John Moore, President 2010-2012

THE

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Editors' Note

Two years have passed, and here again is a record of what some of our members have been up to over the intervening period. We have tried to reflect the truth that the club is a broad church, encompassing both fell walking on the one hand, and hard rock and ice climbing on the other, as well sub groups such as fell runners and, for the first time, kayakers. Also we have tried to balance articles which look back to our history with accounts of current activities.

The winter of 2011-12 has been disappointing in comparison to the previous two, however the winter of 2010 to 2011 has extended its icy reach into the Journal and has contributed some wild looking routes. Also there have been an amazing number of new rock routes uncovered, not only in the upper grades, but also some quality routes which are within the reach of mere mortals. Our thanks in particular to those who contributed the excellent photographs of these activities.

Exploits abroad (if we include Scotland here!) cover earth (New Zealand), water (Scottish sea kayaking), ice (Greenland) and fire (Ecuador). The fire of the imagination is also catered for with words from the Lake District's best known poet and an article about the poet who has claim to be considered the Lakes' best poet of the twentieth century. We (well at least one of us!) would encourage the submission of poetry by our own members.

The 2012 Journal contains a series of articles on the Bob Graham Round, prompted both by it being the 80th anniversary, in 2012, of the first round, and also by the death of Fred Rogerson, who for many years was an inspiration and support for many who attempted the round. Alternatively the articles included here may cause automatic rubbing and flexing of joints, and confirm to those who have decided that their time has gone by that the decision not to attempt the round was a wise one.

As usual we offer our thanks to all those who have contributed, and our extend our invitation to contribute to the next one. We hope you find it a good read.

Martin Cooper *Andrew Paul*

Wasdale Rainbow, 9th May 2011 *(Andrew Paul)*

Mickledore Moon

Al Phizacklea

In the course of writing the book about Scafell, I had the dream of filling it with some unique photographs, shots of familiar routes taken from a new perspective; shots that demand attention. One photo I have admired for years, since it was published in the last Scafell guidebook, was Andy Rowell's frontispiece, a shot of the sun slanting across the great face of Scafell, with minuscule climbers giving it a scale of grandiose proportions, complete with the moon rising in the pale blue sky behind. I remember it was a shot of opportunity, taken on the way down after a long tiring day which consisted of one new route, one hard fall and an epic retrieval of gear at the crux. We had to remove the gear because it was on an unclimbed line, and we didn't want this fact to be highlighted to any interested rival teams by a nut and a krab hanging in the middle of nowhere. This cautious covering of our tracks obviously worked, because the line is still unclimbed twenty years later!

I love the stunning vertical aspect of Scafell crag as viewed from Mickledore. It is one of the most impressive features of an already impressive crag and one which is not apparent from the usual viewpoint from Hollowstones. Wouldn't it be good to get a photograph of the moon rising above Mickledore with this vertical wall of rock in the foreground? The obvious place to get this photograph is from the top of the Shamrock, but this presents one particular problem. If you take a picture of the moon with an ordinary camera, actually I mean one with the regular wide angle lens, it always looks disappointingly small and insignificant. That result wouldn't suffice – I wanted to see a big moon filling the gap of Mickledore; big, round and full. To get a 'big' moon on a photograph you have to zoom right into it with a large focal length lens - great for the moon, but you wouldn't see anything of the crag from the top of the Shamrock, because you are too close to it from there. You have to step back a way to get the correct perspective between the moon and the surrounding crags, and when I say 'a way', I mean by a few kilometres. Shamrock lies directly west of Scafell Crag, it's not something you notice or care to know unless you look at a large scale map. So

I needed to move west from Mickledore, and a study of the map extends this line above the top of Black Crag, and beyond Wastwater towards Middle Fell and Seatallan. A check of the trusty Wainwright confirmed that from the summit of Seatallan the crag of Scafell is indeed seen in vertical profile. This then is the sort of area I was looking for as a base to take my photograph.

