

YRC JOURNAL

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Spenceley Glacier, South Georgia

Photograph by George Spenceley

Articles

Chachapoyas, Peru

Early caving

Classic sailing

Pontrasina, Switzerland

Walking on La Palma

Ilkley Moor

First steps in the Alps

Scotland

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THE SWISS ALPS

AN INITIAL INTRODUCTION

Albert Chapman has been reminiscing about his early years on the hills.

Albert suggests that every member ought to enjoy at least one season in the Swiss Alps and compare the present to the Switzerland he describes or if old enough, to the country they visited in their youth. He suggests there have been many changes in the last 55 years.

Strangely the year he talks about (1958) I was in Switzerland as a 14 year old on a school trip.

I think it makes fascinating reading and given a chance, I will take up the challenge and go to see how it is now.



It does however conjure up for me a picture of YRC members scattered carelessly amongst the Swiss Alps and of innocents abroad

To quote Albert,

My first visit was in August 1958 when Tim Smith and I planned to traverse the Haute Route. Pat Stonehouse decided to join us although Tim and I, in our early twenties thought Pat to be too old and past it in his early forties.

The final planning for this trip was held around the dinner table at Shoebridge House, Tim's family home.

We first ate the dehydrated food which we were to 'enjoy' later in the Swiss huts. These were complimented by many fine wines, rich puddings and strawberries and cream so as not to dull our taste buds.

After coffee we crossed to a large chestnut tree on the lawn and from a high branch attempted to prussic up a hanging rope pretending a crevasse rescue.

Pat climbed the highest that evening at eleven and a half inches above the lawn!! We therefore decided Pat would be a good team member and resolved not to fall into a crevasse.

This was before jumar clamps. We just wound a looped hemp line twice around our nylon climbing rope to form a prussic connection and the other end through the waist band and into a pocket.

The departure day arrived and I was collected at precisely 5.30 from the Engineer and Surveyors department at Bingley Town Hall, my place of work.

We took a flight from Manchester to Heathrow and a night flight to Geneva, then a train along the side of Lake Geneva and up the Rhone Valley to Brig. Here we met a YRC group of Hartley, Large and Fielding.

The Post Bus to Saas Fee delivered us to the cheapest room in the Glacier Hotel where in English and Japanese a notice requested us not to spit on the floor.

The following morning a gentle climb up to the Britannia Hut and my first introduction to wooden hut clogs and drinking bowls in lieu of beakers. No need to book huts in those days as they were rarely full.

The following day in great weather, a good walk over the Adler Pass between the Rimpfischhorn and the Strahlhorn to Zermatt.

Tim and I took it in turns to choose hotels in the valley. I for cheap bunk houses or B and B's. whereas Tim was slightly more comfortable at the Pollux Hotel in Zermatt which even had a white telephone in the bathroom.

1958 was before credit cards and we were only allowed to take £25 out of the UK. On the plus side the rate of exchange was 12 Swiss Francs to the Pound.

Next were two days in Zermatt then up to the Schonbiel Hut with fantastic views of the Matterhorn Zmut Ridge.

The following day up to the Col de la Tete Blanche and a snow plod onto Tete Blanche itself with good views on this sunny day. Down the glacier to visit the Bertol Hut before descending to Arolla for two nights. Here we met Decort another YRC member.

Then a climb up to the Vignettes Hut where a cure for constipation would certainly be to traverse the 30 yards of icy path wearing hut clogs to the toilet overhanging the glacier. We had an interesting climb onto the Pigne de Arolla then down the Ottema Glacier to Chanrion Hut. This was a wonderful area just below the snow line with lots of Alpine flowers.

The following morning we went up the Durrant Glacier to Col du Sonadon. Gaining so much height I suggested we climb The Grand Combin but was out voted and we then had to descend a steep snow slope to the Valsory Hut. I cut steps for half an hour until Tim suggested I have faith in my crampons. On my tenth step a crampon balled up and I pendulumed across the slope held on the rope by Tim. I then cut steps for a further four hours to reach the Valsory Hut deserted even by the warden.

The following day down to Bourg St Pierre and by bus to the delightful village of Champex. An advantage of those days for anyone trying to make a long distance trek was the opportunity to post our surplus gear in a kit bag to the next village ready for us to descend to.

The Trient Hut was to be our last night in the snow and then across the Trient Glacier to climb Aiguille de Tour.

We then stopped off at the Albert Premier Hut where we met Maurice Wilson, yet another YRC member.

Going down to Argentier we were overtaken by a German climber who then pushed past two boys who nearly fell off the narrow path. The German was still in the car park when we arrived. Tim set about him calling him a stupid ill mannered Krout. Not understanding English he pointed to his car and said 'to Chamonix'. Needless to say, we then enjoyed a pleasant car ride to Chamonix where we managed to find accommodation in the first hotel we tried. It had a three bedded room.

However, Tim was disappointed with the cleanliness of the bedroom so we left and tried many more hotels. The only one available that satisfied him had a twin bedded room.

Whilst deciding who would share a single bed Maurice Wilson turned up so it meant four in a twin bedded room.

Maurice had been to the dentist and could not understand why pain killer tablets in France were not taken by mouth but pushed up the anus.

The following day was the Chamonix Guides Fete celebrations so we thought Mont Blanc would be quiet and decided to go.

The first part was a train ride then an hours walk up to the Tete Rouse Hut. From there we proceeded up the snow slope and across a couloir, wider than our rope's length, with a deep channel in the middle gouged out by falling stones. On reaching the far side, up a loose ridge, we finally reached the Goutier Hut, which in those days was designed for 40 climbers. On this "quiet" day however, 104 people and a dog spent a very sleepless night.

Most actually left at about 3.00 a.m., aiming for the summit. But the weather had deteriorated and a storm blew up; sparks two inches long were appearing from my ice axe which I believe is called St. Elmo's Fire. Party after party turned back and after we reached the Vallot Hut we also decided to follow them in that course of action. We went past the Goutier Hut and down the loose ridge to where we found a French climber injured by a rock fall. Pat being a doctor looked after him while others sped to the Hut to call the guides to help in a rescue.

When the injured climber was finally brought down by the guides, Pat joined us at the Tete Rouse Hut where he was welcomed as the 'great English doctor' who had saved this French climber and he was given a large bowl of warm brandy.

When the two Swiss climbers, who were the only pair to summit, arrived they also acclaimed Pat's efforts. and encouraged him to follow them glissading down the steep snow slope to the station, instead of using the path. Pat now full of warm brandy joined them but Tim and I, both sober followed more cautiously.

While resting above the station we sold our Viking climbing rope to the Swiss guides at a good profit. These ropes were British and the best available at the time.

We then made our way back to Chamonix and Geneva Airport and after a large evening meal of curry we flew to Heathrow and an early morning flight to Manchester where Tim's family chauffeur, Slinger, collected us.

We dropped Pat at his home and my curry in a lay-by.

I then arrived at Bingley Town Hall one hour late for work. and was thinking the chief clerk was rushing over to welcome me back, having had no sleep for three nights. Alas he sped past me and added a half day against my name on the holiday chart.

A change of career clearly beckoned."

CHACHAPOYAS

Phil Dover

My son, Rob, went to work in Chachapoyas in the Department of Amazonas in northern Peru in 1996, where an eccentric American had decided to build lodges for travellers in the mountains and wanted someone to oversee the construction. However, he had neglected to get permission from the landowners and so the job came to nought apart from completing one lodge already started. Needless to say, my wife and I decided to visit him there.

Our first trip with Rob, was to visit Kuelap, a massive Chachapoya construction on a 3,000m high ridge. We set off early in a combie, a collective Toyota minibus, which leaves its depot when it is full and not until. The combie did not sound very healthy as we descended to the Utcubamba River and followed the river upstream for about an hour in a gorge covered in candelabra cacti, agave and scrub. The route then turned up the side of the gorge to New Tingo. By now the van was sounding very sick and we crawled up the hillside until it finally stopped. The driver then free-wheeled it back down the steep road to old Tingo on the valley floor.



The Road to Kuelap

From here a path leads up 1,200m to Kuelap and the guide books say “you must leave very early as it is a very hard climb in the heat of the sun”. We left at 11 o’clock completely un-acclimatised and with the sun beating down, though we rested a few times in the meagre shade of thorn bushes. We were extremely tired by the time we reached the magnificent stone construction and by the time we had looked round it we did not have time to descend, but got a bed in a rough hostel near the site with only the clothes we stood up in and had a meal with the family.

On that same holiday, the three of us set off for a three-day backpacking trip to a beautiful valley, Belen, a wide grassy valley with a meandering river in it.

Our second night was by an abandoned farm, and when my wife went to use the crude toilet, a hole in the ground covered by wooden posts, there was a terrified scream and she came rushing back “There’s something in there and it’s moving”. We accompanied her to the hole, and yes there was something there, so we removed the posts to find a foal up to its hocks in you know what. To have fallen through the gaps between the posts it must have been Houdini. It was quite a job getting it out, pulling on its ears and tail

without ourselves falling in, something not to be contemplated. However we managed and then attempted to give it some water but it immediately wandered off eating, eating and eating the lush grass. The next morning apart from a slight limp it seemed perfectly happy, the mare was nowhere to be seen.

My wife and I returned two years later. My son by now had set up his own guiding company in Chachapoyas and he was always looking for new routes for his clients. One day he told us there was supposed to be a path to Soloco from Taquia, a local village, “Please go and see what it’s like, you should be able to find a bed in Soloco or you can descend to the Mendoza road and there’ll be plenty of combies”. It was a delightful walk along a fairly level path which followed an Inca road, winding in and out of valleys halfway up a mountainside, with flowers in abundance and several humming birds, called delightfully ‘picaflora’ in Spanish. After some hours we had to decide whether to continue to Soloco or make the long descent to the valley and get home that night, and chose the latter. The road was strangely quiet, so we turned towards Chacha and started walking, thinking a combie would soon arrive. After several miles we heard one spluttering along, but it was full and by the look of it we were not sorry, thinking it couldn’t possibly climb the steep hill up to the town, so we walked on and by then it was starting to get dark. At this point we met at the side of the road a couple with a young baby who had walked out of the hills and crossed the river by a bridge. Many of the bridges are roofed, so we stayed with them still hoping for one of the mythical combies, or that we could pass the night on the bridge which could at least give us shelter should it rain. It was dark and late when along came a combie, full, but combies are seldom really full so the four adults and the baby piled in. “Where on earth have you been?” said Rob when we reached his house.

On our next visit, we had a similar incident. Rob asked us to investigate the Inca road to Tingo, which until the 1940’s was part of the old Inca road from Cajamarca that was the main way to get to Chacha before the road was blasted through the gorge from Pedro Ruiz. This then continued over the mountains into the Amazon rainforest. Rob dropped us off at the start of the track up to Levanto, a steep climb on to a ridge, then a pleasant walk with good views in to the Utcubamba valley on one side and the mountains on the other. After about three hours we reached the reconstructed Chachapoya round house at

Collocruz from where we were into new territory, along the ridge and then down a lovely Inca staircase in a gully to a col. Here we made a mistake and followed the wrong track which led us rapidly downhill until we realised our mistake and had to do a slow climb back up. Later the track became overgrown so we forced a route down to a river, before eventually finding a bridge to climb up the far side to another col. From there we could see Magdalena and then it was just a case of following the road to Tingo. Again all the combies appeared to be going in the opposite direction but quite a few people were waiting to get back to Chacha. Eventually when it was getting dark a collective taxi arrived and a German who had arrived before us gave up his place, so six of us crammed into the taxi to be bounced along the potholed road for the two hours back to Chacha.

Another time Rob asked us to investigate Lake Huamampata, above Mendoza, which is a town in the sub-tropical zone where they can grow coffee, pineapples and other crops it is not advisable to notice! It was a three-hour bus journey down to the town which was very noticeably hotter than Chachapoyas. Rob had arranged for a local man to show us where the track started and because of the heat it was a dawn start.

The track went steeply up through some forest and the man decided to accompany us with his son, to show us the way and for him to check on his animals near the lake. It was warm work carrying our camping gear over the ridge. The lake nestled in a hollow with no surface outlet, so it filled up in the wet season but was dry later in the year and was in a beautiful situation surrounded by thick woodland.

We found a place to camp and put the tent up. Later the man came back and noticing there was a group of men fishing in the lake he called across to them to see if they had caught anything. One of the fishermen stripped off to his underpants, put a fish in a plastic bag and swam across to us with it in his mouth. So that night we had very fresh trout for dinner.

Behind the town of Chachapoyas is the mountain, Pumo Urco which at 3,300m is about 1,000m above the town. We usually climb it at least once on our trips to see Rob as it is our favourite walk. First you pass through the outskirts of the town, then fields of vegetables, maize and potatoes and a few pasture fields with cattle, horses and sheep.

About halfway up you enter the cloud forest with its many different trees and bromeliads. On the summit ridge are more potato fields. This time, as is usual, my wife was in front, for the last climb up to the wireless relay station which is on the summit, when two men jumped out of the bushes with automatic pistols. Unusually the gate into the compound was open and the resident guard was not to be seen. The men pushed us in to a hut used by the guard as his kitchen. They were young and did not appear to be very competent thieves. We had both recently read Brian Keenan's book about his captivity in Lebanon, in which he

said if you don't cooperate with your captors it confuses them, so I didn't understand any commands, even when obvious and my wife argued with them in our poor Spanish. After some time an older gunman appeared who seemed to be more of a threat and took charge. He ordered them to frisk us, which they did ineffectively, missing my wallet but took our rucksacks and cameras. After a discussion amongst themselves they called on four other men, unarmed, to bring some wire. The latch on the door to the hut was broken so they fastened it up with the electric wire, then to our surprise we saw them run off. I managed to prise the door open a little with some wood from the guard's fire and then burn through the outer cable and then was able to force the door open.

Checking the men had really gone we then went looking for Umberto, the guard, not knowing if he would be alive or dead. We found him trussed up like a chicken on a concrete floor with a nasty wound to his head where they had pistol-whipped him. We released him and dressed his wounds, but he was terrified the men were going to return. After he recovered his composure, he telephoned his boss who called the police. Umberto didn't want us to leave him but we managed to telephone our son to meet us on the road nearest the track. We had to leave as it was getting late and the first people we met were the firemen who act as the local rescue team carrying a heavy stretcher and a rope you could tie up an ocean liner with. Next we met our son and finally the police, who presumably had taken their time to make sure the gunmen had got away before they arrived.

The gang were on the mountain to steal the solar panels which power the repeater station, which acts as the main wireless station for the whole of the north of Peru, so if they had been successful, telecommunications would have been affected over a wide area. Even if it was the wrong time for us to be on the mountain, it was the right time for Umberto, who is convinced if we had not appeared he would have died from hyperthermia if not from his wounds. So whenever we see him in Chacha now he greets us and calls us his guardian angels.

We have since climbed Pumo Urco several times without incident and it is still a good walk.

There are many other incidents, like the rescue and release of the young condor which has been reported in the YRC journal. One year we took four fellow Volunteer Rangers from the Lake District National Park to Peru, one of whom was a vegan and takes no stimulants coffee, tea etc. whatsoever. On descending from the highest mountain in Amazonas, Condrosarma (4,200m), our guide insisted we all tried chewing Coca leaves. Liz, the vegan, did not sleep for three days!

Michael Smith has proposed a trip to this fascinating area in 2014. If you want to know further information, please contact me.



1



2



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4



5

- 1 - Gotcha (RD)
- 2 - Sonche Gorge (PD)
- 3 - Petaca (RD)
- 4 - Tajopampa (RD)
- 5 - Sparkling Violetear (RD)

Photographs by
 Rob Dover (RD)
 Phil Dover (PD)

STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT

Not a good weekend; the garage deemed that the intermittent total power-loss fault on our larger car was irreparable and the central heating pump died in one of the winter's coldest spells. As I shaved in cold water, the radio announced this the first day of spring with a forecast of heavy snow in a day or so. Helen and I decided to get out for a walk in the Peak District before our stretched patience snapped.

I parked at Upper Midhope near Langsett, north of Sheffield and we headed south along one of the three tracks crossing Low Moor with its remains of tank target rails and underground shelters.

Within a minute we had spotted one of the two buzzards recently taking up residence and seen and heard the curlews starting to proclaim their territories. Half way to Pike Lowe (478m), approaching snow had covered Fenny Common and where there are a few boggy patches with sufficient flow to avoid it freezing our boots were coated in rich brown clag.

Nearing Pike Lowe Stones we put up a mountain hare. Keeping to its natural cycle it had changed back from its winter white to grey; like us it expected better conditions by late March. We found fresh boot prints in the snow by the cairn at the top and followed these for a while on the short descent to Candlerush Ridge.

Heading west along this broad flat ridge our going was aided by a biting tail wind, frozen boggy sections and an unusually firm footing on the peat.

Initially marked by sticks the ridge becomes indistinct and we were pleased to drop into the sunken path of Cut Gate. Here there were a few more footprints in the snow and later we saw someone in the distance. Cut Gate took us south to overlook the Derwent valley before we climbed a little to Margery Hill (546m). The highest marked point in Sheffield (High Rocks a kilometre to the south has a point on the moor a couple of metres higher) this was a favourite of Stanley Marsden's. Stanley would report back with raised eyebrows that he had spent a pleasant half hour on Margery Hill and sip his gin as his audience pondered the meaning.



Pike Lowe from Low Moor

Fellow Manchester Pedestrian, Pat Stonehouse would have been useful to us here as he could undoubtedly have placed the Bronze Age burial mound there in context. Instead we had to content ourselves with a look round at the neighbouring hills and the lowering skies to windward.



Margery Hill Trig in the summer

By now with boots cleaned by the snow and heather, we beat a retreat to Cut Gate and back north to Mickleden Edge, and a return to muddier going, before turning northeast to the North America farmstead which was demolished by tanks using it for target practice during WWII.

From there we joined the popular Langsett Reservoir path back to the car with a sprint in our steps, refreshed to face the prospect of car showrooms and emergency plumbers

Michael Smith

CAVING IN OUR EARLY YEARS

Caving historian Steve Craven of the Mountain Club of South Africa has access to our archives and he has produced extracts from our early minutes which should be of interest to others with a direct interest in the early years of speleology in this country.

He reports –

YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB

MINUTE BOOKS

The minute books for 1892 - 1894 are missing and successive Secretaries have apparently been very discreet in their recording of Committee minutes. The bulk of the minutes consist of routine matters viz. elections to membership, club meets and meetings. There is very little contentious matter recorded - on occasion a prominent member resigned and the Committee asked him to reconsider.

A good example of this circumspection occurred in the 1930s. Even though Ernest Roberts is known to have been corresponding with Eli Simpson about the proposed British Speleological Association, there is no mention of this in the minutes.

These extracts and comments do not pretend to be a complete precis of the minutes. They merely record my personal interests in the speleological affairs of the YRC.

MINUTE BOOK 1 (Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Accession 2974).

13 Feb. 1894: First entry.

26 Oct. 1894: Refers to a letter in the Leeds Mercury re dangerous condition of Gaping Gill. Dr. J.R. Robinson of Dewsbury wrote to Committee promising financial assistance to fence the hole. Resolved to write to Mr. Farrer.

q.v. Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement 13 Oct. 1894 p. 8, and Leeds Mercury 17 Oct. 1894 p. 2, for the above-mentioned letter.

13 Nov. 1894: Letter tabled from Mr. J.A. Farrer re Gaping Gill. The matter has been referred to his agent.

27 Nov. 1894: Letter tabled from Farrer's agent listing the commoners whose consent will be necessary before Gaping Gill can be fenced. Resolved that the matter not be pursued, and that Dr. Robinson be informed that the

YRC. would support him if he were to take up the matter himself.

21 Dec. 1897: Discussed the possibility of the YRC "subscribing to the Speleological Society." Decision postponed.

27 Oct. 1903: "Mr. Eli Simpson also wished to become a member of the Club. His qualification was read, and on the motion of Mr. Moore seconded by Mr. Nichol, his qualification was deemed insufficient. This was put to the meeting and carried"

15 Oct. 1907: "Some correspondence was read from Mr. Blackburn Holden of Barnoldswick, who wished to join the Club, but in consequence of his not knowing any of the members he was unable to obtain a proposer. He had filled in a nomination paper, which was considered insufficient, and the Secretary was desired to write him to that effect. Mr. Buckley kindly offered to ask him to join the next potholing Expedition in order that he might become acquainted with a few of the members, and thus assist him in his nomination"

29 Oct. 1907: Letter read from Blackburn Holden re YRC. membership.

10 Mar. 1908: "A letter was read from Mr. George Lowe suggesting that a book be written and published by the Club, on Yorkshire Caves and Potholes. Mr. Lowe said that publication had appeared on a similar subject, dealing with other parts of the country, and that there was a rumour that the Yorkshire Caves were to be similarly dealt with. Mr. Lowe suggested that if this was true, we ought to be the first in the field, and take up the matter without delay"

A sub-committee was formed: The President Messrs. Lowe, Moore, Cuttriss, Gray, Booth, Parsons, Hastings, and Buckley to report.

19 May 1908: The above sub-committee met on 07 April and recommended "that such a book be published & that steps be taken to collect the matter & to invite the cooperation of the Club members"

A further meeting was held on 26 May (sic). Two quotes had been received for printing 500 copies of 500 pages, similar in format to the YRC Journal viz. 7s 1d. and 5s. 11d. per copy to which would have to be added the costs of illustrations, blocks and authors' corrections.

It was resolved to circulate members to solicit cooperation.

21 July 1908: Letters were read from Dr. Dwerryhouse & Harold Broderick about the proposed book.

12 Jan. 1909: Thos. Gray wrote that he wished to discuss the proposed cave book with the sub-committee.

02 Feb. 1909: Dr. Dwerryhouse and Thos. Gray were appointed joint editors of the proposed cave book, (even though Gray had just resigned as Journal editor).

06 July 1909: Dr. Dwerryhouse resigned from the YRC.

07 Sep. 1909: Blackburn Holden's application to join the YRC. - deemed to be inadequately qualified.

30 Nov. 1909: The President had written to Dr. Dwerryhouse asking if he was prepared to continue as cave book editor despite resigning from the YRC. A reply was awaited.

30 Nov. 1909: Resolved that the "Speleological Society" be asked to send a representative to the YRC annual dinner.

21 Dec. 1909: Letter read from Dr. Dwerryhouse resigning as cave book editor because no longer resident in Leeds.

Thos. Gray resigned from the YRC. Resolved to ask him to reconsider.

MINUTE BOOK 2: (at 22 Moorland Avenue, Brierfield, Lancashire).

25 Oct. 1910: YSA not on the list of invited clubs.

23 May 1911: "A letter was read from Mr. Slingsby & enclosure, one from J.H. Bennett & Co. of Sheffield, with reference to publishing a book on caves & potholes. It was decided to let the matter lie on the table"

09 July 1912: "A letter was read from the Secretary of the Yorks. Speleological Society, complaining that we had not obtained their permission to use the winch at Gaping Ghyll last Whitsuntide. Their letter had been replied to, and as their full permission had been obtained in writing some time previous to the Club's Expedition, the matter be allowed to drop"

21 Oct. 1913: Blackburn Holden was elected.

25 Aug. 1914: Fred Botterill resigned; and his outstanding subscriptions were written off.

15 Apr. 1915: The Derbyshire Pennine Club proposed that members assist the Government by searching the fells for contraband petrol stores. Deemed that the proposal was impractical because of the large area to be covered and small membership.

08 Mar. 1921: "C.E. Burrow reported that the wire rope had been sent to Messrs. Craddock's Wakefield for expert examination and report, and proposed that if the report was favourable that he should be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Y.S.A. for the purchase of same & also the Y.S.A. winch" Carried.

09 Dec. 1924: Edmund Bogg NOT elected to Hon. Membership after "considerable opposition"

20 Nov. 1928: "A letter was read from Mr. A. Mitchell of Skipton, asking for information with regards to joining the Y.R.C. The Secretary reported that he has sent this information to Mr. Mitchell from whom however no further reply had been received"

16 Apr. 1931: "The Sec. read a letter from the Craven Pot-Hole Club asking the Club to lend the winch only for the weekend June 20/21st when they wished to descend Gaping Ghyll by ladders & desired to have the winch as a standby.

"Mr. Holden a member of this club would be in charge.

"It was decided, after a lengthy discussion, that the winch alone would be of no use without the wire rope & that we couldn't loan the wire rope without the necessary tackle being correctly fixed; to ensure that the least possible wear & tear on the wire rope.

"Further that none of the Y.R.C. members who could undertake this somewhat technical erecting would be available either the weekend before or on the actual weekend mentioned"

The Secretary was instructed to write to this effect to the CPC.

12 July 1932: Reported that the NCFC. men had put 14 men via Flood Entrance into the Main Chamber of Gaping Gill, and out, in eight hours. Resolved to send a letter of congratulations.

15 Oct. 1932: Letter from NCFC. inviting the YRC. to send a representative to its dinner on 5 Nov. Jack Hilton nominated.

08 Nov. 1932: Letter from the CPC. inviting the YRC. to send a representative to its annual dinner.

02 May 1933: Letter from the NCFC. thanking YRC. for the loan of tackle.

22 Sep. 1933: Gerard Platten elected.

08 Nov. 1934: 1) YRC reps. to attend dinners:
CPC dinner: J. Buckley
NCFC dinner: F.W. Stembridge.

2) "A suggestion from the Northern Cavern & Fell Club regarding a Rescue Corps was discussed and it was decided to appoint E.E. Roberts & J. Buckley as the Club's representatives at any meetings which might be called, & these were given authority to speak for the Club"

3) "It was agreed to demand an apology from the owner of Blue John Cavern, Castleton, for the libellous statements he is reported to have made regarding damage alleged to have been done by members, and the Secretary was instructed to write demanding same"

13 Dec. 1934: "The Chairman reported that the controversy between the proprietor of the Blue John Cavern and the Club had reached the stage when it had to be handed over to the Honorary Solicitor to the Club"

27 Aug. 1936: "In view of the fact that the British Speleological Association has made application to descend Gaping Ghyll at Whitsuntide 1937, it was decided to forego our usual privilege"

04 Nov. 1936: 1) C.E. Burrow to attend the CPC. dinner.

2) "The Secretary reported that E. Simpson of Austwick was seeking powers, through the various land owners, to control the access to potholes. It was decided to take no action at the present time, but to make every endeavour to keep this question under observation."

