

YORKSHIRE *RAMBLER*

THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS CLUB

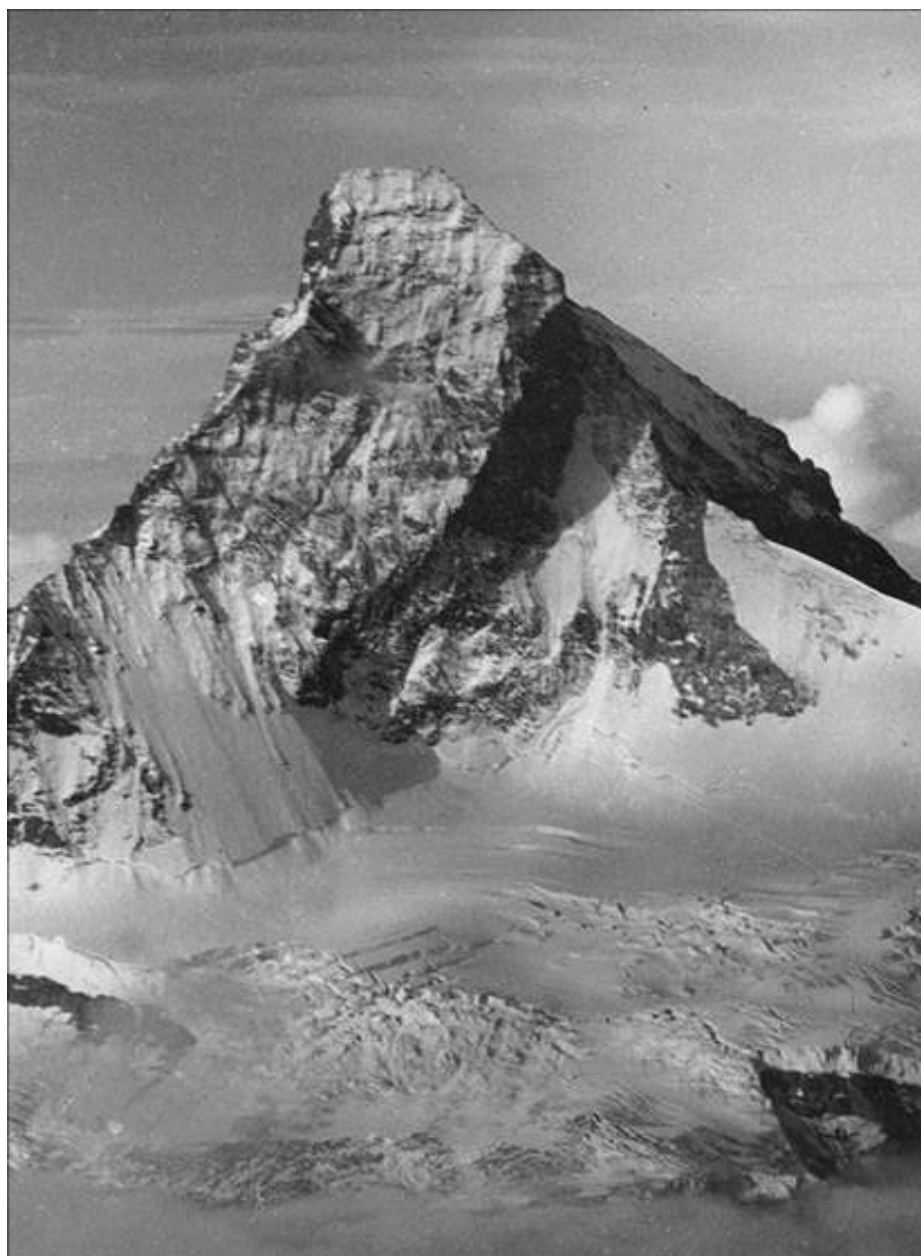
YRC BULLETIN

Issue 23

Summer 2005

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THE MATTERHORN - F David Smith



The Yorkshire Ramblers Club

Established 1892

A mountaineering and
caving club

Club Member of
The British Mountaineering Council

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

'The Rambler' is both a journal of the activities and proceedings of the club and a source of articles on a range of subjects provided largely by the membership. It also acts as a newsletter.

We welcome articles on climbs, caving exploits, skiing, sailing, expeditions; natural history, folklore, archaeology and other similar subjects.

Material is also welcome on informal meets, private trips and any similar pursuits, ranging from full blown articles to small items to go in a section of chippings. We welcome poems and photographs or drawings which need not necessarily be accompanied by any article.

However articles are always of more interest if accompanied by photographs and maps or drawings showing locations.

Roy J Denney, Editor

MOUNTAIN QUEST

The following is the grid from the last journal and unused letters have been removed.
21 names hidden in the block are given below.

SLIASKCALB
SIVENNEBI AONS
NEPODNAWLA
HA E RDF IFE
U CL KR E L YK
DMOL OALRD RI
NOGAWYLLODP TP
RRBT L O I K
OVIA IWADDIKS
CEREKIPDLOC E
NCSWIRLHOW

SAIL, BLACKSAILS, ESK PIKE, TRYFAN,
SKIDDAW, SWIRL HOW, RED PIKE, PILLAR,
CORN DU, CRIB GOCH, BOW FELL, DODD,
DOLLYWAGON, SEATALLAN, CALF, KINDER,
WANDOPE, BEN NEVIS, MORVEN, YOKE,
COLD PIKE.

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EDITORIAL

The Editor makes no effort to define the limits of the matter which will be found between the covers of this Journal. It will attempt to be an accessible and permanent record of the Club's work. Articles descriptive of rambles on the highways and in the byways of travel; accounts of mountaineering expeditions; records of climbs or cave-work; and reviews of books or notices of current literature bearing upon the Club's interests, will appear in its pages.

Yorkshire will, without doubt, receive a considerable share of attention. Its dales still cherish many old-world manners and customs, and much that is quaint in habit and speech. They contain some of the most picturesque English scenery, with the added charms of their past and present human occupancy; history, tale, and legend fill them with moving interest. Its caves and pot-holes are only just beginning to yield their secrets to the adventurous explorer. Its fells, perhaps, do not suggest serious mountaineering, but climbers can find on them interesting short scrambles which afford excellent practice for more arduous work.

Easily accessible, the mountains of the Lake District and North Wales have claimed a large portion of our members' holidays. Norway with its great possibilities of fresh mountaineering work has attracted us. Switzerland has filled many of the Club's evenings in past years with increasing interest, and the fascinations of her Alps and valleys, peaks and glaciers have never waned.

Perhaps we are a little too late to achieve much that is new, but we are not too late to enjoy the old, and if other men still continue to make new ascents or to find new ways up mountains the Yorkshire Ramblers hope to do likewise, and to record their adventures in these pages.

From stranger, wilder lands we may have tales of stirring incident, but it is none of the Editor's business to prophesy, and he has said perhaps sufficient to indicate what the journal will attempt.

It is not proposed to confine it entirely to members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, and the Editor is sanguine enough to believe its readers will also not be limited to that body. If it helps to bring together Yorkshiremen and dwellers in our Northern Counties of kindred tastes to strengthen our organisation it will have attained another of its objects.

The Journal being now an accomplished fact, the Editor hopes the members of the Club will not fail to supply him with interesting matter with which to fill its pages. Its continuity is perhaps most seriously threatened by the disinclination of the average member to put pen to paper. He is therefore especially anxious to disabuse members' minds of any preconceived notions of his editorial severity. Keenly conscious of his own shortcomings, he knows it is easier to criticise the work of others than to do it himself. His anxiety to make the journal fulfil their wishes must plead his excuse. He asks them to bear with his failings, and credit him at least with a single-hearted desire to do his duty."

I could not put it better; this was the introduction by Thomas Gray to our first journal in July 1899.



PICTURE PROVIDED BY MIKE SMITH

THE EARLY ONSET OF SANITY

Where have all the nutters gone? When I first joined the club there was a fairly sizeable group of comparatively young members, oft referred to as the hooligan element. Quite obviously age lends a different perspective and it may just be that our latest crop of less elderly members are not only busy doing great things but may also indulge, unbeknownst to me, in the same sorts of dafter pastime that we used to get involved in.

I hear no tales of boulder trundling, tobogganing on fertiliser bags or indeed, becking.

I have recollections of fighting our way up Hell Gill where by sitting in the top of the gully you could be shot out at a great rate of knots to drop into a deep pool. Tilberthwaite offered some serious challenges but great fun along the way and Howsteen Gorge helped get a good clean up after crawling around in Goyden Pot.



I have memories of members trying to hold their breath, submerged in deep pools, long enough for colleagues to stand on their heads and try and climb out of waterfalls. I recall skinny dipping in the Alport after a particularly dusty crossing of Bleaklow.

We were even daft enough to tackle becking with snow on the higher hills and I have pictures of an epic climb of Scafell by Piers Gill.

On another occasion I recall a less intentional madness when several of us climbed the face of Scafell in deteriorating weather conditions to unrope at the top not long before dark. Despite having left a vehicle at the head of Wrynose we felt we had better take a direct bearing to Eskdale to get off as it was about as dark a night as I have ever seen with constant drizzle and we were carrying tackle.

Sad to relate Tim Teasdale vanished up to his waist when he broke through an overgrown tarn which we had mistaken for a bit of unusually flat terrain. The smell which came up took some believing. Tim left the club not long afterwards for reasons we can only guess at.

Other recollections of stupidity include a Christmas meet after weeks of miserably wet weather when we waded across a quarter of a mile of Derwentwater just to get a drink before closing time.

The reactions of various landlords and their more sane customers when we appeared on the scene after such epics would fill a book all by themselves.

I recall leaving the Kirkstone Inn an hour before dusk to cross over to Kentmere and missing the soup course in the process. A near white out on High Street had delayed our arrival at Kirkstone but more sane members of the party had abandoned the effort to get there and turned back.

I also recall less commendable activities such as balancing a bowl of water over a part open door to bless elderly members going out for a nature call in the middle of the night. I trust the younger members do not take up this habit as I might now be the recipient. I will not embarrass the actual culprit by naming him but he does now owe me a pint for keeping his secret.

I remember members of Art Bart and Fargo joined by a few more of us, providing musical entertainment to the customers of the Station at Ribblehead whether they wanted it or not; I recall a hirsute member stashing bottles of home brew in crevices to be retrieved in future years in surprisingly drinkable form.

I could go on at length about some of the caving element at that time including fairly riotous times in the company of Glynn Edwards and David Judson to name but two.

I remember members complete with dinner suits practicing moves on roadside boulders on route for a club dinner at Harrogate, not to mention the wearing of 'Swiss' evening dress complete with seagull on head and toothpaste (droppings) on shoulder. Impecunious members bought cheap plonk in nearby supermarkets to smuggle in to dinners rather than pay corkage leaving tell tale evidence under the tables at the end of the night.

Fire regulations have put paid to meets where we all slept on the bar room floor which is a shame as that led to some hilarious evenings. I do recall a meet at Otterburn when we slept on the floor of the library and armoury of the Otterburn Towers Hotel and one inebriated member crashed into a suit of armour trying to find the loo.

High level camps provided endless opportunities for the nutters. I can assure you that elderberry wine turns pink when backpacked in bulk up to 2000 feet and it does make a surprisingly interesting porridge if somewhat strange of hue. That meet we had driven up from Manchester and decided to spend the early evening in the Wasdale Head before driving back down the road to carry our tents up Nether Beck to the camp at Scoat Tarn.

Needless to say we left it a bit late and by the time we dragged ourselves out of the bar we knew it would be dark before we got up to the tarn so two intrepid souls decided that under the circumstances they would stay till closing

time and carry their packs in over Red Pike in the dark.

We were a bit annoyed about 2.00 am when these two finally made it and woke us up to assist them erecting their tents. We stopped complaining however once the same Tim Teasdale pointed out to us that when we had driven away from the pub we had taken his boots with us and he had done the walk in his town shoes.

Tim was well qualified to be classed as one of the nutters and he was a sad loss to the club.



Above is a picture of Tim at the helm of Ian Crowther's Talisker on an ill fated attempt to sail it from Arrisaig to join a Skye meet.

Perhaps there is yet hope for the younger members and the possibility of such traditions being continued if evidence from last year's dinner is anything to go by.



Roy Denney

YESTERDAY'S MEN

An occasional series of articles on former members

DR TEMPEST ANDERSON

by David Laughton

Tempest Anderson was a Club member from 1899 to 1913 and Vice President 1901 - 1903 during Cecil Slingsby's presidency. Living in York, Anderson was a well known specialist in ophthalmic medicine, a Sheriff of the City and a leading light in the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Even today his name is well known in York, one of the City's major lecture halls, attached to the Yorkshire Museum, bears his name. The name "T Anderson M.D." also appears on a pillar outside the York Medical Society Rooms in one of York's main streets - Stonegate where he lived.

Anderson, who was also a member of the Alpine Club, had a particular interest in volcanoes, visiting and photographing them all over the world.

He also climbed extensively in the Alps. His voluminous photographs (on glass plates) are still preserved in the Yorkshire Museum archives.

Besides extensive travels to volcanic sites in Europe and the West Indies he made a major round the world tour in 1908/9, recorded in the 1909 YRC Journal:

Nov 1908 - New Zealand via Tenerife and the Cape

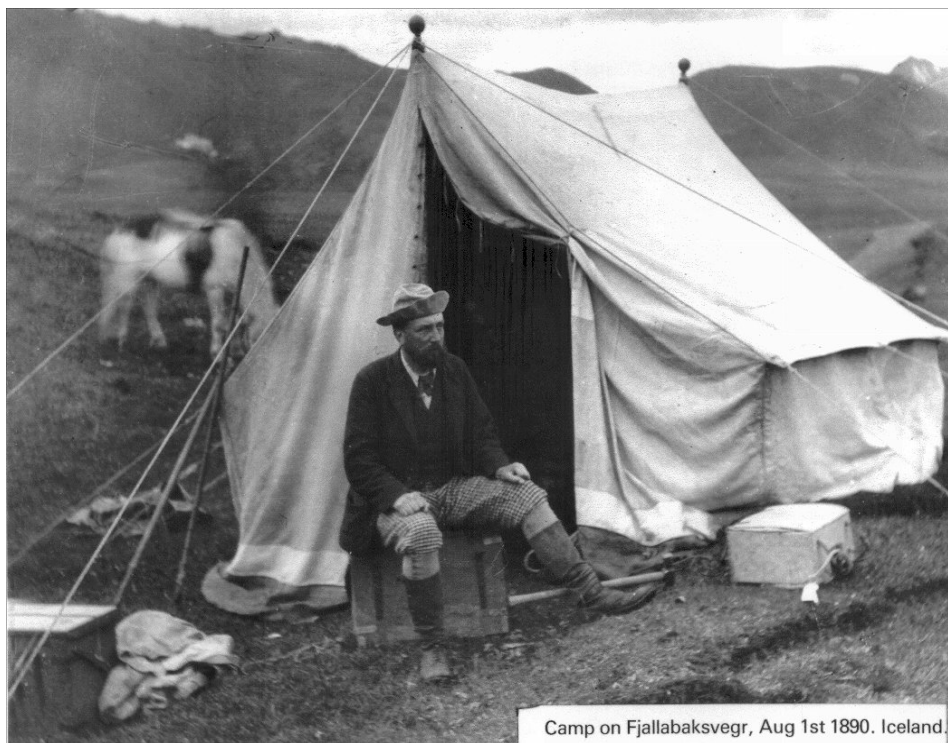
Mar 1909 - Friendly Islands, Samoa, Fiji Islands

May - Hawaii (for 2 months) and then Canadian Rockies (4 weeks)

On his final overseas visit in 1913 he visited volcanoes in Java and the Philippines. He died of a fever on the return journey whilst passing through the Red Sea and is buried in Suez.

A brief obituary appeared in the 1913 YRC Journal and a more detailed one in the Alpine Journal, Feb - Nov 1913.

A copy is in the library at Lowstern.



An excellent article entitled "The York Vulcanologist" by Bill Bradley appeared in the Yorkshire Journal, Issue 42. The York Evening Press also published a short piece on 15 January 2003 entitled "Des follows in footsteps of Tempest" when a museum worker planned to raise money for The British Heart Foundation by attempting to climb Etna, Stromboli and Vesuvius. This article included photographs taken of / by Anderson in Iceland (1890) and on Vesuvius (1898)

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FORTY YEARS ON IN TURKEY

George Spenceley

From the small town of Camardi in south-east Turkey we were directed some distance away to find a small unprepossessing mud brick house. This was the home of Ibrahim Safak and his family, a poor and illiterate farmer who tended his meagre flocks of sheep and goats on the lower slopes of the mountain behind. His name had been given to us by an Alpine Club member, a business man resident in Istanbul. "Just mention my name," he said, "and you'll be made welcome." And so we were.

We had no common language but at the mention of Sidney Nowill smiles of welcome filled Ibrahim Safak's face and, bending low, we were ushered into the dark interior of his single-roomed house.



There to meet us was his wife, wearing a colourful blouse above dark baggy pants, and of course the headscarf, the religious symbol of her faith.

Curious but eager to meet us was their son Ali, perhaps sixteen years old.

Lurking in the background was their much younger daughter Fatima. At first she was very shy, but by the next day she was bold enough to allow me to photograph her posing on the bonnet of my car with a coquettish smile on her face, as if already aware of her childish beauty.



Mats were spread out on the earthen floor on which we sought to sit cross-legged while tea, that essential social lubricant, was prepared, served in tulip-shaped glasses. This was only the beginning of their hospitality.

We pitched the tents outside but no food were we allowed to prepare.

Instead we were summoned back to the house, again to squat awkwardly on the mats and be offered a mixture of chicken, rice, beans and eggplant, eaten with our fingers in folds of unleavened bread. No payment was expected or offered. To have done so would have created grave offence.

Now all these events, although still clearly in my mind, occurred just forty years ago. It was 1964, the first of my several visits to Turkey. My companions were Pat and Peter Shorter. We had driven out from England to climb in the rugged limestone peaks of the Ala-dag Taurus, and hopefully the highest and most prominent of its summits, the 3756-metre Demirkazik.

We could see it clearly from our camp, dominating the skyline and glowing richly in ever-warmer tones as the sun sank. Two days later, Ali led us with a donkey carrying our gear to a bivouac site in the mountains.

Forty years later I was back again and from precisely the same place looking again at Demirkazik glowing in the evening light.

This time I was with my wife Sylvie, and we were sitting comfortably before a table on the verandah of a modern, well-built stone house.

Just below were the neglected remains of the home where Pat, Peter and I had been so royally welcomed. It was a nostalgic excursion to refresh memories of a mountain area, to show Sylvie where I had once climbed and, perhaps, unlikely but just possible, make contact with some of the Safak family whose hospitality we had earlier enjoyed. It turned out to be highly rewarding.

From the lunar landscapes of Cappadocia, where once we had been almost solitary visitors, we drove south towards Tarsus. Almost half way there we turned off to follow a minor road, earlier one of dirt and dust, now asphalted, and soon we saw the grey peaks of the Ala-dag Taurus. At one time little known, rarely visited, they now form the chief attraction of a National Park.

We deviated to stop at what we considered to be the Park's centre. A young man approached us to ask if we spoke English. "I am a mountain guide," he said. "Can I help?" Indeed he could. By singular good fortune here was one of the family I had hoped to meet: Ibrahim Safak's grandson, Basar.

Much excitement followed and we were guided to the well-built stone house to meet his father Ali, the young donkey boy who so long ago had guided us and our gear to a high bivouac site through the Nerpiz Gorge into the cirque of Yalacik. Then a young boy of little education, now speaking good English, he is a retired schoolmaster running with his son Basar, a small pension for trekkers and for those who come to see the unusual birds of these parts, the Wallcreeper and the Caspian Snowcock.

It was a highly emotional reunion; tears of joy ran down his face, there were kisses and embraces. "I am so happy," he kept repeating. It felt like the return of a much-loved, long lost relative, and remarkable was his memory. "Your car was blue,"

he said, "and you sent my father an electric torch." Sadly his father had died some years earlier, although his mother was still alive but too old to visit. Fatima, the coquettish one, had married and, the mother of several children, was now living in Mersin.

And so we were welcomed as of old, well fed but now in comfort at a table, and there were showers, beds and, of course as before, to offer payment would have been offensive. Such are the laws of hospitality in the East.

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We did indeed climb Demirkazik in 1964 as I have earlier written (Y.R.C. Journal No. 34), and by the west face. It was the fourth ascent of the mountain, and the first traverse. The Germans were the first to climb the mountain in 1938 by the exposed but easy south-east ridge, and then in 1943 the second ascent was made by Sir Edward Peck and the recently deceased Robin Hodgkin, They climbed by the west face up what was to become known as the Hodgkin-Peck couloir. On the summit they removed the swastika pennant, which is now in the archive of the Alpine Club. The next ascent was made by our friendly contact in Istanbul, Sidney Nowill.

From the valley we had located the couloir by which we proposed to climb the mountain and, seeing no vestige of snow, we neglected to take crampons or ice axes. This was a mistake for on arrival at the base, we found it to be a thin ribbon of hard snow and ice. Lacking the tools of the trade, we were forced out on to the steep rock wall which much delayed us. We were benighted half way down the south-east ridge, the next morning returning to our bivvy 32 hours after leaving it.

How often Demirkazik has been climbed since we wonder? Basar said very rarely and perhaps never again by the Hodgkin-Peck couloir.



## BRADFORD STRADDLEBUGS TOURING ASSOCIATION

"Qui n'a sante n'a rien"

We often regard ourselves as the oldest regional mountaineering club in England, or at least in Yorkshire. Well not so, here is a surprise. The Straddlebugs were founded in Bradford in 1882. By the birth of the YRC in 1892 they already numbered 32. Ian G Strang wrote a brief history of this strange club in 1975, a copy of which formed part of Stanley Marsden's effects. This article is based on that interesting history. A silver beetle tiepin can identify Straddlebug members. Gold one is presented to distinguished members.

Very much in the same mould as Yorkshire Ramblers, the Straddlebug membership included at least four who were also YRC members. Namely, Geoffrey Turner, Edward Tregoning, Stanley Marsden and Arnold Patchet. The first 'Straddle' in 1882 was from Ingleton to Hawes taking Ingleborough and other peaks en route. In Hawes they met a similar group of young men called the 'Blasted Pines' who had like interest in outdoor pursuits. The two groups joined in discussion and frivolity; firm friendships were established and in 1894 they joined forces.

An 'Executive or Ways and Means Helmet and Pig-Top Committee', a Scientific Committee, a Musical and Entertainment Committee and a Medical Staff and Ambulance Corp were formed. Founder member, F H Bentham became Primus and General Secretary. Mr H Hollinshead was appointed Secundus and Mr T T Peel the Captain. An 'Oath of Allegiance' was introduced, later declared to be obsolete. "Death, sickness or poverty only deemed to be a sufficient excuse for non-attendance at the Annual Straddle. Should any one of the gentler sex prevent a member from attending, that member shall be ignominiously expelled"

The Straddle bugs meet annually, at the ODG in Langdale since 1962. In the earlier years they

travelled very light, with rucksack and walking stove or alpin stock, on which badges were placed to commemorate their achievements. Their garb was unsuitable for today's standards, being a cloak or rainproof, knickerbockers, puttees and chrome leather boots (weighing up to six pound a pair), Norfolk jackets, high collars and flat caps.

A summary of the 1895 four day Easter Tour goes as follows: - Friday Train to Carlisle, rest in porters room in the early hours, walked along the River Don to Penrith, walked to Kendal via Hawes Water, Bowness to Newby Bridge, On to Grange, over the viaduct to Arnside, on to Morecombe and finally the train to Bradford. Entire holiday cost less than £2.

They walked where they liked and seldom saw anyone. A typical straddle would be Grasmere to Keswick on to Patterdale and back to Grasmere. A local straddle was fixed for the last Saturday of each month.

**RULES** We ae nooan nah. Its nobbut foils and madmen at needs 'em. Use common sense. If ye ae nooan yo'll etta buy some at 30 bob a time. Them at's inclined to grummel abaht grub mon put sum-mat in t'box for t'Russian famine fund. Them at's inclined to backslide ed better leave that to t'insects at live by't and at nobbut do it once if they're copped. Them at es a bee in their bonnet mon let it aat or keep it in and pay for it.

In other words, rules, like miners agreements, were inconvenient, impracticable and a menace to peace.

**STRADDLEBUG** In 1936 the College of Agriculture, University of California, Department of Entomology and Parasitology was approached when it was established the beetle belonged to the Family Scarabaeidae, Canthon Laeis Drury which commonly rolls dung balls and in so doing straddles them.

Clearly they were and no doubt, still are, men of character. Mr. Strang's history of the Straddlebugs is now located at our library at Lowstern.  
F. David Smith

## A LONG ROAD TO TRAVEL

A less publicised part of the legislation brought in creating our 'right to roam' was aimed at improving and defining our rights of way network.

As background a few facts make interesting and occasionally depressing reading.

The Audit commission calculate that as much as a third of our existing network is unusable at any given time and this percentage is slowly rising. Some of these problems are temporary where farmers are slow at restoring routes after ploughing but most are due to obstacles or dilapidation which it is the responsibility of local councils to make good.

Under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act a complete review and re-assessment has to be completed by 2026 and after that date it will be very difficult to get any paths added to what will in effect be a new definitive list of public paths.

This may seem a long way off and many of us will not be around to see it but given the extent of the problems with the network and the limited resources being thrown at the project it is a daunting task and any of us with knowledge of a path which should be included or indeed where one should realistically be provided should inform their local authority who will by now be working on their rights of way improvement plan.

Alternatively you can address it to your Local Access Forum who can be contacted through your local authority. These bodies represent all walks of life and interests and were set up under the act to advise the local authority and highways authority on the wishes and needs of the local community. I Chair the Leicestershire Forum.

The forum is tasked with various responsibilities including providing advice as regards the improvement and promotion of public access land within their area for the purpose of open-air recreation and general enjoyment of the area and

includes advising on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the County.

