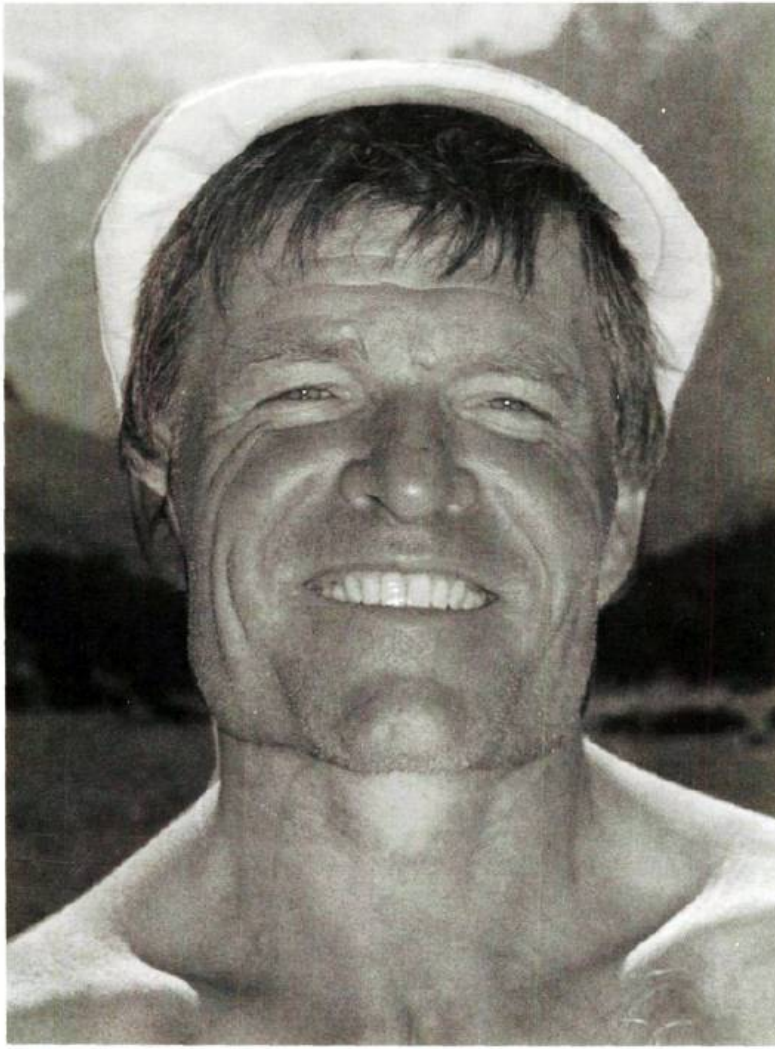

Syd Clark, President 1990–1992 (in the Asan region of the Pamirs, 1990)
Photograph by Brian Swales

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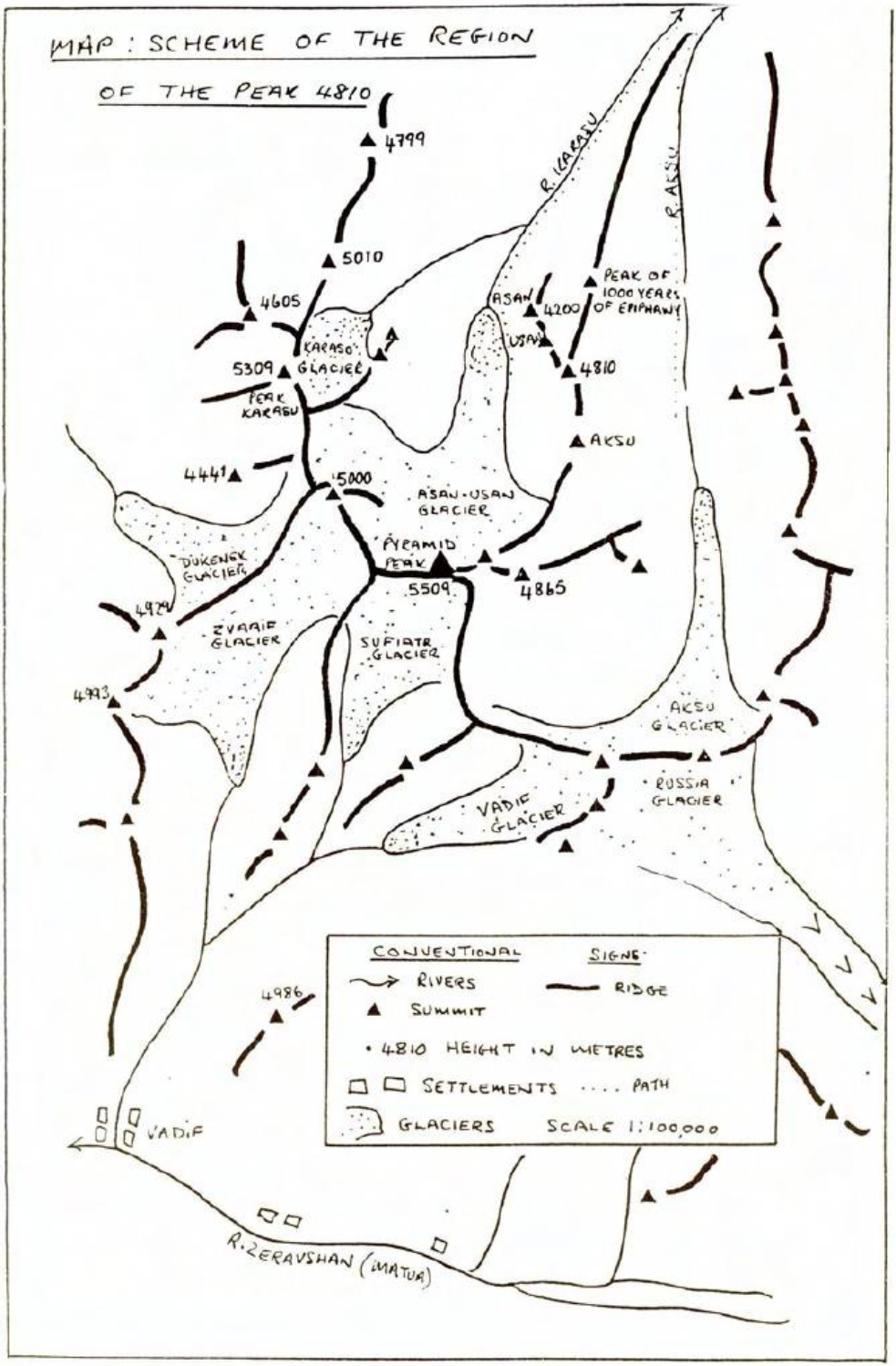
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A BIRD'S EYE VIEW – PAMIRS, 1990

Eileen Clark

Following a scientific potholing trip to Uzbekistan in 1989 a contact was made between some Sverdlovsk climbers and John Robinson, the climbing expert on the 1989 trip. The outcome of this contact was an invitation for ten British climbers to visit the Asan region of the Pamirs. In spite of glasnost and perestroika the Soviets preferred to deal through an organisation, so the Club was the obvious choice.

After months of organisation, and a visit by two Russians to the UK, ten Fell & Rock members left Heathrow for Moscow on 26 July 1990. We were met in Moscow by Misha, the Russian expedition leader and Irena, the interpreter. A battered coach took us to a battered Moscow hotel where for two nights we were kept going by very indifferent food. In between, a visit to the Kremlin and Moscow State Circus provided the entertainment.

We left Moscow airport wearing duvets and four hours later hit Dushanbe in Tadzhikistan at 40°C. Our accommodation was in the Alpina Hotel, the staging post for Pamir expeditions. The two days spent there helped us get used to the heat and the lovely fresh food provided by Ula, our cook, which more than made up for the Moscow fare. Meantime Misha had been using his considerable skills to acquire a helicopter.

The food and equipment to service eighteen people filled a small wagon. The eighteen people and sacks filled a small bus. Put the two together and a large helicopter was overfilled. Excitement, fear and anticipation as the chopper shuddered and groaned its way out of the airport for a journey that in itself was worthwhile. One hour and twenty minutes after several stomach-lurching ridge crossings and some very impressive views, we arrived in the Karisyn Valley of Asan.

Base camp was about a mile up from the helicopter drop and it took the rest of the day to transport the gear and pitch the tents. Apart from the personal tents there was an eighteen-seater mess tent, a kitchen tent and a stores/dispensary tent. Quite a settlement.

The following day we went up the valley onto the moraine to recce the routes. Our Russian friends hadn't been to the area before and were relying on information given by their friends from Sverdlovsk. The routes the Russians were especially interested in were the multi-day Alpine routes, especially the one on Asan. Across the river a 500m route called Yellow Wall took our fancy. Another face to the left of Yellow Wall also look interesting. Together with the two Brians, Syd and I decided on the Yellow Wall route. The rest of the team decided on a route on the

Opposite: *Map of Region* by *John Robinson.*

unclimbed, now named Cathedral Peak, to the left of Yellow Wall.

Misha was up before us to cook the porridge and brew the tea. We left camp at first light, the Brians just ahead. The river crossing was interesting: a very delicate log over a fairly impressive drop. A rope was definitely prudent. Just under an hour saw us at the foot of the route, which followed a natural ramp. The first seven or eight pitches of grade 4c brought us to the two artificial pitches which led to the head wall of the route. Some easy ground followed before the final six or so pitches of grade 5a–5b led to a col. An easy descent ramp led us back down to the bottom. A good route on sound rock. The river had, of course, by this time risen and as well as the delicate log we had to contend with being splashed.

Whilst we had been climbing Yellow Wall the rest of the team had done a new route on Cathedral peak. Graded 4c/5a and about 700m.

Later that evening came the first of several saunas we were to experience during our stay. A large fire was lit and covered with stones. After several hours the fire was extinguished and the stones covered by the large stores/dispensary tent. The heat was incredible, not to mention the beating of us all by Misha, with the birch sticks he had walked several miles to collect. After you could stand the heat no longer the idea was to lay in the ice-cold stream that ran through the camp site. My reluctance for this was overcome by Misha throwing me in the water. Not the most pleasant of experiences!

The following rest day saw a visit by a local shepherd family. Being born in Kirghizia, Misha knew all the niceties of hospitality. After being watered and fed they left with an invitation for us all to go for tea. At first glance their home just looked like a stone wall. Only the smoke coming through the roof showed life within. Working for the State, these local people came up to the summer pastures from the end of June to early September. To say their home was simple was an understatement. The food however was out of this world. Fresh bread, sheeps' yoghurt, double cream, single cream and various cheeses. So much for the cholesterol. During this visit the grandfather arrived with two other sons and nephews. The six hundred sheep were milked every day and grandfather spent the night higher up the valley with the herd.

Back to the job in hand! A relatively small peak adjacent to Asan had a line on it which had been climbed a few weeks previously by some Dutch lads. The peak, now named Point Hollandia, was too small to interest the Russians, who couldn't understand why no-one wanted to climb the three-day artificial routes that were available. Again the two Brians, together with the two Daves (yes, it is confusing: there were also two Johns, two Sergeys and two Sashas!) and ourselves. The Daves set off

Following page:The Shadow of Usan on the Massive face of Peak 4810
Photograph by David Miller

further to our left and found a peg. We followed a rather loose crack/groove line for a few pitches. Then followed some excellent 5b pitches leading eventually to a short ridge and the summit. Another good route of about sixteen pitches. Some in situ pegs off the top pointed the way to quite an interesting abseil descent. Dark caught up with us as we reached our gear. A reception party came to meet us at the foot of the scree: these Russians were certainly looking after us.

Our next objective was Usan. Most of the team had already done this during our rest days. They had decided to bivvy and had found an excellent site. The Brians decided to do it in a day. Syd and I, together with the Daves, also decided to bivvy at the same place as the first team. The site was ideal, with large flat stones. The night was perfect and really peaceful until a large stonefall came off Peak 4810. The noise rattled round the corrie and felt very close. Bendy walking boots are not the ideal medium for crampons but for the only bit of bergschrund we climbed during the trip they were ideal. An hour's flog through some horrible scree brought us to the foot of the route proper. The ridge was marvellous, and as there was nothing harder than 4c we were able to move together, in true Alpine style. We made the summit in about two hours. It was a lovely feeling to have reached a proper summit. Some down climbing and abseiling brought us quickly back to the start of the route. We then had to reverse the bergschrund, which in itself wasn't difficult, but was now a raging waterfall. Ice-cold baths were becoming too common!

During our next rest day we had in camp a visit from another local, the 'Bandit', so named as he used to be an assassin and had been in jail until Stalin's death and a general amnesty. He was certainly an interesting character and again we were all invited back for tea. His house was further downstream than the shepherds, but his status was certainly higher. The first rain of the trip meant that tea was indoors. Nine members of his family lived in the fairly solid single-roomed hut. The women had a separate place for cooking. In fact, this structure could have been the forerunner of the dome tent. The food was very similar to our previous tea, except that we had some rather fatty meat. The hospitality is such that as soon as one lot of bread is eaten another lot appears. Of course they are mortally offended if anything is left. Fortunately our appetites had increased by this time.

The Brians, together with the Sergeys, decided to go for the Alpina Route on Asan. After two days of fixing ropes and re-ascending each day they topped out on the third day. A good effort on a very fine looking line.

For our final line we decided to repeat the route on Cathedral Peak. Having the benefit of a route description and being much fitter than when

Previous page: Peak 4810, Point Holland and Asan. *Photograph by Brian Swales.*

we arrived, the route went very well. A fitting last climb in a magical area, with lots of potential.

All too soon our time in Asan was drawing to a close and before we knew it the last night party was under way. Ula again pulled out all the stops and produced a meal fit for kings. We had even managed to save a couple of bottles of whisky, whilst the Russians had a bottle of vodka and one of brandy. We were all presented with a wooden carving with "Asan 90" burnt on them. They had spent hours cutting these and we were very touched. For our part Peter Moffat dressed up as 'Father Frost' – the Russian equivalent of Father Christmas – and distributed our presents to them. Speech-making and singing round the fire sealed friendships that had been forged over the last few weeks.

It was time to leave Asan. The weather was perfect as the helicopter finally arrived to carry out the much lighter load back to civilisation.

Back at the Hotel Alpina in Dushanbe we were treated to a proper sauna, followed by a champagne supper. It was a very weary party that said their sad goodbyes to our Sverdlovsk friends.

Back to earth with a bang when on the plane back to the UK we were told the news about Iraq invading Kuwait.

Summary

The first British expedition to the Asan region of the Pamirs, 26 July – 16 August, 1990.

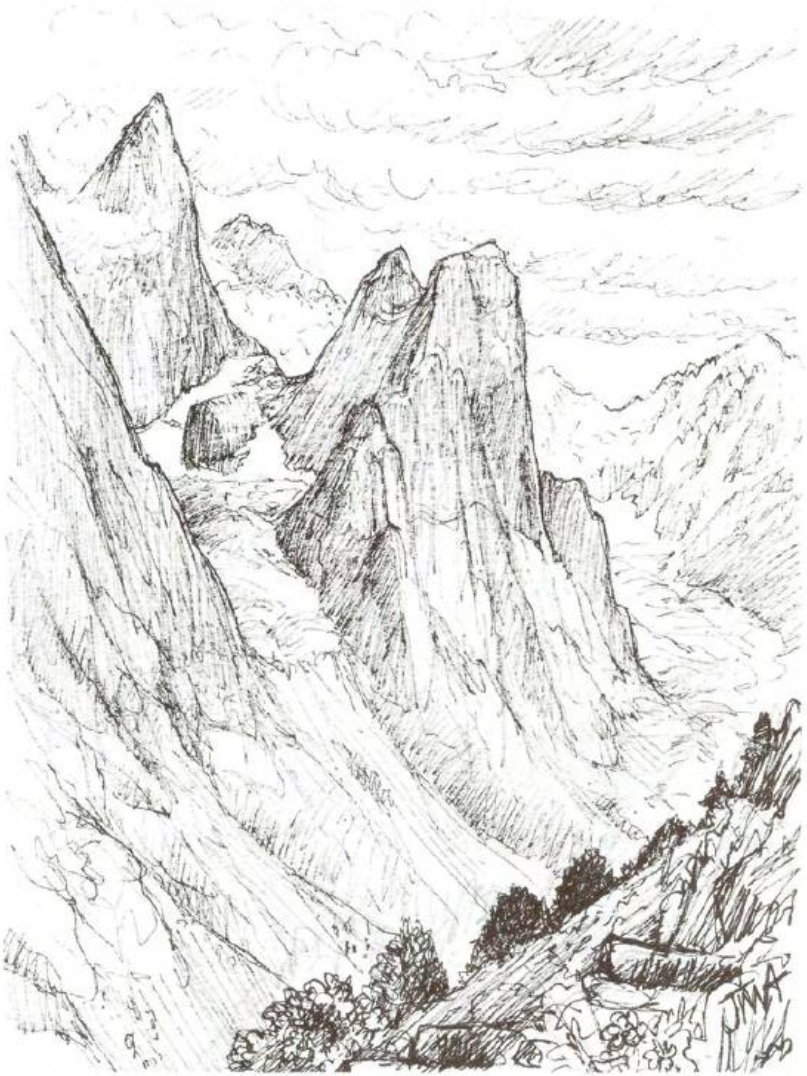
The following routes were successfully climbed:
Diagonal Route (500m) on Yellow Wall,
altitude 3600m. 5 FRCC members and 3 Russians.
S.E. Ridge (700m) on Cathedral Peak,
altitude 3755m. 6 FRCC members.
N.E. Spur (700m) of Point Hollandia,
altitude 3900m. First ascent. 6 FRCC members.
West Ridge (700m) of Usan, altitude 4377m.
All 10 FRCC members and 2 Russians.
Alpina Competition Route (1000m) on Asan (4209m).
Joint effort by FRCC members and 2 Russians.

Fell & Rock Climbing Club members

Eileen Clark, Syd Clark, Stuart Gallagher, Brian Griffiths, John Leigh, David Miller, Peter Moffat, John Robinson, David Staton and Brian Swales.

Russian party

Misha Morozov, expedition leader; Irena Davydova, interpreter; Sasha, Ula, Sergey and other members of the Sverdlovsky Alpine Club.



The Asan Valley, 1991: Peak 4810, left; Usan and Asan, centre; Pyramid Peak, right.

YOUTH AT THE DOOR

Tom Price

Listening to the remarks made at the AGM last year about attracting young people to the Club reminded me of something I wrote a year or two ago but did not submit to the Editor of the *Journal*. It is as relevant now as it was then, so here it is.

Whenever I go into Brackenclose, into the men's dormitory, my eye roves up to the top bunk in the far left-hand corner of the room, and to the rafters above it. I'll tell you why.

The time is long ago, and the place is Langdale on a fine December afternoon. The occasion is an unofficial meet of the L.U.M.C.

As students, when we came to the mountains for a weekend, our behaviour was very similar to that of small children let out into the playground at playtime. We burst upon the scene with just the same mixture of elation and surplus undirected vigour. We also took enormous pleasure in each other's company and experienced all the cheerful solidarity of the gang.

This explains, though it will hardly excuse, the extraordinary decision we made to hike over Esk Hause and Windy Gap to Ennerdale in order to force an entry into Black Sail Hut which we knew to be closed. We somehow persuaded ourselves that we could enter the building without causing damage and naturally we would leave it in as good condition as we found it, if not better.

The idea came to us as we sat expansively over a farmhouse tea at the foot of The Band. It may well have originated from one member of our group who is now a highly respected officer of the Club but who at that time had a propensity for lighting the blue touch-paper.

The farmhouse tea, which we were having as a late lunch, was too enjoyable an occasion to hurry and when we rose from it it was nearly three o'clock. We were already in shadow but the sunlit bracken shone like copper on the slopes of Pike of Stickle and walking in darkness was part of the idea. We filed up the side of Mickleden and by the time we reached the foot of Rossett Ghyll darkness had advanced upon us, assisted by a huge black cloud which had been forming in the west. We climbed up the steep and rocky slope into an altogether different and forbidding region of gloom, darkness and incipient storm. What had started as a delightful lark was changing rapidly into a serious undertaking.

By the time we reached the top of Rossett Ghyll we were in a tempest. The rain came at us downwards, sideways and even upwards. The wind

buffeted us in a brutish and unseemly manner. Angle Tarn was seen as a livid blur in the general blackness. Progress was slow. Our party was seven or eight strong. Or seven or eight weak, it would be truer to say, for keeping everybody together was not easy. We had regarded the path over Esk Hause as an unmistakable highway. In the roaring dark, however, and with patches of snow across it, it proved surprisingly easy to lose. We also lost the capacity to estimate time and our walking, and waiting, and struggling seemed interminable. To an observer we would have looked like a demented, squabbling rabble, but we were only trying to make ourselves heard, and keep our feet in the savage wind. We had frequent discussions about the route, yelling our opinions, staggering in the wind, occasionally clustering round a wet map by the light of a failing torch. Somewhere on the top of Esk Hause my balaclava flew off my head in a violent gust of wind and disappeared for ever, leaving me with a strong feeling of outrage. I wrapped my scarf round my ears and we pushed on.

A dangerous-looking void ahead turned out to be the nearby waters of Sprinkling Tarn. No doubt a ragged cheer went up from our wretched little band. All should now be plain sailing to Sty Head. But a curious thing about walking the hills at night is an unconscious reluctance to go downhill. Visibility on a very dark night is limited to little more than a yard. One can generally see or sense the ground at one's feet, but anything lower than that is indistinguishable. One's tendency then is to step where one can see something to step on and that is usually something slightly higher than foot level. In this way one unconsciously prefers going slightly uphill to going down.

We lost the path but the feeling of knowing where we were was strong after leaving Sprinkling Tarn, and we hoped to run across it again. We set a compass course. Some time later we came to a drop. Those in the rear cried 'Forward!' and those at the front cried 'Back!' Cautious probing suggested we were on the top of a cliff. Tossing a stone into the blackness confirmed it. We tried more to the left. More cliff. We tried to the right. Cliff again. Those in charge of the compass protested that we had now tried all reasonable directions and that it made no sense. These conjectures, of course, were made at the pitch of our voices on account of the storm. In the end we took the only course open to us, which, as the compass-men bitterly pointed out, was back the way we'd come.

We scrambled and slithered downhill and eventually found the path. After that whenever we lost it we would send our scouts in various directions until we found it again. In this way we got down to Sty Head Tarn.

The plan of continuing up Aaron's Slack into Ennerdale was now unanimously rejected while a proposal to get the hell out of our present

difficulties was carried unanimously. Finding the start to the path to Wasdale was not easy however. We came to the col where nowadays the mountain rescue box stands and here I expressed the view, at the pitch of my lungs, that we needed to go up a little to make sure of hitting the track. My friend Wildblood disagreed, on the ground that we would then be in danger of taking the Gable Traverse path. We became surprisingly heated for two people on the brink of hypothermia. It was like a scene out of King Lear. I do not know how it ended but after we'd torn a passion to tatters for some time we did eventually find the way down and went lurching down in the teeth of the storm until we reached at last the levels of Wasdale Head. Endless columns of rain still swept up the valley from the Irish Sea. We trudged on until we came to the lake. There was a light showing in Brackenclose. We looked at the time and found to our astonishment it was only nine o'clock. We thought it must be at least one in the morning.

We knew Brackenclose, having stayed there with our president G. Graham Macphee. We now stood at the door, a forlorn, hapless crew, wet through. We knocked. It opened, revealing a vision of dryness, warmth and light.

We explained that we were a university mountaineering club, that our President was a member of the Fell & Rock and though he was not at present with us would no doubt be willing to vouch for us. We were becoming seriously affected by the cold and wet, etc., etc.

'This is a private hut', said the spokesman of the dry people within, speaking in what we instantly registered as an Oxford accent. 'The Rules of the Club say that guests must be accompanied by a Member.'

One of our difficulties was that we had no very plausible explanation for our presence in Wasdale. We could hardly admit that we had been frustrated in our nefarious plan to occupy Black Sail Hut. In the end we were turned away from the door, back into the rain and darkness. Or rather we took ourselves off, gathering the rags of our dignity around us, resolved to seek shelter in the barn of Wasdale Head Hall, half a mile away.

Our interview at the door of the farm was a good deal shorter. At first we thought we discerned some glimmer of sympathy in the eye of the framer's wife, but when she saw that were girls in the party her face assumed a rather stony expression and it was thumbs down from then on. Whether she imagined she might be giving licence to romps in the hay, or whether she simply felt that girls needed better accommodation than a barn was not disclosed, but it made no difference. We had the choice, she said, between Brackenclose (half a mile), the hotel (two miles) and the Youth Hostel (four miles).

She found it easier no doubt than the climbers to refuse us. There is a certain kinship among climbers, even between respectable club members and those beyond the pale. For them, turning us away must have felt a little like turning away poor relations. But to her we were visitants from another planet, part of that strange alien tide of townspeople that lapped intermittently round the boundaries of the farm.

We went back to Brackenclose to report our failure. This time we pushed the girls well to the fore. They hardly looked like sex symbols with their blue faces and bedraggled hair, but perhaps in those days chivalry was less dead than it is now. The climbers, moreover, had had half an hour and more to listen to the rain beating on the windows and to compare their lot with ours as they sat toasting their toes before a roaring fire, mugs of tea in hand.

They relented, and our troubles were over. Some brave and kindly soul must have entered his name in the book as the member responsible for us. (I wish I knew who he was, to be able to thank him again after all these years). We paid up, we crept obsequiously around keeping out of people's way and cooking our soggy food. The girls, stripping off wet clothes and combing out their dripping hair, revealed themselves to be more girl-shaped than might at first have been thought and made themselves exceedingly pleasant to the company at the fireside. On the whole our intrusion did no-one much harm and some perhaps a bit of good. It was only years later, however, that I realised fully the nature of the dilemma we put those people in.

But the point of this story, it is has a point, and the culmination of the whole incident and the thing that has made it stay in my memory when so much else has faded, was climbing into that top corner of the three-tier bunkhouse, close under the sloping dry timbers of the roof, to be cradled in the total luxury of dry blankets, and to hear the rain furiously pattering and hissing on the slates a few inches above me. I was at one with all animals, in all dens, all over the world.

AN ALPINE DEBUT

Jack Carswell

Recently, while on the Tour de Mont Blanc with Jo Flint, I found myself, after a lapse of too many years, once again in Entrèves. It was sad to see what had happened to this once pleasant Alpine village in the meantime – now a collection of hotels, a virtual suburb of Courmayeur.

One thing, however, had not changed – and that was the splendid view of the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc, aptly described by André Roch as 'One of the most imposing faces in the Alps.'

The saga of Graham Brown's obsession with this Face and his exploration of it, which produced the three classic routes – 'The Pear', 'Route Major' and the 'Sentinelle' – are now part of the history of mountaineering. These are well-seen from the road just above the village and seeing it all again renewed memories of my first visit to the Alps – now forty years ago.

I had arranged a holiday in Chamonix with Charles Tilly, and Ian Charleson of the SMC. Charles met me at the station, accompanied, I was surprised to find, by his old friend André Roch whom he had chanced to meet in the town. André had a proposal: some years before, in a party of three, he had made the second ascent of the 'Via Della Pera', and it still awaited a third ascent. It so happened that the other two members of that party were presently in the town with this objective in mind and the proposal was that we should join forces for the attempt, a British first.

Assuming that Ian would have no objection when he arrived we arranged to meet at the refuge on the Col de la Fourche a few days later, leaving just sufficient time for my Alpine baptism on the Verte, on which mountain, as Frison Roche has it, 'A man becomes a mountaineer'. The hut is splendidly situated on the frontier ridge of Mont Maudit, standing on a ledge scarcely bigger than the floor of the building, if such it can be called. To me, the hut resembled nothing so much as a family-sized Anderson air-raid shelter of Second World War vintage.

We found the place occupied by freeloaders, four of whom were politely but firmly evicted to provide beds for we 'bona fide travellers'. They did however pass on the message that the two friends whom we had arranged to meet there, spurred on by a poor weather report, had decided not to wait and had left for the mountain that morning – and had thus bagged the third ascent.

The twin hazards of the Brenva routes are weather changes and avalanches: in the afternoon we were treated to the spectacle of an enormous avalanche, apparently involving the whole of the Brenva Face, which is in

full view from here. After the noise had died away André went back to bed with the laconic remark that it was just one lot of ice that we would not have to bother about tomorrow, an observation which, to me, appeared to contain more truth than comfort!

We left the hut at a quarter past midnight. A vertical gully dropping straight off the hut platform gave access to the glacier. A lengthy though easy walk brought us to the Col Moore, where I was surprised to find the upper lip of the bergschrund forming the same vertical wall as faced Smythe and Graham Brown in 1927. I had read Smythe's account and felt that he had regarded this as unusual. Apparently not so – this was obviously the norm. Smythe had tackled the wall conventionally, cutting hand and footholds. Our solution was much more radical – we did it by sticking our axes into the snow and climbing up the protruding heads. The main difficulty was in siting the first ones, owing to the width of the gap – a good stride wide – and their subsequent recovery.

The knife edge of Col Moore marked the transition from the glacier to the serious climbing on the face, the abrupt sense of exposure and isolation being heightened by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the lights of Courmayeur far below and apparently beneath our feet.

We were now on the edge of the Face, with the Pear Buttress higher up on the other side. The approach route involved a steeply rising traverse over high-angled ice and snow, interspersed with deep avalanche grooves, some of which proved quite awkward to cross, giving an exciting feeling of vulnerability whilst on the glass-smooth bottom.

We arrived under the buttress with perfect timing at first light and ignoring the first rocks cramponed up to the main cliff. The rocks were firm, rough and dry, though the ledges were piled high with debris of the previous days avalanche. We were in an exposed position and likely to be for some time hence. Therefore the niceties of pure rock-climbing were put on the back burner and we became mountaineers, with the sole object of covering the ground as quickly as possible.

At the slightest hitch André demanded a shoulder or a hand, in fact anything to keep the upward momentum, never once making a false move. I found the interest and excitement of fore and aft involvement so engrossing that I forgot about the altitude. We picked the left-hand side of the buttress as likely to give the quicker, though more difficult route. It also meant climbing almost within arms length of the huge, vertical, flanking ice cliff, a chilling experience in every sense. Higher up the ice began to develop huge, threatening, blue-green overhangs and we were glad to take a difficult crack leading away from the ice and reach easier ground on the front of the cliff, which brought us quickly to the top of the rocks.

Here we stopped for the first time since leaving the hut and took a rest and a bite to eat.

The main face was reached by a narrow exposed ridge of rotten snow and we made good progress up the glacier and through the intricacies of the upper face, emerging eventually on the easier slopes leading to the Col Major. Here I began to be affected badly by the altitude. The others were most solicitous and offered, as an alternative, to make a detour which would avoid going over the summit of the mountain. The offer was made without much conviction, no-one being surprised when I refused and opted for the summit.

In due course we arrived at the top where it was bitterly cold with an icy wind and slowly worsening weather, so that no time was lost in descending the ridge to the Vallot Hut, a thousand feet lower where it was much warmer. Sitting in the snow we ate and drank what bits and pieces of food were left, beginning to think positively of the meal we had promised ourselves in Chamonix that evening.

The descent by the normal route was uneventful apart from some troublesome crevasses on the Grand Plateau. The one place where it is impossible to avoid exposure to stonefall remained quiet, even in the afternoon. Our arrival at the Grands Mulets hut immediately preceded the onset of the thunderstorm which had been threatening all afternoon and had kept us moving as quickly as possible to avoid being caught higher up the mountain, no doubt causing some concern at my slow progress on the Col Major.

The intention had been to reach the valley by cable car from the hut, so it was a blow to find it out of action, for what reason I now forget, but Chamonix suddenly seemed to be a long way off.

After the storm, there being nothing else for it, we started down through the forest, on foot. I will draw a veil over our tribulations after it got dark. Contact was kept by occasional flashes of the one workable torch and listening to each other's curses as we stumbled over unseen obstacles. If there was a path we never found it. We navigated by following the line of cables outlined against the stars. After an age we hit the road and reached Chamonix at 11.15 pm – twenty three hours after leaving the refuge on the Col.

Next day the weather broke and as we watched the rain pounding the pavement we reflected on our luck over the previous few days. The mountain had belied its reputation, as not a pebble or a puff of snow had stirred whilst we were on the face. We had beaten the weather by a matter of hours, or indeed, minutes if the storm at the Mulets be counted as the onset.

All in all, to borrow an aphorism from Tom Price, it had been 'A good grimpe'.

And so began my involvement with the big mountains. Before this I had been no higher than Ben Nevis and had never worn crampons. I had never before turned over thankfully in the small hours on hearing a guardian's dolorous 'Mauvais temps' or escaped from a hut after attempting to cope with what is laughingly called 'breakfast', on to a crisp glacier.

It is in the order of things that changes should take place. Bad weather and logistic problems have encouraged climbers to divide their time between the sun-soaked cliffs of the South of France and the big mountains. Climbing standards have soared beyond my recognition and I am pleased to be associated with fellow mountaineers able to achieve such standards. But the Brenva Face? – now that is something different and always will be so for me.

LEVADAS AND MOUNTAINS IN MADEIRA

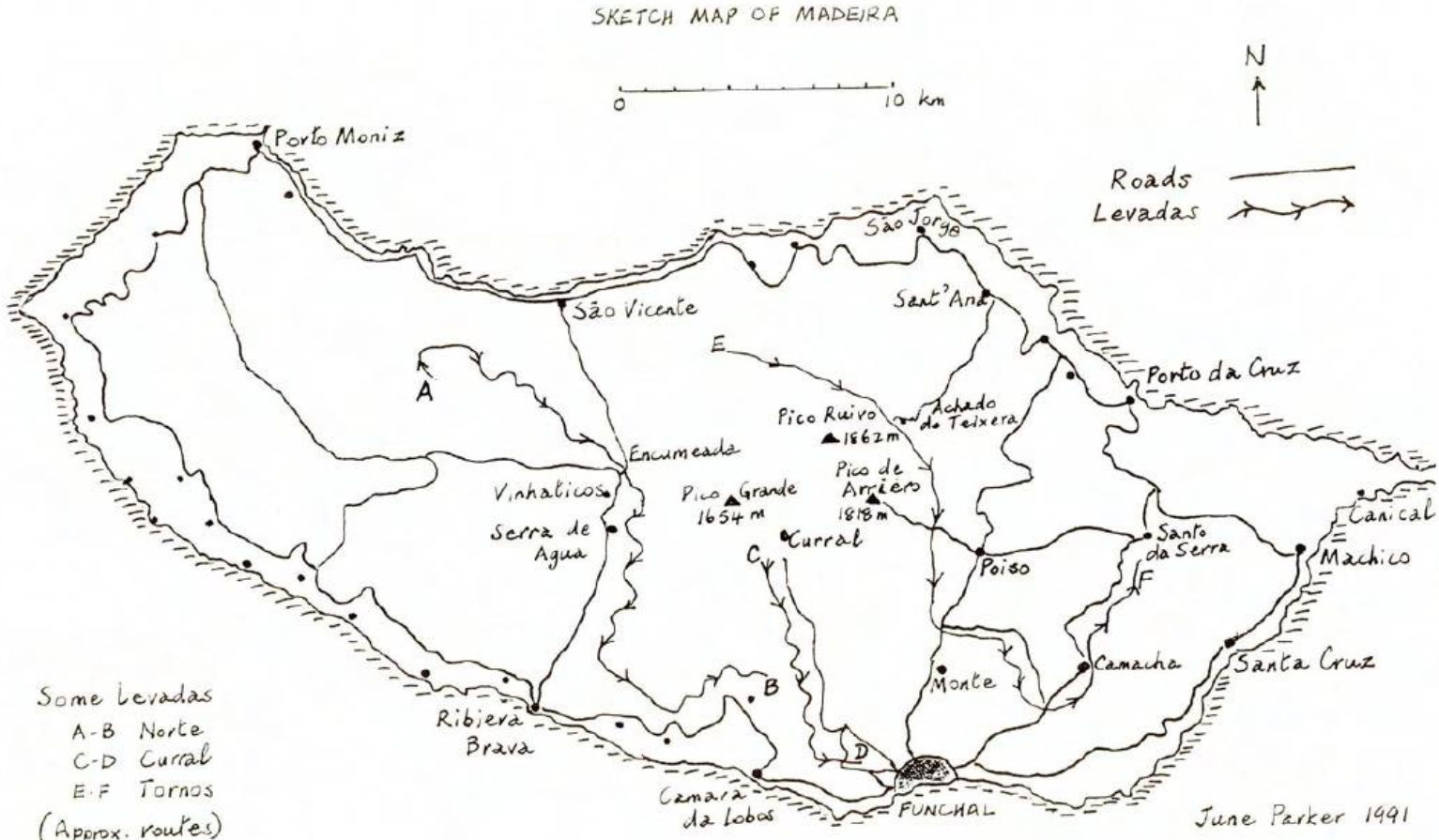
June Parker

This summer we found ourselves exploring the island of Madeira for the first time. Although we had talked to friends who had been there and looked at the guidebook nothing quite prepared us for the unique qualities of this very small volcanic island. Set in the Atlantic, a little further south than Casablanca and about 300 miles north of the Canary Islands, Madeira enjoys a very equable climate and has long been a favourite port of call for cruise ships. Only thirteen miles from north to south at its narrowest point, the central mountains rise to over 6000 feet, a fact which makes for a very precipitious land surface. Not only are there many vertical cliffs, these are deeply dissected by ravines and gullies giving a very rough and rugged topography. The high mountains cause heavy precipitation in the north of the island and the combined effects of the water supply, the rich volcanic soil and the southerly latitude result in a vegetation which is lush and sub-tropical.

Most of the walking on the island is along the *levadas* or water-channels, built with the greatest skill and ingenuity in seemingly impossible situations. Rain falling in the mountains percolates through layers of volcanic ash before emerging in springs when an impervious layer of basalt is encountered. From these springs the water is channelled to power stations and then to the myriads of tiny terraces on which grow all manner of fruit and vegetables and to the vinyards and banana plantations.