08 Nov. 1938: Letter from NCFC. inviting a representative to attend its dinner.

04 July 1939: Resolved to send two copies of the current journal to the "Climbing Club of South Africa".

07 Oct. 1946: 1) Letter from the BPC. enquiring of the YRC. an opinion on the feasibility and desirability of a war memorial. Resolved that the matter should "rest"

2) Kindred club guest list - CPC omitted.

13 Dec. 1946: Blackburn Holden resigned.

13 June 1947: Letter from CPC. seeking to borrow corrugated sheets for the Gaping Gill dam, and the two forms for the mess tent. Approved.

31 Jan. 1948: Letter from the London Speleological Group telling of its "new activities"

YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

(Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Accession 2974).

12 Feb. 1912: Annual dinner attended, inter alia, by Fred Haworth of the YSA.

LETTERS TO E.E. ROBERTS 1891 - 1961

(Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Accession J856 3539).

Although this collection is clearly incomplete, it merits further detailed inspection.

Copy survey Bull Pot of the Witches d. 01 June 1909 by T(heodore) R(idley) Burnett.

Copy survey of Stump Cross Caverns by E. Simpson d. May 1932 acknowledging previous survey by "A. Raistrick University of Durham, July 1922"

YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB CORRESPONDENCE

(Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapletown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Accession 3865/6).

There survives here a very small archive. Clearly the bulk of the correspondence is missing.

Letter d. 03 June 1903 S.W. Cuttriss to Thos. Gray. Inter alia, "At Mr. Bateman's request (Mr. Farrer's agent), the passage has been permanently obstructed with part of the jib timber"

This refers to Jib Tunnel leading to Gaping Gill.



THE STERNDALE BLITZ

They bombed our church them Germans did
In nineteen forty one
And left it there without a lid
Exposed to wind and sun.

In memory of Tom Wise, the Earl Sterndale poet, who died earlier this year. Permission to print this novelty poem was obtained by Derek Clayton

And when at last the war was o'er
And Hitler was the loser
We knelt, and, praying as of yore
Thanked God they'd missed the boozer

MEMORIES OF TAI MO SHAN

The Tai Mo Shan is part of the Club lore. Its wider history was recounted in our last edition.

For many years those of us who have only been in the Club 30 years or so will recall many half-believed stories of epic trips on this boat. Numerous even older members crewed it from time to time and recanted hair-raising tales, but from my recollections, not many went out with Jack Woodman twice.

For ten years Jack sailed the Western Isles every Summer with his sons and any young YRC member he could press gang as crew.

These are the memories of Albert Chapman who was brave enough (or was that foolhardy) to have been out more than once.

"I joined him with Conrad Jorgenson in June 1956 as assistant cook. To set the tone, we always dressed for dinner!

We sailed from Holy Loch on the Clyde though the Kyle's of Bute to Tarbert on Loch Fyne, where I was hauled up in a bosons chair to the crosstree of the mizzen mast to repair a non existing fault. I was left there for three hours while the others went on shore for shopping.

Round the Mull of Kintyre at midnight and after a visit to Colonsay where we ate dulse at the Scallasaig pub, we sailed to Iona where the Reverend George McLeod invited me to take communion at the Abbey.

A year later I joined the Tai Mo Shan with another 23 year old YRC member David Tetlow. We met our yacht in the fresh water basin of Crinon Canal and this year I was head cook and in charge of forward sails.

Out of the lock gates and through Dorus Mhor to Tobermorry; on to Canna to climb Compass Hill. We then sailed to Rhum where Tetlow and I camped for two nights and climbed Askival while the yacht went to Mallaig for supplies.

We were collected from Rhum and sailed North to anchor in Loch Scavaig for an attempt on the Cuillin Main Ridge.

On our approach to Skye with the sail down the propeller shaft broke. Tetlow and I were given ten minutes to launch the on-board dingy, pack all we required and then have Woodman take us to the nearest point on Skye before chasing the crewless Tai Mo Shan drifting slowly South.



Tai Mo Shan in more recent times still going strong

After a three hour walk along the coast of Skye we arrived at Coruisk and pitched our tent by the side of a new Mountain hut being built.

We soon realised we had forgotten food. The builders soon realised this too. Their only visible food was 24 bottles of H.P. Sauce.

We left camp at 3.00 am and had a great day along the Cuillin Ridge from Garsbein but climbed a wrong route on Bhasteer Tooth and had to abseil off into Lota Corrie. We then had the dilemma, should we return to a foodless tent at Coruisk or risk the Sligachan Hotel.

We choose the latter but on arrival was told it was Glasgow Fair week and all rooms were full. However charm prevailed and we slept semi naked under a blanket in a private lounge, while our clothes were washed and dried. All this for two shillings each.

We departed at 7.00 am as promised and trekked back to our tent. Moving out, our luck held as the MacBrayne's ferry arrived from Mallaig.

A boat journey to Mallaig and two days hitch hiking to Crinan culminated, late at night with us pitching tent on the hallowed turf next to the lock gates, The lock keeper woke us at seven inviting us to remove our tent.

We sat in the garden of Crinan Hotel drinking 'shandy' awaiting the arrival under sail of our faithful yacht.

At last she sailed through Dorous Mhor and dropped anchor a mile out and the dingy was sent to collect us with a warning to the lock keeper that the Tai Mo Shan will enter the fresh water basin through the lock under sail alone! The lock keeper was visibly shaken as he had witnessed our departure through the gates two weeks before with an engine.

Back on board we swapped stories of our deeds for an hour then waited until the outer lock gates were open. Gathering speed we headed for the locks; on Woodman's command the main sail came down and sure enough the boat began edging to port against the rudder direction. Woodman then in panic realised the mizzen sail was still up which acts as a guiding sail. After many four letter words he instructed the nearest crew member (me) to pull the mizzen sail down but as I was in charge of forward sails I did not know which sheet to pull and release the mizzen.

The urgency in Jack's voice suggested speedy action so without checking I pulled out a row of five belay pins. A group of pulley blocks shot to the top of the mast; the main sail boom dropped three feet with a crash and the sheet controlling the mizzen sail came free and the sail was pulled down with speed. The rudder then responded and our yacht sped through the outer gate.

Woodman then applied the gear lever to reverse the engine before realising the engine had not been used since the propeller shaft sheared.

Twenty five tons of yacht was approaching the green heart lock gates protecting the fresh water basin where at least ten yachts were at anchor. Their watching owners panicked, fearing that if our yacht crashed through the gates their yachts would be flushed out to sea.

At the last moment a line was thrown to the white faced lock keeper who wrapped it round a capstan and our yacht stopped two foot from the gates."

Albert extols as a welcome delight, that many of our members still continue the sport of yachting although their yachts are now smaller and some have only one mast.

The article in our last edition of the journal also caught the attention of Raymond Harben who found it extremely interesting and brought back many happy memories of cruising the Hebrides with Keith Barker and David Woodman.

He recalls sailing from Mallaig up to Tobermory where they literally bumped into Jack Woodman who was then in his 'fishing boat'.

He had had this specially built with a shallow draught for sailing the French canals although it was registered as a fishing boat so that he could buy cheap fuel for it.

The following day they headed West and sailed into the bay of Canna loosely classed as the 'harbour'.

One other yacht anchored there, the "Seewolf", previously owned by Hermann Göring and being polished by two crew members. It is now owned by a Blackpool car dealer.

The following day both boats left late with Seewolf heading north west, Raymond and co heading due west into some very big Atlantic rollers. As the wind started freshening it was decided to change the foresail to a storm gib and Raymond volunteered to go forward.

No roller reefing on this sail it meant pulling down the sail and unclipping it from the stay wire and clipping the new sail onto it. All the while the boat was pitching and tossing on the waves. Raymond remembers turning green but fortunately wasn't sick. Finally late evening they sailed into Castlebay on Barra where they enjoyed a celebratory drink ashore.

The next day they set off back for the mainland and arrived off Muck but due to increasing wind and rapidly fading light it was decided that it was too dangerous to go into the anchorage and so they dropped anchor off shore and had to mount an anchor watch throughout the night.

Raymond got the dog watch 4.00am to 8.00am. At around six o'clock the wind had eased so he got out the fishing line and no sooner had it been cast than he was pulling in half a dozen mackerel. Not really being a fisherman he had to wake Keith to come and take the fish off the hooks and so followed a tasty and very fresh, fish breakfast.

They sailed from Muck back to Tobermory where they had the spectacle of "Round the Islands" racing yachts coming into harbour at great speed and simultaneously dropping anchors and sails.

From Tobermory they went back to the mainland and then Raymond went home to Sheffield after a memorable holiday.

The recollection seemed to be one of leaving late each morning and arriving late in the evenings.

I can personally vouch that these are typical of the experiences of many members as recounted over a pint or two in cosy bars in front of winter fires, a long way from the scene of their endeavours.

Ed

BOOK REVIEW



2020VISION ISBN 978-0-7495-7359-1 RRP £25, Published by the AA, it is available on Amazon at £16.

This claims to be the most ambitious nature photography project ever staged in the UK, aiming as it does, “to engage and enthuse a massive audience by using innovative visual media to convey the value of restoring our most important but often fragmented natural habitats - to show that healthy ecosystems are not just for wildlife, but are something fundamental to us all”

The team of award-winning nature and wildlife photographers are responsible for some of the most spectacular nature imagery I have seen for some time. As well as their outstanding visual artistry, they are also committed to using their images as valuable communication tools. This is the first time that many of the UK's best nature photographers have come together to collaborate on a project of this scale. The stunning images, film and sound gathered by the 2020VISION team forms the basis of a multi-city 'roadshow' whose centre-piece is a street gallery exhibition being made accessible to millions of people nationwide, at locations throughout the UK between now and 2015. It is also backed up by a book available in hard back or paperback and for those of you who admire great photographs I can commend it to you.

As Chris Packham says in the foreword “We've learned how to protect, rebuild, reintroduce and restore a smattering of species and habitats. But, overall, these initiatives are not preventing a continuous decline in the wider environment; so, like these individual photographs, we have to question their efficacy. Harsh but true.



Addressing this would seem to be a necessary priority but change takes courage, pragmatism, conviction and real energy. It also needs imagination and honesty – all ingredients in this brilliant 2020 VISION project project, which very definitely seeks to present the bigger picture through the clever choreography of many individual images. Thus, this is not just a collection of the prettiest photos from around the UK; it has a defined purpose to portray a visual narrative that clearly defines the state of our nation's wildlife and, crucially - finally - the bigger thinking that could make a difference if we are to see nature, and people, flourish.

2020 VISION not only allows us to celebrate the UK's natural riches but also gives us an insight into emerging perspectives, fresh ambitions and real hope for the future.

They invite you to look at, revel in and be astonished by what you see and read in this book; be in awe of the beautiful photographs, but do not forget the unique and innovative purpose of 2020 VISION's objectives - to make us all realise it's the bigger picture that really matters.”

They make great claims for the work but it really is a stunning book and I can commend it to you.



The picture of apparent wilderness (inside front, beside the foreword) is from Beacon Hill in Charnwood, part of the National Forest in Leicestershire which was visited by both walkers and cyclists on the Long Bike Ride meet in 2011.

Roy Denney



CHIPPINGS

COAST TO COAST, NORTH

Plans for a new walking route to commemorate John Muir were officially unveiled at the Scottish Parliament late last year. The Central Scotland Green Network, will develop the 108 mile John Muir Coast-to-Coast Trail which will run from Dunbar, East Lothian to Helensburgh, Argyll and Bute.

The new trail should be open by April 21, 2014 - the date of Muir's birthday and the centenary year of his death.

A MIDLANDS MEANDER

As an alternative, in May of that year another long distance trail will open.

The National Forest Way will start from just outside Loughborough at Beacon Hill and finish at the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas. At 75 miles this shorter trail will take in most of Charnwood Forest and Needwood Forest and go through surprisingly diverse scenery, much of which was enjoyed by participants on the big bike ride meet in 2011.



Beacon Hill, Leicestershire

ROACHES TO CAPE WRATH???

Fancy a really long walk?

Scotland's longest walking route, a 470-mile Scottish National Trail, was officially opened on October 30, 2012. Starting where the Pennine Way leaves off, the trail forms the first ever end-to-end or top-to-bottom walking route through Scotland, from Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders to Cape Wrath, the most north-western point on the British mainland.

All we need now is a trail from Edale to link up with the S.W. Coast path and Ian Lang has made a start of which more later.

(see article page 62)

The new trail has been pulled together by author and broadcaster Cameron McNeish, who has also co-authored a Mountain Media book about the route called 'Scotland End to End'.

The route wanders through some of Scotland's most beautiful and rugged landscapes primarily linking numerous existing rights of way and creates a long distance walking route that must compare with the best in the world.

For normal mortals who might be tempted to tackle this in bite sized chunks it does break down into quite identifiable stretches.

Kirk Yetholm - Melrose - Edinburgh - Milngavie - Callender - Aberfeldy - Kingussie - Fort Augustus - Acknashellach - Kylesku - Oykel Bridge - Cape Wrath

One big issue for walkers attempting the trail or parts of it is that in the more remote reaches accommodation is scarce to put it mildly.

The jumps mentioned are the best shot along the actual route at getting somewhere to stay and are between 30 and 55 miles long but then there are easy miles and hard miles to consider.

HIGH AUSTRALIA

In discussion about Tony's obituary the question of the height of St. Mary's Peak came up and it became apparent that members involved had little knowledge of the mountains of Australia, not perhaps a classic mountaineering area.

St. Mary's Peak is the highest mountain in the Flinders Ranges National Park and the second highest peak in South Australia. This 1171 metre peak is located on the North-East edge of the Wilpena Pound and offers breathtaking 360-degree views of the Flinders Ranges, Wilpena Pound and surrounding plains.

It is far from being the highest in Australia which is Mount Kosciuszko is a mountain located in the Snowy Mountains in Kosciuszko National Park. With a height of 2,228 metres.

There are several over 2000m: Mount Townsend (2,209m) (second highest mountain on the mainland) Mount Twynam (2,196m) Rams Head (2,190m) Unnamed peak on Etheridge Ridge (2,180m) Rams Head North (2,177m) Alice Rawson Peak (2,160m) Byatts Camp (2,159 m) Abbott Peak and Carruthers Peak (both 2,145 m) Gungartan and Mount Tate (both 2,068m) and Mount Jagungal (2,061m)

PEAK PROGRESS

A project to renew some 2 kms of well-loved paths at four major access points to Kinder Scout has just been completed and will help to protect the internationally important moorland habitat from the effects of foot traffic and water. Paths at Grindslow Knoll, Crowden Tower, Ringing Roger and The Nab have been enhanced as part of the Natural England Conservation Plan Project.

These improvements may help walkers but keeping us to the paths is also of great ecological benefit. The Dark Peak moorlands support the full range of breeding birds found in the South Pennines, some of which are represented at their most southerly English locations. The extensive areas of peatland are also home to all the blanket bog plants such as a cotton grasses, crowberry, heather and bilberry.

Robust features have been incorporated to try and keep our feet dry such as drainage ditches, water bars and fords. By introducing water bars and angling flagstones, water is diverted across and away from the paths.

Considerable planting has also been done to undo the damage alongside the paths where we previously strayed off the paths to avoid the swamps.

The improved footpaths will significantly improve our access and enjoyment while protecting much loved landscape and wildlife.

GRAMPION SPELIOLOGICAL GROUP

I am pleased to let members know that we have entered into a journal exchange with this group and back copies will find their way to our library in due course. I have eight of their most recent editions and there is much useful material in them.

They also have a hut which may be of interest to members. Taigh nam Fadh is available in Scotland's finest caving region and is equipped with all mod cons; visitors will enjoy fantastic views of the Assynt scenery from the comfort of the conservatory. Drying room, hot showers, fully fitted kitchen, bunk rooms and toilets are all provided. Fees for non-members are a very reasonable £5 per night.

The hut may not be booked for sole use by visitors, but many times there will be fewer than five members present and the hut sleeps 20 on bunks, plus there are two fold-down couches and some spare mattresses in the attic (where they usually send condemned snorers!). The grounds allow for some camping on the lawn, and there is space in the car park for the odd camper van - the Craven were there last Spring and used these, feeding electricity from the main hut. If walkers/climbers/cavers in YRC wish to book, they should contact the hut warden Peter Dowswell, 28 Eriskay Road, Inverness IV2 3LX, peter.dowswell@btinternet.com

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

The Northern Cave Club, one of the more recently formed caving clubs, celebrated their 50th year at a gathering in Clapham this May.

In a comment that has a familiar ring, one of their founder members said "Caving is now becoming a sport for older people, with few young people becoming involved"

SACRILEGE?

An act of treason on our own door step. I recently bought a copy of Wainwright's Pennine Way. It was printed and bound in China. Now that must constitute treason.

Alan Linford

SUCCESS OR FAILURE

The Land Reform Act in Scotland now is 10 years in law and was proclaimed as one of the best pieces of public access legislation when it was passed.

Looking back was it a success, a waste of time or a valiant effort?

The ambition was to largely follow examples from Scandinavia but they seem to have gone one better on the face of it as it is now envied by the Swedes. It now means that from the mountaintop down to the shoreline, people have the right to be there. It went much further than has the English 'Right to Roam' for a start by also extending to cyclists, horse riders and even canoeists on their waterways. However, we are excluded from riverside, woodland and any 'improved' land.

Further than that it is not just a right to travel over these lands but other legislation was amended to legalise camping on private land which given the distances involved between any habitation was essential to the enjoyment of the 'wilderness'

Eventually the government agencies set up the National Access Forum to assist access negotiations in sensitive locations and also set up the Hill Phones scheme, to give walkers ready points of contact for each estate during the stalking season etc.

All was not rosy however and many disagreements could not be negotiated away and numerous landowners continued to deny access and used what they deemed 'reasonable' force to remove walkers from their land.

The Scottish Government has now set up a Land Reform Review Group to judge the effectiveness of the Act and a major consideration is whether there needs to be an arbitration mechanism to resolve access disputes without expensive resort to law.

NATATION SUR NEIGE

New Alpine Sport?

Back in May a British climber created what could be described as a new winter sport but not one I would recommend to you.

When descending off the Mont Blanc Massif he was hit by the full force of an avalanche but survived, effectively riding its surface by 'swimming' for about half a mile.

Not something to try deliberately but worth remembering just in case?

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE?

The Dales and their intriguing holes in the ground in our heartland have drawn people out of the neighbouring urban communities for hundreds of years but not all are fully equipped either by experience or kit and some get in trouble. Perhaps not as frequently these days but there are still many calls for help.

There have been numerous dramatic rescues, particularly underground, the most serious probably when in 1967, six young men drowned in Mossdale Caverns. The unsuccessful rescue attempts were assisted by a no longer young Bob Leahey who has just passed away (see obituary pages) His knowledge of the system, having been the first to explore its distant reaches, was second to none but it was to no avail.

One of the earliest recorded rescues was back in 1910 when a man fell down Sunset Pot when his old rope broke as unfortunately did his thigh. A colleague dashed to the Hill Inn and the landlord set off by bike to bring a doctor from Ingleton. The injured man was eventually brought out strapped to part of an old table cut down to the shape of his body; a near 24-hour epic rescue.

The rescue teams are now much more experienced, better prepared and better equipped but it all takes money.

The Cave Rescue Organisation, at Clapham, and the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue, both do sterling work but both have taken a big hit in their finances with the cancellation, last year, of the Broughton Game Show which had been generating as much as £10,000 a year for them.

<http://cro.org.uk> <http://www.uwfra.org.uk>

LOCAL NATIONAL TRAILS?

After lengthy delays, the Government has finally published its conclusions from a review of National Trails, which set out devolving their management to local trail partnerships and made no mention of any national body to oversee them.

Natural England will be setting quality standards and providing Government funds for trail maintenance, but the partnerships will be accountable for local delivery.

Is this progress or buck passing?

"A Proposal of Marriage" *this is reproduced by kind permission of Swaledale Museum, Reeth, North Yorkshire.*

Peter Green recently visited this small gem of a museum and highly recommends a visit by anyone in that area. The museum is open Easter to September and further details can be found at www.swaledalemuseum.org

A Proposal of Marriage - 1866

My Dere Miss,

I now take hup my pen tow rite yow open feelines will find yow well as it leaves me at present. You will praps be suprised that I should maiksoabolde as tow rite to yow who is sutch aladi and lhoph that yow will not bee vex at mee for it. I hardly dare say wat I want I ham so timid about ladis and mi and trimmels like a lespinlefe. I am a farmar in a small wai and mi age is rather more than 40 year and mi mother lives with me and keeps mi ouse and sheas been very pourlelyaitly and cannot stur about mutch and I think I shud be comfortable with a wife. I have had my I on yow a long time and I think that yow are a very nice young wumman and one that wud make me appi if only yow think soa. We ave a nice parlor down stares with a blu carpet aahoven on one side of the fire plaice and the old woman on the uther smoking. The golden rules claimed up on the walls abuv the long settle and yow cud sit awl the day in the ezy chare and nit and mend my kirtles and leggings and yow cud maik the tee reddy again I cum in.

So I hoph to hear from yow as I am desprit and yurnist and will marrie yow at mai day or if my mother dees afore Ise want yow afore if only you will accept of mi. And mi dere we cud be very appi to gedder and I oap you will let me now yowrmind by return of poast and iff yow are faverable I will cum up to the scratch. Soanoa moor at preasant from your well wisher and truluve.

Pea hes. I hoph you will sai nothing about this if yow will not except of mi as I have anuther very nice wumman in mind and I think I shall marrie her if you do no except of mi but I thought you wud suite mi mother better - the same venerable specimen of the female biped (excuse me but this is our skule masters remark and hes a clever man) being very crusty at times, so I tell yow before yow cum She will be maister.

Footnote: History relates that she did not accept him.



NATURAL HISTORY

WILDLIFE, ECOLOGY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



ON THE BRINK

The poor old Hen Harrier is still seemingly fighting for survival. Bad weather in their breeding season for the last two years has done them no good but it is man's persecution that is pushing them to the edge.

They are quickly being driven towards extinction in England and there were only thought to be 617 pairs breeding in the UK in 2010 (and 29 on the Isle of Man). It is one of Britain's most endangered species and English Nature report that it has vanished from a number of areas where it was hanging on, including the last time I heard, the 12,000 acre Geltsdale Reserve in Cumbria. This like many other reserves is surrounded by managed moorland and it is hard not to suspect the activities of gamekeepers.

The RSPB has been offering a £1,000 reward for any information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the shooting of a Hen Harrier last summer, on Thorny Grain Moor in Colsterdale, not far from Masham.

Prosecutions are rare but a couple of years ago a keeper on a large Scottish estate pleaded guilty to shooting a hen harrier, it having been captured on film. He was fined £2000, which whilst a considerable sum if found from his own resources were any landowner to compensate an employee for any fines incurred they would probably consider it fairly cheap to maintain stocks of valuable game birds. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Scotland claims that hundreds of hen harriers have been systematically killed over the last decade.

The history of Yorkshire casualty was well known as she was raised in 2011 in Bowland, not far from our Hut at Lowstern. Nicknamed 'Bowland Betty', she had been fitted with a satellite tag by Natural England as part of its Hen Harrier Recovery Project to assist them in learning more about Hen Harrier's wanderings far and wide around the country.

In the last year this bird had travelled as far north as Caithness, returning to Bowland last May, before making her fateful journey into North Yorkshire. After patrolling the moors in Nidderdale and the Colsterdale area she was shot out of the sky.

Betty's death is a body blow in the battle to save the species in this country and the RSPB consider her shooting a serious offence. They have a confidential

headline if anybody sees or suspects any such activity (0845 466 3636)

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 reduced predation by 85% but few estates are prepared to take this trouble. There is an apparent disparity between the successes of the birds on adjoining moor-land areas where the only obvious difference is the attitude of the landowners.

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.

PLANTS OF THE EASTERN MOORS OF DERBYSHIRE

John & Valerie Middleton have been doing a survey of the six moors and one small woodland managed by a joint venture of the National Trust and the R.S.P.B. now known as The Eastern Moors Partnership.

These contiguous but individual areas comprise Big Moor, Clod Hall Moor, Jack Flat, Leash Fen, Ramsley Moor, Totley Moss and Shillito Wood with a combined area of almost 2000 hectares. The intensive survey took just under three years to complete. The results will eventually be computerised and help form a basis for future observation, management and conservation plans.

Well over 300 species are recorded to date and John and Valerie are working on a comprehensive scientific report and may produce a further précis for the journal if it proves practical. In any event for those particularly interested John will be able to guide them to copies when it is complete.

With the countless hours such research must take it is a miracle that they find time to do their exploration of the caves and karst of the globe.

