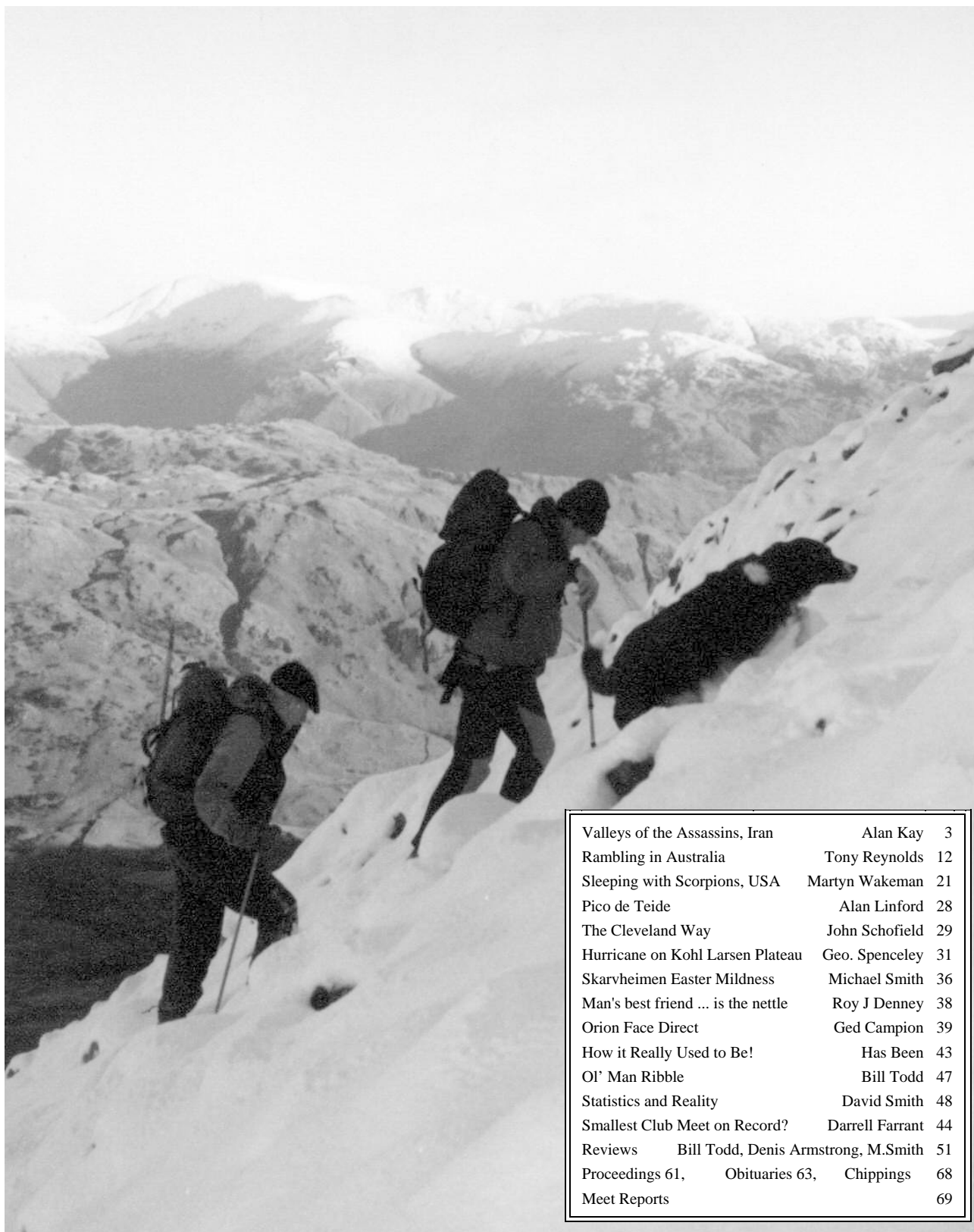


Yorkshire Rambler



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Derek Smithson and David Hick ascending Wetherlam from the Greenburn valley

Foreword

We have lost some outstanding members since the last edition of the Yorkshire Rambler.

Bernard Nelstrop, a prominent caver in the pre-war period, was in the seventieth year of his membership of the Club, and our longest serving member. Bob Chadwick was always a leader and trendsetter in whatever he undertook in a long and distinguished life. He became President of the Club at the AGM immediately following my election to membership in 1962. Eddie Edwards died on a glorious sunny day in the Yorkshire hills, active to the last, attending our Glan Dena meet in North Wales only a fortnight before his unexpected death. Maurice Wilson always contrived to get the maximum out of a full ninety-year life, which included his unforgettable contribution to our 1957 Himalayan expedition.

Life proceeds however, in the YRC as elsewhere, and it is my pleasure to welcome to full membership of the Club George Burfitt, Roger Dix, David Large, Martyn Thomas and James Whitby, all of whom have been elected since our last issue. Some of these new members have close relatives in the Club, others have friends, and now they will have many more.

I know that we all hope that they will enjoy the sort of relationship with the YRC that so enhanced the lives of Bernard, Bob, Eddie and Maurice and is still enriching the lives of the rest of us.



W C I Crowther, President

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not
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Travels in the Valleys of the Assassins

The Islamic Republic
of Iran, 1999

Alan Kay

Most of us know very little about Iran, except that there was an Islamic Revolution there under the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, and that it is the source of a lot of oil. There is, however, much more to Iran than religion, oil and deserts; it is Asia's fifth largest country, half the size of India (and three times the size of France); there are 42 peaks over 4000m, Damavand, an extinct volcano, the highest at 5671m is snow covered the year round, and there are huge rock faces, many unexplored, in both the Elburz Mountains north of Tehran, and the

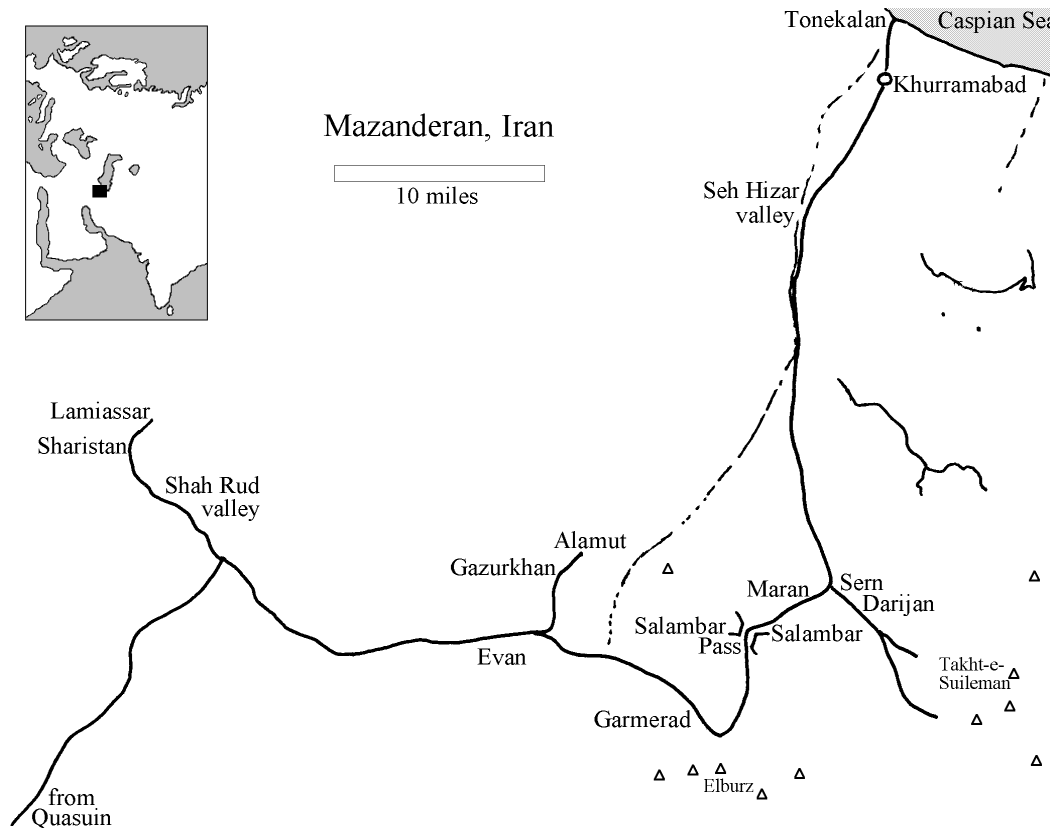
Zagros Mountains in the west of the country.

Add to these a civilisation stretching over 6000 years and the natural Persian friendliness and hospitality, and you can begin to recognise that Iran has a great deal to offer.

During September 1999 I travelled in the Elburz Mountains with a group of 8 women (6 English and 2 Iranians) and 2 Iranian (male) guides. The aims of the expedition were twofold, namely to visit the Castles of the Assassins, and to explore some of the remote valleys, ridges and villages on the northern slopes of the range, leading down to the Caspian Sea.

The trip was largely inspired by Freya Stark's travels in the area in 1929 and 1930, and the wonderful book she subsequently wrote; the secondary title of this article is taken from the name of that book.

During our short stay in Tehran we



visited the National Museum of Archaeology, and the nearby Islamic Museum - both well worth a visit to enable one to begin to understand the incredible history and artistry of Iran - and also the Ceramic and Glass Museum, the latter containing stunningly beautiful blown glass from the first Century BC, the time when glass blowing was invented in the Middle East.

We drove via Quasvin to the Shah Rud valley in the western part of Mazandaran Province, and on to Sharistan, a village about a mile from Lamiassar, our first Assassin Castle. The mountains here are steep, rocky and barren, but the valley bottom is well irrigated and fertile, and the locals were gathering in the rice harvest. It was a peaceful, subdued scene, with pale green and yellow rice fields, rich brown earth, swaying poplar trees and mud and stone built houses.

We camped on the outskirts of Sharistan, in view of the castle, beneath a delicate sickle moon.

Next morning we climbed up to Lamiassar Castle, a fairly rough scramble, for the path had been washed away in places by a recent flash flood. The castle formerly covered an entire mountain top, over an area about 800m by 400m, steep on all sides, with embattlements still very evident along the eastern flank. The entrance is guarded by the remains of a solid circular tower, and in the centre of the site, the keep, still fairly well intact, gives an idea of the massive scale of this impregnable castle.

The Assassins were Persians, a branch of the Ismailites who were themselves a branch of the Shi'ites. The first leader and Grand Master of

the Assassins was a young Persian called Hasan - i - Sabbah who joined the sect in 1071AD; it was Hasan who turned the murder of his opponents into an avowed political weapon. The secret garden at Alamut Castle where he drugged his followers with hashish before sending them out on their missions was known by the Crusaders, giving us the word "Assassin" or "Hashishin", meaning in Arabic "hashish eater".

The recent rain had washed surface soil away to reveal scattered shards of attractive patterned pottery which we gathered; which Assassin, I wondered, took his last sip of water from the lip of the cup I brought home; who was his chosen target, and was his mission successful; did he survive?

We returned to camp via a scrambling descent over smooth sandstone slabs, and after a delicious lunch of yoghurt, salad, grapes, omelette and melon (in that order) prepared by our Iranian friends, we moved off eastwards towards Evan Lake.

En route we passed two flocks of sheep being moved to lower ground for the winter, both flocks moving along in single file, one sheep behind another. From a distance they looked like a line of ants crawling along the ground, and as they moved each animal kicked up its own mini cloud of dust in the dry soil, making it appear as if they were moving along in a cocoon.

We camped beside Evan Lake, about a mile from Evan village, and next day had a short walk northwards into a narrow rocky valley where we disturbed a group of turkey quail - they are indeed the

size of turkeys, and make an intermittent cackling noise as they scutter along the scree; we never saw them flying.

Around a bonfire at camp that evening, as we ate more delicious Iranian food and talked with our Iranian guides, another sickle moon rose in the sky, and an occasional satellite traced a thin line across the heavens; the darkness gradually intensified, and we heard dogs furiously barking in the distance as they drove wolves into woodland beyond Evan village.

Early next morning as daylight returned, the hills, crags and trees were all mirrored in a perfect reflection in the lake.

We now moved on to the large village of Shamsmi - Kelai, and walked up to our second Assassin castle, Maymunde. This was a most unusual castle, for it was a series of huge natural caves with entrances high up on the face of a near vertical conglomerate rock. It was quite unassailable, for the only access in time of peace was along a series of wooden planks forced into the rock face, and which were removed by the defenders when they were under threat. The caves were enlarged by the Assassins, and they formed a stronghold for Hasan's elite troops.

There was some archaeological exploration at this site by a British team in 1960, when Joe Brown was employed to climb the loose conglomerate face to gain access to the caves; the caves and tunnels were then thought to be just about habitable, but the expedition report mentions substantial rock falls during the time the team was in the tunnels.

In the early afternoon we moved on to Gazur Khan, the village below the huge rock of Alamut Castle. Abbas, our guide, was anxious that we should climb to the castle in the late afternoon, and he was right, for the low sun cast warm, mellow light on the sandstone and shadows on the undulating folds of hills, giving the whole scene a magical combination of colour and perspective.

A steep but easy climb took us to a high sandstone ridge which led on to the Castle. Just before the final pull up to the top, a huge circular hole, 3m high and 4m wide, had been made in the sandstone ridge, perhaps initially by natural weathering, but subsequently enlarged by the Assassins, and this provided a beautiful birds eye view of the rugged mountains, clumps of pale green poplar trees, and distant valleys.

John Simpson, the senior Foreign Correspondent for the BBC travelled here in the late 1980's, and his subsequent book, "Behind the Veil" most sensitively describes the then prevailing circumstances in Iran. He visited Alamut Castle, and here is his description of the scene:- "The view was wonderful, and I think I shall never forget it; it was like being taken up on a pinnacle of the Temple and being shown all the kingdoms of the world. The mountains and rivers and the bright green of paddy fields and the slicks of near-desert reached off into oblivion."

Alamut Castle was the home of Hasan for 34 years - he never left it; he spent his time "studying in his immense library, administering his province, ordering the murder of his enemies, and leading an otherwise

pious and abstemious life” (John Simpson). The Castle was never conquered in battle, but was surrendered in 1256AD to the Mongols, who were then under the leadership of Genghis Khan’s grandson.

There is now very little remaining of Alamut Castle, but it clearly had everything an 11th century castle needed; it was difficult to approach, being either vertical or very steep on all sides, there was adequate annual rainfall which was stored in huge natural caverns 10m deep (still very much in evidence) and the soil on top of the rock was sufficiently fertile for cultivation.

I walked back to the campsite with Abbas, and as we passed through the village of Gazur Khan we met a group of travelling actors who were giving a performance for the villagers. Abbas exchanged greetings with groups of villagers - “Khaste nabasheed” meaning “don’t be tired”, an appropriate and meaningful greeting in this remote and rocky region. “Khaste nabasheed” would perhaps be an

appropriate greeting for mountaineers or backpackers.

Next day we drove to Garmerud, a large village south east of Alamut, the last four or five miles of the track being narrow and rough where recent heavy rain had washed away the surface. Garmerud lies at the end of a narrow rocky valley, the only onward route, on foot, passing through a narrow rock cleft.

Freya Stark spent much time here, and her guide Aziz had his house, and shop (and two wives) in Garmerud. Freya obviously felt it was a place where she was amongst friends, where she could relax and also recuperate from her attacks of malaria. We quickly felt at home, too, for Shirin, one of our Iranian guides, had relatives in the village, and we were invited to spend the night at their house. Iranian hospitality is such that no payment in cash or kind was expected (and could in fact have been tantamount to an insult if any had been offered by us). The whole house, sitting room, washing room, and kitchen were available for our use, and the



family simply adjusted to having ten extra people in the house. Iranian village houses do not have furniture in the western sense, the only furnishings being piles of thick cushions to sit on; at meal times a cloth is spread on the carpeted floor, bowls of food are placed on the cloth, and you simply sit on the floor to eat the food.

Aziz's shop was on the opposite side of the stream from our abode, and although Aziz is long gone, his son is the current shopkeeper. I tried to find him, but his shop opening hours were somewhat variable, and my visits to the shop never coincided with opening times. Whilst looking around the village I encountered a group of ten old men who were sitting on a bench, chatting and watching the world go by. They beckoned me over to them (perhaps they felt envy or pity at my entourage of six women!) and although they couldn't speak any English, and I couldn't speak sufficient Farsi, spoken words were quite unnecessary, and we "conversed" very effectively with smiles, signs and a few "salaams". They asked me to take their photograph, and I hope the copy I later sent to Shirin eventually reaches them.

Julia and I walked around the rest of the village, up steep narrow alleys, along higher paths, and near a mosque we found memorials to three or four young men who presumably had been killed in the long war with Iraq. Young children followed us part of the way and fetched their parents out to look at the "ferangi" - foreigners. Their curiosity was genuine and there was no suggestion of threat or lack of politeness. Back on the valley

bottom road a car stopped beside us, the occupants wound down the windows, and in perfect English, though with a slight American accent, they welcomed us to Iran and to their village, thanked us for coming, and asked if we needed anything. This was so typical of the delightful warm welcome we received everywhere in Iran.

Next day we walked upstream, through the narrow rocky entrance to the upper valley, and climbed steeply to a high contouring mule track, which eventually lead to the small village of Pichiban. This, too, was a favourite of Freya Stark - it is at a height of 2700m, is quite isolated, and for five months every year is cut off by snow. As we entered Pichiban we were seen by a few children who called others to come and look at the "ferangi", but as usual, they were very friendly, and a few sweets did wonders to improve Iranian/British relations even further.

Our campsite was half a mile beyond the village, on the far edge of a flat grassy plateau; there were fresh water springs around, and looking back over the Pichiban, the high Elburz Mountains were a purple hue in the afternoon light - it was a glorious place for a high level camp.

Julia and I wandered back into Pichiban to take photographs and were met by a woman carrying a pile of freshly baked unleavened bread; she offered us some, and it was delicious, and she then asked Julia to take her photograph. As all this was happening two other women came up to us, one of them with bandages on the fingers of her right hand. Clearly news of our presence had got around, and we

were seen as the only source of any form of medical help. Gingerly she peeled back the bandages to reveal two large gashes on her fingers, probably an accident whilst cutting fodder; the best we could do was ask her (via much sign language) to go to our campsite, where the wounds were cleaned and rebandaged.

As the sun went down the colours on our plateau became more and more muted, and eventually merged with the surrounding mountains. For an hour or so after dusk shepherds were still driving sheep towards Pichiban, and fires appeared in various parts of the plateau where other shepherds were staying out overnight with their flocks.

Reluctantly we moved on next day to climb to the Salamber Pass, at 3100m the highest point of the trek. At the pass was an old caravanserai, and although now partly in ruins, it would nevertheless provide shelter in a storm. When Freya Stark passed this way in 1929 it was still in regular use.

We had a near 360° view at the pass, including the pyramid shaped Takht-e-Soleiman (4820m) and Alam Kuh (4850m), two of the highest peaks in Iran. A wide band of white limestone, about half a mile wide, split through the entire mountain range as far as the eye could see, and in stark contrast to the rest of the Elburz range which is generally grey/blue in colour. I do not know the geological explanation for this intrusion, but it is locally called Abraham's Path, and according to legend Abraham travelled here driving his ewes before him, and their milky dripping udders are said to have left this sign of their passage.

A winding path zigzagged down for about 1000m to the settlement of Salambar and we camped half a mile further on beside a waterfall. Late afternoon mist enveloped the campsite and village and the temperature dropped the first signs of winter approaching.

Next day we moved down valley on a superb high level path, past a series of four big waterfalls in a



canyon that was probably 350m deep, and arrived at the large village of Maran. This was a beautiful village, with houses newly whitewashed, pots of colourful flowers in front of most houses, and many colourfully dressed women and children who were not in the slightest shy at being photographed; it was also a hive of activity, as mules carrying loads of fodder and bedding were being driven hither and thither from fields to storage in readiness for winter.

We continued on via a rising path until, quite suddenly on the apex of a rocky spur, we turned southwards into the Darijan Valley. Here, for 10 minutes or more, three birds, probably peregrine falcons, swooped up and down and round about in a huge aerial display of falcon enjoyment.

After a long easy descent to the River Darijan, we boulder hopped across the river and climbed up to the village of Sern. Here we lunched in a village house, and for me this was one of the particularly memorable parts of the trip. We were invited in by the lady of the household, (shoes to be left outside, as in all Iranian village houses), and we sat on the carpeted floor or on thick cushions. Whilst we waited for the laggards of our group to catch up we were served with more and more sweet green tea.

The husband of the household joined us, and he turned out to be the man who had helped us to cross the River Darijan. This household, the charming husband and wife, children and grandchildren, and the simple but spotlessly clean house epitomise, for me, the friendliness and hospitality for which the Iranians have been well known for

centuries. Our meal was a mixture of beans and tinned fish, and whenever we now eat these at home, in my mind's eye I immediately zoom back to Iran, the Elburz Mountains, Sern and its inhabitants.

As we left Sern to go further up the Darijan Valley, all the villagers lined the path to greet us; as the sole male "ferangi" I "salaamed" and shook hands with all the menfolk, feeling a bit like a fake dignitary or royalty, except that in Sern I think we were all genuinely pleased to meet and greet one another.

Word of ferangi arrival had spread to Sharistan, the next village up valley, and as we passed through, a young woman approached us carrying a pile of fabric, intricately patterned, colourful, and for sale. She was in her late twenties, with a baby on her back, and she had woven the fabric the previous winter. The "wives" gathered round, examined the material, and subsequently bought the lot - a relatively easy sale, and a bit of a disappointment for me, an inveterate haggler.

Our campsite for the next two nights was half an hour further south, up the valley beyond the village of Darijan, at 2160m. It was misty and cold at night now, even colder when the mist cleared and a fuller moon shone in a starry sky - winter was beginning to take an early grip.

Our guide Abbas Jafari was a man of many parts; he is a film director (he has done work for the BBC, amongst others), he is perhaps Iran's leading climber with a number of first ascents to his name, and he has represented his country at international climbing conferences. He told me that he was introduced

to climbing as a teenager having read one of Alan Blackshaw's climbing books, he subsequently taught himself to climb by reading Alan's books, and later met Alan at some of those conferences. He told me all this before he knew of my YRC connection.

He is also a good cook, his cooking of Iranian food being up to top YRC standards, and at the Darijan camp he asked if I would like to have the cooked potato from the bottom of the rice pot; as you might imagine, I did not altogether understand the significance of this, but being polite, said "yes"; he delved into the pot and handed me a tasty, succulent slice of potato, which had been cooked by being put into a thin layer of fat at the bottom of the rice pot, the rice placed above it and cooked at the same time. It was delicious, and I ought to have kept quiet about it, for later the wives wanted their share of this delicacy.

We were fairly close to Takht-e-Suileman, its pyramid shaped summit guarded by long, broken and jagged Cuillin like ridges; Abbas and Farah, our other Iranian guide and a leading Iranian female climber, spent time tracing their routes on these ridges and buttresses.

Next day we visited some hot sulphur springs two hours walk further up the Darijan valley, and found the site already occupied by two or three Iranian families, picnicking and bathing.

After the "wives" and our two Iranian girls had bathed in the springs, Abbas and I joined four other Iranian men in the low water filled cave for our turn. The water was pleasantly warm, a good bath

temperature, about 1½m deep, and it was possible therefore to have a good soak. I imagine it will be a haven to descend to in winter when the surrounding mountains are covered in snow and ice. Freya Stark visited these springs in 1930, and nothing seems to have changed during the intervening seventy years.

Before beginning our walk out of the Darijan valley next day, Julia and I went up into a side valley to visit a mineral water spring which had also been visited by Freya Stark in 1930. She had taken a sample of water for subsequent chemical analysis, and the results of that analysis are given in her book. We drank some, and although it had a definite earthy taste when neat, with orange powder added it was delicious and thirst quenching.

Then began our exit down valley, northwards into the Seh Hizar valley, and on towards the roadhead leading to the Caspian Sea. The valley became narrow and deeper, with steep sides, and was in many ways like a slightly smaller version of a Himalayan valley, with waterfalls and rapids, a track threading into and around gullies, a few trees, and all the time a backdrop of big jagged hills and ridges.

We had to cross the Seh Hizar river six times, sometimes boulder hopping, and on three occasions by gingerly balancing on bridges composed of one slender tree branch about four or five inches wide, rounded and slippery, and twelve inches or so above turbulent water - a test of balance and concentration!

