David Miller, President 1988-1990.

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AGM AND DINNER, 1988

Colin Shone

It would be a brave man who would draw comparisons between Hilary Moffat and the current incumbent of 10 Downing Street, but perhaps the two most significant events in a fairly full 1988 A.G.M. agenda were the completion of Hilary's two year Presidential term and the almost wholesale ministerial reshuffle which accompanied it. Reporting Hilary's election in 1986 Harry Griffin described her as a busy Cumbrian housewife and climber. The compliments extended upon her retirement were indicative of the mark she had made over the previous two years in all aspects of the Club's activities while Peter's continuing robustness confirmed that domestic services had in no way deteriorated. David Miller, elected to the Presidency with acclamation, was the first to admit that he had a hard act to follow. Fell and Rock Presidents, however, are rather like Welsh outside halves – the good ones keep coming up. And so it is with the other duties in the Club and David's accession was attended by the induction of a largely new but no doubt capable team. The valedictions and salutations to the retiring and incoming officers, wardens and committee members were most ably extended by Audrey Sutcliffe.

With regard to the actual business transacted at the meeting it was largely a case of "Small earthquake in Chile – not many hurt". Minor verbal skirmishes occurred over the changes in treatment now to be accorded in Club publications to obituaries and book reviews and Club members seeking adequate recognition upon departure to the Great Belay in the Sky would now be well-advised to achieve extensive prior publication and thus gain entrance by both doors. A report by John Hartley, newly elected as Vice-President, kept the Scottish broth-pot boiling in a more realistic and encouraging way while Paddy O'Neill, as outgoing Secretary, provided a perceptive and not-too-cynical view of the Club year and of secretarial machinations which would probably repay publication in its own right.

Of the Dinner itself there is little to say except that Pickles II obviously learnt much at the parental knee and has the manager and staff at the Shap Wells clearly under control. With no fear of contradiction one may assert that there were quite a few people present and that a good time was had by all – especially by our Chief Guest, Trevor Jones, who told a large number of entertaining stories the doubtful relevance of which he readily admitted, without once mentioning his recently published history of Lakeland climbing.

As to the rest the weather was fair to good and there was much coming and going on the hills. What more could one require?

AGM AND DINNER, 1989

Paul Exley

Once again the Shap Wells Hotel witnessed the congregation from afar of members both ancient and modern to participate in two days of intensive fellowship with a measure of light exercise.

The weather was as good as may be expected in early November. Saturday brought showers of rain, sleet or hail (depending on altitude) but with some outbreaks of lovely, yellow, low sun which generated breathtaking colours on autumnal leaves. On Sunday it was drier but colder. Mardale, Swindale and Wet Sleddale were much visited whilst to the other side the northern and southern Howgills and Wild Boar Fell areas were explored, amongst many others.

There were no unpleasant surprises at the A.G.M. and little to upset the acceptance of committee nominations except a vote for elective members. A mild debate about subscriptions resulted in agreement to increase them to £20 for 1990, after several years at £15. Tim Pickles explained the proposed hotel booking procedure for the 1990 A.G.M. Charles Pickles spoke warmly of Muriel Files's devotion to a number of club offices over many years – sentiments which received widespread support. A.B. inquired wryly if anyone knew anything about the benefactor C. Waters who "died at such a convenient time". Fortunately, Gil Lewis was able to shed some light.

The dinner itself was a minor miracle of organisation with a small army of waiters and waitresses scurrying in well-drilled manoeuvres to serve four delicious courses to a multitude whose appetites had been enhanced by hours of upland fresh air. In the Presidential speech, David Miller recalled the most memorable events in the club's year and admitted to having been outwalked on the so-called "geriatric meet" at Dundonnell. He too praised Muriel Files for her hard work on the club's behalf over very many years of service. He also thanked the "Scottish hut" team, and particularly John Hartley for strenuous efforts during the last two or three years which resulted in our successful bid for the former police station at Kinlochleven. David welcomed our guests from the other senior clubs, thanked them for helping to make the dinner such a success and proposed a toast to them.

A breakdown in the hotel's public address system was fortunately able to be overcome by pressing into service the amplifiers and speakers of Flintstones who were to provide the disco. Thus the President and the Chief Guest, Ian McNaught-Davis were able to add ventriloquism to their many talents. Lips moved at the front; sound came from the side.

Those of us at that side heard the speeches dreadfully well.

Mac, who is Vice-President of the British Mountaineering Council, drew laughter and applause for his ribald stories of some FRCC characters. However, the important and serious message of his speech related to the problems, both at home and internationally, which are the direct results of the popularity of our sport. He spoke of access by limited numbers of permit holders to Belgian crags and the widespread erosion of footpaths, especially in the Lakes and Snowdonia. Despite the evidently detrimental effect of our activities on the fabric of the hills, Mac toasted "The Club".

The evening continued with dancing, or rhythmic twitching after the PA system had been restored to a disco. It was an evening when old friendships were renewed and many fatigued voices had to be kept well lubricated.

After Sunday's recovery period, Peter Fleming gave a superb lecture in wonderfully laid-back, matter-of-fact delivery about his sometimes hair-raising exploits among the Alpine 4000 metres summits. It was illustrated by his slides, some of which were achingly and starkly serene whilst the overall quality was (to a would-be photographer) of quite depressing excellence.

Our thanks once again to Tim Pickles for organising such a full weekend of enjoyable activities.

THE GREAT CHASE: THE SEARCH FOR WATERS COTTAGE

John Hartley

Just before an Easter break in the early 60s a heavily laden A35 van battled over the old Shap Road (A6) bound for Glencoe. The weather, as usual, was vile. As driver, I felt as though I were the helmsman of a lifeboat rather than a driver of a motor vehicle as the van submerged between the waves of rain and spray billowing out from the wheels of north-bound trucks.

Some six hours later we were putting up a tent in Glencoe, optimistically looking forward to an Easter's mountaineering in the magnificent mountains of Lorne and Lochaber. The first day was a traverse of the Aonach Eagach ridge in horizontal driving sleet. We got back to the tent soaked, wriggled out of our wet clothes and into dry sleeping bags and made a meal. The weather was getting worse. The tent was firmly anchored but the fabric began to rip around one of the poles and, before long, the tent became a disaster area. In an increasingly violent storm, we donned our somewhat moist gear, collapsed the tent and bundled it, still wet and dripping, into the back of the van. The three of us followed it in and without a further word I turned the van towards the Lake District. We arrived at Brackenclose in the early hours of the morning and quietly found vacant bunks. I remember thinking to myself just before slipping into a deep exhausted sleep, "gosh, I wish we had a hut in Scotland".

I became aware that David Roberts raised the matter of purchasing a hut in Scotland during his presidency. A property was found called "Brecklet House" in Ballachulish and members of the Committee had been to examine the property and come away with mixed feelings. A surveyor's report had been obtained and this had not made very attractive reading. Apparently, after several meetings spread over a considerable period of time, the project died a death and little more positive was done until a cottage was found in Glencoe which again needed substantial structural work and which, at the end of the day, would have provided only modest-sized accommodation. This matter was not pursued any further.

I had gathered that the surveyor's report had rather disturbed and demoralised the Committee. Such reports always stress the defects and difficulties associated with any property; remember always that the surveyor is not only looking at the building but watching his own back as

well. One has to become used to reading these documents and getting the feel of what is meant in reality by the various terms used. One should look at them carefully, but with a degree of optimism. I had felt that this was lacking in the Committee's considerations of this report. Let's face it, a surveyor's report of Rawhead Barn would probably not make such agreeable reading.

I was elected to the Committee just as the interest in this property was fading away but I immediately joined the supporters of the Scottish Hut Project. A variable "sub-committee" was to be formed if an appropriate property was found and from there on I endeavoured to obtain as much information as possible about the property market in the Glencoe, Onich, Fort William area. A subscription was made to the Oban Times for regular copies to be sent to my office, frequent forays were made to the area, where I visited Hamish MacInnes and Peter Weir who was particularly helpful with his suggestions and comments. In fact, Peter Weir's guest-house in Glencoe Village became headquarters for our many visits.

Turning over the pages of the Oban Times one day, my eyes let upon an advert for a property called "Gardeners Cottage" near to Ardrhu House which is situate on the point at the junction of Loch Leven and Loch Lhinne. Onich always seems to have its own microclimate (look at the Palm trees outside the Craig Dhu Hotel) and if ever there is any sunshine in the area it is always at Onich. Ardrhu Point is an idyllic situation with views over both lochs and a distant view into the Glencoe mountains. Victorians always knew a good building site when they saw one. In the garden of the house had been built a number of holiday homes and, in fact, Gardeners Cottage had been converted into such a unit. A number of members went to inspect and found the situation most attractive although the accommodation was rather small. The house was basically in good condition and as one of the visitors said "we could hold a meet here next week". I contacted our Solicitors and Estate Agents in Fort William (I had spoken to one of the partners who himself is a climber some time previously and sought his firm's assistance and help which was readily given throughout this period of time) and an offer was made. I am looking now at my file and see a letter dated 30th March 1988 when Mr. MacPhee of MacArthur Stewart & Company of Fort William, wrote to me advising that the selling agents had declined our offer. "The only reason that they are doing so is because they are frightened that a sale to a climbing club would have an adverse effect on the sale of the adjoining properties. The price and other conditions are entirely acceptable." This was a blow I had not envisaged and rang up

the selling agents in Edinburgh who sounded a rather top-drawer set-up. Having interrupted the pause for morning coffee of the partner involved, I explained to him that members of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District did not roll up to their huts in "Tranni" vans, fall out of the back door in lumps and vomit into the nearest hedgerow. I admit to some fairly outrageous name-dropping and virtually assured the gentleman that it was a prerequisite to membership of the Club that one owned a Porsche. If there were to be any future visits in connection with this particular transaction Stephen Porteous was obviously our man. However, my pleading was in vain and the whole holiday complex was later sold to one purchaser.

Back to the Oban Times. During the course of my work, which seriously impinges upon climbing time, I have to deal with people who are deeply disappointed because they have not been able to buy what they thought was the house of their dreams. So it was with Gardeners Cottage and I had to tell myself to take my own advice, and that is, however disappointed you are, one invariably finds a better property some time later.

On a visit, I looked at a small house on the way to Appin from Ballachulish. The asking price was £45,000 and that seemed, at that time, far in excess of what the Committee considered to be a reasonable price to pay. There was a very suitable property for sale at the back of Glencoe Village. We had very little time to make up our minds and, in fact, could hardly do so within the time available before "the closing date".

The closing date is a feature of property transactions in Scotland. When a property is offered for sale, prospective purchasers have to arrange their surveys, ensure that they have finance available, and when they have gone to the trouble and expense of making these arrangements, they then make a written offer to the seller or his Solicitors or Agents, and these offers have to be in the hands of the seller or his Solicitor or Agents by the closing date. On that date they are opened and the seller then has the choice of considering the various offers and selling to the highest bidder or alternatively the person he thinks most suitable. So far as a buyer is concerned, this system is far worse than buying a property at auction, as one does not know the amount of the opposition's bid.

As I mentioned before, in these circumstances we had to arrange surveys and discuss whether the property met the criteria which the Committee finally set down. These criteria were:-

The Official Opening of Waters Cottage. President David Miller presents the Golden Key to Warden Alan Rowland and Assistant Warden Cynthia Grindley. *Photograph by Ron Townsend.*

1. The property should be within easy driving distance of the Glencoe mountains and Ben Nevis;

2. It must be of a size sufficient to accommodate twelve persons at least;

3. There should be land available for car parking and perhaps even camping;

4. It should be near other habitations so that it would have the benefit of neighbours to protect it from vandalism.

So far as the property in Glencoe was concerned, we had only about ten days before the closing date to arrange and consider all these matters. It was impossible.

There was a Committee meeting around this time which I failed to attend. In my absence, the Committee, to quote a line from Pink Floyd, had a "momentary lapse of reason" and put your money, dear Members, where my mouth was and instructed me to make an offer on any property that I thought suitable within the area under consideration. I was absolutely amazed and then became very worried by the prospect but said "Yes, I would". If a property were found which satisfied the above criteria so far as was reasonably possible then I was to contact as many members of the variable sub-committee as possible, endeavour to persuade them to visit Scotland with me to view the property and then make arrangements for surveys, etc.

More visits to Scotland followed and I became rather despondent with what I found. In July 1988 I wrote to Paddy O'Neill as follows – "It is quite obvious that there is a substantial boom in the property prices in the Glencoe/Onich area. The last cottage apparently went for £43,000 and was nowhere near as good a proposition as Gardeners Cottage for which we offered £33,000. Our agents in Fort William also confirmed this trend in prices. Unfortunately, I now feel that the club has been priced out of the market for a property in the Glencoe/Onich area."

The rising price of property also brought another consideration into play. The cost of building in north-west Scotland is comparatively high. When the search for a property was started, it was obviously a far more viable financial proposition to purchase an existing building where the least amount of work as possible was required. By this time a small two up two down cottage in Glencoe was in the £45,000 bracket. Remember those upstairs rooms with the little comb windows? No room for bunks. Should we consider looking for land to build a purpose-built hut? The search widened now for a building plot. The creation of the West Highland Way and the expectation of greater skiing areas north of Fort William was also having its effect on the market. My feelings about the project became more and more gloomy.

The Oban Times for Thursday, 15th December, 1988, arrived at the office in its usual paper wrapper. There was a cottage (unmodernised) at Lochyside by Fort William comprising two rooms and scullery on the ground floor and two bedrooms and bathroom on upper floor with a very large outbuilding formerly a hay shed. Region £28,000 – closing date for offers noon January 11th. This property was being sold by our own agents and a call to them elicited that they expected the property to "sell well" and that the final price would be in excess of £28,000 (in the event it was £36,000).

A little further down the property adverts, I saw "Old Police Station, Kinlochleven". This property appeared to be a bungalow and a large detached outbuilding. The bungalow required extensive refurbishment although the outbuilding was in generally good repair. Formal offers in excess of £14,000 were invited. I carried on reading down the column of properties. At that time one could not buy a semi-detached run-down dog kennel in north-west Scotland at £14,000 or anywhere near it. I formed a visual impression of the extensive refurbishment including the rebuilding of most of the major walls, together with the construction of a roof, before anything else could be done. I thought nothing more of it.

I used to ring Cynthia Grindley up from time to time to see if she was aware of any properties that might be coming for sale in the area. In fact, I hadn't rung Cynthia recently at all. "How are you Cynthia – alright?" Her professional position as district nurse in the Glencoe area does, of course, give her a certain intuitive understanding as to which particular properties may be coming up for sale in the not too distant future. I will say nothing more. Cynthia did remark that another climbing club had been making enquiries about the Old Police Station at Kinlochleven. "What was it like?" I asked. "Not so bad really" was the reply. "I think you should look into it." My next call was immediately to Peter Weir in Glencoe for further information. He believed that the property had been empty for two years, but that it was in quite reasonable condition. I asked about the detached modern building and was told that this, in fact, had been the proposed nerve-centre for the administration of north-west Scotland in the event of a nuclear attack as it was a steel-reinforced concrete bunker without windows, but containing all necessary facilities. I made arrangements with Peter that he would speak to a local builder and arrange a meeting at the property that very weekend. David Miller was, by this time, our President and on that evening I telephoned him and he now takes up his part of the story . . .

WATERS COTTAGE: THE FIRST YEAR

David Miller

One Friday evening, early in January 1989, John Hartley rang to tell me that the Old Police Station in Kinlochleven was being offered for sale and that it might be suitable for use as a Club hut. John had been searching for premises in Scotland for the Club for some time and, following a preliminary inspection and report by Cynthia Grindley, he thought that it may be worth pursuing. So early next morning, in company with Tom Parker, we set off for Kinlochleven, where we met Alan Rowland who had come over from Edinburgh. The weather was atrocious, with heavy rain and gale force winds.

The Particulars of Sale were not promising:- "The bungalow is in poor repair and would require extensive refurbishment. Offers in excess of £14,000." The photos which accompanied the particulars showed the premises looking run-down and depressing.

So when we got there we were pleasantly surprised; the bungalow looked much better than we had expected to find it. It was soundly built and although unoccupied, even following a period of wet and windy weather, it was essentially dry. Our view, and that of the local builder who we had invited to inspect the premises, was that it was simply in need of maintenance, decoration and limited fitting out.

In addition, alongside, was the equally large Civil Defence building, which was built in solid walls with few windows and a concrete flat roof. It was in remarkably good condition considering its recent neglect and clearly had potential for future development. The site itself was pleasantly located in a residential area on the outskirts of the township.

It was clear from our inspection of the Police Station, the amount of interest being shown by prospective purchasers, and the price fetched by properties recently sold in the area that a substantial bid would be needed to secure it. The following day we braved the floods and gales to tour the Glencoe and Fort William areas, looking at properties which were for sale or had recently been sold, in order to provide a basis for comparing value with the Police Station. It was soon clear that properties in those areas which were far less suitable for Club use, and in poorer condition, were selling for sums in excess of the finance we had available, which at that time had been set by the Committee at £45,000. It was suggested that the Police Station may fetch over £30,000 which exceeded the professional valuation we subsequently received, but at the end of that weekend we were of the opinion that it would be worth the Club bidding a sum in the region of £40,000 to acquire the property.

Two weeks later the Committee agreed to bid just over £40,000 and then the waiting began. First, we heard that we had put in the highest bid, apparently by a small margin. Then we had to wait until the planning authority considered our application for 'change of use'. Finally, permission was granted and the purchase was completed in June.

THE SEARCH FOR WATERS COTTAGE
(continued)

John Hartley

After our inspection it was felt that the Old Police Station was definitely worth further investigation. It is always useful to obtain the feelings of anyone who is working in the building industry in any particular area and I was therefore interested to ask the builder who met us at the Old Police Station that damp and dank Saturday morning, what he thought the value of the building might be. After squinting sideways at some other people inspecting the property at the same time, he suggested probably £30,000 or a little more. The other people viewing were locals who, I think, were in business in Kinlochleven. I began the usual round of telephone calls to the surveyor and our Solicitors and discovered that the surveyor had, in fact, already inspected the property on behalf of other clients so that I was able to negotiate a report at half the usual fee. As I mentioned earlier, this system of purchasing a property in Scotland can be very expensive and I had already expended several hundred pounds of the Club's funds in survey fees and other expenses. I know that Hilary Moffat, who was President for most of the time that I was carrying out these abortive investigations, used to have nightmares about the cost involved and rather thought the Club may consider surcharging her for part of them. Hilary bore a great deal of anxiety and heartache about this project and I do not think that we should forget her efforts made and anxieties borne on behalf of the Club.

The surveyor suggested to me by telephone that any bid in excess of £30,000 should stand a good chance of effecting a purchase. A telephone call to our Solicitors in Fort William elicited the fact that they had been instructed to act on behalf of eight potential purchasers. They could not advise me as to the amount required for a successful bid as that would obviously be acting against the interests of their other prospective clients. (The builder had said £30,000 or a little more, the surveyor had said a bid in excess of £30,000 should be successful but, of course, the question was how much in excess of £30,000.) I felt very oppressed by the situation. Not knowing the amount of the other interested parties bids, I could, of course, commit the Club to a price which may have been £5,000 or more in excess of any other bid. There was a further discussion with the surveyor in which it transpired that his suggested figure of £30,000 or more was based upon the Police Station building only, and

little consideration seemed to have been paid to the Civil Defence bunker. I argued that as this building was in existence and had drainage and services to it, it must have a site value which could in those circumstances be £10,000. Eventually, after discussion, it was decided that the Club should bid £40,000 for the two buildings. Why then bid £40,350 you may ask. In the event of someone else coming to the same conclusion as the Club, they would probably decide to clinch the transaction with a bid of £40,250. If there were such a person I would bid £40,350 and that was how the eventual offer was formulated.

The offer was prepared following the form prescribed by our Solicitors in Fort William and was made subject to us obtaining planning consent for a change of use from Police Station to Climbing Club Hut. It was not thought that such a condition was unreasonable as very few people would expect to continue using it as a Police Station and all offers were likely to be conditional. By lunch time of the closing day, I could not resist the temptation any longer and telephoned a young lady called Isobel Patience in Inverness who was on the staff of the Director of Law and Administration of the Highland Regional Council. She told me that our bid was the highest and would be accepted subject to the appropriate Committee accepting our condition. She expressed the view that this was unlikely to cause any difficulty. This news was, of course, an immense relief and I felt confident that all future events would click into place and the Club would be the proud owner of a Scottish Hut. I use the word "club" in this context as being the majority of the members as I am painfully aware that one cannot please all of the people all of the time. However, I have been greatly encouraged by the reports that I have heard about the Hut and no-one has, as yet, shaken me warmly by the throat.

I thank the Club for the opportunity which it afforded to me to become so involved and instrumental in the most important project of the Club in recent years, the purchase of what is now Waters Cottage.

WATERS COTTAGE: THE FIRST YEAR *(continued)*

David Miller

At a Committee meeting held late in June Alan Rowland was appointed as Warden and a small Sub-Committee was established, initially with authority to spend up to £5,000 on essential repairs and improvements.

I had taken the opportunity, during a wet day on the Spring Bank Holiday Meet in Glencoe, to measure up the bungalow and prepare a plan, but the first working visit to Kinlochleven was in early July. Keith Wright came round with his big van, together with John Robinson. We loaded it up with furniture and appliances we had been able to acquire and sped north to reach the Clachaig Inn for the last pint. On Saturday Cynthia Grindley joined us at the Old Police Station and we commenced by clearing out rubbish and assessing the building and repair works which would be needed before it could be used as a Hut.

A quotation was then obtained for work on the bungalow from R. Watt, Builder, of Ballachulish, who had accompanied us when we first inspected the property. The works included bricking up un-necessary external doors, repairs to roofs and gutters, external painting, provision of separate toilet facilities and renewal of the plumbing system. At this stage it had been decided to concentrate work on the bungalow, which could be readily converted for use, and to leave the Civil Defence building, with the exception of work to secure and weatherproof it.

The builder commenced work promptly, early in August, and the following weekend Christine and I had a slow journey to Kinlochleven in a hired Luton van, transporting furniture donated by Peter Williams and bunk beds acquired from Hawkshead Youth Hostel. We were met there by Alan Rowland and found that building work was in full swing, with partly bricked-up external doors and all the plumbing stripped out. But not to worry – Alan had been to the pub and brought bottled water – to go with the whisky! On Sunday morning Ken and Pat Andrews arrived for a few days stay to find things much less orderly than they may have wished. However, they proceeded to 'set up camp' in the bungalow and spent their time usefully, cleaning and painting the bunk beds between forays onto the hills.

Most people then retired to the Alps for summer holidays, leaving the builder to contend with the exceptionally wet August in Kinlochleven. Although this prevented much activity outside the internal work was

substantially completed by early September. About this time, on a visit to Scotland, Stan Roberts inspected and tested the electrical system and prepared a report with recommendations for electrical works. A quotation was obtained from a local electrician who subsequently carried out the works to upgrade and extend the system.

The next major step forward followed later in September when Alan Rowland and Gill Lewis carried out the daunting task of power sanding and sealing all the floors in the bungalow. This work had a dramatic effect in improving the appearance and would make cleaning easy in the future.

The time was then right to call on the members who had volunteered to help to prepare the bungalow for use and a large working party assembled on the weekend of 20-21 October. The Civil Defence building provided sleeping space and served as a workshop, whilst frantic activity took place in every room in the bungalow. The kitchen was fitted out with shelving, shower cubicles were installed and most of the rooms were decorated. The Warden helped to keep up the workers spirits with haggis and neeps for lunch, washed down with a tot of whisky. By the end of the weekend curtains had been made up and fitted, bunks and furniture installed, and it was very satisfying to leave for home with the knowledge that the cottage was ready for use.

The Annual General Meeting followed two weeks later and members present were consulted on the Committee's suggested name for the cottage. At about the time that consideration was being given to the purchase of the Old Police Station it was learnt that Chris Waters had left his entire estate to the Club, amounting to over £40,000. There was no stipulation as to how the legacy was to be spent, but this most generous gesture both influenced the Committee's attitude to the amount of the bid and associated our benefactor with the eventual acquisition. It was thought that Chris Waters would have approved the use of the legacy for the acquisition of a Scottish Hut and the A.G.M. was unanimous in supporting the Committee's proposal to name it "Waters Cottage".

By the end of the year all the initial building works had been completed on the cottage and a large party of members celebrated Hogmanay in the comfort of the cottage. There were still plenty of jobs to do and improvements to plan when the pattern and extent of use became established, but in less than one year after we heard of the sale of the Old Police Station the Club had another 'home', for the first time outside the Lake District.

The Club owes a great debt to the small but enthusiastic group of members whose efforts have led to the acquisition and development of

Waters Cottage. In particular, John Hartley, who led the search to find and acquire suitable premises in Scotland, and Alan Rowland, the first Warden, who dedicated himself to the development of the cottage for use by members.

WATERS COTTAGE: THE OFFICIAL OPENING, 6th MAY, 1990

Alan Rowland

The weather, at least and at last, was typical of the month: blustery, showery, cool, with glorious occasional shafts of sun and a sprinkle of snow on the tops to freshen the last traces of winter drifts. A small group passed the day in the seemingly endless finishing and tidying, both inside and outside; others joined the Meet parties on local hills.

As the 6pm deadline approached members arrived in various states of dampness. A small group of our neighbours, with whom we have so far had too little contact, were a welcome addition. Eventually the President was able to address the sixty members present, perfectly timed with a little local shower.

The President described the history of the search for a hut in Scotland, which commenced in David Roberts' Presidency and was continued by Hilary Moffat. Doubts about entering into such a commitment were strong in the early days and frustrations later arose when suitable premises could not be acquired with the finance then available. Vice-President John Hartley then spearheaded the Club's search for premises and eventually was successful in finding the Old Police Station in Kinlochleven, coinciding with the fortuitous bequest from Chris Waters.

David Miller went on to describe the development of the property for use by the Club, initially by employing local builders and finally by the considerable efforts of a small group of members. Finally the President thanked all those members who had helped in the project and particularly Alan Rowland, the Warden, and Cynthia Grindley, his assistant.

The great golden key, made by T.R. Burnett and originally used in the opening of the Salving House in 1953, was ceremonially handed to the Warden and Waters Cottage officially declared open.

Following the official business, punch was served and the traditional tea and cakes followed in abundance. All the visitors were invited, indeed pressed, to sign the register.

It is impossible to thank individually all those who have made Waters Cottage possible. It would be remiss not to record the initial commitment of David Roberts during his Presidency and the continuing efforts of Presidents Hilary Moffat and David Miller in subsequent years. The skill of John Hartley in negotiating the purchase and all those who worked in making the property habitable must also be placed on record.

Finally, the Warden would like to record his gratitude to those who used the cottage through one of the wettest and windiest winters in the century, thereby sustaining his hopes that a Scottish Hut is a viable proposition.

Scafell, 7th Remember, 1987

Now might I lie down and die;
No need now for climbing higher;
No need now for self-reliance;
Gone the thrusting lust for life;
For as blowing snow may numb and
Overcome a rawbrick walker, a
Dome of pleasure smothered me.

Fox-cubs moist from a hidden den
Emerging to an upstairs world, we found
Ourselves islanders with shy land around.
Here was Heaven's half-way house:
A crumpled counterpane of cloud-sea
Skimmed from underfoot, with England
Fined to an archipelago of peaks.

Launcelot would not have spoken
Leaving the gateway to the Grail.
On his bridge of pilgrimage even
Mickledore, engorged with water
White between two black-eyed walls – a
Torrent in a tourniquet –
Kept all but a whisper to himself.

Shipton witnessed Kili from Kenya, its
Great ice-dome deep-ploughing the clouds.
Wiping our reaching eyes, a startled
Cone in white lay by Braemar –
But enough! . . .
Members lucky to be there
Remember, others must search themselves.

Christopher Machen

THE BOTHY ON THE SHORE

Angela Soper

On the last day of July in our lucky year, Cynthia and I stared out from *MV St Ola*. The Old Man of Hoy was hidden to his waist by a grey beard. Somewhere in the gloom must be Rackwick Bay. Did we really want to camp there in such a downpour and wait till it was fit to climb? We had several hours to decide, as the Hoy ferry didn't leave until late afternoon, so we explored Stromness to find the people friendly, the town rain-washed clean and the museum fascinating – a pity it closes for lunch. No one offered any hope for dry weather in the foreseeable future and we concluded that for Orkney "showers and bright periods" means torrential downpour with occasional spells of heavy drizzle. Should we visit Skara Brae instead?

But just suppose it clears in the morning and we're somewhere else, we'll be kicking ourselves. Remembering our knack of being in the right place at the right time we reached a sufficiently positive frame of mind to jump into the little boat. Before we landed the boatman insisted that we advise the coastguard of our intentions and he even wrote the phone number on a scrap of paper, which we accepted for his peace of mind.

First priority, though, was how not to walk the six miles across the island with our heavy sacks in the pouring rain. No problem, if you've got a tongue in your head. The two local cars aren't taxis, but they do meet the boat and will take you from the isolation of the landing stage to the remoteness of Rackwick Bay for £4. Money well spent, we thought, and better still, our driver pointed out the farthest building from the road end – "There's a bothy, if you'd prefer not to camp".

We squelched towards the long, low building in a walled enclosure. "Burnmouth Cottage," said the plaque. "You are welcome to stay free of charge". It is a fine bothy in its own right: clean, dry and spacious. But the situation! At Rackwick the surf breaks on golden sand. Only the highest tides reach the stormbeach of pebbles and boulders that screens the sheep pastures. The burn, now a peaty torrent, meanders down the glen to break through, and the cottage stands on its bank, as near as could safely be to the sea. There are plenty of stepping stones across the burn to where dunes have built up behind the storm beach and salt-loving plants have taken hold. Very soon red sandstone cliffs, steep but loose, cut off the beach and you have to return to explore the other way.

The Old Man of Hoy. *Photograph by Angela Soper.*

Then you see more low buildings like the bothy, a few lived in, with cattle grazing around, but most roofless and derelict. One perches halfway up the northern headland on the way to the Old Man. The former school is now a simple hostel – another reason why we needn't have carried the tent. We beachcombed, found some fairly sound cliff beyond the houses, and realised that it was now only raining in the squalls. For supper we had a feast – salmon from the River Coe, Cynthia's first new potatoes, then fresh raspberries – while hundreds of terns gathered to wheel and soar over the beach.

Gulls, not terns, woke us early. Squalls still arrived but the sky was bright so, more in hope than expectation, we set off up the muddy cliff path. The Old Man is indeed a strange sight when he appears across undulating heather, only to reveal his full stature from the very edge of the cliffs. An on-shore gale threatened to blow us back to the bothy so we quickly slithered down to the base of the stack, thankful that the east face route takes the sheltered side. Never have I rock-climbed, in so many clothes – polar jacket, Goretex cag, the lot. So much for 1st August! Our only spectators were a puffin on the basalt base and a big seal swimming beneath it.

The East Face of the Old Man is not a great climb because the rock behaves as you would expect of red sandstone, especially on the second pitch. Instead of climbing naturally you have to be very careful, trying always to press instead of pull on the holds. There was a lot of gear in-situ, including a very thick fixed rope to retrieve yourself from the free abseil; it was all surprisingly good and looked American. Not only our tent but also our spare rope and most of our rack turned out to be superfluous: we should have brought binoculars and a bottle of wine instead. The climbing didn't compare with the three-star routes we've done in the Lakes this year. Only one late-developer of a fulmar chick still occupied a nest and no bird came near us. Are we the only team not to have been attacked by skuas? The last pitch was the most enjoyable, a steep, clean corner crack on better rock, with the wind whistling through. We stood on the summit, swaying in the gale like loose chimney pots, and Cynthia, now a connoisseur of sea stacks, said she was glad we'd done it but she wouldn't bother again . . . the Old Man of Stoer is a much better climb. I wished a ship would come past; there was nobody to wave to, unless you count a colony of eider ducks on a tidal pool.

It turned out later that some walkers had watched us abseil off and had been amazed that we had climbed the Old Man while they could hardly stand up on the cliffs. Quite a few people visited us in the bothy because they were interested (or curious). We could hardly believe that

Burnmouth Cottage: 'The Bothy on the Shore' Cynthia Grindley outside. *Photograph by Angela Soper.*

our luck had held and we had done the climb already. The wind eased but the sea stayed lively. I wandered about at dusk looking for otters in the burn but only saw a baby seal trapped in a rock pool until the tide came in. The terns again put on the main show of the evening. Cynthia and I watched it for a while. Eventually we snuggled down with the bothy door open as the oyster-catchers took over the stage.

MINUS ONE DIRECT

Ron Kenyon

When one thinks of climbing on Ben Nevis one tends to think of either winter routes or the summer classics of Centurion or The Bat. When looking through Ken Crocket's book on the history of climbing on Ben Nevis a photograph of Minus One Direct caught my eye. This showed a climber climbing a beautiful corner surrounded by more beautiful rock, with the rest of the route towering above him. I had always thought that this area of Ben Nevis was the preserve of the ice technician, with the classic Minus Gullies and the more modern buttress climbs in between. I had thought that if the buttresses go in winter they must be very vegetated enabling use of ice gear but this summer rock route of Minus One Direct had no veg but lots of rock.

In July 1989 Chris and I made our way north with intentions of a route on The Ben. Camping in Glen Nevis we were handy for the walk up but on rising on the Saturday morning there was a lot of cloud about and we thought our plans might be changed for a day in Fort Bill. The weather forecast promised that the cloud would clear towards late morning so with this in mind we set off up the track. The choice of route had not been decided. Neither Chris nor I had climbed Centurion and the thought of another tick in "Hard Rock" was tempting. I was also thinking of Minus One Direct, that photograph and its 900 feet of VS rock.

The path up to The Ben was busy with groups attempting the Three Peaks of Scotland, England and Wales and also the Four Peaks, to include the highest peak in Ireland. We entered the mist just below the Lochan and were being pursued by two rope-clad individuals. An enquiry into their proposed route was answered by "Centurion". We carried on into the mist, awaiting the late morning clearing.

Eventually we reached the CIC Hut just as a group of climbers were leaving. They had had a week there of clear blue skies and perfect rock. The mist, however, persisted and we could just catch the odd glimpse of the North East Buttress, Tower Ridge and the other landmarks of that magnificent north face. I thought that I could probably find the Minus Face more easily than Carn Dearg Buttress and, with the lads who had passed us heading for Centurion, we decided Minus One Direct was to be our route.

