

YRC JOURNAL

EXPLORATION, MOUNTAINEERING AND CAVING SINCE 1892

ISSUE 10 SERIES 13 WINTER 2010



PHIL DOVER ON APPROACH TO STOB BAN

LAGGAN BRIDGE MEET 2010

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICK BORROFF

ARTICLES

CANOEING IN CANADA

SAILING BETWEEN BRITAIN'S HIGHEST PEAKS

SKIING THE YORKSHIRE 3 PEAKS

CLIMBING IN CALIFORNIA

A HILL IN BRAZIL

CHINA CAVING

TREKKING IN BOLIVIA

CONTENTS - SERIES 13 EDITION 10 WINTER 2010

| | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|---------|
| 3 | George Spenceley - congratulations! | | |
| 4 | Canoeing in Canada | George Spenceley | |
| 9 | George | Tom Price | |
| 10 | Life and climbs with George | Tony Smythe | |
| 13 | Sailing the three peaks | Andy Syme | |
| 23 | Skiing the three peaks | Ged Champion | |
| 27 | An extraordinary hill in Brazil | John & Valerie Middleton | |
| 29 | Ama Dablam | Roy Denney | |
| 30 | Chippings | | |
| 40 | Natural History | | |
| 44 | Obituaries | | |
| 45 | Publications review | | |
| 47 | Overseas Meets | | |
| | California | | |
| | Bolivia | | |
| | China | | |
| 64 | Photography Competition Results | | |
| 65 | UK Meets | | |
| | Lowstern, Clapham, North Yorkshire | Jun | 4 - 6 |
| | Derwent Watershed, Derbyshire (Long Walk) | Jun | 18- 20 |
| | Shropshire, Long Mynd (Cycling & Walking) | Jul | 13- 15 |
| | Great Langdale | Sep | 10 - 12 |
| | Yorkshire's Northern Dales | Oct | 15- 17 |
| | Cader Idris, N. Wales | Nov | 5 - 7 |
| | Kirby Lonsdale (Dinner Meet & AGM) | Nov | 19 - 21 |
| | Lowstern, Clapham, North Yorkshire (Christmas) | Dec | 10 -12 |
| 76 | Picture Gallery | | |
| 78 | Club Proceedings | | |

Additional copies of this journal can be provided at a nominal cost whilst stocks last. Articles or the entire publication may also appear on our web site and can be provided in electronic form and may be reproduced for any purpose other than for sale, providing that the author and the club are given proper acknowledgement. The same applies to any photographs provided. The copyright however remains with the Club or the authors.

Requests can be addressed to the Club's Honorary Secretary who will advise on any costs and availability.

The journals occasionally include material from non-members who are happy for us to reproduce their work but we may not be able to pass these on in electronic form or show them on the web site due to copyright considerations. Similarly where members wish to retain copyright it will be indicated and may not be reproduced without their express permission and will not appear on the web site. Members can be contacted via the Secretary and other authors via the Editor.

The current series 13 of the journals goes back to Summer 2006. Series 12 was published under the title of the 'Yorkshire Rambler' and goes back to summer 1994. Both these series are held in electronic form.

Earlier journals can be accessed for information and go back to the formation of the club in 1892

GEORGE B SPENCELEY

George joined the YRC in 1941 and has therefore now been a member for 70 years. This year also marks another milestone in that he will achieve the age of 90 – Congratulations George!

He has been a member in the fullest sense of the word in that up to 2009 he was a regular attendee of meets and he has been a periodic contributor to this publication. After a period of poor health it was nice to see him out again on the dinner meet. With time on his hands he again put pen to paper and has provided us with the following article about his canoe epic through the Barren Lands of Canada.

At the age of 84 George became the oldest man ever to trek to the Annapurna Sanctuary. With the adventures of his earlier life I do not suppose he thought much to this. He does seem to take everything in his stride.

The year before this he had returned to Demirkazik in South East Turkey, the scene of an earlier endeavour, to show it to his wife Sylvie. Forty years previous he had made the fourth ever ascent of that mountain and the first ever traverse.

Perhaps the two most dramatic episodes in his life of adventure were his trips to South Georgia and the Jugal Himal.

Part of the team which mapped South Georgia back in 1955, he has a glacier on that island named after him which featured on a commemorative postage stamp 50 years later.

He was also part of the Club team which in 1957 set off to tackle Loengpo Gang (7083m) then known as Great White Peak. George was leading a party of four when they were hit by an avalanche and only George survived.

To celebrate his remarkable record a number of contributions have been submitted to show appreciation of the example he is to us all.

Members will have numerous anecdotes of experiences with George but I trust the following pieces are representative of the memories of the membership as a whole.

At the AGM in November George was presented with a bottle of red wine and a commemorative decanter to mark this milestone in his membership of the club.

Ed.



Below - On An Caisteal



PADDLE POWER

George Spenceley looking back on a trip across the Barren Lands of Canada

In the course of the 2009 Club Dinner, George Spenceley was reminiscing on his earlier canoe journey across the Canadian Barrens. He was persuaded to put pen to paper for the benefit of newer members unaware of this exploit so here is a brief account of that journey in 1976, of particular interest because of the tragedy suffered by the last British predecessors on the same river fifty years earlier. George obviously caught the canoeing bug as since then, with his wife Sylvie, he has canoed the full length of both the Danube and the Mississippi.

George writes "My five week canoe journey through the Canadian Barrens is a good story, not only for our paddle but for the story of our last British predecessors some fifty years earlier. They had had sought to over-winter having no seaplane to put them in as we had enjoyed. The diary of the 18-year-old from Dover College who survived for a month alone after the death of his two companions became a minor classic.

After our trip, being the first British to visit their graves, I did some TV and radio programmes on the story and back in 1979 I wrote it up for the journal in more detail. Given 30 years have since elapsed and we have many new members I feel it will stand some re-telling, especially as we now have the means of including photographs with any article.

My companion was Tom Price, a dear friend now 91. Tom was the retired Warden of the Outward Bound Mountain School in Eskdale in which capacity he had visited similar establishments in Minnesota. where he learned the rudiments of Canadian canoeing and was hooked, buying his own canoe on his return. When I joined him I also took to this delightfully relaxed mode of travel, admirably suited to more than middle-aged mountaineers and it was then that I fell for his suggestion of a river in the Canadian North.



But Canada was a long way to go so we sought no ordinary river but one that would give five or six weeks of travel through wilderness: a long river remote, wild and in little known country. Anything less, we could have found much

nearer home. Naturally, therefore, it was Northwest Territory that fired our imagination; thirteen times the area of the British Isles and with a population then of no more than a medium-sized English town. A local expert suggested the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers although he was to retract his recommendation when he learned there were only two in the party.

We were not so much concerned by the length of the journey and its remoteness, but with wild water and our limited ability to cope with this unfamiliar element. A few minutes' immersion in water where last winter's ice might still be lingering could be serious. Even worse, with the loss of the canoe and its cargo, the chances of survival would be remote indeed. Possibly we were being too ambitious.

That immense stretch of tundra that extends across the top of mainland Canada from Hudson Bay almost to the Mackenzie is usually called the Barren Grounds. The name suits it well. Except for the few weeks of high summer when the land bursts into colour and life, it is an endless empty space of rolling plain, shattered rocks, countless lakes and twisting rivers. For most of the year, it is held in the terrible desolate grip of winter.

Of the many river systems that give some pattern to the Barren Grounds, one of the longest is the Hanbury and Thelon. Together they form the best west-east canoe route through Arctic Canada. The Hanbury rises just over the water-shed north-east of Great Slave Lake and, in the very heart of the Barrens, joins the Thelon which continues east, linking a series of considerable lakes, to empty into Chesterfield Inlet. In selecting this route, we should be following in the footsteps, or rather paddle strokes, of the earlier British travellers I have already alluded to.

David Hanbury, now an almost forgotten English explorer, arrived on the Canadian scene in the late 19th century and, among a series of remarkable journeys, mostly with Eskimo companions, was the first to canoe the Thelon and the river which now bears his name. Of more poignant interest, the Thelon will always be associated with the name of more recent British travellers: John Hornby, an eccentric Englishman who, in his own lifetime, became a legend in the North, and a schoolboy from Dover College, whose deeply moving diary documented the story of a tragic winter that would otherwise have gone almost unnoticed.

Of later parties down these rivers, there had been quite a few Canadian and American, but no British since John Hornby's party.

I was on the scene some weeks before Tom's arrival, but I was not long alone. The Thelon has a reputation in the North and, when news got around that two Englishmen were bound on a venture so apparently bold (or foolhardy), much help was offered. In Edmonton, I bought six weeks' food and,

to a carefully considered ration plan earlier worked out, packed it in six 14 man-day bags, each item doubly waterproofed. This was dispatched the 1,000 miles north to Yellowknife.

Our chief concern was air transport. This was essential, for to start from Fort Reliance at the east end of Great Slave Lake and paddle and portage over the watershed, as the pioneers had done, would take too many weeks of an all too short summer, with the awful prospect of being frozen in before journey's end. The pioneers had been prepared to overwinter and survive, often precariously, on the proceeds of net, trap and rifle. Not all had survived.

Our journey was to be comparatively modest; a light float plane could lob us down on some lake near the Hanbury's source thus, in a few hours, cutting out some 300 miles of difficult and tedious travel. It would leave us just 500 miles of canoeing to the Eskimo settlement of Baker Lake which, even with the prospect of many unnavigable rapids and delaying winds, was we felt, a reasonable journey in the weeks available. Our major concern was not over the need for or availability of air transport, but the high cost of charter.

Fortunately, and purely by chance, I met the Air Transport Officer for the Indian and Northern Affairs Department who casually remarked that he had a single-engined Beaver on Charter, "Would that help?" he asked. "It should be available at the week-end." It was with this glad news that I was able to welcome Tom to Yellowknife on the 15th July, looking as if he were ready to step straight into a canoe. Four days later we took off from Yellowknife with the 17-ft. Grummon alloy canoe lashed to one float, a practice the illegality of which is ignored by the bush pilots. We refuelled at the tiny Indian settlement of Snowdrift, hand-pumping the fuel from drums and after another two hours of flying over a vast water-laced wilderness we landed on Hanbury Lake. We made camp at the head of the first rapids, where the Hanbury River exits from the eastern shore.

Until that moment, I think we had forgotten that devastating curse of the North: insect pests. They rose from the lichen at our feet and hung like a malevolent mist around us; both mosquito and black fly, the latter, not merely biting but with each bite taking a lump of us away with them. They flew into our mouths and nostrils, they found their way through the tiniest rift in our clothing, but their favourite place was the ear where they spun and tumbled deep down near the drum. Repellents and nets offered limited protection, and we could only arm ourselves with that most important of weapons: sheer resignation.

We cooked our meal and, like any novice in the North, we picked out black fly from food and drink, a futile task we soon abandoned. I then attempted the first of many unsuccessful attempts at fishing. These waters may offer the best sport fishing in the world, but required more skill, or stronger line, than I possessed.

The last but inescapable extremity of the canoeist is to portage, and on our first day there were more hours of this

than paddling. Each required three relays of 80 lb. loads, the most unmanageable being the canoe, carried inverted balancing on shoulder pads and leaving us highly vulnerable to the wind. At other times we lined the canoe down on ropes fore and aft, through fast water we dared not yet run. Unskilled in swift water, on the first day we hit a rock, Tom fell out and we only managed 10 miles. It got better however; 17 miles the next and 27 the day after. There were still portages and rapids, but we were gaining some small degree of confidence and skill; it was exhilarating travel. Once committed to the current, there was no escape; one was swept inexorably forward at a speed which, from our low kneeling position, seemed highly alarming.

We delighted in our remoteness from human life, although perhaps privately a little fearful lest something go wrong. No-where on the Continent is there a place more isolated than the heart of the Barrens through which we now travelled. The nearest settlement, occupied cabin or tent, must then have been some hundreds of miles away. Or so we thought, until one day we swept round a corner and saw a canoe on the shore. On the bank were two wild and ragged Frenchmen crouching amid the bloody remains of two dismembered caribou. Without the convenience of an air lift, nor the security of adequate rations, with little more than a bag of flour, a rod and rifle, they had set out to cross the Barrens as few had done before, relying entirely on the fruits of their hunting. Some weeks earlier, with ice still in the Lakes, they had left Fort Reliance. Twice they had capsized in stormy waters and swum ashore, narrowly escaping death from cold. They had meagre luck with their fishing and less with their hunting. Only the day before, weak with hunger, they had managed to shoot two young caribou. They were now resting up and regaining strength while drying slices of the flesh on stones in the sun. We exchanged porridge and potato flour with them in return for tender caribou steaks, and went on our way feeling rather humbled. We were to meet once again at Helen Falls, where a disaster befell them that might easily have ended their journey and their lives.

Our two hardest days of travel, and least rewarding in distance, were still to come. On one we covered only five miles-although we walked twenty-and on the next day a mere seven. It was portaging that delayed us. The longest of these was Dickson Canyon, a narrow and deep cleft through which the water furiously boiled for over three miles. That night, too tired to seek a better site, we camped in a place more than usually plagued with pests, the black fly pinging against face and tent like lead shot. By now, we were almost unrecognisable. We peered through narrow slits in faces grossly bloated and our bodies were mottled with a pattern of itching, swollen sores.

The fifth day of travel, with more portaging, brought us to Helen Falls. We approached them cautiously, which was just as well, for they were preceded by a five-foot step. We carried round this, and then let the canoe down on ropes, in water increasing in speed to the head of the falls. There the river narrowed and leapt 25 feet into the canyon below where it continued at high speed along a boulder-strewn floor. We established camp above the falls to take stock

when the Frenchmen came into sight. Paddling at a furious pace like veteran Voyageurs, they failed to see the step until too late. They were swept over it and capsized. Somehow they struggled ashore to the opposite bank but the canoe and its load continued at increasing speed down the centre of the torrent to plunge over the falls into the gorge below. So deep was the fall, so wild the water, we did not doubt it would be a total loss. The ultimate disaster, the nightmare that haunts the thoughts of any wilderness canoeist, had occurred, not to us thank goodness, but to two others for whose survival we must now be responsible.

But by a miracle we were however spared this duty as some distance down the canyon, we found the canoe wedged between boulders on our bank, dented but otherwise undamaged. We easily recovered it, one pack still intact inside. Others tied together were stuck between stones some way out from the shore. Tom lowered the canoe out on a rope and, using this to brace myself against the current; I was soon able to recover them. By a freak of fortune, we had all been saved from an unpleasant if not also serious situation.

Another portage and perhaps 25 miles of pleasant fast paddling and we reached the junction with the Thelon River. It had taken us six days to travel the first 100 miles, but there had been many portages and more miles of lining in rapids too perilous to run. We had 400 miles still to go, but the main difficulties were over; our chief concerns now were delaying winds and swell and surf in the big lakes further east.

At the junction with the Thelon and for 50 miles beyond, there was a change in the landscape. Tundra, bare of all but tiny growth, gave way on both sides of the river to sturdy spruce. This is that strange oasis of the Barrens, an island of comparative fertility, where tundra and tree line merge. This is the place for which John Hornby, our British predecessor, was making for his winter quarters fifty years earlier.

On our second day of travel down the Thelon, we found the remains of the cabin, a rectangle of rough hewn logs set back a little from the river.



Small colourful arctic flowers grew in fantastic abundance, contributing to a peaceful and beautiful scene but this was the stage on which was played out the tragedy of that long drawn out winter and delayed spring of 1926-27. Three mounds of earth and stones and the three crude wooden

crosses told of the final outcome of a human drama in which all the qualities of fortitude, courage, self-sacrifice and devotion were fully displayed.

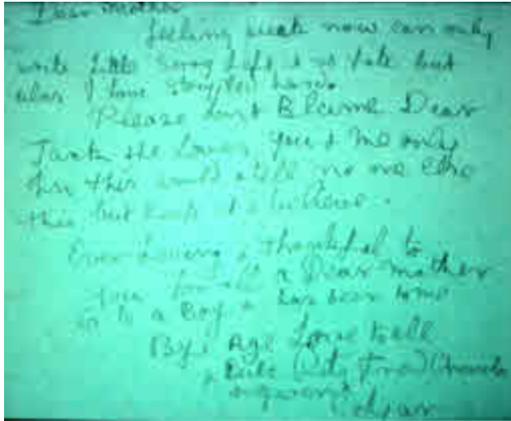
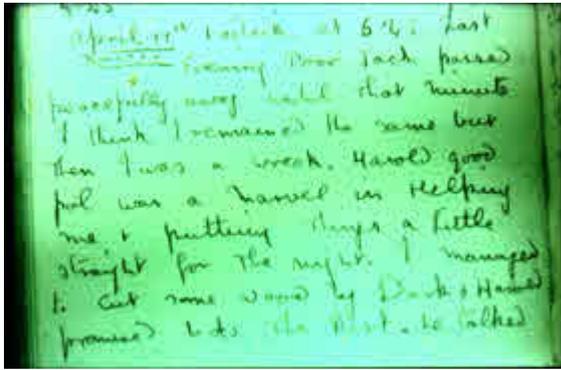


Everyone north of Edmonton has heard of John Hornby. The son of a well known Lancashire and English cricketer, he went to Canada in 1904 and became obsessed with the mystique of the Barren Grounds. For years he wandered alone in the North like an animal, wintering in caves, living off the land. Prodigious in endurance, he sought hunger and hardship for their own sake, as others would comfort. In twenty years of travel, he had become a living legend. But Hornby, with all his wealth of experience and uncanny knack of surviving, lacked foresight and judgement which fatal weakness was all too evident on his last journey.

In the summer of 1926, he appeared on Great Slave Lake with two unlikely companions: one Harold Adlard, an ex-RAF pilot, the other his second cousin Edgar Christian, an 18 year-old schoolboy from Dover College. With these two novices he proposed to do what not even the boldest trapper would consider: to winter on the Thelon. They left Fort Reliance in late July; they were never seen alive again. The lifeblood of the Barren Grounds is caribou. Back and forth, from timber to tundra, the herds flow like a great tide. But the caribou are fickle. It is an unpredictable flow even if rhythmic. The caribou may pass the same spot in the same month for a dozen years running and the next year, not come at all. For good reason it is often called the land of feast or famine. For the three men who built their cabin on the banks of the Thelon, it was a land of famine.

A little meat and fish they found, but the caribou migration on which they depended had passed them by. An R.C.M.P. patrol found their bodies two years later, two rolled in blankets outside, one on his bunk within the cabin. The details of that tragic winter would only have been surmised, their deaths quickly forgotten, but for the labour of the schoolboy Edgar Christian. From October on-wards, he kept a daily diary, a remarkable record without trace of fear or self pity, showing only concern for his companions. We learn that John Hornby died, exhausted by his efforts to find food, in April, and a few weeks later Adlard died too. Somehow, for another month, alone and with no hope, Edgar Christian remained alive, keeping the diary, recording in meticulous detail an account of each day's search for food.

This diary, which was later published, is now housed in the library of Dover College.



The bulk of our journey was still ahead of us, but there were fewer difficulties; only the need to cover distance before the coming of the worsening weather of autumn. But the broad Thelon, now less troubled by rapids, gave us fast and relaxed canoeing. Such swift water as did occur we could usually run after an initial reconnaissance. On a good day we could cover 40 miles and still allow time to photograph and fish and observe the wealth of animal and bird life. Every day, we saw solitary wolves and caribou and small herds of musk ox. This area contained the world's greatest concentration of the latter animals, now happily protected. Regrettably we failed to see the Barren Ground grizzly, although their tracks were clear and fresh on the river bank. Perhaps it is as well, for we had no defence against them unless we could frighten them off with flares.

After many initial failures, we were now having some luck with our fishing and a 20 lb. lake trout or pike was a welcome addition to our otherwise rather dreary diet.



Our only cause for worry were the 100 miles of travel through the big lakes, Beverly, Aberdeen and Schultz, where we would often be forced to paddle in open water far from shore and highly vulnerable to wind. Many days were to be lost lying up while heavy surf broke upon the shore, sometimes

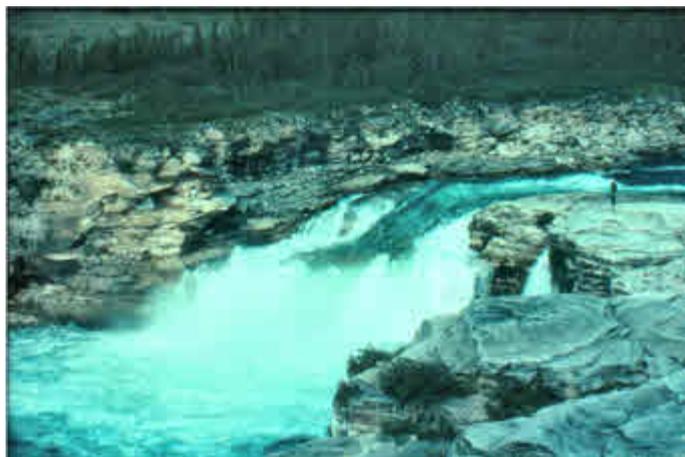
still concealed by banks of last winter's snow. We thoroughly frightened ourselves in the first lake. Crossing between two headlands, we misjudged the size of the swell. Fortunately, Tom in the rear showed much skill, heading us into the waves, for otherwise we should have been lost; even so we shipped much water over the bows. We learned our lesson and laid up for four days after that, until the wind dropped sufficiently for us to dare travel again. At the east end of Beverly Lake, we were surprised by a light aircraft which came in low over our canoe and circled. We were to learn later that this was the R.C.M.P. Officer from Baker Lake, who had chartered an aircraft for a 350-mile round trip just to assure himself of our safety. It was comforting to know we were not forgotten. After another day and a half of lying up in windy weather, we made the link between Beverly and the much larger Aberdeen Lake, threading our way through a complex pattern of islands which caused us some difficulty. Even with good maps, navigation was not easy, for the low, uncertain shore gave us no conception of distance or shape.

It took us four days and a night to cover the 60 miles length of Aberdeen Lake, our progress being further interrupted by idle hours of waiting for calmer wind and waves. Although hardly mid-August, the brief summer was seemingly over; the cold and storms of autumn had begun. But one night at about 9 p.m., the wind dropped abruptly and, anxious to cover distance before the weather worsened more, we broke camp and pushed off into the lake to paddle with only a blood red backcloth to give us light. On a surface now quite still, we slid swiftly forward, the silence only broken by the dip of the paddles and the gentle murmur of water beneath the bows. With no light to read the map, we could but travel vaguely, skirting bays, rounding capes, threading our way by islands which rose before us like surfacing sea monsters. We worked with unusual energy, but the rhythmic swing of arms alone was not enough to bring us warmth. Too numb to paddle further, we pulled ashore and for an hour or so lay in sleeping bags beneath the un-pitched tent, listening to the unearthly howl of nearby wolves. We got up with the rising sun, frost thick on the ground and, with brief halts for food, paddled through the day. At 6 p.m. we made camp at the outlet from the lake by a cluster of ancient Eskimo cairns.

The next 25 miles of minor lake and river was pure delight, as summer returned for a brief spell. We glided almost effortlessly over a glassy surface that made us feel as if we were suspended in a replica of the sky. Two more days of canoeing along the northern shores of Schultz Lake and an evening paddle in open water steering by compass and we reached the outlet of the Thelon. We had now a mere 67 miles to go to the Eskimo settlement of Baker Lake. In a river with a constant current of six to eight miles per hour, and only one portage, this should only have taken us two days but in the event it took us five. Perhaps after nearly five weeks of almost continuous effort, we were tiring, but the real cause was the wind. Perversely, it blew hard against the flow of the river, whipping waves up through which we had had strenuously to force our way. When we entered Baker Lake, great blocks of last winter's ice were stranded on the shore and, as we reached the settlement, the first snow of the next winter began to fall."

A very long river through a very lonely land!

THE TRIP IN PICTURES



GEORGE SPENCELEY

A memoir by Tom Price, long time companion and fellow adventurer.

George and I go back a long way, as they say. From about 1947 we would occasionally come across each other at the foot of some rock climb. In those days the climbing world was a lot smaller and if you didn't know someone on a crag you were a bit surprised. So I soon knew George was YRC and FRCC, and we had friends in common such as Eric Arnison, Charles Tilley, Jack Carswell and Harry Griffin. It was through Eric Arnison, I think, that I went on some YRC potholing trips such as Bar Pot and the through route via Sand Cavern, the Portcullis, to the bottom of Gaping Ghyll and Mud Hall. Those were the days of muddy ladders rather than single rope technique and I can still remember a long chilly wait, at the end of the day, for our turn to climb the Bar Pot ladder. I also remember Eric Arnison introducing us to the magic potion of whiskey and Crabbies.

I'd formed a very good opinion of the YRC, largely because they showed much imagination in devising meets, especially in places other than their own huts. I was invited to one such Whit meet at Loch Coruisk. George and I went in my open tourer to Mallaig where we met the others. A boat took us to Loch Scavaig and collected us a week later. We planned to traverse the Cuillin in one day but we left it too late in the week and the weather broke. A year later, however, we did it accompanied by Crosby Fox and another whose name I forget. We started at 1.00 am and finished at 5.30 pm. From Alpine Club members we met along the route we learned that the AC were giving John Hunt and his wife a celebratory trip along the ridge after their Everest success, so it must have been 1953 or 1954. They were travelling light wearing espadrilles! Crosby became very keen not to be overtaken by the Hunts and so we had to force the pace, with many an anxious look behind. We kept ahead however, stopping for a dip in a dub on the last mile or so to Sligachan. We had dinner at the hotel, slept in the heather till 5am. We then made our weary way over Clach Glas and Blaven. A trip to remember. On Blaven an eagle lifted off from a rock some ten feet below us.

Next day the boat took us back to Mallaig where the party dispersed. Here a trawler was landing a catch of herring. Having spent much of the war with trawlermen I went over and asked if they could spare a couple of fish. He said, 'Aye, hod oot yer hond like this', i.e. palm up fingers spread. I did so and he hung a herring by the gills on each digit. We stopped at the white sands of Morar in the glorious evening sun and fried the fish in butter over a driftwood fire. The evening was dazzling, with a clamour of seagulls screaming for the fish heads and guts. We felt rich!

As is often the case with climbing friends we shared our mountain life and experiences but knew comparatively little of each other's private lives. Though we had much in common and were of similar age we came from different backgrounds;

I from the deserving poor and George from the middle class, his father being a prominent member of Harrogate society. But even before the war we had in spirit shaken off our past and taken to the hills.

When after the War we became acquainted, I thought of George as something of a public school toff, but not so. I soon came to realise that he could live rough, travel light and take whatever vagaries the weather threw at him. However hard the conditions were, his good manners remained. He saw cheerfulness in adversity as a bounden duty! This made him a good club man and a good expedition man.

The South Georgia Survey, 1955/6 threw us together for the best part of a year, the voyages out and back, courtesy of the Christian Salvesson line, then a whaling firm, taking two months at least. Our base at Grytviken was the most southerly jail in the world but the unpredictable nature of the weather compelled us to spend most of our time in the field, so as to be ready and close to the survey stations we were aiming to set up and use. We lived in four two man tents and the plan was to change tent mates at intervals so that each member could sample the advantages and disadvantages of sharing tent and cooking with each of the others. When a change over took place animated conversations could be heard in all the tents for a bit. We often had blizzards pinning us in our tents, once for eight consecutive days. By the end of the expedition the tent poles were bent and twisted and the cloth abraded paper thin. Yet it was a wonderful experience in a place of great beauty, and one of the most enjoyable periods of my life. It launched George upon a career of travel lecturing in which he became highly proficient. His lectures were professional, carefully planned and delivered. His personal appearance and authoritative manner was impressive. It was not often you could see him so well dressed!

Once George, to my surprise and consternation, asked me to be chief guest at a YRC dinner. I accepted with the greatest trepidation, being by nature a fader into the background. It took place in a Harrogate hotel of, to me, alarming opulence and splendour, the assembled throng resplendent and mostly in evening dress. A last minute addition to the top table was Peter Boardman, just back from Everest. My speech, when it came, was a success, judging by the warmth of its reception, which says much for the kindness and geniality of the YRC membership. It led to one or two invitations from other clubs.

George had introduced me to potholing and I introduced him to canoeing. I wanted to show off the Canadian wilderness, and we chose the River Thelon in the NW Territories. George's canoe training was a weekend in a heatwave on Windermere and two short trips on the Oxford canal and the Isis respectively.

It was this venture, more than anything else we did together, that cemented my friendship with George. The thirty-one days of solitude, not unmixed with hard work, serious hazards and anxieties, not to speak of mosquitoes and blackflies, in those vast and marvellous waterways across the Canadian barrenlands, starting with the Indian culture

and ending with the Inuit, had a profound effect. We had to depend on each other, and we knew we could. George went on to canoe the Mississippi and the Danube with his wife Sylvie.

The War contributed a great deal to our education, especially in terms of values and personal development. George had his standards, could 'walk with crowds and talk with kings nor lose the common touch'. He was tolerant of people without necessarily condoning what they did. I remember him telling me of an incident in an unsavoury part of New York, where he responded with more courage than sense to some unpleasant comments made about him by a group of Afro- Americans. Just at the point where violence seemed about to erupt, a large black stranger intervened and frightened off the troublemakers! He and his new acquaintance became good friends. George has no quarrel with people of different class, race or religion. He can look beyond idiosyncrasies and see the person beneath. At the same time on certain issues he can be pretty rigorous. When one of our SGS colleagues, John Cunningham, made a foolish and probably joking comment during an interview with a climbing magazine, implying that he was left to get out of a crevasse he had fallen into, without help, George took the assertion seriously and never forgave him. This shows the importance George attaches to the noble history of mountaineering and exploration and the maintenance of its good name. For my part I can't help thinking of Bacon's succinct opening to his 'Essay on Truth'; 'What is Truth?' said jesting Pilate and stayed not for an answer'. It shows the difference between idealism and the cynicism of experience. George has a bit of both but most of the idealism.

I became an admirer of George for his courage, adventurous spirit and generous nature.

He is a much valued friend!

LIFE AND CLIMBS WITH GEORGE by Tony Smythe

I first saw George Spenceley in the summer of 1950. I say 'saw' because at that time I was very junior, aged 15, and was with my elder brother John camping with a group in Little Langdale, and it was a few more years before I joined the YRC and got to meet and know George. On that first occasion he was outside Low Hall Garth, a rather distinguished figure, and John chatted to him for a few minutes. Next day John decided he and I would go climbing on Gimmer and with only a few days' rock climbing experience between the two of us I was dragged, terrified, up something extremely smooth and steep.

But back to George. While I am happy to write something in honour and recognition of his 70 years of YRC membership I am a bit wary of these reminiscences being seen as some sort of an obituary-in-waiting. As I write, George will shortly be entering his 90th year, but it would be

not only churlish but rash to bet against him walking up hills and running at home along the banks of the River Cherwell, albeit more slowly, for another ten years or so. Because George is a survivor, a very tough cookie indeed, honed on a lifetime of hardship and adventure that included a war-time plane crash in a bomber behind enemy lines, years in a German POW camp ending with the dreaded Long March, untold numbers of peacetime expeditions on mountains, glaciers and rivers, some of these very gruelling indeed, with a vast amount of climbing, walking and potholing fitted into the rest of the time. The ordinary hard graft of earning a living seems to have been almost a side issue for him.

He was living at Harrogate when our paths began to cross. He was teaching full time locally, but after work would very often set off to drive a large distance, give an evening lecture to a school, club or society on an expedition or travel subject, returning late that night for the day job next morning. I also happened to give talks on the same types of subject, so when George kindly invited me to stay with him when I passed through his area we would swap information on contacts, fees obtained, hospitality offered – everything in fact down to useful lay-bys for overnight sleeping in our estate cars. George said he always parked ready for instant exit in the event of trouble from drunks or villains, and reckoned he could slide into the driving seat and drive off while still in his sleeping bag. We had both managed to lock ourselves out while in our pyjamas, but saved ourselves by manipulating a branch from the hedge-row inserted through a window open a crack. His sleep had like mine been interrupted more than once by the police who assumed that inside a car coated in ice they would be dealing with a dead body. George told me about some of his experiences at the institutions that offered hospitality. He had been obliged to drag the carpet over his bed one freezing night when he had been provided with only one thin blanket. On the Isle of Wight he had inadvertently walked into a girls' dormitory while looking for a lavatory. He warned me about a nymphomaniac head-mistress at another establishment, and I cautioned him about a chairman at a library who couldn't stop introducing me and finished up giving my lecture for me.

An evening with George over a meal and bottle of wine must have done as much to establish a rapport as all the hill walking we did together at that time. He stayed with me occasionally when my wife and I lived in Reading, and later at Chesterton in Oxfordshire when we moved there. One day I received a typically concise letter informing me that he had quit teaching, he would now be lecturing full-time, he had married again, and he was arriving shortly with his new wife, Sylvie to live at Steeple Aston, some 8 miles from us. This opened up a whole new series of evenings together. George would invite me over to keep him company while Sylvie was at a meeting, and at some late hour I would set off home in my car. It was in the days before the authorities really clamped down – I don't think the breathalyser had even been invented – but to avoid the police I navigated a little-used set of lanes, hoping for the best. Madness! Somehow I got away with it. I shudder to think of it now.

George is a very knowledgeable bird-watcher, and it was a natural accompaniment to our day on hill or moor. There is no doubt I would have walked past no end of interesting and unusual species had not my companion stopped, raised his much-used superlative Leitz binoculars to his eyes, murmured 'green woodpecker', 'stonechat', 'dipper' – or whatever – before handing me the glasses. In the course of conversation with a suspicious Scottish keeper he glanced up at the sky and remarked casually, "Ah, a buzzard." A few minutes later we were granted permission by the keeper to drive up a glen using the private road. During a YRC meet at Inchnadamph we were plodding up Ben More Assynt when he drew my attention to a bird soaring above a ridge in the distance. A Golden Eagle, he declared, and so it was, complete with that unmistakable W shape of its great wings. It was one of only two occasions I have ever seen one in the wild.

I also marvelled at George's empathy with dogs. If we were walking through some village and a snarling brute made for us it was instinctive for me to hide quickly behind my companion! George on the other hand would defuse even the most aggressive animal. He told me that this ability nearly brought him to grief, but in an unexpected way. On the Long March at the end of world war 2 all the inmates of his POW camp were brutally forced by their captors to trek westwards away from the advancing Russian army. Those that fell by the wayside were shot. One night in a field George went searching in a nearby copse for wood for their fire. He was spotted by the guards and a huge guard dog dispatched at him. He simply bent down towards the charging animal and held out his hands, whereupon the dog slowed to a walk, came up and licked him. The guard, beside himself with rage, very nearly shot George before ordering him to return to the field. A day or so later they were liberated by the British army, and George happened to tell the story to a Sergeant, pointing out his German tormentor. The Sergeant unhitched his pistol. "Take this and shoot him," he told him. "Go on, shoot him!" George politely declined the offer.

During the Inchnadamph meet at the end of one long hot day we drove down to the Summer Isles where we sat outside the pub on the coast at Achiltibuie. It was one of the golden evenings near mid-summer in the far North of Scotland when the sea is almost flat calm, glittering in the late sun with the tide washing quietly on the pebbles, and the conversation and the pints flowing smoothly. George was always excellent value although I have no idea now what we talked about. It could have been about Finland for which he had a great affinity, or the Thelon River in Canada with Tom Price, or his dreadful experience many years ago in the Jugal Himal, or the girls' school party he was invited to lead to Kalapathar below Mount Everest, or Ethiopia, or South Georgia, or any other of his numerous trips. In South Georgia he shared a tent with Louis Baume in a long period of bad weather when they were confined to their sleeping bags. I had met Louis a few times and he seemed the most gentle, reasonable person, as in fact he was, George assured me. But slowly, in those weeks on the glacier of South Georgia, while the wind howled and the driving snow battered the tent, he apparently drove George to the point

of murder in the most unexpected way. Whenever the two men agreed that it was time for another biscuit from their precious supply, Louis, who was Swiss and a member of the Baume watchmaking family, would produce his penknife – the sort that has every gadget – unfold the largest blade, and apply a carefully-judged portion of butter to the biscuit. As George went on to explain, he would then spend several minutes smoothing and shaping the butter so that it exactly covered the top surface of the biscuit. Then he would hold it up to eye level to ensure that it was truly spread, turning it this way and that, correcting any unevenness with the knife. Finally, when he was completely satisfied with his workmanship, he would carefully clean the knife and put it away before eating the biscuit, delicate nibble by delicate nibble. Now I know for a fact that George has his faults, and he would agree with me about that, but I also know that in a tent, on a mountain, or anywhere in the wild, he is the most forgiving and tolerant man. But even the strongest branch of an oak tree will snap under enough weight, and George came perilously close to that point when obliged to witness too many times this agonising example of Swiss precision by Louis Baume. I might mention that poor Louis is no longer with us, felled by cancer some 20 years ago. At George's urging I went to see him in hospital, not a happy experience for either of us. George was with him just before he died in a hospice, and told me that Louis, always rather a solitary soul, gripped his hand and whispered words of friendship – a very sad and difficult moment, George told me.

