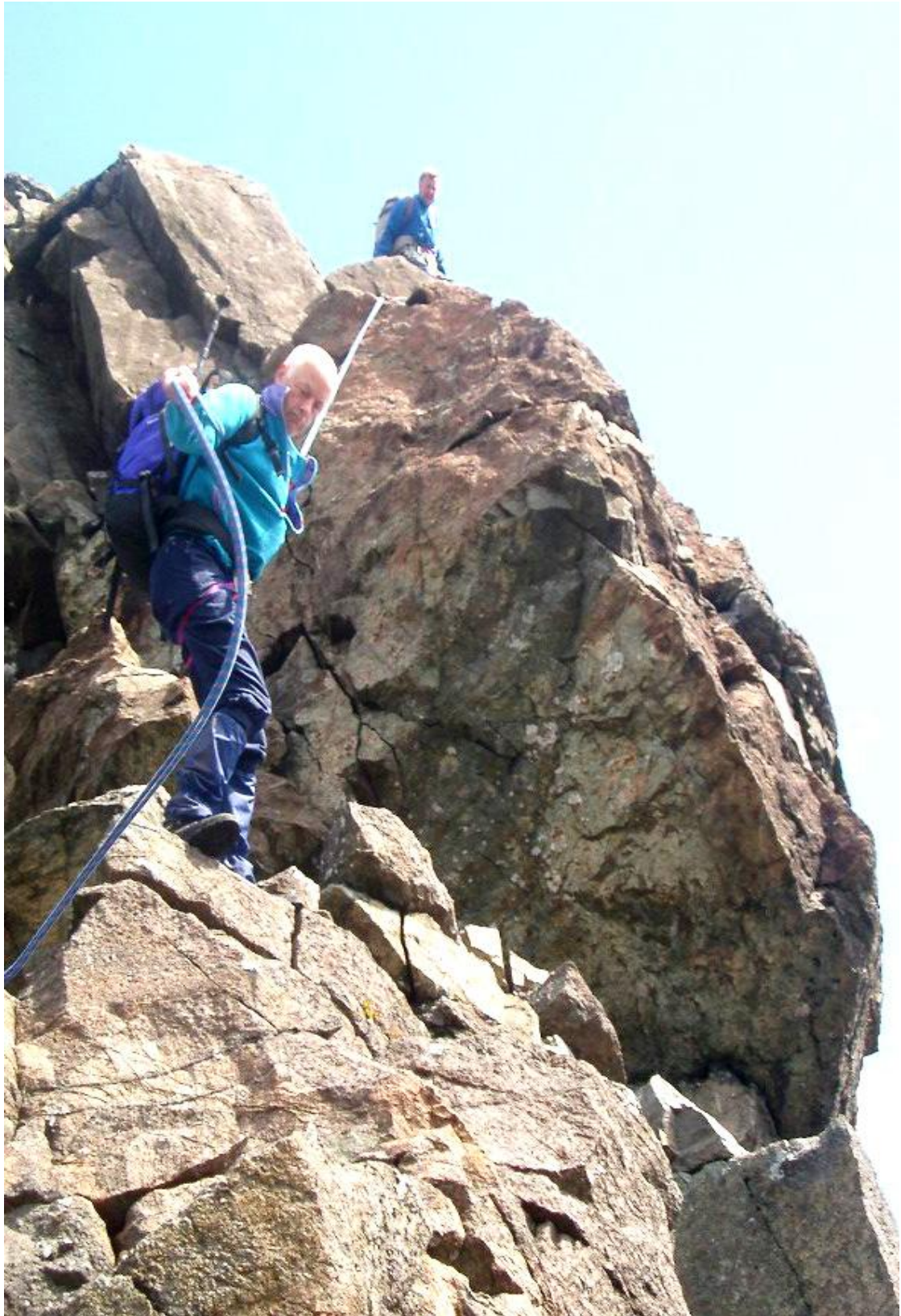


# Y R C Rambler

Caving in China 2002, Hidden River Expedition ...	3	Not the Long Walk.....	16	Letter .....	31
North by North-West.....	5	Who Won First Alamein?.....	17	Chippings.....	32
Not the Rishi Ganga.....	9	I Must Go Down to the Sea Again .....	19	Meet Reports .....	34
The Two-Thousanders.....	11	More of the John Muir Trail 2001 .....	22	Alpine Meets 1986-2002 .....	37
Gentiana filmanii – an update.....	12	Dartmoor Traverse .....	25	Alpine Meet, Pyrenees.....	46
The Tour of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau .....	13	Reviews: Tschiffely's Ride, Rocky Rambles.....	27	Obituary .....	32
Michael Smith.....	16				
Bill Todd.....	17				
John Sterland .....	19				
DA Smithson .....	22				
Kevin Brown .....	25				



Abseil on Dubh Beag, Skye, where Derek Bush watches John Varney

Photograph by David Smith

## Foreword

As part of the editorial team's commitment to quality assurance we have invested in market research among our esteemed readership. Well, to be honest in the New Inn, one Friday night, I asked some members which they thought were the best parts of the Bulletin. They mentioned these views in a couple of conversations on later meets for others to reflect on them.

Meet reports were popular as a reminder of weekends or, for those who couldn't attend, an opportunity to gain an impression of activities and see who did get there. Longer reports were thought necessary for new trips to maintain a formal record of the event. A frequently made comment was a preference for the shorter articles. Those of up to three pages were more often read with care.

I do not know if these discussions influenced recent contributors but there do appear to be more of the shorter ones this time.

Practically all types of article though attracted support. Of course there has to be at least one member in favour of each article - it's author.

If you think there ought to be more of one particular sort of article than you know what to do; write it and send it in. All contributions gratefully received.

In case you are wondering if the Presidential foreword has been ousted by popular demand following the 'market research', do not worry. His repeated explorations beyond our shores made it impossible for him to get the copy in by the deadline.



Editor

---

©2002 Yorkshire Ramblers' Club

Secretary - Gordon Humphreys,  
3 Mountbegon, Hornby,  
Lancashire LA2 8JZ

Editor - Michael Smith, 80 Towngate Road, Worrall,  
Sheffield, South Yorkshire S35 0AR  
smithjura@ukonline.co.uk  
Copy for next issue by February 2003.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the YRC nor its Officers

# Contents

Caving in China 2002, Hidden River Expedition .....	3
North by North-West .....	Tony Smythe ..... 5
Not the Rishi Ganga.....	Bill Todd ..... 9
The Two-Thousanders .....	George Spenceley .... 11
Gentiana tilmanii – an update .....	Ken Aldred .... 12
The Tour of the Pic du Midi d’Ossau .....	Jack Short .... 13
Not the Long Walk.....	Michael Smith .... 16
Who Won First Alamein? .....	Bill Todd .... 17
I Must Go Down to the Sea Again .....	John Sterland .... 19
More of the John Muir Trail 2001 .....	Derek A Smithson .... 22
Dartmoor Traverse .....	Kevin Brown .... 25
Reviews: Tschiffely’s Ride, Rocky Rambles .....	Michael Smith .... 27
Letter .....	..... 31
Chippings .....	..... 32
Meet Reports: Hill Inn, Chapel-Le-Dale.....	2002, January ... 34
Cwm Beudy Mawr, Wales .....	April .... 36
Alpine Meets 1986-2002 .....	..... 37
Ladies Meet, Richmond .....	April .... 38
Coruisk, Skye .....	May .... 40
Gaping Gill .....	May .... 44
Alpine Meet, Pyrenees .....	June .... 46
Long Cycle Ride, Lowstern.....	July .... 50
President’s Garden Party, Chapel-le-Dale.....	July .... 55
Low Hall Garth Working Meet .....	August .... 56
Wharfedale Meet, Appletreewick.....	September .... 59
Obituary: Herbert Thompson .....	..... 32



# Caving in China 2002

## Hidden River Expedition

Several YRC members were active in this successful and productive expedition. Here are a few of the many excellent photographs available from the Hidden River Expedition's website. Chris Renton invites readers to view these in their full glory via a hyperlink from the Club's website ([www.yrc.org.uk](http://www.yrc.org.uk)).



The strange beauty of a fungal growth on rodent faecal pellet (Arthur Clarke)

Jon Riley inspecting a damaged rope – no doubt there is a tale to tell of how that came about!

The expedition joys of shared transport – Did either party complain about the smell?



Interim reports suggest that some twenty-five kilometres of new cave passages were explored and surveyed. This takes the total to almost thirty-two kilometres across the series of visits to scores of the area's caves.



Photos of Stuart Muir of the WCG.





# North By North-West

**Tony Smythe**

Alfred Hitchcock liked his plots to have a good ration of surprise and nail-biting tension, but these are the last things I want from mountains nowadays (or at any time really). I prefer excursions to alarms and excursions. In earlier years things would sometimes go wrong through a lack of proper planning, a biting off more than one could chew, a plain lack of judgement, a bit of bad luck tipping the scales on a demanding climb. But as experience grows, so potential problems tend to announce themselves in advance, to be accepted and prepared for, or to be circumvented. However, my complacency that as an old hand I could now hope to avoid trouble before I walked smack into it, was due to be rudely shaken on a recent trip to Torridon and the Fannichs.

The first mistake I made was to imagine that I could forecast the weather. I think the weather in Scotland is a bit like the Stock Exchange – cloud bases can go down as well as up, cocking a snook at every prediction. I have watched the Azores High establish itself over the Highlands, got there quickly, and still been unlucky. Another fallacy is the old saying, “May is a good month for Scotland”. This can seriously prevent clear thinking and should be amended to “Even in May the weather in Scotland can be terrible.”

But I never learn, and having decided this time that the weather was due to be showery with bright intervals, which was what the Met man said it was going to be and which for Scotland is a bit better than a kick in the pants, I packed my van and headed north.

The evening I arrived I parked near Lochluichart, just outside a small isolated Presbyterian church as it happened, in the hope that if thieves were about when I was on the hill they might think that the owner was inside the church - praying for good weather perhaps. My plan was to cycle from there to Fannich Lodge and walk over the four easterly Fannichs, but this idea was shelved next morning at 6.55 a.m. when, in spite of Michael Fish’s reasonable optimism, the reality was that it was raining steadily. For a first day the Fannichs seemed a bit of a waste in these conditions, so I drove to Torridon where I got a good soaking on Ben Alligin.

Next day started similar, and I struggled round Slioch, but that afternoon the sun shone on my back as I tramped along the beautifully wooded shore of Loch Maree and the Kinlochewe River back to the van. I accordingly drove back to the church at Lochluichart, where in the evening stillness the midges swirled in their millions around my windows. How did they know I was in there? It has to be seen as entirely possible that midges have now inherited a programme that tells them that cars, camper vans, etc are mobile larders, to be hovered around. But this still doesn’t answer the question of how the squillions of midges beyond the reach of roads and paths and thus people, thrive. The camping-wild camper will know that wherever he goes there are populations which have the ability to tighten their belts for years until his arrival, but what about the huge blanks on the Highland map where just about nobody ever goes? We know that midges have heat-

seeking radar, but how far do they travel? I am reminded of an occasion when, during a powered dinghy trip down the Yukon, my companion and I selected as a lunching spot a small sandbar in the middle of the river, completely without vegetation and several hundred yards from the nearest shore. Within two minutes a mosquito appeared, then a few more, then a lot more, and within five minutes we were beset by the same dense swarm that was always our lot in the riverside bush itself.

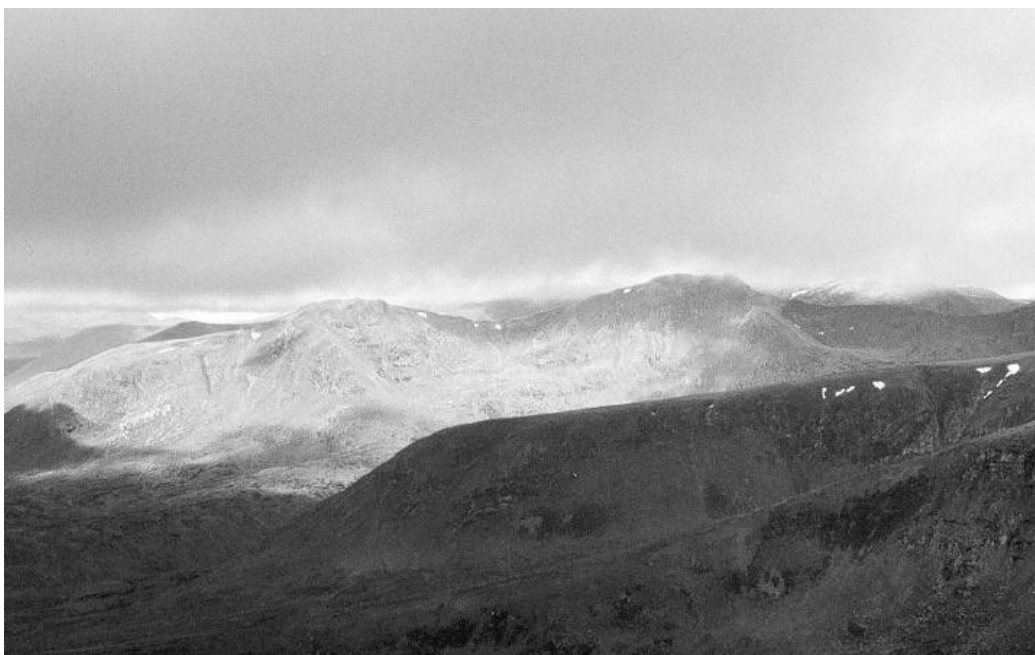
But back to Lochluichart. Early next morning the sky was mainly clear but there were looming black clouds all around. Resolutely I breakfasted, packed the sack, arranged the inside of the van to look empty, squalid and uninviting (not difficult, the last two) and set off on the bike for Fannich Lodge.

A smooth tarmacked road climbed up through a plantation and just as I was beginning to think I might as well have driven up I came to a massive gate with a chain that had originally

been used for the Queen Mary's anchor and was secured with about 29 padlocks. Fortunately the walk-through gate to one side accepted my bike as well, thus making unnecessary that Highland trick of balancing a bike on a fence about 14 feet above your head before going through to collect it from the other side.

As I reached the top of the forest the ground levelled off affording a view for several miles up the desolate glen of the Grudie. Some much bigger hills lay beyond this, the eastern outposts of the Fannichs, their heads buried in a ceiling of cloud. It began to rain – stinging pellets in my face driven by violent gusts from the west. After half an hour of laboured pedalling, the tarmac road, laid by a wealthy water authority, wandered away to an installation on the south side of Loch Fannich, and I continued on the unmade Estate road along the north shore towards the Lodge.

The situation was depressing in the extreme – the enormous grey length of Loch Fannich with the Lodge lost



The westernmost Fannich summit seen from the easternmost

somewhere in the distance, clouds creeping lower, and battering rain squalls slowing me almost to a standstill. Occasionally I crossed small wooden bridges over burns and these I noted carefully. In the event of a puncture – quite a possibility on the sharp stones – the bridges would provide the only possible shelter in that bleak landscape while I tried to make a repair.

At last, fairly shattered, I coasted down to the Lodge (how do Highland tracks along lochs manage to go up and down so much), and seeing a couple of cars at a cottage, knocked on the door. The Keeper invited me to leave my bike in a little wood and ascertained that I expected to be down that evening. Walking alone in the Highlands, it isn't usually feasible to arrange this kind of 'coverage', but the faint reassurance of knowing that someone locally is aware of where you've gone tends to be tempered by the pressure of keeping to a schedule and reporting back.

From the Lodge a stalkers' path heads north towards Meall Gorm. As I gained height the wind and rain increased and however hard I walked I could not stay warm enough – the ferocity of the blast on the totally exposed flank of the mountain seemed to suck away every trace of body heat from under my (new, decent quality) anorak. Reluctantly I stopped to put on another pullover, but higher up, now in cloud and nearing the ridge I was scarcely able to stay upright and the rain was like a machine-gun. I became gloomily aware that I was getting cold again. I seemed to have only two choices. At the bottom of my rucksack I was carrying as usual a sweater which I had never before needed, a creation I had bought from an old woman in

Poland, a huge, shapeless, home-knit, malodorous thing which my wife had refused to allow into the house at first. Surprisingly light-weight, it had seemed to be ideal for a bivouac, and from then on it languished in my sack along with the whistle and the torch and the foil bag, as emergency equipment which I hoped I would never need. I must now put it on, and if that didn't make any difference I would have to turn tail.

The far side of the saddleback ridge gave a little shelter and soon I was kitted up, if somewhat damp. On your own in harsh conditions on a mountain you find yourself monitoring not just the progress of the walk but your own physical state, and for the rest of that day I found myself going over a kind of mantra: Energy level.....Core temperature (ignore hands and feet) .....muscles..... food stop?.....

