Jill Aldersley, President 1994-96
Bhutan, November 1994
Photograph by David Miller

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LONDON SECTION - 75 YEARS ON

Peter Ledeboer

It may come as a surprise to some members that 1975 was our 75th anniversary year. No doubt this can invite cracks about reaching the age of discretion or becoming geriatric, but it is a milestone that could not be allowed to pass without a celebratory Dinner graced by the President herself on 4 December - the actual date of foundation. It may therefore be of interest to give some historical review of our activities.

THE EARLY YEARS

It is recorded by Dr. Charles Hadfield, the first Chairman, that following some unofficial discussions in the autumn of 1920 the Section was inaugurated with the Club's blessing at a dinner in Soho on 4 December.[1] Some background is worth quoting from the account given by Dorothy Pilley, the first Secretary, in the 1921 *Journal*:

> "Possibly some members living in the North wondered at the formation of a London Section. To those who have experimented the present day difficulties and expenses of long distance travelling, the Section certainly filled a long felt want. An after-war slump necessarily meant increased curtailment of week-ends in the Lakes, and although walks round London may be a poor substitute for the fells, they are better than nothing. Therefore, the main function of the proposed London Section was to organise occasional meets. This induced members who had never done so before to get up early on Sunday mornings and go for long country tramps with cheerful parties of fellow-members."

Without delay the first Sunday walk took place on 6 March 1921 in the Surrey Hills from Clandon to Dorking. Sadly the party got rained on in a big way, and after a tea shop was eventually reached in Dorking "it left a very dripping party to catch a very bad train to London". But walks continued on a pretty regular basis, necessarily using rail transport, right through the Second World War. They were led in particular by P. J. H. Unna, who had some 1000 postcards printed with the times of outward and return trains and probable lunch place, and P. R. Mears who quoted "a fine 3 hours walk to Harrison Rocks, carrying all our stuff, i.e. lunch, rope, shoes, trousers, etc."

Membership in the early years kept up surprisingly well at near the 100 mark, including some historic names. Those who paid their 2/6 subscription included Haskett-Smith, Theo Chorley, Leslie Somervell in 1926, Geoffrey Winthrop Young in 1935 and later W. A. Poucher. In those times the mountaineering world was much smaller and formal Annual Dinners were the order of the day, to which many noted names were invited as guests, largely due to the influence and generosity of G. R. Speaker, such as General Bruce, Noel Odell, Hugh Ruttledge and Frank Smythe. In 1937 the formality was such that morning dress was specified! The war inevitably brought a change to lunches, and although Dinners were resumed in 1948, formality gradually faded out.

LATER YEARS

Our outdoor activities continued on a consistent pattern of Sunday walks in most months, and with the Rucksack Club yearly, covering areas within reach of London on all sides, such as the Chilterns, the North Downs and the South Downs. "Perhaps it is not surprising to note that our walks generally led us over the highest ground to be found in London's countryside." Indeed, one can actually reach 1000 feet at the top of the tower on Leith Hill. A regular favourite in the summer months has been the South downs, which are Ian Clayton's speciality. His 1957 notice was historic: "Please warn people to beware plain leather soled shoes as they get very polished on downland grass, and as I am apt to wander a little from the beaten track they may find themselves ski-ing downhill and crawling up." A classic occasion was a night walk on the South Downs ending with a chilly dawn kip on Chanctonbury Ring. Later in the 70s David Ferguson, who had the advantage of height and speed, favoured the North Downs and out-distanced us on one occasion when we were charged by an angry boar.

A further development has been week-end meets - one in early summer in different areas and one in autumn in the Lakes based on each of the Club huts in turn. These have proved popular and given us more scope. We have covered North Wales, the North Yorkshire Moors, Derbyshire, Offa's Dyke and particularly the Dorset cliffs and the Brecon Beacons.

Indoors we have slide lectures in the winter months. These started in 1965 with a joint arrangement with the London Section of the Rucksack Club and the M. A. M. at the Ski Club of Great Britain's premises. We now have a different venue, but it is a great opportunity of seeing where members have been on expeditions all over the world. The other aspect of

meeting indoors has of course been foregathering at Annual dinners. After their post-war resumption in 1948 these continued mainly at the Connaught Rooms, but by the 60s there was a preference for less expense and informality at restaurants. The general trend to informality moved on to buffet style suppers following the A. G. M. at a hired hall, continuing to this day with good food from an outside caterer.

LEADING LIGHTS

There have been a number of members like Marjorie Garrod and Ned Hamilton who have contributed greatly to the London Section over the years, but there are two in particular deserving of outstanding mention:

Charles Hadfield.

It was largely due to his enthusiasm that the London Section was formed, and as Chairman from the start he continued as such for a record 40 years. Although he climbed extensively in the Alps, Lakeland was his favourite ground. He became Vice-President of the Club in 1925 and President from 1931-1933, being made an honorary Member in 1956. But he hardly ever missed a London Section walk, arriving characteristically on his bicycle. A man of great charm, his special achievement at London Section Dinners was to conduct the A. G. M. from the top table at the end in two minutes flat. Reluctantly with diminishing powers he resigned as Chairman in 1960 in his 86th year. "I have frequently suggested such a course in the past, but my offers of resignation have always been turned down by the unanimous but I might almost say indignant negative of the Committee and no less enthusiastic support and appreciation offered to me by the members."

G. R. Speaker.

Speaker's role in the London Section was unique. He was Hon. Treasurer almost from the start and also Hon. Secretary in 1935, when Dorothy Pilley moved abroad. Apart from climbing in the Alps, he had an unrivalled knowledge of North Wales and Lakeland climbs, but no London Section walk was complete without his presence. His enthusiasm and genius for friendship, combined with his generosity, were remarkable. The London Section Annual Dinner became his personal party with many guests, Kendal Mint Cake and violets for the ladies and cigars for the men. He was President of the Club 1937-39 and Editor of the *Journal* from 1932-42.

Perhaps his most remarkable achievement was his perception of the need for a new hut to attract younger members, resulting in his success, despite opposition, in organising the funding and building of Brackenclose, opened in 1937. His death from a fall on Great Gable in 1942 was tragic.

SOME SPECIAL MOMENTS

There have been some occasions over the years of various kinds which form part of the folklore of the London Section:

1936 Presentation to Haskett-Smith of a silver model of Napes Needle to celebrate his 50th anniversary ascent of it that Easter.

1946 Fund of £500 raised to purchase the freehold of Raw Head barn as a memorial to G. R. Speaker.

1955 Presentation of a carpet to Brackenclose, hand knitted by Marjorie Garrod and her team.

1960 Presentation to Charles Hadfield of a radio set on his retirement after 40 years as Chairman.

1962 Presentation of a silver tankard to Ned Hamilton after his many years as Walks Secretary.

1964 Presentation of a further rug for the dining room at Brackenclose.

1970 50th Anniversary Dinner on 4 December at the Royal Overseas League, where Margaret Darvall as Chairman was presented with a woodcut of the Napes Needle by Charles Hadfield's daughter.
Presentation on a walk of a pair of wire butterfly brooches to Mary Sargeant, a Friend of the London Section, to celebrate her 90th birthday.

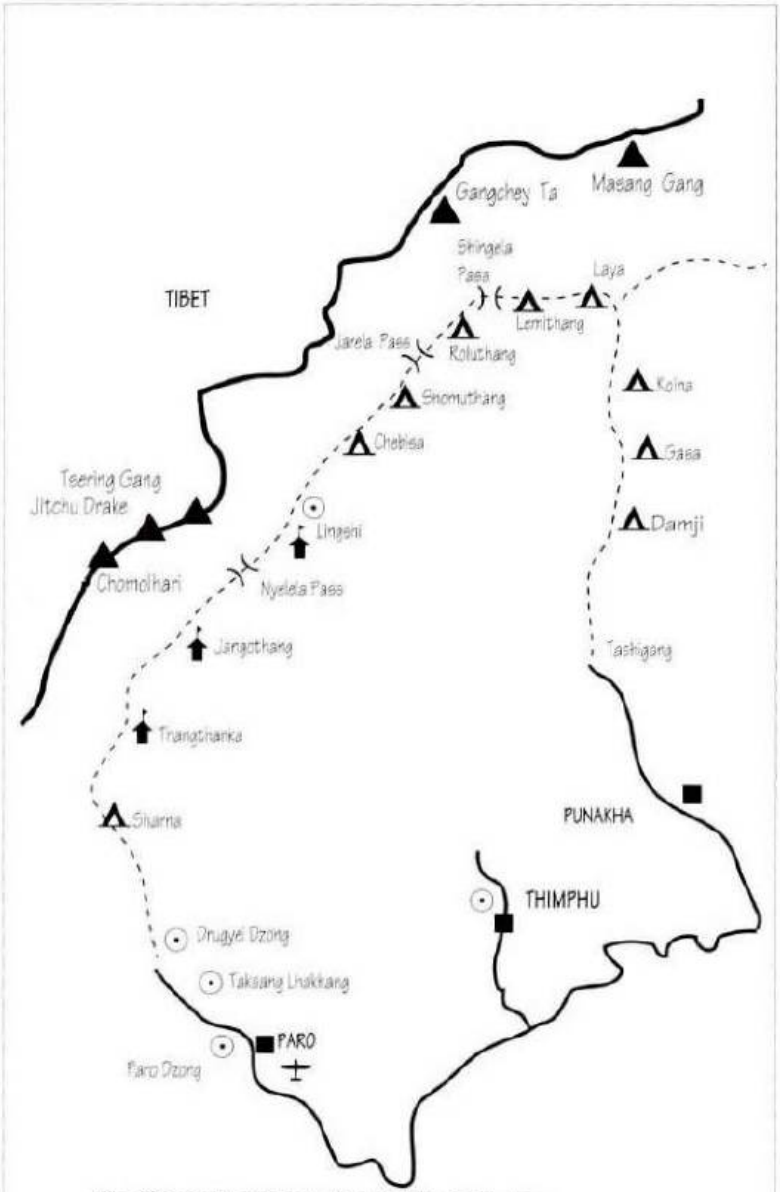
1974 Presentation to Marjorie Garrod, member since 1923, of an autographed copy of Heaton Cooper's *The Lakes*, to celebrate her 80th birthday.

1995 75th Anniversary Dinner on 4 December at the Rembrandt Hotel.
Presentation of Amiral de Beycheval claret to Dick Boyland, a Friend of the London Section, to celebrate his 90th birthday.

AS WE APPROACH THE MILLENNIUM

Despite the passage of time, we still feel the separation of 300 miles from the Lakeland fells. In the early days there were the problems of transport and expense. Today there is traffic congestion and no lack of expense, and the fells get more crowded. So perhaps we do not come to them as often as we would like and the *raison d'être* for London Section activities in the south remains. We are active and we try to encourage membership of the Club. For those who are not likely to qualify, but are keen walkers with an interest in the Lake district, we associate them as Friends. They have no voting power, but have their own contribution to make. When we come north we get a warm reception and we are asked when we are coming again. For those who come south, and would like to see more, I am reminded of Donald Murray's comment on feeling rather lonely on first coming to work in London in the 20s: "Thank goodness for the Fell & Rock." Long live the Fell & Rock!

[1]Dorothy Pilley's account in the 1921 *Journal* (p.331) says that the dinner was held at Gatti's Restaurant, whereas Charles Hadfield (first London Section Chairman), writing in the 1951 *Journal* (p.104), says it was the Villa Villa Restaurant. They may have been the same, the name perhaps having been changed in the intervening 30 years, but neither now exists and I have no means of verifying which is correct. J. P. L.



The Chomolhari Trek, North West Bhutan

BHUTAN, LAND of the THUNDER DRAGON

Bob Allen

The small jet (one half of the entire fleet of Druk Air) was cruising at an altitude of about 30,000 feet, its dozen passengers trying to fill in an inordinate number of pieces of official paper, when sunlight burst into the cabin. Papers were immediately brushed aside and everybody rushed to the windows to see one of the most stunning views in the world; there, rising above the seas of cloud, were the highest summits of the Himalaya, glittering with ice.

Motup knew them all. "There's Dhaulagiri." "And there's Everest!" He's been to the South Col seven times, so it is reasonable to assume he was right. We watched, entranced, as Everest faded from sight and Kangchenjunga's immense bulk filled the view. Then, just before we re-entered the cloud, we had a brief glimpse of three more astonishing, icy spires soaring above the haze, spires which were to dominate our landscape for nearly a fortnight as we trekked towards them and then along the border with Tibet.

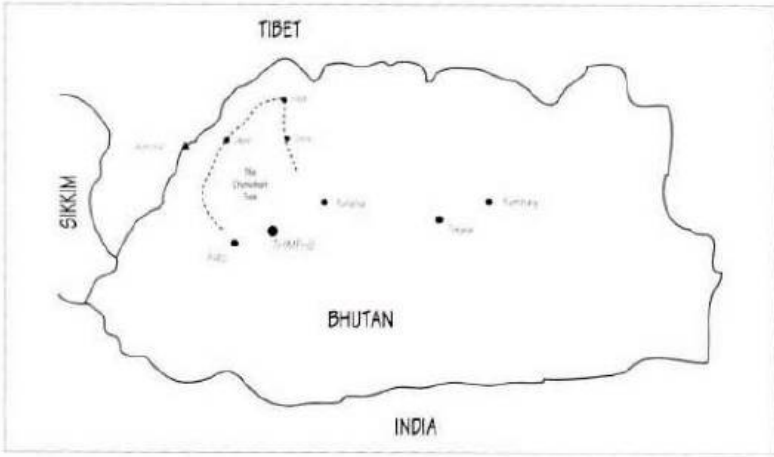
As the little plane swooped below the cloud ceiling and twisted along a high valley, tiny flat terraces of grey-brown earth, showing pale against the dark green of conifer-clothed mountainsides, flashed past almost before we had time to register what they were. Then we banked, levelled and touched down. We were in Druk Yul, the Land of the Thunder Dragon, which the modern world calls Bhutan.

Situated to the north-east of India, Bhutan is like a staircase rising from a thin strip of tropical jungle and then extending sideways while climbing to the greatest heights of the Himalaya. It is the last country on the planet whose state religion is Tantric Buddhism, which is virtually incomprehensible to most Westerners, including me. It guards its cultural independence by numerous means, for example, by tightly restricting the number of visitors or tourists that cross its borders and then charging them substantially for the privilege; none of your cheap package tours here! In many ways still medieval, Bhutan wisely accepts only those aspects of western life and technology that it believes it can use without being overwhelmed by them. It is a kingdom, but a benevolent one that seems to be favourably accepted by its citizens. It is overwhelmingly *different*.

We nearly didn't get there at all. The original plan had been to climb a trekking peak in the 20,000ft band, in the Basingthang area of north-west

Bhutan, but then we heard that the Bhutan Government had cancelled all permits for all peaks. That caused some dithering, as may be imagined, but as Paul Roberts, who had taken on the role of organiser, pointed out, it might be a blessing in disguise and Bhutan would not get any cheaper. Paul eventually tracked down Motup (our invaluable liaison), put together a viable team and chased up our visas; then the western world - and all airlines involved - went into a panic about the reports of plague in India. So, until less than a week before departure, we could not be sure we would even be able to reach India, let alone Bhutan. Consequently, it was with some relief that we met, and were greatly welcomed by, a smiling black-haired young man with ears sticking out from the side of his head like jug handles. This was Chhimmy (the spelling is correct!), the managing director of Be-Yul Excursions, whose company were to provide both the trekking team and all the other travel and cultural arrangements, for what was to prove an extraordinarily successful trip. Chhimmy was not only charming, he could certainly fix it. Incidentally, I know for certain that the spelling of his name is correct because that is how it was spelt on his visiting card. For the names of other people, if I never saw them in print, I have spelt them as they sounded to me. For the place names even printed information varies, so the ones I have used are not necessarily exactly correct either. It is all part of the mystery of these lands.

The airport at Paro is the only one in the country and is at an altitude of 7218ft/2200m. High above the Paro valley, at about 9500ft, is the



monastery of Taksang Lhakhang, the "Tiger's Nest" or "Lair", where the greatly revered Guru Rinpoche, who brought Buddhism to Bhutan from Tibet in the eighth century, is reputed to have landed after flying on the back of a tigress. It is a place that all Bhutanese try to visit at least once in their lifetime, and was to be the object of our first visit; apart from the intrinsic interest, the 2500ft climb would be useful acclimatisation.

Viewed from the valley, the distant monastery buildings can be seen clinging like swallow's nests beneath overhangs on an enormous buttress that rises out of steep wooded slopes. After a couple of hours' uphill toil in warm sun you also realise that a deep ravine separates the buildings from the path you are on and this has to be crossed by a descent into the gully and subsequent reascent past a tremendous cascade. Built in the back of the gully, accessible only by a notched tree trunk as ladder and with a certain-death drop below, was a tiny house. Uygen, our Bhutanese trek-leader, told us that this was where two monks, blind monks, regularly spend three months meditation. Although it seems likely that next year Bhutan will close all monasteries to non-Buddhists, we were lucky enough to be allowed inside the nearest main building as far as the inner shrine containing the huge effigy of the Guru, in one of his terrifying manifestations, and to receive holy rose-water from the caretaker monk there. Emerging from the shrine onto a balcony overhanging the sheer cliffs and opposite the great timbers of one of the ancient roofs, I was greatly intrigued to spot two little panels secured just below the final turret. They looked like solar panels to me.

On the return descent through the woods, when it was almost dark, we were also intrigued to see two naked and giggling girls leaping into a sort of tub beside the stream and hiding themselves in the water. A fire burned nearby and large round stones were warming up the fire, which were then used to heat the water. Four of our party (Paul and myself and two of the girls, whose names I will chivalrously not reveal) later stripped off to the buff and tried one of these Bhutanese baths when we were back at the hotel, enjoying much hilarious banter and calling forth that it was as well that none of use were Members of Parliament. (Before I am accused of stirring up mischief, I had better also say that the girls were in one bath and we were in another ...)

The huge Paro Dzong, a tremendous fortress-cum-monastery-cum-town hall, built, like all the other Dzongs in Bhutan, at strategic points on high ground, dominates the Paro valley. It overlooks the little town of Paro

(and one of the royal palaces) whose wooded-fronted shops we scoured to purchase umbrellas and other last-minute items, but its image was soon to be overlaid as we drove to the ruins of Drugyel Dzong and the road-head to start our trek. For we saw, beyond overlapping darkly-forested ridges, a shimmering white light, remote and ethereal: the icy summit of Chomolhari, Bhutan's most sacred mountain. Even as I scrambled for my camera, clouds welled up and the vision disappeared, but the hope of seeing it again at close hand burned strongly for the next few days as we trekked towards it.

Walking up the wooded valley of the Paro River, we passed isolated farmhouses built in the traditional way, with three storeys and with roofs made of split wooden planks weighed down with stones. The ground floors are used for storage of tools and shelter for the farm animals in winter, the next storey for the human occupants and the upper storey is used for storage of grains, hay and other produce. Chillies, which are an important item of Bhutanese diet, are often dried on the roofs.

We camped the first night just outside a village called Sharna and had a lot of fun playing and re-playing tape-recorders to local children, who were fascinated by anything electronic or mechanical; auto-zoom lenses exerted a particular fascination. We also had our first camp-fire of the trek, beginning a succession of enjoyable evenings of folk songs, recitations and music (taking my harmonica was one of my happier ideas) in which our five Bhutanese lads all joined with enthusiasm. There is no shortage of timber in Bhutan and we had roaring fires, and all the cooking was done on wood, throughout the trek.

The following day, as we continued further up the valley, we began to appreciate that 'uphill' in Bhutan meant that the finishing point would be higher than the start and that 'downhill' meant that the finish would be lower than the start. What we could never establish in advance was how much uphill or downhill there might be in the middle. So that day we gained about 3000ft officially, but it must have been nearer to 4000ft of actual height. We reached a sort of lodge or barn in the forest, built in the traditional way by the Bhutanese Tourist Corporation, so that there is a fireplace in the middle of the floor and the smoke simply rises and finds its own way through various gaps and holes in the roof timbers. Uygen and his lads behaved rather strangely that night and Uygen particularly asked me if I had zipped up my tent properly as he was concerned about some people in a nearby house, the only other building in sight. Not until the

following day did Uygen and Motup very reluctantly reveal that this lodge was supposed to have a caretaker, but he had been murdered a few hours previously. Uygen saw his corpse and he had been stabbed under his armpit. His body was just on the other side of the wall where we had such a jolly evening that same night.

More travel up the valley followed, to reach the tree-line at just over 13,000ft and the Chomolhari Base Camp at Jangothang. We were slightly surprised to find that a small German party was camped here as well, as we had no prior knowledge of anyone else being on this trek, but it appeared that they were on a much shorter one than ours, had less available time and their leader had had to return to Paro with pulmonary oedema. The mountain was not to be seen, being shrouded in mist, which was a great disappointment. The following day was misty again but also snowing intermittently as a team of yaks arrived to replace the horses that the Germans had used so far and then they moved away. We were having a valuable rest day and walked up the side-valley towards Chomolhari, hoping that the weather would clear, but saw only glimpses of towering ice-cliffs. The fact that there was so little to be seen did not stop Jill from dipping her paint brush in gin (so that it would not freeze) and starting a sketch. In fact, every time we stopped somewhere for even half an hour throughout the trek she promptly started painting.

That night it snowed again and then froze and we rose to a glorious day. The sun had not yet reached the tents but Chomolhari was framed by the almost black sides of the valley, glowing with an intense light reflected from the snows of the most colossal ice face I had ever seen. It stretched for 10,000ft above us (it is 23,996ft/7314m high) to the summit of a superb symmetrically-shaped mountain, tilted very slightly to the right. It looked impregnable and has, I understand, only been climbed twice, once by Freddie Spencer Chapman in 1937, from the Tibetan side, and a second time (in the 1980s, I believe) by a joint Bhutanese/Indian team. Spencer Chapman almost died and two of the joint team did die.

As the sun reached our tents and we sat outside having breakfast we heard a sharp crack, then a noise like thunder and watched a most enormous avalanche develop and pour down the ice face towards us, filling the combe below with an ice cloud that lingered for minutes. This was the sort of thing I had come to the Himalaya to see, and it was incredibly exciting; sadly it was almost impossible to capture such size and scale on film.

Our own yaks arrived shortly afterwards and we left most of the lads

to load up as we continued up the valley a little further, crossing the river and climbing up to the north-west towards the col. We were soon granted another stunning view, that of the ice-grooved spire of Jitchu Drake (22,290ft/6794m) looking rather like an enormous Matterhorn at the head of the valley we were leaving.

These two great mountains dominated our landscape for the next few days but we had another problem to face. Officially we were leaving Jangothang for a new camp at a place called Lingshi, via the Nyelela Pass, which was indicated as 13,900 feet and which implied an altitude gain for the day (excluding, although we never could, any up-and-down effect) of only about 700ft. We gained that in the first hour and could then see that the pass was far beyond and much higher. In fact we could not see it at all until we had crossed two more subsidiary cols. Motup and I, using carefully reset altimeters of our own, established that the final pass, with its prayer flags streaming in the wind, was at about 15,700ft/4800m, almost 2000ft higher than the official height. It gave us all a much harder day than we had expected and an opportunity to reflect on the valuable acclimatisation that we had gained before being faced with it.

When we reached Lingshi we learned that the Germans, who had left for the shorter return, had had an even harder day as they were less acclimatised. They had left Jangothang in poor conditions when it was misty and snowing and had crossed the river at the wrong place. One of their party had fallen in, got soaked and slightly injured. They had then to climb to the Nyelela Pass without being able to see it and while continually slithering backwards in new snow. And they would have had none of those stunning views.

The pattern that was to follow had already been set as we climbed and traversed again to the north-west, for the valleys all drained to the south-east from the highest peaks and we were therefore crossing the grain of the land. We passed by Lingshi Dzong, apparently now a high-security prison, so we were not supposed to get too close. When I wanted to get nearer for a splendid view of Jitchu Drake soaring high above, there were mutterings that I would not get many visitors if I got myself locked up. Leaving this we crossed another ridge and had views of Tsering Gang, another superb mountain and probably unclimbed, like almost every mountain in the country, and spent the night in a tiny, remote village called Chebisa, where the children, who were always curious, rushed out to see us, the curiosities.

Still crossing the natural lie of the land, with snow lying only on the

north flanks at our altitudes, we traversed the Gobula Pass and then another, unnamed, took us to a wild camp site at a place called Shomuthang. There was no sign of human habitation at all here and crossing the bed of a wide valley drained by innumerable little streams separated by peat groughs was rather like traversing Pennine bog-trotter country in a gigantic Scottish corrie. What a wonderful place! The fact that every possible site for a tent was on a slope added to its exclusivity. At least the weather was holding: in fact, it was getting colder every night and we were having hard frosts with temperatures around minus 10° Celsius.

The night we were at Shomuthang was the night of the Fell and Rock A. G. M. and Dinner at the Shap Wells Hotel (Saturday, 5 November 1994). Jill Aldersley, due to be elected President in her absence, had arranged to try to send an amusing fax, signed by us all and conveying greetings from Bhutan (which in the event was never received) and we had our own mini-dinner that same night. So, after Pinjo's Pantry had done us proud, we drank tots of duty-free whisky and various speeches were made, including the loyal toast. Somebody suggested that it would please our Bhutanese team if we included the King of Bhutan, but when Paul announced the toast it emerged slightly differently than he had intended, for he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, The Queen, coupled with the King of Bhutan ... Oh my God! Another Royal scandal!"

The following morning was again bitterly cold and Jill astonished us by announcing that her spittoon had not frozen. We were pretty certain that she had not got a pee bottle (which every smart man had, of course) but we had no idea that she had bought a spittoon. Later we realised that if it had not frozen it could only have been because she had drunk an inordinately large amount of whisky.

Still heading north-east we again crossed a ridge and climbed up to 15,091ft/4600m to cross the Jarela Pass, seeing more herds of bharal, the 'blue sheep' which actually look rather like deer, on the way. From the flag-decorated col we could see a major range ahead, probably Gangchey Ta. We could also see in the distance what looked like the col that was to give us our highest pass, the Shingela Pass, at a whisker under 5000m. It looked hard, but we had already been (unexpectedly) up to 4800m. In the interval, however, we had experienced several other height discrepancies where the actual altitudes varied by as much as 1000ft/300m, or more, from the heights given. We had experienced remarkably settled weather so these variations were not pressure changes.

One or two of the party had not acclimatised as well as they had expected and the ups and downs around 12,500 -15,000 feet were fairly gruelling on the legs of a party whose average age was, at a guess, about 58. So the possibility that this pass could also be a good thousand feet higher than its official height could not be discounted. Fortunately, probably as the result of taking great care about water and personal hygiene and the fact that our trekking staff were scrupulously careful to keep their own hands clean when involved with food, we had had no tummy problems so far. And in fact, apart from an odd day near the end of the trek when Jill agreed that it would be accurate to describe the Presidential Person as a 'loose woman', we escaped without any Delhi Belly or Katmandu Quickstep.

Before we had to contend with the Shingela Pass we had another long descent to make and a wide and fast-flowing stream, with no bridge or shallows, to cross. The men had no alternative but to give their feet a wash (the first for a week in my case, although I had changed socks several times and washed them) and then wait for the sensation to return to the numbed digits after wading across the frozen torrent. The girls did rather better: that incredible guy Motup produced a pair of flip-flops from his rucksack and carried each of the girls, including their rucksacks, on his back across the fast-flowing waters. However, they didn't escape the subsequent reascent of about 800ft to reach the next camp, at Roluthang, on a wide shelf, again at the tree line and in an even more scenic position.

Even Jill's spittoon was frozen the following morning as we straggled off, ahead of the yaks as usual, to tackle the Shingela Pass. In fact there were no problems, so long as you don't consider putting one foot in front of the other is a problem. There was no discrepancy with the altitude and everybody arrived at the cairns and prayer-flags within about twenty minutes. Never having been up to 5000m before I personally scrambled up the ridge above the col after Motup until we were both absolutely certain that we were a little above 5000m, then returned to the pass for group photos in the freezing wind, with Jill draping the Club flag across her chest.

That was the highest physical point of the trek, but it was not by any means an anti-climax thereafter; indeed, in some ways the best was yet to come. We descended to a grand spot at a place called Lemithang, getting some stunning views of Gangchey Ta en-route, and had a jolly evening with another roaring camp fire. Then we set off down a long wooded valley, crossing and recrossing the foaming river and following the yaks until they suddenly turned off the path and scrambled up a steep slope. We

thought they were out of control, but they knew where they were and led us up onto another high alp, with a superb view back to Gangchey Ta and one to the north, which was probably of Masang Gang, 7194m, although there are so many unnamed and un-surveyed mountains in Bhutan that it is difficult to be certain. On the alp, directly ahead of us, were the solid houses of Laya, the most isolated and northerly village in Bhutan.

We had a rest day here, camped on an open and rather windy site, but still at about 12,600ft. The children rushed out to see us and were unbelievably welcoming. One of them, called Choeden, who carried her little brother, Handoo, everywhere on her back, was a natural actress who stole our hearts. In the evening the young women of the village, who all wore distinctive conical hats made of plaited split bamboo held on the head by means of a skein of beads, danced traditional Bhutanese dances for us by the flames of the camp fire. The following day we visited their houses and drank butter-tea in the smoky interiors, for none of them here or elsewhere in Bhutan had a chimney. It was a glimpse of a remarkably self-sufficient life, essentially unchanged for centuries. The smoke clearly exacerbates respiratory and eye problems and a number of older women queued to request medical treatment: unfortunately we could offer them little.

We said goodbye to our yaks here and the loads were transferred again to horses as we set off down a long valley, now heading south. In the best Bhutanese way the trail switch-backed down the main valley, contouring into every side valley en-route. The lunch did not arrive that day until nearly 4 p.m., by which time we had reached our campsite at a place called Koina. When the horses arrived they were all wet up to their bellies. They had forded the river at one point and one of the horses had been swept away, fortunately for only a short distance and, to everyone's relief, its load had been the kitchen equipment which had not suffered at all from the wetting. The campsite looked like a dump, for a gang of young people from Laya were repairing and improving the trail and had temporarily taken over the site, but they had an extraordinary party that night which none of those present will forget in a hurry, dancing and stamping in the smoke-filled interior of a low building lit by the flames of the fire in the centre of the floor.

We had one more pass to cross, the Balela Pass, which was at 12,267ft, and notable for the fact that it was hidden in the forest and defended at one point on the trail by a nest of bees, entailing a brief diversion up the hillside

to avoid them. Then we reached Gasa. The saga of the horses is too long to retell here but we finished up that night descending another thousand feet to camp at the hot springs lower down the valley.

These natural hot springs are credited with healing properties and the faithful make a two-day walk up the valley to reach them and bathe in and drink their waters. Needless to say they provided our party with the first decent wash we had had for a fortnight and our clothes got the same treatment. We even had the delightful sight of two locals leading a horse into an adjacent warm pool and washing it all over.

We were losing height rapidly as we continued further down the valley, passing through bamboo zones and semi-jungle which would be leech-infested in the wet seasons and whooping loudly to warn Himalayan bears of our presence, but we had one more night's camp at a place called Damji before a last walk out to the road-head at Tashigang. When we reached the tarmac, the splendid Chhimmy had organised beer and cream cakes for us all. Cream cakes? After all this time without gut-rot? Theory says they should be avoided like the plague! But we trusted Chhimmy - at least some of us did - and I certainly scoffed three, while Paul said ominously, "Four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two ... that's the bugs multiplying in your guts". Our trust was not misplaced: nobody had any ill-effects.

The final part of the trip was essentially cultural, but still fascinating. We drove to the central part of Bhutan, the Bumthang valley, over the only road linking western and central Bhutan and which traverses two passes, each about 12,000ft high. There we visited more monasteries and got to see the inside of a Dzong before travelling to Thimpu, the capital, for more sight-seeing, including a specific performance of masked dances normally performed only at the great 'tsechus', or religious festivals.

There is far more to tell, but no space to tell it. The organisation had been superb, the food excellent, the weather almost entirely good, the mountains glorious and the people we met friendly and welcoming. It had been a wonderful experience, with never a cross word, with no real difficulties with altitude and with no health problems. Paul said he had only one complaint: he'd never travelled with such an abstemious lot in his life.

As a footnote, I ought to tell you that the party consisted of the following: Jill Aldersley, Bob Allen, Andrew Hall, Hatty Harris, Christine Miller, David Miller, Margaret Roberts and Paul Roberts. So you can see that there is still life in the old buggers yet!

SUPER BARIO

Jim Rigg

"... with Kinabalu almost out of sight to the north, another, much smaller but in a way even more startling landmark had come into my view. Two white pinnacles, close together and joined by a saddle, which I could not then identify on any map but which became our landmark into the interior on all subsequent flights ..." (Tom Harrisson - *World Within*).

I like mountains to have some sense of history about them. I know each mountain has its unique place in the world, but that accorded Batu Lawi is "more unique than others". (Forgive the appalling English quote!) Mount 200 (as it was known in WWII) was used as a navigational aid by Tom Harrisson's "Z" special unit when they were searching for the fabled Kelabit Highlands. Bario and the "flat as a pancake" highlands were first explored by outsiders during the 1911 expedition into the interior of Borneo led by R. O. Douglas. Harrisson's unit was parachuted into this region on 25 March 1945 and successfully organised behind-the-lines resistance to the Japanese occupying forces who saw to it that Sarawak was virtually cut off from the outside world for three years. Unfortunately one of the aircraft failed to return to base in the Philippines and after the war, in 1946, Tom Harrisson placed a memorial just below the top of the female peak to commemorate their heroic efforts. (The wooden original was replaced in 1987 by an Australian military expedition who left a metal plaque securely fastened to a rock wall close to the summit, near the site of the original). Bario and the Kelabit highlands saw "centre stage" yet again in 1963 during the "confrontation" with Indonesia when British troops, having already dealt with the emergency, found themselves back in the jungle fighting guerilla forces who crossed into Sarawak from Kalimantan. For a small place in such a remote setting, Bario and the Kelabit Highlanders who live there have "seen a fair share of world history".

Bario is located in north-east Sarawak within one day's walk of the Indonesian border and is nowadays a settlement of about 1000 people, mainly of the Kelabit tribe. It lies on a plain, about 3000 feet above sea level, surrounded by forest-covered mountains rising to almost 8000 feet. Rainfall amounts to about 150 inches per annum, with the driest period in July and August. To reach Bario you either walk or fly. The Rural Air Service flies in daily provided "visual flight conditions" prevail. The plain

is very fertile and the Bario rice, with its distinctive flavour, is much sought after in lowland areas. Other crops include vegetables (cabbage, onion, tomato), fruit (banana, orange, pineapple), as well as sugar cane. Protein in the diet is provided by, amongst other things, chicken, barking deer, monkey and wild boar. The latter are hunted using rifles and dogs rather than the blow-pipe. Since there is only one fridge in Bario, the quarry is butchered at the site of the kill and rapidly sold and consumed!

