

YORKSHIRE *RAMBLER*

THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS CLUB

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Picture

Part of the cascades at Roski Falls
Krka National Park, Croatia





Club cottage, Little Langdale, Cumbria



The Yorkshire Ramblers Club
A mountaineering and caving club
Established 1892

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those
of the YRC or its Officers.

I have been invited to have a go at producing the bulletin which has been in the very capable hands of Mike Smith for over ten years. Not an easy act to follow.

As a complete stranger to the black art of desk top publishing I have come up against several brick walls in putting together this first edition.

They do say desperation is the mother of invention or words to that effect and I have found a way through the many difficulties. However, I imagine I have done several things the hard way and I will hopefully learn new tricks as I go along.

I will have to ask you to bear with me in the early days and please do not expect any fancy effects

At the end of the day this is your journal and the content will only be as good as the material you let me have.

I welcome any article you feel will interest your fellow members and photographs in support add value. In addition to full blown articles I would welcome snippets on wildlife and the environment and any other small items to go in a section of chippings.

Anything being sent on disk or by email should be in word format saved as an rtf file. Please do not attach any photographs to your articles but send them as separate files to assist in layout.

Please contact me in advance of sending any sizeable files to make special arrangements.

Hard copy can be accepted if necessary.

Don't forget, if you do not want to hear too much from me it is up to you to fill the pages

Roy J Denney

Clogwyn Du'r Arddu: Llithrig HVS ***

A day out in August 2003

for Tim Josephy & Adrian Bridge

We were at the bottom of Cloggy just after 9 am; the sun was on us as we prepared, but soon disappeared behind the crag. Despite the fine day and settled forecast, we both sought further layers, expecting to be in shade all the way.

The first pitch, given 4a - the early part of Sunset Crack - was led by Tim. It was surprisingly steep with wet grass on many of the holds and water dribbling down in places. Route finding wasn't straightforward either. As I followed up, my feet slipped off twice, and I arrived at the stance feeling very unsettled. Fortunately, the next pitch was almost free from water and grass; it began with a delicate traverse across a groove to an arete, which was ascended to a two footed resting perch and the beginnings of good gear. A slightly descending traverse on fairly small hand holds and spaced foot holds led to a wet corner and a pull through the overhang above on good holds.

A much easier ascending traverse led to a spike on which there was a thin blue tape sling and a krab. The next bit was not only steep but also holdless, stretching to a ledge and a belay.

This was the Pendulum Traverse - clip the krab, lower away and swing across to a groove below the stance. Easy! Actually it was, but was the sling to be trusted? Back it up with a nut and the second rope. Tim was out of sight around the arete but did a very good job with the ropes.

On reaching the belay, I found two pegs - possibly from Joe Brown's first ascent. They were usable, but quite rusty. Placed two more nuts and stitched it all together to become bomb proof. Tim followed with an apparent ease, retrieving my pendulum back up nut and relying completely on the in-situ sling to make his swing - no problem.

Tim led the next pitch, more or less straight up in grooves. What looked reasonable was rather steep, with the good holds in the early part fading away near the top where it overhung a little and where they would have been more useful. An interim stance was taken to overcome this - we landed gasping on the ledge above.

This stance was in a 90 deg corner, shared with two pinnacles and quite uncomfortable. We were also back to mud and weeping damp.

Couldn't get any gear until some way above the stance - a micro nut that would probably have popped out if tested, above a better nut. An off balance traverse leftwards, with minimal hand holds led to a crack line in which I expected to find holds and lodge good gear. I got there to find imaginary holds and minimal gear options. A very ineffective friend was the best I could do. Teetered up, heart in mouth, 200' above our sacks and grasped better holds. Tim came up, took a higher line on the traverse and wandered across nonchalantly.

We were now in the Green Gallery - lush water holding vegetation on a sloping terrace. Thoroughly unpleasant in smooth soled rock boots.

We zigzagged across and up, roped from one poor belay to another until we reached the bottom of the Direct Finish of the East Buttress (HS) and the easiest way up the Pinnacle. We climbed it in two pitches, both were damp and vegetated up an open corner. Tim led the longer, second pitch; hazards not only of wet grass and dribbling water, but loose rock as well. It didn't look as if it got much traffic.

It was lovely to emerge into the sunshine at the top and we lay on the dry grass for a while. It was around 2 pm; plenty of time for another route, but I hadn't got the zip to even consider it all again. Tim expressed his disappointment - was he kidding?

I later learnt that Llithrig means slippery; the name fits.

This was my first climb on Cloggy - despite living in Wales and climbing on Snowdonia rock for many years. I'd never even visited it until earlier this year - got hooked, then bought a guide book - we picked a route and did it.

Magnificent, scary, exciting and BIG.

Post Script

When Tim and I climbed Llithrig, we had the whole crag to ourselves; the weather continued to be good and two week ends later, I returned and climbed two other routes. Then, there were possibly 30 ropes along the crag, with queues for routes such as White Slab.

Apart from at Tremadoc on a sunny bank holiday I'd not seen so many climbers at a crag before.

Wonder what it would have been like in the Pass?

EVEN MORE CAVES AND KARST OF MADAGASCAR!

John and Valerie Middleton

Following an extended visit to several little visited areas of Madagascan karst during the autumn of 2003 the authors note their observations, and a few small but interesting new finds.

INTRODUCTION

As the basic maps and background information are not repeated it is intended that this short article should be read in conjunction with that covering our previous visit published in "The Yorkshire Rambler", Summer 2002, Issue 17, pages 49-56. In the aforementioned article two print errors occurred regarding the survey captions: figures 2 and 4 on pages 52 and 54 should be transposed. The purpose of our visit, as before, was both botanical and Speleological: oh yes, and adventure!

Extensive references are to be found in "Cave and Karst Science" (see note at end) but are not included here due to lack of space.

MAHAFALY

THE ITAMPOLO REGION

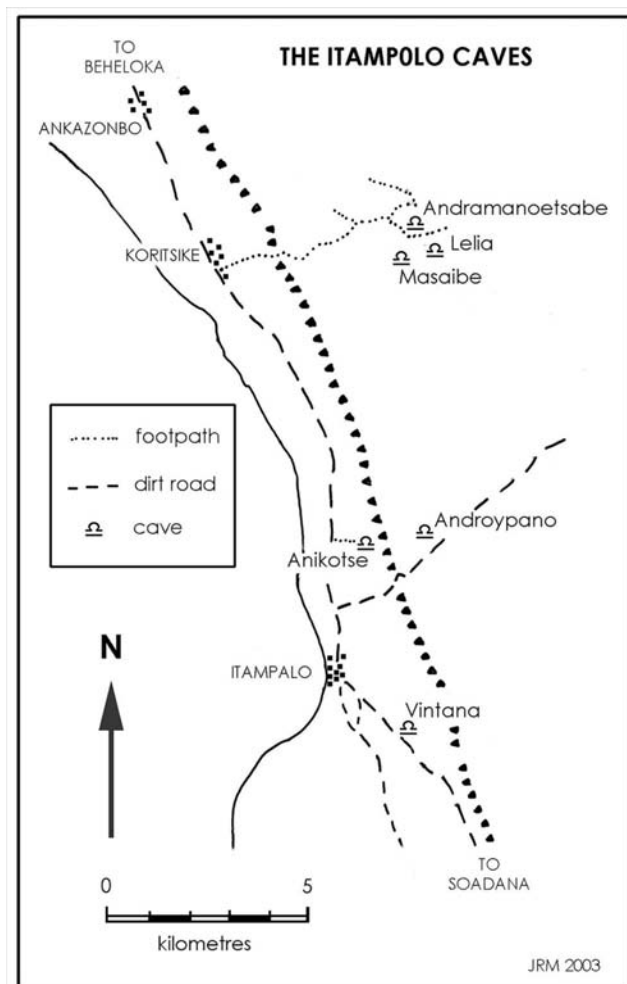


fig. 1

GENERAL.

Within the area of the map a low Quaternary coralline sandstone covered terrace extends from the coast to the base of a prominent and continuous escarpment rising to an altitude of 120m. This terrace is variously covered by dry forest and scrubs or used for subsistence farming by members of the local communities. The steep sided slope of the escarpment is extremely stony and many small karren etched limestone cliffs protrude from it. Once on top the generally flat plateau is densely covered in xerophytic forest dominated by succulents such as *Adansonia rubrostipa*, *Alluaudia ascendens* and *Pachypodium lamerii*.

Much of the ground is thinly sand covered but there are extensive exposures of flat bedded and occasionally fractured limestone. This surface is enlivened with many perfectly round solution pockets and flat bottomed kamenitzas. Caves, both above and below the escarpment tend to be of collapsed doline origin. No true horizontal development has yet been found.

From discussions with the local population, potential for new finds would seem considerable but exploration within the forest is difficult. In addition, it is not always clear what constitutes a new find, as there would seem to be few accurately noted positions for most previous explorations, nor are cave names always consistent. We have exclusively used local names and spellings after reference to both our guide and confirmation from local villagers.

Brief visits by several French speleologists have been made.

CAVES MENTIONED ON THE MAP.

ANDROYPANO. Situation. S24° 39' 00.7" E43° 57' 47. 5" altitude 87m. By following the old, now impassable road to Ejeda onto the plateau and then for a further 300m, a small path on the left turns into the fantasy-land succulent forest. Some 150m along this, close to an impressive baobab (*Adansonia rubrostipa*), a 15m x 9m hole suddenly appears. The karren-fluted walls of the shaft descend 4m to 6m before belling out into a vast chamber whose sides we could not reach with any stones. About 30m directly below the opening it is possible to see the top of a debris pile, the steep sides of which quickly vanish into the darkness.

We estimated the depth to be at least 50m.

Many Greater Vasa Parrots and African Black Swifts constantly swooped in and out of the hole.

Our guide stated that they nested within, an occurrence that is not normal practice for either bird.

It was rumoured that a further 2 hour walk down the road several similar caverns were to be found but lack of time prevented us confirming this.



photo 1.

The entrance to Androypano
Note the many strange plants (Alluadia)

ANIKOTSE. Situation. S24° 38' 18.3" E43° 56' 56.9"
altitude 24m.

Heading north from Itampolo a track, difficult to find without assistance, leads to the east about 1,500m from the turn off to Ejeda.

Ten minutes down this is a 6m-diameter cavern roof collapse into which the path makes its way.

The chamber measures roughly 30m x 15m and is up to 4m high. A hole in one corner gives access to a small water supply used by local villagers and takes the depth to -10m.

VINTANA. Situation. S24° 42' 07.2" E43° 57' 51.2"
altitude 12m at lower edge.

Vintana is a classic cenote situated 2km south of Itampolo and just 50m east of the main road. It is not easily seen due to the thick scrub.

The hole is roughly oval in shape measuring 40m x 35m with the vertical walls varying between 5m and 10m to the lake surface.

A large species of Ficus grows from the water and allows access, albeit precariously, to the surface. However, there is a local "faddy" concerning swimming here so this should not be contemplated.

ANDRAMANOETSABE. Situation. S24° 34' 31.3" E43° 57' 58.4" altitude 36m at point of entry.

From the small village of Karitsike a sandy footpath heads eastwards to a steep ascent onto the escarpment at just over 100m.

From here it is almost 3 kilometres until the route descends into either a valley or enclosed depression (the forest prevented accurate observation).

Just prior to the bottom a further path on the left leads to a very impressive collapsed doline.

This is approximately 50m by 35m in size with a well trodden path leading down to a large and murky pool used by both humans and cattle. The vertical walls above the pool rise at least 50m directly onto the plateau.

This must place the permanent but shallow lake on or near the water table.

LELIA. A short but difficult walk through the forest from Andramanoetsabe to the opposite valley side gives access at an altitude of 22m to an equally impressive site.

The hole is roughly oval and 70m at its widest. Most of the walls are undercut, quite extensively so at one end where these are highest (18m). Beneath this lies a cool, crystal clear pool apparently untouched by the villagers.

Various large trees such as Tamarind and different Ficus species comfortably grow from the floor. Great Vasa Parrots were again much in evidence.

MASAIIBE. This large gash in the hillside can be spotted on the descent towards Andramanoetsabe and is situated not far from Lelia.

Unfortunately due to the dense forest we could not find our way to it. We assume its similarity with the other two nearby caves but...

TOLIARA

THE ONIHALY REGION.

GENERAL.

Flat-topped limestone hills of Eocene origin dominate the landscape north of the perennial Onihaly River. These descend steeply via forest-covered slopes to a fertile plain.

Notable caves are unknown on either the slopes or at river level but two large freshwater springs, each of several cumecs, resurge close to the villages of Ambohimavelona and Ambinanitelo.

The gently rolling plateaux (lembalemba) situated between 180m and 300m altitude were, until less than four years ago, covered in dense xerophytic forest.

This is currently being removed at an alarming rate by an influx of new farmers from Toliara hoping to grow maize.

As much as 75% of the surface area is covered in limestone and whilst minor karren features are obvious the rock is also much fractured.

A few caves, in the form of large shafts are known and with the removal of the forest it is possible that others will become obvious.

by 15m high passage descends at an angle of 45° over boulders until a leveling out at -85m occurs. At this point the passage is also appreciably larger.

Due to a lack of light this was as far as I visited. Stones thrown around did not indicate any further drop but this could not be confirmed.

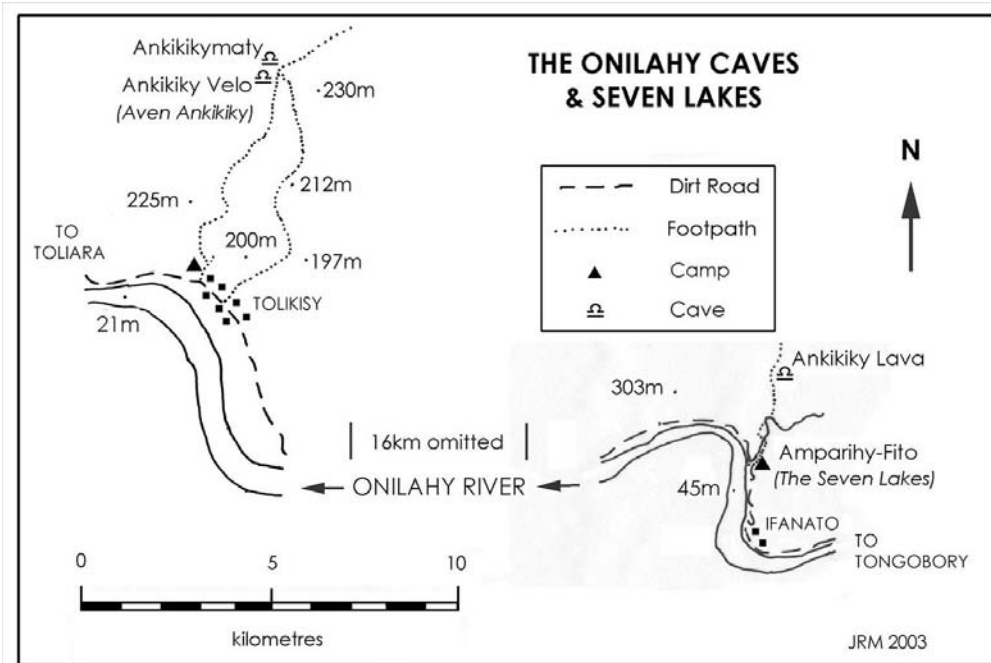


fig. 2

My two guides stated that whilst they had brought the occasional passing tourist to this cave none had been equipped for exploration.

It is difficult to believe that this cave is unrecorded but the only other major cave noted in the region is *Gouffre de Tolikisy* - a name my guides did not recognise.

This is recorded as being 160m deep but an exact location is never stated.

ANKIKIKY VELO (aven Ankikiky). Situation. S23° 24' 14.7" E43° 58' 34.4" altitude 228m.

This great chasm, well worth a visit, is found on the Lembalemba Ankikiky a 7km walk from the village of Tolikisy.

It is situated in a shallow depression and measures 60m in diameter with its vertical sides plunging 70m to a boulder strewn and vegetated floor without exit.

French cavers have descended Ankikiky Velo several times in the past 40 years.

ANKIKIKYMATY Situation. S23° 24' 50.8" E43° 58' 35.9" altitude 230m.

A 15-minute walk from Ankikiky Velo leads to this second impressive hole. It appears as a 25m diameter shaft descending 15m to a large soil and rock-covered bottom from which a Tamarind and species of *Draceana* and *Pandanus* grow.

On our visit this area was also home to a well fed 2m long Madagascan Ground Boa which our guide refused to pass!

This level is reached by an awkward scramble down the crumbling shaft wall. Opposite the entry point a 20m wide

Decary and Kiener do note that a 205m rope is needed but this still does not equate with my experience where a descent to 85m is an easy scramble leaving only a further 75m for a rope if indeed the passage continues as a shaft.

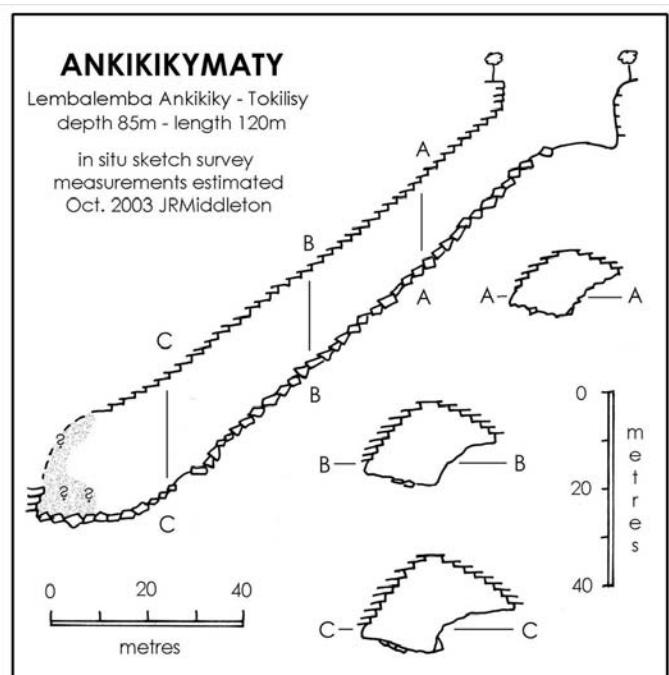


fig. 3

ANKIKIKY LAVA. Situation.
 S23° 30' 29.1" E44° 09' 46.1" altitude 171m.

This cave can be found 3.3km from our delightful Seven Lakes base camp by following a regularly used cattle trail from the end of the lakes.

It occurs as a 2.5m diameter shaft to the right of the path and is obviously formed by cavern collapse. The thickness of limestone is barely 0.5m at the entrance from where it enlarges to form a great chamber. With the aid of the midday sun it was possible to see down to the top of a debris pile some 30m below.