In order that they can properly reflect all points of view they need and do take soundings from a wide range of interests. The needs of landowners and businesses on the land and of wildlife and the environment in general must be balanced with the provision of facilities to the general public and by definition a balance will also have to be struck between the needs of some sports and pastimes and the danger or disturbance they may cause to others with different requirements. In a recent survey we initiated in Leicestershire, 66% of the residents said that access to the countryside for leisure was very important to them and 90% said it was important.

The government seeks to spread the benefits of countryside recreation to a wider cross section of the community and to encourage local authorities to give a priority to linking town and country and to providing more information to those people who are unsure about what is available and what legitimately can be used.

Footpaths and access generally have to be managed with many conflicting considerations and some which do not conflict but are thought to do so and bodies such as the forum are there in part to try and build bridges to minimise these conflicts.

English Nature is for now the Government funded body whose purpose is to promote the conservation of England's wildlife and natural features although its own existence is under review. They are sometimes seen to be heavy handed and over bureaucratic and a threat to walkers where our presence is thought to be a disturbance to wildlife.

It does have legal responsibilities to protect areas but a bit more common sense in interpreting these matters would not go amiss.

No matter what its aims, if it continues to make it difficult for voters to enjoy what they are

preserving, then eventually the political support for the funds they receive may well dry up.

English Nature, in my experience, seems to see little good in many of man's activities. They have recently surpassed themselves. One of my favourite parts of Britain is the area of Suffolk near the Minsmere RSPB reserve. This area of eroding sand cliffs, brackish coastal marshes, sandy heaths and stony scrapes known as the Brecklands, is home to many rare species of flora and fauna which has survived largely due to the careful activities of local people.

Bodies like the RSPB have been actively involved but landowners have shown unusually sensitive attitudes to the needs of many creatures and the success of these partnerships should be an example to all. You are however unlikely to see it replicated elsewhere now that English Nature has stepped in with heavy boots.

Farmers who made a success of these voluntary schemes have been rewarded by the imposition of a statutory reserve status on them (SSSI) which means in many aspects of their activities they cannot carry out their normal functions without the permission of English Nature.

The justification for this action (which they say they have to carry out under EU rules) is that this area of about 30,000 acres is home to 40% of the national population of stone curlews. This bird, whilst still threatened, has doubled in number over the last ten years. It has managed this without statutory protection.

The ludicrousness of this action is even more apparent when you realise that farmers are now going to be paid £1 an acre as compensation for leaving areas of bare earth for the birds to breed and for management they are already doing voluntarily.

Much of English Nature's work is focused on designated sites, and in particular on SSSIs and may therefore be thought not too great a problem but these cover 7% of England which, when you take away all the built up areas means it is an even

larger proportion of the open land. There are just over 4000 SSSIs in England, covering 2.5 million acres.

There is some hope of more joined-up thinking about such matters in that English Nature is to be merged into a new super QUANGO with parts of the Countryside Agency and most of the Rural Development Agency.

This new body was recommended by Lord Haskins in a government report issued a few years ago and will now come into force in January 2007.

It will be know as Natural England (quite a change from English Nature! ) and will cost at least £40,000,000 to set up.

It seems to be a step in the right direction but big is rarely beautiful when bureaucracies are involved.

The avowed purpose of SSSIs is to safeguard, for present and future generations, England's most valuable nature conservation and earth heritage sites, containing many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. They represent some of our most outstanding countryside and play a major part in attracting people into the countryside, for a wide variety of access, recreational, sporting and tourism interests who in turn help support 340,000 jobs.

This is all very well but the needs of people to have access to enjoy these areas often seems secondary to the preservation of them and hopefully work under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act will help restore the balance.

English Nature claims to want people to experience and benefit from contact with nature and acknowledges that recreation plays an important part in improving people's quality of life and sense of well being.

Nationally they advocate an environmentally sustainable approach which enhances both wildlife and recreation but from my experience

several local agents have a bias towards conservation and pay lip service to allowing access by walkers etc.

Nationally they do have working relationships with many sporting interests, including anglers, canoeists, orienteers, ramblers, cavers and climbers. In the case of the British Orienteering Federation and the British Mountaineering Council and no doubt other similar bodies they acknowledge that these bodies actually carry out their own monitoring of protected scarce birds and place voluntary restrictions on their members using particular areas at sensitive times.

We need to bridge the gap between these various organisations, and look for ways each of us can help each other and that is part of our role at local level when serving on the Forum.

Sport England's new mission is "To make England an Active and Successful Sporting Nation" but they are also tasked by the Government in leading the development of a framework which aspires to meet a Government target of 70% of the population being physically active in ways that benefit their health by the year 2020.

So what does this mean for sport in the countryside? Will we find it easier to get new members or will we find the solitude we enjoy in high places lost amongst hordes of new walkers?

Over 25% of the sports recognised by Sport England rely on the countryside as the basic resource for participation in the particular activity and this body is to focus its activity on driving up grass roots participation.

Their interest covers not only organised sport in the countryside but is also about physical activity and active recreation, such as climbing, walking, cycling, canoeing.

Particular mention is made of opportunities for adventure and sport "so long as they do not interfere unduly with the enjoyment of others and land management".

As part of this comprehensive review and rethink about countryside activities the Countryside Agency is now taking forward the review of national parks particularly seeking to establish the demand for different forms of recreation in areas designated because of their landscape and conservation interests.

There is a separate Local Access Forum for each National Park and if you want an input into matters in one of these in particular you should seek them out.

The aim of the review is to establish the demand for different forms of recreation and capacity of the areas to accommodate them. The latest published papers consider that more intensive recreation activities can be accommodated; it states "the parks seem relatively robust environments, capable of absorbing a range of recreational users".

Personally I am not too keen on meeting more mountain bikers or motor cycles on some of the higher routes!

Consideration is now being given by the Countryside Agency to ways of implementing these findings with the first phase being to establish the demand for recreation activities.

Society makes many demands on the countryside and needs to establish ways in which we can increase participation in sport alongside rightly expecting higher environmental standards to be imposed to safeguard wildlife and the Forum can play a part in this. The work on actual access areas is nearly complete but the footpaths to create access or to provide linear routes is now a hot potato and they would welcome any points of concern and specific suggestions for improvements where missing links could be considered which would assist in their deliberations.

Footpaths are in existence which now go nowhere but take up resources for maintenance. These should perhaps be extended to give them some useful purpose or closed to save on valuable

resources. Footpaths need to serve a purpose and there are new access areas which need new approaches to enable walkers to use them in a linked fashion to achieve longer walks.

Can you identify any pockets of countryside where access is permitted but a route in is difficult? Is there any link between communities which you do not feel is adequately provided for at present? Are you aware of any factors deterring people from enjoying any facility?

Do you feel that present rights of way are being maintained adequately? Are you aware of any rights of way which could be upgraded to accommodate more classes of user? Are you concerned that some users are unsuitable for the surface which is being degraded?

Please let your local representatives know. Any help will be welcome as the review even with some professional input is an enormous task. There are 120,000 miles of official public footpaths in England alone. In addition, by undertaking a comprehensive survey of highway authorities, consultants estimated that there may be some 20,000 unrecorded rights of way in England, amounting to some 10,000 miles. The consultants estimated that some 54,000 days would be required to carry out the archival research alone. If adopted, on average, 58% of this increase would be in the form of footpaths, 25% would be bridleways and 17% would be byways open to all traffic. This could result in a 9% increase in the network as a whole.

In an attempt to resolve the fact that recording rights of way (ROW) on the definitive map is still not complete, and to bring an end to the continuing uncertainty for landowners and the public alike about "lost ways", the Countryside & Rights of Way Act introduced a cut off date of 2026 for all such routes in England. After that date any unrecorded ROW will be extinguished.

Your local Forum will be working closely with the local Highways Authority and the Countryside Agency (CA) who are managing a project to

identify "lost ways" in England to assist in completing the definitive map before 2026

The CA are proceeding by coordinating historic research across the country and enabling Modification Orders to be made. In July 2004, the CA appointed a commercial firm to set up an Archive Research Unit (ARU). The ARU will undertake and coordinate the systematic research of historic documents held in over 100 national and local records offices throughout England. The detailed evidence collection will start with research in the National Archives at Kew.

This will be followed by a staged approach to county based research in local records offices, beginning in two lead areas supposedly to be completed about now. This will be expanded to collect all of the available evidence for ten counties by the end of the third year of contract and from the experience gained from this initial period they will then review and refine their approach as necessary and anticipate countrywide coverage in less than ten years.

In advance of the research beginning in each county, local interests including Rights of Way and Archive Officers, volunteer groups and experienced researchers, landowners and managers will be contacted to explain the process and devise an Archive Research Plan (ARP). This ARP will detail how the work will be approached and tailored to reflect local factors, such as progress with the definitive map and research already undertaken.

Within the Club we have a depth of knowledge, certainly of the upland areas, which is second to none, and I would ask members who know of any old routes which are not rights of way to approach their own Local Access Forum with the information they have.

If you do not know how to contact your local forum they will be able to direct you from your County Council.

RJD

# YOSEMITE VALLEY HALF DOME & BEARS

W. Alan Linford

The Yosemite National Park is home to a large number of mammals including some 300 black bears which have such a varied diet they might be seen and encountered anywhere in the valley. Visitors to the Park are provided with information about carrying food and what to do when you meet or see a bear. This information was digested and understood but what do you actually do when you do encounter a bear?

The trail head for the track from Curry to Half Dome 8842ft. starts about 500m from the trail car park the road does continue but is restricted to official vehicles.

The ascent of Half Dome from Curry is a 17 mile round trip with 4880ft of ascent on well prepared signposted paths and therefore a popular route. (Fortunately most people charge at the mountain and fall by the wayside). The guide book recommends making the ascent a 2 day trip with a camp in Little Yosemite Valley at start of the John Muir Trail. I decided on a solo trip with an early start so Angie, suffering with her ankles from a previous attempt, dropped me off at 5.30am at the car park and sped off back to bed.



Turning round onto the start of the path leading to the trail head I found myself looking at the rear end of a bear waddling along the same path.

Stopped in tracks. What to do? Less than the length of a cricket pitch away. In the sack a ripe banana, 2 apples and a mars bar, all bear snacks.

The car and safety had gone, missed the hill yesterday so I stepped into the road and walked, for about 100yds, parallel with the bear. I could still see his back, then he wandered out of sight and I sped up to the bridge across the Merced River to the trail head.

The path soon leads onto the John Muir Trail, passing Vernal falls, Mt Broderick, Liberty Cap 7076ft. over the bridge at Nevada Fall to a flat section in Little Yosemite Valley alongside the Merced River.

A loud noise of something crashing into bushes and water slashing, another bear? Yes, few people around at this time but others on the top had seen both or other bears. On the top 10.15, splendid views of the Valley and John Muir Wilderness and back in Curry just after 3pm.

Wise to ignore the bear?

Bears regularly visit camp sites including the one near the trail head car park, many are tagged and are well known to the Rangers. If my close encounter had been an aggressive bear he would have been captured during the night. During our stay in the Yosemite Valley, one group met a bear in their cabin as they opened the door. We certainly had one outside our cabin, bears have a keen sense of smell, but they smell, real bad, you can smell them when they are close.

Fellow walkers I met confirmed my thoughts that Ranger miles in the USA are different to Statute miles.

## ORIENTEERING A KINDRED SPORT

Variouly described as cunning running or an athletic treasure hunt (or indeed a sport for nutters), orienteering is a wonderful activity for all ages and levels of fitness. At its most competitive it is considered an extreme adventure sport and requires the highest levels of fitness and concentration. You are invited to run (or walk) around parkland, moor, mountain or woodland trying to find markers located on various named features and shown on a detailed map. It gets you into parts of the country that other sports cannot reach and is a form of competition where navigation counts as much as speed.

The foremost requirement in orienteering is the ability to read a map. As you progress you also need to be able to judge direction by using a compass at speed; and distance, by counting your paces.

It therefore has a good deal in common with fell walking particularly in the large tracts of uplands where a compass is a distinct advantage. I well remember a long walk on Bowland when within an hour of the start two groups of the YRC bumped into each other in mist and heading in entirely opposite directions although intent on being on the same route.

I took up the sport when I moved down to the East Midlands as it was a good drive to the nearest fells and I needed something to keep me fit and get me out into the countryside.

I now run regularly without embarrassing myself and have become a major player in the administration of this fascinating pastime which I can recommend to any of you. I am aware that a number of other members enjoy the sport.

In the background it is a very technical sport having to produce our own very detailed maps and I have taught myself mapping and now produce maps on a regular basis.

We also have sophisticated electronic scoring systems akin to carrying a swipe card which you use when you find what you are looking for. This produces your result instantly at the finish complete with all your splits for each leg.

Many of you will have seen Harvey's Walkers Maps which are actually based on maps they produced for major orienteering events.

In orienteering, you do not actually race against each other but go off at timed intervals so that you cannot follow someone else. At each event there will be as many as 14 different courses of differing physicality, technicality and distance so you do not know whether someone you see in front of you is on the same course or not. The scoring system does mean that results in each class are available almost as soon as the event finishes and are usually on the web within hours. If you want to see how it works have a look at our web site [LEIOC.org.uk](http://LEIOC.org.uk) (you will also see how well I have done in any events I have taken part in so I had better make a concerted effort over the next few months whilst there is the chance you might be checking on me).

For championship and other larger events the courses are in age classes and there are regular competitors in M75 right down to the under tens classes (M75 is men over 75). Other local leagues have age handicapping giving us oldies a bit of a start over the young tigers and theoretically at least, a chance of winning.

In the days when I took a private meet to LHG most years, I did once introduce a party to orienteering. It was one of those dismal spring days with cloud down to ground level and pouring with rain. Our kit was still wet from the soaking on the fells on the Saturday so I dragged them off to the Grizedale Forest visitor centre where an orienteering map can be bought and a permanent course is laid out. No one was running but all seemed to 'enjoy' the challenge of complex navigating through broken terrain.

It does help to be something of a nutter in that if taken to extremes and really pushing to get a



good performance in, you fight through all sorts of evil vegetation including waist high bramble. Whilst you have your eyes down carefully picking the best route through such stuff without spoiling your matrimonial prospect you frequently get lassoed or attacked around the head by blackthorn and other barbed growths.

My own club, has been in existence for well over 30 years and is one of the older orienteering clubs in Britain. Orienteering began in Scandinavia, as army training within their forests and they have been competing since the end of the nineteenth century. The first public orienteering competition was held near Oslo on October 31st 1897 but competitive orienteering did not really begin until the end of the First World War when the basic principles of modern orienteering, including rules, types of course, choice of control sites, age classes, and event organisation were devised.

By 1930 orienteering was firmly established in Scandinavia and parts of Eastern Europe. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, East Germany, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany then formed an international federation which Britain joined in 1967.

Orienteering came to Britain in the 1950s and in 1957 Chris Brasher who had been a gold medallist in the 1956 Olympic Games was quoted as having said 'I have just taken part, for the first time, in one of the best sports in the world...'

Other quotes include; Orienteering is one of the least understood of adventure sports "Daily Telegraph"

It is like trying to do the Times crossword while running for a train "The Times"

An English Orienteering Association was formed in 1965 with Brasher as Chairman, and in 1967 the British Orienteering Federation (BOF) was born.

Gordon Pirie was the first men's champion at the first British Championships and a memorial event called the JK International Orienteering Festival was created in honour of Jan Kjellstrom who had tragically died in a road accident after doing a lot to help set up the sport in Britain. The JK is held over four days every Easter and attracts thousands of entrants from all over the world. Those of us at the recent meet at Stair saw maps pinned up indicating that Fylde MC have an annual orienteering event in their programme.

A few years my club provided a number of members (including myself) of the organising team for the British Championships staged at Clumber Park and the Chatsworth Estate and last year saw many of us taking a lead role in staging the main day of the JK in the Lake District which you may have seen bits of on television. The core team stayed at LHG for the weekend.

The events were staged on parts of the Graythwaite Estate not far from Grizedale and the logistics of marshalling, parking, feeding and controlling thousands of competitors was challenging to say the least. There were 17 M75s taking part!

We had over 5000 entries over the four days.

I would also advise that if you ever contemplate being in the Lakes at Easter check whether the JK is there that year as roads, campsites and pubs etc are exceeding busy. RJD



# THE SUDETENLAND HUT TO HUT

By Michael Smith

Our eternal search for different places to visit took our reduced team of three to the Karkonosze or Giant Mountains and Izersky hills along the Polish Czech border just east its junction with Germany. This is the Sudety or Sudetenland that notoriously changed hands a couple of times around fifty years ago.

The Karkonosze offers a culturally interesting alternative to the Alps. It has ski resorts, bird watching, canoeing, fishing, horse riding, mountain biking, rock climbing, steam railways, swimming and plenty of walking on well marked trails from 'Indian file' paths to 3m wide tracks with plenty of full-service mountain huts along the ridge. Large areas of Karkonosze are preserved as a national park by both countries.

For our base we chose Swieradów Zdrój, a small town with a large health spa based on once popular Radon-rich water. Curiously, the words Radon and radioactive figure less prominently in recent publicity. We found a warm welcome, picturesque scenery and exceptional value for money. A Polish phrase book was essential. The selection and purchase of a pair of sandals called for a creative mixture of Polish, German, English, and sign language with a final Italian "Caio" from the amused of the shopkeeper.

Traversing the full length of the Izersky and Karkonosze took us three and a half days of steady walking and we had sunshine for much of each day. The distant views lived up to their reputation for being rather hazy but we could easily make out the peaks marking each day's progress.



The vintage huts too were often prominently placed. Our first was by the highest point in the Izersky, was memorable for its blueberry and cottage cheese stuffed pancakes with cream. Another was an old meteorological observatory. The next had a dance floor complete with bandstand and innumerable antlers and boars' heads on the walls. Our last was mushroom-shaped on Snezka and the highest point for miles.

(see photo Stogu Izerskim hut)

Everyone gave us a good reception, especially when they realised we were not German. At each hut we were allocated a room to ourselves and had a choice of simple but filling meals. 'Vegetarianism' can be translated into Polish but is a choice not catered for in rural areas beyond the available soup, bread, cheese and eggs.

The walking was often along the main broad undulating ridge joining distinct peaks and cut into by steep backed corries. We made one diversion to a large meadow that once supported a few score Germans until the clearances of 1945. There is now a single inhabited wooden building, once the schoolhouse and now a small hut. Strangely there appeared to be a training session for fire-fighters in progress outside.

A few hours after that we crossed the only road (Prague - Jelenia Gora) bought an ice-cream and started the slog up through blueberry bushes, birch and then firs to the highest and most impressive part of the Karkonosze.

The far side of Snezka Mountain is a near vertical corrie back.

Don't arrive at the top too early as the cafe and museum don't get going until later.

Both here and in the early part of the walk, many trees had suffered from acid rain.

Sun-parched silver tree trunks stood starkly bare dead but still accusing the nearby heavy industrial areas for their neglect in burning low grade coals.

The replacement bright green vegetation is growing rapidly and the birds are said to be returning along with a pack of wolves last winter.

The ridge is the border for much of the way and has a few guard huts and signs listing those who may or may not pass.

The Czechoslovak CSs on the south face of the short border posts had been painted out and replaced with simple Cs. To the south we could see Czech ski developments and more, long mountain ridges.

Where there were tracks or lifts within five kilometres of the ridge there were plenty of folk of all ages about. Some in their Sunday best chattering away, but breaking off for a smile and a "Dzeien dobry." Others on mountain bikes, or in running kit. Family groups, backpackers, scouts, military and pensioners some equipped for a blizzard others for a high street stroll.

After an ascent of Snezka and a wait for the early cloud to clear, we descended to the busy honeypot of Karpacz full of souvenirs, hotels and eateries. We were told it would have been possible to continue walking on paths all the way to the Tatra in the east.

Instead though, before moving on to Prague, we were off to explore castles, a transplanted old Norwegian church, spas, market towns, waterfalls and a traditional mill where we were served bread and dripping.

We enjoyed seeing this backwater before it is fully westernised. Promenade concerts in the spa hall, wholesome local food and some Polish widows revisiting their homeland after half a century away all left us with lasting memories.

Information:

Names are something of a problem when researching this area. Rendering the Polish name, Karkonosze, pronounced car-ko-no-she, or its Czech equivalent, Krkonoše into English produces a range of spellings. Likewise, the highest mountain, Snezka (1602m) is Sněžka in Czech and Śnieżka in Polish. Add the German name for the mountains, Riesengebirge, then Bad Finsberg for Swieradów Zdrój, and it more complicated. Pronunciation is challenging too. 'Strc prst skrz krk' is a vowel-less Czech tongue twister sentence. Persevere though or cut through the lot by asking locals who have an office in Sheffield's Polish club ([www.poloniumtravel.co.uk](http://www.poloniumtravel.co.uk)). They will sort everything out and even offer to show you the real Frankenstein country.

Purchase 1:25k or 1:12k maps locally at a tourist information office for about 1€. They represent most paths accurately. Don't rely on these offices responding quickly to e-mails or necessarily having up to date transport information. They do have national and regional glossy brochures describing the many national parks. Guidebooks in English can be found locally though we relied on common sense and local advice.

There were ATMs on the main streets of Swieradów Zdrój and other towns we visited. Don't expect information to be available in English. Bus services were punctual, cheap and sufficiently frequent. Both Szklarska Poreba and Karpacz have lifts to get you up towards the ridge or back down again. In Swieradów Zdrój a horse and cart takes groups to the Stogu Izerskim hut. Taxis are readily available in towns.

The Karkonosze are about two or three hours drive north of Prague or a similar distance south west of Wroclaw. Both these places have cheap flights from the UK. If you prefer to travel overland a minibus leaves Sheffield a few times a week for the area.

Health information for walkers carries dire warning about the effects of bites from Ixodes ricinus ticks leading to encephalitis. On local advice we walked in shorts even when brushing through foliage in lowland woods and are all still alive three months later. We saw one small snake. We were hardly troubled by insects.



ONE OF THE MANY TORS WE PASSED



THE LEGACY OF EASTERN EUROPEAN HEAVY INDUSTRY

#### THE 1924 STOGU IZERSKIM HUT

Perched above Swieradów Zdrój, it was hosting a DXing field day with radio 'hams' working distant contacts through the night using Morse code.



A TV TRANSMITTER STATION HIGH ON THE RIDGE





"DON'T WORRY GOV

LOWSTERN IS IN SAFE  
HANDS"

By F. David Smith

One of the winning  
photographs in last years  
competition

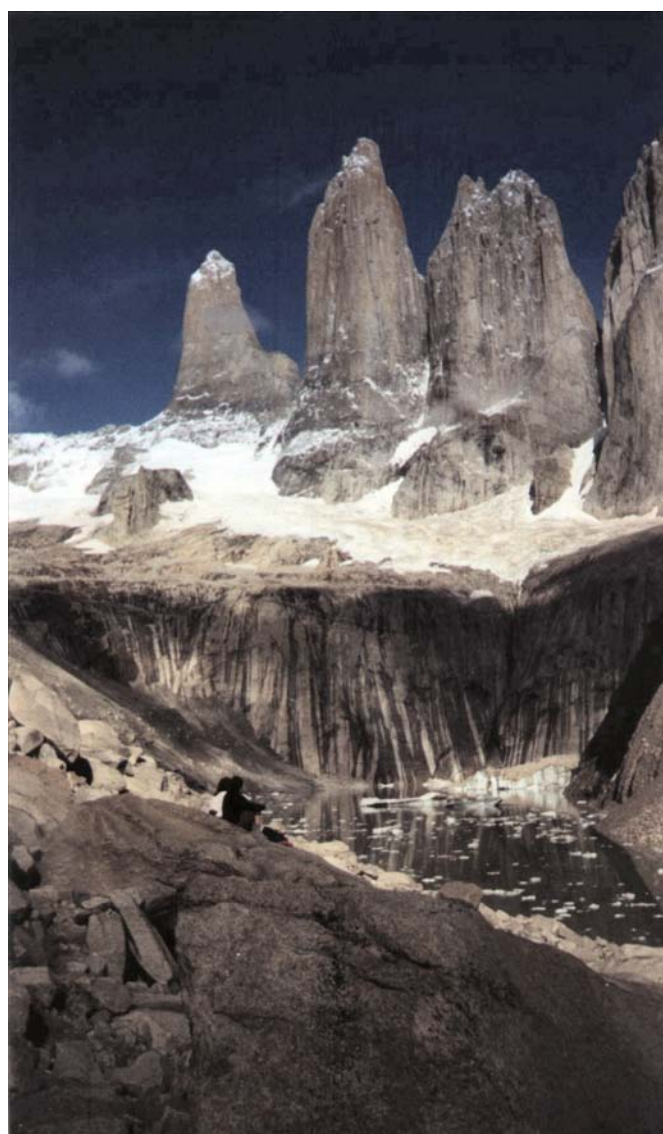
## TORRES DEL PAINE CIRCUIT CHILE

STUART DIX FEBRUARY 1999

I was lucky enough to get three months unpaid leave at the beginning of 1999, and I resolved to spend at least a month of that tackling an expedition overseas.

I was drawn to Chile for a number of reasons. Firstly, one of the earliest mountaineering books I ever read was Chris Bonnington's "I Chose to Climb". I was captivated by the opening chapters in which a party including Bonnington and Don Whillans raced a party of Italians for the first ascent of the Central Tower of Paine in southern Chile.

This they achieved by a mixture of tenacity and subterfuge. Secondly, I enjoyed reading Ranulph Fiennes' "Mind Over Matter" a number of years ago. The last place they visited as they flew south towards Antarctica, where he was to attempt to cross the continent unsupported, was the town of Punta Arenas.



L to R - TORRES DE AGOSTINI (2850m)  
TORRES CENTRAL & TORRES NORTE

This place at the bottom of the South American continent held an evocative allure since it is the main jump off point for most expeditions travelling to Antarctica. The third main reason was that after a miserable winter, preceded by another English non-summer, I wanted to go somewhere warm; in February this meant I would have to go to the Southern Hemisphere.