The older *levadas* are narrow and the channel is often vegetated. They sometimes cascade steeply down the slopes directly to the fields. The newer ones constructed by the Government in the middle of this century are built of concrete and are often three or four feet wide. They travel across country for miles at an almost constant height, often in long tunnels. One of these is the Levada do Norte, the source of which is high in the moorland plateau in the north-west of the island. It is joined by the Levada des Rabacas and the enhanced flow is piped down to the power station at Serra de Agua before continuing its long course to Funchal.

We chose a walk along this levada for our first day and it proved an interesting if not entirely agreeable experience. One reason for this was that a long section was under repair so that it was empty of water. A modern concrete channel is not exactly an object of beauty. However, we were able to observe at first hand the work done by the *lavadeiros* on maintenance and repair. The existence of the levada paths enjoyed by the walker is entirely due to the necessity of keeping the levadas in good order. The work is hard and laborious. We saw young boys doing mens


SKETCH MAP OF MADEIRA
0
10 km
N
Roads
Levadas
Porto Moniz
São Vicente
São Jorge
Sant'Ana
Porto da Cruz
A
E
Pico Ruivo
1862m
Achado do Teixera
Encumeada
Pico de Arriero
1818m
Pico Grande
1654m
Vinhaticos
Serra de Agua
Curral
C
Poiso
Santo da Serra
F
Canical
Machico
Camacha
Santa Cruz
Monte
B
D
Ribeira Brava
Camara de Lobos
FUNCHAL
Some Levadas
A-B Norte
C-D Curral
E-F Tornos
(Approx. routes)
June Parker 1991

work and laughing and cheerful young girls humping sacks of cement up steep paths. Materials and tools were stored on platforms about six feet wide specially built at the side of the levada. Sometimes where work was going on at a narrow section we had to step carefully to avoid the hands wielding the tools!

On this walk we had our first experience of very persistent children begging for '*escudos, bom-bons and ceegarettes*'. Later we learnt to grit our teeth and tell them to 'Vai embora'. This is something to be beware of whenever a *levada* goes through an area close to houses. Fortunately there were other places on this walk where the countryside was wild and delightful, like the hidden valley of the Ribiera de Caixa filled with flowering cherries. Everywhere the wild flowers were abundant and we particularly liked the *levada* walls covered with long-stemmed purple and white daisies, the great patches of violet coloured thistles, yellow broom, white cistus, mimosa and big white arum lilies flourishing in the damper places. This walk ended in a superb viewpoint looking up into the Ribiera Brava valley where the *levada* comes down from Serra de Agua, but the walker must descend to catch a bus back to Funchal.

At this point something must be said about the local buses. Timetables are available from the Tourist Office in Funchal for 100 escudos (about 0.40p) and many of the walks can be done making use of them. The only snag is that a very early start is needed for some, such as the No. 6 which leaves Funchal at 07.35 to arrive at Encumeada, from where several walks start, at 09.40. It is also necessary to check on the time of the return buses and to make sure you don't undertake a walk which is so long there is no time to enjoy the scenery and the flowers. In the evenings fellow-walkers can be recognised by the feverish pouring over bus timetables as they work out their itinerary for the next day. The bus journeys themselves are full of interest but can be quite hair-raising as they hurtle round tight bends on narrow roads with a steep drop below. In the country the buses will pick up anywhere as well as at the bus-stops signed '*paragem*'. Taxi-sharing is a useful and not too expensive alternative.

The Levada dos Tornos is another very important modern *levada*, carrying water an incredible distance from the northern mountains to the eastern slopes above Camacha and Gaula. We followed this one day from Monte to Palheiro Ferreiro and on another day from this place to Lombo Grande. The first part was notable for the many beautiful flowers and for the fragrance of eucalyptus and pine. The second part provided our first experience of a tunnel, which happened to be rather a narrow one, but it was soon passed. Beyond the second tunnel came the best part of this walk, the *levada* being cut out of a steep rock wall and leading round the head of the Porto Novo river with a waterfall pouring into the pools below

in a long, slender, almost vertical stream. Quite exposed, but the concrete path is wide enough and need hold no terrors for those used to mountain paths. Best to stand still though when admiring the views of the lush valley down below.

Some of the *levada* paths are very wide and easy, for example the Levada de Serra which can be followed for short or long distances as there are several access points. This is an old and vegetated channel, still attractive even in places where there is no water. Most of the way we found water flowing, and the two metre wide path of reddish beaten earth is bordered with hydrangeas and lilies planted by the *levada* workers. These were not flowering at the time of our visit, but there were masses of yellow broom and patches of wild freesias.

Quite another story is the Levada de Curral, which can be followed down from the mountain village of Curral des Freiras, almost to Funchal. The scenery is magnificent, but in places the edge of the *levada* is only about fourteen inches wide and there are sheer drops to the valley below. Two of our party of four on this walk found themselves afflicted by the vertigo of which the guidebook gives constant warnings. It was astounding to see a young couple carrying a baby along this *levada* and walking very fast! In many places the *levada* paths are the only way for local people to get to the nearest village, so they must be accustomed to the verticality at a very early age.

Two methods of coping with vertigo were suggested by other walkers. One is to use a longish stick to trail along inside the *levada* and touching the edge, which gives an illusion of an anchor and so aids self-confidence and balance. The other is to find a long cane and for two or preferably three people to hold it with the sufferer in the middle. This gives the illusion of a safety rail and a party of three we met on this walk were using this method. The Curral *levada* is probably the most difficult and most vertiginous of all the walks on the island. Not only is there steep exposure and a narrow path, there are places where the *levada* must be left because it is rushing down a steep incline and it is impossible to walk along the edge. There are rough alternative paths in this case, sometimes crossing scree and prone to landslides, where care must be taken.

Personally this was for me a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable walk. The scenery is wonderful all the way, with the river far down below and narrow terraces clinging to the steep slopes on the other side, with toylike houses dotted among them. The most impressive part of all is just beyond the abandoned village of Faja, where the *levada* curves round into an amphitheatre with vertical rock walls. The *levada* is cut out of the rock and carried round the head of this side valley in a windowed tunnel. It is safe to walk as far as the tunnel and observe the continuation of the *levada*

Following page: The central peaks and Curral. *Photograph by Alan Parker.*

clinging narrowly to the cliff under cascades of water. An old flight of wet and slippery steps leads to a lower level and remains of old railings are seen offering very inadequate protection on the edge of the abyss. You may be relieved to know that walkers do not go this way, but retrace their steps for a short distance to find the path through Faja, with its empty houses almost hidden in luxuriant trees and shrubs.

The easy walk from Camacha to Assomada is a complete contrast to the Curral walk and equally enjoyable in different ways. It begins with a steepish descent on a good path to the tiny village Salgados where we saw women and girls doing the traditional wickerwork. Pink apple blossom and white arum lilies are a feature here and the houses have attractive gardens. The Levada de Canico met below the village is an old narrow one filled with rushing water. The pity is that it is over so soon; it is only six km long so it is a good one for enjoying the views and the flowers.

Although *levada* walking has its attractions, and many become positively addicted to it, we preferred to vary it with forays into the mountains. The weather is different up here from the warm and sunny southern coast and cloud and rain can be quite frequent. We were lucky with the weather one day on a pleasant walk from Corteceiras to Curral. An easy track goes up through a eucalyptus forest to a high pass, then an adequate mountain path goes down into the deep bowl of Curral. It was a sizzling hot day and we were glad of a refreshing stop by the river pools before tackling the gruelling steps to the upper village with its welcome cold beer and colder ice cream.

Other days we were not so lucky. The day we traversed the tourist path along the main ridge from Pico de Arriero at 1818m (5965 feet) to Pico Ruivo, the highest point at 1862m (6100 feet), we were enveloped in deep swirling clouds and the extensive views were completely hidden. A well-made path is maintained by the Government and is laid with stones and steps with handrails giving protection from steep drops. There are some minor ups and downs, then a longish descent to a tunnel piercing the Pico de Gato. There are four further tunnels, roughly at the same level, then several caves are seen cut into the cliff. At the end a most attractive path climbs up easily through golden yellow broom and some surprisingly large trees of *erica arborea*, the tree heather, up to 5m high. Ten or fifteen minutes below the top there is a mountain hut where we found a log fire burning and refreshment available. The path from here to Achada do Teixera where we ended the walk is excellent, about five feet wide and passing three shelters, two springs and some short grass that would have been a tempting spot to linger had the sun been shining.

On another day the weather was even worse. We followed a track from the Boca da Corrida to Encumeada in heavy rain as well as mist and ended

Previous page: Pico do Cedro and Curral from the Boca dos Namorados path. *Photograph by Alan Parker.*

up soaked to the skin in spite of our so-called waterproofs. Part of the trouble was pushing our way through the water-laden broom bushes, dense thickets of them. There was no respite until near the end of the day when we caught a glimpse of the Poussada de Vinhaticos far below us in a patch of sunshine. In spite of the fact that we ate our brief lunch on the hoof because of the rain, there was little time to spare on this walk and we did not have long to wait for the bus at Encumeada. The state of our clothes was quite embarrassing as water dripped off us and made puddles on the floor and the seats and other passengers flinched away from us. Next time a stay at one or more of the mountain huts, mostly equipped as inns, is called for. However for a first time visit we would strongly recommend staying in Funchal because of the variety of walks made possible by the bus service combined with better weather in this area. Our choice of the Monte Carlo hotel proved excellent; not only was it within 20 minutes walk of the buses, it was comfortable, small and friendly and had a good restaurant. Flying time from Manchester is 3½ hours.

Guidebook: *Landscapes of Madeira* by John and Pat Underwood. 3rd ed. Sunflower Books, 1988. (Essential)

Maps: Two 1:50,000 maps cover the island and are available from a travel agent opposite the post office in Funchal. (Interesting, but the maps in the guide book are much more useful.)

CLIMB FOR THE WORLD

Doug Eliott

Climb For The World in 1991 left me with an unforgettable memory as together with a couple of friends we used the event to focus arrangements for a walk of the Ennerdale Round. The twenty tops include Lakeland classics like Great Gable and Pillar, and eighteen are over 2000 feet in height. Even the remaining two deserve 'mountain' status with Haystacks as one of the most delightful summits in the Lake District, and Crag Fell as the imposing entrance to the valley. Before describing events on one of the finest mountain circuits in the Lake District, I present a few facts and later comment on the Climb For The World event.

Climb For The World aims to be a decade of commitment, from 1991 to the year 2000, to the encouragement of the health and well being of the planet and all its peoples. It is an international response to a challenge by UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, for the combined strength of individuals to demonstrate their concern to those in power. Climb For The World seeks to raise funds for a range of United Nations approved projects in various countries on health, education, social and environmental issues.

Climb For The World day for 1991 was noon on 21st September to noon on 22nd September. A high impact event was an international climb of the Eiger, but the desire was for mass support at more humble venues including some sixty summits in the Lake District. Organisers had arranged for 24 hours camps to be established with flags flown, beacons shining, and 'ambassadors' present to stamp specially produced 'passports'.

My own plan was to use Climb For The World as an excuse for a reunion of old friends on Pillar Rock and then the pub. Intentions were not matched by deeds. Time passed without organising anything and with realisation that numerous 'official' summits would be manned the plan developed into a ridge walk around the Ennerdale valley including Pillar Rock on the way. Thoughts of a booze up were set aside as we lifted our sights to the mountain sites of the Ennerdale Round and to the high moral ground of Climb For The World.

Our team was composed of two geriatric members of the Fell and Rock together with a fit and healthy rucksack carrying young man waiting to go to University. We were reasonably fit, the two geriatrics had done the circuit previously and saw no problems to completing in 8 hours or so. The plan was set. We were to get to the first official summit of Great Borne for noon on Saturday 21 September and then to meander round the twenty

tops to finish over Crag Fell before nightfall. As well as Great Borne the walk included other designated summits of Red Pike, Haystacks, Green Gable, Great Gable, Pillar and Steeple. Our lifted moral thoughts did not extend to an overnight vigil, but we would think of the many we hoped to meet as we celebrated our achievements in the comfort of the pub.

The weather forecast on Friday was for severe gales all Saturday with heavy rain arriving in the afternoon. This caused a little alarm but a couple of phone calls solved any potential problem as it was agreed to bring our starting time forward. A few summits would unfortunately be crossed before noon, but we would stroll in ahead of the rain and have a longer time for celebrations before closing time.

Early breakfasts and quick car journeys allowed us to start just after 8.00 a.m. from the site of the former Anglers Inn on the shore of Ennerdale Water. A helpful tail wind pushed us up towards Floutern Tarn and it was only on the first summit of Great Borne that the real severity of the wind was felt. The traverse across Starling Dodd allowed us to avoid the main force but it was a struggle onto the exposed summit of Red Pike. Cloud had now descended, but windows continually opened to give magnificent views over the Grasmoor and Newlands fells. There were no problems in route finding along the ridge but it was becoming increasingly difficult to make progress and at times we were blown to a standstill. We dropped into the lee of the Buttermere side and popped up and off the summits of High Stile and High Crag as quickly as possible. We experienced our first doubts that all may not go to plan.

Where was everybody? It was only on the descent to Scarth Gap that we met anyone. Perhaps it was because we set off early, but later with four groups in addition to ourselves on Haystacks the place appeared almost crowded. It was then 11.30 am and we were tempted to wait for invigilators to get our World Passports stamped. Though clouds had lifted to become streaming masses over our heads, the wind was increasing further and we carried on over Brandreth to the ridge path across the head of the valley.

We met no-one else until the slopes of Green Gable, and there on the summit was a Venture Scout group and a home made flag. Though no 'official' 6 feet by 4 feet polyester flag with sleeve, rope and toggle was available, the World Stamp was real and we got our first passport stamps just after 12.00 noon. The group informed us that we were their first Climb For The World participants, and likely to be their last as a leader was considering withdrawal in the face of worsening weather. We sympathised, but pressed on.

Though cloud free the wind was now violent and wreaking havoc on

those between Green Gable summit and Windy Gap. Neither old-fashioned chivalry nor newly found comradeship of Climb For The World stretched to us offering to retrieve a ladies hat blown into Ennerdale. From the somewhat sheltered pull up to Great Gable we could look back to this section and for some time could analyse various techniques employed as groups and individuals were tossed around by the wind. At the summit it was almost impossible to stand and we were not surprised that 'passport control' was absent. We battled alone down to Beck Head and had an exposed and buffeting traverse over Kirk Fell, Black Sail Pass and Looking Stead.

None of us admitted to collapsed lungs, creaking joints, or even aching muscles, but the raging gale made progress slow. Then came relative calm as we took the High Level Route to Pillar Rock, followed by a welcome and exciting change up Slab and Notch. With no view the misty summit of Pillar Rock may have been the summit of anything, but to us it was a major part of the plan. The threatening clouds that descended around us were now less worrying than the time. It was 4.30 p.m. and we were well behind schedule.

Moisture enveloped us as we scrambled to Pillar but it was only at the summit, again deserted, that the actual rain fell. A compass came into use with visibility less than distance between cairns and we headed for Windy Gap where again the place lived up to the name. On Scoat Fell the wind force appeared to abate, but it was still strong enough to drive torrential rain horizontally.

At last we met other Climb For The World participants. A bedraggled group of Venture Scouts appeared out of the cloud on their return from Steeple where they had not seen anyone all day. They were keen to stamp World Passports and this was done on the strict understanding that Steeple was climbed. It was only after a couple of abhortive excursions off the main ridge that later it became obvious we were on the grassier slopes of Haycock and had missed the 'not to be missed' Steeple. Rain and limited daylight made us reluctant to retrace our steps but fate intervened with punishment for broken promises as rainwater washed off the ink of the passport stamp.

Doubts about each others sanity were exchanged in the shelter of the wall over Haycock. We were soaked to the skin and at last admitting to being tired, but unwilling to take the opportunity for a short return down the spur between Silvercove and Deep Gill. With zero visibility and continuing rain we scrambled over Little Gowder Grag and then began the dull plod over Caw Fell and Iron Crag. Without protection from the stone wall running over the summits we may not have made progress.

Night approached and on reaching the wall junctions before Crag Fell it

was decided to follow Red Beck to the lakeside path of Ennerdale Water. Clouds were left above but darkness fell and progress depended on the glitter of water indicating the track. We slithered down and then splashed our way round Anglers Crag and the end of the lake to arrive at the cars after more than 12 hours walking. A note under the windscreen wiper announced that wives and friends had been to Crag Fell to greet us and had retreated to the Fox and Hounds at Ennerdale Bridge. We followed.

Warmth, food and drink in good company allowed us to reflect. Atrocious weather may have transformed our walk into a minor epic, but the final wet slog and stumbling in the dark were quickly forgotten. We were well pleased with our achievements, but what of Climb For The World? Why did the 1991 event pass by largely ignored by most climbers? Was it supporting organisation that failed? Was it limited media coverage that left it unnoticed? Was it a rejection by climbers of a political stunt? Was it just indifference?

I have no complete answers to these questions. Organisation from a base camp at Sheffield appears to have been sound if hectic. In the Lake District groups of Venture Scouts may not have realised the severity of the weather when agreeing to man designated summits. Sponsors eventually were found with support from a high technology organisation and a climbing gear company. Patrons included political figures such as John Major, Neil Kinnock and Paddy Ashdown, together with climbing connections including Edmund Hillary, Chris Bonington, Doug Scott and others. It must be acknowledged that media build-up was poor in volume, and it tended to report on the Eiger climb rather than promote widespread participation.

I suspect that though climbers are not indifferent to aims such as those of Climb For The World, they are unwilling to mix fund-raising with mountain pleasures. Certainly climbers will not welcome mixing with politics, and though I am sure climbers can appreciate symbolism as well as non-climbers there is unease at 'planting flags for the future, not waving one for the present', or at having lights 'piercing the darkness' as 'declarations of human rights'. Perhaps the main reason for limited participation was a natural reluctance by climbers to become involved in what appeared as an organised stunt.

We had not chosen to invigilate a summit or combine in any formal way, but hopefully we have raised our awareness to the plight of others and their environments. This is surely for good. It was a memorable day, and with 1991 as the start of a Climb For The World decade there are another nine years when weather can only be better and opportunities can be taken to meet others. I shall be participating again. Will you?

ENNERDALE TOP TWENTY

Location	*Distance (miles)*		*Ascent (feet)*	
Anglers Inn site	–	–	–	–
1. Great Borne	2½	2½	1600	1600
2 Starling Dodd	1½	4	450	2050
3. Red Pike	1¼	5¼	650	2700
4. High Stile	¾	6	350	3050
5. High Crag	1	7	100	3150
6. Haystacks	1¼	8¼	550	3700
7. Brandreth	1¾	10	850	4550
8. Green Gable	¾	10¾	450	5000
9. Great Gable	½	11¼	500	5500
10. Kirk Fell	1¼	12½	700	6200
11. Looking Stead	1¼	13¾	250	6450
12. Pillar Rock	1	14¾	550	7000
13. Pillar	¼	15	500	7500
14. Scoat Fell	1	16	300	7800
15. Steeple	½	16½	100	7900
16. Haycock	1	17½	350	8250
17. Little Gowder Crag	¼	17¾	50	8300
18. Caw Fell	½	18¼	150	8450
19. Iron Crag	1¼	19½	200	8650
20. Crag Fell	2½	22	350	9000
Anglers Inn site	2	24	–	9000

PUFFINFELLA

W.A. Comstive

This could be Norse, but it isn't, for the craziest birdwatching expedition of the 1986 Scottish Meet. The weather was bad for the greater part of the week except for a day on the Five Sisters ridge which coincided with the fallout from Chernobyl.

Frustration had set in and Reg sensed it. On the Wednesday evening he came into the hotel lounge and announced: 'It's the Saddle by the Forcan Ridge tomorrow, weather permitting. Meet in the carpark at 10.00 a.m.' The weather was not permitting. It was even worse, a fresh sou'wester, the hills cut off at about a thousand feet. As we breakfasted we watched the rain run down the windows and the water on the loch being whipped by the wind.

In his usual persuasive manner Reg appeared, put his head round the dining room door and asked if anyone was interested in a 'fun walk'. 'There's a small colony of puffins nesting on a loch very near the summit of Sgurr na Coinnich on the Isle of Skye – anyone keen to go?' asked Reg. Nine 'volunteers' came forward to listen to Reg unfold his plan. 'I have arranged for cars to take us to the ferry near Glen Bernera. Once on the other side it is a straightforward climb to the summit. When we have seen the puffins we will then make our way back to Kyleakin across country. I have also arranged for cars to pick us up at Kyle of Lochalsh at around 3.00 p.m. to get back to Balmacara in time for the picnic.'

If I had thought about this plan a little more carefully I should have realised that puffins do not nest on lochs near the summit of a mountain.

We were transported to the ferry by which time the rain had almost stopped. I shall never forget the expression on the face of the ferryman when we told him where we were heading for and why. In clearing weather we made for the subsidiary summit of Beinn Buidhe. It was rather monotonous at first over a featureless hillside of stones and heather. The pace began to tell on one or two and we became strung out a little. The rain started again and the mist began to thicken, but Reg kept us all in check at intervals. He used his whistle to good advantage and counted us in and out again as we plodded upwards in worsening weather.

One member decided to call it a day and we were assured that she was quite happy to return and able to find the way down to ferry. She would have to phone the hotel from there to be collected.

The cloud ceiling lowered, visibility got worse and we became unrecognisable shapes looming out of the mist, heads bent into the wind and driving rain. Occasionally we heard Reg's whistle and stopped to let the

others catch up – it was vital to keep contact with one another the whole time. A lost member of the party might be walking for hours in this stuff. We were now on compass bearings only and every large hummock became the top but through the cloud and rain higher ground always rose up ahead: it seemed endless in these conditions. I kept turning over the thought that I must have been clean out of my tiny mind to fall for this. We huddled together for 'elevenses' in the middle of nowhere and after what seemed an eternity the summit cairn loomed out of the mist. Here lunch was taken, or should I say hurriedly crammed down, as this was no place for hanging about.

For reasons of necessity I detached myself from the party and wandered off for a few yards and through the mist I saw what I thought was the small lochan. I rushed back to tell everyone, but a closer inspection revealed it to be an old snow patch. Before moving off Reg carefully laid the essential bearing and made no bones about the fact that we had to strike the headwater of the Allt a' Ghleannain in Froaoch Coire and follow this down, otherwise goodness knows where we might end up.

We were now facing the freshening north-west wind and I noticed rime starting to collect on some of the rocks. We moved quickly down into what we hoped was the Coire and behold a shout from Reg ahead, assured that he had found the headwater. We stuck to this small beck like glue as it changed to a stream and lower down into a tumbling torrent. By now we all realised that the appointed time to meet the cars at Kyle was fast approaching and would no doubt pass even before we reached the plantation. Would the waiting cars desert us in favour of the goodies at Balmacara? One could hardly blame them in this weather.

As we dropped down the clouds were no doubt getting thinner and soon we could see a mass of green below us. The plantation. We hit it at a point some reckonable distance from any path and then our troubles really started. You have seen those pictures of explorers in the jungles of Malaya. Well, we felt like that except that they were warm and wet and we were distinctly cold and wet. By religiously following the Allt we found ourselves on the side of a steep gorge and there was nothing for it but to turn into the thick of the plantation and push through to the path which we knew was ahead somewhere.

At the meeting of the waters we turned right to head into Loch na Beiste with the idea of following the headland round to Kyleakin. When we reached the bay the tide was in and steep cliffs made that route impassable. We srambled up the cliff hanging on to whatever vegetation was available and suddenly stumbled across a narrow path which led on to a stile at the edge of the plantation higher up.

'Now', we thought, 'if we follow the edge of the plantation across

country we would be in Kyleakin in about half an hour.' At length we reached a large flat area not unlike wetland with tussock grass. The Doc was ahead now and I noticed that he was bouncing up and down as though on a trampoline. I soon discovered why. The crust was floating on a bog beneath: one bad move and I would be in. We all kind of skated across this last obstacle towards the cottages of Kyleakin and firm ground at last.

The ferry was just leaving as we reached the quay so we sheltered in the small hut to wait. Reg put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a mess which looked like paper-mâché – it was the remains of his map. Without it and his dead reckoning we might still have been out there walking.

Looking across to the higher carpark at Kyle we could see figures waving; they had spotted us. Poor devils, some of them had been sat there since 3.30: it was now past five and the thoughts of hot tea dominated. The picnic was almost at an end when we reached Balmacara to cheers from the assembled members, but there was hot tea and cakes in abundance to fortify the fun-seekers. The only disappointment was that we did not see the puffins. Ah, well, perhaps next time!

IN THOSE DAYS

Marjorie Alferoff

Marjorie Cain (she was to marry in 1931 and change her name to Alferoff) was born on 5 June 1908, in the year in which the Fell and Rock held its first recorded meet – at Thornythwaite Farm in Borrowdale. Her father, Herbert Porritt Cain, had joined the Club in the previous year and was to play a main part in the Club's development over the next twenty years, being President in 1925–27. Marjorie for her part has retained a keen interest in the Club all her life: now aged 84 she still makes a point of travelling each year from her home in Edenfield to Shap Wells to attend the AGM, and she still likes to take a holiday once a year with members of her family at Birkness Cottage.

Marjorie spoke to me last year of her personal reminiscences of Club life and history (I had married her daughter Rona in 1959) and the following article is a compilation of extracts from her conversation with me. She begins by telling how, in 1916, when she was 8 years old, her father came home on leave from the Great War, and took his wife and daughter up to Borrowdale.

Roger Wallace

'Just me and my father and mother – bliss! We stayed at Mrs. Jopson's in Thornythwaite, and I lay in bed listening to the cows lowing, and I bathed in the stream – in the pool near the road. I used to take a dip every day. That was my father's idea, of course, having a dip every morning. Today if I hear a cow lowing in a barn I'm transported back to that first time when their lowing so thrilled me as a child.

My father decided, on this trip, to take me over to Wasdale and back. Very few children were taken on the hills in those days. I had some black school shoes, and we walked all the way up Sty Head and down to the Wastwater Hotel, where I was enveloped in Mrs. Whiting's ample bosom, and put to bed for a bit to recover, and then we started off again back. By the time we got back to Borrowdale my shoes were blue with wear and wetness. My father was so thrilled that I'd done it – he wrote about it in one of the Fell & Rock books somewhere – that the next day on the way home he took me into Keswick, and there was a lovely climbing boot shop – Hardman's – it's still a shoe shop, it's still there – and he bought me a proper pair of little climbing boots.

I remember too – perhaps I was a bit older – my first climb, up South East Gully on Great End. At one point I couldn't reach the rock with my foot, so I got my hand out and put my foot on the rock. My father was

quite proud of me doing that too.

Then from the age of about 10 or 12 I went up to the Lakes a lot. It was always with the Fell & Rock. In those days we stayed in hotels or camped – there were no huts. The Fell & Rock bases at that time were –

The Sun Hotel in Coniston, which was the Club's original meeting place.
The Wastwater Hotel in Wasdale.
The Woolpack in Eskdale.
The New Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale.
Thornythwaite Farm in Borrowdale.
The Buttermere Hotel (*now the youth hostel*), and Nellie Jackson's Syke House Farm in Buttermere.

New Year's Day was always spent in Buttermere. Before breakfast on New Year's Day my father used to take us for a bathe in the river (*opposite today's Bridge Hotel*) – just a quick in and out!

We all used to meet at the Buttermere Hotel. There was a young man, Lawrence Pollitt – I think he was later killed in a flying accident – and there was Geoffrey Kidd, Geoffrey Whitehead and Lawrence Hardy, and they took me up a lot of lovely climbs – I did all my best climbing before I was 18.

At the hotel on New Year's Eve Lawrence Pollitt used to get a climbing rope and climb up to the second floor, and we were all in that big room, and there was a smoking room at the back. We used to have a lot of sing-songs. We had a member of the Club who was Canadian, Mrs. Wakefield, married to Dr. Wakefield – he was on one of the earlier Everest expeditions (*in 1922*) – she was a wonderful entertainer and would sit at the piano for hours playing all the songs of the time. We had a lovely time singing all those songs. Oh, we spent all evening singing away. George Basterfield wrote climbing versions to many of the songs of the day and a whole book came out – I've got the musical edition and I've got a book of the verses that he made up as well.

In later years in the 1940s and 50s Lawson Cook, Harry Spilsbury and John Hirst at the dinner meets used to sing dozens of well-known songs with climbing words added. Now all that tradition's gone . . .

We had a lovely competition once when I was a little girl. There were so many lovely whimberries on the tops if you went at the right time of year, and my father thought of the funniest things, it was he who suggested we had a competition to see who could get the blackest tongue eating whimberries, and I was pronounced the winner – I think they were only pampering me! I loved being with them all – they were so sweet.

I remember Claude E. Benson, for instance, who wore long plus-fours

and a pepper and salt jacket and hat – he was an author; and his wife who dressed in a very old-fashioned way even for those days, with a long costume jacket, long skirt, and thick brogues for walking.

There was Howard Somervell whom I first met when I was 13. He was lecturing in Manchester, and we got to know him through the Congregational Church. He was one of my heroes – he was an Everest climber and had rescued some porters who were stuck on a glacier (*on the slopes of the North Col in 1924*).

I was 16 at the time of the Everest Expedition on which Mallory and Irvine were killed (*in 1924*). Oh that was a sad time in the mountaineering world. It was a great tragedy: I took it very much to heart. I wrote a poem about it which began – 'Oh ye who rest in the eternal height . . .'

I remember Bentley Beetham – he was a wonderful man, a schoolmaster; and Godfrey Solly – another wonderful old boy. And 'Gibby' – W.G. Milligan – who was a 'confirmed' bachelor – he was the owner of the Lakeland Laundry at Barrow. He married in later years and his wife died in a tragic accident.

Leslie Somervell was another of our friends. He was very kind. I often think of him if it's a misty day – the air has to be just right – and I picture myself up on Pillar with one or two people including Leslie Somervell. He gave me a lovely book once, 'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas à Kempis. Then a gorgeous girl came to the Fell & Rock, Betty de Fonblanque, and Leslie fell in love with and married her.

Darwin Leighton was a marvellous man. He had a wonderful knowledge of natural history. He was a very good grocer; he used to carry on the mountains those blue bags, those little sugar bags they used to have, filled with lovely, luscious prunes and things like that, and Mapleton's fruit cake – I think they still make it – that was a great standby for everybody, and Kendal mint cake too.

We used to have a ration when we were children – a piece of Kendal mint cake on Sundays after dinner!

Dr Burnett was another wonderful character. He always had to make a cup of tea when he was out – we all used to tease him about it. He was a wonderful old man; he came from Dumfries.

And the doctor who looked after my father when he died, Dr. Macphee – a very clever and interesting man, a dentist I think. He died on Tenerife Mountain a few years later.

I was very lucky being in such company as a child, and being a little girl they were all very sweet with me. But in a way I was very spoiled – I never had to read a compass or a map; they all looked after me, you see, and all took me out with them. I haven't inherited my father's flair for

knowing all the mountains by their shapes and where they were and everything – I haven't inherited that at all.

I became a member of the Club in 1926. I was only 18. I loved being out on the hills – climbing was my passion when I was in my teens. But then my father died in 1927.

We'd gone on a cruise in January of that year and came back in early March. It was supposed to have been helping him in his illness. I saw him in one of his attacks while we were away, he went absolutely grey; and I was helpless, there was nothing I could do; we were in a taxi at the time in Greece, and I couldn't do anything for him except grieve for him, seeing him like that. He was a bit naughty, because he drove the car to help Dr. Hadfield and Billy Pape get on the three highest peaks in 24 hours. (*The first 24 hour Ben Nevis – Scafell Pike – Snowdon achievement in 1926 is described in Journal No. 20*).

We set off for Langdale on the Friday – it must have been in the middle of the afternoon – and I remember my father couldn't find the compass, and we hunted and hunted for this compass. Then we went off, my father, Billy Pape – my father befriended Billy Pape because he'd been in the war as a very young man – Enid Pape, a new young friend, Eric, and myself, in the Chrysler car, and off we went. The first night there my father played bridge, and quite enjoyed it, I think. Then the next morning some of us went up Side Pike – it's opposite the Fell & Rock hut on the other side of the valley – it was a very, very wet day, not exactly cold, but there was a drizzle all day. We did this walk, and then we came back again. And, oh yes, something I never forgave myself for, before we went out – my father went with Percy Lavender, his friend he'd met in the army, a lovely man, the father of Jean Rivers – and he called to me and said. "Do you know where the ice-axe is?" I said, "I think it's up in the bedroom" and I didn't go and get it for him. He went. I thought afterwards I could at least have done that for him. That was the last I saw of him alive.

He did a big walk with Percy Lavender up Rossett Gill, which is awfully steep, steeper than a lot of passes. He went up there and down again, and I was sitting holding hands with Eric – that was as far as it ever got, but that was important in those days, to hold hands with somebody – I still think it is, it's very close, isn't it? – and I looked down, about 200–300 feet down on the pass, and saw people running. I looked again and I saw somebody moving their arms. It was the doctor trying artificial respiration on my father – but he was dead by then.

Well, I didn't know, and we wandered down back to the hotel, very puzzled, and Margaret Boothroyd came up to me and told me then that my father had died. I didn't want to see him, I wanted to remember him as he was.

To the indignation of the members of the Club, they put him in the barn. The members of the Club insisted that he was put back in the bedroom. Somehow or other they must have got the same firm from Edenfield that I want to bury me – Wolstenholmes – they went up there. They asked them just to bury him in his climbing boots and climbing clothes. That photograph of him in his grey jersey and an old jacket, that's what he was buried in – so his boots are still in the grave at Stubbins.

It was a huge funeral, oh it was a big funeral, people came from far and wide, it was in all the papers. We didn't go into black, but for my father I wore pale blue, and that was quite an innovation in those days, not to put black on. Poor mother, I don't think I ever appreciated what she went through. She'd been to the theatre that day with Mrs. Lavender, and I don't think she ever forgave herself for being at a theatre when her husband died.

Then, afterwards, they asked me to be the Club's librarian, and I was only 18 – I think it was partly because the books were all there, at Rosebank, in our billiard room – all the climbing books and his own books all round. So I was a very shy and embarrassed young woman attending those committee meetings. I wasn't driving myself in those days, I had to rely on somebody else to drive me. (*H.P. Cain was the Club's librarian from 1919 until his death, the collection being housed as described in his own home*).

My father was going to take us to Skye in 1927, but his death intervened. So we didn't make any attempt to go that first year. But then we went the second year, 1928, Billy and Enid Pape – and Basil came as well, separately, on his motor bike – and my mother and myself – and I think my brothers, Billy and Tommy, were there too. We stayed in this gorgeous little croft on the edge of the loch – Glen Brittle. That was the best place to tackle the Cuillins from. That's where, in later years, Ronald Macdonald came down with a 'pich-nich' for Rona and Tamara (*Marjorie's two teenage daughters*) in the middle of the night!!

I can remember seeing a very ancient climber there, the first time I went, I think – Norman Collie – he was a famous name. He was a wonderful climber and a fisherman, and we saw this tall, bearded gentleman, and we worshipped him from afar . . .

I'd met Basi in 1926. (*Basil Alferoff had joined the Fell & Rock in 1924. He was to become Marjorie's husband in 1931*). We went up to a Fell & Rock meet at the Woolpack in Eskdale, and my little brother Tommy was there camping with us, and I went in to see him in the camp, and saw this young man there also in his own tent. I was in rather a flirtatious mood that weekend, I can remember. There were all these lovely young men there, and I was 18, and they were all attractive in their own way. And

anyway, poor Basil got caught; we just were attracted to each other, that first time . . .

Then we went up to Buttermere for New Year, and he was there camping in the little field behind the place where you get the milk now; that little cottage was where the Jacksons lived – Syke House Farm. Basil had got a lift with somebody called Tony Shaw from Birkenhead – he was a dashing young man with a Bentley, and I'd met him earlier on. His parents had thrown a party and Basil was invited, and I was invited too, and his brother was Raymond Shaw, a lovely man. They were Wayfarers, because the Wayfarers was a Liverpool club. It was a great honour for Basil to become the Wayfarers' president, and he edited their Journal. The Wayfarers had the hut in Langdale opposite Raw Head – that was put together by the members of the Wayfarers Club. Basil worked very hard on that too, and so did Harry Spilsbury – he was a very clever man. I remember once going up with Basil to help. Before Raw Head was turned into a hut there was a Mrs. Robinson there in the cottage part, and that was one of the places you could stay at in Langdale, and I can always remember lovely home-made bread with Turog flour. In later years, when we were married, Basil and I stayed there once, and we had a little dog by that time that we'd bought in Skye, and we took her with us to the cottage, and she produced her puppies in the middle of the night . . .

We didn't have the same waterproof clothing in those days, you know, we used to get very wet. The best thing was a Grenfell jacket – those were classic things to wear. But I had an outfit made at Hebden Bridge, I don't think it was waterproof. It was very smart, it was a sort of lovely reddy-brown colour like the colour of bracken when it's faded. In earlier years the shabbier you looked – the more patches and darns you had on your clothes – it was almost as if you were the better kind of climber. We wore the most awful rags. When I've shown people that picture of my father, I think nobody could believe that my father would dress like that, but those were his climbing things . . .

We all had nailed boots of course – they were rather nice. You know how a pendulum has a weight on the end – you got a sort of good swing with those boots somehow, the weight sort of carried you along, you weren't aware of it. It was lovely sloshing through streams in them.