However, things are never as simple as that, because you have to ensure that the moon is rising directly over Mickledore, and that became the nub of my problem. I had observed over the years that the sun rises at mid-summer from a north easterly direction, and sets in the north west. In mid-winter, the sun rises in the south east direction, and sets in the south west direction. Hence in mid-summer, the north facing Scafell Crag gets both the morning and evening sun on its face, and contrarily the reverse happens in winter, and the crag never gets any sun. The moon, however, rises and sets in the opposite phase to the sun. In winter, the moon rises in a north easterly direction and sets in the north west, so consequently it is higher and thus brighter in the sky in winter than it is in the summer. So there must be a middle ground somewhere when both the sun and moon rise in the east and set in the west. This is the equinox, when the daylight is equally divided into 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness, and this occurs each year on the 21st March and the 21st of September. So, by reasoning, to get a photograph of a full moon rising over Mickledore, I had to select the full moon nearest the equinox; and the next one was scheduled for the 19th March 2011. There is no alteration to this date; the moon completes one full orbit of the earth every 29.53 days, as it has done for millions of years. My plan was beginning to form. I didn't want to take a photograph exactly on the full moon, because as the moon rises, the sun sets; and I would loose the lighting on the crags, making it a dull picture. So it had to be the 18th March for the photograph, which suited me perfectly, as that fell on a Friday and if I planned my flexitime correctly I could leave work at noon.

I had months to wait, but I had marked this day in my diary to ensure that it wasn't forgotten and over the preceding days the weather forecast looked favourable. Rain and cloud would obscure everything, and hazy conditions would result in a poor, flat picture.

I would then have to wait until the September full moon before I could have another attempt at getting this photograph. I went out and observed the rising moon on the Thursday through a heavy bank of haze, and noted that the moon was rising just to the south of east, so this confirmed my prediction about the location from where to take the photograph. I estimated that the moon would rise 50 minutes later on the Friday, at about 5-30pm. A check of the map suggested that the top of Black Crag would be ideal, after all the further away I took the picture, the greater the chance that it would be ruined by haze. All I needed was some good weather.

I travelled up Wasdale in glorious sunshine on the Friday afternoon, and from the road just beyond Nether Beck Bridge, it is purely coincidental that the top of Black Crag is in a direct line of sight with the top of the Shamrock, but from that angle you can't see Scafell Crag or Mickledore because of the bulk of Shamrock, so I knew that this part of my plan wouldn't work. I needed more height to get to a vantage point where Scafell Crag could be seen above the Shamrock, so a glimpse at the map confirmed that my base would be Middle Fell for today. I had never been up Middle Fell, nor had I seen Greendale Tarn, so in the event of not getting a photograph the day wouldn't have been wasted, because I would have become acquainted with one more lovely corner of the Lakes. I had my two Jack Russell dogs Charlie and Meg with me, and arrived on the summit at about 4:30, so I settled down wrapped in a duvet to admire the view. It was perfect, there was little haze and there were only tiny scattered clusters of cloud above the higher fells, and Scafell looked magnificent as seen in profile, even though it was 6 kilometres away. To pass the time, I sent John Holden a text which read 'On Middle Fell – Scafell in superb profile, waiting for the moon'. There were no abbreviated words or txt shorthand; it was in full with the punctuation as indicated. We can't let our standards drop especially on top of the fells! John immediately rang me and we chatted, he had just finished work and was obviously rather envious of my situation. Only then did I notice a large cloud passing overhead, rather like the alien spaceship on the film 'Independence Day', which slowly drifted across the valley and seemingly parked itself on top of Scafell. This was disastrous! It was only half an hour before moonrise, and I could

no longer see Mickledore! I just had to hope it would disperse rapidly, but it stubbornly persisted in a band between Great End and Slight Side and my dogs grew bored of their owner cursing the skies. Every other top in the whole of the Lakes was still clear, bathed in the late reddening glow of a sun setting beyond the towers of Sellafield. (This was a week after the Japanese tsunami, so the thoughts of what we would loose in a similar situation if there was a nuclear incident in Cumbria helped to pass the time).