To my relief I now seemed to have enough insulation. I eventually clambered up the overlapping waves of grassy shelves leading onto Sgurr Mor, the highest of the quartet, where the large cairn overlooking the invisible void of the North face offered a trace of shelter in its lee. The view from here on a fine day would be terrific, I thought sadly. Within a minute I was having to go, and committing myself to the 'Last Blue Mountain' descent (for those returning to Fannich Lodge) to the humble north-easterly outlier, Bein Liath Mhor Fannaich. I met a couple of walkers on this and exchanged the usual remarks about not expecting to meet anyone else mad enough to be up here on a day like this.

To return to Meal Gorm and to take in the most south-easterly Fannich, An Coileachan, it was necessary to go back via Sgurr Mor, into the teeth of



the weather once again. I saw that a large snow patch linked the spur I was on with the main ridge running down from Sgurr Mor, and that by traversing this I could save myself quite a climb up and round. However this was not to be – the snow had an inch of soft top on a hard underlayer and the slope fell steeply a couple of hundred feet down to rocks, and I had only a trekking-pole – so I started the exhausting climb up the sodden grass beside the snow.

Within a few moments alarm bells were sounding in my dulled brain. The grass, like the snow, was rock-hard under its slushy surface, and lay at the same angle. The recently-departed snow had flattened and smoothed away all the tussocks that would have made footholds, and I was standing on a surface that was effectively as friction-free as the snow. A long way down, the rocks were waiting as a very nasty reception party. It seemed too late to go back the way I had come, so my trekking pole now became as important a solitary tool as Dougal Haston's last ice peg on the final ice-slope of the Eiger. A slight exaggeration, perhaps, but nevertheless there was a considerable adrenalin rush when I thankfully reached easier ground.

Somehow that tiptoe up to the top of the nothingness was the real summit that day. Up to that point I had been worried, thoughtful – at time very worried and thoughtful. In earlier years I probably would have quit soon after leaving Fannich Lodge. It would not be over-dramatic to say that the most

serious effects of exposure had I been obliged to stop, would have been felt within an hour – the Scottish Highlands were demonstrating, as they so often can, that, summer or winter, they can be as demanding a place to walk as almost anywhere on earth. But now, although I had the summits of Meall nam Peithirean and Meall Gorm to cross, and the long haul across the Bealach Ban to cover before the final leg-numbing effort up An Coileachan, although I was just about spent with fatigue and tension, deeply chilled, wet to the skin and suffering from what might have been trench foot and fish fingers, I knew I had it cracked and a tidal wave of euphoria would carry me over the last miles.

At the end of such a day the sun just has to come out as you make your last descent, and it often does, and it did. I sat on a boulder some hundreds of feet above the Lodge and its lonely square of forest, and gazed at the grey-metallic waters of the loch, and listened to the high piping of an anxious bird nearby, and ate a much-delayed proper lunch, and let the bright watery warmth soak into me. And felt very glad I hadn't turned back.



# Not the Rishi Ganga

Bill Todd

Juliet and I were staying at the Gresty Minfford Hotel south of Cader Idris. Cader was the main object of our visit but we knew friends were camping not far away and drove round to say “Hello.” Beverley, whom we hadn’t seen much of since he went to live in Wales, had a great idea for a walk “The Grand Canyon of Mid Wales”, he said, “Great views, great walk, let’s all go”.

Nothing loath to see new country Juliet and I went along knowing we would be safe with a bunch of old friends with proved mountaineering skill.

We drove into Macynlleth, turned left at the clock tower and right at the garage eventually going through Aberhosan to a “Nature Reserve” sign and a parking spot on a track by a bridge.

We started walking on a track which went north then turned west and we could see the gorge on our left. “That’s it,” said Bev. “Afon Dulas



Cader Idris

Canyon. It’s a few years since I was in it”. Juliet and I should have listened to that and gone somewhere else.

The start had been late so we had lunch before entering the canyon on a good path. Unfortunately that good path wasn’t our route. We had to descend into the bed of the gorge and make our way upstream. There were short lengths of reasonable going but no continuous path. The shape of things to come became apparent when we had to do a delicate traverse on loose shale. I found a safer way and Juliet coped very well under Malcolm’s tutelage.

Lots more delicate stepping followed. Sometimes, when it got too steep for delicacy we had to grab a bunch of heather. On the whole, however, it

was enjoyable and the waterfall scenery was magnificent. I was about at the end of my tether when we got to a final delicate traverse on loose scree with a 20ft drop on the right and nothing to hold on to on the left. I know that the





first requisite of mountain wisdom is to climb on the feet and not to look for jugs but the darn stuff we were

walking on could easily have acted like ball bearings. Because of this looseness it was more frightening than the Cavall Bernat Ridge when we did it on a meet in 1995. If it had been on a cliff I would have shouted for a top rope.

But there was nowhere to go

but on.

At the end of this stretch Malcolm found a feasible way up the next steep bit on the left, lots of heather, and we were able to walk steeply up to the rim, hard work but not dangerous.

There only remained a fence to climb to get us safely back onto the outward track.

“It’s not like it used to be”, said Bev later. “There was quite a good path when I was there before. There must have been landslides or something.”



## The Two-Thousanders

George Spenceley has recently completed the ascent of all the 407 mountains of England and Wales of 2000 ft. or more. His last summit was Bryn Garw at 2004ft. in the Rhyder Mountains. It's taken him a long time. If, as he believes, he reached the top of Ingleborough at the age of six, no doubt much assisted by his father, it's taken him 74 years.

They lack the challenge of the Munros which, with forty-seven still to climb George does not anticipate completing, but the 2000s, extending as they do from the Cheviots to Dartmoor and most of Wales, cover much country. That is their reward. The walker has to visit many areas that otherwise might be neglected.

Since the first appearance of the Munro Tables in 1891 there have been several attempts to similarly catalogue the mountains of England

and Wales. A Manchester member of the Rucksack Club, P.S.Minor, declared his intention to climb all the mountains of 2500 ft. or more, which inspired a fellow member J.Rooke Corbett to make a proper list. In the Rucksack Club Journal of 1911 he found 131 mountains that qualified and a revised number of 148 were listed in the issue of 1927. Included in the latter was Gallt-Yr-Ogof which fell short of the magic figure by one foot. It was perhaps assumed that the walker would leap into the air.

It would seem that the first list to embrace the 2000s was compiled by the Rev. W.T.Elmslie and appeared in the Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of 1933. Using spot heights from the half-inch Bartholomew series he made 347 entries. This was not considered satisfactory and there followed further attempts, first by F.H.F.Simpson of the Wayfarers in 1937 and E.Moss of the Rucksack Club who finally in 1952 listed no less than 621 tops. The qualifying feature required was at

The slopes of Bryn Garw





least one contour ring as shown on the one-inch maps. This involved the inclusion of many minor protuberances which can hardly be considered as separate tops.

Another assiduous cataloguer of mountains was W. M. McKnight Docharty who, in 1954 and 1962, had privately printed three massive volumes listing and describing more than a thousand mountains, including Scotland and Ireland, but with a rather arbitrary height selection.

A more recent list, and the one which has been the guide to George's walking, was the work of George Bridge. It was published in 1973 by Gaston's Alpine Books, West Col Productions, the founder and editor of which was our one-time member, the late Louis Baume. In compiling his list Bridge distinguished, as did Munro, between a separate mountain of which he names 248 and their subsidiary tops, 160 in number, the latter to be separate from all others by calculated distance and height with a rise of not less than 50ft. all round. Included in the total 408 is Snae Fell on the Isle of Man which George intends to ignore unless at a greater age he takes a taxi to the top.

Since Bridge's list was published, others have followed, increasing the number with the addition of many minor humps, bulges, whatever; but as far as George is concerned he feels honour is satisfied.



## **Gentiana tilmanii** **an update**

Ken Aldred's further researches on *Gentiana tilmanii* (see page 47 of the last issue) reveal:

- a. Tilman was in Nepal twice in 1950. First in the spring, when he led a party to the Annapurna region (including Pisang) that included Major Jimmy Roberts, Charles Evans and Col. D. G. Lowndes the botanist. Then he was back again in the autumn when he was included in Houston's party to the Everest area.
- b. The Japanese Botanic party reported their activities in 1952.
- c. Pisang is in the Annapurna region so a reference to 'Tilmans Camp and Pisang' would tie in with the spring visit. However, the Japanese reference is to October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 1952.

Together these would appear to justify the reference to Tilman's camp but only if the dates are completely wrong.

Also, the Royal Horticultural Society at Kew also 'credit' Harry Smith with naming about a dozen different gentians which have not been registered correctly. Progress on any research on the differences between *G. timanii* and *G. marginata* may take some time yet as an informant based at the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh indicated that they had not yet caught up with some of the material collected by Kingdon Ward in the 1930s!

## **The Tour of the Pic Du Midi D'Ossau**

**Jack Short**

A long weekend in the Pyrenees sounded good when I saw an offer in the Times newspaper for a cheap Eurostar and TGV return to anywhere in France.

So Thursday night in Pau arrived uneventfully and after a night in a hotel I found myself the only passenger on the bus to Laruns, followed by a taxi to the start of the tour, Lac de Bious-Artigues.

My original intention was to prospect the route and return to civilisation at Gabas, as I had no reservation for the Friday but had booked Saturday night at the CAF hut at Pompie. However having devoured my ham sandwich bought in Laruns, I kept going on a little further until it appeared to be quicker to go on rather than go back.

The heat of the day did not hit one until leaving the shelter of the woods, but in due course after about three hours I arrived at Pompie, immediately under the imposing rockface of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau.

It turned out that there were only five people staying the night, but I established that there were forty-five for the following night so my reservation was justified, and I decided to stay two nights, as the nearest other Hut at Refuge d'Ayous was closed until the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. A five course dinner with wine proved very agreeable, and an almost empty dortoir ensured a good nights sleep.

There are two routes from Pompie, the steepest being a pass known as Colle de Peyreget, and the other a longer but easier route via the Soum de Pompie. As I had a day in hand I determined on the steep one up and the other route back to the Hut to determine my choice for the following day. The route up was deserted and several sections of partially frozen neve which gave way underfoot made for an interesting walk.

At the col, fortunately, I met another solitary walker going the opposite way and he was able to direct me to the correct side of the large area of snow to avoid some awkward sections of broken rocks which were present on the other side of the snowfield. A knowledge of French does come in



handy in France these days!

A slow and careful descent to the Lake followed, again with sections of soft snow, and after my usual lunch of a Mars bar and a snooze in the sun, whilst listening to a selection of music on my minidisk player, I unhurriedly returned by the easy route, having made my choice for the following day.

The guardian had considerably moved my sleeping bag for me into a smaller dortoir to avoid the large parties of Spanish and French who arrived at intervals during the afternoon. It was quite entertaining watching them come down the route I had gone up in the morning, whilst I sat and consumed a carafe of the guardian's best red wine, thinking to myself that this was life as it should be lived. Another five course meal,

and the morrow dawned with me on my way, not too early, as I at least knew the route, I leave to your imagination which route I had chosen.

After passing the Lac de Peyreget the route descended interminally down through the woods via numerous zig-zags, getting hotter all the while, until eventually coming out in the valley with the sun at its highest. I found out later that the temperature in Laruns had reached 40° deg Centigrade.

Although the Lac de Bious Artigues was not too far away I had booked a night at the National Park Refuge D'Ayous so a further two hours walk was required once the sun's intensity had eased off. I found a pleasant shady vantage point where could see the Sunday trippers perspiring in the sun on their way to the fishing in the lakes of Ayous. As my water bottles



Pic Du Midi D'Ossau with Mike and Marcia Godden, Alan and Angie Linford, Yvonne Bush, Joan and Dennis Armstrong on the recent Club meet in the area.

were getting dangerously low I had eventually to continue on my way, climbing a waterfall by mistake enroute and arriving at the Ayous Refuge that had only just opened after it's winter closure which by regulation ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> June!

Horror of horrors, the hut had no alcohol, I had to make do with three cans of shandy. Only eight people booked in, no entrance to the dortoir until 6pm, and a passable dinner, with breakfast not before eight. I was pleased to be away into the wilderness as soon as possible, we have enough regulations in England without going to the south of France for some more.

A straightforward return, missing out the waterfall, and I was back at my starting point the Lac de Bious Artigues. There is a Refuge Pyreneae there but as it is on the edge of the

large car park I did not put it top of my priorities, preferring instead to walk the four kilometres down the road to Gabas where there is a splendid restaurant. Truite Meunier with some excellent wine went down very well, and they phoned for a taxi for me to return to Laruns.

Once I found out where the YRC campsite was I hastened there to assist the President et al to provision for food and drink for dinner, which was partaken in a leisurely fashion before availing myself of the offer of a bench in the dining room for the night. Alan Linford kindly offered me a lift to Pau in the morning, and TGV and Eurostar saw me home before nightfall. All in all a very pleasant weekend, I hope the rest of the Meet party enjoyed their stay as much as I did.





# Not the Long Walk

**Michael Smith**

I couldn't make the Long Walk meet this year. I did though get out for two shorter walks that weekend.

One, with family company, was on the wet Sunday taking advantage of a rural bus service to access part of the very popular Derwent Edge along Rights of Way. The weather kept away the crowds and having paid the price by munching sandwiches in the lee of a boulder in the rain, we were rewarded with an improving afternoon for the remaining bog hopping.

The other day, walking alone, I was in sunshine working my way for several miles along a deep wooded ravine that lacked any significant track.

I was 'away from it all' having left behind the protective curlews' distracting calls and dives and the fluttering dashes of female grouse on the moor tops and dropped into the quieter, more sheltered, valley.

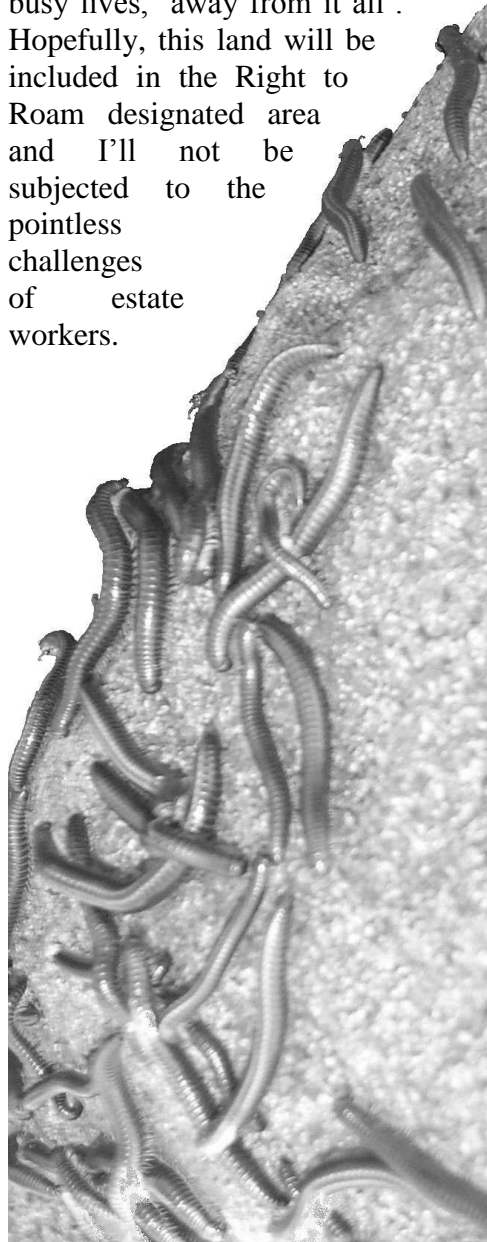
A cuckoo was sighted a couple of times swooping between trees and it's call competed with many little brown jobs lost in the leafy cover.

The twists and turns of the stream gave ever-changing views and there were few obvious signs of human intervention. At one point three lengths of railway track formed a stream crossing. Higher, several twisted pieces of aircraft wreckage had found their way onto the banks. I wondered what tale lay behind each of these mechanical intrusions.

A strange event was happening along a mile or so in the streambed on many of the gritstone rocks. Millipedes were massing and forming tangles of bodies.

At the head of the stream, regaining the open moorland, pheasant and grouse fly off startlingly as, seemingly, one's boot is but a moment from crushing them. The young grouse look like stuffed soft toys, in unlikely flight on inadequately stumpy, fluffy wings.

In many ways this was an unremarkable couple of walks on a weekend, and that is the point of taking the trouble to make a note of it. Within several miles of a major city's centre we can enjoy a break from busy lives, 'away from it all'. Hopefully, this land will be included in the Right to Roam designated area and I'll not be subjected to the pointless challenges of estate workers.



## Who Won First Alamein?

**Bill Todd**

“Will (Lacy) was then given special orders to go over the whole line again, together with Major Harding of the Royal Artillery, to plan a line of defence in detail... the defence line thus created was to enable El Alamein to become one of the great turning points of the war.” p.42 “Forward Regardless, The Adventurous life of Will Lacy” by Mike Morgan.

The following is an attempt to examine how Will’s contribution affected the fighting at El Alamein in July 1942. To most people Alamein was where the British and Commonwealth forces, gathered together as Eighth Army under General Montgomery, forced the Axis Army under Field Marshall Rommel into headlong retreat. Readers of Field Marshall Montgomery’s memoirs will know about the preceding battle of Alam Halfa where Rommel’s final despairing attempt to break through to Cairo was soundly defeated. This was on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1942.