I've got a picture somewhere taken at a Fell & Rock annual meet. They moved from the Sun Hotel because it was too small, and my father organised for us to meet at the Hydro in Bowness – he knew the manageress – it was about 1925, '26. AND we dressed up! I remember I had a most beautiful brown velvet dress which somehow or other I'd acquired from a cousin. It was pretty new, with a sort of round neck – very modest – and I think it had long sleeves, and I had a lace collar round – oh, I felt the

bee's knees. Haskett-Smith was on the picture, and, you see, I met all these famous people, Dr. Wakefield, Haskett-Smith, Bentley Beetham, Solly; I met one of the Abrahams; the Somervells. And, oh, there was a man called Ormiston-Chant from Manchester, I was always a bit taken with him, he was a very upright, elderly gentleman, a friend of my father's. Then there was somebody called Sang from Scotland, and I can remember Mrs. Sang, a sweet little woman. Then of course John Appleyard, he was another friend of my father's, he was the Club secretary for a long time. After my father died I went to learn hen-farming with John Appleyard in Coniston – it was rather fun. The hens were all free-range in those days, so it was quite a pleasant job. They must have had a few hundred hens. He was a war casualty, and his health had suffered as a result, and this was the best sort of life for him, outdoor life. Then he married Eve Harland, and Eve is still alive, she's ninety-something, and still lives in the Coniston area. I used to help to look after the children a bit too when I was there, in the evening; I used to mother them a bit.

I think the present-day young men are more competitive, whereas in our day – or before me – it wasn't supposed to be competitive at all. I think if they found a climb they'd tell somebody about it, I think that was one of the big differences.

Then, of course, in order to get to the climbs they had to make a big effort in those days. I mean, my father would leave Stubbins on Saturday – he worked Saturday mornings – about midday, and get a train to Accrington, and another train to Preston, then another train to Keswick, I think via Penrith – there was a station in Keswick in those days – and then from Keswick he'd perhaps walk up Borrowdale, and go out climbing all day Sunday, and start off the home again Sunday night, and be back at his desk again Monday morning. So that it was more appreciated, I think, in those days: they'd had to make such a big effort to get there.

I was at school with Emily and Betsy Walker, the daughters of Mr. Walker from Seascale, and my father had conceived the idea in the early 1920s of buying the tops and presenting them to the nation as a war memorial to those killed from the Fell & Rock. Eventually this materialised, and they had a service on the top of Gable, with the memorial tablet that had been made. But I was away at school, so I didn't participate in that. But it was a lovely idea. This Mr. Walker passed over the ownership of the hills to the Fell & Rock. (*This achievement is recorded in, among others, Journal No. 69*).

Seascale was a nice little place in those days. We used to go for holidays there, stay in a hotel. I remember during the war we went up there, and my father had a friend to meet – I think there was a station at Seascale too

– and this Major Arbuthnot turned up in his Scottish regalia. They'd go off to Wasdale together, and we children played on the beach. Now they're talking of trying to dump all the nuclear waste in Gosforth . . .

Another extraordinary man was Harry Scott. He used to take me to tea in Manchester quite frequently. He was very broad Lancashire, a busy, white-haired man, very sociable, a good Club member. And when I married we asked him to make the speech to the bride. He was a dear man, very sweet, very kind to me after my father died. He lived in Southport.

Then there were the Boothroyds – they had a shop in Southport. The daughters were Margaret, Helen and Kathleen, and then there were two brothers, Geoffrey and Norman. They were very, very keen, and very knowledgeable about the Lakes too. Very kind, Mr. and Mrs. Boothroyd, I used to go and stay with them quite frequently.

George Seatree sent us a picture of Kanchenjunga when we were married, a very big enlarged photograph. It was one of the first wedding presents to arrive, and we had it in the place of honour at Lightbeck.

Then there was somebody else called W.T. Palmer, – he was a journalist and climber. I remember his wife too, with lovely, gentle eyes. He wrote a lot in the Fell & Rock Journal too.

And the Plints. They came up from Formby to Kendal and were of course delighted to be in the heart of the Lake District. Dick was one of the few friends that Basil retained. Dick chose to be buried in Underbarrow. There was a great long string of cars going up the Scar to take him to the graveyard – it was an extraordinary sight – and when I got there I saw within feet of Dick Plint's grave, Basil's mother's grave, and I'd had Basil's name put on it at the same time as his mother's, to say that he'd died out in Pakistan. They were such good friends, and I felt that they were together somehow . . .

And Noel Odell. He was the last person to see Mallory and Irvine alive. I don't remember this – but he told me it when he was an old, old man, in the sitting room at the hotel in Windermere – that the first time he'd seen me, apparently, it was with my father at Langdale. And he said, 'I said to myself, "What a lovely girl!"' And of course I was thrilled to bits. And he said, 'And then I looked for you again, and your father had *whisked* you out of sight . . .'

It might have been better if he hadn't, mightn't it!

He turned out to be a wonderful old man. He used to walk the tops when he was quite old.

Odell, Bentley Beetham, Howard Somervell and Wakefield – they all used to come and stay at Rosebank – my father loved entertaining. After my father died the Fell & Rock worthies, including Chorley – he was very

concerned always to see that I was taken out on the hills – and Dr. Burnett was another one – were very kind – Leslie Somervell, Darwin Leighton – very kind to me.

Then, I suppose about the time I was 20, I went more with Basil than in a party. Our main walk was to do the four passes on New Year's Day – it had to be New Year's Day – and we used to get back in the dark. We'd go up Scarth Gap, Black Sail, Sty Head, Honister, and if it was frosty and cold our boots used to ring somehow on the ice, and we used to sing a lot together going down the hill. There were very few cars, it wasn't fit for cars in those days. But I do remember pushing a little car up Honister once, with several others who were walking up, and there was supposed to be an actor and an actress in this little yellow car, and we pushed it up all the way to the top between us, the surface was awfully bad. And so back to Jackson's Farm in Buttermere, although I think Basil was still camping – he was only earning £5 a week, he couldn't afford to stay . . .

I think that, talking of all these people, I'm reflecting quite a lot of my father's enthusiasm for the Club and his friends; and if he thought they were wonderful, I did too. He was quite a good judge of character, was my father, and very popular . . .

I'M WEARING MY FATHER'S BOOTS

Rod A. Smith

I'm wearing my father's boots. He died earlier this week. There have been many things to do. So many people have called, written and telephoned. What can they say that's different? I need space and time to think; I don't want to talk to anyone, but I want to say something. That's why you are reading this.

His boots were thick with dust when I took them from a forgotten shelf; and hard from too long exposure to the central heating. They are a heavy well-made pair in a quality of leather that was common forty years ago. When I first saw them as a child they were resplendent with tricouni and clinker nails. Many years ago they were converted to commando soles but, in common with many such attempts, the adhesion was never too good. They were boots for a Colossus, but, when I was knee high, that's what my Dad was to me. He kitted me out with an ex-army anorak, from Brighams, then in a Manchester back street and well before the 'Great Outdoors', skiing and fashion boom were thought of. Our house was, and still is, although I haven't lived there for twenty five years, in the Pennines, right under Alphin Pike and the entrance to Chew Valley. Our first walks together were up this hill, which to me was then the summit of ambition. It seems appropriate to take the boots for our last walk together up the hill.

The afternoon is hot and bright. A summer's day of yesteryear. I walk up to the edge of the moorland path. The smell of heather and peat, the gobs of cuckoo spit, the bright green young wimberry bushes; all prompt sharp pangs of stored Pennine memory. The rising ridge divides the view. Familiar valley floor to the left; mysterious moorland to the right. This used to be the boundary at infinity of my knowledge. How comforting then the familiar sights of the village safe in the valley. How exciting was the unknown world of the moor.

I can see the tiny church which was packed during the funeral service. My parents married there 51 years ago, just before my father departed for the duration in the RAF. My Grandad's brother appears on the memorial plaque to the fallen of the First World War. He was 23 when he was killed at Ypres; his youngest sister, now 90, was at Dad's funeral. Such is the continuity of village life. It was a great consolation when, quite unexpectedly, a representative from a small town in Germany arrived for the service. Dad had acted as an interpreter on visits to Germany made by the local male voice choir. Friedrich made a little speech about Dad's role as an ambassador between the two peoples. My Japanese wife and her

mother stood with the family during the service; I wonder if they became part of the circle because of inherited values of international brotherhood? He certainly never encouraged me to admire militarism, although I was as keen as the next young boy on thrilling tales of war. He only once shook my doubts about his part as an RAF officer. We made a Spitfire; a skeleton of balsa wood ribs and stringers. We is not quite true; I was deemed too small to use the sharp knife. But I watched the long process avidly over many evenings. The great moment came when the two halves of the fuselage were to be joined. We had two left-hand halves . . .!

The path is much better defined than I remember it. A distinct track winds through the heather which is itself stronger and much cleaner than forty years ago. Indeed, the valley looks much greener. Trees now flourish where previously they struggled in industrial smoke. This was, of course, Lancashire dirt, borne by the prevailing Westerlies into our Yorkshire village. Yorkshireness was an important part of Dad's pride. He was born, lived in and for most of his career, taught for, the West Riding. Some years ago, we were reorganised into Lancashire. Geographically logical; but emotionally wrong for most of the older residents. At least Yorkshire Cricket Club waited until the day after Dad's death before announcing that they needed to import foreign players! The many arched viaduct where we waited for the six twenty double-headed express has disappeared. What little remains of the line of the track is a linear park; populated by horse riders and dog walkers. Over on the far side is the truncated Frenches Mill. My father was one of the first to raise the alarm, when years ago he was returning from the station with my sister and spotted flames shooting from the top storey. I was brought from my bed to watch the subsequent conflagration. Although we watched from over a mile away, we could hear and feel the shock made as the once solid walls collapsed and tumbled down onto the street. Many new houses can be seen, and even from this distance, the newly sand-blasted walls of some cottages stand out like Cotswold dwellings amidst the smoke-blackened Pennine grit buildings. Gentrification is at hand. "Chelsea in the Pennines" was Dad's slightly disapproving description. It must have been a hard return from the Mess to teaching in Oldham and bring up two children in these then rather grim surroundings. He was staunchly and actively Socialist in those days; and still vocal, but not so active, to the end. I think we diverged slightly, but not seriously; *The Guardian* versus *The Independent*. Thank you, Mrs Thatcher, for giving us a common enemy.

Getting higher now. At this stage long ago I would be excited at the prospect of the approaching summit. I had been taken to see 'The Ascent of Everest'. Family tradition recalls me climbing the stairs on fixed clothes

line, wearing a gas mask. Maybe our outings started soon after that. After many such local walks, we went to the Lakes. What a revelation! The details of our three-day trip remain sharp. Patterdale to Grasmere over Grisedale Pass on the first day, Great Gable, as bold in reality as in name, on the second (I left the bobble cap knitted by my mother on top), and an easy day to soothe huge blisters at Tarn Hows to round it off. Many regular Easter trips followed, but a lifelong affair with Cumbria was consummated on that first occasion. Of course, fell-walking leads naturally to rock-climbing. Spurred on by an article in *The Eagle*, I festooned a local quarry with washing line. Although my father didn't climb, he mentioned my predilections to a sympathetic Master at school, who introduced me to the friction of Gritstone. I saved up to buy the Laddow area guidebook. Grey covers and six shillings by post. I memorised it. "Dad, what does Nil Desperandum mean? What was Charybdis? And where was Scylla?" The predicament for my parents was how to encourage this possibly dangerous obsession. I was despatched on a Mountaineering Association course to Skye and missed their Silver Wedding.

The top is now only a few strides away. The view is brilliantly clear. Way in the distance, light flashes on the windscreen of a car beginning the descent from the top on the Isle of Skye road. Just at the point where, on my return visits here, my pulse quickens at the sight of the downward swoop of Alderman. These Pennine curves are gentle, almost softly female and anatomical. Far removed from the geometric savagery of the Alps, Norway, Greenland and the Himalaya; all places where my apprenticeship with my father has lead me to; but unfortunately only shared with him on slides on my return. An expanse of reservoir nestles in the bottom of the fold of the hills. The sun sparkles on the white sails of the boats. These waters have long since flooded the pool where we used to bathe on summer days such as this.

When my small legs grew longer, we continued beyond this top, way along the moor edge to Indian's Head and Wimberry Rocks. Down there in the narrowing valley, we had our first family picnics. One ended in crashing thunder and flashes of lightning. Maybe this was a good introduction to fear. Farther still, beyond the appropriately named Wilderness, the valley narrows further and the floor rises to meet the moor edge. Here lies the lonely Chew reservoir, once the highest in England. As a child a walk as far as this was a major undertaking. Under snow it assumed, in my mind at least, an expedition of Alpine proportions. Sometimes we joined the reservoir keeper for a mug of sweet tea. His house is now gone. A few foundation stones outline its past function. Thus fortified, we would begin our low level and, to me, weary return. But, today, I have come far enough. We are at the right place.

A few paces down from the top, overlooking the valley where we shared what is important, I take off Dad's boots. A few stokes with a garden trowel and the boots are laid in a hole in the peat. A stamped covering, a couple of stones, a thousand memories and a whispered, "Thanks, Dad. Thanks for everything" finish my task.

Opposite: Bill Freeland on the top pitch of *The Colonel's Corner* (HVS), Dungeon Buttress, Galloway. *Photograph by Steve Reid.*
Following: *Traitor's Gait*, VS, Cooran Buttress, Galloway. *Photograph by Steve Reid.*

THE DUNGEON OF BUCHAN

S.J.H. Reid

If you enjoy putting up new routes, never climb much harder than mild extreme, and live in the Lake District, you have a bit of a problem. Exceptionally it is possible to find an overlooked route at a reasonable grade on our popular cliffs but the great lines have long since been taken and increasingly one is forced to scrat about on insignificant outcrops only previously ignored due to their diminutive size or isolated position. Thus, in late 1990 I found myself casting about for unexplored territory reasonably close to home. There was no choice, actually. South and east lay Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northumberland, all places even more climbed-out than the Lakes. North-east squatted seemingly dull and uninteresting Scottish lowlands with perhaps the odd quarry favoured by locals. But the north-west and particularly the Galloway region seemed to hold promise and a glance at the current guidebook confirmed it.

Unfortunately, a few visits to the interesting sounding sea cliffs of Meikle Ross and Burrow Head soon dispelled it again. Although pleasant and easy of approach neither were particularly inspiring, the rock being dubious at best and many routes becoming overgrown – going back to their roots, so to speak. Further glancing at the guide showed other intriguing possibilities, in particular a 120+m buttress with only two routes on it and mention of a 'huge, unclimbed deidre'. This was the Cooran Buttress of the Dungeon Hill of Buchan. The routes were *The Highwayman* and *Cyclopath*, both HVS. The former was the work of G. Little and J. Dykes in 1968. The latter that of Pete Whillance and Jim Fotheringham who visited the crag in 1982 for a few days of fishing and the odd route. As well as *Cyclopath* and a repeat ascent of *The Highwayman* they also put up *Saddletramp* (E2) on some slabs way to the right of Cooran Buttress. The only other route of note in the area was A. Fraser's *Traitor's Gait* (VS, 1984) which takes a broken ridge to the left of Cooran Buttress. In between this and the other climbs were a couple of Diffs dismissed in the guide as rambling and grassy. The rock was reputedly sound granite and the crags south-east facing. There had to be a drawback and, on attempting to hike over for a look-see from Glen Trool, I soon found out what it was.

Those of you who have walked the Galloway Hills will know what I am talking about when I say that the going was rough. Those who have not cannot begin to imagine. Suffice to say that on reaching a viewpoint for the crags on the northern flanks of Craignaw, even if I had had a partner and ropes, I wouldn't have had the energy to climb. But at least I had seen

the potential – albeit from half a mile distant – and provided a reasonable approach could be worked out I felt a new route or two creeping up on me.

* * *

'Bicycles' said Joe Grinbergs.

'I beg your pardon.'

'Mountain bikes. Ride up the forestry tracks to the Blackhill of Bush bothy and then walk in from there.'

We borrowed bikes and gave it a try. Unaccustomed as was my behind to public bicycling I made it to the bothy in three quarters of an hour and not long after Joe and his pneumatic legs: we had inadvertently discovered the source of most of the crag's route names. The bothy was in a quite disgusting state, a very sad reflection on the hill-going fraternity. It put me in mind of some favourite lines by Banjo Patterson (altered slightly to suit the occasion):

"There were some yobbish youths who wrote on the bothy wall,,

"Their eyes were dim, their heads were flat,

"They had no brains at all . . ."

On a subsequent visit we found that the Mountain Bothies Association had done a first rate job of tidying it all up but unfortunately, even more recently, the poor old socially deprived (sods?) have managed to drag it down to their level once again. The stumble to the crag over a man-eating bog took another three quarters of an hour and revealed nothing at all due to the cloud being down to foot level.

It's always a worry, introducing a climbing partner to your secret crag (should you be lucky enough to have both a secret crag and a climbing partner, that is). There is ever that nagging doubt that the venue is not nearly as good or important as you have built it up to be in your own mind. But as the cloud lifted, and Cooran Buttress was revealed, Joe's enthusiasm left me in no doubt. The unclimbed diedre was magnificent, a sort of laid back *Cenotaph Corner*. It finished at about 30m but above it stretched a further hundred metres or so of virtually virgin granite, solid and inviting. The corner would require some turf removal, but was patently possible . . . Unfortunately it was also wet, so we went exploring and found the Dungeon Buttress.

This smaller crag lies at the bottom of what turned out to be the descent route from Cooran Buttress. It is steep, about 35m high, and seamed with jamming cracks. We did four routes that day, ranging from VD to HVS. Naturally the hardest remain etched most firmly in my memory, but they were all good. Three have had second ascents, a VS corner (*Carrick Corner*) in particular receiving rave reviews from a totally independent party we met on a later visit. I failed on an especially imposing project, a jamming crack leading to a large overhang, and my abandoned prusik

loop treaded under the roof was to niggle my conscience on many future occasions.

Thus our summer lay mapped before us. Armed with old ice axes, wire brushes and various other secret weapons we pedalled and cleaned and cleaned and pedalled and just occasionally climbed, And the routes were all gems. The diedre was one of the next to fall. It, too, has had a second ascent and has been described as 'as good a corner pitch as any anywhere.' Above the corner we discovered a pleasant way up the more broken middle section of the crag and then another steep groove up the final 30m headwall to give *The Colonel's Corner*, HVS (5a, 43b, 5a). We were beginning to understand the nature of the climbing now and went arrayed with upwards of fifteen Friends of all sizes and little else. With this arsenal protection was as overhead as you wanted it to be . . . nearly all the time.

So it proved on *Heir Apparent*, our next climb on Cooran Buttress. Squeezed in on a grey day, prized out of the grasp of showers and midges, we were so ecstatic about this one we hardly stopped talking about it all the way home. At least I did, Joe may well have been asleep. I cleaned the whole thing on one long ab, and then we climbed it straight away. Hard moves came straight off the ground up the vertical left wall of *The Colonel's Corner* to a small spike. Thence a desperate, knee scrabbling mantelshelf led to a gradually easing groove up the left arête. With all the rope out I belayed on a terrace and Joe led through. Having complained bitterly about the difficulty of the mantelshelf he then did one almost as hard on the second pitch. A bold effort, considering the water that was streaming down it at the time. A short scramble took us to the foot of the *pièce de résistance.*

In the centre of the final headwall is a blank section. On closer inspection it was found to contain a long wafer-like layback flake that, in true granite fashion, started and finished in the middle of nowhere. A fingernail pull-up gained the flake which gave tremendous laybacking to a welcome rest. Continuing to the top of the flake left two options. Firstly a very bold direct finish up and left which proved to be E2, 5b, and secondly a shuffle right into *Colonel's Corner* and a dramatic few moves up an impending jamming crack at HVS for the Almscliff trained and Ee-by-gum for the rest. We did both that memorable day, though the direct finish only succumbed after a regrettable top rope inspection.

Further routes followed as fast as our limited time and the Galloway weather allowed. On Dungeon Buttress Joe led his fine on-going project, *Bannockburn*, at HVS, 5b, (in honour of a treasured time when the Scots had soundly defeated the English) which only gave way after repeated falls on an earlier attempt. The route name was my idea of a joke. That same day, on my fifth attempt, I finally succeeded on my roof which gave a

strenuous and daunting E2, 5b – *Incy Wincy Spider* – Joe's idea of a joke. But this was Joe's last visit. Having had a puncture (on his bike) and had suffered a full three-hour walk-in and similar return I suspect he had begun to appreciate fully the isolated splendour of Dungeon Hill and decided it might be better left that way. Besides, he hates jamming cracks.

I dragged other reluctant and not-so-reluctant partners up the forestry road. Dave Wilson, in particular, added two E3s – *English Gold* and *Parcel of Rogues* – to Dungeon Buttress, a splendid effort and one which Bill O'Connor and I were hard put to follow – even on what Bill termed a G rope. And, on what was to be my final visit last year, Bill Freeland and I repeated a number of the climbs and put paid to the final obvious line on Dungeon Buttress – *Free Land*, HVS, 5b.

* * *

The Dungeon Hill of Buchan is a round dome of a hill in the midst of the hauntingly beautiful Galloway mountains. On its south-eastern flanks stand numerous rocky outcrops of clean, rough granite which give climbs of very high quality, particularly in the HVS category. A bird ban virtually rules out climbing there early in the year but in fact the crags are at their best in August and September when the winter seepage has totally vanished. The approach is arduous but the Blackhill of Bush bothy makes an excellent base and, with the bicycle approach, I can be at the crag in exactly the same time that it takes me to journey to Scafell. The reward for my efforts in going there, as opposed to Scafell, has been to enjoy splendid and utter isolation with only an occasional wild goat for company and to climb a superb series of new lines at what are, by today's standards, very reasonable grades indeed.

The time is rapidly approaching when there will be no new lines of worth (under, say, E4 and over, say, 540 feet) left to do in the Lake District (and probably for that matter, England). To those who aspire to such adventures, have not the makings of a Dawes, a Moon or a Moffat, and yet shun the bolt, the 'dog' and the 'red point', I can only say "Get on your bike and go north-west, young man!"

(Editors Note: The current SMC guidebook to Central and Southern Scotland contains very little information on the Galloway mountains. A new guide is in production; meanwhile any Members requiring route information are welcome to get in touch with the author at his address in the Handbook).

A.G.M. & DINNER, 1990

Gerald Light

Continuing the better weather pattern of early November Dinners, the 300 plus people attending the AGM and Dinner were able to enjoy two good outdoor days. Cold winds on top but only the odd shower, and lee-side crags warm enough for climbing. Groups visited the higher and lower Eastern Fells, the Howgills and Wild Boar Fell and one climbing party drove a long way east for the Yorkshire Grit at Slipstones. Back in the Shap Wells the indoor events started on the Friday evening with a competition climbing video (Leeds '89), and a chance to look at the plans of the changes proposed for Birkness Barn and Coach-house. In the Barn these will make the washroom facilities more user-friendly, and in the Coach-house add another family unit on the upper floor.

With many pairs of boots still unsold in the Swap-shop, the start of the AGM was hampered by a non-operational sound system. Once underway, serious consideration was given to remembering Chris Waters as the effective donor of the Scottish Hut (a proposal to change the hut name to reflect this more precisely was narrowly defeated, but a commemorative plaque was generally favoured) and to whether the annual subscription should be linked to the RPI. This was rejected, on the grounds that the costs that index monitored were not typical of those incurred by the club. The proceedings were enlivened by A.B. Hargreaves' strong support for the Council for National Parks and, under Any Other Business, by a light-hearted suggestion that as George Lamb had donated a prize to the Keswick Show for the best tup, prizes should also be awarded at appropriate events by Dave Miller for the best loaf and by Tim Pickles for the best gherkin!

The dinner itself was served competently but the sound system failed again for the speeches. The President was forced to use the disco microphone to introduce the Guests, who following this year's theme included several guide-book writers, and to emphasise the need for more young climbing members to maintain the club's guide-book tradition.

Far more enjoyable was the Sunday afternoon slide show which concluded the weekend. Five of the ten members who climbed in the Pamirs this August took turns to give us a wide appreciation of their trip. From how the expedition was organised, and their arrival and initial exploration of granite and glaciers, we followed them climbing the huge rock walls around Point 4810 and exploring neighbouring valleys and ridges. We also met the neighbours, including 'Mr Bandit', and laughed at their last night party. There was no doubt that most of the team would return there, given the chance, even more readily than most of us would return to the Shap Wells next November.

GRANDSLAM

Mike Browell

Round One – Dreaming with Friends

Conceived in the tranquillity of a campsite below the Mamores, high on an endorphin-laden atmosphere, the dream became real. The twinkling of a far distant possibility was given life and all who breathed on it breathed gently and steadily. It only required time to become . . .

. . . so phone round on Thursday to make sure it's on. Any hint of weather and abort. . . .

It's off. Drowning the dream on a forecast of no hope, the weather deteriorates into summer gloom. Every common sense instinct screams negatively. By every intelligent instinct except one, it's off.

But the dream has life. It will be. The one dominant instinct laughs insanely . . .

It's on: six hearts sink.

Six friends converge on the dream, carrying all essentials. The weather converges, squalling outrageously.

In the eerie sharp gloom of a stormy June night a hyped-up runner slouches towards the centre of Keswick. The threatening horrors of a heavy weather night loom purposefully over the hills. The Moot Hall clock dings six strokes and the fight begins.

Hail and gales strike upon entering the ring of mist which enshrouds Skiddaw. White slippery ground, drenching rain, more hail, more rain and all the time a savage westerly stinging eyes and striving to strangle the dream at birth. If ever there was a sign, this must be it.

Free-falling some time later out of the cloud down Hall's Fell ridge and Threlkeld materialises from the half-gloom, somewhat ahead of schedule but not a minute too soon. The schedule says eat, so for the first time down go the soup, peaches and rice, washed down with Staminade; change partners and off we go, slogging up into the mist as the last of the half-gloom fades and the rain continues into dusk.

Rolling round on the too-gentle subtleties of the Dodds and sooner or later it happens. We roll casually off the flank of one and find ourselves further on with one Dodd missing. Panic in the mist and the hand of Maradona parts the clouds for an instant and shows us the error of our way. We remedy it and continue into the thickest mist of the night.

Fairfield had to be invented by someone whose love of fine fells was flawed. We fail to find the path and flog up and sometimes down scree on a bearing which eventually hits the summit. The same bad luck, enhanced by the ubiquitous thick mist, ensures that the descent to Dunmail Raise

takes uncharted boulder slopes and guarantees our arrival thirty minutes behind schedule.

Hours later, but with less hours than scheduled, a careful plummet down through the cloud sends the spirit soaring. Approaching Bracken-close full of the euphoria that only a Wasdale dawn can bring, the dream will be.

When friends run into the rain and mist of a stormy Lakeland night, leave their beds to bring coffee and a rope to a slippery Broad Stand, anxiously wait beneath the oaks for news from the hill; can there be any uncertainty?

Still more windswept hours pass and the certainty is reinforced until striding as a single mind down narrow lanes towards the beginning. Cutting through the market stalls of a late afternoon, past the heaped boxes, the prams, past the querying masses who puzzle, not knowing the significance of the event.

What can it mean?

Dreaming with friends.

Round Two – Hunger

Sleep and dreams come hard and rare. Both take three days of sleepless and dream-corrupted night to arrive, a pattern which is to continue week after week . . .

One week has passed and the dream demands more.

A shot and we're off, jostling and pounding down the tarmac on a grey Sheffield Sunday.

Demoralising downpour at five miles and continuing chilling wind dampens any hope of joy. At the eighth mile something stubborn in the legs fails to respond and each subsequent marathon mile falls a further minute behind schedule. Eighteen in all. There is no pain, no uncertainty, just a stubborn resistance. But it doesn't matter, the dream can accommodate a lesser pace.

The race continues and concludes safely within four hours and remains respectable, if uninspired.

Round Three – Feeding the Dream

Another week has passed and the dream is hungry once more.

Assembling in the rain and mist of a miserable Langdale morning, hundreds of competitors share the same hope. To some the mist brings hope of success; navigational skills will win the day. To others it brings hope of sudden death, hoping to be elsewhere, anywhere but here.

Nine hours later and many hopes have faded; only the compass-cunning have survived. In the A Class, less than 20%. Harsh cut-out times have

decimated the competition, favouring the early starters.

The SLMM 90 overnight camp is sufficiently commodious to accommodate the survivors in comfort; the retired have gone to even more commodious hostelries but those in Langdale are more hard pressed than usual. The organisers are also hard pressed by disenchanted competitors . . .

Descending from the mists at the end of day two; this is becoming a habit . . .

Retirement of the competent and strong puts us uncomfortably close to moving up a class next year. Not a warming thought.

Round Four – Realising the Dream

Week four of four; at last the sun has come to conclude the dream in summer glory.

Dawn in Wasdale, misty sun breaks over the fell and Brackenclose trembles awake as the hills heat up. Swollen streams of past weekends have abated and shimmering white rock on the high fells scorns the suggestion that it could ever have been otherwise!

Assembled runners smell of Ambre Solaire and where one week earlier talk was of Goretex and gloom, talk is now of sun-block and shade.

The fell race starts by surprise and startled rabbits rush skywards.

Up and down and up again, down sharply, then steadily up. A short descent then up, steadily down and down; up steeply now; down very steeply; up steadily steadily and finally a flog to the last up which is followed by plenty of down, down, down and it's all over.

Grandslam!

Opposite: Bill O'Connor and Dave Wilson on the first ascent of *Parcel of Rogues*, E3, Dungeon Buttreess, Galloway. *Photograph by Steve Reid.*
Following left: Yellow Wall. *Photograph by Brian Swales.*
Following right: Dave Staton on the ridge of Usan. *Photograph by Dave Miller.*

THE GRAND TOUR OF MONTE ROSA

Chris Wright

Having access to a wealth of climbing literature in the Club Library that is not otherwise easily available is a bonus that members should exploit. Through their writings I have been able to follow in the footsteps of those explorers of the Golden Age – Forbes, Tuckett, Mathews and others – and be fascinated by their accounts in trying to discover the High Level Route. I was fortunate in being able to lead a party on foot on the HLR in 1987 and then ski it in the Spring of 1988. In the summer of 1988 I followed Forbes route of 1842, zig-zagging over the Swiss-Italian frontier, but it was reading the suggestion by J. Hubert Walker in *Walking in the Alps* and a rediscovery of an account by John Waddams in *Journal No.66* (1978) that set me planning a complete tour of Monte Rosa.

There *is* a Tour of Monte Rosa, but this is only a five-day jaunt on the Zermatt – Saas Fee – Monte Moro – Macugnaga – Alagna Valsesia – Cervinia – Theodul Pass circuit, which usually features on the programmes of the guides' bureaux in those villages on the route and which incorporates bus and uphill transport. The Italians have their Alta Via della Valle d'Aosta No.1 from Courmayeur to Gressoney-St-Jean – an eight-stage route created in 1978 of 120km and 18,000m of ascent which I walked in 1989, but which I extended by four days, 80km and 5300m by continuing to Alagna, Mascugnaga, Monte Moro and Saas Fee and the Höhenweg Grachen – but there is, as yet, no similar long-distance footpath in the Swiss Valais. Unlike the Tour of Mont Blanc, there is no officially recognised 'Grande Randonée' around the Monte Rosa massif, and it was my intention to plan and walk such a circuit in 1990.

In the event a route of some 270km and 20,000m of ascent was achieved, plus some 5000m for peaks and huts conveniently close to the route. The circuit took three weeks, with averages of 15km and 1500m of ascent each day. I carried the barest minimum: 10kg, about half of which consisted of camera, maps and notebooks. A track suit, spare shirt and socks, rain suit (used only twice), wash kit and trail snacks constituted the rest.

It was a gloriously warm summer's day when I detrained at Le Châble, and caught the connecting PTT up to Fionnay. There was on display in Le Châble an exhibition of accounts and lithographs of the flood which devastated the valley in 1818, but I had to miss it because of the transport timetable. Neither could I do as Waddams did and go up to the Panossière hut as it had, the previous spring, been destroyed by an avalanche. (It has now been reopened).

So it had to be the Chanrion Hut for which, fortunately, I had sufficient time. Whilst waiting for the next bus up to the Mauvoisin Dam two German lads stopped by and gave me a lift to the road head. Instead of taking the jeep track through the tunnels on the west side I took the path below the Mont Rouge de Giétro: a much more pleasant route, and it was in the sun anyway. From the Passo Tsofeiret it was downhill to the hut, and a chance to sit out in the sun before it disappeared behind the Grand Combin. The guardian remembered me from my previous visits and made me welcome.

Next morning I was up with the crowd, but I got away before them and was soon across the Drance and past the Chermontane chalets. Forbes went this way in 1842 and had to cross a glacier to get to the far side of the valley, and several other British explorers followed in his footsteps in the subsequent years. Within two hours I was on the Swiss-Italian border at the Fenêtre de Durand, 2797m. Ahead was a view of Mont Vélan, 3731m, first climbed in 1779 by Canon Murith of St. Bernard Hospice.

There was time for an ascent of Mont Avril, but it was an uncomfortable climb up the shale slopes to reach the 3346m top. But well worth the view, the Grand Combin dominating the northern scene, with a turn to the left showing the Gran Paradiso.

On the way down I met a few others coming up from the hut, and I left them at the col. An easy descent, past a howff and possible bothies, brought me down to the road head at Glacier. I followed the road down to Ollomont, the first village in the valley, where I could get supplies. I'd stayed at the Hotel Gèle here in 1989 when on the AVVA and then had taken a high level route round the corner into the Val Pelline to Oyace, but this time I continued down the Val d'Ollomont on an old miners' track – the valley was mined for copper, which the Rev. King had described in 1855 – to the village of Valpelline, at the confluence of the two valleys. A double serving of pasta and salad at the simple Croce Bianco inn was taken on the vine-covered verandah above the bar and ended a perfect day.

Tracks and paths mostly alongside the Buthier torrent led me the next day up the deep valley of the Val Pelline. The tower of Oyace dominates the scene one third the way up and it was warm work going up the valley bottom, but the path rose up to the road at Bionaz, where there was a slight breeze. The ridge running south from the Dent d'Herens is a formidable obstacle to cross in order to get into the next valley, the Val Tournenche. A series of hanging valleys provide routes over the ridge and the higher up the main valley you go the shorter is the crossing to the principal village of Valtournenche.

From the new refugio at Prarayer at the head of the Lago di Place

Moulin a new bridge carried me across the torrent to a path climbing up the steep wooded valley sides to reach the alpine pastures in the Val Cournera. P.A. Arnod had mentioned the existence of a pass at the head of this valley in a report to the Duke of Savoy in 1694: its first recorded crossing was by Jacomb, with Kronig, Taugwald and Andermatten from Zermatt to Valpelline in August 1860. Unlike Waddams, I had no difficulty in finding the way up to the col, although the climb was very rough and steep. A short but steep snow slope on the north side led down to steep scree and to the Lago Balanselmo. There's a bivouac hut nearby, but I continued down to Lago di Cignana, where I found lodging at the private Rifugio Balmeno – a clean place, but expensive.

From the vantage point of Col Fenêtre the following morning I could look up the valley to Cervinia and the headwall of Monte Cervino. The view extended from the Furggrat and the Italian Ridge westwards to the Dent d'Hérens, 4171m, and Les Jumeaux, 3872m. Through the glasses I could see that the routes to the Cime Bianche cols were now either ski roads or pistes. A much more attractive prospect tempted: the ascent of the Grand Tournalin, 3379m, directly opposite my viewpoint and above Valtournenche.

I descended northwards to go and have a look at the fantastic river gorge of the Gouffre des Busserailles, first explored in 1865 by three locals from Breuil – the Canon of Aosta, J.A. Carrel, and the brothers J.J. and J.P. Maquignaz. They laid out cantilevered walkways for exploration, just like the Victorians had done in our own Tilberthwaite Gill.

Then it was downstream to Pâquier for supplies then a climb south-east through the woods to Chenil. I was lucky to get a bed at the Albergo Panorama, a private rifugio, its popularity no doubt due to the quantity and excellence of its food.

The next day started glorious as before so I was up early to climb and traverse the three peaks of the Grand Tournalin, 3379m, Petit Tournalin, 3207m, and Becca Trecarré, 3033m, giving good views of Lyskamm and The Twins. The Grand Tournalin was first ascended by Edward Whymper and J.A. Carrel alone on 8 August 1863: Mont Blanc had been climbed 80 years earlier! I met the first people of my day when I descended to the Col di Nana, 2775m, from where I descended to St Jacques. The superb CAI rifugio on the outskirts of the village provided food and a well-earned end to a splendid day.

My viewpoint from the Grand Tournalin had indicated that although the Colle de Bettaforca, 2672m, was the obvious route the 'path' beyond the private rifugio at Resy was now a jeep track. The Colle di Pinter appeared the more attractive and it also offered an ascent of the Testa Grigia, 3315m. A climb up through the woods in the shadow of the

morning led comfortably to Crest then out onto the open to the chalets of Cunéaz and the Colle di Pinter, 2777m. A superb scramble led to the top of Testa Grigia and provided a magnificent panorama ranging from Monte Rosa to Mont Blanc.

It was a long descent to Gressoney, where I bought supplies. A sharp shower laid the dust in the village and the weather seemed unsettled, but it cleared up for the steep climb out of the village to the Lago Gabiet, where a path led me finally to the small CAI Rifugio del Lago. The guardienne's husband seemed to be an idiot and insisted that the hut was full, but then his wife appeared and she welcomed me to stay. I was the only one there.

The following day I intended to go up the Stolemberg – St Vincent ridge to the CAI Gnifetti hut as it appeared to be an easy scramble and traverse over the glacier. However, the morning was a cloudier start than any others and there was still threat of a recurrence of yesterday evening's rain. The route to the Colle d'Olen, 2881m, enabled a prospect of the traverse of the snowfield through the glasses and I could see that the line was well-defined. The gaunt CAI Rifugio Vigevanno, 2864m, provided the excuse for a visit, but by the time I'd emerged there was 10/10ths cloud and it was getting lower. The easy summit of Corno del Camoscio, 3026m, demanded a visit and it still provided a view of the Pyramide Vincent, 4215m, and the Monte Rosa peaks – just. By the time I'd reached the Stolemberg, 3202m, the clouds was lower and prudence dictated that to climb another 400m higher would be pointless. As if to reinforce the point it started to rain.