As we progressed northwards the trees became more and more dense, until latterly we were walking in a

mature forest, and therefore with plenty of greenery, in contrast to many over exploited Himalayan valleys. Back in more populated terrain, we stopped twice at tea shops which had been set up at the junctions of mule tracks and which did a steady trade from passing muleteers. We eventually arrived at the roadhead in gently falling rain, and decided that we would try to locate a village house for accommodation instead of camping, and it was as well that we did, for it rained heavily during the night, and the intended campsite had been close to the river.

Our descent of the valley had fortuitously been well timed as the river had risen a lot during the night and we certainly would not have been able to boulder hop or balance on tree branches to cross if we had been 24 hours later.

So in the last phase of the trip we drove down to the southern coast of the Caspian Sea at Tonekabon, and

on to Ramsar where we stayed overnight, and in the somewhat faded glory of a hotel which until the 1979 revolution had been one of the Shah's palaces, we soaked off the accumulated grease and grime, and experienced that combination of sadness and satisfaction which one usually feels towards the end of a successful trip.

We ate sturgeon which was delicious, but there was no caviar (it is all exported), we walked along the Caspian coast with huge waves pounding the shore, we visited a tea plantation, and two days later, via the busy town of Zanjan and the impressive mausoleum of Soltanieh, were back in Tehran.

Iran is a great place, I plan to go again just as soon as I can, and am working on plans to follow the route of Alexander the Great through the Zagros Mountains to Persepolis, across the deserts towards Tehran and on to Mashad - does anyone else want to join me?

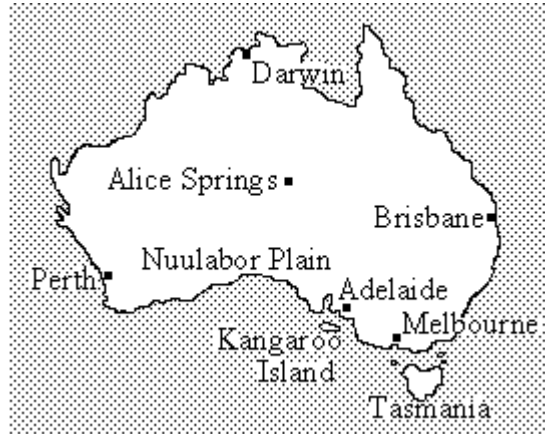


Rambling in Australia 1975 to 1999

Tony Reynolds

In 1974 I was offered a position in Australia and, despite misgivings, took the plunge. There are still regrets over leaving Albion but we've had great times downunder and some of our travels I relate here. There are no tales of severe climbs or deep potholes but plenty of adventure.

So where do we start? We settled in South Australia, sorted out house, school and job routines then turned to thoughts of outdoor activities. One of the first destinations was Mount Gambier famous for the Blue Lake and deep water-filled potholes known as Picanniny Ponds. The lake is the crater of an extinct volcano and the water is used for the local township. Around November each year the water changes to a bright blue colour and reverts to the normal colour after the summer. As a major tourist attraction, the locals keep the mystique of this colour change alive



with explanations involving bacteria, algae and mineral solubility. Some day the truth may come out.

The whole area is limestone with ponds – deep holes on the moors, filled to ground level with water. Holes up to three hundred feet deep are known and in the early days of exploration, there were several drownings. Nowadays there is little exploration. Gazing after a chunk of limestone sinking down one pond, we noticed an interesting rocky outcrop nearby. So, number three son, Jono, and I set off across the moors in deep grass towards the rocks. Suddenly there was a shout and Jono jumped



Mists on Kangaroo Island



Arch on Kangaroo Island

high into the air and beat a hasty retreat to the car. He'd trodden on a very large and dangerous brown snake. We never did get to those rocks. Instead we retreated to a pub for a couple of nerve steadying brandies.

Our second adventure in South Australia was camping on Kangaroo Island, an island in Spencer Gulf. One night we camped in the bush at Snake Lagoon and while Doreen made camp with Jono, I went off in the car to collect firewood. In the morning, after breakfast, we had planned to go to Rocky River to look for platypus. Jono started to climb into the back seat only to jump out about ten times faster than he went in. On the back seat were several scorpions. I'd obviously collected them with the firewood and overnight they'd migrated from the boot into the car. We spent a long time searching the car before we could set off on our visit to the river with any degree of safety. Poor Jono had his scares during our first years in Australia!

For our first long holiday we decided to drive to Ayres Rock and Alice Springs, camping all the way. We had to choose the time carefully because the road, in those days, was not sealed and became impassable after rainfall. So we went for the dry time but not summer. A camp on the first night consisted of driving off the road for a few hundred yards, pitching, eating and sleeping. During the day temperatures reached around 100°F. When we woke in the morning the temperature was well below freezing. The desert was covered in frost but it soon disappeared when the sun rose. Another long drive seeing very few vehicles on the road brought us to the Rock, tent pitching, cooking and so to bed.

Nowadays there is a modern hotel with full facilities, but then there was very little apart from a shop, petrol and a Ranger Station. Obviously, we had to climb Ayres Rock, now known as Uluru. This is a stiff walk up with a chain to keep walkers away from the

edge. There have been several deaths over the years with people falling off, but I cannot imagine how anyone could get into such a dangerous position on top of the rock.

We had a few days in this camp and walked around the whole area, as well as visiting the aborigines' camp. They lived in humpies made out of oil drums, bits of carpet, lino and timber. Women made artefacts out of wood and with a tiny fire and some wire produced elaborate pokerwork. The kids were half naked, with sore eyes, snotty noses and lots of flies. Many were blond with straw-coloured hair but this disappears as they get older.

Leaving the Rock, we reached the fleshpots of Alice Springs, camping on a well laid-out campground. Alice is renowned for the Todd River Regatta where the boats are on wheels running on rails laid in the sandy bed of the river. The oarsmen have to dig their blades in the sand in order to move their boat. Very energetic but it helps to increase the sale and consumption of beer.

The day we had to set off for home, expecting a two-day drive, it started to rain. The first 250km, driving on bitumen, gave no problems but then we had to get onto the dirt road. This went well enough as far as the old opal town of Coober Pedy but was far too dangerous to continue in the dark. Most residents hereabouts live underground and we booked into a beautifully cool and luxurious underground hotel for the first night as it was raining. Later we shifted to a shed on the camping ground where the mud was already a foot deep. Still we were dry and had food and water so existed, if somewhat frugally.



After three days of heavy rain, we went to the police station for a report on the six hundred kilometres of roads south to reach the next black top, bitumen sealed road.

The man in blue was not optimistic. He said, and I quote "A bloody boat got through overnight" and he invited us to drive down to Twenty-mile Creek, 20 miles to the south of Coober Pedy. By driving through deep mud and water we got to the north bank of the creek to find that not only was it twenty miles from CP but twenty miles across. Abandon hope for at least another day! The rain had stopped and the following day was warm and sunny so we decided to have a go. We should have waited another day as it turned out to be a nightmare drive.

Deep water, mud, mud, glorious mud with no relief. The biggest problem was with trucks and coaches stuck on the slightest rise in the road. However, in spite of having to dig out a few times and several excursions around deep lakes, we managed pretty well. At Pimba we filled up with petrol and food, picked up a guy whose brand new four-wheel drive vehicle had broken down (he'd left his brother with it waiting for spare parts to arrive) and headed south again. Almost within sight of the bitumen section disaster struck. We came to a large lake and stuck in the middle was a Land Rover. I waded out to him but he didn't want any help. He'd flooded the engine by going too fast and his starter motor had jammed. I walked a few yards

past him and found the water still only at mid-calf level.

So very slowly we entered the water. No worries, we passed the Land Rover and then about fifty yards further on the car fell into a hole, water over the bonnet but it staggered on firing on six, then five, then four cylinders. It got down to three before dragging itself out onto dry land for two hours of drying out. The brakes were not functioning for a while but we restarted and later in the journey the generator stopped charging. Water and fine sand are not recommended!

This, and 250km to go, put a stop to our hopes of getting home that night. We finally made it to home and work the next day with happy memories of a great holiday.

Still in South Australia, we had Alan Brown visit us and he expressed a desire to go to the mountains for a days walking. So, with three hundred kilometres to go we had an early start and 100mph on some sections to arrive mid-morning at Wilpena Pound to climb St. Mary's Peak. The pound is an old volcano with the hills forming a circle perhaps twenty-five miles across. It was the end of January and the place was deserted, I realised why later on. To get to the top is a bit of a scramble but old ladies with walking frames and young ones with high-heeled shoes have been seen having a go. It was the hot time of the year, starting warm but soon getting hot.

Just beyond one short vertical pitch we came upon two nubile young Swedish ladies stripped to the waist improving their tans. After an all too brief conversation with the girls we had to leave them and carry on in the time honoured YRC fashion of

onward and upward. The temperature soon rose above 100°F and although we were carrying lots of water I got severe cramp and had to leave Alan to complete the walk on his own. To say the least, the walk back to the car was slow and painful. There we were able to get soft drinks from the shop before heading south to the nearest pub at Hawker.

It was Australia day and the pub was packed – lots of cars, drunks, families and kids all having a ball. I have searched my memory about the amount of liquid we consumed and I think it was seven pints of weak shandy on my part, and I suspect Alan was not far behind. A nighttime drive home and bed got us back into civilisation again. The following day was one of recovery but it was two days later that I felt really bad. Muscles had seized up and I had difficulty in moving but it was back to normal the next day.

A valuable lesson in walking in temperatures over 100°F: don't; and if you do, carry lots of water and salt tablets.

Western Australia – My company asked me to go to Perth to sort out one of our businesses so Doreen and I put our four-wheel drive on the train and two days later arrived on the west coast.

While I was working for about five weeks we did the normal tourist things, then, when the job was finished, we took a months holiday camping around Western Australia before driving four thousand kilometres across the Nuulabor to Melbourne.

We moved south first, to the beaches, then into the Karri forests. The centre of attraction is the almost three hundred foot tall Gloucester Tree with



The Gloucester tree with the spikes spiralling up the trunk

its observation platform on top. This used to be a fire watchtower but is now used for visitors who lack a fear of heights. The ascent is by a ladder of long metal spikes spiralling around the trunk with other longer spikes supporting a wire handrail. There is no protection and a slip would result in a long fall. As before the YRC policy of onwards and upwards got me started.

Halfway up I was met by a chap descending with his obviously scared ten-year-old son. Dad was below him and placing the lad's feet one by one on the next spike down. Hand movement followed and they were going very slowly indeed. I got as far away as possible while they passed and although I kept my ears open, there was no cry and thump, so assume they got down safely. I got to the top well enough and spent a few minutes looking around 360° of a vast forest of enormous trees.

Going down was worse than the climb up. The spikes, only an inch in diameter, felt slippery and seemed to slope downwards, or so I thought. It was a relief to be down on to solid ground again.

That night we camped on the side of a river, got a fire going, had a great dinner, slept well and woke the next morning to rain. Warm of course and the only wetting for some weeks, so welcome. Once the rain stopped we got a big fire going and dried all our gear before travelling on to the coast for our next camp. On the way, I climbed to the top of a peak called Frenchman's Cap (resembling a beret pulled forward over the eyes) with magnificent views from the top. We saw some of the beaches later on, a real paradise, all white sand, warm water and deserted.



View towards Frenchman's Cap



The Frenchman's Cap from Mt Mullens

The next walk was to Bluff Knoll in the Stirling Ranges just over 1000m high. It can be called a good stiff walk and is best done early in the morning. This I did in fairly cool conditions, but by the time I was on the top it was pushing 30°C. The mountain was deserted, I didn't see a single person or animal until I got back to the car where I met up with four Japanese youngsters who were thinking of going to the top. Not suitably clad and with the wrong shoes but determined to give it a go. They shared their watermelon with me and I left them to their climb.

After a few days camping in Albany, Australia's last whaling station, and visiting the local tourist spots, we had to set off for the long drive home. Two hundred kilometres on a sealed road to Esperance, then along the dirt road for about 150km following the coast, a sharp turn north to Balladonia



Clytemnestra from Frenchman's Cap.

on the main highway to the east. There I had to go around the car tightening the nuts and bolts that had shaken loose on those very bumpy dirt roads. The dashboard was literally hanging off at this stage.

From Balladonia it was over five hundred kilometres to the state border with only four possible petrol stations. We camped out with no tent, in the open and under the stars, just off the road that night. Another hundred kilometres took us two days with a second bush camp and a problem with the car. Fifty kilometres from anywhere, I noticed the oil pressure was going up and down, dropping at times to zero. I couldn't find anything wrong as the car was running OK and there was plenty of oil, so it was a very slow journey to Bookabie and the only garage for miles. The mechanic found a loose connection and after we had shared a beer, I was on my way. Another overnight camp was needed then it was bitumen roads to Adelaide.

Only eight hundred kilometres to home - a great experience. Some years later a pilots' strike forced me to make the same journey by road again. This time it was bitumened all the way and in a three-litre car with lots of umph. Stopping only for fuel, food, calls of nature and a short sleep on the Nullabor, we drove three thousand kilometres from Melbourne to Kambalda in exactly thirty hours.

Tasmania – Now to the Apple Isle with its climate similar to the UK, or at least the sunnier parts of England.

There is only one thing I could make note of after several visits over the years.



View of Cradle Mountain from the Lake Dove car park

I went on a business trip to Hobart and decided to stay the weekend and walk part of the Cradle Mountain track. So with a small hire car, anorak and boots, I drove up to the Derwent River and on to the campsite at the southern end of Lake St. Clair. I hired a hut for a couple of nights then, having no food, drove back to the pub at Derwent Bridge for supplies, a meal and a few beers.

In the bar I got talking to some locals who invited me to go fishing later that night. "I've no gear" I protested – "No worries, we don't use rods and lines, just gelnite" they replied. I backed away from their invitation as the penalties are very stiff for that sort of fishing.

Saturday was wet, but in the best YRC tradition I plunged out of the warm dry hut into the cold, wet downpour. Following the track north, I found the going very slow. The rain didn't help, but at intervals of fifty to one hundred yards there was a fallen tree to negotiate. Trunk diameters were anything from two feet to giants of six feet across. Crampons would have been a great help. About ten miles up the track I came to Pelican Point where the track divided – straight on to Cradle mountain; to the left over a small mountain and back to

Derwent bridge. A slog along a wet track for a couple of miles and I got to the summit to find an old mountain hut partly ruined but a dry area where I took a leisurely lunch. Wet and cold – just like a Ramblers' weekend.

Back to the camp and, wonder upon wonder, the sun came out. I got into dry clothes and sat outside thinking of dinner. I struck up conversation with my next door neighbour and out of the blue he offered me a fish, one of the many he'd just caught. This turned out to be an enormous trout of two or three pounds. I'd to cut it into many pieces as the only thing I had to fry it in was a small pan about six-inches across. Done in butter it lasted for dinner, breakfast and, on bread, for lunch.

Sunday I walked tracks along the river with not a soul around and, together with a bootload of wet clothing, headed back to civilisation in Hobart.

Victoria – About fifteen years ago some friends talked us into camping on Boxing Day for a few days. They had gone up before Christmas with another family to camp in the bush on the side of the Snowy River at a crossing called McKillop Bridge. We loaded the car with tents, sleeping bags, food and, of course, beer and wine. A five-hour drive and we found them, pitched our tents and relaxed in the late afternoon sunshine.

The next few days were fabulous. We did an occasional walk, though it was really too hot to be too energetic. So we got out our camp chairs and put them in the river, sat on them and only came out of the water for food,

beer or wine. The only excitement was while our friend's wife and I were cooking breakfast one morning and all the others were still in bed. A very large Australian Brown Snake visited us. Fortunately, either he was not interested in coffee, bacon and fried eggs or it was the shriek from my assistant cook that scared him off.

Then, alas, the day finally came, we ran out of beer! A meeting was held and, as it was about fifty miles to the nearest supplies and we were due to leave the following day, we reluctantly struck camp, said goodbye to the others and went home. Five days of great weather with beautiful countryside, good food and great company.

Walking, around where I now live, is mainly on forest tracks and paths. The whole area in a 150 mile semi-circle is thick forest with old gold mines all over the place and the rusting remnants of discarded machinery from long gone timber mills. There are several narrow gauge railway lines once used to bring logs down from the mountains to the mills in the valley.

For instance, the most popular rail route for a two-day walk is the Warburton to Powell town line. Initially horses were used to pull the logs on the rail cars to the top and the descent was made under brake control. Horses gave way to steam then to diesel engines. Around 1941 the area closed down for logging and all that is left now are bits of rail, small bridges over the Gullies (most unsafe) and some remains at Powelltown.

I've done a fair amount of this walk and plan to take two days with an overnight camp once the weather cooled to a reasonable level.

Queensland – It is fortunate that we have close relatives in Brisbane, which gives us a base for starting our explorations. We've spent many happy hours on Fraser Island. This is the largest sand island in the world and was a pristine area but is gradually being taken over by the developers. It's essential to have a four-wheel drive vehicle to drive along the beach and get across the soft sand and rocky regions.

On the mainland coast opposite Fraser Island is a camping site virtually only accessible by a four-wheel drive vehicle. We camped there once to spend a few days swimming, fishing and sight-seeing. One day Doreen, my better half, was not feeling too good and decided to stay in the tent while we walked along the beach to an old shipwreck.

During the morning Doreen woke from an aspirin induced sleep to find she was sharing the tent with a large goanna lizard. It is not recorded who was the most alarmed. A goanna can get to over six feet long with four-inch claws but generally they are harmless. This one beat a hasty retreat but was seen around the campsite for the rest of our stay.

This episode leads on to some other animals encountered during camping.

Dingos - These can be dangerous and a nuisance. They scrounge food and we've noticed them taking away our soap, cooking pans and any food we've left around. It's advised that no food is left in tents and that these wild dogs should not be fed under any circumstances.

Emus - These six-foot high birds can be a pest while begging for food. They have used their large claws to attack campers.

Kangaroos - Like emus these animals can be very large and in popular areas can be aggressive. There was a death of a camper in Victoria a few years ago, but it was proved that had been teasing the 'roo with food.

Spiders - Always a problem but more at home than when camping. The redback, funnel web and whitetail can cause severe reactions and death.

Ants - Every place that we've camped has been overrun with ants. Sizes vary from one tenth of an inch to one inch and these latter can give a nasty bite even through clothing.

Mossies, sand flies and ordinary flies - Using a good deterrent spray stops them settling on bare skin. Corks around hats do not work.

Sharks - Everyone knows of the dangers of swimming in the sea. There are very few attacks each year.

Crocodiles - In the tropics, the fresh water croc is reputed to be harmless, not that I would even consider dipping my toes in water where these beasts are known to live. The estuarine croc is a different matter. They will take swimmers. The coastguard have reported one around Darwin estimated at over twenty feet long.

I've seen dozens along the banks of the Adelaide River in the Northern Territory, but our guide assured us that we were safe because crocs couldn't climb up the banks. The track was about twenty feet above the water level. After telling us that we were quite safe, he then advised that if one croc did complete the climb to the top then attacked, we should run, continually changing direction. Apparently crocs can run only in a straight line but no one was prepared to put it to the test.

Jellyfish - These don't swim in the tropics during the summer unless the beach is protected by nets.

Octopi - The blue variety is very poisonous but there are none, or very few, bites a year. It is a small beast that lives in drink cans, bottles, etc. found in harbours.

Sea snakes, cone shells, stone fish and many other sea creatures can be dangerous but in all these cases, one would need to be most unfortunate to get stung or bitten. Ants and flies are by far and away the biggest problem when camping.

Well, that's it. Camping in Australia can vary from luxurious camp sites to out in the bush, desert or forest, temperatures well over 100°F to well below freezing, but generally there were few other campers. Ideal for anyone interested in the outdoors. We hope to see more YRC members out here where the living is good.

Bluff Knoll

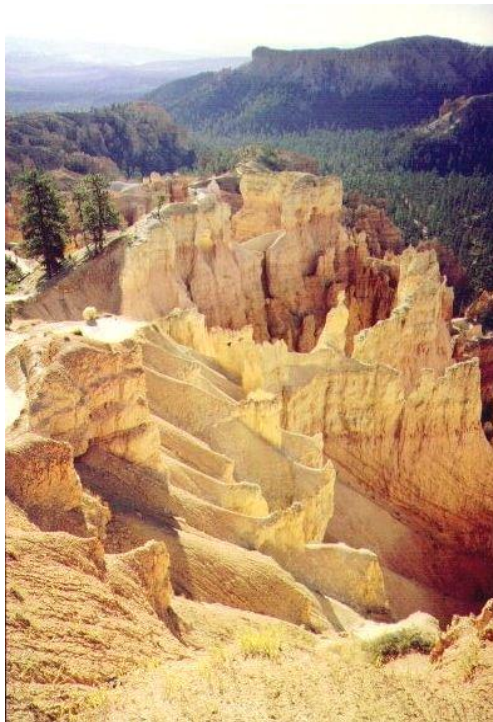


Sleeping with the scorpions...

Martyn Wakeman

... the story of a September week in the deserts of the USA's Southwest.

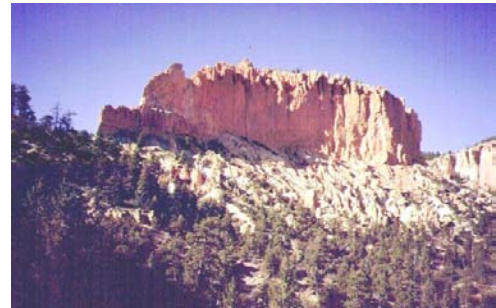
Seeing numerous westerns as a child and, more recently, Marlborough cigarette adverts has inspired me to get a campers perspective of these beautiful and wild areas. I had a week in the area around Las Vegas, chosen only for its proximity to the National Parks in Southwest Utah and the cheap airfares. On arrival, I collected my curious combination of US mail sack protected rucksack and business trolley bag together with my suit container before heading off to collect my car for the week. A Subaru Outback with 4x4, high clearance suspension and a 2.5l boxer engine was only \$4 per day more than a Ford Escort.



Duly stocked and provisioned I drove north and left Vegas behind, passing through a hot and arid no-mans land

of rocky and sandy plains with distant hills slowly becoming closer. A winding pass led through these to the high desert of the Colorado Plateau and Bryce Canyon.

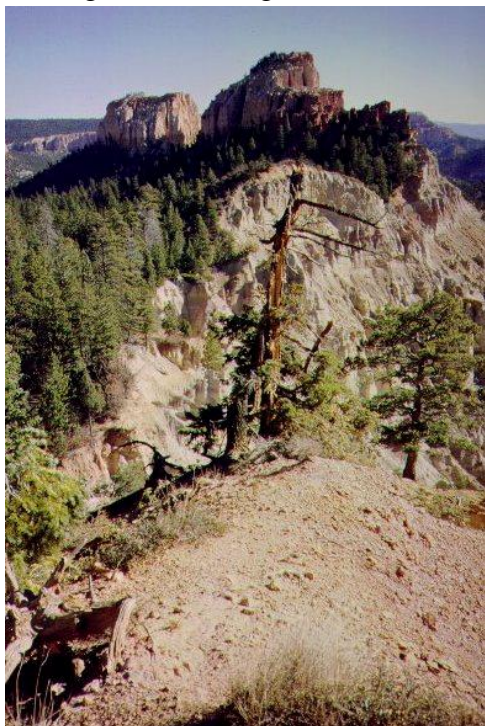
I was hoping to start the backpack trip into Bryce that evening but the ranger would not issue the permit until the following day. Instead I stayed at the quieter of Bryce's two rim campsites, Sunset. I was one of only three people who would be sleeping below the rim the next night. I had picked, more by chance than planning, the best time of year. The crowds on the rim were minimal, the daytime temperatures bearable and the nights cold, even below freezing. The previous night I'd walked a trail wandering from the canyon rim down past the hoodoos or vertical columns of red rock. The geology of Bryce Canyon seemed more fitting to Mars than Earth with the colour, shadows and shape of the hoodoos changing with the position of the sun.



My solitary walk under the 9000ft tree fringed rim in Bryce Canyon filled me with wonder.

I had been a little worried about tramping across sandy rock between tree stumps and autumn leaves with the resident Great Basin rattlesnake, some five feet in length, sniffing around. Apparently, they don't always rattle a warning if you're too close. I took my ski poles to place over logs etc to warn the rattlers off. I would have liked to have seen one but to my

slight disappointment, and relief, didn't see any. There were plenty of rabbits and small squirrels around as I descended through the hoodoos in the new light of morning.