The most cost-efficient way of travelling was on an Air France, Manchester to Santiago, via Paris and Buenos Aires. Having recently gone "on line" in

1999, I endeavoured to use the Internet as much as possible to facilitate my travel arrangements and this included booking my internal flights with the LAN Chile airline and my hotel stay at Punta Arenas. Everything worked exactly as scheduled and the highlight of the flight was crossing Aconcagua in the Andes after a seemingly endless expanse of dense jungle across South America. I over-nighted in Santiago and flew south the next day.

Punta Arenas is a colourful, if slightly scruffy place. Far from giving the impression that it was at the end of the world, it is a bustling commercial town. Apparently, Ushuaia further south (and in Argentina) has a more remote feel and impressive coastal topography.

The main reason for my being in this part of the world was the Torres del Paine National Park, a two day bus trip northwest from Punta Arenas.

The first destination to visit when you arrive at the park is the Torres themselves. These are up the valley of the Rio Ascencio, and after a day spent trekking alongside the river, I camped at the foot of the hanging valley that leads up to the Torres corrie.

Awakening in the gloom of the next morning I climbed the streambed leading to the corrie above. The Torres are a very impressive sight



especially as they reflect beautifully in the glacial lake that fills the bowl, the north end of which they dominate.

I spent a couple of hours in glorious sunshine taking far too many photographs but as the light changed, so new aspects of the Torres were revealed.

Advice to travellers is not to attempt the Circuito walk alone. However, there seemed to be plenty of travellers who were attempting the trail and I decided to take it on. The walk of around 100km is an arduous one for the trekker who is carrying all his own equipment, but is in no way a technical challenge. The regular siting of suitable camping areas means that a walker can choose the time he wishes to take to complete the circuit. For myself, I went with the Lonely Planet guide to the Patagonian Andes and decided on a 7-day trek, in a clock-wise direction which involved six overnight stays.

Day one was a gentle walk alongside the eastern slopes of the Paine massif from Hosteria Las Torres to Puesto Seron. I was struck by how similar the topography was to that of the Sutherland region of Scotland. What surprised me, however was the proliferation of wildlife. My scant ornithological knowledge recognised torrent ducks, parrots (cachanas), a variety of hawks, geese and blackbirds and the odd shrike. I also saw the Patagonian equivalent of the ostrich (nandu) and some guanacos (the southern Patagonia version of the llama.) The big difference from back home was how close you were able to get to these creatures before they flew off or ran away. They seemed oblivious to the presence or potential threat of human beings.

As the pass headed north towards Seron into a beautiful golden meadow I made the first of what were to be numerous rope bridge river crossings. These varied in complexity from a reasonably sophisticated and secure affair involving wires and wood to a simple rope across a stream

designed to stop you from falling into the water.

One thing was clear, there had been some rainfall in the previous week and while water levels were low at that time, the fixings for the bridges at the bank edges had been left in a precarious condition.

The second day of the trek continued north and then west towards Lago Dickson Hostel. The surrounding valley becomes steeper and the peaks sharper as the trek progresses and the highlight of the day is the approach to the Hosteria. The Hielo Sur, the southern ice cap, hems in the western boundary of the Paine national park. This permanently glaciated area of Patagonia spills over into the park at the lower passes. It does this in spectacular fashion at Lago Dickson where its cascades over a pass and down into one end of the large glacial lake. The wooden hostel sits at the other end of the lake, a superb situation.

Day three and the landscape changes. The next couple of days will lead up and over the John Garner Pass and break out into the western end of the park.

The first of these days is a full day walking through dense lenga forest as the path twists and winds its way upwards towards Los Perros camp. This camp is higher than the previous ones and it feels colder where it sits at the periphery of the forest; the winds coming down from the John Garner Pass above and to the west. The evening here is broken by huge explosions as the Glacier Los Perros calves into the glacial lake above the campsite.

The next day (the fourth) is the "crux" of the trek in that it reaches the highest point (1180m) and is renowned as the hardest part of the walk. The walk out of the camp is tough. The recent rains had turned a rough path into a swamp. With a full pack and with mud up to the knees, this was exhausting work. After a couple of hours the

boggy terrain gave way to bare rock and the steep section up to the pass started. A hard climb up to the Pass reaped rich rewards. The broad saddle at the pass gave way to a stupendous view west over the Ventisquero Grey. This huge glacier comes out of the Hielo Sur ice cap and calves huge chunks of ice into Lago Grey about 10 miles to the south.

At this point you are able to get some idea of the vast size of the ice cap as it spreads for some three hundred kilometres down the coastline of Chile. I was able to spend a good half hour here and take in the view.

I was fortunate in this regard. This region is notorious for very high winds and I was lucky throughout this trek that, while the recent rains had caused me some problems with waterlogged terrain, the winds were never an issue.

The terrain throughout this section of the trek is never anything other than challenging. The descent from the pass is extremely steep and the overturned trees and roots are a constant hindrance and danger. I eventually reached the Paso campsite, draughty and cold as it perched in the trees on the hillside high above the glacier.

The whole of the next day was spent walking along a path that traversed the hillside above the Ventisquero Grey glacier heading due south towards the Lago Grey Refuge. The views into and across the glacier were excellent. I was able to appreciate both the scale and extent of the glacier and also the beauty and mystery of the crevasses that scoured its surface. A straight forward walk was made problematic as the path crossed wide and steep ravines that came down from the mountain above. Again the recent rains had caused significant erosion and most of the bridges to cross them had been either washed away completely or damaged beyond repair. After a short day's trek the Refugio Grey was reached. Fortunately, there was no room at the inn. I say fortunately because this meant I was forced to use the lakeside campsite next to the

refuge. What a splendid situation! I sat outside that evening, replenished by some excellent food at the refuge, watching small icebergs float slowly by, only yards away from my tent.

The next day I trekked on early to Camp Pehoe, situated at the far south-western corner of the Circuit. I pitched my tent by noon and spent the rest of the day walking without a pack, bliss after 6 days fully laden. I spent a very interesting day exploring the Vallee Frances and taking advantage of some excellent views of the Cuernos (horns) of Paine.

These are the spires most usually depicted in photographs of the Parque Nacional and are a memorable site indeed. Although these mountains are not particularly high (the highest point in the Paine massif is only 2800m above sea level) the fact that they rise vertically from around 200m and are almost all topped by sharp rock spires means they are very impressive peaks. I kept being drawn back to my comparison with Sutherland, although on a larger scale.

Spending this extra day wandering around meant that I was lucky enough to spend the following night in my tent and experience some of the force of the fabled Patagonian wind. Pitched at the end of the aptly named Valley of the Winds I felt that the whole of Patagonia was being blown away overnight. Incredibly when I awoke the next morning after a troubled night of sleep, the air was still and clear. I spent a lovely day walking back to the Parque administration centre and my bus back to Puerto Natales.

This walk was an excellent choice for my first solo trekking experience. At seven days it was a nice length and while it is at times very remote, there is always a path; easily followed, if badly eroded. There are usually other trekkers around to give a feeling of safety but not too many to detract from a "wilderness" experience.

The lingering appeal of this walk is not just its spectacular views but the fact that each day of the trek you are treated to very different



terrain, from awesome mountain passes to lush golden meadows. Chile was a good country for the lone trekker to visit, its transportation system is good (bus and plane, not train) and the people were friendly and helpful.

I will definitely go back and would have no hesitation taking my family with me.

## EXPEDITION UPDATE

### CHINA Ged Campion

The Fengshan 2004 expedition in Oct /Nov was a follow up to the earlier China Caves Project expedition in Feb/March of that year.

Following the notable success of the earlier expedition in the Jiang Zhou system, and realizing the potential of this cave and the attractiveness of the surrounding karst features, the Fengshan local government had decided to put forward the area for designation as a national "geopark", and commissioned the Karst Institute in Guilin to complete a survey of the caves and study the karst in the area.

The prime objective of the expedition was to carry out this work for the Institute and Fengshan County and build on the successes of March trip.

The idea of a geopark is to afford some degree of protection to important geological sites which do not have the benefit of World Heritage Site status or some other form of protection.

The umbrella organisation, the "Global Network of Geoparks" established under the aegis of UNESCO, has set a target of establishing 300+ global geoparks, adding about 20 new sites every year.

At a national level China currently has 44 geoparks, 8 of which are on the global list and all of which are of national importance where tourism and scientific research are encouraged.

This was a China Caves Project expedition drawn mostly from the YRC and other northern clubs who have been exploring the karst in the north-west corner of Guangxi Province for the past 5 years.

The expedition was conducted over a period of a month with some of the team (11 UK members in total) there for the full period and others joining half way through the exploration.

The Jiang Zhou system was extended from its Spring 2004 limit of 7.5km to a new length of 29km, making it the longest cave in Guangxi and the third longest in China.

The cave system straddles Fengshan and Bama Counties in the Duyang Shan hills of Guangxi Province, about 24km south-south-west of Fengshan Town and roughly 50km to the west of the Hongshui river. The multi-entrance system lies under a typical tower karst landscape, with individual limestone towers rising to about 800m and the surrounding alluvial plains lying at about 300m. The main entrances and the fossil sections of the system lie between the 450 and 650m contours.

The nearest large village is Jiang Zhou, about 2km from the south-west edge of the system. One of the entrances to the system is within a few hundred metres of the village of Long Huai and another is just to the north of the scattered hamlet of Dalue.

The explored system comprises mainly very large fossil passages and chambers, the floors of which are often strewn with massive boulders or decorated with flowstone or stalagmite formations. The typical passage is 30-50m in width and of a similar height.

Underlying the fossil series is an extensive active cave system which can be accessed at various points from the fossil passages. The underground river passages, however, frequently sump and an extensive section of river passage has yet to be discovered.

The sheer scale and volume of the passages is awe inspiring and sporting trips to the far reaches of the cave involve 16 km return trips - not once having to revert to knees!

Other caves in the area were also explored, looking at the potential for system to the north and west of Jiang Zhou. Ma Wang Dong, explored in 1989 by the China Caves Projects, was revisited but a potential link to the relatively nearby Green River Cave eluded the team. The sinks and resurgences of the Qaiyoin river system south east of Fengshan were also examined.

At one point this system reveals itself spectacularly as Chuan Long Dong (Factory Cave) in Fengshan Town.

A return trip to the area is planned for this year. The expedition was supported by the Yorkshire Ramblers Club and the Ghar Paru Foundation.

Team Members were:-

YRC - Bruce Bensley, Ged Campion, Alister Renton, Graham Salmon, Ernie Shield, together with Jane Butler.

Craven Pothole Club - Emma Porter and Mike Clayton.

Cleveland Speleo Group - Tony Harrison.

Scarborough Caving Club - Mike Peters.

Gloucester Speleo Club - Dave Appleing.

## LONG WALKS ON THE NORTH YORK MOORS

We all have our experiences of walking the Lyke Wake, White Rose or Cleveland Way walks and Jeff Hooper details his reminiscences later.

He talks of the his and the Club's crossings of the Lyke Wake in the middle of the last century when this walk progressed from a largely trackless one to one with a defined route. By the time I first did it in the early seventies it was in places, quite a good walk from one side of the track to the other: A veritable M1 of a muddy track.

The last time I did it was from west to east finishing up going north on the coast path to overnight in Whitby enjoying very welcome fish and chips, several beers, a bath and a very comfortable bed.

In the mid seventies Yorkshire Junior Chamber organised a long walk for charity but given the state that the LWW had deteriorated to by then, we elected for a variation.

We tackled the White Rose Walk just a few miles longer but on more interesting terrain.

Over 200 members set off but only about 80 finished. I entered a team of 8 from Ilkley Junior Chamber where I was President at the time but I was the only one who made it home and I was a bit worse for wear. My feet had become waterlogged and badly blistered and I had to take half an hour out at a first aid post, to have the blisters cut off and dressed before continuing.

The event was based from a large hotel and nearby campsite somewhere outside Middlesborough and we were bussed to Sutton Bank for the start and back from the finish with three alternate pick ups for those dropping out.

I do recall getting back fifteen hours after setting off and returning to the hotel to find a Saturday night disco getting underway, which I joined after a quick soak in the bath.

I even recall taking to the floor after sufficient anaesthetic (red wine).

We made our way home and I duly went to work on the Monday but by the end of the day could hardly walk. Next morning I reported to the quack and did not see the office again for seven weeks. Naturally I had explained what I had been up to and they diagnosed some form of tendon or ligament trouble in the area of my heel.

For several weeks I was being taken to the hospital Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to have hot wax and cold dip treatments which had very little effect but slowly things improved till I could finally return to work with the aid first of crutches and then two sticks.

It was only a year or so later when after another attack, I was diagnosed with gout that I realised that had been the problem all along (that red wine!)

I have walked all of the Cleveland Way although never as a continuous exercise and I do think walking in this area is wonderful. I particularly enjoy the remoteness of parts of Newtondale which I often explore by taking the steam train and dropping off to walk the valleys before remounting at a different station.

The area is also a firm favourite by virtue of the superb and fascinating diversity of species of watering hole. The managed pub is fairly rare but tenancies abound and the area has a higher percentage of the lesser common free house than can be found anywhere else in Britain.

Nearly all the long routes in the NYM involve stretches of the other walks but I do still believe that the White Rose is the most varied and interesting and would make an excellent long walk for the club which would definitely tempt me out but may well be beyond me these days.

The spirit is willing but the body no longer as resilient as it once was.

## WHITE ROSE WALK

Starts at Kilburn and you climb onto the escarpment edge before heading north past Sutton Bank and the White Horse.

You then follow the edge past Arden Great Moor along the Cleveland Way until you hit the Lyke Wake which you follow to the east for a way before turning north again above Greenhow Bank and past Kildale Moor before dropping down to cross the road at Kildale village.

Proceed crossing Roseberry Common and going over Roseberry Topping to finish at Newton under Roseberry.

## CLEVELAND LYKE WAKE WALK REMEMBERED BY J H HOOPER

Before I became a member of the YRC, and in the days soon afterwards, Brian Nicholson (President 1972-74) would regale me with his account of the YRC doing the Cleveland Lyke Wake Walk in 1956. It was the week-end of 15-17 June (See Journal No. 28 1957). There were 25 walkers and 10 supporters, the first walker finished in under 12 hours, all but two finished, one injured his knee almost within sight of the end. At this time the Long Walk had not become a regular feature of the YRC calendar. The story has been told many times in other annals of the open challenge put out by Bill Cowley for anyone to try to walk across the North Yorkshire Moors, from West to East, in as near a straight line as possible, in less than 24 hours, starting near Osmotherly and finishing at Ravenscar.

The challenge was taken up and the first group to complete the walk in 1955 included our member, David Laughton, before he joined the YRC. Brian Nicholson said that in 1956, the entire forty miles was trackless and covered with knee high heather.

It was 1966 when I first completed the walk. In the ten years between the YRC crossing and mine, a very narrow track had appeared. It was just wide enough to swing one boot past the other between the strong heather roots. My election to the YRC preceded my starting to work in York by four months.

After a year or so of hearing about my exploits with the YRC one of my colleagues revived an interest in walking, then others decided they also would like to have a try. This was just before the period when completing the Lyke Wake Walk became somewhat of a cult in York, then, in the 1970s young men would go and do the Lyke Wake after closing time on a Saturday night instead of going home. Others would take a tent and camp half way across. There were double and even triple crossings. One thing they all had in common was that the traditional starting time was midnight.

Twelve colleagues decided that the time was ripe to try a long walk and the Lyke Wake was the obvious choice. Another colleague was enlisted as driver and a mini-bus hired.

Only Charles and I had walked any distance together before, a walk that finished at Ilkley. I can still feel the sense of shock, as we walked into a pub at the end, and for the first time I saw a man with shoulder length hair. This was in 1964. The age range of our group was from mid-twenties to mid-forties and included a professional footballer, someone trying to get fit on doctors orders, one or two over-weight hopefuls who usually did not walk far and some men who spent their working days rushing around a large factory site built on seven floors.

The driver was at least honest with himself, he was interested but knew he could not complete the crossing.

Charles had been lucky enough to get to the Lakes walking and climbing as a young man just before the Second World War. He would happily spend time chatting about climbing ice glazed rocks or would describe the route up Napes Needle illustrating the climb and holds with his pencil.

He also had a set of tracings of the climbs at Almscliffe that I eventually identified as having been copied from Harry Stenbridge's drawings in YRC Journal No.25, 1949.

I left home at 7-30 am. on the morning of 3 June 1966 for a twenty mile ride to work on my BSA 350 motorcycle with panniers and carrier loaded with walking gear and supplies. The working day passed all too slowly before we could go our separate ways to prepare for the bus collecting us at various points around York about 10 pm. I had dinner at Charles's house and changed into my walking gear.

Just before midnight on 3 June we were approaching the trig. point (GR.997 458) at Osmotherly with our lamps and torches barely showing the route on the map, never mind on the ground. The full moon did not penetrate the trees. The members of the group were dressed in disparate clothing. I wore breeches made from tweed trousers, a woollen jumper and corduroy cap, my only waterproof being an ex-army cotton snow smock dyed red and proofed with 'Nev'. My boots, bought for the 1961 Wasdale Skyline Long Walk, had 'commando' soles, but were never comfortable. Other peoples garb ranged from tracksuits to golf jackets topped with wool bobble hats and cycling capes as weather proof clothing.

At a quarter past midnight we set off. As usual the least fit rushed off at the greatest speed into the night which was pity because they included the one who had done the walk before and knew the way. The rest of us floundered along the woodland track with our miserable lights so that within a short time the whole party was spread in single units over a great distance. A pattern familiar to all in the YRC.

The 'bumps', that is the hills on the edge of the moors, from Live Moor to Hasty Bank were walked in darkness with the lights of Middlesborough to the north. By the time the Bilsdale road was reached at 3-25 am, light was just showing in the sky.

The formation of the walkers was changing with some of the over enthusiastic ones dropping back and the tortoisises catching up. The climb to the highest point of the moors at Botton Head, 1490 feet, was completed as daylight arrived just before reaching the almost level cinder bed of the old railway at 4-25 am.

The next 3 or 4 miles was easy fast walking through the chill, misty, morning air before taking to the heather again to meet the road at the head of Rosedale, with only a short distance before Ralphs Cross, approximately halfway and the feeding point.

I got there at 6-10 am. John, the driver was 'playing a blinder', later in his career, after he was promoted to dizzy heights the rest of us never reached, we always said that it was the finest point of his life. He had driven the mini bus round the narrow roads from Osmotherly to Ralph Cross mainly in the dark, then lighted the primus stoves to provide hot tea as the walkers came in.

At this point the one of the unfit and over weight hopefuls gave up, and some of the fast pack were beginning to suffer. Ideas of cholesterol free diets and fat free food fads had not yet become popular; the sufferers could not eat their share of egg, bacon, sausages and fried bread; which news was received thankfully by some of us who promptly ate their share, as well as our own. We all helped with cooking breakfast, so that the stop extended to a welcome one hour's break.

A few hundred yards on the road again before we had to cross the moorland on the route to the next meeting with the support van between Rosedale Abbey and Egton Bridge at Hamer House where I arrived at 8-40 am. The driver again extended his finest hour by arriving before the walkers and produced hot tea and food. Here we met the first small group of walkers going the other way, the first we had seen, other than our own people, since leaving Osmotherly.

Following a ten minute break we turned into the heather trying to follow a poorly defined track across the boggy Wheeldale moor, past 'Blue Man

in the Moss' until Wheeldale Youth Hostel came into sight in the valley as we walked down the hill. The youth hostel was reached at 10-15 am where we waited for twenty minutes until the stragglers had regrouped. By this point ten hours after the start most of the party were effected by the distance, and the fitter ones from now on acted as 'whippers in' to encourage the tail enders and make sure no one was left on their own. For the last eight or nine miles that was the procedure.

As we approached the road near the telephone box at Eller Beck Bridge at 11-30 am we met a lone walker going in the opposite direction. The support vehicle once again beat the walkers to Eller Beck Bridge and food and drink were supplied. Support on this walk can be a real problem if there is only one vehicle as the roads that bisect the moors go down to the edges of the moors and then return into the centre following the ridges and valleys.

A hour was spent gathering strength and urging falterers to carry on. Two-fifteen found the party split into ones and twos struggling on the thick mud in and around Jugger Howe Beck, the last obstacle on the route. Helwath Bridge on the Whitby Scarborough Road was gained at 3 p.m. and when the last straggler in his red tracksuit appeared on the horizon the front of the group moved off towards the wireless mast marking the finish and ultimately the Pollard café at the end of the Ravenscar road. My time of arrival was 3-47 pm.

As walkers were dropped at their homes there was great hilarity, most could not bend their legs to climb out of the bus, one in particular could stand upright but could not move his legs either backwards or forwards. He progressed down the path to his front door by keeping his feet about eighteen inches apart and swivelling his whole upright body on each foot alternately.

By 6-30 pm I was back on my motorcycle with a full load for my twenty mile ride home.

It was 36 hours since I last slept.

## CLEVELAND LYKE WAKE, SECOND CROSSING

After June 1966 I carried on walking with the YRC and from 1967 walked the Fellsman Hike each year. My colleagues seemed to have been satisfied, or the memories of the 1966 Lyke Wake prevented them from doing more, their comments regarding me and the Fellsman were not flattering. The general attitude was that I was mad and that they would never do anything like that. This was strange as by about 1978 everyone who had criticised and condemned me were very proud that they had done the Fellsman.

In 1970 two of my colleagues joined me in my lunch time running sessions and continued to improve their performance throughout the winter. When Spring arrived and I was preparing for yet another long walk, Derek wanted to try out his new found fitness, this resulted in arranging with him to do the Lyke Wake Walk in April. Considering that the previous year he had been unable to walk more than a few hundred yards without getting out of breath it was quite an undertaking.

Other colleagues heard about the idea and wanted to join in with the result that on Friday 16 April 1971 a party of ten walkers and a driver left York in a hired mini-bus heading for Ravenscar. Only four of the walkers in the group had been on the 1966 crossing, four others were novices and we had a different driver.

This time the idea was to walk from east to west and we timed the arrival at Ravenscar GR 980 013 for just before midnight. I do not recall listening to a weather forecast, but a night in mid April is always pleasant, isn't it? We piled out of the van opposite the Pollard café, shaking out our joints after sitting in a cramped position for two hours.

As was tradition and for a safety check, at 15 minutes after midnight on Saturday morning we pushed a list of names through the letterbox of the café and started walking. It was cold and as

we set off the light rain which had been falling turned into flurries of snow, and the temperature headed downwards. I was still using my red ex-army cotton snow smock but now, unlike 1966, I had a Peter Storm cagoule to wear on top as water proofing. It was not possible then to buy lightweight walking boots and I had decided that 'Tuf' boots with a sole welded to a leather upper were just the thing for long moorland walks. They were sold for general purpose work, a pair weighed almost 1lb 8oz less than a damp pair of 'Hawkins Skiddaw'.

The rain and sleet continued until we reached Helwath Bridge at 1 am but then it stopped briefly. As we turned north-west for a short distance along the main road it started to snow hard. About here we made a mistake with the route, the service road was found in the dark and snow but we turned along a spur, in a southerly direction instead of carrying on south west to the end. This put us into the deepest, wettest, muddiest part of Jugger Howe Beck. We flounder in the thick orange clay and water trying to climb the steep banks. It was now 1-45 am. Scrambling out of the beck Fylingdales Moor was found to be covered in wet snow and water. For the previous fortnight, or longer, it had been fine and dry, so when the heavy sleet and snow came that night, water lay on the bare earth rather than soaking in.

By the time Burn Howe was reached at 2-25 am. the direction of the wind had changed from easterly to north-westerly and it became even colder. The snow on the heather froze. Earlier the group had maintained contact but by Lilla Howe it had split in two, the two parties continued separately across the moor until Eller Beck Bridge where the front ones waited until the party had regrouped.

We had now been walking for about three and a half hours and had covered nearly nine miles. It was very cold, the road that we crossed was covered in ice. My feet were wet and I intended to wring-out my socks but I found that my boot laces were impossible to unfasten, they were

frozen and had been converted into half-inch diameter bands of ice. My socks too, were layered thickly with ice half-way to the knee.

The party slithered down the slope to the railway line at Fen Bog Houses as the moon came up. Now the sky was completely clear with all the stars showing.

Before Wheeldale Lodge the sky was lightening behind us in the East. In the weeks before the walk a line chart had been drawn that showed all the points on the route the compass bearings at each change of direction and the distance between points. Even using that we missed Simon Howe and suddenly found ourselves going down the steep slope to Wheeldale Lodge where we crossed the stepping stones at 5-10 am. The wide track worn across the moor in the past sixteen years was covered with snow, the moor was featureless.

Between Wheeldale Lodge and Hamer House snow lay over the whole moor, all traces of tracks were hidden, so it was a matter of 'heather bashing'. The heather was frozen stiff with the old stalks sticking up like wire spikes. The sun, now risen just above the surface of the moor shone brilliantly on the snow. The view was spectacular, snow under a blue sky but the sun had no heat in it. It seemed a long way across Wheeldale Moor as we crunched through ice into water among the frozen heather.

One of our walkers was in trouble, in his early twenties but not a walker, he had been keen to come with us, the distance coupled with the conditions that night were too much for him. Possibly beyond anything he had imagined. All we could do to help was see that he did not drop behind and encourage him. At Hamer House no one was more pleased than he to see the transport waiting. At 7-05 am. he thankfully climbed into the cab after sixteen demanding miles. Only a brief stop was made here before the group started the next section to the Rosedale road with thoughts of breakfast in mind.

The walk across to the Rosedale road was uncomplicated. All one needed to do was put up

with the conditions; cold, a strong headwind and two inches of snow underfoot with ice half an inch thick over water; all brilliantly illuminated by the sun. As we crunched through the ice socks became more thickly encrusted with frozen slush. Across this stretch of the walk we met about twenty people going west to east.