There was a quick escape route down a scree gully from the Stolemberg – St Vincent ridge and this quickly got me down into the combe below Punta Vittoria and below the cloud and rain. A delightful descent of the Bors glen, passing a CAI hut in a remote cluster of chalets, brought me into the valley of the Sesia torrent and the superb CAI Rifugio Alpe Pile. Converted out of abandoned stone huts, it had won a 'Civic Trust' award. The hut was busy, though not full – it's only 30 minutes from a roadhead. The weekenders were amazed that I had walked so far in just a week.

The rains of the previous two days had swelled the streams so that the following morning the river in the gorge below the covered footbridge serving the rifugio was a boiling torrent, while the waterfall of Acqua Bianca was a magnificent sight falling down the fellside opposite.

I'd been over the Turlo Pass the previous year as it was the obvious choice: it's an easy graded, well-paved mule track, but it's a rather boring slog. More attractive was the Bochetta della Moanda, 2422m, offering an ascent of the Monte Tagliaferro, 2964m. A long zig-zag path took me to a narrow nick on the ridge which is the pass, then followed a two-hours

scramble up to the summit of the noble pyramid. A scramble down the north ridge took me down to the Colle Mud, 2324m, and so down to Rima. Next day it was a steep climb up the headwall of the valley to the Col Piccolo Altare, 2627m – only a short distance from the Turlo Pass – then down to the Bivacco Emilano Lanti and the Valle Quarazza – a delightful valley, passing rock pools and the ruins of old gold mines. A drink at the bar at the end of the valley, then a pleasant path wandering down through meadows to Macugnaga in the Val Anzasca.

The next day was a 'rest day' from the circuit to enable a climb of the Pizzo Bianco, 3215m. I got away early for a lovely walk up to Belvedere and was soon at the CAI Rifugio Zamboni & Zappa. I booked a bed, left my sack and took the climb up the Pizzo. It was first climbed in 1789 by H.B. de Saussure but it did not receive its second ascent until 80 years later, by Mathews and Morshead. It provided me with a superb view of the magnificent east face of Monte Rosa.

The climb up to the Monte Moro was hot, long and steep. A pleasant walk down from Rifugio Zamboni & Zappa to Pecetto, then a 1500m climb in the full heat of the sun. Halfway up I passed a party of schoolchildren who had started from Staffa, and I was to meet them later in the rifugio on the top of the pass. I reached the CAI Rifugio Citta di Malnate, 2769m, after four hours of climbing and reserved my bed for the night. It was a relief to get away from the crowds thronging the huge Madonna statue to spend 45 minutes climbing the nearby Joderhorn, 3035m, to observe the magnificent circle of peaks that form the Monte Rosa – Nordend, 4609m, Dufourspitze, 4634m, Zumsteinspitze, 4563m, and Signalkuppe, 4556m – this last topped by the SAC Margherita hut, which could clearly be seen through the glasses. Lago Maggiore was visible in the opposite direction.

The rifugio was formerly the customs house on the pass between Italy and Switzerland and its custodian, Dino la Spina, had the character to accompany its superb situation: he's been resident there since 1982 and was founder of the Monte Rosa East Face Club, only open to those who had climbed the infamous Marinelli Couloir. At supper, when asked by Dino, all, including the schoolchildren, said they wanted to see the sunrise, so at 4 a.m. we were on the balcony watching the east face of Monte Rosa light up orange in the clear sky of a superb day. As the sun rose higher more of the face was lit by the rays of the sun and the colour lightened through various shades of gold and yellow to glittering white.

I knew it would be an easy walk down into Switzerland. I went over the true pass this time – the snow 'col' to the east of the rocky Madonna 'pass'. Forbes had passed this way in 1842, followed by Sir Alfred Wills ten years later. Wills commented that "great efforts are being made to reconstruct

the ancient pathway. . . . if this be effected there will be nothing to prevent ladies from making this pass."!

On reaching the Mattmark lake I took the path on its eastern side and on reaching the barrage had a last backward view of the Madonna. While on the descent the shapely pyramidal cone of the Bietschhorn, 3934m, across the Rhône began to dominate the view. I was soon in Saas Almagell and continued down almost as far as Saas Grund in order to take the Kappellenweg up to Saas Fee. This unique pilgrim's footpath passes fifteen shrines erected in 1709 after a disastrous flood, each containing unique Italian Baroque wood carvings representing the Mysteries of the Rosary. At the top is the chapel of St Mary of the High Steps and the path delivered me into Saas Fee to face a collection of superbly-preserved 'stalden' or hay barns standing on stilts on a remarkable outcrop of glaciated rock.

I stayed at the Hotel Gletschergarten, the first hotel to be built after the road came up to the village in 1952. Herr Bumann made me welcome again, as it was here that I had stayed on my tour of 1989 and on two winter visits skiing with my wife. The next day was again on familiar ground, along the celebrated Hohenweg Grachen, a route winding above the Saastal on the eastern slopes of the Balfrin. The Weissmies, 4023m, Lagginhorn, 4010m, and Fletschhorn, 3919m, were across to the east, with the deep trench of the Vispa below leading the eye to the Bietschhorn in the Oberland. At one stage the route follows a line of ledges above cliffs, crawls precariously below overhangs, crosses narrow gullies and goes through a tunnel. After six hours of up and down I arrived at Hannigalp, where I stayed in the dortoir of the self-service restaurant on the ski slopes.

It was a pleasant descent to Grachen, through the old village and on to Gasenreid, then steeply down to St Niklaus and its distinctive onion-shaped bell-tower. Tuckett had passed through the village in June 1856 on his way from Saas Grund and Stalden to Zermatt, having the day before crossed the Adler Pass from Zermatt to Mattmark and Saas Almagell. He was surprised at the amount of damage done by the earthquake of July 1855 "houses still being prostrate" and the "walls of the church, cracked in all directions." Scarcely had a house in the village escaped damage and many more were destroyed. Avalanches from the Sparruhorn, 2988m, had wrecked the church choir and tower in 1618 and another in 1750 destroyed what was left.

St Niklaus was a mountaineering centre famous for several of its sons. In the small churchyard lie the bodies of the three brothers Knubel (killed on Lyskamm in 1877: their clients Lewis and Paterson are in the English churchyard at Zermatt); Franz Lochmatter (killed on the Weisshorn: was

on the first ascent of Lyskamm in 1861 and had led Geoffrey Winthrop Young on the SE face of the Täschhorn in 1906, one of the greatest rock climbs of the time); and J.M. Lochmatter and his son (killed on the Dent Blanche in 1882). I was disappointed to find no memorials to them, some of the most outstanding mountain guides in the history of alpinism.

I bought supplies in the village for my supper that night in the stubli at Jungen, a hamlet superbly situated on the edge of an alp high above St Niklaus, with a magnificent view up the Mattertal to Lyskamm and the Breithorn, the Mischabel peaks opposite and the Weisshorn towering overhead on the right. At night I could pick out the lights of the Gornergrat station in the far distance, the Bordier hut below the Balfrin opposite and the lights of Randa and Täsch and their traffic far below.

The highlight of the next section of the route is the Schwarzhorn, 3202m, providing magnificent views over the Valais and the Oberland. The way to it is via the Augstbord Pass, 2874m, but I had been that way before. My alternative was the Jungpass, 2990m, as I was heading for the upper Turtmanntal: the upper reaches of the Jungtal were exceedingly rocky with no path through the moraines, and sliding shale on the col where the snow of the perpetual cornice was melting. Not a soul to be seen, but buzzards overhead and ibex up on the slopes of the Furggmanhorn. It was a steep drop down the Hungerlitalli from the exposed pass, with a dramatic view of the Becs de Bosson, 3148m, rising up behind Grimentz. It was a rough, rocky descent to the derelict Hungerli chalets then a lovely three-hour traverse southwards and finally a short climb up to the SAC Turtmann hut, 2519m, giving superb views of the Turtmann and Brunegg glaciers and the Diablons above.

There was another pipeline traverse to follow the following morning across the Wang slopes on the west side of the valley then a climb up to Chalte Berg and the Bluomattalli. I was avoiding the easy and popular Meidpass and taking the Pas de Forcletta, 2894m, a narrow rock crest between two horns of rock. Like yesterday, I had the path to myself.

To the west the Becs de Bossons was prominent, but directly over my next hill, the Corne de Sorebois, was the distant Mont Blanc, and the Grandes Jorasses could just be seen. To the left were the three peaks of the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla and the Grand Combin. A steep descent then a lovely traverse through the alpages and by lunchtime I was in Zinal. It was hot and the signpost said 4hr 20 up to the CAS Mountet hut, a distance as far again as that which I had covered that morning and some extra 1200m to be climbed. But the climb over the Corne de Sorebois was just as high – though shorter and steeper – and the same time to the Lac du Moiry. I couldn't guarantee I'd get over the Sorebois and up to the CAS Cabane du Moiry (another 2hr 20 beyond the dam) before nightfall,

so I opted for the Mountet and phoned ahead for a bed.

It was a long slog up the Val de Zinal but well worth it for the superb views of the glaciers Cornier, Durand and Mountet falling down from the Dente Blanche, 4359m, Mont Durand, 3718m, Ober Gabelhorn, 4063m, and Zinalrothorn, 4221m, respectively.

Next morning was again brilliantly sunny but I didn't want as long or as hard a day. I was thinking about where I might be staying that night as I retraced my steps part way down the valley, then I struck up the La Lé and Singline pastures gradually gaining height below the Garde de Bordon to the Sorebois pastures. I noted new dortoir accommodation being built at Sorebois but I carried on, up to the Col du Sorebois, 2845m, and in a few more minutes up to the Corne itself, 2895m. The day was hot. I couldn't face another four and a half hours in this heat. And there was still the Col de Torrent to cross to get to Evolène. The descent to the Lac du Moiry was grassy and steep: the cafe on the barrage beckoned. On the menu notice board was advertised the Dortoir du Barrage: on enquiry I was given the key for the wooden cabin up the hill, a leftover from the construction of the dam in 1952. Supplies from the cafe; relaxation.

There was no need to go over to Evolène next day, so no need for the Col du Torrent. After a cold, cloudless night I was off early, leaving the key at the cafe under a stone by the door. A brisk walk along the lakeside track got me warmed up, then I was soon up to the narrow Col du Tsate, 2868m. It gave me a good view of the jagged tops of the Grand Combin and the snowy dome of the Pigne, 3772m, above Arolla. A pleasant descent on good forestry roads led me down to La Forclaz and lunch at the La Cordée restaurant just off the village square in Les Haudères.

The old road climbs steadily up the Val d'Arolla, past the old chapel of St Barthélemy, built in 1688 beside a huge rock, to join the main valley road at La Guille. A sign pointed to the Blue Lake which intrigued me, and as a path appeared thence to traverse to Arolla, a climb up was justified to avoid the valley road. The lake really was blue, but very clear water, and picturesquely adorned by a cowherd tending his cattle for the benefit of the tourists, of whom there were fortunately few. The path through the trees was surprisingly narrow and overgrown, and it took longer to get to Arolla than the map suggested.

Apart from the initial steep climb out of the valley it was an easy walk the following morning up the Montagne d'Arolla slopes, providing grandstand views of Mont Collon, 3677m, Pigne d'Arolla, 3796m, and Mont Blanc de Cheilon, 3827m. I was soon at the Pas de Chèvres, 2855m, and had to wait at the top of the ladder for a party who had made a mid-morning departure from the CAS Dix hut. The Dix stood out on its rocky spur inviting me over the easy glacier and an hour later I was sitting on the

parapet wall having a beer contemplating the possibilities for the last two days. The path took me behind the Tête Noire and followed the crest of the lateral moraine down to the head of the Lac des Dix. I got a surprise to see it full to the brim and a lovely turquoise blue colour: on my last visit in a previous June it was at its minimum level and its ugly shores made it look a dismal place.

A good track winds its way along the western shore, but instead of following it all the way through the tunnels at the northern end I struck off up the Barma pastures and over the Col des Roux, 2804m, the scree slopes of which had been in front of me on my way along the lakeside. Ten minutes down the far side and I was in the Cabane de Prafleuri, 2624m, a contractors cabin of timber in a dreary valley with no views, but having the advantage of saving a descent down to Chargeur or Pralong and a climb to regain height the following day. This is a self-cookers hut, so I had come prepared, having brought basic foodstuffs from Arolla.

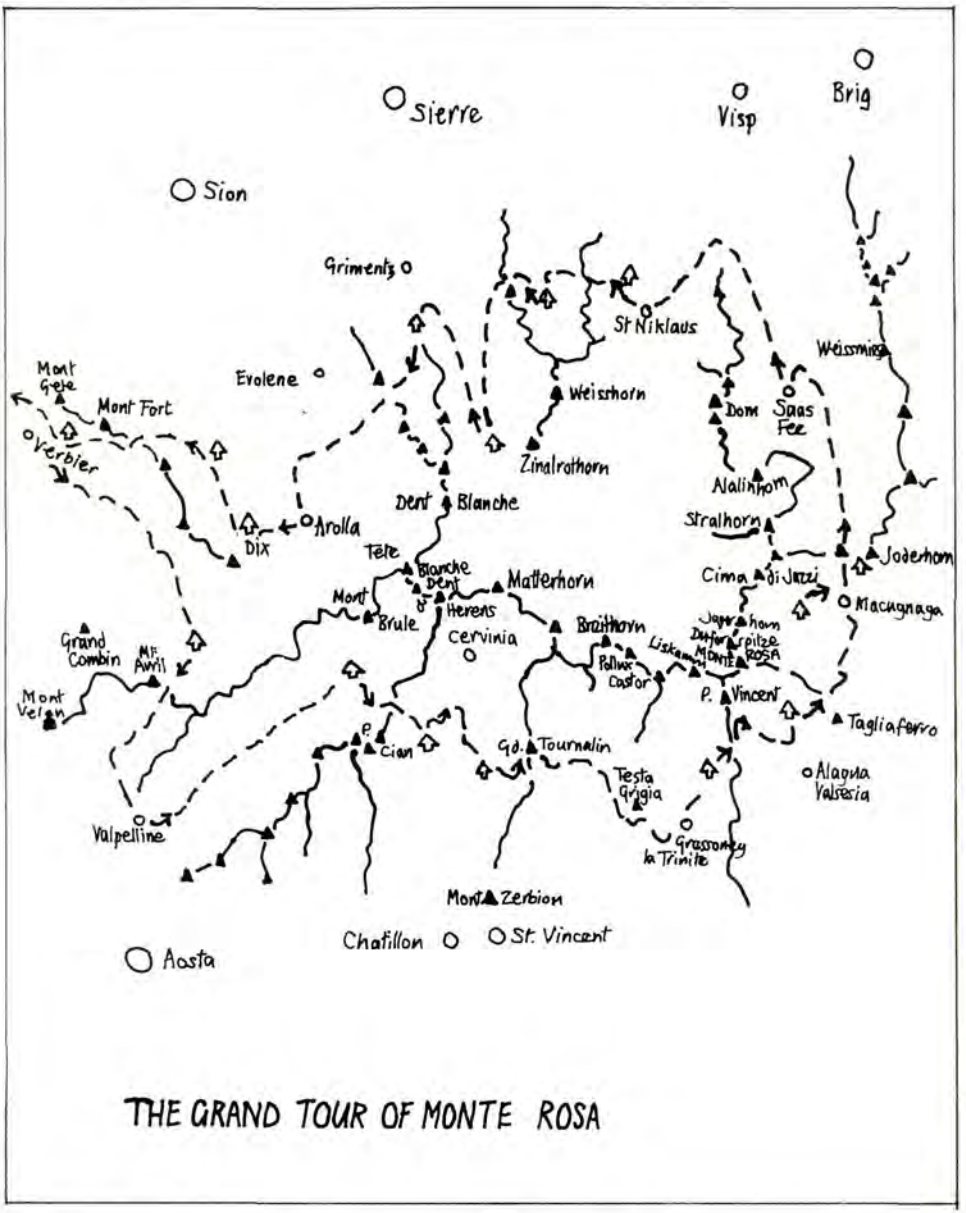
The final big day was to involve crossing three passes over 2900m high and glacier too, but four young Swiss at the hut who had done my intended route from Mont Fort the previous day assured me that it was not difficult. The first job was to get out of the depressing Prafleuri combe, over the Col de Prafleuri, 2965m, then a descent and left traverse over glaciated slabs to the edge of the Grand Desert glacier. Huge waymarks indicated the crossing point: the crossing was an easy 10 minutes walk. Then a scramble up shale and scree led to the Col de Louvie, 2921m. A large herd of ibex were grazing on the far side, but they were far enough away not to be disturbed. A rocky descent, followed by a traverse below a terminal moraine, than up again and westwards to the Col de la Chaux, 2940m. In another hour I was at the SAC Cabane du Mont Fort, perched on its knoll.

It was almost all downhill on my last day. I wanted to avoid going into featureless Verbier so I traversed behind the Mont Fort and climbed up to the ridge that encircles the resort and provides the start of the ski runs that criss-cross the huge open south-facing bowl. A path runs along the top of, or just below, the ridge of Mont Rogneux, 2693m, and over the Tête des Etablons, 2415m, to Croix de Coeur, 2174m, then to Savoleyres and below the rocky Pierre Avoi, 2472m. Here the path swings round on to the northern side of the ridge, providing superb views through the trees over the deep trench of the Rhône and across to Les Diablerets and the Wildhorn. Tracks through high meadows and woods led me to the Col des Planches, 1411m, and the roadhead. Taking a course to avoid the road as much as possible I walked down to the village of Chemin, 1157m, directly above Martigny. Soon a post bus was to take me down to that place, where I found accommodation in the College Communal before catching

Opposite: Weisshorn, 4505m and Bishorn, 4153m, from the Forcletta path.
Photograph by Chris Wright.

a train home, via the Lausanne – Paris TGV, the next day.

I was back the following year (1991) walking eastwards from Verbier over other peaks and passes, but that, as they say, is another story.



AN INTRODUCTION TO GIMMER

Heather Yates

In the winter months I do a great deal of rock climbing, without even moving from the depths of a comfortable armchair. It is something I think we all do from time to time, to relive the climbs we have done, to fantasize on the climbs to do, the harder leads, the new hidden crags. All these things to be done next season on warm, dry rock, on those days of absolute clarity where every crag, gully, stream on the distant hills stands out. No thought to rain or the days spent queuing for a route or trying to work out if that belay point will take yet another couple of climbers.

From an armchair, with my feet gently toasting by the fire, I can flick through glossy climbing magazines, club journals and a whole range of books. It was doing this that I first became aware of a route on Gimmer Crag called 'The Crack', 240 ft of magnificent VS climbing, following a superb natural line.

July this year found me at the base of the climb – I was about to encounter it in reality. That morning, by rights, I should have been in Manchester, my mind engaged with chemicals, semiconductors and COSHH regulations, but the morning had risen bright and clear pushing away all thoughts of work – especially since I had a potential climbing partner available.

Mike and I had trudged up from the O.D.G. in a perspiring humid heat, arriving at Gimmer already parched. Only then did we discover that neither of us had brought anything to drink. After a couple of warm-up climbs, which included my first lead using double ropes, and a passing glance at Kipling Groove, we were ready for 'The Crack'.

While Mike led off I watched the ropes and tried to keep my mind from various phrases in the guide book, which were not to my liking, such as delicate traverses and strenuous moves. I was brought back to the present by the call of 'safe'. The weather was changing, becoming darker and cooler with signs of rain, but it was too late, I was committed.

The initial ramp led me to the first serious move over a leftward traverse. Mike, probably not noticing that I was starting the traverse, still pulled the ropes tight. Shouting, I got no response except an even tighter rope. Finally, in desperation, I yelled, "SLACK – you're pulling me off'. I now completed the traverse with no noticeable rope movement at all. Before starting the second pitch, described as a delicate move, Mike carefully placed a wire in a thin crack and pulled it down hard. By the time I could follow I spent probably 10 minutes, although it felt longer, getting this wire out at the expense of any feeling I had left in my fingers.

I was beginning to enjoy this pitch when I found myself faced by a steep corner crack. After an extremely strenuous and inelegant struggle, all arms and legs (I would have used my teeth if I had thought they would help.) I was sitting in 'The Bower', laughing between the howls of pain as my fingers gradually came back to life. I vowed to start using the climbing wall so I too would be able to make those moves look effortless. After that struggle the rest of the climb seemed in comparison easier, or perhaps it was just having the ability to feel the rock again. The climb now following the crack vertically upwards to the end.

Once on top feelings of exhilaration and complete well-being took over. It had an added elation special to a long-sustained route, unlike that felt on short routes however technically brilliant. I had done it, 'The Crack' was no longer a dream. Maybe, I will lead it next year . . . perhaps . . .

The Crux '*Spring Bank*', Gimmer Crag.

A BIRTHDAY TREAT

Leslie Shore

My twenty pence bought me a picture of Stan Laurel's lower face framed within the perforated edges of a postage stamp. His thin-lipped smile caught my attention. This small square of paper represented a Nation's public tribute to him. It marked the centenary of the birth of Cumbria's most internationally known son, who will for ever be associated with Hardy, his comic movie partner.

I fixed the stamp to a self-addressed envelope and took measures to ensure that it would be franked ULVERSTON, 16 JUNE 1990, the date of Laurel's birthday. This was a lucky opportunity for me, an 'offcomer', a term used by locals to describe people from elsewhere who have settled in the area.

Ulverston's Bill Cubin organised a public celebration of Laurel's birthday. It was perfectly timed. It was held on Saturday, 16 June. My wife and younger son, Alistair, watched it. They described to me a remarkable occasion. The town's pavements were packed with spectators who generously applauded a parade of the Sons of the Desert, the official Laurel and Hardy fan club. Music was provided by the Town's band, who led the column of fez-hatted fans who had made their way to the place from all over the world. Fits of laughter reverberated through narrow cobbled streets, an excellent antidote to the effects of sweltering heat.

I missed the fun because I had decided to go to Scotland to climb instead. That day I chose to visit the northern cliffs of Ben Nevis with Andy Carlin. We laboured up to them by an ascending path that followed the slow-moving Allt a' Mhuilinn stream which drains Ben Nevis's elevated and capacious northern corrie. Our destination was Carn Dearg Buttress and our intention was to climb it via Centurion (Scottish VS).

The freshness of a high summer's morning lingered with us until we reached the corrie. There we joined valuable company: three members of the RAF Leuchars Mountain Rescue Team. They too were going to climb Carn Dearg Buttress. How fortunate, I thought. Native opinion, such as Andy's, could have been characteristically direct in telling them that I was a potential candidate for their services. After all, my previous visit to Scotland had ended with me breaking my left hand's middle finger in a fall off a climb on nearby Garbh Bheinn, Ardgour. On that occasion Andy's belaying skill saved me from more serious injury.

Our climbing partnership started in 1977 and it has yet to surpass that of Brown and Whillans in terms of performances. Privately we consider some of our deeds to have much more in common with those of Laurel

and Hardy. Our outward appearances bear some resemblance to those of the Hollywood pair: I am the straight man and he is the round one. Some climbers have cheekily enquired about our ability to communicate to each other on the crag because of the contrast in our dialects: he is a Clyde Valley Scot whilst I am a South Walian. Perhaps it is a bewildering fact that we have always speedily agreed on a common climbing objective and that day it was Centurion.

Carn Dearg Buttress is a mere detail in the landscape of Ben Nevis's northern corrie. This I had concluded on the occasion of 'ticking off' my sixty-ninth Munro, Carn Mor Dearg, in June 1974. On that warm, clear summer day, standing at four thousand and twelve feet, I looked down on to that seemingly small buttress that lay one mile to the west. The vast spatial scale of the corrie became more fully appreciated the moment I sat beneath the Buttress, which is a mammoth body of rock. Turning my attention to the Buttress my gaze took me on a vertical flight, up its blue, sky-bound corners. My attention trembled at the sight of its large overhangs, which emphasised the rock stratum crossgrain. Blacks, greys and blues of differing hues decorated the rock. I became conscious that growing in my mind was a waryness about the route we planned to climb.

Andy is quick to direct fear towards action. When I announced that I was experiencing a shivering bout he detected my mood. His response was immediate; he got to his feet, grabbed his ends of our double ropes, began tying on and announced in a positive manner that he was ready to climb. The noonday weather conditions at that moment were ideal; there was no wind and it was warm even under the shadow of the Buttress.

Centurion takes a route up the centre of the Buttress, following its most obvious vertical line. Glancing up the climb I noticed that teams of climbers were ascending it at a pace. Later we were to find out that they were Czechoslovakian. We were heartened in thinking that we would have the route to ourselves, a prized privilege.

Robin Campell in Wilson's compilation *Hard Rock* describes the first pitch as being a "stiff little pipe opener"; a meaningless description to me and I was curious to find out what it meant. The pitch took the left wall of a huge corner. My first moves involved me teetering on to a sloping, narrow gangway. A steep crack line followed. Don Whillans during his first ascent in August 1956 would have jammed it in a proficient manner: I got up it by plucking at the sharp wrinkled edges of the flake bounding its right-hand edge. A steep pitch demanding respect. For a "pipe opener" I will remember it using musical terms as middle A, the standard pitch.

I joined a lone Czech belaying a leader who was high above us.

During the short time we were together I learnt a lot about their Scottish tour and wondered about the usefulness of his climbing shoes; cross-country running shoes complete with well-worn studs.

After Andy joined me at the stance my attention turned to the vertical corner pitch above us. It involved a run-out of one hundred and twenty feet and is considered to be one of the two crux pitches. My success on its was founded upon a slow but determined lead. Its slabby belay ledge proved to be a slippery slide upon which to sit and watch Andy follow. He used a variety of techniques; chimneying, bridging, jamming and jug pulling. We found the rock to be rough, clean and solid. We both agreed that the climbing quality had been impeccable.

We reminisced later that the climbing we undertook escaping left from the skidpan belay was similar to the first pitch of Langdale's Gimmer Crack. Once the traverse was completed, easier vertical climbing followed before I rejoined Andy.

I led through to find myself confronting another leftward traverse line that avoided the perpendicular rise of the main corner's continuation. With the traverse safely behind me I belayed to a large rock bollard.

The pause until Andy re-joined me was the opportunity to absorb the extraordinary surrounding scene. To my right Ben Nevis's North-East Buttress's appearance, with its extensive screen of battleship-grey rock, corrugated with large tapering ridges, filled me with awe. An awareness of my insignificance grew too. Minute dots of colour on the Buttress I recognised as remote people, lost in the scene; blinking glints of sunlight reflected from helmets announced that they were fellow climbers. I assessed the might of Nature's elements. Opposite me was the high, dark brown, steep hillside of Carn Dearg. The slope was combed from top to bottom with a profusion of thin vertical grooves; these had culverted, during that year's January and February, a torrent of rainfall gauged at four feet. There was a profound silence. I felt detached and joyfully alone.

We climbed two further pitches before attempting the climb's final two. A small overhanging problem provided the entry point for the penultimate pitch. I then sidled up some steep slabby rock and as leader I reached the climb's second crux. I acted quickly and released a scream of delight as I executed a set of match-winning moves. After a confidence-building conference at the belay point we began to feel that the odds on us finishing the climb looked promising.

Caution was regained in a rush as I negotiated the final pitch. Care was demanded from the start. Before I reached a blunt arête a series of trying moves brought me to the day's final belay. I relaxed with a groan that sounded like a bagpipe piping down.

Six hundred and fifty feet of superlative and memorable climbing was

triumphantly and safely achieved the moment Andrew stood with me. Our spirits were high. We smiled and laughed. We congratulated ourselves and shook hands.

"What about another handshake," I demanded to his surprise: "It's my birthday, Andy".

Gimmer Crack

UNSCHEDULED DIVERSION

Paul Exley

The day had started well. Or, rather, the night had, for it was quarter past three when the party of four had left the Monte Rosa hut. They had climbed steadily over a cold wasteland of boulder scree, up stone-pocked dry glacier and had followed the well-formed trench in the refrozen snow. The brilliant full moon had poured its chill radiance over some of the harshest ice-falls in the Alps; they hadn't needed head-torches.

By ten o'clock they had reached the Silbersattel, 40 metres higher than the Matterhorn, and had stopped for their first proper rest. (It was the first time it had been warm enough.) The narrow ridge to Nordend had been exciting for its extreme exposure – sheer rock eastwards, down to Italy's Monte Rosa glacier; a long, convex slope of hard snow to Switzerland's Monte Rosa glacier. The dozen metres of the final rock tower had added spice to the ascent and, once on the summit, they had basked in the glorious stillness of a beautiful Alpine morning and had been intoxicated by the immense peace of that vast, lonely space. Back at the Silbersattel, they had inspected the broad, north face of Monte Rosa.

The latest Collomb guide – 1975 – described the route up good névé as being quite straightforward. We had banked on this to give us a quick route to the top before continuing over the Zumsteinspitze to the Margherita hut. However, the intervening 15 years of glacier recession had taken their toll and our intended route was a slope of bare ice. A party of two just ahead of us had had great trouble, dislodging many rocks before retreating. With one 45 metre rope between us and not a single hard hat, there was no question of its being viable for us. After some discussion, we elected to look at a snow band rising rightwards across the face.

It was easy at first. Then we came to a small, rocky buttress which was entertaining because of the mass of unconsolidated snow which smothered it. For one fraught moment, Cath's only point of contact seemed to be her stomach. In retrospect, this was the time at which we should have retreated, although no-one would have relished climbing back down that rock. But we continued. Andy was second on the rope. Ken was at the back. That seemed the right place for a Strong Man.

The fact about steep, north faces is that they don't really get any sun, so fresh, deep powder stays just like that. And you can't tell what is under it. The feedback I was getting from my crampons spoke of hard ice with the occasional, toe-shattering embedded rock. As I edged rightwards, I felt that a second axe would have been handy. And so would another rope. When you subtract four tying-on knots from 45 metres and divide the

remainder by three, the result is lots of short pitches.

At the end of the first, I found that the rock-band above was quite devoid of anything which could provide a belay. Ken's ice-screw got passed tediously down the line to act as the much sought for security. I brought Andy across. I scraped and creaked my way up into the rock band in the forlorn and ultimately futile hope of finding an alternative route. It was loose, awkward, equally lacking in belays and promised no escape route.

Back on the ice, I traversed again within the pitifully short limitations of rope length. Teetering on insecure front points, I wondered what on earth had possessed me to leave my ice-screw in my rucksack. In a frantic, carefully-managed balancing act, born mainly of fear. I edged my sack round and rummaged through a jumble of food and clothes to find the precious length of clever titanium tube. Secure again, I gave Andy his turn. He traversed with equal difficulty, explaining apologetically on arrival, "I'm sorry, I haven't really done anything like this before." "Oh, that's OK," I said airily, "Cath hasn't either."'

"What on earth," I asked myself, "are we doing here?" I had just found that the rock wall above was inhospitable. The inspection from Silbersattel had shown that there were cliffs and big crevasses below. It would have been very difficult to abseil off, even with two long ropes and a series of good belays. With four of us, one rope and belays in poor rock or using ice-screws it simply was not an option. I felt that we were trapped. My watch told me how long it had taken to shuffle across this little bit of mountain. I looked anxiously to the north for signs of the approaching storm. The sky was as clear and blue as it had been all day. At least something was on our side! The main concern was no longer to reach the Margherita, merely to get off the mountain.

Ken climbed rapidly across to Cath. He was uncharacteristically ratty, having been standing more or less motionless in the shade and freezing powder for well over an hour. Despite her well-founded, initial misgivings, Cath acquitted herself heroically, as if she had been traversing north faces all her life. At last I could move across to the bottom of what I fervently hoped was an easy exit ramp. I found the dream – two solid rock belays – and brought the team across. Ken led without much difficulty up the ramp and we emerged hugely relieved onto the trade route. It was half past five, long after sensible people had left the mountain.

Nevertheless, we agreed that we hadn't come through all that just to go straight down again. So we climbed steep (but consolidated) snow and airy rocks in the evening sun to emerge at the highest point in Switzerland at 6 p.m. We experienced weary satisfaction rather than wild jubilation, whilst realising that we had done more than most to reach that summit.

Then we hurried back down. Andy had not fully recovered from his tummy bug of a few days previously and the descent cost him more effort than we realised. Once, we had to dissuade him from bivvying where he stood. We regained the Monte Rosa hut in the very last of the daylight, just after ten. The end of a nineteen hour day.

Unpacking the supper which we had anticipated eating at the Margherita, I reflected that I may have been the only person ever to have carried a one and a half litre bottle of mineral water to the top of Monte Rosa, only to have carried it back down unopened! We discussed our adventures with the guardienne, and explained the problem with the direct slope up from the Silbersattel.

"But everyone knows," she said in astonishment, "that that is very hard. No-one climbs it nowadays!"

"Yes," we said.

ONE VERSION OF THE GROATS-END WALK

Roy Sumerling

There is the story of three men on a retirement course who were asked what they planned to do with their time. The first said he was going to build a boat and sail around the world. The second said he was going to restore a veteran car and motor round the world. The third said 'Well, I must clear out the garage.' Although not adventurous, he was at least a realist.

For myself, I had been retired for a year but working harder than ever on our new bungalow and garden. It was the following winter when the idea of a long walk through Britain took root. My fell-walking friends were still in harness, so I would have to do most of it alone. But there are compensations. As Hamish Brown, that doyen of Munro-bagging has it: 'Solitude is a singing glory and quite different from the cold pain of loneliness. No one holds you back if you are alone.'

So the plan developed to link together several long-distance paths and byways and select the best route. By starting in early April and going south to north the Spring season would be prolonged, it would be quieter and overnight accommodation should be easier to find. My wife Eileen was very supportive – she offered to drive me to Lands End, collect me at the finish and meet me at one or two places on the way. Also – most important – Eileen would attend to the Brackenclose bookings and keep the garden in good order whilst I was away. In return I agreed to be sponsored for her favourite charity, The Childrens Society, although this committed me to finish come hell or high water, perhaps not a bad thing. I planned on using hostels where possible and guest houses otherwise, except for those occasions when Eileen stayed with me for a few days and we could use our VW camper van. A few friends offered to join me for part of the route. I was particularly glad of a companion on the Pennine Way, where bottomless bogs were known to lurk on Bleaklow and Black Hill.

So on the last day of March 1990 Eileen and our Border collie 'Roly' camped with me near Whitesand Bay, Cornwall, ready for the start at Lands End on Sunday, 1st April – an appropriate date!

It was a wonderful beginning to the walk – 8 a.m. on a bright, cold and breezy day. It generated a feeling of intense joy and excitement at the prospect ahead. The lively seascape was complemented by a profusion of spring flowers – primroses, violets and sea squill growing along the cliff path. You felt you could leave all your old worries behind and not think of the new worries you were letting yourself in for.

Eileen and Roly joined me for the walk to Cape Cornwall, then left me to drive to St Ives. The cliff path was an ever-changing delight, albeit up and down sufficiently to slow progress – the sobering thought was that there was 210 miles of the South West Way to Minehead and it had taken me 11 hours to do the 22 miles to St Ives.

At Newquay Hostel on the third day I met Trevor Warman, 20 years old, laid out on his bunk and complaining of blisters. Nevertheless he perked up when I suggested a visit to the nearest pub. Trevor had started from Lands End two hours after me and was walking in aid of Cystic Fibrosis, complete with a teddy bear mascot on his rucksack. We parted next morning when he took the high road to Exeter.

My low point came on the approached to Padstow on the fourth day. The cliff walking had been spectacular, passing Trevose Head and the Bedruthan Steps on the way and the weather was again cold, bright and breezy. My problem was that apart from the usual foot troubles my left ankle hurt to blazes and I couldn't see any relief ahead. After much thought I worked out the case of the trouble – on a coastal path you are often walking on a slope, thereby putting a strain on the lower ankle: in my case, the left. So I was later able to relieve the strain by using the camber of the path to level myself up and the pain subsided.

In the morning the harbour at Padstow provided good views for my camera in Spring sunshine. I took the small ferry across the Camel estuary. The walk to Port Isaac was a sheer joy: I had the buzzards, butterflies and wild flowers to enjoy in solitude. The next day, on the way to Boscastle harbour past Tintagel, I met a bull on the narrow cliff path. Fortunately he was benign or at least indifferent to my presence.

After reaching Bude on the seventh day I completed the last of the Cornish coast, visiting Sharpnose Point and a detour inland to see Morwenstow church. This was the domain of the 19th century vicar and poet R.S. Hawker. He is best known for *The Song of the Western Men* which includes the lines 'and shall Trelawney die? Here's 20,000 Cornish men will know the reason why.'

At Marsland Mouth I crossed into Devon and at Knapp Head the change in the colour of the rocks was evident. My plans to stay at Elmscott hostel were thwarted as recent storm damage had closed it, so I cut inland to the village of Hartland for the night.

I regained the coast at Hartland Point, with views of the lighthouse, a nearby wreck and Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel. Then on to the steep village of Clovelly, bottom to top. It was near dusk when I descended to the coastal hamlet of Bucks Mills and very grateful to spend the night at an old mill converted into a guest house – the only accommodation. This unspoilt place has pretty whitewashed cottages which belie its

harsh existence. I was told a chilling ghost story of a packman in the 18th century who had been murdered by two spinsters in whose house he had spent the night – in the house across the way, my hosts reassured me!

My route then included Bideford, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe on the north Devon coast. It was here that I met another walker from Lands End, John Briscoe. John had started later on the same day as myself. He had planned a 1442 mile route taking 83 days, typed out on a computer, with stops all booked ahead. I didn't have his supreme confidence and felt ill-prepared in comparison. He was having a rest the next day so I walked to Lynton hostel perched high above the town, with Lynmouth below. From there I went to Minehead where I met a friend for the next days walk to Holford. I was glad of his company.

