

Yorkshire Rambler



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Foreword by the President

As I write, I have enjoyed five excellent meets since assuming the Presidency. My thanks to all concerned. This year's Glen Etive meet was so popular that I have changed my mind and we *will* have a 25th Inbhir Fhaolain meet next year, but in March! Unfortunately, we have recently lost several valued members to the grim reaper. The obituaries appear elsewhere in this issue, but I want to pay a personal tribute to the late Bill Woodward. Bill was a genuine, and hard, all-rounder who, especially in the sixties and seventies spent a lot of time with the YRC and with individual members, including myself, both at home and in far flung places. His attitude to life was very *laid-back* and the words of the old song could almost have been written about Bill...

"I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler, I'm a long way from home,
and if you don't like me then leave me alone.

I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink: when I'm dry
and if 'moonshine' don't kill me I'll live 'til I die."



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

Catamite Hole, East Kingsdale Ged Campion

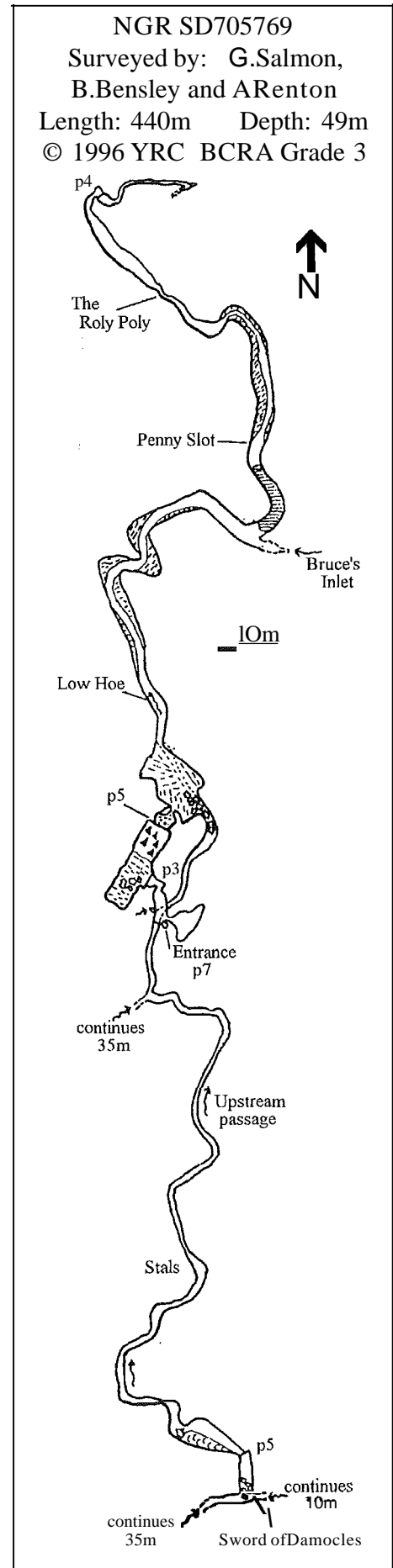
Work on Catamite Hole started approximately three years ago, in 1996, following preliminary investigations of the area between Crescent Pot and King Pot where there was significant drainage but virtually no known cave passage. The entrance to Catamite Hole is in a small shake hole where a stream flows in wet weather. A narrow entrance with a large wedged gritstone boulder drops 6m onto boulders in a rift. The rift descends to a 3m climb and boulder floor at the bottom, marking the extent of the previous exploration.

However, an encouraging draught blowing between the boulders seemed a good enough reason to extend the cave here. Over the next couple of months considerable work went into sinking a 4m shaft through loose material.

Progress became increasingly encouraging as the noise of a stream bubbling beneath could be clearly heard in wet weather. On a cold December day when the Dales were plastered with fresh snow and the slopes of Braida Garth were avalanching, a breakthrough was made.

The removal of wedged boulders at the foot of the shaft revealed a short crawl which opened on to a 4m pitch descending into a fault chamber full of boulders. The chamber sloped away to the head of a further pitch dropping down a vertical boulder and mud consolidated wall. At the bottom the passage appeared blocked but a perfectly formed 2m brown cylindrical shaft, later to be christened the chocolate speedway, seemed to offer some hope of penetrating the choke below.

Returning the following weekend with lifting tackle three large boulders were removed and a gaping space revealed, we slid down an unstable boulder slope into an impressive stream chamber.



Considerably encouraged we ventured upstream where pristine, delicate straws were in abundance. An inlet joined the mainstream before it was necessary to crawl to avoid breaking any formations. After 20m crawling and a squeeze over a false floor- we climbed up into a small aven to the head of a 3m pitch. Below the passage bifurcated both leads becoming too narrow after 35m and 10m respectively.

The downstream end of the cave however was disappointing - the passage after only a few metres diminished to a low bedding where the stream flowed tantalisingly on. The next few weekends were spent clearing rocks and silt out of the crawl. Hard work in cold wet conditions. The bedding was so low in places it was difficult to see what was being excavated. At last, however, the passage height increased marginally allowing just enough room to edge through and clear the obstruction from the other side. After crawling in the stream around a few bends we encountered an inlet carrying a sizeable flow.

Downstream a further constriction halted progress - a small rock pillar blocking the passage. This was removed the following weekend to reveal yet another constriction in the stream, the Penny Slot where the passage assumed a particularly hydrophobic character.

Once through this, the passage enlarged in classic keyhole profile, some sections reminiscent of Crescent Pot. After 3m the stream returned to low bedding and an oxbow tube had to be unblocked to give access to more crawling on the other side. An awkward squeeze gave way to a 5m pitch and standing room. The stream however flowed miserably on into a

low bedding, round a corner and promptly disappeared into a slot.

Work at the end of the cave has continued but the site is particularly dismal though the draught continues to be encouraging.

With the discovery of the East Kingsdale Master Cave to the north and developments in Dale Barn to the south, much potential would seem to exist around the Lords Top area. M. Cascoyne in 1973 postulated that owing to the limited surface run-off on East Kingsdale few sizeable caves were accessible. Much drainage consists of slow seepage from bogs and glacial till resulting in narrow and often impenetrable cave passages developing, for example Broken Finger Pot and the entrance series to Crescent Pot. Nevertheless, where these narrow vadose fissures meet faults or major joints - the results can be spectacular, for example Growling Hole and Spectacle Pot.

Catamite Hole bears a close resemblance to Crescent Pot and may well form one of its main tributaries - though dye testing has as yet proved inconclusive. The upstream section of Catamite goes some way to explaining the drainage of the surrounding area. Short Cave, Little Demon Pot and Thunder Thighs Hole would appear to be feeder streams. To date 400m of passage have been discovered to a depth of 40m

The team consisted of Ged Campion, Bruce Bensley, Graham Salmon, Shaun Penny, Eddy Edkins and Alistair Renton.

A version of this article appeared in Caves & Caving, Summer 1998

Robert M. Brench, Alum Pot, and the Fifty Shilling Tailors: 1935

S.A. Craven

The fourth decade of this century was not a prosperous time for most people in England; and if extra money could be earned on the side, so much for the better. One such aspiring entrepreneur was the late Robert M. Brench of 36 Barrowby Avenue, Austhorpe, Leeds, a founder member of the Leeds Cave Club which flourished from 1930 until 1939¹.

Leeds at that time was the centre of the ready-to-wear clothing industry. One of the retailers was Prices, Tailors, Ltd. of Cardigan Crescent, Kirkstall Road, Leeds 4. It traded under the name, "The Fifty Shilling Tailors", because it sold suits for £2/10/0, or £2.50 in modern currency.

Brench thought that a suitable advertising gimmick, and test of the fifty shilling suit, would be to wear it to the bottom of Alum Pot and back, dry clean it afterwards, and publicise the predictable minimal damage.

Accordingly he took his camera into Alum Pot and took a series of photographs of cavers in the standard dress of the day. He then prepared an album of 18 of these photographs and added the advertising copy.

The album is 177mm high x 280mm wide with six pages, and front & back covers. The front cover is entitled, "Alum Pot & The Fifty Shilling

Tailors", and is embellished with a photograph of the Alum Pot plantation. Inside, the photographs follow the progress of "Mr. X." from the surface to the terminal sump. The photographs are unremarkable; but the text is the typical hyperbole of the advertising business:

Alum Pot on the Yorkshire Moors, 297 feet deep & England's most spectacular pot-hole is to be the scene of the greatest & most daring test ever carried out by any Tailor. Mr. X, seen in the right foreground wearing a STOCK 50/- suit, is to make the complete descent through all the passages. What will be the result; will the suit stand the terrific gruelling it will receive? We think so! ... How will this stock suit stand the strain? ...

Mr. X. is then shewn descending a ladder.

156 wooden rungs before he can rest; all rubbing against his suit while the rough rock ledges seen at the top have bumped & battered him & covered one side of him with slime & mud. This mighty rock crevice has claimed our man - he can stand the strain but will our suit? We shall see...

Mr. X. has now landed on the Ledge, about 130 feet from the surface.

Immediately on the right the ladder follows on over the next 70 feet of this awful gulf. In the corner can be seen the waterfall, now split up into spray in its long descent. It damps the clothes but not the spirits of those on the Ledge. Our suit seems to have lost its 'Showroom Finish' but we can hardly see it now for mud & water. We are hoping it will pull through alright.

¹ Craven S.A. (1976) "The Leeds Cave Club 1930 - 1939" J. Craven Pothole Club 5, 217 - 220.

ALUM POT



The Fifty Shilling Tailors

Mr. X. then enters Lower Long Churn Cave from below.

The stalactites on the right are smooth enough but the roof rubs & scratches the clothes while a mud bank on the left is doing its worst to spoil our trousers. Mr. X. says the suit is going fine so far, not a tear & not a single seam has given way. It's too soon to crow, however, for many more dangers are ahead. Will it come through?

At the Double Shuffle Pool,

One slip and ... well the pool is 9 feet deep & the water is almost freezing in this underground chamber. There is just the one little foothold and no handhold - an agonising moment for Mr. X. while the photographer did his job. Mud, rough rock & lime are trying to work their ravages on our test suit but so far NOT EVEN A BUTTON HAS PARTED COMPANY. ... and Mr. X. is hurrying to his next Death Trap.

This was the "horrible" Letter Box,

evidently owned by his Satanic Majesty because it's a huge ragged crack about 30 feet deep with jagged boulders at the bottom. Over this crack he has crawled slid & wormed his way and after going down a 50 feet ladder with a small waterfall down his neck he takes a breather & admires one of Nature's most magnificent pictures. Our test suit now looks a bit like Drainpipe Jim's would after a day in wet clay. ... However, there's hope because so far the suit hasn't lost its shape.

Mr. X. has now arrived at The Bridge.

He has come down 15 feet of rock ledge covered with dripping wet moss - ugh! that was cold - & is now back in daylight. He has walked round a narrow ledge on the left with a drop of 100 feet below him if he had slipped - but he says he isn't going to test the suit that far. ... One slip in any direction means instant Death - but Mr. X. & his 50/- stock suit go gaily on.



The top of the main ladder

would be available on request at any branch of the Fifty Shilling Tailors.

On 25 June 1935 Brench offered the portfolio and text to Prices, Tailors, Ltd. The photographs would cost £3/11/6 (£3.58) each, or £64-/7/0 (£64.35) the lot; and Price's "agents would handle the space in the usual way". Three days later a Director of Prices, Tailors

He then descends to the bottom of the Main Shaft.

He has to come on down the steps of the cascade over which the water is running so he'll get another wetting. The suit is nearly at the end of its test & is still going strong. Mud, sludge, rough rock & water have spoilt its looks but we are not dismayed

The model has now reached the sump.

The stream he has followed has been joined by a mighty thundering waterfall just behind & the two streams have joined & flow into this pool. Back to daylight now & let's see what the suit looks like when it has been to the cleaners.

The plan then was to take the suit to Crocketts Cleaners who, presumably, would restore it to its original pristine condition with the appropriate certificates of authenticity.

It seems that the photographs and text would be split into several consecutive parts for serial advertisements, and that a copy of the complete album

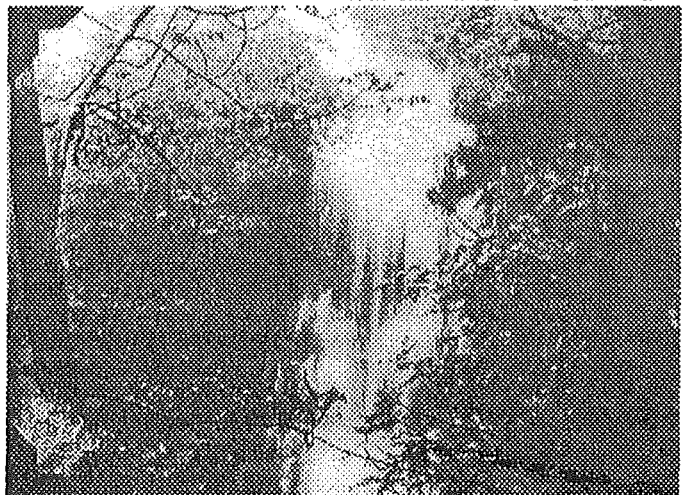
replied, declining the offer.

There is in the letter no indication of the reason for the refusal. Perhaps the hyperbole was too exaggerated for the company. On the other hand the photographs, while good, are not outstanding. Another possibility is the apparent high asking price for the photographs - each one would cost more than the suit which would be promoted!

Acknowledgement:

I am grateful to the late R. M. Brench Esq. for his reminiscences and for the gift of the album.

Waterfall after one hour's rain



Yorkshire Ramblers at Ingleborough Cave

as Recorded in the
Ingleborough Cave Visitors'
Book

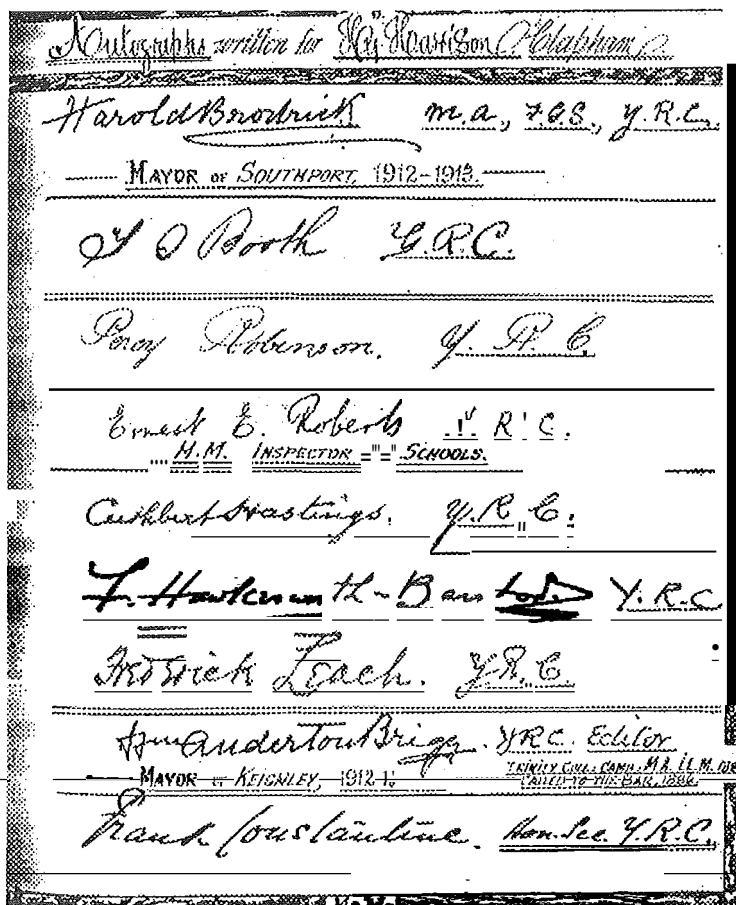
S.A. Craven

Ingleborough Cave, about 2½ km. north of Clapham, is well known to every member of the YRC. It was discovered in September 1837 when estate workers broke the stalagmite barrier at the entrance, thereby exposing about three-quarters kilometre of stream passage which was immediately opened to tourists'. This was the first cave dig in the northern Pennines, and was the first northern cave to be surveyed.

The first custodian of the Cave was Josiah Harrison, who held office until his death in 1888. He is said to have kept a visitors' book', but its location is unknown.

Josiah Harrison's grandson, Henry Harrison, was appointed custodian of the Cave in 1888, at the young age of 22 years'. He kept two complementary visitors' books, both of which have survived.

The major book is 19.5 x 16.0 cm, bound in red quarter leather and corners. On the outside cover has been tooled in gold:



AUTOGRAPHS
AND
QUOTATIONS
Written for
H. HARRISON,
Clapham,
Yorks.

Few of the signatures are dated. There are 24 blank sheets, followed by 70 pages autographed on one side of the paper, and a further 64 blank pages.

The reason for this unused paper remains a mystery, especially as there is another, smaller and cheaper, paperback booklet in which some of the autographs have been repeated. This booklet is 17.8 x 11.2 cm with 12 pages autographed on both sides of the paper. All these signatures are dated.

¹ Farrer J.W. (1849) Quart. J. Geol. Soc. Lond. Vol.S. 49 - 51.

² MitcheU A. & MeUor D.(C.) (1972) J.Craven Pothole Club Vol.4.(6), 326.

³ West Yorkshire Pioneer 2 Apr. 1937 p. 11.

Of the over four hundred autographs there are 42 of members of the YRC., nine of which are reproduced here. All 42 are transcribed below (in bold), with Harrison's comments in standard font, and my comments in italics. The absence of a spacer between the signatures indicates that they are consecutive, a point to be borne in mind when attempting to date them

Harrison maintained his book until his death on 16 December 1938 after nearly half a century of service'. The paucity of dates makes it impossible to date the commencement of the book. The earliest date is that of Prof G.A. Lebour of Sheffield University on 13 June 1899, but does not appear on the first page. This signature is on a separate piece of paper which has been glued into the book, suggesting that the album was acquired after Lebour's visit. On the other hand, Harrison may have simply mislaid the book. It is clear from the many blank spaces, and from the smaller paperbook book, that the autographs were not written in chronological order.

After Harrison's death in 1938, the autographs passed to the Lord of the Manor, Sydney James Farrer, who died in December 1946⁵. Sometime thereafter the books were borrowed from his widow, Violet M.P. Farrer, by Eli Simpson of the British Speleological Association. Simpson failed to return them. After his death in 1962 they were acquired by Messrs.

Richard Hollett & Son of Sedbergh, from whom I bought them in 1973⁷.

The members may have signed the book either when visiting the cave, or on passing the entrance en route to elsewhere on the southern slopes of Ingleborough. The presence of signatory members at Ingleborough Cave or elsewhere in the neighbourhood is listed in the table";



⁴ Craven Herald 23 Dec. 1938 p. 7. (Skipton).

⁵ Anon. (1949) J. Yorkshire Ramblers' Club 7. (25), 253.

⁶ Letter dated 02 Dec. 1971 V.M.F. Farrer to S.A. Craven.

⁷ (Plant 1.) (1973) Craven Herald and Pioneer 13 July p. 6.

⁸ Craven S.A. (1996) "A Speleological Appreciation of the YRC on the Occasion of its Centenary 1892 - 1992" Yorkshire Rambler (6), 32 - 45.

Date	Venue	Signatory Members
14 Sep. 1895	Gaping Gill	Calvert, Gray et al
05 Oct. 1895	Jib Tunnel	Bellhouse, et al
Dec. 1895	Gaping Gill	Booth et al
May 1896	Gaping Gill	Booth, Calvert, Gray, Scriven, Slingsby et al
23 Aug. 1896	Ingleborough Cave	Calvert et al.
06 Sep. 1896	Ingleborough Cave	Calvert, Gray et al
29 May 1903	Gaping Gill	Booth, Buckley, Brodrick, Constantine, Dwerryhouse, R.J. Farrer, Hill, Horn, Parsons, Puttrell et al
June 1903	Ingleborough Cave	Hill et al
21 May 1904	Jockey Hole	Booth, Brodrick, Buckley, Constantine, Hastings, Hill et al
21 Aug. 1904	Rift Pot	Booth, Brodrick, Buckley, Constantine, Hastings, Hill, Horn, Parsons, Scriven et al
Apr. 1905	NewbyMoss	Brodrick, Buckley, Hastings, Hill et al
09 July 1905	Gaping Gill	Booth, Buckley, Hastings, Horn, Parsons et al
Summer 1905	Ingleborough Cave	Hill et al
05 June 1906	Gaping Gill	Booth, Brodrick, Buckley, Constantine, Dwerryhouse, Hastings, Hill, Horn, Leach, Puttrell, Robinson, Slingsby et al
28 July 1906	Gaping Gill	Booth, Buckley, Constantine, Hastings et al
18 May 1907	Gaping Gill	Booth, Buckley, R.J. Farrer, Hastings, Horn, Leach, Robinson, Rule et al
21 Sep. 1907	Gaping Gill	Booth, Buckley, Constantine, Hastings, Horn, Leach et al
28 May 1909	Gaping Gill	Barstow, Booth, Buckley, Collie, Horn, Roberts, Rule et al
26 June 1909	Car Pot	Brodrick & Rule
July 1909	Car Pot	Booth, Brodrick, Buckley, Hastings, Hill, Horn, Rule et al
16 July 1909	Gaping Gill	Horn, Parsons, Rule et al
12 May 1910	Gaping Gill	Barstow, Booth, Brodrick, Hastings, Rule, Seatree, Slingsby et al
11 June 1910	Gaping Gill	Booth, Brodrick, Robinson, Rule et al
03 June 1911	Gaping Gill	Brodrick, Hastings, Horn, Rule, et al
25 May 1912	Gaping Gill	Barstow, Brodrick, Buckley, Rule et al
1912 & 1913	Ingleborough Cave	Brodrick et al
10 May 1913	Gaping Gill	Booth, Brodrick, Hastings, Robinson, Rule et al
June 1913	Foxholes	Brodrick, Hill et al
Aug. 1913	Foxholes	Hill, Rule et al
20 Sep. 1913	Ingleborough Cave	Brodrick, Hill et al
July 1914	Foxholes	Brodrick, Hastings, Hill et al
22 May 1920	Gaping Gill	Booth, Roberts, Robinson et al
1920	Disappointment	(Unknown)
1920	Ingleborough Cave	Roberts et al
13 May 1921	Gaping Gill	Buckley, Roberts et al
06 June 1924	Gaping Gill	Buckley, Horn, Roberts, Robinson, Seaman et al
04 June 1927	Gaping Gill	Buckley, Horn, Roberts, Robinson, Seaman et al
28 Aug. 1927	Gaping Gill	Buckley, Horn, Roberts, Robinson, Seaman et al
03 Sep. 1927	Gaping Gill	Buckley, Horn, Roberts, Robinson, Seaman et al
11 Sep. 1927	Jockey Hole	Roberts et al
26 May 1928	Gaping Gill	(Unknown)
08 Mar. 1930	Ingleborough Cave	Roberts et al
27 Sep. 1930	Rift Pot	(Unknown)
23 May 1931	Gaping Gill	(Unknown)
15 May 1932	Gaping Gill	Yates et al.
02 June 1933	Gaping Gill	(No signatory)
02 July 1933	Rift Pot	Roberts, Yates et al
09 June 1935	Gaping Gill	Leach et al
June 1938	Gaping Gill	Roberts et al

The above comparison of the YRC members' attendance at meets, with the signatures in the Cave book

transcribed below, reveals only one correlation viz. that of Harold Yates who signed on 17 May 1932 during

the annual Gaping Gill winch meet. Most of the autographs therefore remain undated.

The Major Book:

J. Norman Collie.

Dr. J. Norman Collie LL.D., F.R.S.
University of London. University College:
Professor of Organic Chemistry. Author
of "Climbing in the Himalaya & other
Mountain Ranges." "Climbs &
Exploration in the Canadian Rockies"
[Hugh M. Stutfield & J. Norman Collie,
F.R.S.]

Hon. Member 1909; died 1942.

H. Yates Esq. Y.RC.

*Elected 1928; Life Member 1963; died
1979.*

H.H. Bellhouse

2 Sep. 1937.

*Founder Member 1892; Hon. Treasurer
1892 - 1893; Hon. Secretary 1893 -
1898; President 1927 - 1929; Life
Member 1931; died 1943.*

Arthur Dwerryhouse D.Se., FoG.S.,
MRI.A.

University Lecturer in Geology, Belfast.
[Late Leeds University.]

Elected 1904; resigned 1909.

Will, Cecil Slingsby. Y.Re.

*Hon. Member 1893; President 1893-
1903; Vice-President 1903 - 1908;
Committee 1905 - 1908; died 1929.*

Harold Brodrick MA., F.G.S., Y.RC.

Mayor of Southport, 1912 - 1913.

*Elected 1903; Vice-President 1914-
1919; Life Member 1933; died 1946.*

Brodrick & Hill surveyed as far as

*Giant's Hall in summer 1912, and
continued further in summer 1913⁹.*

T.S. Booth Y.RC.

*Elected 1893; Committee 1896 - 1899,
1902 - 1905, 1909 - 1913, 1915 - 1919;
Vice-President 1907 - 1909; President
1929 - 1930; Life Member 1931; died
1938.*

Percy Robinson. Y.RC.

*Elected 1906; Committee 1915 - 1919;
Vice-President 1922 - 1924; Life Member
1936; died 1948.*

Ernest E. Roberts Y.Re.

HM. Inspector of Schools.

*Elected 1908; Vice-President 1919 -
1922; Hon. Editor 1920 - 1948;
President 1923 - 1925; Life Member
1938; died 1960. Roberts was there in
1920¹⁰.*

Cuthbert Hastings. Y.RC.

*Elected 1900; Committee 1905 - 1909,
1911 - 1919; Vice-President 1909 - 1911;
Life Member 1931; died 1943.*

F. Hawksworth Barstow, Y.RC.

*Elected 1908; Committee 1910 - 1913;
Life Member 1938; died 1955.*

Fredrick Leach. Y.R.e.

*Elected 1892; Hon. Secretary 1893-
1894; Committee 1894 - 1896, 1906-
1908, 1910 - 1911, 1913 - 1919; Vice-
President 1908 - 1910; President 1925 -
1927; Life Member 1931; died 1954.*

Will, Anderton Brigg. YRC. Editor.

Mayor of Keighley, 1912 to Trinity
Coll: Camb. M.A. LL.M.. 1886. Called to
the Bar, 1886.

*Elected 1894; Hon. Editor 1909 - 1920;
President 1919 - 1922; Life Member
1931; died 1938.*

⁹ Hill C.A. (1912) "Clapham Cave" J.
YRC. VolA. 107 - 127.

¹⁰ (Roberts E.B.) (1930) "Clapham Cave"
J. YRC. Vol1.6. 78.

Frank Constantine. Hon. Sec. Y.R.C.

Elected 1893; Hon. Secretary 1894-1920; Committee 1920 - 1921; Vice-President 1921 - 1923; Life Member 1931, 'died 1948.

W. Parsons. Y.R.e.

Principal of the Training College, Beckett's Park. Leeds. President of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club 1912 to 1915,

Elected 1896; Committee 1897 - 1898, 1900 - 1902, 1904 - 1906, 1907 - 1910, 1919 - 1920; Vice-President 1902 - 1904; Hon. Member 1939, 'died 1944.

Charles A. Hill. MA. MD. RC. Y.R.C. MR.C.S. L.R.C.P. D.P.H.

Honorary Physician Liverpool Consumption Hospital, Vice-President of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club

Elected 1903; Vice-President 1912 - 1914; died 1914. Brodrick & Hill surveyed as far as Giants Hall in summer 1912, and continued further in summer 1913¹¹.

Alex. Rule. MSc. Ph.D. Y.R.C.

Lecturer in Chemistry Liverpool University.

Elected 1907; Vice-President 1910 - 1912; President 1934 - 1936; Life Member 1937; died 1960.

J.H. Buckley Y.R.C.

Swiss Villa, Victoria Road, Headingley. Hon. Librarian Yorkshire Ramblers Club. Died April 25th. 1932. Aged 60 years.

Elected 1901; Hon. Librarian 1903-1924; Vice-President 1911 - 1913; Committee 1924 - 1925, 1926 - 1929; died 1932.

Arthur E. Horn Y.R.C.

¹¹ Craven S.A. (1976) "The Yorkshire Speleological Association: Britain's first caving club" Brit. Caver Vol.64. 27 - 35.

Elected 1901; Committee 1903 - 1906, 1921 - 1922, 1930 - 1931; Hon. Treasurer 1906 - 1921; Vice-President 1913 - 1915; President 1931 - 1932; Life Member 1931; died 1954.

B. Holden. Y.R.C.

(the Second). Elected 1913; Committee 1921 - 1922; died 1946.

Ralph F. Stobart Y.R.C.

Elected 1910, 'resigned 1932.

Wm. Horace Albrecht. Y.R.C.

Elected 1909, 'died 1942.

J.A. Ormerod Y.R.C.

Elected 1905; resigned 1922.

C. Scriven Y.R.C.

Captain of the 2nd. W. Yorks. Royal Engineers. Volunteers. Captain 155th. Co.. Royal Defence Corps. 1914-17.

Elected 1892; Committee 1892 - 1895, 1901 - 1903; Hon. Treasurer 1895 - 1898, 'Vice-President 1906 - 1908, 'Hon. Member 1923; Life member 1931; died 1938.

James Anson Farrer

Educ: at Eton, [Five years pupil of Dr. Warre, at Eton.] Balliol Coll: Oxon. 1st.c1.CL: Called to the Bar at Middle Temple. 20th. April 1875. IP. for Yorkshire. High Sheriff. 1897. Contested South Westmorland as Lib: 1892. & Skipton Div. of Yorks: 1895. (Born on the 24th. July 1849.) (Died at Ingleborough on the 21st. June 1925.) Author of "The New Leviathan", "Paganism & Christianity", "Primitive Manners & Customs", "Military Manners & Customs," "Books condemned to be burnt." etc: etc:.

Hon. Member 1912; died 1925.