Our mountain days together have been in the years when we had both largely finished with rock climbing. Most of them seem to have been in Scotland. We have often used my self-converted camper van where I unselfishly slept on the only bunk, delegating George to the floor (where I did at least provide a mattress). I would sometimes wake at an early hour, and then decide that I needed more sleep. However George is an inveterate early-riser and detecting that I might be awake would inflict on me a kind of Louis Baume moment by popping his head up at intervals to check. Good relations were surely restored by the time we were dressed and breakfast was under way. I trust George will agree with that version of events.

Usually we would be heading for a Munro or two that George could tick off. Those he hadn't done were marked with a cross on his OS map, and at that stage he was I believe about two-thirds of the way towards completion, as the SMC's Clerk of the List would write it. But he wasn't in the least obsessive about Munros – unlike me who on moving to the Lakes in 1991 decided to make a big push to do them all as an incentive to see more of Scotland. But he would never turn back because of the weather. Usually I went along with this, although on Ben Chabhair near Crianlarich I drew the line on a day when the rain, wind and cloud base were truly daunting. George pressed on and arrived at the van some three or four hours later like a drowned rat, triumphant and insisting that he always got something out of a day. It was a philosophy that he expressed more than once and it probably sums up in eight words who he is. When I began Munroing in earnest I found myself following George's staunch example in bad

weather, but for less noble reasons. I figured that if I had to drive up as far north as say, the Fannichs, it would cost me a fortune if I had to keep returning because of a little bit of mist and rain. However there's always that realisation that on the worst days with visibility virtually zero and it's map and compass all day long you could be anywhere and the whole exercise was in danger of being pointless.

I have said how tough George is. At that time if either of us were going to flag it would be me. With his stocky economical frame he would keep going, and going, and going. Eventually he *might* admit that he was suffering what he called 'the knock' – which for me was oncoming exhaustion – and we would stop for something to eat. I remember on one endless ridge in a biting wind our halt was accompanied by a supersize Mars bar each, and within seconds we had consumed 600 glutinous calories, setting ourselves up for further progress.

Usually our walks were incident free, but I will always remember a very nasty moment on Ben Lui. We were coming down the gentle lower slopes when George, who was just ahead of me, skidded and fell on the slick wet grass and slid a short distance on his back. I was horrified to see his bare head shave past a blade of rock, a bit of the solid mountain that stuck out through the turf, as sharp as a razor. He very nearly collided with it, at speed, his whole weight, with the top of his head. For a moment I thought of Sylvie and the explaining I would have had to have done. But I can't remember any other worrying moment; George was always as solid and dependable as the rock on Ben Lui he so nearly had a losing argument with.

He never complained at my eccentricities. One day soon after I had discovered the delights of paragliding we were walking on Foel Goch in South Wales when I decided that it was the moment for us to part company and for me to float unsociably down to the valley. George watched solemnly while I laid out the canopy and readied myself. However I have to confess that I was greatly inexperienced at paragliding and was basically keen to show off my new toy. I misjudged the wind which was blowing a bit too strongly up the slope.

As George said later, in his amused way, "One moment you were there, and then you popped up high overhead!"

Fortunately I managed to control the acreage of nylon and was eventually reunited with my companion.

On another occasion, at the end of a YRC meet at Braemar decided that it would be useful to take home some nice big smooth rocks from the River Dee to adorn my terrapin tank. I got carried away and stowed a hundredweight or more of choice boulders on the floor of the car. I ought to mention that we were using George's car – the springs and fuel consumption must have been sorely tested. But he never grumbled, although he probably thought plenty.

Scotland seemed to have a habit of producing odd situations. After another meet I was with George and Stanley Marsden when we stopped for something to eat at a hotel on the A9. We had drinks and sandwiches and after putting the world to rights strolled out to Stanley's car. Some fifty miles down the road when there was a lull in the conversation, Stanley said, "You paid at the hotel didn't you, George?" and it turned out that none of us had. Stanley paled visibly, and as we instinctively checked for squad cars behind us, it was clear that he considered his career and reputation in the financial world to be in great peril. I can't remember how the bill was eventually settled, and I don't think that Stanley did actually give himself up at the nearest police station, but I remember that George was vastly amused. For him it was just another strand in the rich pattern of life.

Perhaps it was on the river Wye that I sensed how much George loved – and loves – the outdoor life, however adventurous or gentle. He persuaded me to accompany him on a trip in his Canadian canoe from Glasbury to Monmouth, and for two days, or was it three? I had a view of the back of his head. He had shown me how to do the J stroke to keep the darned thing straight, but for me a perfectly good journey through pleasant fields, woods and valleys was to some extent spoiled by blisters, backache, bum ache, biting flies and the burning sun, all of which was absent or under normal control during our subsequent enjoyable walk back to Glasbury to retrieve the car. But I have a vision of George on the river – oblivious to my labours and discomfort, untroubled by the flies, aware only of the natural things surrounding him, his paddle dipping smoothly into the water, the smoke drifting from his pipe, in no hurry to get anywhere and completely at peace with himself and the world.



A FEW WORDS OF WISDOM

No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationery.

I wondered why the boulder kept getting bigger, then it hit me.

Atheism is a non-prophet organisation.

A will is a dead giveaway.

Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.

Climbers with poor footwear suffer the agony of de feet.

A bicycle cannot stand alone - it is two tired.

She was only a whisky makers daughter, but he loved her still.

And finally with Christmas upon us please remember, Santa's little helpers are subordinate clauses.

SAILING THE THREE PEAKS

Andy Syme, Team On & Up

In September 2008 I was invited to do the 3 Peaks Challenge for the Meningitis Trust; the traditional 36 hour version, being driven between the peaks; I accepted but it got me thinking about a Challenge I had long wanted to do. A rather speculative email entitled "Is this a mad idea or what?" had led, 21 months later, to me motoring out of Barmouth harbour with 23 other boats; band playing, crowds waving on the sea wall; about to start THE Three Peaks Race with a team comprising the youngest competitor, the oldest competitor and 3 middle aged optimists.



Well
wishers
on
Barmouth
sea wall

THE CHALLENGE

The race was inspired by the tales told by sailor, mountaineer and Barmouth resident HW Tillman and organised by his doctor Rob Haworth and Rob's colleague Merfyn Jones. The inaugural race, started in June 1977. 4 out of 7 boats finished and the Scafell leg included an overnight camp. Bill Tillman was not only there to present the prizes but had also set the tone for the race and the rules "Why not just let them get on with it". Tillman never saw another race; disappearing shortly afterwards between Rio de Janeiro and the Falkland Islands on another adventure, aged 79; but the ethos was set.

While the event has evolved over the 33 years, it remains a straight non-handicapped race from Barmouth, via Caernarfon/Snowden and Whitehaven/Scafell, to Fort William and the Ben. At sea, the boat must be powered solely by the 5 team members own muscle power; on the land it is run/walk or, from Whitehaven to Ennerdale only, cycle. The entire race therefore involves around 389 miles of sailing (rowing or kedging), over 18,000 feet of ascent, 26 miles of cycling and 72 miles of running.

Teams comprise 5 people and within the race there are two distinct categories of teams:

- The Tillman teams; where 4 of the team must each summit at least 1 peak.
- The 'specialist' teams comprising 3 sailors and 2 fell runners.

We were a Tillman team and, while in the 'doing it for a challenge' sub-category, looking at the 2009 results, where the Tillman winners were 11th, I optimistically had an eye on a top 3 position.

CHOOSING TEAM ON AND UP

For Team On & Up, the acceptance criteria were not, so critically, based on physical or sailing prowess but more basically on:

1. Saying yes to my original email, or not an emphatic no.
2. An inability to find an excuse to get out of it once they realised what they had agreed to.

The original team consisted of me, my brother Duncan, my father Rob, and 2 friends Ewart & Richard. Richard however, contrived to get a posting to Afghanistan and having already decided to enter for the '3 members of a bone fide club' trophy, we found a willing and very capable replacement in another Richard (Smith) who was also a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers Club. The YRC were also critical in getting another key prerequisite – a yacht. 3 of the 4 co-owners of Aquila were also YRC members and an adventurous (or was it reckless) spirit saw them willing to release Aquila to my hands; albeit under Rob's watchful eye.

After some discussions we decided to support 2 charities, Breast Cancer Haven, a charity supporting sufferers of breast cancer and their families; who had supported my Mum and Rob last year when Mum was diagnosed with, and treated for cancer; and Help for Heroes, the well known charity supporting disabled servicemen.

We submitted our application form and race fee on the first day of entries in November 2009 and I sat back thinking it was all over bar the training.....

How wrong I was.



BARMOUTH TO CAERNARFON VIA SNOWDEN

62 miles sailing and 24 miles running.

Having never raced a yacht as a team and with only Duncan having raced yachts before (Rob and I had never raced anything much bigger than a 14ft dinghy) the start was actually pretty smooth. We positioned ourselves nicely and crossed the line just behind the 'performance' boats. Within minutes however the 'pack' were left windless while the 'magic Kevlar sails' of the performance boats seemed to be making their own wind.

As we watched the leaders sail off, it was clear that they were heading straight over the sand bar called St Patrick's Causeway, which I had planned to avoid. Knowing they were deeper keeled than us, I went below and having checked again the tides and times, decided to follow suit. As the wind came back we headed straight for Bardsey Sound following the lead pack

Interestingly others chose to hug the coast or to avoid the bar none the less. Whatever their reasons the direct route worked for us. As we approached the sound 4 hours later we had almost caught 2 larger boats, and had got a good lead on the pack, with whom we had crossed the line.

Nearing the sound I became less confident about my plan to cut 'inside the rock'. 'Umhing' and 'Ahing' I finally decided the original plan was right but, with the wind and tide, we could no longer make enough way to get inside the rock so we were forced outside. Overhauling the 2 boats who had entered the sound ahead of us, it looked like the dither had not affected us, but then The Dockers came racing through on the inside, having gone inside the rock, and raced on away; we never saw them again until Fort William and they went on to win the Tillman Trophy!

As we were about 8 hours out from Caernarfon Ewart & I retired to rest for our run, leaving Rob, Duncan and Richard to get us there as quickly as possible.

"We'll be there in an hour"; I felt exhausted having had a fitful sleep; "I hardly slept" I complained; "You snore a lot when you lie down then... Cup of tea on the side" was the departing comment as my 'waker' climbed back out into the cockpit.

The sailors had obviously done a good job. We were just behind Storm Force and Shanti was behind us. The wind was dropping but we were less than ½ a mile from "Mussel Bank" buoy where we could turn on the engine. Ewart and I began taking on fluids and energy food in preparation for the run. The wind however had other ideas. 15 Minutes later we were sat, becalmed again, with the tide turning against us. There followed almost 4 hours of rowing, kedging and very occasionally sailing. The last half hour was particularly difficult. Storm Force had put up their spinnaker and in a single gust crawled past the buoy & us. We however, having not raised our spinnaker, were left a tantalizing 25m from the buoy; with 4 boats, who had been out of sight an hour before, closing on us; spinnakers flying. Even a final push (or should it be pull) with the oars was in vain against a growing

tide and it was only when the wind arrived again that we finally crossed the 'engine on' line. We motored into Caernarfon and docked at 08:30 in wonderful sunbathing weather.

The performance boats pulling away



Mussel Bank buoy, so near and yet...

Rob and Ewart rowing, not enough muscle to pass Mussel Bank



Finally ready to run.

The 7 hours on Snowden were not great. As we climbed, reasonably gently out of Caernarfon I realised that the rowing and the sun were not conducive with me achieving our target time of 5h 30m.

It took over 1.5 hours to get to the rangers path, which I had expected to reach in about 1 hour, and as I looked up towards the summit I knew it was going to be a bad day! The rangers track is basically a two step climb with a flat (ish) middle section; the second climb being the steeper and longer.

As I finally reached the summit ridge, by the PYG track I was hot, grumpy and tired; I also knew that we were not going to make the tide. I literally crawled up the steps to the summit cairn and registered my electronic tag in the 'gizmo' chained to the trig point. I was exhausted but also annoyed that I had not achieved what I thought I should and consequently there was no way now we would reach Aquila in time for the tidal stream in the Swellies.

The descent to Llanberis was painfully steep in places but allowed our thighs a welcome break from going up, in the

short window before our knees began complaining about going down! As we set off jogging along the valley however I finally began to feel somewhat normal; just as we ran out of water.

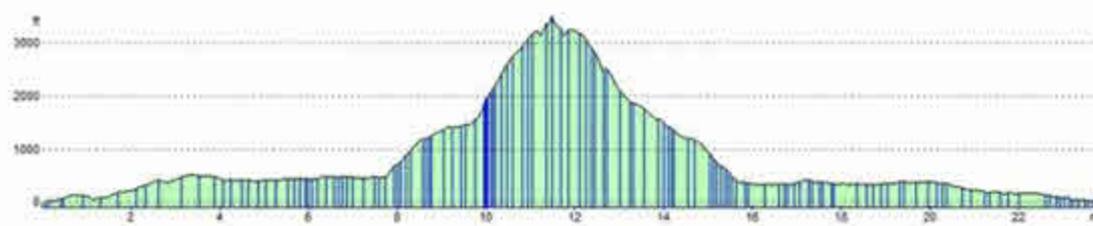
The final miles back to the boat were a combination of thirst, pain & boredom in which the desire to gain back a few minutes too often lost out to the lethargy of dehydration and sore feet (hill running shoes are not good on roads). The sight of the pier was heaven sent and gave us the spur of a last ½ mile jog home.

Summary

Route Distance: 23.8 Mi
Total Ascent: 4617 ft

Estimated Time: 9:15
Total Descent: 4617 ft

Elevation Profile



Despite what the 'topo' shows, the route from Llanberis to Caernarfon seems to be an almost never ending series of up hills which was nicely explained by Ewart. Apparently my engineers training was at fault and I should have studied something useful like philosophy which would explain the illogicality of more ups than downs very clearly!?!

Looking back on Snowdon from Menai Straights

CAERNARFON TO WHITEHAVEN VIA SCAFELL PIKE

100 miles sailing, 26 miles cycling and 26 miles running.

We set off NE up the Menai Straits planning to anchor by the Swellies and wait for a low tide passage; challenging but 'doable'. However the wind was on the nose, and showed no signs of changing, and as we passed Sigi Mae going the other way; hailing us of the problems White Cloud and Team Krishna were having (who hit the Swellie rock); we decided that despite all our plans and the advice we would go the long way. As we approached Mussel Bank Buoy again I scuttled down below to sleep.

Coming on shift again in the dark and with no wind I had a dreadful thought that we were still by that blooming buoy. In fact we were still on the South side of Anglesey but at least we were well clear of Caernarfon.

The next 12 hours saw us crawling round Anglesey and into the Irish Sea in some of the most boring winds I have ever sailed, but as we entered Monday afternoon the winds began to pick up, intermittently, and we spent the afternoon and evening alternately making good time and wallowing.

About 7 PM we rang Mum; who was bringing the bikes to Whitehaven; to say that we would not be there before 4 AM on Tuesday and more likely would not arrive until Tuesday afternoon.

As we passed into the night the wind steadily increased and our decision to stand on a straight path, rather than follow the crowd inshore, was vindicated. At 4 in the morning Duncan was waking the runners and ringing Mum, to wake her up and get the bikes ready, as we raced past St Bee's Head; wind behind us, surfing down the waves; at one point recording a boat speed of 9.5 knots! As the winds dropped slightly we dropped the Spinnaker and called up the lock keeper.

At 5:30 AM the runners were away and the sailors could relax.

By now there were 2 distinct packs about a tide apart, but from being in the middle of the rear pack, of 7 boats, we had got our selves to the front of the pack.



Duncan, kite flying in the Irish Sea



Sunrise as we approach Whitehaven

Scafell - By Richard Smith

The night before Scafell the wind was only slight and it looked like we wouldn't make it into Whitehaven until at least mid-day. As such, we were late heading to bed, thinking we would be in for quite a long wait the next day before setting off. However, while we slept the wind picked up considerably in our favour and we were hastily awoken early in the morning as we were approaching the Whitehaven lock. (I think the excellent progress was helped by some great sailing by Andy, Duncan and Rob on the night shifts).

As I frantically readied myself, there was little time to take in the view. But judging by the sunlight coming below deck it was going to be a very hot day.

Once through the lock, Ewart and I were dropped off at the pontoon and we made our way to the kit check. Before each land section, both runner's bags were checked to make sure all the required kit was being carried (this includes just enough equipment to overnight on the hills in an emergency). It is at the checkpoint you also pick up electronic 'dibbers'. These are carried round with each runner and are used at the checkpoints and summits to electronically register the time of arrival.

Having unloaded the bikes from the support van and with kit checked, we set off through the town to pick up the route. The track used to get to Ennerdale is an old railway that's been converted into a C2C cycle path. Apart from the occasional low bridge or prominent tree root, this part was fairly uneventful, especially when you're battling head down into the wind.

Having tested the route a few weeks before we had a good idea of the ups and downs ahead. On the cycle section, there is one particularly steep hill not long after leaving the old railway track. However on the way out to Scafell, this is a rather speedy descent, with the hard work saved for the return leg.

On arriving at Ennerdale, the Youth Hostel could be likened to the Marie Celeste. Ewart and I were sure we were at the right place, mainly from all the high visibility signs dotted around on the track; but no marshals. After some searching, two marshals emerged from a car to man the checkpoint. Here at the Youth Hostel is where the outward cycling section finishes with the remaining route up Scafell covered on foot. The rest of the track up Ennerdale to Blacksail Youth Hostel is supposedly 4 miles, but feels a lot longer in the repetitive pine forest. Even at 6 AM, the shadows from the forest gave a welcome break from the sun. Eventually the track emerged from the trees only for us to be tormented by the smell of fried breakfasts as we passed Blacksail Youth Hostel. From here the route crossed the river and quickly steepened as we made our way up Blacksail Pass.

With our pace down to a quick walk this was a good place to take on food and water while still moving. As the land section would take Ewart and I over 10 hours it was important to keep replenishing our energy reserves. Ewart had done some great research into the various high energy food and drinks available and while not quite a culinary delight, they certainly give you a boost.

We reached the top of Blacksail in good time and were presented with the view across to Scafell itself. It looked striking with some low clouds swirling round the higher ridges. However as we were racing there wasn't time to sit around taking in the sights and we dropped straight into our first descent. Remembering back to the practice walk, we were careful to not go down too quickly as we had two further knee-punishing descents to make.

From the bottom of Blacksail Pass, the route follows the valley to Wasdale Head where there is a second checkpoint next to the pub. As we rounded the track we saw the welcomed (but unexpected) sight of Andy and Gabrielle, who had driven round to meet us (and probably check we weren't slacking!). After a quick talk and re-stocking on water/energy drinks as we passed, Ewart and I started on our second (and

largest) ascent. It is a steep pull from Wasdale Head up Scafell and we were soon into the patchy low cloud. This gave us some nice respite from the sun.

Before Wasdale, we hadn't seen anyone out on the hills, but now we were onto the more traditional Three Peaks route there were an abundance of people. In the brief words spoken in passing, most of them were quite surprised we had come all the way from Whitehaven!

Following a few slight detours in the cloud we made it up onto the top of Scafell and to the furthest electronic checkpoint, by the summit. It felt good to know we had made it to the top, but we were only halfway through this land section. With both of us starting to feel the distance, we started to retrace our route and begin our second descent. Although we were making good progress and confident of meeting our target time, the greater fitness of some of the other competitors became apparent on our return trip. Especially when we were overtaken by a pair running up Blacksail Pass! This second ascent of Blacksail Pass was definitely the hardest section of the route and was made more difficult by general tiredness accumulated from the previous days at sea. We were both glad when we crossed over into Ennerdale for our last decent. Sadly the track through the woods from Blacksail Youth Hostel hadn't got any shorter, but this time when we arrived at Ennerdale Youth Hostel they were ready for us and we were soon on our bikes.

Well, Ewart was going good on his. I only managed a few kilometers before the chain decided it had had enough and snapped. In my mind I was having visions of a long push all the way to Whitehaven. However Ewart had come well prepared and, with the help of a 'chain break tool', we were able to continue cycling within 20 minutes. As we got back onto the old railway track we quickened our pace and, knowing we were almost back, raced down into Whitehaven. After over 11 hours on the hill, we were both relieved when we finally made it down to the marina. With legs now made of jelly and help from the rest of the team, we just about managed to get off the bikes and get to Aquila's mooring.

Thankfully, for the benefit of the rest of the crew, there was just enough time to wash before the tide came in sufficiently to let us set sail for Fort William.



Before

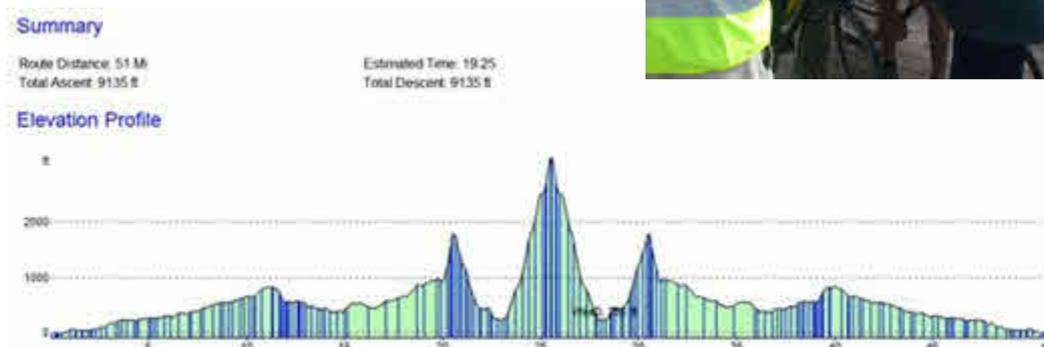


during



and

after



WHITEHAVEN TO CORPACH VIA BEN NEVIS

227 of sailing and 17 miles of running.

“Aquila It’ll be another 30 mins before you can leave” said the dour lock keeper over the VHF, so we sent the runners off for a shower and began pottering round the boat getting her ready to cast off. No sooner had the runners entered the shower block however the lock keeper came up again .

“What’s your draft again Aquila?”

“1.6m”

“Oh ok you can leave now with Storm Force”

“Wait one. Our runners have just gone for a shower!!”

“5 mins”

The runners valiantly jumped straight out their ‘leisurely showers’ and ran back to the boat, as we assured the lock keeper we were on the way. At 6 PM, as we pulled out of the lock, the generous bonhomie with Storm Force as we chatted in the lock turned to competitive spirit. We raced up the sails and, with a Force 4 wind off the beam, Aquila shot off West for the Mull of Galloway. After about an hour Storm Force was a good half mile or more behind but the wind was dropping and 30 minutes later there was Storm Force again less than 100 meters away. After 20 minutes, the wind was returning and again we began to pull away; but again this was not to last. Every time the wind blew we sailed clear of Storm Force, but in light airs she hauled Aquilla back; and the winds were blowing less and less often. Sigi Mae was also closing the gap. After a night of racing, as we rounded the Mull of Galloway at 6 AM we were behind both Storm Force and Sigi Mae, but only just.

As the day progressed we were in a battle royal with Sigi Mae and we remained, more or less, in hailing distance; while Storm Force remained sitting about 1 mile ahead of us. We slipped round the Mull of Kintyre at 5 PM, just ahead of the tide turning, and Sigi Mae and ourselves tucked into the East side of the Sound of Jura while Storm Force seemed to be heading for the NW side, or possibly going outside Jura, as she slipped from view into the darkening and cloud filling horizon. Night fell; so did the wind and the rain. I left Duncan and Ewart for their shift with a drooping spinnaker and the view going backwards saying “do you want to take the kite down before I go to bed” “no there’s another gust coming, we’ll wake you if we need to”.

In the next 3 hours ‘sleep’ I was woken to drop, raise and drop again the blooming spinnaker and I was not a happy bunny when Ewart woke me again with the inevitable “You’re on watch”. Looking at the live tracking site however; with the benefit of hindsight and a good night’s sleep or two, their 3 hours were an excellent piece of sailing when they went backwards less than anyone else and got a good 2 mile lead on Sigi Mae; what we couldn’t do was see Storm Force (her GPS transmitter had broken) .

We sailed on up the Sound of Jura and then through the Sound of Luing with the tide with us and the wind perfectly placed behind us, if still a little flaky in volume. The only shock was the speed with which The Salty Peanuts were catching

us despite our best efforts; evil thoughts about them ‘cheating’ showed how tired, or competitive, we had become. But we were only half right; yes they were motoring, but they had retired anyway!

That said their rapid overhauling, before we knew about the motor, didn’t half spur us on to try to sail better!



Richard helming through Sound of Luing

As we passed the South West end of Lismore Island the wind again dropped but as it came back, it had an increasingly North Westerly element to it and was weakening each time; the anemometer print out would look like half a decaying Sine wave! With Sigi Mae now back in sight we once more raised the spinnaker. This was a marginal success, but 4 hours were a trial and a half; flying our normal spinnaker way off the starboard side and dealing with the ‘interesting’ problems that occurred with each gust that flew over our port side; and tired peoples tempers frayed slightly. As they flew past Sigi Mae gleefully shouted “great spinnaker technique, but this is easier. Bought this sail off Ebay for £150 last week. Money well spent”; I smiled politely making a mental note to self to look for some light airs sails for next time!

The last hour and a half were trying as the wind direction now precluded our unconventional spinnaker tactics and Aquila’s sails were ‘too heavy’ for the light airs, we did however sail past the motor mark; Driac and most of the boats behind us were less fortunate and ‘enjoyed’ hours of rowing against the tide to finally make it to Fort William. In the last hour, Ewart and Duncan went into the normal, ‘carb loading’ and hydration routine. I remain to be convinced though of the benefits of bacon sandwiches on our elite athletes performance; though they did taste nice

At 18:30 we docked at Corpach and disgorged Duncan and Ewart for the final run.

The Ben - by Duncan Syme

It was a great relief to discover (via a recce by Ewart some 3 weeks before the start of the challenge) that there was little scope for us running up the Ben, those of you who have been up will know why. Those that haven’t then rest assured it is possible (technically), but then so is human flight (technically!).



Elite athlete
power eating
before
his run

Ewart
& the bacon
sarnie

Upon landing at Corpach, between us and the bottom of the Ben, we were gently led into our leg with a reasonably flat run of about 4 miles, which we started at about 19:15, with a pipe-dream of finishing that same day i.e. by 00:00 (give or take a minute!).

The route took us through the housing estate and beside the railway line to Fort William. This first leg was the only part of the entire challenge that had not been recce'd so was the only part of the challenge where the OS map got some use! When we got to the bottom of the Ben, it was clear that we weren't the only 3 peaks challenge going on! For most of our brisk climb up, we met a steady stream of fire-fighters coming in the opposite direction – it seemed as though every watch, of every fire-station, of every brigade had a team up the Ben that day and they were coming at us at some pace (and in varying states of control – some seemingly leaving their descent more to gravity, rather than carefully placed steps!). The climb up is steep and relentless and defies you from getting into any form of rhythm – The path is defined, but each step you take needs to carefully find a foot hold and each foot hold varies in step height. Mild relief from lactic burn is found on the plateau about half way up – Ewart gave me some good advice at this point “think of it as marking 2/3rd distance/ effort on the way up and ½ on the way down”.

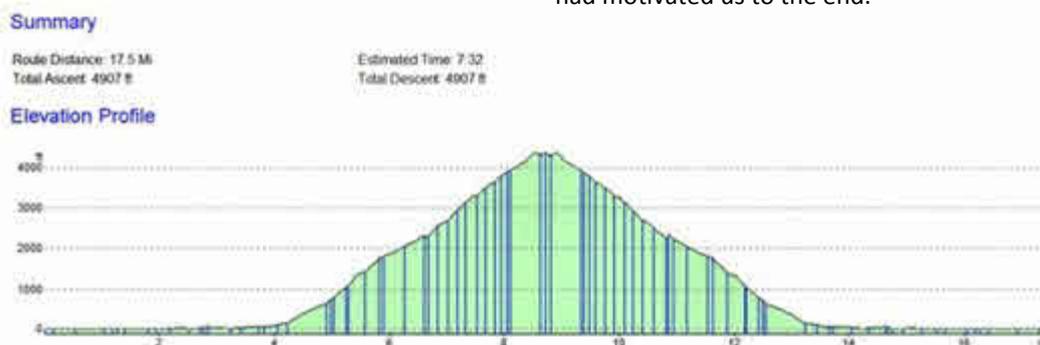
Around the actual 2/3rd point of the ascent was where the cloud cover finally removed a quite stunning view of Loch Linne and brought both visibility and temperature down dramatically (sufficient for there to still be snow fields on the top of the Ben in the middle of summer), but not such that we were prevented from summiting, which we did around 22:15 – 3 hrs from Corpach to the top was better than expected and meant we might make our midnight deadline (and beer). We clipped our sheet and “dibbed” our timing bands and headed straight back down – no views to admire sadly.

The first part of descent was a little more tricky than its ascent had been, hence it was at about the same speed. Especially difficult was the 30 meter wide snow field which we'd climbed like true snow and ice mountaineers only 30 minutes earlier; we descended it more like novice skiers! Back below the clouds, we felt we had the visibility and daylight left to try a more speedy descent and started running. Quite tricky for the un-initiated at first but we soon both had the hang of it, thanks again to Ewart's helpful advice; “land on your heel on the dirt and your toes on the rocks”.

There were very few people on the mountain by now, but we did pass some fellow yacht racers on their ascent – we figured we were unlikely to lose any placing now so some of the pressure lifted.

The highlight of the descent had to be the comment from one group we passed close to the bottom and who were also descending, but at a much gentler pace; “those Guys are awesome”. As is often the case the last part of any journey is the worst and is where you discover that the amount of training you did was not quite enough - our pipedream deadline slipped past and we were only just starting the run back to Corpach.

We eventually crossed the line just after 01:00 AM. 5 hrs and 40 mins elapsed leg time. Most of the other competitors had gone to bed by then, but our other teammates were waiting on the line to welcome us back, with what was, by then, very welcome refreshment – the finish line beers that had motivated us to the end.



REFLECTION

Training - Andy Syme

The pre-race training was physically difficult; I rued the day I left the Army swearing never to run again; but was a matter of time and drive. I hate running, but regular visits by Duncan up to Leeds, each time arriving fitter and faster than the last, spurred me on. A month out Ewart, Richard & I also ‘recce’ the Scafell route one weekend. While possibly the most uncomfortable 9 hours I’ve ever spent, voluntarily, in the mountains the ‘recce’ did show that it was “possible for us”;

not necessarily competing with the big boys but certainly not disgracing ourselves.

We also took a weekend together in Scotland to sail as a group. The wind was almost non-existent all weekend (good training had we known), but Richard and Ewart got a chance to do their first night sail and I was able to discover, in good time, that my 'old and trusty' oilskins weren't; failing the basic test of keeping the rain out! Credibility blown, the oilskins were unceremoniously consigned to the bin but the sailing and a 10 mile run in the hills around Kilmelford certainly help build the team and, for me at least, removed the nagging doubt of having bitten off more than we could chew. By the time I departed for Barmouth I was more realistic about 'winning a prize' (though still wildly optimistic in Ewart's eyes) but quietly confident that we could at least finish.

With hindsight more would have been better (for some of us at least), but for middle-aged wannabe's "we did good".

A logistical challenge - Andy Syme

After 20 years as an Army officer, having organised over 20 expeditions and with the full power of Internet behind me I was, initially, quite blasé about organising our entry. In fact the majority of tasks followed the normal 'delegate or do' cycle and were ticked off. But the Three Peaks Yacht Race has some unique challenges. For example where do you buy a rowing kit for a 36 foot long, 7.5 ton, sailing boat? You don't! Even when I had dug out my mechanical engineering training from the depths of my memory and devised a system of rollocks for the boat yard to manufacture we were still looking for oars. It was only weeks before the start that a random thought took me, eventually, to Leeds Rowing Club (who I never even knew existed) and the kindly David who lent us a pair of 'sweeps' (the oars used in 4 and 8 man racing boats)

There were also the inevitable OMG (Oh my God) moments. 10 days before the race we realised Aquila didn't have a Trysail to meet the "full set of heavy weather sails" rule. Rob rescued this particular problem resorting to ringing round various contacts and leads and buying a one within 1 hour. More embarrassing was my mad moment of receiving the charts, leaving them in the kitchen while I rang the supplier to thank them for the quick delivery and returning to a 'funny smell'. I had accidentally turned on one of the hobs and had just burnt about £40 worth of unused charts!! There were also the 'boring' but necessary tasks such as spending 8 hours one Sunday applying about 150 NTMs (chart updates) to our new charts; or buying and boxing food for 5 hungry people for up to 7 days.

In reality between February and May I did nothing, evenings and weekends, but '3 peaks stuff'.

I burnt a vast amount of 'family capital' during those weeks. The patience and understanding of Emma in allowing me to divert so much time, not to mention turning the house into a cross between a chandlery and a triathlon shop and not even taking her out for a birthday meal, is with hindsight unbelievably generous. She has, and continues to, support me and I still can't thank her enough.

The kindness of strangers

In addition to the generosity of the charity sponsors, who have donated over £7500 to the charities, I have been continually amazed by the kindness and patience of the people who have helped me. The rowing gear shop owner who, when rang up to be asked "how would you row a 7.5 ton yacht" spent 30 minutes discussing the problem, after giving the obvious answer "I wouldn't", and then advised me to buy off someone else as it would be cheaper. Or the Life raft hire company who gave us a 30% discount and then when asked for advice on where to get our additional flares gave us a set free.

In particular I must mention Clive. A friend of a friend, he and his friends gave up a days sailing from their holidays to take Rob and I through the Swellies, the notorious tidal race in the Menai Straits, so we were able to see it first hand. He was also on hand as we sailed into Caernarfon with a welcome wave and cheer, as well as the biggest camera I've seen to record the start of our first running leg.

And friends

We also have superb assistance from friends. We had always planned to collect the boat from Stranraer where it was being dropped and Robert was leading an intrepid bunch to move the boat down to Barmouth over the week preceding the race; thank our lucky stars one of us was retired! But an illness meant that we suddenly had an additional 100 miles of boat delivery to arrange.

The only date available to move the boat was Duncan's birthday, which he graciously forewent, but we still needed a third crew member. I rang Malcolm with a not very attractive proposition but to my surprise he agreed.

Last Minute Scramble - Andy Syme

With 3 weeks to go everything was set and I could finally relax. Unfortunately our 'part 1' delivery crew skipper's wife then became seriously ill. With no obvious plan B, Duncan & I, plus Malcolm a friend from Leeds, met in Carlisle at 21:00 and drove up to a Glasgow airport long stay car park where we met Ewart; who had driven over from Edinburgh. Ewart drove us all to Kilmelford, near Oban, arriving at 02:30 Saturday morning. At 03:00 we cast off, leaving Ewart to sleep in the car before going to Ben Nevis for a recce, and set off south in no wind and mirror calm seas. With no wind we had no decisions about motoring and as a consequence were able to make excellent time going South, arriving in Stranraer having averaged 6 knots all the way (9 with the tide round Mull) and arriving in time for a pint and a meal; rather than the expected 2 AM arrival based on the '4 knot average' plan.

We got the early train back on Sunday to Paisley and picked up the car to reverse Friday's journey. I was back in Stranraer the following weekend to drop off Rob and the 'Part 2' delivery crew. Six days to the race and finally everything was done!

Rob's recollections

My interest in the event goes back many years, but remained a "pipe dream" until Andy asked his question last year. There seemed to be many questions; not just that first one. The project took shape rapidly once my co-owners of our boat had agreed to her being used with the proviso that a representative of the owners was aboard; it was my good fortune that none of them were "available".

