



George Watkins, President 2002-2004

Sketch by Peter Osborne

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EDITORIAL

Surrounded by a wealth of talent an editor's lot should be a happy one; accepting submissions and blending them to produce a journal. It has been acknowledged previously that very few activities spawn the huge amount of literature as does climbing and mountaineering, and a high proportion of those who participate in such pastimes also read about them. In addition to quantitative factors there are also qualitative characteristics. Climbers and mountaineers are observant and creative as they climb rocks, achieve summits, or simply saunter amongst mountains, and they have an appetite to tell their tales and to voice their views.

As joint editors we are grateful that once again FRCC members have proved they are writers as well as readers. We thank those who have contributed and we hope all members will find something to their taste as another journal has fallen into place. Different styles have been adopted and the standard of writing varies, but all contributions are based on the experiences of FRCC members. There is no distinct theme, but as for many journals, emphasis is on nostalgia. However this goes beyond mere recollection or remembrance with an element of struggle between body and spirit, yet there are no regrets. Always positive; members' submissions are concerned with human relationships ranging through desires, endeavours and achievements; sometimes serious or factual and sometimes humorous or nebulous.

Perhaps an editor's lot is not as straightforward as suggested above. For this fourth edition of our joint editorship we set out once more to identify subjects and to target potential contributors. Somewhat disappointingly a number of proposed articles have not come to fruition, and in particular there is a dearth of commentary on the Lake District. We have al-

ready set the scene for the *Centenary Journal* in 2006 to focus on the Lake District and perhaps this has undermined the present edition. The Club needs to embody its full title as the Fell & Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District. Notwithstanding the likelihood that a *Centenary Journal* will stimulate nostalgia it must also embrace what is happening now and it must look to the future.

For this 2004 edition we have reversed the decline in *Book Reviews*; though catching up from the last couple of years has led to a disproportionate number. The reviews are not over-effusive, and indeed some may be judged insufficient, but for the *Centenary Journal* it will be necessary to limit *Book Reviews* to major publications of the moment. Another section to be limited is likely to be *Climbs Old and New* where the present bulk may be regarded as excessive. Even so, the listings have been pruned with efforts directed at incorporating a selection across all grades to provide something for everyone. Information on new routes or comments on crag conditions are readily available via the internet, and for the future the Journal's priorities will be prime discoveries or outstanding advances.

For our final contribution as joint editors, happy with our lot, we give notice that the *Centenary Journal* will not be allowed to just fall into place. Already key members have commenced on commissioned articles, and proposals have been welcomed to include a pictorial section of photographs or other illustrations with a Lakeland theme. We take an early opportunity to thank those who already have Centenary topics in hand, and as expected from editors, we encourage members to convert their experiences and interests into words, to provide illustrations, and to share these with others.

E1 – IT MAY FINISH ME OFF!

Graham Daniels

What do you do when you have finished all the Munros and subsidiary tops? I felt that while I had enjoyed my time in Scotland there were too many places in the world to visit, and so I was not inclined to start on the Corbetts. But still I had a need to tick off or underline small achievements as milestones were passed.

It all started in the southern Dolomites above Rovereto. When walking in the snow we came across a sign which said 'E5 – Bodensee – Adriatico'. Our leader was unable to explain the significance of the sign. Returning to England I went to Stanfords map shop and they were able to supply a map of European Long Distance Footpaths which showed E5 going from the coast of Brittany via the Bodensee to the Adriatic. Then I noticed the E1 which goes from Lapland to Sicily and en route passes close to where our daughter lives in Germany. 'That will do' I thought.

So the great work has begun — but will I live long enough to complete it? Retirement is a busy time, and what with weekend visits to the Lake District, trips to China and New Zealand to fit in, I find that the E1 is only being pecked at in about two week-long trips a year.

Considerable preparation is necessary. I have acquired a guidebook to the German and Swiss sections – KOMPASS Wandserfuhrer Europaischer Fernwanderweg E1. Which immediately indicates the first problem – translation! Having attended four years of night school and lately passed GCSE German, I find that I can, in a whole day, translate the notes for one day's walk. This is then laboriously typed out into notes to carry on the route. Stopping points for

lunch and overnight are indicated in the guidebook, but as I no longer like to walk with more than a day sack, before leaving home I spend many happy hours sending and receiving faxes to tourist offices and small hotels to ensure a bed is in place.

Maps are a difficulty. There does not appear to be a German equivalent to our Ordnance Survey series.

The guide book indicates which maps you need, and these do show footpaths, but they are produced by different publishers, and they are not necessarily contiguous. To control costs, I have found a good German map shop in Wiesbaden where my daughter lives, and they get them and she picks them up.

Doubtless Stanfords or other English suppliers could get them, but the cost would be greater.

As with my early Munros, I have started by hopping about all over Germany. In the north Alison and I went to Schleswig Holstein. Cheap Ryanair flights from Stanstead to Lubeck were easy, but the train track from there to Eutin was flooded and an alternative bus service was laid on (just like railways at home!). The route is clearly marked here with a white Andreas cross on a black background. We walk about 20km a day and on our very first day summited on the highest point in Schleswig Holstein – the Bungsberg (168m) where thoughtfully one can climb half way up a telecommunications tower to look out to the Ostsee (Baltic) and Kiel. In Neustadt two very wet walkers found they had booked into the best hotel in town. We were welcomed with the same warmth that was extended to rich Scandinavian visitors en route to the southern fleshpots.

A small problem faced us when, a few days later, we came to cross the river Schwartau towards the end of a day's walk. Heavy rains had flooded the entire valley and we waded knee

deep 100m down the track before reaching the bridge over the river. After a change of socks and getting redirection help from a lady walking in the woods we reached our guest house in Bad Schwartau. A few days later the walk back to Lubeck airport was enlivened by the company of the principal flautist of Kiel State Orchestra who, like so many Germans, spoke good English.

Another trip took us from Nassau in the Lahntal (the Lahn is an easterly tributary of the Rhine) through the Taunus hills to the northern outskirts of Frankfurt. It was cold and cloudy as we approached the summit of the Grossen Feldberg, at 878m the highest point in the Taunus. On this last stretch we were most curious to discover the Weilquelle (which I had been unable to translate) – it turned out to be the spring which was the original water supply to a large Roman fort which commanded the heights 2000 years ago. The summit of the Feldberg is a great disappointment, with large car parks and telecommunications towers, but even on a cold day there were many people running, walking and mountain biking through the woods.

Feeling the need for a little sun, we rented an apartment above the Bodensee (Lake Constance) which is really the German Riviera. The plan was to walk from Engen to Konstanz. We found the markers had changed to a red and white rhombus (or diamond) on a yellow background, the route here being contiguous with part of the Freiburg-Bodensee cross route through the Schwarzwald.

Our first day from Engen was a washout, but we did make the summit of the Hohenhewen (846m) before having to abandon in the incessant rain. Happily that was the only bad day and the succeeding day took us over a series of tor like hills and ridges, notably the Hohenstoffeln (844m), where we were pleased to sign the Gipfelbuch (the first English names) to

prove our passage. Most of these rocky hills had the remains of castles on which we could clamber. Beyond Singen we would highly recommend the path to Konstanz above the Marienschlucht and Mainau Island as a fine bit of the German equivalent of Victorian path engineering across difficult terrain. Here we met a Dutch couple who had walked from Maastricht to Bodensee in two months.

While in this area we would also recommend the boat trip down the river from Schaffhausen to the Rheinfall. We sat in the sun on the top deck and were surprised when, following an unintelligible announcement, everybody got up. We sat still and were eventually commanded to go downstairs by an officer. Meekly obliging, we were pleased we did, because the roof then came down hydraulically by two metres to enable the boat to pass underneath a low, old medieval bridge. Last down – first up, so we then sat in towel-less good seats for the remainder of the trip! The Rheinfall is a waterfall about 50 metres high which stops boats going through from Basle to the Bodensee.

To date we have covered only about 400km of the 2100km within Germany and Switzerland, and if we are still going, we can always then press on with the other 4000km to complete the route from Lapland to Sicily.

ALTA VIA ONE – THE DOLOMITES

Paul Goulding

I first mooted the idea of a long-distance trek through the Dolomites at the end of a trip to Scotland together in the spring of 2001. Gavin and I have long had an annual week's camping and hill-wandering in Scotland, going back for more than twenty years, but I fancied a break with Scottish tradition, and had been reading my old copy of Martin Collins' Cicerone guide 'Alta Via'. Ten days are recommended for AV1, to allow for bad weather and to enjoy it without unduly rushing – September seemed to be the optimal time: settled weather, no problems with snow, and quiet, and so we pencilled it in for the middle two weeks of September 2002. I booked early with Ryanair and got a cheap flight from Stansted to Salzburg, with a return from Treviso at the southern end. The question of whether to use huts or camp en route was settled when our tickets revealed a tight baggage allowance. Alta Via is what it says it is – high – so trips down to nearby towns to restock on food were undesirable, as well as breaking the continuity of the route, so we opted to use the well-spaced huts which are scattered along the route. I was already a member of the Austrian Alpine Club and Gavin joined the CAI (Italian), thereby taking advantage of significant reductions on sleeping and food costs.

During a hectic year of work, the prospect of an idyllic, calm, autumnal traverse through the sunny Dolomites grew steadily in attraction but doubts began to surface as the turbulent alpine weather of that year showed no signs of abating, even by early September: they said Everest had had more successful summit bids than the Matterhorn; the freak floods which submerged Prague also inundated Salzburg (making me wonder if we would even manage the train journey on from there)

and my frequent checks on the 'meteo' on the internet revealed one depression after another rolling over northern Italy. An added frustration was that Gavin had his CAI card stolen barely a fortnight before we were due to go and e-mails in Italian to head office somewhere in Italy drew little response – eventually we got a vague promise that a replacement card might arrive at our first hut on the evening of our first day. The one glimmer of hope was the unexpected word 'anticyclone' appearing in the last meteo before we left, but we were doubtful: we arrived in a wet Salzburg, and the train journey to Villabassa in the Val Pusteria continued damp. On arrival the mist was clinging at half height in the wooded valleys but we found a suitable Gasthaus (one is still under Tyrolean influence at this point: the alternative name for Villabassa is Niederdorf), dumped our gear and sallied forth for a wander through the village. It is always good to absorb the different customs of another country but we were somewhat taken aback to observe two cows peering out of the dining room window of an attractive house on the main street – closer inspection revealed it was in fact a barn with the street facade painted to resemble a superior town residence. Then again, we decided the best place to eat was in a Chinese restaurant, served by German speaking Chinese in northern Italy ... interesting.

Our first day proper dawned damp and misty, but the locals seemed confident that things were going to improve: 'migliore'. We took the bus to the start of the route at Lago di Braies, where the last outpost of civilization before we reached Belluno was blaring out a weather forecast in English. We listened intently but at no point could we determine to which country, or even area, it referred – interesting, but singularly useless. And so we started, past the lake, where the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi used to act as guru to the Beatles, and up the

valley to the Porta Sora L'Forn, from where a ten minute descent leads to Rifugio Biella (2,300m). This stage took just under four hours, and proved to be the only time in the whole trip that we wore our mountain jackets, briefly, to fend off some rain. By the time we reached Biella patches of blue were starting to appear and we began to be hopeful. We didn't know then that we were destined to enjoy a wonderful window in the weather which was to last precisely the length of our trip. At 2 pm at Rifugio Biella however mist was still shrouding the tops, so we marked time for a couple of hours, and read, and planned, and then, with signs that the mist really was lifting, made a late afternoon ascent of the Croda del Becco (2,810m), at the summit of which we sat for half an hour or more amidst chamois, ptarmigan and choughs, absorbing amazing and constantly changing views, from the Pelmo, to the Tre Cime, to the Tyrol, as the clouds closed and parted to reveal spectacular sunbursts and shadows. On our return to the hut we were delighted to find that Gavin's CAI card had arrived via a landrover from Cortina, thanks to the 'posta prioritaria', and with our only remaining task to phone ahead to book the next hut, it was two very happy chappies who retired that night after a fulsome meal.

It is unnecessary to describe the rest of the route in detail as it is well documented in the excellent new Cicerone guide *Treks in the Dolomites* (Martin Collins and Gillian Price) which is an updated version of the aforementioned 'Alta Via'. Suffice to say that day two dawned crystal clear, just on freezing as we set off at a brisk pace for Rifugio Pederu. Forty five minutes later at Sennes we stopped to don shorts and an hour after that we arrived at Pederu just in time to get the taxi-jeep to La Varella, which at 8 euros was very good value, and saves a 500m ascent up a dusty landrover track. We pushed on to Rifugio Lagazuoi by way of the spectacular



Tofane from Lagazuoi

Photo: Gavin Young

Forcella del Lago, a huge cleft in the skyline, followed by a very steep descent down scree to the Lago di Lagazuoi. The final pull up to the Lagazuoi refuge (2,752m) was tiring at the end of a nine-hour day but the reward was a stunning panoramic view of many of the fabled Dolomite peaks, with buttresses, spires and vertical walls soaring above the evening cloud.

Day three was cloudier and we were caught in a mid-height mist as we skirted the southern front of the Tofane, passing much evidence of the fighting between Austrian and Italian troops in the first World War. We took the ski lift up from Passo Falzarego to the Scoiattoli hut where we scrutinized the Cinque Torri nearby and then tackled the Via Ferrata Averau en route to our destination for the day, Rifugio Nuvolau, perched spectacularly at the top of the Nuvolau ridge at 2,575m. Conditions are somewhat spartan at this airy hut, with water

in short supply (indeed one gets the impression that deferring basic bodily functions till another day is welcomed), but the view the following morning from the frost-rimed terrace was almost unbelievable. One departs this refuge with an abrupt descent of a narrow ridge starting about ten paces from the hut, and coordination felt a little dodgy at the beginning of day four as we negotiated the down-climbing with no preliminary warm-up. Once more however the frosty start soon gave way to warm sun and shorts, and once past Passo Giau (2,236m) the scenery changed significantly: the landscape became grassy for the first time, and whilst vast limestone mountains still abounded, they were more dispersed, and greenery took over from limestone bed-rock.

Until we reached the vicinity of the mighty Pelmo that is. From near the Rifugio Citta di Fiume an immense wall of scree and rock rises 1,000m to the 3,168m summit, making Monte Pelmo undoubtedly one of the great peaks of the Dolomites. We skirted its base to reach the Rifugio Passo Staulanga (1,766m) which is privately owned. We had hoped that apart from the Lagazuoi (also private) we would be using only CAI owned huts but when we had phoned ahead from the Nuvolau to book the Coldai hut we were surprised to find that all 88 places were taken. All the huts so far had been pleasantly quiet but this was the weekend. When we suggested the Tissi hut, further on, the guardian at the Nuvolau advised us that this would make an excessively tiring day, so a call to the Staulanga ensued, and despite still being a Saturday there were only about six of us staying overnight. There was the added bonus of an unplanned shower which served to reduce the span of non-wash days considerably.

Day five was dominated by the huge mass of the Civetta as we skirted its western wall: 7km of cliffs towering 1,200m overhead in a succession of slabs, peaks and pinnacles – the

'wall of walls'. Rifugio Vazzoler (1,714m) was our destination today, with its attractive alpine garden, and we were the only two there. We were clearly near the end of the hut season, and here we discovered that the Pramparet hut further south was closing early, necessitating a further change of plan. We decided on a relatively short day six, to the Tome hut on the Passo Duran (1,601m), expecting it to be private, but as we descended to it from above the letters CAI stood out boldly on the roof, and it was a pleasant surprise to find yet another shower, at no extra cost, and they even lit a fire for us in the bedroom, rather welcome as the evenings were undoubtedly a little on the cool side by now. The Passo Duran is regarded as the start of the third and last stage of AV1, and so at 8am on day seven we embarked on the wildest and loneliest stretch of the route.

After a misty start the sun once again obliged as we skirted the M. Tauer massif and after the Pramparet hut the terrain became 'a rocky wilderness, an almost other-worldly landscape of bare, eroded limestone and dolomite' (Collins). We pulled up to the Portella del Piazzadel (2,097m) and then up to the Forcella de Zita Sud (2,395m), beyond which stretched 'a primordial, almost lunar landscape of denuded rock, boulders and scree' (Collins again). From this, the highest point of the day, a seriously jolting descent brought us to the Rifugio Pian de Fontana (1,632m), delightfully situated on a flat grassy shelf high up on the head wall of the Val dei Ross. This is a relatively new refuge, replacing an earlier bivouac hut and it was memorable for the copious food and free flowing vino rosso, decanted straight from the barrel.

By now our thoughts were seriously concentrating on the climax of the whole trip, namely the long via ferrata descent down the south face of the Schiara the following day. Would

the weather hold, or would rain or worse, a storm (with all that metal work) necessitate a cop-out retreat down to the west? To our delight day eight dawned yet again wonderfully clear and so at 7.30am we headed for the Forcella la Varetta, then past the point of no return, the important 1,590m path junction, beyond which the route lay unequivocally before us – a steep ravine between the Schiara and the Pelf, with the Gusela rock needle visible on the skyline. A 700m ascent brought us to the Forcella del Marmol (2,262m), well ahead of guidebook time. To our surprise, mist was swirling in the precipitous gully down the south side of the gap and indeed visibility was much reduced for the duration of the descent. It is arguable whether this added to the sense of seriousness of the via ferrata or whether we were spared the full exposure of the vertiginous walls. Nevertheless it was time to don harness and helmet, fix our new Petzl Zyper kits, pull on some old gloves and go.

It is essential to keep on route and we were initially somewhat concerned that the Marmol bivouac hut didn't materialize within the expected 20 minutes. In fact, it's a lot further along the mountain than we expected and took a good 40 minutes to reach – something worth remembering in these conditions. From then on there is a spectacular 500m descent down ledges and gullies, corners, buttresses and airy traverses, ending at an overhanging cave called the Porton (1,780m). Not having experienced via ferrata climbing before (apart from our trial run on the Averau mentioned earlier) we were pleased how quickly we became proficient at speedily clipping on and off the cables and rungs. Before the trip I had debated whether to simply cobble together some 11mm rope and a couple of karabiners but the special wide-gate self locking krabs, plus of course the friction device which must have the correct diameter rope to be effective, gave a much greater sense of

security. From the Porton it was barely half an hour to the superbly sited Rifugio 7 Alpini (1,490m), set against an amphitheatre of rock walls, where another sociable evening ensued with a party of amiable Italians.

Day nine dawned misty, so sadly we never really got to scrutinize our descent of the day before in any detail and it was clear that the weather was about to turn. We walked all the way to Belluno, spurning guide-book suggestions of catching the bus for the final stage, thereby assuaging, to some extent, our guilt at using taxi-jeps and ski-lifts earlier. So ended a wonderful trip and when I got back home I went back on the internet to check out a web cam facility near Cortina: to my astonishment our route was covered in snow and the ski runs were plastered: winter had arrived.

A LA RECHERCHE DE LA ROCHE PERDU

Dan Homer

Hidden amongst a dusty collection of rock specimens I jealously guard a piece of ancient volcanic tuff. There is nothing remarkable about this obscure sample to excite the professional. Yet this anonymous, pyroclastic fragment is one of my most valued possessions. Any visitor, chancing to examine it, will have me bounding across the room in an instant to reclaim it like some treasured talisman.

It is not a geological specimen. It is a climbing relic – a precious link to a distant but enjoyable period of rock climbing and two early climbing companions. I don't know exactly where it came from, except that it fell from above, parted my hair, and landed amidst a tangle of rope at my feet. It seemed natural to pick it up and keep it.

Curiously, I acquired it at the end of the most discouraging three days of climbing I have ever experienced. I had not known The Dodger and Moleskins for a long period. Yet the mutual understanding that this least successful of our excursions fostered, remains refreshingly clear and the significance of my loose clattering fragment from the past steadily grows.

It was hardly a promising build up to that disastrous long weekend. We were all out of sorts. The Dodger had descended into one of his periodic but unpredictable spells of low spirits. He was taciturn and uncommunicative by nature, unless under the influence of artificial inducements, and I was only just beginning to appreciate that it was best to leave him alone until he had recovered his composure.

Moleskins was uncharacteristically sombre and reflective too. Perhaps he had remembered that it was exactly a year since his near fatal accident at Cloggy. He had been forced to abandon his first attempt at White Slab because he had been

unable to lasso the spike. He had retreated to his second and they had agreed to abseil. In the confusion, Moleskins had failed to clip the figure of eight into the screwgate karabiner on his harness.

As he had stepped backwards into the void he had lost his footing and to his second's horror had disappeared from view. He had cart wheeled a considerable distance down the slab before becoming entangled in the abseil ropes. He had rope-burned to a standstill, hanging free off the end of the slab. He was barely conscious, but alive. Moleskins had been extraordinarily lucky and it had been a long road back.

To complete this introverted trio, I was struggling to come to terms with the severe verbal battering I had received from The Dodger's latest girlfriend at our midweek get together. She was a theological screwball from the States and two pints of IPA had been enough to encourage me to express inadequately researched ideas. It was a mistake that I was not keen to repeat.

However, she was one of the most naturally talented rock climbers I had ever seen. Moleskins and I had secretly nicknamed her the 'Black Magic Woman', or the 'BMW' if The Dodger was present, a reference to the lyrics of the Santana song. She wielded an uncanny power over The Dodger and had spurred him to a number of spectacular, though esoteric ascents on Derbyshire limestone.

There were no indoor climbing walls within range at this time and we had recourse to other alternatives for training. In the outskirts of the city, there was a single arched, railway bridge, above a disused, branch line. Since its abandonment by British Rail and adoption by local climbers, several phases of careful chipping had engineered a network of finger-bending test pieces. It provided us with a perfect training ground, even in the rain.

However, The Dodger disliked the cycle ride to the Railway Bridge. Unless a vehicle was available, he preferred to maintain his fitness by vigorous training sessions in the weights room of a college gym. In retaliation for this self-centred display of muscularity, Moleskins and I conspired to point him at any strenuous or overhanging pitches that we encountered. To our continual disappointment The Dodger exuded a manic enthusiasm, almost amounting to relish, for overhanging, off-width cracks!

In contrast, Moleskins was an elegant and graceful climber. He was technically strong and a delight to watch. He excelled on steep walls, in narrow cracks and awkward corners. His natural ability was complemented by a less disciplined training routine, although he usually managed to squeeze in an afternoon at the Railway Bridge between girlfriends.

I maintained my position as a steady second by adopting the Railway Bridge as a second home. It had done wonders for my finger strength and I could pull off a crucial lead at unexpected moments to keep The Dodger and Moleskins on their toes. Unfortunately, I had only just recovered from the embarrassment of a broken ankle sustained when I had parted company with the parapet of the Railway Bridge during the previous winter.

By that Friday lunchtime there was still no consensus on a venue for the approaching long weekend's vertical activity. Skulking in my flat, I pictured The Dodger sunk in hopeless introspection and Moleskins fingering the ugly scars on his elbows. I was acutely concerned that the BMW might make a surprise appearance and renew her withering attack.

I was considering an escape to the Railway Bridge, when Moleskins telephoned to say that Brain had just arrived. Brain had been one of The Dodger's previous climbing partners. He had left the city some months earlier and this was his first re-

appearance. Moleskins explained that Brain had a car for the weekend and that he wanted to go climbing. He had already contacted The Dodger who, he explained, had immediately brightened at this unexpected prospect of action. "And don't fret yourself! Brain's only looking for *three* people to share petrol" continued Moleskins, "We can rely on him to keep The Dodger's mind firmly focused on rock."

Brain was determined to make the most of his long weekend and had no intention of setting off that night. It was difficult to argue with the vehicle provider so we compromised on an early Saturday morning getaway. Brain's idea of making the most of his weekend started with a systematic tour of the pubs in the city centre. It was an enjoyable evening but an inauspicious way to begin a climbing weekend. We finished up at Moleskins' flat, judging correctly that we would be safer there from any unwanted intruders.

Not surprisingly, our nocturnal excesses turned the projected early start into a more relaxed mid-morning departure. As the car cruised northwards out of the city I asked, "By the way - where are we going?" "Wales" said Brain firmly without looking round. I glanced uneasily at Moleskins, who sat next to me on the rear seat, and remember noticing that he had turned as white as the fateful slab at Cloggy.

It was a quiet journey across the middle of England and I dozed off listening to The Dodger's bizarre taste in music. When the Welsh Borders approached we began to take more interest in our surroundings and the weather. As we drew nearer to Snowdonia, so, predictably, did the base level of the clouds. By the time we had reached Pen y Pass the tops were no longer visible and although it was not raining there was moisture in the air. We parked at the boulders below the Cromlech and sat mournfully gazing out of the windows at the depressing scene.

Brain's half-serious suggestion of going for a walk was greeted with hoots of derision.

It was The Dodger who broke the ensuing silence. "OK - Tremadoc!" he grunted. Tremadoc was always a good bet in indifferent weather. Turning the car around, we re-traced our steps to Pen Y Pass and headed for Bedgelert. In truth, there wasn't much difference between the weather in the Llanberis Pass and the weather at Tremadoc. There never has been on each of the half dozen occasions that I've been persuaded to climb there. It's just that the walk up to the base of the climbs is shorter and at half past five on a dank Saturday afternoon that can be crucial.

After a quick shuffle at the guidebook, The Dodger and Brain selected 'Fang' whilst Moleskins and I decided to take a look at 'G-String'. All went well for a while. The Dodger powered his way effortlessly to the small stance at the top of the first pitch. "Looking good Dodge!" shouted Moleskins over his left shoulder. Moleskins' progress was equally smooth. He had reached a point immediately below the overhang and was fiddling with a runner as Brain set off confidently to join The Dodger.

However, it took Brain an agonising hour to second the first pitch of 'Fang'. The Dodger was fed up and cramped when he finally joined him on the ledge. During this time, Moleskins had sorted out his protection but had failed miserably at the crux of 'G String'. He had lowered off fuming and had handed over to me only to see me fail in turn. He had then decided on one final attempt before dark.

I took up the slack in Moleskins' ropes at the bottom of 'G-String' and enviously watched Brain set off for the top of 'Fang'. As he disappeared around the skyline to the left I remember noticing how speedily he was moving. No sooner had he vanished from sight than I heard him shriek "I'm off!" He

reappeared with equal suddenness and penduluming on his only runner landed neatly at The Dodger's side on the belay ledge! He was shaken but fortunately nothing more than that.

There followed a hiatus of half an hour. Brain could not be induced to try again and The Dodger had spent so long on the tiny ledge that he was completely cramped up and didn't fancy it either. The sight of Brain's tumbling form had also taken the enthusiasm out of our efforts. It would be dark in less than an hour. We decided on a collective retreat.

Brain and The Dodger then got into a furious argument over the size of the piece of gear to be left behind for the abseil. Brain sensibly argued that it should be as large as possible. But The Dodger had led the first pitch and it was his gear. Naturally he wanted to use something small and unimportant. The compromise was less to Brain's satisfaction, but they both retreated safely.

Simultaneously, Moleskins lowered off, untied and began to pull on his ropes. Unfortunately, the last few metres twisted around each other and then jammed solid in the karabiner of his highest runner. No amount of tugging could free them. In the gathering dusk he borrowed The Dodger's ropes and scrambled up to abseil from a tree at the top. After much effort and a lot of swearing, he succeeded in freeing the ropes. He retrieved his runner with the aid of a head torch and rejoined us at the foot of the crags. Then as Moleskins and I heaved on The Dodger's abseil ropes our expressions changed. The trailing rope had jammed too!

This proved to be the final straw. No one was willing to scramble back up again to fix a second abseil - even The Dodger whose ropes they were - and we decided to call it a day and collect the gear at first light. We slept miserably by the car at the side of the road next to the garage. Light drizzle was fall-

ing when we awoke next morning.

We recovered The Dodger's ropes from the top of 'G-String' and his abseil point on 'Fang' in the damp greyness of the early dawn. The immediate prospects were gloomy. The drizzle looked set for the morning. It required a healthy breakfast in the cafe at the garage to revive our flagging spirits. As I supped a mug of steaming tea I casually suggested Gogarth. We had never been to Anglesey. Sea cliff climbing had never attracted us. However, that morning the prospect of better weather overcame any absurd purist feelings we may have entertained. My three companions jumped at the idea.

At first it seemed like a good decision. The drizzle had stopped long before the Menai Bridge and by the time we were coasting across the middle of Anglesey Island the cloud cover ahead was broken by patches of pale blue sky that beckoned us onwards. The final approach dispelled any feelings of reticence we may have held because we appeared to be heading into the mountains, not towards the sea. We parked the car at the end of the track and walked over the rocky crest.

Our first sight of the Main Cliff was inspirational. A vivid ultramarine sea lapped against the base of a huge, sweeping wall of quartzite. The wall was dappled with bright sunlight. We relished the novelty of arriving at the top. However, it soon became apparent that Brain didn't. He had been quiet since breakfast, and as we reached the descent path he set his jaw and announced "I'm not climbing today".

This presented us with a problem. Moleskins and I had already settled on 'Cordon Bleu'. It was a girdle traverse and the guidebook explained that it was a good way for newcomers to see the cliff. It was one of the few routes graded VS, although one short pitch was given a higher technical grade. This should have rung a warning bell, but didn't. We were more concerned that a three-man party on a lengthy traverse would take ages. However,

The Dodger had seen our expressions drop and sportingly decided to spend the day taking photographs. This proved to be a wise move.

Moleskins and I made our way down to the start of 'Cordon Bleu'. The surroundings continued to impress. The first pitch went easily as we traversed out into the middle of the Main Cliff. It reminded us of Derbyshire limestone - even the seagulls! We made mental notes of where key routes crossed the traverse. One of the stances was shared with Pete Crew's original route. We had a good look at that for the future.

After three pitches of traversing, the natural break that the route followed ended at the foot of a short bulging wall. It was my turn to lead. I was oozing with confidence. It was only a short wall. I glanced at the belay and made a couple of brisk moves upwards on small flaky holds.

Although the traversing had been straightforward I soon realised that it had lulled me into a false sense of security. The steepness of the Main Cliff was now overwhelming. The short bulge became an overhanging wall of prodigious proportions and I started dithering on the holds. After ten minutes of half-hearted effort I stepped downwards onto the belay ledge and embarrassingly handed over to Moleskins.

He shrugged his shoulders as we exchanged ends and then set off as confidently as I had done. Glancing upwards he commented, "Steep isn't it!" To my surprise, and I should add a degree of comfort, he did not make speedy progress. He also started dithering and a quarter of an hour later he retreated to the ledge wearing an expression of deep frustration.

His failure provided me with the incentive that I needed to have another go. This time it went better. I committed myself to the moves and reached the lip of the bulging wall without difficulty. I had firmly convinced myself that it would be easier from there onwards. Unfortunately, it wasn't. I clung

precariously for several minutes, vainly trying to work out how I could get my feet from under the bulge onto the slab above. I knew that a fall was imminent but I was powerless to prevent it. One second I was in contact, the next I was plummeting seawards.

Moleskins broke my fall and I began to collect my thoughts. I was swinging wildly upside down a few inches off the belay ledge. When I righted myself, Moleskins was nowhere to be seen. Then I realised that my fall had yanked him from his stance up into the bulging wall. He was wedged there, momentarily speechless and bleeding profusely.

For one awful moment I thought the rope had tangled around his neck and the force of my fall had strangled him. When I lowered him back to the security of the ledge and examined him, I discovered that a small downward pointing spike had pierced the interior of his right ear. If I had slit his throat, there could not possibly have been more blood. "Fucking bastard!" he said, through gritted teeth. I hoped he was referring to the spike and fiddled with my waist knot.

Nothing provides moral encouragement like drawing blood. I have scabbled inadequately with off-width cracks for ages, going nowhere, the hand jams simply refusing to stick. Yet a simple grazed knuckle can act like a wake-up call. Suddenly the jams slot into place and the climbing goes easily although it's never pretty to watch. Significantly this only applies if it is your blood that has been drawn.

On this occasion Moleskins' eyes burned with an intensity that spoke volumes. He attacked the bulge with renewed vigour and had cracked it in seconds. I was left to gaze upwards at his disappearing form dodging the steady drops of blood. He reached the next stance, gave an exhilarating cry and within a couple of minutes I was sitting beside him providing the echo.

It was not simply success that had motivated his shouts. Someone else before us had had problems with this pitch. Jammed in a fissure behind the belay was a huge hexagonal nut. Better still, there was a long tape attached to the nut and dangling from it, deep inside the crack, were several karabiners, a selection of wedges and a figure of eight. We took turns to wriggle bodily into the crack to work the hex free. Eventually it came loose and we recovered the biggest haul of booty we had ever found. In his excitement, Moleskins forgot all about our little contretemps below.

The rest of the route was easy and soon we had rejoined The Dodger and Brain at the top of the descent path. By prior agreement, Moleskins put one arm around my shoulder and I pretended to assist him over the last hundred yards. The Dodger wasn't fooled for a second but the sight of dried blood caking the side of Moleskins' face and neck and staining the sleeve of his T-shirt was too much for Brain. His face told a different story.

Examining the ear in more detail at the car we decided that a stitch might be necessary. Despite vociferous protestations from Moleskins we made our way to Casualty at Bangor Hospital. By an amazing coincidence, and to Moleskins' eternal chagrin, the Nursing Sister on duty recognised him! She had received him the year before when he had been brought in from the accident on White Slab. This sent The Dodger into uncontrollable hysterics. Moleskins was less amused. Brain remained ominously quiet throughout. I cannot remember whether a stitch proved necessary.

From Bangor we agreed to head into the Pass again, this time from the other direction. We spent the evening in a pub in Llanberis and bivouacked at the boulders below the Cromlech. On the Monday morning, Brain was stricken with a crippling attack of diarrhoea. This he blamed solely on "The

proximity of unhealthy water!" We were less convinced, but I have never bivouaced there since. This meant three on a rope because nothing was going to prevent any of the remainder of us from trying to salvage something from the weekend's efforts.

The weather was overcast and dank. There were damp patches shining on the rocks although it clearly hadn't rained since the previous day and we reckoned that conditions were good enough to climb. An unspoken agreement took the three of us to the foot of Dinas Mot and the start of 'Diagonal'.

The first pitch was greasy. The crux traverse needed care. "This is more like it!" said The Dodger. And then my piece of silicified tuff appeared from the heavens. There was a party ahead on 'Superdirect'. Perhaps one of their ropes had dislodged it, perhaps not. I heard it coming a split second before the impact. There was no time for evasive action. I felt a faint breath of air ruffle my fringe and the missile smacked into the coils at my feet!

Carefully examining the ropes, I discovered a neat incision almost severing one of them midway between The Dodger and myself. I picked up the rock and to my astonishment found flecks of melted kernmantle stuck to one edge. I tried to show this interesting gravitational phenomenon to The Dodger but to my disappointment he simply swore in the direction of 'Superdirect'. It was The Dodger's rope.

Only when I joined Moleskins, on his stance above, and after a major surgical reorganisation of the ropes, did it dawn on me how lucky I had been. My helmet was neatly stowed in the boot of Brain's car. Understandably, The Dodger thought that a cranial impact would have been a desirable alternative as he didn't see much further use for two 25m ropes.

These discussions were brought to an abrupt end by the arrival of a few spots of rain. By the time we had all gathered

below the last pitch it was tipping down. The flake crack proved to be an appropriate end to a singularly unsuccessful weekend. All three of us tried it but none of us could make any progress in the deluge. We were forced to resort to an elaborate system of combined tactics. This enabled me to establish a footing in the crack. Several points of aid finally got me to the top.

Brain was smiling to himself in an irritating way when we reached the car and he wouldn't let us get in without first stripping off our sodden clothes in the layby. In the process I discovered the piece of rock in my pocket. I took it out and was about to hurl in over the wall into the streambed when a voice in my head said "Keep it!" I packed it into the zip pocket of my rucksack instead.

This ended our worst Welsh weekend. If Brain ever climbed again, it was certainly not with Moleskins, The Dodger nor me. However, the remaining triumvirate gained much from the experience. Gogarth became a favoured haunt and within a year we had enticed the Fell & Rock from their mountain stronghold in the Lakes and organised the club's first official, Sea Cliff Meet.

The Dodger, Moleskins and I climbed regularly and far more successfully over the next three years and to our collective relief, the BMW returned to her home across the Atlantic. We were disappointed to hear that she had thrown away what could have been a brilliant career in sport rock climbing by eloping with an NHL ice hockey star.

The prospects for the future looked bright. Vague plans were aired for 'something big'. Then, tragically, the news of Moleskins' death in an avalanche in the Peruvian Andes reached England. It was a shattering blow. The Dodger sought refuge in a post-doctoral assignment to the States and shortly afterwards, I too left England for Africa.

The climbing has not stopped with the loss of my friends and after nearly two decades working as a geologist in Africa, I returned to the UK with a substantial collection of rock specimens. Occasionally a visitor glances over them and makes a query – ore and mineral samples exhibit attractive shapes and hues. I try to remember which mine a particular sample originated from and then, suddenly, my eyes fall on a dusty fragment of Llanberis tuff and reassuringly I notice that the bits of sheath from The Dodger's rope are still there.

THE SALVING HOUSE, IN BORROWDALE

25 May 1953 – 25 May 2003, and still counting ...

George Watkins

The Salving House, in Borrowdale, is opposite the shop
It sticks its bottom in the road, and makes the traffic stop.
The subsequent congestion causes passers-by to swear;
But if you climb in Borrowdale, the Salving House is
where ...

... you meet your friends, and plan your route, and make
yourself at home,
And dry your things, and eat your tins, and never feel alone.
The kitchen's full of microwaves, the fireplace beckons wide,
So when it's raining out of doors, you cook yourself inside.

The Salving House, the Salving House, there's nowhere like
the Salving House.

There never was a climbing hut so handy as the Salving House:
The Royal Oak's across the road, the Scafell keeps good beer,
And when you're out in Borrowdale, the Salving House is near.

The Salving House is local stone (it's quite devoid of brick),
Its roof is slate, its walls are white, and thirty inches thick.
In times gone by its rough, flagged floor accommodated sheep,
But climbers go there nowadays to fester, eat, and sleep.

The Salving House, the Salving House, there's nowhere like
the Salving House.

There never was a climbing hut so quirky as the Salving
House;
But though the men's convenience may have no space to spare,
If time runs short in Borrowdale, the Salving House is there,

Though Castle Rock of Triermain can reasonably claim
A crag rat's close affection, and White Ghyll can do the same,
When Gillercombe is what you choose, or Dale Head-Cat
Bells-Stair,

Or Langstrath-up-to-Scafell Pike's the stroll that you prefer;
When Shepherd's Crag is warm and dry, the aneroid Set Fair,
You ought to start from Borrowdale: the Salving House is
there.

The Salving House, the Salving House, there's nowhere like
the Salving House,

There never was a climbing hut so handy as the Salving House.
It's where you want it, as you like it. Come on, now, declare:
"We like to climb in Borrowdale. The Salving House is there."

WHERE DID IT START? WHERE HAS IT BEEN?

A Lakeland love affair and the joys of the Journal

Lyn Wilson

Our family summer holiday in the Yorkshire Moors ended on 1 September 1939. Our home was in north London, and we evacuated three days before the start of the War to an uncle and aunt in Kendal. I was 7 years old. Suddenly the world was upside down; and I was sent to a boarding school at Arnside, arriving with trunk and gas mask. My parents worried over the expense of £35 per term.

Over the six years of the war, I learned poetry and spent summer afternoons as long stop – an ideally idle post from which to gaze at the Lakeland fells. This unknown geography was represented in a three dimensional relief map on the school dining room wall showing the effects of what one learned later, were the three main rocks, Skiddaw and Coniston slates divided by the Borrowdale volcanics, which had been pushed up into a pudding bowl and then eroded into a clockface of valleys.

The winters were cold. We skated on the tarns and lakes, even Morecambe Bay froze across to Grange and the tide created 'ice bergs', while at night in January 1941 the northern lights flickered brilliantly over the blacked out world below – a world into which German bombers sometimes penetrated to Barrow.

At Easter, age 9, I wrote to my father, a doctor in the blitzed east end of London, and I have the pencil letter in front of me, describing an adventure which started in a Ribblesdale bus with, I think, 35 seats and into which, my mother's diary records, there were 84 passengers which made the ascent from Kendal up Beastbanks very slow: "I climbed 3 mountains on Thursday, Helvellyn 3118 ft, Low Man and Whiteside. There

was snow on them. We began at Thirlspot and came down at Wythburn or somewhere. It was very windy on the tops. We had dinner at about 2000 ft. The bits near the top were pretty rough going as there were glaciers and boulders. I saw Red Tarn all frozen over, Swirral Edge and Striding Edge". Little did I then know that I was looking onto the site of Charles Gough's death in 1805 and where his dog kept watch for three months – a site commemorated by Canon Rawnsley's memorial and cairn – a dog lauded by Wordsworth (*Fidelity*), Walter Scott (*Helvellyn*) and, finally, Thomas Wilkinson (*Eamont Vale*), and the latter attended the interment of Gough's skeleton at Tirril Quaker burial ground.

Back at school the Lakeland panorama took on new meaning: Black Combe to the west, Coniston Old Man, the Rydal Fells, the Kentmere hills up north and, nearer, Whitbarrow Scar and Benson Knott over Kendal.

In 1943 and 1944 we had a summer holiday at the Buttermere Hotel, now the Youth Hostel, where the three Edmondson sisters reigned. In the lounge was a glass-fronted bookcase with all the copies of the *Fell & Rock Journal* – absolute magic. And staying at the hotel was the president of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, Jack Davis, while along the lake at Lower Gatesgarth we discovered A. C. Pigou and Claude Elliott, shortly to become President of the Alpine Club (a direct link, though I did not then know it to Geoffrey Winthrop Young and the Pen-y-Pass parties with George Mallory, George Trevelyan, Jack Longland and other greats – parties which started in 1907 in the same year that the Club's first *Journal* appeared). They took me to the crags in Birkness Combe, generally sodden, but blissfully happy with wet sandwiches and a rebelliously knotting manilla rope. And then, one memorable day, having some petrol for our 1924 Austin 12 we reached Glaramara and the Doves Nest Caves

where I, aged 12, with a handful of candles, led my father, the Marshall Professor of Economics at Cambridge and the Provost of Eton through and up and out of the caves. The next day I was allowed to walk alone to Great Gable via Warnscale Bottom – where the ground was thick with orange caterpillars and every footstep squashed dozens – and there on the summit was the F&RCC war memorial and GWY's famous lines, modelled on President Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg: "Upon this mountain we are met today to dedicate this space of hills to freedom ..."