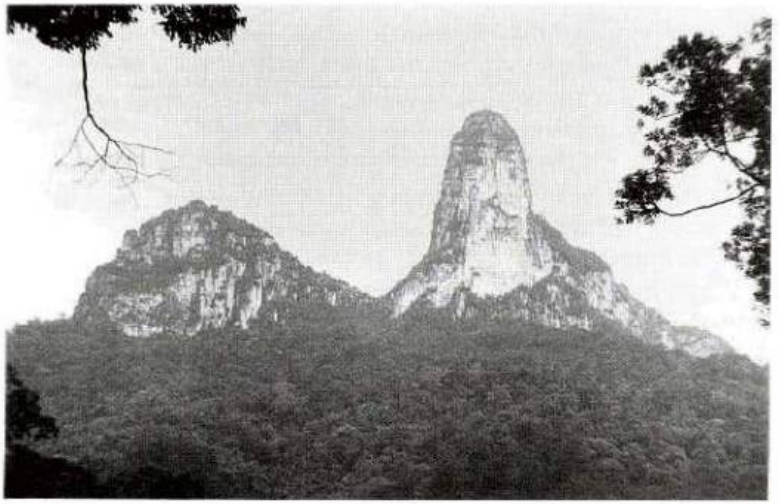
Our objective was to trek to the summit of the female peak of Batu Lawi. However, as we warmed to the environment and friendly Kelabits, it became much more than a simple (if arduous) jungle bash. We spent our first night in a longhouse at Pa'Ukat, which is about 45 minutes on foot from Bario. Our guides Larry and Henry live in this small kampung in the shelter of the Tamu Abu range. To say the Kelabits are friendly and generous is an understatement on a grand scale. As soon as one enters a longhouse one is made to feel welcome, although most of the elders speak little English. A longhouse might be 100 yards in length and accommodate as many as 20 families. There might be a generator which is switched on for a couple of hours each night but, since everything is air-lifted in, fuel is expensive and it may be that everything is done by candle or torch light. All cooking is done on a wood fire.

The walk to the first camp starts by threading an intricate line through beautiful, tiered paddy fields. Particularly prominent were the brilliant green nursery paddies. After about 45 minutes at Henry's "slow pace" we entered the jungle. From the entry the track leads uphill to the "gap" in the Tamu Abu range which must be crossed before Batu Lawi can even be seen. Careful balance is vital as one moves through convoluted country with twisting rivers, rickety bamboo bridges, boot-wide tracks through collapsing vegetation with the ever-present threat of a hungry (or should I say thirsty?) leech population. (In this respect we were lucky: the weather was dry). The trail began life as a hunting track and has seen only modest improvements in recent years. It is certainly not uncommon to find a huge fallen tree simply obliterate a section of trail - such places provide guides with the opportunity to exercise their fearsome, razor-sharp parangs. Having said that, trees have been felled to make difficult river crossings easier and two wooden shelters have been built to provide camps en route. The climb to the gap is hard work. Once there the trail descends through a fascinating region of mossy forest. This is amazing country where it is impossible to move quickly. Although deep gullies are bridged by slippery

tree trunks, in the main you weave in and out, under and over all sorts of obstacles. Soon after one emerges from the dense mossy forest one can observe pitcher plants hanging from the trees. The Kelabits used to cook rice in them and they can be used as a source of water in times of desperation. From this point it is not far to the "bothy" located on a bend of the Ulu Limbang river. The river is easily crossed at this point and provides a refreshing bath in brown, peaty water - just what is required after the hot, sweaty exertions of the day.

From Camp 1 the trail leads across the river before heading into evermore complex terrain. Exact recollections are vague, but I do remember crossing rivers of various sizes no less than thirteen times. (Was it the same river each time?) I think we made four steep ascents and three descents over distinct ridge lines before reaching a superb viewpoint of the mountain, Surely this is one of the most impressive of sights. In the middle of the rain forest over one million years old stands this unique monument of a mountain - Batu Lawi. From the viewpoint more ascent on a sweeping curve leads to the top of a long ridge which is descended for like evermore before a river crossing leads to the final pull up to the second camp.

The male and female peaks of Batu Lawi, Sarawak.
Photograph by Jim Rigg



En route we encountered many fascinating examples of the way the Kelabit makes use of material available in the forest. Larry showed us the bean-like fruit of the Patar tree, eaten in the belief that it prevents kidney disease. The root of another plant is chewed before/during/ after bouts of drinking - it is reputed to stave off drunkenness and is apparently expensive to buy. The giant Ilu tree is taped for its sap which solidifies to make a very effective firelighter. We heard barking deer, wild boar and hornbills, we were fortunate to enjoy a delightful display of acrobatics by gibbons and during the night heard a big cat, perhaps making a kill.

Travelling light from Camp 2 saw us racing up the track to the saddle between the male and female peaks in an effort to keep up with Larry. A steep ascent through forest and a scramble up through rock and vegetation allows access to the openness of the saddle. From the saddle a tortuous track leads up and down rock steps, over trees and under trees, eventually reaching the top via a short section of highly unstable vegetation and a distinctly suspect creation of a rope ladder. The view is one of primeval landscape and Murud, together with the Tamu Abu range, are clearly seen. All the time it is the male peak which dominates. Inevitably one asks why this mountain exists at all: there is certainly nothing else like it in this part of the world. Why are the surrounding mountains so different? What geological forces brought about its existence?

The male peak was first climbed in 1985/86 by a British Army team but their ascent was called into question by an Australian Geographical Society team who reached the summit in September 1993: they had found retreat slings low on the route and no further evidence of the '86 climb was found until the summit was reached. (Postscript: A British Army expedition spent three weeks at Batu Lawi, arriving in December 1985. Although not experienced rock climbers, they came to Sarawak with the aim of reaching the summit of the male peak and set up camp at the saddle, descending each day to replenish water supplies. Persistent attempts to climb the higher peak failed and with supplies running low they decided to trek round to the north side of the peak. This significantly reduced the amount of steep climbing and the team were successful at their second attempt. The Australian team graded their 1993 route as 5.10 A2). Even an ascent of the female peak is a serious undertaking: at only three places along the trail would helicopter access for rescue be possible. It receives about 50 ascents per year and is a demanding enterprise, not to be taken lightly.

The track back is just as hard as the outward journey and just as interesting and rewarding. All the time there is something new in the forest and Henry and Larry display an enthusiasm for the environment which is definitely catching. Henry is a super-fit 54-year-old who has one pace - "we go slowly". He has considerable experience and helped in the opening up of the Mulu National Park. Larry is an able, athletic 29-year-old who has returned to the longhouse after a spell of working in the big towns down on the coast. He has seen the mountains in all their moods and knows the place like the back of his hand. Their equipment is basic. Most impressive are their "Bario Reeboks", a rubber shoe with a studded sole which provides good grip. Their feet are much tougher than ours and I would certainly not encourage a visitor to wear them on a long trek.

Fortunately on our return we had time to take a good look around Bario. Local people speak freely of politics and development and it is not unusual to be invited into a longhouse for tea. Improvements in communication have brought many benefits and will continue to do so. The one hour flight to Miri passes over rain forest cut by the tracks of Chinese and Japanese loggers. They are not that far from Bario! Nobody I spoke to wants to see the loggers in Bario. They are seen to bring destruction, not development. Some would like to see road access, others are content with the rural air service. It is not for me to say what should or should not happen. However, the natural beauty of the area, its peacefulness and the warmth of its people are treasures I would not want to see ruined.

Acknowledgements:
Tom Harrisson: *World Within*
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Our guides Henry and Larry
John and Karen "Tarawe's", Bario
The staff of Borneo Mainland Travel, Patrick, George and Kenneth.

B. J. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ROUND
11 & 12 AUGUST 1995

Loweswater		Depart	16.00
1	Whiteside		17.01
2	Hopegill Head		17.15
3	Sand Hill		17.21
4	Wanlope		17.40
5	Eel Crag		17.48
6	Crag Hill		17.53
7	Sail		18.00
8	Scar Crags		18.09
9	Outerside		18.22
10	Stile End		18.32
11	Barrow		18.40
Braithwaite		Arrive	19.00
		Depart	19.10
12	Carl Side		20.20
13	Ullock Pike		20.30
14	Skiddaw		21.05
15	Little Man		21.25
16	Jenkin Hill		21.35
17	Latrigg		22.10
Newsham		Arrive	23.30
		Depart	23.40
18	Clough Head		00.25
19	Calfhow Pike		00.50
20	Great Dod		01.10
21	Watsons Dod		01.23
22	Stybarrow Dod		01.35
23	Raise		02.05
24	White Side		02.20
25	Lower Man		02.35
26	Helvellyn		02.45
27	Nethermost Pike		02.53
28	Dollywaggon Pike		03.12
Dunmail Raise		Arrive	04.00
		Depart	04.15
29	Steel Fell		04.55
30	Calf Crag		05.20
31	Sergeant Man		06.00
32	High Raise		06.05
33	Thunacar Knott		06.20
34	Pavey Ark		06.30
35	Harrison Stickle		06.40
36	Loft Crag		07.05
37	Pike o'Stickle		07.25
38	Rossett Pike		08.00
39	Ill Crag		08.40
40	Broad Crag		08.58
41	Scafell Pike		09.30
42	Great Gable		10.45
43	Green Gable		11.00
44	Brandreth		11.10
45	Grey Knotts		11.21
46	Haystacks		11.55
Scarth Gap		Arrive	12.10
		Depart	12.20
47	High Crag		12.50
48	High Stile		13.07
49	Red Pike		13.22
50	Little Dodd		13.33
51	Starling Dodd		14.05
52	Great Borne		14.32
53	Gavel Fell		14.52
54	Blake Fell		15.03
55	Burnbank Fell		15.10
Loweswater		Finish	15.40

55 at 55

Barry Johnson

I had envisaged blue, clear skies and warm sunny weather. In reality I thought it was bound to rain - mid August in the Lake district is always wet! And yet there we were gathered in the weather of my wildest dreams: calm, very warm, too bright for comfort. The weather all summer had been blistering, the hottest on record. The Loweswater hills were more akin to the sierra Nevada than the customary lush green and misty blue. I wasn't complaining.

Just a small group of friends started the countdown. The coolness of the Village Hall was quickly lost as we jogged down the road, but we turned into the shade at Scale Hill and walked through the trees back into the sunshine at Lanthwaite Green. First drink of water from Valerie, Penny and Harold DeMoss. No sign yet of the piles Ursula's nightmare had foretold!

Dave Clarkson and David Lees, my first two helpers/pacers, took me effortlessly through the first section: water, Staminade, High five, food, sluice in the beck, talk of family holidays. One hour up on schedule at Braithwaite and too early for the next pacers, so David and I jogged across the Bassenthwaite badlands to the bottom of Carl Side. Dave met the next fell help and then drove round to Dancing Gate. Clean socks, three new pacers, lots more to drink, then off we go into the shade of the trees - luxury. Carl Side, Ullock Pike, Skiddaw, Low Man - first time for John Carr on these hills, old hat to Terry Kirton (who is very excited about his new Sunday paper) and we receive a lot of verbals from David Findlay for daring to put our torches on. It was an easy section, jogging downhill, mainly walking the flat and any uphill. We reached Alan and Sue Ferguson at Newsham just 30 minutes up on schedule.

Val tended to my every need - actually, just a little too much, because the banana came back again on the top of Clough Head. Colin Dulson, Keith Longney and Sky managed me very nicely thank you through the Helvellyn section. No torches, lovely warm temperature. Peter Nicholson and Christine Ross provided tea and biscuits on Sticks Pass. Jim and Peter Fairey appeared with hot chocolate and lots of sustenance and, would you believe it, a table and chair. Well, bloody hell, that tops the lot - and on Helvellyn summit too!

The weather began to change. Early warnings were banks of cloud

billowing from over the High Street area. It hit us on Dollywaggon. The "Chain Saw Boys" had it sussed - five degrees west, knock off the magnetic, allow for the depression into the ghyll, avoid a scree by marching twelve paces N. N. W. and down we went - slightly wrong, but we got there. Thanks a lot, boys - a good section.

A big team was waiting at Dunmail: my old mate Pete Nelson, ace navigator, ace friend, and other close friends: Phil Stones, Penny DeMoss, and leader of the Fell Tigers, Derek 'Jack Charlton' Fowler. We pulled steeply up Steel End, leaving Harold DeMoss (chief cook and bottle washer) to sort out. Penny, a Californian running friend, was to pace for more miles than anyone else. Rain, Mist, Summit, Rain Mist, Summit, Rain Mist ... We chatted about the famous people we had met - from the President of the United States to Ena Sharples. By this time - 6 a.m. Saturday morning - Pete had precisely navigated us to Sergeant Man, High Raise, Thunacar Knott, Pavey Ark, Thunacar Knott - Thunacar Knott? Not a foot wrong to Rossett, feeling really good, watered and fed every step. It was colder on Esk Hause and we put on extra tops. The ground was treacherous, Scafell Pike was gloomy, we were thirty minutes down on schedule. We scuttled down the Borrowdale descent, very dirty from the race one week earlier, and on to meet up with Janet Sutcliffe and Joss Naylor on the Corridor Route. Janet had balloons, bunting and a banner ready for Esk Hause but wasn't sure in the unexpected bad weather if I'd passed or not, so she met Joss at Sty Head and they wandered back up to the Piers Ghyll area to locate us.

The balloons, etc., were intended to broadcast the celebration of my 55th year, hence the proposed round of 55 peaks. Sand dunes at 80! I'd considered the Bob Graham Round plus 13, but really wanted something different, and it wasn't until Val suggested a completely different round based on the same concept - starting and finishing at the same place - that Loweswater emerged as the only choice. Grant and I have organised triathlons and Pete and I have organised fell races from there and I have such fond associations with the valley that Valerie's idea to start from the Village Hall and finish with a birthday pint was almost inevitable.

The 'B. J. Round' came out of the desire to include a traverse of the Whiteside and Grassmoor fells and finish on the familiar Blake Fell range. The development of the round was a pleasure, with many happy days exploring and tweaking the route and times to the eventual outcome. The round is truly magnificent. We dropped into the valley bottom only twice

to road crossings at Braithwaite and Newsham. The remaining "low" points are all high passes and the leg from Dunmail to Loweswater is never intersected by road.

I was overwhelmed by the immediate offers of help for the round from friends old and new, and found that I did not have to publicise my attempt to get enough pacers. One guy who should definitely have been there with me- and he was in my thoughts - was Grant Edmondson. He was initially down for two sections, but was dragged down by illness and a knee injury. This was a blow to me, but there will be more days like this to come!

Suddenly we emerged from the high fells, cascaded down the Corridor Route onto Sty Head. The takeover party were huddled by the rescue box with lots of food - thank you Barbara! - and off we go again. Joss chatted all the way up the new path to the summit of Great Gable. A unique sandwich was consumed with pleasure, the little black bullets with a little bit of apprehension - but they all helped. Typically of the 'Virtual Reality' man, we took some delightful routes and the section from Brandreth to Grey Knotts stretched my legs. The high traverse to the top side of Black Beck Tarn was a treat. Dot Patten and Lynne Hibbert joined us and Janet veered off. Joyce and John appeared briefly and Phil Cottrill kept me sustained and encouraged to Scarth Gap. Thanks Phil.

Coming off Haystacks, Joss suddenly plunged off the track into abundant heather and emerged clutching some sprigs of white heather. He stuffed it into my hands with the directive "Give this to Val". Down we went to Scarth Gap, exactly on schedule again.

And yes, she was there, a pleasure to see again and delighted by the heather and my good state of health. A little cuddle, a lot of welcome fussing and the off, with a big group this time, steeply up Gamlin End to High Stile. We all made good progress, Joss in front, blazing the trail, Harold DeMoss catching up after each rough descent and claiming that they don't have descents like these in California; Phil and Lynne 'David Bailey' Cottrill; Claire Kenny raising money for her Everest trip - good to see you; Valerie dishing out the goodies; and my partner on my forthcoming Everest Marathon trip, David Clarkson, helping on a second section, was by my side. It was a real, real pleasure. I felt good and strong, the weather had improved, the views developed nicely and it was looking likely that I would finish within the 24 hours. We tripped nicely through to Great Borne and it was at this stage that Lynne Hibbert announced her intention of having a go at the Bob Graham Round. Best of luck, Lynne. Gavel was

longer than I had anticipated. Blake Fell was wet and windy - we even missed Claire, Keith and Pippa. The final hill, Burnbank, came and went. The joy inside was immense - such fantastic country. Paddy O'Neill met me on the lonning up to the Village Hall. Paddy and I ran a lot together in the early 80s: including our Bob Graham rounds, and his company was extra special.

I had imagined getting back to the Village Hall, being sick and falling into the back of the van, but I'm pleased to say, none of that! Frank Smith had put the beer on, Margaret Edmondson and Ursula Clarkson had done a magnificent presentation of Valerie's food, Janet's balloons and bunting were put to good use, and Simon, my son, was there as was almost everybody who had helped during the day, plus various other friends. Nothing could have been better.

I am proud and feel proud to have been able to complete the round. It comprises just over 82 miles and about 31,000 feet of ascent. My time was 20 minutes under 24 hours - 15 minutes inside the schedule.

No pain, no piles, just pleasure. Thanks everyone.

Taksang Lhakhang monastery - the 'Tiger's Lair' - near Paro, Bhutan
Sketch by Jill Aldersley

PEAKS and TROUGHS of the MUNROIST

Lyn Wilson

This was impossible - wholly unreal. I was fit. Yet this is what I was hearing: "You are having a heart attack! I'll give you an injection of morphine to stop the pain and I'll call an ambulance to take you to Stirling Infirmary."

I felt extraordinary, and had just been violently sick as I walked down from my 171st Munro, An Caisteal, before being driven to a welcoming B&B in Crianlarich.

I live in the south of England and, having been bitten by the ambition to reach the summit of all Munros, the 277 peaks above 3000ft in the Scottish Highlands, I had seized a weekend to tackle the five mountains north-east of Loch Lomond.

Now the doctor was telling me not to move, and shortly, Jock and William from the Scottish Ambulance Service at Killin arrived and carried me to Stirling Royal Infirmary. Wearing my climbing clothes I was put on a trolley and wheeled towards the X-ray department which another patient was also approaching. "Cardiac has priority." I queue jumped. Was this really me?

Intensive care, flickering monitors, and the arrival of members of my family suggested that I was properly ill. It was hard to believe. After eight days of care I returned home to Hertfordshire.

My doctor in Stirling had said: "Try walking to a telegraph pole, then next day to another, and on the third day another - a bit at a time."

I was weak. I hobbled slowly with a stick. This was infuriating. There were still 107 Munros to climb. Could it really be true that my walking days were over?

Month by month I walked further. I wandered on the Quantocks in Somerset. Fine. Then I visited Snowdonia to see how I got on with some hills around the Nant Ffrancon valley. All went well, if somewhat slowly. I was back among the mountains - if Geoffrey Winthrop Young could scramble here with a peg leg then I was sure that my heart would support my endeavours. While I was in hospital I had been given a small booklet about heart attacks: "Perhaps you weren't taking enough exercise? Try some hill walking [yes please] or gentle golf ..."

Right. It was time to return north of the border: 107 to climb before completing Sir Hugh Munro's challenge.

And it worked. On November 5, 1994, my wife and I with an old climbing friend (Eric Furness, FRCC member and Munroist 340 who completed eight Munros for his 80th birthday) travelled by launch along Loch Mullardoch to the foot of An Socach, in wild country east from Glen Cannich and west from Glen Elchaig. I reached the summit and became the 1,359th Munroist.

Now the challenge was how to celebrate? I wanted to contribute in some way to Highlands in which I had had so many happy days and nights, in sun, rain, snow, and at the jaws of the accursed midges.

An idea dawned: could one rent the youth Hostel at Loch Ossian for a weekend? The hostel has been described as the remotest in Britain: the only reasonable approach is by train to Corrour Station, 1,350ft high on Rannoch Moor, and then walk to the hostel with all one's provisions. An enquiry to the warden, Tom Rigg, who has cared for the hostel and its visitors for 24 years, was enthusiastically received. So the reservation was made for a weekend in March. No more than 20 guests could be accommodated.

My wife gave careful thought to the menus. The party would last from Saturday breakfast until Sunday evening: two breakfasts, two lunches, two teas, and the celebratory Munro Dinner. My job was relatively simple: a call to the Wine Society for a crate of champagne, a dozen French country red, and a couple of bottles of Scotch.

My climbing companions were all clearly identified in my records which showed routes, dates and times of ascents. Family members, fine. It would be good to invite Jock and William, my ambulance team in February 1990, and what about a cardiologist and a nurse from Stirling Infirmary? The invitations were delivered, the response enthusiastic. And thanks? I must make a contribution to the British Heart Foundation and the John Muir Trust which is dedicated to conserving the remaining wild places in Scotland. The board on which I serve, Friends Provident, was willing to make a donation to a mountain rescue charity, Boots Across Scotland.

The weekend approached. Fifteen guests travelled north from London's Euston station on the Fort William sleeper, due to arrive at Corrour on Saturday morning. They would be complemented by guests from Scotland using the West Highland line from Tulloch and Crianlarich.

The weather forecast for the weekend was diabolical: "Blizzards" marked all over the TV weather map. The forecaster was so excited he

almost decreed, Keep Out of Scotland. Normal people would not travel, but we were committed to our party - so we had to go. The food, wine, ice axes, crampons and rucksacks arrived at Euston. We scrambled aboard, squeezing the gear into the sleeping compartments and then enjoyed the first class buffet car. This is the way to travel. After a good night, the train was winding slowly north past Loch Lomond and up on to Rannoch Moor. At Corrour we scrambled out into deep snow. No blizzard.

Tom Rigg met us and reported his sledge buried, so the wine cases were left in a snowdrift. The hostel is a three-roomed hut, perched on the fringe of Loch Ossian; coals flicker in the grate of the women's dormitory; a sign on the loo is practical advice: "Bolt the door as it may blow off."

A happy band arrived at the hostel to be greeted by Windswept, a tame stag, and breakfast was created. The Scots visitors arrived mid-morning and so, too, did the wines. To whet our appetites, and knock off another Munro for those keen to add to their list, a cheerful rabble set off up Beinn na Lap, one of the easiest Munros.

No blizzards. Far from it. Good views to Glencoe and Buachaille Etive Mor, my first Munro in 1947. We looked north to the Mamores and Ben Nevis and the Grey Corries, eastwards to the six big and remote peaks around Ben Alder, south we could see the railway snaking over the moor and the peaks around Tyndrum. It was good to be alive. The glissade down and the walk along Loch Ossian were in beautiful conditions with the setting sun ahead.

Now for the Munro Dinner. The champagne was certainly cool. A party of 20 settled down to a four course feast which had been brought up frozen and gently thawed all day on Tom's stove. The wind generator was not working, so gas lamps and candles lit the party: the evening was filled with drinking, eating, recounting deeds in the hills over thirty years, remembering absent friends, and plotting other visits to Scotland and mountain ranges further afield.

Sunday was a day of relative quiet. Still no blizzard. Another Munro was visited in deep snow and under a blue sky with brilliant sunshine. The time drew near for us to pack and depart. The Scots heading south left at tea time.

The wind rose and the snow began to swirl and the darkness became more intense. The troupe for London allowed an hour to cover the mile to the station and, through the drifts, struggled across the moor trusting that the train, with its warmth and light, would be coming up past Loch Treig

from Fort William - we just made the connection.

So what next? As the Reverend A. E. Robertson, the first Munroist replied to the inquiry "What will you do now?" "I am going to climb them all over again." The message for those with heart problems - with your doctor's approval, try a little mountain walking.

(Lyn Wilson's article first appeared in the Financial Times, Weekend, 26-27 August 1995, and is reproduced here with the Author's and Syndication Editor's permission. Editor).

Dr. Alan Bridges (left), cardiologist from Stirling Infirmary, receiving a cheque for the British Heart Foundation on the summit of Beinn na Lap from Lyn Wilson. Photograph from the Lyn Wilson Collection.

CONFESSIONS OF ORIGINAL SIN (and OTHER STORIES)

Al Phizacklea

The following short essays are extracts from stories conceived for publication or articles produced for magazines that never got past "the drawing board", so to speak. They are personal anecdotes, thoughts and incidents that have occurred to me over the years that I had the urge to commit to paper soon afterwards. After reading them I realised that they were too personal for a wider public audience, as I always regard the first person articles as ultra-egotistical. However, when I discovered the *Engineer's Slab* draft recently, I thought that maybe Club members would be a bit more understanding about their content, and allow me to ramble on ...

These essays appear as they were originally written, that is, without any corrections being made to the style, grammar or content, in order to preserve the spontaneity of the moment.

Confessions of Original Sin

The first ascent of *Original Sin*, E5 6c, Scafell Crag.

I wasn't going to bother writing anything down about this route until I heard a friend commenting on Rick Graham's and Andy Hislop's failure to repeat it. They'd pulled out a thin blade I'd inserted trying the moves, and there was some insinuation that I'd used the peg for aid. Well, I hadn't, and I must offer an apology to Rick and Andy, because the route description was a real piece of sandbagging - they were off-route. Here's what happened ...

When you look at The Great Flake on Central Buttress it is actually a massive exfoliated flake which is completely detached from the main face, and the whole of its huge weight (6 or 7 hundred tonnes) rests on The Oval ledge preventing it from toppling earthbound. The right-hand side of the flake is open, and forms the crux of Central Buttress. (Well, it did until the chockstone slipped out in 1994). The left-hand side of this single flake is defined as a thin ragged crack, zig-zagging its way down from Jeffcoat's Ledge to a point just right of the obvious diagonal crack of *The Nazgul*. The two edges of this crack, being slightly misaligned and offset, are obviously catching at certain points and acting as the "handbrake" which holds the flake in place. This crack is the line of *Original Sin*.

When I inspected the route by abseil, it was obvious that the first five metres were going to be desperate. The wall overhangs at this point, the crack is too thin to admit any fingertips, although there was a good nut slot for an RP at 3 metres. I put the peg in at this point so I had some form of protection in order to place this nut. It was a bit easier than I anticipated, the peg was clipped from a small flat edge for my left hand and the wire was quickly placed, but I couldn't get any higher. There was a one-finger slot in the crack two metres above, which was right out of reach as the rock in between was totally unhelpful. One go, two goes, three goes - no way. The nut was well and truly tested, and I was getting sore fingers cranking on the small edge. Time for tea.

Time for a different look. On the wall between the thin crack and *The Nazgul* were some very small holds. One of them was no bigger than the thickness of a matchstick. Well, either I was going to give it a go, or go home. My first attempt was feeble, but at least I got some chalk on the holds which made finding them easier next time. The sequence was diabolical - reach rightwards from *The Nazgul* crack to a little edge; cross over so the left hand is screeching on the matchstick, dob the foot on to the little hold from where the nut was placed and flick the right middle finger into the slot in the crack. One fall, two falls, I can see the skin peeling off my left fingertips. Third go - I must change my weight, go on - swap feet ... got it! Finger in and - pow! Off again!

The sequence was coming together, but somehow I had to control the barn door momentum for just that split second to get that right finger in the slot. Fourth go, come on fingers ... slap the foot and - got it! What a bloody desperate move! Come on ... a Rock 1 was fired in and a quick pull led to a large flat hold. The next nut popped in, but I was pumped solid and so I came back down to the belay for a good rest.

I must mention my patient belayer that day, Dave Kirby. It was Dave who encouraged me to push through those moves, and he was quite happy to hang around as we had a brew. Good old Dave - I'd have given up by now!

Back to work - but what's this? One fall, two falls! The opening moves are so difficult that even after two hours of cracking the sequence I found them too hard to repeat. My left fingers were grated and almost bleeding - there could only be one more go left in them. Got it! I surged up past my high point and slotted in a Friend 1, but cocked up the move. My right hand was pumped crazy and I couldn't summon up the power. Time to rest.

I sat on the Friend, totally flaked out. There was no way I could repeat those opening moves - no way. What the Hell! I decided to do the route with one rest and let somebody else receive the kudos of the first free ascent.

The rest of the crack was wider, and the angle had eased to merely vertical, so after a brief rest I rushed upwards, superb jams and nuts leading towards a good resting niche. The pump returned with a vengeance and it became a race. Come on! Run it out and watch for that sloper - too late, it was grabbed and I hyperventilated, going puce! No, No, No! Come On!! Don't open up ... Sheeet! The flight was brief but cruel. So close! The crowd watching from The Oval weren't impressed with my language, but at least they might have learned a new combination of profanities that are not fit for publication.

This was total disaster. I lowered back down to the resting Friend and sat in it again - for ages. The ethical puritans will mock, but I didn't even pull my ropes through the higher runners. I'm sorry, but there was nothing left in me. If you think you can do it better, well go and do it, and good luck!

I got to the belay ledge next go, and brought Dave up with the occasional rest. We explored a new way up the crag, completely on-sight, to finish just left of the top arête of *Saxon*. By the time we returned to Wasdale I was exhausted, and it's the only time I've ever had a sugar craving - it was as though my body demanded some form of energy. It was definitely the hardest technical pitch I have encountered on a mountain crag.

But to return to the introduction to this piece ... I wrote up the first ascent details as follows: "Climb the thin crack past a peg (very hard) to a small pocket and a flat hold above ..." I didn't mention the sequence out of *The Nazgul* - no wonder Rick and Andy failed on the route. Sorry, lads, I was too economical with the truth. I remember thinking at the time "Bugger 'em, I had to work out the problem, so can they." It's time to come clean and to confess about my *Original Sin*.

Thoughts on Esk

From an unfinished article, 1990.

First and Last and Always. God, what a route! I abseiled slowly down, inspecting the chalk on the flat holds and sidepulls, all etched onto a gently overhanging wall a hundred metres above the base of the crag. The climb was such an audacious line, you either have to be crazy or bloody good.

Even bloody good might not be sufficient qualification to climb a route like this - I'm convinced you've got to be certified and bloody good. The route climbs directly above the belay where *Bridge's Route* scuttles off leftwards - obviously by avoiding this line Alf Bridge was a sensible man, even though he did practice jumping off crags from a height of 60 feet! From here, the headwall overhangs gently, it appears featureless apart from a vague groove lower down which runs up to a series of overlaps, obvious barriers that accentuate the steepness. An abseil rope hangs down the line, clipped into a peg and tied off to the belay below, a reminder of the top-rope practice from the previous weekend. The peg doesn't seem too bad but there's bugger all below and only a horizontal Friend half higher up; meagre protection as you undercut and slap your way into the main groove of *The Cumbrian*. I am in awe, totally mindblown, and well gripped up, even on an abseil rope. I jugged out and wandered off to another part of the crag, unaware that at that very moment, three figures were approaching the crag from Eskdale.

Dow Crag Notes

The following notes were written in 1993 for an article to coincide with the publication of the Dow/Duddon/Slate Guidebook.

Genocide E4 6b**

One of the shorter problems on the crag, this is basically a left-hand variation to *Holocaust*. It took a few doubting abseils to realise it was possible. It follows a thin crack running up left from the crux of *Holocaust* to a point where it blanks out into vertical rhyolite. The moves are delightful: three pockets provide fingery cross-overs to reach a peg, where a Friend 1 can be used to block up your best hold. From here, a wafer-thin flake invites a rotation of the body and a razor sharp pull in order to half lunge, half fall into a jug right on the lip of *Giant's Crawl*.

Pandora's Box E5 6b**

I thought that Holocaust and Tumble were hard enough - but this beauty is much harder. The slim groove just right of Tumble contains a few small holds and a single jug at its base. This gives two problems - there is little in the way of protection, and the jug is 7 metres off the ground. Two pegs in the groove solved the first problem, and some zealous scraping of a shallow crack at 3 metres helped to protect the second. With two RP 3's

wedged in their new home, I dogged out the very fingery start and eventually udged up for a jug. The udge move dislodged my foot from its non-existing smear and I only just caught the lip with two fingers ... half a second later I was airborne and in another half second I was rolling down the grass into the cleft of Easy Terrace, only to be fielded by John. The fall had shattered the fragile nut slot, and now the only protection comes from a low peg I placed out left - so that's how you've got to do it - carefully! The groove gives sustained, tiring climbing until you can eventually step left into the groove of *Tumble* for a rest. A frightening traverse rightward follows next, smearing on grotty footholds to slap for a rounded layaway, where a quick mantelshelf leads up to the traverse of *Catacomb* with some urgency. A powerful layback through the capping roof of *Catacomb* provides a memorable finish to a great route.

Free Flight E5 6b*

A short history to this one - this article could have ended here in 1992. There was an obvious gap on the diagram of Lower 'B' Buttress which led into the hanging groove on Pitch 2 of *Murray's Super Direct Route* - a sort of *Murray's Mega Direct*, so to speak. I placed a peg for a runner, but on my first attempt I cocked up my feet on the holds; a good time to test the peg, I thought. Have you ever seen an action scene on a film which has been slowed down - rather like the point where Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid jump into the river? Well, it felt just the same when that peg pulled out, slowly spinning round still clipped into the rope as I leisurely cartwheeled to earth. The effect was eerie and frightening - until a blinding white flash inside my head signalled that I'd decked out. Now, the ground below 'B' Buttress is full of jagged blocks and flakes which is most unkind to flesh and bones. Guess which lucky bugger missed them all? The tender, if slightly amateur diagnosis from the concerned gathering around my moaning body concluded that ribs and pelvis had been fractured. It certainly felt like it (although later on the hospital said nothing was actually broken). An hour later the Coniston Rescue Team had dragged me down the scree and slotted the stretcher into a waiting Sea King for what the military call a Medevac.

The story takes on one of those strange coincidences that you often find in life. When I was in hospital I met an infirm old character by the name of Harry Grisedale who used to be a gamekeeper in the Torver area in the 1930s. He told me a story of a rescue on Dow Crag many years ago, which

gives a fascinating contrast to the service provided by today's excellent rescue teams.

"We were told that a couple 'ad tumml't off Dow Crag, down this wide cleft wi' a gurt stane wedge across't bottom o' it. We tried to git up this stane, but nun of us were cragsmen, we were nobbut farmers an' shepherds. One feller went o'er to Cove Quarry, which were still wokkin' then, an' came back wi' a ladder, but it weren't lang enough. Any'ow, this chap Appleworth came up wi' a reeap, climbed up't rock wi' ease an' pull't us all up on't reeap. Well, t'lass 'ad a brokken arm an' leg, so she was teed on't ladder an' carried down't Torver. The lad was deead, so one feller on't rescue just threw 'im down't gully, hoiked 'im ower 'is shoulder an' carried 'im down".

I knew that this incident must have taken place in the 1920s or 1930s, as the quarries were still active at that time, but soon afterwards the following paragraph from Alan Hankinson's book, *A Century on the Crags*, shed some light on the incident: "Dr. John Brogden of Hartlepool, who had done a good deal of climbing, was leading two others - Bill Tilman, who had already conquered Mount Kenya with Eric Shipton, and a schoolteacher called Vera Brown - up *Jones's Route*. It is not a hard climb but the weather was bad; cold and windy. Brogden had reached the grassy ledge at the top and Tilman was only a few feet behind him, on a poor belay, when Miss Brown, traversing from the Bandstand, slipped and fell. Tilman was immediately pulled off and Brogden, who cannot have been anchored, fell sixty foot or so on to the scree of Easter Gully. Brogden was killed and the others were terribly injured. When he recovered consciousness, Tilman, with fractured vertebrae, crawled the four miles of rough ground back to Coniston to raise the alarm. It was a remarkable feat of willpower and endurance and took him four hours. But it enabled rescuers to reach Miss Brown in time to save her life."

Anyhow, back to 1993 and my first visit to the crag since the accident. There was no point in dithering about - this was the only route I wanted to do, and to be honest I was scared sleepless in anticipation of the forthcoming duel. An abseil inspection showed the reason for the peg coming out - it was rock failure, the distinct semi-circular scar brought back memories of when I hammered it in - ring, ding, dunk - the peg hadn't bottomed out - the rock had cracked! I replaced it with two pegs, just to make sure!

The route climbs above the *Tiger Traverse* of *Murray's Route* to reach the pegs, where an awkward move using a one-finger layaway leads up to

a good jug, a fine place to get pumped! From here a delicate manoeuvre enables the groove of *Murray's Super Direct* to be entered, and where that route climbs out right, *Free Flight* finishes through the bulges on the left. A bit contrived, yeah, but it contains some memories!