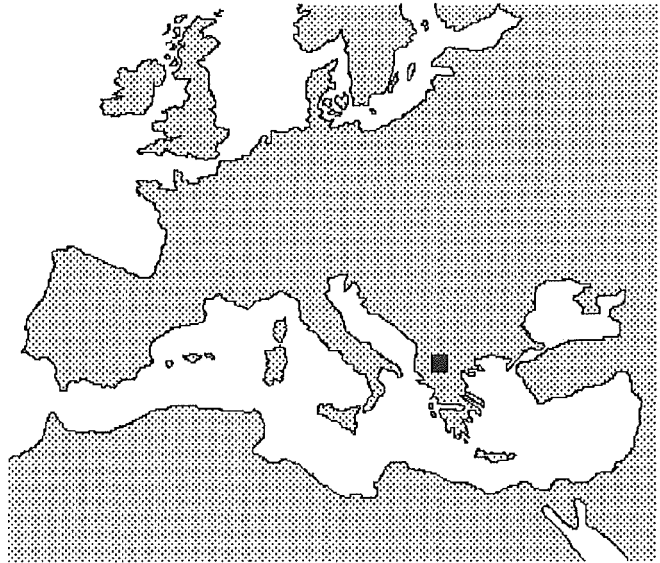
Reginald Farrer

Educ: Private tutorship and at Balliol Coll: Oxon. F.R.M.S., J.P. for Yorkshire. Contested the Ashford Div: of Kent as

Macedonian Caves

Harvey Lomas

In July 1998 I joined the Craven Pothole Club trip to the relatively new Republic of Macedonia, once part of the old Republic of Yugoslavia. We converted an old ambulance and, in true style, travelled the motorways across the expanses of France and Italy, through Greece eventually arriving in Macedonia after three days. This account is based on the record in my diary.



We arrived on Monday, 20th July, having driven across France, the whole of Italy to Brendesi, over to Igomenetsa into northern Greece. I had not previously travelled to this part of Greece with its winding roads over impressive mountains. The route took us very near Thessalonica and through fertile plains to the Macedonian border.

The Greeks were very annoyed that we were going across to Macedonia, as one of our party called it, instead of the F.Y.R.M. the former Republic of Macedonia as they called the place. Across the border and a man waited dressed in a white coat, asking 5DM for the privilege of driving through his horrible disinfection trough. There was no problem with our access to Macedonia, instantly the standard of the infrastructure had gone down and the lack of good signs on the roads was noticeable especially to Skopje.

We arrived at Matka near to sunset, it is an hydroelectric station our place of residence is on the side of the lake in an attractively narrow gorge. The caves are accessed by means of a boat ride up the Matka Gorge.

Matka were our hosts have an hotel have accommodated us all in a room, it over looks great spires of white rock which rise out of lesser crags and trees. People make trips up the side of the fast flowing waters of the river Treska to eat and drink at the restaurant, and to fish in the great pool that makes up the final feature before the dam, all of this is overlooked by a small 13th century church which stands quietly amidst this man made location.

In the evening there was a barbecue with our hosts, woodsmoke, beer, music, and cooked sheep's head were to our delight, this lasted until well into the early hours

Wed, 22 July, Matka: We have just returned from Skopje and a very hot afternoon travelling round the town doing some souvenir shopping. Why do we do it? Especially in the heat of the afternoon when all the shops are quite rightly shut because of this baking heat.

In the morning we explored a cave some twelve kilometres to the north west of Skopje. We drove through villages that were rustic in appearance, but well lived in. Rubble stands in mounds and jobs lie there waiting to

be completed. Typically a wall half built, holes in the road that some day may get filled in with stone. Old men, sat on donkeys, stared at us as we breezed through the *street of a thousand jobs in progress* out to open country.

The clouds would not shield us from the mid-morning sun, as we changed in a curious dugout leading to a pool of water at the end. What fed the pool was a mystery. The dugout was in the side of a dried up river. The cave was up on the side of the channel, it was a series of dry chambers with a black coating of mud. Each chamber being connected by crawls followed by climbs up and down through a phreatic maze. We all said this was crawling we had expected to leave behind in Britain. But still we pressed on to a conclusion of chokes and impenetrable rifts, The whole trip took two hours and our guide said the cave was 500m long. The cave having this thick coating of black mud, we were now covered and

had no water except the trough to wash in. Our gear was soon dried in the sun along with our throats.

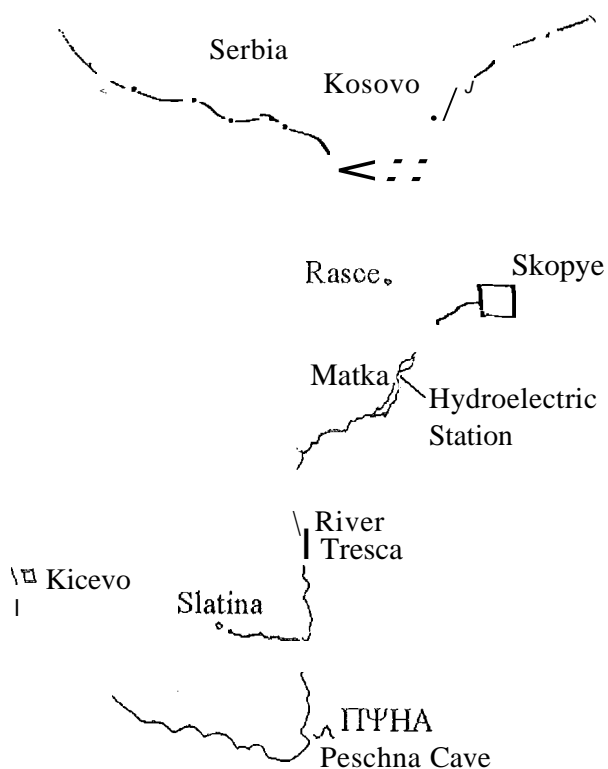
The cave, near Rasce, was Donna Duca cave, named after a girl shot by the Germans after they found her hiding in the entrance. What she was supposed to be guilty of was not mentioned by our guides.

Tuesday: We took the boat up to the caves. The highest is Ubava Cave, the middle one is Krshtalna Cave and the lowest, Vrelo Cave. All three caves are well decorated, each being at different heights up the hill side. The middle one started with a greasy mud slope and was very well filled with formations. I forgot my socks so my wellies were uncontrollable and climbing unsafe. The bottom cave was the shortest with a stairway leading to a lake which All said connected to the water filled gorge outside. The backed up waters seemed to linger idly under the steep cragged wall which climbed to 300m. The gorge cuts through the mountains some 14km with a hydrolake about 5kmlong.

Thursday: Our vehicle needs a repair to the front drive shaft oil seal, Andy and Pete have gone to Skopje and have it seen to. We are leaving Matka for three days to explore another area centred in the village of Slatina, though it is 100km away through a military zone. All last night asked for our passport details. I must say the trouble in Kosvo does not seemed to bother the people here who seem take sides along ethnic lines.

This morning we spend washing our gear from yesterday and generally have a rest.

Then leave Skopje late afternoon to drive to the mountains. What followed was a awesome descent



down to the valley base, bend after bend, the Kosziac valley revealed its splendours. However our brakes overheated and progress slowed as we allowed them to cool. We drove two hours up a track as the night advanced and the valley fell into darkness. Our host said 10km more, I feared for the return journey as our vehicle was being stretched to its limits.

En-route we stopped briefly in the mountains where some women were gathered at a communal water tap filling their containers. It struck me that this was Europe and such sights were a complete contrast the dynamic urban types we had seen talking into mobile phones in the restaurants of Skopye.

We did reach a good road but by then the drive had taken the enthusiasm out of us. The leading vehicle drove across a bridge of dried flaking planks loosely laid over two substantial timbers. The it was our turn and we all got out to allow to lighten the going. Our destination was an old school house.

This evening we have been round a camp fire lit by our hosts outside an old school house that will be our headquarters for the next four days.

Friday: A house martin woke me by flying round in circles above me for five minutes. By daylight we can see that our valley is tree-lined with little streams running just below our place. The trees are full of fruits of all kinds, I saw plums and hazel nuts scattered on the ground. The sky is cloudless so no doubt the day will be hot.

It seemed that a Macedonian cannot pass a fellow countryman especially if they are sheltering under a tree from the hot sunlight and not pass the time of day and talk at length with great exuberance followed by very much

handshaking, with his friend and further prolonged good-byes. We have returned from a village where I'm afraid we drank into the late afternoon. Earlier we had climbed a hillside in blistering heat up a track, through heavy thickets to a small rift entrance.

Momichek Cave was one large passage with formations and the odd pool, our hosts, some differently not equipped for the caving. A reporter who had descended the entrance pitch of five metres conducted an interview with our hosts, whilst we ourselves crawl and climb over every flowstone cascade, avon, and calcite choke in the 200m of the cave. The cave was about 20m high and slightly wider. The reporter's exit from the cave was not very dignified as he was yanked out by ropes whilst our hosts barked conflicting instructions to the surface.

Andy has just said that a 25m pitch has been discovered so he and a team are setting off to investigate.

Meanwhile, on the way back from the cave, we visited a village situated to one side at the foot of the mountainside. A beautiful resurgence delivered clear waters to the nearby river Tresca. The streets of the village were of earth and dust while a small cool stream had been diverted from the resurgence through the rambling passageways. All of this was overlooked by a flaking picture of Tito, stuck to the mud-coated wood-lattice wall of a house, with, his sideways glance and piercing eyes surveying us all.

Two elderly ladies of miniature proportions dressed in black and grey clothes and head scarves had faces finely woven with lines. They lingered close while we drank beer, one puffed on a cigarette and the other doodled in

the earth with her stick occasionally lifting up her eyes to gaze at us. Their few sheep pulled vegetation from the verges and chewed while we attempted to drink the local house-come-shop out of beer.

The long hot afternoon was spent amidst pleasant village people, sitting in the shade, the fresh cool stream chilling the drinks. Our hosts, the Macedonian Cavers, talked freely with the locals while the bottles kept arnvmg.

Saturday: A new cave, Mirko Cave, near the school was descended. I moved along underground to a chamber but not being equipped returned. The cave continues to big chambers dug out by a local man. He then informed cavers who promptly extended it and descended the pitch. He then retired from all explorations. Legend has it that a bride, dressed in white, emerges from the cave and, if her gaze falls upon you, you return with her to disappear for ever.

Afternoon: Returned down the narrow rift of a pitch, about fifty feet deep, into a large gallery. Halfway down the pitch belled out to a free-hang landing on a large boulder at the top of a slope.

Splendid formations at the bottom many of them delicate. The floor was full of fragile mud banks and thin calcite flow coverings. The cave was not very long and went on to a wallow in mud though exploration continues. The main chamber is named Beautiful Room This is typical of most places in Macedonian caves that are well decorated.

On the return the pitch was much more difficult. I climbed the ladder thinking that I would be able to exit the rift at the top, however, before

reaching the top it became too tight. I wondered if this really was the way we had descended into the rift. It could not have been so I reversed down about ten feet to find a window into a parallel shaft and then pulled the unwilling ladder across. Wriggling upwards, I chose wider sections to allow progress through the parts so easily passed in descent.

Sunday: Had a tour of Slattner village with its basic timber structures, latticed walls, narrow paths and no cars as they can't be driven up the hill. A man with water containers came to the village tap. Mirko Cave is just below the houses on the side of a limestone knoll surrounded by terrible thickets. This really is a pleasant place in which small streams and irrigation channels flow by pathways down scented woodland ways and occasional limestone outcrops.

We packed up to return to Matka and, about 10km down the road, were shown a large cave entrance about 40m high and 80m wide. A long slope led to the top of some rocks and behind was an inner entrance silted up with sand. It was about 12m high, and in winter water issues from it. An old ruined castle stood to one side with tumbling walls. The name of the cave is something like Peashna.

Friday: The last four days were a collection of minor explorations. One was up the canyon of Matka along a path supposedly dug out of the cliff side by Russian prisoners of war. It began at our hotel and, at various heights above the lake, stretched the whole way up the canyon. I followed it for about 6km finding it, in places, exposed and exhilarating requiring great concentration as a slip would send you down sheer walls sometimes for 80ft.

An other day we climbed up to a chapel, termed a monastery, on the opposite side of the valley. Nearby there was a route onto a pinnacle ridge about 150ft above the chapel, the start of an exposed arete. The route was up a gully with a tricky move, about severe, leading to the start of an exposed ledge which I did not fancy at all. So I spent a rather breathless couple of minutes reversing the overhang to come back down. The panoramic view from the top, across the Matka Canyon, made the climb worthwhile,

That afternoon moved to the Mavrovo National Park.

Saturday 1st August:

We found the temperature at the Mavrovo National Park much pleasanter than Matka. Very alpine in feel and look. We drove to Tresonce and arrived at a forest clearing to sleep out. in the open under stars visible all night. The cave is one hour up a path by the side of a fast flowing stream. Manrovo is next to the Albanian border, however for obvious reasons the area was closed, even to the Macedonians.

Alelitza Cave is a steady climb through woods by the stream which followed the ravine to the cave entrance on other side of the fast flowing river. I accompanied a group of Macedonians who were equipped in various degrees of effectiveness. I had full gear with both oversuit and undersuit while others managed with a handheld torch, Tvshirt and jeans as the caves were never cold.

A low arch with a rock strewn floor about stooping height eventually led to a balcony with a view of a largish chamber and the sound of a stream below. There was a top way in and another group was descending it by a series of pitches.

Descending from the balcony by climbing down a slope to the river Sonya, our minder, announced that they had not explored down stream very well and a closer look was needed and we had the honour of joining in the exploration.



Immediately there was a cascade (where I managed to keep dry) then smaller but still walkable cave passage which looked spiky and sharp with mud banks. We climbed up out of the stream and after a short distance to the top of a pitch which I was invited to down climb. While it didn't look very difficult it appeared slippery, and we had plenty of ladders I asked **if** it was really necessary for me to risk it, but the T-shirt clad man with the handheld torch was already off over the edge. So to keep face I followed when a voice came from below. Someone had discovered a route lower down and was going onward but unfortunately only for a very short

way as a sump was reported and the whole team turned and retraced to the cascade. Among the antics of climbing up was someone having difficulty bridging up high enough to clear the spout of water which was strong enough to sweep a climber off their holds.

Upstream was a different story with large chambers, wonderful climbs into well decorated galleries, a high route over calcite flowstone then down again to rejoin the river, and an all too short passage to a siphon. Many chambers were covered in a soft white mud called Moonmilk.

Coffee, tea, cheese with bread, a delightful situation in a glen with a cool breeze offset by a fire's warmth, and great crags rising steeply above us, completed the day.

Sunday: We returned to the cave to for photography where one of the locals wanted to take pictures underground without a flash despite futile pleas from one of the Macedonian cavers concerned that they would not come out well.

Monday: Went by jeep express over mountain roads to Lazarpole, then down through forest onto a fertile plateau with limestone crags dipping at 30 degrees. My companions said that there were no caves other than a small one near Lazarpole. This place was not what I expected having one half empty shop, one empty restaurant with flies the only diners. Rubble covered and cars shell strewn streets led up to a monastery and the many people did not seem very forthcoming. The road to Debar had magnificent cliffs stretching a long way. On the ridge top was the border with Macedonia's turbulent neighbour, Albania.

Debar is overwhelmingly Albanian, according to our hosts (who being from Skopje were unpopular here), and only 3km from the border. We happened upon an Albanian wedding procession which consisted of three transit-sized vehicles, packed and doubled packed with guests, every horn, light, and indicator activated. It was said that they do this for three days stopping only for petrol and toilets. Later a man driving a horse and cart came rushing up the road, ribs protruding from the poor animal's sides. We left Debar with supplies and went up the large valley past its hydroelectric scheme. Reputedly there was here a cave formed in alabaster but blasted away by gold mining activities.

Tuesday 4th: Returned up the valley to Alelitza cave stopping off at a resurgence discovered the previous day by some members. Across the stream, through thickets and along a wall, a short climb reached the six foot high entrance. Water appeared along a series of spout holes and down a mossy wall and disappearing into the stream which flowed by nearby. A short climb went round a loose corner into a low canal of very cold water. We arrived, after thirty feet, in roomy chamber on a slant following the dip of the bedding plane. A climb up of about fifty feet to a wall revealed a way on the right, then choked.

The homeward trek began on the Thursday after a night's party at Matka. Through Greece, waiting for brakes to cool on mountain passes, Albania and Corfu, to see the moonlit Mont Blanc's snows and the lights of the Torrino hut just before the alpine dawn.

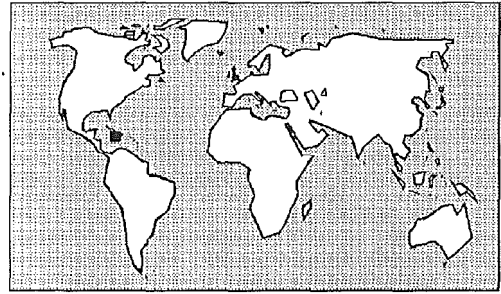
Blue Mountain Peak, Jamaica

Don Mackay

The choice in front of me was tantalising.

Clear now of all my commitments I was left with two, or, with luck, three days to myself before picking up my homeward bound banana boat. On the breakfast table of my colonial style hotel in Kingston the proprietor had left an inscribed gilt card inviting me to a tea party at the Governor's palace. The Governor General of Jamaica would himself be receiving the visitors. It was an opportunity that could not be lightly dismissed. Indeed, it was a crucial period in the political history of the island. Could I decline such an invitation? I telephoned the shipping company who informed me the ship was having difficulty in getting a full cargo. The banana crop had been poor. The captain was considering making a detour to South America to try to get more bananas. Would I be prepared to add a few days to the voyage for this purpose? I readily agreed but also savoured the thought of an extra day I would be getting either to investigate some of the unexplored caves of the island or to visit the highest point in the Caribbean - the Blue Mountain Peak.

I turned down the Governor's invite and I settled for the peak. There was just not time for everything. I was put in touch with a man who would help me to get there. John Alchurch, son of an English planter who had been brought up in Jamaica and had been to England to study civil engineering at Loughborough. In a brief meeting I learned that he had climbed in the Lake District and Scotland and that he had returned to Jamaica to become



chairman of the Jamaica Railway. It was his job to resurrect the 100 miles of wobbly line and ancient rolling stock to cater for the banana and the bauxite traffic.

John suggested a route that would take me to the old homestead of the Alchurch family. A planter cabin built by his grandfather which he had converted as a hostel for visitors to the Blue Mountains. There, he said, I would find Cynthia who would look after me and arrange a guide. But, he said, the roads were tricky and I would need a Land Rover for the last ten miles unless I was prepared to walk. It was an understatement. The roads were incredible but, as if there were insufficient natural hazards, the island was gripped by pre-election fever and some of the islanders had arranged the occasional road block as a protest against a regime they considered unsatisfactory. The gradient increased and my small car came to rest, rear wheels spinning uselessly, on a hump. A small army of village boys lifted me bodily back to level ground and I tried again without avail. I left the car at this point and set off on foot with a boy to carry my pack and I made good progress. I was now into deep jungle territory, In places there were clearings planted with coffee, here and there a small settlement. In one of these I identified a shop and went inside. The construction was of bamboo. There was a steelyard hanging from the rafters and a primitive counter. It

could once have been a thriving grocery but there was now a singular lack of anything appetising I would wish to purchase. I had a drink of Red Stripe beer and gave the boy one. I fed the mangy cat a piece of ham from my packed lunch and left with a little more understanding of the road blocks, and sympathy for the people who had erected them.

It was getting late when I arrived at the cabin to be greeted first by a notice on the gate saying 'Please be quiet after 10 o'clock' and then by Cynthia.

Cynthia, a vely large lady indeed, escorted me into the compound where, seemingly not in the least surprised by my arrival unannounced, she sat down on a tree stump and enquired if I was hungry. Soon others appeared. Several generations of her offspring down to the tiniest bambino; a very close knit family.

I was introduced to my guide, Vinny. He was not of the family. He was more the appearance of a Sherpa. A weather beaten face and a broad smile. Vinny explained, almost apologetically, that there was a standard fee, 40 dollars. I paid him in Jamaican money and was taken into the inner sanctum of the sprawling cabin. It was fitted up with improvised bunks in the rafters and an assortment of beds and bunks in the numerous rooms leading from the main living area. The main room was lined with bookshelves full of leather bound volumes of great antiquity. Probably great value too had not the termites and jungle insects taken their toll. The room, 30' long and 20' wide had an open fireplace and two tiny windows at one end and a larger window closed in by jungle at the other such that no direct light penetrated the gloom. In the centre there was a table which

measured 12' by 6' and must have been hewn from a giant tree. It was set with three oil lamps which Vinny proceeded to light. Cynthia shuffled in with a bowl full of lice and peas and chopped meat. Supper for Vinny which he said I could share. After supper he wished to examine my gear. He was not pleased with my footwear but decided the deck shoes, the only thing I had, would do. My pack, last used on Helvellyn, was dissected ruthlessly, You won't want this, you won't want this, you won't want this he said jettisoning the treasures, even the first aid kit I always take with me at home. "I will be taking everything we need like that", he said.

I was sorry to see my precious tins of beer thrown out but accepted an assurance that he would take plenty of water in a flask.



The simple way of life of this cabin and the people associated with it appealed to me. I would have liked to have stayed and talked but Vinny reminded me he would wake me at 3 o'clock and I was shown my bed. I put my head down on the hard pillow that night, hoping and expecting to fall straight asleep. But jungle noises were starting up. I tossed and turned and then worse, I began to itch! Perhaps I had exposed myself too much to the sun I thought. I tried a new position, and another. All the time it became worse. I reached for my torch and found I was covered in ants. Red

ants!! Big red ants!!! I looked over the side of the bed and found my cover had slipped down and was trailing on the floor. Up it were marching legions of the ants. I pulled up the draw-bridge and shook the cover and brushed most of the ants away before collapsing exhausted and falling into a fitful sleep. Liverishness then overtook me, or so I thought, but it was a swarm of fireflies dancing above my head. Piercing pinpoints of light and then Vinny shaking me. Come on, he said, or we will miss the dawn. Vinny had assessed me. He had decided beforehand that I would be like the rest. No good.

I was given more rice for breakfast, this time with whole shrimps stirred into it. A treat brought up by the last visit of the Land Rover. Vinny doled out a bowl for me and one for him. He gave me a spoon and I didn't start, I had always been used to taking the heads and legs off shrimps and was not sure what I was supposed to do. I was soon shown. Vinny scooped the lot into his mouth and scrunched the whole shrimps. I followed his example.

Setting off, the smell of roasting coffee still lingering in the night air, we soon left the plantations behind. The track narrowed to a foot track like a tunnel into the undergrowth. I came to understand the need for a guide. There were forks. At times circuses with a number of tracks leading off Vinny pressed on. I followed uncomplainingly which I think surprised him. I saw a large fruit hanging from a tree. Vinny explained that you could eat it, or, you couldn't eat it. The sort of fruit, he said, you could eat now but next month you would be stone dead. I felt I would like to stay longer and learn more about it but it was not possible.



Soon we left the jungle behind and emerged into open terrain. Fuschias, which grow like weeds in this heavenly place, gave way to lush grasses. I saw before me what looked like a long old slog. Arriving at the top I thought, this is it! What is all the fuss about? Vinny announced that we had arrived at Lazy Mans Peak. This, he said, is where most people turn back. How did I feel? He did not disguise the surprise he felt that this lanky Englishman should wish to proceed. Down and up we went. Back into the jungle to emerge again to encounter an even longer long old slog. This time it was the real thing. At the top a trig point and a stone building. We had arrived at the Blue Mountain Peak in time to see the rims of cumulus cloud flash bright and give way to the golden orb of the sun rising up to pour its rays down upon us relentlessly during the homeward journey. It was spectacular and rewarding.

At this point I felt I deserved a swig from the flask. Vinny handed it to me. I removed the cap and raised it to my lips. Glug, Glug. Never mind the taste of paraffin which must have been the last thing Vinny had had in the flask.

Now, in the full daylight, it is possible for me to see more of my surroundings, From Kingston, the Blue Mountain Peak had appeared indisputably blue. From close quarters it was green. Lush green. I had hoped that from the top of it I would be able to take a ridge walk but Vinny explained that was not possible. All the nearby peaks are covered in brush like vegetation and they are inaccessible. They do some boar hunting in parts he said but no-one with any sense goes there. I recalled stories of the Cockpit country further to the east. The folklore has it that no-one ever goes there and comes back. Why should this be any different?

A previous visitor had left a biscuit tin on the 7402 ft top. Vinny picked it up and examined it. To him this was a useful and a valuable thing. He decided to take it back.

It seems there is just one route to the top and no alternative but to return the same way. We set off and in the light I was able to see humming birds. Small animals and lizards scurried beneath our feet. Coffee, I noticed as well as in the main plantations, was grown in amongst the jungle trees. The higher up the mountain the better the coffee, explained Vinny. I recalled an old ballad.

'The higher up the mountain
the greener grows the grass,

The more a donkey cocks its
leg the more it shows its ...

Ask no questions hear no lies
etc.'

Lower down, at four thousand feet, I observed large fields planted with onions. Vinny spoke to the workers arriving at the fields. I couldn't understand what they were saying. You see they all speak English he said.

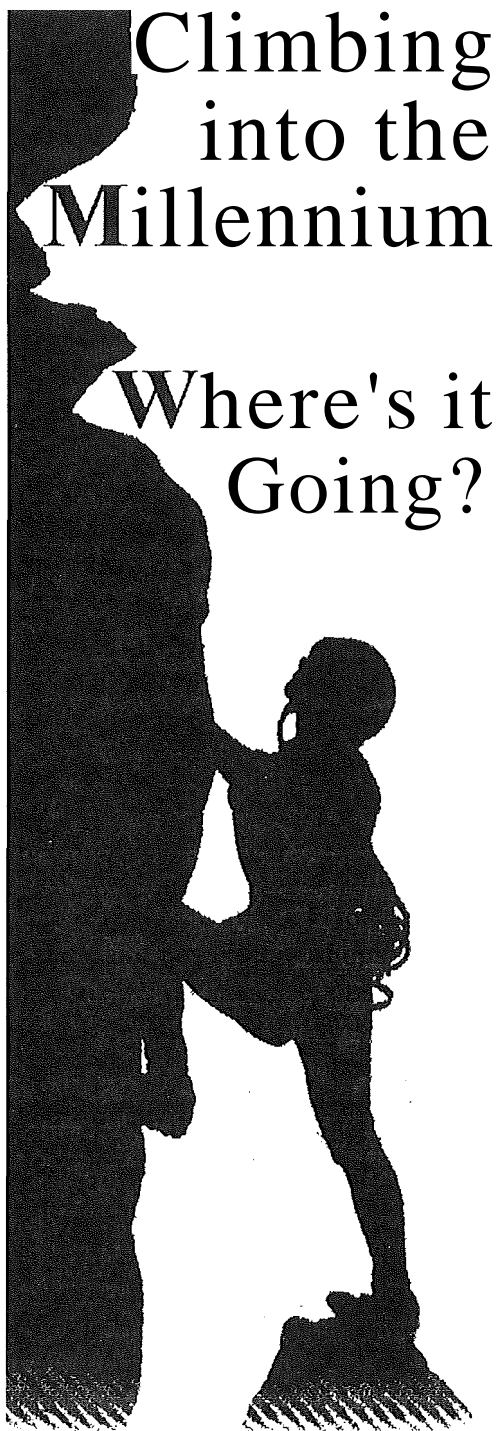
It was English but their own. A sort of pigeon English.

I collected my oddments from the cabin and gave Vinny another 40 Dollars, Jamaican, that I felt he had earned. Cynthia was in the compound by her bamboo house still surrounded by the family. I produced my camera and they all knew what it was. Half of them vanished. Camera shy no doubt. I took pictures, said my farewells and set off on the long trek back to my car. The deck shoes which served me well uphill were becoming painful on the descent. Each step became like a hammer blow to my big toes. Months later my Blue Mountain toe-nails came off.



Don made this trip in 1981 and the then unexplored caves mentioned were the Windsor Caves south of Fahnouth. They are visited both for the guided tour to a fraction of the extensive underground rivers (see the locally produced guidebook 'Jamaica Underground') and for the spectacular dusk mass departure of bats. Local caving activity was recently reported to be moribund,

The John Crow National Park was established in 1993 in an attempt to arrest the deforestation of the Blue Mountain area.



Climbing into the Millennium

Where's it Going?

An Alpine Club Symposium

6th March, 1999

"..dogs on leads in the Westem Cwm"

"those magical days of exploratory
mountaineering"

"is a solo ascent of Everest truly *solo*
if done alongside dozens of others"

Chris Bonington & Doug Scott -
Introduction and Setting the Scene

Mick Fowler - High Standard
Technical Climbing - Himalayas

Julie Ann Clyma - Exploratory
Climbing in the Himalayas

Alan Hinkes - Bagging the 8000m
Peaks

Jon Tinker (guide) & Chris Brown
(client) - Commercial Climbing on
the Highest Peaks

Mike Thompson - Environmental
Issues in Nepal

Leo Houlding & Seb Grieve - British
climbing is alive, well & very necky

Andy Parkin & Stevie Haston - The
Alps: Theme Park or Great
Adventure Climbing Ground

Alex Huber - Big Wall Climbing in
Yosemite and the Greater Ranges

Reinhold Messner - Keynote Lecture

"If others keep getting killed on their
13th or 14th {8000m peak} it keeps
the number six spot open for me"

"the challenge is entirely individual"

"the fall was just brilliant - wow"

"if alpinism is the Walker Spur then
alpinism is dead in the Millennium"

"*afull on* place ... it's out there .
skate it it's fourth dimension .
fired it spirit strong ... floating"

"telling you about this is, in itself, to
risk damaging it - an ethical dilemma"

"no mountain is worth a digit."

"bolting the alps won't reduce deaths"

"Mont Blanc is reduced in stature by
the huts, waymarks and the trails"

"millions of harder possibilities,
elsewhere, just waiting to be found."

It certainly was a day with variety and contrasts in the Pennine Lecture Theatre of Sheffield Hallam University for the four hundred or so climbers gathered to consider *Climbing into the Millennium - Where is it Going?* under the charge of ringmaster Sir Christian Bonington.