The scramble up below Tower Ridge did not seem the same without the snow. There was snow below the Minus Face and we eventually

reached this with the rock face towering above. What a great place! The snow was quite hard and I thought it best to approach from below. We should perhaps have traversed across the snow below the start of The Long Climb. It seemed most strange crossing this snow to gain the rock. We then followed the bergschrund rightwards below the Minus Face, across Minus Two Gully, to get below our route.

The mist was still with us but surely it would clear soon. Our apparent solitude was broken by the sound of other climbers on The Long Climb and Observatory Ridge. This face is so big, however, that their presence seemed very distant

The first pitch entailed a short slabby wall to gain the corner in the photograph. Excellent rock and protection led on to a sloping glacis belay on the right. Chris soon reached the belay and we felt we were now on our way. The buttress reared above with imposing overhangs. A series of grooves and cracks now led on to an awkward move up left. After a few tries I committed myself and gained the ledge above. A short easy section then led to a belay. The mist was still with us but the rock had the most perfect friction. Two other groups appeared at the foot of the climb and one of them started to follow us. Chris joined me at the belay and I continued up the easy cracks to what the guidebook described as a vast plinth. This pinnacle top is recommended as a belay. However, I continued up right into a short corner and moved awkwardly right onto the face. What a place! Superb friction climbing then followed up to a ledge and a belay. This was great. Chris scampered up the rock with the awkward move onto the face. She reached the ledge and we felt quite committed. The mist around us denied what would have been a spectacular view.

At the right end of the ledge there was an ancient MOAC jammed in a crack, at the foot of a groove. I clipped into the very tatty piece of cord through the MOAC for the move into the groove, which was the technical crux of the route. It took a number of tries to go for the hold in the hope that it would be a good one. Though not brilliant it was sufficient to enable progress up a rightward slanting ramp. What friction and what a position! An awkward mantleshelf, then I gained a ledge on the edge of Minus One Gully. We felt quite lonely on that ledge, the mist still with us, the following party retreating and lots of rock around us. A choice of ways now confronted us. Either a repulsive looking crack above us – the Original Way – or the Serendipity Variation across the face to the left. The Variation looked much more inviting and I made my way across on good holds initially. A few awkward moves enabled me to

Finale Groove (HVS), Boulder Ruckle, Swanage. Climber: Leslie Shore. *Photograph by M. Benwell.*

reach a corner. Which way now? The guide was rather vague here. I set off up the arete, but this looked desperate. I investigated a sling well to the left but thought that this must be on the winter route, which takes a left-hand line. What a place to be in winter! Just left of my initial attempt a series of superb holds led up over an overlap to easier ground and a belay. This was really good! Chris worked her way across the Variation and up the wall to me.

We were just on the left of Minus One Gully and I set off up a groove on reasonable holds but with no gear. At one point I was looking down at a foothold and as my head went up I banged into an overhang. I felt a little queezy and put my hand to my head and felt blood. Oh dear! My worry subsided as I clasped my hat over my head to help the blood to coagulate. On up the groove I went too high and had to down-climb a little to a point where moves across the left wall gained a large niche.

The weather forecast had been wrong in its prediction on the mist. Luckily the slabs were retaining their frictional qualities but the ledges were now becoming quite slippery. Chris joined me in the niche. Surely it cannot be far now?

An interesting hand-traverse left led to the small ledge on the nose of the buttress. Again the mist obscured the view, for which I was partially grateful. A blank slab above us was cut by a thin crack which, though awkward to start, soon yielded and I reached the Great Terrace and more or less the end of the difficulties. When Chris reached the belay we felt refreshment was warranted and we were satisfied to have reached this point. There was still the nagging worry as we had a fair way to go to reach the summit.

A steep flake above led to the crest of the ridge where crampon marks indicated the finish of Minus One Gully just before joining North East Buttress. After a slight detour by mistake onto the choss on the left we found ourselves below the famed Mantrap. Without its winter coat it can be easily bypassed, but taken direct in its correct manner it seems much harder than the Diff grade tagged to the Buttress. The corner above also seemed awkward in its damp condition, especially its finish. Easy scrambling led us on with excitement to the summit plateau. We stumbled over the jumble of stones, which in winter are covered with snow, and reached the eerie summit surrounded by mist. After some 1500 feet of continuous climbing the route had felt almost Alpine and must be one of the best routes of its grade in Scotland.

CONISTON COPPER MINES REDISCOVERED PART III

Peter Fleming

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Introductory Notes

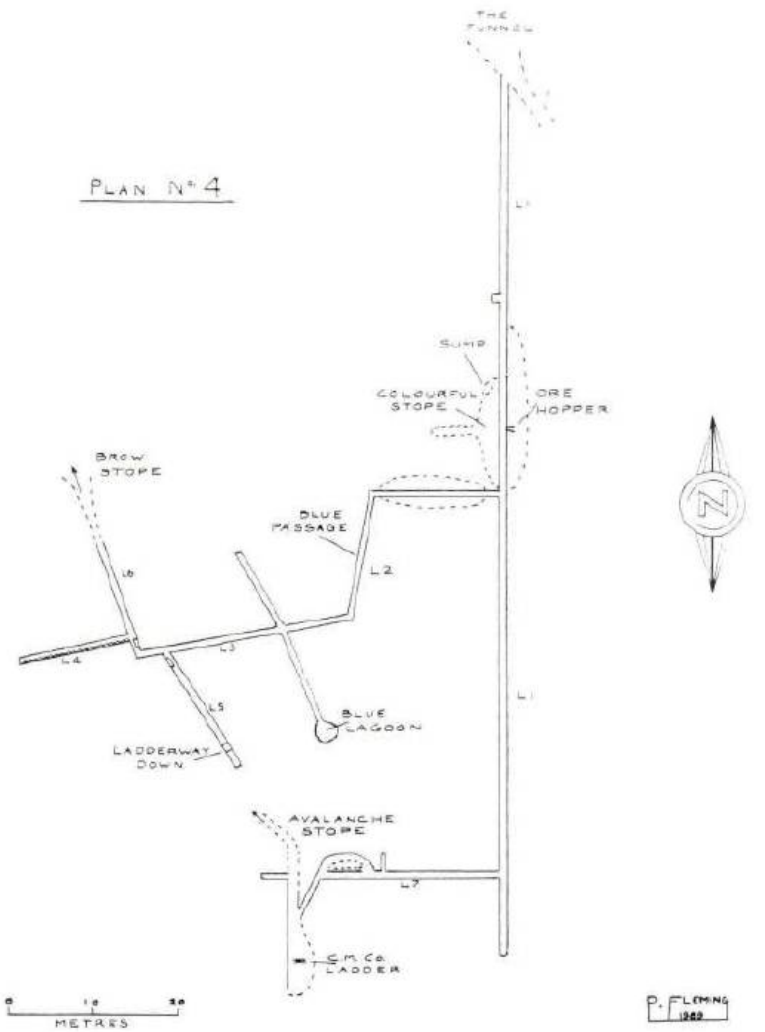
The following record of explorations should be read in conjunction with the three plans and two cross sections which appeared with Part II of this series, published in F.R.C.C. *Journal*, Volume XXIV(3) No. 71, dated 1988. A further set of three new plans and two cross sections will be found within the text of Part III.

THE EXPLORATIONS

We had no reason to suspect that there was a mine driven from the shores of Levers Water other than the obvious workings we had already explored, so it came as a surprise on the 17th November, 1984, when Levers Water Mine was re-discovered – almost by chance. A team of Cumbria Amenity Trust members were doing some research below the "funnel" within the fenced area close to the tarn. One of the group remained above to keep an eye on the abseil rope. To pass the time he began to enlarge a hole which had appeared only recently in the clay bank on the right hand side, looking down. Before long he could shine a light into it and see a tunnel leading off, full of water. This spurred him to greater efforts, and soon a copious flow of water was pouring down the "funnel", washing everything loose before it and falling in a great cascade down the 60 metre pitch; much to the consternation of those below. The noise created by this mini-Niagara made communication difficult. After about an hour, with no sign of the waterfall diminishing, the companion who had triggered it off re-belayed our ropes on a new hanger so that it would be possible to prusik out without getting soaked. Soon all four of us stood watching the torrent racing over the edge of the "Funnel". By this time we were having anxious thoughts about Levers Water. Had we breached it in some way? What would the North West Water Authority say? Would Coniston Village be awash? No one dared to go and look. It was two hours before the water began to subside, and it was obvious that we had unwatered something which was extensive.

Coniston Copper Mines

Paddy End Workings — Levers Water Mine



We enlarged the entrance and scrambled in. The water was now only a foot deep. The tunnel ran due south and after 32 metres entered a worked-out vein overhead with a sump to the right. Climbing the stope, it became more interesting. First there were straw stalactites of iron oxide up to one and a half metres long and only 10mm thick, and also stalagmites. Then a whole wall of colour, ranging from all shades of bright blue through to green and white. This was formed by copper carbonate, leached from the vein above by water percolating from the surface and resulting in this secondary mineralisation.

Continuing along the main tunnel a right-hand branch below more stopes brought us to another colourful spectacle. The floor on the continuation of this tunnel was the most beautiful pale blue, shimmering beneath 3 inches of water. We could see about 13 metres along this "Blue Passage" as we called it, but we decided not to disturb it until it had been recorded on film. However, we were very curious to know where it went. We followed the main tunnel again for another 41 metres to another right-hand branch, where the mud on the floor was covered with miners' clog marks. Nineteen metres further on was a hole in the floor to the right containing the remains of a ladder, and nearby lay old detonator boxes, fuse wire and a small wooden pricker. Moving left brought us into a small stope with a 5 metre ladder against the side. It was in sound condition and safe to climb. Carved on its side was the legend "C.M.Co" (Coniston Mining Company). Nearby were blue and white stalactites and associated stalagmites, also a bat in hibernation, and there were tallow candles everywhere – the place was wick with them!

We were by now surprised at the importance of our discovery, which was not shown on the old Coniston mine plan we had at that time and therefore not expected – and we had not yet seen all of it! At the opposite end of the stope from the ladder a collapsed floor revealed a gaping hole of great depth. Stones thrown down it took an incredible 23 seconds to come to rest. It was later proved that they rolled part of the way, giving no true indication of the depth.

We made our way out to surface where it was dark by now, and decided to come back as soon as possible to survey (see Plan No. 4) and photograph the mine and finish exploring at least the easy parts. Eventually we found that Levers Water Mine was first driven in 1840 and started from a cutting within a few feet of the tarn. The collapsed remains of this are still visible.

The Coniston Mining Company were operating over the period from 1870 to 1891, which indicates that the ladder must be at least 98 years old (at the time of writing). In addition we had noticed some old sacks

which had been used for carrying out ore when the mine was last worked in a small way around 1908, and since then no-one had probably entered this part of the mines.

We returned the following Saturday to carry out a survey and make a photographic record. The "Blue Passage" was entered; 13 metres along it turned right and soon came to a four-way junction. The right branch was partially stoped away with a timber platform overhead, stacked with waste rock. This tunnel was blind after 8 metres. The left branch ended after 13 metres in an alcove filled with a blue pool and flowing into it from the walls was a static cascade of intense blue and green copper carbonates. It was a most beautiful sight – an Aladdin's Cave of colour. It is hoped it will remain undisturbed. There is no reason why it should not. This was named the "Blue Lagoon".

Returning to the junction and turning left, we came to another offset four-way junction. Parts of the floor were false and gaps in the floor gave glimpses into a deep stope below. Straight ahead the tunnel was partially backfilled. To the left, passing over a man-way with a ladder below, the end of the tunnel was reached after 14 metres. Another bat was found hibernating here. Back at the junction and turning right, the floor had collapsed after 11 metres, leaving a deep stope bending away out of sight. It was suspected at the time that this would connect with Brow Stope at the surface, providing access for the bats. This was proved to be correct at a later date. (See Plan No. 3 and Section No. 3.)

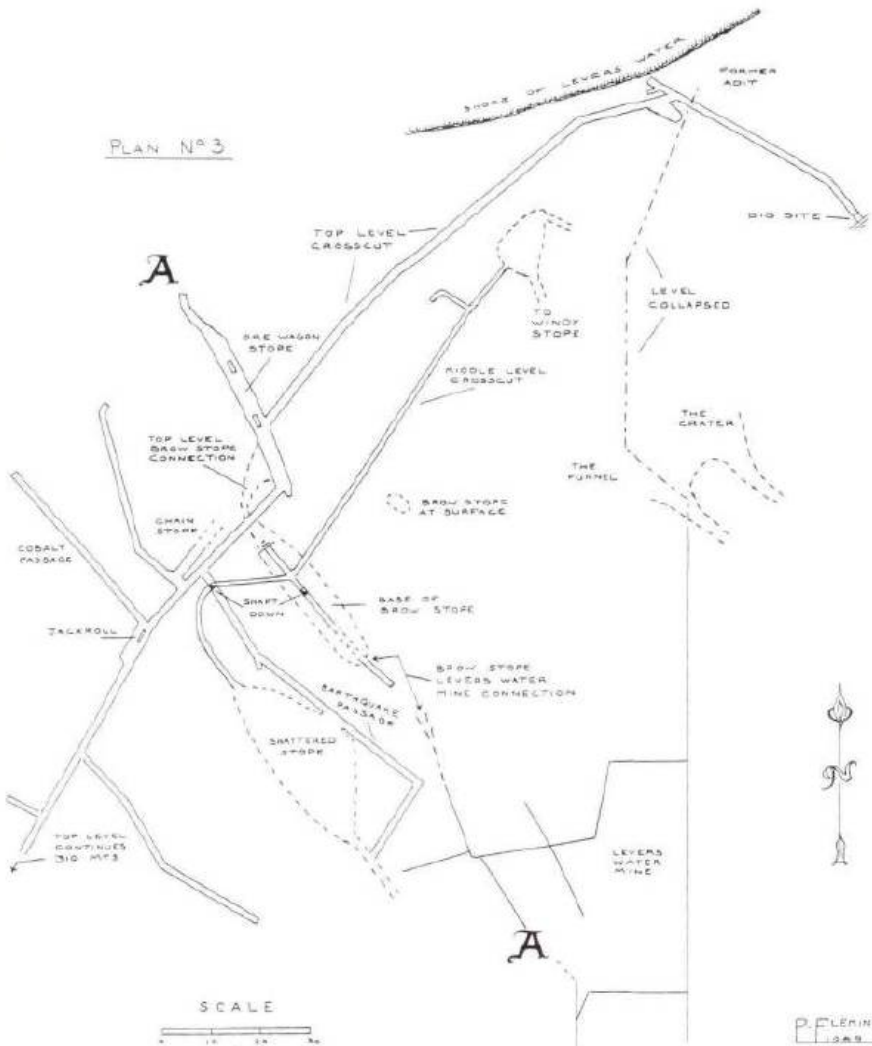
On the 15th December 1984, an attempt was made to descend the deep stope near the C.M.Co ladder. This soon proved to be fraught with problems. The stope was made up of steeply inclined rubble slopes with vertical pitches in between. It was impossible to avoid triggering off avalanches, which shot over the vertical sections with a great roar, to disappear into the depths below. At the bottom of the first slope a wide stress fracture could be entered which served as a take-off point for the vertical 20 metre pitch below. At the base of this a short tunnel could be entered to escape the bombardment of rock whilst other members descended. Then followed another long steep rubble slope. Bolts and hangers were fitted in the walls and the next vertical pitch was descended. Further progress was terminated due to objective dangers, but a total vertical descent of approximately 65 metres had been made from Levers Water Mine. We christened this dangerous area "The Avalanche Stope". Whilst these deep explorations were taking place, another team were busy with a video camera and floodlights, recording the interesting and colourful ramifications of Levers Water Mine.

Twelve months were to elapse before a solitary member reached the bottom from the previous low point in Avalanche Stope on the 22nd

Coniston Copper Mines

Paddy End Workings

Top Level Extension Showing Adjacent Workings on Middle Level & Levers Water Mine

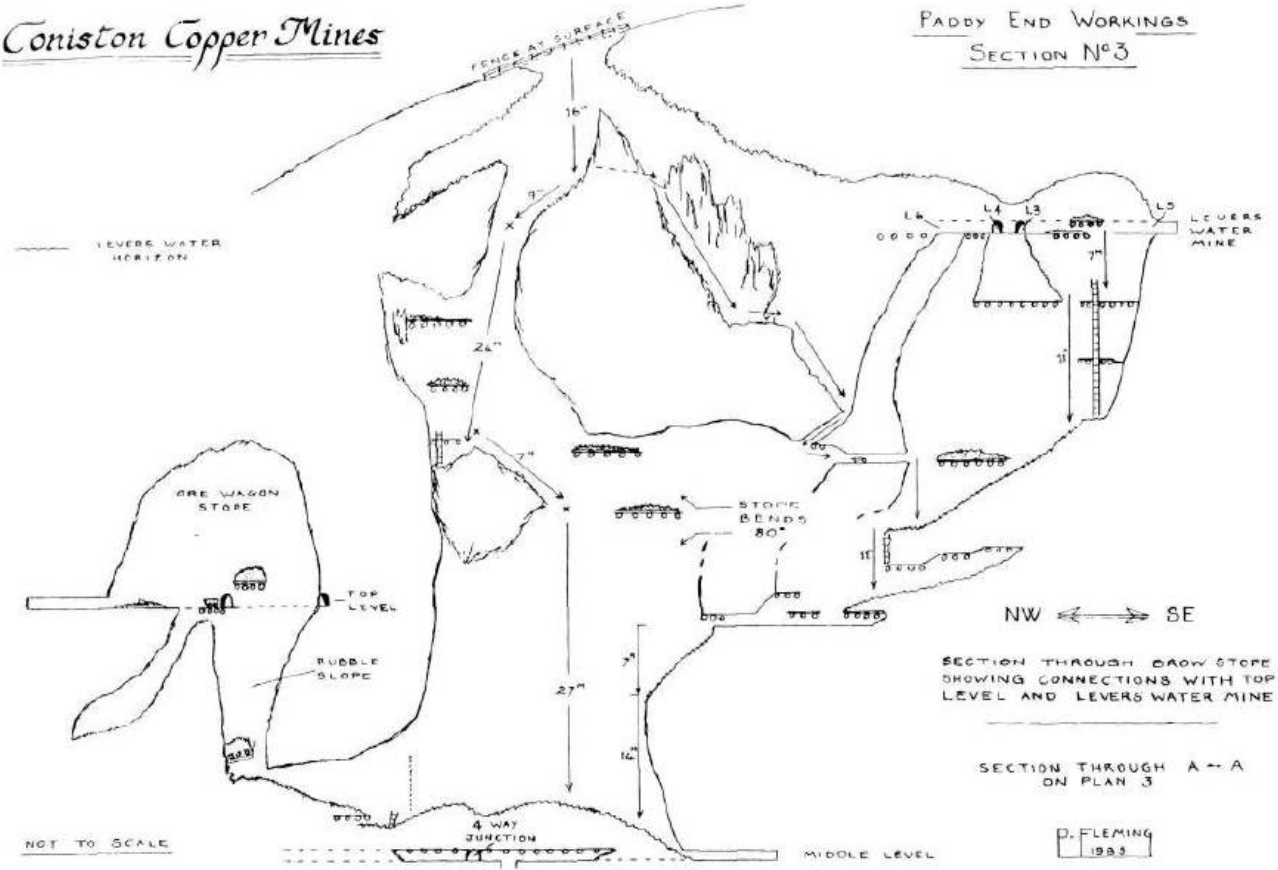


December, 1985. This descent started with an alarming incident. The leader had just reached the bottom of the first slope when a large area of it started to move down. Soon a considerable avalanche of rock, rubble and old timber was heading straight for him. Those members above were powerless to assist, and watched in horror, believing that if the rope was not severed he might escape with cuts and bruises. Somehow, he had penduled to one side and escaped the worst zone of danger. When the noise of the rockfall subsided, we were relieved to find he was unharmed. Despite this close call, and requests to abhort the descent, he decided to carry on down and with some assistance from others at the previous low point, he reached the bottom which was choked with rubble, giving no access into other workings. It is difficult to estimate the total vertical distance descended, but it would be in excess of 100 metres from Levers Water Mine. It seems very likely that it formerly connected with the main haulage wagon way in Grey Crag Level some 125 metres below. The stope would otherwise have filled with water. Two thirds of the way down, what appeared to be a level floor went off to the north and could be connected to another part of the mines, but this was never investigated.

Brow Stope has already been mentioned in passing. This is the fenced-off hole on the brow of the hill below Raven Tor (see Surface Plan in Part II of this article). Prior to the 19th August, 1984, no attempt had been made to descend this hole, which was known to be very deep. The hole marks the point where a rich copper vein came to surface and, depending on which mine plan is studied or how they are interpreted, it could be one of the Paddy End old veins or the New Vein. The small hole at the surface belies the extent of the underground workings we had yet to explore. The first descent was successful in reaching the bottom at approximately 85 metres, the landing point being on top of a huge pile of collapsed rubble 38 metres long and 10 metres high. The descent involved three vertical pitches and two steep slopes. (See Section No. 3.) To the south east at the base of the rubble it was possible to enter a short, blind tunnel, later identified as the end of a drive on Middle Level containing a shaft and the turquoise pool we were to discover later on 24th March 1985, an account of which is recorded in Part II. Another piece of the Coppermines jigsaw was slotted together when we realised that the four-way junction on Middle Level was directly below the base of Brow Stope. At the north-western end of the stope an old ladder stuck out of a jumble of fallen blocks with a heavy chain overhead and in the corner nearby was what appeared to be a blocked ore pass. Owing to the discovery of Levers Water Mine shortly after this, Brow Stope was not entered again until 3rd February 1985,

Coniston Copper Mines

Paddy End Workings
Section No 3



SECTION THROUGH DROW STOPE SHOWING CONNECTIONS WITH TOP LEVEL AND LEVERS WATER MINE

SECTION THROUGH A – A ON PLAN 3

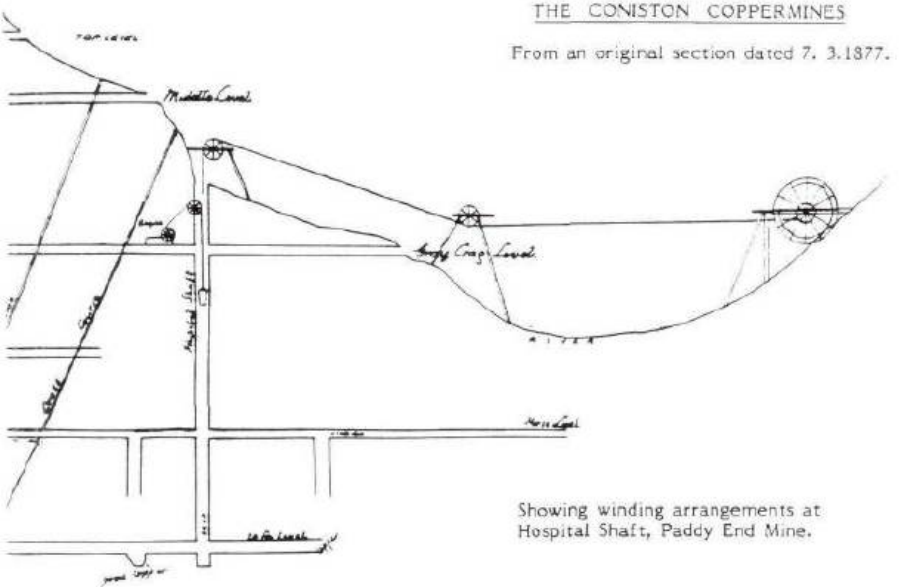
NOT TO SCALE

D. FLEMING 1983

when an alternative line of descent was discovered. Starting behind a detached pinnacle at the base of the entry pitch, this led into a very shattered zone, where it was possible to free climb down a narrow fissure which became tight at the bottom. This brought us to an open area where, high up above, the stemples could be seen that once supported the floor of a tunnel which, at the time, we did not realise was Tunnel L6 in Levers Water Mine. (See Levers Water Mine Plan No.4.) The next section involved a 10 metre abseil into a sloping passage, followed by an acute pendule into a tunnel underneath containing a wheelbarrow and numerous hand drills. Then came another 10 metre abseil to the base of a rubble slope. This slope was ascended to the bottom of a long ladder going up through two false floors, but this was not safe to climb. Continuing the descent, an 11 metre abseil and a short scramble brought us into a tunnel running into a collapse beneath a false floor to the south-east. Two old ladders were stowed here. We thought perhaps that the tunnel might be part of the Top Level system, but later, from measurements taken, realised it was too low to be part of the Top Level Horizon. At the north-western end of the tunnel, where the stope bends 80° to the left, a 7 metre ore shute, followed by a 14 metre abseil landed us at the bottom of Brow Stope again. The two routes described to descend Brow Stope have been linked two thirds of the way down, by a series of traverses.

It was not until 26th May 1985, that the connections between Brow Stope and Levers Water Mine were proved, when we abseiled from Tunnel L5 down the ladderway, and discovered it was the same ladder that had been reached from below on 3rd February 1985, as noted in the previous paragraph.

The description of Grey Crag/Hospital Level system in Part II refers to the theory that part of the floor was false. This theory was put to the test in February 1986, when work commenced. A lot of rubble and timber was either removed or shored up in order to make the area safe to work in. The following Sunday, 16th February 1986, further clearance work was done which revealed an iron trap door, solidly rusted closed. The water draining along the level disappeared down around the door and a light shone through the gap allowed a glimpse of a ladder going down into the depths. It was an intriguing discovery but another week elapsed before it was possible to gain entry with the assistance of oxy-acetaline cutting gear. A rope was lowered and three members abseiled through the cascade of water into the large stope below. It was thought it could be the same stope as the one in Paddy End Shaft below Grey Crag Level, not far away, but no connection was found. The bottom was reached at about 55 metres. It was piled high with collapsed rubble.



Showing winding arrangements at Hospital Shaft, Paddy End Mine.

Once again we were denied access to Deep Level, but high in the stope to the north was what appeared to be a sub-level which would correspond to the one shown on the old mine plans. The most interesting discovery was a complete ore wagon partially buried in the rubble above the base of the stope. It was the first one we had found in Coniston Mines. It was of an all steel construction and appeared to be an end tipper. There was no way it could have fallen from Grey Crag Level, so we assumed it came from the sub-level. To date this stope has not been re-visited, and no effort has been made to reach the sub-level.

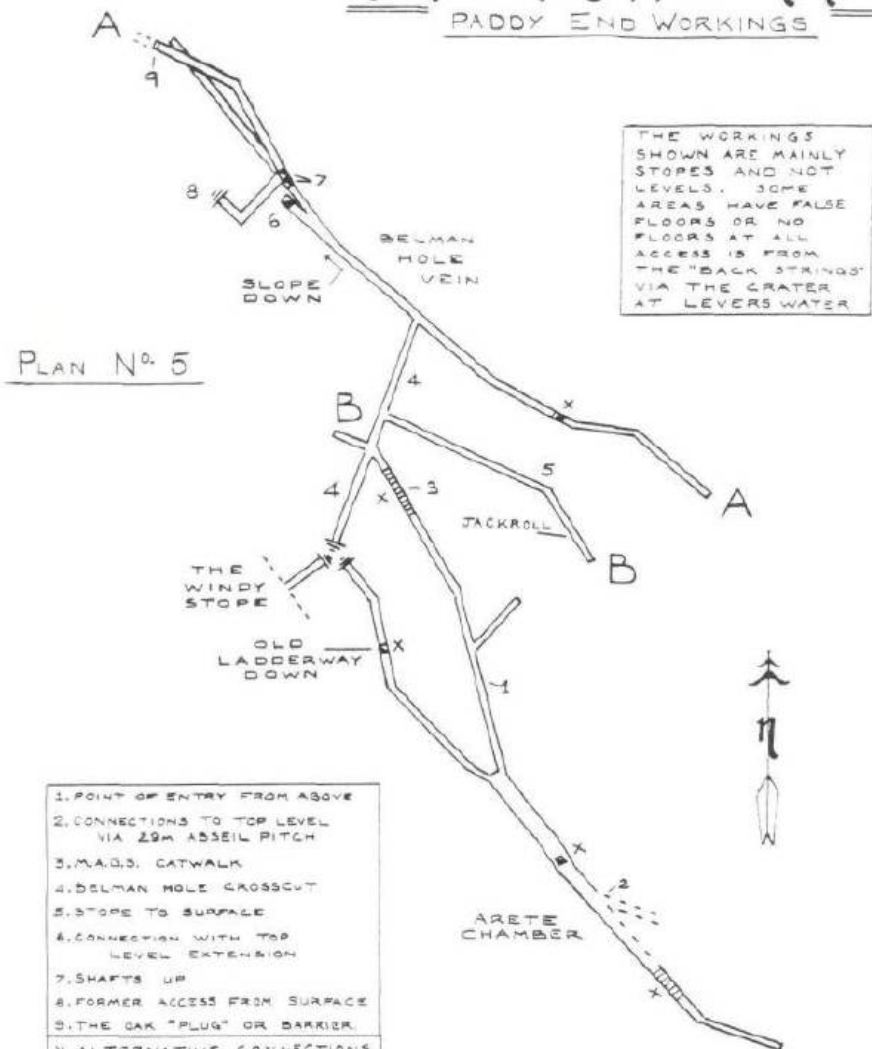
Apart from a couple of attempts to gain access to the "missing" parts of Middle Level, little else was done in 1986, until the 26th December, when a Cumbria Amenity Trust Meet was arranged to examine closely the Simon's Nick area at surface. We suspect that the "Nick" has a false floor as it holds no water, but despite lots of hard labour we were unable to prove it. However, we did find the remains of a jackroll windlass, again the first at Coniston. By now it was snowing hard and a bitter wind had sprung up. This caused most members to depart to the warmth of their homes, but four stalwarts decided to have a look into the narrow section of Open Stope, which is the north-west continuation of Simon's Nick. It had always been assumed it would be sealed at the bottom and lead nowhere. But how wrong this assumption proved to be. We were on the verge of a major discovery in the Coniston Mine saga which created a resurgence of interest in Coniston Mines and took up a lot of our free time in the early part of 1987.

We descended a rubble slope to a false floor. Two and a half metres below this was another false floor. In a dark corner underneath, a gap or man-way led down a steep rocky slope. At the bottom was a shaft with the remains of a ladder in it. We were surprised at our new discoveries. No one seemed to know why it had taken so long to decide to look down here.

We had not brought very much gear, not having planned to go underground, but managed to rig up enough to set up an abseil down this shaft, which passed some shaky-looking false floors and landed us at 14 metres next to a jackroll, still in position over a flooded sump. (See Plan No.5, ref No.5 and also Section 5B). Going down the inclined floor of the stope to the north-west via steps carved in the rock, we reached a tunnel. Overhead a colourful display of blue and green copper staining covered the walls, its origin a beautiful blue pool held in an alcove above. The tunnel had a false floor with a flooded sump beneath. Further ahead a 'T' junction was reached at a "crosscut". A wrought iron pricker was found here, and nearby lay the remains of a small dog. A few metres to the south-west a stope ran SSE. The bottom could not be seen. A few cross timbers (stemples) spanned the void. The vein could be seen in the roof about 15 metres overhead. The tunnel continued SW to a blocked stope, which draughted. Going in the opposite direction, to the NE, the tunnel ended at another stope with a steep slope of loose rock going down to the left (NW) and rising up to the right, near the bottom there appeared to be a tunnel leading off. Owing to lack of time we did not push our explorations any further that day, and prusiked out to the surface, well pleased with our new discoveries, which we believed were workings on the upper part of the

Coniston Copper Mines

PADDY END WORKINGS



Belman Hole Vein above Top Level. The most interesting features of the day were the two jackrolls – one still *in situ*. We therefore declared this to be "The Day of the Jackroll"! An interesting coincidence lies in the fact that the four members who made these discoveries were the same four who discovered Levers Water Mine two years previously.

Two days later a team of six returned to investigate the stopes. It was a wet day and a lot of water cascaded down the shaft. A dig was started at the blocked stope at the SW end of the crosscut. We later found out that this resulted in the bottom of the "crater" subsiding at the surface, some 14 metres above. The rubble slope at the NE end of the crosscut was descended and found to be blocked at the bottom with loose stones.

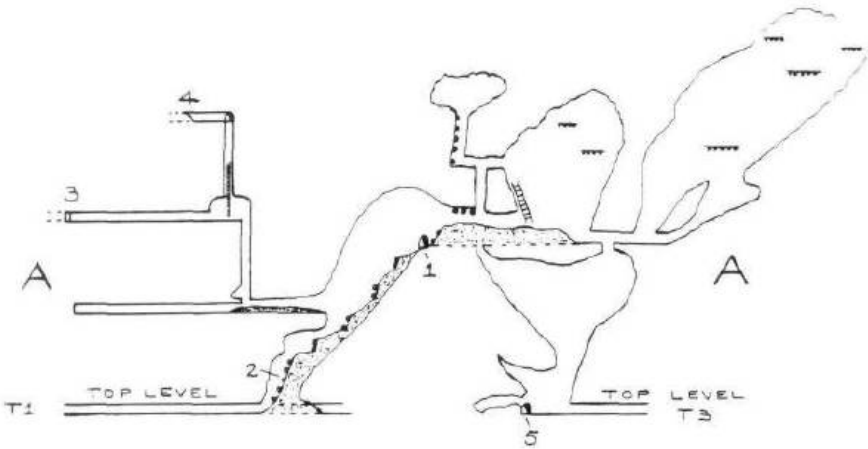
We then decided to abseil down the stope with the stemples in. Twenty-two metres down landed us on the four-way junction on Top Level, where tunnel T4 and T5 intersect (see Plan No.2). Having found this new connection with Top Level, it was easy then to reach the major blockage on the main haulage level (Tunnel T1), which we now guessed coincided with the choke of stone at the bottom of our newly discovered stope at the NE end of the Belman Hole Crosscut. We put our theory to the test by sending members to both sites and found we were able to communicate quite clearly through the collapse.

This was an important discovery. We now knew there was not a lot between us and a way into the extensive workings on the inner reaches of Top Level, which had evaded us for so long, but of which we were fully aware from old mine plans. Before we left the workings that day in order to draw up plans for a dig into Top Level Extension, one member gained entry, with difficulty, into the tunnel previously mentioned, in the same stope above the dig site (see Cross Section No.5). It was guarded by a loose wall of waste rock which was removed. The tunnel was partially choked, but at the end, about 7 metres along, a very colourful square cut shaft rose up about 10 metres through solid rock with water trickling down. It could not be climbed without the aid of a "maypole", but there appeared to be a tunnel running off at the top in a NW direction, which would take it beneath Levers Water. We were already at a point beneath the shore of the Tarn. This was an exciting revelation. Were we on the verge of discovering the legendary oak plugs, sealing the bottom of the Tarn! (See reference to this in Part II.) We left the mine that day with the prospect of exciting discoveries ahead.