Due to its accessibility this cave must have been recorded but to date I have been unable to confirm this.

THE SEVEN LAKES (Amparihy-Fito).
 Situation at small vehicle park. S23° 31' 33.9" E44° 09'16.1" altitude 59m.

Two kilometres west of Ifanata the Antsimaha stream spectacularly descends through a series of azure blue pools separated by tufa cascades and waterfalls. These lakes may be up to 60m in length and 4m deep and extend for over 700m.

A superb gallery forest adorns the valley sides in which both the Ring-tailed lemur and Verreaux's sifaka are frequently seen. Tufa deposits can be viewed for a further 2km upstream but access is difficult. In addition, tufa is frequently in evidence along the drive between Tolikisy village and the Seven Lakes.

Salomon has published a detailed paper on these deposits.

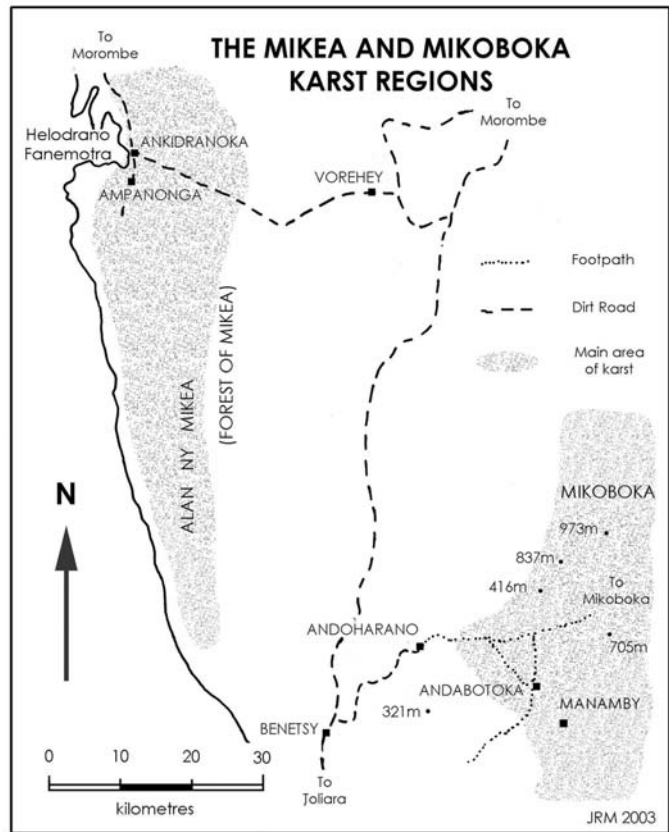


fig. 4

**THE MIKOBOKA
 THE ANDABOTOKA PLATEAU .**

A brief visit to this stunningly beautiful wilderness confirmed both its inaccessibility and potential for new discoveries.

Inaccessibility because the furthest point vehicles can be taken is to the village of Andoharano.

From here it is a 23km walk to the plateau and village of Andabotoka beyond which lies the slightly higher Manamby and Mikoboka.

All food and water must be carried in.



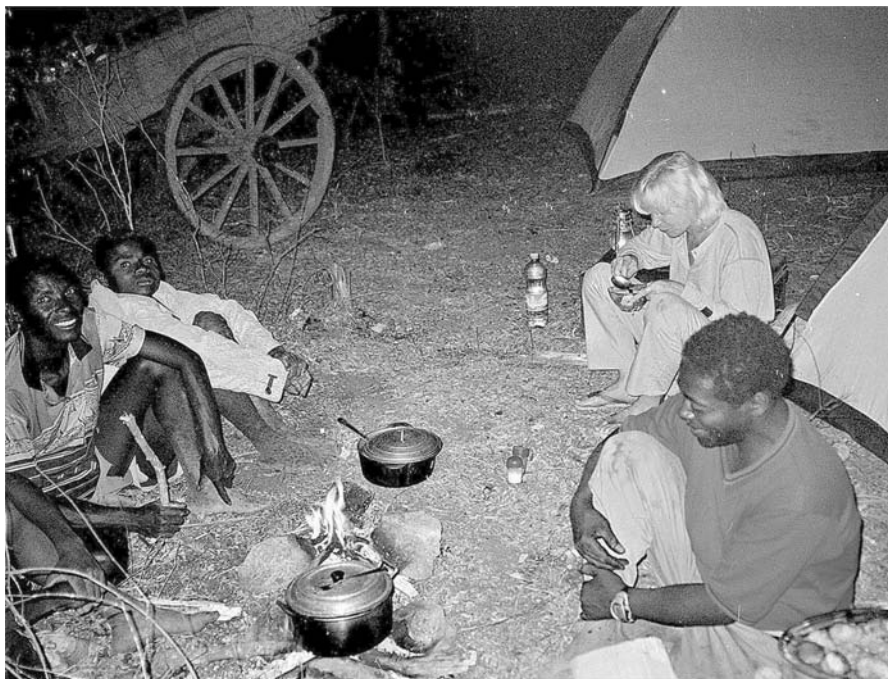
EN ROUTE TO ANDABOTOKA

The plateau is a gently rolling countryside with panoramic views over ancient savannah and dense xerophytic forests.

Dolines, in various shapes and sizes are profuse. Those containing a few trees invariably are also host to exposed limestone and shafts.

Within an hour we had noted the situation of 12 such holes exceeding a depth of 10m.

Our local guide, who had also assisted two previous French expeditions, stated that all the Andabotoka, Manamby and Mikoboka lembalembas are riddled with shafts of varying diameter and depth (to -200m) of which only a small proportion had so far been descended.



ANDABOTOKA CAMP

THE MIKEA

THE AMPONANGA AREA The Alan ny Mikea is a vast flat region to 58m above sea level. It is extremely dry and hot and is once more covered in a dense xerophytic forest.

To the north of the Helodrano Fanemotra (Bay of Assassins) and as far as Morombe the forest grows above a Quaternary dune karst. This exhibits itself as frequent shallow exposures of eroded rock and occasionally as collapsed dolines and small caves to 175m in length.

South of the Helodrano Fanemotra horizontally bedded Miocene limestone, usually covered in deep sand, hosts an interesting but widely spaced array of cenotes, collapsed dolines, and exposed rock usually well fretted by karren.

Our objective was to similarly explore this region but the deep sand, even with the aid of Zebu and carts prevented us penetrating further south than Amponanga.

Just 1,500m from the village we were taken to a cave known to the villagers as ANDRANAMBA at S22° 14' 09.2" E43° 19' 10.9" alt. 18m.

It appears as a 20m by 15m wide vertically sided hole to 12m deep within thick forest. Access can be gained by scrambling steeply down one end. Various large trees grow on the bottom including Tamarind. Opposite the descent the wall is undercut to form a cave 15m long and 10m wide completely filled by an up to 2m deep lake.

The blindfish *Typhleotris madagascariensis* is reported to live here but on our visit we could find no trace of it.

The surface area above the cave and beyond exhibits very impressive karren features with several holes breaching the cavern roof. The rock is of a distinctive pink colour. Salomon has published a paper on this dune karst (see references).

MOUNT IBITY



photo 4.

Mount Ibity. Antombanboanjo is just off the picture in the left hand corner.

The 2,254m high Mount Ibity is a small but readily accessible massif situated some 25km south of Antsirabe and west of the main RN7 road. It is composed of Precambrian quartzites, pegmatite and dolomite.

The surrounding landscape is dotted with small quarries from which semi precious stones are extracted including Tourmaline and rose Quartz.

The unusual surface soil is home to an abundance of plants endemic to the region, the more interesting being *Pachypodium brevicaule*, *Euphorbia quartzicola* and *Aloe ibitiensis*.

Karst features have been occasionally reported.

In 1991 a German team of speleologists explored Grotte Albert, at an altitude of 1,900m, to a depth of 43m and length of 152m.

It was our intention to revisit this cave with a guide from the village of Ibity. Some 3 hours spectacular walking later, and at an altitude of 2,112m (GPS), we were shown a cave in an extremely wild region just below one of the summit ridges.

We were informed that this cave was called "ANTOMBANBOANJO" (the place of ferns and orchids).

It has three entrances with the easiest access being at the point of a much vegetated cavern roof collapse. The initial large chamber is impressive and solution features are much in evidence on the solid walls and roof. Breakdown is extensive down one side of the passageway. Malagasy graffiti in the entrance area show that the local population knows this cave. However, we have been unable to find any written record for it.

The altitude of 2,112m would confirm Antombanboanjo as the highest cave yet reported in Madagascar.

We did not find Grotte Albert or any other karst features so we assume that these must be on the opposite side of the massif.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

We should particularly like to thank our guide and friend, Michel Rakotonirina, for all his enthusiasm and assistance: to Madagascar Airtours for their excellent organisation; and to all the Malagasy people we met whose friendliness contributed greatly to our trip.

REFERENCES.

Detailed references can be found in Cave and Karst Science, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2002. Pg. 20: also additions in Cave and Karst Science, Vol. 30 2003. Pgs. 125-128.

We currently have most of these references in our own possession and would be pleased to show them to anyone wishing to pursue investigations.

PLANS

Fig. 1. The Itampolo cave region.

Fig. 2. The Onihaly caves and Seven Lakes area.

Fig. 3. Plan of Ankikikymaty.

Fig. 4. The Mikea and Mikoboka regions.

Fig. 5. Plan of Antombanboanjo.

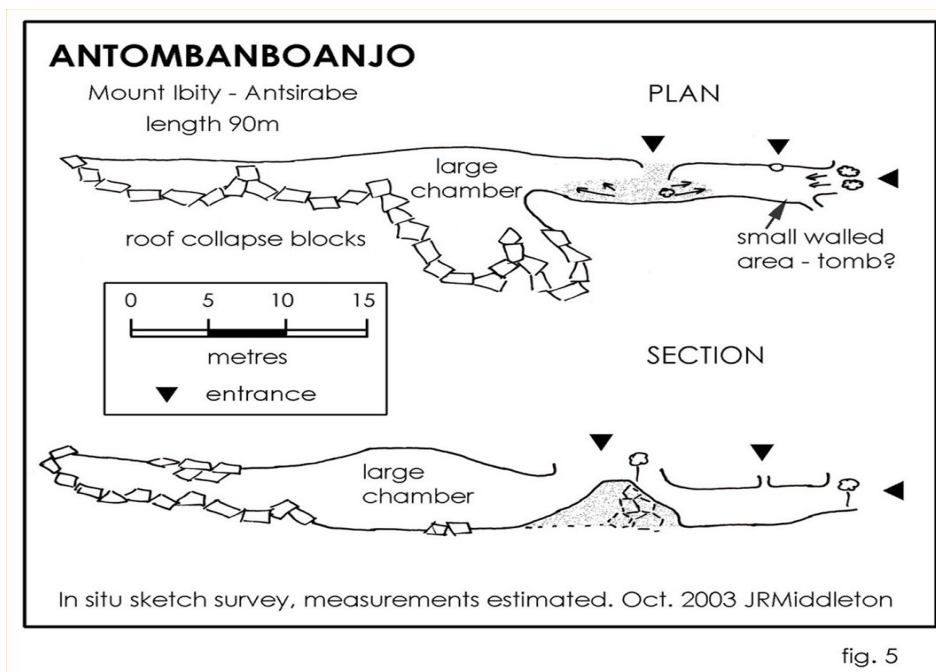


fig. 5

ANTOMBANBOANJO . Situation. The north side of Mount Ibity at S20° 05' 50.0" E47° 00' 22.0" Altitude 2,112m. Length 90m.

A TOUCH OF THE BALKANS

Roy Denney

Many members will have enjoyed the rugged and often mountainous coast of the old Yugoslavia which was a place I had hoped to visit before the troubles broke out and the country started to disintegrate.

All is still not well in southern parts of the region but I have just visited Croatia and found it settled and increasingly prosperous and very welcoming.

I was part of the six man crew of a yacht sailing out of Rogosnika which found itself battling gale force seven winds often in near freezing weather before having to take shelter for two days, behind one of the larger islands whilst storm force winds blew themselves out.



For the technical amongst you with sea going interests we were sailing a friend's Westerly Oceanlord 41.

We flew out in October with limited knowledge of the weather patterns at that time of year as my friend had only moved his boat out there in the spring and this was his first late-in-the-year visit.

We got some idea of what to expect when we flew in over snow capped mountains in turbulent weather.

Croatia only became independent of the old Yugoslavia in 1992 and only has a population of just over 4 million but has an enormous coastline. Most of the people live in the fertile lands, around the capital Zagreb, inland and to the

north, where the climate is typically continental but the long western coast is backed by arid limestone mountains dissected by gorges and river systems where a few people scratch a living.

This coastal area enjoys a typically Mediterranean climate until winter imposes itself, with many small villages along the coast providing excellent facilities and local fish and wine contributing to first class cuisine.

The country is only about the size of Ireland but is nearly as much made up of territorial waters as it is land as it has over 1000 islands of one size or another. The coast line is nearly 18000 miles long given that there is a continuous series of bays and inlets which now provide for a burgeoning tourist trade largely involving water sports.

Our fears were confirmed when we arrived to find most yachts had been pulled out for the winter including our own and we had to spend the first night ashore before having it re-launched the following morning.

The sea does however remain surprisingly warm as I can personally confirm after several dips, one of which was involuntary.

Croatia has very few beaches as such but the rocky coastline and clear waters are backed up by numerous national parks and we had hoped to visit several but we only had one day of good weather which limited our excursions.



AN OLD SEA DOG

The weather was largely dry apart from a couple of dramatic thunderstorms accompanied by torrential downpours but the winds were never below force 5 and usually considerably stronger and there was a distinct nip in the air.

We did take advantage of the one good day we had to sail into Skradin on an inland lake before walking off into the hills of the Krka National Park where we found waterfall cascades that would stand comparison with any in the world.



ROSKI LOWER CASCADES
KRKA NATIONAL PARK

Given the historic sites of interest also on offer it will not be long before package holidays and low cost flights start serving the area but I would certainly recommend it to any of you seeking an activity trip and would suggest doing so before tourists start crowding out the small towns with their present charm.

THE OLD WALLED TOWN
OF TROGIR,
GUARDING THE
APPROACHES TO
SPLIT



THE EARLY HISTORY OF DUNALD MILL HOLE, NETHER KELLET, LANCASHIRE

S.A. Craven.

Dunald Mill Hole, situated in the limestone east of Morecambe Bay at SD515676 1½ km. ESE of Nether Kellet, must have been known to the local inhabitants from time immemorial. The conspicuous entrance, immediately adjacent to a road and an old corn mill, is about 7 m. high into which a respectable stream flows before disappearing into a sump after about 230 m.

It was first described, in the extravagant language of the time by Adam Walker, a "lecturer in natural and experimental philosophy" of London. He had previously visited caves in Derbyshire, and explored Dunald Mill Hole on 24 August 1760:

"We are led to it by a brook, near as big as the new river, which after turning a corn-mill, juft at the entrance of the cave, runs in at its mouth by feveral beautiful cafcades, continuing its courfe two miles under a large mountain, and at laft making its appearance again near Carnforth, a village in the road to Kendal. The entrance of this fubterraneous channel has fomething moft pleafingly horrible in it.

"From the mill at the top, you defcend for about ten yards perpendicular, by means of chinks in the rocks and fhrubs of trees; the road then is almoft parallel to the horizon leading to the right, a little winding, till you have fome hundreds of yards thick of rocks and mineral above you. In this manner we proceeded, fometimes through vaults fo capacious, we could not fee either roof or fides; and fometimes on all four, from its narrownefs, ftill following the brook, which entertained us with a fort of harmony well-fuiting the place; for the different height of its falls were as fo many keys of mufic, which all being conveyed to us by the amazing echo, greatly added to the majeftic horror which furrounded us.

"In our return we were more particular in our obfervations. The beautiful lakes (formed by the brook in the hollow part of the cavern) realize the fabulous Styx; and the murmuring falls from one rock to another broke the rays of our candles, fo as to form the moft romantic vibrations and appearances upon the variegated roof. The fides too are not lefs remarkable for fine colouring; the damp, the creeping vegetables, and the feams in the marble and limeftone parts of the rock make as many tints as are feen in the rainbow, and are covered with a perpetual varnifh from the juft weeping fprings that trickle from the roof. The curious in grottos, cafcades, &c. might here obtain a juft tafte of nature.

"When we arrived at the mouth and once more hailed all-cheering day-light, I could not but admire the uncouth manner in which nature has thrown together thofe huge rocks, which compofe the arch over the entrance, but as if confcious of its rudenefs, fhe has cloathed it with trees and fhrubs of the moft various and beautiful verdure, which bend downwards, and with their leaves cover all the rugged parts of the rock."

Walker (1731 - 1821) was a self-taught son of a Patterdale woollen manufacturer. He became an itinerant teacher of mathematics and physics in Manchester, elsewhere in the north, Eton, Westminster and other public schools.

He also was an inventor of machinery for raising water, watering land, rotating lighthouse lights and thermo-ventilation.

It is clear that at that early date Dunald Mill Hole was on the itinerary of those visitors to the Lake District who approached from the south via Preston and Lancaster. It was included, but erroneously spelled, among the "principal Views and Situations" of Lancashire in a 1793 atlas of England.

In 1800 appeared a more useful description of the cave. "... a rivulet or large brook, which, after turning the large water wheel of this mill, immediately tumbles down a rugged descent of a few yards, and enters the gaping jaws of a rocky chasm on the side of a limestone craggy hill. The frightful gap is romantically fringed with trees, which, growing from the rocks, and impending over the entrance, contribute greatly to the awful gloom. Immense fragments of rocks hang from the roof of the orifice, as if ready to drop down, and crush the intruding visitor, forming altogether one of the rudest and most grotesque entrances imaginable. It is nearly as high, but narrower than, and otherwise very different from Yorda's Cave, near Ingleton.

"We were so unfortunate as to visit this place after heavy rains, which had so swelled the river as to render our passage up this curious cavern very difficult, and not without danger. After travelling along these gloomy mansions about thirty yards, with a very gentle descent, and winding a little to the right, we found it necessary to return. Nothing can be conceived more alarming than the appearance of this rugged cavern: the numberless large chinks and crevices grinning on every side; the dark passage before us, unfathomable to the eye; the massy lumps of rock projecting from the roof and walls; and the dashing of the water from rock to rock, heard at a distance in awful yells - all conspire to alarm the stranger unaccustomed to such scenes.

"This, however, is not always the case; for in dry seasons the cave may be explored, not only without danger, but even with pleasure to the curious in these singular works of nature. The water then, instead of forming a disagreeable appendage, delights the ear with its harmonious tinkling; while the beautiful hanging petrifications, and other curious accompaniments of this subterranean passage, please the eye.