Of course to be aboard with the others, two members of whom I introduced to sailing in the early "80's" gave me great satisfaction – particularly as they now possess some skills which are more than a "notch up" on mine.

The next few months were all absorbing in terms of time and planning, not least to see that our boat was in the best possible "shape" and provided with items which had not hitherto been part of our equipment. For example not many cruising yachts are fitted for oars! It was sweat and tears and a new experience for us all rowing a heavy yacht to achieve well over 1.5 knots through the water. (Final speed attained is "classified info"!)

I had not appreciated the multi-faceted logistical problems we had to solve before even getting to the start line in Barmouth. Conversations and advice from friends who had taken part in earlier years were invaluable; but of course we are now much wiser having completed one event. It is an axiom that those who complete one "3 Peaks", almost all want to have another go, at least to apply what had been learned first time.

None of us knew for certain when we set out, that we would be able to complete the course. So it was with great silent emotion as we passed through the Dorus Mhor tidal rips, and in sight of the infamous Gulf of Corryvreckan that I shed a tear and thought of our many generous sponsors and the beneficiaries of the two charities we had chosen to support

"Lawyer Peaks" at the Barmouth to Fort William Three Peaks Yacht Race - Ewart Baxter

Well its over and we did it! 389 miles of sailing, 26 miles of cycling and 72 miles of running (well some crawling), with approximately 18,000 feet of ascent, as the invitation I received suggesting the race said, "I know it's a mad idea, but". Well it certainly was, at the beginning of June I was a novice sailor who'd never done anything other than a basic dingy course, now I've competed in a classic yacht race. We were 14th out of 20 finishers (and 23 starters).

I can recommend the 3 Peaks Yacht race to anyone who wants to throw themselves into a unique concentration of physical and mental highs and lows. Over the week I was so tired on watch I could hardly keep my eyes open, so hungry I could eat wine gums in handfuls and so out of breath going uphill I nearly caused a local weather system.

However, I can confirm that Snowdon is nowhere near the sea, Ben Nevis is knee poppingly steep and if you are forced to start in the wrong valley (Ennerdale Water) to climb Scafell Pike, having to climb three hills, (Blacksail Pass twice, Scafell once!) rather than one, it shouldn't come as a surprise!

Other than a brief case of wobbly knees half way up Blacksail pass (for the second time), a broken bike chain and the realisation that bicycle clips and sore feet aren't really compatible, we coped with the physical challenge. Further, our brains were able to ignore the pleas made by pain wracked bodies and we kept at it.

The elation of flying on the edge of the wind from Barmouth, the tension of the race around the Mull of Kintyre and the sheer exhilaration of running down Ben Nevis in twilight will remain with me for a very long time.

However, the best thing, without a doubt, was being part of a close team of people, who faced an extraordinary challenge and raised over £7,500 for our chosen charities.

Final thoughts - Andy Syme

The Three Peaks Yacht Race is a hard event, but actually perfectly feasible for a moderately fit, and determined, group of 'normal people'. Despite thinking we had entered the Dragon's Den of elite athletes everyone was welcoming, friendly and helpful; except on the start line: but what can you expect!?

I must admit to being slightly bitten by the bug, once I started forgetting the most painful bits, and you never know, Scottish Three Peaks next year then back for the 35th event in 2012 might not be so unimaginable!!

We all came out of our comfort zone at times. Richard found cooking a challenge "Its hard enough at home, but there gravity isn't pulling you sideways. Even with a gimbaled stove, it takes a certain degree of skill to balance all the plates and dishes as you try to serve up food on a tack." and almost never getting more than 3 hours sleep we all suffered the dreaded 'head droop' on night watches but these were also quiet reflective times for Richard "my favourite moments were silently sailing through moonlit waters".

I am still toting up our charity receipts, but I hope that we will raise more than £7,500 between Help for Heroes and Breast Cancer Haven. What could be better than that; raising money for worthwhile causes by doing something unique, challenging, exhilarating and fun.

You know what, I might start planning the next race now!



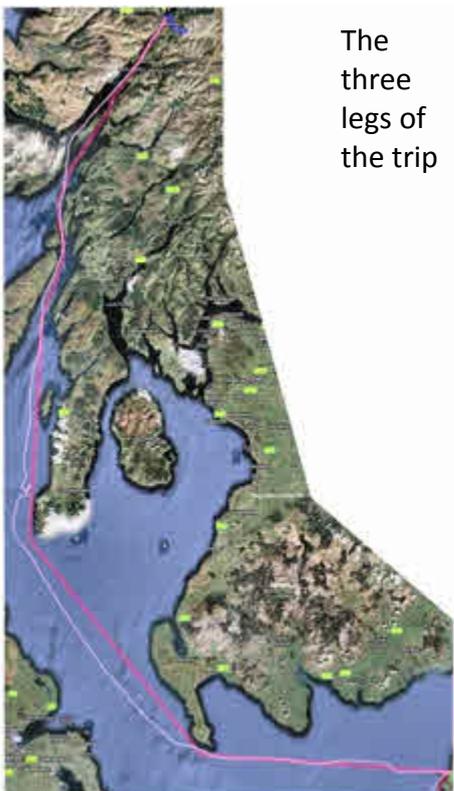
Richard, Duncan, Rob, Andy & Ewart
Team On & Up



Aquila with
bunting in
front of
Ben Nevis



Finished! - Got the medal!



The
three
legs
of
the
trip

SKIING THE THREE PEAKS

No not those three peaks again. This time we are talking of the Yorkshire Three Peaks. Ged Campion tells of an ambition fulfilled.

"I had always wanted to ski Pen-y-Ghent, Ingleborough and Whernside on the same day. A feat rarely accomplished because of the fickle snow conditions that seem to blight the Craven Dales. I had on a few occasions skied two of the peaks on the same day albeit in fairly dreadful conditions with the snow and visibility virtually disappearing before me. The maritime influence of Morecambe Bay and prevailing westerlies means that snow will fall one day and duly disappear the next day even though snow may remain higher up, the connecting routes between hills become unreliable lower down. This season however promised to be different. Plentiful snow had already fallen from Xmas onwards, and freezing conditions meant that the snow base never really eroded providing limitless skiing possibilities in the Dales. On Xmas day I had skied the Crina Bottom approach and descent of Ingleborough, on Boxing Day myself and Aaron had skied the East summit slope of Whernside and following day Pen-y-Ghent from the Horton Lane approach in perfect conditions. It had required no ski carrying at all, just skiing straight from the car to the top and then the descent. From the Xmas break the conditions seemed to get better and better always fresh dumps of snow and very little drifting the sort of regular regime you'd expect in the Alps. By the second week in January high pressure was definitely in charge with wall to wall blue sky, light north easterly winds and beautiful sunsets. It looked likely that the weather would hold to Friday and winds and cloud would pick up on Saturday.

I could get time from work on Friday and contacted Bruce on Wednesday night to see if he could join me on a Three Peaks bid. He had leave time pending so he was in with a chance. On Thursday however, things changed because he had to see his Chief Executive the very next day so I was back to a solo trip once again. Friday morning arrived and sure enough a perfect Alpine day dawned. I'd decided to follow a route that would allow efficiency, excitement, getting the best out of the prevailing snow conditions and most importantly finishing in my back garden in Twisleton. My route therefore would be from Horton in Ribblesdale to Pen-y-Ghent via the Lane to Tarn Bar up the fell to the big dog leg and to the summit and down the same route. Next I would tackle Ingleborough, Horton Railway Station across the fields and follow the Sulber Nick fault line past the Shooting Hut across Simon Fell Breast and up the very steep Swine Tail to the summit plateau. I would descend the Swine Tail in the direction of Simon Fell but ski the steep wall overlooking Chapel Le Dale and then down across Humphrey Bottom past Braithwaite Wife Hole to the Hill Inn, Then up Whernside via Philpin Lane and Bruntscar up the steep east slope to Low Pike and then to the summit with a long descent along the ridge to Scar End at Twisleton.

I wanted to start at first light but child minding duties dictated the start time. I would have to help get the kids ready for school before I headed for the start.

I arrived in Horton at 8.45 and left my car outside the Primary School. There was no one about. I walked across the small wooden river bridge opposite the school and put my skis at the start of the lane. I knew the conditions in the lane were good from a walk I'd done with the family the preceding Sunday when Aaron had sledged all the way down Pen-y-Ghent. A chilly easterly blew as I joined the main lane. Despite the brisk pace I adopted, it was still cold enough to keep a wind proof top layer on. The only things that interrupted my rhythm were the gates that would only partially open because of the snow build up around their base; easy for walkers but requiring contortions with skis on. Nearing the top of the lane to my surprise I met a walker coming the other way. He was moving briskly and we just nodded to each other conscious not to distract the other from the task. I assumed he was tackling the 3's as well and as we exchanged pleasantries, I was very aware of how far he already was in front of me. Anyway I now had Pen-y-Ghent to myself and it was good to get out of the walled lane and onto the open fell where one branch of the path leads off to Hull Pot. Up and down, crossing a few shallow gills the slope rises consistently and leant itself to the rhythm of skinning on near perfect snow, gliding above the crusty surface. I soon reached the sharp bend where the walking track swings to the right and forms a rising traverse before the final summit slope is reached. There were heavy accumulations of snow on the traverse forming near cornices but still the conditions provided a firm base to skin.

On reaching the summit the chilly easterly was more apparent. It had taken around an hour and my first peak was done. There were brilliant views across towards Wharfedale and beyond. I took off my skins and prepared for the descent. From the summit I cut diagonally across to the sharp bend near the small crag to get a good even ski down. From the bend I took the line of the walking track throwing in the occasional Telemark turn and step turn to control my descent. These were perfect conditions and I soon reached the top of the lane. The lane itself had become a veritable cresta run with few opportunities to turn. But skiing it previously I knew where I could let rip and also where to exercise caution! Two thirds of the way down a small bend with an icy step forms a difficult obstacle with rock still exposed despite the liberal snow and ice cover. This same step for many years provided a difficult obstacle when driving my old Renault 5 up the track to the shooting hut (a suitable changing facility for cavers) which has long since gone. After a succession of schusses aided by a little skating I arrived at the Horton Road. I clattered across the Tarmac and skied along the pavement. Unfortunately the Three Peaks Cafe was closed or I might have stopped for breakfast! The humpback bridge by the Crown Hotel was devoid of snow because of its narrowness but I managed. Howard Beck from CPC was surprised to see me he just leaving Ivy Cottages for the day and wished me well. I was forced to take off the skis while crossing the tracks at Horton station

because large amounts of grit were sprinkled on the crossing area. The steep narrow approach to the style the other side proved challenging with skis on! Once through the style it was skins on again. There was only a vague suggestion of footprints across the undulating meadows that followed but always a set of prints that I was certain belonged to the mysterious walker/runner who I had encountered in the walled lane above Horton. As the meadows became fell side and the steepness increased, the snow was slightly deeper making progress heavier. Beyond the cross roads of paths where the finger post points out the possibilities, the Sulber Nick fault becomes more pronounced. I had decided to follow it up on the left side, well out of the nick and away from any obstacles like walls and stiles. I knew any clints would be buried under the snow so progress would be good. To my amazement the nick itself was completely buried and the unconsolidated snow deep above its recess was uncomfortably soft and deep even for skis to glide over let alone walkers to walk. All footsteps took the line I had intended to. I reached the derelict Shooting Lodge and stopped for a coffee and sandwich. This place always forms a sun trap protected from westerlies by the first real slopes of rising Ingleborough just behind.

The warm sun on my face seemed a long way from the icy start I had made in Horton hours before. Until now I hadn't used the climbers on my ski but this slope was short and steep. I reached the stile and Simon Fell Breast was spread out before me with the summit of Ingleborough elusively behind. This is always a long stretch and after I had completed it I'd wished I'd taken off my skins. It undulates sufficiently to allow gliding interrupted by occasional strenuous poling but lazy like I slogged it with skins on. The monotony of this section was only broken by the chance encounter with the owner of the mysterious footprints and the character I had met near Pen-y-Ghent. He was just returning from Ingleborough content to do two peaks, ambitious without skis or snow shoes at that! Impressed by my 3 peaks bid he continued on his way to catch the train from Horton back to Leeds. He wished me well as he headed off down.

Before long I reached the foot of the steep slope that forms the 'Swine's Tail' just below the extensive plateau that forms the summit of Ingleborough. This was without doubt the steepest ground on the route and it's hard to zig zag here because the 'Tail' is the crest of a steep ridge, the ground either side even steeper at times and littered with gritstone boulders. One is therefore forced to stay on the crest. With full use of climbers on the skis I managed only having to side step a few times. Towards the top of the slope I realised how busy Ingleborough was becoming, walkers topping out on numerous routes up having beaten tracks despite the depth of the snow on the approach paths. Having been on my own for what seemed a long now, it seemed bizarre to suddenly see so many people in this arctic landscape. I crossed the summit plateau to the shelter where a while host of characters were gathered eating lunch and surveying the incredible views in every direction. A number of people were wearing crampons and wielding all manner of brightly coloured ice tools. People looked at my equipment with curiosity but didn't question my purpose. It was 1.30. and

time for lunch. I had a sandwich but I hadn't too much of an appetite probably because I was forcing a pace more akin to jogging than walking. I was virtually out of liquids but looked forward to flask of coffee that I had arranged Bev to leave just down the road from the Hill Inn.

Skiing off the summit plateau was going to be the most challenging of the descents. I chose the slope overlooking the Horton side to allow me to reach the vague saddle between Ingleborough and Simon Fell. A few kick turns above menacing gritstone boulders on the steepest sections interrupted the rhythm of Telemark turns but got me down efficiently. I got to the top of the steep slope that follows the fence down towards Humphrey Bottom and Chapel Le Dale beyond. It's a short but very steep slope that appeared more like a grade 1 Scottish Gully than a trade route up a Dales Hill! People had been using the fence for assistance so much that the posts had become up rooted and detached from the slope in places hanging forlornly in space. This section of the hill forms 'The wall' of Ingleborough that protects its upper slopes from the west. It's one of the few slopes you get the feeling of avalanche danger on the route and I had heard stories of avalanche here in the past. I treated 'the wall' with respect more for its steepness than avalanche potential given the perfect snow and ice conditions. I cut the wall diagonally; the snow was deep and turning a little hard in unforgiving snow with breakable crust. I settled for a more defensive traverse than a succession of short turns ensuring that I arrived at the bottom in style and not dishevelled. With relative ease I completed the steep section much to the bemusement of walkers getting ready to start the snow couloir beside the fence.

The snow slopes below Humphrey Bottom take on an undulating appearance from above but always gently descending towards the double stiles near Sunset Hole. This stretch was perfect I took a clear line towards the west which bore no relationship to the ascending track from the stiles. This was completely obliterated by snow and substituted by a narrow winding track just discernible to my left beaten by a succession of walkers. Wide and open the turning was majestic here, with the occasional dip of a gill adding to the interest. I reached the double stiles and for the first time had to take off my skis to cross a stile. The change of mode introduced the first stirrings of cramp in my calves. Skis on again I headed past a very snowy Braithwaite Wife Hole and down the nick, along the side of Southerscales scar towards the pastures that lie above the Hill Inn.

Despite the flatness easy poling enabled me to glide speedily past a few teams returning from Ingleborough. This part of the 3's was certainly the most populated. I reached the road and for a 100 metres or so carried my skis to the start of Philpin Lane that leads up to Brunts car. Just by the gate here Bev had left a flask of coffee thus making my tour not completely unassisted. By now the affects of dehydration were taking their toll and the coffee was timely.

My target now was to reach the summit of Whernside before nightfall. With urgency I poled up the slightly

monotonous lane stepping aside for a tractor at one point. Even here the tarmac wasn't showing! It was good to reach Bruntscar where two walkers were returning from Whernside. Questioning me on my method of ascent they were fascinated to learn that I could ascend hills on skis, gliding across the top and not having to ignominiously sink on every step as they had done. Able to witness a complete change of mode they marvelled at how well my skins could stick to the skis yet be removed when necessary, They had done two peaks and were slightly envious of my ambition that day. I told them I still had a good distance to go but they seemed very confident in my ability to succeed. I bade them farewell and focussed on my task.

I had climbed Whernside on skis on Boxing Day and had found conditions on the section before the initial ridge to be steep unconsolidated snow with much sliding on the traverses and despite freeze/thaw since that day the slope still lived up to its reputation. I finally reached the ridge at Low Pike feeling tired but reassured. I knew this ridge so well because it eventually leads to my house. I'd done it many times in the dark in far less clement weather. But that was later; I still had to finish Whernside.

I climbed the initial steep section the rocky outcrop itself well covered by snow. As I progressed upwards I surveyed the slope the other side of the wall where virgin snow appeared to provide an uninterrupted way down, wider and devoid of any walking tracks. It was easy to use both sides anyway; the wall had mostly disappeared under the snow only revealing itself occasionally as a couple of stones or rusty section of fencing. Just before the final gate on the ridge to my surprise I met the only other skier that day - a snowboarder descending with a dog. He only acknowledged me with a wave not wanting to lose his momentum on the more level sections of the path come piste.

Ahead lay the summit, cold and empty of human kind and where I would finally turn around. Without much shelter I finishing the last dregs of my coffee I took off my skins for the last time heading for the other side of the wall.

The dying sun was almost down but the rose tint glow on the snow framed as perfect a picture you would see anywhere in the Alps. The fading light became uppermost in my mind, dark spectres on the snow making it difficult to assess the fall line at times.

The descent to Sand Beds passed quickly and I started the long four and a half mile section to Scales Moor where you follow the undulating flat ridge with the wall on your right all the way to Scar End and home. Despite the undulating nature of the ridge the sheer abundance of uninterrupted snow gave the ridge a new lease of life making it easy to skate and glide, only to be punctuated by the stile below Combe scar which I circumvented by tackling a much reduced wall to the left, with rusty barbed wire threatening to ensnare my ski tips as my tired legs awkwardly straddled the obstacle. I skied away from the wall at West Fell End for a while taking the open fell where the snow was a more even cover, a herd of sheep below in the dim light completely taken by surprise quickly scattered into the fading light.

East Kingsdale lay to my right where many years of digging in caves seemed a million miles away, I passed the two familiar huge boulders in the wall, reassuring landmarks on Scales Moor in dark or misty conditions. I crossed leftwards to the nick with the scattering of clints either side of me covered in snow.

With no moon to guide me, I resisted using my head torch for as long as I could with the snow casting a natural light and providing some vision ahead but as darkness prevailed I reluctantly resorted to artificial illumination that quickly enclosed me in my own circle of light oblivious to what existed beyond the reach of my torch.

It didn't seem far before I reached the hill fort site and I could see the orange glow of the lights of Ingleton in the distance.

As I neared the edge of Scar End the final steep slope down to the waterfalls path can be quite challenging even in daylight on skis so I had to proceed gingerly, the build up of snow had completely obliterated the scar at the top of the bench providing deep soft snow as a soft landing in the absence of a track. I probably fell over more on this last section than anywhere else on the route but at last I found the long ramp feature which I was very familiar with. I could see the welcoming lights of the house as I skied down.

I was home. The entire tour had taken 9hrs 15 minutes from Horton to Scar End."



Returning home

Equipment used;:
Asnes Telemark Skis (2 metres)
Riva Cable Bindings,
Swix Poles.

The longer narrower ski whilst not so good for short turns give good stability for ski running and can cut through deep snow effectively with their curved fronts. The more modern parabolic shaped skis whilst good for turning on steep ground can be heavier and harder work cutting tracks and ascending. The extendible 'climbers' under the boot heel attached to the skis allow up hill progress without stretching the heel so much!

Plastic Garmont Telemark boots though less comfortable than leather boots give more stability for turning and feet stay drier when paddling through thawing snow/ice pools.

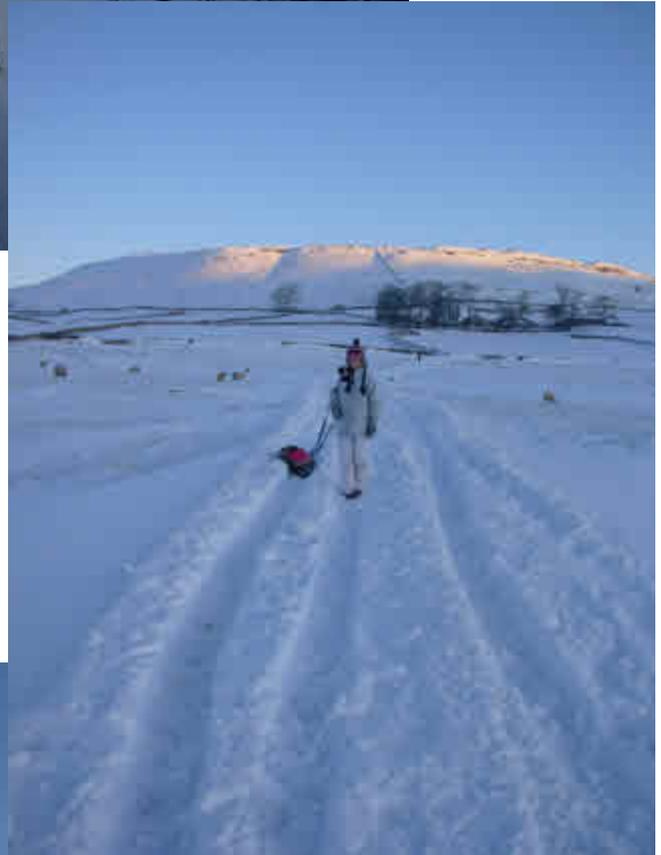


Penyghent from Horton Lane

Snowed in at Twistleton

Penyghent in perfect skiing conditions

Photos by Ged



AN EXTRAORDINARY HILL IN BRAZIL

BOM JESUS DE LAPA

John & Valerie Middleton

A small limestone hill is the centrepiece of a city situated in the scorching hinterland of Bahia State, Brazil. It is a haven for some unique flora and fauna, is a place of pilgrimage and is also the site of a spectacular karst. The information in this article results from our own observations during 2010, from conversations with local people and from local pamphlets, posters etc.

Bom Jesus de Lapa sits lazily on the eastern bank of the great São Francisco River some 850 arduous road kilometres from the state capitol of Salvador. It has a population of around 65,000 with the occupants mainly involved in regional commerce, agriculture, and fishing and in providing facilities for pilgrims. The town is generally clean, attractive, very friendly and is easy and interesting to explore. The centre of the city is dominated by a spectacular and revered rocky outcrop known simply as "The Morro"*. The size of this great grey degraded limestone tower would seem to be locally open to debate but measurements taken from "Google Earth" suggest that in reality it is just 680m by 290m by 65m high. At its narrowest it is 140m. The sides are vertical to just off vertical and streaked by great karren features whilst the top is a jagged field of typical bambui** karst with small pinnacles, razor edged rillenkarren, canyons and shafts. Sprouting from the inhospitable environment is a host of different cacti including one, *Quiabentia zehntneri*, for which this is the type locality. Exotic bromeliads cling precariously to the rock whilst occasional orchids sprout from any available cracks. Hairy faced marmosets peer inquisitively from tree branches, agouties scuttle across the floor and lizards rush everywhere on endless errands. Great Black Vultures stand guard at the highest points. Some of the canyons reach almost down to street level and it is possible to make an interesting and not too difficult ascent to the top whereupon there is a Cross, a Shrine and a breathtaking 360° view. A very special hill indeed!

From the market place at the south-western end of the hill a broad flight of steps leads up to an impressive cave entrance. This is the amazing "Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Lapa" to which over 700,000 pilgrims come every year to ask for divine intervention, to give thanks, be blessed or to simply worship. The imposing entry leads almost immediately into a tile floored natural chamber some 50m long, 15m wide and 7m high. A large natural opening in the far right hand wall overlooks the countryside whilst a beautifully decorated altar stands to its left. Natural stalactites hang from the ceilings, flowstone cascades down the walls and a few stalagmites grow around the edges. The atmosphere, even to non catholics, is one of excitement and anticipation with even hardened travellers such as us being rooted to the ground in a state of total



awe! By the side of the altar a smaller passageway gives access to a second chamber of similar beauty, use and proportions. Finally, a further tunnel continues to a series of smaller but well decorated rooms most of which house prosthetic parts, crutches, religious symbols and models of objects that need to be blessed. We have not managed to find an accurate survey of the interior but we estimate the natural passageways that we traversed to be around 200m in length. Outside and to the left of the entry is a rather incongruous round tower that houses the church bells. The Sanctuary is open all year round but the high season for pilgrims is for nine days of prayers between July 28th and August 6th with this latter day celebrating the Sanctuary and the City's founder, Francisco de Mendonça Mar.

Francisco de Mendonça Mar was born in Portugal in 1657. In 1679 he travelled to Salvador to further his profession as a painter. This proved successful and nine years later he obtained a contract to paint the palace of the Governor General. There then followed an unfortunate disagreement with Francisco subsequently deciding to revoke all worldly goods, become a monk and travel to the interior of the state. In following this aim he endured considerable hardship from the terrain, wild animals, hostile Indians and mosquitoes before eventually coming upon a hill close to the Rio São Francisco. Whilst investigating this hill he found a cave that had previously been inhabited by Jaguars, he entered it, decided to stay and immediately settled into the life of a hermit. Over the next few years he converted the cave into a catholic shrine and then resolved in 1691 to devote his time to the poor, the needy and the crippled. Visitors were frequent as in the 17th and 18th centuries access to Brazil's vast interior with its untold riches of gold and diamonds was normally made along the

São Francisco River. His good work encouraged people to settle in the region and eventually a thriving township developed. During 1705 Monk Francisco was ordained as Padre Francisco Da Soledade. He died at the cave in 1722 aged 65.

Surrounding the town is a generally flat landscape that belongs to the great "sertão", a harsh and drought prone region of the central north-east. The vegetation itself is described as "caatinga" being characterised by deciduous low forest and thorny thickets that are able to cope with the low and unpredictable rainfall. Much of this has been cleared to make way for low density cattle ranching. It is however still well-known for Boa Constrictors and rattlesnakes! To the north, towards Ibotirama, there are several more isolated limestone hills but all are small and not thought to contain any caves. Southwards it is almost 130km before limestone is again seen, this time as extensive but little visited outcrops around the isolated town of Luiú.

The city of Bom Jesus de Lapa is connected to the western bank of the river by a fairly recent and beautifully arched bridge. There is little to see here except for a few cottages and a couple of Bars although the latter do serve delicious local fish and provide an impressive view of the "Morro" across the water. The land on this side is slightly more undulating and is well known for its banana production. Some 60km westwards and close to the attractive old village of Porto Novo resides a further region of unexplored Bambui limestone. We spent a full day here and were totally mesmerised by its exceptional flora and stunning karst features. We only explored along the eastern plateau edges and saw no caves but there were deep fissures and the area does cover many square kilometres. About 80km directly south from Porto Novo are the limestone ranges of Serra do Ramalho. This is the site of many recent cave discoveries including Boqueirão, 15,700m long; Gruna da Água Clara, 13,880m and Lapa dos Peixes, 7,020m. The region is wild, remote, difficult to explore and usually necessitates major expedition techniques.

FOOTNOTE. A number of other caves exist within Bahia State that are used as places of pilgrimage, although to a lesser extent – most notably the Gruta da Patamuté, Lapa dos Brejões and Gruta da Milagrosa. An excellent paper has been written on the reasons and myths of such sites by *Elvis Pereira Barbosa and Luiz Eduardo Panisset Travassos in Acta Carsologica 37/2-3, pp331-338, Postojna 2008 entitled "Caves, Stories, History and Popular Traditions in the Semi-Desert (Sertao) of Bahia in North-eastern Brazil"*.

* Morro is a Brazilian Portuguese word for *hill*.
 ** Bambui karst. See also YRC Journal Issue 9, Series 13, Summer 2010 p8.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. The southern end of the "Morro" with Bell Tower.
2. The "Sanctuary" entrance.
3. From the top of the "Morro" with Bom Jesus de Lapa below.
4. The Bar, Rio São Francisco, the bridge, Bom Jesus de Lapa and the "Morro".
5. Classic Bambui limestone by Porto Novo.
 The silver bromeliad is as yet unnamed

The photograph on the previous page is the first chamber of the "Sanctuary".



MOTHER'S PERPETUAL NECKLACE

Roy Denney

A suspicion confirmed.

Most of you will have seen advertising by Invesco Perpetual Asset Management displaying the distinctive 'Perpetual' mountain. Material has been popping through my doors from them for years and I have often puzzled as to what the mountain was.

Taking the classic form of every child's imaginary mountain I several times convinced myself it was Ama Dablam but whenever I looked at my photographs of that mountain I had doubts. It bore a great similarity but if indeed it was that peak it was taken from a vantage point that I had never seen before.

I have often been puzzled trying to confirm attractive locations displayed in marketing and had come to understand some of the tricks used. A well known credit card was produced with a very attractive and obviously Scottish loch and in desperation when I contacted them it turned out it was a mirror image.

Similarly an article in the Caravan Club magazine showed pictures of an idyllic coastal spot where they were extolling the virtues of one of their most popular small certified camping locations. They chose not to actually name the location, as I subsequently learned, to prevent it being overwhelmed as it always had waiting lists.

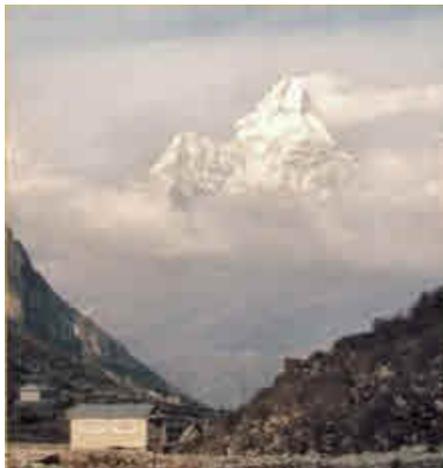
Friends and I, feeling we knew the British coast extremely well, puzzled over this one too, studying which way shadows were cast and other techniques to no avail. Again on enquiry it was a mirror image.

Finally I recently decided to put the matter of the mountain to rest and contacted the company. To their credit this was not in fact either computer generated imaginary or doctored mountain but indeed Ama Dablam.

From pictures I have seen I have always thought this the most classically beautiful mountain but when I trekked past it was largely shrouded in cloud and I only got glimpses of it till I was above and looking back from which direction it had lost much of its 'shape'.

The best picture I got of anything like that profile, was just a distant shot of its summit rising above the cloud base and taken from Khumjung.

Not only did Invesco Perpetual put my mind at rest but they sent me a limited edition



presentation book explaining how they got the photographs and including some of the most magnificent pictures I have ever seen of the mountain.

It points out that Ama Dablam literally translated means Mother's Necklace, denoting the high hanging serac just below the summit. This necklace holds special meaning in Nepali life. Important items are secured in a box and worn round the neck of the family's senior matriarch, an important figure in local culture. As a result Ama Dablam holds a very special and holy significance to the people of Nepal.

The mountain was introduced as Perpetual's corporate logo as far back as the 80s but 'retired' 20 years later when Invesco acquired Perpetual. It was revived for a one off campaign 4 years later and so enthusiastically received that it has remained ever since.

At that point they decided to really do the mountain justice and commissioned the renowned Donovan Wylie to do the photography. As Ama Dablam is already one of the worlds most photographed mountains they concluded that they had to shoot her from all angles - by using helicopters they had a 360 degree view of her in all her glory which is reflected in the superb pictures in the book. It also explains how the aspect is not one I had seen exactly before.

You may be questioning why this is not appearing in the book review section but as this is a book you cannot buy there seemed little point. As however our journal is not for sale I have been given permission to replicate the images.

Donovan Wylie is Belfast born and a member of Magnum, the international photography cooperative owned by its photographer members. With offices throughout the world it provides photographs to press, TV, advertising agencies, museums etc and more detail can be found at <http://www.magnumphotos.com>. Wylie himself is a BAFTA award winner for a channel 4 film.

Some of those attending the Annual Dinner this year or a recent committee meeting have seen the book together with Richard l'Anson's photographic record of Nepal (*book revue, journal Series 13 issue 9*) I brought them along to inspire the photographers amongst you.



CHIPPINGS



KALYMNOS UPDATE.

The "2010 Update List" of climbs on this amazing island shows the number of sectors (cliffs) now to be 84 and the number of routes as almost 1,700.

Many new routes occur on the island of Telendos including a 3 star 245m multi pitch consistently 5c route (max. 6a). It also states that there will be at least 4 bolting teams active during the year to increase this number further.

We made our third visit to the island during April and found this to be the best time yet with good weather and us the only climbers on many of the cliffs we visited. May 1st is when the first charter flights arrive on Kos and this is immediately high season for Kalymnos. It is also a time when the island is at its most beautiful with an abundance of colourful flowers.

New sectors visited were Belgian Chocolates, Skalia Pillar, Afternoon, Pescatori (Telendos) and Irox (Telendos). All routes were of a consistently high quality.

John Middleton

HIMALAYAN CONCERNS

China and Nepal recently agreed to differ on the height of Everest, one including the ice cap and the other discounting it. It might all have been to no avail as if things continue as they are, eventually there will be no ice cap. Rising temperatures have already melted much of the ice on the steep trail to the summit with climbers struggling to get a grip on the newly exposed rock where their crampons are little use on the rocky surfaces.

The melting ice has increased many other risks as it has also exposed deep crevasses and increased danger from outburst floods of glacial melt water.

University College London reports that the Himalayan glaciers are retreating faster than most others around the world. Professor Steve Edwards, in the report, 'The Waters of the Third Pole', added that during summer months there is going to be a lot of slush on the ice fields and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that melting ice in the mountain range remains a source of grave concern.

The Kolhai glacier in Kashmir, one of the largest in the Himalayas, has receded by almost 22 metres in 2007 while several smaller glaciers had disappeared completely.

The Director General of Indian Meteorological Department, recently warned that the glaciers are a unique reservoir of fresh water supporting rivers such as the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra serving billions of people in South Asia which could become only seasonal in the not too distant future.

Ed.

MADEIRA - FLOODS & ROCK

There was a big storm and serious flooding in parts of the island on Feb 20th this year. I visited it in March and saw the effects it has caused.

Over 50 people had been killed, but only 43 bodies had been found – others were still buried or had been washed out to sea. In Funchal huge amounts of mud and rock had cascaded down the river gullies through the town and been deposited in the low lying areas of the town close to the sea. They had done a remarkable job of removing it and cleaning up the streets. The debris was piled onto what had been a small rocky beach beyond the promenade, just to the east of the marina. There was nowhere else to put it, since all the land is fairly steep and built upon. This created a 2 - 3m deep layer of mud and rock over an area as big as a couple of football pitches (I guessed), upsetting the outlook of many promenade front cafes. No one I spoke to seemed to know what long term plan there was for it. Considering the scale of the devastation, the cleanup operation in the capital had been very quickly conducted, and almost all shops and businesses were functioning again. Large numbers of workmen were repairing the intricate stone pavements, which form an attractive feature of the city, as well as working in the major drainage channels through the town. Clearly, to have at least the capital in good shape for the tourist industry was a priority.

Further inland – and not very far – the serious damage was all too clear to see. All the valley sides are steep and landslips had carried away whole houses and parts of others, leaving remains mangled up with trees, mud and rocks. Over 500 cars had been wrecked; we saw several in gouged out river beds looking like they had been in a crusher. Many digging machines were busy clearing damaged roads and moving debris. In some places the whole valley floor, houses, gardens and roads, had been scoured away.

In other areas of the island there was no sign of the storm having caused any damage and even in Funchal, there was little evidence of appeals for help – a resilient lot, the Madeirans.

Levada and mountain walking was largely unaffected and provided enjoyable days out. There are many steep rock faces all across the island – which is of volcanic origin, but the opportunities for 'safe' climbing are limited, since good sound rock alternates with rotten/softer stuff and in many places there is evidence of rock falls, old and new.

Looking straight down the almost vertical 580m high sea cliff (said to be the second highest in Europe) was an interesting thing to do – all the tours visit it; To get to/from it, of course, one has to pass the many sellers of tat and indispensable Madeiran souvenirs. A good week's holiday, but a little different to what we had expected.

Adrian Bridge

A SALUTARY REMINDER

Steve Craven has brought to our attention a report from the Himalayan Club. As he says, "there is no substitute for the traditional leisurely trek from railhead to base camp".