Nine hungry walkers reached the Rosedale road GR 698 011 at 8-30 am. and looked in vain for the breakfast wagon. Our driver was a very reliable man; on that morning it was providential that he was also a rally driver. To get from Hamer House he had to go back to Rosedale Abbey and then on icy roads drive up the excessively steep hills to meet us. Two groups walked in opposite directions along the road and eventually the support van was found about half a mile away. By now the cold was intense. I have often thought that I have never been anywhere so cold as it was on the North Yorkshire Moors that night. Most people who know me will have already heard me tell how we had to cook the breakfast inside the back of the van. Even then the kettle took ages to boil, the eggs in the frying pan on a large ex-army pressure stove did not change colour for several minutes. The bacon was cooked by pre-heating in a covered pan before transferring to the hot frying pan.

This gave the party time to change wet and icy socks and have a sit, in fact it took 2 hours and 10 minutes before breakfast was finished, when we set off again it was 10-40 am. About one and a half miles of road walking gave us a good start before diverting into Westerdale to Esklets because of a problem with access to the moor, this meant losing and then regaining a height of 500 feet. Once the moor was left everything was green in the valley in the Spring sunshine. Back on the moor that same welcome sun had melted the snow and as the day wore on the greenery appeared and the mud clung to our boots, the surface turned into a big mud bath, the few miles on the cinder bed of the derelict railway track gave a relief.

By Botton Head, the highest point on the moor, we were back in the snow. Walking was now more

difficult than at any time on the walk and the difficulties continued for most of the remainder of the day. The sun had turned the surface into a quagmire where the snow had melted and because of the ruts worn in the surface the tendency was for feet and legs to splay out sideways, particularly on the long downhill section. The effect on muscles not usually used was pronounced and caused two more walkers to retire at the Bilsdale Road. The remaining seven left at 2-35 pm. after a half hour snack stop. It was decided to follow the miners track on the side of Hasty Bank, Cold Moor and Cringle Moor into freshening wind. The views and thoughts of dinner at the end were enough to keep our spirits up. One walker regaled the group with how much he was going to eat at the end, soup, beef burgers, tinned fruit and custard; the lot! Over Carlton Bank glider station the wind was strong but now for the last six miles to the finish at the reservoir car park near Osmotherly, early on an April evening it was pleasant sunshine. It was 6-15 pm.

All of the party that set out had suffered in some way. The walkers who had retired early helped the driver to prepare food for those who completed the entire walk. Derek and I had carefully chosen food that we thought would be tasty and appetising at the finish, we had given up part of our lunchtime on the Friday to buy special beef burgers full of flavour from the local butcher. There was soup, bread rolls and tinned fruit and custard.

The finishers reacted in different ways at the end, the mud and slippery surface had taken its toll from people. Ernie finished but could not bend his legs to sit down or reach his feet to take his boots off. He solved the problem by falling flat on his back like a wrestler going to the mat with one leg sticking straight up in the air. Ken, who had been going to eat everything in sight two or three hours earlier now could not even face tinned fruit and custard. I have often heard people say '... the colour drained from his face ...' but this was the only time I have literally seen it. Joe was sitting opposite me in the bus when Derek brought him a

lovely plate of beef burgers with a great aroma of onions. Until then Joe's face was its normal colour, then his forehead went white at the hair line and the white travelled down his face to his neck pushing the colour ahead of it, with a sharp delineation across his face between the white and colour. He then stood up and went out. It is the only time I have known Joe unable to eat. It had been a long, interesting and testing day, trying in parts, that left a sense of achievement to remember.

#### GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY !

Next year it will be 50 years since the YRC did the Lyke Wake Walk, it is hackneyed, well defined and over used, much of the section between Osmotherly and Botton Head has been paved. Now, it is said to be an easy 40 miles, but how many Club members could walk it? Should the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club celebrate the Golden Anniversary and do it again?

#### MY TIMES 1966

| Place             | Time (hours-mins.) | Distance (miles) |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Osmotherly        |                    |                  |
| GR.997458         | 0015               | 0                |
| Carlton Bank      | 0210               | 6                |
| Bilsdale Road     | 0320-0325          | 9½               |
| Railway           | 0425-0430          | 12½              |
| Blowarth Crossing | 0435 12¾           |                  |
| Ralph Cross       | 0610-0710          | 18               |
| Hamer House       | 0840-0850          | 22¾              |
| Wheeldale Lodge   | 1015-1035          | 27½              |
| Eller Beck        | 1132-1225          | 30               |
| Jugger Howe Beck  | 1415-1425          | 35               |
| Helwath Bridge    | 1500-1506          | 37               |
| Ravenscar         |                    |                  |
| GR. 980 013       | 1547               | 38¾              |

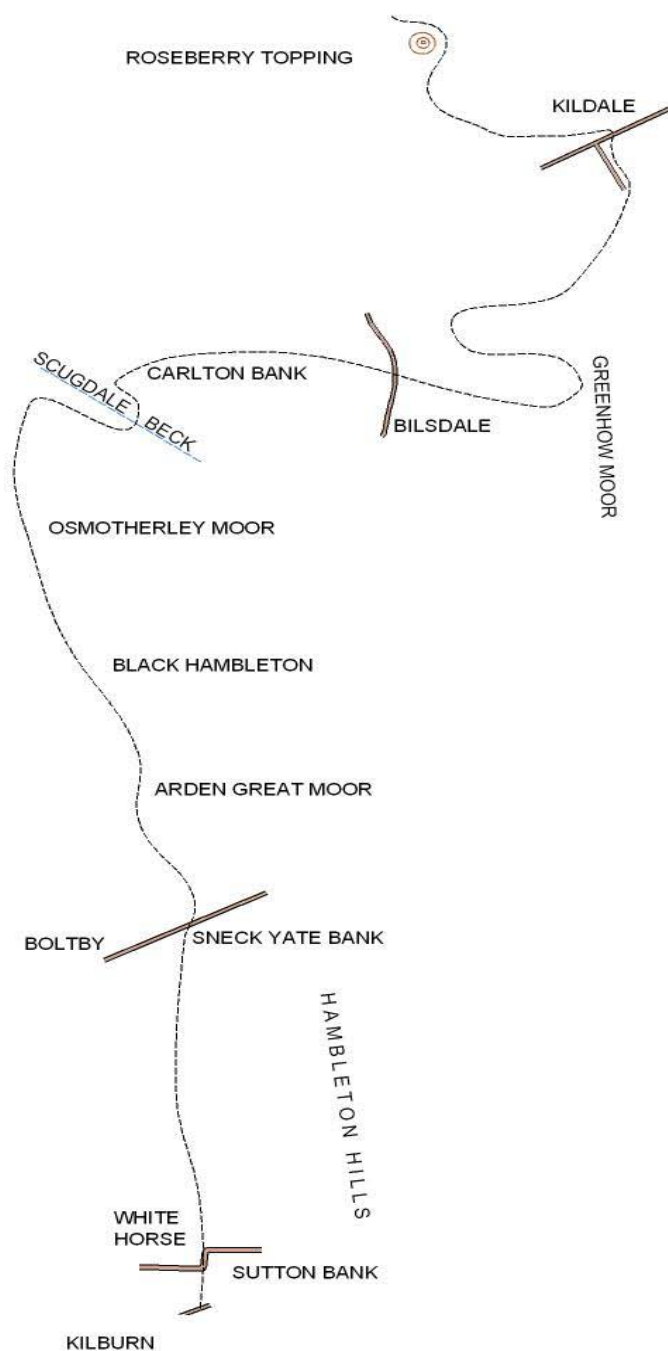
#### MY TIMES 1971

|                  |           |      |     |
|------------------|-----------|------|-----|
| Ravenscar        |           |      |     |
| GR.980           | 013       | 0015 | 0   |
| Helwath Bridge   | 0100      |      | 1¾  |
| Jugger Howe Beck | 0145      |      | 3¾  |
| Burn Howe        | 0225      |      | 5   |
| Eller Beck       | 0350-0400 |      | 8¾  |
| Wheeldale Lodge  | 0510      |      | 11½ |



|                 |           |                  |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------|
| Hamer House     | 0705-0715 | 16               |
| Rosedale Road   | 0830-1040 | 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| Railway         | 1205      | 23               |
| Bilsdale Road   | 1405-1435 | 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| Carlton Bank    | 1605      | 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Osmotherly Res. | 1815      | 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ |

## WHITE ROSE WALK



## RECOMMENDED HOSTELRIES IN THE NORTH YORK MOORS - RJD

Quite apart from the numerous great pubs along the coast there are a number of very welcome homes-from-home scattered throughout the moors.

A firm favourite is the Saltersgate Inn high on the moors near the Hole of Horcum. This oasis provides excellent beers and a range of fairly simple but well prepared and well priced meals. The open fire can be very welcoming if you have walked in, other than in the height of summer.

The New Inn at Cropton is a smart brewhouse with a fine range of its own ales both on draft and bottled including presentation packs. It does ambitious meals off a fairly short menu and has very pleasant gardens.

Another exceeding pleasant halt on route if walking nearby is the tiny Birch Hall Inn at Beck Hole. If you are very good friends about eight can get in the front bar and five can actually sit down. There is a further small room round the back which is only a little bigger. Half the front bar is given over to a small shop.

It only does cold snacks but the beer is great and it is superbly located. I have often sat outside or in the beer garden or even on the nearby bridge parapet enjoying a welcome break.

Another favoured eatery with good ales and wines is the Horseshoe at Egton Bridge. In a beautiful location by the river Esk and set amongst mature gardens, this is a fine restaurant still paying due reverence to its wet trade.

Other fine pubs/hotels well worth a visit in this general area include two in Helmsley, the Crown and the Feathers, the Duke of Wellington at Danby, the Fox & Hounds at Sinnington, the Huntsman at Aislaby, the Fox & Hounds at Ainthorpe, and the Milburn Arms at Rosedale Abbey.





BIRCH HALL



BECK HOLE



BECK HOLE



HORSESHOE, EGTON BRIDGE



NEWTON DALE



NEWTON DALE



NEWTON DALE



HOLE OF HORCUM

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS (from troglodyte to middle class)

Derek Smithson

I do not belong to the golden age of hotel dwelling and guided climbing. I started rock climbing with a man who had shared ownership of a car with a maximum speed of 40 m.p.h. We made it to Borrowdale quite frequently and occasionally all the way round to Wasdale. In Borrowdale we normally slept in the caverns created at a quarry near Rothwaite near enough to attend the pub and village dance on a Saturday night. I can remember being there alone one Easter and having to sleep in every piece of clothing I had with me and then inside a thin sleeping bag and finally with an oilskin coat wrapped round. The tickling of the woolly balaclava was irritating and, being unable to move because I was so tightly wrapped up made for uneasy sleep.

Enough comfort was achieved on this rocky floor by use of a hip length air bed which we for insulation and comfort, despite its weight. We were not concerned so much about the weight we carried as people are now and this would be because we had no choice. There were anoraks made of Grenfell cloth which were well beyond our means and the initial anoraks we used were ex-army and water proof only to the extent that the thick cotton material soaked up a lot of water. Eventually there were down exposure suits from the air force and they were worth their weight, but the ex-commando rucksacks were only worth while if carrying more than about 50lbs.

The cave in Borrowdale was the site of a very frightening experience for a novice who accompanied us one weekend. Exhausted by his day out, he stayed in the cave whilst we went for our social evening in Rothwaite. He was woken by a deafening noise resounding and echoing in the cave and opened his eyes to find the place lit by four beams of light. Four motor cyclists had come and driven their bikes into the cave entrance. We found a large, leaning boulder below Dow Crag

which gave us shelter. Later we saw the cave on the path. A friend let us look at his guide book so we found the star of the Necklace, later another look showed us we had finished on Gordon and Craig, The following day we did the bottom half of Gordon and Craig followed by the top half of the Necklace. Both good routes and we were lucky to find them. Climbing without guidebooks teaches caution, but gives nothing to boast about in the pub.

When we went to Wasdale Head, we slept in comfort in the barn of the hotel. I remember it being an inner barn with deep hay and no light at all, even in daylight. Cooking was done in the outer barn. If we came by bus to Keswick the walk to Wasdale was rarely done on a Friday night and even Rothwaite could be too far. There is a boulder on the road side which gave us shelter one night and we slept with our heads uncovered and in the most exposed place so that the rain would wake us before we became significantly wet. The boulder is still there but I can't see how we considered it provided any shelter. I do though, remember heavy rucksacks and nailed boots on a tarmac road combined to produce a need for release from the pain.

We eventually graduated to having a tent which barely slept two and weighed about 13lbs without the benefit of a fitted ground sheet. This raised in us a desire to sleep near the climbing. If the car was left at Seathwaite we would walk to Hollow Stones, via the Corridor Route, or traverse round Gable to Robinson's Cairn. Neither of us ever seemed to have a decent torch and felt forward with each foot to find if the ground was high or low, if it was flat enough to stand on and rough enough to avoid a slip. It was very slow work.

One Bank Holiday weekend on Pillar we met the Stembridges who were staying at the Angler's Hotel and who offered to buy us a drink if we visited. After an evening meal on a lovely summer evening the question was raised as to whether we did one more climb or walked down to the hotel.

The hotel won and much, much later we came back to the tent in the dark, up through the forest to our tent sharing a pen torch and the rain started. In the morning we slept late and found ourselves enveloped in cloud so went back to sleep. At about eight in the evening we got up but so intense was the cloud that we feared to walk far from the tent and collected water from the pools around the tent for a meal. Having refreshed ourselves we went back to bed. It is one of the few times, in those early days when we seemed to get enough sleep at the weekend.

The real value of the tent was for visiting Scotland and Wales where we did not know the location of caves. We took the tent up to the C.I.C. hut one Easter with a mass of climbing gear including carrying our nailed boots. We enjoyed being welcomed into the hut during the days of rain and sleet, but no one ventured onto the mountain. We did not know the occupants of the hut, but I can remember being impressed by the number of pegs and wooden wedges being tipped out of a rucksack. They had intended trying to do some filming of climbing. All of them became well known over the years. Having a tent should have led to multi-day backpacking trips but that had to wait until lighter equipment became available, particularly the tent. It was not even a good base for the Alps and most pictures taken show a little tent surrounded by a large area of clothing, sleeping bags and other gear. All of which at some stage managed to get into the tent or at least under the fly sheet or outer tent as it is now called. All these early days had one tremendous advantage. Full rucksacks, climbing gear and tents could be left almost anywhere without fear of theft or vandals. That was a big plus.

The 'executive cottages' of the present day are the club huts where it is never damp and rarely cold. The primitive huts we originally met are long gone, except perhaps the C.I.C. hut which I can't imagine as a cottage. The closest things to those early huts are bothies in Scotland. In Little Langdale the hut depended on an Elsan, a chemical toilet.

In Rothswaite the stove was almost impossible to light. Many of the huts had big, dank rooms which, in the winter, took all weekend to warm. There were extra blankets, but they had to be aired before they could be sensibly used. So much depended on having heat, which in those days meant lighting a fire. Even the CIC hut had a heap of coal outside the hut for heating. Calor gas was commonly available for lighting and cooking but not for heating. I now find huts very welcoming because they are no longer dank, no longer uncomfortably damp and chilly.

However there were huts almost everywhere, if one had the right club memberships or good friends. These huts, added to the tent gave access to many mountain areas, particularly as they were combined to better cars. It was all we needed for climbing mountains and meeting with like minded people, and its simplicity created a comradeship. Coal was shared, someone had to empty the Elsan and limited cooking facility called for consideration of others and good manners. Sometimes we were the only party in a hut and this gave a freedom which could only otherwise be found in camping. Using caves also created a comradeship but usually only transitory, not extending beyond the weekend. But man strives to 'improve' and so we got bigger and better huts, electricity which brought night storage heaters and refrigerators with no need to use the stream for cooling; heat at the touch of a switch and specially allocated drying rooms.

So now we have huts, or should I say cottages with every imaginable convenience. Is there a hut no longer equipped with a microwave? We bring wine and expect glasses. The big tea pot or a walk across the fields to the pub is not enough. There is even the occasional use of table clothes and the tea towels are usually clean, but I pretend not to notice. All helped by convenient heat which provides hot showers and avoids the penetrating cold when first entering. It's not better, only different and the memory of those ancient times ignores some of the discomfort.

## A RHUM TRIP

Albert Chapman

The death of Max Nicholson early last year reminded me of my former days on Skye and attempts to climb on Rhum.

Beginning in the early fifties, I climbed in seven consecutive years in the Cuillins usually based in the Glen Brittle Youth Hostel. The washroom looked directly towards the forbidden hills of Rhum and it was on them I was determined to climb.

On being elected a junior member of the YRC in 1955, I again visited Glen Brittle. It was here I discovered the owner of Soay, Tex Geddes, could be persuaded to take a group of at least twenty across to Rhum for a day. I therefore scoured the campsite and Youth Hostel and within a day raised 20 enthusiastic climbers to give a small deposit for our sea crossing in two days hence.

Assembled on Glen Brittle beach we watched Tex's boat come slowly into the Loch and dispatch his man on a rowboat to the shore. His news was not good. Tex considered the weather too unsettled and would take us round to Scavaig for the same money. Revolt was in the air by my 20 companions (mainly Glaswegians) and a lynching was recommended. While they looked for a suitable tree (not abundant near the beach) I remonstrated with Tex's man and told him if his master would not take us to Rhum, he could sail to the centre of the Loch and open the sea cocks. Persuasion prevailed and we enjoyed a superb day on this fantastic private Island.

One of the many photographs I took was of the small schoolhouse and this I made into a Christmas card and sent to the owner of Rhum, Lady Monica Bullough. She replied from her present home in Newmarket to the effect that it was the best card received and would remind her

always of the happy times long ago when she lived at Kinloch Castle.

I followed her letter with a request that I take four friends to Rhum the following year. This she agreed and asked that I confirm two weeks prior to our visit so that she could make sure her head keeper, Duncan McNaughton collected us from MacBraynes Mail Boat.

Six weeks prior to our visit another letter arrived from Lady Monica stating that she had sold Rhum to the Nature Conservancy and now only scientists specifically engaged in scientific research were allowed access.

I had no alternative but to ring her at her Newmarket home and with 'tongue in cheek' (something I became skilled at in later years) told her she must have misunderstood our previous correspondence. We were scientists and were to engage on scientific research.

In that case permission was granted, subject to giving our qualifications and expertise to Dr Egging at Edinburgh University

Mike- A university lecturer from Edinburgh was an ornithologist.

John - A teacher from Stirling was a botanist.

Günther - An ex Luftwaffe pilot now living in London was to be a geologist.

(Günther was captured in Belgium towards the end of the war and sent to a prison camp in Scotland. From there he escaped to the hills, killed two sheep and returned to prison camp with fresh meat to supplement prison food. After the war he studied geology at Edinburgh University.)

Iain - A superb watercolour artist.

I myself decided to be a lichenologist, being able to identify two of the two thousand lichens found in Scotland.

Permission was finally granted, subject to submitting a report on our research being sent to the Nature Conservancy!!

Duncan McNaughton duly collected us by launch as MacBraynes Mail Boat entered Loch Scresort and we enjoyed a delightful week amongst the Coolins of Rhum.

We wrote about the things we did and saw and presented a copy as promised to Dr Egging. A copy reached the desk of Max Nicholson, the Director-General of The Nature Conservancy in London and it was from him the YRC received permission to visit Rhum the following year.

Twenty-five members spent Whitsuntide week in 1957 being not the first club to climb there, but maybe the first with official permission.

## MODERN RISK ASSESSMENT

### HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS APPLIED TO THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR!

Subject: Trafalgar 2005

Nelson: "Order the signal, Hardy."

Hardy: "Aye, aye sir."

Nelson: "Hold on. That's not what I dictated to Flagg. What's the meaning of this'?"

Hardy: "Sorry sir?"

Nelson (reading aloud): "England expects every person to do his duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability. What gobbledygook is this?"

Hardy: "Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censor lest it be considered racist."

Nelson: "Gadzooks Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco."

Hardy: "Sorry sir, all naval vessels have been designated smoke-free working environments."

Nelson: "In that case, break open the rum ration. Let us splice the main brace to steel the men before battle."

Hardy: "The rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It's part of the Government's policy on binge drinking."

Nelson: "Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd better get on with it; full speed ahead"

Hardy: "I think you'll find that there's a 4 knot speed limit in this stretch of water."

Nelson: "Damn it man! We are on the eve of the greatest sea battle in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest, please."

Hardy: "That won't be possible, sir."

Nelson: "What?"

Hardy: "Health and safety have closed the crow's nest, sir. No harness; and they said that rope ladders do not meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until proper scaffolding can be erected."

Nelson: "Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay, Hardy."

Hardy: "He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle Admiral."

Nelson: "Wheelchair access'? I've never heard anything so absurd."

Hardy: "Health and safety again, sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled."

Nelson: "Differently abled'? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of admiral by playing the disability card."

Hardy: "Actually, sir, you did. The Royal Navy is underrepresented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency"

Nelson: "Whatever next'? Give me full sail. The salt spray beckons."

Hardy: "A couple of problems there too, sir. Health and safety won't let the crew up the rigging without hard hats. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?"

## SOLITARY IN NIDDERDALE

Tuesday 17 May 2005

Jeffrey Hooper

Nelson: "I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy."

Hardy: "The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone, Admiral."

Nelson: "What? This is mutiny."

Hardy: "It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal-aid lawyers on board, watching everyone like hawks."

Nelson: "Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?"

Hardy: "Actually, sir, we're not."

Nelson: "We're not?"

Hardy: "No, sir, the Frenchies and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation."

Nelson: "But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil."

Hardy: "I wouldn't let the ship's diversity coordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on disciplinary."

Nelson: "You must consider every man an enemy, who speaks ill of your King."

Hardy: "Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest; it's the rules, it could save your life"

Nelson: "Don't tell me - health and safety. Whatever happened to rum, sodomy and the lash?"

Hardy: "As I explained, sir, rum is off the menu! And there's a ban on corporal punishment."

Nelson: "What about sodomy?"

Hardy: "Believe that is now legal, sir."

Nelson: "In that case, kiss me Hardy."

Anon 2005 - provided by David Laughton from the Humber Yawl Club of which he is a member)

Editorial note - The journal has to be of an even number of pages and when material leaves spare space I am happy to print novelty items as fill up.

I moved closer to Nidderdale 18 months ago and so far I had not made time to have a walk in the valley. Time seems to have been filled with the other things that come up when one moves house.

Driving to Lofthouse in the morning, which should have been straightforward, I was day dreaming as I left Masham and took a wrong road. Confident that I knew the small roads, I turned up a lane just one car wide to be confronted by a tractor and trailer. After backing up and moving on it was not long before I was hopelessly lost in the circuitous lanes.

It was when I saw the North Yorks Moors in front of me that I realised it; they should have been behind me. I passed the same water tower twice on different roads from opposite directions but eventually picked up the Masham - Lofthouse road half an hour later than expected.

My intention was to park in Lofthouse but after being thwarted by a brewery wagon filling the road whilst off-loading I changed tack to a car park I knew in Middlesmoor. This turned out to be a good move.

Walking through the unpaved streets between the houses I came to the church and found the downhill track from the corner of the churchyard.

Following the marked track to the water company's access road I came to a bridge over the Nidd into Lofthouse.

The weather was not unpleasant, cool and bright but not sunny.

I followed the Nidderdale Way footpath markers across the fields past sheep and lambs along the course of the Nidd, but above it.

Although after the middle of May some trees were not in leaf, notably the Ash, in the grass I noticed violets, celandine and primroses; not being knowledgeable about wild flowers, there were others that I could not identify.

Birds sang in the trees and bushes; under foot the grass was dry but the streams down the hillsides were flowing brightly.

Coming down close to the Nidd, I could see that the bed was dry, particularly in the area of Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole. Soon I climbed higher up the hillside before turning to the left towards Scar House reservoir.

A cold brisk Northwest wind blew but now there was some sun to compensate. The route follows farm tracks along the valley and the views compare well with areas of the Lakes; Deadman's Hill, Little Whernside and Great Whernside form a backdrop to the reservoir.

Some of the derelict farms are being resurrected as luxurious if re-mote dwellings.

Although the scenery is beautiful it is impossible not to notice that dam building, quarrying and farming have taken place there. The large dam of Scar House reservoir is prominent across the valley and down below, the narrow concrete access road for vehicles follows the valley bottom.

The route was well signed until just the place where it was needed, at the highest point on the walk; there on the open hillside a bit of experienced guesswork helped me to find the main track again.

Coming down to the dam at the north end I found a shelter, but as it was not raining the outside was preferable to the in, for a brief lunch stop.

The dam top is about 500 yards across, with splendid views along the reservoir to the hills in one direction, and a stomach churning view into the valley bottom down the face of the dam wall on the other.

The hardest bit of the walk is the climb from the dam to the moor top along a track which is used by off road vehicles but fortunately it has not suffered badly. A high point of 1400 feet is crossed. Again there are superb views all around, particularly of Great Whernside and along Nidderdale over Gouthwaite reservoir and Guisecliff towards Harrogate, which on a clear day, I am sure could be seen.

Here, within half a mile of the finish I met the first people of the day; A farmer on a quad bike and an older man on foot moving a flock of sheep, each with a lamb, between the walls of the track.

Eight miles, well worth walking.

## ADVICE FROM THE PAST

"Climb if you will, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime.

Do nothing in haste, look well to each step; and from the beginning think what may be the end."

Edward Whymper



# BOB GRAHAM AND I

Roy Denney

Since Greg Jones, a member of my orienteering club, completed the Bob Graham round in 1991 I have had an ambition to complete it myself and I have finally succeeded.

It has however taken me 37 years. On the recent meet at the Stair hut I took in Hindscarth, the last of the peaks on the circuit that I had not climbed. Somehow over the years when walking either from Dalehead or from the north, I have always either gone via Robinson or High Spy.



