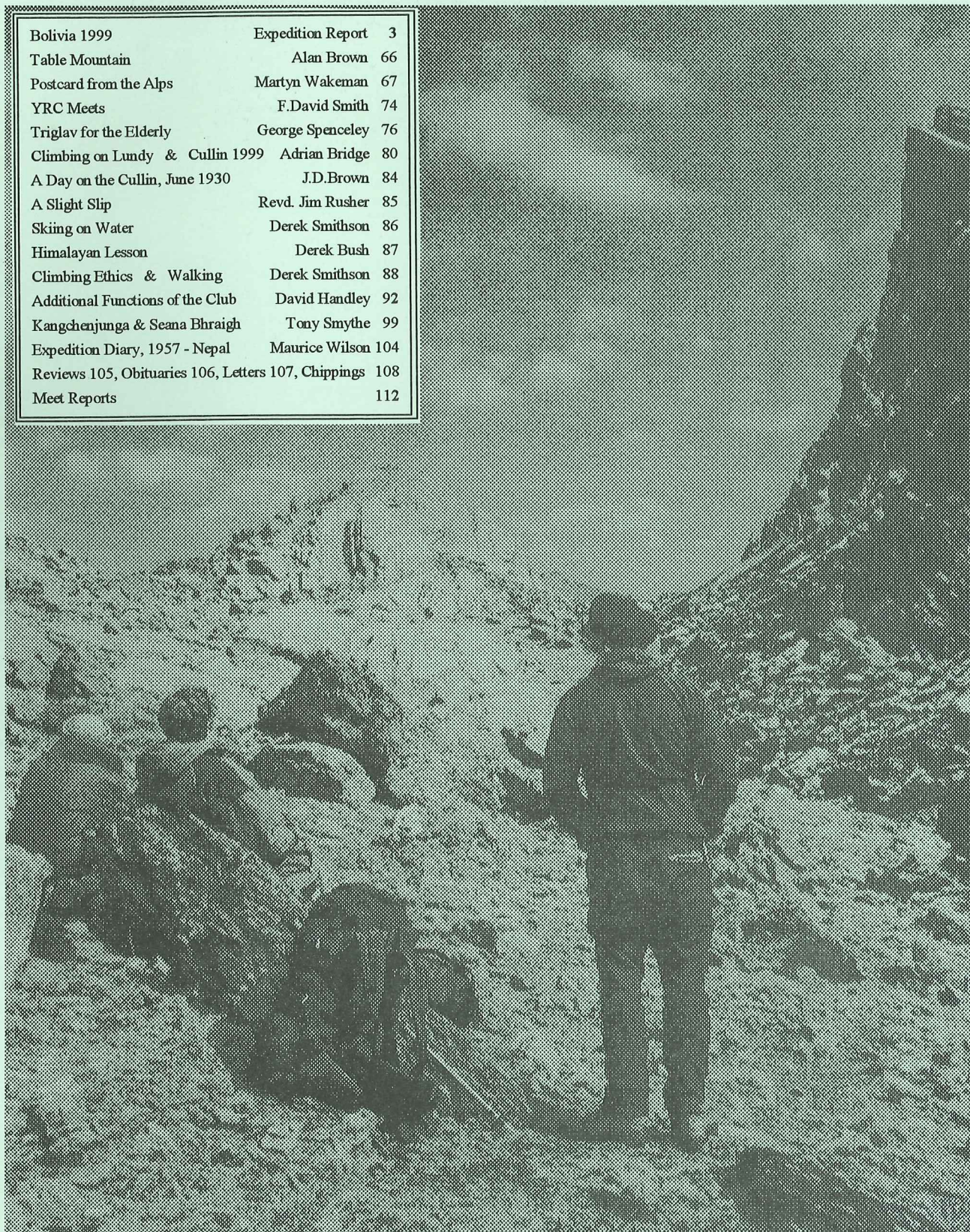


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Javier, Tim Josephy and David Hick, now in bright sunshine, gaze ruefully back up at Sankhayuni V in the Cocapata, Bolivia, having just abandoned it during a brief snow storm

Foreword

This issue is largely concerned with the recent Club expedition to the Andes and readers with little interest in this particular area will, I hope, forgive the self-indulgence of those who went. We enjoyed the luxury of being able to jet in, soak up the ambience and, once we have had enough, jet out again, leaving the mountains to those Andean communities we met and who helped us.

"The noble people lived on undisturbed except by the ... straggly parties of mountaineers with peeling noses and diarrhoea who came for the most part, curiously enough, from Britain." Louis de Bernieres' *The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts*, Ch.2

We seemingly endlessly retell the striking (literally in some cases) experiences we had in Peru, Chile and Bolivia. That...

"...Venusian world of ice, of sudden reckless mists of palpable water, of lichen and trickling springs, of fragmenting shale and glistening white peaks, where human realities became remote and ridiculous, where sky is actually below you and inside you, where breathing is an accomplishment in itself, and where condors, inconceivably ponderous and gigantic, wheel on the upcurrents like lords of a different and fantastic universe." Ibidem, Ch.6

Read on but forgive us when we fail to express ourselves-quite so graphically as the professionals.



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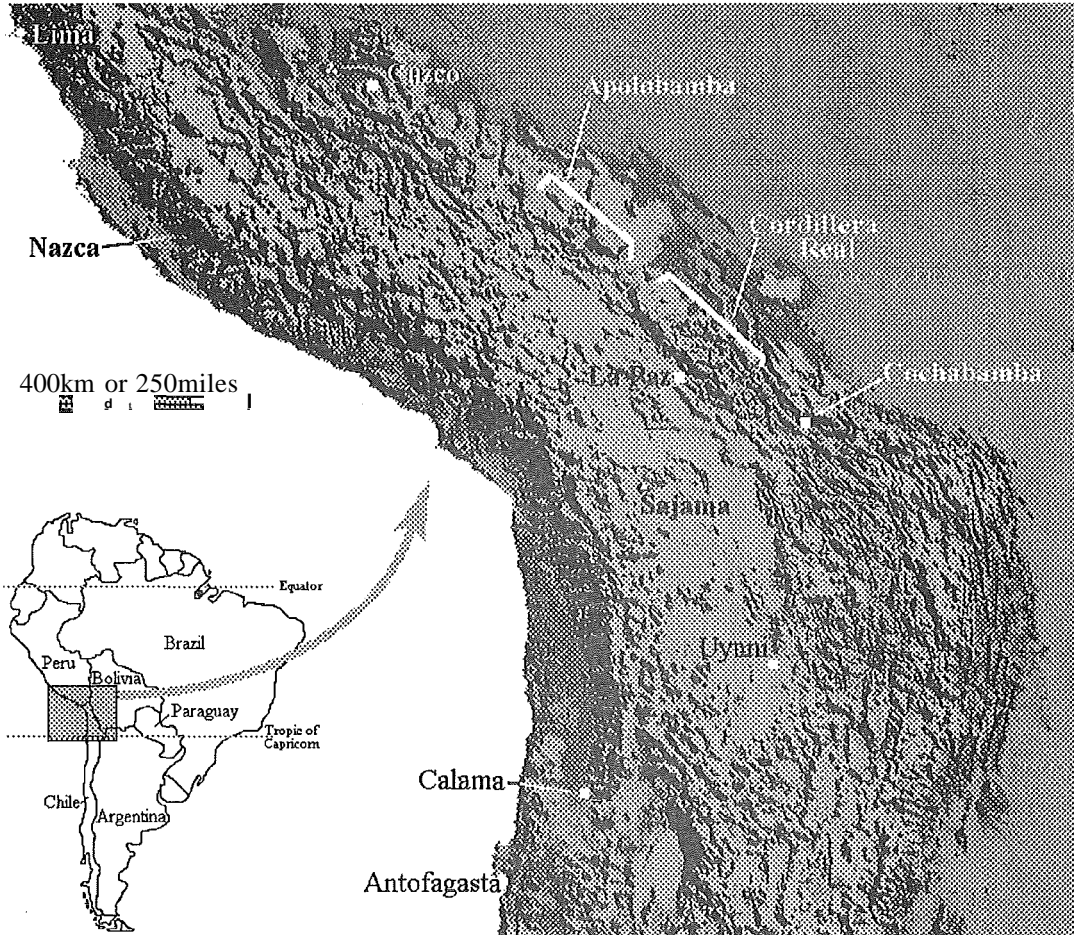
The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Y.R.C nor its Officers

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Bolivia 1999



Abstract: During June and July 1999, twelve members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club visited Bolivia. Following a week of acclimatisation on the altiplano, five visited the Cocapata range near Cochabamba for exploratory rock climbing on granite peaks, while the remainder completed a two-week trek in the Cordillera Real. Subsequently all combined for an ascent of Sajama. Two members then explored the Cordillera Occidental. This report includes notes on planning, routes, personal accounts and further opportunities for climbing and trekking.

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Introduction

The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club's links with Bolivian mountaineering started in 1898 when honorary member, Sir Martin Conway, made the first ascent of Illimani's highest top (6402m 21000ft) with two Swiss guides. Their local porters abandoned them on the ascent of this prominent peak which dominates the view from the city of La Paz at the southern end of the Cordillera Real (Conway, 1901, p124). Conway later almost reached the summit of Ancohuma (6427m 21086ft) at the northern end of the Cordillera Real.

Then in 1966 Tony Smythe climbed ten peaks¹, mostly first ascents, in the



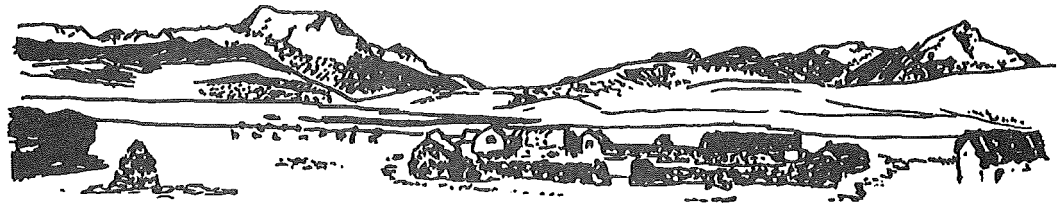
Illimani, Ruben Calderon

¹ These traditional mountaineering ascents were made more tiring by penitentes and long days out from Laguna Jacha Leche Khotabase camp. The ten ascents were:

Yoka de Ancohuma, 19,873ft, 1st ascent;
Kimsakolyo, 19,332ft, 1st ascent;
Hankopiti I, 19,249ft, 2nd ascent;
Buena Vista, 18,200ft, 1st ascent;
Viluyo 2, 18,390ft, 3rd ascent;
Taparacu, 18,867ft, 2nd ascent;
Haltatawa, 18,370ft, possible 1st ascent;
Nonte Triangulo, 18,609ft, 1st ascent;
Pico de Linea, 18,400ft, 1st ascent; and
Kunotawa, 19,622ft, 1st ascent.

Ancohuma area with one or both of Dave Challis and Bob Hall of a Bangor University team.

That trip was during a generation long lull in YRe organised mountaineering in the greater ranges. Later, the Club, after a series of well supported Alpine meets, organised a successful expedition to the Apolobamba range, north of Lake Titicaca by the Peruvian border, in 1988 (Smith, 1989). This



Apolobamba: Hunancuni & Cololo from Quello

attracted six members and created two first ascents of new routes on peaks-which had previously had few visits (Brain, 1999, p17,75). That expedition's logistical support was provided by Bernardo Guarachi who was, this year, being honoured in Bolivia by the issue of a stamp commemorating his ascent of Everest.



There followed a series of Himalayan treks and climbs over the next ten years until, by the late 1990s, groups of mostly newly retired members, with forty or so years experience, were heading out to Nepal once or twice a year.

1995 saw a YRC party of sixteen trekking and climbing in the Jugal Himal including a younger group of members. These active younger members concentrated increasingly on international caving trips over the next few years. This, and their careers, resulted in a 1998 call for members interested in another trip to Bolivia

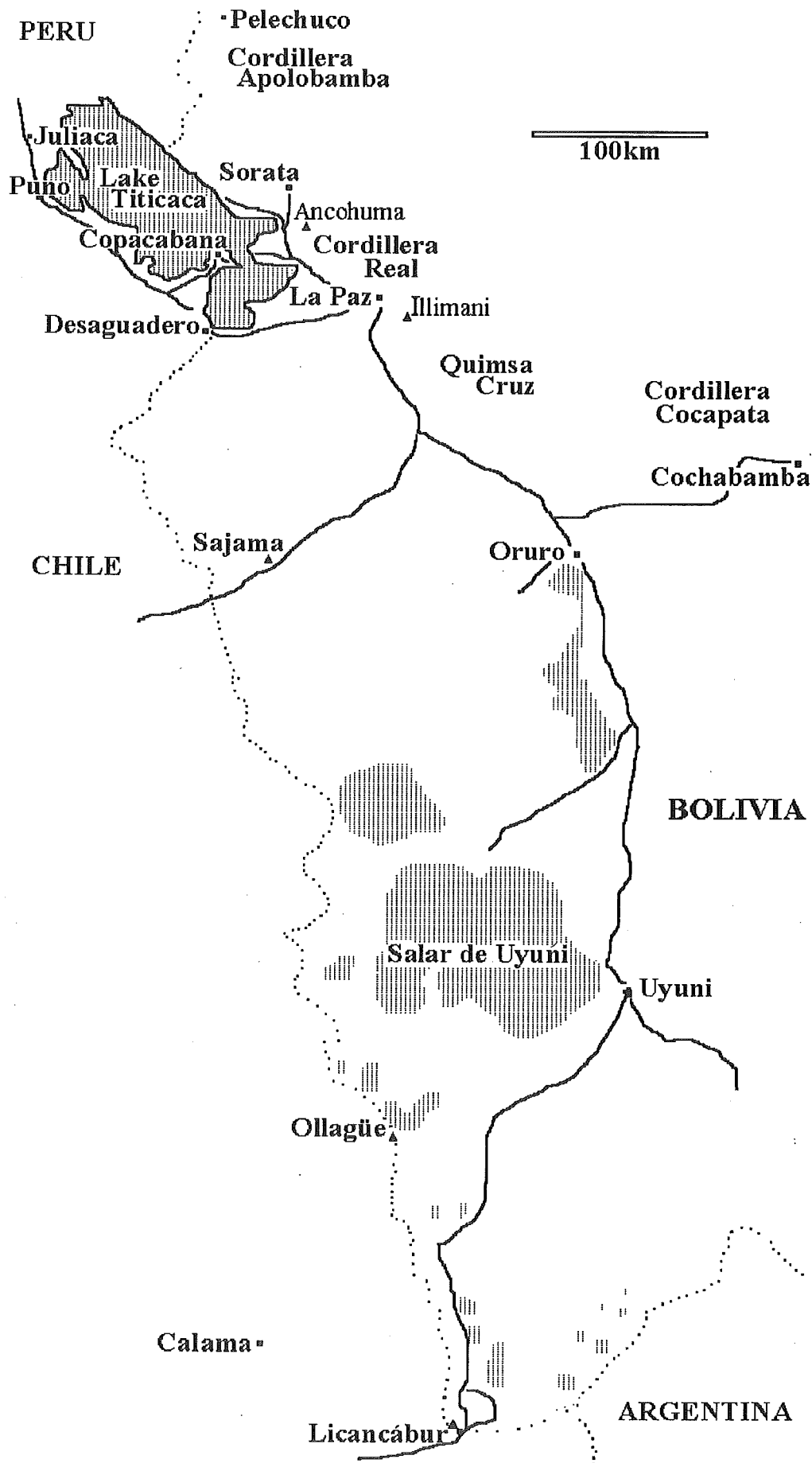
2 Cololo, 5915m / 19,406ft, west ridge route and Nevado Nubi, 5710m / 18,734ft south-west ridge.

and Chile predominantly attracting older, retired members. The vast majority of those interested wanted to spend a month, rather than six weeks, on the trip and preferred to trek without vehicle support through attractive peaks and meet up as a single group for part of the time.

Consequently the expedition itinerary was in four parts: acclimatisation; trekking in the Cordillera Real or exploratory rock climbing in the Cordillera Cocapata [Echevarria, 1997] near Cochabamba; a combined trip to Sajama; and finally, for those who remained, an exploration of the Cordillera Occidental and the Puno de Atacama. These lasted about one, two, one and two weeks respectively. The Apolobamba, Quimsa Cruz and Southern Cordillera Occidental were rejected as the main trekking and climbing as being, respectively, already visited, unlikely to bear many significant new classical routes and too remote and widely spaced.

Support was negotiated, several months in advance with the La Paz based agency, Andean Summits, with whom a suitable trekking route through the Cordillera Real was negotiated. Porterage proved much more reliable than a century earlier.

Information on the Cocapata was supplied by Evelio Echevarria to supplement his article in the *Alpine Journal*.



Personnel:

Cordillera Cocapata, Climbing:

David Hick
Tim Josephy
Duncan Mackay
Rory Newman
Michael Smith

Cordillera Real, Trekking:

David Atherton
Derek Bush
Albert Chapman
Ian Crowther
Iain Gilmour
Alan Kay
Alan Linford
David Smith

Cuzco, Arequipa and Sorata

Christine Marriott

Support from Andean Summits

Jose Camarlinghi, guide
Javier Thellache, guide
Virginia (Vicky), cook
Arles, cook
Rebecca, assistant cook
Rafael Savé, driver
George, driver
Juan Carlos, driver/aspirant guide
Mario Quespe Mendosa, boatman

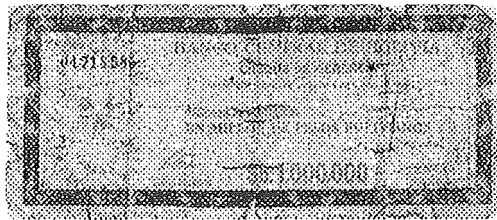
Logistics:

Flights were booked nine months in advance with American Airlines from Heathrow to Miami then Miami to La Paz. This reduced Conway's forty four day journey out from London to La Paz [Conway 1901, p69] to just twenty hours including a stroll round Miami's fashionable art deco area.



The local agent provided all trekking and base camp gear and support, local transport and food. They also booked hotels and tourist excursions for the acclimatisation period. We took out two Club Ultra Quasar tents, three MSR@Dragonfly stoves for use beyond base camp and eight climbing ropes.

Our base camps were supported by a cook and, in the case of the larger camps, an assistant. The food carried into the camp was supplemented by small amounts purchased locally as available and by a resupply after a week when the guides changed over.



Joseph Barclay Pentland (1827), a Briton who was the first person to map the Cordillera Real, was allowed £650, including £200 for books and instruments, for his eighteen month survey of Bolivia on behalf of the British government. In 1988, the Apolobamba trip cost members about £1300 including incidental costs in the field but excluding personal equipment. This time the expedition,

with its increased level of support, cost about £2000. That comprised roughly of:

- £550 air fare,
- £1200 logistical support,
- £200 on excursions and
- £50 administration and communal gear.

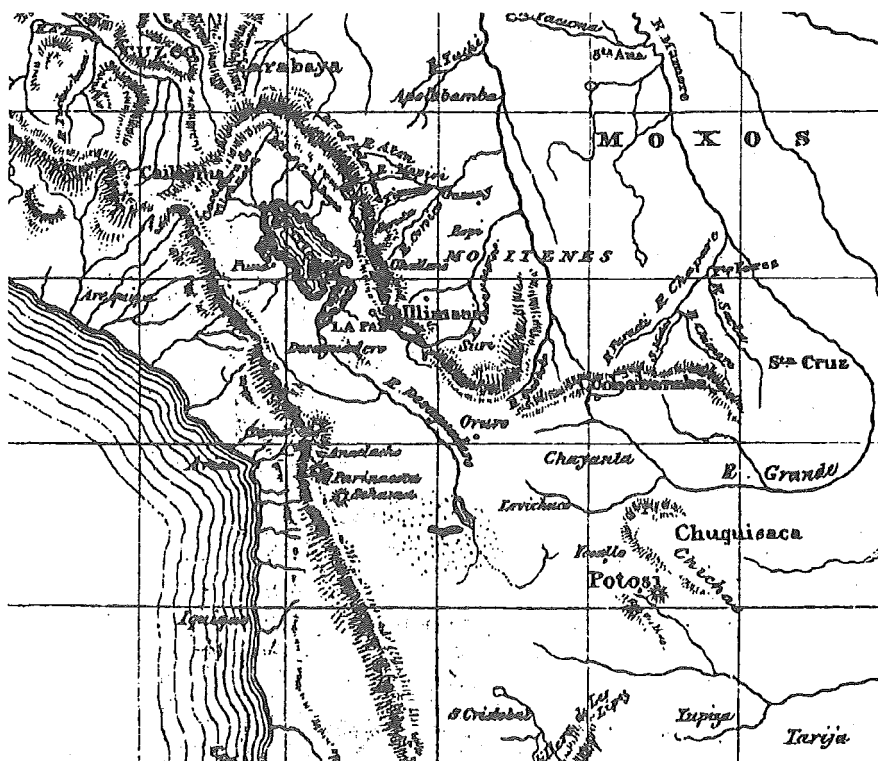
The trekking routes through the Cordillera Real are now well established and a variation, selected on the advice of the agent, was planned to provide an opportunity to ascend a peak if all was going well.

For the climbers, photographs of the Cordillera Cocapata, supplied by Echevarria, indicated that the steepest continuous rock was to be found on the west side of Jatuncasa (Cerro Jatun Khasa on the map). Consequently the largest lake in the area, Lago Calzonani, only a few kilometres away, appeared to provide a good base. This lake is a few, uphill kilometres from the nearest road and several hours steep and rough driving from the city of Cochabamba.

Since our 1988 visit the transport infrastructure and mountaineering support service had improved considerably. The publication of Yossi Brain's climbing guide, earlier this year, makes the peaks accessible to a wider range of mountaineers. Bolivia would appear to be set for an expansion of mountaineering activity.

Why Bolivia?

Invariably the first reaction of anyone told of our plans was to ask "Why Bolivia?" We saw the main advantages as abundant impressive peaks, a lack of climbers, peak fees and bureaucracy, clear blue skies almost guaranteed daily, a rich and unfamiliar culture, general stability, reasonable safety, inexpensive local support and ease of travel to the mountains. The air fare costs, sparse flora and fauna, less well known mountains and the impossibility of gradually acclimatising are significant disadvantages.



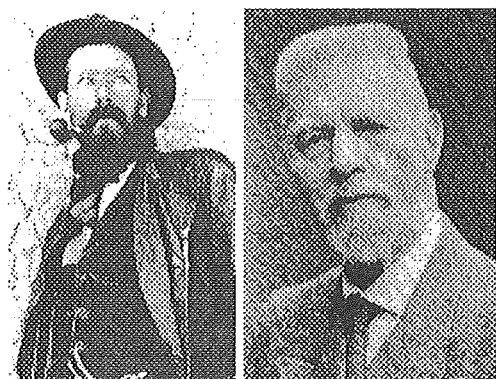
Part of one of Pentland's maps published for the Royal Geographical Society in 1835

The expedition consisted not of a single party but groups which formed at different times to visit different areas. It would be tedious to record who was where at each stage but the following outlines the main movements.

June			Day
19	Sa	Fly Heathrow - Miami - Bolivia	1
20	Su	Arrive in La Paz and remain there for orientation/recovery	2
		Titicaca sailing group (3)	
		Cuzco group (9)	
21	Mo	Puerto Perez, sail to Suriqui, camp	3
		By road to Cuzco	
22	Tu	Tiquina to camp on east shore	4
		In Cuzco visiting archaeological sites	
23	We	Isla de la Luna and Isla del Sol	5
		Visit to Machu Picchu ruins	
24	Th	Cochabamba and back to La Paz	6
		Fly from Cuzco back to La Paz	
25	Fr	Lunch with Embassy staff and	7
		Guarachi, 3 ascend Charquini	
		Cocapata Climbing group (5)	
		Cordillera Real Trekking group (7)	
26	Sa	Via Cochabamba to Tunari, camp	8
		Via Sorata to Cocoyo and camp	
27	Su	Establish Laguna Chacapata base	9
		Sarani pass to near Chajolpaya	
28	Mo	Jatuncasa, Co. Cajonani Khasa	10
		Negruni pass to Negruni lake	
29	Tu	Explore to Willipanki, Cerro Torre	11
		Rio Amawayá Jawira, Janqu Quta	
30	We	Establish Willipanki camp	12
		Quinasini Quta to near mine track	
1	July	Willipanki I, Sankhayuni	13
		Mina Fabulosa, Chiqapa Jawira	
2	Fr	Willipanki II climbed	14
		Mina Fabulosa, Chiqapa Jawira	
3	Sa	Khochá Khasa, Malpaso	15
		Cerro Nigruni corries	
4	Su	Cerro Torre, Pututuni,	16
		Co. Chiquapa pass, L. Alka Quta	
5	Mo	Jatuncasa circuit, Malpaso	17
		near Co. Wawanaki, Juri Quta	
6	Tu	Poma Apacheta	18
		near Co. Kuntui, Chiyara Quta	
7	We	Nido de Condores (Sankhayuni)	19
		Cerro Ventanani (Austria)	
8	Th	Decamp to Pefias	20
		Condoriri Glacier	
9	Fr	Sipe Sipe and on to La Paz	21
		to Tuní and La Paz	
10	Sa	Reorganising in La Paz	22
		Sajama group (9)	
		Others	
11	Su	Drive to Sajama, camp nr thennals	23
		LaPaz	
12	Mo	Establish base, 4800m	24
		La Paz	
13	Tu	high camp at col, 5800m	25
		Embassy reception with Blashford-Snell	
14	We	ascend Sajama, 6542m, to base	26
		Depart for UK	
15	Th	Decamp to near thennals, geysers	27
		Cordillera Occidental (2)	
16	Fr	Sajama village, return to La Paz	28
		Chilean Lacua National Park, Putre	
17	Sa	day in La Paz	29
		Zapahuira, Belen, Saxamar, Cuya	
18	Su	Fly La Paz, Santa Cruz to Miami	30
		Huara, Humberstone, Iquique, Pacific	
19	Mo	Heathrow	31
		Tocopilla, Calama	
20	Tu	Peru Group (2)	32
		Chuquicamata, Chiu Chiu, El Tatio	
21	We	Cuzco	33
		Geysers, San Pedro de Atacama	
22	Th	Pisac and Urumbamba	34
		near Licancabur, L. Verde, L. Colorada	
23	Fr	Visit to Machu Picchu ruins	35
		Laguna Caiiapeto Volcan Ollague	
24	Sa	fly to Arequipa	36
		ascend V. Ollagüe, Salar de Chiquana	
25	Su	Colca Cayon	37
		Salar de Uyuni, Uyuni, Isla de Pescadores	
26	Mo	Pacific Coast	38
		Tahua, Jirira, Salinas, Challapata	
27	Tu	Arequipa to Puno	39
		Poopo, Cala Cala, Oruro, La Paz	
28	We	Puno	40
		day in La Paz	
29	Th	LaPaz	41
		La Cumbre, Apacheta Chukura	
30	Fr	day in La Paz	42
		Fly La Paz, Santa Cruz to Miami	
31	Sa	Fly La Paz, Santa Cruz to Miami	43
		Heathrow	
1	Aug	Heathrow	44

Cocapata

Our attention was drawn to this area as having the "potential to be a rock climbers' playground ... 'and whoever goes there will have the whole range to himself' (Bchevarria, 1997, p158). This matched the YRC approach perfectly and the lack of previous visits by foreign mountaineers, since Hoek in 1903 and Herzog in 1908 and 1911, suggested that an exploratory climbing venture would yield new routes and peaks.



The Germans Henry Hook, 1878-1951, and Theodor Herzog, 1880-1961

Yossi Brain, outspoken as ever, commented "no snow, shite rock, why bother?" (Dec. 1997, e-mail) but we preferred to rely on first-hand accounts such as Herzog's "grey jagged ridge", "bizarely formed peaks", "steep rocky homs" and "extraordinarily impressive black tower" (1913) and Echevarria's "excellent grey granite" and "long, steep slabs of smooth rocks" (1998, correspondence).

Studying the 1:50000 maps, sent out beforehand from La Paz, confirmed the extent of the range, its relative ease of access, the steepness of the slopes and the number of peaks. While these maps depict permanent snowfields they do not now exist nor did they in Herzog's time.

The name *Cordillera de Cocapata* was used by Herzog and Echevarria in

preference to Tunari or Cochabamba and we have followed their example. The group lie north-west of Cochabamba and south-east of the Quimsa CIUZ. Peak names are problematic. Map names do not coincide with much of the current local usage. This report uses names shown on the IGM maps except for Jatun Khasa, or Herzog's Incachaca, which is referred to as Jatuncasa.

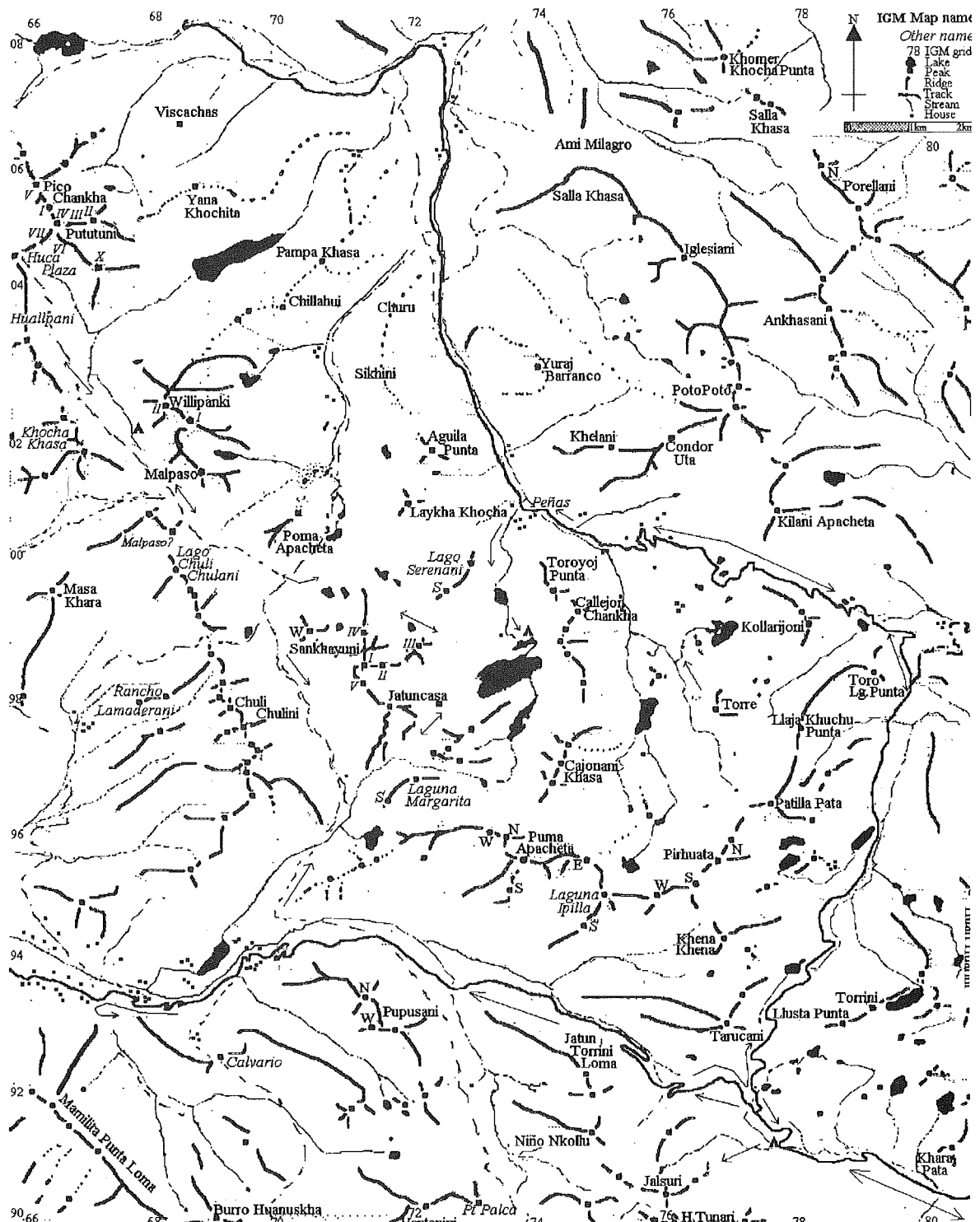
The climbers were:

David Hick
Tim Josephy
Duncan Mackay
Rory Newman
Michael Smith

Their average age was 48 years. We spent two weeks in the area during late June and early July after a week of acclimatisation. We were supported by a cook, Virginia¹, and a guide who negotiated with local people, organised the logistics and joined us on ascents. It was also the guides' first visit to the area and they knew of no other visits there apart from some viscacha hunters and mountain bikers making excursions from Cochabamba.

Our journey to the range from La Paz took a wll0le day, from 9am to sunset at 6pm, first south almost to Oruro then east over the Cordillera Oriental via the Pongo pass. Refuelling then turning north-west at the plaza in

¹ Virginia was impressive. She not only catered efficiently despite having just one paraffin stove but had, with other expeditions, climbed Illimani and Huayna Potosi (three times), and, when not employed as a cook, knits garments for sale. She spun wool at a tremendous speed. Her meals were hearty, tasty and uncomplicated. We took to searching for fossils or birds rather than arriving back at camp mid-afternoon since any early return prompted Virginia to rustle up a large bowl of salad for you, making it impossible to do justice to the evening meal.



The Cocapata based on the IGM Ed.2 Series H731 maps, sheets 6342-III and IV with grid 19 coordinates. Our basecamp was slightly north of the large lake in the middle of this map.

Quillacollo, on the outskirts of Cochabamba, initially flat fields lead into a narrow steep-sided valley rising from around 2500m to 4400m in 20km. As most of the ascent is over just 5km as the crow flies, the unsurfaced road zig zags as much as a kilometre.

Close to the Tahua Cruz road junction north of Huayna Tunari, headtorches were needed as we unpacked and erected the American designed, Taiwanese manufactured, Walrus tents and sorted out their arrangements of interlocking and criss-crossing poles.

On Sunday, June 27, we rose well before dawn for an early breakfast to give time to take the gear to Pefias at the far side of the range and leave enough time for the vehicles to be driven back to La Paz.

Tim, David and Rory were driven round to the west and dropped off at Bam, at a hut by the road, due south of Jatuncasa. They intended to cross the pass between Lagunas Margarita and Azeroni to reach, Laguna Calzonani, locate a suitable campsite and meet us at Pefias village. However, as they approached the supposed pass, the crags by the pass, viewed from below, against the rising sun, looked impassable and an alternative was found. This yomp of several miles, with full packs, clockwise round the whole Jatuncasa-Sankhayuni group meant they arrived at the camp area shortly before the first of our two, horse assisted carries up from Pefias around noon.

Meanwhile Duncan explored the ridges of Huayna Tunari. Michael and Javier had taken photographs from the south side of the range and then from the east as they had all driven round to Pefias for Ham

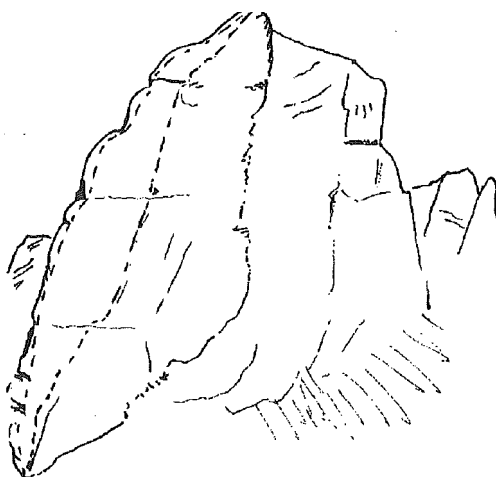
The second carry up is completed by 4pm and we establish the camp in and around a pifold by Laguna Chacapata. There is no running water and the area is grazed by alpaca. Andean geese often fed on a boggy area above or swam on the larger lake with Ruddy Duck, Caracara were frequent visitors and condors were seen daily. A lizard lived under a rock by the camp and another visitor, a vole, was only found, freshly squashed under the mess tent floor when we broke camp.



Jatuncasa

Jatuncasa's slabs looked brown, clean and warm in the morning sunlight across the lake. Just a couple of kilometres away they were an obvious first objective.

Tim and David climbed close to the left-hand edge while Javier and I took a more direct line partly along cracks. The vertical rise of the slab was measured as 300m though the 40° angle and a short ridge behind the slab's top to the true summit behind brought the climbing to 500m



Jatuncasa's 450m slab seen from the north with the two routes marked.

Even the smallest horizontal cracks in the lower half of the slab were scattered with viscacha droppings. These dog-sized rodents can scoot up much steeper rock than this at incredible speeds - they need to too, to avoid being shot.

The climbing was around VD with poor protection on infrequent shallow excavated cracks. Typically, a 45m runout would have one runner. A short descent from the top of the slab along a shattered ridge and past a tottering gendarme brought us to the summit in four hours.

There was no sign on the summit of a previous visit and no cairn on either of the two tops. Yet this was supposed

to be Herzog's Incachaca. Compare this with the description of nearby Sankhayuni (see notes below) and it is likely that these were the first ascents of Jatuncasa.

The descent looked uninviting in all directions and was a dangerously steep and loose scramble off the back and to the north, requiring three abseils in the lower part.

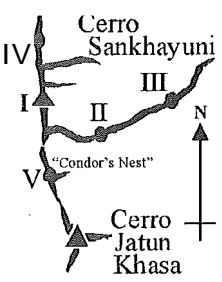
Michael was stricken with a stomach bug and, weakened, trudged slowly back to camp arriving well after dark.

Sankhayuni

Cerro Sankhayuni is a prominent group of peaks above Laguna Calzonani. Four peaks and some lesser tops enclose a complex come. A lower, fifth peak extends towards Jatuncasa, separated by a lower col. From most angles it is difficult to tell which peak is which, or to see how they relate to each other.

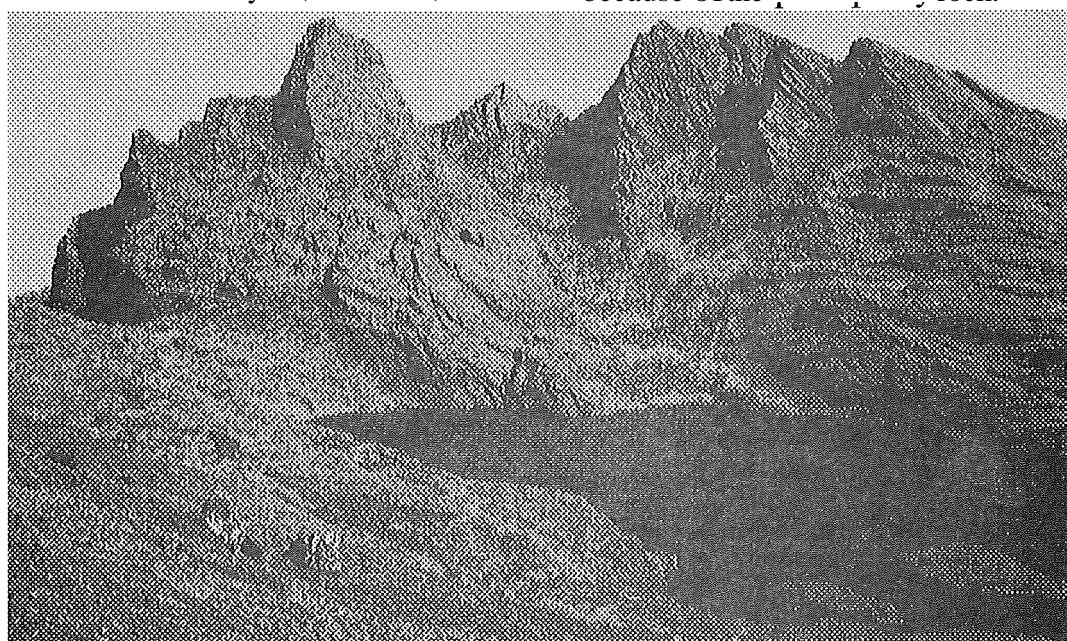
Our original information was that Jatuncasa had been climbed by Herzog but there was no sign of a previous visit and no cairn. The highest summit of Sank-hayuni, however, was

approached by Duncan and ROY on IV Ist July, via two chimney-gullies at about D-. On it was an old tumble-down cairn and Rory is convinced that this was the summit reached by Herzog, and therefore that our ascent of Jatuncasa was a first ascent.



Peaks II and V (see ridge map) of Sankhayuni were climbed by YRC parties and involved rock climbing. A first ascent of II was made by Tim and Jose in four pitches of unprotected climbing on slabs similar to those on Jatuncasa. Their descent involved three abseils down a loose couloir.

Peak IV was already cairned, and was therefore probably the other peak climbed by Herzog, Peak III was climbed by Rory and Duncan and involved a very pleasant scramble up a long section of easy-angled slabs on its north-east ridge, and a loose, shattered summit ridge. It was apparently unclimbed. A traverse of the complete ridge of Sankhayuni would be a very serious undertaking because of the rock.

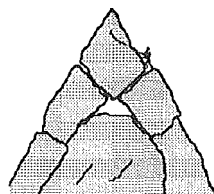


Cerro Jatuncasa, Nido de Condores (just left of centre) and the Sankhayuni peaks from the east

Nido de Condores

Condor's Nest was our fanciful name for the outlyer of Sankhayuni, top V, which, from basecamp, sat between Jatuncasa and the Sankhayuni tops.

Each morning in the first couple of



hours of sunlight the very tip of this peak glistened white.

What else could that be but the droppings round the nest or perch of some bird? What bird other than a condor would select such an exposed spot for an eyrie? The name Nido de Condores, stuck.