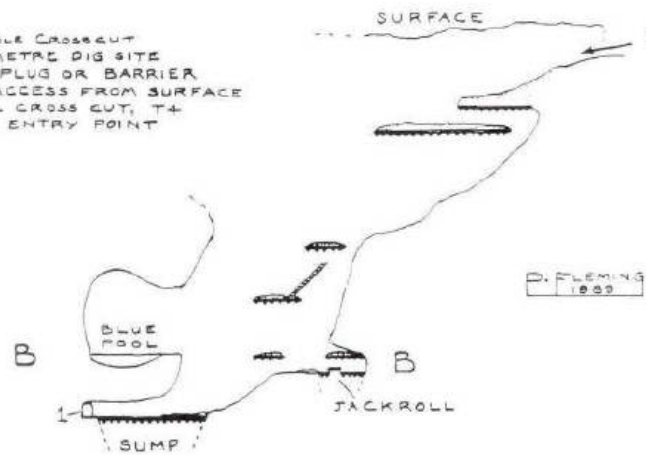
On the 11th January 1987, eight members of Cumbria Amenity Trust returned laden with timber and other equipment to commence the dig at the bottom of the rubble slope and to pin back the slope itself into a series of steps upon which the loose stone from below could be stacked. As the dig got deeper the hanging wall of rock was held back with

Coniston Copper Mines

SECTIONS THROUGH WORKINGS ON PLAN Nº5



1. BELMAN HOLE CROSSCUT
2. THE SIX METRE DIG SITE
3. THE OAK PLUG OR BARRIER
4. FORMER ACCESS FROM SURFACE
5. TOP LEVEL CROSS CUT, T4
6. ORIGINAL ENTRY POINT



METRES
0 5 10 15 20

NW — SE

stemples and boards. Good progress was made – three metres of rock were removed during the day. Whilst this was going on some of the team discovered that the stope with the 22 metre abseil connection to Top Level was in fact a stope common to the Arete Chamber system, and a connecting passage some 4 metres higher could be seen on the far side. Entry by this new connection was effected with difficulty on our next visit on the 25th January 1987, by abseil first from the Arete Chamber side, and then a prusik up to the crosscut on the other side. Seven days later three members fitted five new cross stemples, in addition to the original four which spanned the gap, which makes it possible to stride across the void clipped into a safety rope with no need to abseil or prusik. This is now known as "M.A.G.'s. Catwalk", from the initials of the three members who placed them in position. (See ref. No 3, Plan 5.) This route was immediately adopted as being the quickest and safest way into Belman Hole workings and the Top Level system.

On the 25th January, a Land Rover loaded with timber was driven up to Levers Water and the timber laboriously manhandled down to the dig site, where work commenced once again. In the meantime a "maypole" was erected in the 10 metre shaft above the dig and a tunnel was reached. An old wheelbarrow and rubble held back water. This was waded through for 20 metres, and there a wooden barrier completely sealed up the tunnel, which was heading below Levers Water. We had found the legendary oak plug sealing the bottom of Levers Water!

We treated the old barrier with great respect and thought smugly of relating this to those people who, doubting its existence, had laughed at the idea of Levers Water being sealed by an oak plug. We have no idea how long the 5ft by 4ft barrier has been there. The earliest reference to the level of Levers Water being raised by a dam can be found in Alfred Fell's book *"The Early Iron Industry of Furness"* page 196, where it refers to "making of dams at Levers Water and Low Water, and timbering of floodgates and sodwork", etc., in 1713. It is unlikely the barrier is this old however, but it must be well over 100 years since it was fitted. The large spanner used to tighten the nuts was still leaning against it. We gave this level the appropriate name of Woodends Level, as it almost corresponds with one bearing this name, shown on old plans.

Above the old wheelbarrow, yet another shaft, containing a ladderway, rose up a further 13 metres. This was ascended five weeks later on the 2nd and 3rd of May. At the top a short tunnel ran into boulder clay, which we estimate must have come to surface on the shores of the tarn, close to Levers Water mine portal. This must have provided access for the men who installed the barrier. In the short tunnel we found two 18" chisels with square tops and a clog.

The team returned down the shaft to join the others at the dig, which was now almost 6 metres deep. Time was getting on and some members left, but we knew a breakthrough was imminent, and despite having run short of timber, succeeded in uncovering the roof of the tunnel. Very soon entry was gained to Top Level Extension (a long-held ambition realised). Apart from a minor blockage 40 metres further on it was discovered, after a hurried examination of the workings, that the whole of Top Level was open right to the end – over 500 metres from the dig. In addition, there were other side passages and stopes. Many interesting artefacts were seen, but detailed exploration was left for another day. It was 9.30pm before we reached the surface to a bitter, starlit, January night on the shores of Levers Water, where our harnesses and clothing froze instantly, making it difficult to remove them or open karabiners.

The 18th of February 1987, was earmarked for the first detailed exploration of our new major discovery. (refer to plan No's 3 and 5). Seventeen members entered Top Level Extension via the new approach from Arete Chamber, across M.A.G.'s Catwalk. Some ascended the colourful maypole shaft to see the oak barrier at the end of Woodends Level. The remainder, including a group with a video camera and lighting to record the event, carried on into the "new" workings. A bat was noticed shortly before reaching the minor blockage which originates from an area of decomposed shaly rock. This bottleneck was cleared at a later date by a small work party on the 8th October 1987. At this point the tunnel turns SW and runs through solid rock for over 100 metres. At the end a pile of rubble almost blocked access into a stope. We found two ore wagons here, partially buried. One was in good condition, but in danger of falling through the floor it was standing on. The rails and floor to the left of it had already collapsed.

The continuation of the tunnel was reached after placing a safety line across the hole. In an alcove here were the remains of a clay pipe, a water flask and a wooden box. Twenty-five metres along the tunnel a side passage entered from the left. On the floor at this point was a dismantled jackroll. This was later re-assembled in a wider part of the workings for the benefit of photographers and also as a permanent exhibit. The side passage had a shaft in the floor, presumably where the jackroll was mounted and used. Also nearby was a sheaved winding wheel and an old clog. Following the side passage we came to a highly stressed zone where the wall to the right was breaking away, leaving a jagged opening which gave a view into a large deep stope. The floor of the passage had cracks running along it. Towards the end, around a 90° bend, more cracks were opening up in the roof and walls. A very deep and narrow stope marked the end of the passage, which we named

"Earthquake Passage".

Returning to Top Level, the main tunnel soon reaches another junction from the right, where the entrance to a side passage has been partially backfilled. However, this can be climbed over into the passage itself, which extends for 40 metres and contains numerous small artefacts. At the entrance to this passage a stope runs off to the NE. In it a climbing chain hangs from a working platform high up in the roof. It probably marks one of the last working areas in this part of the mines. It was ascended on the 3rd May 1987. The stope drops down to water at about 18 metres. This working is an anomaly. The vein runs NE-SW, which is at variance by 180° with most other veins in the Coniston Mines. We called it "Chain Stope". It stops just a few metres short of intersecting the Ore Wagon Stope.

Not far beyond the backfilled junction the main passage widens out and this is where the jackroll was re-assembled. To the right is another side passage which displays an interesting vein of erythrite or cobalt bloom. It is recorded that in 1855 cobalt was mined at Coniston and perhaps this was the location.

Top Level then continues for a further 360 metres in a SW then a WSW direction, with only short side passages here and there. It ends deep beneath Raven Tor and Brim Fell with no sign of ore. Towards the end are long lengths of square-section, wooden, ventilation trunking still in position on the walls and, where it crossed the tunnel roof at bends, short cast-iron connections were made. In the absence of any evidence to show what provided the forced draught, there being no running water anywhere near this part of the workings to provide a waterblast, it could be assumed it was a hand-operated fan. Other minor artefacts were found here, including shovels, clogs, water flasks and tallow candles. Various types of rails and chairs are still *in situ* along the floor of the tunnel with points here and there.

Having explored all the easy horizontal workings we turned our attention to the shaft in Earthquake Passage and the stope at the end, which we had reason to believe was Avalanche Stope, coming down from Levers Water Mine. Holes were drilled and bolts and hangers fitted, allowing one member to abseil 26 metres. Time was running out, so the next pitch was not descended, leaving the probe inconclusive. Meanwhile, the shaft had been descended and found to be 23 metres deep to a rubble pile in a tunnel which ran to the east for a short distance, containing remains of another jackroll. This tunnel is part of Middle Level and ends at a collapse we later identified as the four-way

Earthquake Passage, Top Level System. *Photograph by Peter Fleming.*

junction below Brow Stope, which we had already been on the far side of.

At the bottom of the shaft the remains of a partition, or hopper, are still *in situ*. The continuation of the tunnel in the opposite direction had been backfilled. A way through was cleared seven weeks later on 26th April 1987, giving a flat-out crawl into the bottom of the stope we had seen through the jagged opening in Earthquake Passage high above. The stope was piled high with collapsed blocks and pinnacles of rock. It is possible to free climb up to the passage. We called the area the "Shattered Stope".

The day's activities ended with an alarming incident. One member had been clearing loose rock from the bottom of the hole below the ore wagon, where there appeared to be a choked shaft. Suddenly there was a loud rumble as the loose rock on which he was standing subsided and buried him, leaving only his helmet showing in the rubble. Things looked fairly grim. There was at first no response to anxious shouts. A rope was lowered down and soon he responded to questions. He was all right apart from cuts and bruises, a broken lamp and a lost wrist watch. He got his arms free and had to cut away some trapped gear with a pen knife. Eventually he was hauled out through a small hole with the rope, but it was a lucky escape.

The discovery of Top Level Extension has added greatly to our knowledge of Coniston Coppermines and opened up so far a further 1000 metres of new tunnels and a large selection of artefacts which should be left *in situ* for other people to see.

The ore wagon on the brink of the hole is worthy of description. It is similar to the one previously discovered in the stope below Grey Crag Level. It still stands on its rails on a section of false floor. It has a steel-riveted body 2ft 6ins high and 5ft long with tapered sides and a door at one end hinged at the top. It has handles for pushing and pulling, and close to the centre of gravity a square iron axle carrying two cast-iron spoked wheels is fastened to the tub. Two radius arms, pivoting on this axle, are connected to a floating axle under the closed end of the tub, while an iron rod runs from the centre of the fixed axle and passes through a hole in the middle of the floating axle and then projects beyond the end of the tub. A ring suspended by a chain is looped over the end of the rod. When the ring is removed it is a simple matter to lift and tip the tub and contents, which will empty out of the door end. It was decided to mount a rescue operation to clear the rubble from around it and renew the floor on which it stood so that it could be shown to

Ore wagon found in the Top Level System. *Photograph by Peter Fleming.*

advantage as a permanent *in-situ* exhibit. This work was started on 24th March 1987. The wagon was pulled clear into the side passage whilst a new timber floor was fitted and the rails relaid. The wagon was then replaced in its original position where it now proudly displays itself. Nearby in the same stope is another more battered wagon with a wooden chassis. It is probably an older one. Between the two wagons is another deep hole. This was descended, through unstable ground, to the sealed bottom at 15 metres. It is believed to have formerly connected with the NW branch of Middle Level that leaves the four-way junction beneath Brow Stope. It was descended on 29th March, 1987.

Cumbria Amenity Trust returned to Top Level Extension on 19th July 1987 to descend the Deep Stope at the end of Earthquake Passage, using a 100 metre rope. A steep rubble-covered slope was reached at 45 metres. The slope led down to another short pitch. Overhead at this point were some very unstable-looking blocks resting on rotten timbers. We decided the chances of them falling within the next couple of hours were slim, so we abseiled down to the next steep slope, which could be scrambled down to the lowest point, estimated to be 85 metres vertically below Top Level. This would be equal to the distance down to Grey Crag Level. By now we realised that this stope was not the so-called Avalanche Stope from Levers Water Mine, but a completely different one. From where the upper reaches originated we did not know, but there must have been access from elsewhere, as yet undiscovered. What was obvious was the fact that there are three very deep and large stopes running parallel with thin walls in between, namely, Brow Stope, the Avalanche Stope, and now this one, the Shattered Stope. No wonder the tunnels and walls have stress fractures in them. At the lowest point of this new stope, it began to turn to the north, but progress was stopped by a 5 metre muddy blockage which could not be climbed. Stones thrown over the top could be heard to roll down into water. It is very likely that this is the inaccessible part of Grey Crag Level. It was annoying, not being able to prove it. We were short of three or four climbing stemples to wedge across the stope.

Reports of our recent discoveries in the Coniston Mines had been appearing in local papers and creating much interest. The story of the legendary oak plugs sealing the tunnel beneath Levers Water triggered off an alarm at the North-West Water Authority, who are responsible for the maintenance of Levers Water as a reservoir; they wanted to know more. It was arranged to escort two of their more intrepid engineers into the workings to examine the barrier. This was fixed for 21st October 1987. Two Land Rovers took us up to the dam. A man remained with the vehicles and another stationed himself at the crater

entrance to maintain radio contact with the others and their headquarters. The two engineers we took underground were well, if over, equipped, with gas detectors and self-rescue resuscitators. The vertical shaft up to Woodends Level was scaled using electron ladder and safety ropes. All went smoothly; the engineers examined and photographed the barrier. It was decided eventually that no action be taken, mainly due to its inaccessibility, and to leave well alone, despite the fact that it has held back the waters of the tarn for over a hundred years.

Some of our members had recently been beavering away at the major collapse at the four-way junction on Middle Level under Brow Stope. Tons of rock had been removed and stacked in the two tunnels we now had access to, and it was possible to communicate through the blockage. To clear this junction would open an important link between two different areas of the mine, i.e. Brow Stope and the Windy Stope, and also a new section of Middle Level. It was decided to descend Brow Stope to see what impression the dig had made on the rubble pile at the bottom. This was done on 29th November 1987. On our arrival there, we were surprised to see little change. It was possible that a ruckle of boulders were jammed across the walls and holding up the pile above. We were saddened and annoyed to find rubbish in the form of empty tins, wrappers and plastic bags left behind recently by an unknown group of mine explorers. More conservation minded, our members later removed the unsightly litter. Two members decided to prusik out to the surface and enter Top Level Extension then descend the Shattered Stope to the four-way junction on Middle Level to try and make voice contact from below with those remaining in Brow Stope. To reach the place would however take some time.

You will recall the mention of a blocked ore pass in the NW corner of Brow Stope on the occasion of our first descent on 19th August 1984, since when the discovery of Top Level Extension and the surveys made left us in no doubt that this ore pass and the choked shaft below the ore wagon in Top Level were in fact the same place.The member who was rescued after being buried whilst trying to clear this shaft from above had a close look at the ore pass again and, on shining a light into the blockage, was amazed to see his wrist-watch lying in the rubble. So, here was proof. It spurred him into action to clear the blockage, which was no problem from below and soon he could see up into the Wagon Stope above. By this time the two who had prusiked out had reached the Ore Wagon Stope and were surprised to hear a familiar voice calling them from below. They quickly realised the significance of this and immediately began to assist in the work from above. After another hour

it was reasonably safe to pass through the new connection. This link provides yet another route in the workings which connect Levers Water Mine, Brow Stope and Top Level Extension, and provides an escape route from all three.

Nine members of Cumbria Amenity Trust returned to this new connection on 26th December 1987, to stabilise it. Brow Stope was now accessible via Top Level Extension without the need to abseil. It was therefore important to make it safe, as it would no doubt receive a fair amount of use. The following information is extracted from a meets report in the Cumbria Amenity Trust's Newsletter No.19, and refers to explorations undertaken on the same day.

> "A few members went to examine Earthquake Passage and the Shattered Stope with the twin objectives of seeing if there had been any more movement in the passage, and of trying to locate the head of a timbered shaft seen from below on a previous visit. The floor of the passage had indeed moved, and seems to be slipping into the Shattered Stope. In order to indicate future movements, a stone was left wedged in an apparently widening crack in the floor near the end of the passage. The Shattered Stope was examined and a bat was seen, hanging on the wall close to the passage leading to the Four Way Dig. The wall of the stope was followed from here towards its junction with Earthquake Passage, and a crawl beneath huge jagged blocks led to a squeeze into a narrow part of the stope where the floor sloped downwards. This was followed and led to a debris-strewn floor on the Middle Level Horizon. At the bottom of the slope was what appeared to be a shaft head. About 26 metres above, in the roof of the stope, is some timberwork which seems to match up with this. Stones dropped down caused much rumbling of falling material, and spontaneous runs also occurred. There seems to be two holes, the nearer dropping straight down into a narrowing stope, whilst the other, about 2 metres further on drops down beside a masonry wall about 13 metres high before sloping steeply down in the direction of the descent from the junction with Earthquake Passage. There was neither time nor inclination to proceed further, but before leaving we sent a member to shine a light down at the Earthquake Passage junction. This was seen to be about 23 metres above and 10 metres further along the stope."

During the previous month a small group of members had been carrying out exploratory probes into other areas of Paddy End Mines. Two of these probes were into the South Vein Stope from Middle Level.

These took place on the 26th November 1987 and 20th December 1987. This deep stope was previously descended on 11th November 1984, as recorded in Part II. On that occasion little was seen due to atmospheric conditions. This descent ended at the Pudding Stone Level on Grey Crag Level Horizon. This new attempt was made to try and reach Deep Level 125 metres below, and at the same time look for any intermediate levels. The descent began at the junction of Tunnel M2 on Middle Level where it enters the South Vein. At 45 metres a re-belay was made. A further 17 metres landed them on a short section of false floor with loose ground at both ends. A bolt and anchor were put in here as a safeguard should the false floor collapse. This was part of the Grey Crag Level Horizon. In order to reach the continuation it was necessary to traverse a gap in the floor by prusiking up a short way, penduling across to another re-belay and abseiling down again. The re-belay bolt was sited in solid chalcopyrite. The gap was descended to a steeply-sloping floor of fine, loose material 13 metres below. It was probably used as an ore chute. The slope was followed to its conclusion 17 metres further down, directly beneath the hanging false floor above, and here the stope fell away into the depths. The upper end of the slope gave access to the continuation of the Pudding Stone Level along the South Vein. This extends for 20 metres to a forehead. It lies in the stope for the first few metres but then continues with a solid rock ceiling. The vein seems to have been abandoned here as being barren. There were no artefacts or rails. A greeny blue pool was the only item of interest.

An attempt was made to traverse in the opposite direction and re-belay in order to continue down to Deep Level. It was not easy to arrange a hang avoiding loose ground, and in order to do so it was necessary to pendule several metres. The shape of the stope was such that the rope dragged over the rough surfaces above. This involved a risk of damage to the rope, so it was decided to abandon the attempt.

Whilst prusiking up the rope the opportunity was taken to examine the stope. The full extent may be seen in both directions. Little of interest can be seen to the north-west, but at the south-east end it rises to a niche under an overhang. Above this is a steep rubble slope rising to what could be a level. If it is a level it is possible it could lead through to the roof of the large stope above Grey Crag Level, which contains the long iron chain and timber platforms at the top. These horizons are similar. Above the rubble slope are sections of a wooden ladder rising close to the headwall which seem to penetrate the ceiling forming the floor of Middle Level. This area calls for further exploration.

On the 7th December 1987, two of the members involved in the South Vein explorations decided to investigate the "Lake Stope". The

abseil from Top Level to the water's edge was 20 metres. This lake slowly dries up during periods of drought, by soaking away through the muddy rubble bed. It is my theory that it drains down into the elusive Middle Level Crosscut, which must lie only a few metres below here. To support this theory a run of ladders descends in a recess to this point, having come all the way down via Top Level from the Arete Chamber Workings, where access to or from the surface would be made. The slope of rubble and mud rising from the lake to the north-west can be climbed past a spectacular green malachite-stained wall until loose hanging rock bars the way after 25 metres. This stope runs very close and parallel to the Windy Stope. The dividing wall must be very thin.

After the major discoveries of 1987, which generated much activity, 1988 was a quiet year. On 17th January a further two-pronged dig was mounted at the four-way junction on Middle Level beneath the rubble pile under Brow Stope. As on previous occasions, many tons of rubble were removed and it was possible to communicate through the blockage, but due to the massive pile overhead no breakthrough was made. At the end of the day an inspection of Brow Stope via the new connection from Top Level Extension was made. We expected to find a sizeable depression after our efforts, but again there was no trace. This was rather puzzling. A few weeks later however, a large crater had appeared there. A jam of rocks must have been holding it as previously suggested. This site awaits further attention.

Apart from club meets, when we visited familiar areas of the mines, no new exploration work was carried out until 27th November 1988. It was decided to return to Belman Hole crosscut (see Plan No.5 and also the Cross Sections). The stope, rising from the north end of the crosscut in a south-easterly direction, had never been examined.

An initial steep pitch of loose rubble was climbed into a narrow section of the stope. Following this for 10 metres brought us to a wider area with working platforms high above. The remains of an old ladderway led up to the north of them. Continuing south-east a rock tunnel was cut through a section of barren vein. The walls here were very colourful with the usual copper deposits. Spanning the tunnel floor was a shaft which we had not really expected to find, so we were speculating as to where it descended, but first we put in bolts and anchors for a safety line across the shaft. We stepped cautiously across from one stemple to another. The far side was even more colourful with beautiful stalactites of blue copper carbonate hanging down. We were no doubt the first people to set eyes on them. The tunnel then ran into a very high stope with a steep rubble pile running up to an even steeper, unclimbable wall. The top of this working must come close to the surface

to the north-west of Simon's Nick. Indeed, the vein can be traced on the surface where it has been "tried" along its length. We rigged an abseil rope down the shaft. Ten metres lower it was necessary to put in a deviation belay to avoid loose, jammed blocks. After a further 10 metres, the bottom was reached. We were on familiar ground. It was no surprise to find ourselves on Top Level in Tunnel T3 next to the Boxing Day dig. We had decided some years previously that this overhead stope was blind. This assumption had just been proved to be incorrect.

Whilst this descent was in progress the rest of the team had retrieved the maypole from nearby Woodends Shaft, where it had been for almost two years, and re-erected it alongside the ladder mentioned earlier. This enabled them to reach a short tunnel with a rise at the end, terminating in a small overhead stope. An ore pass dropped down to the lower tunnel and then entered an ore shute down to Top Level.

Whilst the group were recovering the maypole from Woodends Rise, one of them noticed what appeared to be the apex of a tunnel roof buried in the debris at the base of the shaft. This was excavated on the 15th January 1989. The material removed was a light-coloured, fine slurry, with no solids in it. This must have been tipped down the shaft, but why and from where it originated is a mystery. A tunnel was revealed which was approximately 18 metres long, running in a north-westerly direction to a blind end.

With the biennial conference of N.A.M.H.O. due to be held in July 1989, one of the proposed field trips involved a guided tour of Levers Water Mine, abseiling down Brow Stope, followed by a tour of Top Level Extension via the new connection, then out to surface via Arete Chamber and the "Crater". Some preparatory work had already been carried out for this excursion, but in order to reduce the high water level in Levers Water Mine, a large quantity of rubble needed to be removed from the entry area to lay a drain. All this material would have to be tipped down the "Funnel" (see Cross Section No.2), with the possible result of sealing off hitherto unexplored areas below. With this in mind it was decided to have a look down there before work commenced, so on 16th April 1989, five members of Cumbria Amenity Trust started out on this project. They did not expect to get very far. It must be borne in mind that the "Funnel" has been eroding away and getting larger over a very long period. Many hundreds of tons of clay and rock have gone down below already.

From the bottom of the first pitch, which was familiar ground to us, we prepared to abseil down to the north-west. Great care had to be taken because of the loose, unstable nature of the stope, jammed with poised jagged rocks. Any horizontal progress was barred by collapses

and loose material. Carrying on down after two more re-belays, we reached a very shattered opening where it was difficult getting bolts into the hard rock. The next pitch was a good clean one of 30 metres to the top of a rubble pile. From here the bottom of the stope was visible 10 metres below. We had been there many times before from a point further along, but two members went down to complete this particular line. The other side of the pile to the north-west was also descended. Although this was still in the same stope, it went down about 20 metres. A line of heavy cross timbers was reached at 15 metres. These timbers probably mark the point where a branch of Middle Level formerly ran through the stope. Some good specimens of chalcopyrite were found here. We prusiked up to the surface again relieved to have escaped unscathed from this very dangerous area. It is unlikely this descent line will be repeated, however it had been checked out to our satisfaction.

LOOSE ROCK: A MEMORY OF PILLAR

John Hunt

I may not be alone, among the older generation of climbers, in recalling my return to the fells in 1946, the first year of the peace, as a uniquely emotive experience; for me it was almost an act of thanksgiving for survival. In late August, 1939, as the clouds of war gathered over Europe and my recall to military duty became imminent, my wife and I, with Heaton Cooper, were walking down Easedale towards our rented cottage in Grasmere on a glorious evening of that long, hot summer. We had been climbing on Lining Crag below Greenup Edge. I recall saying to my companions: "Whatever else happens, these hills will still be here when it's all over." A few days later I sailed from Greenock in the first convoy of the war; a copy of Heaton's "*The Hills of Lakeland*" was in my baggage and this helped to keep hope alive during the months and years ahead of me.

True, there had been a few opportunities to climb in war-time, during the brief spells of leave and while training Commandos in mountain and snow warfare in Scotland and Wales. But I had not returned to the Lakes in all those six years. So it was with a special sense of anticipation that Joy and I came down from Scotland after a few days climbing in Glencoe, to spend Easter with Professor A.S. Pigou at Gatesgarth. His other guests were Philip Noel-Baker, at that time a Minister in Clem Atlee's administration; Harry Tilley, with whom I was shortly to climb in Skye; and Wilfrid Noyce. Wilfrid, a most improbable soldier, had turned up in my regiment at the beginning of the war before being posted to duties more attuned to his talents; I had made the most of his skill and experience during the short spell to help me train soldiers of my Brigade and later, Commando units, in North Wales. It was during those weeks that we had played truant – or taken busmen's holidays – and climbed together.

It was as though to give thanks for personal survival that, on our first day that Eastertide, I suggested we return to Lining Crag after climbing on Scafell. Joy, having the responsibility of being mother to our young family, was not climbing that year, but she came along to watch our antics and meet us when we reached the top. We spent a splendid day on Eagle Front and other climbs in Birkness Coombe on our second day, the pleasure of it by no means diminished by a dressing down from the 'Prof' for being late for dinner. For our third and last – and best – day we chose Pillar, my favourite Lakeland crag, which held many good memories from pre-war years.

It was typical of Wilf that he should compose a recipe worthy of the occasion: it was Easter Monday and, for more reasons than one, we were in a mood to rejoice. He proposed three routes which, together, would make a synthesis of strenuous and delicate climbing, laced with a high awareness of exposure. The ascent of Savage Gully would provide that first ingredient: by the standards of over forty years ago it ranked a very strenuous climb. But we had not reckoned on another ingredient of Wilf's menu: loose rock. The guidebook informed me that, while being "one of the most exacting climbs on Pillar, its reputation for loose rock is quite undeserved". We were in for a shock.

Wilf, Harry and I made quick work of the first four pitches, which are shared with the North Climb, and addressed ourselves to a different order of difficulty in Twisting Gully: the guidebook says "it is divided by a fine-looking rib", and so it was. Wilf and Harry negotiated the awkward move, some forty feet up the right-hand groove in the gully and, after pulling up on the rib, had landed on the green stance in the left-hand groove. It was my turn to make the difficult manoeuvre. As I started to ease myself around the rib I became aware, to my horror, that a huge chunk of the rib, which provided the "key" hold for the swing across, was loose and beginning to move. I was, of course, quite petrified! But there was an even more compelling cause for concern than my own dilemma. Somewhere in the mists below us another party had started up the lower pitches of the North Climb; there was an imminent prospect of a multiple climbing disaster.

To this day I am not sure how I, a moderate performer on hard rock, managed that move while leaving the monster undisturbed. Desperation forced me to take deliberate and meticulous care and some other handhold must have been there to accommodate my searching fingers. Considerably shaken, I rejoined my companions on the shelf. So much for Savage Gully's "undeserved reputation for loose rock".

The remainder of that climb was sheer joy. I, for one, was on what we nowadays call a 'high' as I swarmed up the steep, strenuous grooves, cracks and corners to reach the cairn beside The Nose of the North Climb. Far below, lying on his back the better to observe us, Philip Noel-Baker gave us a cheer and we revelled in our good fortune.

It was then that Wilf unveiled the rest of our programme: down the North Climb over The Nose, then straight up North West, to trace a kind of zig-zag on the face of Pillar Rock. The descent of The Nose was the easier for myself for two ascents in the pre-war years. For the North West, Wilf changed his Kletterschuhe for tricouni-nailed boots, by way of indicating his relative assessment of the two VS routes that day.

What a superb finish it made! I have a vivid mental picture of Wilf, in

Lamb's Chimney, poised for what seemed an eternity in time. My diary records: "Craning my neck, I could see him clinging on toe and finger holds, apparently defying all the laws of gravity. It was a tense moment." I fancy that even Wilf, at that moment, may have been regretting his change of footwear. And Oppenheimer's Chimney! Surely one of the perfect finishes to any rock climb, anywhere in Britain. That was one of my most memorable days in the Lakes.

We hastened back by the Old West Climb, intent on avoiding further disgrace at the hands of the 'Prof' who had awarded us his famous cardboard medals for our dilatory return from Birkness Coombe.

Two days later, after Joy and I had returned home, we learnt of Wilf's accident on the Napes Ridges, when he was blown off the Shark's Fin in a gale. Dear Wilf! He never learned to discern that fine line which, even for one possessing his brilliant skill on a mountain, has to be drawn between safety and disaster.

Post Script. I have often wondered what happened to that unstable block in Savage Gully, which I reported in the Hut Book at (I think) Braekenclose as weighing about half a ton. Its disappearance, long since, will doubtless have restored the reputation of the climb, as described in the 1935 edition of the Fell & Rock guide-book.

(The Archivist has been unable to find any reference in the Brackenclose log-book of the entry by Lord Hunt, or of its disappearance or being knocked off. It isn't mentioned in the next two editions of the Pillar guide after this incident. Noyce's accident on the Shark's Fin and subsequent rescue are recounted by Rusty Westmorland in his '*Adventures in Climbing*' (Pelham Books, 1964). (Copy in the Club Library). – Editor.

THE SECRET CRAG

Malcolm Ibberson

It was December 13th, 1989, when I first saw it, a Secret Crag . . . my Secret Crag. Less than a mile from the centre of Cockermouth and right under the noses of Syd and Eileen. I'd have to move fast.

The search had taken 6 years. In 1983 I'd "found" a piece of rock at the foot of Rannerdale Knott with at least 3 routes on it. In fact I passed it nearly every day when I drove into Cockermouth. It wasn't in the 1979 Guidebook for Buttermere, so I pointed them out to Geoff and suggested we have a go. Somehow we never got round to it, so imagine my chagrin when they appeared in the 1987 Guide. It's not going to happen again.

My pre-occupation with a Secret Crag stems back to the articles in the *Journal* by "Sherpa". They had that air of mystery about them. Sherpa used to take off in his car from a meet and head *away* from his crag in case someone was following. They remained secret until he'd done all the best lines. Great articles those. Inspirational really. Sherpa called them "two pullover" climbs because either he or Terry Parker would get stuck on the crux and freeze to death. Secret crags had made him famous, why not me. Being able to climb E "high – numbers" wouldn't do it. I'd read a letter in the *Climber* from someone who had just returned from Gibraltar. It said there was a 14-year-old on the Rock who was solo-ing E6's and nobody knew his name. Imagine that, no ropes, no gear, and so young. What chance had I?

(Incidentally, the letter went on to say the other monkeys were just as good.)

No, I needed my own Secret Crag.

Well now, at last, I'd found one. It was small as crags go. About 30 yards long with height indeterminate, but vertical. Not your "sloping back at 70 degrees" vertical; I mean spirit-level vertical, as though fashioned by human hands. There was a 45 degree overhang at the top that was as smooth as glass. The right-hand end was a miniature Kilnsey Crag. Too hard for me but the rest looked alright.

When I saw it on December 13th I wasn't too optimistic. Holds were as scarce as cuckoo nests. But I knew that each subsequent visit would reveal more. It's always the same. Every vertical wall looks impossible when you first see it, but gradually closer inspection begins to show small ledges and cracks you hadn't noticed before. There was no chance of ab-ing down and inspecting the routes, the overhang precluded that. I could "hang-dog" and clean up the routes with a wire brush but I

thought it would be better to lead "on sight" to avoid any subsequent ethical arguments. (Who am I trying to kid! I've pulled up on slings before now and said n'owt.) No, I musn't cheat this time, must make them clean ascents. Anyway, there was no one to hold the rope to let me hang about cleaning.

I also had another problem. My finger strength wasn't up to steep walls and small holds. I'd have to take a page from Livesey's book and do some training. It was a compromise now between getting fit and having someone else beat me to it. I was absolutely sure I only had a few weeks before my car was spotted near the base of the climbs and I was rumbled. To build up my strength a chinning bar was set up in the new garage I'd just finished.

At least in the garage I was out of the rain. That was another thing about my crag. The overhang protected the routes from the weather and the crag would stay bone dry. Once everyone knew about it there'd be hundreds of locals turning up. Not just a Secret Crag, but an "all-weather" one; what a discovery!

Within a week I was up to 20 pull ups. That would have to do. Now for the first route. A few hours spent nonchalantly walking about the area revealed the only time I wouldn't be seen was early morning before 8.30 am and the lunch hour, 12 'till 1. At any other time there appeared to be someone about. So just before Christmas I arrived at the foot of the wall at 8 am.

I tried at the left end and couldn't get off the ground. Some start. Move right a bit. Ah, cracked it, I managed to get both feet 6 inches off the ground . . . Hardly a route yet, but progress. A slanting line rightwards slowly took me to the overhang. Nothing worse than a 4a on that one. Now to get down. Thankfully, I'd taken the precaution of tying on a rope. As Bill Peascod used to say when he went solo-ing . . . "I take a rope 'cos it might catch on something if I fall!" I was able to fix an anchor at the overhang and slide down.