"We were informed by the miller, that this cavern, in a dry season, might be explored with ease to the length of 150 yards, when the roof drops at once so low, that it is necessary to creep three or four yards; after which it opens into another spacious apartment for about ten yards, and again falls, obliging the visitor to proceed, as before, a little way in a creeping posture; soon after this, he is finally stopped by a deep pool of water, formed by the brook, which accompanied the tourist during the whole of this subterranean excursion.

"The roof, according to the information we received, sometimes rises to the height of twelve or fifteen yards; the apartments are often spacious, and the walls curiously coloured, and encrusted with a sort of spar. The little river, which finds a course along this singular cave, appears near Carnforth, a village on the road to Kendal, after running under ground for about two miles. This is said to have been proved by the husks of oats being put in here, and coming out again at Carnforth."

This use of husks to trace the rising of the water is not implausible, given the corn mill at the entrance.

Dunald Mill Hole was sufficiently popular for an engraving of the entrance to be published in 1846 (see fig.), yet Jonathan Otley in 1837 correctly thought that it is "inferior in extent and grandeur to some in the West Riding of Yorkshire and in Derbyshire". He repeated this opinion in the 1849 edition of his book, the first to contain the supplement "Lonsdale and the Caves".

In 1865 Dunald Mill Hole was explored by Addison Crofton, a pupil at Cheltenham School, his two brothers and a Kendal clergyman. They took with them a rope and compass, cautiously "taking bearings and mapping down carefully the ground we passed over, and in this way secured a safe retreat and made a useful guide book for future descents." Unfortunately the intended guide book does not appear to have been published.

Edward Baines in 1870 was the first to give a more elaborate opinion about the destination of the water. He stated, without giving the evidence, that the stream rose at Dingle Pot (vide infra), and at Meerbeck (alias Carnforth Beck) at the bottom of Carnforth Brow.

On 29 June 1889 the members of the Geological Section of the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club, on the occasion of their first meet, made a thorough exploration of Dunald Mill Hole. The detailed report by J.P. Smith, which has not since been improved, well indicates that there is a limit to that which unorganised individuals can achieve. It needed the resources of a club to do the library research, organise transport, complete the exploration and survey, prepare the lecture and publish the report.

Smith admits that although on many occasions he had been near the cave, it was not until 1889 that with two of his brothers he ventured inside. This preliminary visit made him decide that, "a more fitting subject for the Geological Section of the Club could not be found". He may have been prompted to enter the cave by a lengthy description published earlier that year in a Lancaster newspaper.

On the appointed day six members and four guests, guided by young John Taylor of "Kellet" and using 75 gm. tallow candles and magnesium ribbon for illumination, explored the cave. Photographs were taken by R.C. Preston (Smith's cousin) of Lancaster. On 25 July 1889 Messrs.. A. Hawcridge (Secretary of the Geological Section), J.G. Lister, J.P. Smith and Williamson, supervised by J.G. Lawn, mine surveyor of Dalton-in-Furness, returned to survey the cave.

During the August 1889 bank holiday, Messrs.. R.C. Preston (the photographer), J.P. Smith and the latter's two brothers returned to Dunald Mill Hole with a "cowrake". They lowered the wet crawl out of the then terminal chamber at 35 m., but were unable to make any significant further progress.

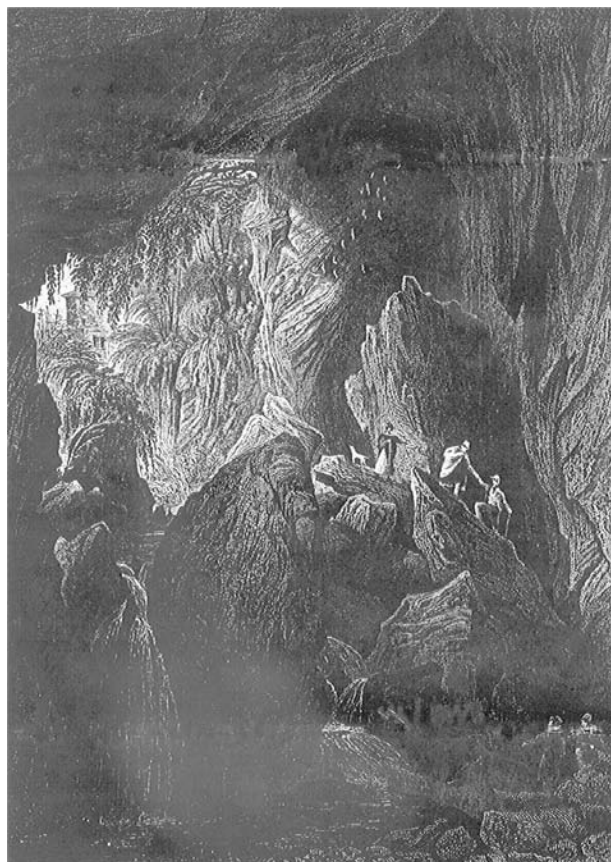
Having described the cave and its exploration, Smith then discussed at length the possible risings of the stream, but made no claim for the reliability of his conclusions. He described the local hydrology in detail, and concluded that the rising may be at the following intermittent springs:

Dingle Pot Hole, about 1.6 km. due west of Over Kellet;
at
Brewer's Barn Hole, about 1.6 km. NW of Over Kellet and just north of the Lancaster - Kendal Canal;
and / or at
Netherbeck Farm, about 1 km. NE of Carnforth,

or may just disappear into the ground, depending on the volume of water entering Dunald Mill Hole.

Smith's scarce report, printed for private distribution among the members and his friends, is a model of objective speleological and hydrological observation.

On 07 June 1890 three members of the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club returned to Dunald Mill Hole, but there was too much water to permit "any extended observation".



During the first 50 years of its existence, the members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club made only one recorded visit to Dunald Mill Hole.

Samuel Cuttriss was there on 04 September 1903.

It is probable that the other members overlooked the cave because there are bigger and better holes to be explored nearer to Leeds and therefore easier of access.

Another early visitor was Charles E. Burrow of the Yorkshire Speleological Association who explored it in 1907 and "two or three years" previously.

DUNALD MILL HOLE, IN OR BEFORE 1845

TAKEN FROM AN ENGRAVING BY R. SANDS
OF A DRAWING BY G. PICKERING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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S A Craven

ERTA ALE AND THE DANAKIL

John & Valerie Middleton

A brief account of a recent visit to the wild, desolate, and unbelievably exciting Danakil, an area of frequent volcanic activity, lava lakes, salt, sandstorms and the magnificent Afar people.

Day 1. Eagerly clutching the long awaited permit our two 4x4s (for safety) turned off the main Addis Ababa to Djibouti road and at last headed northwards towards the infamous Danakil Depression.

At first the newly "improved" dirt road took us quickly across expansive but desolate plains; however as we reached the first hills we frequently sighted the nomadic Afar with their domed huts, camels and goats. The occasional ostrich, gazelle or jackal would also enliven the scene.

Sixty kilometres from the turnoff we came to Silsa, a ramshackle village of perhaps 30 patchwork huts inhabited by itinerants, passing salt workers and a small contingent of the military. These latter manned a road block and informed us that it was too dangerous to continue further at that time of day (6 p.m.).

We obligingly pitched camp beneath their gaze and just opposite the very noisy bar - soft drinks and light beer only.

By eleven everything quietened down and we fell asleep only to be suddenly awakened as the most violent thunderstorm commenced. We soon realised that our tents were not waterproof and hastily bundled them, all our gear and ourselves into the vehicles where our Afar guides, drivers, cook and assistants also sat. The storm continued throughout the night and, permanently cramped together, no sleep was possible.

Ah well, things can't get worse!

Day 2. It dawned dry, but deep puddles and mud were everywhere. Breakfast, even of the tasty local flat bread, jam and excellent Ethiopian coffee was taken in silence. It didn't last long though, the ensuing scenery of entire hills made of obsidian, others of pumice, and the rest of basalts and geological wonders quickly made us forget the previous night.

Even though we were still in mountainous terrain it was obvious that we were slowly descending and as an altitude of zero slowly approached (GPS) so did our excitement. It came and passed just before a heavily guarded bridge over a violently flooded wadi. The well-armed soldiers, unused to seeing foreigners at their checkpoint, kept us chatting.

Not far from here a wheel spectacularly came off our second vehicle - luckily nobody was harmed and we had two spares. With impressive views over the large salt lake of Ad-Freera we slowly descended towards the town of the same name at -106m. The town was even wilder than Silsa, the same ramshackle buildings but with goats, camels and crowds of very friendly people everywhere. These people were mainly refugees working for the salt.

We parked in the police compound and began our negotiations for a permit to proceed further with the chairman of the town. These progressed on and off for some three hours. Eventually, after much shaking of hands and many smiles we added two armed guards to our team, clutched another piece of paper and set off. This time we really were in the bottom of the Danakil.

The temperature was in the low 40's, it was relatively flat and desert-like though through the haze we could tell that we were vaguely skirting a large volcano.



THE DANAKIL AT -110M

The road was now virtually none existent. We frequently became stuck. Towards dusk a strong wind arose and within minutes we were in an amazing sandstorm where visibility was zero, even with our guides sitting on the bonnet. We were lost and had to stop. It was not possible to cook and it was again a night in the vehicles, this time with two extra guards complete with spiky Kalashnikovs.

After a couple of hours discomfort Adbara, our chief guide, suddenly realised that if the sandstorm turned to rain we could be flooded where we were situated so a slow drive round was made with the aid of our GPS until we had risen a few metres.

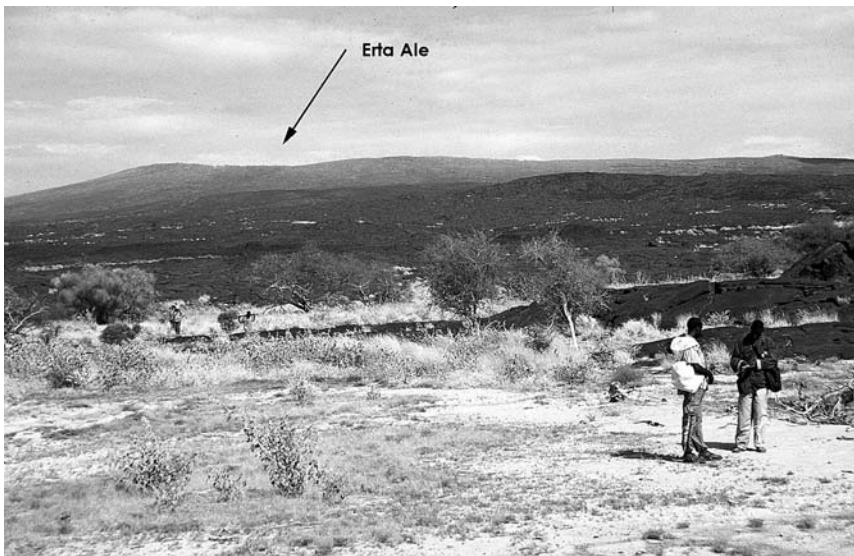
We returned to discomfort, dust, misery, and another night of no sleep.

It definitely couldn't get any worse than this, could it?

Day 3. At the first signs of light the storm slowly subsided and we drove aimlessly until some feature was identified.

Amazingly we were barely a kilometre off course and only 20km from our destination. With soaring spirits we raced across the sand. At a point where this became too treacherous we dispatched a guide to a nearby Afar village to hire camels for carrying food and gear up the mountain.

We then left the sand and drove onto the vast lava fields at the base of the three volcanoes Amaytoli, Gabull and Erta Ale. Erta Ale being the central one. The end of the passable lava finished in a wilderness known as Asbari Kooma.



10K TO GO

Here, we made a base camp, had a good meal, packed our gear for the camels and commenced scrambling up the 10km long lava flows leading to the edge of the caldera at +587m.

The scenery was amazing, some jagged a-a lava, but mostly the smoother, shinier pahoehoe, much riddled

with small lava tubes, topped with weird hornitos and swirled into a multitude of patterns.

It was again well into the 40°s but we reached the caldera rim in about four hours around 6p.m.

The views were sensational both back down the lava flow and forwards into the caldera. We couldn't resist a quick dash through the suffocating fumes to the lava lake before it became dark.

Our excitement was infectious and even though only our interpreter, Salah, spoke a (sometimes incomprehensible) English we were all chatting in bits of Afar, Amheric, Arabic and in the case of Adbara, our chief guide, some passable French.

Dusk fell, it became cooler and we separated into them and us camps huddled together on the exposed mountain side.

An hour later Adbara and Salah stumbled through the darkness and produced a tin of cold beans.

Salah hesitatingly spluttered, "the camels will not arrive tonight, they do not walk in the dark!"

They were terrified and obviously afraid to tell us; we were horrified too! We only wore what we stood up in i.e. T-shirts, trousers and trainers; we had no food and perhaps a litre of water left each.

In the dark - we only had a micro torch - we found a hollow, huddled together on the sharp ash and froze; we definitely couldn't sleep!

It could indeed get worse!

Day 4. At dawn we creaked and groaned into an upright position and tested each other to see if we really were still alive. We were, we had survived and the early morning views were even more amazing. We all chatted incomprehensibly again.

And then the miracle, amongst the lava flows we spotted heavily laden Ali and Lubeck scrambling towards us.

They quickly arrived and amongst even more excited chatter they offloaded pancakes, jam and hot cardamom tea.

There had obviously been panic at base camp when the camels didn't arrive! Ali and Lubeck wanted to turn straight round to run back down (3 hours) to fetch us back lunch (4 hours).

"No way, you can't do that," we all shouted in unison. "We do it for the honour of the camels" stated the proud Lubeck (all our team were Afar). We finally reasoned with them saying that 4 more hours was all we needed to explore the caldera then we would all come down.

We headed back to the lava lake, this time with the wind obligingly blowing the other way so we did not have to run the gauntlet of the fumes .

Because of the brightness the lava lake was even more impressive. The crater measured about 160m across, went about 30m down to a large dry lava ledge filling half the crater and then dropping a further 20m to the bottom where there was a violently active red lava lake constantly bubbling, roaring, and ever changing.



INSIDE ERTA ALE CALDERA

Many films were expended in the next hour! We finished exploring the other surrounding features and then headed back down the mountain arriving at base camp around 1.30 p.m. Lunch was ready and camp was packed.

Apparently they wanted to cross the nearby lowest part of the depression immediately just in case of floods. Dusk then saw us camped on the edge of the desert at -61m adjacent to a lava flow. It was a brilliant starlit night, a perfect campsite, a perfect meal, and for the first time in four nights we slept!

It suddenly couldn't get any better!

Postscript. We obviously couldn't help but have many more adventures on the way back; it's just that kind of country! We then headed for Djibouti to see the equally amazing geological features that this exciting State has to offer - the 60m high travertine towers of Lake Abhe, the sensational salt sea of Lake Assal

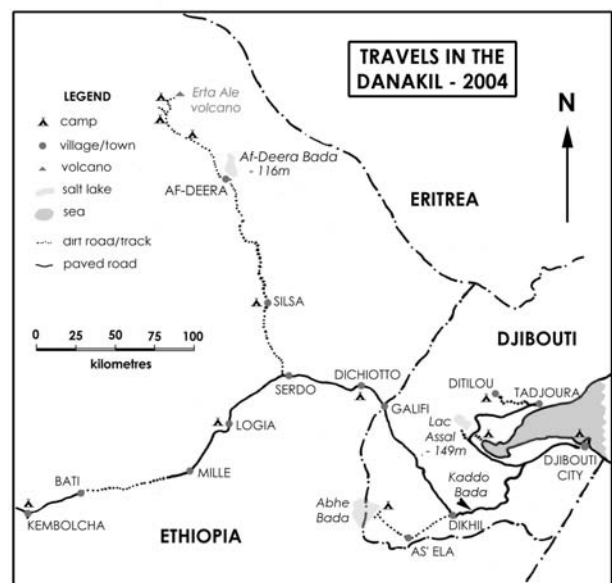
at -156m, Le Ghoubet and the phosphorescent sea, the recent volcanic eruptions, and the wild, beautiful, and friendly Afar people. Oh, and what happened to our camels? Our emissary sent to the village to hire them simply couldn't cross a flooded wadi to make contact just a kilometre from the village!

The Trip.

Ever since reading Thesingers account of his trip to the Danakil and meeting the Afars I had always wanted to visit them. The opportunity came when hostilities in the region seemed to have subsided and a contact in Djibouti said he could organise it.

The team was made up of Jan and Tony Waltham and my wife Valerie and myself, plus, of course Ali and Abro, the drivers, Adbara the guide, Salah the interpreter, Hasan and Lubak the helpers, several others we collected and dropped off en route, and then Kadija the amazingly accomplished cook who produced mouth watering food from nothing.

Bara additionally accompanied us in Djibouti and it was thanks to him and his company "Caravane du Sel" that this expedition was such a success. Our trip was made during January of 2004, reputedly the coolest period. It is still considered a dangerous region due to hostilities between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the many displaced people who roam the region.



A CARTOGRAPHICAL CONUNDRUM

There has been a debate raising its head on and off now for several years, as to where the centre of England is located.

It has developed into an argument about concepts for which there does not appear to be any correct answer. It was a comment about Meriden, near Coventry which started things off amongst my associates. Meriden does claim to be the centre of England.

Recently the BBC entered the debate and fired it up again.

How do you measure the centre of an irregular object such as England or Britain?

So far I have heard 29 different definitions muted but no doubt more will be forthcoming and I know from various conversations at a recent meet, that some of you have taken an interest so I am jotting this down to stimulate more debate.

The one I have always favoured was the point at which you would be furthest from the sea. This would put Meriden only a few miles out but how to measure even this is not a fine art.

Given the shape of Britain the answer on this basis would be the same for both England & Britain which is perhaps the best argument for coming up with something better. However, when looking at England, do you include Wales or should it be from the Welsh border when this is nearer than the sea

However taking this system the OS have decided that the answer for Britain would be just south of Church Flats Farm just the Derbyshire side of the border with Leicestershire.

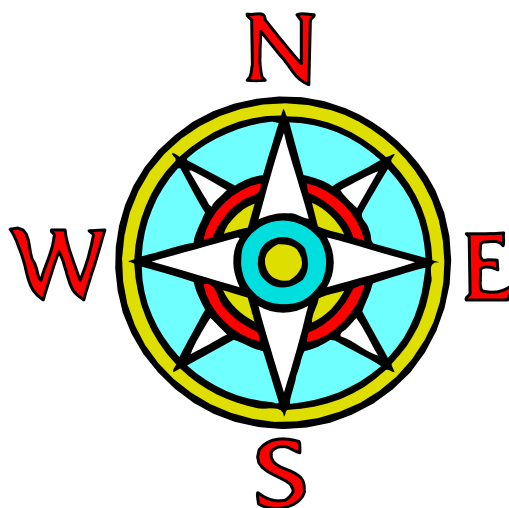
This assumes 'as the crow flies' but a case might be said that as it is flat to the east but going west you have to climb hills then the answer in strides would be further east. Presumably such measurements are done when the tide is in but do you include estuaries?