On July 6 the dawn sky was unusually cloudy but David, Jose, Michael and Tim walk west up the Quebrada Sankhayuni. The upper part of the valley is littered with large boulders and shadowed by the vertical, cold and forbidding southern crags of Sankhayuni. Tim, his attention attracted by swarming flies, found a boulder shelter in this area, which stank of cats and there were puma spraints, fox prints and bones pierced with teeth marks.

No sooner had the four stood under the steep slab at the foot of this peak than it began to snow. After sheltering under a boulder in increasing snowfall and a freezing wind for half an hour a retreat was made to the bottom of the high come. The weather gods were in taunting mood and the sun came out and cleared the peak of its snow as we watched. Jose and Michael slogged back up to the peak for a closer look and by heading right onto the col gained a better viewpoint.

It was clear that the intended route would have necessitated a traverse of several false saw-tooth like tops to gain the true summit. These could be

avoided by a shorter climb starting at the side of the slab and taking grooves, ledges and slabs to the crest then turning left to the true summit. Footprints crossed the col.

Returning the next day Jose, Michael and Tim climb this route in three pitches but end up on the wrong pinnacle and have to abseil back down two of them. From this unexpected vantage point they see that the summit is composed of stacked blocks and clouds passing behind can be seen through a tunnel between the huge granite blocks.

The 150m climb to the summit was made in three pitches at VD+ mostly with good stances on terraces which broke up the climbing. There were no signs of any previous ascent. The rock here was the best in the area.

Near the top our attention is caught by rockfall all around. Nothing too dramatic but stones clattering down in the distance.

As for the condor's nest, it turned out to be pale grey lichen covering a couple of metres of slab below the summit but angled to catch the morning sun,

Cerro Poma Apacheta

Cerro Poma Apacheta: the name implies that this is a suitable mountain from which to contact the Apus or mountain spirits. It is a high ridge running *WSW/ENE*, with four summits, that at the WSW end being the lowest and separated from the other three by an obvious col. The two ENE summits (joint highest) are separated from the third by a prominent overhanging gap - these two appeared unclimbed: the lower summits were cairned. There is a fairly continuous slabby buttress on the

ENE end of the ridge. Rory approached from the SE, on 6 July, in a snowstorm; this fortunately cleared as he reached the ridge via a grass/scree rake at what turned out to be the col. The WSW summit was reached via an easy scramble, the central one involved steeper rocks at about D-. An interesting traverse on snowy ledges led to a loose stone chute/gully which gave access to the gap between the two highest tops (and an even more interesting stone-fall). The tops were reached by easy scrambling, and Rory caimed them. The ridge is very loose and the flanks quite broken, but the ENE buttress seems sounder and might give decent climbing, particularly as a relatively easy descent exists.



Poma Apacheta's profile seen from the south

Cerro Malpaso

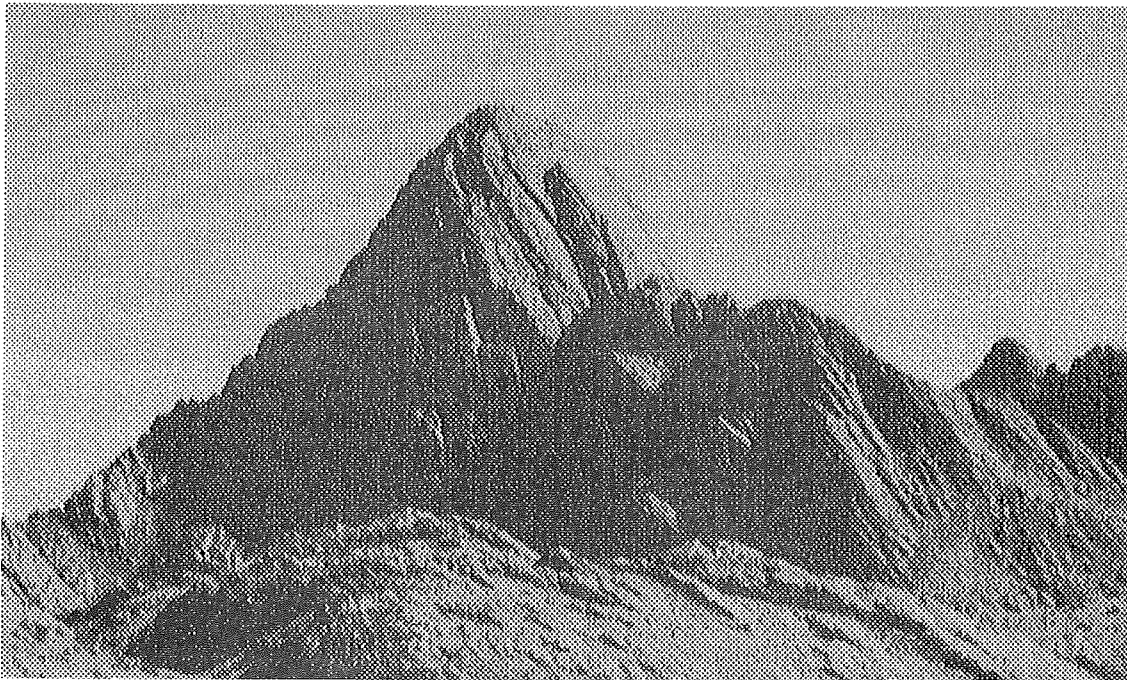
Cerro Malpaso (as it appears on the map) is a ridge south of Willpanki, separated from it by a pass accessible to llamas. The ridge runs approximately east-west with a peak at its east end near the pass, and a higher central summit. A local farmer told us that the peak is misnamed on the map. He believed this ridge to be part of the Willpanki massif, and suggested that the un-named peaks to the south-west climbed on 30 June were the real Malpaso. The east peak of the map's Malpaso was climbed by Rory and Duncan on 3rd July by a very pleasant scramble at about D- from the south-west, following an obvious gully, then a slabby ridge. The central summit was climbed, again

by Rory and Duncan, on 5th July, approaching over the llama pass, then by an ascending traverse up the north flank. A short gully led to the loose but easy summit ridge.

Pututuni

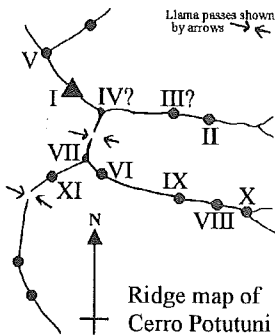
Cerro Pututuni is an extensive and complex mountain with four significant ridges, each with several distinct peaks, lying north-west of Cerro Willpanki. Two of the ridges run east-west in parallel, enclosing a steep hidden valley with a llama pass at its western head. A third, lower ridge runs south-west then south; its south-western part was not explored but looked very much like one of the rock ridges on Arran. The fourth ridge runs north-west and includes the highest peak on the mountain.

The massif was partially explored on 4th July by Duncan and Rory from a camp below the west flank of Willpanki. Unfortunately, they chose a day with extensive cloud and strong wind. This made navigation awkward, as the tops were intermittently in cloud, and the lack of sunshine meant that a lot of the rock was verglassed. They approached from the south; this flank of the mountain is made up of slabby broken buttresses separated by steep gullies. They followed an icy gully with Moderate excursions onto the buttress to its right (east). This led to the ridge west of peak IX (see ridge map). They scrambled easily up the peak, then followed the hidden valley between the parallel east-west ridges to its head. An icy Moderate scramble north led to peak IV; through breaks in the cloud we could see apparently higher peaks to east and north-west. The continuation ridge east looked very icy and awkward, so instead we made a traverse on scree to another



Cerro Willpanki I rising above Cerro Poma Apacheta seen from a pass to the south.
Tim and Javier's route was close to the left skyline of Willpanki.

gully on the south west flank of the north-west ridge. This led via an easy scramble to peak I; a convenient break in the clouds confirmed this to be the summit and enabled us to estimate relative heights for some of other peaks which are numbered on the ridge map in descending height order.



Relative heights are difficult to estimate and peaks III and IV are almost the same height. Peak V is named *Cerro Pico Chankha* on the map but is clearly

part of the Cerro Pututuni massif.

Finally, returning to the head of the hidden valley, they scrambled up peaks VI and VII at about D-. Apart from the llama pass at the head of the hidden valley no sign of human activity was seen anywhere on the mountain: all the peaks appeared to be first ascents. There is a lot of scope for interesting scrambling, with at least six more unclimbed tops. Peaks

II, III and XI all look to be fairly serious undertakings and might involve rock-climbing. Unfortunately the rock is variable in quality, often very loose.

Willpanki

Driving into the eastern Cocapata any mountaineer's eye will be caught by the red tombstone like slabs of Willpanki. A more direct approach to this peak, than the one we took, could be made by driving five kilometres further north along the Rio Peñas road then doubling back along the Rio Chakheri path. However, once we had all our gear at our base by Laguna Chacapata it was easier to take the mountain passes to the north west and camp below Willpanki by the source of the Huallpani. A single tent was occupied by three pairs of climbers in turn.

On July 1, Tim and Javier, climbed the steep but broken south-west ridge of Willpanki's southern top, starting with an approach from the south. There

were considerable amounts of poor rock and sections of the route were graded Severe. Reaching the top via slabs, it was obvious that this was clearly the higher of the two tops despite the opposite being marked on the map. There being no record of any previous ascent and no cairn on the summit, despite building on being the local habit, this was claimed as a first ascent of Willpanki I.



Willpanki II and I seen from Khocha Khasa to the west. The route on II is the ridge forming the right-hand edge. On I the route followed the nearer of the two ridges on the right descending the left hand skyline.

The ascent was only part of their problems though as the descent to the col between the two peaks required abseils despite the lack of suitable anchors.' A jammed rope further complicated matters. This descent of the north ridge and dropping into the couloir at the head of the come to the west, is not recommended. The return to camp was made late in the afternoon and return to basecamp completed after dark.

David and Michael, on July 2, climbed the south-west ridge of Willpanki II, the northern top. This route was about VD, 350m vertical rise and about 500m of climbing took six hours. It started at the lowest point

on the butress (4585m) and followed the rib, broken in places by scree, to an obvious tower (4865m) before traversing a narrow crest to the summit at about 4915m. Loose material in gullies was a hazard, good belays were few and short walls gave the hardest moves, some Severe. Only close to the tower was the climbing directly lit by sunlight so the rock was cold and some ledges snow covered. This is undoubtedly a first climbing ascent of the peak but there is a straightforward walking route from the north and a large, well-built cairn indicates regular ascents. That route was used in descent to reach the steep open couloir leading east and back to the camp. Both climbers were so tired after this climb that they slept straight through the long night - a rarity indeed.

The Willpanki peaks give good views over to the Quimsa Cruz and Illimani. The eastern flank is an obvious area for further climbs of higher grade.



Willpanki II and I as seen from the south with the line of the route on II marked.

Khochha Khasa

The peak under this map label was a gentle one mile walk from our Willpanki camp. It gave good views into a deep-cut valley running into the Rio Pucarani. Steep, shattered crags fell to the south. David, Rory and Michael made this ascent on July 3. David visited the summit three times in search of a dropped compact camera.

Cajonani Khasa

Two small uncaimed tops of Cerro Cajonani Khasa, but south of the map label, were climbed by Rory on 28th June. Each involved a little mild scrambling on loose rock. He suspects that these had been previously climbed by llamas if not by people.

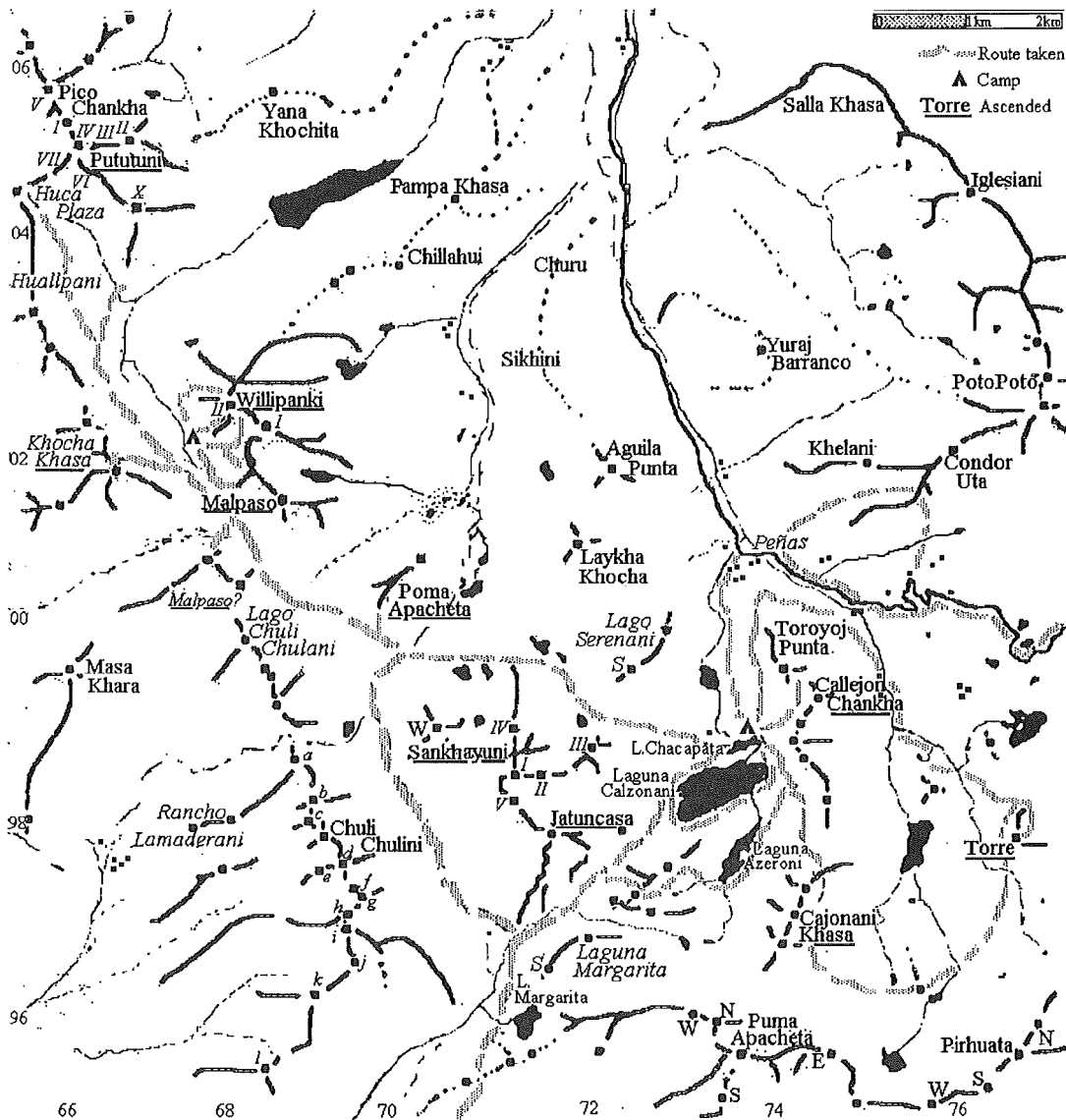
Cerro Torre

A short exposed climb on north-east side protected this distinctive isolated barrel-shaped peak. The summit was caimed.

Cerros del Lago Chuli Chulani

Three unnamed peaks forming a ridge running approximately north-south

were climbed, on 30th June, by Rory and Duncan. The ridge is south of Cerro Willpanki, west of Cerro Poma Apacheta and north of Chuli Chulini. All three peaks present steep scree faces to the east, and very steep buttresses of rotten rock to the west, with caps of loose but continuous rock on their summits. The southern peak of the three is the highest of the range. Each was ascended by struggling up the scree then mild scrambling up the summit rocks. The views, particularly from the highest summit, were extensive and impressive. The peaks appeared to be unclimbed but the extensive scree makes them rather unattractive.



Our routes in the Cocapata area

Return trip

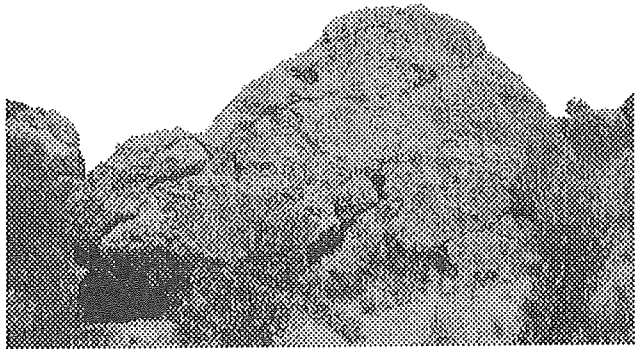
Our return via Cochabamba to La Paz was eventful and protracted when all we wanted was get under the Hostal Naira's hot showers.

As we descended towards the Quillacollo suburb to the north of Cochabamba the steep, rutted and boulder strewn track proved too much for an already damaged leaf spring on one of the vehicles. This had to be nursed along to one of the many garages on the main road. Given the state of most roads and the overloading of trucks repairing and replacing leaf springs is a thriving business in Bolivia. The repair would take a couple of hours.

At this point it seemed logical to *do* something and we already had a half-hearted plan to visit some ruins above the village of Sipe Sipe which was several kilometres away. We shifted all the gear into the damaged vehicle and all the gringo into the good one along with Jose and Rafael as driver. Thankfully Rafael, a calm, tolerant, patient chap is a devout Catholic who crossed himself before each journey.

Sipe Sipe is on a side road maintained by the local authorities and paid for through a toll collected by a one armed man dressed, like most older, rural males, in a dark suit. The main plaza was a hive of leisurely activity and looked an ideal place to stop for a cool beer. Indeed this was suggested but the hardened travellers amongst us insisted that the ruins were only twelve kilometres up the hill side.

Those twelve kilometres were on a track which steadily deteriorated through rough, corrugated, rutted, loose and landslipped to the point where we were lurching from side to side, looking over abrupt drops and



The condor's head rock at the Inca-Rakay ruins, Sipe Sipe

searching for traction on the steep gravel surface. It would have been quicker to walk apart from the effects of the altitude and the scorching heat. It took 1¼ hours to cover the 12km.

We were shaken by the journey, but not stirred by these ruins of a supposed administrative centre overseeing the agricultural valley. Only a bureaucrat would consider placing it so far from the centre of activity. The walls were largely collapsed and little remained. Michael worked hard to remain enthusiastic and eventually tracked down the rock shaped like a condor's head and found behind it the 14m long tunnel mentioned in the guide book as traditionally supposed to exit in Cuzco. We would advise other parties to opt instead for the beer in Sipe Sipe. Weeks later, when we again found ourselves struggling to get a 4WD through a streambed-cum-road in Chile, Rafael was to be heard muttering "Sipe Sipe" accusingly.

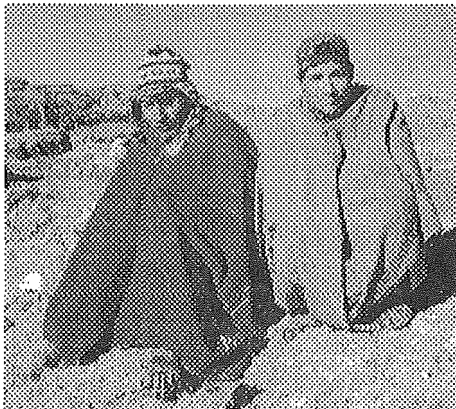
The gravity assisted journey down was quicker and we found the other vehicle, long since repaired, waiting by the main road.

Crossing westwards over the main Cordillera Oriental to the altiplano, now on good paved roads, we arrive at the various toll stations and checkpoints on the way to La Paz. These are bristling with police and the military, much more so than normal.

We gather that there have been outbursts of civil unrest over government plans to switch control of schools and teacher training to the universities in a bid to improve standards. To prevent the mobilisation of demonstrators the military have been called in to enforce a movement restriction order. Traditionally the teachers have supported the general workers union, COB, and, it appears, the favour was being returned. A few times over the following weeks, when in La Paz we were to see well organised mass demonstrations by students bringing city centre traffic to a slow crawl for hours at a time.

On returning to La Paz we were to read the newspaper headline *Slight*

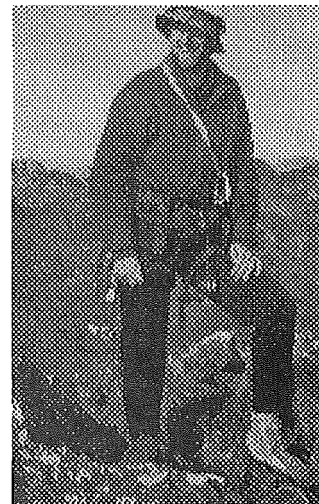
Tremor Shakes Cochabamba (Bolivian Times, July 15, 1999). On our last day of climbing, at about three in the afternoon, we had noticed extensive rockfall on the opposite face and had wondered what the cause was. It must have been that reported earthquake measuring 3.9 on the Richter Scale with its epicentre actually in the Tunari mountain range. Thankfully it appeared to have caused no damage or injury though it must have had a psychological effect on the local people who suffered in the deadly 5.9 strength quake that hit the region on May 22, 1998, killing over a hundred and practically destroying Aquile and Colollo Grande to leave over 20000 homeless. It is possible that what we experienced was merely one of over a thousand aftershocks.



This Cocapata report was compiled by Michael Smith and Rory Newman.

Visitors to base camp

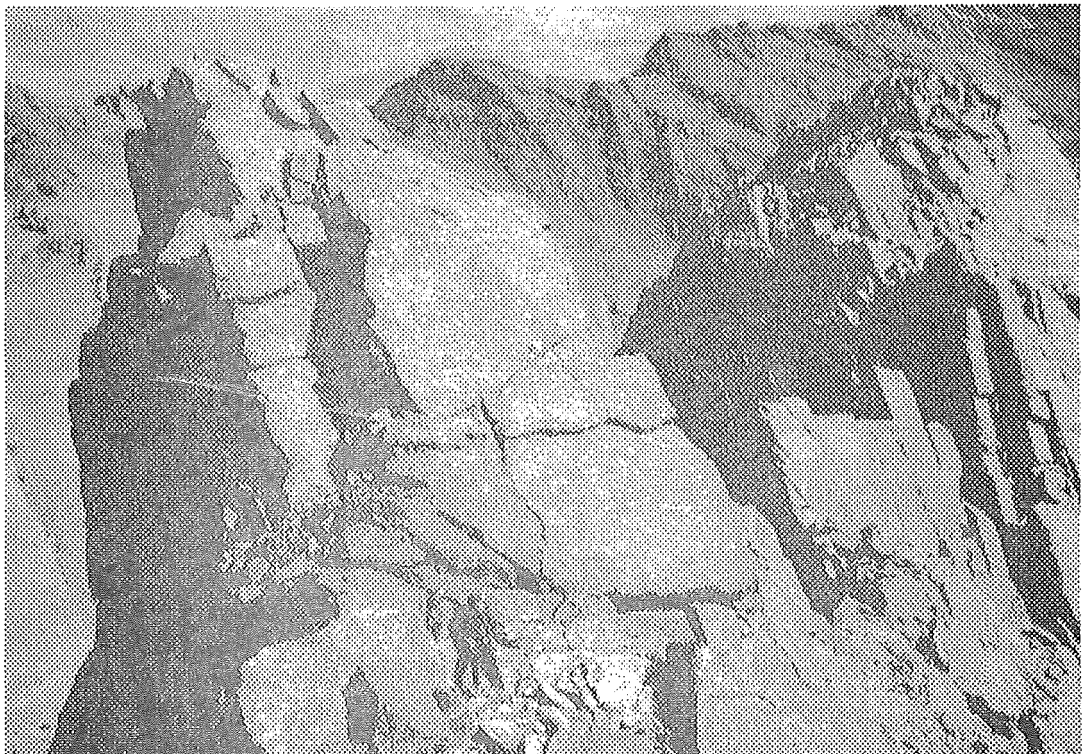
Michael Smith on the top of Jatuncasa





David Hick by the summit cairn of Willpanki II

Michael Smith and Tim Josephy on a false summit of Sankhayuni V, the Condor's Nest



Cordillera Real

The Cordillera Real was chosen as the trekking area for its simplicity of access from La Paz, the attractiveness of its peaks and availability of experienced support. It provided all of these and inspired the hardened, experienced trekkers with the opportunities for further visits.

Besides the trekking visit a few other excursions were made into the Real including a day ascent of Cerro Charquini [Biggar, p94] as part of the acclimatisation and a final-day walk from La Cumbre approaching Cerro Wila Mankilisani (Biggar, p94/S)

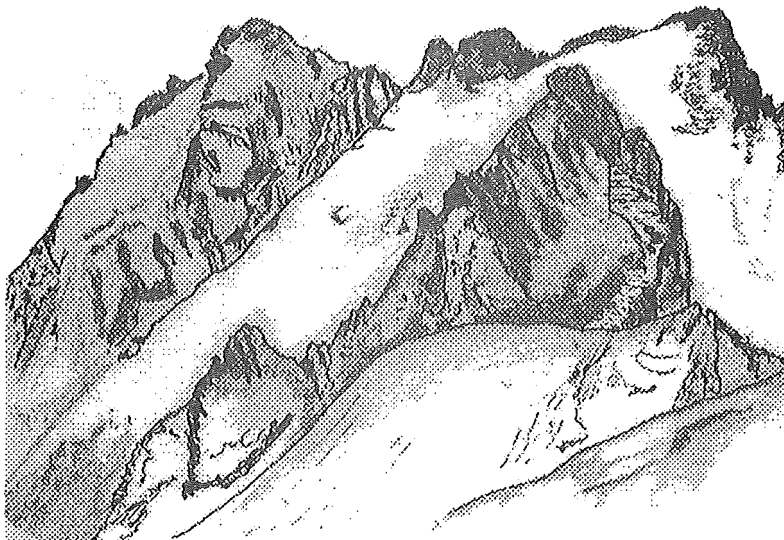
Charquini Tim Josephy

Duncan, Rory and I decided to use the spare day before we set off for the Cocabata to go up and look at Huayna Potosi (6088m), hoping to get as far as base camp. Jose provided us with a vehicle and driver, and we set off early for the Zongo Pass. Once clear of the dismal slums of El Alto, we took rough dirt roads past abandoned copper mines up towards the white cone of Huayna Potosi. The views are stunning: there can be few places

where you can get so close to such a big mountain. The advanced camp (Campo Argentino) could just be seen high on a glistening glacier. Two tiny dots could be seen working up the vast moraines below the glacier and we began to have second thoughts. In our state of acclimatisation, we might spend the whole day grovelling about in the moraines. On the opposite side of the pass we could see another, smaller mountain. Yossi Brain's excellent climbing guide gave Charquini (5400m) a passing mention (p143). Armed with the information that the walk in was along an aqueduct, and with the help of a dotted line on a sketch map, we decided to give it a try. We soon found the aqueduct and set off in fine style. Round the first corner we stopped in astonishment. The aqueduct, about two feet wide and deep, with a twelve inch retaining wall, snaked across a vertical cliff about 1500 feet high. Rejecting the idea of walking in the channel because of the risk of frostbite later from wet feet, we teetered along the rim. Far below, beyond the foot of the cliff the ground dropped steeply to the track, where a "plume of dust marked a bus negotiating the dizzy hairpins of the

Zongo Pass. Occasional overhangs enlivened the proceedings by causing us to stoop, and we tried to ignore the feeling that a slip would probably precipitate us straight through the roof of the bus.

Once past the cliff the going was easy and we soon turned up over moraine towards the glacier.



Charquini and Cerro Wila Mankilisani from the south-east
sketched by Michael Smith

A faint path made life easy, and we stopped at a pretty glacial tarn to put on crampons. A few steep feet took us onto the perfect snow of the glacier. We were all feeling the altitude now as we weaved between well defined crevasses towards a col. Clouds had been building for a time, and now visibility dropped in a light snowstorm. We left the col and continued up mixed ground until suddenly there was no more up. The summit was a pile of blocks on a knife edge ridge, with a terrific drop on the far side. Occasional rents in the cloud allowed views of wild mountainsides and huge crags.

Our elation at having made the summit at over 17500 feet was tempered somewhat by the sight of another pinnacle, about 400 yards away, and apparently higher. Duncan (Mr Gadget), produced a miniature clinometer and proved conclusively that it was, in fact, lower. We set off down in high spirits and made good time until Duncan announced that he had been suffering for some time with headaches and nausea. He was by now feeling pretty bad and descending was not helping very much. Duncan's nausea and lack of balance made the crossing of the aqueduct somewhat exciting. We roped up and put him in the middle, intending to throw ourselves flat in the channel if he lost his balance. He didn't, and we didn't have to, so eventually we reached relative safety where the steepness eased. Here we found a plaque on the rock commemorating an Israeli who had attempted to ride a motorbike across! He had not made it very far.

Relaxing in the minibus on the way back we felt pretty pleased with ourselves. There is no doubt the best days are always the unplanned ones.

Trekking through the Cordillera Real Alan Kay

"Many people who climb high (over 8000ft - 2500m) are fit on arrival but feel ghastly over the next couple of days, with headache, breathlessness, insomnia, fatigue, poor appetite, nausea and dizziness"

This quote from *The Medical Handbook for Climbers* by Peter Steele could hardly have been more apt for some of the YRC party on arrival at La Paz. The city lies, somewhat astonishingly, in a huge bowl-like valley at 3600m, but the airport is on the Altiplano which forms the rim at 4000m, and therefore all medical advice about acclimatisation has to be adjusted to these statistics.

The pilot of our American Airlines jet did his bit to help us as we descended towards the airport from our cruising altitude of 37000ft in the last twenty minutes of the flight. He gradually adjusted the cabin air pressure from 5000ft to 15000ft a case of descending and ascending at the same time.

The trekking party comprised the following:

David Atherton
Derek Bush
Albert Chapman
Ian Crowther
Iain Gilmour
Alan Kay
Alan Linford and
David Smith

Their average age was 64¼ years and ages ranged from 62 to 71 years.

Our trek in the Cordillera Real started on 26th June, with a drive in 4 wheel drive vehicles, scheduled to last eight hours but which in fact took ten hours. From La Paz we drove up on to the altiplano, through initially

dreary scenery, but eventually we turned towards the hills, and lunched on a ridge high above the town of Sorata. A maze of interconnecting ridges, some covered with luscious vegetation, shifting clouds and varying light made this a delightful lunch spot. We descended to Sorata and spent a short while looking round the centre of this beautiful town. It is at a mere 8800ft in height, is therefore warmer than La Paz, and there is a feeling of mild affluence about the place. The town centre and palm tree lined square are similar to some small towns in Spain, a clear reminder of its colonial past. Sorata merits more time, and with hindsight we should have stayed there overnight, and perhaps located its "Ristorante Italiano", reputedly the best (perhaps the only) Italian restaurant in South America.

We had to press on, however, to get to the village of Cocoya where the trek was to start. Leaving Sorata and the valley of the Rio San Cristobel, the road abandoned any attempt at remaining horizontal, and for the next four hours the vehicles were either ascending or descending on ever diminishing tracks at angles between 20 and 30°, with sharp hairpin bends, mist and thin rain thrown in for good measure.

On arrival at Cocoya, the end of the road in every conceivable way, Jose, our agent and guide for the next four days, handed out our tents for erection. Most of us have enough experience at this job, and can put up almost any tent, or so we thought, but the American made "Walrus" tents defeated us all. Imagine being given a bundle of thick knitting needles and a sheet of nylon, and being told to make a tent; throw in the poor fading light and drizzle, and you might be able to visualise how we felt. It took four or

five days of help and instruction by Jose before all of us could both erect and dismantle these wretched tents.

So at last we were able to start our much planned, much discussed traverse of the Cordillera Real. Day 1 was suitable for an introduction to trekking in the Andes - a gradual ascent of the valley behind Cocoya to the Sarani Pass at 4500m, along fairly well graded paths. The valley was brown with winter vegetation, but the view from the pass was of tantalising snow covered peaks in the Chiaroco Massif. Jose pointed out three condors and an eagle high above the valley, the first of regular sightings in this part of the trek.

A few of the "hares" in the party got too far ahead and subsequently wished they hadn't - perhaps a useful lesson in this remote terrain for maintaining adequate group contact.

Derek was still recovering from a stomach upset, and David A was beginning to show signs of mild altitude sickness, so progress was slow on the steep descent from the pass. We arrived at our campsite near Chajolpaya in daylight, but in drizzle thick enough to require waterproofs for the one and only time on trek. It added an urgency to the erection of the oddly shaped "Walruses".

On day two we headed for the Negruni Pass, a climb of 900m. on a rough scrambly sort of path. It was not easy to discern the direction of travel because of the many spurs, hanging valleys and boulder fields around, but gradually we gained height. A short rocky descent brought us to an intermediate col, our lunch spot, with views back towards Chajolpaya, and over to the wild upper part of the valley. After lunch we applied ourselves to the long

arduous grind to the top of the Negruni Pass. The pass was just clear of snow but glass hard ice led immediately from the pass to the attractive peaks of Negruni Chico and Negruni Grande. Fortunately on the descent from the pass we were able to circumvent most, though not all of the ice, but without ice axes at this stage of the trek, some care was needed before we got to ice free rocks.

We had struggled a bit on the final pull to the pass, but we had, of course, not merely climbed 900m, we had ascended from 4000m to 4900m, a respectable feat on the second day of the trek. It had taken us just over four hours.

Descent to the campsite was through a mixture of scree, then a marshy area, finally the path traversed the hillside high above a scree choked lake, quite attractive with the patterns of stones formed by the old inflow and outflow channels. We arrived at our campsite by Negruni lake almost four hours after leaving the Negruni Pass, and in the last few minutes of daylight. It had been a long hard day, especially for our two unwell members, but on the bright side, arriving late with the rearguard, I found that one of the llama drivers had kindly erected the wretched tent for me.

Llamas were our "beasts of burden" for the entire trek, though we had three separate teams of them. At Negruni Lake the first team returned to Cocoyo, and the second team joined us, augmented by a pony and a donkey. The llama drivers for this team were three amiable brothers who helped with tents, carrying kit bags, and were delightful company. There were about twenty llamas in the team, each able to carry a load of 20 kgs. With relatively small heads atop long necks, the llamas have a superior,

haughty appearance, as they literally look down their noses at the smaller, human species. At the same time they seem quite dainty, but they can apparently spit 5m at anything that troubles them, and can also kick sideways - obviously an animal to admire from a distance.

Our campsites and consequently the length of the daily stages were always dictated by availability of water and flat dry land, and we had a choice next day of either a long trek or a shorter one of about four hours, and we decided on the latter. The nearer site was apparently sheltered by a few trees and bushes and was relatively low down, and this last point was important, as a further low camp was needed to help with acclimatisation. We went down valley passing by a few adobe buildings and small farmsteads where potatoes were spread out on the ground for freeze drying. Potatoes seemed to be the only crop, and they were grown in the most unlikely places, with patches more often than not high up on steep sided valleys - presumably the aspect of the slope as well as drainage of the potato patches was important for their growth. We saw people only from some distance, except of one occasion as we rounded the corner of a building and came across two small girls who were playing, the elder girl, perhaps eight or nine years old looking after the younger child who was about three or four years. Both girls were dressed in clean smart dresses with their hair carefully combed, and faces were clean, bright and inquisitive, as well they might be when a gang of strange gringos turns up in the valley. We could only "speak" to them in sign language, but smiles can be very communicative, and the elder girl let us take her photograph; it was eventually too much for her younger

sister, however, and she took flight, hardly surprising, really!

Our campsite lived up to its description and we were able to relax and wash previously unwashed bodies and clothes in the nearby stream. The llama drivers and our kitchen staff did likewise, and clearly appreciated an easy day. As the afternoon progressed cloud drifted into our valley from the Yungas, a reminder that we were not far from the Amazon forest, but at dusk the cloud melted away.

As we prepared to get into our tents and snuggle into our four season sleeping bags, the llama drivers merely covered themselves with a llama skin lay on the ground and slept - yet another of life's lessons in humility.

Just before turning in I looked up at the Milky Way in all its splendour, and the Southern Cross; there was the occasional shooting star, then suddenly a vivid streak of bright orange light flashed across the sky and disappeared from sight behind a high ridge - possibly a piece of space debris burning out in the Earth's atmosphere. The stillness of our mountain valley was complete, not a sound could be heard, and the night was full of peace.

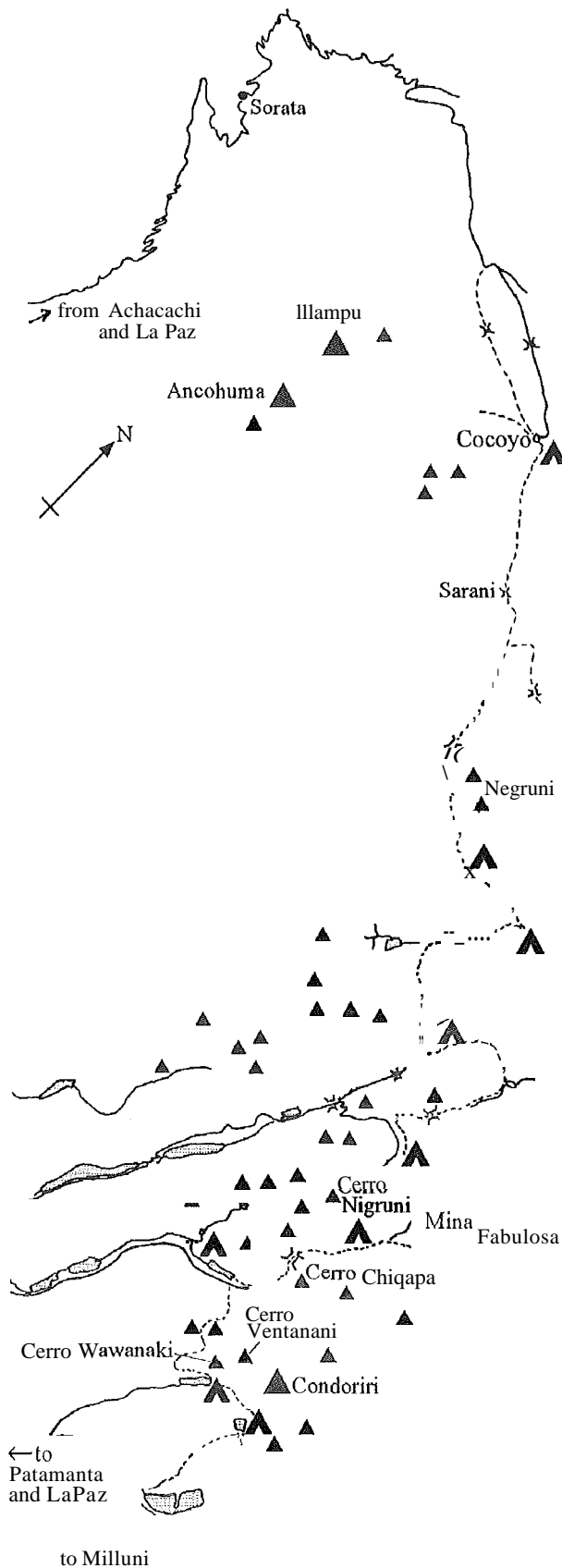
It is, I suppose, a form of poetic justice that a short day is immediately followed by a long day, and that is how it turned out for us. A long slanting rise up the valley side on a dusty slender path brought us into a hanging valley where more potatoes were laid out for freeze drying. There was a trickle of a stream in this valley, and it was dammed in one or two places, with more potatoes placed in the ponds to produce a type of fermented potato, so Jose told us. We gradually wound round the sides of the hanging valley, past incredibly steep cultivation patches (potatoes

again), over the main ridge, and then a long pleasant descending traverse into the next main valley, the valley of the River Amawayá Jawira. This valley forms one of the very few "through routes" in the Cordillera Real, and a rough jeep track comes in from the south west and eventually links up with the road to La Paz. Jose had arranged for a vehicle to meet us at the highest point of the track; our rendezvous was successful, and we received fresh supplies of food, including bananas which were immediately pounced upon.

We also had a change of guide here as Jose had to return to La Paz to go on to our climbing group, and his replacement was Juan Carlos, an amiable young man of 28 years.

Carlos started in the afternoon in a way which was to be repeated occasionally, namely steeply uphill, and fast. We soon slowed him down, however, for the terrain was rough and broken, and we were heading into a high hanging valley the entrance to which was not particularly obvious from below. Some of us had much trouble with this slope and as we gradually gained height a thin playful type of mist began to form. As we neared the lip of the valley we were treated to the most superb aerial display of the trip when five condors flying low, just about ridge height, dipped and darted about on the thermals with obvious enjoyment, and two or three smaller birds attempted to harry them along. The thin mist added a touch of unreality to it all, making one want to pinch oneself to be reminded that we were deep in the Bolivian Andes at 17000 feet.

The sighting did wonders for morale, as did Carlos' comment that our campsite was 400m distant, not 400m of ascent away.



The campsite was dramatic - a narrow valley floor with just enough flat space for our tents, a tantalising ridge on three sides of us, and beyond the

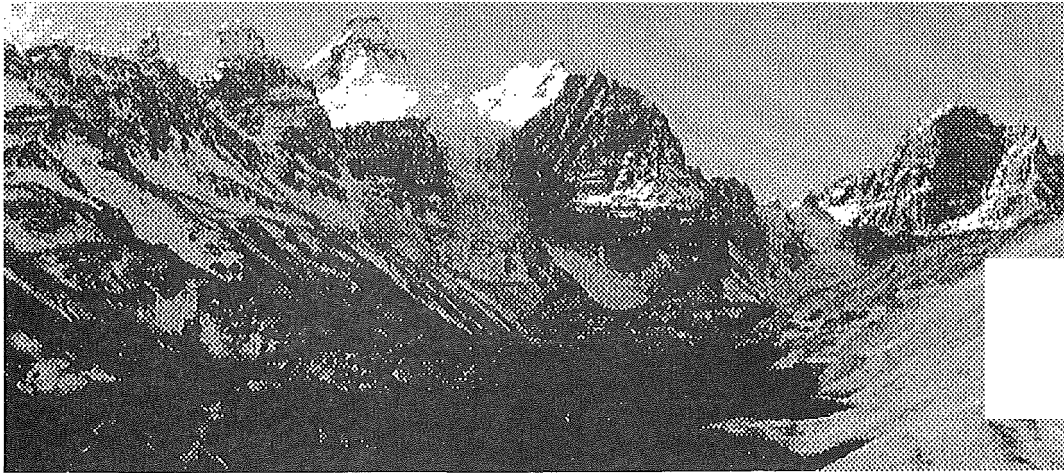
boulders of the lip, a view of distant ridges merging into one another in the late afternoon light. Far distant were the thicker clouds of the Amazon jungle. In this narrow valley the sunlight was lost early, and it soon became dark and cold.