To cut a long story short, by January 19th 12 routes up to MVS were under my Whillan's harness (belt). I knew the routes would be very popular and repeated many times. It was so handy. But I also realised that was the end of it, because next day they were going to officially open my crag to the public . . . the Cockermouth Climbing Wall.

BENTLEY BEETHAM, 1886 – 1963

Tom Parker

During August 1989, Peter Codling, a member of the Midland Association of Mountaineers, who was staying at Beetham Cottage for a few days, had a caller enquiring if he had found the house where Bentley Beetham lived. He was John Spaldin, an old student of Barnard Castle School, who had become interested in B.B. after having read an article published in the March 1989 issue of the School's Old Boys' Club Newsletter; hence his pilgrimage.

It was explained to him that Bentley had never lived at the Cottage, together with the circumstances in which the Fell & Rock had acquired the property, and Spaldin was shown the photograph taken by Alfred Gregory which hangs over the fireplace. Subsequently Spaldin sent a copy of the Newsletter to Peter Codling, who in turn sent it to me.

A letter to the Headmaster at Barnard Castle School, Frank McNamara, requesting permission to publish the article in the *Journal*, referred me to Kenneth C. King, a Housemaster at the school and Secretary of The Old Barnardians' Club. Mr. King had been a pupil of B.B. and had climbed with him in the 1940s. In addition to the following article Mr. King very kindly sent me other material, including references to B.B. by Mr. E. Scott, another student at Barnard Castle between 1942–49, who was also a pupil of B.B.

Mr. Michael D. Lowes, the author of the Newsletter article, has loaned three photographs – Members of the 1924 Everest team; B.B. climbing, probably on Shepherds Crag; and a portrait of him at the Everest Base Camp, probably taken by Capt. J. Noel, the Official Photographer. The thoroughness of Mr. Lowes' research is evident in the copy of B.B.'s birth certificate which he obtained, giving his date of birth as 1 May, 1886, and his place of birth as 95 Stanhope Road, Darlington.

I am indebted to Mr. Kenneth C. King and Mr. Michael D. Lowes for permission to reproduce the articles from *The Old Barnardians' Newsletter*. Barnard Castle School is undoubtedly very proud of Bentley Beetham and I am delighted to have been of assistance in passing on the results of their efforts to the members of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club, who hold him in high esteem.

Bentley Beetham in 1924. *Photograph from the M.D. Lowes Collection.*

"Many Old Barnardians who were at School between 1925 and 1949 will remember the lectures given to the Natural History Society by Bentley Beetham on the 1924 Everest Expedition of which he had been a member. Whatever the nominal membership of the Society, on these occasions it seemed as if the whole School crowded into the Lecture Hall to hear his account of perhaps the most enigmatic expedition in the history of mountaineering. Few of those present would not admit to being affected even in small measure, by the telling of this story which culminated in the loss of Mallory and Irvine sometime after they were last seen climbing 800 feet below the summit.

This epic venture was fixed in the visual memory by the accompanying slides which took the listener from Darjeeling, through Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley, into Tibet. Then it was on to Rongbuk, Base Camp and Everest itself. There was the climb through the East Rongbuk Glacier, violent weather conditions, the scaling of the great ice cliff to the North Col, Norton and Somervell's climb to over 28,000 feet without oxygen and the final attempt on the summit by Mallory and Irvine. A stillness came over the audience as the final photographs were shown of the memorial cairn to those who had lost their lives in the three expeditions of 1921, 1922 and 1924. But the mystery of what happened on that fateful 6 June remained and the question of whether Mallory and Irvine reached the summit has never been answered.

It was memories of these occasions which led in 1979 to the discovery in a remote corner of the School of a large brown slide box containing almost one thousand glass 3¼ × 3¼ slides, and amongst them was the Everest collection. How many of the Everest photographs were taken by Beetham it is not possible to say but some on the mountain itself would have been taken by Capt. J.B. Noel, the official photographer to the Expedition. Beetham himself was not able to go beyond Camp ii owing to a bad attack of sciatica.

There is no doubt that he was well regarded by his climbing colleagues and had it not been for the sciatica was thought of as a contender for an attempt on the summit. Sir Francis Younghusband in his book *The Epic of Mount Everest* describes him as being "perpetually boiling and bursting and bubbling over with keenness and enthusiasm . . . And it must have been fortunate for the School that the Alps are fairly accessible, that he may annually let off much loose steam." It is clear that his selection for the 1924 Expedition was primarily on grounds of his mountaineering experience rather than his undoubted reputation as both naturalist and photographer. Yet it was

Members of the 1924 Everest Expedition. *Photographed at the 16,000 ft. Base Camp by Capt. J. Noel, Official Photographer*
Back Row: L to R – A. Irvine, G.L. Mallory, Lt. Col. E.F. Norton (Leader), N.E. Odell, MacDonald (Interpreter)
Front Row: L to R – E.O. Shebbeare (Transport Officer), Capt. J.G. Bruce, Dr. T.H. Somervell, Bentley Beetham. *Photograph from the M.D. Lowes Collection.*

his interest in natural history and especially bird photography which led to his becoming one of the foremost climbers of his day. To see how this came about, and to provide a background for the slide collection, a brief look at the career of the man who, as Professor Kenneth Mellanby put it, "produced a mythology about himself in his own lifetime," would be useful.

Bentley Beetham was born in Darlington in 1886 and went as a boy to what was then the North Eastern County School in 1899. Little is known of his time at School except that he was in Northumberland House and in 1903 was a member of the House Committee. By this time he was also a member of the Natural History Society, he played soccer, and possibly hockey, for the School and was a member of the Games Committee. However, in view of his subsequent career, the growing emphasis being placed on science subjects in the curriculum

must have been a strong influence on him. It was during his time at School that he took up bird photography, making use of the new darkrooms, and the Barnardian of 1902 printed his photographs of the nests of pheasant, sandpiper, moorhen and the corncrake which were then abundant in the area.

Of the period between 1903 when he left School and 1914 when he returned as a master there is little detail. According to Professor Mellanby there is a suggestion that he worked in an architect's office in Darlington. Be that as it may, it was during these years that he continued the ornithological work begun at School and developed his photographic skills to become recognised as a leading naturalist and bird photographer. He visited the Netherlands, where he began his studies of the Spoonbill, and carried out field-work in the Marismas of the Guadalquivir delta in south-west Spain. In 1910 he published *The Homelife of the Spoonbill* which contained thirty-two hand-mounted photographs and they clearly demonstrate how his reputation as a bird photographer was gained. This experience and interest in bird photography led him to publish *Photography for Bird Lovers* in 1911, in which he advertised his services as a lecturer. That year he had been ornothologist to the Jan Mayen Expedition and he published his articles on birds in flight. Then in 1913 he contributed to Percy R. Lowe's illustrated book *Our Common Sea-Birds*. As time went by he became increasingly concerned with the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats, but it was not until 1927 that he published his book *Among Our Banished Birds* which was dedicated "To my old School at Barnard Castle where I learned to love the open country and all wild life".

These years spent in field research, writing, photography and lecturing were an impressive testimonial and when in January, 1914, he was appointed to the staff of Barnard Castle School to teach natural history he brought with him a wealth of first-hand experience and knowledge. He clearly possessed a deep interest in his subject and it was this, and to some extent his style of teaching, which was effective in giving many boys a grounding in biology that was not easily forgotten. The formality of his teaching, however, almost brought a premature end to his teaching career when in 1937 he was strongly criticised by His Majesty's Inspectors. Professor Kenneth Mellanby recalls that at this time the School was not in a strong position and numbers were low. The Governing Body, of which his father Dr. A.L. Mellanby was Chairman, at first held the view that Beetham should be asked to leave, but was persuaded by the Chairman that he had much to offer the School and should not be

dismissed. Field-work was his strong point, as would be expected, but he depended to a large extent on cyclostyled notes at this time and it was this and the lack of practical work which seemingly had invited criticism. As a consequence, Kenneth Mellanby arranged for him to be invited to Sheffield University, where he was then working, with a view to helping him to revise his teaching programme and for two or three weeks he observed practical classes being offered to first year science students.

His growing interest in rock-climbing was, however, something about which Beetham said little, although he had begun climbing in the Lake District before the first war and it was during this time that he formed a lasting friendship with Dr. T.H. Somervell who was also destined for Everest. The war put an end to climbing but in 1919 he joined up again with Somervell and they asked the veteran climber and alpinist G.A. Solly, then aged sixty, to give them instruction in ice and snow. This and their subsequent climbing in the Alps was to give them the experience which resulted in their selection for the Everest Expedition. Still Beetham kept his climbing activities to himself and so it came as something of a surprise when the announcement of his selection for the 1924 Everest Expedition was made at the end of 1923. After two terms away he returned to School and on 31st October, 1925, he gave his first lecture to the Natural History Society on the Everest Expedition "illustrated by lantern slides".

In the period up to the Second World War Beetham climbed in many parts of the world. He had several seasons in the High Atlas which Somervell felt he probably knew better than any other mountaineer. He also climbed in the Tatra Mountains of Czechoslovakia, the Lofoten Islands, in Natal and New Zealand.

In 1929 the School rock-climbing club, later known as the Goldsborough Club, had its beginnings and was in existence for over twenty years. Using the Borrowdale Hut as a base, Beetham introduced boys to many of the classic climbs in the Wasdale Head area, on Gable, Pillar and Scafell Crag, but in addition he pioneered numerous climbs sometimes with members of the Goldsborough Club in the party particularly in Borrowdale. These climbs are described in detail in his rock-climbing guide *Borrowdale* published by the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District in 1953. Climbing was not confined to the Lake District, however. Goldsborough Carr provided a nursery for initiates and Cronkley Scar offered longer and more taxing climbs for those Sundays and occasional holidays when after Chapel a party would squeeze into his

S.S. Jaguar and make for Upper Teesdale, and occasionally the Lake District or Brimham Rocks, for a day's climbing or scrambling.

It is a measure of his thoroughness and the disciplined team-work upon which he insisted, that no accidents occurred to any boys while on climbing expeditions. He himself had two accidents during his climbing career, one in the Alps when he suffered a serious injury to his ankle and a second in the Lake District. As on previous occasions his determination and perseverance hastened his recovery and he was able to continue climbing.

In 1949 Beetham announced his retirement after thirty-five years service to the School and, as if to confirm that it was the end of an era, in September, 1950, the School's tenancy of the Borrowdale Hut came to an end. He still went on pioneering climbs in Borrowdale even so, and then at the age of sixty-six he was invited to join the 1953 West Nepal Expedition but had to return owing to illness. Time was beginning to run out and by 1959 the old injury to his ankle brought his climbing days to an end. His last year was spent in a nursing home after a stroke which affected his head injury and there he died on 3 April, 1963, aged seventy-six.

Bentley Beetham's affection for the Lake District and its mountains was shown by his legacy to the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of which he had been a member since 1918. With it the Club acquired Brothers Water Cottage on the Kirkstone to Ullswater road near Low Hartsop village for a climbing hut and renamed it the Bentley Beetham Cottage.

It is difficult to sum up the qualities of a man who did indeed become a legend in his own lifetime. Those who knew him, whether as teacher, ornithologist, mountaineer or photographer will have their own recollections. To many he was a teacher and housemaster who presented a severe and unbending nature; to all he was a strict disciplinarian and hard taskmaster, striving for excellence himself in all things and expecting the same quality in those he taught. To others he was a man who was influential in developing lifelong interests and enthusiasms whether for natural history, a love of the countryside or the personal challenge to be found in the hills. It was, perhaps, on field trips and when climbing that he was at his most relaxed. There was delight in the discovery of a golden plover's nest, satisfaction in the completion of a hard climb and pleasure in an individual making a first ascent. This is probably the Bentley Beetham more familiar to his old friend Howard Somervell who, in writing his obituary,

Bentley Beetham (on Shepherds Crag?). *Photograph from the M.D. Lowes Collection.*

remembered him as being, "a loyal friend, a delightful companion on a mountain, modest and self-effacing, in love with nature and liked by everyone who knew him".

The rediscovery of Bentley Beetham's slides in 1979 raised the question of what to do with them. First of all they were sorted and catalogued. It was found that the largest number of the photographs are of Everest and other climbing expeditions mostly taken by Beetham himself. Quite a number are of particular interest to the School, being of events, individuals or groups of boys, and there is a section of geological slides. Unfortunately the majority of his highly thought of bird photographs is missing.

The advice of A.L. Colbeck, an amateur photographer of some repute, was sought and he was of the view that the collection was of considerable interest and steps should be taken to safeguard it. He then offered to put the whole collection onto negative 35 mm film and from this produce a full set of positive slides. The first stage was completed in February, 1982, and he then produced a selection of slides for use in the Stockdale Memorial Lecture on Bentley Beetham given by Professor K. Mellanby on 5 March, 1982. Sadly, this was the last work that he did on the collection owing to his sudden and unexpected death. The Old Barnardians' Club is grateful that he was able to give so much of his time to the project and had he not done so this story may well have had a different ending.

It was some time before a way of finishing the work was found and it was not until 1987 that, thanks to the Photographic Technician of the University of Durham School of Education, the rest of the work was completed.

In the slide collection the School has a fitting reminder of one of its more colourful Old Boys and a valuable archive which will be of interest not only to future generations of boys but also to historians of mountaineering and photography."

M.D. Lowes

Michael Lowes was a member of the Goldsborough Club and a Yorkist under Bentley Beetham's housemastership. When the slides were discovered, he undertook to catalogue the collection and enlisted the help of Mr. A.L. Colbeck. This short article is taken from a fuller account which it is hoped to publish at a future date.

Now retired and living in the Durham area, he was formerly Lecturer in Education at the Durham University School of Education and before that was on the staff of the College of St. Hild and St. Bede.

The late Mr. A.L. Colbeck was the father of L. Colbeck ('64) and B. Colbeck ('67).

K.C.K.

Many Old Barnardians' memories were stirred by the above Newsletter article on B.B.

E. Scott (1942–49) "thought that one aspect of Barney's educational influence receives little attention, namely the impact of its environment on its pupils . . . "

" . . . Bentley Beetham did not only introduce the Goldsborough Club to the dale (Teesdale) . . . but also had virtually the whole school out collecting rose-hips all over the country for the war effort. We got 2d per pound if they were up to his standard sample in the Central Hall display cases – 1d per pound if not properly topped and tailed. Every rookery from Coniscliffe to Langdon Beck saw his recruits counting nests for the national rook survey. One night he even led us out of the School Field in our dressing gowns so that we could have a chilly lecture on the cause of a brilliant display of the Northern Lights. For some of us, his portentious delivery of the phrase 'Behold! the Lesser Celandine' was our portent of Spring . . . "

" . . . Sometimes unstructured, often in the case of the Goldsborough Club under skilful guidance, did we benefit from an informed outdoor education long before the educational world latched on to its value and institutionalised it."

Professor K. Mellanby recalled the motor-cars at Barney in the 1920s: " . . . At this time cars were still scarce. The only other one owned by a master was Mr. Beetham's 1904 one-cylinder Rover. This we immortalised in a scurrilous poem:

'fore the natural historian everyone cowers
so great is his strength and so wondrous his powers
He climbed up Mount Everest in under two hours
But not in his Rover ca-har, ha, ha
But not in his Rover ca-har.

"One day he was driving at some speed when a wheel came off and he saw it bowling in front of him. A lady who had seen this happen said 'I am so relieved to see that you are alive. I saw a motorist killed last week, and if you too had died I should have never driven again!' To which B.B. replied 'Yes, Madam, and neither should I!' This is not apocryphal: I heard it from B.B. Himself!"

N. Frost (Master 1926–34) is another who recalls memories of Mr. Beetham. "Since retiring from the Second Mastership of Bedford Modern School he has made his home in that town and on the walls of his lounge are photographic portraits of three pets – and Irish Terrier, a cockatoo and a monkey – all by B.B. Shortly after taking up his appointment at School, he writes, 'I was invited to partake of Tea in Bentley's study: a most impressive ceremony with its silver teapot, milk jug and sugar basin, complete with silver sugar tongs. I well remember how impressed I was too, with the furniture in his room which later I learned was the result of visits to Heals of London. Occasionally I was invited to make four at Bridge when either Adlard, Phillips or Hardy were not available'."

TWO'S COMPANY, THREE'S A CROWD

Brian Swales

As soon as Ian told me about his plan, I agreed. He thought it would be good training for me and I liked the sound of the challenge to do a route on every crag in Langdale in the day.

June was the best time to do the circuit as we could make use of the maximum available daylight hours and the weather had been unusually fine for a long period. This meant all the routes would be bone dry. Ian had planned to do the circuit mid-week when the crags would be quiet but with the possibility of a change in the weather he suggested doing it the following Sunday.

After the pub on Friday night, we retired to Ian's house to finalise plans for the circuit. Suddenly we were interrupted and a voice said "That sounds a good do, I'll be at your house by 6.30 p.m. tomorrow if I'm coming with you". It was Steve, a friend who had hung up his P.A.s in the seventies and was thinking of getting some more footage out of them before buying some new "sticky" boots. We thought he was joking so didn't bother discussing it anymore.

Ian arrived at 7.45 p.m. the following evening and my gear was loaded. As Ian nipped upstairs to the loo my 'phone rang. Who could it be? I picked up the 'phone and sure enough it was Steve, half a mile up the road and surprised that we were still in town. We picked Steve up and set off at speed for Ambleside to do the magic hour from Skipton, 60 miles in 60 minutes. Steve protested all the way saying he wanted to die in his bed and not in the back of a Renault 5.

We arrived with one minute to spare and nipped into the Golden Rule for a swift one as we had to build up our fluids. We also had a pint at Wainwrights and Steve decided he didn't like the place so we hurried down to the Stickle Barn where we had a couple more. Don't get confused, we were not doing a circuit of the pubs in Langdale, I'm sure that has been done many times before, we had our sights set much higher.

I was awake before six and saw Steve slide out of his bunk and wake Ian. I got changed and went downstairs for a brew and some breakfast. It was obvious Steve hadn't done much lately as he had brought no food or perhaps he never does. We drove to the Old D.G. "Should I take my big boots?" Steve enquired. "It's up to you lad" was our reply and set off towards the Band at 7.00 a.m.

Even at that time it was very hot and the slight dew was disappearing from the grass. It turned out to be the best part of the day and we

realised we should have been out sooner. Ian vowed never to lie in bed in the morning again whenever he was in the Lakes.

We arrived at Neckband at 8.00 a.m. and Ian roped up to lead "Razor Crack". Steve belayed while I lay in the sun for a while before getting ready. We both seconded together and I found it quite sustained at that time in the morning and I had a scare when a jug moved when I pulled on it. Ian reassured me it was mechanically sound.

Nine o'clock and we had left Neckband and continued up Bowfell till a path branches off to the right to Flat Crags and below to North Buttress. There was a welcome spring of cold water at its base and we left the sacks there. We found the start and I climbed the first pitch of "Sword of Damocles". It was very dirty and may have been the first ascent of 1988.

I brought up Ian and Steve and then I set off up the upper pitches. It had been the first extreme I had climbed so it was good to come back and lead it after all these years but "alas, the sword, is no longer with us", it fell off in 1978. I found the climbing interesting but very dirty, the only consolation was that it was dry. I reckon Arthur Dolphin made a good job of the crux pitch as it was an excellent lead for its year considering the equipment available, i.e. no "Friends". There was a jammed and corroded Friend in the upper layback crack.

We descended to the gear, had a quick bite to eat and then set off at about 11.30 a.m. It was at this time we sighted other climbers en route for Bowfell Buttress.

We contoured under Bowfell Buttress and round to the top of Rossett Ghyll, over Rossett Pike and down to Stake Pass. Here we had a ten minute break before making the long haul and worst part of the trip to Gimmer Crag. Steve started to break trail for the first time and was immediately sacked as he led us straight into a bog. Eventually we arrived at the top of Gimmer.

Ian cracked a can of Pils lager and we had a bite to eat. It was at this point that Steve thanked us for "inviting" him on the trip. "We bloody didn't", I bluntly replied and said that he had invited himself.

We soloed down Junipall Gully and met some friends at the bottom and inspired them to reverse part of our circuit. It had been decided that we each lead a route completely so now it was Steve's turn. He set off up "Intern" and was climbing very smoothly. Ian followed and then myself. I found it as awkward as before and very bold when I had taken out the gear before the crux.

On arrival on the terrace, K.G. appeared to be vacant so I raced around the corner only to find a chap ensconced in the groove with his mate about to start the traverse on his first HVS. I belayed and then jammed a rope under the corner of the roof, so I brought Steve up on

the other who released it and then clipped it into a runner to prevent it happening again. We had to resort to plan B and finish up "Gimmer String". What a superb pitch, good climbing, good gear and very exposed. It was probably the best way up the crag. Steve and Ian came up even stopping to pass the time of day with a lady on the "crack" just as the chap on K.G. was belaying.

We scrambled back up to the sacks where Ian opened another can of Pils and Steve said the chap on K.G. had nicknamed me Sylvest – "he takes no rest". I nicknamed Steve "Reinhold" because of his appearance and his plans for the summer. Steve then announced that "his" idea had been a good one but we may have been faster if there had been only two of us and we had left Ian behind. I didn't catch all of Ian's reply but he suggested Steve go forth and multiply.

Off again, this time round to Pavey, stopping at Stickle Tarn to take on water. Although we had done the hard part of the circuit it was beginning to feel like a job.

I had a good rest as I belayed Ian up "Arcturus". It may have been because I had been resting and found it hard to get moving again or perhaps climbing over to the left of the peg, the way Ian had done, was too much of a reach but I found that section very awkward. Steve climbed to the right of the peg, the way I've done it before and said it was O.K.

We were greeted on Jack's Rake by Og, a friend of Ian's who produced some bottles of lager out of his sack. They were very refreshing but Steve complained because they were alcohol free and had no calories, which is what we required.

Steve set off up "Golden Slipper" only to find a team starting up the second pitch. This was our first major hold-up of the day. I knew one of the team and he said that they wouldn't be long. Sure enough, as soon as the leader was up, Barry ran up that pitch leaving Steve placing lots of runners. He had just told us how he had scolded a fellow climber in his youth for missing out good runner placements so he had to practise what he preached. Again the pitch was superb climbing on rough rock.

Down Great Gully and back to the sacks and off to White Ghyll at speed. Ian's original plan was to finish in White Ghyll but Steve insisted that we should really finish on Raven Crag with "Pluto". Time was against us so we had to get moving. It was my lead and we had chosen "Laugh Not" which we had done many times before. From setting off from the tree in the ghyll to all three of us arriving back we had taken just forty-five minutes to do "Laugh Not", and abseil back down. We even won a No. 1 Rock off "Man of Straw".

At the bottom of the ghyll Steve was lagging behind: he should not

have put his mountain boots in his rucksack. Ian and I resisted the temptation of the Stickle Barn and walked on the track towards Raven Crag and waited for Steve at the gate. He did not appear so I stood on the wall and I caught a glimpse of a yellow teeshirt in the car park. We shouted and then Steve appeared through the trees. He slogged his way up to us. The time was 8.45 p.m.

We discussed the situation and for us to do "Pluto" it would take us an hour to an hour and a half and we may miss the pub and be descending very tired with darkness upon us. S.M.J. took over and we decided on the pub. We arrived back at the car at 9.00 p.m. and had been out for fourteen hours, done seven routes on five different crags and walked 8 miles and staggered an additional 1½.

So the challenge is there, to do the same circuit but include "Pluto", or do a circuit which is harder or easier in grade. Whatever you choose you will have a memorable day out just like we did. In spite of what you might think, we enjoyed Steve's company and he helped carry some of the gear and shared the leading. Cheers Steve!

On reflection we should have set off earlier, i.e. 6.00 a.m. and perhaps a rope or two may have been slightly quicker but who knows . . . Steve?

Summary

The following routes climbed by I. Dobson, B.J. Swales and S. Suthorn on 12th June 1988 round Langdale – Lake District. Various leads.

Razor Crack	HVS **	Neckband – Bowfell
Sword of Damocles	E1 *	North Buttress, Bowfell
Intern	HVS *	Gimmer Crag
1st pitch Kipling Groove + 3rd pitch Gimmer String	E1 **	Gimmer Crag
Arcturus	HVS **	Pavey Ark
Golden Slipper	HVS *	Pavey Ark
Laugh Not	HVS **	White Ghyll

B.J. Swales

Marmolata Buttress, Boulder Ruckle, Swanage. *Photograph by Leslie Shore.*

A VERY SHORT WALK WITH TITUS

Stephen J.H. Reid

I'm sure many of you will have met up with Titus on some fell or other. You may not know him by name of course, for such is the nature of climbing encounters that mountaineers seldom if ever get around to formal introductions whilst belayed, and in any case the fashion is currently against shaking hands – even on attaining a summit (though it has to be remarked that summits also seem somewhat passé these days so perhaps the opportunity seldom arises).

But the chances are you will have found Titus's rangy, if anonymous figure, occupying your stance at some time or another, aristocratic eyebrows twitching like antennae in the ozone of the hills, as he engages you instantly in charmingly light but never frivolous conversation.

Though it is true his business and social interests, not to mention his age (which I promised I wouldn't mention), preclude him from ever attaining cragrat status, he indulges in his chosen sport with an enthusiasm and energy which puts many a younger climbing-bum to shame. In short, Titus is as good a climbing partner as one could wish for and any excursion in the hills with him is a guaranteed adventure. That day in the early winter (alright . . . late autumn) of not so many years back was no exception.

The forecast was not good. But it was better than its predecessor of the day before, and on the premise that the greatest dreams are founded on such tiny rays of hope (and sunshine) we planned accordingly – de-rusting crampons and sharpening axes that had lain idle and unwanted during a summer of rock. Destinations were discussed and excitedly disputed – Pavey? Great End? Hellvelyn? Scafell? Of course – Scafell – Moss Ghyll . . . If anywhere was likely to hold ice on a day of jungle-like humidity (considering it was late January) Moss Ghyll would be that place. We licked our lips and packed our sacks in avid anticipation.

Our journey began at six a.m. in my partner's battered Passat, the time being a compromise between Titus's wish for an hour later and my own desire, respectful after a number of enforced and unprepared-for bivouacs, in positions and conditions far from suitable, for an hour earlier. Wrynose was dismissed as a possibility – too much ice we hopefully agreed and Titus turned left for Newby Bridge and Ulpha. The Volkswagen's windscreen-wipers struggled with an increased deluge. "Should be snowing higher up," I suggested, but with little conviction.

The Canaletta of Massanella. *Photograph by June Parker.*

Birker Fell and Eskdale were navigated in mist more by luck than good judgement and eventually we were tearing up the western shore of Wastwater. The rain was almost horizontal and oddly we hadn't encountered a single other vehicle on the road the whole way from Windermere. At Wasdale Head we sat and listened to the heavy drops drumming on the car-roof and watched white horses on the lake. The mountains weren't to be seen.

Like so many others who have more enthusiasm than time for climbing Titus is a bit of a gear-freak. Unfortunately his time for pre-shopping discussion is also strictly limited with the result that he is a rather uninformed gear-freak. Salesmen seem to see him coming and his rack contains at least one of everything that never quite made it in the equipment shops – T-chocks, single camming units, peculiar wire threaded wedges and even stranger abseiling devices – Titus had them all. He eyed my tattered breeches with disdain as I struggled to open the car door against the wind.

"Still wearing those old things, eh?! Got rid of mine. Couldn't stand me stockings falling down. Got these instead. Pandy Hatterskew swears by them!"

I examined with interest his new, fluffy blue, one-piece romper suit. Mindful of Bonington perhaps, the manufacturers were leaving nothing to chance and had incorporated a fly zip of almost obscene dimensions equipped with an enormous dangling zipper. Hatterskew, I recalled, was the proprietor of a well-stocked local sports emporium and the suit looked suspiciously like last years model. We hoisted our sacks, Titus's jangling hopefully with the latest in banana-shaped picks. Soaked through already and we hadn't even started.

All went well, albeit slowly, to the foot of Brown Tongue. Never have I felt less like embarking on that which Oppenheimer innocently refers to as "a mile more of easy tramping up a grassy tongue between two chattering brooks". Anyone who has passed that way will, I am sure, know exactly what I mean. But the ascent was academic at that point, for our first concern was one of the aforementioned brooks which was not so much chattering as roaring. I thought of numerous pathetic reasons for postponing continuance of our venture but did not feel free to voice any of them in the face of the keenness of a climbing partner who was old enough to be . . . well, my uncle. Had the stream been any higher the question might have been decided for us but as it was I balanced precariously from the tip of one greasy boulder to another, thankful of my plastic boots, and so reached the far bank. Titus followed, eyebrows bobbing appreciatively, until he had but one step to

take and I saw him visibly relax. It was of course at that point that he fell in.

I don't think either of us was unduly worried by this at first, after all we were both pretty wet, and it was only when he stood up that I noticed the middle finger of his left hand which was pointing at a horrifying angle of forty-five degrees to its fellows.

"Titus, you've broken your finger." I said, pointing out the obvious.

"Oh . . . So I have," he replied, examining it with interest.

There followed a prolonged silence, at the end of which the finger was clearly not going to make an instant recovery, and I felt constrained to add, "We will have to go down".

There was genuine disappointment in his voice as he acknowledged the sense in this; and we plodded soggily back across the torrent and down to his car.

Titus maintained a ridiculously cheerful upper lip, and would admit to no pain at all, over the 16 miles to Whitehaven, where his finger excited much humorous interest among the staff at Casualty. They swiftly clicked it back into place and bandaged it professionally; it appeared it might merely be dislocated.

That done, I was astounded to discover it was only 11 a.m. Titus was all for returning to Wasdale and renewing our assignment with Moss Ghyll but I demurred and he, reluctantly agreeing that we might be a bit short on daylight, said "Chaz Burrow never missed an opportunity and neither must we. Lets look around Whitehaven, haven't been here for years." Burrow, I recalled, was a pre-war Everest veteran of prodigious energy and, alas, now venerable age. I wasn't entirely sure that this was quite the moment for sight-seeing though it is always hard to argue with dicta hallowed by time.

But Whitehaven on a wet Sunday is a depressing place and not suitable for convalescing an invalid. Decay was everywhere and, despite the odd valiant attempt to preserve a handsome Georgian or Victorian facade most buildings seemed to be crumbling apart and were green with slime. Half an hour of this was enough for both of us. We headed north.

"Primrose Dale!" exclaimed Titus suddenly. "Turn right immediately."

I did so, much to the annoyance of oncoming traffic.

"First came here in '59," he enthused. "Haven't been back since Snooker died. It was his hobby you know. Made a fortune out of manufacturing Union Jacks during the war and built this theatre. Amazing man. Used to get top performers from all over the world –

Gropelli, Benjamin Scotland, Rapelski . . . and the dinners afterwards . . ." He retreated into the happy mists of gastronomic time as I nosed the Passat off the road and parked in front of a dilapidated barn that sported a peculiar entrance reminiscent of a booth at Henley Regatta. Paint peeled forlornly from scalloped eaves. Titus strode in and searched the building until he found a solitary cook loitering with intent in a far-off kitchen whom he duly press-ganged into service as a guide. Inside, the place was one of the seven wonders of Cumberland – bars – a restaurant and a two hundred seat theatre, "papered" in fading flame-red silk. I was suitably spellbound, though I couldn't help noticing dust on the light fittings and bare patches on the carpet. Not, as Titus later re-iterated, what it was in Snooker's day. We eyed the shabby restaurant unenthusiastically and, to the cook's indubitable delight, decided on Cockermouth for lunch.

"Hang on," said Titus, "turn left here. We'll go and see old Stengun. Always telling me to pop in whenever I'm passing. He'll be pleased to see us, lives on his own but loves a bit of company."

I was not so sure, we were decidedly bedraggled and our wet clothes gave off an aroma familiar to climbers everywhere, but I followed his directions and felt even more uncertain as we pulled up on the crisp gravel drive of one of the minor stately homes of England. If Stengun was surprised at our appearance he was too much of a gentleman to show it and, with Titus waving his bandaged hand like a guilded invitation card, we were ushered through classical colonnades and down a series of darkened corridors to his inner sanctum. I snatched glimpses of high rooms hung with ancestral portraits and gleaming with polished furniture. But even a stiff gin didn't make up for the lack of heating and, while our host pontificated on the failing fortunes of the landed gentry, I shivered soundlessly in the depths of my Chesterfield, my knees turning the proverbial colour of his blood.

If Stengun was not worried by our peculiar appearance, the manager of The Minnow at Cockermouth was even more po-faced. After all I suppose our wet money was as good as anyone's and I mingled uncomfortably in a haze of expensive perfume and cigar smoke as Titus tucked into roast pheasant and circulation returned painfully to my toes.

On the way out of town Titus uttered another cry and I duly obeyed his further instructions regarding the whereabouts of another long-lost friend.

"Should be just around the corner any minute now. Never seen it myself. She got left it out of the blue."

I pointed out various, to me, enormous houses which were dismissed with impatience. A signpost read "Isengard 1/2". Another

inconsequential mansion that could have been home to several families was disregarded and then, just as its architect must have intended, we rounded a bend to see a castle of dramatic, gormenghastian proportions. Turrets seemed to sprout from turrets which sprouted from further turrets and a flag fluttered from the highest pole.

"Good show, should mean she's at home," exclaimed Titus as we motored over the drawbridge. But she wasn't, as we found after a long wait by the front door bell. Eventually a small boy appeared from around a distant corner of the building. He did a quick double-take and then vanished only to reappear seconds later with his apron-clad mother in tow. She eyed Titus's zipper cautiously from a safe distance and took several hurried paces backwards when (eyebrows oscillating) he lurched towards her waggling his finger by way of explanation. Eventually an understanding was reached, explanations given and messages left, and we departed once more for the road. I noticed the good housekeeper staring after us, mouth agape, for a long time as we trundled away down the avenue.

On the run home I made the mistake of introducing Titus to "Rack and Ruin", my favourite climbing shop. True to form, he quickly discovered a number of essential new items that he could no longer manage without and it was some considerable time later that I delivered him home in time for tea. We hadn't done much climbing I know but, as I sat with my feet up in front of a blazing fire, a cup of tea and a plate of buttered toast nicely balanced on opposing arms of a very comfortable chair, I felt that Burrow would have been proud of us.

NAPES NEEDLE – THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Peter Fleming

I recall having years ago read in George Abraham's Book *British Mountain Climbs*, about a postcard being on sale in Chamonix photographic studios, showing Napes Needle masquerading as the "Aiguille du Nuque", and giving the impression that it was to be found on the Mont Blanc massiff. This occurred shortly after the turn of the century and has always intrigued me.