Porifolio E1 5b 5c*
I was stood below 'B' Buttress trying to sort out the descriptions of the routes against the diagram. There is a long, slim right-facing corner between the lower parts of Madam and Eliminate B which is an obvious feature, and it soon became obvious that nothing went up it. Andy's leg was hurting and he was dozing in the sun listening to the second Test Match on the radio, and John had wandered off. Bugger it - soloing new routes on sight is the purest and almost ethical form of climbing there is. All went well until the top pitch, which gave an awkward moment when I had to crank it out on tiny finger edges. A perfect nut slot before my eyes mocked my efforts to keep cool. That's when I remembered that soloing new routes on sight is also bad for your health.

Dow Jones Index E4 5a 6a 6a
Tony Greenbank thought up this name, and he desperately wanted to climb a route on Dow Crag in order to utilise it. The obvious place for a name like that is near *Jones's Route* in The Amphitheatre of Easter Gully. I went up there and spotted a gap; it's the first time I've been accused of stealing a name! The crux pitch climbs the wall left of The Bandstand wall, the highlight on the classic *Great Central Route*, and the scene of many a struggle. A thin crack leads uneasily to a bulge, which is surmounted leftwards using an excellent two-finger pocket, a perfect place for a crucial skyhook runner. The top pitch is merely a tall man's boulder problem high on the pillar: the problem proves to be reaching the holds. Not a brilliant line, but it wouldn't have been climbed at all if it wasn't for Tony's name. He said I could use the name only if he got credit for thinking of it in the first place, so there you are.

Gable Crag
An account written in 1989 which was originally intended to publicise the launch of the 1991 Gable/Pillar Guidebook.

"**Snuff Dry Rock**, Youth!"

Each syllable was individually stressed to breaking point, his faith in his own prediction was enhanced by a slightly crouched posture and an intense shaking of his tightly clenched fists.

"Gerraway. It'll be wet, Tony."

"No, no man! Snuff dry!"

I didn't share Tony's enthusiastic optimism of the conditions. Our first glimpse of Great Gable indicated a dark cap of cloud sitting atop its broad shoulders, while the sun shone on every other crag in Borrowdale.

"Hey, it looks a bit cloudy up there, Tony."

"Hell, man, it'll be snuff dry! Just you wait and see."

I was convinced he was puddled. Neither of us had climbed Engineer's Slab before, and Mr. Greenbank, that eternal bundle of energy, had promised to hold my ropes on something harder if only he could lead "the slab."

The grass at the base of the crag had a damp touch to it, but my sanguine partner assured me that conditions would be perfect - although I was certain there was a slight twang of doubt creeping into his voice. I was first to scramble up the steep, slippery slope to the foot of the route.

"Snuff dry, my arse! It's as greasy as hell!"

"Hmm ..." he replied thoughtfully, slowly rubbing his chin with one hand. "Well, in that case youth, you'd better lead it."

And so, *Engineer's Slab* was ascended (notice it wasn't climbed!) in full feet-skidding, hand-slipping, greasy conditions. I have to confess that it was no pushover, especially the short layback crack which was swiftly overcome by pulling on a couple of nuts, turning what should be a classic VS into something more like an E2 with two points of aid! The upper corner felt as though someone had poured a barrel of grease down it, so we opted to venture out on to the outer arête for a most memorable heart-in-the-mouth finish to the route.

Postscript. Tony would like it to be known that he has subsequently repeated the climb in more favourable conditions. It must have been snuff dry!

THOUGHTS ABOUT A LONG WALK

John A. Jackson

> "Wherever the nearer range dropped, fresh peaks and horns shot up over it's unknown and untrodden passes. Below the bright belt of new-fallen snow on which I stood, the great spurs of the mountains were spread out range beyond range."
>
> Douglas Freshfield *Round Kangchenjunga* 1905

A Chance Meeting

With a group of friends, Eileen and I were walking along the Milke Danda ridge in north-east Nepal. It was 1990, the 35th anniversary year of the first ascent of Kangchenjunga, and our destination was the upper Yalung valley below the south-west face of the mountain. Early in the morning at our campsite near Gupha Pokari we had marvelled at the sheer majesty of a bluish sunrise on Makalu, Chamlang and the Kangchenjunga face of Everest. Now, further along the ridge, our breath was taken away, not by the altitude, but by a new panorama when we rounded a bend of the track near Gurja Gaon. A wall of mighty ice ramparts guarded the head of the Tamur valley ahead of us. These were the towering flanks of Jannu and the huge massif of Kangchenjunga, attended by a host of princely peaks - Koktang, Rathong, Kabru Dome, Talung and Pandim. It was then that the quote from Freshfield's book sprang to mind.

The track descended through small fields growing crops of millet, buckwheat, maize and potatoes and the air was heavy-laden with the scent of frangipani. Steeply, we diverted into a rocky gully where the path was narrow. Coming towards us were two trekkers and a Sherpa and we stepped to one side to let them pass. With a shock of surprise, and at the same moment, the Sherpa and I recognised each other.

"It's Nima Tenzing!" I exclaimed, and a feeling of great joy rose up within me.

"Yes, Jackson Sahib, it is!" and the toothy grin splitting Nima's face told me he felt the same.

During recent years we had met several times in Sola Khumbu where he had become a famous trekking sirdar. However, I am sure that Eileen, like me, was remembering an occasion in earlier years when he was the proud leader of a party of wolf hunters at Pangboche.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I am taking my party to the Makalu base camp in the Barun. They are friends of Doug Scott's."

Mention of Makalu then set me thinking of a journey he and I made with other Sherpas even earlier in time. A long walk that began at the foot of Everest, led us by Makalu base camp, took us through to Tibet, on to the base of Kangchenjunga and finally ended up in Darjeeling.

Our two groups were going in opposite directions and each with a long day in front of us, so we couldn't linger. Even so, there was time for photographs and time for Nima to meet Charlotte McKinnon, the daughter of Tom who had been with Nima and me on the ascent of Kangchenjunga in 1955. It proved a happy meeting for everybody and whilst continuing the descent to Nesum I was able to tell Charlotte more of that earlier climb. But it was the mention of Makalu and memories of the long walk that kept impinging on my mind.

Usually when we travel we are aware that others have gone before us and often the pleasure of the journey is enhanced because of the knowledge and added interest we have gained from their experiences. There is however something very special about making a journey that no-one has made before. Everest to Kangchenjunga was such a journey.

The Journey Begins

Following a desperate swim in the Dudh Khosi (an involuntary one, during which he was nearly killed. Editor) I collected my Sherpas together, including Nima Tensing, and began the journey. Curtis, the Foreign News Editor of the *Daily Mail*, had given the go-ahead for me to seek out Hillary's New Zealand Expedition on Makalu. There was a rumour in Khumbu that Ed Hillary had died of malaria and it was hoped that I might discover the truth of the matter. I was then to carry on and find my way to linking up with the reconnaissance team on the south-west face of Kangchenjunga. Maybe they had seen signs of the "Yeti". Many years earlier it was in that region where John Hunt had found large footprints at 19,000ft. near the Zemu gap.

Nima and I, along with others of our team, said our farewells to the rest of the 'Snowman' expedition at the village of Tola, then off we went to Chukhung in the Imja Khola. From thereon the journey took almost twenty days.

Whilst with the anniversary group we continued to trek along the Milke

Danda, passing through Nesum and then on to Dobham, I continued to think of Nima Tenzing and my other companions, and my mind went quickly through the bare bones of the journey that we had made.

The Bare Bones

From the Imja Khola we crossed the Ambu Lapcha to the Hongu and then traversed the west and east cols of the Barun Saddle at 20,000ft. In the Barun valley it was a superb relief to see Ed Hillary striding up the glacier with a huge pack on his back and clearly very much alive. Without more ado I took a photograph and sent the film back to Ralph Izzard by a couple of Sherpas. The picture was eventually circulated to papers around the world and the revenue paid for most of the expedition. In addition to Hillary's party I also met some of the Californian Expedition members who were attempting Makalu from the long east ridge. Dick Houston and Franz Lippman made me very welcome and later Al Steck arrived back from the mountain. It was another twenty-three years before I met Al Steck again and showed him my 'Snowman' pictures at his home in Berkeley, California.

From the Barun we crossed over to the Arun valley and reached the Arun river after a descent of seven thousand feet. Crossing the swaying bamboo bridge the Sherpas and I then travelled to Chepua and eventually Goyem. We had to cross the Lumbasamba Himal to the Tamur River and Walungchung if we were to reach the Yalung glacier and Kangchenjunga before June. To do this we crossed the Rakha La, 17,800ft., then descended to the Naktang Chu in Tibet. There we found sunnier and drier conditions as we travelled through Tibet for three days, eventually crossing back into Nepal over the Tipta La. From the Tipta La the descent of the Tamur valley took us to Walungchung village which the famous botanist and traveller Sir Joseph Harker first visited in the 1840s. It would appear that over a hundred years later I was the second European to visit that large Bhotia village. This makes you realise just how remote the area was until recent times. But then one has to remember that it wasn't until 1950 that the first people from the west (Britain and America) first visited Sola Khumbu and the south side of Everest!

It was actually nineteen and a half days after leaving Everest base that we arrived in the Yalung valley at the base of Kangchenjunga. There we met four of the reconnaissance team - John Kempe, Gilmour Lewis, Jack Tucker and, for me the greatest thrill of all, my brother Ron. Having

climbed together in Britain and the Alps over many years it was a tremendous experience to share days with Ron in that rugged part of the Himalaya. There has never been any doubt in my mind that that meeting was the richest memory of the walk, but there are other memories too. Most are happy and pleasing, though one or two are tinged with sadness. The Ambu Lapcha was one.

Ambu Lapcha

The Ambu Lapcha is a pass over 19,000ft. high at the top of the Imja Khola. It varies in difficulty. Sometimes it is icy, requiring much cramponing, step cutting and careful belaying. At other times, following a fall of snow, it can become relatively easy. It had been so the first time I crossed it whilst making a climber's appreciation of the difficulties of ascending Ama Dablam. At the time the Daily Mail thought that a team led by Hillary was going to attempt the climb. Before putting pen to paper I looked at the mountain from the summit of Pokalde, then crossed the Ambu Lapcha and visited the Mingo La. Two of us then climbed a glacier peak near the Mera Pass. Many years later, I was pleased that the route I had thought most feasible was the one by which Ama Dablam was first climbed. But a great sadness was that the great ice ridge I condemned in the appraisal was the ridge on which later two climbing friends lost their lives. A similar sad memory was linked to the Ambu Lapcha.

Annullu, a younger brother of Sirdar Dawa Tenzing, had been with Tom McKinnon and me on the carry to establish Camp V on Kangchenjunga. He had also been the Sherpa who with Wilfrid Noyce had first reached the South Col of Everest in 1953. Later he was involved in many fine climbs on Makalu, Pumori and other mountains. Years afterwards, whilst leading a couple of German trekkers on the Ambu Lapcha, there was a slip and all three of them were killed.

Opposite: Bhotia headman
Next page: Ambu Lapcha and Barumbe
Photographs by John Jackson (1954)

On a more cheerful note I thought of Nima Tenzing's great friend Ang Nyima. Whilst crossing the pass on our way to Kangchenjunga the route had been made more difficult because of debris at the bottom of the couloir. It was ice all the way to the top, having been swept clean by avalanche. Ang Nyima had been a tower of strength, helping me to safeguard several of the party who were heavily laden with 'lakri' (wood). This was for Hillary's expedition if, or when, they camped at Hongu Lake.

Ang Nyima was a young and bold Sherpa from Darjeeling and he was looking forward to returning home. He and two other Sherpas shared a tent with me for most of the journey and because he smoked incessantly I banished him from the tent on many occasions. It was particularly amusing watching him 'train' and lord it over his simple unspoiled brethren from the 'wilds' of Khumbu. One of the many chores he taught them was to bring him tea to the tent each morning. The previous year he had carried to the top camp on Everest during the first ascent, and then in later years he went to the summit of Annapurna II. He was also a most reliable and stalwart Sherpa with Wilfrid Noyce and David Cox on Machapuchare. All this was long after our crossing of the Ambu Lapcha, where I first began to notice him change from being a loner to a fine member of a team. Eventually he served with the 10th Gurkha Rifles in Borneo and Malaya where he rose to the rank of sergeant. Perhaps the camaraderie engendered throughout the walk to Kangchenjunga was a help to him in his future life.

Once across the pass we left the Sola Khumbu behind and after traversing the west and east cols of the Barun Saddle at 20,000ft. descended the Barun glacier to the base camp of the Californian Himalayan Expedition. Later in the day we camped at the New Zealand base where we stayed for two days with Doc 'Mike' Ball and Jim McFarlane, who was badly frostbitten. After we left the New Zealand camp to descend the Barun Khola we met two sirdars, Dawa Tenzing (with us on Kangchenjunga the following year) and also Angtharkay, who had been with Shipton and Tilman on many exploratory expeditions. With them was an American biologist, Dr. Lawrie Swan, who was also investigating the mystery of the 'Snowman'. He and I had a good chat and exchange of experiences before we went our different ways.

Little did I think at the time that we would meet again, but not until 33 years later. This was in San Francisco during 1987 when I was lecturing with a set of slides that illustrated the very journey on which we met. An astonishing coincidence.

The next seven days were full of incident, taking us through exciting country. Quite rugged and remote it seemed at the time. For three days we saw no other people, then at a squalid bamboo village named Mankim we met many charming and friendly locals. Being the first white man they had ever seen, I was a great curiosity. We were able to buy fresh food, barley flour (tsampa), potatoes, onions, eggs and much to Ang Nyima's liking, bamboo jars filled with foaming 'chang'.

Our route then took us across the River Arun and through the villages of Chepua, Chyamtang and Goyem. Finally, having crossed the Lumbasamba Himal, we crossed the Rakha La into new country - Tibet.

The terrain through which we travelled to get there was not only remote but many years later became an important area for the study of basic plant species - particularly barley. Dr. 'Len' Beer, who frequently used to visit me at my home in Capel Curig, eventually led a botanical expedition from the School of Plant Biology at the University College of North Wales, Bangor. This took him and the rest of the expedition right into the Lumbasamba Himal and I was able to provide useful information, as well as photographs, prior to them going.

Now in the 1990s trekking organisations take groups to the Barun via the Arun valley and Shipton La (Sedua Pass), which is what Nima Tenzing was going to do with his party when we met him on the Milke Danda ridge.

But that will be the journey to make if ever the border is opened - through the Kumbasamba Himal, over the Rakha La, down to the Naktang Chu and to the village of Kudo in Tibet. Like me, I was sure that Nima Tenzing would never forget the moment we first saw that country and felt pleased that I had written about his reactions many years earlier.

Tibet Side!

We left the village of Goyem in very damp and dreary conditions. Early on we found specimens of large Himalayan Blue Poppy, *Meconopsis grandis*, their hairy leaves covered in rain drops, sparkling in the feeble yellow light of the early morning sun. Rain turned to sleet and as we climbed higher the slopes became barren, covered with mushy snow and slimy moss. It was drear. Then we heard the snorting of a yak, and the tinkling of yak bells and out of the swirling mist appeared a Tibetan yak-man. This was a watering place named Jalong and the elderly Tibetan supplied us with creamy yak milk for which I paid him well. He was quite alone and living in a canvas-covered bothy, the roof of which was sagging

beneath the weight of wet snow. Most of the time this would be the only life he would know, a lonely and harsh existence, yet he appeared to be content, was very hospitable, and obviously delighted at our meeting. It is so often the way amongst people living a simple life, almost entirely devoid of material possessions. They are constantly in touch with nature; indeed, they are part of it, and having sufficient to live on seem quite happy to share with others any excess that they have.

We left him sitting by a tiny fire of yak dung and within moments of leaving his bothy all we could see was a drift of blue smoke, then all was gone, enveloped in the mist.

Higher up towards the pass the wind increased, blowing powder snow horizontally onto our chests where it formed a thick crust protecting and insulating us from the elements. Finally we wound our way through a group of rock gendarmes and could see a fluttering of flags, a Lung-Ta, that marked the top of the Rakha La. We were still in the clouds but I felt there was a growing excitement among the Sherpas and a sense of anticipation. What was to happen, I wondered? Within an hour I knew, for the transformation from the cold and fierceness of the day was astounding. There was no snow or rain. The sun shone brightly. Below us a smooth grass-covered valley stretched ahead, flanked by a host of rolling green hills. The lovely pastel colouring of the Tibetan landscape was a dramatic contrast to the harsh snow and wind-riven environment we had just left behind. It was quite enchanting.

"Tibet side!" shouted Nima Tenzing. He was leaping excitedly and his face was split open by one huge cheery smile. It was probably the most exciting day of his life.

At our meeting on the Milke Danda ridge many thoughts flashed quickly through my mind. In 1954 he had helped to haul me out of the Dudh Kosi after my swim. We had also ascended the Everest ice-fall together and made the journey to the Nangpa La. He had been with me on carries to camps on Kangchenjunga in 1955 and in 1976 he had been the leader of a party of wolf hunters in Pangboche. In 1986 it had been good to meet him again at Pangboche and then at Phakdingma in 1987. In 1988 we shared the same camp site but with different people, for then he was the sirdar with a party of American trekkers.

But on the Milke Danda I realised that the most enduring and satisfying memory I had of Nima was that moment when, below the Rakha La, he saw for his first time the original homeland of his people - Tibet.

Ibis Bills

Dr. Biswamoy Biswas was the Curator of the Mammal Section of the Calcutta Museum when he was invited to join the Daily Mail Yeti Expedition. We always called him 'Bis' for short. During the expedition he did identify and name several new species and sub-species of mammal but mainly he concentrated on collecting, or observing, as many types of bird as possible. There was one species in particular in which he was interested. These were the Ibis Bills, Ibidorhynchus struthersii. For a long time the whereabouts of the nesting sites of these snipe-like birds had been sought. He said they were expected to be found somewhere high and remote in the Himalaya, perhaps on the alluvial flats below the terminal moraines in old glaciated valleys. On the walk in from Kathmandu to our base camp in Sola Khumbu we did see several on the wing and possibly migrating. They were somewhat larger than a redshank and mainly grey with a black forehead and face. The bill was quite long and decurved, that is, turned downwards towards the tip which enables them to forage for food beneath small pebbles in stony streams and sandy rivers. 'Bis' constantly reminded me to look out for their nesting sites whenever I moved off to meet groups of team members in the higher valleys. I did hope I would find them in the Upper Dudh Kosi, perhaps near Macherma or in the Bhote Kosi during our journey to the Nangpa La. It was not to be.

Once 'Bis' knew I was going to make the journey from Khumbu to Kangchenjunga he became quite excited and reminded me again to look out for the Ibis Bills. I shall be always glad that he did.

Once we were down below the Rakha La we descended to the upper reaches of the River Arun, here given the Tibetan name of Naktang Chu. Clumps of red azalea were a blaze of fire down by the river and less than a mile away we could see the flat-roofed village of Kudo. We camped nearby and the following morning moved off early because now we were in Tibet I had no desire to meet up with any Chinese soldiery. I felt sure we were in far too remote an area, and in any case, I hoped my ragged clothing and sun-burnt skin would disguise me if we did. I had a massive beard and my sherpas said that I looked like a Sadhu anyway! We arrived at a yak-hide tent and having been hailed by the inhabitant, a handsome Tibetan woman, the Sherpas quickly disappeared inside for refreshing yak milk and tsampa.

The sun shone warmly and outside the tent a rippling freshwater stream flowed swiftly towards the village. Beside the stream a clump of blue

poppies swayed in the gentle breeze and golden-haired yak grazed contentedly nearby. High peaks tipped with snow and ice rimmed the valley to the south, a fine backdrop to the flattened and marshy valley floor beneath. I was reminded of Mini Marg, east of the Zoji La in Ladakh and of the alluvial flats below the glacier near Phalong Karpo and Pheriche in Khumbu.

Suddenly a pair of Ibis Bills rose up from the meandering river bed. Their penetrating flute-like calls resounded throughout the valley and I wondered if at last I had found one of the breeding grounds of these shy birds. Throughout the rest of a long day, first along the Naktang Chu then up a side valley, we continued to see them rise from nesting sites among the marshes by the river. Our altitude was around twelve to thirteen thousand feet. Between the village of Kudo and a small dwelling-site named Tashir-haka many hours further along the valley the terrain seemed to fit in well with the description of the breeding grounds that 'Bis' had given me, I felt elated.

Back in India weeks later I left behind a write-up of my findings, giving 'Bis' a description of the area and the nesting sites. Though I never met 'Bis' again I did on several occasions read of journeys that he made with that doyen of Indian ornithologists, Salim Ali. Did they also visit the Naktang Chu? I never found out.

Tipta La - An Important Trade Route

The track along the Naktang Chu and out over the Tipta La back into Nepal was broad. This was because at the time it was the most important trade route between the two countries across the Umbakh Himal. Even though the Chinese had already invaded Tibet and the trade routes were closing, the Tipta La, being in such a remote area, was still open. Throughout the day large herds of yak, and nak (female yak), were moving up and down the valley. Mostly they were carrying loads of cigarettes, paper, kerosene, felt hats and grain from Nepal or in the opposite direction were taking yak-dans (panniers) filled with salt or borax. We noticed the yak men separated the herd of yak from each herd of nak by at least a mile. A wise precaution.

Stops were fairly frequent, for once the yak were below the stony and icy pass they found the grazing among the marshes much to their liking. The yak men too used such opportunities to light a fire of yak dung and make a brew from brick tea, salt and yak butter. Perhaps they were also giving thanks after a successful crossing of the high pass, a custom I had

come across in other parts of the Himalaya over twelve hundred miles away in Kashmir.

Once again there was a profusion of blue poppies. They were not the large *Meconopsis grandis* of Tibet but the smaller *Meconopsis aculeata* to be found over in the west and central Himalaya. The blue colouring of the petals can vary greatly and I noticed that the flowers of the *grandis* were generally a deeper, richer blue than those of the *acaulis*. Blue poppies and azaleas, yak and nak, Ibis Bills and nesting sites, snow-tipped mountains and softly rolling hills: I felt it to be a privilege to be part of the environment of Tibet side! Though I had met few Tibetans, all were charming and hospitable. It was good preparation for the next few days among the Bhotias of north-east Nepal.

We set up camp on the Tibetan side of the Tipta La and the weather deteriorated rapidly. Swirling spindrift filtered through every crack in the tents. It was a very cold night.

Bhotias

We wakened to find it a bleak, white world and wasting no time crossed the pass to enter the Tamur valley. Rain fell in torrents throughout the day. Crossing the Tamur River by an exciting and rather dilapidated bamboo bridge we then sloshed out way down to the village of Walungchung, where we stayed the night. Walungchung was well-described by Sir Joseph Hooker in his *Himalayan Journals* and though his visit took place in 1848 I found in 1954 that very little had changed. It was still playing an important role with caravans of yak carrying trade goods to and fro between Nepal and Tibet. The inhabitants of Walungchung are Bhotias. The name arises from Bhote, the old name for Tibet, and like the Sherpas they are Tibetan peoples who at some time in the past have crossed the mountain range and settled on the south side of the Himalaya. In dress, language, physique and features they are the same as the Sherpas.

When we arrived at Walungchung in 1954 we were invited to the house of the 'Gova', the village headman. There I was introduced to 'tombu', a pleasant liquid drunk out of bamboo jars. Fermented millet seeds were placed in the jar and then hot water poured over the grain. After a few minutes the liquid could then be sucked through a hollow bamboo stick fitted through a hole in the lid of the jar. I found the flavour to be similar to cider and there was no doubt that the contents were very alcoholic. When I caught Ang Nima glancing coyly at the Sherpani Karmi whilst he drank

his 'tombu' I contemplated the possible consequences of "sipping cider through a straw". ("Tombu" is the name in common use today, but in 1854 Hooker used the name "Murwa".)

Being Bhotias the whole population of Walungchung were Buddhists. Prayer wheels line the many mani walls that led towards a large and well-decorated gompa that dominated the village. Apart from its size it was also readily distinguished by the large 'torcho' standing outside the building and the many lines of gaily coloured prayer flags hung across the entrance. We found most of the streets were cobbled, and on each side, in addition to dwelling houses, large wooden storehouses had been built for storing grain and other trade goods. Though short, it was certainly a very interesting stay with the Bhotias of Walungchung who, as we found with people throughout the journey, were most friendly and tremendously hospitable.

Before leaving next morning Nima Tenzing foraged for provisions, eventually buying eggs and tsampa. We then went on our way down the Tamur before turning east and crossed the Ningo La to reach another Bhotia village, that of Ghunsa in the Ghunsa Khola.

Within another thirty six hours I reached the Yalung valley and was camping with my brother Ron and other members of the Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance Expedition. Four of us were members of the Fell & Rock!

It was just over a year later that a party of us made the first ascent of the mountain, on 25 May 1955 and another thirty-five years on, when in 1990, I met Nima Tenzing on the Milke Danda.

I did wonder what changes there might be in the Yalung valley below Kangchenjunga for I knew that Walungchung was greatly changed from the time of our first visit. In the 1960s an earthquake caused a large landslide that destroyed much of the village so that the number of inhabited houses was reduced to a third.

It would have been good to have talked longer with Nima, and have asked him if he had revisited that Bhotia village. There wasn't time, and it wasn't to be.

When at Dobhan, I finally turned into my tent that evening. I did still think the meeting with my brother in the Yalung was the highlight of the long walk, but I also knew the deep rich seam running throughout it all was the memory of the cheerful and sincere companionship of my Sherpa friends, and in particular of Nima Tenzing.

IT'S GOOD TO KEEP IN TOUCH

John A. Jackson

It was fifty years ago, at the end of 1945, when I met John Wilkinson, Ken 'Mac' Heaton, Jack Umpleby and Harry Ironfield for my first time. I had just returned from four years away in Africa, India and Burma so at the Widdop gritstone outcrop I wasn't overjoyed by the lack of sunshine on a dank, cold day. Their companionship soon cheered me, though I was appalled at how much I had lost the skill of climbing on short steep grit. During the day I discovered that three of us had become members of the Fell & Rock that same year, and the other two followed soon after.

In 1944 David Jackson (no relation) and my brother Ron had put me up for membership, and interestingly, it was another Fell & Rock member, Harry Tilly, along with Wilfrid Noyce, who had proposed me for the Himalayan Club around the same time. As a result of this I had become a member of the two clubs on the first day of 1945.

Throughout subsequent years the two clubs have helped me in the development of wonderful friendships, both on and off the hills, and even when distance or pressure in life have prevented regular meetings, the Club *Journals* have kept me in touch, invoking many happy memories.

They are too numerous to recount, but reunions feature. For instance, in the *Journals* of 1956 and 1966, there are photographs of the then Presidents, Howard Somervell and Donald Murray. Both stimulate memories of the Club's 50th Anniversary Meet at Brackenclose. I was joint meet leader with Alf Gregory and on the first day it gave me tremendous satisfaction to lead Murray and Somervell up *Eagles Nest Direct*.

In the 'Nest' I was able to tell Howard Somervell of when we first met. I was a boy of eight attending a lecture on South India given by a medical missionary. It was at the Congregational Sunday School in my home town of Nelson. Towards the end of the talk the missionary doctor began showing lantern plate slides of the highest mountains in the world. Thrilled and excited, I leapt to the stage at the end of the talk and showered him with questions. Of course, it was T. H. S. and the pictures were of the 1924 Everest Expedition. Even as a boy of eight, I hoped I might see the high Himalaya some day and fortunately I have, but an additional very special memory is of climbing on the Napes to the Eagles Nest with two great Fell & Rockers.

Of course, as you get older reunions become more numerous, so that during the last twelve months or so (I'm writing this in August 1995) there has been the Kohima Reunion with the squadron I flew with in Burma (as WOP/AG) and later the gathering for V. J. Day and a reminder that it is 50 years since the end of the Second World War.

In May a group of us gathered at the Pen-y-Gwryd for our 40th anniversary of the first ascent of Kangchenjunga in 1955, and last but far from least, in June Harry Ironfield organised a Widdop reunion of the five of us just 50 years on. Once again I was in the presence of stalwart Fell & Rockers, for of course both John Wilkinson and Harry have been Presidents (among other things) of the Club. 'Mac' Heaton, along with his brother Alan, had been the first (after a period of 30 years) to break Bob Graham's record round. Jack Umpleby, who gave his name to that difficult *Corner* at Widdop, had remained a constant member of the Club and a fount of knowledge on the Julian Alps, written of so beautifully by Julius Kugy.

Slides and photographs taken half a century earlier showed we hadn't changed much (well, some!!) but creaking knees, wobbly ankles and for me a torn calf muscle, were a reminder of the passage of time. Still, they are younger than me and for 1996 I am trying to get them to altitude where I have hopes I can keep up with 'em.

Finally, in *Thoughts About a Long Walk*, I have written about another reunion year and a journey where, as with the get-together of our Widdop party, I met up with an old and dear friend of the mountains, Nima Tenzing. At that meeting I not only thought of our Kangchenjunga climb in 1955 but of a journey we made together the year before. For the Fell & Rock I wanted to write about the walk because I have already written about the climb in an earlier Journal. It allows me to concentrate a bit on the environment, on the satisfaction in meeting with different peoples and expeditions, as well as the pleasure of travelling with Sherpa friends.

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Andy Coatsworth

"Stark raving bonkers!", pronounced Rodney.

After this presidential valediction had warmed the cockles of our hearts, Paddy O'Neill and I flew to northern Norway with the quiet confidence born of our considerable experience and the meticulous preparations made for a three week ski tour. Paddy had even gone to Aviemore for a weekend to learn to use Nordic skis. In Tromso's transit lounge we met the rest of the Eagle Ski Club party and discovered that we had five tent pegs between four tents. A scheduled flight took us to Longyearbyen, the throbbing capital of Svalbard (Spitsbergen), 800km north of Norway. It was at this popular ski resort - well, there were nine of us - that we made our final arrangements before dining in the only bar, as condemned men taking their last meal.

An articulated tracked vehicle deposited us on the frozen Tempelfjord. The novelty of pulling a pulk (sledge) wore off in about ten yards. I'd have swapped mine for a millstone around my neck at any time.

Our pulks were Fjellpulken fibreglass models, and as the manufacturer's name featured prominently on the back, we were confronted by the word 'Fjellpulken' for hours on end as we moved in Indian file. An anagram competition resulted, Patrick finally claiming thirty words as we returned to Longyearbyen; future expeditions should arrange to fix a different word on the pulks each day, preferably less frustrating than the one we endured for 19 days.

On these pulks we each hauled camping gear, personal effects, minimal winter climbing equipment, 5 litres of paraffin and 21 kilos of dehydrated food, packed in cardboard boxes. As far as I know, no one succumbed to eating the cardboard in preference. At a pre-expedition meeting the stores-master had been sorry to report that pemmican was no longer available due to the whaling ban, and therefore we would have to survive on a variety of dried meat. I had tried to look crestfallen.

During our second day we reached the end of Tempelfjord, from which we could ascend into the interior. There was a lot of water at the head of the fjord, where two glaciers ended in ice cliffs and melt-water channels. At times on the fjord we were skiing through three inches of water, otherwise on clear ice. The pulks had a life of their own; since this being sea ice, it was not flat, and the pulks would suddenly go off sideways - most

disconcerting when one was trying to avoid deep pools of water, possibly where the ice was thin. I did not relish breaking through ice, particularly while rigidly attached to a heavy sledge.

This type of ski-touring is quite anti-social. While on the move in Indian file you are separated by not only the length of each others skis, but also by the length of the pulks and traces. Conversation is impossible. Once the stop for the day is made, the only thought is to get the tent up and into your sleeping bag as quickly as possible. Thus unless you make the sacrifice of venturing outside again to visit another tent, conversation for three weeks is mainly restricted to your tent companion. With military preparedness Patrick had tested his night-time receptacle at home, but during the first night found that it had insufficient capacity, resulting in his peculiar exit from the tent. I remained content to go outside. Emptying such a bottle isn't a piece of the proverbial, if you leave it to become frozen.

Having previously toured mainly with Fell & Rock parties, I was shocked to discover that this Eagle Ski Club party, even though Eagles profess to specialise in the art of ski touring, was quite ill-prepared for bad weather. The Fell & Rock ski mountaineering team always go equipped for the worst conditions, not just in terms of warm clothing, survival bags, etc., but with the necessities to survive for days on end in snow-bound inactivity. Paddy and I both had a Travel Scrabble and our duty free liquor; as usual my emergency kit also included a pack of cards and a classic piece of literature that I was only likely to ever read in extreme circumstances.

In comparison the Eagles were quite austere. Apart from Paddy and me, the group did not take any duty free liquor on tour, did not play bridge, scored low in Scrabble, and seemed to prefer pastimes such as responding to midnight fireworks and attempting to light multi-fuel stoves. The latter must be judged unsuitable at low temperatures. The fireworks were also of questionable benefit. A Dutchman had lost his head to a polar bear in the region last year, and so we were deploying bear alarms, modified from a NATO device, comprising a trip wire, which if pulled, fired a small explosive charge. When first setting the alarms the lack of zoological expertise in the party became apparent, as we discussed the correct height for the wire, so that the bear could neither crawl under, nor step over. We later learnt that the issue was not academic; there are accounts of bears having learnt to crawl under such wires, and current recommendations are either to set two wires at different heights, or to do as did a Dutch party we met upon our return - nominate the last arrival at camp to sit up all night

on guard duty. While our party of nine was on the move I often encountered the figures in the swirling snow, pondering whether eight of ten would be the worst total to arrive at.

Roger was more philosophical about the bear risk, believing that if a bear had his name on it, that was that, but most of us wanted the alarms. One of Derek's skis had been damaged by the explosion from a bear alarm during the first night that we deployed them, fixed to skis. We had some fun attempting to draft his insurance claim for replacement skis: "I was skiing near to our bear alarm, when a Polar Bear tried to break into the camp, thereby causing an explosion which irreparably damaged my ski." At subsequent camp sites we fixed the trip wires not to the skis, but to four pulks parked as a laager around our tents.

We lost only one day due to bad weather on our outward journey, and that was on the huge expanse of the Lomonosov ice cap, where navigation in a white out would have been difficult. During the enforced day in camp David inserted safety pins in the trigger pins of the bear alarms between noon and 1 pm, so that we could extract food from the four pulks to which the wires were fixed. I enquired if this period had been selected because bears took a lunch break between noon and 1 pm, or because they did not. Idleness during bad weather on a trip such as this leads to much discussion of equipment, and to brand expedition participants as gear freaks would be unjust, given the weather conditions. I had gone traditional with a Ventile anorak, but the relative permeabilities of Goretex, Pertex and even Durex provided hours of discussion.

The contents of our 'high energy' food boxes were also an endless topic of discussion. Why had we selected low calorie drinking chocolate, sugar-free custard powder and slimline margarine?

The following night I awoke at about midnight to hear alternating noises resembling footsteps in the snow and snorting. I tried to dismiss it as rustling of the tent and somebody snoring, but the direction changed; a bear! I didn't go out; was this fear of provoking the bear into attack or just plain fear? I didn't mention it to anyone till the morning when Andy told of a similar occurrence at about the same time, also certain that it was a bear. We looked for footprints, but the snow had obliterated even our own tracks.

The precipitation on Svalbard is very low, so the glaciers are gentle and only mildly crevassed. We never roped up, so John was questioned as he led off: "What method of rescue from a crevasse would you like?"

We paused at the head of Millingbreen to absorb the beauty revealed before us. Derek asked me to take a photograph of him, and immediately after passing me his camera he fell over backwards. I hope the photo came out.