A silent epidemic is killing many visitors to the High Altitude areas. A lack of understanding about effects of High Altitude on human body is taking a toll of many visitors. Lack of time, fast pace of life, quick holidays and the false bravado is killing many visitors to the Himalayas and there are many more who survive but do not enjoy the trip due high altitude induced illness.

Just look at some of the incidences: Kathmandu News Agencies - 2009 : At least 10 Indians were killed attempting a pilgrimage to the Mt Kailash in Tibet and the nearby Manasarovar lake, venerated by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. The deaths occurred due to high-altitude sickness (HAS) as most of the pilgrims were above 60 years and came from cities in plains like Bangalore, Chennai and Lucknow, tourist agencies in Kathmandu said. Times of India - June 2010 - A Hotel in Leh a guest from Pune had passed away during the night. Cause of death, HAS

A leading Accountant from Mumbai passed away a few hours after returning from Leh (12,000 ft) after 8 days holiday. He was reported to be ill at Leh: A tourist from Mumbai died returning from the famous Khardung La, the highest motorable road in India. HAS: A biker from Mumbai was rescued by an Army hospital on his way to Leh. He was dizzy, lacked co-ordination, was totally fatigued and on the verge of collapse due to High Altitude: A group of pilgrims were evacuated from Kailash and Manasarovar suffering from HAS and were rescued in the nick of time. They had driven up too fast to the Tibetan plateau- which is above 12,000 feet throughout: A climber who reached 16,000 feet in three days from base lapsed into a coma and died later- cause: not acclimatising.

As we know as you go higher and higher, each breath you take means there will be less oxygen for your body. Oxygen is needed to give you the energy to move, but it is also needed simply to keep your body alive - for your brain to function, for your digestive system to work, for healing cuts and all those normal things your body does without your knowing about it. Without this oxygen, the body will start shutting down and life will be squeezed out. It will suffer from HAS.

The allure of the Himalayas calls on one and all and early travellers understood the effect of High Altitude on human body very naturally. In the early days of exploration of the Himalayas, access was a major problem due to the lack of roads and communication. Be it Mountaineers, trekkers or pilgrims, all had to travel long distances on foot to achieve their objective.

A pilgrimage to Kailash and Manasarovar involved an arduous trek that took several days to bring you to the holy lake followed by a trek to the holy Kailash. A journey to Leh involved about 20 days of trekking from Srinagar and this slow pace of trekking to the high altitude allowed for a gradual acclimatization. Over the years, roads have been built

through the most difficult terrain, airports have facilitated easy access to locations that bring you straight into the heart of the Himalayas and adjoining regions.

The tourist today has few holidays during the year and wants to make the best of the short time available. They wish to spend less time travelling and more time at the holiday destination. They can fly in and fly out and the lack of time for a holiday and available financial means has led to what Sherpas call "Everyone come looking-looking, no one see"

However, what the modern tourist does not realize is that in the process of shortening the travel time to the Himalayas, they are exposing themselves to a grave risk of altitude related illness. Hence the rarified air at altitude is now a serious concern. As the altitude increases, the oxygen content decreases and the atmospheric pressure also drops. This results in a decrease in oxygen intake in the body. The human body has a capability to "acclimatise" which has enabled humans to inhabit the higher regions of the Himalayas and other high-altitude regions of the world.

The body adapts to the reduced pressure and oxygen by some internal changes that enable the body to receive the necessary oxygen and continue its functions. You breathe faster and deeper. The body makes more red blood cells to carry more oxygen. But these changes take time. If one allows the body enough time, most people could adjust. If the body does not acclimatise, due to insufficient time, exertion, inadequate hydration etc. it is susceptible to various levels of illness. Starting with symptoms of headache, nausea, fatigue, dizziness or difficulty in sleeping, the patient may suffer from High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema (HAPE) or worst High Altitude Cerebral Oedema (HACE). HAPE results in the filling up of the lungs with fluid, virtually drowning the person and cutting off his breath. HACE results in fluid leakages from brain cells into the cranial cavity causing the brain to swell. Depending on the severity, the time for treatment is very short to avoid fatality.

In this case, precaution is most desirable since the risk of fatality is very high with the onset of HAPE or HACE. In any case with the onset of HAS, the patient is required to be evacuated immediately to a lower altitude in addition to being given various medication. Very simple precautionary measures are necessary to avoid HAS; a) Give the body sufficient time and rest to adjust to the altitude.-Go slow - halting and resting at different altitudes: b) Ensure that the body is well hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids, at least 4 litres per day in form of water preferably with electrolytes: c) Ensure that the body is not exposed to the elements.- wear enough clothes, keep yourself warm and wait if weather is bad.

People with cardiac ailments, high blood pressure, asthma or other ailments that affect the cardio vascular system of the body are advised to avoid travel at high altitude or to take preventive medication before they reach high altitude. Take advice of a qualified doctor who understands effects of altitude. If symptoms of HAS are noticed, it is possible to deal with them safely if detected early. The consumption of garlic, adequate hydration, supplementing body salts and other

simple measures can help. Homeopathic medicines, allopathic tablets or injections of can be used to prevent fatalities. Contact local health practitioners.

Unfortunately, most tourist are not aware of precautions to take to avoid HAS, the treatment that is necessary to deal with it or the risks of HAS and and even trekkers and mountaineers get blase. With the number of tourists and pilgrims visiting the high altitude regions increasing every year, the number of reported fatalities, rescued people and tourists whose holidays have been ruined by HAS has increased by many fold.

Unfortunately even some of the Travel Agencies that are selling trips to Ladakh or pilgrimages to Kailash & Manasarovar are not aware of HAS and prepare itineraries which are unsuitable. They must advice caution and take their clients at suitable pace for acclimatising.

It is therefore necessary to educate and spread awareness amongst the travel industry as well as the tourist / trekker / pilgrim to ensure safe and enjoyable visits to the high altitude regions. Along with the mystique, beauty and adventure of visiting the Himalayas, Tibet, Ladakh and other high places, it is essential to also publicise the precautions one needs to take and the consequences failure to do so.

The number of deaths has increased too alarmingly and unless immediate steps are taken, we stand to loose out on tourism in the long run. The following is suggested :

All airlines bringing in passengers into Leh , Kathmandu and other high altitude regions distribute information on HAS along with the boarding pass issued for the travel. All Travel Agents provide information on HAS to all the passengers before they sign on to their trips and also give an adequate briefing to the passengers on the tour. The guides that accompany tours to high altitude need adequate training to identify symptoms of HAS and to provide first-aid to passengers having early signs of sickness.

All Hotels / Guest Houses / Lodges in high altitude locations provide information on HAS to their guests. Local authorities in high altitude regions put up sign boards / displays / hoardings providing information to tourist. Emergency Health Care centres be set-up at high altitude locations that can treat tourist and Himalayan rescue organisations to be set-up to facilitate air / land rescue of affected patients.

The Himalayan Club, founded in 1928, is one of the earliest clubs to have been established in the sub-continent. Its mission is to encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration, and to extend knowledge of the Himalayas and adjoining mountain ranges through science, art, literature and sport. The Club has held seminars and training programmes to spread awareness about how to acclimatize. It has prepared an information card and a booklet giving a detailed instruction about preparations and precautions to be taken while visiting high altitude areas. It has just launched a new web site - <http://www.himalayanclub.org>

EIGG ON THEIR FACES

During the summer, inhabitants had electricity rationing. They were put on level red and obliged not to use various appliances during peak times of the day as power became in short supply.

Proud of their 'green' status they were reliant on wind turbines and a little hydro power. We'd all support the use of renewables but it must be as back up as renewables are not reliables.

They had a lovely summer. Half as much rain as usual (streams dried up so no hydro) and the usual strong onshore 'breezes' were very light (hardly any turbines working)

Certainly it was very pleasant to be outside as midges were also late arriving and not as numerous as usual

Ed.

NATIONAL PARKS OF SCOTLAND

Grave concern is being expressed by numerous groups at the decision of the Cairngorms National Park Authority to approve a major new development, adjacent to the River Spey, which would double the size of nearby Aviemore.

The development includes up to 1,500 homes to be built at An Camas Mor, despite a Scottish Government planning warning that the development breached national planning guidelines and was not justified. Even the Park Authority's own planners called for a reduction in the number of houses to prevent unacceptable environmental damage.

The decision raises fundamental questions about the future direction of Scottish national parks and the balance between local and national interests. At the May 2011 Scottish Parliament elections members in Scotland should ask their candidate to consider changing the legislation to increase the proportion of nationally appointed board members to locally elected ones to try and prevent such a situation occurring again.

Ed.

WHAT IS A CONTINENT

Following my contribution in the last journal it has been pointed out to me that in reviewing the target list of mountains to be achieved I overlooked two. I did mention "County Tops", "Country Tops" etc but omitted "Continent Tops". Given there are seven continents we should be talking about the 7 peaks.

Simples I thought but oh no! When enquiring I came upon arguments about which are in fact the peaks concerned. Everest, Aconcagua, Mount McKinley, Kilimanjaro and Vinson are I trust undisputed.

However when you look at Australasia there are differing interpretations. Some accept only the large continental

island of Australia and therefore claim Mount Kosciuszko as the high point of this continent. Others include New Zealand as part of "Oceania" or "Australasia" and would claim Mount Cook as one of the "Seven Summits". Others consider New Guinea as part of this "continent"? The island is definitely on the same continental shelf and the water separating it from the other islands making up Indonesian is very much deeper! So the high point of this island could be said to be the most logical candidate, especially as the waters between Australia and New Zealand are much deeper. Thus the Carstensz Pyramid is from the mountaineering and the geographical point of view the best candidate to be the high point of "Australasia" or "Oceania".

When you turn to Europe it gets even more messy. We all learnt at school that Mont Blanc was the highest mountain in Europe but this is no longer the generally accepted view.

If we take a continent to be a tectonic plate floating on the mantle there are seven or possibly eight major plates and many minor plates. It gets more confused when we talk of supercontinents e.g. Eurasia, subcontinents, often land on different tectonic plates but now conjoining the rest of the "continent" e.g. the Indian subcontinent and the Arabian Peninsula. We also have microcontinents where sections of continental crust that have split off and drifted apart from a main continental landmass. Madagascar is the largest example and the Horn of Africa is thought to be in the early stages of the same process. We also have some areas of largely submerged continental crust often considered submerged continents as in the case of what is sometimes called Zealandia, primarily evidenced above the sea in New Zealand and New Caledonia.

One definition of a continent is covered by orology, the study of mountains and their formation, which separates mountain ranges by the deepest points and saddles to the next higher mountain and land only by water. Elbrus is orologically connected to the High Asian mountains and not to European ranges. Its key saddle is far away in South East Iran quite near to the Pakistani border. Basically Europe is now just part of the large supercontinent of Eurasia, but if one separates orologically, one has definitive borders for the two European peninsulas. Scandinavia's (or Northern Europe's) border runs from the White Sea to the Baltic Sea. Southern or core Europe's border runs across the prominence saddle of Mont Blanc, then along the river Volga to the Caspian Sea. The southern border is the Kuma-Manych depression, across the basin saddle of the Caspian depression over to the Black Sea! Therefore the true ruler of the European core subcontinent is of course Mont Blanc.

We are therefore left with the challenge of climbing the 7, 8, 9, 10 or possibly 11 peaks.

Messner has probably done them all but I cannot find out for sure and Bass and others could give him a shout as to who first climbed whichever definition of the high points of the continents.

I certainly cannot see many normal mortals being able to take this on board but in the interests of completeness this

challenge should be added to our list. For my mind I would suggest that the target should be the 10 as follows-

- Kilimanjaro 5,892m 19,34ft Tanzania, Africa
- Vinson Massif 4,892m 16,050ft Antarctica
- Kosciuszko 2,228 m 7,310ft Australia, Australasia
- Carstensz Pyramid 4,884 m 16,024ft Indonesia, Australasia
- Mount Cooke 3,754 m 12,316 ft, New Zealand, Australasia or Zealandia or Oceania.

- Everest 8,848m 29,029ft Nepal -China, Asia or Eurasia
- Elbrus 5,642m 18,510ft Caucasus, Russia. Europe or Eurasia

- Mont Blanc 4,810m 15,782 ft France, Europe
- Mount McKinley 6,194m 20,320ft Alaska, USA, North America

- Aconcagua 6,962m 22,841ft Andes, Argentina, South America

Another target I overlooked, again not one for mere mortals, is the 8000m's

Alan Hinkes (OBE) from Northallerton in Yorkshire is currently Britain's leading high altitude mountaineer and was the first British climber to summit all of the world's 14 peaks over 8000 metres. I have however been able to find records of 17 other climbers who have also done this, the first apparently being Reinhold Messner between 1970 and 1986 when he was aged 42.

It would appear that there are at least 8 more peaks over 8000m but these are considered lesser summits of the same mountain as some of the generally accepted 14.

Hinks, born in 1954, climbed them between 1987 and 2005

- 1987 - Shishapangma 8027m Tibet first climbed in 1964
- 1988 - Manaslu 8163m Nepal (1956)
- 1990 - Cho Oyu 8201m Nepal/Tibet (1954)
- 1991 - Broad Peak 8047m Pakistan/China (1957)
- 1995 - K2 8611m Pakistan/China (1954)
- 1996 - Everest 8848m Nepal/Tibet (1953)
- 1996 - Gasherbrum I 8068m Pakistan/China (1958)
- 1996 - Gasherbrum II 8035m Pakistan/China (1956)
- 1997 - Lhotse 8516m Nepal/Tibet (1956)
- 1998 - Nanga Parbat 8126m Pakistan (1953)
- 1999 - Makalu 8463m Nepal/Tibet (1955)
- 2002 - Annapurna 8091m Nepal (1950)
- 2004 - Dhaulagiri 8167m Nepal (1960)
- 2005 - Kangchenjunga 8586m Nepal/India (1955)

That to me would appear to be the ultimate challenge.
Ed.

SNOW LEOPARD UPDATE

Yet another target which we have covered in an earlier journal was the Snow Leopard Award. Alan Linford writes to update us on this. This old Soviet Union award is a bit of an embarrassment as almost all were outside Russia

“The UN has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity; has anyone heard about it?

The plight of the Snow Leopard will feature in the endangered species programme but another endangered species is Russian Masters of Sport. Two mountaineers who earned the Snow Leopard Award of the old Soviet Union were executed by Stalin, but there is hope for the future.

The Mountaineering Federation of Russia have formally approved a new award, The Snow Leopard of Russia. To become a holder a climber must climb 10 famous Russian Peaks.

These are,
Mt. Elbrus 5642m; Dyhtau 5204m; Koshtan-Tau 5151m; Mizhirgi 5025m; Puskin Peak 5100m; Dzhangitau 5085m; Shkhara 5068m; Kazbek 5034; Klyuchevskaya 4688m; and Belukha. 4,506m.

Alex Slotyuk, president of the Moscow section, was the initiator of the award. Successful climbers will receive a plaque and diploma.”

Ed

PICTURES ARCHIVE

As we reported when covering club archives we have a lot of historic photographs on file. In addition many members have large collections which are often offered to the club and we need to decide what we can do with them. To make them truly accessible to members we need to have them in some form of electronic archive and your committee is considering the issue.

Brian Nicholson's widow Brenda has provided us with his collection (200) and Paul Linford has started putting these on a web based archive. If you were to go to the site www.flyinghigh.smugmug.com and select 'clients' then 'YRC Brian Nicholson collection', you would be able to see his efforts. You would require a password which we cannot publish but an email request to the editor will provide it.

There are many more YRC photographs to tackle but all need processing in some form or other. Titles will be added then we need to decide what to do with them if anything. If the Club wishes to have a digital archive Paul will not have the time to do them all but is willing to advise if we can find someone willing to do the work required. The Club would also have to budget for the costs.

Anyone at all interested should contact Alan Linford for more information as to what might be entailed and at that point the club will need to look at benefits against cost and decide how to proceed.

Ed.

MEET PROGRAMME

In addition to our formal meet programme a number of groupings of members local to a given area organise weekly programmes of activities which those from further afield might well like to join from time to time.

One group used to undertake something every Tuesday based from Lowstern and David Smith used to keep a number of us posted so that we could join in on occasion.

A group of our more elderly members also get together regularly denigrating their efforts by describing themselves as the grave dodgers.

In the past another cohort used to meet round Saddleworth and another group met monthly for a walk/lunch around Appletreewick. Our immediate past president and TJ go climbing with friends each week in N Wales or on climbing walls.

These mid week meets are a great thing to do and it rightly is up to local members - in any area - to band together to do so. It would be helpful if we could come up with some way of letting the wider membership know so that on that occasion when they could get over to the appropriate area they could participate.

Given how difficult travelling at weekend can be there is even a case for those of us based more remotely making two days of joining such a crowd by over-nighting in some fashion but if we are to contemplate booking into a nearby hostel etc we do need some certainty as to who will be where.

We could even contemplate a small number of formal midweek events very much like the long bike ride meet. It would of course only be OK for the gentlemen of leisure, but less so for the employed and younger members.

If you would be interested please let a member of the committee know your thoughts

Ed.

PATHS UNDER THREAT

Walking is a free leisure activity, which has been proven to help both physical and mental well being. Yet cuts threaten to reduce opportunities for walking, resulting in disrepair and blockages to many valued paths, regardless of the costly impact this will have on the demand on the NHS.

You may have reported an obstruction on a local path which the local authority cannot afford to resolve, or you may be aware of other paths which are being left to fall into disrepair as they are not a 'priority'.

North Yorkshire County Council apparently has 10000 so called priority rights of way issues outstanding and, not surprisingly in today's climate, does not appear to be about to increase the budget allocated to this problem. They are not untypical.

We have to be realists and take a pragmatic view; there is limited funding available. One school of thought is that we should let nature take its course to some extent. If paths become overgrown by a natural process, it tends to reinforce the argument that they are not being used and therefore scarce resources should not be spent on maintaining them to the highest standards. Balanced against this it is hard for individuals trying to walk a path on an occasional basis to keep at bay, rampant bramble, bracken etc. so it is important to report such problems. If paths become obstructed and no-one reports the problem the Highways Authority can reasonably assume that the path is not being used.

However, this puts a greater emphasis on the need of the authority to be able to react to network problems quickly, and ensure that the regularly used paths are maintained to an acceptable standard.

It is probably pointless to use local paths, which do not fit comfortably into any natural route, just to keep them open but there is no mechanism as yet to allow poor and unwanted bits of routes to be traded off against new links to make the network more relevant to today's situations. A second round of Rights of Way Improvement Plans is in hand and perhaps we should be campaigning for this phase to work more towards improving the network itself rather than 'improving' or maintaining all agreed rights of way to the same and sometimes unjustified standards.

Paths through open access land and on the high fells do tend to look after themselves until they reach a point where the authority then 'repair' them to what many would consider an over-engineered standard, but approach routes are likely to suffer from neglect very much as paths through farmland and the suburbs.

Ed.

GUNUNG

Malaysia's Gunung Malu National Park on the Malaysia / Borneo border in the interior of the island is a superb example of geological history and an outstanding representation of on-going evolutionary processes. The national park is named after Mount Mulu, the second highest mountain in Sarawak. It has exceptional natural beauty and contains significant natural habitat for in-situ conservation of biological diversity and the protection of threatened species. It therefore has four claims, any one of which would justify it having world heritage status which it attained in November 2000. It has incredible caves and karst formations in a mountainous equatorial rainforest setting and part of the reason for it being so unspoilt is its very isolation.

To get from the coastal city of Miri you have to fly over impenetrable jungle or travel up the Baram, Tutoh and Melinau rivers to the headwaters in mountains occasionally visible on the far horizon. The alternative is a very difficult overland route which still involves a boat trip of at least two hours or trekking in down the Head Hunter's Trail from Limbang.

It continues to draw international caving expeditions, which have discovered many caves including what is claimed to be

the World's largest cave chamber, the Sarawak Chamber.

There have been over two dozen expeditions to explore the caves all now drawn together as the Mulu Caves Project and discoveries and extensions come thick and fast. A few years ago what is now known as Api Chamber was found (200x300m) and the system now stands at over 186 miles and is one of the longest caves in the world. Recent discoveries by British cavers include a cave calculated to house over 3,000,000 bats.

Ed.

SECRET BRITAIN

Following the BBC's excellent mini series of this name I would like to add to the debate. Despite having spent a lifetime wandering the more remote and unusual parts of Britain's countryside I still get surprises and certainly the BBC turned up some spots I had never heard of, never mind visited.

We are often stopped from exploring corners of this Sceptred isle by preconceptions but I have walked very near to some of the beauty spots they displayed without knowing what was just round the corner.

If I was to mention the Wyville Thomson Ridge, Bassurelle or Shell Flat it is fair to say I would not be surprised if you looked blank. Perhaps understandably unless you are amongst the members who go sailing or sea diving, as these are areas off our coasts which have either just been given protected status or are under negotiation for that status. New 'Marine Protected Areas' have gained protection under EU laws.

The sites chosen were those that contain rare species that are in danger of going extinct. The most well known are reefs off Lizard Point and Land's End where there are colourful sponges, sea squirts and corals. Trawling will not be allowed in these areas and fishing will be limited to protect rare species like the multi-coloured cuckoo wrasse.

Red Bay in Northern Ireland, Long Sands and Margate Sands off Kent and North Norfolk sand banks act as nursery grounds for many fish species such as plaice and sole whilst also supporting sand eels, a major food source for seabirds, dolphins, porpoises and seals.

Off Lyme Bay and Torbay there are sea caves where a diverse community of creatures can be found including sponges, anemones, soft corals and sea squids.

Wyville Thomson Ridge off Scotland also has important sand banks as has the equally remote area of North-West Rockall Bank. Closer to home the outer Thames Estuary and Liverpool Bay are also now protected areas because of the red throated diver.

Others under consideration include sandbanks off East Anglia (Haisborough, Winterton, Hammond, Race Bank, Inner Dowsing and North Ridge), Bassurelle in the Dover Straight and Shell Flat in the Irish Sea.

Further protection should be forthcoming under The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 should ensure clean healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans

and seas around our shores. To put it in civil service speak "The Act introduces new tools for conservation of marine wildlife that together with existing ones can: halt the deterioration in the state of the UK's marine biodiversity and promote recovery where practicable, support healthy functioning and resilient marine ecosystems, ensure environmental considerations are at the heart of decision-making processes, and provide mechanisms that can deliver current and future EU and international conservation obligations".

To return to the land and 'secret' Britain, I wonder how many of you can recognise this area of upland ?



All will be revealed later

Roy Denney

ARDAL TURLAG

Twenty three members of this Norwegian group (a kindred club) came on a visit to the UK during a week at the end of August/beginning of September.

Their focus was to visit Slingsby's haunts - home, working places and grave.

They arrived in Edinburgh, visited Fort William, ascended Ben Nevis, and the Pap of Glencoe, then Keswick and various hills in the Lake district before travelling to Bell Busk where Slingsby lived, Carlton where he worked and is buried and then to York before leaving to return home to Norway.

Derek Smithson and I had email corresponded with them before their visit, but were unable to meet up with them. In the event, none of the folks that came were known to Derek who'd last visited them in Norway in 2000. In a follow up message, they said they'd welcome any YRC members wanting to visit Norway and show us their mountains.

Contact could be made via Bjarne Havro, leader of this group at bjarnhav@online.no

Adrian Bridge

THE ULTIMATE TREK?

If you have £20,000 to spare, time on your hands and understanding wife or one who wants to see the back of you then this may be the answer. This is your opportunity to be one of the first people ever to walk the full length of Nepal's Great Himalaya Trail in one continuous trek.

Put together by World Expeditions, the 157 day trek commences in the far east in the Kanchenjunga region and traverses the country to the high plateaux on the Tibetan borderlands in the far west. Along this 1700km trail you'll encounter some of the wildest and most remote mountain environments imaginable. You'll see all of Nepal's 8000 metre peaks, cross dozens of passes ranging from moderate to extreme and witness villages where the culture has remained intact for centuries. The organisers say the Great Himalaya Trail should only be considered by those with extensive trekking and mountaineering experience, a high level of fitness and a flexible approach as there will be the need to adapt to a range of situations throughout the trek.

Flying in over 4 days with stopovers in Kathmandu and Biratnagar, you start at Suketar before spending 18 days trekking by Kanchenjunga then another 12 days on the Sanku link. You then spend 15 days on the Makalu & Everest Traverse via Sherpani & West Col, & Amphu Labsta and then 13 days on the Rolwaling Traverse via Tashi Labsta. They have then organised what by then will be a well deserved rest in that for 5 days you return to Kathmandu, before spending 10 days doing the Langtang link to Panch Pokhari. 7 days are then spent joining Langtang via Tilman Pass to Syabru Besi and then 6 days on the Ganesh Himal link to Jagat. Days 101/117 you join Manalsu & Annapurna via Larkye and Thorong before spending 14 days on the Upper Dolpo Traverse via Phoksumdo Lake and a further 6 days on the Far-West link to Rara Lake. The Rara Lake & Yari Valley stage takes 15 days and on day 156 you fly Nepalgunj to Kathmandu where I would recommend a massage and bed.

Any takers?

Ed.

DALES WAY AND VARIANTS

Whilst on the subject of longish walks, one closer to home has just seen some changes. The Dales Way long distance footpath covers about 80 miles (129 km) running from Ilkley to Bowness. I have walked all of it in bits but never the whole length in a continuous effort. On the way up to the annual dinner Martyn and I did a short 5 miles stretch to keep below the clag and it remains, to my mind, a lovely stretch of riverside walking.

There are well publicised walking links from Leeds and Bradford to the start of the Dales Way in Ilkley, and there has been a link from Harrogate albeit only to Bolton Abbey. It does not go to Ilkley thereby missing the fine opening miles of the Dales Way. I could make a case that the walk could start even further down the Wharfe having lived in Wharfedale for 12 years but the walk is now well established with its start in Ilkley.

A major problem with the traditional link from Harrogate is that it crosses the Barden Fell Access Area, which can be closed when shooting is in progress; this has also meant that the route is not named through the Access Area on O.S. maps.

A new Dales Way Link which will lead to Ilkley has been identified which is 16 miles long, utilising the first 8 miles of the existing "Harrogate Dales Way." The original route will still be open, but will no longer be promoted. The new walk can be divided into three bite sized sections of 8, 10 and 15 miles. The new path leaves the present route after crossing the Swinsty Reservoir dam wall, leaving the track by a stile on the left hand side to access a permissive Yorkshire Water path going up the bank. Pass Swinsty Hall and follow the paths in a westerly direction to reach Timble.

You then continue along the minor road to cross the Otley to Pateley Bridge road, to the woodlands of Great Timble, and onto Middleton Moor to follow the track to the stone cairn on Lippersley Pike.

You then strike south along the track for nearly 2 kilometres to leave the moor by a large wooden gate ahead, [GR 1305 515] not the small gate and stile on your right. You then continue downhill to enter Hollingley Farm before passing East Moor House Farm, West Moor House, Hill Top Farm and then on to Middleton. You follow the road until a public footpath on the left takes you to the public playing fields and the river bank to join the start of the Dales Way.

The new edition of Harvey's Dales Way map, published in May 2010, contains the new "Harrogate Link."

Ed.

CAIRNGORMS GETTING BIGGER

One of the UK's newest and the largest national park has just increased in size.

The Cairngorm's boundary has just been extended to take in a further 728 square miles. The southern boundary now goes down to Blair Athol.

At 4528 sq. miles, this park is now twice the size of the Lakes NP.

Ed.

BULLS IN YOUR WAY

There is considerable confusion as to whether farmers are allowed to put bulls into fields that have public footpaths running through them. This has been tragically put back on the table recently when an elderly Leicestershire couple walking locally, were attacked with the man killed on the spot.

Coming across a bull in the countryside can of course be a frightening encounter and even those of us who regularly meet beasts do need to exercise considerable caution and indeed stockmen get in trouble from time to time.

Following this recent tragic accident it is worth highlighting several issues relating to farm animals which are very much part of the walking environment. Most problems arise when a dog is being walked.

Other animals often see your dog as a threat even when it is not. Cows may act aggressively especially with young calves to protect although perhaps surprisingly bulls rarely do. Even the friendliest dogs can suddenly follow their instinct to chase something. They may not actually attack other animals but the stress of being chased can frighten pregnant ewes and cause them to abort their lambs.

A dog was not involved in this latest tragedy but there have been a number of high profile cases reported in the press of people being injured by livestock due to dogs upsetting cattle, and owners attempting to protect their dogs and being injured as a result. The National Farmers Union has advised that livestock are not docile and walkers should be alert to potential dangers. They have published guidance leaflets available from some council offices, libraries etc. Or at <http://tinyurl.com/nfuadvice>.

So how should we behave? For a start do not worry about wearing bright clothing - many creatures including bulls are colour blind and surprising an animal by merging into the background can trigger a bad response. It seems likely that the Leicestershire couple surprised the bull by coming out of the evening gloom.

Make sure that animals know you are there. If coming from behind and they haven't noticed you, calmly whistle or talk to them to let them know that you are about.

Never come between a cow and its offspring. If cattle aggressively move towards you, keep calm. If you have a dog with you it's safer for you and your dog if you let it off the lead - it can get away from the cattle more easily than you can - exit the field as quickly as possible and leave the dog to make its own arrangements! Having said that however, if an animal is startled it is probably best not to run! The animals may think that this is a wonderful game and may decide to join you.

Not all animals behave the same - cattle and ponies are more likely to ignore you if you walk quietly past them or away from them. This is a bit of a test of nerve and if a bull starts running towards you the temptation to 'leg it' would probably win out. In that circumstance head for the nearest field exit - preferably down hill as that is easier for you (and given the bull has short front legs it risks tripping up).

It is also worth bearing in mind that animals may feel excited or threatened by large groups of people. Split the group into smaller numbers and keep reasonably quiet when passing close to animals, whilst ensuring they know you are there.

Problems should be viewed in perspective however, statistics show there is no increase in serious incidents although user groups think less serious incidents are on the increase but are perhaps not always reported.

The average number of serious incidents reported is fairly constant at 2 fatalities and 5 serious injuries per annum.

As for the actual legal position, The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence, subject to important exceptions, for the occupier of a field crossed by a right of way to cause or allow a bull to be at large in it.

The exceptions are if the bulls are less than ten months old, or not a recognised dairy breed and in the company of cows or heifers. Those dairy breeds include Ayrshire, British Friesian, British Holstein, Dairy Shorthorn, Guernsey, Jersey and Kerry.

If you believe the bull you encounter is prohibited, then report it to the local highway authority (the county council or unitary authority); or contact the Health and Safety Executive if the bull acts in a threatening way.

Whilst as we go to print there has not yet been an inquest, it does seem on this occasion that the bull was of a less common dairy breed imported from Europe but not specifically listed in the Act. The legal position is therefore open to some ambiguity.

Roy Denney

GREETINGS FROM THE LAND OF OZ

For those of us old enough and members for long enough to remember Tony Reynolds his wife Doreen sends greetings.

She still reads the YRC Journal with interest.

She was asking about 'sunny' England when she contacted me with an exceedingly poor sense of timing or considerable sarcasm as it was in the depths of our deep freeze. I am afraid Tony is still not in good health. He manages to soldier on but has given up driving and very rarely leaves the house now. Doreen makes up for it with three days a week helping in school libraries with the odd days teaching [not bad for an 80 yr. old]. She is still hoping to come to the old country next year but Tony will not be up to it. His days of attending the odd meet for old times sake are over I am afraid.

Ed.

KENDAL MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

Alastair Lee's 'The Prophet' has won the grand prize at this year's Kendal Mountain Festival.

The film, featuring Leo Houlding free-climbing a new route on El Capitan, premiered at the festival.

Called The Prophet, it is thought to be the first route established by a Brit. on El Capitan. On completing the climb, in partnership with Jason Pickles, Leo apparently said: "It had been a major objective of mine for almost a decade. This is the highlight of my climbing career. El Capitan is the greatest cliff in the world, the history of modern climbing is written into the routes on the wall. Now my name and Jason Pickles' will be part of that history forever. A great honour."

Alastair Lee described winning the best climbing film and the grand prize at Kendal as "amazing", he was "blown away".

NATURAL ENGLAND PATHFINDER

A little known web site may prove very useful in finding new ways to approach favoured locations which will not be shown on maps as they are not rights of way, neither are they permanent. <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk/> shows you details and maps - for more than 1800 walks and areas of open access provided under the Countryside Stewardship, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Environmental Stewardship Schemes. An example the site gives is, 'Land at Crummackdale Near Austwick, North Yorkshire'

Every effort is made to keep the information on this site current but circumstances occasionally alter the public access available. In the interests of safety and conservation an area may be closed for short periods.

It also remains to be seen how many years this is of any real use, as the grant schemes which fund these new routes are under threat from the cuts. It seems likely that access and the funding thereof will run on for the length of each agreement but as things stand at the moment is unlikely to be renewed and certainly the prospect of any new agreements looks bleak.

Ed.

THINGS THEY ARE A CHANGING

Youth Hostels are no longer anything like those we knew in our younger days. For a start young people are in a minority and the facilities are greatly improved.

Another thing changing is the landscape of much of the Midlands. As part of the project to fight climate change, improve air quality and afford more opportunities for outdoor recreation a new national forest is being created.

This new forest in the making covers 200 square miles of central England which is being transformed by linking the Needwood Forest in Staffordshire with Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire and taking in parts of South Derbyshire. More than 7 million trees have been planted and woodland cover has increased from 6% to 18%.

It goes under the imaginative name of The National Forest and after 12 years is making a very real difference. For many years people commented on the hundreds of road signs saying when you entered it but asked where the trees were. Well they have grown, as trees do, and are now very evident. It is not however wall to wall woodland but a pleasant diverse landscape encouraging a lot of new wildlife including species under threat elsewhere.

The area provides good walking with surprisingly good views as you climb over the various granite outcrops (the only remaining evidence of a long forgotten major volcano, one of the largest in Europe). The highest point is only 912 feet but you can climb on and over several similar prominences around the original rim to make up a very good day's walking. We are to organise a mid-week meet there in August using one of the new 'super' YHA hostels. The meet will take in the annual long bike ride but will provide walking opportunities for those that can get away.

Roy Denney



NATURAL HISTORY SNIPPETS

WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BOWLAND BOTHER

A pair of European eagle owls nested in a remote piece of woodland in Northumberland in 2003 and two chicks were found in a hollow in a tree spring 2005 and by 2009 they were cropping up in a number of locations. 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 were 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. This does not however seem to be the case and they are increasingly being spotted in other locations

Those early arrivals 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 first breeding pair in Northumberland were escapees but they could have migrated down from Scotland. Wherever they came from they are now with us and should survive well in Britain's wilder corners if not persecuted by man.

Much as I like to see 'lost' species returning to where they originally existed it always has a knock on effect with other animals in the food chain.

There is a small colony of these birds surviving in Bowland which is also the last stronghold in the country of the Hen Harrier. This spring an eagle owl was caught on camera attacking a hen harrier and then remaining on that birds nest for some time and needless to say that nest then failed. Given in 2009 only six pairs of Hen Harriers successfully bred in England this is fairly disastrous. Quite apart from taking some other birds for food the eagle owl is known to attack other predators to get rid of 'competition'.

Hen Harriers are in very real trouble and do not need this added problem. They have vanished from the 12,000 acre Geltsdale Reserve in Cumbria. This reserve is surrounded by managed estates and gamekeepers are suspected of being the cause. Natural England has been investigating several large private estates. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Scotland claims that hundreds of hen harriers have been systematically killed there over the last decade. This beautiful bird nests on the ground but the nests, eggs and

young are regularly stamped on with the adults being shot or poisoned. Unfortunately the bird does take young grouse but in a few areas the practice of feeding the bird with dead rabbits during its rearing season has been shown to reduce predation by 85% but few estates are prepared to go to the trouble of doing so.

This bird is smaller than a buzzard but larger than a crow and has a long tail and long wings. It can often be seen hunting low over the ground with wings raised in a shallow V when gliding.

To aid recognition you should remember that the smaller male has silver grey upper-parts, white under-parts and black wing tips whereas the female is dark brown with buff wing markings and a grey-brown tail with white banding at the base.

Ed.

DOVE NUMBERS DIVE

Have you this year heard the gentle purr of the turtle dove so evocative a sound of summer? Probably not! It has become increasingly rare and is now on the Red List of endangered species, numbers having fallen by 88 per cent since 1970. The turtle dove is smaller and darker than the now more common collared dove and is a little larger than a blackbird. Its upper parts are distinctively mottled with chestnut and black and its black tail has a bright white edge.