Our onward route was ever upwards to the top of our hanging valley, followed by a rough scrambly descent to a large lake, the Qinasini Quta. This was one of those spots where a sensible person just stops and silently takes in all the surrounding countryside. Blue sky, dramatic mountains, shimmering lake, good company; is there anywhere a more delightful combination? On the lake were two Andean geese, a worthwhile addition to our bird list.

Southwards we went, past other lakes, over a 5100m pass, then a long descent on scree beside crumbling cliffs to a valley bottom campsite at the junction of three sizeable valleys. Ridges of jet black rock on three sides looked like enlarged versions of the Black Cuillin or An Teallach, and are almost certainly unclimbed.

We were close to a track leading to the Mina Fabulosa and we followed this track next day until we came in sight of the mine some 300m below us - just the usual heap of waste material to see and nothing else, though crucially there was a vehicle track leading from the mine southwards through the Cordillera to La Paz, some four hours drive away.

This had to be a short day, and at 1.30pm we camped in the valley of the Chiqapa Jawira, about a mile from the mine. Above us and to the south was the Cerro Chiqapa pass, at 5100m, and known to be choked with snow and ice on its southern side; it had been decided that whilst we rested



Condoriri group with high steep peak being Cabeza del Condor, 5648m

next day, our three llama drivers would climb to the pass and hack out a route for the llamas to descend.

David A had developed a bad cold and throat infection, and hadn't been going well for a few days, and furthermore he hadn't been able to acclimatise properly during the trip. Faced as we were with a succession of longer days over high ice covered passes, he decided that he should return to La Paz to recover whilst there was an opportunity to do so along the mine track. Carlos therefore climbed high on the ridge to call La Paz on his mobile telephone, and requested a vehicle. Thus at 5pm David left us on what turned out to be a six hour journey to La Paz, and whilst this was undoubtedly the right decision for him, it was nevertheless sad for our group to lose one member.

Whilst we waited for the vehicle to arrive at the mine, some of us wandered round the adjacent ridges and comes, and in a high come at about 4700m beneath Cerro Nigruni, I suddenly found myself too close for comfort to three or four cows with a frisky, defensive young bull in attendance (surely a record height for bull), and I beat a hasty retreat.

The llamas, pony and donkey beat us to the top of Cerro Chiqapa pass, and

had descended and were clear of the snow and ice before we topped the pass. Llamas mayor may not appreciate beauty in their surroundings, but we definitely did, and some of us looked longingly at the summit of Cerro Chiqapa, 300m or so above the pass. There was no time to climb it, for steep ice, cornices and loose rock would have meant a detour of two or three hours. We followed the pack animals down the head wall of the valley, and although the route was straightforward, some care was needed on the ice, and we lunched beside a small, part frozen lake just clear of the ice. Here one of us (he'd better remain anonymous) broke through the frozen crust at the lake edge and was lucky to struggle out wet only to thigh height.

A rough, and in places very wet descent into the teeth of a strong head wind brought us to camp at the southern end of lake Alka Quta, the biggest lake we saw on trek. We had a change of llama team here, and the old team, returning home in two days, had firstly to reverse yesterday's route and re-ascend the 5100m ice bound pass - anyone of us who previously thought little or nothing of humble llamas, ponies and donkeys would by now have changed his mind.

Our route went eastwards across more roughly angled valley slopes to a pass just north of Cerro Wawanaki, at 5258m. Carlos disappeared for a while, but we followed the new llama team down into a big rocky valley beneath the pass, in terrain that looked like the roughest of the Rhinogs of North Wales, but on a gigantic scale. Woe betide anyone who got lost here! When Carlos reappeared we learned that he'd climbed higher to get a strong enough signal to telephone his girlfriend in La Paz!

In traversing round to lake Juri Quta, our destination for the day, we crossed wide scree slopes, made up entirely of small stones arranged into lines by the process of frost heaving. So uniform were the patterns of the lines that they looked as though a gigantic comb had been used to form them.

Juri Quta was one of the most beautiful campsites of the trip, a fairly long and narrow lake with the ice covered Cerro Janchallani forming an impressive backdrop. Overnight it snowed, adding even more beauty to what was already a "chocolate box picture". The snow delayed our departure next morning, when we faced yet another steep and rough ascent eastwards towards Cerro Kuntui, then a long descent northwards over scree to Chiyara Quta, the site of the Condoriri base camp.

So far our campsites had been very remote, devoid of any other trekkers, so it was now with a minor culture shock that we had to share our campsite with three other groups, all engaged in climbing on Condoriri or neighbouring peaks. We spent three days here, surrounded by peaks averaging 5500m, many of them within the ability of a number of YRC

members - it was a bit like the better parts of the European Alps, but a lot higher, and with no crowds. Some of us climbed a peak to the west which acquired the name "Austria", but is I believe more correctly named Cerro Ventanani - 5408m; others took the opportunity to recover from a bout of "Delhi belly" which had affected everyone except Iain G and Alan L. On day three these two took Carlos onto the glacier between the camp and Condoriri and practised snow and ice techniques.

The trek finished with a four hour walkout to Laguna Tuni, a large reservoir, where the land cruisers were waiting. Three hours later we were in La Paz, enjoying the luxury of hot water and trying to remove the two week accumulation of grime and grease.



Currency conversion

Transactions could be made in either the national currency, New Peruvian Sols, Bolivianos (B\$) or Chilean Pesos or, alternatively, in US Dollars (US\$). One US\$ was at this time equivalent to approximately £0.62p, 5.7S01s, 5.6B\$ or 880Pesos.



Holding a llamas ears at Condoriri camp to keep it still while it is loaded

The Trials of a Pensioner on Trek Derek Bush

I'd got it all planned: trekking in the Andes with a maximum pass height of no more than 16500ft. Have a couple of days rest in La Paz and then go out and climb a straight-forward snow peak even if it is over 21500ft. No problem! Done it all before (well almost) on two previous trips to Nepal. What's more the food this trip promises to be more to our liking. "Dream on Bushy-boy" as Albert would say. The reality proved somewhat different.

I should have been forewarned. Our current President had said so. He had been there in 1988. Trekking in Nepal is thirty to forty years old whereas in Bolivia it is in its relative infancy. Almost always in Nepal except on its high mountain passes the tracks are adequate but in Bolivia there are stretches of steep hillside to negotiate where paths seemed non-existent or of little use. Failure to lift your ski pole or your feet over the high tussocky grass and you were in deep trouble. It was akin to walking in Bowland only twice as steep and 14000ft higher. KE, the Keswick based adventure travel company, described a similar trek as moderate to demanding, hardly a description the average YRC member would view with trepidation.

It was a blow to one's pride that almost every day I was "tail end Charlie". We did not have the safety net, as in Nepal, of having a Sherpa at the front of the party and one bringing up the rear. You were on your own. Carlos, our leader for the second part of the trek was less than half the age of even our "youngest" member. He was too young and innocent to realise what the ageing process does to a person! He was a thoroughly nice guy

but he went like a bomb throughout, partly I suspect because he wasn't too familiar with the route and he had to scout well ahead to make sure he got it right. Once or twice he was saved by timely whistles and shouts from either Arles our cook or one of the llama drivers. One afternoon he did get it wrong and this was after a particularly tiring morning, when we had crossed over a high pass. We had to retrace our steps, a very tiring process for an already tired trekker.

One morning towards the end of the trek I had to stop for a call of nature and was well behind. When I eventually caught up I was put at the front immediately behind Carlos. There had been a light fall of snow in the night and I set my own pace encouraged by the President who was immediately behind. It was a measure of my lethargy that although I was gasping for air there was a general buzz of conversation as if all my other companions were out for a Sunday morning stroll on the riverbank. What a turnoff

All sorts of excuses could be made for my condition. I'd had a bout of sickness and diarrhoea immediately prior to the trek but I got over this. Nearly all the other members had at some stage on the trek the same problem. However although I had no appetite, I should have forced myself to eat more because the food was excellent and there was no excuse for not partaking. It was no coincidence that those who ate well went well; the two fittest trekkers Alan Linford and Iain Gilmour ate everything put in front of them. They also kept free of tummy upsets which may have been due to them using their own drinking utensils throughout the trek, although one can never generalise about these things.



So what other reasons caused me to struggle so often? Had my general physical condition deteriorated so much since the Rolwaling trek two years ago? I must admit I had not been too active in the Spring and early Summer. Glen Etive was a washout, well almost. I hadn't been to Arran but I'd done some jogging and had coped reasonably well at the high level camp week-end at Scoat Tarn where we had a fairly hard day on the Saturday. When we got to Bolivia we did all the right things regarding acclimatisation. We went to Peru and visited the Inca sites at Cuzco and Machu Picchu. Their situations are not as high as the Cordillera Real but always between 8000ft and 10000ft. La Paz airport (El Alto) is about 13300ft and the city where we were staying some what lower at 11800. However when we look at the trek itself we started at the hamlet of Cocoya just over 13000ft and we were at or above this height for the whole of the thirteen days often switchbacking up to 16000ft plus, and down again in a day.

We spent the last few days of the trek at Laguna Chiar Khota (Black Lake) height 15500ft which is the base camp for the Condoriri group of mountains. A magnificent situation. The next day most of the party ascended Pico Austria a relatively easy rock peak at just over 16400ft. I didn't make it, much to my disappointment and the day was only saved by Alan who persuaded Arles our excellent cook to make us a most delicious bacon and onion omelette for lunch. The following day I decided to try the peak on my own but just told the rest of the party I was going for a wander. As all YRC members will know there is something magical about walking on big mountains in solitude. The route goes up fairly steeply to a high plateau which is then traversed to a scree slope. An ascent by a reasonable track brings you to a col perhaps a few hundred feet before the summit. The only company I had were a group of horses grazing high on the plateau plus of course the ubiquitous llamas. I was almost at the top of the scree slope when to my surprise a young Bolivian moving silently and swiftly caught me up. We exchanged greetings although neither of us knew a word of each others language. He must have been concerned about my lack of upward progress as he stopped behind to make sure I chose the correct one of several alternative paths. At the col he was waiting for me and what little food I had, I shared with him, for which he was grateful. We took a photograph of each other with my camera, using the Cabeza de Condor as a backdrop. (His snap turned out better than mine - no comment needed.) He then enquired by sign language where I was going and I indicated down. I wish I had told him the summit of Pico Austria as I am sure he would have

accompanied me. For some strange reason I thought my friends below would be worried about me. It showed how unwell I was! My Bolivian friend then continued over the col and I thought that was the last I would see of him. However he soon caught and passed me and he must have reached the base camp at least an hour before I arrived. I had the thought that there must be dozens of potential Olympic athletes waiting to be discovered in these parts of the high Andes, given of course the correct diet and training routines!

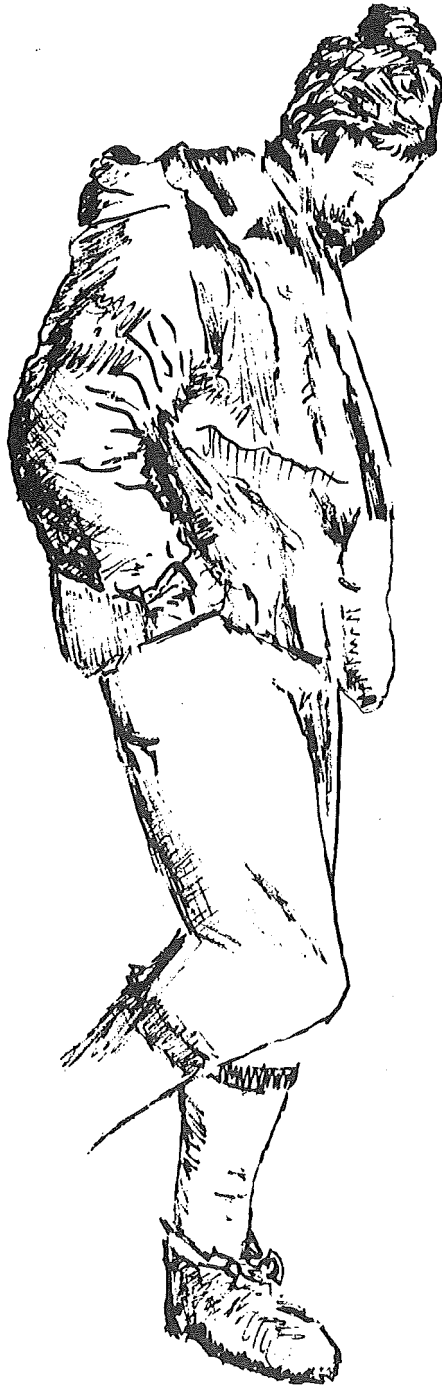
The interesting thing which occurred to me over the trek was that all the Bolivians we met seem to be able to eat European food without any problems. From what I observed both Arles and Rebecca our charming assistant cook plus an assortment of llama drivers and porters all ate the food cooked for us. This was not the case in Nepal where even Motup our

Western educated Indian leader seemed to prefer the more Nepalese version of the food served to us.

However I digress. The more I write the more it appears an apology for being a first class wimp! The reader may think that I did not enjoy the trek. They would be completely wrong. My own personal view was that it was the best I have ever been on. Most of us wished we had been thirty years younger when a lot of the snow peaks we walked under or around would have been climbed. Without hesitation I would say to the younger climbing element in the Club if you want an excellent Alpine type holiday without the crowds, with assured good weather and stable snow conditions get yourself to Bolivia. The base camp at Condoriri would be a good place to start. All you want is three to four weeks holiday, and you could do it much cheaper than our somewhat exotic geriatric excursion.



Michael Smith and Duncan Mackay try the best eatery in Challapata, Bolivia



5000 metres

*Two quick breaths a step,
I'm struggling again,
Nose is blocked,
Dry throat in pain,
I'm out of steam,
My pack opened,
Contents given to the team
We move on again,
Ever upwards as in a bad dream,
Simple track, moderate gradient,
The going hard.*

*My head is canted forward,
Eyes focused on the track,
Unaware of terrain,
Because of arched back,
I don't feel well,
Can't let the team down,
The going is hell.*

*The gradient recedes,
And the col is reached,
We sample the day,
Below, the snow slope looks amenable,
Camp is a couple of hours away.*

David Atherton

Cordillera Occidental Sajama, 6542m

A Novice on Sajama

Iain Gilmour

If you asked a trekker of average YRC age if he would climb to over 21000 feet, the answer would usually be "No", but if you take advantage of YRC teamwork, all sorts of things become possible.

The Bolivian trip splendidly organised by Michael Smith and Alan Kay included a last week joint effort by climbers and trekkers to climb Sajama, Bolivia's highest peak. Both the climbers and trekkers had been active for two weeks at altitudes above the Altiplano (14000ft), and this had given a reasonable degree of altitude acclimatisation. We were glad to be accustomed to the height, and free from AMS symptoms.

After two weeks trekking, often crossing passes at 16000ft, it required some determination to leave our comfortable La Paz hotel, and set out again for Sajama, some 4 hours drive to the south of La Paz, in the desert near the Chilean border. We were again guided by Jose Camarlinghi of Andean Summits, and we motored steadily in a heavily loaded Toyota minibus and an offroad 4x4 car. Our first sight of Sajama was a tiny white peak on the horizon, which grew in size to a massive white volcanic cone as we came closer. We drove into the Sajama National Park, and registered at the reception office before camping at the hot springs a mile or so from Sajama village.

Our camp was at the end of a dirt track, near some volcanic hot springs, and conditions were semi-desert. Some of the keener members of the



David Hick & Duncan Mackay with Sajama behind. The route was near the left skyline.

party went for a swim in the hot water, although swimming at 14000ft is quite tiring. The tough wiry altiplano grass grew in discrete clumps with bare volcanic dust between them. Herds of alpaca and llama wandered throughout the area, tended by local folk from the few remote adobe dwellings. Sajama peak lay to the east of us, and looking north we could see an unclimbed snowy peak with a massive summit tower of unstable rock. To the west of us, two gigantic snow covered volcanoes attracted admiring glances, but the probable ten hour trek to a possible base camp tempered the enthusiasm of the climbers. To the south of us lay a range of snowy volcanoes, and in the crystal clear air one could see occasional puffs' of volcanic dust emerging from one of them.

Moving up to Base Camp, we walked through the thin forest of small

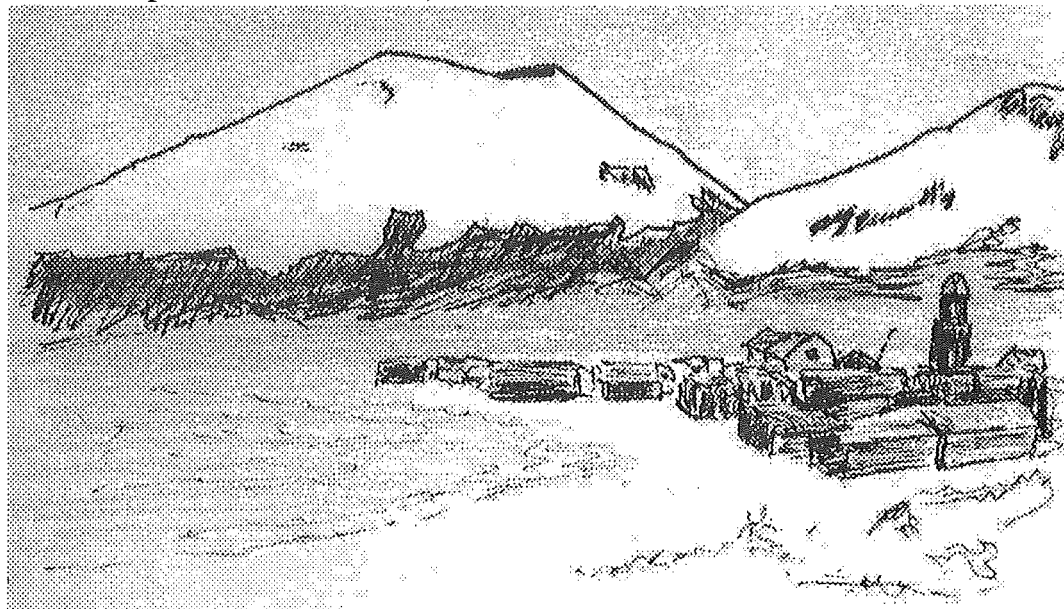
shrubby queflua trees, the highest forest on earth, which covers the lower slopes of the Sajama foothills. Base Camp was in a wide flat basin at 4600m, and our muleteers delivered the bags and tents in plenty of time to enjoy the last of the afternoon sunlight. The plan was to move up to High Camp the next day, with each climber carrying his own gear, but the tents and food being carried by porters. The effects of gippy tummy and chest infection had reduced our numbers to Michael Smith, David Hick, Duncan Mackay, Rory Newman, Too Josephy, Alan Linford, Iain Gilmour, and our guide, José Camarlinghi.

My first benefit from teamwork was the excellent tuition given by Alan Linford to Juan Carlos and me on the Condoriri glacier. A bit of ice climbing and abseiling had greatly improved my confidence on ice. My second bit of teamwork was simple but crucial, when Rory saw me struggling with a gigantic rucksack and muttering about dropping out, he advised me to offload sleeping bag to the porters and to get started. The climb to High Camp crossed scree, then some . . . of hard snow, onto

a rocky ridge. This ridge ascended past rock towers and eventually we came to a small flat area above a massive rock tower, which stands like a tooth on the volcanic cone of the mountain. This is probably the only suitable camp spot, since all other parts appear to slope at the same general angle of some 35 to 40 degrees.

When we arrived at High Camp, 5600m, we were delighted to find that the porters had erected three of our four tents, and were busy digging a snow platform big enough for the remaining tent. We had a splendid little camp with tents on three levels. Duncan constructed a snow garden seat, where Tim actually fell asleep in the afternoon sun! We looked out onto an amazing view of mountainside and distant space. The key piece of teamwork was by our excellent guide José Camarlinghi who successfully arranged strategy, transport, mules, and porters. José took every problem in his stride and was courteous and patient with all of us.

Our valiant cook, Arles, huddled under a tarpaulin and plied us with afternoon tea, followed by supper of



The Payachatas, Parinacota (left) and Pomerata lie several hours walk from Sajama village MS

sausages and mash. Shortly after our arrival, some porters arrived with tents for a Karakoram Experience party. There was barely enough room for their three tents which were placed above us with minimum shelter.

The night was cold, probably -14°C. as we lay fully dressed in our sleeping bags. What would tomorrow bring? Would I be able to cope with the next day? Turning to simpler matters, I put my leather boots into my sleeping bag at one in the morning, and dozed until camp stirred. We rose at 2:00 am and packed our sacks with the bare minimum of gear. Arles produced breakfast of tea and muesli, and we prepared to depart. At this point my Petzl headtorch decided to fail. It took some encouragement from the team before I could get it to work with a wide pale beam

It was a relief to get going. All doubts and concerns were put to one side as we plodded upwards.

A feature of high snow slopes in the tropical latitude and dry air of Bolivia, is the formation of penitentes. These are blades of ice, in long ridges, or individual spear shapes, varying from six inches to three feet high, and some may even look like kneeling figures - penitentes. The ice may be wafer thin at the tip, and several inches thick at the base, and these penitentes are spaced at intervals of from six inches



Penitentes on a Sajama ridge

to a foot apart. We crossed extensive fields of these devilish creations, trying to tread in between them, or trying to stand on top of them in our crampons. We then made a long ascent of a forty five-degree couloir, which led to a rocky ridge. At an altitude approaching 0000m. Michael had to return, due to a stomach infection which had prevented him from eating properly for days. David accompanied Michael back first to High Camp and then, after a sleep, to Base Camp.

It had always been my intention to climb with Alan Linford, but altitude has peculiar effects on the mind. My ascent became a self-contained struggle, not against the mountain that kindly tolerated our presence, but against myself. As the air becomes thinner, you have to force yourself to keep going, and every fifteen yards becomes a challenge. Daylight began to break at 6:15 am, as we were clearing the last band of small penitentes. The warmth of the rising sun was dissipated by a strong blustery wind, estimated at between 35 and 40 knots. Climbing at altitude, it is often helpful to develop a breathing rhythm such as "Step, breath, breath, step, etc." but when faced with a strong gusty wind such measured progress is not suitable. A more feasible method was "Step, step,

ice axe in, step, step, ice axe in, step, step, ice axe in, and pause for forty seconds of frantic extra breathing" Lurching around like a drunken man, I must have presented a sorry spectacle.

As the route ground slowly upwards on the symmetrical ice cone,



Duncan Mackay on the summit of Sajama

the voice of José from my left shouted something about 6200 metres. I did not know what that meant, but took it as encouragement and plodded on. Another figure appeared going downhill, and ROY gave words of encouragement.

My climbing harness began to slip down over shiny trousers, impeding my progress. I think I was aware of someone behind me, like a St Christopher, keeping an eye on my progress. As I became hobbled by the harness, St. Christopher stepped forward to fix it for me and underneath his goggles and balaclava I could see a distinct likeness to the whiskered face of Tim Josephy.

Shortly after this the angle of slope began to ease, and we emerged onto a flat summit. If I was jubilant, this was tempered by relief, and after a few moments, José, Tim, and I started off downhill. The temperature on the summit was probably around -20°C . and the strong wind made conditions very severe. Duncan Mackay summited, but suffered a temporary frozen eyeball in the extreme wind-chill conditions, while Tim suffered frostbite on the tip of his nose.

Looking down the mountain in daylight for the first time, I was astonished at the length of snowy ridge beneath me. Some minute dots of colour in the distance, which I mistook for climbers, were in fact our tents at High Camp. There was no sign of the other party, who had abandoned their ascent. We used a safety rope in a couple of places on the descent, and returned to High Camp. Arles plied us with cups of tea as we packed tents and rucksacks. Our splendid porters, who had ascended from Sajama village and base camp on succeeding days, returned and collected our tents. Thinking about these porters who had twice ascended from Sajama village on succeeding days, I felt more like a tourist than a mountaineer! We returned to Base Camp that same day and agreed with José that climbing Sajama is gruelling enough, without planning other ascents the next day.

Well, thanks to José, Alan, Rory, Tim, and Duncan, I now have some super memories to look back on. Michael Smith and Alan Kay can be satisfied that their plans for Sajama led to a successful outcome.



Returning to the Sajama high camp at the col

Preparing to leave Sajama Village



Sajama Snippets

The drive out from La Paz to Sajama is now on good surfaced roads for almost all the trip. Turning from the La Paz to Oruro road and heading west towards Arica we stopped at the first checkpoint and neighbouring shops where a village party was in progress. The standard brass band was enthusiastically belting out a shrill melody with heavy bass drum. The notes slurring as the alcohol took its toll. We were engaged in intense but

incomprehensible discussion by one of the older members of the accompanying villagers and pressed to join in the drinking. After a glass there was a move to process to the next cluster of buildings so we could make our excuses and break away.

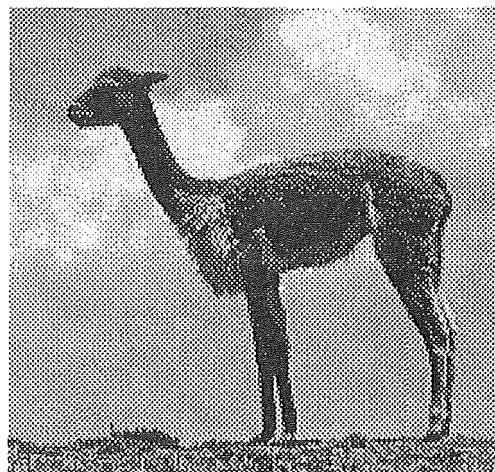
Well on the way to Sajama a deep valley was crossed lined on either side by innumerable rock spires and crags. Alan Kay likened it to "the Bridgestones gone mad". Nearby, set

back from the road, is the Bolivian army mountaineering school.

Arriving at Sajama village the first building seen is the National Park office. This has regular radio contact with La Paz, houses a small museum and has large scale maps displayed on the wall. The ranger there will arrange for the local family whose turn it is on the rota to provide any pack animals or porters required.

The thermal springs are about an hours walk away from the village and are signposted, as are all the features, from the main track north which used to be the road to La Paz. A building by the pool marks the spot in this empty, undulating pampa.

A geyser field is also about an hours walk west of the village. The bubbling springs, hot pools and gurgling noises are interesting rather than dramatic.



Vicuna on a minor ridge above basecamp

Volcan Ollagile, 5868m

Michael Smith

Not having previously climbed an active volcano I expected a rather dull trudge up even slopes and a quick scree run down. The ascent proved much more interesting than that.

The ascent of Ollagile from the north-west is published [Biggar, 1996, p109] but our route approached this isolated volcano from the south-east. Eating lunch on volcanic wavelike rock formations many miles away from the peak, we viewed the facing flank through binoculars. We can make out the steaming fumarole and a likely looking track zigzagging across the face and decide to investigate. Branching left from the track to Avaroa we cross a wide river wash area, take a well graded track steeply up to a cluster of houses then on to a right-hand switchback at 5300m where the road splits into three tracks on the bend. The leftmost heads horizontally

across a snowfield to the Chilean border, the right most to the currently worked mine area and the central one to a previously worked area. As this is the only place for miles along the track where it would be possible to turn the vehicle we decide to stop here and camp. At the other side of the snowfield, somewhat higher was steam emanating from the fumarole. Hydrogen sulphide from this pervaded the air, gave us headaches and clung to our clothes for days.

Three workers came up about four times each 24 hours to fill their lorry and descend. At their 10pm visit they suggest we move our camp from the disused central track round the corner towards the snowfield to be a little further from their turning area for safety. We do this before they return. Via Javier they warned us about mines recently laid along the border by Chilean soldiers.

Our ascent, on 24 July, starts as a steady walk up old, snow covered

mmmg tracks to a ridge (right) of gleaming yellow sulphur crystals running roughly south-south-east.

The route was decorated with pinnacles, eyes and arches and had fresher air. This peters out around 5500m and we cross scree to another ridge and traverse a short way to the summit.

On that traverse a chunk of rock is dislodged and falls to hit Duncan's rucksack.

Sitting at the summit around noon we wonder if a more easterly top, further round the crater, is higher. We check

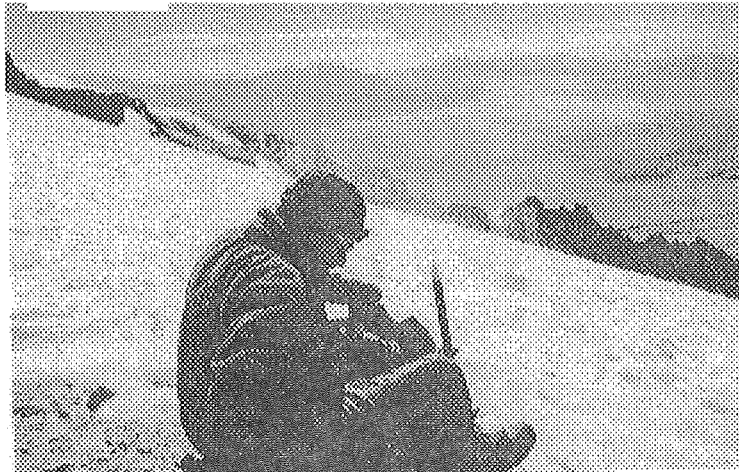


it out but it is not but it did have a windbreak and spent flare cases.

Javier circles anti-clockwise round the crater while Duncan and I go widdershins (clockwise in this hemisphere) past the summit and on a descending traverse to the large fumarole near more old tracks.

The fumarole stank of hydrogen sulphide. Unpleasant from our camp about a mile away it was revolting at close quarters. The local miners had talked of it giving them headaches and stomach upsets. I consoled myself with a recollection of being told that it was noxious only once the concentration was so high that you could no longer smell it.

The column of steam, several metres across at the surface, billowed out and rose hundreds of metres into the air. In the calmer, colder air



Duncan on Ollagüe's summit with a view across the salar and Michael on the subsidiary top with the summit behind



of the night and moonlit this was very impressive. The water content is not surface water but from perhaps 100km down, taken there over thousands of years after being trapped in the subduction zone under the Pacific.

The sulphur thickly coated everything for tens of metres around and left a yellow rime on edges on rocks near the rising vapours.

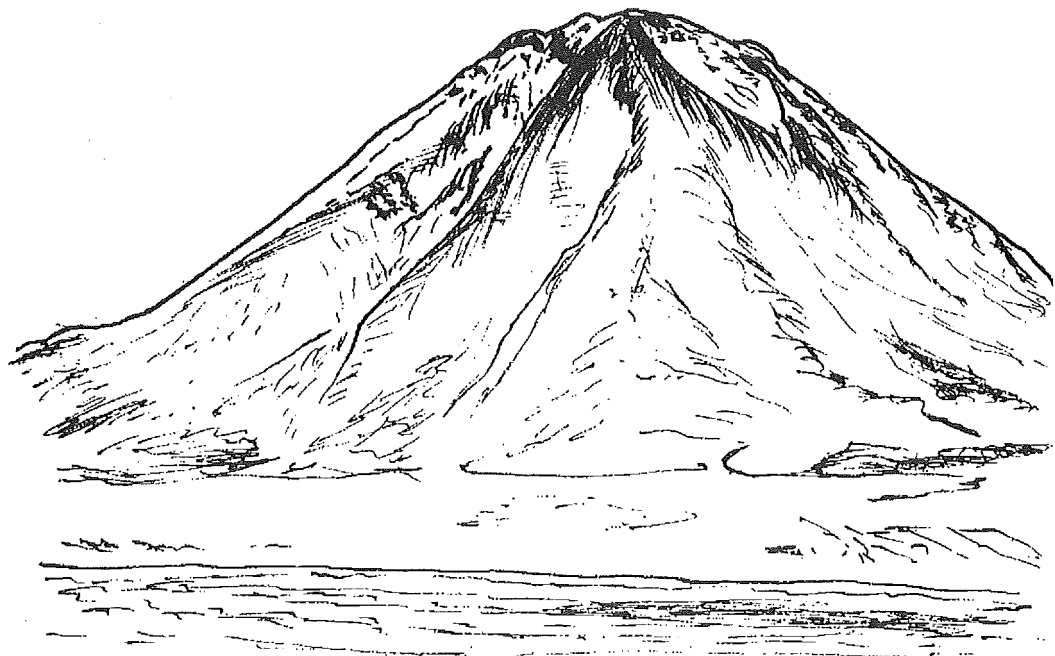
I could withstand being a hundred metres or so away looking down into the fumarole but soon had a headache. After a retreat to the col joining the main cone with the subsidiary cone carrying the fumarole, we had to pick our return route. The alternatives were a haul back over the summit and descent in clean air or a short direct route across the scree and snows of the corrie which carried the warning of landmines.

On closer questioning it appeared that these soldiers arrived on motorbikes. Given this, the hard snow covering the

area and our strong determination to allow Javier to descend first, there was no real contest. Javier, though, did suggest that the longer route might be safer. Outvoted he set off down a scree which started promisingly but soon became too steep and coarse for comfortable running. It was a relief to reach the hard neve that allowed the use of crampon to within twenty metres of the tents.

Breaking camp was made easier by strong winds having already collapsed our tent. In fact it was only prompt action by the driver, Rafael, who was waiting for us at base, that had prevented our gear being scattered across the mountainside.

We descend to pitch camp, after dark, by a deserted quarry or mining depot, lost on the salar. Driving in the dark we had kept too close to the security of the single railwayline and missed the fork off to San Juan de Rosario. With the light of morning we are soon back on route.



Volcan Licancabur behind Laguna Verde

Michael Smith

Birds of Bolivia

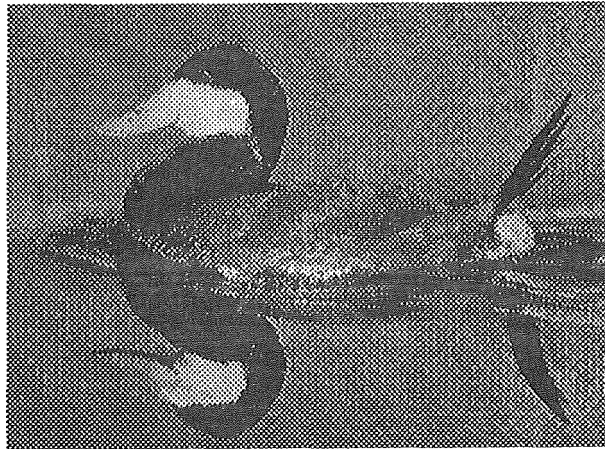
Duncan Mackay

Going from England to any other country always brings with it the challenge of identifying new species. Going to South America is unlike anywhere else in the world because the huge number of species found there. On top of this, almost none of them except the ubiquitous Starlings and House Sparrows occur in Europe.

So with nothing familiar and many families of birds which only occur in South America, Bolivia is quite an ornithological challenge.

Until recently, it was also difficult to get a guidebook to the birds like the field guides we enjoy in Britain. However a new guide to The Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica (De La Pena and Rumboll, 1998), goes some of the way to solving this problem. Though, with more than 1600 species of birds in the region, it is impossible to cover all of them in a single volume. Using this field guide, we were always faced with the possibility that what we were looking at was not included in the book.

The expedition visited a number of different habitats during the six weeks that it was out in the field. These ranged from high Andean peaks and valleys, Altiplano regions of Bolivia, Lake Titicaca, the city parks and gardens of La Paz and Cuzco, the cloud forests of Peru, the Atacama desert, the Pacific shore of Chile and the lakes and salt pans of southern Bolivia. These habitats are in many respects very demanding of the bird species that live there. The temperature extremes and the arid nature of the climate make this a region for birds that are specialists in

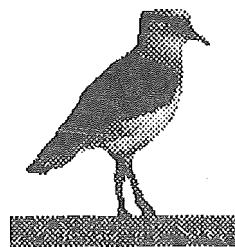


Pan'a, a blue-billed duck on Lake Titicaca

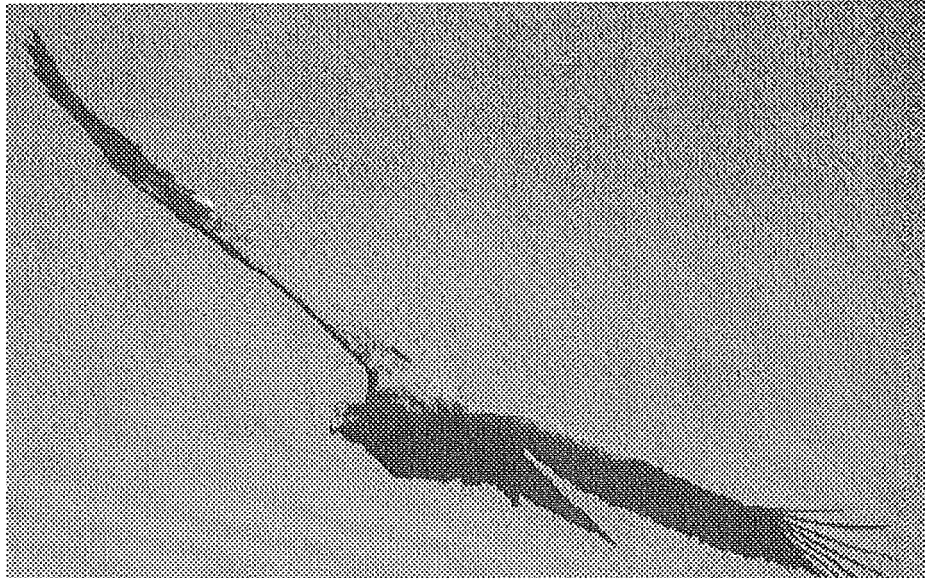
survival. They have to be tough to eke out a living in the Andes.

When we arrived in La Paz, the first birds we saw were flying around the parks and gardens. The Chiguano Thrush and the ubiquitous Rufous Collared Sparrow were seen. House Sparrows and Starlings are also present in large numbers and the Feral Pigeons are almost as abundant and well fed as those in London.

Our journey to Peru across the altiplano went through a variety of habitats, in particular puna and wetland. Eared Doves and Black-Winged Ground Doves were to be seen particularly in agricultural areas, Andean Lapwings were also quite abundant. Pearl Kites, American Kestrel and White Tailed Hawks were also seen. On the rivers were Andean Geese and Southern Pochards. In areas of wetland, we saw Puna Ibis,



Snowy Egrets, Andean Lapwing (left) and Andean Coots. Those sailing on Lake Titicaca saw Pan'a or Ruddy Duck and, slowly flapping in flight, Huacana or Cotili as they are called locally in Aymaran, probably the Night Heron.



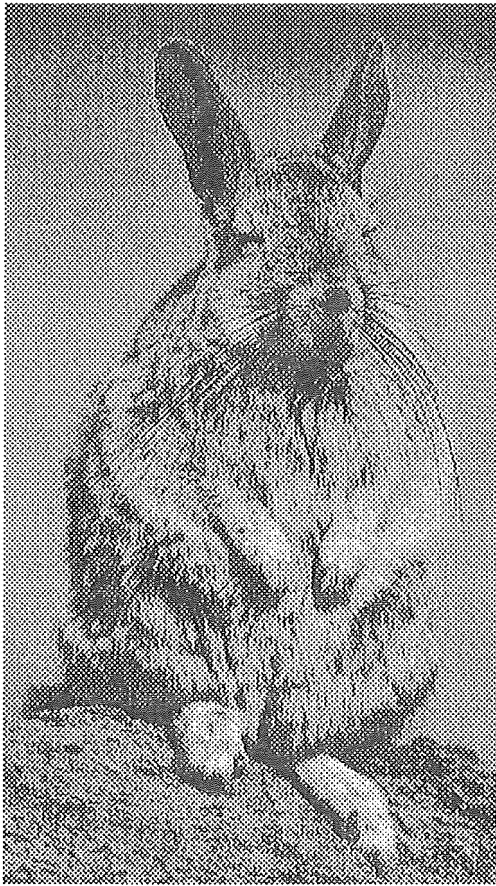
The cloud forest around Machu Picchu contained so many species, and was outside the region covered by the guidebook, that it was not possible to be accurate about identification. The fabulous colours and wonderful songs made a magical spectacle that warrants a whole expedition all to itself. To walk the Inca Trail with a pair of binoculars would be the ideal way to study these birds.

North of Cochabamba we were climbing in the Cocabata area with mountains of between 4500m and 5000m. The valley floors were primarily low grasses, and shrubs typical of puna vegetation. The mountains were free from snow during the winter season when we were visiting. Winter being the time of the year when least precipitation occurs. The local farming was principally potato growing and grazing llama and sheep. The large herds provided a good food supply for the Condors and Mountain Caracaras. We found that most days we could count on seeing at least four Condors. They often flew quite close and on mountain ridges very close fly-bys, sometimes just a few metres away (above), normally

happened at moments when the camera was buried at the bottom of the rucksack.

The bird guide mentions that the young of the Mountain Caracara are coloured brown. However the local people seemed to think that the brown Caracaras were actually females. We were unable to decide which was correct. However some very mature looking Brown Caracaras were present around base camp, and we noticed that on several occasions the birds mobbing Condors were these brown coloured Caracaras. Perhaps the adults don't bother to act aggressively towards their larger cousins.