Half an hour passed, and there seemed to be some slight thinning and raising of that pesky cloud cap which at last revealed Mickledore, but there was no sign of the moon, I needed to know where it rose so I could quickly alter my position to get it right in the middle of the gap. Then I saw it, a faint white disc through the thinning cloud – the moon had already risen and it was to the left of Mickledore, so I picked up my bag and dashed off to the north, dropping down the hill to attempt to re-locate the moon above Mickledore. This might sound bizarre, but as the moon is a quarter of a million miles away, it effectively stays still so as I moved I could change my line of sight to get it to be right over Mickledore. Except that the moon isn't still, it moves across the sky by one of its own diameters every 4 minutes or so, so it became a mad dash down the hill towards Nether Beck in order to get the photograph. It was a plan that worked, because as the strength of the sun faded as it set, the cloud started to break up quickly and at last I could get my photograph. I was unable to get the shot with it directly in the gap, but at least I got one of Scafell in profile with the moon above and it was a big moon, because this was the closest the moon had been to earth since 1993, and I learned that this full moon nearest the spring equinox is called the Lenten Moon.

All that remained was to carefully make my way down to the Nether Beck path and take the long walk back to the car at Greendale, but at least I had a full moon to light up the road!

Letters to George Seatree

Rev James Jackson/Mr George Seatree

In this Journal we try and strike a balance between recognition of current achievements and celebration of past glories. The following article is a record of what was achieved in the days before motor transport, when, of necessity, a day out in the hills included getting to the hills in the first place, not just climbing them. They concern the Rev James Jackson, of Sandwith, Whitehaven, taken from his correpondence with Mr George Seatree, of Penrith, later reprinted in the Penrith Observer, in 1906. This article abridges the 1906 document. The letters cover the period 1874-1878, around which time Rev Jackson was 80 years old. Although the subjects of the correspondence are varied, there is a theme of exchanging details of long days in the hills, and in particular concerning ascents of Pillar; Rev Jackson viewed himself as 'patriarch' of an exclusive group of people who had ascended Pillar Rock, who he refers to as the Pillarites.

Mr. Seatree and Mr. Jackson began a correspondence which clearly gave each a great amount of pleasure. The first letter of which notice need be taken was dated September 25th, 1874, and included the following passages:

> To give you some idea of my powers of endurance, I will briefly say that Oct. 1st, 1864, I walked 46 miles in 14 hours; Oct. 4th, I walked 56 miles in 18 hours; and on Oct. 7th, 60 miles, my crowning exploit, in 19 hours 50 minutes. The last-mentioned was to Keswick and back, via Whitehaven and Cockermouth. As the season for rambling is nearly over, I may perhaps beguile some dull or rainy day by giving a brief account of my lengthened and varied and still robust existence ... It only remains for me to mount the Pillar Rock, and then I may sigh for something else to conquer.

In his next letter a fortnight later the veteran was planning a visit to the Rock during the same autumn, as he felt himself in 'excellent walking trim and think my limbs may be more supple now than in the spring of next year' He continued:

> Now a word as to Mickle Door (vulg. Mukle Duer), proper pronunciation Mickledore. I went three times to the connecting ridge before I found the right way from the Pikes to Scaw Fell. In fact I ascertained that

there were three ways of ascending or passing from the Pikes to Scaw Fell - one by a gully on the Eskdale side, which I once took; another by the Lord's Rake from the Wastdale side, and the usual pass which commences about 10 or 20 yards from the ridge on the Eskdale inclination. My rambles have all been solitary, and often my experience dearly bought. On a third visit to Mickle Door I found the passage as stated above. It commences with a cleft which just admits you sideways - then you gain at some height above a flat portion of rock and observe that someone has cut for you a toe step, and Nature provided you with a cleft for the insertion of the fingers of your right hand. This is the critical point. Your fingers might slip and the fall might be fatal. Will Ritson's remedy is 'a narrow tooth in the crack'. I did without one, and fortunately succeeded.