Until recently mainly a bird of southern and eastern England and to a lesser extent Wales it is now largely contained within Anglia. It was often heard rather than seen and is best looked for in woodland edges, hedgerows and open land scattered with bushes and between April and early October.

The strong bonds formed by pairs of these birds has made them emblems of devoted love and they have been the subject of poetry over the years as well as folk songs such as the 12 Days of Christmas.

They are apparently the only migratory bird which survives solely on seeds which is probably a factor in their decline given the loss of certain arable weeds from our now sanitised farmland.

The collared dove is a comparatively recent addition to the birds of the British Isles. Distinctive with its buff/pink plumage and black neck collar, it is usually seen singly or in pairs, although flocks may form where food is plentiful. After rapidly spreading across Europe in the early half of the 20th century, the collared dove is now one of our most common birds and its monotonous cooing is a familiar sound. It is less picky with its diet than the turtle dove.

Ed.

PEST AND / OR TASTY PARCEL

Confusion reigns in respect of the grey squirrel or tree rat as some know them. This quite endearing creature has driven our even more attractive red almost to extinction surviving only in small pockets often only with help from ourselves. Unless there is a mass extermination programme for the grey squirrel these creatures have had it. In Victorian times this lovely creature was found the length and breadth of the British Isles. The grey was only introduced in 1876 but now has chased the red out of most of the country.

Greys also attack birds nests killing fledglings and taking eggs and if they get into a house can do a lot of damage so, cuddly as they look, they are not welcome.

They make a mess of lawns as well both burying nuts and then searching for them.

The red population is now down to 160,000 and is not as flexible in its eating habits as the millions of greys and cannot compete with them and has found it can only survive in the areas the greys dislike. They thrive where the small and hard-to-retrieve seeds of some coniferous trees do not satisfy the greys. Reds apparently likes a mix of Larch, Norway Spruce and Scots Pine. If their problems are not bad enough we are now having to fell literally thousands of larch trees to try and stop the spread of sudden-oak-death disease.

Despite having broods of between 3 and 8 food shortages mean survival rates to maturity are poor and progressively populations are vanishing. The young are suckled for nearly two months and are moved regularly to avoid threats before being left to their own devices whilst mum has a second litter which is even more unlikely to survive the winter. All squirrels need to pile on the fat during autumn if they are to see the next spring. The bigger and stronger grey will tackle nuts before they are fully ripe and also has more fat reserve to survive periods of shortage and thus has something of a stacked deck.

If that was not enough for the poor red to contend with, the grey is thought to have brought with it a viral infection somewhat akin to a squirrel cold, which they can laugh off but which can decimate reds.

We could all play our part in reducing grey numbers but the law is a minefield. They are a pest so it is legal to trap them. However once trapped they can only be killed humanely and that is not clearly defined in law. You can shoot them but who has a gun to hand?

Quite apart from the chasing out of our native Reds we must find a way to control grey squirrels or at least reduce their numbers considerably, but how. Recent studies have shown the extent to which they impact on song-bird populations.

It is not rocket science. There are estimated to be at least three million grey squirrels in Britain. A very conservative estimate says that each squirrel may predate ten birds' nests a year – eggs and young birds. That is 30 million nests, at say three or four eggs or young per nest; a minimum of 120 million potential birds lost.

And we worry about poor pussy!

We need to licence an acceptable way to catch and kill them and perhaps promote recipes for squirrel as a delicacy.

Several top restaurants are serving squirrel meat which is said to be delectable but how do you get it from trap to table. One man was fined over £1500 this year for drowning one he had trapped. Apparently it is OK to kill one with a blow to the head. However if you do not succeed in killing it you are not allowed to hit it again; that is cruel. You can use certain poisons but who would then fancy eating it?

Further if you do trap one and cannot find a way of dispatching it you cannot release it. It is illegal to release pests into the wild. I suppose you must then provide it with food and water and allow it to exercise.

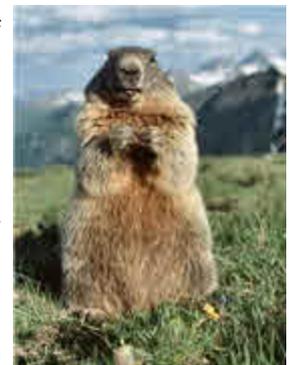
Presumably the same law in respect of wild animals also applies to mice and rats. As I said confusing isn't it!

Ed.

DOIN' BETTER AS IT GETS 'OTTER

A large cousin of the squirrel is the marmot. The Alpine Marmot (*Marmota marmota*) is found in mountainous areas of central and southern Europe. They live at altitudes of between 800 and 3,200 metres, in the Alps, Carpathians, Tatras, the Pyrenees and Northern Apennines. They were successfully reintroduced into the Pyrenees at the end of WWII, from where they had long since disappeared.

Probably already the largest of the squirrel family, climate change is creating extra large marmots that are bigger, stronger and do not need to hibernate for as long. Scientists claim longer summers have led to marmots waking up earlier from hibernation, giving them more time to reproduce and gain weight before the next hibernation period. Also because marmots are reproducing earlier, their offspring is more likely to survive during winter.



These creatures are excellent diggers, well able to penetrate ground that even a pickaxe would struggle

with and normally spend up to nine months a year hibernating. Normally an adult would weigh between 4kg and 8kg and reach between 42-54 cm in length excluding the tail measuring 13cm to 16cm but much larger specimens are being seen.

Alpine Marmots eat grasses, herbs and grain as well as insects, spiders and worms. They hold food in their forepaws to eat. When the weather is suitable they will consume huge amounts to create a layer of fat enabling them to survive their long hibernation period. They come out to feed during and they may not feed at all on very warm days.

Also doing better these days is our native otter, the European Otter (*Lutra lutra*). The reasons are many; efforts are being made to assist it, climatic change is improving survival rates for the young and water quality improvements are increasing numbers of its prey. It often needs man's help to create pockets of habitat suitable to permit the establishment of breeding colonies but as rivers are cleaned up and agricultural practices revert to more traditional methods including the banning of certain insecticides, this should change. It is also helped by legislation affording it protection including protection under the E U Habitats Directive.

Climate change is not all good news for them however and they are a surprising casualty of excessive rain and ensuing flooding. Dozens are killed on the roads during floods as they try to find alternative routes back to their burrows when unable to cope with the rates of flow in their normal rivers. Also, unfortunately, otters like to have their young in nests in burrows about three feet above the water line which in low lying areas is not always possible. This has been no protection for the young in many other areas in recent years as water levels have often been far higher than this.

This charming creature with an apparent sense of mischief has long been gone from many of our rivers but is making a largely welcome comeback. Numbers are thought to have nearly trebled in the last 30 years and probably stand at about 20,000 now. They are rarely seen but their presence is often evidenced by their droppings (spraint) and unfortunately road kills. Unlike their bolder northern relatives they are now largely nocturnal. They are in fact the same species as the otters of Scotland's coastal waters but the two populations have developed very different lifestyles with the 'southerners' having had to become much more secretive to survive. The spraint is largely made up of the indigestible bits of fish, frogs, crayfish, birds and small mammals (feathers, bones, claws and scales) and is a black tar-like mess smelling of grass cuttings.

I say they are largely welcome but when natural food sources are limited they have taken to raiding ornamental fish ponds to the dismay of many Koy keepers.

They have sleek brown fur and a white neck marking unique to each animal. Their sleek appearance is due to a heavy oiling of the coat for waterproofing which is essential given they spend so much time in water. Other adaptations include webbed feet and the ability to close their ears as well as eyes when underwater. They find their prey by means of long and very sensitive whiskers. Otters are inquisitive, playful and intelligent, often appearing to take childlike enjoyment in sliding around on muddy banks or even in snow. They are semi-aquatic mammals and live in holts around water edges. They are fast, agile swimmers. Bubbles of air trapped in their fur give them a silvery appearance underwater.

They are great travellers and are often just passing through. In addition the male may have a territorial range of up to 25 miles although the females probably half that. It is strongly territorial, living alone for the most part. The length of the territory depends on the availability of food and it is only defended against members of the same sex, so those of males and females may overlap.

Otters will breed at any time of the year and have between one and four pups which remain dependent on the mother for just over a year. The male plays no direct role in parental care, although the territory of a female with her cubs is usually entirely within that of the male. They feed mainly at night, while the day is usually spent in the holt, usually a burrow or hollow tree on the riverbank often only to be entered from underwater.

The Otter Trust has a reserve in Suffolk where I did manage to get a great daytime photo of a pair basking in the sun but it is not the same as seeing one in its native habitat.



Another creature which historically enjoyed a similar habitat is also doing well but this is down to man rather than climate change.

The first beaver families were released in May 2009 in Knapdale Forest, Mid-Argyll and have apparently settled in well to their new home as kits were successfully reared this year.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust continue to observe the beavers closely to track how they prosper and more importantly how they are changing the environment in Knapdale as upon these results will depend whether they are allowed to spread at will.

Ed

WHITE CHRISTMAS?

Spare a thought for our birds - The harsh early winter has chased some winter visitors further south than usual and we have seen more waxwings than normal. Many other of our feathered friends have gone south to avoid the cold but those birds who stay put are having a hard time.

Last winter's prolonged cold hammered a number of species and early indications of another harsh winter here will push their numbers even further back.

The population of wrens dropped last year by 20% and dunnocks by 12 %. Perhaps the species most sorely missed during the festive season was the robin. They dropped to 27% below average numbers last year and will be struggling again this year.

Ed.

GUNNING FOR TROUBLE?

Bird crime in across the UK was up last year; the second worst year since records began. Nearly 400 incidents were reported and North Yorkshire was one of the worst areas. It cannot be entirely coincidental that poor areas are normally areas with shooting estates. The Country Landowners and Businesses Ass. is working with the RSPB but if rogue estate owners are to be stopped then they must be hit if their keepers are convicted.

If the threat was that they would lose their shooting rights they may well come to heel and if their complicity could not be proven and it was thought that keepers were acting under their own initiative then something more than fines is needed. There are known cases where keepers fines have been paid by their employers and if that can be proven then both should be suitably punished. If it cannot and we need to stop rogue keepers then taking away their shot gun licences would soon make them think twice.

Ed.

A GREEN LAND ?

Fancy a summer break in a green and pleasant land? No I am not advocating staying at home or having a staycation as it is now being called. There was little green or pleasant about my lawn this year.

No I am suggesting Greenland as a summer retreat: Away from the madding crowd and increasingly becoming the place its name suggests it should be. If we want to enjoy exploring the Greenland Ice Cap we had better not hang about.

"We are doomed" to quote a well known comic actor. Floods, fires, melting ice and feverish heat: smoke-choked Moscow, floods and land slides in Pakistan, China and Bangladesh, the planet seemed this year to go potty. Even England's normally reliably erratic weather settled into a pattern of high winds and precipitation in the north and west but virtual drought in the east and south. Living in the East Midlands we had the weirdest weather this year. We went 9 weeks with no measurable rain whilst hearing thunder from time to time and hearing of localised flooding within 50 miles of us to the north and in the West Midlands. My garden was a dust bowl! All this followed by the early deep snows and desperately cold weather in November.

It's said that this is a portent of things to come but I would contend that trouble is already here and that this is the new norm.

That is not to say however, that things can't get a whole lot worse and that we cannot try and do something about it.

The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has long predicted that rising global temperatures would produce more frequent and intense heat waves, stronger winds and more intense rainfalls and colder winters. Long term the biggest threat we face in Britain is that if the changes we are seeing in Greenland continue it may turn off the Gulf Stream and we will enjoy the climate more normally experienced at our latitude. Newfoundland here we come!

People do not help themselves; climate change is very real but Salvano Briceno of the U.N.'s International Strategy for Disaster Reduction pointed to aggravating factors in the latest climate catastrophes: China's failure to stem deforestation, contributing to its deadly mudslides; Russia's poor forest management, feeding fires; and the settling of poor Pakistanis on flood plains and dry riverbeds in the densely populated country, squatters' turf that suddenly turned into torrents.

It's been the hottest summer ever recorded in Russia, with Moscow temperatures topping 38 degrees for the first time. Russia's drought has sparked hundreds of wildfires in forests and dried peat bogs, blanketing Moscow with toxic smog and destroying much of its cereal crops. The tundra in Siberia is warming to the point that if you hammer a tent peg into the ground you can ignite the escaping methane. Pakistan had the heaviest monsoon rains on record; 12 inches fell in one 36-hour period sending rivers rampaging over huge areas of country, flooding thousands of villages and leaving about 20 million homeless or otherwise badly affected. China is witnessing its own worst floods in decades.

In the States wildfires and tornados are becoming more common and local weather patterns are changing. Just one example, Iowa, had its wettest 36-month period since records began, a period of 127 years.

Even Israel has seen the worst forest fires in its history.

Closer to home looking out of my window as I pen this the conditions look very Arctic and winters do seem to be getting more severe.

To return to the Arctic itself, the Greenland ice sheet is melting at a record rate due to global warming, according to a British-led expedition currently taking measurements from the treacherous glaciers.

The finding immediately raises fears about the long term effect on rising sea levels and ultimately 'positive feedbacks' as water absorbs more heat than ice, therefore speeding up the warming effect. A 260-square-kilometre chunk of ice broke off from the great Petermann Glacier in Greenland's far northwest this summer. It was the most massive ice island to break away in the Arctic in the 50 years we have been monitoring the situation. The huge iceberg appeared just five months after an international scientific team published a report saying ice loss from the Greenland ice sheet is expanding up its northwest coast from the south. In the Arctic Ocean itself, the summer melt of the vast ice cap has reached unprecedented proportions in recent years. Satellite data shows the ocean area covered by ice last month was the second-lowest ever recorded for July.

The melting of ice into the oceans is accelerating rise in sea levels worldwide, and the WMO'S World Climate Research Program now says seas are rising by 3 inches every 30 years about twice the 20th century's average. Scientists from Pennsylvania State University warn that temperature rise of between 2C and 7C would cause the entire ice mass of Greenland to melt, resulting in 23ft rise in sea level. Just think how many major cities round the world are on the coast.

Worldwide temperature readings, meanwhile, show that January to June 2010 was the hottest first half of a year since record keeping began nearly 200 years ago. Meteorologists say 17 nations have recorded all-time high temperatures in 2010, more than in any other recorded year.

To continue the debate about what is a continent Greenland is, by area, the world's largest island that is not a continent but we won't go into that argument again. Physiographically, it is generally accepted to be a part of the continent of North America.

With about 55,000 inhabitants it is the least densely populated country in the world if we do accept that it is a country. In 1979 Denmark granted them home rule and in 2008 more powers were transferred to the local government with Denmark in charge only of foreign

affairs, security and financial policy which includes providing a subsidy annually.

Ed.

MASS TRESPASS TO BE STOPPED

Kinder Scout, one of the most famous mountain tops in Britain, is to be fenced off in an attempt to return this bleak plateau to the natural moorland it was two centuries ago. 200 years of pollution, wild fires and overgrazing compounded by man's intrusion since it was opened up has made the area into "one of the most damaged areas of moorland in the UK", according to conservationists.

The next step in restoration is to keep out the grazing sheep with new fencing on at least some of the land, but thankfully not responsible walkers.

Over 100,000 walkers cross Kinder Scout every year but in future we will face bogs and fencing where before there was open access before. Unfortunately we have been contributing to the destruction of this wild area we love to visit. Stiles and gates will ensure access is maintained but it will be more contained and directed.

In 1932 it was of course the scene of the 'mass trespass' when hundreds of ramblers stormed the mountain to campaign for greater access leading to the creation of the national parks and more recently the CRoW Act and our 'right to roam'.

As previously reported the National Trust has been organising reseeding work and now is to invest £2.5 million in 're-wilding' the Kinder Scout area by planting heather blocking run off courses and allowing the bogs to fill up with water.

The plan is to scatter grass and heather seed across the plateau largely from the air and fertiliser will be spread on the soil which should result in an improved environment for wildlife and walkers in due course.

Ed.

DRINK TO THEIR HEALTH

In a previous edition I pointed out that there was a scheme afoot to help the Black Grouse.

This iconic bird of the uplands is still declining in numbers, down 80% in 15 years.

If anything represents the mountain areas we love it must be this doughty creature. No dashing south to warmer climes for this tough bird. They stick it out in the worst of mountain winters and just have to be admired. Unfortunately bad weather in the rearing period does play havoc with the young.

I mentioned the introduction of a scheme whereby every bottle of Famous Grouse sold contributed 50p to a fund to help this bird and the RSPB report that to date they have received £150,000

Keep up the good work

Slangie

Ed.

OBITUARIES

It is deep regret that we have to mark the passing of two long standing members of the club

IAN CARR – Joined 1959 Dec 'd July 2010



Ian in his younger days

I first met Ian in the 1950's when he joined the newly formed Cleveland Mountaineering Club and then we were in the same party for our initial visit to the European Alps.

We enjoyed each others company in the hills, but then he had been used to the company of mules to haul guns in the mountains.

He started his adult life serving articles as a pupil in Durham University Land Agents and then joined the Royal Artillery in 1942. He served in North Africa and Italy, but when de-mobbed trained as a forester. This suited his temperament and liking for physical activity. He was interested in almost everything and very observant which made outings with him very interesting. His knowledge of the natural world far exceeded mine and when in Scotland he was liable to stop the car, for no apparent reason, and disappear through a gap in the hedge to investigate a village rubbish dump. Maybe he was the original eco-warrior, but these dumps yielded treasure. All brass was valuable and I can remember he found a rather nice carafe which led to a fruitless search for the stopper. An abandoned forestry camp on the hill above Glen Etive yielded a worn set of Meccano which he planned to repaint for his children.

His ability to walk over rough ground was impressive and I constantly complained that he raised controversial subjects when we were walking up hill through the heather and I needed all my breath to keep up with him. We had a good day in Wales from a camp on the shore of Llyn Ogwen. We walked over the Glyders, did the Snowden Horseshoe and then walked back over the Glyders. Always walking with lots of talk and comfortable silences.

Ian was a good companion in camp, even in small tents. His Primus stove always lit first time and didn't leave carbon on the fingers. He was neat in everything, even his moustache, but he could live with others who were not so orderly.

Scotland was an important place for him — Whitsuntide in Ardgour comes to mind and February in Glen Etive . In Glen Etive we shunned the crowded comforts of the Grampian Club hut and lived in a small broken down cow shed that had a roof and the virtue of the remains of a stove which was nursed into life for a year or two more.

He enjoyed the independence and we would stay on when the rest of the club had returned South, exploring the snow covered hills.

Ian married in 1962, moved to Cark-in-Cartmel in 1965 and worked as a Nature Conservatory Warden at Roundsee Wood Nature Reserve until he retired in 1982. For six years he raised his two sons without the benefit of a wife and in 1979 married again and gained two more children. So, even though the YRC saw less of him, he had a busy life. In 1983 he underwent quadruple by-pass surgery, which limited his physical activity but he remained interested in things and extended these interests. He spent more time drawing and painting; more time fishing and tying flies and more time learning, enquiring, observing.

Ian died on 22 July 2010 after further operations and illness. A number of us attended "A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Ian Carr" at Flookburgh on 30th July 2010

Derek Smithson

VICTOR BUGG -Joined 1969 Dec 'd 14.8.2010



Born in 1927, Victor was by profession a quantity surveyor and he joined the Norwich office of Davis Bellfield & Everest in the early 1950's and was responsible for the firm's Cambridge Office in 1958.

He went on to become a highly respected figure, not only in the Cambridge business world but also, with his boundless energy and enthusiasm for good causes, in the wider community, especially alleviating suffering wherever it occurred.

He was a founder member of the Cambridge forum for the construction industry and an active member of the Cambridge Rotary Club being their President in 1976. He was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship of Rotary International in 2000 in recognition of his charity work.

He was instrumental in winning a substantial amount of work with the Cambridge colleges notably Robinson College and was a key member of the team which won the competition to build the Burrell Museum in Glasgow.

Following his retirement in 1997 Victor was elected a Member of Magdalene College, Cambridge in recognition of nearly fifty years service to the College.

Victor was introduced to our Club in 1969 by Don Mackay and in his early years with the Club was a firm friend of both Stanley Marsden and Edward Tregoning, sharing their interests in ornithology and malt whisky.

Most years he attended the Whit Scottish camping meets during a period when the Club's ambitions for adventurous meets were somewhat reduced.

In later years having camped at every Scottish location with the Club he joined a small group of us on private Whit meets. Over the years we camped in S.W. Ireland, the Pyrenees, and Harris and he introduced us to Picos De Europa. On possibly the last such private meet he led us from Rannoch to his favourite Scottish view point; Meall Liath na Doire Bhig. That evening we dined at the Rannoch Station Hotel before putting him on the night train to Euston. His house, being only 20 minutes from Stansted was the rendezvous point for Club meets to Slovenia and Sardinia.

Never a keen caver but a great companion in the hills!

There was a northern presence of the Club at his funeral where his love of the Club and its members was well expressed.

Our condolences go to Audrey, his wife, and the family, of whom Stephen was a YRC member for some time.



Albert Chapman and David Handley

PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

Speleological Union of Ireland

After a 9 year gap, 2009 saw the publication of Irish Speleology No. 18. Packed with articles ranging from a database of caves in Ireland to caving overseas, it contains many things of interest to our cavers. Colour photographs are abundant throughout as well as surveys and many kilometres of new, often water filled passages have been found and new connections made.

County Clare has seen some new finds and Fermanagh has seen the reopening of Shannon Cave through a dig in Polltullyard leading to the breakthrough into Shannon Cave.

The articles are well written and the quality of the photographs and most of the diagrams and surveys make this a publication that the Club library should hold.

If you want a personal copy and SUI members have not snapped them all up it is worth making enquiries of Matthew Parkes, Natural History Museum, Merrion Street, Dublin 2 (mparkes@museum.ie.) They were charging £9 to their members

We have now received issue 19 of what they hope will now again be an annual production. This edition again has superb photographs and numerous useful surveys including recent extensions. It has a list of the deepest 30 systems in Ireland and the 30 longest.

To quote their new editor "I would like to offer a profound and moving critique of the current state of Irish speleology. That an issue of Irish Speleology has appeared only one year after the previous issue is testament to the amount of work currently being done to explore and catalogue the caves of Ireland. It is hoped that this rate of exploration continues, not only to increase our understanding of Irish karst but also to further document our caves, something that has often been lacking in Irish caving.

Irish Speleology has in the past suffered long dormant periods, resulting variously from the lack of new exploration, the lack of an editor, or an unwillingness to record and publish discoveries and research. It is the editor's opinion that a healthy caving scene remedies these maladies. Caving in Ireland has enjoyed a recent increase in popularity, a renaissance in exploration, and is well served by its governing body. It is hoped that this is maintained, and with it the will to discover, to record, and to publish."

Are cavers the world over too modest or too active to put pen to paper?

Both copies are in the library at Lowstern

Ed.

Hikes, Walks and Rambles in Western Crete.

Authors: Angelos Assariotakis and Yannis Kornaros. Published by Kritike Publishing SA ISBN : 978-960-218-644-2. Available from Amazon, £15.

Ten YRC members and guests will well remember the club meet in Crete in 2003, when they spent two weeks, guided by Angelos Assariotakis, his colleagues and Nano, his girlfriend, walking, scrambling and exploring Western Crete.

Angelos was then working on his book about the island and the final work has recently been published; what a wonderful and comprehensive guide it is!

There are short sections describing the geography, geology, climate, vegetation, the mythology and history of the island, and practical information about food, holidays and festivals, maps and photography, all very useful for a visitor to Crete.

Short sections describe how best to get to Crete and accommodation whilst there.

There follows a description in meticulous detail of fifty one routes of various lengths and difficulty, from 2 hour strolls beside the sea to 9-10 hour treks along narrow precipitous paths and climbs to the high peaks in the White Mountains. Each gives information about the level of difficulty, elevation change, type of terrain, where water and shade can be found and points of particular interest.

Many routes are “off the beaten path”, taking walkers to some of the hidden treasures of Crete. There are mountain treks, seaside treks, treks combining the two, and canyon treks, including the famous Samaria Gorge and a short two hour exploration of the Preveli Gorge, where you might find yourself wading through waist deep water.

All routes the YRC followed in 2003 are included, the introductory wade out to Elafonissi Island and the coastal walk to Palaiohora, the Irini Gorge, the beautiful coastal walk to Soughia and the ancient settlement of Lissos, the 9 hour walk and scramble from Soughia to Agia Roumeli and the ascent of Pahnes.

The photo album at the end of the book shows some of the rugged, diverse terrain of Crete, with a few photos of YRC members ascending steep snow en route to Pahnes and on the precipitous path high above the Libyan Sea from Soughia to Agia Roumeli.

If you've already been to Crete this book will remind you of some of the unique features of the island, its people, history and its mountains, and you'll yearn to return; if you haven't yet been to Crete, this is the perfect introduction and guide to one of the most beautiful and fascinating islands in the Mediterranean. There is no one better qualified to guide you around the island than Angelos, either personally or via his book, and I strongly recommend the book to all who think of venturing there.

Alan Kay.

Ron Fawcett – rock athlete. An autobiography

Vertebrate Publishing 2010, £20 (but a lot less via web sites) ISBN: 9781906148171

Ron is 55 this year, I've never met him but did see him once when climbing at Haw Bank Quarry near Embsay with Arthur Champion in 1972 or '73. We were struggling on a crack line, he was soloing all over the blank rock face on the steeper part to our left.

He credits Arthur as getting him started on the rock, safely, with rope and karabiners etc and whilst admitting he wasn't much good at school, notes that **George Spenceley**, one of his teachers at Aireville secondary school was the only one to encourage him in his love for climbing. I was amazed by the Rock Athlete film of Ron climbing 'Lord of the Flies' on the Cromlech in '79 – it made a big impact on me and still does when-ever I re-watch the video.

The autobiography is (ghost) written by Ed Douglas, but Ron's obsession with climbing, his modesty and desire for a simple life shine out of the pages. Sure, there are details of him doing exceptionally difficult routes, but greater emphasis is often put on other climbers' progress to climb. Very often the build up to a new route climax is followed with only a sentence or two defining the climb itself. There is a chronology at the back of the book which helps, but within the text it is sometimes a little difficult to follow what happened when; this doesn't matter – its such a roller coaster ride of success and (just a few failures) at the very top of the sport. He has been lucky enough to visit and climb hard in many parts of the world, and of course been partnered by many other top climbers. He describes them in objective and generally affectionate terms. If you like rock climbing, read this book; if you are really good, try some of his routes – I wish I could!

Adrian Bridge

STOP PRESS - Ed Douglas has won the Boardman Tasker prize for his co-authorship of this book.

The result was announced on Friday, 19 November at the Kendal Mountain Festival.

Ed.

POETS CORNER

*Another novelty from Tom Wise, the Earl Sterndale poet.
Permission to print obtained by Derek Clayton. It reminds me of
the top bunks at LHG and the old Lowstern Ed.*

PATENT PENDING III

I've thought of another invention
and this one should make me a packet
For tales of non - fiction,
confirm my conviction
No holiday maker should lack it

A parachute pack for pyjamas;
for them folk that choose the top bunk
In cabins on ferries
or wherever there is
a danger of falling when drunk

Although it's a splendid idea,
to sell it now would be a crime
For when I last tried it
old Newton defied it;
the thing didn't open in time

In spite of this snag, I assure you
Improvements continue apace,
and in the near future
no dressing or suture
need ever adorn a tanned face.

OVERSEAS MEETS

CALIFORNIA July 11- 25

Tim Josephy, Ken Roberts, Tony Dunford, Neil Grant and I met at Heathrow on July 11th for a non stop Virgin Atlantic flight direct to San Francisco. We emerged into the US sunshine some 11 hrs later and headed for the hire car depot. After managing to avoid buying the extras the agent was so keen to sell us, we set off for Yosemite, arriving at Crane Flat camp site around 2130. It was extremely dry and dusty; a fine layer of tilth soon covered everything. Next morning, we called at the check in desk at about 0745, seeking to pay for the night we'd just had and one more. Whilst the office was manned by two people – and the till was being used – they would neither accept any money nor take a reservation until they 'opened' at 0815. We idled away 30 mins and returned; they quickly did as we'd wanted and thanked us for waiting – and of course insisted – have a great day!

Drove down into the valley; I've made that drive several times now and the first views of El Cap. and Half Dome are still awe inspiring and to me, one of the best vistas anywhere. It was Ken's first visit; whilst Tony and he went and walked up the Mist Trail beside Vernal Falls then on up past Nevada Falls (to return later via the JMT), Tim, Neil and I climbed a six pitch route, 'After 7', on the Manure Pile Buttress, a mile or so east of El Capitan. Any manure that might once have been there was no longer present, tho' we did watch out for bears in case they came to leave some. We walked further into the valley and climbed a little on Swan Slabs, before getting the shuttle bus to Curry Village where we met up for a meal.

Next day, July 13th, we drove into Tuolumne Meadows, stopping at Olmsted Point for photos and Lake Tenaya for a swim, then set up camp at the Meadows camp site.



Neil, Tim and I set off to climb Werner's Wiggle, a 5.8 bolted route on the smooth side of the nearby, Lembert Dome. We could hardly ascend the first pitch before deciding that dome climbing is not what we're good at, so retreated. We followed Tony and Ken walking around and over the same dome, with splendid views to Cathedral Peak one way and Mt. Conness the other.



That evening we ate at the Tuolumne Lodge – as in previous visits, a good meal and good value.

Before 6 am the next day, Tim, Neil and I were on the trail to Matthes Crest, planning to traverse from north to south. There was a lot more snow pack around than on previous visits and en route to the crest we had to cross some and avoid other patches. Our first views of Matthes Crest were from between a couple of the Echo Peaks above Budd Lake – a spectacular ridge.



We (I) began too ambitiously seeking to climb some slender rock fins, which were not easy to get down off, so retreated – lost 30 mins – then realised we'd bypassed these on our 2006 traverse from south to north. Continued on up/over/across the rock cornice and into more jagged steeper ground, when in sight of the North Tower – the highest part of the ridge, we got 'lost' and wasted a lot of time seeking the right line to traverse or descend, before re ascending. The ridge was pretty narrow with spectacular drops on both sides – not a place for taking undue risks. Eventually a gully/chimney on the east side of the ridge was ascended and the North Summit attained. In 2006 we'd had no such route finding problems going the other way.....why this time? We didn't have enough time to complete the traverse over the southern half, so abseiled off 100m, on the west side then descended talus slopes, walked across and up to the bench, south of Cathedral Peak.



AB

Mozzies were very active, biting/stinging through clothing as well as on exposed flesh so we didn't spend too long admiring the wonderful views. We arrived back at the car around 7 pm. to find beers had been provided for us by Tony and Ken - a most welcome treat. A camp meal and a good fire rounded out an enjoyable, if frustrating day. (Peter Croft, in his inspirational book of High Sierra climbs "The Good, the Great and the Awesome" describes how he soloed the whole route, including approach and return one morning, in time to report for work at 0830. A man in a different league!

15.7.10: Packed, second breakfasted at the Tioga Gas Mart and collected a permit from the Mono Lake Ranger Station for our next 2/3 day visit to the Matterhorn Peak in the Sawtooth Range.



AB

Drove north to Bridgeport, then west across a few miles of flat grass land on which thousands of cattle were being raised. (Surely not all for the huge meals at the gas mart?) As we drove along it appeared that the approach to Matterhorn Peak was surrounded by extensive snow fields – for which we were not equipped. The road ended at Mono camp ground, where we stayed. To check out access to Matterhorn Peak, three of us walked up Horsetail Creek trail towards it, steep zigzags to begin followed by a delightful flower bedecked valley. The trail deteriorated to an indistinct cairned route still some 3000' below our peak; from that point we could see that access would indeed be barred by snow fields, so reluctantly, gave up on that objective and returned by a longer route, the Cattle Trail which lead east via more spectacular flowers and down to the mid point between Twin Lakes, then a couple of miles back to camp along the lake side.



AB



AB

The return from Matterhorn Peak

The next day we all walked up the Barney Lake trail from the camp site to a series of lakes, Barney, Robinson and Crown with, as everywhere, grand scenery all round. We turned back just before the Sawtooth Crest - decision made by the approach of a thunder storm and fierce mozzie activity. Luckily, the storm missed us, tho' it did hit the camp site. When we got back, other campers were mopping up. I say campers, but there were few tents; most were in the large to very large camper van/bus vehicles with all the attendant



TJ

The approach to and summits of Matthes Crest

bikes, fishing kit, boats, BBQ kit, outdoor furniture, generators – with a significant proportion of the occupants having a BMI exceeding 35 – and having a very different sort of outdoor holiday experience to us.



Barney Lake - Crown Point - Sawtooths

17.7.10. Packed and left, drove to Mammoth Lakes, parked the car and took the shuttle bus to Agnew Meadows. It was a little disappointing that the bus descended 1500' to our starting point, leaving us with that and rather more to ascend. From there, we walked up to the Thousand Island Lake, with bivi gear, climbing kit and food. The Thousand Island Lake was about a mile long, we went along its northern side over/round endless granite boulders, small pines and water courses: our walk in took about 5 hours, to a place we deemed suitable to camp at.



The Camp site Thousand Islands Lake

Our (climbing) objective was one of the ascents of Mt. Banner. There was plenty of snow around the mountain and we agreed on the North Ridge as the better line.



Mt. Banner has a dramatic profile from the way we had approached – little did we realise what a tottering pile of rock it turned out to be. Off before 6 am next morning, 90 mins trudge – a lot through snow - up to the pass and the start of the North Ridge. Steep scrambling and a few pitches brought

us to the top of a pillar – wrong start. Careful descent, traverse and re ascent, all through worrying loose rock.



Dawn start for Mt. Banner



Approach to Mt. Banner

We reached the Peaklet, followed by descent and as often, false leads/retreats. Began to find snow, to climb or avoid. We failed to find the way onto the ridge proper and climbed a steepening gully, heading for a notch in the sky line which we/I assumed would bring us onto the NE Buttress route. Above a steep wet chimney, we reached a place where the rock wall was slightly overhanging, loose in places and with water trickling down. It was too hard, so we abseiled off a rock 8/quick draw left in place at the highest point of the pitch and slowly retreated, leaving several more tape slings in place at various abseils. Eventually we reached safer ground where the loose rock was less of a hazard. Fortunately the afternoon thunderstorm that looked as if it might arrive didn't do so and the weather stayed good all day. We stumbled on down, getting to the camp at around 7 pm feeling very frazzled; it had been frustrating and often scary – we'd never been amidst so much tottering rock.

Ken and Tony had been up a subsidiary peak on Davis Mountain, north and east of Mt. Banner; they provided TLC, food and drink which was much appreciated. Early to bed amongst the loud croaking-frog chorus.

Having had three 'outings' spoiled by navigation errors/incompetence, I was beginning to wonder if we were getting past our 'best before' date.....

Next day we walked out and stopped in a small café in Mammoth Lakes; a minor altercation led to the arrival of two police men who decided on balance not to escort Tony to the local penitentiary. We drove off as free men and stayed in a motel in Bishop.

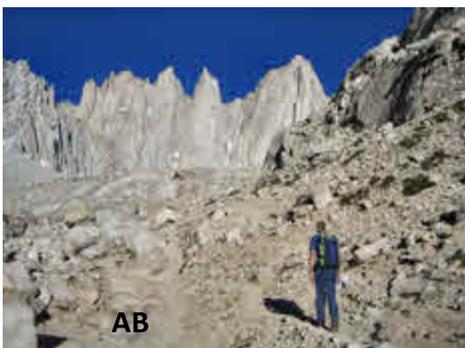
The following day (20th) we drove up Route 168 and to the South Lake trail head. Walked from there up the trail towards Bishop Pass. Tony and Ken ascended the well named Chocolate Mountain, whilst the rest of us walked/scrambled up the south ridge of Mount Goode.



The ascent was laborious, much sand and loose stone before we reached steeper rock and some snow. We met three folks descending with axes and kicking steps; they were Seattle ladies, we chatted a little then used their steps to ascend. Views from the summit were superb, and several tops we'd been on in 2004, 2006 were identified.

July 21st was Tim's 62nd birthday, so the traditional song was sung before breakfast. We made a leisurely drive south to Lone Pine and collected the permit for Whitney for the following day. Tim had applied for this in Feb, not got it, and then later received news that we had won a place via the lottery. At the Ranger station, we had forms to fill in and sign to comply with strict but sensible conditions and were given a WAG bag each. There are a lot of visitors to Mt. Whitney and the land is steep with not much dirt, so everyone is required to pack out all waste. The WAG bag process isn't too bad, but we found that the odour control aspects could be improved!