## HINDSCARTH WITH DALEHEAD BEHIND

The BGR is a very real challenge in every sense of the word. It could be said to be the British equivalent of climbing Everest in that it involves climb of about 27,000 feet. The overall distance is 72 miles and is over far-from-forgiving terrain. The challenge is to actually do the circular route, taking in 42 peaks within 24 hours.

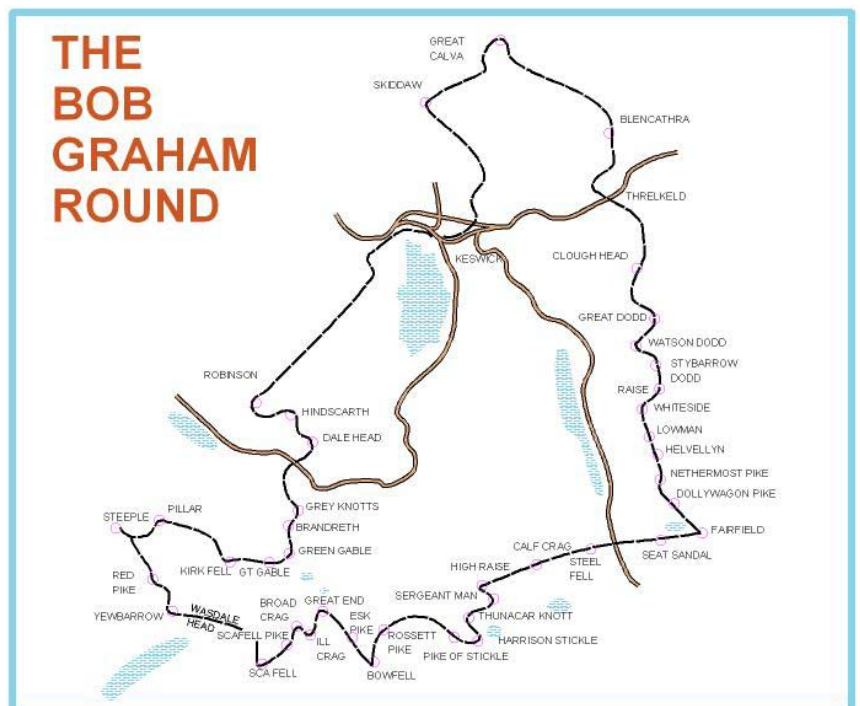
Men and women, young and no longer young (ages ranging from 13 to 66) have cracked it. Billy Bland from Borrowdale did it in 1982 in an incredible 13hrs.53mins. which still stands as the record time.

Bob Graham himself was from Houghton in Carlisle and was a gardener before

running a Keswick guest house. He took regular, long fell walks often involving overnights and in 1932, and in his forties, he completed the round of Lakeland Peaks which now bears his name. He did it on a diet of bread and sweets, wearing shorts and tennis shoes but with the aid of 4 pacers; his record was to stand for 28 years.

Many attempts were made during that period but when an article appeared in the Lancashire Evening Post, written by Harry Griffin it fired the imaginations of a new generation of mountain men including two Clayton-Le-Moors Harriers, Alan and Ken Heaton, who in June 1960 were joined in an attempt by Stan Bradshaw a veteran of 48 years old. Only Alan finished, in a time of 22hrs.18mins but Stan had another go a couple of weeks later and succeeded. News of this was a further stimulant to other would be heroes and over a 1200 have now successfully completed the challenge.

If this is not tough enough for you and you're capable of doing the 42 peaks with time to spare within the 24 hours, you can go for the Lake District 24-hour fell record. For this, you can start anywhere, although you have to work out a schedule in advance and cover all the peaks run by the current record-holder. This record at present stands at 77 peaks in 23hr 47min., done by Mark Hartell in 1997. Yuk!





# NATURAL HISTORY CORNER



## WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### POOR OLD BROCK

Following on from comments in the last journal the badger's lot has deteriorated considerably. Results of trials in Ireland now seem to confirm that it is the guilty party in the spread of Bovine Tuberculosis and the Government is coming under increasing pressure to allow farmers to wipe them out. 20000 cows are slaughtered each year due to this disease and the economic argument is hard to refute.



The report on the trials does point out however that you would have to ensure complete removal of the badgers from an area to be really effective and whilst this is feasible they will always creep back in and it will a continuing costly campaign unless the creature is wiped out completely throughout Britain.

A recent report suggests there are about 275,000 badgers in Britain at the moment an increase of 57% since the last assessment ten years ago.

In the long term vaccination is probably the only real answer but we are a long way off developing an effective one.

### SEA TROUBLE AHEAD

I reported in the last journal on the collapse of populations of many species of sea bird normally abundant on the isles off Scotland, thought to be due to increasing sea temperature which has chased away the plankton and with it the sandeels which make up the staple diet of many species. More than 50% of the UK's wildlife lives in our unprotected seas which are among our greatest natural assets.

Protection of the marine environment is pathetic and our seabirds face many threats to their survival, largely from loss of food supplies due to fishing and climate change, but also from pollution and developments at sea. Our old friends the wind turbines take a heavy toll.

As a nation we are responsible for some of the world's most important seabird populations and still have some superb wildlife areas off our coasts including coral growth, and better protection of our seas is essential.

Perhaps one of the greatest threats to life in our cold seas is the rise in water temperature due to climate change which is rapidly reaching a point where the damage will be irreversible.

Fishing is obviously another major problem which seems beyond the Common Agricultural Policy to resolve.

We must obviously keep trying to push other countries in the right direction but could make a start ourselves by setting up marine conservation areas.

New Zealand has apparently created National Parks off their coast which create breeding havens for wildlife and we could do the same.

Climate change is a broader problem than its effect on our seas but that is where it will have most effect. By 2050, warmer weather will probably have melted most of the sea ice at the poles changing the ocean currents dramatically but of most concern this will allow the major glaciers in Antarctica to start sliding into the sea with large increases in sea level.

Serious estimates vary from between 2 foot and 15 foot but this would put most major cities at risk and could cause billions of people to lose their lives.

Up to 30% of the world's land-based plant and animal species may face extinction from climate change.

We should do far more to reduce demand for energy and encourage its more efficient use, particularly in transport, as so called green energy can only scratch the surface of the problem.

## RECYCLING UNDER THREAT

A report at the turn of the year suggested that 10% of the world's bird species would not survive this century and a further 15% were at severe risk. Of great concern within these statistics is the fate of fish eaters with a third expected to vanish largely due to man reducing their food stocks.

Of even more concern is the probable loss of a third of all scavengers. Nature's great recyclers are under threat.

The report points out that scavengers are important recyclers of nutrients which has the side effect of limiting the spread of disease in humans which would otherwise be caused by decomposing bodies.

They point out that the collapse of the vulture population in India in the 1990s led to an explosion in the population of feral dogs with

30,000 people dying of Rabies in India in 1997 alone.

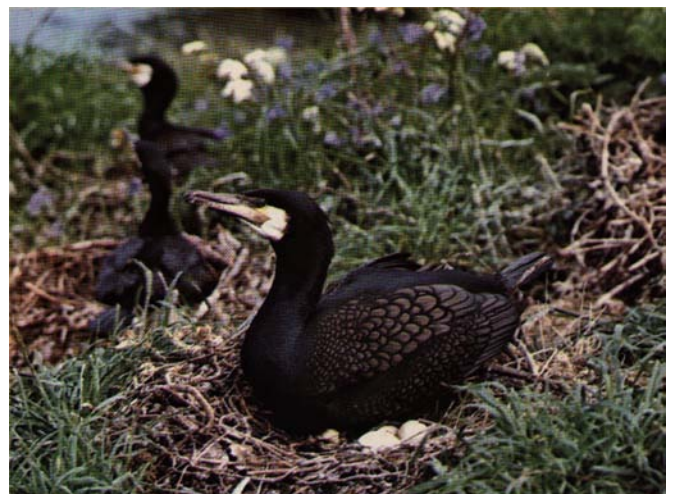
The most attractive scavenger we now see in Britain is the reintroduced red kite. However whilst it flourishes in England it is still being decimated in the Highlands due to poisoning by gamekeepers.

Much of this may be inadvertent in so far as it is probably hunting raptors that are the target but there is a real prospect of this bird again becoming extinct in Scotland.

## CORMORANT CULL

Another bird in trouble is the cormorant.

These are birds of salt and freshwaters and are on the Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern because of the relatively small number of breeding sites and because the UK supports over 20% of the European winter population of the bird.



Despite Government's commissioned research showing cormorants do not cause a serious problem to fisheries the Government has now licensed widespread culling of them. The annual

limit for killing cormorants will be increased from the current 500 birds to 3,000 a year for two years.

England only has a population of about 15,000 birds. The new policy is aimed at actively reducing this population.

For the first time, fisheries owners will not have to demonstrate that the birds are damaging their stocks. Licences to shoot cormorants are only issued at present to scare birds from the few fisheries where serious damage has been shown to have occurred.

In each case, the person seeking the licence has to demonstrate serious damage, and that scare tactics short of shooting have not worked.

## MAN'S NEAR NEIGHBOURS

We have all seen more than our share of unusual creatures as our activities take us to the wilder locations of the country but increasingly there are opportunities for everyone to see our wild neighbours as they move in with us. Equally our sometimes careless activities are bringing non native species into the ecology of our country.

If you bear in mind that there are half a million hectares of gardens in Britain and usually more trees in cities than in open countryside it should be no surprise. A survey some years ago in Edinburgh counted over a million trees. Kestrels are widespread in many cities including London and sea birds nest on buildings and bridges etc in many coastal towns.

Herring gulls are in fact becoming a real nuisance messing up the roofs of high buildings.

You can rarely drive through the back roads of any suburb late in the night without seeing a fox and one triggers my security lights most nights.

A beautiful creature in the wild, in town the urban cousin is often mangy and far from welcome. We must however admire its ability to survive in our midst. They are scavengers and get rid of carcasses of other creatures but unfortunately do turn over dustbins seeking leftovers.



SUNDAY  
MORNING  
VISITOR

TAKEN FROM MY  
FRONT DOOR

They are omnivores and do kill domestic animals and pets and I recently had the distressing experience of coming face to face with a fox carrying what I can only hope was an already dead cat.

It was by no means a small cat and despite my shouting and arm waving the fox was not about to drop its meal. Vets report ever increasing numbers of cats badly injured in fights with urban foxes and pet owners are starting to blame this creature for the numerous pets that vanish.

Over the last year there have been several cases of foxes killing young dogs and one evidenced case of a fox biting and trying to run off with a toddler asleep with a parent in the lounge of their home.

In March an adult and fit Alsatian was killed in a fight with a fox and a few weeks later in the same area, possibly the same fox tried to fight its way through wire fencing to get at a fully grown Labrador.

It is ironic that by instinct the fox itself appears to kill for sport. One fox got into a netted compound at a dog breeders property and went through a litter of young terriers. They are well known for killing all the hens in a coop even though they will at most manage to carry a couple away.

Kestrels are as adept as foxes in coming to terms with us and often patrol gardens and motorway verges looking for anything from worms to small birds.

Hedgehogs, whilst nothing like as common in the countryside as they used to be, are still doing fairly well in our gardens although regular casualties on the roads.

Over the last year I have seen a little owl sitting on a lamp post and a tawny owl in a tree in the church yard.

Many supposedly woodland birds are actually more prevalent in gardens these days and peregrines actually hunt in a deserted allotment area within Leicester itself. Given that they number feral pigeons amongst their prey this must be very welcome.

This bird is slowly making a comeback nesting in moorland cliffs and rough mountain areas but is also taking up residence on taller man made constructions such as school and office block roofs, mills, factory chimneys, pylons and bridges. It is in fact the fastest creature on the planet having been timed with dives at over 200 miles per hour.

There are a pair nesting on a church in Exeter and the RSPB, in conjunction with other organisations, is setting up watching posts where people can view them through telescopes etc and a camera is going to beam live pictures to a local museum. It is also intended this this lead will also be used as a web cam so that we can all have look in on the internet. ([www.rspb.org.uk/webcams](http://www.rspb.org.uk/webcams))

The Hawk & Owl Trust is monitoring such sightings ([www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)). Their project aims to establish how the number of urban Peregrines has increased in the last decade, the type of artificial nest sites the birds are selecting and their distribution throughout the UK. Nick Dixon, Project Officer for the research is keen to hear about any sightings in urban areas or around buildings and other man-made structures [Nickdixondevon@aol.com](mailto:Nickdixondevon@aol.com)

The supposedly shyest of birds, the kingfisher is now in urban locations and can be seen flying the drainage ditch crossing the busy A46 not far from where I live and along a local brook at the back of Co-op car park.

With our parks, playgrounds, allotments, verges, islands, rubbish dumps, wasteland, ruins and man made cliffs (high rise buildings) we have created a multitude of suitable habitats and our none-too-clean habits provide many sources of food.

Ironically our improving of cleanliness and recycling skills by introducing wheelie bins is probably causing the increase in pet kills by foxes as they find easy pickings from dust bins and refuse bags have vanished.

Even badgers are to be seen in some larger gardens on the edge of open country and we all know of setts just outside the villages we live in. There is a family which has made a home in one of our local sewage farms.

Smaller creatures take to our garden water features as ponds and marshes in the countryside disappear. Frogs, newts, toads, lizards and slow worms are quite prevalent and in larger more untidy gardens grass snakes can be found. Bats take insects on the wing as do increasing numbers of dragonflies.

Rats and mice also abound and are not so welcome but some mice are of more unusual

species and not all the common house mouse.

Plants have also followed man with coastal varieties thriving on roadside verges where we regularly salt the roads. Foreign species abide there as well, brought in on container lorries from the continent.

Wild liquorice grows where once thriving liquorice industries were based and flax and teasels near old mills. Limestone loving plants thrive on mortar and concrete filled ruins although many miles from any natural habitat.

How did the alpines living only in the clefts of the limestone pavements of the Yorkshire Dales get there?

Fig trees are to be found flourishing where the waters of power stations have increased river temperatures and if you swim in the seas off Sizewell or Drigg you will find very exotic sea life.

Yellow rape plants are now a common part of our 'natural' landscape having blown from the cultivated fields of this crop which have spread widely over recent years and Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and the ubiquitous rhododendrons are all invasive introductions.

## OH DEER!

Deer are becoming a very real problem in many areas as young saplings have to be expensively protected for many years to prevent them being topped by them and they are becoming a serious threat to the ecological balance. They have a fairly liberal diet and will eat tree shoots when other food is short in winter.

Red Deer are a particular problem up in Scotland and the chairman of the John Muir Trust has come up with a novel answer in that he has called for people living in the Highlands to be allowed to

shoot red deer and take the meat home.

The red deer is our largest land-mammal with a summer coat of reddish brown to brown and a winter coat tending towards grey. It is a truly native species with large highly branched antlers and is a magnificent site with stags weighing in 90-190kg and standing 107-137cm at the shoulder. As with all deer the females can be much smaller than the male, as light as 63 kg and not much more than 100cm

The wilder deer on the uplands in Scotland are generally smaller than those in kept in English woodlands and parklands.



RED  
DEER

This animal can live up to 18 years but rarely does. Native stock is fairly common in Scotland, the Lake District, East Anglia and the south west of England. Gone wild stock is present in pockets of the rest of England but many of these will be crosses with the closely related Sika.

In woodlands red deer are largely solitary or in small groups of hinds with their calves.

In open country or in higher mountain areas they form single sex groups coming together only during the autumn mating season (the rut) when the dominant stags will get the spoils of their efforts to keep younger males out in the cold. Peak activity is at dawn and dusk but they use the cover of darkness to move into open areas closer to man.

In Scotland the red deer are a serious threat to the regeneration of woodlands and a fairly

recent survey, shows that the only restriction on numbers appears to be the weather and food competition and that the now traditional culling, of 12% to 15% has no impact. There are an estimated 300,000 red deer in Scotland, and the Deer Commission wants a significant reduction to prevent widespread damage to fragile habitats. In 2003/04, about 60,000 red deer were culled without significantly denting the population. For culling to really keep the population in sustainable numbers without detriment to the environment we would have to cull about 80% each year.

A collapse in venison prices means it is not financially viable for estate staff to cull hinds in winter for meat to meet targets for reducing deer numbers.

There was recently, widespread anger over the massacre of large numbers of deer by government agents on an industrial scale using helicopters.

The Chairman of the Trust is quoted as saying "My understanding is that every hind shot now costs an average of £100 after expenses if it is being shot by estate staff, while the Forestry Commission spends £5 million a year shooting deer in its forests. If this is the case there is surely now an argument for the idea of encouraging competent local people to go to the hill to both shoot the animals for free and take away the venison."

## POOR PORCUPIG

Over the last few years the hedgehog has been struggling and many of 2003s young were short of body weight and did not survive that winter.

Hedgehogs often have a second brood but these young often lack sufficient time to build up their mass before winter sets in, although our recent milder winters were giving them a fighting chance

of survival. That year's paucity of food supplies was disastrous.

Last winter was not so difficult for them but numbers are still well down.

This ancient creature is welcome in any garden as its diet includes many pests and is known by several local names such as Porcupig or Furzehog.

The young are known as Pinkies and, no doubt to the relief of their mothers, their early spines are quite soft. These young spend about a month suckling and another month learning how to fend for themselves after which they then need to treble their mass to survive hibernation.

Thought to raid bird's nests for eggs, it is doubtful that they take enough to make any serious difference. They actually have a very cosmopolitan taste in food and are great opportunists but contrary to popular myth bread and milk is bad for them. Their favoured food is worm, slug or snail.

They do love piles of old wood or compost heaps for snug homes especially when hibernating over winter and many come to a tragic end due to this. They tend to start hibernating from November depending on the weather and stay put to March.

A fully grown adult can reach about a foot from nose to tail and is very athletic. They are by no means slow when they want to get a move on and if you ever get the chance to see one climb you will be very impressed. They can also swim quite well but garden ponds can be a threat as they find it difficult to climb out where they cannot stand on the bottom.

Very few animals can get through its defences with 2 inch long spines, but their habit of rolling up into a prickly ball does them no good when facing an oncoming car. Their spines are actually adapted hairs and they have about 6000 of them.

One of the few creatures with a tough enough snout to get to the soft underbelly of these creatures is the badger which finds them a hearty meal.

The badger also competes with the hedgehog for most of its food so they are normally not found in proximity to each other.

## WHAT A HOOT

If you are up in Northumberland this year you may if very fortunate, get something of a surprise.

A pair of European eagle owls nested in a remote piece of woodland and two chicks were found in a hollow in a tree last spring.

I have just spent three very pleasant days there but did not see them.

European eagle owls, are amongst the world's largest owls and grow to a height of two foot six inches with a wingspan of nearly six feet; a large beak; enormous talons and startling bright orange eyes. They can weigh in at up to nine pounds and, like most owls hunt at night for their prey which includes rats, mice, voles, rabbits, hares and other birds.

They are fairly common in the wilder areas of Europe, Scandinavia, Northern Africa, Asia and the Middle East but are very rarely seen in Britain and then only in the Highlands of Scotland. The species was wiped out in Britain about 150 years ago and because we are an island and the birds don't like to cross large expanses of water it was thought unlikely they would be back.

Those seen in Scotland were probably island hoppers from Scandinavia blown off their normal patch by bad weather.

There are a lot in captivity and it is quite likely that the birds in Northumberland are escapees but they could have migrated down from Scotland. The eagle owl should survive well in Britain's wilder corners if not persecuted by man.

## NEW YEAR SPRING

There seems to be an argument that spring starts on New Years Day. I had a race that morning in very acceptable weather and within days reports were coming in of flowers blooming early. Daffodils, snowdrops, wild primroses and even camellias were in flower by mid January across the south of England and parts of the Midlands.

Frog spawn was found as far north as Inverness in January 2004, and again that October elsewhere in Britain. Ladybirds were seen in central Scotland as late as December.

January snows this year should not have had much effect but some plants and insects were set back by the odd frost in February and March. Bees were also in abundance but one problem is that birds breed to have young when certain food sources used to be plentiful but nowadays they may be arriving when the cupboard is getting bare.

January also saw literally thousands of reports of bumble bees feeding off nectar when normally they should be hibernating.

The Woodland Trust has published research that show that last year spring arrived 4 weeks earlier than in 1920 and January was two degrees warmer than the average for the last 50 years. The line across Britain which reflects spring by the triggering of insect activity has moved from the south coast to central Scotland in ten years.



Another welcome sight this year reflecting our bountiful autumn last year and generally mild winter, was the number of waxwings to be seen about. They were raiding the berries from last year's crop into the early part of this year.

Climate change is now a fact and we must try and do something to slow it down and give nature a chance to adjust to the new environment.

## NEW WOOD FOR OLD

The new National Forest in the Midlands has just seen the planting of new tree number 6,000,000. It is just as well as woodlands elsewhere in the country are constantly under threat.

It is not only the volume of trees that matter however as once lost, Ancient Woodland cannot be recreated.

The UK is one of the least wooded countries in Europe, and the little ancient woodland remaining is incredibly vulnerable. The mighty oaks and black poplars, delicate ash and willow and the beautiful flowering blackthorn and may are an essential part of our countryside but since the 30s half of what little remained of the UK's ancient woodland has been damaged or destroyed. Ancient woods now cover only 2% of the country and 85% of what is left has no legal protection.

Ancient woods form a direct link with the original wildwood dating from the Ice Age. They are the richest wildlife habitat in the UK and a source of beauty and inspiration.

## PONIES IN PERIL

30,000 strong in the sixties, when I first visited Dartmoor, the native ponies are now thought to be down to about 1,500 or even less.

A new trust has been formed to try to preserve the remaining truly indigenous stock.

The Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust fears there may be as few as 500 completely pure bred specimens. Other ponies are kept on the moor including Shetlands and other more colourful breeds and some crosses are inevitable.

The Dartmoor pony is as much a part of the unique Dartmoor landscape as are the granite tors and dramatic scenery.

Watching a herd move at breakneck speeds over the rough terrain during the annual drift is one of the sights which will always stick in my memory.



This pony is an amazing breed of tough, hardy animals and is capable of living throughout the year on this moor.

As a herd animal they learn to learn (keep to their own territories) and will know where the nearest shelter is if the weather changes quickly; and we all know how changeable the Dartmoor weather can be.

They are also very efficient grazing animals and keep the growth of vegetation under control, preventing coarse growth from taking over and blocking access to the moor.

Unfortunately, due to ongoing low market prices and the introduction of pony passports (the administration fee is often more than the pony is worth) many farmers have decided to stop keeping this breed and so the decline continues.

## ANOTHER OSPREY?

Wardens keeping an eye on a nest being built by a pair of ospreys on Bassenthwaite were concerned when the finished nest was filled with snow during a late fall in April.

Their fears were confounded however when just a few days later the hen laid an egg.

To date I have not heard whether it has hatched out.

## MORE IMMIGRANTS

Yet another unwanted beetle seems to have taken to our changing climate.

The Rosemary Leaf Beetle has been found in Anglia and is causing considerable concern.

As a previously non-native species it has no known predators here and it can destroy crops of rosemary, thyme and lavender by eating out the growing tips.

Yet another new insect to our shores has no name in English.

This affords the finder the opportunity to name it so why not start searching for something yourselves. Who knows we may eventually see the 'Aldred Eleven Spot Burnet' appearing in guidebooks.

The one recently discovered is a species of moth normally found in southern Europe, Asia and Northern Africa.

It has now been called the Minsmere Crimson Underwing after where it has set up home.

## WINNERS AND LOSERS

Last edition I touched on the respective fortunes of grouse and bitterns. New reports are out showing how these and other birds are faring.

Until last year capercaillie numbers were climbing nicely but the population had a major set back having many chicks killed by unseasonably heavy rains. With the population already low and the bird having a low breeding rate in normal times, it is fairly critical.

It is generally accepted that each hen needs to rear one chick each year for the population to maintain its numbers and last year it is thought that the average was only one chick to every three hens.

Despite government targets and various interesting schemes it would appear that attempts to reintroduce black grouse to former territories are meeting with very limited success.

Bitterns however continue to thrive and Britain is well ahead of the targets set by the government as part of its bio-diversity action plan.

Last summer, for the first time since conservation schemes were introduced, over 1000 male corncrakes were recorded calling.

This is over double the number counted ten years earlier.

In last year's summer edition I commented on the return of choughs to Cornwall during the respite from tourists during the foot and mouth closures. They appear to be doing well; so well that a visitor centre set up to allow those very tourists to enjoy them without causing them any disturbance had over 18,000 visitors last year.

Birds not doing well include the lesser spotted woodpecker down 81% in the last 30 years and the spotted flycatcher down 85%.

Most woodland birds have halved in numbers during that period and nightingales, song thrushes, woodcock and bull finches are all struggling.

## MINCED BIRD

A far from encouraging story is developing of plans which will decimate several populations of rare birds.

The Isle of Lewis is one of Europe's finest locations for rare and endangered species but detail is now emerging of the proposed massive wind farm there which will cause immense damage to the environment.

The proposal is to erect 234 turbines, each over 400 feet high with blades cutting a circle larger than the size of a jumbo jet. They will stretch for 25 miles and need 100 miles of new roads not to mention the massive concrete bases and crane stands. In all probability at least five quarries will be needed to produce the needed rock. There will be untold miles of overhead power lines, over 200 pylons and numerous electricity substations.

A couple of years ago the RSPB published an article by me warning of the dangers of such

developments but at the time they were fairly ambivalent about such threats and refused to get involved in the 'politics' but they are now belatedly waking up to the situation and starting to campaign against such sites.

What is the point of the area being designated a Special Protection Area by the European Union and also a Wetland Site of International Significance under the Ramsar convention if the powers that be take no notice of such things.

The area abounds with golden plovers, dunlins, greenshanks and divers including nearly 10% of the UK population of red throated divers. Merlins and 8 pairs of golden eagles patrol the skies, corncrakes traverse the area travelling to their breeding grounds and whooper swans land to recharge their batteries mid migration.