A little later Mr. Jackson acknowledged a compliment from Mr. Seatree, for whose descriptive powers, nerve, daring in mounting the rugged rocks, and tenacity of purpose he had 'nothing but good words'. In the Penrithian he confessed he had a formidable rival in pedestrian endurance. He then goes on to describe the steps he took towards securing a walk with Henry Lancaster, 'one of the Stylites', from the Anglers' Arms at Ennerdale, on an October morning when the lake was raging like a little sea, and the hills were invisible in the mist, and so the trip had to be abandoned. Mr. Jackson later requested:

If under your guidance I should succeed in reaching the top of the Rock you will have an opportunity of crowning me with parsley fern or heather as 'The Pedestrian Patriarch of the Pillarites', for in April, 1875, I shall have entered my eightieth year.

Next year the programme began early, and in April the Patriarch asked Mr. Seatree for some information as to the route the Penrith party followed. On the 20th the old gentleman, being disappointed in getting company, drove to Ennerdale - a journey of 2¼ hours - sailed up the lake, and by noon with his driver was at the altitude of the Rock. 'Either thro' misdirection or misunderstanding' they parted company for two hours, and found many rocky obstacles in their path before they got to the base of the Pillar, near to a niche mentioned by Mr. Seatree:

We found our way across it and climbed for some distance without difficulty until we came to a sloping bank of heather. Here I was inclined to try the cleft on the left hand, but my companion wishing to look round

the rock on the right we drove some spike nails into the rock, and he had an opportunity of satisfying himself that the route was far from inviting in that direction. We were, however, both so thoroughly exhausted by our previous efforts that I determined to be content with our partial success, and come again some other day to complete our work, for we were satisfied that we were on the right track, and had no doubt as to our ability. We had two coils of rope, each 17 or 18 yards long, and several iron spikes. We left four spikes in the rock, but not the ropes. On returning we ascended to the summit of the mountain, thence to the Windyeat, and by Gillerthwaite to the Boat House. We got home safe but both very weary; yet next morning I was neither stiff, sick, nor sorry, and my companion has since told me that he did not begrudge the journey. . . . Before summer is far advanced I hope to tell you that the Patriarch of the Pillarites has been on the Rock and vindicated his claim to the title. I wrote to William Ritson to ask if any of the dalesmen had yet ascended by the east side, and his reply is in the negative.

The Patriarch had not long to wait until he attained his ambition, for he wrote the following on June 1st, 1875:

Yesterday was the last day in May, and a proud day it was for me, for I succeeded in gaining the summit of the Pillar Rock, and of returning unscathed to my home, and am now writing in a very comfortable condition of mind and body. I will not here give you any particulars on the subject, as I shall send an account for publication in the Whitehaven News of the 10th of the month. I content myself for the present with sending you the enclosed card written in Greek at home this day without spectacles, a copy of the one left on the Rock. The translation is not a part of the card left, and was written with 'specs' on nose. As you may think the card worth preserving as a souvenir of a very verdant old gentleman, I have given it a covering of liquid glue, i.e., shellac in solution. Our route was without doubt the very route by which you and your friend ascended. We noticed the letters 'G.S.' and the initials of what we supposed were those of your companion, cut on the summit of the Rock. I am sorry to say the bottle is in very bad condition, and should be replaced by a new one on the first opportunity and an oaken receptacle provided for it. The things left by me on the Rock will be minutely described in the newspaper. The following is the translation of the parchment to be found inside the bottle: 'Jacobus Stylites with John Hodgson ascended the Pillar of Rock on the last day of the fifth month in the year of our Lord 1875. Written on the summit without spectacles, and the card rolled up and put in the bottle'.