On returning to Chamonix after a three day epic in a storm on the Peuterey Ridge during the summer of 1982, I came across a recently published book by the late Gaston Rebuffat entitled *Chamonix Mont Blanc – 1900*. The text is in French but the illustrations reproduced in colour and black and white from old photographs, paintings, posters, adverts, magazines and postcards of the period, made it worth buying at £10. To the mountaineering historian it is an essential item for the bookshelf. However, on page 87 the "Aiguille de Nuque" makes an appearance once again. Being of an enquiring mind, I asked a French acquaintance what, if any, was the meaning of the word "Nuque", and was told "It is this part here", touching the back of his neck, "You call it the nape, I think". Well – I should have expected it!

The view reproduced in the book is not the usual one from the Dress Circle, but is taken from further up the Needle Gully and shows prominently the overhanging top block of the Needle. The caption beneath has been masked out and changed to "Chamonix, Ascension d'une Aiguille". The photograph looks to me to have the style of Abraham. This article includes a modern shot from the same viewpoint.

I decided to write to Gaston Rebuffat to ascertain if he was aware of the mistake, to explain where the "Aiguille" really was and at the same time extend appreciation of the excellent books he had produced to date.

Mr G Rebuffat
Parc Vallombrosa
6 Avenue Jean de Noailles
Cannes 06400

3rd September, 1982

Dear Mr. Rebuffat,

I have just returned from a climbing holiday in the French and Swiss Alps, where I bought a copy of your book, "Chamonix Mont Blanc 1900", which is most interesting and well produced.

However, I was intrigued to find reproduced on page 87 a photograph entitled "Chamonix – Ascension d'une Aiguille". The pinnacle illustrated is, I am sure, not to be found in the French Alps at all, and is in fact on a mountain in Cumbria (Cumberland) England, known as Great Gable, not 50 km from where I live. The pinnacle is named Napes Needle, and viewed from a different angle has served as the emblem for our local mountaineering club since its formation in 1906 – The Fell & Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District, upon whose paper I write to you.

You may well be aware of this, because it was known about here at the time of the original publication of the photograph at the turn of the century, when it was on display in Chamonix photographic studios, but I felt I would like to write to you in case you did not know of this.

I would like to take the opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed all the books you have written to date.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Fleming

His reply was interesting, most friendly and informative. Written by hand and in French, the main part of his letter translated as follows:-

"Thank you very much for your letter. You are confirming what Edward Pyatt pointed out in the Alpine Journal (1982 p250/1).

I hesitated a long time before publishing this card "Chamonix-Ascension d'une Aiguille". I know the Mont Blanc Range very well and that of the "Aiguille Rouges" as well as the shape of all the "Aiguilles". I have tried to find out what could be the needle on the card and I finally said to myself:

1. I do not know all the needles
2. This one may have collapsed since 1900.

The summit of the Aiguille de Argentiere on Page 43 is not the same

nowadays, and it is therefore Edward Pyatt and yourself, who have given me the key to this enigma, what would George Abraham think of all that?

Now how could a photograph by Abraham be published here in Chamonix? Maybe Abraham had an arrangement with one of the Chamonix photographers, maybe with Mr. Willmann.

In any case, thank you very much for your letter. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you one day."

"Sadly, I never had an opportunity to meet him, but feel honoured to have corresponded with such a distinguished mountaineer and in doing so to have added some little known facts to the 100 years history of our Club emblem – the "Aiguille du Nuque", or as our fourth President, W. P. Hasket Smith would prefer to call it – Napes Needle.

SWANAGE SNAPSHOTS

Leslie Shore

Swanage is a Dorset seaside town situated not far from Bournemouth. Significantly the rock-climbs found on the sea cliffs located a mile or so to its south attracted me to the area, geographically known as the Isle of Purbeck. By Dorset standards the town is an ordinary one. However, its cliffs offer some impressive rock to climbers seeking adventure. The cliffs extend from Durlston Head westwards to St. Aldhelm's Head and are made from limestone of the Jurassic age.

When I lived in Hampshire I was conveniently placed to enjoy the satisfying experience of Swanage climbing. The sea, the rock scenery and the climbs will be the main subjects captured on film by the climber-photographer. Similarly I present below some of my personal snapshots of events encountered there. I start with the sea.

"He's in the water!" yelled a panic-stricken, cockney-voiced climber we could not see. Keith Martin and I rushed to join the line of other climbers marshalling along the top of Swanage's Subluminal Cliff. A gasp of astonishment echoed from us as we watched the rescue of a fallen climber. Beneath us an urgent team of people were snatching at ropes rooted in the sea. Their efforts were rewarded when a man's head surfaced above a wash of waves. His feet struck out wildly at the cold February sea until he was plucked out of the water on to a limestone platform. Sluggishly at first he stood upright among them; soaked, humiliated and confused. His recovery was marked by the sound of his curses directed at his lead climber who had failed to hold his fall.

The Subluminal Cliff is a popular place for climbers. It is easily located just below a lighthouse. It is a good place to introduce yourself to Swanage's cliffs. Short, bold and vigorous climbs place belayed leaders along its upper edge. From a distant viewpoint their assembly resembles that of a resting colony of gulls.

"I did the last ascent" remarked Ed Dilley laughing. Certainly his ascent was one of distinction. I was fresh from my first explorations of Swanage rock-climbing and his announcement was relevant. "A very impressive climb" boasted the opening sentence of Richard Crew's description in the 1977 Dorset Guidebook; this was also its epitaph I realised.

A week or so earlier Dave O'Keefe and I had entered the Promenade area of Swanage drawn by this description of the "Crack of Dawn", a seventy foot Severe climb. Dave openly admitted that Swanage Severes taxed him to his limit and that Lakeland Severes were much easier by

comparison. Dave belayed me at the foot of a disintegrating crack. After a brief physical struggle I quit my attempt to climb it at six feet. I privately concluded that Dave's grading comparison was true.

Ed's statement, about the "Crack of Dawn", changed this view because he had a justifiably rare claim to make. He had climbed the route in January 1979. Later that year a savage storm wrecked the "Crack of Dawn"; it wrenched a limestone monolith, measuring forty feet by six feet by twenty one feet from the cliff and the impressive climb disappeared into the English Channel. Swanage has a reputation for loose rock, which this example may exaggerate, yet it is a factor that a climber must take into account.

"Retire when you are young". The advice came from a dog owner out for a stroll along the Swanage cliff tops. Coincidentally Mike Benwell and I were preparing to climb in the Boulder Ruckle. To achieve our climbing objectives we had to ignore this wise advice. Affectionately called the Ruckle, by those intimate with the place, it is the epitome of commitment climbing. Access is by a hundred foot abseil. If you are unable to use rope escape techniques then your skill at climbing at Very Severe will be the minimum required to get you back out; some easier ways out do exist but they tend to be dangerous because of loose rock.

You can obtain a comprehensive view of the Boulder Ruckle from its minor eastern extension, the Subluminal Cliff. A hazy grey ribbon of steep rock, over a hundred feet tall, curves ever so slightly around the sea. The haze obscures any quick assessment of the cliff's features. On closer inspection the rock face has some impressive features; vertical grooves and cracks criss-crossed with horizontal roofs and overhangs.

What then does the Boulder Ruckle offer of interest to the rock climber? The climate maybe? The cliff's steepness perhaps? The rock routes? The solitude? You can climb there all the year round thanks to the kindness of the weather; certainly a point in its favour. The steepness is unremitting; thus it's not for the unfit or nervous. Its half mile length has yielded a large number of climbs; those in search of quality climbs having character will enjoy the place. Staggeringly it shares with the Highlands of Scotland a measure of solitude so unexpected for southern Britain. To entice you into the Ruckle I will describe next some of its best exit routes.

"Adventura" (VS) can be found near the Ruckle's west end. Aloft on the final pitch one will get excitement. A two-pitch climb on sound rock: the first one provides a stiff opening scene; after a short bulging wall a corner crack is bridged to an excellent ledge. Mike led the first pitch and I led through. The principal feature of the last pitch is an overhang that has to be climbed. It was made from shelvings of handwide laminations

of limestone rock. I clung to the overhang's handholds like a trapeze artiste. My discomfort rapidly increased and I realised I had to make a move. Hanging, squatting like a partially opened pen knife, I snapped my body upwards. My final breathless moves above the overhang found me standing on a thin rock lintel resting at the foot of a "V" groove. I had plumbed the depths of my concentration to get to such a safe haven and I was deaf to calling sea gulls.

"Old Faithful" (VS) is a good climb that provides the easiest way out of the Ruckle's eastern rampart. It is a straightforward climb; a crack leads up to a square cave ledge and from it a line traces its way up a short steep wall to the top via a groove. The crack requires a bold approach to overcome its first awkward steep moves. The steep wall is scattered with palm-sized holds and its ascent is a pleasant experience. As a first taste of the Ruckle this is the ideal climb. However, the climb is located in an area subject to climbing restrictions during the bird-nesting season, extending from the last day of February to the first day of August.

Mamolata Buttress is the most prominent feature of the Ruckle when looked at from Subluminal. Its rocky enormity will one day collapse into the sea and the crash will be heard in South Wales. Wessex climbers are optimistic that during our lifetime it will remain securely attached to South England's coast; the 1988 FRCC *Journal's* review of the Jenkin's Climbers' Club Guide to Swanage attempted to shake this confident outlook by suggesting that the climbing was already to be found on the South Wales coast!

"Tatra" (VS) is a mean and cruel climb for its grade. It is a must for tickers of classics. It starts a few strides west from the spectacular abseil entry down the Mamolata Buttress. As you detach your descendeur, your eye can pick out the line of the route; the scalding sting felt from gripping it will be instantly forgotten as your mind comes to terms with what's in store.

You will encounter the climb's technical crux on the first pitch. I found it a lead with sustained difficulty. It starts with a delicate traverse across a steep wall and finishes up a vertical crack in a bulging nose of rock. The next pitch is the penultimate one and it is entertaining; an awkward belly-type horizontal crawl ends abruptly at a snug, square belay ledge blessed with enthralling views eastwards along the Ruckle. Mike led the final pitch, an intimidating vertical corner. He bridged it widely, in a methodical and practised manner, saving his breath for each repeated upward move. When at last I joined him at the top of the cliff our physical tiredness showed as we slowly coiled up our ropes. Simultaneously we swapped jokes about the whole masochistic

experience. For days afterwards our limbs were to ache from head to toe.

In my opinion one of Britain's best rock climbs is located in the Ruckle. A single stone's throw west from the start of "Tatra" will find it: "Finale Groove" (HVS). In 1966 "Speedy" Smith made the first ascent of this daunting overhanging groove; a necky achievement that deserves more renown.

"Finale Groove's" rock architecture consists of projecting triangular plates of limestone tilting threateningly overhead to form a gaping escarpment. The groove's shadow paints a vertical line to a single point perspective, approximately one hundred feet above you. A karabiner dropped from the top of the cliff will fall plumb and land ten feet from the base of the cliff.

When I climbed "Finale Groove" I did it on a bright, February day. I climbed it in a determined but relaxed manner, overcoming the serious situations with ease. When I reached the convex grass slope, that commanded the cliff top, I felt triumphant. Mike followed me and we sang the climb's praises all the way home.

Swanage's cliffs offer a wealth of climbing to those who are prepared to explore its hidden places. So before you retire I recommend that you visit this corner of Dorset to climb. You will enjoy the sunshine and the sea-side setting. You will also find out what the euphoria of escape from dangerous places is like.

CECIL SLINGSBY'S IMPRESSIONS OF CLIMBING WITH WINTHROP YOUNG IN 1919

Muriel Files

The manuscript letters written to Katharine Chorley (when she was Katharine Hopkinson) by Cecil Slingsby give a most graphic description of some of Geoffrey Winthrop Young's early attempts at climbing with the artificial leg which he had himself designed after despairing of getting an artificial limb for climbing made professionally.

In early September 1919, Slingsby says that he, Geoffrey Young and G.M. Trevelyan were led up "the so-termed A Buttress on Gimmer Crag by a young Barrow Vickers engineer named Bower". There were three climbing generations – more accurately 2½ –: Slingsby, 1849-1924, G.W. Young, 1878-1958, and Bower, 1890-1953. According to Geoffrey Young in *Mountains with a Difference*, 1951, (p.130) it was "up Amen Corner and the chimneys", which suggests B Route. Later in the month they climbed with Prof. Pigou's Gatesgarth party in Birkness Coombe (Mitre and Oxford & Cambridge) and on Pillar (the North by the Nose). Geoffrey Young's account of the climb, and particularly of Slingsby's climbing (in *Mountains with a Difference*, p.130) is worth quoting:

> "Slingsby was celebrating his seventieth birthday. It was his last rock climb, and he moved and belayed with an instantaneous precision that was an example for any modern school. He threw into every moment of the day all his old unfailing and expressive enjoyment, of each good value of life as it passed. The passage over the "Nose" recalled to us that it had been my last climb with Bicknell before the war; and that I had then as leader shown him the little finger-press which turns the lead over the Nose into so neat a problem. He now in turn showed me the way – not a little of it on the rope."

The remainder of the passage adds a few details to Slingsby's account of the gruelling descent over Scarth Gap to Buttermere. G.W. Young says that the North was led by Bicknell; Slingsby says that Pigou came down last; "this he had done several times before and it is to my mind really a great feat". Although Geoffrey Young says that this climb on his seventieth birthday was his last, Slingsby in his letter to Katharine Chorley is not so pessimistic. He clearly hoped for another "little, Oh a wee and not too difficult a climb".

After these early climbs, Geoffrey Young improved the design of his

"peg", especially by a spring inside it which greatly reduced fatigue and was to make "greater mountains again possible for me" (p.133). Geoffrey Young also wrote most appreciatively of the climbing parties at Lower Gatesgarth, the house Professor Pigou, the Cambridge economist, had built in 1912. These parties continued to give enjoyment for about fifty years. Professor Pigou was succeeded at Lower Gatesgarth by Claude Elliott, sometime President of the Alpine Club and Headmaster (later Provost) of Eton. I do not know the later history of Lower Gatesgarth.

The Slingsby and Hopkinson families were close friends, indeed distant relations, as Slingsby implies in his letters. The Pilkingtons were close friends too, and members of the FRCC, as were also the Slingsbys; but the Hopkinsons, well-known climbers also, never joined the Club.

The Club is most grateful to Theo and Katharine Chorley for their unique gifts. These included the manuscript letters of James Jackson, Patriarch of the Pillarites, which describe "his wonderful octogenarian exploits", particularly on Pillar Rock. And I am greatly indebted to George Watkins for the accurate transcription of the Slingsby letters, including line arrangement and layout of the page, punctuation, omissions from the originals and literal errors.

Dungeon Ghyll New Hotel

– Prince Partridge
Day –

1-9-1919

My dear Katharine,
How very very good of you to invite
me to join you "top Great End" but
~~Know~~ how you found out I was here I cannot
tell. Now it is raining furiously, Query! What
is the "it"? otherwise my Wife & I would have
been now on our way up Bow Fell.
We leave here tomorrow & shall have been
a fortnight in this delightful little resort,
Eleanor & Geoffrey Young were with us for
a week & Geoffrey, G.M. Trevelyan & I
were led up a most formidable climb
to wit the so-termed "A Buttress on Gimmer
Crag" by a young Barrow Vickers engineer

named Bower. Rarely, if ever, have I been
on so straight-up a rock face & with only
finger-tip holds – very good & firm of course
owing to the almost perpendicularity of the rock
As you know perhaps Geoffrey Young lost
his left leg – amputated very high up
too – in Italy. He has invented a wonderful
artificial limb for climbing, but I
never saw such a magnificent mountaineering
feat in my life as his on Gimmer Crag.
Bower was at the top with 100 ft. rope,
G.W.Y. ~~at the other end~~ half way on the rope
I at the other end. Tied on to me also
was a 60 ft & G.M. Trevelyan at the bottom
G.W.Y. had to do practically the whole of
his climbing with his hands & one foot, the
right. Where nature had provided a
little foot-hold for the left foot G.W.Y.
held tight with his hands – often only very
minute holds & hopped up & across
with his right foot to the foot-hold
designed for the left. This feat had to be
done frequently. I carried his two
sticks, He never grumbled, but really
enjoyed himself. Still it was terribly
tiring for him as was also the descent
by the footpath to this most cosy hotel.
Bower used rubbers as most young climbers
do now. Excellent they are on dry rock.

a short time ago
my Wife & I spent a fortnight at the Buttermere
Hotel in perfect weather. Eleanor & Geoffrey
being at the same time a week at Prof^{r}. Pigou's
lovely little house. My wife & I one day,
leaving the river at 12.30, went up Red Pike
High Style & High Crag & down to Scarth
Gap – a very jolly round. I had an ex-
cellent climb one day up a difficult
gully on Fleetwith Pike, led principally
by a girl (daughter of D^{r}. Wills A.C.
& granddaughter of Sir Alfred Wills.

Naturally with such good mountaineering
blood coursing through her veins
she climbed like a cat.

~~We may~~ G.W.Y. & may very likely
be coming again to Buttermere & to
Prof[r]. Pigou's; also my Wife & I may also
come to the hotel again in October.

Hard lines for you is this change of
weather.
We return home to S[t]. Anthony's
tomorrow, do please write a
few lines when you get home
again & tell me all your exploits
but now dont you be too
venturesome. Tell me also how
your father is now.

With my Wife's dear love
Ever your affectionate cousin (of sorts)

W[m]. Cecil Slingsby

Better luck next time.

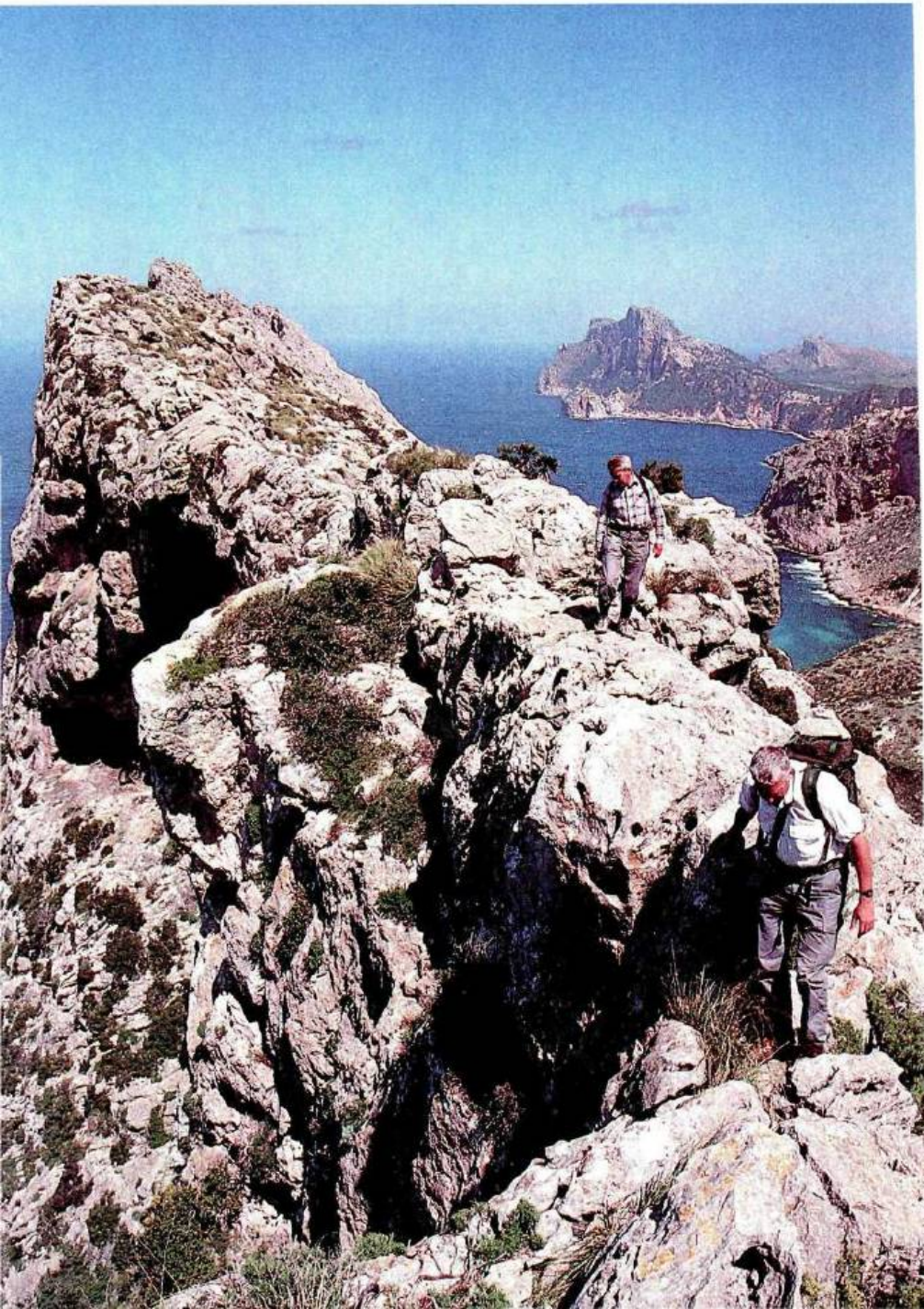
St. Anthony's
Heversham
Westmorland

24[th] September
– 1919 –

My dear Katharine.

Well done you! Well done all of you! Really magnificent!
Now you'll be surprised to learn that I left Buttermere only yesterday
It was this way. Geoffrey Young was invited by Prof[r]. Pigou to
Gatesgarth & I believe also to bring me. We went there on ~~Tuesday last~~ Thursday last week. Geoffrey slept at Pigou's, another man
& I at the farm where we also had Breakfast, & all other meals
at Pigou's. We were a party of 10 mountaineers.
On Friday we all went up to Birkness Combe & divided into

Pilgrims Steps from Soller to Lluc. Cornadors behind.
Photograph by Peter Hodgkiss.



different parties. Pr: Pigou led Geoffrey, me & another man up a really fine climb up steep hard slabs called "The Mitre". We had snow showers. I stopped then but the 3 others made another ascent which is headed by what is called "The Oxford & Cambridge climb". Oddly enough it was my first visit to Birkness Combe. [N.B. I once saw rather a bad accident in a gully on High Stile above Blaeberry Tarn & this put me off Buttermere climbs – wrongly so I now think.] On Saturday two jolly Cambridge lads took me a sail on the lake.

On Sunday all 10 of us set off at 9.30 for the Pillar. Six of us went up by the "Stomach Traverse" route & "over the nose". The other 4 went up by the easy slab & notch & descended by our route meeting us just below "the Split Block". On this descent Prof[r]. Pigou came down last, This he had done several times before & it is – to my mind – really a great feat. Really it was astounding to see Geoffrey Young, just above me, climb those very difficult rocks with an artificial leg. Awfully hard work it was for his hands, arms & right leg. Often he pulled hard with his hands & hopped with his right foot up to a foothold which Nature had designed for the left foot. He went most brilliantly over that fearsome NOSE. I – short in the arms boggled a great deal. You long-legged & long-armed Hopkinsons, of course would make small work of the difficulty, though the sensational element of swinging over nothing in particular will certainly be in evidence. We we out for 11½ hours, pretty long for an auld fellah loike me? Geoffrey found the descent from Scarfe Gap in the dark to be very tiring but he was helped by willing friends.

Lovely it was to see the gilded bracken turning darker & yet brighter day by day.

Well! I must let you, some day before I am too old to take a stroll, take me a good i.e. good for me & not too long (what an involved sentence?) walk & a little Oh! only a wee & not too difficult a climb.

I do trust that your Father will soon be as well as I am & ready to climb the Pillar with you and me i.e. if you'll have me. With my Wife's and my own love to your Father & Mother & of course yourself, Ever Yours affectionately

W[m]. Cecil Slingsby

On the Cavall Bernat ridge. Formentor behind. *Photograph by Peter Hodgkiss.*

VAIL, COLORADO

Cath and Paul Exley

We went on one of the first Thomson package skiing holidays to Vail in January 1989, but didn't really know what to expect. The main purpose of writing this article, then, is to offer a survey of our impressions with inevitable, and perhaps useful, comparisons with the European Alpine skiing scene.

We regard ourselves as good intermediate skiers and usually manage most of the black runs in European resorts, though we mostly ski red.

For ease of comparison, we have converted all prices to sterling. The exchange rate at the time of our visit was $1.75 to the pound.

The package cost was £699 per person which included travel on scheduled flights from Gatwick to Denver, transfer to Vail and accommodation, on a room-only basis, at the Holiday Inn for 13 nights. Cheaper options were available for out-of-town hotels but we were glad to have been in Vail proper for convenience to ski-lifts and restaurants. The other hotels were linked to the central areas of Vail by free shuttle bus but it seemed rather irksome to have to rely on it to get everywhere.

Hotel breakfasts cost about £4, which was fair value for those with large appetites and plenty of time. We bought food locally and ate it in our room. Endless supplies of free ice permitted makeshift refrigeration to be achieved but, strangely, there were no tea or coffee making facilities in the rooms – apparently not unusual in American hotels.

Lift passes cost £18.30 per day but were slightly cheaper if we bought "6 out of 7" days tickets which allowed for an off-day without penalty. Vail is twinned with Beaver Creek, about 10 miles away and tickets bought at either resort are valid at both. At the time of our visit, the frequent shuttle buses to Beaver Creek were free, but there is normally a small charge.

The skiing at Vail is on Vail Mountain which has an east-west ridge about three miles long. Most trails (they don't have pistes in the States!) are on the north-facing slopes which are wooded almost up to the 12000ft ridge (no metres either). The trails have been made by clearing trees and, as such, are superficially very similar.

On the south side, a series of bowls gives some superb powder skiing (except that lift queues build up quite quickly) but they suffer poor snow conditions after several days of snow-free weather. Because of the relative lack of trees on the south side, the lifts there are first to close in windy conditions.

The American runs are graded blue, black and double-diamond black,

equivalent to European blue, red and black. The blue and black runs were usually groomed to a high standard. The double-diamond blacks were usually ungroomed and were difficult because of ice or moguls, usually both, rather than because of the intrinsic skiing difficulty which we expect of European blacks. The runs most like good European blacks were often the off-piste ones starting over rocky outcrops or following the lines of chair lift pylons.

The "official" trails are almost without exception wide and cut through the trees, which leads to uniformity and a more obvious degree of artificiality than bulldozed European equivalents.

Many runs were equipped with snow-making machines so that man could overcome any shortfall on the part of the Almighty. This didn't prove necessary during our stay.

Even though our fortnight coincided with the World Skiing Championships with all the attendant jamboree, the slopes never seemed crowded. Sometimes we would have two or three hundred yards sections to ourselves. We rarely experienced lift queues of more than a minute or two; when we did they were all very polite and civilised – none of the customary European elbowing, pushing and shoving. In fact the Americans everywhere, driving buses, attending lifts, serving in restaurants and sharing lifts or tables, all seemed very friendly, polite, and welcoming.

Because of the lack of variety at Vail (Beaver Creek was smaller but more varied) we hired a car for three days and visited other resorts. This cost about £40 per day (including insurance) for a comfortable 5-seater. Petrol was much cheaper than in the UK. Travel was easy on the interstate highway, even driving an automatic, left-hand drive car on hard-packed snow. However, the other skiing areas were not really very different – rather more of the same trails carved out of coniferous and aspen forests. But the views were new.

Mountain restaurants mostly offered a wide variety of food from hamburgers and chips to pick-and-mix salads at fair prices. Their home-made soups were not to be missed.

Vail has grown from a small group of wooden shacks in 1955 to a sizeable small town (still referred to as Vail Village). It has been under single control so that the buildings share a common, tasteful architecture of Alpine origin – lots of big timbers and white-painted, cement-rendered walls with hotel names in gothic script.

Deliberate attempts have been made to "prettify" the Village, much of which is a pedestrian zone. An ornate, Lucerne-style covered bridge spans the stream whilst the many trees are filled with myriad, tiny fairy lights; some shop windows are as opulent as anything at Zermatt.

Evening meals ranged from £5 for large, take-away pizzas to as much as you wanted to pay but a very good steak with trimmings and other courses would provide a very acceptable evening meal for about £12 each, including some drinks.

In summary, this was a superb holiday. We had extremely good snow conditions, but for a few days had to contend with record low temperatures and the distinct possibility of frostbite. It was an exciting time to be in Vail and, luckily for us, was less crowded than later in the season. Because the W.S.C. had been given so much "hype" it had actually discouraged people – with consequent overflow in other resorts. We would certainly visit this area again, but from the look of the 1990 brochures there will be a significant increase in future costs – presumably due to the initial popularity and the poorer exchange rate.

WALKING IN THE WINTER SUN

June Parker

There is something about an island, especially a mountainous one like Mallorca, that lures people back time after time. Skye is a favourite island, and so is Corsica, but since discovering the mountains of Mallorca in 1981 we can't keep away. In spite of no map and no guide-book and staying in the wrong part of the island, Alan and I discovered the wildness and rugged nature of the mountains and that was where we chose to go for our first long winter holiday made possible by early retirement. Mallorca, of course, offers something special that many other islands do not, and that of course is winter sunshine, giving ideal walking conditions day after day. At the time, in 1984, there was no walking guide-book available and a friend suggested, possibly as a joke, that I wrote one. The idea germinated and that was what I did, spending three months that first year discovering walks and then all the following poor summer back at home writing them up.

Since then we've been back every year, for two months or three, checking on existing walks and trying out new ones. The possibilities are endless, and over 20 new walks are now written up (in addition to 30 previously published) with many more lined up for the future. This may come as a surprise to those who think Mallorca is only of interest to holidaymakers wanting sun, sand and sea. But I can promise that this idea of the island is quite wrong and strongly recommend anyone who likes walking in warm sunshine to go and see for themselves.

Not only are there many tops over 1000m, there are also deep-cut gorges, steep rock walls and a spectacular coast where the mountains plunge straight into a jade-green and turquoise sea. The island is also a wonderful place for wild flowers and shrubs, at their best in the spring perhaps, but also full of interest even in the winter months. The deep blue flowers of rosemary are always in flower somewhere and the lower mountain slopes are often like natural rock gardens. Dedicated birdwatchers choose April or October for the spring and autumn migrations, but all through the winter the resident birds such as the magnificent black vultures are there to thrill you.

To start finding the walks one of the first things we did was to buy all the available maps of the mountains in the Mapa Militar series, both 1:50,000 and 1:25,000. The snag of the latter is that they are even more out-of-date than the former, so that, for example, major new roads, such as the C710 from Soller to Pollensa, are not shown. Another snag is that quite often the information is totally misleading, many imaginary or

"lost" paths being shown while real perfectly good paths are missed out. This can be very frustrating because the first impression is that the maps are quite good, and we had to learn to question the authority of the map in a way never or rarely necessary to those used to our excellent O.S. maps. The "pleasing vagueness" so dear to Tilman would have been preferable to the inaccuracies. Maps sometimes led us to find interesting walks but quite often led us into difficulties or dead-ends that required a retreat. (New and better topographic maps have since become available.)

One successful walk found from the map is along the coast from near the port of Valldemossa to the Foredada, an impressive craggy peninsular with a hole going horizontally right through the rock. Although mainly along a good track, the last kilometre of this has fallen into the sea, so that negotiating this section is a bit of a challenge. Another is the old road from Lluch to Pollensa. This is a very narrow track indeed and it is amazing to think it was the main road until comparatively recently when the C710 was built – by the Americans, in return for the use of the summit of the Puig Mayor for a radar station. This walk involves catching two local buses to reach the start at the monastery of Lluch, which is an interesting place to visit with a museum, refectory, shop, accommodation for visitors and a daily public performance by the boys' choir for which it is famous. Not that there is much time to spend there because this walk is a long one of 20km, unless it is possible to miss out the road section at the end by using two cars or arranging to be met. The choir may be heard though, as the performance takes place shortly after the arrival of the bus and the acoustics at the beginning of the walk are just right!

While hunting round bookshops in Palma for maps we also came across two guide-books in Mallorquin, a language like Catalan, which is possible to read with a little knowledge of French, German and Spanish, although seemingly impossible to speak. One of these books had quite good sketch maps so we were able to find our way on some of these walks even when without fully understanding the text. The descriptions were not always precise, especially to anyone on a first visit to an area, so that it was always a question of doing the walk, then writing a new description rather than attempting a translation.

When out walking a look-out was always kept for paths which could be followed on other occasions, often making good use of binoculars for this. That was how we came to find a walk on Formentor, the Puig de Sa Roca Blanca, by espying a path from the Fumat further along the peninsular. A little researching found a circular walk here and it has become a very popular excursion, with its beautiful views of the sea and

a return through the wooded and sheltered Cases Veyas Valley.

Another time, having a lazy Sunday in Pollensa, we saw people on the top of the Cuculla de Fartaritx and decided to find a way up there. The approach route was already known, an old stepped mule path leading up to a high shelf below the spectacular *cuculla*. This has steep cliffs on three sides and although only 712m high is the nearest of the three hills that dominate the town, the others being the Puig d'es Ca and Tomir. On this occasion it was found impossible to make a circular route, at least one that could be recommended to others in a guide-book, because the logical way back down a stream known as the Mal Torrent proved to be almost impossible. The head of this valley is protected by steep rock, overhanging at the bottom, and all round the perimeter a high barbed-wire fence has been closely attached to the rock. By dint of casting up and down we eventually forced a way through by removing stones from a built up section then wriggling underneath on our backs, while endeavouring to make a safe landing on steep ground and avoiding too close an encounter with the barbs of the wire. This took long enough, but our troubles weren't over, as the valley only showed the merest vestiges of a path and was severely overgrown with many prickly shrubs. Fading light spurred us on to the high farm below, where we knew there was a surfaced road all the way back to Pollensa.

Another late return from a new walk entailed a very slow descent on a rough track as we'd optimistically left torches behind. The brilliant lights of the town football field below beckoned but did not help. On this occasion we had followed a red arrow seen on a previous walk and were delighted to find that it took us successfully up to a broad shelf below the long ridge of Alfabia with its several tops of over 1000m. The actual walking along the ridge was not so easy, being very dissected limestone which required some care to negotiate and was the cause of our lateness. Although we were in cloud at first, this cleared to give airy views on both sides, one towards the port of Soller and the other to the quiet valley of Orient.