The major difficulty of the morning was not the sudden fall of snow blocking the higher trans-Pennine routes, but technical problems with the sound and slide systems which tried the patience of all present. While such hiccups are acceptable among the ad hoc arrangements at Plas y Brenin for an Alpine Club (AC) symposium the expectations of a purpose built university lecture theatre are somewhat higher.

The AC had secured an impressive line up of speakers representing all aspects of mountaineering from the guided client on Everest to the young bold crag-rats. Only Warren Hollinger could not make it due to damaging his back during a fall. Speakers were enthusiastic and open and entered into the spirit of debate when the discussion sessions challenged their ethical stances or sought clarification. Illustrating their perspectives with slides and videos of their ascents they described the past, present and probable future states of their corner of the climbing scene. All were warmly received by the enthusiastic audience. While little progress was made towards a definitive and unified climbing ethic I'm convinced that a greater understanding of the different viewpoints was reached and all in a good humoured and entertaining way. This was not achieved by diluted views or weasel words, indeed sparks flew and there were sharp intakes of breath at some of the challenging statements, but a mutual respect for

the right to hold an alternative approach ensured that people were still speaking to one another afterwards.

Doug Scott, in measured tones, made an unpromising start for debate by postulating that there was nothing new to be said as from Mummery to Reinhold they were all contriving to push the limits and that rather than using aids, bolts, guides (guideless climbing was castigated in the AC's early years) or drugs we should wait until we, or someone else, can make an ascent. He raised a chuckle by supposing that any introduction of retrospective dope testing would result in the cancellation of most previous Himalayan ascents.

Scott finished by emphasising the need for eternal vigilance **if** we are to maintain access to the mountains as we know them in the face of commercialism and increasing use. This was echoed by Mick Fowler who pointed out that the inexperienced climber, under commercial pressure to achieve early successes, and not appreciating some of the problems or risks, may do things simply because they think that is what they are expected to do. Since technical advances have made it possible to get up just about anything where do you stop? Different eras apply different ethics to the use of equipment: bivvy bag, tent, portaledge, winching gear, where you draw the line changes with time. He illustrated the dilemma from personal experience of balancing weight of equipment carried with the corresponding loss in speed of movement.. On one trip the potential loss of a burner unit in snow put the whole climb in jeopardy. On another carrying insufficient food for a fifteen day trip meant hunger affected judgement and a fall resulted in

cracked ribs. Fowler maintained that these were, for him, personal judgements but this contrasts with the US National Park institutional approach of Rangers checking your route plans, gear, food and fuel against their standard checklist.

Julie Ann Clyma started, as usual, apologetically and there is no need as her achievements in exploratory mountaineering put the most of us to shame. The apology appeared to be for not being on the highest, steepest faces and for including pictures taken of tent with herself and Roger Payne between climbs. Both of these help me to identify with the approach and are more welcome than yet another picture of a blank wall or smear of ice.

Her point, that notion that a technical climbing - exploratory climbing divide does not really exist, was made through considering their trips off the beaten track. Here maps may have plenty of lines but fail to prepare you for impasses which nobody has previously seen and you are pushing personal limits, coping with a wider range of unexpected factors. The ethical dilemmas of exposing new areas to potential damage through her visits and publicity were explored and she encouraged us not to repeat earlier mistakes, as with the Sanctuary, which resulted in environmental degradation.

Completing tick lists has been a continuing part of Alan Hinkes life. Having spotted all the A4 Pacific and Deltic locomotives he is now well on his way through the 8000m peaks. Unlike many top climbers he strongly values a family life, carries a photo of his daughter on the mountains and will not risk fingers or toes for the sake of another summit. While essentially highly competitive he is perhaps more willing than some others to turn back, survive and leave a top for another

day. He certainly need all his determination and stoicism at the lectern given the equipment failures he suffered.

There was much comment on the *dogs on leads* view of guided clients on the highest peaks. Coos Brown, a potato fanner gave the clients' perspective but left me uncertain of his motives in going mountaineering. For him raising sponsorship for his trips and for local charities was a major factor so he needed to carry banners and get these photographed on the tops. The use of guides allowed him to get to higher and more distant peaks than he could manage on his own. Preferring to tackle only those peaks I can manage myself or with fiends, I was uncomfortable with his approach. However, I am happy to use mountain guide support to provide food, fuel and transport to make my stay in the mountains longer and easier, so it is another case of where does the individual draw the line to define their mountaineering ethic. Scott wondered how different guided climbing on Everest was from his own participation in the big Bonington expeditions of the '60s and '70s as a cog in a large machine with little control over events. Perhaps the essential difference was that they joined as fiends and remained fiends for the rest of their lives.

The other side of the trip, that of the organiser/guide was put by Jon Tinker who was due to embark on his sixth such trip to Everest with about a dozen *punters*, seven guides and three dozen sherpas. For him the main problem was his clients' failure to reveal how they were feeling and their full medical history. The reticence, fuelled by a fear that negative information might reduce their chance of acceptance or inclusion in the

summit party, is understandable once you have invested thousands of pounds and a lot of face, time and effort. Messner commented that only the deaths of the guides in the '96 disaster prevented the testing in court of a guides responsibilities on such an ascent.

Tinker has a cowboy client, Bob, who wants to execute a particular lasso jumping trick on Everest's summit. I recall freezing in a queue to approach the top of Mont Blanc with Graham Salmon, behind an Italian juggler and his video camera wielding friend. They were determined to have their fifteen minutes of fame recorded to promote the act. We decided to quit the queue and descend for that was not mountaineering as we knew it. I feel the same about Bob though I'm unlikely to be behind him in the queue.

Tinker came under heavy questioning to justify taking, to such heights, people who could not do this on their own and in so doing put added pressure on an already overburdened environment. His response was that their part took away more rubbish than they brought in, it helped these paying mountaineers and the local economy while he still drove an old car so it obviously was not profiteering. My concern is that the paying client is not in control of their own ascent but abrogates that responsibility to the guide who, at those altitudes, can't exercise the degree of control over the situation expected in, say, an alpine guided climb. But then I am a poor team player and a apt to be a bloody nuisance if I can't control my own actions. It is unclear, to me, just what is the role of the guide when passing through the Khumbu ice fall or, sitting on the South Col, balancing probable weather, acclimatisation, value for

money and the summiting success rate for next year's brochure.

There was a consensus that everyone was concerned about managing the honeypot peaks for future mountaineers but practically no consensus on the solution. A universal ban on the use of oxygen on Everest has been mooted, as has the possible building of a permanent lodge on the north side of Everest to cope with the larger numbers of people, provide a medical centre and reduce some of the environmental damage from rubbish and human waste.

Mike Thompson dispelled the orthodox environmentalist argument that increasing Nepalese population and visitor numbers strains resources, causes wider foraging for wood, farming of less suitable land, burning of valuable dung, soil erosion, quicker run-off flooding and reservoir silting. These arguments were put forward in Stockholm in 1972, by David Attenbrough in '84 and by the Overseas development Agency in '97 as urgent and soon to be catastrophic problems. At least the first two have proved to be ill-founded. Thompson argued that their approach fails because it is: apocalyptic whereas environments are truly adaptive; blames the Nepalese who are actually the victims; exacerbating the ignorant fecund peasant model of a typically resourceful, intelligent and knowledgeable people; and, distorting existing international tensions through the development process.

The result is that twenty five years and millions of pounds have been aimed at the wrong problem. His example was the apparent deforestation being falsely attributed to poverty. In fact the revolution in the fifties nationalised the village forests and removed the local forest guardian

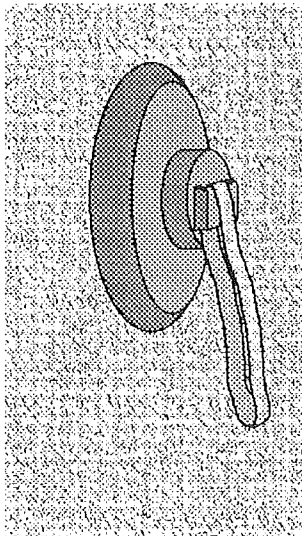
system but failed to replace it with effective management so the forests deteriorated. Now control is being returned by the forestry service to village caretakers and the woodlands are recovering.

He maintains that climbers can play a part in the solution by being ethical, respecting and cherishing local democracy (one in eight of Nepalis were candidates in a recent election and we lack such a participative democracy) especially as climbers set the tone for the rest of Nepali tourism. His practical advice was: take no excess baggage on the plane; eat rice and dhal when there; and, to use a helicopter is an admission of failure.

After a lunch break the focus changed from the greater ranges to rock faces with Leo Houlding and Seb Grieve were not at all convinced that they would make it to the millennium the way they were pushing their climbing to the limits. They traced a progression from Botterill, through Hargeaves and gritstone, home-made gear, limestone and training walls to wilder lines and extrapolated this into future unsighted solo ascents. Their current ethic is for short powerful routes requiring tenacity and boldness with all falls being acceptable provided you do not hit the ground.

Seb's light-hearted suggestion for the millennium was a solution protecting climbers on large, smooth, blank faces: a sucker with built in wire or tape.

Leo explained that,



for him, it was all about how he felt on the day. To a large extent rain and temperature were irrelevant if his psyche was strong. There were to be no distractions though, no sponsors' pressure or photographers when it came to creating a new climb. Photographs came later as posed shots probably with a hidden safety rope.

Leo's enthusiasm for Welsh rock, his delight in discovering the laser pointer, descriptions of minutiae of individual moves and expressive, informal delivery were refreshing. He brought the same attitude to Gogarth as to El Cap.

Andy Parkin refuted the notion of the alps as a theme park and explained his adventurous approach to locating opportunistic lines on ice over bald rock buttresses where, in summer, there are no climbable lines. His ethic, enforced perhaps through an aversion to bolting and the presence of only dubious belays, in one of climbing as if solo - a return to the leader never falls.

In stark contrast was Stevie Haston's confrontational stance. Asserting that there were no good lines left to be found in Chamonix he questioned why people bother with traditional routes when people nowadays snowboard down the likes of the Tour Ronde. He treated cragging, alpinism and the greater peaks without sub-division as just mountaineering, the ethic being to identify and solve individual small problems wherever they were.

Both the climbing establishment and the media attracted his criticism: the establishment for funding outdated snow-plodding expeditions while ignoring youngsters exploring solutions to harder problems; the media for concentrating on a few heroes and failing to report wider developments.

Haston, himself, has reportedly (Observer, 21 March 1999, p15) resorted to attempting the title of *first Brit to top Everest from both north and south* in an attempt to secure BBC sponsorship. If he can then snowboard down it should increase audiences and his future sponsorship potential.

On a day when we saw hundreds of images of mountains and crags it was one of Haston's which struck home. Not a peak but a few square metres of rock with a dozen or more fixed ropes running side by side, all weathered to tat and anchored to goodness knows what, a rusting piton, snow-stake, ice-peg or failing bolt perhaps. Taken on Nanga Parbat, it could have been anywhere on the highest peaks though, it summed up our failure to operate a sustainable ethic. It was a long way from *take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints*. He questioned the ethic of mass ascents of 8000m peaks through employing numerous sherpas to trample a path to the top for you.

Alex Huber asked *quo vadis?* and plotted his own progress through family skiing, alpine ascents, sport climbing including training by exercising separately each finger, to applying those techniques on big walls and so eliminating the need for ninety per cent of the protection bolts on El Cap. The next step is to apply Leo's bouldering style moves, leaping several feet for a flash move, to bigger, higher routes.

Reinold Messner asserted that mountaineering is inherently about risk and that a mountain without danger is not a mountain but something else. The danger, necessary for learning, limits the number of participants and there is no single rule or ethic, we must each decide our own level of

risk, our approach and our chosen routes. For him, between his last 8000m peak and his first heart attack as he put it, the mountains are getting taller and the crags steeper so his choice of routes is changing.

He saw Himalayan climbing as progressing from knowledge and equipment limited exploration, through peak goals and the prestige of Everest which still distorts the mountaineering world and its reporting, to nationalism epitomised by flags on summits, through the moribund late 1960s rescued by Bonington's new agenda setting face climb, to the small group alpine style ascents of high faces or adventures on smaller remoter peaks with the consequent sense of exposure.

The essence of mountaineering, for him, is the handling the risks and hence putting yourself in touch with a deeper, animal instinct. This is addictive and can't be bought on commercial expeditions but can be readily found, at whatever level, by simply not going where all the others go.

Reinhold's *death zone* is, for Scott, his *come alive zone* a mountaineering reality not found in western urban life.

Discussion brought broad agreement on a few points but an acceptance of some inherent internal inconsistency. Firstly; there is no single climbing ethic but a collection of differing ethics which stand alone. Secondly, any ethical stance is acceptable provided it does not disadvantage others and is, in the broadest sense, environmentally sustainable. Thirdly, the only constant is change. These were hammered out by debating of specific issues. Agreement was reached, including even Ken Wilson from the audience, that removing

dubious pegs and the like from traditional alpine trade routes and replacing them with guide-maintained bolts was ethically acceptable. The use of bottled oxygen on Everest was an uneasy compromise recognising that the individual's right to choose their own ethic would inevitably interfere with others choice. If you choose not to, you still have to step round others bottle dumps: if you choose to use it, you prevent others making an unsullied ascent by your presence. An authority imposed ban on the use of bottled oxygen was rejected on the grounds that it was unlikely to be widely accepted at

present. When climbers shuffle past a desiccating corpse to top a peak something somewhere is wrong.

The warm applause late in the evening and the chatter round the bar were testimony to an interesting event and the a positive attitude to the future of mountaineering. The symposium gave ordinary climbers a chance to hear the leading lights reflect on their and others' achievements. The Alpine Club deserves thanks for organising the event and for making it accessible to more climbers by staging it outside London.

Michael Smith

Snapshots

On Lingmoor Fell during the January LHG Meet, Dermis Armstrong, John Schofield, Alan Brown and Mike Godden



Photographs by Bill Todd



Swirl How with George Spenceley, GenyLee, John Schofield, Ken Aldred, Stuart Dix, Michael Smith, Dermis Armstrong and Mike Hartland

Costa Blanca con Nieve

Michael Smith

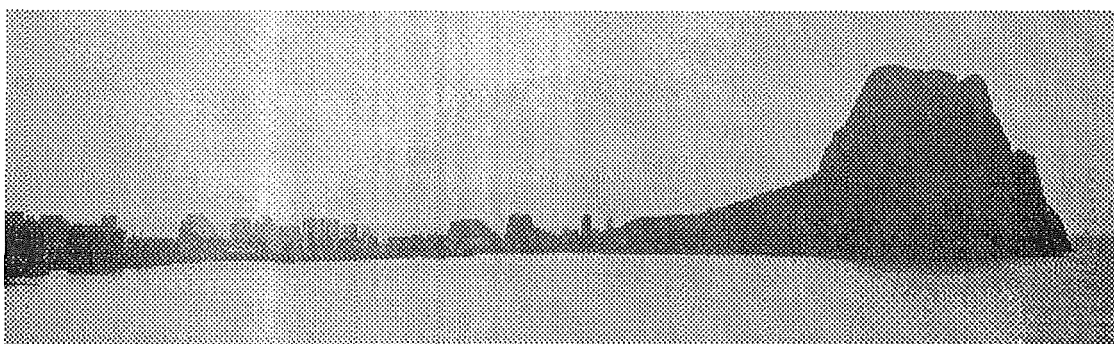
Just five days before I was due to set off for Scotland and the meet in Glen Etive an urgent question came from Helen, holding a call on the telephone, "Do you fancy Benidorm instead next week?" Given the weather prospects predicted by the long term forecast I jumped at the chance.

Cheap accommodation in Benidonn and car hire gave access to plenty of climbing within a thirty minute range. Most of it on clean, sun-warmed, bolted rock. Our first choice was well off the road along a reasonable track beyond Sella (past the cemetery with Snow White's dwarfs) and a full two minutes uphill to the limestone crag of Ojo de Odra. The MAM were out in force on a meet and their ropes covered the crag.

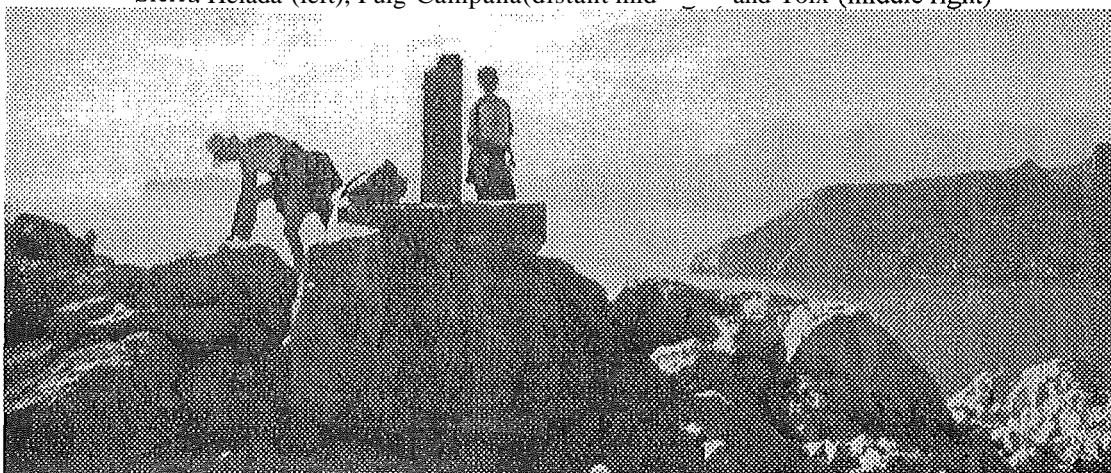
Shorter approaches can be found or longer ones of perhaps fifteen minutes such as at the Pefion de Ifach by quieter Calpae. The climbing was restricted here during the nesting season. This is April to June rather than the longer period given in our guide book. Register your presence at the entrance building.

The walking was good with contouring tracks, pines, orchards and tavemas or mountain peaks such as the Puig Campana. We descended this by the north scree which was well covered by snow (the coast had enjoyed it's first snow since 1988 just before we arrived) down into thick holly and gorse: a stimulating experience wearing shorts.

The meet in this area planned for October has justly drawn plenty of interest. I'd encourage walkers, climbers, ornithologists and painters to go and avoid the 'British' bits.



Pefion de Ifach (above), Calpe, and the view from its guano stinking top to the Sierra Helada (left), Puig Campana(distant mid _ and Toix (middle right)



A Postcard from Switzerland

Martyn Wakeman

At the moment the earth seems to have plunged away from the sun into the icy depths of the known universe. The daytime temperature was -7°C in Lausanne over the weekend making for some very chilly rides to work.

Two weekends ago I went skiing for the first time ever on snow. This proved to be an enormous success and monster fun. Having been contemplating a broken leg and ripped out knees, I wasn't expecting much progress. Especially so because friends had told me that snow boarding was easier to learn than skiing - but I had had a day on my butt trying unsuccessfully to defy gravity on a snow board, so what chance on skis?

On the Saturday it was off to the debutantes slope. This means *learner* in French, but has distinctly negative connotations in English. Upon checking the dictionary, debutante in English means: *a girl or young woman regarded as being upper class, wealthy, and of a frivolous or snobbish social set.* Hummn - not something that I wish to be considered as too often!

I seemed to master the basics of skiing without too many problems and by the end of Saturday I could ski wherever I wanted on this beginner's slope. What to do next - not wanting to remain a debutante but still wishing to return alive - I had to decide between a large jump to red runs or stay put - this ski area lacked intermediate beginners IULS.

So I forked out another 30 CHF and joined the queue for the big lift. On

reaching the top of the red run, my first reaction was "you have got to be joking - you need crampons for that!" I was coaxed down by three friends, skis firmly in the snow plough position. After falling once and regaining composure, I managed to snow plough turn all the way down, albeit slowly and without grace. This was quite sensational, having walked down hills for years and now being able to slide (effortlessly") down. I am not sure of the effortlessly bit, because my lack of technique made it very hard work to control the skis.

Nobody told me about going up hill again. Simple as grabbing hold of that bar thing and letting it pull you up? Not really - in fact this is harder than skiing down. If you skis go over a bump or into a groove then you are pulled out of line with the tow wire and you fall off. Also, the wire jerked on the steep bits and nearly pulled my arms out. So, I am joining the "ban the lift" campaign and can now be seen dressed in black with night vision goggles and plastic explosive. If you want to ski down hill, then you should jolly well walk up it first! That would reduce the unsightly gaggle of people at the lifts and cafes, returning a little dignity to these mountains.



Having completed one red run, my friends abandoned me in search of near death experiences on the black slopes. Trust me' here, crampons really are needed. So I wandered around a bit and regained some composure before trying a slightly harder red run. This was narrow in places so you had to turn or start tree hugging. The Swiss whizzing by at

ten times the speed didn't help, but by the end I was flowing a bit more and letting a bit of speed build up. Phew! - but boy did my butt ache the next day, not from falling but from crouching for two days.

Last weekend it was back to the real hills without the ugly towers and monstrous abominations of man. My American friend, Pete, wanted to try winter camping for the first time. We agreed to go snow-shoe walking across the Jura. It was going to be a cold weekend, so an excellent introduction. There was about a metre of snow on the top of the Jura, so progress with snow shoes was hard work and without, a joke! We walked up a tree lined ridge with views of Mont Blanc towering up from 300m at the lake to over 4500m. The occasional glimpse of the other big alps arose behind a cascade of vicious alpine peaks gleaming in their winter raiment of snow. We arrived at the top (1580m) about four o'clock, with temperatures at -Doe not counting the wind chill from the swirling spin drift. Mushroom shaped snow drifts had formed around the occasional tree on the now exposed ridge. We could see a snow storm coming across the valley so decided to make camp. A large platform was cut into the snow and walls made around this before pitching the tent. As it happened, the storm was minor and we walked to the summit before returning to thaw out my still frozen beef and chilly stew made at home. A three course meal was just the job and we retired wrapped in all our clothes and snuggled deep inside our sleeping bags for the night.

Morning came and we had a lazy lie in before melting more snow for porridge and a brew. The tent had helped to shelter us during the night

but the inside temperature was still well below freezing with moisture from our breath freezing to the inside of the tent as a layer of frost.

Breaking camp was the cold bit, before we descended amidst cold sunshine. We had planned to arrive at a different railway station on the way back to make this a round trip. We decided to follow the yellow triangles marking the summer path to traverse under some big cliffs that barred the way out. This turned out into a bit of an adventure because the snow was very deep and soft, hard work even in snow shoes. The slope angle increased until we were on a traverse at about 35 to 40 degrees, which is difficult with snow shoes. Pete didn't think much to this, but followed my steps until we found the breach in the cliffs and made it to the top. This included a ledge that the Swiss had kindly protected with a metal rod & chain. Never dangerous, more a feeling of unease of slipping into the alms of the waiting forest.

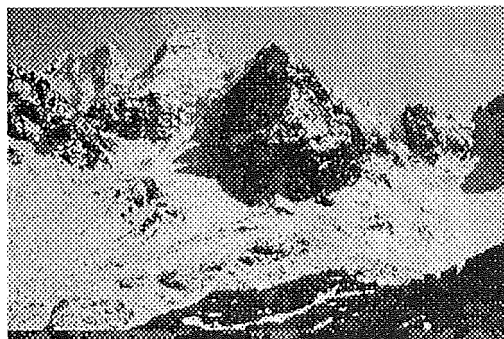


On Bradfield Moors east of Derwent Edge

On a Condor's Wings

by Jose Camarlinghi

After the war between the Aymara gods, and before mankind posed a threat to the survival of the species, Condoriri, the greatest of the condors, was immortalised in ice, rock and snow. So the Aymara believe.



The Condoriri basin

Today, Bolivia's Condoriri, in the Cordillera Real, retains its natural majesty and has become popular with climbers and trekkers, who come to marvel at its pristine and savage beauty. The clouds clustered on the east side of Mt. Condoriri (5,648m) as we made our way through the moraines and glaciers. By the time we reached the couloir that leads to the summit ridge, visibility had dropped to 10m. We figured on reaching a peak mobbed by clouds. The ridge appeared

to be very steep and narrow, but since we could only see white fluff to either side, we felt naively calm and confident. We crossed the last, nearly flat section to the summit, likewise in a swirl of clouds. Then there was nothing left to climb; we were there. Reaching Condoriri's summit has always given me a sense of triumph, but this time



The summit

the mass of clouds ruined it. We could only see ourselves congratulating each other. Suddenly, a gap opened in the clouds revealing the west face of Huayna Potosi. The hanging glaciers among the steep mountainsides so captured our attention that we didn't notice the clouds dispersing behind us. When we turned around, we were surprised to see Lake Titicaca in the distance and, farther north, more awesome Andean peaks.

According to Aymara legend, Condoriri was a gigantic condor that lived before humans were around to endanger the species. The Aymara tell that after the war between their supreme gods of the universe, Pachacuti and Wiracocha, Condoriri was immortalised into rock and ice, its spread wings frozen in an eternal take-off position. Sir Martin Conway, the 19th century explorer and Honorary Member of the YRC, was the first to introduce the western world to this beautiful mountain. He compared it to the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps. In 1926 Germans German Stoller and Helmut Fritz wrote to the Bolivian Andean Club about their new climbs in the region. In the letter they referred to a mountain they climbed, but whose name they didn't know. From their

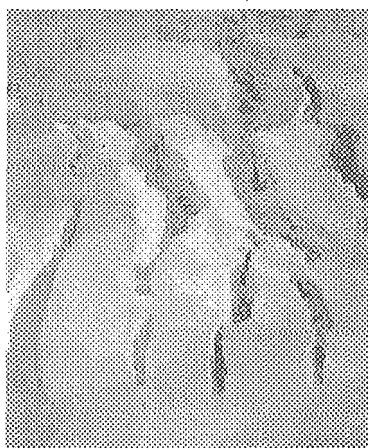
description, we believe they were the first to have climbed Mt. Condoriri along its current main route. It was not until the 1960s that foreign and local mountaineers started hiking and climbing in the Condoriri area. The region's geography is really quite complex. There are dozens of peaks with all levels of difficulty, each peak boasting its own beauty

and climbing approach. What's best is that most of them can be reached from the base camp located next to Lake Chiar Khota (Black Lake). The walk through the central Condoriri valley takes just three hours from the end of the road at Plaza de Llamas, in Tuni Valley. This is a highly recommended trip, not only for climbing experts but also for campers, hikers, fishers and nature lovers.



Pequefio Alpamayo

We just plopped down there on the summit and contemplated Alpamayo Chico, the peak we conquered the day before. The peak was named after a mountain in Peru's Cordillera Blanca, supposedly the most beautiful mountain in the world. Alpamayo Chico (or Pequefio



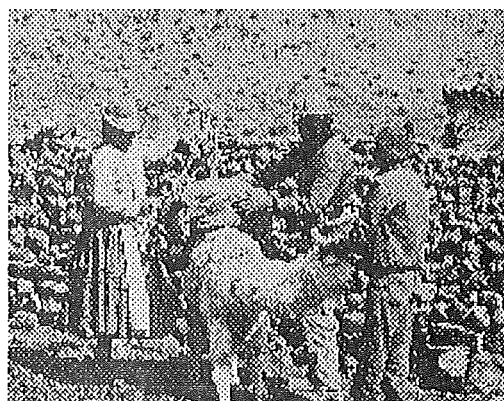
Crevasses below Condoriri

Alpamayo) cannot be seen from the base camp; a large glacier blocks the view. To reach the mountain's base, it's necessary to climb Tarija Peak first, descend a hundred meters on the east side and cross an exposed ridge. From our view, though, it didn't look so difficult. After spending more than an hour on the summit, we climbed down towards base camp. Without the cloud coverage, we could appreciate just how steep and narrow the ridge was that we so peacefully walked across. It was wide enough to fit both feet, but the slopes on both sides measured seventy degrees. From there we could see the thirty or so tents that neighbored the lake. Since more climbers and trekkers have been visiting in recent years, due to

improvements in the road leading to the reservoir, the local Aymara farmers have organised an association that provides luggage transport by donkey or llama, fresh rainbow lake trout and cold beer. They also guard the tourists' empty tents around Lake Chiar Khota, collect all the rubbish left behind by ignorant trekkers and have even built latrines at base camp.

This area is generally used by mountaineers to acclimatise before higher ascents. After spending a few days and climbing a couple of peaks, they are ready for the 6,000m peaks like Huayna Potosi or Illimani. Several trekking routes pass by Condoriri's base camp,

so at the peak of the tourist season the valley gets fairly busy but, fortunately, not unbearably so.



Jose Camarlinghi of Andean Summits, La Paz, has adapted this article from a version which appeared in the Bolivian Times, January 14, 1999, Vol. VI No. 2

Reminiscences of Bolivia 1988

John Sterland

Articles on the 1988 Bolivian expedition have been written by Harvey Lomas and Michael Smith in the first, second and fourth issues of *The Yorkshire Rambler*, and a full technical report, published in 1989, was produced by Michael Smith. However, I thought that it might be of interest to add some of my own, non technical, impressions of that expedition, bearing in mind the imminent departure of a dozen members on a second expedition this summer. Michael Smith and David Hick were, of course, the active climbers, but I was charged with the duty of producing a botanical survey. Therefore things which I was impressed or concerned with were to an extent different from those which have previously been reported.

I believe the most difficult aspect of the expedition, and one which the 1999 expedition will undoubtedly encounter, was altitude sickness. This hit us almost immediately after arrival in La Paz, which is 13700 feet above sea level. The sudden change from almost sea level at Heathrow to that



A well protected Michael Smith and a market scene. All photographs by John Sterland

height was too much for the leader! and his deputy, and both spent the first two days in La Paz in bed, the deputy leader wishing to die as soon as possible. Other members were affected to a greater or lesser extent, particularly David Hick, as reported in issue four of the bulletin, and also Ian Crowther who, on return from base camp to La Paz, spent five days in bed suffering from mouth ulceration and it was necessary for him to be fed intravenously and to be attended daily by a doctor and an anaesthetist. The effects of altitude sickness were exacerbated by upset tummies, almost certainly caused by some element of the food served in the local restaurants. So, 1999 expedition members, be careful what you eat in restaurants, because they don't seem to be subject to the stringent controls which one finds elsewhere. This is despite the apparently large number of doctors and dentists in La Paz, or perhaps it is the reason why there are

¹ 'Our Leader's' diary of those early days records a different perspective. On the second day three of us headed south-east from La Paz, in a taxi, for a walk through deep ravines; bird spotting. We have a spicy, if scrawny, chicken meal with chewy purple potatoes and beer for under a pound then a Micro minibus back to the centre and a wander round the markets. John retired with a headache and so escaped the visit to a burger-bar. Which, against my better judgement, I was persuaded to try my preference being for the local foods. In bed by nine I managed four hours before the burger re-appeared. The next day's entry is short as were the snatches of sleep between dashes to the bathroom. The entry does record that four set off on a \$255 trip to Cuzco, that David Hick kept providing sugared water and by the evening I managed a stroll but not food. The following day David and I were off climbing on the Devil's Molar. While I was affected by the altitude what struck me down was the burger.

so many medics in the town, although they seem to be very knowledgeable and to have excellently equipped surgeries.