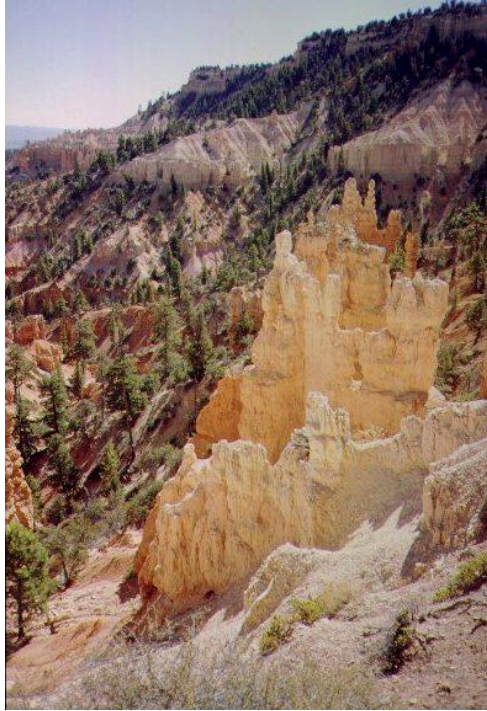
The route wandered from Bryce point down to the valley floor, passing under the pink cliffs of the Wasatch Formation following the white

Dolomitic slopes clad in an open forest of Ponderosa, Limber Pine and Douglas-Fir. These plants live off 15 inches of rain per year. Before entering the forested depths of Yellow Creek I had expansive views towards Northern Arizona with strange rubble towered hoodoos capped in harder rock, known locally as the hat-shop.

The vegetation by the creek reflected the dryer and warmer climate with Pinyon and Utah Juniper abounding but with some scattered Douglas Fir. September brings the flash flood season and I guess much of the rain, accompanied by lightening storms. Many trees showed the violence of a lightening strike. Other trees were exposed with the roots forming a cruel silhouette against the arid backdrop. The intense mid-day sun, at 40C even in the autumn, dries and hence twists these stumps and remains into warped and impossible shapes.

After Yellow Creek I crossed a hot open flat choked with bushes. I'd been assured that the free Park map would suffice for this hike and that was generally true, except for the fallen leaves that covered everything hiding the path on occasions

An ascent then followed with a soft sandy trail across a hot and dry grassy hillside being hard work in the mid-day sun. This topped out at a 7600ft saddle near the contact zone between the Wasatch Formation limestone to the West and the Kaiparowits sandstone to the east. The trail wandered along a ridge with a spire-topped castle like rock rising 600ft. Here there was little shade, except under my desert rat hat. Here I took a fork which ventured deep into Sheep Creek. The guidebook said that this would offer solitude, but as I hadn't seen anyone all day, this was not a problem.



Sheep Creek's simple campsite was a few areas cleared of larger rocks and vegetation. It made a lovely place to camp. I was a little unsure of the local wildlife as mountain lions and bears roam the park though are almost extinct. I may sound a little paranoid but a guy at work had been trampled by a bear in the night in Yosemite National Park. The result was a nasty infection as the bear's weight pushed its rancid toenail through my friend's sleeping bag and into his leg. Here was a long way from anywhere.

I therefore cooked well away from the tent, taking care not to spill anything. The piece of cord for tying the rucksack up in a tree was too short and I spent the evening devising ingenious ways to rig it for the night. I then settled down for the night. I awoke alive in the morning having watched the stars above several times in the night whenever trees or leaves rustled especially loudly. I had had no nocturnal visitors and there were no scorpions in my boots. It was safer than the conference hotel in Detroit after all.

Water was an interesting consideration during this and subsequent trips. The Ranger had said that there was almost no water down below the rim though I found three clear running streams. I had opted to carry water and took my drink bottle plus a 6-litre water sac, giving 7 kg of extra backpack weight but also independence from the unreliable springs for two days. The water weight would be the limiting factor for longer desert camping and good local knowledge of water conditions would be needed.

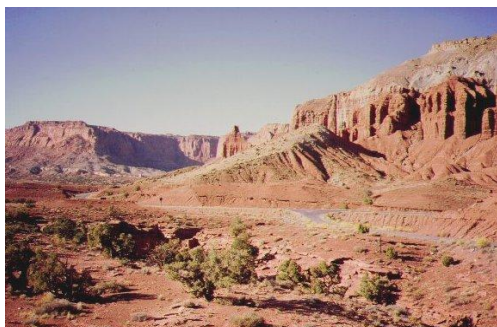
With care I was never dehydrated and seven litres was enough, with even a little spare at the end.

During the night the temperature dropped below freezing, but without frost due to the dry air. While I was warm during the night from having taken the correct sleeping bag, it was bizarre to have cold feet while the boots warmed up. The previous day my feet had swelled slightly or became tighter in the boots due to the hot ground. I was wearing boots designed for Scotland in winter, but strong solid footwear was needed while carrying a heavy pack over rough stony ground.

The Parks in this area have a "take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but foot prints" policy that was rightly enforced to the point of backpackers signing to say that they would bring all rubbish back, including used toilet paper.

The second day's walk took me along a dry river bed through Swamp Canyon (no swamp) with orange and bluff coloured cliffs soaring upwards all around. I then climbed back up to the rim using the Whiteman connecting trail to rejoin the road.

Here I hoped that someone would offer me a lift without my trying to hitch (which was illegal). After walking for a while it was clear that these drivers had no conception of why someone would be walking along a road carrying a backpack, without even a view, as the plateau was tree covered! The thumb came out and it did the trick as I was picked up by an old Israeli couple and was soon back at my car.



I then drove to Capitol Reef National Park; arrived at the visitors centre and the beard and dust on my face convinced the ranger that I was serious about heading off on a trail. I wanted to hike the Upper Muley Twist Canyon that was located off the Strike Valley desert and about halfway down the Waterpocket Fold. This route involved driving off road along a dirt track for over fifty miles each way, so this 4x4 car was going for a real test drive. I stopped in the fading light half way to the final destination, the Cedar Mesa campground for the night. All this had was a few picnic tables and a pit toilet and was really in the middle of nowhere

with just three trucks (taking a circular drive through this region) sharing the campsite.

Morning came and I hurriedly ate a bowl of grapenuts moistened by water (milk not keeping long in desert heat!) before breaking camp and continuing the dirt road drive towards my intended walking area. The track led down the monocline with grey cliffs on one side with a bluish hue starkly contrasted the red and white sandstones on the other.

I found the turn off to Upper Muley Twist Canyon, my destination, and the White Canyon flats. This track was amazing, rising hundreds of feet in six steep switchbacks all in first gear dodging rocks and holes. The road passed up into the narrow slot of Burr Canyon and up unto the desert flats. Rather than driving onto these, a turnoff to Strike Valley overlook was taken. The guidebook described this as rough, but passable to all vehicles. I was therefore a little surprise to knock the front bumper and light moulding reasonably hard when descending into a steep sided ditch made by a flash flood stream. No damage apart from scratched plastic, but the return direction would be worse!

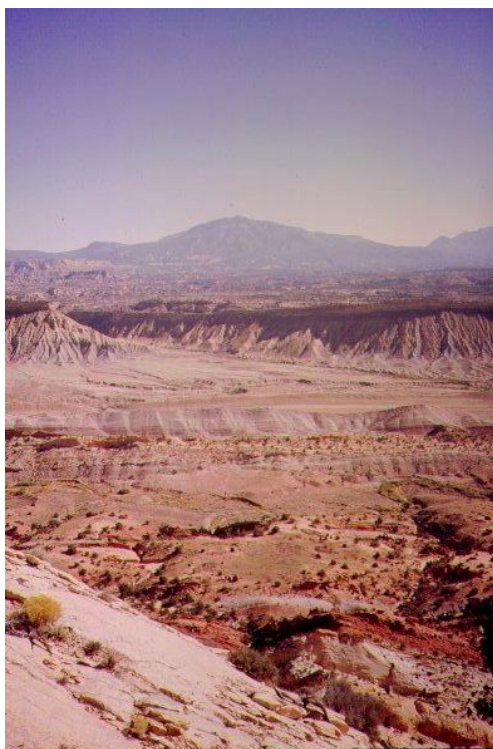


The Upper Muley Twist Canyon has carved a deep defile more than twelve miles long, with numerous natural rock arches. It passes between the steep hummocky slopes of the Kayenta formation to the west and the soaring cliffs and slick rock domes of the Navajo sandstone to the east.

The trail alternated between sandy and hard packed sections as it passed amongst cliffs and domes of orange hued Wingate Sandstone. As the canyon narrowed, three pot hole type arches were passed, one being particularly impressive.

I then turned right to the Strike Valley Overlook trail which climbed up out of the canyon amidst sand and slickrock, passing Navajo domes with their strata tilted sharply downwards and meandering through dispersed Pinyon-Juniper woodland. Route finding consisted of trying to follow small cairns located at each confusing point. Generally easy, but definitely not a place to get lost!

The top ridge then gave a view that was so vast that space and time really did seem to merge, especially with the almost total lack of human intervention. The overlook gave superb views, approaching a hundred miles in each direction up and down the fold but blocked by the mid-distance Henry mountains and behind by the opposite canyon wall.

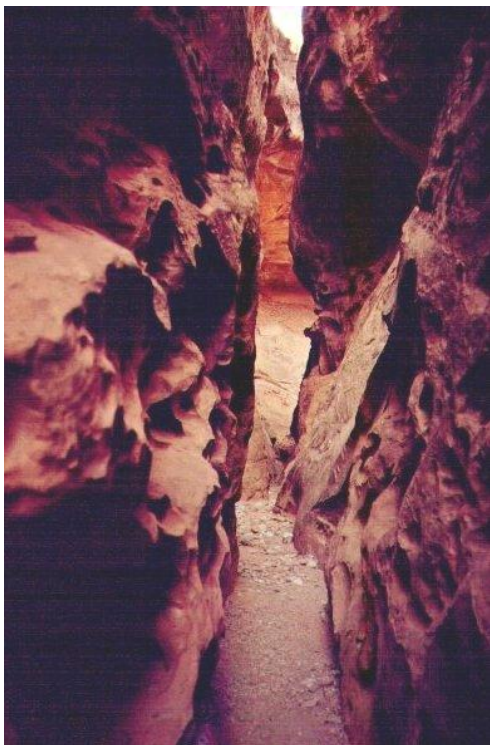


The route wandered along the glistening white Navajo sandstone domes where seemingly impossible small trees grew from the solid slickrock. Several had black and wrinkled trunks that appeared dead and sun twisted but with green growth on one branch while the remainder were black. Pockets of sand on top of the rock generally saw the largest concentrations of trees - stunted and widely spaced. This big mass of sandstone domes paralleled the valley and the canyon, with the route supposedly marked by cairns.

Throughout the journey through Utah but especially here, a black, crusty covering existed on the bare ground (primarily on clay soils). This ground cover is also called a microphytic or a cryptogamic crust that is made up of mosses, lichens, cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) and fungus in various combinations.

The route, which was initially difficult to follow, followed the crest passing over the dry and smooth slickrock. Some good scrambling was found here, essentially because I was off the path trying to avoid damaging this cryptogamic crust. The crest narrowed dramatically at several points, with a convex slope leading in smooth slickrock to a vertical, polished drop. The cairns here led up a series of broken ledges amidst loose rock, sand and dry branches - all of which were balanced on the slick rock.

I really wanted to sleep out on the rock, to soak in that view and to see the sun set and rise across the desert. I'd picked from the guidebook a moderate two-day route, but had quickly reached the halfway point. In terms of just completing the hike it would be more efficient to leave the big sack in the car and move fast for



one day rather than lugging water, stove and sleeping gear in this heat.

However, that would miss out the desert sleeping experience and this really was a spot to savour. So I had arrived at the marked descent point to the slot canyon below, with about four hours of day light before darkness and therefore about six hours before sleep.

I found a flat sleeping spot to stop me rolling over the rim then cooked noodles and drank hot chocolate as the sun fell. The sky turned slowly dark blue and the first stars appeared before night finally came and the desert was supposed to be still.

Not this night - maybe it was the very exposed position, or just the thermals from hot rock, but the wind strengthened to the point where anything not weighed down would have been blown away. The flapping, snapping Gore-Tex required tucking underneath me before I could sleep.

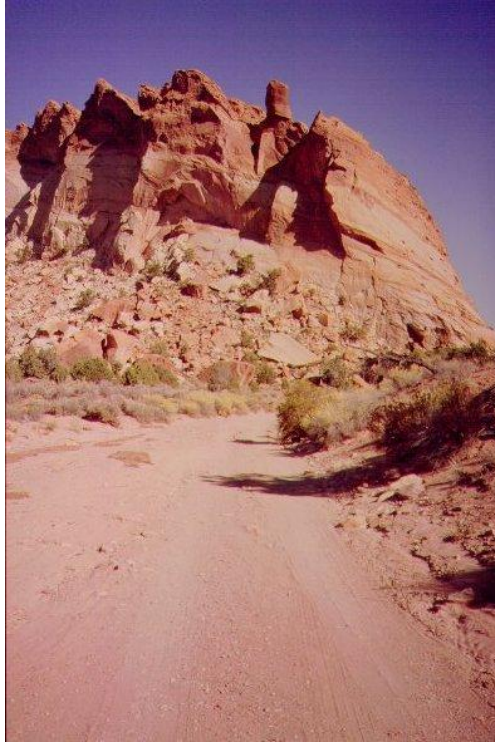
It was dark for about twelve hours each night, so I often awoke before dawn. That was the plan for this

morning, and I watched the first lightening of the dark sky and the slow glow as the sun crept up behind the Henry Mountains. Some high level cloud caught this light and glowed, while the changing colours and shadows recreated the texture of the landscape. The sky flared red as the sun very quickly climbed above a distant ridge, sending a fiery beam of morning light to my campsite.

The route descended to the end of Upper Muley Twist Canyon. Here the red rock has been carved into a slot as the name suggests. I ventured off trail as far as I could go down a swirling, polished trench until a steep drop-off barred the way. I then returned to my pack, now considerably lighter after consuming last night's water.

A cairned way across ledges, smooth rock slopes and terraces climbed slightly before traversing the slot canyon's impassable section. After this route descended back to the canyon floor, the pack was again dumped for some exploration. The slot canyon could be followed with cliffs walls thirty metres high but only by one metre apart. Strange hollows had been eroded out by the turbulent water currents and local inhomogeneities in the rock's hardness. A chock stone required some bridging to pass before I was brought to a halt at a smooth pour-off (a step in the bed where the water flows over the drop). I then started the long march out.

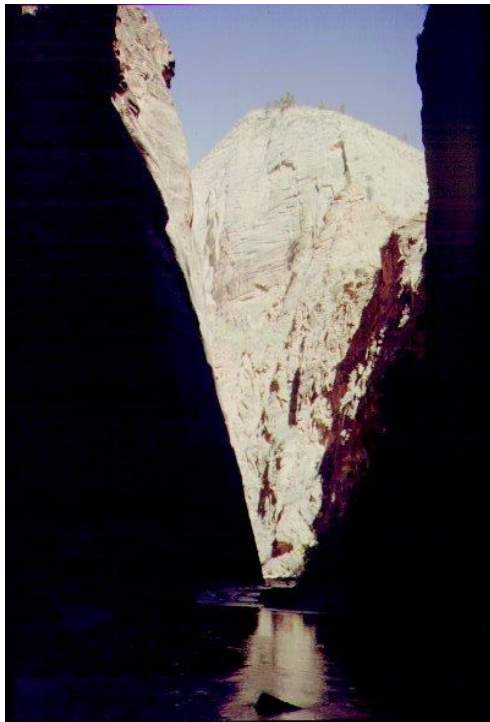
The rest of the walk followed the wash down an ever-widening canyon floor with amazing erosion of the rock and contrasting colours. It was about seven kilometres back to the car, which alternated between cool, fast marching in the shade and a hot, sand sinking plod in what was now the mid-day desert sun. The car was found, a cold Sprite drunk and gear



sorted out before driving back down the desert track.

I drove south to the Grand Canyon (which being the deepest hole around just had to be seen) and then on to the treasures of Zion Canyon.

I was magnetically drawn past features such as the checkerboard Mesa to the point where the canyon



narrows. I had time for a walk and upon inspection of the guide book discovered that the Virgin River that flows through the narrows of Zion canyon can be waded in knee-deep water or slightly deeper in the pools ¹.

I marched off wearing boots plus ski poles for balance and splashed into the river with delight as the water soon poured into my boots. From here on the imposing vertical, near vertical or even overhanging cliffs closed in on the river until it was just a dark twenty foot wide slot in the rock. Many crossings of the river followed, winding past deep pools. At the beginning, many people were around and the best route up stream was easy to follow but the tourists soon thinned out to people with only dry suits and canyoning gear. I continued, always wanting to see around the next corner until I reached my absolute cut-off time and had to retrace my steps - one day I would like to do the whole thing.

Back at Las Vegas, I took a mini-bus to see the strip at night. To anyone with cultural pretensions it is tasteless, gaudy, vulgar and crass. The only natural feature to account for the location is a spring north of downtown used by Paiute Indians and has grown from nothing to a million people in ninety years. It is the biggest single attraction in the US with thirty million visitors per year. Better to sleep with the scorpions.



¹ It may have been knee-deep on Martyn but some of those pools were almost up to Ed's daughter's midriff.

Recharging One's Batteries

or

So you want to climb Pico de Teide

Alan Linford

A mid-winter flight to Tenerife with boots, shorts and sunblock and we were set to have a week walking in wall-to-wall sunshine I know all our members go out on hills well prepared but many visitors are caught out in this sun spot.

The main walking area is the National Park del Teide containing Pico de Teide (28.3N, 16.6W is Earth's third largest volcano at 3718m) and numerous other peaks around the 18km diameter crater rim. The highest, Montana de Guajara, at 2715m/8910ft, it is always windy and bitterly cold on the rim. Two years ago, at the same time of year, Teide was covered in hard snow and impossible. Its most recent eruption was on the northwest flank in 1909.



Access to the summit of Pico de Teide is restricted and all paths to the summit are patrolled by Park wardens. To pass you need to obtain a permit from the Island Government Offices in Santa Cruz. The offices close at 1400 and the first visit may not yield a permit so set it up before you arrive. Advice from the Chief Warden suggests that there is a chance of



reaching the summit by walking up to and spending the night at, the Refuge Altavista, 3250m, and as a concession be allowed early morning access to the summit. The refuge is not always open or staffed and you may be guided to the summit. Normal access is by the cable car and a second established concessionary path which leads part way to the summit and starts on the track to the Mirador de la Fortaleza, but you need more than the one hour time permitted at top station.

The traverse over the Guajara, on the crater rim is a good trip, but remember, even if using a car, you start the day from sea level. There is plenty of walking in the crater and the volcanic vista is colourful, dramatic and worth the visit. Away from the lava, to the north the countryside is lush green, interesting forest (laurel) and ridge walking.

The guide book (Sunflower Landscapes Tenerife guide by Noel Rochford) directions are good but using the term *Tenerifes Lake District* for several beautiful ponds is more than artistic licence.



The Cleveland Way

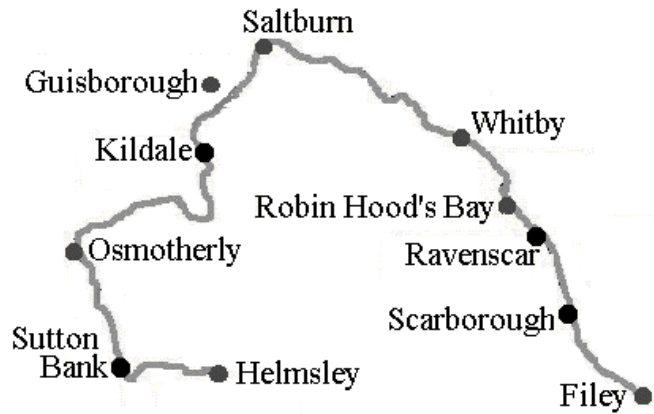
John Schofield

Dennis Barker and I met at the Tourist Information Centre car park at Sutton Bank one Monday morning. After a coffee we left one car at Sutton Bank and motored to Helmsley (It seemed an awful long way!) and walked back to Cold Kirkby and then back to Sutton Bank. We went on a sightseeing tour of stately Rievaulx Abbey on the way. What a wonderfully tranquil place! We didn't look at the White Horse, however and so did some eight or nine miles on the first day. We then motored back to Helmsley and looked at the five acre walled garden, which whilst worth a visit, will be much better in about ten years or so.

We stayed at a first class B-and-B at Grange Farm, Hawsker - half way between Whitby and Robin Hoods Bay. This concern provides transport to where one starts the day's walk and picks up where one finishes, and I must say that this is a first-class service. We ate our evening meals at the local pub in the village (one hundred yards from the B-and-B) and we ate in Whitby and in Robin Hoods Bay.

The following day we walked from Sutton Bank to Osmotherly and had stupendous views over the Vale of York. Visibility was near-perfect and all the way nearly to Osmotherly we could see the radio monitoring station at Menwith Hill (near Harrogate) almost thirty miles away. Also we are convinced that we could see Great Whernside in the distance.

The longest and most arduous day we walked was from Osmotherly to Tidy Brown Hill - some eighteen miles.



There was quite a good deal of uphill work and it was a strenuous day. Fortunately the day was cool, damp and overcast so we did not dehydrate. Visibility was poor but otherwise conditions were ideal for a long day.

On the whole, however, we had super weather with magnificent views over the plain of York and also to the North towards Middlesbrough. The last two days of the trip we had rain and got quite wet but otherwise the weather was near perfect.



Much of the walk is in woodland - some pinewoods but plenty of natural deciduous areas and this made for variety. Some of the walk is through farmland, some moorland and, down the coast, cliff top walks with coastal views of cliffs and villages.

It took us three-and-a-half days to reach the coast at Saltburn and another three-and-a-half days to get to Filey so we averaged fourteen or fifteen miles per day, which seemed reasonable when we were planning the walk, but I have to say that we were tiring by the eighth day!



The National Trust's Port Mulgrave

Perhaps what impressed us most was the scale, grandeur and majesty of the landscape, the moors vistas and the coastal views of cliffs and rolling country. The contrasts between woods, fields, moors and coast were really very stimulating and altogether we found the walk thoroughly uplifting.



Captain Cook's monument on Easby Moor was huge, but the bronze plaque was weathered in such a way as to make it difficult to read. Roseberry Topping, by contrast, was rather a disappointment. This feature, although a landmark for miles around, was rather insignificant to climb. Perhaps by then we had had a surfeit of panoramic views!

Between Saltburn and Runswick Bay is Boulby cliff - said to be the highest cliff in England. This area has been

extensively worked in the past for jet, ironstone and alum shales and there is still evidence of the area's industrial past.

Eventually we got to Filey and the skies opened and rain poured down upon us for the last fifteen minutes of the walk - this by way of letting us know that we had been treated kindly for the previous week! So we were picked up for the final time, after mistaking the pick-up point and chasing the transport around for a mile or so, and taken back to Hawsker for one o'clock, just in time to drop down into Whitby and buy two nice dressed crabs for tea at home that evening.

In conclusion, a lovely walk and well worth the effort. The memory of the area - only visited previously as a tripper - will live in my thoughts for a very long time.



Hurricane on the Kohl Larsen Plateau

George Spenceley

My diary of the South Georgia Survey 1955-56 unread for many years, has recently been transcribed by my wife Sylvie, bringing back to my mind certain events occurring in five months of sledging. There were brief highlights of clear skies and crisp snow, of modest mountain ascents and exhilarating if inexperienced ski descents. More often there were days of boredom and discomfort lying up in blizzard and white out. We suffered a sixty-hour blow on the Grace Glacier when two tents were ripped apart, and then the eight-day blizzard in the Salvesson Range, when we watched the abrasive action of icy drift slowly erode the heavy duty ventile until it was almost paper thin.