We crossed the 79th parallel. The sastrugi and ice over the upper third of the ascent of Newtontoppen made progress fairly difficult. Three hours from our camp brought us to the summit, 1717m. We looked into the remote mountains of Ny Friesland to the north. It was windy and bitterly cold on top, where we took photos, but did not linger, for example to pick out landmarks or to use the GPS as we had intended to check the altitude of the peak. We agreed that we had insufficient time for our secondary objective of Perriertoppen (also 1717m), but that we would return by a more easterly route.

We skied down to Gruzdevbreen, marvelling at some ephemeral mountains far to the east. From the map these must have been either the distant coastal range or possibly even the mountains on the island of Barentoya. Once down on the glacier we were all fascinated by the texture and expanse of enormous wind sculpted sastrugi, thrown into relief by the low sun. Each of us moved slowly, trying to find a photographic composition, but for all the weird beauty of the scene there was no obvious subject.

I had an extraordinary dream during the night, and remembered at least part of it. I was scrubbing myself, naked, in a pink bath in the middle of a shopping precinct just along from the Academic Astronomers pub in Oxford. There was a low splash screen, but I was quite exposed to the throngs of pedestrians passing by. Then I had an awful realisation that I'd no towels or clothes. I made a streak for the pub to get one (a towel, not a pint) but got arrested. At this point I woke up to find my tent companion shaking me by the shoulder and telling me it was my turn to make the morning tea. I can explain the dream as :

> I probably did need both a bath and a beer;
> I do not know if Oxford has a pub called the Academic Astronomers, but we'd skied past Astronomfjell and over the Oxford Glacier;
> I'm used to seeing towels on the top of pub bars, though I would not in my wakeful moments consider one quite sufficient to either dry or clothe myself.

Brazenly finding an unnecessarily bold descent line to Transparent Glacier, I achieved the dubious distinction of being the only person to get a laden pulk completely airborne. We crossed the vast Lomonosov ice cap, Andy, Paddy and I rotating the lead, hard work over huge sastrugi and into the teeth of a very cold wind.

We were forced to have another rest day. I went with half bottles of Dalimore and Tomintoul Glenlivet to Paddy's and Andy's tent for a game of Scrabble. On conclusion of this merrymaking, Paddy made the diplomatic blunder of visiting another tent, reeking of whisky, but with nothing to offer.

We awoke to a katabatic gale of indescribable malevolence and which subsequently increased in ferocity, but boredom amongst the members ill-equipped for bad weather dictated a move. Paddy ably led our descent from the Lomonosov ice cap over uneven, and sometimes quite steep, snow and ice, with pulks alternately pulling and pushing us against our free-heel skis; the spindrift hid the trail of destruction, as we fell over or were blown over. One couldn't tell what the incline in front was: sometimes one poled forward, sometimes held back on the poles, or attempted to snowplough. At times one just stood still and attempted to remain upright by bracing against the poles. I tightened the hood around my face as I felt my left eye closing beneath the build-up of ice within my goggles. This experience belied the popular conception of cross-country skiing as a soft option. We were just starting to emerge from the white void when we found our way blocked by an icefall. Had we encountered it earlier might Paddy, and perhaps some of those following him come to a precipitate end? I questioned him later as to whether he had been worried at the possibility of an icefall during our descent from the Lomonosov ice cap, but I felt there was a flaw in his logic: "From the map and from what I'd seen of the glacier on our way up, it was clear that there wasn't an icefall."

After a few false attempts we found our way round the icefall. Repeated tumbles during the descent enabled Derek, by combining the realism of field testing with the thoroughness of destructive testing, to destructively field test his pulk.

We enjoyed a wash and a change of shirt upon our return to Longyearbyen. The local restaurant 'special' that night was as many prawns as one could eat; I wonder if the loss the proprietor suffered on our prawn consumption was balanced by his profit on our beer intake. A party of Norwegians, one without arms, were also enjoying themselves before

setting off on their 'Armless to the Pole' expedition to raise funds for the handicapped. On conclusion of our drinking we retired to the hostel - legless.

Our modest circuit was dwarfed by that of a Norwegian couple we met at the airport: she had just become the first woman to ski the length of Spitsbergen.

The staggering beauty of endless ranges of mountains bathed - and that was the only bathing - in the soft Arctic light more than compensated for the cold on this trip, though Paddy and I still had tingling finger tips weeks after our return to England.

Facts:

A permit is needed by advance application to the Sysselmann (governor); proof of insurance is required before departure from Longyearbyen; Ing Geir Paulsen A/S, Sjormradet, PO Box 490, Longyearbyen (tel:79 02 13 22, Fax: 79 02 18 10) can arrange transport from Longyearbyen, Polar bear alarms, rifle, ammunition, and fuel by advance notice. The same company may also have in stock last minute requisites, though not tent pegs.

Camp 6 on Russebreen
Photograph by Andy Coatsworth

SOUTHERN PATAGONIA

John and Marion Smith

Patagonia is a geographical area shared between the countries of Argentina and Chile, within the temperate zone at the southern tip of South America. The Argentinian side is very different from the Chilean side with vast areas of desert "steppe" contrasting with wetter, afforested and mountainous country. From the higher reaches of the main Andes (approximately 7000 metres) the peaks become steadily lower, down to around 3 to 3500 metres, with the east to west width of the mountain area reducing to around 100 km. Overall the Patagonian Andes stretch for over 2000 kilometres, not always as a continuous chain of mountains but more in a series of separate ranges with their own characteristics. They can be divided into three distinct zones: North, Central and South, with a fourth area being the mountains of Tierra del Fuego beyond the South American mainland, south of the Magellan Strait. The whole area is well protected by National Parks, with around 20 in total.

Northern Patagonia includes the Lake District (home from home!) and Araucania. The main features of these areas are shaped by volcanic activity, typically with volcanoes, mountain lakes and thermal springs. Araucania has a relatively sparse vegetation due to climate, height and more recent volcanic activity, with the Lake District having rainforests and a wide variety of wild life and plants. Volcan Lanin (an extinguished volcano) is the highest mountain in the area rising to 3776 metres; its base plain being just over 1000 metres. Some of Chile's best downhill skiing is apparently to be found in Northern Patagonia, in the Parque Nacional Villarrica.

Central Patagonia is the most thinly populated area. Generally, it has wet weather, is remote and has a poor transport infrastructure. On the Chilean side the western plain breaks up into a series of islands, the largest being the Isla Grande de Chiloé, which has National Park status. A major peak in the area is Cerro Castillo (2675m); this has basalt turrets resembling a medieval castle. Also, at Laguna San Rafael, the Glacier San Rafael is the worlds most equatorial glacier that reaches the sea.

Southern Patagonia is a remote and rugged place, which includes peaks with some of the worlds most renowned climbing in the national parks of Torres del Paine (pronounced pie-nee) and Los Glaciares. The towering granite peaks are flanked on the Atlantic side to the east by the desert steppe

and on the Pacific side to the west by two continental icecaps, the smaller to the north (Hielo Norte) and to the south Hielo Sur (the largest icecap outside the two poles). With the proximity of the two large oceans and the Antarctic the climate is more extreme and subject to stormy unstable weather. Despite this it has a mountain wilderness appeal not to be resisted.

A friend has a favourite quote: "you only pass this way once"; this often applies but in the case of Patagonia hopefully not. One of the main problems in life is the racing time factor which, combined with the changeability of mountain weather in general and Patagonian weather in particular, make for high odds against being in the right place at the right time. In a three week itinerary how do you get through the long distance travelling required, and do some walking with a hope of seeing something of Paine and Fitzroy ?

The only option of condensing as much as possible into the time available was an organised trip. Travel was as follows:

Taxi, train and tube to Heathrow. Flight to Buenos Aires, and then on a domestic flight (3 hours) to Rio Gallegos. Then by road (well that's what it says on the map!) to Punta Arenas; this is a large town (by Patagonian standards) in the most southerly part of mainland Chile. Punta Arenas is on the Magellan Strait and is where ships leave for the Antarctic. We then travelled north via Puerto Natales and into the Parque Nacional del Paine at Laguna Amarga, where after four days of trains, planes and dusty roads our first trekking began.

Once into the mountains two nights were spent at a fairly civilised campsite at Estancia Cerro Paine (development of bunkhouse/chalet accommodation, with restaurant and bar is taking place). This campsite provided a base for us to walk up the Rio Ascencio to around 1000 metres where we had close views of the Torres del Paine spectacularly rising 2000 metres above. The weather was unbelievably calm and warm with clear blue skies as we sat below the Central Tower of Paine (2800m) first climbed in 1963 by Bonington and Whillans.

We left the Torres del Paine by walking along the side of Lago Nordenskjold passing the Cuernos del Paine (Horns of Paine), with views into Rio Frances towards the sword (Cerro Espada), the fortress (Cerro Fortaleza) and the sharks fin (Cerro Aleta de Tiburon - only 1717m but an aptly named thin blade of granite). The next campsite was below Paine Grande (3050m) at the end of Lago Pehoe where the camp pitches are sheltered from the Patagonian wind with wooden shutters (bad weather

was not a problem as our good luck continued), but basics (e.g., toilets) were a half mile walk (run) away. Although very remote, some home comforts were available with a campsite bar ; unfortunately this ran out of Cerveza (beer!) on the second night so some local Pisco sour (local hooch; pisco mixed with lemon juice and egg white) had to be the order of the day.

The first view of the Southern Patagonian Ice Cap (Hielo Continental Sur) came the next day with a long walk alongside Lago Grey to Glacier Grey, a central feature of the north-west corner of the Torres del Paine National Park. Glacier Grey is 17km long and has a snout 4km wide by 60m high.

Following this short but spectacular three days of walking we left the campsite by boat to rejoin the mini bus and the long dusty desert roads. Going back over the border from Chile into Argentina patience is required for a typical example of overt bureaucracy (for collectors it's simply another stamp on the passport). Border controls are strictly in evidence with no smuggling of fruit, vegetables, meat or other illegal substances. It is interesting to note that although agreements on borders have been reached between the two countries, the borders shown on the Chilean maps and Argentinian maps are different (obviously in the home countries favour). Nevertheless at the point we crossed the customs posts are 7km apart leaving a large area of 'no mans land' in between.

The dusty roads and the journey continued, via El Calafate, a large town by the side of Lago Argentino; it is the gateway to the Los Glaciares National Park. Here restocking of food took place for the remainder of the trip. After 14 hours on the road we eventually arrived at the remote Estancia Nibepo Aike just before midnight to crack open a bottle of wine by a large fire followed by a meal in the early hours, the days journey soon forgotten. Colonization only took place in this part of the world a little more than 100 years ago, with immigrants of diverse European origin; Welsh, Scottish, English, German, Yugoslavian and Spanish. Estancias were established and the sheep population grew tenfold to 4 million within 20 years. The development of power and wealth of the large families, workers revolutions, creation of towns like El Calafate, over-farming a desert land, changes in the world market and a declining economy are too much to go into in an article so short as this. Nevertheless the two nights in a green oasis and comfortable surroundings sampling a traditional Gaucho Asado (mega barbecue) was very pleasant.

The Estancia was our base for a 'tourist' day to see and walk around

the snout of the Glacier Perito Moreno, one of the few glaciers in the world which is apparently growing. The snout is 4 km wide and up to 70m high and periodically dams the right-hand side from the main channel. The water level rises to produce pressure on the ice dam until a spectacular breach occurs to enable the water to flow through and the process starts again. This has happened at fairly regular intervals over the last hundred years of observation with the damming and breach cycle being around two to four years. However, the last recorded dam/breach was in February 1988, and at the time of this article the dam was not near to closing. Has it stabilised? When (or even if) will it happen again ? Questions only nature knows the answer to.

On with the journey and another day on the bus to El Chalten, entrance to the Parque Nacional del Glaciares, and a sort of mountain shanty town below the Fitzroy massif. Here the first encounter of a real Patagonian storm meant an enforced rest day as the winds howled and gusted making it quite difficult to walk down the road. However, next day the eight day trek began. Clouds covered the summits and drizzle was falling, along Rio Electrico to Piedra del Fraile, (Rock of the Priest, named after Father Alberto Maria de Agostini who in the 1920s explored Patagonia and made first ascents of a number of important summits, publishing a mountain atlas of the area). Camping was by the Refugio Los Troncos, which houses a collection of climbing souvenirs from expeditions to Fitzroy and other peaks. Late in the day we walked to Lago Electrico as the clouds cleared giving views of the north side of Monte Fitzroy and the return of good weather. Fitzroy was first climbed by Lionel Terray and Guido Magnone in 1952, and although this exploit forms only a small chapter in Terray's book *Conquistadors of the Useless* it is a stunning chronicle of the major problems in climbing in this part of the world. Even today with modern equipment the unreliable severity of the weather still adds to the seriousness of the routes.

The trek then went into Rio Blanco, with an ascent to around 1300m above Fitzroy base camp with clear sunny weather again giving spectacular views to Fitzroy (3408m), and then down to camp at base camp Rio Blanco. From here an ascent the next day took us into Valle Fitzroy to Bridwell base camp below Cerro Torre (scene of one of the most controversial ascents by Cesare Maestri in 1958, with his colleague Toni Egger who was killed on the descent). A cloudy evening was followed by a spectacular red sunrise, at 0550 hours, but this lasted only moments before the clouds returned, not

to cover Cerro Torre, Torre Egger and Torre Standhart but to effectively switch off the light to the view.

Our exit from Bridwell took us by Tyrolean traverse across Rio Fitzroy (the notice says "Solo Climbers", translated to mean "Only climbers". However, an added corruption in the translation could be that it is the start of the approach to ascend Cerro Solo, 2121m, which is a distinctive but fairly easy outlying peak). We then climbed to a ridge (1400m) and descend into Valle del Rio Tunel. The expedition towards the icecap next day began badly, with the glacial séracs looking somewhat dodgy, precluding climbing without crossing the river and so it was boots, socks and trousers off to wade one at a time (roped up) across the glacial torrent. Safely across we backpacked (no horse support to carry the tents/food for this part) over Paso del Viento (pass of the wind) and onto the icecap. Hielo Continental Sur is over 350km long, up to 90km wide and covers an area of 13000 sq.km. Despite more reasonable weather it was difficult to take in the vastness of the desolation, and dream of becoming a polar explorer (no thanks!). However, in the winter time (June/July) the weather is usually more stable and although there are few entry points to the icecap, there is a possible 4/5 day (ski) trip from Rio Electrico/Paso Marconi to Paso del Viento round the western side of Cerro Torre (food for thought?).

All that remained now was the return over Paso del Viento chased by a storm which filled the mess tent with dust, giving a timely reminder of the changeability of the weather. Back to El Chalten for a few beers, bottle of wine and another asado, before the long trudge home with a very early start back on the dusty roads to Rio Gallegos. Buenos Aries and UK.

What else ?

Well there were lots of birds (an expert twitcher in the party recorded over forty "new" species) an amateur selection being - Condor, Rhea, Rufus Backed Negrito, Black Necked Swan, Austral Parakeet, Magellenic Woodpecker, Chilean Flicker, Rufus Collared Sparrow, Spectacled Duck and Torrent Duck.

And flowers/bushes: Anemone, Violet, Palomita, Chilco, Lenga, Calafate and Chilean Fire Bush.

Fauna is very limited: Skunks, Guanaco and Magellenic Fox

What next ? Well Patagonia has plenty to go at - "you only pass this way once" ?

HOPPIES: A CENTENARY ASCENT

John Holden

The 14th April, 1895, was Easter Sunday. The news in Saturday's *Times* was of The Chitral Expedition in the North West Frontier region of India. The expedition under Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Low had just relieved the beleaguered garrison at Chitral. The tribesmen in revolt were retreating towards the Afghan border and it was thought unlikely that any further severe fighting would occur. At home the news was of The Boot Trade Dispute; officials of the Operative's Union in Leicester had been distributing strike pay as the strike entered its fourth week. Another article was about the Snowdon Railway: 'Satisfactory progress is being made in the construction of the railway to the summit of Snowdon. The severe weather of the early part of the year delayed operations, as for several months the mountain was covered with deep snow. There are about 200 men engaged on the railway. ...'

The centenary ascent nearly didn't make it, as the whole of the Furness peninsula was in Pembroke, apart from, that is, Peter Fleming. I thought that persuading a troglodyte to go climbing in the open air might be difficult, but he came peacefully enough. We were to meet up at the traditional rendezvous; the loos at Greenod. (No, I'm waiting for a friend. Yes, really. We're going climbing. No, you can't join in.)

The weather, just as the previous two days, was set fair. There had been a mist early on, but the sun was now burning it away. A hundred years previously the forecast was for light westerly and north-westerly winds, changeable, some rain, with a maximum temperature of 50°F.

We parked up just before Boo Tarn. There was hardly a breath of wind; it was certainly warmer than a century before and we set off in shirt sleeve order up the Walna Scar road.

Dow Crag appears for the first time as you breast the rise into The Cove. A ribbon of snow snaking down Great Gully gave the lie to the summer heat. We passed everyone on the track; Peter had not slowed down discernably since I had been out with him last.

A hundred years in the life of a crag isn't very long, but as we looked up into Easter Gully I couldn't help but think of how Hopkinson's Crack

Dow Crag. Photograph by Eric Shaw.

would have looked on 14 April, 1895. Peter passed the remark that it wouldn't have been the same then. It was probably choked with grass and soil. Would it have had a small tree or two, or some heather?

I scanned the corner, anxiously looking for signs of damp. It looked green, but dry; and I felt like a fraud. The absurdity of the situation was striking. Here I was, festooned with ironmongery, a pair of sticky-soled boots and two fat ropes, worried about the state of the route. A century ago, Hopkinson, with a pair of nailed boots and a hemp rope, had gone into the unknown to produce a classic route. In order to appreciate the true absurdity of my mental state, I can add that the night before I had led an E2 - on bolts!

The sun was still shining on the corner when I set off up the first pitch. The first few feet had some seepage on the right wall, but dry holds were available and I quickly gained height and confidence (the protection is bomb-proof). The rock, where the sun had been shining on it, was warm and grey. The crack was dark, damp and much colder. Disconcertingly, a wind was quickly developing in strength. It was blowing straight up the corner, causing my unzipped windproof to wrap itself around my head. I backed up and bridged to the first stance, and decided to keep on going to the Bandstand.

The last few feet are desperate. I faced right, as suggested in earlier guidebooks, and tried out the available holds within reach. None of them came with a money back guarantee. Something has gone - a chockstone or flake on the right wall - but I know of a lot of VS climbs that are easier than this Hard Severe. I pulled up and grasped the finishing spike, and hurriedly picked a poorer hold when I felt it creak as I pulled on it. My arrival on the Bandstand was not greeted with a fanfare.

Peter was glad to get moving. It was getting colder by the minute. As a sop to my ego, Peter had the good grace to slow down on the harder moves and unbidden, ventured his opinion that it was harder than he had remembered. We swapped belays and I traversed back to the corner. What more had the route in store? The 1922 guide says that there is one section that is continuously severe. I moved up, placing more rock-solid protection. As I bridged up I could see that it would indeed be hard in boots, but in rock boots the feet were spoilt for choice.

The angle eased and I reached a substantial belay. Peter soon arrived, having made short work of the pitch, and we made our way down to the sacks. A party was just going up into Easter Gully. "Which route are you

going for?", Peter asked. "Hopkinson's", came the reply. "You know why you should be doing it?" I asked, and they looked puzzled and then pleased when told.

We found a place out of the wind directly below Intermediate Gully to have a break and consider what to do next. The obvious choice, also done one hundred years ago to the day, was right above us. The weather, however, had returned to its seasonal norm. The snow in Great Gully no longer seemed incongruous. I voted for down, and neither of us were at all surprised to see numerous other groups evacuating as we moved off. Before dropping into The Cove we paid our respects at Charmer's grave (not some Cumbrian lover, but a hound commemorated by his loving owner in 1911). The car, at Peter's pace, was very close, and as we had time to spare we went to the Blue Quarries in the Coppermines Valley. The routes, with their shiny bolts, are just about as safe as Hoppies!

Hopkinson's Crack, with John Holden. Photograph by Peter Fleming

THE WEEKEND BEGINS HERE!

John Robinson

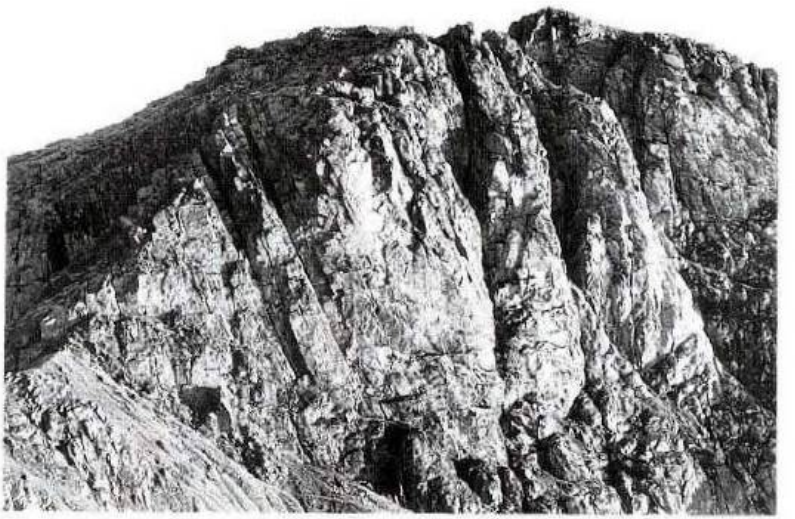
I arrived at Brackenclose at about 6.15 p.m. There were a few cars parked and people gathered around the doorway as I gunned the car up the land far too fast. The skies were clear, with Gable standing splendid at the end of the valley. I needed to use up some of that adrenalin generated on the drive up so I changed into my old trainers, track suit bottoms and vest and set off jogging up past the hut on to the Brown Tongue track. There are still signs of where the new header tank has been put in, but it is grassing over nicely. The pipe, previously poking up out of the water, is now fully hidden as I cross the bridge and think about my ascent.

Last year I reached Mickledore in 50 minutes then blew up and took another twenty minutes to reach the top of the Pike. I jog up the new path, dropping to a walk every few minutes - it seems to take longer and longer to warm up, but the bonus is increased stamina. I reach Hollow Stones, still in the sun, vest tied round my waist and take the left-hand path - a mistake, for it soon disappears into a mass of big boulders - and turn and glance up at the Pinnacle Face. The sun has moved round far enough for its rays to highlight the main features: the Great Flake, Botterill's Slab - totally magnificent - I just wish that I had a camera to record the experience. I return my concentration to the path, cutting across the to col between Lingmell and the Pike, cursing my decision to choose this route - Mickledore is much quicker! Conditions underfoot improve and I glance at my watch - 38 minutes, but a long way to go - then glance back to the Pinnacle Face - the sun's rays have gone, and all is dark - was I really dreaming it? It is cold now and I replace my vest - that's better! I continue to ascend up on to the rocks - the bare bones of the mountains - and into the mist. It is now desperately cold but I keep going, wishing that I had carried gloves and hat, but pleased I have an old cagoule. I see, in the distance, a large cairn - great - the summit, and 54 minutes gone - but when I reach it it is a false hope and 5 minutes left to be under the hour! The slope is easier now however, and I press on, lungs bursting to reach the trig point in 59 minutes. Yes!

Scafell Central Buttress.
Climbers on The Oval and Great Flake, Botterill's Slab to the left.
Photograph by Eric Shaw

I turn immediately, put on the cagoule and set off down into the wind and mist. Out of the mist now and on to the shoulder of Lingmell. I cross the stream - now risen with the weeks' rain - and a super level section, running with the sun setting over Yewbarrow. There is no other place on earth that I want to be. The descent of the breast of Lingmell is easy jogging, and I reach the hut, hot tea, shower and wholesome crack, by 8.05 p.m. What a marvellous way to spend a Friday evening!

Scafell Central Buttress
Photograph by Eric Shaw



DOWNUNDER DAYS

Angela Soper

One of the things about being a New Age Pensioner is the freedom to follow the sun. My first 'winter out' in '93-'94 was magic, with friendly people and good adventures everywhere I went.

On the way to 'downunder' Marlene and I stopped over in Thailand to try the sport climbing at Phra Naang on the shore of the Andaman Sea. We expected an exotic place and it was, including the climbing. The routes were on steep limestone cliffs that rise from the beach and disappear into the jungle, with deep caves in them and stalactites hanging out to make sensational pitches. Even in November is was so warm and humid that we swam frequently, sometimes to off-shore islets. The sea was calm, very buoyant, and phosphorescent at night. There were climbers of various nationalities, and enterprising locals were setting up a climbing school and preparing a topo guide. We lived in a simple bamboo hut and ate Thai meals at the beach restaurants, sometimes choosing our main course from fish swimming in a glass tank.

M went straight to New Zealand but I first visited friends who live near Sydney. They took me to the sandstone crags of New South Wales, the finest being Cosmic County in the Blue Mountains. Many climbs rely on traditional protection but some have old in-situ bolt heads and the leader has to put the hangers on, not easy when i*n extremis*. It's best to keep them in your chalk bag and take plenty to make up for the ones you drop. We spent a weekend at Boroomba Rocks near Canberra, doing multi-pitch climbs on scary granitic slabs with long runouts, like Scottish routes. But the scene was totally Australian: kangaroos, gum trees, noisy parrots and camp fires.

We climbed at Point Perpendicular, an impressive sea cliff named by Captain Cook. The climbs are on the highest tier and reached by abseil; recent ones are bolted, others protected with big Friends in horizontal breaks, and the rock quality is exceedingly variable. Leaders carry huge racks of Friends, at least two of each size. Australian grades were becoming meaningful: 22 was a challenging lead for me.

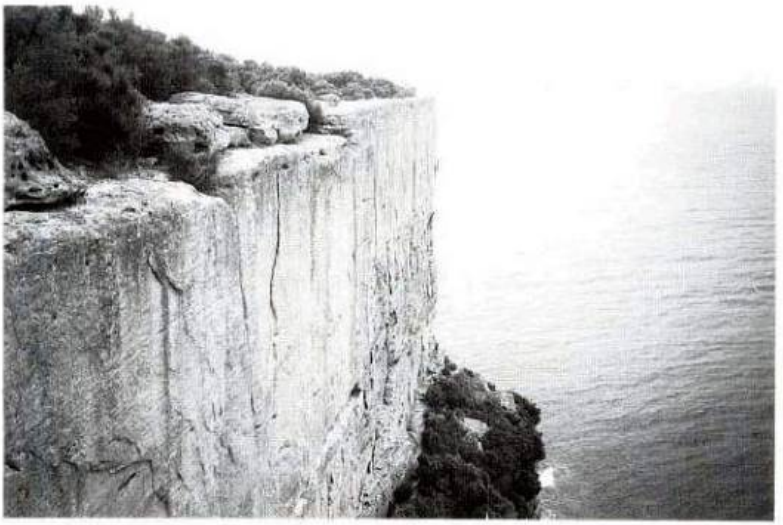
Christmas Day saw us in Tasmania, walking to Frenchman's Cap, a quartzite peak with a steep and serious face; the walk alone is a major challenge. It goes through rain forest, crosses the recently bridged Lodden River, and negotiates the 'sodden Loddens', miles of swampy scrub,

gaining and losing a lot of height on the way. My fell-running trainers got strange looks from serious bush-walkers, but they were fine and I didn't even pick up any leeches. No climbing came of it though, just several days at Lake Vera hut sheltering from torrential rain.

Tassie was a special place, not to be missed. One evening at dusk we went to a lonely beach to see the fairy penguins. It was nearly dark when they came surfing in from the sea, hundreds of small birds heavy with fish, and waddled over the shingle into the bushes, where their young waited in the nest to be fed. In the morning the parents would go out to fish again ... until the nesting season is over.

Back in mainland Victoria it was important to visit 'the best crag in the world'. Mount Arapiles isn't actually that good, though the rock is sound and there are hundreds of climbs. The much photographed route *Kachoong* (21) is world class, spectacular rather than hard, but the cutting edge has moved to the awesome Taipan Wall on Mount Stapylton in the Grampians. I was fortunate to be there with the legendary 'HB', who had put up most of the routes. There was very little I could manage on Taipan Wall but Bundaleer was more amenable. A long edge rising from forest-like Kyloe-in-the-Wood magnified, it has fine routes such as *Blimp* (21), a magnificently sustained Cenotaph-type corner.

Point Perpendicular
Photograph by Angela Soper



In January I flew to New Zealand, and hitch-hiked from Auckland to Wellington, to see the country and meet the people. The church at Rotorua is a fine example of Maori woodcarving, it is normal to have hot springs in your garden, and the youth hostel has its own naturally-heated pool. The Inter-Islander ferry took me to Picton, and I headed for Payne's Ford, round the coast beyond Nelson, to find the only limestone climbing in New Zealand. While I was thumbing out of Picton a Kiwi fellow driving in the opposite direction shouted "You're too young to be doing that!"

Although there was less traffic, hitching on the South Island was still good, with people going out of their way to show me beautiful scenery and interesting places. Payne's Ford is tiny, just a bridge across the river, the outcrop, and a few climbers' tents to identify it. Amazingly, at the very instant I was dropped off, fellow FRCC members Tony and Eileen Burnell arrived in a hired camper. So Tony and I climbed a selection of the routes, which are quite short and start among treeferns. When Tony and Eileen left, I joined the other climbers and we talked the evenings away round the camp fire, to the strange cries of bell birds and tuis. My new friends eventually gave me a lift to Christchurch and put me up for as long as I cared to stay.

My contact at Mount Cook was Brede Arkless, now guiding out there. Brede was in the middle of her busiest season, but she put me in touch with Paula Turley, an Irish climber based at Mount Cook village. Paula and I made an expedition up the Hooker Valley to climb the Dazler Pinnacles and then Jay, an American doctor, arrived to climb ice with Paula's husband Andy. Unknown to me, John Wilkinson was at Mount Cook; later I saw his name in the book at the NZAC hut and realised that I had just missed him.

It was too hot for ice climbing, not even freezing on the summit of Mount Cook at 3754m, so Andy, Jay and I, with Anton, an off-duty guide, drove down to Fjordland to walk into the Darran Mountains. These are very rugged, like a big version of the Cuillin, with tougher vegetation and even more rainfall. Two cols and several hours later we were in a comfortable bivouac under a huge boulder, surrounded by peaks, crags and waterfalls. Nest day in miraculous weather Anton and I climbed Sabre Peak by a direct line up its north-west buttress, ten pitches with a crux of 19, and lingered on top, picking out all the peaks of Fjordland and Mount Aspiring further away. Sabre has no easy way up and was first climbed only in the '50s. Back at the bivvy our food and sleeping bags had been

ravaged by keas, fierce wild parrots and a protected species. We threw stones but they were not easily frightened away.

Later on, Jay needed a partner for Mount Cook, which is too dangerous to solo. Paula's boots fitted me, so I teamed up with Jay for an unexpected opportunity. In 1991 the east face of Mount Cook fell away, a reminder that this is the most rapidly uplifted range in the world. People are now climbing there again, and it is normal to fly up to the snow plateau under the east face using a ski-plane, just as one would use a téléphérique in Europe. The light aircraft at Mount Cook airfield do a thriving trade in scenic flights for Japanese tourists and a more dangerous one in landing climbers of the plateau. We shared with four other Americans and it was worth every penny.

Plateau Hut was heaving with people from all over the world, several of whom had summited on Everest. We intended to climb *Zurbriggen's Route*, which follows the right edge of the east face until it joins the normal route at the summit rocks, some 5000 feet of ascent. At midnight there was an exodus, everyone roped and wearing crampons for the heavily crevassesd plateau. In the dark Jay and I were the first to find a safe approach to *Zurbriggen's*, and soon we were climbing over fallen seracs. Only one team followed us; the rest took the normal route up the Linda Glacier. We moved together up the 50° snow, belaying only across the occasional tricky section. Our route choice in the dark was good, and the snow reasonable, so we made steady progress as day dawned. Several rope lengths up the summit rocks added variety, and now there were people from the ordinary route, some already going down. Hot and thirsty, we pushed on to the summit, or at least to the highest safe point rather than the tottering seracs that cap the unstable east face.

We looked down on Mount Tasman and all the other peaks and glaciers. The west coast spread out below, with big rivers emerging from the rain forest into the ocean; it was very exciting. Then followed the serious descent, tedious plodding through the deep soft snow of the Linda Glacier, keeping crampons on in case either of us fell through. The path around the lower crevasses was so contorted that I wondered how anyone would ever find it after fresh snow or in poor visibility. Still roped together after 17 hours we regained the hut for celebrations, in hope that the planes could still land next day on the even softer snow. They could, though only to carry four people at a time. So I started my journey home.

TEN CHAPS IN THE TIEN SHAN

Paul Hudson

Ken Findlay and I were at 5200 metres, it was dark and the wind had risen alarmingly in the short time we had already been tied to the rock. Spindrift rammed against me as another savage updraught soared straight up the mountain and into my face. It had been a hard ascent. Ken had felt all day that the weather had been 'hunting' us. He looked down. "Oh come on then, there could be enough room for us both here." Later he regretted this kindly remark.

At one time during our visit to the Tien Shan there were reported to be over one hundred climbers in the upper Inylchek Glacier area. It is highly doubtful whether there has been as many visitors in the Kaingdy Valley this century, though there was a strain on the area during 1995, when there were twenty UK visitors. There are no really high peaks associated with the valley except Shokalski Peak at 5738m, and that I think had been climbed from the Inylchek side. So there it was, a nice looking valley on the map that held few interesting objectives for those seeking only after height. Perhaps it has been left pretty much alone I thought, I hoped.

It was a slow start. Just Ken Findlay and I began the planning but then Ashley Hardwell, who had been on our Bolivian trip, called and said he'd like to go. Then at the Alpine Club symposium on mountains in the Community of Independent States (CIS) we met Stuart Gallagher and Ken Mosely, both FRCC members and seasoned CIS travellers. They had made two previous trips, to the Urals and Altai, for a ski mountaineering and a climbing trip. We welcomed them and they brought in David Suddes also from the North-East.

Stuart seems to know everyone and can find out anything you want to know; so when Graham Treacher, John Hudson and Dave Penlington asked to join the team he sent out his feelers and passed them as OK. At the very last moment Philip Kendon, a member of Leeds Mountaineering Club, came on board to make the group a round ten. We departed from Gatwick on 23 July, 1995.

Angel Peak, climbed by Paul Hudson, Ashley Hardwell, Philip Kendon and Ken Findlay.
Photograph by Paul Hudson

The journey to our base camp took six days and took us from Gatwick via Riga, Moscow, Almata, Karakol, Inylchek and Maidaadyr before we used the local transport of a helicopter to make the final leg. Ken Findlay, Ashley, David and I took the easy flight while Stuart and Ken Mosley led the other four members on their walk into the Kaingdy valley.

As I flew over the low hills at the start of the Kaingdy Glacier I recalled the eight hour bus journey to Karakol; the first night's wet walk 'home'; the Istanbul cafe where Ken Findlay was afflicted by the attractive waitresses and made many a call there; David Penlington and John Hudson checking the tents for base camp and finding that we were being allocated tents without guys and poles that did not go together, let alone fit the tents and few pegs. All of us in the helicopter kept a look out for the walk-in group of Stuart, Ken Mosley, David, Dave, John and Graham who were due to join us in three days time.

