconsolate figure at the airport complaining at the £70 excess.

We did not cross Vatnajakull, the greatest ice cap outside Greenland and Antarctica, but we are all keen to return so perhaps next time.

An Icelandic day with the YRC

Adam Genster

Extracts from the passionately written diary of an American who joined three members for a trek from Skoga to Landmannalaugar

June 14, 1998 - day five of our trek

What a glorious day it has been!

The four of us ambled out of bed at about 6:45am and began to repack our rucksacks (British for backpack not to be confused with the American word for day pack) and Martyn prepared our horrendous Icelandic porridge and tea, as has become the morning custom

It has been our experience thus far that the days start out bright and sunny, with blue skies, and that the storm systems tend to move in during the middle of the afternoon. As such, we are waking earlier and earlier each new day to begin our **tramping**.

Today was no different. The sun was shining bright. The sky was a lovely shade of blue. Lake Aftavatn looked beautiful from our red trimmed hut, with the snow covered mountains rising to the heavens in the distance, and the wondrous glaciers revealing themselves just behind them

We only paid 500 Ikr each for our stay at the hut, despite the fact that the rate is 800 Ikr for members, 1,200 Ikr for non-members. There was no warden, running water, nor gas, and the WC was locked. As such, we felt 500 Ikr was a justified fee, and so stated it in the guest book.

We shoved off a little after 8:00am, walking across a very small valley.

The most physical part of the day's journey came early - a fairly steep incline rising about 400 metres in a

short distance. It was tough, but not so tough such that one had to stop because of fatigue. However, should you look back during the ascent, you were stopped by another, irresistible force - the power and beauty of nature.

The hike up gave way to tremendous panoramic view in every direction - snow and rock and glacier and glacier and rock and snow. With each step, our new perspective surpassed the last. Each of us *had* to stop, several times, to take in as much as much as we could. None of us could take it all in - we could still be there basking, soaking it up like sponges.

At the top of the grade, we came to our first set of hot springs, which lay at the edge of a large ice cap or permanent snow field called Kaldaklofsfjoll. It truly was an amazing sight to see spouts of steam coming out of the ground, which was surrounded on all sides by fields of deep snow. Upon closer inspection, we could see the water boiling in the shallow pools. Actual bubbles coming from out of the ground less than three feet from a snow field! A very impressive sight with sulphurous springs creating beautiful collages of burnt red, clay, yellow, yellow/green, and lime.

From here on in it just kept getting better and better. Hot springs and mountains partially covered, with snow. The slopes were at times gentle and precious, at other times quite jagged and steep. In the distance, mountains, glaciers, crevasses, rock - as far as the eye could see. And, of course, beautiful lake Alftavatn, our starting point for the day, in the distance and five hundred metres below.

From our vantage point we could even see the pass we crossed days before, between the larger glacier Myrdalsjokull and the lesser glacier Eyjafjallokull. I can't think of enough superlatives to describe the views. Suffice it to say, Martyn, Tim, and Derek, with a combined 100 years of mountaineering experience among them, commented several times that they had never seen a place like this.

Thank goodness there are so many wonderful places in this world that can create such feelings in people. A completely natural endorphin rush.

We traipsed through several long snow fields to arrive at our hut rather early around 1:30pm after a short hike of 10km.

After a respite and short nap, we struck out for an afternoon stroll to check out some more hot springs. We grabbed our boots, gaiters, and Lekis, and shoved off up the snow mountainside near the hut to the top of Hrafninnusker. At this time, 4pm, the sky was a whitish grey - clearly not as blue as it had been at the start of the day.

The view from the summit was tremendous. Panoramic glory in every direction. To the distance was ocean, at least 100 km to the east. We could also see the glacier Hofsjokull about the same distance away and Hekla, an active volcano, which has erupted in 1913, '47, '70, '80, '81, and '91, was prominently in view, with the resultant lava flow.

We continued to walk towards the hot springs, each sprouting tremendous amounts of steam from the ground in several regions to the west of Hrafninnusker.

Tim, Martyn, and I went down the mountain to get a closer look, Derek

deciding to stay on the plateau and walk back to the hut.

We walked down and explored, tramping down the steep snow slopes of the peak, and then meandering playfully through snow tunnels drilled out of the water flow from several hot springs. In particular, we walked into a snow tunnel that sloped gently up a hill until it opened up to become a tremendous cavern about 18 feet high, with a hot spring as its source. Steam and sulphur were everywhere.

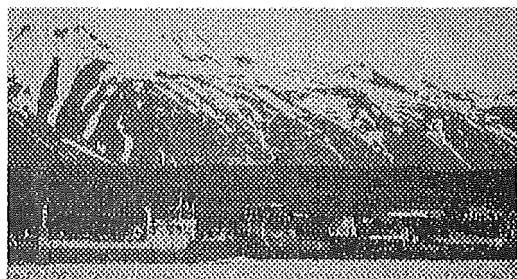
After that, we walked to two more springs that seemed intriguing from the distance. One had a pool of water over 3m wide and 5m long. However, the water was not merely boiling in this pool - it was whirling around in a tremendous fury! A vicious whirlpool. It looked like class IV rapids of boiling water cork screwing on top of itself.

The last hot spring we saw produced a tremendously strong, but thin line of steam. We saw that the water was evaporating from the pool upon impact, as soon as it came out of the spring. The entire spring was steam.

We then made our way back to the hut. When it came into view it was past 7:00pm. I was famished.

Tomorrow, we head for Landmannalaugar. Hopefully arriving before 1:30pm and the only bus - the only Reykjavik bus of the day.

Iceland - today I discovered - truly is the land of ice and fire.



Icelandic Adventures

Rory Newman

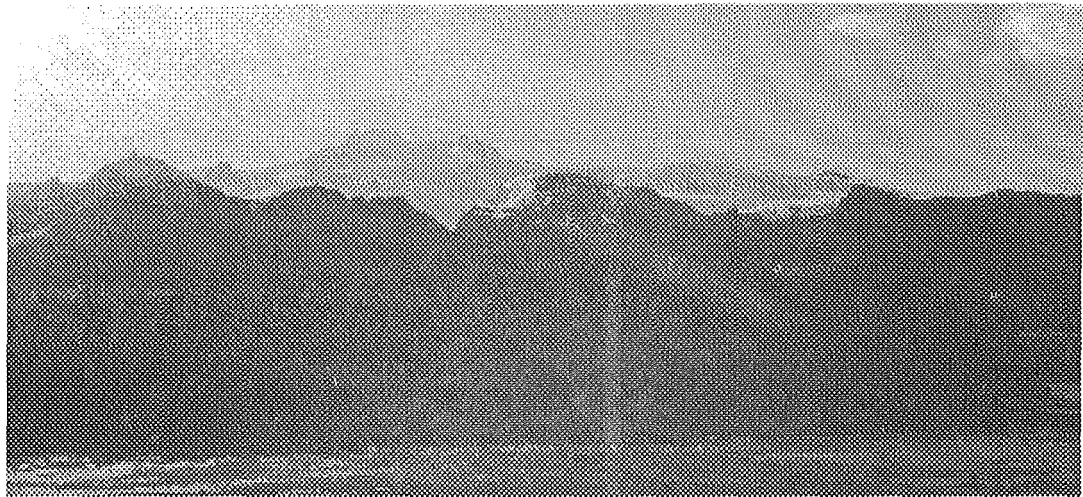
We had a wonderful time in Iceland. Other members' reports will tell you about amazing scenery, vast deserted open spaces, huge glaciers, 80-mile views, and so on. It's all true!

Sue and I travelled by boat via Shetland and the Faroes, taking a small car (and lots of climbing gear for various other people). We would recommend this approach to anybody with sufficient time and a robust, less-than-new vehicle (and perhaps a fairly *go-for-it* approach to driving Icelandic roads are *interesting*). We camped and self-catered throughout the trip. Icelandic weather is unpredictable, so a robust mountain-type tent is probably worthwhile. We took a standard small gas stove (cartridges) and plenty of fuel, but would have had no problems in obtaining fuel in Iceland. There are limits to the amount and value of food which can be imported (and some restrictions - no fresh meat or **dairy** products), so we bought a good deal of basic supplies as we went on. We recommend unreservedly *hverbraud* (geyser bread - a dark, sticky tea bread made with molasses) and *skyr* (a delicious low-fat yogurt or *creme fraiche* confection, made with a yeast culture). We do not recommend *hakarl* (putrefied shark buried on the beach for 6 months, then excavated for eating) - in an emergency, your companions' dirty socks would be much more appetising.

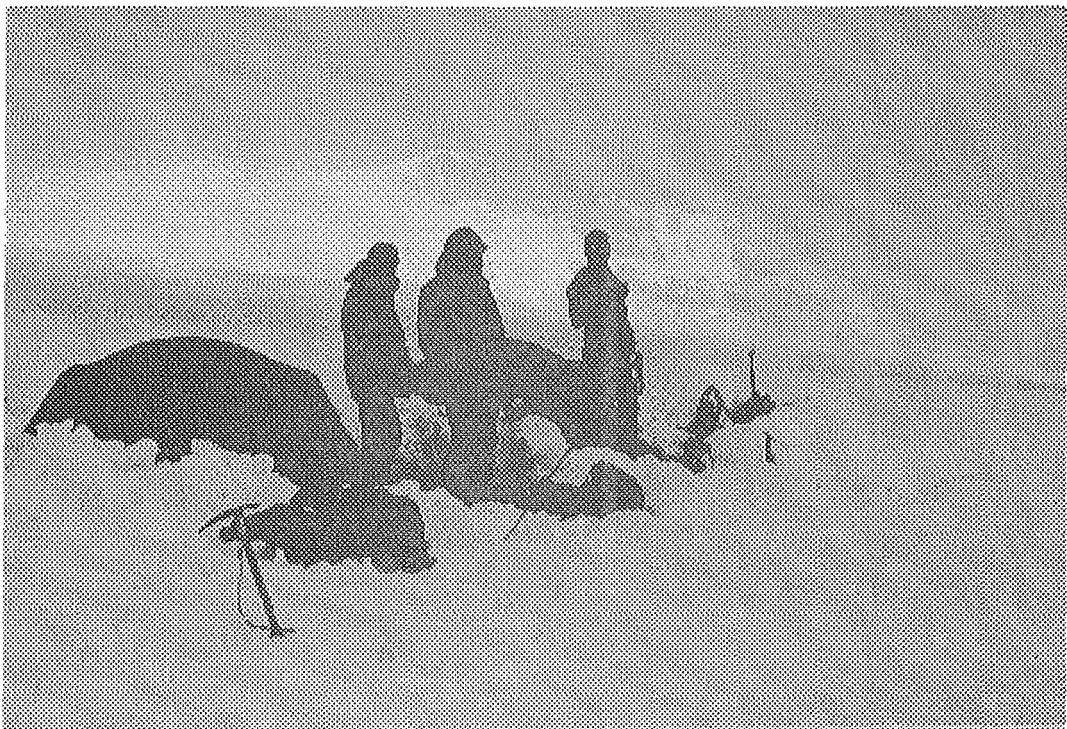
In the Shetlands, we visited Jarlshof, watched puffins and seals, and saw a pod of orcas swimming and sounding at the southern tip of Mainland. Another highlight was a click mill, of a type used until a few years ago - I

was impressed to find exactly the same basic undershot design with horizontal grindstones which I had seen still in use in Nepal.

The Faroe Islands were a revelation - basically North-West Scotland type mountains, coming straight up out of the sea. (Faroese weather is also basically North-West Scottish, only more so. However there are NO MIDGES.) The hills have steep green flanks with a lot of rock showing, and rocky summit ridges with some fairly serious scrambling opportunities. The island of Litla Dimun *averages* a 45-degree angle, and many of the bigger islands are almost as steep. It's the only place I've ever visited other than Nepal where (because there's no flat ground) people terrace hillsides for cultivation. Any heroic hard rock-climbers in the club might appreciate up to 750 metres (yes, I do mean metres) of vertical (and yes, I do mean vertical) sea-cliffs. The rock appears to be sound, but they would have to be attempted in the winter because of nesting seabirds, and the first stance would have to be in a boat as they rise vertically out of the sea. For us lesser mortals who enjoy long scrambly deserted mountain ridges, a six-month visit would enable a 'representative selection of the better summits to be reached. We intend to go back! High spots included Slrettaratindur at 882 metres (*the* highest spot in the Faroes), climbed on Midsummer's Eve, and Sornfelli. On Slrettaratindur, we met a bus-load of Faeroese, struggling slowly up the steep flank to dance on the summit (traditional). Halfway up, they stopped to lie down, complain, and eventually sing loudly to encourage themselves. An astonished hare came out to see what was making the extraordinary noise, ending up a couple of metres away from an equally astonished Sue.



Iceland's highest point seen from Skaftafell campsite and a high camp on an attempt to climb it.



Sornfelli was exciting because ROIY approached the summit via an awkward steep scramble. He then found first, that the summit belonged to NATO, and was definitively out-of-bounds to casual mountaineers, and second, that his approach had left him *inside* the security fencing, video surveillance, and other similar embarrassments. Also, the summit on the day was the summit of a radar dome. This was not ascended. Another five hills were also climbed,

but this was really a bare taste of the feast on offer.

The main areas we visited in Iceland were the southern edge of the Vatnajokull icecap, North-Central Iceland, Eastfjords. Most of this would have been possible by public transport, but having the car saved a lot of time and effort - and possible starvation of some of the other Ramblers.

Skaftafell

All the Iceland parties met at the Skaftafell campsite on June 1st, but two parties - ourselves and Tim Josephy, Derek Smithson and Martyn Wakeman stayed for a while to climb locally. Our companions had brought multi-fuel stoves, intending to buy Coleman fuel, but when this was not obviously available, resorted to unleaded petrol. It was quite instructive to watch how different people behave when their stove explodes, converting itself into a flame-thrower, igniting the wooden table on which it rests, and melting pans and cutlery into little twisted lumps of hot metal. Tim ran for the campsite fire extinguisher. Derek ran (very wisely) much further, to fetch a bucket of water. He came back noticeably more slowly, especially as he approached what was now a baby volcano. Martyn, deciding that the jobs of running about and panicking were already spoken for, calmly took a series of photos to show the manufacturers later. After the conflagration was extinguished and the excitement had subsided, the car enabled us to get to Hofn, and therefore to purchase the only two containers of real Coleman fuel outside Reykjavik in the whole of Iceland. But for this, the awful choice of hakarl or socks would certainly have (out?)faced our noble companions.

Other highlights of Skaftafell included:

- a fairly rapidly aborted attempt on what turned out to be an unclimbed ridge (but we got a couple of nice summits out of it)

- some amazing views of icefalls (complete with sound-effects) - these would dwarf most of the big

Himalayan icefalls. Iceland's highest point is only about 7,000 feet but the glaciers and icecap are on a heroic scale, starting on the beach and going all the way to the top.

- a whole day spent walking up one of these glaciers. Eventually Rory fell through thin ice into deep water. This was surprising - glaciers aren't supposed to do that. We think the water may have started life as a hot spring under the ice, further up, and eroded its way down under the surface. By the time Rory met it, it was, to say the least, no longer hot. Rory discovered an unexpected ability to levitate, or at least to mantelshelf while wearing a 50-pound pack. Sue, anticipating instant freezing, galloped up shouting "Quick! Take all your clothes off!" This was an intriguing offer, miles from anything except miles off. Rory declined.

- a superb expedition to the highest point on the island, involving a high camp, a couple of entertaining crevasse crossings on snow bridges, a very successful trial of snowshoes, and some of the best views of a number of years climbing mountains. We were lucky to climb up through and above the cloud, reaching the summit at 9:00 p.m. in bright sunlight (24-hour daylight has its uses). Martyn fulfilled a lifetime's ambition to camp on the icecap. The rest of the party would have helped him excavate platforms for the tents, but he enjoyed it so much, we couldn't bear to spoil his fun. Derek said at the end of the day, "That may be the best day's mountaineering of a lifetime".

- an example of the laconic Iclander - the National Park warden described seeing a tidal wave 20 feet high, 3 miles wide, carrying icebergs the size of houses, exploding from the tongue of a glacier and rushing

towards his Land Rover. (This was the Grimsvotn flood of two years ago, following a volcanic eruption under the icecap.) He escaped by driving frantically out of its path. He said, "It was quite interesting."

The Eastfjords

Highlights here included:

Rory's attempt to climb Mount Bjólfur in sea-level cloud. The attempt was severely handicapped by his inability to locate Mount Bjolfur in sea-level cloud.

Hengifoss a spectacular waterfall, 120 metres high, with red and yellow horizontal strata in a black basalt cliff

The Hotpot! - a hot spring piped into a soaking pool; ideal for tired mountaineers at the end of a trip.

The Giantesses' Rampart - a remarkable drystone wall 20 feet high and a mile long, made out of rocks the size of washing machines. It's actually a terminal moraine.

"Arizona" - our first real sight of the Icelandic interior. Black desert, with mesa-like lava hills rising out of it. In early June, the landscape is covered with purple saxifrage.

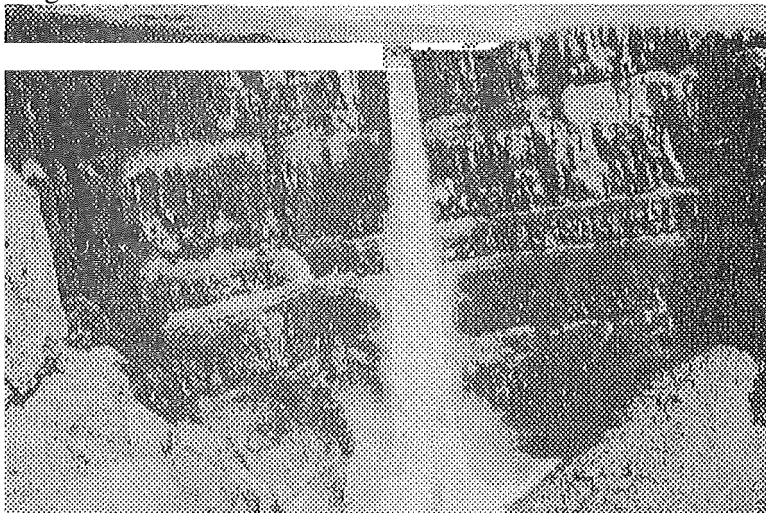
We would like to go back and spend more time in the deserted interior of the island.

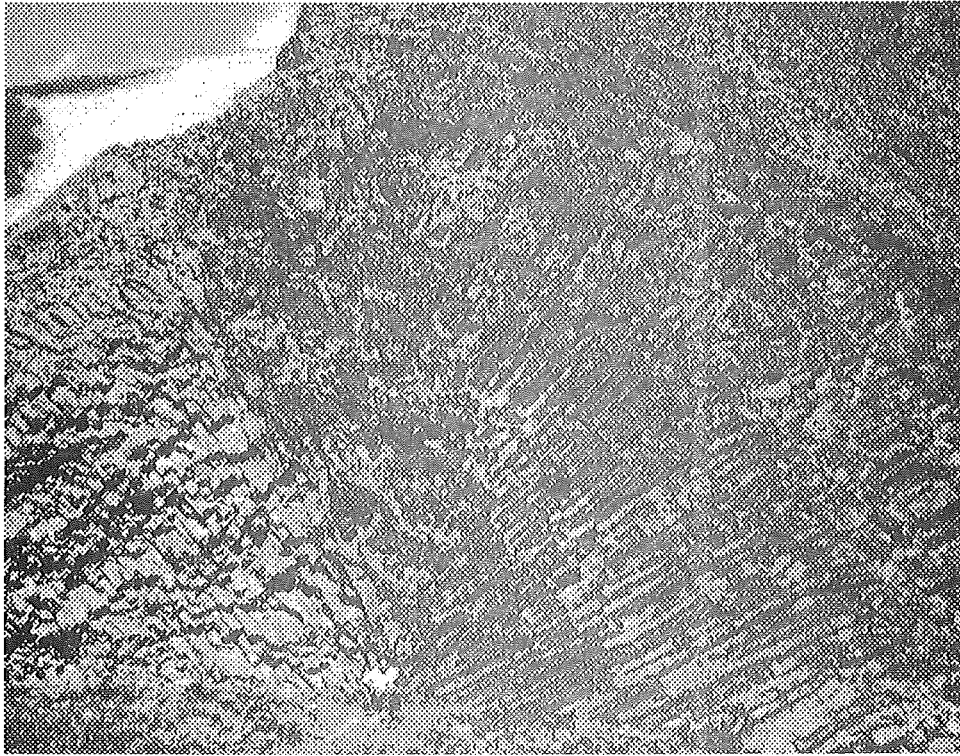
North-Central Iceland

Highlights here included:

The Myvatn area - craters, boiling mud, solfataras, hot springs, steam vents - this place is a physical Hengifoss

geography textbook laid out as a giant interactive (possibly not with the boiling mud) experience. Geothermal power is a local industry: you drill holes down into really hot stuff and use the superheated steam that comes screaming back up to drive turbines. One local attraction is the place where a drilling crew found something slightly more active than they were looking for. Pieces of the drilling rig were found 3 kilometers away. The resulting crater known as "Homemade Hell", is 50 feet deep and 100 yards across. Remarkably, the drilling crew all survived. In spite of this, Sue thinks volcanoes are FUN! We can't begin to describe the whole thing. Go and see for yourselves. Apart from the above, attractions include an underground naturally-heated swimming pool, more breeding ducks than you will ever see anywhere else in Europe (both species and numbers), Arctic terns and snipe nesting on the campsite, and (in the Dimmuborgir) the weirdest piece of landscape we have ever seen. Tortured lava formations, mmm animals, buildings, dragons, Heath Robinson machinery, etc. etc. If the Quirang on Skye was a pilot project, this is the masterpiece!





Basalt formations dwarf Rory in the Jökulsárglúfur

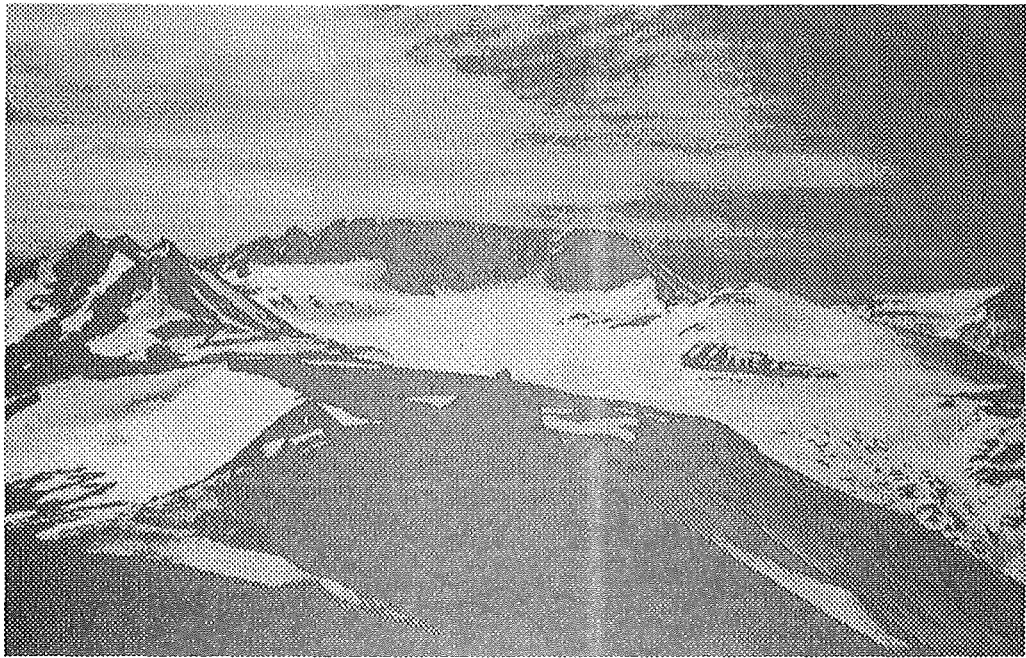
Akureyri - the place we would like to live **if** we lived in Iceland. It is a seaside town with three bookshops and a botanical garden with a complete Icelandic flora. It's also within walking distance of a series of superb-looking Alpine-style ridges. We only had time to explore one of these, but there are dozens. Most of them look either accessible walking/scrambling with an ice-axe, or as **if** they would go for a fairly light party with a couple of axes each and a short rope. Tempted?

Akureyri is also the place where a local cat enjoyed sharing our picnic lunch so much that it got into the car through the sun-roof and asked to come back to England with us. As its owner was watching anxiously from a window, we didn't cat-nap it.

The Jökulsárglúfur - this is a canyon carved by the Jökulsá á Fjollum, a glacial ice-melt river draining the northern part of the Vatnajökull icecap. It's possible (and we did) to backpack from Dettifoss

(Europe's most powerful waterfall) down the canyon to Asbyrgi (the footprint of Odin's horse). This expedition involves climbing in and out of the canyon, with stunning views of waterfalls, basalt formations, red and black lava hillsides, craters cut by the river, and, **if** you're lucky (which we were), merlins and gyrfalcons.

We could go on and on about the lake which appeared a few years ago after an earthquake, the rock formations where geology was invented, the walk through the steaming crater of an active volcano, the amazing Icelandic forests (Icelandic joke: Q. What do you do **if** lost in the Icelandic forest? A. Stand up.) etc. etc. We climbed 27 summits, we saw 45 species of birds (and several species of whales from the boat, both coming and going) and 120 species of plant including the rare Hawkweed-Leaved Treacle Mustard (who *thinks* of these names?) But we'll only make you jealous... Go and see for yourselves! We intend to.



The hills above Akureyri



David Hick balanced while crossing the outflow at the snout of the Vatnajokull

Travelling hopefully

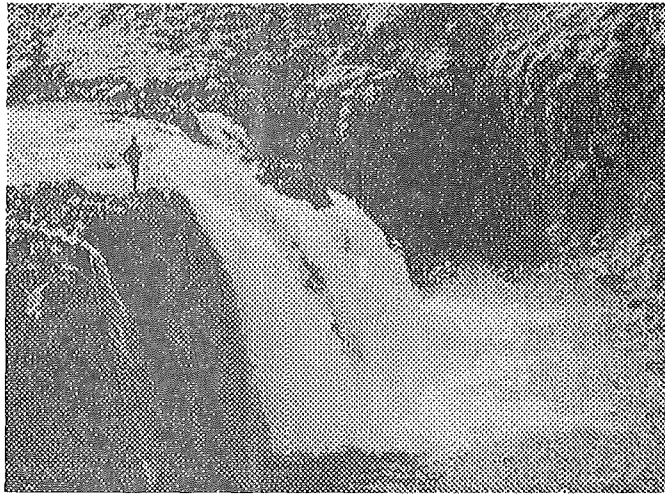
David Hick, David Martindale
and Christine Marriott

When we thought about what we wanted to do in Iceland: travel around the island, meet up with the icecap party and help them by carrying some gear if they wanted us to, and take our own camping gear, it seemed that the obvious thing to do was to take our own vehicle. Rory and Sue came to the same conclusion, and we travelled out with them although they returned a week after us. Others opted for air travel and either car hire or local transport.

John Schofield's excellent research and administrative skills provided us with tickets and ferry times. To get to Seydisfjordur on the east coast of Iceland, we would be leaving Aberdeen on Monday afternoon, spending Tuesday on Shetland, stopping off on the Faroe Islands for a couple of hours on Wednesday, and arriving on Thursday morning. High speed travel compared to the return journey. Thursday afternoon out of Seydisfjordur, Friday, Saturday and Sunday on the Faroes and Tuesday on the Shetlands, arriving back in Aberdeen on Wednesday morning. Most of our travelling was done at night.

Try telling your insurance company that you want to take your car to Iceland. We had some interesting responses. "Sorry, can't be done," was the most common. "I've worked in insurance for twelve years and that's a first," said another. It was a relief finally to have all the necessary paperwork in our hands.

And the journey was an experience in itself. We're accustomed to getting onto a plane and getting off two, three

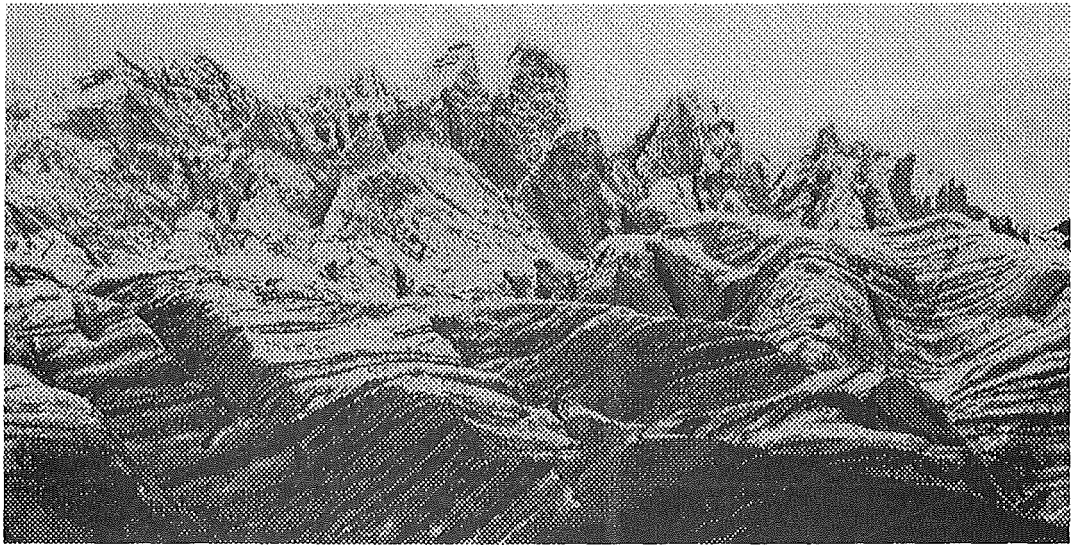


Hof

or four hours later in another part of the world. Taking the time to sail adds an extra dimension to travel, especially when there are two ferry changes to be made along the way. Passengers feel much more involved in the arrival and departure from quaysides than from airports, when they are sealed in the aircraft cabin. There's time to read, reflect and people-watch as the waters slip by.

We were on the first ferry of the year into Seydisfjordur. We shared the delight of the young Icelandic woman, a crew member, going home for the first time since the winter and the pleasure of families waiting to greet returning travellers. A band of children was playing to welcome the ferry into port.

What of the driving? There were times when the car owner got rather pensive, as he faced yet another road, only opened days earlier after the harsh Iceland winter, and still rutted with the caterpillar tracks of the only vehicles to have passed over it for the last eight months. He became expert at spotting and avoiding potholes and the larger boulders that littered the way. The car seems to have survived unscathed and it certainly served us well.



Contorted ice - Vatnajekull

High spots

Because we travelled so early in the season, there were limited opportunities to travel into the interior, but there is so much to see within striking distance of the main ring round around the island, that in the time available to us this scarcely mattered. Early summer is the time to see the waterfalls at their finest. Access to Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in Europe, surely the most impressive in Iceland, had opened days before we arrived. Walking on the edge of the Jokulsa á Fjollum canyon gave us great views of this and other waterfalls on the river.