I was hooked. Our family was reunited in the south in 1945 and my schooling continued up the Thames. Not a hill to be seen! The library introduced me to Whympster's *Scrambles* and there were many of Frank Smythe's books. One master was keen on rock climbing and my father, in conjunction with the Fell & Rock, identified a member, newly returned from the Burma campaign, Eric Furness, who was willing to join four boys at Wasdale for a week. He walked from Keswick railway station to Wasdale Head where I met him, and in the darkness his tricouni nails created sparks off the road: proper climbing boots! We stayed at Bowderdale, now Joss Naylor's farm, and there were also some Cambridge undergraduates. On a wet day we were ahead in Kern Knotts Chimney when one of the students shouted, "David, I need your dad's Eighth Army to give me a shove" – Monty's son. The new boy's guide was John Barford's *Climbing in Britain*, a Pelican paperback of 1946 costing 1/6 (9 pence), one of the first outputs from the newly formed British Mountaineering Council in 1944.

As a schoolboy I walked with the London section – the north and south Downs and the Buckinghamshire fields. It wasn't the same, but the adults were proper climbers. One, who seconded my application for F&RCC membership in 1950 was R.G. Mears who worked for British Ropes Ltd., and I

came across him recently when reading *The First Descent of the Matterhorn* (Alan Lyall, Gomer 1997) where his article in the *Alpine Journal* 1951 is summarised, *The climbing rope defined*. I paid £15 for Life Membership of the Club. Thank you F&RCC.

Since those days long ago walking and climbing continued – interrupted by work overseas and family commitments – Wales, Skye, the Alps, Norway and Scotland, becoming a Munroist in 1994 (F&RCC Journal, No 75, 1996, *Peaks and Troughs of the Munroist*). But the Lakeland landscape, fells, valleys, farms, sheep and crags always remain vivid; slogging across the Cairngorms, sweating in an Alpine hut, sledging in Spitsbergen, or mowing the lawn one can see so clearly every hill and every changing view – from the classic Lakeland rounds such as the Fairfield Horseshoe or Chris Bonington's recommended trip from Mosedale on the watershed of the river Caldew, to the leisurely wander at Loweswater or lonely walks at Shap; the picnics with family and friends on hillside or by tarn or burn; and relive the joys of being young and fit on Dow Crag, Gimmer, the Napes, Pillar and Scafell. And there are the recollections of wind and rain, sun and snow, and the ever changing light – and the joy of throwing back one's anorak hood after a storm.

It's eventide, the shadows lengthen and I have my slippers by the fire. Many are familiar with the Harrow School song, 'Forty years on when afar and asunder, Parted are those who are singing today' in which the fifth verse is especially apposite:

Forty years on, growing older and older,
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,
Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder,
What will it help you that once you were strong?

Close at hand is the complete set of the Journals – what a delight: for example, the obituary to John Wilson Robinson in Volume 1, and one may dream among the advertisements of Frederick's Gold Medal ice axes from 18/- (90 pence) and James Carter's climber's boot, cost £1-19-6 (£1-97p.) per pair, and the Sun Hotel at Coniston offered bed and breakfast for 3/6 (18 pence) with hot and cold baths (cold baths for the public school brigade and officers of Empire?). Volume 2 gives us the creation of the Robinson Cairn by W. P. Haskett-Smith, George Seatree, Cecil Slingsby and L. J. Oppenheimer and 'volunteers'. Advertisements for hotels and farm house accommodation, for cameras and climbing gear and for guide-books do not appear after 1942 and the wartime paper shortages.

The love affair with Lakeland is enriched by all those contributions to the Fell & Rock Climbing Club Journals since 1907, and the outstanding photography throughout, encapsulated perhaps by the frontispiece poem in Volume 2 of which the first verse is:

My heart's in the Lakeland. I cannot breathe here
 In this smoke-laden city with air seldom clear.
 My heart's in the Lakeland, 'tis there I would be,
 'Midst the rocks and the fells where the wind wanders free.

And let me conclude this nostalgia with the first verse of Geoffrey Winthrop Young's *A Hill*:

Only a hill: earth set a little higher
 above the face of earth: a larger view
 Of little fields and roads: a little nigher
 to clouds and silence: what is that to you?
 Only a hill; but all of life to me,
 up there, between the sunset and the sea ...

THE TUNNEL

Maureen Linton

Many years ago, during a gloriously warm and sunny June Meet at Raw Head, the conversation not unnaturally turned to members' plans for the approaching summer holidays. It transpired that Eric Walker and myself had some spare days in hand as we both had longer holidays than our 'other halves', Doreen and Don, with whom we had already arranged holidays. Neville and Betty Morton, two much respected elder members, overheard our discussion and invited Eric and me to join them on their already planned trip to the Silvretta Alps. We were delighted to accept; logistics were worked out and it was arranged that we should join them on an agreed date at a certain railway station in Austria.

We travelled by train and ferry but, as no couchettes were available at short notice, we spent a less than comfortable night sitting up in the train. At daylight, we unpacked food from our rucksacks, spread out our belongings and settled to breakfast. The train began to slow down and a sudden doubt entered my mind – were we to meet the others at Bludenz or Breganz? I was quite clear about the B and the Z at either end; it was the bit in the between I was unsure of. Eric could not remember either. The train was now entering a station and our carriage window glided passed Betty waiting on the platform. It was Bludenz. Frantically gathering our belongings, we virtually fell out of the train clutching gaping rucksacks, ice-axes, clothing, remnants of food and my boots which I had taken off overnight. When Betty saw us, she shouted urgently for us to hurry as Neville was trying to hold up the bus for the next stage of our journey. We ran out of the station and into the street hanging on to our gear and hoping that we were not

dropping anything on the way. I was still in stockinged feet but we caught the bus which brought us some 30 miles to its destination at the top of the Bielerhone Pass.

Our arrival at the Madlener Hut was more dignified than our arrival in Bludenz. The hut lay not far from the road at the top of the Pass and, after other passengers had dismounted, the driver indicated that we should remain seated. He then drove down a short track and deposited us right at the door of the hut before starting his return journey to Bludenz.

It was a superb area and, after a couple of days in the vicinity of the Madlener, we moved up to the Wiesbadener and Saarbrucker Huts. Despite mixed weather, we enjoyed excellent days and good snow conditions in the Piz Buin group along the Austro-Swiss border. We then returned to the Madlener with the intention of spending the remainder of the holiday on the opposite side of the Pass. However, we felt that we deserved an off day and we also needed more lunch supplies. Neville and Betty were happy to stay around the hut while Eric and I would descend to the valley to replenish our stores at Partenen and then walk back.

The village of Partenen lay about 10 miles away down the very tortuous main road but we could shorten this distance by using footpaths which cut off the road bends. From the hut, our way led down through forest eventually joining the road by a reservoir from where another path descended the hillside then continued over meadows to the village. Here, after indulging in a lunch of steak and chips as a change from hut food, we started to explore our surroundings. We were particularly fascinated by the water-controlled mountain railway. Each of its two cars carried a large water tank and, while the car at the top station was having its tank filled, the one at the bottom was drained. The heavier car then descended pulling up the lighter one and the process was repeated. We would

have liked to watch for longer but had to think of our long walk back.

Near to the lower station was displayed a large panoramic diagram of the area showing footpaths and ski-runs. We noticed that there seemed to be a fairly level track from the upper station traversing the hillside as far as the reservoir from where we would shorten our return journey and, as it was now raining, it seemed a good idea to take this route back. But first to the bakery which was our real purpose in coming to Partenen. The day was grey and damp and the bakery smelt warm and delicious. We bought our loaves of black bread then noticed some very tempting apple strudel on display. As our journey back would now take less time, we should arrive earlier at the hut and could surprise Betty and Neville with something for afternoon tea. So we bought a large portion of strudel.

The loaves fitted easily into Eric's rucksack but the strudel needed more gentle treatment and had to be carried on the flat of my hand in the manner of a wine waiter balancing his tray. In the falling rain, we were not surprised to be the only people on the uphill train and the strudel could enjoy a seat to itself but, at the top, a crowd of very damp people were jostling for places on the downhill ride. The hillside here was very steep and rocky with thick undergrowth between the crags and outcrops but our path was clear. Starting beside the railway, it curved out of sight round some rocks. Carefully balancing the strudel, we took this path which, just round the bend, merged with the lines of a narrow gauge railway. This, in turn, disappeared straight into the mountain through a door built into the rock face. This could not be right, so we returned to the upper station but there was no sign of any other path and nobody to ask as the train was already on its way down.

We returned to the door and this time opened it. Ahead of us stretched a tunnel dimly lit by well spaced electric lights

fixed to the bare rock walls. The lighting suggested that perhaps this really was the way so, leaving the door open, we entered the tunnel and started walking along the rail track. As we progressed, the patch of grey daylight in the open doorway behind us grew smaller and smaller and our conversation became quieter and quieter till the last speck of daylight disappeared and our conversation died out completely. The only diversion on this seemingly endless walk was the exercise of transferring the strudel from one hand to another to rest my wrists.

After some time our way was barred by another door which opened to reveal yet more dimly lit tunnel stretching ahead. We walked on in silence although by now we were both wondering what would happen if a truck came along. We had good headroom and enough width to walk comfortably side by side but there was little room between the rails and the tunnel walls. We did not communicate our fears, in fact the strudel was the only member of the party apparently unconcerned. Thinking back, it was like a scene from 'Lord of the Rings'.

Eventually we came to yet another door blocking our way but this one opened on to daylight. The tunnel had now become a gallery cut into the hillside. On our right was the rocky wall of the mountain, overhead a metal roof on which the rain was thundering down, on the open side to our left the ground sloped away below us and, from the edge of the roof, the rain formed a curtain of falling water. Well at least we would stay dry on this stretch so we kept going, although the strudel was now beginning to wilt a little. When we reached the end of the gallery, we saw that the rail track continued along the hillside but some distance away across open ground we could see the dam of the reservoir. Leaving the track we headed straight for it.

The rain was less heavy than the noise on the gallery roof had led us to expect, but it was still wet and the ground underfoot very boggy. We had to negotiate some fences, manoeuvres which the strudel did not enjoy very much, but finally we reached the dam and, after a short walk along the road, joined the forest track for the climb under the dripping trees up to the hut. By now the strudel was distinctly soggy, although it was still in one piece. It had lost its crisp, shiny gloss but it kept a brave face and was no doubt anticipating the pleasure it was about to bring to Betty and Neville.

We reached the hut wet and rather cold. Betty and Neville sitting by the stove in the common room were glad to see us back so soon. "We've brought you strudel for afternoon tea" we announced triumphantly. "How nice dear" said Betty "But we've already had our tea".

Footnote

Later study of a local map showed that there really was another path, although not a well defined one. It apparently started some way above the top station, but it would have been a very wet walk and the tunnel did keep both us and the strudel dry for about half the journey. We also came to the conclusion that the tunnel must have had some connection with the construction of the reservoir and its dam and that the rail track was therefore no longer in use. But we never found out for sure.

Me?

I like to run. Nothing competitive. Couldn't stand the crowds of the London Marathon. But out there on the hills on my own, that's what I like.

The way my feet find their way. How my eyes are measuring the ground ahead so I know where each footfall will land, not thinking about it, just conscious of this process co-ordinating itself without me bothering. And there's that sense of floating too, like neither the rhythm nor me will ever need to stop. I like that.

Weekends are the best, when I can really put the miles, the hours in, but evenings too, short, but they keep me alive. I get home after work feeling wasted and wound up tight as a clockwork spring, and maybe it's raining, and then it takes a real effort to get out the running shoes and stretch and change. But it's worth that effort to burn off all the dross, winding down into that warmth in every muscle and joint afterwards. Sometimes an evening stuck in front of the TV can be very tempting, nice and undemanding. But I'm always glad when I don't give in, when I do get out for a good burn.

I suppose that's why I keep the dog. I mean, I might be a bit reluctant to go but there's never any doubt that he's keen after being cooped up in the house all day. He's a big Black Lab who's not as daft as he looks. But he's a problem at times, no doubt about it; no traffic sense at all, and a tendency to go huffing off after some scent or other, then race about desperately looking for me. He gets me out though and I need that and he does too.

The really good thing about running with him is that he won't chase anything, well nothing that hasn't been thrown. I

suppose it's the retriever in him. He's just not interested in livestock. I had a Doberman once and she was hopeless. Trained in every other way, but I just could not stop her chasing things. Ducks, squirrels, hedgehogs, sheep and cattle if she got the chance, she'd chase anything and killed a cat once. A right stroppy bitch! And I've known a few in my time! She just had to stay at home in the end when I went fell-running. My ex has got her now. They deserve each other

But the Lab, he's different. Sometimes I'll run with him on a length of climbing rope with loops at either end and a karabiner to clip him on. Makes a good lead. But I try to keep him off-road and off the lead as much as possible, slinging it around me like a bandolier. Otherwise it's like he sees it as a challenge, gets his shoulder into it and pulls like a bloody husky.

The only real problems we've had are with cattle. He'll be trotting along ignoring them but cows with calves just don't like him around; I've had my legs taken out from under me once when I was thinking about something else and the dog put me between him and a cow that was seeing him off. I was 'dead-buttocked' for 20 minutes.

Another time we were running the Three Peaks and were coming down from Pen-y-Ghent heading for the viaduct. I don't know if it was the time of year or what but we were crossing this field of bullocks when they started getting frisky. A couple started chasing the dog and then the whole lot of them were after him as he made for the stile in the corner. Problem was, as they converged on him it was me they were cutting off. I had to run like hell to make it, my foot just hitting the bottom step as the dog left it to leap over the top. I looked back over a sea of black and white backs and heads and horns squeezing into the field corner.

Bulls have been the worst though. What is it with these farmers who put bulls to their cows in fields with public foot-

paths running through them and never put up any warnings? I mean the animal may seem all right but they're too damned unpredictable. A farmer, neighbour of mine when I lived in Wales, told me he was leading his bull along nice and quiet one day when it just tossed him, out of the blue, straight into the air. He came down on the other side of the beast, on his feet and still holding the chain to the nose-ring. The bull took no more notice of him so he just walked on, leading it, no trouble, like nothing had happened. You can never tell with bulls.

I had this flat once that was fine for running past the Big House and through the Deer Park, and there were canal tow-paths and footpaths, that linked up into some decent circuits. It wasn't much good in winter though, with damn few well-lit, quiet lanes for those months when I work all the daylight hours. I notice exhaust fumes more in the cold air too.

I did manage to find one route. It ran across fields lit by distant street lamps, and I tried to use it as much as the weather and work allowed. There were cattle in those fields, but they'd never taken any notice of the dog or me before so I thought nothing of running through there at night. Well, until one night.

I'd cleared the stile from the lane and could follow the track's shadow-marking worn in the grass. Most of the cows were lying down; humped shapes chewing the cud. One was right next to the track and, as the dog passed, it shook its head and stood up. I was level with it when I realised that what it had swinging between its back legs wasn't an udder. I moved up a gear, sharpish and belted along a fence line which stretched all the way to the next stile. But suddenly it jinked away into the darkness and I carried straight on up a bit of a mound. 'No problem, don't panic,' I thought, 'just bear left and you'll pick it up again,' then sank knee-deep into sludge. The air was filled with this god-awful stink that told me it wasn't just mud. I

struggled another step and nearly went face down in it, then twisted to squint over my shoulder expecting to find the bull bearing down on me. He'd barely taken a couple of steps and was now standing still, chuffing clouds of hot breath about his forelegs in the neon light. I waded out of the manure heap the way I'd come, picked up the path again and squelched over to the exit stile where the dog met me. There's a lesson in that somewhere, I told him ... 'when you're wading through shite don't keep going' ... or something like that.

Bit of luck really. Bad luck. It was a heavily-built brute, which would have taken a while to build up speed enough to catch me even if it had the inclination. Being so close, I hadn't hung around long enough to weigh that up.

We had another run-in with a bull, which was much leaner and meaner, in the Peak. Again the dog triggered it. We were in the middle of a huge field, with a couple of beasts trotting about a bit alarmed, when this bull I'd not spotted burst out of a cluster of cows, his head going down. The dog gave up trying to piss on every cowpat and made for the gate easily, leaving me with a ton and a half of beef bearing down on me. I didn't have much hope of outrunning it but swerved and dodged the first rush like a matador. It turned on me again slowing to tighten the circle, before I broke out and into a run again. I side-stepped and weaved like I was in some kind of crazy dance but it still kept on me, near enough to touch, with the dog running round us barking, frantic.

Then the ring in its nose glinted close to me as its bulk rushed past and a picture flashed into my mind from a kid's book: a farmer leading a bull by the nose, a rope clipped into its nose ring. Could I do that, with the dog's lead? All my dodging, jinking and turning was getting me no nearer the gate, and all the time I risked slipping on the damp grass and falling under those hooves. I unclipped the lead.

As he turned again, with a toss of his head, raking a horn at me, I side-stepped and held the karabiner open, reaching out and down to clip the nose ring as he rushed past. The krab and my knuckles slid over a steaming nostril in missing, and the bulk of his shoulder bounced me horizontally a couple of metres as he turned to stamp me into the ground. I fell clear, rolled, and was up again to meet him, slotting the krab through the nose ring and stepping neatly aside, though his whole right flank brushed past me.

Then the lead was ripped out of my hand.

It swung free for an instant before a heavy foreleg stamped down on the trailing end and the bull stopped dead. His head was bowed down to the pain of that tugging pressure on the nose-ring, and I ran for the gate with no more thought of leading him anywhere than of flying. The dog cleared the gate just before me, just as relieved.

We both looked back over the distance I'd sprinted to where the milling cattle bawled and the bull stood unmoving, frozen. We were both panting. I noticed the grass-stains on my knees and elbows. Then suddenly I was shaking with laughter, tears rolling down my face. The dog seemed to join in, grinning and lolling his tongue. I couldn't help it. It was just so funny seeing that bull, kind of switched off after he'd come so close to killing me. I just leaned on the gate and let it take me until I was all laughed out.

I waited.

The bull didn't move.

I still waited.

I couldn't see any farmhouse around. Perhaps it would be days before anyone checked up on him. Would he be in pain all that time or would he get used to it?

I didn't know. The cattle had stopped bawling. Everything seemed very still.

And then there was only one thing that I could do.

I told the dog to stay, climbed over the gate and walked back towards the bull.

I remember the coarse tawny hide and the solid muscle twitching under it. The rope was pinned about two-thirds along its length, squashed down into the mud but the handle loop was free so I could pull it round from under the bull's hoof. I moved slow and careful with an eye on the eye watching me. As the rope came free, I was ready to run but the bull just lifted his head and took a step forward. So I moved with it, slowly, bringing his head around towards the gate.

We walked slow and easy to the gate. I climbed over without loosing the rope, then reached through the bars to unclip the karabiner. There was a moment when I thought the nose of the karabiner was going to catch on the ring but it snicked and was free. The bull stood still for a long minute then wandered off looking puzzled. I watched him go, then turned for home, talking a lot of nonsense to the dog about what had happened as we ran, like you do.

Since then I haven't pushed my luck. Just stick to the high fells. I can cope with sheep.

Yeah, I like to run ... sometimes it seems ... like ... like ... it's just ... the right thing to do ...

Yeah, make mine a pint.

SECRET GARDEN

Dave Rhodes

Apart from the Northern Corries of the Aviemore Cairngorms: where to go, where to park and how long it takes, it is likely that the Costa Blanca venues are better known to many than North East Scotland. Yet at Karn House one is in day-reach of a score each of gullies, waterfalls, crags, Munros and Corbetts. A hundred pins in the map: treasures, many with the wrapping paper still on. This piece is about the winter ice, the bright spring traverses and the warm crystalline summer crags in Karn's northern back garden.

The ground rules governing the selection below are firstly that all are north and west of the A9, that is, there are no Cairngorm locations. Secondly that in every case the driving distance is no more than a good hour from Karn, the equivalent of Leeds-Dales; Helsby-Gogarth; Ambleside-Wasdale for a day out from home. In Karn's case, half of that is usually on dual carriageway and with light traffic. This piece asks to be read with an atlas or the 1:200,000 map. For GPS users, the prefix to grid references is NN until Dalwhinnie. Thereafter it is NH. References and a mileage figure thus: (xy; z) are points at which to leave a car.

Starting in the SW on the A86 at Laggan. Three locations, not counting Creag Dubh of Newtonmore. The Laggan-side road was for a long time highly accidented, in both meanings; indeed George Bower writes in an early FRCC Journal of a motor-cycle tour, 'We escaped with our lives, and were thankful'. Now, honestly, it has undergone a major overhaul, progressing from the west and the last awkward section in Strath Mashie is finally being subdued. A straight run then to Aberarder (483873; 34) for Creag Meagaidh. No more winter camping, no more late 7am start

from Kingussie YH. Not just in winter, when our own members are still adding new routes on this superb cliff but also for the big spring traverse: Carn Liath right along to Beinn a'Chaorainn is a spectacular day.

Four miles further west Luiblea (433831; 38) is the track-end for Binnein Shuas and its south-facing Ardverikie Wall: classic HS and these days expect queues at peak periods. A good white road approach, hardly long enough for bikes with the bother of lifting them over the deer-fence gate half way in.

Leaving A86 in Laggan village for Garva Bridge (522947; 31) on the upper Spey. Expecting to stop there we had taken bikes but found that the asphalt continues to (468959; 34) and the Corrieyairack Corbett cluster is right there. Beyond, General Wade's Military Road zigs steeply to the pass and Real Bikers do carry up and over it (not for little people). There is a warning by Melgarve of a dodgy and crucial bridge over a gorge down the other side, for them. We enjoyed quite enough of its bouldery surface walking back down it on our side. There at the head of Corrie Yairack on Sron a' Bhuirich are dark wet crags. If they froze the road is low enough to be likely to stay open. Nothing more known there.

A similar distance south on A9 is Dalwhinnie level crossing (633846; 32) for the Loch Ericht-side white road to the Ben Alder playground. With the Leachas ridges and Lancet Edge, there is another big place to be. Bikes are needed and the road is smooth. I make a point of mentioning the new Swiss Gothic gatehouse built right across the road just out of sight of the station, part of the rebuilt millionaire estate. Frontal first impressions are discouraging but walk through the iron turnstile on the right hand, turn and from the inside open the blank wooden gate to take the bikes through. We met a family party with geared-up children who were turning back, dismayed. Don't. Incidentally Karn does have a lockable bike

shed, and although using bikes for access is not everyone's cup of tea they save a lot of time, even making the impossible possible.

North of Aviemore now but not far: a crag. Turn west before Daviot on the A9 and drive the B851 south west up Strathnairn to the RSPB carpark at Loch Ruthven (638281; 35). In the direction of Stac Gorm south west are outcrops: Tynrich Slabs (632274). There are a score of routes, mainly E-numbers, on three crags.

The best is yet to come. Across the Great Glen is Easter Ross, the secret garden. For this the physical barrier of Loch Ness has to be turned. But the Kessock Narrows bridge is a mere 32 miles of dual carriageway from the hut, followed by the new road across the Black Isle, so avoiding Inverness. Glen Strathfarrar, Strath Conon, Fannich, Wyvis and away north Alladale make a hand of cards westward with their intervening ridges, and have most of the fun. They, seen from Little Wyvis, instigated this piece. December 1st: snow, minus ten and anticyclonic, and seemingly every mountain there is was on show that day. Sgurr na Lapaich south in yellow dazzle, holding court. Liathach rawboned and stark. Beetling Beinn Dearg and satiny Sgurr Mor: the rough and the smooth. Dozens more, everywhere. Below, purple-brown moor zone descending to woods then strath floors: palest green and still as glass, hoar frost never touched by the straw sunlight, quietly building ice from day to day as air slides off the snowfields, pooling; pencilled smoke. "There, now" he said, saying it all. "They've got to know about this" I said. "Why?" came the reply!

Conditions for ice do well here. Cold darkness lags late into morning even more than in an English January. Days are short, the angle low. Northerly arctic or easterly continental airstreams are little warmed by the shallow unheated North

Sea, just a few bubbles of snow-cloud. Snowfields once set self-refrigerate. High in Sgurr Mor's north eastern corrie névé firming and ice forming can go quite slowly at this season but at mid height, where streams still run and fall over typical glacial trough-sides, then wind can layer spray-ice thickly onto chasm sides; the Glen Doll phenomenon. Strath Conon is good for this. Over in cloudier Wester Ross there is more loose water but fewer spells of icy wind to use it. Here in Easter Ross low chilling can continue through February and the high corries firm up as the sun strengthens. In an ideal world. As it was last in 2001.

The winter weakness is the relative dryness. Two fifths of western precipitation and cold winds may find too little flowing water; calm spells create too little spray. But once into summer that means sunlit dry rock, less gardening and drier ground, noticeably more so than in the west. Crag-foot basking may be down to Mod-diff. You have only to look at the vegetation here on the Dry Side. Now to details.

Glen Strathfarrar is important. Car access at the locked gate at Inshmore (396405; 52) is from 9am (not Tues. and Sun. mornings) to teatime. Ring the lodge doorbell. Winter needs a call (Struy 260). Asphalt road (224393; 67) and walk up the Allt Toll a'Mhuic by track and stalker's path to the corrie. Glen Strathfarrar holds the cold and Sgurr na Muice north-east face and Sgurr na Fearstaig S.Top east face are known for keeping good snow well into spring. Gully and mixed routes are here up to 170m, like Sorcerer,***. February 2001 saw new routes.

The Sgurr na Lapaich ridge between Glen Strathfarrar and Glen Cannich broadens westwards into hard work and in view of the former's teatime exit deadline Loch Mullardoch in Glen Cannich (218316: 62) is a better starting point for any big day planned on some or all of those four Munros. Out

there the superb roof-plateau of An Rhiabhachan miles long and 1100m is another faraway place of incomparable spring light. We once flanked the north side returning west and it was horse-work. Back high is the answer; always different views in reverse. Sgurr nan Clachan Geala has winter corries.

Strictly, so far it has been Inverness-shire, a guest appearance, but now it is the magical Easter Ross proper. Glen Orrin is roadless and on the maps looks shallow-sloped and trackless from the east. It is, but there is a crag in upper Orrin which is reached from Inverchoran in Strath Conon (260507; 65). Walk the track south to meet a stalker's path over to Creag a' Ghlastail 267470. Above there is Allt a' Ghlasteil, V and further, on the left of the crag, deeply cut Waterfall Gully IV.

Strath Conon is a good glen with much to do in it. Get to it via Marybank south on the A832 off the A835 two miles before Contin then the minor road on the south side of the Meig. There are Corbetts in the book, far up, good steep and remote, and several ice and rock climbing venues. The sides close in, rocky. Ice did some trenching here. Down from Inverchoran is the Allt Gleadhraich 274510 III/IV, Xmas '95 and the line of Creag Dubh crags: waterfalls at III and IV, bridge (282524; 60).

Also there: Glenmeanie (283528; 60) has a track through Glen Meinich to Creag Ghlas 246520. This is an important, developed, rock crag, c.150m, with Salamander, a HVS classic, among others. The rock climbing like much of Glen Strathfarrar and the Fannichs is on schist. Sedimentary sands metamorphosed into quartz-based banded rock, much tougher in the mass. Characterised by glittering mica streaks it is not a place to lose a contact lens. It runs to rough planes, crisp edges, pockets and corners but if it dips down out of the hillside is slabby, often with scarce holds, hence the E-grades. At best

sandpaper, more positive than granite and the Torridonian and what goes in tends to stay in. Glenmarksie Crag (389568; 50), track to 380579 and beyond is another rock venue. Turn off A832 after Contin.

Between Strath Bran and The Dirrie More lie the Fannichs, for long a summer whole loaf of a traverse (7 miles to Fannich Lodge then the circuit of the eastern seven Munros) or smaller winter slices, from south or north: walkers' territory. But as early as 1932, Ling in his first SMC Northern Highlands Guide (more a report than a guide) picked out three rocks, 'the north east face of Sgurr Mor, the Garbh Coire Mor of An Coileachan ... the eastern face ... Clach Geala ... precipitous ... finest exposure of rock ...'. Unerring fingering: the hands-on exploration came sixty years later but you read it there first. His eyes saw rock for climbing.

There is no longer general car access to Fannich Lodge. Use A382 to between Lochluichart and Grudie Power Stations (313626; 59), bike to 260665 for the Garbh Coire Mor, whence a very reasonable walk-in. Both winter and summer routes are here, gullies and good rock, some quite big like Sarsaparilla, 280m and some easier rock routes. The east face of Sgurr na n Clach Geala is a bigger expedition, more bike miles, further miles up Allt a' Choire Mhoir and big mixed routes but club members have been in there recently and successfully. Round the other side, the 900m altitude snow-keeper corrie of Sgurr Mor (A835, Loch Drum (254756; 69), track and path 5mi. or [236759; 70], path, 4mi.) is, like Sgurr nan Clach Geala, pushing the bounds of the golden rules of this article. Dark start and big legs are needed but why not, what better?

So, back east, not so far, Ben Wyvis, at first appearance shaped like a hypermarket shed, once threatened with a funicular railway, has hidden depths. East of the summit are Coire Mor and Craig Coire na Feola 470670. To get there cross

the Black Isle and turn west at Evanton up Glen Glass: Eileannach Lodge (545689; 48) then walk in a fair way, not all on track and path. Snow blows plentifully into these deeply scooped corries (Wyvis east does avalanche) and routes are there. Feola has mixed routes of III and IV and in 2001, 180m IV.5.

Finally, and here you need skates on in winter, get up to Ardgay, short of Bonar Bridge, and follow the north side of Strath Carron (Glen Carron is in Wester Ross) minor road to Calvie (464891;75) This could be bike point but permission to go further can be sought from Marcus Munro, stalker, by driving to Alladale Lodge up above the glen (439848). The winter routes are up-river on An Socach 3787 and at the back of the corrie 379872 north east of the summit. Meall na Fhuaran north east face c393898 has a V and a III icefall. A number of ice routes were done in the short days of 2001 from Aviemore, biking in from the road: impressive.

Also from Calvie, in summer, one jewel is Carn Chuinneag, the Corbett. Lots of private road notices at the entrance to stop cars but walk to and past the House buildings and along the estate road to 474849. From there the smoothest stalker's path in Scotland, including those in Glen Quoich for King George V, slips its way up to 477836 within a bus stop of the summit top on a mini-plateau of Cairngorm granite sand. Superbly graded, one wonders by whom? There is an eagle to watch out for on Craig Riaraidh on the way back. We have club families and this is one for those old enough to stay.

This has been put together from various sources, material coming directly and indirectly from all over. Of these, two people, both local in different senses are Martin Moran over in Glen Carron, surely the sharpest mountaineering intellect you are likely to meet, and Laird John Mackenzie of Strathpeffer, a man with an eye for an adventure and the en-

ergy and enthusiasm to carry it through. Both have carried forward the development of Rossshire climbing almost as a professorial function. Whatever, it's happening up there and now, with Karn, it is on our doorstep too. More detail of routes will be found in the SMC Regional and Climbing guides, at www.smc.org.uk There is a new one covering Rossshire out in 2004. For weather there is a huge collection of websites put together at www.greatweather.co.uk to sort through. There www.maalla.co.uk is a good six day synoptic. Websites drift in and out but greatweather's collection stays.

KARN HOUSE

Dave Rhodes, Alan Rowland and Ken Jackson

SECTION 1 - THE BACKGROUND TO KARN HOUSE

Dave Rhodes

The story behind Karn House is witness to the way the FRCC does at times extend a genuine and warm welcome to friends and visitors. It has come from the Campbell-Bruce legacy.

Yvonne Campbell-Bruce first visited our huts in the company of our member Mollie Hyde-Parker. These two ladies had had parallel careers as army officers and as their retirement began the pair were frequently seen. First in huts: Rawhead, Brackenclose and The Salving House in the eighties; then in the nineties at the Royal Oak, latterly enjoying the hospitality of the Dowies. There they were able to cross the road to the Salving House and met much kindness; younger members driving then to places, on outings and just talking; for them the magic carpet of hut company.

Mollie died at the end of the nineties. A little time later Yvonne wrote to Neil Dowie, her FRCC connection, to express the wish to do something practical which would be a memorial to Mollie. This was passed to the then President and over several letters and conversations there was arrived at a plan to clear the scrub wood at Waters Cottage and replant with a copse of characteristic Scottish hardwoods. This appealed to Yvonne very much and something was about to be put on paper for her to pass on to her lawyer when there was a sudden early-morning telephone call just on Christmas: "Hold everything," came her firm military voice, "Wait to hear. There is a taxi here to take me to hospital." Sadly that was the last of that good voice.

But in the spring came a letter from her executors saying that she had left us the bulk of her estate. That estate had approximately doubled as the recent result of Mollie Hyde-Parker's bequest to her and now Yvonne had willed it to us, expressing the hope that it would be used for future, new, benefits for the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, as would have been the wish of her friend.

An enormous number of ideas was discussed widely by all and a hut emerged as best fitting her wish, with the most benefit to members present and future. Further deliberations extended through to the year 2000 AGM, and a mini-referendum, and with all the bushes beaten there emerged an overwhelming preference for a centre in or near Aviemore. Given that secure mandate events then moved swiftly and within the year the Vice President of the discussion phase, now become President, had obtained in turn: place, planning and purchase. The Hut Secretary moved equally quickly and in the second summer we saw the formal opening of what is an excellent structure in a position in Britain the advantages of which are already opening windows for us all.

Just as Yvonne must have wanted, her gift, and our imaginative use of it calls to mind the determination of the very first "hutters" to develop the Brackenclose Wood site. A young Mollie Hyde-Parker was one of them. Then, at that time, what they did, their belief, gave the FRCC a new dimension to use. Now, at this time, confirming the Scottish venture is another such: fitting the time, fitting the future. Full Circle.

SECTION 2 - THE FINDING OF KARN HOUSE

Alan Rowland

Following confirmation of the scale of the legacy so generously bequeathed by Yvonne Campbell-Bruce and Mollie

Hyde-Parker the Committee decided at the September 2000 meeting that the Club be recommended to seek a site in Speyside for a second Scottish property. Needless to say, amongst our membership of 1200, not everyone was attracted to this idea and at the A.G.M. sufficient concerns were expressed that the matter was referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

The Committee met as usual in late November and decided to survey the Club with a simple request as to the most favoured site in the U.K. - the results, (courtesy of an SAE ensuring a high response) showed a strong preference for Speyside, and in February a working party led by Stephen Porteus was charged with putting the search in train.

Unfortunately February saw the start of the Foot & Mouth Disease outbreak which paralysed much outdoor activity for the next six months. Fortunately, Scotland north of the Forth-Clyde valley escaped the spread of disease, skiing continued and for climbers and walkers the Scottish hills were progressively opened up during the summer.

During this difficult time a number of properties were seen by various members; most were either too small, poorly converted croft houses, or frighteningly large with clearly alarming maintenance problems evident or on the immediate horizon! Then, in June, an advertisement appeared in the Highland solicitors property paper "Guest House for Sale, Craig na Gower, Aviemore." Not the flavour of the month for many of us but, bearing in mind the success of Waters Cottage over the years, Gill Mather, a long time member of the Club living in Kincaig, who had already been extremely helpful in checking out other possibilities, offered to go and see it. She was somewhat doubtful at the outset - "Aviemore? Are you sure? Craig-na-Gower? It's modern!" But she undertook to check it out for parking in the first instance.

I phoned that evening and her first words were "you had better come and see this one". So we did, and on the first visit took the owner Mr. Neil Campbell by surprise; he was extremely hospitable and we were very impressed.

The property had a large flat grassed area at the end of a private drive, three large letting bedrooms with en-suite facilities(!) and good sized living accommodation. At the Coniston meet a couple of weeks later the details were hawked round anyone who would listen; people were urged to go and look, and they did ! The Treasurer and the Huts Secretary among other key players were both satisfied. Quickly decisions were taken, John Hartley, buyer of Waters, was again brought into action and an offer made by mid-September, subject to planning permission being obtained for change of use. This last qualification was the result of very helpful advice from the Climbers Club especially Mark Vallance and Bob Allen who had faced some 4 years of rebuffs in their search for a Scottish hut before establishing at Roy Bridge. Autumn was a bit of a cliff-hanger ! Planning meetings of the local authority were delayed, plans to satisfy both change of use and Building regulations had some problems and the Scottish system is not comfortable with conditions being placed on property sales. However, the fact that the property was originally commercial may well have been helpful and all's well that ends well - the President rushed up the first week in January 2002 to attend the final planning board meeting in Kingussie to find it had been held the day before ! And permission had been granted. So it was on the 11th January 2002 the President shared a dram or two with Neil Campbell; gladly accepting the keys, and the Club was the owner of Karn House. For anyone who may wonder at the name, it is an acronym of the first names of the Campbell family and they kindly allowed us to keep it. From this point all is history; Ken Jackson,

as Huts Secretary carried out or supervised all the work which has transformed the place from a very well found guest house to the 26 bed property of which we can all be proud and which will see us well into the 21st Century. His report forms the next section of this account.

During the course of 2002 we were delighted that Meg Griffiths accepted the position of founder warden and essentially joined Ken Jackson's work team. The official opening was held on the 7th September 2002 at which we were able to welcome representatives from the Scottish Mountaineering Club, the Climbers Club, the Cairngorm Club, the Rucksack Club and the Wayfarers as well as a number of our oldest members. A very successful Hogmanay meet followed and through 2003 the property has gone from strength to strength.

SECTION 3 - THE REFURBISHMENT OF KARN HOUSE

Ken Jackson

My first visit to Karn House was in July 2001, shortly after Alan and Gill had been to see it. I came away quite impressed particularly with the size of the rooms, the toilet/wash-room provision and the potential for car parking.

Following the Committee decision, in September 2001, to make an offer for Karn House I heard on the grapevine that two members had expressed some interest in being the Warden. It so happened that I met them both at the Waters Cottage maintenance meet later in the year and had a chat with both of them. This led to Megan Griffiths becoming the first Warden of Karn House.

The next visit I made was in early January 2002, just days before we took possession. Megan, Alan and I went to look at the building with a view to deciding what alterations Karn would need to make it suitable for Club use. We con-

cluded that the first priority would be to extensively modify the kitchen and to create a drying room. Before we could start to use the building we would have to change all the locks, clear out all the existing bedroom furniture and put in bunk beds. It took until late April to get the bunks and mattresses and shortly after this members started to stay at Karn. The Club had appointed a local Architect to obtain planning approval for change of use which had been one of our requirements before we agreed to purchase Karn. I proposed that we extend the Architect's appointment to include preparing drawings and applying for a building warrant to cover the minor alterations that we were contemplating at that time.

I travelled to Aviemore at the end of April, in a snow storm, to meet the Architect and the Building Control Officer. If I say it myself the meeting was a disaster. The Architect was not cooperative, I was tired, and it turned out that although we had obtained change of use for planning purposes we still needed to apply for change of use under Scottish building regulations. The immediate effect of this was that the upper floors of the house were effectively declared a no-go zone as they did not comply with fire regulations. In fact the Building Control Officer had the power to forbid us to use any of the building until we had change of use. Thankfully he chose to turn a blind eye on this and allowed us to continue using the ground floor rooms.

We urgently needed to prepare drawings and submit our application for a building warrant and for change of use. Megan and I tried, for nine or ten weeks, to get the Architect to produce the necessary paperwork without any response. In July I discussed the situation with John Hartley and we agreed to suggest to the Architect that he end his appointment. The Architect agreed and we proceeded to appoint a replacement.

The new Architect was like a breath of fresh air. He started

in mid August and was totally finished by mid September 2002. As usual Murphy's Law applied and the extent of the work needed to comply with Building Regulations (Technical Standards in Scotland) proved to be even greater than my worst fears. I knew about the need for a different staircase but not about increasing the fire rating of all the first floor walls and ceilings.

We had not been idle during this early period because quite a lot of work that needed to be done did not need a building warrant. By the middle of June we had upgraded the kitchen, extended the car park, enlarged the ladies washroom, constructed a drying room and carried out extensive improvements to the plumbing and electrical installations.

The work meet in August saw all the structural and plumbing work to the ground floor washrooms completed thus leaving the major task of upgrading the upstairs accommodation. As soon as I had the drawings I resolved to try and get the work complete in time to get the whole hut open for Christmas and more importantly Hogmanay. Megan had told me that the bookings were pouring in and she needed to know if she should try to limit the numbers. By bullying suppliers and pleading with workmen I was able to get all the materials and the tradesmen to hold a work meet during the first week in December. We achieved our objective of finishing all the work to comply with regulations by the end of the week which involved working fourteen hour days. This did not allow time for any fancy plasterwork or sanding down giving a few members the impression that the work was shoddy.

I was able to put in the completion certificate and was very pleased when the Building Control Officer lost no time in inspecting the work and passing it without a single fault to be put right. He issued the Building Warrant and more importantly the Certificate of Completion on 24th December 2002.



Men at Work: Ken Jackson & John Barrat Photo: Alan Rowland

How is that for a last minute completion.

My final work meet, but not Megan's, was held at the end of March 2003 when we put the finishing touches to the plasterwork, joinery and washrooms. We also added some radiators to the common room and reprogrammed the heating system.

In retrospect I enjoyed the experience of bringing Karn House into use but if you feel like acquiring another hut please wait until someone else is Hut Secretary.

MALLORY AND IRVINE – In Conclusion

Bill Comstive

Everest has not yet revealed the body of Andrew Irvine from which, it is hoped, the vest-pocket Kodak camera will be retrieved. The film will be developed and on what it reveals hinges the answer to the mystery as to whether or not Mallory and Irvine reached the summit.

In my article in volume XXVII(1)No.(78), I referred to my belief that they had reached the summit due to the absence of the flag and his wife's photograph not having been found on his body in 1999.

Life is fascinating. Just when you have what might be a firm theory, something turns up to blow it.