A look at what was happening two months earlier may be instructive.

Prime Minister Churchill was in conference with President Roosevelt when news reached him of the fall of Tobruk on 20th June. Rommel’s triumphant forces surged on to the capture of Mersa Matruh. The Mediterranean Fleet sailed out of Alexandria and the smoke arising from the burning of GHQ’s confidential papers obscured the midday sun.

Study of the events of early July makes one thing clear. With due respect to Mr Morgan, there wasn’t a line at Alamein. What a pity we can’t

ask Will whether he really plotted platoon positions from the sea to the Quattara Depression. All the authorities agree, however, that there were four defensive boxes with minefields in between. Rommel might not have been aware of this. He certainly referred to the “Alamein Line” himself.

Having reached that vicinity on 30<sup>th</sup> June Rommel’s plan of attack was characteristic and based on tactics which had served him well in the past. A feature of the battlefield was the so-called Miteirya Ridge running roughly east and west. I say “so-called” because it was more of an elongated hump than a ridge. The German 90<sup>th</sup> Light division, motorised infantry, was to advance eastwards along the north side then make a left hook to the sea around the El Alamein box. This was supposed to throw the defending forces into confusion and enable them to be picked off in detail

The Deutshkes Africa Corps, comprising 15 and 21 Panzer Divisions, tanks and lorried infantry, was to parallel Miteirya Ridge on the south then wheel right hoping to throw the commonwealth divisions down south into similar confusion.

The Italian element was to keep an eye on those allied forces not engaged by German troops and stop them spoiling Rommel’s plans.

In the event to start off, hopefully, was to prove better than to arrive. 90<sup>th</sup> Light set off at 0300, Rommel was there to see them off, and just after dawn the leading files saw some British tanks moving away from them. These in fact belonged to 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade who were making for the Alamein box. Not being expected they received a dusting of fire before establishing their identity. But when the 90<sup>th</sup> Light Division

came into view a major concentration of artillery and machine gun fire from the box brought them to a halt.

The Afrika Corps also had a good start and seemed to be getting an easy ride until they ran into heavy fire from the Deir el Shein box. An attempt to swing round to the north was unsuccessful.

A sandstorm at noon enabled 90<sup>th</sup> Light to draw back and resume their progress along the Miteirya Ridge. Rommel was delighted and warned some Italian troops to get ready to follow them. Meanwhile General Nehring, commanding the Afrika Corps, decided that the 18<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade, holding the Deir el Shein strong point must be eliminated. In the same sandstorm his infantry reached the wire and his panzers went in. They were greeted by close range fire from 25 pounders. The battle was intense and Matilda tanks and 88mm guns joined in. When the battle was over the Germans had the Deir el Shein box but 21 Panzer Division's striking power was severely reduced.

15 Panzer had been waiting for resistance in the box to fade when they were chased away westward by 22 Armoured Brigade only to find themselves under artillery fire from the Bab al Qattara box in the south.

90th Light had formed themselves into four battle groups and worked their way eastward to points south east of the Alamein box.. Here they met a storm of fire from a crescent of gun positions. The volume of fire shook even Rommel. The significant fact, however, is that the word "panic" appears for the first time in the 90<sup>th</sup> Light War Diary.

The following day, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the same diary admits "The German forces....

seem unable to take this last English fortress before the Nile Delta.

And that was that.

It wasn't the first time Rommel had been beaten. Auchinleck had forced him to retreat the previous November. But the records show that his last chance to win through to the Nile Delta had gone.

On 30th June 1942 the Allies were facing a very serious situation. Afrika Corps radio was promising the ladies of Cairo an early visit. By the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> July Rommel's hopes had gone for ever. All his efforts on that day had been foiled mainly by allied artillery and machine gun fire. The books talk about tired troops, long supply lines, and General Auchinleck taking over Eighth Army. But we in the YRC know that it was the Yorkshire input into the defence plan that made the vital difference.

"I'm thankful for every day's respite we get... holding onto our Alamein position has given us the severest fighting we have yet seen in Africa"  
F.M. Rommel to Frau Rommel 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1942.

#### Bibliography:

Rommel as Military Commander,  
Ronald Lewin, Barnes & Noble.

Knight's Cross, A Life of Field  
Marshal Erwin Rommel, David  
Fraser. Harper Collins.

Auchinleck, John Connell. Cassell.

The Crucible of War, Year of  
Alamein 1942, Barrie Pitt. Cape.

Forward Regardless, Mike Morgan.  
Caedmon of Whitby.

# I Must Go Down to the Sea Again

**John Sterland**

The title of this article may not seem to be consistent with the objects of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, but then neither does cycling. However, cycling has recently been an accepted part of our programme, albeit as a result of the foot and mouth epidemic, which prevented the enjoyment of the Club's traditional activities last year. In any event, no doubt many of our members indulge, or have in the past indulged in that sport in parallel with their more accustomed activities with the YRC.

Similarly I believe that some members presently indulge, or have in the past indulged, in sailing boats of varying types – dinghies, ocean-going yachts or tall ships. My son, when he was secretary of the "Square Riggers" Club, persuaded me that there was ample opportunity for those who were interested in climbing to climb the rigging of a tall ship. From time to time the "Square Riggers" Club hired the training ship "TRS Royalist" from the Sea Cadet Corps, and arranged for members and guests to embark for a weekend working sea trip. TRS Royalist had a permanent professional crew of six and I think twenty-four other crew members. There were no passengers, and all crew members were allocated a sailing duty. There was a profusion of ropes and halyards on board, all of which when pulled activated some vital part of the rigging or other maritime function. I must admit that I never found out exactly what function all



the ropes fulfilled – I just pulled my rope when I was ordered to do so.

The crew was divided into "Watches", as in the Navy, and were responsible for sailing the boat during their four-hour stint. This presented little difficulty during the day, but at night it was quite a different matter. Only one member of the regular crew was on official duty during each watch, and after giving details of the course to be steered and any other essential instructions, he retired to the comparative comfort of the communal cabin, although he was available for advice in an emergency.

So, we all assembled on the quay at Gosport, were treated to a tour of the boat, allocated our duties and bunks and kitted out with oilskins and sea boots. Unfortunately my bunk was in the bows of the boat, which presented me with some difficulties, as will be explained later. We were asked to vote on the destination across the Channel we would prefer, and the majority favoured Guernsey, mainly I believe because they thought there were better restaurants there we could visit when we went ashore than in the French ports. We therefore set sail for the flesh pots of Guernsey, but no sooner had we left the shelter



of Gosport than the wind began to freshen, and before long blew up towards gale force. At this stage the skipper announced that the direction and strength of the wind would prevent us from sailing to Guernsey, and we altered course for Cherbourg which, despite a severe buffeting, we reached without undue alarm. We disembarked and made our way to a recommended restaurant in the town, and ordered large quantities of "vittles", despite the advice of the bo'sun, who said that we would lose it all before we got back to Gosport. Apparently he had heard the weather forecast, but thought it prudent not to inform us of what might be in store for us; that is, not until we got on board again, when the skipper said that we were going to have a difficult journey back into the teeth of the gale, which by this time was gusting up to storm force. Not very long after leaving the shelter of the port of Cherbourg the prophesy of the bo'sun came true, and most of the members of the crew were sick, many of them several times.

Each watch consisted of six members of crew, but two people on my watch were completely incapacitated, so that all the work and duties of the watch had to be carried out by the remaining four. We went on watch at midnight, when I believe the storm was at its height, and unfortunately I had left my gloves in the locker near my bunk at the front of the boat. I made an attempt to fetch them, but as soon as I went "below" I felt violently sick, and because of the lurching of the boat I was unable to make it, and had to return post haste to the bridge. Fortunately one of my colleagues (or shipmates) had a spare pair in his pocket, which he

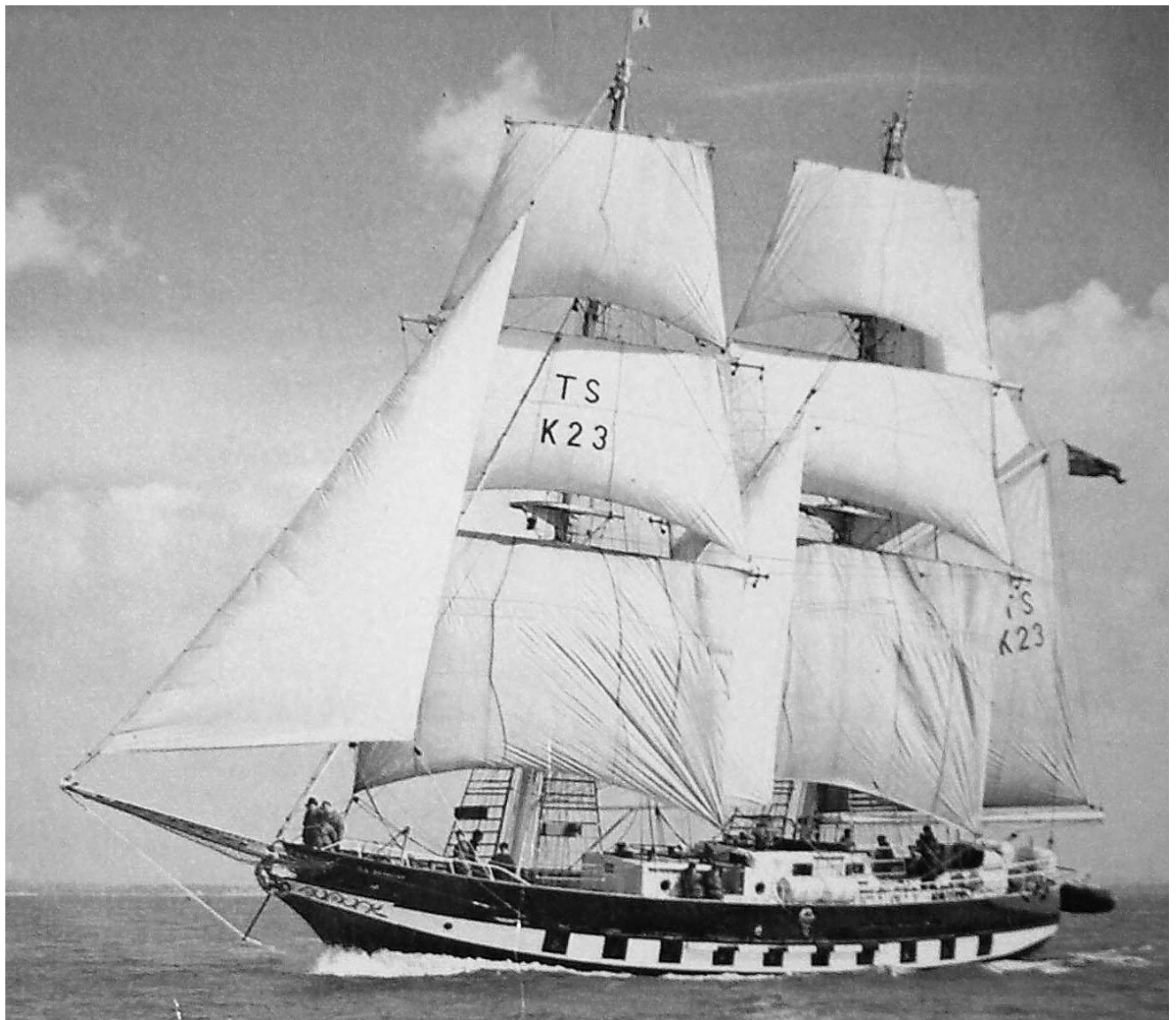
lent to me and I was therefore able to survive the extreme wind chill. Reduced to four we decided to take the helm for one hour each, but controlling the gyrations of the wheel was more than we bargained for as the wind increased in velocity. When I was at school I read John Masefield's poem "I must go down to the sea again", and I remember that one line referred to "the wheel's kick". I did not then understand exactly what he was talking about, but on the Royalist I found out pretty quickly. Whenever the boat rolled into the enormous troughs between the waves the wheel of its own accord in maniacal fashion kicked violently to right or left. We could not let go of the wheel, because no doubt that would have had disastrous navigational consequences, but holding on to it meant that from time to time we were flung violently to either port or starboard. To counter this danger two other members of the watch stationed themselves on either side of the helmsman and pushed him back to the perpendicular when he lurched in their direction. I could not forecast which way the wheel would kick, although no doubt the professionals could. However, they were warm, or at least dry inside the cabin.

Eventually, to my relief, our watch ended and we were able to return to our bunks, but even this was fraught with difficulty. From earlier experience during the watch I calculated that I had about twelve seconds to get into my bunk before I was sick. I just managed it, fully clothed, including my oilskins, but it was a sleepless night, since as I was in the bows of the boat the rise and fall on the waves was at its

maximum, and it felt as if I was riding a bucking bronco. At least my watch was spared the necessity of “going about”, which was a major operation, taking about five minutes, or so it seemed to me: this duty fell on the morning watch, and it was necessary for the permanent crew to abandon their warm quarters and lend a hand on pulling the various ropes which was necessary to achieve this highly skilled operation.

Daylight dawned at last, and most of us were surprised that Royalist was successfully navigated back to Gosport, where the day dawned bright and relatively calm. Most of

the crew owned boats themselves (mostly of a smaller variety), and many of them vowed that they would not sail again, and would open negotiations to sell their craft as soon as they got home. I suppose they thought better of that decision after a good night’s sleep. For my part I decided that I would definitely not step aboard a square-rigger boat again, and that I would stick to the somewhat less hair-raising activity of fell walking. That, however, as I subsequently discovered, can have dangers of a different variety, but that is a story for another day.



home. He had very little gear so presumably home and where he found them were both close.

There were two very fruitful meetings, both with solitary travellers. Firstly, Paul, a physically fit man who was adding mountain ridges and tops into his journey which included part of the John Muir Trail and the second, Chuck, a fortunate meeting on the top of my last pass before I was to leave the trail.

Paul was close to nature and conscious of its impact on himself and on others. We met him two or three times in all and Kevin struck up a friendship that has continued after we all returned home. I was delighted to exchange Christmas greetings with him and sorry not to meet him when he visited Kevin a year later. He gave me, and I think the others, an emotional experience which was unique. His interest in Native Americans had led him to make flutes to their original designs and learn some of their tunes. These flutes were valuable to him and carried close to his hands, not in his rucksack. As our party descended from a pass, leaving him on the top, he played a farewell on a flute which had all the emotional impact of bagpipes at a funeral, it lifted me out of myself.

Chuck also kept in touch. He was spending a few days looking at part of the trail and testing his lightweight equipment, with the intention of trying to do the trail later in the year. From the time we seriously started preparing to do this trail, we discussed means of reducing our load and still carrying enough suitable food and these problems are beyond anything experienced in Europe. Chuck was obsessed with these and we were interested to hear his views. He had a bigger bear canister than the

norm, a very light tent supported by two walking poles and a wood burning stove which he had made. Also he was leaving the wilderness at the same time as Iain and I, *and* he had a car at the roadhead. He gave Iain and I a lift of about seventy-five miles to a town with trains and buses. There was no nearer public transport. But our luck in this latter matter was small compared to Alan and Kevin, who got a single lift all the way to Los Angeles. The contact was continued by Chuck e-mailing references to sources of design of lightweight equipment. Alan and Iain were toying with the idea of returning to the High Sierra so they were particularly interested. For me it was rather academic since I have no intention of returning to the high temperatures, altitude and continuous effort required in the High Sierra.

Alan's plans for getting us to and from the trail must have been the result of a lot of hard work and if the finances permit it, a support party with transport would solve many problems, but detract from the sense of commitment that added greatly to the satisfaction of the outing.



# More of the John Muir Trail 2001

**Derek A Smithson**

The last report of our trip gave “a few of the most memorable highlights”. The High Sierra is extraordinary and rather different from other places I’ve encountered. Its wonderful clear light that enabled us to see “for ever” can be compared to the blue of Iceland or English light after a rainstorm.