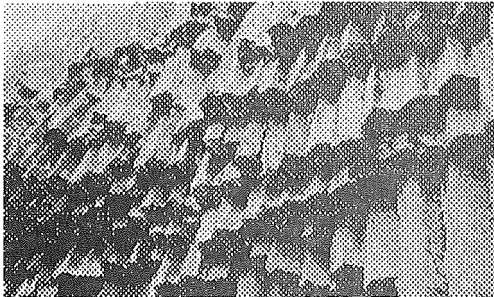
The volcano Hekla, 1491m, provided a challenging day's climbing. The early season condition of the roads necessitated leaving the car before the recommended parking spot but we

took great care to note our position against such features as we thought we could identify later. This in turn meant that there were many additional kilometres of lava fields to be crossed before beginning the ascent. This lava has been deposited in the last decade and no erosion has yet taken place. The lava is as it cooled, huge blocks of sharp, hostile rock that cuts into boots and flesh, interspersed with deserts of volcanic ash.

On the summit the snow is melted, and the soil steams and is warm to the touch from underground volcanic activity. A visitors' book on the summit showed that only three people had ascended before us this season.

We looked forward to returning to our hostel for a well earned sauna and dip in the hot pool, but could not find the car in the moon-like landscape.





Basalt at Svartifoss↗ and Kirkjubæur↘



We came upon it just as we despaired of ever finding it again, and reached our hostel after a fourteen hour day. The sauna was every bit as good as expected.

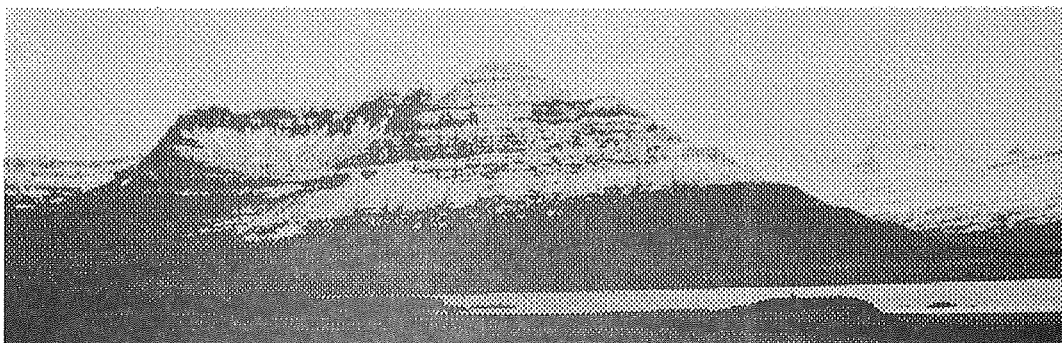
Iceland is a dream for birdwatchers. We had heard that the birds seem completely unperturbed by people, and this proved to be true. We saw

the nests of arctic terns, red throated divers, redwings and snipes, nesting feet away from our tent on the Skaftafell camp site. Throughout the night the snipes made their weird drumming sound. Other favourite sightings included the harlequin ducks, black-tailed godwits, red necked phalaropes, arctic skuas and the snow buntings which seemed to choose the darkest and most forbidding lava fields to show off their lovely black and white plumage and wonderful song.

Lake Myvatn is home to many species of water birds. Among those we saw were scaup, common scoters, long tailed ducks, Barrows goldeneye, teal, gadwall, slavian grebes and red breasted mergansers.

An exception to the 'live and let live' rule were the great skuas. On Ingolfshofdi, a promontory about 8 kilometres across a tidal lagoon, we were able to walk among the skuas' nests, but only at great risk of being divebombed by the adult birds. We had reached Ingolfshofdi in a hay cart pulled by a tractor driven by one Sigurdur Bjarnason, a true Viking who reputedly spoke English, but unlike anyone else we met refused to use it. Still, he communicated by smiles and expansive gestures.

In Iceland there is always the sense that the land is still developing. Hekla last erupted in 1991. Our guidebook told us that the ground surface at



Bulandstindur, 1068m, in the south-east

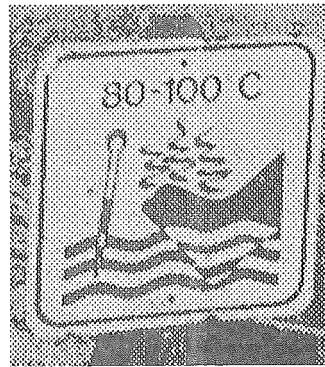


Tombolo on St Ninian's Island, Shetlands

Krafla, the spectacular fissure in the north east, is rising, a sign of possible activity in the near future. Walking among the steaming, warm rocks this was easy to believe. The tremendous floods of 1996, caused by the volcanic eruptions under the Vatnajokull icecap were visible from the campsite that the icecap party used as its base. Vegetation has only a fragile hold on the land. Much of the land appeared to be covered by fresh lava, with the only plants being mosses and lichen. In other places, flowers, including vast fields of lupins, grow miraculously out of the sand and dust of recent volcanic activity.

The Faroes

We spent three days on the Faroes: they merit three weeks to themselves. We enjoyed wonderful weather, more contact with friendly people and relished the sight of lush grass and trees



spartan Icelandic landscape. Having left our car on the dockside of Torshavn port we walked and took advantage of the superb public transport system. Highlights were the walk to Kirkjubaer and a visit to the island of Eysturoy.

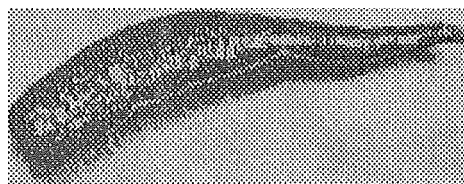


Faroes

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice Wilson



May 13

Awoke to find the cave abuzz of activity with axes chopping away at wood for the fires. The ceiling was still festooned with Ryvita papers and soup packets. The burnt tree in the entrance was silhouetted against sunrise in place of sunset. It was grand not having to crawl about in a cramped tent.

Dan showed me how to inject a dose of morphine into Lakpa, which I did after the syringe had been boiled and the solution prepared. It hurt him a bit, I'm afraid. Reached the Rakhti Kola in $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. Took some cine shots of the casualties crossing the bridge but the light was not good. The jungle is now thick and passage through it difficult, especially under or over fallen tree trunks. The Sherpas are very good with Dan and help him considerably.

I tried to make a flute out of a bamboo shoot, but without much success. It is amazing the speed with which the coolies transport Lakpa over this terrain. Reached a small holding at lunchtime, where we saw our first yak. Was offered and ate some cheese. Dan is slowing up a good deal now and it is obvious we will not reach Tempathang, today. Camped at the junction of Langtang Kola and Pulmutang Kola. I soon graduated to being assistant doctor. Several had cuts on the soles of their feet and scraped shins. Remedy for all ... elastoplast! Treated one man for

dysentery. Saw some leeches today ... and one got on my boots.

May 14.

A lazy start this morning. Took some cine pictures of Lakpa being tied on to the stretcher and then moving off.

The rest of us soon halted at a mountain stream and had one of our rate washes. There is a constant buzz of insects in the woods and bat-like insects flitting around; lots of life but mainly, unseen.

The path is now much easier and small bamboo huts have sprung up in our absence. We all stopped at one of these for some time, and I took pictures of the family. Ultimately, reached the cornfields where the men and women were all at work. I was intrigued by the primitive method of reaping. The corn is plucked by grasping the stalks between two short sticks of bamboo and pulling upwards, so removing the head of corn.

Reached Tempathang in the early afternoon and went straight to Tensings Mama's home. Camp not pitched on the former site, as I would have liked, but on an old corn field in the village. Pestered with villagers the whole time and by dogs after dark. Quite a large attendance at the surgery. Wrote to George and re-organised the food boxes.

Alpine Trilogy

Martyn Wakeman

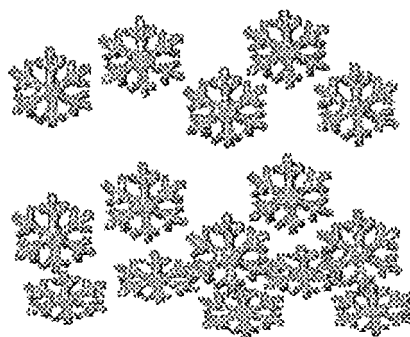
These are three short accounts from a member who has recently moved to Switzerland.

Practice

I had been living in Switzerland for about three weeks on Good Friday and had been foaming at the mouth to explore some of these white fangs that rose out of the lake from 300m to 2500m in a few kilometres.

It had been snowing recently, and as I spent Good Friday in my apartment unpacking various belongings, the call of the hills increased and I was forced to obey. "Explore..... Explore....." I was off to Iceland in June and this seemed an excellent opportunity to try out my new snow shoes. All attempts during February had failed due to the gross lack of snow in Scotland. It is a wonderful experience being able to see such a variety of shape and form rather than the sky line of Nottingham. The locals convinced me of the need to let the snow calm down so that I didn't avalanche myself, so I looked to the Jura instead.

The Jura are a band of forested mountains up to 1700m, stretching across the border between France and Switzerland, which folk here call the pre-alps. Think of the hills 2000m to 3000m without glaciers. The Jura are basically like the Cairngorms covered in trees but without many cliffs. People go cross country skiing there in the winter. It was supposed to be a quick play with the snow shoes, a walk with views of the main alps and some relaxing camping. However, it snowed hard all weekend with nearly a metre gathering on the tops.



The snow shoes proved useful and it would have been impossible without them. They worked but it was hard work with the extra weight on the feet.

I walked between 16 and 20km each day through lovely virgin snow. This was a delight in itself, something which is rarely experienced in Scotland. Trees buckled under heavy snow, all features of the path that I should have been following hidden and the yellow and red triangles on the trees and walls masked from sight. A 1:120000 map of the canton was all I had, which made for some inspired navigation, but I didn't stray too far. The first night I dosed in a barn rather than bivving in the snow and by morning all traces of my steps in the snow had vanished. Big banks of the stuff had plied up along the walls of the ski hut, giving a real wintry look. The second night I bivvied lower down in the snow and with all water hidden under the snow my epi-gas cylinder took a hammering melting water. With hindsight I would have used the petrol one, as the gas goes sludgy when cold and it takes a long time to melt snow for a meal, breakfast and drink bottle.

The best bit was that all the Swiss stayed at home because they cannot contemplate skiing while heavy snow was falling, especially when it was pouring with rain in the valley. I'm told this was the heaviest Easter snow for years. Good practice for Iceland.

First attempts

My first chance to escape the lower hills and head for the alps proper in Switzerland came when my mend Steve, from the Lincoln MC, his friend, Harry, and brother, Paul, came out for three weeks climbing around St. Moritz. I took the train and joined up with them to attempt Piz Bernina, the most easterly 4000m peak in the Alps. We set off on Saturday morning, knowing the forecast was a 'little dubious' in high hopes of success. We were soon heading across the glacier and then up the Fortezza ridge. The ridge gave a couple of easy scrambling pitches and we were soon up to 3500m. The weather started to clag in, but we decided to continue to our destination, which was a bivvi site near the Marco Rossa hut at 3600m.

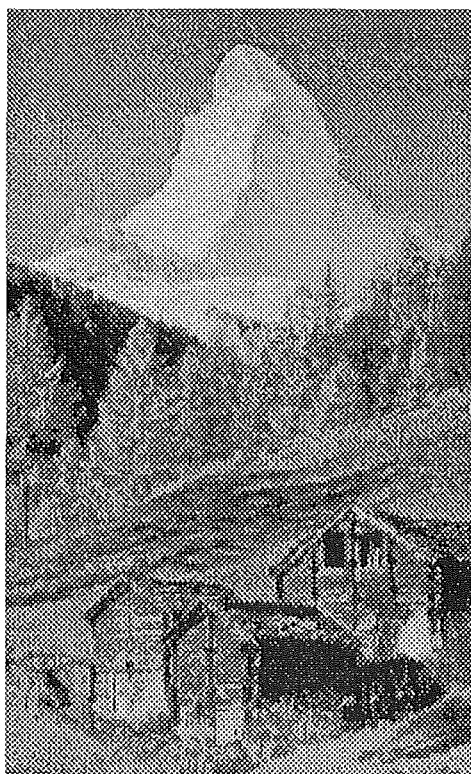
In Scotland, you can at least get down into the valley reasonably easily provided you avoid the cliffs. Here the glaciers go down the easier way, between the cliffs, so high ground can be difficult to loose. It was therefore easier to continue to the hut than reverse the ridge by rock climbing. The storm moved in and threw hail at us the size of one's finger tips, driven by gusts that blew us to the ground. All this while traversing steep snow slopes and avoiding crevasses. After some inspired navigation on a fading track and then a rough compass bearing with constant altitude checks, we made it to the hut as lightening flicked in the clouds around us. Not as bad as the worst of Scotland, but unpleasant nevertheless. We opted to stay in the hut for the night rather than sleep outside as we had planned. Just after we had anived, a group of ten Slovakiens on one rope appeared out of the mist. They had been following

our prints in the snow and were so glad that we had been there to follow. We were hugged and our hands shaken, with names like Elvis and angels being passed our way. They were poorly equipped and inexperienced for that route and were lucky to make it in one piece. They would have had severe fun without us to follow. The fifty Swiss Francs for the night and food were nothing compared to what might have had to be endured as we watching the storm erupt in full flow with a spectacular display of lightening from the windows. We awoke at 4am to assess conditions for a summit bid, but the weather was still bad so we slept until 8am when the weather had improved, but not a lot, so we all agreed to head back down the ridge rather than climbing to the top. Only 400m short, but a long way in bad weather - better to return another day.

Harry had twisted his knee after falling into a crevasse the day before, so he and Paul descended by an easier route to the Italian side. Steve and I retreated via our route of ascent in bad visibility, followed by the Eastern Europeans again. Steve collected Paul and Harry later, and had an amusing time going through Swiss customs with Paul who hadn't got his passport with him, but a plea of 'le Alpinist' seemed to grant immunity.

For the last weekend of their trip, we had agreed to meet in Randa, down the valley from Zermatt. Steve still had to gain his first 4000m summit, so plans were hatched to climb the Dom (4545m). On the Saturday we walked to a high bivi, passing through a rock band where we had to pull up on wire ropes and chains. The bivi site was amazing, with views over the ice fall to the Matterhorn and the Wisshorn etc. Our mountain still loomed 5000

feet above us like some Andean giant. We awoke the next morning at 3:45am to start the climb proper. This involved climbing one glacier, hopping over a rocky ridge and then traversing and climbing a second glacier to where the ground steepend. We then climbed up the north aspect through huge and massive ice scenery. Crevasses loomed through the slope almost the size of a ships hull and ice towers hovering around. We followed a safe(ish) route through these before gaining the summit ridge to the top. The top was a nice snow pyramid with a short rocky ridge leading out to the summit cross - nothing like the name 'Dom' might suggest. The view was truly amazing - looking across to the Matterhorn and over the Alpine giants to Chamonix, the Bernese Oberland, and the rest of the Mischabel chain. That was the fun part, but then we had to descend 10,000 feet back to the valley below. Steve then returned to from Zermatt to Lincoln (1000 miles) in a claimed 14 hours - pretty good gong.



Alpine Weekend

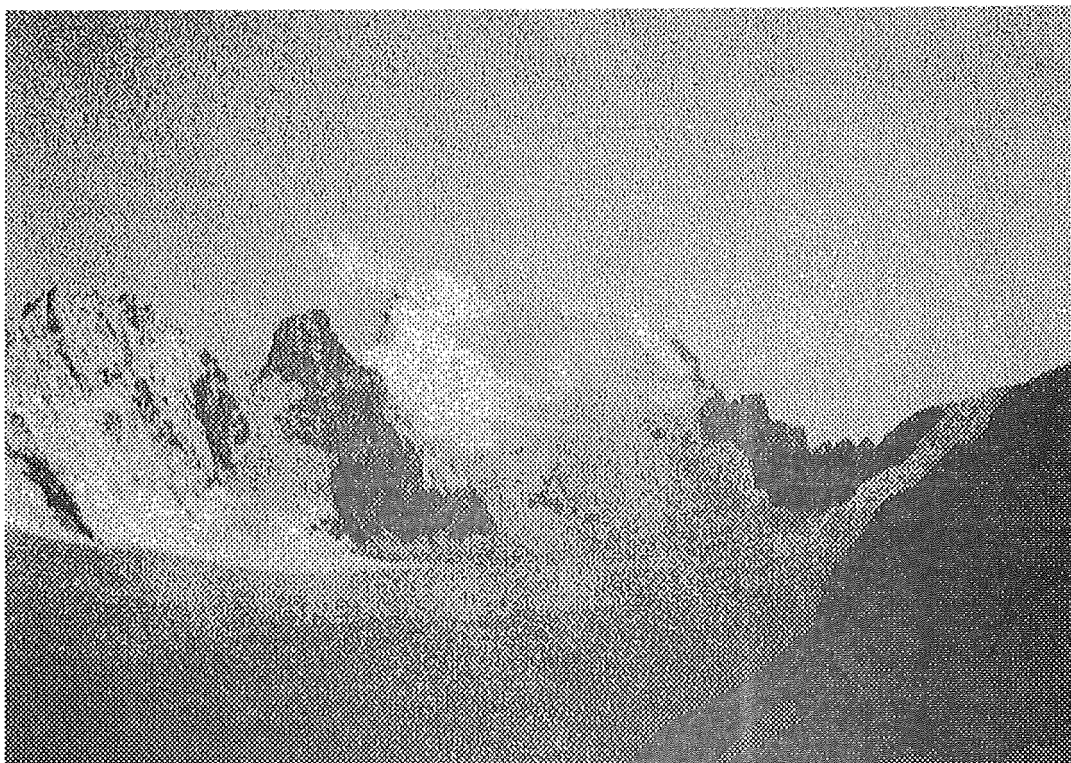
I have just had an excellent weekends alpine climbing in France. My French teacher gave me the number of an English guy that I should contact because he kept on raving about mountains in the French class - a bit like me. Perhaps I should explain that I have recently moved to Switzerland.

We met up with a third English guy and drove to the Dauphine massif, which was a four hour trip. They are hardened Alpine peak baggers and have both done nearly half of the 4000m peaks. Dave had a Mercedes which made for a comfy ride.

The Barre des Ecrins is in really nice area, with stunning mountains rising out of largely unspoilt valleys. There are no cable cars, so every one on the mountain has earned their right to be there by their own sweat.

I was persuaded to cough up some Francs and stay in the hut (3100m) rather than bivi which is my normal practice. I personally find that the bivi is an essential part of the process and a large component of the mountain experience. Since I was tagging along with them, I relented for this one occasion.

The hut was perched on a rocky shelf above the glacier and the supply helicopter lands on the roof as it is the only flat spot around. After walking up past the glacier snout we had a quick kip before eating the hut food which was both tasty and voluminous. As the sun turned the snow of summit ridge and tomorrow's climb pink, we tried to get some sleep.



Sleep is an elusive luxury in an alpine hut - the high altitude makes sleep restless anyway, and it is often hot and stuffy in a room full of snorers. We actually managed a reasonably good sleep, before a rude awakening at 3:45am. We won the window open / window closed debate (it remained open) and thankfully we were blessed with no snorers.

The morning was freezing cold with the stars shining brightly around the peaks which were silhouettes in the moon light. We joined about thirty to forty other euro-citizens tromping over the glacier through (but thankfully not in.) the crevasse band to the base of the north face of the Bane des Ecrins.

The sun rise was lovely, with ridge after ridge framed as shadows by a brightening sky as we ascended. Both these guys were fit and we fairly stormed up the steep glacier (40°) to the right of the picture, right of the rock step before the snowy dome. Most people ascending this mountain just climb this snowy lump, its 4000m

altitude giving the desired appeal. They cannot say they have climbed the mountain. However, this was not the summit, so we were to climb the ridge to the top. It was also the interesting bit - the reward for the glacier slog.

The hanging glacier on the north face had some impressive crevasses that we needed to cross to gain our objective. A quick look down revealed overhangs on both sides, but thankfully the hard frost had stabilised these. To get onto the ridge, a bergschrund needed to be crossed - this is a large kind of crevasse where the glacier leaves the permanent snow of the mountain. Another good snow bridge amidst the gleaming icicles lead to a delicate traverse under a vertical ice bulge before gaining the col.

At the col a thin layer of surface snow covered hard blue ice where rain had fallen the previous week and frozen solid. This took great care to cross, even with crampons. Thirteen people were killed on Mont Blanc during the previous weekend trying to ascend the mountain after high altitude rain froze

as ice all over the mountain, turning a standard route into something which must have been terrifying. Best to stay in bed when the mountain is like that. Thankfully, we only encountered a few small sections of the stuff.

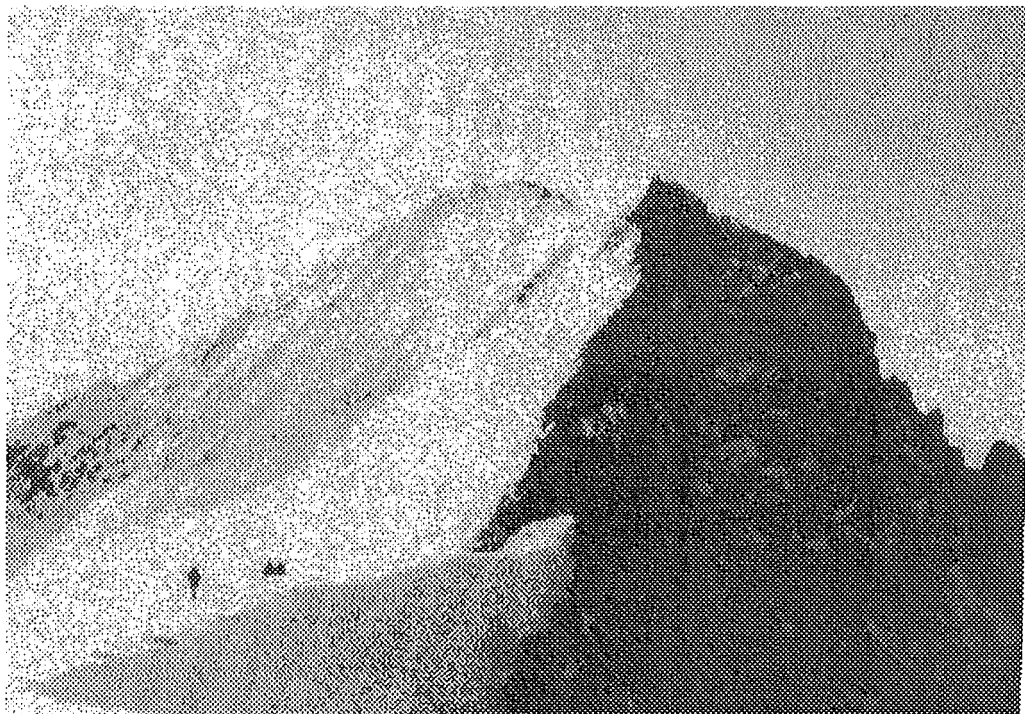
The ridge was a little more interesting than expected for a PD+ grade route, mainly due to the exposure and cold wind. Some very exposed scrambling and easy climbing ensued, with the snow face seen on the picture opposed by a very shear face to the south, forming a knife-edge ridge. Thankfully, the rock was good and the hand and foot holds bountiful. A few sections were no more than one foot wide, and others were crossed by hanging from the edge which formed a lip a few inches wide, and shuffling the feet along small edges. Not difficult at sea level, but requiring meticulous care at 4100m. This was all climbed in crampons because of the ice on the col making it impossible to gain the ridge without them.

We were first on the summit and enjoyed a view over peak after peak

for a couple of minutes before the descent. It was both windy and cold, which was to be expected as the summer has ended and the nights are moving in. On the way up we had moved together on the rope, without fixed belays, but placing the rope over small pinnacles to provide a degree of protection in case of a slip. It was easier on the way down with the crampons off but we still made a few running belays from slings to protect the steepest sections. This made for some shivery waits while belaying each other down the rock steps.

It was a relief to regain the col and start the descent, escaping the wind and exposure. After tromping back down the snow slopes to the glacier and then the moraine 1100m below we were able to relax and have some food before walking back to the valley.

All in all an excellent mountain venture with good companions. Probably the last big one of the season for me unless September is exceptionally good.



That Last Munro

Darrell Farrant

Countless articles must have been written by the almost two thousand mountaineers who have now successfully completed the Munros. They will have described the sense of elation at the final achievement, the careful preparations that went into it, and probably the nature of the celebration with the chosen companions.

I was no different when I finally reached the summit of Ruadh Stac Mor on a foully wet day in May 1974. An article for the Club Journal (1976) duly appeared to describe the nine-year odyssey and I assumed that that was the end of it. I had, however, not reckoned with metric surveys and the reforming zeal of the SMC.

First I was informed by a friend of mine in Edinburgh that the new survey had discovered that the summit of Sgurr nan Ceannaichean, next to Moruisg in Glen Canon was just above the magic mark and had been added to the list. A family holiday in Glen Shiel in July 1977 provided the opportunity for a quick get-away and I plodded up the newcomer on a drizzly day, having survived a near miss when crossing the railway line in the glen.

The next news was of another survey that had produced Beinn Teallach at the western end of Loch Laggan. My visits to Scotland had become fairly infrequent by then and it was not until August 1997 that the opportunity arose to add this one to the list. This time I chose an absolutely scorching day on what is rather a dreary hill but all was redeemed by a marvellous swim in the bum at the bottom.

No sooner had I done my last Munro for the third time when the SMC published a significantly revised list which added no fewer than eight new summits. I scanned the list anxiously and found that I had done only five of them. Here we go again! This time I decided on a joint campaign with my oldest climbing mend, who had done well over a hundred Munros with me and whom I had had the pleasure of accompanying on his last summit a couple of years before.

Thus in June of this year we planned our expedition to Scotland and were extremely fortunate to enjoy a short spell of beautiful weather in what has otherwise been a wretched summer. The first objective was Stob na Broige at the southern end of the Buachaille ridge and we climbed this by a track from Glencoe that contained several quite awkwardly steep sections. The next day we set out on mountain bikes on the long track up Glen Einich and parked close to the loch before setting off up the steep ridge towards the Cairngorm plateau. We came out on the cliffs of Braeriach and walked round the lip of this magnificent come to our objective of The Angel's Peak (another 4000 footer to add to the collection!). I had in fact walked past the base of this some years before when en route for Cairn Toul but it was a joy to return to such a superb location. The following day was another trip to a summit that I had missed by less than half a mile in 1973, Maoile Lunndaidh. Previously the other top on the plateau had been the Munro and I had looked across the short distance and had decided it was not really on the route!

We again cycled up the glen (last time I had managed to get the car up there) and it is a long trek to Glenuaig Lodge. The ascent is quite a brute but

we were rewarded with the most superb views stretching out to Hams, Skye, Rhum and Eigg as well as to the closer hills of the Fisherfield Forest. Once we had got down we fell into discussion about the various summits and to my horror I was informed that another recent change had been to move the Munro on An Socach in the Southern Cairngorms from the Eastern Peak to the Western.

This meant that it was necessary to set out for the last Munro for the fifth time. I took the opportunity when we were up in Edinburgh for our annual visit to the Festival to drive up to Glenshee and walk through all the mess of the ski-tows to Glen Baddoch. From here the western plateau of An Socach is readily attainable and I was back at the car after just over four hours.

Have I really done it this time? I suppose the argument is academic in that if you climb all the Munros on the current list you can be officially registered as a Munroist and I have my "Certificate of Completion" number 127 as well as the tie to prove it. Nevertheless there is still the sneaking feeling when the lists are revised that you want to remain up to date. I hope that this recent revision will be the last for a very long time. Interestingly enough, although the official list now stands at 284 Munros, I actually have 296 on my list if I include all those that qualified at the time of ascent. Perhaps I shall make 300 yet.



Rambling on the Right to Roam

Roy J Denney

Every expatriate is said to dream of the green, green grass of home but urban sprawl and extensive road building are painting a very different picture.

The continuing debate between the countryside supporters and a government supposedly largely elected by townies is providing much entertainment as the extremes of both sides wax lyrical but it does involve issues with an impact on our club not least the question of access. There is a body of opinion in the cities which patently does not understand the ways of country life but the vast majority of us love the outdoors and enjoy it whenever we can, pursuing whatever particular interests we have.

It is important that this majority do not stand idly by ignoring the debate but it is equally important that we take serious stock of the issues as many of us are not as informed as we think we are. The right to roam is at first glance a potential boon to our sport but with my involvement on the committee of the National Forest (This committee brings together representatives of many different organisations with different views and requirements) I am starting to realise that every change is a trade off and that we may not be much better off. Unfortunately the track record of bureaucratic involvement in environmental issues is at best chequered.

I am warned not to smoke as it kills millions but banned from eating meat on the bone as it may kill a few. To

eat or not to eat red meat, that is the question. We subsidise over-production of food then pay farmers to set aside land and others to store unwanted food which is subsequently destroyed or sold below cost.

Returning to the Right to Roam the Country Sports enthusiasts are on one side of the fence (if you will excuse the pun) but the other side does not appear to think this includes men on horses in funny red clothes chasing vermin. Most people are against any cruelty to animals including foxes (one of which frequents my garden nightly) but I have not seen any convincing case made that other proposed methods of killing them are any less cruel. Provided some practices of rogue hunters are curtailed most people seem to see no reason to change a way of life which has survived centuries and is supported by the great majority of the people in the areas in question.

Similar arguments will be used against hare coursing but in the case of both sports, hunting animal against animal could be said to improve the stock of both creatures as the old, infirm and less athletic will be taken leaving survival of the fittest to enhance the gene bank.

Civilised people are completely opposed to badger baiting where man takes a direct hand in the kill employing technology to disturb any natural balance between the animals and shooting stags with telescopic rifles comes low in many peoples estimation of a sport. Both are still pursued largely at opposite ends of the social strata.

Rough shooting of live game with shotguns and taking fish by hook are more even contests but neither are to everyone's taste and must involve

cruel situations. If moorland management for grouse shooting were to be abandoned the grouse population would plummet and the moors as we know them would deteriorate into impenetrable tangles of heather above climbing hillsides of bracken. Whatever our well meaning inclinations there is the danger, however, that once animal 'rights' are established as a basis for legislation there is no knowing where it will end. The worm on an anglers hook does not have much of a fighting chance.

As a sport fell walkers require largely unfettered access which is not always easy to come by. Land owners feel that if all and sundry can wander at will many of the areas we value will be spoiled for our purposes which speaking selfishly it is hard to disagree with.

Talking to the representatives of landowners and agents of some large estates it is apparent that given the pressure they are coming under from the government they are likely to try to achieve voluntary arrangements falling short of full access. They hope that the creation of paths through their land will be accepted which would not be any great help to us if such paths did not happen to go in the direction we want to travel. If these paths were created in areas where we have managed to agree occasional access rights such as Bowland Forest it is likely that in restricting access to other areas by the general public they could impede our use and make us worse off

Present discussions as to possible legislation are concentrating on mountains, moors, heaths and commons, downs and pasture land. Many of these are poorly defined but obviously come within the ambit of our sport. Agricultural land is

excluded and much woodland is not being included at present presumably as it is considered a cash crop and therefore agriculture.

Some landowners are seeking support for their subsidised way of life and are at the same time fighting a rear guard action to keep us out of areas where with proper agreement we could co-exist. Despite over-production and reducing returns they still seek to circumvent rules keeping them out of SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and similar.

The bureaucrats creating these nature reserves and protected zones are equally blinkered. They often seek to preserve habitats supporting rare flora or fauna without realising that present activities by man have created the habitat and by restricting our use they may destroy what they seek to preserve.