FLOWERING PLANTS			
Alder	Cowslip	Hogweed	Sage, Wood
Angelica, Wild	Cow-wheat, Common	Holly	Sandwort, Three-nerved
Apple	Cranberry	Honesty	Sandwort, Thyme-leaved
Archangel, Yellow	Crane's-bill, Cut-leaved	Honeysuckle	Saxifrage, Meadow
Arrowgrass, Marsh	Crane's-bill, Dove's-foot	Hop	Scabious, Devil's-bit
Ash	Crane's-bill, Meadow	Iris, Yellow	Scabious, Field
Aspen	Crosswort	Ivy	Selfheal
Asphodel, Bog	Crowberry	Knapweed, Common	Shepherd's-purse
Avens, Wood	Cuckooflower	Knotgrass	Silverweed
Bedstraw, Fen	Cudweed, Marsh	Knotweed, Japanese	Skullcap
Bedstraw, Heath	Daisy	Lady's-mantle, Hairy	Skullcap, Lesser
Bedstraw, Lady's	Daisy, Oxeye	Lady's-mantle, Pale	Sneezewort
Beech	Daffodil	Lady's-mantle, Smooth	Snowberry Snowdrop, Single
Betony	Dame's-violet	Lady's-mantle, Soft	Sorrel, Common
Bilberry	Dandelion	Larch, European	Sorrel, Sheep's
Bindweed, Hedge	Day-lily, Yellow	Larch, Hybrid	Sowbread
Bindweed, Large		Lettuce, Wall	Sowthistle, Perennial
Birch, Downy	Dead-nettle, White	Loosestrife, Dotted	Sowthistle, Prickly
Birch, Silver	Dock, Broad-leaved	Lousewort	Sowthistle, Smooth
Bird's-foot-trefoil, Common	Dock, Curled	Marsh-bedstraw, Common	Spearwort, Lesser
Bird's-foot-trefoil, Greater	Dock, Wood	Marsh-marigold	Speedwell, Germander
Bittercress, Hairy	Dog-rose	Marsh-orchid, Southern	Speedwell, Heath
Bittercress, Large	Dog-violet, Common	Mayweed, Scentless	Speedwell, Ivy-leaved
Bittercress, Wavy	Dog-violet, Common	Meadowsweet	Speedwell, Marsh
Bittersweet	Duckweed, Common	Meddick, Black	Speedwell, Slender
Bitter-vetch	Elder	Melilot, Ribbed	Speedwell, Thyme-leaved
Blackthorn	Elm, Wych	Mercury, Dog's	Speedwell, Wall
Blinks	Eyebright	Milkwort, Heath	Speedwell, Wood
Bluebell	Field-rose	Mint, Round-leaved	Spotted-orchid, Common
Bluebell hybrid	Figwort, Common	Mint, Spearmint	Spotted-orchid, Heath
Bogbean	Flax, Fairy	Mint, Water	Spruce, Norway
Bramble	Flleabane, Common	Montbretia	Spruce, Sitka
Bridewort, Confused	Forget-me-not, Creeping	Mouse-ear, Common	St. John's-wort, Hairy
Bridewort, Intermediate	Forget-me-not, Field	Mouse-ear, Sticky	St. John's-wort, Slender
Brooklime	Forget-me-not, Tufted	Mouse-ear-hawkweed	St. John's-wort, Square-stalked
Broom	Forget-me-not, Water	Mugwort	Stitchwort, Bog
Bugle	Forget-me-not, Wood	Mustard, Garlic	Stitchwort, Greater
Bulrush	Foxglove	Nettle, Common	Stitchwort, Lesser
Bur-reed, Branched	Gentian, Autumn	Nipplewort	Strawberry, Barren
Burdock, Lesser	Globe-thistle	Oak, Pedunculate	Strawberry, Wild
Buttercup, Bulbous	Goat's-beard	Oak, Sessile	Sundew, Round-leaved
Buttercup, Celery-leaved	Goldenrod	Orchid, Bee	Sycamore
Buttercup, Creeping	Golden-saxifrage, Opposite-leaved	Parsley, Cow	Tansy
Buttercup, Meadow	Gooseberry	Parsley-piert	Thistle, Creeping
Campion, Bladder	Gorse, Common	Pearlwort, Knotted	Thistle, Musk
Campion, Red	Gorse, Western	Pearlwort, Procumbent	Thistle, Marsh
Cat's-ear	Ground-elder	Pennywort, Marsh	Thistle, Spear
Celandine, Lesser	Ground-ivy	Pignut	Thyme, Wild
Cherry, Wild	Groundsel	Pimpernel, Yellow	Tormentil
Chickweed, Common	Guelder-rose	Pine, Austrian	Trefoil, Lesser
Cicely, Sweet	Harebell	Pine, Corsican	Twayblade, Common
Cinquefoil, Creeping	Hawkbit, Autumn	Pine, Scots	Valerian, Common
Cinquefoil, Marsh	Hawkbit, Rough	Pineappleweed	Valerian, Marsh
Cleavers	Hawk's-beard, Marsh	Pitcherplant	Vetch, Bush
Clover, Alsike	Hawk's-beard, Rough	Plantain, Greater	Vetch, Common
Clover, Red	Hawk's-beard, Smooth	Plantain, Hoary	Vetch, Tufted
Clover, White	Hawkweed sp.	Plantain, Ribwort	Vetchling, Meadow
Clover, Zigzag	Hawthorn	Ploughman's-spikenard	Violet, Marsh
Colt's-foot	Hawthorne Double-red	Pondweed, Bog	Water-cress
Columbine	Hazel	Pondweed, Broad-leaved	Water-crowfoot, Round-leaved
Cornflower, Perennial	Heath, Cross-leaved	Poppy, California	Water-starwort, Common
Corydalis, Climbing	Heather,	Ragged-Robin	Water-starwort, Intermediate
Cotoneaster, Wall	Heather, Bell	Ragwort, Common	Whitebeam, Common
Cowberry	Hedge-parsley, Upright	Raspberry	Whitlowgrass, Common
	Helleborine, Broad-leaved	Redshank	Willow, Bay
	Hemp-nettle, Common	Rhododendron	Willow, Creeping
	Herb-Robert	Rowan	Willow, Eared

Willow, Goat	Moonwort	Hairy-brome	Cottongrass, Hare's-tail
Willow, Grey	Polypody	Heath-grass	Deergrass
Willowherb, Broad-leaved	Rustyback	Mat-grass	Rush, Bulbous
Willowherb, Great	Spleenwort, Black	Meadow-grass, Annual	Rush, Compact
Willowherb, Hoary	Wall-rue	Meadow-grass, Rough	Rush, Hard
Willowherb Marsh	Horestail, Field	Meadow-grass, Smooth	Rush, Heath
Willowherb, New Zealand	Horsetail, Marsh	Millet, Wood	Rush, Jointed
Willowherb, Rosebay	Horsetail, Water	Moor-grass, Purple	Rush, Sharp-flowered
Willowherb, Short-fruited	Horsetail, Wood	Oat-grass, Downy	Rush, Toad
Willowherb, Square-stalked		Oat-grass, False	Sedge, Bottle
Wood-sorrel	GRASSES	Oat-grass, Meadow	Sedge, Carnation
Woundwort, Hedge		Oat-grass,	Sedge, Common
Yarrow	Bent, Black	Ryegrass, Perennial	Sedge, Flea
Yellow-rattle	Bent, Common	Saltmarsh-grass, Reflexed	Sedge, Glaucous
Yew	Bent, Creeping	Sheep's-fescue	Sedge, Green-ribbed
	Bent, Velvet	Soft-brome	Sedge, Oval
FERNS	Brome, Barren	Soft-grass, Creeping	Sedge, Pill
Adder's-tongue	Brome, False	Sweet-grass, Floating	Sedge, Star
Bracken	Canary-grass, Variegated Reed	Sweet-grass, Small	Sedge, White
Buckler-fern, Broad	Cat's-tail, Smaller	Timothy	Soft-rush
Buckler-fern, Narrow	Cock's-foot	Vernal-grass, Sweet	Spike-rush, Common
Fern, Lemon-scented	Couch, Common	Wheat, Bread	Spring-sedge
Fern, Marsh	Dog's-tail, Crested	Yorkshire-fog	Tussock-sedge, Greater
Hard-fern	Fescue, Red		Wood-rush, Field
Hart's-tongue	Foxtail, Marsh	SEDGES & RUSHES	Wood-rush, Great
Lady-fern	Foxtail, Meadow		Wood-rush, Hairy
Male-fern	Hair-grass, Early	Club-rush, Bristle	Wood-rush, Heath
Male-fern, Golden-scaled	Hair-grass, Tufted	Cottongrass, Common	Wood-rush, Heath
	Hair-grass, Wavy		Wood-sedge
			Yellow-sedge

BIRD WATCHING

Cognition and culture in the wild

Most research on animal cognition and culture has been conducted in captivity and so tells us little about the selective pressures operating in natural populations. We take our research out of the lab and into the field to investigate the evolution and development of cognition and culture in the wild. Using experimental, observational and statistical techniques we aim to understand the cognitive challenges faced by animals in their natural environment and examine how the ability to learn from others affects the behaviour of individuals and groups.

To translate this into normal speak, they watch bird behaviour!

A part of a research team project at the University of Cambridge are running an online survey to better understand how people influence the distribution of certain bird species across gardens in the UK. They would greatly appreciate if we could participate in their survey.

As people that enjoy the outdoors, they hope our members may be interested in helping them understand the factors that drive bird distributions.

Survey questions should take no longer than 10-15 min. and ask about the activities of birds in participant's gardens. No personal information other than postal code and age range will be collected.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/corvid_perceptions

SNOWDONIA RESTORATION

Work is currently on-going to restore an important blanket bog in Rhyd-ddu, Snowdonia.

Years of inappropriate management means that restoration works on the peatland is badly needed, and the work has been ongoing at the site since September 2012.

Key species required for peat growth, such as sphagnum, or peat moss can still be found, but its water and plant life needs to be restored.

This is a considerable project with 12km of ditches at the site needing filling in and eventually the benefits this project will bring to the biodiversity of the area will be substantial. The restoration of the site will increase the peatland's ability to lock up carbon, improving the quality of the water and water retention within the catchment of Afon Gwyrfaai at the same time.

Work was also undertaken on less intensely drained peatland on adjacent farms as part of the project constructing peat dams at intervals along the lengths of the shallower channels. These dams will ensure that the land will remain wet, encouraging plants such as bog asphodel, sundews and sphagnum to grow, and create habitats suitable for creatures such as dragonflies and toads.

The project will be completed by the time you read this.

WINTER WANDERERS

The numbers of birds in Britain over winter is about quadruple that in summer. Geese, swans, waders, wigeon and other ducks, redwings and waxwings are visiting in their thousands along with other regular, colourful and noisy visitors. In addition normally-resident species grow in number as their cousins from colder climes call in.

We have more blackbirds as many younger birds in particular come over from Europe to find easier food supplies to get through the winter although they may have struggled this year.

The waxwings and redwings have also flown in from across the water looking for berries, fruit, worms etc. The redwings are often seen in mixed flocks with their fellow members of the thrush family, the fieldfares.

Another close relative of these thrushes is the robin and our resident birds will have been joined by an influx of continental visitors from Europe, but as robins are territorial throughout the year, the locals defend their patches for feeding and are likely to be seen chasing off these visitors.

Starling numbers also build up and can result in the fantastic spectacle of large flocks dancing in apparent formation above their favourite overnight roosts.

The crow's colourful cousin the jay comes in from continental Europe in fairly large numbers. They also become much tamer and you have more chance of seeing them. This is aided of course by lack of leaf cover in the trees.

These birds all try and escape the Arctic conditions in the heart of continental Europe, Scandinavia or from the colder conditions of Greenland and Iceland.

If you are out and about in the winter months you have far more opportunity to see birdlife than in summer months but if we get many more winters like the last one who knows whether this will still be the case so keep your eyes open as you take to the countryside this winter.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY

Those of us who support progressive re-wilding of appropriate parts of the British countryside to try and re-balance the ecology are hopeful of another big step forward. Wild boar are now not unusual if not planned and are largely accepted as are muntjac. After long and bitter arguments, beaver were released in an area of Scotland with no apparent adverse effects and indeed some positive ones.

We are now looking forwards to the release of lynx back into their rightful homes.

Experts are carrying out genetics research to find the closest surviving relative of the British lynx and surveying habitats for the best locations for re-introductions. They are currently engaged in a range of research projects to identify the sub-species of lynx most closely related to the extinct British form, and assessing sites throughout the British Isles for their feasibility as release locations and ongoing habitats for lynx. They hope to build a captive population of lynx to be released into the wild after gradually accustoming them to self sufficiency. Carefully assessed reintroduction sites will provide secure locations for lynx, and act as a centre point for monitoring and support of the population.

The Eurasian lynx, was a native of the British Isles, and is a medium sized cat that over the last 2000 years has been forced out of much of Western Europe by habitat destruction and human persecution. The last of the British lynx disappeared about 1500 years ago.

Focused on hunting deer species and smaller prey such as rabbit and hare, the lynx is a legendarily elusive creature, known by ancient cultures around the world as a mysterious 'Keeper of Secrets' that rarely leaves the forest. Hopefully it will keep down the population of muntjac if it is allowed to become widespread.

This solitary and secretive nature means that they present no threat to humans and it is exceptionally rare for them to predate on agricultural animals. They will naturally avoid anywhere that man is active so their presence will return a vital natural function to our ecology helping control numbers of deer and a variety of agricultural pest species whilst protecting forestry from deer damage caused by overpopulation, without any detrimental impact on ourselves, our pets or our livestock other than possibly lambs born out on the fells which farmers do not normally allow.

Re-introductions into other European countries have been a remarkable success, with the best managed programmes constructing whole new eco-friendly industries such as wildlife tourism around their presence, breathing new economic life into remote rural communities.

With no natural threats and bringing a great range of benefits to humans, the time is perfect to bring back the lynx to the British Isles.

The project will be managed by Lynx Trust made up of conservationists with specialisations in areas such as field research, ecology, biology, genetics and captive breeding, determined to return a sustainable population to the UK over the next decade.

A HILL WHATEVER COLOUR

WILL SURELY BE AS HIGH

Birthday greetings to the Blue Hills.

Cairn Gorm can be translated from the Gaelic as 'blue hill' and the National Park is just 10 years old. This is a strange place in many ways not least in its name. The range's Gaelic name is Am Monadh Ruadh or the red hills because, on a clear evening, the screes of the Lairig Ghru and Braeriach glow a warm red.

The Cairngorm mountains form the largest area of high ground above 1000m anywhere in Britain, and contain four of Britain's five highest peaks yet the general populous just think of them as a skiing area and most only know of Ben Nevis as a high mountain. It is actually amazing how few English people have ever been to Scotland if the statistics are to be believed.

The Cairngorms are not however just an area of high mountains, with its size it is in fact an entire eco system. The lower slopes are wooded and support a large number of native mammals: Badger, pine marten, red deer, roe deer, wildcat and feral domestic cats, bank vole, wood mouse, weasel, stoat, fox, hedgehog, red squirrel, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat, common pipistrelle bat, soprano pipistrelle bat and brown long-eared bat. There are 3 non-native species as well in sika and fallow deer and grey squirrels.

The area supports numerous species of birds including, in the near Arctic summit areas, birds which are normally winter visitors or summer migrants to Scotland. Birds such as the purple sandpiper, shore lark and snow bunting have nested successfully and other northern birds have been observed. Two predators, the snowy owl and long-tailed skua, have been recorded but the lack of small mammals or rodents, especially lemmings their main food source in the Arctic is a major brake on successful breeding. Both the density and the breeding success of the dotterel and ptarmigan are greater in the Park than anywhere else in the world. The hardy snow bunting has a foothold, the most southerly population in Europe.

These are all supported by the very diversity of the area, including as it does, rock ledges; snowfields; unimproved grassland; heathland; mossy areas; marsh; reedbeds; open water; willows and dwarf shrubs. If that is not enough the freshwater lochs, marshes and peat bogs, streams and rivers support their own additional communities including otter; water vole; mink; salmon; pearl mussels and lamprey and birds such as dipper; kingfisher and red-breasted merganser.

Truly a world unto itself.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Peter Hodge's son Andy, gold medalist in the coxless fours at the last Olympics as been awarded a further accolade. Andy Triggs-Hodge (now MBE) was named Yorkshireman of the Year at the recent Dalesman Awards.

John Colton invites members and guests to a preview at the Alpine Club of an exhibition he is to stage there. The work will be on display until into the New Year. It's looking more like a retrospective as some of the pieces date back to 1970. There are quite a few original drawings done on some big routes, including these, one from on the Walker Spur in 1988 and another of Dow. The preview is at the AC, 55 Charlotte Road, London, EC2A 3QF 020 7613 0755 - 5pm on Tuesday 8th October 2013



FLYING SOUTH FOR THE WINTER.....

.....OR AT LEAST FOR A WEEK

Glen Affric, the first of the three 2013 Scottish meets had gone well then a few of us tried to extend the break for a few days but the wind was too strong and we failed on Ben Wyvis then again in Glen Lyon. Incidentally, for the latter we parked a car near the village of Dull twinned last year with Boring, Oregon. Anyway, we returned south with frequent road signs warning of snow forecast and high winds and I dumped the winter gear, picked up shorts and sun hat and flew out to somewhere on the same latitude as Florida, La Palma in the Canaries. That is not the Las Palmas fleshpot on Gran Canaria but the smaller, more westerly island which is quieter and host to the Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes. A couple of hours from landing and we were poolside on the western, cloud-free side of the island, Cicerone guide in hand planning our walking itinerary.

The El Paso Tourist Office provided the definitive walking map at 1:40,000 then they and the local visitor centre clued us in on how far one could drive up the tracks. The next day we walked part of the rim of the large caldera with a cooling wind requiring care to be taken to avoid sunburn. Five hours and we had ticked off a couple of hill tops, one at 1,854m, visited petroglyphs and a lava tube besides watching cloud pouring over the eastern part of the rim to fall and evaporate as it met the rising warm air in the caldera. Probably the most varied walk started above Los Llanos with a taxi ride to Los Brecitos (one can only park there for a few minutes) and a drop off to walk a descending traverse to a camping area in the caldera then descend again back to our car. This was a little over five hours but included varied dramatic views, towers, gorges, stream hopping, cascades and a bypass which was designated 'experts only.'

An hour's drive took us to the north of the island and a gorge walk with cave dwellings, more petroglyphs and a laurel forest. Then a steep drive up to the rim and we were overlooking the crater and several astronomical telescopes. After that we took a day off and the bus to a festival in Santa Cruz when everyone dresses in white, promenades all day to street bands and throws talcum powder over one another. Why? Well, they used to use flour but it got messy when they tried to wash it off. Or more deeply it is connected with the return of people from Cuba still dressed in white suits, carrying suitcases and holding lots of money. It gives a lot of people harmless fun and an excuse to meet up.

Strong winds gave us problems on a foray south to the more recently active volcanic area beyond Fuencaliente or Los Canarios as it is confusingly also called.

Firstly they blew sharp dust into eyes and mouths and they prevented us crossing from the rocky summit of Volcan Teneguía to its more rounded high point. We parked in the Volcan de San Antonio compound at a cost of ten Euro expecting to be able to walk the crater rim. We were not and wished we had parked on the approach road at no cost or on the Fuencaliente high street. The exhibition centre was disappointing and hardly delayed us before we walked to the southern tip of the island via the craters. A two-hourly 203 bus was caught from the lighthouse (faro) at the end of the GR131 back to the high street.

Problems again on our last day and last opportunity to walk the spine of the island, the volcano route, when the winds had fallen to 26km/hr but we were in all enveloping wetting cloud and a fair quantity of rain. If there were volcanoes we barely saw them on the 18km from a taxi drop at El Pilos to the next habitation, Fuencaliente. We saw only six people, mostly English – presumably the only nationality daft enough to venture out in such conditions. Again the one of the many bars in Fuencaliente was our refuge until the return bus arrived. We must return sometime and see what we missed in the mist. We did notice though that the long needled pines were efficient at gathering moisture from the clouds and dripping them onto the volcanic crumbs and us.

While the rest of you were suffering snowfall and near freezing daytime temperatures we had a grand week in the Canaries with only one day with poor weather and then only on the highest hills. La Palma makes a good winter break with ample hillwalking. Our welcome back to the UK was not a warm one: the taxi booked to collect us from the airport failed to turn up then our car would not start because of a flat battery.

Information:

La Palma 1:40,000 Cabildo Insular de la Palma's *Mapa de la red de senderos* is the definitive footpath map bought with a comprehensive book in English listing and outlining the walks at a cost of 20 Euro from a tourist office.

The Cicerone guidebook to La Palma cost £13 and was available in the UK. It was easier to use as the descriptions and sketch maps were side by side on the page. However, it covers only a selected 44 walks.

The Sunflower guidebook was similar though perhaps more detailed and selective. We met someone using this one and they had found it invaluable.

www.transporteslapalma.com has bus timetables and the services were cheap and reliable. Taxi services are organised to get you to and back from the ends of the main walks or bike rides. Pillars there have details though you do need a usable mobile phone (+34 686 553 868). See www.taxilapalma.com

Michael Smith

**Cloud creeps
down into
the caldera**



**Walking the
caldera ridge
at a footpath
junction**

**Below:
descending a
ravine in the
caldera**

Birds identified:

- Barbary Partridge
- Berthelot's Pipit
- Blackbird
- Blackcap
- Chaffinch
- Canary Islands Chiffchaff
- Common Kestrel
- Common Raven
- Eurasian Buzzard
- European Robin
- Great Cormorant
- Grey Heron
- Island Canary
- Lesser Black-backed Gull
- Red-billed Chough
- Spanish Sparrow
- Yellow Wagtail



MY BEST DAY ON THE HILLS

The Dalesman's regular feature "my best day", has given us an idea for a series of articles in the Journal.

There follows what I hope will be the first of regular items in which I will ask members to recall and recount their best day out on the hills or indeed underground. Volunteers are invited but I have a list in mind as to who I will be approaching if material looks like drying up.

ALBERT CHAPMAN RECALLS ~~~~~

"Having climbed and trekked in many countries over the past 60 years I still think my best day was February 5th 1960 when in my early twenties I climbed An Teallach with Brian Rayner, my works chum.

Having no transport of our own we hitched a lift to Carlisle; took a train (The Royal Highlander) to Inverness; another train to Garve and then a post bus to Breamore Junction. We then got on an even smaller post bus along the Road of Destitution towards Dundonnell. Leaving the bus part way we then trekked over the moors to Sheneval Bothy.

These are the notes we wrote up at the time ~~~~~

Wednesday, 2nd' February, 1960.

To Carlisle by car, throughout the evening, to lounge in the County Hotel until 1.00am, and then to sleep full length in the train compartment for the rest of the night.

Thursday, 4th.

At dawn the Cairngorms are snow clad and the familiar trough of the Lhairig Ghru shows in the dark blue of the morning. This year the Royal Highlander takes us through Aviemore, northwards to Inverness, arriving on a sunny morning at 9.00am We wander round the town, buy some bread, and walk by the clear peaty river, flowing fast and full under the temporary bridge at the foot of Inverne Castle, built during the reconstruction of the town's only road bridge. The 10.30 train to the Kyle of Lochalsh runs out by the fishing boats and along the fringe of the Moray Firth, crossing the swing bridge over the eastward entrance of the Caledonian Canal, and passing the flats which are exposed at low tide. The morning is fresh and sunny and the mountains, the sea loch and the lowland woods and fields fill us with anticipation.

Garve village is a row of houses, with a post office and a hotel; the bus is waiting, loading mail bags. It waits, however, for a further hour, before it feels ready to set off, but eventually we are swinging along the narrow single track road through wild country and by the side of rushing streams. After ten miles we come to the foot of a fine new dam constructed beneath the heights of Ben Wyvis, enclosing a vast stretch of water reaching in between the mountains at its farther end. There is much construction work in the district, both for hydro-electric and water supply purposes.

It begins to rain, and before we are at Breamore Junction a deluge descends, and we scurry between the bus (which continues to Ullapool) and a shooting-brake type of van which will take us towards Dundonnell. We transfer our kit in the unhelpful shelter of group of immense Wellingtonia pines.

Again we are the only passengers and upon our request, the driver stops by the roadside to allow us to visit the Falls of Mesach, and we career down the hillside, coming upon a cleft in the Glen floor with a slight bridge suspended thereover. The drop takes our breath away, we not expecting such a drop, and gingerly we stop out on three planks over a gorge 250 ft. deep and 50 ft. wide, overlooking a great water fall in flood. It dropped in a white spray with much noise immediately below the bridge, to surge away in a dark flood down the remainder of the gorge.

After a brief stay, back to the bus, and onward, over the Road of Destitution, built during the depression, towards Dundonnell.

After some time, our point of departure approaches, the road crosses the stream and by the bridge we alight, the bus leaving us by the roadside with a heap of kit, and a certain disinclination.

However, we get out the axes and the odd pullover; hoist our packs and strike off over the heather on a compass bearing for Achnegie.

The hills in front loom black and the mist ominously crawls over them. In anticipation we put on our waterproofs and soon the rain comes. A hundred inches per year fall in the area, and a large proportion of this must have fallen during our afternoon's march. Deer flee at our approach, and as we descend to Achnegie we disturb two, which are cropping the grass in front of the house. The rain has stopped and the house is deserted, as expected, but the furniture is still in place. The door is locked, but this does not affect us as we are making for Sheneval

Two miles down the valley, by the chattering river, over a rough path, darkness closes in, as we sight the roof of Sheneval, a welcome sight. The door is unlocked and it is a little eerie at first, so many deserted rooms and the stillness and darkness.

A steep, ladder-like flight of stairs leads to the bedrooms, which adjoin the staircase without a landing. Thus inspected, we light the stove and get some tea, later

lighting a roaring fire in the stone flanked fireplace, henceforward to be a feature of the nights at Sheneval. The place is very comfortable end warm; three bedsteads are in one bedroom which has been lined with fibre board insulation. The weather is mild and we stay warm overnight, having a comfortable sleep on our airbeds, which by dint of great effort we eventually managed to inflate.