However, for the purposes of this exercise, they have treated Britain as a whole.

A commonly accepted alternative is to take the longest line of longitude the length of Britain and the halfway point is then the centre.

This comes out at Haltwistle where several local enterprises promote their being at the centre of Britain. Could not the same case not be made for the longest line of latitude although this again would be the same for England as Britain. Again it could be where these two lines meet. Why should they be lines of L or L? Should it not be half way along the longest possible straight line route on mainland Britain.

Possibly the furthest point North and furthest point South should be joined, and then East to West and where these cross should be the centre.



I have seen it calculated by drawing straight lines between the extremities of Britain such that they never cross land and taking the common intersection point of lines then drawn from all the touch points across the country to each other.

Another technique is to effectively rely on gravity and as such define the centre based on mass.

This involves making a cut out of Britain and the centre is then the point at which it would balance on a fulcrum.

This does not of course allow for the volume of land above sea level at any given point so should it be loaded so that the mountains of Cumbria weigh more than the flatlands of Anglia?

Discounting this anomaly the OS calculates the centre of Britain by this means to be near Dunsop Bridge by the Trough of Bowland and not far from Lowstern.

BT do in fact have a call box there, claiming to be at the centre.

They have however made allowance for the off shore islands. How? and should they have?

Using this method for England by itself the centre appears to be Lindley Hall Farm in Leicestershire, between Atherstone and Hinckley which is just over 10 miles north of Meriden.

On the same basis the centre of Scotland is by the north end of Loch Garry by the A9 from Inverness down to Perth.

For Wales it is Cwmystwyth surprisingly near the Cardigan Bay coast although not many of us would recognise it by name.

For those of you of a technical bent I am obliged for the following specifics from a different source :-

*Centre of Great Britain - Mainland only
5.5 km SW of Clitheroe, between Whalley, Billington and Calderstones Hospital.
Grid Reference: SD 72321.72 36671.1.*

Great Britain Mainland plus the seven major islands of Isle of Wight, Anglesey, Arran, Mull, Jura, Islay and Skye.

*The Eastern Edge of Longridge Fell, 1.5 km south east of Walker Fold and 1km north-west of Turner Fold.
Grid Reference: SD 68123.7 41406.29.*

*Centre of England (mainland only)
Lindley Hall Farm, 1.5 km east of Fenny Drayton and 5 km north of Nuneaton.
Grid Reference: SP 36382.2, 96810.73.*

*England (including all surrounding islands)
Between Lindley Hall farm and Lindley Grange 1.5 km east of Fenny Drayton and 5 km north of Nuneaton.
Grid Reference: SP 36373.66 96143.05*

*England and Wales Hurst Green Farm, 2 km west of Curdworth south east of Sutton Coldfield.
Grid Reference: SP 15627.33 92949.96.*

*Wales (mainland only) 3.5km north west of Claerwen Reservoir, next to Afon Claerddu.
Grid Reference: SN 81162.99, 67795.6*

*Wales (including all surrounding islands)
7.5 km north-west of Claerwen Reservoir and 2.5 km south of Cwmystwyth.
Grid Reference: SN 79728.22 , 71704.43.*

*Scotland (mainland only)
0.5 km west of White Bridge on the B846 (General Wade's military road) and 5.5 km south of Tummel Bridge.
Grid Reference: NN 76731.26, 53751.42*

*Scotland (including all surrounding islands)
3 km east of the northern tip of Loch Garry.
Grid Reference: NN66784.93, 71599.4.*

*Entire UK (including all islands)
7 km north west of Dunsop Bridge on Whitendale Hanging Stones
Grid Reference: SD 64188.3, 56541.43.*

*Centre of London
300m east of Waterloo Station.
Grid Reference TQ31330.87 79647.52 .*

*Northern Ireland (including all surrounding islands)
Grid reference: 97004.44 533740.17*

*Northern Ireland (mainland only)
Grid Reference: 96962.33 533666.07*

Source: Strategy for Country Calculations and Boundary Line 1999 (Districts) for London.

From the OS site: -

The point furthest from the sea in the British Isles is at Grid Reference SK 257144. This lies just east of Church Flatts Farm, approximately 1 mile south-east of Coton in the Elms, Derbyshire.

But then that is just their way of doing it!

If you take all this too seriously it will drive you mad.

Roy Denney



YRC IN SARDINIA Extended Meet Report

The meet was based at Cala Gonone with the first arrivals on 26 April and the rear guard departing on 15 May, a 21 day meet? Not so. Most members stayed for 10 days within this period.

Those in the advanced party enjoyed the location and would certainly return for another meet but in a more central location near the mountains, Oliena was suggested as suitable.

It was disappointing that the two halves of the meet did not meet up and there was, in essence, two meets at different times using different accommodation, not that this is a problem but we should endeavour to be there at the same time.

As a guide the self catering accommodation was less expensive than the half board at the POP Hotel. Not that either were expensive and with the excellent Ryanair service another visit is worth considering.

We were clearly very early in the tourist season and many facilities were not open, the result - few people on the hills and empty roads except when the police closed the steep main road with many hairpins, between Dalgari to Cala Gonone for speed trials. Super cars and bikes, air thick with testosterone and we had to find another tortuous route back to base.

According to the locals we experienced the wettest spring in Sardinia since 1957, 2 days of torrential rain and those annoying showers when it rained for 3 minutes every 2 hours.

Spring is the right time to go all excursions were delayed by flower gazing, Rory and Sue (who as you might expect covered the most ground) reckoned on 200+ flowers and plants, many amazing and beautiful. Purple Orchid and dense patches of Cyclaman and all manner of colour. Gecko lizard and tree snakes seemed to be just out of hibernation, the gecko's posing for close up shots and a pair of snakes (1 metre plus)

kindly moved out of the path and gave us a steady and beady eye from the safety of a nearby branch.

Birding was very varied, some saw numerous birds including Barbary Partridge and a nesting lesser Kestrel while others encountered large quantities of discharged 12 bore cartridges. Perhaps the free range goats, pigs and piglets, horses, hares, and mouflon spotted actually belonged to someone and had survived.

Gorge walking was popular, the Gola su Goruppu being the most spectacular with limitless rock climbing on 200m sheer walls. Limestone and colourful.



The boulder hopping and dodging in and out of Oleander trees up the river bed of Codula di Luna needed concentration and was very tiring but with splendid cliffs if you stopped to look. Spectacular pinnacles at Punta Goloritze.

The group at some time or another visited various antiquities, Il Golgo 'the Big Hole' 270m deep and claimed to be the deepest unimpeded shaft in Europe. If you do not agree write to the Tourist Agency not the Author. This hole is remarkable because the base rock is basalt, the same material used to construct the prehistoric Nuraghe village Sierra Orrios (1800 BC) and claimed to be the largest and most technically perfect megalithic buildings in Europe.

I wonder if Pat Stonehouse ever visited this and other site in Sardinia.

The climb up to the big doline of Monte Tiscali was well worth the effort, not much left of the structures but how did the inhabitants feed and water themselves in such a difficult Environment?

Rory and Sue climbed Punta Caterina (1127m), the highest top on the Monte Alba range, very impressive, Punta Carabbida (1321m) in the Supramonte in poor weather but worth a return visit on a better day, Bruncu Spina (1828m) in the Gennargentu range (granite) but with thick snow and no gear did not go onto the highest peak so they settled for Monte Spada (1595m) to complete the week.

Apart from the rain and snow a tedious end to the trip, for Rory visiting more antiquities on the way to the airport, car was broken into and a rucksack full of laundry stolen! The famous tee shirt and baggy track suit may not be seen again.

Dennis and Joan Armstrong.
Mike and Marcia Godden
Alan and Angie Linford
Rory Newman
Jim Rusher
John Schofield
Sue Thomason

Alan Linford

**Diary of our visit to Sardinia.
May 2004**

**Jim Rusher.
John Schofield.**

Sunday 2nd .

The flight was rescheduled one hour later than booked and we cleared our baggage almost immediately, picked up the car without difficulty, and set off for Cala Gonone at about 18.15.

We had a superb run across the island and arrived at 20.45. We were immediately picked up by Alan and Angie Linford and escorted to our digs. We could not have had a better trip. The apartments were of a good standard and we

shared with Rory and Sue, who also had their own private toilet and shower.

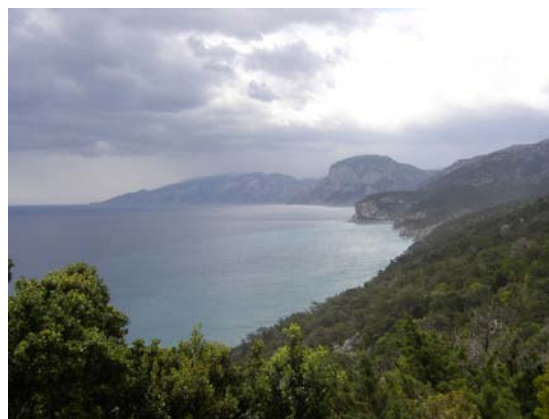


Monday 3rd .

We took the car to Caletta Fuili and walked up the gorge almost to the end, came back and looked at the beach, then met with the rest for a pizza and a carafe of wine that night. Sardinian gorges are very impressive and gorge walking is very interesting and attractive.

Tuesday 4th .

This time we started at Caletta Fuili and walked towards Cala di Luna along a well-defined path through woods and along a high-level coastal route with spectacular cliff views. The coast at this point is both dramatic and beautiful and the



wild flowers profuse and colourful.

Wednesday 5th .

Today we had a rest(!) day. We rang home, did our washing, shopped and drove up an interesting and challenging road to Cala Cortoe - a delightful and deserted beach to the North of Cala Gonone. Again there was a natural meadow full of wild flowers - a feature of this part of Sardinia

and a delight for the whole of the holiday. After this beach we looked out the hotel Su Gologone where Jim had stayed previously, and very up-market it is too, then we went and had a look at the second biggest stalagmite in the world, 38 metres. The biggest is in New Mexico and is 40 metres and is not worth making the trip to see it. The Grotto di Ispinigoli has it all! So ended an agreeable and appealing day.

Thursday 6th

We took the water taxi to Cala Sicine, South of Cala Gonone, with a view to walking back to Cala di Luna. The ferry was 45 minutes late setting off and we had to jump into the sea at Cala Sicine to get ashore. It wasn't deep but the writer fell flat on his face getting off the boat. Still, we dried out fairly quickly. The book (undoubtedly one of the more notable works of fiction) said 3¼ hours for the walk, but it took us 4¼ hours and so we were late for the return taxi. The ferryman waited for us so we told him that had he dropped us off on time we would have been early. But he still seemed miffed!



The walk climbed 650 metres through woodland and then joined an astonishingly wide road for the last half of the walk after we saw a shepherds hut. We also saw a rock window.

Friday 7th

Today we walked up to Tiscali (no not the internet provider, but we think he came from here), a huge master cave that the roof collapsed in prehistoric times.

The entry is through a dramatic cleft and under a cliff that defies detection. A rough village has been built as a refuge, but there is no pasture and no water so it couldn't have been anything but a bolt-hole. A very interesting trip and one which should not be missed. We walked through woods full of semi wild pigs with lots of piglets,



but they seemed sociable enough, and did not get aggressive when we approached them. We also looked at the Grotta sa Oche, a not very interesting

cave, but a school party was roasting one of the pigs in front of an open fire in a clearing.

Saturday 8th

Another 'rest' day. We had a look at a Nuragic settlement 'Serra e Orrios' to the North of Dorgali.

The Nuragic peoples lived in Sardinia from 1700 BC to 500 BC and left behind ruins of villages together with relics and artefacts which are giving an emerging picture of their life and times. Very interesting.

Also looked at the 'Tombe di Gigantic Thomes'- a type of communal grave of which there are several examples in Sardinia.

We then went on a motoring tour from Lula to Sinisicola through some beautiful country and so back home along the coast



Sunday 9th

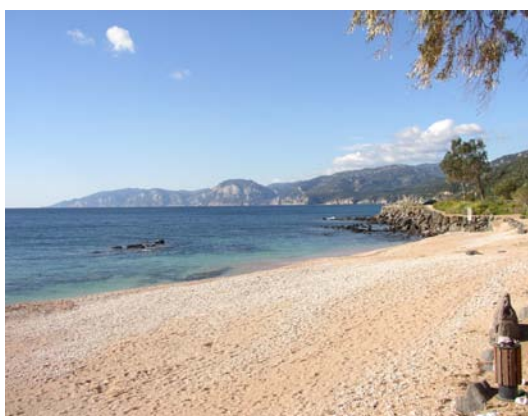
Today we walked for 4½ hours to the gorge of Gola di Gorropu and back along the side of the river and peeped into the gorge which was impressive indeed.



Again, unspoiled, natural country with such an abundance of wild flowers.

Monday 10th .

The last day! On the way back to Alghero airport we visited the Necropoli di S. Andrea Priu. This was hollowed out of solid rock using only stone



tools. Again, very impressive and really interesting and astonishingly large. Well worth a visit.

And so back to the airport and farewell to Sardinia and Cala Gonone. The overall impression being of an unspoiled island rich in history and ancient culture

John Schofield.

Sardinia Meet, Second Group

These notes refer to a mainly male party of 10 attending during the second week. Cala Gonone is approximately 175km from Alghero, the airport, on the eastern coast of Sardinia.

This long-awaited meet experienced unseasonal weather; spring had arrived but certainly not summer. Prudent members had arrived with appropriate gear for the ever-changing conditions.

The island has charming, undulating coastal walks, dramatic gorges, high limestone plateaus and rugged peaks all of which were experienced by some or other of the team.

Climbers from all over Europe and beyond were much in evidence enjoying the endless limestone walls and coastal cliffs that were accessed by boat.

Walks included Cala Gonone-Cala Luna, Sistine-Cala Luna, Tiscali 518m, Punta sos Nidos 1348m, Carabidda 1321m, Scala e Pradu Plateau, Caminu 1331m, and Monte Corrasì 1468m. The latter was ascended by 3 past Presidents and the newly 75 year old. They were serenaded by a large group of Sardinians on the summit. The Gorrupu Gorge was also explored. Four members enjoyed a full 5 days activities and the 75th and 77th birthdays of two members were celebrated in style on the same day!

Other points of note. The wild flowers were profuse and in their glory! Astonishing caves were visited by boat and one great hole was descended to witness fantastic formations.

Prehistoric sites were also visited. To the north of Cala is a quarry the likes of which few had seen before. Huge pieces of marble were being sawn out at various levels and was reminiscent of Carrara in Northern Italy.

Discussions took place comparing Sardinia with Corsica. Corsica seemed on balance to be preferred though the islands differ enormously. Oddest moment; seeing a young English GP walking barefoot on the rough Cala Luna track and talking to him in the hotel later about this eccentricity. Not to him it wasn't!!

Cheap access to Sardinia via Ryanair and the bargain hotel at 45 euros half board made the trip economic. Thank you John Middleton for your strong recommendation of this venue in a previous Bulletin.

Attending. Albert Chapman, Derek English, Derek Bush, George Burfitt, David Smith,

Victor Bugg, John Lovett, John Varney, David Handley and Bernadette Schutte (g).

DH

A Walk Across the Bay

Tony Smythe

Does a walk at the English seaside *count*?

That is, does it qualify as a story for inclusion in the Bulletin alongside all the mountaineering, caving and expeditions to uttermost parts of the earth?

There seems only one way to find out - to put fingers to keyboard and risk editorial rejection and ridicule.

My recent crossing of Morecambe Bay bore at least one similarity to a walk in the hills; it was perfectly possible to get it wrong and die in the process, as the unlucky Chinese cocklers discovered.

Morecambe Bay is at least part of the Lake District - well fairly near to it! But now comes the real admission that might cause the Editor to click his Return to Sender tab, it was a *guided* walk I went on....

However although climbing with guides might be thought merely unadventurous it could be said that an inexperienced person setting off to walk alone across Morecambe Bay at low tide would be reckless bordering on suicidal. At least that was the way I saw it.

My brother, when he lived at Barrow-in-Furness met a man who had been crossing the Duddon estuary in company with a knowledgeable local when the latter, noticing a trickle of water flowing in the sand where there shouldn't have been one, insisted that they had to run for their lives.

They did, and exhausted made it to land *just*. With hundreds of yards still to go the water, by now a strong tidal current, had become waist deep.

Then there was the sad business of a couple of winters ago when a man and his ten year old son were caught by a sudden mist that blanketed the sands, and lacking a compass became disorientated.

The last mobile call the man made to the emergency services was that the water was up to his neck, his son was on his shoulders and he could hear car horns but could not determine their direction. Their bodies were washed up 3 miles away next day.

But despite the forbidding history of the Bay, I had become interested in joining a guided group to walk across. It is a very beautiful region unique for the magnificent views across its gleaming expanses. From the south you have the distant sweep of the Lakes; from the whaleback of Black Combe through the Scafells, the Langdales, the Helvellyn group and across to the Pennines.

From the Barrow peninsular at half-tide in the evening the huge cirque of the bay can be blue and featureless with miles of sand and channels merging with water and sky. Once Sonia and I had been at Grange when we saw a party coming from the south, appearing almost like a mirage as in that famous scene from Lawrence of Arabia. Walking across must surely offer a new perspective for someone who's walked and cycled all the surrounding hills and lanes.

A search in the local paper and a phone call, and one Saturday afternoon I drove to Hest Bank near Morecambe. A group of about 50 people including families with children and dogs had assembled and our guide, Alan Sledmore, one of the two official salaried Guides to the Sands, relieved me of £5 ("It's not for him" his wife had told me, "it's two pounds for charity and three for the bus") and I received a ticket for the return journey on wheels.

Alan's briefing was succinct. His gaze swept around the feet of his flock. "No heavy boots I hope," he said. "All right, let's go."

I had fretted over what to wear on my feet. I'm not used to walking in anything other than boots, but seeing everybody else in trainers and sandals and now hearing Alan's confirming comment (which suggested disaster for a booted person at the first quicksands we encountered) I had left them in the car. I wondered whether my feet would survive, or whether my battered trainers would hang together for the 8 ½ miles to Grange. It was a bit late to worry about it now.

The first few hundred yards followed a path through maram grass. We blithely ignored the notices about dangerous channels, tides, and quicksands, shrugged at the lifebelts hanging on posts, and placed our faith in Alan.

Soon the grass gave way to sand only and the first obstacle, a water-filled trough a few yards wide. Our guide strode through like an infantryman heading for the beach on D-Day.

I was about to follow suit when I noticed an elderly man (hell, I'm elderly and I may also have been the *oldest* there) removing his shoes and socks. I decided to do likewise, although I had an unappealing vision of a thousand such removals and replacements before we reached the very distant shore. However the sand was smooth and moist, so like many others I walked barefoot thereafter for the next 5 or 6 miles.