Lesley and I visited Kate in Toronto in September 2003. One afternoon by choice, I was left on my own. I was browsing through Kate's collection of books when I found Conrad Anker's and David Robert's book, *The Lost Explorer – finding Mallory on Mount Everest*. I read it with great interest; but it only had the effect of sowing yet further seeds of doubt in my mind. After finding the body of Mallory, Conrad Anker and Dave Hahn climbed the mountain. To do this they had to overcome the second step. This step is, from their account, ninety feet high on what would otherwise be a moderate ridge. The bottom section consists of angular blocks, then a series of high steps and mantels. In the middle of the steps a triangle of snow leans against the cliff. Above that is a fifteen foot crack in a large corner, slightly overhanging, which forms the crux of the climb.

In 1960 the Chinese made a mass assault on Everest. Two hundred and fourteen Chinese and Tibetan climbers laid siege to the mountain. According to an article in a Chinese propaganda magazine, two climbers flailed away at the Second Step

for a long afternoon and into the night climbing all but the last three metres. Three weeks later another trio came to grips with the Step. One climber made four all-out attempts to climb the crux, falling off exhausted each time. Finally another member of the party took off his gloves and boots and using a shoulder stand had a go at the cliff in his stocking feet ... the partner who lifted him up trembled with exhaustion and shortage of breath. Topping the cliff after a three hour struggle he brought the rest up on a tight rope. The three men then continued on to the summit, arriving there at 4-20 pm. Many western mountaineers regard this ascent as a hoax. The next attempt to climb the mountain by the north ridge was made by another Chinese party in 1975. They found great difficulty with the Second Step, but having carried a ladder up to the crux they fastened it to the rock with pitons. I understand that subsequent ascents of Everest by the north ridge have used this ladder.

Conrad Anker decided that he would climb the step without using the ladder to prove that Mallory and Irvine had made it. Anker found that the rock in the crack was so rotten that none of his cams would have held in a fall. When he got to the base of the crack he found it full of stones and even by moving them around he decided that the crack was not safe. He then decided to climb direct up the face at the side of the ladder. At one point the exposure was incredible – 8,000 feet of space down to the Rongbuk Glacier. Finally the cracks in the wall became so difficult at the altitude that he had to rest by putting his left foot on the ladder. His attempt at free climbing the Second Step had defeated him. Using a top rope, the ladder and the fixed ropes his partner, Dave Roberts, reached the crest of the ridge at 11-00 am and they went on to the summit.

At this stage let us remember that on his solo ascent of Mount Everest in 1980, Reinhold Messner had soloed the same cliff bands that form the second step but in a different place.

How and where had he unlocked the key to the North Ridge, without climbing the Second Step direct, as Conrad Anker had ?

All this evidence has, alas, made me more sceptical of the possibility that Mallory and Irvine reached the summit of Everest in 1924. I have had to lower my expectations for two reasons. First the obvious technical difficulty of freely climbing the Second Step at that altitude. Secondly, did Odell see them surmounting the First or the Second Step ? Judging by the time taken by the two climbers seen by Odell to surmount the Step as rapidly as he said they did, then having read Anker's account of the difficulties, it appears to me that it was probably the First and not the Second Step where Odell saw them. There are also further points to consider. Both Mallory and Irvine started out wearing oxygen equipment. Was Mallory's ripped from his body by the fall. There was no evidence of oxygen equipment on or near the body when it was found. If they were ascending then they would almost certainly have been carrying oxygen. If they were descending then they might have discarded the oxygen equipment – who knows ?

There are so many ifs and buts in this puzzle that without indisputable evidence as to what happened, the mystery may never be solved.

AFTER 'GRACE' (C.K.Williams)

Joyce Hodgson

Almost as awful as losing the track
is to find another one in completely the wrong place.

Almost as awful as good advice
is finding out by yourself, at a cost.

Almost as awful as a sack dropped by mistake
is one lowered too slowly.

Almost as awful as a broken compass
is one which points in the wrong direction.

Almost as awful as forgetting your poles
is remembering them in a high wind.

Almost as awful as a lunch forgotten
is a shared sandwich of cucumber and red pepper.

Almost as awful as climbing with aid
is getting down again without it.

Almost as awful as losing your guidebook
is finding the big ticks in someone else's.

Almost as awful as setting off late
is setting off early and losing the way.

Almost as awful as unripe bilberries
are rabbit droppings you carelessly mistook for them.

50 @ 50 (THE 'PETER PAN' ROUND) 23.00hrs 7/7/02

Wendy Dodds

A great deal of heart searching went into deciding which 8 peaks to add to the Bob Graham Round (BGR) for my goal of 50 peaks within 24 hours at the age of 50. (It has become tradition in setting up 24 hour Lakeland Rounds to base them on the first such round 'The Bob Graham', though credit should be given to those setting up their own - see Barry Johnson's account of '55 at 55', FRCC Journal 1996). I initially started looking at those used by the early pioneers from Clayton Le Moors Harriers adding in a group to the north of Stair and went over these in 2000. If we had not all had to miss a year out with Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), I might have persisted with these. But having lost some fitness I started to look at the alternative 'extras' done by a number of stalwarts. As time passed, the important thing was to get round and as the aspiration of being first female to do '50 at 50' was the goal, I opted to add one extra not used before, one used once and the remaining six used by a number of the men. Despite the obvious connection with my first name the title 'Peter Pan' round was suggested by Paddy Buckley. It arose at the thought of 'eternal youth' by older people doing things usually done by younger ones.

The day eventually arrived. I had missed the original date of 5.5.2001 (which turned out to be a perfect day with a full moon), on account of FMD and the next selected date of 25.5.2002 was postponed on account of a bad weather forecast. In the week leading up to the attempt, I had the luxury of a week of 'rest' as I had hoped to move onto reconnoitring the Ramsey Round (the Scottish equivalent of the BGR) by June but could not do this with this round now planned for the end of the week.

In the hour leading up to 11p.m. on 7.6.2002, folk started to arrive at the car park in Keswick. The support team in the form of Eileen & Graham Bond, Monica & Colin Shone and Chris Porritt were in attendance while my chauffeur, Ralph Henderson, ensured I was there in plenty of time. Wyn Cliff was due to join us in the early hours of the morning after doing a night's work. Two of the three supporters for the first leg in the form of Steve Cliff and Rick Houghton arrived and we were standing outside the Moot Hall with only minutes to go when Alan Duncan appeared and we were off.

The role of the hill supporters is one to navigate, one to carry gear and the third to record times at each summit. Equally important is the 'road support'. At each of 4 road crossings a team looked after me while another team looked after the hill supporters whilst another helper ferried hill supporters to and from their cars as necessary. Thus it is very much a team effort.

The first few miles are always difficult wondering how fast or slow to go, knowing that getting it wrong in either direction can seriously jeopardise the whole of the attempt. We chatted all the way up to Lonscale Fell, the first 'extra', but on the way to the second extra peak, Skiddaw Little Man, Alan quite correctly reminded us that we should save our energies for getting up the hills. We uneventfully got over the 3rd extra top at Bakestall, a somewhat controversial choice, but it saved me the psychological pressure of having to think about Great Rigg on section 2, leaving it as option to replace a later peak if I was feeling strong. We had left the mist behind on Skiddaw but blinked and almost missed Little Calva, the 4th extra peak, and again somewhat controversial as a choice. By this time, we were moving well and crossed the river between Great Calva and Blencathra. I felt very comfortable moving uphill, so much so that 1 and then 2 of the supporters fell back a little

so that Alan and I were in the mist on our own at the top of Blencathra when Rick caught us again, so the 3 of us were able to descend with me sandwiched between the 2 men.

The support was at the ready in Threlkeld but only Yiamis Tridimas of the hill supporters was there for the next section. With gentle 'persuasion', Alan agreed to continue and off we dashed up Clough Head. I regretted for a short period not having removed some of my clothing as it was becoming very warm but fortunately there was a pleasant breeze on the ridge as we flew along to Great Dodd, which Alan skirted in order to catch us up, a very necessary requirement since he was carrying my food and liquid. We made good progress and picked up Mike Mailer en route and then Nick Harris, both of whom had overslept and missed us at Threlkeld. This allowed Alan to drop off after Dollywagon. Progress was so good at this stage that I thought I would pick up Great Rigg but early morning fatigue on Fairfield made me decide not to do this. The result was that we arrived at Dunmail well ahead of schedule and Wyn had joined supporters so we had a full team present. Being ahead, we were already well on our way when Clare Kenny arrived as an 'itinerant' road supporter, en route to Ennerdale.

In lighter clothing, I had one of my most comfortable ascents of Steel Fell, gaining further on schedule with my 3 fresh supporters, Richard Lamb, Kev Davison and Chris Reade. We made good progress through to Rossett Pike despite being shrouded in mist through the Langdales and had picked up another two 'extras' at Pavey Ark and Loft Crag. Down to Rossett Gill and after a quick call, Lawrence Sullivan appeared from behind a cairn to greet us, (Lawrence, from Clayton le Moors Harriers, had thought up an original 20 hour round in Torridon to celebrate his 65th, when I had the privilege of accompanying him – see *Fellrunner*, February 1999, as it en-

compassed that beautiful area, which has just escaped being defiled by the proposed Shildaig hydro scheme). Lawrence was to reappear at Ore Gap thinking he might be unable to find us as we crossed to Allan Crags, the seventh 'extra', as it was so misty. This conditions did slow us down a little as I was anxious not to fall on the slippery rocks and I knew we had time to spare. We were briefly optimistic that a rope might appear at Broad Stand but very sensibly (for the prevailing conditions), this was not in place so we used our planned route up West Wall Traverse, which worked well. We picked up the 51st summit, which was an 'extra extra' (as I was now 51), in the form of Symonds Knot, which fulfils the criteria for a summit (Nuttall) and has the distinction of being over 3,000ft. The team are to be particularly congratulated for excellent navigation on this section, meaning that time lost was purely due to the slippery rocks and no time was lost with navigation (quite unlike a 60 at 60 attempt a month later where they met similar conditions on this section and slow speeds resulted in termination of that attempt).

We fooled the supporters at Brackenclose by approaching from a slightly unexpected direction with the result that we had our first casualty of the day when Monica fell and injured her hand. It was not until much later that I learned of this and could not understand why she was unable to open my new socks to wear for the next section. It was at Brackenclose that I had my most enjoyable food of the section – I think because this was unexpected in the form of warm bread, which went down well with my soup.

Off we moved up Yewbarrow, Yiannis doing a second 'tour of duty' now joined by Mike Bates and Wayne Percival and the weather was beginning to clear. Certainly the climb out was no worse than a week earlier, immediately after I had done the Duddon fell race so I was confidently optimistic at

this stage. We picked up the 8th and final extra peak at Scoat Fell. As we approached Pillar, we were surprised to see the Ennerdale Race runners coming in the opposite direction as they should have been through long before, but the bad conditions a few hours earlier had slowed a lot of people down. It was particularly good to see Barry Johnson, the '55 at 55' man, and Denis Lucas, a '50 at 50' man. I had the easiest ever descent off Pillar as we bypassed every unnecessary bit and had a lot of grass to run on. I had been persuaded to pick up Black Craggs before this as another 'extra extra' so did likewise with Looking Stead (making it a '53 at 51' round!) as I knew I had plenty of time to spare by now. At this point, we had picked up Richard and Chris again, who felt they had not had enough exercise over Scafell and wanted to be out in better conditions (whereas Kev had been tempted by the luxuries of Brackenclose). Coming off Gable, we were met by Alan, who after having a good sleep in Yiannis's car, had come up to meet us. As we came off Brandreth, we met the 2 new hill supporters for the final section, Stuart Thompson and Gary Armitage.

There was a happy band of 8 who descended to Honister in the warm evening sunshine. I was able to enjoy lavish attention from the supporters at this point and ate the most substantial rations of the round as I now knew there was no stopping me. The 'man of the mountains', Paddy Buckley (after whom the Welsh equivalent of the BGR is named), was now 'in attendance' and chauffeur Ralph was back.

Chris & Mike decided to continue on with us and Wayne too wanted a little more exercise. We confidently covered the remaining summits, but the extra supporters wandered off a bit eastward not quite making Robinson. Stuart led me down a nice grassy route to the track and it was good to see Ralph and Paddy as we came off the fells. After a brief stop at

Newlands to allow a change into road shoes, we were onto the final section. Nick and Clare had their cosy evening meal upset at the Swindale Inn when I called out to them to get down to Keswick for the finish. Over the bridge at Portinscale, after we had had a further welcome from the support troops as we ran through the village, and Chris Porritt joined us for the final mile or so.

It was a magnificent feeling seeing the Moot Hall. A couple of weeks earlier, whilst on the back of Skiddaw, I had visualised this moment and it was good to see it happen. Virtually all the troops were there, both hill support and road support, so it was a magnificent end to a perfect day. I certainly could not have got round without superb support, everybody playing an integral part in getting the right things for the right people

WENDY DODD'S 53 AT 50

Top	Planned split	Actual split	Real time	Navigator	Recorder	Sherpas
Moot Hall	23:00			Steve Cliff	Rick Houghton	Alan Duncan
1 Lonscale	60	57	23:57			
2 Skiddaw Little Man	20	21	0:18			
3 Skiddaw	20	16	0:34			
4 Bakestall	10	14	0:48			
5 Little Calva	35	28	1:16			
6 Great Calva	15	11	1:27			
7 Blencathra	70	70	2:37			
Threlkeld	30	34	3:11			
Rest / Dep	10	7	3:18			
8 Clough Head	50	52	4:10	Yiannis Tridimas	Alan Duncan	
9 Great Dodd	30	27	4:37			
10 Watson Dodd	10	8	4:45			
11 Stybarrow Dodd	10	9	4:54			
12 Raise	15	15	5:09			
13 Whiteside	10	8	5:17			
14 Lower Man	10	13	5:30			
15 Helvellyn	5	6	5:36			
16 Nethermost Pike	10	8	5:44			
17 Dollywaggon Pike	10	12	5:56			
18 Fairfield	35	36	6:32			
19 Seat Sandal	30	23	6:55			

Top	Planned split	Actual split	Real time	Navigator	Recorder	Sherpas
Dunmail	15	16	7:11			
Rest / Dep	15	9	7:20			
20 Steel Fell	30	25	7:45	Richard Lamb	Kev Davidson	Chris Reade
20 Calf Crag	20	20	8:05			
22 High Raise	40	34	8:39			
23 Sergeant Man	10	7	8:46			
24 Thunacar Knott	15	14	9:00			
25 Pavey Ark	10	7	9:07			
26 Harrison Stickle	10	13	9:20			
27 Loft Crag	10	10	9:30			
28 Pike O Stickle	10	7	9:37			
29 Rossett Pike	45	42	10:19			
30 Bow Fell	30	32	10:51			
31 Esk Pike	20	22	11:13			
32 Allen Crag	15	16	11:29			
33 Great End	20	21	11:50			
34 Ill Crag	15	16	12:06			
35 Broad Crag	10	12	12:18			
36 Scafell Pike	15	13	12:31			
37 Symonds Knott		31	13:02			
38 Scafell	30	6	13:08			
Wasdale	30	30	13:38			
Rest / Dep	15	11	13:49			

Top	Planned split	Actual split	Real time	Navigator	Recorder	Sherpas
39 Yewbarrow	50	48	14:37	Yiannis Tridimas	Mike Bates	Wayne Percival Chris Reade Richard Lamb
40 Red Pike	45	48	15:25			
41 Steeple	20	20	15:45			
42 Scoat Fell	5	6	15:51			
43 Black Crag		9	16:00			
44 Pillar	25	16	16:16			
45 Looking Stead		19	16:35			
46 Kirkfell	50	31	17:06			
47 Great Gable	40	37	17:43			
48 Green Gable	15	15	17:58			
49 Brandreth	15	14	18:12	Stuart Thompson	Gary Armitage	Mike Bates Chris Reade
50 Grey Knotts	10	9	18:21			
Honister	15	14	18:35			
Rest / Dep	10	7	18:42			
51 Dale Head	35	37	19:19			
52 Hindscarth	20	19	19:38			
53 Robinson	25	26	20:04			
Moot Hall	100	94	21:38			

TOTAL TIME FOR THE ROUND

22 hours 38 minutes 12 second

50 @ 50

585

ONE FOOT IN LA GRAVE

Reg Atkins

It was early May and Sheila and I decided that an escape from doctors and their snake oils was called for. So all their medicaments were packed with 15 large bars of Kendal Mint cake and 3 lbs of Mars Bars to supplement the beta blockers.

Taking the advice of John and Margaret Wild ('our man in Gap') we approached the Alpes Maritimes from Cuneo over the Col de Tende. The Vesubie valley was then reached over a sportingly snow-covered Col de Turin and a good à la ferme camp site found at St Martin under the impressive Italian Frontier ridges, a site recommended by many FRCC parties.

The ascent to the CAF Cougarde hut with its access to the dominating Cairns de Cougarde was a little frustrating. I waved my FRCC card to an official looking person in overalls but received the Gallic shrug. He was there to clean out the septic tank and the grease trap so I presumed he was an aspirant CAF member on his first maintenance meet. But the hut was otherwise closed.

We later arrived at the Refuge de la Madone de Fenestre and were greeted most amiably. Things were looking up for the entente cordiale at last, "Would we like some stew and a glass of wine?" "Mais oui" I replied in my best Brummie accent, deftly pulling up a stool. "And are you a plumber, or an electrician, or perhaps a joiner?" We had arrived on another maintenance meet. To hell with the entente, we had still to plod up to the Pas de Londres in deep soft snow and fast approaching blizzard conditions ... "but perhaps on our return" ...

The optimistic walk up to the Nice Hut looked promising up the beautiful snow-filled gorge under Mt Neiglier; a broken ladder and thick ice added interest to the mauvais pas.

The long slog in deep snow was enlivened by the number of chamois and bouquetin and, of course, by the incredible alpine flowers emerging from the melting snow slopes. The col over to the Madone Hut was completely out of the question with its frequent avalanches all day, so we continued up and round the frozen lake to the hut. This was another magnificent day between Alpine seasons with no other party to intrude on the splendid isolation of it all.

There are disadvantages to out of season Alpine trips and having to frequently thaw out tents is one of them, so a trip down to the Med seemed a sound idea. We camped under the awe-inspiring Bau de St Jeanette rather than the more popular Verdon Gorge. We crept out past a party of climbers assembling their gear and put in a long day's walk across the *causee* type country behind crags. The climbing party comprised a group of 8 young dedicated French climbers who spent an hour each evening and morning encircled with their climbing guide books like a Young Mens' Bible Class.

I had a strange conversation with one who was detached from the group. I asked when most of the early routes were put up and he replied, "In the forties by French Climbers when British Climbers were fighting German Climbers". I am still not sure how I should have responded to the irony in that comment.

Feeling warmer we returned North to La Grave and the Dauphiné. Is it sadness or irrational nostalgia that drives me there every year for just a few days once the winter snows start to melt? Too many years ago family holidays were taken there with Bob and Marj, Hilary and Derek, Roger and Val – and a growing number of children. These same children are now adults with their own children and, happily, are tramping the same hills. They may eventually regress to writing maudlin journal articles like this one !



On the way to the Promontoire Hut with a snowy South Face of La Meije filling the view.

Photo: Reg Atkins

Things were too simple then ... In those days I would not have noticed the Soldanelle alpina bursting through the receding snow on our approach to the Promontoire Hut. A pair of nesting eagles above our camp site or noisy choughs would have been 'crows'. *Primula auricula*, *Pulsatilla soufre* or *Daphne cneorum* were just vegetation messing up the routes.

A thunderstorm on Les Bans heralded the onset of two days of violent weather. The municipal camp site at La Berarde was under new snow and the road down to civilisation was fast becoming dangerous – not so much a case of *chausée déformée* but 'where has the road gone?'

My beta blocker had dissolved in my rucksack, the statins had settled to the bottom of a glacial torrent, the health tablets guaranteeing me ever-lasting life and “WD 40” joints had frozen to death under the tent flap – and my leg brace had buckled as we raced ahead of a minor avalanche off Pic Coolidge.

It was time to go, time to push wet tent and damp sleeping bags into the van and to head up the N6. It was time to camp among the Beaujolais vineyards again and to vow not to repeat the exercise next year, knowing full well that we will do so !

Challenges have lost most of their charm over the years. We return to Alps to be back amongst the mountains we love, not necessarily to climb them. Their magic remains in water-stained guide books and maps with wilderness dreams.

A MAN, MOUNTAINS and a DISEASE

Ken Richards

This article is about myself, my involvement with mountains, Parkinson's disease and the interaction between these.

I have always viewed myself as being a private sort of person, somewhat introspective (I think that like Jean Cocteau 'I have lived in the shadows') and have led a fairly conventional life. The nature of my article being largely autobiographical means, however, that I shall have to act out of character and come out of the shadows for a while.

My interest in mountains goes back to my schooldays: 1948 to be precise. It so happened that during the end of year exams I had a period for revision, but as I was up to date with this I decided to relax by doing some general reading and the book that I chose from the school library was *The Mountain Vision* by Frank Smythe. The book dealt with the various aspects of mountains and mountaineering; I found it fascinating. On the one hand Smythe wrote about mountains as objects per se and climbing them, but on the other hand he dealt with their 'spiritual' side. He thus included chapters on 'The Himalayas', 'Rock Climbing', 'The Enjoyment of Mountain Scenery' and even 'Clouds'. Smythe's concept of the spiritual is very much in the Romantic tradition of towering precipices, yawning abysses and raging torrents, which replaced what Kenneth Clark calls 'the forest fears and mountain panics' that were its forerunner. He also included a religious dimension: 'The hills should be approached in the spirit of the pilgrim approaching a shrine'. These ideas may seem somewhat outmoded today but at the time I found them inspirational; they were the origin of a stimulus that led to me developing a deep appreciation of the beauty of the mountains and a desire to climb them.

I should like to acknowledge at this point that many years

later Smythe's concept of the spiritual was enlarged and further refined in *The Mountain Spirit*, an anthology assembled by Tobias and Drasdo, which focused on 'the qualities of the mountain experience'. To them the passion that results from this experience 'exerts an influence upon art, introspection and culture' – areas which are fully explored in the book.

To outline my mountaineering career I must return to my schooldays. I discovered that several of my friends with whom I had done some walking in Shropshire under the auspices of the school's Travellers' Club were also attracted to mountains. After having done some walking in the Shropshire hills – during which we enjoyed scrambling on outcrops such as those on the Stiperstones – our small group decided that we would like to do some 'real' rock climbing. The fact was that, at that point in the postwar period, there was very little climbing gear available; there was also the difficulty of having limited financial resources. As a result we had to kit ourselves out with ex-WD equipment, such as camouflaged anoraks, commando rucksacks, gas capes and Hiatt karabiners; as we couldn't afford boots we had to use our PE plimsolls. The question of rope was solved by buying a communal 120 foot hemp one. Although this cost us many weeks' pocket money we all thought that the sacrifice was worth it as having a rope gave us the status of being 'real' mountaineers to the extent that there was considerable argument concerning who should carry the rope when we ventured forth to actually use it.

One of our walks had taken us to Pontesford Rocks not far from Shrewsbury and, having obtained a guide to the Rocks produced by Birmingham University Mountaineering Club, we decided to do our first climbing there. Although we tried to exude an air of confidence deep down there was a sense of nervous tension in the air. (I can't remember who carried the rope). We all enjoyed our initiation into rock climbing which

took place in a delightful setting in Mary Webb country. Emboldened by our success we decided next to tackle some sterner stuff and went to North Wales, stopping at Idwal Cottage Youth Hostel. On our first day's climbing we chose the Milestone Buttress and successfully climbed *Rowan Route* – albeit with much shouting of 'keep the rope tight' ! A successful ascent of the *Milestone Ordinary* followed and, finally, we climbed *Pulpit Route*. After an enjoyable ascent things went very wrong; one of our group of three decided to abseil down the route in spite of our pleas not to do so. We waited until he had set up his abseil and started his descent before we set-off down; however, shouts from the foot of the crag alerted us to the fact that our abseiler had made a more rapid descent than intended and was in a heap at the bottom. Our initial response was one of shock and panic; on reaching him we found that things were not as bad as we had feared. A failed anchor on the last abseil was the cause of the accident and our companion had not fallen far; after an examination and clean-up it appeared that the only real damage was a nasty cut to his head. It was decided that the casualty probably needed some stitches as well as a check-over and so we all went by bus to Bangor Hospital where, after an examination and stitches, he was discharged and we all returned to Idwal. So ended my first go at climbing on a 'proper' crag.

The next major change in the direction of my life was that when I left school I went into the R.A.F. to do National Service, which I served in this country. During this time the opportunities were rather limited but I was able to spend most of my leaves in the hills (some with the R.A.F. Mountaineering Association) visiting North Wales and, for the first time, the Lakes and Scotland. This was followed by a period of study in London which again imposed restraints on my mountaineering activities. Studies over, I stayed on in London. I longed

to visit the Alps hoping to experience 'a sentiment of ecstatic wonder' as Shelley had done on his first visit. To this end I attended a course run by the Austrian Alpine Club in the Stubai Alps. More down to earth events then took place: I got married, had two sons and moved to the Midlands. Although there were many demands made on my leisure time I did get into the hills whenever I could and I became very active as a voluntary instructor at a mountain centre in North Wales. It was during this period that I did the 14 Welsh peaks above 3,000 feet, after bivouacking for the night on the summit of Snowdon and enjoying a magnificent sunrise. A failed marriage meant that I became more involved in the mountain activities – these, no doubt, acting as a form of therapy at a difficult period in my life.

In order to broaden my mountain horizons I went to the Atlas Mountains and had a great time, which included ascending Toubkal. However, on my return to this country things turned out to be not so great: I discovered that I had hepatitis A and ended up spending some time in hospital. Having recovered I went to Chamonix hoping to be able to put into practice the skills that I had learned on the AAC course. This proved to be another successful trip; glorious settled weather allowed us to make the most of our time, including a traverse of Mont Blanc. I also continued to be active in this country and on frequent holidays on the Continent I combined mountain activities with another interest of mine, studying architecture. Like Petrarch I ascended Mont Ventoux with the same aim of enjoying the view from the summit – which I did. On a later holiday to France I made an interesting ascent of Montagne Sainte Victoire, a favourite subject for Cezanne's paintings. Back home my mountain interests now focused very much on the Lake District; this reflected the fact that in 1984 I had become a member of the FRCC.

In 1987 a life-changing event took place which affected my mountaineering life: aged 55, I did an early-retirement deal with my employers. This meant that as well as signing on the dole I had far more time to devote to mountains. I celebrated my retirement with a trip to Spain where I admired the wonders of the Mezquita at Cordoba and climbed Mulhacen, the highest mountain on mainland Spain. I also continued to be very actively involved in mountain activities in this country.

At this point in my life sinister forces began to infiltrate it – forces that were radically to alter it. In 1989 I became aware that two of the fingers of my right hand had developed a slight, involuntary tremor; but thought nothing of it and the matter was pushed to the back of my mind. In 1990 I went on the FRCC meet to Zermatt, fingers still twitching. This turned out to be a memorable trip: for a start the Meet leaders must have had powers of a divine nature in that they conjured up three weeks' magnificent weather; and then, thanks to the redoubtable Fields who invited me to team-up with them, I achieved my schoolboy ambition of climbing the Matterhorn. The day was memorable, too, for another less pleasant reason: a young Danish woman fell off whilst climbing down the Lower Moseley Slab; she and her husband were tied on either end of a 45m rope, the full length of which was being used, and the woman thus fell this distance down the East Face. As we were the only party near at hand we had to render assistance, which included 'phoning for a rescue helicopter. Unfortunately it took a very long time to affect a rescue with the result that it was dark before all of our party got back to the Hornli Hut, where we had to spend another night. (The incident was, by the way, the result of somewhat eccentric rope management by the husband, who suffered badly burned hands; amazingly his wife was not seriously injured).

Later in 1990 I ran a half-marathon. Although I completed

this I noticed that, apart from the tremor in my right fingers, my right arm was static as I ran and my forearm felt rather dead. As I was busy getting on with my retirement life I suppose that, whereas I was aware that I should have done something about this matter, I didn't. I thus carried on enjoying my mountain activities: I had two wonderful trips to the Dolomites which included doing a large number of vie ferrate and ascents such as the Marmolada. I was also active in this country, making frequent visits to the Lakes and walking the Pennine Way and the Coast to Coast walk; and in Wales I was busy completing the peaks above 2,000 feet listed by Walter Poucher in his *The Welsh Peaks*. I think that I ought to explain how this came about as it is germane to my later mountain activities. It so happened that I was paying one of my frequent visits to Harold and Maureen Drasdo's when Harold, browsing through my Poucher, noticed that I had ticked off a large number of these peaks and suggested that I ought to complete the remainder. This I did when I ascended the final peak – Diffwys in the Rhinogs – on a glorious day in late 1997.

I had, by this time, become aware that my posture had developed a definite stoop and that I shuffled my right foot when I walked. Added to this I had noticed that my writing had got progressively smaller, with accompanying legibility problems, the weird thing being that if I wrote with my other hand I could write any size I chose. I noticed, too, that I found it difficult to get up out of the chair and had a tendency to drool.

For many years I had been a keen skier, my first skiing holiday dating back to my demob leave after completing my National Service and I had skied regularly ever since. In 1998 I went to Chamonix with my friends Duncan and Jan Boston; our aim was to ski the Vallee Blanche from the summit of the Aiguille du Midi. Whilst doing some skiing in preparation for

this I found to my chagrin that I was having trouble with my turns to the left and my balance, I couldn't slide slip. Duncan (an ex-professional ski-instructor) decided to take me in hand, but to no avail. That was it: no Vallee Blanche – in fact I did no more skiing after this. (Happily Duncan and Jan did successfully complete the run.)

Later my rock climbing suffered a similar fate. My friend Harold – with whom, over the years, I had been privileged to climb as one of his seconds – loves exploring 'odd' cliffs, such as ones that are remote, unexplored, forgotten or unusual. One day I thus found myself with him at a smallish crag (Craig-y-Tonnau) hidden in a forest in a remote valley. Without going into somewhat humiliating details I couldn't cope and made a real mess of things. I realised that if 'the medium is the message' then the message was 'time to give up' which I did, this being my last rock climb.

At this point in my life it dawned on me that I had not been facing-up to the various warning signs that had manifested themselves and which clearly, were not going to go away – all was not right with my state of health. But things were about to change. I was reading one of the autobiographical series written by Dirk Bogarde – one based on his time in Provence living with his manager, who had cancer. In referring to his friend's illness Bogarde happened to remark that he had also noticed that his writing had got very small, which was 'a sure sign of Parkinson's disease'. Alarm bells rang: I could no longer ignore my condition and needed to seek medical advice. A visit to my doctor's, followed by one to a neurologist, confirmed that I did have Parkinson's disease.

I should now like to say something about the nature of the disease. It is caused by a deficiency of a chemical called dopamine which acts as a neurotransmitter in the brain; when the cells concerned do not produce enough of it the result is

Parkinson's disease in which the message system does not function properly. It is progressive, incurable and irreversible, although a lot of research is being done. The effects of the disease are varied; the main ones include tremor, muscular rigidity, abnormal posture, 'frozen' movement and problems with walking and balance. Then there are a host of other things; difficulty getting up from a seat, slurred speech, hoarse voice, problems swallowing, fixed facial expression, depression, etc. On the plus side it is reassuring to know that the disease 'seldom shortens life expectancy to any significant degree'.

There is a range of drugs used to treat the condition, but heavens ! What frightening names they have: pramipexole-dihydrochloride, trihexyphenidyl, etc. The drugs can have side-effects too: nausea, vomiting, hallucinations, dizziness, confusion, depression, to name a few. However, another is 'increased sexual drive' and so all isn't doom and gloom. There are also surgical procedures that are used but, having seen some of these on TV, I found them redolent of medieval torture methods and do not wish to discuss them.

I have already mentioned that I had had suspicions about my state of health for some years but the 'official' diagnosis still came as a shock and my first task was to come to terms with the situation and accept that, to quote Michael J Fox (a fellow sufferer), 'I had Parkinson's disease and it wasn't ever going to go away'. First of all I had to expel feelings of anger (the 'why me?' syndrome) and depression so as to reach the stage of acceptance. Like Fox I had to 'embark on a journey' (which I now share with a supportive partner) and carry-on living my life in a positive manner, and even try to enrich it in a way that would not have come about without Parkinson's. Fears about what the ultimate outcome would be had to be banished from my mind.

I decided that what I needed was an aim that involved

some sort of ongoing challenge and it was here that the FRCC unwittingly came to my aid. By this time *The Lakeland Fells* had been published and on ticking off all the fells of 2,000 feet and over that I had ascended, there were 45 that I had not done. Here then was a worthy challenge and so I drew up a plan of action by which to achieve my goal. I found that an organised approach was needed as the fells on my list were widely scattered over the Lakes within an area defined by High Pike (Caldbeck), Walna Scar, Tarn Crag (Longsleddale) and Caw Fell. I thus started to work my way through the list. In writing about his declining health, Michael J Fox wrote that 'My brain was demanding, and incrementally seizing, custody of my body'; also that 'Coping with relentless assaults accumulating damage is not easy'. This well expresses what I was experiencing for, although I was trying to be positive in my approach to the situation, I found that this became increasingly more difficult, for not only did simple everyday tasks become a struggle, but also my walking and balance were deteriorating steadily, and becoming a cause of concern. I had the feeling of gradually becoming trapped within my own body. I was, therefore, finding it more and more difficult to cope on the fells; but I shuffled on and gradually ticked off further fells until only 10 remained: Iron Crag and Caw Fell in Ennerdale, and the remainder in a cluster north of what Coleridge called 'the vast and towering masses of Skiddaw and Blencathra'.

A great deal of my walking had been done on my own but by now I had become increasingly worried about my physical condition; there was a 'ghost in the machine' which frightened me in case I ran out of steam, or had a fall, and had to be rescued. On the last few visits necessary to achieve my aim I thus called on the assistance of a friend, Jean Bell, to whom I give my thanks for her patience and understanding. Last July

we found ourselves, rather unexpectedly, staying the night at Ennerdale Youth Hostel in order to tackle Iron Crag and Caw Fell. As to have to walk up Ennerdale and then do the ascent would, I feared, have been beyond my capabilities, I thought it would be a simple matter to get permission to park by the hostel; but how wrong can you be? I got lost in a jungle of bureaucracy: the YHA referred me to the Forestry Commission, who referred me to the National Trust, who referred me back to the YHA, who then told me that if we stayed the night we could park our car in the hostel grounds, which we did.

Great Sea Fell and Knott were the next fells to be ascended; they were followed by Great Calva – but only after an aborted attempt due to the fact that after 300 slow metres my legs seized up and we had to make a slow retreat. This left 5 to go.

In September we were back in the Lakes and did Bowscale Fell (but we didn't see any stars in the tarn at noon – a phenomenon the locals told Daniel Defoe about during his tour of the Lakes in the 1720's) and Bannerdale Crag. Our intention was to do Mungrisdale Common as well but my brain and body were not interacting too well and we were forced, annoyingly, to leave it for another day. The next day my walking had improved and we completed the round of High Pike and Carrock Fell without any problems – except for our slow pace. This left one to do – Mungrisdale Common, which would complete a list of fells, the ascent of which started in 1951 with that of what Wordsworth called 'mighty Fairfield'. At this stage I was feeling tired and had grave doubts concerning my walking capabilities; thus we parked near the Blencathra Centre to gain some valuable height and followed the easy track towards Skiddaw House, turning off this where Sinen Gill crosses the track. I was having great difficulty walking; after a few acceptable paces this regressed into a stumbling shuffle and I

needed to stop and rest every 20 metres or so. There was no track, the terrain was steeper and the surface was tussocky grass (murder for me because of my shuffle). I began to have serious doubts about making the summit; a brain/body tussle ensued and fortunately the body won on points and I kept going. It took us 4 hours to reach the summit ('The Lakeland Fells' time is 1 hour 40 minutes). Deep down I was dimly aware of a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction, rather than of euphoria, at having achieved my aim, but I think I was too shattered to appreciate things fully. Feelings of pleasure were soon dispelled when I realised that the agony was not over; we still had to get back to the car. This took another 4 wearying hours.

Since completing my project my walking and balance have noticeably deteriorated further; I now found walking extremely difficult, sometimes grinding to a halt and taking a time before I could get going again. This led to another visit to see a neurologist and I am now taking yet more pills. I am hoping that when my brain and body have adjusted to these the result will be an amelioration in my condition. I am, however, facing-up to the probability that my mountaineering days are most likely to be over. I have no regrets regarding this: I am thankful for the pleasures I have got from life – in particular those resulting from mountain activities. As Edward Whymper wrote, 'The recollections of past pleasures cannot be effaced. Even now ... they crowd up before me ... I see the great peaks with clouded tops, seeming to mount up for ever'. Michael J Fox considered his Parkinson's years to have been the best of his life – hence the *Lucky Man* title of his autobiography. Whereas I don't see this as applying to my own life I do feel that, as the disease has taken over more and more of it, I have come to a greater appreciation of what has been an enjoyable life and of those areas over

which I still have control, such as my love of music and reading, and my interest in old cameras.

In conclusion I should like to quote from a Wordsworth poem that eloquently sums up my own feelings. Whereas of his youth he writes:

* ... when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains. ... *

In his later years he writes:

* ... that time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. ... *

BAD DAY ON MOUNT HANANG

Dan Hamer

I got my first view of Mount Hanang from a light aircraft on a charter flight across northern Tanzania. I'd been away from Dar es Salaam for nearly a week and was anxious to get back to the family sweating it out in the unpleasantly humid conditions on the coast. I talked my way onto the flight at Geita Gold Mine late one afternoon following a technical meeting.

The Beechcraft Kingair took off from the laterite strip, banked eastwards over the densely wooded Ironstone ridges enclosing the mine and headed southeast towards Dar. After a recent spell of wet weather the pilot had promised a clear flight, although I had taken little interest in the savannah rolling beneath us until he had pointed out that we were passing the southern end of Lake Eyasi. The soda lake was full to the brim and the vast expanse of shallow, silty water was shimmering in the evening sunshine.

I was still gazing absently out of the cabin window a few minutes later when I noticed a smaller alkaline lake trapped against the dark scar of one of the many faulted escarpments of the East African Rift System. I glanced northwards along the line of the escarpment and could clearly distinguish the conical outline of Mount Meru. Beyond it the brooding triangular mass of Kilimanjaro was ringed by a narrow collar of cloud. The tiny glaciers on the southern flank of Kibo were plainly visible. I could even distinguish threads of snow in the western gullies on Mawenzi.

I dropped my gaze again and was surprised to see that a prominent massif had appeared beneath us to the east of the second lake. Rugged, sinuous ridges radiated from a central boss. The massif passed astern and out of sight within a couple

of minutes but that brief glimpse had been enough to set my mind wondering. Our flight path was well to the south of the higher peaks of the Crater Highlands and I was unaware of any significant summits in this area. I hadn't the slightest idea what, or how high, it was.

Next morning over coffee at the office in Dar I searched out a few topographic maps and tried to reconstruct our flight path to identify the mysterious mountain. It proved to be a relatively simple task as the second lake was immediately identifiable as Lake Balangida, situated at the extreme southern end of the Gregory Rift, approximately 200km southwest of Arusha. I looked closer and found that a peak labelled Mount Hanang was marked to the east of the lake. It was one of the partially eroded volcanic remnants associated with Pleistocene tectonism along the rifts. To my surprise I discovered that it was over 3400m high.

Further research revealed Mount Hanang to be one of the youngest pyroclastic edifices and the fifth highest summit in Tanzania. It is widely separated from the four more elevated and better-known tops of Kibo and Mawenzi on Kilimanjaro; Mount Meru; and Loolmalasin in the Crater Highlands. For this reason, it is seldom visited. A faint track approaches the south summit from the west from the village of Gebabi at 1600m. The ridge between the south and main summits had the appearance of a narrow and exposed scramble. My appetite was wetted. Getting there, however, was to prove the main difficulty.

The internal road system, like much of the infrastructure in Tanzania, is in a rudimentary condition. A tar road connects Dar with Zambia and continues northwards from Dar to the main tourist destinations on the northern circuit around Arusha. Mount Hanang is a long way off this solitary ribbon of sealed highway. There are no major settlements nearby or National

Parks and the few dirt roads are badly maintained and frequently impassable during the rains. Local transport passes within a few kilometres and provides uncertain access for the seasoned overland traveller with plenty of patience and a large supply of unread books. The prospects were not hopeful and I put the project to one side for several months.

Then, towards the end of the following dry season, my wife announced that she wanted to visit our daughter who was at school in the UK. This meant that I would have to look after the two boys in Tanzania for a fortnight. One of the two weeks coincided with their half term at the International School in Dar. I looked at my map again and decided that it might be worth driving from Dar to the northern goldfields and back just once, especially if Mount Hanang lay en route.

I sought advice from numerous colleagues and friends about the journey and our company drivers about the route. They all thought I was mad. No one willingly drives from Dar to the northern goldfields. There are good reasons for this. The northern goldfields are approximately 1500km northwest of Dar by road. Half of this journey is on poorly maintained dirt roads. However, I knew that this was my only chance to get close to Mount Hanang and stubbornly proceeded with my planning.

I settled on a route that would take us from Dar to our main exploration camp near Kahama via Arusha and Singida. I estimated that the journey would take three days. I allowed a further day for the mountain. I would then be able to spend a few days on site reviewing progress before returning to Dar by a different route. The whole journey would take eleven days.

The two boys were excited when I told them what I was proposing. They grew less so when they cottoned on to my ulterior motive. I confess that I was apprehensive at the thought

of spending six of the eleven days confined to a vehicle on dusty and bumpy roads with a ten-year-old and an eight-year-old on the back seat. Probably they thought the same about being confined to a vehicle with a 45-year-old tyrant at the wheel! If so, they held their council but I felt that our party needed additional support.

It was our camp manager at Kahama who came to my rescue by suggesting that he should send one of the bush drivers down to Dar to accompany us. I hadn't considered this possibility and agreed at once because I was beginning to have second thoughts about the wisdom of the venture. A Tanzanian driver from Mwaui, with the unlikely name of Robert Thomas, was dispatched post haste by bus to meet us in Dar.

Denise got away on her midweek flight to Manchester on schedule and our reinforced party of four then faced a couple of days in Dar before our intended departure. There were a few basic preparations to make and of course the packing to look forward to.