After the early La Paz experience most of the party acclimatised for six days by travelling to the Inca towns of Cuzco and Machu Picchu, as mentioned by Harvey Lomas in Issue 1. Located at 2500m, Machu Picchu covers ten acres of ruins, and was discovered by an American named Bingham in 1911. Later Ian Crowther and I visited Tiwanaku, which is situated between La Paz and Lake Titicaca. The Tiwanaku civilisation pre-dates the Incas, and interesting artefacts of that era can be viewed at the Tiwanaku museum in La Paz.

The open-air markets in La Paz are fascinating and very extensive. Generally speaking they are located on the south side of the Prado, while the better-class shops and commercial premises are located on the north side of the Prado.

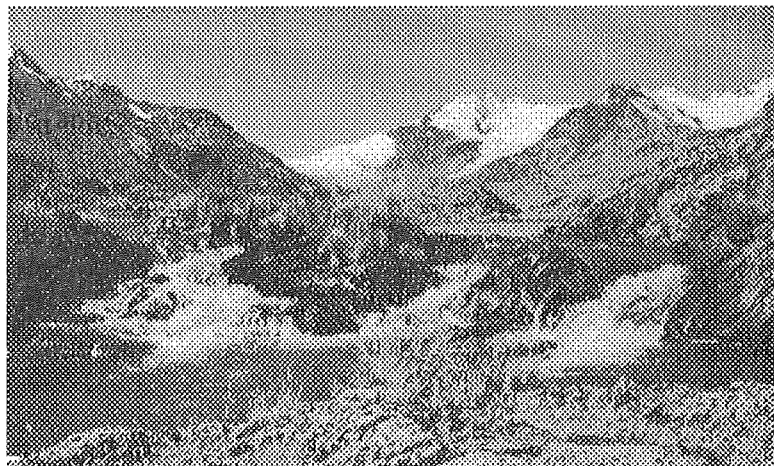
As mentioned in the *Expedition Diary* in Issue 1 of the *Bulletin*, we spent the first night in the Apolobamba in the school house at the village of Nubi Pampa, arriving there after an adventurous drive across a "no-mans-land" of rough terrain where the track over the "difficult" areas was delineated by more or less parallel lines of stones. Only a high-clearance four-wheeled vehicle could be driven over such terrain, and it was necessary to make many stops to make sure that the vehicle could negotiate a particularly bumpy piece of ground. It was well after dark

when we arrived at Nubi, and our imminent arrival had been well advertised by the headlights of our vehicle. We drove into this little isolated village to a reception committee of practically the whole village: the children were assembled in the front, and the adults stood behind.



All remote villages in the Apolobamba, and perhaps in the whole of Bolivia, have a school, the building of which is financed by UNESCO, sometimes with the assistance of the Bolivian government, and it is customary for (very rare) visitors to be accommodated in the school or the school house. Children sometimes walk for up to four or five miles to go to school.

Base camp was set up near Lago Paoche, the most easterly of the three lakes, up the valley from Nubi Pampa, at about 15000 feet, with the assistance of a muleteer or arrieros named Benanzio Huanca, discovered and commissioned by David Hick.



His mule and donkey, although unwilling, and despite the comparatively unreliable nature of Huanca, proved invaluable in the journey to and from base camp and also our trek to Pelechuco, and the circuitous route back to base camp. All the lakes in this area were glacial, and heavily silted, giving an attractive green hue to the water. The site selected for base camp was therefore located a little way above the lake by the side of a rushing stream. At least, it was rushing during the day, but it froze solid every night when the temperature dropped dramatically to about minus ten degrees centigrade. Although the sun eventually melted the stream during the morning it was agony washing our clothes or ourselves in the water.

We had a camp minder, provided by the mountain agent through whom transport and other arrangements were made. He was also supposed to do the cooking, but proved incapable of cooking anything other than soup and porridge, so that the culinary activities of the expedition were shared by members of the party. Our reliance on the mountain agent to provide the "cook", and also the food was a mistake, as the amount of food provided for the time at base camp was not only inadequate, but also lacking in variety and content essential at such altitude. It was therefore necessary for Ian and me to trek about twenty miles over the mountains to Pelechuco to buy more provisions. This journey was made with Harvey Lomas and David Martindale, as described by Harvey in Issue 2 of the *Bulletin*. However, we found that the Pelechuco shops, or stalls as they perhaps could be more accurately described, had very little to sell apart from large quantities of tinned sardines, local hard bread, and a little

tinned food: meat was available, but we didn't particularly fancy it! In the end we reduced the local stock of sardines, bought some of the very dry bread, what we thought was llama cheese (very expensive), the only two tins of fruit in the village, oranges, margarine, the one tin of corned beef in the village, rice, the only remaining tin of sausages, and a bottle of Nescafe. No fresh vegetables were available.

Life in the village was very basic: as an example, there were three communal "loos", located over the stream which flowed through the village, and which provided effluent disposal at no cost. Surprisingly the village boasted a fairly extensive street lighting system, paid for, as we understand, by foreign aid. The only snag was that the village could not afford to generate the electricity necessary to make it work, so it had never been used.

Ian and I returned to base camp by a circuitous route via a 17500 foot high pass, which was extensively used as a trade route. Mules carried most of the loads, but many of the muleteers also carried various loads in their "knapsacks", consisting of a shawl-like piece of material, which they fold in very similar fashion to a papoose sling in which the women carry their children. The air is thin at that altitude, but these men did not seem to suffer from the respiratory problems that I had on the way up, for although a mule was carrying our rucksacks, I found that I could only manage about 200 steps of the ascent before I had to "rest awhile" (to admire the view of course). During this trek Huanca, who accompanied us, spent most of the journey spinning llama wool on his hand-held spinner. This was a common activity of travellers in the

area, since it seemed that most of their clothes were made locally in the villages on small looms. This activity is indicative of the backward nature of life in the Apolobamba. Our trek took us through the village of ruo ruo Estancia, where we spent the night, again in the school.



There was a disturbance during the night, and all the dogs in the area decided to bark. Huanca alleged that there was an intruder outside, and he barricaded the door. We did not see the "intruder", and the dogs eventually quietened down. Payment for school-room accommodation was a matter of negotiation, and usually consisted of a few American dollars, topped up with a pocket calculator and a few Bolivianos.

The bush telegraph is very active in the Apolobamba, and everyone for miles around knew that we were encamped in the Nubi valley. So, one morning, just as it was getting light at about seven o'clock a young Indian named Andres Barreras arrived at base camp and told us that his wife was ill. We asked questions in our not very good Spanish, which he only vaguely understood. We identified her symptoms as sickness and diarrhoea, and immediately thought that she had the "trots", we therefore prescribed immodium and he went away delighted with a supply of these tablets. However, he returned three days later and said his wife was no better, and requested that we go to see her. Further questioning revealed

that she was likely to have cystitis or some infection of the urethra. Michael Smith and I, therefore, took our medical equipment and accompanied Andres Barreras to his home in Kelo Pado, a walk which took us about one and a quarter hours. We were taken into a small courtyard; two small boxes and blankets made of llama wool were produced, and we were invited to sit down. On one side of the courtyard were living quarters, probably communal for day-time use, and on two other sides were store houses. On the fourth side was what could have been a slaughter house for killing llamas, because there was a stone channel leading from the doorway to the exit from the compound, and presumably this was for the blood to run away. Llama meat, dark red in colour, was laid out on one of the walls to dry.

Many of the members of the Indian woman's family were inside the living quarters, and very soon smoke issued from the roof. The fire was to heat water to prepare some cocoa (a rare luxury), with which we were later served in mugs of metal. While we were drinking the cocoa two members of the family went to fetch the Indian

wife, who could hardly walk. She was escorted into the living quarters and there was then another long wait. Ultimately Andres said she was ready to see us, We entered the hut: and saw her sitting on a small chair surrounded by members of her family, who clearly thought she was going to die. We asked where her pain was, and ascertained that it was worse after urinating. Michael and I then went into "wise consultation", considered the medicines we had available, and prescribed a course of antibiotics, About three days later we had occasion to visit the village again and we were delighted to learn that she had made a full recovery, She was very grateful to us for curing her, and asked if we had anything to cure her mother, who had a pain in her shoulder. We did not have anything very suitable, but we gave her a tube of hydrocortisone, which we had for skin eruptions, and gave instructions not to take it orally. We did not go back again, so we do not know whether it was effective or her mother survived. Andreas and his wife allowed us to take a photograph of them and their baby, a great honour for us. They took half an hour to dress up in their traditional best clothes, and posed outside their house. I sent two copies of the photograph to them from England: one was returned marked "not known": the second one was not returned, so I hope that by post or other means it found its way to that remote part of the Andes. Incidentally we delivered a letter to Pamela Holt in England from Maria de Alvarez, the owner of the Pension Mexico in Pelechuco.

The above experiences were very interesting to the members of the party, but my primary task in Bolivia was to do a botanical survey of flowers in the Apolobamba, to

catalogue, photograph and if possible identify them. This proved much more difficult than I had imagined, because prior to departure I could not obtain any useful information on flowers in the area. I contacted several botanic gardens, including Kew Gardens, who said that their botanists had visited practically all areas in South America except the Apolobamba area. I could find no books on the botany of the area, except one in Spanish at Cambridge University, but this was not **very** helpful. A visit to a professor at Birmingham University, allegedly an expert, only resulted in his telling me that I would not find any flowers in the Andes in July and August, which proved to be incorrect, and a request from him to search for the seed of an obscure variety of potato. This was to assist him in writing his third book on potatoes.

Another problem arose before we left England, because my two cameras, wide-angle lens, and a large quantity of film were stolen at Heathrow. I therefore had about ten minutes to buy another camera before the flight to Rio de Janeiro departed, Consequently I had to take close-up photographs of flowers with a camera I had not previously used. The results were not as good as I would have hoped for, or could have obtained with my own equipment, but about 90% were satisfactory, On return to the UK I found that I could not get any help on identifying the flowers. Kew Gardens said I would have to tell them the species of every one, because their experts were so specialised. I had defeated the object of my request straight away since I evidently did not know, and in any event it was quite clear that most, if not all, of my specimens were indigenous to the high Andes, and were not the same as



A view over La Cumbre towards the glaciated peaks of the southern Corillera Real and a track leading up from the Yungas

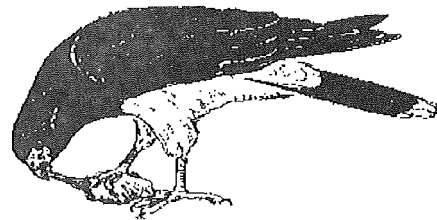
Alpine plants. The Alpine Gardens did not respond to my letter enclosing specimens, despite the good offices of a member of the YRC who was also a member of the Alpine Garden Society. Cambridge Botanic Gardens did succeed in growing two seed varieties, but could not identify them. At this stage I gave up, but I have a catalogue with photographs of 48 specimens, details of their habitat, and pressings of about twenty flowers.

On descending to about 12000 feet, for instance at Pelechuco, and Cochabamba at about 2500 feet, there were a number of flowers identical or nearly so to flowers in this country, including marigold, Californian poppy,

foxglove, broom, berberis (three varieties), roses, hollyhock, pelargoniums, begonias, pyrethrums, mezambryanthemum and petunias. I flew to Cochabamba to see a botanist there and to view the Botanic Gardens. This visit proved abortive, because the botanist was away on safari, and the Botanic Gardens were overgrown and useless to me. Furthermore, I found the town generally uninteresting, one point worth mentioning though was that it was built on the grid system, and, in parts, resembles a town of the Wild West.

Our identification of birds proved to be more satisfactory. Most of the birds

were dissimilar to those in the UK but we did recognise giant coots, black ibis, ducks of various descriptions, including torrent ducks, honey buzzard, condors, black and white Andean geese, humming birds, and mountain caracaras. Further information is included in David Martindale's ornithological report in Appendix 8 of the expedition report published in 1989.



A Short Walk in the Peloponnese

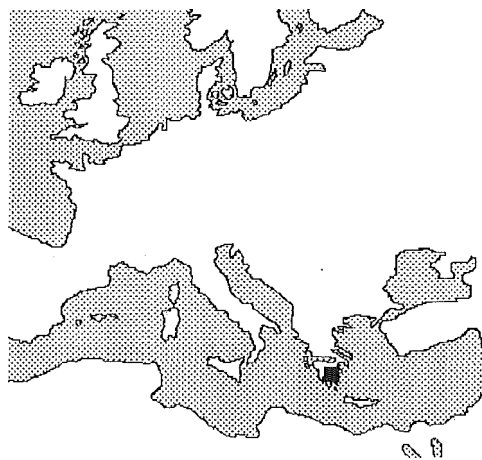
Alan Kay

A chance remark can sometimes often act as a 'trigger', setting off a whole sequence of quite different thoughts and events, and when David Smith casually mentioned that he had received a brochure about Greek holidays from Filoxenia, a firm run by our Club member Simon Stembridge and his family, in my mind's eye I immediately saw blue sky, warm dry rock and distant sandy beaches, and many other seemingly unattainable things.

At the time, we were making our way south from Cape Wrath, a week or so before mid summer's day, 1998, we hadn't seen a patch of blue sky for days, a westerly gale was blowing and the ground was completely water logged; ideally we should have been walking in wellington boots, such were the conditions for most of the Whit holiday backpacking trip.

I fairly soon contacted Simon Stembridge and set out the type of holiday that Julia and I were wanting - some time in the mountains, either camping or staying in villages, in a fairly quiet and remote area; we didn't want to carry more than a day sack, so some form of SUPPOIt would be needed, and just as important, we wanted a few days of sightseeing and absorbing some Greek sun and warmth.

Simon and his colleagues provided the perfect answer - ten days in the Peloponnese, the mainland of Greece south of Corinth. Flights, taxis, hotels and apartments, village houses, camping gear and guides - all were



arranged for us - all we had to do was enjoy the holiday.

The walking part of the trip was in the Parnon range, between the coastal town of Astros and Sparti. These are largely limestone hills, rising to 6500 feet, and our guide was an Athens based surveyor by the name of Christos. He would make an excellent YRC member what better compliment can there be! He did all the route finding, far from easy in the rugged, broken terrain, he described in detail the local history, both natural and political, he pointed out buildings of particular historic or architectural interest, he introduced us to village mayors, took us into monasteries where we were always well received, and he and a colleague did all the cooking!

We met Christos at Astros and drove to the village of Ano Doliana, calling en route at the delightful small monastery of Loukous. From Ano Doliana we walked over high semi wooded heathland which for the most part was quite trackless, and down through mixed woodland to Kastri. Here we stayed at a small guest house, and dined "Greek style" i.e. very late, in the local tavema, along with most of the other inhabitants of the village.

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Filoxenia, owned and run by Suzi Stembridge and YRC member Simon Stembridge, is a small specialist travel company featuring Greece.

Filoxenia literally translated means 'Friend of Strangers' or 'Hospitality'. The company can tailor-make almost any kind of holiday in Greece either for individuals or for small groups (mini YRC Meets consisting of Members and friends for example). Activity holidays include: walking, mountaineering, river rafting and kayaking, bird watching, painting, archaeology, botany, horse riding and even skiing in the winter.

Walking Holiday areas include the Pindus range in northern Greece including Metsovon and the stunning Zagoria region and the Vikos Gorge. Here we work with the Egnatia Epirus Foundation whose group leaders and staff are hand-picked professionals in activities ranging from rock climbing to Byzantine history and are dedicated to preserving the heritage and the environment of the region.

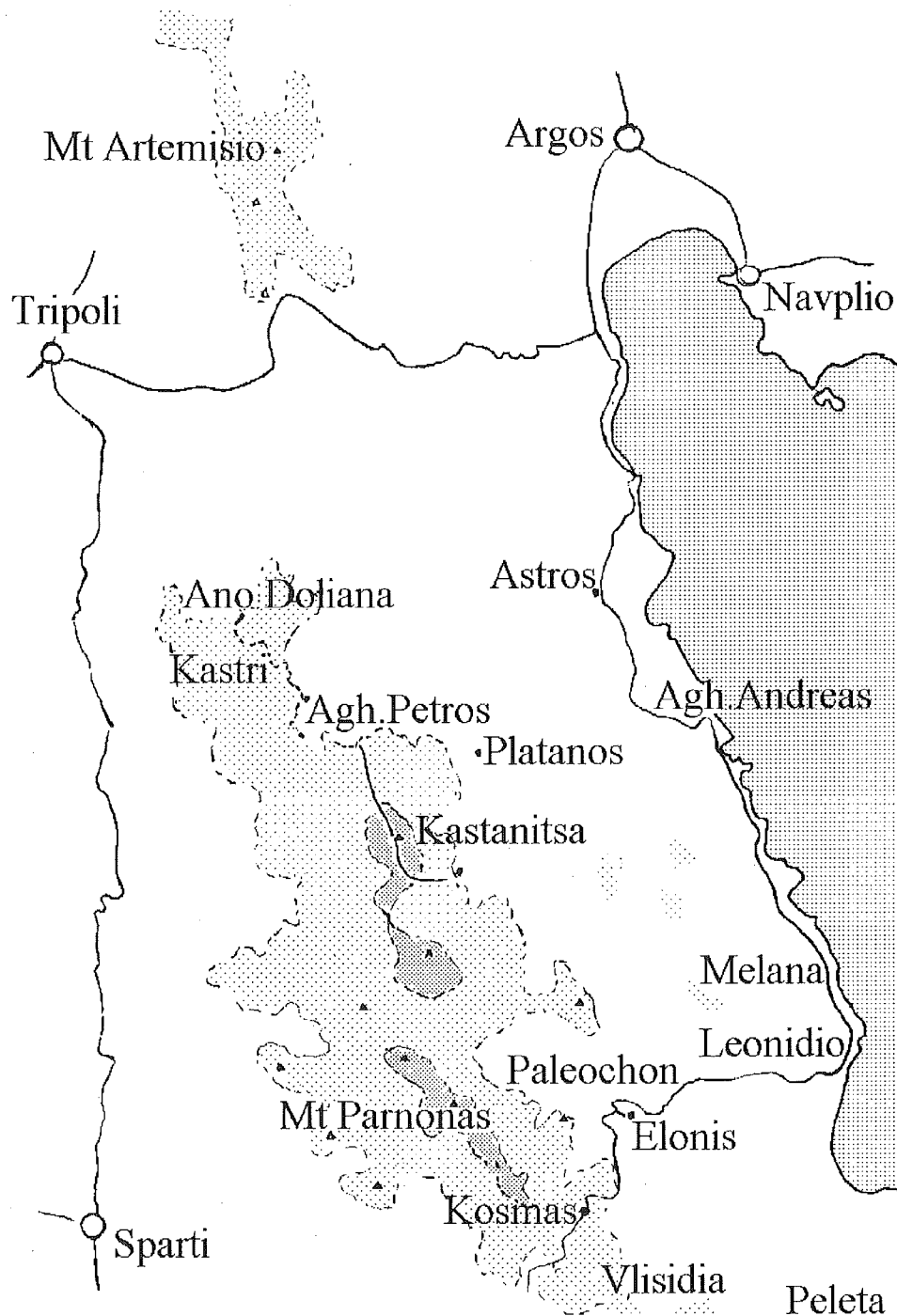
In the Peloponnese, we organise walking holidays in the Parnon range in conjunction with Atropos Tourism (see Alan Kay's article). They follow the old mountain trails and offer three or four day trips in small groups staying in village rooms or houses. The emphasis is on rural culture and nature and one of their trips can easily be combined with a seaside location for the rest of the holiday. In the Mani area of the Peloponnese, the owner of one of our quality properties in Kardamili will lead walks in the Taygetus range, but you return to the same base each night.

Other areas suitable for activity holidays (guided or unguided) include the beautiful Pelion region on the east coast of the mainland and further north, the Mount Olympus National Park, or in north eastern Macedonia, the Rodopi National Park with its unique forests and the ornithologically rich Nestos River.

For further information or to request a Filoxenia 1999 brochure:
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From Kastri we walked next day through a forest of walnut trees, along a series of intricate forest paths down to the busy village of Agh. Petros. We dined well, had a siesta, then began the ascent of Mount Parnon, passing the large monastery of Malevis, when the climb began in

earnest. Much of the ascent was both trackless and steep, but eventually we came to an alp where a shepherd was staying whilst tending a flock of sheep. His shelter was made of a tarpaulin covered with a few branches, and his provisions were little more than a few tins of food and a larger



number of bottles of vodka, most of them empty. He gave us directions, then later joined us at our high camp where he proceeded to devour a large part of our food supplies, and a whole bottle of Christos's vodka!

Our high camp was about 600 feet below the summit of Mount Parnon, and on the slopes grew a herb which could be made into a refreshing drink, a sort of herb tea. It was obviously

much valued by the locals, for a number were taking sackfuls home, stocking up for the rest of the year.

At first light we made a quick, direct ascent of Mount Parnon, and in crystal clear visibility could see range after range of mountains to the west, separated by deep unseen valleys. To the east and beyond the foothills, the sea was illuminated by the newly risen sun, and we did the only sensible

thing, we just sat and absorbed this wonderful scene for an hour or more.

After a quick descent to camp and an early lunch, we were off again, over a series of contorted limestone ridges and spurs, then into a forest where we descended a long gully "Tarzan" style for about 2000 feet, clambering over a jungle of fallen branches, jumping the intermittent stream, clambering down or round outcrops of rock, but all good fun. Sanity returned when we found a series of tracks leading in the direction we wanted, and these were tracks used by the local workmen when tending and halvesting the trees in the walnut forest. Eventually we came to the village of Kastanitsa, located the taverna, and drank cool delicious juice and ate ice cream until our thirsts were slaked; we even met two tourists here, the first we had seen since starting the walk.

We went on to the superbly situated village of Platanos and stayed overnight in a village house. The washroom and loo were in a shed down the garden and the room furniture consisted of a wooden bed and a mattress and a wooden chair, but nothing more was needed.

My most cherished memory of this short sojourn in Greece is of this village. Situated high on a mountain ridge and surrounded by walnut forest, it has about 300 inhabitants, headed by an elected mayor and secretary. It depends on the harvest from the walnut trees for its existence, and life seems to be blissfully uncomplicated.

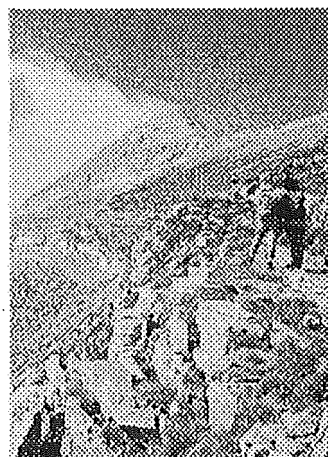
Christos introduced Julia and myself to an elderly lady whom he knew (he seemed to know everyone) and we were invited to take tea in her house. She showed us photographs of her children and grandchildren and of her late husband, tears of emotion welling

up in her eyes as she spoke of them, and of her life in the village. Most graciously and charmingly she served us refreshing green tea, and with Christos as interpreter we enjoyed an hour or so in the company of this lovely lady.

To see and experience rural Greece at its best, my recommendation is to go to Platanos, stay in a village house and walk around the village and the nearby forest for a couple of days. Do, though, tread slowly and carefully, it is too wonderful to want to rush,

Simon had arranged for us to spend the last few days in an apartment on the coast at Poulithra, an hour's drive to the south of Astros. From here, in a hired car, we explored more isolated villages and secluded bays, visited monasteries which were perched high on mountain ledges, and the rest of the time simply ate delicious food and watched the world go by.

We shall be returning to the Peloponnese just as soon as we can, and I can strongly recommend the area and the services of Filoxenia, their main agent in the Peloponnese, Yannis Georgidakis, and Christos our guide, to any YRC member (and partner) who might want to see the best of "non tourist" Greece.



Prophítis Ilias in the Taígetos

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice F. Wilson

May 15 Tenpathang

All was bedlam this morning. When I emerged from the tent, I found that all the village had turned out to witness our goings-on but, in fact, only half the porters arrived. Such are the attractions of family life! Moreover, people kept turning up in ones and twos for medical attention. There was the usual chatter, which I could not decipher. **In** fact, only by moving from box to box and almost hoisting it on to a man's back, could I get them moving. It was 9.30 am before I left the site and, lo and behold, down by the river there was another blarney going on. It appeared that one man was needed to carry the stretcher-bearers' food. This seemed reasonable enough, so we finished up with fifteen porters, altogether.

Getting Lakpa across these surging rivers is always a great attraction. We left the liver about ten am and were soon committed to very steep and thickly wooded slopes. I seemed to lose sight of the rest and felt quite cut off. I could hear no sound of the others. So, I kept strictly to the ridge and, after two hours, came out on to a little plot of land. I was pleased to see, just a short way ahead, Pemba chatting to a group of 'residents'. I was only the third man to have arrived, The others did not appear for nearly an hour but, meantime I had received a delicious bowl of milk. We camped amid lots of cow muck and there was no water nearby. After dinner, helped to fashion splints for Lakpa's leg and dressed it with fresh bandages.

May 16

Dan was very restless last night and so, I too, had a disturbed night. There were the usual injections to be given, so it was 7.45 am before we got away. Steep slopes through the woods led to an easy traverse interspersed with an excellent staircase of rock. Then, it was back again to the woods and steep paths. The stretcher bearers were slow today but, then, it was a bit of a bind. Now, we were getting excellent views of Dorje Lakpa and Yam-bi-cho, (The Great White Peak.)'

We seemed to take a long time to reach water but, eventually, came out on to a beautiful plateau surrounded by Rhododendron bushes. It was a perfect camp site and, at a slightly higher level, is a small lake. We put up our tents here and revelled in the position. In addition to the usual cigarettes ration I gave each of the porters a flake of pipe tobacco and a piece of toilet paper (with this they rolled their cigarettes). One of the boys tidied up the outside of our tent and festooned it with Rhododendrons. A storm is in progress over the Jugal Himal and we are on the fringe of it. The evening is improving but by no means settled. I sat out until it became too cold. The porters made their home in some disused huts about two hundred yards away. It is very lovely here and I shall be sorry to leave this place.

¹ I had an earnest conversation here, with a group of locals and porters. They called it 'Yam-bi-cho' (phonetically). I think it was the Scottish Ladies' Expedition of 1955 who gave it the English name.

Past Snow

Derek Smithson

Don't believe everything you hear about the early meets at Low Hall Garth. The Elsan never did freeze and always was a stinking messy business even in the hardest frosts we had years ago. In those days the greatest fear was that the road conditions would prevent our arrival and there are many tales about cars, drivers and snow. But this Club is about mountains and such things, not motor cars.

One year we went to the meet in Cliff Fielding's 1938 Morris 8 which was then nearly twenty years old. This enables me to guess the year because it was before I owned a car. So it must have been 1956 or thereabouts with plenty of snow and snowing hard on the Saturday morning. Cliff and I got away early with an eye on SE Gully on Great End. I still had a hemp rope but I think we would be using Cliff hawser laid nylon. A couple of slings and one ice axe each, with a pick designed for cutting hand or foot holds. We wouldn't have crampon because they were not considered necessary.

So off we set. All geared up with the snow on our backs as we walked to Great End. We knew the crag so finding the climb was no problem fortunately since we found we were being watched by two eminent members, Stanley Marsden, President and Jack Hilton, Past President. They continued to watch as we struggled with the initial pitches. There was plenty of snow and enough of it compacted but it was the new snow that caused the problem. I remember being part way up a pitch when first I couldn't see for the powder pouring down the gully and then I couldn't breathe because of its density. It is a situation to remember; like first they put the light out and then create a vacuum, and in those days to fall off was unacceptable as well as dangerous. At the end of the pitch I found I was in pain with the life coming back to my hand. We abandoned the climb and joined Stan and Jack for the walk back.

Faces into the snow and away we went. We couldn't see into the driving snow but we all knew the hills and looking back gave us familiar views. Some time later and colder and wetter we found ourselves on top of a small buttress that we all knew did not exist on the route to LHG. Out came the compasses and the elder statesmen said we turn right and Cliff had the temerity to say we should turn left. I simply said I was going downhill to where it was warmer and then decide where to go. Cliff came with me and the other two went their own way. As we descended we found we were in Grains Ghyll above Seathwaite in Borrowdale, but we did not recognise it in the deep snow until we saw the Stocksley Bridge. We had a vision of a fire and cups of tea at the Edmundson's at Seathwaite, but the fire had not been lit. As we finished our tea, feeling still colder from sitting still, there was a clatter of nailed boots in the passage and our erstwhile companions appeared.

There was some discussion about crossing Stake Pass in the dark without torches in the continuing storm but intelligence prevailed and we caught the bus to Keswick where the pubs were just opening and drank rum until we could get a bus for Coniston. I also clearly remember how very cold I was on the bus. Bus heating was much poorer or non-existent in those days and my woollen longjohns and cotton windproofs were soaking wet. We walked from the main road and opened the door into a warm hut where our friends were sitting enjoying a good meal without a single thought for those lost in the storm.

From this you can gather that the essentials of the Club have not changed even if the weather has. These were the Dermis Driscoll meets during which he started the fashion for communal catering. We had a coke stove in the living room which also heated water and another cylindrical one in what is now the bathroom, then a drying room. The water heating system was so good, or the hot tank so small, that water had to be run off in the night to stop the water boiling and making a terrible din.