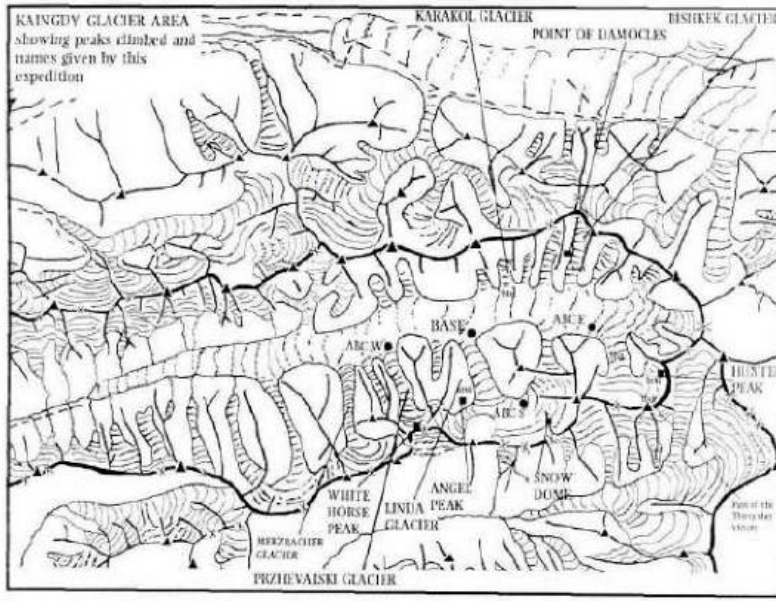
Silence fell as the noise of the helicopter faded away down the valley. It was just us and the mountains now. Two hours of heavy work later and all the gear, food and tents were on the Base campsite. By 2pm the tents were erected and items sorted and we could enjoy a well earned rest and a cup of tea. While I decided to go for a short walk along the Kaingdy Glacier, Ken, Ashley and David stayed at base. Later outside their tents

they spotted the Russian Rescue team coming down the summit ridge of what we were to call the 'Mountain of Death'. They got out the binoculars to watch and Ken recalled 'a strange feeling that something wasn't right'. They took turns in looking through the binoculars and became more uncomfortable as the group descended. Ken retired to his tent but no sooner had he got into his sleeping bag than David shouted out at the top of his voice: "They've gone over the edge !" Where there had been four climbers only minutes before, now a lone figure remained spread-eagled, desperately holding on to the mountain for dear life. David had watched as the first person on the rope had gone too far onto the giant cornice which overhung the North Face and as the second climber followed the whole cornice broke off, taking with it the second and third climbers. The remaining person had managed to secure herself on the ridge, and within seconds the rope had been shredded, probably by the ice and rock. Almost in tears Ken and David watched the lone figure begin a slow and careful descent. Joanna, for that is who it was, was later met by two other Russian climbers who had set off to rescue the survivor.

The next day Ken and I took a walk up the Moshnyi Glacier to look at potential climbs. As we passed we looked up at the Mountain of Death; unroped climbing, that was something to think about. With all the real climbing behind them Joanna and Mick Davie nearing the top would have been in good spirits, then one false step! Mick Davie had fallen down the mountain on 18 July: now, just ten days later, two others had followed.

The following day while Ashley and I tried a 'first' climb, the trekking-in group arrived They had had a great, if wearing, journey through alpine fields of Edelweiss, gentians, Alpine Asters, potentilla, mushrooms and wild rhubarb, a difficult icefall and a zig-zag journey across fast flowing rivers.

Early on 2 August after a warming drink and some chocolate Ashley, Ken Findlay, John and I set off for the Moshnyi col (4800m). We followed in the footsteps of Dave Penlington and Graham Treacher who had made a day trip to the col yesterday and reported great views across the next valley to the south and Kirov peak. I got to the col and sat down, having been up through the night with the runs. I was exhausted and could go no further. Ken disappeared up the eastern slope behind me to join John and Ashley who were ahead of him. The three made good progress but as they climbed higher it became clear that their 'summit' was no more than the prow of a subsidiary ridge and the true summit lay somewhat higher and



a way off. At 8.30 they rested on this prow. Ashley had developed a rasping cough and was now coughing blood-marked sputum. From the west clouds began to gather and were now cutting the tops off the mountains around them. They decided to descend, hoping to return on the morrow. In the night there was a storm and a deal of snow fell. The morning was little better so they descended with heavy hearts to return to base camp. At 2 o'clock another snow storm blew in for the night.

A great day dawned on 4 August and while John, Dave and Graham were exploring the area to the west of Base Camp David Suddes, Ken Mosley, Stuart Gallagher and I went across to the other side of the valley, north of Base. Ken Mosley and Stuart Gallagher looked out of their 'superior' tent. Their superior tent was interesting; instead of the single thick walls of our 'Scout' tents theirs was a double-walled affair. Don't be misled, however. This was no special Russian high-altitude extra snug sleeping accommodation. It was a thin cotton outer with a printed cotton inner, the sort of printed cotton we used to use for summer curtains in the 50s. Mind you it gave Stu and Ken a feeling of home from home! The four of us made our way across the Kaingdy Glacier retracing the steps Stuart,

Ken Mosley, David and Philip had made two days previously. They had made a good bivvy only to wake in the morning to a snow storm. We were quickly across and did our best to ascend a wide slope of snow and ice running up from the Karakol Glacier to reach some attractive peaks behind a rock buttress high above us. We went well at first and Stuart and Ken got ahead of David and I finding a convenient rock ledge. From that point Ken led a bold ascent over difficult rock to find a way forward. Two hours later after all except me had ventured off into the sun it was decided that there was no way up from their advanced point and that nothing remained but to return. Ken had tried every option but found nothing would go: slabby rock, wet with melt-water, repelled his last attempt. As we descended we eyed the possibility of continuing higher up the snow slope to its top. We never returned there so are still left to wonder if we could have got further that way.

Ashley, Ken and Philip had an easy morning but in the afternoon went up to 'ABC South' on the Moshnyi Glacier. Philip, still not feeling one hundred percent, returned to Base Camp leaving Ken F and Ashley in place for a further attempt at the peak above the Moshnyi col.

The day's early brilliance disappeared in the evening and heavy cloud moved in around 5pm, followed by light snow at 7pm. In the night it snowed heavily depositing around four inches at base camp and more higher up. As it had snowed all night, Ken and Ashley woke to find a white world much too dangerous to climb in and decided to return to Base Camp yet again!

Our walks east along the Kaingdy glacier gave views of possible routes from Base Camp. At first impressive, they were then ruled out as too dangerous, too serious, too difficult!

In the early hours of Sunday, 6 August, four climbers set off across the Moshnyi Glacier, heading for "Angel Peak". Good progress was made until we tried to cross the higher glacier to the foot of the climb. Some of the team nearly gave up here due to the length of time it took in route finding and the slowness of travel across wide crevasses. Eventually with "Linda Glacier" behind us we started up the peak itself. Ken Findlay led off with Ashley Hardwell on his rope then Philip Kendon and I followed. Ken quickly made progress over a huge bergschrund and onto a slope of ice at 50°-55°. There were good conditions here with frozen snow over-lying hard ice and good screw placements were found with ease. Clouds had now billowed in overhead, producing light flurries of snow. The climbing was

tiring and required continuous concentration as it was mainly on ice.

After around two or three hundred metres the slope eased to 45° and the layer of sugary snow deepened. Ken continued to trend right aiming to reach the ridge itself.

There followed an endless and tiring plod. Time sped by as we had to rest after every few steps of effort in deep and unstable snow. Finally we were there, on the ridge. Here both sides of the mountain ran steeply away from us and we sat in the deep swaths of sun-drenched snow. It made a change from the cold shadows of the north-west facing slope. Midday approached and our minds were fixed upon the next difficulties; how to gain the next part of the ridge above us and what sort of ground would we find there?

It looked straightforward enough, 70m or so of reasonably angled snow rising a little more steeply to another leftward curving arête. Ashley though was clearly having problems. He had made good progress at first and was now almost at the end of the rope, then he came to an abrupt stop. "It's impossible to go up here," he called down. "It is just mush with no holding power at all, and it gets steeper! I am going to go right and up this wall." Here he indicated the area of ice which led up to the next easy-angled area of snow.

The rope was sorted out and we gave him more free line. Then he descended right and downward, out of our view. There followed a desperate traverse and ascent which was enough of a strain to watch, let alone climb; Ashley balancing on his points and pecking with his axes slowly made progress up the wall. At one point his left boot slipped and our hearts were in our mouths, at another he lengthened his axe slings so that he could step into them; it was appalling to watch! Finally after a lot of effort he surmounted the last section of ice and disappeared over the top. We cheered! While Ashley had been struggling with the ice we had had to untie and join two ropes together otherwise he would have been stranded twenty feet below the crest. I followed on, retying to the rope's centre leaving Ken Findlay and Philip something to keep hold of. I followed Ashley's line but twenty feet from the crest was brought to a sudden stop. "What the hell are you two doing down there?" I shouted down the rope, now taught and pulling me down towards Phil and Ken, the tips of my crampons looking decidedly small. I gave another pull and they realised my predicament. Ken and Phil messed around and somehow found some slack, so I struggled the last few feet up the slope to reach Ashley.

We pulled as Ken and Phil floundered their way up the chest-deep powder snow of the ridge. After a very short rest Phil led off. It looked only a short distance to the summit ridge now and of course there would be a pleasant, flat, bowling green of a bivvy site awaiting us to provide us with a well earned rest. Well, that was not quite what happened. It was the start of a six hour episode which found the whole team drained, though fortunately not all at the same time.

After a false start, we continued as one rope of four and I led off. After four long pitches, at the top of which I pulled up the rope as the others followed, I had to stop and Philip took over. As we neared the mountain's crest the temperature dropped and darkness began to fall. It was well below freezing as Philip ascended the last ice slope and managed to fight his way onto a more level area of 30° which held some deep snow. Ken Findlay and Ashley Hardwell had to climb this last difficult slope in the dark and with Ken's hands freezing he was unable to use his head torch which remained in his sack. Sub-zero temperatures and blackness meant that Ken could not get all the ice screws out; when he eventually reached the top he sat exhausted in the soft snow and began to retch. A bivvy ledge was dug and the night spent in fitful sleep. We all sustained frost nip in our toes as a result of this bivvy but there was no lasting damage.

On a cold and misty morning we breakfasted on chocolate and tied on. It took an hour to ascend the last 200 feet. Snow and mist hampered our enjoyment of the summit, but "Angel Peak" had been climbed. A brisk wind from the west was bringing new cloud all the time so we decided to descend rather than look for a further route along the ridges running off to the east and west some way below our peak. We kept more to the crest of the ridge now and completed the descent by three abseil pitches when the slopes became dangerous in the afternoon sun. Even when the bottom of the mountain was reached we still had to recross "Linda Glacier" and this took a tiring four hours. On occasions we were forced to crawl and 'swim' across some areas of snow. Base camp was reached 45 hours after departing.

It was not until 12 August that a further peak was ascended, this time by Ken Findlay and me. We ascended a high point on a ridge in "Bishkek Glacier". After a bivvy below the climb, and while four others were climbing on the opposite side of the valley, we made a zig-zag ascent to a col after being repulsed by a small break in the long and high cornice due to its unstable nature. After the long traverse, under 30-foot long icicles,

we reached the col from where we climbed to the first high point along the ridge. I later called it "Point of Damocles" after all the icicles that had to be negotiated. We reckoned it to be at about 5200m. Because of the lateness of the day we decided to descend and following instructions shouted up from the glacier floor we descended south into an avalanche chute, crossed it and down climbed safely to the glacier floor. Ashley had waited for us at the bivvy site and told us their exploits. The team of himself, Philip, Stuart and David Suddes had made excellent progress until 100 feet below the crest where they were turned back by the snow conditions.

On the same day Dave Penlington, John Hudson and Graham Treacher climbed a mountain to the south of the Kaingdy Glacier. The team measured the mountain, "White Horse Peak", as being at 4850m. They found the snow conditions much better than on the main glacier system. They hoped to return there later to climb more mountains but unfortunately illness and then a violent snow storm prevented them.

On 13 August bad luck hit David Suddes and Philip Kendon when after a bivvy above 'ABC East' they attempted an unclimbed peak to the east of the Upper Kaingdy Glacier. After an early start they were making good progress when they were both afflicted by an attack of the runs. David had to dangle on the rope at one point when suddenly he had to give in to nature's call. Their physical condition slowed them down and when they came across a huge slope of windslab just ready to go they decided to call it a day. They returned to Base the following day looking much the worse for wear.

The last ascent of the trip was made by Ken Findlay and myself on 16 August. Like the first, it was affected by bad weather which drove us down after ascending a rock and ice high point when our plan had been to make a traverse of the ridge to gain the peak which lay to the north. Having moved in the afternoon to 'ABC East' from Base, Ken and I then set off around 4am next morning and ascended towards the Pass of the 30 Day Victory but turned east to the mountain mass before reaching it. By sunrise we were on the lower reaches of the ice slope that led to a rock outcrop and the ridge. The route was again ice, sometimes overlaid with an inch or two of granular snow, sometimes bare ice and in one or two places it had deep and unconsolidated snow overlying crevasses. At 4pm a storm blew in giving high winds and a drastic drop in temperature. Snow and spindrift affected our vision making progress very slow. An hour later we decided

that a bivvy was our only option as the wind and snowfall increased. Hoping to find deep soft snow at the top of the ridge we pushed on to the summit of "Hunter Peak", 5250m, to find hard ice. The only option left was a small rock ledge 24 x 35 inches just below the top. We spent the night sitting up or pushing each other off this perch; Ken claimed that he got his head sat upon by me, though this was never proved.

The snow continued all night except for a brief spell when I awoke to stillness and stars overhead and quickly made a Horlicks drink. By morning, mist, snow and high winds had returned and we were forced to abandon our other ideas and settle for a retreat down our ascent route. Small powder snow avalanches fell down past and onto us as we descended and on reaching the main bergschrund we found that whereas the day before it had been between 6 to 12 feet high it was now completely covered. We reached 'ABC East' at around 5pm to find Phil and David Suddes preparing for their own last attempt but not before hot drinks and food were supplied.

David Suddes and Philip Kendon made their last attempt but that too had to be aborted due to the heavy snowfall and continuing unsettled weather. We were airlifted out on 21 August.

Overall the trip was enjoyable and apart from the poor organisation of the base camp equipment and food, the quality of the cook and an occasional misunderstanding, the International Travel Mountaineering Centre managed to provide us with the support we required.

Stuart Gallagher has ideas to return to the Urals as soon as he can and with his previous contacts is assured of a much better quality of food and equipment as he will tell you again and again, given half the chance, or even if you don't and you're about to try to consume the 19th main meal of vegetable soup. (That's all our cook could produce! The 'Cook' - well that's another story in itself and the editor's editing prevents me telling it here!)

Looking back it is certainly a place I could return to. The opportunities there are tremendous; the mountain routes though do pose real dangers and one would need to exercise care in the choice of objectives. I'm sure over the next few years the Kaingdy Glacier will see further visitors.

The United Kingdom Tien Shan Kaingdy Expedition 1995

Expedition members: Stuart Gallagher (FRCC), Ashley Hardwell, John Hudson, Paul Hudson (FRCC), Philip Kendon, Ken Findlay (FRCC), Ken Mosely (FRCC), Dave Penlington, Dave Suddes, Graham Treacher.

THE CUILLIN RIDGE - NOW AND THEN

John Lagoe

Then, it took all day to drive from Eskdale to Kyle of Lochalsh, with supper at Tomdoun before the now-closed road over to Cluanie. Next morning, across to stay with the MacRaes at Glenbrittle House, and the afternoon on Sron na Ciche: our first visit to Skye.

It was May, 1953. Dick Marsh [1] and I were Outward Bound instructors with a week's break between courses. With no thought of the main ridge traverse on that first day, we climbed *Cioch West* and one of the awkward Diffs above, up the Bad Step to Sgurr Alasdair, looked north and south - and we were hooked. A chapter in W. H. Murray's *Mountaineering in Scotland* provided both information and inspiration. We planned two recce days, then a day for the traverse.

Still keen to climb a bit, we went up *Abraham's Route* to Sgurr Alasdair and then round Coire Lagan and learned how to flick the abseil rope off the In Pinn - no slings in place then. Next day we left Dick's Land Rover at Sligachan, reached Gillean by the Pinnacle Ridge, traversed Am Basteir, the Tooth and Bruach na Frithe, then back to Glenbrittle House by going down the Tarneilear corrie. The view from the Tooth roof down *Naismith's* was impressive: we spun a coin for first down; I lost.

All this in clinker-nailed boots. But I had a pair with rubber soles and Dick had tennis shoes, so we set off in these at 4 a.m. on a perfect morning, followed by the Glen Brittle cuckoo, and reached Gars-bheinn at 7 o'clock.

After more than 40 years, that stands out as one of my best-ever mountaineering days: the rocks, the views, the companion, the fitness, the confidence. Nothing gave us pause. Not having heard of Munros, we didn't divert to Sgurr Dubh Mor. The TD Gap must have been easier then. The unknown section from Sgurr Dearg to Bruach na Frithe doesn't stick in the memory (I had to learn the secrets of Bidein Druim nan Ramh again, later). Naismith's was much easier up in rubbers than down in nails. At Sgurr nan Gillean, still with its gendarme, it was 3.30 p.m.: eight and a half hours from Gars-bheinn.

Halfway down to Sligachan we realised that we might do the whole thing in thirteen hours: we pushed a bit and got to the hotel at exactly 5 p.m.

We were tired the next day, and went on a boat trip to Rhum, and sat on the shore - then back to work.

Another "then", 29 years later. Ever since the 1953 trip I'd wanted to take Joan on the main ridge traverse, and in June 1982 we rented the MacRae's cottage for a week with Bill Hunter and his wife Mary. It was Spring Bank Holiday and many Club members were in Glen Brittle. We planned a two-day traverse, so the day before Bill and I dumped bivouac gear, food and water just below the Banachdich col, and the four of us had a civilised start at 7 a.m.

From Bill Murray onwards, writers have described the long boggy trek round to Coire nan Laogh and the steep scree to Gars Bheinn in less than complimentary terms. We took it gently, in four hours, and the head-down grind was soon forgotten in the surprise and pleasure of reaching the top, the view down to Coruisk and the sweep of the ridge ahead.

Off at about 11 a.m. with a great sense of well-being, we met on Sgurr nan Eag a young couple who had come up Coir' a' Ghrunnda, heading out for Gars-bheinn, and I made a mental note that if there was a next time that would be the approach to take. Further on, we avoided the TD Gap. When dumping the bivouac gear, Bill and I had met Syd and Eileen Clark near Sgurr Dearg: they told us the ascent from the Gap was hard, and if they thought so, it must have been. So we took the easy traverse on the west side, finding a snow patch to refill water bottles, then followed a school party of 14 up to Sgurr Alasdair, avoiding the Bad Step. After Thearlaich we met Ron and Margaret Miller, doing the ridge from north to south, on Collie's Ledge, and had afternoon tea at 4 p.m. on Mhic Choinnich.

The school party had bypassed Mhic Choinnich and An Stac, which we climbed by the superb scramble up the front, and were queuing at the foot of the Inaccessible Pinnacle by the time we arrived - so we didn't join the queue, to the great relief of Mary, who'd practised her first abseil in Coire Lagan only two days earlier. It was 6 p.m. when we reached the bivvy site below Bealach na Banachdich and still sunny and warm as we cooked our supper. After a calm dry night on gathered moss, disturbed only by the distant rattle of a car passing over the wooden bridge in Glen Brittle, we were wakened by a cold dawn wind and swirls of mist, and were soon up and away by 5.30 a.m.

We all felt we had an easy day ahead of us and plenty of time - my fault, as my memory of the 1953 traverse was vague and took no account of the different climbing abilities and fitness levels, and having the bivouac gear to carry. We were in for a long, tiring day, so maybe it was good not to know it until later. However, we reached Bealach na Glaic Moire in four and a

half hours despite having to rope up on two of the Mhadaidh tops; still I persisted in under-rating the ridge, forecasting 3 p.m. on Sgurr nan Gillean. It then took nearly two and a half hours to traverse Bidein Druim nan Ramh: once Mary had to use her new abseiling skills, and that and the route-finding ate away the time. By then we were tiring, moving slowly over the long section over An Caisteal and Sgurr na Bhairnich to Bruach na Frithe at 2.30 p.m. Joan's notes record her thoughts here: "Feel we will complete ridge now though Gillean looks very high".

There were climbers on *Naismith's* but we'd never intended to climb the Tooth. After Sgurr a' Fionn Choire we lost a lot of height below Am Bhasteir on the north side, then up to the bealach and a quick trip without sacks to the summit. Only Gillean to do: but we set off up the wrong chimney, had to rope up and sack-haul - and reached the top at last at 5.15 p.m. "Photos and hilarity". Just the Tourist Route down now - but it took 3 hours. We'd been out for 38 hours, with a ridge time of 19 hours top to top.

Once again, one of the best of many mountaineering trips, with that sense of achievement that comes from completing what was for the four of us a serious expedition. Looking back from our 1955 visit, Bill and I are even more impressed at Mary's and Joan's performance.

Two articles led Bill and me, in our declining years, to plan a one-day traverse of the Cuillin main ridge in 1995. An account of Monica Shone's successful Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge Run inspired us to have a go, in 1994. Our own completion of the Run (much longer than our usual 'long' days) encouraged us to raise our sights: what to do next year? We were already thinking of Skye when Andy Hyslop's article *Running the Ridge* appeared in *The Climber*: so that settled it: we'd try to do the ridge in one day, and maybe set a target for those of riper years.

Our plan was to follow what is now the established route for anyone wishing to break Andy Hyslop's amazing record of 3 hours 32 minutes: starting at Gars-bheinn, taking in all eleven Munros and Bidein Druim nan Ramh, and climbing the TD Gap, *King's Chimney*, the In Pinn and *Naismith's*. We enlisted my son Jonathan as porter and encourager; drew up a schedule by multiplying Hyslop's time by four, giving ourselves a target of 14 hours; collected detailed route advice from him and others to add to our own recollections; and bought Maxim for drinking and High Five and Power bars. Two days before, we dumped huge amounts of water

and some food at An Dorus and Bealach Harta, reconnoitring the Mhadaidh tops and Bidein between, then had a day's rest. We discussed at length the approach route from Glen Brittle and, thank goodness, decided not to go via Coir' a' Ghrunnda, and not to bivouac on Gars-bheinn. It would be important to travel light.

Jonathan arrived in the evening and after a short night we left the Glen Brittle hut just before 3 a.m. on 24 June, accompanied by a descendant of the 1953 cuckoo. The weather was perfect and the views east superb when we reached Gars-bheinn at 6 o'clock: mountain tops as far as Ben Nevis appeared above a thin sheet of cloud. Two young men arrived during our second breakfast and set off at great speed. Shortly after we left at 6.20 we saw others packing up their bivouac having arrived there at 3 a.m., and further on several parties were heading out for Gars-bheinn after following the Coir' a' Ghrunnda route - we felt pleased and 'pure' to have come straight to the start.

Hyslop took a vague path under Sgurr a' Choire Bhig to avoid the summit. This looked uninviting so we stuck to the ridge path, but his route after Sgurr nan Eag to pass under Sgurr Dubh an a Bheinn was excellent and easy to follow up to Sgurr Dubh Mor where at 8 a.m. we were 20 minutes ahead of schedule. We were then soon at the TD Gap - and into the crowds. Climbing quickly up the pinnacle, Jonathan put the abseil in place; but two climbers on the exit side were moving very slowly, and here we made the first decision not to stick to the 'established route'. We retreated, by-passed the Gap, missed the best line and had to climb the Bad Step, and found ourselves 20 minutes behind time on Alasdair, at 9.40.

At 7 a.m. it had been hot; now it was baking and totally airless. We each had a litre of water with Maxim (after drinking the same amount at Gars-bheinn); I drank this in frequent tiny sips from a squirter bottle carried in a holster, and ate frequent small bites from High Five bars, so we didn't have to stop to eat and drink. With little to carry (except for Jonathan, who had the rope), and light running shoes (I wore Walsh Raids), and two water dumps ahead, all the signs were propitious - it was the heat which was to hit us.

Once over Thearlaich, Andy Hyslop's descent led us quickly to the bealach where we at once decided to use Collie's Ledge: King's Chimney would be time-consuming for three on the rope, and the main aim was to complete the ridge in one day. After Mhic Choinnich we chose the direct way up An Stac (avoided by Hyslop via an uninviting brown ramp on the

west side) and came in sight of more crowds on, and roping up at the foot of, the Inaccessible Pinnacle. No hesitation now in deciding not to queue, so we by-passed it and pressed on over Sgurrs Dearg, Banachdich, Thormaid and Ghreadaidh, heading for food and water at An Dorus.

Towards the end of this stretch the blazing heat was making us light-headed. Rest, food and water were not enough to help Bill recover, and he descended from An Dorus; Jonathan and I didn't get much further before we too realised we were unsafe moving on exposed rock in such conditions. Beyond Mhadaidh and its tops we reluctantly made a decision to abandon the attempt, but determined to go on far enough to be able to descend to Sligachan. After traversing under Bidein to Bealach Harta we drank most of the three and a half litres of water dumped there - and still felt shaky and stumbly, moving slowly and cautiously over the exposed bits of An Caisteal and on to Bruach na Frithe. And so down Fionn Choire to Sligachan at 7.30 p.m.

What a superb day! Despite the disappointment of not finishing the whole ridge, it had been a delight to be on the Cuillin again, with the special pleasure you get from moving smoothly and swiftly over the rock. Why rush along such a magnificent ridge, when you can explore and linger and savour? Well, there's room for both - and I'm hankering after another try, before the joints stiffen. Meanwhile, if anyone else thinks a one-day traverse is a good challenge for geriatrics, I suggest the 'established record route' described above but excluding the TD Gap and *King's Chimney*.

Are you over 60? Have a go!

1 Dick Marsh (not a Club member) was killed in a fall on Dow Crag in 1964. The footbridge between Brotherilkeld and Taw House is his memorial.

A SHORT WALK AROUND MONTE VISO

David Miller

My climbing plans for the summer holiday were thwarted and instead I reluctantly accepted Christine's invitation to join her and a group of Members and friends on the Tour du Mont Blanc. The trip was planned for mid-September and we decided to go out to Chamonix by car, with the thought that if the weather was bad we could always escape to the south.

The Chamonix *meteo* was not good and only promised improvements later in the week. However, after meeting up with the rest of the team in Les Houches, we were drawn in to setting off on the trip. The first night was spent in the Chalets de Miage and the following day dawned to the sound of heavy rain and nil visibility. Later that morning at Les Contamines a further forecast offered nothing but more bad weather and so we made a quick decision to bale out.

We awoke the next morning in the Piedmont region of Italy to a cold, clear day with fresh snow on the mountains and white cloud streaming in a strong wind from the summits. A short drive took us to Crissolo, the highest village in the Po valley, which is set at the foot of Monte Viso. The season had ended, most of the shops were shuttered and the bunkhouses had closed but we managed to find a room in a friendly, family-run hotel. The weather prospects were only fair for a couple of days but a short trip into the mountains seemed possible. It looked from the map that a walk around Monte Viso would be possible in that time - so that was the plan.

We made a 'climbers start' at about 9 a.m. by driving up to Pian del Re, 2020m. It was a beautiful, clear day with fresh snow on the mountains, which seemed to thrust steeply up into a deep blue sky. Monte Viso, 3840m, on our left dominated the serrated ridge which continued to the Col de Traversette, 2880m, which we had to cross into France. I convinced Christine that there would only be a thin powdering of snow on the path and so up we went. The route was easily graded until we reached the snowline below some derelict military installations. Just below the col, with a steep drop to the left and the snow now above our boots, one ski stick each seemed a little inadequate. However, the view along the ridge to Monte Viso was superb and made more dramatic by the mist sweeping up the face. Reaching the col opened up a view over the Queyras mountains and up as far as the Ecrins.

Fortunately, the descent into the Vallé du Guil was easy and we soon reached the Refuge du Viso, 2460m, where we sat in the sun on the balcony enjoying a fine view of the north face of Monte Viso, whilst having soup for our late lunch.

The route ahead over the snow-covered Passo di Vallanta, 2810m, was obvious but it took some persuasion to leave the comfort of the hut balcony. An easy walk led to a small lake, followed by a steep plod up the snow slope towards the col, which in the late afternoon shadow was quite chilly and the wind on the col didn't help the comfort level. Back into Italy again, we quickly descended a good path towards a small lake at the foot of the west face of Monte Viso, where the modern Rifugio Vallanta, 2450m, was sited.

This 'architects' dream' is built in the shape of a triangle, both in plan and section. This makes for some strangely shaped rooms in the upper dormitory: the height of the top bunk in the apex has to be seen to be believed. We spent the night here in rather cold, austere surroundings, so unlike most mountain refuges, with only two other visitors for company.

Nest morning it was cold and grey as we descended towards the Varaita valley. The sky cleared and the sun came up as we reached the grassy slopes above the woods, where cattle and sheep were grazing. There were attractive stone barns but no habitation down to the point (1919m) where our route turned off to strike up the wooded hillside towards the Passo di S. Chiaffredo, 2760m.

It was an easy ascent, first through trees and then up a good path on grass and scree to an open, rocky valley containing a number of small lakes and a bivvy hut (the Bivacco Piero Bertoglio, 2760m) sited on a small hill on the left. As we climbed, banks of cloud started to rise up from the valleys and then the pressure was on to reach the col and gain a view of the steep west face of Monte Viso before it was engulfed. But it was too late; we walked into dense mist below the west face and the long traverse across boulders to the Lago Grande del Monviso and the Rifugio Quintino Sella, 2650m, though on a well-made track, was rather monotonous.

After lunch in the hut we emerged back into the mist to follow the track down to the car. We should have passed two small lakes but we only saw one, and we nearly walked into that as rain further reduced visibility!

The walk around Monte Viso was pleasantly quiet in September and the early snows added to the interest. If you are in Piedmont and get a couple of days fine weather it is well worth doing; and if it rains you can always visit the vineyards.

AN AFFAIR WITH PEASCOD'S WOMEN

Leslie Shore

Enorbarus "But there is never a fair woman has a true face."
Menas "No slander, they steal hearts."

Shakespeare *Anthony and Cleopatra* Act 2, Scene VI

Cleopatra seduced me back to the open-cast pit of Honister Pass for a second time. My first visit was in 1989 and the second in September 1990. My infatuation with Bill Peascod's 'Women' was the reason why I was keen to climb his route on the "slate metal" of Buckstone How.

My climbing performance has a tendency to be erratic immediately after a family holiday. Andrew Carlin was my climbing companion on the occasion of my second visit and he was fresh from a holiday in Africa. My family holiday was a dim memory. As a result I believed that the day would proceed without complications.

Andy recounted his holiday experiences from the moment we left my parked car on the Buttermere valley floor. His account of watching big game in Kenya and feasting at Tree Tops served to ease the toil of walking up the hillside. I became fascinated by his story. An effect though was that our previous knowledge of Honister's geography was lost to the Kenyan bush. His monologue ended in abrupt silence. We stood at the foot of an unfamiliar crag.

The situation shook us out of lethargy. I fumbled through the guidebook to discover that we were standing beneath Yew Crags. We had lost our way. Buckstone How stood half a mile to our east.

Buckstone How

Two Penrith climbers greeted us upon our arrival at Buckstone How. Their dash to the crag had been less eventful than ours. We introduced ourselves

A 'Penrith climber' completing the wall traverse at the end of the first pitch of Cleopatra, Buckstone How.
Photograph by Les Shore.

with a self-reproaching account of our ramble from Yew Crags across ankle breaking, knee rapping stone scree. They had only walked for ten minutes from the Youth Hostel at the top of the pass.

Conversation revealed that we were all aiming to climb on nearly the same piece of rock. We invited them to have a go at their route first because we had reasons to doubt our climbing form. Bewilderingly they declined our invitation. So I repeated the offer. They were resolute about their decision and so we became the first to belay.

Bill Peascod

When the laugh of Maryport's son, William Peascod, first echoed around Buckstone How, in the 1940s and early 1950s, he was ending an unwitting alliance between quarryman and climber. Strangely, their hands had not touched Buckstone How. Instead, the quarryman had taken his Holman rock drill, sledge hammer and chisel to smash holes into Fleetwith Pike opposite and to burrow into the hillside adjacent to the crag. Whereas climbers had discounted the crag's importance, opted to pass it by and proceed to the Grey Crag climbs, up in Buttermere's Birkness Combe.

Bill Peascod became the Honister iconoclast. Furthermore, during his distinguished courtship of Lakeland climbing, particularly during 1950 and 51, he revealed in the naming of his routes his affection for women: *Cleopatra*; *Delilah* on High Crag, Buttermere; *Jezebel* on Miner's Crag, Newlands; and *Eve* on Shepherd's Crag, Borrowdale.

Poignantly, Andy and I can recollect the day of Peascod's death in May 1985, because during it we were climbing together on Llanberis' Dinas Mot. The droning of a single R. A. F. Mountain Rescue helicopter overhead, en route to the higher cliffs of Llanberis, was noted during our conversation. We were to agree a few days later, when *The Times* carried his obituary, that its journey must have been to recover his body. Tragically he had collapsed on the rope of Don Whillans' party when climbing on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu. He had first climbed *Cleopatra*, within one day of that fatal date, thirty four years before, on 18 May 1951.

Cleopatra

We were determined to start *Cleopatra* at a different place than Bill Peascod. Our chosen way was the Variation start, described in the Guidebook as 'Climb on to a pillar, pull over the bulge to a gangway leading left to the original start'.

My finger tips had touched the bulge for the first time during May 1989. Andy was also seconding me as the leader. Our party also had a third member, Dave McLennan. When we arrived at the crag that day we were full of the joys of spring. Yet when I pinched the climb's naturally, slippery flake holds available for the 'pull over', my spirit evaporated. I retreated. We all decided that we should go to Shepherd's Crag to climb instead.

Eve

Dave became animated at Shepherd's Crag. Normally taciturn, his pithy Scottish delivery can have the ability to hit a raw nerve. First, he publicly chided Andy and I for preferring to eat our day's picnic instead of getting on with the climbing. We laughed and continued to chew our food.

It was his second comment that hurt my pride. He classed us as "girls" before turning his back on us to solo *Adam's* first pitch, the neighbouring climb to Peascod's *Eve*. Instantly, as if one person, we squashed sandwiches into our trousers pockets and each rushed to tie on to an end of one of his two ropes, which dangled down the pitch's crack. Having reached his belay, we were still panting when he announced that *Eve* was the route we were going to do. Together we nodded agreement.

Pooled between us were at least four previous ascents of Eve. Furthermore, with other partners, we had all led it. Yet our joint experience soon counted for nothing. Dave led. He sped up the short corner of the climb's second pitch and was soon out of sight. A gymnastic swing had taken him around the corner's left-hand edge to position himself ready for the problems of the slab. His rope became stationary. This was followed by a long silence, which was broken by Dave making a comment which was common knowledge to us all: the absence of protection. Unusually, for Dave, he continued to repeat variations on the same comment.

Andy and I realised that the situation was ripe for mischief. Accordingly, we loudly welcomed every climber who passed us on the ascent of *Adam*. We reassured each climber that we were all right and informed them that our leader was taking his time to climb *Eve's* pitch. We used the intervals to warn other climbers not to follow us. Dave was ignored.

Dave eventually issued to us a call: to 'climb'. His tone was one of apology.

For Andy and I the memory of *Eve* might be that of a long, amusing love affair. For Dave though, perhaps:

Charmaian "Tempt him not so far. I wish forbear;
In time we hate that which we often fear."

Shakespeare *Anthony and Cleopatra* Act 1, Scene III

Cleopatra - Courtship Resumed

An aim of our second attempt on *Cleopatra* was to regain some personal pride. As leader, I found it mentally difficult to overcome my original shyness of the first pitch's bulge. However, I successfully conquered the bulge and the pitch's other problems.

Andy led through. At an estimated fifteen feet distance away from me he stopped and began to fidget. A dispute broke out between us about the guidebook's description concerning the location of 'severe' moves. I exhorted him to carry on. He curtly rejected my calls and belayed ready for me to lead through.