Packing in the Hamer family has been a serious issue for as long as I can remember. I blame my father. He was a capable but ruthless packer. As a teenager I used to gaze on in amazement at the predictable spectacle of our departures for the hills. I never saw my father pack any of the rucksacks himself. That was my mother's task. My father's job was to make sure that everything fitted into the boot of his car. I say 'his car' with good reason.

My father was courteous and gentlemanly to a fault. His car, however, was his Achilles Heel. It wasn't a question of pride. He never felt pride in inanimate objects. It was the 'No Claims Bonus' that caused all the problems. Years of careful driving had accumulated a respectable bonus and the prospect of compromising it had nurtured irrational neuroses.

He steadfastly refused to allow anyone else to drive it,

especially my mother. He always parked it in a secure position, free from the slightest risk of accidental damage, although this frequently meant miles of needless walking. He maintained it in a clean, tidy and roadworthy condition. Above all he would not let anyone pack it but himself.

He used every cubic inch of packing space. Nothing was allowed to spill out into the main body of the car. This was where the ruthless approach came in handy. Anything odd shaped or superfluous was quickly discarded. 'I'm not taking that!' he would say flatly. This resulted in a considerable effort on the part of my mother who would spend an increasingly frustrating last few minutes before our departures trying desperately to find extra space in the decreasing number of luggage items remaining for the growing assortment of rejects. She became adept with practice although something vital was always left behind.

My mother exacted her revenge in the car. As we stopped at the traffic lights at Brook Bottom or approached the cross roads at Lydgate she would say casually "Did my anorak go in?" or "I hope someone remembered the boots from the wash house?" This usually drew an unprintable response from my father who would purse his lips and breath heavily through his nose as he turned the car around to drive reluctantly back to the house. Frequently we would discover that the item in question was already aboard.

I admired my father's packing. It was sensible, ordered and safe. He would not tolerate any noisy luggage that he reasoned might distract his attention from the road ahead and cause an accident. He shook everything carefully before he packed it into the car to make sure that there wasn't a loose spoon next to the camping stove.

Occasionally he would miss something. We'd be leaving Bolton on the Horwich New Road when I'd become aware of

an ominous metallic rattle to the rear. My mother and I would try to ignore it but my father's hearing was acute and he would glance accusingly at my mother in the passenger seat beside him. This was my cue for action. "I'll see what I can do", I'd say and I'd burrow into the luggage behind me, try to identify the offending articles and separate them.

I have inherited my father's compulsive approach to packing and I know that this is a great irritation to my wife, who thankfully does not share it. I have made weak efforts to change but so far with little visible effect and I am further dismayed when I consider that I lack the luxury of a healthy 'No Claims Bonus' to justify my behaviour.

Denise made a strong statement about packing shortly after we were married. We spent a weekend camping at Brackenclose in Wasdale. Denise had got a lift with my parents. I had arrived separately with a colleague from work. On the Saturday morning we were anxious to make a quick getaway with a party heading for Napes. Denise needed several items of clothing, including her boots from the rear of my father's Renault.

He made the mistake of tossing her the keys and was mortified to see her dive indiscriminately into the neatly stowed luggage like a ravenous bear searching for food. She found everything she wanted but left my father's vehicular sanctum in a shambles. His face was a picture of consternation and horror. He took care not to make the same mistake again. My mother, however, knew that she had found a valuable ally at last.

The children exhibit the full range of our individual characteristics. I despair over Ashley's and Edward's disorganised attempts at packing but am seriously concerned that Sam will subject his own family to a disciplined routine that would have raised even his Grandfather's eyebrows! I

gloss over the details of our packing for the Hanang journey. Suffice it is to say that the three of us conformed to type. Sam and I vied with each other for first prize in the compulsively obsessive packing competition. Ed scratched his name from the entrance list and stood by watching with a mischievous glint in his eyes. As a result it was Ed's boots that got left behind and we were already in the outskirts of Dar when he decided to point this out to us.

This was not the disaster that it might have been. None of the children like footwear. They much prefer strops and tevas or to go barefoot. This is one of the benefits of an African childhood. The soles of their feet are like rhino hide. It has been a puzzle to me why my feet have never adapted during this same period. I still walk uneasily barefoot across a well-manicured lawn. However, walking in the mountains is different. Or at least it should be.

On one of their first days out on the tops in the Lake District, we took them over the Langdale Pikes. I forced them into their lightweight boots in the carpark at the New Dungeon Ghyll and they sulked all the way to Stickle Tarn. They threw them off in disgust at the Tarn and enjoyed a brief swim. A battle of wills ensued that I barely succeeded in winning. They clambered up Jack's Rake onto Pavey Arc leaden footed and complaining bitterly. Only a moment of mild comic relief, when Denise got fed up with her rucksack in one of the narrow constrictions and threatened to hurl it into the Tarn from the top of Arcturus, kept their minds off their feet.

By the time we had got back to the head of the Dungeon Ghyll they had had enough of their boots and declared UDL. Despite my protestations they sat down together beside the stream and pointedly took off their boots. My patience was wearing thin and I decided to let them have their way. I knew the track beside the Dungeon Ghyll well and was convinced

that they would soon want to put their boots back on again.

"OK" I said "Off you go."

They sprang into action leaving their boots and socks scattered in the grass and scampered ahead chattering wildly. I had an uneasy presentiment that their feet might be harder than I had imagined. Denise and I had a tough job keeping them in sight on that descent. It was mid-afternoon but there were numerous parties still laboriously making their way up from the valley. The 'barefooted gypsy children' were on everyone's lips. Long before we were half way down Denise and I were embarrassed and fed up with the barrage of comments from those we passed. It was pointless trying to attempt an explanation, so we were forced to resort to underhand tactics and disowned them instead.

"Irresponsible" I found myself tut-tutting to an elderly couple who seemed particularly outraged. "Can't imagine what's got into the parents!" When we finally caught up with them again they were playing touch rugby in a field full of herdicks, I gathered from Edward's complaints that he was supposed to be the ball.

Consequently, as we rose gradually from the sprawling suburbs of Dar into the palm-dotted hinterland I was not unduly worried by the knowledge that the whereabouts of Edward's boots was uncertain. Lacking the same resilience or understanding that my father possessed, I decided to press on. It was dusk when we reached Arusha. We were all dog-tired and went to bed early.

Next morning Robert collected us at 06h00 and we set off towards Lake Manyara. I had hoped to reach Mount Hanang by the late afternoon. For much of the morning we continued on the tar road with the Crater Highlands looming out of the wavering haze on our right. The tar gave out as we passed the entrance to the Tarangire National Park and our rate of progress

immediately slowed. For a short distance the dirt road was in reasonable condition but it soon deteriorated and we were obliged to leave what remained of it and drive through the sand on the left for considerable stretches.

A puncture brought us to a halt in the searing heat of the middle of the afternoon. I helped Robert change the tyre and we limped the next 20km into Magugu hoping that we would be able to get it fixed. I had inspected the damaged tyre before we had fastened it onto the rear door of our vehicle. It was tubeless and the rip in the tyre had looked serious. Robert explained that he knew Magugu from a previous excursion in this area and he said that there was a garage. His comments re-assured me until the huts came into view.

Magugu proved to be a dusty village with a knot of mud-walled thatched dwellings and a few roadside dukas. I couldn't see anything remotely resembling a garage. In the centre was an open space and in one corner a 3-ton truck was jacked up on two precarious pillars of wood. The encouraging flash of a welder flickered to one side. We pulled up behind the truck and got out. The truck had broken one of the rear offside leaf springs and this had been removed and was being welded.

The garage was a mud brick hut with a galvanised roof. The proprietor, a heavily built man with a greying beard introduced himself to us as Judica. His principal asset and source of wonder to the children of the village was the welding machine. He was very proud of the welder and insisted on giving us a personal demonstration before we could explain the nature of our problem. Somewhat deflated by our lack of interest in his prize possession he brightened at the prospect of business. Yes – of course he could mend a tyre. He was the best tyre mender in the district.

I left Robert to attend to the details and took the boys for a stroll around the village. We had a warm coke at the duka

opposite Judica's garage and then walked the length of the village. There didn't seem to be much going on in Magugu and I hoped that the tyre would be mended quickly because I didn't fancy spending the night there.

On the way back to the centre of the village, Sam pointed out a larger building on the right. We had passed it unnoticed a few moments before. There was a commotion outside and as we drew level we could see that a signboard had been erected at the side of the dilapidated wooden door. Several men were standing in front of the signboard with their backs to us. One had just written 'D-E-R-B-Y' in large unsteady white letters.

Fascinated, we stopped and watched. The sign writer continued oblivious of his audience. C-H-A-R-L-T-O-N he wrote. We watched mesmerised. When he had finished and stepped back to admire his work the full text read 'DERBY-v-CHARLTON LIVE 5 clock 50Tsh'. It seemed unlikely but we made our way over and said 'Jambo bwana, samahani nipishe'.

I peered inside and found a row of rough wooden benches arranged in the manner of a rural African church. Instead of an altar, however, a 20-inch Panasonic colour television in a welded, metal-framed cage, no doubt fabricated by Judica, hung from wooden beams. A Skysports football commentator was giving a preview of the day's Premier League games to an audience of half a dozen small boys. Once outside I could hear a generator put-putting away in the background and Ed was quick to point out the satellite dish. You are never very far away from football in Africa.

When we returned to the vehicle, Judica had made progress with the tyre. However, he confirmed my earlier fears that the tyre was badly damaged. He said he had done his best but thought that it was unlikely to last long on the dirt roads if we had another puncture and needed to make use of it. We fastened it to the rear door, paid and thanked him. We drove

out of Magugu with the flashes from Judica's welder winking in the rear mirror. The hubbub on our left indicated that the Derby-Charlton game was well under way.

As the shadows lengthened on our left we began to climb into a range of rugged volcanic hills covered with low scrubby vegetation. We decided to halt for the night in the next and larger settlement of Babati. We found a small guesthouse off the main street. There was one spare room with a large double bed. There was no water in the taps, no food and the beer and sodas were warm. The novelty of not being able to wash appealed to the boys and the excitement of cooking our dinner on a petrol stove in our bedroom was a great adventure. We slept together under a voluminous mosquito net.

After an unexpectedly pleasant night we got away early and drove towards Singida. The massive bulk of Mount Hanang appeared on our right during the first hour. The top was obscured by thick cloud. We stopped at the police station in Katesh and sought directions for the village of Gebabi on the western flanks of the mountain. The 10km approach road to Gebabi was little more than a goat track and we were able to test the vehicle's four-wheel drive capability. We arrived at Gebabi and had a light breakfast before wasting another precious hour placating the local administration, which was unduly paranoid about unannounced visitors. Then we had to organise a guide and haggle over the rate of pay.

We managed to get away shortly before 09h30 as the last wisps of cloud were dissipating from the summit ridge. The western flank of Mount Hanang towers impressively over the village of Gebabi. An apron of cleared and intensively cultivated land fringes the mountain. From the base of the steeper slopes, Mount Hanang is densely but not lushly vegetated. A ridge, slanting upwards from left to right climbs steeply to a shoulder below the south summit. It was clear

from a brief chat to the guide that our route would ascend this ridge.

The delay in our arrival after yesterday's puncture had made the prospect of reaching the main summit unlikely and we would have to be content to head for the south top. It was already hot. The air was dry and the ground dusty beneath our feet. I lathered the boys and myself in sun cream, abandoned my boots in favour of strops and set off carrying a rucksack full of water behind the guide and the two boys.

The lower slopes were parched and the fields barren. I was already feeling uncomfortable when we reached the base of the mountain proper. I was impressed to see that Sam and Edward were keeping pace with the guide. It was a steep and sluggish ascent. A few larger stands of trees grew in a faint valley and provided indifferent shade for the first half an hour. Then we passed into short tussock grass with occasional spiky proteas. It grew hotter and dustier. To my intense annoyance, I struggled to keep up with the blistering pace of the others.

This amused Sam and Ed endlessly. At first, I thought it must be the altitude. The ridge we climbed went on and on at the same relentlessly even and dreary angle. I began to consume water at an alarming rate. This was a bad sign. I don't drink large quantities of water on the hills! That day I could have drunk a river. I think I must have been dehydrated from the previous two days in the vehicle. In contrast the boys skipped ahead. To make matters worse the guide had not brought any water with him. He had expected us to provide everything. In effect I was both client and porter!

When the ridge reached the shoulder beneath the final slopes, the steepness ahead increased to a scramble. At one point, I sat down on a dessicated tussock, stared westwards at the dried up bed of Lake Balangida and carefully considered admitting defeat. The only reason that I kept going was the

thought that the boys might not go on if I stopped.

It was at this miserable low point that Ed's voice rang in my ears "Come on Dad" he sang, "You see that ridge ahead, the top's just beyond it!" How many times had I said the same to him? This unsettling foretaste of future days on the hills galvanised me into activity. I swallowed my pride and blundered on, finally topping the crest at 15h00. I had to lie flat out in the hot sun panting for breath for several minutes.

When I had recovered sufficiently to gaze around I could see that the ridge ahead to the main top looked vaguely Scottish and definitely worthwhile! It was narrow throughout and rocky at several points. However, there wasn't time to consider it at this late hour. I was in no mood or state for a mad dash to the summit. I needed half an hour on the South Top to recover enough composure to contemplate the descent.

We raced down again with parched throats having consumed the last of our water at the summit. The boys would have left me standing had Ed not banged a knee on a jagged rock at the shoulder and Sam scraped a forearm tumbling amongst the tussocks. I managed the retreat unscathed, if a little unsteadily. We reached the cultivated lands at the base of the mountain in just over two hours as the sun was setting beyond the escarpment. I then struggled painfully across the loose brown soil to the village in my strops, picking thorns out of my feet at every stride.

It was dusk when we reached the vehicle and a mug of hot, sweet tea and cups of cool water revived us. We set off again into the darkness around 19h30 and endured a dusty and uncomfortable ride on a badly corrugated laterite road to reach Singida. We found lodgings at the Stanley Motel and to our immense relief there was water in the taps, food in the kitchen and cold drinks at the bar.

It took another long days' driving to reach the field camp

near Kahama, where we stayed for three nights. The journey back to Dar took three days. One of these was a lightening drive across the Serengeti National Park. I had never been to the park before and was particularly impressed by the open expanses of the short grass plains in the south. Zebra abounded. We returned to Dar on schedule and the following day the boys were back at school. It felt like we had been away for a month.

Since then, I have flown to the northern sector many times. A full year of seasons has gone by and I have watched Lake Balangida fill with water and dry out again. I have studied Mount Hanang from a variety of different aircraft and from a variety of angles. The steep western ridge that we climbed to reach the South Top is a prominent feature. There are several lesser but attractive peaks in the vicinity but to date I have been content to admire them from afar.

LAY OF THE ANCIENT CRAGSMAN

Bruce Gilchrist

There's a crag to the north of the Carnedd,
There's a problem they say is the last,
But those who know
Have said it won't go,
And shaken their heads and walked past.

But look up there on the nose of the buttress,
See there's a man on a rope,
What does he feel
With his nerves of steel?
This man who now dares to hope.

Well he thinks of his second below him,
Hung from a loosely jammed chock,
And the hundred feet
If he has to retreat,
Of almost unclimbable rock.

GWENT TRIPTYCH

Leslie Shore

'Clouds shadows on the Sugar Loaf, the song a river sings
When touched by rain's soft finger tips, those sudden, mellow gleams
Of sunlight on old Skirrid-these are the magic things
That I have stored within my heart and woven into dreams.'

Myfanwy Haycock, June Thoughts, Hill of Dreams

The Sugar Loaf, Skirrid, and Blorenghe were my Gwent hills of dreams. Government Boundary Commissioners have made them vagrants of the county of Monmouthshire, which is where they are presently shown on the map of Welsh local authorities. They are mountains in miniature with each one possessed of their own charm. Walkers who possess the Olympic spirit of 'wanting to take part' will take to them unconcerned that they might evoke thoughts of the Himalaya.

Mynydd Bedwellty, of western Gwent, was the first mountain which I explored. My access to it was immediate. I just swarmed over the back gate of my home in New Tredegar to be directly confronted with its steep, west-facing, hillside. A walk to the north of say two miles along its remote, whale-backed, moorland ridge, would bring me to its summit at 1594 feet (486 metres). The Welsh name for the summit area is Twyn-yr-hyddod (hill of the stag). You will find grazing there today sheep, their fleeces in tatters, and the wild descendants of pit ponies. The Sugar Loaf can be seen from the place on a clear day, ten miles to the north-east.

Another favourite vantage point of mine on Mynydd Bedwellty was at a place known locally as 'top rocks'. From there I could see north to the Brecon Beacons. The drop to the west fell into the narrowest part of the Rhymney Valley, whose

river fed the sea twenty or so miles to the south at Cardiff. Crammed between Mynydd Bedwellty and Mynydd Brithdir, its near twin opposite, lay my home town's streets of terraced houses. A signature of coal mining was evident in plumes of discharged steam from the town's Elliot colliery. Perhaps I acquired a superficial interest in mountaineering as a pupil at the New Tredegar Technical School because I was a member of [Edmund] Hillary house. Yet I cannot claim that my fascination with the 'top rocks' escarpment of Pennant Sandstone set me on course to become a climber. I know that my conversion to the sport took place in Scotland when I went to work on Clydeside to help make steam raising boiler plant.

Clydeside was well placed in September 1975 for a long weekend with Gus McNicoll exploring the rugged, sandstone mountains of Torridon. We enjoyed perfect weather. The Cuillin of Skye was crystal clear for the three days. Beinn Alligin, Beinn Eighe and Liathach were climbed individually on successive days. Hamish Brown, a notable Scottish hillwalker, has referred to them as the 'Torridon Triptych'. Our return from Torridon coincided with a major story from the Himalaya.

An 'illustrated lecture on Everest South West Face Expedition' by Chris Bonington in February 1973 had prepared us for the news. Gus and I sat in a packed City Grand Hall, Glasgow, and listened attentively to his masterful account of a failed expedition. He also announced his wish to return to the challenge and this he managed successfully. The Sunday Times reported in October 1975 the outcome: *Man at the Top, The Everest Assault in colour*. Dougal Haston and Doug Scott had stood on top of Everest on the 24th September. A dream of British climbers had been achieved.

The Himalaya remain outside my personal experience but lectures about them have given me clues to what I have

missed. My second Chris Bonington presentation was in February 1996, at the Coronation Hall, Ulverston. His aim that evening was to raise funds for a John Ruskin's School of Coniston expedition. I sat in silence with my younger son, Alistair, as the woman head teacher began to introduce to a full house a 'climber of Everest'.

A crash from swing doors at the back of the hall disrupted proceedings. It announced the arrival of a late comer. The woman's voice faded to a whisper. I believe that a look of astonishment on her face gave way to a confusion of pity and annoyance. A small old man, propped up by two walking sticks, shuffled noisily up an aisle. He sat down near the front of the stalls with a thunderous bang. Chris Bonington nodded to him acknowledgement. The audience murmured bemusement. My son at least recognised him. It was A.B. Hargreaves, the surviving climbing partner of Colin Kirkus, the 'suicide squad' of the 1930s. His network of climbers reached back to the Everest expeditions of the 1920s. In 1953, as President of our Club, he no doubt toasted the first Everest success several times. Together Hargreaves and Bonington represented a rich part of British mountaineering history and the place that the Gwent Triptych has played in it might be considered modest.

An Early French Expedition

From the heights of any of the triptych you can look down upon the 'Gateway to Wales', the market town of Abergavenny. Hamelyn de Baladon, a Norman Baron, led a military expedition to its district in circa 1090. A reputed tactic of William the Conqueror for dealing with his greediest and most aggressive barons was to assign them to this western frontier of his new province, which became known as the Marches. He also granted them rights and privileges which allowed them free-

dom to extend the western boundary of their Marcher Lordships. This he hoped would distract them from plotting a coup. An effect of his plan was the creation of a borderland between Wales and England.

Hamelyn de Baladon would have surely visited the triptych's summits to survey his new lordship and to eye the lands beyond. De Baladon sat atop the Blorengé, possibly on a horse's back, with mixed feelings. He might have felt some insecurity about a threat from the west. Caradoc ap Gruffyd, documented around this period as being the King of Gwent Uwchcoed (Upper Gwent), would have been planning an attack. A coat of mail armour, with the greying dust of the White Cliffs of Dover stuck in its interstices, gave de Baladon some reassurance. However the fact that he could retreat to his hastily erected castle, a circular mound and ditch, on the eastern bank of the ochre-coloured waters of the River Usk, must have given him some confidence.

This original Abergavenny castle of De Baladon's survives, and is an ideal reference point for placing the triptych. The Blorengé is three miles south-west. The Sugar Loaf is to be found four miles to the north-north-west. Whilst the Skirrid, an Anglicised form of Ysgryd Fawr, lies nearly three miles to its north-east.

A Dream's Origin

My dream to climb the Gwent triptych probably originated in the Nineteen Sixties in the back of an Evans' house removals van. I was a passenger with the Boy Scout Troop of 1st New Tredegar. Our compensation for the journey's discomfort, shared with the camping equipment, was the annual two-week summer camp in the north-eastern corner of Monmouthshire, in pretty places like Skenfrith.

The van's driver left open the vehicle's upper door of the

tailgate so that we had some air to breath and could see out. We always passed through Abergavenny. It marked the point where we exchanged the urbanity of our industrial Valley life for a brief taste of rural existence. I took my turn with my companions, Morgans, Williams, Prices and Griffiths, to cling on to the upper edge of the tailgate's lower drawbridge like door. We rudely harangued De Balon's 20th century subjects as the van steered through the town. I have no doubt that King Caradoc would have been pleased at our warlike behaviour but he would be saddened to know that years later many of us left his kingdom to pursue our careers.

I at least have been fortunate enough to return for holidays, eventually with a young family. A moment arrived, when my sons reached a suitable age, to invite them to join an expedition of mine to the Gwent triptych. Their initial lack of interest was overcome in part when I promoted a quest: which one of the triptych had a connection with the Olympics?

Sugar Loaf

The Sugar Loaf was the last distinct hill we Boy Scouts saw as we retreated, happy, but exhausted, from our summer camp. As the van struggled westerly up the Clydach Vale, along the 'Head of the Valleys' road, we had a long time to study it framed within the tailgate's opening. Its conical shape rose to 1955 feet (596 metres). A local writer has described it as having some resemblance to the Matterhorn. Like the Torridon hills, it is made of sandstone but of a much younger rock. The hill has a large neck's scarf of fern whose colours change from green to shades of brown as the year passes. In some light its summit cap appears to have a sprinkling of white rock.

My family and I climbed to the top, one moist, breezy, August day. We started from a carpark located on the 1100 foot (335 metres) contour and endured a two and a half mile

round trip. The northern view was dominated by the U-shaped Vale of Usk and the sprawling Black Mountains of the former county of Breconshire, with a remote part of it loaned to Herefordshire.

The Sugar Loaf's slopes are useful for the sport of stone trundling. A person with Olympian strength and skill could strike terror into the Breconshire people of Crickhowell, three miles westwards. A World record attempt might land a boulder in the backyard of Gwernvale, once a grand house but now an hotel. It would certainly make for a deafening explosion but it would not have the same impact as the name of a man linked to this house has had on mountaineering. Sir George Everest was born here on the 4th July 1790.

Everest departed Gwernvale in his youth. His early promise as a clever military engineering student gave him a start to a career which advanced him to Surveyor of India in the 1830s. The enduring fame of his surname is due to a cartographer whose calculations identified the highest point on Earth. The mountain's ignoble designation of 'Peak XV' was erased in 1865 from early maps of the region.

Everest thus enjoyed some praise as a manager of explorers. This had become something of a British convention. A prominent Cumbrian example was one of Ulverston's most famous sons, Sir John Barrow (1764-1848). As first secretary to the Admiralty, he sponsored seafaring missions to search for a North-West Passage of the Northern Americas, so that a navigable route from the northern Atlantic to the Pacific could be established. Even today the Atlas of the World retains his name for the most northerly part of Alaska and a strait in the Arctic region. Cape Barrow in the Antarctic was also named after him, as was a northern duck, Barrow's Goldeneye.

Any curiosity that a youthful Everest had for maps of the Marches, would have brought him into early contact with the

vexed legacy of cartographers naming mountains. The Tibetan name for the eponymous mountain was Chomolungma (Goddess, Mother of the World) has caused some controversy. A Welsh name for the Sugar Loaf is Mynydd Pen-y-fal (the head of the valley) which is considered to be a corruption of Pen-y-foel, 'the top of the bare hill'. Saxton's 1577 map of Monmouthshire, contrived to respect some local information and recorded it as Pentmiel hill. Older records call it 'Moelvannon' - Moelfannau, the bare beacons. The present Ordnance Survey map has opted to call it the Sugar Loaf.

Saxton also called another of the triptych the Bloreneh which today is known as the Blorengé. In C.J.O.Evans' *Monmouthshire*, an exceptional pocket guide to the history and topography of the county, the 'bulky mass ... known as the Blorengé ... [is considered to be] an odd name the derivation of which is obscure.'

The Blorengé

My sons and I found the ascent of the Blorengé to be a sweet dessert for an Easter Day's afternoon. A casual stroll, of about two miles, brought us to the summit at 1834 feet (559 metres). Appreciative crowds had been drawn there for its views of contrasts. A variety of green, yellow and brown fields of infinite shapes and sizes, like a patchwork quilt, caught one's attention to the east. To the north the limestone moorland of Mynydd Llangattock slumped as a foreground to the cloud trap of the Brecon Beacons. The sun sparkled on the 'Severn' sea to the south to salve the darkest mood with hope. Yet the districts's fame resided in the stark, industrial scene, of a broad, shallow valley to the south-west where the town of Blaenavon mused. A World Heritage site was on view.

The place is a treasure trove of the Industrial Revolution. Its 'Big Pit' is a popular attraction and a museum of coal mining.

A preserved nineteenth century ironworks, unique in Europe, perpetuates an image of the time when south Wales led the World in making iron. A memorial obelisk, adjacent to the ironworks, celebrates the work there in 1877 of an industrial revolutionary of the technical kind, Sidney Gilchrist Thomas. Historical writing based upon the district's social history has given at least one author some success.

Beyond Coity Mountain, to the west of Blaenavon, is the Ebbw Fach Valley. Alexander's Cordell's *Rape of the Fair Country* was centred there but the Mortymers, fictitiously named ironmasters of Blaenavon, are featured in this 'ribald, bawdy, exciting tragically violent' tale. Many of the local ironmasters, like De Baladon, took refuge from their industry in large homes in the Abergavenny district. The Skirrid was a neighbour to some of them.

The Skirrid (Skirrid Fawr)

The Skirrid (1595 ft, 486m) is an Old Red Sandstone hill. It is a steep knoll with a hint of rock, set above a sea of green pasture. Hamish Brown presented an account of it in his 1981 book *Hamish's Goats End Walk*, a 'one man and his dog on a hill route through Britain and Ireland'. He described the Skirred (sic) 'as an old holy mountain, hoary with legend'. A local tradition indeed claims that at the time of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, when there was darkness over the whole land and the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was rent in twain, 'the earth did quake and the rocks rent' and so Skirrid's rocky chasm was formed.

Hamish Brown's comments are insulting to a man of Gwent. I also discovered in his book that I might have been able to make him more accommodating towards the legends. A comparison between his book's diary and my hillwalking records found that on Thursday, 24th May, 1979,

we were both on the Munros of the Western Fannich, A'Chaillach and Sgurr Breac. Ominously there were crashes of thunder on that day. I fled north and he southwards. If we had met, I would have shared with him another local belief that the Skirrid had been relocated from Ireland by St Patrick.

The Skirrid was the most arduous of the triptych to climb. One hot and humid August day a family expedition attempted the hill. The grandparents were represented by my wife's parents, the Edwards. The weather and toil of ascent took its toll on the party. Grandfather and Gavin, my elder son, quit climbing at the start of what they judged to be a daunting, long, summit ridge. Their act caused mutiny. Mother and grandmother decided to halt in sympathy. Alistair and I left them to pick whinberries and fought our way through swarms of blue-bottles to the top. The expedition re-grouped and there was joy at our success.

We descended the hill and on nearing the carpark met a party of walkers in a hurry. They bullishly bumped us off our path. A queue of eyes, disparaging in their glance, looked at us from mature, sweating faces. Our purple stained, lipped smiles of greeting, did not draw a reply. Our dress might have annoyed them. They were attired in tweed breeches, tartan coloured shirts, and brown leather boots which crashed into parched earth with jackboot force. We were dressed for a lunch time visit to the Skirrid Inn, the oldest inn in Wales.

We drank a toast to our morning's fun in the inn's lounge. I felt proud that two of us had completed the round of the triptych. Moreover I had no need to recall the great British sporting achievement of the Olympic year before the Everest triumph. That was known to us all and the reason why we had climbed in Gwent.

FORTY YEARS ON

Pat & Pete Shorter

We left the cottage in the cold of the morning and started up the road which led to the pass with the lake below. The smooth black top of the Tarmac made walking easy. Pat was remarking on the smoothness of the lake and its reflections when the little inn came into view. In the early nineteen sixties you could sleep the night on the floor of the bar of this inn for nothing so long as you bought one of the landlord's breakfasts in the morning. Those breakfasts contained enough bacon and eggs to keep you going all day on the fells with no need to carry extra food.

The inn was more sophisticated now and anyway was closed at this time of the morning so we went past it and dropped down to the track leading across the level floor of the valley. At the other side we picked up the stony path which rose up the side of the hill through the trees. Walking was harder here and progress was rather slow. Pat had recently twisted an ankle and a long walk round the lake the previous day hadn't helped. At the same time I had damaged a knee by foolishly running down a hillside.

The track eventually emerged from the trees and looking upwards we could see our objective – a white crag on the skyline several hundred feet above. We now had to reach the crag but the hillside was steep with no apparent path. We wandered a little trying to find the easiest way and avoiding several large boulders but the ascent was tedious. At last the crag was reached and we sat down to rest for a while. I had been at this same place many years before and had seen the helicopter carrying the two well-known climbers up to the big crag at the head of the valley where they were making a television spectacular. At the time I had thought it was a mountain rescue in progress.

I only realized the truth when I saw the programme a few weeks later.

We now had to consider our climb. On our first visit here all that time ago we had climbed all four routes on the crag one after the other, including the big hundred-foot slab in the centre and the tricky little 'severe' at the right-hand end. This time in our seventies we thought one climb would be enough and we decided on the ridge at the left-hand end. We roped up and I started on the first pitch – a gently rising traverse across the slab. The rock was dry and solid and it was a real pleasure to be on it after the hillside scramble. The pitch finished on a grassy ledge and Pat now followed, slowly at first as she hadn't been on rock for some time, but then with gaining confidence.

We looked at the second pitch which seemed to consist of boulders piled on top of each other for the next seventy feet or so. I remembered this as having been a bit of a doddle the first time I climbed it. It had got harder over the years, one or two of the moves requiring quite a stretch. I reached a second grass ledge and Pat came up much more quickly than I had and elected to lead through on the third pitch – a slabby rib with small holds into which her small boots fitted neatly. I followed, really enjoying the climbing and then we had the fourth and final pitch to consider.

'Crux', said the guidebook. 'Climb the wall by its left edge or traverse across from the right'. The traverse looked the easier option so I took it and after a short struggle landed on the belvedere at the top. Pat came up the harder left edge and I knew she had enjoyed it as her smiling face appeared.

We sat on the grass in the relaxation and euphoria which always follows a climb. Of course it hadn't really been very difficult. Compared with a modern 'extreme' it probably qualified as 'walk in the park', but what it lacked in difficulty it made up for in atmosphere.

The start, high above the valley, the sound, clean rock, the scenery and the varied and interesting pitches all gave the feeling of a proper mountain route. Even the summit of the hill was now close at hand. At one time climbers thought a climb to be incomplete until the summit of the hill was reached.

This hill is really only a blip on the long ridge leading up from the road to the high peaks to the north and west. We remembered a day when we walked over these hills followed by a sheepdog we had picked up. We finished by descending this same ridge, running down all the steep bits with the dog leaping beside us. On reaching the road a car pulled up, the door opened and the dog jumped inside and was driven away without so much as a backward glance.

We did not descend the ridge at a run this time. Hobble was a better description, both ankle and knee scoring heavily, although strangely when actually on the climb I hadn't been aware of the knee at all. We slowly descended and near the end of the ridge the sun came out so we stopped for a rest and I fell asleep. I was awakened by two walkers with big rucksacks who were gently chiding us for being asleep on such a superb day. We gave them a grin and staggered to our feet to slip down through the trees to the wall beside the road.

Once on the road there was only a short distance to go back to the cottage. The smooth black top of the Tarmac almost seemed to make walking easy.

TAFROUTE – MOROCCO

Ron Kenyon

There had been some concern about what would await us for our climbing trip to Morocco. However, when we parked near the small village of Assagour and gazed up at the vast amount of rock overlooking the village we realized that this was indeed a well kept secret on the world climbing scene.

We were staying at Tafroute – a town about 80 miles inland from Agadir. All we really knew was that Joe and Les Brown, Claude Davies and Pete Turnbull had been making annual visits to Tafraoute for the past ten years or more and other notables – Derek Walker, Paul Ross and recently Chris Bonington – had been there. There was very little other information but we thought that it must be good for these ‘heroes’ to keep returning.

Chris King, Shaw Brown and I gathered together information, including the very useful ‘Rough Guide’ and ‘Lonely Planets’ guides, and flew to Agadir. A midnight arrival caused accommodation problems. We could have slept at the airport, though at the time this seemed to be frowned upon. In the end this was solved by camping at a bird reserve at Quad Massa – 40km south of Agadir on the way to Tiznet. The night-time sounds of frogs and birdlife were broken in due course by the amplified call to prayers from the local mosque at 4.30am!

After watching the donkeys pass by in the morning and trying to identify the birdlife we set off. The small town of Massa was an eye-opener for our western eyes and the rather suspicious taste of the omelette for breakfast at the roadside cafe was hopefully due to the goat’s cheese. A quick visit to the town of Tiznet was followed by the journey inland. The flat coastal plain gave way to valleys and hills but not much in the way of crags. The villages, the people

and views, maintained interest. We gained height and eventually on nearing Tafroute we past some impressive granite crags and boulders at Adaye – about 2km from Tafroute.

Tafroute itself is a small town set amongst this granite area – an area that extends much further than at first appears. There are a number of hotels and we decided to stay at the Hotel Tafroute, which at 150 dirham (£10 per night) for three (!), with clean rooms and hot showers, when the sun shines (it's on solar power !) is not bad value ! It gives a good base from which to explore and get to know the town and the locals – but beware of being asked for tea!

The Hotel les Amondiers is set on the hill above the town. Joe, Derek, Chris B, Claude, Pete and Dave Jones were staying here, which is somewhat more expensive at approximately £22 all in per day – but still cheap! It is away from the goings on of the town but is a good base. A new routes books, which has been written up over the years, is kept at reception here and is available for people to look at – but not take away!

About 3 miles north of Tafraoute is the Ameln valley which is about 10 miles long. The north side of the valley is dominated by the mountain of Jebel el Kest, rising some 4000 feet above the valley with buttresses of all sizes, subsidiary valleys and gorges along its length and a number of villages along its base. This was the reason Joe and his pals had been coming here! A read of the new routes book gave an idea of the area but it was difficult at first to sort out 'Crags A to W' and 'Buttresses A to E' – but eventually they fitted together.

Derek Walker had recommended the *White Tower* (nick-named the 'Bonatti Pillar') – which he and Les Brown had ascended a few years previously and graded 5+. I had always wanted to do the other 'Bonatti Pillar' – this was a much safer option. It is a clean looking pillar tucked away to the left of 'E Buttress' near the head of a valley. An easy walk of about an

hour took us to the base of the buttress and an obvious corner and the route. Immaculate climbing took us up the corner crack to below an overhanging corner. The original route avoided this on the left but Chris dispatched this with a steep 5b pitch – as I followed clouds were gathering and just after I gained the belay the heavens opened. We sat it out and after not too long the clouds cleared, the rock dried out and Shaw joined us on the stance. An easy pitch followed and a direct line gave a final immaculate pitch. What a route!

Looking at the new routes book we realized that there are many routes of Grades 4–5+ (VS–E1) up to 1000 ft long along the valley. In addition the north side of the mountain has been developed. This is well seen when approaching Tafroute using the more usual direct route from Agadir. When viewed from the village of Sidi M'dal the array of crags is spectacular and particularly one crag about 600ft high with an obvious curving corner. Derek Walker and Les Brown had tried this corner but had scuttled off left out of the corner. We paid a visit to the crag. However, with inclement weather and a late arrival we decided to have a look at a corner just to its left. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated and we had to abort and abseil off. Jim Lowther climbed the route on the day we were travelling back to Agadir and gave it appropriate praise.

Although the big crags abound, with our cragging mentality, we were drawn to the smaller crags. 'K Crag', up the gorge from Assagour looks like a nice little outcrop when viewed from the distance but is in reality about 250ft high. Various routes had been climbed on it by Joe and Claude but there was an obvious crackline, which appeared unclimbed. An interesting first pitch passing cacti and prickly bushes led to a belay below the chimney at the base of the crack. Chris squirmed up the chimney and popped out into the continuation

crack above. This was followed in a fine position to give *Call to Prayers* E2 (5a,5b). Just to the right was a stupendous wall, just off vertical with, if you looked hard enough, a possible line. With limited time available on our first visit Chris had a look at the first pitch to check out whether it was on or not. We returned later on for Chris to pull out the stops and have a better look. *Waiting for the Barbarians* became the route of the holidays and Chris reckoned it was one of the best new routes he had ever climbed. It was done completely on sight – there was a small amount of loose rock (but this has gone now – don't leave rucksacks at the bottom of new routes!). A steep and interesting slanting crack on pitch 1 went at 5c and led to the top pitch, which reared up above the stance. The way was not obvious but Chris found a way. A high runner well off to the right protected the crux (6a) moves and the upper wall maintained interest to give a stupendous E3.

En route to A Buttress, above Anergui, (another mega-size crag) we spied a smooth looking slab, which called for investigation. At its base we realised that the slab was very steep and very smooth with no cracklines – no go. About half a mile to the left another buttress, about 40 metres high, attracted us. Chris led the central crackline to give a fabulous E2 (5b) and also the right arête (starting up the central line) – *Relief Arête* – again E2 (5b) – it's useful having a 'Chris King' around for this type of trip! I climbed the obvious chimney crack on the left at HVS to give *Finger of Fatima*. We named the buttress Thyme Buttress after seeing two lads going by with sacks containing thyme for the local market on the following day.

Tizgut Gorge is a large gorge cutting into the mountain above the valley. There have been quite a few routes climbed in this area. Joe Brown had climbed Tizgut Crack sometime ago and it seemed well worth a visit. With limited information

on the whereabouts of the crag we were somewhat taken aback when we saw the extent of the rock at the entrance to the gorge. The corner-crack is however at a narrowing of the gorge just above the path. A 'Brown' route needed a Brown to lead and Shaw led the main corner pitch which steepens to give a wide awkward crack to finish with. Very much in the JB idiom, with shades of *Cenotaph Corner*.

As mentioned Tafroute itself is on granite and to the south granite crags abound. Paul Ross had climbed a few routes (*Article Climber*, November 1995) here, but Joe, Claude and Derek showed little interest in these outcrops. Pedro Pons, from Spain, has also written an article in the *Desnivel* magazine and detailed quite a few routes. The article was entitled the Moroccan Joshua Tree – the area is not as extensive as the American version but has potential for many more routes and to be a useful addition to give variety to the climbing in the area. There is also an area of Painted Boulders of tourist appeal and worth a visit, but more rocks abound.

We visited a crag overlooking the old road to Agadir, near the village of Aguerd Uoudad. The large boulders turned out to be high on 200 feet high! The three routes we climbed, on the right of the crag, only scratched at the potential for this crag alone. *The Camel* (E1 – 4c,5a) gave Chris an amazing pitch up through a tunnel (eye of a needle) – more like vertical caving. *Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained* (E1 – 5a) gave me an exciting lead, just to the right, up a slab with little protection.

A visit to a crag just above Aguerd Uoudad gave us three fine lines. Again the rains came – this interrupted the climbing but the boulders provided useful shelters. Chris led a stonking crackline which had been done before (as it had a bolt belay at the top) – but we nicknamed it 'Touch at the Top' (because it was) at E2 (5b). I climbed a fine line to the left

with help, from below, with bundles of gear being sent up to assist with the route and the rain. With some loose rock, now removed, it seemed amazing that it had not been climbed before – it goes at E1 (5a) and named *Friend in Need*. Shaw finished off the day climbing the obvious (and again unclimbed) crack just to the right, which was harder than it looked at HVS (5a) – he just topped out before a downfall which made my ascent, as second, somewhat interesting – the name *Rain Stopped Played* was very appropriate !

Near the village of Tazka is a gazelle engraved into the granite which is some 3000 years old and worth a visit. Again rock abounds here and a quick visit on our last evening only hinted at the potential. Shaw had his eye on what he thought was a HVS crack line – to Chris and myself it looked a lot harder. He set too (in HVS mode) and climbed it (not without effort) to give *Lucifer*. He was very pleased when we indicated, after our ascents, that we thought it was E2 (5b) – not bad for someone who had not led E1 before this trip.

The trip was a great one; not just the climbing but the town, the market, the carpets, the mint tea, the tagines, the views, the way of life, the hotel, the shops and last but not least the people.

It was fun getting the information together on Morocco and the climbing information when we got there. Claude Davies was putting a guide together, with Cicerone Press, which details the routes climbed to date on the quartzite (not the granite) and this is now out. I am sure Tafroute will become more popular and more developed. However, I hope that the bolt does not take over and this can be kept mainly a trad climbing area.

For those looking for some adventure and something a bit different this is a place to go to.

THE GREEN BALLOON OF ARDGOUR

John Hickman

Now you have all heard the tales of the Great Grey Man of Ben Macdui but how many of you have heard of or indeed encountered the Green Balloon of Ardgour? T'is a mysterious and terrifying tale! And the tale goes something like this: -

Many moons ago, not long after Tricounis gave way to Vibram, four intrepid FRCCers were set on doing the Great Ridge on Garbh Bheinn. They were a Future President (who we will call the FP), and three very ordinary members. The FP was also 'The one who'd been there before' but TOWBTB is too long and difficult an acronym to use very often. The members of the expedition assembled in Carlisle from far-flung parts (well, Workington, Teeside and Manchester actually) and boarded a small van, the proud owner of which being the FP. Now this van could best be described as having had its newness worn off some considerable time before. The accommodation was, putting it mildly, a little on the Spartan side, with two unsprung front seats and a rough wooden floor behind stacked high with gear and of course, more to the point, the contorted and cramped bodies of two members of the party.