Friday, the 4th. Bhienn Dearg Mhor

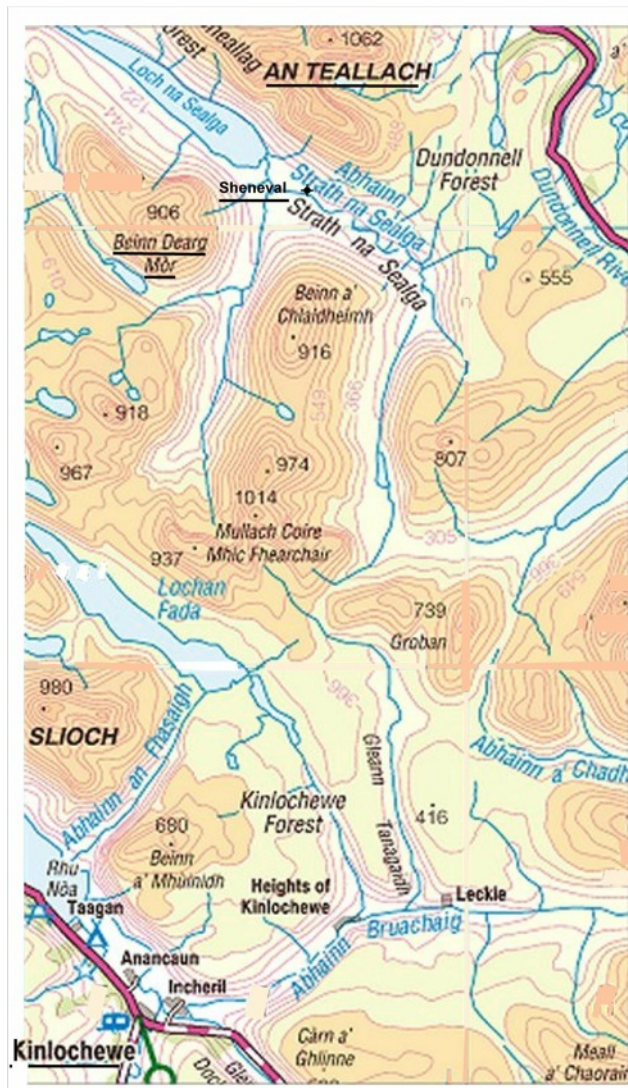
What a struggle it is to get up; It is warm in the sleeping bags. Eventually we are up and out, disgracefully late at 11am, setting off down to the river, the first river, there to roll up our trouser legs and plunge across the fast flowing stream, up to our knees in the icy water of yesterday's rain. The real punch comes on the far bank, when the air gets to our wet legs. It is all part of the trip, however, and we must needs make light of the agony, bearing it stoically, until a moment or two has elapsed on the bank! Over the boggy flats and to the other stream, this comes only half way up the leg, and thus we are twice as dry. So on and up; the corrie below Bhienn Dearg is walled by the twin arms of the great moraine on the lower side. Up this we slog, ascending by a tumbling stream into the corrie floor. The route to the ridge provided some discussion, but we at last take to the west wall of the corrie which rises very sharply and causes much pain on the ascent of 750 ft. At long last; the ridge, half in and half out of the swirling mist, the rocks feathered with driven snow and ice; having a bite to eat, Nestlé's Milk on snow with orange slices, is very palatable. As the mist momentarily clears, we see out over the brown lowlands, out to the blue sea. The pinnacles and towers rise arrogantly above, immune to the weather, and with surprising speed we reach the cairn, climbing over icy boulders and onto the snow cap of the summit.

The summit connects with the other tops by a corniced ridge, circling round a frightful gully, which plunges straight down to the corrie, walled by black snow-flecked rock. The central peak is most airy and the three foot square summit a place for most careful stepping, overlooking the great drop, snow and ice covered.

Occasional sunbeams light the yellow grasses which thrust through the snow, giving the snow a creamy colour, and we again circle above the gullies, surprising a pair of ptarmigan and mountain doves in their white coats, which rise and glide off down the mountain.

Round the east buttress, we look for a way down, and after reconnoitring for a while, decide on the broad and generous a gully down the north face. Across the valley, An Teallach shows a savage crest through a break in the mist which has hung over its head all day.

Loose stuff requires our careful steps but lower down, two good patches of snow (from below apparently hanging like wallpaper on the face) provide a good glissade path, and we with joy and expertise, slide downward as far as they permit. Hard rough gong down to the twin rivers, through



tussocks of heath, wading the rivers with unconcern and gathering wood *en route*, we arrive heavily laden at the bothy, having fire and food in great quantity in a short time.

In the evening the skies clear, and the stars appear with great clarity and brilliance; the mountains show against the bright sky and the moon lights the glen and the loch as we fetch water from the noisy stream.

Saturday the 5th An Teallach

We woke to what I now consider to have been my best ever day in the hills. With dawn a strange glow penetrated the sky light, and we are unusually chilly in our sleeping bags. Scraping the ice off the inside of the pane, our hopes are realised, there has been a white frost and the sun is rising in a cloudless sky, lighting a wonderful world. The rosy light touches the top of Bhienn Dearg Scar and lowers itself down the faces of the pinnacles. We set off at 9.00am following up the stream by the side of the bothy, later to take to the hillside, climbing steeply up the rough slopes. Hard work for two and a half hours in the bright warm sun.

The mountains are reflected in the mirror of Loch Shelleag, which has not a ripple to disturb the surface. At last the bare rock dome of Sail Liath, the grey heel, 3150 ft. and we

survey the route along the ridge. The towers and cols were laced with snow; the rocks glistening with ice, scintillating in the sunshine; the cornices at the gully heads flashing white, sown with diamonds. It is wonderful up here, the climb up is forgotten, the air filled with exhilaration and the morning fairly sings.

Down across the Col to the next summit over the bright snow and from here down again on this see-saw ridge to be confronted by Corrag Bhuidhe's rocky edge. We circle below this top and the sunny side of the mountain, threading through the snow covered rocks and cutting steps or running up snow gullies in an upward curve in order to reach a similar height on the other side of the snow. The mountain falls away steeply.

There are tracks of a fox on our route, and in places he has slipped on the steep snow, scrabbling with his claws to retain his footing. Surprisingly, deer tracks are in the snow on Sgurr Fiona. Our traverse has brought us directly below the tower of Lord Berkeley's Seat, and we ascend to its summit and, of course, sit to admire the view, before making a quick ascent of the north pinnacle of Cerrag Dhuidhe, 3425 ft., over rocks bristling with driven ice and snow. Below Berkeley's Seat are the 2,000 ft cliffs falling into Toll an Lochan, and the position is somewhat airy.

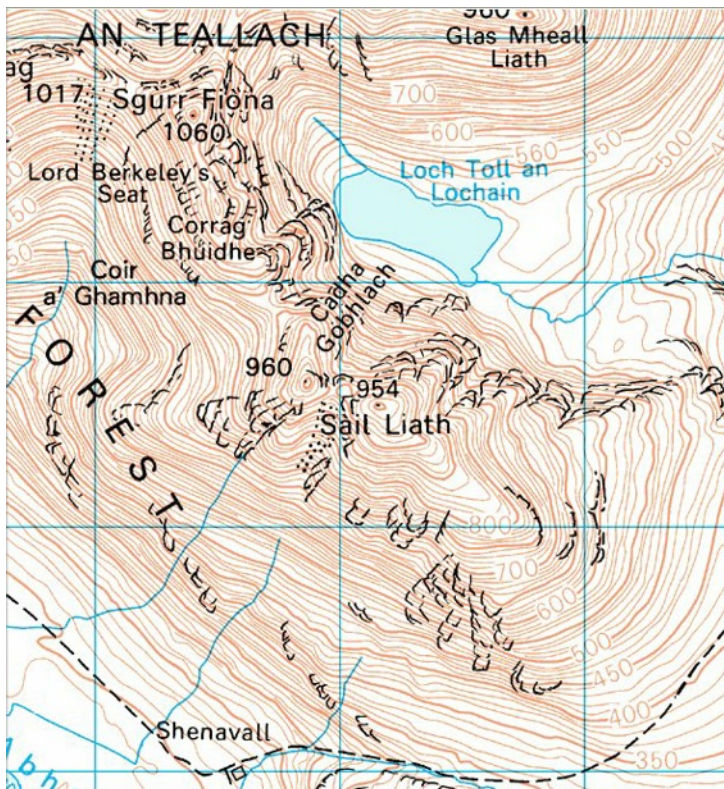
On towards the cone of Sgurr Fiona, 3474 ft., and from the highest point, glissaded down hard frozen snow to a col, 500 ft. Below. We follow friend fox's tracks up and along the cornice to the highest point of An Teallach, Bidean a Ghlass Thuill, 3463 ft., surmounted by a cairn and trigonometric point and here we took lunch, captivated and astonished by the vast outlook.



From here we can see the North Sea to the east and the Atlantic to the west; snowy crests rise in endless waves to the landward sides, the sun reflecting from them. We look down as from an aeroplane, into the armchair of Ben Dearg Mhor; onto the glens, laced with water courses and on to ever-still lochs.

However it is to the West that the greatest beauty lies. The slopes below reach out into the pure pale blue of the Atlantic, enclosing calm lochs reflecting the shores, out beyond a great distance to where, below a long line of cumulus cloud towers, lie the Outer Isles of the Hebrides, Harris and Lewis, dark shapes asleep in the sea.

To the south west, Skye, the Cuillin peaks in blue silhouette,



topping the mainland mountains by their familiar outline, and we name the peaks to each other. Round to the north west, the cock's comb of Suilven, a dragon behind the intervening hills. In the bay a tiny boat leaves a long wake between the Summer Isles, heading for the shore.

From Sgurr Fiona, obliged by the time of day, we reluctantly descend to the next col, and, having selected a suitable gully from the ridge, we embark on a glissade of 1500 ft from the col down to the slopes immediately above the Lochan.

Not without upsets we ride on our heels with a hiss of snow; out of the yellow sunlight; into the shadow of the ridge; down the crystalline snow, a marvellous descent. We are tempted to climb again for the joy of it, but no ...

The lochan is glazed with ice in parts; the rest of its dark surface reflecting the familiar outline of the cliffs of the corrie. We press on outwards over the moraine, circling to the right over a low ridge, pausing to watch the sun set, shining pink to purple to blue over Ben Wyvis. On down to Sheneval in the blue light, down the stream side to the bothy.

One of the delights of the trip is the evening fire, and the evening meal; the small living room soon heats up with the roaring logs, and in this comfort we find immense satisfaction with our day on the hills.

Sunday, the 6th. Sheneval to Kinlochewe.

Awoke this cold morning at 5.00am, got up in misery at six, ate breakfast and packed up before dawn, setting out as the Glen is suffused with pink light reflected from the only cloud in the sky, and with this encouragement stride down to the rivers over the frosted orange grass.

The water is a little less deep, but no less cold, and as we emerge from the water, the sharp reaction stings our legs. The frost has to some extent sealed the bogs, but the going is very rough as we strike south up the Glen na Muice, going at a very poor pace under the shadow of Ben Tarsuin, snowy and crisp against the clear yellow sky. Watched from the skyline by still and attentive deer, their heads like immobile propellers as they regard our progress.

It takes considerable effort and no less than five hours to rise up the long glen, cross the coll, and make our miserable way down the far slopes. The icy crust of a bog breaks, and plunges the unwary up to the thigh in the morass. A golden eagle flaps with dignity above us and we see it clearly, so near is it; it is waiting for our bones, we feel.

In the warm sunshine down to the shore of Loch Fada, a beautiful lake, ice covered at the mountain-locked end, but transparent and brown at the easterly end, at a high altitude in the mountains. The sun is shining brightly and the noble Slioch towers over the far shore, the snow seamed north wall and mile long crest of white showing well both as skyline and as reflection in the tranquil loch.

Having not the energy, we are thankful we have not the time to ascend and ridge walk Slioch, and in lieu of the ascent, we relax on a crescent beach in the sunshine taking photographs, eating and paddling in the lake to ease our aching feet.

The eastern side of the Loch is bounded by banks of shingle, frozen into one solid mass and the minor bays are ice covered; we skim boulders of increasing size across the surface. The outflow is a vigorous stream about knee deep, but strong and swift, thus being the most sporty stream we waded. Across without incident, we thread through the moraine heaps and, after a ridiculous detour round a gully on the tourist path, strike off down Glen Bianasdail, trough-like, narrow, enclosed, by cliffs glowing golden by reason of the declining sun and the water which seeps from the rock walls. The sun shines directly up the Glen in our faces, outlining Ben Eighe, that fine massif, now showing through the gap of the Glen, raising hoary white heads in the mellowing light.

The stream flows fast and brown, thundering over falls; through gorges and dark evil pools: we cross it by a tumble down bridge of pine logs poised across a rocky channel, and in the absolute calm of a highland evening thread along the shore of Loch Maree, between the trees. The farthest hills seem to float on air above the gathering valley mist, and blues and purples predominate; the sky is gentle pink and the loch mirrors every tint, the outlines of the pines by the shore. The frosty air, the wood smoke, the forests, the tranquility and again we are treated to the essence of the beauty of the northern hills.

There is a considerable river flowing across our path, but in the growing darkness we find a set of rapids between the

ominously deep pools, and wade a hundred yards across in about eight inches of water. This is the third river today.

The white frost has settled on the grass and the pools are covered with ice. After fence climbing, stream jumping and generally feeling our way through the murkiness for some time, we are at last stamping along the road in the moonlight, and arrive at the Kinlochewe Hotel about 6.30pm ready for a bath and some soft living.

Monday the 7th. Last Day

Having failed to rouse our host before 8.00am this morning, we are unable to walk from Kinlochewe to the railway at Achnashellach. However, after breakfast we stride off along the road to meet the bus, hoping to see Liathach before we coincide.

The morning is frosty and still, and somewhat cloudy; though the sun shines on Ben Eighe, it is rather dull. The frost has decked the trees and the heather, and the river sweeps between vast banks of pebbles in a broad channel. We manage a lift in a car, after walking a couple of miles, and he takes us to the shore of Loch Clair, from where Liathach looms through the light mist, heaving a dark shape steeply from the Glen and rising impressively above.

We cross the plank bridge over the river and on the road, await the coming of the bus. Eventually we are riding to Kinlochewe, collecting our baggage, and proceeding on the long climb to the watershed, looking back down a long ribbon of road to Loch Maree,

At our destination, Achnasheen, the valley has widened and is somewhat desolate. We walk from the station about one and a half miles, through the cluster of houses, digress through a riverside wood to arrive at the Ledgowan Hotel for coffee. This is a fine highland hotel on an eminence, surrounded by firs and rhododendrons, overlooking the broad valley and the snowy mountains.

Over the fire place are fine stags heads, and we take coffee in gracious surroundings.

The rail journey to Inverness is pleasant in the mid-day sun, passed frozen lochs and tumbling rivers, through forests and ravines, always backed by the white mountain tops. The fringes of the Moray Firth are iced over and the day is bright and sharp. After an hour in Inverness, a useful little town and pleasant to walk in, we steam off south. The journey is remarkable for its sunset; in a pale blue sky, a single grid of fleecy clouds stands over Creag Dhu, and show iridescent red and gold, a fine sight. The Cairngorms are complete white, turning through pink to blue as the train waits at Aviemore. The sun sets behind the forests in splendour, and in the night we later clank over the Forth Bridge, the huge framework rising above the steam into the darkness. The Forth is hung with lights. Change trains in Edinburgh and home by 4.00am, nearly a thousand miles behind us.

MOOR TO THINK ABOUT

Roy Denney

A recent article in the Dalesman about a new discovery of an ancient monolith on Ilkley Moor, triggered memories in my mind about that area from the days when I lived there.

If asked and given some thought I could come up with a particular and spectacular day on the hills that sticks in my mind but first thoughts are “which of many”.

I remember a bitter-sweet meet in Teesdale when half of us spent the Saturday walking up the Tees from below High Force up into and round High Cup Nick. Wall to wall sunshine and a brilliant deep blue sky reflecting back at us everywhere from fairly deep recent snow with a firm frosted top. The river was in spate from snow melt and High Force was spectacular. Unfortunately I went through some old mine workings with Brian Nicholson on the Sunday which was to turn out to be the last time anyone saw Brian who died a few days later.

I recall a similar superb sunny day with snow everywhere when we spent an acclimatisation day climbing above Dengboche in Nepal.

I remember sitting with a friend in sunshine on top of Helvellyn watching the sun go down, valleys full of ever darkening cloud and the tips of distant peaks still illuminated. We finally forced ourselves to leave this paradise and drop down through drizzle and near darkness to arrive in Patterdale too late for the last bus round to Grasmere. A night in somebody’s unlocked garage was at least dry.

I recall rare really-warm sunny days walking the edges of Langdale with the trees below us resplendent in autumn colours; walking the coast path of Pembrokeshire and numerous great days in New Zealand and the French Alps where my two children now live respectively.

I actually think that in many ways my best day was a fairly modest one really. It was however a bit life-changing in a subtle way and probably had more impact upon me.

As background, I was brought up in the suburbs of Manchester, in a family that never had its own transport. Going walking with the family meant the local parks, nice as they were in those days, or the occasional local bus out to Wilmslow and Alderley.

Father ran corner shops and took no holidays and as children we were occasionally taken to stay with relatives in caravans at Rhyl or Mablethorpe and, on

one occasion, we had a long weekend with Great Auntie Mary at her boarding house in Blackpool. The end result was that I had very limited knowledge of the great outdoors.

In my early teens I joined the Church Lads’ Brigade and each year for three years we went on a trip to a farm in New Mills; not nature in the raw, but seeing the hills beyond I developed a curiosity I have never satisfied. There is always another hill to look over.

As we approached our middle teens my sister and I got ever more adventurous. When Laddow Rocks were opened to the public we caught a bus out and walked over to Greenfield and a couple of years later when I was I think 15, we caught a bus from Manchester to Thirlspot, climbed Helvellyn and returned home by bus. My sister is 18 months younger than me but those were much safer days for youngsters to be out on their own.

I remember starting work at 16 and the following year when holidays came round I spent every day catching the train from Didsbury out to Edale exploring every inch of Kinder. I had caught the bug.

After several moves between branches of my bank, I ended up working in the village where I lived, Withington, where, working in the neighbouring branch of Barclays, was a reprobate called Derek Clayton. At the age of 26 I was persuaded to go out with his walking club, the YRC, and four years later I succumbed to the pressure from Peter Swindells and paid my subs to become legitimate as he put it.

By now I was walking regularly and had my own car and knew many corners of upland Britain quite well. Marriage and a managerial appointment saw me living in Wharfedale and in 1978 and 1980 my children came along.

In all my walking it had been exercise, the views and solitude that I was pursuing but I knew little of the natural world around me; it was normally head down and plough on.

Then came the day when I managed to get my youngest at about three to walk up onto Ilkley moor, about a mile from our house. Needless to say I had to carry him back but it was that day that rather changed my life. The moor only rises to 1,319 ft, but that is high for a three year old even starting out at about 600ft.

We were taking a breather and admiring the view having promised to walk to the Cow and Calf for an ice cream

when he asked me what the funny markings on the rock were.

I had walked the moors thereabouts extensively and had never noticed these markings but from that day on they seemed to be everywhere. Even the YRC had walked the moors on an after dinner meet the week of our John's third birthday. I had to admit I did not know the answer to his question but I found out. My wife was also a city girl but to help field the many questions coming our way we began to learn the names of flowers and birds and trees and all manner of things that attract the attention of youngsters.

Since then whenever I go out walking I have an entirely different attitude: seeing rather than just looking. I have developed an interest in ecology and the environment and in my retirement work with a number of organisations protecting and preserving our countryside.

That is why in some ways that day on Ilkley Moor was one of my best days on the hills.

The moors above our house in Burley in Wharfedale were indeed a fairly mysterious place. I walked over them numerous times; a favourite walk being over to Dick Hudson's and back (this was a pub on the edge of the moor at the far side, looking down on Bingley). Crossing the moor in the dusk was more than a little eerie.

The words from that classic folk song did not help with an impressionable three year old. "Then t'worms'll come an' eyt thee up."

Those strange shapes our John had asked about are a give away to the ancient past on these moors.

Rombald's Moor to give it its real name is a large area of moorland roughly bordered by Ilkley, Ben Rhydding and Burley in the north, Silsden in the west, Shipley, Keighley and Bingley in the south and Menston in the east.

Within this expanse of gritstone, sandstone and shale are several informal locally-named moors of which the famous Ilkley Moor and Burley Moor are two.

Although much of the area now consists of rough land overgrown with heather, bracken and wild grasses, with many places waterlogged with peat bogs, there is evidence that these upland areas may have been farmed or hunted on as many flints, dating back as far as the Mesolithic era, have been found. Remains have been found from the Iron and Bronze ages. These ancient peoples left traces of their presence in the form of a stone circle called the Twelve Apostles; large burial cairns such as the Great and Little Skirtful of Stones; many small cairns and enclosures and several monuments of unknown purpose.

The most likely purpose appears to be that they were part of some burial ritual. It is widely thought to be ceremonial use of some sort and it was quite probably they were used by different peoples throughout the ages. Considerable evidence points to an early Masonic group convening here in medieval times and from historical records it seems possible that members of the legendary Grand Lodge of All England (said to be ordained in the tenth century by King Athelstan) met here, or at the adjacent Great Skirtful of Stones giant cairn 400 yards to the east.

The moor is also, as I mentioned, covered with hundreds of large flat slabs and rocks that have cups, rings and grooves cut into them, some consisting of simple cups, others having complex series of patterns combining many different elements. It is unclear what the original meanings of these carvings were and there have been many theories put forward to try to explain them. Rombald's Moor can in fact boast the second highest concentration of such ancient carved stones in Europe.

To the north, where the moor drops steeply towards the village of Ben Rhydding, are two millstone-grit rock-climbing areas: Rocky Valley and Ilkley Quarry, site of the famous "Cow and Calf". This large rock formation consisting of an outcrop and boulder was to see me practicing my moves and teaching both my children the basics of rock climbing.



According to legend, the Calf was split from the Cow when the giant Rombald was fleeing an enemy, and stamped on the rock as he leapt across the valley. The enemy, it is said, was his angry wife. She dropped the stones held in her skirt to form the local rock formation The Skirtful of Stones.

As previously mentioned, back in 1983 the Club had its AGM and Dinner at Craiglands on the edge of the moor and Ray Harben has kindly provided this picture taken on the after-dinner walk. We have tried to identify those in the picture and unfortunately many are no longer with us. There may be some we have wrong.

I was on the meet and could have walked home from the function but did arrange nearby B&B accommodation for myself and 3 other younger members. This enabled me to fully partake of the after dinner socialising; helped my impecunious colleagues and, as we were back then known as the young hooligans, it gave older members some respite.

We also did our own thing on the Sunday; I seem to recall walking over to Dick Hudson's for a pint or two and then returning round the edges of the moor in time for the after-dinner high tea which was the custom of the Club in those days.

We are not young hooligans any more, nearly 30 years having elapsed, we are at least less young than we were.

As to hooligan tendencies, that is for others to judge. One of that motley crew went on to be President and has attended more meets, certainly in the last ten years if not in history, than any other member.

I recall the Craiglands dinner as being fine and we may have gone there twice but I know it changed hands and priced itself out of contention. It might be worth checking it out again as a future possibility.



Alan Linford? Chris Renton
Cliff Cobb? David Smith
Richard Gowing? Cliff Large
Roy Salmon
Ron Goodwin
Jack Devonport
John Hemmingway
Arthur Craven
Alan Brown
Pat Stonehouse
Bob Chadwick or Roger Allen
Bill Lofthouse
Neville Newman
Brian Nicholson
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CLIMBING ON POSTAGE STAMPS

Stamp collectors may be slightly unhinged but putting a thematic collection together produces food for thought. Research into an issue to commemorate an ascent of Gasherbrum II revealed to Alan Linford that the expedition lost two Sherpas and three more on previous expeditions! A bit off one might say.

Alan has produced a number of stamps from his collection depicting climbing, and wonders why, but offers top marks to, the designer who selected abseiling for a topic.

Oxford English Reference Dictionary entry for abseil is 'Mountaineering v&n. v. descend a steep rock-face by using a doubled rope coiled round the body and fixed at a higher point. n a descent made by abseiling. The rate of descent is controlled by friction between the rope and the climbers clothing.

Abseiling? possibly from the German *abseilen*, *ab* down plus *seil* rope.

Jean-Esteril Charlot-Straton 1840-1925 a Chamonix guide devised this method of descent during a failed attempt on the Petit Aiguille de Dru in 1876. The technique became known as the classic style and many old bold climbers will recognise the method and the discomfort. The rate of descent is controlled by the friction between the rope, the climbers clothing and their anatomy. Alan blames it for his varicose veins. In 1879 Jean-Esteril, after many attempts, climbed Petit Dru.

Hemp rope, from the stem of the hemp plant, hawser laid, provided too much friction especially when wet and was eventually replaced by hawser laid nylon rope or smooth braided rope. Safety sacrificed for comfort obtained by the misuse of karabiners is shown on a rather amateurish 1980 design from Indonesia. The Munter Hitch was an emergency use of karabiners to form a friction device.

Several designs issued as 'mountaineering' show the climber descending on a single rope with the rate of descent controlled by one of many mechanical friction devices. By definition this method is not an abseil; rappel, ab-off, roping off were common terms heard on the crags. Single rope indicates single pitches with a fixed anchor preventing the rope being pulled through for the next pitch. Long abseils were possible with the advent of very long small diameter high strength rope used double.

These designs include a 1946 Rumanian stamp, one from 1980 from Bermuda, D of E expedition with the advent of the sit harness now evident, and a 1981 Eire 50th. Anniversary of An Oige (Irish Youth Hostel, an Irish abseil going up or going down?

Also included from 1987 a New Zealand Tourism issue. Single rope down ice! How many tourists are ready to fit crampons and abseil down ice walls? Another from 2001 Norway, Issued as Rock Climbing; a 'free' abseil, exhilarating! If you have not had the experience, inform the President who will arrange a meet.