It is irrefutable that wind farms cause massive destruction of bird life as several international studies have proven.

In California, researchers in 1986 estimated that 6,800 birds were killed annually at the San Geronimo wind facility, mostly those of nocturnal migrants. The infamous Altamont Pass wind farm also in California, is causing severe environmental impacts to raptor populations due to bird kills from collisions with turbines and electrocution on power lines. These turbines each year kill an estimated 900 to 1,300 birds of prey, including more than 75 golden eagles, several hundred red-tailed hawks, several hundred burrowing owls, and hundreds of additional raptors

Official reports in Belgium, Holland and Spain also point to high mortality in those countries, at various wind farm locations.

If you wish to add to the objections you can write to the Scottish Executive at 5 Cadogan St., Glasgow G2 6AT. More information can be had from numerous web sites if you search under Lewis Wind Farm.

# BOOK REVIEW

## THE VILLAIN THE LIFE OF DON WILLANS

BY JIM PERRIN

Hutchinson h/b pp 350 £18-49.

Reviewed by Bill Todd.

I never knew Don Whillans, except by reputation. Probably just as well because one of the things I heard about him was that he was always wanting to fight and I don't think mountaineers should fight among themselves but all be good friends rejoicing in the joy that the hills hold for us all.

But having read the book I feel I know him better than I did before, it is a very good book and well worth a read. It fills in a lot of gaps in my conception of Don, not all of them, be it said, to his credit. One of the things definitely to his credit which I hadn't a clue about was that he took to the hills as a hard walker.

As a schoolboy of thirteen he walked from Hayfield to Ashbourne and he also circumambulated Kinder Scout. So when he went to Shining Clough with his pal Eric he was not one of the rock gymnasts who had, in the words of my own mentor Bob Files, "no use for a mountain "

It was Eric who wanted to climb so Don tied him on and let him lead off.

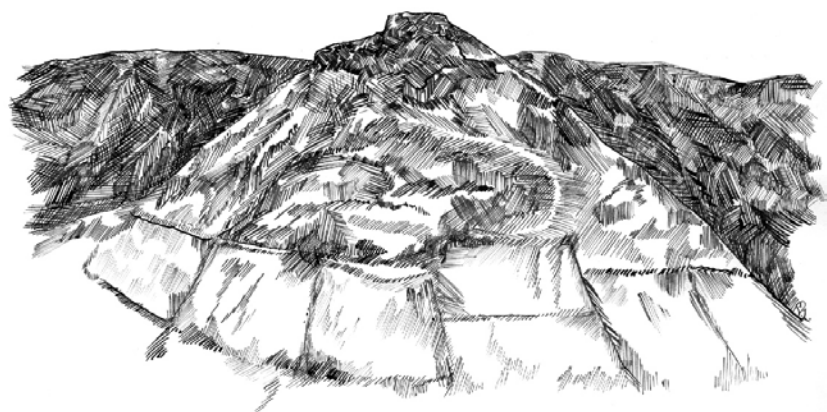
I suppose the belay ledge was fairly obvious because Eric brought Don up to it and evidently Don thought it was up to him to lead on to the top. This he did on holds which my guide book describes as " good " but which rattled a bit for Don. The climb was " Atherton Brothers " graded severe. This was Sunday 16 April 1950 and Don's first climb.

He did not climb with Joe Brown until April 1951 when he took Slim Sorrel's place seconding Joe on Valkyrie at the Roaches. The next month he must have really felt he had got there when he apparently climbed Gimmer Crack with a member of the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club.

I joined the YMC in 1956 and I immediately started wondering who it could have been. My first idea was Charlie Salisbury but he did not join until later.

Then I thought "Arthur Dolphin", he was certainly in the same class as Don as a climber. If any body is still alive who knows I would be delighted to know.

Anyway it is not up to me to summarise the book but only to recommend it as a jolly good read, both enjoyable and informative.



LORD'S SEAT  
EDALE

VICKI LOWTHER

## THE FALL

BY SIMON MAWER

Abacus, h/b pp 442 £6.99

Reviewed by Bill Todd.

This is an amazing book, the sort of book that reminds me of the "Lady Chatterley" trial when prosecuting counsel asked the jury "Would you want your servants to read this book?" In this case for climbers it would be "Would you want your mother, sister, girl friend, or most important of all your wife to read this book?"

I just finished it yesterday and I am still confused as to who fathered whom. But it is not one of those books that set out to be lurid and leave you completely indifferent as to who fathered whom. These are real people we read about and the author is an absolute cracking novelist, he would be worth reading in my view, even if he was not writing about climbing.

But his writing about climbing, as one would expect from a climber, is first class particularly how it must have felt to spend a night on the Spider with a broken leg being lashed by gale and snow, exponentially worse than this reviewer's only similar experience which was by Stickle Tarn and with rain instead of snow.

Every climber ought to read this book, and I warn you, it is difficult to put down. A day ought to be reserved for a concentrated session, the author's use of flashback doesn't make it any easier, any more than one of the principal character's habit of altering her name according to her age. I'll make that one easy for you she is Meg as a young lady and Caroline as she got more mature. The other main characters keep their names all through and are Guy, senior mountaineer, Diana, Meg's friend, and the two climbing mates are Rob and Jamie.

If you get hold of this book be chary about lending it to anybody because it might be a long time before you see it again.

# OBITUARY

WALTER CLIFFORD COBB

Cliff Cobb died peacefully, aged 82, in hospital on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005. His health had deteriorated in the last few months but he had remained active well into his seventies.

Born in Kirton in Lindsey, near Scunthorpe, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1922, he attended Brigg Grammar School.

His first job was with Appleby Frodingham Steel Works but in 1949 moved north to join ICI Engineering giving long and loyal service until his retirement. A Civil Engineer he worked on the design and development of capital projects for the large chemical complex on Teesside.

As a young man Cliff regarded all motor cars as mechanised perambulators - the only civilised way to get from point A to point B was by motorbike. He acquired a succession of ever more powerful motorbikes, finishing up with a 1000cc Vincent which was acknowledged as the Rolls Royce of two wheeled travel.

Marriage and a young family ensured that two wheels slowly gave way to four and whatever he felt about this development he was regarded by the many to whom he offered transport as one of our best drivers.

Jack Devenport (President 1974-76) introduced Cliff to hill walking, an activity Cliff embraced with ever growing enthusiasm for the rest of his days. In 1950 Cliff and Jack visited the Alps, travelling aboard the trusty Vincent of course. He took every opportunity to rock climb and regretted not starting much earlier in his mountaineering career.

Never one to be still, he visited many Alpine regions with his family in pursuit of, flowers, walking, food and wine and often by bus.

Cliff's election to YRC membership was in 1976 and he quickly became an active member, invariably joining the annual Whit Meet in Scotland. Members will remember him in the Lake District, Wales and the Dales but he also attended our overseas meets in Majorca, Spain and Norway. I was visiting Majorca with Cliff in 1995 when, just before our departure the then President Derek Bush asked if he would examine the possibility of holding a YRC meet on the island. Many of the walks which were enjoyed on the subsequent meet held later that year were inspired by Cliff who was fastidious in sorting out all the details which have to be addressed for any successful meet.

A meet leader and regular attendance at meets throughout his time with the Club meant that he was widely known, his modest demeanour, good humour and dry wit made him a very popular figure, and these characteristics were further enhanced by his innate kindness and generosity. He was a most equable companion, a quality I had good cause to remember in the Picos Europa when I stumbled badly, knocking Cliff off his stance and causing him to fall some 10 feet onto razor sharp limestone. His hand was badly cut, the route abandoned, even with assistance from the Guardia, our distance from base meant that he could not reach the hospital for some 24 hours. Cliff bore the scar forever afterwards but he made light of it at the time and never touched on my clumsiness that caused the mishap.

He will be remembered for his kindness in bringing the ageing Maurice Wilson on meets for many years, long after the time when Maurice was active enough to join us on the hills. On the Rhum Meet in 1988, Cliff duly turned up with Maurice both being determined to witness the spectacle of

Sheerwaters flocking to their nesting sites on Halival at midnight. This venture was very nearly aborted when Maurice had a minor accident on rough rock. The wounds looked impressive but Cliff patched him up and the summit reached in time to greet the returning Sheerwaters. Maurice recorded this memorable excursion - a valuable record which I still enjoy playing.

Cliff was one of our most knowledgeable botanists and could always be relied upon to make sure we got our Scottish flora right. A keen gardener and Alpine plant enthusiast, cuttings and seed from his efforts will soon be a reminder in many YRC gardens.

In spite of atrocious weather the YRC support at Cliff's funeral included the President and eight past Presidents, which was in itself a reflection of the esteem in which Cliff was held. The Club has lost a great supporter who will be sadly missed, yet remembered with great warmth and affection.

Alan Linfoord.



# MEETS REPORT

## LOWSTERN CHRISTMAS MEET

10th 11th and 12th, December 2004.

Looking back over the Christmas meet reports of the past decade there have been few occasions when we have been blessed with clean, crisp weather. This meet was no exception with leaden skies and intermittent rain. This failed to dampen the festive spirit which prevailed at Lowstern throughout the weekend.

Some thirty six members and two guests had booked to attend the meet; unfortunately one member was let down by his car and failed to arrive.

The weather on Friday was particularly dismal but the welcome at Lowstern lifted the spirits with the prospect of convivial company, good food and cheerful quarters. The full complement of attendees did not assemble until Saturday but a substantial number sat down to an equally substantial meal on Friday evening, the main course of which was generous helpings of Lancashire hot-pot. Wine flowed freely. A decorated holly bush and a blazing log fire in the Cliff Downham wing lent a festive atmosphere to the proceedings.

Saturday dawned with little promise of an invigorating day on the hills. This was no deterrent to the assembled throng - Forays into the hills and dales around Clapham and Ingleton were made by separate groups. At large meets where several small groups set off in various directions it is difficult to pin down who did what but the following is an attempt on the part of the writer to summarise the day's activities.

Two members spent time underground in Illusion Pot while three members accompanied by their guest were similarly occupied at County

Pot. Two members took a leisurely stroll to Clapham Cave where they encountered Father Christmas. This was before they had imbibed!

Another party visited the Norber erratics and the area around Austwick and others ventured further afield, taking the Long Lane Allotments route out of Clapham then heading to Nick Pot. From there they turned north to join the Ingleborough ridge then over to Gaping Gill returning to Lowstern. Four members indulged in a little ornithology at the R.S.P.B. Leighton Moss reserve.

Punch was partaken as a prelude to the Christmas dinner. The extent and quality of the offering set a very high standard which will be difficult to better. The chef and his band of helpers must be complimented on their endeavours and the menu is worth recording. Smoked mackerel pate was followed by parsnip soup. The main course was roast pork with barbecue sauce and the appropriate vegetables. Home made Christmas pudding followed (more of which below), then cheese and biscuits served with port and finally, Marcia's mince pies and coffee. Once again the wine flowed freely.



Several large Christmas puddings had to be steamed and this challenge demonstrated the ingenuity often displayed by the club when presented with an interesting problem.

The steam was generated by a wallpaper stripper connected to a wooden box with a length of rubber hose. Heath Robinson could not have improved on the appliance.

Nor was there a hint of Polycell paste in the pudding. Full marks to the inventor.

Sunday morning showed little promise and there was a certain air of lethargy about, possibly

attributable to the indulgences of the previous evening. The writer suspects that some stalwarts sallied forth but has no knowledge of their activities.

In conclusion the meet was a most enjoyable occasion much appreciated by those in attendance. R.W.

### Attendance:



Ken Aldred (President)  
David Brooks (G)  
Alan Brown,  
Derek Bush,  
Ged Champion,  
Alan Clare,  
Derek Clayton,  
Robert Crowther,  
Ian Crowther,  
Roger Dix,  
Graham Dootson,  
Paul Dover,  
Mike Edmundson,  
Iain Gilmour,  
Mike Godden,  
Peter Green,  
David Handley,  
John Hemingway,  
Chris Hilton(G)  
Howard Humphries,  
Gordon Humphreys,  
Rob Ibberson,  
Tim Josephy,  
Richard Kirby,  
Alan Linford,  
Harvey Lomas,  
John Lovett,  
Chris Renton,  
Alister Renton,  
Arthur Salmon,  
John Schofield,  
Michael Smith,  
David Smith,  
Derek Smithson,  
George Spenceley  
Roy Wilson,  
Frank Wilkinson.



## LOW HALL GARTH 7<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> January 2005

In the fifties and sixties members could expect good snow conditions and an exodus for Great End Gully on Saturday morning. Weather forecasts for this weekend were not promising. We arrived in rain and things didn't improve, water flowed in a continuous stream down the lane with only the new paved area edging preventing flooding in the cottage.

As the evening moved towards night the rain and wind intensity increased, clearly a storm was developing. During the night slates could be heard slipping from the roof and the rain lashed against the windows. At about five in the morning the new emergency lighting came on, indicating that there had been a power failure.

Fortunately there were no slates missing from our roof but there was a pile of slates from the adjacent roof revealing the crook barn beams. None however had damaged our parked cars. A sheet of corrugated iron from the drying room roof had disappeared. It was recovered and temporarily replaced. A decision was made to abandon LHG and head for Lowstern.

Apart from huge pools of water along the track all seemed well until we encountered a tree across the road from the ford. Luckily a couple with a cottage in the valley were able to return to their cottage with three saws. Large numbers of trees in the woodlands along the road had been uprooted.



We eventually reached the Coniston road to meet Derek Bush heading for the cottage having had to manoeuvre around fallen trees all the way before and from Ambleside. The local council had done an excellent job cutting the fallen trees to give a single lane through the chaos. Added to these problems were flooded areas across the road. Most of the area was without electricity until after lunchtime.

Down at Lowstern another group were in residence. They had exclusive use of the Downham room whilst we had the dining room. All was very amicable. Alan and Frank then produced a splendid four course meal with portions to match the hungriest of us.

No one would claim that it was it was the most active of meets but it was both exciting and enjoyable. Ken and Derek S did however get a walkin, but decided not to come with us to Lowstern.

F. David Smith



On the Meet were,  
The President, Ken Aldred  
Derek Bush  
Albert Chapman (part)  
Paul Dover  
Richard Dover (PM)  
Iain Gilmour  
John Jenkin  
John Lovett  
Frank Platt  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
Alan Wood

## LOWSTERN

January 21-23 2005

The meet had been planned as a caving meet for everyone; including members who had not been caving for years, if not decades, and complete novices. Arthur Salmon, the meet organiser, received a reply slip marked for caving by such a novice, months in advance. And on the subject of replies, Arthur had changed his e-mail address, not an uncommon event, and several e-mail replies disappeared into a cyber' black hole. I arrived with Arthur at Lowstern, mid afternoon Friday, and we soon found that the expected attendance would be exceeded. The rest of the weekend included visits to locally resident members and the shops in Ingleton in order to supplement the supplies.

The weekend weather forecast did not suggest much precipitation, but it would be cold and there were concerns re driving onto the fells. The discussions on Friday night resolved that with the number of cavers, objectives could best be satisfied, by splitting into 2 parties. Our leader would take a novice party into Aygill Pot and the Josephys would do the Lancaster-Ease Gill through trip with a more adventuresome party.

I had not been caving for several years and the experience only underlined the growing awareness that ageing creeps up on one. Aygill was a good choice for the intrepid novice; none of these railway tunnels and easy upright walking. It was crawling, if that is a correct description when referring to the near vertical, mixed in with traverses in vertical rifts, where it was all too easy to get in the wrong position with no suitable limbs to give either support or power to move. In general the cave was dry, but with some water going over the first pitch. The real cavers in the party, the minders, led down the second pitch and reported it wet. I mistakenly thought this referred to the passage at the bottom, not that the pitch was a cold shower bath and I thus got a soaking and voted for an immediate exit. Of the

10 men in the party, all got to the bottom of the first pitch but beyond there, only 5 got to the second and 3 descended it. Getting out of course is more difficult than getting in, but everyone made it, by necessity.

In the other party of 6, initially a ladder was taken in County Pot, and then the through route was achieved by means of abseiling and the knowledge to use Wretched Rabbit and various roof passages to avoid Poetic Justice.

Of course not everyone went caving. There were walking expeditions from the hut with varying ambitions. One party did a circuit, from the hut, including Ingleborough and Whernside.

The meet had full catering with full English breakfasts. The Saturday evening meal included, by some miracle, everyone (exc. vegetarians) receiving a half chicken served in the same sitting. 22 sat down for the meal.

Sunday saw the usual departure of many members, but a party of stalwarts went to the dig above Newby and others went caving again or just walking.

The view was expressed repeatedly that this type of caving meet was a resounding success and that it should be repeated. The catering was up to the usual very high standard and the niggling problems associated with the modern technology of de-humidifiers and automatic hot water control barely scratched the surface of a very memorable weekend.

## GLEN ETIVE

Inbhirfhaolain

February 17-21 2005

The weather conditions for the weekend could have been very much worse. The valley bottoms were free of snow, apart from the overnight sprinkling, and the snow line hovered at 1000'-1500'; but there was a strong biting wind,

especially on the Friday. The worst of the rain was during Thursday night. It was typical front conditions; first the warm one with rain and then the cold bringing infrequent blustery rain or snow showers, but giving clear views if you were out of the cloud. It improved on the Saturday and the Sunday was quite pleasant.

In the traditional manner, most people arrived on the Thursday. The numbers were well over the limit, but as a majority chose to sleep outside in tents or cars rather than tolerate warmer but noisier nights on the *matratzenlager* (my dictionary translated as put down a mattress for the children); there were actually spare beds.

The Friday saw people disappear to wide ranging objectives and pursuits, but many remained in the Etive valley. The bealachs on either side of Buachaille Etive Beag are always inviting, and received a single as well as a circular visit. One party took the path to the westerly col but immediately followed the steepest line of ascent to the start of the ridge which they followed to the last summit before Bidean nam Bian. Another, inappropriate attempt (including yours truly), was made on Bidean from the ridge accessible just south of the forest clothing the slopes above Inbhirfhaolain. Shortage of time and the conditions meant turning back at the summit before the rather large drop leading to the west face of Bidean. There were skiers on Aonach Mor, and climbers on Ben Starav, the Buachaille, the Monros in Glen Coe and those accessible from Victoria Bridge. Everyone reported strong winds that sometimes led to failure to achieve the original objective. An excellent meal was provided by John Lovett even though some participants had to take it in the standing position.

The Saturday was slightly calmer and the horse-shoe of Ben Starav was completed by 4 of the original 8 starting out. Some of those turning back had the legitimate excuse of being cooks for the night. There were attempts in Glen Coe. Another excellent meal provided by Derek Bush.

Sunday saw the departure of many. The author and Arthur Salmon took the walk from Ballachulish to Duror; where Arthur's brother Roy lives, now unfortunately unable to join meets. We noted that a lot of the forest had been felled since we had done some of the route on the Corbetts meet. This route had been followed by Ian Crowther and Chris Hilton during the previous 2 days by staying at a bothy. Mick Boroff and Adrian Dixon also had a good day traversing Ben Lomond from Rowardennan.

Another excellent visit to the Grampian club hut and my apologies for any omissions or inaccuracies.  
FW

#### Attendance

Ken Aldred  
Tim Bateman  
Nick Beale (Guest)  
Mick Borroff  
Derek Bush  
Albert Chapman  
Ian Crowther  
Roger Dix  
Adrian Dixon  
Chris Edmundson (Guest)  
Michael Edmundson  
Iain Gilmour  
Mike Godden  
David Hick  
Chris Hilton (Guest)  
Gordon Humphreys  
Alan Linford  
Harvey Lomas  
John Lovett  
Don Mackay  
Frank Platt  
Roy Pomfret  
Harry Robinson  
Arthur Salmon  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
Tony Smythe  
Frank Wilkinson  
Alan Wood  
Barrie Wood  
Michael Wood



PTARMIGAN RIDGE



DEVIL'S KITCHEN



STOB GHABHAR



LLYN IDWAL



THE GLYDDERS



LLYN IDWAL

## NORTH WALES, GLAN DENA

5-6 March 2005

A distinct dusting of snow on the tops welcomed members to the MAM Club, strategically located in the trees at the East end of Llyn Ogwen, while those arriving after dark noted a promising nip in the air!

Following a pleasant breakfast, Saturday saw parties taking to both sides of the valley with the freezing level starting shortly above the hut.

Mick Borroff, Adrian Bridge together with Josephys, Tim and Richard undertook a high level stravaig (anyone know what the Welsh is for idle wandering?) into a cold head wind from Pen yr Ole Wen, out along the snowy Carneddau to Foel Grach, returning with much involuntary skating on icy patches to Pen yr Helgi Du and the Y Braich ridge.

After the walk, Tim and Adrian also limbered up on the Plas y Brenin climbing wall on the promise of a better forecast for Sunday.



The leat feeding Llyn Cowlyd was traversed to the reservoir by at least two parties (Mike Godden and a second team of Jim Rusher and John Scofield), returning by different routes. Coming back from from Capel Curig,

Mike was fortunate to see a ring ouzel with its distinctive '*shek-shek-shek*' cry. Richard Gowing ascended Y Braich to Pen yr Helgi Du.

Other teams negotiated Tryfan in a distinctly icy wind via the snowy North Ridge (Iain Gilmour, Alan Linford, Richard Dover and Derek Smithson) and by a second route (John Lovett and David Smith).

Alan took George Spenceley over to see co-expedition member, John Jackson, who had recently returned from Darjeeling, ahead of the fiftieth anniversary of the ascent of Kangchenjunga, to be celebrated shortly at the Alpine Club.

A superb dinner was prepared by the Huts Secretary and devoured gratefully by the assembled members, washed down with beer and the usual array of red wines from the New World, Old World and a few more worlds in between, before retiring for the usual varied and vigorous discussions in front of the log fire.

Sunday dawned bright and cold in Snowdonia. Windless blue skies and sunshine soon had parties on the hill enjoying the snow, or off to investigate warming rock.

One team attempted the Glyders via the Devil's Kitchen but the lack of traction control devices caused a retreat at some severe icing below the Devil's Appendix icefall, before retreating to take in Y Garn from Llyn Idwal (Alan Linford, Derek Smithson and Richard Dover).

Armed with crampons, a continuing traverse of the ice-encrusted Glyders, Tryfan and Y Foel Goch was undertaken by Mick Borroff in superb weather, with magnificent views over the Snowdon horseshoe.

Others enjoyed the all too rare combination of sunshine and snow high on the Carneddau via Cwm Lloer and Craig Llugwy (Ian Gilmour) or the

ascent of Y Garn (Richard Josephy and George Spenceley) or took in the outstanding views on a more leisurely circumnavigation of Llyn Ogwen (David Smith) before returning home.

The prospect of sun-warmed rock drew Adrian Bridge and Tim Josephy to Tremadoc, where in the pleasant absence of crowds and in rising

temperatures, four routes were completed in summer-like conditions: Salamander, Holloway, Scratch and Poor Man's Peuterey.

All in all, members enjoyed a fine meet with five star catering, thoroughly deserving the vote of thanks to Richard Josephy. M.B.



ADRIAN, TIM AND RICHARD  
INSPECTING A CORNICE  
NEAR CARNEDD LEWELYN

Attending:

Mick Borroff  
Adrian Bridge  
Richard Dover (PM)  
Iain Gilmour  
Mike Godden  
Richard Gowing  
Richard Josephy  
Tim Josephy  
Alan Linford  
John Lovett  
Jim Rusher  
John Scofield  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
George Spenceley

### LOW HALL GARTH

Maintenance Meet. - 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005.

Thursday saw the early arrival of the Warden, who decided to make a start on the dormitory decorations and eventually did the lot before bed time.

Friday saw six members continue the good start made the previous day, and serious work began on car park improvements. On Saturday, numbers had increased to ten, and by evening the car park improvements and Cottage cleaning and painting had all been done. Inspection of the drying room roof was made and details taken of the requirements for its future repair.

Final touching up was completed on the Sunday.

Appreciation is due to those who gave their time, and also to the Warden for the excellent food and refreshment provided.

Those attending were:-

Iain Gilmour  
Chris Renton  
Mike Godden  
John Lovett  
Rodger Dix  
John Casperson  
Mike Kinder  
Richard Kirby  
Albert Chapman  
Rob Ibberson  
Ian Crowther  
David Handley

FMG.

## GRITSTONE CLUB JOINT MEET THIRLMERE 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> April

This, usually, and deservedly popular meet, was held at the Gritstone's "Smithy" hut close to the A591 at Thirlmere. The weather forecast was not good but despite that Mike Godden and George Spenceley arrived early Friday and had had a wet-footed look at High Rigg and a bit of Helvellyn before meeting prior to some solace in a pub. Some more YRC members arrived for tea and outnumbered the "Grits" for while. There was the usual jockeying for stove hobs to prepare an evening meal and a good deal of jocularly too.

Saturday dawned dull, drizzly and doubtful. Some "Grits" looked at Iron Crag, but decided not and Tim Josephy must also have concluded it was not a scrambling or climbing day. He caught up the rump of the YRC's on the way down the west side of Thirlmere just as they were leaving the road at Armbboth for the westward ascent of High Tove which proved slippery and aptly lived up to two of the above "d" adjectives. Spirits were high though; some traversing ground they'd last trudged up to 40 years earlier.

Sights were lowered a bit for the day, but Tim had other plans and left us as the cairn.

We slowly slithered and slid to Watendlath and there supped a hot drink.

John and Mike then went forward to Borrowdale with plans for busses back to the Smithy. They were more fortunate: so that with a bit of back-tracking they were "motored" home, courtesy of a "Grit" and took an "early bath".

The rest of us regained the crag whence we'd descended and then turned south attempting to follow the path to Blea Tarn; it was rough going but level-ish and a good boot tester. We met another small party by the tarn and had a flash of watery sunlight: but that was very brief.

The descent to Thirlmere was, if anything more difficult than that to Watendlath but all regained the road without too many wet behinds. The level walk back to the Smithy was good for conversations and Tim caught us up again after his brief circuit to include Rosthwaite, Greenup Gill, Gill Edge, Ulscarf and Coldbarrow Fell.