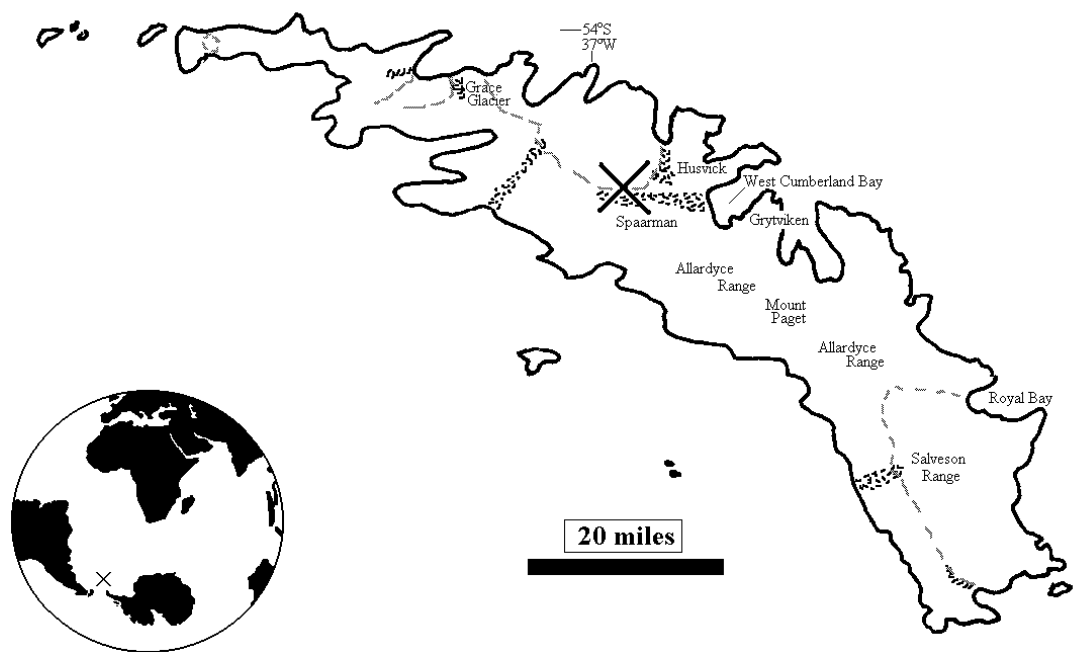
The fourth and final journey was to be to the south of the island culminating hopefully in the ascent of the highest peak Mount Paget, but plans had to be modified. We were delayed by the need to refit and repair and then, later

in the season, heavy surf precluded the sealers making any landing on the south coast.

The less attractive alternative was to land at the head of West Cumberland Bay and sledge to the Kohl Larsen Plateau of the first journey, from where a pass could lead us to the unexplored country to the south of the Allardyce Range.

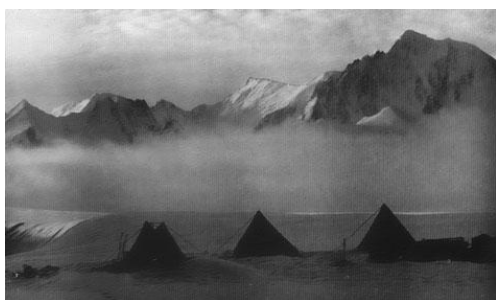
What follows is an unedited extract from my diary of the dramatic and potentially dangerous debacle that ended the expedition, written at leisure a day or so after the events. The persons involved were Duncan Carse, Leader; Dr Keith Warburton, Louis Baume, John Cunningham and myself.

Several accounts of the incident have been published which have given great credit to Cunningham for his bold lead off the plateau. Duncan, in both lecture and article to the Royal Geographical Society, described him as a V.C. type. It is thus much to be regretted that he later told Ken Wilson in a telephone interview for *Mountain* magazine a grossly distorted account



of the retreat from the plateau which almost led to litigation. Jeff Connor's recently published book, *Creagh Dhu Climber, the Life and Times of John Cunningham* contains part of this interview, along with Baume's more sober and truthful account.

From whichever source we may read of these events, it remains a salutary lesson of how explorers, highly experienced in both the difficulty of the terrain and one of the world's worst climates, can in an act of collective folly put themselves in a position of considerable peril.



Allerdyce Range G.B.Spenceley

March 14th & 15th The Crevasse

Little did we know that today would mark the start of a great trial and a great adventure. A fine morning, but low mist at first; very cold. Out of tents at 0630. Tony, Stan and Tom got away for a trig. station between Dimple and Spaarman. We are to move camp over Eureka Col. As they left us, expecting only to be parted for a few hours, little did we realise the hours of peril and anxiety that would divide us from our next meeting.

Taking only one sledge at a time we made slow progress up in the direction of the col. Surface easy in places, fresh soft powder snow in others. About 1200 the wind freshened and bad weather seemed to be coming up from the east. The slopes leading up to Eureka Col would be no place for a camp; a river

of cloud was sweeping up the Neumeyer Glacier and filling up the plateau, although at the moment we were above it and we must consider the three may be having difficulty in returning. Having laboriously hauled up the three sledges we now took them a few hundred feet down until out of the wind channel. Hoping the weather might not worsen we only pitched two tents. John and I made a brew but I turned down the offer of Pemmican soup thinking I should shortly have one with Stan.

No one had turned up by 1500 so out of tents into weather much worsened to pitch the other two tents. The trig. party returning in mist will be lucky if unaided they can find the camp. Unwisely we set out, the five of us, to walk line abreast at 100 ft. intervals through the mist on the line of their approach. Old tracks quite obliterated and the tracks we leave behind us soon obliterated likewise. There is very considerable drift; fortunately we do not exactly face it, and eyes and beard are soon iced up till we become almost unrecognisable.

For forty minutes we continue this march, Duncan in the centre with the compass, we protecting eyes and face with our mitts, stumble forward over ice and soft snow never taking our eyes off the figure to our side, sometimes hardly discerned through the torrent of snow. We dared go no further, so for thirty minutes we stood cold, our backs to the wind, hoping that the missing three would see us. At 1600 we set off back - back to the camp we were never to see again.

With the wind more at our backs progress was rapid but to me it was soon obvious that the tents would not be found that night. Suddenly Duncan put his foot through into a crevasse. Obviously we were too low

and off the central part of the plateau judged to be crevasse free. Back we went, fighting against the wind, great masses of ice clinging to our beards.

We followed for some way our fast disappearing tracks, then off on a new course. If anything the visibility was getting worse. For some moments I lost sight of Duncan and the others and imagined spending the night out alone. By 1830 with less than an hour's daylight and, of course, no tents we stepped into a crevasse, at one end shallow and friendly.

In a few moments we were all cowering underneath, sheltered from the wind. A steep slope led down to a small platform and an ice bridge beyond which the crevasse opened out and plunged into greater depths. It was quiet; our voices absorbed by the ice walls penetrated only a few feet and the wind could only be heard like the faint rumbling of very distant artillery. By comparison it was warm and cosy and our spirits were high. Certainly we were lucky in so easily finding this shelter.

Food was shared out: one biscuit, one square of chocolate and a small portion of Kendal Mint Cake per man, and we composed ourselves for a long and uncomfortable night. The temperature was a degree above freezing point to start with and our windproofs, covered in snow, were soon saturated. We spent the night between sitting and standing. We had little to sit on but the snow and even when between another man's legs the cold could not be long endured. At frequent intervals we had to stand and stamp our feet. Half an hour of this and of vigorously moving the shoulders stopped the shivering and brought back some circulation, enough perhaps to endure another spell of sitting. What added to our

discomfort was the constant stream of powdered snow flowing down the slope, covering in a few moments anything left on it and, while we sat, mounting up our backs.

We stood or sat, shivered and stamped our feet for ten hours. Soon after 0500 Duncan, who had been standing at the top of the slope most of the night, broke through into the open. Eagerly we awaited his report, but none of us expected it to be encouraging for we could still hear the rumble and the drift still flowed down the slope. Conditions indeed were exactly as before, except that the wind had now veered right round and was blowing southwest across the plateau and down the Neumeyer Glacier.

We stayed there several hours more and discussed plans and possibilities. Duncan was faced with a most difficult situation but as always every aspect was most carefully considered before a decision was made. We had to work on the assumption that the other three had likewise spent the night out and that, although they were better prepared for such an emergency, their condition might require help. How could we best help them? Certainly we could stay in this crevasse for, say, three nights without serious danger to life, but then we ourselves should be in need of help, or at least in need of food and sleep before in any condition to help others. We decided to get out to briefly look for the camp and then to fight our way down with the wind behind us to Husvik. Twenty-four hours rest and equipped with skis, rope and food and we should be able to return in some condition to assist the others if assistance required. Having decided on this plan, we left our refuge: a refuge that had almost certainly saved our lives, and went out into the storm.

Certainly the wind and drift were no less than yesterday and for a moment we wondered at the wisdom of this move. But with the wind at our backs progress was easy. Walking close together, endeavouring to keep a straight course, only crevasses impossible to see interrupted our movement. For an hour perhaps we continued, not quite free from worry certainly, for our route on to the Neumeyer was by no means assured and always there was the danger of crevasses; but at least relieved to be in action.

Before us the slope to the Neumeyer seemed to fall away in front. Keith, who was wearing Vapour Barrier boots, found difficulty here on the patches of hard frozen snow, and Louis and I gave support on each side. The angle increased and then ahead, vaguely seen a few feet only in front, a large open crevasse. We must have come too far to the right, but against this wind there was no going back now. We turned it on our right, John crawling over on his back, kicking hard with his heels.

So we went over that and other crevasses, slithering down on our backs, hardly seeing where we were, in a line one behind the other. We stopped. Ahead lay something steeper than anything we had come down before, but the precise angle was almost impossible to judge. As before John went forward, but almost immediately turned back and, panting and blinded by drift, returned. The angle was too great. We couldn't discuss or plan anything here; shouting could only be heard a foot away. Back we went - the worst moments of the whole episode - crawling on hands and knees, stung by drift, quite blinded, seeing nothing except occasionally the feet of the

man in front, fearful lest the slender and precarious link between us was severed, panting and choking with drift in our lungs.

It was evident that no serious attempt could be made to retrace our steps; there was no fighting this wind and drift for more than a few minutes. Life would soon be extinguished if the struggle were continued. We searched now for another crevasse where we could if necessary spend a second night and at least talk and discuss the situation. My own feelings were for a move to the left until an easier descent could be made. I felt very strongly that crevasses, horrible though they were, constituted the least danger. Who could say how many days this storm would last or what condition we should be in after another night of hunger, wet and cold?

All the crevasses that on the descent we had crossed were examined and proved to be too deep; only one admitted us and that was too confined, but in the end we had to go into it. Actually only John, Duncan and I entered and for a few moments sheltered in comparative comfort from the fury outside. Again I urged descent and was supported by John, but the general opinion was to search for another crevasses more commodious. Out again into the turmoil, at first edging along the lip of a large crevasse and then down, John and I supporting Keith who had little control.

Things went well. This was the turning point. Very shortly we were out of crevasses and the slope continued at an easy angle. Vastly relieved we hurried down and soon were on a nearly level surface. Our hopes ran high after the bleak prospects a short while ago and our

spirits rose even higher when a short way along the glacier a patch of blue sky showed above and we caught a glimpse of surrounding peaks. At least we were in the right place.

An hour later we were well down the Neumeyer, hungry but without apparent weakness, and visibility all round. Only one anxiety remained. Close by Admiralty Peak was a mass of crevasses - this we knew from a few days before when we had been going up the glacier. Then we were well equipped to deal with the problem - now we were without skis, ice axes or rope.

As soon as this area was approached and we started to put our feet through, we linked arms and walked cautiously forward in a line diagonal to the fissures. It was a dangerous place. At almost every step one of the five put a foot through, to be supported and pulled out by those behind or in front. Frequently we went through to our hips. There was one dreadful moment when John disappeared altogether, fortunately to wedge securely some twenty feet below. He was able to climb out.

This was the last of our trials. Once past this area we were able to relax in the knowledge that only straightforward walking separated us from the food and comfort of Husvik. At the White City we rested for a short while and ate a biscuit and square of mint cake.

Husvik was everything that we had learned to expect. We were accommodated on the whaler *Busen 2* and ate an enormous meal, had a glorious hot shower and changed into the clean underclothes supplied by the slop chest.



Black-browed albatross by Royal Bay

The Aftermath

We were safe but our great concern was for the party still on the plateau who must have suffered a similar fate; but our fears were unfounded. By singular good fortune and by keeping high, in a sudden clearing they had seen the tops of the tents. The blizzard continued and they could but remain in camp trying to keep their minds off the tragedy they felt had occurred.

On the following day, now in clear weather, they started their return off the plateau at the same time as we, now re-equipped, were preparing to return.

Some days later we did indeed return to the plateau to retrieve equipment and complete one further trig. station.

Mount Paget, the highest peak on the island standing at 9625ft, was ascended in 1964 by a combined services expedition.

Skarvheimen Easter Mildness

Michael Smith

Sweechup, sweechup, sweechup, sweechup, sweechup is all I hear. Twin red pencil shapes jabbing alternately upwards into the goggle restricted field of vision and blue mitts bobbing up and down in the periphery, is all I see. The “pencils” draw wide parallel grey lines on the dazzling white surface of the lake.

Easter 2000 is late and warm moist air from the south is pushing up over the ice covered Hardangervidda leaving the Skarvheimen covered in thick mists. Two of us, unfamiliar with much of the terrain, are making a five-day tour taking in three fully equipped huts. Clare is a trained DNT (Den Norske Touristforening) tour leader so we carry full safety gear resulting in a 13kg pack.



Travelling in comfort on the train from Oslo towards Bergen we've alighted at Finse, 1222m, and paid our respects to the Scott polar memorial. Then taking a dozen steps, clipped on the cross country

skis and set off across the lake towards the small Appelsinhytte. Unfamiliarity with skiing with a large pack means I make heavy work of the ascent but this is nothing compared with the difficulties I have in controlling the descents on wet snow during the first two days. Clare is in her element this being her fifth tour this year.



Hut is really a misnomer in the case of Finsehytta, it has four-bed rooms, showers, WCs and can hold 150 people. 20km the next day, took us to Hallinskeid's two unstaffed huts (the second in case the first burns down as did the nearby hotel). One had a composting toilet and a better supply of food but snow to its eaves while the other gave views from the upstairs windows so we moved the food we needed across and enjoyed the vistas 'till ten. Nobody else arrived.

Electricity supply was installed by the railway when they donated the hut to the DNT in the face of declining station use once the hotel burned down. A refreshingly enlightened approach which has paid off. A Bergen group now run the hut and it had been visited recently by some Driscoll's from Kendal.

If you ever stand in front of these huts you will see a third smaller hut to the right. It was designed and built by Clare's husband's grandfather in their town home, disassembled, sent up in a train and rebuilt there. Snow was level with its roof ridge and a wagtail flitted across the roof (below).



Our 24km the third day was into a mild but stiff wind over a high pass by Såta. At least it was 3km shorter than the summer walking route as they have to skirt the lakes. The mildness was melting the snow and water droplets could be seen among the ice crystals. Klistert was applied but for most of the route we could get little going by way of a glide. The only clearing was at the top of the pass and it was a slog across the lakes to idiosyncratic busy Geiterygghytta with its pet rabbits nibbling straw on the snow.



Reports suggested clear weather to the north so we made a rest day excursion in search of it but failed. Arriving parties reported clear weather in Finse and every other direction though we stayed in dense mist.

The shortest way back to Finse on the fifth day involved an unmarked ascent to the lake, Flakavatnet. However, steep avalanche-prone slopes suggested a prudent retreat to the way marked route (kvisteruter) through a higher defile called Kyrkjedori (church door). With red klistert we had plenty of traction and on the lakes could even manage a descent glide.

Approaching Kyrkjedori the temperature rose to 16°C and water was streaming off the crags. At 1410m the melt, flowing into a bowl had gathered above an iced-over tarn, about twenty metres across, to saturate the lower snow layers. Clare followed other blue tracks across the bowl. I followed but being heavier was soon floundering in shin deep slush. Each ski and stick could be extracted only with difficulty before

being advanced half a metre or so before sinking as soon as it was weighted. Emerging at the other side I needed to stop and wring out my socks.

Emerging through the defile into the Finse valley the mists cleared and we enjoyed sunshine for the rest of the day. In descent we crossed the tracks of the 14000 skiers who'd joined a popular ski race down the valley. Then it was a steady effortless slide down to the railway station, scrape off the gungy klistert thick with captured hairs, and catch the train to Oslo.

The peculiarly comforting simplicity of sweechuping along through the mountains was replaced by the traditional comforts of food served in a warm carriage.

So ended a short but valuable and entertaining introduction to hut-to-hut skiing in grand Norwegian style.



Full board at huts, including shower and packed lunch, costs around £25 per bed night. The self-service huts (selvbetjeningshytta) have a food store and set you back only half as much. More details, especially opening dates, are available on www.turistforeningen.no.



Flakavatnet

Man's best friend... ...is the humble nettle

Roy J Denney

Some five or so years ago the father in law of a Leicester friend of mine joined us on a moorland marathon (I hasten to add, both he and I planning on walking the greater part with our ambitions limited to getting round within the ten hour cut off).

At the twelve mile rest stop whilst the rest of us pulled out drinks and nibbles he surprised us by searching out a clump of nettles and repeatedly plunging his arms in amongst them.

He assured us that this was not the early onset of senility but that it did wonders for his arthritis. We humoured him and kept our thoughts to ourselves and made our way onwards. This stuck in my mind and as so often is the case once something has been brought to your attention I have since heard similar claims from a number of sources both for nettle and bee stings.

As all the rest of my family suffer allergies of one sort or another we do subscribe to natural and herbal remedy booklets and take note of articles in the press on the subject. In the recent past I have seen adverts for nettle products and several press comments culminating in a comprehensive summary of the plant's claimed properties which appeared in the Daily Telegraph.

My first experience of this humble friend other than the obvious and painful early introductions was on holiday in Heysham in the early fifties. On a glorious summers day (as they all seemed to be looking back) I came upon a tiny village shop with a wooden trestle outside selling nettle

beer. The lady had a number of stone bottles lined up in a small stream running by and took one out to order providing a glass full of cold nectar for I seem to recall a thrupenny bit. Talking about painful introductions, I cannot help but feel that the first three letters of this plant's latin name are very appropriate (*Urtica dioica*).

Judging from the material I have read since, nettles were used by Roman soldiers to ease their joints after long marches and as a pick me up for exhaustion. Arthritis and rheumatism sufferers take note.

It is said to be packed with iron and other trace elements, health-giving minerals and many different vitamins. It is a blood cleanser, detoxifier, tonic, diuretic and astringent. It is also claimed to stimulate the immune system and be good for eczema and other skin conditions, asthma, hay-fever and other allergies, for gout, cystitis, prostrate and water retention problems, anaemia, bloody noses and high blood pressure. Applied with caution it helps haemorrhoids and varicose veins and as a shampoo it encourages hair growth.

It can be added to beer or wine during manufacture, mashed, stewed, boiled, microwaved or steamed and produce a herbal tea or form part of many dishes. It has little flavour in it's own right. If you do not have a ready supply why not pick fresh young leaves in spring, liquidise them, freeze the resulting mush in ice cube containers and bring them out regularly to add to your cooking etc.

It should therefore help me on at least three counts and if any of you feel you have no use for this valuable friend then you are very lucky.

Go on folks, get stuck in.

Orion Face Direct

Ged Campion

We will always have Richard Webb to thank, it was his cock-up with the Mile House Booking on the Wolverhampton MC March meeting in Cairngorm that allowed us to focus our attentions on the Ben once more. A quick adjustment was made and Dewars chalets and caravans were booked in Onich. Providence was truly at work, the forecast on the West Coast seemed to be infinitely more promising than it had been in the Central and Eastern Highlands.

Stewart Muir and myself had an old score to settle on the Ben - the direct on Orion face. Two years previously we had reached the start of the second pitch but had been dramatically repelled by spindrift reaching avalanche proportions. We had had to abseil off a friendly Russian ice screw that Stewart had purchased in Kathmandu - we didn't know in those days that screw-ins could be retrieved by a crafty pusik knot! Only twelve months previously we had walked up the Allt a' Mhuilinn in appalling conditions in the hope of finding Orion face in condition. In fact it was thawing so badly we didn't even set foot in Observatory Gully, but this time it was going to be different. The problem was, neither of us had been on ice since December when we had snatched a few routes on Snowdon's South Face. Would we be up to it I thought as the alarm in the chalet finally put an end to my short and restless sleep. It was 3.30 am on Saturday morning as Stewart started to cook a miserable breakfast. With our rucksacks packed the night before, Stewart bade his farewell to Joyce and we closed the chalet door with the

dimly audible sounds of Richard Webb stirring in his bed.

The gates of the golf course were firmly locked so we had to make do with parking on the road. As if the Ben wasn't far enough to walk we thought without the additional 110 yards of tarmac start! But our spirits were lifted by the clarity and stillness of the morning. The stars burnt bright in the sky with the dramatic spectacle of Hale-Bopp, tracking its way Eastwards. This was my first sighting of the comet. We felt truly honoured, a sight not yet clearly visible in the southern skies but even Hale-Bopp couldn't provide us sufficient light to find our way efficiently across the golf course. Indeed, before long barbed wire and threatening thickets quickly brought us back to earth, an earth of a very damp and marshy nature. The time honoured march up to the CIC hut is always thwart with apprehension - providing too much time to reflect and not enough time to save energy. When we finally arrived at the hut, the residents hadn't even risen. We were probably the first to feast our eyes on the awesome prospect of The Ben that morning.

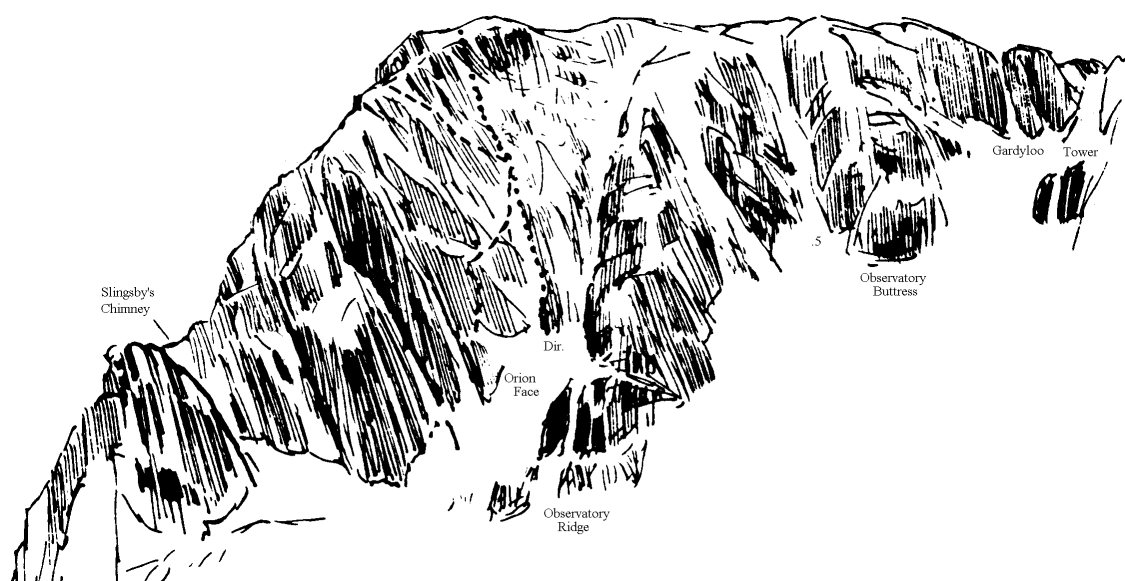
High clouds still obscured the top of North-east Buttress and Observatory Ridge. But the unmistakable features of the Orion Face were clearly in view with its own elusive white spider dissolving into the cloud above. Strange really, we hadn't agreed what route we would go for that morning but there existed an unspoken understanding between us and at the very least, we were obliged to have a look. But would there be enough ice on the face and even more important what would the spindrift factor be? With nagging doubts in mind we pulled on our harnesses and sipped warm coffee. By this time others

were approaching the hut. The good forecast had certainly brought people out in their crowds and it was as if a small army of stragglers were now advancing on the CIC hut. Our situation suddenly became more pressing as two fit and wiry looking characters threw their sacks into what had become our personal space. It was that old familiar scenario outside the CIC hut, teams weighing up the opposition, trying to extract information about what route each were likely to be going for. It transpired that they too had designs on Orion Face but somehow, our throwaway comments and oozing confidence just gave us the edge and after a little while we re-established our personal space.

With burning calves and breathless lungs we trudged our way past the Minus Face to the foot of our route. The two lads followed casually like stray dogs hanging around for the scraps. Conditions looked promising on the first pitch, not too much spindrift and tantalising ice crying out to be climbed. The first pitch isn't too steep - and gives a chance to acclimatise to the near vertical territory above. Although the first three pitches of Orion Face Direct are

mostly in a chimney groove, looking up the steep start gives an impression of an undulating wall that appeared to go on forever. As I set off on the first pitch, the two lads behind had decided to follow - an additional concern you don't need on such a serious route with the dangers of falling ice and debris. But that was their problem not ours. I reached the first belay a peg well placed in the black gully wall. Little did I know that this would be the last insitu belay that day. Stewart followed through and as his axes bit the ice he confirmed its quality, not too bad, but then this was just the start. At about ten metres he seemed to get an ice screw placement the steepness of his progress was difficult to judge from below. Although spindrift cascaded down the face Stewart seemed indifferent to its teasing. In what seemed less than minutes, Stew disappeared over a bulge and the rope reeled up the chimney ending with a convincing tug. Audible communication was a luxury we wouldn't have that day.