We all wish to preserve the natural beauty of our countryside but **if** the truth be known very little of it is natural. The charming dry stone walls are man made as are the hedges which wild life relishes. Truly natural countryside would have neither but would involve a full cover of heath, moor or woodland.

Subsidies rarely work as intended and could be re-directed to better effect for all our sakes. The nonsense of them manifests itself in many ways but a classic example is butter. I am not sure whether we still have a butter mountain but not long ago we were transporting unwanted butter to East Europe and USSR at a cost to both the environment and the taxpayers at the same time as butter was being shipped all the way round the world from New Zealand to be sold in the UK.

The EU did try to resolve this by further bureaucratic means by restricting the tonnage which could be imported and making it subject to a levy. Notwithstanding the cost of transport and this levy this butter from New Zealand where it is produced without any taxpayer support can still be found on our supermarket shelves competing happily with European butters produced nearer to home with substantial tax payer subsidy.

If as a nation we want more access to a well maintained countryside we should stop subsidising unwanted production but support the landowners and farmers in their lifestyles by effectively paying them for access and the maintenance of walls, styles etc. **If** money now spent on set aside and produce subsidy was only made available to them in exchange for the usage we all wish to have they would have a vested interest in working with the likes of ourselves to our mutual benefit. To be fair to him the present EU Agriculture Commissioner (Commissar) Hans Fishler of Austria is trying to reform the CAP along these lines but is meeting strong resistance from Countries looking after the vested interests of their own landowners.

The governments avowed intent of gaining unrestricted access to four million acres of open land can only be of encouragement to all country lovers but we need to keep pressing them not to be deflected by restricted voluntary arrangements whilst at the same time not antagonising landowners with whom we have existing good relationships and bearing in mind their very real concerns. Not a small order.

I cannot personally look forward with great confidence to a major change as a result of this exercise as it seems to

be wrapped around with untold get out clauses.

It appears likely that designated access land will be able to be closed for short periods at the owners whim, or for health and safety reasons, military training, to protect wildlife or for archaeological interests. It would be very disconcerting after several hours walking to find one's route barred by a temporary and unpublicised closure. It is not expected that any access should be charged for although specific facilities provided could be.

There is a consultation process in hand at present on the proposals for Right to Roam legislation. Copies of the paper can be obtained from the D of E (0181 691 9191) The Countryside Commission have their own web site at <http://www.countryside.gov.uk> and is advising the government and issuing news releases (<http://www.coi.gov.uk/coi/depts/GCMIGCM.html>.) The Ramblers' Association is obviously active in this matter and by virtue of their size are better represented at Westminster than we can hope to be. Their interests do not exactly match ours but you may wish to support their activities and keep up to date with developments through them. Their parliamentary office is at 36 Great Smith St., London SW1P 3BD.

Alongside the Right to Roam considerations the Countryside Commission is also apparently working on suggestions for a complete rethink on Rights of Way. During, I think, the late fifties a comprehensive review of existing rights of way was carried out and all local authorities are now obliged to maintain a definitive footpaths register and have responsibilities to ensure these rights of way are kept open. Quite rightly it is a

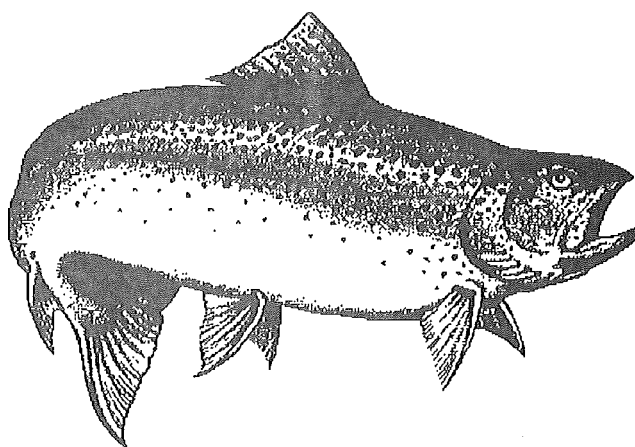
difficult process to close a path or indeed divert one as a right of way is a benefit to all the population if they choose to exercise it.

Paths can be added to this list where historic evidence can be produced much to the annoyance of landowners and the Ramblers Association amongst others complain of the difficulty of creating new routes.

It seems likely that The Commission will suggest doing away with the definitive record and the virtual obligation to re-open paths which can be proved to have been there in the past and a system of authorisation by Local Authorities be set up backed up by arbitration. The intention is to simplify both the creation of new routes and closure of 'inconvenient ones'. I see obvious dangers in this given the power of vested interests set against the vigilance of occasional users of some of these facilities.

My own experience is that money speaks and if landowners are compensated as I have suggested previously the creation and retention of paths should not be a problem. The new National Forest is setting a good example.

Since its launch in 1990 as an idea born of the Countryside Commission our new forest has been growing if



you will excuse the pun. Intended to cover over 100,000 acres across the North and East Midlands it will eventually merge the surviving historic woodlands including Charnwood with large tracts of reclaimed former mining land.

Whilst described as a forest it is not conceived that it will ever be continuous woodland as the aim is for diversity of land-form to encourage all forms of wildlife. On the same tack this is not to be swathes of conifer plantations. Trees being planted include most native species in particular Birch, Willow and Rowan. Also going in are Hazel, Oak, Ash, Wild Cherry, Maple and Alders. The new plantings take many forms from verges on the side of new roads and new hawthorn hedges, through copses to sizeable tracts of new woodland.

The National Forest Company charged with 'making it happen' has been actively working to promote the concept for three years. They are basically facilitators and promoters with the land involved being owned either by local authorities or private individuals. They do direct grants of state aid to applicants who tender for support for what are deemed to be worthy schemes. A sort of scoring system for various elements is used to decide between applicants and points are given for public access along with other considerations which hopefully will lead to many new areas for use by walkers amongst others. To date about 70% of the newly planted areas have entered into agreements giving some public access although not always as free ranging as we would wish. Of this nearly three-quarters is in perpetuity and the rest subject to 10 year agreements.

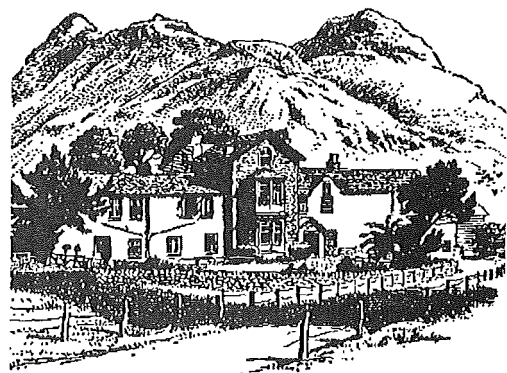
Many of the new areas are small by our requirements and trees do take a

considerable time to grow but in the long-term as areas meet up with others and the trees get taller we should have some good prospects for new long distance walks.

There have been comments that more National Forest road signs have been planted than trees but this is unfair. Much of the new planting is so immature that it is not yet noticeable but I have visited dozens of sites where in all over 2,000,000 new trees have been planted so far out of a target of 30,000,000.

We will all have differing views on many of these points but if we do not make our views known as far as is practical, we can have little complaint about the outcome. The last thing a democracy needs is change for its own sake without a full debate involving the informed views of the whole populace. The favourite ploy of a fox seeking to avoid the dogs once it has been flushed from its hiding place is a series of sudden U-turns and if public opinion is clearly against the direction of present policies this would not be an altogether unknown practice for politicians.

It seems to have stopped raining outside now so perhaps I had better shut up.

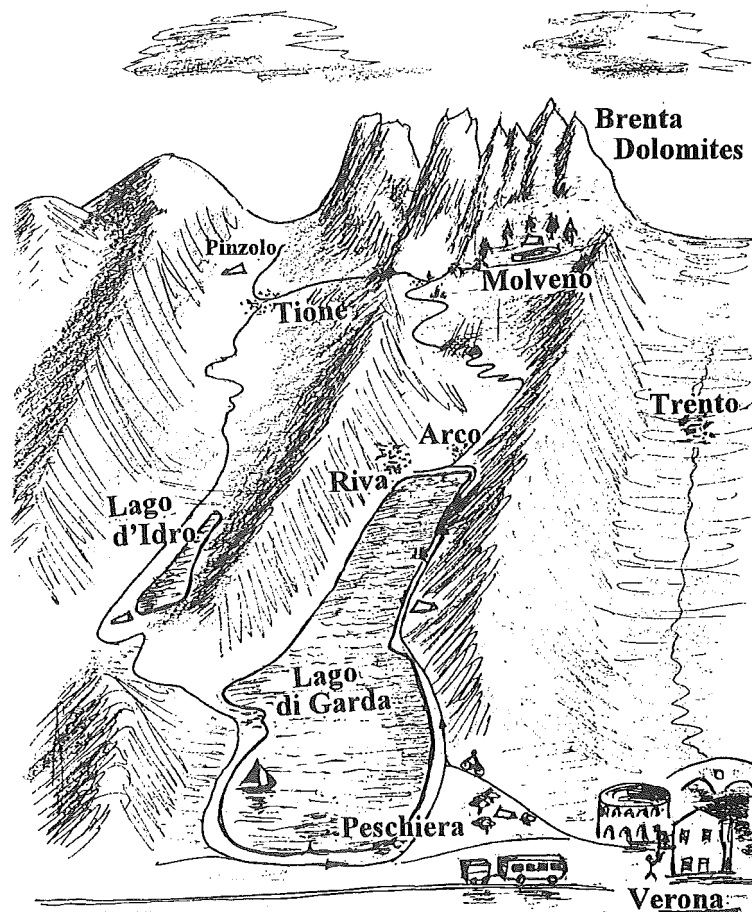


Dolomite Days June 1998

Arthur Tallon

Tuesday morning was sunny and clear. I made a cup of tea and had some breakfast outside my tent on the campsite by the lake at Molveno in the Brenta Dolomites. In fact, I had a very comfortable meal at one of several picnic tables provided for the campsite users. I had sole use of this table near my tent until it was taken over on the second evening by two large German motorcyclists. This was to be my one day in the mountains. All the other days of the week's holiday were spent cycling so to have one day without the bike was a welcome change. (Sorry, Bike, nothing personal)

This was my first cycling/camping trip abroad and so far things had gone well. On Saturday I had set off on my bike to Junction 26 of the M25 (a mere 5 miles from where I live in Epping) where I was picked up by the European Bike Express at midday. The EBE is a company based on Middlesbrough which runs coaches for cyclists (and trailers to carry the bikes) south along the M1, M25 and M2 to Dover and Europe picking up cyclists along the way. They have two routes through France and one to Italy terminating at Venice. We were on the Venice route and travelled through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Italy and I was dropped off near Verona at 10am on Sunday along with two others who were intending to go by train to



Florence and from there explore Tuscany.

My route took me first to Verona itself which I found crowded and difficult to explore on a fully laden mountain bike. (I spent more time sightseeing on the return journey). I left Verona about midday and took the road to Lake Garda, about 15 miles away. I had intended to do about 40 miles that day but by mid afternoon it was raining and I decided to camp at a point about 10 miles short of my planned destination.

Camp sites in this area of Italy in early June were less than half full. The facilities are generally good although it is worth checking to see if hot water is included in the price. It can be expensive if you have to pay extra for this. I paid between £5 and £7 for a night's camp for myself, a small tent and the bike. Most of the sites have a

bar and/or cafe and a shop. I even managed a discount ("un piccolo sconto") at one site when I pointed out how much cheaper my previous site had been.

I have been attending Italian classes for some time and found the Italians happy to indulge my faltering attempts at conversation and, I think, pleased to find a foreigner who was prepared to make a fool of himself grammatically. My first conversation was with a fellow cyclist at the camp site on the shores of Lake Garda who was very interested in my proposed route and advised me to buy a rear light to use in the many road tunnels

en route to my destination. This proved to be good advice and it made me feel slightly more confident negotiating the long, poorly lit tunnels while being overtaken by what sounded like several dozen heavy lorries on a screen test for the film "The Wages of Fear" but which often turned out to be a single Fiat Seicento!.

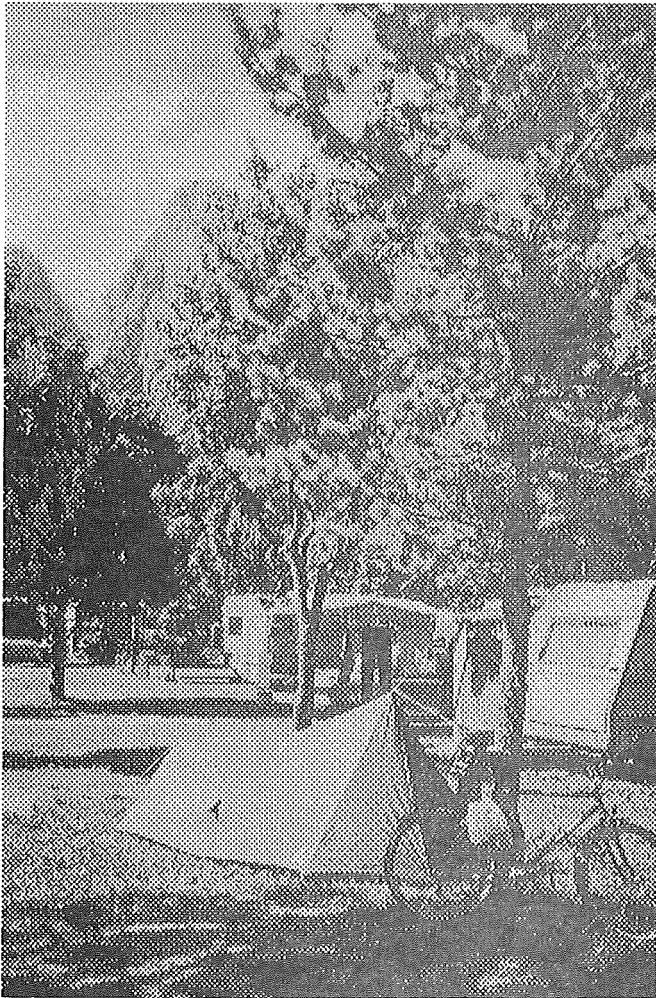
I bought my rear light next day at Malcesine, one of the many tourist resorts on Lake Garda. After leaving the head of the lake at Riva I passed



View of the Brenta Dolomites with the track from Molveno in the foreground

through some spectacular rock scenery at Arco and Dro. This is one of Italy's main centres for sports climbing and also has lots of facilities for mountain biking. Then began the climb up mountain roads and through tunnels on my way to Molveno and the Brenta Dolomites.

This was by far my hardest day covering 54 miles and gaining over 800 metres in height. The climbing was not as hard as I expected; the inclines, although long, were not too steep and had a fairly even gradient, so that once the right gear had been



German and where I was asked by a group of English with straw hats and loud voices the way to the cable car terminus, These were the only British I met, except in Verona and at Malcesine, on the whole of my trip. There were Germans by the hundred and plenty of Dutch but not many British or French. I think it was because most of the tourists were German that it was often assumed that I was also German. An understandable mistake but one I felt should be corrected whenever possible.

I followed one of the marked trails which took me up the valley into a sort of amphitheatre at the top of the tree line where I was surrounded on three sides by magnificent mountains with enormous, sheer rock walls and some snow in the

sheltered gullies. My "passeggiate" ended at a "rifugio" (privately owned) where I sat on the veranda and had a drink and took in the scenery. Weather wise this was the best day of the week and also from a scenic and interest point of view. The route down was along the side of a mountain with some spectacular and exposed tracks including a pedestrian tunnel through one of the rock walls. All along the track there were views of the mountains on one side and of the green lake and the hills behind on the other. I wish I could have gone higher but there was not time and being on my own I thought the route I did take was probably testing enough.

By the time I reached the valley I was quite tired with both the walk itself

selected it was just a case of sticking at it until some respite came at the top of the climb. It can be very satisfying to look down into the valley you left an hour ago and see the patchwork of fields and the miniature villages a few hundred metres below. I finally reached Molveno about 6.00pm having left the Lake Garda campsite in the morning at 8.30am

The campsite at Molveno is perfect; near the lake, the mountains visible through the trees, and a shop with a friendly proprietor and a good restaurant.

Leaving my bike secured to a tree next to my tent, I walked into the town, bought some food for the day, visited the information centre where I was offered a footpath guide written in

and the efforts of the day before so I treated myself to a dinner and a couple of glasses of wine in the camp ristorante. Then it was a stroll along the lake and an early night.

The next day started out rather cloudy and damp and I paid for the site and set off to ride round the mountains to the western side of the Brenta Group and to a camp in the Rendena valley at Pinzolo. The scenery was magnificent but the weather was mixed and after I found the camp site near Pinzolo and bought some supplies in the town (the camp shop only opened on a Monday!) it started to rain. That night was wet with thunder and lightning and this being my furthest point from my EBE pick-up in Verona I had some misgivings about my itinerary. However, next morning at 7.00am the rain stopped and I quickly packed and set off down the valley. I calculated that apart from a climb of some 450 metres out of Tione today would be all down hill. It was! I had intended to have another walking day at Pinzolo but in view of the weather I decided to move nearer to my rendezvous point just in case there were any delays in the journey due to rain or high winds.

The next night was also wet with thunderstorms and I was running out of dry clothes but the evening was enlivened by watching the Italy/Chile match in the campsite bar on the shores of Lago D'Idro. Italians do tend to get excited about their football team!

Although it threatened to rain most of the next day it kept reasonably dry. It was very windy with waves breaking over the roads bordering Lake Garda. I reached Peschiera on the southern shores of the lake by mid afternoon and decided to find a cheap hotel for the night. The information centre

gave me a map and a list of hotels, with prices. I went for the cheapest one at about £17 with bathroom and sorted out my clothes and managed to dry enough for the next day. I was glad of a break after two nights in a small tent with thunderstorms that seemed to go on all night.

I was now back in the tourist area and on the Saturday rode along the lakeside in sunshine past Gardaland (a theme park on the lines of Disneyland) and to Lazice where I had first seen Lake Garda almost a week earlier. By now the weather was clear and sunny again and I sent into Verona to find the information centre had closed for the weekend so I retraced my route to the "Romeo e Giulietta" campsite which I had seen on the way in about 3 miles out of Verona. This again is a good campsite with trees for shade, plenty of spaces for tents away from the caravans and a well stocked shop. It also had a friendly, helpful proprietor who claimed he could supply seats for the opera in Verona at a good price and who was willing to indulge my attempts to speak his language. He also expresses surprise when he was entering my date of birth into his camp record book. He said I didn't look my age! (At least I think that is what he said!) He hadn't seen me after my long ride to Molveno earlier in the week! I watched another World Cup game on the bar TV and had a discussion with the barman about the prospects for Italy and England in the World Cup. A rather ambitious and potentially controversial topic!

Next day I was at my rendezvous point in Verona Sud along with ten other cyclists who had also been in the Dolomites area but they had been there for two weeks.

Another time I too would go for a fortnight. One week put a lot of pressure on me to reach my objective (the Dolomites) and to get back to Verona to meet the coach. Of course, travelling to Italy overnight on a coach is not ideal but it is inexpensive and we were well looked after by our two couriers who supplied us with drinks and sandwiches and it means the bike is carried safely and at no extra cost. I felt secure and safe on the roads in Italy although the tunnels can be rather intimidating. In fact, the only incident when I could have been injured was on a windy afternoon when I was riding under some pine trees and an enormous cone fell off a tree and actually smashed the plastic cover on a rubbish bin at the side of the road as I rode past.

I took a small "Backpacker" tent which weighs less than 2 kg but has not much headroom. Another time I would probably put up with extra weight to give myself the extra comfort. I find that the need for extra comfort is one of the signs of growing old, amongst other things! The rest of the camping equipment, clothes, emergency food, etc. all proved satisfactory and I think the only things I did not use on the trip were the spares for the bike and one of the three gas cylinders I took for my camping stove. (I also lost several pounds in weight). In total I covered 240 miles.

I own two bikes and opted to take the more modern Scott mountain bike with road tyres rather than my lighter Claud Butler touring bike which is older and perhaps not as strong as the Scott. In the event I had no problems at all with the bike. I did not even have to pump up the tyres.

Perhaps next time I will try the Pyrenees!

Hiking in Crete

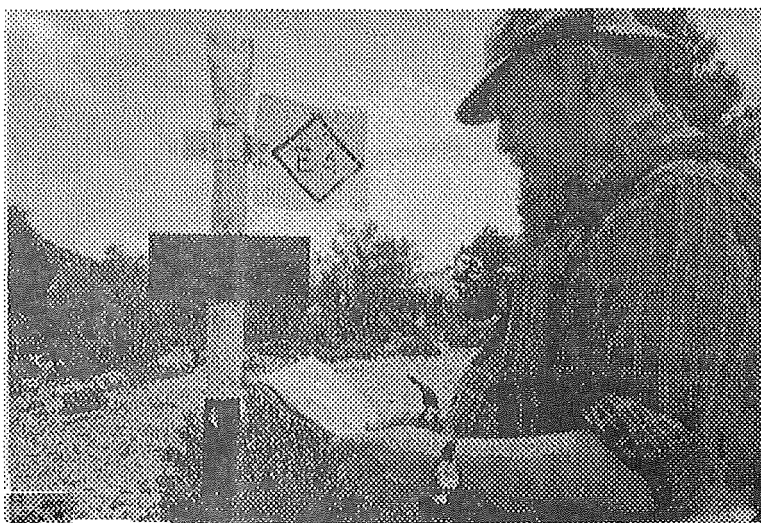
Bill Todd

I enjoyed reading George Spenceley's article in Issue 9. I enjoyed it even more because his reference to European Hiking route E4 reminded me of a jolly day in Western Crete last May.

Juliet and I had not done our homework and assumed that the red line on our map showed a mere footpath. So when we strolled up the bulldozed track out of Askifou we ignored the little E4 sign and went a couple of miles out of our way. Mind you there was just a scree slope rising into steep woodland. It didn't look the least bit like a path, honest.

We regained the E4 at a Hellenic Mountain club refuge but too late to get up Kastro, 2210 m, which had been our tentative target. We got some consolation because a young German couple also failed to make the top in spite of riding a scooter up to hut level.

Coming back we found the true E4, pleasantly descending, and landed out where we should have left the jeep track, nevertheless a good day.



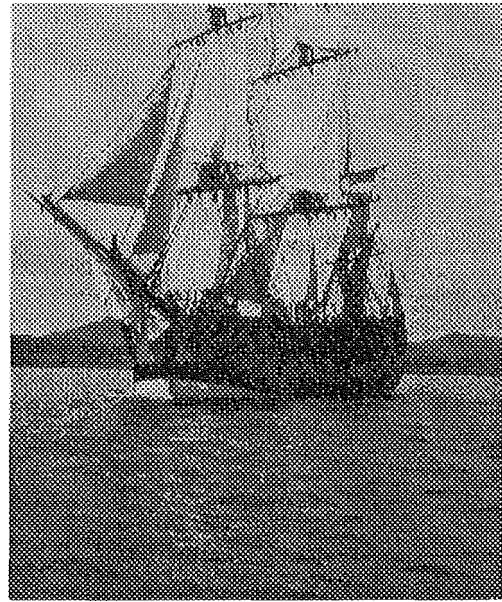
Bill Todd studying the map on E4 European hiking route in Western Crete, May 1998, Photo by Juliet Todd

An Unexpected Interlude

June 1998

Donald MacKay

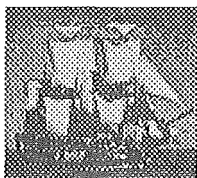
My wife and I thought ourselves lucky when we were allocated a cherished telephone number, 60000, later to have a 3 added on to the front of it which had the added spice for me, an engineer, of being 360 degrees plus three circles! Unfortunately the local opticians had 360006 and as many of their customers have poor eyesight we get a lot of their calls, usually early in the morning. When the phone rang after two of these wrong calls one morning I was expecting just such another but a familiar voice said: "Donald, I am speaking to you on the captain's mobile from the deck of the replica BM Bark Endeavour on passage from Edinburgh to Inverness". It was a friend of mine ringing to tell me of his latest extravagant adventure. "Donald", he said again enthusiastically, "You must experience this. It is absolutely marvellous. The captain has one cabin left from Inverness to Greenock. The published price is £3,500 but I have persuaded him to let it go to you for £3,000". There was no way, I said, that I would spend that sort of money on myself I could get a luxury cruise for two for that amount. That would have been the end of the matter but the phone went again. "The captain has agreed to bring the price down to £2,500." My wife urged me to go. She said I needed the cobwebs brushing away. Before reason could dictate otherwise I found myself calling to confirm the booking with the Endeavour office at the National Maritime Museum. A sweet voice on the phone listened to the story of the captain's bargain offer and said "Oh



no! The other supernumeraries have paid the full price. They are not going to like it if they find out you are getting your berth on the cheap. Sorry, I can't agree to it". But by that time I had been hooked on the idea so I rashly wrote out my cheque for the full amount, posted it, and dashed off to the railway station to book myself on to the night sleeper from Euston to Inverness, not forgetting to renew my Senior Citizen's Rail Card which paid for itself twice over on the one round trip.

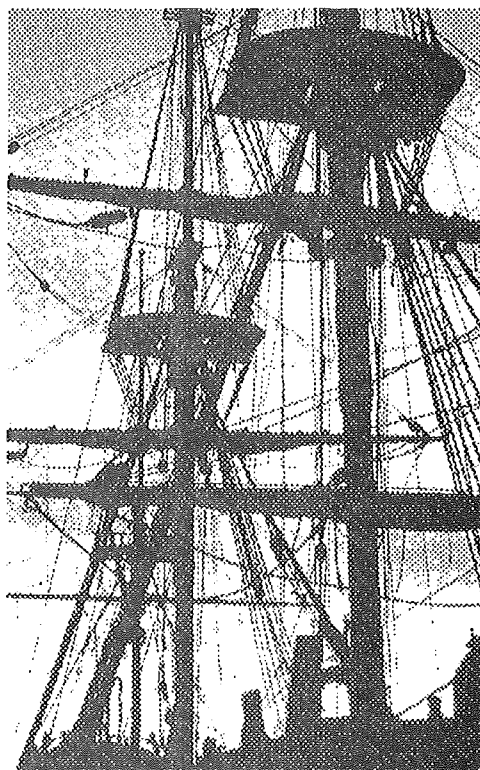
I arrived in Inverness very early in the morning on Wednesday 11th of June 1997 and had time to kill because I was not expected on the Endeavour until 4.0pm. I had a luxurious breakfast and then went in search of some flashes for my stockings. I had packed my kilt because I thought it might go down well on the ship and it did. I had to try several shops and one of them, Chisholms, also sold bagpipes. A set in the window was marked at the unbelievable figure of eighty pounds. It seemed too good to

be hue. I asked the shop keeper if it was just an ornament or could it be played? Just the sort of question he wanted. He tuned up the pipes and marched up and down the shop playing *Scots Wa'hae* and things like that. Indeed, in the light hands, these cheap pipes produced a very creditable result. I parted with eighty pounds and toddled along to the gang plank of the Endeavour to be greeted and welcomed aboard by Captain Coos Blake who personally showed me to, my cabin which was a mere 5ft high by 7ft long by 4ft back to front with a sort of cot hanging by rope from the deck beam above. There was space enough under the cot for the luggage. But there was not enough room to stand up in so in the morning it was necessary to open the door and get out of the cabin before pulling up my trousers. Next appeared Caroline, the stewardess. She helped me get established and introduced me to the three other Supernumeraries who turned out to be a colourful lot. Captain Cook had taken scientists with him and I had been allocated the cabin of Dr Solander, a famous botanist of his day. It was the smallest cabin and was situated next to the ship's carpenter's cupboard which I later found contained the supply of black powder for the cannons which were fired ceremonially each time the ship neared a harbour.

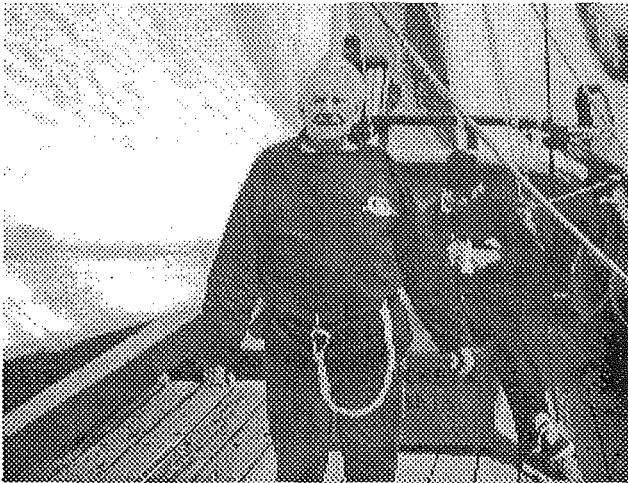


The estimable Caroline, whose husband Danny had served his apprenticeship as a shipwright in Cornwall, was the ship's carpenter and had been involved since the laying down of the keel in Freemantle six years earlier where he had planked the whole of one side of the ship, took me for a walk around the ship and below decks where the crew sleep in hammocks, packed in like sardines and hanging like bats from the beams in the dark and gloomy interior.

One deck down again was the mess deck where Joanna was head cook and bottle washer and produced all manner of delectable food doled out by the ladleful on to basic platters, all as authentic as they could make it. Captain Cook took sheep and chickens with him and killed them as he needed them. Joanna though was allowed the luxury of a deepfreeze and was able to replenish her stock of fresh food at each port of call. But by and large the degree of discomfort we experienced must have been comparable to the real thing.



There were a dozen regular crew members, apart from Danny and Caroline, Antipodeans. The rest of the crew, some three dozen of them, were amateurs, mostly raw, who had paid a thousand pounds each for the experience and had been given a day in training in Inverness up and down the rigging on the 125ft high masts where they were required to get out on the yards to unfurl the giant sails. An astonishing amount of nerve and agility was displayed by these folks - doctors, engineers, housewives, a motley and improbable assortment, not a man or womanjack of whom jibbed at going up aloft even in the gale force winds which tend to be the norm up in that area. The sound of the wind and the straining of the rigging as the great vessel covered 12 knots over the ground through the Pentland Firth was an experience never to be forgotten.



Then an unexpected drama. At Cape Wrath the captain signalled that he wanted a conference. "Gentlemen", he said with perfect political correctness, "I have just received a signal from No10 Downing Street. The Prime Minister wants me to attend a banquet there tomorrow evening in honour of a visit by the Prime Minister of Australia. If I can get a berth at Stornoway I can catch a flight to Glasgow and then on to

London and be there in time. What do you think?" Now the Endeavour was a strictly dry ship and as, by then, we were all feeling the need for a drink, it did not take a lot of persuasion. We agreed, and with the Captain gone, a rollicking good time was had by us all in Stornoway, a saga in itself, cut short only by the captain's return. He too had enjoyed himself immensely. But, by then we were in a good position to blackmail him. We, the Super-numeraries, declared that we too should be given a special treat, and it would be a pity to come all this way without having a look at St Kilda, the tiny group of islands about 50 miles west of Lewis way out in the Atlantic. Heads immediately went down in the chart room and the announcement was made that the Captain was prepared to do it although it might cut down the time we would have for jollifications in Tobermoray. Let's do it, we all said, and what an adventure it turned out to be!