Whispered amusement had arisen from our spectators, the Penrith men. They had climbed to share the belay with me.

An important aspect of our dispute was the whereabouts of a 'bracket' feature that was described in the guidebook. In my loudly expressed opinion, Andy was nowhere near it. My opinion was based upon an estimate of the length of his pitch's run-out based on the conversion of the guidebook's metric data to imperial measure.

In a state of anger, I chased up the rock to join him. As I snatched surplus protection gear from him he boasted about the quality of the rope work in his belay. In a short, tart, patronising statement I acknowledged his boast. Then I rushed on, utterly convinced that the rock ahead was going to be technically severe.

Almost instantly I found myself wrestling with a piece of rockface. Panic. I reacted intuitively, though clumsily, and leapt above it to safe ground. My legs trembled and the palms of my hands sweated. In a chorus of laughter we said in unison: 'The Bracket!'

Peascod, I read afterwards, used his seconder's shoulder to overcome the bracket:

Caesar "Do not exceed the prescript of this scroll;
our fortune lies upon this jump."

Shakespeare *Anthony and Cleopatra* Act 3, Scene VIII

Below us, on the ground, two Penrith men's smiles beamed up at us. When they abseiled off I think I heard them say that they did not want to be late for an evening's engagement with their lady friends.

As a matter of record, Andy and I finished the climb without more ado and so finished our long courtship of *Cleopatra*.

Delilah

Peascod's *Delilah* fell to our advances nearly two years later, in May 1992. At Buttermere's High Crag, on that occasion, we met two past Presidents of the Club, the Moffat's, and Graham Townsend. They were finishing off the climb as we arrived.

We wooed *Delilah* in privacy. The climb was a short romance. We climbed it quickly and enjoyed it. Belayed at the top, I resisted a naïve urge to sing bars from a 'hit' singles record of Tom Jones.

Jezebel

Peascod's *Jezebel* on the Miner's Crag in the Newlands valley has yet to be climbed. What frightening fate is in store for me when I get round to tackling "this accursed woman"? I have begun to wonder if my fate in the valley below will be like that of Jezebel's King Ahab; after being killed by a random arrow, my blood stains will be washed from my rucksack by the licking tongues of dogs! When I visit Miner's Crag I will try and ignore such a horrible prospect. Indeed, regardless of the dangers, I am resolved to make *Jezebel* complaisant.

My love affair with Peascod's Women will be over when I ascend *Jezebel*. Then I can ponder what comments they might share if they could review my love affair with them. Perhaps their thoughts will be like Cleopatra's:

> "Come away,
> This case of that huge spirit is now cold.
> Ah Women, women! come we have no friend
> But resolution, and the briefest end."
>
> Shakespeare Anthony and Cleopatra Act 4, Scene XV.

ROOTS

John Wilkinson

"It will last as long as there are hills in the Lake District."

Edward Scantlebury, co-founder of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club

If there is one thing at which the British excel more than the ability to invent (although not necessarily to practise) sports, it is the organisation and promotion of sports by the creation of clubs, the upholders of tradition. Mountaineering, however, was not the invention of the British. For various reasons, mountains had been climbed in a sporadic fashion since the days of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, but the first ascent of a difficult mountain was not made until 1492 when Charles VIII of France commanded Antoine de Ville to climb Mont Aiguille in the Vercors, an ascent not repeated for 350 years. By the end of the 18th century, a score of high Alpine peaks, including Mont Blanc, had been climbed. In the first half of the 19th century, well before the main force of British climbers arrived in the Alps, many more high summits had succumbed to the attack of mainly local climbers: Jungfrau, Finsteraarhorn, Wetterhorn, Ortler, Gross Glockner, Piz Bernina and several others. However, it was not the inhabitants of the Alpine valleys who invented the sport of mountaineering; it was outsiders, principally the British. In 1857 they founded the world's first climbing club, the Alpine Club, created the first mountaineering journal and, by banding together like-minded individuals, organised mountaineering as a sport. The continental countries followed suit; the Austrian Alpine Club was formed in 1862, the Swiss and the Italian Alpine Clubs in 1863 and the French Alpine Club in 1874. The second half of the century was marked by frenzied activity in the Alps, when virtually all the remaining virgin peaks were ascended, many of them by British climbers.

In many ways the development of rock climbing as a sport in Britain mirrored that of mountaineering in the Alps, initially with sporadic ascents: the climbing of Pillar Rock in 1826 was followed in mid-century by other routes on Pillar, Scafell and Pavey Ark. In Britain, rock climbing began in earnest in the Lake District around 1880 and was well established as a sport by the time Haskett-Smith soloed the Needle in 1886. Why a Lakeland climbing club was not formed at that time remains a mystery. As early as 1880, John Wilson Robinson, a Cumbrian yeoman farmer from

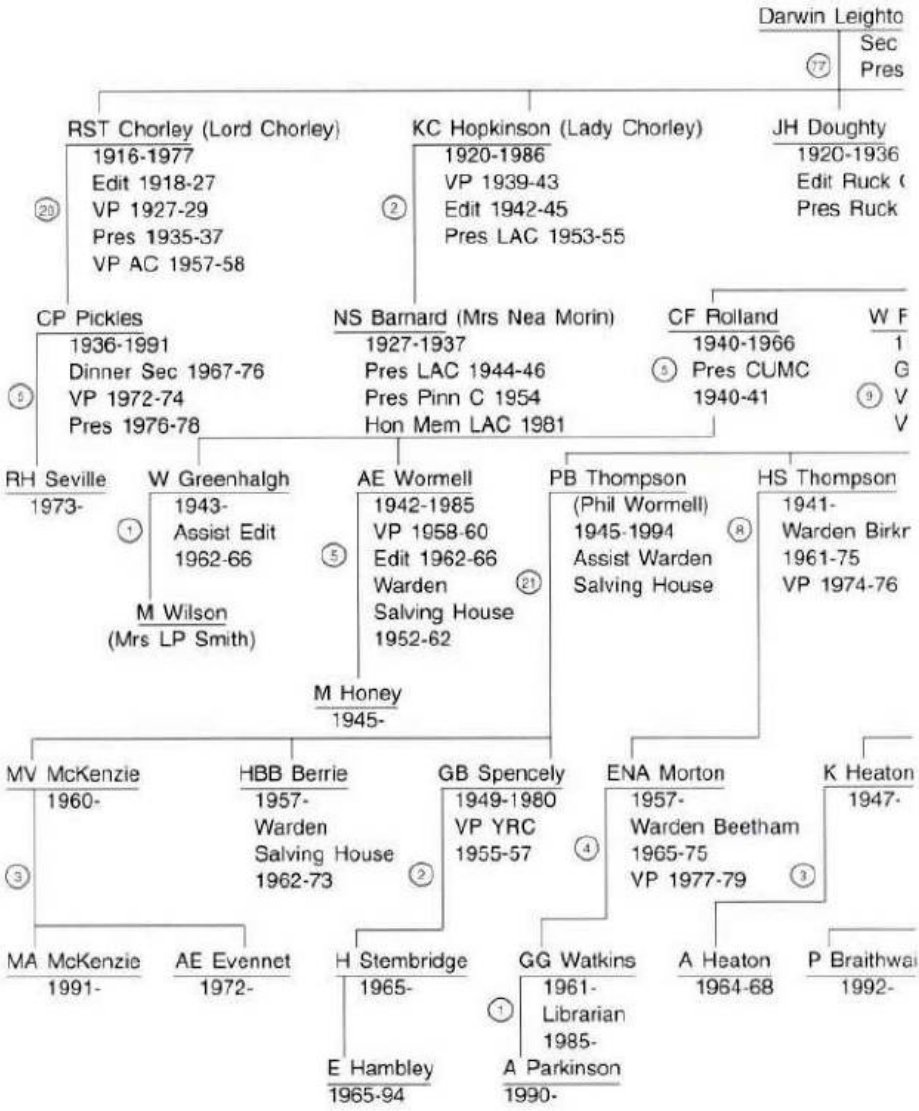
Lorton and one of the most prominent Lakeland climbers of his day, advocated a meeting at Wasdale Head of all frequenters of Cumberland and Westmorland crags for such a purpose. It came to nothing, and a quarter of a century was to elapse before the formation of the first Lakeland climbing club in 1906, by which time several other clubs were well established. The Scottish Mountaineering Club was founded in 1889, The Yorkshire Ramblers in 1892, the Climbers' Club in 1898 and the Rucksack Club in 1902. The Wayfarers' Club was formed just a few weeks after the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

Somewhat belatedly, on 11 November 1906, at the instigation of Edward Scantlebury and Alan Craig, a small group of men from Ulverston, Barrow and Kendal met in the smoking room of the Sun Hotel, Coniston, with the object of forming a Lakeland climbing club. Although initially it was intended merely as a local encouragement of the sport, the ad hoc committee extended an open invitation to all climbers and walkers to join. It soon became apparent that interest was widespread throughout the country and that there was great support for the formation of a properly constituted club. The committee decided to proceed with the formation of the club and in selecting its name, they indicated with some precision the exact nature of the club's proposed activities, fell walking and rock climbing, which were to be undertaken in a well-defined area, the Lake District. The name chosen, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District, was certainly unlike the brief and general names given to other clubs formed around that time: the Climbers' Club, the Rucksack Club, the Wayfarers' Club and the Pinnacle Club.

By Easter 1907, when the committee drew up the rules of the Club, 120 men and women had already paid their subscriptions of 2/6d ($12^{1}/_{2}$p) for men and 1/0d for women. On 30 March 1907 the committee increased the subscriptions to 7/6d for men, 3/6d for women and introduced an entrance fee of 5/0d, an event which caused fourteen resignations during the year, but by January 1908 the membership stood at 176. An extract from the first membership ticket read:

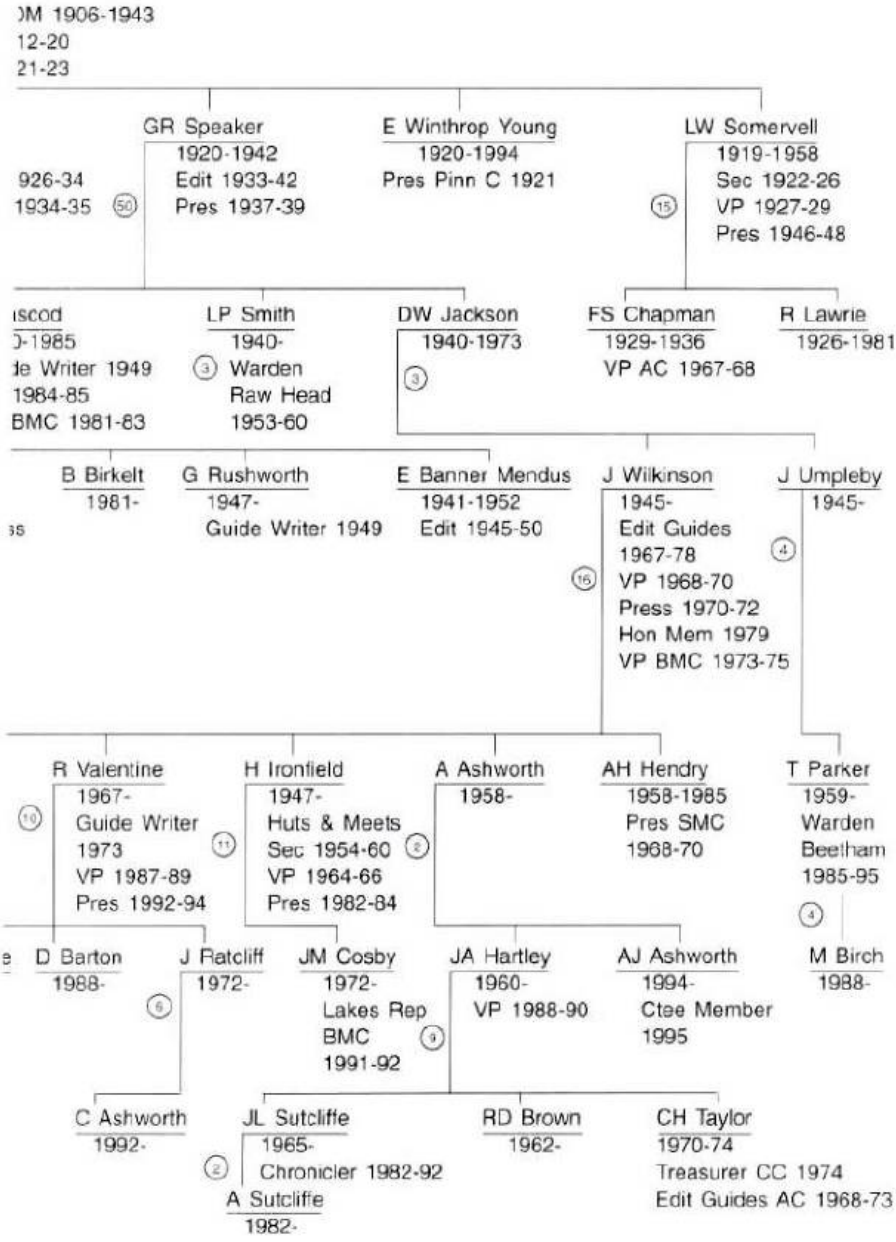
"This Club was founded in November 1906, with the sole object of fostering a love of mountaineering and the pastime of rock climbing in the English Lake District, and to provide such facilities for its members as to enable them to meet together in order to participate in this sport in one another's company; also to enable lovers of this branch of athletics to become acquainted with one another and, further, to provide information

Membership of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of th



77 Number of members proposed

:nglish Lake Distrct at January 1908, 176, including:–



and advice on matters pertaining to local mountaineering and rock climbing."

At a meeting of the committee on 25 September 1907 it was agreed that in future, all candidates for membership should be proposed and seconded by members of not less than one year's standing, both having personal knowledge of the candidate. On 8 May 1908, the first members to be elected by this route joined the Club.

In the early days of the Club, most members knew each other and there are many references in articles in the Club *Journal* to the family atmosphere in the Club. However, as the President T. Howard Somervell wrote in the 1956 volume of the *Journal*: "The old days when the Club was a kind of family, a small climbing fraternity, are over. However nostalgic one may be for the old family feeling of a small club, we welcome our large membership and rejoice that so many are keen enough to join our fraternity."

The growth in membership of the Club led, for a period, to the imposition of a limit of 1000 members. This was subsequently relaxed, but the recent rise in membership has now prompted a debate as to just how large the Club should be.

As a relevant factor in this debate, members might possibly devote a thought as to how the Club developed from its origin in 1906. The word 'family' is the key, for in many ways our Club is like a family in that each member has as 'parents' those who proposed and seconded him or her, and has 'children' who they themselves proposed and seconded. Indeed, in many cases parents actually proposed their own children who in turn proposed theirs, and there are certainly third generation members in the Club. In this way, we are all 'related' to the 176 members who, in January 1908, constituted the Club. Every family has a family tree, and it is not too difficult a task to go back a few generations to find our connections to those members, the roots of the Club. Unfortunately, this involves the tedious process of wading through all the back numbers of the Club minutes, which are stored in the archives. To construct a family tree for each of those 176 members would be a truly daunting task, so I have selected the Original Member, Darwin Leighton, who began the family tree to which I belong. Again, it would be an enormous task to follow up all branches of the tree, and it would be so large as to be impossible to encompass within the bounds set by the size of the pages of the *Journal*. I have therefore selected for the tree principally those persons who have in some way contributed to the life of the Club, other climbing clubs, or made their mark in other spheres such

as mountaineering, rock climbing, mountain literature or art. Furthermore, for the sake of simplicity in constructing the tree, I have selected only those who proposed members, seconders being excluded.

Darwin Leighton (1869-1943), a Kendal grocer, was an active climber long before the Club was founded, partner of such distinguished climbers as J. W. Putrell and the Abraham brothers, with whom he made the first ascent of *Amphitheatre Buttress* on Craig yr Ysfa. He was also in the party which made the first ascent of *'A' Route* on Gimmer. He played his part in the formation of the Club; an Original Member; Hon. Secretary 1912-1920; President 1921-1923. A well-loved and highly respected member until he died in 1943, he was the most prolific proposer of candidates for membership in the Club's history. Over a period of 37 years he proposed 77 candidates who were elected to membership, and seconded many others. As can be seen from the family tree, 1920 was a vintage year when he proposed 14 candidates, six of whom were destined to make their mark in the climbing world.

From a great mountaineering family came Eleanor Winthrop Young, wife of the legendary Geoffrey and daughter of the 'father' of Norwegian mountaineering, Cecil Slingsby: she was, with Pat Kelly, the co-founder in 1921 of the Pinnacle Club, and its first President. Katherine Hopkinson (later Lady Chorley), also born into a distinguished mountaineering family, was a dedicated worker for the Club; Editor 1942-1945; Vice-President 1939-1943. It is a mark of the esteem in which she was held that she was offered the Presidency of the Club in 1958, some 28 years before our first lady President. She was President of the Ladies Alpine Club, 1953-1955. A strong mountaineer, she also made her mark in literature; one of her books, *Hills and Highways*, is a mountaineering classic. Joseph Henry Doughty, who died at the early age of 47, was another literary giant who did much to improve the literary qualities of climbing club journals. His superb essays on various aspects of mountaineering were lovingly collected by H. M. Kelly after his death and published in 1937 as *Hill Writings of J. H. Doughty*, now a collector's item. He edited the Rucksack Club Journal, 1926-1934, and was its President 1934-1935. At the time of his death he was working on a *Manual for Rock Climbers* which was to have been published under the aegis of the Fell & Rock, and it is a matter of great regret that it was never finished. Gustave Robert Speaker was already an accomplished alpinist, and expert on the Dolomites when, at the age of 45, he joined the Club. A firm believer in the value of climbing

clubs, he was a member of most of the British clubs and several foreign ones, and was always ready to play his part in Club activities: Editor 1933-1943; President 1937-1939, one of the few Presidents who never served as Vice-President. Like Darwin Leighton, he too was a prolific proposer of candidates for membership, 50 in all. Despite the fact that Rule 5 of the Club Rules drawn up in 1907 stipulated that both proposer and seconder should have personal knowledge of the candidate, it is clear that Speaker, probably like some others in the Club, often proposed candidates who were virtually unknown to him. In 1940 he proposed a block of ten members of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, some of whom had never even met him: all were elected. By tradition, members of the mountaineering clubs of Cambridge and Oxford Universities invariably joined the Climbers' Club; perhaps Speaker was merely trying to redress the balance. Charles Rolland, who was President of the C. U. M. C. at that time, subsequently became a committee member of the Club and distinguished himself by opening up the low-lying crags of Langdale, making the first ascent, in 1941, of *Bilberry Buttress* on Raven Crag. Lewis Smith, the C. U. M. C. Secretary, subsequently served a seven-year stretch as Warden of Raw Head. My own proposer, David Jackson, whose superb oil paintings of mountain scenes grace several members's walls, was also proposed by Speaker as a result of a chance meeting at Glenbrittle House on Skye; they never walked or climbed together. Unfortunately, I never met Speaker although by a quirk of fate I was on Great Gable at the very moment he was falling to his death on *Eagle's Nest West Chimney* in September 1942, a great loss to the Club.

Two other climbers who were to distinguish themselves in Club affairs were also proposed by Darwin Leighton. R. S. T. Chorley (later Lord Chorley): Editor 1918-1927, President 1935-1937 and Vice-President of the Alpine Club 1937-1938, who in turn proposed Charles Pickles, President 1976-1978. Charles, who was present at the 50th Anniversary, in 1936, of the first ascent of the Needle, attracted Chorley's attention when he assisted in a mountain rescue the same weekend. Darwin also proposed Leslie Somervell, President 1946-1948, brother of Howard who also became President. Leslie in turn proposed F. S. (Freddie) Chapman, the distinguished mountaineer and author of many excellent books, including *Helvellyn to Himalaya* and *Lhasa the Holy City*. Chapman's membership was short-lived, only seven years. He subsequently became Vice-President of the Alpine Club in 1967. Somervell also proposed Robert Lawrie, a

bootmaker originally from Burnley who later became the proprietor of the most prestigious climbing equipment shop of the period. Lawrie, who made his own climbing boots, supplied special high-altitude ones for the pre-War Everest expeditions, together with lightweight clothing based on Grenfell cloth. In my early climbing days most climbers aspired to own Lawrie's boots (I wore out four pairs, nailed of course), but sadly his post-war business finally succumbed, mainly due to foreign imports of Vibram-soled boots.

As can be seen from the family tree, the members proposed by Speaker led eventually to a substantial number of Club officers and others who have made their mark on the mountaineering and rock climbing scene, on mountain literature and on painting. Bill Peascod, in particular, had an eye for potential talent. A distinguished climber, painter and author himself, he was away from the Club scene for 28 years when he emigrated to Australia and only proposed nine members, most of whom made a substantial contribution to Club life.

As in any family, when the parents avidly follow the careers of their offspring, so in the Club a proposer is delighted when his or her protégés do well. In my own case, most of the sixteen candidates I proposed are still active with the Club, although age and illness have taken their toll, together with the odd 'defection' to other clubs: Harry Ironfield and Rod Valentine both achieved the highest office in the Club, and Archie Hendry became President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. Ken Heaton ended a splendid climbing career which included the early development of Neckband Crag in Langdale and the lead of one of the first 5b pitches in the Lakes (the first pitch of *Do Not* in White Ghyll), to become the holder of the Lakeland 24-hour Record - 51 tops in 22 hours 13 minutes, covering 82 miles and 31,000 feet of ascent. This record was broken by Ken's brother Alan, who he in turn proposed for the Club.

Some Presidents may seem to have fallen behind their predecessors when it came to proposing candidates for the Club, but it must be remembered that in 1962, the committee ruled that "officers of the Club and elected members of the committee shall not normally propose or second any application for membership". This rule held sway for many years despite the fact that officers and committee members were often the most active members of the Club, thereby coming into contact with many prospective members. However, in many cases, this difficulty was overcome by 'deputing' other members to propose the candidate who

would normally have been proposed by an officer or committee member. I certainly remember doing this on several occasions, as when I got John Hartley to propose Colin Taylor who, had he not been killed in the Alps in 1974, would certainly have achieved much in his several clubs, and in mountaineering.

As Frank Simpson wrote in his excellent review of the first fifty years of the Club's existence in the 1956 *Journal*, the Fell & Rock is "not so much a club as a way of life". I should like to think that Darwin Leighton would not be displeased with how his 'family' have contributed to that life.

CAUTIOUSLY CRABWISE on the CORNISH COAST

Peter Checkland

We had passed the last easy escape route to the cliff top and were now committed to reaching at sea level the easy rock ridges which guard the southern end of Irish Lady Cove. We had taken longer than intended, the tide was now coming in and we faced having to swim again at the foot of unclimbable rock. There was a sea-weed covered block just breaking the surface halfway across, and being a weak swimmer I decided to go for it and rest there. I plunged in. I did not see the sudden bigger wave which broke over me, leaving me breathless and scared. I spluttered to the surface a few feet from the block and lunged for it. Scraping skin from shins and forearms I dragged myself onto it, staining the sea red. All this very much amused my son-in-law Neil who slid into the sea, otter-like, swam calmly over in slack water and executed an elegant mantelshelf on the halfway rock. I left at once to swim the last stretch to rocks we knew we could scramble up at Moderate standard: we were now safe and I was relieved as well as exhausted.

What were we up to? We were coasteering, that is to say traversing the shore between high and low water marks, or, as Des Hannigan puts it in the best-written of current climbing guides: "crabbing along the tideline through spectacular rock scenery".

This esoteric branch of our sport has a history of almost total neglect, apart from interest in the sea-level limestone traverses at Torbay and Swanage, taken as rock climbs. The coasteering sport proper was developed around the turn of the century in West Penwith by Arthur Andrews, a geographer of independent means whose uncle owned a big house above the sea near Zennor. From there Andrews and his sister Elsie discovered and began to climb the Cornish cliffs, starting at Wicca Pillar, and also began to explore the exciting traverses along the tideline. Arthur and Elsie had a project, never completed, to traverse the coastline of Britain between high and low water marks! Now, there's a challenge ...

Andrews had considerable impact on British climbing. In the 1890s he introduced the wearing of rubber gym shoes on hard climbs; after explorations in Wales he co-authored the first guide to Lliwedd with J.M. Archer Thompson in 1909; and 41 years later was main author (with Ted Pyatt) of the first climbing guide to Cornwall. As a guide this volume is strong on moor and coast walks, geology and bird life but rather short on

actual rock routes - only ten routes on Bosigran main face (where there are now 95). But it does contain many accounts of Andrews' coasteering explorations. Andrews spells out the difficulties:

> "The zawns are a serious complication. The problem arises of the passage of seaweed and slime covered rocks for which no precise technique can be recommended. ... The traversing of some passages submerged in inches of water or of others rapidly between successive waves has also to be negotiated. Climbers should remember that periodically there is a wave larger than the rest, usually just at the time selected for one of the moves in question. By local rules the climber is considered to be climbing as long as his nose is above water."

His route descriptions convey the authentic flavour of the activity, though Des Hannigan, who wisely describes no such routes in detail in the modern guide, points out that these routes have been pounded by the Atlantic for more than forty years since Andrews' accounts were published, and may be significantly changed. Here is Andrews describing a passage between Trevowhan Head and Zawn Alley Isle:

> "Descend a slippery chimney into a deep inlet. Cross a green and slimy slab. Follow a stretch of beach and climb over or round a series of projecting ribs. Three of these reach nearly to the top of the cliff and the central one provides an exit, in case of need, over steep grass."

Best of all, perhaps, is the image in one of Andrews' poems:

> "Tide coming in too fast and on our left
> A cliff we could not climb and on our right
> Nothing but sea, America and night."

The only book to take coasteering seriously seems to be Pyatt's *A Climber in the West Country* (1968), though he describes a heavy metal version of the sport, recommending that pitons be carried, together with foot-long angle iron to be driven into earthy slopes with a slater's pick! Perhaps we should feel grateful that this particular advocacy has not been heard by climbers.

Despite the fact that climbers have in fact almost completely ignored coasteering, it does have two characteristics which give it some importance. Firstly, since it is so dangerous it cannot be hijacked by the educational establishment and used for their purposes, as has happened with rock climbing and abseiling. Educational climbing has to take place in false situations of apparent danger which are actually completely safe. Coasteering cannot be tamed in this way. No Head would allow Outdoor Pursuits staff to take parties of children coasteering; no parents would allow their sons and daughters to go, and neither should they: coasteering makes tigers of us all.

That is its second important characteristic. It is a genuine adventure sport in a way that modern well-protected rock climbing is not. The history of rock climbing is the history of a balance maintained between the boldness of moves which can be made and the degree of protection available to the climber making them. Early climbers with hemp rope and no runners were as good as modern climbers, but were restricted in what moves could be attempted by the real risk of serious injury. As the art of protecting climbs developed so the technical difficulty of the moves attempted crept up and the balance was roughly maintained. But in recent times that balance has been skewed by the development of camming devices and small wires. Protection techniques are now so good that what should be an adventurous sport has been edged towards becoming a branch of gymnastics. Coasteering is a genuine adventure sport.

We had decided to coasteer from Lands End to Sennen Cove because I had previously been defeated when trying to go the other way, escaping from an incoming tide up a ridge of loose rock and what seemed at the time to be vertical grass. This time we would start from Lands End and head for the easier rock enclosing Irish Lady Cove.

As always with coasteering, the timing was decided for us by the tide table. We made our way to Lands End at lunch time, ready to exploit a mid-afternoon ebb tide. We had to thread our way through big crowds to the top of the World's End descent route since this was an afternoon when the Red Arrows were due to perform *their* particular adventure sport over the tip of West Penwith. Wearing gym shoes, swimming trunks and T-shirts, we also carried an old hawser-laid rope which we intended to carry with us on the route.

Ignoring the funny looks and trying to appear business-like, we set up

the abseil at the top of the World's End Approach, which "can appear quite intimidating" (Des Hannigan). Any impression of competence we wished to display quickly evaporated. Hawser-laid nylon ropes become very stiff in old age and this one was too arthritic to run through a descendeur. It had to be pushed through inch by inch, and our descent was a series of uncomfortable short jerks. After this it was no surprise that our combined weight failed to pull the rope through, so we had no choice but to leave it in place if we wanted to get moving with a maximum chance of beating the flood tide. (We recovered the rope from the top two days later. As expected, it was still in place: it's not a rope to tempt a thief!) We started to scramble across the boulder beach, past Cormorant Slab, heading for the first major feature of our route, the Great Cave which pierces the neck of Dr Syntax's Head, and which we wanted to pass through.

At the entrance to the cave Neil attempted a 5a traverse on the right wall but the rock was wet, the holds ran out and he returned to the start. Earlier than we had hoped we would have to start swimming, though this was not attractive in sea which was salad-dense with weed. At this point we were interrupted. We had noticed the main Sennen lifeboat patrolling off Lands End, a wise precaution with such a crowd on the cliffs. It nosed inshore. What is more, the inflatable 'inshore' lifeboat was also on duty. Now two men in the inflatable motored up to the ledge we were on. Given our stuttering abseil and our failure to retrieve the rope, we must have appeared a couple of clowns to the lifeboatmen, so I was very impressed by the courtesy with which they asked "Will you be able to get back up to the top alright?" We assured them - rather against the evidence - that we knew what we were doing, and politely declined their offer of a lift round the Head to the exit of the Great Cave. As we prepared to take to the water we noticed that a lifeboatman in the prow of the main lifeboat was filming us. No doubt we shall appear in the next Sennen lifeboat video, illustrating just how stupid the public can be on a dangerous coastline.

Perched on the boulders in the middle of the Great Cave we were in an awesome spot, a cathedral of the sea, and there followed a number of stunning situations on the route which had not been at all apparent from the cliff-top path. There were also, amongst much tot, some buttresses of fine granite which would give good climbs if you made the considerable effort to get there with the climbing gear. One architectural ridge in particular, a superb combination of weight and shape, would give an inspiring pitch or two before the angle eases. There were also many passages of hopping

over chest-high (wet) boulders. Andrews' advice for this kind of ground is "touch and go"; it is very tiring.

We had to retrace our steps several times, searching for a line which minimized the amount of swimming. In all we had to take to the sea four times in the mile-long route, which took us all of three and a half hours.

Back in the cottage in Sennen Cove I lay on the floor and waited for hot tea with whisky to be poured down my throat. Of course, we could have spent the afternoon with the crowds on Sennen Crag. We would have enjoyed it. But we had had an adventure.

That is the missing dimension in much modern rock climbing. Coasteering helps restore it.

FOX TRAPS, BORRANS and GOOSE BIELDS

Peter Fleming

Prior to the introduction of organised foxhound packs in Lakeland during the early 19th century, it was common practice to lure foxes into specially constructed stone traps which were usually, but not always, sited on or close to a "borran", which is best described as a large boulderfield at the base of a crag beneath which there are often small caves and deep recesses where foxes live and breed and where they go to "earth" if pursued.

The word "borran" is in common use by North Country fox hunters and hill farmers and has been for many generations. The word comes from the Old English "burgaesn", meaning a burial mound or ancient heap of stones, which suggests they are man-made features. To apply this name to a fox's earth is not strictly correct. The term I would prefer to apply is "bield", which is a Cumbrian dialect word for a shelter or animal den, from the Old English "beldi". However, being a supporter of local traditions, I shall continue to use the word "borran".

In the high fell country there are many well known borrans. Most of them show much evidence of excavation by huntsmen and farmers to rescue trapped terrier dogs sent in after the fox, or to retrieve the body of the fox after the terrier had done its work. Many tons of rock were frequently removed over several days. Hundreds of man hours have been spent in attempts to effect rescues, sometimes in vain - several terriers have died in the underground labyrinths.

At Broadhow in the Troutbeck valley there is an extensive borran covering a large area of fellside. The nucleus is formed by a landslipped crag, leaving deep crevices and caves where there is much evidence of major excavations.

Below Dove Crag, Dovedale, Brotherswater, is another extensive borran, mainly formed by very large boulders having fallen from the crag above. A lot of work has been carried out to infill cracks and cave entrances with dry stone pack to prevent foxes going to earth. Again major excavations are present but none of the work is recent.

At Yew Crag, Hardknott, Eskdale, scree slopes cover a large area of fellside. The boulderfield at the base shows very intensive excavations probably dating back to the 19th century on account of the very weathered nature of the debris.

Above Levers Water, Coniston, at the base of Great How Crags, is another extensive borran known to huntsmen and hill farmers as Hookriggs. This consists of a large boulderfield where much work has been done to infill cracks, holes and crevices which probably resulted in less excavation work being required than with other borrans of this size. It is also the only large one to have a fox trap built on site. There are many more borrans in the fells and some of these will be referred to in the descriptions of the fox traps.

Most of the stone fox traps were probably constructed in the 18th century when hunters were largely preoccupied with stag hunting. By the early part of the 19th century, when stags were almost driven to extinction, hunters turned more of their attention to pursuing hares, polecats and foxes. Fellhounds were specially bred and trained for this purpose.

The Coniston pack were the first to be operated through public subscription in 1825, although prior to this privately run packs existed from kennels at Threlkeld belonging to the Crozier family and also at Dalemain near Pooley Bridge.

By the year 1870 the number of fellhound packs had increased to eight and the stone fox traps fell into disuse and were no longer maintained (with one or two exceptions).

The stone traps were built on the principle of an igloo, but without an entrance and with the inner walls overhanging considerably all round, leaving a circular opening on top of a diameter of 1.5 metres or less, with the floor at least 2 metres below. The trap was baited by attaching the fresh carcase of a goose or chicken to the inner end of a plank projecting over the wall and balanced from the adjacent fellside or large boulder. The weight of the fox up-ended the plank, tipping the fox into the trap, from where it would, in theory, be unable to climb or leap out of the constricted space. It would then be shot within a day or two and retrieved for the value of its pelt.

Little has been written to date on the subject of these traps and where they are mentioned only the two well-known ones at Levers Water [1] and Great Borne in Ennerdale [2] are referred to. Unfortunately, the first written account referred to the Great Borne trap as a "goose bield", and every writer since has used this description. The name has stuck, but it is wrong and misleading. There are goose bields to be found but they served a different purpose. They were designed to keep geese in and foxes out. Like a fox trap, they were circular with no entrance, but much larger. The walls

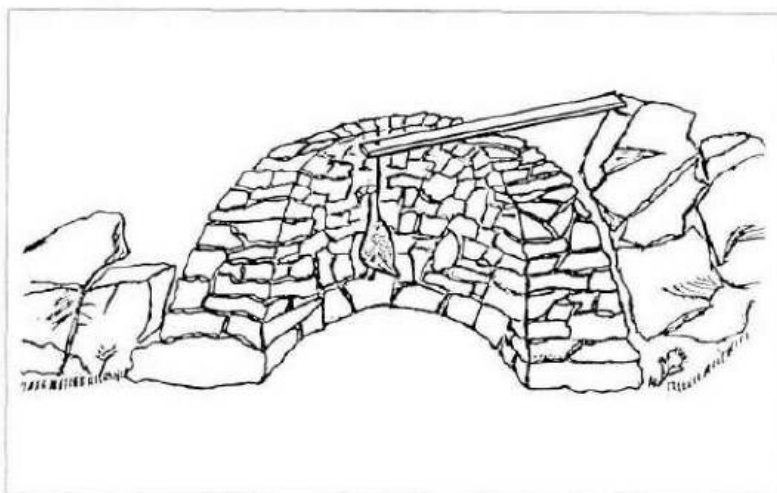
were of the conventional dry-stone style without an overhanging inner side. Instead they had capstones overhanging around the outside to prevent foxes jumping in.