I then followed the Quantock ridge to Bridgewater and the Somerset Levels, thence to Cheddar hostel which I reached on Easter Monday. The Gorge itself was packed that evening but almost deserted next morning when I left to follow the West Mendip Way to Yatton, near Bristol. Here I stayed with friends and had a rest day, helping my host the verger with his duties in St Mary's church. From Yatton it was 25 miles to Chepstow, bypassing Bristol, on the coastal path. A sudden cloudburst caught me unprepared on the exposed Severn-Wye bridge, so that I ended up soaked by the time I got to the hostel.

I was pleased to meet John Briscoe again and companions at Chepstow hostel. We stayed together for the southern end of the Offa's Dyke Path. This was pleasant enough, through bluebell woods and views of Tintern Abbey across the Wye. We stopped at Monmouth hostel, a converted 15th century priory, rather primitive but with a sense of history which made up for the lack of hot water.

We followed the dyke and the Welsh border, passing the moated White Castle and on the Black Mountains, to Capel-y-ffin hostel. Then to Hay-on-Wye, Kington and Knighton, over the Long Mynd and to John's house in Clun, Shropshire. Next morning we parted and I made my way to Montford Bridge on the Severn near Shrewsbury, where I met up with Eileen and Roly once more. Then my route followed a meandering path along canal banks into Cheshire, where I had my second rest day in Crewe, apart from taking the dog for walks. Using mainly canal paths I arrived in Staffordshire, where the three of us went up the delightful Cloud, a National Trust hill near Congleton. Then followed the Gritstone Way, more canal paths near Macclesfield and the lovely Lyme Park, leading to Whaley Bridge and Edale in Derbyshire.

The weather was fine for the start of the Pennine Way. A great day to air the legs in shorts over Kinder and Bleaklow, also to dry the bogs somewhat. At Crowden I teamed up with John Manley, who was to

accompany me for the rest of the Pennine Way. We said goodbye to families and crossed the dreaded Black Hill and Saddleworth Moor. The trans-pennine roads offered some refreshment in the way of tea caravans. The Way improved as we reached Blackstone Edge and descended from Stoodley Pike to Mankinholes hostel. Thence by Hebden Bridge across the moors to Bronte country near Haworth, followed by limestone scenery at Malham, Fountains Fell and Penyghent. Yorkshire at it's best!

We arrived at Horton-in-Ribblesdale just in time to escape the gathering storm. At Keld hostel we competed for bed space with Coast-to-Coast walkers and ended up with the lion's share of washing up. Mist and moorland combined to make the Tan Hill area bleak, but Teesdale which followed was a delight with its waterfalls and unique alpine flora. From High Cup Nick we descended to the hostel at Dufton, an unspoilt Cumbrian village. It was a super walk the next day over Cross Fell to Garrigill and Alston.

We got a little lost near Greenhead, as our 15-year-old map did not show a large wood which had grown up in the meantime. Following Hadrian's Wall was a pleasant interlude before the desolate stretches of moor and close-packed conifers of the Wark Forest, alleviated by stops at Bellingham and Byrness. Cheviot bogs provided a sting in the tail of the Pennine Way, ere we reached Kirk Yetholm and the Border Hotel. Unfortunatley Wainwright's money had long run out so there was no free pint when we signed the book.

John then left me and I walked to Kelso, where the banks of the Tweed provided an easy passage westward. From the top of the Eildon Hills I was able to look down on Melrose Abbey. I was then able to make use of part of the Southern Upland Way, over the ancient Minchmoor drove road to Traquair and thence to Peebles. Another green drove road was used to get to West Linton, where I met Eileen again. My route then led across the Pentland Hills, passing a Covenanter's grave (1666) to pass through several little Scottish towns. In Forth, south-east of Glasgow, a lad of about 8 years old asked me, "Where you going, Mister?" I said, "John o'Groats". He eyed me, half in disbelief. "It's the end of the world, Mister, the end of the world," he said – and I thought I was nearly there! I then passed through Bonnybridge and along the towpath of the now disused Forth-Clyde Canal, before coming to the Carron valley reservoir and Drymen, where I joined the West Highland Way and said goodbye to Eilleen.

The views from Conic Hill over Loch Lomond were splendid, with Ben Lomond to the north. I stayed at Rowardennan hostel, then went by way of Glen Falloch to Crianlarich, Bridge of Orchy and Glencoe. At Altnafeadh I crossed the Devil's Staircase to arrive in the wet at Waters

Cottage in Kinlochleven. A very comfortable hut, with the bonus of a few Fell & Rock members for company. I reached Fort William via Glen Nevis, but was unable to find accommodation there. I strode off into the sunset, intending to sleep under a hedge if need be, but was saved by a B&B sign at Banavie, by the Caledonian Canal.

I followed the canal banks to Loch Lochy, then by Loch Oich to Loch Ness. I saw no monster, but I did see a polecat cross the road near Drumnadrochit. Here I left the loch and headed north over the hills to Beaufort and the Muir of Ord, when rain suggested a stop should be made in the town. Next to Dingwall and views of the Cromarty Firth, where hot weather and an injudicious pint of cider combined to make me wander a bit. It was 25 miles before I reached accommodation at the isolated Altnamain Inn on the moors. I was lucky. They served meals and had self-catering accommodation for the night.

I met Eileen for the last time at Bonar Bridge on the Dornoch Firth. We camped at Lairig and walked past the Shin Falls to see salmon do spectacular leaps upstream.

Near the Crask Inn I traversed my one and only Munro that year, Ben Klibreck, which had fine views of Loch Naver and Ben Loyal. So I reached Strath Naver, a valley with a dark history of the highland clearances, where at Rossyl in 1814 homes were burnt and people perished, to make room for sheep. In contrast Strath Naver is now the haunt of the rich – Roly was warned off swimming in the river by a water bailiff, who said anglers paid £2000 a week to fish the Naver, 'the finest salmon river in Scotland'.

I reached the coast at Bettyhill, walking along coastal roads and paths to Reay and Thurso, camping near Dunnet Bay. We had a celebratory drink at the John o' Groats Hotel on 18th June and signed the book. However, Hamish Brown says the real end of the walk is Duncansby Head, so I walked there – It's much more impressive, on a par with Lands End.

In all, 1220 miles in 77 days, plus two rest days. We collected £600 for The Childrens Society. That was a bonus. I enjoyed the planning, the challenge, most of the experiences and was left with a store of memories, some captured on film. I can recommend long-distance walking as an honourable alternative to peak bagging, especially for those of us who are older if not wiser. Mind you, I'm still only half way through my Munro's.

THE SECRET DIARY OF ANDY COATSWORTH, AGED 37¾[1]

Andy Coatsworth

I recently recovered fragments of my 1990 diary together with mature dairy products from the base of my rucksack. Deciphering the remains has been an odorous task, but the surviving snippets may assist members in selecting suitable companions for a ski touring holiday.

5–6 May

Research as to which ski lifts into the Oberland are open. None.

The Striver and myself shop for bread; we buy some round loaves of superb rye bread. Very dense and ideal for packing in rucksacks. It will go well with the vast quantity of sausage and cattle cake that the Accountant says we have got to eat.

7 May

We did the Roter Tot (2840m) from the Schwarenbach Hotel, taking much longer then the 2hr 30 minute guidebook time. Made our annual rendezvous with the Swiss Army, this time the Avalanche Patrol, on the top. We offer the Swiss some sausage. The regular soldiers were bemoaning the poor standard of conscripts, who were crawling ant-like over the glacier below and seemed unlikely to reach the top. Suddenly, our excessive ascent time seems very good. Attempt to recruit 6 FRCC members into Swiss Army fails due to drab grey button-up jacket and baggy trousers offered as kit; we'd look like a pre-war Everest Expedition.

8 May

Did the Rinderhorn (3458m); beautiful powder on descent. Holiday photos will mainly be of the Barnsley Basher and myself, as we are the only ones with photogenic bright-coloured clothing. Was drabness of pre-war mountaineering clothing due to monochrome photography?

9 May

Schwarenbach Hotel, Schmarx Glacier, Balmhorn (3699m). A long slog up the glacier leads the Striver to declare "I'll be glad when I've stopped enjoying this", this being ski-mountaineering. Bergschrund and exit from glacier is hard ice and steep; skis off, crampons on, except for the Doctor

[1] With apologies to Sue Townsend

who elects for a very long lunch stop. The Basher decides that it will be crampons all the way to the top, so sensibly leaves skis below the Bergschrund. The rest of the party strap skis to rucksacks, and start climbing. The lightly laden Basher reaches the top first, confirming his strategy. He starts descent first, as the ski party will quickly descend the ridge to the top of the glacier bowl.

Ski down. The ice slope looks very steep with a long run out beyond the Bergschrund. The Barnsley Basher seems to be climbing back up; must be doing some ice climbing practice, while awaiting rest of party. The sun has softened a thin layer, so we decide to try to ski down it, the steepest slope most of us have ever skied. The Pensioner takes the fall line with continuous turns in a long-forgotten style, generating universal admiration. For the rest it is cautious side slips, and long traverses. I start to turn, stagger a bit, and just make it round, narrowly missing the Basher, who looks very alarmed to see me. What a stupid place to stand, with the whole slope available. He has a crampon in each hand, not on his boots; he must be experimenting with a new technique.

Skiers get down somehow. Touching reunion between Doctor and the Striver. We have lunch (sausage) while waiting for the Basher, who seems to be making the most of the ice slope. As he arrives we notice that he looks a bit gripped up. It seems that the ice softened just enough to be skied, and just enough to ball up his crampons. Much hilarity at misfortune of him who left skis behind.

10 May

Walked down to the cars at Kandersteg. Cheese and wine party in the spring sunshine beside the river. Drove to Interlaken; checked into youth hostel, or was it an American High School? Loads of inadequately dressed nubile females. The Pensioner seems at home.

11 May

Railway to Jungfraujoch, with in-train entertainment as a piano is offloaded onto a steep road at Wengen. Poor weather and no views.

Walk down tunnel and emerge onto glacier. Progress barred by large party of Japanese tourists. Lose 20 minutes while we are enthusiastically photographed. Set off in white-out, but abandon foray after the Accountant gets half way up the Mönch, instead of finding descent route. Return to Jungfrau Station, which is luxurious, and where we feel very out of place in waterproofs, harnesses etc, eating sausage. Wander round Jungfrau Research Station exhibition, waiting for weather to improve, and meanwhile improving our minds. Learn that Jungfrau has clear sky over 300 days per year. Venture out into cloud again, and cautiously ski

down the Aletsch Glacier as far as Konkordia Platz. Up 345 step-ladder to hut.

The Basher is impressed at my grasp of German as I learnedly study past issues of Die Alpen; I hide the fact that I merely like the photographs.

12 May

The rye bread is keeping well; it is virtually untouched. Ski up and down the Kranzberg (3664,) from the ramp below the east ridge. Perfect weather. I strip to my pants, and wash outside the hut by rubbing snow over myself, vainly imagining torso on front of Health and Efficiency magazine.

The time pressure while ski touring is terrible. One can only enjoy oneself from 2 p.m. till 9 p.m. Dubious words used by the Striver en route to his success at Scrabble; why doesn't the SAC provide Oxford English Dictionaries in all its huts?

13 May

Set off in good weather for the Trugberg (3993m). We are a party of five plus the Accountant, who blazes a trail, though not where we are going unfortunately. We turn back at 3700m in bad weather. Quick ski descent, and equally quick improvement in weather shows retreat to have been premature.

A large and boisterous Italian party has taken over the hut; they sing most of the night, and one of them has even carried a cornet up.

14 May

I remember the club President saying that one never sleeps well in alpine huts.

The Doctor and the Striver each have a new one-piece harness, a most complicated piece of corsetry. They find these harnesses very difficult to put on in broad daylight, and impossible by torchlight. People should make themselves familiar with their equipment before going to the Alps.

We make our way over to the Finsteraarhorn hut.

15 May

Boots don't feel as comfortable as usual. I come to put my skis on, but to get the buckles on the outside of my feet I have to cross my legs. I can't ski with my legs crossed; it's too much like trying to do a Telemark turn. I find that I have the wrong boots on the right feet, or the wrong feet in the right boots. The party is amazed that I could get a left inner boot into a right outer boot etc. All becomes clear when it is found that I have my left foot in my right inner boot etc.

Skied up the Gross Fiescherhorn (4049m). The descent takes no more than

1 hour – the fear of late afternoon avalanche or crevasse problems prevents leisurely enjoyment while ski mountaineering.

The Italian party have come over to this hut, and are very rowdy. They have an inexhaustible repertoire of drinking songs, or so I judge by the consumption of hut liquor. Strange that the well ordered Swiss tolerate foreigners behaving so badly. The Doctor and the Striver stand up for their right to lie down . . . in peace.

16 May

The Striver is puzzled as to what the rest of the party do in a morning between him being ready and everyone else being ready. We would have gone for the Finsteraarhorn, but could not bear the thought of sharing the long and narrow ridge with the cornet player and his vocal friends. Skied up the Gross Wannenhorn to the 'winter peak', some 5m below the true top (3906m). Or is the real summit left virgin out of respect to some local deity? The others skied down quickly and competently. This irritated me, so I fell over again and again. Back at the hut by 12.30 – what was all the rush for? Spend the rest of the day barefoot climbing on the sunny rocks above the hut, which ran out of beer.

Find out that the Italians are Swiss.

17 May

Confusion over what time it is; the Barnsley Basher is still giving the UK time, because he doesn't know how to adjust his digital watch.

Discussion on politics enlivened by consumption of two bottles of wine.

A Swiss journalist is amazed at the British party – no guide and not even a leader. I modestly explain that we are a democratic race, and that we agree everything in the party by mutual consent.

19 May

The Hollandia is a very comfortable hut. Three members of the party come out of the hut with skins on, ready for the Äbeni Flue, three without skins ready to descend. We discuss our plans in the biting wind on top of the col. A compromise – we go to within 100m of the top (3962m), and then we ski out down the Lötschental.

The rye bread has lasted even better than the Striver or I expected. We leave it with a pile of other rocks before joining the bus.

MOROCCO BOUND

Trevor Jones

Morocco has the Atlas mountains and Marrakesh at the foot of them where Churchill painted during the Second World War. On the horizon from Marrakesh is a wonderland of visual vertical delights on limestone, quartzite and sandstone for Les Brown and me. It was thirty years since we had first climbed together. THE ODD COUPLE would be a title which would sum us up: Les six foot four and me five foot six. The fact that he can reach eighteen inches further than me has always been an irritation. I often accuse him of dodging the crux because he can reach beyond to better holds. We'd both climbed in the Verdon Gorge but never realised that Morocco had an equal with the Todhra Gorge – thousand-foot walls only a hundred yards apart. Two hotels – the Hotel Yasmina and the Hotel des Roches – nestle under the overhanging east face, none with alcohol and unfortunately no booze closer than Ouarzazate, a hundred miles away.

Only two hundred metres away is the Dalles des Hollandais. On the west face there are half a dozen 50-metre pitch routes on the side of the gorge with in-situ chains to abseil off.

Just five minutes away from the hotels and a wade across the river was the Couchant Pillar, an orange-coloured cracked masterpiece of fourteen pitches which nudged El or HVS. It had bolts, in-situ pegs and tapered cracks that swallowed up safe metal chocks. Near the top I wasn't sure of the route and took a hanging stance with a poor nut belay and an overcammed Friend wedged into a downward slot and hoped it would be alright. On an easy stretch Les slipped off, the rock belay shot out, I was pulled off into space and a hundred and fourteen years of climbing life depended on an aluminium stem and a Moroccan slot. It all held, although Les scraped his side badly.

From the top of Couchant Pillar a descent in the searing heat of a Moroccan afternoon. Near the bottom an aged shepherd asked my age. "Soixante" (everyone in Morocco speaks French from birth. A baby's first words are usually 'Donnez-moi un bon-bon' to train him for the tourists). The shepherd was forty and looked ninety after decades of hard, high work. Children start to look after the upland flocks of goats from five years old as school doesn't start till they are seven.

The owner of the hotel sang Berber songs in the evening then said "Monsieur Jones, will you sing my favourite English song – Ilkley Moor baht'at?" I responded and got a free tot of whisky from a Spanish party. I sang another song but sadly no more whisky was offered.

Next day we went through the northern part of the gorge where only forty feet separated the towering walls with the river gushing between them. Beyond there was a sudden opening to a high valley rimmed with 500-foot cliffs such as Les Pisson Sacres with only an occasional route and untouched vertical acres.

Unhappily our time was short and we moved to the Dades Gorge a few miles west and parallel to the Todhra Gorge. From Boulmaine at the foot of the Atlas Mountains a winding dirt road was carved from a crumbling hillside with an unguarded drop of several hundred feet into the muddy waters of the Dades River. The road got so steep that we had to get out of the car, except for the driver. Eventually the gorge grudgingly opened out to give enough flat space for the simple Hotel Taghia at 6000 feet above sea level. One of the reasons for the lack of climbing activity in this gorge is the complete absence of a hotel until the Taghia was built two years ago. It is in orange-tinted country with even more untouched rock than the Todhra Gorge. Les and I could see that any rock-climbing pioneer could be in a seventh heaven in such a place.

Opposite the hotel was a steep hillside with herds of goats and little rock buttresses crowned at the top with 1000-foot untouched cliffs. In the centre was a glittering orange pillar. Les Brown and I had retired from the new route scene a decade before but we just had to do it.

An initial three hundred-foot needle, even with an appropriate hole at the top which we reached by a delicate 5a traverse. Above a small ledge at the top of the needle was a twenty-foot wall leading to an overhanging sentry box, which proved to be the 5b crux of the climb. The apex of the box was even more alarmingly overhanging. So a tense toe traverse led Les to a cut-away perch, usually described by guidebooks as 'romantic exposure'. A few more feet and although we didn't know it the hardest pitch of the holiday was behind us. (I was finding things a bit hard by this time; as we were in a Third World country, I was suffering from shingles, dysentery and cystitis which caused my doctor much interest when I got home and also the Environmental Health people who came round to see if our lavatories were adequate.)

Many of the cracks held chocks and flakes which had to be prised out. The air was filled with sulphurous smells as they bounded on to the empty road far below. Limestone cracks after limestone crack, thousands of feet of virgin rock. The steepness grudgingly relented to high Berber goat country.

In contrast in the valley below there was poverty where climbing could never have been considered because of abject poverty. The women dressed in all-concealing chadors and carried enormous loads of firewood. Women's lib seemed several hundred years away, with their

male relatives lounging under trees drinking mint tea.

The summit cliffs were so continuous that even after two hours of traversing I was still, at 8000 feet, three miles further away from the hotel and close to complete disintegration. I started to despair. It was getting dark and I wondered if I was going to get down that night. Falling sideways, forwards and backwards, exhaustion was close.

Fortunately we came to a mule track well-used by nomads to supply their five-year old children in the winter, who were sent up to look after the herds of goats in the winter months whilst their parents lived in miserable caves in the valley.

As complete blackness cloaked the valley I lay down for half an hour and finally tottered on to the road just as my wife Anna, for the first time in our long married life, drove out to mountain rescue me. Soon a tasty meal of Tagine, a spicy meal very like spicy Lancashire hot pot, perked me up. The electricity was turned on so that everyone could watch Moroccan pop videos in Arabic, followed by total darkness when it was switched off. It seemed to be a hint for the guests to go to bed.

Far beyond the hotel there were other crags, other valleys, all untouched by the modern rock climber. Apart from the Hotel Taghia there was no other accommodation for ten miles in either direction. Real riches await the climbing hotelier.

With a heavy heart we left the Dades Gorge, late at night, all so completely untouched. It seems a sacrilege to write about all that untouched rock rising into the black velvet sky and winking stars and the bleating of the goats as the dawn hits the High Atlas.

We went back to Agadir then south into the Anti-Atlas to the painted boulder playground of Tafroute. The infinitely tortuous narrow road was host to courteous lorry drivers who pulled over when we approached their rear mirrors.

As we got into the mountains we saw unclimbed buttresses and ridges and we knew that we had come to the crock of gold at the end of our personal rainbows. As we dropped down from the 7500-foot Tizi-n-Taraktime Pass unclimbed buttresses appeared on the right. Les likened the area to a cluster of high, unclimbed Skye ridges. The rock was quartzite, just like Gogarth, and proved just as delightful to climb on. Early the following morning we toiled up the hot, stony hillside to the closest buttress to the Tizi-n-Taraktime, which sounded like a children's television programme.

Its ramparts reared one thousand feet into the thin, hot Moroccan sky. A line of grooves on the right of the buttress tempted us. From the valley far below came the call of the muezzin calling the faithful Muslims to prayer, and the buttresses called us too.

Easily straight up, then the rope on, a traverse left into sheaves of overhangs and a tenuous niche which seemed to provide the key to the higher levels. Moves of a continuous 5a difficulty were stopped in mid-flight by tenacious wiry bushes which required intense tugging to free them from their ledges and their earthy scrapes to pull on the excavated indentations. Les took over for the next overhanging niche. Bushes, fragments of rock and four-letter words spewed from the cleft. Eventually Les was forced right on to a vertical quartzite face after the 5b exertions below.

Everyone yearns for Paradise, but that upper wall was close to it for us. Huge jugs, immense exposure and sheer delight for hundreds of upper feet. Eventually the rock fell back as if it were glad its secrets had been unlocked to us.

Morocco is a Third World country but only three hours flight from Heathrow and there are rock-climbing riches there for every climber.


ALADE

THE MEET

Pat Andrews

(Editors note: To assist prospective members this article is accompanied by a glossary of commonly misinterpreted terms used by the Fell & Rock).

Picture, if you will, a crowded hut on a fair Saturday morning of a Fell & Rock 'Meet'.

The fire burns freshly in the grate, the tantalising smell of bacon and burnt toast wafts in from the kitchen where members compete for the stoves. Unshaven youths in stretch tights and trainers wander aimlessly around, hunks of bread and jam in hand, discussing the condition of the rock, whilst their elders sit around the fire nursing their mugs of tea, discussing the weather prospects. There is a general air of lazy bonhomie. The Meet Leader – when you've discovered who this is – will tentatively suggest a couple of alternative objectives for the day, both of which will be greeted by what can only be described as 'lukewarm' response. The Hut Warden also puts forward a few suggestions, but no-one feels like sawing the branch off the oak tree or mucking out the coal hole today. The climbers will have in any case by now decided to wait until the rock has 'dried out a bit' and have settled down to porridge and black pudding.

Suddenly a booted and spurred member, hitherto unnoticed, appears stowing his flask and Mars bars purposefully into his rucksack. "Where are you going?" is the query from those almost finished breakfast. "Oh, I thought I'd climb Peak A by the ghyll route, go along the ridge and drop off the easy slope at the end." "Good idea; we'll join you."

Before you can say 'Jam Butty' you find the hut deserted – except for the climbers and two or three older members who have seen this all before. Hastily cramming your lunch into your rucksack you hurry down the lane in pursuit, stuffing the last of your toast and marmalade in your mouth as you zip up your anorak.

Soon you have caught up the 'tail-ender' who, like you, is sweating and suffering from heartburn. Neither of you dares to stop to rectify either of these discomforts and neither of you has a clue as to your ultimate destination because you didn't dare to admit that you hadn't actually heard what the plan was, so now you must keep the leaders in sight to avoid being left behind. You now become obsessed with keeping in touch with the main party. Not only do YOU not know where you're headed but, contrary to popular belief, neither do THEY. As they lean on gate or stile courteously waiting for you to join them they are in fact still discussing variations on the Original Plan. Maybe it would be more interesting to

scramble up this gill or via that crag, or perhaps the snow in that gully would be more of a challenge. As you draw near they move off again, decisions taken but not communicated, so you still don't know where you're headed! There's no way now you can branch off and do your 'own thing' because you can't get near enough to the others to tell them that you're not 'with them' any more. Mind you, it is debatable whether or not they would notice if you were gone, but you can't take the chance and so you scuttle along behind the pack until panting and tired you crest the last rise and flop gratefully down behind the rocks for the lunch stop . . . just as the leaders are packing away their empty flasks.

But you still have a few precious moments of rest – photographs must now be taken for the archives. The group is posed on a precipitous ridge with a suitably dramatic 'back drop' and cameras click professionally until the photographer pronounces himself satisfied and the group prepares to move on once more.

"Now here's where we have a choice of route": the keen leader is at it again. "We can keep to our Original Plan and go along this ridge and down the grassy slope at the end" (your spirits lift, but his tone makes it abundantly clear that this is NOT exactly what is expected of the Fell & Rock) "or we can take in Peaks B, C and D and return via the interesting scramble at the end." You won't admit you'd rather take the easy option so once again you cram in your last mouthful of sandwich and set off.

Peaks B and C are bagged and you begin at last to think the end may be in sight. At this stage you begin to hallucinate about such decadent luxuries as hot showers, tea and food, especially food. The talk turns to 'recipes I have known', 'memorable meals I have had' and 'do you put brandy in your Christmas pudding?'. Suddenly someone (probably that keen chap again) comments that the nearness of another 'Falkingham 2000' is too good to pass up. So the stalwarts trot off to do this diversion whilst you sit down to admire the view. A couple of artists get out their sketch blocks whilst the sun chooses this moment to slide behind an ominous bank of cloud, a chill wind gets up from nowhere and sweat turns to ice on your back. Members then fall to discussing the warmth properties of various items of thermal underwear – the 'TOG Values' – whether Berghaus is better than Karrimor, if Peter Storm has the edge on Rohan and what gunge you find most effective to waterproof your boots. All dynamic conversational topics.

Eventually the leaders return as the light is beginning to fail. The pubs, it is observed, will soon be opening and some of the party have to attend a Sub Committee at 5.30 so they decide to 'run' back to the hut. Your spirits begin to sink with the sun, when a much respected older member suggests a 'short cut'! You grab this as a lifeline, until too late you realise that,

unlike the crow, you can't fly over the waist-high heather, black slimy peat and newly planted forest with its mantrap ditches and furrows!

However, in the end, and contrary to all the odds, you do stagger back to the hut before dark – just as the 'runners' emerge en route for the pub, having visited some old mine workings on the way down, had their tea and used all the hot water on their showers.

Tomorrow you'll make your own plans, or will you?

* * *

Glossary

Off in a little while	The first man has already gone.
We're nearly there	Almost halfway.
Easy grassy slope	Vertical drop on wet grass.
Easy rocky slope	Scree.
Easy scramble	V. Diff. climb.
Can see the top	Only if you have exceptionally long sight.
Summit ridge	Several more 3000ft peaks.
Short cut	Impossible terrain.
Short day	Back before dark.

WINTER IN THE CAPE

Richard Hamer

The Cedarberg is an area of rugged mountainous terrain about the size of the Lake District some 250 kilometres north of Cape Town adjacent to the narrow but richly productive agricultural lands around Citrusdale. The highest summit, Sneeuberg, is a modest 2000m but the highly dissected nature of the range and its proximity to the coast enhance the physical appearance of many of the summits. The area is designated a 'Wilderness' and as such freedom of access to it by suitably equipped walkers and climbers is guaranteed – a rare thing in a country where private ownership and state control severely restrict access.

In summer the Cedarberg is a popular destination for weekend trips from Cape Town but in winter few visitors disturb the tranquillity of the area. As a result the range boasts one of the largest leopard population in the Cape. In addition there are a few species of buck, monkey and a wide variety of montane birds. However, the principal wildlife attractions are botanical and comprise the rare snow protea, only found above 1700m, and the cedar trees from which the range derives its name.

We were touring in the northern and western Cape and had just enjoyed a profitable four days in the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. It was mid-July and with night-time temperatures dropping to −5°C we had found ourselves practically alone on the campsites. Now we were heading for Cape Town: at the edge of the Namaqualand plateau the Cedarberg Mountains lay across our path, guarding the north-eastern approaches to the Cape.

There is always an immense satisfaction to be derived from coming out of a stark featureless desert into the lushness of mountains and running streams. After a fortnight in the Kalahari and the previous eighteen months prospecting for gold over the Limpopo hinterland we were unused to water and the green mountains of the Cape beckoned to us as we sped along dead-straight roads across the dried-out salt pans of central Namaqualand.

Our first hint of the coastal mountains was a faint glimpse of cloud on the horizon but as we drew near the vague shapes resolved into a line of peaks topped by angry looking cumulus. We paused briefly at Calvinia, an unpretentious provincial dorp that secures a gap in the Roggeveldberg. A quiet, sleepy place secure in the knowledge that it once achieved singular notoriety. In 1902, during the final stages of the Boer War, Calvinia was used by Jan Smuts' Commando as a base from which to threaten the British in Cape Town.

Once through the gap beyond the town the weather began to close in. As we turned off the main tar road for the final approach to Clanwilliam, over the Pakhuis Pass, the rain came down. First in sharp squalls, then more steadily and finally in fierce wind-driven torrents. It was the first rain we'd seen for seven months and we immediately stopped the car and leapt out into the mud dancing with excitement, much to the amusement of our eighteen month old daughter Ashley who sensibly remained inside. However that dirt road became increasingly difficult in the wet and the novelty of the rain quickly wore off as I strove hard to keep the car on the road. At length we were enveloped in a thick mist and by the time we reached Clanwilliam late in the afternoon, without so much as a glimpse of the mountains, we were longing for the sunny skies of the Transvaal.

The weather in the Cape coastal belt is notoriously fickle in winter. We had persuaded ourselves, with typical British pigheadedness, that it couldn't possibly be worse than Borrowdale in October. That night we camped miserably in Clanwilliam. The rain tipped down and to make matters worse an onshore gale from the Benguela Current, which flows up the West Coast of Southern Africa straight out of the Sub-Antartic, brought an icy chilling wind under the flysheet.

Our original plan had been to drive into the central portion of the Cedarberg to the forestry station at Algeria, base ourselves at the campsite and operate from there. Next morning with the cloud still hugging the ground and the rain having eased only marginally to a persistent and penetrating drizzle we decided to review our plans.

"Ashley won't enjoy camping in the cold and rain," I said, trying to appear enthusiastic despite my chattering teeth – young children can be so useful in moments of extremis. Denise agreed and we opted for a vehicular recce. We took the dirt road eastwards from Clanwilliam and wound up a forested hillside into the uninviting gloom. We reached Algeria at lunchtime.

No doubt Algeria could be a delightful spot but with the campsite awash and the valley blanketed in mist, the outlook was dismal. I was about to get back into the car and abort for Cape Town when Denise suggested that I enquire at the forestry office if there was a cottage to let. Denise always says this at wet campsites and I always ridicule the idea.

'Do you have a cottage to let?' I asked of the lady in the forestry office, expecting a similar response to the one I had given Denise.

"Oh yes," said the lady. "How many of you are there? We've a large one for a dozen with a wood-burning stove and a smaller one for six with an open-grate fire."

"We'll take the large one!" I said, butting in and responding to the reassuring sound of a wood-burning stove.

"Three pounds a night, firewood included. It's yours for three days. There's a party from the Mountain Club coming on Thursday. Here's the key. It's about five kilometres further up the valley across the river on the left-hand side. You'll see it quite clearly from the road."

"Oh!" she added, as an afterthought. "You probably won't get your car across the river just at the moment!"

Steadfastly ignoring Denise's "I told you so!" look I got back into the car and we drove on up the valley. It was raining hard again and when we reached the ford it was clear that the car would not get across – indeed, we seriously wondered if we would be able to transport ourselves and our equipment over. In the event there was nothing for it but to strip off, don a cagoule and wade. Half a dozen trips and several unsteady moments of blind panic later and we had carried the basic essentials across to the hut and lit the stove.

The cottage was equipped with the barest essentials. Bunk beds, mattresses, wooden trestle tables and benches, a bathroom with a sink, loo and bath (!) and in the kitchen a basin and stove which supplied hot water to the kitchen and bathroom. The wood supplies were more than adquate. We settled down to a second night of torrential rain but in infinitely more comfortable and above all drier surroundings than the first.

I should add that the forestry officials had warned us that the immediate forecast was grim. Severe gales were lashing the Cape and low cloud, high winds and heavy rain had been forecast for the rest of the week. It didn't sound very encouraging, but at least we were warm and dry.

I awoke next morning to hear the birds cheerfully singing and our friend the red-chested cuckoo going all out with his monotonous and infuriatingly persistent three-note call. It was some moments before the paradox struck home and when the light finally dawned I leapt out of bed and gazed at an outstanding vista. A beautiful V-shaped valley fell away before me, its lower slopes clad in coniferous plantations. Higher up, broken rocks climbed to more continuous buttresses and arêtes which soared up to airy ridges, whilst above the sky was an unbroken azure blue.

This unexpectedly pleasant turn in the weather caught us wrong footed and with the cuckoo's call still ringing in my ears I galvanised the team into activity. Our course of action was clear – choose a suitable route and get up to the tops as quickly as possible to get our bearings. Thus after a hasty breakfast we returned to the forestry office to enquire further. The weather had clearly caught them out as well – even at Ceres, a little under 100km to the south, the anticipated gales were battering the town. It seemed unlikely that this unexpected Cedarberg lull would last. Nevertheless, undeterred by this prospect we secured our 'permit for walking'.

Across the river, through the campsite at Algeria, a track zig-zagged up

the hillside to a hanging valley. A number of lesser summits ringed this valley in which the Middleberg Hut was located. With Ashley secure in the backpack we set off into the shadow of the pine forests. Pine forests always make me think of Alpine valleys – once sniffed that unmistakable smell is never forgotten and outside the Alps I have to make a mental effort to dismiss from my mind's eye the accompanying vision of those tiresome moraines on the final hut approach.

Today, however, our route ascended steeply, threading a way between the looming rock buttresses until at length we reached the lip of the hanging valley and broke out into the pale wintry sunshine. Above the plantations the only trees were low shrubs and the occasional quartered cedar. By midday we reached the Middelberg 'bothy'. It proved a pleasant spot, sheltered from the wind and Denise opted to remain there and amuse Ashley by the stream. I decided to press on and continue as far as Middelberg Noord, a rocky peak on the western side of the valley.

It took me another hour to reach the top and as I was soon to learn, the Cedarberg summits are not to be won without a short scramble. In fact a vicious off-width, jamming crack of some 6m seemed the best option. The jams were good, but my knuckles bore the evidence of the struggle when I hauled myself onto the summit platform. From the top of Middleberg Noord I was able to map out the geography of the range from Sneeuberg a dozen kilometres to the south-east, to the distinctive and aptly named Crevasse Peak to the north. The tops were clear as far as I could see, although away to the north ominous grey clouds bespoke the gales of the Cape.

However, more so than these atmospheric anomalies I think what impressed me was the amount of rock. Seldom have I gazed on a range of mountains with so much rock evident. The Cedarberg is composed largely of gently dipping, massively bedded sandstones of the Table Mountain Group – the same rocks that constitute Table Mountain itself, except that here about halfway up a prominent shale band forms a line of weakness which is sufficient to generate an extensive plateau. It was on the leading edge of this plateau that I stood. The jointed nature of the sandstones facilitates erosion and the rocks are worn into blocks and sculptured by the wind. It is a scramblers' paradise – Brimham Rocks on a scale of the Lake District. An area of spectacular rock formations, most notably the Wolfberg Arch and a remarkable pinnacle appropriately known as the Maltese Cross. But above all what amazed and delighted me was that above 1800m there was a light skittering of snow. I raced back down to Denise and dragged her to a col at the head of the valley to show her the snow.

"OK, so there's a bit of snow", she said, rather unenthusiastically. "You'd better get up there soon, it won't last long in this weather!"

There was no question of making it that day and we returned to Algeria

the way we had come, light-headed from the exhilaration of the day. When we reached the ford we found that the river had receded and so we were able to get the car across to the hut,

For the next six days operating initially from the hut, but later from the campsite, we ranged across the central portion of the Cedarberg. Violent gales continued to lash the Cape, giving substance to its other name – the 'Cape of Storms'. However, in complete contradiction to the daily forecasts an umbrella of blue sky reigned over the Cedarberg. True, it was cold in the shade and at night, and bitterly so in the wind, but somehow the blue skies persisted and we ran up a creditable list of summits.

For Sneeuberg itself I was even forced to give my crampons an airing on a short iced-up wall on the east ridge. We were even successful with the snow protea because near the summit of Langberg I found a bush fire singed clump protruding from beneath the snow in the lee of a boulder. Not quite the 'edelweiss-tinted' vision I'd conjured up in my mind, but a snow protea nevertheless – and certainly a rare sight in the snow!

Our final day took us to the Wolfberg Cracks, a popular rock-climbing haunt in summer. The principal climbing area is a huge buttress of 200m or so at the edge of the plateau beneath the shale band. The buttress is rent by a series of vertical cracks, one of which provides a spectacular scrambling route to the plateau. The side walls give well-protected technical wall climbing in summer. However, with a chill wind and ice filling the finger cracks we had the place to ourselves always excepting the ever present Cape thrushes and rockjumpers.

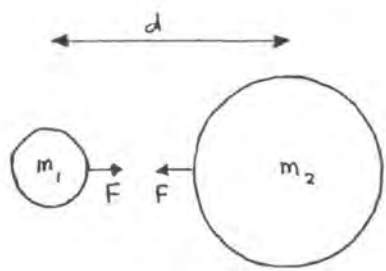
At length the time came for us to move on. We chose the inland route in order to get a better look at the southern section of the range and on the way passed an area of caves with Bushman paintings. I have a fascination for rock art and we stopped to take a peep. I love the thought of those not-so-distant days when the Bushmen – true conservationists – roamed freely over Southern Africa in harmony with their environment and lament the ignorant ruthlessness with which they were dispossessed. These paintings at Stadsaal Rocks were typical: elephant, kudu, zebra and lines of figures, the men with hunting spears or bows and arrows and the women with water jugs on their heads, and both with the grotesquely disproportionate buttocks so characteristic of Bushman art. They clearly loved the Cedarberg and all it once contained.

Sadly, as so often happens at these sites, there was a range of more modern graffiti. In particular an ugly, black, hand-painted inscription which asserted that no less a person than the ex-premier P.W. Botha and his wife had visited the place and scrawled their names beside the paintings. Another depressing reminder that while much of the land is still beautiful, the same is seldom true of its current inhabitants.