The sky clouded over and a mist descended. Near gale-force winds got up and away we went on a boisterous surging sea. The navigation must have been brilliant. Everyone was up on deck straining to see through the mist when above us emerged the towering cliffs of the main island. It was much too rough to go ashore but we put in to the little bay one sometimes sees on television.



StKilda



The islands had been de-populated in 1930 but were being used as a toughening-up place for the army. A small crowd of soldiers appeared on the shore and we spoke to them on the

ship-to-shore radio. We were told that there were fifty of them on the island and our three-masted bark looming out of the mist had understandably caused quite a stir. We had been lucky to find that there was a piper amongst our crew so my bagpipes came in handy and we left St Kilda after about an hour to the skirl of the pipes and cannons blazing.

Again, with brilliant navigation we cut through the Sound of Hams and on into the Sound of Mull, the ship ploughing its way through fascinating straits.

Our time at Tobermoray was indeed made shorter but not too short for three of us to be able to hire a car and get across the island and over by ferry to Iona and there fit in a visit to the ancient monastery founded by St Columba in AD 563. It was a moving, and even eerie, experience to be visiting this original centre of Celtic

Christianity whence missionaries were dispatched for the conversion of Scotland and Northern England and to which for centuries students flocked from all parts of the North. Now a remote little island but then a centre of civilisation.

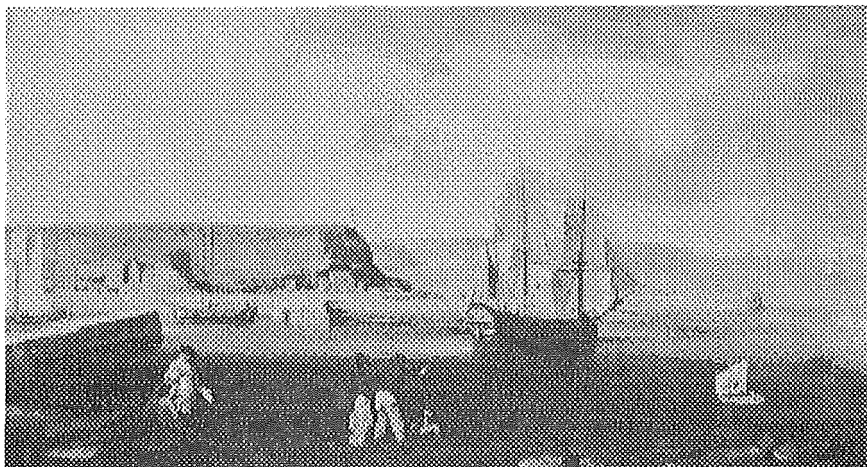
Twelve days after leaving Inverness we arrived at Greenock where, to the sound of pipes and drums, there were thousands of people awaiting the historic ship's arrival and the Lady Provost came aboard and gave us a most generous and flamboyant welcome. Before the final fling of partying that night a fellow supernumerary had been so impressed



with my bargain set of pipes that he clamoured to have me sell them to him. No, I said, I wanted them for myself. He plied me with double whiskies until my

resolve failed but I was not so far gone as to part with them without a modest profit. A final whimsical twist.

So the voyage had ended. And I thanked my stars for that improbable phone call of just a fortnight ago when my adventurous friend had talked me into this disgraceful extravagance.



The bark, Earl of Pembroke, later renamed Endeavour, leaving Whitby in 1768, an oil painting by Thomas Luny

Water, Webbed feet and the YRC

Roy J Denney

During my two man trek in the Himalayas last year the long often very cold nights were a challenge to our conversational skills and minds turned to reminiscing on our days on the hills. Whilst my colleague had spent many weekends at both of our club huts he has never actually been on one of our meets and as such I regaled him with stories of our epic past.

It struck me after a while that the subject of water came up time after time which may have been Freudian -given-the shortage of this product on the ground in the Khumbu high valleys but I have come to the conclusion that at least some members of the club have an unusual affinity to things Wet. This is totally disregarding products purchased over a bar.

I will have been a member for 25 years next year, which seems an appropriate time for looking back. My earliest introduction to the club was I think in 1970 when an apparently respectable pillar of society (an assistant bank manager with Barclays Bank) took me on my first meet. I must have been on about a dozen meets thereafter and got married along the way before being pressed to become legitimate and join the club in 1974.

One of my early introductions to the more insane but surprisingly enjoyable sidelines of the club was an early experience of becking. I have recollections of fighting our way up Hell Gill to achieve the top of a natural water shoot where by sitting in the top of the gully and spreading oneself to create a natural dam the water could be backed up until your

arms gave way at which point you were-ejected at a great rate of knots to drop into a deep pool. I also recall subsequently standing at a bar taking internal refreshment and along with my colleagues, seeping half a beck onto the bar-room floor.

In a subsequent year when walking to the bar of the Golden Lion in Horton in my stocking-feet I made such an impact on the flagged-floor; that the landlady asked me to come back the following day to clean the other half.

Becking exploits continued throughout the seventies including Tilberthwaite with its difficult upper exit and Howsteen Gorge in Nidderdale. This latter was the scene of much merriment when we were joined on a Goyden camping meet by a teacher from, I think, St Peters School, York. As the oldest school in Yorkshire he felt he should join up with the oldest regional mountaineering club;

A large party set off on the Sunday morning to beck through the gorge and this guest could be seen hopping from boulder to boulder holding his trousers up to avoid the water. Little did he know the YRC.

The futility of these efforts whilst entertaining us was eventually slowing us down and the mischievous author of this article "inadvertently" nudged him into the river.

Along the way we had to admire the efforts of an elderly ticket collector shouting down from the scenic walkway demanding tickets from, as unsightly looking a bunch of reprobates as you are likely to see in a long time.

By the time we had swum, climbed and pushed and pulled our way to the top of the gorge and turned to retrace

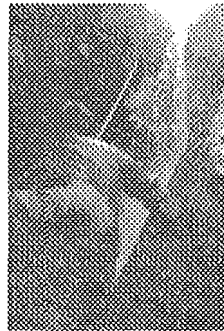
our steps the teacher had had enough and returned to the camp through the fields. By the time we had got to the bottom he had decamped and vanished never to be heard from again.

The most dramatic becking trip I can recall was a Lakes meet with snow on the higher hills when we decided to climb Scawfell by Piers Gill. This involved almost four hours largely immersed in snow melt including swimming across one deep pool to climb out up a 10 foot waterfall that took delight in constantly throwing us back. We finally exited this obstacle by stepping on Derek Clayton which every one seemed to enjoy. Derek stood on a rock well below the water surface whilst we climbed up him and then over the lip by standing on his head or shoulders. This exercise took so much time that I even managed to remove my camera from its waterproof container and take a picture of this new technique which some members may recall seeing.

The day in question was actually sunny and comparatively warm especially' when emerging from the water. At the top in a small cleft sheltered from the wind on the south facing side where the snow had melted we largely stripped off to dry and change into such spare clothing as we had. I am not sure which was the more surprised, our party or the party of fell walkers who trudged past us wearing full snow gear and carrying axes.

More predictable exposure to water occurred in the occasional pots I was persuaded to descend and dipping through your first sump is not an experience soon forgotten much as you might try. I do recall one trip through the caves at Goyden when squeezing through a shallow passage meant removing your helmet turning

your face to the side and pushing the helmet forward through the mud with your head as you made progress, creating a foul tasting mini bow wave as you went.



In Piers Gill



Other recollections include a Christmas meet at Braithwaite when our present President's father had the Coledale Inn. On a miserably wet day after weeks of miserably wet days we decided on a comparatively low level walk above the West side of Derwentwater dropping down for a late lunch-time drink around the head of the lake. Perhaps not surprisingly in hindsight the lake was several feet deeper than usual and we were faced with the prospect of either no drink, a further walk of at least 3 miles to get round the lake reasonably dry or going direct. Being the YRC and it fast approaching closing time I am sure those of you who were not involved will not be surprised at our choice. It was amusing to see cars stopping on the far bank on this dismal December day to watch half a dozen idiots walking across the duck boards up to their thighs in water and carrying their trousers over their heads. The last laugh was on us however because where the boards ended there was still 200 yards of water left and we were suddenly up to our waists.

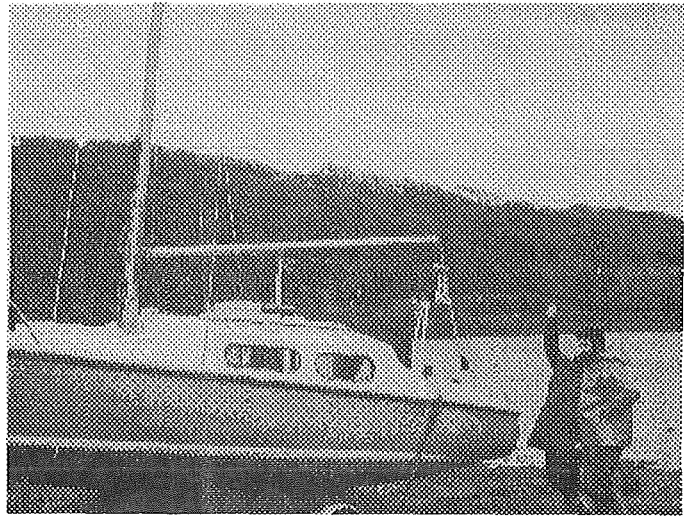
The pub was far too posh to allow us in but one generous soul did take our money in for us and bring out very well earned pints.

Another memorable Christmas meet was at Kentmere, the scene of many happy meets. On this particular occasion substantial amounts of snow had fallen on the tops and whilst it was a sunny day when we started out albeit windy the weather closed in and on the top of High Street we experienced a virtual white out. Some turned back, some swung right around Nan Bield but in our wisdom we dropped down to the Kirkstone Inn. We did not get there till 2.00 and even leaving within the hour it was too late to return over the tops with dusk due by 4.00.

We walked down the road before looking for a way to cross over to Kentmere and whilst our sense of direction was sound it did not find us a bridge and we ended up wading through the river to finally arrive dripping after the soup course had been served.

Having mentioned Tim Josephy in passing I cannot finish without mention of Ian Crowther. I could fill this bulletin with stories of Ian but he has deeper pockets and a better lawyer than me so I had better restrict my comments to a few salient highlights of my time with him in the club.

Ian and water definitely go together in my recollections. I have early pictures of him just after he set up his own business when he came to a LHG meet in his little red van. My favourite is of him being pushed out of the ford with water inside the car and



Ian Crowther's boat, Talisker, at Arisaig en route to Eigg

another of him hanging out of it baling out the interior with his mess tins.

I am perhaps on dangerous ground with this one as a few years later I parked my car overnight on the Three Shires side of the ford during a storm to find in the morning that water was across the floor of the car. I started my engine to try to drive out but immediately lost traction and floated back into deeper water before jumping out and pushing a rock under the back wheel to stop the vehicle. I returned to the cottage to seek assistance and in true YRC tradition the members refused to move till they had finished a sedate breakfast.

Another epic with Ian was when we towed his yacht Talisker from Coniston to Arrisaig with a view to sailing it to Skye for a club meet. We never did get to Skye and any members who did will recall delays even by the trawler the club had hired to get them there and washed out tents held down by rocks and such.

We did eventually set sail after a days delay when the winds had eased to just below storm force. The seas however were still reflecting the passions of the preceding days and in

hindsight this was definitely not a wise move. Ian, Derek, myself and Tim Teasdale who is no longer with the club came very close to all being past members that day.

We were only half a mile out and still within the supposed protection of the bay when the engine burnt out and we lost steerage way. Fortunately our dinghy was blowing up into the wire rigging which gave some sluggish steerage and Tim was tied to a climbing rope and went forward to attach a handkerchief (I think the technical term is a storm jib) to the prow. Whilst all this was going on I was below looking at the echo sounder which was set in feet. Once it dropped below 2 feet I abandoned this and joined the others in the futile argument about which shore we might have to swim for. We passed reefs out of the water we could have reached out and touched.



Tim Teasdale at the helm

As evidenced by the fact that we are still here we did survive but only just. Even with just that tiny bit of sail, once we turned the boat round we were creaming in with the four of us hanging completely out off the side to give counterbalance with the mast head still flicking the wave tips. We finally moored to a buoy in the inner bay and abandoned the craft driving South to spend the rest of the week at Low Hall Garth (LHG).

This was not much dryer and having climbed the cliff face of Scawfell one evening we ended up staggering back into Eskdale in the dark in driving rain unable to see more than a yard in front of us. We left the tourist track to cut across to the road as our vehicle was at the top of Wrynose only to have Tim disappear up to his waist when he broke through the cover of an overgrown tarn releasing the most awful smell you can imagine. Fortunately after sharing out the cleanest looking clothes between us one of our number managed to thumb a lift back to the car whilst the rest of us kept out of sight.

Other water recollections are of no water supply into LHG and too much water in LHG. On several occasions engineering has been required to free the water supply and at least once we have had a stream running in through the front door.

On a more pleasant footing I remember on a couple of occasions when the weather has been kinder when I have gone for a dip in the pools below and above the cottage.

I can recall climbing out from Dungeon Ghyll to go round to Pavey Ark and having to cross the head of the waterfall up to my knees in a torrent trying its best to drag me over. Many times have I ended up boulder hopping, not always successfully, over streams that are not usually there.

My memories may be coloured by the passage of time and stories oft repeated in many a bar but these are all real experiences many of which could become the stuff of nightmares.

The YRC is no ordinary club and neither are its members.

Long may it rain.

Daniel Defoe in Yorkshire by Geoffrey Brook-

"My head began to be fill'd very
early with rambling thoughts."

Robinson Crusoe

On an August day in the 17th century five travellers on horseback, passing from Lancashire into Yorkshire by way of Blackstone Edge, found themselves battling with a furious snowstorm. They had left Rochdale in bright sunshine, but before reaching Halifax they ran the gauntlet of Pennine weather at its roughest.

It is unlikely that we should ever have known anything of this but for the fact that one of the horsemen was a man of medium height, with a brown complexion, a hooked nose, grey eyes and a sharp chin; with a large mole near his mouth. These particulars, issued by the police, referred to that extraordinary character, Daniel Defoe, journalist, novelist, pamphleteer, and political agent.

How came the author of *"Robinson Crusoe"* and that riotous parody, *"The Shortest Way with Dissenters"* to be ploughing his laborious way over Blackstone Edge in a blizzard and in which of his many capacities was that man of parts roving about the north of England?

The answer, that of a journalist, was made clear when Defoe published, in 1724-6, his great *"Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain"*, the best, and the most entertaining Travel book about Britain in the language - and I am not forgetting Cobbett's *"Rural Rides"*

Daniel Defoe, the supreme journalist and reporter, had highly developed gift for presenting fiction in the guise

of fact his *"Journal of the Plague Year"*, that graphic account of the grim summer of 1665 in London, reads like an eye-witness's report, yet at the time Defoe was a mere lad.

Again although he had never set foot in Africa, in his novel *"Captain Singleton"* he takes his hero across the continent with such graphic narration that the account was actually taken in some quarters for a true story. A certain Mr MacQueen in fact regarded Captain Singleton as being a candidate for the discovery of the head waters of the Nile!

The difficulty is that this knack of Defoe's tends to make suspect any work of his claiming to be factual, and indeed, as one commentator has pointed out, Defoe was quite capable of recording a tour through Britain without ever stirring out of his lodgings in London.

But he did in fact cover the ground of this tour, and he did see and experience what he set down in his book, It was not, however, the record of a single long journey, but the result of knowledge gained on about seventeen different excursions. The *"Tour"* was published in three volumes, but for our present purpose we shall look into volume II only, containing accounts of Defoe's travels in our own county.

Approaching from the South, Defoe

"entred the great county of York, uncertain which way to begin to take a full view of it, for as 'tis a county of very great extent my business is not the situation, or a meer geographical description of it; I have nothing to do with the longitude of places, the antiquities of towns, corporations, buildings, charters, etc. nor much with histories of men, families, cities or towns, but to give you a view of

¹This article was discovered in the Club's archives by Ray Harben.

the whole in its present state, as also of the commerce, curiosities, and customs, according to my title."

This comprehensive catalogue of subjects not to be touched might have been expected to cramp the author's style somewhat, but Defoe did not in fact stick very closely to his resolution.

At the same time' anyone expecting to be amused by trivial gossip and the retelling of stale historical anecdotes will be disappointed. There was not much romantic nonsense about Defoe. He was unmoved by local "sights" and "curiosities", such as, for example, the petrifying cave at Knaresborough, or the Devil's Arrows at Boroughbridge, which he did not even bother to visit.

Unfortunately, he was also a child of his time in that he had little of no interest in natural beauty either. Moors and mountains were merely irritating impediments to his easy passage from one place to another.

Entering Yorkshire by the West Riding, which he observed to be the largest, wealthiest, and most populous of the Ridings, Defoe found himself at Doncaster, a town which impressed him greatly, recalling Camden's reference to the town having been burned to the ground in the year 759, Defoe saw no signs of the calamity remaining, but apparently felt that another fire was overdue, "for it looks old, and many of the houses ready to fall."

Travel scribes who are likely to be followed around by so keen an observer as Defoe should be careful what they set down. At this point he damps the glowing account of two earlier writers who rhapsodised over the views to be seen from the spires of Doncaster Church and York Minster

by pointing out that neither edifice possesses a spire,

"So fit," he says, "are such men to write descriptions of a country"

At the old seat of Tankersly at Wentworth, Defoe saw what he considered to be the largest red deer in this part of Europe: one of the hinds, he thought, being larger than his horse.

"Thence over vast moors, I had almost said waste moors, we entred the most populous part of this county, I mean of the West Riding, only passing a town call'd Black Bamsley, eminent still for the working in iron and steel: and indeed the very town looks as black and smoaky as if they were all smiths that lived in it; tho' it is not, I suppose, called Black Bamsley on that account, but for the black hue or colour of the moors, which being covered with heath (or heather, as 'tis called in that country) looks all black like Bagshot Heath near Windsor. After, I say, we had passed these moors, we came to a most rich, pleasant, and populous country, and the first town of note we came to in it was Wakefield, a large, handsome, clothing town, full of people, and full of trade."

At Wakefield, Defoe admired the fine spire of the Cathedral, noticed how well filled the church was, and that there were very few Dissenters about the town.

Huddersfield, or Huthersfield as he calls it, he regarded as

"one of the five towns which carry on that vast cloathing trade by which the wealth and opulence of this part of the country has been raised to what it now is."

Yorksriemen will applaud Defoe when he takes another passing rap at his predecessors, certain other,

"pretended travel writers and journeyers thro' England" who had "not so much mentioned this whole part of England, which is on many accounts, the most considerable of all the Northern division of this nation."

At this point in the *"Tour"* Defoe diverges for a time into Lancashire, whither we shall not follow him His route back into Yorksrire led him over the Pennines, "those Andes of England", as he so grandly describes them, and the unseasonable weather which struck him oh the tops inspired one of his finest bits of descriptive writing.

"Here, ...though we were but at the middle of August, we saw the mountains covered with snow, and felt the cold very acute and piercing; but even here we found, the people had an extraordinary way of mixing the warm and the cold very happily together; for the store of good ale that flows plenti:fully in the most mountainous parts of this country, seems abundantly to make up for all the inclemencies of the season, or the difficulties oftravelling."

So Defoe, with his four companions, with the local brew, left Rochdale on a clear, sunny, August day, but as they mounted towards Blackstone Edge the wind rose, and soon it was snowing. Here Defoe must continue the narrative in his own words-

"it is not easy to express the consternation we were in when we came near the tops of the

mountain; the wind blew exceedingly hard, and blew the snow so directly in our faces, and that so thick, that it was impossible to keep our eyes open to see our way, The ground also was so covered with snow, that we could see no track, or where we were in the way, or when out; except when we were showed it by a fearful precipice on one hand, and uneven ground on the other, even our horses discovered their uneasiness at it, and a poor spaniel dog that was my fellow traveller, and usually diverted us by giving us a mark for our gun, turned tail to it and cried.



In the midst of this difficulty, and as we began to call to one another to turn back again, not knowing what dangers might still be before us, came a surprising clap of thunder, the first that I ever heard in a storm of snow, or, I believe, ever shall; nor did we see any lightning to precede the thunder, as must naturally be the-

case; but we supposed the thick falling snow might prevent our sight.

....Upon this we made a full stop, and began to talk seriously of going back again to Rochdale; but then one of our men called to us, and said he was on top of the hill, and could see over into Yorkshire, and that there was a plain way down the other side. We all rode up to him, and found it as the fellow had said, all but that of a plain way; there was indeed the mark or face of a road on the side of the hill, a little turning to the left

north, but it was so narrow, and so deep a hollow place on the right, that the depth of the precipice, and the narrowness of the way looked horrible to us: after going a little way in it, the way being blinded too by the snow, the hollow on the right appeared deeper and deeper, so we resolved to alight and lead our horses, which we did for about a mile, though the violence of the wind and snow continuing, it was both very troublesome and dangerous.

.....At length, to our great joy, we found the wind abated, as well as the snow, that is to say, the hills being so high behind us, they kept back the wind, as is the case under a high wall.

All this way the hollow on our right continued very deep, and just on the other side of it a parallel hill continued going on east; as that did which we rode on the side of the main hill which we came down from, which is properly called Blackstone Edge, ran along due north, crossing and shutting up those hollow gulls and vallies between, which were certainly originally formed by the rain and snow water running into them, and forcing its way down, washing the earth gradually along with it, till, by length of time, it wore down the surface to such a depth,

We continued descending still, and as the weather was quieter, so the way seemed to mend and be broader; by and by; to our no small comfort we saw a piece of ground enclosed with a stone wall, and soon after a house, where we asked our way, and found we were right.

We thought now we were come into a Christian country again, and that our difficulties were over; but

we soon found ourselves mistaken in the matter, for we had not gone fifty yards beyond the brook and houses adjacent, but we found the way began to ascend again, and soon after to go up very steep, till in about half a mile, we found we had another mountain to ascend, in our apprehension as bad as the first, and before we came to the top of it, we found it began to snow too as it had done before."

Christian country, In the form of Sowerby Bridge and Halifax, was still some way off and, Defoe says,

"From Blackstone Edge to Halifax is eight miles, and all the way, except from Sorby to Halifax, is thus up hill and down, so that, I suppose we mounted to the clouds and descended to the water level about eight times in that little part of the journey."

Which leaves us with an interesting little topographical puzzle. How came Defoe to ascend to the clouds and down again eight times between Blackstone Edge and Sowerby Bridge?

There are no prizes for the answer, but some member might entertain himself on a spare Saturday afternoon trying to reach a solution.

All the way down to Halifax Defoe was struck by the fact that although dwellings were numerous very few people were to be seen. He soon discovered that they were all busy indoors, working industriously at their hand-looms.

The importance of Halifax in the seventeenth century is revealed by the amount of space which Defoe devotes to its history, its manufactures, and last but not least, to its gibbet. To the fear of this grim instrument, and the comparatively minor offences leading

to its operation, Defoe attributes the old jingle,

"From Hull, Hell, and Halifax
Good Lord, deliver us."

"But," he adds, "How Hull came to be included in this petition, I do not find."

It appears that Defoe had almost as much trouble getting out of Halifax as getting into it,

"We quitted Halifax not without some astonishment at its situation, being surrounded with hills, and those so high, as, (except the entrance by the west) makes the coming in and going out of it exceedingly troublesome, and indeed for carriages hardly practicable, and particularly the hill which they go up to come out of the town eastwards towards Leeds, and which the country people call Halifax Bank, is so steep, so rugged, and sometimes too so slippery, that, to a town of so much business as this is, 'tis exceedingly troublesome and dangerous."

By way of Birstall Defoe continued his journey to Leeds, of which he writes,

"Leeds is a large, wealthy and populous town, .It stands on the north bank of the river Aire, or rather on both sides of the river, for there is a large part of the town on the south side of the river, and the whole is joined by a stately and prodigiously strong stone bridge, so large, and so wide, that formerly the cloth market was kept in neither part of the town, but on the very bridge itself; and therefore, the refreshment given to the clothiers by the inn-keepers, is called Brigg-shot to this day."

The cloth market in Leeds Defoe called a prodigy of its kind, and not to be equalled in the world, in fact,

"many travellers and gentlemen have come over from Hamburg, nay, even from Leipsick in Saxony, on purpose to see it."

He gives a lively description of a typical working day, starting at seven in the morning, the tressels set up, the bell ringing for bargaining to begin, the whispered transactions, and again the bell for close of business. All this took place twice a week.

Leaving Leeds and crossing the Wharfe at Harewood, Defoe was astonished to see so fine a bridge spanning so small a river, but returning at a later date when the Wharfe was in spate he revised his opinion and was convinced,

"the bridge was not at all too big, or too long, the water filling up to the very crown of the arches, and some of the-arches not to be seen at all."

The country north of Harewood, or Harwood, as Defoe spells it, must have presented a different aspect in his day, for he writes,

"From the Wharfe we went directly north over a continued waste of black, ill looking, desolate moors over which travellers are guided like racehorses, by posts set up for fear of bogs and holes, to a town called Ripley, that stands upon another river called Nud by some, by others Nyd, smaller than the Wharfe, but furiously rapid, and very dangerous to pass in places."

Defoe here notes that no other part of England can show, "such noble, large, lofty, and strong stone bridges.

He called further along the river at the town, "Known among foreigners as Knaresborough Spaw," but refused to be impressed by the four springs and the petrifying cave, having as he says, been surfeited with country wonders in passing through the Peak.

Defoe was nevertheless surprised to find so many people taking the waters, considering as he thought, that Knaresborough was such a desolate, out-of-the-world place, fitted only for men to retire to for religious mortification, and hatred of the world! Defoe gives much thought to the varying tastes and smells of the waters, seeming much more scientific, but not half so effective as Sam Weller, who, it will be remembered, briefly and pungently described the waters at Bath as tasting of warm flat-Irons.

Harrogate does not receive a mention, but Defoe thought the market place at Ripen as the finest and most beautiful square of its kind in England.

Remarking on the fact that this part of the county is given over to horse breeding, comparing favourably the Yorkshire breed with Turkish and Barbary, Defoe found that at Richmond manufacture came into its own again, and discovered most of the natives engaged in the clothing trade. He noticed that childrens stockings could be bought for eighteen pence a dozen, and sometimes less than that,

Defoe recognised in York, as he could not help doing, a pleasant and beautiful city. He promises not to give us a draught of its history, and then proceeds to do so at some length, The only defect he found in the Minster was the lowness of the great tower, feeling that it lacked a fine spire, and once more rebukes the un-named former writer, who had given it one.

He commends York on its abundance of good families, and compliments the young ladies of such families for not allowing themselves to be carried off by half-pay gentlemen of fortune. During his stay at York, Defoe took a day off to visit the battlefield of Marston Moor in the company of an

old soldier, who gave him a complete account of the action, on, the authority of a relative who had taken part in the battle. This information Defoe used later with telling effect in his "*Memoirs of a Cavalier*"

"From York," says Defoe, "we did not jump at once over the whose (Ouse?) country, and, like a late author, without taking notice of anything, come out again, sixty or seventy miles off like an apparition, without being seen on the way."

Beverley Minster Defoe regarded as a "very fair and neat structure", and writing of the ancient privilege of sanctuary granted by King Athelstane he says,

"It is easie to conceive how Beverley became a town from this very article, namely, that all the thieves, murtherers, housebreakers, and bankrupts, fled hither for protection: and here they obtained safety from the law whatever their crimes might be."

The good people of Beverley could not have felt very flattered at this candid assessment of their ancestors.

Another six miles took Defoe to Hull, and of the great port he writes,

"If you would expect me to give an account of the city of Hamburg or Dantzick, or Rotterdam, or any of the second rate cities abroad, which are famed for their commerce, the town of Hull may be a specimen. The place is indeed not so large as those; but in proportion to the dimensions of it, I believe there is more business done in Hull than in any town of its bigness in Europe.

The greatest imperfection as to the strength of Hull in case of war, is, that lying open to the sea, it is liable to a bombardment, which can

only he prevented by being masters at sea, and while we are so, there's no need of fortifications at all, and so there's an end of the argument on the subject."

If aerial warfare had not been perpetrated, that would have been the end of the argument, but as Hull knows to her cost, it was not.

Defoe mentions the encroachment of the sea on the East coast, and tells of much land being eaten up, and many villages having been lost. He also writes of Spurn Point but does not give the impression of having actually visited the headland. Bridlington, Scarborough and Whitby are mentioned, but Defoe, being much more interested in how men earned their living than in how they spent their leisure time, has little to say about the resorts.

One cannot escape the impression that Defoe's absorbing interest in Yorksbire was in the manufacturing districts of the West Riding.

But Defoe was now on his way out of Yorksbire, and signalled his entry into Durham by describing Darlington having nothing remarkable but dirt and a high stone bridge!

It must be stressed that Defoe's "*Tour*" is in no sense a guide book, and the sights and wonders forming the raw material of most guide books are absent in Defoe. What will be found is a graphic picture of the social and economic life of seventeenth century England,

Perhaps the only blemish in this remarkable book is the almost complete absence of personal contacts. For all we are told Defoe might well have accomplished his tour without speaking to a single human being. And yet he must have conversed with dozens of inn-keepers, labourers, tollmen, and fellow

travellers, but about the matter of the conversations he maintains a baffling silence.

True he spoke with his landlord at Knaresborough about the superiority of the Derbyshire over the local springs, but this is his only recorded conversation in Yorkshire, apart from asking his way at a cottage near Blackstone Edge. Even his companions of that rough day on the Edge are shadowy figures, we are told nothing of them, who they were, where they were going, or, an even more surprising omission for Defoe, what their business was.

This lack of inverted commas does not, however, in any way affect the interest of the book. Indeed, such an experienced craftsman as Defoe may have felt that conversational interludes would only retard the racy flow of his narrative,

A comparison with Cobbett's "*Rural Rides*" is almost inevitable. Both were written by plain, commonsense Englishmen; in prose of unmatched clarity and strength. The difference in the two books may be briefly stated by noting that one was written by a townsman and the other by a countryman. Defoe's interest was in the town and its manufactures, Cobbett's in the soil and its tillers, and this curiosity impelled both men to make their unique contributions to English literature,

If, therefore, you wish to combine entertainment with edification, and to know what the most unusual "Corner-in" to our county thought about Yorkshire, you cannot afford to miss Daniel Defoe's "*Tour Through the Whole Island a/ Great Britain*"



Goyden Pot and the Pudsey & District Rambling Club

S.A. Craven

The recent death of Winston Farrar in April 1997 at the grand old age of 87 years' has prompted me to place the caving activities of the Pudsey and District Rambling Club in their context.

Goyden Pot is a conspicuous cave entrance in upper Nidderdale which must have been known to the locals for centuries. The earliest description which I can find is that of 1832 by T. Allen», He announced that Goyden could be safely penetrated with a lighted candle for two or three hundred yards. He made no claim to be the first man there; and the inference is that the place was already receiving visitors. At that time Goyden Pot was essentially a huge chamber with a boulder-strewn floor at the end of which the River Nidd disappeared into a sump-

However, in 1888 there appeared in Chambers's Journal all anonymous article describing a new passage in Goyden Pot, reached from a ledge above the main stream passage». The late Ernest Roberts stated, without any supporting evidence, that the author was George Gaskell'. Ever since then this part of the cave has been known as

Gaskell's Passage. Although it is now known that the article was written by John Hawkrige Metcalfe of Grassfield House near Pateley Bridge", the misnomer persists.