Next morning, Ken got up to drive us to the trail head from our camp at the Whitney Portal camp ground, to start our (Neil, Tim and I) ascent just after 4 am. The trail head is at ~8000' and the summit is ~14,500' so we expected a long day. We planned to ascend the North fork of Lone Pine Creek trail to Iceberg Lake, and climb the 1200' East Face of Mt. Whitney. We began with many others who were going up the main trail to Whitney, and then we branched off onto the steeper, less well travelled trail. At around 5 am the dawn came and with it, amazingly beautiful alpenglow views of the East Face and Keeler Needle.



Keeler Needle and East Face of Mt. Whitney

The dark grey to pink to red/orange to yellow to bright but pale grey transition took only 5 mins and we were lucky to be in a good position to see the mountain sides clearly when it occurred. We reached Iceberg Lake around 8 am. Part of the surface looked to be clear water, but it was solidly frozen.



Neil above Iceberg Lake

Three other lads had camped there and set off up the East Face route ahead of us, getting established at the 'notch' and beginning of the pitches, just before us. We waited ~30 mins then followed. The climbing was relatively easy most of the way, but the exposure got ever greater; at one small stance above the 'Fresh Air Traverse', there was ~1000' vertically below us to the scree, with clear views across the Owens valley to the White Mountains.

At a few places, we had to wait for the other climbers to move on, but it didn't slow us down much; in fact at above 13,500' exertion needed some recovery time, so rests were welcome. In many places there was loose granite rock so care was needed, however, it was very much less of a problem than we'd encountered on Mt. Banner.



Our route involved 14 pitches which ended right at the summit, which we reached at around 4 pm. We sprawled around, had lunch, enjoyed the views 'from the top of America' and the flute playing of a couple who'd walked up from their camp at Guitar Lake.



Tim, Adrian and Neil on the summit

We'd already decided that we would descend via the main Whitney trail, even though it was twice as long as our approach, for variation and not wanting the steep and roughness the North Fork route entailed – and if we were to be out after dark, a better defined trail would be easier to follow. We left the summit at 1645 and got back to the trail head at 2030. The way was almost 11 miles with countless zigzags; whilst the views were great – and, as throughout the holiday, the weather was good too – the path went on and on. Our sympathies were with Iain Gilmour and Alan Kay who'd made this descent at least twice before with JMT type loads on their backs. This is not a route I shall ever choose to return to!

We passed a couple of areas where folks were camping and several people walking up with big packs; I've no doubt a one day trip is easier than a two/three day summit trip. It's a long way to be carrying a lot of stuff.

Tony and Ken had left the car at the trail head, we got in and returned to the camp where they prepared a pasta noodle tuna corn peas mix meal. It was lovely! We relaxed around a fire after a great day with no problems. Confidence returned.

Next day, we visited a Bristle-cone forest, 10,000' up in the White Mountains, some 25 miles east of Big Pine,



marvelling at the twisted and stunted trees, looking half dead and up to 4000 years old. We didn't visit the oldest tree, estimated to be 4800, and called Methuselah, it was a bit further away than we felt like walking in the hot sun, (and probably didn't look much different).

"One of these ancient life forms is over 3000 years old . Which is it?"

On our penultimate day, we revisited Mammoth Lakes and climbed the North Ridge of Crystal Crag, whilst Tony and Ken walked up onto a ridge overlooking this little mountain. The climb was graded 5.7, only so on the first pitch, the rest was a lot easier and lead up to and through a huge crystal band below the summit.



TJ

This was a fitting end to another excellent High Sierra trip. Many thanks to Tim for most of the arrangements.

Ken and Tony stayed on in San Francisco for a further 24 hrs, Neil's wife Clare flew out and they spent another two and a half weeks touring. Tim and I returned on 23rd, arriving on 24th. Work on 25th took some surviving!

Adrian Bridge

SOME SIERRA TRAIL NOTES - Tony Dunford

There's nothing like a shower after a hike such as the beautiful Vernal & Nevada Falls trail loop, so be warned that there are none on the Yosemite valley and Crane Flats camp grounds. However there is a solution!

Good planning can take you (next day) via Tenaya Lake, and a swim there will be memorable, agreeable, and in the most beautiful glaciated scenery. It's named after the old chief of the tribe that inhabited Yosemite Valley (in summer), until its "discovery" in the 1850s.

Tuolumne Meadows gives numerous trail options, and so it did for Ken and I. Book early in the year or take a chance on the day, for a campsite. I've been fortunate on 2 of the 3 previous trips, and this time also there was space.

We chose a route that would use the John Muir Trail south west towards Little Yosemite; but enable us to top one of the classic "spires" in the area namely Echo Peaks. Tim, Adrian, and Neil (hereinafter "the ANT team") had left for nearby Matthes Crest, so it would enable us to "keep an eye on them"!!

The JMT winds gently up from Tuolumne through pine forests on a well used and maintained trail. It's a great start to the day being invariably cool in the morning; semi shaded and mosquito free, whilst giving increasingly beautiful glimpses of Cathedral Peak and Tresidder Peak.

By the time we arrived at the easterly of the 2 Cathedral Lakes after some 5 miles, the day was warming. Some 130+ years ago John Muir recounts he camped on its shores and had his soap taken by an acquisitive bird. It's to the immense credit of the US National Park organisation that the area has remained in its pristine condition since 1907.



KR

Tony before Cathedral Peak

Near the shallow col and not far south of the lake we left the trail and struck off east up the semi wooded slope to emerge after an hour on the sun beaten glaciated plateau giving superb views of Cathedral Peak. Unseen climbers were heard somewhere on its steep south face.

Our ascent at this stage somewhat resembled that of Frodo, Sam, and Gollum on their way to the Volcano - in that we often stopped for breath in whatever shade we could find. (I'd memories of bad headaches on earlier trips resulting from sun and altitude).

We were underneath the fore-shortened main ridge and spires of the 9 Echo Peaks, and some careful map reading was required to choose the approach to Echo Peak No.5 classed as a grade 3 scramble. Initially the route was through / round scrub, scree and small snow fields until reaching the correct steeply ascending ridge. This gave some tricky and enjoyable scrambling for 400 vertical feet, to emerge on the 2nd highest of the 9 spires at 11,120'.



The views were everything one could wish for. Although midday, it was the clearest panorama I've had in the Sierras. To the north east were the mountains either side of the Tioga Pass, the various peaks of the Cathedral Range stretched to the south east, whilst south of us Matthes Crest was providing sport for the ANT team. Away to the south west was Clouds Rest.

Descending the scramble showed an alternate return route for us; which we followed, after lunch in the shade of some scrub. At precisely 1255, and from Wilts Col, we spotted 3 ANT specks on the Crest. We picked our way down the north facing rubble slope, avoiding snow fields, all the while having views of Cathedral Peak and Budd Lake. The whole area was still only emerging from the deep annual snow cover. There's no trail on the map, or on the ground, until one is below the Budd Lake outfall. This valley is wooded and steepening, so we were pleased to eventually spot the small rough trail on the opposite bank after some 30 mins. As a result, during the hottest part of the day we were benefiting from the shaded woods of Budd Creek for 2.5 miles. This trail is faint and not un-strenuous in parts, prior to its unannounced junction with the JMT half mile or so south of the Tuolumne road.

The excellent route, great weather and 9 hour day were rounded off by us bumping into the accomplished man and wife team who had ascended the Cathedral Peak south face, and the later return of the ANT team, with whom we were to subsequently share and enjoy the logistics, trails, and many beers.

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS - Ken Roberts

It was my first visit to the Sierra Nevada, so I benefited from the experience of Adrian, Tim, Neil and Tony. It was all a wonderful surprise. Yosemite was full of surprises and beauty; smooth white granite mountains, especially the spectacular Half Dome and superb waterfalls. On our way up to the high level Nevada Falls we saw a Rattle snake beside the path. On the way out of Yosemite we saw a Black Bear by the side of the road and then stopped at Olmsted Point for an amazing panoramic view back into Yosemite Valley. My other team members will have documented our other locations, achievements and experiences, so I will now just focus on my first impressions.

The word which comes to mind when describing all I saw was WOW!

I saw many new birds – inquisitive Steller (blue) Jays, majestic Bald Eagles and Californian Condors, Western Bluebirds, Dark Eyed Junco and Hummingbirds. Also the ever present Striped Squirrels, Chipmunks and Marmots. We also came across an inquisitive stag deer by our camp site at 1000 island lake and I just missed seeing a Black Bear walk past our tent at Mono Lakes (as reported by our American neighbour)

A special surprise was the quality of the trails, the lack of litter and the abundance of wild flowers. We learnt that the trails were improved by “available labour” during the 1930's great depression. The wild flowers are everywhere and walking along the trails was at times just like walking through an established garden, along with ever changing carpets of colour and fragrance. Brushing against the large areas of wild sage gave a welcome pleasant odour – especially welcome when washing facilities were absent!

The general scenery is just stunning especially from mountain summits and ridges – it must be one of the most beautiful places on earth. A “must do” for anyone who loves the beauty of mountain scenery.

Other memorable sights were our visit to the Bristle-cone pines in the White Mountains - one of the most ancient of trees. They presented a natural and most beautiful spectacle of ancient trunks and twisted branches - preserved by altitude and dryness. Also the unique “Wild West” landscape between Lone Pine and Mount Whitney – the setting for many movies. I also still remember the 104deg F heat in Bishop and lying down in a stream to cool down after a hot day climbing Echo Peak 5. My first sight of the eerie Mono Lake was also a lasting memory.

On the way back, Tony and I spent a day in San Francisco – quite a contrast and surprisingly chilly. We enjoyed rides on the steep hill climbing cable cars and misty views of “Golden” Gate Bridge and Alcatraz.

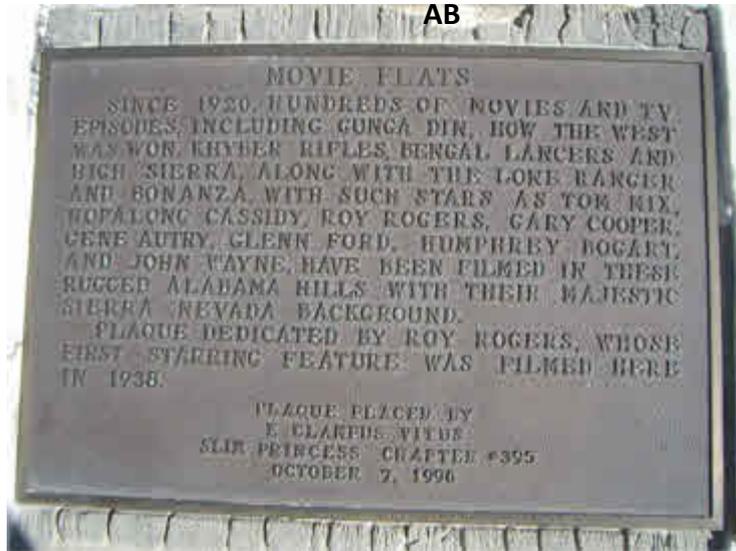
I might even be tempted back to do a John Muir trail!

n.b. An 'All Parks' Pass cost \$80 – in 2006 it was \$50.
£1=\$1.47 exchange rate this trip.



The dawn photos on the previous page are of Mt. Whitney from North Fork Trail, the team are beside South Lake and the camp site is at Whitney.

The other photos are of Bristle-cone Pines, an unnamed wild flower and a scene described as something from the wild west, backing up the claims of the plaque shown here. The final photograph is one of the local inhabitants - a rattlesnake.



Photographs throughout the report are by Tim (TJ), Adrian (AB) and Ken (KR)

BOLIVIA, QUIMSA CRUZ - AUG

A report of the YRC trekking expedition to the small Quimsa Cruz range of 5000+m peaks a day's drive from Bolivia's principal city, La Paz. Following a week of acclimatisation tourism the party of seven completed their trek during a week in mid August 2010.

Introduction

Over the last forty years or so the Club and its members have made several successful trips to the Bolivian Andes with ascents and treks in the Cordillera Apolobamba, Cordillera Real and the Yungas, Cordillera Cocapata and the full length of the Cordillera Occidental. The remaining significant mountain group, the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz appeared overdue a visit. Interest in such a trip was aroused among both rock climbers and mountain trekkers though the former were already committed to a trip elsewhere in the Americas this season.



The mountain ranges of Bolivia

The Quimsa Cruz

The Quimsa Cruz range is part of the Cordillera Oriental which runs in a line to the north and east of the altiplano. The Cordilleras Apolobamba and Real form the northern part of the line, close to and north of La Paz with Cerro Illimani marking their southern limit. The Quimsa Cruz lie on the southeast of La Paz River as it cuts through towards the Yungas and Amazonia. The range extends from 40 to 80 miles southeast of La Paz, almost reaching the highway leading from the altiplano to Cochabamba.

Around 1900, miners from La Paz found tin deposits at the foot of the glaciers near Viloco in the northern part of the range. They ascended the icy ridges and high altitude glaciers under the leadership of one Don Oswaldo Quetena. He died tragically on a Korichuma ridge while searching for a mountain pass to the richer veins. A decade later Germans Herzog and Seeling published the first technical information on the range prompting a number of pioneering expeditions. Mining operations flourished, then towards the end of the century declined markedly. They are now being re-established by smaller scale cooperatives.

Mesili describes the mountain chain as beautiful with Bolivia's most isolated climbing on high quality graniodorite rock and excellent new route potential. Parts of the range can be reached in a single long day's drive from La Paz with a four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicle. Reliable mountaineering information is available in La Paz from those professional guides who were part of the 1987 German expedition.

Thellaeche calls the Quimsa Cruz a microcosm of the Andes with summits cloaked in perpetual snows and glaciers, enormous granite peaks, multi-coloured lakes, deep gorges, bamboo forest and an immense variety of birds and plants. This variety makes for unforgettable trekking between 4200m and 5000m.

The range is also called the Tres Cruces – Quimsa or Kimsa being the Aymaran for three. Sometimes the term Southern Cordillera Real is used locally. Around fifty of the Quimsa Cruz peaks have heights of 5000m to 6000m. The reported heights of early ascents are exaggerated by around 150m to 200m. Monochrome photocopies of 1:50k maps are available in La Paz though it is said that the sheets may be reprinted and/or updated. The mapping is mainly from aerial photography in the 1950s with little attempt to represent accurately the steeper ground, especially crags. Glaciers in the area have retreated considerable distances with the smaller ones no longer extant resulting in unstable rock in these areas. There is poor agreement between sources on place names.

Currently the range attracts little attention with a few visits from serious mountaineers each year. There remain parts of the range with no ascents and ample opportunities for new routes even in the more frequented areas. However, the altitude, isolation and absence of available support in case of any accident or serious illness are factors which need to be considered by visiting teams.

Participants

In a busy (northern) summer for the Club this expedition attracted seven participants. Their ages ranged from 20 to 74 and their previous mountaineering experiences ranged from single visits to the Lake District to a number of mountaineering visits to the greater ranges.

| | | | |
|----------|---------------|---------|--------------------|
| Members: | Rob Ibberson | Guests: | Sarah Broadhead |
| | Michael Smith | | Gabrielle Ibberson |
| | Richard Smith | | Helen Smith |
| | | | Fiona Smith |



The trekking team at camp 4 with on the back row (l to r) Javier Thellaeche (guide), Richard, Michael, Helen and Fiona Smith, Sarah Broadhead, Gustavo (cook), Gabrielle and Rob Ibberson, Raymundo (head porter). The Penis Pass is in the left background. (photo by JT)

Logistics

International flights to Bolivia's La Paz are available via Miami, Madrid and Santiago or Amsterdam and Lima. Mid 2010 these cost about £900. Accommodation in La Paz is plentiful but should be pre-arranged at the height of the season (July/August). We found the Hostal Naira to be (£17 per person with breakfast) quiet, clean, efficient and helpful. They store bags in a locked area while you are on trek.

The availability of good logistical support for mountaineering around La Paz has improved markedly over the last thirty years. There are a handful of companies providing experienced and qualified guiding, portering, catering and transport. Besides the dependable agencies there are innumerable small tourist services offering support for trekkers and mountaineers but employing porters (not guides). Care should be taken to avoid these.

Andean Summits were selected for this trek because of their knowledge of the Quimsa Cruz and longstanding reputation. Arrangements were made with them several months in advance and an itinerary negotiated via email. Their reliability and flexibility were invaluable. Menus were varied and interesting and the food well prepared. The guide's knowledge of flora, fauna and local cultures adding to the trekking experience and well worth the £415 for five days full trekking support and two days transport. We provided only our sleeping bags, sleeping mats and personal gear.

For the seven trekkers a substantial support team was required: ten porters and head porter, a cook with his assistant and a mountain guide. Transport consisted of two 4WD strengthened and adapted to withstand the rigours of the rough dusty roads in addition to a pickup truck for the porters, tents, provisions and other equipment.

Even well-made plans often fail to run like clockwork in Bolivia. On this trip two political protests and two celebratory parades caused minor disruptions to our programme. Participants need to be adaptable and, at times, patient.

All food and fuel for trekking should be taken from La Paz. The largest nearby community, Viloco, is a shadow of its 1920s heyday and can not be relied upon for supplies. All water was thoroughly treated first by filtering then boiling at camp or using standard personal water treatment systems en route during the day. The distribution of petrol to the towns along the highway on the altiplano was undependable. Local transport is available from La Paz to Viloco (from where it is possible to trek) and apparently beyond. Transport to Cochetanga may also be available. Local transport would be cheaper but somewhat slower and more crowded than a hired vehicle.

Acclimatisation

La Paz lies between 3000m and 4100m so, assuming one is arriving from UK altitudes, a number of acclimatisation days need to be spent around this height adjusting to the altitude before starting trekking. On this trip seven days were spent at altitude before setting off for the Quimsa Cruz. The first in La Paz, four on a brief visit to Cuzco and Machu Picchu in Peru and, finally, two days exploring the city of La Paz. Despite the hectic trip to Peru, by the end of that week the initial symptoms of nausea, dizziness, lassitude, lack of appetite and headaches had abated and all were feeling ready for a trek. However, once actually heading up a rising route at 4500+m breathlessness quickly returned and the pace was slow on the first day. By the last day the pace had improved noticeably.

Route

The five-day route was circular, starting and finishing at Cuchu Mocoaya (586370), a terrace of mining cottages set back from and hidden from the road several kilometres north of Viloco in the northern part of the range. An eight-hour drive from central La Paz arrived there via Ruta 1 towards Uyuni turning off at Conani passing Puchuni, Tablachaca and Caxata on a surfaced road before a rough track past mining villages including Viloco and Campamento Miraflores. This track was left just before a ford on a tight bend (one of many) for a smaller track soon barred by a padlocked wire. The miners have the key. A few hundred metres beyond, past the houses, are flat areas by the stream. This was our basecamp.

Day One - Cuchu Mocoaya to Mina Nevada

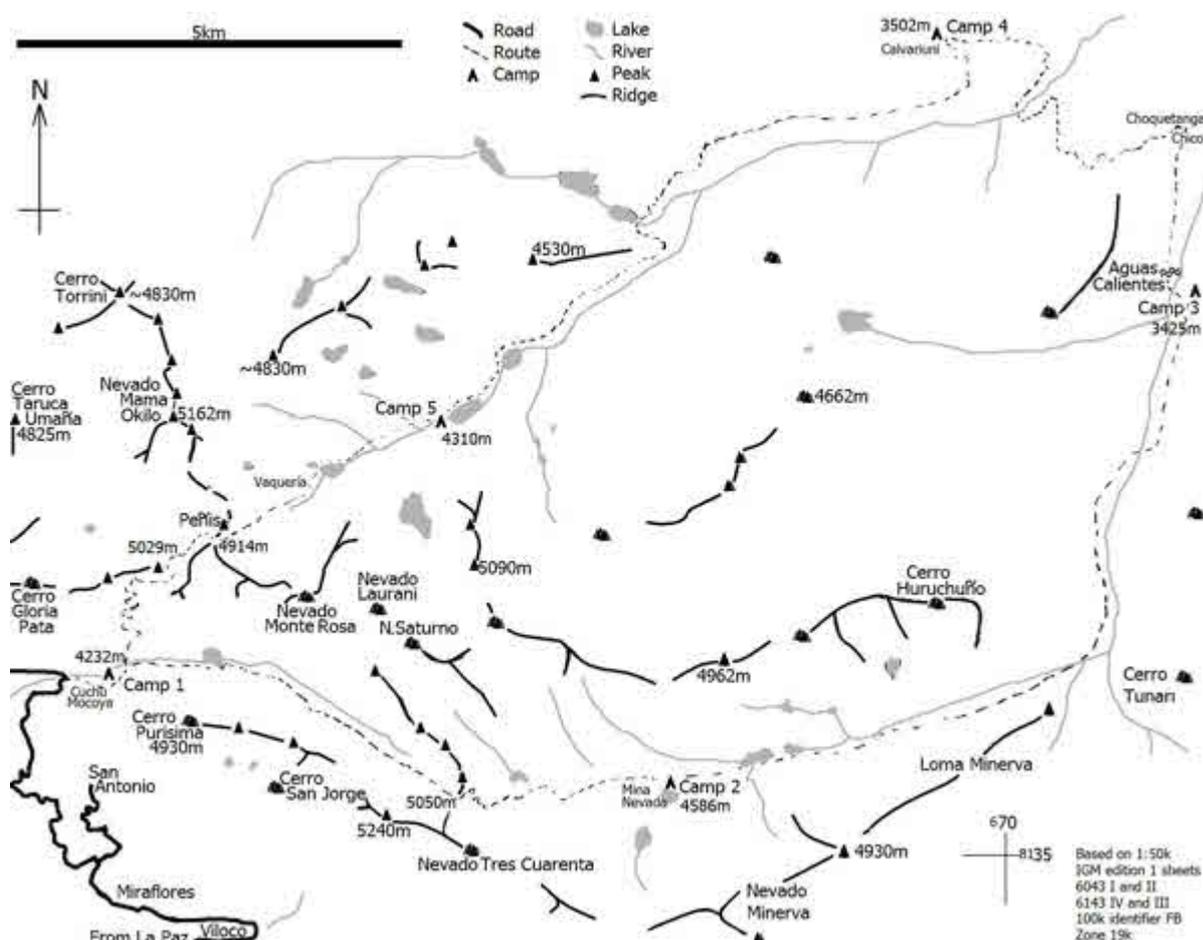
Initially on a rough vehicle track to the mining area the route became less distinct through hanging valleys leading eventually to a broad col around 5058m. The miners we saw climbed steep screes then crags to gain the veins they worked. Power for their tools came from a spluttering compressor at the foot of the scree and Cuchu Mocoaya had a two-man rocking crusher made of granite resting on a flat stone.

Above Laguna Blanca in the first hanging valley llamas grazed and the route moved to the right (south) of the valley passing through a narrow cleft between a boulder and a cliff. Beyond this the path was usually on the south flank of the valley until the screes were gained towards the col.

The season had been exceptionally dry so streambeds were parched resulting in a lack of drinking water. This was the only section of the trek where drinking water was a problem.

At the col a rough 4WD mining track from Viloco is joined. This track gives an easy-angled descent to a second tarn and the hamlet of Mina Nevada perched high on the hillside at the track's end. This track on the south side of the valley does not follow the line shown on the IGM map and there are other new tracks on the northern side of the upper Rio Calachaca valley. The mining hamlet has a few houses and an old administration building with people living in some of its rooms. By the tarn is a rudimentary football pitch on which we were allowed to camp. The family in the house adjoining the larger building provided a quinoa-based drink flavoured with cloves and later a sweet coffee.

Sketch map of the trekking route



This was a tough first day with about 800m of ascent and a distance of 10km on the map. Eight hours.

Day Two - Mina Nevada to Aguas Calientes

An easier second day ensued as the valley was descended so relinquishing the height gained the previous day over about 12km, 1350m of descent and 8 hours. Initially the path followed the line of the mining track, contouring round the hillside. A balcony walk followed the south side of the valley through four hanging valleys passing Laguna Pakkota and a prominent waterfall to cross the river close to the junction of three valleys and Cerro Tunari. Here the route and Rio Calacha Jahuirra valley descends to the north.

We disturbed feeding condors, saw flocks of ibis and on reaching the timberline, noisy flocks of parakeets. To the east of the lower valley were many craggy peaks of sound-looking rock all believed to be unvisited. A worrying activity was the burning of vegetation at the foot of crags and by some pastures. This did not appear to be aimed at improving pastures and was started by children. Large areas were engulfed in flames as sparks lit new areas and smoke filled the valley.

Crossing the river we passed through an increasingly vegetated area of large boulders to arrive at a small village on the opposite side of the valley to a hot water spring. The flow from the spring passed through a bathing pool to a washing area. We had the place to ourselves but believe that it is a popular gathering place for locals on a weekend. To reach the springs from the village involves a loop upstream and crossing four interesting log bridges across streams.

It was at this camp that a decision had to be made. From here an alternative route could be taken east for one long or two shorter days to reach the Choquetanga road. However, to continue we had to accept that there was no other sensible ways out except to continue over the high Penis Pass or reverse our route in. We decided to continue. The decision was celebrated round a campfire with songs from both gringos and porters.



Gabrielle makes running repairs to clothing by the campfire at Aguas Calientes

Day Three - Aguas Calientes to Calvariuni/Alisuni

A rising traverse from the pool headed to an obvious shoulder on the western side of the valley, about 3km downstream. A village, Choquetanga Chico, rested on the far side of the ridge and we passed some time talking to a local lady with her children and inspecting her garden. She reported spectacled bears raiding her crop of sweetcorn. This small community far from any road has a schoolhouse but no teacher as the last one was taken ill. Unusually for such a remote location a neighbouring garden sported topiary.

A long traverse along a pre-Columbian trail was then made back west across a heavily ridged, north-facing forested slope high above the Rio Chaca Jahuirra. A few cattle grazed the slopes and it was in a clearing here that a dead skunk was found. Soon after midday a gradual descent was made to the river (3300m) and a bridge above some hydroelectric workings. There is a large HEP installation about 20km further east and there was once a plan to flood the valley we had descended the previous afternoon.

After lunch the northern bank had to be followed across boggy ground for a few hundred metres to pick up a newly restored trail up through steep bamboo forest. The dark tunnel of vegetation stopped as the ridge was gained and a more open trail contoured to the hamlet Calvariuni perched on a shoulder. This once hacienda is marked by a prominent tall tree with dark foliage and had the drying skin of a spectacled bear outside one of the two locked huts. Minor engineering works soon restored to operation the narrow aqueduct which served the site.

Perhaps 10km with 600m of ascent. Seven hours.



Fiona crossing the outflow of the lake above the cliffs. The crags and valley beyond have had only a few visitors. (Photo RWS)

Day Four – Calvariuni to Vaqueria

The route continued back east and south for a short distance up the slope above the campsite to reach the ridge on the left. Crossing this and traversing west round a ridge brought into view the long traverse ahead high above the Rio Chaca Jahuirra again. The valley below is heavily wooded and 5km

further upstream a cirque of steep bald cliffs blocks the valley. The carefully engineered traverse we follow across ridges and cliffs arrives just above this cirque at the outflow of the lower Laguna Rater Kkota which form one of the two impressive waterfalls flowing over the cliffs. The route predates the Incas.

As we traverse we see smoke from a fire set at the foot of a gully by the laguna. This rapidly spreads up the gully and much of the slope for 600m above with dense smoke engulfing the peak above.

After lunch by the outflow we head up the slope to the south again rounding the ridge to the left to see the now smaller traversing path onwards into the Vaqueria area of granite rock to the east of Nevado Mama Okllo. This narrow valley is approached via a few scattered buildings in the valley bottom, llama herds and two hanging valleys. We camp just beyond the second lake with its gulls and geese. There are trout in the lakes but the ones caught are not large enough for our supper.

About 10km with about 600m of net ascent making it a tough day. Nine hours.



Basecamp with ascent route heading off to the right and descent route above the shadow on the left. (Photo RWS)

Day Five – Vaqueria to Cuchu Mocoya

Starting on the north side of the stream feeding the lake the route heads south of west past Laguna Mama Okllo and boulders harbouring large kangaroo-come-rabbit-like viscachas. Height is then made quickly as the route steepens and reaches the prominent pinnacle of the Penis Pass. All around but especially to the left before the pass are steep crags of sound rock with some established routes up the obvious cracks.

Beyond the pass the route first descends west a little with another large crag on the left. A route can be seen to a second slightly higher pass on the left (south) side of the valley above Cerro Gloria Pata. This 5000m pass was taken after lunch. Beyond the second pass a traverse is first made right (west) into the next corrie before many zigzags are followed to the valley floor at Cuchu Mocoya.

Only 8 km but 650m of ascent and 800m of descent. About 7-8 hours.

Overall this was a challenging five-day round which could be tackled in 6 or 7 days but with sustained interest and mostly on good paths. Two hours might be taken off each day's time if all the team were well acclimatised and experienced in mountain trekking.

Weather

The weather followed the traditional pattern for an altiplano winter. Dry with generally clear skies.

Mornings generally had a frosty start with a thin layer of ice on lake edges and some streams. The arrival of the direct sunlight onto the camp was welcome. Temperatures quickly rose though it remained chilly in the shade. Protection from the high level of ultraviolet radiation was essential and lips needed protection from the cold dry air. The dryness, radiation, low pressure and exercise also contributed to rapid dehydration and we all needed to watch our water supply. By the afternoon walking required only one or two thin layers of clothing. Under trees on the lower parts of the trek the humidity and temperatures were higher but not uncomfortably so.

Sunset triggered a rapid fall in temperatures and duvet jackets and thicker trousers were soon required. Sleeping bags rated -10°C to -15°C were considered too warm by some and inadequate by others though the minimum overnight temperatures were thought to be -5°C to -10°C. Skies remained clear and calm at night giving good views of the stars limited only by an early rising moon.

At the end of the trek the effects of a cold front were observed. An increase in the winds from the usual midday fresh breezes were accompanied by billowing clouds encroaching over cols from the Yungas.

Fauna

The range of climates from the cold arid high mountains to the warmer damp upper Amazonian forests between them support a diverse flora and fauna. This can be seen in the following lists though they are not exhaustive as several species were not identified.

Birds seen on the Altiplano and in the Quimsa Cruz

- American Kestrel
- Andean Condor
- Andean Flicker
- Andean Goose
- Andean Guan
- Andean Gull
- Andean Lapwing
- Andean Swallow
- Andean Tyrant
- Ash-Breasted Sierra Finch
- Bare-Faced/Whispering Ibis
- Black Siskin
- Black Vulture
- Black-Crowned Night Heron
- Black-Faced/Andean Ibis
- Black-Winged Ground Pigeon

Blue/Puna Ibis
 Cattle Egret
 Common Moorhen
 Golden-Winged Cacique
 Grassland Sparrow
 Grebe (Lake Titicaca)
 Humming Birds (black and blue/green)
 James Flamingo (Lake Titicaca)
 Marbled Wood Quail
 Mountain Caracara
 Mountain Parakeet
 Neotropic Cormorant
 Peregrine Falcon
 Pipit
 Puna Plover
 Puna/Variable Hawk
 Rock Pigeon
 Rufous-Collared Sparrow
 Snipe (small)
 Social(?) Flycatcher
 South American Tern
 Stripe-Capped Sparrow
 Tinamou
 White-Headed Gull
 Yellow-Rumped Cacique

Additional birds seen in the Amazon Basin

Amazon Kingfisher
 Black-Tailed Trogon
 Blue-Crowned(?) Trogon
 Blue-Fronted Parrot
 Cocoi Heron
 Collared Trogon
 Curassow
 Diademed Sandpiper/Plover
 Flycatcher (all black)
 Great Egret
 Green and Blue Macaw
 Green Kingfisher
 Large-Billed Tern
 Red and Blue Macaw
 Red and Green Macaw
 Round-Tailed Manakin
 Snowy Egret
 Speckled Chachalaca
 Dark-Winged Trumpeter
 Tawny-Throated(?) Dotterel
 Torrent Duck
 Trogon (brown)
 White-Capped Dipper
 White-winged Swallow
 Yellow-Billed Tern

Animals (neither domesticated nor captive)

Araneomorph (funnel-web spider)
 Armadillo
 Butterflies including Blue Morpho, Northern Segregate, Papilionidae, Pieridae and Nymphalidae

Capybara
 Cockroach
 Dragonfly
 Dung Beetle
 Glow Worms (Phengodidae)
 Horse Fly
 House Fly
 Lizards
 Neuroptera (lacewing?)
 Skunk (dead)
 Tarantula
 Viscacha

Insects were not an inconvenience on the trek. Lower down by the River Beni near Rurrenbarque there were biting insects but no mosquitoes were noticed though the areas round the villages where we spent the evenings are likely to have been treated with insecticide.

Problems encountered

There were no insurmountable problems. Those listed here are included to illustrate the operating environment for those organising and participating in trekking in Bolivia.

- Somewhere in the transfer of one couple's kit from the airport to the hotel room a small rucksack was stolen. This required the urgent replacement of medical items including prescription medicines and reporting the loss to the National Tourism Police for insurance purposes.
- Early symptoms of acute mountain sickness were observed by the guide in one of the porters who had been suffering from a cold but had not mentioned this fact to anyone. Diamox, coca leaves and a shot of alcohol (on patient request) followed by a rest and removal of his load resulted in the porter being fit for duty the following day.
- The burning of vegetation in the dry season results in fire and smoke over a wide area, spreading at alarming speeds. If mountaineers notice smoke anywhere away from houses they should check wind directions and plan an escape route in case it becomes necessary to take evasive action.
- Road signs are to be seen in parts of La Paz and on some newer main roads. The vast majority of junctions have no indication of routes and in some villages and towns it is difficult to distinguish between the main road and residential side streets. Discussion with local people can help to establish the condition of roads and such information is likely to be accurate for routes along which public transport arrives at their location. Having a guide familiar with the roads and able to check on their condition avoided potential problems.
- Parades and fiestas with marching bands are popular in Bolivia. A parade of college bands blocked the main street in La Paz pushing more traffic onto the side streets and closing all streets for one block leading down to the main street. Our accommodation was on such a block and this

complicated loading the transport for departure for the trek. Later, at Patacamaya local fiesta parade was making its slow way with the complicated dance steps of the merengue along the highway. All traffic dispersed onto inadequate unsurfaced side streets to bypass the blockage.

- Political unrest in the Potosi area arising from dissatisfaction with the level of national support for local development resulted in a number of days when roads were blocked and about 100 tourists stranded behind the barriers. The leader of one such group of tourists was the Andean Summits partner with the final instructions on arrival times and hotel requirements for our group. Our advance party were therefore not met at the airport so took a taxi to the anticipated hotel only to find that it was full and they had no reservation. Eventually, a room was found in the hotel next door.
- Our party had bus tickets booked for the 12 hour journey from La Paz to Cuzco, Peru, due to leave at 8am. The day before departure we were first warned the journey was likely to be cancelled as the Desaguadero border crossing was closed on account of "smugglers protesting at the government tightening of customs regulations". Later we were told that the bus would leave late in the afternoon so that, by agreement, the bus would pass the border in the middle of the night when the protesters would have gone home. While this did require us to spend a cold night on an unheated bus it did allow us to visit Cuzco.
- It is common knowledge that Bolivian water closets can not cope with toilet tissue being flushed down them. What one long-distance bus passenger did not know, but the bus conductor obviously expected her to know, was that such bus toilets can only cope with urine.

Personal recollections

Trekking trips are about much more than the route and the adequacy of logistics. They are personal journeys and opportunities to get to know new people. The following accounts reflect these aspects of this trip.

Downhill all the way

After the trek the Smiths took the opportunity to see part of Bolivia which contrasts with the altiplano and high Andes. A nine-hour drive in a 4WD took us over the La Cumbre pass between Mururata and Khala Huyo, down the alleged "most dangerous road in the world" (which now carries much less traffic on account of the new road on the opposite side of the valley) and to Yolosa. There we flew the three 400m to 600m zipwires back and forth across the valley. Back in the vehicle it was down to Caranavi for a lunch of bush meat (snake, boar and deer) then on a lesser road to the gold mining town of Guanay and an overnight in a simple hostel. Another 9 hours in a dugout canoe along the Beni river took us down to the San Miguel del Bala lodge run by the Tacana people whose lands rise from there to the Cordillera

Apolobamba above. We spent three days there visiting their community, school, sugar extraction machine and fields then following their trails. A more luxurious boat took us further downstream on this tributary of the Amazon to Rurrenbarque to catch a flight back to La Paz. This was a complete change from the previous two weeks and well worthwhile.