HOW SCHIEHALLION WAS USED TO WEIGH THE EARTH

Ron Young

Sir Isaac Newton, about 1650 (published later in his *Principia, Volume 2, System of the World, 1686*) had suggested that a large mass such as a mountain would exert a gravitational attraction on a plumb-bob and would draw the plumb-line from the vertical. By measuring the angle of deflection and calculating the mass of the mountain, the mass of the earth could be determined. Newton worked out the theory shown below but did not have the facilities to do the experiment.



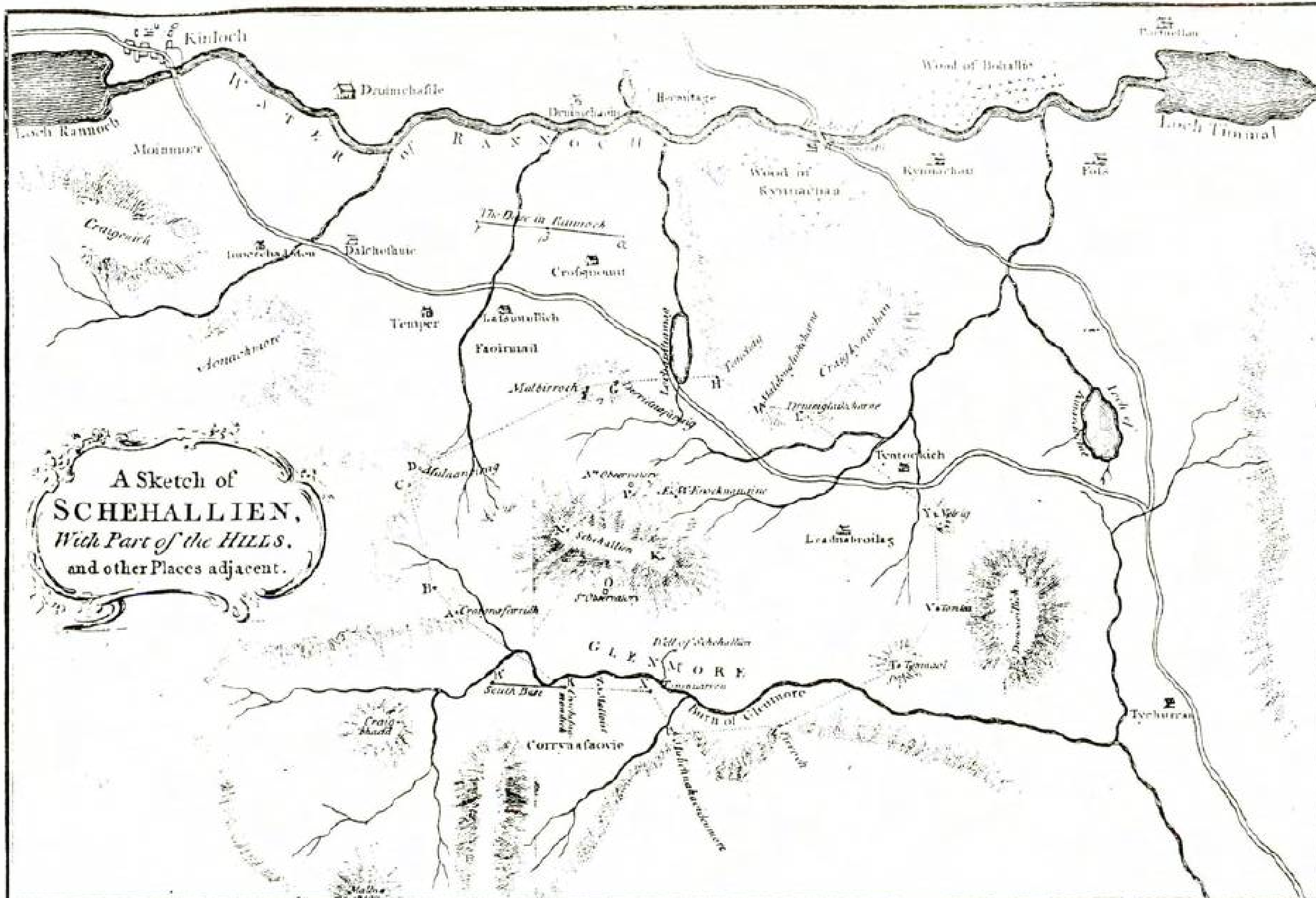
$$F \propto \frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$$

$$\therefore F = G\frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$$

where G is the gravitational constant

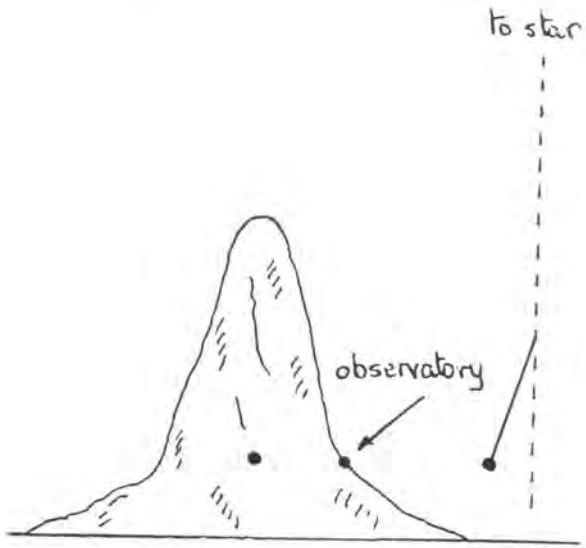
Newton's Theory suggested that a mass m_1 attracts a mass m_2 with a force F proportional to the product of the masses and inversely proportional to the square of their distance apart.

Schiehallion from Loch Rannoch.
Photograph by Irvine Butterfield.

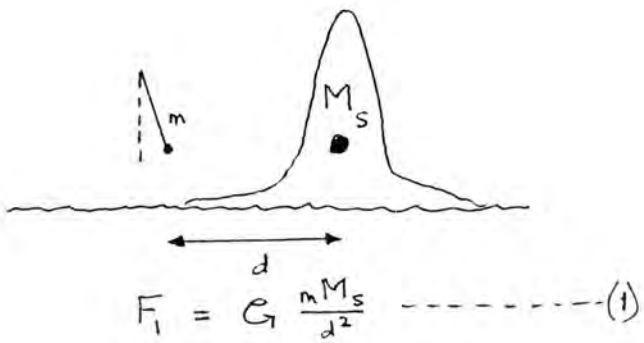

A Sketch of
SCHEHALLIEN,
With Part of the HILLS,
and other Places adjacent.
Kinloch
Loch Rannoch
Druimchasle
Hermitage
Loch Tummal
Wood of Bohallie
Moinmore
Craigroich
Dalchosnie
The Base in Rannoch
Crossmount
Temper
Faoirnaid
Malbirrock
Wood of Kynnachan
Kynnachan
Fois
Craigkynachan
Loch of Kinardochie
Tentockich
Leadnabroilag
Schehallien
GLEN MORE
Well of Schehallien
Burn of Glenmore
Corryvafaovie
South Base
Tychurran
Craig-bhaid

In 1775 the Astronomer Royal, Nevil Maskelyne,[1] proposed to carry out an experiment on the lines of Newton's theory and a committee was appointed by the Royal Society 'to consider a proper hill whereon to try the experiment, and to prepare everything necessary for carrying out the design into execution'. Maskelyne started the search for a suitable mountain of regular shape so that its volume, and therefore its mass, could be calculated. He first considered Pendle Hill, Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough, Whernside, Helvellyn and Skiddaw. After rejecting these mountains because their shape was not regular enough, and because their composition was not uniform enough, he said, 'Fortunately, however, Perthshire affords us a remarkable hill, nearly in the centre of Scotland, of sufficient height, tolerably detached from other hills. This hill is called by the people of the low country Maiden-pap, but by the neighbouring inhabitants Schehallien which means 'Constant Storm'' (sic)'.

Maskelyne set up an observatory about one quarter of the way up Schiehallion to measure the angle of deflection of the plumb-line. He determined the position of the true vertical by observing through a telescope a star which was directly overhead. The angle of deflection was very small, about 1/600th of a degree.

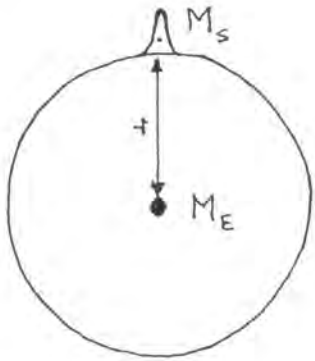


Applying this idea to the mass of the plumb-bob m and the mass of Schiehallion M_S



The final equation (below) shows that in order to calculate the mass of the earth M_E the mass of Schiehallion M_S must be known. This was found by surveying the mountain to calculate its volume. The measurement of the average density of the rock of which Schiehallion is composed gave the density as 2½ times that of rain water (sic). Then the mass of Schiehallion M_S = volume × density. These calculations were made by Charles Hutton[2] of Woolwich and gave a value for the mass of the earth M_E of the right order, but about 20% low. In view of the tiny angle of deflection of the plumb-line this was a remarkable result to have been obtained for the first calculation of the mass of the earth in 1778.

Now consider the attraction between the mass of Schiehallion M_S and the mass of the Earth M_E

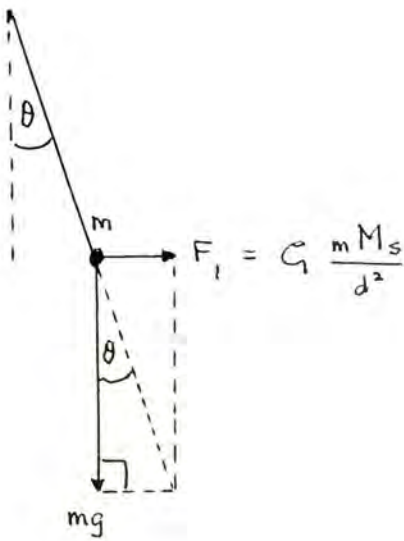


$$F_2 = G\frac{M_E M_S}{r^2} = M_S g.$$

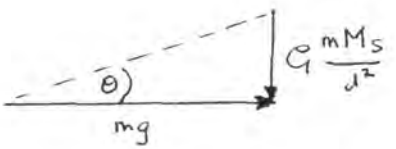
$$\therefore \frac{GM_E}{r^2} = g \quad \text{----------} (2)$$

where g is the acceleration due to gravity

Consider the forces on
the plumb-bob m:



Redrawing the triangle of forces:



$$\tan\theta = \frac{G\frac{mM_S}{d^2}}{mg} = \frac{GM_S}{gd^2} \quad \text{------(3)}$$

Divide (2) by (3)

$$\frac{GM_E / r^2}{GM_S / gd^2} = \frac{g}{\tan\theta}$$

$$\frac{M_E}{M_S} \cdot \frac{gd^2}{r^2} = \frac{g}{\tan\theta}$$

$$\therefore \quad \boxed{M_E = \frac{M_S r^2}{d^2 \tan\theta}}$$

From which the mass of the earth M_E can be calculated.

In 1858 a similar experiment using the same fundamental method was made by James and Clarke at Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh. They obtained a value only 2% below the correct value and showed that Hutton did not survey the land sufficiently far from Schiehallion. It is now known that there is a fundamental defect in the mountain method. Sir George Everest and Archdeacon Pratt, about 1850, showed that a plumb-bob in the Ganges plain was deflected much less by the Himalayas than would be expected from their size and density. Pratt explained this by what is called isostasy. Mountains float in hydrostatic equilibrium on rocks below the earth's crust rather like an iceberg floating in the sea. They have a subterranean roof of light rock floating in denser rocks and, as a result, it has even been known for a plumb-bob to be deflected in what is apparently the wrong direction.

References

1. Maskelyne, Nevil. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, Vol LXV, pages 495–542. 1775.
2. Hutton, Charles. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, Vol LXVIII, pages 689–795. 1778.

CHANGING THE RULES

S.J.H. Reid

In 1823, at Rugby School, William Webb Ellis, ignoring the then current rules of football, picked up the ball and ran with it. He was not, of course, the first person to have committed this particular misdemeanour, but what previously had been treated as a foul on this occasion somehow caught on. The rudiments of rugby had been invented. Nowadays, though both soccer and rugby involve two opposing teams, a ball and goal posts, even a casual observer can easily spot the profound difference in the rules of the two games.

In June 1984 Ben Moon led *Statement of Youth* at Pen Trwyn using pre-placed bolt runners for protection. This was not the first time that bolts had been used for running belays (as opposed to aid) in Britain but previously they would either invariably have been aid climbing relics or kept to an absolute minimum and generally placed by the climber who was so much better than his peers that he was almost beyond criticism. Pete Crew thus survived bolting the *Boldest* and Ron Fawcett *The Cad* without sparking off an avalanche of copycat-bolted climbs by lesser mortals. Moon's ability of course was arguably (relative to his time) every bit as great as Crew's and Fawcett's (*Statement of Youth* is graded E7, 6b) but two facts made this ascent different: firstly the number of bolts placed – eight in twenty five metres – and secondly the behaviour of other climbers. Whilst earlier generations would have been hell bent on repeating the climb without the bolts and then chopping them, some now realised that the bolting of certain, otherwise unprotected, lines was on. Thus in 1986, in the Llanberis slate quarries, Paul Williams led *Colossus* (E3, 5c) using thirteen pre-placed bolts as runners. Despite initial criticism the route became an instant classic and the bolts stayed. And a few months later *Limited Edition* (E4, 6a), in Hodge Close, received the same treatment from Paul Carling. Much muttering ensued but nothing was done: the bolts remained and the route is climbed reasonably frequently. All of a sudden it was perfectly all right to place bolts on climbs as long as they were in quarries or on previously neglected parts of limestone cliffs.

A boom ensued, gradually gathering momentum, so that within five years most climbers, even if they didn't accept such bolt runners as the norm, did nothing to prevent them being placed, and now bolt-protected climbs appear on many natural limestone crags, particularly on the Ormes, in the Peak District and North Yorkshire and, closer to home, on South Cumbrian limestone. Limestone is especially suited to bolted climbing as many crags have large expanses of pocketed wall that provide

numerous hard lines but little, if any, natural protection. The Catwalk area of Malham is the prime example. Gritstone remains bolt free. Sandstone likewise, though by some perverse logic St Bees is considered fair game and now has half a dozen or so bolt routes. Mountain crags and natural sea cliffs are currently, virtually, inviolate. A peculiar system of double ethics evolved with leading climbers happily bolting new lines on permitted rock whilst climbing new routes elsewhere in a more or less traditional style. I say "more or less" because on the hardest climbs it appears acceptable amongst many top climbers to pre-place all the runners, thus effectively lowering the overall grade of the climb. Top-roping, shunt practising and sly rests on the gear are not exactly new phenomena but they have become far more common.

To be fair, the climbs concerned are so steep and the placements often so marginal that it is hard to imagine anyone ever managing to lead them in a traditional way (though that is an argument that has been proved wrong many times before). Oddly, even with this system, there are ethics of a sort. Thus a series of pre-placed wires complete with extenders would probably pass unremarked, but to place a single solid runner at the top of the crag and equip it with an enormous daisy chain sling that could be clipped at will would undoubtedly invite censure. The position is somewhat complicated in that first ascentionists are not always forthcoming in declaring such tactics!

On bolt routes a different style of climbing takes place. Climbers seldom attempt climbs of a grade that they would be happy leading on un-bolted rock. Several grades harder is the norm and a kind of siege ensues, with the leader climbing from bolt to bolt with rests and/or falls on each being acceptable. This is known as "dogging". The eventual aim may well be to "red point" the route by linking all the individual moves together. This is what most of us refer to as leading. An attempt on a one-pitch climb as described can take all day and still fail. And although bolts have not yet appeared on grit in any quantity, bolting ethics (if that is not a contradiction in terms) have. Thus hard routes at Froggat or Stanage will frequently be found occupied for hours on end by one team and their top rope. Often they have little leading gear anyway and their knowledge of how to place it may also be minimal. It is curious that in an age where siege tactics are becoming unacceptable in the greater ranges they should suddenly become prolific on one-pitch rock routes.

On 17 May 1991 the Lakes' mountain crags received their first major challenge with Dave Birkett's *Daws Rides a Shovel Head* (E7, 6c). Notwithstanding the name, this direct variation on his Uncle Bill Birkett's *Centrefold* on Raven Crag, Langdale, was a considerable achievement, with the best protection on the crux consisting only of two very dubious

sawn-off pegs. It was also nice to see Jim Birkett's grandson carrying on a family tradition of bold and technical first ascents. However, after writing up the climb in Rock and Run's new routes book, Birkett added the following post-script:

> I think that the pegs I have put in will only last about a year, so the route will become unprotected and I doubt that anyone will want to repeat it after that. So I would like to put a bolt in next to the top pegs. If anyone has a good reason why not please write below, but just remember that there is a bolt in *R & S Special* which you use at the bottom of this route.
>
> Yours sincerely, David Birkett.

The following viewpoints appeared underneath:

> Don't worry about the state of the pegs: by the sound of it they are up to the quality of Ed Cleasby's in Hodge Close – no worries there, eh?! (also *First Republic* on Castle).
>
> As for the placing of a bolt this is a little over the top. The fact that a bolt is in place on *R & S Special* is irrelevant as this was originally placed in the early 60s on the unfinished aid route *Today's Wall*. To use others' misdemeanours as an excuse (or example) for your own intended actions is a poor defence. How many rapists would use this as a defence? 'I did it because others had committed the crime before me.' Such a statement would be rightly ridiculed.
>
> Finally if a bolt does appear it would last for even less time than your poor pegs.
>
> Yours ever ethically, Bob Wightman.

> Definitely go ahead and put the bolt in, Dave. Ignore the rapist's writing above. This bolt will only affect a handful of people who want to do this route, yet everyone and his dog will step out of the woodwork to say something about it. Ignore the bastards and do what you want. Also f*** the bolt laws, place them where you want.
>
> P. Cornforth."

> As long as bolt ladders don't appear everywhere. Just because one bolt is placed doesn't meant that one two feet above and two feet below needs to be added, e.g. Scout Scar.
>
> G. Cornforth.

> Go ahead and whack 'em in, Dave. It's your route and unless anyone else can climb it without them, good luck to them; maybe then they will have justification for removing any bolts. Until then it's just blurt and envy.
>
> S. Hubbard.

Beneath which someone wrote:

That's it then, the matter's closed.

Feeling that local opinion was on his side and, rumour would have it, encouraged by a number of others who felt that it would be no bad thing if the water was tested, Birkett duly placed his bolt. Which in turn was duly chopped. Unfortunately it was a resin bolt rather than an expansion one and the only way of removing it was to hacksaw if off, leaving an unsightly stub.

There was some criticism of the chopper as he had not repeated the route without the bolt (in the past this would have been a prerequisite for claiming the right to remove it), but on the whole the majority of those climbers who weren't totally apathetic about the issue supported the bolt's removal. After all, there did not seem to be any point in sticking by a set of rules when your opponents were bent on ignoring them.

Naturally Birkett got slated in various climbing magazines (except *Climber*, where blood seemingly proved thicker than ethics) and someone made an anonymous but succinct entry in the Rock and Run Book:

Birkett is a sacrificial goat.

One thing that is certain that arises out of this is that sooner or later, and probably sooner, someone else will try the same sort of thing again, so it is worth setting out the pros and cons of bolting routes.

On the positive side, bolts (and I mean well-placed bolts) undoubtedly make a route safer and they can be placed virtually anywhere. Unlike all others forms of protection currently used by leaders, the placement of a bolt is not dictated by the nature of the rock. Thus on bolt-protected climbs the overall difficulty of the route is no longer dictated by the environment, though the technical grade remains, of course, unchanged. Those who doubt that the odd bolt placed on a hard route will lead to a spate of bolt-protected easier routes need look no further than Llanberis, Malham or Coniston. And along with the bolt-on runners other evils appear: chipped, sawn or drilled nut placements and even, believe it or not, bolt-on holds. Also on the positive side bolt-protected climbs are undoubtedly popular and a retro-bolted route will generally receive far more ascents than it did in its un-bolted state. Anyone who doubts this should have a look at Scout Scar where extensive bolting has transformed a justifiably ignored outcrop into a popular venue for climbers living up to an hour's drive away.

On the negative side there is no doubt that by lowering the risk of injury on an otherwise poorly protected route bolts mean that first ascents are being made by those who are not worthy of them. The achievement of

Johnny Dawes in leading *Indian Face* (E9, 6c) could so easily have gone to a lesser person, given twenty or so bolts. Bolting is robbing future generations of their last great problems. There will soon be nothing, except the extremely strenuous, left for them to do. For those that doubt that technical standards and boldness can rise any further I can only say look to the past. Historical precedents are plenty. The future for mountaineering also looks bleak for in a few generations time, if bolting continues unabated, it is quite probable that the majority of climbers will be incapable of placing their own protection. This may sound alarmist but such a trend can already be seen in London-based climbers who practice almost exclusively on indoor walls and at Harrison's Rocks.

Arguments are regularly proposed by both sides to show that bolts are detrimental/beneficial to the environment. In fact the only bolts that can possibly be beneficial to conservation are belay bolts at the very top of a route which would avoid wear and tear on delicate vegetation. I believe that most climbers would accept such bolts if a good case could be made out for their placement, but this reasoning cannot apply to other bolts which inevitably spoil the beauty of the crag on which they appear. The truth is that all climbing activities are detrimental to the environment and that factors other than bolts have a much greater influence on our wild places. The nub of the bolt controversy is ethical, not environmental.

Are these things important? Is it not better to encourage something that people enjoy and is safer than it used to be? It is hard to argue this point without considering our present (non-bolting) code of climbing ethics. Here, the hypothetically purest climb is an on-sight solo of a new route by a nudist. Various forms of aid then effectively downgrade the route. These range from the acceptable – sticky rubber boots, chalk, clothes, etc, – to the unacceptable – pulling on the runners, chipping holds, and so on. There is a lot of doubtful territory in between and some practices come in and out of favour. Currently, though, things are a lot laxer than they were when I first started climbing, twelve or so years ago. Remember the furore that blew up when chalk was first used? Despite which, climbing still has an unwritten code of rules that most climbers abide by (at the very least when they are being watched).

The bolt ignores these rules and effectively changes the nature of the game. Possibilities for protection become limitless, possibilities for further safety likewise. Such a situation now exists in several continental countries. Climbers there are no longer responsible for placing their own protection. Generally the town council, commune or whatever has assumed this responsibility. At present most of the bolts are relatively new. What happens when a climber is injured or killed due to failure of an officially placed bolt is anybody's guess at present but I would say there

was a fair chance of the council being successfully sued. No doubt in time such authorities would deem it wise to regulate the behaviour of climbers so as to lessen the chance of an unfavourable court case. One can imagine the sort of thing: compulsory helmets, no soloing, all climbers to have passed a basic belaying course, etc, etc. All good sound stuff – if you don't mind your mountaineering tied up in red tape and neatly waymarked. But it strikes me that the reason that most of us climb is to get away from the sort of bureaucracy that I have just described. Climbing and mountaineering under the old rules have one primary, central dictum and it is that the climber is responsible for his or her own safety. Bolted climbing will, inevitably, change this. Those who doubt that should look at the European situation.

So do pro-bolting climbers want bureauracy on the crags, total safety with bolts every two feet, or to cheat future, bolder and fitter generations out of their inheritance? I doubt it. In fact I suspect that the pro-bolters have much baser motives, motives which I as much as anyone am guilty of possessing. The desire for fame, however fleeting, however small the proverbial pond, is strong. Less base, and maybe stronger, the desire to create lies deep within many of us. The desire to explore has its place as well. To a climber all these longings can be allayed, temporarily, with a new route. But new routes, in the popular areas of Britain, are hard to come by; and what use is a new route if it never gets repeated? Making the first and possibly only ascent of an unprotected E9 is one thing – fame is assured, but few nowadays want to bother with unprotected E3s and E4s knowing that they will merely sink back into the oblivion from whence they came. With all the easy, obvious and protectable lines accounted for, new routes must be ever harder, shorter, or more remote. Each type of climber picks his or her preference. The best go for difficulty. But well protected difficulties are few. thus the ascent of new climbs nowadays has less to do with technical ability than daring. For those climbers whose ability outmatches their bravery the bolt is the only way of redressing the balance. It must be very, very tempting.

In essence, what pro-bolt climbers have done is that they have picked up the ball and run with it. They have, in fact, by the rules of the old game, cheated. In doing so they have created a new game. In its infancy it has few rules and thus appears most attractive. It will not stay that way for long, but who cares? It will be their problem. And so it would, and no, I wouldn't care, but for one fact. It is this. They are running out of room. In the analogy of football they want to pinch our pitch and move the goalposts. But one cannot play rugby and football on the same ground. The rugby players would always win because their sport is less skilled and more anarchistic. Similarly, bolt-protected climbing and traditional

climbing cannot long co-exist without the demise of the latter.

Unfortunately bolt-protected climbing is here to stay. We all stood around and did nothing and the bolters have bolted what they could get away with and there it is. Geographical divisions have grown up with all natural crags except for limestone remaining bolt free. Such divisions may be totally illogical but they are all we have got. Moreover, the bolt brigade's attitude is hardly conducive to friendly discussion. 'Ignore the bastards and do what you want' sums it up rather well. At least we know what we are up against.

The philosophy of 'take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints' is most apt when applied to mountains. It is flawed, of course, because our very presence inevitably destroys something, but it is nonethe-less an ideal worth striving for. I, and I believe, almost all climbers, love climbing for the freedom and challenge that it gives us. I feel that a great part of that challenge is that climbers assume full responsibility for safeguarding themselves, and that aids to achieving this should be kept to an acceptable minimum. I feel that we should not reduce the mountain to our level, but elevate ourselves to its and if that means that certain areas of work remain unassailable to all except the utmost elite is that such a bad thing? Cannot rock too afford to have its Kanchenjunga – like summits where only the Gods may tread? I appeal to those whose immediate reaction is otherwise, to whom I am but a 'bastard', full of 'blurt and envy': do not destroy the sport you love for the mere sake of your own selfish greed.

At the very least, leave our mountains as you find them – a challenge to be accepted, not subdued.

NEW ROUTES 1988–1991: A BRIEF APPRAISAL

Al Phizacklea

You will immediately notice a change to this regular feature to a more informal article, which has done away with the old format of reproducing the full details of all the new routes claimed. This is not to say that the Fell & Rock Climbing Club are no longer concerned about the continual development of the crags because these descriptions are already widely available in the Club's Supplements and Guidebooks.

An article of this kind enables me to concentrate on the major achievements without becoming swamped with details of poorer routes, which admittedly are on the increase now that unclimbed rock is scarce. However, it is not all choss and moss: there have been some magnificent new routes on many of the better mountain crags such as Scafell, Esk, Dove, Dow and Flat Crags, spurred on by another noticeable rise in standards.

On the other hand, there have been disturbing incidents of chipping and bolting over recent years. So far the worst chipping has been contained within the quarries and the removal of the Raven Crag bolt was not an unexpected reaction because the route had been led without it in the first place.

It will be noticeable that this article has a greater concentration of information from the South Lakes. This is not favouritism from the author (honest!), it is a combination of a couple of factors. Firstly I decided not to include any routes that have since been incorporated into the latest definitive Guidebooks (hence few Gable and Eastern Fells details) and secondly there has simply been more development in this area.

I have divided the article into the five main guidebook areas where exploration has taken place – Scafell, Dow and Eskdale; Langdale; Borrowdale; Pillar and Gable and finally the Buttermere and Eastern Fells area. At the end I have provided a list of all the E7s in the Lakes to highlight the progressive rise in climbing standards. About half of the six hundred-odd new climbs in the Lakes have been within the Scafell – Dow Crag guidebook area, so it seems sensible to start this summary in this region.

Scafell, Dow and Eskdale

I dropped a hint in the last edition of the Guidebook about the 'Forgotten Walls' of Deep Ghyll. Well, these have been the venue for several new routes in impressive surroundings and on good rock. Descending from the head of the Ghyll the first addition is *The Scarlet Pimpernel* which takes a direct line through the slabs of *West Wall Climb* before attacking the steep headwall above at E4 5a, 6a.

Opposite: *The Unforgettable Fire*, HVS 5a. Deep Ghyll Buttress, Scafell. The first pitch. First ascent. Climbers: Al Phizacklea and Andy Rowell. *Photograph by John Holden.*

To its right, the slabby corner of the West Wall slab leads to a prominent diedre high on the face to give a pleasant HVS 5a, 4c called *The Unforgettable Fire*. Above the start of *The Great Chimney* rises the mighty, unclimbed *Death Arête*, which has a thin flake pressed against its left flank. This flake, and the continuation groove, is the line of *Ixodes*, El 5b, 5a. Finally, the gently overhanging right wall of this arête is the home of *Alamagordo*, which follows the thin crack up its centre at E4 6a. All these routes were climbed by myself and Dai Lampard, with the help of Andy Rowell and Paul Plowright. Further down the Ghyll, Paul Ross and Pete Lockley climbed the thin crackline in the steep wall between *Gobsite* and *Xerxes* to produce *Swansong*. Paul gave it E2 5c, 5b, but I get the feeling by the way he described how 'the abseil rope hung free down the crag and never once touched the rock' that it could be a little undergraded, but there can be no doubt about the quality.

Around on the main crag, the thin crack rising up the front of The Great Flake (to the right of *Nazgul*) was climbed by myself and Dave Kirby to create *Original Sin*, which felt like an E6 6c, even with a rest point. (I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to any members who were within earshot of the frustrated expletives that were uttered on that day . . .) Tony Marr and Mike Took claimed a variation of *C. B.* which traverses across the front face of the flake at E1 5b, thereby missing out on that historic crux – Heaven Forbid!

The East Buttress has also been productive. Paul and Greg Cornforth climbed a tenuous line up a thin crack and arête between *Dyad* and *Leverage* at E4 6a, 5c which they astutely named *The Ambleside Brother's Climb*. When you stand back from this section of the crag a diagonal line becomes evident, starting from *Dyad*, crossing *Leverage* to a steep corner which joins *Fulcrum*: this is the line of *Juno*, E4 6a, 5c, the work of myself, Andy Rowell and John Holden.

There was a brave attempt by Martin Berzins and Chris Sowden to climb the overhanging brown wall right of *Zeya*, but Martin resorted to a point of aid to overcome a nasty blank section. The grade? If you need to ask, you won't be able to do it! Martin and Chris also added a desperate entry to gain the first belay of *Lucius* from the right at E6, 6b, called *The Caution Horses*.

It was a pleasant surprise to find some easier routes still unclimbed on the East Buttress. The wall left of *Centaur* gave a delightful E3 with three independent 5c pitches to produce *Chiron*. Another route of a similar grade, but not quite as sustained, is *Cerberus*, which follows a hanging flake left of the initial ramp of *Great Eastern* before finishing up the capped corner above the top of *Yellow Slab*. The third route, called *Eastern Front*, takes a long mossy crack line to the left of *South Chimney*

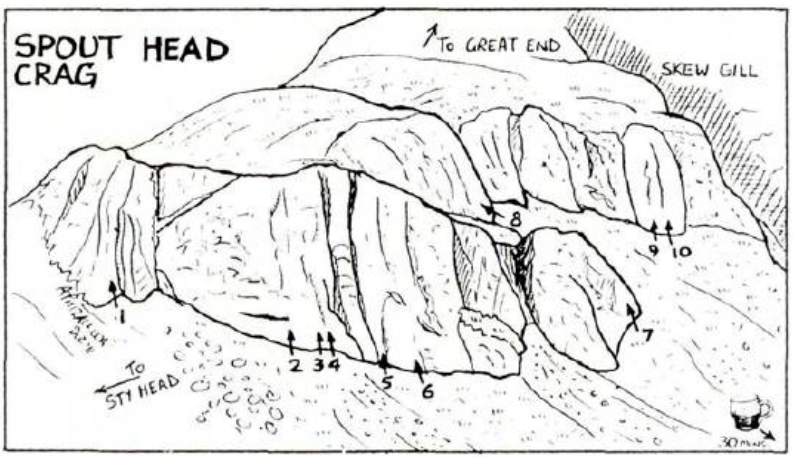
Opposite: *Juno*, E4 6a. East Buttress, Scafell. The first pitch. The first ascent. Climbers: Al Phizacklea and John Holden. *Photograph by Andy Rowell.*

at E1 5b, 5a – all three routes were led completely on sight by myself and John Holden.

The smaller crags around these hills (the ones usually passed by on the way to Scafell) have been developed by various teams. Tony Marr and Mike Took climbed the crack in the steep wall left of *Slanting Groove* on Pike's Crag to produce *Inexs* at E1 5b. Bill Birkett joined me for a day's exploration on Chambers Crag at the top of Little Narrowcove, but the crop of two E2s and two E4s will only appeal to those looking for remote adventures.

Ray McHaffie developed the lovely little wall of rock which sits above the crossing point of Pier's Ghyll by the Corridor Route. There are a dozen routes ranging between VD and E1 and their sunny aspect is well worth remembering if you are considering an early retreat from a chilly Scafell.

In a similar sunny orientation is Spout Head Crag, the crag sitting above the bottom end of the Corridor Route which was extensively developed by



KEY TO START OF ROUTES

1 PARSON JACK RUSSEL GROOVE (E1 5b)
2 BLAST FROM THE PAST (HVS 5a) / PATHMAKER (S)
3 THE NETTLE (HVS 5a)
4 THIRTY-THREE YEARS AFTER (VS 4c) / TIME MACHINE (E1 5b, 5a)
5 TOUCH AND GO (VS 4c)
6 TRADITIONAL APPROACH (HS)
7 HOURGLASS RIDGE (S)
8 FLYWAY PETER (HVS 5a)
9 GUTLESS CROW (HVS 5a)
10 CRAGSMAN'S CRACK (S) / THE BADGER (VS 4c)

Paul Ross. He added thirteen routes between Severe and El, but as they are described in the 1990 Supplement in the order that they were climbed, and not in the sequence that they lie on the crag, the sketch opposite should clear up the confusion. He was partnered by Paul Tanner, Denis Byrne-Peare and Peter Greenwood, who was drawn out of a thirty-three year retirement from climbing by Paul, which inspired one of the route names.

Some impressive 'Last Great Problems' have fallen on Esk Buttress, resulting in a meteoric rise in standards on the crag. Dave Pegg climbed the bold, bald wall left of *The Cumbrian* calling the result *First and Last and Always*, an incredible route with marginal protection, at E7 6b. He said that a helicopter trip may be required (to hospital) if you wimp out before you reach the peg – but before you contemplate jumping off for a certain pair of plaster trousers it's well worth remembering that a Sea King clouted the crag with its rotor blades whilst rescuing a climber last year! (It crash-landed at the bottom end of the Great Moss). This incident inspired the name of *Seaking Inspiration*, a much admired line by Neil Foster and Martin Berzins up the corner between *Satisfaction* and *Antibody*, at E6 6b. The wall to the right of *The Cumbrian* still holds out to a direct ascent, but myself and John Holden climbed a diagonal line across this steep piece of rock at E5 6a which we called *Mona Lisa*. We also found a line up the slabs right of *Trespasser Groove* which led to an overhanging diedre left of *Frankland's Crack*. This went at E4 5a, 6a, 6a, 5b to give *The Touchstone*. The Gargoyle Wall was the setting for three good routes. *Alehouse Rock* climbs the left wall of *Gargoyle Grooves* before finishing up a thin crack right of the Gargoyle Block. The slanting crack right of this which merges into *Wild Bunch* is *Blockbuster*, and *End of Time* climbs the wall right of *Boot Hill*. All three routes are graded E3 6a.

Tom Walkington and Barry Rogers are responsible for opening up Long Crag, which is the sunny outcrop passed by those on the approach to Esk Buttress from Cockley Beck. Out of the dozen routes to choose from here I would recommend *Twice Over*, E2, *Five Round*, VS, *Option Cracks*, VS, and *Right Edge*, HS, to anyone stopping on their way home from Esk. The Needle in Eskdale was climbed by a direct route left of the original 1907 line called *Straight to the Point* by myself, Rowell and Holden at E2 5c.

Hardknott Crag was brought into confusion by the Supplements when I wrongly identified a steep clean groove as *Earl Boethar*. This was in fact an unclimbed line until Ted Rogers and Rick Graham sorted it out and produced *Caesar*, E3 6a, the best of a dozen new routes added here. If you want to climb here, and you would be mad if you didn't, it would be worthwhile obtaining a copy of the topo from one of the local climbing

shops, which should clarify the situation until the new Guide comes out.

I climbed nine new routes on Demming Crag with Andrew Brewerton. The best is probably the slim groove left of Demming Slab called *Demimonde*, E1 5b. The masses of new routes continues on Gate Crag, where Ian Turnbull and Alan Wilson added another seven, ranging between HVS and *The Sassenach* (no that's not a new grade, it's an E6 6c direct finish to *Rock Aid*).

There have also been a lot of short hard problems added to the granite slabs of Hare Crag, sometimes referred to as the Yosemite of the Lakes. (But perhaps the Camp 4 Boulder of the Lakes would be nearer the truth!) Bill Birkett climbed a direct start to *Hareline Crack* at E5 6b and then added *Birthday Boy*, an E1 5b to the right of *Slit Wall*. Brian McKinley followed me up *International Rescue*, an E3 6a to the right of *Thunderbirds*. (Incidentally, *Thunderbirds* is to the right of *The Groove*, not left as stated in the Guide). Andy Rowell succeeded in leading a crack line on the left of the crag on which I had been 'dogging', so it was truthfully called *Hare of the Dog*, E5 6b. The only new route on Heron Crag is called *Titus*, an interesting E3, 5c, 6a, 5c squeezed in between *Gormenghast* and *Iago* by Dai Lampard and myself.