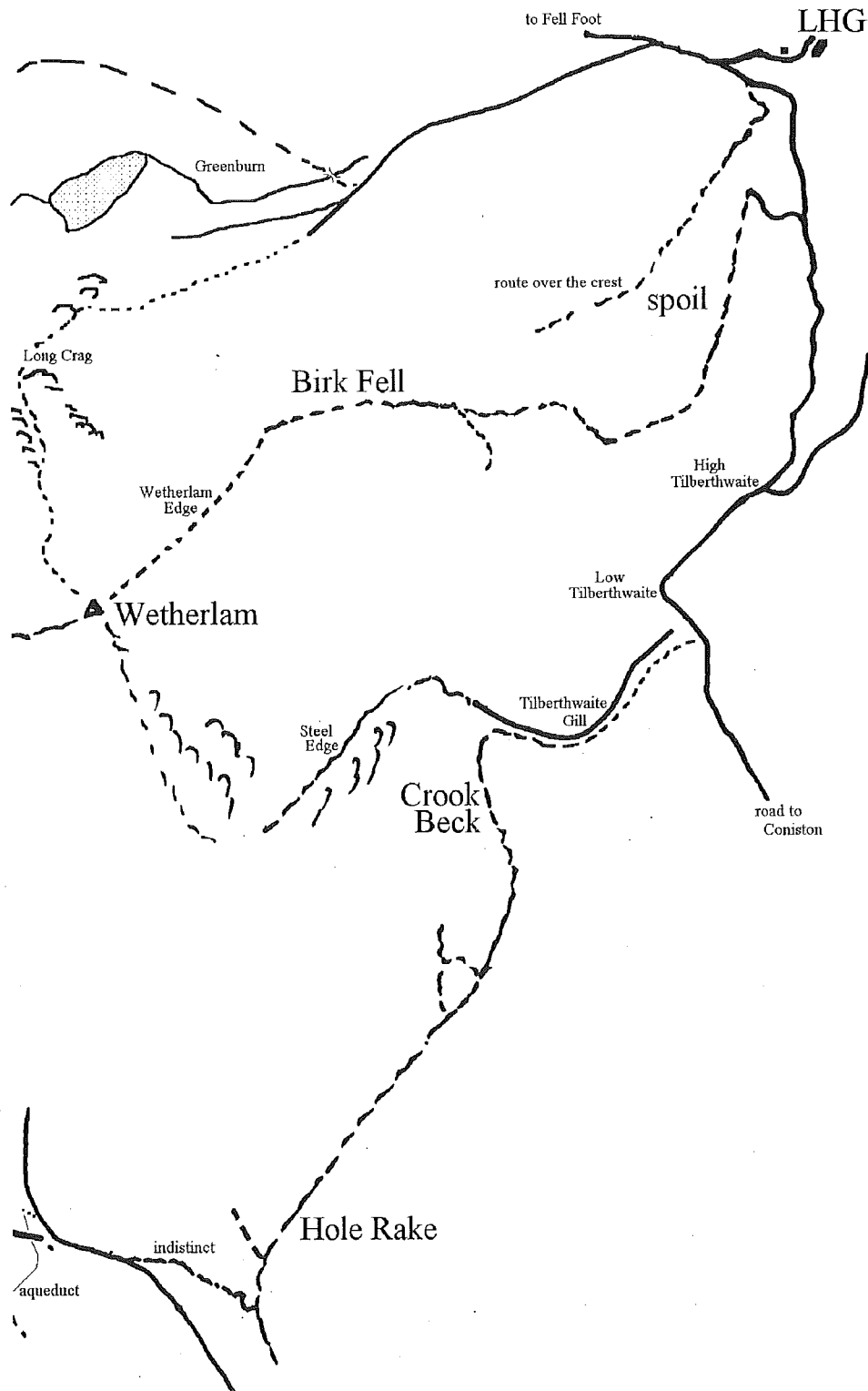
Old Man - new tricks

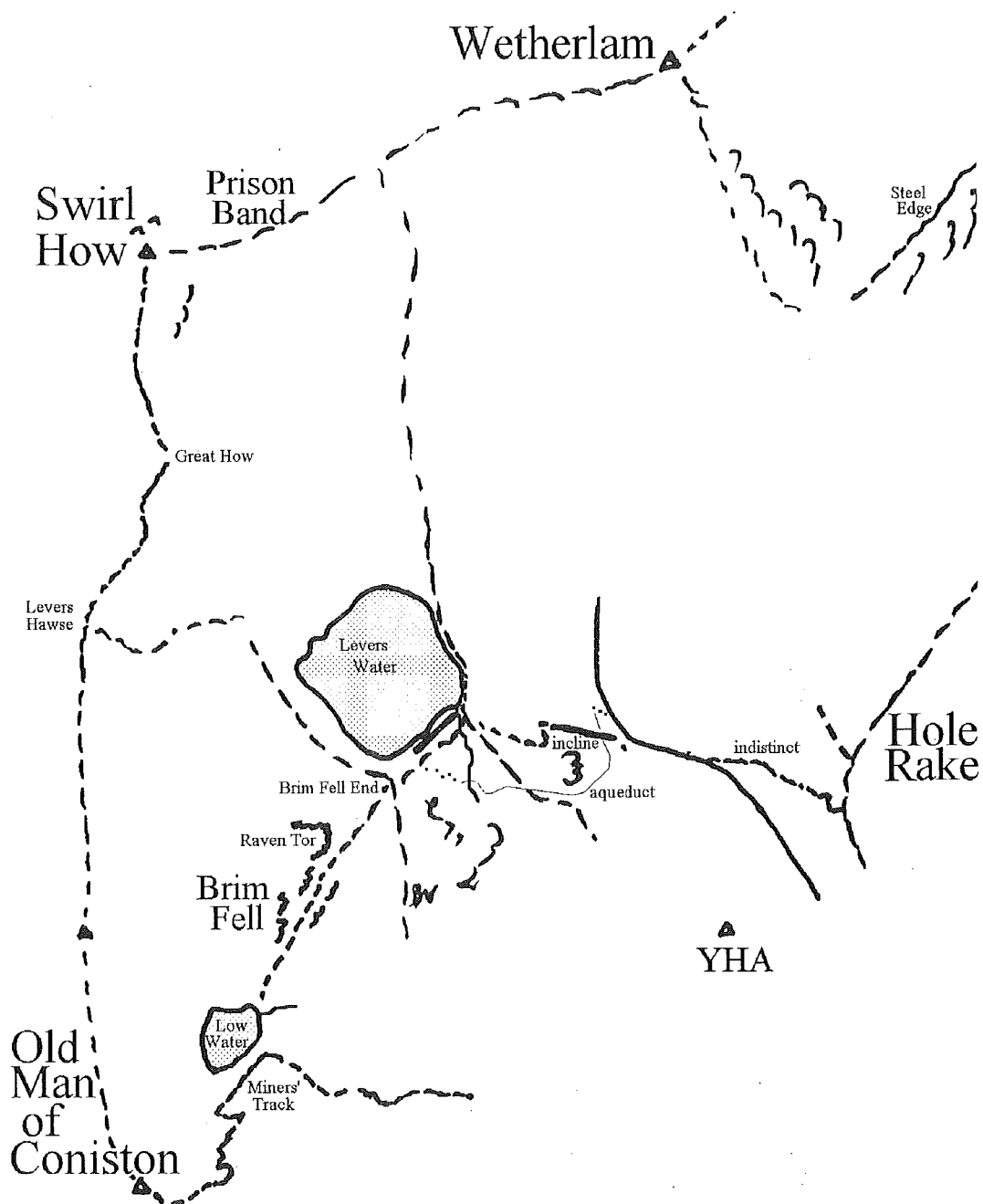
Michael Smith

It was only after we had both slipped on the iced-over path, well into darkness and 1000ft up while sharing one headtorch, that the attractiveness of the long ago rejected option of

descent to Coniston and walking back round to LHG via Tilberthwaite in time for the evening meal, became apparent.

Don't worry, this is not another heroic tale of benightment but a suggested variation or two for outings from Low Hall Garth.





The LHG January Meet is reported elsewhere in this issue but both days out provided, for me, new variations on routes on familiar peaks which are typical of the ways we make interesting days out on these familiar peaks behind our cottage.

To ascend Wetherlam the obvious choices are Greenburn, direct and squelchingly to the foot of Prison Band or up Wet Side Edge and over the Carrs and Swirl How, or walk round to Tilberthwaite then up the Gill and either Steel Edge or Wetherlam

Edge. There are innumerable attractive alternatives though which are also more direct, lying between these two lines and we string two together, one on each day of the weekend.

After following the Greenburn Beck as far as the workings we found a line to the left of the valley bottom track to a rock shoulder below Long Crag. This held a few boggy patches but most would have been avoidable but were of little concern to us on this frozen Saturday morning. Maintaining



Above Long Crag, Wetherlam, Derek Smithson and David Hick

Turn South though and after one and a half miles you reach The Old Man of Coniston. If like me, you are loathe to retrace your steps you can descend either of the routes into Coniston and take on refreshment to fortify you for the two and a half miles of on or near road walking to get to Tilberthwaite to pick up the track to the ford and home.

a steady ascent along a badly defined ridge of Long Crag brought us to the higher fellside which slackens just before the top of Wetherlam

In rough weather, blowing in from the south west, I have used a line like this to keep out of the worst of the wind until the summit is reached.

Less sheltered is to follow the crest past the quarries above Betsy Crag to arrive at the broad col before going over the upper part of Birk Fell to Birk Fell Hause, where the path up from Tilberthwaite joins the route, and up Wetherlam Edge.

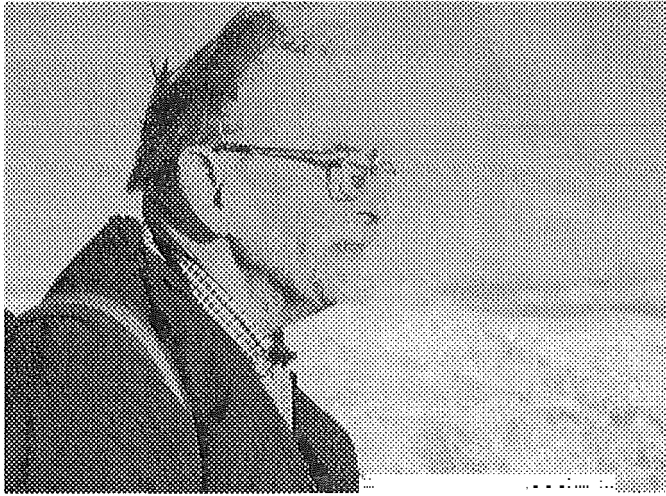
On the Sunday we followed a route on the sunny eastern side, below Betsy Crag, which traversed high above Tilberthwaite. It then swung almost north onto a flat area before ascending Hawk Rigg to Birk Fell and up Wetherlam Edge.

Having arrived at the top of Wetherlam the obvious next spot is Swirl How. From there though to turn north means either an early return down Wet Side Edge and Greenburn or a messy round of one or more of the Wrynose Fells and Lingmoor Fell. Possibly because I invariably go over these in foul weather they then never hold much of an attraction for me.

Alternatively descending the Miners' Track to below the Coppennines Youth Hostel there is a track over the col between Wetherlam and the Yewdale Fells, called Hole Rake, which descends by Tilberthwaite Gill. A little further down, by Miners Bridge a path round to the other Coniston Youth Hostel at Far End heads north and over the Yewdale Fells to Tilberthwaite. In either case the extra ascent, for me, is worth it simply to keep away from the roads.

Descending from The Old Man by the Miners' Track, while you are well above Brim Fell, two other minor variations can be spotted provided you are free of cloud and mist.

The higher of these leads from Low Water to Levers Water and is a feint path on a narrow, green broken terrace across the crags of Brim Fell. Getting started on it from the outflow of Low Water needs the small act of faith of setting off in the right direction and it will fall into place as the terrain reduces the options for you. At the other end, Brim Fell End, the grassy slopes have no real path though there is the terrace to aim for if you are heading up the fell.



George Spenceley looking out from Brim Fell, January, 1999

Heading down from Levers Water outflow there are a couple of ways to avoid the obvious paths. One is heading east and slightly rising over the shoulder of Kennel Crag then steeply down to an obvious raised incline left over from the mining days. The second is to take the path down by the outflow but look out for added up aqueduct going off left to the east then north. Follow this and it arrives near the foot of the incline.

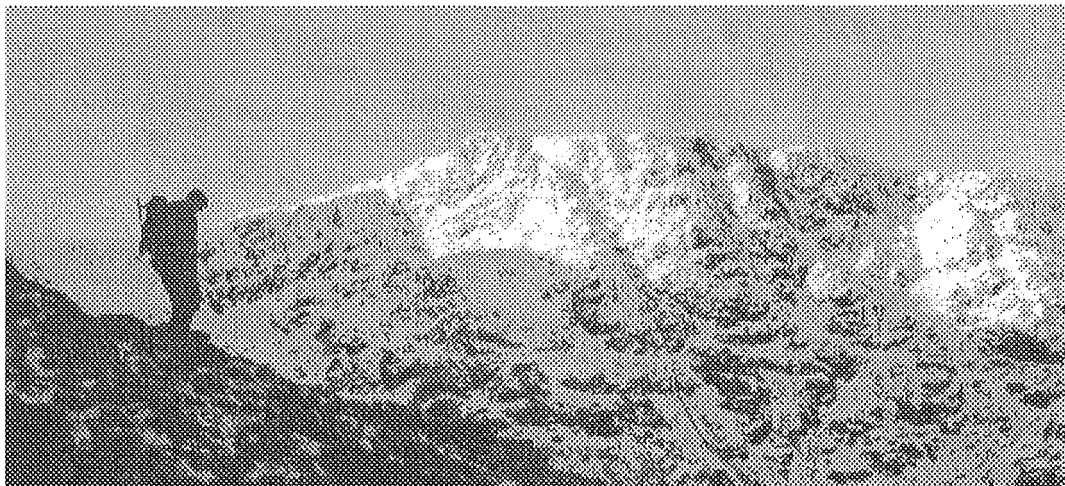
The Red Dell track can then be followed down for a few hundred metres before an indistinct path makes a gradually rising traverse into Hole

Rake. This then takes you back to Tilberthwaite, If it is winter almost certainly you will finish in the dark.

This was the case for George Spenceley and I this January. Linger on the tops enjoying the sparkingly clear views we overtaken by the gathering gloom before we climbed out of the Coppermines area towards Tilberthwaite, It was pitch black and starlit by the time we gained Hole Rake.

The hut was filled with conversation, a spectacle-misting fug and with diners enjoying their third course by the time we arrived, We joined a select second sitting an hour later and agreed that our tour was a superb day.

The next day George joined HalTY Griffin who knew the route below Brim Fell and thought himself its original discoverer. We can each discover these variations for ourselves either by close inspection of the detailed maps or having an eye for the landscape on a clear day. There must be dozens more waiting out there.



Swirl How viewed from the slopes of Wetherlan above Greenburn

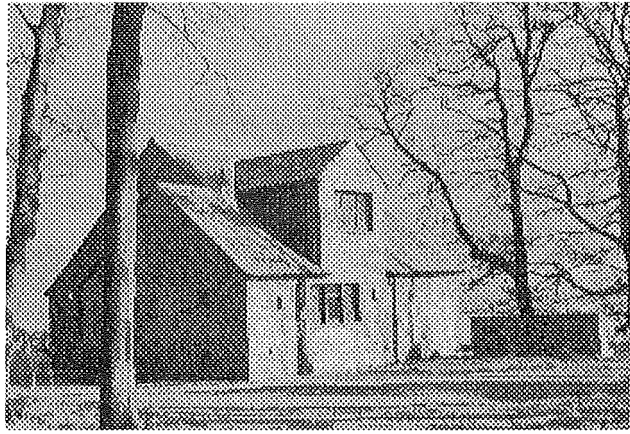
Lowstern Hut 2

F. David Smith

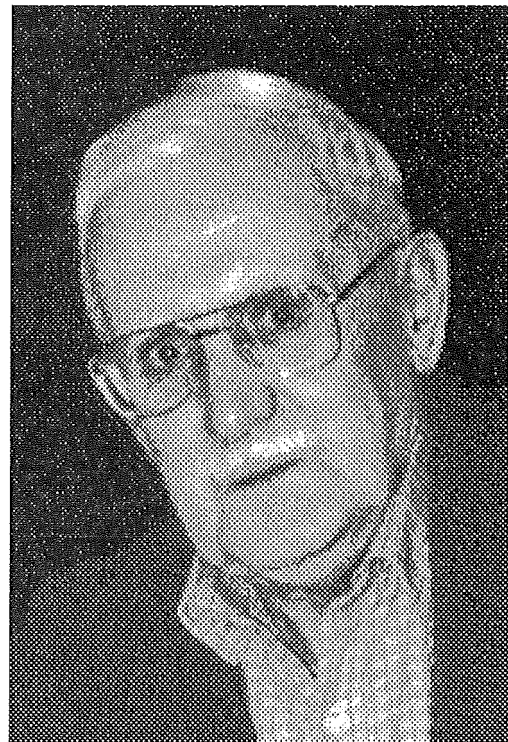
In the number 30 edition of the *YRC Journal* Cliff Downham gives the background and activities that went into obtaining and refurbishing of our Lowstem hut. It was in a period of great activity above and below ground. This did not stop members light across the age range and from all over the north of England from giving their weekends, week after week, to the work of reconstruction. These working weekends provided a remarkable bonding of members and indeed it was a very happy period in the Club's history. Most of the work was done 'on the cheap' and the facilities of members' employers were stretched to the limit.

There was much talk in the late seventies and early eighties about obtaining a hut in the Lake District that we would own. In Dennis Armstrong's presidency the topic was increasingly voiced. He, using the great authority of his office, managed to persuade the Committee and members that our attention should be focused on Lowstem as Yorkshire was our natural home. The old iron clad hut was getting the worse for wear and increasingly difficult to maintain in a satisfactory condition. One warden and his wife spent a good deal of their spare weekends cleaning the place. Potholers straight from the underworld have the greater priority of cleaning themselves. The question was should we do a massive refurbishment of the old hut, perhaps timber cladding it, or build a new one?

A meeting at the hut, when several past presidents attended, made the



decision to build a new hut that we could be proud of, no cutting corners this time. Peter Swindells took over the presidency and masterminded the funding. He knew just how to extract money from members and succeeded in areas where others would not have dared to put pressure. Another former president, Bill Lofthouse, was our architect and he and Ron Goodwin took on the task of organising the work. A local builder, Martin Pettiford was engaged and slowly an impressive new hut emerged constructed in local limestone. Much



Cliff Downham

of the interior work was undertaken by members. The new hut was duly opened by past president Stanley Marsden, himself a keen potholer in his day, on the after dinner meet in 1988.

It was a splendid hut but on club meets it was found to be difficult to cater for large numbers. During the early days of Tim Josephy's presidency consideration was given to extending the hut. John Whalley was given the difficult task of designing an extension that would blend with the existing building. There is little doubt that he has succeeded admirably. The imagination and persuasive qualities of Albert Chapman added to this success, notably in the provision of a beautiful oak floor and impressive open fireplace. A forward thinking treasurer had ensured that there would be money in the bank. This together with numerous gifts and loans from members ensured that a start could be made.

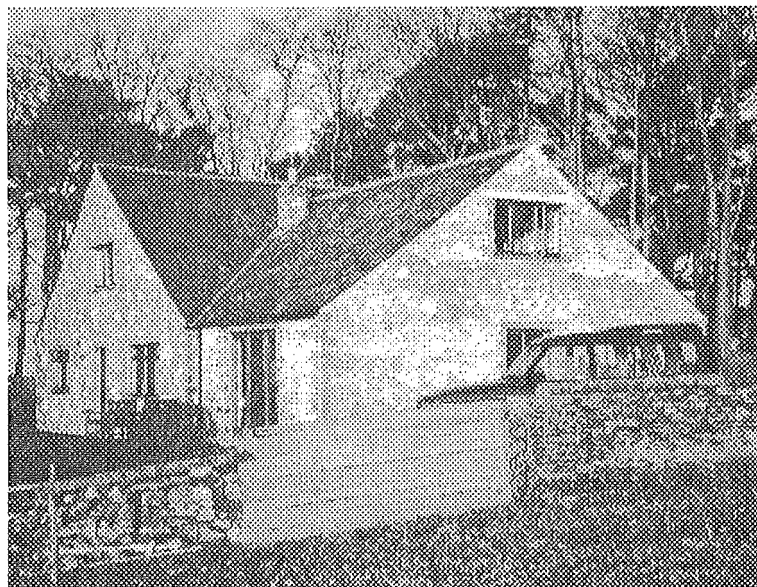
The more lavish approach would not have been possible had it not been for a legacy from Cliff Downham and a second one from Nellie Downham. In their memory, and especially to Cliff's enormous contribution to the effective running of the Club and his undoubted love of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club it was decided to name the new common room, 'The Downham Room'. This was carved into the ancient oak mantelpiece by Howard Humphreys. Upstairs there is a



Photograph of the hut before the recent extension was built

large new bunk room, also a sluice room and tackle store has been provided for the potholers for them to wash and store their equipment.

The opening on the after dinner meet in 1998 was performed by Mrs Joan Farrer who in her delightful speech linked the Club with the Farrer family and their close association over the century. A quite superb buffet was provided by Mrs Sammy Chapman that would not have been out of place at the Ritz. The hut or loather clubhouse is now used for other Club activities such as committee meetings and meeting to plan the ever increasing overseas expeditions another of Cliff Downham's dreams for the Club that has taken shape.



The new Lowstern Extension (Photo Richard Gowing)

A Fairy Tale



wise to risk a night out with the hardy sheep.

And so they reached home, all agreeing that it had been a very pleasant day.

But then; Calamity!!

S.B. discovered that he had lost his penknife.

Pockets were turned inside out... twice; rucsac emptied, sandwich box searched and the kitchen scoured. The car (Smartie's car we had been using) was scrutinised minutely.

All to no avail.

Now this may seem a lot offuss about a simple penknife but S.B. was very attached to it. It had been a present from his wife many years ago and it had served him well, and had endured many adventures, having been lost and found again time after time. Sometimes, S.B. wondered if it talked to the fairies when it was lost. It was a good knife.

S.B. thought very carefully for a long time and finally decided that he had last used his knife when sharing out the aforementioned choc.bar, and when replacing the knife in his pocket it must have slipped into the grass.

He became more & more forlorn thinking of his poor knife lying in the cold wet grass with, by now, a covering of snow, and his distress became so grave that another friend, one Archie by name, also well versed in mountain lore, promised to take him to look for it, and so they set off in Archie's car, but unfortunately the weather was now frosty & snowy and the

Dear Derek,

As we are unlikely to see each other prior a rather indeterminate time I thought I would send you a little fairy tale I heard recently.

Here goes, as well as I can remember it.

Clifford

The time was December, long long ago (well, not all that long ago, but fairy tales are always long long ago.)

It was a sunny frosty day as all December days should be, and three friends, "Speedy", "Smartie" and "Scatter Brains" - S.B. for short - were wandering around the mountains as was their habit; a habit not to everyones' liking but nevertheless I am reliably told is very good for body, mind & soul.

When I say "wandering" they were not lost, good gracious no, they were highly skilled and practised in their craft.

However by mid-afternoon, having walked far and wide they sat down by a stone wall sheltering from the wind and finished their last sandwich and cup of coffee, and S.B. shared a chocolate bar between them.

They did not linger, as the winter days were short and they still had a considerable distance to walk to reach their car and they were far too





Arthur Craven, Cliff Cobb and his brother-in-law, Terry Temple. Photograph by Derek Smithson

steep mountain road so treacherous and a black cloud descending low over the mountains that they had to turn back for home.

S.B. was now becoming resigned to his loss; but not quite!

Two days later the morning was blight & sunny and he decided to try once more, this time by himself, & so, fortified with coffee and Mars bars he set off and soon without difficulty he reached the previous pic-nic spot. The grass had a light covering of snow, and S.B. carefully scraped this off with his gloved hand, but after several minutes his heart was sinking.

No luck. Then as a last resort he decided to try with his walking stick with its steel point. Again no luck and he was just about to walk away when - "tinkle-tinkle". His stick had found his knife, little the worse for its night out. S.B. decided the fairies had been looking after his knife and had guided his stick to it.

Carefully zipping up the pocket with the knife safely inside he celebrated with a Mars bar and a cup of coffee before returning to his car with a jaunty step (well, as jaunty as he could manage.)

When he reached home he did a most unusual thing for him, he celebrated a second time with a glass of some gold-coloured liquid.

And S.B. was happy once more.

It is believed that he will now place the knife in a glass case, with a brass plate recording its adventures.



While this is definitely a fairy tale the author is reliably informed that the salient features are all true.

Inbhirfhaolain and all that!

Derek Bush

Over the years the YRC have held many winter meets in Scotland very often over the Easter holiday period. However it was not until 1970 that the Glen Etive February meet commenced and quickly became a fixture in the Club's meet list.

It came about because of Cliff Downham's friendship with Don Green of the Grampian Club. A contributory factor must also have been the improved road network which gave motorway or dual lane standard driving, from either side of the country, almost to the edge of the Scottish Highlands. Once past Crianlarich you began to feel you were almost there.

In those early days the hut was lit by gas light giving it a certain ambience which most members agree has been lost with the advent of fluorescent lamps. The kitchen was small and cramped, it still is, but the good nature of all the members ensured that everyone got their meals even if sometimes it was nearly ten o'clock at night. The simplest expedient was often to go to the pub early, usually on the way back from a hard day out and wait for the scrum to clear. Water was, and still is, brought from the stream and again the YRC is seen at its best as members ensure that the water containers are seldom empty for long. The Elsan situated in a small outhouse is a sight to behold! There are two classes of members who go to Glen Etive - those who use the Elsan and those who go with a spade into the bushes. The latter are the ones who refuse to empty it on our last

morning on the somewhat tenuous excuse that they haven't helped to fill it!

However the object which made the hut such a joy to stay in was the pot bellied stove which once alight dried all the soggy clothes and was the focal point around which the fellowship and 'bonhomie' of which the YRC is so renowned was revealed in its true glory. The Grampian Club at one stage took it out and replaced it with an electric fire. It was in many ways a disaster and happily they have now installed a multi-fuel stove which is far more suitable for the hut's needs.

We all tend to think that when we were young the summers were always long and hot and the winters hard, frosty with plenty of snow. There developed a theory that in the month of February a high pressure system built up over north west Scotland which always coincided with the Glen Etive meet. In the first ten years, looking back at the meet reports five out of the ten were described as 'good' to 'excellent'. The years from 1980 to 1989 also produced the same ratio but with three consecutive years 1985-1987 giving excellent weather. This is how the myths of constant good weather build up. We have not had good weather for a full weekend on the meet since 1987. It is quite remarkable how much was achieved despite the weather and the writer can perhaps think of maybe only one weekend when he did not get somewhere near a top, if not exactly on it! Very often the trip was saved by a Munroe being bagged somewhere to the south on the way back home on the Sunday.

During all this time the average attendance was twenty eight which in the majority of years would be higher than the Club average attendance for

all meets. Excluding guests the average was twenty two. On two occasions there were forty two people and we only fell below twenty once, in 1975, when there were nineteen.

Enough of statistics, Inbhirfhaolain is all about climbing mountains in winter conditions and the comradeship which follows after a hard day out on the hills. The first meet in 1970 was attended by twenty six members and guests including Paul Nunn who was a guest of our member Clive Rowlands. Members may recall that Paul should have been our Chief Dinner Guest in 1995 but was killed tragically in the Himalaya a few months previously. Six of the members on that first meet attended our recent 1999 meet.

Reading through the twenty plus meet reports available to me I realise there are far more erudite members than myself and I make no excuse for the unashamed plagiarism which follows as I quote verbatim from those reports,

1971 "Do not get up so much speed that you burst out of the lowlands into the land of the early closing petrol stations without so much as a glance at your gauge"

Written by the late and sadly missed, John Gott, - when four of us spent the night huddled in our sleeping bags in the vicinity of Tyndrum petrol station.

1972 Written in the form of a consultant's report by Gordon Humphreys. Under the heading of Introduction... *"We have concluded that the problems revealed are ^{vel}l serious but that any attempt to solve them would so radically alter the character of the Club that the changes would be totally unacceptable to the members"*

Under the heading of Supply... *"In the case of food each member's or guest's wife assumes she must provide for her spouse and also for the rest of the party. In the case of drink each member tends to hope that the others will bring something with them."*

"Under the heading of equipment we should perhaps mention that no apparent loss was suffered by the member and guest who splashed starters in the gloaming in the stream above Alltchaorunn"

No prizes for guessing who the member was!

Under the heading of Accounts... *"We had hoped to provide a set of audited accounts for the meet, but the member to whom the duty of collecting the fees had been delegated explained to us that since he did not know at which hotel he and his guests would call on the way home, nor what they would eat, our suggestion was impracticable!"*

1974 "Sunday was an appalling day-heavy continuous rain and low cloud. Masochists and the 'two day only men' set out to test waterproofs to the limit and Buchaille Etive Beag and the volcanic plug on which Stirling Castle

stands were two of the tops reported climbed!" Author unknown!

1975 (Mike Hobson) To help explain the following paragraph the meet leader was John Gott.

"The hillside was typically Scottish. Foreshortened from across the valley and dwarfed by surrounding heights, it seemed just a short barrier towards the attainment of greater things. Closer acquaintance brought home the cruel realities. Although at an apparent angle of seventy degrees, the

ground still had the characteristics of best quality bog. Heather, rocks and grassy tussocks abounded and far from being a short barrier the slope was interminable. Since 'contouring' or 'tacking' do not form part of the Meet Leader's vocabulary, the party was proceeding directly upwards at a pace which was beginning to tell on some members within a hundred feet of starting to climb. Enveloped in a cloud of steam, blinded by sweat and with a high pitched ringing in my ears I gradually became aware that words were being addressed in my direction - 'I've been looking through the records, and its been a long time since we had a meet report from you etc Life at times, even with the YRC can plumb the depths.'