Catering by Gabrielle

This was my first experience of such a trek. Many things impressed me about the organisation but I think the cooks, Gary and Gustavo, deserve a special mention. Their first concern was to prevent any bowel problems. This had been a problem in the past. They achieved the good hygiene by making sure there were hand-washing facilities before entering the canteen tent and also supplying a spirit based sterilising hand gel.

Obviously they had to give us enough kilocalories to do the trekking as our energy consumption would have been well above our normal daily level. They went well beyond this though by making the meals interesting. No two meals were the same, not even breakfasts, and we were given a number of Bolivian specialities such as quinoa, apple bananas, empanadas, cooked chicken marinated in a chilli/vinegar and appi - a drink made from a red sweetcorn. Lunches were especially good; for five of the seven the cooks carried precooked food in a large saucepan in an insulated box so we had a rice based dish twice, a pasta based dish twice and a quinoa based dish once. All helped stoke up our calorie intake. Each time there were different additions to the basic carbohydrate in the way of meat, fish or vegetables to make the food very appetising.

There was always tea with cake or biscuits when we arrived at camp, even when we were very late, followed by supper an hour or two later. The latter always started with a delicious soup (the soups again were outstanding) followed by a main course and then a dessert, mostly fruit based. All these were cooked on a small gas cooker which they had to carry, of course.

Contrasting Treks by Rob

Since joining YRC I have experienced several treks: all different. This one stands out from the others for several reasons. First, starting at 4,200 metres and reaching our highest point (over 5,000 m.) on the first day and with almost all of the trek above the 4,000 m. level. Second, the almost total "isolation" in that few local people were encountered. Third, that the scenery was without exception from start to finish, exceptionally grand and inspiring; different from other mountain regions because of altitude, latitude and remoteness. This last points to the further possibilities for some future YRC pioneers re-visiting the region with new climbing routes and summits as objectives. The organisation is proven and competent, so could be relied upon assuming continuing availability of support from Andean Summits which seems likely. Though mentioned already, the weather would seem to be more reliable than many other regions the Club has visited; an important detail when one has to travel so far.

Finally for me, was the appreciating the explanation of an Inca “mystery” by visiting the pre-Incan archaeological site of Tiwanaku. This civilisation was building magnificent pieces of civil engineering – aqueducts and temples; metal element mining, smelting and alloying; foundries; wonderful ceramics and a clear knowledge and use of the astronomy from 1,500 BC until they were absorbed by the Incas in the early 13th Century A.D. This is presumably how the relatively short-lived Inca civilisation acquired the engineering skills they needed for their renowned buildings.

Conclusions

The Quimsa Cruz offers varied and interesting trekking and there are opportunities for rock climbing. A minimum of two weeks is required even for a short trek on account of the acclimatisation period needed on first arrival on the altiplano. The unfamiliar cultural and geographical setting of Bolivia enhances the experience. Support for mountaineering around La Paz has improved markedly.

A number of more specific conclusions drawn from this trip follow.

- The continuous support of an experienced mountain guide familiar with the route pays dividends. Their ability to extract up-to-date information on the state of routes from local residents avoided potentially time-wasting diversions.
- Visiting Cuzco and Machu Picchu from La Paz in 4 days is possible but tiring. Breaking the journey at Puno or Copacabana would help. While trains still run the full length from Cuzco to Machu Picchu the slow zigzagging near Cuzco is generally now avoided by tourists who are transported by minibus on a good road to Ollantaytambo to connect with the trains.



The Smiths and the Ibbersons rest on the approach to the Penis Pass,



The distinctive column at the Penis Pass (photo MS)



Richard crag climbing, 4b at over 4200m (photo MS)

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Ted Saunders of the UCL expedition for recounting first hand experiences of different parts of the Quimsa Cruz.

The success of this trip was due in no small part to the preparation and encouragement of Andean Summits, especially Javier Thellaeché.

Sources

John Bigger, 1996, *The High Andes: A Guide for Climbers*, published by Andes.

Yossi Brain, Andrew North and Isobel Stoddart, 1997, *Bolivia: Trekking in Bolivia* published by The Mountaineers.

Yossi Brain, 1999, *Bolivia: A Climbing Guide* published by The Mountaineers.

Jose Camarlinghi and Javier Thellaeche, 2009, www.andeansummits.com/

Sarah Griffin, 2004, University College London Quimsa Cruz Expedition, www.quimsacruz.info

Stuart Halford, 2001, Lakeland Quimsa Cruz, Mount Everest Foundation expedition report reference 01/27

Theodore Herzog, 1913, Von Urwald su den Glestschen der Kordillere Stuttg.

Lonely Planet, 2010, Bolivia

Noel Kempff Mercado, 1985, Aves de Bolivia published by Editorial Gisbert

Alain Mesili, 2008, Quimsa Cruz, www.andes-mesili.com/en/quimza.htm.

Jill Neate, 1994, Mountaineering in the Andes (second edition) published by the RGS-IBG Expedition Advisory Centre.

Virgil Scott with Hal Watts, 2007, Imperial College Quimsa Cruz 2007 expedition report, www.quimsacruz2007.co.uk

Hermann Wolf, 1987, Report of the Bayreuther Anden Expedition of the German Alpine Club (DAV)

Contacts

Mountain guide in Cuzco: Adrian Ccahuana Tel Cusco: 084-274980 realperu1@hotmail.com Av. Ausangate SN. Tinki. Cuzco, Peru

Accommodation in Cuzco: El Posada del Abuelo, Avenida Pardo 869 www.laposadadelabuelocusco.com

Mountain guide in La Paz: Andean Summits P.O.Box 6976, La Paz, Bolivia. Office at #1009 Muñoz Cornejo St. and Sotomayor St., Sopocachi, La Paz, Bolivia. Phone: (591-2) 242-2106 Fax: (591-2) 241-3273. info@andeansummits.com www.andeansummits.com

Accommodation in La Paz at Hostal Naira, Plaza San Francisco-Calle Sagarnaga, 161 La Paz, Bolivien (010) 2 235 56 45 hostalnaira.com

Instituto Geografico Militar (IGM for 1:50k Bolivian maps) Tel (591-2) 237-0118 Oficina 5, Juan XXIII 100 (a passage off Rodriguez) or shop on Saavedra, Estadio Mayor, Miraflores, La Paz

CHINA REPORT

Our covers go off to China; do some good work and come back and it is perhaps almost becoming routine, almost like the moon landings did. As such your editor has to press them to keep the rest of us informed and to put on record the work they are doing. They have just returned from another successful trip and I hope in the next edition to have a report updating us on their caving activities. Ged Champion has however been persuaded to give us a different slant on their trips to China and penned this before they went off on this years trip.

CRASHING OUT IN CHINA

Fairly late on in the organisation of the 2009 China Caves Expedition to Huanjiang in Guangxi, Southern China we were to discover that the World Bank were going to be indirectly funding some of our activities. Although this sounded very impressive we weren't absolutely sure what this would entail. Since 2003 we had talking to Guilin Karst Institute about organising an expedition to the Mulun National Nature Reserve, where some of the most extensive and stunning cone karst in Southern China can be found. No caving expedition had previously explored this area although our French colleagues including Jean Bottazzi had explored the Libo area to the north just across the Guizhou border. They had reported seeing a spectacular skyline of cone karst towers stretching to the horizon but none of them had crossed the Da Gou River which guarded the northern approach and inner sanctum of Mulun.

As luck would have it, Zhang Hai our trusty contact at Guilin Karst Institute had applied for permission to enter the reserve from Huanjiang and so the planning of the expedition started to gather momentum.

We set off for China a little depleted because some of the usual suspects were away on other assignments but we managed to recruit new blood from a reasonably reliable local source, the New Inn at Clapham.

We collected our equipment from the store in Guilin ensuring we had plenty of rope; our scouts in Mulun had informed us of many bottomless shafts just waiting to be descended. Huanjiang is just 4 hours from Guilin and easy to reach by road. Huanjiang literally means 'town on the bend of the river'. The town is a typical bustling Chinese county town with an impressive square where local people congregate. Huanjiang County has a population of approx 330,000 which comprises Han people but also Maolan, Molao, Zhuang, Miao and Yao minorities.

Mulun Karst Forest Natural Reserve is situated in the north of Huanjiang county and 72km away from Huanjiang county town, and comprises 90 square kilometres in total area divided into a protected, buffer and experimental zone. It was approved as a natural reserve by the National Council

of the People's Republic of China in 1998 and is well known for its work to preserve endangered flora and fauna. A tastefully sculptured scale model found at the park headquarters cleverly illustrates the impenetrable nature of its cone karst with virtually each and every cone diligently listed and labelled for research purposes. Our job was to locate, explore and survey caves in the park and assist biologists where possible to collect new species of cave fauna.

The park had attracted a generous award from the World Bank to support this endeavour so we would get free board and lodgings and transport. What the park hadn't done was to give Guangxi Forestry Commission sufficient notice to process the details of our authorisation and straight away we got caught in the middle of considerable red tape generated by local government officials, and to our dismay the park and the forestry commission seemed to be winning. As if this wasn't enough, an unsightly side show concerning the legalities of fauna collection in the protected zone was also developing and our Tasmanian biologist Arthur Clarke and his team would be seriously limited in what they could achieve.

Two Japanese scientists were the first real casualties and were told to leave town by noon the following day. The rest of us were virtually placed under house arrest within days and only allowed out of our hotel to visit sites agreed by our local government hosts during daylight hours. Lots of meetings were convened and even representatives of the World Bank were flown in to mediate. Initially we thought these politics would severely diminish our chances of doing any caving at all but then by chance an accommodation was reached and it was decided we could visit sites in the experimental zone with the purpose of comparing species with those eventually to be collected in the protected zone. It was never entirely clear where one zone finished and another began so therefore we were not going to argue as long as we could go caving and the shafts we started to recce looked quite appealing. So everything started to feel back on track until that was... **one of our vehicles went off the road!**

It started as a fairly normal day National Park 4x4s arriving late had been repaired from the punishing treatment on bumpy tracks the previous day. We set off north in the direction of Mulun. I was in the first jeep in the convoy. The driver got a phone call ... come back! Mike Peters and I immediately expressed our concern about another delay, something forgotten, or maybe another enforced change of plan. We reluctantly agreed to turn around and headed back towards Huanjiang. Within a quarter of a mile a roadside crowd had gathered at what appeared to be a location where a vehicle had gone off the road. Never for one moment thinking it was one of our cars, we all jumped out to see if we could help ... and then to our horror we saw one of the now familiar orange 4x4's lying on its side in a muddy paddy field surrounded by debris and a mêlée of people rushing around trying to help. The driver was trapped behind the steering wheel and the navigator Mr. Tan, not wearing a seat belt, as is the custom in China, had been thrown through the windscreen. Eddie, Harvey and student Jun were all staggering around blooded but just about mobile.

They had all been rolled around like rag dolls in a tumble dryer. The stench and the grey murk of the paddy field mud and water seeping into the vehicle only added to the devastation.

We used dismembered car doors, the parcel shelf and anything that would form a platform over the mud. With no sign of accident and rescue services yet, we did what we could to assist, our caving first aid kits only sparingly used previously, now almost exhausted in minutes. Apart from the driver still trapped we managed to get everyone else on to dry ground. Jude and John were desperately trying to keep Mr. Tan conscious, mumbling and lying prostrate on a grassy terrace complaining of pain from his chest. Harvey's hand was so covered in blood the nature of the injury was barely discernible. Eventually help arrived, in the shape of a hospital doctor, nurse and assistants all dressed in immaculate white coats carrying drips on bamboo poles, quite an incongruous site amongst the mud, broken branches, twisted metal and equipment bags littering the scene. The gathered crowd of Chinese locals who until now had remained curious spectators were galvanised into action to clear an access route down the road bank and paddy field terraces to evacuate the injured. After finally getting them up the bank and loading the injured into the ambulance, the police arrived and started to direct the traffic which had managed quite well until they had arrived!

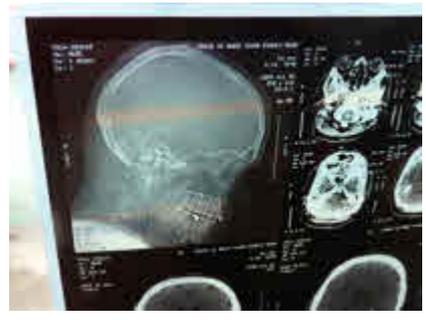
The rest of the day was spent at Huanjiang Hospital where the five occupants of the car were admitted. Eddie and Harvey were scanned, x-rayed and dressed etc. Harvey's injuries were principally to his head and hand, Eddie's mostly to his ankle and ribs. The driver and navigator had more severe injuries and were kept in a few days; our team, not wanting to be abandoned in a foreign hospital were discharged that evening.

The accident had been quite a blow to the morale of the expedition, leaving us with depleted numbers and our Chinese hosts behaving even more cautiously than normal. And yes, we did do some caving, in fact lots of vertical stuff, in fact almost exclusively vertical stuff. Most of the shafts averaged around 100 metres and though we discovered only short sections of horizontal passages we were treated to spectacular drops in some of the most impressive karst scenery in Southern China. We also descended a number of smaller Tiankengs and searched for clues and traces of resurgences of the elusive underground rivers in the area.

One of the highlights of the expedition was the Ganmei Shaft located a days journey from Huanjiang near the Guizhou border, requiring overnight stays in the farmhouses in the isolated village near to the cave. This shaft consisted of a spectacular 250 metres but sections of the drop zone were scarily loose. It was completed over a three day period by six different members of the team. Unfortunately the huge boulder strewn ramp at the bottom of the shaft ended in a blockage.

None of our finds were to yield a master cave so horizontal development did not feature highly on the expedition but

at least all expedition members survived another episode of exploration in China proving that as with any expedition, the transportation can prove far more challenging and dangerous than the exploration itself.



PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

This years photographic competition winners were:

Best picture: 1st John Whalley A China cave scene (see page 74)
 2nd Mike Smith Andean/Bolivian Skyline (see below)

Best picture of a member on a meet:

 1st Tim Josephy El Chorro Gorge (previously published, Summer 2010)
 2nd Paul Dover LHG track clearing in the freeze (previously published, Summer 2010)



UK MEETS REPORT

LOWSTERN NORTH YORKSHIRE JOINT MEET WITH ALPINE CLUB June 4 - 6

An invitation had been extended to members of the Alpine Club to make this a joint meet.

Meet attendees were able to participate in the numerous activities normally associated with the Yorkshire Dales and indeed some went climbing or walking etc. However, on Saturday we organised a through-trip down Lancaster Hole/ Easegill Caverns, providing sport and interest for active cavers and for those just interested in a one-off trip to see this varied cave system.

Caving lights/helmets were hired in Ingleton at Inglesport (015242 41146) for £3/day for those not regular cavers.

On Saturday everyone who was there for the full day, with the exception of our President did go caving in Easegill - the parties split into two, one lot with Graham Salmon, one lot with Tim Josephy.

Water levels were extremely low in complete contrast to our last Club trip down here when survival was uppermost in the mind.

Once down Lancaster Hole entrance shaft, the Colonnades were visited before descending to the downstream sump via Montagu West & Wilf Taylor's Passage. It was rumoured that the sump between Wilf Taylor's & Bull Pot of the Witches had dried up but it still didn't look very inviting, so we'll never know. Upstream in the Master cave was easy going in the low water & Oxbow Corner was soon reached. The dry high level passages were traversed with remarkably few mistakes and an exit was made up the interminable snakes of Wretched Rabbit Passage.

Walking back to Lancaster Hole to retrieve our rope, we could see flashing lights speeding along the lane to Bullpot Farm. On arrival at the entrance we found a bunch of cavers from a senior University club milling about in some confusion. It transpired that one of their number had got his long hair stuck in the belay some 20ft down the shaft & was immovable. They had immediately called the cave rescue; it apparently not occurring to them to go down and cut off the offending locks. Luckily a more practical chap from another group did so and solved the problem in minutes. The cave rescue organisation members were very philosophical about it all when they arrived (at least when anyone was listening).

The President having decided not to cave, attracted some stick from the cavers but wished to do the Three Peaks from and back to Lowstern, feeling he needed some leg miles 'in the bank' ahead of the Long Walk and California etc.

He took exactly nine hours and reports that there were hundreds of other walkers out including several charity events on what was a lovely day. The ground was very hard due to shortage of rain, hence sore feet etc.

Arriving later Arthur Salmon and Derek Smithson walked on Ingleborough. Several people came later still and got in some walking but others came Saturday evening just for the social BBQ arranged at Lowstern which was very successful.

Sunday most members did their own thing but those going on the China caving meet held a pre trip meeting.

Just to be different after that meeting Bruce Bensley went up to the Lakes to canoe round Derwentwater.

Tim Josephy and his guest David Hunnisett joined the President on the Sunday and climbed a couple of VS routes on Pot Scar, Giggleswick, before being chased away by very heavy rain, but not before tea & cakes in the café at Feizor.

Attending

Caving Teams

David Hunnisett (G)
Tim Josephy
Ged Campion
Steve Hunt (G-AC)
Natasha Guere (G)
Edwin Edkins
Graham Salmon
Paul McWinney (G-AC)
Sarah McWinney(G)
Dave Williams

Other activities

Arthur Salmon
Derek Smithson
John Whalley
Bruce Bensley
Adrian Bridge
Albert Chapman
Gail Faulkner (G)
Pamela Holt (G-AC)
Sean Penny (G)
Richard Sealey (G)
Carol Whalley (G)
Jane McWinney (G)

LONG WALK - EDALE, PEAK DISTRICT

18-20 June

This long walk, the Kinder Dozen, was blessed with suitable weather but plagued throughout with temptations to take short cuts. Sheffield's Ken Jones devised the challenging route in 1997 so that it takes in all three Kinder trig points and many of its summit features.

To achieve the Dozen's 10,000+ft of ascent in 24 miles walkers are required to head steeply up to a feature on the plateau only to immediately turn downhill into the next valley. As you make that turn the next point to be gained on the plateau is usually only a mile or so to your right. So considerable resolve is needed not to head straight there and avoid the 1,000 ft drop and climb.

Those parking at Ollerbrook Booth on Friday evening found they had a 400m trek to the simple isolated camping barn. This gave the Club a peaceful, spacious and private location in a honey pot area. The facilities were a cold tap, chemical toilet and sleeping shelf. However, sitting in the evening sun with a mug of tea and a splendid view across to Hollins Cross and Mam Tor everyone was content and ready for an early start.

4:30am saw six setting off up towards Ringing Roger and were all around that top at the same time. That was also the only time. With others joining later as they arrived or finished their bacon butty in an Edale café and some missing out a couple of the longer northern descents, sightings of other groups were few. Indeed sightings of other walkers were few and mainly distant though this is not unusual for long walks.

Our Hon Editor arrived at 7.45 and explored the plateau's full length with a figure of eight of about 25k, covering the Sandy Heys in the northwest to Jagger's Clough in the east. On the way he only encountered two other members who he accompanied for the last loop.

Our Hon Membership Sec reached Edale mid morning went up to Ringing Roger and covered 29km on the plateau meeting a member at Crookstone Knoll and descended to the camping barn with him before rehydrating in the Nags Head with other members.

The lead group passed Seal Stones about noon and finished the round in just over thirteen hours. On the Kinder Dozen scale they warranted a rating of somewhere between 'obviously insane' and 'almost unstable' – over 14 hours is classed as 'perhaps normal'.

The feeding party had been thwarted by lack of water near the intended Seal Stones and had relocated towards Fairbrook Naze. Several members came across them there, though three missed that part of the plateau edge on the seventh of their descents.

The weather was kind. To the south of the plateau and in all the valleys it was warm and often sunny and sheltered. On the plateau and the northern slopes a strong wind and high cloud kept walkers from overheating. The nights were chilly.

Meanwhile the cyclist had made a grand circuit of White Peak. By mid evening all were gathered again outside the barn enjoying a stew and a beer or two in the sunshine before most adjourned to the Nags Head adding a couple of kilometres to the day's total. The verdict on the day was that the Kinder Dozen was certainly a challengingly perverse route: worth attempting but perhaps not to be repeated too often.

Sunday, as usual for these meets, saw many heading straight home after helping to relay all the gear back to the cars. Two headed for the climbing at Ravensdale, another for Monyash and a walk. The climbers managed just two routes (Mealybugs and Medusa) and found them very polished and rather unpleasant. Their feet hurt a bit too much to do any more, however they found it pleasant being sheltered from the wind and in hot sunshine - somewhat of a contrast to the day before.

Thanks go to the long suffering catering and support pair, the meet organiser, Sally Gee for early booking of the barn and Ken Jones for details of the route.

Michael Smith, Meet Leader

Attendance:

Mick Borroff & Roy Denney - Walking day visitors

Richard Gowing and Harvey Lomas - Walking

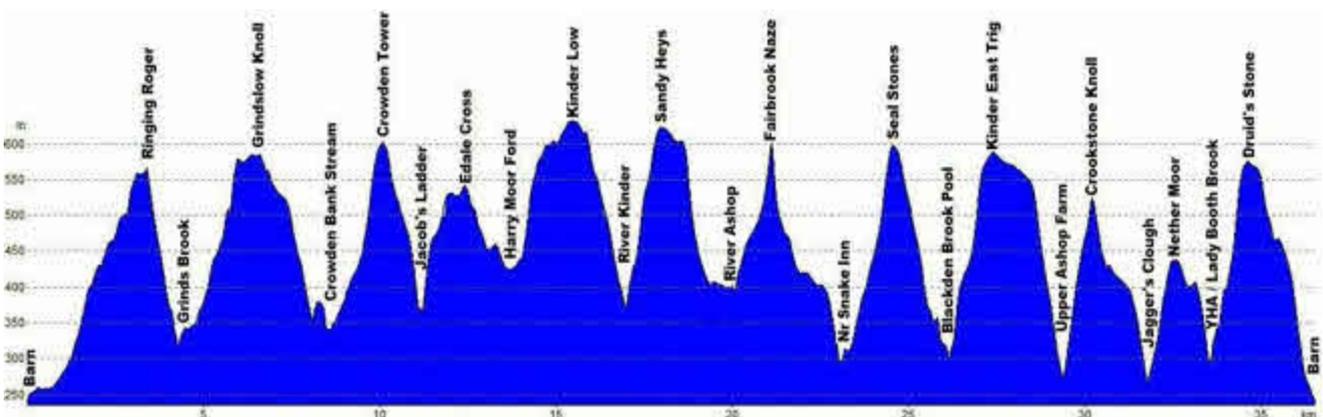
Iain Gilmour and Richard Josephy - Walking, 10+

Adrian Bridge, Tim Josephy & Michael Smith - Walking all 12

Ian Crowther - Cycling

Alan Linford and Derek Smithson - Support

Profile of the Kinder Dozen





Tim on Crookstone Knoll
(getting down was not so easy)

LONG MYND, SHROPSHIRE 13 -15 July

This meet was primarily the annual long bike ride but some members took advantage of the location to get in some walking. The detailed break down of where the cyclists got to would fill this journal but the following paints the picture.

Roger Dix returned to his old stamping ground when deciding the venue for this years bike ride. The accommodation was at Clun Youth Hostel, one of the association's oldest properties which has recently had a wonderful make over but is still retaining many of its original features as a flour mill.



We were fortunate to share the accommodation with groups of cyclists riding the end to end cycle route from Lands End to John o' Groats. An epic journey which put our endeavours into perspective.

Tuesday evening saw the assembled gathering retire to the Sun PH for liquid and solid refreshments. It was curry night which provided some of the participants with a new gastronomic experience but was enjoyed by all.

Wednesday dawned wet and windy with the weather forecast not producing much encouragement. No great enthusiasm was shown to preparing the bikes for the 60+ or 40+ mile rides prepared by Roger. Sufficient energy levels were in place by 9.00am to prepare the bikes and by the time we set off shortly afterwards the rain was beginning to abate. The common route for both rides saw us heading west from Clun towards Wales. A long gentle climb split the group into those hoping to do the long route and Ian Crowther who was planning a more leisurely short route. At Abermule we turned north to Montgomery where a very pleasant café was found to take on much needed refreshments. Whilst the lead group of Stan Colquhoun and Eric and Richard Dover dined we were joined by Ian also in need of sustenance.

At this point the two routes separated and we left for Kingswood and the first serious climb of the day. The 1 in 5 hill onto the Long Mountain had us all walking at some point but the cruise along the ridge with a following wind and the descent toward Westbury was reward enough. Unfortunately the visibility whilst riding the ridge of the Long Mountain precluded us from enjoying the, reportedly, magnificent views west into Wales. A navigational error just passed Westbury caused us to modify the route a little and caused us to make yet another 1 in 5 climb ascending through Bromlow to the Stiperstones Ridge and a very welcome tea stop at the Bog visitor centre. The long descent into the heavily wooded West Onny river valley was a delight until Eric started to suffer punctures. In the space of 4 miles either the front or rear tyre was off the rim no less than four times.

The wooded valley opened out into a much broader valley and attractive villages of Linley, Norbury and Hardwick. A mile along the A489 and back onto country lanes and heading south into a steady headwind. We notified base that we were running later than expected and expected to arrive around 7.00pm. Eventually we joined the B4368 and the final leg west to Clun.

During the ride into Clun Eric confessed to never having ridden more than 20 -30 km in a day before so covering over 100 km in hilly terrain and wet and windy weather was a fantastic achievement. Well done Eric.

The shorter route omitted the Long Mountain and Stiperstones ridge and hence Ian was home and showered as the weary trio arrived back at the hostel.

Paul forsook his bike due to a damaged hand and joined Jack for a walk north along the Shropshire Way to its confluence with Offa's Dyke which was then followed south to Newcastle. At this point they cut their planned route and returned via the road to Clun. It was an interesting route with several moderate gradients and good views. The walk with Jack provided a link with Paul's weeks walking together on the club's Austrian meet in 2009.

WALKING

Keith and Roy set off from Leicester at 6.00am on the Wednesday and were taking breakfast in Church Stretton by 8.30 before setting off on a circular route (with several cut out points given inclement weather with worse forecast). As it happens they managed the whole planned route albeit spending too much time putting on and removing waterproofs - no easy task on the tops with some of the winds which they experienced.

They walked out of this very interesting market town and up the Carding Mill Valley onto Wild Moor (484m) which came as more than a bit of a surprise.



Neither of them had visited this part of Shropshire before and The Long Mynd itself was far more dramatic than they had expected. Whilst it is in reality a very long ridge there is quite a plateau on the top at this point and in the thick low cloud / drizzle navigation was a bit of a challenge. Such glimpses as they got of the supposed superb views were few and far between.

They then headed south along or just off the summit of the Long Mynd, following "the Portway" (an ancient pack horse route) to reach the trig point on Pole Bank (516m - 1692ft). By reputation from here the views are excellent with a wide panorama to the west including much of Central Wales. The nearest hills however are the Stiperstones, another area of Shropshire high ground that is probably worth looking at on any future visit. The summit of Pole Bank is adorned with a brass plaque that usefully points out all the major mountains and hills that are visible on a fine day! As it was they could barely see each other. Pole Bank itself is basically another plateau with many deep valleys radiating off.

From here they continued south skirting Round Hill (462m) dropping down over Cross Dyke before going over Grindle (459m) to drop down into Little Stretton to cross the valley. Caught in yet another heavy downpour the local hostelry came just at the right moment to dry out.



Crossing the valley still heading south they took to tracks to reverse their direction which eventually took them over the very steep sided Ragleth Hill (398m).



This hill commands the best possible vantage point for viewing the Long Mynd to the West and also boasts spectacular views in all other directions, not least to the north where the peculiar craggy form of Caer Caradoc can be seen. At the end of this wonderful little hill (Ragleth), with its uninterrupted views, stands a wooden mast which they reached after a hot climb in a period of warm sunshine, to be rewarded by super views before a sudden squall left them grabbing for waterproofs again. Coming off the hill at the northern end they headed east to pick up the Jack Mytton Way which was followed north west to return to Church Stretton. All in all a very satisfying 14 mile circular despite the weather.

An excellent meal prepared by Roger and Richard Kirby rounded off a most enjoyable day.



The following day after a hearty breakfast, two walking parties made the most of the local topography. Keith and Roy were thwarted in their intent to do Caer Caradoc (459m) which seems well worthy of a visit on another occasion.

It is volcanic in origin, like the Wrekin etc, formed of narrow ridges of resistant Pre-Cambrian rock, thrust upwards by movements deep down along the Church Stretton fault. This fault runs from Staffordshire to South Wales. Its summit is apparently crowned by an Ancient British Iron Age or late Bronze Age hill fort which it is named after. Local legend has it that this was the site of the last stand of Caractacus against the Roman legions during the Roman conquest of Britain.

They had hoped to ascend this on the Thursday but circumstances and weather conspired against them. After overnight thunderstorms that day proved less solidly overcast but windier with a mixture of bursts of sun and sudden showers. They took advantage by returning to Church Stretton from Clun by driving over one of the lanes which crosses over the Mynd to see the views they had missed the day before. This was a good decision as the weather chose the right moments to pick up. They even had a badger trotting up the lane towards them in broad daylight, a first for both of them.

After crossing the valley they then approached the north of Caer Caradoc only to be baulked by heavy lifting vehicles blocking lanes to fit new telegraph poles and so aborted to walk a length of Wenlock Edge between showers.

Paul, Richard D and Eric also headed by car over the Long Mynd to Church Stretton and by starting from a different place did enjoy a triangular walk taking in the peaks of Willstone Hill, Helmenth Hill and Caer Caradoc Hill.

RD & RD

Attending

Stan Colquhoun (Guest), Ian Crowther, Roy Denney
Roger Dix, Eric Dover (Guest), Paul Dover, Keith Raby
Richard Dover, Richard Kirby, Jack Short

PS There is still a lot to go at in this area and we were completely surprised at the wild nature of parts of it; not at all how some of us conceived Shropshire. It just goes to show that we should believe members when they extol the virtues of their home patches and be prepared to support meets away from the classic areas. There is enough upland here to satisfy the ambitions of most people and the extremely attractive little villages and market towns are linked by pleasant low level walking and it will make a great location for a social meet. The Club is hoping to go there next year.

I would also like to make a case for more mid week meets. Obviously work commitments preclude some from attending but from time to time, a number of us join the long bike ride meet as walkers because travel at weekends can be a nightmare and mid week is much easier. Perhaps in addition to this now traditional meet another midweeker could be included in the programme. There has been an informal programme of midweek day meets but attending them from afar is logistically near impossible.

Roy Denney

PPS

The three thumb nail pictures of 'Secret Britain' (see Chippings) were in fact of Cardingmill Valley, Wild Moor and Caer Caradoc. Not at all the gentle farmland, preconceptions had suggested.



HARRY SPILSBURY MEMORIAL JOINT MEET WITH WAYFARERS. 10-12 September

Friday was not an auspicious start to the weekend, those who ventured out returned very wet, revived by fresh scones and jam, made it to the pub, returning with the workers for traditional corned beef hash followed by apple strudel. Next years meal will start at 7pm.

Heavy rain overnight, overcast conditions, a leisurely wash-up after a light breakfast, hoping the weather would improve, eventually, all set out. 3 Shires, round Lingmell via LHG, Fairfield Horseshoe from Rydale Hall of all places, on return this pair having to climb the locked gates to get out. Scaffell and Bowfell from the hut. This group very late back (22.00 too early to start worrying?) due to knee injury coming down the Band. (Shades of Harold Mellor and John Varney.) Fortunately slow cooked steak and kidney keeps well and all were well fed.

Sunday, sunshine splattered with showers giving a magnificent double rainbow at Dale End. Climbers, AB, RS and D McK headed for White Ghyll, Route 1 and 2, rest of crag streaming with water and headed down to Upper and Lower Scout crag, 3 routes on drier rock and back to the hut for 1700 in the dry. Most headed for home and other duties.

There was a fair bit of chat about whether this meet would continue to appear on the meet calendar, however by popular demand old friends will meet in 2011 at Lowstern. Fair notice to Presidents to fix a date in the next meet calendar.

AL

Attending.

Wayfarers

Ken Aldred, Steve Auty, George Chambers, Bob Fergusson, Mike Godden, Alan Linford, Dave McKie, Dave Ormerod, Graham Pennie & Martin Tomlinson. Peter Dixon was around most of the time trying to be invisible.

YRC

The President, Adrian Bridge, Paul Dover, Dennis Armstrong, Ian Crowther, Alan Hanbury, John Jenkin, John Lovett, Harry Robinson, John Schofield, Richard Smith, Martyn Trasler & Chris Ursell (G).

KIRKBY STEPHEN 15-17 October

The venue for this meet was a converted 17th century shepherd's cottage now Bent's camping barn, a mile or so north of Newbiggin-on-Lune near Kirkby Stephen. The long and winding farm track to Bent's Farm passes Tower House which has a distinguished history: home of treasonous Elizabeth Gaunt who in 1685 was the last woman to be burnt at the stake, a Bonnie Prince Charlie hiding place and a lookout for Borders raiders. The camping barn is on the coast-to-coast route and could just cope with our party.

Most members arrived before darkness fell some having visited the Kirkby Stephen mountain rescue centre and a couple having tramped the Middleton Fells above Barbon to the south (16km, 600m ascent). A local member had been refitting windows to his home. The busy Black Swan at Ravenstonedale provided a meal that evening.

Saturday saw Ian Crowther and John Jenkin arrive and stroll round Nettle Hill to Crosby Garrett to inspect its Anglo-Saxon

church. Iain Gilmour made a round of Willy Cock Stones, the Potts valley, Little Asby and Crosby Garrett. Meanwhile, Derek Smithson walked north from the barn into the Howgills spotting two 'wild' horses along the way. He traversed Green Hill before going first southwest over a hill and then northwest to join a ridge taking him back to Weasledale and the barn.

The largest group headed to Dufton and made their way up to High Cup Nick to follow Maize Gill upstream. At this point Tim Josephy and Richard Smith broke off right to skirt Murton Fell for Mickle Fell. Lunch for the others in the open shooting hut near Great Rundale Tarn was timed to coincide with a passing rain shower.



Alister Renton's meet leader duties then called upon him and he returned with Paul Dover via Great Rundale to prepare the evening meal. The Mickle Fell two's enthusiasm for their rough ascent diminished rapidly on hearing gunfire as they approached the military range and they rejoined the main party. Meanwhile the others had examined the scattered wreckage of a Vickers Wellington which had crashed on Dufton Fell in 1942 while on a night cross country exercise from Finningley. Thankfully there were no fatalities.



The then President Elect Peter Chadwick examines the aircraft wreckage on Dufton Fell

A tramp north west took the party to Great Dun Fell with its air traffic control radome. Here Michael Smith and David Hick returned to Dufton to move a vehicle round to Kirkland allowing the others to traverse Cross Fell.

They kept exactly the right pace for the driver not to be kept waiting at the roadhead there by the old hall. A round of about 23km with 875m of ascent.

A freshly prepared meal was conjured from the cramped kitchen after a delivery by Jane Renton carrying Neev. The evening in the barn passed quickly in easy conversation and the usual joshing.

Sunday dawned clear but soon clouded over. This did not deter members from heading up into the hills. David Hick and Iain Gilmour ascended Wild Boar Fell whose distinctive outline had been noted the day before. They had sunny weather and good views. Derek Smithson also followed a route he'd noticed on Saturday: starting with Smarsdale and taking the line of a disused railway along a gorge complete with viaduct, to finish with a main rail track viaduct. The President Elect's party of five shuffled cars and tackled a traverse of the Howgills from the north. From Bowderdale, west of Ravenstonedale, they walked over West Fell and Hazelgill Knot to a cold and windy The Calf barely clear of the clodbase. A modicum of shelter from the wind was found for a hurried lunch on the lee side of White Fell before traversing Wind Scarth towards Docker Knott. After crossing the col towards Uldale Head and Rispa Pike the track down to Gaisgill was followed to a carefully positioned car. The 20km horseshoe has 850m of ascent with a fair fraction of the descent being trackless.