Pressure on space in the article prevented inclusion of an important feature of walking the trail - the people we met. I felt a need to devote all my energies, both physical and mental, to trying to keep up with the required programme and appreciating the



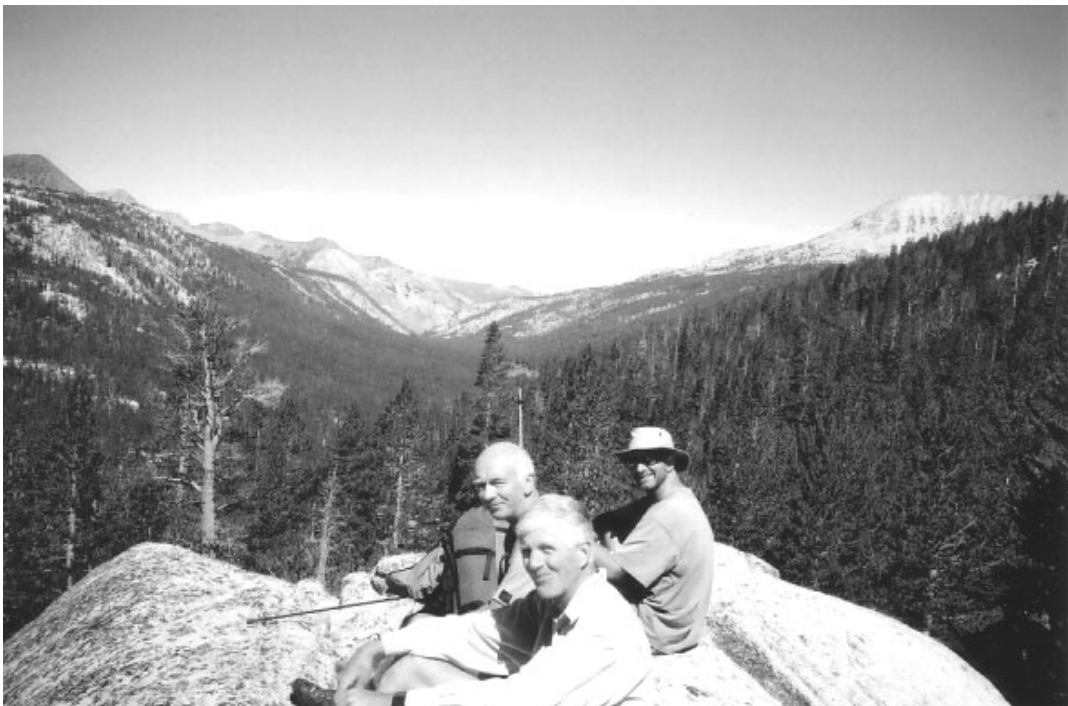
surroundings. Even my customary log book was neglected in favour of more sleep, so I missed the variety of people to be met on the trail, perhaps two or three parties each day, made up of different numbers, ages and sexes. Judging by the time others spent in conversation I guess most encounters were typical of meeting strangers in a situation of high commitment. More like meeting others on a mountain climb than a walk. The exception to these was the leaders of mule trains, who simply nodded a greeting and kept riding - just like cowboys on the films. And then there was the man leading two llamas who had strayed and he was taking them



Banner Peak



The mule train that the YRC party saw on their second day on the John Muir Trail and a view down Evolution Valley taken at a welcome rest after they had walked up it. These photographs by Derek Smithson





# Dartmoor Traverse

**Kevin Brown**

“Tor: A hill, more usually crowned with rock and recently used for the crowing mass itself.” Will<sup>m</sup> Crossing, Guide to Dartmoor



Four Ring Circle

Hill walkers often overlook Dartmoor. It isn't particularly high, just a little over 600m, and it hasn't any notable rocky ridges or towering summits. At worst it's rather like several Rannoch moors strung together. With a reputation for appalling weather and difficult terrain it's easy to understand why many have passed it by. However, with a unique vocabulary of tors and leats and a range of different characters associated with each river valley there is something to be found amidst the rounded rock-crested hills of the South-West.

Two members made a North-south traverse of the moor in September, from Sticklepath to Ivybridge. Heading virtually due south we crossed Cosdon beacon and continued on easy ground as far as Hangingstone hill. After the short soggy stretch to Whitehorse Hill we left all tracks behind and struck South-West across rough ground and tussock grass, over the headwaters of the East Dart and up the North side of Cut Hill. With the mist burnt off it was hot and clear as we walked west towards the prominent rocks of Fur tor at the centre of the North moor.

From the rocky West flanks of Fur we dropped down to inspect the headwaters of the river Tavy and traversed peat workings and a bronze age burial ground to arrive at Lynch

tor. On the edge of the moor this gave fine views to the West of Brentor, Kit Hill and the outline of Bodmin moor in the distance. Moving south we descended to cross the river Walkham and then climbed the North slopes of Great Mis tor before crossing the Tavistock to Princetown road and climbing past Hollow tor to the radio mast on North Hessary tor. Only a short drop down took us to Princetown and mid-way refreshments at the Plume of Feathers. Glad to put the people behind us again we took the gravelled track to South Hessary tor and branched West to the trig point before Cramber tor. From here we cut South, finding a bridge over the Devonport Leat (built by Drake to provide freshwater for his ships at Plymouth) and down to the Newleycombe lake (in fact a fast flowing stream). Although feeling the miles by then we ascended the slopes of Hingston Hill to reach the long stone row and circle to the North West of Down Tor. After a pause to appreciate four thousand years of history we walked towards a brightly-lit Combeshead tor and then descended through bracken and clitter to find a good campsite beside the ruins of Combeshead farm with good water from the Deancombe brook. Ponies replaced bears as our major nocturnal concern (we'd previously camped together on the JMT) but the night passed without mishap. Away



Fur Tor

by about 8.00 a.m on a fine morning we passed cuckoo rock and ascended onto Yellowmeade down. Heading slightly off-route and across tussocks we found the four concentric rings of the rarely visited Nattor stone circles (575 678), detoured round the clearly “private” fields and took the gravelled path to Ditsworthy Warrren house, an isolated farm now used by the military for training. Passing North of the farm we crossed the river Plym with dry feet (where a dam feeds a leat) and walked through ancient field systems to reach Hen tor, strikingly positioned on the side of the hill. From Hen we continued uphill to the trig point at 492 m and then turned to walk East, crossing the river Yealm and then heading South-East towards Stalldown barrow. Four large stones stood out black against the sky-line as we approached Stalldown. On reaching them we found a continuous



Combeshead Stones

line of smaller standing stones crossing the ridge. Was this a bronze-age boundary marker? About 1km beyond the stones stood Hillson’s House, a stone shelter on the summit overlooking the river Erme. From here we struggled, fought and tripped our way down through dense bracken over steep rocky ground to reach the river. We

crossed the Erme easily (it’s often fast and deep) and found a rough gully leading up through the bracken to the higher slopes of Three Barrows. Looking back we observed a path through the bracken from the North of Hillson’s! From Three Barrows it was a simple southwards march along the grassy ridge passing Piles Hill, Hangershill rock and Butterdon to reach Western beacon. With the sea visible from the summit we made a short descent and reached the road just above Ivybridge. A prosperous town with a good tea shop.

Over the two days we covered about 36 miles, crossed eight rivers and made 1250 m of ascent. Apart from the wild spaces of Dartmoor today there were frequent reminders of human activity through the ages, from the Neolithic stone rows and circles to the Tinner’s huts and their blowing houses.

Maps:

Harveys 1:40,000 Dartmoor  
 Superwalker ([www.harveymaps.co](http://www.harveymaps.co)).  
 OS Outdoor leisure, 28, 1:25:000,  
 Dartmoor

Useful publications:

Bound, T. (1995) The A to Z of  
 Dartmoor Tors. Obelisk, Exeter.  
 Burl, A. (2000) The stone circles of  
 Britain, Ireland and Brittany. Yale  
 University Press.



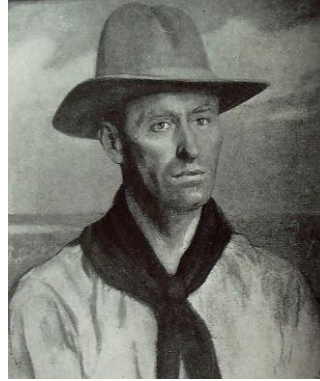
## Book Reviews

# Tschiffely's Ride

by A.F. Tschiffely  
Heinemann, London, 1933, 2002

Labouchere trekked 5000 miles through the Andes on horseback. Severin rode from Paris to Jerusalem. O'Reilly covered 1000 miles through the Karakoram. Margaret Leigh hacked the length of England. Hanbury-Tenison, the Great Wall of China and Bruhnke, Patagonia to Alaska. All cited one man as their inspiration – the Swiss, Aimé Tschiffely who with no previous equestrian experience set the high water mark for twentieth century equestrian explorations.

I am indebted to Ian Crowther for drawing to my attention the unpretentious account of this ten thousand mile trip on horseback through the Americas from Argentina to Washington. Ian passed on a 1945 austerity reprint and recommended it



Tschiffely

as much for the image it portrayed of contemporary attitudes as its commentary on the people and places traversed.

For his companions he chose two elderly horses, starting aged fifteen and sixteen in 1925, descendants of the Conquistadors' stock, robust feral horses of the Argentinean Pampas – and they needed to be given the extremes of terrain and temperature they suffered. All three displayed sheer doggedness averaging twenty miles a day in conditions more often than not adverse.

Equipment for the extensive trip was kept to a minimum. Tschiffely carried a .45 Smith & Wesson, a 12-gauge shotgun, a Winchester .44, maps, passport, letters of credit, compass, barometer, woollen blanket, light rubber poncho, goggles, a piece



Titicaca fishermen landing with the day's catch

of mosquito netting to fit over his broad-brimmed sombrero. He also carried a supply of silver coins in his saddlebags in order to persuade local guides who might refuse paper money.

On the night before his departure, the carping of his critics and his own inexperience caused him “to be assailed by a sickly feeling, as if my stomach were a vacuum” but like many before him and since, his longing for adventure had brought him to the point of no return.

Taking thirty months this 29-year-old schoolmaster through astute observation, socialising, working alongside people and conversations with officials and local experts gained an insight into the lives and beliefs of the many communities visited.

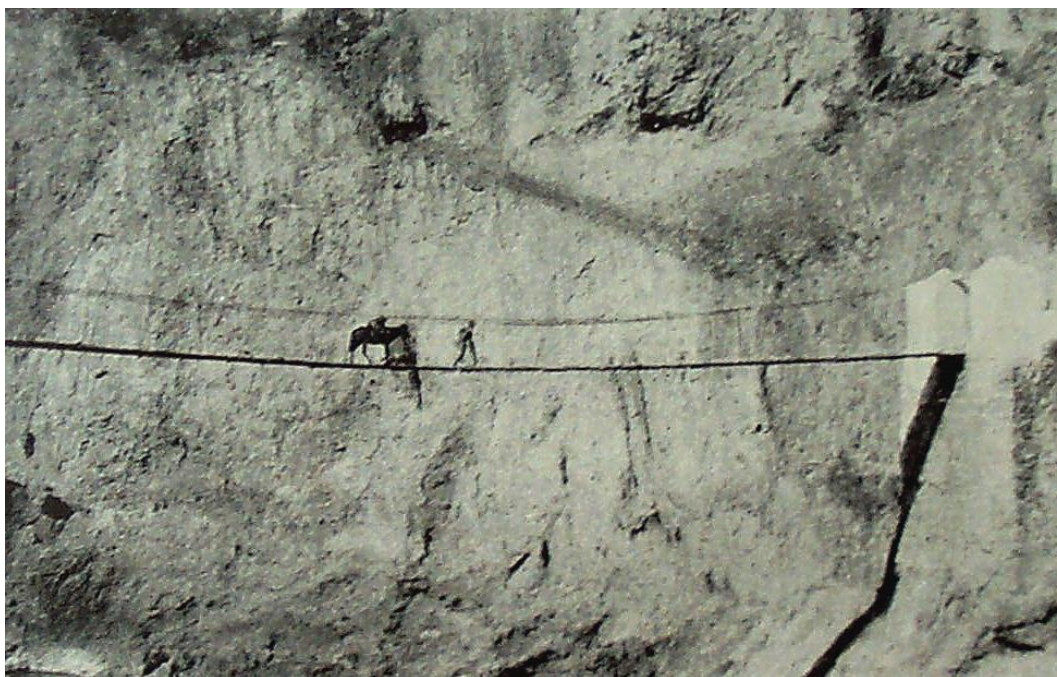
Coming across tiny representations in pebbles of corrals and villager’s huts on the hillside above our Club’s Apolobamba base camp we, as brief visitors, speculated on their purpose. Tschiffely learned that each llama dropping placed in the corral protects a loose roaming llama overnight

while a herder is away from home and the houses, if built each night on a journey, build luck towards eventually owning such a property.



After 1300 miles, on the altiplano near Tres Cruces, hail the size of small eggs beat down on them as they made their way through a mountain pass. The baking sun, freezing air and wind-driven sand forced Tschiffely to fashion and don a “sandstorm mask” and a pair of goggles in an effort to protect his face and eyes from the harsh elements. Upon entering an Aymara village he was mistaken for a demon by the superstitious campesinos, who fled at his approach.

Like most travellers he was variously conned, cheated, generous to those h



Crossing an awe-inspiring Peruvian chasm on a wobbly bridge 4ft wide and 150



meets, over ambitious in his choice of route, thankful for the help he received and frequently found blundering around in the dark or poor conditions. Throughout he manages to maintain a philosophical outlook and take good care of his two horses.

One enterprising con artist presented him with a printed card stating in translation "*Jhonny Welinton, the deaf and dumb American explorer and foot-walker, who on a wager has undertaken to walk around the world twice in ten years, visiting every capital and city, using no other means of locomotion but his feet. This card is given away free of charge but any donation you are willing to make will be thankfully received.*" I've come across variants of this in the Americas, Asia and Europe. In his case the chap was later seen swaying to music, exclaiming obscenities when startled by a firecracker and boarding the La Paz train.

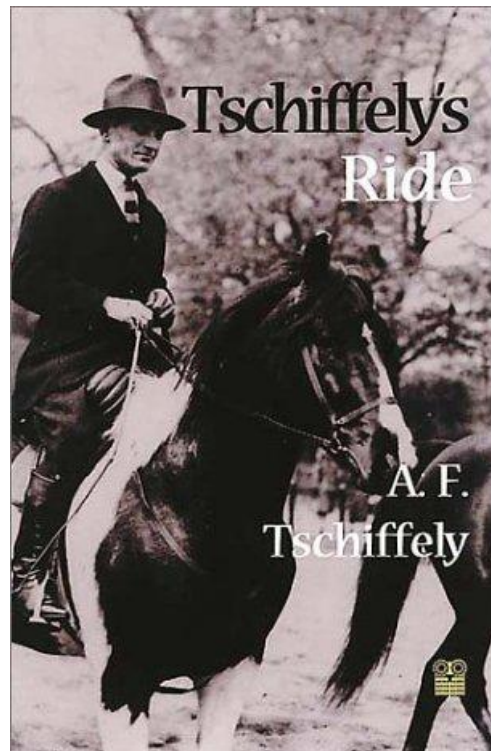
Tschiffely's visits to archaeological ruins reveal their current condition to be practically identical on the altiplano, at Tiahuanacu by Titicaca, but revealed by better cleared around Cuzco. Tourists at Pisac, then as now, struggled with the effects of altitude scaling the steep track to the observatory. Today's roads were not available to him but at least in his pre-lorry era the infrastructure for supporting transient horsemen still existed in many places. The drinking at village fiestas hasn't changed in intensity or effect though national bottled beers have partly replaced the local brews he encountered.

Balsas, as the reed boats are called were then commonplace on Titicaca. In the seventies I saw them being used by only a dozen or so families and nowadays they appear almost exclusively used as a curiosity, replaced by locally made boats of

hardwood brought by lorry from the Yungas.

New York's mayor honoured Tschiffely on arrival with a city medal and booked passage for the trio back to Argentina on board the Vestris but they missed the departure. Vestris sank a few days into her voyage with a loss of one hundred and ten lives. Three weeks later they escaped the whirlwind of New York society and sailed for twenty-eight days to Buenos Aires, arriving almost three years after their departure.

Tschiffely died in 1954 but his tale is undergoing something of a revival this century having been republished by the Long Riders' Guild Press a year ago (isbn 1590480112, \$20) and just now in a new edition by Pallas Athene (1873429703, \$13).



For a traditional adventurous tale or to dip in to for a new perspective on areas you may well have visited I can recommend this book. Thanks Ian.

Michael Smith



# Rocky Rambles in the Peak District

*Geology beneath your feet!*

by Fred Broadhurst

2001, Sigma Leisure, £7.95

ISBN 1-85058-750-7

Broadhurst, after lecturing in geology at Manchester, has been active in interpreting the subject for a wider audience. His interest in geology started with hill walking and was heightened underground as a Bevin Boy. This book, through observation of examples, helps those who can't distinguish dip slopes from scarp slopes or crinoids from concretions.

By prompting walkers to stop, look and consider the shapes they see he draws attention to spheroidal weathering of dolerite in Tideswell Dale and the sand blasted sculptures on Kinder Scout.

As a family we tested out his approach on a familiar circuit based on Castleton. The enthusiasts scratched around finding galena crystals and hunting for gas bubbles in basalt – vesicular lava as we learned to call it. All followed the explanations of the landforms current shape and imagined its earlier state on the edge of a shallow shelf sea. The reluctant walker relished the many new opportunities to find a suitably sized rock for a sit. It certainly added to the outing and made us want to try out others in the book.

Large numbers and unfamiliar terminology can be the plague of geological texts for the non-specialist. Broadhurst introduces few of the former, practically none in the walk descriptions, but does not shy away from using the correct geological terms. He identifies those terms clearly in the text and provides a full

glossary for reference use until the reader gains confidence and remembers them.