Through another correspondent, a Mr Maitland, Rev Jackson came in possession of an earlier descripption of Pillar Rock, by a Mr Dymond, which one suspects whetted his appetite for exploration. In his communication Mr. Dymond said:

> The Pillar Rock is severed into two distinct portions by a chasm 6 feet wide with inaccessible walls. The smaller [in bulk] and less lofty of these two portions stands between the main rock and upward slope of the mountain. The larger portion is partially severed by a cleft floored with a steep slope of grass. To ascend you pass the chasm just mentioned, and cross a small sloping slab of slate by means of a shallow horizontal crack in its surface. This is the most dangerous feat in the ascent, as the slab terminates at its foot in a precipice. You then immediately begin to escalade the rock, making use of some of the horizontal shelves to get round its right hand face, which you must do without ascending too high. Arrived in view of the cleft, wriggle round (a business which seemed to me the worst feature in the whole climb) as well as you may, off the rock on to the green floor on the cleft, which like the slab before mentioned, also runs down to a precipice. You climb this slope up into the narrow throat of the cleft, where your way is barred by a fallen rock jammed in. A bit of tugging will, however, raise you over this, and then you easily run up to the top. This rock has one peculiarity. Its descent is at least as easy as its ascent.
>
> N.B. A guide desirable. Will Ritson never did it. Two Alpines spent two hours in vain attempts to find the way up. One in four pedestrians might do it, but no object is gained by doing it, except the reputation of having accomplished it. Twenty people have done it. Five views ascending the Screes thro' Hawl Ghyll. The Lord's Rakes on Scafell. width 5 to 20, floored with screes swarming with garnets. The ascent cannot be steeper than the 'angle of repose' of such loose materials, namely, about 45 degrees. C. W. DYMOND, 1866.

Perhaps with the above description in mind, on April 3rd 1876 Rev Jackson wrote as follows to Mr. Seatree:

> On the 12th of this month I shall have completed my lengthened span of eighty years. Now, as I feel 'pretty bobbish', I contemplate spending a considerable part of my birthday on and about the Pillar Rock. My plan is this. On the llth I shall train it to Seascale, thence walk via Gosforth to Wastdale Head, and lodge for the night at Ritson's. On the 12th I shall be up betimes and quietly wend my way to the Rock, either with or without a dalesman, for a ladder rope which I shall take with me makes me feel very independent in the matter. If the exigencies of business will

permit it, I shall be glad of your company; if not on this occasion another opportunity will be afforded to you of meeting me, when I have arranged with a photographer to take the Rock both from the east and west, and also from the south. The last point being very near to the object, the Patriarch will appear staff in hand on the summit, where perhaps you might desire to appear as one of his supporters; and though London is a long way off, Mr. Maitland might appear as the other. I am in Whitehaven today, and shall see Mr. Brunton, the artist, on the subject. The ascent of the Pillar Rock in April, even by an octogenarian, seems to me a very tame affair compared with the ascent of Mont Blanc in January of this year by a lady. I think we should both of us bow very low in the presence of such an heroine. Don't you think so?

That is the last letter from the Patriarch which Mr. Seatree has preserved. It would seem that circumstances caused Mr. Jackson to postpone his ascent for three weeks, but on May 6th he wrote from his house, at Summer Hill, Sandwith, to the 'Whitehaven News', the following account of his exploit:

I trust you readers will hold me guiltless of any undue assumption when I say that they may wait many a day before they see it again recorded that another full-blown octogenarian, on the 4th day of May, or any other day, all alone in his glory, between eight and nine a.m., has stood upon the Pillar Rock, having ascended and descended, without mortal eye or aid being near, and was able to say in his house on the next morning that he was neither sick, sore, nor sorry. Before I give a few particulars of this feat, I will first state that on the 18th I walked to St. Bees, trained to Seascale, then walked via Gosforth to Wastdale Head, and the next morning, full of hope and vigour, began the ascent by the Black Sail Pass. But here the mist closed in upon me, and I was literally mistified. I have coined the word as more applicable to my condition than the word mystified found in the dictionaries. Then there was rain, then large flakes of snow, and as I trod the summit of the Pillar Mountain I had to knock the snow-pattens from my feet. I succeeded at last in gaining a glimpse of the Rock, but as my hands were smarting with cold (though I am a bold man, I am not wanting in discretion), I at once perceived that under such adverse circumstances it would be worse than folly to attempt to overcome the gigantic difficulty I came single-handed to encounter. I therefore decided on making a descent by the Wind Gap, the Black Crag, and the Steeple; then, turning to the left, to pass by Scoat Tarn, down Bowderdale, and so gain the road by the lake.