What follows gets worse:- "This report would not be complete without mention of the epic return made to civilisation by the Meet Leader and his followers. Driven by the need for petrol to travel by Loch Lomond rather than Stirling (See reference to petrol in 1971 report) they were lost in Glasgow for an amazing hour and a half. During this time, strange villages on the outskirts were visited. There, instructions were given on the correct way to escape southward and the luckless party would plunge once more into the bright lights only to emerge, still hopelessly lost, in yet



another peripheral community. Fate, in the shape of the Glasgow Police eventually took a hand the party being stopped by a patrol car and the Meet Leader accused of speeding. Some sort of smooth talking finally produced a caution rather than a booking and (more to the point) concise directions on how to escape the City's clutches. Landfall back in Cheshire, was made by the writer at about 4 a.m. and for those interested - he didn't get his bath until Monday night."

What a classic weekend. It sounds like something out of "It will be all right on the Night"

1978 (Michael Smith) "Sunday saw many members heading homewards, but several decided to 'bag a quick Munroe'. Parking at the head of Loch Etive, the route up Beinn Fhionnlaidh skirted the forest, went across the frozen Lochan na Fola and a direct route up a line that (as one member informed us) could not be called a gully as it only had one steep wall. In any case it lead straight to the top though some ominous sounds were heard from the partially consolidated snow. The conditions were worse, cloudy and more Windy but a little milder. (The writer is referring to the previous two days weather) Various descent routes met on the forest road by Allt nan Gaoirean. Snow conditions and the length of the route meant that this 'quick trip' took the whole of the day."

1979 (Author Unknown) Describing a 'trip' over the Aonach Eagach

"The Eagach party of three arranged a car trip with two others traversing from west to east. The snow

conditions, the blue sky, the warmth of the sun provided near Alpine conditions on the slopes of the Devil's Staircase. The ridge itself was not so good as last year, but presented unique problems demanding great care and concentration. The exposure was impressive and was a continual reminder that the mountains are never conquered, merely climbed"

The report goes on to say... "The west/east party enquiring of some Scots as to the better of two routes over a pinnacle advised that only one way would go and that it was 'Hobson's Choice'. They were not to know they were addressing Mike Hobson!"

1980 (Howard Humphries) Writing about a beautiful day on a Saturday...

"However the day was not over. The stars were so bright that after dinner the Buchaille Etive Beag was bagged on a round trip of two and a quarter hours!"

If my memory serves me correctly I think Peter Chadwick, Peter Elliott and Michael Smith made that late evening trip.

Also on that meet, it was reported, a new recipe for coffee au lait was tried. "Use potato powder not dried milk, serve from thermos flask with tent peg."

All I can say is that the 80/- bitter tasted better than ever that evening!

1981 (David Smith) "What makes one meet better than another is not always easy to understand but year after year Inbhirfhaolain draws people anything from 300 - 500 miles. This year was no exception when no fewer than 42 people crammed into the cottage which offers 11 beds. Many people brought tents or Dorma-

vehicles which did ease both the sleeping and eating situation. ss

1983 (Duncan Mackay)

We arrived at the hole in the wall at 6.00am. The ground was frozen hard, everyone was asleep and you could just make out a faint white glow from the ridges. The sense of anticipation and excitement was immense - great things were expected this weekend.

1984 (Adrian Bridge) Late on the 16th some members arrived and marvelled at the new comprehensive electrical system, but quite failed to make even a single light work! The next morning it was discovered that the electricity supply hadn't quite reached the hut!

Many members and guests met up in the Clachaig hotel bar for a drink or two on the way back to the hut. Amongst a time of much merriment two small incidents are worth recording. One was the refusal of a barman to make a shandy with his 80/- beer, far too good to sully with lemonade! The other was the look on the face of one member who'd just phoned his wife to say he would be home 24 hours after he had previously told her he would be. If ever a man was nearly turned to stone at the end of a phone it was he!

1988 (David Handley) "One indefatigable Andean aspirant completed a thirty mile overnight trek from Kinlochleven to a bothy north of Loch Treig and back via Loch Eilde Mol'. He arrived back just before his remaining kit was to be distributed among 'friends'."

"Desperate for a happy ending the Lancashire contingent stopped for afternoon tea at the Ben Lawers Tourist centre but were persuaded to

make a serious attack on Meall Mam Tarmacham, Beinn Mam Eachan and, for two members, Creag No Caillich. And I quote 'an excellent ridge, hard snow, barely visible footprints, crunchy ice, blue skies and extensive views... Was this really the same weekend?'

1989 (Derek Bush) *"The member from Cambridge (he who always comes to Glen Etive) was found wandering down the road to the cottage on Saturday morning having come lip on the overnight sleeper. He stayed the night and accepted a lift to Bridge of Orchy on Sunday before he travelled south on Monday. Such is the lure of Glen Etive."*

And now to bring this article up to date. We were there (in 1999) only a week ago. The weather was typical of the last few years but the company was, as always, excellent. I will leave a description of the meet to the report writer Michael Wood.

The cottage has been improved, more subtle ceiling lighting, new kitchen extension, the whole of the downstairs interior clad in tongue and groove boarding. The Elsan has gone and there is now a self composting toilet housed in a stockade type watch tower attached to the 'west wing'. The notice hanging up in the compartment says it is one of only a few scattered around the world. We felt very honoured. Members were literally queuing up to use it! We still have to get water from the stream and conversations with the hut custodian after the meet indicated that the Grampian Club have no intention of installing a piped supply because of the problems of frost.

Research also revealed that 1999 was the Club's 24th weekend at Iubhirfhaolain and because of this and

no little pressure from members, our President has very generously agreed to hold a 25th anniversary meet on the equivalent date next year. It is already booked! We are planning to provide some form of cooked meal on the Saturday evening and we would hope all the regulars will be able to attend. Preference will be given to the older members to occupy the bunks!

Finally just in case you haven't got the message let me leave you with two quotes by David Handley from the 1977 and 1988 reports respectively.

"The Glen Etive meet has a Vel)) distinct character. The solitude and surrounding prospects of Inbhirfhaolain are unique by any standard and we are again gratified to the Grampian Club. Undoubtedly this was an exceptional meet. The company, location and meteorological rarity will have sent members home with a touch of the mountain magic reserved for a few on rare occasions in Scotland. It was a privilege and a pleasure to be there."

"Their hut, now somewhat modified upstairs, boasts electricity and a galley more akin to a small yacht than a cottage but it's the view from the Elsan which brings back YRC men back year after year."

Acknowledgements:

- David Smith for supplying copies of the meet reports;
- The report writers one and all whether quoted or not;
- The late Cliff Downham for starting the practice of meet report writing.

President's Report

as presented at the 1998 AGM

1998 has seen a continuation of the enterprise and variety which has characterised our activities in recent years. Some of our cavers have been in the forefront of international caving, and as usual, individuals have been ranging far and wide. At home, the fabric of Lowstern is complete and work is ongoing to equip it.

The Iceland expedition took place in the spring of this year, with eleven members and guests taking part. Although the primary objective of crossing the Vatnajökull icecap was not achieved, partly due to the lack of snow on the glaciers and partly due to our having underestimated the task, all parties had an excellent three weeks, with most people vowing to return. Several mountains were ascended, including the highest, Hrannadalshnukur, a 2 day trip which involved a camp on the icecap. Full details of all the activities are in the Bulletin; suffice it to say that Iceland is an unique and exciting country almost on our doorstep- it is definitely worth consideration for a future meet.

Looking to the near future on the expedition front, the 1999 South American expedition is organised and booked. A climbing and a trekking party will fly to Bolivia in June, the climbers to attempt first ascents in the Ccapata range, and the trekkers to explore the Cordillera Real. I know that the next President is very keen to have a major caving expedition in the year 2000 and proposals are being raised for that.

Members of the Club were involved in a successful attempt on the world depth record in the Mirola Cave

earlier this year. This and other enterprises have elevated our caving group to a high profile in the sport. My only regret is that so far this has not resulted in more cavers wishing to join the Club. We should lose no opportunity to promote the facilities and activities we have available now at Lowstern.

Sixteen meets were organised for the Club, with a mixture of traditional meets and innovative ones. The caving meet in the Vercors was a most enjoyable week with twelve members and guests attending. It has been suggested that, discounting Ireland, this may have been the first official overseas caving meet. Whether this is so or not, I hope it will not be the last; caving areas tend to have something of interest for everyone and meets of this kind really deserve popularity.

It is becoming obvious nowadays that global warming is changing our climate and so our meets programme must change if we are to make the best of it. Inevitably some of the traditional meets will disappear but hopefully they will be replaced with something better. Whilst no one wants change for its own sake, we must be forward looking and prepared to experiment. Perhaps there is scope for parallel meets to cater for those who do not wish to attend specialised or overseas meets.

As regards attendance, I do not intend to give figures as I think they do not truly reflect the success of the meets. For example, The Spring Bank meet and the Long Walk, both excellent meets were reduced in numbers by the Iceland expedition; the same problem will occur next year. The Vercors meet was never going to attract as many members as a traditional October meet. Suffice it to say that a successful and well attended meets

programme was run, with hut accommodation more often over subscribed than not.

Turning to the Club huts. I am pleased to report an upturn in receipts for Low Hall Garth. This has alleviated last year's problem although we are still in dispute with the National Trust over the rent. Until they fulfil their obligations with regard to repairs to the fabric of the building we will continue to withhold a proportion of the rent. Apart from that, LHG is in good condition and is continuing to show a profit.

The extension to Lowstern is complete and the formal opening will take place tomorrow. I hope as many of you as possible will come to see what an excellent job has been done. Apart from the extra room inside, the clubhouse is now well equipped as a caving centre, with a proper tackle store and kit washing facilities. A new boiler has yet to be fitted, and some decorating and furnishing to be completed but otherwise the major work is now all done. As I said last year, we owe a great debt to a number of people, in particular Albert Chapman and John Whalley for the planning and administration work, Mike Godden for the new heating system and Ian Crowther for his work on the new bunks. A major project for the future is to upgrade the electricity supply when funds allow.

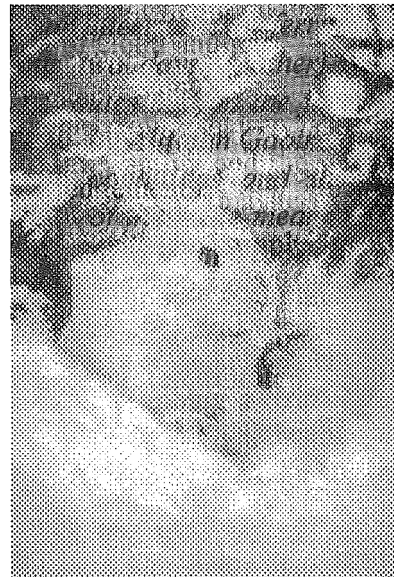
The winter 1998 Bulletin is the biggest yet and the quality of articles continues to be high. I am SURE you will all have noticed the improvement in picture quality- our thanks go to Michael Smith for all his efforts.

Last year saw the ending of an era. Stanley Marsden died shortly after the last Dinner and although he had not been active for some years, most of us

remember him as a towering personality within the Club. A member for over sixty years, he gave us unstinting service as Vice President, Treasurer, President and Committee member. Since writing this report, I have received the sad news of the death of Pat Stonehouse last Wednesday. Members will wish to know that he took a keen interest in the affairs of the Club light up to the end. He was gentle person and a true friend of the YRC. They will both be sadly missed. Regretfully, I also have to report the deaths of three other members, Cliff Fielding, Duncan Brown and John White. There were five resignations during the year, however seven new members were elected. Total membership now stands at 184, broken up as follows:

Ordinary members	115
Life members	64
Honorary Members	5
Total	184

Tim Gough



Book Reviews by Bill Todd

Craven Pothole Club Record

No.51 July 1998 - Lowe's' Gully

It was high time some proper Yorkshire folk went out to Malaysia and sorted out this gully. They weren't YRC more's the pity but I was delighted to read that a Craven Pothole Club Party made the first properly organised descent in March 1998. There were a dozen Yorkshiremen with a climbing/caving background and various ancillary staff like two Malaysian National Park Wardens and a television chap name of McDonald.

The expedition worked in teams of four setting things up and taking them down. Casualties were minimal the only serious injury being sustained by Kenny Taylor as a result of objective danger. After nine days the final team arrived at Roberts Falls and knew they had cracked it. When they finally emerged an army of porters was waiting to help with the gear and no-one was in any doubt which way to walk.

I must take issue with the author" Steve Kelley, on the history. He says that a ten strong team of 1994 had to be rescued after twenty-one days in the gully. According to the written accounts five members completed the descent and, albeit starved and ill, made their way to habitation. These were N.C.O.s. No wonder this country has not lost a major war for centuries.

Much else of interest is included in this Craven Pothole Club Record now in the Club Library,

Craven Pothole Club Record

No. 53 January 1999

It is amazing how a little detailed attention to any outdoor journal turns up nuggets of interest from the past. In the case of this issue of the CPC Record there is a most interesting article describing an impromptu descent of Gaping Gill by a couple, not in their first youth, who had only ever gone near Clapham to have their car serviced.

When the exit from Trow Gill was said to be as steep as Sharps Hill it took me back :fifty years to when I used to walk up Sharps Hill six mornings a week on my way to work. The article was written primarily for the Chapel Magazine and I am morally certain that the Chapel concerned must be the Greaves Methodist Chapel which is at the bottom of Sharps Hill at Greaves, Lancaster.

Other articles of general interest are on Norway, High Cup Nick, and Skye. The Skye article by Nigel Graham describes some interesting walks and deals with the impact of the news of the untimely death of the Princess of Wales.

By the time this review appears you may have to wait to read the Record but there are also as usual plenty of articles of underground adventure.

Also received is an index to publications 1932 to 1998. There is such a variety of subjects covered that one is tempted to get on the bus and go to the library to read all of it before the embargo comes down.

Yorkshire Gritstone

Edited by Dave Musgrove

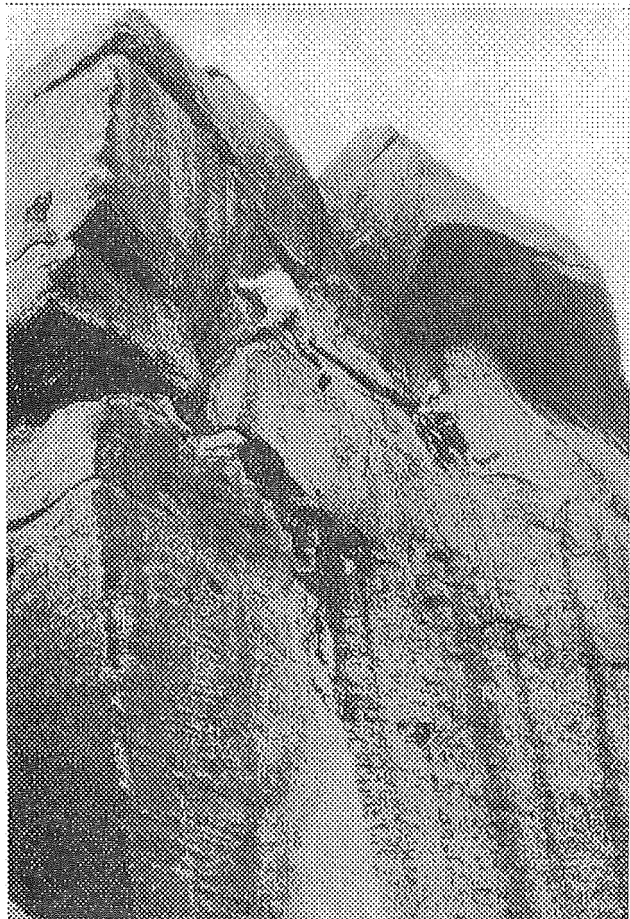
on behalf of the YMC,
pp695, £18.95 h/b

This is the fourteenth book dealing with Yorkshire Gritstone, The first two, Laycock's and Graham's, were published before the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club was formed. The next two were published by the Gritstone Guide Committee; Allan Allsop edited the first of these, "Kinder, Roches and Northern Areas" and later in the decade Allsop and Y.M.C. Member Brian Evans produced the first Gritstone Guide devoted entirely to Yorkshire. Apart from Steve Rhodes' and Tony Barley's boulder books all subsequent Yorkshire Guides have been sponsored by the Y.M.C.

This "Millennium Edition" is a magnificent achievement. It covers 42 major crags and 41 minor ones. There are 57 excellent colour photos and five atmospheric black and white pictures ranging from 1895 to 1997. The diagrams by Nigel Baker are new and more than adequate.

But this is far more than a guide book; it is literature. Dave Musgrove's prose style is both entertaining and informative and it is possible to open the book anywhere and sit down and enjoy reading it.

Instead of a history section for each crag (though there are ascent lists) Dave has concentrated the history into a 28 page essay which is well worth reading and of course gives the Y.R.C. it's due as the first Yorkshire Club.



The severe A climb on The Cow, Dkley. Brian Church safeguards Bill Todd on the YMC's Boxing Day meet, 1990 as reproduced opposite page 600 of Yorkshire Gritstone

(photograph by Patricia Todd)

One reviewer cannot vouch for the accuracy of every description or historical happening but there is 100% accuracy in the parts I know about. The first ascents which took place while I was there are accurately recorded and I am pleased that one or two climbs I used to lead have been upgraded. I am also pleased that my old friend John Johnson now appears in his proper name instead of Joe Johnson as the 1989 book had him.

A copy of the book has been given to the Club and will be available from the Librarian until the Leeds Central Library is open after the repairs.

Scottish Mountaineering
Club Journal
Vol. XXXVI No. 189

For some unknown reason my attention focused this year on the Skye section of the accident report pages.

It seems that walkers and pony trekkers fare far worse than climbers. There was a fatal accident on the Elgol coast path and a walker suffered skull, spinal and abdominal injuries from a falling rock. A woman suffered spinal injuries after being thrown off a Shetland pony. Climbing accidents included two leader falls, one near Neist where shoulder injuries were sustained and the other on a snow obscured Sgurr a Mhadhaldh where a leader pulled a loose block onto his own leg.

Its enough to make you take up tiddley-winks. But of course there is a lot more on the positive side. Andrew Fraser writes a fascinating article about the nose of Sgurr an Fhithleir; I believe that was first ascended by Mike Dixon and Neville Drasdo in the early sixties; much to Tom Patey's chagrin. Mr. Fraser also mentions the great number of people who have "discovered" the Reiff sea cliffs. A bit like Brandrith in Yorkshire. I remember Joan and I doing two routes at Reiff in 1962, any advance?

Articles on Ferlie Mhor and the late AL. Bagley held my interest. Bagley's book " Holiday Rambles in North Wales" helped put my feet on the right path.

This is an excellent issue with a good share of humour. Read how the Past President converted snow to ice to secure a tent pole, and an aspirant's reaction to the first step.

Book Review

by John Hemingway



Walks in the
Nidderdale Area
Gwynneth Jackson and
Bill Lofthouse

Published by the Nidderdale Society

Fourteen walks are included in the booklet and a number are in areas

which, I suspect, are not generally visited by YRC members. They are mostly five or six miles with the odd nine mile one thrown in. The walks are all in the Nidderdale area but omit the hills at the head of the Dale and, as a result, visit places not in the fell-walkers' normal itinerary, but none the worse for that. Try some of them, I can assure you that you will be pleasantly surprised,

All the walks are explained in a clear and understandable way, supported by excellent maps and interspersed with interesting historical facts. This particular book includes walks which I have not personally seen in any other walking guide to this area.

The theme of this book is the history of the area which is covered in the introduction, both to the book and to each individual walk. The book's supplementary title is *In the Monks' Footsteps* and it can be seen why as you progress through the walks.

Altogether, a good companion to Nidderdale and I am confident that it provides a worthwhile means of combining history with a walk, particularly for a family expedition.

Whilst the walks are not long or onerous they are sufficient to prove that there is more to walking than just walking!

If you have difficulty in locating a copy, at £3, contact Bill Lofthouse.

Book Review by Michael Smith

Bolivia: A Climbing Guide Yossi Brain

Cordee, £12, ISBN 1-871890-48-9, 222pp, B/Wphotos

This is the first English language mountaineering guide to all the main groups of Bolivian peaks. Previous guides either only covered the parts close to La Paz or the whole of the Andes. It is thorough, well informed and covers almost forty peaks with several routes being included on each of the more popular peaks.

The outspoken Yossi has an obvious enthusiasm for these peaks but is not blinded by this to the inherent difficulties. His advice on the possibility of theft is typically sensible, putting the problem into perspective, giving a couple of solutions and explaining just where to contact the police, if necessary. Likewise his advice on acclimatisation does not revel in scare stories but offers simple reassuring personal checks you can make. Straightforward and practical.

His eleven page history of ascents recognises the contribution of Bolivians alongside the Europeans and Americans. Access is fully described while the geology, flora and fauna are given enough coverage for the lay person to appreciate these aspects of the mountains.

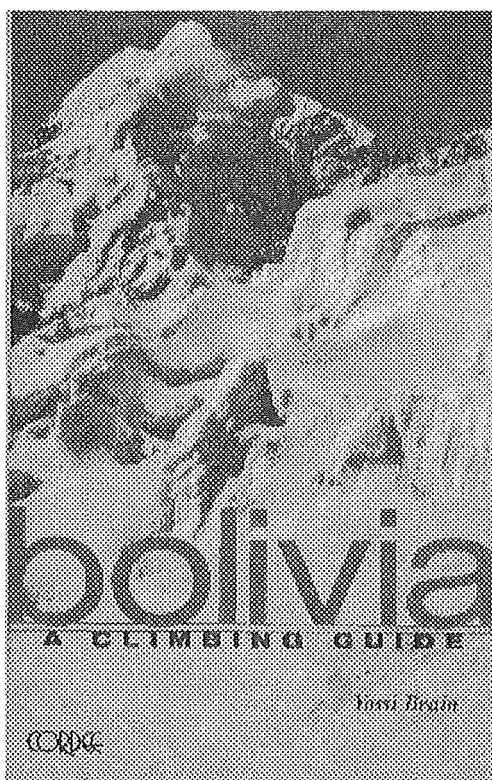
The 152 pages devoted to routes and peak descriptions cover the Apolobamba (27 pages), Real (91 pages), Quimsa Cruz (18 pages) and Occidental (16 pages) and are fully illustrated with a photograph or sketch map seemingly on every other page. The photographs, mostly illustrative rather than aesthetic, give a strong impression of the terrain, climbing style, suitable gear and, importantly, the peaks and routes themselves.

Routes are graded with the angle, height, duration and first ascensionists stated. There is sufficient detail for the experienced mountaineer to pick out the route and ample indication of exceptional objective dangers.

Chapters start with a short quotation ranging from '30s Hermann Hess in to the 1990 Louis de Bernieres' *The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts* (worthwhile preparatory reading).

The publication of such a thorough and lucid guide, soundly based on Yossi's extensive personal experience, is sure to increase climbers' interest in the Bolivia and will certainly ease the way for them. So get a copy and go there soon as the infrastructure is now in place to make shorter hips practicable while the weather and accessibility result in minimal waste of precious time.

Like Yossi's contentious and enlivening arrival on the guiding scene in La Paz his book will revitalise foreign interest in Bolivia's peaks.



Waiter Patrick Bowman Stonehouse 1953-1998

Pat Stonehouse, born 11 October 1913, died on the 19th November 1998 after a long struggle against cancer, but he was active almost to the end. He celebrated his 85th birthday on the 11th October 1998 with considerable style.

Pat's maternal Grandfather was Dr. W. H. D. Ramsden who set up in General Practice in Dobcross 138 years ago and whose memorial stands in the village square. The family link with the practice continued up to Pat's retirement in 1977.

Part of his early education was spent in Switzerland and he later went up to Downing College, Cambridge where he read medicine.

He saw active service in the 1939/45 war, serving as a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the 94th Armoured Division, a heavy ack-ack unit of the Eighth Army, initially in the Middle East and North Africa and latterly with the Scots Guards in Holland and Germany. He regularly attended his Regimental Re-union in Edinburgh, the most recent being in 1997. He maintained contact with the Services as President of the local section of the Royal British Legion.

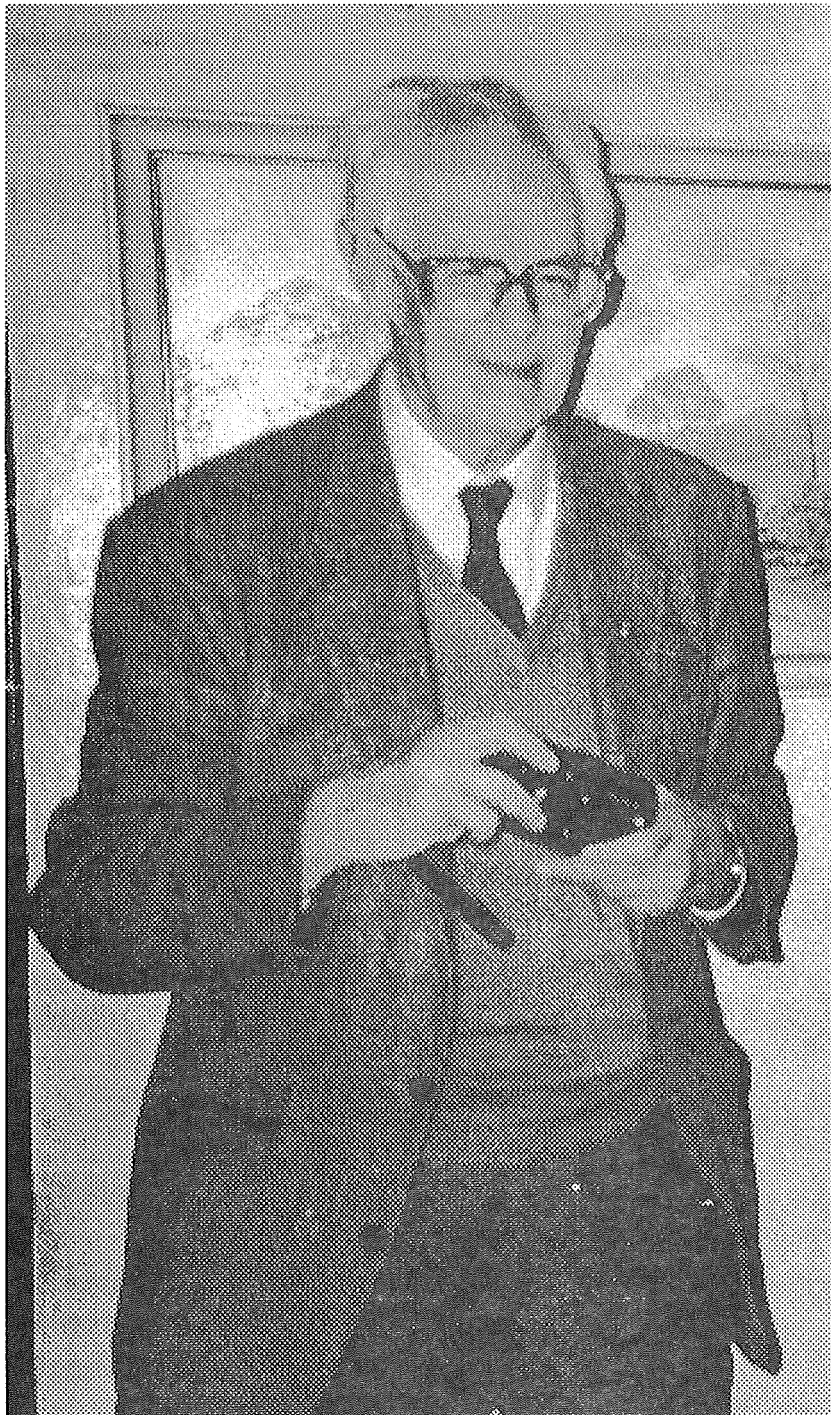
On demobilisation he returned to the family practice, but left to become Medical Officer of Health for Saddleworth based in Huddersfield. He eventually rejoined the practice where he remained until his retirement in 1977.

He was an archaeologist of considerable distinction. His first dig was on Rocher Moss in 1957 and further fieldwork was undertaken on the Saddleworth and Marsden Moors over many years. All his work was meticulously recorded and written up for subsequent publication in the journals of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Society.

His extensive finds, which number over 10,000, along with his notes and drawings have been lodged with the Tolson Memorial Museum in Huddersfield. His book about the pre-History of Saddleworth & Marsden is to be published in 1999. Pat was a leading member of the Saddleworth Historical Society, taking part in many of their digs and contributing to their bulletin. He was also a keen geologist and bird watcher and assisted in compiling the publication of "The Birds of Saddleworth",

Pat joined the YRC in 1953 and was a very active member for almost 30 years. A strong walker and an enthusiastic participant in all the club's activities, he was not a leading climber or potholer, but he would cheerfully follow wherever taken. In particular, his intimate knowledge of the South Pennines was second to none. He had a number of Alpine Seasons including well known peaks, both with and without guides. He was an excellent companion on the hills with his wide knowledge of natural history and his sense of humour. He will be remembered for the tales of his exploits, both in the forces and on the hills. I suspect that they will be retold for many years to come.

For the record he was on the Committee from 1956 to 1960, Vice President 1960 to 1962 and President 1964 to 1966.



Pat at Appletreewick during February 1993

Photo by Mary Scovell

The YRC. meant a great deal to him and he looked forward to receiving the bulletin which he read with interest. The last meet that Pat attended was in Saddleworth, during October 1997, when he enjoyed a walk over to Laddow but most of all was delighted to

find the Club in good heart. He did, however, continue to attend the Appletreewick lunches which he thoroughly enjoyed.

In the early 1980's he found it increasingly difficult to get away for week-ends and joined the Manchester Pedestrian Club, a local Club and in many ways very similar to the YRC. The M.P.C. arrange weekly walks and Pat was a very regular attender and during his membership, 'clocked' up 3575 miles. He was President in 1986 and was active with the Club well into 1998. Above all else, Pat had a very deep love of Saddleworth and its people. It is fitting that due to very dedicated care he was able to finish his days in the family home and overlooking his 'patch' of moor.

Pat was a man of very many parts and some of us were privileged to be part of the thread that ran through the whole.

Pat married Margaret, née Bames, in 1961. Sadly she died on the 24th July 1993.