Disconcertingly we appeared to be heading for the Isle of Man, or Ireland, but after about half an hour our course began to curve round to the North. Alan said that this was to avoid quicksands near Hest Bank. He told us how a previous client during a halt was enjoying a can of beer and the view of the sky and had begun slowly to disappear downwards. Alan grasped him under the arms from behind in a wrestling hold and got him out by toppling backwards. He laughed at the memory and we all laughed nervously too.

Alan was a large burly man who set a powerful pace, resulting in the party becoming very strung out.

The youngest child was only about 5, but his dad had a papoose carrier, which came in handy later.

Others only a little older found the whole thing a tremendous lark and kept up well. There were young couples and single people like myself, mainly I am sure used to walking conservatively and rationing their energy according to the distance yet to be covered.

It was of course completely level going, the tide having swept the surface of the firm sand smooth, and for a long way there were no more channels to cross other than shallow pools.

Even in bare feet it was the easiest walking you could ever wish for - no mountain could ever offer such uninterrupted, uncomplicated miles. The wind blew strongly in our faces from the northwest but this simply served to keep us cool on a sunny day in early June and I never had to take off or put on extra clothing.

Alan stopped every twenty minutes or so to allow the stragglers to catch up, but remembering from my earliest days the fatigue of being in this position I stayed close to our guide, even though he set a relentless pace.

He was obviously aware that the tide waited for nobody, and although the margin of safety was large it wasn't exactly the place to mess around. Alan carried a bunch of pink wands and planted one from time to time. "It's OK on a day like today," he said, "but not so good when the mist comes in".

As we pounded on, the shoreline we had left, the railway, houses and hill, and the long frontage of Morecambe seemed scarcely to retreat, and the wooded crest of Arnside Knott far over to the east, refused to change position, while Grange and Humphrey Head remained obstinately way in the distance ahead.



ARNSIDE
KNOTT

The waste of wet sand was like a gigantic surreal treadmill where no progress could ever be made.

And yet the serenity, fresh air and great views were exhilarating.

Alan brought us back to earth at a stop after about an hour and a half. "This is where the Chinese cocklers were," he said sourly. "All their rakes and stuff were found here. They left it too late. It got dark, and of course they headed for the lights of Hest Bank & Morecambe - fatal. They went into the incoming tide."

He went on to say that up until 5 years previously nobody other than local people went out collecting the cockles. He was disgusted by the present situation, how the cockle beds were being worked to depletion by greedy entrepreneurs from outside the area who stripped out even the small immature shellfish.

He demonstrated how easy it was to trick the cockles into rising to the surface by working his foot up and down on the wet sand. Within a minute the apparent incoming "tide" had caused one, then half a dozen, a dozen, fifty, of the round-shelled animals to appear, ready to be raked up. I asked him how deep the water would be at this spot at high tide. He thought for a moment. About twenty feet, he replied. We started walking again.

I wondered what the procedure would be if a member or members of the party became exhausted or incapacitated. Then I saw that our guide was using his mobile. "Tractor's coming to meet us," he explained, and soon after the half-way point, sure enough, an ancient machine, well rusted by the salt water hove into view from the opposite direction. "Anybody want a lift?" we were asked, and several of the younger children promptly sat themselves on a long wooden seat attached to the back. The tractor then chugged alongside us and the driver later told me that he almost invariably came to meet groups, as arranged.

A little later we came to potentially the most difficult obstacle on the walk, the river Kent. This was a sand-clouded mixture of fresh and salt water about a hundred yards wide and thigh deep. Had the current been stronger it would have quickly become dangerous but it now provided an amusing dip and the water was surprisingly warm. I disregarded the shrieks of laughter as others lost their footing, and concentrated on keeping camera and binoculars safe.

The channel was at least a mile to the east of its position marked on my OS map, and Alan said that the previous year it had been nearly a quarter of a mile wide, and exhausting. We crossed it about one hour after low tide, having set off on the walk an hour in advance of low water.

Grange was now apparently quite close, but the angle formed by bearings on Arnside and Humphrey Head showed that we were still at least 2 miles out. The sand had developed sharp ridges, painful for my unaccustomed feet, so it was trainers back on at the risk of blisters, which luckily did not trouble me.

At last, after three hours, our destination started to sprout houses the details of which you could make out, and then even people walking along the front.

As a last party trick, as we closed in on the acres of grass surrounding Grange shoreline, Alan introduced us to some real quicksand.

Bidding us to remain where we were, he very cautiously tried it out before pronouncing it "As safe a quicksand as you could ever get," and certainly even the most enthusiastic among us could not manage to get themselves in more than ankle-deep, and that temporarily. "Be very different after a bit of rain down the channel," our guide said wistfully.

I'm now the proud possessor of a Cross Bay Walk Certificate.

BOOK REVIEWS

Mountains of the Mind: a History of Fascination

By Robert Macfarlane

Granta paperback £8.99

The author of this book, a Cambridge don, is barely 30 years of age but what he lacks in the experience of wild places is probably made up for by his intellectual grasp of why people seek out mountains for solace of the soul. Or is it!

There are chapters on geology, our historical fascination with glaciers and the seeking out of danger; all meticulously referenced as becomes a scholar.

His coverage of the pre-war Everest attempts gives a very useful summary of the huge logistical difficulties faced by the early expeditions. It was interesting to learn that Mallory lurked on the fringe of the Bloomsbury set and that Rupert Brooke declined his invite to climb in Wales. The magnet of expeditions to areas on the map marked 'unexplored' is also examined in some detail.

Curiously the volume is marred by poor quality of photographs, some of which have no caption. So should I recommend it? Certainly - but you may choose to wait for the paperback rather than fork out £20!

Postscript.

I wrote the above in October 2003.

In early December Macfarlane's book was awarded the Guardian First Book Prize so you will have to make up your own mind!

David Handley

YRC Bulletin

The Shackleton Voyages: a pictorial history of the polar explorer and Edwardian hero

Intro. Roland Huntford

Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2002

ISBN 0 297 84316 8

I came upon this lavish tome by total chance: a friend had bought it from a remainder company. It is, therefore, not new.

Most are familiar with Shackleton's fortitude, especially in his leadership of the Endurance voyage, being ice-bound, the stay on Elephant Island, and the eventual escape to South Georgia. But there was more, much more, to Shackleton!

His journey with Scott, the voyage of the Nimrod and the story of the post-Endurance expedition with the Quest are much less known but here are recorded in some detail and always with fascinating photographs.

My enthusiasm for this volume (nearly 300 pages) is to do with the remarkable accumulation of photographs many of which I had never seen before. They evoke the excitement, inspiration and sheer awfulness that was early 20 century polar travel

An absolute must for those so inclined!

Postscript.

In 2001 a team of mainly Australian adventurers retraced Shackleton's route across South Georgia from King Haakon Bay to Stromness.

They found it to be severe test even with the benefit of state of the art equipment. An account appears in the Australian Geographic No 68 Oct/Dec 2002

David Handley

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NATURAL HISTORY CORNER



WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

THE RED SQUIRREL

In the name of EU regulation designed to protect the environment a magic corner of old Lancashire is to be destroyed and English Nature is enthusiastically acting as executioner.

Directives keep descending upon us that have little benefit to human beings, wildlife or the globe we all live on, all in the name of protecting the environment.

The area in question at Threshfield near Formby, is to be 'protected' under EU legislation as the coastal dunes where there is a national red squirrel sanctuary are a rare example of a sand dune system.

Here the last thriving red squirrel colony in lowland Britain lives amongst the hundred years old pine trees in this bit of near wilderness. The trees are all to be cut down to restore the 'natural' environment. The eminently sensible Victorians planted them to preserve the dunes and hold back the winter tides and once they are gone the habitat that we are supposedly preserving will soon be lost to the sea.

I also learn that another area is to receive the same treatment and will destroy another surviving colony of these charming indigenous creatures.

Newborough Forest on Anglesey is to see hundreds of acres of Corsican Pines felled at great expense to comply with a European Law which, as far as I can find out, none of our European partners take any notice of.

There is a population of reds on the island but it was to have been strongly reinforced by imports as there are so few viable colonies left in Britain. Thousands of grey have been exterminated in the last few years (using tax payers' money) as a preparation for a mass reintroduction program.

Now the trees are to be felled for the same reasons as those in Threshfield; to meet the European Habitat Directive which pays no cognisance to the plight of the red squirrel as it is common in most of Europe.

It does not matter that it is protected by British Law as an endangered species

Rare natterjack toads have been released near a refinery on the North Wales coast, an area from which they have been absent for half a century but where they are now thriving.

These were from stock from Threshfield, one of their few remaining colonies, and it is perhaps just as well they have been moved as their old home now has a questionable future.

The sea is also to be allowed to creep inland at a site in South Devon. There is an enormous freshwater lake at the back of Slapton Sands which is cut off from the sea by a busy local road and is in fact the largest freshwater expanse in the South West. For twenty years it has been designated a National Nature Reserve for its many unusual species of flora and fauna. Now however the EU policy on 'living with the sea' suggests that the road be closed and the sea allowed to encroach notwithstanding this loss of a rare habitat and the detour of nearly 20 miles that locals will face to get to work in Dartmouth. They have already started removing some sea defences.

Isn't conservation and environmental protection a wonderful thing!
rjd

EARLY ARRIVALS

Swallows usually arrive during April and set off about the beginning of September to winter in Southern Africa. This involves a flight of about 6000 miles each way. This pattern is changing slowly and the 'first swallow of spring has been arriving' mid March in recent years. This year however swallows were seen all along the south coast during the first week in February.

It has always puzzled me as to how the birds in Africa get the British weather forecast.

With global warming it is thought that many find winter in southern Spain warm enough and they cut down their journey and give Africa a miss. Very early arrivals were not unknown in the past hence the saying 'one swallow does not a summer make', but the survival rates amongst these 'early birds' is probably very low.

They are all fortunate that insects are also arriving earlier, or are the birds following the food supply in.

Swifts also migrate from African making this epic journey each year. They are fascinating and mysterious birds, not least because they sleep on the wing. They appear to close down 50% of their brains and go onto autopilot whilst flying at high altitude away from hazards, often as much as 10,000 feet high. They constantly adjust their flight effort and pattern to maintain height and direction whatever the wind variations and these skills, as far as I am aware, are superior to the most up to date technology used by even military planes.

rjd



NATURAL HISTORY CORNER



GREEN ENERGY

Fears about the impact of wind turbines were raised in again in January when a red kite was killed by one near to Aberystwyth and now there are worries that they are threatening to push the golden eagle into extinction.

Conservationists are starting to be quoted saying that the rapid spread of wind farms in Britain poses a grave threat to many birds but in particular birds of prey including the golden eagle, sea eagles, white tailed eagles, osprey, red kites, merlins, kestrels, buzzards and peregrine falcons.

Hundreds of golden eagles have been killed flying into the blades of turbines elsewhere in the world and we do not



have enough of a population here to survive such decimation with a total of just over 400 pairs.

Official statistics show that 800 golden eagles were killed by wind farms in one year in California alone.

AT RISK

There are proposals for 360 additional wind farms in Scotland which is home to almost all of Britain's golden eagles.

One in particular has been highlighted recently where there is an application in to build 36 along 4 miles of a mountain ridge near Loch Ness, all nearly 360 feet tall.

This is an area designated as one of outstanding natural beauty.

Neighbouring estates relying on tourists coming to see the birds or just the grandeur of this superb mountain fastness are incensed. There are estates nearby where years of effort and substantial sums of money have been invested trying to restore the area as a breeding ground for the eagles after many decades in which they were poisoned and had nests destroyed.

Both white tailed and golden eagles are found in the area and more are being enticed back.

Vast sums of subsidy are being pushed into wind farms, seen as an environmentally friendly source of energy but there are very real downsides not least the intrusion of these giant edifices into those wilderness areas we all enjoy. If the same sums were invested in other more reliable

renewables we would see a better result with less impact on the environment.

In my own area the National Forest is being created at a commendable pace but one problem arising is that wood as a cash crop has limited markets. Several schemes have planted willow for coppicing but the cost of transporting the off cuts to a wood burning power station outweighs the value and the vehicles carrying the wood give off harmful emissions from fossil fuel.

If more small local wood burning stations were created this valuable source of both heat and power would be viable with the added benefit of the oxygen production and carbon dioxide scrubbing effect of the trees as they grow. This 'Biomass' form of power is used successfully in some parts of Britain and increasingly in other parts of Europe

Another form of green, or should I say brown energy is to be found in the South West. A power station has been set up burning cow slurry, which is creating heat for the local community and contributing power to the national grid.

This is perhaps not such a great surprise to those of us who have sampled the delights of cooking coming off stoves, in the Himalayas, using dried yak dung as fuel.



rjd

FUEL SOURCE

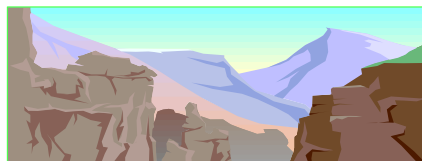
Chuffed Again

During the 'foot and mouth' closure of coastal paths in the south west several pairs of choughs were seen nesting. This bird still breeds in other parts of Britain but had died out in England in the seventies and was only rarely seen as a visitor. It used to breed successfully in Cornwall where it was also known as the red legged crow but disturbance by holiday makers had finally put paid to it.

A group of conservation societies had been working to create suitable nesting sites and a captive breeding programme was scheduled to start releases but this is being held back to see how the wild birds manage. There is a colony in Brittany and the ones now in Cornwall have probably migrated from there.

This bird acrobatic bird could almost be described as the national bird of Kernow (Cornwall) as it does appear on the Cornish coat of arms. It is a magnificent sight with its glossy black feathers and bright red beak and legs.

CHIPPINGS



LOST SHEEP

If you have come across miles of electrified fencing stretched over the fells above the Dudden Valley do not despair. It will only be there for 4 years as a means of stopping the sheep on the fells getting lost.

Herdwick lambs learn their own terrain from their mothers (the technical term is being hefted) but with the wiping out of the herd during foot and mouth the new stock do not know their way about their patch.

The devastation of the industry at that time has focused the minds of all involved and not only are flocks being restored but new outlets for the product are being explored.

Until recently nearly worthless, the yarn is now being used to make high quality insulation and another entrepreneur is marketing distinctive carpets made from it and is having considerable success in the States.

The meat is appearing by name on the menus of some Lakeland pubs and even Prince Charles has tried Herdy Burgers.

Editor

OPENING SHORTLY

We should shortly have opportunities to walk in new areas.

Defra has announced the dates for the roll out of access to the new blocks of open country created under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (Crow).

September 19th starts if off with Lower North West and the South East with the rest of the North West and the North East next May.

All other regions are presently scheduled to become available between August and November next year although the appeals process is still underway.

Editor

THOSE BUSTARDS ARE RETURNING

The Great Bustard was Britain's largest land bird a few centuries ago with prime specimens of this turkey like bird reaching nearly three stones.

They finally died out in the middle of the nineteenth century after the enclosure of the open areas on which they lived making them easy targets for both hunting and egg collecting.

They are to be re-introduced on to Salisbury Plain where the open grassland is ideal for them. They will probably eventually nest in nearby cereal fields and arrangements are being put in hand to try to watch for them as cropping is done.

About 40 birds are to be introduced from Europe every year for five years.

This bird is probably the worlds heaviest flying bird and the first chicks of a rearing program have been hatched in Russia and will soon be on their way to England.

They stand as tall as a roe deer and can have a wingspan of up to 7 feet so they will come as a bit of a surprise if you do see one when walking nearby and I do not like to contemplate their droppings.

Seagulls are a problem and only a fraction of the size.

Editor

FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Forestry Commission has just announced that they are to dedicate all their freehold forests as open access land in perpetuity as funding becomes available.

The first three should be processed shortly including Delamere Forest near Chester.

Editor

IF YOU GO DOWN IN THE WOODS....

On an encouraging note I can report the recent creation of a partnership between the Forestry Commission and The National Trust to preserve one of the last truly unspoilt corners of the Peak District.

On the edge of the Bleaklow massive running roughly parallel with the Snake Pass, the valley of the Alport is inaccessible by road and runs down to join Ladybower reservoir.

Shaped by a large landslip it has many varied geological features and is overlooked by rock pinnacles known as 'The Castles'.

One of the most attractive features is the river cascading over a series of bedding plains. These shallow rock bottomed stretches warm the water very pleasantly and the pools at the foot of each cascade make excellent swimming holes.

The area is well known to many members who lived in the Manchester and West Yorkshire areas as during the sixties it was often visited on our informal Boxing Day meets.

The club has also in the past had meets based on camping barns nearby.

The area contains a number of very diverse habitats and is a wildlife haven covering almost 1000 acres. It is now to be preserved as such in perpetuity and the large pockets of conifer plantations will be phased out progressively and replaced by native broadleaves.

Ennerdale

This is another area held dear by many of us.

Unfortunately the woodlands in the valley are planted with serried rows of boring conifers but this is also being addressed.

Luckily the valley is owned by United Utilities and the Forestry Commission with upper reaches let to the National Trust which makes a meeting of minds easier to achieve and they have all got together to restore a more natural habitat.

Conifers will soon be removed and deciduous trees planted and ecological processes left to their own devices.

Editor

GAPING GILL.

There is yet another way entrance into Gaping Gill about to be pushed through.

Following the success of last year in the discovery of Hensler's Pot into Hensler's High Aven, the B. P. C. have expended vast amounts of energy and enthusiasm in forcing yet another rift from the surface.

Corky's Pot is a recent discovery for which the B. P. C. digging team are to be congratulated on their tenacity and perseverance in this rift which descends through a fault in a series of pitches and is at present poised to break through to a big pitch into (it is assumed) the aven of Mud Hall. Of interest to geologists is the shale band on one side of the fault which leaves the question of where is the shale band to be found on the other side of the fault?

In the depths of Gaping Gill a most successful dive in Deep Well to 42.5m brought about a major push to make Gaping Gill the deepest pothole in the Dales.

The underwater passage is 3m square and the diving team are convinced that this is undoubtedly the main drain between the Main Chamber and Ingleborough Cave.

The logistics of getting personnel and equipment to this area of the system makes pushing the passage further an exceptionally serious undertaking.

Surely there must be quiet spell at Gaping Gill now, but what are the White Rose up to in the old B. P. C. dig in Clapham Bottoms.....?

Mike Hartland

National Parks

2001 was the 50th anniversary of the first national parks in England and Wales.

To coincide with this, work started on two possible new parks to be created in England and both are making good progress.

The birth of the movement which ended with the first parks being created is often put down as the time in 1932 when Benny Goodman and others addressed a gathering of about 500 people in a quarry just outside Hayfield before leading them out on the mass trespass of Kinder.

Following this mass action by ramblers, mainly from Manchester and Sheffield, Benney and five others were convicted but they had started something which gathered pace.