All had gone reasonably well until a couple of miles south of Fort William, and we had seen our objective across the loch, when the *second* of the tyres blew out! Was it an evil influence from across Loch Linnhe we asked ourselves later? Lots were drawn to see which stalwart should join the FP and bowl a wheel into Fort William to acquire a tyre on which at least there was some semblance of a tread. Two of us lost the draw and we were forced to spend an idyllic afternoon dreaming in the spring sun to the sound of Oystercatcher and Eider Duck. Some time later (quite a lot later actually) the two bowlers returned, hot, tired and somewhat disgruntled. Well you could say extremely disgruntled. They had indeed located a replacement tyre but the

garage owner had taken one look at them and refused to accept a cheque, and quite frankly who could blame him. I'm not clear how we overcame this problem but have a feeling we all had to attend the garage and turn out our pockets to assemble sufficient coinage.

So we continued on our way much later than intended when after some time the FP announced that as a matter of some urgency we required two things, paraffin for the Primus and some petrol. Why these two essential commodities were not purchased in Fort William I still have no idea. Some time later we came upon a lone petrol pump and a small village store. Having persuaded the elderly, wizened, ginger-haired and bearded Scot to give us an empty lemonade bottle to contain the paraffin (he kept muttering darkly that he could get 'thrupunce' if he returned the empty bottle to the supplier) we then asked for petrol. Now I know this took place some time ago but the pump was ancient indeed. It was of the type consisting of a one-gallon glass bowl, a hand pump and a tube with a hand operated valve on the nozzle. The wizened one would wind the handle to fill the bowl with a gallon then open the valve to transfer the precious liquid into the tank. The FP, no doubt smarting from the insult of having his cheque refused, had miscalculated and ordered too much and now petrol was overflowing down the side of the van and onto the ground. One of us grabbed the hose and hurriedly turned the valve to 'off'. Luckily no one was smoking at the time. So there we were, with the best part of a gallon of petrol still in the bowl and the wizened one wanting to charge us for all eight pints. Now we from south of the border are well known for our generosity but this was stretching our largesse just a bit too far. In modern parlance we had an 'interesting exchange of views' with the wizened one, but were forced to pay up and I have to admit, with not very good grace, we climbed into the van and set off. We had only travelled a few yards when there was a furious banging on the back of the van. Slamming

on the brakes we were confronted by an out-of-breath, furious ginger beard declaiming, "yuv nay paid mu suvunpunce fer the puruffin"?

Eventually in the gathering gloom, low cloud and heavy rain we arrived at the foot of the hill, the FP plus one to sleep in the dry interior of the van, the remaining two (which included me) to spend what the other two thought would be a damp miserable night in my two person mountain tent.

Next morning broke dire. Pouring rain and cloud down to road level. It was a good job we knew which side of the road the hill was on, otherwise we would have needed a compass to find it. However the FP (or you will remember TOWBTB) said, "I know the way and just because it's pouring with rain and zero visibility there is no way you lot are going to fester all day in your sleeping bags, we having already gone through a fair amount of hell just to get here", or Anglo-Saxon words to that effect. So we roped up into pairs with the FP leading the way. It took him some time to find his way through that nasty greasy slabby bit which has to be overcome before getting onto the Great Ridge proper. Indeed it took him so long that we began to wonder whether he had in fact BTB. Soon after this I found myself, in the lead. Now one of the more interesting bits, if a little painful for us males, occurs when nearing the top of the ridge. It is a very pointy horizontal flake, the only sensible way across seeming to be astride. Sitting in this rather uncomfortable position, with the rain trickling down my neck, seeping through my clothing, trying to see my second who must have been all of twenty feet away, and all the time wondering what on earth I was doing there with a perfectly good bottle of Bell's lying in the tent below. Whilst trying to remember the taste of the amber liquid I became aware of a shape drifting into view through the mist. Was it a Golden Eagle? No. Was it a high-flying Eider Duck? No. Was it a Raven? No. I called to the other three who were similarly bewildered until it came close

enough to be identified as nothing more sinister, or so we thought, than a green party type child's balloon which hovered uncertainly then gently rose above our heads and disappeared into the gloom.

Now this was weird and what did it portend? We had no answer. However the summit was successfully achieved and in the pouring rain and zero visibility the FP announced that he knew the way off. Well, he knew *a* way off, a filthy, wet, slimy gully down which we slipped, scrambled, fell and cursed. (It was only later I discovered that our route down when taken in the opposite direction contained several 'Severe' bits). The bedraggled group eventually arrived back at road level, the van and the tent, still puzzling over the appearance of the balloon. The van occupants were gloating. They were going to have a dry change of clothes and would sleep in a dry van whilst our tents would be wet, cold and miserable. In choice words we did suggest they treated us with more respect as we were the ones with the whisky. But, Ha! Ha! Ha! In order to make room for themselves in the van the night before they had piled their dry clothing underneath and they had forgotten something else. They had parked the van in a hollow which now had their gear floating in six inches of water whilst our sewn in groundsheet had preserved ours entirely in the dry.

But this is not the end of the tale. Oh no. The FP opened the back door of the van and there lying serenely on a sleeping bag was – THE GREEN BALLOON. Now how did it get from the top of Garbh Bheinn into the back of the FP's van we asked ourselves? No answer ever came.

Post Script

We never did decipher the ancient Gaelic rune that was inscribed upon the green shiny surface of the inflated spheroid. It read 'BP'. - Any ideas?

THE HIGH LEVEL ROUTE – Chamonix to Zermatt

John McM Moore

A few years ago, I drafted the compilation maps which accompany this article, to show the main variations of the High Level, aka Haute Route, from Chamonix to Zermatt and beyond. The route was first walked in 1861, by doughty members of the Alpine Club. It is a week-long trip over glaciers and passes, with a selection of accessible peaks en route. These days, it's venerable 'big walk' origins are obscured by 'high-jacking' as a much sought after ski traverse – the *sine qua non* for any skier worth his conversational salt at an Eagle Ski Club function – equivalent, socially, to a bagged Cuillin Ridge or completed Munro collection at a Shap dinner!

The crowds who fill the huts from March to May, are mainly groups of guided skiers. Day after day, they trail in tram-lined serpents, creating a ski motorway between the hut 'service areas'. In good conditions, those who do not relish paying to be taken for a walk on ski by a professional, need only 'stick with the crowd', at a discreet distance from a guide, and be carried along in the lemming-like rush. Bottlenecks are the main problem – as anyone knows, who has waited, shivering, behind an irascible Swiss Bergführer, whose party is fumbling with unfamiliar crampons, and blundering – sometimes panic stricken – up or down the snow gully access to various cols. A midweek start slightly reduces the pressures of Saturday to Sunday 'package' tour traffic.

The route starts from Grands Montets cable car top station, above Argentière. The excitement, and hassle, usually begins on the Col du Chardonnet, which often needs a short abseil descent. This is the perfect place to observe the client stress, which guides must handle for their living. There are

two alternative onward routes: via the Trient hut to Champex and public transport to the Bourg St Pierre or Verbier; or from the cosy Aig. Doreés bivouac, over the Grande Lui to La Fouly in Swiss Val Ferret. From La Fouly, a lovely but avalanche threatened valley leads up to the Grand St Bernard Pass for a night with the monks at the Hospice. From the monastery, a bit of complicated navigation brings one to the Velan Hut, from where, a steep run and stiff re-ascent, rejoin the Champex route at the Valsorey hut.

Next comes the notorious Plateau du Couloir, an awkward ascent and traverse on the south flank of the Grande Combin. This section is the crux of the classic route and in icy or avalanche conditions, can be impassable. It was from this slope, I once glanced into eternity when one of our party slipped, with the prospect of 1000 ft of 30-40 degree, hard névé and rocks below. But ice-axe belays do work – at least when four or five of them are applied with some urgency.

From the Plateau du Couloir, a great run down the Durand Glacier leads to the Refuge Chanrion and hence, across two cols to the Dix Hut. The alternative is a long trudge up the Otemma Glacier to the Refuge Vignettes – notorious for both crowds and its airy, ‘touching the void’ loo. The Dix–Vignettes connection is much more satisfying and involves a traverse of the Pigne d’Arolla (3796m). A less demanding variation which avoids the Plateau du Couloir, and favoured in bad weather or by guides with inexperienced parties, is to use public transport from Champex to the Verbier lift system, spend a night at the Refuge Mont Fort and then traverse the Rosablanche to the Dix hut.

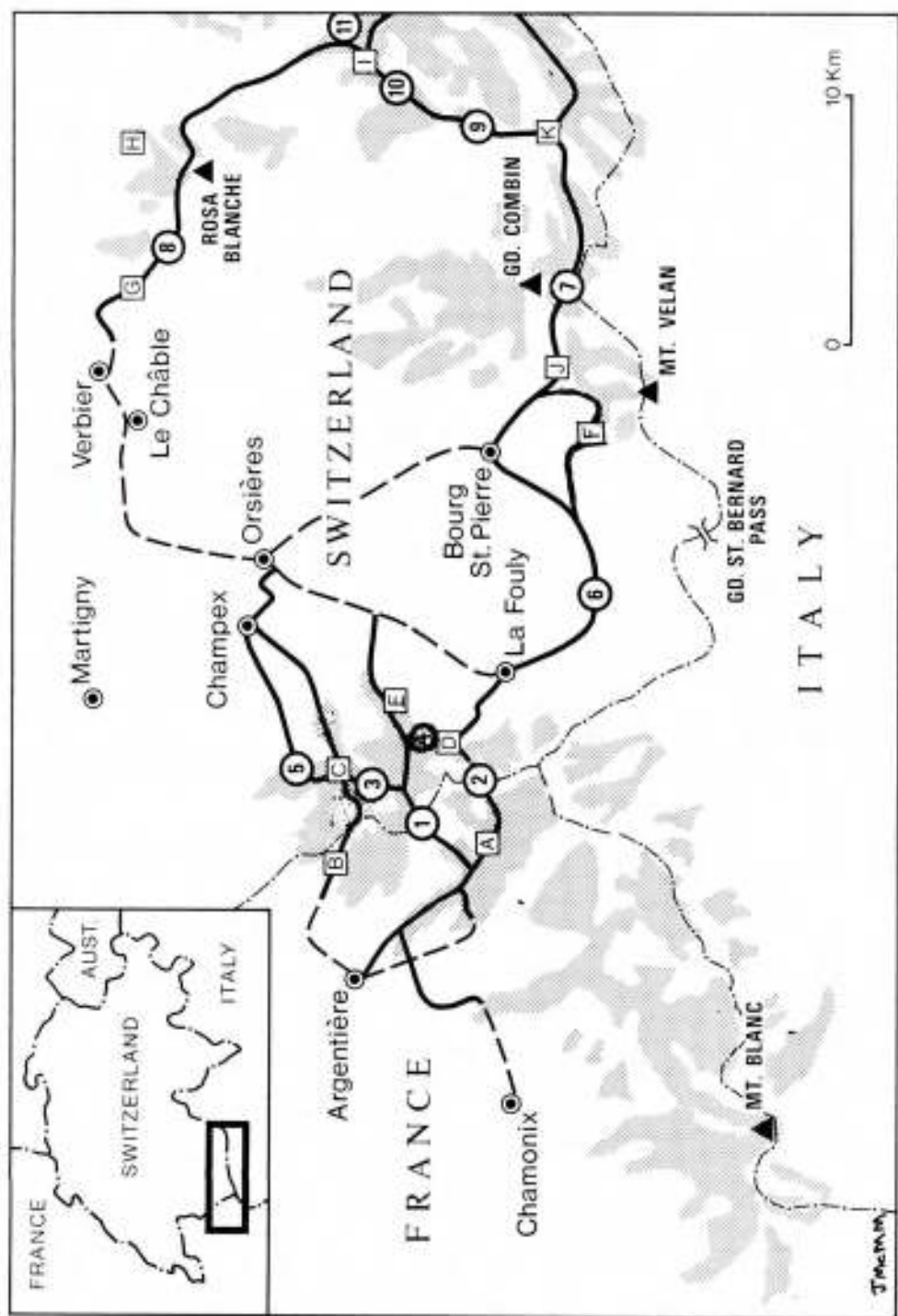
Next comes one of the biggest days – three cols and the spectacular run down the Tiefmatten glacier under the Zmutt ridge and Matterhorn north face to Zermatt, pausing, perhaps, for refreshment at the old Schönbiel Hut. There are numerous

extensions of the Haute Route beyond Zermatt, notably by the Adler Pass or Alphubeljoch to Saas Fee and the Italian High Level route to Monte Rosa.

For those of sterner stuff who eschew the comforts of wardened refuges, beer, wine and three course meals, variations can be made using a string of bivouac huts on both Italian and Swiss sides of the border.

For anyone interesting in 'people watching' the Haute Route on ski brings great rewards. Hut life and the stress of Grade 2 snow gullies gives wonderful cameos of 'group social dynamics', and guides' skills in organising their clients' hut tables before slipping off to chat up the scullery maids. It was in a Haute Route hut that I heard the apocryphal story of a British Guide who has a UIAA badge sewn on to every piece of his clothing – including his underwear. Sadly FRCC hut dorms lack that waft of expensive ladies' and gentlemen's French toiletries and we have little of the style of changing to fashionable multicoloured ski suits for dinner. Perhaps it is time to brighten FRCC social life with more pink, lavender and mauve patchwork clothing (for the gentlemen). Of course, the British on skis provide entertainment for the Europeans too: not only in our eccentric dress sense but in the tradition of being more often first up and last down than the other way round. This is not to mention the habit that infuriates all Continentals, our refusal to ski uphill in hierarchical line astern behind one's Führer.

To walk the High Level Route in summer is a pleasure – the huts are less crowded and the glaciers empty. And one can occasionally sense a little of the atmosphere of those AC doyennes, with their blankets, porters and champagne. And summer reveals the scary size and frequency of the huge crevasses which one skis over so blithely, in Spring, unroped!

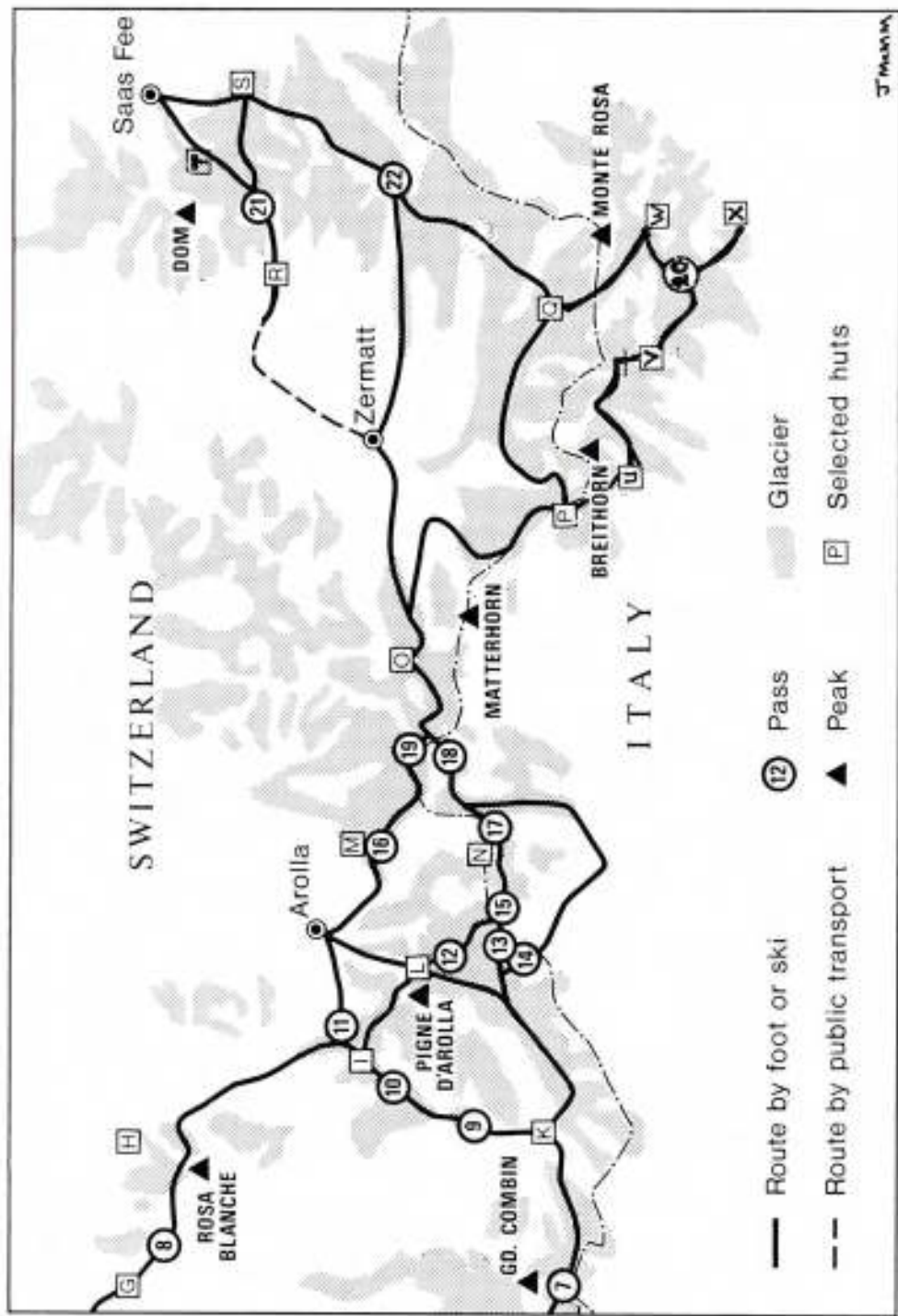


SELECTED HUTS:

- A: Argentière
 - B: Albert Premier*
 - C: Trient
 - D: l'a Neuve*
 - E: Saleina hut/Aig. Doreés bivouac*
 - F: Velan
 - G: Mont Fort
 - H: Prafleurie*
 - I: Dix
 - J: Valsorey
 - K: Chanrion
 - L: Vignettes
 - M: Bertol
 - N: Bouquetins bivouac*
 - O: Schönbiel
 - P: Theodul
 - Q: Mte Rosa
 - R: Täsch*
 - S: Britannia
 - T: Längflue
 - U: Nuova Mezzalama
 - V: Q.Sella
 - W: Margherita*
 - X: Gnifetti
- * unwardened in ski touring season.

PASSES

- 1: Chardonnet
- 2: Argentière (summer only)
- 3: Fenêtre de Saleina



- 4: Saleina
- 5 Ecandies/ Fenêtre du Chamois
- 6: Fenêtre de Ferret
- 7: Plateau du Couloir
- 8: La Chaux/Momin
- 9: Mont Rouge
- 10: Cheilon
- 11: Pas de Chèvres
- 12: Vignettes
- 13: Petit M.Collon
- 14: Oren
- 15: l'Evêque
- 16: Bertol
- 17: M.Brulé,
- 18:Valpelline
- 19 Tête Blanche/Herens
- 20: Lisjoch
- 21: Alphubeljoch
- 22: Adlerpass

A ROPE TOO SHORT

Dale Bloomer

God it's cold, my fingers are numb and this one-footed stance is slowly collapsing. What do I have as a secure belay? A loose nut runner on the left wall and a couple of axe picks in soft snow threaded with a sling to my harness. After climbing twenty-five metres of vertical ice and snow I'm above the hardest part of the pitch, but the rope has run out fifty feet short of the proper stance. It was always a gamble bringing just one sixty-metre rope between a party of three, but now I could kick myself for not bringing a second rope. I'll just have to keep it tight, then if either one of them should fall, there won't be such a big tug. I had hoped for better intermediate belays than this.

The gully bed now lay at a more comfortable angle and beyond, another ice pitch reared up to obscure the view of the gully's upper reaches. Cloud and mist rolled in and out, giving fleeting glimpses of Coire na Ciste, five hundred feet below. A gentle breeze intersected by gusts blew spindrift from the summit buttresses into an airborne frenzy.

I was three quarters of the way up the first pitch of Green Gully. Ten years ago one could expect to winter climb on Ben Nevis's north face in good snow and ice conditions for at least four months of the year. These days you would be lucky to get one month with the satisfactory freeze/thaw cycle that produces good *névé*. The winter of 2004 saw cold weather and snow just after Christmas, followed by extremely mild spells that melted everything that had formed on the northern precipices. Little rain had fallen and seepage required for significant water ice to build up was down to a trickle.

Plans for my winter tick list had begun during autumn, when I had searched through the Ben Nevis guidebook for a

suitable classic IV, the criteria being that it had to have three star status and that it needed to be included in the ice climbers' bible, *Cold Climbs*. On the Ben two routes fitted the bill, one being Comb Gully and the other Green Gully. In late February conditions were still very lean and it was a very worrying time, wondering if I would get anything done that winter. The weather was just too mild, as I had found whilst on a Fell and Rock Climbing Club prospective members meet. We had attempted Green Gully during a temperature inversion and had to abseil from the second pitch when the melting ice began to peel away from the rock. Summit temperatures on that day were seven degrees.

Now, three weeks later, I was back on the first pitch once again. It had been sub zero above the nine hundred metre mark for a couple of weeks and it had snowed a little, which left a few inches of soft snow on thin ice. After a long, cold wait for the two climbers above, I had climbed the first serious ice pitch under torrents of troublesome powder avalanches. The onslaught came when I was in the most vulnerable position on the steep ice with no protection in place. My natural reaction was to dig the ice axes in deep, sink my head into my shoulders and hope that my helmet would protect me from anything heavy that may accompany the spindrift. Now, out of the direct line of fire, I was in a position to bring my two partners up to and past me to the peg belay above.

'Climb when ready', 'Climbing'. It was Graham's voice. The rope went slack and I started to take it in, keeping it taut. Inch by inch I drew in the rope, then to my side another spindrift avalanche sped by, covering my embedded axes and cascading over the lip of the ice wall below. The rope stopped and I held it in tension until the avalanche had passed. Ice axes soon appeared, flicking in and out of the rim of the ice, followed by a helmet and a snow-covered figure, easing over

the lip onto easier ground. As Graham arrived beside me, he paused. His bushy, snow-encrusted eyebrows framing uneasy eyes. He carried on towards the peg on the left wall, where two other climbers were making very slow progress starting on the second pitch. Once safely clipped into the peg I brought in the second half of the rope until John called 'that's me'. After unclipping himself from the stance, John was soon on a tight rope and at battle with the ice. The gully's secret weapon was again unleashed as a foray of spindrift sped over the lip, showering him with an icy veil. Cramp and aching ankles were foremost in my thoughts and I longed to be moving again. Passing my stance, John continued on up to where Graham was anchored and I hastily followed.

The three of us were now awaiting the leader of the party in front to complete the second pitch and bring up his partner, who we were now sharing the stance with. Several minutes passed, but as soon as the second man had set off, I prepared to follow. At slightly less severe angle than the previous icefall the pitch went without any hesitation and the ice quality had improved, accepting gently swung axes that gave impeccable placements. Natural protection in the gully walls was non-existent so when the rope ran out, a double axe belay in good ice safeguarded my partners' ascent to the next stance higher up.

When I arrived at the stance it seemed like Graham was getting to know the guys in front quite well, having spent most of the time on the belays chatting. Stance, is a loose word for the site of a piton in the wall of the gully. The real situation was that we were all shuffling from one foot to another in the footprints we had kicked into steep snow slope. It is inconceivable how on such a serious route as this, a rope of three can catch up and have to wait for long periods for a supposedly experienced pair. Their rope

hadn't moved for several minutes and signs of embarrassment were beginning to show from the belayer as he called to see if the lead climber was OK. In order to rest my weary feet, I embedded the picks of my axes into a decent section of névé, clipped into them and sat, suspended in my harness.

I was really pleased with the way that we were performing as a team and in the way we were climbing. John was doing well, to say that this was his first serious ice route, but Graham, I was particularly pleased with. He was wearing an old pair of 'three-season' hill-walking boots, which were far from ideal, but to offset this he had my super home-made ice axes. We had climbed a few grade III routes together in the Lakes and these axes had performed really well. Sharp, exact and perfectly balanced, they were now in the hands of a master.

Belays were swapped over as soon the second man was on the move and with rejuvenated legs, I took my position to tackle the third ice pitch. It was a fairly straightforward section of around forty feet of near vertical ice intermingled with bits of bedrock protruding through. These were truly thin conditions for the time of year. Axe placements were carefully chosen, aiming for the thickest accumulations, so as to avoid hitting rock through the thin veneer around the edges. Hands began to warm back to life and it was great to be on the move again. The last man of the team above had made good progress and had reached the next stance just as I arrived at the top of the ice wall. I headed towards the right-hand side of the gully, searching for runner placements in the wall side. Higher I spotted a spike, fifteen feet below an awkward looking ice bulge near the right wall and suspected that a belay would be available in a small cave under the bulge. I slipped a sling over the spike and moved up to the bulge. I dug a small stance and inserted a nut runner in a crack in the wall and bedded the nut

with a slight tug. The rock around the nut cracked open and I quickly removed the nut before a large chunk fell away. I planted my axe above the ice boss and tapped it firmly home with the hammer, clipped in to both tools, then I inserted an ice screw into solid ice below the protuberance. The stance was poor and with hindsight I wished that I had belayed from the spike. The half rope was making the route a very challenging and fairly dangerous affair with these poor intermediate belays, but the advantage was clearer communication between the team. The clouds lifted revealing the cornice of the summit plateau, some two hundred above, reflecting the warm, soft glow of the afternoon sun.

The practised relay of belay exchanges began once more and Graham followed up to the next peg above, surmounting the ice bulge and my stance by the right flank. Belays exchanged, John climbed up and secured himself to the rock spike, enabling me to escape yet another torturous, temporary stance and gain the soft snow just below the final crux pitch. I arrived at the small crowded bay and a situation that had been so familiar during this climb. With the leader of the front rope only just making a start on the crux ice wall I knew that we were in for another long wait. I lowered my weight onto my harness and sat suspended from both axes, which were securely struck into the gully bed. The incompetence of the above party, or their lead climber had somehow taken the edge off of what should be a satisfying and pleasurable climb. A near fall from the ice-fall that he was now tackling almost made up for the lack of excitement and was a further indication that he was, perhaps, out of his depth on such a serious climb. Huge chunks of ice were crashing down the gully as he thrashed anxiously away at the perpendicular wall of ice. I thought of John secured to the spike below, dodging the lumps as they picked up speed, tumbling down the gully bed.

More than half an hour passed before the apologetic second took to the ice and confidently ascended the pitch in good style. John arrived and I moved up to position myself below the barrier of green ice. It was certainly the steepest pitch of the whole route and the obvious crux, but a definite line of weakness ran diagonally left. I made a start and teetered up steadily, noting that the harder that the ice was struck the more it fractured and broke away. My crampons failed to bite deep enough into the tough ice, which made the climbing on the lower section precarious but with balanced moves and gentle upward pulls, height was gained. To compound the problem there seemed to be a lack of ice on the left side for crampon points and a small ice bulge at waist height was forcing my body away from the ice face. A pull up on fragile ice enabled me to overcome the bulge with a long step up with the right foot. If the ice had given way during this manoeuvre the consequences would have been costly. Occasionally I utilised some of the old pick holes from previous ascents until better placements for the axe could be found slightly higher.

Twenty feet above the belay, I tried inserting a screw for some security as the gully yawned beneath my heels, but the tube through the centre of the screw was blocked with an old core of ice from the preceding belay. I felt confident in the way that I had been climbing and decided to go for it without further protection. After a series of good, solid placements for axes and crampons and sixty feet of strenuous climbing, I paused for breath just below the brink. Above the gully widened into a steep snow slope and no further difficulties were evident. I headed up towards an obvious rounded rock and the first decent intermediate belay that I had found on the whole climb. I drew in one of the ropes and John called 'That's me'. Pulling the rope tight to inspire confidence, I called for John to begin climbing. The

rope moved slowly then stopped followed by the sound of metal hitting rock and then ice.

The aspect was spectacular. Hemmed in by giant frost encrusted walls, the gully bed vanished towards the corrie one thousand feet below, while above, swirling, airborne spindrift lit by the afternoon sun was evidence of a strong breeze on the summit. Thirty feet further up the gully our slow friends were starting on the final part of the climb, which headed up through easy snow to the cornice. Several minutes passed before the blue crown of John's helmet appeared. Once he gained the final stance above, John made himself safe and I took in the rope so that Graham could get the work on the concluding, key pitch. When he was in full swing on the pitch, the steady, constant movement of the rope meant that he was climbing boldly, but then again with flexible boots he wouldn't want to hang around, standing on his front points for too long. When he gained my belay his first words were 'That was bloody desperate'.

Five hours after starting the route we climbed up the soft snow of the last pitch to break through the cornice onto the summit plateau. I was accompanied with mixed emotions on that final pitch, those of relief, elation and finally exhaustion, but with the satisfaction that Zero and Point Five could only be a season or two away.

THE WHITE TOOTH

John Jackson

When I returned home to Britain after the war I was keen to go to Switzerland as soon as possible and to see how similar the country was to Kashmir. Time as well as money was scarce and it wasn't until the summer of 1947 that I was able to go. Even then it was only for seven days. My companions were all fellow members of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club – John Wilkinson, Harry Ironfield, and also Ken (Mac) Heaton, who was not only an outstanding rock climber but who later, with his brother Alan, broke the Lake District fell running record that had been held for 30 years by Bob Graham.

We chose to go to the Valais Alps and on arriving at Les Haudere it astonished me to see how similar it was to Kashmir. The houses, complete with spacious verandahs were built entirely of wood and in the same style as at the villages of Gund or of Kangan in the Sind valley. The same smell of ponies and of pony dung pervaded the air and beyond the village there were similar sweeping pine-clad slopes and clear views of distant peaks. One difference I found was the high mountain huts such as the Cabane des Vignettes above Arolla, and to reach it we had a steep little glacier ascent in thick cloud over the Bas Glacier d'Arolla.

The Vignettes was my first Swiss mountain hut and I remember it well for various reasons. First it made a welcome sight as I led my companions (on their first alpine season) out of the clouds to the rocky platform on which the Cabane stood. The second, which for more than one reason reminds me of the chill I felt at the base of my spine, is of looking down the hole in the 'loo'; perched as it was at the end of an exposed path, the space beneath the hole went straight down for thousands of feet to the valley of Arolla. Surely, I thought, this is

the biggest 'drop' devised by man ! A third memory is of a voluble and excited Frenchman (was he affected by altitude ?) who with much noise and gesticulation leapt onto a bleached wood table and proceeded to change his trousers in front of everyone including a pretty but very startled lady alpinist who had just arrived. The next day I remember seeing his guide literally dragging him gasping and protesting over the glacier as if in retribution.

At the time the normal Warden of the hut was in gaol for smuggling wine over the Swiss-Italian border. Smuggling was rife and one story that still makes me smile was of the Italian smugglers who came over the frontier (Col d'Arolla) and broke into the Mont Collon Hotel. From the hotel they took the grand piano. Imagine them carrying the grand piano up the long Haut Glacier d'Arolla, over the col, and into Italy! My mind boggles at the thought but I've always given them full marks for musical appreciation.

Our first mountain ascent was a traverse of the Pigne d'Arolla, La Serpentine and the Mont Blanc de Seilon, crossing back to Arolla over the Pas de Chèvres. Wasting no time we then crossed the Col de Bertol and traversed the Glacier de Ferpècle to reach the Cabane Rossier on the Dent Blanche – the White Tooth. Often it is referred to as the mountaineers' mountain for there is no easy way of ascent or descent. It was first climbed via its South ridge in 1862 by Kennedy, Wigram and the guides Kronig and Croz. The North ridge was not climbed for almost another 80 years.

A further ridge, the Ferpècle or West Arête rises steeply from the Glacier de Ferpècle in a series of powerful rock ridges. British guide books sometimes refer to this ridge as the Jones Arête for it was here in August of 1899 that the renowned Welsh mountaineer, Owen Glynn Jones, along with the guides, Furrer, Zurbriggen and Vugnier, fell to his death.

Though it was our first alpine 'season' and only our second climb we strongly considered climbing the North ridge but finally settled for a traverse of the mountain via the Ferpèclegrat, and a descent by the South ridge. During the traverse we had to bivouac below the summit and complete the climb the next day. This was my fault because I had been used to late starts in Kashmir and we left the Cabane at the wrong time of the morning. Part of my satisfaction with the whole experience is linked to the interest and appreciation my companions had shown the previous day as I had cut steps on steep ice and found a safe way through an intricate crevasse system after ascending the Tête Blanche.

During the early part of the ascent of the Ferpècle we knew real fear as stones buzzing like bees flew overhead and we had to crouch for safety behind any available rock protuberance. The ridge itself proved surprisingly steep but apart from the exhilaration of the rock climbing it was particularly satisfying to work out the intricacies of the route and I particularly treasure the memory of the firm companionship and combined strength of the party. This was never more apparent than during the cold long night of the enforced bivouac, when without any extra gear we merely huddled together for warmth below the summit.

Even so we all were impressed by the silent majesty of the hills at night time – a silence that was occasionally broken by the creaking movement of a distant glacier, or the dull crunch of a falling sérac from the ice-fall across the valley. By morning our mountain tops floated above a bank of mist and the sun rising in the east cast the long shadow of the Matterhorn across the cotton wool sea. Descent was made with care and at the big rock steps a guide with his client was happy to see that we were safe and added fuel to our inner fires by giving us a packet of Ovomaltine.

Finally, at the last snow slopes above the Rossier, we met a lady bringing us refreshing and most welcome coffee in a vacuum flask. It proved to be the well known alpine historian Dr Claire Engel who was to tell us that we had just completed the first guideless British traverse of the Dent Blanche by the Ferpèclegrat and the Sudgrat.

True or not, the White Tooth had provided us with yet another memorable journey in life.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH McHAFFIE

Martin Cooper

Heavy snow was forecast and a second winter climbing trip of the year beckoned. January had given me two good days in the Northern Highlands and a first visit to Coire Mhic Fhearchair. It did not disappoint, but climbing conditions were not yet stabilised and Ian McNeil and I had settled for the easy route out, in summer conditions, straight up to the bealach between Ruadh-stac Mor and Coinneach Mor. It made for an easy snow slope at no more than Grade I. We had serious doubts about the party of four descending past us without crampons. Tim, as ever had found climbing conditions, high up on Liathach in Coireag Dubh Mor and he returned to the bunkhouse triumphant. Jim, his partner, had a look of world-weary exhaustion. Next day the cloud had closed in and I made do with a drive to Applecross where Bryn pointed out the routes on Beinn Bhan and snow blocked the top of the Bealach na Ba. We eventually made an easy ascent to the top of Sgurr a' Chaorachain, peered into the gloom below and watched as beams of sunlight teased us with fleeting forays through the clouds. It was enough.

Now it was mid February, Friday night and the wind was getting up. Joe had spent the afternoon packing food and gear and I returned from work shortly after four. A decision was needed. More snow was forecast and high winds. The temperature had been below freezing for most of the week. The drive from Tyneside to Kinlochleven takes five hours at best. Driving conditions were unpredictable and I was tired after a week at work. Yet climbing conditions were likely to be good and a late arrival at Waters Cottage and the need for an early start was not putting me off. But Joe needed to make the decision. He doesn't get out as often as me and, to understate things

slightly, he isn't the world's earliest riser. I did not want to impose an agenda. Joe is twenty three. He is my eldest son. After a few minutes thought he came up with the solution; forget Scotland for the weekend and the worries of difficult driving. We could travel to the Highlands next month. Have an early night and an early start and do something big and long in the Lakes. It made sense, the pressure was off and I sat down with a book and a can of beer. It was a good decision; we might even encounter steep ice and a brave Rheged Warrior.

Next morning we swung into our well practised routines but the snow outside was as deep as I'd seen it on Tyneside for years. As I carried out the day's trickiest manoeuvre, getting the car off the drive, and surveyed the scene down the street, I decided we would be lucky to get as far as the Lakes. West of Newcastle, however, the snow was less deep and we made swift progress along the A69. Soon Skiddaw and Blencathra came into sight and a decision had to be made, Patterdale or Borrowdale? A quick mental check of hills we had done over the years revealed that Joe had never been on Glaramara. That gave plenty of options for later in the day. Stopping briefly at Rosthwaite to pick up the valley's last colour slide film at the shop opposite Salving House, it now being apparent that we were in for a brilliant day, we parked at Stonethwaite, clipped axes to our sacks and set off.

Soon I was stopping to take pictures of a winter's day that only comes once every so often. The temperature was well below zero, the air clear, sky blue and sufficient snow covered the tops to give an Alpine feel. We had made a good decision. Half way up the ridge I stopped to take a telephoto shot of Glaciated Slab – Joe and I had climbed there when he was twelve. I turned to look back down the valley. As I glanced back beyond Kings Howe and then up ahead to where

Gillercombe was coming into view I began to think about another day in the Lakes and a weekend I will never forget. For a simple fell walk from Black Crag, below Kings How, to Gillercombe and on further to Great Gable, the distance to be covered is quite modest. The height gain is little to worry about either. Add in five multi-pitch climbs en-route, however, and you are looking at a serious stamina trip. Start at Keswick and finish on Gable by two in the afternoon, and then you are considering a great day's climbing by anybody's standards. That is what Ray McHaffie had done on the particular day I had in mind in the summer of 1996. Perhaps he did that most days! But I'm jumping ahead of myself.

Joe and I made good time up the long ridge of Thornythwaite Fell. I've been down that way more often than I've been up. The short rock step below the summit of Glaramara had a good covering of hard ice. We took a minute or two on that. On from Glaramara the ridge is interesting and easy. Every stream was frozen solid and Central Gully looked to have enough in it, although conditions would be thin. At Allen Crag a couple of lads with technical axes passed us. Maybe they had been on Great End. We looked at the options open to us: on to Scafell (a bit late in the day for that), Esk Pike and Bowfell (we would end up retracing our steps), descend into Langstrath (not the most exciting finish but quite sensible when the light would be gone by five). We chose the latter and met not a soul from Esk Hause to the Langstrath Hotel. It is a lang strath but we had enjoyed our walk and a drink in the Scafell was a good way to finish. If it had been summer we would have gone to the Shepherds Crag café and studied the current Borrowdale guide book, dedicated to Ray McHaffie.

Saturday June 15th, 1996 was a memorable day for a number of reasons. England beat Scotland at Wembley in Euro

96 with a spectacular goal from Gascoigne. An IRA bomb destroyed the Arndale Shopping Centre in Manchester. The sun shone gloriously all day in the Lake District and Scafell was festooned with climbers as if it were Stanage on a sunny Sunday afternoon. I was lucky enough to be camping in the valley and on the previous Wednesday night John, Ray and I had decided that we would do Botterill's Slab. It was my first route on Scafell Crag and I savoured each moment, the slab pitch itself being just testing enough to warrant its reputation but, in the conditions on that afternoon, never anything to worry about – a truly superb climb. We had taken our time and we descended late in the afternoon, I for one, not really wanting to leave the crag behind which, by now was basking in the evening sun. The next day was hot and sunny again and we decided on some easy routes on Gable. We made our way to the Napes by way of Kern Knotts, but the West Chimney was a slight let down after Botterill's Slab. Nevertheless, the route was done and we moved across to look for the start of Tophet Bastion. It took a bit of finding, high up above as well as to the left of Tophet Wall but by now we were in even less of a hurry. As John tied on and I prepared to belay a familiar face appeared on the scene, red-cheeked and grinning. The "Jaws of Borrowdale" had arrived.

My first pathetic attempt at climbing in the Lakes was on Gillercombe, Easter 1981. It was not an enjoyable experience. A few weeks later I made it to the top of my first route, Needle Ridge, and slowly in the usual fashion, I built up some experience, had a few frights, climbed some classics and found myself sometimes on rock not of the best quality. That was fairly unusual and, I am pleased to let you know, the addiction is now without cure. A good friend Pete, who I climbed with a fair amount in the eighties, was definitely a grade better than me but somehow I got out more often. There was just a touch

of rivalry, but we agreed on one thing- when we had done Overhanging Bastion, Gimmer Crack and Troutdale Pinnacle, then we would be proper climbers. I still haven't done The Crack and it was a long while before I tackled Overhanging Bastion but in May 1993 I made my first visit to Black Crag and did Troutdale Pinnacle by the direct variation. This joins the original route on the slab below the pinnacle and instead of a downwards traverse across the slab you arrive below the slab on its left side, make an awkward step up and belay at the foot of the pinnacle. I placed a runner below the awkward move and was about to move up when, from nowhere, a climber soloed past me, complaining that he was slow that day. The route normally took him eleven minutes, he said, but he was recovering from an ankle injury. I smiled and watched him disappear towards the skyline.

Ray McHaffie was born in Carlisle and first came to notoriety as a member of a gang of Teddy Boys; he was part of what his sister-in-law Ivy describes as 'a rough crowd'. He had jobs as a joiner and a sawyer and, apparently, as a grave digger before working for the Water Board but, Ivy says, it was moving to Keswick that changed him and, "he has never looked back since". His early climbing antics, of course, spread his fame much wider than Keswick. Trevor Jones, in *Cumbrian Rock*, describes Ray's first climb, a solo ascent of *Kern Knotts Crack*, and the party piece which attracted media attention and earned him some money in the early 1960s, his ascents of *Little Chamonix* in roller skates and boxing gloves. This semi-apocryphal story has long been one of the legends of Lakeland climbing but anyone who doesn't believe it need only take a look at the photographs which are still on display in the Dog and Gun in Keswick.

Cumbrian Rock begins to put Ray McHaffie's achievements into their proper place in the history of Lakeland climb-

ing but it was published too early in 1988 and Mac was nowhere near finished with what has been his climbing life's work, new routes in Borrowdale. He has done another hundred since the publication of that book, given up new routes and started again and still gets out most days. After opening his account with *Voodoo* on Gowder Crag, he climbed *Interloper* with Ado Liddell in July 1962 on Lower Falcon Crag. A month later the same pair returned to Lower Falcon to produce the classic route *The Niche*, E2 5c. The use of three pegs caused some controversy at the time but it must be remembered that there were only a handful of routes at that grade in the Lake District at the time and none harder. Spectator climbers recall watching Mac and Ado hacking at loose rock on the first ascent and exchanging some banter regarding their 'step-cutting'. In terms of finding rock beneath Borrowdale vegetation it was the shape of things to come.