In response to requests, a number of easier walks have been collected, such as the walk past the lighthouse at Puerto Soller. This was another walk found from the map, as there is a track marked as leading south along the coast. This went further than shown and led to a high viewpoint on the cliffs, a worthwhile but easy walk. There are several other easy walks in the area around Soller, some of which are described in a small booklet published locally by the information office from whom it is available. We tried out some of these and wrote new descriptions as those provided were a little too brief and not always up-to-date.

Guide-book descriptions in Mallorca tend to become out-of-date fairly

quickly for a variety of reasons. New housing developments sometimes destroy or at least divert paths. Minor landslides and floods wash paths away; sometimes they get repaired, sometimes not. Occasional winter storms and snow bring down trees which block paths and roads; these may take a long time to clear. The worst changes though are those of access and one outstanding problem in the northeast of Mallorca is still ongoing. The owners of the Ternelles, who happen to be the owners of the Banca March, have severely restricted access to their property. Although it includes a road to the sea and the 13th-century Castell del Rei, to both of which I understand access should be allowed by Spanish law, nobody seems to have made any attempt to protest. Access has been allowed on one day only in the week, at first on Mondays and then on Saturdays, with various arrangements for getting permits and/or showing passports at the gate. The guard, when questioned about the reasons for the restrictions, made a long speech, the gist of which seemed to be that the owners wished to conserve and care for their beautiful estate and protect it from vandals, hooligans, fire-raisers, litter-louts and all despoilers of the countryside. Although I am all for open access to the countryside I must admit that they have got a point. There is open access to the pine-woods and sand-hills between Puerto Pollensa and Alcudia and their state is beyond belief.

Maybe most walkers are responsible people who take their litter home, but the trouble with the Ternelles Valley is that there is an easy road all the way to the beach which attracts too many visitors, especially in the high season. Well, I never thought to hear myself express any sympathy with a landowner. It is to be hoped that Ternelles will be opened up in the near future, because there are some excellent walks there, including a "new" one, the Pas de Pescadors, or Fisherman's Step.

This is a scramble really, up the cliffs bounding the valley on the east and giving some spectacular views down to the deserted bay Cala Extreme, backed by a bare rocky peninsular. The approach is from the most easterly point of the Ternelles valley road and marked by red circles painted on the rocks. Although an easy scramble, it is steep and not for those unused to such places. A cairn on the cliff-top marks the way down, but a descent without a previous ascent is not recommended. There is another, secret, way near here, leading down to Cala Extreme from the top of the cliff. There are a number of deep clefts in this area and one of them provides a roofed passage down through the cliffs and leading to a steep way down to the sea. This one is quite safe, but others are quite dangerous with hidden holes in the floor.

One of our favourite new walks is the Portell de Sa Costa. Strangely

enough, we accidentally discovered the way up by the Verger spring on our first mapless and guide-bookless visit. A friend had recommended the walk up the "Pilgrim Steps" from Biniaraix as an approach to L'Ofre, but we took the left branch instead of the right and never made it to L'Ofre, because one of us left a camera by the lunch place on the way up and we had to retrace our steps. But we had a pleasant Christmas Day picnic here in warm sunshine which certainly gave us a taste for future winter holidays. We then did the descent from the "Portell" years later on an excursion with the Club Pollensa, only this time approaching from Cuber. This *portell* is a gateway in the wall which guards the long ridge bounding the Torelles Valley from the steep wall of the Monaber Valley, and gives access to an incredible path that goes down a seemingly impossible way in a series of well-graded turns.

Circular walks are always attractive and the tour of Balitx near Soller is one that rivals the tour of the Puig Roig near Pollensa. Although the Balitx walk is a low level one, rising to a maximum of 407m from sea-level, it is quite strenuous and includes some easy scrambling and quite difficult route-finding. Anyone expecting such a coastal walk to be a mere doddle is in for a big surprise. A pleasant one of course; the country is rough and wild, the scenery spectacular, and the peace and solitude an extra bonus.

Perhaps the most exciting walk we've done was the scramble up to the top of Mitx Dia, a subsidiary of the Puig Mayor itself and very near the closed and guarded military zone. I'd always wanted to go up there and tried writing for permission to do so, having read somewhere that this was sometimes given. After two years without a reply we decided to go anyway, but prudently left our cameras behind in case our films were confiscated. We kept a very low profile on the way up, but once above the Coll de N'arbona one is in full view all the way. My normally slow pace doubled that day in my enthusiasm to get to the summit without being stopped. There is a low circular wall on top which effectively hides one from below and here we enjoyed a leisurely lunch with almost the entire island in view in glorious sunshine. We chanced looking down at the military through binoculars and were not too disappointed to find that no guns were trained on us. In fact they didn't appear even to have noticed. All the same we went down by a different route well out of sight.

The best places for walkers to stay are Cala San Vicente and Puerto Pollensa in the northeast and Soller and Puerto Soller on the west coast. There is an immense variety of walks of all grades and lengths all over the island, but mainly in the Sierra de Tramuntana, the mountain chain which runs from northeast to southwest and separates the rugged coast

from the central plain. These vary from the short easy stroll along the Boquer Valley, favoured as a resting place by migrant birds, to the exciting traverse of the Cavalle Bernat ridge. The rocky towers of this ridge, which lies between the Boquer Valley and the beautiful bay of Cala San Vicente, give delightful and in places difficult scrambling. Then there is the tremendous gorge walk, the Torrente de Pareis . . . but I hope enough has been said to persuade you to give the mountains of Mallorca a try. But don't all go at once – we like it quiet and peaceful and hope it stays that way for years to come.

HA CHARLIE

Tom Price

It is hot. We set off up the dirt road, stirring the yellow dust. We cross a creek of pale brown water, traverse some bare slabs of yellow sandstone and take a path across a tract of mealie-fields. The maize grows six feet high, a rich green. It grows out of red earth, and the trail we follow is the colour of burnt sienna.

We cross another creek, the water a mere wet stain on extensive slabs of water-worn sandstone, and ascend into a pretty village of round thatched houses. "Lumela ntate" and "lumela 'me" we say to the locals. "Eh, bontate" they reply, raising a courteous hand. "Good morny ow are you give me some sweets" say the children, more to display their superior education than in expectation of any reward.

We enter a steep-sided and stony valley, traversing a boulder-strewn slope. We lose the path and follow animal tracks through a zone of bushes, our rucksacks rasping their way through the branches. A stream enters our valley from the left. We descend to it, toil up the other side, climb with some difficulty through a horizontal band of sandstone and gain a small area of cultivation on a sloping ledge of the mountainside.

The little valley narrows. The river bed is a chaos of boulders the size of the Bowderstone and overgrown with bushes and trees. The sides steepen into big rock walls. We push on until our little path ends under an immense curving overhang. The yellow sandstone walls soar up over our heads in a smooth curve. We are in a kind of cave, with a flat earth floor and a roof a hundred feet high. At two points streams cascade from above, to continue down the hidden and rocky bed of the valley.

We settle in, choose our several sleeping places, cook the evening meal on Trangias, boil water from the waterfalls. Darkness falls fairly rapidly here. Bats sew their aerial patterns above us. We make a fire and gaze at the shifting colours in the embers. Five of us are white, seven Basuto, Zulu or Bantu, one 'Cape-Coloured', though this last is as dark as any of the blacks. Ages range from twenty to forty, but several have never slept out before.

The night passes, not so much in sleep, as far as I am concerned, as in something almost better, a delicious awareness of comfort and ease, and of how much more satisfactory it is to be lying in a sleeping bag than walking with a pack on.

We are up at five thirty, away before seven.

A rocky scramble takes us into the world above the cave. Up here is a large sprawling village, Lipetu, on a high broad col. We find the water

supply, a covered spring, carefully protected against cattle. You dip in under the little roof with a dish and patiently fill whatever receptacle you have. It is a daily chore for women and girls, who carry large buckets and drums away on their heads. When a baby girl is born the village women notify the father by throwing water all over him. For a boy they beat him with sticks.

For a mile or two our way lies across a broad upland. Ahead we see a big valley, with tributary valleys coming down from a range of jagged mountains, the Malutis, rising to over 10,000 feet. We descend steeply into the main valley, our road having at this point deteriorated owing to erosion into a complex 'donga', like a miniature Grand Canyon. At the bottom, there is an attractive river with grassy banks and big shapely willow trees. By now it is raining hard with thunder and lightning, and we are glad to take refuge in the back of another cave or overhang. At this point it emerges that Samson, a genial but dreamy twenty year old, has omitted to bring his waterproof, and is now looking stoical and resigned in a totally wet T-shirt. He has, however, brought a large radio with twin speakers. We arrange a groundsheet over his shoulders.

Since the rain has moderated from stair-rods to steady downpour, we boulder-hop across the river, walk up smooth slabs of bare rock, and pick up another red-and-yellow trail up the Menyameng valley. The hills are now shrouded in mist, the thunder has moved away, but quiet, persistent, Lake District-style rain appears to be setting in. We pass a school, tin-roofed, with a row of narrow, corrugated iron privies ranged alongside, at decent intervals from one another. The children swarm about, wrapped in pieces of blanket (the Basuto raincoat) indifferent to the rain.

About midday we come to a village, Ha Boranta, where a rondavel is under construction. The round thatched roof is complete, but it is supported only on a ring of vertical poles. The stone, mud or wattle walls have yet to be built. We ask if we can shelter under it to eat our lunch. We get out a Trangia and brew tea. As we have one or two Sesotho speakers in the group we are able to converse amiably with the villagers. They show much interest in me and concern for my well-being, since a white beard is to them indicative of extreme and venerable old age. Interspersed with the mealies there is a great deal of 'daka' (marihuana) grown, and indeed towards the heads of these mountain valleys there are fields sown with nothing else. We make a joking reference to this and within seconds sprigs of the precious weed are produced for us. These local people are courteous, quite formal in some ways, but always ready for a laugh.

We plod on. The rain abates. Our intention is to bivouac under

waterproof sheets somewhere in the vicinity of Ha Charlie, a highland hamlet now visible high above on the top of a truncated spur. There are some flat and sheltered places in the valley bottom, but it seems a good idea to make some of the height towards the pass we must attain tomorrow. The rain seems to be easing, and there is bound to be water at Ha Charlie.

We strike up the steep and muddy path. Unfortunately as we approach the village the rain comes on again very heavily, the stair-rods now horizontal in a rising wind. Ha Charlie, we find, has few amenities and these do not include flat or sheltered ground. In fact the village seems to have been situated with a view to catching every breeze that blows. On the very crest of the spur is a large walled kraal which would make a tolerable camp site except that its floor is a swamp of black mud and cowdung. We huddle in the porch of a rondavel while one of our number seeks out the Chief. The Chief when he appears is wearing a khaki greatcoat buttoned askew, and has an umbrella and wellingtons. We ask his permission to bivouac somewhere near the village and seek his advice as to a possible site. He and I go and stare disconsolately at the hummocky ground in the lee of the cattle kraal. Rather than provide shelter the wall seems merely to create turbulence in the airstream that sweeps powerfully over the spur.

By this time the group have seeped gradually into the dim interior of the rondavel. In there it smells deliciously dry, with the clean fragrance of old woodsmoke. It has a neat mud floor washed with cowdung. Near the centre is a circular depression about two feet six across and three inches deep, the fireplace. There is no chimney but one can see a small chink of daylight in the apex of the thatched roof. There is a double bed with brass knobs, a cheap formica-topped table, a good-looking but rickety dining chair, and two donkey skins crudely cured and as stiff as boards. There are two eighteen-inch square windows, one blocked up, the other with four little panes of yellowing glass.

I will not dwell on the delicate moves that bring the Chief to offer us the use of the rondavel, first to cook in, and then to occupy for the night. Perhaps they are too shaming, too much like begging. But I have in mind Samson without a raincoat, and our meagre supply of cord for constructing bivouacs, and the total inexperience of most of the group. At all events the Trangias are soon in operation and hot drinks and soup and supper prepared. Our kind hosts bring in a shovelful of burning wood-coals and a quantity of firewood, a very generous gesture in a country where fuel is at a premium. We sit round the cheerful blaze, wheezing gently in the smoke, and are visited in relays by everyone in the village. We feel immensely snug and weatherproof, but as the smoke

gradually thickens from the roof down we are forced lower and lower, eyes smarting, towards the ground. I recall from forty years ago a cold wet day at the Refuge de Tuqueroy in the Pyrenees when with a wood fire burning the only breathable air in that wretched hut was in a layer six inches above the floor.

Before we turn in we have to take out all the ash and embers of the fire as every inch of floor space is needed for sleeping. Our rucksacks alone fill half the rondavel. At last we are all settled in and the last to lie down is the unfortunate villager who has to share his bed with one of our party. He stands on the bed, arranges a blanket round his waist, wraps his outdoor blanket round his shoulders, and as he lies down takes off his hat and hangs it on one of the brass knobs.

I am near the open door. The smell of rain is in my nostrils. All night there is something crawling delicately about my person, never biting or stinging, just exploring. My questing hand fails to locate it. Live and let live, I finally say to myself, and concentrate on the simple pleasure of being in the dry.

In the morning the rain stops long enough for us to breakfast outside. We sweep out the hut, shake the donkey skins, leave everything spick and span. Before we depart the rain comes on again but we set off up-hill into the mist on a good though precipitous path.

We reach the col. Nothing could be less inviting than the steep mountainside running with water that rises to our left. But to go down into the next valley would involve us in miles of extra walking. We turn left, up-hill, into unknown terrain. A path of sorts traverses the side of the ridge, much of it across steep slabs cascading with water. Each time it debouches on to a small grassy col it is difficult to know where to look for the continuation. There are subsidiary ridges running off to the side and we are anxious not to stray on to one of them. Samson, wrapped in his groundsheet, has more reason than most to want to get a move on, and he steps confidently out in front without the faintest idea where he is leading us. This in the end is such a distraction that I compel him to get in the middle of the group and stay there.

In a mist times and distances become distorted. We seem to spend hours and hours threading dubious paths with many an anxious consultation of the compass, but eventually that moment arrives when the valleys below begin to swim vaguely and strangely into our ken, and then show sharp and clear as one drops below cloud level. We are still on the right ridge. A world of mesas and sandstone scarps lies below us. The clouds disperse. The sun comes out, extravagantly hot. The Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, which boasts the highest low point of any country in the world, presents once more its colour, its pastoral

beauty and its rugged charm. All is forgiven.

We spend a long beautiful evening, bright and sunny, and sleep under another sandstone overhang in a pretty spot full of the scent of pines and eucalyptus. Water is half a mile away but there are many willing to fetch it. We make another camp fire. We are nearly home.

Before the group disperses everyone subscribes a couple of rand for a present for Ha Charlie. Next time in town we buy candles, matches and other household goods, and Tony rides out on horseback to give them to the Chief. The Chief reciprocates with a live chicken.

MUMPU – THE MOUNTAIN THAT SPITS PEOPLE

Richard Hamer

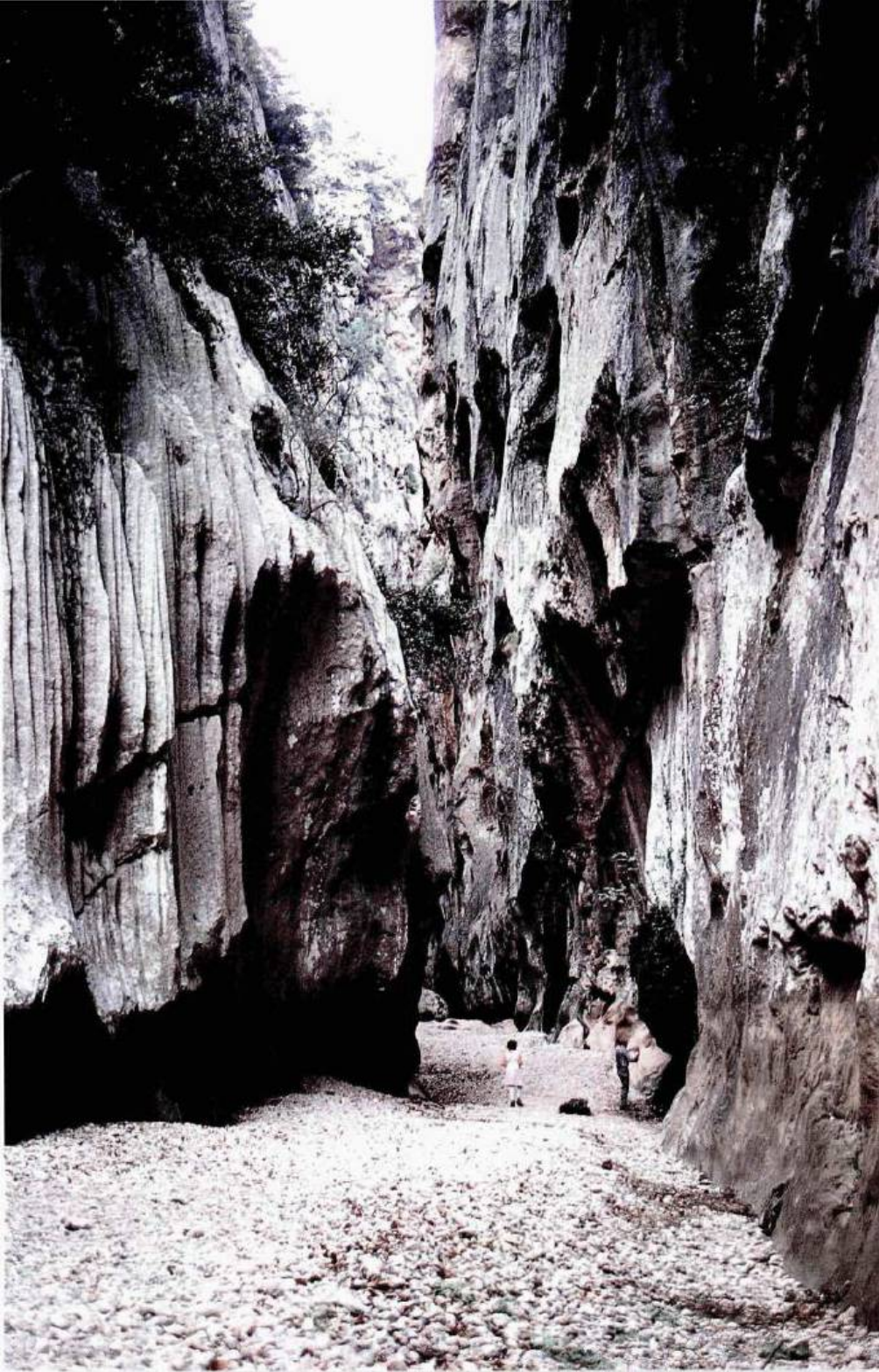
A range of rugged hills drained by clear sparkling streams, a mountain with an enormous cave overlooking the Zairean border, an abandoned nineteenth-century prospectors' fort and a rare opportunity to catch a glimpse of Verreaux's Black Eagle: that was how Mumpu was first described to us. We had just seen a collection of colour slides of waterfalls in Northern Zambia at a Wildlife Conservation Society meeting. This had ended with a brief look at this unfrequented corner of the country. We took to the place at once and began to lay plans for a visit.

Mumpu is the northernmost peak of the Irumi Hills which form a line of mainly quartzite ridges breaking the monotony of the bush-covered Central African plateau, about 200km south-east of the Copperbelt. The mountain overlooks the headwaters of the Luapula and Lunsemfwa rivers whose tributaries drain the Pedicle, a peninsula of Zairean territory which almost splits Zambia in half. The area is a forest reserve devoid of people and the nearest habitation, Mkushi, is 50km away to the south-west, on the Great North Road. Mumpu is the highest peak in western and central Zambia, reaching 1891 metres and is chiefly noted for a huge cave on its western flank. The cave has passages leading inwards and upwards, through a series of chambers, which re-emerge near a saddle just below the summit. Hence the tradition amongst the local Bemba tribes that Mumpu is "the mountain that spits people".

From November to May the tropical rains pour down, the mosquitoes proliferate and bush travel becomes difficult and uncertain. But from the middle of May onwards the bush gradually dries and access improves. We chose a weekend at the beginning of July for the trip because a newly introduced public holiday presented a marvellous opportunity to take a long weekend without using hard-earned accrued leave.

We began the journey from the Copperbelt by travelling south towards Lusaka but soon branched off at Kapiri Mposhi, the Zambian terminus for the Chinese-built railway to Dar-es-Salaam, and made our way along the Great North Road to Mkushi. Here we left the tarred road and the real journey began. We had taken the precaution of obtaining detailed directions and soon realised how invaluable they were. Bush driving in Central Africa is a wearisome business. One drives

The Torrente de Pareis Gorge. *Photograph by Peter Hodgkiss.*



for hours through endless bush following vague two-wheeled tracks which wind tortuously around the wetter grassy depressions. Rarely does the tree canopy open out and the undergrowth restricts visibility to a radius of 200 metres. Great faith in the directions given and a keen sense of the direction of gently sloping ground are the main components of success. There were a couple of tricky turnings in the village of Mkushi itself but we eventually reached the right track on the far side and paused briefly at a small tavern where we were both surprised and delighted to find ample stocks of cool beer! Within seconds, however, the deserted bar was alive with people. Elderly madallas and women were shaking our hands vigorously in welcome and a crowd of small children with beaming eyes and bulging bellies ringed our vehicle and eyed our movements with intense curiosity. It was some time before we managed to clear the road and we fled with the crowd still growing.

It took a further three hours to reach the campsite. The track was dry throughout, although we identified one open grassy dambo as being the main trouble spot in the wet season. Only over the last few kilometres did we notice the ground rising gently in front of us. Rocky outcrops appeared amongst the trees and finally we broke into the lower end of an elongated clearing with a small stream at its centre and the remains of several old camp-fires beneath the trees. We unpacked the vehicle, set up camp and took advantage of a deep pool halfway down a cascade to wash off the dust of the journey. Shortly before sundown we decided to stretch our legs and we crossed the stream and climbed a small kopje to get our bearings. From the rocky summit of the kopje we saw our first clear view of Mumpu . . . a twin-topped peak, 10km distant, with steep craggy sides. With the disappearance of the sun the temperature fell appreciably and a cool breeze, unusual in Zambia, blew from the higher ridges. Soon after dusk we sought refuge in our sleeping bags around the embers of the fire.

Our intention was to be away at dawn, before the sun became too hot. We would visit the cave and of course the summit and select a bivouac site somewhere on the upper slopes, hoping to see the pair of Black Eagles reported to be nesting in the crags above the cave.

The next day we would cut across the line of the Irumi Hills, roughly following the border, by way of a series of upper dambos, and make our way to Fort Elwes. A stream rising just below the Fort could be followed back to our camp in 3 hours. The total distance was not much more than 30km and was over fairly even ground, except for the 700 metre pull to Mumpu itself. It didn't sound very exciting . . . but there were other

Rifugi Pedrotti and Tosa, Brenta Dolomites. *Photograph by Chris Wright.*

factors to be taken into consideration. Firstly, there were no paths of any kind and although some of the undergrowth would by now have burnt off, dense vegetation could be expected over much of the route. Secondly, the availability of drinking water was an unknown factor, and lastly the possibility of making an unexpectedly close acquaintance with one of the more dangerous inhabitants of the bush added a certain amount of excitement to the trip. We were under no illusions about meeting any of the more familiar, larger animals . . . long since poached to virtual extinction outside relatively limited areas in the National Game Reserves. But nevertheless there are a great variety of poisonous snakes, biting insects and stinging plants which are not to be regarded lightly.

We awoke to the familiar sound of the flysheet tugging at the guy ropes. The wind had apparently continued throughout the night. Something was missing, however. One of the pleasant things about bush breakfasts is the accompanying chorus of birds . . . a staggering variety of them. There are over 700 recorded species in Zambia. Surprisingly we could hear nothing except the wind in the trees and the flapping of canvas. It was a strange and eerie breakfast.

Leaving camp at 6.30 a.m. we crossed the stream again, climbed over a low saddle and descended the escarpment on the far side of the Lunsemfwe flood plain. As the sun became hotter we crossed a couple of dry gullies and came into a clearing with chest-high grass. From the centre of the clearing we caught our second glimpse of the mountain, this time rising sharply in front of us. We had to make a detour upstream to find an easier crossing of a dambo still marshy in the centre. A likely place appeared where the stream issued from a valley breaching the escarpment. Here in the dense, lush vegetation a considerable amount of energy was expended hacking our way through as a fierce sun blazed down on us between the trees. It was 8.30 a.m. and the silence of the bush around us made a profound impact. We crossed one more dambo without difficulty and were fortunate in finding a small stream at the centre for our refreshment. By this time were were sufficiently close to the mountain to distinguish the cave. The middle section of the western slopes is carefully guarded by a line of crags. A great sweep of slabs beginning far to the left steepens abruptly in the centre and becomes overhanging. At the foot of these huge overhangs was a dark scar marking the entrance to the cave.

We moved forward over rocky lower slopes with baboons barking their lookout warnings and scampering effortlessly ahead of us to higher perches. A trickle of water issues from the cave and as we drew nearer we found the vegetation getting denser again. No shade was to be found

from the full glare of the sun and the last 100 metres to the entrance proved an energetic fight. Below the cave was a huge flat-topped pinnacle with a superficial resemblance to the Cioch and we took a breather here to study the cave. From below, on the flood plain, the scale had completely deceived us. The mouth was at least 100 metres wide and at its highest 50 metres. Alpine swifts nesting above the entrance continually darted back and forth with their curious swishing sound. As we watched them a peregrine falcon swooped down amongst the swifts and plucking one out of the air with its talons disappeared away to the left.

We continued upwards and once inside the gaping entrance found shelter from the sun. It was deliciously cool and we amused ourselves with a tremendous echo. The floor of the cave steepened at the back and in the distance we could see a faint patch of daylight. As our eyes became accustomed to the darkness we pressed on inwards, scrambling over a huge knot of boulders. At the darkest, narrowest point of the cave, as if at a word of command, the air suddenly became alive with hundreds of bats, disturbed from their resting places. Shuddering, we scrambled on, eager to climb beyond the bats: at length we emerged into daylight at the bottom of a funnel-shaped gap in the mountain. The sides were steep and slippery but we quickly reached the lip and were "spat out" into the glare of the African sun on to a rocky ridge about 100 metres below the shoulder. From the shoulder only a short stroll across rough quartzite, devoid of vegetation, remained between us and the west summit which was crowned by an ugly colonial survey beacon dating from the 1950s.

From here the view was extensive, the line of the border along the watershed was now visible for 100km in both directions, as were the Irumi Hills stretching back towards Mkushi. All around us nothing but virgin bush with faint sinuous clearings marking the line of the dambos and the course of the Lunsemfwa river. From a bivouac site on a ledge just below the summit we spent the morning enjoying the view and "bouldering" on the rough quartzite outcrops. Redwinged starlings and Mocking Ghats kept us company here but there was no sign of the eagles until the thermals started rising after mid-day, when we sited one through the glasses flying along the line of the escarpment towards us. Later in the afternoon it appeared again below the cave and this time there was no mistaking the distinctive white patch on its back. It rose in a huge arc and soared over the summit above our heads enabling us to appreciate how large a bird it is.

The wind rose again at dusk confirming our suspicions that it was a feature of the daily weather pattern. Sitting on our terrace, round our

camp fire, in the lee of the wind, we watched a deep crimson sun sink slowly behind the Copperbelt. The sky was beautifully clear and for a long time we lay in our sleeping-bags watching the stars of the Southern Hemisphere revolve slowly overhead. At sunrise we awoke to find low cloud scudding over the summit and eddying round on to our little terrace. It was bitterly cold and we were eager to be moving. We quickly packed and made our way over the boulder-strewn saddle between Mumpu's twin summits and down the east ridge. The wind lessened with loss of altitude and was little more than a pleasant breeze by the time we reached the upper dambos. These dambos were merely damp or dried out and recent bush fires had burnt off much of the taller grass. It took us three hours to reach Fort Elwes, which occupies a commanding position on an open saddle through the Irumi Hills into Zaire's Shaba Province. It was built in 1896-7 by a party of European prospectors in search of alluvial gold, to provide a refuge for the party in case of military necessity. All that remains today is a rectangular outline of drystone walls, in places 3 metres high. We stayed about an hour musing on the changes wrought in Central Africa in the 90 years since the fort was abandoned, then shouldering our rucksacks made our way down to our campsite.

Early next morning we again spent a disappointing couple of hours hoping to spot a few birds. Ordinarily we would have reckoned on 30 to 40 species in that time. Perhaps the wind was a contributory factor. After lunch we began the long drive back to Mkushi, glancing back towards the line of the Irumi Hills. There, at least, man's impact on the African landscape has been minimal. True, the larger animals have gone, but happily the nineteenth-century prospectors found nothing to satiate their greed and as a forest reserve the area has been spared the outrage of systematic deforestation for agriculture and charcoal.

The mountain that spit's people . . . I thought as we bumped along the track to Mkushi – well, let's hope not too many!

HANGING LOW, SCHWINDELFREIE

Mike White

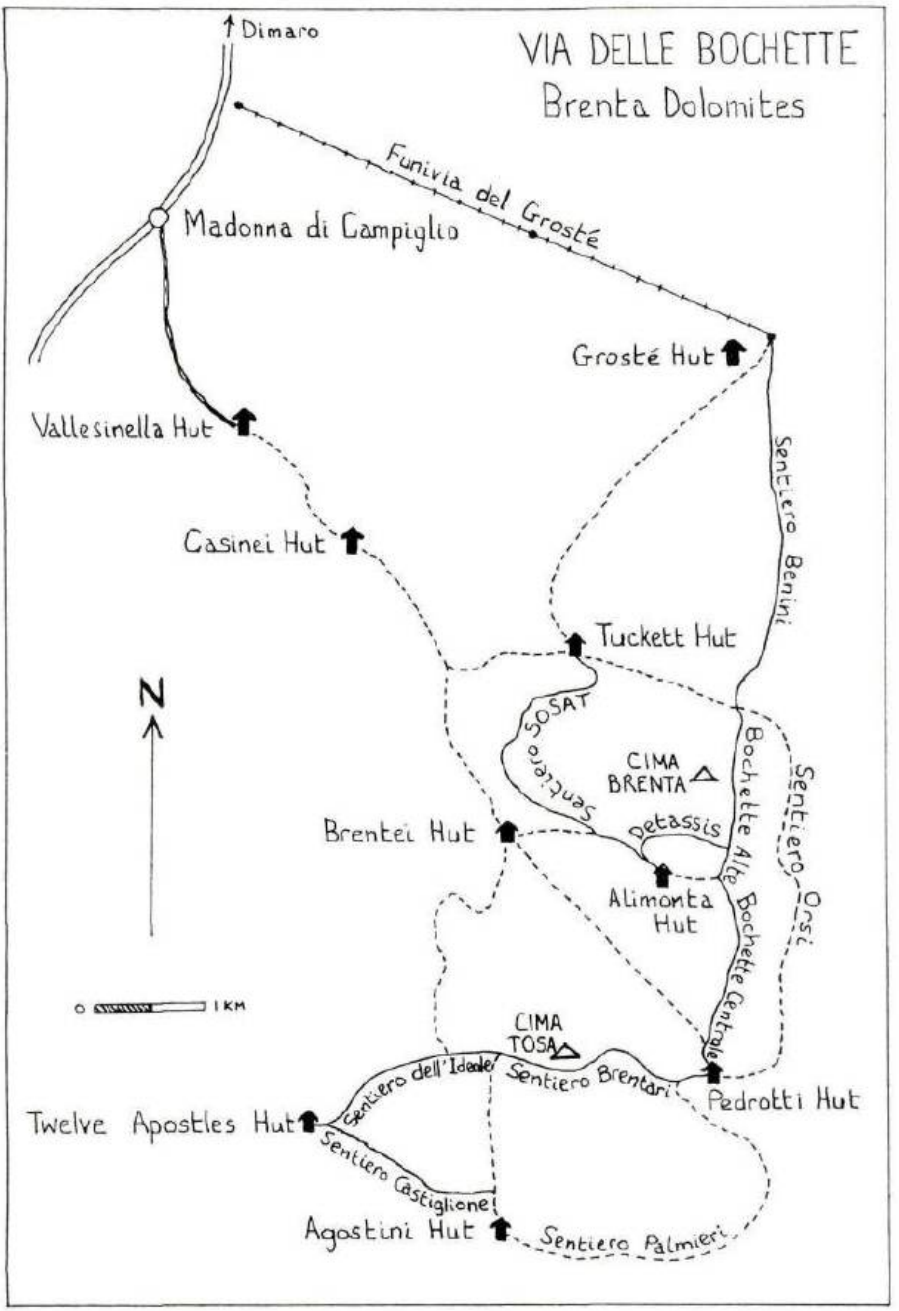
Choosing a summer holiday destination for the family can be difficult. I still harbour 5a fantasies and imagine myself on Alpine routes I should have done half-a-lifetime ago. For some unaccountable reason my family fantasises about 5-star hotels and designer-label shopping malls. So our holidays are usually a compromise and none of us does what we really want. Would this year be any different? Our teenage children were generously prepared to forego a fortnight's pleasure with fond parents, and made their own holiday arrangements. So it was just Carolyn and me.

She fancied Tuscany. This meant an Alpine crossing, so we could incorporate a few days in the hills on the way. But how to strike a balance between her enjoyment of walking and dislike of heights with my climbing ego? I vaguely remembered scrambling down some metal stakes after an epic ascent of the Solleder route on the Civetta back in the days before the Beatles left Hamburg. The phrase *via ferrata* came to mind. There must be a guide-book and a suitable map. A quick phone call to Upton and, two days later, they came thumping through the letter-box.

Most of the routes in the guide-book lie east of Bolzano but the Brenta seemed the obvious choice. There, on page 83, was a diagram of the footpath system linking the six huts of the central Brenta. This was our introduction to the Via delle Bochette. Most of the footpaths had numbers. Many of them had names. Two had the phrase, "Sentiero delle Bochette", in their names. Was the Via delle Bochette just these two, or did it include some of the others? If so, which ones? Perhaps it was all of them. It was very confusing. One thing was obvious. We could spend our few days in the hills here.

Trying to work out a suitable combination of paths to suit us provided our first challenge. The German descriptions of their standard was evocative. Thus "unschwierig" seemed quite reasonable but Carolyn began to have doubts about one that was "fur schwindelfreie Bergwanderer". And a path described as "absolute Schwindelfreiheit erforderlich" could lead to divorce. It seemed sensible to start on something easy, try to get fit and take it from there.