Our base camp was positioned beside small lakes at the foot of Sankhayuni. Andean Geese, Silver Grebes and Puna Teal were all present on the lakes. Shrike Tyrants, White-winged Cinclodes, Plumbeous Sierra Finches and an unidentified species of Ovenbird were all frequent visitors. A delightful flock of Black Siskins; beautiful black birds with bright yellow wing patches lived among the scrub and rocks close to the shore of our base-camp tarn.



Amongst the mammals Viscacha (above) were abundant in the rocks right up to the tops of the peaks. We also had a large species of vole that lived under the ground sheet of the mess tent in base camp... until one day somebody stepped on it. Another death, that of a horse near base camp was notable in that the Condors and Caracaras only took 48 hours to completely strip the carcass of meat. This large assembly of birds of prey arrived within a very short time of the death and then departed just as quickly, immature Caracaras being left to clean up the few remaining scraps, Some birds were so full of food that they were unable to flyaway when we approached.

Our next climb was made :in the Sajama National Park in the west of Bolivia on the border with Chile. Some members of the expedition were lucky enough to see Lesser Rhea close to the village of Sajama. Amongst the

buildings of the village colourful Sierra Finches and Rufous Collared Sparrows were abundant. Puna Ibis, Andean Geese and Flamingos were found on the wetland areas. Plumbous Sierra finches were also widespread occurring at quite high altitude. Of the Mammals, seventeen puma are reported to be active in the area, although the only one we managed to see was kept on a shelf in the wardens' office. Wild cameloids, Vicuña, are found in the park. We saw small herds of them close to Sajama Base Camp. Alpaca are the most common grazing animal in the park.

The continuing journey made by two members of the expedition went across the border into Chile. It is remarkable how the numbers of particularly Vicuñas but also some other species increased immediately we crossed the border. This is likely to be influenced by the strong protection that the Chilean government affords the wildlife both in and outside the national parks. Vicuña are protected and very abundant. The wild fowl on the lakes in the area is also very rich. Unfortunately, we passed through rather quickly on a strict time schedule.

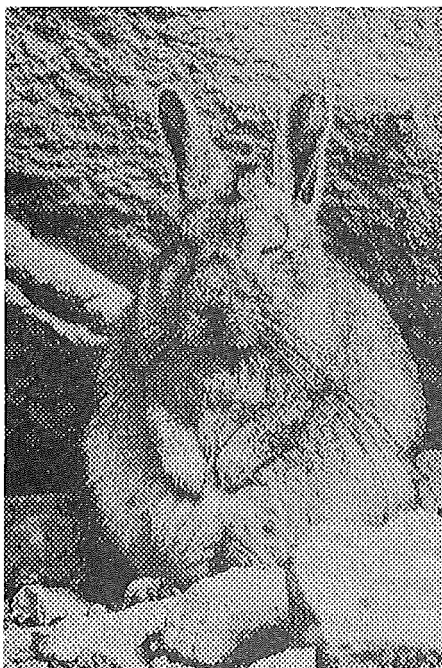
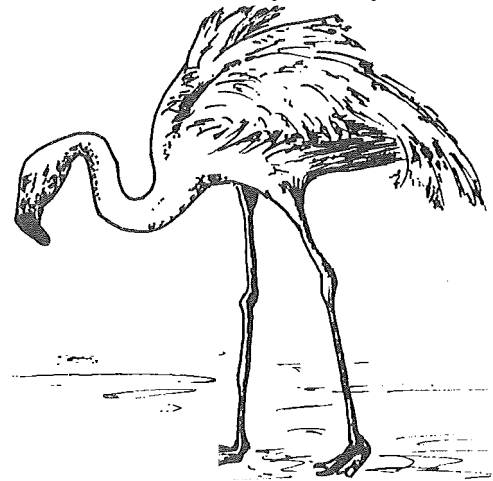
The Pacific seaboard saw a radical change in the bird life. Peruvian Pelicans, Olivaceous Cormorants, Brown and Peruvian Boobies were found in abundance. Some of the island colonies that we saw just offshore south of Iquique were spectacular. A few Oystercatchers were seen among the rocks, notable in that they were completely black. Amongst the gulls, we identified Brown Hooded Gulls and Kelp Gulls. The large number of Turkey Vultures which frequented the beaches was

quite a surprise. They also turned up right in the middle of Iquique roosting in the palm trees outside the town hall, lots of them!

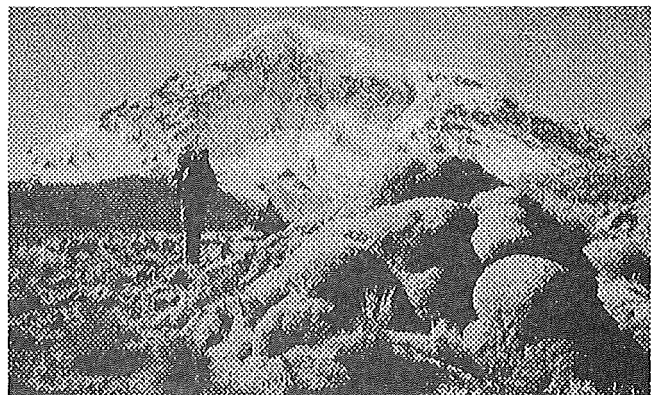
The next stage of the journey saw us returning across the Atacama Desert into Bolivia. The desert itself was devoid of almost all forms of life, although Black Vultures were found in several places. Plumbeous and Red-Backed Sierra Finches, Rufous Collared Sparrows were found throughout the area and in oases we found Speckled Teal, Puna Ibis and Plumbeous Rail. On the Laguna Verde Andean Avocets, Puna Plover and Andean Gulls were present. Whilst Laguna Colarada was the best lake for flamingos and all three species were seen: Chilean, Andean, and James. It was quite remarkable that the flamingos remain standing in the water during the night and become frozen in as the lake freezes over. As

the morning sunshine melts the surface ice, flamingos are liberated one by one to fly off.

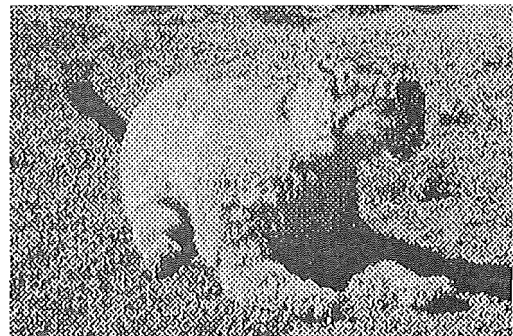
This region of South America is full of birds. The new bird guide made the job of identification easier and hopefully the above notes will give subsequent expeditions a head start on us. They can start to look in detail at some of the more difficult families like the Ovenbirds and Tyrant Flycatchers.



Related to chinchillas, viscachas have a long fluffy tail. Where they are hunted they are seen only as a blur as they tear across scree or crags to the safety of their holes between boulders.



Llaretas is a relative of parsley which is collected and used as fuel. Thousands of individual plants form these bright green solid domes seen here with Sajama and Jose.



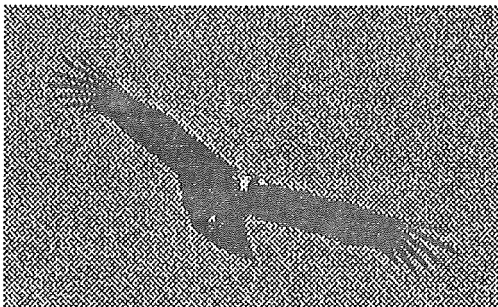
The puma!



Birding on the Trek

Alan Linford

He must hear the question from every group "Jose, when are we likely to see Condors?" His answer was that it would be the second week so mind and eye were conditioned to look for the other birds we expected to see. As it happened our first sightings were of three Mountain Caracara black and white scroungers with red faces and yellow legs, looking thoroughly miserable as they sat by the roadside in thick mist and drizzle, unperturbed by our presence.



During the first day of trekking, Derek's birthday incidentally, and we saw two Condors, their metre long body, three metre wing span and white ermine collar unmistakable despite being high up. We enjoyed a sighting every day until the sixth day when we observe five Condors in one group, harassed by Caracara; a sight our trekking guide Carlos had not seen before. We saw no more for six days.

You may have seen video of Condors but to see one float over the ridge just as we started to descend Pico Austria (Condoriti) gives one an entirely different appreciation of this bird. The terrain there was a beautiful valley with three lakes and it had another surprise in store - a pair of Andean Geese. These are big birds the male three and a half kilos, the female less, coloured mainly white with blue-black primaries. Not only did we see them on the water, which is most unusual, they also carried out a bonding ritual,



Duncan's photos of Caracara on this page and Condors on previous page

We soon made friends with the Sierra Finches charming little birds. The male grey, female speckled, they would wait patiently for us to lift our tents and feed on the bugs beneath - the ground there being moist and frost free. Not so the aggressive Ground (Andean) Tyrant, a flycatcher with an evil red eye, they would dash in and pick the early risers. Bugs never bothered us, but there must have been plenty around for the Tyrants and South Martins,

Finch-sized, grey with white throats, white underparts and red rump, the Common Divca Finch were not unlike our Snow Bunting but seen much higher than expected.

Among the smaller birds were Siskin, South Lapwing and Andean RuffNecked Sparrow.

Snipe drew our attention, the Common (Jack) Snipe, always seen in

pairs, IS similar to ours apart from the yellow rump, The Seed Snipe, however, looks more like a Grouse in shape, short stubby beak and grey/white underparts.

We had a few sightings of Duck and Plover, but many more of Moorhen, even over Sooum, and Common Gallhole on wet lands. The most

stunning of our sightings, though, was a White Necked Heron, standing stock still in a mirrored surfaced pool, the reflection so brilliant and perfect, Most lakes are now stocked with trout, something we not only saw but ate.

Flocks of Spotted Tinamou, with features similar to our Ptarmigan, were spotted and many more birds, too many to relate and all at incredible heights. We never did find out where they roosted.



Excursions:

Various excursions were made while we were getting used to operating at altitude and after the main part of the expedition.

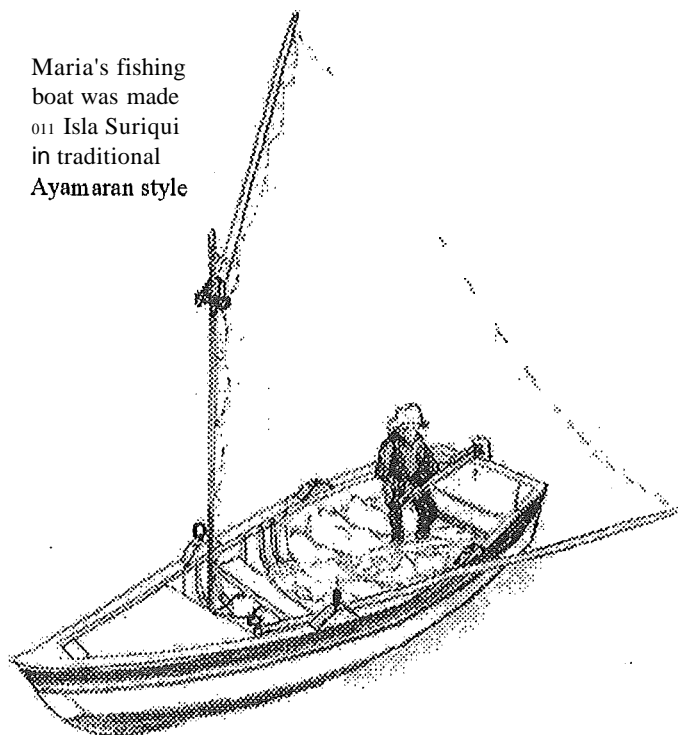
Sailing on Titicaca

Michael Smith

Once you have been to Machu Picchu, it appears, you are reluctant to return lest on the second seeing it does not match that perfect memory from the first time. Well that is one theory to explain why Ian Crowther, and I left the others to their dash into Peru to see the famous ruins before anyone had a chance to erect the proposed cable car. We were joined, thankfully, by David Hick, who was heading for Peru later, and together we decided to relax somewhere near Lake Titicaca, only an hour's drive from La Paz.

We had considered lounging in Sorata below the Illampu-Ancochuma massif but our guide, Jose, vetoed that as too low for adequate acclimatisation for later climbing. Considering it a bit of a long-shot I asked Jose if he could hire a boat for sailing on the Lake. A few weeks before leaving the UK we were resigned to visiting a few ruins and taking a commercial trip to Isla del Sol as Jose's enquiries had drawn a blank. Owners at the sailing club were reluctant to allow precious craft out of their control. Then I mentioned that we were not wanting anything flash and would be happy to have a local sailor along as a guide or guard. Almost by return of e-mail, Jose had arranged for four days sailing in the

Maria's fishing boat was made on Isla Suriqui in traditional Ayamaran style



fishing boat of Mario Quespe Mendosa of Isla del Sol for just \$150. Suddenly we were all looking forward to the acclimatisation period. This was greeted with scepticism in my family as they are all too aware of what a lousy sailor I am - seasick in the slightest swell.

The reality lived up to expectation though there was probably as much rowing as sailing since the wind dropped for long periods during the middle of the day. Mario's boat was about six metres long and typical of the local fishing boats. The mast was set well forward and extended by a long gaff that, together with a boom which extended well aft of the stem, allowed a vast area of sail to be rigged. The sail gaped untidily at the foot of the mast as the fore end of the boom was not resting against the mast but was held in a loop of cord hanging from the gunwale. When changing tack the boom had to be manhandled to the opposite gunwale and relocated.



We joined Mario at Puerto Perez. He had intended to use the normal night breeze to get him from Isla del Sol to Puerto Perez, a distance it took us three days to sail. Unfortunately there was no wind either during that day or the night so he had to row the whole way. He did not, however, mention this until we got to know him well.

We stowed all the food, camping gear and me in the bottom of the boat and rowed out of the weedy shallows. Within a couple of hours we have found a breeze and tack gently through the cold water and colder thin air, to Suriqui. Boat building is going on everywhere and, straining our Spanish, we quiz the workers about their techniques. While they do build some totora reed boats mostly they work with wood brought up from the Yungas (the Amazonian side of the Cordillera Real) and all boats are painted in the same combination of white, red, green and black.

We camp by the shore close to the northern tip of the island and are visited by a family of pan'a, a blue-billed duck. After ten hours in a sleeping bag we are keen to make an early start so are up at first light, 6.30, breakfasted and on board by 8am to catch the early breeze.

This fails before we reach the Tiquina narrows and we take it in turns to row with David taking the lion's share.

Mario is quietly amused and slightly embarrassed that we insist on doing, as a holiday, what he does for work every day.

We gain some insight into Bolivia bureaucracy on arriving at the San Pedro side of the straight and Mario goes to the Harbourmaster's office. He is not there but might be at the other side and he is needed to stamp a copy of a thirty Boliviano permit allowing movement of the boat, with its cargo of gringos, from the lesser part of the lake, Huyñamarca, to the greater part, Chucuito. We row over to San Pablo and land beside the ferry barges waiting for the buses which arrive in diminishing numbers now the roads round the lake have improved. Stamped we row on north, pick up a breeze for a while then row again until 5.30. Mid afternoon I moved to sit on the bow and read. This was a mistake and I'm queasy by four so I retreat to the bottom.

Abruptly woken by Mario at 5.30 we are off just after six in the fresh wind making two knots at first rising to five or six. There is much nautical talk but I'm laid in the bottom reading when a wave slops over the side to give me a wetting. I sit up and peer over the gunwale. White tipped waves are almost a metre high while our freeboard is just half a metre. I am given a plastic sheet to put over me to keep me quiet.

Arriving at Mario's home port on Isla del Sol about 1.30, we head up the Inca Stairway and fill our water bottle at the Fuente del Inca. This is a gushing fountain which supposedly also has an outlet in Cuzco. We gain the spinal crest of the island, slowly on account of the altitude, and follow it north to knock off our first 4000m top. At 4032m it is a rocky hillock a couple of metres above a field. Much

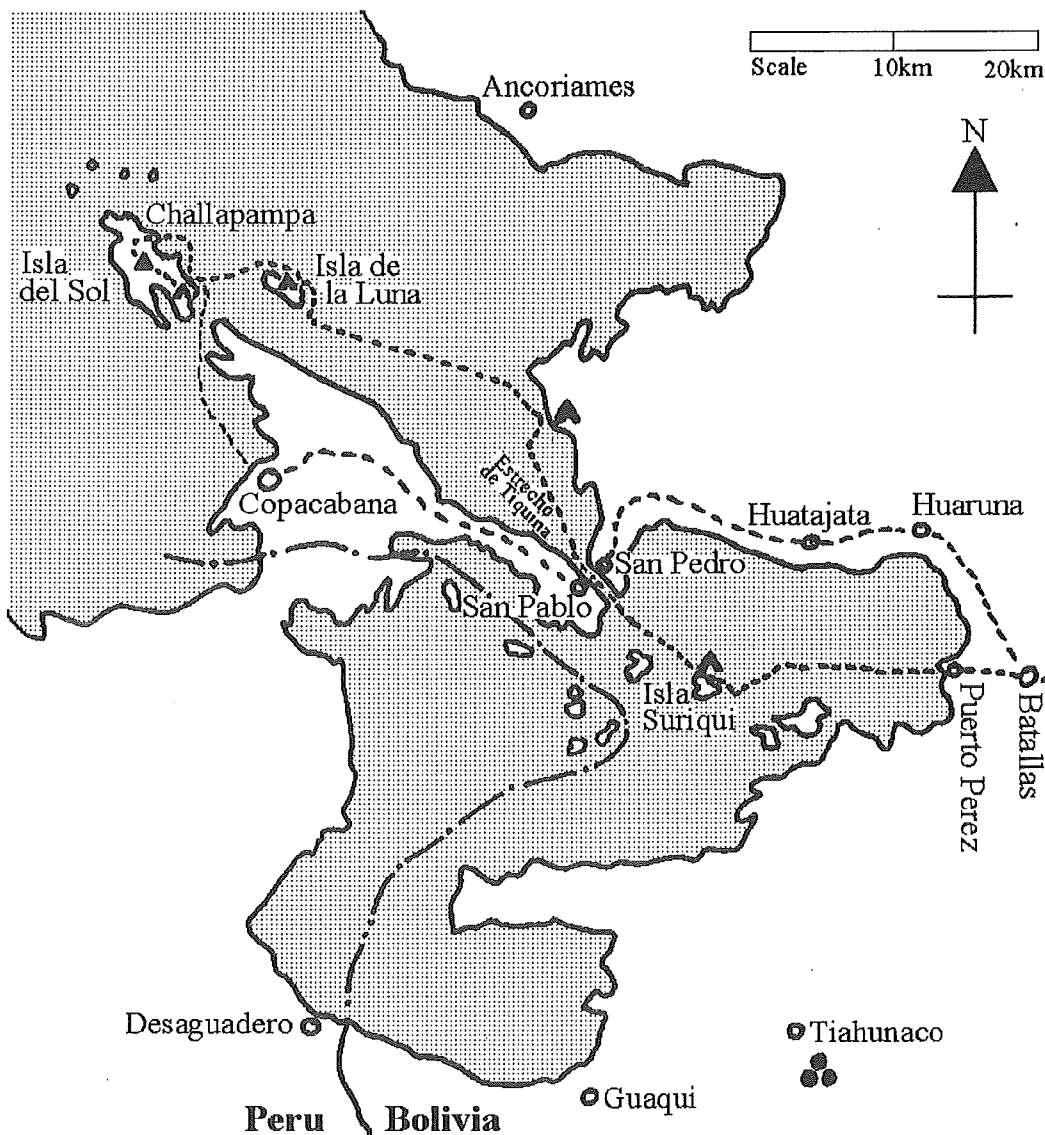
of the island is used to grow vegetables. Before us is spread out the whole length of the Cordillera Real and, way off to the left, the tips of the southern peaks of the Apolobamba. We are convinced that one is Cololo, the scene of our previous visit.

Mistakenly we descend into a bay too far to the north and have a dispiriting reascent to the ridge before the drop down steep slabs to Cha'llapampa and the museum (5 Bolivianos) of local Tiwanacu, Inca and colonial artefacts. Rather than walk back along the coastal trail we find a man with a motorboat willing to take us to back to the Inca stairway for 70 Bolivianos. This we readily accept rather than walk and only realise later how

ridiculously expensive it was.

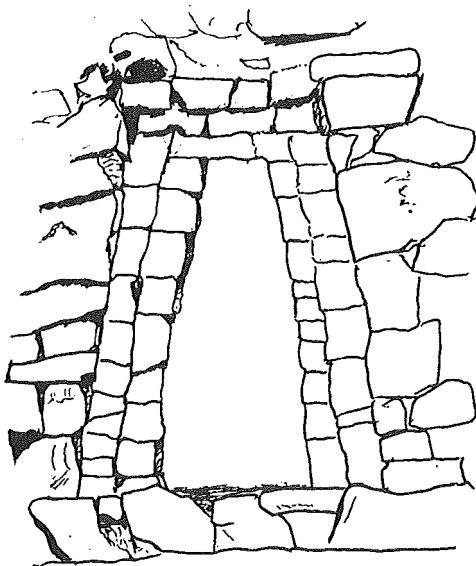
As darkness draws in we ask people the way to Mario's house - they all know the way - through a maze of paths between fields and houses. He has four rooms, a burro and sheep. In his specially swept courtyard flowers are growing. All four of us head off to a circular adobe restaurant which is opened for us and Titicaca trout (truchi) and salad are prepared for us as we drink beer looking across at snow covered Ancohumá.

We walk in the dark the few miles to the Pilko Kaina ruins, bring our gear up from the boat and camp by the Virgin's Palace - deserted. After watching the sun rise over Illampu,

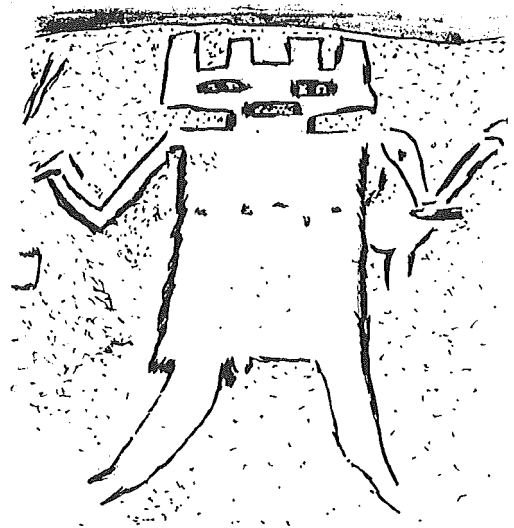


through the tent door, we pack our gear down to the jetty. Before a motor boat arrives to take us to Copacabana we have time to help beach a large boat and raise it on props.

The usual way back to La Paz would be through Peru but one of our party had not got his passport so we must go via Tiquina. There will be a bus in a few hours but we find a taxi in the plaza which, once we have feigned indifference by dozing on the wall, drops his price to half, \$35. On bald tyres we slip and slide to Tiquina where the driver decides he has had enough, leaves the taxi and takes us onto a ferry boat bluffing his way through the police passport checkpoint. We are packed onto a minibus, which already has a few locals on it, and instructed not to pay any more. It leaves immediately and we are given special treatment frequently being asked if we want to stop for photographs. We are dropped off at the terminus, El Cimetario, and take a radio taxi to reach the Hostal Naira about 4pm for a welcome shower.



Inca doorway on the Isla del Sol M. Smith



Petroglyphs and Geoglyphs

Michael Smith

Driving south along Chile's section of the Pan American Highway between Arica and Iquique can be tedious at times. The road has long straight sections through largely unchanging rocky desert. So when the opportunity for a short diversion presented itself we took it.

We stopped the four-wheel drive vehicle at Huara, a small town with many buildings resembling closed and dilapidated stores with boardwalks seen on western ghost town :film sets. Entering one open general store we stand between stacked furniture and bundles of alfalfa while our driver asks about petrol. Supplies appear in five litre open plastic canisters to be poured into the tank through an inverted two litre plastic soft-drink bottle with the bottom removed.

The next stop was for a coffee at a cafe which had a stuffed armadillo with a red ribbon tied around its head, by the till. Bolivia has a day when dogs and llamas are be-ribboned, Could this be the Chilean equivalent?

Refuelled and refreshed we headed east about ten' miles to the single hill rising from the flat desert, CelTO

Unita. There, high on the even southern slope, was an 86 metre tall geoglyph, a line-drawing of a person. It is supposed to be the largest archaeological representation of a human figure in the world. It consists of dark stones arranged on the lighter soil.

This is not the only such work in the area but it is the largest and most complicated.

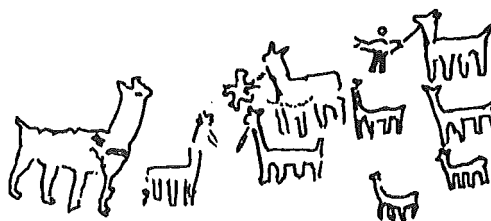
Later, having crossed back over the Cordillera Occidental onto the altiplano we ask at Poopo town hall for directions to some rock carvings we have heard of. Rosa, the wife of an official is volunteered to act as our guide and attempting to make a good impression, interprets every feature of the local landscape for us.

After crossing the river while heading towards the co-operative mine, we go a kilometre along a new road up the narrow valley by the river. Stopping at a small adobe hut by a mine entrance we walk down a path which then contours upstream, crosses a small tributary then, almost at river level, a scree. Several metres up this scree are the remains of the petroglyphs. Most have been damaged recently by the mining company while creating the roadway.

Rhea, puma, humans and cameloids are represented. The shapes have been made by hammering with a



pointed tool. There are also geometric shapes, collections of dots and two shapes we could not identify, which resemble aircraft.



Approaching Oruro from the previous site we broke off and headed east a dozen or so kilometres to Calacala, a fenced in cliff site. About two metres above the base of the overhanging cliff were representations in white, black

and red of cameloids, two of them are being held by humans. We were informed that these were probably of Wankarani origin placing them between 800BC and 400AD.



Calama to El Tatio, Chile

One of the big mistakes of the trip was the choice of the northern route from Calama to El Tatio to see the geysers. On the guidebook map [Biggar, p104] it looked logical as it was practically one side of a triangle rather than the two it would have taken via San Pedro de Atacama which we intended to visit later anyway. Also, on local maps, that one side had various braids and the northern one appeared to go closer to the mountains.

All started well with a picnic lunch in the shaded quiet plaza at Chiu Chiu by the whitewashed adobe church and Duncan finding new birds to photograph. Then Javier offered a pan of avocado and tuna leftovers to a couple of local girls but in the bustle of departure we forgot to recover the pan. That was half our kitchen equipment gone.



After Chiu Chiu (doesn't Bolivia have some wonderful sounding place names) the paved road ends and it is an unsurfaced track. Thoughtfully at the larger junctions in this scrubby desert with no habitations, the authorities have erected whitewashed adobe-covered brick-wall centred signs on which are painted a rough map of nearby villages and the tracks between them. We should have descended into Tonconce and taken the newer track to the south of El Tatio but to the north were attractive crags and the maps showed a track which appeared to avoid descending onto the canyon containing Tonconce.

As far as the crags the road was fine and we saw viscacha, vicuna and tall cactus. A right at a T junction and we were skirting below the crags with views down over a ribbed rocky plain cut by a deep canyon. By now the road was closely following an ancient waterpipe over rough terrain, so closely that we deduced that it was a maintenance road for the now apparently disused pipe. Our speed fell to a few kilometres an hour as the track became steeper, narrower, looser, boulder strewn and cut by streams. Rafael gave heavily loaded glances but coped masterfully using four-wheel-drive to link together ribbons of gravel and vegetation into a route across a fast flowing stream. We cleared the bigger boulders on narrow sections and watched the hours pass - this would be almost impossible in the dark.

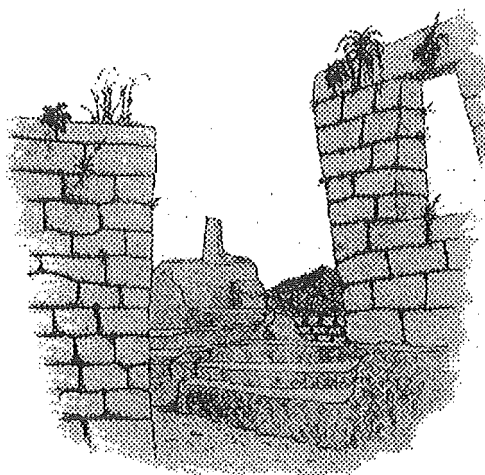
Arriving at Linzor at six we find that it is a one bicycle, one man, one house, two dog place with the function of looking after the reservoir.

The man is amazed that we have arrived this way and promises us that the road out to El Tatio is better and only 25km long. Surely it didn't look that far on the map. With half an hour before sunset and only a short tropical twilight we make haste east. Then we discover why it is 25km the road twists round contouring and heading west at times. There were a few more boulders to move but we arrive, in the dark, after an hour. We knew we had arrived when crossing a stream there was steaming water bubbling out of the ground by the side of the vehicle. We crept forward a little onto more solid ground, find a track and follow it until stopped by a column of steam passing through our headlight beam and rising hundreds of metres in the moonlight. It was time to camp as we need a pre-dawn start.

The view at first light could have been from a Star Wars set. In the coldest temperatures of the day (-14°C) columns of steam rose higher than ever and the small stream of scalding water produced a curtain of steam over 200m long and several metres high. We wandered around the few kilometres of geysers finding different types. A metre tall column had steam spluttering from the top. Pools had springs that gushed up almost a metre then settled back to a rolling flow. Sulphurous pools were rimmed with red, brown, yellow and white streaks. Rusting away at the northern end was the remains of a steam engine where someone had attempted to tap this seemingly infinite supply of energy.

All too soon, dozens of vehicles arrived from San Pedro de Atacama bringing trippers and breakfast tables. Some boiled their eggs in the hot water while others bathed in prepared pools. At this point we decamped and departed,

Cuzco and the sacred valley



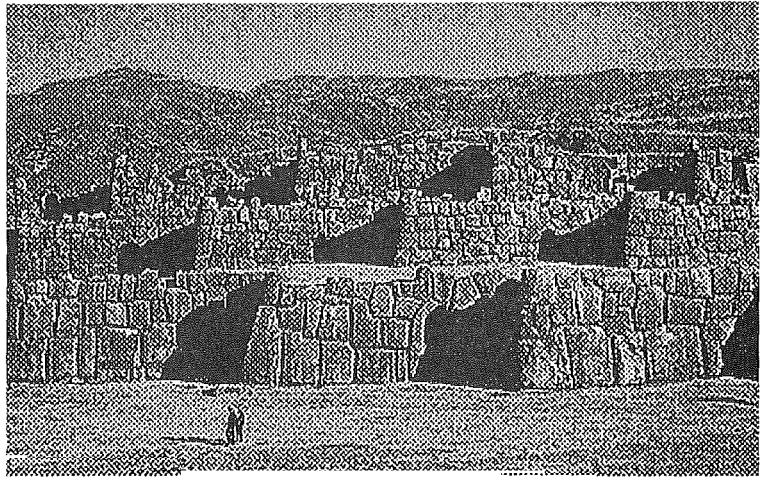
Two Innocents Abroad

Tim Josephy

Dawn in Cusco. Both Duncan and I are awake in our hotel room listening to the chorus of car horns without which Peruvian traffic is unable to proceed. Nothing for it but to get up and about and see what's to see. In the main square, an army of cleaners is just finishing the mammoth task of clearing up after last night's revelries (it is Inti Raman, an Inca festival which seems to involve a solid week of drinking, dancing and music). No other pedestrians are about and we can view in peace the magnificent cathedrals and the Spanish colonial buildings atop their massive Inca foundations. About 500ft above the square are two hills, one crowned with a statue of Jesus and the other with a cross. We decide to test our total lack of acclimatisation and climb up there.

The way takes us up narrow stepped alleys, between white painted terraces of houses to a church courtyard where workmen, even at this early hour are rebuilding an Inca wall from a pile of numbered blocks. Climbing on, both of us pretending we are not in the last stages of collapse, we suddenly break out into a huge area of ruins. Surrounding the hilltop, the temple of

Saqsaywaman is one of the finest remnants of Inca building to be found. Wandering around the massive walls and doorways, we fall into conversation with the only other person around, a Brit and Inca nut who spends half of each year out there. We get the guided tour, and on our way back to the hotel for breakfast,



Saqsaywaman's impressive Inca foundations overlook Cuzco and are dominated by a three tiered zig-zag wall about 700m long built from huge stones which fit together perfectly.

Mike offers to show us around for the day. Climbing once again out of the city, we visit the ruins of Q'enqo, an area of limestone outcrops covered in carvings of animals, much mutilated by the Spanish invaders. Further on, in a large crag split by natural fissures, we explore the Temple of the Moon, a modified cave with carvings of snakes and pumas and with an altar lit by a skylight. All rather Indiana Jones! Out in the sunshine again we follow an ancient highway up through terraced fields and over a low pass. Grotesque cacti and the variety of songbirds are a reminder that despite the height, we are in a tropical country.

Eventually we reach an Indian village, where women and children are laying potatoes out to dry. The tiny thatched adobe huts look as if they haven't changed for a thousand years until one notices the incongruous looking electrical supplies going into the roofs. Black pigs wander in and out of the doorways and when Duncan gives a grubby little urchin a coin to take his photo, every child in the village rushes to line up, complete with sundry dogs and cats. Mike ducks into a black doorway, inside which is a tiny shop, presided over by a charming lady with an enormous smile. We consume bottles of sickly fizzy drinks and go on

our way accompanied by more smiles and good wishes. Not far above the village, we reach the road from Cusco to Pisac, where we wait for a "micro", one of the ubiquitous mini buses that are the principal form of transport hereabouts.

The first micro to arrive, with seats for about twenty, has at least forty on board. No self-respecting rush hour tube traveller would even consider it, but the conductor jumps off and thrusts us in. The next 20 minutes are to be among the most terrifying I can remember. The road drops about 3000ft in a series of steep hairpins, the shininess of the tarmac matched only by the shininess of the tyres. The driver is clearly on a time bonus and believes the whole road is his. As we squeal round a corner on the wrong side of the road, Duncan mutters about taking a taxi next time. A girl next to us speaks a bit of English and relays his comment to the passengers, who dissolve in gales of laughter. "Taxi drivers are dangerous" she says, "stick with the bus!"

Pisac is a strange mixture. On the tourist trail, it has its fair share of tawdry souvenir shops but on the other hand it is still an ancient market town carrying on its trade much as it

has done for centuries. We visit a shop owned by the mayor, who sidelines in grave robbing. His back room is full of artefacts way beyond our price range so we make polite excuses and leave. High above the town is a craggy limestone mountain whereon is a large Inca city. We are too late to walk up so we accept the offer of a taxi. The driver demands payment in advance so he can buy a few pints of petrol. Having shifted a large sow from the road and convinced a cow to relinquish its scratching post on the petrol pump, we complete the refuel and set off up the hill. Considering the total lack of clutch and brakes, the driver does a great job of negotiating the hairpins but Duncan and I have already decided that, approaching darkness or not, we are definitely walking down.

Inca Pisac is magnificent. The surrounding hills are splendidly terraced and the city itself covers the mountain top and spills down the sides. We follow a narrow path across a cliff and through a low tunnel to a col, above which a large cliff face, pocked with holes, contains the graves of hundreds of Incas. We follow a path down, past well preserved buildings and dry fountains towards the terracing below. In the gathering dusk, with the lights of Pisac still looft below, it is a magical place. We finally reach the bottom in full darkness and wait for the last micro home. Arriving in Cusco, we realise we have discovered the stress free way of travelling in South America always go uphill and at night!

Next day, on our return from a trip to Machu

Picchu (which is another story), we find the last night of Inti Raman in full swing. Tens of thousands pack the squares, listening to concerts, which are a strange mixture of rock and Pefias, the haunting pipe music made famous by countless wildlife documentaries. High above, the church we passed on the first morning is floodlit and I have the brilliant idea of going up there to take photos of the city below. In the dark the alleys look different and we are soon lost. No matter, we climb on until suddenly we realise the crowds have gone and we are alone apart from three figures following a short distance behind. We turn left, they turn left. We quicken our pace, so do they. One catches up and demands money. I am all prepared to hand over my life savings but Duncan is made of sterner stuff. He delivers a smart blow to the chin and we make a break. I don't know if Duncan is as frightened as me, but he makes a fine job of keeping up as we put Colin Jackson to shame, hurdling the alley steps down to the safety of the crowds below. Back in the square, light headed and breathless from our escapade, we reflect on our stupidity.

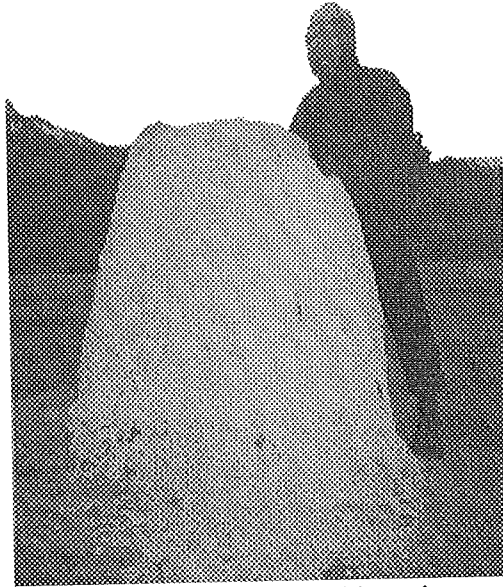
There's no fool like a pair of old fools!



Machu Picchu ruins from the top of Huayna Picchu peak. A member noted that "the countryside seen in Peru is the most picturesque I've seen anywhere, and deserves a return visit."

Pictures of an expedition

Just a few significant memories...



Duncan, at dawn, looking into a gently steaming geyser column wondering if it will gush.

El Alto and La Paz by night

El Alto is a rapidly expanding city on the plateau above La Paz. A combination of dirt roads in terrible condition and heavy traffic with rules of the "no biting, gouging or kicking" variety make El Alto by night a badly-lit Breughel Hell. As you drop down off the plateau, La Paz, a city in an immense canyon, appears as an enormous spider's web of lights -- a surprisingly moving experience.

Alan Linford

I remember Alan at 20000ft struggling towards an impossible summit in a 40km/h wind. When asked to stop because of time and conditions, he turned back without a murmur. The next day I saw him slowly doing the backstroke in a natural hot-spring pool, eyes closed, and a grin that stretched from ear to ear. It isn't just summits that matter, it's the whole trip. Rory

The Puma

Everybody wanted to see a puma, and ideally to photograph one as proof of the encounter. The stuffed puma in the National Park office at Sajama village was too much of a temptation. Duncan and Michael eventually kidnapped it, posed it artistically in the scrub outside the office, and took its picture. Don't anybody tell Albert it's not a real one...

Languages

Duncan Mackay is sitting on a boulder, with Vicki the cook. She speaks Spanish and Quechuan. He speaks English and French (though he hasn't quite given up hope that French will turn into Spanish if spoken slowly and loudly). They are trying to identify birds from a picture book, using all four languages. Rather surprisingly, communication seems perfectly effective; point at bird, point at picture - who needs words?



The Atacama Desert, vast, barren and incredibly varied in terrain and colour. A wind-sculpted, balanced rock tempted Javier to solo up the left overhang.

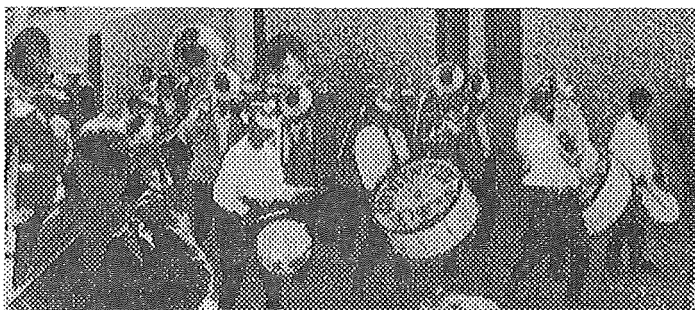
A Grand Day Out

Javier, our guide from Andean Summits, was a bit unsure about the climbing party's fitness and acclimatisation. He and Tim went for a nice day's climbing. The day involved an early start, an epic multi-pitch ascent of a new summit on loose rock, and an even more epic descent on even looser rock. Tim and Javier then found themselves some six miles of steep difficult going from base camp with an hour of daylight left. As usual, Tim had eaten about three raisins all day, which he believes is entirely adequate. Unfortunately he had catered for Javier on a similarly generous scale. When they arrived back in base camp, as darkness was falling, T00 was in good form and high spirits. Javier, arriving a few minutes later, croaked, "He made me RUN!" (all this having taken place at around 4500m). Later I saw Javier lying in a corner of the mess tent, eyes closed, trying to eat his supper but falling asleep between mouthfuls. The conclusion seemed to be that T00 at least was acclimatising quite well really.



Guiding the YRC

Our guides, after being with us for three weeks, got to know everyone well and got over their initial concern at this collection of mountaineers much older than their usual clients. They enjoyed not having to instruct us in the basics and could relax as we looked after one another rather than leaving it to our guides. They enjoyed the trips.



One of the several fiesta bands we came across on the altiplano

British Embassy

The British Embassy were supportive and interested in our venture. Making contact on arrival we were invited to a welcome lunch with embassy staff and Bernardo Guarachi. Maria Paz Campo was full of enthusiasm, helpful information and advice.

While some were visiting Sajama, Albert, Ian, David Atherton and newly arrived Christine Marriott were in La Paz and able to take up the Embassy's invitation to a reception for the Col. John Blashford-Snell Kota Mama Expedition. This was held at the Ambassador's house rather than the offices and allowed them to meet Ambassador Minter, who is a keen rambler.