Jdm Hemingway

Major W. (Will) Lacy

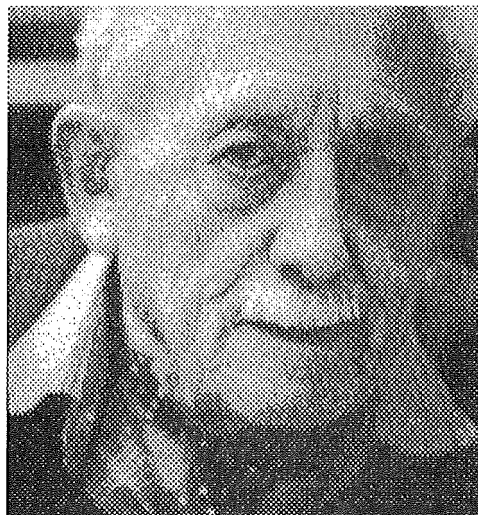
1937-1998

Will was born at Hawsker near Whitby in 1907 and died on Christmas Day 1998 aged 91. He is buried at Hawsker next to his beloved sister, Mary,

He was aged thirty, working in Manchester, when he joined the YRC and with Ernest Roberts as his mentor soon became involved in the great thrust of pothole exploration with Davidson, Chubb, Armstrong and Burrows. Following a career in banking and two years as a financial consultant, travelling around the world, he moved to Switzerland. This gave him ample opportunity to climb many alpine peaks culminating, at the age of seventy two in an ascent of the Dent du Midi. He then decided that enough was enough and his mountaineering days came to an end. Shortly afterwards he returned to live first in Robin Hood's Bay (where he purchased land to establish a wildflower reserve) and later Whitby.

We do not know when Will first proclaimed "one life is not enough", many members will remember this phrase, admired it, and may even have been inspired by it. I suspect it must have been early in his life for him to have set himself so many long term and difficult targets.

Throughout his life polar exploration was his great passion and whilst still working he satisfied this passion with trips to the Arctic musing "we can't all be adventurers - but..." No *buts* though for Will, opportunities arose and, aged 84, set off for and reached the South Pole. Twenty months earlier he had stood at the North Pole, the oldest man on earth to reach both poles. This feat was duly recorded by entry in the Guinness Book of Records.



A deeply religious man, Will chronicled the life and times of Jesus among; many other varied activities including establishing the provenance of Samaritan script fragments and finding a probable 16th century Correggio. His war service' has already been recorded and he remained unashamedly proud of Britain's colonial heritage..

He loved returning to the Club when he could, was thrilled in 1997 to be made an Honorary member. For more details of this remarkable man see his biography, *Forward Regardless 2*.

WALinford



Will at the North Pole - April 1990

1 Journal Vol.VII No.24 p155

2 Forward Regardless by Mike Morgan, Cadenon of Whitby, ISBN 0905355423

William Woodward

1962 -1999.

With the sudden and unexpected death of Bill in March, the Y.R.C. and Yorkshire mountaineering has lost one of its most colourful characters. Bill was somewhat secretive about his age and it came as a surprise to many that in August of this year he would have been 80 years old.

Bill was born in Nottingham Little is known of his early life or schooling up until him joining the army although Bill said little about his experiences during the war. He was in at the beginning and eventually joined No. 3 Commando. He landed in France on D-day +1 and fought at the battle for Caen and went right through into Germany, After the armistice his unit was sent into Greece to take on the communist guenillas so that democratic elections could be held.

He met and married Mavis, a Geordie at the beginning of the war. After demobilisation they moved to Rotherham where Bill worked for Brightside Engineering and became a skilled welder. They walked and climbed every weekend in the Peak District and further field.

I met Bill over 42 years ago when I joined the Pennine Mountaineering Club in Sheffield and Bill was their Training Officer. We soon became firm friends. Shortly after we were joined by Don Henderson and Keith Barker, both having just completed their national service, We climbed widely in this country and also abroad, in the French and Swiss alps and in the Dolomites. Skiing was also a favourite pastime started at a time when reaching the snows particularly in Scotland meant canying equipment



Bill in the Dolomites with Ivano Dibona

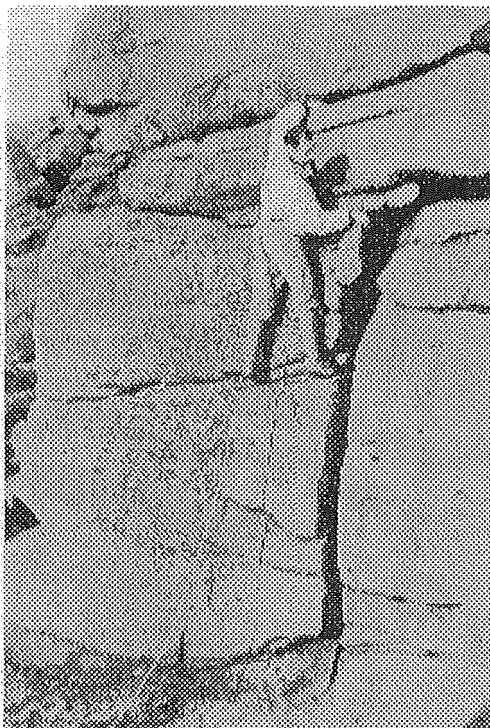
over long distances. He also skied abroad in Norway and Italy. Bill wasn't the most elegant of skiers but always approached the slopes with enthusiasm.



Bill skiing locally

Bill's house was a weekly meeting place for friends usually on Wednesday and on Sunday evenings when a meal was invariably provided by Mavis and the days events were recounted in full.

We joined the Y.R.C. in 1962 when, exceptionally, we were accepted into the Club as a group of friends and became known as the Sheffield Four. Our first meet was the seven peaks long walk from Dentdale to Cray. All those that met Bill will remember his storytelling - another epic, escapade or dilemma usually recounted with pint in hand. One of Bill's escapades is recorded in his article in the Y.R.C. Journal.!



Bill on Derbyshire gritstone

Bill's underground visits were not all that frequent preferring climbing to potholing but he did accompany John Middleton to the Lebanon in 1968 and 1969 where some important exploration was undertaken and new finds recorded. A pothole - Gouffre Bill- was named after him.

In 1976 Bill suffered a great loss when Mavis died of cancer. Bill's resilience and the support of friends saw him through a very difficult time.

¹ Y.R.C.J. No 32 1964 pps 287 - 289

² Y.R.C.J. No 35 1970 pps 315 - 335

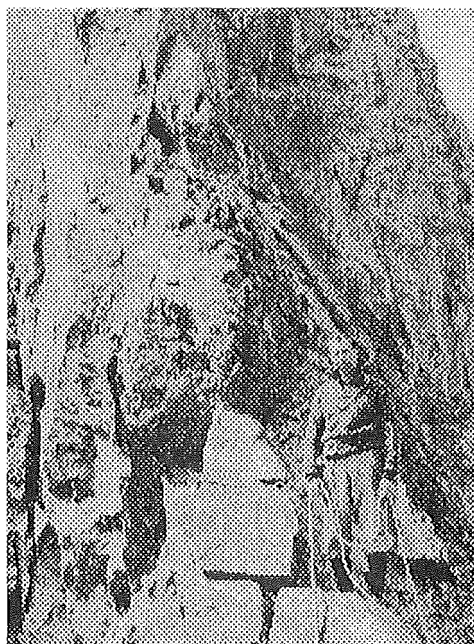
Because of Bill's inability to drive meant that in later years his attendance on Club meets diminished although having joined the Parnassus Climbing Club he remained active on the hills and with them used our Club huts on a regular basis.

He formed a close friendship with Dorothy Gould having met her in the Nags Head at Edale after both had been out walking and he spent a great deal of time with her and her family over at Chelmorton in Derbyshire. They travelled widely to reach the hills using Dorothy's camper van as a base.

Paul Nunn once said of Bill, "He can certainly wrap up a good story, have you rolling about laughing but then you would find out that what he'd actually said was quite true after all." We can all remember occasions like that.

Bill remained active right up to the end and will be remembered with fond affection by his many friends. The President Ian Crowther and number of other members represented the Club at the funeral.

Raymond Harben



Bill on the Pointe de l'Index, Chamonix

LETTERS

The Grave of C. D. Frankland

Dear Sir,

Claude Dean Frankland was a member of the YRC in the 1920's. A photograph of him climbing on Almscliffe hangs in Lowstern, together with a cartoon sketch of him. He is shown as a man of about forty, balding a little, with round spectacles which were common at that time. He seems to have been a climber of some skill, who was pushing the standards of those days. Unfortunately he was killed climbing on Great Gable on 31 July 1927, I believe it was on Tophet Bastion, and he is buried in the church yard at Wasdale Head.

I came across this grave some years ago when Joan and I were having a few days at Wasdale Head. It looked neglected, untended. I do not know what family Frankland had,¹ or whether any are still alive. The grave does not mention that he was a member of the YRC but I thought if others fail the club ought to care for the graves of their members, especially if they died in such circumstances.

The chance came at the last LHG meet. I asked Ken Aldred if he would be willing to help me to tidy the grave.

¹ The obituary in the YRC Journal, Vol.V, No.18, p311 notes that he left a widow and a son and a daughter.

Jeff Hooper

I knew he knew more about botanical specimens than I did, and this knowledge could be useful to identify anything worth saving. We drove over on the Friday afternoon, 8th January 1999, and did what was necessary to make the grave decent.

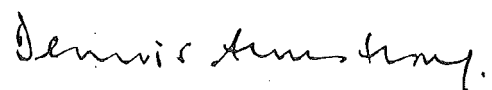
The headstone stands firmly upright. It is of rough good solid rock, probably granite, and probably from Gable itself. The inscription gives the simple facts; there is no mention of husband to, or sadly missed by... etc. The grave is enclosed with edging stones, and the area is paved with small stone pieces. It is one of three graves located in what may be described as the North East corner of the graveyard, all climbers who died on the nearby hills.

Ken and I washed the headstone free of lichen, so that the inscription can be easily read. We cleared the grave area of overgrowing weeds, and washed the stone pieces. Ken identified some plants, that grew in the interstices, and these we left. We trimmed the grass around the edging stones, so that the grave looked neat and tidy. Then with a thought for the man who had made his contribution to the YRC, we picked up our tools and left him to the quietness of Wasdale Head.

The President suggested that I wrote to you as the Editor, to enclose a brief summary of all this in the next issue of *The Yorkshire Rambler*, so that members are aware of Frankland's grave.

With all good wishes,

Yours, aye,



Dennis Armstrong

January 1999, Coventry

Chippings

John Hemingway, Bill Lofthouse and Harry Robinson enjoy a walking trip most weeks, generally on a Wednesday or Thursday. Loosely based on the '27Club², but has been compared to *Last of the Summer Wine* - no answers for guessing who is who! The walks are selected by the democratic method of each person choosing a walk based on strict rotation. As a result the outings are in Nidderdale, South Pennines or the Trough of Bowland with additional days to the Dales or Lakes. **In** fact, one trip was arranged to Paris - but we were not able to find any hills! The walks are of a non-taxing nature and are, normally, as far as we want but usually up to nine or ten miles.

We try to select hills new to at least one member of the party; how many members have been to Knowle Hill or Whittle Hill or Great Bull Stones or Pott Moor? We have two or three pilgrimages to Pendle each year and are happy to act as guides to anyone who has not visited that border guardian - if any member has been that remiss! So in spite of the note in the last Issue' we do not just go up Pendle once a year!

² 1927 vintage- obviously a good year!

³ Your Hon. Editor must confess at this point that he was the sole author of the note which was attached to the last issue. Following a conversation with one of the *Wednesday Club* in which they enthused about a day out I put together a paragraph describing their day. On reading this they

But, horror of horrors, our wives join us from time to time, on the strict understanding that they do not walk us off our feet!

We make no limitation to membership but consider that any 'tiger' may be overtaxed... by keeping down our speed. Like all good convoys we go the speed of the slowest on the day, which can be anyone of John, Bill or Harry.

The only other criteria for inclusion is to be able to contribute to an intelligent debate which can be on any subject - this and that, but mostly the other.

Our main ambition is to 'keep clogging' and enjoying days out in the hills - so far, we have succeeded..

Working with the Tasmanian Cavemeering Club Ged Champion and Bruce Bensley joined some good caving in the extensive and island's deepest system, Growling Swallet, in south Tasmania's Florentine Valley. Their visit in January, 1999, and in north Tasmania they joined another group caving in the famous Mole Creek area and later got underground again in the mainland's Blue Mountains.

thought it open to the possible misinterpretation that they only manage to get out once a year. Hence their *right of reply* and the above.

The search is on for a secure, warm, dry temporary store for a van load of books from the YRC Library. They need to be housed while the Leed Library refurbish their normal storage room and even a place lacking access for members would be considered. Suggestions for suitable storage places for about one year are urgently needed and should be made to the President.

Raymond Harben was in Mallorca last October encouraged by the many reports of excellent walking in that island including the Y.R.C visit reported in the Summer 1996 issue of the Bulletin. The walk up to Castell del Rei described in that Bulletin is not now possible as the Temelles valley has been closed to the public.

Fine and warm weather allowed many outings including walking in the Boquer valley, climbing El Fumat and Roca Blanca and down to the sea via the Cala en Gossalba on the Formentor Peninsular where Eleanors Falcons were still present. Also Puig Tomir. Anyone planning to climb this peak and continue on following Walk 21 in June Parker's excellent guide book should note that the small plain at Camp'Redo is now planted with trees and surrounded by a wire fence. There is a gate into the plantation and one gets out by climbing the fence just by the dry bed of the stream. Teix was also climbed followed by the Archduke's Walk. Black Vultures were seen over both peaks. More birds were seen on a visit to the Albufera including excellent sightings of Marsh Harriers and Osprey.

The Alpine Journal 1998 carries on pages 351 to 553 an obituary of Hany Stembridge.

Deer have been seen in Lowstern Coppice on two occasions recently by Harvey Lomas. In the quiet of the mid-week days during January they were surprised to be disturbed and were last seen running gracefully over the fields towards Bowland.

Norway has had its usual crop of March!April skiing visits with Derek Smithson near Finse, David Hall north of Voss, Rory Newman moving from hut to hut above Hemsedal shortly followed to the area by a valley-based Michael Smith. The last was stopped while hauling YRC logo kitbags, from a Stanstead baggage carousel, by Spitzbergen companions of Duncan Mackay returning from Finse. So carry your YRC bags with pride and make new friends.

The attention of members planning to attend the Costa Blanca meet is drawn, by Richard Gowing, to an article in the APIU issue of *High* describing a superb ridge scramble above Calpe along the 4km crest of the Sierra Bernina. Rising to 1129m and involving an abseil and a few short pitches of exposed *Dijf*, the route is only a 30-40 minute drive from Clape.

The December, 1998, issue of the Dalesman, Vo1.6, No.9, includes an article by Graham Uney, *On the Rocks in Your Own Back Yard*, pages 41-45, which reviews rock climbing on the North Yorks Moors. Ernest Roberst, the Burrow brothers, Arthur Evans, and Maurice Wilson are mentioned.

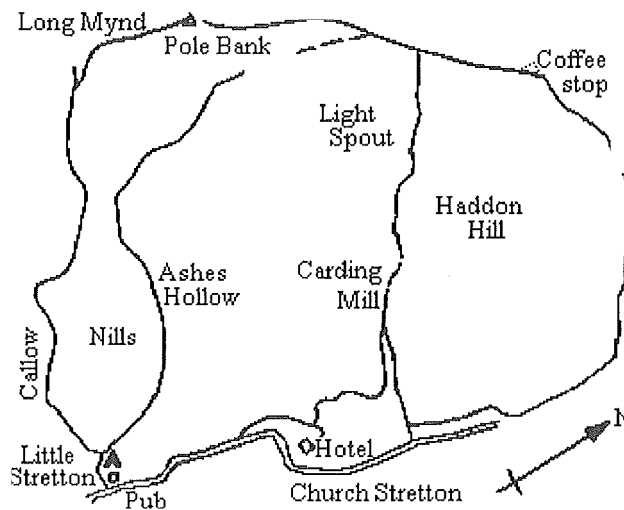
The advertisement in this issue is carried in return for a donation to the hut fund.

YRC Ladies' Weekend Church Stretton 8-10 May 1998

This year's Ladies' Meet was held at Church Stretton, below the Long Mynd in Shropshire, with headquarters at the comfortable Long Mynd Hotel and members and their guests distributed between the hotel, the Springbank Caravan Site and B & Bs in the town.

On a fine Friday evening the first arrivals gathered at the hotel before dining variously in the hotel restaurant or bar, or in various eating establishments in the town. By late evening most of the meet had arrived in the bar, with some notable additions to be welcomed to the usual attendance.

Next day a party of about thirty set off from the hotel at ten o'clock on a fine



morning, to follow the route which had been carefully planned and documented by our leaders, Dennis and Joan. Initially this followed footpaths and minor roads contouring the wooded lower eastern slopes of the Long Mynd range to the next village of All Stretton. From All Stretton we followed a bridle path, a short stretch of road, footpaths and open terrain to reach the crest of the Long Mynd at its northern end. The gentle whaleback ridge then provided



Iain Gilmour stands before a group enjoying a coffee break. Tim Josephy's dogs wait patiently.



extensive views east to Caer Caradoc and The Lawley and beyond them to Wenlock Edge and the Wrekin, and west to the Stiperstones and the hills of the Welsh border, as we followed it towards Pole Bank, the 516m. summit of the Long Mynd.

Being readily accessible by tarmac roads closeby, the summit was well populated so we moved a hundred metres or so down the south eastern slope to find a comfortable clearing in the heather to enjoy our lunch and the view. We then followed a good path south east over Round Hill which took us to the col between it and Grindle, named Barrister's Plain, then contoured round the south side of Grindle and the north east side of Callow, to descend to a campsite and ford with a road leading to Little Stretton at the Ragleth Arms pub. This we sampled before following the road and a diverging track, back to the Long Mynd Hotel, having covered a total distance of some twelve miles.

Thirty-nine of us sat down for a good dinner, followed by a presidential address which was necessarily kept

shod in deference to other diners. We then migrated to the ballroom to see Alan Brown's slides of last year's Himalayan trek from Khatmandu to the Khumbu, their fine quality and great interest being sadly somewhat marred by focussing problems with the projector.

Sunday was mostly overcast, with the day ending in rain, fortunately after our walk was complete. Again leaving the hotel at ten, we took the track south below Long Mynd to ascend the pleasant valley of Ashes Hollow to the main ridge, then descended Mott's Road towards Carding Mill Valley, entering a side valley to stop for lunch below a small reservoir. We then followed the valley past the old Carding Mill to the National Trust centre and cafe, where further refreshment was taken and the party generally dispersed.

Many thanks to Dennis and Joan for arranging and leading a meet which was greatly enjoyed by all.

Richard Gowing

Attendance:

The President, Tim and Mrs Elaine
Josephy
Dennis and Joan Armstrong
Alan and Madge Brown
Derek and Yvonne Bush
ran and Dorothy Crowther
rain and Sarah Gilmour
Mike and Marcia Godden
Richard and Elizabeth Gowing
David Hick and Christine Marriott
ran and Una Laing
Gerry and Margaret Lee
Alan and Angie Linford
Bill and Brenda Lofthouse
JimRusher
Arthur and Shirley Salmon
John and Pat Schofield
David and Elspeth Smith
Michael and Helen Smith
George and Sylvie Spenceley
Bill and Julia Todd

Attendance:

Bruce Bensley
Ged Champion
ran Crowther
Dorothy Crowther
Alan Fletcher
Tim Josephy
Elaine Josephy
Harvey Lomas
Mike Pitt
Alister Renton
Graham Salmon

Vecors Meet

17 - 24 October 1998

The Vecors range, lying between the Rhone Valley and the Dauphine Alps is an area of France rich in contrasts where the landscape affords the visitor many opportunities for a whole range of activities. What drew members to the area in October of last year however was its limestone, for we had in the main one thing on our minds - caving.

We based ourselves in a fairly spacious gite in Choranche, a village chosen for its close proximity to the Grotte de Gournier, a cave which lay high on the agenda for many of us.

Saturday the day of our arrival was spent settling in, taking a look at the entrance to the Gournier and basically enjoying the warm sunny weather, which was much appreciated as we had just left heavy rainfall and gale force winds behind in Britain.

Unfortunately these idyllic conditions were to be short lived, as during the night it rained and on inspecting the local forecast the next day it transpired that the weather over the coming week was to be very changeable. The consensus of the group, as a result, was that an extensive trip inside the Gournier, a system notable for its water hazards (several cavers having drowned in it over the years) was not immediately advisable and that a shorter trip later in the week might be more prudent.

So out came the guidebooks and alternatives looked for. Eventually the Scialet de la Combe de Fer was agreed upon, seeming a likely prospect for good caving. However after spending the day locating the entrance and rigging the first few pitches this venture was to be abandoned. This was due to problems in interpreting

certain aspects of the cave description and the fact that if we did indeed persist we would have to either purchase new ropes or 'chop up' existing ropes, something none of us wished to do.

Another contributing factor was the travel time involved in getting to and from the entrance, something which had also decided us against attempting the Scialet de Grand Corbeau a cave which Bruce and I were to locate the following day.

Due to a collapsed tunnel in the Bourne Gorge journey time to many of the caves in which interest was expressed would be greatly increased involving car trips of several hours on top of the time spent actually trekking up to the entrance from the road.

By Tuesday the weather being favourable a day trip into the Goumier was decided on. First in were Tim and Ian with Tom's *ex-lifecraft* dinghy, a necessity given the small lake in the entrance, followed half an hour later by Ged, Bruce, Graham, Alister, Mike and myself in the *SS Wolverhampton* a second dinghy.

After much mirth in getting to the *dock* a rock outcrop on the far side of the lake, a large and spectacular passage was gained, which we followed eventually dropping down through a boulder-choke into a stream where much merriment was to be had in attempting to stay reasonably dry. After a while only Ged and Bruce were able to canyon in a dry state due to their donning of pontonnières, a latex suit much favored by the French, which are designed to keep cavers completely dry in wet conditions.

The rest of us had either to wade in or turn back. We chose the former and carried on 'soaked' for around another hour until some wire traverses were

reached whereupon we parted company with the *rubber boys*, who carried on for another couple of hours, whilst we headed back to the entrance.

The following day found Graham and me arriving at the entrance shaft of the Glaciere de Carri, only to hear the receding clinking of karabiners. Quite apparently another group had just descended. Due to the restrictive nature it was not really feasible for us to double rig it so we left it for another day.

The others occupied themselves in either walking up to the Boumillon resurgence which is the largest cave entrance in France or mountain biking an activity which to be honest never really appealed. However, with the day so far being a bit of a disappointment I decided to have a go and see what the crack was. After much going over the handlebars and extraction from bushes, much to Mike's amusement, I think I will stick to caving. It's definitely safer.

The rest of the week had Ged and Bruce returning to the Gournier for a more extensive trip requiring a nights bivouac in the cave. Graham, Alister and myself returned to the Glaciere de Carri, a fine trip, and the day after descended the Grotte de Favot a cave with a remarkable pentangular phreatic passage known as the *Grand Tunnel* which has an almost man made appearance about it. Tim and Ian went to the sump in the Bounrillon and along with Mike and Harvey walked to the summit of the Grand Veymont which, at 2341m, is, I am told, the highest point in the Vecors.

On the whole the week, I think, had a relaxed *its a holiday* feeling about it as opposed to a week away from which one returns feeling a holiday is required in order to recover.

Alan Fletcher

The 85th Annual Dinner

Whoop Hall Hotel

Kirby Lonsdale

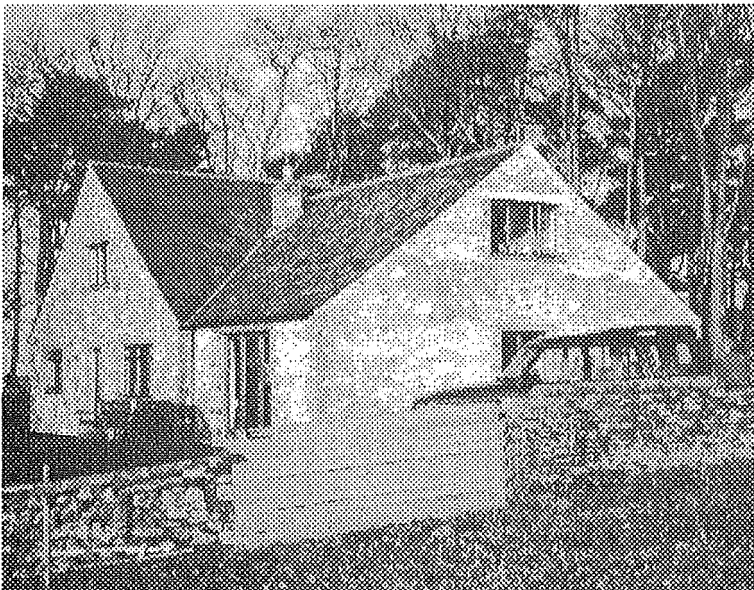
21 November 1998

The Principal Guest at the Annual Dinner, Andy Eavis, is a renowned caver who used his speech to demonstrate how he had used up all his "nine lives" surviving various accidents and incidents underground.

Commencing a caving career in 1956 and Sh011ly afterwards becoming statistic No. 65 in the Upper Wharfdale Fell Rescue Association log, I was appreciative of how it is necessary to keep a sense of humour and a degree of

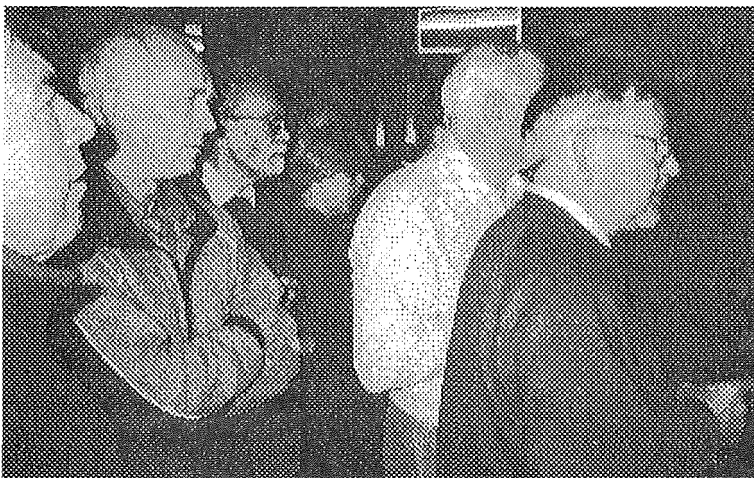
mental stubbornness to persist in "enjoying" the rigors and risks of underground exploration.

With this in mind and in view of the weather forecast of persistent rain, the attraction of caving for the Sunday meet appealed only to the hardened few who set off to tackle Sunset Hole on the flanks of Ingleborough, where no doubt a close eye was kept on the rising water levels. Brought to fame by the television documentary "What a Way to Spend a Sunday", which filmed the rescue of an injured caver who tragically did not survive, this classic pothole is not to be underestimated in bad weather.



The new
Lowstern
Extension

(Photo Richard Gowing)



Arthur Salmon,
Alan Kay,
George Spencely,
Dorothy Crowther and
Frank Wilkinson listen
to the short opening
speech

The highlight of the day was to be the official opening of the Lowstern extension and members and guests were requested to ensure they returned in good time for the ceremony.

A group of a dozen or so set out from Clapham intending to do the round of Norber, Sulber, Maughton and Oxenber, but on account of the dreadful weather cut the walk short at Maughton and, after a brief stop at the Wet Stones spring, came down Crummockdale, across the Washtubs and, via Austwick and Clapham, made it back to Lowstern, invigorated, but somewhat wet.

Other groups were out on Ingleborough, a small party made their way up Long Lane to return to Norber via Thwaite Lane, whilst a dedicated twosome sampled liquid refreshment in local hostelrys returning with the good news that the new management at the Gamecock in Austwick has greatly improved the standard of food, beers and hospitality.

Cavers and walkers returned to Lowstern for 1530 hours and after a brief interlude everyone vacated Lowstern to commence the celebrations.

Judith Humphreys, Dorothy Crowther and Fiona Barr in the kitchen



Cliffs Large and Cobb, Richard Gowing, David Smith and Maurice Wilson with David Large and Derek English (behind)



John Hemmingway, Betty Lovett, Irene Barton and Janet Hemmingway with Duncan Makay and John Whalley behind

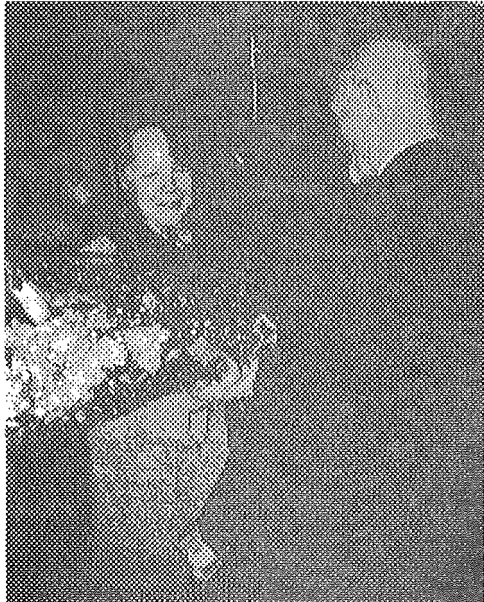


After a charming speech, Mrs. Farrer graciously cut the ribbon across the doors into the new extension. The President thanked Mrs. Farrer on behalf of members and, following presentations of bouquets of flowers, everyone made their way inside to enjoy the splendid buffet and wine provided by Sammy Chapman. With the log fire burning in the new fireplace, good food, wine and

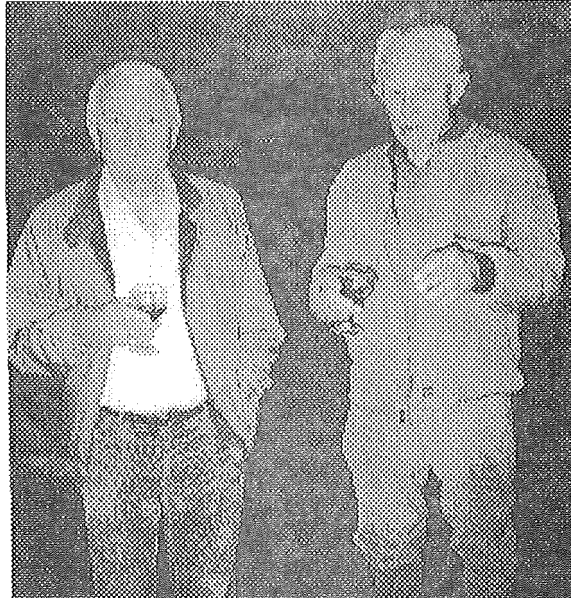
company, the foul weather outside was immediately forgotten.