But when I emerged from the mist I was at the head of Mosedale, and not of Bowderdale. The last-named has not an inviting surface, but it has nothing so bad as the Screes of Mosedale. These have left a disagreeable impression on my memory, for the muscular exertion required to retard my descent left a soreness which made me uncomfortable for several days. However, I reached Ritson's at 1:15 p.m., then tramped the thirteen miles to Seascale, which I reached in time for the 6:24 train to St. Bees, with the reflection that if my foresight had been as good as my aftersight I should have waited for the month of May.

This month came with a rising barometer, and full of promise. So I trusted the favourable indications, and the 3rd and 4th days of the month required for my work fully atoned for the mist and the snowstorm which in April had left my labour without the desired result. From St. Bees I went by rail to Seascale, thence on foot to Wastdale Head, reaching Ritson's at 5 p.m. Early to bed, early I rose; and after a cold breakfast I unlocked the door, and was on my way to the Pillar Mountain at 4:20 a.m. The summit was reached at 7:30 a.m.

The descent of 400 feet to the Rock was effected before eight, when I stood in the presence of this awe-striking and picturesque freak of Nature. After duly surveying the route I had to pursue, I was soon at the rock with the transverse nick which has to be traversed; then I scrambled to the sloping rock, which is about six yards in extent, and may be called the pons asinorum of the climb. Into this rock I drove a spike, on which, by the means of my staff. I raised the loop of a rope ladder with four rungs, hanging it on the spike; as an additional security a hand-rope was also attached to the same point; and with these appliances I gained, without slip or injury, the narrow heath-covered ledge. About six yards is the horizontal extent of this ledge, when you have again to mount upwards for 20 yards. Here I left my staff with its point in the ledge below, and its top just visible to indicate the precise place to which I should go in my downward course. With ungloved hands I grasped the rugged rock, and in five or six minutes I stood proudly on the summit, and a second time asserted my claim to be the Patriarch of the Pillarites. Whilst on the rock I ascertained, by means of a string to which a small plummet was attached, that the depth of the chasm which separates the rock from the mountain was 16 1/2 yards.

My next task was to leave some proof that the old juvenile had been there. I saw no bottle, and had prepared no card had there been one. So I took a small pocket knife, and with it made four successive scores on the western side of the higher staff; and then, descending to the lower one, performed the same operation on its eastern side. To the untutored crags-

man these whittlings might have no meaning, but be regarded as the work of some mischievous boy; whilst, if some intelligent person, let us say the Senior Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman of his year (he has often been upon the Rock), had seen the marks, he at once would say,'These marks have a meaning - they are repeated on both staffs to draw attention - they are four in number; and viewed through the hieroglyphical lens the four scores may mean 80 years, which is the age of the Senior Scrambler, alias the Patriarch of the Pillarites, and this is the record he has left'. If he so spoke, the wandering CEdipus would have been right in his divination. I will now briefly state that the descent was made in safety, and that, too, without the aid of the rope ladder; for I discovered a practicable path parallel to the ladder, and only a yard or two from it. I observed this in my ascent, and even hesitated whether I should avail myself of the appliance I had with me. I was again on the top of the mountain at 10:15 a.m., and at Ritson's by 12-10. After a slight refreshment I was driven in a trap to the Strands, then walked to Drigg, reached St. Bees by rail, and was at Summer Hill by 7:30 p.m.

And now comes the last sad story of how the Rev. James Jackson paid for his temerity with his life. All that is known is contained in a newspaper report of the inquest, dated Thursday, May 9th, 1878.