This was another grand meet in the hills. Thanks go to Alister Renton who reorganised this meet from the intended Dufton youth hostel to this camping barn in an interesting area. Thanks too to Jane for making sure we were well fed.

Attendance:

Peter Chadwick, Ian Crowther, Paul Dover, Richard Dover, Iain Gilmour, David Hick, John Jenkins, Tim Josephy, Alister Renton, Derek Smithson, Michael Smith, Richard Smith

TY GWYN, DEINIOLEN LLANBERIS 5 -7 NOVEMBER

We all met on the Friday evening at what is a well presented Lincolnshire Mountaineering club hut. It was very clean and tidy and had possibly been recently renovated, a really nice place to stay and a very good choice.

Saturday dawned very clear and bright and everyone set off in different directions. John, Derek, Barry and Paul, took a walk up to Elidir Fawr from the direction of Marchlyn Mawr reservoir and followed the ridge across Y Garn. There was a discussion about ascending Glyder Fawr and down to Pen Y Pass for a cup of tea and a bus but this was felt to be a bit far and if they missed the bus, a long walk, so they descended into Llanberis pass from Llyn Cwm instead, cutting through the quarry back to Deiniolen. It was dark by the time they arrived and had begun to rain but with the clear weather during the day the views were fantastic.

This seemed the same for all the parties. Alan C went up to the summit of Snowdon to see the new top station and Alan K met up with Paul and his group on top of Elidir Fawr and walked with them until he returned over Carnedd y Filiast. He was caught in a bit of a squall on the way down that missed all the other parties.



Alan Kay, John Brown, Derek Bush and Barry Wood on summit Elidir Fawr

Adrian, with Tim, Richard, Nick and David had a long day by traversing the Glyders, Carnedd y Filiast to Glyder Fawr and down to Pen Y Pass. There they dropped off David and Richard, who caught the bus back to Nant Peris, with the others traversing the side of Snowdon through Cwm Glas and down to Nant Peris, where they caught up with the Paul D and his group walking through the quarry.

Stuart & Roger Dix with Ian went across to the Aber Falls, to Bera Mawr, dropped to the south and wended their way back. Unfortunately Ian took a bit of a tumble, but apart from a stretched thigh muscle all was well. There was quite a bit of discussion about what he had slipped on but the less said the better. During the walk they freed a sheep caught in the fence, which will surely now survive to get stuck another day! So a long and eventful day was had by all.

We were entertained by a wonderful dinner at the hut in the evening with the usual round of stories and discussions.



Sunday again dawned clear with the tops of the hills shrouded in the snow. Adrian and Tim spent the day at Tremadoc, where they "managed three decent routes on wet to drying and damp rock, in sunshine". Most of the rest of the group made their way home, but John and Paul could not resist a walk up Moel Siabod, a first for Paul. They ascended from Plas Y Brenin through the woods and after a couple of hours were just about to sit on the summit for lunch when Richard J and Nick W turned up, after scrambling up the south east ridge.

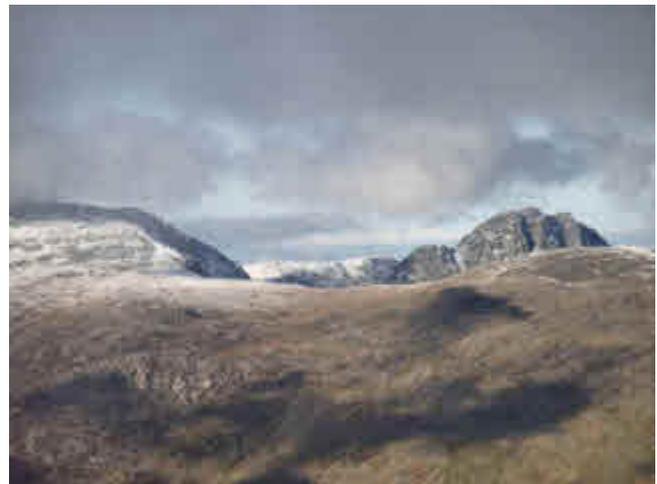


There were several inches of snow on the tops and it was a really clear day with brilliant views.

Paul Dover (top) and Richard Josephy and Nick Welch on summit Moel Siabod.



Below, Summit of Tryfan from Moel Siabod. Photo Paul Dover



Paul and John took the north east ridge down which is a very invigorating scramble.

At the base they made for the woods to pick up a path through but did not bank on finding the local hunt drawing the wood and it being surrounded by guns! After a bit of a detour through a new planting area, stumbling over cut trees, they found a decent path back to the car.

A rather exhausting end to a really brilliant weekend.

Our thanks go to Alan K for all his organisation and for choosing such a good venue.

Members present: -

Adrian Bridge; John Brown; Derek Bush; Alan Kay; Ian Crowther; Roger Dix; Stuart Dix; David Hick; Paul Dover; Alan Clare; Barry Wood.

Tim & Richard Josephy and Nick Welch joining us for the weekend walks

DINNER MEET 18-22 NOVEMBER NORTH LANCASHIRE

Members started arriving on the Thursday to extend the AGM and Dinner weekend. Most took advantage of the facilities at Lowstern but some intrepid souls slept in their cars.

Those travelling from the south on the Friday had fog most of the way to contend with but fortunately the sun broke through early afternoon and was fine on the Saturday

The usual activities were pursued in this very familiar location before a good crowd assembled the Friday night at Lowstern.

Some took to the hills, some went down holes.

One party climbing Pen y gent on the Friday afternoon watched the sun go down in the west whilst a full moon rose in the east over valleys slowly filling with cotton wool as the evening fog returned. Needless to say the camera was in the car.

Tim Josephy and John Whalley joined Glyn Edwards, guest and a former member and Arthur Champion (CPC rep) on an abseil through Swinsto Hole to Kingsdale Master Cave.



There was a lot of water flowing and it was very cold!

Saturday activities were a bit curtailed with the meetings starting mid afternoon, especially those transferring accommodation to the Whoop Hall Hotel where the general meetings and dinner were being held..

One group however explored what was to them new terrain to the west of the hotel and were very pleasantly surprised.

Climbing up through woodland to Dalton Craggs and then onto the top of Hutton Roof Craggs afforded a wonderful 360 degree panorama despite only being 274 metres above sea level at the trig point and the maze of limestone pavement and tangled shrub on Hutton Roof and the absence of any real paths certainly made navigation a challenge.



For those who could get up on time on Sunday morning or indeed did not have to start off on long journeys home there was the official after dinner walk.

They went on a short circuit from the top of Barbondale down into Dentdale. On through Dent, up Deepdale and back along a contouring green road to the start.



Attending this walk were:

Sarah and Maurice Burkill, MAM President and her husband and Peter Chadwick our new President accompanied by

Adrian Bridge, Arthur Salmon, Frank Wilkinson, Richard Kirby, Iain Gilmour, Richard Gowing and Paul, Richard and Philip Dover

CHRISTMAS MEET - LOWSTERN, CLAPHAM 10th – 12th December 2010

As the faithful gathered at Lowstern on a grey Friday afternoon which had had its fair share of drizzle, one could be forgiven for thinking that a wet weekend was ahead. However

Meanwhile there were tea & alcohol to be considered. The row of (exclusively red!) wine bottles and beer no doubt impressed the later arrivals, and some were quickly emptied. Others preferred to decamp to the New Inn and / or the Gamecock at Austwick for evening sustenance.

Part of the pleasure of dining at the Gamecock is to point out to the young staff there, just how the place had been arranged and run, some three decades or so before they were born. The meal and beer were grand too.

The bustle on Saturday morning commenced in low key at an early hour. Perhaps some had in mind that the (*anticlockwise*) circuit of Ingleborough suggested by the Meet Organiser was 17 miles, needing an 8.30 start to be back by dark.

Speeded on by a "Continental" communal breakfast, a strong contingent of T Josephy, D Hicks, I Gilmour, A Bridge, Mike & Richard Smith and P Chadwick (hereinafter called the "Antis") rose to this challenge and were away before 8.00 am, off up "Long Lane".

There was a considered response from the "Clocks" (Paul Dover, R Ibberson, R Gowing & the writer), who were too polite to decline a lift to Ingleton, kindly offered by John Brown, (on his way to an uncrowded route in the Forest of Bowland), They thus started around 9.00 am with the ascent via Fell Lane Track & Crina Bottom, on the *clockwise* route.

This latter track was in much better condition than could have been expected and only minor occasional deviations away from icy snow patches were necessary

On the level above Quaking Pot, the faint path north to the potholes had some deeper and larger patches of snow, so we headed, in the general direction of Meregill, which was passed on the left, before the duckboards of the Hill Inn to Ingleborough path were reached. We followed this some way towards the Hill Inn before branching north east on the recently christened "Limestone Trail" path. This gave a comfortable stroll, with Ribbleshead Viaduct views ahead.

At this point the "Clocks" met the "Antis" hurtling around on the same circuit in the opposite direction. However the annihilation predicted by particle physics did not occur and after this narrow escape it was decided to take lunch, using the dykes as tables. So favourable was the weather, that no shelter was required.

The above (faint) path meets the one heading east to the farmhouse buildings near New Close (772778). This can be considered the half way mark and turning point of the circuit.

The return leg was into the pleasant afternoon sun, with good going underfoot; with views of the prominent stream valley feeding the Alum Pot depression; and those across to Penyghent etc. The final leg was down Long Lane in a pleasant sunset.

Meanwhile Mick Borroff was ensuring someone actually topped Ingleborough, by making a solo ascent from Lowstern via Newby and the Newby Moss path and returning via Gaping Gill and Ingleborough Cave.



Others still were out making the most of the beautiful day, with sunshine clear views and barely a breeze. This could not have been expected given the preceding week's doses of freezing weather and snow.

John Jenkins, Robert & Ian Crowther, and Frank Wilkinson, headed to Austwick and Feizor by paths. There in the local café was displayed a Yorkshire Post description by another Frank Wilkinson (!) of a circuit essentially the opposite of the one which the party had chosen!! Enlivened by article and cafe staff, the "genuine" Frank et al. continued on the path south south west near Brunton House, across the scars and Settle roads to Lawkland Green; then crossing beck, and railway twice, to Eldroth.

The circuit to Austwick was completed by the path and lane.

Thus once back at Lowstern, there was a general feeling of satisfaction after the day's exertions.

Mike Smith was showing videos taken during the year, of various exertions at both YRC and private meets. The results were excellent, the more so considering the small size of camera used.

Meanwhile a small lochan of punch was being prepared by Albert Chapman with an ease which suggests much practice. It certainly met with wide approval, as did the range of appetizers he kindly laid on. Eventually the tables were ready and a gathering of 35 sat down in anticipation and enjoyed an excellent meal consisting of

- Smoked salmon, with avocados, lettuce and horseradish sauce.
- Lamb casserole with flageolets, mash potatoes and vegetables
- Copious quantities of cheese (which lasted throughout Sunday)
- Mince tart and custard
- All washed down with consummate ease by red wine and / or beer

The President welcomed Dr Farrer, Guest of Honour, thanked all who had helped supply and prepare the meal and proposed the toast to the YRC, to which was spontaneously added "and absent friends".

On Sunday there was rather less bustle or sunshine.

Nevertheless, Ingleborough summit was again visited.

One party (F Worthington, R Gowing and T Dunford)



headed up via Ingleborough Cave and Trowgill.

En route, near Gaping Gill, we were pleased, but unsurprised, to meet more YRC, in the shape of B Wood and D Bush, who provided the additional good conversation which helps the miles pass. Care was needed underfoot on the ascent.



After lunch, taken out of the keen wind, we enjoyed some good views on the descent, and after Gaping Gill, took a variant for the return – to the east of Rayside plantation, and the track through Clapdale farmyard. ("John says it's not private").

It was not an exclusively Ingleborough day however.

I Gilmour and M. Borroff reported a good walk in Bowland circumnavigating Roeburndale from Wray, and that – once up on the fell - you can see the unusual panorama of all the Dales hills from Gregareth, Great Coum, Whernside, Ingleborough and Penyghent, right across to Fountains Fell on the horizon.

Meanwhile Tim Josephy and Adrian Bridge travelled to 'prospect' at Giggleswick Crags, looking to find climbs for warmer weather. They report dozens of newly bolted routes there, which should be well worth a trip.

Others took paths known only to themselves and God, as the author did not catch up with them.

Tony Dunford

Photographs of the 'Antis' by Adrian Bridge and the others by Richard Gowing

Attending

| | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Mick | Borroff | Mike | Hartland |
| Adrian | Bridge | David | Hick |
| John | Brown | Rob | Ibberson |
| Derek | Bush | John | Jenkin |
| Peter | Chadwick | Richard | Josephy |
| Albert | Chapman | Tim | Josephy |
| Alan | Clare | Richard | Kirby |
| Derek | Clayton | Alan | Linford |
| Robert | Crowther | Harvey | Lomas |
| Ian | Crowther | John | Lovett |
| Paul | Dover | Harry | Robinson |
| Tony | Dunford | Michael | Smith |
| John | Farrer | Richard | Smith |
| Iain | Gilmour | Derek | Smithson |
| Mike | Godden | George | Spenceley |
| Richard | Gowing | Frank | Wilkinson |
| David | Handley | Barrie | Wood |

PICTURE GALLERY



Domesticity, Shropshire meet



Support party



California

The approach to Mount Goode and Chocolate Peak gives excellent views of the desolate, barren, and aptly named Inconsolable Range which stretches for some 3.5 miles to the East of the routes they took. One view of it is enough to evoke fatigue!



Above
Lighter moments from long walk meet.



Adrian, Derek and Barry
enjoying casual drinks
in the Lincoln MC hut
in Deiniolin



Kabru from Danphebir - 2009 Meet - Photograph by Peter Hodge



A China Cave Scene (Pools formations in Dark Cave) - Best photo in 2010 competition - by John Whalley

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

Special General Meeting

Before the AGM, a Special General Meeting agreed minor revisions to the Rules of the Club.

(To be published in full in the next journal.)

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held at The Whoop Hall Hotel Kirkby Lonsdale on November 20th with 42 members present.

After a minutes silence to remember members who had passed away since the last AGM, officers' reports and the accounts were debated and adopted and the officers and committee were elected for the forthcoming year.

The President made his report.

Albert Chapman was made an Honorary Member.

The Membership Secretary named those members achieving the status of Life Members having been in the Club for 35 years. They were John Casperson and Peter Clarke.

Total membership stood at 178. During the year there were two deaths (Ian Carr and Victor Bugg), three resignations (David Atherton, Jim Rusher and Chris Fitzhugh) and two new members (Alan Hanbury and Ken Roberts).

The appointments to positions were:

President – Peter Chadwick
Vice President - Paul Dover
Hon.Treasurer –Arthur Salmon
Hon.Secretary - Richard Kirby
Membership Secretary- Mick Borroff
Huts Secretary - Richard Josephy
Lowstern Warden - Barrie Wood
LHG Warden - Gordon Humphreys

and other committee members :

Ex officio - Immediate Past President Adrian Bridge
Elected -
Martyn Trasler, Ged Campion, Andrew Syme, and Ian Crowther.

Editor- Roy Denney
Archivist- Jeffrey Hooper
Librarian - Albert Chapman
Webmaster- Andrew Syme
Tacklemaster - Ged Campion

Hon. Auditor- Derek Bush

Annual Dinner

The Dinner followed the AGM at The Whoop Hall Hotel. Our Principal Guest was Tony Waltham, a professional geologist and lecturer with a long history of expeditions to caves all round the world. Tony spoke fluently using excellent slides.

The President presented a lifetime achievement award to George Spenceley.

Attending the dinner were :

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Ken Aldred | Gordon Humphreys |
| Dennis Armstrong | Jason Humphreys |
| Adrian Bridge | Rob Ibberson |
| Alan Brown | Richard Josephy |
| David Bull | Tim Josephy |
| George Burfitt | Alan Kay |
| Maurice Burkill (G) | Richard Kirby |
| Derek Bush | Cliff Large |
| Ged Campion | David Large |
| Peter Chadwick | Alan Linford |
| Albert Chapman | Bill Lofthouse |
| Iain Chapman | Tim Lofthouse |
| Gary Chapman(G) | Harvey Lomas |
| Ken Coote | John Lovett |
| Roy Denney | Duncan Mackay |
| Paul Dover | Don Mackay |
| Phil Dover | John Middleton |
| Richard Dover | Peter Moss |
| Glyn Edwards (G) | Aaron Oakes |
| Darrel Farrant | George Postill |
| David Gamble | Harry Robinson |
| Iain Gilmour | Arthur Salmon |
| Mike Godden | Graham Salmon |
| Richard Gowing | Michael Smith |
| Alan Hanbury | George Spenceley |
| David Handley | John Sterland |
| Tony Harrison | Andy Syme |
| John Hemingway | Martyn Trasler |
| David Hick | John Whalley |
| David Holmes | Frank Wilkinson |

Club Guests

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Tony Waltham | Principal Guest |
| John Farrer | Ingleborough Estate |
| Arthur Champion | Craven Pothole Club |
| Sarah Burkill | MAM |
| | (Midland Association of Mountaineers) |
| Robin Quine | Alpine Club |
| Pete Dixon | Wayfarers Club |
| Andrew Hinde | Gritstone Club |



Pre dinner debate



Admiring the menu



George acknowledging his award



Tony Waltham, 2nd right, talking to the retiring President, Adrian Bridge.

President's address to the AGM

Adrian Bridge the retiring President addressed the members at the AGM and these are extracts from his comments. The full version is available to members who were not at the AGM.

Welcome everyone to this, the 118th AGM of the YRC

I'm sorry to have to say that two of our members died this year; Ian Carr who joined the club in 1959 died in July, and Victor Bugg who joined in 1969 died in August. Both had been Life Members and whilst neither had been on meets for quite some time, they had many friends in the YRC and their funerals were well attended.

Both of these members most generously left legacies to the club, totalling £900. Please stand with me for a few moments in remembrance of these two members and in sympathy with their widows, Jane and Audrey and their families.

Your committee met only five times this year, three fewer than last year, seemingly without detriment to the management of the club. As last year, committee meetings have generally been jolly events with contentious issues on only a few occasions.

The club finances have improved considerably since this time last year. Without the need for significant capital expense anywhere, income from membership, hut fees and donations have had a positive effect on the cash flow making it more likely that the kitchen refurbishment for Lowstern will be carried out next year rather than in 2012 as previously planned.

My thanks go to the committee members as a whole for their support during the year:

to Richard for sterling work as Hon Secretary, efficiently dealing with the meetings, meeting minutes and club correspondence, and to Mick as Vice President and Membership Sec, who crafted the current handbook format, which has been very well received. Richard, Barrie and Gordon have managed the huts well and we see the benefit of their hard work in the balance sheet.

Arthur has kept score competently as usual and Andy has continued to improve the club website. Roy has produced two more excellent Journals and I've an inkling that the next one will be quite special.

I want to mention as well, Jeff Hooper, who is looking after his wife and unable to be here today. He has transferred the archive from its previous difficult to access home in Leeds, to Northallerton where it is much more accessible.

I'm going to break with tradition now and ask you to vote on something, before continuing this address with other club matters.

One of our Life Members has been in the club for over 50 years and has contributed a great deal to the club's well being, spearheading the extension of Lowstern to create the excellent Downham room; developing links with Motup and establishing trekking in the Indian subcontinent as a regular club activity, from which many members have benefited.

I am speaking of course, of the master of Whernside, Albert Chapman.

The committee have fully endorsed the proposal that he be awarded Honorary Membership of the YRC and I commend this proposal to you.

Under the current rules it is a lot more difficult for the President to have someone elected than it used to be, but Albert, you've passed the first democratic step!

Can I have a show of hands in favour?

Congratulations Albert please remember that non payment of subs is not obligatory in your new position!

Amongst the 17 meets on the calendar this year, we've had two significant overseas meets and I welcome back members who went to Bolivia and China. Unfortunately, the number of YRC members on these meets wasn't very large. Fortunately most other UK meets have been rather better attended and the Social Meet in particular was a great success.

It has been quite a struggle getting together the meets list for 2011, but now it's done and will for sure provide a lot of enjoyment for those attending.

I need to raise one question and it concerns electronic communication of meets via the newsletter posted on the website.

In common, I guess with many members, my e-mail volume steadily increases - so seeing a message which tells me I can view the latest newsletter by going to the website requires a different set of activities to just opening an envelope.

It means logging on, choosing the members' zone, then clicking to upload the new item, scrolling down to read the adverts for forthcoming meets, then further to find the reply slip, which either needs to be printed off, or if the system allows, e-mailed on directly. Until the item is in hard copy it is transient in my mind and, I suspect that of many others.

Clearly communicating to members by electronic means reduces the work for the people collating and sending the newsletter - but is it actually in the members' interest?

I asked all members a question in one of the newsletters this year and did not receive a single reply. I'm not sure that if the same question had been asked in a posted paper newsletter, that the response would have been any different. However, if the question is there on the paper, it remains to be seen each time it is handled.

For E stuff, unless it is answered immediately, it is frequently submerged beneath the deluge of new incoming mail. I know that at work, email is both a boon and a curse but one has to use it.

Whilst more expensive, might the snail mail approach be better received and acted upon by our club for members?

You'll recall that at the beginning of last year, we chose to improve the website, in part as a publicity tool to spread the message of the YRC in a bid to increase the membership

– well, owing to members' deaths and resignations exceeding new joiners, numbers have declined by three.

For sure, the website is much better than it was, but perhaps we need to focus now on other ways of seeking new members.

15 years ago members were on average some 15 years younger and, for example, the Alps meets were well attended. Even if numbers on recent club meets are maintained, it is clear that the volume of high level activity has declined and we are not recruiting sufficient new active members of any age; it is clear that the average age of even the active members is steadily rising.

One thing we seriously need to consider is that of linking with a university club; for example, the MAM (from whom we have Sarah Burkill, current President as our dinner guest tonight) has close links with the Birmingham University Mountaineering Club and get a steady stream of new members from that source. We need to look at our current policies to see whether this might work for us.

Like most members, I've had – and still do have - good times on meets.

The locations are good, camaraderie is excellent, catering better than in many hotels and it is always superb value, and one is free to walk, climb or cave at will, so one could ask "why seek to change anything?"

For me, the answer is that I worry for the future; that we may decline into an old man's walking club instead of upholding the heritage our predecessors have left us.

To look back over the past two years, at the aspirations I expressed at the beginning of my term of office, I can claim that the most important one has been achieved.

That was to have good meets – which we have had - and to follow them with good meet reports.

I've very much enjoyed these two years in the company of friends and many like minded folk and thank the club for giving me this opportunity.

I wish Peter success for his Presidency and hope you'll look after him as you have me.

Adrian Bridge



THE NEW PRESIDENT

Peter Chadwick, on talking office as our new President says:

"I am honoured to have been elected President of a Club with such a long and distinguished history etc., my aims are to increase membership, offer an exciting meets programme and encourage more members to attend meets etc."



CLUB MERCHANDISE

A wide range of outdoor and leisure clothing is available with the traditional YRC 'Yorkshire Rose' badge (in green, yellow & white silks), beautifully computer embroidered at no extra cost, directly on to the clothing. The range includes Tee-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, fleece jackets of several grades and designs, knitted jumpers, cagoules and parkas. There is a full range of sizes from S to XXL. The smaller badge can be embroidered onto any items; which are available in a wide range of colours, but the larger badge can only be done on to an item coloured in YRC bottle green.

Kitbags are also available.

Discuss your requirements by contacting Rob Ibberson or better still; see him at a meet, where he will be able to show you the samples and illustrated catalogues showing all the items available.



ROLL OF HONOUR

PRESIDENTS

1892-93 Geo T Lowe
 1893-03 Wm Cecil Slingsby
 1903-06 Alfred Barran
 1906-09 Rev LS Calvert
 1909-12 Lewis Moore
 1912-19 Walter Parsons
 1919-22 WA Brigg
 1922-23 JC Atkinson
 1923-25 EE Roberts
 1925-27 F Leach
 1927-29 HH Bellhouse
 1929-30 TS Booth
 1930-31 T Gray
 1931-32 AE Horn
 1932-34 WV Brown
 1934-36 A Rule
 1936-38 JM Davidson
 1938-46 C Chubb
 1946-48 H Armstrong
 1948-50 CE Burrow
 1950-52 Davis Burrow
 1952-54 J Hilton
 1954-56 HL Stembridge
 1956-58 S Marsden
 1958-60 TH Godley
 1960-62 FW Stembridge
 1962-64 RE Chadwick
 1964-66 WPB Stonehouse
 1966-68 EC Downham
 1968-70 EM Tregoning
 1970-72 AB Craven
 1972-74 BE Nicholson
 1974-76 JB Devenport
 1976-78 FD Smith
 1978-80 JP Barton
 1980-82 WR Lofthouse
 1982-84 WA Linford
 1984-86 JD Armstrong
 1986-88 PC Swindells
 1988-90 AC Brown
 1990-92 DA Smithson
 1992-94 GA Salmon
 1994-96 CD Bush
 1996-98 TW Josephy
 1998-00 WCI Crowther
 2000-02 AR Chapman
 2002-04 TA Kay
 2004-06 K Aldred
 2006-08 FM Godden
 2008 -10 A D Bridge
 2010 - PRP Chadwick

HONORARY MEMBERS (PAST)

1892 Edward Whympier
 1892 Wm Cecil Slingsby
 1892 Clinton T Dent

1892 8th Duke of Devonshire
 1892 Charles E Matthews
 1892 The Earl of Wharncliffe
 1893 Charles Pilkington
 1893 Charles F Tetley
 1893 Gerald W Balfour, MP
 1893 Sir W Martin Conway
 1900 Horace Walker
 1907 Sir Alfred Hopkinson
 1907 EA Martel
 1907 G Winthrop Young
 1909 Dr Norman Collie
 1909 James Anson Farrer
 1921 George Yeld
 1921 George T Lowe
 1923 Charles Scriven
 1925 Canon AD Tupper-Carey
 1939 Sydney J Farrer
 1939 Walter Parsons
 1946 Robert de Joly
 1949 Ernest E Roberts
 1955 Sir R Charles Evans
 1956 Harry Spilsbury
 1959 Fred Booth
 1959 Davis Burrow
 1965 Clifford Chubb
 1965 Jack Hilton
 1968 EC Downham
 1968 S Marsden
 1968 HG Watts
 1977 HL Stembridge
 1985 A David M Cox
 1998 Major W Lacy TD
 1990 FD Smith

HONORARY MEMBERS (CURRENT)

1988 Dr John Farrer
 1997 Derek Bush
 1997 George Spenceley
 2001 Alan Brown
 2003 Alan Linford
 2008 Iain Gilmour
 2008 Gordon Humphries
 2008 John Lovett
 2008 Chewang Motup
 2010 Albert Chapman

VICE PRESIDENTS

1892-93 H Slater
 1919-22 EE Roberts
 1892-93 G Arnold
 1921-23 F Constantine
 1893-94 G T Lowe
 1922-24 P Robinson
 1893-94 L Moore
 1923-25 JF Seaman

1898-00 Rev LS Calvert
 1924-26 M Botterill
 1899-01 JC Atkinson
 1925-27 L Moore
 1900-02 A Barran
 1926-28 W Villiers Brown
 1901-03 Dr Tempest Anderson
 1927-29 CE Benson
 1902-04 Dr FH Mayo
 1928-30 CE Burrow
 1903-05 W Parsons
 1929-31 WA Wright
 1904-06 JA Green
 1930-32 C Chubb
 1908-10 F Leach
 1931-33 GL Hudson
 1909-11 C Hastings
 1932-34 FS Smythe
 1910-12 A Rule
 1933-35 JM Davidson
 1911-13 JH Buckley
 1934-35 GA Potter-Kirby
 1912-14 CA Hill
 1935-37 J Hilton
 1913-19 AE Horn
 1935-37 H Humphreys
 1914-19 H Brodrick
 1937-46 A Humphreys
 1919-21 CRB Wingfield
 1938-46 H Armstrong
 1946-48 D Burrow
 1946-48 AL Middleton
 1948-49 GS Gowing
 1948-50 GC Marshall
 1949-50 HG Watts
 1950-52 S Marsden
 1950-53 J Godley
 1952-54 FS Booth
 1953-55 FW Stembridge
 1954-56 RE Chadwick
 1955-57 GB Spenceley
 1956-58 CW Jorgensen
 1957-59 JA Holmes
 1958-60 JE Cullingworth
 1959-61 J Lovett
 1960-62 WPB Stonehouse
 1961-63 MF Wilson
 1962-64 EC Downham
 1963-65 BE Nicholson
 1964-66 JA Dosser
 1965-67 FD Smith
 1966-68 MD Bone
 1967-69 AR Chapman
 1968-70 JD Driscoll
 1969-71 J Hemingway
 1970-72 EJ Woodman
 1971-73 WA Linford
 1972-74 AJ Reynolds
 1973-75 JG Brook
 1974-76 JP Barton
 1975-77 WR Lofthouse

1976-78 J Williamson
 1977-79 N Newman
 1978-80 J Stuttard
 1979-81 GA Salmon
 1980-82 PC Swindells
 1981-83 DA Smithson
 1982-84 TW Josephy
 1983-85 DJ Atherton
 1984-86 GR Turner
 1985-87 AC Brown
 1986-88 R Cowing
 1987-89 CR Allen
 1988-90 DRH Mackay
 1990-92 WCI Crowther
 1992-94 H Robinson
 1994-96 K Aldred
 1996-98 IFD Gilmour
 1998-00 DA Hick
 2000-02 DJ Handley
 2002-04 G Champion
 2004-06 FM Godden
 2006-08 RA Kirby
 2008-10 M Borroff
 2010 - PA Dover

MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE ALPINE CLUB (CURRENT)

Mick Borroff
 Ged Champion
 Albert Chapman
 Chris Fitzhugh
 Richard Gowing
 David Hick
 Alister Renton
 Tony Smythe
 George Spenceley
 Michael Smith
 Chewang Motup

LIFE MEMBERS

Armstrong, JD
 Bush, CD
 Casperton, JD
 Chapman, A
 Clarke, PD
 Clayton, WD
 Crowther, WCI
 Denney, RJ
 Ellis, JR
 Errington, RD
 Farrant, DJ
 Goodwin, R
 Gowing, R
 Hamlin, JF
 Handley, DJ
 Garben, R

Hemmingway, J
 Hobson, MP
 Holmes, D
 Hooper, JH
 Humphreys, H
 Humphries, RG
 Ince, GR
 Josephy, TW
 Kinder, MJ
 Laing, IG
 Large, C
 Lockwood, P
 Lofthouse, WR
 Lovett, J
 Mackay, DRH
 Marr, AM
 Middleton, JI
 Middleton, JR
 Middleton, RM
 Moorhouse, DM
 Newman, N
 Oxtoby, DM
 Pomfret, RE
 Postill, GP
 Renton, K
 Reynolds, AJ
 Roberts, PD
 Rowlands, C
 Salmon, GA
 Salmon, RT
 Salmon, TW
 Short, J
 Smith, SH
 Smith, TH
 Smithson, DA
 Spenceley, GB
 Stembridge, DW
 Stembridge, SW
 Sterland, JH
 Sykes, PW
 Tallon, A
 Tetlow, DM
 Varney, JA
 Wilkinson, B
 Wilkinson, F

HONORARY TREASURERS

1892-93 HH Bellhouse
 1893-99 H Slater
 1899-04 J Davis
 1904-21 AE Horn
 1921-24 C Chubb
 1924-51 BA Bates
 1951-78 S Marsden
 1978-83 D Laughton
 1984-90 JD Armstrong
 1990-98 TA Kay
 1998--- GA Salmon

HONORARY SECRETARIES

1892-93 JA Green
 1893-98 HH Bellhouse
 1898-09 L Moore
 1910-20 F Constantine
 1920-24 CE Burrow
 1924-29 J Buckley
 1929-46 D Burrow
 1946-52 FS Booth
 1952-56 JE Cullingworth
 1956-57 CR Allen
 1957-66 EC Downham
 1966-68 FD Smith
 1968-79 EC Downham
 1979-83 J Hemingway
 1983-93 CD Bush
 1993-96 JA Schofield
 1996-08 RG Humphreys
 2008--- RA Kirby

HONORARY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES

1894-10 F Constantine
 1957-62 J Hemingway
 1910-12 JR Green
 1962-64 TW Salmon
 1912-19 L Moore
 1964-68 WCI Crowther
 1919-24 J Buckley
 1968-73 FD Smith
 1924-26 AS Lowden
 1973-79 J Hemingway
 1926-46 FS Booth
 1979-83 CD Bush
 1946-52 FW Stembridge
 1983-85 J Hemingway
 1952-53 O Stonehouse
 1985-92 M Smith
 1953-54 C IW Fox
 1992-95 M J Kinder
 1954-57 EC Downham

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

2008- M. Boroff

HONORARY MEETS SECRETARY

1996-09 JH Hooper

HONORARY EDITORS

1899-09 T Gray
 1909-20 W Anderton Brigg
 1920-49 E E Roberts
 1949-70 HG Watt
 1970-83 AB Craven
 1984-90 AC Brown
 1990-93 DJ Atherton
 1993-03 M Smith
 2003--- RJ Denney

HONORARY ASSISTANT EDITORS

1947-58 RE Chadwick
 1958-59 RB Whardall
 1959-60 HL Stembridge
 1960-70 AB Craven
 1970-77 DP Penfold
 1985-92 EC Downham

HONORARY WEBMASTERS

2001-08 CG RENTON
 2008-09 A Renton
 2009 – A Syme

HONORARY LIBRARIANS

1899-03 F Constantine
 1903-24 JH Buckley
 1924-27 C D Frankland
 1927-29 JK Crawford
 1929-30 W Allsup
 1930-35 J Buckley
 1935-39 R Rimmer
 1946-48 HS Booth
 1948-49 DS Blair
 1949-58 HL Stembridge
 1958-62 JG Brook
 1962-71 AB Craven
 1971-79 JG Brook
 1979-96 R Harben
 1996-98 MP Pryor
 1998-03 WN Todd
 2003--- AR Chapman

HONORARY HUTS SECRETARIES

1955-57 GB Spenceley
 (Low Hall Garth)

1957-59 JD Driscoll
 (Low Hall Garth)
 1958-62 PR Harris
 (Lowstern)
 1959-66 FD Smith
 (Low Hall Garth)
 1962-66 FD Smith
 (Lowstern)
 1966-67 AR Chapman
 1967-82 WA Linford
 1982-91 K Aldred
 1991-96 DM Martindale
 1997--- R Josephy

HONORARY WARDENS LOW HALL GARTH

1952-55 GB Spenceley
 1955-59 A Tallon
 1959-73 JD Driscoll
 1973-76 FD Smith
 1976-78 GP Postill
 1978-84 N Newman
 1986-89 WA Linford
 1986-98 FD Smith
 1998-01 D English
 2001-02 M Edmundson
 2002-07 IFD Gilmour
 2007 -08 G Dootson
 2008--- RG Humphreys

HONORARY WARDENS LOWSTERN

1958-64 J Lovett
 1964-67 J Richards
 1967-72 CG Renton
 1972-74 JTM Teasdale
 1974-76 A Hartley
 1976-78 JA Varney
 1978-79 GP Postill
 1979-82 WCI Crowther
 1982-86 C Bauer
 1987-88 J Lovett
 1988-90 H Robinson
 1990-93 FM Godden
 1993-96 GR Salmon
 1996-00 FM Godden
 2000-05 RA Kirby
 2005-09 J Lovett
 2010— D B Wood

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club



Established 1892 - www.yrc.org.uk

The mountaineering and caving club

The Club's aim is to organise caving, mountaineering, walking and skiing expeditions, to encourage the exploration of caves and potholes and the more remote parts of the world and to gather and promote knowledge of natural history, archaeology, folklore and kindred subjects

Editor

Roy Denney, 33 Clovelly Road, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8AE
Editor@YorkshireRamblers.Org.UK

Secretary

Richard Kirby, 11 Beverley Drive, Clitheroe BB7 1HY
Secretary@YorkshireRamblers.Org.UK

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

The YRC Journal is published twice a year and is free to members and certain kindred clubs. First published July 1899

Club Properties

Low Hall Garth
Little Langdale
Cumbria



Lowstern
Clapham
North Yorkshire

Lodged with the British Library - Publisher ID L-42592

Printed by Alfred Willday & Son Ltd, Unit 1, Dunns Lane, Leicester LE3 5LX - 0116 251 8478