As I moved up the quality of the climbing beckoned me on. It was steep but we had both been on steeper. I led on with purpose and the angle finally relented as I approached



the basin, the belt of Orion. Traversing left in the process, I cut a slot for a dead man and tied off one of my axes. The basin seemed more like an amphitheatre than I had imagined. Above me the cascading icicles of the Astral highway glistened with intimidation. Stewart traversed right and the line ahead was by no means obvious. He belayed beneath the steep rock buttress. This was the point where Orion Face direct becomes rather indirect but neither of us seemed to have made the distinction in the guide book. We should have descended a little to the right but conditions were so good that we were naively lulled towards favourable ice above. I led through and started to move up an icy groove like corner not perceptibly steep and seemingly straight forward. After a couple of metres I managed to get an ice screw half in and tied off. This was the only protection beneath the groove and one of those places that you know you are not going to be able to stop to arrange gear later. I bridged up the icy corner which was generally uniform. At the top there seemed to be a possible place to rest. On arriving, the ground was steep and I was pushed out uncomfortably. From my precarious perch I surveyed the wall above me. It was overhanging and the line uncertain. I shouted down to Stewart for encouragement but his wry smiles only served to confirm that he didn't appreciate how tenuous my situation was. Perhaps the route wasn't in condition I thought? I tried to place some gear there wasn't anything. This is the sort of position where conflicting emotions of self preservation and sheer determination have to be as balanced as your climbing. As Stewart craned his neck his utterances were lost in the wind. Unsure of my

ground I climbed up - the steepness pushing me out. Icy pockets in rocky corners provided placements for my axes but as I forged on I was becoming more pumped as my front points desperately scratched for footholds. I could see that a metre or so about me, the angle relented and as I lunged for a difficult placement my left foot cut free pulling my weight on to my arms. Now on one axe, and one foot, I rammed home my left axe convincingly and found a placement more by luck than judgement. It held and I was back on the vertical. The stance above me was disappointing, no decent belays at all but Orion Face was always consistent in this respect.

As I brought Stewart up it was clear that he shared my concerns about the steepness of the pitch. His comment "I hope you have got good belays" only poured scorn upon my pathetic ice axe belay and half in ice screw. Determined not to be toppled, I kept the rope like a piano wire until Stewart was safely up. He congratulated me on my efforts but this was by no means the end of the difficulties. Six difficult pitches lay between us and our goal, the top North-east buttress. Stewart carried on through climbing small overlaps on thin ice. As I surveyed the space below me, I could hear one of the team behind chomping his way up the crux-pitch just below me. His expletives reflected the difficulty of the pitch. When he eventually joined me on the stance, he questioned me intently about the direction we had taken. It was then and only then, that it occurred to me that we might have taken the wrong line. Neither of us had realised that we had embarked on a Grade 6 finish to the Orion Face! I later discovered that we had mistakenly taken a very direct route - the long climb finish - normally a



Orion
Face

three star VS in summer and only climbed as a winter route by Clothier and Kane in 1983.

Our two companions managed to traverse right and re-join the original route. We remained firm in our resolve to continue, not always knowing what lay ahead. The climbing was always around grade four to five and always without good belays. Hacking our way high up on the dark cliff we arrived at the top of North-East buttress where the snow rock and ice eventually stops and the sky begins - or so that's how it felt. Walking on near flat ground seemed

alien with the insecurity of belays, frozen stances and avalanching spindrift behind us. We had climbed Orion Face and had joined the elite class, we could now read Dave Wilkinson's account of the route in *Cold Climbs* with smugness. In fact, it was probably good that we hadn't read Dave's account carefully enough or we would have been cheated of an opportunity to finish the route on such a sensational line. With nearly a thousand foot of climbing behind us, it had taken us eight hours still only 3.30 in the afternoon, just twelve hours since we had left our beds. Even as we stood on the summit of the Ben we didn't know what the route was that we had taken, but it didn't matter, we had been on Orion Face and survived. I remembered Robin Campbell's literary epitome of Scottish winter climbing which reminds us that mountaineering is a struggle and in winter often a desperate one - "no dry exercise of logic and skill, a frozen waiting in icy torrents of thundering rubbish, a world where to spend time is maybe to spend your last time and when only the bold strike will suffice". Seemed to fit the bill admirably.

The next day would bring Spring joys and good company on the Ardgour. That evening everyone relaxed in the caravans where a drunken stupor and a smelly atmosphere seemed to be the order of the evening. As I left Dave's caravan to wander back to my chalet, I gazed into the sky where Hale-Bopp was still burning bright and making its long imperceptible climb towards an even greater Orion than we had climbed.

How it Really Used to Be!

by a "Has Been"

We were both wearing ties for, even in 1962, I was behind the fashions. In any case the way up to Castle Rock of Triermain is

short, though we walked briskly as it was already about 6.00 p.m. The trip was enlivened by David rushing down past us shouting, "We left the rope in the van. Paul is at the top of the first pitch of Barbican." All of us worked at O.B.M.S. Ullswater and Paul - Paul Ross - offered a quick route on Castle Rock to anyone who would drive him over to Keswick where he was courting his wife to be. When he said quick, he meant quick!

In those days we were all amateurs with many and varied and no qualifications. There were few "education" qualifications and none in mountaineering, though Johnnie Lees did have a George Medal and a British Empire Medal for services rendered. Between us we did have some pretty intensive life experience and a fair understanding of Kurt Hahn's philosophy. Among the instructors were: a lifeboat coxswain, a test pilot, a lab technician, a big game hunter, a house painter and a woodcutter. A temporary instructor on one course was a John Blashford-Snell, not very fit and needing looking after. I was just back from a year spent living deep in the bush in the Niger delta, finding lots of oil.

Oliver and I carried on and roped up at the foot of Overhanging Bastion. Our gear took little sorting - no helmets, one belay sling, three line slings for me as



the leader and a pair of P.A. boots each. No metal at all apart from a total of just five karabiners. One good thing about Castle Rock was that, due to the steepness, you hit nothing on the way down.

It was a lovely evening and things went well on the first pitch and part of the second. It is quite steep and, having been there before, I expected to find a little tree which provided a useful balance hold. It wasn't there! I had a think, then another, all the while under great stress. Remember the pubs shut at 10.30 in those days. Fortunately a colleague lowered a rope as a substitute handhold. Good.

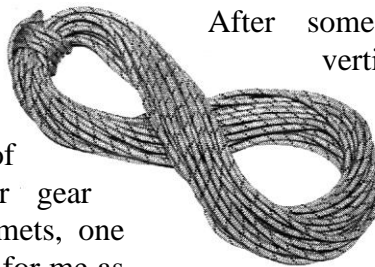
As I was about to step off the pinnacle onto the gangway Paul, now at the bottom of the crag just had time to shout up that there was a nice little foothold only eight inches or so from the top of the pinnacle, before running down to the van and his pleasure.

The gangway pitch is a lovely pitch and I even found a spike over which to drop a sling so, with one runner in place, I felt well protected. Thoroughly absorbed but a little nervous of the traverse out at the top, I climbed on. On a previous visit the piton at the top of the gangway had been removed and I had none.

Suddenly there was a blow to my head. I covered and looked up. A piton. Yippee!

Without this protection the little traverse left is nerve wracking, with the protection it is still exhilarating in the extreme.

After some daft skidding down vertical grass we did make it to the pub by 10.20 and probably had a dangerous ride back to Ullswater in those pre-breathalyser days.



The Smallest Club Meet on Record?

Darrell Farrant

In 1971 the Club had included a meet in the Mountains of Mourne to be led by Peter Swindells who at the time was living in Northern Ireland. There was considerable interest at first and I was very keen to go, as I had never climbed in that area before. I decided to fly over and return by boat and duly booked my tickets. Nearer the time, however, members understandably began to have second thoughts because of the worsening political situation, and about a week beforehand the Committee decided that the meet should be cancelled.

Both Peter and I were naturally disappointed but after various detailed phone calls decided that we would continue with our plans and go ahead with the meet as a twosome. He met me at Aldergrove on the Friday evening and it was a very sobering thought to arrive at a British airport to be confronted with armed soldiers at the ready. We had actually picked almost the worst possible weekend, as the government had just decided to impose internment and everything was extremely tense.

Peter drove through the country lanes to his imposing residence in Narrow Water Castle near Newry. This seemed an idyllic spot with lovely views across Carlingford Lough into the Irish Republic. Little did we know that within a few weeks Peter would have returned to Bradford after having a gun battle raging around the castle walls below. Similarly the pleasant little town of Newry in which we bought our supplies on the Saturday morning was soon to experience some of the worst of the IRA atrocities.



We, however, were bound for a day on the hills and drove along the coast road to Annalong on a beautiful July morning. We followed the track up into the hills and soon came to the Mourne Wall, a huge structure about six feet high which was built by the Belfast Water Board in the early years of the century to enclose their land and also to provide employment in a time of depression. This encircles the mountains for 22 miles and is so broad that one can easily walk along the top. Our first objective was Chimney Rock Mountain and we made our way easily enough through heather, bilberries and warm slabs to the summit. We were able to admire the huge sweep of the sea on one side and the wide circle of the peaks on the other.

From here we returned to the wall and I walked astride it for some distance on our ascent of Slieve Donard, which at 2796 ft. is the highest mountain in the North. There is a small turret with the trig. point on top of it and it requires an awkward little move to reach it. We had the impressive view "where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea" and indeed the eastern slope seemed almost precipitous as it tumbled down towards Newcastle. We continued over a steep and narrow col to Slieve Commedagh and then down to the main track through the Mournes,- the Brandy Pad, with its name redolent of smuggling days. The next objective



was Cove Mountain, where at last we found some running water to refresh our depleted supplies, and a comfortable ledge on which to rest.

The next peak, Slievelamagan, provided a steep ascent to begin with and then some slabby crags that needed some care. There was now just one more peak to complete the round, so we added Slieve Binnian to our list. This is crowned by several shapely granite tors in the Cairngorm style, and these have earned the summit ridge the sub-title of the Dragon's Back. From here we had our one clear view of the day out over the sea to the Isle of Man and a, faint outline of the Lake District hills on the horizon. The descent from this ridge offered some interesting scrambling but we were soon down at the Annalong River where we had a refreshing swim. We eventually reached the car just before 8.00 p.m. after a memorable day of almost ten hours.

On the Sunday morning we drove round to the eastern side of the Mourne and set off up the track that leads to the attractive Hares' Gap and the Brandy Pad. When we had gained the first rise we left the track and cut across the stream to the rocky slopes of Slieve Meelmore. The facing crag was divided by a steep and inviting grassy rake that Peter thought he had climbed before. The scrambling up this proved very interesting as it grew very much narrower and steeper. I had just said that I would not have been too keen to reverse it when we came out on a high, flat and exit-less plateau! The view was superb but the descent decidedly challenging.

This time we decided to cut round the crags and got up the side of the mountain without further incident and moved on over the twin peaks of this attractive little mountain.

The next section of the ridge round the shoulder of Meelmore to its col with Slieve Bearnagh (below) was a good piece of traversing and then we had to negotiate some short craggy walls that led to some more granite tors along the summit. These actually give this peak the most impressive skyline in the Mourne. It was not too difficult to descend from here, and following the wall once more, we were back at the car in five hours.

The day's adventures were not over yet, however. I was due to sail from Belfast docks on the overnight boat and on the way Peter gave me a guided tour of some of the spots that have entered into the notoriety of the province. We drove down the Falls Road past the Divis Flats and then into the Loyalist stronghold of the Shankill Road. There were grim sights: streets barricaded with barbed wire, armoured cars in the roads, gun emplacements sandbagged into street corners manned by soldiers with guns at the ready.

Eventually we reached the safety of the docks area, and in thanking Peter for his kind hospitality I reckoned that this had certainly been a meet with a difference!



The future starts now

Roy J Denney

As we approach the start of a new millennium with the club well into its second century it seems an opportune time to take stock and throw an idea onto the table for the way ahead.

As a club we can look back with pride at the achievements of the past not least of which is the continuation of an ethos of good adventure and exercise in hand with good company. The great variety of our meets satisfies most members' needs at different stages of their lives and leads to a tradition of lifelong membership even if activity waxes and wanes. The club huts and communal catering promote mutual assistance and camaraderie not always apparently evident at some clubs I have attended as a guest.

Memories of the past include numerous occasions sleeping on pub floors, in barns, schoolrooms, hostels and on one occasion in an armoury. Unfortunate changes (from our viewpoint) in fire regulations means this informal arrangement is not now as readily available to us, more's the pity.

Some of my most enjoyable meets have been in less than classic mountain country but in pockets of super countryside often overlooked. The Cheviot, Teesdale, the Howgills and Gunnerside spring to mind as do schoolrooms at Mallerstang and freezing cold camping barns by the Snake. Knee deep mud between bed and loo in South Derbyshire is a perhaps less welcome recollection.

It is great to see the ambitions of the club reaching out to distant parts and those members with the time and inclination now have wonderful opportunities opening up to them. Having spent three weeks in the Himalayas myself in the recent past I certainly have a wish to do something similar again in the next few years and would recommend all to have a

go and support a club expedition if they can.

When we take out the Alps, Iceland, Nepal, Norway, Bolivia, Corsica etc., we are still left with an interesting programme of events throughout Britain. If however you cannot make the expeditions etc. and some Scottish meets are so far away from parts of the deep south as to make them impractical for weekends, there are blank spots in the calendar for more restricted members.

We have had meets in more local areas run on a self help casual basis at the same time as parts of the club are overseas and I would suggest that this should become the norm to create a regular programme for all tastes within the club. We could also arrange one day get togethers in those locations where we have a core of members like North Lancs., Cumbria or Leeds.

These low key events would take little organisation and would provide continuity of opportunity for those in the club who cannot make it to more distant parts.

Such secondary meets for smaller numbers could also provide the possibility of visiting minor areas where a full meet may not be popular, for instance Cornwall, The Heath-lands of Suffolk, Charnwood and Sherwood Forests or Galloway. We could have a go a stretches of some of the long distance footpaths with a little transport planning - the Dales and Cleveland Ways for example could provide two-day excursions.

At the end of the day the club will always consider ideas put forward by members prepared to organise events and all Presidents like to set a pattern to the events during their period of office but I trust my comments will open up a debate and encourage members to come forward with different suggestions.



Ol' Man Ribble

Ramblers all walk in the Dales of Yorkshire.

Ramblers all walk while the tourists play.

Climbing those hills from the dawn till sunset;
Gittin' no rest till the Judgement day.

Don't look up and don't look down,

You don't dast make the leader frown.

Bend your knees and bow yo' head,

And climb that fell until yo'r dead.

Let me go 'way from the Dales of Yorkshire;

Let me go 'way from the leader's whip;

Show me that road number 6160,

The road that leads down to the town of Skip.

Ol' man Ribble, dat ol' man Ribble,
he must know something but don't say nothing.

He jest keeps rollin', he keeps on rollin' along.

He don't climb mountains nor crawl through caverns;

He don't get thirsty nor sit in taverns

But ol' man Ribble, he Just keeps rollin' along.

You an' me we sweat and strain,
body all achin' racked with pain;

Climb that slope and leap that crevasse,

If you slip walking downhill you fall on your back-side.

I gits weary and sick of tryin',
I'm tired of livin' and feared of dyin',
But ol' man Ribble just keeps on rollin' along.

Bill Todd. February 1999. Acknowledgements to Oscar Hammerstein II

Statistics and Reality

David Smith

Sometimes one meets the question of the past, the present and the future of the Club is aired.

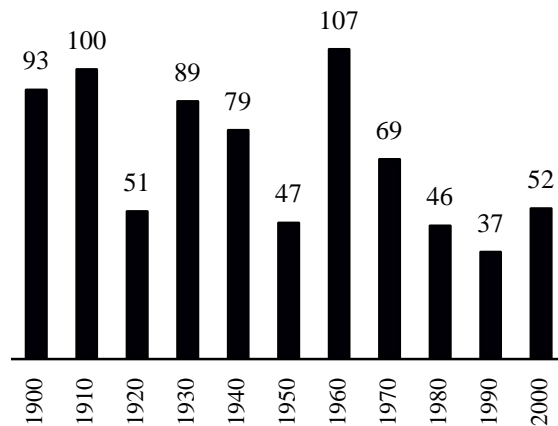
- How does it continue to function as it does?
- Is the Club in a healthy state?
- What is the average age of the membership?
- Are we recruiting sufficient new members to ensure continuity?
- Is there a decline in the core activities, climbing, potholing, skiing, etc.?
- What is it that makes the Club operate as well as it does?
- Does it work well enough?

One thing is certain, it is the same club as it was in 1892 and it has absorbed many changes without losing its identity. It is a Club of friends with many common and varied interests.

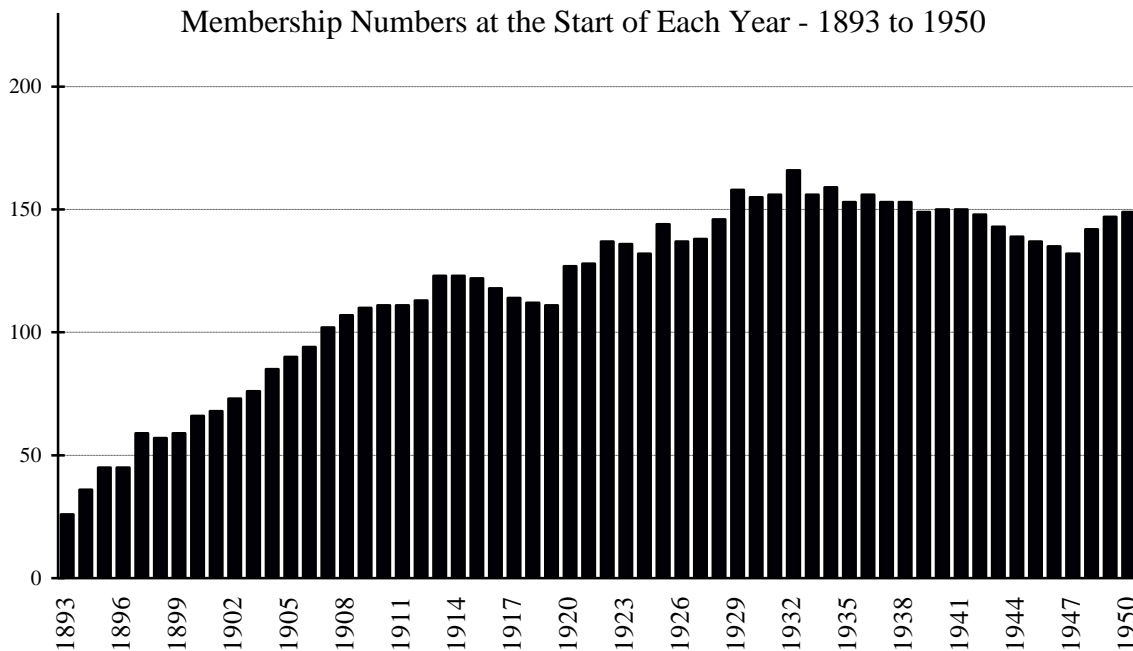
The accompanying chart (*below*) shows membership in the formative years growing smoothly with an

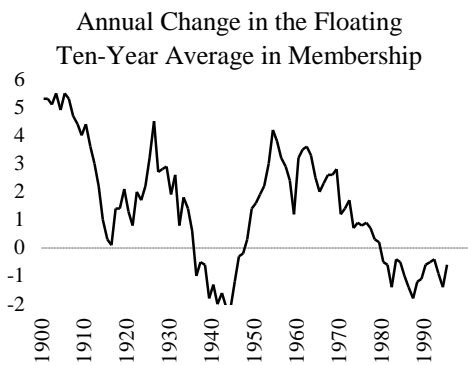
inevitable decline in the first world war years.

The *New Membership in Decades* chart shows the intake of new members increasing up to the '60s, with the small drop during the second world war. Then recruitment declined through the '70s, '80s and '90s, albeit whilst the total membership was increasing. The larger charts showing the *Membership at the Start of Each Year* perhaps gives a more balanced picture of the health or otherwise of the Club. From the '50s through to 1980 there was some growth. Since then there has been a small decline in membership. The average start of year membership is 179.



Membership Numbers at the Start of Each Year - 1893 to 1950





Looking at the membership numbers averaged over a ten-year period, to even out the year-to-year oddities, there is comparatively little difference between the periods of under recruitment and that required to maintain a constant membership. Just a couple of members a year.

The questions that I believe we must ask ourselves include:

- Where have all the climbers gone?
- Are young people no longer as clubbable as two generations ago?
- Should we have regular lectures as there were in the early days and even in the '60s and '70s?

Should the few members who do climb and pothole encourage other members to join them in these activities?

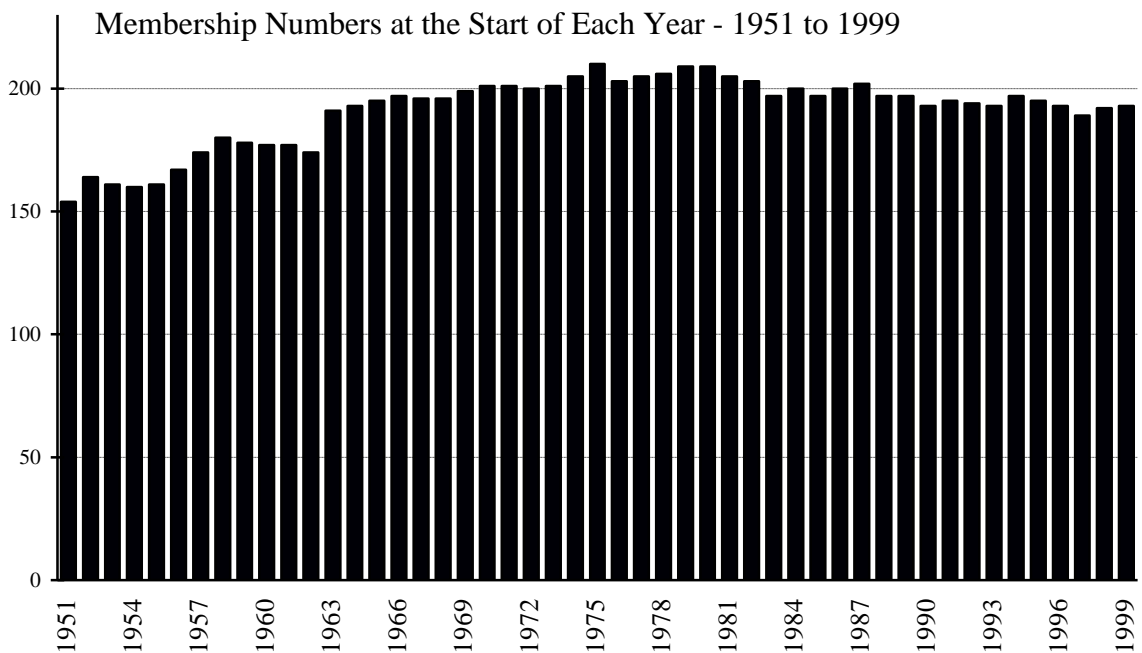
- Are members doing enough to encourage like-minded people to join?
- Do we have the right mix in our meets lists?

We should all ask ourselves these questions.

One thing is beyond question; we are members of a great club, having no age, status or ability barriers.

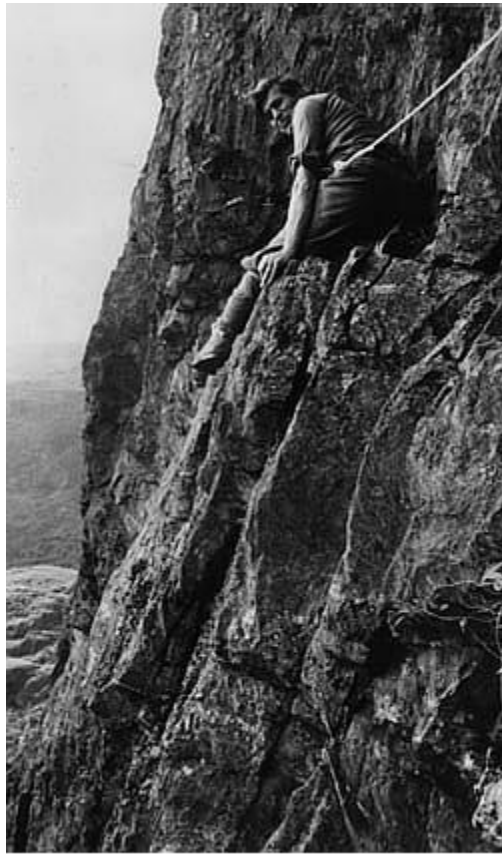
Reading the old YRC journals it is so easy to realise that our activities are so similar to those of our forebears. Reading the successor to the journals, 'The Yorkshire Rambler', we are clearly a well-motivated club, doing things here, there and everywhere. It is however always worth reflecting on these matters as things can possibly be done even better.