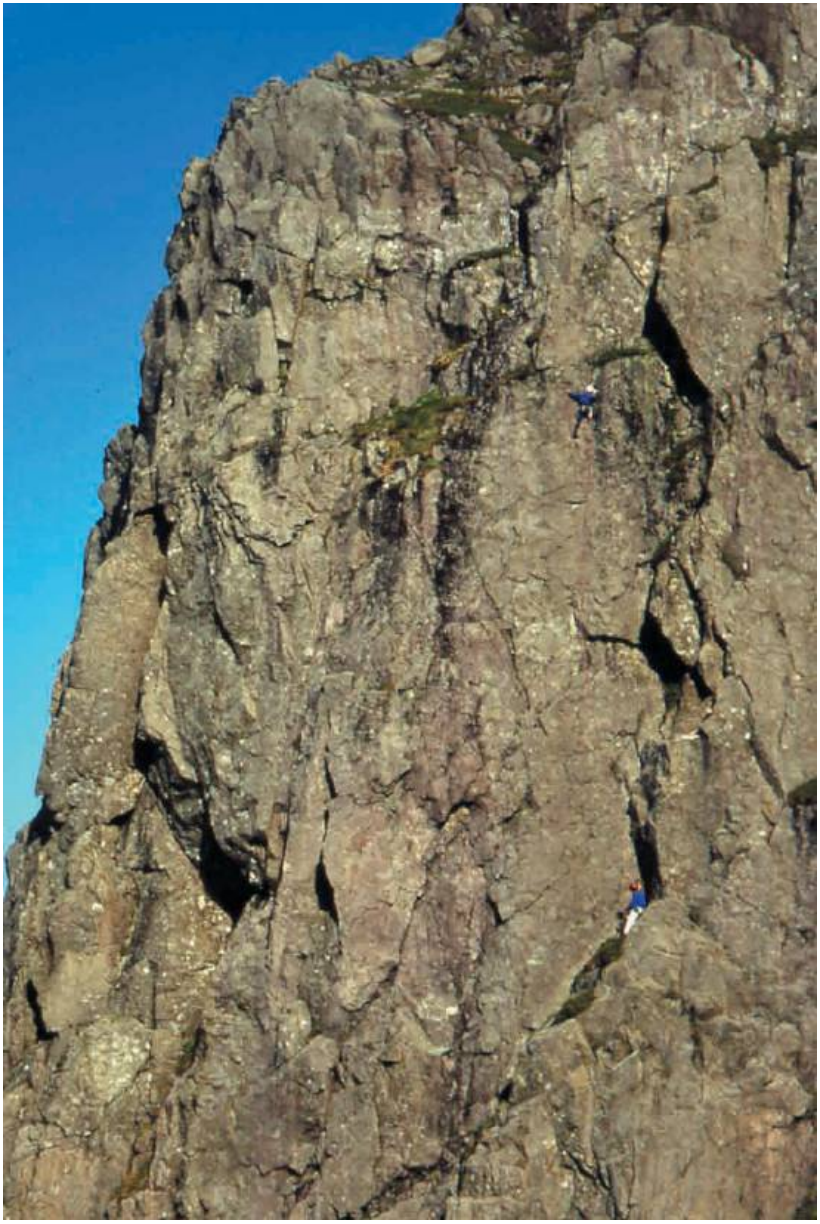
The inquiry was held on Saturday, May 4th, at the Wastwater Hotel before Mr. J. McKelvie, the district coroner, the Rev. George Pigot, vicar of Wastdale, being the foreman. It was a pathetic coincidence that G.S. 'Auld Will' Ritson should have been the principal witness. Mr. Jackson went to his house - Wastdale Head Hotel - on Tuesday evening, April 30th, and was then in his usual health and spirits. The veteran left about five o'clock on the Wednesday, telling Mr. Ritson he was going on the Pillar Rock if it was not misty. If it was misty he would go back and stop another night. He had two poles, and a bag containing ropes, of which he intended to make a ladder. As Mr. Jackson did not return that night, Auld Will sent a party to search for him next day. They did not succeed that day, and so returned to the vicinity of the Rock on the Friday. The Tuesday was rather misty sometimes.