The book's eighteen circular walks range from six to thirteen miles between Glossop and Matlock, Macclesfield and Stanage. They occasionally include mention of flora and invariably detail the impact the geology has had on human activity. Climbing, lead mining, cement works, roofing materials, footpath conservation, Blue John, quarrying techniques and machinery, and water supply all get an airing.

An introduction covers all the basic information and background such as geological eras, geological history and structures so the features seen on the walks can be fitted into a broader context. The text for individual walks can, though, be appreciated without having first studied and remembered these seventeen pages.

The 15cm by 21cm soft covered, 160 page book can be slipped into a map pocket and is just small enough to carry in the hand between stops. It has sketch maps for each walk and a description of the route integrated with the geological information so there would be little need to refer to other maps.

For those whose visits to the Peak District are few and far between Sigma have other titles in the same series: Lakeland Rocky Rambles, and Snowdonia Rocky Rambles, both by Bryan Lynas. Other titles investigate archaeology, battlefield walks in Yorkshire and megalithic monuments. See [www.sigmapress.co.uk](http://www.sigmapress.co.uk)

For motorised ramblers interested in discovering more about the landscape they traverse this book is worth using to add variety even if the stops do break up the rhythm of the walk.

## LETTER

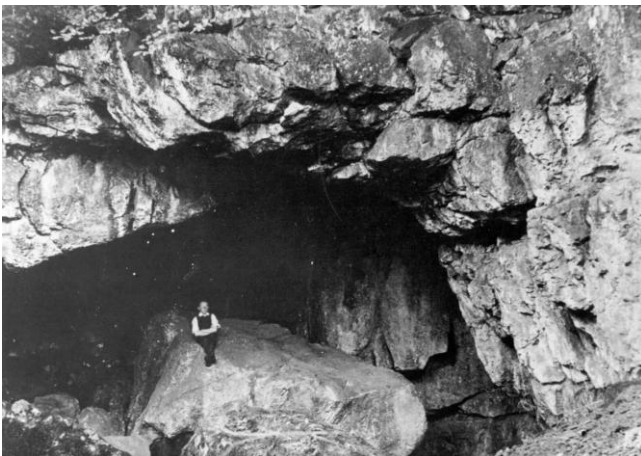
Dear Editor

“Dunal’ Mill Oil”

Congratulations on another splendid issue (number 17). It is not often that the articles which ring a bell with me are about caving but this time they are.

When I was a boy becoming a youth my Dad used to take me walking. We lived at Lancaster and I got an early visit to Clougha Pike. But on this particular day Dad took me over the Town Moor to a little known track which gave onto the main road from Lancaster to Ingleton, at Halton. A little more track walking took us to the footbridge over the Lune which was in spate, a magnificent sight.

Crossing the Lune Dad set out in the direction of Over Kellet, “We’re going to Dunal’ Mill Oil. I used to camp there with your uncle and Doug Hodson when we were lads”. After asking the way once only (it must have been thirty years since he had been there) Dad



found the cave, clearly visible

from the road, which turned out to be another magnificent sight with a flooded beck hurtling into it. It would have been impossible to stand in the entrance as the man is doing in the photograph on p27 (below).

After that it became a regular place for me to go on my bike and penetrate the cave as far as I dare. I remember the “small side passage on the left” but I did not get very far down it. Once or twice I walked over the neighbouring field and looked down into Dunald Mill Quarry, I was fascinated by the cliffs although I knew they were man made.

About thirty years later I joined a major industrial group called Powell Duffryn and was amazed to find that Dunald Mill Quarry belonged to one of their subsidiaries.

The other dose of nostalgia took me back to 1945 when I did a walking tour of the Dales passing Weathercote on day two. In those days you knocked on the door and asked permission to visit the cave. As I remember it was a young man who answered the door and handed you the key. You were invited to make a contribution to charity though whether that was before or after your visit to the cave I do not remember. It was certainly well worth seeing.

Yours sincerely,

*Bill Judd*

# Chippings

Persistence paid off for **Iain Gilmour** and **Alan Kay** who returned from California in August having completed the entire John Muir Trail in seventeen days, plus two rest days (see accounts of the previous attempt in the last two issues). Rattlesnakes failed to intervene to bring a premature halt to proceedings; bears were again avoided by using bear-proof canisters for food storage, and by ensuring that cooking was done an hour or so from camp. The scenery was no less wonderful than last time and was only slightly marred one day by smoke from distant forest fires.

---

Loser's Pot on Penyghent, first dug some thirty years ago by Liverpool University Speleological Society, and recently subjected to the efforts of the Bradford Pothole Club had been persuaded to go a little further and was showing promise, with a somewhat restricted passage pushed to an estimated thirty metre pitch. **Mike Hartland** reported that inclement weather at the 2002 Gaping Gill Winch Meet at first prevented the anticipated work to connect the surface with Hensler's High Aven in Gaping Gill. Despite disappointing progress enthusiasm was maintained and eventually rewarded. With chemical persuasion two further pitches of around 10m were followed to a final rift sumped at both ends and calculated to be the Hunt Pot Inlet in Penyghent Pot.

Earl Shaffer, an American long-distance walker, died aged 83 in May this year. **Dennis Armstrong** noticed a report in the Times (4.6.02) of Earl's three complete traverses of the Appalachian Trail. His first, in 1948, was the very first of the full-length and he chased the spring northwards. In 1965 he followed autumn southwards taking 25 fewer days. Just months before his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first track, he walked the entire trail once again. The trail had by then grown by 100 miles and a journey took him 173 days. "His poncho doubled as a tent and he cooked oatmeal and baked bread over an open fire." A remarkable rambler.

---



Albert Chapman on the Moel Siabod ridge


It often happens on the hills that members take differing routes to agreed destinations. In the virtual world of the web the same applies. Some use [www.yrc.org.uk](http://www.yrc.org.uk) to reach the Club's website while others stick to [www.yorkshireramblers.org.uk](http://www.yorkshireramblers.org.uk). For those with failing memories and no written reminder to hand, search engines provided with YRC and Yorkshire Rambler's generally get there, usually after a few interesting diversions along other paths.

Whatever the route, arrival is rewarded with more up-to-date information than the newsletter can provide and opportunities to prompt discussion or leave information in the 'members only' area. If you have misplaced your password contact Chris Renton [[chris@crexis.co.uk](mailto:chris@crexis.co.uk)] and then you will be allowed in.

Let's get more of the membership making full use of the site and using it to its full potential. No computer? That's no excuse as resource areas in libraries, some hospitals and colleges or even cyber cafés provide public access, often with someone on hand to guide the inexperienced.

The internet has proved invaluable on Club expeditions over the last five years in the research and planning phases then providing reassuring feedback to those back home during the trip itself. From dusty cramped cyber booths on a traffic island in Chile's Calama to wired up notebook computers relaying pin-sharp digital camera images from the Chinese cavers hotel base, members were kept abreast of the latest developments.


Don't be left out – log on.




At a farewell reception at the Chinese Embassy to mark the end of the term of office of His Excellency Ma Zhengang, the only president attending was the President of the YRC. Albert Chapman was looked after very well by the Ambassador and introduced to several dignitaries and ambassadors and the UK Deputy Prime Minister. His Excellency was the Club's guest at last year's Dinner



On 22 September 2001 - as close as possible to the hundredth anniversary of the Rev A.E. Robertson's first completion - Murray Papworth completed his round of the Munros and Tops. He celebrated with a party of ten on Ben Cruachan. A total of 518 summits were bagged - 278 mountains and 240 tops based on the 1984 edition of Munros Tables. The round was started at Whitsun 1984 on Sgurr na Sgine in Glen Shiel, Kintail. Additionally all the further "Munros" in England, Wales and Ireland were also climbed during this period. Murray is already well into his round of the Corbetts with number. 38 of the 221 being Corryhabbie Hill being completed in August.



Steve Craven noticed in the page four "50 years ago" column in the Craven Herald 13<sup>th</sup> September 2002: "A bonfire blazed on a foothill of Ingleborough at Austwick in celebration of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Around 40 people attended the celebrations, many of whom stayed all night on the hill in tents."



## **The Old Hill Inn Meet Chapel-le-Dale 11-13 January 2002**

Once again, the January meet has come round, though it does not seem that long ago that we were last here. That could be due to the long lay off, caused by the Foot and Mouth outbreak. When travelling up to the schoolhouse, I was certainly hoping that we were not going to see anymore "Keep Out" notices when we arrived.

We were staying once again at the ex-schoolhouse bunkhouse with its excellent accommodation near Chapel-le-Dale, on the road, just below the Old Hill Inn, where it was planned to have our evening meal on Saturday night and other refreshment. There certainly was a good turnout for the meet with many members staying for the whole weekend.

Unfortunately I cannot say the weather was as good for us, as it was the previous year. Friday started off bright but came in wet and windy later on. Saturday got off to a bit of a dull start but by midmorning the sun was out and it was almost like a nice spring day. If we had hopes that this was to stay for the weekend, these did not last long. As the day went on, it got colder and by evening it was stormy and blowing a gale for most of the night. Sunday was not much better, being wet for most of the day, with it only drying up a bit in the late afternoon. All this said we did not let the weather put us off.

After arriving on Friday night with Robert Crowther we quickly stowed our gear and made our way to The Old Hill Inn where we met Ian Crowther and others who were just finishing a meal and some others



### Attendance:

The President, Albert Chapman  
Dennis Armstrong  
Ian Crowther  
Robert Crowther  
Pete Daws (G)  
Iain Gilmour  
Mike Godden  
David Handley  
Gordon Humphreys  
Howard Humphreys  
Jason Humphreys  
Robert Ibberson (G)  
John Jenkin  
Alan Kay  
Richard Kirby  
Harvey Lomas  
John Lovett  
Frank Milner  
Alister Renton  
Jim Rusher  
Arthur Salmon  
Graham Salmon  
John Schofield  
George Spenceley  
David Smith  
Michael Smith  
John Sterland  
Frank Walker (G)  
Frank Wilkinson



joined us here after coming from Lowstern, where they had been packing the equipment for the caving trip to China that needed to be shipped out soon if it was to be there in time for April. Ian gladly volunteered to provide the entertainment for the night with a song and dance on the table (Ian claims he was only taking the quickest route to the toilet). While we all enjoyed this, I'm not sure the landlady will be thinking of booking him for any forthcoming events.

After breakfast on Saturday, three or four groups formed in usual chaotic style to go off and do various things. Alan Kay and a brace of Smiths set off to do Ribblesdale - Great Knoutberry Hill - Whernside, while Graham Salmon and others went off to explore Juniper Gulf. Robert Crowther and I drove down into Horton in Ribblesdale to walk up Pen y Gent. We stopped for a while near Fawcett Moor to watch and talk with some people who were quite successfully hunting rabbits by sending a dog down the burrows. They already had about sixteen

rabbits at this time. We continued up Pen y Gent and then made our way back round to Horton. We returned back to the schoolhouse but after being unable to find the key we had to force ourselves (really) to go to The Old Hill Inn. Here we met George Spenceley who had set off in the morning for Whernside and Ingleborough, but after an early dip (he fell in the beck) he decided to call it a day and return early. In the evening after another excellent meal at The Old Hill Inn, we had a film show showing us some of the breathtaking views from the summer's Slovenia and Julian Alps.

On Sunday, everybody went to look at Weathercote Cave with Albert. Although this cave is officially closed after an unfortunate accident where a boy died, we had been given permission to go down. Not that I know much about this as I was left behind in the bunkhouse with George Spenceley, washing up the breakfast dishes and cleaning up.

I certainly enjoyed the meet and hope everybody else did as well, although the weather could have been better for us. I would like to thank Arthur and Frank for putting on a very good meet over the weekend.

John Jenkin



Your Editor is aware that this is the second report of this meet but assures you that this is an official and authorised version.

## **Welsh Meet Cwm Beudy Mawr 12-14th April, 2002**

On Friday fourteen members and one guest assembled at the Rucksack Club hut, Cwm Beudy Mawr, about a mile from Old Llanberis in the Llanberis valley.

On my arrival I found most members sunning themselves awaiting our meet leader and discussing the theft of a members' tent which fortunately did not contain any personal possessions.

The early evening was spent planning and organising Saturday to take advantage of the forecast excellent weather. We then retired to the local pub for drinks and a meal, where our reverend member was quick to point out that two different starters would make a substantial meal for about fifty per cent of the normal cost.

We woke Saturday morning to an early-morning frost and, after a more than adequate continental breakfast, most parties got away early to take advantage of the excellent weather.

Routes taken were mainly on the Snowdon Horseshoe as well as climbing on the slanting buttress; walking, climbing and scrambling over Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach and across to Tryfan and Nantlle Ridge - where steep descents were encountered. One of our more distinguished members went out to bag more Welsh 2000 footers including Foer Gogh, Endir Fawr, Myntas Purfoss and Carnedd y Ficiast. On returning we were met by our President's party having climbed Moel Siabod. After a wholesome meal a few words and jokes were

exchanged before the President returned to Yorkshire that night.

Sunday saw a change in the weather, with the arrival of drizzle and mist, which resulted in the departure of most of the members. Five ventured over to the T Croesors Rhosydd slate mines: three embarking on a six hour through trip which more than lived up to expectations. Our thanks go to Tim for a well-planned and interesting meet.

Alan Clare

### Attendance:

The President, Albert Chapman

Alan Clare

Derek Clayton

Ian Crowther

Roger Dix

Stuart Dix

David Hick

Andy Jones

Richard Josephy

Tim Josephy

David Martindale

Mark Pryor

Jim Rusher

David Smith

George Spenceley

Nick Welch

Frank Wilkinson

# Alpine Meets

## 1986 - 2002

It was coincidentally extremely appropriate that the Alpine Meet in 2002 should be in the Pyrenees. The year's Meet may well be the last of this kind of Meet. The Club moves on, different needs and new ideas arise, new Presidents have new thoughts for taking the YRC forward. It is coincidental because it was to the Pyrenees that the then President proposed to have the first Open Meet in 1983. An Open Meet? With wives there? Good Lord, man! Not as an official YRC Meet! So the Committee of those days ruled that the meet could not be a Meet, it must be a private party. Some members dropped out because it was deemed not to be an official Meet, but some dozen people went, and established the idea.

When the details of the gender argument leaked out to members, the general feeling was that it was nonsense to fight for a gender issue when Meets in the Alps were for a longer period than Scottish Meets. At the AGM in 1984, a member proposed that the Club should organise an Open Alps Meet and this was carried by a large majority. The first such official Open Meet was in Arolla in 1986 organised by David Smith. Then followed a series of Meets in Saas Grund, Morterasch Glacier, Argentiere, Lauterbrunnen, Picos in Spain, Dauphinee, and Neustift (pictured).

To be successful, such a Meet requires a spread of members; younger members keen to ascend hard routes and prepared to assist older members to make reasonable ascents.



If, as happened this year, the younger members now are more interested in farther-flung more adventurous places, then the Meet loses an edge. The presence of wives has two effects: one perhaps adverse, but the other positive. First, in general the wives attending (but no means all) are not so fit or as inclined to undertake bigger expeditions (but then neither are all male members). Second, it has to be realised that unless their wives came, many members attending would not be there at all.

The Club moves on. Meets in Norway, Iceland, Morocco, the Andes, the Himalayas, and the John Muir Trail, not to mention caving in China, indicate that there is now sufficient Members who are fit, keen to go to new places, seen to be more exciting than the Alps, and the need for these compromise meets, Open Meets in the Alps such as this last one in the Pyrenees, is passing. The YRC rang in the new form of Meet in 1986 with acclaim; so as we ring them out in 2002 to ring in their successors, Meets in Distant Places, let us recognise the impetus, the fun, the adventures we have enjoyed, and above all how those Alpine Meets gave opportunities to many older members to climb 4000m peaks which otherwise they would never have attempted.

Dennis Armstrong

## **Ladies Meet**

### **Gilling West, Richmond**

### **26 – 28 April, 2002**

The long dale running northwest from Scotch Corner, parallel to the A66, has been named “The Vale of Golden Silence” for the tranquillity and beautiful rolling countryside. John Schofield had found our hotel, Hartforth Hall Hotel near to Gilling West, and this provided a good starting point for walks direct from the hotel. In this area rich in history, there are earthworks from Brigantes occupation, medieval monasteries, Roman roads, and routes used by the lead mining trade.

Hartforth Hall was in the possession of the Cradock family from 1720 to 1986 and the high ceilings with ornate furnishing still give us some idea of the standard of living of a successful military family. Members of the family had fought at Agincourt, while the last military member went down with his ship in the First World War.

We had an attendance of 36 members, wives and family, with a large group setting out on Saturday for an 11 mile route through the vale and along the

southern fell side.

Starting from the hotel, we followed the delightful Holme Beck to Ravensworth and Gayle, climbed to the fell side above Kirby Hill, and then headed SE along Jagers Lane. This lane may have been the original Roman route from Scotch Corner towards Carlisle, but the name is more recent in origin, so called after the Jagger lads. These men transported lead from the Grinton area down to the Tees at Yarm to be exported. The horses used were German Jagger horses, hence the name for the lads who tended them, and the lane from the direction of Grinton.