This is only a taster of the seventy or so new routes claimed in Eskdale over the past four years, which seems an awful lot until you compare it with the Duddon valley, where almost 170 routes have been added – only the major developments will be outlined, for obvious reasons!

John Daly and Kieth Phizacklea opened up, cleaned up and climbed up the steep walls overhanging the River Duddon in the gorge behind Troutal Farm. The best routes are on the open arêtes, such as *Diehard*, E3 5c, *Snapdragon* and *Troutal Arête*, both E3 6a, but the best two are *Pigwatching* and *Whitewater*, both E2 5c. The latter climbs above the waterfall that thunders into the lower pool. On Burnt Crag I climbed the hanging groove-line right of *S.P.C.* with John Holden at E5 6b to satisfy a *Burning Desire*. We later plugged the space between these two routes with *Scorched Earth* at E4 6a. Mark Radtke and Jane Cooksey added *An Alien Heat*, E4 6b, up the thin crack and groove line between *Burning Desire* and *The Burnt Ones*.

Keith Phizacklea and Dave Geere continued their long association with Great Blake Rigg, a pleasantly secluded crag which sits in the sun all day high above Seathwaite Tarn. *Younger Than Yesterday*, E3 5c, climbs directly up the slab that *Rumour* avoids, and *Anthrax* takes the hanging arête right of *Against All Odds* at E3 6a. I can't resist mentioning the upper wall of this crag. Although tiny, it is a superb place for a hard climber to escape from the hordes of groupies one usually finds at the more popular crags (i.e. you will have the place to yourself). Miss it and

weep. Across the other side of the tarn lies Far Hill Crag, which has been extensively developed by Bob Wightman and myself. Probably the best two lines are *Sparkle In The Rain*, E3/4 6a, which climbs the central capped groove and *First Of Class*, which takes the wall to its right as E4 6a. Back towards Troutal I must mention the multitude of small outcrops: Monolith Blocks, Little Blake Rigg, Viz Crag and the most beautiful of all, Foss How Crag. Set aside the cascades of Tarn Beck this little wall holds the hardest route in the valley – *Rough Diamond*, E5 6b.

Dow Crag is a superb place which has maintained a tradition from the earliest days that only climbers living or working locally have been involved in the development of the crag (with the obvious recent exception of Pete Livesey's *Rough and Tumble*). Since the last Guidebook a total of eight routes have been added, all led by myself with Steve Carruthers, Rob Knight, Stuart Wood and John Holden holding the ropes. Briefly, they are *Abracadabra*, a magical route up the wall left of *Abraxas* at E4/5 6b, and *Genocide*, a technical problem left of *Holocaust* at E4 6b. *Pandora's Box* climbs the desperate groove right of *Tumble* at E5 6b, which was the key for *Another Fine Mess*, a rising traverse which poaches the best bits from the *Holocaust* wall at E4 6a. The remaining routes are all a bit more obscure: *Adhara* which pulls out right of *Sirius* to climb the Central Wall direct at E4 6a was quickly followed by three routes in North Gully – described as a dirty and oppressive place in the Guide, but mock ye not! The right wall has some good clean rock, and facing south it is a veritable sun trap! *Acid House*, E4 6b, and *Gatecrasher*, E2 5c, climb the walls either side of *Pete's Party* and *High Life*, E2 5b, pulls out right of the huge (and I mean huge!) overhangs that cap the gully.

Jeff Wilkinson has led a revival of interest in the Coppermines Valley. He climbed six routes on Low Wether Crag and a further four on a leaning tower on Raven Tor, which were all named after films starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Why? Well, Jeff is a keen body-builder, styling himself on Arnie, and his dedication even went as far as travelling to California specifically to pump iron in the same gym as his celluloid hero. However, unlike his pectoral-packed pal, Jeff's joints were torn asunder under his own tendon-tension and unfortunately he's retired from the local scene.

Back to the climbing and Blue Quarry (sometimes referred to as Rascal How Quarry, because the instigator, Martin Bagness, didn't know its true name) which lies on the hillside to the right as you enter the valley. The end result is a dozen good slabby routes in the E2/E3 range which are all fixed with bolts and lower-off points set in a pleasant sheltered location.

The other quarries around the Tilberthwaite area have seen a rapid expansion of routes since a battery-powered drill has been available from

Rock and Run. One of the best is Black Hole Quarry, which was the setting for the infamous route-chipping scandal, when the smooth back wall was drilled out to create a venue for a climbing competition. The holds were quickly filled in with cement and the event never took place, but in the bitter aftermath the cement was chipped out and there it remained until Rick Graham equipped and led what is now *The Cruel Sea*, E4 6a. The rest of the quarry now contains many excellent routes of the more conventional kind which were established mainly by Roger Brokes, Dave Bates, Martin Dale and Andy Hyslop. A couple of routes, *Orifice Fish*, E3 6a, and *More Banana Related Japery*, E4 6b, traverse above the lip of the cavern which gave them a ridiculous sense of exposure out of all proportion to their length. Just as exciting are those routes which break through the stacked tiers of overhangs – *Ring Piece Activist*, E4 6b, *Darklands*, E4 6a, and *The Turbulent Beast*, E5 6b, have all won universal acclaim for their amazing climbing up an improbable area of rock. Don't be put off by their crude names, the hordes of abseilers and the midges – it's a great place to climb.

Parrock Quarry has become one of the most popular evening venues now that the routes have been 'retro-bolted'. However unethical you think the action is, the transformation of such a neglected backwater is quite remarkable. Johnny Adams and Bill Birkett added two big lines to the left of The Slabs: *The Groove*, an awesome flared slot, will spit you out at E6 6b and the *Wall and Slab* above the cave gives a fairly bold E5 6a. Further down the quarry Andy Hyslop has been responsible for developing *The Slobs* slabs and also the pillar in the entrance archway to Hodge Close, which provides dry climbing in the foulest of weather.

The walls of Hodge have seen some excellent additions. Dave Pegg climbed the left wall of *The Main Event* at E6 6b to create *Command Performance*, probably the boldest of the new routes. Paul Carling's *Viennese Oyster* is a good route left of *Blank Expression* at E3 6b, but his *Fatal Attraction*, E5 6c, which wanders up the smooth slab right of *Sasquatch*, gives a real test of adhesion between slate and rubber. Two further routes have pushed the limits of friction to excess: Paul Cornforth's *Power Transmission* which pulls out left of *Big Dipper* at E5 6c is matched by my own *Great Expectations*, which takes the rib right of *Sky* at the same grade.

To round off this area I will end on a disturbing piece of news – Peatfield Quarry has been blown up, despite the fact that the quarry operator had no licence for the use of explosives. This is no great loss to climbing (except for John Daly, whose routes have now gone) but could this unscrupulous style of quarrying spread to a more popular venue in the future?

Langdale

Well, it had to happen sooner or later – the first protection bolt was fixed into a natural volcanic crag in the Lakes. It was placed on Raven Crag in Langdale by Dave Birkett, grandson of the great Jim Birkett. (To be historically accurate, and to put this incident in context, bolts for aid have been placed on crags in the past and some are still used nowadays for protection, as on *The Dangler*, Falcon Crag.)

The route in question is *Daws Rides a Shovelhead*, a direct finish through the roof above *Centrefold*, which was always regarded as the Last Great Problem of the crag. It wasn't a question of bolting it up to bring it down to his own level – he had already led it at E7 6c without the bolt – so now it has been chopped the route is actually back to its original state.

Besides all this controversy, Dave has also climbed several desperate problems on the outcrops in Langdale. *Street Legal*, E7 6b, and *Bob Dylan*, E6 6b, fill the gaps on Middle Scout Crag either side of *The Beatles*. In Thrang Quarry behind Chapel Stile he climbed *Scared Rabbit*, E5 6b, *Hello Helen*, E6 6c, and a link between the two at 7a called *Keep on Keeping On*. Dave Pegg has added some desperate problems, notably a deceptive looking groove between *La Wally* and *Exposure* on Flat Crag which he called *Flattery*, E7 6b. On the same crag Martin Berzins added *Remains of the Day*, E6 6b, up the niche left of *Ataxia* after his partner Neil Foster had bagged the line right of 1984 to create *Deadlock* at E5 6c.

This Berzins/Foster team has also visited Pavey Ark to check out a couple of lines that remained on the steep East Wall, but the word must have leaked out. They found one of their prospective lines already occupied by Andy Hyslop, so Martin climbed *Angleheart* up the bold hanging ramp between *Fallen Angel* and *Heartsong* at E6 6a – apparently it's not for the faint-hearted! The afore-mentioned Mr Hyslop had raced up the crag at dawn with Martin Bagness (here's a tip – don't ever try to have a race against these two!) to stop the notorious Yorkshire raider from grabbing all the spoils. The result of all this tactical manoeuvring was *Assault and Matrimony*, an E4 6a slotted in between *Red Groove* and *Mother Courage*. Tom Walkington added a route up the steep wall left of Rake End Chimney which joins *Cook's Tour* after some E5 6b climbing, which he modestly named *Walkington's Tour*.

Over on Gimmer Crag Steve Reid and Joe Grinbergs climbed *Remembrance*, a long VS 4b, 4c, 5a, 4c to the right of *Gimmer Chimney*, which was covered by an article by Steve in the last *Journal*. I climbed a hard direct version of this route with John Holden which breaches the large overhanging wall half way up this face to create *British Bulldogs* at E5 5b, 6a, 5b. I also added a direct line up the slab of *Nocturne* at E1 5c with Rob Knight, who named it *Hash n'Thrash*. The quiet crags around Easedale

have seen little development apart from *The Strop*, which was climbed by John White, M. Scrowson, S. Hollis and Gill Hussey to the right of *Erne* at E2 5c.

Borrowdale

Malcolm Lowerson has discovered an interesting wall on Walla Crag, which is best known to most climbers as the heap of choss one passes just south of Keswick. He has climbed over a dozen routes up to E4 with N. Stein, R. Smith, S. Crowe and D. Greenop but his claims about their quality have not yet been verified.

Any Jones and Rick Graham added a hard eliminate on Lower Falcon which pulls through the bulges above the first peg on *The Niche* at E5 6b called *Vicky*. Paul Cornforth, that hard young man from Ambleside, has filled in the last major space on Reecastle Crag with a route that has gained a reputation as being the hardest in the Lakes. *Burn at the Stake* climbs the thin crackline between *Penal Servitude* and *Daylight Robbery* at the phenomenal grade of E7 7a, which was confirmed after several repeat ascents. Corney also climbed *Sentence to Hang*, an E5 6b up the wall between *Penal Servitude* and *White Noise*, but it lacks independence. On Reecastle North Crag – the one seen in profile left of the main crag – Karl Telfer and Joe Gilhespie climbed *The Emigrant*, which takes the diagonal crack up the front face at E2 5c. Meanwhile, on the South Crag, Kit Wilkinson and Duncan Booth added *Blonde Ambition* at E4 6a which takes the wall between *Widowmaker* and *Ricochet*.

On Caffel Side Crag, across on the other side of the valley, Steve Crowe, Simon Gee and Bob Bennett climbed the crack right of *Street-walker* at E2 5c to create *Miss O'Gynist*. Don Greenop has opened up Greenbank Crag, which lies in the woods south of Shepherds Crag, but I have no details of the routes as yet.

Andrew Slattery and Mike Flanning filled a few gaps on Bowderstone Crag, but their routes weren't as hard as Duncan Booth's *Mesrine*, which pulls through the diagonal roof right of *Hell's Wall* at E6 6b. Down on Eagle Crag Steve Reid and Ron Kenyon climbed the wall left of *Squawk* to produce *Needless Sports* at HVS 5a, 5a, 5a, and further up Greenup Valley the remote wall of Long Crag was partially developed by Jason Clay, Jon Sparks and Matthew Walsh.

The ubiquitous Ray McHaffie has discovered yet another crag! This time the rough slabs on the side of Sergeant's Crag in Langsthrath have provided him with some excellent little routes, and in the same valley Kit Wilkinson is continuing his association with the Black Wall, where he added *Upshot*, E2 5c, with Mac. Goat Crag is one of the most worked-out walls in the valley but it still provides routes for those with a crafty eye for

Opposite: Martin Berzins' attempt on the first pitch of the wall left of *Zeya*, East Buttress, Scafell. Climbers: Martin Berzins and Chris Sowden. *Photograph by Al Phizacklea.*

a line. Phil Rigby and Alan Greig may have come up with a cunning solution for the overcrowded crags of the future with their claim that *Ruptured Duck*, E3 6a, which climbs directly up the *Tumbleweed Connection* wall, renders all the existing routes in the area obsolete! Another eliminate was added by those roving raiders Neil Foster and Martin Berzins who rode their *Trojan Horse*, E6 6b, 6b, through the overhangs between *Footless Crow* and *Mirage*. Andy Jones and Dave Kirby climbed a route starting right of *Bitter Oasis* and then pulling over the roof above the second pitch to create a pleasant E5 6a, 6a which is still un-named.

Pillar and Gable

Very little has emerged from this area since publication of the Guide last year except for a few fillers on the outcrops. On Buckbarrow Ian Turnbull climbed a direct through *The Witch* at E4 6a and called *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, whilst on the Upper Pikes Crag Andrew Atkinson and I added a girdle at E3 5c, 5c, 5c called *Three Pint Primer*. I also climbed *Aquiline Slab*, E1 5b, to the right of *Eagles Nest Ridge Direct* with John Holden on the same day that we added three little routes on Kern Knotts. Steve Clegg led a team up an eliminate to the left of *Kern Knotts Crack*: these four additions to the crag are all in the E1/E2 bracket.

Buttermere and Eastern Fells

The new Guide *should* be in the shops by the time you read this, which is a great relief to me as I am suffering from writer's cramp at the moment and I don't have to cover the area in this article! However, I cannot ignore the contribution that Martin Berzins has made to the huge North Buttress of Dove Crag, where he has climbed *Bucket City*, E6 6a, *Pale Face*, E6 6b, *Bucket Dynasty*, E6 6b, *Beyond the Pail*, E5/6 6b, 6a, and especially *Vlad the Impailer*, a desperately strenuous E7 6b. With a great deal of help from Neil Foster he has brought the crag to maturity with one of the hardest collections of routes on any major crag.

The only other E7 in the Lakes I haven't mentioned is on Iving Scar in Kentmere, where Paul Cornforth climbed *Mindscape* to the right of *Shaken Not Stirred* at E7 6c.

This brings the total of E7s claimed in the Lakes to eight, so to round off this article here is a list of them, in alphabetical order, so get ticking!

Postscript. After I had written this article I saw the graded list for the forthcoming Eastern Fells guidebook – *Mindscape* has been downgraded to *only* E6!

Previous page, left: *Chiron*, E3 5c. East Buttress, Scafell. First pitch: first ascent. Climbers: Al Phizacklea and John Holden. *Photograph by Andy Rowell.*
Previous page, right: High on *Mona Lisa*, E5 6a. Esk Buttress. The first ascent. Climber: Al Phizacklea. *Photograph by John Holden.*
Opposite: *Genocide*, E4 6b. Dow Crag. The first ascent.
Climber: Al Phizacklea. *Photograph by Keith Phizacklea.*

LIST OF E7s IN THE LAKES

Route Name	*Crag*	*Originator*	*Year*	*Tech. Grade*	*No. of Repeats*	*Detailed in*
Burn at the Stake	Reecastle, Borrowdale	P. Cornforth	91	7a	3	Unpublished
Daws Rides a Shovelhead	Raven, Langdale	D. Birkett	91	6c	0	Unpublished
First and Last and Always	Esk Buttress	D. Pegg	90	6b	0	89–90 Supplement
Flattery	Flat Crag, Langdale	D. Pegg	90	6b	0	89–90 Supplement
Inferno	Bowderstone Crag, Borrowdale	P. Ingham	88	6c	1	Borrowdale Guide '90
Mindscape	Iving Scar, Kentmere	P. Cornforth	89	6c	1	Buttermere/Eastern Fells Guide '92
Street Legal	Middle Scout, Langdale	D. Birkett	90	6b	0	89–90 Supplement
Vlad the Impailer	Dove Crag, Dovedale	M. Berzins	91	6b	0	Buttermere/Eastern Fells Guide '92

N.B. Correct to the end of 1991.

IN MEMORIAM

* News of the deaths of these Members was received too late for the inclusion of Obituary Notices in this *Journal*.

** Regrettably no Obituary Notices have been received for inclusion in this *Journal*.

ALISON ADAM

Alison first climbed on Dow Crag in the 1930s and she led the F. & R. C. C. Alpine meet in Zermatt in 1939. During that meet she climbed the Rimpfischhorn and the Dent Blanche. She had already explored other mountain regions in Europe before this particular season and between 1935 and 1939 she had climbed and walked in the Tatras Mountains, the Stubai Alps and in the Silvretta Alps.

During the war she not only chose to teach in London but she also worked at an information desk at one of the main line stations and when

time permitted and the opportunity presented itself she greatly enjoyed the walking meets of the F. & R. C. C. London Section.

She continued to do some climbing after returning to the north both in the Alps and throughout Britain. The Pennine moors and fells she knew particularly well and she continued to organise a Yorkshire meet for friends every year, including one for 1989 when she led the group along part of the Pennine Way. Usually she selected the more remote and less frequented ways.

She was an intrepid traveller and her interest in visiting mountain areas never diminished. In 1958 she did a walking tour in the Jotunheim Mountains of Norway with Marjorie Wood, in recent years she went twice to Turkey, and in 1989 at the age of 82 she had planned to go on a walking tour in the Himalayan foothills but the trip had to be cancelled, much to her huge disappointment, through lack of support. Undeterred she had planned a visit to Oberammergau for later in 1990.

For many years because of her commitment to the Church, she made an annual visit to Iona where she lived and worked with the Iona Community, and she already had one planned for 1990.

She was an energetic, disciplined and adventurous person, both intellectually and physically, who continued to exercise and explore these attitudes in spiritual and mountain areas all her life.

Jo Light

CHARLES ERIC ARNISON

'One of Nature's gentlemen' would be a good description of Eric Arnison, a man completely without side or pomposity, generous to a fault, loyal to his friends and the ideal companion in the hills. He died in March 1992 at the age of 90.

I had had the privilege of close friendship with Eric for at least forty five years. We had regularly climbed, skied and walked together in the Lakes and in Scotland. Our Scottish trips were usually in his converted van, adapted for sleeping and cooking, where you had to snuggle up with his dog. In awkward or dangerous situations he could be imperturbable and resourceful: a good chap to have around.

He also climbed and skied in the Alps, Corsica, Norway and Australia. When he was 70 years of age he became the oldest man to climb Mount Kenya and two years later traversed some of the highest mountains in Ethiopia. Eric was a capable and determined rock-climber but at his best as an all-round-mountaineer: he became a member of the Alpine Club in 1938.

Eric didn't join the Club until 1937 but he had been fell-walking and climbing long before then. After years of prominence in the Club he became Vice President in 1951–53 and President in 1960–63, serving the office with quiet distinction.

Eric was a founder member of the Lake District Ski Club in 1936, becoming its meets secretary, then president and later an honorary member. He was also a member of the Keswick Mountain Rescue Association and of the Lake District Mountain Trial Association for very many years, being actively associated with fell-running in the Lake District. He took part in an early mountain trial round the fells, running round the course in nailed boots, accompanied by his dog, when he was at least twice the age of most of the other competitors.

Eric was very much the all-round countryman – not only active in the fells and on the crags but keenly interested in shooting and fishing. His other interests included flying (as a passenger), motor racing (as a spectator) and archaeology.

After school Eric became articled to his father, qualifying as a solicitor in 1926. After a few years in London he came back to the family law firm in Penrith, walking daily to his office until a very late age. He became closely associated with many Penrith affairs, captaining the rugby club in the 1930s and later serving as club president for many years. For many years he was clerk to the magistrates, secretary to the local Chamber of Trade and secretary to his Parochial Church Council.

Eric had lived a very full life, much of it among hills, and was at his happiest among old mountain friends. One of his outstanding characteristics was his loyalty and continued fondness for friends, no matter what their rank or station. All his very many acquaintances, you could say, were also his friends.

A. Harry Griffin

GORDON BOND

Gordon was proposed to the Club in 1957 by Harry Ironfield and myself, who were among his closest friends. Although he only ever did a little rock-climbing in the Lakes he would often be seen at Widdop on the boulders. He was a very fit fell-walker and extremely capable when it came to camping and preparing food in the huts and I unashamedly admit that I relied heavily on him at these times.

Gordon was always interested in holidays that were different: tramping through Lapland in 1950 and Tunisia in 1951, when these places were hardly to be seen in travel agents' brochures. In his fifties he was not able

to roam the fells any more but travel still dominated his thoughts and he visited Western Ireland, India, China, Egypt, Jordan, Amman and Israel. The latter had a special appeal as he had served in the army in Palestine in the Second World War.

Gordon's working life was spent at the Accrington Brick and Tile Company, from leaving school at 14 to his retirement at 65 and it was a tragedy that he was unable to enjoy his last years owing to the condition of his breathing and his heart. Since his death in July 1991 he has been greatly missed by his many friends.

Ted Pettinger

COMMANDER ALAN STUART CRAIG OBE

Commander 'Haggie' Craig joined the Royal Navy in 1936 as a cadet and served his commission with Derek Satow at Dartmouth College. He saw active service in the North Atlantic and Home Waters (1940), Mediterranean (Battle of Spartivento, November 1940 and torpedoed on a Malta convoy in June 1942), South Atlantic, Indian Ocean and raids against the Japanese at Sabang, Palembang and Surbaya.

In 1948 he was appointed to ordnance engineering and was promoted to the rank of commander in 1952. He was appointed an OBE in the New Year Honours List in 1966 and retired from the Active List in 1971. He then joined the Admiralty staff in Bath and for five years was the editor of the *Journal of Naval Engineering* until his final retirement in 1977.

On his move to Bath in 1972 Commander Craig and his wife settled in the picturesque village of Bathford on the boundaries of Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. A keen historian and genealogist – he was a member of the Society of Genealogists of London – he chronicled the history of his parish (*Bathford Past and Present*, 1985).

Although a keen sportsman in his youth – rugby, cricket, cross-country and shooting – I have been unable to find anything about his involvement with the Fell & Rock since he joined in 1938, although his father was one of the founder members of the Club in 1906 and was one of its Vice Presidents in 1919. In his will Commander Craig bequeathed a bound set of *Journals* to the Club.

Chris Wright

(I acknowledge assistance from Mrs Anne Craig and Mr Laurence, Chairman of the Bathford Historical Society).

JACK FENWICK

Although not known to many members, Jack Fenwick joined the Club in 1939 and was very active in the Forties. He rarely aspired to the higher grades, but was a steady rock-climber and loved to pass on his expertise to younger potential climbers. I will always be grateful to him for those three days in September 1943 when he took myself and two other teenagers up and down all the easier ridges of the Napes. He also showed us Brackenclose and later proposed us all for the Club.

In 1945 he married Norma and they spent their honeymoon in Skye where they met the late W.A. Poucher and appeared several times in photographs in his book *The Magic of Skye*. In 1948 he left his native north-east and moved to Scotland to work for the South of Scotland Electricity Board, retiring in 1971 as Deputy Chief Financial Officer. During this period his hill-walking was mainly confined to Scotland. Latterly he had started attending meets again and I last saw him walking to Shenavall during the Scottish Meet of 1990.

Jim Huddart

Jack took particular pleasure in attending, with Norma, the Scottish 'geriatric' meets in May. He was a delightful companion on the hills with a fund of interesting stories told with a gentle humour. He was also a life-long keen skier and right up to his last illness he and Norma had a skiing holiday in the Alps.

Margaret Roberts

MARY DILYS GLYNNE 1895–1991

During her long life Mary achieved a wealth of success. An expert plant pathologist at Rothhampstead, her work was recognised with a Doctorate from the University of Wales and later an OBE. She had a love of gardening, travelling, archaeology, painting and yoga and more importantly a unique empathy with her family and ten nephews and nieces. Born in North Wales she began fell-walking as a child and rapidly developed mountain 'lore', and a deep love of her native Snowdonia.

Following the death of Owen Glynne-Jones, a cousin of her mothers, the family were opposed to rock-climbing, so when Mary began serious ascents she referred to them as 'scrambling'. Her first 'scramble' was a descent of the Arrowhead Direct on Gable, invited by two FRCC members, who promptly suggested she join the Club. Thoroughly 'hooked' she

joined in 1923 and was soon climbing with well-known mountaineers – Dr Hadfield, Dorothy Pilley Richards, Menlove Edwards, and with her favourite guide, Joseph Georges. Ascents of Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Grepon, traverses of the Dru, the Grand Charmoz and the Meije followed year by year. During her travels she was the first lady to climb a peak in the Tatra and Mount Spenser in New Zealand. At the age of 69 she strolled up Fujiyama. She joined the Ladies Alpine Club in 1928 (becoming Vice President) and the Pinnacle Club in 1934.

An active member of the London Section she encouraged many in their climbing careers, acquiring a host of firm friends. Her contemporaries knew her as "Mary Glynne, she can get up anything."

David Garrod

EILEEN GREIG

Eileen Greig (and her elder sister Maisee) lived in Liverpool and went to school there. She studied modern languages at Girton in the days before women were granted degrees. She taught in Liverpool but spent as much time on the continent to increase her fluency in French and German.

She played the violin and Maisee the 'cello. When they retired a quartet met on Monday mornings at their home. They enjoyed the Liverpool Phil and the Playhouse. For many years she was chairman of the gardening section of the West Kirby Townswomen's Guild and an active member of the Presbyterian church.

Eileen loved the mountains and to enable her to reach them at one time ran a motorcycle and sidecar. She became a member of the Club in 1925 and for many years was one of the hard walkers, being a frequent member of the Lawson Cook – Graham Wilson – Raymond Shaw party. She was one of those members who would be out in all weathers: along with Maisee and friend Kath Sconce she was a dedicated lover of Lakeland.

S.C. first met Eileen in the early days of Brackenclose where she spent many happy visits. She also had the distinction of being the first fee-paying member at Raw Head in 1945. She was a regular attender at the Club Dinner and had a yearly reservation for the New Year Meet at the O.D.G.

Eileen spent many holidays abroad, often in Portugal with a friend who lived there and she even went as far as New Zealand. Her final holiday was a cruise along the Norwegian coast, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

M.B. saw her at the end of May and took her down to the front in West Kirby in her wheelchair. Eileen enjoyed life to the full – never in a rush, but as much as she could fit in.

Sid Cross and
Marjorie Bowker

DAN HAMER 1923–1990

Dan Hamer's most active years with the Club spanned a twenty year period, beginning in the 1960s, during which time he was a regular attender on meets – a familiar figure huddled over his sketch pad in the lee of a boulder or sitting quietly reading in the corner of the hut. A neat and skilful climber, a tireless mountain walker, he was equally at home on rock or ice. He was a quiet but enthusiastic supporter of the Club, serving on the committee and leading a number of meets. He loved being in the mountains and thoroughly enjoyed the choice companionship that mountaineering in general, and the Fell and Rock in particular, afforded him.

Born in Bolton on 31 January, 1923, he was brought up by strict Quaker parents. Encouraged by his father he soon proved himself a competent golfer and cricketer but his adventurous spirit, coupled with a natural artistic talent, carried him beyond the limitations of the sports field to the freedom of the hills.

His rock-climbing began in the Lake District and on the Derbyshire crags under the sage guidance of Len Barlow in the early war years and at the same time he began to paint the mountains he climbed. The outbreak of hostilities had found him still at school. In 1941 he enlisted in the RAF, trained as a radio operator and served the remainder of the war around the Mediterranean. Old sketch pads chart his involvement – seafront at Alexandria, burnt out buildings at Tobruk, paintings in Malta, Sicily and Italy. From a RAF rest camp at altitude on Mount Etna he climbed the volcano several times making detailed drawings and water colours of the various craters.

After the war he began an outdoor career as a surveyor with the Ordnance Survey and when he retired in 1983 was managing their North-East Manchester Regional Office.

Dan was actively involved in the formation of the Lancashire Caving & Climbing Club and the Saddleworth Art Group, and it was through the former that he met and married my mother. They were both introduced to the Fell & Rock in 1952 by Lionel Glaister of Bolton.

As soon as I was able to stay in the huts Dan's activities with the Club increased and I know he regarded the years that followed amongst the

most rewarding he ever spent. Sadly the onset of an extremely debilitating and rare brain disorder in 1986 suddenly robbed him of his ability to climb and paint and after a prolonged illness he died, at the age of 67, on 13 October, 1990.

Modest and unassuming, solidly dependable, he was a private man, cultured and well-read but with a surprising and ready sense of humour for those privileged to witness it.

He was a fine example to me, a loving husband to Mollie and the very best of companions on the hills. He has been sadly missed by family and his many friends.

Richard Hamer

JACK HEERY 1918–1988

The sudden death of Jack Heery in a cycling accident in June 1988 was a great shock to his family and friends and brought to an end a full and active life.

Jack joined the Club in 1977 and, with his wife Mavis, soon made friends amongst our members, but before long the death of Mavis put an end to the plans which they were making for foreign travel together and Jack had to adjust to a new life. Typically he thought of others and involved himself in voluntary work with the mentally handicapped, while keeping active on the hills and travelling and trekking abroad. During this time he was very touched by the kindness and support of his relatively new found friends in the Club. He was a frequent attender at Meets where he soon became known as a very strong fell-walker and as a friendly member of the crowd in the huts but he also enjoyed quieter company and liked to stay in huts and tramp the fells with just one or two companions.

He was a devoted family man and had strong ties with his three sons and their families. It was not unusual for him to cycle out to Switzerland or across Ireland to see his grandchildren. On one occasion the landlady of an inn at the top of an alpine pass was entertained by two small children who told her that they were waiting to meet their grandfather. To her great surprise they ran to greet, not the elderly gentleman she had envisaged, but a fit and sunburnt cyclist who had just pedalled up the pass on the last leg of his ride from England.

Jack was a man of high principles and was very decided in his views. His wartime experiences on active service with the Commandos had left him with a bitter hatred of warfare. He was a man of peace, yet despite his quiet disposition he loved the verbal battle and thoroughly enjoyed heated debate on the issues of the day.

The Club has lost an active and interesting member and we have lost a very good friend.

Maureen Linton and
Don Lee

(The Editor regrets the omission of this obituary from *Journal No. 72*).

AUDREY OLWEN KENYON

(Although Audrey Kenyon's obituary appeared in *Journal No. 72* the following letter of appreciation has been received from a family friend of long standing and member Mrs Margaret Harris).

Audrey Olwen Kenyon (nee Jones) was born in Chiswick on 22 July 1912. One of her grandmothers was Dutch and Audrey spent some of her childhood in Amsterdam. Her undoubted talent for design and embroidery was fostered at the Manchester School of Art. While in Manchester she met Jack and caught his enthusiasm for the Lake District, where she would stay with 'Granny' Grant at Low Yewdale (and encountered Mrs Heelis) or with her aunt and uncle, Major Rothwell-Jackson at Hazel Mount, Broughton-in-Furness.

It was from here that she married Jack on 27 February 1938 in the little church at Wasdale Head. Legend has it that a group of lads padlocked the gate and forced Jack to lift his bride over it – no mean feat!

In 1950, when Jack was Borough Engineer, Surveyor and Planning Officer in Middlesbrough they bought the house at Haws Bank, Coniston for holidays with their growing family: later it became their permanent home.

We met the Kenyons in 1954 when we acquired 'derelict outbuildings' at Gateside, Coniston, from Helen Bryan and Evelyn Pirie, and made them habitable for holidays. Thus began a friendship in which Jack and Audrey were our anchor-men in Coniston. Audrey's welcome on our return was unsurpassed: the home-made cake on the exquisitely embroidered cloth, the splendid fish cooked for enormous suppers, warm fires with a friendly Bracken or Donegal by the hearth, pots of her jam to take away, but above all, when work sent us south again, she wrote us letters in an inimitable stream-of-consciousness style, packed with news, vignettes of local life and piquant comment. She was a very sharp observer: it was Audrey who, seated in an aeroplane awaiting take off, insisted against all protests of disbelief from passengers and staff, that the petrol cap was off and dangling on its chain. Of course she was right! She had a way of being right.

Until she injured an ankle she was a keen camper, walker and mountain

LEGACIES

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

Commander Alan Stuart Craig OBE A complete set of *Journals* commencing in 1907.

William George Standring £1000.

Free Spirit: A Climber's Life
Reinhold Messner. Translated by Jill Neate. Hodder & Stoughton. 1991. 250pp. illus. £16.95. ISBN 0-340-42900-3

Coming Through: Expeditions to Chogolisa and Menlungtse
Andy Fanshawe. Hodder & Stoughton. 1990. 217pp. illus. £14.95. ISBN 0-340-52079-5

Both of these books are autobiographical, and both give much information about expeditions. Messner's covers some forty years, and Fanshawe's not much more than four, but is more detailed.

Messner's book is to be recommended mainly to those who have not read his previous books. Apart from some delightful childhood reminiscences – when he climbed near home with his brother Gunther and with school friends – his expeditions and his climbing philosophy have been well covered in earlier books. However, all the important events of his life are here: his Dolomite climbs when he concentrated on purity of line, his Himalayan expeditions and solo climbs, his successes with oxygen-free climbing at high altitude, and his exploration of the highest summits in all continents, including Antarctica. He gives an interesting and moving account of the loss of his brother on their descent from the summit of Nanga Parbat in 1971, after which Reinhold lost several toes but was able to continue climbing. He pays tribute to other climbers who have continued to develop his ideas, notably Jerry Kukuczkz and Tomo Cesen; and he brings the reader up to date on his travels to the wild places of the world and his concern with conservation.

The book is decently written with some good descriptive passages, well put together, and marvellously illustrated. For the reader who has not previously encountered this author's career, it will be of great interest, and for those already familiar with Messner's exploits, it will act as a reminder of what a truly innovative force he has been in the climbing world, as well as being informative about his early background.

Andy Fanshawe's *Coming Through* shows remarkably clearly how a brilliant young climber, ready for anything, becomes tempered by experience and the death of friends. He tells us nothing of his early life, but one knows from other accounts that at 14 he saw his physics teacher killed on a winter climb of Blencathra and learnt that mountains needed respect, and how he led his first expedition to the Ecuadorian Andes while studying at Imperial College.

When we first meet him on the Aiguille du Plan on Christmas Eve, he is in his early twenties. He has just given up his job in order to train for an

Great Expectations, E5 6c. Hodge Close Quarry. The first ascent.
Climber: Al Phizacklea. *Photograph by Andy Rowell.*

expedition he is organising to traverse Chogolisa the following year. He has some hair-raising experiences in Chamonix as well as Wales and Scotland, before departing for Pakistan in 1986. On Chogolisa all five expedition members are successful but of three (not including Andy) who later visit Broad Peak (sans permit!) one is killed. For the achievement on Chogolisa Fanshawe's team was awarded the 1986 Nick Estcourt Award.

On return to England he took up an appointment as National Officer with the BMC in Manchester, a job he held for three years – handy for climbs in the Peak District – and the following winter made for Scotland with John Taylor. On New Year's Eve, 1987, they were on Ben Nevis in mist and snow when they misjudged the descent route and the snow avalanched them 300m down Five Finger Gully, John falling to his death, Andy being injured. Very fortunately there were others on the mountain and a rescue was organised in time to save his life.

Through the BMC Andy had come into contact with Chris Bonington, and when Chris was getting together his second expedition to Menlungtse in 1988 (his first having been unsuccessful), he invited Andy to join the team. There was a good deal of media interest, as Yeti footprints had been seen in the area. The mountain is approached through Tibet (China) involving a very long trek, well described. But there was no sign of the Yeti, and soon the media went home. The climb on Menlungtse takes up more than half this book and gives much of the best writing. It was done lightweight, on the West Face, by Andy and one companion, and on their descent they found that a cache had disappeared. Yeti?

On his return Andy decides to get married but at the same time makes arrangements for an expedition to Makalu, for which he had had a permit for three years. However, once at base camp, and after recce-ing the mountain, Andy realises that he does not wish to climb it at that time, and is now mature enough to retreat, so returns home. Later when Ulric Jessop (who had been with him on Chogolisa) returns to Makalu, they go together, in January 1990, to Kleine Scheidegg, and we leave them having reached to the summit of the Eiger by its north wall.

This book offers full appendices on Chogolisa and Menlungtse and these two main expeditions are excellently described. This is a first book, and a young man's book, and improves as it goes along. For those interested in the detail of Himalayan climbing, it will be found most enjoyable.

Livia Gollancz

(Andy Fanshawe was killed in March 1992 while climbing the Grade V, 200m Eagle Ridge of Lochnagar. He had been training with Ulric Jessop for an attempt on K2. He was 28 and lived at Dufton, nr Appleby. He leaves a wife, Caroline, whom he married in 1990 and to whom we extend our sympathies. Editor.)

The Alpine 4000m Peaks by the Classic Routes
Richard Goedeke. Diadem Books. 1991. 240pp. illus. £12.99.
ISBN 0-7634-1007-4
This is a book which will inevitably find its way into the rucksack or anorak pocket of many British alpinists, particularly those who are actively 'ticking off' the 4000-ers.

This 'Guide for Mountaineers' was first published in Germany in 1990. The English edition was edited from an original translation by Jill Neate.

The scope of the book encompasses all the highest points of the main alpine peaks throughout France, Switzerland and Italy, including ridge points, shoulders and gendarmes.

The route descriptions for the main peaks (61 listed) are provided with a historical note, the nature of difficulties and grade, the effort required in terms of metres of ascent, the dangers and pleasures and details of maps required, followed by a description of the route to the hut and then the climbs to the summit or summits. Other worthwhile alternative routes are then briefly mentioned. To support the text there are 32 sketch maps and 17 topos, 48 high quality colour photographs and 48 black and white photographs. The maps are rather basic and so it would be necessary to obtain the appropriate detailed maps of the area to be visited.