The availability of low stretch semi static rope, single pitch opportunities and affordable safety equipment has allowed this part of mountaineering to become a stand alone activity. Abseiling is now employed by industry for safe access to inaccessible places and charity fund raising. See 'Charity Abseils.com or Tailored Event Management. No postage stamps yet of these events.

25% of mountaineering accidents are around getting off the cliff having completed the difficult moves. Sometimes equipment error sometimes climber error. It is so easy.

There are two postage stamps where the stamp designer has captured with accuracy the 'classic style' In a 1962 issue by The Most Serene Republic of San Marino, part of a series on mountaineering, and more recently in 2012 an issue by Austria to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Austrian Alpine Club but not a single issue by GB when there is so much British achievement to celebrate. Opportunities missed include, in 2013, the 80th anniversary of the first flight over Mt. Everest, the 60th of the first ascent of Mt Everest by British teams and the 60th of the Himalayan Trust UK. A Trust that has done so much for education in Nepal. Any chance of a surprise in 2015 for the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Kangchenjunga by a British team? Another missed opportunity in 2007, 150th anniversary of the Alpine Club, the first mountaineering club in the world. We are spoilt for suitable subjects, 1st. ascent of Napes Needle, abseil off the Inaccessible Pinnacle or anywhere on the Pembroke cliffs. Send your pictures to Royal Mail.

Alan has also turned up an excellent stamp of mountaineering in general issued to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Swiss Alpine Club.



OVERSEAS MEET REPORT - THE ALPS

Pontresina, 23rd July to 5th August 2012

My apologies for the late report, this is entirely the fault of the meet leader (myself). Many thanks to everybody else who promptly gave me the requested information last summer!

This was for me a slightly strange meet as it was rare that we were all in the same place at the same time, due to excursions by part of the group with overnight stays in huts and due to not everybody arriving at the same time. We were however blessed with fantastic weather and fairly good snow conditions and I think everybody had fun. I had thought when suggesting the meet that south-east Switzerland would be a poorly known area to British mountaineers, but there is a hair-raising account in the YRC archives from 1988 involving involuntary bivouacs on glaciers and cliffs. Phil and Bern had also previously been in the area, interestingly with much more snow on the ridges than we had.

The meet began for me on a Sunday with a delayed train meaning that I missed the bus connection and had to lug far too much stuff to the campsite at Plauns (about 3 km from Pontresina) as it got dark. Under time pressure, I found a nice quiet spot for a couple of tents in the fairly crowded campsite and settled down for what turned out to be the first of a couple of frosty nights. From the tent porch, Piz Palu could be seen along the valley. There had been some problems with communication so I wasn't quite sure when to expect anybody else (nor how to recognise them). On the Monday (still alone) I collected my mountain bike from the station and headed down the Roseg valley to get a look at the Biancograt and Piz Rosegg, before being defeated by lack of technique and fitness. That evening I bumped into Bern and David Oldfield on the campsite who told me that they had been expecting to see Phil and Evelyn by then (I had mistakenly thought that they were all travelling in convoy), and that they had had no luck with telephoning... This was somewhat worrying, but the next day I headed off, somewhat late, to the Coaz hut (2610m) to try and find Michael Smith and Peter Chadwick.

In the words of Michael:

"It took some resolve to spurn the opportunity of a horse and cart ride up the first stretch of the Roseg Valley on the way to the Coaz hut, though the two hour wait for the next run was also a factor. The track was busy as far as the hotel then peaceful past the lake and up the side of the valley. Peter's father, Bob's 50 year-old map had two glaciers merging and flowing past where there is now the lake. We did have a modern map too.

Tucking in to the first course of the hut's evening meal the table's multinational diners speculated on the national

identity of the missing person 'Wysply'. Unrecognised, he soon arrived and joined the conversation then in German. Picking up a clue to our identity he turned and asked if I was Michael Smith."

Wysply turned out to be the transcription of Whitby, garbled by the telephone and the local dialect. Having eventually identified my fellow YRC members by being sat next to them (I hadn't seen Peter for 9 years or so!) we agreed on **Il Chapütschin** (3366m) as our goal for the next day.

We had fine weather, and the ascent over moraine, slabs, a glacier and a broad blocky ridge provided no undue problems apart from a steep couple of meters of rock to get off the glacier, so that we got to the top, rather to our surprise, in the guide book time. On the way down, I slipped on a ledge and was very glad to be stopped by way of sliding into Michael who was surprisingly relaxed about the incident given the possible consequences. Later on, on wet slabs, the third member of the party was less fortunate and apparently took a long slide but with no harm done.

I then left Michael and Peter in order to meet my guest at the Tschierva Hut with a view to attempting Piz Roseg. Peter and Michael had been considering a number of rather unlikely looking routes and eventually settled on a pass called the Crasta del Lej Sgrischus, 3304m:

"Looking for something to do on the way back from the Coaz to Pontresina we found in the guidebook a PD ridge with a decent track up to the nearside col, Fourcla Fex – Roseg 3068ms, and an assurance that 'a way could be made down either side' at the far end col, Fourcla dal Lej Sgrischus 3232ms. The first part was right enough. The ridge, though shattered included some entertaining scrambling and exposure. Then we arrived at the col, and could see the hut path a kilometre away at 2660ms. It took us 1½ hours of skittering, tottering, scattering, skating scree and boulder slope descent to reach the path. A rock band had to be down-climbed and abseiled, clearing the route as we went. Two long snow patches gave some welcome relief. The route probably gets few visits."

On my way to the Tschierva Hut from the Coaz Hut, I misread the map and crossed a river by what turned out to be the wrong cable bridge. After a couple of hours of wandering up and down the moraine and half-hearted attempts to ford the in-spite correct river I realized my mistake and retraced my steps, arriving at the hut in light rain just in time for dinner again. Memo to self – do not use aluminium carabiners on steel cable bridges!

On the Thursday, Christoph and myself set off for **Piz Roseg** very early in the morning, only to learn on the glacier that my crampons had lost an important screw holding them together. An attempted repair with paracord lasted about 200 m and left me with a bleeding hand, and as it was still only about 5am we decided on **Piz Tschierva** (3546 ms) as a consolation prize, in the hope that we could repair the crampons either at the hut or in Pontresina. On the way down we were treated to spectacular but alarming views of a long-line helicopter rescue of two people from the Biancagrät (no one was seriously injured).

I got lucky at the hut, and they had a screw of the right size, so on Friday 27th we did make it to Piz Roseg by way of the Eselsgrät (or Middlemore ridge). This was a spectacular route, and I was very glad that I had invited Christoph to lead the extremely exposed (but well protected) crux on the rocky ridge. The old route on the rock-ridge is deprecated due to rock-fall (actually, it seemed to me to have disappeared completely) and the new route is steeper, but has quite a few nice new stainless steel bolts on the way up, and an equipped abseil route for the way down. The challenges we had were finding the correct route in the morning (we didn't, but we weren't alone!), the many crevasses (I went through over knee deep five times, and at one point high up we were both making swimming motions hoping that we weren't both over the same huge crevasse...), and finding the last abseil anchor on steep loose ground. The last abseil was overhanging, and landed us (just) on the downhill side of the bergschrund.

As we left the hut for the trudge down the valley it began to rain, but we were lucky enough to get a lift to Pontresina with one of the hut wardens. Interestingly, one of the staff at the hut was a native of Nepal, spending the summer in Switzerland.

At the weekend, David Oldfield and Bern had been up **Sassal Mason** (3031ms) from the **Bernina Hospice** (glacier and scrambling) and **Munt Pers** (3207ms) from Diavolezza (scrambling and climbing with some fixed ropes). In the meantime, it had become clear that Phil and Evelyn had been delayed en route by illness, but had made it to the campsite at Plauns. Phil, David Oldfield and Bern had been up to the Coaz hut (accompanied part of the way by Ann and Evelyn), with Bern and David continuing on to Il Chapütschin on the 28th. In the evening of the 29th, all those present met for the first time that week. The majority elected for a walk to **Piz Ot** (3246ms) on Sunday, an easy scramble with great views from the top. I didn't fancy another day in boots, so took my bike over the Bernina pass and down the other side to Poschivao (1200 m descent, all on trails). I got slightly lost (again!) and went too far but was lucky enough to get the last train back up to Morteratsch and thence back to the campsite in time to meet David Hick with Christine and Beth.

On Monday 30th the group split again, with several walking (after the cable car) up to **Piz Languard** (3262ms) for the views and the ibex, and others going to Lej Languard. Several people had spoken of **Piz Kesch**, and I had been

keen to try this myself having turned back in bad weather a few years before (with David Large) but in the end we split with David Oldfield, Phil, Ann and Evelyn driving over the Albula pass heading to the Es Cha hut on the way to Piz Kesch whilst James, Michael, Peter, Bern and David Hick went up to the Diavolezza hut for **Piz Palu** and **Piz Bernina**. Christine and Beth stayed close to Pontresina. The Diavolezza hut, despite the Matratzenlager, is a bit like a hotel with a four-course menu, waiter service and Europe's highest hot-tub!

Wednesday 1st of August (Swiss national day and, so I'm told also Yorkshire day) saw Phil and David Oldfield on **Piz Kesch** (3418 m) having followed the normal route over the Portad'Es-Cha. Unfortunately on the way up **Piz Palu** it became clear that David Hicks' cold was seriously affecting his performance and he had to turn back after the ice-fall. Many thanks to Bern for accompanying David back.

James, Peter and Michael continued in softening snow over the famously narrow snow ridge to the summit of **Piz Palu**, and then continued over the rocky ridge of **Piz Spinass** under Bellavista and through another huge icefall in cloudier conditions to the Marco e Rosa hut (3609ms).

Having had a chance to observe the significant differences between Italian and Swiss hut customs (including later breakfasts), we set off the next morning up **Piz Bernina** (4049ms), happily unaware that it was going to be a very long day. We got to the summit and back down to the hut with no real problems but our ropework as a group of three slowed us throughout the day. From the hut we worked our way back through the icefall at lunchtime to the bolted **Fortezza** ridge (with some thunder and hail) to head towards the Morteratsch glacier. Unfortunately, already behind schedule, we then got lost just below the steep part and only got to the edge of the glacier as it began to get dark (one of the 'tracks' we tried to follow turned out to be a meltwater channel...). We had planned for the group to eat together that evening but had to cancel the reservation. We eventually got to the Morteratsch Hotel a little after 8 pm, having first left the Marco e Rosa hut at about 6 am. Many, many thanks to David Hick and David Oldfield for meeting us, and to Ann and Evelyn for cooking for us!

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Morteratsch 'Schaukäseerei' (public cheese-making dairy)



Huge portions of delicious food.

James Whitby

Attending

Peter Chadwick
Phil Dover
David Hick
Michael Smith
James Whitby

Guests

Christoph Niederberger (CH)
Beth Marriott (UK)
Christine Marriott (UK)
Evelyn Dover (UK)
Berne Hellier (UK)
David Oldfield (UK)
Ann Oldfield (UK)



Photographs: by James Whitby

Top - Michael and Peter on the way up Il Chapütschin, at 7 am

Left - The summit of Piz Roseg, from the snowy fore-peak

Bottom - Peter and Michael on the very enjoyable summit ridge of Piz Bernina. The traverse in the background was ice rather than snow, with an uninviting view of the waiting Bergschrund below.

Notable wildlife seen:

Many crossbills and nutcrackers in the campsite, possible bearded vulture at distance, several ibex and marmots near Piz Languard. Snow finches (quite tame) at the Marco e Rosa hut.



UK MEETS REPORT

Low Hall Garth 11th to 13th January

Two members eager to get started arrived late Thursday evening and were met by another member, also eager to get started, early Friday. The hill outside the hut was icy, but an application of rock salt cured this.

Mike G decided to go to Elterwater but had difficulty crossing the Slaters Bridge due to sheet ice. A bus journey was then taken to the ODG where Martyn T was met, he having taken the route via Blea Tarn. Return was via a different route for each and Mike established that the Three Shires was closed as usual throughout January. Derek S did a circular route via Tilberthwaite for some afternoon exercise.

Fires were lit in the hut and the barn ready for further arrivals. Excellent soup and bread rolls were served throughout the evening and much conversation took place with the usual accompaniment of ale and wine.

Saturday started dull, wet, and misty, but by mid-morning the sky cleared with good visibility and a show of some blue sky. After a good breakfast five left early to scramble (grade 1-2 on Long Crag, South of Greenburn Reservoir) on Wetherlam before taking in Prison Band, Grey Friar, Carrs, and Wet Side Edge. The President, Peter C and Peter L, joined them on the scramble and continued over Wetherlam then peeled off south from Swirl How to the Old Man of Coniston and a traverse to Hole Rake, Tilberthwaite and through the old quarry tunnel to Cathedral Quarry. A car journey enabled four to walk round Blea Tarn before proceeding to Skelwith Bridge where light refreshment was taken in the Hotel. Three other members were also there having arrived via Colwith and the Cumbria Way. After a small walk via the Weir the car travellers returned to see to the evening meal.

There were icy conditions on the hills and Martyn T and Paul D found it difficult ascending Wetherlam. (micro spikes were used). Arthur S and Frank W traversed the Carrs, Swirl How, Prison Band, descended to Levers Water and returned via the Coppermines.

The President, Peter C, and Peter L, also scrambled Wetherlam, then Swirl How, Brim Fell, Coniston Old Man, Low Water Tarn, then traversing to Levers Water to return via Tilberthwaite and the old quarry tunnel to Cathedral Cave. Harvey did a circle via the Coppermines and Derek a circle via Hodge Close.

The evening meal of soup, cottage pie, apple pie, cheese and biscuits and coffee was well received by all with much praise for the chef.

Following the meal the President gave an excellent video show of the 2012 Trek to Nepal to climb Mera Peak, followed by a film recording of the first ascent of the Central Tower of Paine in Patagonia.. This was breathtaking.

The weather forecast for Sunday was snow in the afternoon. Middle Fell was ascended by Andy and Alistair, and Harvey went up to Stickle Tarn where it snowed as he descended, making it rather interesting. The President, Peter C, Paul D, and Peter L, walked the Kentmere Horseshoe clockwise but omitted Kentmere Pike encountering plenty of ice and an increasing wind.

The new hut warden, Arthur, and Frank spent the day attending to minor repairs to the cottage having been given several suggestions for improvements by members.

Thanks and appreciation are due to Alan Clare who organized a very enjoyable meet and provided us with excellent food and wine for our enjoyment.

Mike Godden.

Attendees

Peter Chadwick
Derek Clayton
Robert Crowther
Ian Crowther
Michael Crowther (guest)
Paul Dover
Peter Elliot
Alistair Glasson
Mike Godden
Rob Ibberson
John Jenkin

Dominic Kirkman
Peter Latham (guest)
Harvey Lomas
Tom O'May
Arthur Salmon
Michael Smith (President)
Derek Smithson
Andy Syme
Martyn Trasler
Frank Wilkinson

GLEN AFFRIC

31st January - 3rd February 2013

Where can you get a piping hot full English breakfast, for three successive days, in the middle of winter and in a remote and special place? Attend a YRC meet organised



and victuals provided by David Hick in the Strawberry Cottage of the An Teallach MC.

Strawberry cottage was a stalkers' residence before being acquired by the NT for Scotland. It in good repair and just what the An-Teallach club were seeking and with considerable help from the NTS and Forestry Commission they have established a very comfortable climbing hut in a natural nature-reserve and SSSI. The name retained by the club derives from the wild strawberries which existed until the deer took a liking to them.

The hut is located at the west end of Loch Affric (OS25 132207) and booking includes vehicle access to within 200m of the hut saving a long 5 mile walk in. Our thanks to the An-Teallach for providing this perfectly located and well provided hut.



Thursday evening it was raining, pitch black, cold and a miserable prospect for those who elected to walk in. The 15.30 rendezvous at the NT car park was missed by 2 hours, but building on experience gained in Nepal, 6 bodies complete with mountain gear and 3 days food made up lost time thanks to a lift from Aaron.

Eventually with the fire going and an ample supply of wood, the water party was despatched to the river. Evening meal on but suddenly no gas! If all else fails read the instructions. A party was despatched into the wet blackness to a remote barn and Aaron arrived back with full cylinder on his shoulder.

Well fed and warm, discussion turned to the plans for Friday.

The hut provides excellent access to four Munro's, two of them the highest north of the Great Glen. Carn Eithe 1183m, Mam Dodhail 1180m, Beinn Fhionnlaidh 1005m and Scurr nan Ceathreamhnan 1151m. These Munro's are not particularly rocky but are very steep sided with wild corries and craggy enough to make any winter traverse a long and serious mountaineering day.

Friday. Breakfasted at 0645 and kitted up, 2 parties were ready for off by 0730 although it was still pitch black with everything frozen hard. With no idea what the conditions were like up top it was nice to hear each climber checking out the essential gear needed. The route chosen, and accomplished by Peter and Aaron, was from the hut up corrie Leachavie to the bealach south of Carn Eithe onto Carn Eithe; backtrack to and over Mam Sodhail; over point 1069 and down to Bealach Corrie Ghaidheil then down the Corrie and back to the hut. A good 11 mile day in good Scottish winter mountaineering conditions.

The same route was taken by David and Michael but they omitted Carn Eithe. Back at the hut, refreshed and well fed, with Beinn Fhionnlaidh 1005m looking tantalisingly close, we thought perhaps we should have done it. It would have been another 2.5 miles though!

Phil and Alan took a walk around Loch Affric, Phil doing the loop, hoping to meet up with John who travelled overnight and eventually arrived early Saturday.

On Saturday, Peter and Aaron, well fed, were away at first light, 2m back along the track up Corrie Ghaidheil to the bealach; left turn to Scurr nan Ceathreamhnan 1151m and then the ridge from the bealach to summit a good 3 miles along with 7 lumps on the way! Over Beinn an Soccaich, down to the Youth Hostel and back to the hut. A 13 mile trip with excellent mountaineering with pulsating moments.

This was the Corbett day for Phil, Michael and David. First Carn a Choire Ghairbh 863m. (OS34, cairn of the rough corrie). Then a rough track up Allt Gharbh via Na Cnaipn over Carn Glas lochdarach 771m before back tracking and steep downhill to a land rover track and back to the hut.



Phil Dover on the Corbett

John arrived to a full breakfast, and set off at a pace for Scurr nan Ceathreamhnan. Alan headed for the Caledonian Forest.

Fortunately the wind had shifted most of the new snow, leaving mostly hard snow, sparing the climbers the conditions experienced by the unfortunates in Glen Coe.

Sunday was wet, Nepalese experience to the fore again with thanks to Aaron, 7 dry bodies and gear got a 07.50 start from the NTS car park, some heading south and Michael, John and David north, in the wind and wet. they headed for Ben Wyvis but were blown off An Cabar, and unable to stand, retreated and drove S to B&B in Pitlochry to dry out.

Monday saw snow on the road blocking access to Glen Lyon and its 2 nearby Munro's, so resorting to plan B, Innerwick they found that equally disappointing, walking up Choire Odhar but failing to make Cam Chreag when the head-on blowing snow turned to excoriating hail.

The rest of the week was abandoned. AL

Attendance.

The President Michael Smith,
Aaron Oakes, David Hick, Peter Elliott, John Brown,
Phil Dover and Alan Linford.

North Wales Cwm Dyli Cottage

22nd to 24th February

This was the first time that the YRC has held a meet at this cottage, and indeed the first time that we have occupied a Pinnacle Club Hut. Booked by Tim Josephy as our meet organiser for this occasion it turned out to be a good choice. The hut is very well set up and equipped and in a very picturesque area of Nant Gwynant, very convenient for the southerly side of Snowdon and whilst the sleeping arrangements are 'mattrezenlager' type benches in one common dormitory, the mattresses are all perfectly comfortable and well set out. For those who preferred to camp (and there were several who did), there is a quite satisfactory flat green area adjacent to the hut which lends itself to the erection of tents. Some members catered for themselves on the Friday evening whilst others drove the few miles into Beddgelert in order to eat at the hotels there.

On the Friday, Peter, Richard and Michael parked overlooking the hut from the A498 and tramped east over largely frozen ground across Braich Llwyd to Carnedd y Cribau (1,938ft) getting good views of Snowdon and Moel Siabod.

The Saturday weather although cold and with occasional snow flurries was generally quite good, with sunny intervals from time to time. Most of the party split into smaller groups to tackle the various routes to the summit of Snowdon, as it is so convenient from this hut. The PYG track, the Watkin path, the Miners track and Crib Goch were all well used by various groups, some members preferring to go solo. The full 'horseshoe' was completed by several parties.

The high level conditions were a light covering of fresh snow over well compacted snow, requiring the use of crampons. Richard Taylor and our President started out with John Brown, Peter Chadwick and his dog, Pipin. John was suffering badly from the late stages of a cold and struggled determinedly. They ascended directly from the hut by the pipeline up into Cwm Dyli and immediately swung left onto Galit Wenallt (2,032ft) and over Liwedd and Bwlch Ciliau to be joined by various people ascending the Watkin Path. Crossing the south face of Snowdon was increasingly icy and they donned crampon as they reached the south ridge around 3,500ft. Thereabouts they met Alex and later Peter Elliott and Mick Borroff who had tackled the traverse the other way round. By now they were in cloud and light snowfall.

The summit was busy with almost the gamut of mountain attire from gullet climbers with helmets, goggles and the latest axes to some in jeans and sheepskin fashion boots. Continuing north to Bwylch Glas they split with John and Peter who were taking Pipin down the Pyg Track. Robert and Michael crossed Crib-y-ddysgl mid-afternoon against the tide of people heading the usual way up over Crib-goch. Light snow was falling steadily and by the time they were on Crib-goch they met the last of them. He was a chap heading for the Pen-y-Pass car park who had traversed the ridge, strayed onto the north ridge, saw but couldn't recognise the pass of Llanberis and reversed his path over Crib-goch to meet our members. The best advice they could give him was to head down the Pyg Track. Michael and Robert then had the ridge to themselves taking care on the narrow and steep sections as they were scrambling in crampons. In the absence of tracks, they too kept to the ridge too long and descended the North Ridge to just above Dinas Mot, traversed Cwm Beudy-mawr and starting up the road towards Pen-y-Pass. A kind couple gave them a lift to the Pen-y-Gwryd. A swift half there refreshed them for the last mile or so down the old road to the hut. Just about 9 miles and in around 9 hours.

The meet leader Tim, his brother Richard and Nick Welch chose to forgo Snowdon and summit Moel Siabod instead. Others did lower level walks around Nant Gwynant whilst one party of three walked to Beddgelert via the Lakes and the Sygun Copper Mine and ended up watching Wales beat Italy in their Rugby match on the TV screen in the 'Prince Llewelyn' hotel !

Tim provided Saturday dinner up to his usual standard and light breakfasts on both mornings. We were joined for our evening meal by the Assistant Warden of the cottage, Alex Nicholson of the Pinnacle Club, who added her welcome companionship to our now 'open' meet arrangements.

Tents and gear were packed on Sunday morning and members drove off to various parts of Snowdonia prior to returning home. Some planned to go to Cnicht and others to Moel Siabod and Moel Hebog.

Sunday, with local knowledge from Tim, Peter, Richard and Michael parked near Hafodydd Brithio, south of Llyn Gwynant just a few miles from the hut. With Bern and Phil they followed the vague path east round Llyn Edno (~1,800ft) and down via Llyn Llagi in clear cold windy conditions. They took in Ysgafell Wen's North Top and had the best of the day with even a little sunshine.

It is perhaps worth noting that this was the first YRC meet to follow the recent passing of our longest serving member, George Spenceley, to whose funeral many of those present were planning to go in just over a week's time. We will greatly miss George, won't we?

WCIC et al

Attendance

Michael Smith(President)		Tim Josephy (organiser)
Mick Borroff	Peter Elliot	John Brown
Iain Gilmour	Harvey Lomas	Peter Chadwick
Richard Gowing	Alan Clare	Bern Hellier(G)
Derek Smithson	Ian Crowther	John Jenkin
Richard Taylor	Philip Dover	Richard Josephy
Nick Welch		

Crianlarich 7-10 March

Having just returned from a month in Thailand, where John and I were involved in helping Sid Perou make a film about caves and the hill tribes near the Burmese border; I wasn't ready to brave a particularly savage Scottish winter, but my husband, (maybe coerced is too strong a word) persuaded me to attend and I'm pleased I did as a good time was had by all.

John, Harvey and I arrived at about 11.30pm on Thursday evening after a swift visit to the Drover Inn at the top end of Loch Lomand. As we entered we were met by a full sized stuffed bear, one amongst many other animals which graced the bar. I was delighted that such places of character still existed. Anyway, everyone was fast asleep as we crept inside Inverardran Cottage to take our rest.

Morning came all too soon and after a hearty breakfast we set off on our various adventures. I'd heard lots of mutterings about 100 mile an hour winds, on the tops, and the clag was down and according to our Scottish friend it was "dreich", so I didn't feel over confident in myself but nevertheless I donned my gear and set forth.

Derek S had a pleasant walk along the West Highland way, whilst Michael S, Chris H, Richard T & Tim J walked from Victoria Bridge and up Choire Odhair (3058m), then attempted Stob Gabhar(3565ms) but it was much too windy so they retreated off via Glen Kinglass.

At the same time another team: Paul D, Alan K, David H, Mick B and Phil D walked from Loch Lomand to Crianlarich, then in the afternoon Alan, David and Phil walked from Tyndrum back to Crianlarich, whilst Mick and Paul drove over to Oban.

Harvey, John and I travelled to Glen Coe, the weather was deteriorating and we decided to go up the Hidden Valley (Coire Gabhail), which would afford us a bit of shelter.

After a false start and nearly being blown over by the gusts, we met the track where we were rewarded by lovely views of waterfalls. On reaching the coire we traversed across to just under the snowline. From there we were enchanted by an amphitheatre of mountain scenery with a whirling tempest in its upper arms.