We based ourselves at the campsite outside Dimaro on the northern edge of the Brenta. Its facilities were immaculate and it had the added advantage of being only five kilometres downstream from the Mezzano-Marilleva rapids, site of the 1993 World Kayak Championships. The


VIA DELLE BOCHETTE
Brenta Dolomites
Dimaro
Funivia del Grosté
Madonna di Campiglio
Grosté Hut
Vallesinella Hut
Casinei Hut
Sentiero Benini
Tuckett Hut
N
SOSAT
Sentiero
CIMA
BRENTA
Bocchette Alte
Sentiero Orsi
Brentei Hut
Petassis
Alimonta
Hut
Bocchette Centrali
0
1KM
CIMA
TOSA
Sentiero dell'Ideale
Sentiero Brentari
Pedrotti Hut
Twelve Apostles Hut
Sentiero Castiglione
Agostini Hut
Sentiero Palmieri

Scuola Nazionale di Canoa Fluviale was based at the campsite and offered river-rafting and grade IV canoeing. These seemed appropriate wet-weather alternatives to the *via ferratas*. We spent a day on the banks of the Noce recovering from the drive to Italy before going up to Madonna di Campiglio late one Monday afternoon. We parked at the Groste cableway and took the last cable car up to the Passo del Groste. From there an easy waymarked path led across to the Tuckett Hut.

The guide-book warned us that the huts were "regularly and heavily over-filled in good weather in summer, especially in August, and above all at weekends". Well, it wasn't a weekend but the weather was good and it was August so we knew what to expect. Our late arrival meant that we were two of the ten people sleeping on tables that night. The next morning we left at half-past-seven and made our way slowly up to the Bocca del Tuckett. Our intention was to follow the Sentiero Orsi round to the Pedrotti Hut and then, if we were early enough, continue to the Agostini Hut on the Sentiero Palmieri.

At the Bocca we stopped for a drink. Across the Valle di Campiglio to the west, and much higher than us, the triangular rock peaks of the Adamello stood out in sharp contrast to the glaciers at their feet. To the south-east, and below us, the 1000m wall of the Croz d'Altissimo dropped into the haze-filled depths of the Val Perse. Nearer at hand an unlikely assortment of alpinists of all ages, shapes and condition was starting on the ascent of the Sentiero delle Bochette Alte. For a brief moment I felt a pang of regret at our less ambitious route. We were not travelling light, however. The miser in me had rebelled at the idea of treating the huts as restaurants so we were carrying food for five days and stoves, as well as wet weather gear, sleeping bags, ice-axe, crampons and a rope. But the weight in our sacks was already giving us an unmistakeable message.

Aided by a wire rope, we slithered down the scree gully on the far side of the Bocca into the increasing heat of the morning sun. At the point where the path began to traverse away under the Cima Brenta we stopped to change into shorts and T-shirts. A large group of walkers joined us. One was wearing leather gloves. I commented on their incongruity, not really expecting to be understood. Needless to say, he was the only Englishman, an expatriate living in Munich. He explained that the group had signed up for a week's walking tour, led by a couple of guides. They had already followed the Orsi round from the Pedrotti Hut and were off to do the Bochette Alte before descending to the Alimonta. It seemed to us that they were treating it all like a race track, two Sentieros in a day, light rucksacks and smiles on their faces. They

clearly did not appreciate how seriously it should be taken. Our rucksacks were a weighty reminder of our more stolid approach.

We watched as they began the scree-ridden ascent towards the Bocca then, shouldering our sacks, we followed our path southwards, climbing steadily under the east wall of the Cima Brenta. We made our next acquaintance with a wire rope at the end of this section when the exposure increased dramatically as the path traversed a huge rock diedre. We were wearing climbing belts with two slings and karabiners in the approved Brenta fashion and self-protected ourselves on the traverse. It was impressive. The path continued easily and we stopped for lunch on a grassy patch under the Cima Molveno. Here we made our first change of plan. We would not continue on the Sentiero Palmieri to the Agostini Hut. Instead we would be quite satisfied with making the Pedrotti Hut that afternoon. The decision made our sacks seem momentarily lighter. We followed the path into the lower Massodi cwm, catching occasional glimpses of the Torre di Brenta and the Campaniles as they played hide-and-seek in the mist above us. At the foot of the Cima Brenta Alta the path turned to the west and we climbed slowly up to the Pedrotti Hut, arriving there at two o'clock, comfortably exceeding the guide-book time. Despite the early hour we discovered that the main hut was already full but we were given a room for two in the Tosa Hut, a few minutes below.

We now made a second change of plan. It was clear from our experience on the Orsi that our heavy sacks would give us some unpleasant moments on the more exposed Sentieros. However, we could use the Pedrotti as a base, take a day sack with us and do a round trip. Under these circumstances the Palmieri looked too easy. Why not have a go at the Bochette Centrale, descend to the Brentei Hut and walk back up the Val Brenta Alta?

So the next morning we followed the path up to the Bocca di Brenta and descended an easy snowfield to the start of the Centrale. Several parties were ahead of us as we climbed the first iron ladders, clipping in to the rungs as we felt the need. We reached a ledge which traversed away across the west face of the Brenta Alta. As we followed it the exposure became increasingly spectacular. Rounding a corner Carolyn shouted, "My God, there's planking!" Sure enough, the ledge disappeared briefly and a couple of planks, supported on stanchions, bridged the gap. As we crept across we caught a glimpse of the screes, two hundred metres below our feet, in the gap between the planks. This was fun. The need for being schwindelfreie was becoming obvious. Looking across to the Campanile Basso we could see two parties on the south face. Maybe next year . . .

The Sentiero began to climb up, with the occasional piece of ironwork, to the gap between the Brenta Alta and the Campanile. We crossed beneath its foot and continued to climb steadily towards the Campanile Alto. A long horizontal section followed. This culminated in a traverse into and out of a rock corner on the east face of the Torre di Brenta. It was reminiscent of the corner on the Orsi but the exposure was much more sensational with the rock falling away for 300m to the screes below. Rounding a corner further on we found ourselves on yet another narrow ledge but the exposure now seemed much less outrageous. At its end some ladders took us down to the snow of the Bocca dei Armi. We could scarcely believe we had finished the "walk". It was only ten fifteen.

We were soon refreshing ourselves with drinks at the Alimonta before continuing our descent to the Brentei. Now came another change of plan. We could see the start of the Sentiero SOSAT below us, traversing beneath the Cima Mandron. "Why don't we do that while we're here?" asked Carolyn. The fun of the Centrale had obviously made her increasingly schwindelfreie. So off we went. Although much less dramatic than the Centrale it still boasted one spectacular section, involving yet another ledge traverse into a huge rock corner. This led to a 30 metre vertical ladder descent and then a climb up a series of shorter ladders on the opposite rock wall. It was here that we experienced a Bochette problem, other people. A group of three were on the ladder as we arrived. As the leader reached the top, he unhitched his camera and photographed his companions in suitable poses. Then, when they were both up, he descended as few rungs, so that his photo could be taken. By this time another team had launched themselves on the ladder. More were waiting at its foot and the rock wall opposite was swarming with other parties, all coming in the same direction. If we were too self-effacing, we would be in for a long wait. There are times when it is right to be pushy. This was one of them and it was not long before we descended into the corner and began the long climb up the other side.

The rest of the SOSAT was less interesting. As if to underline this, clouds moved in and a thin drizzle began to fall. We were glad we had brought our cagoules, although by the time we reached the Tuckett the rain had stopped. We did not. The memory of the table tops still hurt. We continued our descent to below the Freddolin and then turned south to join the path coming up from the Casinei Hut. Our legs were beginning to feel the effects of an increasingly long day and it was a relief to reach the Brentei. An old man, with thick iron-grey hair swept back from his forehead and a monstrous biblical beard, sat with a small group at a table outside the hut. Now nearly eighty, Bruno Detassis was

holding court. We stayed for thirty minutes before following the excellent path up the Val Brenta Alta. Eleven hours after leaving it we arrived back at the Pedrotti. We were tired but it had been a marvellous day.

Now that we had learnt the Brenta technique, another round trip was called for. This time we would have an easier day and follow the Sentiero Brentari round to the Agostini Hut and return to the Pedrotti on the Palmieri. We slept in the main hut that night, left at our usual time of 7.30 a.m. and plodded round towards the Cima Tosa. At the foot of the normal route up the Tosa we spotted our German group from two days earlier. One of their guides had soloed up a 30m pitch and had dropped a rope down for them. They were clearly in for a long spell of top-roping.

We continued up to the rock ridge of the Sella di Tosa where the *via ferrata* started. By now we were in mist, so the sense of exposure was missing, as was a sense of isolation. Several parties were ahead of us and a couple were behind. Indeed the Bochette is not for seekers of solitude. It feels more like a mountain version of the Ardeche Gorge.

At the gap below the Punta dell'Ideale we descended a long series of ladders onto a snow track leading across the upper edge of the Vedretta d'Ambiez. We knew that we could have extended our walk by following the Sentiero dell'Ideale to the Twelve Apostles Hut. Our legs knew better and turned us southwards under the dramatic east face of the Cima d'Ambiez and the easy descent to the Agostini. A brief stop and we moved onto the Palmieri. Its first section contoured comfortably around the head of the Val d'Ambiez. In the quiet of the late morning, the sound of cow bells drifted up from the pastures far below, a strange contrast to the more brutal world of wire ropes and iron ladders above us in the mist. Alpine plants grew in some profusion, encouraged by the friendlier environment. Higher up, only isolated specimens had provided a splash of colour against the limestone. Meanwhile the path wound on. The Palmieri looked a long way on the map. It seemed longer on the ground. We were weary well before we reached the Pedrotti.

We now needed an easy day so that evening we devised Plan A. In the morning we would descend to the Brentei, leave most of our gear and spend the night at the Alimonta. The following day we would attempt the Alte and, if time permitted, follow the Sentiero Benini out to the Passo del Groste and the cableway. We would go down to Madonna and I would walk up to the Brentei to retrieve our gear. One of the Bochette's charms is that it is easy to devise such presumptuous plans in the comfort of the hut, yet almost as easy to revise them if circumstances demanded. We were developing another Bochette skill.

The "easy" day began well. We were down at the Brentei by mid-morning, cached our spare sack and walked up to the Alimonta in time for a late lunch. Carolyn suggested a gentle afternoon walk. She knows me better really. The opportunity for fitting in another short *via ferrata* was too inviting so we followed the track from the Alimonta round the foot of the "Twins" and on to the easily-angled ice of the Vedretta dei Brentei. For once there were no signs of waymarking but Carolyn's sharp eyes picked out a splash of paint on the wall at the foot of the couloir leading up to the Bocca dei Massodi. This was the start of the Sentiero Oliva Detassis which led steeply up the true right wall of the couloir. It looked suspiciously like Bruno's short-cut from the Bochette Alte down to the Brentei.

The first section of ladder seemed overhanging, and what was supposed to be an afternoon walk became more testing. We then discovered that the diameter of the ladder rungs was greater than we had previously experienced. Our karabiner openings were not wide enough to enable us to clip into each rung. This made for some interesting moments and Carolyn was reminded of her dislike of heights. We reached the snowy col of the Bocca dei Massodi soon enough and followed short ladders and wire rope onto the north shoulder of the Cima Molveno. The path became less distinct and we found a group of four Italians casting about for the right way down to the Bocca dei Armi. They had been on the Alte for nine hours and were intending to continue on the Centrale. Their ambition seemed more laudable than their judgement. The correct route was not difficult to find and, before long, we were scree-running back to the Alimonta. The Italians turned up two hours later. Our respect for their judgement increased.

My Scrooge-like tendencies were conveniently ignored as we tackled platefuls of minestrone, wurst and chips, washed down with copious quantities of beer and lemonade. The next morning we retraced our way back up to the Bocca dei Massodi. From there a long series of ladders and ledges took us to the summit of the Spallone di Massodi, just below 3000m. We could see across to the horizontal terrace of the Spallo di Brenta. Mist was clinging to the east face of the Cima Brenta beyond and a large party was beginning the descent into the gap below the Spallo. It was here that we finally ran out of steam. The Detassis had tested the limits of Carolyn's schwindelfreiheit. My fault for pushing my luck on our easy day. It was sensible to return. Five hours later we were down at Vallesinella. We had enjoyed five memorable days in the Brenta and had done our version of the Via delle Bochette. We never did get to Tuscany, but it didn't seem to matter.

Sunday 18 June 1989

By the top of Rossett Ghyll I had left
The trippers far behind, and, striding out,
Had seen the serious walkers off as well.
Pleased to have the upper rocks to myself,
I was savouring my own vigour, when,
Seven feet tall and lightly tanned, gold-haloed,
Radiant in athletic strip of lycra
Red and green, sunlit, soundless on the rocks,
Apollo himself strolled by – not walked, not
Trotted, but strolled past what I thought was
My brisk pace; graciously inclined his head
In answer to my greeting, ranged ahead,
Adorned the sky-line for a moment, then
Sank beneath it out of sight.
I felt old
Compared with that, and slow, and clumsy, fat,
Shabbily shod, and clad in sweaty rags.
Envy stung me; but something else as well:
Respect for superhuman strength and grace.
I hurried on, to see them just once more,
Crested the brow, looked down on Angle Tarn,
And saw
campers and bathers and walkers
Paddling, or mending feet, or eating lunch.
And that was all. No trace of red and green.
No gold. No elegance. No power. He'd gone,
And left behind an ordinary day.

There is no conclusion or moral to
This incident, but I'm glad it occurred.

George Watkins

REMEMBRANCE
(A NEW VS ROUTE ON GIMMER)

Stephen Reid

At four and a half his little life had not so much been snatched away as slowly extinguished. Emotionally, we were punch drunk, stunned senseless, battered beyond belief. Why, why, why, why, why?

He had been such a big child for his age had Euan. Big smile, big in stature, big in friendship, big hearted. Those who loved him, loved him very much indeed, and he, they. He was big on adventure too. Late one summer, I suppose he was just over three and a half, we took him walking in Patterdale. I had a light line and tucked away near the roots of St Sunday Crag we found a slabby sunny boulder by the path. It was his first, and only, rock climb. He did it six times in his blue welly boots, his favourite bright yellow "climbing trousers" and "Tumble-Tots" T-shirt. He loved it. He loved his rucksack and coil of rope, the picnic by the stream, hide and seek among the trees and the messiest ice-cream imaginable shared with his toddler brother.

And a few months later he was ill, and now he is dead.

Gradually one tries to achieve some sort of surface normality – inside I don't know whether that ever happens and I'm not sure that I want it to. But one tries, and we went to the Brenta and to Cornwall, and I started climbing again but found it a very difficult, very shaky, very nervous time. By autumn I had just about got my mind to accept leading again and I managed a few pitches and read a few climbing books. And I got sent a copy of the new Langdale Guide and thought that the South East Face of Gimmer must surely have had a few additions since the last guide, but no it hadn't, not where I had been thinking of anyway.

We had just moved before Euan became ill and had just begun to make new friends. I started climbing with Joe Grinbergs amongst others. Friends came to stay too, and we were glad of them. One such was Nick Raeside who Jilly and I had been at university with in our other life. In October I teamed them up to do the Crack whilst I inspected the greasy, grassy groove to the right of Gimmer Chimney. It was not surprising it had never been climbed – it was always wet and it was so desperately overhanging that it was hard to make out its features from below due to the spray. Moreover the grass was so bushy that it was totally invisible from above. I gardened and I gardened and I gardened – so much so that I gave myself some obscure tendon complaint and had to go off work for several days. Great rolling bales of silage and mud thudded onto the slabs below and rocks clattered towards the valley. And underneath it all

I found – holds! The groove would go – and I might even manage to lead it. I hurried off to see how the others were getting on . . . we might just have time to do my route before dark. Unfortunately they were stuck at the Bower and with a feeling of historical *déjà vu* I lowered a rope and hauled them to safety.

Well we tried . . . I led the first two pitches in one. Starting up the direct variation on Bracket and Slab, I branched up right on good holds to a thin little traverse right and up to the blocks at the top of the first pitch of Gimmer Chimney. The slim cracked pillar above was hard to start with the holds all wet and a high step, and by the time I had mucked it up several times and then brought the others up it was dusk and we just had time for a quick look at the groove which was muddy and so to a scuttle up Gimmer Chimney and traverse off by the Gangway before it grew really dark. Then we struggled down to Mickleden with one torch between three which was not a lot of fun. What that pitch needed was rain, which, what with it being in the Lake District and in winter, was quite lucky.

It was almost a month later that Joe and I got back there, but due to having to go via Keswick to reclaim Joe's wallet from the police, it was rather late when we started, and cold. At the top of the pillar I surveyed what I could see of the groove. It was still very wet but odd dry noggins stuck hopefully out here and there. If I could keep my feet to these I might just manage it.

". . . a pull up, strenuous, but wedge the left shoulder and jam in a Friend 2½ at full stretch. Breathe again and wiggle the left arm up a slippery jam. Step up and . . . almost rest. Now the teeter . . . up and right. Reach at full stretch and a stalactite comes to hand. Grasp it and swing, and a jug above – superb, all that is needed for that pull on to the friendly, almost dry ledge on the right. Easier now to the belay. Up comes Joe cursing jammed runners, his climbing ability and too many good dinners. But we both agree it would be a great pitch in a dry summer . . ."

Again its getting late and we climb straight up the gully that was the original finish to Gimmer Chimney. Now undescribed, I had thought it might make a fitting finish to my route. But though better than it looks, it is too easy. The slabs to our right look more enticing.

The next visit was a purely solo affair – one man and his Jumars. Competing with the drizzle I cleaned a good line down the slabs and hurtled away the remaining vestiges of the grass ledge from the Gangway. Then I waited. I waited in the normal new route panic that probably grips all pioneers who have a cleaned line waiting to be climbed. Thus despite the gales and torrential rain that swept the entire

country for months I was convinced that the moment the sun came out Graham or Downer or McHaffie would be dropping everything to race to the SE Face of Gimmer. I kept ringing Joe . . . "Yes I know there's six inches of snow and its raining but I think we might manage it . . ." Fortunately these Grinbergs have their heads screwed on and common sense prevailed. Thus it was March before we finally saw a clear day apiece and a good forecast.

At the crag we looked up through sweated brows and it didn't look too bad. Despite storms upon Bowfell the sky above was clear and the rock . . . dryish. We geared up and searched last summer's sacks for extra pullovers which had been inevitably left at home. It was going to be a cold route.

"Do you mind if I lead the whole thing Joe?"

"Go ahead, its your climb."

All went well to the foot of the groove where I shivered uncontrollably while Joe followed up and in passing added a short direct variation to the first pitch. Now for the crux. Within two moves I had lost all sensation in my fingers, but knowing that it wasn't as hard as it looked helped, and I made it to easier ground where I found my cleaning had really paid dividends. Up came Joe, still cursing jammed runners, his climbing ability and too many good dinners. Now for the bit we hadn't done.

An overhead crack was running with water and would have been at least 5b dry, so I followed plan B diagonally right to a junction with Chimney Buttress, then a step left and up a good flake to a smooth slab. At the top of this a steep crack proved difficult to start. It petered out quickly but as it did so good holds arrived to take me to a heather ledge. The wind seemed to be blowing straight through me now but at least it was warming to hear Joe say through his shivers "Wow, what a great pitch!"

I started grabbing the gear again.

"Why do you want to lead it all then?"

Sorry Joe. You can't possibly know, but we're a rope of three. Have been all day. And here comes the third member of the team, in his blue welly boots, his favourite bright yellow "climbing trousers" and "Tumble-Tots" T-shirt. A bit young for VS but he's doing just fine and smiling from ear to ear. The wind brings tears to my eyes as I romp up the final pitch. Even this is not bad for "scrambling remains" territory.

The little churchyard where Euan is buried lies on a hilltop where the wind of the mountains whistles through green grass and gravestones and the clouds are always somehow scudding. Very like the summit of Gimmer on a brisk March day.

Remembrance is all I have left.

Gimmer Crag
SE Face
Remembrance 110m VS

Start as for the variation start to Bracket and Slab Climb.
1. 35m (4b) Climb the crack in the slab, passing an overlap and follow a groove for 3m until it is possible to pull up right into a groove line that slants up to the crux chimney of Gimmer Chimney. Follow this groove until it steepens into a wall*, then traverse delicately right using a tiny sharp spike and move up to a block stance. This traverse is about 2m below the traverse in the opposite direction on Gimmer Chimney. (* Grinberg's Variation, 4c: Climb the wall direct to the traverse of Gimmer Chimney and reverse this to the stance.)
2. 10m (4c) Descending from between the twin chimney/cracks is a slim cracked buttress. Climb it via its right edge to a stance under a roof. Tricky to start and to finish.
3. 15m (5a) On the left is the crack of Gimmer Chimney. On the right is an overhanging chimney-groove. Climb this groove (Friend, 2, 2½, or 3 useful, though not essential, for protection) to the turf ledge that forms the right-hand end of the Gangway. Though often wet, this groove is equipped with good holds and it should be climbable if the rest of the route is dry. On the two ascents to date it has been wet. However, due to a mammoth cleaning operation it will hopefully dry out in the summer.
4. 35m (4b) From the turf ledge climb diagonally right along a fault to a block that gives access to the upper slabs (as for Chimney Buttress). Stand on the block and climb diagonally left using a flake crack to a smooth slab. Up this to a crack in the steepening buttress. Climb the crack and continue up the buttress to a heather ledge. Belay crack on left.
5. 15m Climb the crack to a heather terrace, then directly up the buttress above.

First Ascent: S.J.H. Reid, J.R. Grinbergs, 14th March 1990. (Pitches 1 and 2 had previously been climbed by S.J.H. Reid, J.R. Grinbergs and N. Raeside 18th October 1989. Pitch 3 was previously climbed by S.J.H. Reid, J.R. Grinbergs, 6th November 1989.)

Euan Reid. *Photograph by Steve Reid.*

HABICHT

Paul Exley

"Well I think we should start anyway", said Cath.

At this unanticipated display of enthusiasm – or it might have been fatalism – I diverted my gaze from a forlorn inspection of the drizzle outside the window to scrutinise her face. I searched it for any indication that she was joking, but searched it in vain. I realised that several carefully conceived ploys for a swift return to the valley had been suddenly stillborn. There was no face-saving alternative to climbing the mountain, or at least trying to.

As we followed the red paint splashes upwards, I reflected that we were perhaps as well trying a high mountain. We were due to leave the Stubai Valley the next day, to leave behind us the indifferent weather, soggy campsite and a succession of cancelled sports plans to return to the brilliance and drought of an outstanding English summer. Although we had enjoyed several days on worthy, lower mountains, we had opted to keep out of the low cloud. Until today.

The guide-book described the route as going this way and that, but it didn't really matter because the track was clear and waymarked. There were even some artificial tripping hazards, thinly disguised as steel-roped handrails which had become partly detached. Snow late in the season with more over the last few days had left many patches in unexpected places and we had to plod up slushy snow more than anticipated.

Just as we were beginning to enjoy views of the surrounding valleys, the mist came down again and we had a couple of rain showers. We were by then insulated even from sight of the Last Homely House, the Innsbrucke Hutte, haven of hot showers and comfortable dining, so turned our attention once more to the mountain. The amount of fresh snow, coupled with mist made recognition of the prepared route impossible and we had to face up to the harsh reality. We had to resort to Mountaineering.

It wasn't too bad in the event, and I think that we actually enjoyed making up our own minds about the route, even when an unfriendly cornice loomed rather close. Nearing the top, I came over a slight rise to see a knife-edged ridge directly ahead and whooped with delight. The crest was untrodden and the slopes on both sides were astonishingly steep. I could see that Cath wasn't happy at the prospect of walking along this airy causeway but she surprised me again by going on ahead of

Delilah (VS), High Crag, Buttermere. Climber: Tony Greenbank.
Photograph by Steve Reid.

me. After a few yards, her sense of adventure was quite submerged beneath a welter of common sense and a strong survival instinct. She expressed a wish to turn back.

Now going forward in single file wasn't easy but passing really was a problem. I thrashed around with my axe, quite pleased to have found a use for it at last, and made a bit of a platform, a high altitude passing place. As she retreated to relative safety, I pushed ahead, inadvertently starting simultaneous avalanches to left and right. As I watched the soft snow glide in increasing volume almost silently down into the mist, I was reminded of Tom Patey's dictum about a solo climber being someone falling alone. I think that the gist of my mountaineering philosophy just then was "I haven't done a sweaty four hour hut walk and three hours up a mediocre route to turn back near the summit, just as it's getting exciting". And it was fun.

Soon afterwards I saw the summit cross and floundered up a snow-smothered outcrop to reach it. Nearby I found large splinters of wood on top of the new snow, surely the result of lightning strikes.

Habicht, at 3277 metres, was once thought to be the highest mountain in the Tyrol. As far as I was concerned it might well be. Looking all around, I could certainly see nothing higher. Not with thirty yards visibility I couldn't.

THE MEET REPORT

Ken Andrews

Editors Note: Students will recall that the outstanding literary merit of the meet reports appearing in the "Fell and Rock Chronicle" was largely due to the efforts of Lord Hebden who produced this publication for a number of years during the latter part of the 20th century. The standard having been set we are privileged to find his successors carried on this fine tradition right up until the winding up of the club in 2115 when the huts were nationalised by the Popular Front Government which came to power following the collapse of the European Economic Community.

The example that follows was written in 2090 describing an Easter meet at Brackenclose. (The use of the word "Easter" should perhaps be explained. Although the festival was banned by the secular authorities during the fifteenth Thatcher Government, the club's AGM refused to change the description of one of the major events of the year.) The writer of our example is George Herdwick.

Set off for Wasdale quite late on the Friday evening, young Stan drove me down making very good time. Certainly now the road over Sty Head has been up-graded to dual carriageway many of the old delays have been, if not eliminated, at least ameliorated. Passing through Borrowdale it was nice to see the old "Royal Oak" to be open to visitors once again now the National Heritage has at last finished the work of restoration. It seemed to us that trips around the property were a poor substitute for actually residing and dining in this superb example of an ancient Lakeland residential Inn.

Having arrived at Wasdale Head we paid our permit fees and turned off onto the driveway to the Hut, we were lucky to find a parking space free thereby avoiding the nuisance of having to drive down to Gosforth with the slow return on the service bus.

The attendance was very good for Easter despite the alternative attraction of skiing in Spitzbergen, now very popular following the final closure of the Norwegian resorts as a result of the final melting of the Jostedal Glacier.

Saturday morning turned out fine and warm so the decision was taken to go high. A start was made by taking the Langdale Mountain Goat service up Sty Head to Esk Hause where the party de-bussed at the Mountain View Restaurant and Cocktail Bar. By general agreement the exhausting efforts of the day so far required sustenance so the coffee lounge was brought into use by the fifty or so members present.

After half an hour admiring the views of Eskdale through the plate glass, a move towards Scafell Pike was made. For myself, I find the new plastic paths to be quite comfortable on the feet but the bright fluorescent orange colour is hard on the eyes. However, it is clear that visibility in mist and darkness makes them a great safety factor – especially important now the permit system restricts the numbers allowed on the high fells at any one time which means they are in use virtually twenty-four hours every day.

Arriving on the summit of England an hour or so later it would have been a bold meet leader to have vetoed lunch. So lunch it was, we were lucky to find a pleasant area shaded from the now quite fierce sun under the helicopter platform. The meal was more protracted than usual as there were no less than four birthdays to celebrate, each requiring a toast in the new British Champagne. In addition we all gladly gave another toast to our legal brethren who had successfully defended our refreshment from attempts by the cognac producers to prevent the use of "British" in association with Champagne.

The afternoon was devoted to the ascent of the nearby Scafell with most of the party in agreement that the concrete steps up Broad Stand were a great improvement on the old "Via Ferrata" style iron ladders. The view from the summit was really splendid, the usual crowds were, although not absent, less intrusive as the fine weather had caused a good scattering of the masses in search of shade or a spot in which to sunbathe. So well spread out in fact there seemed to be some risk of the Rangers being called upon to prevent trespassing on the open fellside.

Below us Wastwater basked in the sunshine with the constantly changing kaleidascopic patterns created by the motor boats and their attendant water skiers on the surface of the water fascinating to watch. Certainly, since privatisation of the National Trust some fifty years ago a great deal has been done to open up the Lake District to leisure pursuits.

Saturday evening passed in a very sociable manner, the Chinese take-away just down the road did a roaring trade, as did the Vietnamese Restaurant which has been a neighbour for the last few years. The television lounge was somewhat deserted for most of the time, the damage done to the satellite aerial during the winter gales seemed to be responsible. Nevertheless, the cheerful sounds from the two juke boxes kept everyone in a very lively mood and those who had to keep in touch with developments in South Fork or the East End were enabled to do so from the several portable communicators

which were now so easily removed from their host motor cars for use indoors.

Sunday weather was as one expects – sunny with the threat of wind. Although the last rain to fall at Easter had been more than fifteen years ago there were several older members present, who, lacking confidence in the outlook insisted on carrying rucksacks full of emergency equipment including, of all things, waterproof clothing. Therefore, it was agreed to keep within striking distance of shelter so the pedestrian throughway under the old "Sty Head Pass" was chosen for the first leg of our expedition. Intense excitement among these older members was caused by the rumour that a climbing party was in action; so they had to be humoured.

Arriving at the lift taking spectators up to the Napes cliffs the majority voted in favour of an ascent so up we went, the cost was prohibitive but club funds were equal to the occasion. The view on arrival at the Dress Circle was spectacular, the whole of the extensive concrete platform was covered with deckchairs and sunbeds while the remains of the Napes Needle shimmered below us in the bright sunshine. But the attention of everyone present was devoted to the sight of about twenty fit young men dressed in the colourful garb of the mountaineer who were attempting to climb the Needle Ridge.

Again and again the leading climber was thrown back by the difficulties, the lightweight steel ladders and climbing poles seemed to be useless; even the pneumatic rock cutters which were in constant use failed to provide the necessary assistance to facilitate some upward progress. At last the first hazard was conquered through the expedient of a power propelled grapnel which enabled the lead to swarm up the first vertical section of the climb. It was pleasing to watch how he ignored the bright yellow top rope carefully placed to provide security in case of need.

Having seen the success of the climbers apparently assured the meet moved onwards and upwards, this time taking advantage of the chairlift which deposited us alongside the War Memorial in time to enter the Gable Cafe and reserve tables for a leisurely lunch. Following completion of the repast it became necessary for many members to return nearer to sea level in order to commence their journeys homeward. Here the efficiency of the Mountain Buzzard helicopter service proved its worth. We were all back consuming the pre-motorway tranquillisers within forty minutes.

All agreed this had been a splendid meet, plenty of exercise, scenery, fellowship and enjoyment.

THE LIBRARY

George Watkins

When I succeeded June Parker as Librarian, in November 1988, I inherited new premises in Lancaster University Library, June's splendid *Catalogue of the Library, 2nd Edition, 1987* (copies of which are free to members, on request), and her *Supplement* (available to members for the cost of photocopying) which brought it not just up to date, but up to the minute. The Club is deeply indebted to her for the professional excellence of her work during her ten years in office, which included the mounting of exhibitions as well as librarianship. I personally am grateful for her continuing help.

That includes her processing of the *Catalogue of the Club Archive* (available to members for the cost of photocopying), prepared by Muriel Files, whom I have succeeded as Archivist. Muriel's work was appropriately recognised at the 1989 AGM and dinner, but I must pay tribute, too, to the devoted way in which she continues to support the Library and the Archive.

Malcolm Ibberson has accepted custody of the club's collection of 35mm photographic slides, in an environment favourable to their proper conservation. Only limited, carefully selected, additions to the collection are contemplated at the moment, but I shall always be glad to receive offers of slides of special interest or significance to the Club.

Graham Willison, who has succeeded Peter Fleming as Assistant Librarian, is primarily responsible for storing and handling back numbers of the *Journal;* but the club is fortunate to be able to call on his skill in bookbinding and his knowledge as a bibliophile.

The Club is grateful to all who have given books to the Library, notably to Peter Williams for a further set of *Mountain* magazine, which completes the Library's set and provides a useful collection for the new hut, Waters Cottage, and for a substantial addition of books to stock and reserve.

By the will of the late G.C. Waters we received his collection of mountaineering books, some of which have gone into Library stock and reserve, and others will go to the hut which has been named after him.

During 1989 I have catalogued 22 acquisitions, notable among which are:

ANGELL, S. *Pinnacle Club: A History of Women Climbing*. 1988
HANKINSON, A. *A Century on the Crags: the Story of Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. 1988
ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY. *The Mountains of Central Asia*: 1:3,000,000 map and gazetteer. 1987
WILLIAMS, P. *Clogwyn Du'r Arddu* (Climbers' Club Guide to Wales). 1988

A useful collection is developing of modern books on trekking and climbing in Canada. I hope members will keep me informed about, and perhaps supplied with, books which could help other members to select and prepare their mountaineering activities in unusual locations.

Please refer to the relevant pages in the current Handbook for information about the use of the Library. Please address requests to have books sent by post, and all enquiries, to the Librarian.

IN MEMORIAM

F. Alcock 1947-1989
W. Beatty, MBE 1953-1989
Sir A. Carröe ..... -?-1988
A. Chambers 1932-1989
J.E.L. Clements 1943-1989
R.B. Conn 1944-1988
R.C. Edleston 1935-1988
D.A. Ferguson 1956-1989
J. Heery 1977-1988
Mrs A.E. Kenyon 1941-1990
G. Lester 1954-1988
Mrs K. Plint (nee Le Rougetel) 1952-1989
W.A. Poucher 1937-1988
F.H.F. Simpson 1933-1988
D.L. Theide 1988
R.C. Wakefield .....
Mrs F.R. Wallace (nee Alferoff) 1951-1988
G.C. Waters 1944-1988
Mrs M. Wilkinson 1986-1989
R.E. Williams 1925-1989

FRANK ALCOCK 1947-1989

It is hardly surprising that Frank's main interest, at least when in his early teens, was hill-walking, as his parents were from the Lake District area: father from Keswick and mother from Ulverston. Frank was actually born in Huddersfield, as I was, and we were great friends from a very early age.

He got interested in walking the local hills around the age of 15, and his next move was to go into the Derbyshire hills. In his mid-teens he and I made our first visit to Lakeland. We stayed with a relative of his, and our first top was to walk over Wansfell. Frank was really 'hooked' on the fells of Lakeland after that trip.

In 1952 he applied for, and got, a post at Calthwaite near Penrith as head teacher, which he held until he retired, having been there for 25 years.