Ray has never been much of a climbing club person, although he was part of the Pillar Club in the sixties. The Fell and Rock were a little slow in updating Borrowdale information. Until 1968 all that was available were reprints of Bentley Beetham's 1953 guide. In 1966 McHaffie's produced his own Borrowdale guide. I would be interested to see a copy. It was probably hard to imagine in the 1960s that anyone would ever surpass Beetham's achievement of ninety one new routes in Borrowdale in thirty one years. By 1973, however, with ten years of new routes behind him, Ray McHaffie had already amassed sixty two new routes and he passed Bentley Beetham midway through 1979, after a mere sixteen years on the job.

Since then Mac has accelerated away far into the distance, beyond any opposition and the current guide (2000) gives him a total of two hundred and sixty five new routes. That is almost certainly out of date as well. His dedication to the task can be measured in many different ways. Unlike the

rest of Britain, slumped in front of their televisions on Christmas Day 1992. Mac did six new routes on Christmas Crag and then returned with more new routes on the first two days of 1993. After that – a break until September. The injured ankle he complained of when I met him on Black Crag that year really had slowed him down. It didn't stop him going to work, which at that time was a bike ride to Seathwaite and a six mile walk every day, followed by six miles back in the evening after a day working on footpath repair at Foxes Tarn on Scafell. But by far the most effective measure of what he was doing in the 1990s was the fact that every Sunday afternoon, without fail, he was to be found sitting in the sunshine at Shepherds café, holding forth on the exploits of the day, pot of tea in front of him, broad grin on his face.

The grin on his face on that June day in 1996 on Great Gable was certainly wide enough. He had cycled from home that morning to Black Crag and soloed *Troutdale Pinnacle*, then cycled to the top of Honister Pass where he left his bike before making the short walk along to Buckstone How to solo *Honister Wall*. The next objective was Gillercombe Buttress, another solo and on over the top of Grey Knotts, Brandreth and Green Gable to The Napes. Up *Needle Ridge* and back down and here he was for the last climb of the day, *Tophet Bastion*. He looked warm and his cheeks were red and he set off ahead of John with just a brief mention of what he had done that day. Ten minutes later, before John had even belayed on the first pitch, he was back down again, picking up his tiny day sack and setting off home for tea, calling in at Shepherds on the way home, of course.

1996 was a special year for Mac. The First Ascents pages of the Borrowdale Guide show it so clearly. Eighteen new routes in 1993 had been followed by nineteen in 1994, then just nine in 1995, but not any nine. The route names tell the

story: *One Foot in the Grave*, *Waiting for God*, *Tombstone*, *Age Concern*, *Dust to Dust*, *Ashes to Ashes* and *Death Bed*. Mac was saying goodbye but he had one last trick up his sleeve. On June 2nd, 1996 Ray and James McHaffie did the first ascent of *Final Act*, E2 5c at Shepherds Crag. Two weeks later, there he was, his final route behind him, in the sunshine on Great Gable, the fields and lake of Wasdale below him and a glittering career of new routes behind him. He didn't tell us that day about his final act, but remembering how his mood seemed on that sunny Sunday afternoon it is obvious now why he was wearing such a broad grin. He was a very happy man.

That is not quite the end of the story. Joe and I finished our walk and planned our next trip to the Highlands. It hasn't happened yet. Ray went home for his cup of tea but something inside him must have felt not quite right. In April of 1997 he was back, unbelievably, with another new route, *Tombraider* an E5 at Hows Crag. More followed over the next two years, mostly with son James. The current Borrowdale Guidebook is their book. Who knows the future? I have just rung Mac to check one or two things for this article. Why did I expect him to be at home on a sunny morning in May?

DOWNFALL

Colin Shone

The first falling stone I never saw
Made a marked impression on me,
Psychologically.
A healthy respect for descending rockery
Became an obsessive apprehension
Of all things in free-fall mode -
Reductions in barometric pressure,
Drops in the DOW Jones Index,
The Fall of the House of Usher,
The sounds of a piano
Coming through an upstairs window.
Always alert, I gazed watchfully skywards,
The cry of "Gardyloo" ever ready on my lips.
Thus, neglecting realities at terrestrial level,
I trod on the garden rake,
Receiving from its handle
A Hoffnungian builder's blow to the head,
Reviving my awareness of
Life at the grassroots.
I was brought back to earth and,
One might say,
I received my comeuppance.

This article contains a roundup of the more significant new routes recorded in the Lake District over the last two years; in general, micro routes, variations and boulder problems have been omitted. For full details of all routes and variations done since the last published guide-book, the reader is cordially referred to the Recent Developments section of the Club's website at: <http://www.frcc.co.uk/rock/newroutes/index.htm>. For up-to-date developments on the bouldering scene, a list of websites is given on the FRCC site at <http://www.frcc.co.uk/rock/boulder.htm>, the best of which is LakesBloc.

David Birkett has maintained his crown as Lakeland's climbing king over the last two years with a number of bold and extremely hard routes, mainly on Scafell. These include **Another Lonely Day** (E8), **Death Arête** (E8) and **Welcome to the Cruel World** (E9). Following close on his heels in terms of technical difficulty and sheer audaciousness, is James McHaffie whose major climbs include **Alter Ego** (E7) and **Awkward Logistics** (E7/8) on Eagle Crag, Borrowdale.

In the winter of 2002/3 considerable controversy ensued as a result of Stephen Ashworth's winter ascent of the three star E3 **Snickers Snack** on Gable Crag. Whilst the climbing fraternity is seemingly doomed never to agree on the rights and wrongs of climbing classic summer lines in winter, nor indeed on what exactly constitutes 'winter', it is, at grade VIII, one of the hardest and most sustained winter climbs ever put up in the Lakes and a considerable achievement. The crag was very quickly covered in numerous routes of a similar nature.

On rock, by far the most significant developments of 2003 took place on Dove Crag in the Eastern Fells where many hard climbs were added to the North Buttress. McHaffie started the ball rolling in August 2002 with **Fear of Failure** (E8), a climb that was later on-sighted by Birkett! The following summer, Keswickian Al Wilson and Steve Crowe from the North-East inspired a hotbed of activity at the crag with leading climbers from all over the country attracted there by postings on the internet. Major routes included **Fetish for Fear** (E8) by Chris Hope and **Dusk till Dawn** (E7). Al Wilson, Elsewhere that summer, Duncan Booth made two major contributions with **Relentless Rage** (E6) the oft tried pink groove up the centre of Goucher Crag, Swindale, and **The Second Coming** (E6) with its **Infestation Finish** (E6/7) on Raven Crag, Thirlmere. The winter of 2003/4 was poor and produced little of note, and as I write (in May) new routes on rock in 2004 have nearly all been in the lower

1st Winter Ascent of Snickers Snack, Gable Crag (VIII) Photo: Stephen Reid

grades, though this is not to say that they aren't worthwhile, but I have no doubt the summer ahead will show that the Lake District is far from "climbed out".

Page numbers given in the text below refer to the page in the relevant current FRCC guidebook.

Langdale

White Ghyll Crag (p54)

Titter Ye Not 35m HVS *

A line between *The Slabs, Route 1* and *Forget-Me-Not* on the slab at the top left-hand end of the crag.

1 40m (5a). Start 2 metres right of *The Slabs, Route 1* below an obvious downward-pointing flake at 12 metres. Climb straight up to the flake and pull over it, and the bulge above, on its right-hand side. Continue straight up to the spike belay on *Forget-Me-Not* (optional belay). Passing the spike go up the slight leftwards-facing groove above the spike and belay on the grass ledge above.

2 20m (4b?). Climb the obvious rib above the ledge to the top.

Chris Polden, Andy Lole (alt), 15th May 2004

Pavey Ark (p85)

Alphekka 35m E1/2

(5b). Takes a line left of *Capella*. Climb through the bulge from a pinnacle just left of the tree. Then follow the cleaned crack to join *Capella* below its final bulge and finish up this. Abseil off the holly or continue to *Jack's Rake*.

M Bagness, B Rope, (backrope ?) 10th September 2003

The Luminous Dog 86m E5

Impressive climbing taking the wall between *Gwynne's Chimney* and *Golden Slipper*. Rather scrappy low down but this is forgotten once one moves into the groove. Height is an advantage and a cool head essential. The belay at the top is set well back and a separate rope was used. Alternatively a higher belay could be taken at the bottom of the second pitch. Start to the left of *Gwynne's Chimney* as for *Trolls Corner*.

1 38m (4b) Move up left to the rowan tree. Climb up and traverse left to join *Pokerface* on the slabby wall and follow this and the grassy rake to belay on the left below a grassy corner.

2 48m (6a) Ascend the grassy corner rightwards to where it steepens, below a short corner crack. Gain this and climb it to gain the top of the huge flake traversed by *Stalag*. Move right slightly below the obvious

groove – which unfortunately is initially devoid of gear. Getting into the groove is problematical and solved by climbing the undercut wall on the left to gain a hold and small crack in the left arête of the groove (HB Offset 4 placement in the crack). Continue up using the arête left of the groove to gain some sanctity and a poor runner placement at the top of the groove. Continue up the wall above and over a short overlap to a large flake. Finish up the wall above to the right of the corner.

Dave Menadue, Chris King, Ron Kenyon, 14th September 2002

Lead after a failed on-sight attempt, followed by top roped ascent and cleaning – and also without chalk!

Raven Crag, Langdale (p 128)

Sixty metres further up the gully from *Slim Buttress* is a large boulder embedded in the gully bed.

Lancelot 15m VD

Ten metres below the embedded boulder is an obvious rib.

Climb the rib starting on the left (higher) side.

Jim Cooper, 29th March 2003

Chancelot 20m HVS 4c/5a

Takes the south-west-facing wall behind the embedded boulder. Start just right of the left arête of the wall.

(4c/5a). Climb up for 4 metres to a small overlap. Traverse right for 2 metres to a vague crackline which is followed to easier-angled rock and a large ledge.

Tom Walkington, Jim Cooper, 29th March 2003

East Raven Crag (p151)

Bingo 18 metres VS, 4c

Start as for *Speckled Band*.

(4c). Climb up to the short right facing corner at 4 metres. Climb the corner to a small ledge. Then move up and right to a small letterbox (Friend 2). Climb up and left to a vertical crackline and up and left again to another crackline which leads to the top.

Tom Walkington, Eric Barnes, 8th August 2003

Far East Raven Crag (p156)

There has been a big rockfall from the roof right of *Babylon*, (taken by *Warlock*), and it sounds as though the area is very unstable.

Ur... 48 m MVS

This combination of pitches, with little new climbing, gives a pleasant route and the easiest line on this part of the crag. Protection is good after

the first 8 metres.

Start 2 metres right of *Samarkand* at an obvious slabby rib defining the left edge of the large bay containing an oak tree.

1 13m (4a). Climb the rib, which soon eases. Where it steepens again head up diagonally right, passing to the left of a large blunt spike (runners), then continue to belay at the ledge below Pitch 2 of *Damascus*.

2 7m. Traverse easily left to belay on the holly on *Samarkand* (part of *Far East Traverse* in reverse).

3 28m (4b). Continue the traverse left past a bulge until access can be gained to a groove with a sapling (junction with *Nineveh*). Climb up, as for *Nineveh*, to a stunted oak, then bridge straight up on small holds, keeping left of the right-slanting groove of *Nineveh*.

R Smithson, D Heard (alt), 12th May 2004

Not much new climbing - the existing route Jerusalem is probably close to the first pitch for the first few metres, but so vaguely described that it's hard to know. The middle pitch is not new, and only the top of the third pitch is independent of Nineveh. It's quite a nice route though, and would probably be of interest to climbers of modest ability.

Richard: "Most of the routes round here are named after ancient Middle-Eastern cities. What shall we call this one?"

David: "Ur...."

Gimmer Crag (p165)

Bracket Direct 96m HVS

A pleasant series of eliminate pitches giving a direct line up the junction of the *South-West* and *West Faces*. The difficult sections are short but stiff! Start as for *Bracket and Slab*.

1 31m (5a). Follow the rib of *Bracket and Slab* for a few metres to the good spike and then traverse from this horizontally rightwards to make an awkward pull up into a small niche. Continue up the slab and rib above, overcoming an overlap at its left-hand end, and belay on the terrace under the *Bracket*.

2 31m (5a). Climb directly up to the left end of the *Bracket*, stand on it, and follow the thin crack directly above to exit steeply via a large spike. Climb up to a bay (belay on *Bracket and Slab*) and continue directly up the rock above via a heathery crack to emerge on *Thompson's Ledge* at a blunt nose in between the crack of *Crow's Nest Direct* on the left and *Amen Corner* on the right (possible belay). Overcome the blunt nose direct via a long reach and an awkward mantelshelf and exit rightwards onto the *Gangway*.

3 10m (4c). Splitting the overhanging pink wall directly above is the thin rightward-slanting crack (*Crow's Nest Direct* variation). Climb this directly to the stance on *Crow's Nest Direct*.

4 24m (4b/c). Step up right from the belay and climb the steep wall to a bilberry ledge. Move left along the ledge a metre or so and climb the slab, tending rightwards, to the top.

C King, SJH Reid (Alt), 16th October 2003

Via the Original Finish, Pitch 4 as described was added by SJH Reid, J Roberts, 24th May 2004.

Little of the route was new, probably only Pitch 1 and the upper section of Pitch 2, but none of it had been recorded except the variation to Crow's Nest Direct which forms Pitch 3. However it does make a good HVS up this area of Gimmer.

Original Finish

4 24m (4c). Follow the heathery crack/groove which lies just right of the line of *Crow's Nest Direct* leftwards to the Crow's Nest. From the left side of the *Crow's Nest*, climb directly up the blunt arête (without moving left into the chimney). Easier rock leads to the top.

Stone the Crows 14m E2

This variation on Pitch 2 of *Crow's Nest Direct* gives a short, but desperately sustained, struggle.

(5c). Follow *Crow's Nest Direct* to the niche which is climbed directly.

C King, SJH Reid, 16th October 2003

Quite possibly climbed before as it is such an obvious line.

Lightning Crag (p266)

Sunday's Child 16m E5 **

A fine but poorly protected route up the obvious flakes in the arête between *West Wall* and *Amina*.

(6a). Climb up to the flakes and obvious blunt spike (crucial RP1). Pull up and finish up the obvious groove left of the niche of *Amina* and the easy slab above.

Jim Arnold, Kate Arnold, Al Hewison, 23rd May 2004

Kettle Crag (p270)

A number of new routes have been done here recently.

The routes are described from the top of the gill.

The first feature is *Heather Slab*, a large, easy-angled, partially-vegetated slab. Routes are mentioned though not described in the guide.

Stonechat 20m VD *

Start below the prominent crack in the middle of the slab. Climb the rather dirty crack awkwardly to the midway break. Finish easily at will up the upper slab on superb rock. Several variations possible.

Dick Baker, Roger Wilkinson, Debbie Wilkinson, 15th June 2003

A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing 20m VS * (first half only)

Really a micro route, but on perfect rock. Easier than it looks.

(4a). Start at the lowest point of *Heather Slab* and climb to a small overlap at 5m. (Fiddly poor gear – one small cam). Climb the slab above to the break on tiny but perfect holds, and amble to the top. May feel more like HVS if you don't have just the right gear.

Roger Wilkinson, Debbie Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 15th June 2003

Ten metres left from *Heather Slab* lies a prominent left-facing corner with a somewhat mossy slab (with an overhang at 10 metre) to its left. On the next two routes there is a rather alarming loose flake near the finish that needs to be treated carefully.

Earl Grey 20m VS *

Much nicer than it looks. Start at the thin crack halfway across the slab.

(4c). Climb the crack (crux) and continue on big clean holds to a tiny mossy V-groove. Float over the overhang left of the groove on big incuts and finish easily up the knobbly slab up and left.

Roger Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 28th June 2003

Rose Puchong 20m MVS 4b *

Two metres left of *Earl Grey* at ground level lies a tiny left-facing corner below the left end of the overhang. Climb the corner and the crack springing from it and pass the overhang at its left end. Climb diagonally right and finish up the knobbly slab right of the mossy streak (as for *Earl Grey*).

Dick Baker, Roger Wilkinson, 28th June 2003

Singing Kettle 20m VS ***

A varied, sustained and absorbing route. Excellent rock and often surprising holds.

(4b). Climb the good (if a bit dirty) crack just left of *Rose Puchong* to reach a large heathery bay. Climb the back wall of the bay, and take the overhang direct on good holds to reach a delicate and fairly bold finish up the left edge of the upper slab.

Roger Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 28th June 2003

Five metres left lies a horizontal ledge (providing a useful descent for the lower parts of the crag), access to which is partially blocked by a bit of stone wall. Below is a short gully leading down to the clean *Minor Slab*.

The next route begins about 10 metres along the ledge where an undercut slab is bisected by a wide heathery crack.

Another Kettle of Fish 15m S

Though the climbing is pleasant and the rock good this is an uninspiring route. Start left of the heathery crack.

(4c). A boulder problem start leads to an easy slab. From its apex step across the gully by a rowan and climb the little wall above.

Roger Wilkinson, Debbie Wilkinson, 5th July 2003

Minor Slab lies below the previous route, at the foot of the little gully.

Minor Melodic 25m VS ***

Start at the little corner at the left side of *Minor Slab*.

1 15m (4c). Climb the corner for one metre and then straight up the slab on small sharp holds to a ledge at half height. Step left towards a niche and finish up right-leaning cracks.

2 10m (4a). Above the terrace lies a slab in the form of an inverted triangle. Climb direct on to the toe of the slab and continue on good holds.

Roger Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 13th June 2003

Left again a sloping ledge leads behind a block to the start of *Red Slab* (see guide).

Serendipity 30m Severe ***

A superb and direct route, on impeccable rock, with good gear and increasingly exciting positions. Technically quite easy for the grade. Start on the right of a contorted rowan tree at the right side of *Major Slab* and at the bottom of a vegetated gully which runs down from behind the pinnacle.

Climb easily at first on large blocky holds, then slightly right and up a blunt rib. Good crack climbing leads to a prominent blocky arête which provides an exposed finish.

Roger Wilkinson, Debbie Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 15th June 15 2003

At a lower level lies *Major Slab* (see guide)

Major Slab Left-Hand 30m VD *

Start at the left corner of *Major Slab* on a narrow grassy ledge.

Climb on large if sometimes loose holds up the rather heathery slab, then steeply on excellent holds to pass the overlap at its left end. Finish easily up the top slab.

Dick Baker, Roger Wilkinson 13th June 2003

Tea Time Arête 25m HS **

An unlikely grade for a bold-looking route. Start at the foot of the knife-edge arête left of the huge overhung corner of Semerikod.

(4a). Climb the arête on good holds but with less-than-good gear to a large ledge. Turn right and climb rather dirty rock, avoiding the heather by stepping out airily on to the front face of the buttress.

Roger Wilkinson, Debbie Wilkinson, Dick Baker, 5th July 2003

Woodbine 10m HVS **

At the foot of the gully is a short steep buttress with a prominent right-leaning groove.

(4c). Climb the very shallow scoop right of the groove to reach a thin flake crack (vital but hard to place gear) and continue to a hanging flake. Step left to a ledge and finish up the easy wall.

Dick Baker, Roger Wilkinson Debbie Wilkinson, 5th July 2003

Woodbine Direct 10m HVS

(4c). Follow *Woodbine* as far as the flake. Then move right until it's possible to resume upward progress via a large obvious hold. Finish direct. More sustained than the original way.

Graham Phillips, Roger Wilkinson, 12th July 2003

Shelter Crag (p.380 – addendum)

Gimme Shelter 46m E3 **

Climbs the parallel cracks up the bulging wall between *Pleasure Zone* and *Island of Dreams*.

(6a). Start up one of the above climbs (probably best up *Island*) to the sloping ledge in the middle of the wall. Follow *Zone* to the roof then move right. Make precarious and committing moves back left across the lip of the roof using the obvious undercut spike to reach an incut finger jug (good wire). More taxing moves lead to a good spike and rest.

Continue slightly rightwards up the scoop to the belay of *Pleasure Zone*. Finish up the top pitch of *Pleasure Zone*, or ab off.

Martin Dale, Dave Wood, 31st May 2003

Dow

Dow Crag (p.30)

Holocaust - Direct Variation E5?

(6a/b?). Climb directly up the vague arête above the good jug (the normal route trends up rightwards).

Rob Matheson, 8th September 2002

Still going strong 31 years after he did the first ascent!

Russian Roulette 45m E1

Start just right of *Murray's Route*.

1 25m (5b). Climb the mossy crack in the arête to reach a small spike.

swing right to a nut slot, then pull back left above the bulge to another small spike and good holds. Continue directly to grass, wander up this to belay as for *Murray's Route* below the cave.

2 20m (5b). Climb up to the left-hand end of the cave roof and pull over into a groove (as pitch 2 of *Eliminator*). Traverse right for 10 metres to the right edge of the wall (very exposed) then climb a short groove to a grass ledge on *Woodhouse's Route*.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 15th September 2002

The first 10 metres incorporates an old variation to B Buttress Variations called 'Rock it to Russia' (1983) hence the name.

Eureka 12m E2

This climbs the short, sharp arête 15 metres right of the base of *Easter Gully*, well illustrated on the frontispiece of the current Dow guide.

(5b). Climb the left side of the arête throughout. There are good nuts at the halfway ledge, and a tiny spike to protect the upper crux.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 15th September 2002

Duddon

Stonestar Crag (p196)

Patagonian Penguin VS (?) 13m

Start immediately to the right of the 3 metre high pinnacle at the far left of the crag which is just to the left of *First Arête*.

(4c). Climb the blocky groove immediately to the right of the pinnacle. Continue up the steepening corner until a small bulge is reached at about 9 metres with a rightward-slanting crackline slightly higher up. Ignoring the crack, make a long stretch rightwards (crux) to a small flake which is used to gain the arête which makes up the top section of the sharp prow. Finish easily.

Jonathan Croxford, Jane Cooper, 29 September 2002.

Not sure of grade. Small wires on crux.

Wallowbarrow Crag (p201)

West Buttress

Western Traverse 50m HVS

A fine eliminate style main pitch is the highlight of this climb. Start just left of the easy initial rib of *Malediction Direct*.

1 35m (5a). Scramble up steep heather for 20 metres to the foot of the buttress, some 5 metres under the hanging groove of *Malediction Direct* (wire). Traverse 2 metres left on heather and climb onto a large perilously poised block. Steep moves over the bulge above and up the rib/groove (Micro-Friends) lead to a good resting point and junction with *Western Wall*. Make a few moves directly

up the wall (as for *Western Wall*) to a good Friend slot and wires, and then traverse horizontally left on excellent fingerholds, passing just under a shallow scoop, to gain a good foothold on the rib on the left. Follow the rib more easily to a good stance.

2 15m (4b). Climb the wall just right of the stance to heather, then gain and follow the rib above (just right of the final groove of the *The Leaf*). Either belay directly, or run the rope out and sit down in a hollow in lieu of anchors!

SH Reid, J Campbell (Alt.), 11th June 2003

NB! The large perilously poised block at the start of pitch 1 has now joined its fellows on the scree! This will probably make the start a bit harder.

East Buttress

Oak Tree Slab 30m VS

(4c). The normally disgustingly slimy, wet and unattractive wall immediately left of *Digitation* is climbed direct to the big oak tree. A couple of neat moves at about 6 metres constitute the crux. Protection is adequate, the rock solid, and it is totally independent of *Digitation*. It would clean up nicely with traffic but is probably only do-able in a drought.

Rick Gordon, G Dearlove, 19th April 2003

Could be the same as Vegetation 1978?

Toad In The Wall 25m E2

(5c). From the oak tree on *Oak Tree Slab/Digitation*, drop down about 7 metres to a heavily moss-covered boulder. There is a hole (about Friend 2 size) at face height in the wall. Levitate with difficulty to a black jug at about 4 metres, pull left on small holds into a vague green groove, and ascend to a junction with *Logan Stone Route*, and a rest. Continue up to bulging rock and surmount the overhang/bulge by a breach on the left (Friend 3 or 3.5). Pull up and right to finish on flatties. All a bit friable, pumpy and most entertaining!!!

Rick Gordon, Gordon Hutchinson, 25th May 2003

Low Crag (p213)

Main Buttress

Hangover Direct First Pitch 13m HVS *

This is a good natural line which climbs directly up to the tree belay at the top of the first pitch of *Hangover*.

(5b). Climb the steep wall (crux) to enter the open corner at 4 metres. Up the right wall of the corner to a shallow groove, then move round to the ledge on the right edge. Up a short corner and slab to the tree belay.

Tom Walkington, Eric Barnes, 8th May 2002

Leprechaun Super Direct 40m E1 **

1 9m (4b). As for *Leprechaun*.

2 31m (5c). Climb the thin crackline (crux) in the steep, short wall 2

metres right of the corner of pitch 2 of *Leprechaun*. Continue up the sloping ledge for 4 metres to a short overhanging corner (possible belay on a tree up to the right). Up the corner then up to the (right) traverse on the top pitch of *Leprechaun*. Climb straight up the wall, passing a large hidden flake, to reach the left traverse on *Leprechaun*. Continue straight up the wall in the area of a faint crackline (bold but not technically difficult) to the top.

Tom Walkington, Eric Barnes, 17th April 2002

White How Crag (p239)

The Long Throw 20m MVS

Start beneath a V-scoop and flake 3 metres right of *Jungle Formidae*. (4b). Pull up to the flake then climb a vague stepped rib until the more prominent rib above can be gained and followed to the top.

J Daly, D Geere, JL Holden, 6th April 2002

Twenty metres left of *False Pretences* is a small compact barrel-shaped buttress providing steep delicate slab climbs. The next three routes are located on this buttress and are described from left to right.

Cutting Edge 12m E1

(5b). The rounded left edge of the buttress is climbed using a series of short flake cracks. Care is required with spaced protection.

J Daly, K Phizacklea, 11th April 2002

The Great White 12m E2

A fine delicate climb up the centre of the buttress.

(5c). Climb straight up to a prominent pocket in the middle of the horizontal break. Use a thin crack up rightwards to gain the slab above which is followed to the top.

J Daly, K Phizacklea, 11th April 2002

Hammerhead 12m HVS

(5b). Delicately climb up the right side of the buttress to an obvious niche, step right and follow the rib above.

J Daly, K Phizacklea, 11th April 2002

Little Blake Rigg (p240)

Seventy metres left of *Rhetoric of Meritocracy* is a pair of easy-angled slabs separated by a grassy gully. All three routes start up the clean slabby pillar defining the base of the right-hand slab, the first two routes then proceed to climb the more extensive upper reaches of the left-hand slab.

Taskmaster 27m Severe

Climb the left side of the slabby pillar for 14 metres then move left across a grass ledge to gain the left-hand slab. Climb straight up the right side of this slab to finish up a short steeper crack.

J Daly, JL Holden, 6th April 2002

Costa Del Duddon 30m VS/HVS

(5a). Follow *Taskmaster* for 8 metres, step left to a frighteningly perched flake, and climb a short groove and narrow slab behind it. When the left-hand slab widens follow a diagonal crack leftwards across the slab, then boldly climb the centre of the slab above to finish at its highest point.

J Daly, JL Holden, 6th April 2002

Wish You Were Here 22m Sev / H,Sev

Climb the right side of the slabby pillar to the base of a steeper bulging section, which is taken in the centre via a broken crack line.

JL Holden, J Daly, 6th April 2002

Great Blake Rigg (p253)**Main Buttress****Valhalla** 46m E2

A quality route on clean rock. Start as for *Yggdrasil*.

(5c). Climb the slab and right hand of two shallow corners to a rock ledge. Pull onto the rock fin on the right, bridge the prominent corner/sentry box right again, then climb the continuation finger crack above to the flake on *Odin*. From its top climb up rightwards to another good flake edge, then climb the slab direct passing just left of two grass ledges to finish up the right side of a rock nose above.

J Daly, K Phizacklea 2nd September 2002

Upper Wall

The next route starts just right of *Outside Left Slab* and climbs the right edge of the slab. *Masonic Connotations* is the stepped arête further right.

Armadillo 12m VS

(5a). Up a short, steep diagonal crack to the overlap, pull over rightwards and use small layaway flakes to climb up to the right arête which is followed to the top.

J Daly, D Geere 5th May 2002.

The next route is on *Beano Buttress* (95/96 supplement p.43), which is located 50 metres below and right of the *Upper Wall*.

Mighty Mouse 14m VS

Start between *Mantrap* and *Scary Canary*.

(4c). Climb the prominent corner and spaced blocky holds above.

J Daly (solo), 1st September 2002

Dropping Crag (226 993)**Ticking Groove** 12m E3/5c

Climb the wall right of *Blind Watchmaker* into the groove above and climb groove direct to an easy wall above.

J Shepherd, T Rogers, K Forsythe, 6th June 2002

Cold Pike Crag, Ulpha Fell

This is the west-facing crag about 200 metres west of the summit of Cold Pike and over looking Wrynose Bottom above Cockley Beck, Duddon Valley. It is the highest crag of the series of crags on this fellside known as *Gaitkins*, and has been referred to elsewhere as *Far Upper Gaitkins*. It is most easily reached from the summit of Wrynose Pass. Follow the path north-west to below *Long Crag*. Cross the flat boggy area to the west and pick up the path leading up to the southern shoulder of Cold Pike.

Continue up towards the summit of Cold Pike. On reaching the electric fence, follow this west for 100 or 200 metres (don't cross it). Eventually the crag is reached below you but is not obvious from this direction! To approach from below takes longer. It is about 40 minutes from the road. Mostly the routes are suitable for beginners or oldies. In character it is similar to the neighbouring *Black Crag*, Pike O'Blisco – superb rock, superb situation, very quick drying, facing the sun and accessible but with an additional advantage of solitude (so far!).

Taken together with the *Gaitkins Crags* (an extra 10 minutes further on below), this area has a wide range of excellent routes which could make Wrynose an even more popular rock-climbing centre.

The crag is divided into three sections. *Main Sector* (on the left), *Right Wall* and *Upper Right Bay*.

Main Sector

This is the left-hand side of the crag, at least 30 metres high and mostly easy-angled. Most of the routes start from the wide grassy shelf part way up near to the *Rock Crevasse*.

Star Turn D 30m

From the boulder field below the left side of the crag gain a ledge and then a wide corner/flake crack. Then take the easiest line to the top.

Jim Cooper, 6th October 2002

Happy Days MS 30m **

From the *Rock Crevasse* take a direct way up to the top via the right side of a blunt rib at half height. Both easier and harder variations are possible but protection can be sparse.

Tom Walkington, Jim Cooper, 6th October 2002

Davison's Corner VD 30m *

This takes the obvious left-facing corner in the upper part of the face. The easy-angled rock beneath the corner is reached from near to *Happy Days* by a variety of ways (up to 4b). The corner is straightforward.

Brian Davison, Pete Carter 4th October 1998

Hip, Hip, Hooray VS 30m **

1 10m (5a). From the grassy shelf, find a way up the centre of the steep wall to the large ledge below and right of *Davison's Corner*.
2 20m (4c). Climb the wall immediately to the right of *Davison's Corner*.
Tom Walkington, Jim Cooper, 6th October 2002

Right Wall

This is the obvious 10 metre wall to the right of the *Main Sector*, with a crack running the full height up the centre (*Mid Life Crisis*).

Edjukashun, Edjukashun, Edjukashun E2 10m *

(5c). Climb the left arête and wall of *Mid Life Crisis*.

Tom Walkington, Jim Cooper, 6th October 2002

Mid Life Crisis VS 10m **

(5a). Climb the crack.

Brian Davison, Pete Carter 4th October 1998

Carter's Climb. S 10m

Climb the right edge of the wall taken by *Mid Life Crisis*.

Brian Davison, Pete Carter 4th October 1998

Upper Right Bay

Forty metres to the right, and at a higher level, is a cosy little bay with a wall about 6 to 8 metres high. Seven routes have been done here.

Esk Buttress (p257)**The Long Good Friday** 95m E3

A good, sustained companion route to *Central Pillar* (see footnote). Start at the base of *Square Chimney Route*.

1 33m (5b). Move up to a good spike at the very base of the *Square Chimney*, then step right on a heathery ledge to an incut hold on the steep wall. Pull up to gain a thin crackline in the front of the pillar, which is followed delicately to the top of the large flake on the belay of *Bridge's Route*. Climb the thin crack just right of the flake corner of *Bridge's Route* pitch 2 to a stance just right of the pinnacle (which is *Bridge's Route* second belay).

2 38m (5b/c). Follow the thin crack which leads directly to the junction between the slab and the headwall. Follow this junction rightwards, passing an awkward overhang, (crossing the *Cumbrian* where it starts to go left on the headwall), and continue up into a delicate scoop. Step right and finish up the last 5 metres of pitch 4 of *Central Pillar*.

3 25m. (5c). Start up the thin crack directly above the belay to a good hold at 4 metres, then pull rightwards across a fingery wall (poor Rock 2 in a horizontal crack) and lurch for the 'doubtful block' on *Central Pillar*. Pull onto the higher ledge, as for *Central Pillar*, then reach a higher ledge, which is hand-traversed left to a point directly above the initial crack. Finish straight up.

At Phizacklea, John Holden, 18th April 2003

Notes: Incorporates sections of various routes, but it strings them together into one good continuous line to give a fine companion route to Central Pillar.

Gate Crag (p315)

The Sassenach Direct E6

The original line has been straightened out. A good route – worth 2 stars. Well worth doing.

(6b). Ascend obvious ramp, reach undercut in overlap (two Friend 00s) and move right to a jug on the lip. Climb a groove on layaways to a small undercut (6b) and reach the flake (as on the original way. Gear is poor in the flake but there is a bombproof Rock 2 above in a horizontal break). Reach/slap left to pinch, and finish more easily up rib on jugs.

Andy Mitchell, Steve Hubbard, 17th September 2003

Cleaned, top roped and then led. The original route was by I Turnbull, 1989.

Scafell

Scafell Crag (p29)

Judas Priest Variation – The Rob Halford Finish 30m E5/6

An alternative finish to *Judas Priest* (NB the peg has gone out of JP).

1 30m (6a). Follow *Judas Priest* to the break beneath the crack of *Saxon*. Hand-traverse left to make a move up to another break, and move up to the small overhang. Pull up left to big flakes and finish right of *Foxshooter*.

2 30m (5c). Step left onto the arête at the top of *Saxon's* crack and finish

in a superb position.

James McHaffie, Colin Downer, 18th April 2003

Climbed on sight. The second pitch may have been climbed before.

Death Arête 40m E8 (F7c+)

The direct version of *Def Arête* – straight up the stunning arête.

1 15m (5b). As for *Isodes*, up a groove to a small ledge below the arête.

2 35m (6c) Move up and place a Friend[®] and a crucial hidden Rock 1 (this was placed on the lead, but it would be very difficult to do this without knowing where the placement was). Make a succession of three 6c moves up the arête and continue at 6a/b directly up the arête to the top. The protection is not too bad – small wires and micro-cams – but can you hang around to place it?!

David Birkett, Rob Fielding, August 2003

Welcome to the Cruel World 20m E9 (F8b)

(7a). The thin cracks right of *Borderline*.

David Birkett, 19th April 2002

Al Phizackley on hearing the news: "But that's it, that's the Big One!"

Another Lonely Day (E8 6c, 6b)

Starts up *Borderline*, but continues directly where that route is forced off leftwards. The route, which was climbed with a month's gap between pitches due to damp rock, features some seriously run-out climbing above marginal RP protection on both sections.

David Birkett, Spring 2002

The name, rather sadly, refers to the lack of climbers Dave encountered on his several visits to the crag.

Round How (p135)

South Face (219 081) Alt 710m South facing

This is the pleasant wall, which extends up and right from the main slabs of *Round How*. It catches the sun all day; the rock is solid, quick drying and wonderfully rough. The whole area around here is delightful and offers a multitude of excellent wild camping sites; the beck below the crag gushes from a spring, providing clear drinking water.

In the centre of the wall is a prominent flake, with a wide crack on its right side at head height. The start of the routes are referenced from this point.

Descent. The large belay block can be used as an abseil point if gear is left, the 20 metre abseil can be done on one rope. Alternatively, a short scramble past a small scree patch leads down to the base of the crag. Two routes have an abseil sling already in place.

Round the Horn 23m E2 *

A good clean route, with limited protection. Start 14 metres left of the flake, next to a small recess at head height.

(5b). Climb slightly leftwards and up to twin cracks in a bulge, which lead to a ledge with an excellent spike (*The Horn*). Go diagonally right to a small ledge in the centre of the face, then climb the rippled wall above directly to a ledge and abseil block.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002

Long Crack 40m VS *

An entertaining route up the central diagonal crackline which is obvious from afar. Start at the same point as *Roundhead*.

(4c). Move leftwards to gain a small juniper ledge. Follow the large flake up right to reach a large ledge, then attack the chimney/crack above to a ledge. A short wide chimney leads to easier climbing and a large block belay.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002

Roundhead 22m HVS

Rather contrived. Start about 11 metres left of the flake, below a series of cracks.

(5a). Climb straight up past a diamond-shaped hole to a small capping roof, then step left to join *Long Crack*. Before the large ledge of that route is reached, step left onto the headwall and ascend this before making a rather pokey move left to finish. Abseil from the block of *Round the Horn*.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002

A Round Tuit 26m HVS

Good, open and rather delicate climbing. Start below the front face of the big flake, 2 metres left of the wide crack.

(4c). Climb the thin crack to the top of the flake. Step up then pull left into a scoop, then make a bold move into a higher scoop to reach gear in the thin crack. Climb over the block to finish up the top arête. Large block belay.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 4th May 2002

Get the Last Round In 24m E1

A fine route with a battling crack. Start up the wide flake crack.

(5b). Climb the crack to stand on top of the flake. Pull right to a sloping ledge, then up to a higher ledge crossed by a line of black moss. Step right and climb up to a crack, which is followed with interest, then step left up a ramp to an awkward finish. Large block belay.

Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002

Rondo 24m VS

Delightful climbing up shallow groove just left of the right-hand arête. Start ca.7

metres right of the flake crack, at the foot of the ramp of *Round the Bend*. (4c). A series of delicate steps lead to a sloping ledge below two slanting overhangs. Step left and follow the cracked groove to a ledge. An open V-feature above leads to the large block belay.
John Holden, Al Phizacklea, 12th May 2002

Around the Bend 22m E1

Sustained, delicate climbing which follows the ramp at the right end of the wall. Start about 8 metres right of the flake crack.
(5b). Move up to make an awkward pull onto a ledge. Follow the ramp up and right, which has just enough holds to aid progress, to a large flake at the top. Finish up this.
Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 4th May 2002

Undercarriage Wall 217 077 Alt 750m north-west facing

A small, steep wall lying a few hundred metres above the point where the 'short cut' footpath to Broad Crag col (For the Scafell Pike grockles) leaves the Corridor Route. The remains of an aircraft undercarriage lies at the base of the crag, the rest of the aircraft, including two engine blocks, lie on the grassy rake above the wall. There are some delightfully rough, clean slabs to the left of the wall, on the wall itself, a broken crack on the left side is the line of:-

Piston Broke 18m E3/4

A thin lead with some long reaches.
(6a). Climb a shallow groove on the left of a flake, then step left to a ledge and the last good gear. Step right and go up to a short crack, where a dubious small Tricam can be placed, long reaches above lead to the finishing crack.
Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002 *Top roped first*

Wheel of Misfortune 18m E2

A superb pitch up the central groove. Unprotected, except where it matters.
(5c). Climb easily up to an overhang, step right and enter the groove (Rock 10 or similar). Climb this precariously, past an RP, where the holds improve slightly with height towards the top.
Al Phizacklea, John Holden, 12th May 2002

Crash Course 18m HVS(?)

Start 4 metres right of *Wheel of Misfortune*.
(5a). Climb the right side of the wall, passing a sloping ledge and making use of a vertical crack – description to be checked.
Al Phizacklea (solo), 12th May 2002

Wasdale**Buckbarrow (p163)****Lakeland Pioneers Buttress****Clart 21m VS**

Start in a small chimney just to the left of the gully between *Lakeland Pioneers* and *Eastern Crag*, about 7 or 8 metres right of *Toby*.

(4b). Awkwardly climb the chimney for 5 metres, then cross a small heather ledge, and boldly climb a smooth slab for 6 metres to a ledge on the right. Step right to a cracked slab above the gully and climb the crack to the top.

Sean Johnston, James Foster, 19th April 2003

Gable**The Napes (p147)****Tormentil 65m MVS (? See note)**

Pleasant variations up the right flank of *Tophet Bastion*. Start 3 metres right of *Tophet Bastion*.

1. 35m. (4a). Climb the slim pillar above which leads to a slab (this is taken by the variation to *Tophet Bastion* which avoids the corner). Climb this, finishing delicately up the right rib above to gain a loose grass ramp. Belay below the middle of the slab on the left.

2. 15m. (4a). Climb the slab directly, passing to the right of a small rectangular overlap to finish on the arête of *Tophet Bastion*.

Scramble up the ridge to belay below the *Shark's Fin*.

3. 15m. (4a). Follow the twin cracks to the right of the rib of *Tophet Bastion* and the awkward wide crack to finish. (Well seen in the photo in the guide).

A Phizacklea. JL Holden, 25th May 2003

Note – the grade is suspect because it was greasy. It rained the night before, and during the ascent. Tormentil is the little yellow flower you see on what grassy parts there are of Gable.

Batty Crack 15m VS

An entertaining ascent of the off-width crack 8 metres left of *Belfry Crack*, which can be easily reached from below the top pitch of *Needle Ridge*.

(5a). A poor wire can be placed out left to protect the initial moves.

Climb the crack to the chockstone (solid), and continue to a ledge. An easy chimney leads to the top.

A Phizacklea (unseconded), 30th May 2003

However a note from Paul Ross: 'By the way the little crack on Needle Ridge now named *Batty Crack* I did when I was 16 (in 1954 with Donald Fielding) but did not think it worth recording. We named it **Skorkian Crack**.'