Meanwhile George had attempted Helvellyn (but sensibly in the conditions did not summit) and fell in with a (relatively) young aspiring mountaineer getting some "blind pilotage" in for his Mountain Leadership log.

CROSSING OF  
LONG MOSS  
ON WAY FROM  
WATENDLATH TO  
THIRLMERE



George naturally asked him back for a cup of tea and Ian Willcock finished up as a guest of Y.R.C. for the night.

Some of The "Grits" went cycling; part on snow covered routes on a 44 mile circuit including Whinlatter Pass, Buttermere, Honister Pass, Borrowdale and Threlkeld. President Tim Elliott was obliged to carry his machine the last 4 miles as he'd run out of spare inner tubes.

Peter Haigh walked with the most senior member of the meet, Clifford Duckworth, from Grange to Stonethwaite and back. Meanwhile David P., Richard and Andy went on the Rigg.

Nigel joined for dinner, and the good club atmosphere of Saturday, in preparation for a run on Sunday. Clearly a smart move as Sunday was a good morning, as we wiped off the crow "guano", and after a good breakfast we took our various leaves and ways home.

A good meet and sincere thanks to our Gritstone Club hosts and President Tim Elliott.

Rob Ibberson

Attending:-

Ken Aldred (Pres. Y.R.C.)  
John Anderson  
Nigel Calaghan  
Andy Causer  
Albert Chapman  
Dick Courchee  
Clifford Duckworth  
Richard Edgell  
Tim Elliott (Pres. Gritstone Club)  
Mike Godden  
Peter Haigh  
Rob Ibberson  
Tim Josephy  
John Lovett  
Dave Pettifer  
George Spenceley  
David Smith  
Ian Willcock (Guest of YRC)

## NEWLANDS VALLEY (STAIR HUT)

Apr 29th May 1st

This was the first meet in this area for many years, although I can recollect a meet many years ago based at the Coledale Inn, when it was in the ownership of Tim Josephy's parents.

This part of the Lakes although only a short distance from both Keswick and Borrowdale, remains relatively unchanged and free from the modern crowds of sightseers etc.

The side valley beyond Littleton and Low Snabs Farms is well known to this member, who has hunted in this part of the Lakes with the Blencathra Foxhounds for over 25 years.

The meet was attended by 16 members and the Fylde Mountaineering, Stair Hut has ample accommodation for all those there, although, following a somewhat late arrival back from the Swinside Inn on the Friday one 'quiet and considerate' member slept in the lounge rather than disturb the others.



SKIDDAW WITH STAIR HUT IN COPSE

Saturday morning dawned fine and after a brief breakfast most parties had left before 9.00 a.m., for a round of the surrounding hills. Most seemed to take various routes over Maiden Moor, High Spy and to the col at the top of the valley below Dalehead.



Here, fitter members traversed further west over Dalehead itself, Hindscarf and down by Scope End. At least one other party went anticlockwise over Causey Pike and Robinson and down the adjoining ridge to the valley.



ROBINSON BEHIND HINDSCARTH

Three unfit members (suffering the effects of recent medical attentions) took time off to closely examine the interior and facilities of the Carlisle Mountaineering Club's hut situated some miles along the rough track from Littletown towards the head of the valley. They will hereafter be known as Heart, Balls & Feet\* (H., B., & F.); balls being the unfortunate side effect of a recent double hernia operation and feet referring to those of an ex president.

This hut has a superb location, bringing back memories of the more basic huts of earlier years. The hut warden was a man of Stoke on Trent of all places.

Ian provided a good meal on the Saturday night although his ideas on breakfasts was somewhat lacking for some attending (no bacon or eggs).

Many thanks to whoever for booking and arranging this new venue.

\* H.B.& F, a new sub section of the club for less fit members as opposed to the YRC Exploration Group - I bet we have more potential members.

WDC

p.s. - Those who arrived early on the Friday saw the best weather of the weekend and numerous got in good walks with tremendous views. Saturday was mostly fine if a bit overcast but those hoping for a full day on the Sunday were not so fortunate. Those staying on dressed appropriately to set out in fairly heavy drizzle only to be chased out of the hills mid morning by the most horrendous thunder storm. Soaked to the skin with lightning flashing all around, most made back to the hut to decamp.

Two planning on staying over to the Monday hung out their wets in the hut to dry whilst they took lunch at the Swinside after having largely packed up their gear to call it a day and return home.

However over lunch the skies cleared to give a glorious afternoon so yet another change of plan. With some aches and pains from the previous excursions they went over to Buttermere and did some low level walking before returning to the hut.



CRUMMACK WATER



A RATHER CHOPPY BUTTERMERE

They finally decided on a late evening dash for homes in the deep south rather than unpack gear again.

Commiserations to our member from Rugby, smitten the day before with an ailment making sitting in cars for any length of time (or doing much else) very painful, and who had to cry off.

Another great meet; Ian can normally be relied on to bring home the bacon; he is a member that rarely needs egging on.

RJD



Attending

- Ian Crowther (meet leader)
- Mike Godden
- Ken Aldred
- Richard Kirby
- Roy Denney
- Paul Dover
- John Jenkin
- Alan Clare
- Iain Gilmour
- David Smith
- Derek Clayton
- Derek Smithson
- George Spenceley
- Albert Chapman
- Chris Renton
- Chris Hilton (pm)

## ROBERTSON LAMB HUT

May 24 - 26

I'm beginning to think it always rains in the Lake District, all five meets this year have not just rained but it poured down. This was no exception but it did not deter any of us.

One group of three joined the Cumbria Way a mile down the road following the swollen river to Elterwater before heading up to Howe Banks. It was dampish but at least the rain had stopped. Along Lingmoor Fell we did see interesting mistscapes before negotiating Fat Man's Agony on Side Pike.

Quickly losing height we passed the campsite then rejoined the Cumbria Way back to the hut.

The full meet compliment of seven sat down to a splendid four-course meal masterminded by the President. Has he created a precedent I wonder?

Wednesday the weather was even worse. LHG was the only sensible proposal. The route was via Blea Tarn and Blea Moss in wind and rain. Swollen streams added to the interest. The cottage was inhabited by three of our members and their guest. The return journey took us through Sawrey Woods and back along Great Langdale Beck to Chapel Stile. The beck, now a dramatic river roared towards the lake flooding many fields on its way.

We sat down to another excellent dinner by the President. All had decided to return home on Thursday. The weather turned bright and sunny. Despite the weather it was a very enjoyable meet with discussions on numerous topics.

Well, all did not return home; the President and a Past President made good use of the day. Walking up the track by Stickle Gill at its most spectacular to Stickle Tarn and returning to the valley by Dungeon Gill. They enjoyed the best views of the Lakeland hills this year.

Attendance:

Ken Aldred  
Derek Collins  
Mike Godden  
John Jenkin  
David Smith  
Derek Smithson  
George Spenceley

F D Smith

## MIDWEEK MEETS

For several years there has been a weekday gathering of members at Lowstern driven by that phenomenon of the 1980s and 90s known as 'early retirement', and the seemingly infinitely prolonged active life of members and an excellent club house.

This has always taken place on a Tuesday but for reasons which need not be gone into here, the abridged Three Peaks Walk slipped to Thursday.



LOOKING OVER LITTONDALE  
ON A RECENT TUESDAY

AN ABRIDGED THREE PEAKS WALK  
JUNE 8-9 2005

Members were in the vicinity of Lowstern from fairly early in the day on Wednesday. One member came to collect his boots that he had mislaid and then having found them could not resist going for a longish walk on his own.

It was a lovely sunny June day, the Hut warden could be found carrying on his work bringing the grounds into order by digging drainage channels.

Others were seen planting shrubs and scything nettles. Not what one thinks of as mainstream YRC activities but these were only the preliminaries.

At 7 p.m. eight members sat down to an excellent dinner produced by the President and wine appeared by courtesy of the generosity of two members. The usual sort of confused multi-way conversations took place across and along the table. By 9.30 everyone was in bed ready for the 4.30 a.m. get-up call.

Thursday morning was another real June morning and by 5.30 cars were away taking the walkers to the start at Bradford Pothole Club's Brackenbottom.

A group of three intended to climb Pen-y-ghent and then return to Horton, ascend Ingleborough by Sulber Nick then across to Whernside, so covering all three peaks by a shortened route.

One member wished to test his new high-tech knee by ascending Pen-y-ghent, the President accompanied him.

Our mountain-dwelling ex-President decided that there was no point in him driving to Horton to walk home and then have to recover his car and so

walked from home ascending Whernside first before heading for Pen-y-ghent. This proved to be an inspired arrangement, (see over).

The group, now of four, (one of these was the member who had only come to collect his boots) started walking at 5.50 a.m. and one and a half hours later reached the summit of Pen-y-ghent.

On the way down they saw a man wearing a large straw hat approaching that proved to be Richard Kirby on his way up from Brackenbottom. He joined the group bringing the numbers to five.

At Horton the boot retriever decided that an early morning walk was enough and so at 8.20 the group was back to four for a pleasantly warm sunny walk to Ingleborough.

On the way, near to the top the group met the ex-President and dog heading for Pen-y-ghent. After a chat and food it was arranged that the ex-President should have Richard's car keys then he could drive back home to Scar Top and the rest of us would finish there and collect the car. As I wrote above, an inspired arrangement.

Views from the summit shelter, reached at 10.15 were extensive, it could not have been a better day.



On the descent the change under foot was remarked upon, stone flags and steps replacing the broken ground by the derelict wire fence of thirty years ago, and wooden causeways over the swampy areas.

Just before noon, approaching the Hill Inn, now called the Old Hill Inn (where is the new one?), the wonders of technology caught up with the group in the form of a mobile phone call asking where we were and informing us that the ex-President had just started his ascent of Pen-y-ghent.

The climb up Whernside was uneventful except for confirming that things were not as they used to be in the climbing ability department; for some, descending reinforced this perception.

By now the day was becoming hazy and mist could be seen in the direction of Bowland. On the summit of Whernside our position was relayed to the supporters by wireless telephony (mobile phone).

A group of twelve year olds, fourteen in all were enjoying themselves on the summit in the care of two teachers. They were staying in the area and doing one peak a day. I envied their energy, flexibility and agility as I stumbled my way down to the finish at Scar Top. I was the last to arrive, already, the others were sitting in the sunshine in Albert's garden eating chocolate cake and drinking large mugs of tea or coffee.

Yes, definitely an inspired arrangement. It is good to report that the high-tech knee worked satisfactorily as did its owner after his enforced lay-off.

JHH

The President, Ken Aldred  
Alan Brown  
Albert Chapman  
Mike Godden  
David Handley  
Jeff Hooper,  
John Jenkin  
Richard Kirby  
John Lovett  
David Smith  
Bill Todd  
Alister Renton (visitor)



# CHIPPINGS

## SELECTIVE CONSCIENCE



The article on energy and wind turbines in the last journal has triggered several comments from members. Ian Crowther makes the very valid addition to the debate that whilst we appear to be against nuclear energy as a nation and intend winding down our supply from this source we are increasingly importing electricity from France via an under Channel cable. Guess how they produce a great proportion (80%) of their electricity. Right in one; nuclear power stations. They are even to attempt a Fusion plant with international co-operation

Ian thinks that the road down which power generation must eventually go is the nuclear one, irrespective of its current unpopularity in the UK and a steadily increasing number of people are coming to this view. He points out that in the meantime, France has been leaping ahead in the nuclear stakes. In a field in which we were once leaders we are now being left far behind whilst continuing to buy French nuclear power anyway!

Clearly, he agrees a nuclear industry must be closely controlled and be super-safe in every respect but is convinced that things like wind turbines are never going to produce more than a fraction of our power needs, whilst despoiling the countryside, coasts and surrounding seas. He feels we should bite the bullet and re-invigorate our nuclear power industry, with care and appropriate safeguards.

Also further to the debate on turbines, I have just spent a pleasant few weeks touring Scotland with Australian in-laws and learn that the issue has become a major concern down under where there are proposals to construct turbines on numerous coastal beauty spots.

Closer to home a row is now breaking out about plans to cover the skyline above Shap with these monstrosities.

It is a proposed to build a wind farm of 27 turbines each 400ft high. Can no one see the inanity of the aim to get 20% of our power from renewables? Does anyone really think we can find homes for 20,000 of them without near civil war between town and country?

Wind power is hopelessly unreliable and cannot compete without massive subsidy and without more nuclear stations an energy crisis seems inevitable.

On one hand I find it hard to understand why the government is so determined to pursue this cause but on the other (and wearing my cynic's hat) I understand that the owner of one of the biggest manufacturers of turbine blinds was at a dinner for supporters of the Labour Party recently and just before the election donated a quarter of a million pounds to their war chest.

There is one encouraging new idea in the field however. Feasibility studies are being carried out looking into the possibility of pumping millions of tons of CO2 under the north sea by reversing the pumping process when supplies of oil are extinguished from wells under the sea. However the industry doubts the feasibility at an economic cost and the legality under international law seems dubious.

## IN THE NAME OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Still with the subject of energy it seems nothing can stand in the way of the environment lobby and their plans to bring us environmentally friendly renewable green energy.

No sooner does Scotland have its first National Parks but there are proposals to despoil them with enormous pylons twice the size of present ones. These giants of about 164 feet high are to stride

across the Central Highlands from Denny to Beaufort.

The energy company says it needs this upgrade to handle the power from the dozens of wind farms springing up everywhere.

Some new areas of wilderness will be affected apart from the increased obtrusion where old pylons are being upgraded. Pylons will run through parts of the Cairngorms and it is not only the visual intrusion we have to face. It is a requirement that broad rides are created beneath such power lines for safety and servicing so great swathes of ancient woodland will be cleared.

A representative of the Woodland Trust Scotland states that 48 such woods will have eighty to one hundred metre wide tracts cleared where wood has stood for centuries. These are important sites for species of birds, insects, flowers and trees and are home to 263 threatened species. Permission has not yet been granted and we can only hope that common sense will prevail as otherwise there will be even fewer places in Britain where you can see vistas without any intrusion by man made edifices.

### SCOTTISH ACCESS

Still on the subject of Scotland, a new web site has been created which members may find of assistance. It provides contact details and information on the new rights of access in Scotland.

There is now new legislation giving a statutory right of responsible access and the web site is where you can find out about these rights. [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

### LOGIC OR LUNACY

Along with other agencies the National Parks have been instructed to increase the numbers of ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged people

they serve. They have targets for these groups and failing to meet them will deprive them of funding streams.

I have had numerous dealings with the people involved in such agencies and QUANGOs and whilst some are undoubtedly dedicated and effective the terms 'bureaucratic' 'time server' 'career committee man' 'politically correct' and 'never done a real days work in his life' are the first that jump to mind. I suppose to be politically correct myself, I should have said person not man.

All my worst imaginings have now been confirmed by one of the crassest examples of the logic of the lunatic asylum which has come to light. Unless there is a last minute change of heart because of the increasing condemnation and ridicule, the Lake District National Park is going to correct the imbalance at a stroke by stopping guided walks etc. being provided to white, middle class, middle aged people.

They are considering significantly reducing the services provided at their ten information centres, axing 900 events organised by their rangers and cancelling the guided walks provided to nearly 5000 people each year. Also to probably go are their magazine, slide shows, talks and children's farm visits.

We all know that thousands of people go walking in the Lakes with very limited awareness and the guided walks are a great way of introducing people to the proper and safe enjoyment of the area.

Whilst funding is obviously a part of this equation it is not the main basis for the decision as much of the activity organised by volunteers. I have seen figures quoted that the cost (in expenses) of these volunteers was only just over £38,000 a year and more than 30,000 people took advantage of the services last year.

It seems a strange way to attract more tourists from any group to dramatically curtail your services to tourism and scrap free guided walks.

If he or she who is responsible for decision has any sense he or she will not air his or her views in any hostelry in the Lakes where I or persons of my persuasion are present as their politically correct ears may well get a considerable bashing. I might well be tempted to give this person a 'black' eye but that is probably a racist comment.

At the last quarterly meeting of the Authority they put the decision on hold awaiting more information about a possible sponsor for these walks but unless that is to be regular support it is probably only deferring the problem as they see it. We can only hope that sanity will eventually prevail.

## WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH

One of the more encouraging environmentally helpful suggestions in recent years was one coming from Scottish Power. They spent £65,000,000 building a plant to convert half of Scotland's sewage into dried pellets which could then be used as fuel in power plants in place of coal.

Unfortunately our waste disposal policy is a mess due to EU waste rules including that we must replace most of our landfill sites with giant incinerators. Thanks to the EU's bizarre definitions of waste these are prohibiting all sorts of imaginative recycling systems, such as this use of sewage pellets to fuel power stations.

EU legislation on how waste can be disposed of means that it cannot be used as fuel but has to be treated as waste.

It used to be fed to fish or used as fertiliser but neither of these practices is permitted any more.

Courts have now thrown out the appeal by Scottish Power and the plant will have to close down and Scotland now has to find a way of getting rid of all this sewage which it is also now banned from using as landfill.

All is not lost however as under EU rules there is one way they can get rid of it. You've guessed it: They can incinerate it.

If I have understood the ruling it is all right to burn it so long as the process produces nothing useful.

Similar rules are responsible for the current nationwide wave of fly-tipping, and the fiasco of the EU's ban on burying "animal by-products", from fallen farm stock to old supermarket produce.

Now we have a ruling that horse manure has to be licensed by the government under waste management legislation. It will cost £500 for a license to compost it for fertiliser unless it is just from your own horse.

Why do the words government and manure seem to go together so well?

C. M. (Mike) DIXON.

An appreciation by Bill Todd.

I first met Mike when, as a newcomer to Yorkshire, I stayed at his mother's guest house at Horsforth. On our first Sunday he perched himself on the pillion of my motor bike and off we went to Ilkley Quarry where he led me up Josephine and probably Fairy Steps as well. Then a few more of the climbing lads appeared including Neville Drasdo, John Ramsden, and a character whose name I never learned who rode a BSA Golden Flash, a 650cc twin cylinder machine. Then we all roared over to Almscliffe but I cannot remember what we did.



A visit to Almscliffe that I can remember saw Mike bringing a set of novices up Parsons Chimney singing out "next for shaving" as each one reached the top. The novices, including me, were members of the evening class Mike ran at West Park School in Leeds.

We were taught the theory of climbing in the classroom illustrated by Mike's own photographs; using his own rope and the rafters in the classroom ceiling he demonstrated the technique of prusiking.

As far as I know Mike was never a member of a Yorkshire club, he probably thought Climbers Club and J.M.C.S. were enough.

Given the number of routes he made in Scotland he would have found it hard to keep out of the J.M.C.S.

Between 1950 and 1954 he led five new routes of high standard on Bealach Buttress on Sgur Mhic Coinnich and on the Coireachan Rhuada face he partnered Bill Brooker on an impressive clutch of lines during 1950 and 1951.

While obviously keen on Skye he did not neglect the mainland, with Neville Drasdo he climbed the Fiddler Nose Direct in Coigach and took part in the first ascent of Parallel Gully B on Lochnagar.

Mike was also a first class photographer, I remember seeing his slides of Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis in winter conditions which he did with YMC members Ashley and Audrey Petts and Brian Evans. Alpine ascents he photographed included the Aiguille de Geant.

Mike was a teacher by profession, taking a class of under achievers when I knew him. After getting his A.R.P.S. he secured a post as a lecturer at Dagenham so we all saw a lot less of him.

He did a slide show at Glossop about 1968 and that was the last I saw of him until the YMC

reunion meet in 2002. By this time he was running his own photographic agency very successfully.

Everybody who knew Mike was saddened by his death on the 10th of November and send utmost sympathy to his widow, Mary.

## LIVE HIGH, LIVE LONG?

In an article .....

"Residence in mountainous compared with lowland areas in relation to total and coronary mortality. A study in rural Greece"

(by Nikos Baibas, Antonia Trichopoulou, Eftihios Voridis and Dimitrios Trichopoulos 2005, Volume 59 pages 274-278 in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health)

..... is a suggestion that physical activity around 950m might be better at staving off heart attacks and increasing longevity than staying at a lower level.

"We investigated the association of residence in mountainous or lowland areas, with mortality among rural Greek men and women. The important finding of this study is that residents of the mountainous village as compared with residents of the lowland villages had lower mortality. The contrast was more evident among men than among women."

So get out on those Munros or whatever.

In all honesty it should be pointed out that these were residents in the villages and so the advantage may not be conferred on mere visitors.

An odd finding was that educated women fare worse than uneducated ones and educated males.

Michael Smith

## MISSING LINK

Good news for those of us who like following the long distance footpaths.

The South West Coast Path National Trail has just been improved dramatically.

I have walked considerable lengths of the south coast part over recent years but one problem was just south of Dartmouth where the path vanished and you had to go inland by country lanes.

After a quarter of a century of negotiations the path has now been opened up along the coast from Slapton Sands to Combe Point taking in Blackpool Sands and several attractive coves and gives superb views from the cliff tops looking out over Start Bay.

Let's hope the process speeds up now that we have new powers under the CROW Act.

## HEALTH WARNING?

Never mind sex and bad language: T.V. should carry an on-screen warning whenever the weather forecast is on. The forecast itself can be a major health hazard.

If you live in the flatlands of the south the local stations are little use to you if travelling north, or into Wales in search of hill walking or similar sports and national weather forecasts barely touch on such matters being of little relevance in London.

During this spring there were several weekends when there was the hint that there was a chance of wintry conditions in the Highlands when in reality there was a real chance in all higher areas and some north country lowland areas.

In mid April snow nearly closed some cross Pennine roads and dustings were seen in lower areas of

Cumbria and on modest hills in Derbyshire and further north.

Someone should point out to the Meteorological Office that a lot of people live north of Oxford in a land where there is no need to 'beware daemons and dragons'.

## MOUNTAIN HERITAGE TRUST

I attended a recent meeting of the Mountain Heritage Trust, representing the Club. It was very interesting and a wide ranging forum for discussion.

The MHT was formed in 2000 in response to an appeal from a BMC member to establish a body which would ensure the long term preservation of Britain's mountain heritage.

Mountaineering in the UK has a long and distinguished history but all too often valuable resources are tucked away in attics across the country with their condition deteriorating. Kit, archives, photos, paintings; even old film footage can simply be lost when their value isn't recognised.

The creation of the National Mountaineering Exhibition at Rheged went some way to providing a home for the more famous items. But whilst the Mountain Heritage Trust was sourcing items for the exhibition it came to light that many individuals and organisations are also looking after some pretty exciting material in a wide variety of formats.

The only problem was how to keep track of it all.

In response to this unexpected discovery, the Trust has taken on a Project Officer for 12 months through funding secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This archivist is making good progress but MHT are looking for grant funding to extend this for a considerable number of years.

This project has three main aims;

- to catalogue the artifacts and archive materials actually held by the Trust;
- to build up a database of all mountain heritage resources held in public or private collections;
- and to prepare a conservation strategy for any urgent rescue work that needs undertaking.

The Trust itself has a growing collection, and drawing up a full catalogue will enable potential researchers and other interested parties to identify what's actually held by the Trust, something that has been difficult until now.

The Trust is also working on improving the environmental conditions for their collection and has recently moved into new premises at Penrith station.

They cannot however hope to either home all such material or indeed to expect clubs and individuals to give their collections to them.

With this in mind they wish to build up a record of where other items are.

The meeting strongly agreed that they should work to achieving a comprehensive archive and data base on mountaineering and other matters relating to mountains.

The crux of the meeting was on the way ahead for the Trust and after extensive debate there was a broad consensus amongst the members and representatives there.

The Trust had expended a lot of volunteer time getting the Rheged Centre up and running and everyone was very pleased with the outcome, giving the sport a shop window as it does.

It was suggested however that as the venture had been sold on to a commercial undertaking this role should be reduced to perhaps something akin to

just being part of a broader advisory group ' Friends of the Rheged'? and that their efforts should now be directed more towards their core aims.

They will archive artifacts and valuable historic documents to save them for posterity but we all thought that a larger part of their role should be to locate and identify private and club archives and create a comprehensive data base of what is available and where it is.

To this end they should work more closely with Club librarians and archivists both to identify what is out there and to offer proper advice on how to store and preserve old material.

They are interested in everything from the odd ice axe hanging in a club hut to whole libraries.

Taking a lead from them we as a club should perhaps have some sort of list of what private collections are amongst our membership and seek to publicise the fact that we would happily take them over when a member passes on as there have been tragic incidences of widows binning irreplaceable items when they have been glad to get the space back.

Roy J Denney

## FIRST TIME UNDERGROUND

Well, not exactly: I have been down coal mines and visited limestone caves in Derbyshire as a boy and more recently Stump Cross Cavern in Yorkshire. But if one is a member of Y.R.C., I said to myself "must try potholing, if only to check my preconceived ideas"

The ideas stem from potholers' stories of cold wet streams across which one wades up to one's neck; of "interesting" descents on ladders or ropes to strange Stygian surprises; mud up to the eyes and exhaling hard to squeeze through tight places. None of these filled me with enthusiasm. But was I just scared? I had to find out.

So when the opportunity came with the LWS January meet I was one of the first to e-mail Arthur my intention to try it. He must have noticed my apprehension as I had no idea what to wear and kept up a long interrogation of him. I had plenty of good advice and in the end could have managed with less clothing. Also I almost had to cry off (genuinely, due to a family difficulty) but made it for breakfast on the Saturday.

The approach by car to the pothole was easy enough: I'd expected a long walk in but our YRC guides were kind. The entry was, it seemed impossibly tight but larger men than I went in first. Being more-or-less pushed from above into a hole the bottom of which I was not tall enough to feel with my toes, was the first snag, but soon we were all inside. I was one of three "first timers". We continued to follow our very experienced and confidence building member colleagues into situations I would never have normally chosen to expose myself.