Ever since the YRC was founded, its members had been making intermittent attempts to rediscover the erroneously named Gaskell's Passage. Their repeated searches had been so unproductive that they were beginning to wonder if the anonymous article in Chambers's Journal had been a hoax.

The story now moves to Pudsey which, like most of the industrial towns and cities at that time, boasted a rambling club. Most of the members of these clubs were content merely to walk and climb established local routes. For this reason they have largely been forgotten and passed into obscurity. One notable exception was the Pudsey and District Rambling Club.



Near Goyden Pot, Nidderdale, August Bank Holiday 1931
From the left: Gordon N. Daley, Winston S. Farrar, Kenneth Smith.
Photograph courtesy of the late W.S. Farrar Esq.

During the August bank holiday of 1931 three young members, Gordon N. Daley, Winston S. Farrar and Kenneth Smith, entered Goyden Pot with 47m of rope. They passed through the Main Chamber to the sump, then looked for a passage which might by-pass this obstruction. Farrar flashed his torch on the right hand wall of the stream passage and found an upward-sloping passage. In the floor of this passage were the footprints of two previous explorers - presumably of Metcalfe and of his unknown companion. They followed this passage to a short pitch, followed by a longer pitch which they called "The Turf", to the Lower Stream Passage. It is important to realise that they had no knowledge of the 1888 exploration, and that their discovery was serendipitous.

Not appreciating the significance of this exploration, Farrar wrote an account for his club's monthly Bulletin. A copy of the Bulletin found its way to H. Wadsworth Haywood of the Leeds Cave Club, who passed it to Eli Simpson, then President of the LCC. It was Simpson who realised that the 1888 exploration had been repeated's'. Meanwhile, on 30 August 1931 Messrs. Alfred Butterfield, Bernard Nelstrop and Harry Yates of the YRC, knowing nothing of the Pudsey re-discovery, independently rediscovered "Gaskell's Passage">.

It is clear that Messrs. Daley, Farrar and Smith had much more about them than the average rambler of that era. They had the initiative to explore a potentially dangerous cave with minimal equipment. Indeed, Farrar is well-known as a pioneering rock climber on Ilkley Moor-.

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Eli Simpson and the YRC

S.A. Craven

Ell Simpson (1884 - 1962) was probably Britain's best known speleologist, who devoted most of his life to caves. He was a dominant force in British speleo-politics for his last three decades, and his influence is still felt in British caving circles. His biography was written without access to the YRC archives'. Recently the YRC archives became available for inspection; and it is therefore appropriate to write a few words about Simpson's relations with the YRC.

Inevitably minute books are selective. It is clear that successive YRC Secretaries have been very discreet in their recording of Committee activities, and little contentious business has been minuted.

It would have been logical at the beginning of this century for a young man interested in caves to approach the YRC, which was the only caving club in the north of England. Accordingly Simpson first appeared in the minutes on 27 October 1903 when he, "wished to become a member of the Club. His qualification was read, & on the motion of Mr. Moore seconded by Mr. Nichol, his qualification was deemed insufficient. This was put to the meeting and carried."

Now the qualifications for membership of the YRC were so vague that the Committee could interpret them as it wished:

"Before any person is eligible for election, he shall have shown himself to be interested in the objects of the Club to the satisfaction of the Committee...2



EH Simpson, August 1908

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

At the time of his application Simpson had done no mountaineering, and little cave exploration viz. Stump Cross Caverns in 1901, and again in 1903 when he did the first survey of that cave. Both these explorations and survey were done with the assistance of Fred Botterill, who had joined the YRC in 1902. In August 1903 Simpson caved for a week in Chapel-le-Dale, staying at the Hill Inn.

The attitude of the Committee to Simpson's application is in direct contrast to that displayed in October 1907 to another subsequently well-known, if uncontroversial, caver, Blackburn Holden IT of Barnoldswick:

"Some correspondence was read from Mr. Blackburn Holden of Bamoldswick, who wished to join the Club, but in consequence of his not knowing any of the members he was unable to obtain a proposer. He had filled in a nomination paper, which was considered insufficient, & the Secretary was desired to write him to

that effect. Mr. Buckley kindly offered to ask him to join the next potholing Expedition in order that he might become acquainted with a few of the members, & thus assist him in his nomination."

Holden was elected in 1913.

There is, unfortunately, no indication of whether Simpson was deemed to be undesirable, or whether he merely failed to pursue his application. In 1906 he formed the Yorkshire Speleological Association (YSA), whose members caved for the following six years',

Although Simpson did not feature in the YRC minutes for many years thereafter, the YSA did. On 30 November 1909 the YSA was invited to send a representative to the YRC annual dinner, yet the following year the YSA was not on the list of invited clubs.

There is no evidence to suggest that the two clubs held joint meets. Indeed, when the YSA found that it needed more people to man a Gaping Gill meet than it could muster from its members, it looked to the Derbyshire Pennine Club for extra manpower.

In July 1912 there appeared to have been a misunderstanding about the use of the YSA winch at the YRC meet:

"A letter was read from the Secretary of the Yorks. Speleological Society, complaining that we had not obtained their permission to use the winch at Gaping Ghyll last Whitsuntide. Their letter had been replied to, & as their full permission had been obtained in writing some time previous to the Club's Expedition, the matter be allowed to drop."

By 1921 the YSA had become defunct; and the YRC Committee considered purchasing the YSA winch for descents of Gaping Gill: "C.E. Burrow reported that the wire rope had been sent to Messrs. Craddock's Wakefield for expert examination and report, and proposed that if the report was favourable that he should be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Y.S.A. for the purchase of same & also the Y.S.A. winch." The motion was carried.

The last committee meeting of the YSA was held on 1 October 1914. In the absence of any activity and formal structure of the YSA, several former members had joined the YRC viz. Claude Barton, George Brayshay, Charles E. Burrow, Davis Burrow, Waiter Greenwood and Blackburn Holden II. This mass defection indicates that the YRC must have been negotiating with the sole survivor of the YSA - Eli Simpson.

It is noteworthy that Fred Botterill never joined the YSA. This fact, plus the observation that the above YSA defectors joined the YRC after the decline of the YSA, suggests that there may have been an unwritten rule within the YRC that dual membership was unacceptable.

At this time caving in Britain was characterised by the existence of several fiercely independent clubs including the YRC. Although they tended to send representatives to each others' dinners, there was little, if any, co-operation between them. Simpson had the foresight to appreciate the wasted time, and duplication of effort, which this entailed. He had the vision of a national organisation which would unite and co-ordinate all the clubs and cave scientists.

To this end he corresponded in the early 1930s. with all the relevant individuals and organisations. He is known to have corresponded with Ernest Roberts of the YRC⁴. By 1935 he had formed an organising committee for his British Speleological Association (BSA), which included Harold Brodrick of the YRC. Later that year the British Speleological Association was founded, with Blackburn Holden II of the YRC on its Council. Despite the involvement of senior members of the YRC in the founding of the BSA, there is no mention of the matter in the YRC minutes. We will never know if the Secretary failed to appreciate the significance of the event, or if it was deemed to be controversial and therefore better not recorded.

However, the BSA soon became a controversial organisation. This is not the place for a detailed speleo-political assessment of the BSA. Suffice it to say that in theory members and member clubs were to supply it with information which would then be available to everyone. In practice, people were quite happy to receive information from the BSA, but were unwilling to report cave discoveries. This was in keeping with the traditional independence of the various clubs. Simpson took the dictatorial attitude that if the clubs and members would not provide the information, he would get it for himself

It is very interesting to note that as early as 1936 Simpson's attitude antagonised the YRC committee:

"04 Nov 1936: The Secretary reported that E. Simpson of Austwick was seeking powers, through the various land owners, to control the access to potholes. It was decided to take no

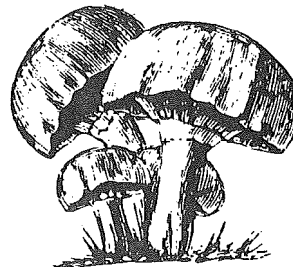
action at the present time but to make every endeavour to keep this question under observation."

In spite of this, the YRC cancelled its 1937 Gaping Gill meet in deference to the wishes of the BSA which was desirous of organising a meet there in connection with its annual conference held at Giggleswick School.

As with most research, this speleo-political ramble through the YRC archives has posed more questions than it has answered. Perhaps the answers may be forthcoming from those long-standing members who can remember what was said by the then senior members when they joined the club?

References

- 1 Craven S.A. (1991) Studies in Speleology 8. 39 - 56.
- 2 YRC Journal (1899) 1. (1), xii (Rule V).
- 3 Craven S.A. (1974) British Caver 64.27 - 34.
- 4 Letters to E.B. Roberts 1891 - 1961 (Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Accession J856 3539).



Better than a Massage

Bernard Nelstrop

In March 1934 I had a serious motor cycle accident breaking my right femur and was in Macclesfield Infirmary for about ten weeks with a cord attached to my right knee with a weight over a pulley to stop the leg shortening.

The only thing was, when I came out my right knee was fixed solid with my leg straight out. Massage helped but I had to do something more. Walking and mountaineering were the answer.

First I followed the River Dane from just below its source under the Cat and Fiddle-Buxton Road (which forms a watershed with the Goyt on the north side and the Dane on the south) and continued along its upper reaches.

In September I loaded my car with camping equipment and made for Scotland. My first campsite was near Patterdale where I went for a walk on the fells overlooking Thirlmere and then decamped and made for Penrith along Ullswater. Then up to Scotland taking the wilder side of Loch Lommond to camp by the tent of a German. He took me for rides across the loch in his motorised canoe.

Following the track north I came to Ben Lommond, the ascent of which was truly enjoyable.

Retracting my steps and then proceeding in my car to Crianlraich and turning east I arrived at the base of Ben More which I ascended, finding it steeper and more rocky than Ben Lommond.

My next adventure was to drive to the Braemar area where I camped with a group of walkers from Edinburgh.

Next I decided to make for the summit of Ben Macdhui having left my car by the River Dee. I then proceeded up the mountainside to lock Avon and then higher up to the left to a shelter under a huge boulder called the

Shelter Stone. The hard floor had been covered with dried bracken or similar and served as a place to sleep and eat food. I was up there for several nights sharing the place with a kilted Scotsman from Aberdeen with whom I became friends. I had a walk with him along the banks of Loch Avon in half a gale and eventually had tea with him at his home in Aberdeen. The Shelter Stone was a good base from which I ascended Ben Macdhui (the giant supposedly inhabiting this summit must have been having a day off as saw no sign of him) then Cairngorm where ptarmigans were flying around with their guttural croaks.

While in the district I walked along Glen Maoi where I was stopped at a gate and told "No way further!" the King was in residence.

I finished with a pleasant ascent of Lochnagar and then home

John Schofield was keen to do Jack's Rake on Pavey Ark. So I offered to go there with him on the Friday of the 1998 Joint Meet at RLH not that I am a better mountaineer than he but I had done it before, including an ascent on the Friday of the Joint Meet eight years before.-

We weren't quite as early as we should have been and the sun was off the face before we reached the start. When we did get going, me first, it proved to be running with water and rather unpleasant.

About twenty feet up John noticed something on my right calf muscle and called up "Bill, how did you get that terrible scar?" "I don't want to upset you John, but I cannot tell a lie. I got it when I fell off Pavey Ark in 1953."

A few feet further on we decided we were not enjoying it and gave it up.

Bill Todd

The Next Two Years

A Policy Statement from the President Elect, Ian Crowther

I believe that the YRC depends, for its continued success upon the quality of its meets. Unlike many other mountaineering and caving clubs, we do not hold weekly meets or evening meets in pubs. Before some members castigate me about that last remark, let me say that I know that there are various long standing ad hoc meetings of members which are of great benefit to those concerned, but they are not official club meets.

I intend trying some different approaches during my presidency. No doubt I will fall on my face sometimes, but I sincerely hope that my policies will be generally supported.

Firstly, interspersed with some old reliables, I am attempting to introduce some new names into the list of meet leaders, and re-introduce others who have not perhaps organised a meet for some time. I am also going to encourage my meet leaders to do a bit of homework in advance of their meets, with the idea of introducing, where possible, matters of extra interest to the members during the course of the meets. For instance, meals other than at the hut, attendance at functions organised in the locality and which might attract us, or pastimes arranged for Saturday nights other than slide shows or just going to the local pub. There could be different activities to the usual ones, after all we have quite a number of interests mentioned in our "aims & objects". It may come to nothing, but I intend trying !

I plan for the next Scottish February meet to be the last (for the time being at least). In 2000 I propose to reintroduce the idea of an Easter

Scottish meet, as a trial. In recent years it has become clear that Easter conditions in the Highlands have been better than in February. The Ladies meet is to be in Southern Scotland. Cliff Large will run it and has already organised a suitable hotel in Abington.

The September Joint meet with the Wayfarers is something that has concerned me for some years because, with our November Annual Dinner weekend they completely dominate the autumn season every year, leaving us very little room to manoeuvre. I have no wish to upset or in anyway snub the Wayfarers - I value their continuing friendship, as I do that of the Gritstone Club, but I think that we should now look for fresh ways to pursue our contacts with them. With this in mind, I am proposing to let these Clubs have copies of our meets lists with an open invitation for their members to be invited to any of our meets, and particularly our Lowstern meet in March next which I would like to see run as a three way joint meet. I have written to the two Clubs concerned with this in mind.

Members know that I like wild camping, and so I will run a President's meet as a high camp at Scoat Tarn in the Lakes, where we have camped previously - a long time ago.

Eddie Edwards has already secured bunkhouse accommodation for a Spring Bank Holiday week meet on the Isle of Arran, and which sounds excellent to me. This will be an open meet.

The South American trip in 1999 will inevitably affect the Long Walk and so I have asked the leader, Bill Lofthouse, to run a more modest long walk then might otherwise have been the case. The matter of whether or not we should have an Alpine meet has also given me food for thought,

because it is almost certain that several of the Alpine regulars will be in South America. Nevertheless, David Smith has kindly agreed to see than an Alpine meet is organised.

In a similar vein, Tim Josephy tried to organise a Costa Blanca meet last November. Unfortunately this coincided with the end of the last Himalayan trip and so proved to be a non-starter, which is a great shame because the mountains inland from the Costa Blanca seem just the right sort of thing for the YRC. I have therefore asked Alan Brown to organise such an open meet in October next, and I sincerely hope that it will turn out to be as enjoyable as the Mallorca meet a few years ago, with the added advantage of high class rock climbing readily available in the area.

I really want the 1998 Christmas meet at Lowstem to be a success. I know that it will be difficult for the caterers, but I think that with our newly extended hut and all the money and work that will have gone into it, we ought to make maximum effort to use the cottage to the full, holding Christmas meets there every other year. For Christmas 1999 however, we are returning to Hag Dyke, the Scout premises up on the fells near Kettlewell, also recently refurbished & improved, I understand, and where we enjoyed a couple of excellent meets some years ago in spite of the fact that I managed to have one or two unfortunate adventures associated with those meets. It just goes to show that I hold no grudges in spite of all the stick that I have had to take over the years about Hag Dyke !

In 2000, I have already had a number of suggestions which I am keeping on file. I particularly want a week long open meet on Corsica around (but not necessarily on) Spring Bank Holiday. Albert Chapman is already kindly

looking into this. I intend the Long Walk to be in the Rhinogs.

Many of you will know that I have a long standing interest in caving, so I am particularly keen to promote a full-blown overseas major YRC caving expedition, hopefully in an area that non - cavers would find equally interesting. This is also being looked into right now by one of our caving gurus. Our cavers are very successfully active & warrant the Club's wholehearted support; they will get mine. Perhaps this might provide our best opportunity of a seriously notable millennium success. I do hope so.

Other things that have been mooted are another An Teallach/Fionn Loch visit (an Easter meet perhaps), A French Skiing meet in March, another "Lads & Dads" meet and possibly a surplus gear exchange and sale mart (perhaps during a Lowstem meet).

I would be only too pleased to hear anyone's views or ideas on these or any other club matters, and look forward to two years of meets as good as those which Tim Josephy has presided over so successfully.

Finally, I do not propose any constitutional changes to the YRC. I look forward to assuming the Presidency with the club in as healthy a state as it has been for a long time. We have in Lowstem the best club hut in the Yorkshire Dales by miles. Our finances are sound, membership is staying steady or rising and our losses being more than made up. Not every club can say that nowadays. Please help me to preside over continuing success.



From the Archives

by Raymond Harben

When Derek Smithson was planning the YRC expedition to Norway some years ago he asked what books or other material were held in the Library. Searching through the shelves I came across a blue folio case with a title spine of "Experiences of Norway". Taking off the cover revealed the case jam packed with foolscap papers of articles prepared by members and in many cases (perhaps all) read to Club members. Despite their age all were in good condition bar one page. Only one paper dealt with Norway. The others mainly covered this country with one in Switzerland. A fascinating find and one that I vowed to return to a later date. This I have now managed to do and list a precis of the articles below.

Folio Case

(titled "Experiences in Norway")

Various papers, all foolscap size, numbered as shown

1 Handwritten manuscript.
Pages - title + 46w

Title:- "By Lake and Mountain".

Paper read by Mr. IA. Green before the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. 3rd April 1894.

Recounts a 2 week holiday in the Lake District in 1893 starting at Grange over Sands and accompanied by Messrs Brigg, Slater and Holmes. On Saturday 21st May they were on Scafell when an accident occurred. Mr Haarbleicher from Manchester walking with his sister

fell down Mickledore Chimney. He was first reached by a party consisting of Horace Walker, Charles Pilkington & Messrs Harrison, Pole & Fisher followed immediately by Green's party. Slater agreed to go ahead for a doctor at Gosforth whilst the others carried the injured down to Wasdale. A doctor staying in Wasdale said that the injury to the head was so bad that there was no hope. The doctor from Gosforth arrived and he and Brigg took it in turns to sit with the injured man. On Sunday Green and Brigg went to church and rang the bells. They then found someone in the congregation who could play the organ. Negotiations followed with the parson and 2 tourists from Lancashire that the church service should take no longer than 75 minutes!! In the afternoon Green's party went up to Broad Stand to determine how the accident might have occurred. Again the doctor and Brigg took turns to sit with Mr Haarbleicher through the night. He passed away early Monday morning. Green felt that the guidebooks did not give sufficient detail of the route from Scafell to the Pike and the difficulties that might be encountered on such a venture. He felt that the accident marred the holiday.



2 Handwritten manuscript.
Pages - title + 17
Title:- "Experiences in Norway"
Paper read by Mr S.W. Cuttriss
before the Yorkshire Ramblers'
Club January 1894.

Recounts his travels of 388 miles from
Bergen to Christiania (Oslo) via
Voss, Eide, Odda, Roldal, Dalen,
Notodden, Kongsberg.

3 Handwritten manuscript. 3 pages.
"A Fortnight's Ramble." No date
and no author's name. (Possibly
Walker or Dawson)

"Who are the Yorkshire
Ramblers?" "Oh a lot offellows
who go walking tours and that sort
ofthing: not half a bad idea"
"Know any ofthem?" "Yes, two
or three" "Lets join" 'Well you
know its not so easy: a fellow has
to qualify; do something big or
other; tell you what lets have a
walking tour." So a plan was
formulated with the help of friends
to walk 200 miles. As there were
no trains on the day they set off
they began walking from Leeds
with Bolton Abbey their first night
goal which they eventually reached.
Next day with great stiffness they
struggled onto Skipton where they
called a halt to their holiday and
caught the train back to Leeds.

5 Handwritten manuscript. 4 pages
"Looking Forward" dated 3rd
March 1894. No author's name.
"Our youthful institution (The
Yorkshire Ramblers) is growing
satisfactorily; but not yet firmly
established. The title of the club
and the amplified meaning given to
that title in the rules show plainly

why the club was founded and the
broad lines which eventually will
expand its sphere of usefulness."

The article philosophises on the
beauty of nature and the
opportunities for exploration
throughout the County of
Yorkshire.

6 Handwritten manuscript. 5 pages.
"Round About Bramham" No
date and no author's name.

Describes a day out first by train from
Leeds to Scholes then onto
Bramham via Kiddal Hall and
Bramham Park - the hall unrestored
since the fire. From Bramham to
Clifford and then to Boston Spa
and the Royal Hotel where we are
asked "to leave us with the
assurance that as Yorkshire
Ramblers we sustained our
reputation when the good things of
this life were placed before us."

7 Handwritten manuscript. 3 pages.
"A Tenmile (sic) Stroll" No date
and no author's name.

Short paper identifying
unfrequented spots within easy
reach of Leeds viz:- Bus to
Roundhay Park then by Tennants
Park, Etchill Crags, Bramham
Moor dog kennels to Thomer
returning to Leeds by tram

8 Handwritten manuscript. 11
pages.

"A Week's Tour In the Lake
District." Paper read by Mr. C.
Scriven before the Yorkshire
Ramblers' Club. January 1894.
From Windermere Station by
bicycle to Ambleside then walking

most of the major summits including Scafell Pike, Great Gable and Helvellyn.

Zermatt area including the Mettelhorn, Unter-Gabelhorn, Unter-Rothorn, Riffelhorn, Breithorn and Theodulhorn.

9 Handwritten manuscript. Pages - title + 35.

Title :- "West Country Scenes." Paper read by H.H. Bellhouse before the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club. February 1894.

Recounts a journey starting at Cheltenham through to Gloucester and Taunton and visiting virtually all major towns and fishing villages in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

10 Typewritten manuscript. Pages - title + 5

Title:- "A Wet Week End." No author's name.

Describes the weekend of 10th/11th February 1894. Train Leeds to Harrogate on Saturday afternoon. Set off walking the 9 miles to Blubberhouses. Seemed like 99 miles as walking into gale force wind and rain. Arrived late at Hopper Lane Hotel where they spent the night. Due to rain on the Sunday morning did not set off back to Leeds until after lunch. Returned via Fewston, Norrard Edge, Dobb Park Bridge, Lindley Church, Lawnswood, Headingley reaching Hyde Park Corner at 9.10 p.m,

11 Handwritten manuscript. Pages - title + 23.

Title :- "Zermatt" Description of a Holiday in July and August 1893. Read by Mr G.T. Lowe before the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

Recounts the climbing with guides of many of the mountains in the

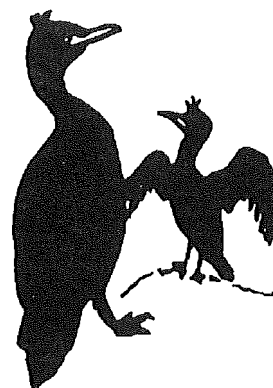
14 Typewritten manuscript. 3 pages

"Lands End to the Logan Rock by the Cliffs" July 1895. Signed Ernest ----- (The last page is damaged and part tom with the surname missing)

The author records a walk of 7 miles undertaken on 29th July 1894 from Lands End to the Logan Rock.

The folio case has been passed to the West Yorkshire Archive Service in Leeds. The articles would make interesting reading for any member and perhaps anyone having the time could review them in greater detail than I have been able to do.

The question must be asked as to whereabouts of articles 4, 12 and 13. There was certainly no more room in the folio case. Are they still there somewhere on the library shelves?



Additions To The Archives

FILE 1: Various item from Stanley Marsden's House to be lodged in the Clubs Archives

Organisation details of Whitsun Meets 1964/1989 of members
Geoffrey Bates,
Bob Chadwick,
John Cullingworth,
Harry Haslam,
Jack Hilton,
Jack Holmes,
Arthur Leese,
Stanley Marsden,
Cyril Marshall,
Norman McKie,
Harry Stembridge,
Edward Tregoning.

Various letters from E E Roberts and other correspondence.

FILE 2: Correspondence and other information relating to the YR C Himalayan Expedition 1957

FILE 3: Meet reports the first issued by Cliff Downham 1956/1985

FILE 4: Meet reports 1985/1993
When they were discontinued.

FILE 5: Club notices 1956/1987

BOX: Club Dinner Menus 1908/1997
Incomplete

BOOK: Short History of the Club by
F D Smith 1992

Not the Same Accident

Bill Mitchell's article in the last *Rambler*, though interesting, had significant errors. John Godley drew my attention to the fact that Cliff Downham was not born when the YRC accident occurred. In the YRC Journal Vol.III, No.10, p 179 Ernest Roberts gives a comprehensive account of the Sunset Pot accident on 15 May 1910. W.F.Boyd, the victim, and a Miss Stevenson were in the party. Whilst returning at 3pm, using an 'untarred rope', as Boyd was making the ascent the rope broke.

Eric Addyman obtained the leaf of a thick table which was used to bring out the injured man. Dr Mackenzie went in at 6.30pm and set the broken leg. Everyone was out by 8am on the following day to brilliant sunshine, the ambulance arrived at 2pm and Boyd was in bed at the Hill Inn at 4pm.

The accident where Cliff Downham was the hero of the rescue took place at Ginging Hole on 13th October 1934. The YRC Journal Vol.VI, No.22, p314 gives a detailed account of the rescue by the Northern Cavern and Fell Club. At 7pm, Cliff and other members of the NC&FC were dining at the Craven Arms in Giggleswick, the call for help was made by a Moor and Fell Club. Their secretary, Mr Weetman, had a leg broken in two places.

Mr Coates of Rainscar Farm, and old friend of potholers of those days carried a 6 ft plank to the pothole which made the rescue possible. During the rescue Cliff Downham formed a human belay. Weetman was carried across the moor in a hailstorm at 5.30pm. The Cave Rescue Organisation was formed in February 1935 with Roberts as its first Chairman and Treasurer and Cliff Downham as Secretary.

Secondly Albert Chapman noticed that the two pictures of the old Lowstem hut showing Roberts opening the hut and giving a memorable speech names Chubb as the other man, he is in fact John Godley the President of the day. (1958/60) It is good to learn that John still maintains a healthy interest in the Club though unable to attend meets.

David Smith

Book Reviews by Bill Todd

Craven Pothole Club Record
No. 50 April 1998

Everybody is very pleased about the new world depth record at Gouffre Mirola. High Magazine mentions it as well as the CPC Record which has an article by Ric Halliwell on page 15.

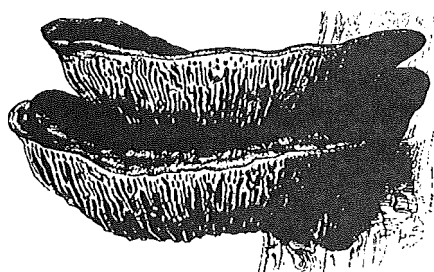
There are the usual array of interesting articles on underground adventure including Caves of Assynt by Tom Thompson. Unusually there seems to be no mountaineering activity reported. There are obituaries of Peter Liversey and Haroun Taziefi and a summary of the Government's Consultation paper on access to open country. Altogether well worth a look if you can get to the Club Library.

Craven Pothole Club Record
No. 51 July 1998.

"Maillon Rapides which are potentially unsafe for use in rigging have been seen for sale at a cheap price on Market stalls in the Chesterfield and Sheffield area." Readers are urged to keep clear of these and buy from a reputable source.

This is probably the most important message in July CPC Record. As usual we have a number of interesting articles with an emphasis, this time, on scientific subjects including Black Hole and Cave dating. Reprinted are also the first three volumes of "The Digger" from the late '50s.

A good read, now in the club library,



The New Look 'Climber'
May 1998

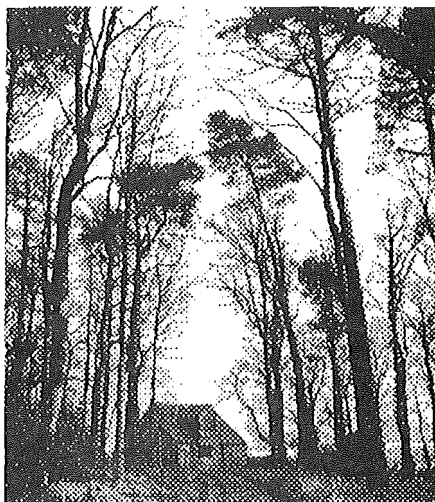
The magazines usually contain reviews of one or more books. The change of management at 'Climber' seems like a good opportunity to subject the magazine to similar treatment.

First, the photographs as usual are excellent, I wish I had taken them myself. On to the writing I was surprised to find Jim Perrin back in harness after telling us at length two months ago why he was giving up. If the editor is that short of writers I am in the 'phone book. I doubt, after reading Mr. Perrin's article whether he really has anything fresh to say but at least he kept off politics this time.

Highlights on the credit side are Cassin at Lecco and, of course, Dave Musgrove on the climbing and access position at the Centre of the Universe.

Good articles on Highland Outcrops and Smith Rock threaten to be crowded out by no less than six tributes to the late Peter Livesey. This is supposed to be the May issue but there is not a word about Sid Cross who died at the end of March.

The issue closes with a vapid article on s... by Bill Wright. I am suspending judgement on whether this new look magazine is going to be worth subscribing to.



Lowstern

Thankfully the mountaineer or trekker of the late nineties can be much better informed than those of the seventies who had little more than expedition reports, the slim first version of the Brandt's trekking guide and Pecher & Schmiemann's valuable but sketchy descriptions of the main peaks near La Paz.

This review considers the guide books available from the point of view of those considering the Club's Andean trip next year.

The High Andes: A Guide for Climbers, John Biggar, Andes, 1996, first edition, ISBN 1-871890-38-1, 160 pages, 8 colour photographs, over 50 sketch maps, 70 line drawings of routes, £16

A comprehensive guide to the main peaks throughout the Andes north of Patagonia, from Venezuela to Argentina, with brief descriptions for all the 6000m peaks and 75 of the more accessible 5000m peaks. Remarkable in its scope and the book gives access information and the normal route for each peak. It is an excellent introduction to the Andes for experienced climbers who are planning their first trip to the range. The no frills, practical advice (for example where an office entrance is hidden you are told that it is down the alley off a side street) wastes no space and all but thirty pages are packed with route information. The high quality colour plates give a good impression of the terrain and vegetation in the different countries.

There are twenty pages of text for Bolivian peaks including eighteen peaks ascent routes on the eastern edge of the altiplano (Apolobamba, Real & Quimsa Cruz) with thirty

others being mentioned. A further thirteen volcanoes along the western border with Chile are covered with mention made of five more.

Essential for those exploring the various mountain areas and a valuable source of information when making choices between different areas.

Trekking in Bolivia: A Traveller's Guide, Yossi Brain, Andrew North & Isobel Stoddart, Mountaineers and Cordee, 1997, first edition, ISBN 0-89886-501-8, 208 pages, £14, \$17

Each of the trails is set out with a clear sketch maps and plenty of black and white photographs give a flavour of the terrain. This guide is well set out, thorough and complete, with detailed route descriptions and almost half the book filled with both necessary and background information all presented from an English point of view. About thirty of the pages are background cultural information.

There are flashes of sharp humour evident in the text and the accounts of the mountain paths, Inca trails and jungle treks include alternatives and 'escape routes'. As up-to-date as any guide can be this is probably the best source of information for anyone planning their own treks. Certainly it has the widest selection of routes.

Seventeen of the twenty three routes given are in the Cordillera Real and their descriptions and details cover eighty pages of the guide.

A companion volume, 'Climbing in Bolivia' is being prepared and is eagerly awaited but unlikely to be ready in time for our trip.