On behalf of the members and guests I thank most sincerely Dr and Mrs. Farrer, Sammy Chapman and all the hard working helpers who made the opening of Lowstern extension and the celebratory buffet such a resounding success.

Mike Hartland



Ian Crowther, on his first day as President, presenting Sammy Chapman with flowers



Terry Temple and Arthur Craven outside the hut, awaiting the opening



The moment the ribbon was cut by Mrs Joan Farrer



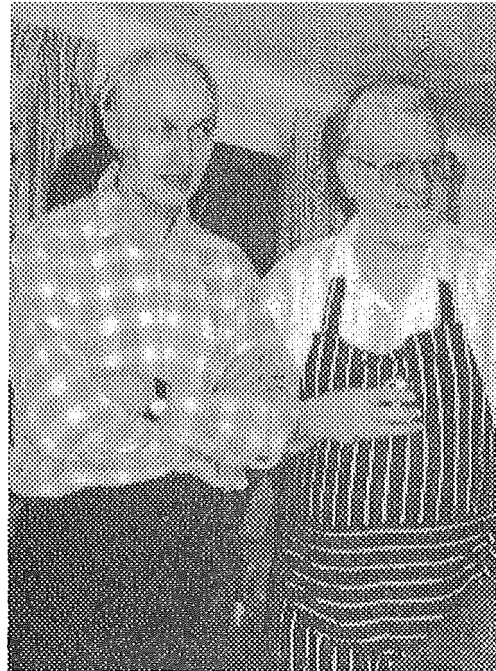
Derek English & Albert Chapman on carving duty

Attendance:

Ken Aldred	Terry Kenny (WC)
Dennis Annstrong	Mike Kinder
John Barton	Ian Laing
Bruce Bensley	Cliff Large
Derek Bush	David Large (Guest)
Ged Champion	David Laughton
John Casperson	Gerry Lee
Albert Chapman	Alan Linford
Iain Chapman	Danny Liptak
Alan Clare	Bill Lofthouse
John Clarke (BPC)	Tim Lofthouse
Derek Clayton	Harvey Lomas
Cliff Cobb	John Lovett
Jeff Cowling (CPC)	Donald Mackay
Arthur Craven	Duncan Mackay
Robert Crowther	Dave Martindale
Ian Crowther, President	Peter Moss
Roy Denny	Nevil Newman
Andrew Duxbury	John Noble (AC)
Andy Eavis (Chief Guest)	Paddy O'Neill (F&R)
Eddie Edwards	Martin Pettiford (Guest)
Arthur Evans	Alan Pitt
Darrell Farrant	George Postill
John Farrer	Peter Price
Bob Ferguson (Guest)	Keith Raby
Alan Fletcher	Alister Renton
David Gamble (Guest)	Chris Renton
Iain Gilmour	Neil Renton (Guest)
Mike Godden	Bob Richardson (SMC)
Richard Gowing	Hany Robinson
Michael Green (GC)	Jim Rusher
Jeff Halford (Guest)	Arthur Salmon
David Hall	Graham Salman
Mike Hartland	Roy Salmon
Colin Hawkins (Guest)	John Schofield
John Hemingway	Richard Sealey
David Hick	David Smith
David Holmes	Michael Smith
Jeff Hooper	Tony Smythe
Barney Hopton (Guest)	George Spenceley
Gordon Humphreys	David Stembridge
Howard Humphreys	John Sterland
Jason Humphreys	Terry Temple (Guest)
Raymond Ince	Bill Todd
Brendan Jones (Guest)	Frank Walker (Guest)
Richard Josephy	John Whalley
Tim Josephy	Frank Wilkinson
Alan Kay	Maurice Wilson

Lowstern Christmas Meet 11 - 13 December 1998

This meet had several firsts. The first meet for our new President. The first full meet in our newly extended cottage and the first time a full Christmas meet had been held on YRC premises. What a fine sight it looked, decked out in festive style. A tribute once again to the two meet organisers, or should I call them chefs?



be remembered for posterity in this way. We should also not forget his wife Nellie as without the joint generosity of the Downhams the new extension would not have been possible. For those members unable to attend the meet the words "The Downham Room" have been carved by our member Howard Humphreys on the wooden beam over the fireplace.

It goes without saying that the meal on Saturday night was magnificent. No words of praise can be too high for David Smith and Mike Godden (pictured above).

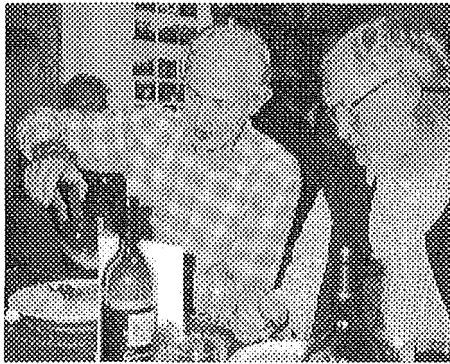
<p>Tomato Rempli *****</p> <p>Cream of Carrot & Orange Soup *****</p> <p>Breast of Chicken with Lemon & Tarragon Sauce New Potatoes & Potatoe Peaks Buttered Julienne Carrots & Green Beans *****</p> <p>Christmas Pudding with Rum Sauce *****</p> <p>Marcian Mince Pies *****</p> <p>Selection of Cheese & Biscuits *****</p> <p>Ground Coffee & Mints</p>
--

Dinner was held in our new Downham Room. How Cliff would have been pleased, modest man that he was, to



The 'cavers' table' Adrian, Ged, Alister and Harvey with Eddie and David Hick behind

This report along with many others will form part of the Bulletin and in 20, 40, 60, 90 years time future members, reading the menu will note that their predecessors did things with style and panache! Perhaps when they are popping their one multi purpose pill which suffices for all their dietary needs for the day they will wish they were able to sit down and share in the ambience and 'bon hommie' of a Y.R.C. communal meal. Perhaps I have been seeing too many science fiction films!



David Smith demonstrating the peppermill to Denis Barker

In a short speech at the end of the meal the President paid tribute to the two meet organisers. He also passed around a bottle of "Malt" which was most acceptable. Afterwards there was a slide show of the Club's recent expedition to Iceland and our honorary member George Spenceley showed slides of South Georgia which were well received by all those present, apart from one member who was ejected from the room because he insisted on playing his accordion.

Well, so much for the social side of the meet but what else happened?

First the weather. It was overcast for the whole of the two days. The mist and cloud did not clear off the tops until late Sunday afternoon when Ingleborough was clear by 4.00 pm by which time most members were on their way home. However there was

very little rain during the daytime. Saturday night was distinctly stormy although it did not seem to disturb either the campers or those members sleeping in cars. Such was the effect of the liquid consumed in the evening.

On Saturday one party circumnavigated Ingleborough coming back via Sulber Nick (well almost!) down to Crummack Dale skirting Norber and back to Clapham which just about covered the daylight hours. Perhaps the longest walk of the day was a member getting his training in early for Bolivia who walked over Gragareth, Whemside and Ingleborough.



David Hick, Alan Linford, brewing, and the Dereks near Sulber Nick

The most nostalgic walk of the day was a past president who walked over Newby Moss to Gaping Gill and showed his companion, another past president where he had camped fifty years ago after cycling from Morley to Clapham, on a Saturday, loaded with camping gear (no lightweight equipment in those days), walked up to G.G. pitched his tent only to be told by the venerable Roberts that he needed a fly sheet if he wasn't to get soaked. Next day he descended the hole, came out through Bar Pot, decamped back to Clapham and cycled back to Morley a round trip of one hundred miles. They were tough in those days! You can all work out who I am-talking about.

All together on the Saturday all the Three Peaks were ascended and much of the surrounding areas covered. Another past president arrived back with his friend about ten minutes before dinner was due to be served complaining that it was half an hour too early and we all should have stopped out longer. They had walked most of the way back from Penyghent in the dark. There is not much wrong with the spirit in this Club.

Saturday night, apart from the storm, was enlivened in the new twelve bunk dormitory by a young member berating older members for snoring. He'd not have got away with it in the old days! When he finally got to sleep he kept all the others awake!

On Sunday there was a certain lethargy about but amongst other things the Falls walk was done and Whernside was ascended from the head of the falls along the ridge and back. It was pleasing to see how the once much eroded path near to the summit had been improved by paving.

The President's party went caving in Skirwith Cave and he at one point got jammed in a crawl. Fortunately he was rescued by his friends.

The last sighting of the President was late on the Sunday evening loading his car to take some tressle tables back to the village hall. Even Presidents have to work these days and it is not a bad memory to conclude a historic weekend.

C.D.B.



Alan Brown, Arthur Salmon and Frank Wilkinson



The 'rescue party' for the jammed projector, David Smith, Tony, Howard and Gordon. The evening was saved by George, returning from a Sheffield lecture engagement, having a projector in his car

Attendance:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| The President, Ian | Crowther |
| Ken | Aldred |
| Dennis | Annstrong |
| Denis | Barker |
| John | Barton |
| Alan | Brown |
| Derek | Bush |
| Ged | Campion |
| Albert | Chapman |
| Derek | Clayton |
| Derek | Collins |
| Robert | Crowther |
| Eddie | Edwards |
| Adrian | Farrow (Guest) |
| Iain | Gilmour |
| Mike | Godden |
| Richard | Gowing |
| David | Handley |
| Mike | Hartland |
| David | Hick |
| Gordon | Humphreys |
| Howard | Humphreys |
| Gerry | Lee |
| Alan | Linford |
| Harvey | Lomas |
| John | Lovett |
| Rory | Newman |
| Alister | Renton |
| Chris | Renton |
| Michael | Smith |
| David | Smith |
| Derek | Smithson |
| Tony | Smythe |
| Arthur | Salmon |
| George | Spenceley |
| Frank: | Wilkinson |

(35 Members and a Guest)

Low Hall Garth Meet

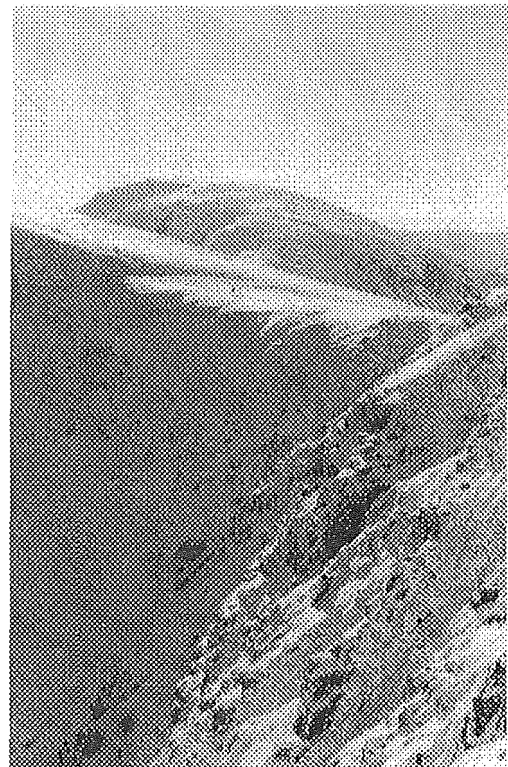
8- 10 January 1999

I was persuaded to attend this meet as I was on the equivalent meet in 1958. By the same token I got the pleasure of writing the report. Not having been on a meet for rather too long I was surprised to find the average age seemed to have risen somewhat. All but five were pensioners. As this ratio is likely to increase with the passing of each year I trust the committee is making suitable provision for the care of the elderly. As there are few still alive from that long past event, it did seem something of an occasion. The chance renting of the cottage above eased space below for what was the largest turnout for years. In fact there was a very good turnout with some thirty five members and guests arriving at Low Hall Garth for pie and peas on Friday night.

I am told, but did not witness, that fairy costumes were exchanged in the car park that night. In the confines of the hut, I did witness that some people apparently snore at both ends of their bodies. For times remembered, David Smith paid tribute to Denis Driscoll's contributions to this particular meet over many years.

The catering was better than I remember it of old. The hosts on this occasion provided a superb feast that would have not disgraced any hotel. Not only was the food excellent but the service, while not quite matching the elegance of the menu, was brisk and genuinely hospitable. The price of all this was patently absurd - it would have been a bargain at double the cost - and I would suggest that the club's profit margins need to be re-examined.

At some stage the president lost his wallet - he thought en route from the



Looking towards the Old Man of Coniston

ford - which, once found again, was the cause of some meniment and many unkind jokes.

On Saturday a party of three encountered a solo elderly member wandering casually towards Coniston Old Man from Swirl How. One supposes that, being a seasoned traveller, he might have survived a night in the open or struggled to some point of civilisation, but it would have been a close run 'thing - perhaps better to have company on the long dark walk back to the hut. This particular member does not suffer senile dementia but perhaps we all need to bear in mind that we can no longer embark with impunity on the excursions of our youth.

The writer of this report discovered this for himself, having tagged onto a couple of pensioners for the day with the idea of repeating some enjoyable walks from forty years ago. Being totally out of practice there was no

evidence that an ambitious outing (relatively speaking) was going to be successfully achieved. Early morning bravado was paid for later in the day as various parts of anatomy protested at the abuse. The pensioners discreetly avoided pointing out the obvious justice of this punishment as we hobbled over the road past Blea Tarn under a starry sky.

That the snow was soft and new made the going harder but who could complain when we were blessed with one of those all too rare Lakeland weekends when the sun shone from dawn to dusk. Mile after mile of snow capped peaks in every direction in air so clear, it seemed one could reach out and touch the distant hills, as we climbed steeply out of the frosty valleys out onto the snows. Snows jewelled in the brilliance of the sun under clear blue skies with clouds only over the distant Isle of Man. You may be familiar with all this, but I have forgotten if I ever knew. Fifty miles all around - and such beauty - snow etched curvaceous hills, green valleys and sparkling sea to complement the detail of bright green mosses, rhymed rocks and crystal granite in the sharp light. Even as we descended, Helvellyn shone blood red in the setting sun and a roseate glow spread over all the outspread land past distant Ingleborough.

Of course, many a person and many a group went forth, criss-crossing the peaks and enjoying fully this blessing of a weekend. All those pensioners, I discovered, have time to walk and climb and travel. Not for them to idle away their days or let their skills go rusty. Fit, strong and somehow no older than they were. Perhaps that is the joy of the club. As individuals our roles change. The once young-bucks become the wise old men. The

sometimes indolent turn their hand to service of their colleagues. The servers too do more than stand and wait and altogether life continues. As a club, we may have missed some tricks over the years but something has stayed and flourished – an appreciation of time spent with colleagues on the hills, a sharing of experience and value of relationship that embraces even absent friends. Forty years on, it was good to share this event and be so warmly embraced by the YRC.

John Varney

Attendance:

The President, Ian Crowther

Ken Aldred
 Dennis Armstrong
 Denis Barker
 Alan Brown
 Derek Bush
 Albert Chapman
 Roy Denny
 Stuart Dix
 Eddie Edwards
 Derek English
 Iain Gilmour
 Mike Godden
 David Handley
 Mike Hartland
 David Hick
 John Jenkin (G)
 Richard Josephy
 Tim Josephy
 Gerry Lee
 Harvey Lomas
 John Lovett
 Keith Raby
 Alister Renton
 Harry Robinson
 John Schofield
 David Smith
 Michael Smith
 Derek Smithson
 Tony Smythe
 George Spenceley
 Bill Todd
 John Varney

North Wales

Rhyd-Ddu

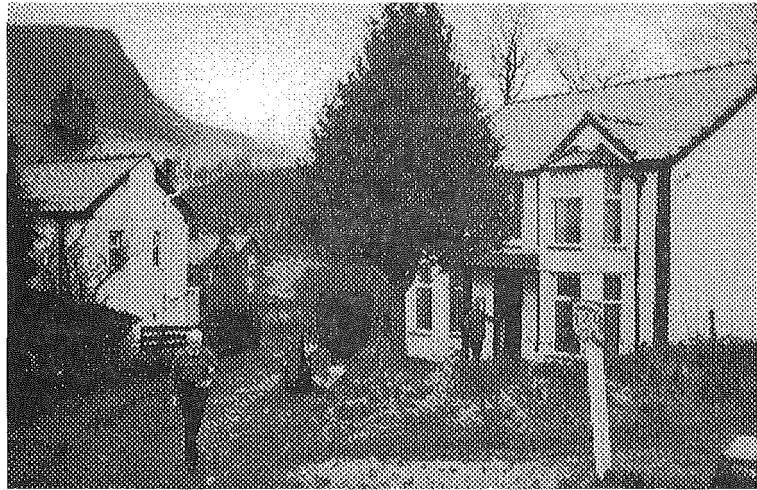
29-31 January
1999

A mild weather system meant that the much hoped for wintry conditions failed to transpire. Members arriving on Friday were welcomed by low cloud that failed to clear during the day making walking a fairly damp and miserable affair. However, by Friday evening a hearty crowd had arrived at the Oread M.C.'s hut, Tany-Y-Wyddfa which, as the name suggests, is nestled beneath the western slopes of Snowdon.

With the weather set fairer on Saturday morning members set out on their expeditions, most of which involved the Nantlle Ridge which runs east to west from the village of Rhyd-Ddu. The YRC should be congratulated on the variety of ways by which its members resolved to traverse the ridge.

One party comprising Iain Gilmour, Richard Gowing, Alister Renton and David Smith trail-blazed the more obvious east-west route that started steeply out of the village to the top of Y Garn. A party comprising Derek Collins, Roger Dix and Stuart Dix, and another of Mike Godden and Eddie Edwards followed them.

On arrival at the summit, all were treated to a view of the surrounding area that was enhanced by the local temperature inversion. In all directions the region's peaks protruded spectacularly out of mist filled valleys. The ridge continued across Mynedd



The Oread Mountain Club's hut, Tany-Y-Wyddfa

Drws-y-coed, Mynedd Tal-y-mignedd to Carnedd Goeh, The interconnecting ridges, most notably Craig Pennant, were exciting scrambles over some very wet and slimy rock. While cloud was low most of the time, the intermittent views occasionally afforded down to the valley below were all the more appreciated for their rarity. For those arriving at Nantlle, a long walk back to the hut along the road finished just as darkness was falling.

Another party comprising our President, Frank Wilkinson and Darrell Farrant took advantage of the road **link** and traversed the route west to east from a trailhead close to Cwm Silyn.

A more "complete" traverse was undertaken by Richard Josephy, Tim Josephy, Michael Smith and Derek Smithson, Having ascended Cwm Pennant on the southeast side of the ridge, with the permission of a friendly farmer, they attained the ridge at the far western summit of Mynedd Grail Goeh, This despite Richard Josephy ending up waist deep in a bog.

When they set out in the morning David Hick and David Martindale had little idea that during their walk up



Richard Josephy and a hilltop 'floating island' in a sea of cloud

Cwm Pennant and then over Moel Hebog they would be treated to the sights and sounds of mating hogs. Having sought liquid refreshment that evening in the local tavern to help them get over their experiences, they were unfortunately further traumatised by a cyclist, victim of a road traffic accident, who was treated before their very pints while awaiting paramedic assistance. While the two Davids have recovered, less is known about the cyclist.

George Spenceley and Harvey Lomas each ascended Snowdon (although not together) where low cloud made route finding particularly hazardous.

All in all this was a very enjoyable meet and special mention and thanks must go to Harvey who stepped in to deputise as meet leader and did a splendid job of keeping us well fed and happy upon our return to the hut in the evening. Those requiring to be even happier continued the evening in the pub.

Stuart B Dix

Attendance:

The President, Ian Crowther

Derek Collins

Stuart Dix

Roger Dix (G)

Eddie Edwards

Darrel Farrant

Iain Gilmour

Mike Godden

Richard Gowing

David Hick

Richard Josephy

Tim Josephy

Harvey Lomas

David Martindale

Alister Renton

David Smith

Michael Smith

Derek Smithson

George Spenceley

Frank Wilkinson

Lowstem

Joint Meet with Gritstone and Wayfarers Clubs

12-14 March 1999

It won't be a big meet", the President airily told the meet leader, so that worthy gentleman was rather surprised to find himself having to ring round asking people to be prepared to camp or sleep in their cars. **If** the success of a meet is counted on attendance, then this was certainly a successful one. Even the weather was kind; rather than the usual misery of March mist and drizzle we had a pleasant **spring** weekend, clear and sunny.

The usual breakfast production line was efficiently run and most people got an early start on the hills. Many routes were taken, most of them intentional (even YRC members find it hard to get lost in such good weather) and the Elder Statesman of the Wayfarers, Hal Jacob, enjoyed a walk around the green lanes and tracks of Clapham and Austwick.

A high powered party of three set off to climb on Twisleton Scar and had a good day there, although their tales of true grit and determination were somewhat torpedoed when Albert Chapman arrived to reveal that they had been partaking of tea and cakes at Scar Top from half past three. One hopes it did not blunt their appetites for the evening repast.

The Presidential party went caving, choosing County Pot in Easegill because of the high level of meltwater run off. They had a long and enjoyable day prospecting into odd comers and getting as far as Diamond Hall before

returning. The President declared that caving was a young man's sport and he would go no more, but he's said that before and we know he doesn't really mean it.

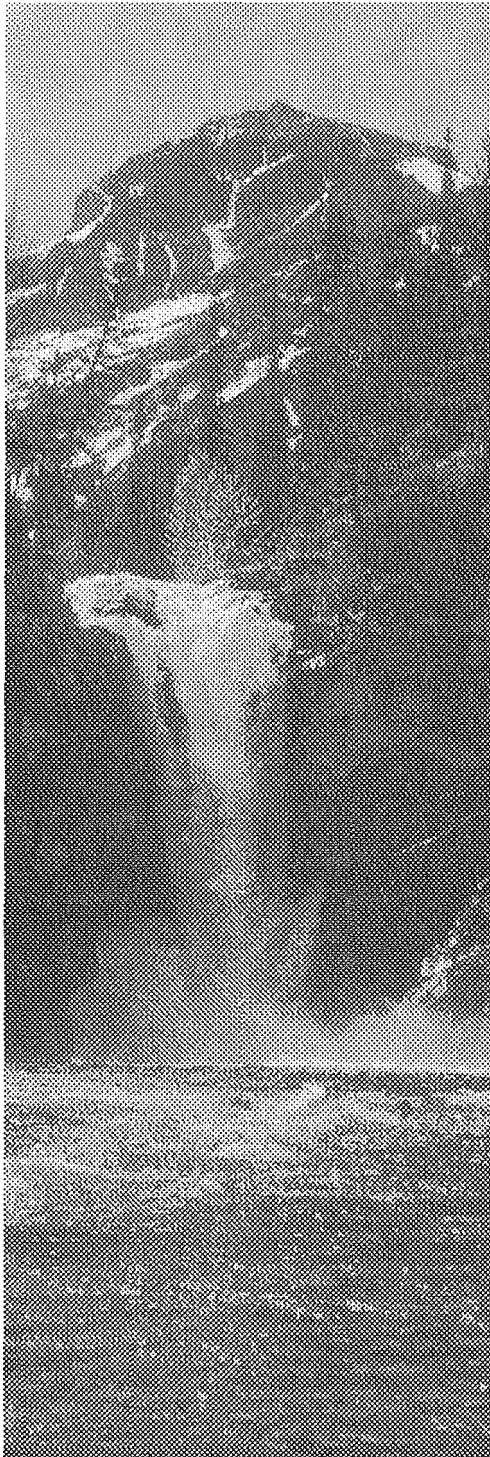
Late returners to Lowstem found a very convivial scene to greet them. Tables laid for thirty six and room to spare for everyone to circulate and enjoy the gluhwein and appetisers provided by our dinner host, David Wood of the Wayfarers. **If** anyone doubted the wisdom of spending so much money on Lowstem then this sort of meet is ample justification. The meal that followed was a traditional Austrian one, expertly prepared and eminently satisfying, both in savour and size. The President thanked David and Derek for their sterling efforts and welcomed the two Kindred Clubs to Lowstem, offering the hope that we would have more such meets in the future. He also asked the company to drink to the life of YRC member Bill Woodward who had died a few days previously. After dinner Michael Smith gave an update on the Bolivian expedition and some people gravitated to the New Inn, where a fancy dress party was in full swing. At about ten o'clock, the door opened and in came the Teletubbies. It was some time before we realised that the third one was in fact the President and he wasn't in fancy dress.

Sunday dawned another fine day and most people took advantage of the weather to have another day on the local hills. About a dozen, including John Barton, David Handley and Sidney Waterfall, who came down for the day, stayed behind to have lunch with Geoffrey Brooks, one of our most senior members, who had been brought over by Bill Todd to meet old friends and to view the new Lowstem. Your meet reporter was not present

but no doubt old acquaintances were renewed and many tales told of Lowstems old and new.

Our thanks go to Derek Collins and David wood for organising such an enjoyable meet that sets the standard for the year to come.

Tim Josephy



Cucumber Falls in Glacier National Park, MT USA

Attendance:

Gtitstone

John Anderson
Denis Chapman
Clifford Duckworth
Jack Escritt
Billy Hinds

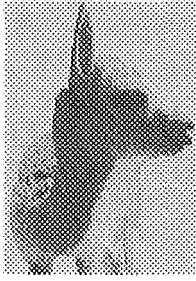
Wayfarers

Steve Auty
Alan Ferguson
Mike Gee
Peter Honey
Bob Hughes
Hal Jacob
David Wood

YRC

The President, Ian Crowther

David Atherton
John Barton
Geoffrey Brooks
Alan Brown
Derek Bush
Albert Chapman
Derek Collins
Eddie Edwards
Mike Godden
David Handley
Mike HaItland
Jeff Hooper
Richard Josephy
Tim Josephy
David Laughton
Harvey Lomas
Arthur Salmon
David Smith
Michael Smith
Bill Todd
Sidney Waterfall



Vicuña in danger

To combat the work of an estimated three dozen professional poachers of vicuña, 250 new recruits to the Peruvian Park Ranger



service were enlisted and sworn in during last winter. Keeping an eye on the animals as they range widely in small groups across the 4000m altiplano is difficult but the Rangers efforts are paying off and the population has increased to over 100000. Known locally as *the walking gold of the Andes* because of their fine wool vicuña are a tempting target as once smuggled from the hunting area, usually around Ayacucho, across the border into Bolivia their hides fetch about £25 on the black market. Their eventual destination is on a rack of suits in an European boutique as trading in these products is illegal in the USA. The 1997 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) reduced the level of protection listed for vicuña in view of the rising numbers opening the possibility of increased trade and consequent temptation for potential poachers.

The una Ulla National Reserve, in the Apolobamba area of Bolivia, is another sanctuary for vicuña which suffers from poaching, with some kills being made within sight of the small collection of building which form the reserve headquarters. Members on the last Club Andean expedition in 1988 saw a few of their 3000 vicuña in the wilder areas away from the llama grazing pastures.

Near to the volcanic peak, Sajama, a probable destination for the next Andean trip, is another reserve, the Chilean run Lauca National Park where the herds number almost 30000 animals so we may see more on that trip.

(Source Latin Press Lima)



The President, WCIC, with hair, making one of his first declarations aged 15 months in 1937

High technology

Michael Smith



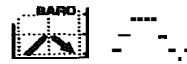
I've used several alti-meters but the Suunto Vector Wristop Computer packs the greatest functionality into least space for the mountaineer.

Styled like a hefty digital wristwatch (5cm / 2in across & 1½cm / 5/8in deep) it combines the usual digital watch functions with a 9000m altimeter / barometer, thermometer and compass. It will operate in metric or imperial units and unlike earlier versions does not need sending away for a change of cell. It will be available with a variety of wristbands

The altimeter reading changes in 5m or 10ft steps and requires only a few presses on two of the four inconspicuous (unlike the Avocet Vertech Alpine) push buttons. In thin gloves I found adjustment a simple matter. So too was mastering the basic adjustments needed to allow for variations in pressure and magnetic declination! but there again I quite enjoy reading electronic equipment and computer manuals. For me the main operation is the altimeter though a compass available at one touch saved rooting around for odd checks. Such a *one touch* can still be inadvertently applied by a rucksac strap while struggling to pull a sac on, though less easily than with larger buttoned models.

The compass circuits use significant currents so after 10 or 45 seconds it goes to sleep and needs another touch to reactivate it. Compared to a magnetic needle compass there are a few points to watch in tricky

situations: you need two hands in front of you (one with the device and one to press the button); you need to keep ice axes away; and the device must be held perfectly level so an integral spirit level is provided for this.



The display of pressure or height changes is either by stepping through the sequence of previously captured reading or an *at a glance* baro display shown in four quadrants (left above). For this I prefer the Casio-style graph (right above) but there has to be a limit to what they can fit in.

The thermometer will display the ambient temperature but needs to be off the wrist for fifteen minutes or more to avoid it being affected by body heat. For me this severely limits the utility of this function. A cheap (£3) alcohol in glass thermometer embedded in clear plastic dangling from your sac or tent appears to me to be a better solution.

What then is this good for? Knowing the altitude is a valuable extra piece of navigational information and, provided you develop the habit of setting the altitude when known, the device will display this reliably and conveniently. It will record settings in a logbook for later replay and gives an at a glance indication of significant overnight pressure changes.

The fact that it replaces a watch means that it is not *another* instrument to carry and the compass function is reasonably convenient for periodic checks. It is undoubtedly more robust than aneroids and has more functions than most club mountaineers have use for - such as ascent rates, split time display for two runners (climbers"). Only you can decide if it worth around £140 to you but it does appear set to replace the Avocet as *the* wrist altimeter with a compass thrown in for added measure.

1 On declination setting my version of the manual (10/98) contained an error in the instructions in 9.1, p33, line 5, the word *twice* should be *once*.