The geese would have their flight feathers docked to prevent them taking off and escaping. The bield would often be sited at a respectable distance from the farmhouse, no doubt on account of the noise geese are capable of generating in the early hours of the morning. Like the fox traps, they have not been used for a considerable time. Further reference will be made to certain goose bields in the description which follows of eight fox traps.

As it is probably two hundred years or more since most of them were built they have suffered the ravages of time and weather. None are now complete, the upper overhanging inner wall having tumbled in. Two traps, however, have been partially restored in recent years by well-meaning enthusiasts.

Seven of the fox traps described below are all to be found in the southern and western fells, the other is sited in central Lakeland. The author is unaware of any in the northern or eastern fells, despite the extensive borrans to be found there.

Cross section of a fox trap, showing method of baiting.
Sketch by Peter Fleming.



Great Borne, Herdus Scaw, Ennerdale

This trap is 95% intact, having been restored in recent years, and is therefore a good example. However, in its original condition the top opening would be smaller, perhaps only 1.0 metre in diameter. The trap has a stone ramp built to its top on the north side, linking it to the source of stone from which it is built. It is sited in a small heathery hollow behind a knoll on the slopes of Herdus Scaw. It has a commanding view of Ennerdale Lake. A borran in a boulderfield lies 50 metres to the east, where there is much evidence of excavation work.

As late as the mid-1920s two brothers named Carrick, who lived in Bowness Cottage near the lake, used to bait this trap with a live goose and then lie in wait with a gun. They did this of an evening after work, just as a hobby.

Mecklin Park, Irton Fell, Nether Wasdale

This one is an oddity in that it is not sited near a borran or even a boulderfield. It stands on a grassy fellside next to a rock outcrop. It is 65% intact, the upper part having collapsed inside, plus some outside on the downward slope. Very little remains of the internal overhang. It was probably built around a pre-dug pit to give added internal depth. The trap is slightly oval due to the use of the long, in-situ boulders, which form part of the base.

Hare Crag, Wha House, Eskdale

Situated near the top of the crag on a grassy plateau, it is 70% intact. The floor area is covered in collapsed wall rubble from the north side, which is adjacent to the fell slope. It still retains pronounced overhangs on parts of the internal walls. The choice of its site is curious, as the screes and boulderfield lie, of course, around the base of the crag, where there is a large goose bield with an external diameter of 8.6 metres. The walls stand 1.6 metres high and are 0.80 metres thick. There is no entrance. A large oak tree now grows within it. The walls on the north and eastern sides are capped with large angular blocks which overhang on the outside as if to prevent foxes or any other animals jumping in, the capstones on the remaining sides having fallen off. The nearest farm is Wha House, two hundred metres away. The bield is situated in a slight hollow out of sight of the valley road below.

Three hundred metres due west of the head of Stanley Gill, at grid

reference 1711 9947, there stands what was probably another goose bield. It is roughly oblong in shape, with rounded corners, and measures 4.0 metres by 3.3 metres. The walls are 1.0 metre thick and presently stand 1.0 metre high. No entry is provided. This bield is built in a sheltered hollow and is only visible in close proximity. It is equidistant at 700 metres between Dalegarth Hall and Low Ground Farm. Fifty metres below and to the north is a small borran with recent remains of a small lamb and game bird, indicating its current use by foxes at the time of my visit.

One hundred metres north of the bield is a roofless bank barn formerly used for the storage of peat.

Two kilometres south-east of the bield, at grid reference 1895 9877, is a feature marked on the Ordnance Survey map as "Fox Bield". It is a shattered island of rock rising from the centre of an area of marshy ground known as Fox Bield Moss. This cleaved and broken rock outcrop is ideally suited to provide an animal's den.

Great Blake Rigg, Grey Friar

Two hundred metres north of the end of Seathwaite Tarn there is a stone fox trap which is 60% intact. It appears to have fallen in on itself and is partly filled with its own rubble. Many large boulders were used in its construction. The overhang of the internal walls is still evident. Originally this trap must have been over 2.0 metres high, with a top opening of about 1.3 metres. It is located at the base of an extensive boulderfield. Within eight metres of the trap there are two small caves, partially walled to form shelters or hides for hunters. One has a built-in bench seat. There are many other small caves in the area which is still inhabited by foxes. Several crevices are still infilled and sealed to prevent them going to earth. Thirty metres to the north-west and 10 metres higher up the fellside is a second fox trap which appears to be of a later date than the lower one, and was probably intended to replace it. However, it was never finished. The completed one-third side is 95% intact and stands 2.2 metres high. It is made up of much smaller stones than other traps. A further third is made up of very large in-situ boulders, whilst the remaining third has never been built. The trap stands on the western edge of the boulderfield near several small caves. There is much evidence of excavations within the borran to retrieve lost terrier dogs. None of this work is recent.

Stonestar, Ulpha

This trap was built within the area of a borran in a rocky gully immediately north-east of the larger gully containing the well-known priest's trod which runs between Stonestar and Pickthall Ground. The trap appears to have been crudely made and must have been smaller than average. Use was made of several large in-situ boulders to form the base. Little remains of the upper section, just enough on its eastern side to prove there was ever one there at all. Fallen masonry lies below the trap to the west and also inside.

The borran shows much evidence of excavations to retrieve lost terriers. Also several crevices are still blocked off to prevent foxes going to earth. The weathered nature of the excavated area suggests the work took place well over a century ago.

One hundred metres south-east, higher up the gully where it widens out, is a walled enclosure of irregular shape. It is about 10 metres across, rather like the goose bield at Hare Crag, Eskdale. This one, however, does have a narrow entrance. It is about 400 metres from Stonestar, which was formerly a farm.

The Prison (Hookriggs), Levers Water, Coniston

At the base of Great How Crags, with a commanding view of Levers Water, stands a fine example of a fox trap in its original form, this despite being only 65% intact. It was built by skilled dry-stone wallers, judging by the neat, close-fitting finish on the internal walls. It has lost most of the upper overhanging section, which now covers the floor inside. Originally this trap must have stood about 2.5 metres high and may have been built around a pre-dug pit to provide added depth. To the west and the north is an extensive borran within a complex boulderfield, containing many small caves. An enormous amount of work has been done to seal and block off dozens of entrances and crevices over a wide area, especially to the north. Despite this there are still excavations evident. This borran is known locally as "Hookriggs".

Lower down the fellside, 100 metres south of the fox trap, are the ruins of an interesting building. This was formerly roofed with slate and has undergone alterations with sealed window spaces and added walls. An important clue to its origins is to be found opposite its doorway. A very weathered inscription on a large boulder has the date 1738 and some unclear initials. It is quite possible that this building could have been used

as a summer dwelling for a hill shepherd and have a direct working connection with the nearby fox trap. The date rules out any link with copper mining in the area. The mines were all dormant at this time and the building is too remote from any working to have served any practical use.

The Benn, Shoulthwaite Moss

Lying one kilometre north-west of Thirlmere dam, this is the only fox trap known to the author outside of the southern and western Lakeland fells. It is 65% intact, having been partially rebuilt in the 1980s. It is larger than the other traps. The eastern and northern walls have been restored to what was probably their full height, but lack the degree of overhang they would originally have. The floor area has been cleared and the rubble deposited on the west and south edges where the walls are fallen. The north-west side is formed by a convenient large overhanging boulder, 2.5 metres high and 2.5 metres wide with a flat top. Four metres of wall are yet to be re-built.

This trap is very difficult to find, having been surrounded by the forestry plantation. It lies to the north of a large boulderfield which was the site of a borran. This is not accessible on account of the dense plantation.

FOX TRAPS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Fox Trap Location	Grid Ref.	Altitude metres	External Height metres	Internal Height metres	External Diameter Base	Internal Diameter Base	Internal Diameter Top
Great Borne Ennerdale	1183 1595	370	1.70 max 1.30 av	1.60	4.50	2.10	1.60
Mecklin Park Nether Wasdale	1316 0225	215	1.20	1.30	4.25 av	1.95	1.60
Hare Crag Eskdale	2008 0117	200	2.00	2.00	4.60	3.00 av	2.00
Great Blake Rigg Grey Friar	2582 9950	437	1.60	1.50	4.20	not possible to measure	2.00
Great Blake Rigg Grey Friar	2581 9951	440	2.20	1.60	5.60	2.00	1.20 est
Stonestar Ullpha	2049 9121	138	Not enough remains to make meaningful measurements				
The Prison Levers Water	2780 9988	523	1.60	1.80	4.80	2.90	2.60
The Benn Shoulthwaite	3035 1995	192	2.00	2.00	6.30 av	4.30	3.70

In addition to the eight fox traps listed above, which were surveyed in the summer of 1995, several more locations were investigated in response to information given by farmers and people with local knowledge. These include Heron Crag, Eskdale; Goats Water, Coniston; Hollow Stones, Scafell; Warnscale, Buttermere and Birkness Combe, Buttermere. Nothing conclusive was found at any of these sites. Nevertheless, any further information which may lead to identifying further fox traps or goose bields would be welcomed and followed up to add to this list.

Acknowledgements

For drawing attention to the Mecklin Park fox trap, thanks are given to Mr. David Bridge of St. Bees, and to Mr. John Bird of Ennerdale Bridge for information on the Great Borne fox trap. Without the help of Mr. Laurie Walton, the gamekeeper for North West Water, I should not have found the fox trap on The Benn.

Further Reading

1 Thomas Hay, *The Goose Bield*, C&WA&AS Transactions. New Series XLIII. 1943

2 Richard G. Plint, *The Coniston Goose Bield*, C&WA&AS Transactions. New Series LXXII. 1972

Claude E. Benson, *Crag and Hound in Lakeland*, 1902

Richard Clapham, *Fox Hunting on the Lakeland Fells*, 1920

Richard Clapham, *Foxes, Foxhounds and Fox Hunting*, 1923

A NEW YEAR MYSTERY

Jill Aldersley

An apparition mysteriously came to haunt the Club at Buttermere on the stroke of midnight of New Year's Eve 1994, an apparition that was first seen (and heard) at Waters Cottage, also at New Year, in 1990.

It was a wild dark night and members of the Club were sitting contentedly around the fire, enjoying the "crack" and a "wee dram", the conversation drifting towards strange tales of yore. Suddenly the door burst open and a startled Club member bustled in, describing a strange wailing noise he'd heard out there in the distant darkness.

"Perhaps it was the ghost of one of those old Irish navvies who built the Blackwater reservoir", suggested a member sitting cosily by the fire.

"I once read a story of the 'Mossy Man of Ben Nevis'", mused another "it was in an old copy of Tit Bits and was called 'True Stories' by Tony Greenbank!"

"More like Tall Stories by Tony Greenbank!"

"No, no. It was 'as told by Spider Penman', so it must be true!"

"Oh, yeah?"

"Anyway, it was a very odd story about this man who went missing early in the winter on Ben Nevis and who was given up for dead, and then in the spring he turned up covered in moss - six months later!"

"Definitely a tall story ..."

"Well, that was the tale - he'd got moss growing on his hair, and great long finger nails and beard, and he thought it was the next day - and it was six months later and he must have survived under the snow all that time!"

"Rubbish!"

"No, no. I've just been reading about that in this year's *S. M. C. Journal*, in an article by Bill Murray, so it really must be true", said another.

"What - he'd been talking to Spider Penman too?"

"No, no, he knew the man: it was in the 1930's and he was called Leighton something-or-other," the third one said. "He went off up Tower Ridge by himself and got caught in a blizzard, then fell off near the top and came to in Coire na Ciste, lying on ice by the lochan, and he crawled back to the C. I. C. hut because he was ashamed to have them send for the Rescue. And the occupants of the hut knew him, but didn't recognise him at once 'cos he was as gaunt as a man just out of a dungeon, and had great long

finger nails like you said, and they decided he must have been in a coma. His wife had sold their house and moved back to her parents out in Rhodesia, and the firm he worked for had replaced him with a new partner, so he really was in a mess ... so he went to join his wife in Africa and never answered any letters and has never been heard of since!"

"That's amazing!"

"You mean it really is true?"

"It must be if Bill Murray said so!"

"There must have been a good few people lost in these hills over the years."

"Yes, like I was saying, all those navvies who were working on the Blackwater reservoir - they used to walk over to the Kingshouse on Rannoch Moor, over the Devil's Staircase, and end up all over the place on the way back; and lots of them never made it back to Kinlochleven at all."

"So you reckon there's hundreds of ghostly Irishmen haunting the moors out there, then?"

"Yeh - and there's a more recent instance of that happening too: You know that bagpiper who plays to the tourists at the top of Glencoe? Well, apparently at the end of this season he'd been playing there one Saturday, and his wife dropped him off there and then nipped down to Glasgow for a day's shopping, and when she got back to pick him up he wasn't there. It was late afternoon and had started to rain by then, so she thought he must have thumbed a lift home, as it had got cold so suddenly, but when she got home herself to Kinlochleven she found he wasn't there. So then she thought of the pub and rang up the Kingshouse and they said 'Yes, he'd got chilled and been fed up because there weren't any tourists, so he'd come in for a few drams at lunchtime and then set off, saying he was going home and not waiting for his wife ... and then someone had come in and said they'd just seen a Scottish piper in full dress piping his way up the Devil's Staircase!' So they guessed he'd decided to walk home over the tops, and he'd been pretty well oiled when he set off ... then the weather'd got worse and not only had it started to rain but it was snowing on the tops in one of those heavy falls they had up here quite early on this winter, and snowed all night, and he never turned up. They had a big search for him, but he's never been seen since ..."

"Poor old fellow!"

"You told that tale pretty vividly - I could almost swear I could hear his pipes playing out on the hills."

"Hey, now you mention it, so can I!" exclaimed the second. He went to the window, drew back the curtain and peered out.

At that moment the sound of bagpipes was heard outside the window, then the front door crashed open and a piper stumbled into the room, in a dishevelled and mossy state ...

The Lost Piper of Glencoe?
Photograph by Colin Shone

THE LIBRARY AND THE ARCHIVE

George Watkins

Negotiations for the deposit with appropriate museums of the Club's collection of mountaineering artefacts and its historic collection of printer's halftone blocks go on, but slowly. A merry and successful Archive Week at Beetham Cottage imposed final order on a large assembly of documents on which Muriel Files had been working up to the time of her last illness. The papers will be added to the documentary archive deposited at Cumbria Record Office, Kendal.

The long-awaited extension to Lancaster University Library is rising impressively from its foundations, flanked by work on the new Ruskin Centre. The guide books, maps, and reserve stock of the Fell & Rock Library, which are kept in the reserve stack, are already more spaciously housed than they used to be, but for the time being they are less easily accessible. New arrangements have been made for access to Geoff Cram's data base of the *Journal*. I am, especially during the disturbance of relocation, most grateful for the unfailing help and kindness of the University Library staff.

There have been many welcome gifts of books, journals, photographs, and other items for the archive, which have been acknowledged by letter. Other donors will, I hope, not mind my singling out one for special mention: Peter Fleming's book *One Man's Fourthousanders: Mountaineering in the Alps*, since it is the third numbered copy of a printing of only eight.

CLUB TRUSTEES

Harry Ironfield

It is almost 70 years since the Club decided to appoint Trustees and this took place at a committee meeting held at the Windermere Hydro under the presidency of Theodore Burnett on 6 October 1928. A minute of this meeting records the decision to appoint three trustees responsible to the Annual General Meeting and not the Committee. Whilst the Rules give the Committee power to appoint Trustees, it requires a vote at a general meeting of the Club to remove any one of them from office.

The present Rule 6 includes the provision that "The committee may from time to time appoint trustees in whom shall be vested such art or parts of the property of the Club as the committee direct", and also that "All such trustees shall deal with the property so vested in them as directed by resolution of the committee from time to time" etc. The deeds of the Club properties are held by Barclays Bank Trust Co., which also acts as a custodial trustee. This arrangement avoids the need for further documentation each time there is a change of trustees.

Although in number they are required to be not less than two and not more than four, traditionally three appears to have been regarded as the optimum number.

A perusal of the list of Officers in the Handbook shows that until very recently the names of the serving Trustees were those least prone to change.

The death of Frank Simpson in 1988 reduced the strength to two until John Lane was appointed in 1991. The further death of Charles Tilly in 1992 left Bill Kendrick the remaining member of the team which had served collectively since 1972. However, Bill Kendrick decided to retire at the end of 1993 after a total of 45 years in office, including the Vice Presidency. During all this time his wise counsel has been of inestimable value to the Club. This record of unbroken service is probably second only to that of Frank Simpson, who served a total of 55 years.

At this point early in 1994 the Committee appointed Stella Berkeley and Harry Ironfield to bring the numbers back to strength.

Over the years presidents and other senior officers have from time to time sought the collective view of the Trustees on a wide variety of Club issues.

A list of those who served in this capacity since 1929 is surprisingly short and namely:

1929	Ashley P. Abraham, F. Lawson Cook, Godfrey A. Solly
1944	Ashley P. Abraham, F. Lawson Cook
1952	F. Lawson Cook, William E. Kendrick, Frank H. F. Simpson
1972	William E. Kendrick, Frank H. F. Simpson, Charles S. Tilly
1988	William E. Kendrick, Charles S. Tilly
1991	William E. Kendrick, Charles S. Tilly, John Lane
1992	William E. Kendrick, John Lane
1994	John Lane, Stella Berkeley, Harry Ironfield.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In your last issue of the *Journal* (Vol.XXV(3), No.74, page 442) you had an obituary notice about Jack Kenyon. This was a very good piece of work recording at length Jack's distinguished career as Borough Engineer, Surveyor and Planning Officer to the County Borough of Middlesbrough and to his career in our Club, which included long periods on the Committee and as an officer, culminating in the years 1968-70 when he was President of the Club.

However, this record made no mention at all of Jack's splendid work over a long period for the Friends of the Lake District, which was much to the benefit of our membership in accordance with one of our objects, which is "to protect the amenities of the District".

We, as fellow members of the Friends, as well as of this Club, feel we should get something on record about this aspect of Jack's life.

Jack Kenyon early became a member of the Friends and, on his retirement to Coniston, he joined the Executive Committee. In October 1980 he became Chairman of that Committee. During his years as Chairman he took a leading part in the opposition of the Society to the proposals to take Wastwater as a reservoir and to increase greatly abstraction of water from Ennerdale as a reservoir.

Jack gave evidence against schemes at public enquiries and spoke against them at various gatherings of interested parties. All this he did very effectively and had a good deal to do with the eventual withdrawal of the scheme for Wastwater and reduction of the scheme for Ennerdale Water.

Also, during this period of Chairmanship, it fell to Jack to pursue a disagreement with the Forestry Commission for a proposed coniferous plantation in the southern part of the Lake District above the west side of the River Duddon, which he handled with characteristic persistence and with at least partial success as a result.

All this work was done with enthusiasm and professional skill and much success. He retired from the Chairmanship in October 1983 but continued to be very interested in the conservation of the Lake District and thus continuing to pursue the interests of the membership of this Club until his death. Some would say that the best period of his work for the conservation of Cumbria, and especially of the Lake District, was as

Chairman of the Friends. Indeed, it was thought probable by his friends that he, himself, regarded that period as the most socially useful of his life.

That is how we, the signatories to this letter, regarded him, and we would therefore ask you to publish this letter in the next issue of the *Journal*.

W. E. Kendrick A. B. Hargreaves

LEGACIES

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

Jill Margaret Evans £5000 (1995)
Eddie Hambly £250
Donald Murray £5000 (1995)
William George Sandring £1000 (1992)
Elizabeth Maud Weston £100 (1995)
Frank Yates £100 (1995)

IN MEMORIAM

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

** Regrettably no Obituary Notices have been received since publication of the last *Journal*.

GEORGE KENDALL BOOTH

My old friend Ken Booth died on 27 November 1995 after a short illness. Ken was born in Ilkley in 1915 and we first met at a preparatory school in Scarborough. Subsequently our paths diverged, as he went to Rugby and I to Harrow. We came together again in 1936, when he lived in Ben Rhydding and worked for the Law, Union & Rock Insurance Company.

I had recently started rock climbing and he was caving with friends on Saturday afternoons. I joined the caving party on Saturdays and three of the cavers - Ken, Robert Clough and John McGowan - joined me for climbing on Sundays. Thereafter the four of us climbed on one rope or in pairs. Ken became my regular second; climbing at a lean 12 stone weight, he had good hands and the strength for sustained strenuous climbing. Brackenclose had just been built and the future looked very bright. The pattern was: Easter in Wales, Whitsun in Scotland, the Alps in summer, and the Lakes for most of the weekends. Ken enjoyed rock climbing at all levels and in all weathers. He took part in good spells on Scafell East Buttress in 1938 and 1939, with Sydney Thompson leading *Great Eastern*, *Yellow Slab* and *Mayday*. On 29 May 1939, on a warm and windless afternoon, he was with me and Robert Clough on the first ascent of *Hangover*, Dove Crag. Ken joined the Club that year.

On the outbreak of war, Ken trained at Woolwich and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery. He served in the Desert War in North Africa until 1943, when he took the instructor's course at the School of Mountain Warfare in the Lebanon. During the winter of 1943-44 Ken and fellow-officer Jack Haines took a detachment to Prince George in the Canadian Rockies. From there they did a three month trek on foot/ski/snowshoes, with rifles and equipment, which established that it was possible for a military force (potentially Japanese) to cross this terrain in winter, without dog teams. They worked out operating procedures, time and number of men required to set up shelter - fell branches or construct igloos, prepare fire, etc., at the end of the day's march - and this was incorporated in a manual.

In 1944 Ken returned to the UK with rank of Captain and continued as an instructor, stationed in Wales and then in Skye. In June 1945 he married Barbara Smith from Ilkley, and after demobilisation he resumed his career in insurance, later becoming a director of A. W. Bain.

During the early post-war years Ken became the father of a young family and climbing became less frequent. Consequently his mountain

activity became mainly fell-walking and skiing. Locally he was active in the Ilkley Tennis Club and in the Ilkley Golf Club, serving terms as President in both, and as secretary of the Old Rugbeian Golfing Association. He was a follower of the Airedale Beagles and the Ullswater Foxhounds. His home was in Nesfield, overlooking the River Wharfe.

Ken was a very friendly, outgoing person. The warmth of his greeting flowed from his interest and concern for all those around him. His mood was one of high good humour. If he was present, the proceedings were always stimulating and often hilarious. He greatly enlivened our existence. Ken became a regular at Beetham Cottage for the Annual Dinner weekend. He enjoyed and became part of the convivial atmosphere in the hut. Members will recall his demonstration of the vortex method of poaching an egg.

Ken had two operations in 1994 but recovered sufficiently to resume playing golf; he had an 18-hole day in the week before his final illness. He was a devoted husband and father. He and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in June 1995 and he was able to attend the wedding of his granddaughter. We extend our sympathy to his family; to his widow Barbara, his children Diana and Martin, and five grandchildren. At his funeral the Priory Church at Bolton Abbey was full, and the Vicar said of Ken's life that "he spread warmth and good cheer - he imparted the feel-good factor". An epitaph that I think he would have liked.

Jim Haggas

W. E. R. CLAY

William ('Bill' or 'Reg') Clay was born on 23 June 1894; his parents lived in Mansfield. At sixteen he went to work with an engineering firm in Wantage, where his father knew the works manager, and he moved five times to gain experience before getting a job at Rolls Royce in Derby in 1916 as an inspector. He progressed into the "Experimental-Instrument Department", and in 1943 was awarded the Crompton Medal by the Institution of Automobile Engineers for a paper on surface finish.

Bill loved walking in Derbyshire, the Lake District and Yorkshire. Occasionally he took a few lads from his department out on a Saturday, then treated them to a meal at a nearby hotel after the walks. Everybody would be tired out, but these walks were much enjoyed.

In 1951 Bill was promoted to superintendent of the Rolls Royce Oil

Engine experimental department, and was there until he retired. He had built up a very good workshop at home and enjoyed pottering about in it. He was also interested in guns and shooting. He was a bit of a loner, but a very good engineer, a stickler for getting things right and therefore difficult to please! He drove his BMW until he was 95, when he moved into a nursing home.

Bill was the first Rolls Royce pensioner to reach 100. Could this be due to the fresh air and exercise? He didn't drink or smoke, but his grandfather taught him to swear when he was six years old.

Bill Clay married in 1933, but had no children. His wife died 30 years ago. He himself survived until June 1995, dying a few days before his 101st. birthday.

Gordon Hudson

(I thank Gordon Hudson - an ex-work colleague of William Clay - for a perfectly delightful letter giving me this information. Obituarist).

LEO CONWAY

Leo Conway died on 29 April 1995 at the age of 94, after increasing ill-health, borne with characteristic cheerfulness. He never gave up, and indeed at the age of 92 he acquired a cardiac pacemaker which he hoped would help him return to the fully active list.

Fully active is what he had always been. He was one of the founder members of Preston Mountaineering Club, whose pre-war custom was to cycle to the Lakes on Saturday afternoon and spend the night in a youth hostel. After a full day's climbing on the Sunday the return journey to his home town of Blackburn was also made by bicycle.

Leo had several climbing holidays in the Alps and the Dolomites, before the war, and he remembered with gratitude the time when John Ashton hauled him out of a crevasse on the lower slopes of the Matterhorn.

He married in 1946. Kathleen, his wife, is also a lover of the mountains and lakes and she used to accompany Leo on many meets, when her family responsibilities permitted. The responsibilities in question were three daughters and a son, and they completed a very happy family.

Virtually the whole of Leo's working life was spent in the service of the Sun Paper Mills at Blackburn. He was a member of their staff for over fifty years, and having obtained the requisite secretarial qualifications he was

appointed Company Secretary and remained in that post for many years, until his retirement.

On one occasion, when steeplejacks were engaged on repair work, Leo took advantage of their lunch break to climb to the top of the factory chimney. He confirmed that, to anyone standing on the top, the movement of the chimney in the wind becomes very noticeable. Personally I am content to accept this information at second hand.

Leo was a most loyal member of both the Fell & Rock and of the Preston Mountaineering Club and he was a life member of both. He had a multitude of friends among the fraternity of climbers and fell walkers. He enjoyed to the full the simple things which an outdoor life can offer. Sadly, a stroke has prevented his widow from the proper enjoyment of her later years, but she is fortunate in having the limitless affection and care of her family.

Joe Renwick

WILLIAM HEATON COOPER

Our distinguished honorary member, William Heaton Cooper, who died in the summer of 1995 at the age of 91, was the foremost and best-known Lake District landscape painter of his age. For many people his very name seemed almost synonymous with sun-splashed fells and translucent depths of mountain tarns. Largely through the enterprising production of prints his reputation was almost world-wide; I have seen drawing rooms in British Columbia crowded with his paintings or prints and have friends in New Zealand who collect them assiduously - to remind them of their homeland hills.

Heaton - as he was always known - was essentially an outdoors painter, doing most of the work on the spot - often high up in the fells - and then completing it in his studio. He was an active rock climber from the 1920s, often climbing alone, and it was through his intimate knowledge of rock, of crags and their structure, that he was able to portray cliffs and outcrops so graphically and accurately in his drawings and paintings. Indeed, his work, in its life-like treatment of mountain features, was often in refreshing contrast to the unreal splodges of some other painters. Essentially, Heaton, in addition to his painting skills, was a draughtsman of distinction, especially of rock, and for this reason he was recruited by H. M. Kelly in the mid-1930s to do the meticulous drawings of the crags, as well as the coloured frontispieces, for the new series of guides produced by the Club.

He continued with this work, accurately delineating routes on the "newer" crags after painstaking study on the spot, for something like thirty-five years, and these beautifully illustrated guides will long be his memorial.

Heaton was a real Lakelander, born in Coniston in 1903. His father was the landscape painter, Alfred Heaton Cooper, who painted in a rather different style, and his mother came from Norway. He studied art at the Royal Academy School, held many exhibitions in London and the provinces and was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours in 1953. For many years he was the president of the Lake Artists Society. In 1940 he married Ophelia Gordon Bell, the sculptor, and with their four children - two sons (one of them the painter, Julian Heaton Cooper) and two daughters - they lived a happy family life in Grasmere. I remember my first wife and I being invited to dinner at Winterseeds once or twice when the children were very young and we came away entranced at the delightful, loving informality of their home. His wife's death some years ago came as a shattering blow to Heaton; only his strong religious faith helped him to pull through.

Since the late 1930s Heaton had been an active member of the Oxford Group for Moral Rearmament and he and Ophelia followed the Group's teaching that the good Christian should always search for "absolute purity, absolute love and absolute unselfishness". Heaton truly believed that only his religion had made his life worthwhile.

Heaton joined the Club in 1930 and was elected to honorary membership in 1965. In his younger days there were links with some of the pioneers and he climbed many of the classic routes on Scafell, Dow Crag and Pillar. Later he often climbed with Jim Cameron of Coniston and did some exploratory work, including first ascents on Lining Crag, Hart Crag and Elliptical Crag. He particularly enjoyed working out mountain ascents linking climbing routes on smaller crags. Regretfully, he and I never climbed together but we often met in the hills - usually, unfortunately, going in opposite directions. The last time I met him at work in the hills was when I was on my way, with a friend, to attempt a new scramble up the rocky face of Ill Crag above the upper Esk and, extraordinarily, he happened to be painting the same crag, seated on a stool at his easel near the lonely head of Mosedale. He was then approaching his eighties - bronzed, alert and, as always, very courteous. We discussed the proposed route, clear in the sunshine about three miles away, and I remember his enthusiasm for our project, the sparkling day and the lovely autumn

colours.

Personally, I owe Heaton a great deal for it was he, about 40 years ago, who encouraged me to write my first books. He himself was a sensitive writer of good prose and several of his books, all illustrated with his paintings or drawings, including *The Hills of Lakeland* (1938) and *The Tarns of Lakeland* (1960), may be found in most mountain libraries. His revealing autobiography, *Mountain Painter* (1984), was his last book.

For many years he lived in a house behind the Heaton Cooper Studios in Grasmere where his paintings and prints are on sale or exhibition - a must for all visitors to the village or, indeed, to Lakeland. All lovers of the hills, not only members of the Club, will regret the passing of Heaton Cooper - a distinguished Lakelander but, mostly, a quiet, gentle man who sought out the beauty of the Lake District and helped us all to understand it a little better.

A. Harry Griffin

My acquaintance with Heaton and his family began in the mid-1920s while I was at Liverpool. At that time the Heaton Cooper family were living near Waterhead, Ambleside, and they were working from the Norwegian Studio in Lake Road. It is there that I came across Heaton, which led me being taken into friendship by the family. In 1931, on my move to Barrow, I bought my first car, enabling me to get together quite often with Heaton and his younger sister, Una, in the evenings for climbing, going to such places as Castle Rock of Triermain (doing that delightful crack up the middle of the face above the overhanging bottom) and doing various short climbs in Easedale. At weekends I was able to join Heaton for climbs on Scafell, including some of the routes on Pinnacle Face, Moss Ghyll Grooves, Pike's Crag, and occasionally Pillar Rock.

Heaton was a very competent and reliable rock climber. It was a pleasure to climb with him and he introduced me to some climbs he had made on Lining Crag above Greenup Gill in Langstrath.

I once persuaded him to come for the weekend with me into North Wales - the Ogwen valley - and this visit, based on Helyg, resulted in a notable picture painted from a sketch done on the top of Tryfan on New Year's Day, 1933, looking westwards to the cirque of cliffs surrounding Cwm Idwal, with just a glimpse of The Rivals in the distance. This picture, which he gave me as a memento of the occasion, is, I believe, his only work

done in North Wales.

Heaton will be sadly missed by many members of the Club as a most distinguished and active member; and he will also be much missed by many people in the Lake District where he lived and worked all his life.

A. B. Hargreaves

HARRY CRABTREE

Harry was born in Todmorden and, except for National Service in the Royal Navy, spent the whole of his life living and working in the town. He was from the form below me at school, and we were lifetime friends. A great lover of the hills, Harry was never happier than when he was striding the Pennines or the Lakeland Fells. He joined the Club in 1978, and remained an Associate Member until he died in December 1994 at the age of 67. He would have become a Full Member many years ago had he not contracted a severe lung condition which effectively terminated his fell walking activities and eventually ended his life.

Harry had a tremendous sense of humour which he preserved to the very end. He was a great raconteur, and his stories, often told at his own expense in his powerful Yorkshire accent which became even more pronounced if he had drunk a few beers, invariably brought the house down. As on the occasion when he was taking the family (including the dog) on holiday and, since the dog was a bad traveller, he had obtained some powerful tranquillisers from the vet. However, before he set off he somehow got the dog's pill confused with his own medication with the result that after a few miles he had to pull the car off the road for a sleep at the wheel whilst the dog was going berserk in the back. Or at Birkness when, unable to climb the fells any more, he contented himself with a daily stroll down the lakeside for "lunch" at The Fish. One day, on the way back to the hut, Harry stumbled, fell off the path and was heading for the lake but fortunately his fall was broken by a courting couple!

Harry's love for the hills was matched by his love for music. He was an accomplished pianist, and at one time played regularly in a local jazz band. He was a lovely man with a great circle of friends: he will be greatly missed by us all, but mostly by his wife Barbara and daughter Miranda.

John Wilkinson

PROFESSOR ROBERT ERNEST DAVIES

Bob Davies died of a heart attack at Golspie near the Cairngorms where he was holidaying on 6 March 1993. He joined the Club in 1944 but unfortunately I know nothing of his activities with the Club. However, from friends at Manchester, the Derbyshire Pennine Club, the Cave Diving Group and a Pennsylvania University obituary, a picture of a very vigorous and enthusiastic personality emerges.

Bob was born at Barton-on-Irwell in 1919; his mother a woman of strong character, notable for obtaining a PhD via night school. His father was in the Rucksack Club and he grew up in a mountaineering family. He graduated at Manchester and obtained an MA and DSc. A move to Sheffield followed where he became PhD; then to Oxford and in 1955 to Pennsylvania University in America as professor of biochemistry. He became FRS in 1966.

His research was prolific and among many outstanding achievements were the elaboration of the mechanism of acid secretion in the stomach, the solution of the riddle of energy sources for muscle contraction, and basic theory linking ion transport to cell energetics.

He held appointments in six schools and taught in seventeen departments. He won an award for teaching that was "demanding, stimulating and permanent in effect", and headed task forces on the quality of teaching. He was also a driving force for innovation and social conscience in the academic community, and was among those who volunteered to serve as hostages if the USSR would permit Mme Sakharov to seek medical treatment in the West.

At Manchester he was a mountaineer and rock climber, delighting in long Scottish routes, but in Sheffield he took to caving and met Graham Balcombe who was working to restart cave diving after the War. He became involved in the change-over from old deep-sea equipment to the frogman technique, and about then I became, under his influence, a guinea pig to test equipment devised from an air-raid warden's chest gas mask and a garden hose. Our first discovery was that the bottom of the university pool was too deep to allow breathing; however, a companion blowing down the hose was enough to put that right.

Bob was engaged in many cave explorations and in Wookey Hole he was once given up as lost (which in another sense he was) when he disappeared in the muddy waters of the eleventh chamber. However, he reappeared several hours later. During attempts to extend the Labouiche

river system he was headlined in a local paper as "L'homme Grenouille."

Of his mountaineering in America I have one report of caving in Virginia and vague memories, via his brother Taffy, out of which only Matterhorn, Fujiyama and Grand Teton stand out. He had an awful experience on Grand Teton (*Rucksack Club Journal*, 1966) when he and his companion were struck by lightning. He had forty wounds, some corresponding to those of his friend, some clothes were melted and zips fused. However, they survived a bivouac and were able to descend safely, to record meticulous notes of the circumstances and their condition.

Another incident on record is his ascent of the college flag pole in the dark and high winds to ensure the American flag could be flown at dawn. Bob had sympathy with the protesters who had cut the halyard, but put democratic consensus first.