Cocapatan Huntsman

Late one afternoon a local chap with feathered hat, well worn jacket and the usual sandals came past our Willpanki camp carrying a .22 rifle. We engaged him in conversation and he explained that he was after viscacha or possibly puma. The latter had been responsible for taking llama over in the next valley.

His gun was well worn, obviously a much loved and treasured possession. The stock had been replaced with a rough cut version which was held onto the barrel by inert tube material straps stapled into place. We wished him good luck and provided a new plastic bag to hold his few precious rounds.

Conclusions:

Bolivia holds a store of opportunities for mountaineer at the club level including new areas. Age and lack of high-altitude experience proved not to be barriers. Indeed one of the main achievements was that of Iain topping Sajama on his first attempt at a large peak.

The Cordillera Real were good for trekking with enough to see each day to make it interesting. Weather was predominantly good and plenty of inviting mountaineering opportunities were passed on the route.

Exploratory climbing in the Cordillera Cocapata was encouraged by the shapely peaks but hampered by loose rock and inadequate anchors. There are more and steeper routes awaiting future visitors. For those seeking mountain walking or scrambling ample opportunities remain as we concentrated on one part of the range. The scarcity of previous visits, ease of access, local support and modest heights were advantageous features of this range.

The Quimsa Cruz were considered as an alternative to the Cordillera Cocapata when planning this expedition. Local guides confirmed the extensive possibilities in the northern parts of the Quimsa Cruz not only for climbing but also for attractive trekking off the usual route. However to include it in a list of seven of the "last great wildernesses" and describing it as "largely unexplored" (Gentleman, 1999) is probably hyperbole. From the tops of the peaks in the west of the Cocapata we could see the Quimsa Cruz and the area appeared attractive for mountaineer climbers.

The Cordillera Occidental offers mainly isolated peaks with little technical difficulty. There are innumerable unvisited lower crags and boulders. Their setting is spectacular though access is difficult on account of their isolation and long distances between habitations. The lack of water and support makes having a 4WD vehicle indispensable. Sajama is an exception in that the local infrastructure supports ascents by the normal route though it is essential to bring sufficient food.

A budding tourist industry based on San Pedro de Atacama in Chile and Uyuni in Bolivia operates multiday endurance-testing tours of the Atacama. Small hostels are emerging to service this trade though their amenities are minimal.

Comparing conditions with twenty years ago the improvement in the La Paz infrastructure and major roads (with the exception of El Alto, though roadworks are underway there) is striking. Supermarkets carry the full range of goods you would expect in an European small town; certainly sufficient to stock a basecamp. Simple well-made fleeces, sleeping bags, jackets, gloves, hats and the like are readily available from a number of stores round Sagarnaga at modest prices. Tents, ice axes and crampon can now be hired.

Petzel head torches were not available and, despite their domination of the market, our group ran into several problems due to inadequate or failing components. Three self-inflating air mattresses, of various types, developed leaks while those with closed-cell foam mattresses slept soundly. These too are available in La Paz. Heavy waterproof jackets were not worth carrying and lightweight windproof tops were invaluable.

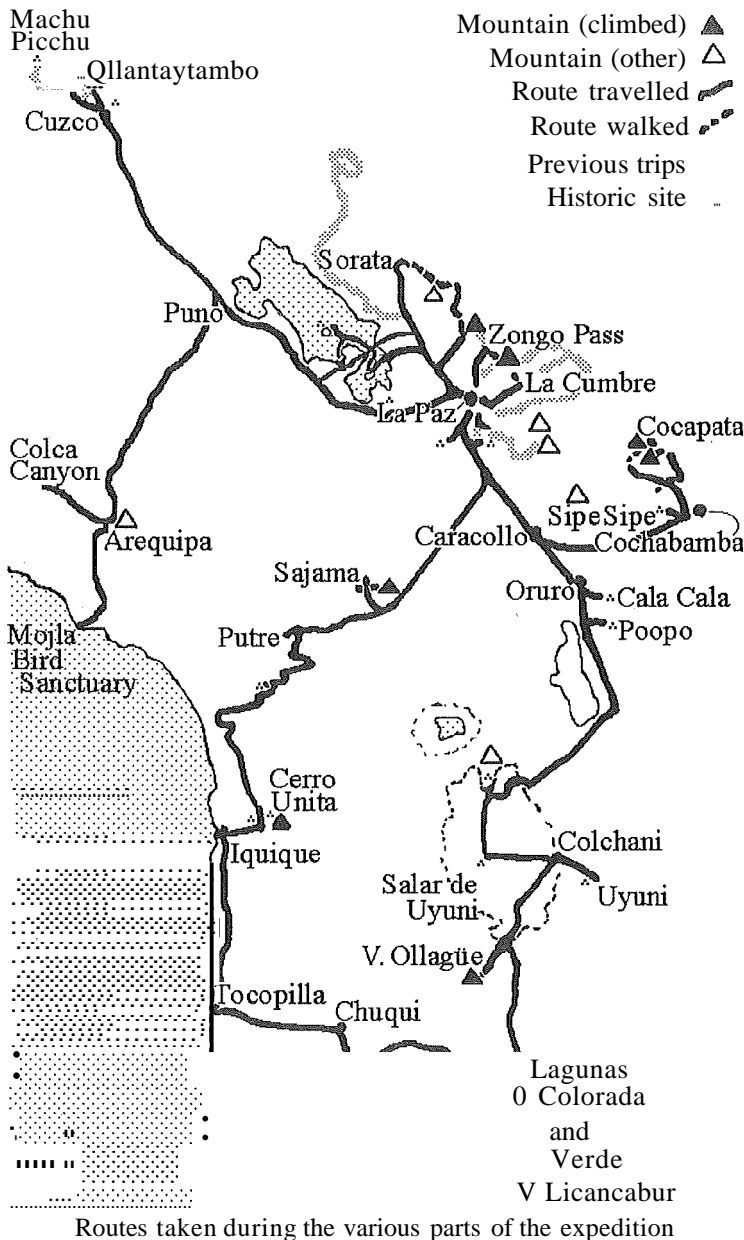
There are plenty of **firms** offering guiding services but good, experienced guides and cooks are at a premium. making contact and booking well in advance, being explicit about 'your requirements and expecting to pay a little more than the average rate pays dividends.

Communications have improved to the point where a mobile phone used on a peak has a good chance of making a connection. Using e-mail permitted negotiation during the planning phase and kept relatives back home informed of our progress once we were in South America.

A Polaroid camera and several packs of film were taken by the climbing party. They were used to take shots of the Cocapata range from the roads which lay to the south and the east during the drive in. These were of little use other than a general reminder of the outlines. This was partly because they were backlit, wide-angle and small, but also because we ended up climbing on the opposite faces to the ones photographed. We also took pictures of the villagers for their own use in return for their tolerance and assistance. Local people greatly appreciated their portraits so the outlay of around £50 was worthwhile. The early morning low temperatures increased developing times several fold.

The weather, both El Niño and La Niña notwithstanding, proved generally reliably stable, dry and sunny but cold. Very little time was wasted due to bad weather. The tropical twelve-hour day with twelve hours of darkness put a certain pressure on time during days out. Nights were often clear and ranged from -14°C in the mountains to +14°C on the coast.

Bolivia, Peru and Chile kept us well entertained and provided more than enough of a challenge. The Club is sure to return and take up some of the many remaining opportunities.



Achievements

The real achievement was that we worked together, with our Bolivian helpers, to enjoy some of the culture and geography of Bolivia, Peru and Chile. However, expeditions are also measured by their contribution to mountaineering achievement so a list of the new ascents in the Cordillera de Cocapata is given here.

Rock climbing routes:

Jatuncasa slabs, left-hand route, Hick & Josephy, 28 June, and central route, Smith & Thellache, 28 June. First ascents.

Willpanki I, south-west ridge, Josephy & Thellache, 1 July, first ascent, and II, south-west ridge, Smith & Hick, 2 July, new route.

Sankhayuni II, slab route, Camarlinghi & Josephy, 29 June, first ascent, and IV, Nido de Condores, Camarlinghi, Josephy & Smith, 7 July, first ascent.

New peaks or mountains:

Poma Apacheta I (also II) Newman, 6 July

Cerros del Lago Chuli Chulani I (also II and III), Mackay & Newman, 30 June

Pututuni I (also III, VI and IX?), Mackay & Newman, 4 July

Sankhayuni III (also III), Mackay & Newman, 1 July,

Malpaso I and II, Mackay & Newman, 3 July

Other peaks or mountains:

Sankhayuni I, Mackay & Newman, 1 July, probably Herzog's Incachaca

Also many other minor peaks.

Sajama was climbed to the summit by Camarlinghi, Gilmour, Josephy, Mackay and Newman on 14 July. Ventanani was climbed by A. Chapman, I. Crowther, I. Gilmour, A. Linford and F.D. Smith on 7 July.

Acknowledgements

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Maria Paz Campero, Press and Public Affairs Officer, British Embassy, La Paz, for support and a warm welcome

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Evelio Echevarria for drawing to our notice the Cocapata range and then supplying photographs and detailed reports

Mark Greenstock, Yuri and Jessica for current information on Cochabamba

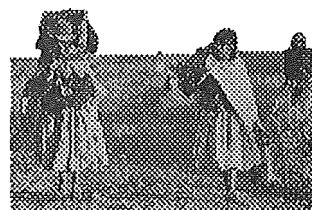
Nerrissa Kisdon for translations

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John O'Neil for recent information on the south of Bolivia

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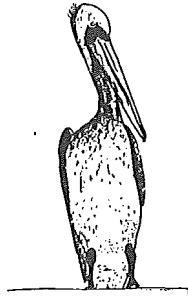
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Condoriri



Guarachi's Everest

While in La Paz Albeit Chapman, Ian Crowther and Michael Smith were invited to lunch with

Bernardo Guarachi to catch up on news since our last visit in 1988 when Bernardo provided logistical support in the Apolobamba.

Bernardo presented the Club with a panorama of the Cordillera Real and was generously invited to his spacious new offices for coffee and a detailed discussion of our plans for the current trip.

The description of his ascent is compiled from articles by Roger Hamilton which appeared in IDB America, July 1998, p15 and Chasqui, July 1998, p4.

At 5:55 a.m on May 26, Katmandu time, after almost having to concede defeat; Bernardo Guarachi, 43, placed the Bolivian flag on the summit of Mt. Everest. He was the first Bolivian and first native American to reach Everest's summit.

The expedition had not gone in a textbook fashion. After arriving in Nepal in late March, heavy snows kept Guarachi and a growing number of climbers tied to base camp. Guarachi spent the next two months conditioning himself with climbs to Camp II and III. "It was very, very frustrating for him," says David Atkinson, one of the organisers of the drive to fund Guarachi's attempt. "It took tremendous willpower and character just to spend two months under those conditions, living out of a tent, losing 10kg, so cut off from his family."

Then on May 19 the weather cleared, and Guarachi and 53 others set off up the Nepal side. But by the time they reached the Hillary Step, just 100 vertical metres from the summit, they had run out of rope and had to turn back.

Back at Camp IV, Guarachi's limited English caused him to misinterpret the plans of his group, and he returned to base camp. Then, realising his error, he did an about face and pushed straight through once more to Camp IV. On midnight of May 25, he set off a final time with a Singaporean group of climbers, making 3548m in 72 hours from base camp to the summit.

This was Guarachi's second Everest attempt. His first, in 1994, ended at 8180m in bad weather.

Guarachi was raised near the windswept Andean town of Patacamaya, where his father still tends the family herds of sheep and llamas, so he has spent much of his life above 5000m. As a guide, he has made more than 170 ascents of 6450m Illimani, overlooking La Paz. The most dramatic of these was in 1985, when he was hired by Eastern Airlines to locate the wreckage of an airliner that crashed on New Year's Day.

The plan to finance his second attempt was hatched during a 1996 climb up Illimani in which Guarachi guided Bolivian Vice-President Jorge Quiroga Ramirez and Bolivian Times publisher, Peter McFarren. They formed a group which raised \$33000.

On July 2nd Guarachi received the Condor de los Andes award, Bolivia's highest recognition, from President Hugo Banzer.

*Con amistad y mucho
afecto de Bernardo
para : amistad
león*

*Juan Luis B.
LP. 25.6.1999.*

Table Mountain

Man Brown

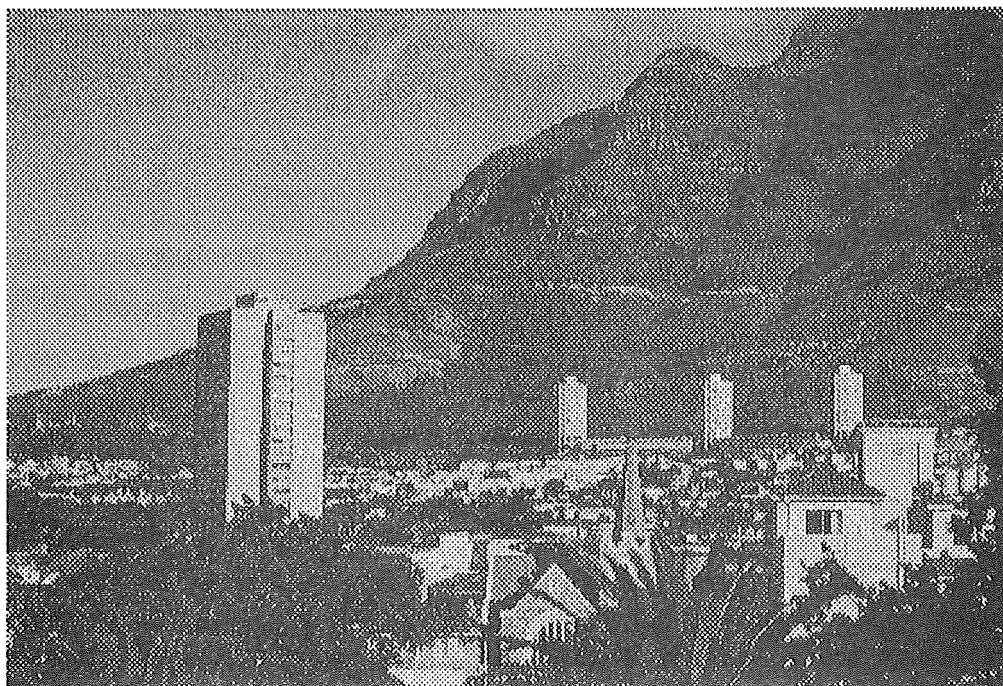
At a little over 3200ft Table Mountain's claim to fame clearly has nothing to do with altitude - it's all in the setting, for the mountain dominates Cape Town and its surroundings no matter where you are. There were dark warnings of muggings on the lower slopes which discouraged the solitary trek I had in mind but a newspaper advertisement led me to Colin who claimed to know every possible route. The favourable rate of exchange meant that his £50 fee of 1975 (the date of my last visit) was reduced to £10 so we quickly agreed a time and meeting place. Very high winds followed by excessive heat postponed the first two dates but at the third attempt we met up at the Cable Car station at 9am.

The mountain offers every possible grade of climb :from severe rock routes to steep but easily negotiable ravines which puncture the South Side. We chose the latter starting :from Camps Bay and immediately

entered a botanical spectacular of exotic plants including a variety of Proteas. "More varieties of plant here than in the whole of the UK" said our Guide and he could well be right. We were on top after 2½ hours and enjoyed the shelter of the hut belonging to the Mountain Club of South Africa. The table of the mountain accommodates four reservoirs completed by Scottish and Cornish stone masons in 1904. For shifting the thousands of tons of rock :from quarry to the work site the Scots even had a small steam locomotive made in Kilmaml'ock, hauling it up the mountain side piece by piece. It is carefully preserved in a small museum on the plateau along with other paraphernalia used in building dams.

Crossing the table between the dams we headed for the Nursery Ravine and a steep descent which ended in South Africa's admirable equivalent of Kew - the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens where we had arranged a pick up back to Camps Bay.

A strongly recommended outing for which I have a map should anyone be thinking of going.



A Postcard from the Alps

Martyn Wakeman

On the first Friday night of our summer holiday, I slept behind some logs in the Saas-Grund car park, to avoid the expense of Swiss campsite fees. The cable car station had running water and toilets after all. This also ensured a minimum time between bed and the first cable car which was taken up to a hut between our two planned 4000m summits, the Weissmies and the Lagginhorn.

We immediately climbed the Weissmies, enabling us to climb the pair in the weekend. An American friend, Pete, and I were joined by a Swiss guy, Marc, and another Brit, Dave, from Geneva. The president of the EPFL Alpine club was also there with his girl friend. This was a long 'snow plod' over a glacier basin and then up steepening ground to a series of crevasses before an airy snow traverse towards the cornice crowned summit. We made it to the top in 2hrs 20mins, compared to a guide book

time of 4 to 5 hrs - not bad for the first peak of the week. We then quickly descended back to the cable car station before the snow melted and the going became harder. The afternoon was then spent lying in the sun looking at the view and the next day's peak, the Lagginhorn.

We had decided to bivi outside but to eat at the hut (getting the best of both world - good food and good sleep with only minimal extra weight to carry to the hut). We went to bed happy, bivvying amidst the hanging gondolas to escape the wind and hiding from any nosy cable car worker. Next morning we were rudely awoken by a bunch of noisy Italians who were staying at the hut and getting up impossibly early for the route intended. After another hour's cold doze in my failing sleeping bag we dumped the bivvi gear before wandering across scree to the start of the Lagginhorn climb. The route went across a dead glacier before ascending a little more steeply to an easy couloir to the rock ridge above. This route



The Mont Blanc Aiguilles

was supposed to be one of the easiest 4000ers, normally being just a pleasant rock scramble. Due to the huge quantities of winter snow, the upper half was a mixed, Scottish like, scramble of snow, rock and patches of ice, where it was supposed to be a shaly path amidst blocks. One of the group was new to crampons, and newer than we thought, so after the other two deciding that we didn't need the rope as this was easy, the poor sole was left trying to master the use of pointy things for the first time in a situation that required one not to slip. Shortly before the summit the icy patches became a little more frequent so the last stretch and the summit itself were wisely binned in favour of getting down in one piece to fight another day. *Climb if you will, but do nought without prudence, and remember that a momentary negligence can end the happiness of a lifetime.*

I continued up solo, feeling confident after using these things for over nine years, and made it to the top and back down to the waiting friend in about 20 minutes, so I am told. The view at the small rocky top, with the mandatory Wallis summit catholic cross, was awesome. A whole panorama of lofty peaks and smaller hills poked through the clouds of Italy. Turns were taken to stand on the top before more easily scuttling back down to the others below.

A day's rest was then in order to recharge ourselves for the rest of the week. Rather than sitting with a few hundred other Europeans in an expensive Swiss campsite, we again opted to find a quiet field and put up the tent - hoping that no landowner would wake us up in the middle of the night. Plenty of good food was eaten, an essential part of the alpine

experience being the 'pig-out' down in the valley after the climb. That night it was two big bowls of sausage with fresh tomatoes, mushrooms and courgette accompanied by the nearly mandatory pasta. A favourite alternative to pasta is to slice potatoes, parboil and then blast fry on the MSR. It was a joy to use a real cooker again that could turn food decently brown after the insipid efforts of the electric hobs that many Swiss insist on using.

After a blissful and undisturbed free nights sleep we piled the tent back into the little VW Polo and drove to Tasch, the largest car park in the Wallis and the gateway to the Swiss phallic symbol, the Matterhorn. Here two friends from England were staying with a climbing club so it was going to be good to be sociable for an evening or two and get a top up of British wit and sarcasm. Two of my old friends from England were off climbing the Matterhorn, and I had arrived a day too late to join them. While they were off doing the pointy one, we had to climb the Breithorn due to an abandoned attempt in springtime when it chucked down with rain for the weekend. Probably the easiest 4000er, but in still meeting that magic height, it had to be climbed. The best policy with these easier snow plods is to get your backside out of bed early and hence be one of the first to the top, avoiding the masses of other mountaineers and guides with their far flung and assorted clients. The first cable car was duly taken and after failing around for Matterhorn pictures we made it to the top in an hour without any stress. We were second to the top, but followed by some keen and adventurous Japanese tourists grinning widely and shouting hello as they were dragged up on the rope by their guide. A walk in a snow

park to be honest, but with some spectacular glacier scenery looking east to the massive Mt Rosa massif with Castor and Pollux in the foreground and the towering Matterhorn still 400m higher to the west. The ridge was followed to descend the other side, giving a few metres of narrow and airy snow ridge if the lip was taken before descending back for a rest on the glacier to watch the clouds in Italy start to build into the afternoon's promised thunderstorm.

We returned to Tasch without problem and after a little shopping drank tea, ate food, and generally chilled out waiting for the two guys to return from the Matterhorn. They duly appeared back, tired but happy, having made it up and down in one piece. They had woken up early and then waited at the start of the route for the guides. They then followed the guides, who apparently move desperately fast, up to the Salvoy hut. They then roped up and climbed the steeper section to the top. Apparently the whole thing was a bit over rated with the guides having placed some steel poles for belay protection and the fixed ropes at the top aiding things considerably. Following the guides saved then the epic of getting lost and onto looser ground. This was the first week that the guides had been taking clients up due to the dangerous amount of snow on the ridge. One of the guys was telling about the various bivi sites on the ridge, in that it wasn't too steep (38 degrees average) but that the main problem is the mountain is really a steep pile of rubble and bits keep falling off, making stone fall a problem.

After the Breithorn, we fancied a different valley that neither of us had visited before, so it was the drive up

past the old monks at the Grand St. Bernard pass through to Italy. We drove there in the rain, expecting a wet walk to the hut below our target of the 4000er Grand Paradiso, but it was OK in the end. This region was really pretty - an Italian national park with no mechanical aids to the hut. A river meandering down the valley with lush evergreen trees and giant boulders, all smelling fresh after the rain.

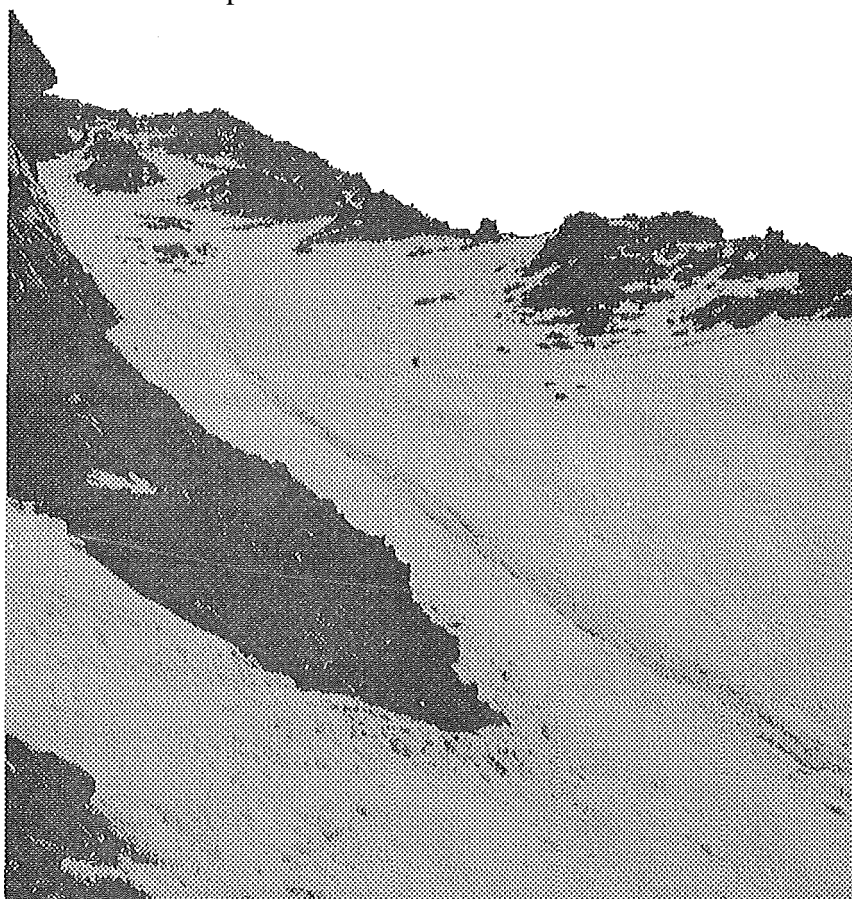
It was a little disconcerting walking up to the hut in the mist and not being able to identify our route for the next day - lots of steep peaks, but which one was ours and where was the route? We have been spoiled by the nicer weather of the Alps and a return visit to Scottish rain was certainly in order. The refuge was a really nice one, having small rooms for four rather than the fifty plus bed dormitories that are usually noisy and difficult to sleep in. We shared with a German guy, Michaeli (about 45-50ish) who was away by himself (leaving the wife and two kids at home) to climb 4000ers, solo. I think that this is pushing one's luck a little too far, although I have climbed two 4000ers solo up un crevassed routes, but I would rather drag a partner into the previously hidden jaws of a gapping crevasse than visit the middle of the glacier by myself. He has been lucky 35 times - 35 4000er peaks - but to save any chances and for a bit more social interaction, we took him on our rope the next day.

Four o'clock duly arrived and after force feeding on dry bread and hot chocolate we joined most of the rest of the hut in climbing to the top. The way went through a boulder field, up a glacier and then onto fresh snow (from the previous days rain). The summit ridge was an airy and exposed,

although not difficult, scramble to the top. Again, we were second to the top, even with the unacclimatised German in tow. He found the going tough because it was his first 'tour' of the year. Either he was dead hard, or his English was too limited to complain very much. The Italian guides were rude and pushy at the top, and on the way down we duly clipped into protection to avoid one of the ten people on his two ropes from pushing us off. We descended quickly as clouds enveloped the mountains, a sign of the rain to come, which fell as we were relaxing back in the hut. All the other lazy or slower climbers finished their route in the rain. Back in the valley, we had pizza Italian style with my choosing a 'Monte Bianco' as a hope of things to come at the weekend. We drove back over the Grand St. Bernards pass (with the Mt. Blanc tunnel sadly out of action) and looked for a nice tent pitch for the

night. We pulled over off the road a little way down a rough track and settled down for the night. An early morning pee after ten hours in bed led to an amusing start to the day. Just as I was finishing, a farmer pulled off the road in his 4x4, but thankfully he didn't seem to care. As a sign of respect we packed up the tent about an hour later and made our way to Chamonix.

Having all this good acclimatisation, it seemed only sensible to try and climb the big one. I particularly wanted to climb it as I have looked across Lac Lemman to its shining top, glimmering white, many times on the way to Westlake Church in Nyon. The forecast was iffy for the next day, so we gave the old girl some respect and had a rest day with plans to climb at the weekend. The last place in Europe to be during bad weather are the high glaciers of Blancy. The huts were all



The Grand Couloir

full, and after freezing my butt off for too many nights this trip, it was time to buy a new sleeping bag. A nice new mountain equipment down bag with canoe stuff sack did very nicely. The night before the climb was probably the crux of the route, with a mixture of excitement and fear for the next two days climbing Mt Blanc. I have climbed harder routes by far, greater height gain and in far worse weather than we would try this one in, but somehow the reputation of the old girl for eating frozen climbers in her sudden mood fits managed to form the impression of a difficult and dangerous mountain. More than a few perish in her sudden storms each summer.

After much indecision about which route, we opted for the safest bet, the Aiguille de Gouter route. This has relatively few crevasses and the main summit climb starts high, reducing the length of the high altitude snow plod. The Mulets route was still in spring conditions and the other options were harder and asking for problems. The only vaguely dangerous bit was crossing the couloir before the hut where stone fall is a major hazard. The guide book tells you to wait until the couloir is clear, and then run across with your helmet on. The couloir is wide at the top and has a big rock field above it, with falling matter channelled to the crossing point. If rocks come crashing down, then it suggests you run even faster. Not an uncommon problem in the Alps, but magnified here by the hundreds of people who cross it daily.

The train was caught to save 2000m offorest slog loaded up with bivi gear. We started the 1500m ascent to the hut, which was rated as a PD route in itself. The first bit was simply a winding path over scree, boulders and then a broad ridge before coming out

at the edge of the couloir. Well, we could see what they meant. The previous night had been very cold and with the precaution of taking the first train up, the snow was still nice and hard with most of those rocks still frozen in place. Hopefully, none had our names on today, and I scuttled as fast as I could, to avoid slipping off the narrow snow path and what would be a perilous fall down the couloir. The French had kindly strung a cable across, but someone had got the maths a little wrong as it was ten feet over my head. A couple of long slings could have been used to string a karabiner to the wire in case of a slip, but I stuck to taking my ice axe out in case of mishap, avoiding the creation of a huge traffic jam. It was crossed by all that day without problems, with only a few stones falling due to the cold weather.

The next stretch to the hut was basically the north ridge of Tryfan and Bristly. A steep scramble mixed with patches of path for 700m vertically up to the hut. It was actually a lot of fun, with wire rope to aid some of the harder or exposed sections. Towards the top of this section it turned out that most of the stuff falling down the couloir was stuff kicked off by climbers higher up the route.

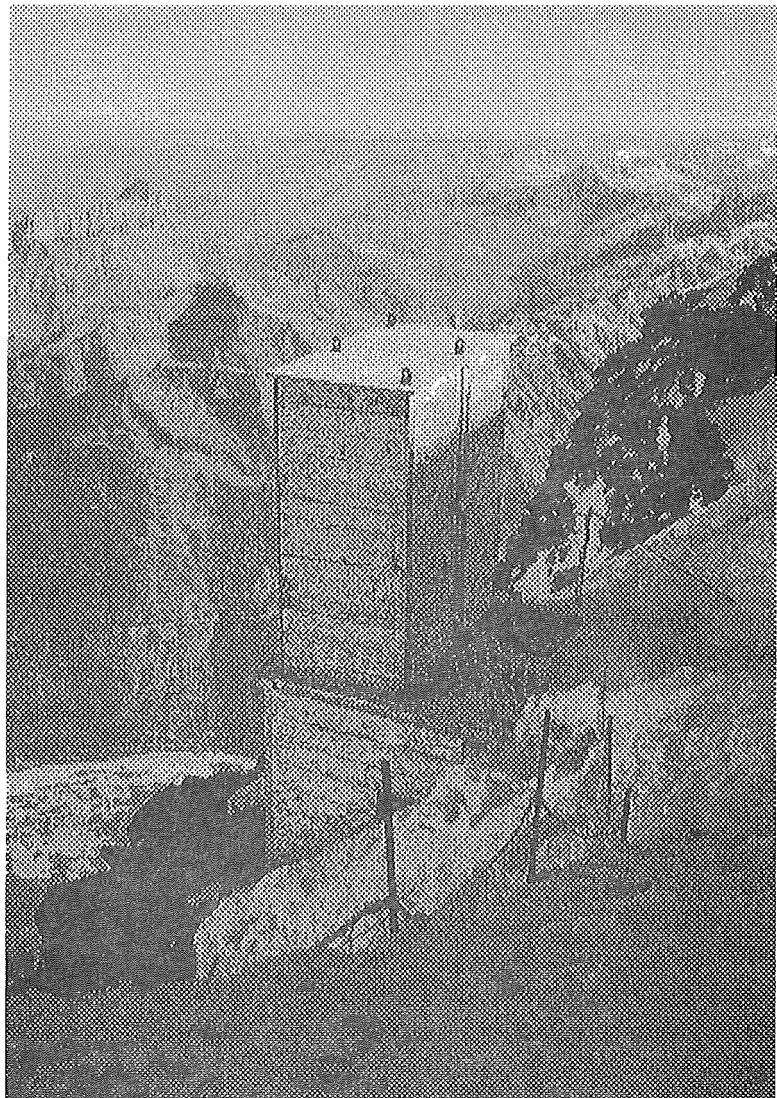
The hut was at 3800m, the same height as the Aiguille de Midi. There was zero bivi space near the hut due to its precariously perched nature at the top of Aiguille de Gouter. We joined other groups in using previously made snow pits on the glacier to put up our bivi bags and sort ourselves out. This was a really cosmic place, looking out across or down at many of Chamonix's Aiguilles with the white slopes of Mt. Blanc rising another 1km into the sky. A magical mystery world, a place of fairy

tales, enchanting skies and a Tolkien wonderland that would make a backdrop fit for the gods. The sort of thing that children in school are told doesn't exist when they paint pointy peaks in the clouds. We sat for several hours looking at the view until the clouds came in and we were lost in white.

Many people who were staying in the hut were looking rather ill due to its very high altitude. After our week of climbing, I enjoyed a second helping of the veal and rice and even finished a big wedge of cheese that they produced for desert. The more that night, the menier for getting up the hill on the morrow.

The new sleeping bag was doing its stuff, and so used was I to wearing all my clothes in bed and still feeling chilly, that I positively boiled until the sun went down. I slept well, be it only for two or three hours, a sign of acclimatisation. During the night there were rumbles of thunder over head and flashes of lightening, which did not bode well for the morning.

Upon awaking at 1am to check the weather, I was gutted to see just a white mist around me. It had also snowed about 5cm during the night, and was still snowing. That old girl Blancy wasn't going to give us her



Not the lofty hut but a loo with a grand view

summit on a plate, or so it seemed. The forecast was good, so what to do? We dossed back down for another hour, and still the mist prevailed, but with many other climbers starting to trail past our camp site. Still not convinced and with a little more time on our side, we waited until 2:30 when a break in the cloud appeared with some stars visible, indicating just a thin covering that would bum off later in the day. At three we were on our way up, feeling charged and ready for battle. Maybe it was the adrenaline, or maybe I was fit, but we blasted up to the top of Dome de Gouter at nearly double the speed of the wallowing parties before

descending a little and then re-climbing to the storm shelter on the ground below the bosses ridge.

At this point I was wearing only double thermal vests and a Pertex top, but as the clouds cleared the temperature fell through the floor. It was still dark, and a quick drink by head torch revealed slushy frozen water in under an hour from leaving my sleeping bag. Big gloves and Goretex were donned before continuing to the bosses ridge. The new snow fall here was deeper, but did not impede progress in any way. The whole mountain was now shimmering and sparking white as the new snow crystals reflected the moon light. The bosses ridge had been built up in my mind to some kind of curvaceous monstrosity with perilous drops to each side and hundreds of pushing and passing people wanting the narrow path. This proved not to be so. As we were moving so quickly, and due to the new snow and cold temperatures, the path was only a small series of footsteps rather than the usual summer trench. The ridge was therefore a joy to climb, with the wind blowing streaks of cloud across the ridge and chilling the air, forming a heavy frosting on our rucksacks and gear. This one really did feel big, as the top was still wreathed in cloud and it was getting really cold, such that Goretex mitts were beginning to feel a little thin, especially for the axe hand. In contrast to the weeks previous climbs wearing minimal gear, this felt like some kind of Alaskan giant or a winter alpine ascent.

We continued up the ridge which was good fun and nothing too exciting. It ascended in a series of steep snow steps and pure snow ridges to bosses and then a repeat, with many false summits, as the name of the ridge

suggests. The air started to get thinner, and as other groups slowed down ahead of us we were forced to reduce our pace a little. The plod to the top continued, but at no time was the altitude a problem if rests of fifteen seconds or so were taken to hit the oxygen debt. The sun was now climbing up the sky from the east, staining the patchy clouds in the sky those wonderful dawn colours of pale orange and red. The valley was filled with cloud and the Augilles were now far below us, notably the Aiguille de Midi which is normally so impressive when viewed from Chamonix, now some 'insignificant' point down near the valley floor, such is the height of the old girl. The summit of Mt Blanc is ideally suited to the task of hosting the many visitors to the top of Europe's highest mountain, with a 50 metre or so long ridge, about 1.5m wide, gently sloping to east and west for 50m or so but with the sharply falling snow to the northern flank and the awe inspiring horrors of the Italian rock and ice faces.

People have slagged off the summit view of Mt. Blanc as being like that from an air plane. Have they lost all child like wonder of the view of the clouds? Even having flown more times than I can remember, I still escape when looking out of an air plane window and seeing the sun after a grey Lutonian morning. Seeing other famous and magic names like the Grand Jordasses all below you, seemingly little, but really imposing when viewed locally, reinforced the wonder of this high and lofty place. We took the mandatory summit photographs and relished the thin cold air. Being an engineer, I had to measure the air pressure, which was 560mb compared to the 1000ish mb of the valley. This shows how high the top at 4808m really is. We had also

made pretty good progress, storming to the top in 3 hrs 15 min compared to the guide book time of 4 to 5 hrs, and longer for un-acclimatised parties. So that extra time in bed was well spent as our seemingly late start had no effect on our summit time (6:15am). Nothing too extreme, but something that I will not forget in a hurry,

We took our time on the way down, watching the view evolve as the day started properly, wondering at the joy of just being alive in such a place. Back at camp and after food and water, it was time to consider the way down. The scramble up to the hut had been an enjoyable time, but now this was covered in 5cm of fresh snow. Very slippery in boots as the snow wasn't frozen to the rocks, but was rather starting to melt in the wakening sun. I decided that two slings and karabiners could be used to clip into the wire ropes and I also put on crampons and removed my ice axe as a grappling hook. Just a Scottish

winter scramble really, which I relished, but not what many of those descending were ready for after expending deep reserves of energy on the high altitude snow plod to the roof of Europe.

To reinforce this point, one guy who was guarding his party with a rope as they started the descent slipped himself and had a nasty bottom bump as the rope stopped him from exploring faster possibilities for the route down. Crampons made all the difference here and I quickly overtook the floundering teams, clipping into all the wire ropes, and was soon back at that lovely couloir crossing. A quick skip across this and I was as good as home and dry and shortly after enjoying a cold drink from an internal pressure distorted coke can at the lower hut.

So, a really good week's holiday, if a little intensive, and I will be back for more as soon as possible.



The summit

YRC Meets - From Britain to the Alps to the World

F. David Smith

The 1957 Club Expedition accident in the Jungal Himal had a profound effect on subsequent expeditions further afield. For the next twenty five years little was said or done, though private meets to the Alps continued and were successful. It was perhaps the encouragement of Cliff Downham that was the catalyst in new thinking in the Club. During my presidency an official Alpine meet was on the meets list but it failed because family holidays took precedence. During Alan Linford's presidency a meet to the Pyrenees failed to get committee approval, however a meet did take place, poorly attended but enjoyed by those that were there.

Dennis Armstrong took over the presidency in 1984 and asked me if I would try once again to get an overseas meet. The words of Edward Whymper came to mind,

"The recollections: of past pleasures cannot be effaced Even now as I write they crowd before me. First comes an endless series of pictures, magnificent in form, effect and contour. I see the great peaks with clouded tops, seeming to mount up forever."

My own mind :filled with similar recollections and I agreed enthusiastically to have a go.

It seemed to me impractical to expect members to abandon their families as would have been normal in the early days of the Club, the world of Whymper had changed and so had the expectations of members' families. Could we create a meet style that would satisfy members without that

old cry "It's the thin end of the wedge" being heard again.

I had had the good fortune of fourteen 'seasons' in various Alpine regions, invariably with two or three Club members, But this was a completely different exercise. Early in 1986 a circular went out, the response was almost immediate, soon I had a list of 26 names of which two thirds were members. Only a very few had previous experience; what would be the chance of success?

Les Hauderes in the Val d'Herens was chosen as the venue as it offered something for most abilities. It had a good campsite too. The early arrivals had an 'interesting' day on the Petit Dent d'Vevevi in excellent weather. From the campsite the Pigne d'Arolla dominates the head of the valley, it is a straight forward snow peak and was to be our first expedition using huts. No fewer than ten of our party succeeded in reaching the summit. From the same hut the more adventurous turned to the more demanding l'Eveque, which was defended by a huge bergschrund. Success breeds success and we could hardly wait to go up to another hut.

Mont Blanc d'Cheilon was added to our score before that most splendid peak in the area, Dent Blanche, beckoned. We experienced a severe alpine storm en route to the Rossier hut and prospects for the morrow were not good. Newcomers were learning the fickleness of alpine weather. However the new day was good and all went well until we were held up by a slow Spanish party. Time being of the essence in Alpine climbing, this delay cost us the summit by a mere 300 feet. But another hard lesson was learnt, 'to turn back and reach easy ground before nightfall'.



1998 Alpine meet in Austria and a high speed descent down easy angled, soft snow descending from the Wilder Freiger to the Sultzenau Hut

The subsequent meet report ...

"Some purists said it shouldn't be held, some pessimists that it couldn't be held, and some sceptics said that it shouldn't be held They were all wrong: the Meet was well attended and a great success"

Roger Allen

The presence of the ladies in no way detracted from the meet, that special camaraderie that one experiences on Whit meets was equally present in Les Hauderes, The next alpine meet was based on Saas Grund and was given the stamp of approval by the presence of the President, Peter Swindells, it attracted over thirty members and guests. The number of peaks far exceeded last year's bag and included seven 4000m summits, including Switzerland's highest, the Dom and the Lenspitz - Nadelhorn traverse.

YRC Alpinists demonstrated their competence by retrieving one of the best guides in Saas from a crevasse. The unfortunate man was being held

by his client whose cries were unheeded by several other parties. Michael Smith took the initiative and soon got to grips with the situation. The victim was brought to the surface in copy book style. We were rewarded by the guide with a bottle of wine waiting for us on our return to the hut after a great day on the Allalinhom.

Subsequent years saw meets in Pontresina, Argentiere, Arolla again,

Ailefroide, Norway, Randa, the Oberland, Picos des Europa, Ailefroide again, Saas Grund again and Neustift Austria. Perhaps the most satisfying aspect of these meets has been the widening horizons of several members who only dreamed of setting foot on these majestic mountains. It has also brought several new young and active members into the Club. But as travel has become easier, the greater mountain ranges have become the norm, starting with Bolivia in 1988, the Jugal Himal in 1995, Rolwalling and Iceland in 1997 and Bolivia again in 1999.