Backpacking in Peru and Bolivia, Hilary Bradt & Peter Schepens, Globe-Pequot, 1995, sixth edition, 282 pages with illustrations and maps, £12

This book, originally 'Backpacking along Ancient Ways in...' has expanded and improved considerably since the first edition appeared in 1974. That one was the combined efforts of the two Bradts, Hilary and George, written on a riverboat and typed up while stuck waiting for transport out of Trinidad the tropical city in Bolivia Amazonia. They then went their separate ways and Hilary kept the guide going though this latest edition has been thoroughly updated by Peter who has benefited from running, for several years, that idiosyncratic communications centre of adventurous travellers (at least those who manage to locate it) the South American Explorers' Club house in Lima.

The Bolivian treks are widespread, detailed and supported with general advice for those planning trips. The style is more readable and personal than others, displaying a warmth of feeling for the people and their culture. Reading the accounts of the treks is nearer to receiving a letter from a friend who has been there and is telling you about it before you go, than a set of directions (though all the factual information is there too). Frequent illustrations prepare the trekker for the flora and fauna likely to be seen.

Bolivia is covered in 35 pages and five treks, mostly close to La Paz.



Mountaineering in the Andes, Neate, Royal Geographic Society, 1994, second edition, 254 pages, photographs, illustrations and maps, \$30

Organised by range and covering the whole of the Andes this book aims to be the most comprehensive reference source for the area. For each range there is a topographical description and summary of the climbing history then a list of the peaks and pointers to other sources of information.

Bolivia - Travel Survival Kit, Deanna Swaney, Lonely Planet, 1996, third edition, ISBN 0 86442 396 9, 488 pages, 38 colour photographs, over 70 sketch maps, £13

With trekking and mountaineering contributions from Yossi Brain this packed volume carries information on a dozen treks and perhaps twenty pages specifically on access for mountaineering. As a general guide for the traveller it contains full information on what to see, where to stay, how to get about and what it will all cost. Entertaining topics from the variety of cameloids to the last days of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid are treated in boxed panels. The whole is a complete information pack of detailed travel information for those who prefer to plan their own visits, be they tourists or adventurous travellers and concise, intriguing background on the culture.

Deanna recognises Bolivia as one of the world's greatest yet least-known trekking destinations and as a result twelve routes are included in sufficient detail for the confident traveller.

If you have failing eyesight, the thin paper and tiny (8 point) type used to keep this mine of information in a pocketbook format will require a good light and possibly a magnifier.

In the same series is Chile & Easter Island, Wayne Bernhardson, Lonely Planet, 1997, fourth edition, ISBN 0 86442 421 3, £12 which includes information on the southwest corner of Bolivia, Laguna Colorado, and access to the volcanoes near Nevado Sajama including the ominously smouldering Guallatiri which last erupted in 1960.

Bolivia Handbook, Alan Murphy, Passport, 1997, first edition, 368 pages with photographs, illustrations and maps, 1£2

This single-country guide is an offshoot of that old standard, 'The South American Handbook'. In the same style it provides information on transport, accommodation, places to eat, what to see and do for every place you are likely to find yourself

This is a comprehensive guide for travellers packed with factual information and obviously written by people who know the country inside out and have a feel for its culture. Alan is a Scot. and Yossi Brain provided much of the trekking and mountain sections.

Seven of the more popular Bolivian treks are included complete with sketch map, advice and full route information, even reminding you to fill the water bottle before an especially dry section.

Forty-odd inset panels of cultural information on topics ranging from devil worship to the fineness of vicuña wool, supplement an initial forty pages of geographical and cultural orientation.

While on thicker, more opaque, paper than the Lonely Planet guide, this is another guide set in small type to 'get it all in'. Still if you are touring this will allow you to make the most of your visit.

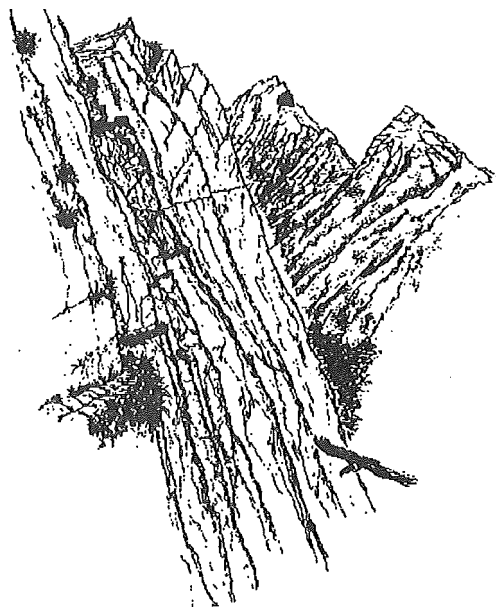
Bolivia, Peru - a Michael's Guide, Michael Shichor (Ed.), Kuperard, London, 1995 UK edition, ISBN 1 85733 031 5, 264 slim pages, 10 maps, 48 colour photographs, £8

This is one of four area guides which are also available as a guide to the continent.

The author claims to be direct and the advice is sometimes very direct. Partly this is the need to be brief if the material is to be covered in the space available. The traveller would need to supplement the information given with local enquiries to establish, for instance, where the required bus would start and how to recognise it. There is enough here though to establish which sights you would like to see and what to expect.

Seventy pages are devoted to Bolivia and a couple of treks are outlined sufficiently for you to know if they would suit you.

The 1993 edition is now remaindered and would be worth picking up if you do not feel your spare day or two in Bolivia warrants a full guidebook but feel you ought to 'gen up' on what there is to see.



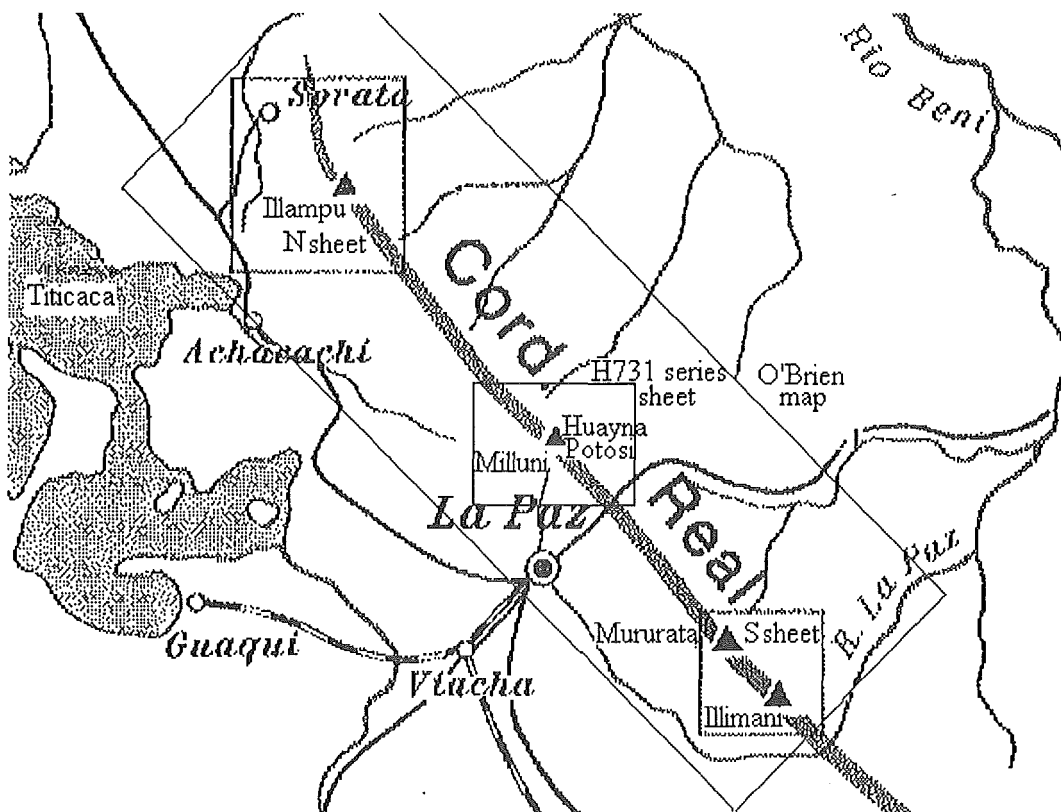
Maps

General maps covering the whole of Bolivia are available and to be of use need to be recent versions as new roads are being constructed.

Available at about £11 is the 1991 Waiter Guzman Córdova sheet at a scale of 1:2,250K.

At a similar price is the 1997 Liam O'Brien 'Travel' map highlighting the National Parks at 1:2,200K. It is ideal for trip planning especially as it is often difficult to envisage the scale of journeys across Bolivia when reading a guide book. The use of colours for each contour interval of 1000m conveys the topography under a grid of latitude and longitude at one degree intervals. The roads and towns, but not villages and hamlets, are marked and the overall effect is uncluttered. My one quibble is that it can be difficult to discern the brown roads crossing the brown altiplano surface in artificial or dim lighting conditions.

Another of O'Brien's maps is the 'New Map of the Cordillera Real de los Andes', 1995, 1:135K and 200m contour interval, is available in La Paz for around \$10, or £10 or so in the UK if, like me, you prefer to study the maps before setting out on a journey. Land type is marked by coloration and relief shading highlights the topography. Tracks and trails are marked and those in disuse often labelled as such. The map has been well researched, including significant contributions from Bernardo Guarachi, and thankfully received by those planning treks in the Real as it is a big improvement on working from a haphazard collection of IGM sheets often of poor quality or monochrome copies. Two grids are overlaid: 10km zone 19 and latitude/longitude at fifteen minute intervals. Since the Real run north-west south-east the grid lines run at 45° to the edge of the map. In an organised trekking party this map would allow progress to be followed, peaks to be identified and the extra detail for ascents of



The areas covered by the 1995 New Real, Huayna Potosi, 1987 Illampu and 1990 Illimani sheets

individual peaks be found in a guide book. This map is the most reliable one available for place names but in the latest fashion for spelling. So *Khota* has become *q'uta* and *Janq'uma* for *Ancohuma*. This only of interest between trekkers and climbers as map names bear little relation to the names used locally.

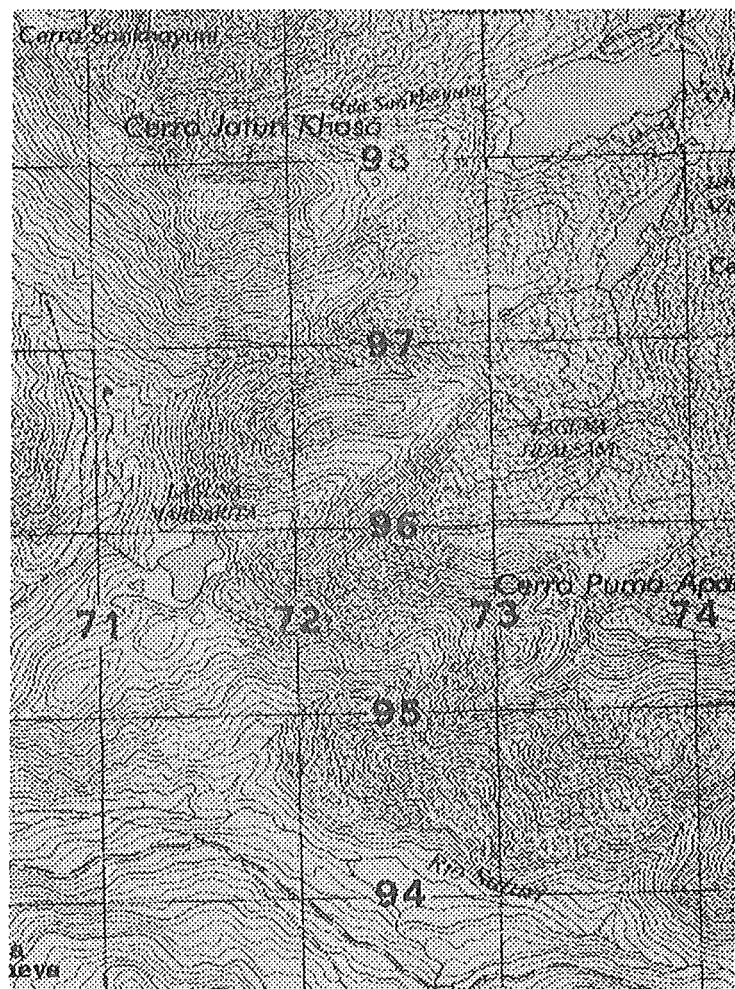
At 1:50K there are up to three choices depending on your area of interest.

The German Alpine Club produced two sheets based on scientific and mountaineering expeditions reports, their own surveys and aerial photography but they are only for the two popular areas. Their 1987 'Cordillera Real Nord (Iliampu)' and 1990 'Cordillera Real Slid (Iliimani)' use eight-coloured printing and are of excellent quality.

Walter Guzman Córdova has sheets of several popular trekking and climbing peaks in, the Real, and of Sajama, available in La Paz and printed on good quality paper.

To buy Instituto Geographico Militar maps, the equivalent of our Ordnance Survey maps, at the IGM headquarters office you will need to take along a passport though you can get sheets at one day's notice from an office on the main street in La Paz. The sheets do not cover all areas, for example not the Apolobamba, and I found that often only a monochrome photocopy was available. These maps are based on aerial

photography with little fieldwork checking and are overlaid with a zone 19 one-kilometre grid and a zone 20 marginal scale at five-kilometre intervals. Some GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver units can work with the zone 19 or 20 datum and give grid references in the familiar format matching the grid on the map. If using IGM maps for planning a trip do not rely on the extent of the glacier or snowfield marked as, just like the Alps, permanent ice has been diminishing. In, for example, the Cocabata mountains near Cochabamba, the most recent sheet is based on 1984 photography with 1989 updates and has the English legend and easier to read whiter paper typical of the second edition (Edicion 2-IGM) sheets. IGM sheets are not readily available in the UK



Part of the Icaro IGM 1:50k sheet near Jatuncasa

John Cosby White 1917-1998

John died on the 10th August after a long fight against cancer.

His first introduction to the Yorkshire Dales was as a medical student from Birmingham University in the late thirties where he assisted Dr. Thomas Lovett at Clapham during his practical breaks.

He became interested in pot holing and joined the club in 1938 at the age of twenty.

His caving was cut short by the war years when he worked as a medic during the blitz of Coventry while lecturing at Birmingham.

He transferred to the University of London in 1943 as a lecturer in pathology, it was here he met his future wife Vivien, younger daughter of Augustus John, as she worked as a nurse in the capital

In 1947 he moved to Moscow for a year where he became medical officer to the British Embassy. He became fluent in Russian and enjoyed the Russian countryside and its people. He spent many weekends walking the open spaces around Moscow often sleeping under trees.

On his return to the UK John was able to participate in the early, post-war Gaping Gill meets. He returned to the University of London and Hammersmith Hospital as a lecturer for the next twenty years and became eminent as a haematologist.

In 1967 he began his ten years at University Hospital Kuala Lumpur where he became associate Professor of Pathology.

This was followed by fifteen years in a similar position at Port Moresby General Hospital in Papua New Guinea. It was here he joined the Papua New Guinea Bushwalkers Association with whom he trekked the Kokoda Trail and crossed the Murry Pass. He climbed Mount Albert Edward twice in 1988 and 1989 an account of which he wrote in our centenary journal

It was during his annual leaves usually around Christmas that he returned to the Dales and the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

Some ten years ago on a YRC meet we visited the Easgill System At the age of seventy this was his last really active pot holing trip. With Brian Nicholson's help we managed to return him happily to the surface after a good day underground.

On the centenary of the club's descent of Gaping Gill I drove him up to the pot where although in failing health he had the youthful enthusiasm of a twenty year old. He made me promise that on his demise I was to throw his remains down the main shaft.

This however was not to be. It would have been logistically difficult and environmentally unfriendly because John was not cremated but lies in a grave beside his wife and under a large piece of moss covered limestone I took there from the pavements of his beloved Ingleborough massif

A delightful friend and loyal member who regrettably spent most of his active life abroad.

Albert Chapman

Edward Mark Haslam

1933 -1997

Mark Haslam was elected to the Club on 2nd May 1933 along with Harry & Frank Stembridge, like them he had a common interest in potholing. He was the senior partner in the family firm of accounts, his three sons following him into the profession. Right until weeks before his death in his 96th year he continued to practice considering that he had a duty to his long standing clients. Although confined to a wheelchair following a stroke, he maintained an active interest in his garden.

He regularly attended the annual dinner meet until 1970, often accompanied by one of his sons. The last recorded meet he attended was the RLH meet in 1963.

He is survived by his three sons Christopher, Derek and Peter

A Tribute to Sid Cross

"Whatever you do, don't say anything to the press" I heard, then the morphia took effect and I sunk into sleep. The scene was the side of Stickle Tarn, the time was mid morning of Monday 20th September 1953. I was lying on a stretcher with a broken leg and a

shattered shoulder about to be taken down to the ambulance by the Langdale Mountain Rescue Team. The speaker was team leader Sid Cross who was also licensee of the Old Dungeon Gill Hotel. And quite obviously a licensee with a difference.

After working in Somevell's 'K' Shoe Factory in Kendal, Sid went into the innkeeping business at the Bummoor Inn at Boot and later secured the licence at the a.D.G. In partnership with A.T. Hargreaves, he edited the Dow Crag Guide in 1938 and again mainly with Hargreaves and their wives made a number of new routes including Crock's Crawl on Dow in 1938 and the Bowfell Buttruss Girdle in 1942.

At Easter 1937, according to J.H.B. Bell, the conditions on the Ben were so bad that only one party succeeded in climbing Tower Ridge, that party was Sid and his wife to be, Alice Nelson.

He was an excellent chap to advise people on where to go for their Lakeland excursions. He put me onto that excellent walk to Scafell by three Tarns and Upper Eskdale which I have repeated since with Earnest Shepperd. He enthused about the grandeur of the Great End Gullies and entertained us with his tales of mountain rescue for which he received a well earned MBE. His reminiscences of such legendary figures as George Abraham and Harry Kelly were fascinating.

Sid died suddenly at the end of March; all our sympathy goes to his widow and their sons.

Bill Todd

LETTERS

Right to Roam?

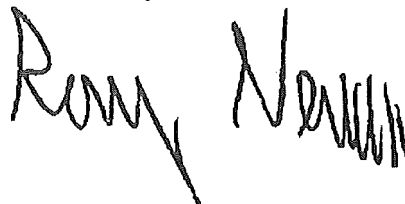
Dear Sir,

I write in response to Bill Todd's letter in the last YRC Bulletin. I agree wholeheartedly with many of his points, in particular his comments about the Dome. However I do take issue with two things. First, I believe that very little land in the United Kingdom is totally "uncultivated" in the sense that nothing is done to maintain it, or that it has no economic or commercial value. The barren reaches of the Cairngorm plateau are very much the exception. Upland country in England is widely used for grazing sheep; heather moorland is carefully maintained as such for grouse shooting; the mountains of Scotland are largely used to feed and subsequently stalk red deer. The commercial/economic uses of these landscapes in their present form prevent them from being converted into (for example) forestry. While in general I support the "right to roam", at least across unfenced land, I believe that unlimited access must be tempered by its effect on the income of the landowners and the livelihood of the people actually doing the work (arguments about "blood sports" are a separate issue which I don't want to get into here). Therefore I do not support totally unrestricted access to unfenced land. Perhaps the onus should be on the landowner to justify restrictions at particular times of year.

My second point concerns the effects walking and climbing can have on what we think of as "wild" landscapes. Any member of the club will be depressingly familiar with the erosion which has occurred increasingly over

the last few years on popular routes in the hills. Some of these landscapes are actually quite fragile. Unless we are prepared to limit our access to them, there will eventually be no access available because the landscapes will no longer exist. There will always be a dynamic tension between access and preservation and this becomes more critical as larger numbers of people visit "wild" landscapes. Whether English Nature are right or wrong on Ingleborough is arguable, but I do support the principle, the practicalities need to be worked out sensitively in individual situations. This takes us on to the discussion about peregrine falcons. There is a reasonable argument that the further off the "beaten track" we go, the more we may disturb sensitive wildlife which has also chosen to avoid the rambling hordes. I agree that the rights of 50 million English people outweigh those of the peregrine, if that is the wish of a majority of those people. At the moment, the law (and therefore the will of the majority) protects the peregrine - actually not so much from walkers as from egg thieves, but it can be hard to tell the difference. Again, there is a dynamic tension between access to a landscape which includes wildlife, and the loss of that wildlife as a result. I feel each case should be considered on its own merits.

Yours sincerely,



Rory Newman
Sleights, Whitby

Chippings

The article on Ernest Roberts in the last issue drew letters pointing out the errors which have been corrected by David Smith on page 71. Apologies to John Godley for failing to identify him and thanks to Richard Gowing, Albert Chapman and others for this correction. John, Richard reminds us, had started his presidency on the day before the depicted official Lowstern opening ceremony.

No doubt through a combination of repetition and journalistic license the stories of cigars and such are allegedly much exaggerated and the rescue described took about 17 hours rather than the days claimed.

For Bernard Nelstrop memories were rekindled of climbing with Roberts on Laddow Rocks and Brimham Rocks during visits one another's homes, and laddering a pot, possibly Death's Head on Leek Fell, "a sheer drop with nothing at the bottom" along with Vivien Brown and a CPC member.

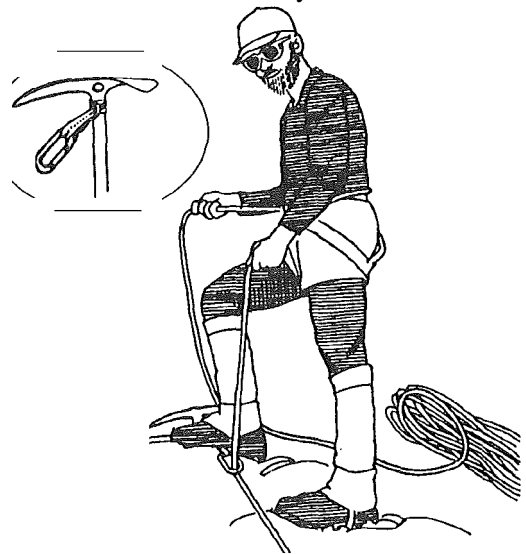


Writing the introduction to the guide to the Fen Rivers Way Long Distance Footpath in time for the opening of the final stretch to King Lynn has been keeping Duncan Mackay busy. His next project is a LDP along the Greenwich Meridian through Cambridge shire from Royston to Earith.



Derek Smithson highlights...

Learning from books does not always bring success. I read a modest book, *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills*, edited by Don Graydon, about mountaineering techniques and realised there were many new ideas. One struck me most forcefully as something that I should have known and should use, particularly on easy snow. I have now returned from doing some glacier travel and realise that I did not once think of this new safeguard. I simply returned to all the bad habits of years ago, including carrying coils. This carabiner-axe belay is simple to execute and infinitely superior to casually looping the rope round the axe shaft. Plant the axe as deeply as possible with a short sling and carabiner around the shaft. Clip the rope into the carabiner. Stand at right angles to the fall line and place a boot on the sling beside the axe on the down hill side and the rope in a waist or shoulder belay. The force of a fall will pull the belayer more firmly into the stance and the hand nearest the axe can be freed to steady the axe.



George Spenceley has been adding to his list of English and Welsh 2000 ft tops, the Bridges, and at the last count had 15 of the 408 still to visit.



An extract from John Masters 'Man of War':

" 'Rock climbing is a sport which teaches you what risks are acceptable and what are not... '

That only once', said Bill smiling.

'Not necessarily - and thats true in war too... It teaches you where your limits are... limits of physical strength and skill, limits of moral strength and endurance, It teaches you that you must expand those limits, push them higher, further.: It teaches you keep your head, keep cool. Panic will kill you, rock climbing ... as it will in war.' "

The publication of Walks with Grandad in the Cleveland Hills (in local bookshops and Atkinson Print, Hartlepool, 01429267849, £3.95, ISBN 1 872239242), authored by Maurice Wilson, will no doubt be of interest given the increasing numbers of members moving into the book's target audience. Tested on his grandchildren, Harry and Grace, the walks have been carefully selected to be the right length and have an interesting feature as the goal. The handy A5 size, 35 page book contains 15 walks each with a clear sketch map, detailed route description and sufficient details of the things you pass for 'Grandad' to build up a reputation, at least with toddlers, for being knowledgeable. A local member who thought he knew these hills well has, after reading the book, discovered what a couple of the mounds and bumps he passes really are.



Derek Smithson feels he is too old to wait for a suitable gap to appear in the meets calendar for a particular trip so offers it as an extra opportunity to one and all. Kjetil Tveranger and Derek offered to organise a meet in Norway, including family camping and a camp on a glacier on Galdhepiggen. The last Bulletin gave the details of this place and the great delight it gave to Kjetil. Derek, incidentally, was surprised this year when a member complained at not being specifically invited to join one of his trips. Trips which, from the years of talking at meets, Derek had become convinced interested no one but himself.

You are invited to the Jotunheimen to play in the mountains. No social life is to be expected, no grand dinners, no alcohol, but maybe some conversation with Norwegians. Maybe even the pleasure of their companionship and their help, Maybe some help with arrangements to travel. Ten days or so in June, or perhaps September, 1999, which will give time to visit other mountains in Jotunheimen at a time when there are fewer other people about and the chance of good weather is greater. The down side of 'out of season' is that some facilities are not available.

Derek also intends to ski in March in Norway, without Telemark. For this he has been joining organised parties in Eastern Norway where novice British skiers gathered to do easy things. This could be done independently of such organised parties using the facilities provided by Pat and Peter Lennon, or somewhere completely different.



Stanley Marsden's papers, relating to the YRC are to be lodged in the archives. They include material relating to the 1957 Expedition, Annual Dinners, most of the monthly meet reports and circulars started by Cliff Downham, and several letters from past members.

The Straddlebugs, mentioned on page 71 of the last issue were founded in 1882 not 1892 and the same year as the YRC, as stated. I am indebted to Arnold Patchett for this correction and being a member of both he should know. Both he and Stanley Marsden attended the Straddlebugs 100th anniversary dinner in Bradford during 1982.

One of our younger members recently received an order at his family lifting tackle company for the supply of a quantity of black webbing lifting slings to be used in pairs for the purpose of lowering coffins into graves.

It occurs to him that it might be a good revenue - making scheme for the YRC to commission the manufacture of personalised coffin lowering slings for sale to our members. These would be of the same black webbing, but computer embroidered along their length with the name of the owner, the YRC emblem and special mention of past presidencies, honorary membership etc., etc.. There could even be a special version for cavers for their last trip underground!

If everyone had them permanently lodged in the bottoms of their rucksacks, so their friends could easily find them and never need be embarrassed by having to cobble up slings made from tatty old pieces of climbing rope.

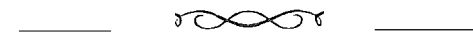
Please let any member of the club committee know what you think of this idea. A bulk club order would ensure keen prices and please the contributor of this tongue-firmly-in-cheek piece, and his father no end.

Towards the end of August, David Hall with two friends, flew to New Zealand to join up with another friend working there, for a ski touring trip. After a warm up on the downhill slopes of Wanaka, over the Bank Holiday weekend, the party flew into the Mt. Cook area in alight aircraft fitted with skis and landed at the head of the Tasman Glacier. The next week was spent in a cold mountain hut being blasted by storms so severe that it almost made Scotland desirable. As usual, on the last day, brilliant weather allowed the party to top out on a peak and ski out down the glacier to a landing site below Mt. Cook. Unlike UK trains the pick-up aircraft arrived on time for the return to civilisation.

On the way to the Stubaial meet the Man Linford and Angie broke the journey at Baccarrat. Paying a visit to a shattered chateaux approached via woods and a short section of tarmac when sharp call by Angie stopped Alan less than a step from a European viper a yard long and as thick as the shaft of a spade. Then on the way up to the Regensburger hut Alan was again one stride from stepping on an adder, shorter and thinner this time, and reluctant to move as it was taking in the sunshine. A short while later they were caught in one of many short but violent thunderstorms, the snake must have known!

Mid-September saw the return of David Laughton from another trip to south-east Greenland. He sailed from Iceland to Cape Farewell, then north in and out of various fjords as far as the rarely visited community of Angmagssalik close to the Arctic Circle. Unusually, given the month, the sea was starting to freeze over causing some problems for the Zodiacs used to go ashore each day. The glaciers falling to the sea and the rock scenery, reflected in the still waters, were some of the best he had seen and the sunshine and good weather allowed him to enjoy superb tundra walking.

Earlier in the year David had sailed along the Aleutian chain, revisited the Kamchatka peninsular then north through the Bearing Sea. He managed some excellent walking particularly on remote St Matthew Island, in the middle of the Bearing Sea, before landing at Little Diomedea. Unlike Michael Palin's celebrated visit to this US outpost by the International Dateline, when it was too rough to land and complete his clockwise circumnavigation of the Pacific rim, David's visit was beneath clear blue skies and water as smooth as the proverbial mill pond. He disembarked at Nome on the south side of the Seward Peninsular, and after flying to Anchorage he drove along the Dalton Highway, over the Brooks Range, across the Arctic Circle to Prudhoe Bay. He then flew to the Inupiaq Eskimo village of Barrow. Finally he visited the remote copper mining area in the Wrangell St. - Elias National Park, south-east Alaska, where he walked the Kennicott Glacier area. The six-week trip ended at Prince William Sound which gained notoriety on account of the Exxon Valdez spillage.



Following a Friday crossing of the Lyke Wake Walk (5.15am-8.30pm with 2½ hours of rain and a very boggy section) in July, when he met only one other dirger going the opposite way, Howard Papworth recently tacked the Cotswold Way from Chipping Camden to Bath. He'd recommend the route, especially the more open, wilder and less wooded northern part, to anyone. Logistically they were well organised in advance with cars or taxis transporting a change of gear and extra items ahead to the next booked bed and breakfast or public house. The allowed them, Howard and two others, to carry small rucksacks and cover the 104 miles at around twenty miles each day. The weather was mixed with a couple of good days, one indifferent and another when it poured continuously.

Howard has found the root the problems which beset his Norwegian winter ski trip, with David Hall and Kevin Brown, earlier in the year. The cold weather they endured, with night temperatures falling to minus 35 degrees (it makes little difference whether that's Celsius or Fahrenheit), turned out to be the coldest in 34 years once the records were collated. Secondly, he later discovered that his shoulder injury was due to a sliver of bone becoming detached in the joint.