As we walked along the lane we could see for miles, to the A66, to the North York Moors, and to Middlesbrough. Descending from the high sides of the vale, we passed through Gilling Wood, carpeted with bluebells, and back through yellow fields of oil seed rape to our hotel.

The village of Gilling West, is now a tiny hamlet, but in the days of the lead trade, it had fourteen pubs for the thirsty Jagger lads.

At the dinner on Saturday evening, Albert Chapman spoke for all of us when he thanked John Schofield for an excellent meet, good walking, and good weather! On Sunday morning some twenty souls did a three mile walk to the 'White Swan' in Gilling West, about half went into the pub, whilst the rest went back to their caravans. It rained before we set off, it rained when we were in the pub and it rained after we set off back home. We didn't get wet. Somebody was looking after us!

Attendance:

Dennis & Joan Armstrong  
Derek & Yvonne Bush  
Albert & Sammy Chapman  
Ian & Dorothy Crowther  
Iain & Sarah Gilmour  
Mike & Marcia Godden  
Richard & Elizabeth Gowing  
Gordon & Fiona Humphreys  
Tim & Elaine Josephy  
Alan & Julia Kay  
Ian & Una Laing  
Alan & Angie Linford  
John & Betty Lovett  
Tony & Valerie Penney  
Arthur & Barbara Salmon  
John & Pat Schofield  
David & Elspeth Smith  
Bill & Juliet Todd





## JMCS Hut, Coruisk, Isle of Skye 18 – 24 May 2002

“If you are a delicate man and  
of wetting your skin you are shy,  
I’ll have you know before you go,  
you’d better not think of Skye”

Sheriff Nicholson

The Skye meet’s ‘A’ party consisted of four stalwart men who seemed to have infinite energy and ability not wasting any time. Mere mortals in the ‘B’ party filled in the days with excursions over Sgurr na Stri and visits to Camassunary by way of the Bad Step or circuits of Loch Coruisk. The famous Mad Burn that Derek, John and David crossed returning on Tuesday without difficulty, reached its maddest before we left making crossing it quite impossible.

The sea journey on the ‘Bella Jane’ was good with a friendly crew. David Hick and Ian Crowther reached Coruisk in David’s boat, Godwit, from Arisaig returning a little earlier than planned because of the threatening weather.

It was a happy and successful meet despite the inclement weather. The JMCS offers a most hospitable base in this delightful and remote corner of Skye.

### “A” report

After setting up a remote camp on the southern slopes of Bla Bheinn (into which to collapse/sleep if ever the Greater Traverse was done), there was some time to spare before catching the 1730 Bella Jane boat to Coruisk. Spar Cave was visited - an interesting spot at the head of a small fjord - not exactly easy to find and inaccessible at higher states of the tide.

The boat trip across to Coruisk gave us our first experience of ‘moist air’ as boatman Donald called it. We had

plenty of that in the week. He refused to put the roof up on the boat, but we noted that on all subsequent trips that it was installed for the comfort of other passengers!

Portering disintegrating cardboard boxes to the hut over soggy bog also set the scene for the week. Almost everyone walked the length of Bidean Drim nan Ramh ridge on Sunday, some via a rock climb up JCMS Buttress. There was evidence of massive rock falls from the cliffs adjacent to the climb - and some of the route was decidedly loose. The ridge was mostly in cloud/rain and all parties turned back before joining the main ridge, at difficult rock sections. On the return, the weather worsened, with even some hail in one squall.

Some rock climbing was done on Monday, two routes on Diamond or Mad Burn Buttress. Whilst water was trickling down much of it, as the rain stopped, so the flows lessened and enjoyable climbs were made on Mayday and Warsle, both on gabbro with superb friction. Later, attempts were made on Coruisk Hut Crack (the obvious steep crack just behind the hut): it repelled leading attempts, but Steve got up on a top rope whilst removing gear. Possibly in the dry....





This day also saw an ascent of Dubh slabs and in very poor and worsening conditions, the late return of two lads. They had abseiled off near the top of the Sgurr Dubh Mor into a steep rocky area, leaving a tortuous descent back to safety. The talk in the hut was 'we don't know where they might be, they're competent chaps, so drink up - they'll be all right.'

On the only good weather day of the week two parties ascended the Dubh Slabs, joined the main ridge and traversed around to the south, descending the east facing side of Gars-bheinn, back to the hut. This descent proved to be rather more trying than anyone expected. Earlier on the ridge a chance encounter was made with Mike Hobson and two companions. It proved to be the only day when the ridge was clear, with grand views all around. In the evening, before the rain came again, three went back to Diamond Buttress to climb another route. Wednesday

saw a small party ascend to the ridge via the valley above the Mad Burn. An attempt was made to climb out of the TD gap, but it proved too difficult in the rain. They went over Sgurr Alasdair and tops to Bealach Coire Banachdich. The cloud opened for a short while when on Collie's Ledge, giving brief but splendid views to Glen Brittle. The ascent of the Inaccessible Pinnacle, normally quite straightforward, was surprisingly tricky in the wet and swirling cloud. Another group walked around to Harta and Lota Corries, seeing a number of unusual birds en route.

Thursday brought continuing rain and a vote to leave a day early. All attempts to get members out for at least some low level walking met with considerable resistance. A past President suddenly cried 'Recidivists, lackeys, back sliders and running dogs' at the table wallahs, but none were shamed into activity. Four souls

walked out, only two crossed Loch Coruisk outfall, but were later rewarded with the close sight of a monstrous mountain torrent in spate. - really exciting stuff. On return, it was found that Loch Coruisk outfall had got rather deeper, necessitating perilous paddling. At least the water wasn't cold.

The water supply to the hut had failed (it is supplied through a poly pipe stretching across the hillside to the upper part of the Mad Burn waterfall). Some interesting and rather wet and windy antics were had in relocating the pipe end back in the water and getting it full again to resume supply.

Every night was a jolly one; the hut provided excellent facilities with a very efficient stove to dry gear. Despite the poor weather, which restricted activities, it was a most enjoyable week.

Adrian Bridge

### **The Dubh Ridge**

The long hoped for good weather on Skye did not materialise but Tuesday did show signs of being all right. Derek Bush, John Varney and I decided that we would make a bid for the Dubh Ridge, one of the classic routes that is readily accessible from Coruisk. From the splendid JMCS hut the route follows the SW bank of Loch Coruisk for about a mile where the gabbro



slabs stretch almost to the shore of the loch.

The rough texture of the rock makes progress a delight, apart from a few little problems can almost be described as a walk, albeit fairly steep. The weather was improving steadily; we were indeed fortunate in contrast to the wet and windy conditions experienced by David Large and James Whitby two days earlier. They arrived back in darkness and decidedly wet. Climbing Dubh Beag was very enjoyable with no real problems. The free abseil added a bit of excitement as none of us had had this type of experience for some time.

With ever improving weather we ascended Dubh Mor and on to Sgurr Dubh an Da Bheinn, (the black peak of the two ridges). We had made the main ridge in the normal three hours. At this juncture we elected to traverse towards Gars bheinn, the traditional starting point for the traverse of the whole ridge, but in our case we would be heading homewards. We decided to ignore the tiny Caisteal a Gharbh-choire as it does involve some rock

climbing and we may run short of time, so we bypassed it on the left and heading straight for Sgurr nan Eag, (the peak of the notches).

Distances in the Cuillin look quite small on the map but it is not



unreasonable to reckon one hour between each of the Cuillin summits. There were no real difficulties, but it never pays to relax ones guard on the savage gabro of these mountains. Sgur Choire Bhig is the final part of the ridge to Gars Bheinn. It took rather longer than expected. A few spots of rain threatened us, but it fortunately did not amount to anything. All that remained now was a descent down to Loch na Cuice at the head of Loch Scavaig.

The broken ridge down did not present any difficulties until we reached some very steep scree, here our problems started, with every step great care was essential and slowly we made our way down into a gully which proved to be too dangerous to descend. Reversing we traversed south across the scree to a more reasonable gradient but taking us further away from our destination. Eventually we reached a faint track taking us round the loch to the hut. Anyone making this expedition would be well advised to descend due south as soon as the Gars Bheinn ridge ends.

The whole enjoyable trip took us just twelve hours on what turned out to be

the best day of weather of the meet. It was unfortunate that both the President and Barrie Wood who should have been with us were suffering from knee problems after a rather dampish day on the long ridge of Bidein Druim nan Ramh two days earlier. On this occasion we had to abandon the

route at the gap before trying to negotiate the rather complicated triple summit of the mountain in thick mist.

David Smith

Attendance:

Adrian Bridge

Derek Bush

President, Albert Chapman

Ian Crowther

Roger Dix

Adrian Dixon (PM)

Steve Eccleston (G)

David Gott (G)

David Hick

Tim Josephy

Richard Kirby

David Large

David Smith

John Varney

James Whitby

Frank Wilkinson

Barrie Wood

# Gaping Gill Winch Meet

**25-26 May 2002**

The meet was the result of the opportunity made available by the Bradford Pothole Club to participate in their Members and Kindred Club weekend at Gaping Gill.



The weather the previous weekend had been kind for the Preliminary Meet, when the equipment is transported up the fell to be set up at Gaping Gill, consequently the winch was up and running in good time.

Coinciding with the Skye Meet it was not anticipated that the meet would be well supported, however the meet organiser was pleased to find that some twenty or so members and guests were to be found in Gaping Gill, at one time or other during the meet.

An early start on Saturday morning saw a break in the weather allowing meet participants to make their way up to Gaping Gill in reasonable weather to book in at the Control Tent and decide on the various options available for descending into the system.

Once the organisers realised two of our parties intended entering via Bar Pot they gave us the task of rigging ladders on the entrance and the big pitch. Something we were happy to assist by so doing.

Richard Josephy, Tim Josephy, Michael Smith, Richard Smith, Gareth Bloor, Dave Price and Dave Emery opted to descend Bar Pot to be met at the bottom of the Bar Pot main

pitch by Mike Hartland, Jordan Walker, Terry Devany, Doug Wensley and John Wensley who took the easier option of descending into the Main Chamber via the winch.

As someone who has been on winch meets for over forty years I have to say that the amount of water cascading into the Main Chamber whilst descending via the winch was the most spectacular I have experienced.

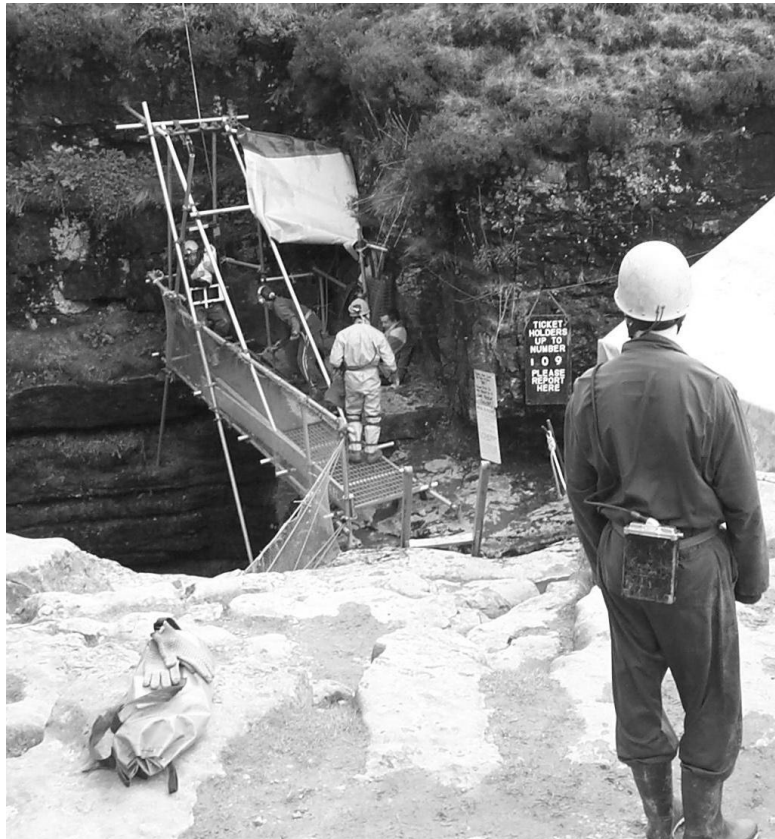
Both groups made their various ways back to the Main Chamber, visiting Sand Cavern etc en-route. A splinter group of two tested each other's abilities (or sanity) by traversing the passage from South East Pot to 'T' Junction without lights!

There had not been time to fix the hand line across South East Pot, which concentrated the mind, a slip would have fatal results.

Even though the amount of water in Fell Beck was decreasing by the time it came to ascending from the Main Chamber via the winch the waterfalls were still impressive as the seat was drawn up through the water.

It is known that Darrell Farrant and his friend Ken Coote were underground, as were Bill and Juliet





Whilst this was a somewhat impromptu meet it was certainly enjoyed by those who participated and, if requested, the organiser is willing to liaise with his Bradford chums and attempt to put something together, perhaps midweek, for next year.

It is pleasing to note that two teenagers were with us underground which reduced the average of the YRC to a respectable level.

Mike Hartland

Todd who completed the day by doing the Ingleborough round via Sulber Nick, Ingleborough, Little Ingleborough and Newby Moss.

The Bradford tell me that there were other YRC members in the system during the weekend.

The President and Vice-President joined the party for dinner, which rounded off an enjoyable day.

During the following two weeks of the winch being available the meet organiser was frequently to be found in Gaping Gill, on one occasion a late night solo trip traversing across South East Pot and, following a Daleside Bitter in the Beer Tent, walking home to Austwick across the fells in the dark being memorable!

Richard Josephy and a dozen or so friends enjoyed what was to be one of the last trips into the system on the final day of the Bradford Pothole Club meet.

Attendance:

- Gareth Bloor (Wayfarers)
- Albert Chapman
- Ken Coote (J.M.C.S)
- Terry Daveny (Bradford Pothole Club)
- Dave Emery (Forest of Dean Caving Club)
- Darrell Farrant
- David Handley
- Mike Hartland
- Richard Josephy
- Tim Josephy
- Dave Price
- Michael Smith
- Richard Smith (G)
- Bill Todd
- Juliet Todd (G)
- Jordan Walker (G)
- Doug Wensley (Bradford Pothole Club)
- John Wensley (G)

# Alpine Meet

## Laruns- Pyrenees.

### 15 - 29 June 2002

A non-committal shrug was offered by the President to the question 'Where would you like the meet to be based?'

Inspiration came from the first chapter 'Short of the Folding Stuff' in Tom Price's book 'Travail So Gladly Spent'. Tom describes a visit to the area and an adventure on a striking mountain Pic du Midi d'Ossau – it seemed just the right place for the YRC. Hard climbing, plenty of walking opportunities, huts abound and the mountains not too high.

The meet was based at Camping du Valentine, an excellent site run by Madame Pelnier who agreed to provide a group area, the only site in the area to offer this facility and essential for a meet.

As the activities developed we soon found parallels with the narrative in 'The Folding Stuff'. Reference is made to a statement by Sir Martin Coway who observed 'That climbers were on the whole too much interested in summits to the neglect of the rest of the mountains'. YRC alpine meets are tending towards neglect of summits! The first group trip out was by car to the Col du Pourtalet, on the Spanish border, and a delightful walk into the gentle meadows of the Cirque d'Aneou. Here, surrounded by vertical towers of limestone but insignificant summits, it was sufficient to enjoy the terrain, the views, animals and the fresh flowers. Derek B and David S could not resist a summit and finished off the day by an ascent of Pic d'Aneou (2364m.) finding a teaspoon on the summit, probably left by the Linfords on a 'recce' trip in 2001.

Open meets by definition, bring a wide range of abilities and aspirations to the area selected which needs to have a wide range of walks, climbs and places of interest to make the meet attractive. Laruns had all the ingredients but only attracted a core of 13 people, insufficient to give a broad mix of parties to exploit the potential. Perhaps after 20 years this style of alpine meet has run its course. All enjoyed the meet and maybe the Club will replace this form of alpine meet with a summer meet, paying a lot of attention to the 'rest of the mountains'

Tom recalls 'at Laruns the noonday sun smote us like a hammer'. The meet had a similar experience, 39 degrees C. on one day, we were melting in the unseasonable weather but it was delightful on the tops. One day of mist on the tops, one hair raising electric storm (which only lasted for 2 hours), some cooling mist in the valley on the whole good weather was had by all.

All members had a trip to Lac d'Artouste via the cable car and the scenic 10km. ride on the Petit Train d'Artouste (Arriving the Lac about 1045). This gives excellent access to a group of high mountains. Two groups attempted Palas 2974m excellent rock but too many distractions to top out and catch the last train back at 1718. Distractions? Well you have all seen them, Gentians, so blue, so fresh, in the most unlikely places and the Lacs d'Arremoulit - icebergs- ice floes blue and green, Sir Martin would have been proud of us. One group walking back to the valley from the Lac had to turn back and catch the last train due to steep soft snow on the Col le Lurien.2342m.