At the back of the book are three lists. The first gives 150 summits or gendarmes 4000m or over. Some of these are only 5m higher than the nearest col! There is at least one mistake in this list. In the second the climbs are listed by grade, the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey being the hardest at D+, and the majority falling into the PD category. The third list provides the number of metres of ascent via the ordinary route from the highest transport point (if you don't mind cheating).

There is more in this guide than most British Alpinists would do in their lifetime, but hopefully it may provide incentive to sufficient people to complete the main summits and then form a new exclusive organisation – 'The 4000-ers Club'.

Peter Fleming

A Lakeland Mountain Diary: From 40 years in The Guardian
A. Harry Griffin. Crowood. 1991. 224pp. illus. £10.95.
ISBN 1-85223-711-2

I do not read *The Guardian*, so these 240 pieces from Harry Griffin's Lake District 'Country Diary' in that newspaper, spread over 40 years, are new to me. I have long enjoyed and admired Harry's other books. Southerners credit me with a knowledge of the life and ways of the Lake District that

actually owes as much to his writings as to my own experience. No doubt some of the material from the *Guardian* pieces has found its way into the other works. The stylistic resemblances are there: the accurate, professionally wrought syntax; the disciplined metaphors; the careful phrase-making; the rather old-fashioned fondness for incisive adjectives; the inherent elegance and courtesy; the unpretentiousness. Of course, when you know your subject as well as Harry Griffin does, you don't have to pretend.

The knowledge is a delight. I have my favourite 'secret' bits of the Lake District – in Dunnerdale, in Swindale, back o' Skiddaw, up Deepdale, and elsewhere that I am not going to tell you about. It is pleasing to have my taste confirmed by many of Harry's pieces. More pleasing still are those which call attention to comfortable crags, elderly scrambles, commodious snow gullies, and grand, solitary walks on deserted, wind-swept fells that I have not previously known. I must attend to them. They will Prolong Active Life better than zoom-pills.

I feel better for learning that others can get lost on the fells, or descend to a low-level outing on a lousy day. Harry's frank, less than rueful, admissions are a comfort, and a token of his generous common sense. So are his recurrent thoughts on the virtues of crampons in addition to ice-axe and compass, in winter. Likewise those on Brasher boots. They must have been revolutionary when first publicised. His conflicting feelings over the merits of fox hunting, quarrying, road improvements, and cairns, bespeak an informed fair-mindedness about balancing the traditional ways of earning a living in the Lake District, the importance of sensitive conservation, and the expectations of visitors and off-comers. One point of difference: although I draw my old-age pension, I am too young to have known Mardale as it was before the drowning. Haweswater is all I have ever known up there, and I like it. From the sepia photographs, the old Dun Bull looks to me like a dump. Harry does not make too much of it, but is it not time for everyone to stop weeping into the beer?

The book is nicely printed, on paper good enough to take sharp, well-contrasted, black-and-white reproductions in the text of 50 photographs from the Geoffrey Berry archive. It is as full as a Christmas cake of good stuff and the right spirit.

George Watkins

Vortex

David Harris. Diadem. 1991. 208pp. £13.99. ISBN 0-906371-19-8.

Vortex indeed. For two days and most of the intervening night I read David Harris's thriller, eating scraps, ignoring work, rejecting spring on the hills, until the gyrating characters and events finally accelerated down the inevitable plug hole. The consequent bleary-eyed queasiness was worth it.

Not very nice cops and arguably acceptable drug dealers stalk each other down west side Canada and USA. High in the North Cascades, climbers rescue a survivor from a crashed aeroplane. Something is leery. Read on through nasty homicide, variable detective work, publisher's obligatory sex, magnificent evocations of ice, rock, and ski mountaineering, and half-convincing special pleading about hard drugs, soft drugs, and social responsibility until . . . all is revealed. You have known all along how it must end, and you haven't even suspected it. The story makes compulsive reading.

Not the description. On introduction, every character is routinely described (dimensions, coloration, notable features, like a passport). Regular up-dates on clothes recur (top half, bottom half, necktie if worn, footwear). Whenever people eat, you get the menu. This is the disciplined verisimilitude, recommended by creative writing gurus. As fiction, it jars. Data have to be planted, but not necessarily in check lists. The swearing is awful. In further pursuit of verisimilitude the characters unimaginatively, routinely, for no discernible dramatic advantage, and without variation, say 'fuck', 'shit', and their derivatives. Shakespeare knew better than that ('Swear me, Kate, like a lady, as thou art / A good mouth-filling oath' . . . i Henry IV, III. 1). I know the argument: real people talk like that, so fictitious ones must do the same, and anyway we are all emancipated now. But fiction is, by definition, not fact. Fiction is for fun, not for re-living the boring 'real' experience of listening to foul-mouthed inarticulates. If we are going to have profanity, let's have real, Rabelaisian profanity. Do you remember Bill Peascod and the 'river of wet shit' in his TV spectacular on Eagle Front? I spent many hours of one night with Bill, in foul weather on the Egginer, swearing in antiphons. It lightened our darkness. 'Well, bugger my wig,' said a surprised professor of 18th Century literature, on another occasion. Only 40 years later have I guessed what kind of wig. You wouldn't believe! 'Peacock's prick!' says Gavin Lyall's Agnes Algar, stung by the suave duplicity of a senior civil servant: zoologically surprising, the semantic shift in the second term of the metaphor tickles ribs and intellect with a metaphysical conceit of excessive beauty, arrogance, self-regard, and impotence. Oh, why doesn't Linda Cunningham in *Vortex* swear like Lady Percy or Agnes Algar! It would be in character.

Sorry for the homily, but David Harris is too good a story teller to be hampered by the fallacy of literalism, and somebody had to say so. Read *Vortex*. Soon.

George Watkins

Mountain Photography
David Higgs. Diadem. 1990. 110pp. illus. paperback. £8.95.
ISBN 0-906371-28-7 (first published by Longman, 1983)

Writing as one who has a healthy scepticism about books on photographic techniques, which are often little more than sales brochures for equipment salesman, I found this book a welcome surprise. Well illustrated by the author's own photographs it contains a wealth of practical advice clearly based on the author's own experience in taking photographs for pleasure and profit, at home or abroad, in fair weather and foul.

The book clearly does not attempt to cover all aspects of photography, but only those areas which are peculiar to the use of a camera in relation to mountaineering activities and in hostile environments. It was good to see that Higgs includes a brief reference to that passé subject, the use of black and white, and the exploitation of the Zone System of exposure control, a most useful tool for light measurement particularly in difficult conditions (eg, snow and back lighting). This is a difficult topic and I was surprised to find no reference to Ansel Adams' seminal three-volume work on the subject in the bibliography.

As a professional photographer, Higgs writes from the viewpoint as one with reasonable resources of space and equipment (and time) but this does not mean that the amateur should ignore the very useful suggestions on technique, equipment care, record keeping, slide, print and negative storage and a thousand and one other mundane aspects of a disciplined approach to all facets of photography which, if properly applied, can only enhance one's enjoyment of a life in the hills.

Ian Roper

Mountains of Heaven: Travels in the Tian Shan Mountains, 1913
Charles Howard-Bury. Edited by Marian Keaney. Hodder & Stoughton. 1990. 176pp. illus. £19.95. ISBN 0-340-52531-2

This was a delightful read of the author's travels from England via Moscow and Omsk on the Trans-Siberia railway and onwards by river steamer, a bone-shaking horsecart and finally by horseback through the

Russian Empire to the Chinese borders and the mountains of the Tian Shan. The area is now being opened up to travellers again and the descriptive nature of the edited journals is of real use to interested travellers as the author travels on through the mountains accompanied by a small bear which he took back to Ireland via Tashkent and Bokhara.

Howard-Bury's diaries have been edited for publication by Marian Keaney but they read as a travelogue with excellent powers of description of the scenery and peoples with whom he met. This is by no means a repetitive travel book. Howard-Burry was an able traveller and a mixer at all levels of society. He portrays an ability to get on with immigrants bound for the extremities of the Russian Empire and local chiefs and officials from both sides of the Russian and Chinese border as well as indulging in a variety of hunting trips and expeditions with knowledgeable tribesmen from the region. Though by no means the first visitor to the area his excellent diaries of 1913 when Siberia was being colonised for the Csar and China was racked by anarchy make for a most enjoyable reminiscence of the region.

Richard Coatsworth

Everest Reconnaissance: The First expedition of 1921
C Howard-Bury and George Leigh Mallory. Edited by Marian Keaney. *Hodder & Stoughton. 1991. 254pp. illus. £16.95. ISBN 0-340-55602-1*

This is a reprint of the report of the expedition which was first published in 1922. The quality of the English is of a high standard but the book is basically a travel book and one of exploration. The reprint demonstrates how little content there was in the original book. This edition contains several maps and photographs but lacks the majority of those in the original edition.

The narrative is interesting as it explores the approaches to the northern valleys and passes of the Everest region in 1921 with comments on the unspoilt Tibetan way of life and the attempts of the expedition to find a feasible route for a future climbing expedition.

The book is useful for two additions to the front part by Marian Keaney, a researcher who has had access to Howard-Bury's diaries. There is a short biography of this wealthy Irishman who led the party, showing his expertise in diplomacy and the extent of his travels to unusual places. The second addition is a series of extracts from Howard-Bury's diaries relating to the negotiations seeking permission for such an expedition to take place and the difficulties of obtaining such, particularly from within the Indian civil service. The extracts are unfortunately a random selection

of entries and rather disjointed and edited. The effect was to show Howard-Bury's preoccupation with hunting rather than trying to get to Tibet and Everest.

There being so many books on the Everest region I found it difficult to find a need for this book. The main reason must be for collectors of Everest books who cannot afford the price of a first edition.

Richard Coatsworth

The Corbetts and Other Scottish Hills. Scottish Mountaineering Club Hillwakers' Guide Vol. Two.

Edited by Scott Johnstone, Hamish Brown and Donald Bennet. Scottish Mountaineering Trust. 1990. 250pp. illus. £14.95. ISBN 0-907521-29-0.

Is there life after the Munros? The second in the SMC hill-walking guides goes a long way to revitalising the interest of the jaded Munroist. The guide gives concise route descriptions to walking those hills in Scotland between 2500 and 3000 ft altitude plus a scattering of interesting hills of lesser height.

J Rooke Corbett was a keen SMC member and an original member of the Rucksack Club who not only completed the Munros and Tops by 1930 (only the second to do so), but also all Scotland's 2000 foot hills. Out of this experience he compiled his list of 221 hills of height between 2500 ft and 3000 ft with a drop of at least 500 ft between each listed hill. These 'Corbetts' as they are now known are thus more precisely defined than Munros and, being free of subjectivity, the list is only affected by Ordance Survey re-measurements. This is a great comfort to the aspirant Corbett-completionist who is reasonably guaranteed that his hard-won summits will not be demoted.

The guide is a companion to 'The Munros' and follows the format of a brief introduction and a separate description for the ascent of each hill. It is very well presented and full of excellent photographs. The unwary may be led to believe from these that Scotland is a land of perpetual sunshine or sunshine and snow. Beware, this is not always the case.

Each hill is given a concise and helpful text detailing access, routes and times to summits together with a hill map and photographs. In some cases hills are combined to give a full days walking. From actual experience the descriptions and times are reasonably accurate.

The form of layout adopted, together with grouping the hills into the same sections as Munros Tables, makes for convenient reference and route planning. One criticism is the lack of an area map at the beginning of each section which would be convenient when planning longer trips.

The book is slightly too big to use as a field guide and there would also be doubts over its durability in a wet rucksack. As with all such books it does remove a great deal of the spirit of adventure and exploration into the unknown. Gone have those fireside conversations in hut, bothy or hostel when hard-won information on unlocked gate, unmarked bridge or path etc was exchanged; now one just refers to the book.

Among the Corbetts are some of the finest hills in Scotland, those of Arran, Rum, Torridon and Wester Ross spring readily to mind. As a bonus other gems such as An Sgurr of Eigg, the Quirang and Suilven are included amongst the lesser heights. With such a collection of hills this is not only a book for reference but one to dip into in the winter evenings and dream of past experiences or those to come.

This is a book well worth buying which will give much information and many hours of pleasure to the hill walker in Scotland.

Stan Roberts

In Monte Viso's Horizon. Climbing all the Alpine 4000m Peaks
Will McLewin. Ernest Press. 1991. £16.95. 225pp. Illus.
ISBN 0-948153-09-1

The book is a personal account of the routes taken in climbing all the Alpine 4000 metre peaks. It is divided into sections each dealing with a particular area and is well supported by maps showing lines of ascent and descent and there is an ample supply of magnificent photographs well explained by accompanying line drawings.

Following a general description of the area, each section is broken down into accounts of individual routes, headed by a classification of difficulty and the members of the party, rarely more than two. The sections are interspersed throughout with essays of general interest such as bivouacs, snow technique, bad rock etc.

It is a fine record of achievement particularly as a substantial number of the ascents was climbed solo requiring, in my view, a special reserve of confidence and resolution. Descriptions of expeditions, unless the route is known to the reader, can become mundane as glacier is followed by bergschrund, by couloir, by ridge and summit. This difficulty is overcome by the author's enthusiasm and one is left feeling here is a man in his natural habitat. Problems are solved with enviable dispassion enabling him to enjoy to the full the splendour of the situation, the magic of the moment.

Perhaps there is for the reader a lack of high drama probably due to the general competence of execution, and being in the right place at the right

time, surely the hallmark of a wily mountain traveller. For me two routes stood out; that of the North East face of the Lenzspitz for its noble simplicity and that of the traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable for its too interesting abseil.

The essays on technical matters are instructive and contain the author's predilections and much common sense which he has employed successfully over many years. However I found the essay on 'Bad Rock' somewhat controversial. Many climbers are more than happy with the word bad although even less complimentary words have been used, I understand! The author objects to the adjectives good and bad and prefers the use of firm and loose and indeed goes on to say 'To be strictly accurate I would have to say something like "not entirely firm" instead of "loose". This sounds like a statement from a particularly slippery politician answering a searching parliamentary question. The author resolves that 'From now on I will refer to firm rock and loose rock' however later, on the Grand Combin, such adjectival extravagances appear as 'dreadful' 'frightening' 'repulsive' and 'horrifying', clearly the basis of a new grading system for bad rock. Ah! Will, I always knew you were one of us.

A fine book, presented well enough for the coffee table, but surely not to be left there.

Eric Flint

Gogarth: Climbers' Club Guide to Wales 7
Andy Newton, and others. Climbers' Club. 1990. 303pp. illus. £10.95.
ISBN 0-901-601-48-9

Gogarth seems to have given the Climbers' Club similar problems to those that Gable and Pillar gave the Fell and Rock in that this guide has been beset by delays and finally appears long overdue and eagerly awaited.

Having inadvertently dropped my previous two volumes in the sea whilst gripped (a well-known hazard of climbing at Gogarth) I rushed out to buy a copy at once, only to be brought up dead in my tracks by its hard cover. I still haven't bought one. To me a hard back cover is an anathema on a modern guide book and for the same fault I declined to buy the last Glencoe guide and the most recent Tremadog guide. I am prepared to wait for the clubs involved to come to their senses and produce a plastic covered reprint that is far more suited to being stuffed down a T-shirt – and preferably with attached elastic cord!

Cover aside, this looks to be a fine effort. With one or two exceptions the colour photographs are top quality and there are plenty of them. There are also numerous historical black and white prints which are not

only fascinating in themselves but generally superb shots as well (see the picture of Joe Brown on *Spider's Web* by John Cleare, for instance). As far as I can see at one reading there are no great bloomers and descriptions are on the whole clear, concise and often humorous. A sensible approach has been taken to mention essential protection without giving too much away. Rewriting the historical section must have been a mammoth effort and great praise is due for this alone.

The diagrams are a mixed bunch, mostly good, but those of Castell Helen and Yellow Wall are very cursory and omit many features essential to route finding on this complex area. I am never sure of the sense in drawing sea cliff diagrams from photographs taken from a boat anyway. Few climbers see the cliffs in this way and it would be much more pertinent to have at least supplementary diagrams based on the view from the foot of the crags and perhaps even halfway up as well.

Aside from Gogarth the guide also covers all other climbing areas on Anglesey, though it has to be said that very few of these merit much attention.

The 1977 first edition of the Gogarth guide has long been unobtainable and committed Gogarth addicts will find this new volume indispensable. Unfortunately Gogarth addicts are rather thinner on the ground nowadays than they were in the early 80s when I was used to climbing there regularly. On a recent weekend visit we were the only team and many a good, formerly clean route had acquired a furry green mantle of sea grass. But, as this guide says, 'visitors to Gogarth may find the situation and climbing to be rather gripping' and climbers don't seem to appreciate being gripped these days. With the crags being (with one notorious exception) totally bolt free, climbers have deserted them for the Ormes and the slate. But, when those perfectly protected gymnasia have become polished to a glassy sheen, Gogarth will still be the place to go for some real adventure.

Stephen Reid

Walking in Mallorca
June Parker. Cicerone Press. 1991. 256pp. illus. Price ?.
ISBN 185284-078-1

When I reviewed the first edition of *Walking in Mallorca* I made the remark 'The crowds stick to the beaches, leaving the hills almost deserted; *though this book may alter that.*' It has. In the five years from the guide's first appearance the island has gained general recognition as a hill-walking centre, especially in the off-season. The author has herself commented

that on her latest visit the number of cairns on paths has increased.

What has put the first edition out of date has been further indefatigable explorations by June Parker. This second edition is a hundred pages longer than the first, and gives detailed descriptions of seventy walks. And even as I write, she is over there again, leaving the foundations, no doubt, for yet another revision.

This guide is not cheap, but it is so packed with interest and information that it is certainly value for money. The colour photographs are excellent. It is more than a mere catalogue of walks. It is a pretty thorough-going general guide to the island, covering history, geomorphology, climate and natural history. It even gives bus timetables and hotel telephone numbers, as well as a comprehensive list of Spanish foodstuffs and dishes. *And* you can pick up a smattering of the language from it!

Mallorca is a very beautiful island and much of it is surprisingly wild, spectacular, and rough underfoot. Where the hand of man has modified the landscape there is beauty too in the stone walls, the terraces, the olive groves and the fine old buildings. It is surprising that it has gone so long largely undiscovered. June Parker's pleasant and informative writing gives an attractive picture of the place.

Tom Price

One Step in the Clouds: An Omnibus of Mountaineering Novels and Short Stories

Compiled by Audrey Salkeld and Rosie Smith. Diadem. 1990. pp.??. ISBN 0-906371-92-9

'Night after night she had pictured the climb, but never quite made allowances for its extraordinary steepness. The rock itself seemed inimical; gravity oppressed her. But the first few moves, springy with the delicious lightness of rubber shod feet after months of heavy boots, brought her confidence back. She dimly heard a little cheer from below as she surmounted the overhang that ended the first lap of the pitch. Then she was out of their sight, alone on the crag, nothing existing in the world except herself and rock.

Now came the crack; she knew well enough what Johnny meant about not stopping to think. One had to flow up it or one would never get up at all. Nothing to haul on – it all had to be done by wedging, and the minimum of wedging consistent with safety, so that one wasted no energy in pulling oneself clear again. The trick was there, learnt on a hundred easier cracks. Up she went.

A little, unkind hand was pulling in the small of her back. These were the two lightest ropes in Harry's repertoire. But the weight of the tremendous run-out was making itself felt. On climbs of this delicacy the smallest check was alarming, and this was an alarm the second could not know. She was somewhere near the point of fear, when the suddenly remembered, blessed belay appeared.'

In this passage from *One Green Bottle*, Elizabeth Coxhead distills down the description of her heroine's first lead on Cloggy; essence of Cloggy, of climbing. No equipment in sight more sophisticated than a pair of pumps (the rope is for her second's benefit). As one member, a contemporary of the fictional Cathy Canning, put it to me; 'In my day we had none of your fancy 'friends'. The only 'friends' I ever used were these . . .'

He held up a pair of truly remarkable devices, fitting cracks ranging from fingertip-sized to a full (and rather generous) fist; the human hand MK I.

If you have not read Coxhead's novel, then for this alone you should buy this book, of which it is the centerpiece. And yet it surpasses so much of the other material collected here. Its restrained descriptions of climbing give the lie to the apparent belief of so many writers that it is primarily the climbing action that should grip the reader; that the narrative be supported by its hardware and technique and the novelty of the language coined to describe them. (In much the same way, the makers of 'James Bond' films have used sophisticated gadgetry – 'friends' for example – to catch the attention of the audience and even as props on which the whole plot will sometimes turn). So action takes precedence over theme.

This may seen dismissive of 'realistic' climbing fiction, but if all you want is incident and action, why make it imaginary? Or, as in one of the novels in this collection, an embarrassing re-hash of well known epics – albeit well written? There's plenty of excellent real-life climbing drama to read about. Or better still, go out climbing, if that too hasn't become hardware-obsessed.

Those who disagree with this viewpoint will find plenty here to enjoy. But for my money, humour works best. The classic 'In Hanging Garden Gully' still holds its own alongside the more recent, but equally classic styles of Dutton, Gregory and Campbell, and a couple of examples of a rather more irreverent, modern style.

There are also some good science fiction and mystery stories. Anne Sauvy dabbles in both with her usual style, which is often compared to that of Guy De Maupassant, who is also represented here.

There is much more material in this volume which I could mention but overall, I think the editors should be congratulated. If enjoyment was their main criterion for selection, then they must have very broad tastes

indeed! I think that everyone should find something to suit their own particular taste in the collection.

Marc Stirrup

Gabe's Fall and other Climbing Stories
Peter Lars Sandberg. Diadem. 1990. 156pp. £12.95. ISBN 0-906371-53-8

This is a slim volume comprising seven short stories. They are competently written, well placed and, in short, easy reading. This undoubtedly stems from the fact that all the stories were originally written for publication in (non-climbing) magazines. They are the sort of thing you might read as a distraction, for ten minutes or so, and in this respect they are very successful; they certainly hold your attention.

Sandberg has clearly identified his market and writes saleable fiction. His stories for *Playboy* magazine illustrate this particularly well, and he even admits as much in his introduction to the first of these. Having said this, I find it hard to understand the reasoning behind the publication of these stories as a collection, apparently aimed at a 'climbing' audience. I found myself longing for the kind of variation in subject matter which is only approached in the final story, if only to show what the writer is really capable of.

As magazine fiction, as I have said, these stories undoubtedly work well, but collected together they don't produce the kind of book that I would take down from my bookshelf to read again and again.

Marc Stirrup

Elusive Summits: Four Expeditions in the Karakoram
Victor Saunders. Hodder & Stoughton. 1990. 191pp. illus. £14.95. ISBN 0-340-48557-4

This award-winning account is written with the immediacy of a personal diary. No reflective contemplation as to why mountaineers climb, nor appendices of equipment, diet, vocabularies, etc, clutter the direct narrative of successive expeditions to Uzum Brakk, Bojohaghur Duanasir, Rimo and Spatnik. Victor Saunders tells his readers how it was, with no frills, and does not spare his companions from public scrutiny.

The narrative unselfconsciously continues the long tradition of understatement in mountaineering literature. Expeditions appear to be planned over a couple of pints in a London pub, disdaining even Tilman's back of an envelope. Expeditions appear to fail or succeed on the strength of the

cook, like Pong on Rum Doodle. The seriousness of high bivouacs without food, and the loss of Steve Venables' sack are left to the reader's imagination.

The book starts with the miraculous rescue of two Japanese climbers on an unrelated expedition on Latok IV, near Uzum Brakk. The pace continues through three expeditions, unsuccessful in conventional terms, till Victor climbs Spatnik and returns to his London pub. Why he continued against such adversity is left unsaid – except by the spectacular photographs.

Andy Coatsworth

Ascent: The Mountaineering Experience in Word and Image
Volume V. Edited by Allen Steck and Steve Roper. Sierra Club Books/ Diadem. 1989. 207pp. illus. £14.95. ISBN 0-906371-13-9

Attracted by its reputation for innovative writing, I had bought my copy of *Ascent V* long before I was asked to write this review. I had read none of its predecessors. Would it live up to my expectations?

The first article, 'Stone', by Edwin Drummond was very much what I had expected, but it had already appeared in his own, autobiographical, collection *A Dream of White Horses*. Whatever your feelings about Drummond's writing, you have to admit that he dares to be different, and this at least has to be admired.

Fiction is fairly well represented here, most notably with 'Headwall' by Tim Ahern, which challenges both conventional climbing and sexual ethics. Also of note is Anne Sauvy's 'The Collector'.

Sci-fi is not usually my personal favourite, but included here are a couple of enjoyable stories: 'El Peligroso' by Robert Walton easily holds its own alongside 'Aniel's Accident' by the much praised Polish writer, Stanislaw Lem.

Among the factual articles, George Bell Jr.'s 'Fifty Crowded Classics' stands out, as an enjoyable account of the author and his partner, drawn – in spite of themselves – to route bagging. Elsewhere, however, there is too much introspection for my enjoyment and also a certain sameness in a lot of American climbing writing, which it was suggested to me (perhaps a little unfairly?) is the product of creative writing schools.

Of the seven poems in this collection, Drummond's contribution once again stands out, with its usual striking array of imagery, while too many of the other examples tend towards an obscurity which so many writers seem to think is obligatory in poetry.

What then of the visual content?

Ed Webster's colour photo-essay 'Mount Everest and Environs' is quite stunning and made me long for more of the same! But the black and whites – why bother? Poor reduction has rendered what is by and large an excellent set of originals rather less than eye-catching. Whether this is the inevitable result of the transition from original colour transparencies, or just poor reproduction, I don't know – but, for the price, I felt they could have done better!

There are also the illustrations, by Tad Welch, which I found a little too idiosyncratic. I much preferred, as the editors have done in places, good photos, imaginatively chosen and captioned to illustrate the text.

The introduction talks about the development of *Ascent* and the attempts to keep it outside and ahead of the 'magazine' market. While the climbing magazines do not attempt to compete, at present, in terms of literary content, I do feel however, that the visual content is somewhat lacking in comparison, especially since the magazines have some way to go before they catch up in price!

Marc Stirrup

(Listed in *Journal No. 72*, then too late for review. Editor)

JOURNALS

Berg '91. Year Book of the D.A.V. and the Ö.A.V.
Edited by Marianne and Elmar Landes

The volume consists of 30 lengthy articles, is divided into 5 main sections, and is concluded with an appendix on equipment. The map for 1990, included at the back, covers the central area of the Verwall which lies to the south of the Lechtaler Alpen, and consequently the first section is composed of 4 articles on this region. 1990 marks not only the 125th anniversary of the first publication of the 'AVs Jahrbuch' and 'Berg '91' is the 115th volume, but it is also the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the AV cartographical section, which produced a map of the 'Ferwall' in 1865. Thus the choice of the theme for this edition.

Dieter Seibert is an eminent alpinist, alpine journalist and writer who has an extensive knowledge of the eastern Alps. His writing is very detailed but immensely interesting and his introductory article is a precise and comprehensive appraisal of the Verwall region. This is followed by a provocative account about modern map making, with particular reference to the new edition of the Verwall map written by an experienced cartographer and mountaineer. He not only clearly describes the methods used in the compilation of data of such complicated geographical areas for

the production of an accurate map, but he also discusses how detailed maps detract from the challenge and philosophy of mountaineering. He suggests there is still the need to venture out without a map and to wander amongst the peaks, bedecked with cloud, unhampered by the clutter of modern equipment and recorded detail. Even in the remoter alpine areas an element of discovery is now absent.

Every article in this volume deserves specific attention and their scope is wide. In the sections on general mountaineering and expeditions abroad the topics introduce readers to a variety of areas in Europe and in other continents.

Especially noteworthy is a series of articles under the main title of 'Elbsandsteingebirge' which refers to a region of enormous sandstone blocks and towers in the former D.D.R. This series includes articles by Martin Schwiersch, a well-known West German mountain- and ski-guide; Bernd Arnold, the recognised climbing expert of the area; Karl Däweritz, a leading writer and authority on the region; and Hörst Mempel, an East German T.V. sports journalist. Together they present a well co-ordinated and complementary paper on this somewhat isolated climbing area known locally as the 'Sächsische Schweiz'. It covers a West German's impressions of an economically underdeveloped area of outstanding natural beauty; the symbolic significance of the area to Saxony throughout its history as a retreat from political repression; the climbing ethics and rules which are practised and strictly observed; a compelling account of the development and significance of its climbing; and the attitude of the media to the strong climbing movement and its members who display incredibly high standards of skill. Throughout the individual comments a common theme is perceptible which is the need to preserve this landscape and its unique character. The sandstone is being viciously attacked by the polluted air from the nearby industrial cities and its delicate tracery of holds cannot support an uncontrolled heavy or unsympathetic usage by climbers and tourists. There is an underlying plea for sensitivity where the future development of the area in general is concerned.

The section on general mountaineering also includes an article by Wolfgang Güllich and Kurt Albert and is about their ascent with 2 other friends of the 'Nameless Tower' in the Trango group. It is not simply descriptive. The adventure establishes a new horizon and a different scale in achievement and challenge. Thus the defined theme of the cartographer is re-introduced.

No article could be described as superficial. The reader is often introduced to a selection of attitudes, developments, problems and controversial issues which not only apply to the sport of climbing, competition climbing and the resulting medical problems, but also to the enormous

alpine debate on the preservation of the flora and fauna, conservation and erosion. For example, there is a full report on the achievements of the Nationalpark Hohe Tauern, 20 years after its establishment.

The final main section contains articles about art and history and ends with a skittish article by a writer about the over production of books on the theme of mountaineering! All the articles are superbly illustrated.

Jo Light

Alpine Journal 1990/91 and **1991/92**

These two issues continue the AJ's recent practice of cased binding, pictorial dust-wrapper, and lavish illustration. As usual, they fulfil the declared intention of being 'a record of mountain adventure and scientific observation'. The AJ's scope is too great for many of us to find uniform interest in the whole of mountaineering from South Georgia to Alaska, the Antipodes to the Himalaya (all of it), the Andes to the Alps. What matters is that these two volumes add importantly to the massive body of mountaineering knowledge compiled by the Alpine Club in its publications since 1859, essential for consultation by anyone planning climbs or explorations in the great ranges. For this purpose the objective accounts, systematically giving routes, methods of approach, local characteristics such as porters' practice, and weather notes seem more useful than the subjective ones which concentrate on sharing horrors, enduring rows, enjoying comradeship, and exulting in success; but there is a lot of hard fact to be picked up from the latter as well.

George Band's valedictory address (1990/91) is a welcome statement of a first-class amateur's interest in climbing. In both issues Anne Sauvy's stories (a bit sophisticated for my own taste) and the good work of several poets continue an important literary tradition. There are authoritative contributions on mountaineering history and biography, mountain medicine, bibliography, geology, and controversy (sc. bolting).

At £17.99 the AJ is good value for money. In terms of durability, range and quality of information, and literacy, it looks competitive with a year's subscription to one of the mags at, say £14 for six numbers. The 1990/91 issue is the merrier of the two.

The American Alpine Journal 1990 and **1991**

The *AAJs* appear as usual in stout paperback, copiously illustrated, with fewer colour pictures than the *AJ* but on paper good enough to allow the printing of photographs at the relevant points in the body of the text, which makes for easier reference. I think the *F&RJ, 1990* beats them both for quality of colour reproduction.

Nearly half of each issue is devoted to the section *Climbs and*

Expeditions, of which there are so many that the brief summaries concentrate on what people achieved, rather than on their methods and experiences. Our horrifying statistic: in the 40 entries for Nepal in 1989 made by Elizabeth Hawley, 22 fatalities are recorded. For climbers planning expeditions, the longer, sometimes discursive, personal accounts of adventures, often by British and mainland European guest writers, may prove more practically helpful. There is solid, valuable scholarship, as in Wiliam Osgood Field: *Glaciers of Alaska . . . Yukon . . . and British Columbia* (1990), and important interest in the environment as in three articles on trash (including human) in the Himalaya (1991). Articles on climbing in the American continent supplement and complement those in the *AJs*.

I acknowledge with thanks the index to the *AAJ* in two volumes, 1929–1976 and 1977–1986.

The Rucksack Club Journal 1989 and **1990**

These are pleasant books to handle: stout paperback, with pictorial covers, good illustrations in colour and black-and-white, nicely printed on good paper. Club news predominates, but there is plenty for outsiders, including knowledgeable articles by Keith Treacher on *The 1936 Anglo-German Exchange* (the Munich Climb and all that) and Peter Harding on *Order of the Boot* (clinkers, tricounis, rubbers, stickies etc.).

George Watkins

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MEETS LIST 1991

	Date	Venue	Leader
	12/13 January	*Beetham Cottage*	John Loy
	26/27 January	*Salving House*	Russell Walker
C	*9/10 February*	*Rawhead*	Wendy Miller/ Marc Stirrup
	23/24 February	*Ceilidh – Borrowdale Institute*	Lynn Valentine/ Flo Fearnley
	2/3 March	*Waters Cottage*	Brian & Joyce Cosby
	4/7 March	*C.I.C. – Ben Nevis*	Joe Grinbergs
	16/17 March	*Derbyshire*	Ian & Evelyn Dobson
	23 March/ 6 April	*Southern France – Rock Climbing*	Rodney Valentine
	29 March/ 1 April	*Brackenclose*	Roy & Norma Precious
M	*13/14 April*	*Beetham Cottage*	Tom Parker
	20/21 April	*Salving House*	Tony Greenbank
	4/6 May	*Ynys Ettws – Joint Meet C.C.*	Brian Griffiths
	4/11 May	*Loch Torridon Hotel*	Andrew Hall/ Jim Haggas
C	*18 May*	*Committee Meeting – Chapel Stile*	
	18/19 May	*London Section – Yarmouth, Isle of Wight*	Aubrey Brocklehurst
	25/27 May	*Waters Cottage*	Derek & Hilary Walker
	25 May/2 June	*Dalmally – Camping*	John & Janet Burrows
M	*1/2 June*	*Birkness*	Dave Long
	8/9 June	*Duddon Valley – Camping*	Al Phizacklea
	22/23 June	*Brackenclose*	Graham & Ann Townsend
D	*6/7 July*	*Sun Hotel, Coniston*	Bill Comstive
	20/21 July	*Birkness*	Peter & Karen Jessup
	21 July/ 10 August	*Alpine Meet*	John Moore
	10/11 August	*Beetham Cottage*	Peter Williams
	25/26 August	*North Wales*	Paul Selley
CD	*7/8 September*	*Brackenclose*	The Vice Presidents
M	*21/22 September*	*Rawhead*	Terry Parker
	28/29 September	*Northumberland*	David Rhodes

	Date	Venue	Leader
	5/6 October	*Beetham Cottage*	Patsy Mayers
M	*5/6 October*	*Brackenclose*	Roy Sumerling
M	*12/13 October*	*Waters Cottage*	Alan Rowland
	12/13 October	*London Section – Brackenclose*	John Wild
M	*19/20 October*	*Salving House*	Val Young
	2/3 November	*A.G.M. and Dinner*	The President
	9/10 November	*Brackenclose*	Bernard Daly
CD	*23/24 November*	*Salving House*	John Coates
	7/8 December	*Birkness*	Andrew & Christina Paul
	28 December/ 1 January	*New Year Meet – Rawhead*	The President

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

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MEETS LIST 1992

	Date	Venue	Leader
	18/19 January	*Salving House*	Bill Hannah
C	*1/2 February*	*Birkness*	Arthur Grout
	15/16 February	*Beetham Cottage*	John Leigh
	29 February/ 1 March	*Ceilidh – Borrowdale Institute*	Wendy Miller/ Marc Stirrup
	14/22 March	*Waters Cottage*	Gill Lewis
	28/29 March	*Yorshire Dales – Lowstern*	Brian Swales
	11/25 April	*Southern France – Rock Climbing – Orpierre*	Rodney Valentine
	17/20 April	*Brackenclose*	Ron & Madge Townsend
	17/20 April	*Scottish Ski Touring – Milehouse*	Bill Smith
M	*25/26 April*	*Beetham Cottage*	Tom Parker
	4/6 May	*Rawhead – Joint Meet C.C.*	Neil Foster
	2/10 May	*Nethybridge Hotel*	Trevor & Enid Roberts
C	*16 May*	*Committee Meeting – Chapel Stile*	
	16/17 May	*Derbyshire – Camping*	John Smith/ Dave Dowson
	23/25 May	*Waters Cottage*	Roger & Valerie Salisbury
	23/31 May	*Glen Affric – Camping*	Jill Evans
	6/7 June	*Wye Valley – Walking and Climbing*	Ra Mason
M	*6/7 June*	*Birkness*	David Long
	20/21 June	*Brackenclose*	Peter & Cheri Chapman
	21 June	*Fell Race – Birkness*	Peter Lord
	4/5 July	*Sun Hotel, Coniston*	Tony Strawther
	18/19 July	*Rawhead*	Ron & Chris Kenyon
	25 July/ 9 August	*Alpine Meet – Bernese Oberland*	John & Margaret Loy
	15/16 August	*Beetham Cottage*	Margaret Roberts
	29/31 August	*North Wales – Camping*	Malcolm Grout
	29 August/ 6 September	*Pembroke – Rock Climbing*	Michael Harris/ Morag Balance
C	*12/13 September*	*Brackenclose*	The Vice Presidents
M	*19/20 September*	*Rawhead*	Terry Parker

	Date	Venue	Leader
	19/20 September	*London Section – Birkness*	John Fleming
M	*3/4 October*	*Brackenclose*	Roy Sumerling
M	*17/18 October*	*Waters Cottage*	Alan Rowland
M	*24/25 October*	*Salving House*	Val Young
	31 October/ 1 November	*Brackenclose*	Brian & Joyce Cosby
	7/8 November	*A.G.M. and Dinner*	The President
C	*21/21 November*	*Salving House*	John Robinson
	5/6 December	*Birkness*	Stan Roberts
	28 December/ 1 January	*New Year Meet – Rawhead*	The President

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