Hamshanker 25m MVS

A reasonable route on clean rock, if only to escape from the lichenous area of rock to the right of *Scrimshanker*. (This is the dirtiest area of rock on the Napes, there are 3 cracklines here which will require cleaning before an ascent, but why bother, when they'll revert to their original state within 2 years?) Start at the right side of the *Scrimshanker* 'Bay' below a wide crack leading up rightwards.

(4c). Climb the wide crack, to stand on a protruding flake. Follow the steeper crack up leftwards to finish.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 30th May 2003

Chantry Buttress Direct HVS

(5b). Climb the widening crack up the front of the buttress to a ledge, and finish directly over the bulging wall above.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 30th May 2003

Napes Needle

Variation: **Thirty Nine Steps** 18 m E3 ***

An excellent pitch which follows the east arête of Napes Needle (a direct line through *Sick Heart River*). Start below a short, hanging groove below and right of the arête.

(5c). Climb the steep groove to a good ledge. Step left and climb directly until a delicate move can be made around onto the right side of the arête. Ascend the arête direct to the *Shoulder*.

Phil Rigby, Kevin Avery, Sunday, 12th May, 2002

Direct Obverse Direct from the Gap 11m E1 *

A straightened out *Direct Obverse from the Gap*, which climbs the north-west arête of the *Needle* direct and avoids traversing out left to the *Shoulder*. Worthwhile. Start at the top of the *Gap* below the arête.

(5b) Boldly climb the arête with difficulty to reach good holds and runners. Follow the arête directly to the top. Reverse the other side of the *Needle* to belay down on the shoulder.

Phil Rigby, Al Davis, 17th August 2002

The Wasdale Roof 17m E3

An exciting roof problem which climbs the large overhang on the top block of *Napes Needle* which overlooks Wasdale.

(5c). Climb the *Wasdale Crack* to the slab. Move left and climb the short rib to the left end of the overhang. Step right and boldly pull directly through the centre of the roof to reach good holds which lead to the top. Belay. (Drop a loop down the *Gap* side of the *Needle* so the second can arrange a belay)

Phil Rigby, Tom Foster, 15th September 2002

Eagle's Nest Buttress**Gharial** 47m HVS/E1

A good long pitch up the slim pillar left of *Crocodile Crack*. Start up *Cayman* (5b). Pull through the first overlap of *Cayman*, and continue straight up to join *Crocodile Crack* at the base of the good crack. Make a long stretch left just above the large overlap to reach the mantelshelf on *Eagle's Crack*. Climb straight up the slab, then follow the thin crack up the steeper rock to a ledge, avoiding a poised block out left. The upper arête is climbed on good holds up the front face to a ledge above and left of the *Croc.* Crack abseil point.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 30th May 2003

Abbey Buttress**Turdus Torquatus** 70m E2

An excellent, well protected route to the left of *Abbey Buttress*, finishing up a memorable crack. Start in the bed of *Eagle's Nest Gully*, 12 metres above the point where the path emerges from behind the detached flake below *Abbey Buttress*.

1 38m (5b). Ascend a short groove containing a suspect wedged block to fix a nut in the crack above (*The Merry Monk?*). Traverse left to the arête and reach a small spike above, then use a curious pocket to stand on a foot ledge on the right (another nut out right). Move up, then back left to the arête to reach the thin crack which leads to a grass ledge. Belay on *Abbey Buttress*, a little higher.

2 17m (5a). From the crack behind the belay, swing right around the nose to enter a square-cut roof, and exit through the crack in its centre. Follow the ridge above to a large block belay.

Scramble leftwards to belay below the overhanging corner.

3 15m (5b). Climb the corner, continuing with excellent jams to a strenuous and awkward finish. A magnificent pitch.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 25th May 2003

Pitch 3 was previously climbed by J Morgan and P Johnson on 13th October 1985, but this was not included in the last guide because it was felt to be too hard a finish for any of the classic routes below, and nobody would be able to do it!

There was a Ring Ouzel singing away at the crag – T. Torquatus is the Latin name for the Ring Ouzel.

Arrowhead Buttress**Unnamed as yet** 32m VS

A direct line up the right-hand arête of the *Arrow* with delightful slabby climbing. Start directly below the arête, from a blocky rake overlooking *Eagle's Nest Gully*.

(4c). Make an awkward pull over the initial nose, then climb the slab above for about 10 metres until the lower part of the sharp upper arête can be gained. Follow this direct to the top of the *Arrowhead*.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 23rd May 2004

The upper 6 metres or so incorporates the old variation finish to the Easy Way of the Arrowhead Ridge.

Sphinx Buttress

Burning Sphinstxer 22m VS

Interesting climbing, with a hard start and a delicate finish, which is well protected throughout. Start about 12 metres right of the notch behind the *Sphinx Rock*, below a steep right-facing corner.

(5a). Climb the corner, over the roof, to a good flake. Traverse right delicately to reach a crackline just left of the arête of the buttress and climb this to the top.

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 23rd May 2004

The Back Passage 10m HVS

Short, but excellent jamming, up the crack in the right wall of the buttress, starting just below the chockstone in the gully bed.

(4c). Climb the crack!

A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 23rd May 2004

The tail has fallen from **Cat Rock**. Should it be renamed 'Marx Rock'? One thing, the *Sphinx* original boulder problem has got a lot harder as a result.

Westmorland Crags (page 171)

A neglected venue with only one route recorded – until now. However although broken, there are some good pitches to be found, and the situation is superb with fantastic views. The rock is generally excellent, clean and quick drying, though there is a fair amount of loose stuff around (feeding source for Hell Gate Screes), so care should be taken. It is best to base yourselves near Westmorland's Cairn at the top of the crag and descend various easy gullies to get to the foot of the routes, most of which start above the broken lower section of the crag. The 1.5 hour approach from Honister, via Green Gable, and Great Gable summit, is relatively gentle as these things go.

All directions are given as though looking up, unless stated otherwise.

Near the left-hand end of the crag is *Westmorland's Gully* (reasonable descent at M), and about halfway down where it eases, on its right (looking up) is a fine prow.

Rusty's Rib 20m MVS 2003

Exposure, spaced gear, and tuneful holds, make for an exciting little climb.

(4a). Climb the left edge of the lower prow wall to a large ledge and poised boulder. Move up into a shallow niche on the right wall, and traverse horizontally right around onto the front face and onto a small ledge on the right. Climb up steeply just right of the overhanging prow and step left onto it. Finish up the rib above.

SJH Reid, JE Reid, 16th March 2003

Tubular Balls 20m HVS 2003

A ballsy variation on *Rusty's Rib*.

(4c) Climb the lower wall by its right arête (no gear) to the small ledge. Traverse left a metre, and climb the prow direct (good wire round on the left wall).

SJH Reid, C King, 10th April 2003

When looking from above, directly below *Westmorland's Cairn* will be seen a diagonal open scree gully (*Central Gully*) which is divided in two by a rock rib. The left-hand ridge of this gully is a *Pinnacle Ridge* (M) which is a popular scramble.

The next route starts from the bottom of the crag, some 30 metres down the Hell Gate Scree's side of the grassy ridge which connects *Westmorland Crags* to the top of the *Napex*.

Sparrow Fart Rib 40m S 2003

Start very early, and begin 3 metres below a large block embedded in the scree, and 10 metres above a square block which marks the start of *Pinnacle Ridge*.

1 20m. Climb a short wall to a rake, cross this, and climb the pinnacle-shaped wall behind, pulling out right onto a small ledge and finishing up a wide crack.

2 25m. Cross the wide grassy rake, and climb the clean rib that has a wide crack on the right and a slim groove on the left near its top, finishing up the slim groove. A good but somewhat disconcerting pitch with lots of hollow holds. A short scramble brings you to *Pinnacle Ridge*.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

The next routes are all best reached from the top of the crag by descending *Central Gully*. The first obvious feature, reached from a short way down *Central Gully*, is a smooth slab with a slim groove in it. The following three routes all start from a block belay at the foot of the right-hand side of the slab.

School's Out 18m S * 2003

A fine little pitch. Climb the slab leftwards to a block on the arête, and thence to a large platform. Climb the wide crack on the left to the top. SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

Dad's Day Slab 18m VS * 2003

(4c). Follow the slim groove direct to the platform. Step right off this and climb flakes to the top.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 15th June 2003

Wha's the Crack? 18m HS 2003

Climb the obvious wide crack at the back of the groove right of *Dad's Day Slab* to just below its top. Step left onto the slab and finish via a short groove.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

To the right of *Dad's Day Slab* are four narrow ribs; the central two having an obvious V-groove between them.

Chocks Away 28m MVS 2003

The poised blocks that gave this route its name were trundled after the first ascent, but it still needs treating with care. Start below the V-groove at a clean bulgy buttress.

(4a). Climb the buttress to a slab and move up leftwards to grassy rock so as to step into the groove from the left. Climb the groove, exiting leftwards, and squeeze up a narrow chimney between two hanging ribs.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

Just right of the V-groove is a vague mossy groove, and 2 metres right again is another clean bulgy buttress leading to a more pronounced moss-filled chimney.

Cairnshung Face 30m HS 2003

Climb the bulgy buttress to a slab and continue up the mossy chimney mainly via its left wall. Where the chimney eases, take to the face on the left and climb it to a ledge. Climb up behind a pinnacle and make an awkward exit via a short corner on the left.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

Towards the bottom of the right-hand branch of *Central Gully*, a subsidiary gully (*Flake Gully*) branches off rightwards behind the obvious feature of the *Great Flake*. *Cairn Buttress* is the long wide slabby buttress that rises directly to Westmorland's Cairn from this junction. It is guarded by an overlap at 4 metres.

The Cairnbrian 40m HS 2003

Takes the left side of *Cairn Buttress*. Start directly under the centre of the overlap.

1 25m. Climb a wide easy left-slanting crackline to just before its end in a grassy niche on the left flank of the buttress. Pull boldly up the steep wall on the right on jugs to gain the slab above. Climb directly up this to follow a thin crack, pulling out left at its top and climbing the sharp arête on the left to a poised block belay on a big ledge.

2 15m. Go leftwards along a grass ledge for 3 metres and climb a wide-crack behind a big spike. The awkward corner beyond leads to the top.
SJH Reid, C Read (AL), A Gladstone, 22nd June 2003

Cairn Climb 40m HVD 2003

An enjoyable mountaineering route. Start as for the *Cairnbrian* directly under the centre of the overlap.

1 25m. Climb up to the overlap, traverse rightwards underneath it, and climb up into a large depression (*Chockstone Chimney* is on the right). Climb the groove on the left, exiting leftwards onto the buttress. Go straight up to a vague ramp and move right up this to its end, before stepping leftwards to a crack. Climb the crack to a to a poised block belay on a big ledge.

2 15m. Climb up to a narrow grass ledge and traverse right along it to a mossy left-facing corner. Climb the corner to a break and finish up the wide crack above.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

Cairn Direct 40m VS * 2003

Crosses *Cairn Climb* and takes the centre of *Cairn Buttress*. Start at the bottom of *Flake Gully*, below the right hand end of the overlap.

1 25m (4c). Climb the steep wall to a large depression just right of the long overlap (alternatively, start one metre up *Flake Gully* and climb a left-slanting crack to the same point). Step down left and pull over the overlap near its right-hand end, moving leftwards to easier ground. Climb directly up the front of the buttress on excellent holds to a poised block belay on a big ledge.

2 15m (4b). Climb the clean slab above, moving leftwards into a slim mossy groove. Go up this and exit to the right of some large poised blocks to finish at the cairn.

SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 15th June 2003

Steve Reid on 'Not a Cairn in the World' (HVS) Photo: Trevor Suddaby

The next buttress to the right is *Flake Gully Buttress*.

Chockstone Chimney 38m HVD 2003

Climb a wide crack and blocky pinnacle under the under the hanging arête on the left side of *Flake Gully Buttress* and move up left to a grass ledge and the foot of the chimney. Follow the chimney, avoiding the upper chockstones by a short groove on the left. Traverse right to a possible belay behind the huge flake. Climb leftwards up a groove formed by two huge slanting blocks to a large ledge. Climb straight up the mossy wall above.

SJH Reid, T Suddaby, 6th July 2003

Not a Cairn in the World 38m HVS ** 2003

The arête gives a superb climb. Start as for *Chockstone Chimney*.

1 18m (5a). Climb to the top of the blocky pinnacle and then up the ramp and arête to gain a ledge at the foot of the arête proper. Follow this boldly (Micro-Friends) to a huge pinnacle flake belay.

2 20m (4c). Step off the flake onto the wall behind and climb the wall direct via a small V-groove to a ledge. Follow the left-hand crack in the wall above to the top.

SJH Reid, C King (AL), 10th April 2003

Variation Pitch 1: Follow Cairn Nuts Crack to gain the arête.

Variation Pitch 2: (4c). Follow Pitch 2 for 3 metres, but step onto the rib on the left and follow this to the ledge.

Variations to original route, T Suddaby, SJH Reid (AL), 6th July 2003

The following routes start about a third of the way up *Flake Gully* at a right-slanting crackline (*Crackerjack*) on the right-hand side of this buttress.

Cairn Nuts Crack 38m VS * 2003

1 18m (4c). Climb the diagonal crack for a few metres to gain a ledge on the left. Move left and climb the striking off-width crack to a huge pinnacle flake belay.

2 20m (4c). Step off the flake onto the wall behind and move up a metre to a right-slanting traverse line. Follow this rightwards under a cracked prow and traverse rightwards onto a hanging arête – all rather exciting. Climb up to a ledge and take the right-hand crack in the wall above to the top.

C King, SJH Reid (AL), 10th April 2003

R & R Special 38m MVS ** 2003

A delightful little eliminate up the buttress between *Cairn Nuts Crack* and *Crackerjack*. Exposed climbing on perfect rock with excellent protection.

1 18m (4b). Follow the right-slanting crack for 3 metres, then step left and

pull directly over the roof on excellent holds. Go straight up the wall above, crossing a right-slanting crack-grooveline, direct to a huge pinnacle belay, 2 20m (4b). Start just right of a large block, and climb the right arête of the wall behind to below a cracked prow. Climb the prow direct, and then take any line up the wall behind.

SJH Reid, C Read (AL), A Gladstone, 22nd June 2003

Crackerjack 38m S * 2003

1 18m. Follow the diagonal crackline in its entirety, moving left near the top to avoid loose blocks. Ledge belay.

2 20m. Move right into the open serpentine groove, and follow it to a large ledge. The sharp arête, climbed on its left side, leads to the top.

SJH Reid, JW Reid, 15th June 2003

To the right of the absolute bottom of *Central Gully*, and just as easily gained from below is the original route of the crag.

Westmorland Ridge 50m VD * 1932

Good climbing interspersed with scrambling. Start at the foot of a small buttress to the right of the entrance to *Central Gully*.

1 26m. Climb the steepest bit of the wall on excellent holds, followed by grassy scrambling slightly rightwards to a left-slanting groove at the foot of the left flank of the *Pinnacle*.

2 11m. Cracks up the wall are climbed to the top of the *Pinnacle*. Drop down to a large ledge beyond.

3 13m. Either climb a left-slanting ramp ahead, or traverse left to a short chimney and climb this to the same point. Easier rock leads to the top.

S Watson, R Holmes, B Porter, D Cowan, June 1932

The remaining routes are best reached by descending *Central Gully* to the bottom of the dividing rib (but above the broken ground below) and traversing rightwards until a scree slope at the base of the *Pinnacle* is gained. *The Pinnacle* is very obvious from above, lying about 20m left of the *Great Flake* looking out. On the *East Face of the Pinnacle* is a steep crackline and to the left of this a fine arête.

Pinnacairnle Rib 45m VS * 2003

Start from a flat chockstone on the left side of the arête.

1 25m (4c). Climb the arête on its left-hand side to a belay on the *Pinnacle*. Scramble 20 metres up leftwards to belay below a narrow chimney in the upper wall (this is just right of the open groove of pitch 2 of *Crackerjack*).

2 20m (4c). Climb directly up the fine slab to the left of the chimney.

C King, SJH Reid (AL), 10th April 2003

Westmorland Crack 25m E2 ** 2003

The stunning crackline is well protected but extremely strenuous. Ditch your wires and take lots of Friends.

(5c). Clamber up nervously into the impending offwidth. Thrutch up this with difficulty to gain the jamming crack and eventually a very welcome ledge. The wide crack in the corner keeps the interest going to the last.

T Suddaby, SJH Reid 14th August 2003

To the right of the *Pinnacle* is *Pinnacle Gully*.

Hell Gate Chimney 40m MVS 2003

An interesting route, though marred by the possibility of an easy escape leftwards onto *Westmorland Ridge* on the second pitch. Start at the base of *Pinnacle Gully*.

1 15m (4a). Climb a slab and rib on the right and step right into a deep chimney which leads to the *Pulpit*.

2 25m (4b). From the left side of the *Pulpit*, follow a crack diagonally leftwards up the wall to ledges. Traverse right towards the arête and climb the wall direct, passing a hanging block on the right. Finish up the easy rib. SJH Reid, IJW Reid, 29th June 2003

Hellfire and Brimstone 40m HVS 2003

Technically easy for the grade, but rather bold. Start at a slab just up and right of *Hell Gate Chimney* and just left of a prominent rock rib.

(4c). Climb the slab to the overhang and avoid this by traversing left across the chimney to the *Pulpit*. Immediately pull back rightwards into a hanging groove and climb this until it is possible to exit rightwards onto a slab. Climb the narrow slab directly above, overcoming an overlap with difficulty, and keeping left to finish.

SJH Reid, T Suddaby, 14th August 2003

Ten metres up and right is *Cave Gully*, the cave being formed by a huge chockstone. To the left of *Cave Gully* are two grooves.

Adam's Groove 35m E2 *

Better and longer route than it looks, up the more obvious left-hand groove.

(5c). Climb dirty dodgy rock to gain the top of a dubious block. Hard climbing up the groove above leads to an exit left onto a slab. Follow the broken crack above to the top.

T Suddaby, SJH Reid 14th August 2003

Caitlin's Climb 35m E1

The slim groove to the right is quite hard for the grade.

(5b). Climb up to the crack (and gear!) with difficulty. More hard moves gain easier ground. Carry on in the same line, overcoming an overlap, to the finishing slab.

T Suddaby, SJH Reid 14th August 2003

Buttermere

Round How (p53)

Stargazer 35m D

Start immediately left of the grassy rake.

1 20m. Follow slabs just left of the rake to a block belay

2 15m. Go up and slightly left and then straight up to the top.

M Lynch, J Lynch (alt), 15th June 2003

Starchaser 35m VD

Start 5 metres left of the rake. Virtually protectionless.

Climb straight up, crossing *Route 2*, to follow a right-facing open corner, and then trend left slightly to the top.

J Lynch, M Lynch (alt), 15th June 2003

Both routes are similar on perfect clean rock but the Starchaser has virtually no protection

Grey Crag (p82)

Spider Wall – the ‘loose but apparently mechanically safe handhold’ on pitch 2 has joined its fellows on the scree. Whether this has affected the grade of the of the route is not known.

Damian 14m MS

Start 5 metres right of the chimney bounding *Dexter Wall* on its right, and below a left-facing shallow groove.

Step over a block, and climb the groove. Where it peters out, finish up the crack on the left.

BJ Clarke (solo), 2nd May 2004

Borrowdale

Eagle Crag (p 233)

Alter-Ego 20m E7⁺***

Start from a belay under the top pitch of *Flying Circus*.

(6b). Follow *Flying Circus* to the undercut above its crux and arrange some gear. Span right and mantel into the undercuts. Wobble your way right to the arête. A brilliant, bold pitch.

James McHaffie, Adam Hocking, Alan Wilson, 15th April 2003

Awkward Logistics 20m E7/8 (F7c) ***

Tackles the awesome overhanging wall right of *Post Mortem* (best reached by abseil). Belay at sloping ledges halfway up the crag. (6c). Climb a dirty groove to a tree, and step out, making crimping dynamic moves up via sidepulls, then step right (Rock 4, Alien 0) and make a powerful high step into the groove (crux). Finish up the brilliant groove above.

James McHaffie, Alan Wilson, Adam Hocking, 15th April 2003

Raven Crag (p 287)**The Eye of Odin** 22m E1

One of the best short pitches in Borrowdale (allegedly!). Approach as for *Coxcomb Cracks* via Pitch 1 of *Crystal Slab*, and descend the grassy fault to the foot of the obvious cleaned finger crack 4 metres left of *Coxcomb Cracks*.

(5b). Climb the well protected crack.

Jim Fotheringham, AN Other, September 2003

Nevermore 25m HVS

Takes a line of cracks up the front of the buttress left of the *Eye of Odin*. Approach from the apex of *Pedestal Buttress*. Scramble up the unpleasant gully until a left-slanting break gives access to a large vegetated ledge.

(5a). From the ledge, gain a rightward-slanting ramp with a cleaned ledge. Climb cracks until a move right gains a cleaned ramp – up this and continuation cracks to the top.

Jim Fotheringham, Tom Bell, September 2003

Goat Crag (p329)**The Northern Crag****Footless Horse** E6 ***

Essentially a link between *Footless Crow* and *Trojan Horse* and not a new route but gives an excellent line and is worth three stars (6b). Climb either the *Thieving Magpie* or *Athanos* into the niche and follow this right to gain the rightward trending ramp above to the bolt and pegs below the roof. Climb directly up the undercuts of *Footless* (PR) and continue directly up (PR) to the undercut fang. Continue directly to the top.

Chris Hope, 3rd July 2003

Eastern Crag**Castle Rock of Triermain** (p126)

Die Another Day 35m E6 6b **

Takes the pillar between the second pitches of *Triermain Eliminate* and *Ghost* and finishes up the rib above in a superb position. (The 'non route' in the '92 guide p135 – Last Liveseyan '78 Supplement). Gives an appropriate second pitch to *Snapdragon / Make Hay* (89/90 & 97/98 supplements). A good route that uses no holds or protection on either *Triermain Eliminate* or *Ghost*.

1. First pitch of *Triermain Eliminate* or *Harlot Face*. Belay on the long ledge.
2 35m (6b). Start behind the hawthorn on the long ledge, below a thin crackline. Climb the crackline to a good jug on the right at about 5 metres (poor Black Diamond Microstopper 3 down left, good RP 1 high left). Continue up the crackline to a downward-pointing spike. Reach high left and climb the bulge (crux) to easier rock and past two old pegs to a blocky ledge on the right. Step left and round onto the rib and climb past the *Rigor Mortis* traverse to the top. Tree & nut belay. Grass scrambling to the top!!
Karl Telfer, Paul Morgan, 14th September 2003.

Top-roped & RPs pre-placed prior to ascent. May be E7 to onsight but are looking at 80-90 ft ground fall if RPs pull!

Raven Crag, Thirlmere (p152)**The Second Coming** 30m E6***

A fantastic, steep, three star pitch. Pumpy to start and technical to finish (6b/c). Start up *Gates of Delirium Direct*. Move out left and into the groove. Climb up this to a good slot. Make a further move up and then climb diagonally rightwards to an old peg beneath the bulge. Pull straight through the bulge above, using a good undercut, to a thin crack in a groove and climb to the top of this (good gear and a good rest). Move a little left, then up and back rightwards aiming for a stainless peg. Make technical moves past this and up awkwardly into the hard part on *Das Kapital*. Do this, passing another peg and up to a small sapling. Continue to belay at the end of the *Gates of Delirium* second pitch.

Continue up the last pitch of *Gates of Delirium* to the top.

Duncan Booth, Mike Weeks, 13th August 2003

Dove Crag (p213)**Fetish For Fear** 30m E8***

(6b) Start up the initial flake of *Fast and Furious*, to its top. Move up and right, passing a loose block to the base of a slim, left-leaning groove. Climb this (Friend 1 and 2) to an overlap. Reach over this to good holds. Make committing moves leftwards to an obvious large flat hold and in-situ thread on left. Move up and right on large spaced holds to join the *Flying Fissure Finish* at its peg. Continue up this to the top.

Chris Hope and Duncan Booth both led. Seconded by Alan Wilson and Jimmy Beveridge. 6th July 2003

Repeated by Steve Crowe who comments 'Great route climbing directly into the Flying Fissure finish. Bold but not desperate, possibly only E7 after I found and cleaned an additional hold at the crux!' On sighted by Chris Hope and David Birkett.

North Buttress Superdirect 37 m E5 *** 1981/2003

(5c/6a). A direct line up *North Buttress*, takes *Fast and Furious* to the top of the groove and moves left to gain the prominent spike on *Bucket City*, which is followed to the ledge system. Make a couple of moves up the groove above before breaking out left via a line of holds above the lip of an overlap. These lead (slightly downwards) to an obvious slot (small cams) from which a line of reasonable holds, breaks and ledges lead directly up the wall, passing a peg runner just below the top.

Rick Graham, D Lyle, Bill Birkett 27th June 1981 – Climbed as far as the ledge system then continued as North Buttress.

Steve Crowe, Karin Magog both led. Seconded by Alan Wilson, 16th August 2003 – Linking the start of *Fast and Furious* to the finish of *Bucket City* for the easiest direct line up the cliff. May well have been done before.

Variation: The Inside Out Link E5/6 *** (F7b)

(6b) Start up *Fast and Furious* following the rightwards traverse (past the peg on FFF) to finish up *Outside Edge*. Mega pump.

Steve Crowe, Alan Wilson both led. Seconded by Karin Magog, August 2003

Dusk Till Dawn 40m E7 6b***

An awesome route – outstanding. This route climbs the huge leaning pillar on the *North Buttress* and is one of the steepest lines in the Lakes. A double set of small cams (at least) is required.

(6b). Start as for *Bucket Dynasty* to meet *Vlad* at the Friend 3 (Bold). Reverse *Vlad* for a couple of metres to good holds (Friend 0.5 or Wallnut 6). Make moves up and right to gain the right side of the pillar. A series of big moves on good holds following a leftwards-leaning ramp leads to a huge shake-out hold below a ramp sporting a good peg at its top. Make hard moves up to and past the peg (leftwards) to superb jugs on the left side of the pillar. More huge moves upwards lead to small ledge. The tricky groove above is climbed to a good ledge. Abseil descent (gear in situ).

Alan Wilson, Chris Hope (both led), 19th July 2003

"Oh my God, that is unbelievable." Chris Hope topping out on the 'most out there trip in the Lakes'.

This route saves you the long walk home. When you ab off and remove that last bit of gear at the end of the swing you're over the road!!

Variation Right-Hand Start

Start via *Vlad* before finishing up the *Dusk till Dawn* headwall – same grade but even pumpier.

Al Wilson, 2003

Fear of Failure 50m E7 (maybe E8)

A very 'big' route, freeing the old aided first pitch of *Broken Arrow*, before taking a sweeping runout across the top wall.

(6c). Climb the wall as for *Vlad* but pull up with difficulty to good sidepulls (peg – from old aid section), make a hard move via a sloping pinch and continue with exciting moves to reach the ledge. Step up left to clip the first peg on the second pitch of *Beyond the Pail*, then make a harrowing traverse up rightwards to buckets on *Bucket City* and finish up this or the groove on the left. Exciting!

James McHaffie, August 2002

Confirmed as E8 and onsighted by David Birkett – possibly the first E8 onsight in the UK.

The Brasov Incident 40m E6 6b (F7b+)

(6b). Follow *Bucket Dynasty* to the bulge but traverse right beneath the bulge, passing two pegs, to join *Fear and Fascination* at the spike below its crux. Move up and across as for *Fear and Fascination* to a junction with *Bucket City* and continue up until it is possible to step right onto *Fast and Furious* below its crux. Move up to the good jug then continue rightwards beneath the *Flying Fissure Finish* to finish up the *Outside Edge*.

Steve Crowe and Karin Magog (both led, but Karin finished up the *Flying Fissure Finish*), 9th August 2003

Goucher Crag (p251)

Truss Buttress

Appliance of Science 40m MVS

An intricate and exciting route. A bit mossy at present as it was led on sight, but should quickly clean up. Rope drag can be a problem – take lots of slings to use as extenders. Start as for *Hernia*.

(4b). Climb the easy ramp as for *Hernia*, but from its left end descend a corner and traverse left behind a tree to a slab. Pull over a bulge onto an upper slab and climb boldly up this and then traverse right into a corner where there is a huge flake (Friend 3.5 or 4). Hand-traverse the flake rightwards to below a slim groove cutting through the bulge above. Climb the groove to a ledge (possible belay in the corner on the left). From the right end of the ledge, climb boldly up rightwards to gain a slab which leads back leftwards to the top.

SJH Reid, C.King, 20th May 2004

The upper half of this route is as for Strider (E1) but it probably makes a better MVS than it does an E1.

Fang Buttress

The Stopper 40m HVS

A filling in type route on the left of the crag. Rather scrappy low down but improves with height. Start 3 metres left of the *Filling* on the very left-hand side of the pillar on the left of the buttress.

1 20m (4c). Step off a block on the left and follow a series of jugs up the left side of the short wall to gain an easy-angle grassy ramp. Follow this to a spike at the foot of the upper wall. Climb a short groove on the left of the spike to gain a large horizontal flake. Traverse this rightwards until you can stand on it and then sidle rightwards round the arête to a belay in the groove below the huge poised flake on *Tamarist*.

2 20m (5a). Step back along the flake a move to a short impending groove. Make a long reach up rightwards for a spike (thin sling), and pull out leftwards on to the buttress above. Keep moving up leftwards and then scramble to the top.

SJH Reid, C.King (alt), 20th May 2004

Some of this may have been climbed before by Al Davis and Al Hewison.

Relentless Rage 30m E6 ***

(6a). Follow *Sostenuto* to ledges below an impressive steep groove. Fill the ragged horizontal crack with runners (last before the top), step right and climb the groove directly to a small overhang. Pull straight through this, onto a large ledge to belay. Superb and quite bold.

Duncan Booth, Jaime Robertson, Mark Greenbank, Jimmy Beveridge,
27th September 2003

Winter

Due to lack of space, only a very small selection of the most significant winter routes are listed.

Gable Crag (p55)**Sledgate Ridge** IV/V

Start up a hard crack and follow the summer line for two pitches. The third pitch finishes up a chimney.

Simon King, John Watts, Jan 2003

Troll VII (8)

Follows the summer line.

Dave Birkett, Mary Jenner, 4th January 2003

Snickersnack VIII (9)

The classic three star summer E3, 5c.

Stephen Ashworth, Stuart Wood, 3rd January 2003

The route received a repeat ascent the following day by Nick Bullock and Dave Hunter. It also excited considerable comment!

Engineers Slabs with Alternate Arête Finish VI/VII (7)

Nick Bullock, Tim Blakemore, Dave Hunter, 5th January 2003

However this would seem to be the same as *Engineers Slabs - Arête Finish* 20m VI

(7). From the belay below the final groove follow the stepped crack to a spike on the arête and make a few delicate moves up this to easier ground and the top.

D Hetherington, D Donovan, 8th January 1997

Jabberwock VII (7)

Follows the summer line.

Dave Birkett, Paddy Deady, 6th January 2003

Repeated by Jules Cartwright and partner with a left-hand finish.

Trundle Ridge VII (7)

Follows the summer line.

Stephen Ashworth, Stuart Wood, 7th January 2003

Back Off VI (7)

Follows a natural winter line based around the summer HVS of *Smutg*.

Stuart Wood, Stephen Ashworth, 7th January 2003

Falcon Crag (p153)

Pinnacle Climb 80m IV

Start half way between *Dollywaggon Great Chimney* and the easy gully between *Falcon* and *Cock Cove Crags*.

1 40m (4). Follow turf ledges and grooves up rightwards until you are nearly looking over *Easy Gully*, next to a rock pinnacle/spike. Climb the wall behind the spike, and ledges above to a belay.

2 40m (2). Finish with a second pitch of I / II climbing.

Huw Davies, Ian Vermeulen, Richard Bilton, 13th March 2004

Scrubby Crag (p166)

Juniper Crack V (6)

The summer HS.

Andy Hyslop, Huw Davies, David Hunter, January 2003

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

JANE BUTCHER
JIM CORDINGLY
JAMMY CROSS
TONY FIELD
RUTH GELBER
KEITH GREGORY
ALAN GROOBY
MAUD HARGREAVES
WINIFRED RUTH HARLAND
RUTH IRONFIELD
PRISCILLA JOHNSON
WILLIAM EDGAR KENDRICK
RADIGUND KATHLEEN MASON
NANCY MURRAY
JIM TOPPING
ERIC WALKER
GRAHAM WATSON M.B.E., M.A., J.P.
RON WINTER

Die and feel their embers quicken
Year by year in summertime
When the cotton grasses thicken
On the hills they used to climb

Bruce Gilchrist

JANE BUTCHER

Jane loved mountains, especially those in the Lake District. She became a member of the Club in 1957 and with her husband Basil attended many meets in the Lakes and Scotland. She was of tremendous support to Basil during his ten year period as Warden of Beetham Cottage.

Born in Gateshead in 1921, she lived on Tyneside for most of her life. During the war she spent four years in the Land Army engaged in forestry operations in the Penrith area. She also enjoyed walking in the Cheviot hills and climbing on Crag Lough and was an early member of the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club.

I first met Jane in 1971 on a hut to hut tour of the Julian Alps and in succeeding years enjoyed her company on many splendid holidays including those in Corsica, the French Alps and Andorra. Jane was a delightful companion full of fun and interesting observations. She died 21 December 2002 and we all miss her greatly.

Irene Farrington

JIM CORDINGLY

Jim was a cheerful, friendly person, always ready to help anyone. He was a keen rock climber, walker and skier. When he lived at Frizington he was out on the hills most weekends.

Jim, a very active member of the club, became the first warden of Birkness. His practical skills came to the fore during the conversion and commissioning of the hut. It was not easy for him to get from Frizington to Buttermere, for he had no motor transport in those days. Many a weekend he cycled to Ennerdale and then walked over to Buttermere while I took his wife round on the back of my motor bike.

He was my pillion passenger on many climbing weekends. In winter the bike often carried two pairs of skis as well as two of us and two large rucksacks. There was more snow in winter then, and I well remember one occasion going over Hard Knott when the road was so icy that Jim had to walk down the side on the grass holding the rope tied to the bike to stop it sliding over the edge. They were good days we spent

together. I shall always treasure the happy memories

When Jim moved to Devonshire he took an active interest in photography, particularly of flowers. He also became a very good fly fisherman – Sarah had to take it up as well, so that they could spend time together. At 58 he started canoeing and became hooked on sea canoeing. They did many trips around the Scottish Western Isles, Orkney, Wales, Ireland, Jersey and the Scillies, and often took their daughter with them. She was only three when she did her first trip. When deteriorating health put an end to long canoe trips he threw himself into gardening.

Jim always loved the Lake District and spent many family holidays at Buttermere.

Pete Moffat

JAMMY CROSS

A pre-eminently fine mountaineer in a sport dominated at the time by men, Jammy Cross, who died on February 16 aged 93, ranked in her prime among the best all-round mountaineers in Britain. A Life member of the Fell and Rock, which she joined in 1937, she was the first woman to lead Central Buttress on Scafell, then, as now, a seriously formidable challenge. Her partnership with her husband, Sid, led to numerous new routes being traced on the crags of Cumbria, tersely described in the Fell and Rock guides and often cunningly named. More renowned was their partnership for 21 years as 'Inn mates' of the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel at the head of Langdale where the climbers' bar became the epicentre of English mountaineering.

Alice Mary Nelson was born in Kendal and fell in love with the Lakeland hills on excursions with the Girl Guides. Quiet determination, a dislike of authority and an adventurous nature marked her character from childhood. Her nick-

name dated from schooldays and may have derived from the French *jamaïs* (never), reflecting a high level of stubbornness. Even so, she was 21 before she felt free to ignore her parents' ban on her desire to climb rocks. By then she worked at the K Shoes factory in Kendal where she met Sid Cross, a young cobbler already established as a serious rock climber, who had partnered many notable names of the day, among them Maurice Linnell, H. M. Kelly and A.T. Hargreaves.

The couple climbed zealously, exploring popular and lesser-known Lake District crags, sharing the lead on technically hard climbs and thinking up apt names for their new creations. *Double Cross* and *Half Nelson* were completed on the same day in June 1937 on Eagle Crag above Buttermere. They would spend weekends cycling to the mountains from Kendal, climbing hard and then returning in time for work early on Monday. The partnership strengthened and when Cross announced plans for an expedition to the Alps with Jammy, some senior members of the Fell and Rock cautioned against the idea, although the club had long welcomed women as members. One doubter, George Bower, sternly advised Cross that women were shackles to achievement. Amused by this outburst of Edwardian chauvinism, on their next expedition to Glencoe in Scotland, Cross and Nelson named their new discovery *Shackle Route*, 'a pleasant, classic climb' on the east face of Buachaille Etive Mor. Their own shackling came in 1939 with their marriage.

Summer and winter the pair pursued their passion for climbing, making little of their achievements other than brief and to the point descriptions in club journals. *Bowfell Buttress* sheathed in ice remains a Grade VI technically mixed climb even with today's advances in equipment and protection. Cross overcame the crux pitch using Nelson's long-handled ice axe as a foothold while torquing his own axe (a hand-me-down from Bower) higher up the crack.

With their climbing friends Albert (A.T.) and Ruth Hargreaves the Crosses bought the Burnmoor Inn in Eskdale as a place providing good food and hospitality to climbers and fell walkers.

The Inn featured in the first edition of Egon Ronay's *Good Food Guide*. In 1949 they moved to the Old Dungeon Ghyll, brought up their two sons, John and Edward, and made the ODG the major centre for English mountaineering. Jammy Cross was a linchpin in the partnership, a dependable and tireless manager who commanded the ODG kitchen with good-humoured authority. Sid and Jammy retired in 1970 and moved down the valley to Clappersgate, remaining keen climbers, skiers and travellers well into their eighties.

Ronnie Faux

TONY FIELD

Tony and I first met in the early 70s whilst teaching. We soon realised we had many common interests with a love of rock-climbing, mountaineering, fell-walking and skiing being paramount.

Consequently over the years, I and many other, predominantly Leeds area based friends, had many adventures with Tony throughout the UK and abroad.

Many of Tony's companions on his numerous adventures will have their own treasured memories of shared experiences and I can only try to illustrate Tony's fine characteristics through an example of a climb that is forever etched in my mind.

Like lots of members we spent many days climbing in the Lake District. Indeed at one time we both saw climbing on our local Gritstone crags as training or mere interludes to getting across to the Lakes. Tony, like many of us, enjoyed the fuller experience of a day on a high mountain crag and all that it entails.

Tony was extremely caring and concerned when things went wrong for others. He came to see me many times whilst I was recovering from a serious knee injury, the result of a bouldering fall, that new found activity now so popular with younger climbers! I was obviously very wary and apprehensive about going climbing. Tony persuaded me to go and climb Bowfell Buttress in Langdale, a route which I had erroneously thought not worth bothering with or leaving until I was really old. I am glad he persuaded me and looked after me encouraging me to lead through knowing how nervous I was. We set off from the O.D.G. in thick, claggy mist and drizzle. Secretly I suppose I was hoping it would pour down.

As we traversed along the path from the Band we heard the clinking of hardware, other climbers were climbing in these conditions so we should too. However, shortly we climbed out of the clag to arrive at the foot of Bowfell Buttress in perfect nick with a bright blue sky and warm sunshine overhead.

What a fantastic day climbing in our beloved Lakes on a classic route with superb views and Langdale valley swathed in white cotton-wool clouds.

Such are our climbing memories with a great friend. I will never forget these memories nor numerous others just as many of Tony's other friends will not do so either. The spirit always lives on and Tony left us all with many marvellous experiences etched in our minds forever. He will be greatly missed by Marion, Stephen, Christopher, Adrian and all who knew him and shared in his passions.

Mick Johnson.

RUTH GELBER

My first meeting with Ruth was a memorable and happy occasion. In August, 1947, we were gathering at Victoria to go to Arolla on what I believe was the one and only FRCC alpine meet. That the tall,

smiling lady was of the company was confirmed by her carrying a matchingly long ice axe, so I was delighted. Who knows what has happened to the antique axe but I can vouch for the smile having endured, since it was there, going full blast, when Yolande Whittall and I took our final leave of her after a hospital visit just a month before her death.

The meet led by the late Douglas Side was a huge success and fine weather allowed the party of novices, which most of us were, to get some very respectable peaks including the Dent Blanche. This was made possible by the party being able to afford no less than the help of 6 guides and that was made possible by the exchange rate being 18 Swiss francs to the pound!

It did not take long to establish that Ruth and I had another interest in common, namely in chamber music, so that when we were back in London, we were soon going to concerts together. I benefited greatly from her better knowledge of what was going on and am in her debt for introducing me to the Conway Hall concerts on Sunday evenings. I feel greatly privileged to have known Ruth for more than 50 years since her interests were wide and her way of life was characterised by a perennial graciousness and warmth.

Alisdair Gebbie

Over the last 35 years I went with Ruth on many of the monthly walks of the London section of the FRCC, which we both thoroughly enjoyed. She had a smile and time for a chat with everyone. She made me feel at home and very welcome on my first weekend meet. At weekend meets in huts we provided our own food, though she invariably treated us to something delicious that she had prepared. She was a good cook and entertained us generously in her Blackheath home. I shall miss her big smile.

Yolande Whittall

KEITH GREGORY

Keith was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1921 and it was a youth hostelling tours in the Lake District in 1940s which first inspired his enthusiasm for the area. Once booked, he and his climbing partner Basil Butcher made the journey west whenever possible, enjoying long days on the crags. Keith became a life member of the FRCC in 1941. His first love had been for Northumbrian rock and with no climbing guides in the early years of the war there was plenty of scope the exploration on the Wanneys, Simonside, Crag Lough and the rest. Where routes existed, marks left by nailed boots could be followed.

A transfer from Newcastle to Whitehaven and Carlisle in 1943 enabled Keith to enjoy the rock and fells of the Lakes more fully but then promotion took him in 1948 to Wiltshire where he lived for most of the rest of his life apart from a period of ten years in Nigeria where he was Head of Telecommunications in Lagos.

Keith later changed careers, becoming a lecturer in economics after obtaining a degree in that subject at Bath University where he played a prominent role in student affairs. He was always interested in young people and was very concerned that the club should make strong efforts to recruit young members.