Sensibly, we turned back and sheltered by an enormous boulder to have lunch: much to the chagrin of a herd of deer which happened by. The day was so cold, even with reasonable clothing it was impossible to feel comfortable so we decided to take a nostalgic look at the Clachaig in Glencoe. Above we could hear a helicopter struggling against the wind as it was circling Bidean Nam Bian. Later, we found out that a young man, had perished but they couldn't retrieve his body until the next day.

Back at Ochil MC, we were met by Graeme Wallace, author of The Southern Highland of Scotland. He told us a little of the clubs origins - that they were formed in 1950 and members had since bought the cottage which came with quite a lot of land so they would be able to extend. The cottage was wonderfully appointed, in a fabulous location (OS 50, 392250), very warm and had everything you could possible need.

Saturday morning found Mike S, Chris H and Richard T attempting Ben Lui (3707); ascending via Coire Gaothach and into Central Gully, but they found themselves in too narrow a gully, which was steepening and the wind was increasingly gusting with blown ice so they retreated. At the same time Paul D, Phil D and David H, Mick B and Peter E scaled Buachaille Etive Beag(3029), then Stob Coire Raineach only turning back at Stob Dubh (3129), due to very high winds. David, Mick and Peter then drove to Loch Etive to finish their day walking under the Etive Slabs.

Tim J walked the West Highland way from Bridge of Orchy back to Crianlarich and Derek had a solitary walk also along the West Highland way whilst John, Harvey and I drove over to Victoria Bridge and walked along Linne Nam Beathach to Loch Dochard. It was desperately cold and the wind unrelenting so we rushed back and had a drink at the Inveroran Hotel which boasts over 300 years of guests including some famous names e.g. Dickens, Coleridge and Darwin.

When we got back to the cottage we found out that Alan K had also popped into the hostelry earlier that day too.

After we'd finished a most excellent meal, one of many that Mick and helpers had prepared for us, we decided to visit next door i.e. The Ben More Hotel where Harvey borrowed a guitar and entertained us, which was a fitting end to a great day.

Sunday morning, it was time to clean the hut and say our "Goodbyes". Some were going straight home while others extended their stay. Peter E headed for the Tarmachan Ridge and on Sunday Dave Hick and Mick B enjoyed a snowy traverse of the ridge in full winter condition taking in some excellent views before the afternoon snow flurries blew in. Mike S, Paul and Phil Dover went on to Glen Ogle Corbett, Creag Mac Ranaich (2654) where they were "told off" for cutting steps on ice while crossing mixed ground rather than donning crampon.



Michael Smith, Paul and Phil Dover



Meall nan Tarmachan from Creag Mac Ranaich

Apparently, Michael S and Paul D had started their meet on Thursday and had already done a round of Callandar and Bracklinn Falls before anyone else had appeared, but for our little group we ended on a visit to Rob Roy's grave in Balquhider's Parish Church followed by a walk up the River Larig affording fine views of Ben Tulachan, Meall Mor and Beinna 'Chroin.

Happy days!

CW

Those in attendance

Mick Borroff (Meet leader)	Alan Kay
Paul Dover	Harvey Lomas
Phil Dover	Michael Smith (President)
Peter Elliot	Derek Smithson
David Hick	Richard Taylor
Chris Hilton	Carol Whalley
Tim Josephy	John Whalley

Peak District, Baslow, 5th -7th April

The meet was held at modest accommodation in the Chatsworth Estate just outside Baslow. No not Chatsworth itself but at Heathy Lea which is the Oread Club hut on the Chesterfield Road. The hut is the windowed extension on the side of the old mill.



Derek Bush reports on the weekend.

"Your writer who travelled from Lancashire i.e. in the opposite direction from which the instructions were given arrived in Baslow and found himself, in typical YRC fashion, looking for the hut on the opposite side of the Chatsworth Estate. When he finally sorted himself out he saw a very clear sign 'Heathy Lea Cottages', so he parked his vehicle went into the premises had a look around. A beautifully appointed kitchen and dining room greeted him whereupon his first thoughts were Michael is doing us proud, his second was how much is it going to cost? And it was only when he saw the bedrooms with no matrazenlager that he realised he was in the wrong place.

The real venue was a quarter of a mile up the road and was perhaps of a more YRC style!

The weather for the first time this winter was beginning to show signs of a belated spring. We were to benefit for this over the week-end.

Roy and Martyn had arrived early and had a Friday walk: More of this later. Michael had been out climbing on Birchin Edge. Most of us went early to the Robin Hood pub for a reasonable meal and then back to the cottage where by this time, with fires in both rooms, the place was warming up. Most retired early to find next morning that the mud and pools, on the track outside, were frozen solid. It was the same for both nights.

After a substantial breakfast prepared by Michael most parties were off early. The largest one composing Roy, John, Carol, Mike and Ian headed upstream to find a crossing point to get onto the Chatsworth Ridge.



They then turned south to follow the ridge and kept high above the Chatsworth grounds. Martyn is seen above looking out from Dobb Edge

Blessed with splendid views, they left the estate woodlands onto the moors rather than descend into the grounds.



They then circled round into Beeley Village taking time out to enjoy an expensive drink before following the busy footpath up the Derwent back into Baslow Village.



Derek Smithson went walking locally. Derek Clayton toured the area by car and went to see the mine workings at St Williams Point, Sheldon. He says he did about two hours walking.

Michael went back to Birchen Edge to do some more climbing. He was joined by a friend the Rev John Hutchinson who has climbed and walked in Spain with other members of the YRC. I did not realise our President was calling on extra help to continue his rock climbing career! An ex member Chris Fitzhugh joined the party and did 26 routes in the day excluding descents.

Also on the crag was John Middleton who is working on a botanical survey of the eastern gritstone edges. He is

behind schedule because of the heavy snow but his progress is reported elsewhere in this journal. A list of all Michael's climbs is appended.

The last party comprising Martyn, Paul and the writer did a round comprising Birchin Edge, crossing the A621 along White Edge crossing the A625 and then on a delightful grassy track to the National Trust centre at Longshaw Lodge: All this in quite beautiful spring sunshine. We then retraced our steps through the grounds and then along Froggatt Edge, Curbar Edge, Baslow Edge and then finally into Baslow itself where we felt we deserved a pint.

We arrived back at the cottage just in time to be served an excellent meal of soup, a lamb stew prepared by the President himself and ginger sponge and custard.

The rest of the evening was spent in the traditional fashion, well you all know the score, the world was put to rights. I am eternally grateful that the death of Baroness Thatcher did not take place a few days before it actually happened!



Sunday dawned just as bright as Saturday. After breakfast an hour or so was spent cleaning up the cottage. Martyn and Roy had to go home early because it was Martyn's 50th birthday. He did well to get away on the meet at all! For some of us the day was too good to go straight home.

Ian, Carol and John did a 4.5 mile circular walk from Baslow taking in Wellington Monument, Eagle Stone then along Baslow Edge to return from Curbar Gap via Easter Moor Estate.

John writes:- 'That to climb the Eagle Stone, an impressive gritstone boulder, signified that a Baslow man was fit for the responsibilities of marriage. It did not look an easy climb!'

Michael, Paul and I did a circular walk starting just above the cottage walking southwards along the edge, eventually into the grounds of Chatsworth House along pleasant paths to the village of Beeley. We then crossed the river and had a very enjoyable amble back eventually arriving back at the cottage without having to use the road. It turns out the walk that Martyn and Roy had done on the Friday followed the same route but cutting short above the house to return.

The Sunday crowds were out but who could blame them after the cold winter and early spring we had experienced. Chatsworth House and grounds are very impressive.

Altogether helped by the weather it was a most enjoyable meet. Our thanks go to the President for organising it.

Michael's climbs on Birchen Edge are listed below:-

- Emma's Slab - VS 4b 2nd
- Emma Royd - VS 4c 2nd
- Emma's Delight - HS 4b
- The Promenade - M Solo
- Promenade Direct - HVD 4b
- Sailor's Crack - HS 4b Dogged
- Whatknot? - S 4b
- Heave Ho - S 4a
- Stoker's Hole - S 4a
- Stoked - VD
- Stoker's Wall - D
- Crack right of Stoker's Wall - M2c solo
- Mast Gully - M Solo

I make no comment on the naval connotations!

In Attendance

The President and meet leader, Michael Smith

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Derek Bush | Derek Smithson |
| Derek Clayton | Martyn Trasler |
| Ian Crowther | Carol Whalley |
| Roy Denney | John Whalley |
| Paul Dover | Derek Bush |
| Mike Godden | |



The Nelson Monument from below

ELPHIN, ASSYNT 4th to 11th May

Nine members assembled on Saturday evening at the SMC Naismith hut in the little hamlet of Elphin, north of Ullapool. The hut, which has been recently and extensively refurbished, was very comfortable if a little snug for the total meet attendance of 10.

Sunday dawned damp and very windy. Three bold souls set off undeterred for the heights, ascending Cul Mor and Cul Beag, finding their route surprisingly sheltered from the wind. Harvey made a cycling tour of the area, whilst the rest walked up the coast from Skeagra to Sandwood Bay, returning by an inland route. Coastal walks may sound easy but the going was rough with a surprising amount of up and down. Sandwood Bay is deservedly known as one of the most beautiful beaches in Britain, remote and lonely, guarded by the elegant stack of Am Buchaille.

Monday was another damp one with low cloud. Another coastal expedition was proposed and all took part in a circuit of the Reiff Peninsula, past some spectacular cliffs and in steadily improving conditions.

Tuesday saw the arrival of better weather with warm sunshine and light winds. Chris went to do the Quinagrange, Mick did a circuit of Conamheal and Beinn Dearg, whilst the rest drove to Lochinver to ascend the striking shark's fin of Suilven. Three went in to the south side, past the spectacular Kirkaig Falls in full spate after all the rain. From there, although there was much to divert the eye, underfoot it was four miles of bog until the final steep ascent to the narrow ridge of the mountain. The return on the north side is much easier on a good track. The rest walked in to the north side, traversing the whole Suilven Ridge and returning to Elphin, except for Iain, who returned west to Lochinver.

Wednesday was dry but windy. Chris had recommended Quinag as dry underfoot and a good short day. Tim and Nick found it dry but their definition of a short day seems to be at odds with Chris's. One or two of the narrower ridges were somewhat thought provoking in the strong and gusty wind. Mick and Chris traversed the Corbett of Breabag finding equally demanding conditions, whilst Iain and Dave went to the 650ft high Kylescu Falls. After a long and boggy walk in, all they could see was the stream disappearing over the edge. Somewhat disappointing! Harvey went touring and the rest went bird watching near Ullapool. Richard arrived in the early evening.

Thursday dawned fine and sunny. Harvey left us to begin the long journey home. Iain and Dave went to Ben Hope, dropping Peter, Michael and Richard off to catch the ferry (5 man dinghy) across the Kyle of Durness and 11 mile minibus ride to Cape Wrath. They were going to follow the coast south to Sandwood Bay for a bivvi before finishing next day at Oldshormore. The rest also went to Cape Wrath intending to walk from there along the coast to Kervraig with its spectacular split sea stack. Unfortunately the minibus and ferry times didn't fit

so after a short sojourn at the most northerly point of mainland Britain they returned to Durness to walk there instead. They finished their rather gentle day with an excellent seafood dinner at the Kylescu Hotel rounded off with a gloriously colourful sunset.

Friday Tim set off home. Iain went to investigate the nature reserve at Knockan Crag near Elphin before preparing a communal meal for the evening whilst everyone else had a day out on Canisp.

This meet maintained the tradition of excellent spring meets and our thanks go to Iain for his hard work and organisation.

TJ

ATTENDING

- Michael Smith
- David Hick
- Chris Hilton
- Peter Chadwick
- Richard Taylor
- Harvey Lomas
- Mick Borroff
- Tim Josephy
- Nick Welch
- Iain Gilmour

Photographs by Tim Josephy

Top

Suilven from Naismith Hut

Middle

Suilven

Bottom

Sunset near Kylescu



SOCIAL MEET 21st – 24th May Merewood Country House Hotel, Windermere



The Club's Social meets have been transformed over recent years as the Club has evolved. Ladies' Weekends with a couple of modest walks have become mid-week four-day events at country house hotels with participants enjoying a range of activities from tours using historic transport to challenging walks in the hills. What remain unchanged are the conversations between long-standing friends, the welcoming of new members and guests and the opportunity for members' partners to become more involved with the Club's activities.

This year's meet was meticulously planned by Paul Dover between Windermere and Ambleside was in an hotel perched high above the main road giving long views down Windermere. To the rear, the grounds' trees shaded drifts of bluebells.

We assembled late Tuesday afternoon from various directions after various visits or walks. The Presidential pair traversed the limestone of Hutton Roof and Farleton Fell by the M6 and A65. We were expecting to be 17 couples on the meet but for one reason or another we ended up with 18, almost filling the hotel. Those with rooms at the front had plenty of space, light and good views. And the Taylors also had a four-poster bed.

We were expecting quality but the meal that evening surpassed expectations being interesting food combinations, well presented. The service in the dining room, bar and at the reception desk was efficient and friendly. There were however a couple of difficulties.

The first, was despite being used to being addressed as 'Duck', 'Love' or 'Pet', now getting used to being called 'My darling'. The second was the indecision arising from being asked to select in advance one item from three for each of four courses for the following night's meal.

After a good peaceful night's rest there were more decisions to be made over breakfast: full English, kippers, eggs Benedict, salmon and scrambled eggs, etc. Those with dogs were out earlier working up an appetite for this meal.

Then we assembled in the car park by the bluebell woods for the object of the exercise – well, according to the Club's constitution 'walking' is an objective while 'fine dining' does not get a mention. Paul's undulating route northwest past Jenkin Crag was an inclusive one giving those who wanted to the opportunity to call it a day at Ambleside and take the boat back or continue steeply up Wansfell Pike for a full circle panorama. The first arrivals had a fair wait for the tail-enders in blustery conditions. All finally assembled, we headed off generally southwards at our own paces back to the Hotel. While an early morning Wales-residing member tackled the route in a couple of hours, the middle-of-the-day connoisseurs made the sunny walk last until time for afternoon tea. That occasion was enlivened with a round of Happy Birthday for the First Lady and a chef's special chocolate cake to keep us all going until the evening meal.

Away from the hills visits were made to Borrowdale and Troutbeck while the Gowings took the bus to Ambleside, cruised back down to Lakeside then on the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway to Haverthwaite, before boating it back to Ambleside.

That evening meal was grand affair with the lively conversation supplemented by checks on what one's neighbours were eating. Shot was found in the pigeon: Speeches were made: The chef and his staff were thanked.

Photos from past social meets and videos from other recent meets were shown before a movement was made either to the bar or to bed. Those choosing the former made it to the latter the same day – though there was a much commented upon sighting of an antipodean guest moving about the corridors in his underwear, more of his legs later.

Numbers were down a little for Paul's second outing: Troutbeck's Limefitt Park, up the long Roman Road towards High Street but turn off at Thornthwaite Beacon for Threshthwaite Mouth. By this time, as planned, those not wishing to climb up to the heights and fresh hail, turned left and back along the other side of the valley either at one- or two-thirds of the way along. Faced on the col with either an indistinct path back down or the prospect of Stony Cove Pike those who had been on the recent Himalayan and Scottish meets were keen to extend the walk. Our meet leader and his bare-legged jacket-less antipodean brother, seeing the black clouds racing in from Scotland and looking at their watches, were less keen but succumbed to social pressure. Knees were turning blue by John Bell's Banner and a good pace was maintained west then south over Pike How and Hart Crag to maintain circulation. The steep descent to the old clapper bridge on the way to Troutbeck Park also had hearts racing. The valley bottom walk back to the start was accompanied by RAF fighters chasing one another and phone messages indicating that the others had sought refuge in The Mortal Man Inn.

Meanwhile the Gowings had reconnoitred White Cross Bay for their forthcoming family holiday, crossed Windermere

on the ferry, drove to Brantwood but balked at the entry fee so drove to Coniston and toured the excellent Ruskin Museum.

The predictions were for Thursday's main dish to be based on chicken as this had not yet appeared on any menu. The soothsayers were right and we had another wonderful meal. Perhaps three nights is as many as one can take of such rich living as one or two were groaning at the prospect of more exercise on Friday. Some walked, and others drove to Town Head for a tour of the National Trust property while others set off home.

Paul and Anne, en-route to Cambridge, visited Alan and Madge Brown who had to cancel due to health worries to thank them for a contribution to be enjoyed at dinner.

Another memorable meet! That it ran smoothly is thanks to not only the hotel staff but the four prior visits there and endless additional planning by Paul. We are lucky to have him running these meets and many are already looking forward to our return next year to Simonstone Hall, Hawes.

Michael Smith

Footnote

Comments from Barry Dover now living in Australia

Upside down reflections! What a wonderful way to spend a few days with friends; well relations and new friends for us. When travelling, one always expects to make the best of what you have, yes the feet after the second day's walk had had enough. It was really wonderful to made so welcome.

Attendees

Dennis and Joan Armstrong
Peter and Anne Chadwick
Ian and Dorothy Crowther
Barry & Janelle Dover (guests of Paul)
Paul and Anne Dover
Richard and Ann Dover
Iain and Sarah Gilmour
Mike and Marcia Godden

Richard and Elizabeth Gowing
Rob and Gabrielle Ibberson
Tim and Elaine Josephy
Ian and Una Laing
Cliff and Cathie Large
Alan and Angela Linford
John and Pat Schofield
Michael and Helen Smith
Richard and Gayle Taylor



The ancient slate Clapper Bridge, Troutbeck Park



Thornthwaite Crag with Pippin and the Dover of Oz

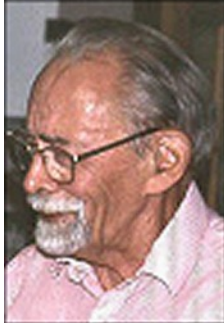
OBITUARIES

GEORGE B. SPENCELEY 1921-2013

Member since 1941

George had been a member for 72 years; a remarkable achievement marked not only by its longevity but by his exploits along the way.

He was born in Harrogate, Yorkshire, on 9th July 1921.



His father came from a real Yorkshire Dales family; the son of a horse breeder formerly of Wensleydale, who had married into the well known Metcalf family of that valley. This association with the Dales was to play a prominent part in George's early life when, first with his father, later on his own, he was to spend much of his leisure time cycling the valleys and walking the moors of the Pennines. From an early age he developed a deep love of the country and wild places.

After a prep-school in Harrogate, George was educated at Ashville College at Panel Ash. It was in the later years of his studies there, having rebelled against all organised games and sports, except cross country running, that George took up caving and pot holing; to be followed later by rock climbing. Much to the neglect of his studies, these activities occupied most of his leisure time. With practice on gritstone outcrops and later in North Wales and the Lake District and with the guidance of more experienced climbers, George gained what he described as some modest skill.

From an early age he was an avid and serious reader and, after the usual children's classics, his choice became books on travel and exploration. In 1934, at the age of 13, he selected from the library shelves a recently published book, Spencer Chapman's *Watkins Last Expedition*, concerned with exploration in East Greenland. No book has had a greater influence on him. From reading this, followed by many of the classics of polar travel, George developed a deep interest in exploration. To be an explorer became his profound ambition but he had to wait many years.

It was a desire for travel and adventure that

was to influence George's consideration of a future career. Mining engineering he thought might offer employment in far off places. His father, ever doubtful of the wisdom of his choice, insisted on a trial period, a week spent in the dirt, dust and gloom of a local colliery. George was not deterred and so after achieving acceptable results in his Upper School Certificate all was set for entry into the Leeds School of Mining. And so it might have been but for the outbreak of war in September which overrode all other considerations. George had always had an interest in flying. A short service commission in the R.A.F. might have been taken but for the headmaster at Ashville totally discounting its suitability: 'your son lacks *esprit de corps*', he said, no doubt thinking of his lack of interest in games.

Even so George had earlier been interviewed for entry to the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve and was deemed suitable material for training at a future date. But that was pre-empted when he volunteered for flying training within the first week of the war. He would say that this was less patriotism than a love of adventure. When called up he was posted to I.T.W. at Cambridge, followed by No. 10 E.F.T.S. in Wiltshire and finally No. 3 A.F.T.S. at South Cerney. He was sent to Bassingbourn for operational training but because of severe losses was posted, before completion of the course, to join an experienced crew as second pilot at 214 Squadron Stradishall flying Wellingtons. Subsequently they flew to the Middle East to join 148 Squadron.

George was one of the fortunate few to survive thirty-eight operations. Of those, nearly half were over Germany and all as second pilot serving with two experienced crews. While waiting for a home posting he volunteered for a further two ops in order to reach a round figure of forty. For these he replaced a sick rear gunner and gained much respect for those sitting in this lonely post. George would say they were to easy targets but, however frightening, he would admit to some deadly compulsion about operational flying.

On his return to England via West Africa, instead of joining a Liberator conversion course at Polebrook as anticipated, George was posted back to Bassingbourn to complete his training for captaincy with a new crew. By early 1942

Wellingtons no longer flew with a second pilot.

Again further training was deferred when all O.T.U.s were put on an operational footing in preparation for the Thousand Plane raids. Scratch crews were formed of instructors and trainees and George was again flying, as a volunteer rear gunner. George was shot down returning from Essen on the second of those raids, at the start of June 1942. He was the sole survivor and suffered very severe head injuries, being unconscious for perhaps three or four weeks in a German hospital. There followed three years as a P.O.W., the first part of it at the famous Stalag Luft III at Sagan. The war ended for George after a month in the great starvation trek to escape from the advancing Russians; a gruelling march right across Germany. Grossly underweight and ill-fed, it became a feat of endurance in which he has always felt his record of pre-war mountain walking may have assisted.

Following his demobilisation in 1945, a long period of study at a school of mining had lost all attraction and he chose to take a short teacher training course in Manchester, specialising in Geography. Prominent in his mind in selecting teaching as a career was the fact that, with a serious shortage of teachers, employment could be found in every location. No inner city school for George; he would find a school in the Lake District. Furthermore what other occupation would offer holidays long enough for a six-week Alpine season. Meanwhile George had married his long suffering first wife, Marjorie, formerly an art teacher in Cambridge, whom he had met in the weeks before his last flight. In due course they had a first son Julian and, two years later, Adrian.

George has admitted he was a selfish husband and a neglectful father. Mountains dominated his life and every week-end and all holidays were taken up with some activity, among them joining that select few of regular post-war active Lake District climbers. In 1941, while still serving in the R.A.F., he had been elected a member

of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, the youngest ever to be elected to the Club. Now George, enjoying much leisure, could take a full part in all their activities. It was largely with fellow members that he enjoyed several seasons of mountaineering in the European Alps.

At this time George did not aspire to seek membership of the Alpine Club but had he not enjoyed a close friendship with a member, he would have lost the opportunity of participation in the South Georgia Survey 1955-56. In his search for suitable candidates, Duncan Carse had a note entered in the quarterly A.C. newsletter that there was a vacancy in his team for a climber with some skill as a black and white photographer, together with experience in processing. His A.C. friend felt George was well qualified and, with slim consideration of his neglected wife, George applied. There followed an agonising wait but in due course he was summoned to the R.G.S. for an interview in which he was requested to show his pictures. There followed more days of anxiety and several hours in the dark room.



George's photograph of Drygalski Fiord, South Georgia

Then came the interview and George recalled anxiously pacing round the Albert Memorial waiting for the hour of the appointment before entering that body's impressive building. He thought bearded Duncan looked very much the popular image of an explorer, not unlike Shackleton himself. Vast was the relief and joy when Duncan told him to go down to see Robert Lawrie in Seymour Street to be measured for boots.

Duncan Carse led three expeditions to the island of which this third was the most successful. Much has been written elsewhere about that trip including reports in our Journal of the time and the article in the YRC journal of summer 2008 (series 13 issue 5).

Their first trip on the island was a 60-day journey, man-hauling sledges through the frequent storms, where winds come in gusts of exceptional force and blew without respite for many days. Most of the expedition was spent in similar conditions and they were to follow the route taken by Shackleton after his perilous open boat journey, albeit in reverse. To commemorate this epic endeavor features on the island were named after members of the expedition and maps now show the Spenceley Glacier.



Recent reunion of the surviving members of the South Georgia expedition.

Shortly after his return from South Georgia, George took up a new teaching post, but still in Cumberland. Financial problems were now dominant in his mind, increased by the needs of a growing family: his third son Nicholas was born while he was overseas. Of greater concern was a massive bank overdraft as no teaching salary had been received during his absence in South Georgia. To pay off some of this burden he took up lecturing which seemed the only way in which he could exploit his recent experience, and what a thrilling and varied story he had to tell. He started off quite modestly, speaking to local Women's Institutes at an inclusive fee of two guineas a time. While George found he had some talent for public speaking, he little thought at the time that in the years to come it would completely change the course of his life.

Expedition slides had first to be selected and duplicated. This occurred at a gathering George organised at a guest house in the village of Austwick in the Yorkshire Dales. All members attended with the exception of Duncan, each to select those slides he wished to have duplicated for his personal use. By an extraordinary encounter earlier that day another person was added to the viewing party. After a day's walking on the hills they gathered together in the local pub and, of course, the conversation was of South Georgia, some of which was overheard by a fellow drinker. Diffidently he approached.

'Excuse me,' he asked, 'but are you speaking of South Georgia.' It was Bernard Stonehouse, the ornithologist, who along with Nigel Bonner had spent some months of study living in a hut in the Bay of Isles. Some of us had visited the empty hut on our first journey.

George continued to lecture to small audiences at a modest fee, carrying around a projector, screen and slides to speak in some village hall after a day of teaching; but all this effort brought little reduction to his overdraft. Matters improved when he received an invitation to speak to the well established Keswick Lecture Society. The reward for this, his first society engagement, speaking before a very sophisticated and critical audience, was more than financial. Word somehow got around and, with no effort on his part; he was contacted by Kay Walley of the Foyles Lecture Agency.