Tom's ascent of the Pi du Midi d'Ossau was assisted by a meeting with soldiers from the Chasseurs Alpins of the French Army camping at Bois-Artiques, now the Lac de Bois-Artiques. The Presidents party, David Smith and Derek Bush, (overnight at the Pombie hut) finding themselves on the mountain without a rope, befriended a young Frenchman David Gerbeaud, who provided protection for these 'adventurous' Englishmen, accompanied them to the summit and later joined the party in camp for a cordial evening. Later in the week the Linfords, at the second attempt, reached the summit but started from the Col du Pourtalet. (4hrs 45m.) Only 11 people on the mountain that day 5 English, 4 French and a Spanish guide and his client. A memorable day with wall to wall sunshine.

On the pretext of visiting the Grottes de Betharran David Smith and John Lovett called in at Lourdes. The caves were well worth a visit and we wait to see the result of visit to the other venue.

Jack Short completed the two-day extended tour of Pic du Midi, finishing in camp and earning a lift to Pau to catch his train home.

Excursions made:- Tour of Pic du Midi and Pic Peyreget (a delightful camp site at Lac de Peyreget), the remainder of the Cirque d'Aneou, the promenade from Eaux-Bonnes, the Valentine valley from Col d'Aubisque and the Ayous Lake Circuit.

Here a note of caution - on the circuit of Lac de Bious-Artiques we watched leeches, tails anchored, trying to catch tadpoles. This did not

deter Dennis from the obligatory swim in the Lac. (In memory of Peter Swindells - the strong advocate of 'skinny bathing'). Tom Price take note: should he return to the spot where he camped many years ago. The Ayous Lakes abound with leeches.

Flies were a pest, the evening swatting cleaned up next morning by fledgling robins, bullfinches and chaffinches, enough, said John Lovett for fledglings to attain Griffin proportions.

The many raptors and flowers noted in the guides were often discussed.

Debate was slightly below par, probably due to the altitude, the most sensible conclusion reached was 'that the Club should spend more money on the quality of printing of the Bulletin'.

It seems Laruns is, and will remain, a remote alpine centre as it was clear that EEC regulations have not reached village, cooked and uncooked meats in the same display and a plentiful supply of much needed sticky fly-catchers banned by Brussels.

The last parallel-At Laruns Tom Price sold coffee to survive, in 1957 at the Grotto Caracas I exchanged coffee for cheese to survive- that's another story.

Alan Linford







Pic du Midi d'Ossau from afar and David, Derek and Albert on the top



## Pic du Midi d'Ossau

Each climber has in his mind the mountain which is a symbol of each range. The Matterhorn is to the Alps as Ama Dablam is to the Himalaya, as Mount Assinbourne is to the Rocky Mountains and as Ingleborough is to the Dales. Without doubt Pic du Midi d'Ossau is the symbol of the Pyrennees. So four members David Smith, Derek and Yvonne Bush, John Lovett and I drove towards the Spanish border on a hot afternoon.

It was suggested that we park not at the high car park from where the walking time to the Refuge de Pombie is 1hour 15mins but at the lower one where the first hour of this 2½ hour walk enjoys the shelter of the forest. The logic of this indicates the suggestion came from the accountant in our midst.

The refuge was almost empty so early was the season and our superb evening meal was prepared by the delightful hut guardian.

We sat in the evening in the shelter of the entrance watching the cloud scapes, thunder and lightning and real heavy rain. Our fifth member Alan Linford enjoyed no shelter from the storm and when half way to the refuge turned back and phoned us later from Laruns.

Next morning three set off for the mountain while Lovett and Yvonne returned to the valley. Our view was dominated by the huge bronze south face as we ascended a low pass and followed an easy ridge to the foot of a more serious climb.

We had each been given flawed advice from our friends in the valley: "It's like Striding Edge" or "the Skye ridge." The 25-year-old guide edited by our late member Louise Baume said the route was festooned with

protruding metal spikes. For these reasons we left our rope in the valley. Our group of three, with average age over seventy, sat and pondered our situation. We saw only two metal spikes and one was loose. We regretted leaving our rope behind. We were in two minds whether to abandon our climb when a shining knight appeared with the name of David, a young mountain guide of the French Alpine Club.

He had a rope and was delighted to join a trio of old Brits. The scramble up the warm rocks was a pleasure with the added security of the rope on the hairy bits. A superb day with extensive clear views from the summit that we enjoyed alone save for an odd Spaniard who climbed by.

On our descent I managed to kick the loose metal spike free and it fell with a pleasant ringing sound to the bottom of the last pitch.

Our French friend departed south (to join us for supper at Laruns that night) and we walked north through pleasant meadows and cool woodland to where our friends collected us from the popular car park by the Refuge de Bios Antiques.

Albert Chapman

### Attendance:

The President, Albert Chapman  
Dennis and Joan Armstrong  
George and Vivian Burfitt and friends  
Derek and Yvonne Bush  
Derek English  
Mike and Marcia Godden  
David Handley  
Alan and Angie Linford  
John Lovett  
Jack Short  
David Smith



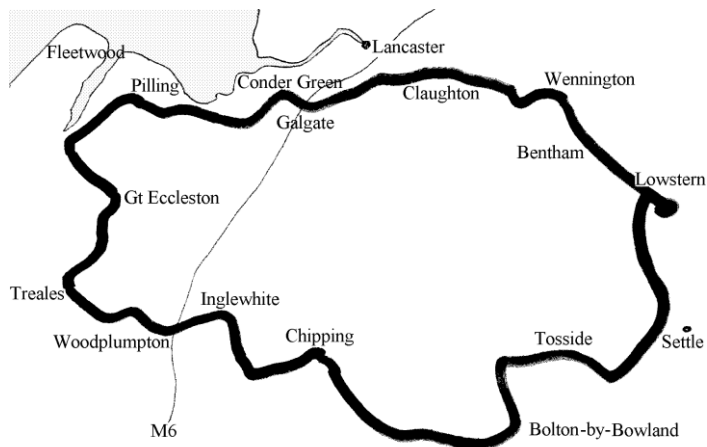
# The Long Cycle Ride Lowstern 12 – 14 July 2002

The YRC Long Cycle Ride has now become a firm fixture on the YRC meets calendar. So as to restrict the participants to members and close friends/relatives it was held at the same time as the Tour de France. Even so it was rumoured that Lance Armstrong was torn between his attempt at a fourth victory in the Tour and our far more demanding event. (Supposedly the pie and pea supper on Friday almost swung the balance in our favour.)

There was a good turn out again this year with a total of sixteen members and one guest performing as cyclists or helpers. Eight tackled the 100 mile road course and two brave souls tackled the off road course on mountain bikes.

Saturday dawned bright and fair and stirrings were heard in the Lowstern Cycle Headquarters from 4:00am as keen participants leapt from their bunks to pull on Lycra skin suits and other aerodynamic aids such as bicycle clips and baggy trousers. Breakfast was a high-energy intake affair with discussions centring on the best places to mount a 'breakaway' or 'attack' the field and where the best café's and pubs were situated.

Scrutineering took place at 5:15am with special emphasis being placed on locating hidden propulsion devices. One electric motor was found but no action was taken when the participant realised that the ten-metre extension cable he was using to connect to the



mains fell well short of the necessary hundred miles.

The road section started at 5:35am and the field were waved away by the Vice President Mr. David Handley. A handicap system was introduced at the last minute and the youngest member in the road event was started one hour later at 6:35am. There was some doubt as to the legality of this under UCI regulations but at the time of going to press the organisers had received no official complaint.

Turning left out of the Lowstern gates the route initially followed the road to Wray through Bentham and Wennington, which at that time of the morning was a beautiful run. Shortly after Wray the route turned south-west on the 'A' road past Cloughton and Brookhouse which, being early, was relatively traffic free. At Caton a swing to the South returned the happy band of cyclists to the quieter roads of the area.

Around this time the second contingent of cyclists were about to undertake their test of stamina and skill. Mike Hartland and his nephew Jordan Walker left Lowstern at 7:30am to tackle a moorland track over the Bowland fell. Mike had spotted this track on the map and with his experience of riding Scottish

tracks to access remote mountain areas thought it would be good if Uncle Mike showed the young lad what off-road riding was all about!

Initially following the same route as the 'roadies' Mike and Jordan made good progress and turned off at Wray onto unclassified roads which eventually led to the "Hornby track", a seventeen-mile unmade track over the moor. Mike was riding a 'rigid' (a bike without suspension) and Jordan was riding a 'hard tail' (a bike with front suspension) – this is by far the preferred mount for cross-country mountain biking.

Once on the track average speeds seemed to slow somewhat and it wasn't long before it was Uncle Mike who was being shown how to ride off-road by Jordan. Deep ruts gradually slowed Mike's progress to a standstill where the only option was to make an undignified dismount (fall off). Jordan was shouting "bunny hop out" (a well known technique to hop out of ruts and maintain momentum) but to no avail. Had there been any passers by at this point they would have heard Mike asking Jordan what rabbits had to do with cycling.

Meanwhile the road test was hotting up as the route skirted Bowland fell. The 'Young Flier' (well I am only 50) having been held back at the start, had the bit between his teeth and arrived at the first feeding station just South of Galgate to find David Smith and Richard Kirby enjoying a drink and a chat with Albert and David Handley. A quick drink and the 'Flier' was off leaving David and Richard open mouthed in amazement at the power and speed of his departure (I feel I must point out to the readers that the writer is not biased in any way!).

After the feeding station the route swung north through Galgate then across to Conder Green where it turned south onto the A558. Some five miles after the feeding station the 'Young Flier' was really getting into his stride, when rounding a corner at Cockerham he was greeted with the sight of David Smith and Richard Kirby stood at the road side waving him on. Clearly these two (dare I say it) cheats had taken a short cut and it is understood that a full stewards inquiry will be mounted.

Following the A588 the route continued in a generally south-westerly direction, gradually losing height and taking the riders close to the southerly end of Morecambe Bay. There was some vague concern that this 'loss of height' would have to be paid for at some stage but for now it was a wonderful morning and all was well with the world.

This was easy riding and in the vicinity of Pilling the 'Young Flier' (I rather like that name) overcame his one hour handicap and gradually hauled in the remainder of the 'Old Guard'. On passing these stalwarts of the bicycle clip and saddlebag, he was good-naturedly encouraged onward to the extent that nothing was actually thrown at him!

After Pilling quieter roads lead south until a 10p toll bridge (not included in the cost of the meet! – further inquiries pending) was crossed on the approach to Great Ecclestone. Continuing south through Elswick, Roseacre and Wharles the riders were taken over the Blackpool motorway and on to Treales, just north of Kirkham, and the most southerly point of the route.

Turning East quiet roads lead back over the Blackpool motorway and on

to Woodplumpton and Broughton where the A6 was crossed and the M6 ducked under. From here a more north-easterly heading was followed on lovely quiet roads, until the second feeding station, manned by Mike Godden and Dennis Barker, was reached at around 50 miles in Inglewhite.

At this point the day was warming up and the 'Flier' discarded his outer layer of clothing to reveal the full extent of his Lycra apparel. Comments were passed about his 'Pixie boots' (over shoes) but the 'Flier' was undeterred and roared out of the feeding station on his way to Longridge and Chipping. It was now about 10:00am on a perfect day and the countryside really looked at it's best.

From Chipping the route ran under Longridge Fell along a very fast downhill section with speeds of up to 40 mph. After the wonderful downhill section it gradually began to dawn on the riders that they were occasionally having to ride uphill could this be where the 'loss of height' in the earlier parts of the ride would have to be paid for?

Undeterred they pressed on through the 'Bush country' of Waddington only to encounter a vicious hill leading into Grindleton. The 'Young Flier', prior to this point had been feeling very pleased with himself and had been pushing a little too hard. This hill brought him up sharp and part way up he tried to change down a couple of gears only to find, horror of horrors, he was already in bottom gear! Much puffing and blowing later he struggled over the top of the hill and coasted through Grindleton, slowly realising that there were many more hills to come before Lowstern

was sighted.

Worse was to come as on the easy section to the last feeding station near Bolton-by-Bowland it became obvious that the 'Flyer' had not taken on enough water and was becoming dehydrated. David Handley and John Lovett who offered useful information such as "the next part just goes up and up" manned this last feeding station. At this point the 25 miles remaining looked more like 250 but the YRC fighting spirit emerged and after consuming copious amounts of water he pressed on for the last stage.

Returning to Bowland fell saw our two mountain bikers emerging from the Hornby track at Slaidburn. The 'expert' of off road riding was in a sorry state and was helped into the Slaidburn café by Jordan where an excellent lunch was consumed. Mike did his best to prolong their stay in the café but Jordan was keen to press on and so remounting they continued to join the road section near Stocks Reservoir for the last part of their ride. Jordan managed 41mph on this section which was the highest recorded on the day and he was on 'knobbly' tyres!

The last road section from Bolton-by-Bowland took the riders "up and up" the very long climb coming out on the top of Ling Hill. The weather was superb and on reaching the top the riders were rewarded with simply stunning views all round with all the well-known hills clearly visible and Stocks Reservoir directly ahead. An exciting decent followed where a right turn lead to Tosside, Wigglesworth and Rathmell followed in somewhat of an exhausted daze but on reaching the Settle by-pass it suddenly dawned

on the riders that the end could not be far off.

Turning back off the by-pass the riders followed a pleasant last section over the Eldroth road where eventually in the distance, surrounded by a halo of light, salvation could be seen - Lowstern – yes they would live. Just a few short miles and the riders trickled back in one's and two's to be revived by cups of tea and cool showers.

An excellent evening meal followed where tales were swapped of hair-raising descents and lung busting hills. All agreed it had been an excellent day, which would not have been possible without the dedicated band of helpers and organisers who planned the route, prepared the food and manned the feeding stations etc.

Mike Edmundson

Attendance:

Riders,

Derek Collins (Route planner)  
Roger Dix  
Mike Edmundson  
Richard Gowing  
Mike Hartland  
Jeff Hooper  
Rob Ibberson  
Richard Kirby  
David Smith  
Jordan Walker (G)

Support Team,

Denis Barker  
Alan Brown  
Albert Chapman (P)  
Mike Godden  
David Handley (VP)  
John Lovett  
John Schofield (Chef)

## **Long Walk Low Hall Garth**

### **31 May - 2 June 2002**

The Lakeland weather had been terrible for ten days, but Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> June was a beautiful clear morning presaging a lovely warm sweaty sort of day with some breeze high up. It turned out to be a window in the weather and by 10a.m. on Sunday it was pouring down again.

The attendance was small being seven walkers and seven helpers, but the hut was comfortably full. The start time was 4a.m. and the walkers set off together. This is the YRC so there were two groups before passing the car park to take different routes up Wetherlam, the group of four splitting into two pairs shortly after and then splitting again.

The fells were empty apart from one sleeper on Wetherlam who looked surprised as we passed. The sunrise was gentle and satisfying and life was pretty good. It is quite a long way to Caw and Kiln Bank beyond the first feeding station and our group arrived six hours later. To our surprise, and delight, we were first. The Long Walk is not a race, but a prominent member had been thirty minutes in front equipped with the latest technology. It was a lovely sunny morning.

Thirty minutes later we left and made southwest. to meet the road 1km south of Ulpha and plodded on up the Eskdale road until we could break out onto the open fell aiming for The Height and then more or less straight for Harter Fell. It was very hot and heavy and boggy so "straight" was very much "more or less." Some time later, when we were getting tired, the base of Harter Fell was reached and looking up at the unrelenting slope it seemed an awful long way. This was becoming a very long walk.

Over the fell and down to Hardknott Pass used up precious energy stores, but the cups of tea and food improved things. By this time the support parties were gleaning information about the walkers and had a fair idea of their whereabouts. All supporters were at Hardknott and enjoying the sunshine. Support Parties often have long weary days waiting and waiting, so this day was a relaxing change. There was even one member, who had come from home, to the top of the pass to spend an hour or two in the sun.

The prominent member with the latest technology was still adrift and we picked up stories about flat batteries. It was a lovely sunny day with excellent visibility.

Hardknott to Three Tarns and then over Crinkle Crag before dropping down to Red Tarn and Wrynose Pass was surprisingly busy with tents in the oddest places, but very hard. The electric fencing for heaving the sheep generated some speculation. Much of the walk was over trackless boggy ground and the paths were on broken ground, so that a rhythm of walking could not be established. Perhaps the time has come for slightly easier walks for the over 60's. As author of the route I felt the last bit was self-flagellation.

Down the pass, wondering if any beer would be left, through the fields past Bridge End farmhouse and back to the hut for 9.15p.m. There was beer.

As always, there were variations. One member went down the Walna Scar road to the Pub in Seathwaite, had some Jennings beer, walked up Harter Fell and then down to Hardknott. Another took off his shorts and carried on walking in the central section. I presume he put

them back on at some suitable time as he was not jailed. Walkers retired at suitable places. The O.D.G. was visited as was the top of Crinkle Crag by one member.

A good meet. Our thanks go to our meet leader for the quiet efficiency and sheer pleasantness of the event. The food is always good, but this time the bacon lingers in my mind.