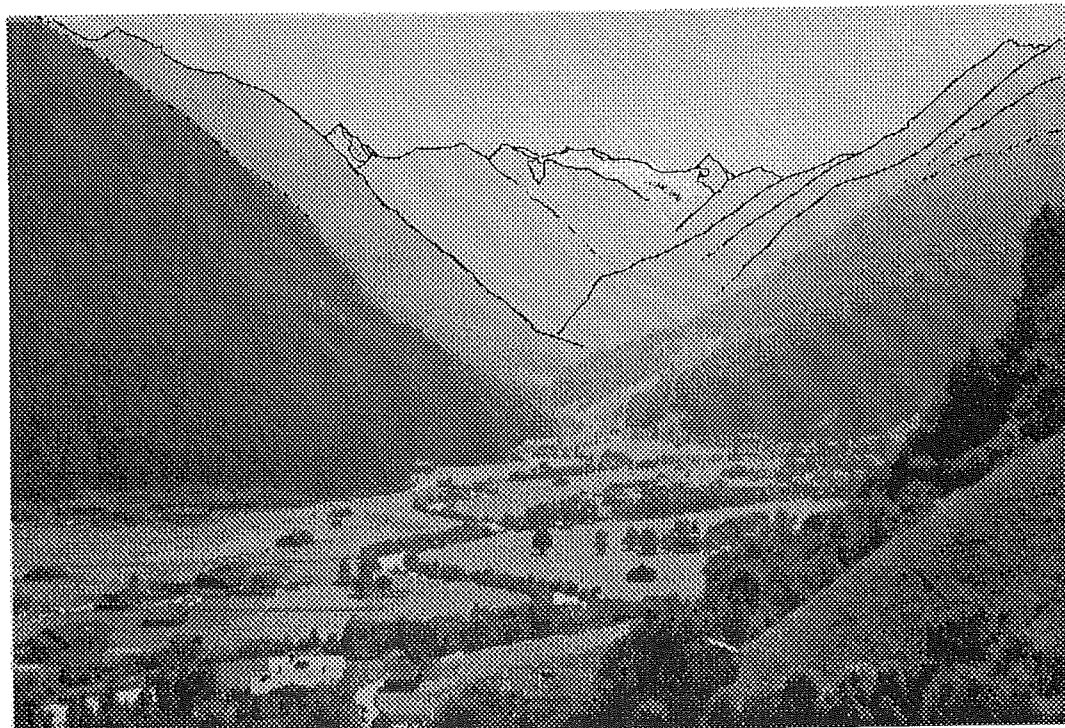
The height given for Dongang in the second paragraph on page 45 of the last issue of the Rambler, should have been 10170 ft.



Alpine Meet

Neustift, Stubaital

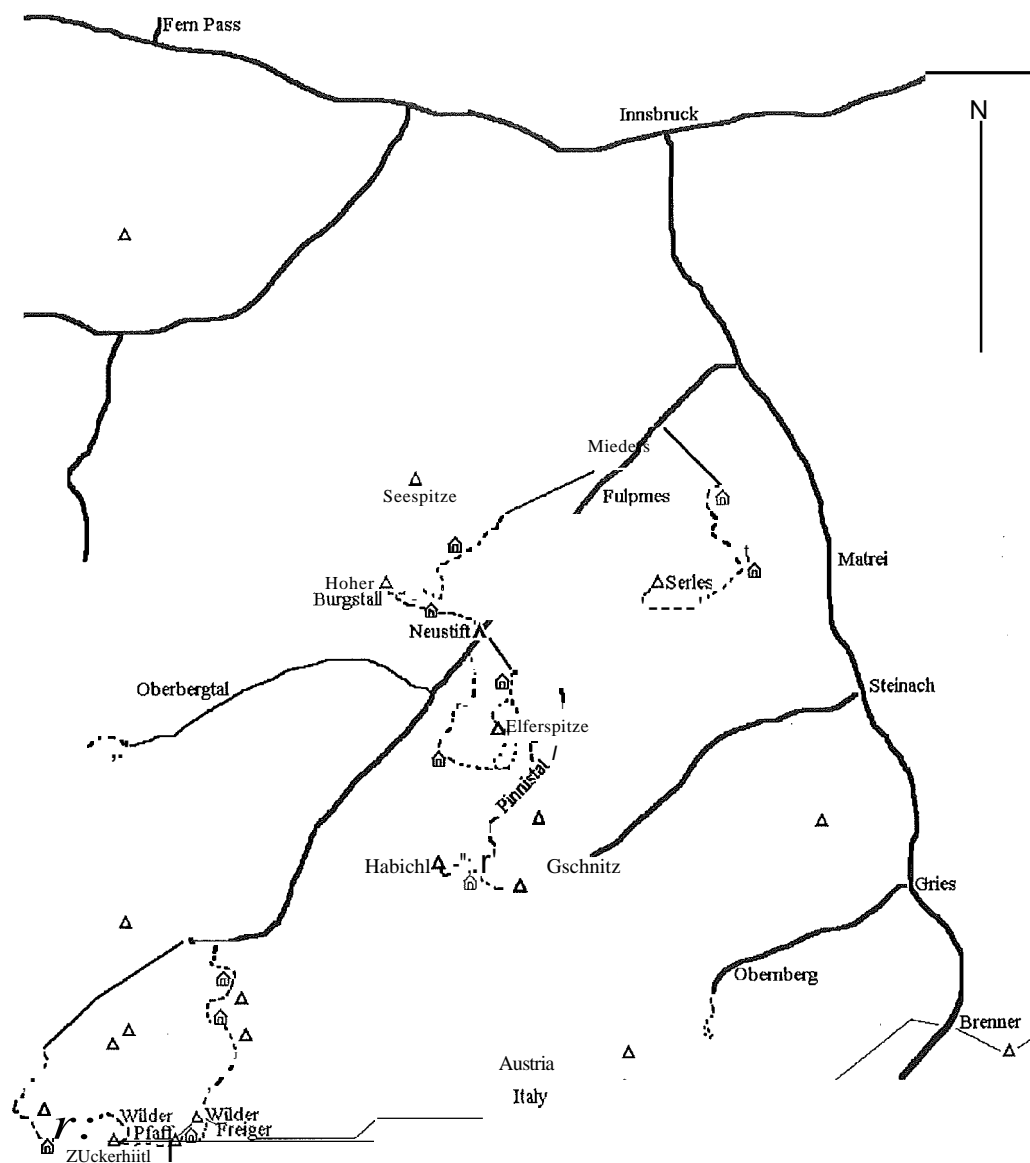
25 July - 8 August 1998



A view up the Stubaital from Neustift with the Zuckerhütl in the centre distance

Among the peaks climbed were:

Zuckerhütl	3507m
Wilder Pfaff	3456m
Wilder Friege	3418m
Habicht	3277m
Schaufelspitze	3332m
Serles	2717m
Hoher Bergsrall	2611m
Elferspitze	2505m



Attendance:

Denis Armstrong

Joan Armstrong

Denis Barker

Anne Edmonds

Alan Fletcher

Mike Godden

Marcia Godden

Alan Linford

Angie Linford

Alister Renton

Kevin Renton

Sheena Renton

Alexander Renton

Ellen Renton

Joanne Moorhouse

Euan Seaton

David Smith

Elsbeth Smith

Michael Smith

Helen Smith

Richard Smith

Fiona Smith

The Stubaital

Man Linford

There are many ¼ plate slides of Austria in the archives suggesting that members frequently visited the area. But a quick search of the journals would indicate that this was the first Club meet there and from the enthusiasm shown by those attending this would not be the last Austrian Alps meet.

Austria is easily accessible-providing you plan early enough, Alan Fletcher arrived one day early and had to leave two days after the rest left due to flights being fully booked. The meet leader arrived one day late having missed his flight connection and left two days early to fly to Indonesia, such are the demands of modern life. Four members arrived with caravans indicating a more leisurely approach to life, providing a haven for campers in the frequent thunderstorms and cool beers in blistering heat. Expertise was improved in card games, new and old, the Smith family taking a liking to pontoon. A rewarding experience for children and adults, ask yourself, when could Richard and Fiona be quietly poker faced?

Elferspitze 2505m

a limestone peak with some fixed ropes and hoops

The Elferspitze towers above the camp site, the sky line reminiscent of the spires of the Picos. A gondola adjacent to the camp site hoisted two groups (on the first day and therefore justified) from 1000m to 1812m. Excellent value with reductions for holding a camp card and extra reductions for senior citizens the downside being that Richard aged 12 years was rated as an adult.

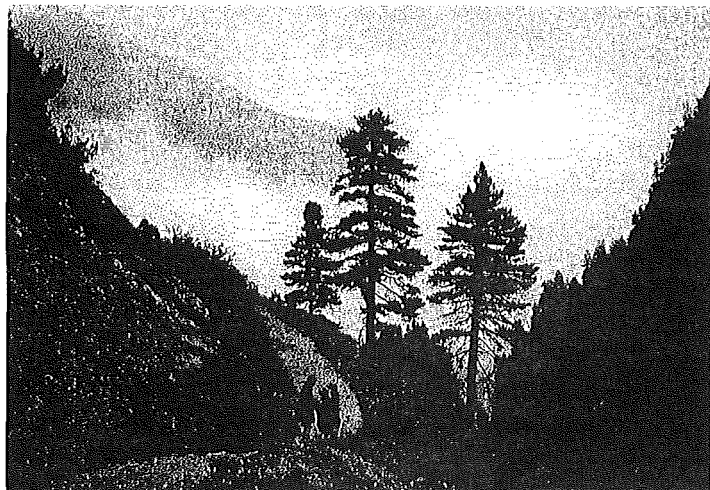
We found it to be a popular mountain with well marked paths and good views all around, giving what we all appreciate, an opportunity to orientate the mountains and valleys with the map. There are more paths than were shown on the map. It is a mountain with plenty of opportunity to do your own thing with walkers, climbers and scramblers approaching the summit from all directions, creating a queue for the last 15ft roped climb to the very small and exposed top. The path wanders through rock falls and buttresses, snow patches here and there, to a welcome seat at the col named Zwolfenieder. A near vertical zig zag path (not marked on my map) tempted the Smith family to walk back to Neustift via Autenalm, the Linfords preferring the Panoramaweg giving excellent views of the Pinnistal valley and the difficult looking rock peaks above it. Two 'Yorkshire Tea' brews were needed to take it all in.

Schaufelspitze 3332m

The end of the Stubaital valley is dominated by 4 large car parks servicing the Stubai Gletscherbahn which unfortunately gives easy access to the high glaciers. Live television monitors show visitors the conditions at the Eisgrat restaurant at 2850m. Useful as it saved Angie and I money and time as on our first visit the cloud level was down to 2500ft raining, 4°C and windy. Plan A to climb the Schaufelspitze was abandoned for the less ambitious Daunkopf, 2879m, so we took the bahn half way to the Dresdner hut at 2303 m and set off. With the cloud level coming down and remembering the resolution made in Norway never to walk in the mist again, we exercised plan B to walk to the Mutterberg See at 2483m. On the Wilder Grube we were caught in a

violent thunderstorm with torrential rain. We exercised plan X and walked down a construction track to the valley. The track served a new construction site at Ganisgarten, a place to be avoided, but the road had bridged the larger streams and spare drainage gullies used to bridge the smaller streams which saved us having to ford. We had sticks and waterproofs but others caught out had neither and made a very slow descent.

The second attempt saw us early on the cable car to be met at the Eisgrat with a roped off corridor leading up to the Bildstockjoch the glacier commandeered by monster piste making machine smashing the glacier up to mush for skiers and snowboarders. It was 11°C!. We walked up outside the roped in area. The bahn is being extended to the Bildstockjoch creating a large construction site, dust everywhere, excavations having destroyed the start to the Wildspitze 3341m and the Schaufelspitze. However a nice scramble up with the summit to ourselves and looking over to the Zuckerhiitl 3507m raised our hats to the lads climbing there. Beating a retreat we climbed part way up the Wildspitze, gained access to the glacier and ignoring cries from the



At Sulzeggafter a shower

mangle men, made our way down the glacier, now running with water, to the cable car.

In 1999 it will be possible to use cable cars to reach the Hildesheimer hut without touching the glacier. What a shame.



In complete contrast, a trip up to the Fernerstrube glacier by the Sulzenauhiitte and the Blaue Lacke was an absolute delight. Not a soul above the lake apart from two climbers descending from the Mullerhiitte, who said conditions were not good on the ridge as it had not frozen overnight, wet feet for our lads up there (lads include David Smith!). There is a splendid alp, Sulzenaualm at the mid point of the walk, the hut run by an elderly couple, where the sevice, friendleness and ambiance were reminiscent of mountain huts 40 years ago. Carvings abound on chairs, tables, walls, beams and posts in dining room, gate posts, to obtain the hut stamp it was necessary to remove the tongue of a gargoyle!. Not an easy place to leave.

Habicht, 3277m

David Smith

Handsome mountain which looks larger than it really is because of its separation from other larger peaks.

Jeff Williams - Stubai Alps and South Tyrol

There comes a time in life when the great glaciers and the highest peaks have less of a pull than in earlier years. The Habicht seemed the sort of mountain that provided all the pleasures of the sport but none of the pressures. I opted for the chairlift to Elfer with the two younger members, the remainder of the group crammed into a four wheel drive vehicle from Neder. The weather looked promising, the descent along the Panoramaweg into Pinnistal, though very pleasant, meant that valuable 500m in height was lost. The path varied through woods and meadows heading down to a small hamlet of Karalm where we joined the main route from Neder to the Innsbrucker Hütte.



Here the height was gradually regained along the Alfairgrube where we met up again with the rest of the party resting in the sunshine. We reached the Innsbrucker Hutte at 2369m early, and though intending making the ascent of the Habicht straight away, decided that as the glacier snow might be soggy we would to climb the nearby Pinnisjøeh. This turned out to be an unwise decision as the loose limestone construction of the mountain was

decidedly unreliable and in my view dangerous. Furthermore we later discovered that the glacier was virtually none existent and we would have had an easy ascent of the Habicht in good weather.



'The Boys' decided that they would bivvi and spent some time looking for the ideal site between the boulders before returning to the hut for an evening meal. I was quite happy to make use of the comforts of the hut, though why we were packed into one room we weren't aware until the army arrived in force. As we settled down to sleep a storm rapidly built up, we were all conscious of our two friends outside fighting the elements. During a nocturnal perambulation I discovered two bodies on the floor narrowly missing by inches putting my foot in a mouth.

One particularly good thing about Austria is that there is no need for 4 a.m. starts, consequently we didn't get up until 6.30 a.m. We didn't bother about a breakfast other than a drink before setting off for the hill. The mist was down but the route finding was very straight forward, much of the more exposed sections are well protected with wire ropes fitted with aluminium 'eggs' to help progress. We had the mountain to ourselves which is always a plus. The Editor's twelve year old son moved like a seasoned veteran, at no time did he

have a problem, clearly the Club has a future in the Alps.

JeffWilliam's guide gives a very clear description of the route, ascent west and south-west before climbing quite steeply north-west over fixed ropes, sharp change of direction south-west up a rocky ridge alongside the Habichtferner and traverse the glacier. Where was it? surely it wasn't the little patch of snow in front of us, But yes, it was. The Alps aren't what they used to be! We soon reached the summit, saw nothing and after a bite to eat set off down. The mountain has a dreadful history of accidents of those who take short cuts, we didn't and quickly reached the hut.

The weather was now improving and it was a speedy descent into the valley. We decided to try out the four wheel vehicle and were packed, two deep in places, into the small car, not a comfortable journey but different. Three of us had intended using the second day traversing over to the Bremer Hiitte along route 124 and over to Ranalt in the Unterbergthal, which I feel is, the best way to 'do' the Austrian Alps. Perhaps next time.



Serles, 2717m

Michael Smith

Months in advance of the meet Ken Aldred, who has lead many parties through the Stubai mountains, was kind enough not only to supply a couple of guidebooks to the area but several pages of advisory notes. Included in these was the description of the best road approach to Serles which was from the far side as we were looking at it from the campsite.

Somehow in the usual chaos of deciding where to go and who was coming along we failed to take note of this point. This may sound careless to those unfamiliar with the Club's larger camping meets but picture the scene... M meets S in the washroom and formulates an outline plan for objective 'A' provided that R can be persuaded to make up the number and E will drop everyone off at the chairlift. Meanwhile R, returning from the supermarket or cashpoint, bumps into E who has heard from the guides that the weather is closing in late in the day and fancies trying objective 'B'. Over a meal the previous night two others have hatched a plan to ascend 'C' and are seeking others to join them. By the time these six protagonists have wandered round the several tents and vans trying to drum up support everyone is in a quandary. Suddenly, no doubt as predicted by chaos theory, a pattern emerges and almost everyone - except the two who, being fully provisioned and not in need of cash, have already set off-heads off for 'D' the one place that has the advantage of not favouring anyone's previous plans.

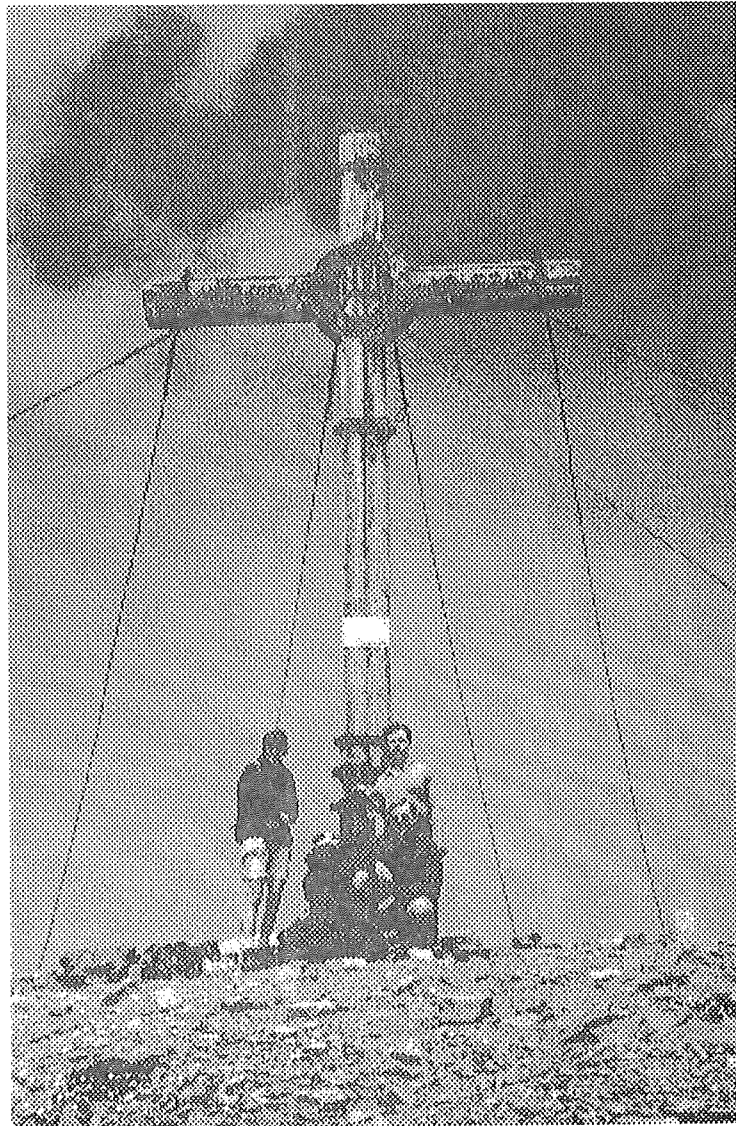
Such was the prelude to two overfull cars disgorging their passengers at the foot of the single-seater chairlift from Mieders up into the thick clouds

surrounding
Koppeneck. The ride brought two delights: the shrieks of surprise as each one of us was swept off our feet by the fast-moving narrow seat (indeed it took some a while to pluck up the courage to plant their feet on the yellow marks and wait) and shafts of sunlight slicing through the misty Obergullenwald as we neared the top of the cloudbase.

The level walk through the forest to the healing pool by the Maria Waldrast shrine was only a few kilometres and brought us to the roadhead we would have driven to had we taken notice of Ken. This oversight and the 5pm closure of our chairlift back into the valley meant we spent the day clock-watching and hurrying along short-legged Fiona.

After an initial rise the path slackens around 2000m, crosses landslip scars, traverses through dwarf conifers then enters the steep, narrow limestone valley up to the Serlesjoch. A single spring, or quelle, lies to one side of the path and provided a welcome drink.

From the windy joch, as the cloud enveloped us and the odd shower hurried us along, it was a 350m sharp pull up over rock bands and scree to the top. Wearing shorts this was not a place to loiter and the first party was descending before the tail-enders



Many Stubai summits have imposing crosses.
This on Serles was the largest we visited.

reached the cross. Gaps in the cloud revealed the campsite below (provided you were brave enough to stand by the edge in the fiercely gusting wind) and the realisation that we had spiralled round the mountain a full 360° during the ascent.

Two o'clock and just three hours to cover several miles and 1100m down to the chairlift meant that an introduction to scree running was called for. It went down well (in both senses) and we were a relaxed and reunited party of ten who descended strung out along the line of chairs down with fifteen minutes to spare.

The higher peaks

Alister Renton

The last time I visited Austria was about seven years ago with my parents. We stayed in a village called Mutters, one of Innsbruck's commuter communities. I remember large mountains and pleasant valleys. It was with these memories I set off to Neustift!

I arrived at the campsite late on Saturday night after a rather interesting flight and a very busy week at work. I had found time to read the guidebook during the flight and I had marked the most desirable routes that would be ideal for all members on the meet. The obvious route would have to be the Zuckerhutl (3505m) - the highest peak in the area.

I made my thoughts known to all and before long we had embarked on a three day expedition to visit this mountain.

We set off up the valley in two cars carrying all the gear required. David Smith entertained our car with an interesting mathematical problem that he apparently solved in ten minutes! (It's at the end) We decided to stay and eat in style at the two huts so we only had smallrucksacks ;-)

At the top of the Stubai valley is a large car park to hold all the winter skiers' cars; Elspeth dropped us off and we purchased tickets for the cable car. Now I know that you are not supposed to use cable cars but it was a real bargain - especially for those that got a discount!

We arrived at the top cable station in high spirits ready for the walk to the first hut. At the top of the cableway is a summer ski area with the hut path alongside - we navigated this and the industrial equipment in transit to the



building site at the top. They are extending the cable car ready for the winter skiers.

After a little while we arrived at the hut and checked in. We sat down and planned the next two days on the hill. Michael Smith spent about five minutes working on David's puzzle before finding out the correct answer.

We all went to bed early in a bid to get a wink of sleep. Two years ago I vowed not to stay in any more huts and there I was lying in a noisy hut!

Morning soon came and we all dashed down for our breakfast, boots on and we were off to look at the Zuckerhutl. We were the first team away from the hut. The route proceeded round the edge of the moraine before reaching the side of the glacier.

We put on our crampons here before starting the standard alpine slog up to the first col of the day. This was the first trip high I had been on since Easter and I felt fine, humm, something must have been wrong.

We arrived at the col in good spirits and had a bite to eat. We still had not seen anybody else on the hill and that was concerning me a little as the guidebook said it is always a busy peak.



The Zuckerhut from the Wilder Pfaff

The cloud was swirling around and the summit ridge could be seen now and then. It did not look that far to the summit but the path took an indirect approach to allow easy access to the summit ridge.

We had decided to return via another hut, the Mullerhntte, and as such we would have to descend the Zuckerhut by the same route. We left our rucksacks in a nice neat pile and set off for the summit. There was a very impressive cornice to one side, which made me a little nervous. The final pull to the summit included an interesting section offront pointing on nice crisp solid ice.

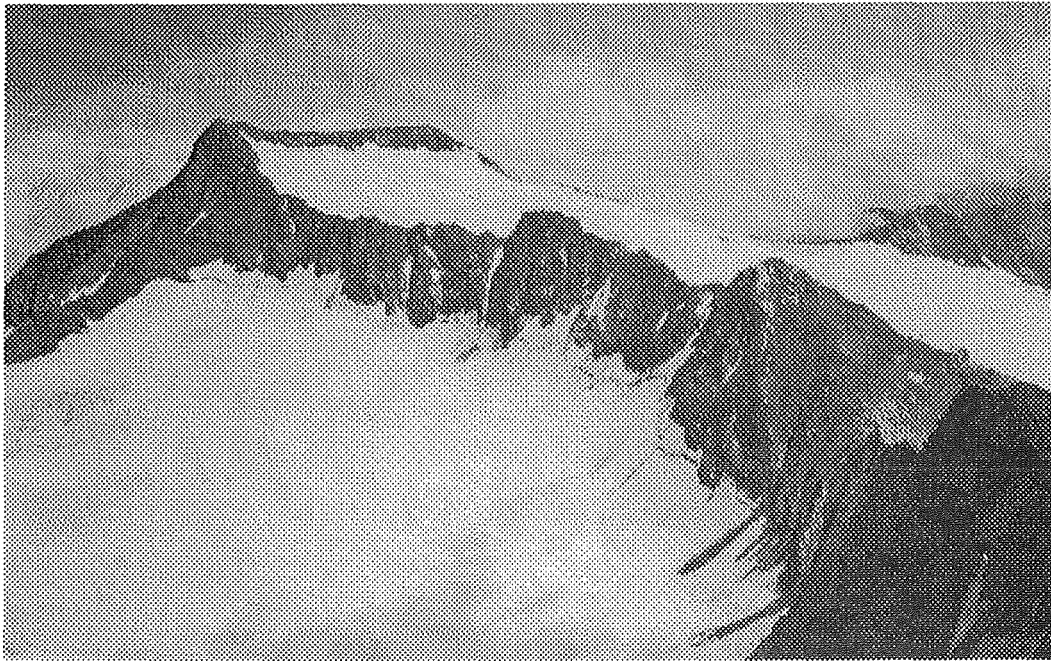
We all arrived at the summit safely and filled in the summit book with our names. We stayed on the summit for a while just enjoying the Alps.

The route down followed the ascent but we found the correct path this time! It made the descent much easier - true YRC style! We were soon to be reunited with our rucksacks and more

and more people could be seen on the paths approaching the summit. With the Zuckerhut complete all that we had to do was nip over another mountain and descend to the hut.

We started off roped in two teams as there looked to be a number of crevasses en-route, to the based of the rock ridge we had to ascend.

No major mishaps occurred and we removed our crampons and ropes for the last time. The route up the Wilder Pfaff (3458m) was just a nice slog. It took about thirty minutes before we arrived at the summit. We had superb views of the Austrian Alps as well as views to the Dolomites. As you might have guessed we sat and enjoyed the views. The hut could be clearly seen from the summit at the bottom of a rock ridge. The climbing was great and before long we made it onto the snowfield in front of the hut. We spent the rest of the day playing and practicing our techniques on a nice snow hollow that the sun had created.



Wilder Freiger from the Wilder Pfaff (from the Mullerhiitte, seen on the right, the right end of the summit ridge was gained before traversing left to the true summit)

The hut was undergoing major repairs to the stairwell and toilets and everyone was sitting outside keeping out of the way. Fine sawdust drifted in the wind despite the workers efforts to keep all waste bagged to be helicoptered down. We live in green times - once it would have been despatched down the nearest crevasse. A wind turbine and solar cells provided power for the hut.

We were shown to a dormitory room which we had to ourselves - it would have been impossible to fit anyone else in anyway. Due to the refurbishments though lined the room had no bunks or fittings and we took it in turns to move about and eventually settle to a late afternoon nap.

Though the hut was actually in Italy and we only had Austrian Shillings with us the guardian did not seem to mind, she just entered it in her calculator and came out with a figure that was a little expensive.

The full works at the Mullerhutte looked a little pricey so we opted for something a little different, ordering individual dishes - but we had to wait until all the main parties had been served before they would take our order. So at about 7.30 we sat down and filled up ready for the following day.



Meanwhile there was much hammering, drilling and carrying to and fro of building materials accompanied by an all pervading stench of the drains as increasingly desperate attempts were made to get at least one toilet working before everyone settled for the night. They did it but only after consulting the



Alister taking a break at the Sulzenauhiitte in the 6000 ft descent from the Wilder Freiger

instruction manual for the vacuum flushing system.

I slept very well, I have no idea why but I did! The morning was clear and we were again the first team off onto the hill. We had to traverse the Pfaffenschneide before we could descend back to the valley.

Again as two ropes we weaved our way up the snowfield to join the rock ridge and on to the summit. We left our rucksacks at a small border customs hut that must have been used during the war to defend the Austrian territory,

We were the first team to the summit. The cloud was starting to roll in from Italy, spilling over the cols along the border ridge, so we made a hasty retreat to our rucksacks before embarking on the long walk down to the valley.



The walk out was very pleasant with lovely green valleys and pastures. The odd snow patch to cross added to excitement, Alan descend them in a most elegant way!

After a couple of hours we arrived at the hut, we invested in a drink here and sat a while and reflected on the trip. I had a quick nap.

We had completed three excellent peaks in two days and had a great time. The team was comprised of

- Alan Fletcher
- Alister renton
- Euan Seaton
- David Smith
- Michael Smith
- Richard Smith

The last name on the list is the important one. Yep, that is Michael's son, he did the whole trip and all the peaks that we did - he is only twelve years old. A name to look out for in the future.

All in all we had a great trip, good weather, excellent company and three peaks.

David's Puzzle

TEA
EAT
+ ATE
BUNS

Each letter in this sum represents a single different digit. What value does each letter represent?

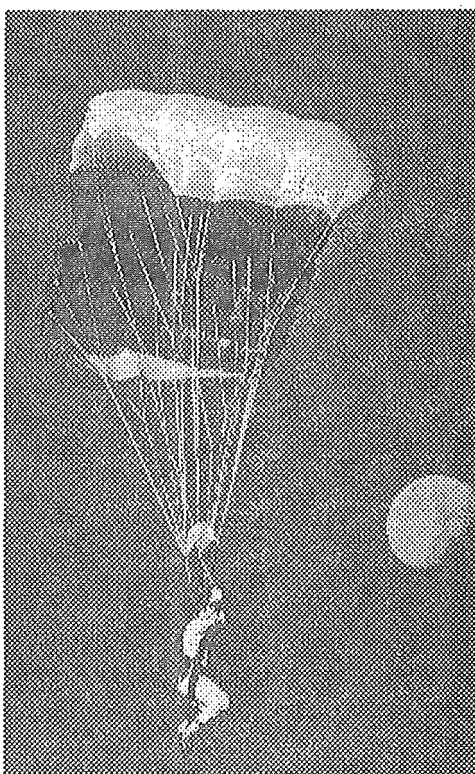
Airborne in the Alps

David Smith

From the first time I saw paragliding from the mountain tops in Chamonix I dreamed of being airborne but never thought I ever would. Tony Smythe tried to encourage me, Ion Riley had a go, so why not me. Too old perhaps? Would I break a leg? Could I justify the cost?

I wandered round to the landing field near Neustiff to witness a landing and to discover that it did not look too hazardous. I now don't think I would have overcome my reticence had it not been for encouragement from my wife. Had she been checking the insurance policies I wondered? I decided to 'go for it' and booked a flight on a tandem canopy. As luck would have it I had picked a perfect day. My co-pilot was a Tyrolean-Italian by the name Oliver, a pleasant fellow. We took the chair lift up to Elfer and Oliver carefully laid out the canopy, the connecting ropes looked more like string to me, but they were numerous enough to give confidence.

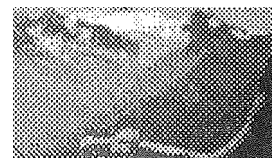
My connection to the device was a comfortable sort of back rest which once airborne became a sort of seat. The take off was a mere three strides downhill, then we soared into the air. It was a wonderful dreamlike experience floating in air, we picked up the thermals, (not the sort one might wear close to the skin), sometime they buffeted us, other times picking us up gently and changing the



A paraglider but alas not David

direction. The valley and the mountains could be seen as the birds see them. Quite incredible. Oliver took photographs for me during the flight, I would have wasted the experience had I used the camera myself. The view changed with every twist and turn, my co-pilot made sure that I got the full works.

Slowly we neared the landing field; there was a small white spot about twelve inches in diameter, surely we could not land on it; but we did. I don't think my landing was copy book stuff but I was safe and sound having had an exciting fifteen minutes. A worthwhile and enjoyable experience to be sure and only £4 per minute!