Three years later the Ramblers Association was formed and after continuous pressure the 1949 National Parks and Countryside Act started the process of opening up the hills which the recent Countryside and Rights of Way Act is continuing.

It is encouraging to see that the New Forest is now to be designated a National Park and work is going on defining its boundaries. The 'New' Forest is hardly new having been designated a Royal Hunting Forest in 1079 by William the Conqueror. As we have a genuinely 'new' National Forest growing in the Midlands and covering 200 square miles, we can only hope for similar protective status in due course.

The New Forest is however to become England's first new national park since the Norfolk Broads. The Countryside Agency's recommendations were put before the public a little time ago but acting on the recommendations of a public inquiry, the government have removed 38 square miles from the original area recommended as a park by them. The drawing of the boundary so tightly around the forest core will exclude many local towns and areas of heathland overlooking the Channel, the whole of the valley of the Avon and parts of the South Hampshire coast area of outstanding natural beauty.

The South Downs National Park is going through its consultation stage but is being resisted by some local opposition including local authorities who presumably fear losing some of their powers. I am also pleased to report that Scotland is now joining in and is setting up its first park, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, incorporating the Argyll Forest Park and totalling about 600 square miles.

Numbers of people in the parks can be a problem normally and whilst with one hand the authorities are giving us the right to roam, they are with the other, working to discourage us from doing so.

I understand that a number of back roads in the Peak District National Park are likely to become toll roads in the near future. If public transport was more available (and reliable) there would perhaps be some justification for deterring cars.

Countryside Code

In the 1930s the 'Commons and Open Spaces Society' produced a 'Country Code' followed by a 'code of courtesies' from the Council for the Protection of Rural England and a 'ramblers code' from the Ramblers Association in the 1940s.

It was not until the 1949 'National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act' that a national Country Code was produced by the National Parks Commission and later in 1950s it was integrated into the Highway Code.

Through the 50s and 60s this Country Code became well established with both visitors to the countryside and landowners. Generations of boy scouts, guides and brownies acquired their Country Code badge, the Central Office of Information publicised the code on TV and B.R. advertised it on trains, Butlins promoted it in holiday camps and factories in their canteens. Demand for the Country Code consistently outstripped supply.

The Pennine Way, the first long distance footpath, was designated in 1965 and an increasingly mobile population with an increased interest in leisure established the need for a code to encourage responsible use of the countryside.

This came in 1979 when the Code was reviewed by the Countryside Commission (previously the National Parks Commission) and which led to the next Code which was published in 1981.

The Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales are responsible for implementing the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 as part of the introduction of the public's new right to walk over and enjoy more of England's countryside which will start from September this year. It's estimated that the new rights will eventually open up some 1.2 to 1.8 million hectares of countryside for people's enjoyment.

A new Countryside Code was launched on 12 July. The new code is designed to reassure landowners as new access maps are published and to make the public aware of their new rights and responsibilities.

To see the new Countryside Code in full and for ideas of new places to go to visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.

Editor

THE NEW CODE



Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs

Even when going out locally, it's best to get the latest information about where and when you can go (for example, your rights to go onto some areas of open land may be restricted while work is carried out, for safety reasons or during breeding seasons). Follow advice and local signs, and be prepared for the unexpected.

• Leave gates and property as you find them

Please respect the working life of the countryside, as our actions can affect people's livelihoods, our heritage, and the safety and welfare of animals and ourselves.

• Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home

We have a responsibility to protect our countryside now and for future generations, so make sure you don't harm animals, birds, plants, or trees.

• Keep your dog under close control

The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs, but it's every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

• Consider other people

Showing consideration and respect for other people makes the countryside a pleasant environment for everyone – at home, at work and at leisure.

OF WHEELS AND WOBBLERS

A new route has been recently opened up which may interest members either as a long walk or as a bike (or horse) ride.

The Mary Towneley Loop is dedicated to the memory of Lady Mary Towneley who first conceived the idea of a long distance route along the Pennines and campaigned for a Pennine Bridleway for many years.

At about 45 miles, wandering the Lancashire and Yorkshire border areas, the Loop traverses a magnificent and very varied landscape with tremendous views and forms part of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail. Suitable for riders of horses or mountain bikes alike it is now open and may be worth considering for the Big Bike Ride next year.

As a circuit you could start anywhere but presumably based where accommodation could be found. One option is in the Rossendale Valley at Waterfoot. From here you would climb very steeply to meet an historic moorland road that straddles the hills above Rochdale and Ramsbottom.

From the north of Rochdale, the route passes over open moorland close to Brown Wardle and Watergrove Reservoir and then on to Calderbrook.

It then follows an old packhorse route from Bottomley to Erringdon with stunning views across the Calder Valley.

After passing along the flanks of Stoodley Pike you drop down towards Hebden Bridge.

The climb out of Hebden is hard graft, but leads to the ancient Gorple Road which crosses open countryside providing splendid views towards Burnley before the route takes you up over Deerplay Moor and back down into Waterfoot.

OBITUARIES

David Smith takes a keen interest in all our members and feels that members should make notes of their lives before their demise. He has about 100 pictures of YRC members.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that they can send him suitable obituary information either sealed or unsealed which can be handed to the member agreeing to produce an obituary at the appropriate time.

Dr A. (Arthur) W. Evans

1914 - 2003

Member 1957 to 2003



Arthur studied for his degree and received his doctorate at Liverpool University.

He climbed with Colin Kirkus during this time and was involved in the opening up of Helsby Crag, it being within easy cycling distance of Liverpool.

He is not credited with any first ascents there, but certainly took part in the early exploration.

While at university he made the first ascent of Corrugated Crack on the Pillar of Elidir. It is still classed as 'severe'. It was considered quite an achievement and to this day it is thought to be quite a struggle.

After university he joined British Titan Products and was seconded to Tube Alloys which was the British atomic bomb research establishment under Sir William Penney.

When America joined the war all research was taken over by the USA and Arthur then moved back to BTP (now Huntsman Tioxide), becoming a senior figure in their research department. He was involved in the opening of a Rutile mine and a titanium oxide processing plant in South Africa.

Subsequently he returned to the research department at Billingham and at this time became dedicated to exploring the crags in Scugdale. These crags remained his favourite to the end of his climbing days.

Arthur, and his wife Nina, made a significant contribution to the first guide book to climbing on The North York Moors. Alas, in a new guide photographs and computer graphics have replaced the Nina's elegant sketches of the crags.

During those marvellous snowy winters in the early 50's many of us tried to teach ourselves to ski on Captain Cook's. The equipment was entirely ex-army, skis made of hickory (laminated if you were lucky and with caterpillar edges if you were extremely lucky and could afford them). Bindings were Kandahar cables and only later we acquired those with hold downs which anchored the heel onto the skis. There was no quick release so when you were clipped in that was it. As a result on one of these weekends Arthur managed to break his ankle but typically he vehemently refused any help and walked back down to his car and drove himself to hospital.

It appears that later he had a serious disagreement with BTP and left their employment. His contract, I believe, meant that he could not be employed in a similar capacity with a competing company for at least five years. It was then that he took up lecturing in chemical engineering.

His other two passions in life were his alpine garden and he possessed an import licence for the many specimen plants and seeds he collected on his alpine trips. He was Secretary and participating member of The Alpine Garden Society for many years. After ceasing to climb seriously he took to fly fishing, mostly for salmon on the Esk and the Coquet, holding the position of Secretary of the Esk Fishery Association for more than 15 years, and continued fishing well into his retirement.

It was during one of his fishing trips that he slid down a muddy bank, caught his leg behind a tree root and finished up with a serious compound fracture. From this time he had to resort to using a walking stick and it was also the end of his climbing.

He died on 13 October 2003.

John Hickman and Alan Linford. March 2004.

11th Duke of Devonshire KG

Member 1955 - 2004

1920 - 2004

The Duke was passionate about opening up his lands for other people to enjoy and we have much to thank him for.

He was the largest landowner in the Peak District and owned another 40,000 acres, including Bolton Abbey.

He publicly apologised for his grandfather's behaviour during the mass trespass on Kinder and acknowledged that it had been the catalyst for many great things, not least the creation of the national parks.

He seemed to go through life with an self effacing manner bordering on diffidence and on the occasions when I met him he seemed a wonderful gentleman in all senses of that word and very happy with life.

He was a nephew of Harold Macmillan and served in his government during the sixties and in more recent years championed the freedom to roam legislation.

Educated at Eton and then Cambridge he served with distinction with the Coldstream Guards during the war and gained the Military Cross.

He opened up Chatsworth to the public with its 35,000 acres of extensive parkland, moorland and woods, effectively letting people in to his home and gardens unlike his grandfather who used his gamekeepers to chase them off

I met him at a couple of formal functions during the time I lived in Wharfedale and since moving down here to Leicestershire and taking up orienteering I have run in the Chatsworth Estate on many occasions.

It has also been a welcome journey break about half way into my travel back to Manchester to visit family.

My last memory of this remarkable man who will be sadly missed, was handing to him a series of prizes to be presented to category winners after a recent British Orienteering Relay Championships which were held at Chatsworth.

Roy Denney

Sidney Waterfall

Sidney was born into a Craven Quaker family in 1918 and later attended Ackworth School, Pontefract.



During the war he served as a medical officer until being captured on Crete.

He remained a prisoner for over 3 years in Stalag V111B and on demobilisation he joined the family book shop business in Skipton and remained there for the rest of his working life.

He joined the Craven Pothole Club in the 30's and became their oldest living member.

Local gritstone crags, especially Crookrise, Rylstone, Simon's Seat and Eastby Crag attracted him and his brother Arnold, and they pioneered several first ascents as members of the Craven Pothole Club in the mid to late 30's. These climbs included Route 2, Bilberry Crack and Craven Wall on Crookrise and Dental Slab on Rylstone. 'While everybody thought they were groping around on hands and knees in some trogloditic paradise, they were actually picking off the plum lines with muscular agility' says the YMC guide. Hemp rope and plimsolls were the standard kit. Chalk bags were for ballroom dancers in those days!

In the early 50's the brothers combined with Anderson, Hartley (both YRC members) and John Wilson to add more routes. By chance, and yet appropriately, some of the best routes on these crags were put up by Sidney's accomplished young neighbour, Ron Fawcett, some 50 years later.

Sydney joined the Club in 1955, said by some to be vintage year!!

I first met him in 1966 when he was a prominent member of the Wednesday nighters; an informal group of CPC and YRC members who quartered the Dales and East Lancashire for around 45 years.

It was on these forays that I began to appreciate his prodigious knowledge of every nook and cranny of the dales landscape.

Member 1950 - 2004

Many perfected the art of navigation in the pitch black on winter nights and experienced the pure pleasure of swimming in remote dales beck holes on midsummer evenings. He read maps with the same intensity that others might read books and had perfect recall of the topography no matter how complex the terrain.

Though only an occasional attender of Club meets his passion was for the Whit meet later to be known as the Spring Bank Holiday meet. Over several decades he and his happy band escaped to remotest Scotland where the Blacks Niger was erected for the duration. The tent still survives!

Never a Monro bagger he nevertheless collected a goodly number usually with some or other of the Wednesday nighters. Many Irish peaks were also added on what became known as breakaway meets. The group explored Taransay, a tiny island off the west coast of Harris, fully 10 years before the BBC programme 'Castaway' discovered its beauty.

You could rest assured that when he chose an off day the camp was immaculate on the return of the others.

In 1976 he completed the Grand Tour of Mont Blanc and shortly afterwards spent two weeks on the GR20 in Corsica. He was a very keen bird watcher and a long time member of the RSPB and Craven Naturalists.

In his latter years his activities were curtailed but his interest in who was doing what in the hills both at home and abroad was undiminished.

Sidney was a quiet, unassuming man with endless reserves of patience which he frequently exercised with the more outrageous of our group.

His calm, cooperative nature cemented endless friendships. He was without malice, guile or anger and will be remembered with warmth and affection.

His ashes were scattered on Crookrise, a hill he could see from his bedroom.

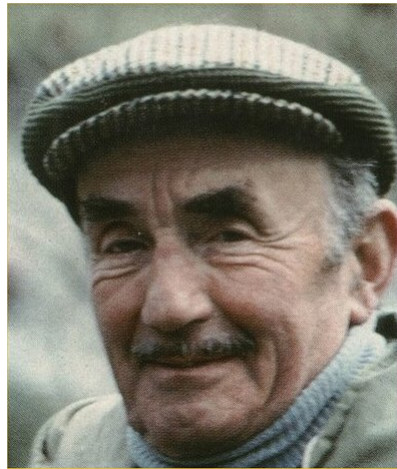
The collection at the funeral was shared between the YRC and the RSPB.

DJH

ARNOLD NEWTON PATCHETT

1908 - 2004

Arnold was born in 1908 into a traditional Yorkshire woollen family but through circumstance, made his career in the world of insurance where, within the Bradford area, he became well known to the business community for his wit and charming manner.



His early outdoor activities were very much towards caving and he became a member of the Bradford Pothole Club in the inter war years.

With Graham Watson as President and Arnold as Secretary / Editor together they ensured that the B. P. C. recovered from the devastations of the war by keeping members in contact in whichever theatre of war they were involved in and immediately after the war they organised the first post war potholing meets.

Pioneer cave diving exploits, overseas caving expedition, exploration and discoveries in Ingleborough Cave and his memorable radio broadcast from Alum Pot soon made him a well respected member of the caving community.

He joined the Y. R. C. in 1950, along with Graham Watson, through his friendship with Stanley Marsden and their membership of the Straddlebugs.

Looking to the future he could see the advantages of purchasing a property rather than renting a club hut in the Lakes or Dales whilst property prices were low, but unable to convince the hierarchy of the Y. R. C. to take action he put his energies into seeking a suitable property for the B. P. C. and after many a false start came across Brackenbottom Farm on the flanks of Pen-y-ghent.

His charming ways soon brought about a successful purchase from which the B. P. C. have benefited ever since.

His love of mountains and history took him to as many places in the world, as a very active business life would allow, and one of his most pleasurable memories was meeting "Sherpa" Tenzing at the Mountaineering School in Darjeeling.

Following the loss of his wife he devoted much of his time to continue his writing (he published a number of books), travel and church work. In his late 80s he raised money for a 4 x4 vehicle for the clergy of the Falkland Islands and with his grandson delivered it in person!

He embarked on trekking holidays, always enjoying the company of young enthusiastic people, celebrated his 90th birthday with a hot air balloon trip over the Dales and enjoyed his annual trip to the B. P. C. Gaping Gill Annual Meet up to his 94th year.

He took a keen interest in Y. R. C. activities and had strong convictions about many of the concerns, which he felt would dictate the future of the Y. R. C.

A gentleman of an age fast disappearing, Arnold will be greatly missed by those who knew him and his popularity was reflected by friends from his many and varied organisations which he supported who came together to celebrate his life at the church service at Menston Parish Church.

He leaves two sons and their families to whom we send our sympathies.

Mike Hartland

Denis Thornton Barker.

1929 - 2004

Member 1959 - 2004



Denis was elected a club member in September 1959, nominated by Arthur Tallon and John Lovett although he attended both the Skye and Welsh 3000s meets in 1958.

JL had long associations with Denis and first met him in 1936 at Cub Scouts in Ingleton, where he lived with his parents.

After leaving Kirkby Lonsdale Grammar School, Dennis moved to Kings College Newcastle to study Fine Art. Denis and JL were boys together for some 10 years, walking, climbing, fishing, and generally enjoying outdoor pursuits.

JL tried to interest Denis in motor cycle racing but Denis was content with an engine fitted to his bicycle.

Much excitement was had getting to climbs in the Langdales and Coniston areas on JL's motor cycle.

Eventually Denis and JL went their separate ways until the 1990's when old times were savoured quite often until Denis's death.

I first met Denis at the Thirlmere meet in May 1990, and was surprised to find that the last YRC meet that Denis had attended was in 1960. Some absence indeed. However in 1990 he went on to attend the Long Walk, the Alps Meet, Galloway, RLH Joint Meet, and the Christmas Meet at Settle; A return with a vengeance.

Since 1990 I have enjoyed many fine days on the hills with Denis. A man not out of place in wild surrounds, and looked the part too, with his pipe gently smoking as he surveyed the horizon. I always thought of Slingsby on such occasions.

Denis enjoyed fine things, good debate, and had great concern for fairness and understanding in life.

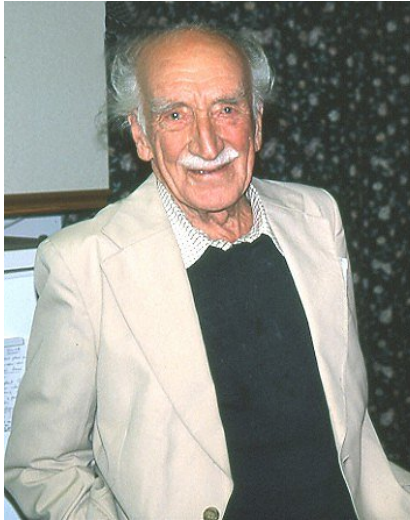
Never a man to give opinions quickly or judge people or events without serious consideration,

Denis has now joined those members whose memories will always be prompted by certain landscapes and discussion that we fortunate members still have in our grasp.

John Lovett and Mike Godden. July 2004

A. Harry Griffin OBE

1911 - 2004



Readers of *The Guardian* will have read a full obituary of Harry Griffin, who died in Kendal on 9th July, aged 93.

For some years Harry was an active member of the YRC and will be remembered by many of the older members of the club.

His most recent attendance at a club function was as our guest at the 50th anniversary meet at LHG, when he gave a very witty speech.

Harry was born and educated at Barrow-in-Furness, becoming active on the local hills at an early age. On leaving the grammar school he joined the *Barrow Guardian* as a junior reporter.

Seeking advice on the nailing of boots, he called upon George Basterfield, at that time the mayor of Barrow and also the president of the F & RCC. This led to a long friendship and to the formation of a group of climbers who became known as the Coniston Tigers, which is the title of his last book.

In 1931 they became the owners of what was to be the second climbing hut in the Lake District, a converted wooden garage near the shores of Coniston Water.

Following his career as a journalist, Harry moved on to a senior position on the *Lancashire Evening Post*, but during the war he served in the army in the Far

East, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel as a staff officer.

On returning to his old post, he devoted his leisure time and considerable literary skills to the Lake District, becoming a major authority on the area. His knowledge of every mountain, viewpoint, valley, footpath, even sheep track was prodigious.

Starting in the late 50s, he began his long association with what was then the *Manchester Guardian*, writing on alternate Mondays the *Country Diary*. He continued to write this piece for the next 53 years, his last contribution appearing two days after his death. He died in harness.

Harry's love and knowledge of the Lake District was expressed not only in his fortnightly *Country Diary*. In 1961 appeared his first book, 'Inside the Real Lakeland', which over the years was followed by ten more books making Harry the most prolific writer ever on the area. For this and other work he was awarded the OBE in 1996.