Frank was known to some members during the 1950-60 period because of singing with John Hirst and Harry Spilsbury. He also led a few meets in that same period, but his attendance at meets was curtailed by the fact that he had no transport.

One of the proudest moments in his life was when he completed, accompanied by me, all the 2000-feet English tops. He also climbed many of the Munros and many of the Welsh hills, and also some mountains in Austria.

He will be remembered by those in the Club who knew him for his great sense of humour and his cheerfulness.

Ron Brotherton

WALLACE BEATTY, MBE 1953-1989

Wallace was born in Carlisle and was educated at the Creighton School there. He became interested in fell-walking very early in life as many of his friends became interested.

He attended many meets in his early years with the Club, and was responsible for running one or two, but as he grew older he became a "loner".

His main love of the hills was Lakeland, of which he had an extensive knowledge, but he also knew the hills of Arran very well.

Ron Brotherton

ARTHUR CHAMBERS 1932-1989

Arthur died on 23 January 1989 at the age of 84. He had had surgery for cancer of the lung a few years ago from which he had recovered well enough to resume his customary busy life, except, as he said, he no longer had a sufficiency of "puff" for the fells. Even so he found enough to take his usual holidays in his beloved Buttermere. He was born in Swinton. He moved with the family to Worsley in 1924, where his father bought the house in which he and his sister have lived ever since.

Arthur had already inherited a love of the fells from his father, who with a family friend from the Rucksack Club, introduced the young Arthur to North Wales and later to Wasdale Head Hotel, at a time when early members of the F. & R.C.C. held sway there. He could recall the fun and sing-songs at night, with the late Philip Minor improvising an accompaniment to them using fire tongs and a fender. These holidays made him determined to join the Club.

After school he qualified in ceramics in 1927 and worked for the Pilkington Tile & Pottery Co., of Manchester, in charge of glazing. His father with three others had been concerned in setting up this firm, financed by the Pilkington family. Incidentally, Dorothy Pilkington sponsored Arthur for his Club membership.

He remained with the P.T.P. Co., until just before the last world war,

which took him into the R.A.F. and fortunately to Durban, where he fell in with the Natal Mountaineering Club. He became a member of it and was able to go with other members on weekend walks and camps in the Drakensberg. On his return to England he joined the Carborundum Co. and he remained with it until retirement.

Arthur never had leisure enough to attend Club meets, as well as to follow his other interests of philately and railways. However he used to come to the Club's dinners in the late 50s and early 60s, and he and his sister spared precious time from one of their Buttermere holidays to make Birkness ship-shape for its opening. His contribution to the Club came through his long service on the committee of the Friends of the Lake District from 1962 until his death: 27 years of valuable help in conserving the Lake District National Park, the Club's "playground". He and his sister also gave generously to the National Trust to purchase property in Buttermere. As a philatelist he specialised in the stamps of Scandinavia and Britain. He was an expert on Travelling Post Offices in these two countries, his interest in Scandinavia being engendered by two walking holidays in Norway, in the Jotunheim, leading to the publication of two handbooks on these subjects. As a railway "buff" he specialised in "Reservoir Railways". He collaborated with Harold Bowtell by drawing the maps and diagrams for the latter's books, as well as spending years collecting data for them, and tramping the routes and areas concerned to ensure accuracy. Their latest publication – "Lesser Railways of Bowland Forest & Craven County, Dam Builders in the Age of Steam" was published in 1988.

Arthur will be sadly missed by the friends he made during his long residence in Worsley and in pursuit of his interests, not least by his sister, Mary, with whom he shared some, and to whom we send our sympathy in the loss of her brother's companionship.

W.E. Kendrick

JOHN E.L. CLEMENTS 1943-1989

John Clements, who died on 14 July 1989 in his late seventies, was a true lover of the Lake District. He was a frequent visitor there, walking and climbing.

I knew him in the 1950s as a member of the London Section. He hardly ever missed a walk and sometimes acted as leader. His flamboyant dress on Section walks consisted of colourful Harris Tweed and velvet breeches, while in the hills he usually wore a bright red anorak and baggy dark brown corduroys. He was very useful with a

camera and many were the beautiful photographs of mountains I received over the years as his Christmas cards.

During the last few years he had transferred some of his interest to caving. When he attended a caving meet once at Buckfastleigh after I came to Devon we had the opportunity to meet and reminisce about the old days.

After he retired as an engineer with British Rail he obtained a degree from the Open University. He was a man of intelligence, rather quiet, but with a sense of humour and a good companion on the hills.

Miss Mabel Burton

(Editor's Note: Mabel Burton was a Member until the 1960s when she resigned to take up a teaching post in Ethiopia. Additional notes courtesy M.D. and P.L.)

RICHARD CHAMBERS EDLESTON 1935-1988

"Dick" Edleston was born in Nantwich, Cheshire, where he qualified as an architect. I first knew him in 1927 when we met at Ackerley's Barn, Stool End, Langdale where we went to assist a mutual friend who took a Scout troop from the most deprived part of Salford. Many of them had never seen grass before so they were quite terrified by their surroundings after pulling their trek-cart from Windermere station. After a week camping among the hills and ghylls of Langdale they were loath to go home. This experience with them convinced us that the mountains were good for the soul as well as the body.

Dick was a moderate rock-climber and a strong fell-walker in the Lakes, Scotland and the Alps. He was interested in Club huts; we measured Raw Head Barn and he drew the first plans for its conversion at a time when building regulations were very limiting.

He believed in marriage, provided he was allowed to remain a confirmed batchelor; his nearest approach being as "best man" to several friends and as a much appreciated godfather to a number of their children.

His work took him to the south of England, helping to build Stevenage New Town. He never owned a motor car, preferring public transport where others did the work of routine travel. After war service in the R.A.F. he concentrated most of his holidays on skiing, particularly in Zermatt. In his retirement he studied stately homes of the eighteenth century, their architecture and their former occupants, with autumn visits to a less stately but elderly dwelling in Coniston.

He skied at eighty years of age. He made friends with a farmer in Northumberland who kept him posted on snow conditions near the

Roman Wall. Indeed, it was on a journey there on 29 February, 1988, fully equipped, that he collapsed on Newcastle station and passed away quietly as he would have wished.

Jack Kenyon

DAVID ALLEN FERGUSON 1956-1989

David was born in 1928 and studied law at Worcester College, Oxford. He obtained an MA and became a chartered accountant. His association with the Club commenced whilst engaged on the audit with Vickers at Barrow, and from there began his fondness of Wasdale and Brackenclose. He later worked for the Bank of London & South America, which later became Lloyds Bank International, and in 1980 he became the Financial Director of London & Scottish Marine Oil plc.

David was very interested in politics and was on Reigate Borough Council for about 12 years. He was chairman, treasurer or a member of several local committees and was always very active in the political field. He would have liked to have become a Member of Parliament.

He found time for many other interests including golf, cycling, swimming, gardening, reading and music. He especially enjoyed opera and also loved going to the Proms every year.

David was, of course, an active supporter of the London Section of the Club and served at different times as its Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Auditor. He regularly led walks and weekend meets.

Many of us knew David through his attendance at the Scottish Meets and his custodianship of the Volcano kettle. It was on these meets where we saw his great love and enthusiasm for the hills. Because of his sheer enjoyment of Scotland and his wide interests in life he was great company on the hills. We were also fortunate to get to know his wife Margaret at the Scottish Meets. The last Meet that David and Margaret attended at Killin is a particularly happy memory as they had great pleasure in sharing their common interest in golf on the local course. David will be remembered through his bequest to Brackenclose, of which he had fond memories.

We extend our great sympathy to his wife Margaret and also to their son.

Aubrey Brocklehurst
and Margaret Roberts

AUDREY OLWEN KENYON 1941-1990

You always knew where you stood with Audrey: very direct and down to earth, this being one of the reasons why I enjoyed her company. I loved to try to rile here that she was always ready with a cutting reply and when visiting her home ready with the tea and cake.

We spent a very successful and happy month in Kenya with Audrey and Jack. They were regular attenders of the Scottish Meets and always present at the New Year O.D.G. Meets.

Our two families met on occasions, particularly in our Eskdale days. Locally she was always ready to help anyone in need.
Audrey Kenyon died on 3 June 1990, aged 77.

Sid Cross

GEORGE LESTER 1954-1988

George Lester died suddenly on a Scottish mountain, on Tuesday, the 3rd of May, 1988. He was with his younger daughter, Jane, at the time and was walking with a group of fellow members of the Fell and Rock Club who were out on their annual Scottish Meet.

Apparently George was chatting happily on the summit of Beinn nan Eachan, over a sandwich, in a close-knit group of people. An hour later, on a flat patch, after descending a bank of snow, it was reported that he sank to his knees and died almost instantly. Two doctors were present in the party to confirm this. His last view on this earth would undoubtedly have been a wondrous view of valley, rock and hill. Being a humble man, the fact that his death happened at an FRCC meet would have troubled him: he never sought notoriety.

Those of us who knew George well were never in doubt that he was the salt of the earth. He was an intelligent and well-educated man, a most companionable man. He held a responsible post at the forefront of nuclear science, yet he was modest, gentle and quiet in everyday life. He loved his church and its people, which he served as a Warden, Secretary and Reader over a period of twenty years. He also loved God's creation, the great outdoors. He was the steadiest and most determined companion you could ask for when sharing a rope on a rock face, or on a long hard walk. His party piece, generally about the time of a difficult patch, was to dip into his pocket and pull out some comestible, to be shared, with the words "we must keep up our strength"!

George was laid to rest at a most beautiful service at the Strathspey Episcopal Church, attended by representatives of the FRCC, which included a splendid address by the Bishop of St. Andrews, to a packed gathering; a reading, by his daughter Jane, from Frank Smythe's "Spirit of the Hills", about man and his affinity to creation, followed by

Mozart's "Ave Verum" in Latin. Flowers from his local church in Fairhaven, Lancs, were personally carried to Strathspey to decorate the church.

He is now numbered amongst a host of other departed members of the FRCC who loved the hills. We, who know, will never forget them as we lace up our boots for another expedition.

Arthur Thwaites

KATHLEEN PLINT 1952-1989

Kathleen Plint was born in 1897 at Blundellsands. She was the ninth and the youngest member of the Le Rougetel family of French Huguenot extraction who came to Liverpool via Jersey and London. After attending Sandford School she joined the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company where she became a popular member of the staff. During this period, until her marriage to Dick Plint in 1929, she made visits to the Lakes, France, Switzerland, Gibraltar and North Africa.

Her first climbing experience was on Helsby Cliff in Cheshire with Dick, where she came on to the rope, but still came back for more! They spent their honeymoon in Glen Brittle at Mrs. Chisholm's Post Office and had a somewhat energetic holiday in the Cuillin. Her first climbing boots were by Mansfield and cost £1.15s.0d. fully nailed! After making their first home in Freshfield, Dick's duties took them to Kendal in 1940. During the War and after she led a National Savings Group and for seventeen years was Treasurer to the Westmorland Girl Guides Association.

Although closely associated with the Wayfarers and the Fell & Rock through her husband (who had joined the Club in 1923 and who became Honorary Treasurer and President), she did not join until 1952. Until then she was fully occupied in supporting Dick and bringing up her family of Audrey, Alison and Guy to an age when they too became members. This devotion to her family was one of her many endearing features, which her friends admired.

In spite of her physical difficulties, of which few were aware, she walked the mountains with spirited determination in fine weather and foul in the joyful companionship of her family and friends. At local meets, and especially at the Scottish Meets, she was a regular and active participant, both on the mountain and at the alfresco tea parties in the valleys. At times though struggling herself she thought of others. I well remember her concerned expression of marital anxiety when she saw her husband had fallen into a deep snow hole on Ben More Assynt and of her relief when he was pulled out undamaged. The traverse of such

peaks as Blaven and An Teallach were triumphant examples of her fortitude and her insistence in keeping up with Dick and others less handicapped. The Scottish Meets were a great pleasure to her, looking forward to meeting old friends and as a source of enjoyable memories.

For many years the Plints were associated by older members with their home at Town View, Kendal, in its prominent position alongside Windermere Road (House of Correction Hill to those who knew it of old). It became a port of call on the way to the Lakes, where one was welcomed delightfully with tea, scones and cake by the hostess. How we shall miss its occupants!

This Georgian house was in a sorry and dilapidated condition when they took it over. Dick was often away on his professional duties, so Kath spent much energy and time with Dick in bringing it up to its rightful status as a Grade II Listed Building, of which she was rightly proud.

Meetings with Kath Plint always brought happy smiles to the faces of her friends. She was one of the world's "Givers". Memories of her will always bring loving thoughts to our minds. She died on 24 June, 1989, in her ninety-second year and we give thanks that her passing was peaceful.

Jack Kenyon
(with acknowledgements to Guy Plint)

WILLIAM ARTHUR POUCHER PhC HonFRPS 1937-1988

Walter Poucher (a name he preferred and was generally known by) died peacefully after a short illness on 5 August, 1988, at a nursing home in Keswick in his 97th year, the country losing thereby its most outstanding mountain photographer.

He was born in Horncastle, Lincolnshire, on 22nd November, 1891. When he left school his father suggested that he become a carpenter, but he opted to become apprenticed as a pharmacist in the local town. He trained at the College of the Pharmaceutical Society in Bath and qualified in 1912. He then went to Charing Cross Hospital with the intention of becoming a doctor but in 1914, after hearing a talk given by an officer from the War Office who said that pharmacists were urgently needed in the Royal Army Medical Corps, he joined up. Casualty Clearing Station determined his career as a pharmacist rather than as a doctor.

After the War he set up as a consulting chemist to the perfumery and cosmetic industry and in 1923 he published *Perfumes, Cosmetics and Soaps*. It became the definitive work and is still in print, but now in

three volumes, as it is required reading in the trade. He was persuaded by Yardley to join them as their chief perfumer and he took to wearing the firm's products himself. He became, in 1954, the first European to receive the Gold Medal of the American Society of Cosmetic Chemists in New York.

After his retirement in 1956 his second career as a guide-book writer and photographer took off, the royalties from his Magnum Opus and Yardley's pension providing funds for his travelling and photography. He had first become interested in photography during his youth in Lincolnshire but the flat countryside was not to his taste. He began to visit the mountainous regions of Britain, where over the years he walked extensively and took a great number of photographs. He also visited the Alps and Dolomites. His life-long love of mountains and passion for photography determined him to show the excellent quality that could be achieved from the then new Leica miniature camera, to which he remained a devotee all his life.

Walter was elected to the Club in October 1937, proposed by Gerald Lacey and seconded by G.R. Speaker, but as far as I know he took no active part in Club life.

The catalyst for Poucher's first book on mountain photography was a pre-war talk at the Club dinner in Wasdale by photographer and Himalayan climber Frank Smythe, who doubted if it was possible to produce a book of successful photographs of the Lakeland landscape due to its moisture-laden atmosphere. It so happened that one of Chapman & Hall's directors (his technical publishers) was a keen Lake District man and together they took up Smyth's challenge and published *Lakeland Through the Lens* in 1940. It is dedicated to members of the Club.

Poucher was friendly with Frank Whittaker, a fellow member of the Reform Club, who was at that time editor of *Country Life* magazine. Poucher provided cover pictures and illustrated articles for *Country Life* and this led to him being asked to do a book after the success of those published by Chapman & Hall. Between them, Chapman & Hall (13) and Country Life (8) published a further twenty books covering the Lakes, Scotland, Pennines, Surrey, West Country, Ireland and Dolomites, all lavishly illustrated with his black and white photographs, full of technical detail and flowery prose.

Then came the four pocket Guides, published by Constable, for Lakeland, Wales, Scotland and Peak & Pennines, between 1960 and 1966. It was the novel treatment of these books – with maps and photos superimposed with routes and names of the mountains – that inspired me, together with the help and encouragement from Walter, that I

produced my own *Guide to the Pennine Way* in 1967. The two of us thereby influenced Constables to produce their walking guide-book series which have run to many titles and several editions.

When aged 75 he suddenly lost his sight in one eye. After treatment, the other eye was good enough for him to drive, read and write but he was no longer able to print his own photographs. When the cost of reproducing colour photographs became less costly – principally by printing abroad – Constables published his *Scotland* in 1980 and so far more than a dozen titles have been published in the coffee-table format. Walter was first elected an Associate then Fellow (1942) and later Honorary Fellow (1975) of the Royal Photographic Society, and in 1985 he donated to them his library of black and white prints and negatives.

Walter Poucher had great technical skill, patience and the eye of an artist. Such was his dedication and tenacity that he would sometimes stay for days or weeks in an area waiting for the 'decisive moment' of sunlight and shadow for his pictures. We last met over lunch at the Old England Hotel in 1983 and he enthused over his enduring love of mountains and photographing them. He died having captured the mood of the mountain scene as no-one else has done, most of his ambitions fulfilled. His memory will live on.

Chris Wright

(I have to acknowledge the assistance of John Poucher in preparing this notice. C.J.W.)

F.H.F. SIMPSON 1933-1988

Frank Simpson died in October 1988, aged 81, at Lytham St. Anne's where he had lived for many years. He was educated at King Edward VII School, Lytham, Ampleforth College and Manchester University. He was a Solicitor in Manchester for 50 years, specialising in industrial conveyancing. An extract from "Who's Who in Greater Manchester" reads:- "Societies: Fell & Rock Climbing Club, Wayfarers, Lancashire Caving & Climbing, the Signalling Record Society, the Manchester Library & Philosophical Society", amongst others; "Interests: climbing, walking, photography, railway history & operation". To these interests he added a concern for his locality, St. Anne's, by working for St. Thomas' Church, and by teaching in classes for illiterates. He was well regarded in St. Anne's and some fifty mourners attended the funeral service in St. Thomas' on 4th November 1988. Among them were retired railwaymen, whom as a railway "buff" he had befriended on his daily commuting to Manchester.

His service to the Club was long and generous. It can be followed in

his numerous articles in the *Journal*, beginning in 1934 with "The Year with the Club", and ending in 1988 with the "Edmondsons of Buttermere". The latter was an example of his persistence in searching for the material for his articles, and his faithfulness to the memories of friends whom he had made in his early days in the Club, when it met in farmhouses and hotels. There were some 16 articles, always meticulously written and often displaying a puckish sense of humour, which he showed in his speech and in his correspondence. As well as records of the Club's activities there were allusions to the sombre world outside them, notably to the grimness of pre-war Europe and the ensuing World War II. His industry, capacity for research, selection of subjects and good writing, were best seen in the article in the 1956 *Journal* – "The First Fifty Years". It occupied 30 pages.

Frank knew the fells about Tebay at an early age when he was taken there to fish by his father. It was his father who showed him the Lake District fells in 1919, when he was twelve: train to Windermere and a horse-drawn wagonette to Ambleside. He joined the Club in 1933, when the stalwarts of its early days were still active and from whom he absorbed their traditions and mountaineering lore. He records Haskett-Smith making his Jubilee ascent of the Needle in 1936, and the cutting of the first sod in Brackenclose Wood for the building of the Club's first hut. In 1953 and 1954 he writes of being present at the opening of Birkness and the Salving House, and although in the following years he was not active with the Club, as a Trustee and as the Custodian of Slides he received the minutes of its committee meetings and through these and reports from his friends he kept himself informed of the Club's activities and policies.

His greatest service to the Club was to house and care for the Club's collection of slides. The collection began in 1922 with a gift of 40 slides from T.H. Somervell, kept by the Librarian until 1936, when the office of Custodian of Slides was established and Frank was appointed to it. When the collection was handed to the Club Library at Lancaster University in 1979, there were 1733 listed items and a large number of unlisted colour items. Borrowing reached a peak in 1949 of 3339 slides. These figures are taken from Frank's accounts of his custodianship in the 1981 Journal. They show the immense amount of time he must have given to this work for 43 years, not only in storing and listing the slides, but also despatching them to borrowers.

His years of retirement were saddened by the sudden death of his only son at a young age, with whom he shared his love of railways and of the hills. Because of severe arthritis he was unable to visit the Lake District as frequently as in the past. Nevertheless he kept his interests, including

that of the Club. He was regularly in touch with his friends, who from their high regard for him can make some estimate of the greater bereavement felt by his wife, Irene. To her we send our sincere condolences.

There can be few members who have, over 55 years, worked so much for the Club, as Frank has done in his quiet and unobtrusive way, and also at the end to leave it a monetary legacy.

W.E. Kendrick

DEREK LEWIS THIEDE 1988

Derek's unfortunate accident on Helvellyn deprived the Club of one who, though only recently granted Associate Membership (January, 1988), would have proved a committed, long-term and active member.

We first met by chance in the Julian Alps where his love of the mountains was obvious. Unlike many holiday friendships this one lasted and led to our occasional attendance at Club meets.

There followed climbing holidays in Scotland when he joined us on our regular Easter trips to Lochaber, bothying in the Rough Bounds and a trip to Skye.

In many ways Derek was an ideal mountaineering companion – a good "goer", not averse to roughing it when occasion demanded, more than willing to tackle anything that came along and invariably cheerful and optimistic whatever the weather or going.

Add to these qualities that of a wide-ranging and cultured conversationalist who mixed easily and the loss to his friends and to the Club can be appreciated.

He will be missed by all who knew him.

Alan Lawson

FRANCES RONA WALLACE (nee ALFEROFF) 1951-1988

Rona came from a thoroughly Fell & Rocky background: Grandfather was the late H.P. Cain (President, 1925-1927); Mother, Marjorie Cain, and Father, Basil Alferoff, met in the Fell & Rock; and Grandmother Florence Cain and Uncles Billy and Tommy Cain were all members of the Club.

Born in 1934, her early years were spent in the quiet countryside to the west of Kendal, under the brow of Scout Scar, with its famed views of the Lakeland Fells, the Howgills and Morecambe Bay. This was one of her favourite walks as a girl, of an evening, with the dogs racing on ahead to the "Mushroom".

Her early fell-walking was at New Year Meets at the Fish Hotel, Buttermere, just before the war. Robinson, Hindscarth and Dale Head were her first tops, the expedition having been recorded in a photograph of us two small girls in nailed boots, wrapped against the cold, one either side of a little snow Buddha sculptured by Father who had an interest in things Tibetan since his friend Marco Pallis had recently written *Peaks and Lamas*.

Rona started her serious fell-walking when she joined the Club and together we attended as many meets as we could hitch-hike to from the south. She was a fine companion on the road (and on the hills!) and had a marvellous gift of composing mad songs – perhaps encouraged by the example of John Hirst and Harry Spilsbury at the Annual Dinners. Rona's "Hitch-Hiking Calypso" poked gentle fun at all the kind givers-of-lifts, and many of the other ditties were quite irreverent towards the Club dignitaries. She had a knack of making an entertaining adventure out of a simple day in the mountains. Often we would drive to Wasdale, Langdale or Borrowdale from Underbarrow in Mother's ancient little Morris 8 tied up with string, the choke being activated by pulling a wire and the hood having a habit of standing up like a sail if caught in a high wind at speeds above 35 mph. If we arrived at a hut knowing nobody, the car always made us new friends – one was so enamoured of the car that he drove off to town one Whit Monday night to find a spare rotor arm for it before we could all leave Borrowdale.

Rona and I gradually went separate ways on the hills. She had seasons in the Alps and Skye with new friends and after teaching for some years went to work in Sicily, where she met her husband Roger Wallace. They settled in Lincolnshire where they brought up their daughters Anna, Lucy and Lisa, and Rona taught in schools in the locality.

Family holidays at Birkness Cottage were a regular feature of these years and once again Rona was able to enjoy walking the Buttermere Fells. One of her last walks, before becoming incapacitated by illness,

was by the lake at Buttermere.

Rona died in Lincoln Hospice on 3 December, 1988. Some of her dearest memories during her illness were of our times on the hills together.

(Ardys) Valerie Alferoff

GEORGE CHRIS WATERS 1944-1988

I first met Chris in the nineteen forties when climbing in the Northumbrian crags and was most impressed by his ability to scale V.S. routes with ease.

He was a small dapper man weighing no more than eight and a half stone, a practising gymnast with strong fingers and arms. Holds that were out of his reach were no problem, he just leapt up and grabbed, a rather frightening experience for his second.

Most of the time spent with Chris was mainly climbing and skiing in Northumberland with occasional forays to the Lakes where I was his guest at the F.R.C.C. huts. The association continued for a number of years until we went our separate ways, as Chris was more and more confined to home to look after his mother.

We met up again when I was the warden at Beetham Cottage when he, on a number of occasions, stayed at the cottage. He always said that Beetham was his favourite hut and he was a great admirer of Bentley Beetham and the fact that he had left his money to the club. I used to jokingly suggest to Chris that as he had no heirs he could leave his money to the club and his reply was that he had no money. However, he had, and he left it all to the club and I am sure, knowing his love of the mountains he would have been overjoyed to know that he had followed in Bentley's footsteps and enabled the club to purchase the hut in Scotland.

Basil Butcher

MAIRI WILKINSON 1986-1989

Mairi Wilkinson was an extraordinary person. She was born on the Isle of Lewis, her family home was a croft and her first language was Gaelic which she continued to love to use. Her childhood was spent following the traditional pattern of life of the island community which demanded discipline, capacity for hard work and dependence on one's own resourcefulness, but to these qualities were added Mairi's own

exceptional degree of caring, her profound responsibility and her awareness of the needs of others, intertwined with an abundance of spontaneous cheerfulness, a lively imagination, great sensitivity and a real zest for life.

After attending the Nicholson Academy in Stornoway she trained as a nurse at Glasgow Royal Infirmary and took further courses in midwifery and psychology in Edinburgh, and it was during this period that she met and married John. Later she trained as a Health Visitor and worked in this capacity in one of the most socially deprived areas of north Manchester and in some of the bleakest problem areas of north-west Lancashire. She was totally committed to everything in which she was concerned, and gave time and caring unstintingly.

It was also her complete sense of duty, her integrity and devotion to her family, friends and patients that made her a very special person in every respect. She was without pretention or fuss and she made one aware of the most important aspects of living. Her influence was far-reaching, pertinent and enduring. She was quite simply, innately good. Her deep sense of fun and humour, and her exuberance, made her a wonderful companion and heightened the enjoyment of many an excursion whether it was walking over the moors above Todmorden, striding out over the fells above Langdale, enjoying the sunshine of a tranquil day in Buttermere, or skiing hard in the Alps; all favourite activities and pursued with enthusiasm, but more importantly with immense pleasure.

Her hospitality was legendary and was of an excellence that always delighted her guests, but all the effort that was expended was given naturally, eagerly, sincerely, with great charm and very graciously. Many will recall the support which she gave to John when he was President, and to all the climbing and mountaineering activities in which he was involved with Club members, but her own involvement with the Club was equally deep and her contribution was most significant. She was a vital, warm and generous friend to numerous of us who returned to huts exhausted, grimy, totally spent physically and mentally, following long, hard days on the crags or fells, and found her ready to ply us with sustenance and conversation which were always accompanied with her gentle laugh of approval of our escapades.

A tragic road accident killed Mairi when she was on duty making a home call, but that essential brightness will never be extinguished in those who knew her best.

Jo Light

LEGACIES

The Club gratefully and graciously acknowledges the following gifts and legacies and commemorates their donors.

Dick Cook. £500. August 1986. (Omitted from Journal No. 71)

David Allen Ferguson. £1500 to be spent on Brackenclose. (1989). This bequest has resulted in two replacement wooden settles for the fireside and an extension of bunk bed accommodation in the ladies dormitory.

Mrs. Dorothy Pilley Richards £2000 May 1987 (Omitted from Journal No. 71).

F.H.F. Simpson £150 October 1988.

George Chris Waters. £46.578 January 1989. This legacy has been spent on the acquisition and development of Waters Cottage. A gift of mountaineering books was also made.

OFFICERS OF THE CLUB
1988-1989

President	D. Miller
Vice Presidents	R. Valentine, J.A. Hartley
Secretary	D. Staton
Treasurer	K.D. Andrews
Journal Editor	C.J. Wright
Guide Books Editor	D.W. Armstrong
Librarian	G.G. Watkins
Dinner Secretary	T.C. Pickles
Huts Secretary	P. Lord
Meets Secretary	S.M. Porteous
Chronicler	J.L. Sutcliffe
Hut Wardens: Beetham Cottage	T. Parker
Birkness	W.G.C. Lamb
Brackenclose	R. Sumerling
Raw Head	D. Rhodes
Salving House	Mrs V. Young
Assistant Secretary	R. Lyon
Assistant Treasurer	J.R. Coates
Assistant Librarian	R.G. Willison
Elected Members of Committee	I. Dobson, P. Exley, T. Griffiths, Miss H. Harris, J. Hartley, G. Jackson, G. Light, Ms M. Linton, G. Oliver, R. Rowland, B. Swales, J. Wild.

1989 MEETS LIST

	Date	Venue	Leader
	7/8 January	*Beetham Cottage*	Arthur Thwaites
CD	*21/22 January*	*Salving House*	Ian and Evelyn Dobson
	4/5 February	*Rawhead*	Eric Spofforth
	18/19 February	*Ceilidh – Borrowdale Institute*	Eileen Clark
	4/5 March	*Black Rock*	Jeff and Lynn Breen
	6-9 March	*C.I.C. – Ben Nevis*	Geoff Oliver
	24-27 March	*Brackenclose*	Arthur and Malcolm Grout
C	*8/9 April*	*Birkness*	Andrew and Christina Paul
M	*22/23 April*	*Beetham*	Tom Parker
	29 April/1 May	*Ynys Ettws – Joint Meet C.C.*	Chris Sowden
	6/13 May	*Dundonnell Hotel*	John & Ellen Fleming
	13/14 May	*Eskdale (Camping)*	Ron and Marian Leather
	27/28/29 May	*Glencoe*	Mike Mortimer
	27 May-4 June	*Glen Doll (Glen Clova)*	John and Marian Smith
M	*10/11 June*	*Birkness*	George Lamb
C	*17/18 June*	*Rawhead*	Dave Long
D	*1/2 July*	*Sun Hotel, Coniston*	Peter Fleming
	15/18 July	*Brackenclose*	Geoff Cram
	29/30 July	*Birkness*	Jo Flint
	12/13 August	*Beetham*	Jill Evans
	26/28 August	*Wales*	Michael Harris and Morag Ballance
CD	*9/10 September*	*Brackenclose*	The Vice Presidents
M	*16/17 September*	*Rawhead*	David Rhodes
	30 September/ 1 October	*Northumberland*	Fred and Kath Wardropper
M	*7/8 October*	*Salving House*	Val Young
	7/8 October	*London Section – Beetham*	Tony Hutchison
M	*14/15 October*	*Brackenclose*	Roy Sumerling
	4/5 November	*A.G.M. – Dinner Shap Wells*	The President
	11/12 November	*Brackenclose*	Ron and Madge Townsend
CD	*25/26 November*	*Salving House*	Gerald and Jo Light
	9/10 December	*Birkness*	Howard Rushton
	30/31	*New Year. Meet O.D.G.*	The President

C = Committee Meeting: D = Dinner to be arranged: M = Maintenance Meet:

OFFICERS OF THE CLUB
1989-1990

President	D. Miller
Vice Presidents	J.A. Hartley, P. Fleming
Secretary	D. Staton
Treasurer	K.D. Andrews
Journal Editor	C.J. Wright
Guide Books Editor	D.W. Armstrong
Librarian	G.G. Watkins
Dinner Secretary	T.C. Pickles
Huts Secretary	P. Lord
Meets Secretary	S.M. Porteous
Chronicler	J.L. Sutcliffe
Hut Wardens: Beetham Cottage	T. Parker
Birkness	W.G.C. Lamb
Brackenclose	R. Sumerling
Raw Head	T.C. Parker
Salving House	Mrs V. Young
Waters Cottage	A.C. Rowland
Assistant Secretary	R. Lyon
Assistant Treasurer	J.R. Coates
Assistant Librarian	R.G. Willison
Elected Members of Committee	Mrs J. Cosby, I. Dobson, P. Exley, B. Griffiths, Miss H. Harris, J. Hartley, G. Light, Ms M. Linton, G. Oliver, Mrs N. Precious, B. Swales, J. Wild

1990 MEETS LIST

	Date	Venue	Leader
	13/14 January	*Beetham Cottage*	Chris Machen
CD	*27/28 January*	*Salving House*	David Staton
	10/11 February	*Ceilidh – Borrowdale Institute*	Ron Brotherton and Ron Kenyon
	3/4 March	*Kinlochleven*	Stuart Gallagher
	5-8 March	*C.I.C. – Ben Nevis*	Gill Lewis
	17/18 March	*Derbyshire*	Ian Roper
	31 March 1 April	*Ski Touring Meet – Scotland*	Bill Smith
	13-16 April	*Brackenclose*	Roy and Norma Precious
M	*21/22 April*	*Beetham*	Tom Parker
	28/29 April	*Birkness*	Jim and Audrey Sutcliffe
	5-7 May	*Rawhead – Joint Meet C.C.*	Harry Lambert
	5-12 May	*Onich Hotel*	Ron Young & John Wild
C	*19/20 May*	*Committee Meeting – Chapel Stile*	
	26-28 May	*Kinlochleven*	Andrew Birtwistle
	26 May/2 June	*Killin*	
M	*9/10 June*	*Birkness*	George Lamb
	16/17 June	*Rawhead*	Stephen and Hilary Porteus
D	*7/8 July*	*Sun Hotel, Coniston*	John Wilkinson
	21/22 July	*Brackenclose*	Paddy and Janet O'Neill
	21 July/ 11th Aug	*Alpine Meet – Zermatt Valley*	Paul Exley and Andrew Paul
	11/12 August	*Beetham*	Kate Henry
	25-27 August	*Wales – Camping*	Malcolm Lowerson
CD	*8/9 September*	*Brackenclose*	The Vice Presidents
M	*15/16 September*	*Rawhead*	Terry Parker
	29/30 September	*Northumberland*	Bob and Madaleine Bell
	6/7 October	*London Section – Salving House*	Jim Beatson
M	*6/7 October*	*Brackenclose*	Roy Sumerling
M	*13/14 October*	*Kinlochleven*	Alan Rowland
M	*21/22 October*	*Salving House*	Val Young
	3/4 November	*A.G.M. – Dinner. Shap Wells*	The President
	10/11 November	*Brackenclose*	Harry and Ruth Ironfield
CD	*24/25 November*	*Salving House*	Heather Yates
	8/9 December	*Birkness*	John Ratcliff
	29 December/ 1 January	*New Year Meet O.D.G.*	The President

C = Committee Meeting: D = Dinner to be arranged: M = Maintenance Meet