NB The larger charts include a small amount of uncertainty due to conflicting dates between different sources for some of the earlier members.





Arthur Craven on East Buttress,
Wallowbarrow Crag, Lake District



Alan Brown on West Buttress,
Wallowbarrow Crag, Lake District

Photographs from Ray Harben's Collection



NC Gully on Stob Coire Nan Lochan, February 1985 with
Simon Goodwin and Ian Crowther

Book Reviews by Bill Todd

The Coniston Tigers, Seventy Years of Mountain Adventure

By A. Harry Griffen

Sigma Leisure, pp206 h/b £14.95

This is a wonderful book by a Mountaineer now in his ninetieth year who was still active certainly up to last back end when he walked the Kentmere Fells. Except for a spot of bother with Hitler this is an unbroken record of Mountain activity since the late 1920s when Harry started going to Lakeland with a group of lads from Barrow in Furness.

Reading the book brings our own good times back; Harry and friends camped in Eskdale, so did I; they walked over Burn Moor to gaze on the noble Mountains of Wasdale, so did I.

In 1948 Harry went to Farleton Knott (now known as Farleton Fell) and enjoyed some good scrambling. Later that year Arthur Tallon led two new routes on the Upper Crag. Forty four years later Arthur and I went up to try and trace them.

The book is punctuated by reprints from Harry's "Country Diary" column in the "Guardian". The one on page 42 particularly interested me as it mentioned a "mountaineering route through the Red Pike Cliffs" from Mosedale. I wonder if that was the same route Brian Evans and I explored in 1989 and which later appeared in "More Scrambles".

Happy days when we were all young come to life. Ronald MacDonald the Skye boatman appears, also of course MacRaes of Glen Brittle. Conversations with C.F. Holland recall the days when John Ritson

Whiting was the name above the Wasdale Head Hotel door.

There are fifty excellent black and white photographs and a map plus numerous drawings by A.A. Wainwright. Read it. You won't be disappointed.

Into the Wild

Jon Krakauer

Pan Books p/b pp 205 £5-99.

In April 1992 a young, educated man hitchhiked to Alaska. Once there he walked alone into the wilderness and died of malnutrition in a derelict bus. This is his story; it also tells about other young men who have done something similar and it tells us a great deal about the author.

Jon Krakauer made his name with "Into Thin Air" an account of the Everest disaster involving several tourists. My daughter thought this book would interest me and she was right.

Speculation as to motivation is a fascinating pastime. People like us must tend to think "If you are going to risk your life why not do it climbing a mountain?" It seems pointless to expire in a bus by the Stampede Trail. Maybe the author thought this way because in his solo ascent of the Devil's Thumb he came near death himself. His account of this epic makes a gripping story and provides a lot of the interest of the book.

Most young men dream about adventure in the wilderness, I certainly did. Some of us find the nearest approach in mountain climbing few of us go the whole hog as Chris. McCandless did.

Read the book, a fascinating story.

The Right to Roam in Central Asia?

**Arka Tagh - The Mysterious
Mountains By William Holgate
The Ernest Press pp 154 £15.95**

As well as the natural obstacles you expect in wild and unexplored country the author of this most interesting book had substantial political problems. The days are long gone when some of the best mountains were in the British Empire and British parties could just go and climb them. Even forty years ago an expedition leader was arrested by the Chinese and only admitted recently that he had in fact been spying; like Mr Greville Wynne in Hungary.

It is difficult to understand what harm could be done to the Chinese Republic by eccentric English fossicking about in the “white patch on the map” which had been intriguing Mr Holgate since 1980.

Repeated requests to the Chinese Mountaineering Association for permission to go to the Arka Tagh met a seven year wall of silence. An attempt to bluff a way through was unsuccessful. A joint expedition was mentioned then shelved by reason of the Tiananmen Square scandal. When that blew over however, a joint Sino-British expedition was set up with Mr Huang Min Min of the Chinese Academy of Sciences as joint leader with Mr Holgate. Not an ideal arrangement but the best that could be done.

Unfortunately it appears that the Chinese hearts were not really in the job. Equipment was not provided when it should have been; Miss Wang, the Director of the Diplomatic Department for the Quiemo County Government was “obstructive” and

the boots which had been specifically paid for by the British appeared on nobody’s feet but Mr. Huang’s.

It is certainly an expedition book with a difference. Instead of a walk-in we have a drive-in in broken down trucks. Instead of faithful Sherpas carrying gear up the mountain it is camels carrying loads between cliff and lake like Anglers crag on Ennerdale Water and falling through the ice. Instead of glacier lassitude and altitude affecting the climbers we have Hassim the camel man falling sick.

Nevertheless the expedition got to see a great deal of country that very few Europeans had ever been to, of which Eric Shipton had said “probably the hardest place in the world to get to”.

The book is well worth a read and I am glad it records achievement by a Yorkshireman.



Slack, The Fun of Climbing Vol 2
Dennis Gray. pp 183 £9.95.

Published by the Author 1998

This is a romp of a book, Dennis picks the reader up and does not let him go until the last page. Adventure follows adventure, character follows character and exotic places follow in succession.

What James Herriot did for veterinary surgery Dennis has done for being a roving climbing ambassador. He seems to have had more hazardous adventures than any six of the authors we were brought up on. Smythe, Tilman and Co. just went and explored and climbed mountains. Dennis gets threatened by the F.B.I., thumped by the C.I.D, assaulted by a lustful Arab and nearly shot by Pathans who take him for a Russian.

I suppose this says something about the decline of the British Empire but not content with getting into genuine trouble Dennis took the most hazardous Yakima Canutt-type part in a film of that name (Hazard) made in 1959 in the Dolomites. That was when some of us used to camp at Nant Peris at August Bank Holiday and I remember Bryan Fuller going large on his experience in the bar of the Dolbardan. He didn't let on that Dennis had had the most dangerous job.

Dennis' experience on the Thai - Burma border are unpleasantly reminiscent of what we read about Kosovo today. The Karen tribe are apparently seeking independence from their Burmese masters.

Reed the book and you will enjoy thumbnail sketches of such as Longland and Blackshaw as well as Ken Wilson's adherence to political correctness. No-one will be surprised

at Stephen Fry's favourite sport and anyone who has been to Tafroute in the Moroccan desert will be interested to know how many tonnes of paint were used by Jean Verame on the fabulous boulders there.

This book is most difficult to put down, even more so than the author's previous books.



Bolton Abbey

The Fell and Rock Journal
XXVI (2) Nk. 76 1998

This is rivetting; it starts with a description of getting over the last bit of a winter Steep Gill and finishes with biographies of some of the finest mountaineers of their time one or two of whom I was privileged to have known. The details of the "greats" I had only heard of were most enlightening too; am I the only young climber who got confused between A.B. and A.T. Hargreaves? In between is a wealth of articles dealing with places from Troutdale Pinnacle to the Pamirs, people from G.S. Bower to Alan Garrick and new winter routes on Cairnsmore of Fleet.

There is plenty of interest to keep most of us absorbed for many hours.

Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal Vol. xxxvi No. 189

For some unknown reason my attention focused this year on the Skye section of the accident report pages. It seems that walkers and pony trekkers fare far worse than climbers. There was a fatal accident on the Elgol coast path and a walker suffered skull, spinal and abdominal injuries from a falling rock. A woman suffered spinal injuries after being thrown off a Shetland pony. Climbing accidents included two leader falls, one near Neist where shoulder injuries were sustained and the other on a snow obscured Sgurr a Mhadhaidh where a leader pulled a loose block onto his own leg. It's enough to make you take up tiddley-winks. But of course there is a lot more on the positive side. Andrew Fraser writes a fascinating article about the nose of Sgurr an Fhìdhleir; I believe that was first ascended by Mike Dixon and Neville Drasdo in the early sixties much to Tom Patey's chagrin. Mr Fraser also mentions the great number of people who have "discovered" the Reiff sea cliffs. A bit like Brandrith in Yorkshire. I remember Joan and I doing one or two routes at Reiff in 1962, any advance?

Articles on Ferlie Mhor and the late A.L.Bagley held my interest. Bagley's *Holiday Rambles in North Wales* helped put me on the right path.

This is an excellent issue with a good share of humour. Read how the Past President converted snow to ice to secure the tent pole, and the aspirant's reaction to the first step. I do not know where the club Library will be when this appears as the Leeds Central Library is closing for essential refurbishment. Any member interested should contact our librarian.

Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal Vol. XXXVII No. 190

This is something of a ghostly issue. The first twenty pages contain fine writing with a strong emphasis on the disembodied, by Mike Jacob and David Hughes. Read them.

In addition, as always there are descriptions of mountain adventure, some excellent photographs, notes of new climbs, Munro matters and accident reports. The numbers of "walkers" and "fell runners" who sustain accidents is distressing. Perhaps it is time for walking routes like the Quiraing Table to be awarded grades for danger and difficulty, particularly under winter conditions.

I say this with feeling having just (5 December 1999) struggled up Strans Gill which is an easy scramble in summer.

The S.M.C. Journal will be kept at the librarian's house until the Central Library is in commission again.

Craven Pothole Club Records Nos 54, 55, 56 & 57, April, July & October 1999 and January 2000

Due to the temporary closure of Central Library I do not have to hasten to review the CPC Record and take it down there so that members may read it. The result is that I have procrastinated until there are four issues crying out for review.

As usual they are full of good reading. Adventures underground predominate of course but there are things of interest to surface dwellers too. The April issue contains a very interesting account of an attempt on Mount Kenya which was spoiled by bad

weather but not before Nelion had been climbed.

July issue contains a set of pictures of Sting Pot which conveys the scene very well and several obituary notices of the late Monty Grainger who seems to have been a unique character.

This one also informs us that the oldest known human footprint (26,000 years) has been discovered in France. The prints are apparently those of a boy and are definitely Homo Sapiens Sapiens (why two sapiens? I don't know) not Neanderthal or other developing sub species.

The feature of the October issue is the extensive coverage of the Gaping Gill Meet, again most interesting particularly to our cavers.

Highlights of the January issue are: Gaping Gill revisited thirty two years on, mentioning our own Sydney Waterfall as a past attender, and a splendidly irreverent poem about Haworth. Excerpt:-

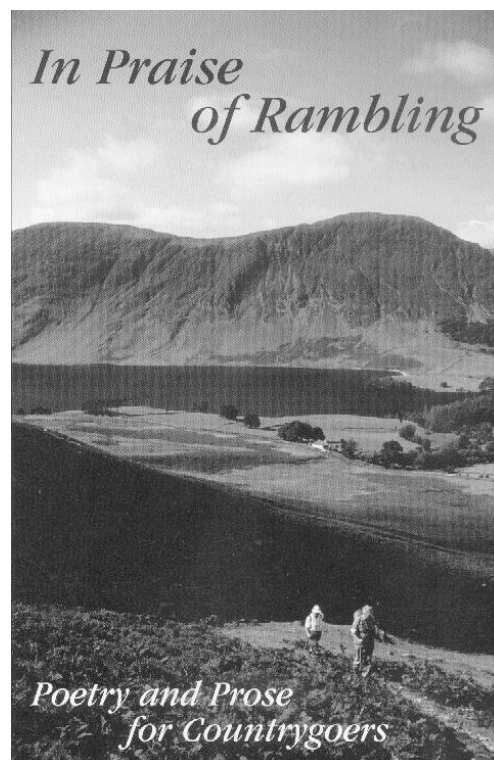
*The Bronte teashops left and right
Dispensed their Bronte teas,
The Bronte dogs lay down and scratched
At their Bronte fleas.*

There's also a thrilling story of an ascent of Scafell from Seathwaite involving a trek back from Wasdale in the dark. I did something similar myself once trekking back from Wasdale to the ODG, but I had picked a light time of the year.

We have the usual interesting meet reports of adventures above and below ground.

These will be retained at my house until the Central Library re-opens and are available to members.

Book Review Denis Armstrong



In Praise of Rambling

Poetry and Prose for Countrygoers

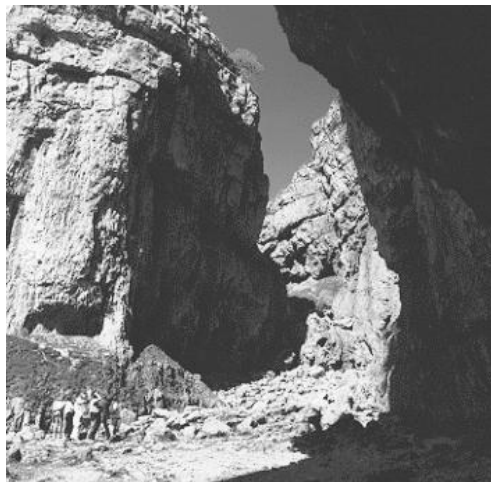
Compiled by Roy Bullen

When I was asked to review this little anthology "In Praise of Rambling", I admit that my heart fell. In general I find anthologies very worthy, undoubtedly containing interesting tit-bits, but there is not enough *theme* to hold my attention for long. So I picked the book up with misgivings, and three quarters of an hour later I found I had read it from cover to cover. I had laughed out aloud several times at the humorous quotes, and been moved by the many authors over the last four hundred years praising rambling. I was reminded that we are forever surrounded by a multifarious cloud of witnesses, who have gone before us, loving the same hills that we do. It is short, to the point, worth reading. In a word, to my surprise - I enjoyed reading it.

The book is compiled by Roy Bullen, a Sheffield Rambler. It may be obtained from him at 18 Furniss Avenue, Sheffield, S17 3QL for £3.50p. It has 44 pages, and is published privately by the Ramblers' Association, to celebrate the 65th Anniversary¹. Most items are allocated to an author, the source, and the date, but not all, (which is a pity). The need to meet the publishing deadline of 1 Jan 2000 probably accounts for these omissions.

The anecdotes and clippings are grouped under themes: the first half is about the weather, clothes and equipment, rucksacks, and the love of maps. The second half focuses upon the struggles for 'the right to roam' and that this struggle is still not over - a theme dear to the heart of the Ramblers' Association. The authors selected are wide ranging, from the Romans Ovid and Tacitus, via Thomas Middleton, the Elizabethan play-wright, to the present day, the Independent of 17 July 1999. Benjamin Franklin gets one quote to represent America, but there are no Europeans included. None of Geoffrey Winthrop Young's poetry, either. The book centres mainly upon the YRC heartland, the Lake District, Yorkshire and the Peak District, but Scotland is well represented (the "Road from Blair Atholl" is particularly interesting this year). Wales less so, and odd quotes about Cornwall, Devon and even Sussex. Nothing on the Alps or farther afield however.

¹ The RA adopted its title on New Year's Day 1935 though the forerunner organisation, the National Council of Ramblers' Federations, was formed in 1931



Gordale

But enough of the flannel, let me give some extracts from the book to illustrate its flavour:

To start with, some stirring stuff for those of you who are ex public schools of the 1930/40s:

Baden-Powell at his heartiest:

"I know nothing more enjoyable, cheering or health-giving than a good old tramp every weekend. A knapsack on your back makes you free and independent. You load it with only the essential things, no luxuries.. every pound counts on a long march. Nothing can beat the Norwegian type of rucksack.... Weather? Can anything be better than good long tramp on a cold blowy day? If wet, all the better. ... I tell you, you get so hardened by practice of the out of doors that .. you never mind the weather. Whatever it is, hot or cold, rain or shine, you gain strength, vitality and cheeriness by it." (No wonder so many Boy Scouts joined the YRC!)

To contrast with the humorous:

Backpacking at its most ironical:

"The rule of thumb for the old backpacking was that the weight of your pack should equal the weight of

yourself and the kitchen range combined. .. the pack eliminated the need for any ground-gripping shoes, because your feet would sink a foot and half into hard-packed earth...” (Alan Kay, please note!)

And who cannot relate to this:

Maps at their most fascinating:

“In the home of an old Sheffield bog-trotter ... a remark was made concerning the number of maps on his bookshelf.

“That’s reet”, he said, “Ah buys ‘em and oppens ‘em awt on t’table and ah gloats over ‘em.” (That reminded me of Eddie Edwards.)

Some interesting historical facts:

Contour lines at their most interesting:

“It should not be forgotten that the contour line as used on present-day Ordnance Survey maps was first used in 1729 by a Dutch hydrographer N.S.Cruquis, to indicate equal depth on sea-charts; the idea of using the device to indicate terrestrial levels does not appear to have occurred to anybody until modern times.”

(NB The French Michelin maps were slow to show them, and the 1” Bartholomew Map of the Lake District published in the 1930s had colours to indicate broad bands of equal height. I recall that that worthy guide book, “Walking the Lake District” by H H Simmonds, (pre-Wainwright) recommended Bartholomews rather than the OS, as it was not so cluttered with all those lines.)

And to finish:

Nostalgia at its strongest:

“When the days come that I must live alone in my own thoughts and my

eyes are dimmed and cannot see the shadow on the hills.... I will turn my mind to those great days we spent upon the fells, and I will count them... treasure them as jewels no-one can take from me... And I will dream of mountain flowers... I will remember rain and bitter winds, the feel of drenched clothes...and tea at a wayside inn with a good friend. And while I think of all those joyous days, I will not envy those who take their turn in tramping the hills I know, for they are part of me, a heritage of beauty nought can spoil.” Author unknown.

A pleasure to read at any time, useful if you are caught for an After Dinner Speech, and short enough to keep by your bed, (or the loo.)



Jed Champion and Robert Crowther during work to improve the security of the passage through the boulders near entrance to the dig on Ingleborough. Photo taken by Michael Smith shortly before the 1999 AGM.

Queuing for Everest

World Premiere at the Sheffield Crucible Studio
Theatre during March/April 2000
Written by Judith Adams,
Directed by Deborah Paige

Climbers' Talk, Joe Simpson

28 March 2000

Expeditions: fact or fiction

Professor Keith Miller

a National Science Week public lecture presented by
the University of Sheffield in the Firth Hall on 18
March 2000

Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer

Pan, 1997, 293pp, £6.99, ISBN 0-330-35397-7

Fragile Earth, Maria Coffey

Coronet, 1989, 208pp, £3.50 ISBN 0-340-52543-6

Of Rarefied Atmospheres

What an opportunity for Adams and Paige: Sheffield with its many climbers; active debate of the morality of guided ascents of Everest; recent publications, such as Krakauer's **Into Thin Air**, telling the story of the 1996 fatalities; television programmes on Mallory; and, the chance of a final production before leaving the Crucible. They researched through workshops with climbers including Jon Tinker, Seb Grieve and Alf Gregory, read old accounts and

*The path of love is as a strand of
hair over an abyss of fire. I say
things like that no-one listens*
"Truman"

*Always feel, wherever I put my
feet, I send avalanches onto
peoples' heads* "Thea"

I panic in a lot of situations.
Especially when they tell me to
relax. "Sophie"

followed modern debates. Then they created an exploration of four people's journeys on Everest: Georges, a Swiss scientist; Thea, an aggressive female journalist from New England; their Sherpa guide; and, a reflective Mallory-like Truman commentating in tweeds. A fifth character, Sophie, Georges's second wife, left in the US, is on a parallel journey struggling with illness.

We were promised a play which explored power struggles, motivations, cultural assumptions, romances and personal moralities of characters and times. With so much to look forward to our party of six was ready for anything.

Well almost anything. A few weeks before the first night we were warned that there would be no conventional seating for this performance *in the round*. If we wanted to remain in the 'stalls' we would need to perch on the *icebergs* (they probably meant glaciers) of the set. Four retreated to higher tiers and safety. Two of us ended up sat on a foam mattress on the floor, a couple of metres from the centre of the round, clutching knees to remain upright and viewing the action on Everest with necks craned appropriately upward. The glaciers must have retreated back to the scenery store before first night. Apart from the stiffness, it worked well enough except when we became entangled in ropes or the action moved to a point behind us. Mallory even took my photograph. The novel approach made a lasting impression for a few days on my back, but did not contribute to my appreciation of the work. Why this approach had been taken was not at all clear. It did not integrate the audience into the action. If anything it was a distraction. At least one of those on the upper tiers

confesses to being at least as entertained by watching actors falling over fidgeting viewers as by the play itself.

While Mallory was portrayed as being drawn by some sporting ideal, and the Sherpa by a religious ideal and financial necessity towards the summit, the modern clients were driven by careers, tick-lists or domestic realities they preferred to leave behind. This last motive: not only because it's there, but also because it isn't here, was identified by Joe Tasker's lover, Maria Coffey in *Fragile Earth*. Her Himalayan journey was a successful quest to understand Joe's fatal motivation in tackling the ENE ridge of Everest in 1982.

Joe Simpson's hour of conversation with Paige which preceded our performance started with Joe slightly abashed, but developed into a relaxed, confident, down-to-earth conversation with the audience. His simple, homely analysis contrasted markedly with the over analytical complexities of the play. Joe emphasised that it was the climbing rather than the summit that mattered, so for him, Everest held no appeal. As Joe's climbing is an expression of his self-belief he would have no truck with

abrogating responsibility to guides. He repeated his condemnation that climber/clients shutting their tent door on a barely conscious Indian climber dying just 20 metres away lacked common humanity. Joe, whose early climbing was in North Yorkshire, offered snippets of hard-earned advice, including the counsel that if you break a bone you have a couple of weeks to get home where the local specialist doctors can sort it all out. I hope I never need to know this.

The Krakauer details a dilemma, In order to succeed on Everest you must be exceedingly driven, but if you're too driven you're likely to die through reckless summit fever and join the litter of corpses. He selects indicative incidents from a myriad of sometimes conflicting evidence and much conjecture. From these he analyses intentions and flawed judgements. His interpretation is criticised by the relatives of some who died especially where they see it as being self-excusing.

In his analysis guides are viewed and portray themselves as super human, conceal weaknesses and inspire others, to the point where the others don't even think about looking after them. For example, one ascending



guide, allegedly, didn't know if those he met by the Hillary Step were ascending or descending. He couldn't speak, was assumed by his party to be just nipping up to the top before catching them up to help with their descent.

Members I've spoken to found Krakauer's account a compelling if horrifying read - mountaineering conducted according to moral standards which they find impossible to accept. The philosophy 'summit at any cost' and the lack of any spare time or effort to support other party members are an anathema in the Club scene.

Incidentally, neither Krakauer nor Simpson, in writing **Touching the Void**, found writing about their intense mountaineering tragedies cathartic but felt compelled to publish their narratives in an attempt to set the record straight.

Keith Miller's expeditionary journeys, as described in his lecture for National Science Week, spanned the continents and the centuries. He looked beyond the activity on expeditions to the lives and motives of their participants, and how these shape the claims they make on their return. Their personal investment in the success of the trip can result in deception or self-delusion so that experiences or observations are interpreted to support the idea of a goal being attained. This even when the achieving the goal was highly unlikely. The false claims connected with the outflow of the Niger, summit photographs of Mt McKinley, and an approach to the North Pole were contrasted with the positive examples of Scott's team and Shackleton's determined leadership.

The time, country of the expedition's origin and stage in an explorer's career were illustrated as influences on behaviour on and after trips. Peary's black co-explorer, Matthew Henson's invaluable work in translation, supervision and breaking trail while pulling a sledge while Peary was reduced to riding, was compared with his treatment on return to the US. Cultural expectations and greed meant he was ignored for over thirty years and died in relative obscurity.

Miller defined success not in terms of attaining the goal but in relationships, managing resources and protecting people. This is the antithesis of the apparent imperative driving those who must be seen to achieve great things. More Mallory than the Georges portrayed in the play.

Queueing for Everest was an opportunity missed. Many themes, possibly too many, were aired, but they remained confusing to the extent that when the interval arrived the audience sat baffled and silent until the theatre staff moved. Rather like someone in line at a Soviet store, we queued but we were not sure why we were doing it. The second half resolved the fates of the characters but not our perplexity. Dance, movement, language, drama and rope work were woven into and around the pretentious reflection on climbing but shed little light on the subject.