As an ex-submariner, I am not easily scared of the dark or "places not easy to get out of" - but this was different. The nearest in my own experience was being in a small escape chamber, just big enough for one large man, being "flooded up" by slowly cracking a water inlet valve to equalise the pressure of 33 metres head of water so that one could open the hatch and "swim" to the surface.

I did that more than once, so why did this seem so much more nerve-wracking? Perhaps it was the quite extensive and Service-like "dry runs" and training on what to expect and do if things went wrong. Not that I was for a second doubting any of our potholers' competence: far from it, they seemed to delight in showing us "wet-bobs" the ropes and ladders.

I descended the first rope ladder as I'd been taught. But was politely put right at the bottom, before climbing back - and all for sound practical reasons.

Coming out of the pot took longer than going in it seemed, yet that may have been an illusion. The last bit - getting out of an "interference fit" (engineering term for a very tight fit, just possible to knock it together or apart) with ones hands restricted and feet with nothing on which to step was probably the most difficult. But I was blinking in the weak winter light by then and a strong arm just attached itself to the scruff of my clothing and that was it!

Would I repeat it? Well, nothing is exactly the same but I would not say "No" to another trip underground, especially if the scenery were a little more spectacular: and provided the care and camaraderie of YRC cavers were in such bountiful supply. We have some of the world's finest in our membership and it was a real pleasure to share just a tiny bit of their unbounded enthusiasm and skill.

Rob Ibberson

## THE NOT SO FROZEN SOUTH

Scientists have found further dramatic signs of the ice sheets thinning in Antarctica.

A report in April's Science magazine states that University College London and the British Antarctic Survey have discovered that the Pine Island glacier has lost 32 cubic kilometres of ice over a 5,000 square-kilometre area since 1992. Pine Island glacier is itself up to 2500 metres thick sitting on bedrock over 1500 metres below sea level. The thinning has caused the glacier to retreat by over 5 kilometres inland.

As this is the largest glacier in the western Antarctic it confirms fears that the west Antarctic ice sheet is ominously unstable, threatening a dramatic rise in sea level.

Antarctica contains about 84% of all of the world's glacial ice and if it all melted it would cause a global sea level rise of about 240 feet. Such a

rise would flood virtually all the world's coastal areas and drown many islands.

The scientists said the discovery supported the argument that comparatively small changes at the edge of the continent, probably due to the effects of global warming, could be transmitted swiftly inland, leading to a faster rise in the sea level.

## MORE MUSINGS AND MEMORIES

The first time climbing rock with a rope was inspirational even though it was a local outcrop only about thirty feet high. Next day I ordered a hemp rope. More recently I gave away my ropes, climbing gear, ski, etc. All full of memories.

Sleeping alone in the caverns in the slate quarry near Rosthwaite. Wearing all my clothes, a thin sleeping bag and an oilskin coat with the woolly balaclava tickling my nostrils. I had met a man in the pub and climbed Grey Knotts Face with him the next day and found this classic rock climb which I repeated many times after that.

Walking in a snow storm. From Little Langdale to S E Gully on Great End but defeated by little avalanches of powder snow which blinded and suffocated. Cliff Fielding and I joined the spectators, ex-presidents Jack Hilton and Stanley Marsden for the walk back. We still ended up in Borrowdale and had to get the bus round. Dinner at the hut had not been delayed.

Snow and ice climbing in fine weather seems to create memorable occasions. First in Great Gully on Great End where we cut hand and foot holds with long axes with straight picks. Much later, the magnificent conditions when we stayed at Sheneval for about five days and climbed the gullies on the east of Beinn Dearg Mor. Imagine a top pitch of near vertical crystalline snow, an almost horizontal ice axe belay and reliable footholds.

I was perched in a recess near the bottom and watched Michael Smith lead the remainder.

Some mountain tops can be memorable. Arriving on the top of Buachaille Etive Mor in moonlight on a February night, so clear we felt we should be able to touch the moon. Duncan Mackay persuaded me half way up the North Climb that it would be a moonlit night. We met two people on the top who directed us to the gully down to Lagangarbh.

However the top of Hvannadalshnükur in Iceland was magical with a sort of blue light which did little to limit the visibility. Twelve hours up scree, snow and glacier to be on top at nine in the evening.

It was unreal and unforgettable.

There was no obvious discussion this year on the location and condition of snow and ice climbing at either the Glen Etive meet or the one in Wales. Is it just that I am no longer privy to such discussions or are we, a walking club, missing so much.

Derek Smithson

## IT'S SNOW JOKE

Since my article in the last bulletin about the changing weather a report from the Countryside Council for Wales has shown that snow levels on Snowdon have dropped by a third over the last decade and that the snow line has moved up from 1700 feet to 2,500.

True winter climbing conditions now only occur for a few weeks of the year and on these trends Snowdon would lose its snow cap before 2020.

We had considerable falls of snow this year but this is apparently to become increasingly unusual.

## 'GREAT' DINNERS OF OLD

YRC dinners of old seem to have been great affairs in more senses than one judging by these comments provided by Steve Craven. No doubt a great time was had by all but also some great names were present and great appetites were required.

"Some time during 1972 the late Fred Singleton Booth very kindly gave me his collection of YRC dinner menus which he had inherited from his father, Thomas Singleton Booth. The Club dinners before the Kaiser's War were clearly intended for the trenchermen, with up to nine courses.

The menus for 1912 and 1913 have been signed by those present, whose names are here listed for the historical record. The Journals of the Fell and Rock Club listed all those present at their contemporaneous dinners, and recorded the speeches verbatim.

The Editor of the YRC Journal was less historically minded; or perhaps he had no sober member who was proficient at shorthand.

### The 1912 Dinner.

This dinner was held on 16 November 1912 in Leeds at the Hotel Metropole, conveniently situated in Wellington Street opposite the Great Northern Railway station. Of the 80 members and guests reported to be present, 69 signed the menu.

The menu was not for the faint hearted;

### Menu.

Hors d'oeuvres, Varies.

\*

Consomme Princesse.

Creme de Celeri.

\*

Turbot, Sauce Riche.

\*

Selle de Pre-sale.  
Jambon d'York, Sauce Madere  
Epinards.

\*

Dindonneau Roti.  
Salade a la Francaise.

\*

Pouding a l'Abriocot.  
Coupe St. Jacques.  
Petits Fours.

\*

Soufflee au Fromage.

\*

Desert et Cafe.

(\* = YRC member at the time)

The President (Walter Parsons) \* Lewis Moore \*  
(Sir) W. Edward Davidson (President Alpine Club)  
George Yeld (Editor: Alpine Journal)  
Reginald (John) Farrer \* John Jeremy Brigg \*  
Philip S. Minor (Rucksack Club) Claude R. Barton \*  
William Anderton Brigg \* P.M. Campbell,  
Dr. Charles Alexander Hill \* Alexander Campbell\*  
George Arthur Potter-Kirby \* James Falshaw  
Watson \* George Theodore Lowe \* W. Horace  
Albrecht \* James Henry Buckley \* Thomas Gray \*  
Thomas Singleton Booth \* Lawrence A. Lowe \*  
Frank Constantine\* Archibald Alexander Hall \*  
H.H. Bellhouse \* John Arthur Green \* Jno. Petty,  
Graham Watson, Walter R. Wilkin \* J.J. Robinson,  
Joseph Thomas Spratt, Arthur William Sykes \*  
Frank D. Kinnaird \* Frank Horsell \* H. Stancliff,  
J.M. Jeffreys \* Frederick Hartley Smallpage,  
Robert Kidson Swales, W.P. Wrepton, Harold  
Brodrick \* Arthur E. Horn \* E.S. Mallinson,  
Walter H.Greenwood \* William Villiers Brown \*  
J.C. Walker \* H. Meredith Lane, Frank Payne \*  
Prof. M.E. Sadler (Vice-Chancellor, Leeds  
University) William Cecil Slingsby \* H.E.J. Dalton\*  
Kenneth R. Swan (Ski Club of Great Britain)  
John Cecil Atkinson \* (?) Williamson,  
C.C. Marshall\* Stephen J. Gordon, ? Fletcher,  
H. Lawrence Slingsby, Erik T.W. Addyman \*  
Frank Hawksworth Barstow \* Herman Evans,  
Arthur Charlesworth \* Matthew Botterill \*  
Frank Helliwell Chappell \* Henry Williamson \*

Lionel Sheard Chappell \* Percy Robinson \*  
 S.S. Chappell \* Walter Clarkson\*  
 Frederick Leach\* Ernest Edward Roberts\*  
 Raymond Bicknell,

John Arthur Green \* Frank Constantine \*  
 Arthur William Sykes \* Frank G. Fedden  
 (Ski Club of Great Britain)  
 Charles Ralph Borlase Wingfield \* Thomas Gray \*  
 F. Townshend Wilson (Fell & Rock Climbing Club)  
 W.P. Wrepton, C.A. Town, Claude Roulton Barran \*  
 George Theodore Lowe \* William Arthur Wright \*  
 William Anderton Brigg \* Matthew Botterill \*  
 Erik T.W. Addyman \* Frank Hawksworth Barstow\*  
 D. Lewis Cairns (?) Claude Ernest Benson \*

### The 1913 Dinner.

The 21st. anniversary dinner was held on 15 November 1913, again at the Hotel Metropole. Eighty five members and guests were present, of which 70 signed the menu. This dinner was planned with military precision. Proceedings commenced at 1845 hours with 65 minutes allowed for the consumption of eight courses and coffee. Immediately thereafter followed the loyal toast, ten speeches, nine songs and a recitation. Finally came the national anthem at 22.47 hours. I doubt if the Master of Ceremonies kept to the published timetable.

The verbatim speeches mentioned can be found in the Fell & Rock Journals of 1913 and 1914 pages 95-104 and 81-83 respectively and the dinners were reported in our journals of the appropriate years.

### The President (Walter Parsons)\*

Godfrey A. Solly  
 (President: Scottish Mountaineering Club)  
 George Seatree (President: Wayfarers' Club)  
 Alfred Barran \* John Cecil Atkinson \*  
 George Yeld (Editor: Alpine Journal) R. Milnes,  
 Lewis Moore \* F. Noble Waite, Alexander Rule \*  
 Dr. Charles Alexander Hill\* Jno. Petty,  
 George Arthur Potter-Kirby \* W.E. Palmer \*  
 A. Herbert Sanders, J.W. Potter-Kirby,  
 M.B. Riall, William Villiers Brown \* H.E.J. Dalton \*  
 Walter Clarkson \* Arthur Charlesworth \*  
 F.S. Jackson, Edward Andrews \* G.L. Watson,  
 Thomas Singleton Booth \* Frederick Leach \*  
 James Henry Buckley \* W. Horace Albrecht \*  
 Cuthbert Hastings \* Guy Louis Hudson \*  
 James Falshaw Watson \* A. Malcolm Ross,  
 C.C. Marshall \* William Billing Odgers  
 Frank Constantine \* Norman Kendall Jones \*  
 Leonard Moore \* Thomas P. Holgate,  
 R.F. Watson, E.S. Mallinson, Walter R. Wilkin \*  
 Frank Horsell \* Ernest Edward Roberts \*  
 P.M. Campbell, John Geoffrey Stobart\*  
 Lionel Sheard Chappell\* Wilfred Ernest Waud \*  
 Walter H. Greenwood \* Alexander Campbell \*

### Menu

Hors d'oeuvres, Varies.  
 \*  
 Petite Marmite.  
 Queue de Boeuf.  
 \*  
 Sole a la Normande.  
 \*  
 Cotelette de Mouton a la Metropole.  
 \*  
 Jambon d'York aux Ramblers.  
 \*  
 Faisan Roti.  
 Salade a la Francaise.  
 \*  
 Pouding Cerisier.  
 \*  
 Poires a la Melba.  
 \*  
 Dessert.  
 \*  
 Cafe

In preparation for Skye at the end of the month a gang of hopefuls set off from Pen y Pass just after 6am, in rain and low cloud, with the weather forecaster's prediction of good weather by noon buoying us up.

We met a single chap on top of Crib y Ddysgl wearing an army camouflage style gas cape that was blowing up around his neck, then nobody till we descended to Nant Peris.

The crawl up Elidir Fawr took two hours and we continued in cloud until just after Gylder Fach, when it opened completely to give grand views of Tryfan and the Cameddau.

Tim had set not only water at Glan Dena, but also bananas and flapjacks, on which we feasted by the road side in warm sunshine.

The last stretch across the Carneddau took six hours, ending on the final top at last light. We'd had lovely views across the Menai Straights in the evening light.

As we descended to the cars it got quite dark and it was a bit of a struggle through the deep tufty grass down to the reservoir. As always that final rack seemed endless. Car to car was 16hrs 40mins.

I felt OK next day, but my feet were rather shiny!

Tim Josephy, Nick Welch, Neil Grant and Adrian Bridge completed the walk, Andy Wells, Aaron Oakes and Tony Howley retired at various stages.

Adrian Bridge. May 2005

Britain's first official long distance footpath was 40 years old in April and walkers were out in strength to celebrate it.

It has been almost too successful for its own good and many parts have had to be diverted to avoid over erosion. We are all too well aware of the unfortunate paved areas and those supported by palings. Add the bits of steel sheeting, old carpet and polystyrene used in other bits and it is a long way from the original concept of "just a line on a map".

It is now estimated that about 150,000 walkers use at least part of the route every year and that approaching 4000 people complete the full walk each year.

The walk was first suggested by Tom Stephenson in an article in the Daily Herald in 1935 to be Britain's equivalent of the Appalachian Trail.

The concept was agreed as part of the 1949 National Parks Act but it took another 16 years to get all the permissions in place.

## TIMES UP FOR YEW

High Yewdale Farm in Coniston is to be broken up in October when the present tenant retires. This 17<sup>th</sup> century traditional farmhouse was given to the National Trust by Beatrice Potter with his father as sitting tenant. The bequest was made as the best way she knew to preserve this superb traditional hill farm which to this day still maintains a highly commended flock of locally bred Herdwicks which are shepherded by man and dog exactly as they were in her time. The land is to be split up between four neighbouring farms but the upper reaches are likely to revert to scrub and rough moorland.



## NATIONAL PARK EXTENSIONS

The Countryside Agency announced in May that it hoped to extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. Under the proposed boundary changes, the Lake District park would extend eastwards to the M6, and the Yorkshire Dales park would begin on the other side of the motorway.

The agency is to begin identifying new boundaries for the parks including much land recommended for inclusion in 1947 when the parks were being created but which was left out for administrative convenience.

The new areas should include Borrowdale, Birkbeck Fells, Whinash, Whinfell, an area near Brigsteer and the River Kent. Also to be included are likely to be Orten, Barbon, Middleton and Leck fells, Cold Cotes, the northern Howgills, part of the Lune Valley and Mallerstang.

Also, in March this year, we saw the formal creation of our latest national park. The New Forest is the first national park in the south east of England. The public enquiry into the proposed South Downs national park has not yet reported

## WANDERINGS IN SCOTLAND

Bill Todd. 29 May 2005.

All the following grew out of an unsuccessful attempt on Cobbler at Easter last year in the company of S.M.C. member Bryan Fleming. We resolved to have another go this year, so having committed ourselves to a journey to Scotland we wondered what else to do.

Neither of us had been to Mull, and I had heard it was very good so Juliet and I booked a week at the Tobermory Hotel followed by a week at the Oak Tree Inn at Balmaha where we had stayed last year.

We were exceptionally lucky with the weather except as told below, but we mustn't grumble.

Our first excursion was on 10 May when we went to Iona; this was great, we walked up to the North beach where we lunched in the sun and then walked up the highest hill on the island, called Dun, height something over 100 metres. The next day was a driving day to Lochaline, Strontian and Ardtoe all in brilliant sunshine and something of a sentimental journey for me as I had been there last in 1963 with Joan, my first wife.

I had been thinking of trying to grab another Munro, Ben More, but the distance to drive the single track road made it difficult to get walking before about 1100, not really early enough for slowcoaches. But we thought we might bag one of Ben More's flankers, Beinn Fhada.

The guide book was quite explicit, follow the south bank of the Scarisdale River till it comes out of a gorge then fork right and ascend the mountain. We drove round, found a beck coming out of a gorge, parked the car and, for good measure, scrambled up the gorge a few yards till stopped by a waterfall.

Turning back to the hill we found it quite steep up the heather at first but it eased off a bit and we stopped for morning coffee about 1200. A line of broken crag came into view, there seemed to be a feasible way up a gully on the left hand end. It turned out rather unpleasant, all grass, mud, and insecure looking blocks. Halfway up it I thought it would be a good idea to come back down but Juliet volunteered to lead. I wasn't keen but at least I thought I could try to catch her if she came off. In the event, of course, she got up in perfect confidence using the handholds provided by nature, mostly heather. I followed in quaking fear and we emerged on another steep slope with yet another belt of crag at the top.

This time we went to the left again but instead of trying the crag, which might have been good fun with a rope and gear, we found a scrambling route

where the scree slope on the north east face abutted against the cliff. Hereabouts the principal summit came into view so we made the best of our way to the near summit and found two cairns and a lovely little lochan.

After lunch, a late one at 1400, and photographs, I strolled over to the south west to admire Ben More and to my horror, instead of a clear view of Ben More there was another great hill in between us. This was of course Beinn Fhada; I had led us up completely the wrong mountain, Beinn a Ghraig.

After making my confession to Juliet I made amends by finding a much less dangerous way down than the one we had come up. And the sun shone all day.

The next day we went to Staffa and walked to the summit of the island but not into the cave, the next day was a rest day for me though Juliet walked to Aros Park.

The land lord of our hotel, Ian, had had the good fortune to have lived near my old home town, so when he recommended a walk and lent us a book with a description in, I knew we would enjoy it. And so we did in spite of a few drizzly intervals.

The route entailed driving to Dervaig then walking north, by a standing stone then across salt marshes to a ruined village. The stone was the only one left standing of a small circle which was protected by a wire fence, crossable by a stile. Unfortunately the upright of the stile did not go as high as they do in Yorkshire and when Juliet grabbed for it, it wasn't there so she hit the ground rather quickly. I was relieved to find that no permanent damage had been done.

Recommendation from one who knows "If you get a climbing mate who is liable to fall get one that falls in safe places"

We had to cross an awkward dyke to get to the shore and the ruined crofting village which told a

sad story. After lunch in better surroundings we continued along the coast to where there was a fossil tree. It was not strictly speaking a fossil as the original tree had been buried in lava and then rotted away leaving a tube. Subsequent volcanic action had filled the tube with lava which solidified leaving the outline tree we can see today.

A bit of scrambling took us over to the first headland which had rough fortifications of Iron Age date. The true Quinish Point was the next headland which formed the apex of the walk. The return was through fields and forestry to the village which I was most relieved to reach.

The next day we crossed to the mainland and went round Inverary Prison Museum on the way to our next base.

Our first few days at Balmaha were gentle walks round culture and tourist attractions in mixed weather. I telephoned Bryan early in the week and he said he was available Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday for our attempt on Cobbler and Friday was the best weather forecast. So of course we fixed on Friday the 20 May for the attempt.

In spite of early rain we rendezvoused as arranged and set off through the woods at the head of Loch Long. The weather was supposed to get better in the afternoon.

There was in fact a ray or two of sun about as we had coffee so we stuck to it and made the Narnain Boulders for lunch.

Onward then down to the Allt a Bhalachain and up the other side, where the path vanished in a welter of bog, just as it had last year.

The rain was worse and the wind was blowing and we couldn't see the way up so, like last year, when at least it had been dry, we decided to retreat.

But, as the British Commander said as he sailed away from Dunkirk "We'll be back"

Bryan has promised to reconnoitre the route this summer and identify it with pink paint at close and regular intervals.

The rest of the holiday could have been anticlimactic but in fact the next two days were very enjoyable, The Saturday was brilliant and we went to see Dumbarton Castle and the Rennie Mackintosh House at Helensburgh.

On our last day, the 22 May we walked over Balmaha's local hill, Conic, c1200' following the West Highland Way as far as Burn of Mar. We came back the same way enjoying splendid views of the Lomond hills. Scotland had the last laugh of course as it poured with rain for the last twenty minutes of our walk.

WNT

~~~~~

Roy Denney. 10 June 2005.

How do you show the real Britain to Australian in-laws with only 15 days to do it? They had only visited Britain once in the previous 30 years and then went to see London, Stratford etc.

When we dropped in on them, when travelling round the world a couple of years ago, I saw their photos and said that there was a lot more to Britain, and when they said they were coming back this year I rose to the challenge.

15 Days and 2194 miles later I put them into a hire car and sent them off to do Wales by themselves being by then in need of more than a bit of a rest.

My companions were all only casual walkers so it was predominately a site seeing dash but I did send them off occasionally to look at buildings or shops whilst I slipped out for some modest hill walks although never able to fit in any real summits.

We picked them up from London and started by having lunch in a typical country inn in a remote part of Essex before wandering northwards.

We took in a number of beauty spots and called into the red kite observatory at Fineshade Forest in Northamptonshire.

We spent one night at home in Leicester organising bags etc (reducing the amount I needed to squeeze into my car) before driving up to York for the following lunchtime. A B&B in walking distance of the city walls gave us plenty of time to comprehensively enjoy the history of the place and one of the party found two excellent ale houses whilst the others shopped.

Next day a trip through Knaresborough and a walk along the Nidd before going through Harrogate and Otley to show them our old home in Burley in Wharfedale. This was followed by a stop at Cow and Calf rocks and a short walk along Ilkley Moor.

On up to Bolton Abbey and a walk round the Abbey and up to the Strid, returning down the other side of the river.

Lunch was taken in an old haunt, the New Inn at Appletreewick before proceeding up the Wharfe all the way to Hawes taking in a brief look round Grassington on the way.

From there we went on to Hardraw Force then over the Buttertubs to run down Swaledale and overnight in Richmond.



The Shoulder of Mutton at Kirby Hill, just above the town, is an excellent inn for both food and drink.

THE BUTTERTUBS

Next day off again heading for Northumberland by a circuitous route. We went through Barnard Castle and followed the Tees taking in a walk to High Force before going over to St John's Chapel.



HIGH FORCE, RIVER TEES

On, to take a break in Allendale before going for a walk along Hadrian's Wall to Housesteads. A late lunch was taken in Wark before going round Kielder and briefly into Scotland to pass back into England at Carter Bar. We then headed for the Northumberland coast at Craster, near Alnwick where we spent two nights in a farmhouse.

Whilst there we had a good walk round the grounds of Cragside before going round this fascinating house; we also had a wander round Lindisfarne.



LINDISFARNE CASTLE

We took in many other places of interest before setting off through the borders to overnight in the Dundas Castle estate outside Edinburgh.

On the way we stopped off at Melrose and walked along the Tweed and called to allow our visitors to see Roslyn Chapel of the 'Da Vinci Code' fame.

From Edinburgh we went up to Drymen and Balmaha on Lomondside before Loch Katrine, the Trossacks and Lochearnhead. A detour to see the Falls of Dochart at Killin and then on to Tyndrum where we had a hotel for the week.



FALLS OF DOCHART

Whilst there we saw the West Highlands fairly comprehensively.

One day we went down Loch Awe and Loch Fyne and over the Colintrave ferry onto Bute where I went for a good walk whilst they visited shops and stately homes. On the return they we visited Inverary and some visited the church and museum whilst I visited the old Puffer and the whisky store.

A second day saw us getting a round-the-islands ferry from Oban calling briefly at Mull and on another day we returned to Oban for a comprehensive look round (I went for a walk) before going down to the 'Bridge over the Atlantic' and on to Seil Island.



DUART CASTLE MULL

Another day saw us drive down Loch Earn past Gleneagles and into the City of Perth and yet another took in Fort William over Rannock Moor and through Glencoe which unfortunately is the scene of major road works at present.

I went round the Ben Nevis distillery (whilst others took in the shops) and then we returned using the old road to avoid the traffic jam (that was my excuse but it did mean we could lunch at the Clachaig Inn)



Our final day saw us go down Glen Etive before lunching at the Kings House.

LOCH ETIVE

We then travelled down Glen Orchy. The falls were spectacular as we had two very wet nights and pretty damp days in mid week.



RIVER ORCHY

Whilst there I took the evening opportunities to visit some old haunts, fond remembered from when I walked part of the West Highland way; the Drovers at Inverarnan and the Inveroran near Bridge of Orchy.

Leaving the highlands we travelled down Lomondside before crossing the Irskine Bridge and dashing down to Cumbria.

A walk around Aira Force was followed by Sunday lunch at the Kirkstone Pass Hotel before going over the Struggle and on to LHG where we spent two nights.



AIRA FORCE

First evening saw us going over the pass into Great Langdale before eating at the Black Bull in Coniston.

Whilst based in the Lakes we drove up to Grasmere and had a walk round the lake and then went up to Keswick. After a shopping break (yuk) we went into Portinscale and parked up and I got them a fair distance up Catbells. Lunch at Stair was followed by a drive over Newlands to Buttermere and a walk round that lake followed by a return to Keswick over Honister Pass. An evening meal at the Britannia went down well followed by a walk round Tarn Hows as the light faded.

Next day saw us going over Wrynose and Hard Knott, taking in the Roman remains before taking elevenses at the King George the IVth in Eskdale Green, waiting to see the narrow gauge steam train.



THE SUMMITS FROM HARD KNOTT PASS

On over Ulpha Fell to follow the Dudden back to Cockley Beck, taking lunch at the Newfield Inn at Seathwaite, a much improved hostelry. Afternoon saw a last opportunity to shop (in Ambleside) whilst I took my brother in law for a walk on Loughrigg.

Finally we arrived at the Watermill, Ings where we were booked in for our last night of the trip and morning saw us wander back to Leicester by the Three Peaks, Pendle Hill and Cannock Chase. We also took in the ancient causeway at Stanton-by-Bridge and Calke Abbey. There must be quicker and more direct ways of getting to and from the Highlands but I doubt any more interesting.

RJD

CLUB HUTS



LOWSTERN, CLAPHAM, YORKSHIRE



**LOW HALL GARTH
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