I met Bob only once in the late forties and again at his brother's funeral in 1991, but what I have learnt in gathering this information makes me wish I had known him better.

Ted Dance

ELIZABETH ANNE DICKINSON

Anne Dickinson was killed at the age of 39 in November 1994 at El Charro in Spain. For no apparent reason she fell to her death whilst scrambling up easy rock to the foot of a route.

She had a gay, bright and lively personality and was such fun to be with. She was a sound, competent climber who loved both traditional and sport rock climbing. Wet weather never dampened her enthusiasm: she could always cajole someone to join her on a wet expedition up *Bowfell Buttress* or onto *Grooved Arête* on Tryfan or similar classic climbs. The mountains were her true love, whether in Scotland or the Alps, where she had spent several seasons.

Anne also loved the Pennine moors and bought a cottage above Hebden Bridge which she renovated and decorated in her own artistic style. Summer evenings would find her out running, or scrambling at Bride Stones. She taught P. E. at schools in Bradford and Halifax, with a special interest in music and dance. Always looking for new challenges, she left teaching in 1992 to take a degree in Law at Lancaster University, graduating with an Honours degree. Just prior to her last trip to Spain she had been accepted at the Bar.

Anne was a person of divers talents brought to an abrupt end before many of them could be fulfilled. A short, but very intensely lived life.

I and her many friends sadly miss her vital spirit and lively independent personality.

Marlene Halliwell

JILL EVANS

Jill died as a result of illness in May 1995. She remained until recently a frequent participant of meets, and her friends will remember her determination to live life to the full, in face of her physical afflictions.

Although Jill spent much of her life in the North of England, she was born in London in 1929, the eldest of a family of three girls. She retained a strong sense of family commitment and loyalty, although she herself was unmarried. At the beginning of the War, Jill and her sisters were sent to live with their grandmother on the edge of Dartmoor, because father wanted them to be safe from the bombing. Dartmoor was the beginning of her yearning for open spaces and nature, and there began her love affair with the hills and mountains.

From secondary school in Essex, she gained a scholarship to Girton College, Cambridge. Here she worked tremendously hard and discovered a vocation for medicine. Although very shy, she sang in several choirs and was, as she remained throughout her life, an active member of the Christian community. From Cambridge she went to Barts for her clinical training and achieved her Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1962. After various posts she moved to Oldham in 1967 as Consultant in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Thousands of people have cause to be grateful for the work she did in the Oldham hospitals. When she arrived in Oldham the infant mortality rate there was very high and by the time of her retirement had reduced considerably and much of the credit must be laid at her door. She spoke of her work - of delivering babies and helping mothers - with tremendous warmth and love.

Jill worked hard and she played hard. Many of her holidays were spent walking, climbing or skiing. Besides the Lake District, she was fond of Scotland and the Austrian Alps, and visited the Himalaya twice. In 1978 she joined the Fell & Rock, maintaining her reputation as a strong walker. While she enjoyed the social ambience of meets, she was always a fiercely independent loner. However, she also gave generously of her time in every

aspect of her life: she led many Fell & Rock meets, and for 20 years organised a huge annual weekend for her local Austrian Alpine Club group, cooking the main meal for about 30 people. Few Fell & Rock members may realise that she also found time for sailing, and owned her own boat for many years. Many a walk was enriched by her detailed knowledge of plants and birds.

It was tragic that her zest for life was curtailed by ill health. She made a tremendous comeback to walking after major heart surgery; then the arthritis in her knees began to limit her. Characteristically, she never complained or made her afflictions a burden to others, but carried on courageously to the limits of her ability. Her determination to complete the Scottish Munros became a battle against time as her knees worsened. She had to be helicoptered off the last - and insisted on repeating it. A photograph of one of her last walks in the mountains shows her proudly displaying her rejuvenated new knees on the top of Scafell Pike.

One of Jill's last outings at a Fell & Rock meet was to Wasdale Head Church one Easter morning - a celebration of both her deep commitment to her Christian faith and her love of mountains. It poured with rain, the vicar overslept, the whole congregation waited patiently outside in the wet, eventually entering to observe that the altar daffodils were made of plastic! Jill had a good chuckle about all this. She was a fine and determined woman, rather shy and serious until you knew her well, who faced great difficulties in life, but was not above a quiet laugh at some of its absurdities.

H. Harris

(I am very grateful to Jill's sister, Mrs. Mary Phillips and her friend, The Revd. Averil Cunnington, for much of the information in this note. H. H.)

OLIVE HAINES

Olive Haines was born in Heaton Norris in 1890, but the family soon moved to Alderley Edge. This is important, as her father, Philip Scott Minor, taught his children to climb on the local rocks. He was a very early member of the Fell & Rock and was a founder of the Rucksack Club. He took Olive climbing and walking in Britain and abroad. She joined the Club herself in 1922 and, when she moved to London to train as a teacher, she joined the London Section. There she met her future husband, himself the son of a Fell & Rock member. After her marriage she did little climbing

but always enjoyed walking. During the War the Haines stayed in London and Olive became a full time Air Raid Warden. They chose a home in Putney to be near Wimbledon Common and Richmond Park. One project they enjoyed over several years was walking the whole of the Thames tow path. Olive Haines died in 1993.

Anne Haines

JACK INGALL

Jack Ingall, who died on 22 September 1995, was a key figure in the extension of the K Shoe factories in Kendal and elsewhere during his 38 years at the Netherfield works. He was very active in the development of the K Fellfarers and in the improvement of their hut in Seathwaite.

Jack was a great walker, joining the Club in 1926. In the 1930s he was very much part of the group of local climbers from Kendal, Keswick and Penrith who enjoyed the mountains and the hot pot suppers at the O. D. G., The Fish and Howtown hotels.

He continued to drive up to the Highlands until 1985 and even walked Wastwater Screes with his son as recently as 1990 at the age of 87.

I enjoyed many winter climbs with Jack on Great End.

S. H. Cross

DONALD MURRAY

After a lifetime spent in East Yorkshire, Donald died in Cumbria on 24 September 1994 at the age of 88. Son of a country GP, Donald was educated at Uppingham School and then joined the firm of J. A Hewetson of Hull, hardwood dealers and flooring manufacturers, working his way up to Managing Director: he was a national expert on hardwoods.

In the early 1920s, Donald began walking and climbing in the Pennines, the Lakes and Scotland, mainly with friends from East Yorkshire including John Appleyard and Graham Wilson, who, in 1928, proposed him for the Fell & Rock. It was whilst he was opening the London office for the firm that he met Nancy on a train en route for an outing with the London Section of the Club, a meeting destined to lead to a long and happy marriage.

An active climber all his life, Donald's experience was widespread both at home and abroad. He was particularly proud of his completion in 1929 of the ascent of the Three Peaks - Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and

Snowdon - within 24 hours. (This had been done three years earlier by C. D. Hadfield and Billy Pape, chauffeured by H. P. Cain within 24 hours, but only from summit to summit). Donald was, if possible, even more delighted when, accompanied by Janet, he repeated the trip on the 50th anniversary inside 36 hours, despite the handicap of two replacement hips. He began climbing in the Alps in the late 1920s, mainly with the Swiss guide Alexander Pollinger of St. Niklaus, and later with the Austrian guide, Franz Steindal, who often led the second rope. Many classic routes in Switzerland, Austria and the Dolomites were climbed, and in 1956 he joined the Alpine Club. Donald then decided that, henceforth, he would explore, guideless, less frequented areas. A family holiday in the Julian Alps was followed by trips to the High Atlas, the Picos d'Europa, the Encantados and by four or five trips to Corsica, where the lure of sun-warmed granite, sleeping rough and the then uncrowded coastline proved irresistible. Various Fell & Rock friends, including Charles Pickles, Harry Stembridge and Dick Cook accompanied the Murrays over these years.

However, the Lake District was Donald's greatest love and, just prior to the War, he and Nancy discovered the Old Mill in Coombe Ghyll, Borrowdale. This was to be their climbing base in the Lakes and, over a period of many years, the Murrays, with a little help from their friends, converted it into a splendid climbing hut, Donald's craftsman's skill and vision being well exercised.

Donald and Nancy were regular attenders at meets, particularly the Scottish ones, and I have fond memories of the Glen Brittle meets I led in the late 1950s. Memories of Donald sandwiched between Tony Greenbank and myself, and the pair of them laughing their way up a new route we discovered on the West Buttress of Sgurr Sgumain (*The Slant*). There was always lots of noise and laughter wherever Donald went. One day we decided to visit Rhum, and Ronald MacDonald ferried the meet across in his boat for a brisk circuit of the ridge. Descending from Askival, I was coming down last and inadvertently disturbed a large boulder which headed straight for Donald. Only his nimble footwork saved him, as he never failed to remind me on many subsequent occasions. At the May meet of 1959 the Murrays, accompanied by Charles Pickles and Dick Cook, traversed the Cuillin Ridge in 12 hours 15 minutes, a vintage performance.

In 1962 Donald was elected Vice President of the Club, and in 1964 President. If there was ever a time in the Club's history for a dynamic President to take charge, then this was it. Donald inherited several acute

problems which his personal and managerial skills enabled him to solve without causing offence or greatly disrupting the Club's affairs. The new Treasurer had, in a short space of time, reduced Dick Plint's meticulous accounts to total disarray: he was persuaded to give up office. The *Journal* was overdue, which was not entirely the Editor's fault, as subsequent events demonstrated that the Club could only sustain a *Journal* every two years instead of annually as previously. However, the Editor's job changed hands. The climbing public at large had become increasingly critical of the Club's dilatoriness in producing guide books, all of which were either unobtainable or well out of date and there was also a pirate guide to Borrowdale already at the printers. Harry Kelly, the distinguished Guide Books Editor for over 30 years, was gently persuaded to give way to a younger generation, first to Joe Griffin and shortly afterwards to myself. I still remember Donald's instructions to me: "Get the guides out - don't worry about the cost, I'll take care of that." The guidebook programme began to roll and is still rolling. However, it was felt necessary to get more information speedily before the climbing public, and the series of *New Climbs* booklets was begun.

Donald's two years in office were marked by several other changes and innovations which are still evident today. The first was the *Chronicle*, which was launched at Donald's instigation and had proved over the years to be a great success. Against considerable committee opposition, Donald initiated a study of the workload of Club Officers, which eventually led to the Ten Year Rule. All this, as well as overseeing the substantial reconstruction of Birkness Barn, the purchase, conversion and opening of Beetham Cottage, and hosting a visit by a delegation of Polish climbers. Donald had a very full two years as President, but he was still very active on the hills. I well remember him on a meet in Patterdale when he was persuaded to have a go at *Sobrenada* on Eagle Crag, Grisedale. He was in trouble, but he would not be beaten and, at Jack Soper's instigation, eventually overcame the crux by standing on slings on jammed nuts. Nobody could ever say that Donald didn't move with the times!

Retirement presented few problems to Donald. He bought a long wheelbase Land Rover, "el coche", converted it and, with Nancy, drove it to Nepal for a trekking trip. Many similar trips followed; Alaska, North and South Central America, and of course Scotland. Advancing years brought the inevitable health problems, particularly two replacement hips and failing eyesight, with resulting decrease in activity on the hills. However,

he still visited the Old Mill and enjoyed the Club Dinner until his last year.

Donald was a tremendous personality: dynamic, energetic, resourceful and, above all, bubbling with enthusiasm. Perhaps his most apt epitaph would be the words Jack Soper wrote in his Editorial in the 1966 *Journal*: "Donald Murray will be remembered as A President Who Got Things Done".

I am grateful to Janet for information on Donald's early years.

John Wilkinson

KEITH NORCROSS

Keith, who died in February 1994, had been a member of the Club since 1949. I knew Keith from two to three years before that when, at weekends, we would hasten to the gritstone outcrops around Oldham, our home town. In those days the sun always shone and the rocks were always dry and friendship, like enthusiasm, was boundless!

Keith left this idyll when, as pupil of Manchester Grammar School, he went on state and college scholarships, to Brasenose College, Oxford, where, as well as his academic studies and other diverse interests (he particularly enjoyed his secretaryship of the University Socratic Club) he was a member of the OUMC and had alpine experience with them.

Following his degree he acquired his medical training in Manchester and the Hospital for Special Surgery, New York, eventually becoming an orthopaedic surgeon at the (then) Dudley Road Hospital and the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, Birmingham.

In more recent years Keith had taken to scuba diving which, contrary to received opinion, he preferred, where possible, to do alone: and, very briefly, gliding. A solitary individual, he made a memorable trip to Hammerfest soon after he retired, in a Tandy Maestro camper in which he ate and slept. Almost to the end he enjoyed walking, albeit comparatively slowly, especially in the Wyre Forest near Birmingham.

Solitary or no, he was a good companion on the hills, full of interest in and consideration for others, and his old climbing and walking friends will miss an anticipated renewal of friendship following an early retirement. Keith leaves a widow and daughter.

Eric Flint

PAUL JAMES NUNN

Paul Nunn died on 6 August 1995 together with his partner Geoff Tier when descending Haramosh 2 in the Karakoram after a successful ascent. Paul's death leaves a huge gap in British mountaineering which will be difficult to fill.

Paul was born in Abbeyleix, County Laois (Leix), Ireland, on 6 January 1943. He was adopted at a very early age and brought up in Macclesfield, Cheshire. His adoptive parents were extremely kind, gentle and indulgent, supporting Paul in any activity he undertook, in particular his passion for climbing and mountains, which was initially fired by the Macclesfield Boy Scout movement which introduced him to rock climbing in the Peak at the age of 12. From this early beginning Paul never looked back. In his youth he was an adventurous and extremely independent individual, making many accompanied and solo trips to areas beyond the Peak, notably to Wales and the Lakes.

Paul exhibited a prodigious talent for climbing from an early age. With his first climbing partners, the embryonic Alpha Club, Paul and his friends made many audacious solo ascents on The Roaches in the late '50s and early '60s astounding many of the 'old guard', but more importantly showing that there were other climbers who could match the rock climbing exploits of the Rock and Ice. Like the Rock and Ice before them, the Alpha Club was to initiate another 'leap forward' in standards. Paul teamed up with one of the foremost members of the Alpha Club, Richard McHardy. He was invited to join the club and so began many partnerships and friendships which have endured the test of time and have indeed outlasted the Alpha Club itself. The Alpha Club was a very loose-knit organisation but its self-mocking, iconoclastic philosophy produced an environment which encouraged you to climb harder and harder. The club's members put up many new routes in those early years, many of which are classics, particularly those on grit.

I first met Paul at Sheffield University in 1961. We were both undergraduates, he already established as one of the leading lights in the climbing world, and me a novice climber and ex rugby player. We were both members of the SUMC living in a flat with Oliver Woolcock and Rod Brown. Our friendship was firmly cemented during our undergraduate years and Paul became my greatest friend and climbing mentor during those years and up to his death. Paul was always a restless spirit in those days, something which never left him. His enthusiasm for climbing led

him from the gritstone edges of Derbyshire to the Lakes, Wales and Scotland where he repeated many of the test pieces of the day and added a few of his own.

One of Paul's notable achievements during the '60s was an early ascent of the *Philipp-Flamm* on the Civetta. Paul's leg was broken on the ascent by a fall of rock but he and his partner Martin Boysen managed to finish and descend the route unaided.

After graduating Paul succeeded in obtaining a teaching post at the Cavendish Grammar School in Buxton and with it the money to indulge his prodigious appetite for climbing.

Paul joined the Fell & Rock in 1964 and was invited to write the Borrowdale guide in 1968, which he approached with vigour and rigour. The Alpha Club was mobilised for the task and we spent many weekends checking routes, doing new ones and, in some cases, the 'last' ascents of others: Paul, with typical ruthlessness, 'axed' many of the routes from the old guide.

Paul was a restless spirit. He was continually planning forays into various climbing areas at this time and he developed a passion for Scottish winter climbing. His enthusiasm for Scotland resulted in many new winter climbs and the forging of new partnerships. Most notable of these was the one he made with Tom Patey. I think it true to say that Patey became something of a Guru to Paul, providing him with a whole new playground for his restless urge, namely the North West Highlands and the Cape Wrath area in particular. From 1969 to the year of his death Paul and friends made an annual pilgrimage to the area. Initially the routes we did were never recorded but Paul, unbeknown to us, had made a record of and named the routes.

During the '60s Paul hardly missed a season in the Alps and he rapidly established himself as a reliable and competent alpinist. His reputation ensured a place on a British expedition to the Caucasus in 1970 with Hamish MacInnes and Chris Woodhall. The expedition succeeded in establishing a new route on the North Face of Pic Schurovsky. After this successful international expedition Paul was invited on many more, including one to Baffin Island with 'Tut' Braithwaite, Dennis Hennek and Doug Scott. They succeeded in establishing a new route on the east pillar of Mount Asgard.

Paul returned to Russia in 1974 with Doug Scott, 'Tut', Guy Lee and Clive Rowlands. The trip was sponsored by Fiat and the Daily Mirror. Fiat

provided the expedition with a car: the object was to publicise the fact that they had just sold their old factory to the Russians, and so the Lada was born. The expedition drove overland to the Caucasus, a journey that proved eventful and hilarious. The Russians were suspicious of any foreigners, the Cold War was still being waged, and they didn't quite know what to do with an anarchic bunch of climbers from the Capitalist Citadels of the west.

After these initially successful expeditions Paul was instrumental in organising his own small-scale 'trips' to the Karakoram and Himalaya. He had varying degrees of success on these because he suffered from altitude sickness and asthma, which had been with him from childhood, and this combination had a very serious effect on his ability to go to altitude. It is only recently that Paul achieved any consistent degree of success on expeditions, and this on small scale ones.

Paul had undoubted leadership and administrative skills and he put these to very effective use in the '60s when he produced the Peak District guides for the BMC. The guides produced by Paul and his guide-writers were to provide the foundation for the explosion of new routes in the Peak at this time and acted as a model for the subsequent series that followed. Paul's administrative skills were also put to good use on Alpine Club committees, The Mount Everest Foundation and the BMC.

His literary skills resulted in many fine articles, book reviews, and contributions to books. Paul's sense of fairness, historical perspective and vision stand out in all his publications.

Paul was also a very accomplished caver, a fact that might astonish many because it is difficult to imagine him pushing his huge frame through a tight squeeze, but he did and with consummate ease. The highlight of his caving exploits was a descent of the Gouffre Berger with Bob Toogood and other members of the Eldon Pothole Club in the '70s.

It is fitting that the culmination of years of mountaineering, rock climbing and dedication to all aspects of the sport should have earned him the presidency of the BMC, but it is a major blow to that organisation and to climbing in general that death has robbed us of a visionary who could have taken the sport and its administrative body into the 21st century.

Paul's friendship was enduring. He was a fine companion both on and off the hills. It was an experience to accompany him on any of his 'trips', whether to the local Derbyshire outcrops or to his favourite stamping ground, the Cape Wrath area of Scotland. Some of the best moments of my

life as a climber have been spent with Paul.. He was a firm friend, a trusty companion, one of life's travellers. He will be sorely missed by many in the climbing world but many of us will be left with memories of him, his ringing laughter, nights in hostelries up and down the land, but above all the climbs accomplished and those still to do. The void will be difficult to fill.

Mike Richardson

DR. GEORGE BRIAN WALKER

Members of our Club would be saddened by the untimely death of Brian, who was only 65. He had had a severe coronary thrombosis in 1988 but was able after careful exercise to manage ascents of High Street, Gable and many other hills. He died peacefully in his sleep on 20 February 1995. The funeral service was at Carnforth Methodist Church, where he was often a lay preacher; interment was at Bolton-le-Sands. Our President, Jill Aldersley, was among a large number of mourners.

Brian was always interested in people and nature. He was encouraged by the curator of Batley Museum to study and mount specimens, particularly butterflies. While convalescing he was overjoyed with the flora and fauna he found on Whitbarrow Scar.

Born a Yorkshireman, he attended Batley Grammar School where he met his future wife Kathleen who was at the Girls' Grammar. He then entered the Medical School at Leeds, coming under the influence of their most distinguished dermatologist, Professor J. T. Ingram. Brian was also trained in gynaecology and midwifery. His first general practice was at Morley for 18 months, followed by 30 years in Carnforth. He became a hospital practitioner in dermatology at Beaumont Hospital, Lancaster, for three sessions per week. All his patients appreciated his ability and humanity.

Brian was a man of many talents: an artist in watercolours, an avid reader, an accomplished angler and president of the Lune & Wyre Anglers' Association. Mountaineering was a great joy, with regular visits to Skye, winter visits to Glencoe and later with the Club. He cut his teeth on the Yorkshire crags.

On asking for this obituary, Hatty commented "We missed his sense of humour at the Coniston Meet last weekend." He is survived by his wife Kathleen, a son, daughter, brother and his mother.

R. H. Savile

PHYLLIS B. WORMELL

Phil Wormell, who died in January 1995 aged 82, had the gift of friendship. All through her life she made friends and kept them, from those of student days at Leeds University to the members of the embroidery circle of her last years, and a great number of them gathered at her funeral at Carlisle.

Phil began climbing at Almscliffe while at university where she read geography, and began to explore the Lake District. By Easter 1935 she was staying at the Coniston Youth Hostel and climbing Severes on Dow Crag with Sid Thompson, and in August VSs on Gimmer. She climbed regularly with Sid - in August 1939 they ascended and then descended *CB* on Scafell - and they were married in December 1940. Sid joined the R. A. F. and was based at Montrose, from where he and Phil climbed all over Scotland during his leaves. In June 1944 they traversed the main ridge of the Cuillin, hiding en-route tins of grapefruit so that he could return in August to break the current record for the traverse from Gars-bheinn to Sgurr nan Gillean in a time of 7hr 40 mins.

When Sid was killed in one of the last bombing raids of the War, Phil moved to Keswick. She developed her association with the Fell & Rock, joining the Club in 1945, and was friendly with many of the senior members, including Rusty Westmorland and Bobby and Muriel Files, and was staying at Raw Head when she met Ed Wormell whom she married in 1947. The circles of friends of the 'PhilanEd' partnership spread even more widely, particularly when Ed and she as the first wardens were recruiting help to fit out the 'Slaving [sic] House' as it became known to the bands of helpers, usually led by Peter Moffat, who under Phil's persuasion found their climbing weekends turning into working meets.

After their marriage she and Ed lived from 1951 in Welton, near Carlisle, where Ed taught in Carlisle Grammar School while Phil travelled to St. Katherine's College in Portinscale, helping to prepare intending teachers for work in country schools. This entailed leading the students on much geographical and botanical work among the hills, and she also assisted Ed in the skiing trips he organised for pupils of his school. School holidays were devoted to their mountaineering expeditions far and wide, most frequently to Austria in the winter and to the Swiss Alps in summer, and there were few weekends during the year when they were not at one or other of the Club huts, climbing or engaged on Club business. Ed's accident on Pillar in 1959 caused damage to his leg and gradually growing discomfort on long climbs, and in later years they turned more to travel, in

Italy, Corsica, or America. After Ed's death, Phil found new friends in pottery and embroidery groups and turned increasingly to her local interests.

Phil not only was a very competent mountaineer, but was eagerly interested in and knowledgeable about the details of landscape and natural life of the hills, whether the eagles of Rhum, the saxifrages of the Alps, or stratification in the Grand Canyon. But above all she liked people and loved talking to them, whatever their age, and it is perhaps for this that her friends will best remember her, at the evening sessions over mugs of tea in the Salving House.

W. Greenhalgh

FRANK YATES

Frank Yates CBE, FRS, was born in 1902, the son of a prominent seed merchant from Didsbury, Manchester. He went to St. John's College, Cambridge, where, besides indulging in roof-climbing and rowing, he took a first in mathematics. In 1927 he got a post with the Colonial Office on the Gold Coast Geodetic Survey, but returned to England in 1931 to embark on a career which established him as one of the country's most distinguished research statisticians. He joined the staff of Rothamstead Experimental Station, the agricultural research institute, under Sir Ronald Fisher, became head of the statistical department and later deputy director on the Institute. He was scientific adviser to a number of ministries and also to the United Nations and the Food & Agricultural Organisation. (One advisory visit to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research allowed him a climbing excursion in the Nepalese Himalayas). On retirement Rothamstead appointed him honorary scientist and he was still writing at 88.

During the War he remained at Rothamstead, working on the optimization of fertiliser dosage to increase crop yields, while pursuing a parallel career with the Air Ministry. He was given the honorary rank of Wing Commander and worked as a consultant to help raise the standards of accuracy in Bomber Command. One project he was involved with was helping to combat the doodlebug threat over South East England from June 1944 by calculating the likely course of attacks.

His love of mountain walking began in childhood. He was fortunate in that his father shared his enthusiasm for the countryside with Frank and his

younger sister Edna (now Mrs. Oakeshott). There were Sunday afternoon walks in the Cheshire countryside with a father who was an active believer in footpath preservation and freedom to wander. His scorn for notices saying "Trespassers will be Prosecuted" was only equalled by his insistence that no damage to fences or flora should ever be committed, that gates must always be closed or, if locked, must be carefully climbed! Similar rules were enforced when Cheshire Sunday afternoons developed into long days out in the Derbyshire dales and Pennine hills, where stone walls must always be respected. Later in Snowdonia and the Lake District a cairn should have a stone added to it. Frank became adept with map and compass and his father had complete faith in his ability to lead them out of thick cloud on a mountain top down in the right direction. Together the family enjoyed holidays climbing from the Wasdale Head Hotel, as well as abroad, particularly in the Tyrol. They were friends of the Chorleys and both Frank and Edna joined the Fell & Rock when young, in 1924. With Basil Goodfellow, an old schoolfriend and member of the Alpine Club, Frank traversed the Cuillin ridge in 1924 in just under 17 hours with "Ridge in mist all the way and rocks wet throughout". Frank also developed a love for solitary walking and believed that this allowed him the time to think and thus develop his exceptional mental powers.

His wife, Pauline, died in 1976. He later married his secretary and long-standing friend Ruth, and together they spent holidays in a shepherd's cottage in Sutherland, from which they explored the northern Scottish mountains, catching up with some of his Munros. He remained a very able mountaineer into his late eighties. He ascended Ben Klibreck on his 80th birthday and died in 1994 aged 92.

H. Harris

(I am grateful for information contributed by Mrs. Edna Oakeshott and Mrs. Ruth Yates. H. H.)

OFFICERS OF THE CLUB
1994-1995

President		Jill Aldersley
Vice Presidents		Paddy O'Neill, Bill Young
Secretary		John Robinson
Treasurer		John Coates
Membership Secretary		Paul Exley
Journal Editor		Chris Wright
Guide Books Editor		Al Phizacklea
Guide Books Business Manager		Ron Kenyon
Librarian		George Watkins
Dinner Secretary		Pam Pulford
Huts Secretary		Peter Lord
Meets Secretary		Wendy Stirrup
Chronicler		Andrew Coatsworth
Hut Wardens:	Beetham Cottage	Tom Parker
	Birkness	Dave Long
	Brackenclose	Roy Sumerling
	Raw Head	Terry Parker
	Salving House	Val Young
	Waters Cottage	Alan Rowland
Elected Members of Committee		Cherie Chapman, Neil Foster, Bill Hannah, Jane Harrison, Ron Lyon, Kath Marsden, Ian Roper, Mark Spreadborough, Greg Tough, Kath Ward-ropper, Heather Yates
Assistant Librarian		Graham Willison
Obituarist		Hatty Harris
London Section Secretary		Mrs. M. S. Chapman

MEETS LIST 1995

	Date	Venue	Leader(s)
	14/15 January	Beetham Cottage	Chris Ashworth
	21/22 January	Brackenclose (Joint Meet YMC)	Graham Exley
CD	28/29 January	Birkness	Pam Pulford
	11/12 February	Raw Head	Ian Roper
	25/26 February	Raw Head (Alpine Planning Meet)	John & Margaret Skelton
	25/26 February	Waters Cottage	Ken Mosely
	4/5 March	Ceilidh - Borrowdale Institute	The President
	4/11 March	Cala San Vicente, Mallorca	June Parker
	18/19 March	Lowstern	John & Carol Barrett
W	27/31 March	C. I. C. - Ben Nevis	Bill Freeland
	1/2 April	Salving House	Les Shore
	9/22 April	France - Camping	Pete & Cherie Chapman
	14/17 April	Brackenclose	Helen Loy
	14/17 April	Count House (Joint Meet C. C.)	Roger & Val Salisbury
M	22/23 April	Beetham Cottage	Tom Parker
	6/8 May	Ynys Ettws (Joint Meet C. C.)	Steve & Kerrie Clegg
	6/8 May	Cefn Goch, Deniolen	Les & Barbara Swindin
W	6/14 May	Waters Cottage	Jo Light
C	13/14 May	Raw Head	Gary Nuttall
	20/27 May	Killin (Hotel)	Roy & Norma Precious
	20/27 May	Skye	George Wright
	27/29 May	Waters Cottage	Barry Chislet
	27 May/2 June	Gairloch, Torridon - camping	Roy & Dorothy Buffey
	27 May/2 June	Birkness (Family Meet)	Gordon & Pat Higginson

	Date	Venue	Leader(s)
	27 May/4 June	Ireland	Paddy Feely
M	10/11 June	Birkness	Dave Long
W	12/16 June	Glan Dena	Bernard & Marian Wright
	17/18 June	London Section - Worth Maltravers	Paul & Phyllida Roberts
	24/25 June	Y. M. C. Hut Coppermines	Dave Dowson
	24/25 June	Brackenclose	Richard & Helen Topliss
W	28/30 June	Raw Head	John Robinson
D	1/2 July	Yewdale Hotel, Coniston	David & Christine Miller
	8/9 July	Raw Head (Guidebook Meet)	Max Bidden
	15/16 July	Brackenclose (Joint Meet M. A. M.)	Dave Pearce
	22/30 July	Birkness (Family Meet)	Hilary Lawrenson
	29/30 July	Ty Powdwr (Joint Meet K. C.)	Paul & Kath Exley
	29 July/ 12 August	Dolomites, Italy	Geoff Waterworth
	12/27 August	Innerkirchen, Switzerland	Janet & John Burrows
	12/13 August	Beetham Cottage	Clive Beveridge & Sylvia Loxham
W	21/25 August	Brackenclose	Eric Ivison
	26/28 August	N. Wales - Camping	Paul Selley
CD	9/10 September	Brackenclose	The Vice Presidents
M	16/17 September	Raw Head	Terry Parker
W	18/20 September	Salving House	Terry Sullivan
M	23/24 September	Brackenclose	Roy Sumerling
D	30 September/ 1 October	London Section - Salving House	Peter Ledeboer
M	7/8 October	Waters Cottage	Alan Rowland
	14/15 October	Raw Head	The President
M	21/22 October	Salving House	Val Young

	Date	Venue	Leader(s)
D	4/5 November	A. G. M. & Dinner - Shap Wells Hotel	The President
	11/12 November	Brackenclose	Mike & Paula Carter
CD	25/26 November	Salving House	Sue Fleming
	2/3 December	Birkness	Andy Coatsworth
D	4 December	London Section - 75th Anniversary	Peter Ledeboer
	16/17 December	Beetham Cottage	Nigel & Joanne Duxbury
	30 December/ 1 January	Raw Head	Sandy & Jane Sanderson

C = Committee Meeting; D = Dinner to be arranged;
M = Maintenance Meet; W = Mid-week Meet.

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Chronicler		Andrew Coatsworth
Hut Wardens:	Beetham Cottage	Richard Collier
	Birkness	Dave Long
	Brackenclose	Roy Sumerling
	Raw Head	Terry Parker
	Salving House	Val Young
	Waters Cottage	Barry Chislett
Elected Members of Committee		Janet Ashworth, Bill Hannah, Harry Lambert, Ron Lyon, Kath Marsden, Tim Pickles, John Smith, Jane Spread-borough, Mark Spread-borough, Greg Tough, Kath Wardropper, Heather Yates
Assistant Librarian		Graham Willison
Obituarist		Hatty Harris
London Section Secretary		Mrs. M. S. Chapman

MEETS LIST 1996

	Date	Venue	Leader(s)
	13/14 January	Beetham Cottage	Adrian Wiszniewski
CD	27/28 January	Birkness	Chrissie Lane
	10/11 February	Raw Head	Dennis Mitchell
	17/18 February	Waters Cottage	Stuart Gallagher
W	19/23 February	Raeburn Hut	Jo Light
	24/25 February	Birkness (Alpine Planning Meet)	Mark Scott
	27 February/ 5 March	Mallorca	June Parker
	2/3 March	Ceilidh - Tithe Barn, Keswick	The President
	9/10 March	Waters Cottage	Mike & Pip Cocker
	16/17 March	R. O. Downes Hut	John Burrows
	23/24 March	Salving House	Andy Carlin
W	24/28 March	C.I.C. Hut - Ben Nevis	Peter Green
	31 March/13 April	France - Camping	Harry Lambert
	5/8 April	Brackenclose	Mark Scott
	5/8 April	Count House (Joint Meet C. C.)	Mark Vallance
M	20/21 April	Beetham Cottage	Richard Collier
	20/21 April	Raw Head (Lakes Fells Writers)	Tim Pickles & June Parker
W	22/24 April	Salving House	David Staton
	4/6 May	Raw Head (Joint Meet C. C.)	Chris Field
	4/8 May	Waters Cottage	Malcolm Rowe
	11/12 May	Derbyshire - Camping	Paul Hudson
C	18/19 May	Raw Head	Paul O'Reilly
	18/24 May	Dalwhinnie (Hotel) & Raeburn Hut	Maureen Linton & Peter Williams
	25/27 May	Galloway - Camping	Ken Andrews
	25 May/2 June	Skye - Glen Brittle	George Wright
	25 May/2 June	Ballater - Camping	Ian Dixon
	25 May/2 June	Birkness (Family Meet)	Gill Rumsby

	Date	Venue	Leader(s)
M	8/9 June	Birkness	Dave Long
	8/9 June	Brecon Beacons	Anne Hartley
W	10/14 June	Glan Dena	Derrick & Edna Robinson
	22/23 June	Brackenclose	Bob Allen
W	26/28 June	Raw Head	Sue Logan
	29/30 June	Skirwith - North Pennines	Ron & Chris Lyon
D	6/7 July	Yewdale Hotel, Coniston	The Vice Presidents
	20/21 July	Raw Head (Guidebook Meet)	Max Bidden
	20/21 July	Glan Dena (Joint Meet M. A. M.)	Dave Pearce
	20/28 July	Birkness (Family Meet)	Malcolm Lowerson
	27/28 July	Brackenclose (Joint Meet K. C.)	Tony Field
	12 July/ 3 August	Alpine Meet - St. Gervais-les-Bains	Mark Scott
	10/11 August	Beetham Cottage	Dick Morgan
	24/26 August	Brackenclose	Chris Pugh & Gwyneth Vernon
	24/26 August	Glan Dena	Frances Carr
W	4/6 September	Beetham Cottage	Pauline Sweet
C	7/8 September	Raw Head	Alison Ashworth
	14/15 September	Salving House (Guidebook Meet)	Ron Kenyon
M	21/22 September	Raw Head	Terry Parker
M	28/29 September	Brackenclose	Roy Sumerling
M	5/6 October	Waters Cottage	Barry Chislett
D	5/6 October	London Section - Brackenclose	Tony Hutchinson
M	19/20 October	Salving House	Val Young
D	2/3 November	A. G. M. & Dinner - Shap Wells Hotel	The President
	9/10 November	Brackenclose	Trevor Goldsborough
CD	23/24 November	Salving House	Ian Whitmey

Date	Venue	Leader(s)
7/8 December	Birkness	David Rhodes
21/22 December	Beetham Cottage	Arthur Grout

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