Added to these have been skiing expeditions to Norway, the Alps and Colorado. Also international potholing has taken off with highly successful meets in France and Oman. The success of any club is measured in its activity and it is up to members, particularly the younger members to keep these activities going, involving as many newcomers as possible.

Triglav for the Elderly

Some notes on the Julian Alps

George Spenceley

"You must climb Triglav," everyone said. "It's easy. Everyone climbs Triglav." This was repeated even after I told them I was seventy eight. Actually an ascent of Triglav had been on my mind for some time and being assured it was easy, even for the elderly, gave me some comfort.

Triglav, 2864m, is the highest mountain in the Julian Alps and is a source of inspiration to the Slovenian people, even more so since independence. "You are not a true Slovene until you have climbed Triglav," I was told, and many do for they are a very open-air minded people. I was assured, even early in the season, I would not be alone on the mountain.

I had seen the Julian Alps several times before. Their summits pierce the skyline as you descend the Wurzen Pass from Austria to Kranjska Gora, and from Mojstrana I had looked up the green Vrata Valley to the great grey north wall of Triglav, almost 1800 metres of near vertical limestone. From this angle any easy route for whatever-age seemed unlikely.

The Julian Alps have been much neglected by British mountaineers and yet, while this far south-eastern tail end to the Alpine chain contains no peak of great height and only a feeble apology for a glacier, it does display a remarkable boldness of feature. It is a relatively uncrowded compact wilderness which compares favourably with the more popular centres in the west. One writer has described the Julian Alps as offering the finest limestone scenery in Europe and our much travelled Dr Longstaffe, writing

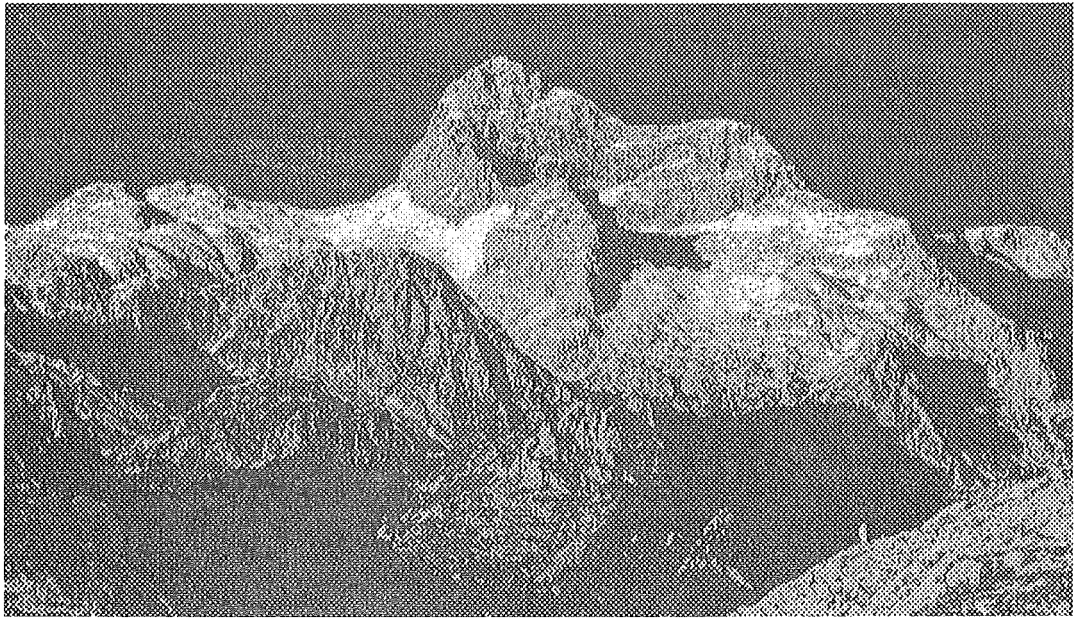
of them to a friend, said "that after forty years of devotion to mountain scenery they have become for me the most desirable."

Dr Julian Kugy was the father of mountaineering in these parts, a man of legendary distinction whose name, even today, is spoken of with reverence. At the southern end of the Vršič Pass is the Kugy Memorial where he stands staring at the Trenta mountains which he loved so much. In his classic book *Alpine Pilgrimage* he wrote about the Julian Alps with great feeling.

Kugy took to the hills first as a botanist searching endlessly through the high boulder fields and along the terraces for the legendary scabious Trenta. This gave him an introduction to the hunters and poachers who alone knew these mountains, the best of whom were to become his friends and guides. In their company he was to make many first ascents and in his book he writes of them with great affection. There were no huts in those days, no artificial aids. His ascents were made from bivouacs with only a blanket and a pinewood fire for comfort. He describes them so well you can almost smell the smoke.

One of Kugy's first mountain ascents was of Črna Prst in 1873 and it was from its summit that he gained his first sight of Triglav, the ascent of which in those days was a rare undertaking. Črna Prst was to become my first Slovene mountain from where I also gained my first sight of Triglav at least from the south. Through binoculars I could just make out the top hut, a tiny brown blob in a sea of grey scree.

Črna Prst is the terminal peak of a long undulating ridge that borders the south side of the valley, extending from above Lake Bohinj almost to



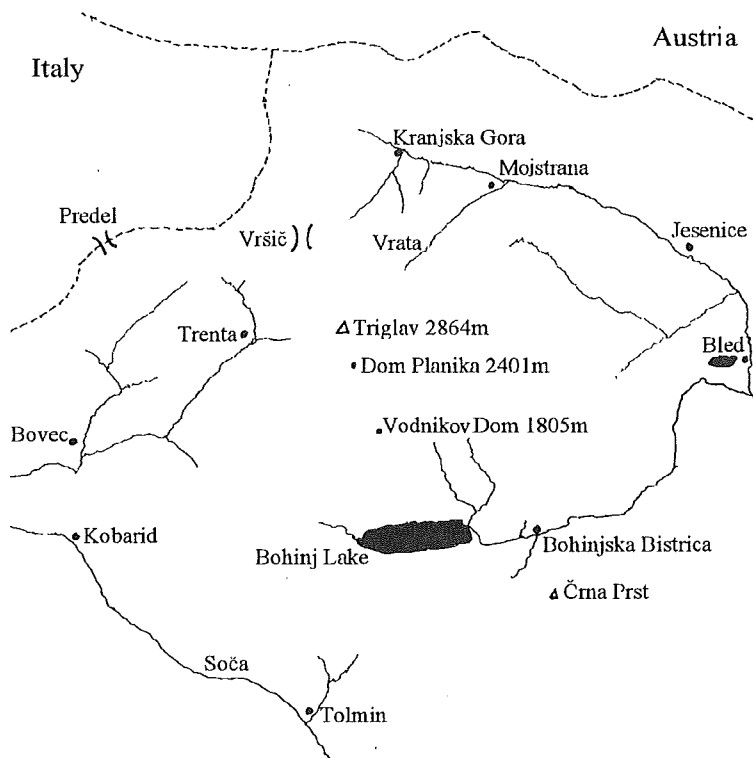
Bled. On its crest is the mountain hut Dom Zorka Jelinčiča which serves as a staging post on the 800-km. Slovene Alpine Trail which runs from Maribor to Koper on the coast. Here is a challenge for any long distance mountain walker with a month or more to spare.

My modest mountain scrambles were now to be broken by two weeks in neighbouring Croatia but return we did, not at first to Bohinj but to the west side of the range. We drove up the Soča Valley and stopped off at Kobarid or what was once Caporetto, the white town of Hemingway's Farewell to Arms. This was the centre of the Isonzo Front and some of the costliest battles of the First World War. The Italian defence works are still to be seen stretching along the ridges as high even as 2000 metres. It was our error in following one of these old lines of communication that was to be partly responsible for our failure to climb Krasji Vir.

The Alpine Club men have been active with the paint brush. Where earlier climbers struggled hard to find their way, now you follow a line of red

dots. Splendid you may say and, indeed, in the forest, which is the prelude to any mountain ascent, the line of dots is helpful. But missing one red dot at an abrupt change of direction we continued forward along an obviously well prepared way but, alas, we later recognised quite lacking in the required red dots. This was a well engineered trail along which mules laden with guns and ammunition and all the appurtenances of war had no doubt laboured. Much time was lost and later even more time when at a point where the trail divided the painter seemed to have run out of paint. When at last we were out of the forest and on to the summit ridge we retreated in the face of threatening thunder.

Sometime later we were in camp at Trenta, so enclosed by high mountain walls that for much of the day the valley lay in shadow. The meagre soil of this narrow, stony valley can offer but a poor livelihood. This no doubt accounts for the menfolk traditionally turning to the mountains for profit, hunting and poaching. Many were later to become well known guides. Of the several sides to Triglav this



west approach was the last to be climbed. It was not until August 1881 that, with the guide Andreas Komac, Kugy made the first ascent. It was to become known as the Kugyweg.

I made a reconnaissance towards Triglav up the Zadnjica Valley to a point at its head where it becomes encircled by steep limestone walls, seemingly blocking all possibility of exit. It was only by careful study that the way out could be seen, but once located the route is easy, even if long and steep. It's like a giant's Lord's Rake, a ledge that diagonally cleaves the left hand wall. By taking this to 1700 metres and then doubling back, the upper slopes to Triglav can be reached. That was for another day I thought, and by way of exercise I took a valley to the right to the col of Čez Dol.

It had been my intention to climb Triglav from this side, but the Bohinj valley where we had already made friends seemed more inviting than the sunless Trenta valley, so we crossed the spectacular Vršič Pass and drove

round to Bohinjska Bistrica. Far less touristy than either Bled or Ribčev Laz by Bohinj lake, it is a small working rural community more concerned with its own local affairs than the passing visitor, but all the more friendly for being so. It has a quiet, welcoming camp site by the infant Sava river. It was from near here that I would make my approach to Triglav.

A daytime temperature of 34 degrees C. was forecast but I made an early start and gained the shade of the beech forest to begin the climb out of the Voje Valley before I had need to suffer. By the time I reached the dwarf pine above, there was some freshness in the air.

It's some years since I last trudged up to an alpine hut and I had forgotten how long and weary the way can be. It took me almost six hours to reach the first hut of Vodnikov Dom at 1805 metres. Triglav can be climbed from here but for me it would be a long day. I was determined to reach the top hut, Dom Planika at 2406 metres - the little brown blob I had earlier seen through binoculars. It still seemed a long way ahead - three hours I was told, but it took me four.

For some distance the way was almost level but enlivened a little by some safe but exposed rock traverses. Even before I had started to climb I was already tired, but happily there are places on a mountain that seem to be specially marked out for a halt, offering a good view and perhaps a vague suggestion of comfort. After a

slight descent I came to such a place. Meanwhile black clouds gathered in the west and thunder rolled across the mountains, the sound reverberating from crag to crag. It was a dramatic demonstration of nature's forces, but there was little rain and it soon passed.

Allowing for rests it had taken rather more than ten hours to climb the 2000 metres to Dom Planika, which is some measure of my age. By the time I reached the hut I must have looked both ancient and exhausted for the lady warden, in an act of unusual solicitude and like any well trained Sherpani, knelt at my feet and removed my boots. It was a pleasant international gathering at the hut that night: Italian, Slovene, Czech and German, but apparently I was the first British visitor for a very long time.

If the ascent of Triglav is easy - which it certainly is - the members of the Slovene Alpine Club are responsible for they have established a marked route. There are not only the ubiquitous red dots but at all places steep and threatening there are fixed wire ropes and stanchions. The mountain has been thoroughly tamed - versicherungen as Kugy called it, and as he also deplored it. In earlier years I would have shared his view but now I admit I gratefully embraced all possible aids to my progress and security. I was not alone; the even more timid linked themselves up with harness, slings and karabiners - really unnecessary precautions. With a little care the route is neither difficult nor dangerous, although in places it is highly exposed and the ridge exceedingly narrow. Regrettably artificial aids can invite the uninitiated pilgrim to mount the staircase until finding the way too intimidating they turn back in gloom and disappointment.

On my descent I did meet such an unfortunate. A rather overweight German, splendid in all the gear of a skilled alpinist, was seeking on a tight rope to shepherd his protesting frau up the first chimney. Hanging between heaven and earth she lay flat upon the rocks, prostrate with fear, no doubt vowing never, never again.

The descent was rapid and easy so long as I could steady myself with wire and stanchion, but it was on the lower slopes of boulder, block scree and minor scrambling that my pace was pathetically reduced. Where in earlier years I like to think I could step down neatly in balance, I was now tempted to sit and slither in - most inelegant descent. I had a beer at the hut, which was expensive for all supplies come up by helicopter, and then I made my descent to Vodnikov to spend the night.

The warden, on learning I had been up Triglav, enquired my age. When it spread about that I was 78, other visitors came up to shake my hand and some to offer slugs of the highly potent local grappa. It was all very good for the ego. The next morning, a four hour descent took me to a somewhat anxious Sylvie who had come up some way to meet me.

I was very impressed with the Julian Alps and am anxious to return. Although the peaks may not have the height and majesty of the greater Alps they are not lacking in grandeur, There are routes and rock climbs offering all levels of difficulty, and splendid treks from hut to hut: all this in a country relatively uncrowded, exceedingly friendly and a third cheaper than any western resort area. A good venue for a meet I thought.

Climbing on Lundy

Adrian Bridge

In July 98, Too Josephy, Adrian Dixon, Phil Giles and I spent a week on Lundy. We were very lucky with the weather - it only rained on our last day, the rest being generally sunny with gentle winds.

The island is about 3½ miles long and half a mile wide, its long axis being north/south. Its western side is almost continuous cliff with few easy ways down. The island is reached via the SS Mildenhall - a German made boat which started life as a ferry many years ago and was later bought to serve Lundy. The boat starts from Ilfracombe and takes about two hours, mooring off the south eastern end of the island. A jetty is being built so that it can tie up to the land; then, we were ferried ashore in a small boat.

Accommodation on the island is restricted to a maximum of about 150 people, between cottages and camping. We rented a cottage near the Old Lighthouse on the highest part of the island, and about ¼ mile from the pub and shop. The light had been removed many years ago after two newer lighthouses had been built, one at each end of the island, nearer sea level, because the fog was often too thick for the higher light to be seen. Two deck chairs had been put on the platform - it was grand to sit there, surveying the scene!

Bird restrictions apply from April to July and about two thirds of the cliffs are restricted. The rest provide plenty to go at and we visited different areas every day. The Devil's Slide area gives novel climbing; a huge low angled granite slab with small holds and rather sparse protection on routes such as Satan's Slip, up its centre.

Most routes are approached by abseiling, often with steep/loose scrambling to begin - frequently the more worrying part of the day. One dampish morning we made a visit to, and a sea level traverse around Rat Island, which is accessible at low tide. Seals came to watch us clamber around on very slippery rock. I could imagine they were amused by our clumsy antics, which ended, disappointingly, in enforced wading at the end of our circuit.

The southern quarter of the island is farmed - sheep, corn and a few horses. Most of the buildings exist there. On the rest of it, dark brown Soay sheep and Fallow deer are easily seen, together with a large variety of sea birds and the more commonly seen land birds. There are said to be Sikka deer too, but we did not see any. Probably the most impressive aspect was the vast profusion of flowering plant amongst the grasses covering the plateau of most of the island. They are all small, kept down by the usually strong winds, but have seemingly endless variations of shape and colour. The unique Lundy Cabbage (not much like a cabbage, unless it has gone to seed) was said to be having a good year; a few plants were seen on the more sheltered eastern side - straggly green stems with occasional leaf and yellow flower.

On only one day did we see other climbers, it seemed as if we had the entire cliff scene to ourselves, which heightened the enjoyment. The atmosphere was most restful - no roads or cars (just a few tracks and a Landrover belonging to the farm), not many people and very comfortable accommodation. The whole island is administered by the Landmark Trust. Their property is quite expensive to rent, but kept at a good standard.

Saturday 11 th			
Montague Steps			
PG & ADB	Nightmoves	HS	.. 105 ft
AD & TJ	Cableway	HS	.. 110 ft
Sunday 12 th			
Devil's Slide			
PG & TJ	Albion	VS	350 ft
	Devil's Slide	HS	400 ft
ADB & AD	Satan's Slip	E1	330 ft
	Devil's Slide	HS	400 ft
The Constable			
PG & TJ	Eveninawl	VS	45 ft
ADB&AD	Original Route	HS	40 ft
Monday 13 th			
Focal Buttress			
ADB & TJ	Ulysses Factor.....	VS	... 340 ft
Kistvaen Buttress			
AD & PG	Bitter Lemons	S	110 ft
TJ & ADB	Clea	HS	80 ft
Tuesday 14 th			
St Patrick's Buttress			
ADB & PG	Holiday in Cambodia	HVS	.. 150ft
	Shamrock	VS	160 ft
TJ & AD	Shamrock.	VS	160 ft
	Cow Pie	HS	180 ft
Wednesday 15 th			
Weird Wall			
ADB,AD & TJ	Apsara	HVS	280 ft
Picnic Bay			
PG & TJ	Unnamed	(S)	85 ft
Devil's Slide			
ADB & AD	Albion	VS	350 ft
Thursday 16 th			
Flying Buttress South			
AD & PG	Horseman's Route	HS	160 ft
	Diamond Solitaire	VS	160 ft
ADB & TJ	Double Diamond	HVS	140 ft
	Horseman's Route		
	Step ye Gaily	HVS	.. 90 ft
Friday 17 th			
First Buttress South			
ADB & PG	Formula One	HVS	130 ft
Sunset Promontory			
AD & TJ	Eclipse	VS	130 ft
Flying Buttress			
All	Battery Rib	VD	95 ft
Saturday 18 th			
Sunset Promontory			
All	Eclipse (if wet)	VS	... 130 ft

We climbed every day and visited most parts of the island. A list of routes follows. A storm had been blowing up in the Atlantic over our last night there. We set off in the dry to climb on our last day and got overtaken by wind and rain just after we had abseiled to sea level. Hence, what should have been a delightful finale ended in somewhat miserable conditions wet people, wet tangled rope, out of sight, high wind, can't communicate, wet rock, more difficult etc etc (you know what its like!).

The boat trip back was somewhat rough, and en route the captain decided to go to Barmouth instead of Ilfracombe. As there is a sand bar preventing access to Barmouth, and as we had set off at a lowish tide, we had to wallow around for an hour or so before the tide had risen and water was deep enough to get across the bar. This meant going in circles - not comfortable in a small boat in a rough sea. Many were the technical yawns. Phi! was one of the performers!

Greater Cuillin Traverse

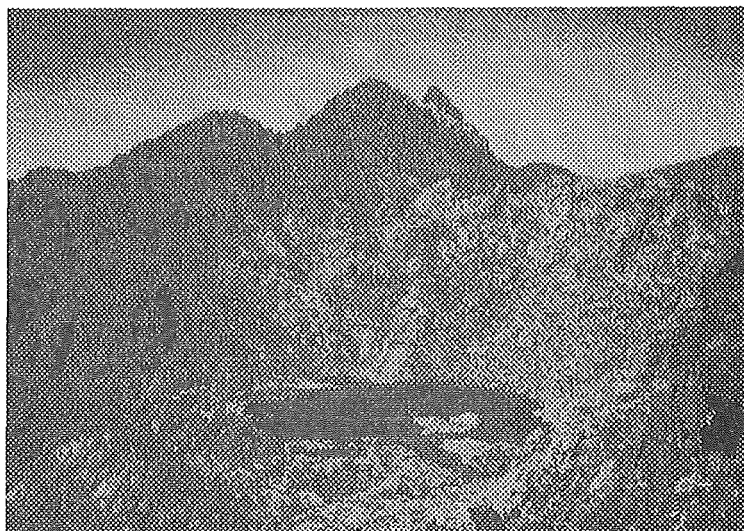
Skye, May
1999

Adrian Bridge

The idea of attempting the Greater Cuillin Traverse had been in my mind since a conversation with Mike Hobson at the dinner a couple of years ago. That plan did not mature, but one did this year (nearly)

The basic idea was copied from Bill Murray who completed this route in 1939. Start at Gars-bheinn and finish after Bla Bheinn, having set up a camp at the end of the descent from Bla Bheinn ready to collapse into. Murray chose Loch an Athain, we chose Camasunary for this camp site.

On a glorious Sunday, we set the Camasunary camp by a stream on the south east end of Bla Bheinn. Then, walked north towards Glen Sligachan and climbed Garbh Bhein followed by Clach Glas and Bla Bheinn, to refresh



Corie Lagan with Sgumain (left), Sgurr Alasdair & Thearlaich (right)

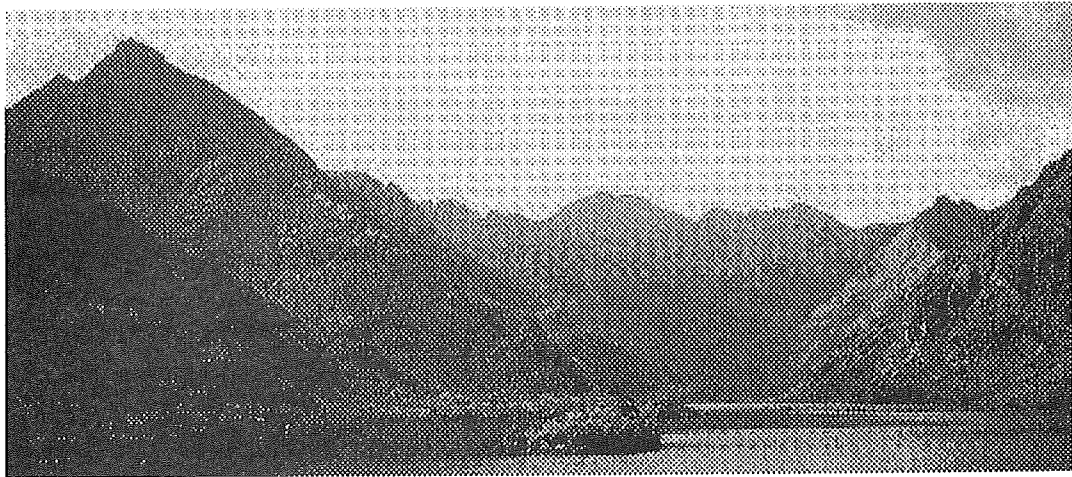
twenty-odd year old memories of the route. Some members may remember the no trousers episode

We set off from Glen Brittle at 10pm, getting to the top of Gars-bheinn at one. The moon had risen enough to make shadows and it never got dark enough to need torches. Sunrise at the ID Gap gave us red, pink, orange then yellow daylight all within ten minutes - a wonderful display of light in a dramatic setting

With a few route finding errors, four on a rope (though not all at once!), sack hauling and some roped down climbing, we finally arrived at Sgurr nan Gillean at 7.30 pm, having had perfect weather all day. On our



The view from Elgol with Gars-bheinn (left) and the peaks of Bruach na Frithe (centre). Am Basteir and Sgurr nan Gillean are at the far north end of the ridge. To the right with two gullies is Sgurr na Stri.



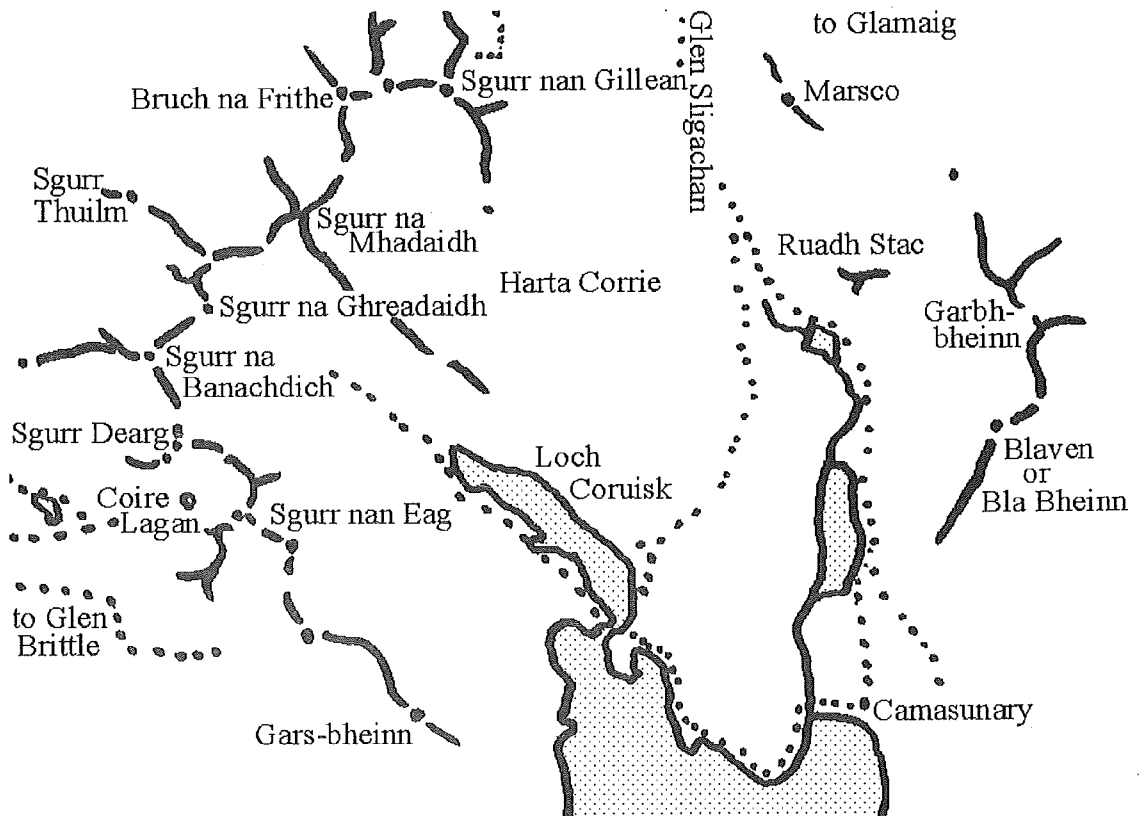
The view across Coruisk to Sgurr Dubh Beag (left) and the Dubhs Ridge to Sgurr Dubh Mor further right.

descent, via the bealach just before Sgurr na h-Umha, cloud and rain came in to spoil the day. Detouring to avoid getting cragfast before we reached the rather boggy Glen Sligachan took extra time and meant that the Clach Glas and Bla Bheinn part - in cloud, rain and darkness - was unwise. Also we felt tired and footsore. So, we trudged back to Camasunary camp, and next day, with it, back to Glen Brittle - mostly in the rain

Memories of two superb days will long outlast those of wet trudging. The Greater Traverse remains: I now know how to do it, we'll have to go again - any interest?

Participants:

Adrian Bridge,
Adrian Dixon,
Neil Grant and
Andy Wells



A Day on the Cuillin

June 1930

a partial account by J.D.Brown

"Two o'clock:, time to move". Rummy's voice. What the hell? and then memory came flooding back.

The previous evening around six o'clock:, the four of us. Rummy Sale, David Reed, Ben Wood and I had been lounging on the ridge of Sgurr Sgumain after a pleasant day's rambling on Stron na Ciche. It was a lovely evening in the middle of a heat wave. Some imp of mischief had made me suggest doing the traverse of the Cuillin ridge next day. Rummy promptly accepted, David opted out on the score of a weak ankle and Ben because he was a novice. So we descended to Mary Campbell's cottage where we were staying and surveyed the commissariat. Mary would provide plenty of sandwiches and scones but liquid was a problem, we had two small oranges and one water bottle. Prudence suggested postponing the venture for a day but then the weather was set fair for the mOITOW but who knew what lay after that. So it was agreed that David and Ben would visit Portree, buy lots of oranges and meet us on the top of SgUIT a Greadaidh about midday.

It all looked very different at two in the morning but we heaved ourselves out into breeches and tricouni nailed boots, breakfasted on Mary's ample fare, packed a rucksack with a large supply of food, the two oranges and the water bottle, slung an eighty foot hemp rope (no nice light nylon in those days) round a shoulder and set off in the cool light of a Skye dawn.

The sun was not yet showing but a pale blue-grey cloudless sky and no wind gave promise of another scorching day as we made our way slowly up the moor to the foot of the Sgumain shoulder.

Then the long traverse to Gars-bheinn keeping high to avoid the 'Bear Garden'. That was our name for big hollow at the foot of Choire Grundha, filled with enormous boulders and overgrown with shrubs into which we had stumbled a few days before. It was a lethal place because one couldn't see what was boulder and what was space. We paused at the bottom of Conie Bhig to drink our fill from the stream and to fill the water bottle then turned up the long shoulder of Gars-bheinn, This was a mistake: we should have gone up the come and back-tracked to the Gars-bheinn summit because the last two hundred feet of the shoulder were composed of fine scree which took a lot of time and effort to surmount.

Six o'clock saw us sitting on the summit of Gars-bheinn, what a sight lay before us. To our left stretched the great arc of the Cuillin ridge-every peak standing black against the cloudless sky curving round to the spire of Nan Gilleann our ultimate objective. Immediately below lay Coruisk:-still in deep shadow, with the waters of the loch showing black through a purple haze. Indeed a place where bogles might lie asleep. To our right over the mass of Sgurr na Stri lay the cleft of Glen Sligachan and the mighty mass of Blaven. To the south-east the waters of Scavaig were sparkling and beyond them the long peninsula of Elgol. Far to the south over the Mallaig coast one could see a square topped lump that could only be Ben Nevis. Due south over a flat sea lay the Island of Soay and beyond it the towering peaks of Rhum. A bit further west the flat island of Canna and then on the far horizon a dim shape, Barra the southernmost of the Western Isles.

To parody Goldsmith:

We gazed and gazed
And still the wonder grew
That one small isle
Could harbour such a view.

A Slight Slip

Revd, Jim Rusher

It was a murky Saturday morning on top of the Glyders. The seven of us were looking for the right path through the bouders topping the ridge. I became separated from the rest of the party.

A slight slip off a damp rock and on the way down I caught my left leg. It bore my whole weight but became released shortly after I hung from it. The ankle was twisted and, as I was to discover much later, the fibula broken. Having sat for a couple of minutes I started my descent and about twenty minutes later rejoined the party. Those who had been searching for me returned, then we set off down the two miles to the PYG. Someone kindly lent me a second stick and, as we neared the road, someone else took my rucksack.

I drove down the Llanberis Pass to the hut where the President sold me a bottle of white wine. What an excellent meal Tim cooks! Afterwards he gave an illustrated talk on the Icelandic expedition. And so to bed with some slight difficulty climbing into the middle bunk.

At 6.30am, while washing, I noted that my ankle had a delightful combination of colours: red, black and purple with white edges. Stood on one leg immersing my ankle in cold water a member enters and says "That's an interesting foot, can I fetch my camera?"

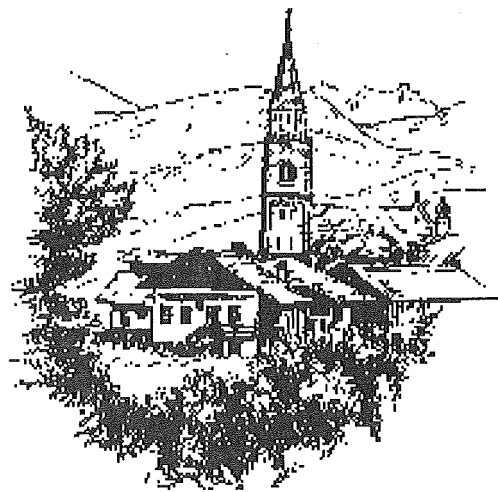
After breakfast, I left for Solihull down the M6 with the car's clutch seeming very heavy. On arriving home I found my grandson had taken everyone to Toys-R-Us and the

honeysuckle required trimming. I get the steps out.

As a doctor my wife took one look at the ankle and said "That's really nasty" and despite protesting I'm taken to the local hospital. The x-ray showed a broken leg, but more dramatically "Cellulitis", a condition where the blood cannot move out of the damaged portions of the lower leg. If left any longer the result could indeed have been really nasty.

My stay in hospital was enlivened by a neighbouring patient's tales of the Punjab. Also by my having, late one night, to hobble along the corridor to raise the alarm when two rough Asians arrived with knives apparently to threaten a recent immigrant from South Africa who'd been defrauded of £2000. Interesting places ... hospitals.

I stayed in the trauma ward for four nights, learned how to use crutches and was discharged with no plaster for the broken fibula. Ten days later, I was in Toronto ready to enjoy a tour of New England with Canadian relatives.



Skiing on Water

Derek A. Smithson

We still only have one word for it - *snow*. As it melts and we skiers persist in trying to make waxes and klisters perform: but melting snow is not like snow, it is more like water.

We had been skiing for a week or more in Femundmarka, Norway, with temperatures never above minus five degrees centigrade, when we noticed the river had small grey patches where the snow was absorbing water and becoming slush. The next morning those grey patches were still there. The river was just across the road from our base, Lystad House. The main road carried only a couple of cars an hour.

Once across the river there were all sorts of wonderful places to ski up and down. However, the bridge was quarter of a mile down the road.

At minus 10 or 15, or whatever the morning temperature was that day, the river had to be frozen but I took the precaution of using the more usual crossing place instead of crossing just where the ski happened to take me. Across the road, step over the fence, ten yards to the steep bank and ski at an angle onto the river. Then suddenly I found myself standing in about six inches of water only a little way out from the bank. Clumsily turning to the bank I succeeded in making the hole in the snow bigger. I then managed two or three steps before I found I had insufficient strength to lift my ski. There was about two inches of slush firmly attached to the top and to the bottom of each ski. In my fury at the stupidity of life I detached the ski and threw them to the top of the bank.



This was witnessed by my wife from the house. She could not see me, just two ski appearing.

I fought my way up the bank in the deep snow and reached the vicinity of the ski only to realise that without ski it was going to be a major expedition to reach the road. The depth of snow prevented the forward movement of the leg in anything approaching a normal walking action. So now I had to scrape off the snow sticking to the ski which was beginning to freeze. Next I had to trample around to make enough space of trodden snow to reattach them. The ski then allowed me to stay near the surface of the snow and reach the road and safety.

Back indoors I stood the ski in a bowl in the hall to dry while my wife and I had a walk in the sunshine. Later I skied down to the bridge to restart my day.

That was 1999...

..., *but in 1998...*

We were touring on ski, again in Norway, and the weather became mild and we spent the day struggling with wet snow. Towards the end we descended to a lake we had to cross to gain the hut, only about one kilometre away. The slush reach the edge of the lake where it became water about 20 centimetres deep, below that was a strong layer of ice - at least we hoped it was strong.

We took our skins off because of the slush, slavishly sticking to the rule of keeping skins dry even after they were so obviously wet. We set off with water coming into our boots. When we reached the middle a strong wind nearly blew us backwards as we had so little grip on the underlying ice. The ski gave us reassurance that we would probably not break through the ice but it might have been better to leave the skins on.

The boots and skins dried overnight and it froze hard outside, but these were the only comforters as we thought of the four kilometre of lake we had to cross. We all stood hesitantly at the edge of the lake because the ice didn't appear thick enough. I made a hole and the ice over water appeared to be about two centimetres thick but then I realised I had no real idea of how thick the ice needed to be! Our leader said we should go, so we went, and as the ice creaked and groaned we pretended we were confident there was a second layer of solid ice just beneath the water we could see through the thin top ice. All the way across the ice starred under our weight but never broke and towards the end there were even some brave souls who stopped to take photographs.

Himalayan Lesson

Derek Bush

Picture the scene: a field at a small summer Sherpa settlement called Na in the Rolwaling valley, at 13200 feet.

We were having a rest day, although we had been out in the morning with our leader Motup to put the final touches to our acclimatisation programme. We had been trying on our high level gear, making sure our crampons fitted etc.

The weather was cool but the clouds were high. I was sitting outside my tent practising my prusik knots. (My climbing friends will know how difficult this is for me!)

All of a sudden an unfamiliar Sherpa came up and sat down. He was almost as broad as he was tall. He explained in passable English that he had walked up from Beding which is the highest permanent Sherpa settlement in the Rolwaling.

He sat down, took my pieces of rope from me and promptly tied me a couple of prusik loops. No problem!

I then asked him if he was a climbing Sherpa and he said "Yes". Asked if he had climbed on Everest he said "Yes". Had he been to the summit? and he said "Yes." "How many times?" "Four times" he said.

He then bid me farewell, addressed me as *Sir* and wandered off to talk to the rest of the party.

It made me feel very humble and not a little inadequate!

Motup told us later that Beding was well known for its hard climbing Sherpas,

No fewer than twenty four of its villagers had summited Everest.

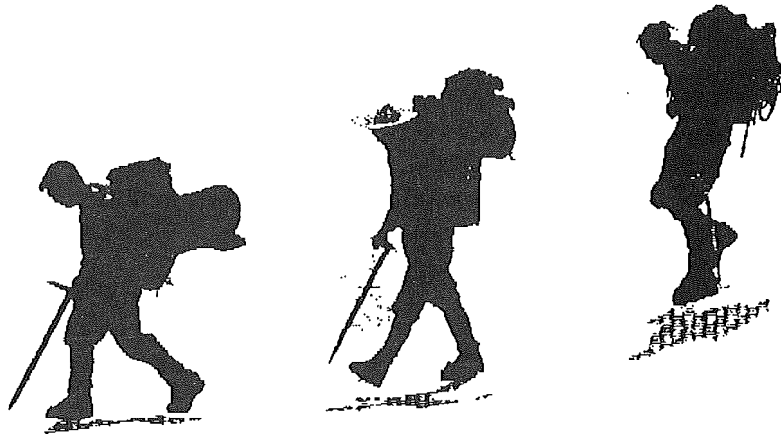
Climbing Ethics

Derek Smithson

Robin Campbell presented a paper at the National Mountaineering Council in 1974 with the title *Climbing Ethics*. This was reproduced in *The Games Climbers Play*, a book edited by Ken Wilson and published in 1978. I read it in 1999 and consider it still to be thought provoking. Here is my impudent attempt to summarise *Climbing Ethics*.

Campbell's paper concluded
... by reiterating my belief that ethics in climbing as traditionally practised is not a serious business. I have no doubt that Tom Patey's attitude was the correct one - treat such things lightly with a song or with satire. It is perhaps not irrelevant that he lived in beautiful surroundings and had no need to pretend that climbing was anything other than occasionally exciting fun.

This very much reflects his opening discourse
Ethics is a serious business; I should like to say right at the start that I'm quite sure that climbing should not be a serious business.... When mountaineers become excessively serious as well as excessively numerous this, I think, is simply because they wish to invest their mountaineering activities with a significance which their other activities palpably lack. I believe this is a factor which has led to the tremendous increase in outdoor education. The mountaineer in charge of children has his fantasies fulfilled -



he is now engaged in what we all agree is a serious business, namely the care of children in dangerous places.

Campbell does not include professional mountain guides as suitable targets for his rocks.

He lists a minimum set of *Categorical Imperatives for Ethical Mountaineers*.

These are:

- 1 *Climb the Mountain*
- 2 *Test your Skill*
- 3 *Test your Nerve*
- 4 *Love the Mountains*

And expands on them as follows.

1. *...nothing much need be said about this except that it is the primary source of ethical conflict since it is most easily obeyed by disobeying 2, 3 or 4.*
2. *This imperative leads us to put a negative value on the use of mechanical aids of various kinds and puts a positive value on the selection of climbs which will have a level of difficulty at or near our own limits ... Why do we value this Second Imperative? I think simply because climbing by means of your own limbs and wits at a level difficult enough to be taxing is psychologically satisfying.*
3. *A wonderful analogy for examining this imperative is the game of Russian Roulette. Russian Roulette*

is undoubtedly stimulating, sometimes fatally so. No doubt it is a tremendously exciting pastime while it lasts. However it would be a dull game when played with no bullets and a short one when played with them all. This Third Imperative conflicts with a most important general ethical value - the Value of Human Life. ... this works against the survival of this imperative in mountaineering enterprises where society at large is involved

4. I suggest that this imperative should be interpreted quite literally, so that we treat mountains as we would treat a lover. Of course, the conjugal relationship is somewhat promiscuous - there are a lot of us and a lot of them and we each of us loves all of them. It is as a result of 'love of mountain' that climbers deplore the acts of defacement and defilement to which our mountains are so often subjected. Defacement by chair lifts, pegmarks, rubbish, beaten paths - all are acts of assault upon a loved one and are therefore deplorable.

This delightful concept led me to the thought that the defacers are using the mountains as prostitutes, but some of the offenders love mountains in their own way so maybe they are using them as bisexual. I must admit, there have been days, in bad conditions, when I have cast doubts on the parentage of mountains, but not their sexuality. In this one time male dominated world, mountains have always been 'she'.

Defilement by excessive indiscriminate promiscuity - so-called 'people pollution' - is also deplorable.

A final implication of this imperative is that rape is unethical:

the mountain must have the chance of turning you down.

... there seems to be a shift in the relative force of the four imperatives that comes with age and experience. In the beginning 1 is paramount, then 2 & 3 and finally 4. This explains the often troublesome value-conflicts between young and old climbers ... A third blow is the introduction to our fragile world of large numbers of climbers trained by schools or by the 'adventure' industry. Since they are trained by professionals they are inevitably less impressed by the Third Imperative than the traditional young climber.

I recently met a British born, Norwegian guide, Leslie Ayres, who from his involvement with mountain safety led me to believe he now has to teach the Third and Fourth Imperative to many young people who have been taught climbing on indoor walls as part of physical education. They taught it as a competitive game without any danger and are extremely skilled except in matters relating to real crags - unreliable rock and placements, weather, love. Perhaps we should work towards identifying this training as quite distinct from mountaineering, as speed walking is.

The remaining kind of professional climber is the Media Man, and there are several well known examples of this species. Here again I feel that the Fourth Imperative says clearly: Do Not Be a Mountain Pimp; Do Not Let the Armchaired Millions Come at Me.

Robin Campbell says much more and makes his views much clearer in the complete text, but I doubt that your attention span would manage the whole.