Shipton's and Hunt's photographs and accounts of the Yeti convinced Miller that there is something there to be reckoned with. For me though the essence of climbing in the rarefied atmosphere of Everest, as portrayed in this production, proved as elusive as the Yeti.

Club Proceedings

1998:

The meets were

- 9-11 January, Low Hall Garth;
- 30 January - 1 Feb Glan Dena, N.Wales;
- 19-21 February Braemar;
- 13-15 March, Low Row, Swaledale;
- 17-19 April, Thirlmere, Joint Meet with the Gritstone Club;
- 8-10 May, Long Mynd Hotel, Church Stretton, Ladies Weekend;
- 22-29 May, Backpacking, Cape Wrath to Inchnadamph;
- 24 May-14 June, Iceland;
- 19-22 June, Long Walk, Cheviots, Towford to Kirk Yetholm;
- 10-12 July, Caving, Lowstern;
- 24 July - 8 August, Neustift, Tyrol;
- 21-23 August, Beudy Mawr, Llanberis;
- 17-19 September, Working Party, LHG;
- 18-20 September, Joint Meet, Robertson Lamb Hut, Langdale;
- 2-4 October, Working Party, Lowstern;
- 17-24 October, Caving, Ardeche, France;
- 21-22 November, Annual Dinner, Whoop Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale;
- 12-13 December, Christmas Meet, Lowstern.

The 106th. Annual General Meeting was held at Whoop Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale, on the 21st November 1998.

The following were elected for 1998/99:-

- President: W C I Crowther
- Vice President: D A Hick
- Hon. Secretary: R G Humphreys
- Hon. Meets Secretary: J H Hooper
- Hon. Treasurer: G A Salmon
- Hon. Editor: M Smith
- Hon. Librarian/Archivist: W N Todd
- Huts Secretary: R D Josephy
- Hut Wardens: Low Hall Garth, D English
Lowstern, F M Godden
- Hon. Auditor: C D Bush
- Committee: G Campion, I F D Gilmour,
A Renton, G R Salmon.
- Representatives to National Committees:
Council of Northern Caving Clubs:
H A Lomas
- BMC Lancashire & Cheshire: R Gowing
Lake District: K Aldred
Yorks & Humberside: W N Todd

The 85th Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President, T W Josephy, was in the chair. The Chief Guest was Andy Eavis and the Kindred Clubs were represented by John Noble, Alpine Club; John Clarke, Bradford Pothole Club; Jeff Cowling, Craven Pothole Club; Paddy O'Neill, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; Michael Green, Gritstone Club; Bob Ferguson, Rucksack Club; Terry Kenny, Wayfarers Club, the President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club Bob Richardson was unable to attend. Attendance 96.

The singing of 'Yorkshire' was lead by Ian Crowther. The official opening of the Downham Room and Lowstern Extension by Mrs Joan Farrer took place on the 22nd.

Membership comprised, 115 Ordinary,
64 Life, 5 Honorary, totalling 184

1999:

The meets were

- 8-10 January, Low Hall Garth;
- 29-31 January, Tany-Y-Wyddfa, Rhyd Ddu, Snowdonia;
- 19-21 February, Inbhirfhaolin, Glen Etive;
- 12-14 March, Joint Meet with Gritstone and Wayfarers Club, Lowstern;
- 16-18 April, Ladies Weekend, Abingdon;
- 7-9 May, High Camp, Scoat Tarn, Cumbria;
- 20-21 May, Working Party, Lowstern;
- 29 May-6 June, Isle of Arran;
- 18-20 June, Long Walk, Rosedale Circuit;
- 19 June-20 July, Bolivia;
- 9-11 July, Low Hall Garth;
- 23 July - 8 August, Alpine Meet,
- 20-22 August, Lowstern;
- 10-12 September, The Roaches,
Derbyshire;
- 23-30 October, Coasta Blanca, Spain;
- 20-21 Nov, Annual Dinner, Whoop Hall;
- 3-5 December, Hag Dyke, Kettlewell;

The 106th Annual General Meeting was held at Whoop Hall, Kirkby Lonsdale on the 20th November 1999.

The following officers and committee members were elected for 1999/2000:-

President: W C I Crowther
President Elect: A R Chapman
Vice President: David A Hick
Hon. Secretary: R G Humphreys
Hon. Meets Secretary: J H Hooper
Hon. Treasurer: G A Salmon
Hon. Editor: M Smith
Hon. Auditor: C D Bush
Hon. Librarian/Archivist: W N Todd
Huts Secretary: R D Josephy
Hut Wardens: Low Hall Garth, D English
Lowstern, M F Godden
Committee: G Campion, I F D Gilmour,
A Renton, M Hartland
YRC representatives to National
Committees:
Council of Northern Caving Clubs:
H A Lomas
BMC Lancashire & Cheshire: R Gowing
Lake District: K Aldred
Yorks & Humberside W N Todd

The 86th Annual Dinner followed at the same hotel. The President, W C I Crowther, was in the chair. The Chief Guest was Brendan Jones and the Kindred Clubs were represented by Paul Braithwaite, Alpine Club; Philip Hopkinson, Climbers Club; Jeff Cowling, Craven Club; Peter Roberts, Gritstone Club; Tony Margetts, Midland Association of Mountaineers; Cecil Rhodes, Rucksack Club; Keith Rigby, Wayfarers Club. Attendance 87.

The singing of 'Yorkshire' was lead by Arthur Salmon.

Membership comprised: 106 Ordinary,
73 Life, 4 Honorary, totalling 184

New Members, Resignations and Deaths

New Members

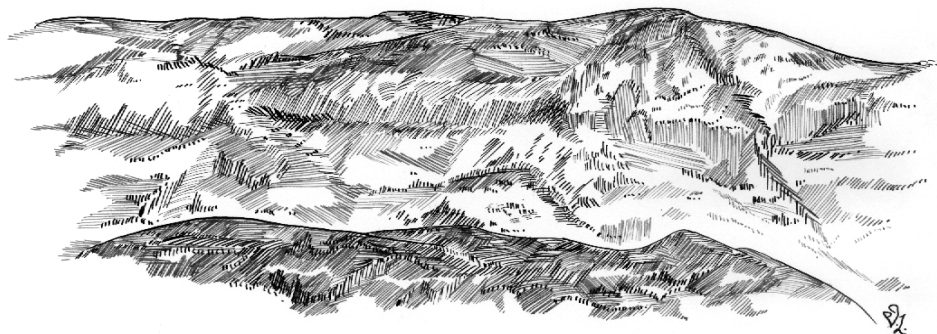
1997 Alan Wood
1998 Christopher N Bird
Stuart B Dix
Jeffrey J Halford
Victor J P Maloney
Keith Raby
Euan Seaton
Martyn B Trasler
1999 David Large
Roger Dix

Resignations

1997 Steven V Bugg
Jeremy Tremaine

Deaths

1998 Charles J Bridger
Clifford Fielding
W P B Stonehouse
John White
1999 Will Lacy
Bernard Nelstrop
Bill Woodward
John P Wright



Obituaries

Robert Everard Chadwick

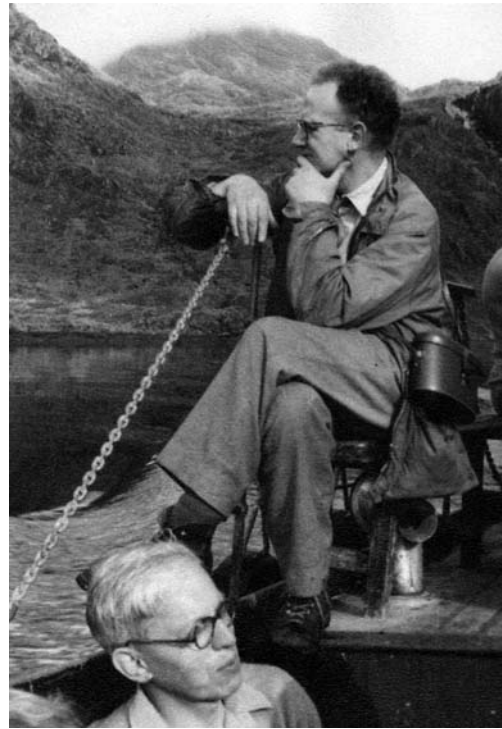
1916 - 2000

Member 1939

President 1962-1964

Bob Chadwick died on the 28th January 2000 after a long illness stoically endured. His Father, Robert Agar Chadwick, joined the YRC in 1905, two years before setting up his own legal practice in Leeds with Joe Hepworth. The Hepworth & Chadwick partnership prospered and the early exposure to mountains and the law influenced Bob's distinguished career throughout his life. The illness of his Father cut short his own legal studies at Cambridge, leaving him to combine demanding work back at the office with further legal studies at Leeds University.

The outbreak of war found Bob attached to the 15th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, where he became Commanding Officer of 'B' Battery, later attaining the rank of Major during active service in Iran, Iraq and Italy. After the war Bob's growing reputation as a practical and effective company lawyer and his wide knowledge of tax laws and trusts meant that there was a wide demand for his services. He lectured on insolvency and other legal matters to accountancy students and in 1958 became Chairman of J Hepworth & Son (later to become Next plc), a position he held for 23 years. He joined the Board of John Waddington in 1953 and served as their Chairman from 1969 to 1977. The Leeds Permanent Building Society invited him to join their Board in 1974 and he was their President in 1982 and 1983.



Skye 1958

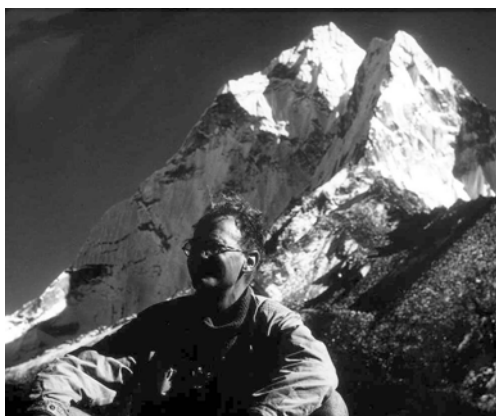
He sat on the Law Society Revenue Law Committee and was President of the Leeds Law Society in 1965.

It is a tribute to Bob's extraordinary energy and organisational skills that he was able to devote so much time to his happy family of three children, and to his interest in mountaineering, fishing, skiing and bird watching. Before joining the YRC in 1939 he was a frequent visitor to Scotland, Wales and the Lake District. In the fifties he invariably attended the Club's Whit Meets, occupying an unusually large tent always known as Grand Hotel, with Jack Dossor, Harry Stembridge and later Jack Holmes. In 1961 he completed the traverse of the Cuillin Ridge in Skye in a day with Anderson, Brown, Dossor and Hartley, returning to the Skavaig camp site some nineteen hours after leaving a mountain tent strategically placed on Garsbheinn. His first visit to the Alps with the Stembridge brothers and Blair in 1947 was amusingly captured in an article

which appeared in the 1949 Club Journal Volume VII No. 25. This article revealed a delightful prose style which enlivened everything he ever wrote. A trip to the Everest Base Camp in 1969 with, amongst others, Harry Stembridge, under the leadership of Eric Shipton started only fifteen miles from Kathmandu - a trek that will be appreciated by those who started this particular route at Lukla. In 1974 he flew to Rawalpindi and thence to Skardu for a four week trek in the Karakoram.

Bob will be remembered for the single minded determination he brought to everything he did. He would allow others to sprint past when setting off up some interesting Munro but his steady pace was always maintained throughout the ascent so he invariably arrived at the top with the front runners. He was a deep thinker on a multitude of subjects and his powerful intellect meant that his views, modestly expressed, were eagerly sought. He had little interest in material possessions and happily migrated from important Board Meetings and luxurious hotels to the rough and tumble of a YRC Meet where he might be found happily manning his primus stove on the grubby floor of some Scottish bothie.

Alan Brown



Maurice Frederic Wilson

1910-2000

Member 1952

Vice President 1961-1963

Maurice Wilson died on the 16th March 2000, the day after his 90th birthday. Although he had been unwell since before Christmas he remained cheerful and articulate throughout, reluctantly postponing his 90th birthday party only a few days before he died.

Maurice was born, and lived for the whole of his life, in Stokesley, where after education at Yarm Grammar School, then Pocklington School he joined the Midland Bank which employed him for 42 years. This long service provided him with a secure base from which he developed his mountaineering skills continuously, starting with a Lake District fell walking holiday in 1931. He returned to the Lakes every year of his life and quickly moved on to serious climbing in Wales, Scotland and the Alps. He enjoyed thirteen consecutive seasons in the Alps, reaching as many 4000 metre peaks, including the Matterhorn which he conquered 100 years to the day after the first ascent. As a member of the Swiss Alpine Club he became one of the first mountaineers to lead ice training courses in Zermatt and it was in Zermatt that he met our own Geoff Scovell who introduced him to the YRC. Geoff and Arthur Tallon both climbed with Maurice in the Alps but also in the Lakes and Scotland. Arthur recalls a difficult pitch on Sgurr Alisdair which both he and Geoff found almost impossible. Maurice, 20 years their senior, quietly took over and completed the pitch, then effortlessly hauled up his juniors. He was with

RAF signals during the war, spending five years in the Hebrides which he explored thoroughly although he never wished to return.

He was a founder member and a Chairman of the Mountaineering Association (later the BMC), founder member and later President of the Cleveland

Mountaineering Club during its formative years and his literary output was enjoyed by both organisations.

Maurice was also an early member of the York Mountaineering Club and contributed to the Club's development in the late 40's and early 50's. He was much involved in local affairs

and as President of the Stokesley Society he provided the commentary for two videos: 'A Walk Round Stokesley' and 'A Scrapbook of Stokesley'. The authoritative pamphlet on the History of Stokesley Parish Church was written by Maurice. Further writings included 'Climbs in Cleveland' and 'Climbs on the North Yorkshire Moors', both published by the Cleveland Mountaineering Club. More recently he published 'Short Walks in the Cleveland Hills' and 'Walks with Granddad'. This latter publication was a response to the many visitors to the town who complained there was nowhere to take the children. As a deeply committed Christian he gave life long support to the Gideons International, often distributing their bibles to schools and local institutions.



Maurice was a member of the Club's 1957 Himalayan Expedition and had a passion, sadly never realised, for Polar exploration. The Friend's School at Great Ayton benefited from his extensive mountaineering knowledge when he gave climbing courses to some 200 of their pupils over a number of years. One of his pupils eventually reached the South Pole, sending Maurice a much treasured sample of South Polar ice.

Many of our members today will remember him for his enthusiasm for the Joint Meet at RLH and for his attendance at Whit Meets in Rhum, Knoydart, the Cairngorms, Torrdon,

Kintail, Ardgour, and Inchnadamph. His traverse of the Liathac ridge in his 81st year, which included every one of the exposed pinnacles between Spidean a' Choire Leith and Mullach an Rathain, will long be recalled as an example to younger fry, indeed one young admirer asked Maurice to pose for a picture so that he could show it to his own grandfather. His final triumph was to gain the summit cairn of Ben Nevis when he was 84.

All this hectic activity delayed Maurice's introduction to normal family life but he finally married Angela in 1962 and is survived by her, together with Peter, Marc and Heather, plus two grandchildren Grace and Harry. The Club has lost a most knowledgeable, kindly and patient figure who will be greatly missed.

If I Had My Way

by **Maurice Wilson**



If I had my way.....
I'd build a house in the Cleveland hills,
Close to a clump of daffodils.
No complicated plumbing scheme,
Just water from a nearby stream.
There'd be a welcome on the mat'
"God bless this house" upon the wall.
Pictures, paintings in their teens,
Of climbing days and mountain scenes.
Here and there some inglenooks,
Lined with my favourite books.
Interminable cups of coffee,
Porridge oats and home-made toffee.
When I grew tired of women's talk,
I'd pop outside and take a walk.
Caked with mud and torn by thicket,
Back in time to watch the cricket.
And between one job and the next,
I'd watch the news on Teletext.
In my retreat beneath the stars,
I'd have no need for motor cars.
Each night, reclining in my chair,
Let 'Bach' and 'Basie' fill the air.
There's lots of things I'd do,
With now and then, a "call" from you.
If I had my way.

**Dr. Thomas Elwyn
(Eddie) Edwards**

1932-2000

Member 1983

With the sudden and unexpected death of Eddie in February the YRC has lost one of its most colourful characters. Eddie joined the Club in 1983 and served for a short period as Dinner Secretary.

He was a regular attender of Club Meets and particularly enjoyed the Whit May Holiday camping week in Scotland. He never lost his strong ties with his native Wales and always enjoyed returning on Welsh meets.

He was a friendly, entertaining man and thoroughly enjoyed imparting his intimate knowledge of the hills to



others. He will be remembered for the tales of his exploits and adventures in the Scottish Highlands. I suspect these stories will be retold for many years to come.

Eddie was very single-minded and could always be relied upon to turn up with a selection of well-researched objectives for a particular day. He was a competent and accomplished mountaineer and was the second person in the Club to complete the Scottish Munros, many of which he climbed alone and in winter conditions. If this achievement was not enough of a challenge he then embarked on the Scottish Corbetts and had completed all but four, again many on his own. He was looking forward to completing his remaining Corbetts this year and participating in the YRC Corbett meet in May. Eddie was previously involved in the successful 1983 Scottish Munro Whit Meet and often spoke of the enjoyment and camaraderie of this event.

Eddie remained active unto the end and will be remembered with fond affection by his many friends. The President, Ian Crowther and over thirty members represented the Club at the funeral. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow, Sheila, his daughter, Siân and family.

Chippings

In March this year Herbert Thompson, our neighbour at Low Hall Garth, moved to live in Ambleside. He had been the tenant farmer at LHG since 1955 and a good friend to the Club especially with regard to maintenance problems. We wish him well in his new home.

Martyn Wakeman has been out on a randonnee ski trip including an ascent of the Wildhorn, 3200m, and the Grosser Aletschgletscher to the Jungfrau Joch.

Frank Milner is back in his feet after a serious leg injury on the Club ski meet in Norway's Jotunheimen. Look out for the Meet report for the full story.

After that meet, **Kjetil Tveranger** and his teenage son, Andreas, spent three days in a hut under "Ålforbreen" 40 km east of Florø. He reports plenty of snow and good skiing conditions in hot and sunny weather well into May. Kjetil is practising for a probable two-week kayak and mountaineering trip to Spitsbergen during June and July.

Dr S A Craven asks if any Club members know of any descendents of the Botterill's Fred, Matthew and Arthur. Replies can be sent via the editor

If, having read *How it Really Used to Be!*, you really must know who *Has Been* is then solve this anagram:

He ranked Hell's obscenities.

The last issue contained a number of errors. As usual the editor failed to keep up with Rory's achievements so consequently the map on page 18 failed to have the peaks between Jatuncasa and Pirhuata underlined as ascended. On page 23 the editor, advised by another who should know better (admittedly while in a bar at over 12000ft), added a few years to the leader's age - the span of trekkers' ages should have been 58 to 71. The corrie on page 82 was actually Coire A'Ghrunnda. On page 111 the 1913 President mentioned was Walter Parsons and not William as stated. Finally, the pothole on page 121 was Juniper Gulf.

Despite these the issue was well received. One reader managed the first thirty-odd pages while their breakfast coffee went cold.

The dig at Newby Moss Cave suffered a collapse in the unstable entrance series, so was sealed. It has now been reopened and digging recommenced at its current end. Over the winter months the cavers, with members of the Airedale have been looking at Darnbrook Pot which, apparently, looks quite promising with a good draught.

Scottish Winter Meet

Inbhirfhaolain, Glen Etive

18-20 February 1999

This was our first visit to Glen Etive for three years. It is rare that we have kept away so long!

Most members were pleased to find that the cottage had been improved extensively. The "flat earthers" amongst us, of which this writer is a fully paid up member, pine for the old days of gas lamps, a horrible cramped and dirty kitchen and above all the ubiquitous pot bellied stove. Nevertheless the Grampian Club should be congratulated on what has now become an excellent modern hut in a splendid part of Scotland.

The most significant feature in the whole of this improvement programme is that the Elsan has gone and there is now a self composting toilet housed in a stockade type watch tower attached to the 'west wing'. The notice hanging up in the compartment says it is one of only a few scattered around the world. We felt very honoured. Members were literally queuing up to use it.

The weather over the weekend was pretty atrocious. Friday was by far the best day and this was characterised by strong winds reaching gale force on the tops where conditions underfoot consisted, at best, of hard packed snow and in most places of sheet ice. Crampons as well as axes were a necessity.

Considering the conditions quite a lot got done. The President accompanied by his Vice President motored round to Glencoe, parked off the A82 near the Clachaig, walked up the Allt na Muidhe and over Sgor na h Ulaidh via a rather hairy, steep, snow filled gully.

Good exciting stuff. Then rather than go back to the car they dropped down into Glen Etive through the forests and eventually back to Inbhirfhaolain just as darkness descended.

Another party went down the Glen and ascended Ben Starav and again got back rather late.. This was a cause of some concern as one member of the party had recently had a heart bi-pass operation. However a check at the car revealed the 'convalescent' fast asleep in the back. He had wisely turned back half way up the mountain. A good effort all the same.

A party of one member and three guests plus a springer spaniel ascended Bidean in terrible conditions. No one asked the dog if it had enjoyed the day out.

There were one or two members who opted for lower valley walks and perhaps the largest party of the day some seven or eight members climbed Buachaille Etive Beag hoping the conditions would be better at a slightly lower height. On the lower slopes there was some preliminary excitement in crossing the swollen Allt Gartain. One senior member eventually gave up, joined a companion, and walked through the Allt Larrig Eilde, a wise decision.

The rest of us got onto the ridge where the lightest one, your writer, was blown off his feet and landed several yards away on his knees, somewhat chastened. The youngest and probably strongest member of the party came to his assistance dusted him down and escorted him back to the ridge. The intention was to traverse the ridge but even wearing crampons it remained a dicey prospect with hard packed snow/ice on either side and 50+ mph wind gusts. Most of us 'chickened out' leaving the two

youngest and hardest members to complete the traverse safely, a commendable achievement in the conditions.

On Saturday the day was even worse. The spaniel insisted on going out again and that party were on Buachaille Etive Beag in a 'white out'. They had the sense to get off pretty quickly. Most of us passed through Fort William to the head of Glen Nevis and then via the path by the waterfalls to the Steall Hut. The President again lead by the front by being the first over the wire rope bridge so we all had to follow for fear of being called wimps which most of us probably were! The remainder of another damp day was spent in Fort William mainly at 'Nevis Sports' drinking coffee or in the bar watching the rugby international.

The evening was spent like all Inbhirfhaolain evenings, full of reminiscences and good humour. Our President had wanted to delete Glen Etive from the meets calendar next year. However the amount of 'flak' he received from the members present left him in no doubt this would prove to be a very unpopular decision, particularly as next year would be the Clubs 25th visit. He gracefully withdrew! Subsequently the meet has been put back a month to mid-March. There will be much observation of weather reports both in mid-February and prior to the actual meet itself. I hope we have got it right.

Sunday showed no improvement in the weather so after the usual cleaning up operations we said our farewells and started the long journey South.