Profitable bookings now flowed in to speak at leading libraries, starting with Burnley, and societies throughout the north of England. It seemed George had some flair for speaking, which he has always put down to careful preparation; he was now an active member of the lecture circuit on which he was to remain for many years. He was to return to the Keswick Lecture Society ten more times, but that was far into the future. It must be remembered that this was still the time when such lecture organisations, some dating back more than a hundred years, flourished in almost every town of reasonable size. It was not until the late seventies that increased expenses, together with declining attendance, caused a decrease in such lecture societies. By then George had discovered other markets: Ladies' Luncheon Clubs and Independent Schools.

Following the successful ascent of Everest in 1953 there was an increasing number of small, privately organised parties bound for the lesser peaks of the Himalayas. Some were to be promoted by mountaineering clubs, and the first such was the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

In 1957 George was asked to be deputy leader of the Y.R.C. Nepal Himalayan Expedition. In spite of increased financial strain, it would fulfill a long

held ambition and at the same time, provide a further lecture subject.

The leader was Crosby Fox, a close friend with whom George had made one of his last climbs in the Alps, the Mer de Glace face of the Grepon. The area selected for the expedition was the Jugal Himal with the ascent of its highest peak, Langpoo Gang, 23,300 ft. as the main objective

A plane table survey of the area was part of the programme. Four camps were placed up the Phurba Chyachumbu Glacier and success might have been achieved had not tragedy devastated the party. Returning to Camp IV from a reconnaissance to the head of the glacier, the party, when threading their way through a complex icefall, was overwhelmed by an ice avalanche from a hanging glacier high above. Crosby Fox and the two Sherpas were buried deep in a crevasse. George leading the rope and furthest from the bounding wall escaped, flung into the same crevasse but into its narrow and shallow end. For the second time he was a sole survivor of a major accident.



George back then

In spite of the sadness associated with the expedition, George was already committed to present this new lecture, despite, with each performance, reliving the tragedy. But he continued to find solace on the hills. Increasingly visiting the Highlands of Scotland, both in winter and summer, more often alone, but sometimes as avoluntary instructor at a mountain centre.

Although continuing to hold a full time teaching post, lecturing continued to take up much of his time, his engagements now spreading country-wide, and so to be more centrally placed he moved back to Yorkshire taking up appointments where a limited number of days absence was permitted. The demands, as well as the profits, of this additional occupation increased to an extent that justified time and outlay on new subjects which were to satisfy his love of travel.

In the years from 1959 to 1962 several months

were spent travelling on ski or foot in Lapland, covering the northern part of Norway, Sweden and Finland. This was followed by much financial and factual assistance, for what George liked to call an in-depth study of Finland. Then came Turkey to which he devoted the years 1964-1966, travelling by car overland through communist East Europe. Two of these visits provided some mountaineering, first in the Ala Dag Taurus to which 40 years later he was to return, and then to the Kackar Dag in the remote north-east. This last was a small expedition he was invited to lead, undertaking a survey as well as botany and geology in an area hitherto closed.

Returning from two of these Turkish trips through Romania, a country that had then largely escaped the corruption of mass tourism; George found a country, beautiful in places, historically interesting and, more than elsewhere in Europe, preserving a rich peasant culture. This became the subject of a further lecture which, with many subsequent visits, he had been updating over the years.

These more conventional travels were broken by participation in a proper expedition to the location that, as a child, had first inspired his interest in exploration: East Greenland. George was invited to be deputy leader of the Anglo-Danish Watkins Mountains Expedition, 1969. Although supported by the appropriate authorities, well funded and aided by the Danish Air Force, it failed in its main objective due to the worst summer weather since records began. It provided a less than satisfactory lecture subject, soon to be discontinued.

More profitable were two visits to Ethiopia, travelling widely to many parts of this very varied country, in some cases, living and travelling with the people. On the second of these journeys, he traversed the Simian Mountains, climbing Ras Deshan, Ethiopia's highest mountain, and descending through bandit or 'shifita' country to the Tigre plateau in what is now Eritrea. This produced one of his most popular lecture subjects. Less successful was a summer George spent in West Africa, again travelling largely using local means.

It was in 1976 that the whole pattern of George's life was to change. Now with a grown up family, two in secure and profitable employment, a third studying in Cambridge, he amicably separated from Marjorie. George concedes she had been a tolerant wife and great mother but they had little in common.

Sylvie Nickels, his second wife is a travel writer whom as a friend, he had known for many years,

meeting occasionally. She had been the first to give him advice on Lapland.

Sylvie, apart from other writing, was for many years a regular travel feature-writer for the Financial Times and editor of guide books. Now, with common interests, their further journeys could be combined. With greater profits from his lecturing and with a much increased market from Independent Schools, George felt he could retire from the teaching profession. To satisfy their respective needs, a new location had to be found.

They needed to settle more centrally in the country to ease the cost and burden of travel, for George was soon accepting up to a hundred engagements each winter; and for Sylvie to be close to both London and Heathrow

They settled for a house in a village in north Oxfordshire, on the edge of the Cotswolds, but they were not settled long before George was away on an adventure of an entirely different nature — a trip that had been in the planning stage before his second marriage and move south. One of the rewards of the South Georgia expedition was the continued friendship enjoyed by its participants. While they were both living in the north, George and Tom Price met with some regularity. It was at one such meeting that, as an alternative to the crags, they took to the waters of Windermere in Tom's Canadian canoe. What a delightful, relaxed, silent way of travelling, thought George, ideal for an ageing mountaineer. This brief spell on the water was to lead to bigger deeds. A year later they embarked on a five-week canoe journey across the Barren Lands of Canada's greatest wilderness. Put in by seaplane, they canoed 500 miles down the Hanbury and Thelon rivers to the Inuit settlement of Baker Lake.

Newly married, Sylvie announced that she would go with him on the next trip, so in 1979 they canoed almost the full length of the Danube, 1,700 miles through seven countries. They completed the Romanian section down to the Black Sea the following year. Having canoed Europe's greatest river, they turned their attention to America's. In 1984 they canoed almost the full length of the Mississippi, providing a further lecture subject for George, and for Sylvie a book; *The Big Muddy*.

"If you want to travel, marry a travel writer" George has advised and in his case the rewards have been considerable. Quite apart from the

pleasures of their relationship, Sylvie's writing regularly for a distinguished 'national' has brought many freebies, some of which extended to her husband. As well as travel articles, Sylvie took on the editorship of Fodor Guides to several European countries in the 1970s and 80s, notably Finland, the former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. In all of these travels and others extending to the Baltic States and Russia, George has been a regular camera-carrying companion.

In his eighties, when reflecting on his life, George regarded it as one both of regrets and rewards, as most would say. Regrets because he neglected opportunities and achieved no academic or professional status; but richly rewarded if travel and adventures are the criteria. He has indeed enjoyed a full life of travel and, as a professional lecturer; he has gained some success and fulfilment. He has undertaken three overseas tours for the British Council, spoken to audiences large and small from Edinburgh's Usher Hall to countless village halls, as well as repeat visits to a high proportion of our Independent Schools. And it all started when Duncan Carse invited him to South Georgia.

In his later years, George remained active and was a regular attender on club meets. At the age of 84 he spent three weeks trekking up to the Annapurna Sanctuary accompanied by a patient porter. According to the locals he was by far the oldest man ever to have done so.

In all George travelled to 42 different countries and climbed hills or mountains in 23 of them.



On March the 4th, after a short family service at the crematorium, a service of remembrance and thanksgiving was held at George's local parish church

in Deddington, Oxfordshire and at least 20 members of the YRC were in attendance, many accompanied by their partners.

There was as always another side to the man. George had his faults or foibles depending on your viewpoint. As son Nick pointed out at the service, George always had a restless urge to travel which made him something of an absentee father to them. Even when at home he would frequently take refuge in his study

where he sat wreathed in St Bruno tobacco smoke, composing lectures.

A Methodist public school, RAF discipline, then four years in a POW camp left him with a profound dislike of authority, especially if it wore a peaked cap, and handed out bits of paper, as many a traffic warden and policeman found to their cost. His sense of adventure sometimes also got the best of him, a memorable instance being the time when he parked his car on Redcar beach to avoid parking fees, only to find it stranded in the face of an incoming tide. On occasions such as these, Nick said his dad would certainly wear his heart on his sleeve. It would be another decade before Basil Fawty appeared on our television screens, but when he did, Nick recognised him instantly.

Sylvie wishes to tell members that she and her stepsons Julian, Adrian and Nicholas, were immensely appreciative of the magnificent YRC support at George's Memorial Service.

TRIBUTES ETC

LITTLE DID HE KNOW

This is an extract from "Rock Athlete" by Ron Fawcett, one of the heroes of Andy Syme who brings this to our attention. I wonder if Ron ever imagined that George until earlier this year, would still be with us and turning out on the occasional meet.

"Judging by this appraisal, my English teacher didn't think my 'enthusiasms' were relevant to my future success. How could climbing mean anything except as a hobby to take the edge off a dull working life? One teacher did encourage me. George Spenceley had been on an important survey expedition to South Georgia led by the actor and explorer Duncan Carse in the mid 1950s.

Carse was famous in those days for playing Dick Barton on the radio and his survey work was later useful when British troops landed on South Georgia during the Falklands crisis of 1982. Mr Spenceley taught me geography and I loved listening to stories about his adventures. He gave me articles to read and encouraged me. I felt I was talking to a kindred spirit, even though we came from very different backgrounds. I don't know how much of a climber he was, but in the 1960s there was more of a crossover between climbing and more general exploration.

You felt they were connected in a way that perhaps they aren't anymore. If I'd done something amazing over the weekend, then I wanted to tell Mr Spenceley about it"

From PEERING OVER THE EDGE: THE PHILOSOPHY OF MOUNTAINEERING

Mikel Vause

George Spenceley was born in Yorkshire, England and took up mountain walking and rock climbing in his early teens and was very active on British mountains until the beginning of World War 11. In 1939 his open air activities ceased when he joined the RAF, training as a pilot. He served in Bomber Command and was shot down over Germany in 1942. after which he suffered three years as a prisoner-of-war. After the war he returned to his mountain activities and had several seasons in the European Alps before joining the South Georgia survey 1955-56, In 1987 he became deputy leader of an expedition in the Jugal Himal of Nepal where he suffered a tragedy in which he was the sole survivor.

During the following years, George was active in the mountains of Norwegian and Swedish Lapland, Turkey, Ethiopia and East Europe. In 1968 he was on an expedition to the Watkins Mountains of East Greenland. In more recent years has become an enthusiastic long distance canoeist, first across the Barrens Arctic Canada, and later with his wife, Sylvie, the full length of the Danube and Mississippi rivers.

MEMORIES OF GEORGE - Tony Smythe

I first saw George Spenceley in the summer of 1950. I say 'saw' because at that time I was aged 15 and 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.

He was living at Harrogate when our paths began to cross fairly regularly. By that time we were both giving 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-byes for overnight sleeping in our estate cars. 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 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 was arriving shortly with his wife, Sylvie, to live some eight miles from us. This opened up a whole new series of evenings together.

Not known by many, George was a very knowledgeable bird-watcher, and it was a natural accompaniment to our day on hill or moor. George also had an amazing empathy with dogs and if a snarling brute made for us George 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 firewood and was spotted by the guards who sent a huge guard dog after 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.

George will be sadly missed. I thought George might go on forever as he was a survivor, a very tough cookie indeed, honed on a lifetime of hardship and adventure that included a wartime 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.

I will remember many things but perhaps one of the more memorable will be when we were canoeing along the river Wye. Me contemplating the back of George's head and he, 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.

From 'CONISTON TIGERS' by AH Griffin

George Spenceley returned from his adventures in South Georgia and later went to the Himalayas with a Yorkshire Ramblers Club expedition during which the leader, Crosby Fox, had the misfortune to be killed. He was a friendly and determined mountaineer with whom we had both often climbed in the Lakes. Thereafter, George continued to seek out an active, indeed adventurous, life, travelling frequently to out-of-the-way places like Lapland and Ethiopia this one with Eric Arnison, as well as canoeing down the Danube and, with Tom Price, on a remote lake in northern Canada. To accommodate his widening interests George embarked on a new career as a lecturer, and when we were last in touch, he still seemed to be in popular demand for his varied, illustrated talks.

He had always been an exceptionally good mountain photographer. Unfortunately, we now live too far apart for regular joint outings, but now and again we do meet up to

chat about our very happy years together on the Lakeland crags It was with George that I first went to the Alps, I'm uncertain of the year, but it was a year or two after the war. All those dozens of years when I foolishly neglected to keep a mountain diary are now coming back to haunt me. Anyway, George and I went to the Alps. We went across the Channel and then by train and bus into the heart of Switzerland, and for me it was all a tremendous adventure, George had been to the Alps before, with Eric Arnison, and knew the ropes or some of them.

Between us, we coped all right, although we didn't carry out anything like the programme we had in mind.

My first sight of the Alps, at dawn, with my head stuck out of the railway carriage window, excited me almost as much as the first sight of the Cuillin: vast, white shapes, just tipped with the gold of the sunrise, and unbelievably high. I couldn't wait to get up there. We planned to get the Matterhorn out of the way first, then progress to better things, including the Weisshorn, Dent Blanche and perhaps one of the Mont Blanc routes.

In the event, we did none of these things. First, we were told the Matterhorn was out of condition, with far too much snow, and had not yet been climbed that season. So we changed our plans, went to Zinal, which looked a convenient base, and set up our tent in a wood just above the village. From here we moved up to two or three huts its turn. crossed a couple of passes and, in rather changeable weather, did some modest peaks including the Trifhorn, Petit Dents de Veisivi. and Pointe Zinal. The next on our revised list was Zinal Rethorn, we were, of course, climbing without guides.

Back in Britain and taking up with the Coniston Tigers again there were also new experiences to enjoy including skiing and potholing: the second, a pastime in which I dabbled for just a few years. George certainly steered me into potholing; he was about 10 years younger than me, and had been in the RAF, flying in bombers, but unfortunately had finished the war in a POW camp. He was a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, the senior potholing club.

THE GEORGE SPENCELEY I KNEW

Dennis Armstrong

Dennis was honoured to prepare a homily/eulogy on George for the service but was unfortunately unable to attend and it was read out for him. Personal extracts from it are worth a wider reading.

"I well remember the first time I met George. It was at the Hill Inn, January 1955. It was my first meet, and I wore my climbing 15/- anorak held round the middle by a karabiner and a length of quarter weight nylon line. An older member introduced me to Spenceley. I turned and looked into those gimlet eyes set into a face full of stern determination. I quailed. He said: "Are you a climber?" in a voice that had

doubt in each intonation. I muttered some climbs I had done. He listened. I did not know anything about his achievements but I just knew that mine sounded puny compared to what this man had done, was doing and would continue to do over the next 50 years.

In his teens, disliking team games, he began to climb on Almscliff and other crags. And while out on the hills, he met Ernest Roberts, now a father figure in the Yorkshire Ramblers Club history. Roberts invited him to come pot-holing. So George became a regular 'junior' guest on club meets, not yet being 21, the minimum age for joining the YRC in those days. When war broke out, George joined the RAF qualifying as pilot. When he was home on leave, he attended YRC meets as before. On one meet Roberts said to him: "Are you a member now, Spenceley?" George replied: "No, I am not yet 21." To which Roberts said: "If you are old enough to die for your country, you are old enough to be a member of the YRC. I'll see to it." So in 1941, George Spenceley became a member of our Club while still a Junior.

After the war George qualified as a Geography teacher and lived in the Lake District with Marjorie, his first wife, and their three sons, Julian, Adrian and Nicholas. He had started to give lectures at other schools, and found this could be another profession, more interesting than teaching. He lectured in all to over a hundred schools. The popularity of his narratives and the splendour of his photography brought forth on average two school bookings a week, a total of 80-90 engagements each winter. George was an enthusiast for the Outdoors; he encouraged his school audiences to "follow their star". It would be good to know that many students bought themselves a pair of boots, an anorak and a rucksack as a result of George's lecture.

Mountaineer, traveller, canoeist, photographer, lecturer, lover of books, yes; George was all these, but for me let me add one more quality, George was a gentleman. All in all, we shall not look upon his like again."

TOM PRICE

As George has received lengthy obituaries in the press, listing his many and varied travels, his remarkable escapes from death during the war and in mountaineering, I have concentrated on my personal knowledge of him, which mostly started when we were both members of the 1955-56 survey of South Georgia. For many years I was acquainted with George and we would meet by chance at the foot of some crag or other, he often with Harry Griffin, I with Jack Carswell. Later with my friend Eric Arnison I took part in a caving descent in the Pennines which George had organised. We laddered down Bar Pot and went via Sand Cavern to the foot of Gaping Ghyll and then further down to another huge cavern called, I think, Mud Hole.

George and I shared an interest in mountain travel, often solo, and with a minimum of gear. He knew of several caves and abandoned huts in the hills, and once told me that a

sleeping bag was the only really necessary item of equipment. A tent could often be done without. Even in the days when he had a profitable lecture circuit to keep him and his family solvent, he lived economically and he had numerous spots about the countryside where he could sleep safely in his car. One of these that he showed me was a quiet cul-de-sac where the M6 had cut off a minor road. There were many quiet woodland spots where anyone with a car could bivouac, though he was sometimes awakened by suspicious police officers looking for people up to no good. A favourite night's lodging on his lecture tours could often be found when he would dine comfortably at an inn and gain permission to sleep in his car in the car park. In this he was assisted by his natural good manners and well to do appearance. He invariably arrived for his lectures wearing good suits with hand stitched lapels, bought at charity shops. He thought one should never spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar.

George was extremely devoted to the YRC and a frequent attender of meets until, he said, he could never find anyone to walk as slowly as he.

Another YRC invitation he arranged for me to join was one of their Whitsuntide meets, this time to camp at Loch Coruisk. Our private plan was to do the whole traverse of the Cuillin Ridge, seven miles of serious rock. We had with us for this exploit George's friend Crosby Fox, a master mariner (later to be lost in an avalanche in the Himalayas). As it happened, we did this on the same day as the Alpine Club had arranged to give John Hunt and his wife in recognition of his success on Mt. Everest in 1953 a supported traverse of the ridge in kletterschuhe carrying nothing except the lightest gear.

Various Alpine Club members stood by at points along the route requiring a rope to enable the pair to be unencumbered by safety gear. We learned this from the Alpine Club members waiting on the route and Crosby Fox became extremely anxious not to be overtaken by the Hunts, so we had to speed up to get over Sgurr Nan Gillean as soon as we could.

We managed it, slept in the heather outside the hotel and next day returned to Loch Coruisk by way of Clach Glas and Blaven. On Blaven a golden eagle took off from a stance a few feet below us.

The meet ended at Mallaig, the participants having been brought back from Coruisk by a boat hired by the YRC, an example of the imaginative way in which the club arranged its meets. George and I were travelling in my open top Austin tourer. Before leaving Mallaig, as a former trawler sailor myself, I approached a ship unloading herring and asked if they could spare a few which they were loading into barrels and they gave me one stuck by the gills on each finger of my hand. As I wrote later of that trip, George and I pulled off the road at the White Sands of Morar, and in the golden afternoon sunshine, we fried the herring in butter over a driftwood fire, the air full of screaming gulls clamouring for the guts and leftovers. What I remember

about that delicious meal is how rich I felt and how favoured.

I could go on to talk of other riches that I shared with George Spenceley such as the beauties, when you could see them, of the mountains and glaciers of South Georgia, and the vast expanses of the North West Territories of Canada above the tree line. It was this 31 day canoe voyage we took from Yellowknife to Quamanatuak, that cemented my friendship with George. We had to depend on each other, facing hazards we knew little of.

George's upbringing was middle class; mine was working class but our lives and our experiences and the values we found turned out to be similar. George had no religion that I knew of but he had standards and he lived by them. They were influenced no doubt by the membership of the YRC and later the Alpine Club, which in a way, were his church and Creed.

He took life seriously and was what we called a good expedition man, which meant standing by his comrades whatever the consequences. It was not only that "great things are done when men and mountains meet"

He and Louis Baume were both prisoners of war. George stood by Louis throughout Baume's last months before he died of cancer, taking on the mammoth task of removing Baume's large stock of expensive books to new premises, keeping them strictly in the same order as Louis had kept them.

His rough life in the wild made him capable of more tolerance of the rough people he had to live with on his travels and did much to form his values in life.

I became one of his close friends and I hope his many travels and adventures will be recorded.

David Handley

With the early potholing information supplied by John Lovett

Explorer, YRC member for over 70 years and *bon viveur*; the extraordinary life of George B Spenceley, AC, FRGS. spanned 1921-2013.

The above ground exploits of George are well documented in the Club journal. What is less known is that in his early days in the Club he was very frequently underground. These reflective notes may well fill in some extra detail.

In the late '40s and '50s George was a keen potholer, mentored by Roberts in such places as Goyden Pot and Manchester Hole. Lovett recounts how George introduced his friends in the Fell and Rock to Jingling, Alum and Bar Pot. This went on for several years and they were based at Harden, Austwick, which was the home of

the Lovetts and headquarters for lots of YRC activities before Lowstern was acquired in 1958.

George's guests on private meets included Eric Arnison, Rustry Westmorland, Tom Price, Duncan Carse, AB Hargreaves and Jack Longland. These underground exploits seem to have petered out in the early 60s. The same crew used the Britannia at Elterwater for Lakeland climbing.

Our paths first crossed in 1963 when he came to teach geography in a small mixed school in Morley near Leeds. There was an immediate rapport and it wasn't long before he invited me for a weekend in the Lakes transported by his new Ford Cortina Estate. We climbed various modest routes and once socialised with Fred Hoyle in the bar of the ODG.

His gift of an old orange Blacks ventile anorak and his sledging trousers from South Georgia equipped me in style!

Other trips followed including a winter weekend in Scotland where we ascended the Crianlarich Ben More....my first Munro. Though we added more together I never recollect him being ambitious to bag the lot.

My first skiing trip was organised by George from his school. I later took a teaching job in Skipton and George was soon appointed to the same school partly on my recommendation.

One of his trips to the Taurus mountains in Turkey was sponsored by the recently formed Yorkshire Schools Exploring Society which included two boys from the Morley school.

At this time, George was a member of the Fell and Rock perhaps to take advantage of their hut facilities, but his abiding loyalty was to the YRC.

With South Georgia and the Jugal Himal expeditions well behind him he was looking for other challenges and Greenland beckoned. His excitement was considerable and just how he managed to dovetail planning and his teaching was a mystery to me. The do or die descent from the Greenland icecap to Gaasefiord where they were to be picked up by boat was an epic and a close run thing. I met them off the plane at Glasgow airport and their privations were much in evidence.

In the 50s George was often in the Alps and the three climbs I know he made were the Mer de Glace Face of the Grepon, the Forbes Arete of the Chardonnet and the Zmutt Ridge of the Matterhorn. He also completed the Haute Route possibly with Crosby Fox.

We travelled together on several Whit meets including

Skye the highlight being the ascent of the Cioch by the Direct route and a memorable day on Naismith's Route on the Basteir Tooth followed by the ridge to Gillean and tea at the Sligachan. Ten years before, George had completed the Greater Traverse. He was a great camper and bivouacer having once spent the night in a huge drain awaiting installation in Glen Shiel whilst on his way to Skye. He took great pride in his Black's Arctic Guinea tent which seemed to have in excess of 50 guy lines. He relished the annual high level meets which were then so much a part of the Club's activities.

To my knowledge George avoided 'positions'. His plans, priorities and dreams were the very antithesis of bureaucracy. Though the first hut warden of LHG he never sought other offices within or outside the Club.....he was too busy 'doing' things to be encumbered with admin. He was VP to Marsden's presidency in the years 1955-57. His affection for the Club was palpable and it for him. It remains something of a mystery as to why he never became president of the Club and those best able to shine light on the matter are long gone. Perhaps his qualities were best employed in planning and executing those things he did best. Suffice to say it does seem incomprehensible. Perhaps his more recent accolade, a Lifetime Achievement award, made up for the omission.

In August 1968 Dubcek, PM of Czechoslovakia proposed splitting the country into two parts; the Soviet Union objected, invaded and occupied the country until 1991. Though there were huge demonstrations the resistance was largely peaceful. George, passing through, on his way from Romania, witnessed the invasion and takeover of Prague and photographed much of the action. However, to his chagrin, he only had coloured film when black and white was required for photos for the press. He always regretted the fact that that lack denied him a world press scoop, not to mention the cash it would have brought.

It seems no other previous member covered so much ground in the pursuit of Rule 2. He always had a number of schemes up his sleeve and his marriage to Sylvie united him with a kindred spirit and a whole new chapter of journeys.

To say he lived a full life would be an understatement. As age crept on he modified what he wanted to do to avoid slipping into a sedentary life. At his 90th birthday bash I suggested he wrote a reflection on his life for the Bulletin.....he wasn't keen. I then suggested that he identified the highest point in Oxfordshire, ascended it and wrote a short piece as if an expedition account. His eyes lit up and he said he would, but alas!

George would be up there in the pantheon of any club but he was specifically ours. Our gilded roll would surely include Roberts and Smith both of whom were huge contributors to the Club in all its aspects but George would be up there in a different sort of way....a driven walker,

trekker, mountaineer, climber, occasional skier and canoer who tested his mettle to the limit in everything he did and in every period of his life. You probably don't expect Harrogate to throw up the like, but it did if only once!

The Club, mindful of his age, recognised all this two years ago when they presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award.....it could be some time before another is awarded but here's hoping.

No account of George's life and passions would be complete without reference to red wine! It possibly came third after Sylvie and wild places. After the aforementioned it was, he felt, one of the few real accomplishments of mankind and many will remember how it animated his conversation until his bunk called.