Walking

Derek A Smithson

Based on *Shanks's Pony*
by Morris Marples, 1960



This book is a history of walking, but, because it is based on written records, it is more like a history of figures from literature. However, some of the statements seemed noteworthy.

One literary pedestrian, William Hutton, said towards the end of the 18th century, "Every man has his hobby horse, and I ride mine when I walk on foot". At seventy-eight he walked from Birmingham to Hadrian's Wall and both ways along the wall.

The first sponsored walker seems to be Taylor, who made all sorts of journeys, not just walking, in the early 17th century. Marples says, "His usual method of procedure, when about to embark on a venture of this kind, was to make his plans known by means of prospectuses called 'Taylor's Bills,' which were distributed in large numbers with the object of securing subscribers in advance".

"Coleridge and Hucks had certainly shown they could walk. The total distance, apart from incidental excursions, was over 600 miles and (unless we are to assume one or two unrecorded passages by coach) there were times when they covered more than forty miles a day. Such distances, however became quite normal during the next generation".

Canon Cooper conceived the idea of walking from Filey to Rome in the late 19th century, more or less in a straight line, and for practice walked to London after Evensong on one Sunday and the following Saturday

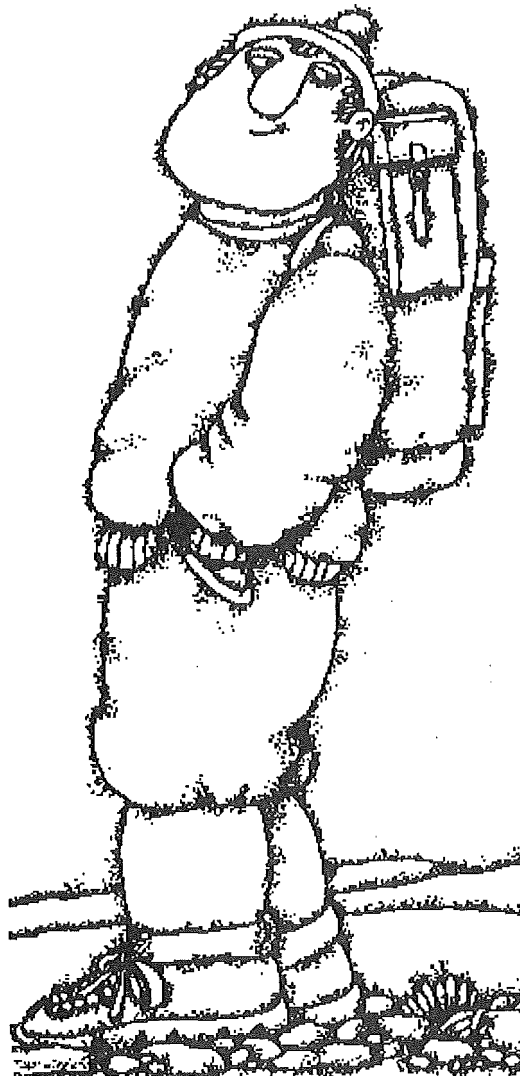
caught the night train home. This is 200 miles in less than a week, but Marples points out that "Foster Powell covered double that distance, from

London to York and back, in under six days" (1773), but Powell was a "heel and toe" record breaking walker. Early in the 19th century, Captain Barclay became the first, but not the last, man to walk one mile in each and every one of 1000 hours allowing only 1½ hours or so at a stretch for sleep.

Also early in the 19th century, Keats and Brown walked from Lancaster into Scotland and according to Marples, "Yet already, like so many modern 'highbrows' (using the word in a not necessarily derogatory sense), they were annoyed and disgusted at the trappings of tourism - the 'miasma of London' at Windermere, the commercialization of Burns, the steamers on Loch Lomond".

What does one get from walking?

Hazlitt who walked with Coleridge around 1800 said of walking, "The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty to think to feel, do just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others." Much later Sir Leslie Stephen; it is said by Marples, "He enjoyed also the sensation of independence and detachment he found in cutting adrift from normal routine, in abandoning the 'dress coat of conventional life' and dropping his dignity... he was well aware that he was really only a 'literary gentleman' ... escaping on ticket-of-leave from the prison house of respectability."



Illustrations by Reg Cartwright by permission of the BMC

Then Stevenson said in *Travels with a Donkey* "For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move; to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly, to come down off this feather-bed of civilization, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flint." Early in the 20th century Trevelyan is said to have tried to catch the very moment of ecstasy when walking. "This kind of pleasure too is varied, ranging from the deep satisfaction we feel when at sunset, having found lodgings for the night and supped, we lean over the bridge in contemplation, to the fierce joy of fighting one's way against wind and snow".

Stephen Graham who wrote *The Gentle Art of Tramping*, asks; "Why do we stare at beautiful things? We see them - is that not enough, can we not merely glance and pass on? We stop and we stare, at that mountain side, at that flower, at that dreaming lake. We cannot pass at once. We seem to be looking intently, staring at something further off and yet more kindred than the stars, but we are not using our physical eyes. Perhaps we are not using our eyes at all. We are listening. Nature is trying to tell us something; she is speaking to us on a long distance wave".

Some of these literary people seem to momentarily understand and express the things that the rest of us walkers just accept and stay dumb.



Jeff Hooper adds:

For long walks Harold's army marching in full kit from Stamford Bridge to Hastings in about ten days at the start of October in 1066, takes some beating.

Some Additonal Functions of the Club

David Handley

Though meets are primarily arranged to fulfil the objectives of the Club (see Rule 2) most Members will know there are well established sub-texts, one of which could be viewed as Rule 2(b). Those present on any Club meet represent a disparate crew. There is likely to be an accountant, lecturer, banker, solicitor, teacher, planners of every hue, sales representative, engineer, consultants, with the occasional tradesman and free spirit, most of whom may be retired, semi-retired or on the verge of such status. The young still remain elusive recruits. Entrepreneurs are few and far between and seen as exotic birds, with idiosyncratic views of the world and Club which are not readily embraced. The risk factor is seen as suspect!

So excluding Rule 2, what happens on a Club meet? One thing the Club does brilliantly is act as a multi-disciplinary advice bureau. With its wealth of experience, in both breadth and depth, the Club dispenses help in abundance, often with 20% or more discount. Members share information on pension plans, cheap flights, architects' plans, efficient heating systems, worsted cloth, hot-rolled asphalt, bridge construction, traffic flows, and medical dressings, nuclear power and much more. The meet is also an important source of esoteric knowledge a world away from Rule 2. The Club has, or has had, experts on obscure languages, high pressure valves for acid and alkaline gases, far eastern publishing, high integrity lifting gear, electronic imaging, early oak furniture, George V Commonwealth stamps, managing vineyards, tropical diseases and

Himalayan flora, technical aid to the third world and other areas of expertise. Some Members have even had brushes with famous people. Just think of that!

Some see the Club meet as a port in a storm; a welcome haven from whatever pressures they bear. Other Members reappear after years of absence and take up where they left off - a unique and highly valued characteristic of the YRC. All bring and generously exchange this wealth of knowledge.

But when all the greetings have been exchanged, communal meals eaten, sleeping spaces commandeered, advice sought and given, Rule 2 aspired to and achieved, there is another facet of the Club which is traditional, integral, and sublime. This is the Club's oral history.

Just as a tribe in Mali or deepest Zimbabwe requires its elders to recount the tribal history to its younger members, so does the YRC. There are events in the Club's history which are proudly recounted by long-serving members. It is the Club's unwritten history; that which does not, appear in Meet reports; that which is vouchsafed by word-of-mouth from one Club generation to the next. As in Africa, stories are embellished with time. The teller recounts an incident to an eager audience, many of whom will have heard the tale a score of times. This does not diminish its telling! A detailed example here would be appropriate but it would destroy this powerful social glue. Suffice to allude to the odd yam.

One story which brings rapturous laughter regards a father and son and an upturned Landrover in Wharfedale. Another has a past President's party scouring Loch Lomondside for petrol

in the early hours. Yet another tells of the famous boat journey from Mallaig to Scavaig in a Force 8 with no-one admitting they would have preferred a watery grave! There are stories of a cantankerous ship's captain and voyages to Skye via Corrievreken, and his endless call for specialist engineers to unblock the heads!

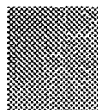
Stories of members returning to base from Canada, Nigeria, Australia and Papua New Guinea, tales of tetchy treasurers, Wodd War II unsung heroes, and major rock climbs before breakfast. Some stories recount bitter fights within the Committee and power struggles involving the cult of personality. There are stories of miserliness, generosity, eccentric diets, monumental bad navigation, heroic drinking bouts, appetites for women, ineptitude and calm in dire circumstances. And of course the Club has places too which it reveres. None is held in greater esteem than the Hill Inn with its legendary landlords and the Three Peaks completed before midday. Many still view the Grove in Kentmere as a place

of unparalleled Christmas meets in the eighties. The White Lion at Cray, Glen Etive, Hag Dyke, LHG, RLH, all these and many more are a significant part of the Club's collective psyche.

These powerful recollections are recounted with gravity and bated breath. What a relief there is no 35 year rule! It is this oral history of the Club that provides the cement and cohesiveness of a small Club, where eccentrics and experts are equally at home. This history should never be written. It is a joy all primitive societies value and if it were ever committed to paper it would die. It is a sort of therapy for which there is no charge, but from which each member would claim some benefit when we are restored to our other family that little bit saner!

Rule 2(b) could be thus: *to revere the Club's social history through story, yarn, anecdote, poem, limerick, or song. This to remain an oral tradition at Club meets.*

Meet reports should note the fulfilment of such a Rule 2(b).



Camping at 5300m on active Volcan Ollague will no doubt be a rich future source of yarns



I've Done it Before and I'll Do it Again

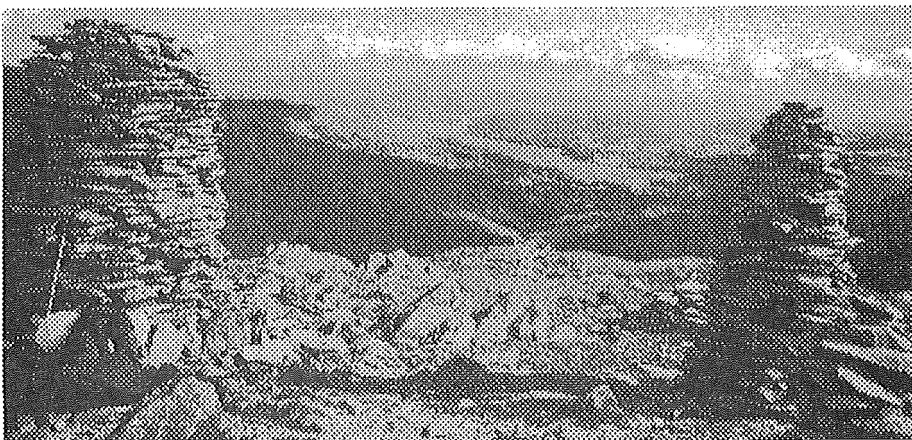
Derek Smithson

As a route I think it has elegance with possible variations and escape routes for the weary or lost. From Hartsop, or thereabouts, to cover the head of Patterdale and back to Hartsop, Pike How, Kirkstone, Red Screes. For greater satisfaction one can start with Hartsop Dodd and add on Scandale Head, Hart Crag and Fairfield. A start can be made via Threshthwaite Cove, but the steep path up to Pike How may be troublesome with a dog. After Kirkstone the escape routes are Caisten Beck, Dovedale and Deepdale. The ultimate must be to finish down Grisedale but this might involve a long road walk.

The other day I did a nine hour round in wet mist blowing from the SW, but the day finished with late afternoon sun in Deepdale which was wonderful. There are great views from the route, mostly of Patterdale, but taking the route via the 'Cairn' gives views over Windermere. I have mistakenly taken this route in fine weather and now did it in mist. It is no problem because the Cairn tells you where you are. After this minor error I met a couple just before Fairfield who could not find the alternative route to take them to Ambleside. They sensibly had decided

to follow their ascent route down. As I went up I was trying to remember what the summit was like on Fairfield because I wanted to join the ridge, between Grisedale and Deepdale, and not descend to Grisedale Tarn. Fairfield does not have a summit, it is flat piece of barren land with no clear summit when in mist. That is my excuse for not remembering it and for being unable to find the top of the ridge.

From Grisedale Tarn there is a lovely ascending path onto the ridge at Deepdale Hause, and then a pleasant descent all the way down Deepdale, particularly in sunshine after mist. Initially this path is unreasonably steep and scree covered but compared to Red Screes it is not bad. The ascent of Red Screes could make a suitable qualification for membership. I always find it almost unbearable and always feel slightly proud when I recover enough to continue. In good weather this is a route of beautiful views and in bad it can easily become an adventure. I have to return to it to find the connection from Fairfield to the ridge and also to check the number of calms at the 'Cairn'. I did not notice a second cairn on this misty day and there used to be two. Do we still have two groups of vandals in the Lakes - those who build cairns and those who destroy them?



Windermere from the path to Dove Crag Cave

Yorkshire Ramblers at Ingleborough Cave Part 2

S. A. Craven

Due to an editorial error the final two pages of this article were omitted from issue 11 of The Yorkshire Rambler. Apologies are made to the author and readers.

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 Lib: 1910. Expert, & well-known authority on Alpines. Author of "The Garden of Asia," "My Rock Garden," "Among the Hills," "In Old Ceylon," "The Dolomites." Died Oct: 17th. 1920 at about 11.30 a.m, buried at Konglabum, on the 23rd. Oct: 1920.

Elected 1906; died 1920.

S.J. Farrer,

Educ. at Eton, and at Bailiol Coll: Oxford. 3rd.cl. History. called to the Bar at Inner Temple. 1913. Mem: of the Eton Shooting Eight, 1906. -- do -- Oxford -- do -- 1908 and 1909. Captain of the Oxford Shooting Eight, 1910. Gazetted 7th. April 1915. Second Lieut: Royal Sussex Regiment.

Hon. Member 1939; died 1946.

Chas. F. Neuman

F.R.G.S. Y.R.C. Universite de Grenoble. 1919. Nautical College, Pangbourne. Senior Modern Languages Master at Giggleswick. 1911 - 1914. Sedbergh. 1914 - 1919. R.N.D. 1914. 2nd. Lieut. K.O.Y.L.I. 1915. R.F.A. 1918.

Elected 1912; resigned 1923.

Alban Claughton F.R.C.O.

Eldest son of the late Canon Claughton of Worcester cathedral. Music Master at the Grammar School, Giggleswick. 2nd. Lieut: 20th. R.F.

Elected 1912; resigned 1925. Claughton was appointed at Giggleswick School in 1906.

E.D. Oark, MA.

Formerly scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge. Giggleswick Grammar School staff.

Elected 1913; resigned 1923. Clark was appointed at Giggleswick School in 1906.

Claude Barton,

[Sixth and youngest son of the Revd. John Barton. M.A. Christ's College: Camb: Missionary (C.M.S.) at Agra and Amritsar. 1860-5. Principal of Cath. Missny: Coll: Calcutta 1865-9. Sec: C.M.S. So: Indian Missns: 1871-6. Inc: of Ch:Ch: Madras. 1872-6. Vic. of Ch:Ch: Roxeth. Harrow. 1876-7. Vic. of Roly Trinity. Cam: 1877-93. Sec: of C.P.A.S. 1893-8. Central Sec: C.M.S. 1900-1.] Agent. Ingleborough Estate. 190

Elected 1901; resigned 1902; re-elected 1912; resigned 1920. Considering that Barton was Agent for the Ingleborough Estate, it is surprising that there appears to be no record that he descended Gaping Gill.

John N. Barran

Sir John Nicholson Barran. Bart: of Sawley Hall. Ripon, and 65 Eaton Sq: London.

Elected 1896; Committee 1899 - 1902; Life Member 1931; died 1932.

John J. Brigg

John J. Brigg Esq: of Kildwick Hall.

Elected 1894; Life Member 1931; died 1945.

J.W. Puttrell, F.R.G.S. Y.R.C.

Member of the English Climbers' Club. First President Derbyshire Pennine Club. Born Oct: 1868. Soc: de Speleologie. etc.

Elected 1900; Life Member 1931; died 1939. Puttrel descended Gaping Gill in August 1907, and Rift Pot in April 1908. Both these descents were done with members of the Yorkshire Speleological Association".

T. Gray. Y.R.C.

Elected 1894; Committee 1894 - 1896; 1909 - 1910; Vice-President 1896 - 1898; Hon. Editor 1898 - 1909; President 1930 - 1931; Life Member 1931; died 1951.

J. Fred Seaman Y.R.C.

Elected 1914; Committee 1919 - 1923, 1928 - 1929; Vice-President 1923 - 1925; Life Member 1944; died 1966. Seaman was at the Cave on 18 July 1925 with members of the Craven Naturalists and Scientific Association".

Gerard Platten,

Gerard Platten Esqre. New Milton. Rants: Member of Bournemouth Natural Science Society. Yorkshire Ramblers Club. Mendip Nature Research Committee. W.N.H. & A. Soc: 22 June 1934.

Elected 1933; deleted 1952.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Esq: M.A., Trinity College Cambridge. Lecturer on Comparative Education. London University..... Author of Poems Wind & Hill- Freedom - Mountain Craft - High Hills, etc: Silver Medal for Valour [twice.] Italian + Legion of Honour, + Order of Leopold. Made the first one legged ascent of Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, etc.: Alpine Club..... 3 Jan. 1934.

Hon. Member 1907; died 1958.

¹² Craven Herald 24 July 1925 p. 7.

¹³ West Yorkshire Pioneer, 24 July 1925 p.7.

Edward Calvert

Edward Calvert Esqre. Y.R.C. formerly of Leeds. Now of London. Made the second descent of "Gaping Ghyll" (along with Mr. T. Booth.) after Monsieur Ed: Martel (the famous French explorer).

Elected 1894; Committee 1896 - 1900; Life Member 1931; died 1943.

The Paperback Booklet:

Geoffrey **Winthrop** Young. M.A., Trinity College Camb.

Lecturer on Comparative Education. London University Author of (Poems) "Wind & Hill" - "Freedom" etc. - "Mountain Craft" - "High Hills" etc. etc. Silver Medal for Valour (twice) Italian. Legion of Honour Order of Leopold. Made first one-legged ascent of Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, etc. etc. Alpine Club. 3 Jan. 1934.

Hon. Member 1907; died 1958.

Gerard Platten, Rotherfield Kennels New Milton. Hants. Member Y.R.C. & Mendip Nature Research Committee.

22 June 1934.

Elected 1933; deleted 1952.

H. Yates of Y.R.C. 17 May 1932.

Elected 1928; Life Member 1963; died 1979. Yates signed the book on the occasion of the YRC meet at Gaping Gill.

RH. Bellhouse A founder of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Secretary 1893 - 1899. President 1927 - 1929.

2 Sep. 1937.

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

A Day Pursuing Kindred Subjects

. David Handley

It started as an off day but turned into something never-to-be-forgotten! Our rag-bag team were based at Achiltibuie for Spring Bank holiday 1996. That well-known, hyperactive and eccentric member from Ribblehead proposed we take boats with outboard motors to visit the large island in the middle of Loch Sionascaig, the huge area of inland water north of Stac Polly. We reported to the Inverpolly Estate Office, announced our team intended to fish, signed the visitors book and were issued with two outboards and the required number of lifejackets

By the time we had carried all our gear from the road by way of a rough track to the boats, a stiff westerly had blown up, though the clouds were high and the sun was out. Our sturdiest member had been issued with a child's lifejacket so he withdrew. Our leader detailed us to our boats and we helped board our member who had recently suffered a stroke. The engines were pulled into action and off we went with some shelter, heading for the open loch and the island. It rapidly became apparent that the wind was stronger than anticipated, but we persevered and eventually landed in the lee of the island. We picnicked, fished and sunbathed before preparing to return.

Within five minutes of casting off we knew there was a problem- we were making absolutely no headway. To be exact we were being blown north, far away from the landing point essential for our stricken mend! Various strategies

were suggested, but the elements prevailed as, in due course, we were blown into a sheltered bay miles away from base. Here the leader and the writer abandoned their boat and suggested the rest of the party persevere in an attempt to get round the headland, into sheltered water. In the meantime, we would walk back to base and summon help if they failed to make it. As we walked, keeping to higher ground, we intermittently caught sight of our storm-tossed companions struggling to round the point. They made it in due course and picked us up. Great relief all round - no need to get help.

Reporting an abandoned boat and engine was a bit delicate! And so for liquid refreshment at the Achiltibuie Hotel. A little later, when our leader rang his wife, we were amazed to discover that the constabulary had visited our home addresses at Ribblehead and Bumsall on information received from the Inverpolly Estate Office. We were suspected egg collectors, up to no good, and had to be checked out. Ignominy! Our leader was indignant, but his appetite for exotic omelettes has, since this event, been less in evidence. Could we really have looked such a rough bunch? Did we really seem suspicious? Only you can decide. Opinions on a postcard, please, to Ribblehead,



Learned discussion of a kite pulled buggy on a meet

No More after Ben More

On Saturday, 9th October, Dave Martindale completed the last of his Munros when he climbed Ben More on Mull.

The ascent was made in dismal conditions with mist and drizzle, accompanied by his brother, John, and David Hick. Notwithstanding the weather, when the summit shelter was reached around 2pm the achievement was toasted with Laphroaig and Champagne (separately!).

In the evening, along with Christine Marriott, they enjoyed a splendid meal in their hotel overlooking Calgary Bay.

Dave's first Munro was Braerich in 1984 but, in those days, there was no question of 'bagging' Munros. Looking back he can remember a superb round of the Mamores in

cloudless weather and another on the Cullin Ridge.

Anxious moments also have their place: Anoch Beag in a whiteout with not a cairn in sight; and, a thigh-deep wade across a river in Gleann na Muice swollen by torrential rain during his last mainland Munro ascent - Ruadh Stac MhOI. Lifts by estate workers along the private road to Fannich Lodge and again in Glen Fyne were memorable.

Dave thanks his YRC companion, Dave Hick, especially for his help on the more technical ascents and also his brother who has been with him on nearly two hundred of the summits.

When asked what he was doing next, Dave thought the Corbetts were likely to get some attention though any of the hills in Scotland would do him nicely, thank you.



Trek To Kangchenjunga

Tony Smythe

In March this year I joined a Himalayan Kingdoms trek to Kangchenjunga. The party consisted of two other YRC members, Albert Chapman and Howard Humphries, plus three others from the 'general public'. We all gathered together a couple of times for walks and chats before the Heathrow departure.

I was a new boy to the commercial trekking scene and enjoyed sitting back and letting it all happen. We stayed in a much fancier hotel in Kathmandu (the Summit) than I would previously have gone for and apart from my camera being peed on by the hotel cat everything went very smoothly.

That is until we were due to fly the second leg of the internal flights, from Biratnagar to the mountain airstrip near Tapeljung, but could not owing to a strike by Nepal Airways pilots. The solution was a two-day journey by Landrover, over roads which at times pretended to be Mod to Diff gullies. The rest of the expedition was spent discussing the likelihood or otherwise of the pilots and their employers reaching agreement before our return to Tapeljung.

Our route, planned minutely in advance, was a 23-day tour via village campsites up the Kabeli, Omje and Simbua Kholas to the site of the Kangchenjunga south base camp (from where the successful 1st ascent of the mountain was made by the British in '55) and from there via the Mirgin and Sinion La to the Ghunsa Khola, and up that to the site of the North base Camp at Pangpema. The return would be via the Tamur River to Tapeljung, a round trip of approx. 150 miles.

We enjoyed wonderful weather most of the time - wonderful for visitors that is, not locals. It had not rained in the lower

valleys for six months and the result was poor crops and tinder-my forests damaged by extensive fires. The rivers were so low you could have crossed most of them without a bridge. Our trek leader, Om, said that Nepal was soon heading for a complete electricity breakdown unless it rained and snowed substantially - all supplies coming from hydro-electric power.

Eventually after nine days, on schedule, we reached Ramze, a couple of yak-herders huts at 14160 ft (verified by a triptych of altimeters) having got there slowly enough to suffer no worse than a few slight altitude headaches. Next day, a superbly clear one, we walked up another thousand feet to a Chorten on the moraine of the Yalung glacier, from where there was an incredible view of Kangchenjunga's south face - the scale so huge it was hard to realise the final rocks lay 13000 ft higher. Some blue sheep were spotted above the moraine, but alas for Albert, no snow leopards.

Thunderstorms and snowfall nearly prevented us making the long crossing of the high passes to Ghunsa, but by Kambachen the weather had settled back into a pattern of fine mornings and moderate afternoon cloud build-ups. Unfortunately we were to be denied a view of Kangchenjunga's north face the side in which I had a particular interest, following my father's efforts on the 1930 International expedition. One of the members of our party had been smitten by a chest bug, and his girl friend, understandably decided we all ought to spend an extra day at Kambachen to allow him to recover. With hindsight I believe it would have been feasible to split into two groups, rendezvousing later at Kambachen or Pangpema, but before I could explore this ideal was bypassed by clever lobbying and the siren suggestion that we all surely needed a rest anyway. So I found myself in a minority of one on the issue.

It would not have mattered particularly had not the weather chosen the one night we subsequently spent at the Pangpema base camp (we were due to spend two) to blow up, developing from thick afternoon cloud to a full-blooded overnight snow storm, with thick cloud the following morning when we had to leave. We had, however, an earlier wonderful view of Wedge Peak, and an ice avalanche falling from it, and later through the murk a glimpse of the ice-cliffs of Kangchenjunga's north face, where the porter Chettan had been killed nearly 70 years before. A strangely emotional moment for me.

So - the long haul back to civilisation, meeting several other parties en route - Kangchenjunga may not yet be as popular as Mount Everest, but after 15 years of being available to ordinary trekking groups there is no doubt it is attracting more and more attention (in spite of the fact that our route involved over 40000 feet of ascent!). Being among the first of the Spring season groups, we had a pleasing sense of isolation, in the early part of the trek at least.

I remember a lot of good things. Superb views of peaks and distances and great cloudscapes. Jannu high overhead in the early morning sun, the Kabru ridge, the huge summit cornices of Wedge Peak seen through binoculars. Fantastic porters and sherpas who sang and laughed and worked endlessly to look after us almost to a point of absurdity (clean table-cloth!) Howard's amazing torch and his scientific and botanical musings. Albert's balloon-bedecked birthday party. lichen colours in the primeval forests. Monster butterflies. Plenty of good food (bar the custard!) and non-stop tea. Walks each day which usually seemed just the tight comfortable length. Flowers - rhododendrons of different colours, gentians, primulas, orchids. Friendly if desperately-poor people and their happy children. The

elderly couple at Chirwa whom I helped (in exchange for a photo!) cut stalks of wheat one by one with a knife in the evening sun. The yak-herder and his family - wife, boy, girl, baby - all innaculately and colourfully dressed (including the yaks!) - with Albert's binoculars paving the way to photographs and filming. Pemba our chief sirdab who had climbed at least four 8000m peaks, and Pasang - their knowledge, energy and enthusiasm. The sense of camaraderie in the group, the highlight of each day in this respect being perhaps the hectic card session after supper, The Buddhist monk's wake for this mother at Sakathon, with the duets of booming, quavering horns breaking out at intervals during the night.

Were there any downsides? Being used to climbing and expeditioning as one of a party of only two or three (usually two) where one's partner is normally a known quantity in the longer term, I suppose it was too much to expect the same meeting of minds among those of a randomly-assembled trek group. We were blessed, lumbered some might say, with an old-fashioned "Life and Soul" type who clearly saw the morale of each member of the party as his personal responsibility, and whose jovial but relentless banter was a dominating feature at most meals and other get-togethers. However, enduring this was a small price to pay on such an otherwise-enjoyable trip, and we each had our own tent to retreat to, and walking on your own, if you chose to, seemed socially acceptable (inevitable for me much of the time with my obsessive photography)

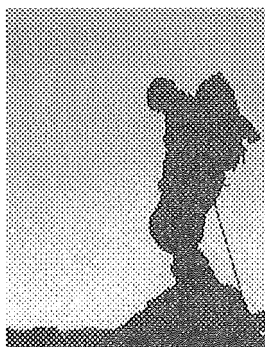
I also found it frustrating to have to walk past mysterious side valleys and interesting-looking lower peaks, with no chance of exploring them. Walking to Kangchenjunga and back in three weeks was the mountaineering equivalent of an American tourist "doing" Europe in the same length of time.

It all ended on a very happy note. Nepal Airways pilots had beer and sandwiches at No. 10 in Kathmandu, were back at work, and we enjoyed a final thrilling 2a-minute aerial swoop from Tapeljung, instead of a repeat ordeal by Landrover,

Of the many poignant moments of the trip, perhaps one I shall always remember is arriving at Pangpema, the bleak shelf above the Kangchenjunga glacier, where the lowering clouds added mystery to the great forbidding North Face. There was a cairn there bearing an engraved copper plaque commemorating an American climber who had died on the mountain. It read:

DR CHRIS CHANDLER
 BORN JULY 17 1948
 WENATCHEE, WA . USA
 SUMMITTEER OF MT. EVEREST 1976
 DIED JANUARY 15 1985 LEADING THE
 FIRST WINTER ATTEMPT OF
 KANGCHENJUNGA' S NORTH FACE
 THOSE THAT KNEW HIM LOVED HIM
 DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP
 I AM NOT THERE. I DO NOT SLEEP
 I AM A THOUSAND WINDS THAT BLOW
 I AM THE DIAMOND GLINT ON SNOW
 I AM THE SUNLIGHT ON RIPENED GRAIN
 I AM THE GENTLE AUTUMN RAIN
 WHEN YOU WAKE IN THE MORNING HUSH
 I AM THE SWIFT UPLIFTING RUSH
 OF QUIET BIRDS IN CIRCLING FLIGHT
 I AM THE SOFT STARUGHT AT NIGHT
 DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP
 I AM NOT THERE. I DO NOT SLEEP

Reading that it seemed to me that life and beauty can never be quite separated from death, or thoughts of death. Especially on a mountain like Kangchenjunga.



Seana Bhraigh Tony Smythe

Seana Bhraigh, 927m, rising above the Inverlael Forest far to the east of Loch Broom, is one of the most remote Munros in Scotland, and yet I climbed it last August almost by accident - I didn't know I was going to be doing it until I was halfway there!

If this sounds like pretty haphazard planning I suppose I have to plead guilty. I was coming up to the end of a week of marvelous weather when I had enjoyed splendid days above Glen Creran and in Torridon on Liathach and Beinn Eighe, and wanted a last good day or two before exhaustion, sunburn and work commitments claimed me. Beinn Dearg and its trio or so of surrounding peaks, SE of Ullapool, was a region new to me, so after van camping overnight on the shores of Loch Glascarnoch (where I was terrifyingly jumped by an RAF Tornado) I drove down to Inverlael next morning and set off into the forest at 7 a.m.

It was warm and still and reluctantly I applied repellent to ward off hordes of midges forming at 3 m.p.h, and some horseflies skilled in quarter attacks.

Beinn Dearg, an impressive domed peak, is reached by a stalkers' path heading south-east for 3 miles above the forest up the River Lael. Path improvements were being made, with accompanying 'Danger - Men At Work' signs, causing me to reflect on things to come. Will every path up every mountain eventually have its block paving, and even fences, Wardens and TV cameras to supervise the crowds?

Today though, as the old millennium creaked on to its end, I was all alone.

Low cloud, which I hoped and assumed would burn off was swirling across Meall nan Ceapraichean above me and my destination, the col between it and Beinn Dearg had a somewhat unwelcoming look to it. A succession of waterfalls and pools in the upper part of the glen were lit by fleeting patches of sunlight, which also reflected off the dripping cliffs to the right. It was a very impressive place. I hadn't seen a soul that morning, and after just a couple of hours into what might be a long day I was beginning to get a sort of "Neil Armstrong-without-Buzz-Aldrin-to-keep-him-company" feeling. It got serious when just short of the col the wind locally picked up to gale force producing a big chill for my sweating and underclad torso.

My Munro 'bible' the SMC guide, talked about a dry stone 'dyke' pointing the way up Beinn Dearg, but I was not to be caught out searching for a watercourse or suchlike. North of the border dykes are nothing other than good old-fashioned stone walls.

The sun was fighting a winning battle with the mist and two figures suddenly appeared, descending from Dearg's snowpatched (yes, in August!) summit dome - a father and young son, Duncan. They had cycled that morning to Inverlael and up the private forest road well before me, so I had been slow off the mark after all.

I was about 20 minutes behind them as I finished the climb, returned to the col and set off to complete what must be one of the least painful quartets of Munros - Beinn Dearg followed by Cona Mheall, followed by Meall nan Ceapraichean, followed by Eididh nan Clach Geala (note to Donald Bennet of the SMC if he is still the Editor: assuming we all care how these are pronounced, how about some

phonetic guidance in the next edition). These four peaks must have something near the minimum reascent from each other to qualify as Munros and all lie within a couple of miles of one another. So not such a long day after all.

On Edith I caught up Duncan and his Dad and we asked each other, "What are you doing now?" We all looked north-east and there, resting serenely on the horizon, a gorgeous sweeping pyramid bathed in the afternoon sunlight, was Seana Bhraigh (translation: "Old upper part" - which I think is somewhat less than complimentary to a very shapely mountain).

The day was still quite young, the weather set fair, the energy banks by no means depleted. Duncan hesitated a little, it looked quite a long way across a lot of ups and downs. But my mind was made up, which triggered Duncan's Dad's competitive spirit, which enthused Duncan. We would go for it.

They set off first while I had lunch, then I followed. What was going to be most encouraging was the knowledge that we could return to Inverlael along a different path, which at least meant that we would not have, to retrace our steps to the Beinn Dearg route. It would make a huge glorious triangle.

The ups and downs mentioned proved to be much less arduous than expected. It was all to do with adrenaline at the prospect of bagging this most elusive and distant peak almost as a cheeky afterthought. And doesn't it make a difference when the Scottish landscape is dry, almost crackly dry, so that you're not wonying about trench foot, or disintegrating boots, or losing a boot altogether, let alone the extra

exhaustion from suction and heavy sopping netherwear

However I do intend to write to the Ordnance Survey about a crag which runs continuously and overhangingly up to 200 feet high for half a mile right across the line we took -and which gets not the slightest "mention" on the 50,000 map. Indeed a series of cairns leads hopefully and in thick weather suicidally, right to the brink half-way along it (thanks a bundle, whoever planted them!)

Eventually though, still behind the others, I came to their dumped rucksacks at the start of the long crossing of a 906m outlier which would lead to Seana Bhraigh itself

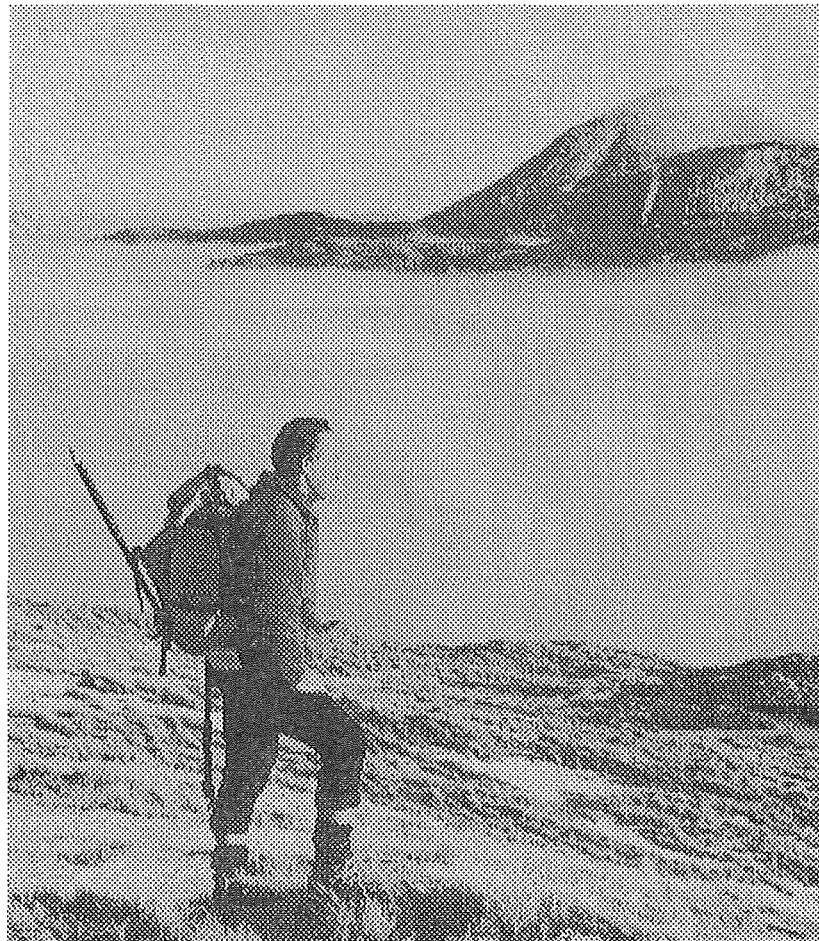
I was beginning to flag a bit and met Duncan and his Dad as they were

descending from this very remote summit. Duncan was elated at doing his 50th Munro, and what a prize. They told me they had seen a pair of eagles up on top.

A quarter of an hour later I was standing by the little circular shelter that serves as Seana Bhraigh's summit cairn. The late afternoon sky was hazy, the skyline filled with far-off peaks. Except when the dying wind rustled the grass, the silence was profound. Mechanically but very content, I set off for the long haul back to the distant glen in the depths.

Summary:

The traverse of Beinn Dearg, Cona Mheall, Meall non Ceapraichean, Eididh nan Clach Geala and Seana Bhraigh. Distance: approx. 25 miles. Time taken: 12½ hours.



David Martindale and a Scottish inversion

Expedition Diary

1957 - Nepal

Maurice F. Wilson

May 17. As usual it turned out fine **this** morning and we got under way at 7.30 a.m We soon entered the woods and followed a gentle traverse **with** fine views, through the trees, of the Jugal Himal and Langtang Himal The track then swung left over a pass and we traversed left, along the opposite side of the next **hill**. Some of this track was quite steep and involved the stretcher-bearers in difficult work The views throughout were magnificent, though not always photogenic.

Along **this** second traverse we met some Ochreni men who surprised us with the information that George and Mnrari were coming along the same route towards us. We **set** off shouting for them but got no reply. At last, in a clearing, we did meet them and told them our own sad story. George was obviously very taken aback and we had a long talk about financial matters etc. until it grew cold and we continued on our separate ways. We were given our mail and the news that Mr & Mrs Boyd-Tollington had left the Embassy in Kathmandu,

Not long after **this**, the sherpas stopped at a snow patch and we had lunch, during which they produced a dead steinbock! I suppose they thought we might carve it up for lunch. In about another hour and very high up, we reached a chorten, beyond which we pitched camp. I took some 'commercial' photos of medical stores and helped to mend Lakpa's lilo, which had been punctured by **his** splint. It's been even more cold tonight than last night.

May 18. It's been an excellent day. We were **just** about ready to start from our windy camp when the group of Ochreni porters (which George had ordered) turned up. There ensued the usual blarney

while I tried to explain to them that only nineteen men were required and it was necessary that four should turn back This they did in the end.... but **with** great reluctance. The hill ahead, to be traversed, did not seem far away but took us nearly 2½ hours to reach. The stretcher-bearers were going quite well and, finally, reached some prominent chortens at the end of the ridge. I expected that we would then drop quickly down to Ochreni but, in fact, there followed a long traverse through woods followed by a sharp descent through narrow defiles The sherpas' handling of the stretcher was terrific and their 'buffoon', in the front shafts, was especially good. Only once was Lakpa dropped and not seriously, as a boy was putting on a headband. We reached OCID'eni as a thunderstorm approached and the tents were pitched just in time. (I noticed one of the boys has, and uses, ...a **set** of fear-cleaners)

Their manner of carrying the stretcher now seems to be established. The front man, between the shafts, carries the weight through **his** head-band and, at the rear, two men each carry a shaft on their shoulder. A fourth sherpa usually trots along behind and **is** at hand for emergencies or to act as a reserve for any position. When passing under low trees or branches, the pair in the rear change to carrying by hand. Any particular hard piece of carrying **is** heralded by a low whistle rising to a shrill note. Their footwork **is** wonderful and any mistake is quickly rectified.

Postscript.

In February 1997, I wrote to the *Guinness* Book of Records, challenging their record indexed under 'Stretcher Bearing' as being an organised 'feat or stunt'. I gave brief details of this 'carry' of a genuinely injured man over 50 miles of high mountains and through dense jungle in ten days, by a team of three sherpas with one in reserve, and accompanied, throughout, by a medical practitioner. I claimed that this was a much greater and genuine achievement. I got no reply... Evidently it is a stunt that matter.

Book Review by David Handley

Flammes de Pierre by Anne Sauvy

Diadem Books 1991 ISBN 0906371 880

You probably agree that the book market is awash with accounts of major and minor expeditions to all points of the compass. Mountaineering and exploration still has by far the most literature devoted to any sport. If you've heard of this one, for it is not new, forgive me; if you haven't then it is, in my opinion, a gem! I have checked with a number of erudite members who agree that mountaineering short stories, let alone collections, are few and far between. There will be the odd club member of the literati who has read these stories in the original French, but for the rest of you (I jest!) here is a treat in waiting.

So who is Anne Sauvy? Well the cover says she is an alpinist with intimate knowledge of Chamonix, married to an English mountaineer. It also says her style is reminiscent of Maupassant and Balzac, and I agree.

Here are sixteen short stories of terror, character, supernatural, greed, weather, competition and trauma etc., set in High Savoy, penned with a huge grasp of all that is entailed in the ascent of major alpine peaks. They are worked skilfully with marvellous attention to the detail of the landscape of the mountains and the mind. They keep you guessing with imaginative twists, suspense and that uncanny knack of an accomplished storyteller - seeing your own experience in what they describe. No more clues!