Derek Bush

Attendance

The President - Ian Crowther

Vice President - David Hick

Dennis Barker

Chris Bird

George Burfitt

Derek Bush

Albert Chapman

Eddie Edwards

David Handley

Chris Hilton (G)

Gordon Humphreys

Howard Humphreys

Cliff Large

David Large (G)

Harvey Lomas

David Martindale

Frank Platt

Steve Pugh (G)

Alister Renton

Graham Salmon

Euan Seaton

David Smith

Martin Thomas (G)

James Whitby (G)

Alan Wood

Michael Wood

Geoff Woods (G)

21 Members

6 Guests

Calpe

Spain's Costa Blanca,

19 - 26 October 1999

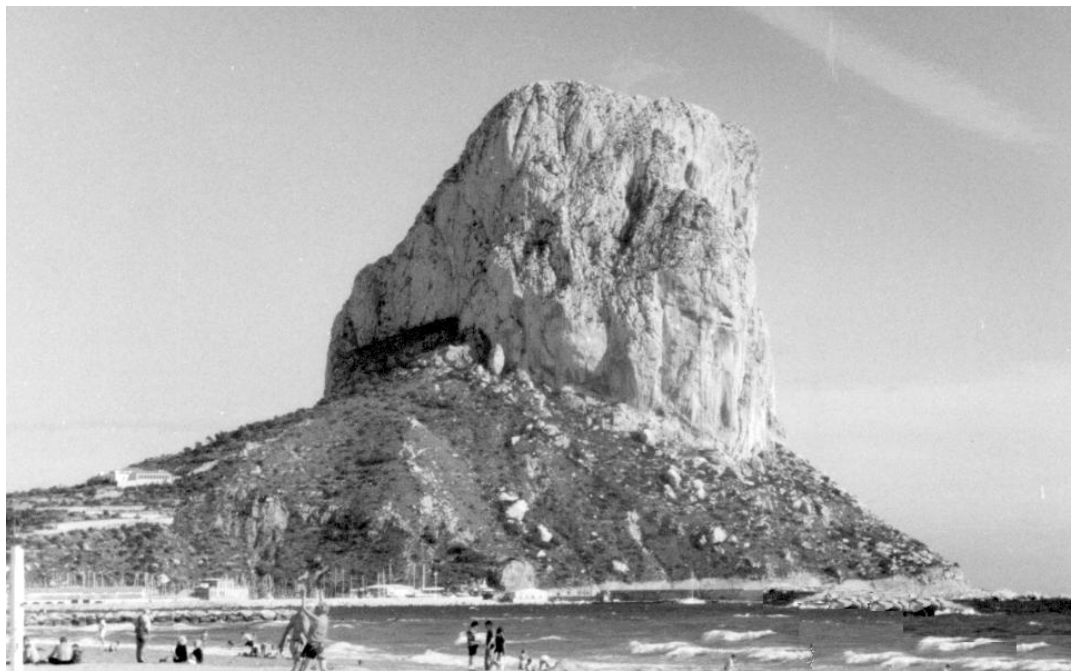
Thirty eight of us had a very good week at the Hotel Galetama and are very grateful to Alan Brown for organising the meet. The weather was rather unsettled for the Mediterranean but we had only the first afternoon of wind and rain, other days were dry and the cloud stayed high above the ridges. We had plenty of sunshine for swimming in the sea or hotel pool.

Calpe is a very pleasant resort of two bays separated by an enormous rock, Peñón de Ifach. Pictured below this is 1100 ft high and has a path through a short tunnel in the rock leading to a terrace ascent. We were warned of the exposure, slippery limestone when wet and unpredictable gusty winds; a good number made the ascent, some in the wet. Just inland from the rock is a very flat coastal plain with a large salt lake supporting a permanent flock of Flamingos and lots of other bird life to interest the bird watching members. Everywhere in the hills

were wonderful displays of Autumn crocuses, flowering heathers and aromatic shrubs.

While we were in Calpe there was the local fiesta featuring Moors and Christian battles with parades over four days and spectacular firework displays. The fine costumes and floats were accompanied by incredibly loud noise but fortunately our Hotel was three miles away at the opposite end of the resort to the old town where the action was. Our room's fifth floor balcony gave a good view of the fireworks.

Only one member had any previous knowledge of walking/climbing in the area and Alan had recruited six brave members to arrange expeditions from the two recommended guidebooks Landscapes of the Costa Blanca and Rodger Stansfield's Guide. The idea was, for the first three walking days to have an alternative of an easy or a more demanding expedition, but since the information was from the books, with little opportunity to reconnoitre, some three hour plus walks turned into six hours plus.



A diary of the meet (with apologies for missing many interesting incidents, expeditions, etc.) follows.

Tuesday

We all arrived in good order from Manchester and Newcastle to Alicante preceded by Alan and Madge Brown and Derek and Yvonne Bush. The weather was fine and warm and we had our first look around the hotel and resort, quick swims, etc.

Wednesday

The morning dawned dry and some went straight out to climb the rock. The car situation looked very thin so arrangements were made for more car hire. The afternoon was wet and windy, the writer and wife had been exploring the old town and port when the heavy rain started. We had to avoid the front to stay on our feet and then dodge debris blowing from the building sites. More sensibly some of the party attended the afternoon Spanish lesson in the hotel.

Thursday - Dry and Fine.

Rodger Dix led the easy walk from Calpe station - a circuit of the local mountain. The first part of the climb was steep and finding the way difficult but with wonderful views back over Calpe laid out below. The geography that seemed confusing the day before was now clear. At the supposed 1½ hour mark we had taken

three hours but then we speeded up. We had an interesting descent of a steep vegetated gully and arrived back without losing much more time. On virtually all the expeditions some vital road/path changes had been made since the guide books were written (1997 and before). The various leaders, handicapped by parties with lots of advisers, had a difficult time. Bill Todd wrote a limerick (not, I think, justified)

*A daring young leader called Rodger,
While conducting a walk made a bodger.
His comrades said "Dix,
Get us out of this fix,
Or Gwen will be seeking a lodger"*

The more demanding expedition led by Alan Wood was part of the Bernia Ridge, an impressive mini Cullin ridge,. The North part is simple scrambling and the rope was only used once but here again a false start was made and instead of walking up to the appointed col, an unscheduled high level caving expedition through the ridge and a traverse was needed before the col was reached.

A third party made a car trip to the old town of Gaudalest and found that everything could be bought there but petrol. A special delivery was ordered by their mobile phone via the Tourist Office and UK.



Cliff Cobb takes a photo of Paso Tancat Cliffs with the end of the Bernia Ridge in the background

Petrol arrived in plastic bags in a cardboard box! OK in the EU perhaps, but UK Health and Safety would have had a fit.

Friday - Sunny and warm.

Jeff Hooper led the walk round the Somo mountain. The road leading to the start had been rebuilt and renumbered causing much confusion. The way following multiple tracks through olive groves was confusing, some way marks were misleading and part of the track is now a new tarmac road. After some frustrating detours and delays we reached the mountain path across a moor walking through aromatic herbs giving off a wonderful aroma. Finally we topped a ridge to find a spectacular descent into a valley with the enormous Tancat cliffs and gorges. A pleasant walk back to cars wiping out earlier frustration. The four hour expedition had taken six hours.

Derek Bush led another party on a walk from Denia on the Sierra del Montgo. Derek had had an opportunity for some reconnoitring and the rocky exposed paths were followed OK. It was remarkably different in that everything went to timed schedule and no one was lost!

Saturday - was a rest day from planned expeditions.

A good number independently explored the castle and town of Guadalest which is built on an enormous pinnacle of limestone. There is an interesting museum. Other walks were investigated, swimming, bird watching and fiesta visiting to see the main parade were among the many activities. A small party did the Sierra de Cortina ridge on the outskirts of Benidorm. In the evening Flamenco dancers performed in the Hotel.

Sunday was back to planned expeditions

Mike Godden led a walk through a deep valley and along the side of the impressive Bernia ridge. We got off route on an olive grove terrace above the proper track and met an irate farmer with no English and two large dogs. He showed us the track but sent us in reverse. After about 200 yards of us chuntering and confusion, a more friendly but still incomprehensible exchange followed and he led us back through his farm to the correct track to the Bernia Taverna where we had our refreshment. The place was packed for Sunday lunch and our farmer and wife were there to dine, they greeted us with friendly smiles. We then retraced our steps and reached the cars surprisingly quickly.



Richard Gowing led a walk from Font Moli near Guadalest described as a stroll through a series of high valleys. Again Richard and Elizabeth had had an opportunity to check the walk so this was followed without difficulty.

A more enterprising party climbed Puig Campana - an impressive rock mountain inland from Benidorm.

Monday - The party was split into many expeditions.

A party climbed Sierra de Olta, the local mountain circled on Thursday. The largest group did the Sierra de la Carrasea and the Mozarabic trail, reputed to have 5,000 steps - they arrived back very satisfied with the trail. Another party climbed Aitana (the highest local peak at 1,558m) by mistake! The guide book again out of date, described the start of the intended walk at a parking area 5 km up a rough track. The track is now a tarmac road with no parking possibility around 5 km. We parked at 6.5 km and followed way marks which seemed to fit until we reached a pass with magnificent views over the

Guadalest Valley (obviously the wrong pass). An easy, attractive ridge was way marked and following the edge of the cliff so we decided to push on and up. We watched two large eagles circling round. Suddenly the wireless military masts on Aitana came into near view over the summit and realised where we were, consulted our watches and made a rapid return to car to get back just in time for the last night farewell dinner at 7.30.

The dinner arranged by Alan following translation services and testing of the Regata Restaurant by Juliet and Bill Todd, was a great success with very good food, wine and company, an excellent way to end a very enjoyable holiday.

Tuesday - Home.

The Newcastle contingent left the hotel at 6.30 am. Our Manchester flight was not due until 6.15 pm. A wet morning dried out to a bit of sun for our last stroll round the resort. The usual tedious delays occurred at Alicante airport.

J. G. Lee



Party on moorland path: Yvonne, Margaret, Cliff Large and Kath

Attendance:

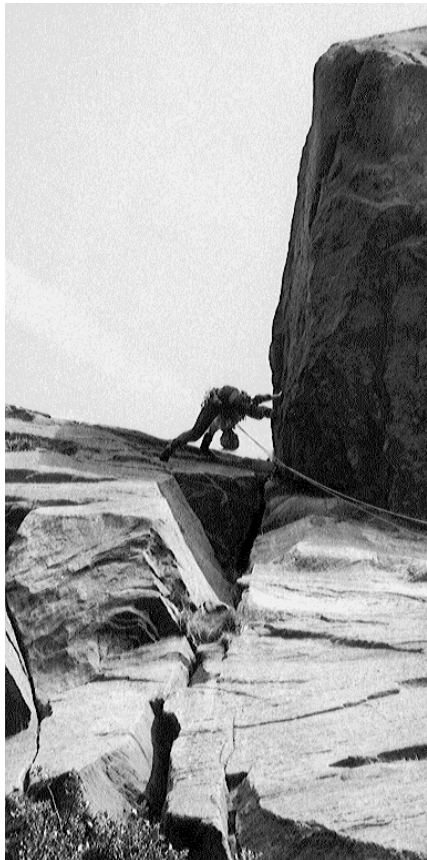
President, Ian & Dorothy Crowther
Joan & Dennis Armstrong
Alan & Madge Brown
Derek & Yvonne Bush
Albert & Sammy Chapman
Cliff & Betty Cobb
Roger & Gwen Dix
Mike & Marcia Godden
Richard & Elizabeth Gowing
Jeff Hooper
Cliff & Kath Large
David Laughton
Gerry & Margaret Lee
Alan & Angie Linford
John Lovett
Vic & Jean Maloney
David Martindale
Frank & Wynne Milner
Frank Platt
John & Pat Schofield
Bill & Juliet Todd
Alan Wood

Reaps Moor, Staffordshire 24th - 26th Sept 1999

The meet was held at the campsite adjoining the Butchers Arms, in the middle of the triangle of moorland formed by Buxton, Leek and Ashbourne. Facilities were basic: a tap in the corner of the field and an indescribable (in!)convenience over the wall in the pub's backyard, but it was free, for drinkers and diners at the pub as we were.

On the Friday, 17 members and guests arrived, pitched camp and enjoyed their first sampling of the excellent fare at the pub. Your reporter, having been otherwise engaged that evening at the Buxton Opera House, arrived on the Saturday morning after his short drive from home. Having avoided the direct route via the Roaches, which were wreathed in cloud, in favour of the main road through Leek, he encountered serious delays due to roadworks, and so found most of the parties already departed to climb on the Roaches or to walk in the nearby Manifold Valley. He was pleased to find the Meet Leader and the President still around with their respective guests, the latter of whom marked the welcome return of one of the "Sheffield Lads", now sadly depleted by the death of that great character Bill Woodward.

This party then set off and drove to the Mermaid pub which, located on the crest of the Morridge ridge, is so prominent in the view east from the Roaches over the Staffordshire moorlands. Walking from there, they traversed nearby Merryton Low before crossing the road again to follow a track past the Blake Mere or Mermaid's Pool, and headed past the central Danger Area of the range to



Bridge
bridge



David's Hick and Martindale and Don's head

the upper reaches of the Churnet Valley. This led them up to the main Leek-Buxton road near the Royal Cottage pub. From there a minor road was followed to join that leading up the rear of the Roaches towards Roach End. This road was left to ascend a gentle gully through the heathery hinterland of the Roaches, one of the areas where, our local expert assured us, the famous Roaches estate wallabies still survive. This led them up onto the Roaches ridge some 300m south of the trig point, and a pleasant spot was soon found for lunch, on the edge overlooking the Roaches woods.

By now the early morning's mist had dispersed, and on arriving at the climbing area of the Roaches Upper Tier the party soon encountered the climbers from the meet who were enjoying the warm, sunlit crags. [MS: a report of the climbing can be appended or inserted here, perhaps.] After inspecting the crags and observing and suitably encouraging the members climbing there our party continued over Hen Cloud to drop down to Upper Hulme, only to find another of our leader's favourite pubs just closed after the lunchtime opening. After a short walk down the main road a footpath was followed which takes quite a direct line up the slopes to the Mermaid (which, typically, was also closed) and the cars. After a brief diversion to a pub in Longnor which was open, the

group returned to Reaps Moor and an excellent dinner at the Butchers Arms.

Sunday dawned overcast but, for the time being, dry and after breakfasting and striking camp the meet dispersed in various groups to walk the Manifold valley, climb on the Roaches again or, in the case of your reporter's party, to traverse the limestone ridges near the upper reaches of the Dove. High Edge gave interesting views over the HSE's Explosion and Flame Laboratory from its summit pillboxes (obviously a key strategic position during the days of wartime threat), while Chrome Hill and Parkhouse Hill gave quite sporting traverses of limestone aretes. On the descent of the latter, rain started so a strategic retreat was made to the famous Quiet Woman pub in nearby Earl Sterndale. There the President's requirement for a Cultural Event was amply met by a talented assembly of amateur music makers, who accompanied the remaining members of the party in a rendering of "Ilkla Moor", of which the locals had not previously heard all eight verses!

Our thanks to Derek for organising a meet in an area the Club rarely visits.



Roy, Alan Clare and Derek

Attendance:

The President, Ian Crowther

Adrian	Bridge
Alan	Clare (guest)
Derek	Clayton (meet leader)
Roy	Denney
Iain	Gilmour
Richard	Gowing
Don	Henderson (guest and former member)
David	Hick
Tim	Josephy
David	Large
David	Laughton
David	Martindale
Euan	Seaton
Michael	Smith
James	Whitby (guest)
Frank	Wilkinson
Alan	Wood
Daniel	Wood (guest)

(18 members and guests)

The Climbs

On the Roaches:

Valkyrie, 38m VS 4b,4c, Bridge, Josephy & Smith

Damascus Crack, 12m, HS, 4a, Seaton, D.Wood I & Smith

Maud's Garden, 21m, VD, D.Wood, Seaton & Smith

Pedestal Route, 27m, HVD, Bridge & Josephy

West's Wallaby, 23m, VS, 4c, Bridge & Seaton

The Sloth, HVS, was climbed to halfway up the overhang by Bridge

On Hen Cloud:

Central Climb, 36m, HS, 4a¹, Bridge, Josephy & Smith, Seaton &

K2, 30m, S, Large & Whitby

The Arete, 30m, VD, Seaton & D.Wood

¹ Adrian comments that he would regrade Central Climb (assuming that we were on route); the first pitch was more than 4a and the second was more like 4c/5a.



Tim Josephy belays Adrian Bridge from under The Sloth overhang on the Roaches

Not the September Meet 24th - 26th Sept 1999

At the Joint Meet at Lowstern in March earlier this year Wayfarers were concerned that there was to be no 'Joint Meet' at RLH this year and indeed several of our members were disappointed and expressed an intention to go there if invited. Ken Aldred, a member of both clubs said that he would be attending the meet and if any of our members wanted to go, they would be made welcome.

The Club was granted access to RLH in 1936 when we had no premises of our own and used it occasionally over the years. In 1947 thirteen Ramblers plus Wayfarers and Rucksackers were recorded. By the 1949 meet was called the 'Joint Meet' and have since always been well attended and enjoyed. The decision to go to RLH was undoubtedly a nostalgic and several older members plus our antipodean member, all regular attenders in the past, went.

The weather forecast suggested heavy rain at times and the journey up fulfilled the promise, but Saturday dawned a near perfect day, both warm and sunny. Mixed groups set off in all directions and the whole of the Langdale skyline saw their feet. Views of neighbouring peaks were magnificent; recent rains enhancing the lush greens of the valleys. One party ascending the Band to Bowfell, the Crinkles and Pike O'Blisco made full use of the beautiful sunny day finally passing the spot where the mortal remains of Edward Tregoning and Stanley Marsden were scattered, bringing to mind many happy days.

Ken and Harold Mellor again provided excellent fare, The Friday evening meal's sweet included enough rice pudding for the whole of

Langdale, thanks to the Co-op's missreading of the food order. The buffet meal on Saturday amply restored the expended energy of the day, and an enjoyable, convivial evening cemented the bond between the three clubs. A clear sky with a beautiful full moon enticed many of us out into the evening air to watch the mist float across the fields. The pity of it all was that we could not be in two places at the same time, as we would also have liked to have been over at the Roaches.

Sunday dawned bright but the fine weather only lasted until two o'clock, just sufficient time for another foray into the hills for some of us. A vintage weekend.

F.D Smith

Attendance:

YRC

Ken Aldred
Alan Brown
Albert Chaman
Cliff Cobb
Eddie Edwards
Mike Godden
Tony Reynolds
John Schofield
David Smith
Derek Smithson
George Spenceley
Trevor Temple (Guest)
Maurice Wilson

Wayfarers

Steve Auty
Bernie Cook
Alan Ferguson
Peter Harvey
Bob Hughs
Harold Mellor
David Vickers.

Rucksack

Neville Coeuille
Eric Cook
Bill Rycroft

86th Annual Dinner Whoop Hall Hotel, Kirby Lonsdale 20 November 1999

Once again the Annual Dinner was held at Whoop Hall in that tiny wedge of Lancashire that separates Yorkshire and Cumbria. The pre-dinner attractions comprised various displays; the very successful South American Expedition and the proposed caving expedition to China in the year 2000 were the highlights, but the on going overseas forward planning, a map of the Corbetts and a proposed visit to Corsica added to the interest.

The principal guest was Brendan Jones, a former climber who had opted for a 'safer' pastime, that of free fall parachuting. Despite a parachute failure and cheating death his enthusiasm was apparently undiminished. The President, Ian Crowther, gave us a confident speech, this was followed by speeches from Mike Hartland and Alpine Club Vice President, Paul Braithwaite. Some members were treated to an excellent presentation of spectacular slides taken on the visit to Bolivia, Peru and Chile by Duncan Mackay.

The after dinner meet walk was lead by former member John Richards over that small but impressive hill, Farleton Fell, wedged between the M6 and B6254. It is quite an interesting walk through woodlands, across limestone pavements passing outcrops with short varied climbs. The rocky summit provides a splendid panorama of the Lake District and the Kent estuary.

Three members climbed on the limestone scar at Attermire, managing to get three climbs in before the temperature dropped too low.

David Smith



Adrian Bridge, safeguarded by David Smith, on Fantasy, pinnacle face, Barrel Buttress, Attermire Scar

Richard Josephy on a pre-dinner walk round Crummockdale. Photographs: Michael Smith.



Attendance:

Ian Crowther (President)
Ken Aldred
Dennis Armstrong
John Barton
Bruce Bensley
Paul Braithwaile (AC)
Adrian Bridge
Alan Brown
Victor Bugg
George Burfitt
Derek Bush
Ged Campion
Lohn Casperson
Albert Chapman
Iain Chapman
Clifford Cobb
Sean Collins (G)
Jeff Cowling (CPC)
Arthur Craven
Robert Crowther
Roger Dix
Eddie Edwards
Arthur Evans
Darrell Farrant
Alan Fletcher
David Gamble (G)
Mike Godden
Iain Gilmour
David Handley
Mike Hartland
Raymond Harben
Colin Hawkins (G)
John Hemingway
David Hick
David Holmes
Philip Hopkinson (CC)
Jeff Hooper
Gordon Humphreys
Jason Humphreys
Howard Humphreys
Raymond Ince
Brendan Jones (Chief Guest)
Richard Josephy

Tim Josephy
Alan Kay
Mike Kinder
Ian Laing
Clifford Large
David Large
Gerry Lee
Alan Linford
Bill Lofthouse
Tim Lofthouse
Harvey Lomas
John Lovett
Don Mackay
Duncan Mackay
Tony Margetts (MAM)
David Martindale
Peter Moss
Rory Newman
Sean Penny
Michael Pitt
George Postill
Peter Price (G)
Alister Renton
Chris Renton
Neil Renton (G)
Cecil Rhodes (RC)
Keith Rigby (WC)
Peter Roberts (GC)
Harry Robinson
Arthur Salmon
Graham Salmon
Richard Sealey
John Schofield
David Smith
Michael Smith
George Spenceley
John Sterland
Trevor Temple (G)
Bill Todd
Frank Walker (G)
John Whalley
Frank Wilkinson
Michael Wood

86 attended

Christmas Meet

Hag Dike, Kettlewell

3 - 5 December 1999



The members and guests who attended the last meet of the Millennium were fortunate to be part of a highly successful and memorable gathering. On the Friday the weather caused some difficulties in getting to Kettlewell with floods ranging from the Eden Valley to Wharfedale preventing some members from attending. Two determined members from Teesside eventually stayed the night at Lowstern before completing their arrival on Saturday morning. Those of us who arrived on Friday afternoon had the pleasure of a warm building and a welcoming pot of tea from the organisers who had already been busy making the hut comfortable. Friday evening saw the usual split in activities, some cooking meals in the hut whilst others made their way back to Kettlewell for a meal in the pub. It must be reported that on this occasion, unlike on a previous visit to Hagg Dike, all members and guests eventually found their way back to the hut afterwards.

The views from Hagg Dike on Saturday morning were superb. Snow covered the fells and the early morning sun produced the pink glow usually associated with summer dawn in the Alps. Unfortunately, the incoming clouds quickly covered the sky and falling snow remained with us for the rest of the morning.

One group, using Silva compass, altimeter and GPS (whatever that is) claimed to have been to the top of Meugher while others with less sophisticated gadgets also made similar claims. As if to prove their success they mentioned a

trig point. This is puzzling as a group of us on a previous visit to the area definitely got to the top but didn't see any trig point. A large number of members took the track from the back of the farm and climbed Great Whernside before turning south and picking up Mossdale Beck. After following the stream down to Kelber they returned to the hut via Providence Pot. The catering was up to the usual Christmas meet standard with a sumptuous dinner receiving compliments from everyone. After the meal we retired to the comfort of an open fired lounge with easy chairs to enjoy the Bolivian slides of Michael Smith and Rory Newman. Then the talk turned to Corsica, China, Norway.....etc. and plans for the next millennium.

Remembering the difficulties of Friday's journey some of us set off for home on Sunday morning but not before we had joined in the rescue of a member's car with frozen brake drums. The first ploy was to pour the contents of a Thermos over the drum but this did nothing for the drum and very little for the coffee.

Then two well equipped potholers arrived with a Camping Gaz stove. Two minutes on Regulo Three was enough to see the wheel rotating freely. By this time the morning was looking very attractive and Michael Smith and Tim decided that they couldn't waste such a good day so they went across to Knipe Scar, contemplated the ice covered rock before climbing, with the assistance

of a top rope, Owl Corner (9m S) on Gate Cote Scar before deciding that the weekend was complete.

A very satisfying way for anyone to end the Millennium.

Ken Aldred

Attendance:

The President, Ian Crowther

- Ken Aldred
- David Atherton
- Denis Barker
- Alan Brown
- Ian Buckner (G)
- Derek Clayton
- Alan Clare
- Albert Chapman
- Robert Crowther
- Roy Denney
- Roger Dix
- Stuart Dix
- Eddie Edwards
- Andrew Duxbury
- Mike Godden
- Mike Hartland
- John Jenkins (G)
- Iain Gilmour
- Ralph Hague
- David Handley
- David Hick
- Gordon Humphries
- Howard Humphries
- Tim Josephy
- Gerry Lee
- Alan Linford
- Bill Lofthouse
- Harvey Lomas
- Rory Newman
- Frank Platt
- Keith Raby
- Alistair Renton
- Chris Renton
- Harry Robinson
- Arthur Salmon
- Graham Salmon
- David Smith
- Michael Smith
- Derek Smithson
- George Spencely
- Frank Wilkinson



First off! Tim Josephy and David Hick heading towards Great Whernside top from Hag Dike with Old Cote Moor far behind



Tricky traverse en route to Meugher



Evidence for the existence of the summit trig point. Tim Josephy and Michael Smith