Another of Keith's interests was in the restoration of old buildings. Several club members have happy memories of visits to the old olive farm in Provence and more recently to the house in Creuse, transformed over the years by summer work parties. Keith remained interested in mountains and the Club to the end and attended the AGM and Annual Dinner whenever possible. He was amazingly active and full of life until three weeks before he died on 21 December 2003. He is greatly missed by his wife Mary and children Kate and Alec and his many friends.

Irene Farrington

ALAN GROOBY

Alan was born at Holden near Clitheroe in 1946, and although always a very active man, he did not start climbing until 1990 when he joined Clitheroe Mountaineering Club, of which he remained an active member until his death. He was a very strong and enthusiastic climber, and seemed determined to make up for the years on the rock he felt he had missed.

He tackled rock climbing, winter climbing, fell walking and mountain biking with equal vigour; he had completed his Wainwrights and Munros and was starting to enjoy the Corbetts. On his first trip to the Alps he climbed Mont Blanc, and on a subsequent trip to Zermatt achieved an impressive list of summits.

Alan had been a very proud member of the FRCC since 1998: he and his wife Valerie were regulars on the Beetham maintenance meets and the Bonfire weekends, and he always enjoyed winter trips to Waters Cottage.

He died tragically on July 12th 2002 after a climbing accident on Twistleton Scar on July 7th. Alan's ashes were later scattered on Ben Sgritheall, his last Munro, completed in 1999.

All members of FRCC who knew him will miss him profoundly, and his spirit will live on in the hills.

Nick Millward and John Barrett.

MAUD HARGREAVES

With W C Slingsby for a grandfather and Len and Geoffrey Winthrop Young as aunt and uncle, Maud (née Gordon) was no stranger to the mountaineering world. She was born in 1911 in Bradford, where her father was a solicitor, but her childhood was a bewildering succession of different homes and schools in Bradford and London, as her father's jobs changed frequently and he was invalided out of the army in France in 1916 to a job in the Ministry of Munitions

in London. She remembered being 'parked' for a time, away from wartime London, with the Trevelyans at Wallington in Northumberland, recalling a huge, unheated house, endless wet walks on the moors, icy bathes before breakfast and performing a *Midsummer Night's Dream* to a terrifying audience of family and visitors in the hall. Her schooling was a kaleidoscope of short spells at a variety of private schools, some liberal and inspiring, others appalling, the worst being a barbaric girls public school on the south coast.

When her parents divorced and her mother married George Sansom, a distinguished Japanese scholar and the cultural attaché at the British Embassy in Tokyo, Maud made three visits to Japan in the early 1930s, interspersed with spells at art colleges in London. Her life in the social and cultural circles of diplomatic Tokyo included classes in art and Japanese etiquette, and a walk up Mt Fuji (12,635ft). She also spent several months as the companion and travel 'fixer' for a rich woman from Luxembourg on a major tour of Asia, with not a word of English allowed, only French, which meant that Maud's fluent French stayed with her all her life.

From the age of 16 Maud was regularly invited to Geoffrey Young's now legendary Easter meets at Pen Y Pass in North Wales, which gathered many of the leading climbers of the day, patiently helping GWY to negotiate classic Snowdonia climbs with his wooden leg. At Easter 1929, Bobby Chew (later the Prince of Wales' headmaster at Gordonstoun) and Cuthbert Wakefield took her to Idwal where they devised a tortuous route up the slabs 'avoiding the scratches'. It's still in the guide books as 'Geography'. It was at a Pen Y Pass Easter, in 1934, that Maud met A. B. Hargreaves who took her up a climb on Lliwedd. The proposal of marriage, when it came, was more of an ultimatum, typical AB, but they were married

in London in the summer of 1935 and honeymooned on a typically wet Skye. If it wasn't Waterpipe Gully that he dragged his new wife up on a wet day it was something like it, an inauspicious start to what was not a successful marriage. Being a very small man, AB liked to live in very large houses with a market garden, which Maud had to combine with bringing up the family of four and, in the war years, a house full of refugees from the bombing in Barrow and Manchester. Not to mention AB's idiosyncratic catering demands.

Between Shannon House in Pennington and Southfield in Ulverston, in reach of his work at Lakeland Laundries in Barrow, we had five years at Hesketh Hall in Broughton Mills, a glorious place but not an easy home to manage. As Treasurer of the Fell and Rock for 12 years and later President, AB was often away on meets; at first Maud could accompany him, and when I was a baby I would be left in my Moses basket in the kitchen of the Woolpack in Eskdale while Maud was out on the hills, but ill health and the demands of household and family made it increasingly difficult for her to keep up with club activities. As we grew up she delighted in teaching myself and my three sisters to swim in the Duddon and other rivers and to walk the Lakeland hills. Her closest friends in the club were those who understood her difficulties, Lyna Pickering, Sid and Jammie Cross, Muriel and Bobby Files, Jean Arnison, amongst others. She would always get to the New Year meets at the ODG in Langdale, if she could, and I remember the dramatic drive through war-ravaged France to the meet at Arolla in 1947 and Maud trying to assuage my 11 year old demands to be taken up a real mountain.

The marriage ended in 1954. Maud went to live in Kent, London, Cornwall, where she stayed for 20 years and created a wonderful garden and small wood, Ferring and finally Oxford. She died in June 2002, at the age of 91, in a nursing

home at Burford in Oxfordshire; during the last weeks she was remarkably free of the pains which had been with her for most of her life.

Richard Hargreaves

WINIFRED RUTH HARLAND

Winifred Ruth Vandy was born in London in August 1908. She went to school in London and from there to the London School of Economics from 1929-1932 to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

After graduating, she embarked on a distinguished career in the probation service. She became a probation officer and then a probation inspector. From this she obtained a job in the Home Office, where she was one of four senior inspection officers (and the only woman) running the probation service. For some twenty years Ruth was chairman on the Probation Advisory and Training Board and set up Rymer House, a residential home for training officers. Ruth was much admired by her colleagues both for her visionary work and her compassion for others.

Ruth developed her interests in rock climbing and mountaineering and joined the Fell and Rock in 1944. She also climbed many mountains in the Alps and Scotland. While on a Fell and Rock Scottish Meet, she met Edward Owbridge Harland (known as 'Bones' for his stick-like legs) whom she married in 1965 at the age of 57. She first joined Bones in Yorkshire, but after a year, the Harlands bought Woodland Hall in Cumbria, not too far from John and Eve Appleyard in Torver. (Bones was Eve Appleyard's brother; their father, Henry Harland was an original FRCC member). Woodland Hall soon became a centre of hospitality, a tradition which continued as long as Ruth was fit enough to entertain visitors. Her niece, Jennifer Woodley, recalls 30 years of happy family holidays

in Cumbria. Sadly, Bones died in 1976.

Ruth remained at Woodland Hall for the next 25 years. She continued to keep up with the Fell and Rock, as a regular attender at the Scottish meets and also the Coniston meet. She enjoyed country pursuits, especially gardening and walking and loved reading, until increasing blindness made this impossible, when she kept up-to-date with talking books and newspapers.

In 1999, Ruth moved to Somerset to live with her niece, moving in to a nursing home for her last year. After her death her ashes were scattered on Woodland Fell.

Ruth is remembered as an immensely kind and intelligent woman, although the most vivid recollection for many of her friends is that she smoked a pipe! This habit staggered some of her colleagues at the Home Office, not to mention the FRCC! She eventually gave it up at the age of ninety one.

Hatty Harris

I am very grateful to Ruth Harland's niece, Mrs. Jennifer Woodley, for most of the information in this obituary. H.H.

RUTH IRONFIELD

Ruth Ironfield nee Langford was born in Ashton-Under-Lyne but later moved to Prestwich, Manchester. After qualifying as a teacher she taught in various schools in and around Bolton and finally became head of the primary department of Bolton School.

Ruth had a great love of the Lakeland Fells and attending Fell and Rock meets with Rona Alferoff. Through Rona she joined the Fell And Rock and it was there that she met Harry. They married on September first 1956 in Borrowdale Church. They walked and climbed together in the Lakes and Scotland and also skied in the Alps. Her first rock climb was with Howard Somerville.

In the early 1960s they bought the Riddings Barn in Threlkeld former home of the Blencathra Pack. Over a period of years they renovated it to the lovely house you see now.

She attended meets whenever she could and was a regularly on the Scottish Meets once she had retired. In their retirement she and Harry went further afield, walking in the Dolomites, Austria, France and Mallorca. Ruth also walked the Ridgeway and the Dalesway with fellow member Margaret Bromley.

One of her great qualities was her kindness, she and Harry were noted for their friendliness and help to new members of the club. Harry received every support from her when he was President.

She had many interests including gardening, she and Harry created a lovely garden in Hawkshaw, where they lived until recently. Her greatest love as she became less active was painting, mostly mountain subjects, in watercolour and oils.

Her last illness was a great tragedy, she lost some sight after brain surgery but bore it all very bravely. Between operations she attended the Coniston Meet, the Salving House 50th Anniversary and Jill Aldersley's 60th birthday at Birkness.

Ruth died on September 15th 2003 aged 75 years, our deepest sympathy goes to Harry and their daughter Janet.

Joyce Cosby.

PRISCILLA JOHNSON

Priscilla Johnson was a life member of the Fell & Rock, a neat and elegant climber, and an enthusiastic fell walker. A North-country woman, she was educated at Casterton School near Kirkby Lonsdale, and lived at Bolton le Sands before the Second World War. By that time she had climbed in Skye, and the Lake District; she made one visit to the Alps to Saas Fee.

At the outbreak of war she immediately joined up, with

the FANYs (Field Army Nursing Yeomanry); and then became a driving instructor at the ATS Driving School at Camberly; she was later commissioned. Sadly her fiancé was killed in the heavy, but brief, fighting in June 1940 at St. Valery, and when her parents retired to Cornwall after the war she made her home with them, and in effect ran the house. It was only practicable for her to make the long journey from Cornwall to the Lake District once a year to the Whitsun Meet, which she did. Dick Cook befriended her, often climbed with her, and encouraged her to lead while he seconded. It was an adventure she enjoyed; women did not often lead in those days. Priscilla had a great capacity for friendship and an enthusiasm for life, which never left her.

After her father died, she and her mother moved up North to live in Crook near Kendal in the early 1970s. Although she did not climb much more, she was a vigorous fell walker, until her mother's old age made it difficult for Priscilla to leave her. She was always a staunch member of the local church. Her mother died at a great age in 1992; and by that time Priscilla's own physique had been affected by the years of looking after her. She was no longer able to walk the fells, but found in gardening an outlet for her enthusiasm and a pleasure which lasted until the very end of her life. She remained an indomitable spirit, always cheerful, considerate towards others, never self-pitying. She was an inspiration to anyone wise enough to get to know her.

David Wagstaff

WILLIAM EDGAR KENDRICK

After some less than happy final months in a nursing home, on 20 May 2002 Bill Kendrick died, as he had lived, uncomplaining. He had made clear that at his funeral, as in every other aspect of his life, he did not want a fuss.

He and his wife Joan chose to pass the more than 50 years of their married life quietly, usefully, and happily in the comfortable provincial city of Lancaster, making the most of their spacious house and its even more spacious gardens to bring up their son, Brian, and to welcome their friends. It was the base for their enduring membership of the FRCC and their work for it. Bill declined professional promotion because the family would have had to move too far from the Lake District and away from Sunny Hill. Quality of life, that rather threadbare aspiration of the chattering classes, was a reality to him.

At the opening of Brackenclose in October 1937, the retiring President, Prof. R.S.T. Chorley, said: "We hope that the youth of our club ... will find it a jumping-off place for days on the hills." Bill Kendrick, newly elected to membership, was one of the beneficiaries. He nowadays appears in the handbook as *Huts & Meets Secretary 1948-1954*. To appreciate the extent to which he repaid the privileges of membership, you have to realise that the office was created only in 1944, in response to our adding a lease of Raw Head cottage to our ownership of Brackenclose. During Bill's tenure we added full ownership of Raw Head cottage, then that of Raw Head barn, all Birkness, and the Salving House; another 100 beds to the existing 48. Petrol and most other things were rationed or unobtainable. Joan and others recall elaborate journeys by train and bicycle to visit the developing huts and to bid for equipment at house sales and ex-WD auctions. The bargains, including quantities of iron bedsteads, were often stored at Sunny Hill. When Bill eventually acquired a car – an 8 hp drop-head Standard – the question arose of whether, loaded with stuff for the incipient hut at Birkness, it would go over Whinlatter. Reverse gear was considered. In those days, the H&M Secretary handled the hut bookings. Membership was expanding and meets had to be co-ordinated. With Joan's support, Bill

was more than equal to the double task. It is not surprising that he was elected Vice-President 1955-1957. Subsequently, as a Trustee for many years restraining or encouraging Presidents and Committees as appropriate, he was respected as a wise counsellor and a careful guardian of our extensive property.

I climbed with Bill only a few times, in my early years in the club. I admired his sound practice and constant awareness of safety, in days when there was still a good deal of manila rope about, and runners were just becoming fashionable. He was a sturdy fell-walker with the club, and skied after the fashion of the time (wooden skis, leather boots). He was quiet-spoken, unfailingly courteous, drily humorous, firm in principle. His many years of work for the Friends of the Lake District were widely acknowledged, but he would never allow a fuss to be made about them. He gave the Council planners in Lancaster a hard time when they proposed unsuitable developments. He was active and successful in promoting the amenities and preserving the fine trees of his district in the city.

Bill Kendrick was born in Leominster. Because his father's profession as an Excise officer obliged him to move about the country, Bill was educated first at the King's School, Chester, then at Hereford Cathedral School when his parents returned to live again in Leominster. As a schoolboy he was introduced to the Black Mountains by his elder brother, John, (subsequently Treasurer of FRCC, having been introduced into the club by Bill). Family resources did not run to a university education for the youngest son, so Bill went straight from school into the Executive Branch of the Civil Service, working in London until 1939. In those years he continued his studies and was called to the bar, though he never practised. In the war he was posted to the Colonial Service in Mombasa and Kampala. Back in London in 1945, he travelled to the Lake District most weekends to climb, return-

ing on the milk train on Monday mornings.

As a member of FRCC, he met Joan (Mc Gregor), also a member, on the Napes at a Whitsun meet. She was glad to climb with him on the Needle. The acquaintance prospered, and they were married in 1947. In order to live in a suitable place, Bill transferred to the Customs and Excise Division, which offered a posting to Lancaster. The rest is history. We were sorry that Bill did not live quite long enough to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Salving House, but Joan was there.

George Watkins

RADIGUND KATHLEEN MASON

'Ra' as she was always known, joined the F& RCC in 1988 and was a vivacious and active member until ill-health ended her beloved mountain activities a few years ago. I renewed my acquaintance with her at Raw Head while she was an Associate – having known her slightly many years before, when she was Secretary of the Royal School of Mines Association. She was full of enthusiasm for both mountains and The Club and enjoyed a little gentle teasing about how she could have slipped into the FRCC without either a birth certificate or accent from a place north of the Dee – Wash line.

An indomitable lady, as she was described by her daughter, Ra did not commence her 'adventurous' life until her three children were grown and flown from the nest. But she soon made up for lost time with a 'round the world journey', walking in New Zealand and expeditions to the Indian Himalaya, trekking in Nepal and in 1994, a trip to Bhutan-Sikkim. Her enthusiasm led to her becoming Chair and unofficial recruiting officer for the London Section (88-90). She was a regular at Shap AGM's and a pleasure as company at the dinner table. In 1991, she was one of the joint organisers of a very success-

ful Alpine meet at the Rif. Monte Bianco, Courmayeur and subsequently attended others, notably in the Brenta Dolomites (1993). Those of us who were caught up in her schemes and plans will remember with pleasure her hospitality and home made beer at her flat in Fulham.

Ra had a *joie de vivre*, which was infectious. She was lucky to have 'seized the day' and taken her enjoyment from some of the more adventurous aspects of life at an age when many would perhaps have pursued gentler activities. "Better late than never" she said – and she was right. Her bubbly enthusiasm will be sadly missed by her many friends in the Club.

John Moore

NANCY MURRAY

When Nancy Murray died on 17 December 2003 she held one probably unbeatable Club record. Her 'life membership score' was 172. This score is calculated by adding your age in years to your years in membership of the Club. Nancy's son-in-law, Paddy, devised this new rule as a replacement for the previous system of life membership, and set the threshold at 110 – an almost impossible target for most members. She joined in 1932, was a genuine Life Member, and contributed hugely to the life of our Club for 71 years.

Born in London in 1902 into a rather austere family, Nancy carved her own inimitable path from the beginning. She defied convention by going to London University and subsequently teaching chemistry. In the 1920s she first visited the Lake District, camping in Wasdale and Eskdale with fellow student Dr Mona Prout with whom she formed a deep friendship that survived for the next 80 years. During these early trips she met GR Speaker who introduced her to the Fell and Rock, and it was through her involvement with the London Section that she first met Donald on a weekend walk. Fam-

ily folklore tells how it was Nancy who 'picked up' Donald by dropping her handkerchief. When Donald – as ever – failed to notice, Nancy bent to pick it up, and read the nametape on his socks. The next adventure in her life began with their marriage in Borrowdale Church.

Whilst no-one could ever forget an encounter with the forthright Donald, it was the indomitable Nancy who provided the background strength and stability to their relationship. Whilst Donald was busy with all the practical maintenance tasks, Nancy organised the social calendar, made the phone calls, wrote the invites and thank-yous, prepared the food – during the war, turning their garden into an allotment – and ensured that everything actually worked. She knew what she needed to do – with or without Donald's help!

Donald worked in a timber-importing business in Hull. For over sixty years they lived in a large house they built in a field at Swanland; this was to become the warm family home for Roger and Janet. They climbed and walked extensively on Yorkshire gritstone, in the Lakes and in Scotland. They had several seasons in the Alps, usually climbing with local guides. Back home, Nancy became heavily involved in the local community, including the YWCA and over 20 years as President of the Swanland Women's Institute. The extensive garden at Swanland was a source of particular joy, growing all manner of produce and flowers, as well as containing a home-dug swimming pool.

Shortly before the outbreak of war, they took out a lease on a centuries-old mill hidden deep in Coombe Ghyll in Borrowdale. Photographs show the Mill as a rough, slated, boulder-built, lichen-covered ruin. This became their Lakeland home and the focus of their building energies throughout the postwar decades. The water wheel was restored and the Mill was made habitable with bunk beds, running water, an ingen-

ious too, torch bulb lighting powered from a car battery, a unique hip-bath with shower – and endless tea boiled in the canteen kettle and served with cake from the tin. It played host to countless climbing parties, celebration meals, and Club discussions. The Mill has survived freak floods, trundled boulders from on high, and insensitive water board engineers. Nancy's warmth and welcome made it a place of wonderful memories – eating meals by candlelight, bathing in the icy stream, tossing pancakes over the beam, and the joy of being surrounded by mountains. Today, Janet, Paddy, their family and friends continue to enjoy the delights of this very special place.

To my family, they were known simply as 'The Murrays' – a formidable pair whose bark just sometimes appeared more like a bite! My father, Charles, was a regular climbing partner with Nancy and Donald, disappearing at weekends to climb throughout Borrowdale. With other climbing friends, including Harry Stembridge, Dick Cook, Bobby and Muriel Files and Harry ('Wop') Fairfield, the Murrays enjoyed climbing trips at home and abroad. They returned to the Alps enjoying a great season in Saas Fee. They climbed in the High Atlas in the early 1960s where Nancy recounted how, on finishing a high route, a local Berber peered over the top to offer them fresh-brewed tea. They also explored Slovenia and Corsica. They were frequent attenders at the Scottish Meet where, in 1959, Nancy, Donald, Charles and Dick were particularly pleased with their traverse of the Cuillin Ridge in just over 12 hours end-to-end, and a combined age of 208 years.

It was typical of Nancy that the Club Handbook records such a short entry against her name. She was so often the subtle 'power behind the throne'. Whilst Donald presided over a turbulent two-year period in the life of the Club, Nancy's unstinting but quieter contribution was marked by her Vice-

Presidency.

Another opportunity for adventure was created by Donald's retirement. They purchased the shell of a long-wheel-base Landrover and converted it to a 'luxury' all-terrain camper vehicle complete with external shower, sun lounge, and long-range tanks. The inaugural run for 'El Coche' was Hull to Kathmandu overland – a journey which few would undertake today. Next came a longitudinal traverse of the Americas. And each year this remarkable vehicle could be spotted on Scottish islands and in remote glens.

For the last ten years of her life Nancy lived in Gosforth. Increasing frailty was not going to stop this woman from reaching her century, returning to her beloved Mill, nor enjoying the pleasure of being amongst the surrounding Wasdale fells from her home and garden. Throughout her life she consistently demonstrated those characteristics of strength and determination which mark out a very special personality. She quite simply refused to give up.

Tim Pickles

JIM TOPPING

Jim Topping died in 2003 shortly after his wife's death. He came to the Fell and Rock from a local climbing club, as was often the case in those days. He spent much time on the fells in company with many distinguished FRCC members living around the Fylde – Joe Renwick, Alf Gregory and Dick Cook.

Jim never took to rock climbing but was an avid mountain adventurer and frequented most of the Alpine Ranges, often on solo holidays. I recall one holiday in Czechoslovakia when photographing a mountain scene he inadvertently included a military installation. He was seen and arrested. His plea of only being a climber was disbelieved on

the grounds that climbers never travelled alone but always in pairs or groups and the upshot was seven days in custody.

His passion to be amongst the mountains led to his detailed familiarity with our own Lake District, Scotland and especially the Pyrenees. He developed an interest in alpine flora that culminated in an unrivalled collection of flower slides and an alpine garden at his home in Garstang. He became a respected member of the Alpine Garden Society.

By profession Jim was an architect and Preston's housing stock bears his mark to this day. His experience afforded him a major role in the development of Beetham Cottage.

His marriage came after he retired but he was able to share many happy years walking in the mountains with his wife before his death at 88 years of age.

Jim was one of those rare persons who was equally at home in a group as in his own company and never more so than when in the mountains.

Tom Meredith

ERIC WALKER

Eric Walker was born in 1921 into an established Tyneside family with strong marine connections and service in the Navy (Royal and Merchant). Eric did not follow this calling because of proneness to seasickness.

From an early age, he was attracted to the hills and an early memory was of a journey to the Lake District travelling over Honister by horse drawn bus in the 1920s with passengers alighting for the final stages to spare the horses. Another early memory was visiting to watch the rising waters of Haweswater cover the village.

At 7, Eric attended the Preparatory School in Caldbeck run by Dr. Mabel Barker, a noted climber of her day and mem-

ber of the FRCC. At 9, on a school camping holiday in Langdale, he completed his first rock climb on Middle Fell buttress with Dr. Barker. The following year, he moved to the Royal Grammar School (RGS) in Newcastle where 2 of his classmates were the late Bob Conn and Brian Cooke with Basil Butcher in the year above. In 1935, a member of staff who was a sound mountaineer, took some boys to Langdale for a week of climbing with Eric, Brian Cooke and Basil Butcher being in the group. After ascending several mountains, they were introduced to rock climbing, beginning on Middle Fell buttress, continuing on to Pavey Arc with climbs in the difficult grade. The following year, the teacher took them to Val d'Isere in the French Alps giving Eric his first experience of alpine climbing.

With the outbreak of War, the RGS was evacuated to Penrith, Eric becoming a member of the local Defence Volunteers (later to become the Home Guard). For the next 18 months, without arms or ammunition, he prepared to defend Penrith with a pitchfork though thankfully this was never required! He took part in night patrols with the local members, who were aware of illicit whisky stills, which introduced Eric to a 'wee dram'.

In 1941 at 18, he turned down the opportunity of going to Cambridge to read history, joining the Army rapidly becoming a Sergeant in the Reconnaissance Corps where he no doubt derived his favourite admonition to me and other climbers that "time spent in reconnaissance is never wasted". After a commission at Sandhurst, he joined the Parachute Regiment landing in Europe on D Day +1. Subsequently he was in Norway and then Palestine in 1945 to complete his military service. It was from here that he explored the mountains of Lebanon with his first introduction to skiing.

Back home, he chose to go to Sheffield University

rather than waiting for his Cambridge place. He soon joined the caving and climbing clubs and played in the rugby team. In his final year, he was elected President of the Students Union where he met the late Jack Longland. Returning to the North East, he taught for 7 years in the mining heartland of County Durham where the boys furthered their maths lesson at the totes of the weekly whippet races. Eric moved to the Careers Service in Newcastle, eventually becoming Deputy Director, remaining until retirement.

He remained deeply attached to the Parachute Regiment and with those whom he served, marching regularly on Remembrance Day.

I met Eric in the late 1950s at a mountaineering lecture and later introduced him to the Northumbrian Mountaineering Club (NMC) where he met up with his school climbing friends, Bob Conn, Brian Cooke and Basil Butcher, one of the founder members of the club, also members of the FRCC. Eric became an active member of the NMC, later representing the mountaineering fraternity on the North East Sports Council.

In the early 1960's we extended our range of climbing holidays to include the mountains of Eastern Europe, covering the Julian Alps, the Black Mountains of Montenegro and the High Tatras in Czechoslovakia. Maps and guide books were often unobtainable though we did find one ancient German map of Slovenia printed in 1938, which may have been left by the retreating Army of the 3rd Reich. Routes were often identified by a blob of paint on a rock and it was due to Eric's competence and attention to detail that we reached our destinations without mishap. We had many memorable days on virtually empty mountains.

In 1966, we became full members of the FRCC, the same year in which the NMC obtained the tenancy of Bowderstone Cottage in Borrowdale. We celebrated both events with a New

Year party in the bare cottage, making the journey from Newcastle with the kitchen table lashed to the roof of an ancient Wolesley car reminiscent of a 'moonlight flit' in bygone years.

Eric valued and enjoyed his membership of the FRCC taking part in all aspects of club life and was no mean entertainer with his rendering of Tyneside songs. On the hills, he was a good and considerate companion, could move with great speed when necessary, which earned him the name of 'Old Smoking Boots' among his friends. Rugby was another sport which Eric enjoyed, having played for his school, the Army, University and the 'Old Novocastrians' of his school with whom he remained associated to the end. At the age of 69, he took up half marathon running, taking part in the Great North Run and other events including the Grasmere Gallop. He hung up his trainers at 75 after his last half marathon in a time of 2 hours. He always enjoyed the challenge, the companionship and the fun which sport gave to him throughout his life and especially in the Lake District. Eric died in December 2003 after a brief illness. Among the many people who attended his memorial service in January in Newcastle were friends from both the FRCC and the NMC, who helped to celebrate a life that was well lived.

Doreen Walden

I would like to thank Basil Butcher, who provided memoirs of their school days. DW

GRAHAM WATSON M.B.E., M.A., J.P.

Born in Bradford on 29th March, 1908, Graham was educated at Marlborough and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, graduating in 1930 with a B.A. in Mathematics. He then joined the family's silk manufacturing business at Manningham Mills, Bradford and eventually retired as Managing Director in 1959.

His love of the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales

was a result of family holidays in these areas and the enthusiasm of his father, who was also a member of the F.R.C.C. His membership to the club in 1934 coincided with his developing passion for motorecycling, which remained with him for the rest of his life.

Although not an active member of the F.R.C.C., his benefit to our club and other similar organisations was his active participation on committees, which have helped to protect development in the areas he liked so much. Starting in 1935 by joining the new 'Friends of the Lake District', he was involved with the passing of the National Parks Act of 1949, served on the Lake District Special Planning Board and, as a member of the Sanford Committee, was appointed to carry out a revision of the National Park policies.

He was a founder member of the Yorkshire Dales Society and was a Secretary of State nominated member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park committee. His love and concern for protecting Upper Wharfedale was demonstrated in 1988 when, on the death of his brother, he gave 5,500 acres of land there to the National Trust for its safekeeping. He was surprised that the National Trust made him a life member when he was already a subscribing member!

Graham also took an active interest in many organisations in his native city, which included being chairman of the Bradford Magistrates for many years.

In spite of his many commitments, he still found time to motorcycle and walk in the Dales and Lake District, mostly on his own, and was always interested in other people's activities.

Many will count it a pleasure and privilege to have known him.

Donald Brumfitt

RON WINTER

Ron was a man with many interests these included wild-life, music, painting, poetry, mountaineering, cycling and youth hostelling. He was born at Eaglescliffe (near Stockton) and was fortunate enough to have parents who encouraged his outdoor activities. As a result he was introduced to the hills at an early age and he became a keen walker.

Youth hostelling was a regular activity and on a visit with his wife to Coniston Coppermines Hostel he met the Warden, Alick Woods, which started a lifelong friendship with him and his family. Alick introduced Ron to rock climbing in the early postwar years. They used an old hemp rope, boots nailed with clinkers and tricounis and a karabiner which at that time was regarded as high-tech equipment.

A few like minded friends formed the Coppermines Kitchen Climbing Club and in addition to climbing helped to clean up the kitchen to compensate for time spent on the hills. The Club Badge consisted of crossed dish mops and a coil of rope.

On an occasion when climbing Dow Crag (Gordon and Craig's route?) with Alan Parker, they encountered ice on the upper rocks. The solution was to remove boots throw them down and continue the climb. In darkness they searched for the boots and only in the light from matches did they manage to find them and avoid an uncomfortable walk back to Coniston. Ron joined the F.R.C.C. in 1950 and served as Assistant Warden in Birkness from 1975 to 1980.

In addition to walking and climbing in the Lake District, Ron and his wife loved Scotland and were particularly fond of the far North West and the Islands where they enjoyed many happy holidays. He was a good ice skater and on one occasion when demonstrating his skills on Sty Head Tarn he ventured towards the middle, the ice suddenly broke and Ron went in

the water. Luck was on his side as his colleague had a rope and managed to pull him out – a near tragedy

Ron's mountaineering activities continued into later life when he was quite happy to be led up climbs by his son Bevis who is a competent mountaineer.

I met Ron when he came to work for British Steel at Workington as a Fuel Technologist following his previous job as an Industrial Chemist at ICI. Hill chat then became a regular thing between us and although I never climbed with him we shared our activities with regular slide shows.

Ron was a talented artist and his paintings have been exhibited on many occasions. His favourite subjects were of mountains and steam locomotives which were another of his interests.

After deteriorating health Ron died on 30 December 2003, his popularity being demonstrated by the large number of friends who attended his funeral service. He was a person I am pleased to have known. I will not forget his welcoming nature and infectious smile.

Our sympathies go to his loving wife Nora and to his son Bevis.

Eric Ivison

LEGACIES

Ruth Gelber	£25,478
Ruth Ironfield	£1000
J. Robinson	£1000

OFFICERS OF THE CLUB 2002 - 2003

President	Gearge Watkins	
Vice-Presidents	Geoff Cram	
	John Robinson	
	Val Young	
	John Burrows	
Secretary	John Barrett	
Treasurer	Pam Pulford	
Membership Secretary	Doug Elliott	
Joint Journal Editors	John Holden	
	Ron Kenyon	
Guidebooks Secretary	Stephen Reid	
Guidebooks Editor	Peter Osborne	
Librarian	Harry Robinson	
Assistant Librarian	Iain Whitmey	
Archivist	Jill Aldersley	
Oral Archivist	Reg Atkins	
Dinner Secretary	Adrian Wiszniewski	
Meets Secretary	Nick Easton	
Chronicler	Ken Jackson	
Huts Secretary		
Hut Wardens:		
	<i>Beetham</i>	Richard Collier
	<i>Birkness</i>	Tony Simpkins
	<i>Brackenclouse</i>	Mark Scott
	<i>Karn House</i>	Meg Giffiths
	<i>Raw Head</i>	John Leigh
	<i>Salving House</i>	Roy Buffey
	<i>Waters Cottage</i>	Barry Chislett
Elective Members:		
Mike Carter	Helen Killick	Iain Smith
Pippa Cocker	Maureen Linton	Mark Vallance
Robin Costello	John Moore	Stan Vickers
Dave Killick	Bill Smith	Iain Whitmey

MEETS LIST 2003

	Hogmanay	Karn House	Richard Mann & Megan Griffiths
	3/4 Jan	Beetham Cottage	Dave Killick
	10/11 Jan	Raw Head (Alpine Planning)	Nick Hewitt
P	14/15 Feb	Waters Cottage (Prospective Members)	Inken Blunk
	21/22 Feb	Karn House	Peter Burrows
C	21/22 Feb	Raw Head -Committee	Les Holbert
	23/27 Feb	C.I.C Hut	Duncan Davey
	7/8 Mar	Beetham Cottage	Simon Jefferies
	7/8 Mar	Karn House	Liz Kirk
	14/15 Mar	Salving House	John Finlay
	21/22 Mar	Raw Head	Dave Hughes
F	28/29 Mar	Raw Head (Family Meet)	Marc & Wendy Stirrup
	28/29 Mar	Waters Cottage	Martin Cooper
M	4/5 Apr	Beetham Cottage Maintenance	Richard Collier
W	7/11 Apr	High Moss (Duddon Valley)	David Bateman
P	11/12 Apr	Birkness (Prospective Members)	Ken Fyles
	11/ 25Apr	France (Camping) Easter	Andy Carlin
	18/20 Apr	Brackenclose (Easter)	Richard Morgan
	18/20 Apr	Salving House	Arthur & Malcombe Grout
M	25/26 Apr	Karn House Maintenance	Meg Griffiths
	2/4 May	Raw Head (Joint C.C)	Dave Fletcher
C	9/10 May	Birkness Committee Meeting	Stan Vickers
	10/17May	Spean Bridge Scottish Hotel Meet	Dave Penlington
	16/17 May	Karn House	Barry Chislett
	24/25 May	Salving House (50 th Anniversary)	Roy Buffey
	24/31May	Scottish Camping (Cannick)	Bill & Margery Smith
F	24/28 May	Waters Cottage (Family Meet)	Di Hampton
F	29/31May	Karn House (Family Meet)	Hilary Lawrenson
M	6/7 Jun	Birkness Maintenance	Tony Simpkins
D	6/7 Jun	Losehill Hall Derbys. (London Sect.)	Hilda Brown & Anne Hartley
W	8/12 Jun	Glan Dena	Bill & Lesley Comstive
	8/12 Jun	Knoydart (White House)	Contact Meets Secretary
F	13/14 Jun	Birkness (Family Meet)	Beatrice Haigh
	14/20 Jun	Glen Brittle, Skye	Graham Townsend & Jenny Massie
	20/21 Jun	Welsh 3000's MAM Invitation	Dave Pearce
P	20/21 Jun	Raw Head (Prospective Members)	Phillip Powell

	27/28 Jun	Brackenclose	Mary Twomey
D	4/5 Jul	The Yewdale Hotel, Coniston	The Vice Presidents
	11/12 Jul	(BMC Youth Meet)	Ron Kenyon
	11/12 Jul	Glan Dena(Joint MAM)	Dave Pearce
	25/26 Jul	Waters Cottage	Faith Carlin
	Jul / Aug	Alpine Meet	See Chronicle or Website
F	8/14 Aug	Brackenclose (Family Meet)	P. Littlechild & Judy Adam
	15/16 Aug	Salving House	Maggie Hopkirk
	22/ 25 Aug	Welsh Marches (Camping)	Paul Selley
	22/ 25 Aug	<i>Ynys Ettws (Joint C.C.)</i>	<i>Vic Odell</i>
C	5/6 Sep	Birkness Committee Meeting	Iain Gallagher
	5/6 Sep	Salving House (Joint Rucksack Club)	Inken Blunk
M	12/13 Sep	Raw Head Maintenance	John Leigh
	12/13 Sep	Waters Cottage	Barbera McHardy
D	19/20 Sep	Raw Head (London Section)	John Finlay
M	26/27 Sep	Waters Cottage Maintenance	Steve Field
	26/27 Sep	Beetham Cottage (Joint K.C.)	John Barrett
M	3/4 Oct	Brackenclose Maintenance	Mark Scott
M	10/11 Oct	Salving House Maintenance	Roy Buffey
P	17/18 Oct	Birkness (Prospective Members)	Pam Pulford
F	17/23 Oct	Rawhead (Family Meet)	Maurice Birkill
D	1 Nov	Shap Wells (A.G.M.)	The President
	7/8 Nov	Brackenclose	Amanda Reddy & Tony Halliwell
C	28/29 Nov	Raw Head Committee Meeting	Andy Carlin
	5/6 Dec	Birkness	Brenda Fullard
	12/13 Dec	Beetham Cottage	Chris & Michael Basten
	Hogmanay	Waters or Kam House	See Next years List

C = Committee Meeting,

D = Dinner

F = Family Meet,

M = Maintenance Meet,

W = Mid Week Meet

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President	George Watkins	
Vice-Presidents	Goeff Cram John Robinson Dave Long	
Secretary	John Burrows	
Treasurer	John Barrett	
Membership Secretary	Pam Pulford	
Joint Journal Editors	Doug Elliott John Holden	
Guidebooks Editor	Stephen Reid	
Guidebooks Secretary	Ron Kenyon	
Librarian	Peter Osborne	
Assistant Librarian	Harry Robinson	
Archivist	Iain Whitmey	
Oral Archivist	Jill Aldersley	
Dinner Secretary	Reg Atkins	
Meets Secretary	Adrian Wiszniewski	
Chronicler	Nick Easton	
Huts Secretary	Ken Jackson	
Hut Wardens:		
<i>Beetham</i>	Richard Collier	
<i>Birkness</i>	Tony Simpkins	
<i>Brackenclose</i>	Mark Scott	
<i>Raw Head</i>	Sue Preston-Jones	
<i>Salving House</i>	Roy Buffey	
<i>Waters Cottage</i>	Steve Field	
<i>Karn House</i>	Meg Griffiths	
Elective Members:		
Barry Chislett	John Hitch	Bill Smith
Pippa Cocker	Helen Killick	Iain Smith
Robin Costello	Maureen Linton	Iain Whitmey
John Finlay	John Moore	Bernard Wright

MEETS LIST 2004

	2/3 Jan	Beetham Cottage	Tom Fox
	9/10 Jan	Raw Head (Alpine Planning)	Open Meet
P	13/14 Feb	Waters Cottage (Prospective Members)	Helen Killick and Phil Elliot
	20/21 Feb	Karn House	Graham Bull & Chrissie Lane
C	20/21 Feb	Raw Head -Committee Meeting	Pippa Cocker
	20/26 Feb	C.I.C Hut	Inken Blunk
	5/6 Mar	Beetham Cottage	Jenny Massie
	5/6 Mar	Karn House	Dave Carr
	12/13 Mar	Salving House	John and Barbera Hitch
	19/20 Mar	Raw Head	George Bintley
	26/27 Mar	Waters Cottage	Ron Chambers
M	2/3 Apr	Beetham Cottage Maintenance	Richard Collier
	2/ 16 Apr	France (Camping) Easter	John Robinson
	8/11 Apr	Brackenclose (Easter)	John Temple
	8/11 Apr	Bosigran (Joint CC)	Roger Salisbury
W	29Mar/1 Apr	High Moss (Duddon Valley)	Bill and Lesley Comstive
P	23/24 Apr	Birkness (Prospective Members)	John Robinson
M	23/24 Apr	Karn House Maintenance	Meg Griffiths
	30 Apr/3 May	Galloway	John Burrows
F	30Apr/2 May	Raw Head (Family Meet)	Maurice Birkill
C	7/8 May	Birkness Committee Meeting	John Hitch
	14/15 May	Karn House	Martin Cooper
	15/22 May	Spean Bridge Scottish Hotel Meet	Margaret & John Loy
	16/20 May	Knoydart (White House)	Contact Meets Secretary
	21/22 May	Salving House	Trevor and Heather Morgan
	28 May/4 Jun	Scottish Camping - Ballater	Richard Morgan
F	28/2 Jun	Waters Cottage (Family Meet)	Di Hampton & Tim Wood
F	2/5 Jun	Karn House (Family Meet)	Nigel & Joanne Duxbury
M	4/5 Jun	Birkness Maintenance	Tony Simpkins
D	Jun	Dorset (London Sec)	Paul Roberts
W	6/10 Jun	Glan Dena	Reg Atkins & Sheila Croft
F	11/12 Jun	Birkness (Family Meet)	Richard Barnes
	12/18 Jun	Glen Brittle, Skye	Peter Latimer
P	18/19 Jun	Raw Head (Prospective Members)	Pam Pulford
	25/26 Jun	Beetham CENTENERY PLANNING	Tim Pickles
D	2/3 Jul	The Yewdale Hotel, Coniston	The Vice Presidents
	9/10 Jul	BMC Youth Meet	Ron Kenyon
	9/10 Jul	Glan Dena (Joint MAM)	Dave Pierce
	23/24 Jul	Waters Cottage	Inken Blunk
	Jul / Aug	Alpine Meet	See Chronicle & Website
	30/31 Jul	High Moss (Joint Rucksack Club)	Peter Benson

	30/31 Jul	Brackenclose	Roger Briggs
F	6/12 August	Brackenclose (Family Meet)	M. Sunderland & J. Wilson
	13/14 Aug	Salving House	Nick & Veronica Millward
	27/ 30 Aug	Raw Head (Joint C.C.)	Vic Odell
C	3 / 4 Sep	Birkness Committee Meeting	Bernard Wright
M	10/11 Sep	Raw Head Maintenance	Sue Preston-Jones
	10/11 Sep	Waters Cottage	Patsy & Malcolm Barton
	17/18 Sep	Ty Powdwr (Joint K.C.)	K.C. Member
D	23/26 Sep	Beetham (London Section)	Liz & Tony Hutchinson
M	24/25 Sep	Waters Cottage Maintenance	Steve Field
M	1/ 2 Oct	Brackenclose Maintenance	Mark Scott
M	8/9 Oct	Salving House Maintenance	Roy Buffey
P	15/16 Oct	Birkness (Prospective Members)	Ken Fyles
F	15/16 Oct	Rawhead (Family Meet)	Beatrice Haigh
D	6 Nov	Shap Wells (A.G.M.)	President
	12/13 Nov	Brackenclose	Trevor and Heather Morgan
C	26/27 Nov	Raw Head Committee Meeting	Dave Dowson
	3 / 4 Dec	Birkness	Cath & Brian Marsden
	10/11 Dec	Beetham Cottage	Anne Collier

C = Committee Meeting.

D = Dinner.

F = Family Meet.

M = Maintenance Meet.

W = Mid Week Meet