See also Anne Sauvy's:-

The Game of Mountain and Chance
Baton Wicks London ISBN 0-898573-15-8

Another collection of unusual, but up-to-date mountain stories. *The London Dinner*, is a fine cameo of a senior club gathered for its annual thanksgiving.

Lecture Review by Michael Smith

The 4th Annual Paul Nunn Memorial Lecture given by Stephen Venables & Jerry Moffat

Sheffield, 6 October 1999

Jim Curran introduced Stephen Venables who barely mentioned his costly ascent of Everest but related excerpts from his many lightweight expeditions in far corners of the Himalaya including the first ascent of Kishtwar Shivling and an expedition to Panch Chuli. This wide-ranging tour of exploratory climbing elicited a warm response from the audience who had to reach beyond his modest commentary to appreciate the dedication needed on his multi-week trips in the remotest of areas often unsupported and sometimes solo. He managed to weave into the show the various times when he'd chanced upon Paul Nunn in the oddest of Himalayan places. Apart from the spectacle of the mountains themselves there were amusing tales of coping with the elements, other climbers and even seeds exploding from spliffs smoked in a tea-house.

Jerry Moffat (rather than the billed Seb Grieve who will probably make it next year assuming that Jnn remembers to tell him the date this time). His story started with traverses across his parent's brick wall on wooden block holds and moved through an early adulthood of several years intensively progressing his climbing sponsored by Thatcher's dole. Dossing at Stoney Middleton developed into much the same at Cloggy then Phoenix and then the Himalaya. The slides showed how he steadily extended the limits of what was possible, Skateboards, go-carts and motorcycles all made appearances though perhaps the oddest images were those of monkeys climbing incredible routes along a trail of bananas shoved into cracks. All gripping stuff which nicely complimented Stephen's material.

Obituaries

John Pearson Wright

1978 -1999

John died early September at the age of 72 after a long debilitating illness. Born in York, his job with Northern Electricity moved him to Morpeth,



Northumberland, in the early 1960s where he stayed after retirement.

After leaving the Navy, John started to do some hill walking and in 1948 became a founder member of the York Mountaineering Club. Whilst he never took up rock climbing he enjoyed long scrambling routes and became an accomplished skier. In those days few of us had cars and John, as a licence holder, was regularly called upon to drive hired cars to the Lakes, Wales and Scotland. Later John owned a series of MG sports cars, his final silver, special edition MGB GT becoming a familiar sight on YRC meets. He joined the Club in 1978 but had probably attended more meets as a guest than he did after joining.

John was particularly fond of Scotland and enjoyed the regular trips up to the north-west and the Northern and Western Isles we made in my dormobile. He also travelled widely overseas on both Alpine skiing trips and pursuing his other interests in music, history and art.

About the time John became a member of the YRC he took over the posts of Treasurer to both the Morpeth Rugby and Morpeth Cricket and Tennis clubs which limited his availability to attend YRC weekend meets. However he maintained a keen interest in the Club and organised an annual visit by a group from the Rugby Club (who called themselves the Boring Thursday Club) to LHG, their lengthy reports regularly appearing in the hut log book.

David Langhton

Reg Hainsworth MBE JP
1903 - 1999

Reg Hainsworth, president of the Gritstone Club for twelve years which he joined in 1923. He was always a good friend of the YRC, some of us will remember the snowy winters in the nineteen fifties and sixties when we were invited to use his ski tow on the local hills. Along with Ernest Roberts and Cliff Downham he was a founder member of the CRG. His efforts in this important organisation of which he was chief warden, then chief controller, was recognised in 1973 when he was awarded the MBE. He had a great love of the Scottish hills and in 1969 was only the 92nd Munroist. In all he climbed over five hundred Scottish mountains.

He was a man of very many parts, self taught motor engineer, egg farmer, special constable protecting the Ribblehead viaduct during the war, he built and ran one of the first cinemas in the country and was a magistrate. He was a rock climber, potholer, walker, skier, swimmer, motor car enthusiast, he helped with scouts; but all this activity was brought to an end with successive hip operations when he was nearly eighty years of age.

Perhaps his lasting tangible memorial will be the walled shelter he built on the summit of Ingleborough to mark the coronation which many of us have gratefully used over the years. He leaves behind his widow Alice and three children.



LETTERS

Forward Planning

Dear Editor

The first story in *Flammes de Pierre* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) is called *The Collector*. Without giving much away, the denouement hinges on the eventual disposal of the records of a very active mountaineer. On checking our own collection, I find that no such records have been received at the Club Library since the lodging of Roberts' materials. This probably means nothing for over 40 years, during which time the Club has seen the passing of scores of enthusiasts whose exploits may have had occasional recognition in Meet Reports, Journal, Chipping's etc. but with no complete record. So, though this is a sensitive issue, the message is clear! Ask your wife/partner to pass on to the club any records, diaries, notes etc. which might otherwise be merely dumped.. The same applies to photographs and slides. Possibly these are to be found in greater quantities than the former. If families have no particular use for them, Club Journals could also be returned as their scarcity will only increase - at least one northern antiquarian bookseller values them highly. As with many other things, it requires the making of final arrangements in good time! The Club archives would be all the richer with a little planning.

David Handley

Chippings

The account of Adrian **Bridge's** Greater Cuillin Traverse appears elsewhere in this issue. During the time they were on Skye, a memorial ash scattering ceremony of Duncan Brown's ashes in Loch Coruisk was made by his son, Peter and a group of friends and relatives. Sadly one of the group died in an abseiling accident in the area of the climb *Engineers Slant* in Come Lagan, put up by Duncan Brown and friends in 1933. Duncan was our control co-ordinator on the YRC Munro meet in 1983.

The BBC1 television programme *Holiday*, last March, showed the beautiful scenery of the area around Enniskellin and included pictures from the brightly lit Marble Arch Caves of County Fermanagh, which are now open to the public at a fee. A small boat ferried passengers across an underground lake, reports Bernard Nelstrop who wished Ernest Roberts could have seen the developments.

Jeff **Halford** was mistakenly recorded as a guest at the 1998 Dinner Meet when he is a member. Also Martyn Trasler attended the January 1999 meet at LHG but was not included in the list of attendees. Apologies to all concerned for the mistakes and thanks to Roy Denney for setting the record straight.

Slingsby Institute - The Club secretary has been sent a report of the second annual general meeting of the Slingsby Institute, its first AGM was in 1993. The Institute now appears to be more effectively organised and Derek Smithson continues to represent the YRC until a more suitable candidate is found. The Institute can have up to fifteen members who will organise meetings and outings with the aim of improving relations between peoples and between people and nature. It is centred in Ardal (Jotunheimen) though members are from different parts of Norway and have different interests. There is a British born professional Norwegian guide, a British born member of the Slingsby family who lives in Germany and there are two YRC men; one Norwegian the other British. The Institute plans to have further seminars like the one in 1993 when Harvey Lomas took the Norwegians into the world of potholes whereas all the other British and Norwegian speakers stayed above ground in their choice of subject.

The Reverend **Jim Rusher** spent four days in the trauma ward of his local hospital early this year having broken his fibula on meet. See *A Slight Slip* elsewhere in this issue.

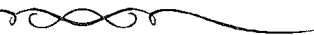
The Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team was founded by Doctor James Ogilvie some 35 years ago. To call out the team, in the early years, Mrs. Ogilvie would fire two shots from a gun when an accident was reported. On the 13th August 1999 the sound of gunshot was heard again in the valley. This time it was to mark the opening of the magnificent *Ogilvie House* rescue centre by the doctor's widow.

The new premises include a surgery, wet room, drying room, lecture room, quiet room for relatives of victims, a large garage, a well equipped kitchen and a control room. The building is constructed in local stone and was completed in five years from conception to completion. State of the art communication systems have been provided in the control room. Each team member has a personal pager and a car phone. Formerly the Patterdale Hotel had provided, free of charge, a barn adjacent to the hotel for their use.

The ceremony was well attended and the YRC was represented by David Smith.



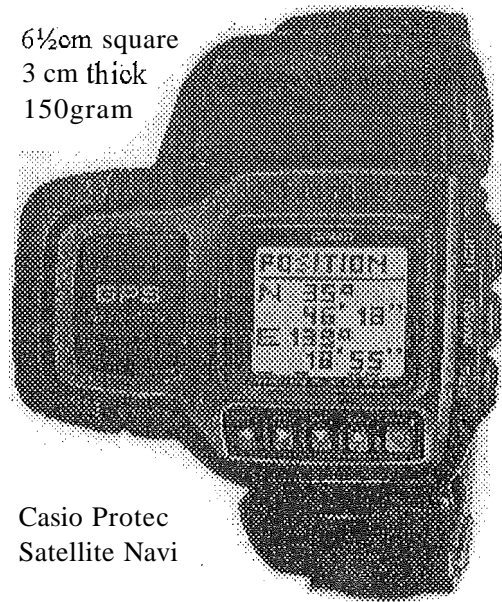
According to a physiologist's study of 500 people, ramblers are more likely than the inactive, to have an active sex life. The effect is more pronounced among mountaineers, and others involved in so-called risk activities. It must be true as it was reported in *The People* on August 22.



After the last issue's update on what is available in a watch to help the mountaineer, the next obvious step has already been taken. Altimeters and compasses are now joined by a

GPS navigation function, though not yet all in the same watch.

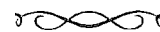
6½cm square
3 cm thick
150gram



Casio Protec
Satellite Navi

The display gives latitude and longitude in degrees, minutes and seconds and it should soon be available probably at around £300. One second of arc in equatorial regions is about thirty metres. If they can get it to use grid references and combined with the altimeter and compass then our only excuse for getting lost would be battery failure.

Incidentally, the compass function on a watch proved very convenient for keeping on route in the featureless, trackless, overhead sun conditions of crossing deserts and salars in South America. The device worked well even inside a Landcruiser,



F. Kingdon Ward's *Plant Hunting on the Edge of the World* has caused Ken Aldred to believe that nowadays we are all getting soft. Chapter 13, entitled *Camping in the (Himalayan) Alps*, mentions "Rhododendron Hill, where the forest ended, was reached in four hours, and here we pitched our small 401b alpine tent on a ridge where the ground was fairly level."

David Laughton continued to pursue his interest in the Arctic by spending two weeks in July camping by Lake Hazen on Ellesmere Island. At 81½° north this is almost as far north as one can go on land and only some 500 miles from the North Pole,

The party of ten flew north via Ottawa, Iqaluit (capital of the new Canadian territory of Nunavut), Resolute and finally by chartered 12 seater Twin Otter to land on a rough gravel strip beside the lake. Lake Hazen is some 50 miles by 6 miles and 900ft above sea level; when they arrived it was almost completely frozen. A small campsite is operated by the Canadian National Parks service with two rangers based there from June to August. Facilities are limited to two oil drum toilets and an emergency shelter. The only source of water is the lake itself so must not be contaminated by soap or anything else.

The object was to explore the nearby 4000ft hills on foot or using the two pneumatic kayaks on the narrow strip of water around the margins of the lake. Thanks to dry hot weather these gradually widened. The north shore of the lake is renowned as a polar desert with virtually no precipitation and plenty of sunshine during the 24 hours of summer daylight. Large gently sloping glaciers are nearby with peaks covered in shattered rock surrounded by tundra, upheaved in places by the permafrost.

Two backpacking trips away from the base camp were undertaken one initially along the shore using the kayaks to transport the packs. Rocks or shore ice required the portaging of packs and boats at several points. One summit was reached and several river valleys and glaciers explored. Footprints of wolves and musk ox were often found but only the odd

musk ox was seen. Red Throated Divers were nesting on small lochans and calling at night. Turnstones, Knots and Arctic Terns were everywhere.

Very few other visitors were seen as only a few planes a week arrived to transport small groups. The Parks service registered only 136 visitors in 1998 and similar numbers are expected in 1999.



Carole and Ray Harben went out to South America as other members were returning. They visited the Peruvian Amazonian jungle and white water rafted part of the Urubamba River. Their visit to the Inca ruins at Machu Picchu went well until, attempting to catch a train back to Cuzco, they discovered a railway workers strike in progress. Spending another night in Aguas Calientes then walking out nineteen miles to the nearest roadhead left them with just 20p between them. They had no credit cards with them because of concerns over security.



News has recently arrived from Jose Camarlinghi in La Paz, Bolivia, that an avalanche in the Apolobamba range on Saturday, 25 September, claimed the life of Yossi Brain. The accident was on El Presidente and a Canadian was also killed. Their deaths are thought to bring the total to six fatalities in the Bolivian Andes this year. Bolivian mountain guides training in the range assisted in the evacuation. Yossi's recent guide book was used by expedition members and he had helped the Club with the planning of the trip.



As his friends in the Club will know Mark Pryer is going round the world with his partner, Elly. His report sound like a travelogue. In the USA's Grand Canyon area he fitted in two days climbing at Joshua Tree National Park where he did a lot of single pitch stuff "working up to mediocre" standard. Then by bus to Chihuahua, Mexico, and train across the Barranca del Cobre (Copper Canyon) to the west coast. They found the last to be larger than the Grand Canyon but not as interesting. The President will be impressed that they visited Trotskys house and tomb in Mexico City.

Other highlights were a jungle boat trip through mangrove swamps with turtles and crocodiles; Acapulco - cliff divers a la Elvis film Fun in Acapulco; the Aztec city of Teotihuacan with the third largest pyramid in the world and interesting artefacts from Aztec and Zapotec civilisations; Samoa for snorkelling, friendly people, lovely coral, tropical fish, lava blow holes sending sea water 60ft. into the air; and a visit to Robert Louis Stevenson's house now a museum.

At the time of writing in April he was in Auckland, New Zealand, and he thought the extreme north of the island rather like mid Wales. He is looking forward to the Cook range on the South Island. Hurricane devastation prevented Mark getting into Central America. After New Zealand he is going to Australia where he has promised another instalment. Watch this space!

"...the mountains are a place where you can find whatever you want just by looking, as long as you remember that they do not suffer fools gladly, mu! particularly dislike those with preconceived ideas" The War of Don Emmanuel's Nether Parts, Louis de Bemieres, 1990, Ch.36

A member, who had better remain unnamed, proud of his new 35mm camera bludgeoned his family into viewing the results from his first exposures. All seated in the dark, the projectionist allowed ample time for the images to be appreciated. Indeed one stayed on the screen for an inordinate length of time and was then accompanied by the projectionist's snores.

From William Parsons' 1913 Presidential Address.. *"Would not most of us unhesitatingly say that through the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club our best friendships of life have been formed - those friendships that will never be broken mu! those memories that will never die?"*

Clifford Cobb would like it to be known that the *Fairy Tale* in the Summer 1999 Bulletin was never intended for publication. It was a bit of fun scribbled during the Christmas holidays and intended only for the personae mentioned. However a copy was "leaked" to the Editor and when Clifford heard of this he suggested that it hardly matched, in content or literary skill, the usual standard of articles. Nevertheless it was published and as Michael has presided over an excellent Journal for many years one must acknowledge his literary judgement.

If the *Fairy Tale* raised a few smiles, even cynical ones, the author will be well content.

In late January 1930 in beautiful weather, forty in all attended the Chapel-le-Dale Meet, and sat down to dinner at which the President was duly invested with the Chain of Office. David Smith recalls seeing this chain at a Hill Inn Meet some years ago. Do any of our members know its current whereabouts?

Ladies Weekend

16 - 18 April 1999

Abington

Let me say that the only mistake that the organiser, Cliff Large, made was to invite me to do the meet report. Why? Because a mere recital of all that was done is a travesty and leads to nothing but league tables and competitions. These have no place in the YRC where the unwritten understanding is that we all do what we feel motivated to do regardless. In spite of this, or should it be because of, a great deal is achieved. The ladies' weekend is no exception; our ladies, thank God, are just as eccentric and diverse as we are. They comprise the very fit, the not so fit, and all stages between. Most important, they are forging their own ties and it is very satisfying to see the ladies greeting each other like long lost sisters, or should it be brothers.

As the person who arranged the traditional type *Ladies Evening* for many years, which required many phone calls to try and rally support, I find the difference today is very marked and certainly very satisfying to all concerned.

So, then, what really took place during the weekend?

Individual parties were fairly compact and all the major peaks in the vicinity were visited - Tinto (707m) and Huddystone (626m) amongst others. In addition excellent walks were enjoyed covering many of the lower hills, in fact, a little visited area to most of the members and guests added to the enjoyment of the weekend.

On Sunday most of the party visited the Lead Mining Museum at Wanlockhead in spite of a 3" covering of snow and had a most enjoyable day. The hotel was excellent and catered for all our needs.



The summit of Tinto with Iain, Angie, Sarah, Alan Linford, David and Elspeth.



Yvonne Bush, John Hemingway, Brenda and Bill Lofthouse Photo by Janet Hemingway

Three members caravanned in somewhat primitive conditions but survived with aplomb. One member caravanned in relative comfort but with only primitive heating..

On Sunday members and guests departed to all points; one in search of Corbetts, one in search of relatives, two refused to leave but the majority did in search of domesticity.

The weekend was a huge success and was thoroughly enjoyed by one and

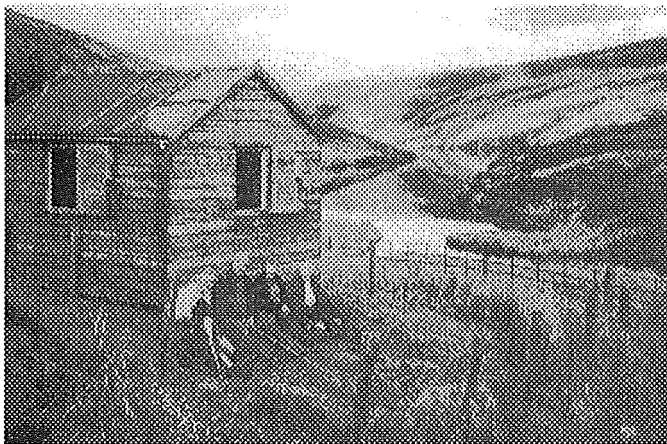
all the noise and happy banter in the lounge on Saturday night were ample evidence if, indeed, any were needed.

The thanks of the Club are due to Cliff and Cathie Large for all their efforts.

John Hemingway

Attendance:

- President, Ian & Dorothy Crowther
- Dennis & Joan Armstrong
- John & Irene Barton
- Derek & Yvonne Bush
- Iain & Sarah Gilmour
- Mike & Marcia Godden
- Richard & Elizabeth Gowing
- John & Janet Hemingway
- TOO & Elaine Josephy
- Ian & Una Laing
- Cliff & Cathie Large
- Gerry & Margaret Lee
- Alan & Angie Linford
- Bill & Brenda Lofthouse
- Roy & Margaret Salmon
- John & Pat Schofield
- David & Elspeth Smith



Janet & John, Yvonne Bush and Brenda Lofthouse Photo by Bill Lofthouse

Scoat

Tarn

High Level

Camp

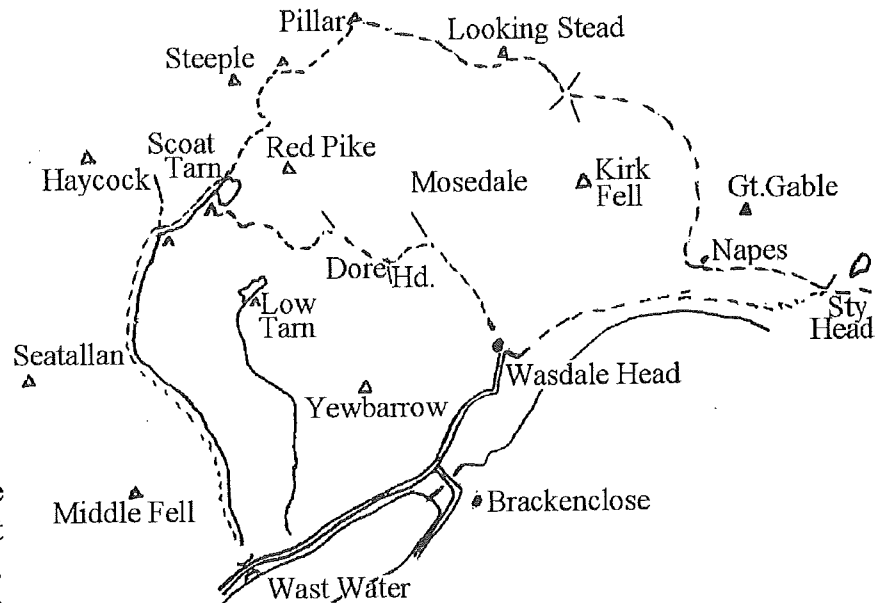
7 - 9 May

1999

According to the tables, sunset on that Friday was at nine. The notion of a sun lingering on the horizon was academic since it was raining steadily and I was already in cloud paddling by the side of Nether Beck towards Scoat Tarn. David Smith and Derek Bush had set up their tents early in the evening and later Ian Crowther had arrived with his.

Twilight was due to last a further forty minutes but that was severely attenuated by the thick cloud. Arriving by the tarn I peered into the gloom for signs of tents and hailed fellow members with a belled shout. The only one who admitted to hearing it thought it might just be a callout but decided it was far too wet to even think of sticking his head out to investigate. He later made amends by brewing a cup of tea and offering a headtorch when I did find them and start putting up my tent. Thanks Derek.

But I'm getting ahead of the tale. Scouting around I noticed what I took to be a white marker a metre or two above the ground possibly on a tripod. The president, I deduced, must have considered late arriving members and arranged for a flag to mark the site. I headed for it and discovered it was an



experimental rain gauge, with polished metal surfaces, mounted on a tripod. Thanks Ian.

Nearby though were the three tents scattered to the south of the outflow at about 600m. Mine made four. There were two more but these were scattered a kilometre or two away. One at the similarly sized and shaped Low Tarn in the next cwm to the south. Iain, having memorised the map, set off from the Wasdale Head head down in the rainy evening gloom and turned up to follow Over Beck uphill rather than Nether Beck. This left him behind Yewbarrow and in need of another check with the map. The resulting cross-country bearing was set to take him past one tarn, up a rise and to Scoat Tarn. This it would have done but for an extra, small tarn which the cartographer chose to ignore. The result was he camped one tarn short of his intended spot. The other outlying camper, David Atherton, was later pitched just below the others at about 400m near a prominent crag overlooking Nether Beck.



Other members avoided a soaking by sensibly staying in the valley. Tim was in his car at the foot of the path and three others were at Brackenclose cottage. They were: Derek Smithson who had started walking from Borrowdale; Cliff who drove round with some of the gear; and Frank.

My spirits were kept up through the wet and windy night by a nip of whisky and the weather forecasters' promise of good weather on Saturday morning before yet more heavy rain set in for the rest of the weekend.

Morning arrived, grey and wet, shortly followed by Tiro, purple and wet, but of the sun there was no sign until the afternoon. By then we five had wandered up to Pillar and looked down into cloud filled Ennerdale, continued on round Kirk Fell and traversed round to Napes Needle. The rock up behind the Needle was wet and slippery so the climbing gear stayed in the rucksack.

Only as we turned from Sty Head towards Wasdale Head could we remove waterproofs. The gorse was bright, new-born lambs were

staggering and the pub inviting after a visit to the graveyard to pay our respects to Frankland.

Meanwhile those who had slept in various places other than Scoat Tarn had found the camp, put up their tents and were exploring the area around the tarn. David Atherton was an exception and we never did find him again that weekend. Frank arrived as a replacement.

Buoyed up by renewed spirits we five in the Wasdale Head Hotel were planning a novel return route. Starting east of Mosedale Beck we tramped straight up to Dore Head. Derek here abandoned the faint path up solid ground and went directly up the scree-filled gully. From the col we sat enjoying the rest and watched his labours. Frank was quite concerned as Derek was canyoning his gear.

From Dore Head we headed half way up Red Pike, into rain and cloud, before turning left and contouring elegantly round to a minor ridge which was above our tents. We arrived back after nine hours out to find the others already tucked up in their tents.



David Smith and Ian Heading towards Dore Head

In the morning, before leaving soon after seven, I had brief conversations with people through tent walls. I never did get to *see* Derek Smithson or Cliff Cobb.

Sunday was true to the forecast: wet. Most people headed home though Derek Smithson traversed the ridge as far as the hawse above Black Sail before escaping the cloud then had a clear walk through the passes back to Borrowdale. Derek Bush, heavily laden, slipped on greasy rocks during the descent and was badly bruised. Ian's arrival back at his car was, about 11:30, announced to the whole of Wasdale when water ingress affected the remote locking device and caused the alarm to sound.

Given the weather this was a good turn out for the meet. "I wouldn't have missed it for anything" said one and that said more about the character of our membership than any of the weekend's achievements.

Michael Smith

The walk apart, this was a most unsociable meet because of the foul weather. It continued to rain through the night and the next morning, making everyone reluctant to set foot outside.

Looking at the tents and remembering high level camps of a decade or so ago, I noticed a distinct change. Tents then had straight metal poles and usually lacked height. Only one, mine, was of this type. The other seven were hooped or geodesic. I must buy anew one.

Attendance:

The President, Ian Crowther
 David Atherton
 Derek Bush
 Cliff Cobb
 Iain Gilmour
 Tiro Josephy
 David Smith
 Michael Smith
 Derek Smithson
 Frank Wilkinson

The Long Walk

North Yorkshire Moors

Rosedale Round

18-20 June 1999

This year's Long Walk was a 37 mile excursion that described a circuit around the northern reaches of the North Yorkshire Moors. Its attraction is that it manages to take in most of the Dales that this area has to offer and is a good taster for those wishing to explore further. The topography of the region means that essentially one walks on a plateau in a clockwise direction, dropping in and out of each of the valleys.

With a number of regular attendees on the other side of the world in Bolivia, it was a select band of members and guests that assembled on Friday night at the campsite in the village of Rosedale. Many members sampled the victuals at the village pub on Friday night, but the plans for the next day necessitated that most were tucked up in bed in good time for an early start.

The morning broke fine, but overcast and while we had few worries regarding the weather, we were all troubled by the midges that had decided to take an early breakfast with/of us. Because of this, no one lingered in camp and by 4.30am we were all away and heading towards Thorgill and our route on to Rudland Rigg. We followed this old road to reach Incline Top from where the old railway trucks transporting metal ore to Middlesborough were left to take advantage of the contours and roll downhill to their destination.

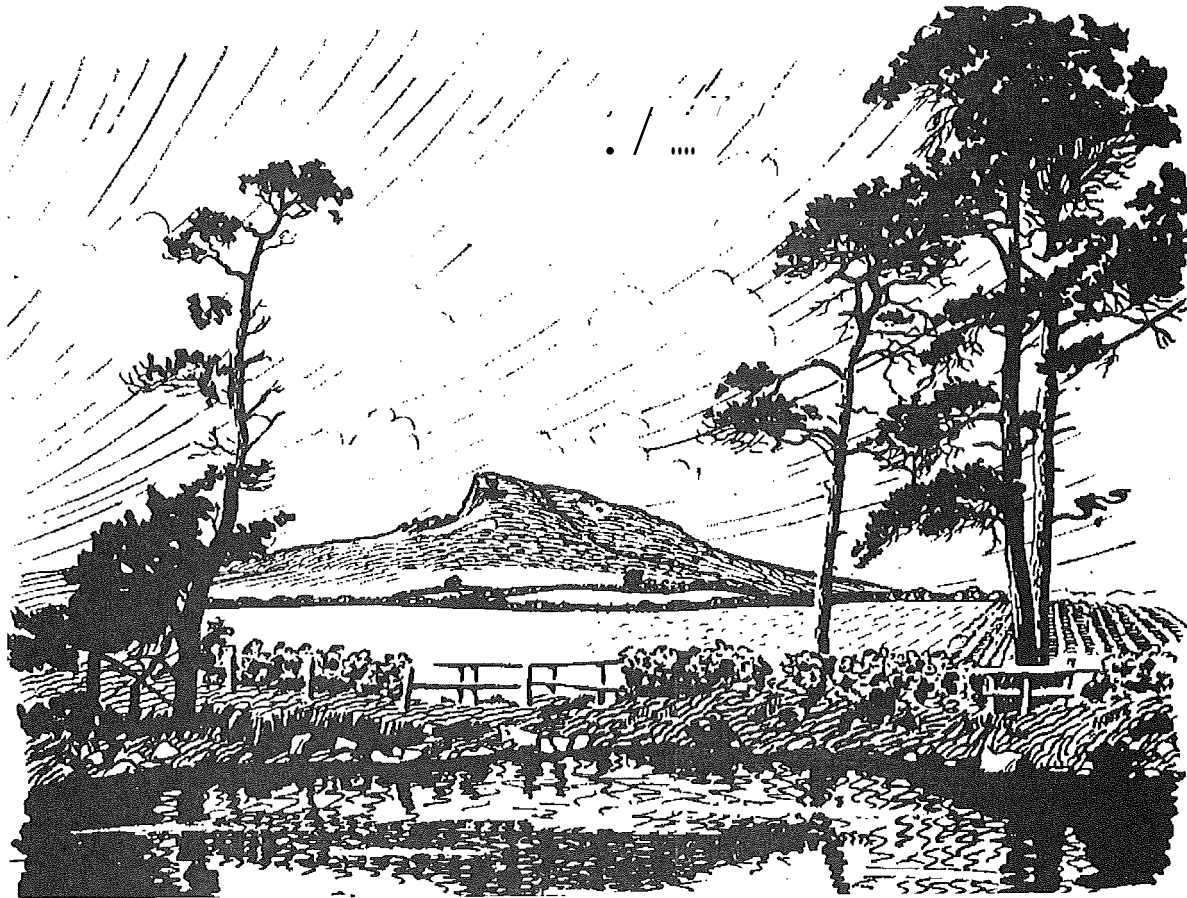
Clearing skies afforded us excellent views north to Teeside and north-east to the impressive little summit of Roseberry Topping. We continued on

into Baysdale and then to Westerdale for the second refreshment stop. The bulk of the party had kept together for the whole of the morning and arrived at the same time. All lay down for a hard-earned rest and enjoyed spotting our distinctive SUPPOt vehicles as they appeared over the hill in the distance. Spirits were high as the sun broke out and we passed through the pretty village of Westerdale.

The route continued through Danby Dale, up to Wolf Pit and down into the enticingly named Great FIYUP Dale. Our third rest stop offered us some refreshing tinned pears and banana and honey sandwiches, far more nutritious than any sausage, eggs and bacon that the location suggested.

The pattern of walking down into a valley and then straight out and up the other side was now established as we passed through Glaisdale and headed south on the homeward stretch of our walk. We had largely avoided any sustained walking along roads, merely crossing them in the valleys and then on the "Riggs" that follow the higher ground above the valleys. Most walkers suffered, however, as we trudged the tannac out of Wintagill and on to Hamer House for the last of the refreshment stops.

Tired legs delivered us into Rosedale in early evening at the end of a thoroughly rewarding day. After an excellent meal some members again took advantage of the local pub and extended what had already been a very long day. Thanks should go to Bill Lofthouse and our support crew who served us admirably throughout the day in less than ideal circumstances. As a recent member of the YRC, I felt it was very fitting that on the weekend of Fathers' Day, so many members and their close family had contributed towards the event. I certainly enjoyed



Roseberry Topping

completing another Long Walk with my own father and look forward to testing my mettle at next year's event,

Stuart Dix

Attendance:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Alan Brown | Bill Lothouse |
| Cliff Cobb | Frank Platt |
| Arthur Craven | Keith Raby |
| Roy Denney | Hany Robinson |
| Roger Dix | Arthur Salmon |
| Stuart Dix | Graham Salmon |
| Andy Eastcrabby (G) | John Sterland |
| Mike Godden | Frank Wilkinson |
| Richard Gowing | C. Philip Wilkinson (G) |
| Mike Hartland | Maurice Wilson |
| Jeff Hooper | Alan Wood |
| David Lewis (G) | Mike Wood |

Low Hall Garth Working & Summer Meets 8-9 & 9-11 July 1999

The advance party of three for the working meet arrived on Wednesday afternoon and commenced their various tasks. One of these involved modifications to the fireplace and installation of a new fire basket. This will doubtless ensure greater comfort for winter meets. A further member and guest turned up on Thursday morning and the living and dining area together with the kitchen, were given a spring clean. The latter now sports two shining electric cookers.

All planned work having been carried out by Friday morning, two members departed whilst two members and guest walked a circuit of Little Cans and Great Cans (with a diversion to Grey Friar) and Wetherlam with a descent via Tilberthwaite Ghyll to L.H.G. The weather, whilst fine, was overcast with high humidity which resulted in copious loss of body fluid by all.

During the afternoon four more members arrived at LHG. The small turnout was, no doubt, partly due to the absence of a number of stalwarts (including the President) on the Bolivian expedition. The meet leader came with a forecast of fine weather for the Saturday but a prophet of gloom and doom delighted in informing us that a cold occluded front was bringing rain on the morrow,

Some members then began to prepare their individual meals whilst others, less self-sufficient, departed to the Three Shires Inn, later to be joined by the self-catering brigade.

The dawn of Saturday morning proved the gloom and doom prophet to be right. Overnight rain was followed by low cloud and drizzle.

However, this did clear later to be superseded by cloudy skies, again with high humidity.

After a hearty breakfast we split into three parties, one investigating the depths of Tilberthwaite Ghyll (with limited success), another taking the path under the north side of Lingmoor to Elterwater, with a stop to replenish lost fluid at the Britannia and then returned to LHG via the traverse of Lingmoor. The remaining party negotiated Fat Man's Agony and explored the slopes of Pike O'Blisco. All the walkers felt the effect of the humidity and the shower was in great demand.

A three-course meal was prepared by Mike Hartland (having been pre-cooked by his spouse - to whom, our thanks). The meal was excellent in both quality and quantity. A pleasant evening was spent in the hut and we were regaled with a graphic account of life in the Fire Service.

The weather on the Sunday was perfect 'with virtually cloudless skies. Most members had to return home, unfortunately; your report writer and guest being able to enjoy an ascent of Crinkle Crag and Bow Fell from the Three Shires Stone.

Our thanks go to Mike Hartland for organising the meet and for the excellent catering arrangements.

RogerDix

Attendance:

Working Meet

Roger Dix
Derek English
Mike Godden
David Handley
Richard Kirby (Guest)

Summer Meet

Ken Aldred
Roger Dix
Eddie Edwards
Mike Godden
Mike Hartland
Richard Kirby (Guest)
Derek Smithson

Spring Bank Meet

Isle of Arran

29 May - 5 June 1999

The pattern of Spring Bank Holiday meets has been changing over the past few years, and as an experiment, this year's meet was turned into an open one, and sited on the Isle of Arran. The advertised meet leader Eddy Edwards organised accommodation, but as fate decreed was unable to attend the meet and the role was taken over by the president. Your reporter travelled with Ian to Arran on the preceding Friday (Ian was wishing to check things out), and we discovered that the accommodation was a group of wooden huts situated on the flanks of Goatfell overlooking Come and the Firth of Clyde; nearly 100 metres up a very steep and deeply rutted tarmac track. There was ample room with catering size kitchen and dining areas, and several bunk rooms, but perhaps this was not the accommodation desired by a mixed group who have passed the flush of youth. In fact, more than half the attendees had chosen to book their own accommodation elsewhere, and the club was lucky to be allowed to use just the annex and pay on a bed night basis; (very lucky, as the club deficit could have been well into three figures). It was also noted that a sizeable YRC contingent had spent the previous week only yards from the hut, but only to depart at the meet onset. Perhaps contributed to by the difficult hut access, and the draw of the gourmet establishments nearby, the meet was very fragmented, some names in the attendance list being seen only fleetingly.

For those unfamiliar with Arran, the island is divided into north and south by a road called The String. The north has all the high land over 512 metres, in the form of three ridges, one on the west separated by some five miles from the other two in the east which are connected by The Saddle to form a rough H. Goatfell as part of the H,

is the highest peak at 874 metres, but the ridge traverses are said to be second only to those on Skye.

Weather during the week was much better than further south, but was quite changeable as the wind swung from easterly round to the west. A frontal system kept bringing rain showers, quite wintry on the tops, to break up what would otherwise have been warm sunny days. Climbers were rewarded by magnificent views over the Clyde and across the islands towards the highlands, but were lucky if they escaped with no rain. Of course we were subjected to the dreaded midge, and being accommodated indoors was a boon, but the weather gave some respite, or one could always retire to a nearby hostelry.

In view of the splintered nature of the meet, it would not be useful to report all individual activities. Nearly all of the ridges were visited, in most cases by more than one party on different occasions, and some rock climbing was attempted although frustrated by bad weather. The Cioch na h'Oighe ridge, reported by Poucher as only for experienced mountaineers, was traversed but I believe Ceum na Caillich (the Witch's step) was not taken direct. Walks at lower altitudes were undertaken including a coastal path north from Sannox where the terrain is of great interest to geologists. Holy Island was also visited and its peak climbed, and of course a visit had to be made to the newly operating Loch Ranza distillery not yet selling matured whisky, but selling cases in bond to be released in several years time.

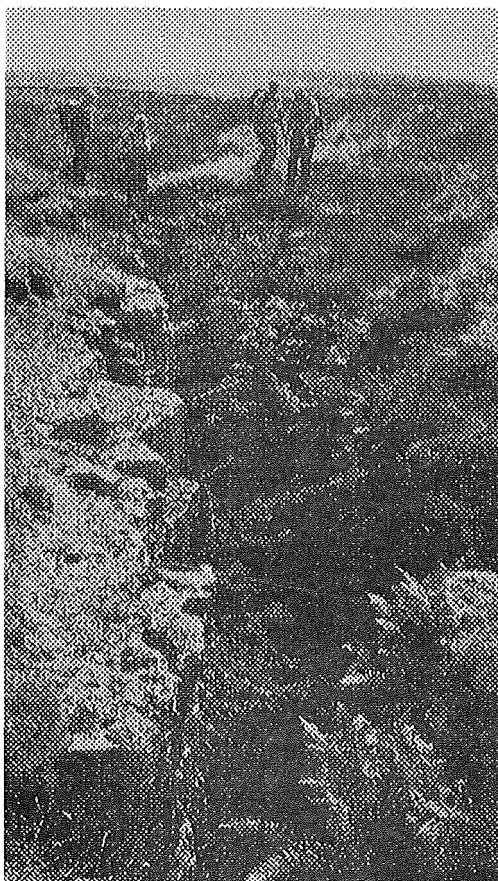
Despite the fragmented nature of the meet, in the evenings, the Ingledene in Sannox attracted a good proportion of those wishing to eat, or just drink, and a group of ten shared table one evening near the end of the week.

A rewarding trip, but one which did not live up to the memorable Scottish camping meets of the past.

Frank Wilkinson

Attendees

President Ian	Crowther
Roger	Dix
Iain	Gilmour
Sarah	Gilmour (G)
Elizabeth	Gowing (G)
Richard	Gowing
Richard	Kirby (G)
David	Large (PM)
Alan	Linford
Angie	Linford (G)
David	Martindale
John	Martindale (G)
David	Smith
Bill	Todd
Juliet	Todd (G)
James	Whitby (PM)
Frank	Wilkinson



Mike Godden, Mike Hartland, David Smith and George Spenceley admiring Rift Pot

Lowstern Meet

20 - 22 August 1999

Meets held in August are likely to clash with holidays or other fine weather attractions, and so the meet leader may feel he has to compete. I believe the President had some say in the choosing of Robert Crowther as meet leader. Situated at Lowstern, potholing was bound to be a possibility, but there was the strange occurrence of the active club potholers (who were digging in the vicinity) visiting the hut, and actually sleeping 'on' the car park outside. They officially were deemed not to be attending the meet, and consequently are only appended to the attendance list.

Robert laid on full English breakfasts, and an excellent barbecue for Saturday evening. He also laid on clay pigeon shooting for Saturday afternoon, and near perfect weather for the whole weekend. There was high broken cloud with long sunny periods and a light cooling breeze, stronger on Saturday than Sunday, but still shirt sleeve weather even on Ingleborough. One may be tempted to feel, in view of the above itinerary, that the call of the easy life had taken over, but considering the average age of official attendees, the activities were more than modest.

The author, while imbibing ale in the New Inn on the Friday night, was asked by a near septuagenarian if the three peaks could be done on the Saturday. In the spirit of the moment, plans were made, and resulted in a party of three leaving Ribbleshead at about 8.30 am. We had left a car strategically at Horton, but two of us managed to set foot on all three peaks before lack of time to meet Robert's

call to the barbecue caused us to descend from Penyghent to Horton rather than the starting point at Ribblehead. During the day we met most of the non potholers somewhere on Ingleborough. This was one of the weekends of the CPC Gaping Gill Winch, and the official potholers on the meet, in the shape of the Josephys, used this facility to explore the Whitsun series of 00. They also explored Penyghent Ghyll on the Sunday when most members had returned home. The author and a past president from Nelson visited the winch camp to foster inter club relations.

I should not forget to mention that I believe some rock climbing was undertaken on Twistleton Scars on the Friday preceding the meet.

Frank Wilkinson

Attendance

President, Ian	Crowther
Ken	Aldred
Denis	Barker
Ian	Can
Iain	Chapman
Robert	Crowther
Mike	Godden
Mike	Hartland
Gordon	Humphreys
John	Jenkin (Guest)
Richard	Josephy
Tim	Josephy
Harvey	Lomas
John	Lovett
David	Smith
Derek	Smithson
George	Spenceley
Bill	Todd
Frank	Wilkinson
Coincidental cave digging group	
Bruce	Benseley
Ged	Campion
Alister	Renton
Graham	Salmon
Richard	Sealey



Ingleborough from Park Fell with Mike Godden and David Smith.

Photos: Bill Todd