A final panorama from the Habicht to the Zuckerhut! taken before the last descent of the visit

Meanwhile, Down at 1000 metres....

Anne Edmonds

Attending the Stubaital meet with Denis Barker was my second Alpine holiday: I could not avoid comparisons with my first, the Lauterbrunnen meet in 1994 - in every respect Stubaital won hands down.

Neustift im Stubaital (993m) is half way along a wide smiling valley dotted with beautiful villages each dominated by a painted church tower and set in flowery meadows; the naturally wooded sides of the valley, topped by peaks, rise steeply from the Reutx, a comparatively unthreatening torrent (which runs off the Mutterberg glacier at the head of the valley); at Milders (1026m), the next village up the Ruetz, the Oberberg valley joins, with its own mini - torrent and glacier but minus villages. This topography provided ample opportunities for a sixty five year old who can cope with distance walking but avoids the scramble.

Three types of walks are available:-

From Schaller (1080m) right down to Fulpmes (937m) we found macadamised paths passing by immaculately kept Alpine houses (their traditionally - painted windows smothered with geraniums and petunias) which take walkers through hay meadows reminding me of the sweet smelling fields of my British childhood - before industrial farming killed off everything but ragwort and knapweed. We watched the hay harvest, the steeper slopes cut by scythe, and breathed in the pungent scents of drying blossoms. Denis and I decided that when we got too old for hill walking we shall take a package flight from Britain with half pension in

Neustift - Marcia and Mike Godden gave us the idea of this happy compromise.

Secondly, from Fulpmes to the Mutterberg a network of footpaths runs through the woods and up to the mountain huts and provides delightful but undemanding walks up to about 14000m One day we took the bus to the MutterbergaIm (1721m) - (a large hotel set in a very nasty car park) and walked through the Alpine woods and meadows past the spectacular Sulzaubach and Langenbach waterfalls, through the hamlets of Fanalt and Falbeson, meeting hardly a soul, down to Volderau (1129m) surely the source of the wanderers' song chorus - folderee, Volderau

Another day we climbed up to Kartnall (1284m) on an alp above Neustift and down into the Oberberg, then up again along a path serving a succession of valley farms and back through Milders woods and the path to Neustift. Another walk took us down the valley to Medraz then up through the Stations of the Cross Maria Waldrast path which goes up to the huts for Serles and Sonnenstein. We are happy to reach the inevitable café at 1364m (misleading called the Sonnenstein - Denis Armstrong was most impressed when I told him where I had been. I did confess). Another day we went to the aims at Inner Pfurtschell (1297m) and Verger (1266m) above Fulpmes, which could have taken us to a hut at 1634m but didn't. (Note on 'alms'; this seems to mean 'café' and every walk leads to several. Some members of our party - who shall be nameless - turned their days into apfelstreudel crawls from alm to alm).

The third type of walk is based on the seilbahn from Neustift which we used twice (lifts from other villages would

give access to equally scenic walks). We took a one way ticket to Agrar (1794m) and walked to the Elferhutte (2004m) (a sophisticated flood-lit café hotel despite its name), then along the Panoramaweg with awful (sic) views of the Hammerspitze (2634m) and Kirchdachspitze (2840m) to Zwolfnerieder at 2335m under the Elferkofl (2505m) where I terrified myself watching climbers climbing down the fixed ladders. Then down (and down and down) a steep path to Autenalm (1658m). This was the most stunning scenic walk we did, going through a landscape as lovely as the alpine and rock gardens' at the Edinburgh Botanicals. Hard walking though and we were relieved to zigzag along a forest road from the Autenalm and Neustift watching our tent grow bigger with every turn of the way. Later in the holiday we took a Hin und Zuruck on the seilbahn. Against Denis' inclination and because I wanted to walk the Panoramaweg in the opposite direction, we went from Agrar down to Pinnisalm (1560m), a beautiful woodland walk, but then I met my come-uppance - literally - in a long drag up a dusty jeep track to the Karalm (1747m) and then a steep circular climb up to the Panoramaweg at 2150m. It was a very hot day and I was exhausted when we met the Armstrongs sensibly coming in the opposite direction. This was a walk I enjoyed only in retrospect.

As well as the walks (which avoid the almost vertical climb out of the valley from Lauterbrunnen) other aspects of the holiday were also much more enjoyable.

We found Austria, unlike Switzerland, very cheap - supermarket prices, even in a tourist village, much the same as in central Edinburgh while restaurants and cafés are cheaper. The seilbahn is

very reasonable - especially for OAP's at £4 single, £5.50 return - and the bus fares compared well with Edinburgh and the Borders. And the Austrian schilling was (very properly) twenty to the pound.

I liked the Austrian attitude to visitors - clearly tourism is an economic necessity (even though fanning is still vital) but they didn't make this obvious by Swiss-style money grabbing. There were few British visitors (visually proven by the litter free paths), most being very polite Austrian or Gennan holidaymakers (with Gross Gott a dozen times a kilometre). The service in cafes, shops, public transport etc. was unfailing courteous yet unobsequious. Most people spoke some English but were civil enough to understand my four words of German (which swelled to around four hundred over the fortnight).

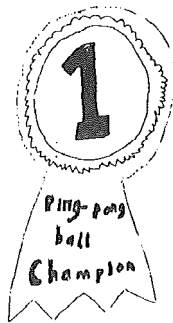
Neustift itself is delightful. The opulently painted 18th Century church interior suggests a long established prosperity reflected in the immaculate houses and splendid community centre where four energetic young men in Tyrolean costumes played for dancing (no charge) every Monday evening. A magnificent swimming pool (with a spectacular flume mercifully separated from the main pool and a cat flap out to an open air section) entertained me on our one day of uninterrupted rain. Helen Smith, fount of all knowledge about village activities and campsite facilities, found a separate open air pool for Fiona while Richard was on his first climb with Michael. She also sent the children on a four hour pony trap excursion with boating lake and barbecue costing only £2.50 each - move the decimal point to estimate what the Swiss would charge for that. There was also an open air concert

hall with a brass band performing every Friday - unfortunately not well enough to be musical and not badly enough to be funny - but it too was free; Denis tried to pay but found he had bought a drink of local schnapps from an unhygienic communal glass. The town was full of cafés and restaurants - the whole party ate together on the last night at a very good and reasonably priced restaurant sussed out by Alan Fletcher and Evan Seaton and called most incongruously for Neustift (where good taste and traditionalism was the norm) Harry's Bar.

The camp site was excellent - right next door to the supermarket and with clean, warm, insect free ablutions. No queues for showers because no coach parties of American students à la Lauterbmnnen. There was one coach with a Czech registration full of strange men in outsize babygrows who sat inside smoking and drinking all day but not washing their hair.

There was also good washing up and laundry facilities although the proximity of a midden to the clothes line left us smelling like cowherds .

One and all enjoyed a table tennis tournament in the games room organised by the Smith children and won (fairly of course) by Papa Smith.



Across from the camp site was the paraglider landing field which Denis watched wistfully but where David Smith took the plunge and won his wings. The church was close by and told us the time four times an hour - the bells did stop at 11.45 p.m but woke us at seven with a very special peal. The weather was, as Angie Linford put it,

"iffy" for the first nine days - just like Scotland and very good for walking. When it turned to blazing sun I longed for some cloud cover.

To conclude - a really delightful holiday and Stubaital strongly recommended for non-climbing members.

An apology - sorry for all the adjectives but Neustift really is that kind of place. And I'm trying to temper my enthusiasm for all things Austrian by reminding myself that the neo-Nazis there poll a higher vote than anywhere else in Europe. Also Denis points out that the strong pound would make even Switzerland cheaper this summer.

PS - Note for travellers - Denis and I drove back via the Oberammergau route - no Fussen; we recommend it. Also Ulm and Speyer are good stopover towns - easy of access, good and cheap hotels, charming pedestrianised old quarters.

PPS - Etymological note - seilbahn means literally "cable way" so when in Yorkshire the rain seils down it is coming down like cables.

Saying of the meet - Euan Seaton, "...looking forward to getting home and having a proper beer without a Z in the name."

Marmots were observed on the Pinnisjoch, we met a harvest mouse on the Sultzenau path and had a close encounter with Ibex on Habicht.

The Armstrongs found the best Apfelstreudel at Barenbad in the Obergatal and whilst sampling the delicacy were rewarded with a good sighting of three young eagles.

Cape Wrath Backpacking May 1998

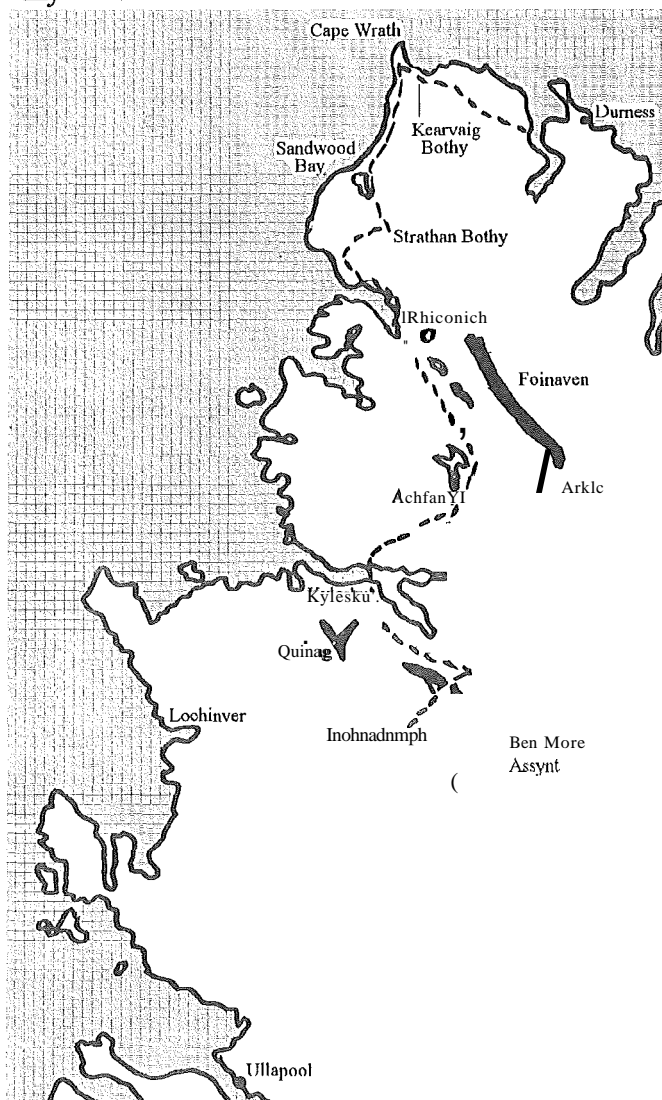
Four YRC members accepted the challenge of backpacking from Cape Wrath to Inchnadamph at the Spring Bank week. Alan Kay chose an interesting route via Sandwood bay, Arkle, Kylesku, and Glencoul to Inchnadamph. This route is part of the Cape Wrath Trail, which has recently been described in an excellent book by the photographer David Paterson.

The hills in this area are bold dramatic shapes, rising starkly from moors of rock and bog. Climb any hill to get a better view, and the landscape appears to be more water than land. Tiny lochans, grand fishing lochs, and fjord like inlets from the sea create a lacework pattern of water.

The party of four were driven to Durness by Elspeth Smith who nobly took time off from pursuing her last dozen Munros. The ferry at Durness is governed by the tides, which prevent the ferryman from operating at low water, but a short wait mattered not to the self-contained backpacker, unconcerned by time or day of the week. The ferryman drove us in a small bus parked at the Cape Wrath side of the ferry, and dropped us within a mile of Kearvaig bothy, some three miles east of Cape Wrath. This roomy bothy is in good repair with upstairs rooms, and is close to a sandy beach facing North. As we snuggled into our sleeping bags at eleven the Northwest sky was lit by orange twilight above a cold dark blue sea extending to the Faroes and Iceland.

The morning mist almost concealed the lighthouse at Cape Wrath, but the booming of the foghorn left us in no doubt that this is the most northerly part of the Scottish West Coast. Cape Wrath to Sandwood bay is a superb walk along a rugged coastline, with cliffs over 400ft high, gradually declining to the sands of the bay at the outlet from Sandwood loch. This is an outstanding area of green turf, sand and alpine plants, in contrast with the surrounding peat bog country.

Our first full day of walking finished at Strathan bothy, three miles inland from Sandwood. Two ample sized rooms make this a useful stopping point for either Kinlochbervie or the Strath Dionard track to Foinaven. We



opted to head for Kinlochbervie, to buy more gas, and to get a roof over our heads in the continuous rain.

After a road walk to Rhiconich, our route headed Southeast alongside Loch a Garbhbhaid Mor, and past the slopes of Arkle to Lone bothy, which is owned by the Ridgeway outward bound centre, and is kept locked. Walking past the bothy to Achfary, we accepted the offer of a concrete garage floor for our beds, a kind gesture by the keeper to the Duke of Westminster's estate. The Argos 8 wheeled vehicle was moved out to make room for us, and bare concrete had never seemed so welcome, as we listened to the rain and east wind outside. After carrying a 45lb pack all day, one member of the party set a sleeping record of 12 hours in bed. Our plan was to carry at least 4 or 5 days food, with another three days reserve food to be collected at Kylesku. A daily allowance of one kilo of food such as cereals, ryvita, soup, pasta, spicy sausage, custard, dried apricots, muesli bars and chocolate, provided enough energy, and allowed one to creep well satisfied into a sleeping bag after dinner.

We hoped to climb Foinaven and Arkle from this base camp, but the rain and low cloud gave little encouragement, so we trekked from Achfary over the Bealach nam Fiann and down to Kylesku. A fourth day of rain gave us a plausible excuse for spending a night in comfort at Kylesku after a meal at the Ferry Inn. Heading South, it is possible to traverse Quinag, but we chose to take the Eastern route where a path from Loch na Gainmhich leads to the top of Eas a Chual Alumn, the highest waterfall in Britain. After a climb to the Corbett Glas Bheinn, our route descended to Inchnadamph. There is an efficient

hostellfield centre here and we took the chance to spend two nights in comfort. The warden permits tents in his garden, and the Inchnadamph hotel next door, provides comfort for the inner man.

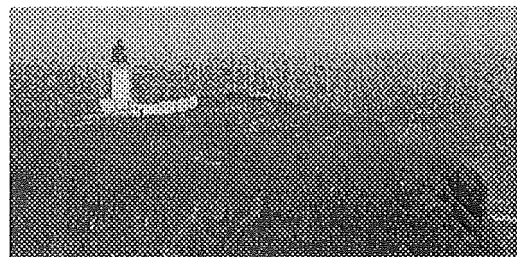
Our last day was a splendid route over the triple peaks of Quinag in excellent visibility. The view extended from Ben Loyal and Ben Hope in the North, the Hebrides to the West, and Suilven, Cul Mor, and Cul Beag to the South. This is an area that we must visit again, and take advantage of these superb hills within easy reach.

This was my first taste ofbackpacking for longer than three days, and I cannot wait to try again. My ridiculous pack weight has been carefully reduced. The secret is to review each item until one has a bare minimum The weight of each item is then carefully checked. By taking a lighter rucksack, lighter sleeping bag, and lighter waterproofs, I plan to start my next trip with a weight of 25lb not including food. So here's to the next time!

Iain Gilmour

Attendance:

President Elect, Ian Crowther
Iain Gilmour
Alan Kay
David Smith



Cape Wrath light

Long Walk - The Cheviots 19-21 June 1998

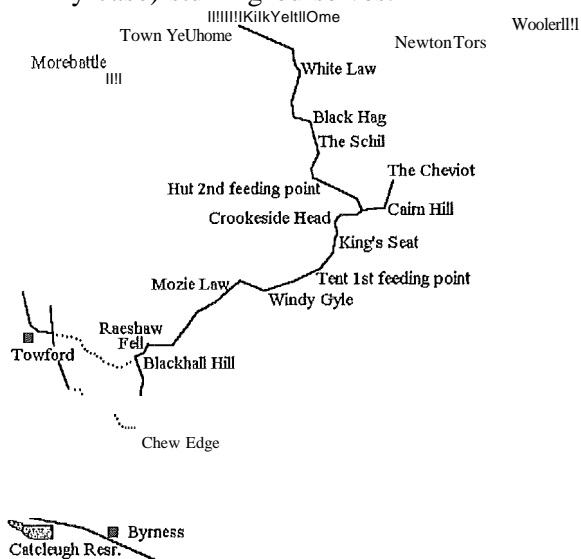
Towford Outdoor Centre is remote but accessible, beautifully set in a few acres of sloping parkland and, for the sixteen meet attendees, spacious and comfortable. All the ingredients for a successful meet were brought together and indeed it was a thoroughly happy weekend. Most people, excluding me, took advantage of the excellent facilities and ate well on Friday evening while one or two examined the nearest pub, eight miles away.

Surprisingly people were chatting at breakfast and our five am start was casual and relaxed on a mild, clear and breezy morning. My preparation has been to read 'One Man and his Bog', so my gaiters were tied securely.

Apart from our President who made a detour by Chew Green to see how the Oldies did it the rest of us made for Blackhall Hill and the Pennine Way. Once it was reached the maps went away and we tramped, quite contentedly in most cases. There was just enough bog to make us grateful of the flags laid over the worst parts.

After a while the sun appeared, the breeze remained and the views down the many valleys into Scotland and England were quite splendid. The first feeding station appeared in the form of a little tent just beyond Windy Gyle from which emanated hot dogs and tea at a rapid rate. We were never told what happened to the sheep! From here the route continued along the Way with one or two steepish slopes and longer stretches of bog, but soon the detour to The Cheviot arrived and was followed. The summit, a sea of mud, is an unappetising place so we all

returned to the ridge and, with better walking, reached the second feeding station which was just like a friendly little cafe dispensing all the right goodies. We sat there in the Sun (in my case) stuffing ourselves.



It was about this time when the logistics of the feeding stations struck me. Both were two miles uphill from a roadhead and a great deal of heavy material, especially water, had been carried there in good time for the arrival of the walkers. The previous day the helpers and even our two guest walkers had made carries onto the ridge. It made a big difference.

The homeward stretch was in bright sunshine and breeze with one or two pulls but it was pleasing to finish in a pub only to find England were following-on against South Africa! Fortunately the lift back to the Centre was about an hour later so our fluid levels were partially replenished.

It was a change to be back in time for our very good dinner and the evening was enhanced by the presence of Angie Linford who had managed her staff with authority at the second feeding station after he, the staff had lost the said station the previous day.

Lowstern 10-12 July 1998

The conversation followed the usual butterfly lines fluttering from one topic to another while the introduction of viagra- or was it Vallium- into the conversation caused one or two to blanch. A little later we had a fascinating and informative talk on the proposed trip to Bolivia during which one member fell off his chair, asleep we think, while another had to go and lie down. The latter was next seen conscious struggling to untie his shoes at 4.30 am Sunday was another good morning and many proposed to walk in the area before returning home.

It was a splendid meet, not the longest of Long Walks but none the worse for that. Thank you Iain and your seven helpers plus Angie. All nine walkers completed the course within eleven hours.

Derek Collins

Distance: 24 miles.

Attendance:

The President, Tim Josephy

Ken Aldred
Alan Brown
Derek Bush
Cliff Cobb
Derek Collins
Arthur Craven
Ian Crowther
Roger Dix (guest)
Stuart Dix (guest)
Iain Gilmour
Mike Godden
Alan Kay
Alan & Angie Linford
Harry Robinson
Michael Smith

Friday 10 July. Denis Barker and Bill Todd went looking for sport among the limestone crags by Hunt's Cross. After failing to climb the Cheese Press Stone we moved a little way south to the crags behind Tow Scar. After climbing a route I had found three years ago we looked at the right hand end of the crag. Here it splits into two tiers separated by a grassy ledge. Not attractive, but we went to look at it. Bill led off and landed on the ledge by dint of moving left and found lots of loose blocks in-between the grass. The middle part of tier two was tempting but it meant putting all your faith in one glorious jug. So the left hand end was attempted.

Suddenly all hell was let loose, everything, including Bill, was tumbling down. Bill landed back on the ledge and after making sure Denis had not been hit, completed the route. Denis came up more directly and with far less fuss.

We do not think this interesting exercise had been done before.

Saturday 11 July. Ken Aldred, Denis Barker, Mike Hartland and David Smith went walking. Over Ingleborough to Ribbleshead, up Whemside by Greensett then down to Hill Inn. Back by Douk Cave Pasture and Newby Moss to a late sitting of the excellent barbecue meal prepared by the meet leader with specialised assistance from the President Elect.

Harvey Lomas, Ged Champion, Ian Crowther, Alan Fletcher, Graham Salmon and Sweep, the troglodog, did Upper Hesleden 1, and 2 plus Sleets

Beck Pot. Ian Carr walked right round Crummackdale and Albert Chapman walked on Whemside. Your scribe went over Newby Moss to Ingleborough returning by The Allotment admiring Juniper Gulf, Long Kin East and Marble Pot. He chatted with a charming Dutch couple by Trow Gill who were making for 'the big hole'.

In spite of not being very well Alan Brown came for the meal. We hope he will have made a complete recovery by the time you read this.

Sunday 12 July. Most people were going home through the rain but Ged and companions went to grass over a dig. Alastair Renton looked in to say 'hello' and was able to put the vacuum cleaner together again and save your scribe's face.

Good weather and good food made this a most enjoyable meet thanks to Harvey.

Bill Todd

Attendance:

Ken Aldred
Denis Barker
Ged Campion
Ian Carr
Albert Chapman
Ian Crowther
Alan Fletcher
Mike Hartland
Harvey Lomas
Graham Salmon
David Smith
Bill Todd

Visitors:

Alan Brown
Alastair Renton

North Wales Meet Beudy Mawr 21 - 23 August 1998

The Rucksack Club's hut at Beudy Mawr needs no introductions; its situation at the centre of the greatest rock climbing and rock ridges south of the border is superb. The clan gathered as usual during Friday evening and obviously many had actually read the meet circular with its warning of limited number of bunks, and tents shot up on all available grass; eventually there were vacant bunks. An early call the next day, together with the innovatory continental-style breakfast meant that everyone was away in good time despite very low cloud and showers.

The President (deputising also as meet leader), together with two companions headed for Main Wall on Cem Las; its grading of H.S. evidently denotes "Horrible Slimy" and the party side-tracked to a rather easier climb, but after two pitches decided discretion was better than a slip on the greasy rock and eventually wandered around all the cliffs of Snowdon, finishing on YWyddfa.

The majority, however, decided it was a day for the Glyders, despite the fact that the whole summit must be the largest area of wildly shattered rock in the UK and in the conditions even horizontal slabs were "H.S." (see above). A party of seven started from the hut direct to the ridge, traversing the two main tops and descending via the Miners' Track to Pen-y-Gwyrdd Hotel. One couple hitched a lift to Capel Curig, traversing the ridge to Foel Goch, while others did variations on the same theme. A somewhat serpentine route was taken by a

couple, which included Mynydd Perfedd, Carnedd-y-Filiast, Elidir Fawr, Y Gam and the Devil's Kitchen in that order. A solitary member joined them on the summit of Elidir Fawr, rapidly disappearing into the mist and later covering three tops. A second solitary member climbed Cnicht and surrounding peaks. The President-elect, in his "free spirit" manner, left his car in Nant Gwynant on Friday evening, camping below Yr Aran and on Saturday "did" Yr Aran, Lliwedd and Y-Wyddfa, collected his car and joined us for dinner.

The dinner menu had a new look, the main course being an excellent and filling ham and chicken salad. Together with the continental breakfast it would appear that Tim is determined to keep - or make - us really fit. It also reduces dramatically the cooking and washing-up! Both meals were voted a great success and I'm sure will be repeated.

Heavy rain, turning torrential, greeted us on Sunday morning and to the writer's knowledge everyone headed straight home. One member took advice that a short walk at Bettws might be O.K, the woods providing good shelter. Man and dog got wet.

One member had the misfortune to hurt an ankle quite severely, high up on the ridge, resulting in a very painful descent. His companions were impressed by his fortitude and his forbearance when every passer-by gawped and wanted the grisly details. I am pleased to say that the patient is making excellent progress (when this report is published, I hope he will be fully recovered).

In spite of only one day's walk, the meet was a great success and maybe

summer meets in Wales will feature more in the future.

Our thanks to the Rucksack Club for the use of their hut, and particularly to Tim for taking over the meet and for his originality in catering.

Attendance:

The President, Tim Josephy

Denis Barker

Alan Brown

Derek Bush

Derek Collins

Clifford Cobb

Arthur Craven

Ian Crowther

Roger Dix (G)

Stuart Dix (P.M.)

Eddie Edwards

Mike Godden

David Hick

Alan Kay

David Martindale

Jim Rusher

John Schofield

Derek Smithson

George Spenceley

DAVID SMITH

Robertson Lamb Hut Great Langdale

Joint meet with the
Rucksack & Wayfarers Clubs
18 - 20 September 1998

Friday morning began wet and misty in the Lakes but by afternoon when some twenty members of the YRC, Wayfarers and Rucksack Clubs began gathering at the R.L.H. hut the sun had broken through to give an excellent start to the weekend. Those that had been on the hill during the day returned to the hut via the New Dungeon Ghyll suitable refreshed, The two thin gentlemen namely Ken Aldred and Harold Mellor produced a gourmet meal of chicken in tarragon and orange sauce. This was followed by tinned rice pudding albeit ambrosia. What was said about the beer at 30p a

can is unrepeatable but comments about the wine at £2 a bottle were a shade better.

Saturday morning dawned misty with clouds on the hills. Our President Tim accompanied by Michael Smith and Mark Pryor decided on a tough trek mainly at the request of Mark who starts a round the world trip at the end of November. There is absolutely no truth to rumour that he is leaving the country for two years just because Ian is our next President.

They crossed the Crinkles and over to Scafell via Bowfell, returning back by the Pikes and Jack's Rake. Other groups went via the Band up to Three Tarns and the Crinkles. David Smith and Raymond Harben ventured out onto Scout Crag, got halfway up, decided it was too slippery and abseiled down. They then climbed up



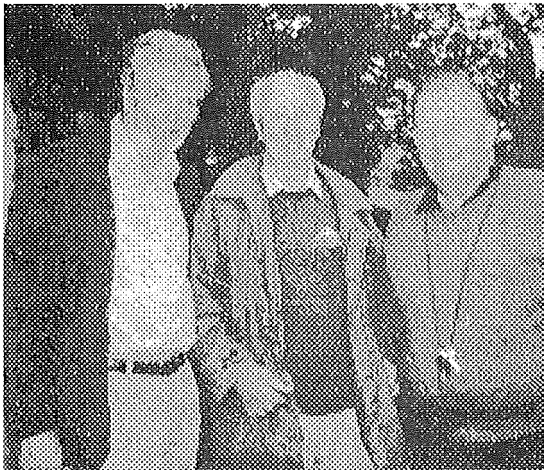
Bill Lofthouse, Bob Hughes, Tim Josephy, Mark, Harold, Ray, David, Ken and Jeff enjoying the warm weather outside RLH

to Sargeant Man by which time the sun had broken through to give fine views in all directions. They then joined the hordes crossing the Pikes and down Stake Pass. Most parties seemed to make it to the New Dungeon Ghyll to quench their thirsts with "real" ale.

The evening saw the clouds come down on the mountains again. With 29 coming to dinner our chefs had decided to prepare a cold buffet table which was enjoyed by all.

Sunday morning dawned misty again although an occasional patch of blue was seen. It was very humid. David Smith having somewhat failed on the rocks the previous day was persuaded by the President to accompany him and Michael Smith to White Ghyll where Slab Route One was climbed. Other parties stayed low, the catering party going to LHG via Blea Tarn. By late morning the sun had broken through to give a gloriously hot afternoon to provide a fitting end to an excellent weekend.

Raymond Harben



Bill Rycroft, Maurice and Neville

Attendance:

YRC

The President, Tiro Josephy

Ken Aldred

Denis Barker

Alan Brown

Charlie Clarkson (G)

Ian Crowther

Tim Edwards (G)

Eddie Edwards

Mike Godden

Raymond Harben

Mike Hartland

Jeff Hooper

Alan Linford

Bill Lofthouse

Mark Pryor

Alister Renton

Neil Renton (G)

Harry Robinson

John Schofield

David Smith

Michael Smith

Derek Smithson

Tony Smythe

Bill Todd

Maurice Wilson

Rucksack

Neville Coeuille

Eric Cook

Bill Rycroft

Wayfarers

Bob Hughes

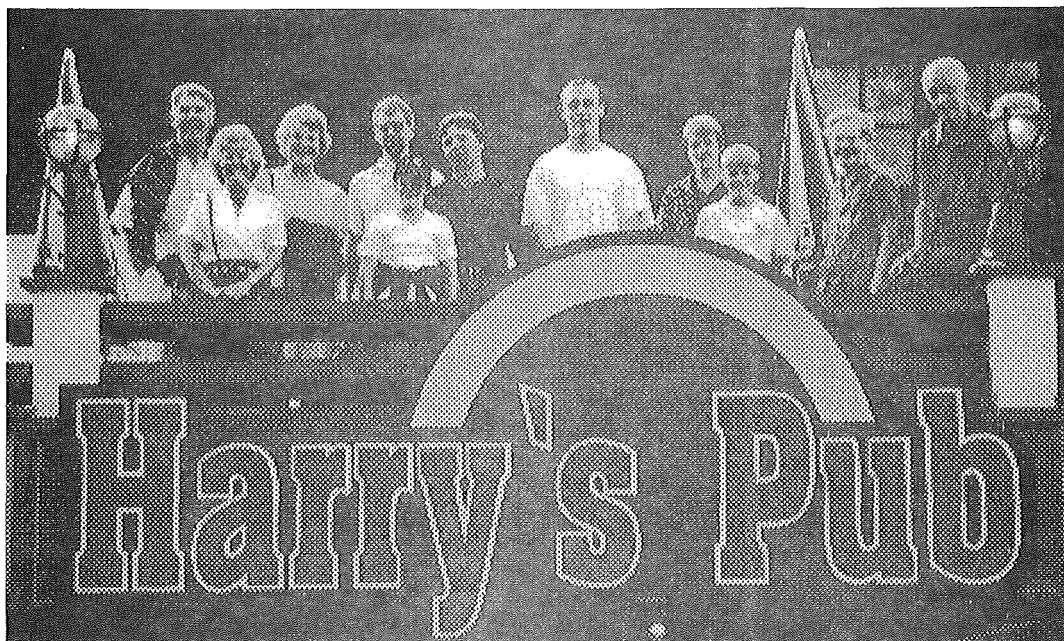
Hal Jacob

Harold Mellor

Snapshots from the 1998 Alpine Meet in the Stubaital



The 'team' assemble in the campsite before setting off for the Hildesheimer Hutte, Smith's Michael, Richard and David, Ellen Renton, Joanne Moorhouse, Alexander Renton, Euan Seaton, Alan Fletcher and Alister Renton.



The 'end of meet' meal out in Neustift, Denis Armstrong, Angie Linford, Joan Armstrong, Michael and Fiona Smith, Alan Fletcher, Euan Seaton, Helen and Richard Smith, Elspeth and David Smith.

Photographs by Alan Linford