J.D.Collins

Route:

LHG, Wetherlam, Swirl How,  
Dow Crag, Caw,  
Kiln Bank summit (215933)  
road south of Ulpha (197929),  
Eskdale Green road leaving it at  
(185958), Harter Fell, Hardknott  
Pass, Three Tarns, Crinkle Crag,  
Red Tarn, Wrynose Pass,  
Fell Foot Bridge (300032), LHG.

Attendance:

The President, Albert Chapman  
Kenneth Aldred  
Alan Brown  
Derek Collins  
Ian Crowther  
Michael Godden  
Richard Gowing  
David Handley  
Jeffrey Hooper  
Gordon Humphreys  
John Jenkin  
John Lovett  
David Smith  
John Sterland  
Christopher Renton (visitor)



## **President's Garden Party Scar Top, Chapel le Dale 14 July 2002**

We have come to expect change and innovation from our current President. A garden party was probably a first. A gathering at a member's home harks back to the early part of the last century when several YRC members had large houses where meets were occasionally held. At this gathering sixty-seven members, their families and friends attended on a beautiful sunny day on that oasis on the side of Wherside, Scar Top Farm.

It turned out to be a very pleasant and convivial occasion and an ideal medium for wives to get know other wives and the men their husbands walk and climb with or go to earth in potholes. One hopes that they were not concerned or disappointed in any way.

Albert arranged with his charming neighbour, Mrs. Beezley, of Weathercote House, to descend the cave of the same name in its grounds.

It is interesting to speculate the connection between Mrs Beezley and the local waterfall bearing her name. The range of footwear would have shocked that doyen of potholers, Ernest Roberts, however great regard was exercised to ensure that there were no untoward lapses in care. It was an ideal opportunity for the uninitiated to get an impression of this curious sport without too much of the hassle that is associated with potholing.

We were indebted greatly to Albert's wife Sammy whose tireless efforts in providing such a wonderful spread, culminating with eleven different and quite superb sweets so professionally presented, which several of us found totally irresistible. A super day out was had by all.

F David Smith



Attendance:

Andy Anderson,  
Denis Barker,  
Bruce Bensley  
Alan & Madge Brown,  
Derek & Yvonne Bush,  
Ged, Bev, Aaron & Imogen Campion,  
Albert & Sammy Chapman.  
Ian & Dorothy Crowther,  
Roger & Gwen Dix,  
Derek English,  
Alan Fletcher,  
Mike & Marcia Godden & Anne,  
Richard Gowing,  
David & Helen Handley,  
John Hemingway,  
Jeff & Joan Hooper,  
Gordon & Fiona Humphreys,  
Bob & Gabriel Ibberson,  
Bernardette's Dutch friends Jacqueline,  
Willem, Jorrit & Gerben Maryn  
John Jenkin,  
Richard & Jo Kirby,  
John, Betty & Moira Lovett,  
Valerie & John Middleton  
Martin & Rose Pettiford,  
Frank Platt,  
Alister Renton & Jane,  
Chris & Joyce Renton,  
Trevor, Anne & Karen Salmon & David,  
Arthur Salmon,  
David & Elspeth Smith,  
John & Bernadette Varney,  
Frank Walker (PM),  
Sidney Waterfall.

## **Working Meet Low Hall Garth 9 – 11 August 2002**

The yearly ritual of working meets started this year with Low Hall Garth. A good sized crew assembled for the weekend work with eight having arrived by Friday evening followed by a further three on Saturday morning.

An optimistic task list had been prepared with the main focus being on outside work in readiness for the expected go-ahead to commence refurbishment work on the inside of the cottage. The band of willing helpers were split into task groups and work commenced.

In order to stop the water which regularly floods into the kitchen, the verge in front of the kitchen was dug out to a good depth and the below ground level cottage wall exposed. This revealed several holes right through the wall into the kitchen, where the water was obviously getting in. (It was easy to see right into the kitchen through these holes and one was large enough to put my hand in!).

The wall was then cleaned up and made good and a land drainage pipe was installed below ground level next to the road to collect any water which seeped into the verge in front of the kitchen. To further protect the cottage wall 'visqueen' sheeting was laid against the cottage wall (below ground level) and the verge area back filled against this.

At the side of the verge a temporary slate edging was constructed so as to stop any water running down the road getting on to the verge area. This is to be made permanent over the coming months as the club now meets at LHG

on the last Tuesday of the month which allows some walking in the area as well as various smaller maintenance jobs to be undertaken.

Below the front door the earth verge up against the sitting room wall was lowered, again to prevent any damp entering the cottage. Slate flags were also laid in this area to prevent the build-up of vegetation and to allow better water runoff. It is now planned to install a good-sized bench in this area to allow recuperation in the evening sunlight for weary walkers.

Next to this area the land drain for the main cottage roof downspout at the front of the property was exposed and cleaned out. It was found that the downspout did not actually enter the drain and this was rectified with the installation of extra below ground level pipe work. The soak-away over the top of this area was also improved.

Further improvements to the front of the cottage were achieved by power washing the walls to remove all loose paint (a long wet job) and two coats of good quality masonry paint were then applied. The gutter and downspout were also brightened up with a coat of paint.

Across the road the rotten wood-store door jamb was replaced and the drying room treated to a complete new gutter, gutter board and down spout. This should hopefully stop the flooding of the drying room.

Finally the inside of the cottage was given a good clean from top to bottom and the paint work was touched up in places.

The working party were fed and watered throughout the weekend thanks in the main to prior preparations by my good lady and all considered that a lot had been achieved in a short time.

#### The Working Party:

Derek Bush

Roger Dix

Mike Edmundson (Warden)

Mike Godden

David Handley (VP)

Mike Hartland

John Jenkins

Richard Kirby

John Lovett

Chris Renton

David Smith



Derek Bush, Mike Edmundson, Mike Hartland, Richard Kirby and John Lovett caught by camera working on the meet



# Wharfedale Meet

## Appletreewick

### 6 – 8 September 2002

This was a low-key meet targeted at Yorkshire 'exiles' on a very much DIY basis and provided an opportunity for those living further afield to visit our heartland. Local members get plenty of opportunities to walk these areas but as the club no longer bases many meets there those of us scattered far and wide rarely do. There was a time when dinners were held in the area and after dinner meets served this purpose.

Those who attended seemed to enjoy a good meet and the sunrise I saw over Pendle Hill on Sunday morning was magnificent. No, your sense of direction has not gone wrong, but more of that later.

The meet was based on the campsite by the River Wharfe in Appletreewick with an evening meal in the Craven Arms. Unfortunately this hostelry has changed hands and some members were very disappointed with their meals. Turn out was low but it did attract the target population in gathering together members from Essex, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Cheshire and Anglesey who either camped or took B&B in the New Inn. We were joined by a few local members.

Despite some appalling weather on the Friday it had cleared by the evening and Saturday dawned with glorious warm sunshine and a light breeze. Our president elect decided to stride out on a private epic and took in Hebden, Hebden Beck, Grassington Moor, Priests Tarn, Mossdale, Conistone Dibb, Conistone and Grassington but the rest of the party elected to go off together and climbed the nose of Barden Moor before circumnavigating that moor taking in the super views from the edges.

The poor navigation and route planning of one of our number was only surpassed by the stupidity of the rest of us in taking any notice of him. We eventually came off the moor by a perfectly straightforward path which we let him persuade us looked iffy when seen on the way up. By diverting up the nose the theory went that we would clear the bracken quicker and it fell to the lot of the meet leader to strike out and find a way up the slippery hillside with head high bracken. I was not greatly amused when reaching an area sufficiently open to look round to discover that the culprit had not followed. On reaching the top however it appeared that they had just become detached from us within the jungle and had experienced just as difficult an ascent. It would have been a lot better to have walked into Burnsall and gone up the fell racetrack.

At lunch we cut into the moor and used David Handley's local knowledge to locate a shooting 'kraal' with heather roof in which tables and chairs provided a very civilised retreat which was even more welcome when the skies darkened, thunder cracked and hail began to fall. We set off again when it eased a little but were caught out in a short but heavy downpour before the sun returned in all its glory. Unfortunately the combination of fresh rain, sunshine and flowering heather brought out swarms of midges which pestered us till we climbed back to the tops where there was some breeze.

After restorative showers members gathered at the Red Lion in Burnsall where we were joined by two of our more experienced members who had come up independently during the day and chosen walks more appropriate to their needs and one ex-president who had elected to spend the day cycling to the meet having posted a change of clothing ahead. He was rather fortunate as a late change of plan meant that yours



truly had to leave them to their dinner and do a 75 mile dash to Cheshire for a family wedding reception though it did mean he could have my bed for the night.

An early morning dash back saw me unable to get in to the hotel at 7.45 so I took a riverside stroll till the others started emerging at 8.30 after what appeared to have been a heavy night for some.

Arriving in the dusk on Friday, Keith and I did see a barn owl by the track over Storrieths and returning on Sunday morning I saw a little owl on a boulder by the road above Eastby. I also saw a greater spotted woodpecker by the river while I waited for people to wake.

Sunday morning saw one member going off to do some sketching and visiting of relations and a number setting off home given anticipated travel difficulties.

Keith and I walked over the back towards the Pateley road before swinging right to hit the top of Troller's Gill which we descended to Parcival Hall and then back for lunch chatting to the locals before making our run for home. Sunday morning was again sunny but very muggy and uphill work very sweaty, not helped by the renowned New Inn breakfast with the largest sausages I have ever seen.

Travel for a weekend away if coming from the south is getting increasingly near impossible and the further north meets are held the more difficult it is for anyone working Friday to get out. This weekend saw traffic on the M6 stopped at Stoke due to an accident and almost stationary traffic for 25 miles south of Matlock on the M1. We switched across to come up the A1 but as hundreds of others had done the same it took us 55 minutes to do 15 miles approaching Newark.

As we cannot move the hills nearer there is not much the club can do about it but

unfortunately we will see less of old friends than we would otherwise wish.

I am happy to keep trying to arrange the occasional low-key meet within range of most working members but it does take some effort to find locations away from your home base and the numbers at the meet last year in North Wales and this one do raise the question as to whether enough members are interested to justify the effort.

These last two meets I have organised were based on a campsite and nearby B&B to try and accommodate all factions. The only other realistic option is a hut or camping barn but increasingly these all charge a minimum weekend fee which even if we could guarantee to fill them would make them fairly expensive and on recent turn out numbers in these less classic areas the risk is either those attending facing ridiculous costs or the meet running at a loss.

Roy Denney

#### Attendance

Roy Denney

Keith Raby

Alan Kay

Arthur Tallon

Martyn Trasler

Jeff Halford

Vice President, David Handley

Ian Crowther

Alan Clare

Derek Clayton

John Hemmingway

Harry Robinson

## Obituary

### Herbert Thompson 1914 - 2002

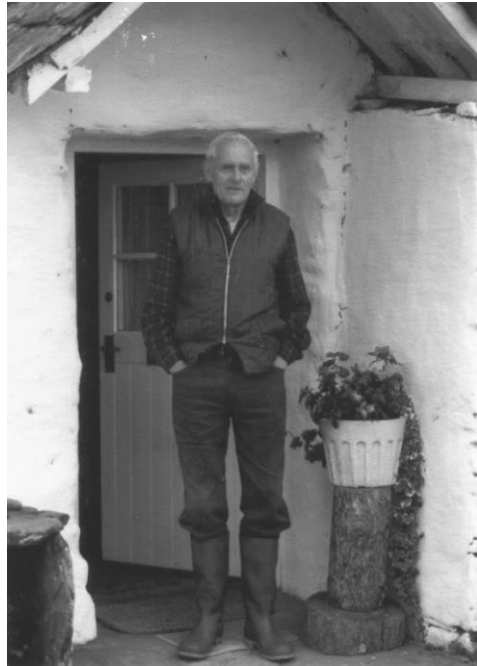
Herbert Thompson was our valued neighbour at Low Hall Garth for nearly fifty years. He died in hospital on Friday the 19th April 2002.

Herbert was born in Milnthorpe on the 9th June 1914. His father died when he was quite young and his mother remarried to Mr Webb, the previous tenant of LHG who was then living at Blea Tarn. He had several occupations before he moved to LHG, which made conversations with him so interesting. During work at a quarry he got a feel for working with stone and made several stone troughs from a solid block. He worked at the wood yard at Skelwith Bridge and on the boats on Windermere.

It was on the boats that he met Phoebe, his wife until her untimely death twenty-two years ago. In quite difficult circumstances they brought up seven children to form a well-balanced and successful family. Many of us have had the pleasure of watching them grow up.

Our wardens at LHG could rely on his help whenever a problem arose. We will certainly miss him; Derek Bush and I particularly will not forget his help when clearing a blocked lavatory in our hut and when we needed to sweep the chimney when we borrowed his brushes and ladders.

He was true Westmorland man with many facets to his character. In his lovely local dialect he would talk of his wide interests, sheep farming, sheep dog trials, wildlife, gardening and football.

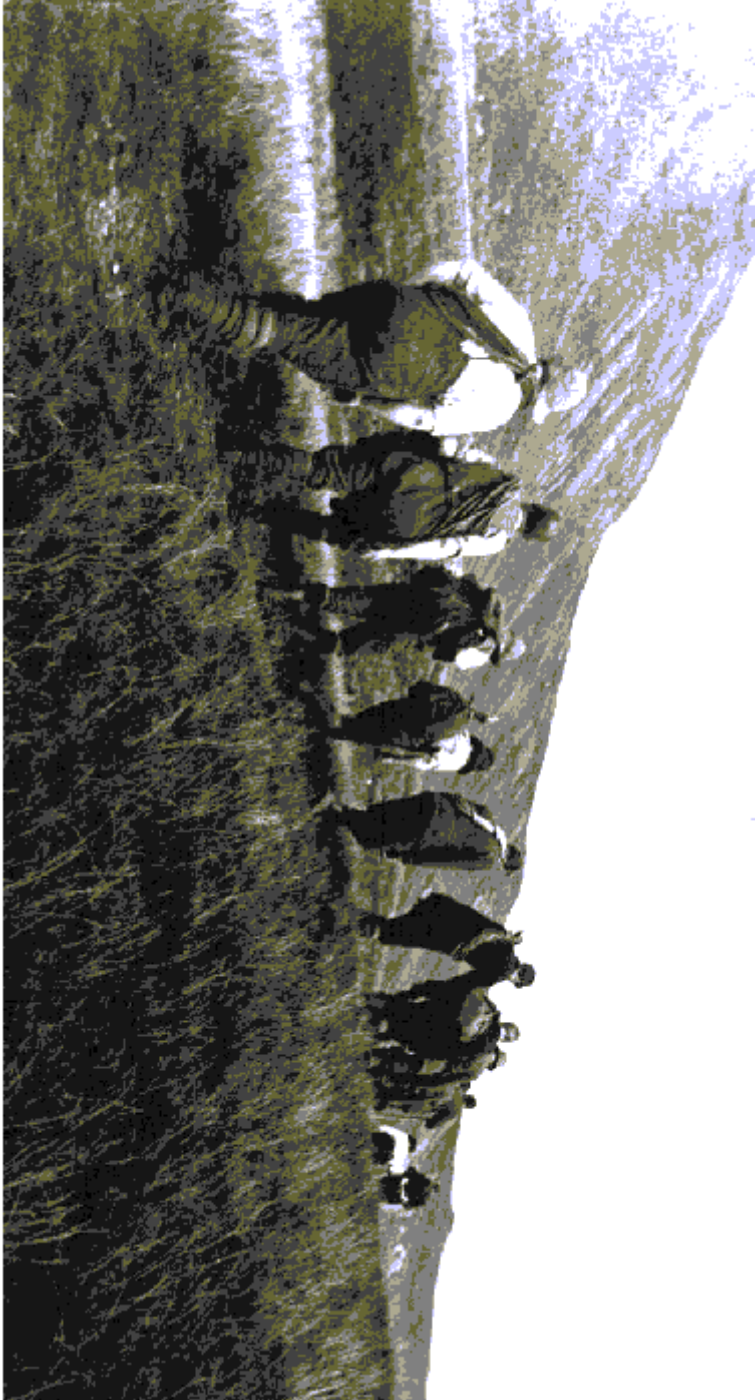


In the final few years of his life he developed a serious circulation problem resulting in the removal of a leg. He was keen to carry on farming but this proved too difficult and he moved to Drummermire, Ambleside for his final two years. Here he enjoyed regular visits from his many friends in the comfort of a warm sheltered home.

The Club was well represented at the funeral at Holy Trinity Church, Chapel Stile. The same vicar who had been there when Phoebe died took the service; it was a happy service of celebration and gratitude for a good life. The church was full; with many Westmorland characters there. In typical changeable Lakeland weather he was laid to rest. How many of us have four strong sons to carry us to our last resting-place?

Our sympathy goes to his seven children. Elizabeth, David, Derek, Fred, Judith, Margaret, Roger and their families at this time.

David Smith



From the E. E. Roberts collection of photographs