For decades George was addicted to pipe smoking. It was a sort of badge of office for explorers. How and just when he broke the habit I'm not sure but he became a keen jogger and member of the gym in order to stave off age and lack of fitness.

Though he rarely initiated political discussion he was for many years an avid Guardian reader where his old friend Harry Griffin had been the Lake District 'Country Diary' correspondent for decades. On or about the day George died the following appeared in the Guardian and I had cut it out to post to him.

'Earnest Shackleton's 1916 journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia is one of the epic survival adventures.....Tim Jarvis's authentic re-enactment, completed yesterday (12th Feb.2013) when he arrived at Stromness after a 19 day voyage and climb came close.....Jarvis and his team endured gales at sea, blizzards on land, suffering trench foot, frostbite and repeated crevasse falls along the way.....' George would have savoured reading that and raised a glass! Had he have been 60 years younger he would have no doubt applied for a place on the trip. Two weeks later Ranulph Fiennes had to be rescued a few days into an attempt to cross Antarctica..... in winter! I wish I could have discussed that with George!

So farewell George, we will all miss you but few more than me!

And finally an extract from the words of George himself which perhaps sums up the man he was.

THE NEW GENERATION

by G.B. SPENCELEY

"There was a time" said my companion, his voice raised above the raucous shouting that came from a party above, "when all whom you met on the hills were people pleasant to know"

We were sitting separated from the crowds on a ledge some 20 feet about the foot the crag and sheltered by an

overhang from the descent of any unheralded missile; below, a little way down the scree, in the "cave among the orange peel and paper sat the young members of yet another new club.

We had finished our sandwiches and while waiting to see which of the four buttresses would be kept occupied, we had been discussing the behaviour of some of the recent recruits to the climbing world. Later we found solitude above the climbs on the summit of the mountain and as we watched the sun sink behind the western hills, my friend, a mountaineer of distinction and twice my age, told me of his own novitiate. He described his feelings on seeing for the first time high mountains and how it came as a revelation to learn that their remote summits, could through toil and skill, be attained, The years that followed were a period of careful schooling for the ultimate purpose but his adventures were as yet lived vicariously in the pages of mountaineering literature on which he fed hungrily, In his later teens, hardihood and endurance were tested on long walks over northern moors, alone and in all weathers; and there were holidays too in the Lakes and Wales with here and there, a little scrambling. But during all this time he knew no climbers, indeed had never even spoken to one, although he had seen them at work, remote figures clinging to Napes Ridge, and once in a hotel room he had stood back and listened in respectful silence to an account of a winter ascent of the Old West on pillar.

However, in those days people never passed one by on the hills with-out a friendly thought and it was just such a casual meeting that brought my friend his first offer of a climb. He was taken in hand and with infinite care taught the basic principles. For some time he was not allowed to lead and from the first there was instilled into him an awareness of the potential danger that lay in every step of a climb and a respect for even the smallest of mountains.

Being a man of imagination, fear took a prominent part in those early expeditions, until with experience he began to distinguish between apparent and actual danger, and with increased mastery of his craft to reduce, if not quite eliminate, the latter. With new friends then and a new rope, working through all the moderates and then the difficults, and so upwards through all the standard courses my friend was launched on what was subsequently to become a great mountaineering career.

I have often thought of this man's approach and attitude to mountains, of his respect for them and love of them; love for their unearthly beauty as well as for the adventure they give, and inspired not only by the mountains themselves, but as much by the breed of men who were mountaineers in those days, 40 years ago. Then, more than today, there was a very real and personal relationship between the experienced climber and the novice, and the older man's influence was a powerful factor in forming, with the budding mountaineer, the correct outlook and values-

George goes on to talk about the technical instruction being provided by clubs but concludes...

"...but is enough interest and care for the new generation being taken by the individual? It is the personal relationship between mentor and pupil that really matters and will in the end do more good than a thousand lectures and all the collective training. Is it not the duty of all who feel deeply about the hills and who love adventure simply and purely for its own sake, free of all competitive elements and of any exhibitionism and sensationalism, to pass on to the new generation, by their influence and example, the traditions and spiritual values that the true mountaineer holds so dear?"



The Guardian published a letter from Sylvie telling George's life story and a comprehensive obituary appeared in the Times where Ron Faux was talking of our 1957 Himalayan Expedition

"It was the first serious expedition to be sponsored by an individual group, and although the club's name might suggest hedgerows and gentle path-ways, the Yorkshire Ramblers were some of the toughest mountaineers around."

ANTHONY JOHN (TONY) REYNOLDS

Tony was an active member of the Club many years ago but moved to live in Melbourne, Australia in 1974.

After many years of declining health Tony died in January this year.

The Club made the following insert into the book of condolences in the Melbourne Herald Sun.

"REYNOLDS. - Tony. A Yorkshire Rambler - Remembered for his exploits both on and under the fells. A great companion whether walking on Snowdon, climbing Great End's Central Gully in winter or caving in Lancaster Hole. Happy Memories! - The YRC"

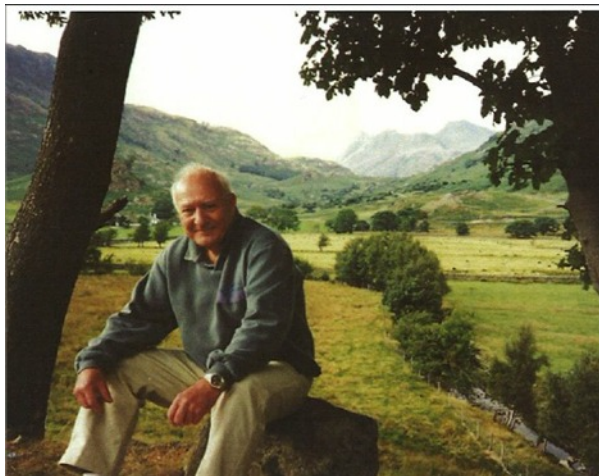
Tony wrote an article for the Journal covering his exploits 'Rambling in Australia 1975 to 1999'

See issue 13 Series 12, summer 2000 p.12.

This nine page piece is a pretty comprehensive guide to most of Australia

In it he recounts a visit by Alan Brown and I have Alan's reminiscence of this later. They climbed St.Mary's Peak.

I recall Tony as very good company on my earliest meets with the Club and recall him turning up at a meet in Cumbria, many years after he went to Australia; unexpected as far as most on the meet were concerned.



I spoke to Tony briefly a few years ago on a visit to Melbourne with a view to visiting him but whilst we were both in Melbourne he was much further away than I imagined and we never made it happen.

Tony's widow Doreen swapped a number of emails with me as his health deteriorated and I learned that a number of YRC members had visited them over the years.

As mentioned, one was Alan Brown who recalls--

"The last ten years of my working life included responsibility for the company's affairs in Australia. It had been decided to close the company's office / warehouse in Sydney,

transferring distribution to local Australian firms. These changes made it necessary for me to visit Australia every year and these trips were best handled by booking a round world ticket which allowed me to drop in on Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Calling on Tony his wife was easy and Tony came up with the idea that we should climb South Australia's highest mountain on my next visit.

Come the day we set off for our target at crack of dawn, strolling through gently wooded country which offered some escape from the searing heat. When the trees gave way to bare rock the heat was intense and our limited water supplies soon ran out. We did manage to reach our top albeit with considerable difficulty. Our very slow and uncomfortable descent ended at a camp site which was the usual starting point for the climb. The site had a store and the iced beer they served up will always be remembered as one of the most delicious drinks I have ever imbibed. All those present evidently shared this view because, without exception, they were all tipsy. It was a memorable day which gave me my one and only experience of serious heat exhaustion and strengthened my conviction that whilst Australia offers many delights - it is really too hot for your average 'Pom'.

When David Atherton visited some time ago, Doreen recounts that they 'did' the Ocean Road and then went on to the Grampians but sadly their 4x4 broke down and she had to go and pick them up. Doreen reminisces that whilst snakes are protected unless they pose a danger when David Smith was with them they had to kill a tiger snake on their lawn.

Tony was in hospital two years ago having a blood clot cleared from his leg and his health went steadily downhill from there

His widow Doreen writes

"Thank you so much for the lovely obituary you put into our Melbourne paper, it was very much appreciated by all the family. Besides his family, Tony's great love was for the YRC and it was his one great regret with coming to Australia that he was missing the YRC Meets and especially the chance of becoming President for a year.

Looking through the membership book, there were so many names that I was familiar with, some I had met and some I only knew by name, and even some that I had stayed with on my many trips back to the UK. In fact the last time I stayed with David Smith, he took me to the Lowstern cottage and showed me the library (I am a librarian, so appreciated the visit).

These are some of the names that I remember clearly, Alan Brown, Albert Chapman, Richard Gowing, David Handley, John Hemingway, Alan Linford, John Lovett, David Stenbridge, Cliff Downham and of course, David Smith.

In recognition of his love for the YRC, his ice-axe and club tie were on the coffin in pride of place along with a photo of Tony on a meet.

Doreen could never persuade him to join a walking club because, as he put it "the Australian Bush just wasn't like the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District and of course, the members themselves" Doreen continues "He did take me a short way down a pot-hole once and I think it was 'Sunshine Pot' or something like that, but I think I like the outside fresh air!

His passing has ended 56 years of marriage and I shall miss him even though he was in a nursing home for the last few months.

Again, many thanks for your kind thoughts.

Doreen Reynolds"

MICHAEL BANKS



A long life of 90 years saw this accomplished mountaineer combine a career in the Royal Marines with expeditions to remote parts of the world. With 3 Commando Brigade for the last stage of the war and its aftermath he was involved in the amphibious landings in Burma and survived to join the Commando Cliff Assault Wing, based in Plymouth, demonstrating his rock-climbing skills in training on the Cornish cliffs. He spent his leave time climbing in the Alps and, in the late summer of 1951, climbed some of the classic routes on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc.

In the early fifties he was part of a two year expedition to N E Greenland and on his return was posted to 42 Commando, but this did not prevent his thoughts turning to the Himalayas. He chose the unclimbed Rakaposhi (25,550ft) in the Karakoram Range as the objective of a four-man British-American expedition in 1956, which he led. Banks put their failure within 1,500ft of the summit down to bad weather, lack of manpower, and the inability of local porters to carry over 19,000ft.

He was then allowed further leave to lead the British-Pakistani Forces Expedition to the mountain in 1958. This time he assembled a powerful team of nine climbers, which included the Scottish mountaineer Tom Patey and Richard Brooke, who joined the expedition direct from Sir Edmund Hillary's trans-Antarctic expedition; they were supported by a strong team of porters. Despite high winds, avalanche and frostbite, Banks and Patey succeeded in reaching the summit on June 20th. He was appointed MBE in the same year. He had also made a return to Greenland to play a key role in the Royal Navy

East Greenland Expedition of 1966, making a depot-laying journey by dog sled.

After retiring to the West Country, he continued to lead or take part in expeditions and in 1972 he was deputy leader of Commander Angus Erskine's Royal Navy Ellesmere Island Expedition to the Canadian Arctic. The expedition made first ascents of a number of peaks up to 6,000ft in the north-eastern part of the island, and left its mark with such place-names as Commando Peak and Marine Glacier.

In 1990, at the age of 67 he climbed the Old Man of Hoy and by 2000, had completed the ascent three times.

After an initial failure at Jaonli (21,758ft) in northern India in 1989, he returned two years later when, with success almost in his grasp, the horrific Garhwal earthquake obliterated the final ridge above their top camp. His story nearly ended there.

In 1997, with a small Anglo-Australian party and a dozen camels, he traversed a large segment of Western Australia's Great Victoria Desert.

He was author of several books including Commando Climber (1955), Snow Commando (1961) and Greenland Geography (1975).

MIKE WESTMACOTT



Members will be aware of the death in June last year, at the age of 87, of Mike Westmacott. They may have seen his obituaries in the national press and on the BMC website; a full appreciation will be appearing in the next issue of the Alpine Journal.

After military service in India he went to Oxford and joined the OUMC, becoming a leading participant in the postwar renaissance of British climbing in the Alps.

He was one of the youngest members of John Hunt's successful Everest expedition, where besides helping to establish the route up the Lhotse face he played a vital role in keeping the route through the constantly changing Khumbu Icefall open during the main assault.

He was later instrumental in ensuring that news of the successful ascent reached London in time for the Queen's Coronation, by escorting Times reporter James Morris off the mountain to base camp. He was later Secretary and President of the Alpine Club, and was responsible for keeping the Himalayan Index up to date.

Older members will recall Mike's attendance as Principal Guest at our Annual Dinner in 1970. His entertaining speech is on tape in the Club's archives.

I had the pleasure of getting to know Mike through membership of the AC and the Oxford Alpine Club; as an

Mike in his expedition period

occasional visitor to the AC's London HQ I was always made welcome by him, and in recent years at the September OAC meets at the Wedgwoods' home near Pooley Bridge I shared some happy times with him over dinner and walking on the nearby fells.

His funeral in June was a private affair for family and close friends. By October, when the time for grieving had passed, we were able to enjoy a fine thanksgiving service in Kendal Parish Church on Friday 5th October, at which I had the honour of representing the YRC. After the well-attended service, led by members of the AC, the hundreds of AC members and other friends present moved into the adjoining Parish Hall, where the wine, food and fellowship flowed in a great celebratory party.

Richard Gowing

BETTY COBB

Cliff Cobb's widow Betty Cobb passed away 20 October 2012. There will only be a few remaining members who will remember Cliff and Betty. Cliff joined in 1976 and he quickly became active both at meets in the UK and meets in Majorca, Spain and Norway.



Cliff

Known for his modest demeanour, good humour and dry wit, he was a very popular figure. He was one of our most knowledgeable botanists and could always be relied upon to make sure we got our Scottish flora right. A keen gardener and Alpine plant enthusiast, cuttings and the results of seed from his efforts are still thriving in many YRC gardens.

Cliff died in 2005. Betty regularly accompanied Cliff on social meets and was well known in Club circles and amongst other partners.

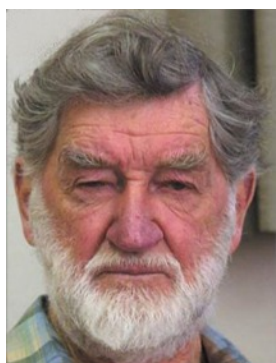
GEORGE LOWE O.B.E.

Born in 1924, George died this March marking the end of an era. He was the last surviving member of the team which first climbed Everest and returned to tell the tale.

Born in New Zealand he spent the years just after the war teaching at a primary school giving him long holidays in which to train as a mountain guide, often pairing up with Edmund Hillary.

Lowe played an astounding part in the Everest success, showing enormous strength and stamina carrying kit up to the South Col, just below the summit. When Hillary and Tensing Norgay came off the top, George was the first to meet them.

Lowe was no mean climber having spearheaded a route



up the Lhotse face, immediately below the South Col., but also carried with him photographic equipment enabling him to back up the official expedition cameraman, who he actually replaced when the party reached high altitudes, providing the now famous photographic record.

The film of the triumph, The Conquest of Everest, was nominated for an Oscar and his career with a camera took off.

Lowe was appointed as official photographer to the Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1957-58, making the first successful crossing of Antarctica via the Pole. They relied on Lowe's experience in spotting crevasses which posed a possibly fatal threat to the dog-teams and the snowmobiles etc. as they completed this journey of 2,158 miles.

After his return from the Antarctic he went on expeditions with the John Hunt Exploration Group for young people to Greenland, Greece, Ethiopia and the Pamirs.

There followed 10 years teaching in Chile partly as school head and he then settled in England and worked as an Inspector of Schools until his retirement in 1984.

Lowe received the Polar Medal (with Antarctic clasp). He was also commemorated in the naming of a 3,000 ft peak in the Shackleton Range as Mount Lowe,

In 1989 he helped found and ended up chairing the Sir Edmund Hillary Himalayan Trust in Britain, helping improve conditions for Sherpas.

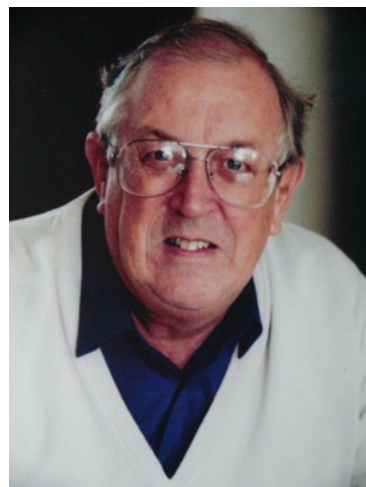
He authored 'Because It Is There'(1962) recounting his experiences. Hillary himself wrote the foreword to another publication 'The Conquest of Everest: Original Photographs from the Legendary First Ascent', which Lowe compiled with Huw Lewis-Jones. It is due out shortly.

PETER DAVID CLARKE

1937-2013.

Peter died suddenly in Calderdale General Hospital. Back in my Bradford days we were good friends and although it is many years since we last met we did exchange occasional emails.

When we moved south and he stopped attending meets as often, we lost touch rather and then he went abroad.



Strangely the next I heard of him was a chance listening to Radio 2 when he was on a phone in and I recognised the voice and then heard his name. Obviously back in the country I contacted him again.

When I first knew Peter he was a customer of my bank and he was part of a group of planning officers around West Yorkshire who socialised together.

He rejoined the YRC at the same time as I took up my position with that branch and one year after I joined. As such we were new boys together, living near to each other and with a business relationship; all of which cemented a closeness both within the club and socially.

His planners group took advantage of the Club's facility in Little Langdale for annual get-togethers and a number of them came to join the Club including one future President.

Roy Wilson was one of those planners and he comments "It is with sadness that I learned of the death of Peter Clarke in January of this year after a short illness following a stroke. He had not been active with the YRC for a number of years.

Peter was born in Stafford and also spent part of his childhood in Sheffield before the family moved to Harrogate. It was in Harrogate that Peter became a junior member of the YRC in 1956. His interest at that time was predominantly caving although he talked of evenings spent at Armscliff Crag climbing under the guidance of Brian Nicholson and other local members. A mutual friend who knew Peter at this time tells me that he was a keen boy scout and of an adventurous nature. Shortly after he had bought a BSA Bantam and learned to ride it he entered a Round Britain motor cycle rally successfully completing the route. As a youth Peter was tall and rather thin and must have looked somewhat out of place on the Bantam.

On leaving school Peter started work as a trainee town planner at the Harrogate Area office of the former West Riding County Council Planning Department. His early training involved part-time study at the Leeds School of Town Planning. Club records show that Peter's membership lapsed in 1962 which is about the time when he moved to Chelmsford, taking up a new appointment with Essex County Council Planning Department. He continued his studies at the Regent Street Polytechnic where he gained a Diploma in Town Planning, ultimately leading to membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute. From Chelmsford he moved to Bury St. Edmunds and Suffolk County Council Planning Department.

His next move was to Fiji working as a Planner for three years which clearly gave him a taste for exotic locations. On return to the UK he first took up a post with Hampshire County Planning Department, then returned to Suffolk County Planning department as he continued to climb the promotion ladder.

He then returned to the West Riding County Council as a team leader in the Urban Renewal Section at the H.Q. in Wakefield. In the run up to the 1974 reorganisation of Local Government Peter was appointed Deputy Director of Planning in the Directorate of Architecture and Planning at Kirklees Metropolitan Council, a post he held until 1989.

Shortly after he moved to Huddersfield in 1974 he chanced to meet Stanley Marsden who lived nearby and occasionally visited the same local hostelry. Stanley persuaded Peter to take up membership of the YRC again which he did in 1975.

Upon retirement from Kirklees, Peter took a three year appointment with the Overseas Development Agency as the Planning Officer of Anguilla in the West Indies. He also spent three months as a Planning Adviser in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

On rejoining the YRC, Peter's activities were to be predominantly on the fells. After a couple of descents below ground he decided that caving was no longer for him.

He had a great fondness for LHG and was the instigator of a long standing annual reunion of former colleagues who for many years used the hut for the meet.

Peter was a good companion on the hills, a most sociable man with an infectious sense of humour.

Notwithstanding his birth outside the County he was a true Yorkshireman and will be missed by his friends. Our condolences go to his wife and family."

ROBERT LEAKEY 1914 - 2013

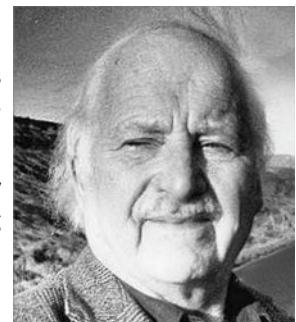
Leakey was a character, quite possibly an eccentric, but of a heroic mould. It was probably in his genes as he came from just such a family.

Born in Kenya, to missionary parents, one brother, serving in the King's African Rifles, was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously and another won a Military Cross and became a major-general.

Bob's cousin, Louis, was the eminent archaeologist and anthropologist of fossil finding fame in Kenya and Tanzania.

During the early war years Bob was an aircraft designer with Vickers Aviation, being called up in 1942 serving as a paratrooper in India and Burma. During his spare time he climbed in the Himalayas, making two unsuccessful attempts, one solo, on the then unclimbed Bandarpunch (20,720ft.)

Later he would climb the Matterhorn.



Back in England he solo free-dived naked into a sump in Disappointment Pot (in January would you believe) to kick out a blockage converting it into a “duck”

After the war he returned to Yorkshire, moving to Settle and later to Giggleswick.

Engineer and inventor, manufacturer, salesman (including “Leakey boats”), an enthusiastic campaigner against almost everything it seemed including pollution, war, capitalism moneytheism, psychosis, censorship, tobacco, the Chemical Industry and corrupt planning. Sometime magistrate, he stood for the local council and as a candidate for the Craven parliamentary constituency twice having formed his own party; indeed a character.

His real claim to fame in our circles however was as a caver and cave explorer.

He is best-known for his discovery and exploration of Mossdale Caverns notorious as probably being Britain’s most testing cave system because it involves crawling and squeezing along narrow and often submerged or flood-prone passages for much of its over five miles in length

Leakey took up caving to overcome his claustrophobia and found Mossdale during his time as an aircraft designer. His solo exploration them during 1941 was a feat of incredible courage and endurance and not a little luck. Time and again using elementary equipment, like candles and bicycle lamps, and wearing an old boiler suit he frequently ended up sleeping in the mud in the passages. He slowly kept pushing further, worming his way slowly to the furthest extremities of the cave system, free-diving a number of short sumps.

He continued to be active in the caves of the Yorkshire Dales throughout the 1950s, participating in several rescues.

PENNINE WAY EXTENSION?

This is a report and a review of a publishing endeavour by our member Ian Laing. Contact Ian directly to obtain copies of the book.

The Roaches to Edale (Pennine Way Extension)

Written and published by Ian Laing & David Allard, 2011

This booklet is in A5 format with 14 pages of text with diagrams for each stage of the walk, wire bound with durable plastic cover using a font reminiscent of the books of Alfred Wainwright. The Pennine Way was, in 1935, the inspiration of Tom Stephenson, who decided that the southern end of the Pennines was in Edale, Derbyshire.

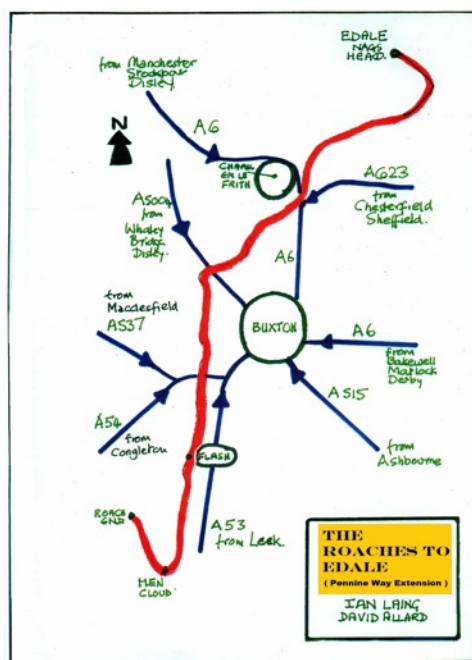
The authors of this splendid booklet, resident in the Peak for many years, have nursed the thought that there ought to be a route connecting the southern end of the Pennines to the actual southern end of the Pennines at the Roaches.

The Booklet describes such a route connecting Edale to the Roaches (including Hen Cloud and the full length of the Roaches to Roach End). The extension is about 28 miles long.

The selection of the Roaches as the southern terminus of the Pennines may not find universal support; there are other possibilities. For example Wainwright apparently favoured the end of Dovedale.

The authors feel that Roaches/Hen Cloud present such a dramatic start/finish to a walk related to the Pennines, that it seemed the most obvious and appropriate choice and hopefully most readers will agree. The route follows as closely as possible, the watershed (avoiding offshoot valleys) and for much of the way follows a logical north/south direction.

Perhaps, as the numbers traversing the Pennine Way have dropped from around 15,000 to 4,000 per year, this route extension is just what is needed.



Alan Linford



Constitution

The Club's rules and bye-laws are printed in journal series 13 issue 11 - Summer 2011

Enquiries regarding the possible hire of Club cottages should be addressed to

**Richard Josephy
135 Divinity Road
Oxford OX4 1LW
Tel. 01865 723630
bookings@yrc.org.uk**

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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

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

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THE YRC

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club

Established 1892

The Mountaineering and Caving Club

www.yrc.org.uk



The aims of the Club are to organise walking, mountaineering and skiing excursions; to encourage the exploration of caves and pot-holes; to conduct expeditions to remote parts of the planet, the pursuit of other outdoor activities and the gathering and promoting of knowledge concerning natural history, archaeology, geology, folklore and other kindred subjects.

Editor

**Roy Denney, 33 Clovelly Road, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8AE
Editor@YorkshireRamblers.Org.UK**

Secretary

**Tim Josephy
Secretary@YorkshireRamblers.Org.UK**

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