My own long friendship with Harry began in late 1948. We hit it off from the beginning and for the next twelve years he was to become my most regular climbing partner, meeting most weekends to walk, or climb on one of the major crags, Dow Crag being our most frequent venue.

We were usually joined by others in what was in those early post-war years a small, we liked to think select, circle of regular, active Lake District climbers.

While Harry was a very competent and safe climber, he would be the first to admit that, though highly experienced, he lacked the brilliance of the top few. This suited my modest ability very well, so that for almost all our climbing partnership we led alternate pitches, I seeking to leave the strenuous pitches to a stronger Harry.

In the mid-50s we devoted much of our time to the eastern fells Dovedale and Deepdale, even making a few new routes on these less frequented crags.

Our activity in this area prompted A.B. (Hargreaves), with an enhanced view of our ability, to suggest that Harry and I take on the writing of the new *F & R Guide to the Eastern Fells*, which in a rash moment we accepted.

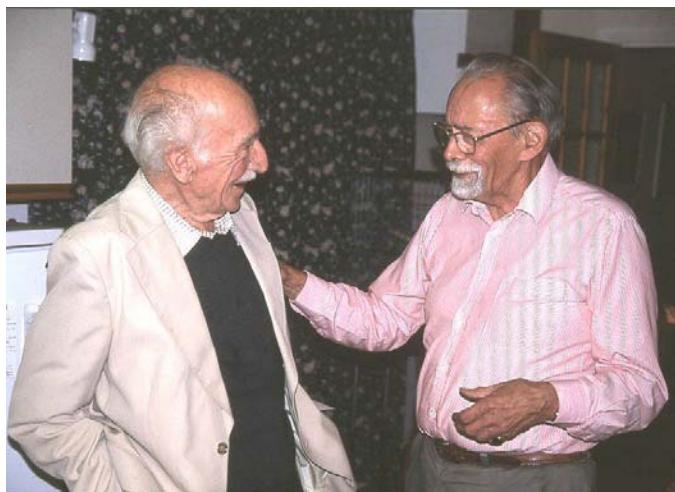
We must have been unaware that a new breed of bold and brilliant cragsmen were putting up new routes of great severity more rapidly than we could hope to climb them, that is in the unlikely event of being able to climb them at all.

Happily I was able to excuse myself of all responsibility when I went overseas for eight months.

On leaving the Lake District in the 60s I was to see less of Harry on the hills, although I continued to call upon him with some regularity, particularly after the loss of his first wife, Molly; and some time later when his life was again darkened when, after only a few months of marriage, his second wife Violet died of a heart attack.

Recently, his much loved partner Josie died of a heart attack, which left him bereft.

His final years were very sad although his brain was as active as ever. Only when you spoke of his beloved Lake District did his mood lighten.



HARRY AND GEORGE

For the few surviving old timers he will be much missed, and I feel privileged to have known him.

Bless you, Harry, for many days enjoyed in your good company

GBS



HEALTH WARNING



Nasty Little Beasties

Lyme Disease is a fairly rare illness, but it has recently started to become more prevalent and the risk of infection should not be ignored.

It is caused by bacteria carried by ticks and people who walk in the countryside through rough vegetation especially bracken, are most at risk.

Although rarely fatal, Lyme Disease can remain in the body for many years and can cause long-term problems, especially tingling in the hands and feet, and weakness or paralysis of the facial muscles (Bell's Palsy).

Fortunately the infected ticks need to be attached to the body for at least a day before they can transmit the bacteria to us.

I have personally suffered from Bell's Palsy due to prolonged exposure to chilling freezing fog in the mountains and I can assure you that it is very uncomfortable and not a pretty sight.

At first when my wife called in the emergency doctor I was thought to have had a stroke.

In rare cases Lyme Disease can lead to chronic arthritis and has been known to attack the central nervous system and even badly affect the performance of the heart.

Strangely it is most common in American salesmen who often sleep too near to their air conditioning units.

Early signs of Lyme Disease often include a red blotch or circular rash several centimetres across in the bite area. This appears between a week and a month after the bite occurred, usually in conjunction with flu like symptoms like tiredness, aching and fever.

These would last several weeks if no treatment were given and more serious complications, like neurological difficulties and joint problems can develop many months later.

Ticks are minute blood-sucking insects that cannot fly but jump easily on to animals such as sheep, deer and cattle that brush through the vegetation on which the ticks hide. Not surprisingly they also attack dogs and humans as well.

The highest risk is during spring and summer when ticks are more active.

Ticks are in fact blood sucking members of the class of insects which includes spiders. They have a strong beak-like mouth which they use to cling tenaciously onto their victims.

Not all ticks can infect humans and with a little care and caution those that can are detectable and can be removed before they have done much harm.



THE TICK

The mature insect is only 10 mm long (or three eighths of an inch for those of us whose school days are a distant memory)

When fully fed they can increase to the size of a grape pip, but the larvae are smaller than a pin head and often difficult to spot.

Attracting ticks is a common enough situation for those of us going into rough areas, but precautions can be taken against this, not least by wearing full body cover, preferably of close weave material.

For those involved in walking the fells the best advice is to carefully examine your body for ticks after outings, bearing in mind particularly their

favourite locations; behind the knees, in the groin area, in the armpits and on the scalp.

Insect repellents containing Permethrin or DEET do supposedly protect against ticks for several hours if you wish to be really confident.

Should you find a tick attached to your skin there are many myths abounding which tell you what to do but many are thought by modern scientific theory to be at best, misinformed.

The best advice appears to be to remove ticks immediately, either with tweezers or between your finger nails - wash your hands and the bite area afterwards using disinfectant if available.

The idea is to grasp it firmly as close as possible to the skin, and pull firmly and steadily without damaging it until it disengages itself.

Try not to squash it as it could then squirt back into its victim, the possibly infected blood it has sucked out.

Oils or proprietary chemical substances are often suggested to loosen a tick's grip but this is now widely thought to be rather ineffective; as is the applying of heat such as cigarette ends or matches.

If you think any part of the tick may be left in your skin, you should seek medical advice as quickly as possible.

You should indicate that you are concerned about the risk of Lyme disease which can be easily identified by blood tests.

Unfortunately some doctors are apparently not familiar with the problem, particularly those away from areas where livestock and suitable vegetation are found together.

If possible, take the tick with you, so that it can be sent for analysis (sticky tape or a folded tissue should suffice).

If identified early enough a course of antibiotics will usually reduce infection and prevent the illness developing any further.

MEET REPORTS

For overseas meets see general articles

Dinner Meet

Whoop Hall - November 14 - 16 2003

The meet followed the traditional format with members arriving sporadically but with most able to attend the A.G.M. which preceded the dinner.

A total of 94 attended, far too many to list here.

Principal Guest Roger Chapman MBE, FRGS

Other guests

Malcolm Eldridge AC

Ian SMITH Pres. CC

Russell Myers Pres. CPC

Tim Elliott Pres. Grits

Bill Truscott MAM

Geoff Bell Pres. Rucksack Club

Russ Bloor Wayfarers

The free use of Lowstern and the provision of a full English breakfast ensured full use of the hut and many others dropped in to see old friends and enjoy the library. Good to see 'headquarters' buzzing.

Members then took to the hills in various groupings, or merely took the road home.

The Club's annual jamboree continues to fulfil a useful purpose quite apart from the enjoyment of the occasion as it does provide an attraction for a number of members we rarely see for all sorts of reasons.

The proximity to Lowstern also helps defray expenses for members.

Christmas Meet,

Threlkeld, 12-14 Dec. 2003

Members and their guests started to gather early on Friday afternoon and by evening when the centre was looking more habitable, twenty-six members sat down to a 'light' supper - John Lovett's definition - if this was 'light' what would appear on Saturday evening for the Xmas extravaganza? Having said our hellos and drunk many peoples health most retired at a sensible time to conserve energy for the Saturday.

Saturday dawned cloudy but bright. Whoever decided to establish the T.B. hospital in 1908 in this location must have been an artist. The views looking through the windows over the valley are stunning. After a hearty breakfast flasks were filled, boots laced up and the brave and the foolish set forth to many and varied destinations to test themselves against the hills and the wind.

More than fifty percent decided to conquer BLENCATHRA and SHARP EDGE from various reference points on the map.

Of those who sought to go down SHARP EDGE some had second thoughts when they saw how wet the rock was and felt the strength of the wind.

Some ventured further afield like Roger Dix, Graham Doutson (a guest) Mike Godden and Derek Collins, who with military precision parked a car in StJohn's Vale and then proceeded to Dunmail to tackle Dollywagon, the Helvellyn ridge, Whiteside and back to Legburthwaithe.

George Spenceley and his party, were the most fortunate of those who decided to do the circuit of Skiddaw How, Carrock mine, Carrock fell, Mosedale, Mungrisdale and the by-road and track back to the centre.

They arrived at Mungrisdale and seeing the sign Keswick 10 miles with the rain starting, were saved by the local mini-bus. Alan Linford and his crowd weren't so lucky and they arrived back at the centre like 'drowned rats'

Tim Josephy soloed Helvellyn and Alan Brown the REGHED CENTRE to watch the Everest film.

David Smith said that he had helped to prepare the evening meal then summited Blencathra and returned in just over 2 hours; Derek Clayton was out with the Blencathra foxhounds.

These are just some of the Saturday activities.

Those who set off early were the most fortunate; this included Iain Gilmour and myself as the rain

started about 3.30pm and never stopped.

At 6-30pm everyone being showered and rested, John Lovett and his then merry band of helpers produced a wonderful seven course meal.

This was the only time that conversation stopped.

Drinks replenished - this was an excellent evening only surpassed by the meal that John and his team produced and Alister Renton did a sterling job as the only 'waiter'.

Sunday dawned bright, most members and guests decided to do shorter activities but again they were very varied.

Bruce Bensley and Gel Campion caving in Kirbymoore cave, Tim Josephy and Mike Smith climbing in Borrowdale, Richard Kirby, Roger Dix and Graham Doutson ascending Skiddaw, Alan Wood and others mountain biking.

Other members who hadn't the head for heights keeping to low levels, like walking around Derwent water.

Those present that had a long distance to travel just seemed to say their goodbyes and offer their festive wishes to friends and members and started for home, others just tidied up, said their goodbyes and also went home.

The members and guests that were on the meet owe a debt of gratitude to John Lovett, the meet

organiser, and his team of conscripted helpers and other members who did their stint at washing up.

A GOOD AND MEMORABLE TIME WAS HAD BY ALL.

D.J.G.

ATTENDANCE

Ken Aldred
Bruce Bensley
Alan Brown
Derek Bush
Ged Campion
Albert Chapman
Alan Clare
Derek Clayton
Derek Collins
Ian Crowther
Roger Dix
Graham Doutsou (G)
Mike Edmundson
David Gamble
Iain Gilmour
Mike Godden
Peter Green (G)
David Handley
David Hick
Gordon Humphreys
Howard Humphreys
Rob Ibberson
Tim Josephy
Alan Kay (President)
Richard Kirby
Alan Linford
Bill Lofthouse

Harvey Lomas
John Lovett
David Martindale
Frank Platt
Tom Price
Alister Renton
Chris renton
Arthur Salmon
David Smith
Michael Smith
Derek Smithson
George Spenceley
John Temple (G)
Frank Wilkinson
Alan Wood

Low Hall Garth Meet, 9-11 January 2004

Anticipation runs high among Club members of good snow conditions for the first meet of the Now Year.

A very wet Friday evening, with gloomy weather forecast, saw thirteen members and their guests gathered at Low Hall Garth, cooking their evening meal and exchanging experiences.

All members commented most favourably on the excellent condition of the hut, for which the Warden and his working parties are to be praised.

As the evening progressed some members sat by the fire whilst others confirmed the continuing existence of the refreshment facilities of the Three Shires Inn.

Saturday dawned fine without too much cloud on the hills, but with very strong winds. Members were away quite early after an excellent English or Continental breakfast.

One party of eight conducted an inspection of the mine workings followed by a trip along to High

Tilberthwaite with the intention of walking along to the Walna Scar Track to Goat's Water.

Plans changed and two splinter groups formed, one climbing Coniston Old Man and returning via Swirl Howe, Carrs and Wet Side Edge. The other group descended to Coniston then walked via Tam Hows by a circuitous route and the dizzy heights of Black Crag.

One intrepid member travelled to the Northern Lakes and enjoyed a traverse of the Coledale Horseshoe plus a visit to Grasmoor on the way round.

Whatever the activity everybody assembled back at the cottage by late afternoon and by now the weather had deteriorated to the normal wind and heavy rain which persisted throughout the evening.

An excellent dinner, very capably prepared and served by Rob Ibberson and helpers was enjoyed by all.

Sunday morning dawned dry and bright but still windy, a full English or Continental breakfast was enjoyed.

A few members departed early for home whilst others set out for half and full day expeditions.

Maybe there will be good conditions for the next January meet. Whatever the conditions, they do not appear to diminish members' enthusiasm for this meet with its valued company and an appreciation of the culinary skills of the meet organiser, to whom we are doubly grateful.

AJD

ATTENDANCE

Rob Ibberson	M
Peter Green	G
Derek Smithson	M
Roy Denney	M
Martyr Trasler	M
Iain Gilmour	M
Ken Aldred	M
Andrew Duxbury	M
Richard Josephy	M
Nick Welsh	M
Gordon Humphreys	M
Arthur Salmon	M
Frank Wilkinson	M

Welsh Meet, Oread Club Hut, Tan Y Wyddfa, 30 January-1 February 2004

The Oread Club hut is located at Rhydd Du on the road between Caernarfon and Beddgelert, about four miles West of Beddgelert.

The premises are somewhat more elaborate than a climbing hut, being a well appointed conversion of a dwelling house, with accommodation in bunk beds for sixteen people. Twenty two members attended the meet, so six of them, for the most part by choice, slept in tents or cars.

In the week before the meet the North and East of England had experienced a significant snowfall, although North Wales seemed to have escaped the worst of the weather.

However, the forecast for North Wales for the weekend was of moderate temperatures, but very wet and windy weather. Notwithstanding this, several members, not wholly trusting the meteorological report, elected as a safety first measure to bring ice axes and crampons.

In the event none of this equipment was taken out of car boots, since the weather forecast proved to be accurate, with temperatures, even on the fells, of about ten degrees.

The rains started late on Friday evening, and continued without cease throughout the night and the whole of Saturday, making walking and climbing conditions very uncomfortable: it was a grey morning on Saturday, with cloud base low in the valley, and no view at all of the surrounding hills.

The conditions and forecast persuaded many members to elect for lowland walks on Saturday, and three members took a trip to Caernarfon to explore the castle.

Two others inspected the nearby Forestry Commission plantations, while two slightly more adventurous members explored the plantation on the western side of the A 4085 road and walked to Beddgelert. There they sampled the local brew of tea before returning to Rhydd Du by bus. These were the sensible members of the club.

Four others elected to attack Snowdon, and of these, two reached the summit, although they did

not see it, but the remaining two turned back at half way because one of them was suffering from a mshoulder injury.

The organiser of the meet, with two companions, tackled Cwm Pennant and the Nantlle Ridge, before returning to prepare an excellent dinner for the survivors of the day.

A quintet of intrepid or somewhat hopeful members, relying on the local knowledge of our meet leader, embarked on a circuit of Snowdon. After struggling for over an hour to negotiate the waterlogged lower slopes to the east of the hut, it was decided nem. con that it was unlikely that we would accomplish all we had set out to do, and we took the track to Bwlch Maesgwm and descended gently to Llanberis.

Here a sandwich luncheon was taken overlooking Llyn Padarn while we awaited the bus to Pen-y-pass.

Thence battle with the elements was resumed as the quintet walked the path down by the Mon Trawsnant to Llyn Gwynant. The track crossed the Afon Glaslyn, but this involved wading across with water over the knees. However, by this time we were past worrying about such minor difficulties, as everyone was thoroughly saturated by the windswept rain: at least the writer was, but then he fell in the water more than the others!

The next decision was whether to take a "short cut" back to Rhydd Du at the end of Llyn Gwynant by climbing the first part of the Watkin path to Snowdon, but then branching off (and up) to Bwlch Cwm Llan.

The writer decided that the short cut was beyond his capabilities, and opted to join the road on the opposite side of the valley and walk the ten miles by road via Beddgelert to Rhydd Du, although this was twice as far as the mountain route.

The remaining stalwarts embarked on the climb up to the col, where they reported the conditions were "atrocious".

I had been of the opinion that conditions had reached that degree of difficulty long before, but I am sure they accurately described the problems, since those who took the High Road, and the one that took the Low Road arrived home at about the same time.

The last member, accompanied by a prospective member, chose a similar circuit, but they walked to Betws Garmon before venturing onto the hills, and later joined the Snowdon Ranger track to follow in the footsteps, or foot puddles of the quintet to Llanberis. However, they spurned the use of public transport and walked all the way up the road to Pen-y-pass, and then followed the route of the odd man out of the quintet, and splashed their way on the road to Beddgelert and beyond.

In places the road was like a river, and cars set up bow waves, which threatened to engulf the bedraggled road walkers - or at least those of diminutive stature like the writer of this article.

The only light relief was a motorist who stopped and asked which was the road to Snowdon, and seemed somewhat surprised when he was told that the nearest he would get to it by road was Llanberis.

The rain had ceased by Sunday morning, and for the first time during the weekend we were able to see the lower slopes, and indeed some rocky eminencies to the West. However, most of the members departed early for their respective homes, but four of them, including the last two who had risked being swamped on the Beddgelert road the evening before, enjoyed a leisurely drive round Anglesey.

One intrepid member slogged off to Yr Aran: I have not heard from him since, but I assume he reached his objective, and returned safely.

Two members, perhaps frustrated by the lack of rock work the day before, visited the climbing wall between Llanberis and Caernafon, and Don MacKay visited the widow of one of our past Presidents-Brian Nicholson. She now resides near Beddgelert.

On the following Tuesday the weather man at the BBC announced that in the previous few days fourteen inches of rain had fallen on North Wales, of which I believe about ten inches fell on the members of the YRC at the Welsh meet.

He went on to say that "the water had to go somewhere", and much of it went into an inflated river Severn, which was threatening to flood the town of Shrewsbury. After our experiences of the weekend I felt every sympathy for the inhabitants of that town.

Nevertheless the weekend was full of interest and camaraderie; everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves after they had dried out, and our thanks go to Tim Josephy for his excellent arrangements and cooking.

JS

ATTENDANCE

Adrian Bridge
Derek Bush
Ian Crowther
Roger Dix
Graham Dootson (PM)
Paul Dover (PM)
Iain Gilmour
Mike Godden
David Hick
Tim Josephy
Alan Linford
John Lovett
Don Mackay
David Martindale
Mark Pryor
Jim Rusher
John Schofield
David Smith
Mike Smith
Derek Smithson
George Spenceley
John Sterland

Lowstern Meet, 13th -15th February 2004

The caterers were away early on Saturday morning in order to ascend Penygent before some of the late arrivals put in an appearance.

When the writer arrived he found that the two chefs had returned and were busy preparing the evening meal.

Their refusal of help meant that the said writer was forced to get himself out onto the hills with no hope of catching up with the earlier groups.

From Gaping Ghyll he made his way over to an interesting development where members of the BPC were winching up large amounts of rubble from a new 'dig'.

The weather was quite fine as far back as Clapham where he met others outside the New Inn.

Back at the cottage, in front of the fire, and refreshed by the usual ale supplies some of the more adventurous explained their exploits.

Some had walked along the road from Clapham and then taken the path to Slatenbar and along the road to Crina Bottom. After a while they went west to Jenkin Beck and Fasegill Force, a spectacular waterfall surmounted by a limestone arch.

A few photographs delayed them for a short while but then they made their way to the top of Ingleborough, returning by Newby Moss.

The leader of this group, who must have walked in the area for at least sixty years, maintained that he had never seen this waterfall before.

Other groups appeared to have had plenty of exercise, working up an appetite for the evening meal.

Once again the caterers had provided us with an excellent repast which saw almost all of us ending the evening in front of the fire discussing past and future meets.

Thanks to the meet organisers for a very enjoyable weekend.

K.A.

ATTENDANCE

Ken Aldred
David Handley
John Schofield
Alan Claire
John Hemingway
David Smith
Derek Clayton
John Lovett
Derek Smithson
Albert Chapman
Frank Platt
Alan Wood
Mike Godden
Harry Robinson
Bill Todd.

Tulloch Meet, 26-29 February 2004

Most of the 31 members and guest arrived by late Thursday afternoon, but the evening arrivals came with two to three inches of snow.

Friday dawned frosty and clear, very windy around Corroun Station, but tolerable on the Ben. The weather remained frosty and sunny for the rest of the weekend.

Activity started early **Friday** morning to the following areas:

Aonach Mor gondola - Stob an Cul Choire, Tom Na Sroine (D.H. + party)
Ben Nevis Garadh Gully + Ledge Route (possibly)? 12 hour day (A.B. + one)
Ben Nevis No.2 Gully and the round of Cam Mor Dearg (A.D. + guest.)
Ben Nevis Gardyloo Gully + Cam Mor Dearg arête (D.L. + one)
Beinn na Lap, party of 6 blown-off just below summit, lunched on bank of Loch Ossian in warm sunshine and calm. Afternoon tea at Corroun Station! (H.H. + five)
Ben Nevis Garaoh Gully (T.B. + one)
Tom na Fersaid Mor and old rail tracks.
Cruach Innse, Lairig Leacach (D.M.)

Saturday

Corbet Beinn a Bhric and Leum Villeim (I.G. + one.)
Grey Corries (A.B.+four.)
Bienn Teallach, Beinn Chaorainn (D.S.+five.)
Aonach Mor (T.B.+ one.)
Grey Corries, Stob Choire Claurigh via Coire Choinhidh (M.H.+one.)
Cruach Innse, Lairig Leacach (D.H.+one.)
Tulloch - Roughburn up Alt a Chaoraim and back via Burnside Cottage. (JL. + one.)

Sunday

Grey Corries (T.B.+one)
Aonach Mor, climbing (M.H.+one.)
Glencoe Ski area, 3 tops and mechanical aids on descent. (A.B.+three)

After dinner chat stretched the mind and imagination when all terrain zimmer frames were suggested as suitable aids.

The weaknesses were soon exposed; however, the Emmet trained engineers rapidly solved all problems.

A short lecture on supermarket trollies, instructing how to lean forward over the push bar enabling one to lift both feet off the ground and still maintain directional control, raised much laughter.

Laughter continued on the following morning when a 'senior' member was seen hopping across the platform, carrying one boot and dragging his rucksack to catch, the 8.05 train to Corroun.

Rail Fares

Approximately 12 people used the train from Tulloch to Corroun and back.

No two fares were the same, varying from £4.40, £4.20 for return tickets and £1.65 for a single up-hill ticket and £1.25 for down-hill ticket!!

Thank you Adrian for all the organisation.

H.H.

ATTENDANCE

Alan Kay - President
Derek Bush
Mick Borroff Guest
Adrian Bridge
Tim Bateman
Nick Beale Guest
Albert Chapman
Ian Crowther
Roger Dix
Adrian Dixon
Derek English
Iain Gilmour
Richard Gowing
David Handley
David Hick
Gordon Humphreys
Howard Humphreys
Mike Hobson
Andrew Hobson Guest
Tim Josephy
John Jenkin
David Large
John Lovett

Dave Martindale
Alister Renton
Harry Robinson
David Smith
Derek Smithson
James Whitby
Barrie Wood

Not all members and guests were present all three nights.

High Moss - Meet Report, 26-28 March 2004

Weather is at best always a gamble in the Dunnerdale Valley at this time of year and this year proved to be the usual.

A damp Friday, followed by low cloud and mist on the Coniston mountains on Saturday; Sunday started quite wet.

An early start was made by most members to the eastern mountains that included Dow Crag, Coniston Old Man, and back along the Walna Scar Road. The meet leader quickly did the circuit of Seathwaite Tarn, Goats Hause, back via Dow Crag and the Walna road, well; he did have the evening meal to prepare!

Two stalwarts of the club climbed Harter Fell for the third time in over forty years needless to say reminiscing of past expeditions together.

The President also did Harter Fell en-route to hills around Seathwaite Tarn.

Members and Guests were treated what has become the norm, a splendid evening meal prepared by the meet leader and helpers, various wines and beers, optional mulled wine and starter based on pate followed by Cornish pasties, choice of sweets, coffee and mints.

After all, we do need time to have a bit of a chat and boast about the day's achievements!

Sunday-two senior members planned to do Harter Fell on the way home.

JL

ATTENDANCE

Ken Aldred
David Brooks (G)
Derek Bush
Alan Clare
Derek Clayton
Ian Crowther
Graham Dootson (PM)
Mike Godden
Jeff Hooper
Alan Kay
Alan Linford
John Lovett
Frank Platt
Chris Renton (Sat. Visitor)
David Smith
Derek Smithson
George Spenceley
Alan Wood
Michael Hobson (Sat. Visitor)

LHG working meet 2-4 April 2004

This meet was organised to tidy up the exterior paving, and to solve the problem of water and sediment accumulating near our front door.

John Lovett and Iain Gilmour had already visited a quarry very high up on the Tilberthwaite fells to order stone for the kerb and paving.

On Thursday 1 April, John Jenkin and Iain Gilmour took delivery of fifteen feet of green slate kerbstones, some as high as 22 inches, and also some slate paving slabs.

Throughout the day, a preparatory trench was dug in a straight line, after cutting the roadway with a diamond wheel. Some other members came on Thursday night, including a nautical individual who raided the quartermaster's stores at half past midnight, and we were ready for a 9:00 start on Friday.

On Friday morning, David Handley arrived with a massive load of cement, aggregate, John Lovett's cement mixer, and other sundry tools. Mike Godden swept the roadway and connected some gully run-offs, assisted by Rob and David.

The road near the Drying Room, which was badly eroded, was smoothed and the deepest potholes levelled expertly by Mike the Broom.

At about 11:00 Howard Humphreys and his wife arrived with more materials and a very smart oak bench dedicated to Herbert Thompson. A number of members including David Smith, Albert, and David Handley had suggested a bench outside LHG.

David Handley had supplied the oak, and Howard had demonstrated great skill and craftsmanship in transforming a rough beam into a superb bench.

Shortly after the departure of Howard, the construction management supremo, John Lovett, arrived looking svelte, with bags, which were quickly taken aloft by the Quartermaster to a reserved bunk.

Changed into more customary working meet garb including pale camel boots, John took charge of providing the necessary dry mix concrete. John Jenkin started aligning the kerb stones, while Iain watched a real precision job, where every stone was positioned to the thickness of a matchstick.

Another team moved the NT pile of wet logs for the cottage above. This liberated two car spaces in the car park. The logs were not being used because the NT had removed the cottage axe and saw (Health & Safety fears!), and the logs were too big for use. Some small stone was spread in the car park to cover the mud.

Meanwhile, the inside team of John Casperson and Mike Kinder made a very thorough job of preparing the living room walls and ceiling, ready for painting.

Lunch was served by the QM who quickly put down a mutiny from some members wanting more of yesterday's pork pies.

Rob fraternised with the locals, meeting Mike O'Flaherty who services High Hall Garth and the cottage, in between visitors. Stores for this are currently held in the lower half of the barn opposite.

Rob also learned from Mike and Pete of Cumbria Pumps, that the borehole pump had been out of action due to blockage, and the water supply had been coming from a beck above HHG for the last 3 days.

The pump tested out satisfactorily, and they left it operating normally.

Saturday morning saw the replacement of the fine weather of the previous two days by heavy drizzle, worsening during the afternoon. Work, nevertheless, continued on the new patio.

Rubble was removed to the top of the car park and the remaining slabs of the old patio were removed and the area smoothed down ready for the new paving.

John Casperson and Mike Kinder continued with the redecoration of the living area. Work also continued on the redecoration of the wash room, this being completed in the afternoon.

With the departure of John and Mike, outside work was suspended due to the weather and all members assisted in continuing the painting of the living area.

On Sunday morning, in the drier conditions, the kerbing was pointed and the old slabs temporarily re-laid on the patio. The dormitory was dusted and swept out and mopped down.

WRI & RD

Friends of LHG

Howard Humphreys
Rob Ibberson
John Casperson
John Jenkin
Albert Chapman
Mike Kinder
Roger Dix
John Lovett
Graham Dootson
Iain Gilmour
Mike Godden
David Handley

Joint Meet Wayfarers and YRC Lowstern 16 - 18 April 2004.

The Wayfarers had a well attended meet at Lowstern in March but knowing caving was the plan only the brave turned out for this joint meet.

For practical purposes the group was an ideal size and 10 people enjoyed a sporting, if wet, day underground directed by Mike Hartland ably supported by Terry

Devany and Dennis Roe from the Bradford Pothole Club.

It is a feature of the YRC that members 'disappear' for a number of years and then suddenly turn up at a meet and get down to business in a manner suggesting they had not missed a meet.

A welcome return to meets was extended to Alex Blair, son of David Blair who many older members will remember, and his guest Chris Mutlow. Arriving on Friday evening Alex expected to be greeted by Ken Aldred who unhappily, having suffered a family bereavement, was unable to attend, and instead found Alan Linford acting as meet leader.

The plan on Friday was Alum Pot via Long Churn, but Mike had a much more ambitious plan.

Saturday, up early, Ian Crowther was despatched to Ingleton to hire helmets, belts and lamps for the guests, The BPC lads had been despatched to collect gear and the party assembled at 10am in Ribblesdale and set off for a through trip from Calf Holes to Browgill, which is a long low wet crawl called, Hainsworth's passage.

This seemed to whet the appetite and the party followed on to Old Ing Cave, a sporting cave with big pools, waist deep canal, ending in a sump and finished off in Birkwith Cave.

A full mile of passage, plenty of tight bits, a couple of ladder pitches and a lot of sport.

Tim Bateman continued with the BPC lads into Dismal Hill Cave, a tight spot, and had little to say about it during the following evening.

The remainder of the meet disappeared in various directions or attended to duties in the kitchen. Food is always a feature of meets and the caving party returned, wet, to fresh scones and home made jam.

Unfortunately Terry could not join the meet for most convivial evening, an excellent meal which finished with traditional Aldred rice pudding .

Their was general agreement was that we should continue with joint meets.

Next one is in September at the Wayfarers Hut in Langdale.

ATTENDANCE

Wayfarers.

Ken Fyles President, Gareth Bloor, John Jacob and daughter Lucy(G),

YRC.

Tim Bateman, Albert Chapman, Alan Brown, Alex Blair and guest Chris Mutlow, Ian Crowther and guest Colin Thwaites, Alan Linford, Mike Hartland, and Derek Smithson.

BPC

Terry Devany and Dennis Roe.

A.L

Ladies Meet, Harefield Hall, Pateley Bridge 23-25 April 2004

For the 2nd year running, this meet was held at Harefield Hall Hotel on the outskirts of the attractive town of Pateley Bridge.

Those of us who had not attended the previous year's meet were duly impressed by this 17th Century Manor House situated in its large area of woodland and gardens.

Members and wives arrived at various times on Friday afternoon and occupied themselves visiting the town and its variety of shops, going for walks or making use of the Hotel's leisure facilities including the jacuzzi, sauna and pool.

In the evening, those staying at the Hotel were joined by others staying elsewhere in the area. A pleasant evening was had by all.

Saturday morning dawned bright and warm and continued in this vein throughout the day. Twenty seven members and wives set out by car, to the parking area at Scar House Reservoir.

The dam was crossed and a route was taken uphill to North Moor, giving fine views over this delightful area. The route continued over Brown Ridge and Lofthouse Moor, pausing to examine a "breather hole" to a disused lead mine.

Lunch was taken by an old Shooting Lodge.

Afterwards, a fairly steep descent was made to the road where a car had been left to transport those walkers not wishing to continue, back to the Hotel.

The remaining party crossed hills in an uphill direction to the attractive village of Middlesmoor. The sun was well and truly out and as luck would have it, the pub was open, and thirsts duly quenched. Before continuing, some also patronised the ice-cream van. A well-defined track led back to the car park.

All those taking part agreed it was an excellent walk with stunning scenery in every direction.

After returning to the Hotel, some of the party rested in preparation for the evening's festivities whilst others took advantage of the leisure facilities.

A total of 40 sat down for the dinner, which was generally agreed to be of a good standard. The usual conversation and banter took place and we were entertained to the climbers' version of 'Clementine' by our own duo. In his speech, the President informed the ladies that they were now club members, but only until midnight!

The next morning saw the good weather continuing and it also saw the departure of several members of the party, homewards.

A group of 11 and a dog set out from the Hotel along the river into Pateley Bridge, then over fields into Ashfold Valley and on to the disused lead mines where a short break was taken.

An ascent of the spoil tips took the party onto a track which led back to Pateley Bridge and the Hotel - another most enjoyable walk and again, lovely scenery.

Final goodbyes were then said and departures made.

Thanks go to John and Pat Schofield for organising the meet and the walks which were very much enjoyed by all the participants.

This meet was, once again, a great success and it is to be hoped, will long continue to be part of the Club calendar.

R.D.

ATTENDANCE

Dennis and Joan Armstrong,
Alan and Madge Brown,
Ian and Dorothy Crowther,
Roger and Gwen Dix,
Sheila Earnshaw (g),
Iain and Sarah Gilmore,
Mike and Marcia Godden,
Richard and Elizabeth Gowing,
John and Janet Hemmingway,
Gordon and Fiona Humphreys,
Rob Ibberson,
Alan and Julia Kay,
Alan and Angie Linford,
Bill and Brenda Lofthouse,
Tony and Valerie Penny,
Harry and Margaret Robinson,
Jim Rusher,
Arthur Salmon,
Barbara Salmon,
Trevor and Ann Salmon,
John and Pat Schofield,
Bill and Juliet Todd.

Big Bike Ride:

July 6th - 8th 2004

It was more of a dribble than a mass start at 5.20a.m. from Lowstern. However by 6.30 groups of 5, 2, 3 and 1 had left the hut.

The single member, fulfilling an ambition, had cycled from Leeds and went off to inspect his properties in the Northern Pennines. We assume all went well.

The rest of us, on a cold, lurid morning, toiled up past Ribbleshead station, 13.2 hard miles, with a further 4 uphill miles to the Dent turnoff. From here to Dent life was exhilarating with the long freewheel, though there was some traffic which had to be dodged.

After a rest, refreshments were served just past the village and here the routes parted.

Persistent and thorough de-briefing later that evening in the pub and at the dinner table left me little wiser as to the exact lines followed by the two parties.

Suffice to say, the roads they followed were mainly tarred, were narrow and enclosed by nettles, had been used by the Romans and led from near Sedbergh through such places as Barbon, Casterton and Leck eventually arriving at Ingleton and then to Lowstern.

The total distance varied between 60 and 65 miles depending on my informant.

The course was hilly and a range of bikes was used, including a recent acquisition from an auction at £14, a real bargain. It struck me as a fine effort by 6 very casual cyclists in the best traditions of the club.

One rider wore walking boots and commented they were well used!

The first recorded crash in the peloton occurred in the nettle section but no scratching was observed

The remaining 4 carried on, struggling in the case of your reporter, up the Lune valley and very much across country towards Burneside north of Kendal, and the second feeding point.

The sun was shining, times were good and the food and drink were well presented, so the world was a better place.

Things were better down the Lyth valley with lovely views, through Underbarrow (hobbit country?) and Brigsteer leading to Levens and the flat Kent estuary roads.

Our guest rider broke a spoke and calmly loosened off the brake allowing the wheel to wobble freely, which speeded up his downhill swoops.

The ride alongside the R. Kent was pleasant while the nasty little hills on the Arnside peninsula seemed a bit unfair, but the final feeding station was close.

The group of 3 were little delayed here and quickly pressed on to the nearest shop while I fed at home before following them.

The promised east wind was blowing and the remaining 23 miles were into it in deteriorating weather and climbing from sea level was hard. We walked here and there, or three of us did, especially near Capenwray.

Finally we rolled in just after 3.00 p.m. and all riders were back within 11 hours.

Afternoon tea with scones and raspberry jam was much enjoyed, as was the splendid meal later.

Fifteen members and guests sat down and an hour later had difficulty getting up.

Some of us still harbouring a fluid deficit needed a visit to the pub but all were in bed pretty early - all that fresh air!

It was good to see David Handley for an hour on Wednesday afternoon and Albert Chapman (I.P.P) deserves our thanks for picking up the meet at short notice, though he did point out that Sammy had provided our dinner, except that he had picked the strawberries.

The unsung heroes in the kitchen and feeding points made a tough day a lot easier.

Thanks.

Being midweek, one member had to go to work on Thursday but the rest went home.

In passing, is there case for those of us not yet follicly challenged to request a mirror in the dormitory.

JDC

ATTENDANCE

Chapman, A R
Clare, A
Clayton, W D
Collins, J D
Crowther, I W C
Dover, P
Dover, R (G)
English, D
Hooper, J H
Humphreys, H
Kirby, R A
Lovett, J
O'May, T (G)
Papworth, H M
Renton, C G
Smith, F D

Visiting:

Handley, D J
Lomas, H A
Renton, A



Lowstern Plantation
Near Clapham, Yorkshire



The Yorkshire Ramblers Club
www.yrc.org.uk

Club Member of The British Mountaineering Council
www.thebmc.co.uk