Another witness, John Jenkinson, labourer, Burnthwaite, who did not know Mr. Jackson, was one of those sent out by Ritson, told the jury how the searchers found the dead body about mid-day at a place called Great Doup, about 400 yards from the Pillar Rock. The dalesmen found he had apparently fallen down a very steep place, 200 or

300 yards high. When further interrogated Jenkinson said he could not tell how the old gentleman fell from the height. Isaac Fletcher, labourer, of Wastdale Head, who was also sent out with Jenkinson. gave some additional information, showing that they found one of deceased's sticks about 100 yards above where they found the body, and the other stick about 40 yards above that. Of course the only thing the jury could do was to find that death was the result of an accident.

A couple of years after his death two veteran lovers of the Lake Mountains, Mr. F. H. Bowring and the late Mr. J. Maitland - contemporaries of the Patriarch - built a cairn and placed an iron cross on the spot where the old gentleman was found, but the winter storms which rage round Pillar Fell and sweep down the savage corries of Great Doup carried both away. On August 16th, 1906, a more lasting memorial was completed. Mr. C. A. O. Baumgartner, another veteran lover of the Fells - the oldest living Pillarite, having ascended the Rock so far back as 1850 in conjunction with Mr. J. W. Robinson and Mr. Seatree, had the initials 'J. J.' and the date '1878' chiselled on to the nearest suitable rock to where the body was found, by Mr. Benson Walker, marble mason, Cockermouth. Taking advantage of the day set apart by Mr. Robinson, one of Cumberland's foremost cragsmen, for his hundredth ascent of the Pillar Rock, an opportunity was found to have the work done. Mr. Walker found the rock to be very hard, but in a few hours an effective memorial of the old clergyman was inscribed which nothing short of an earthquake should destroy.

And so we leave the Patriarch of the Pillarites in his last sleep, with a grateful thought for all he did in the interests of British rock climbing, but deeply regretting that his enthusiasm should thus so tragically have robbed Cumberland of its Grand Old Man of the Mountains.



Chris King and Stephen Reid on the first ascent of Mirror, Mirror... (E2), Pillar Rock. The leader's last runner is just above the little roof half way between the climbers. *(Jonathan Preston)*

Gaps in the Curtain - A Pillar Odyssey

Stephen Reid

Pillar Rock, that most underestimated of the greater Lakeland crags, stands high on the flank of Ennerdale and when approached from the north, from the valley bottom, presents a formidable aspect, towering over its high-rimmed cove some way above the forest line. It was the target of the earliest rock climbing pioneers who viewed it with a reverence bordering on religion, yet nowadays lies all but neglected, the few who trouble to make the long walk from Wasdale along the High Level Route, struggle over Scarth Gap from Gatesgarth, or cycle via forestry tracks from Bowness Knott, being mainly there for the classics; North Climb, New West, Rib and Slab, and occasionally North-West, Grooved Wall, South-West or Thanatos/Electron.

But Pillar stands majestic high over Ennerdale just as it always has and still stirs the blood of some of us in the same way it did over a century ago. For those cast under its spell it is a magical, awe-inspiring place and the more one gets to know it the more it becomes so.

Mirror, Mirror...

Chris set off up the blank-looking wall traversed by Appian Way as I settled into the grass ledge in the corner to pay out rope and watch the master in action. It was my line, I had spotted it, abbed down it to check out the holds and gear (or rather, lack of), given the crucial holds a quick brush though it was all pretty clean, climbed it as far as the crux roof and funked it – an all too familiar pattern. I'm afraid to say that it was often like this climbing with Mr King. Now as he moved steadily up the unprotected lower wall on little crimps and layaways, I reflected on this unequal climbing partnership that had been such a good one, certainly as far as I was concerned, for so long.

Chris and I had joined forces years before when I was researching the climbing in the Galloway Hills for the SMC's Lowland Outcrops guide. He turned out to be the perfect guidebook writer's climbing partner, happy to go anywhere and do anything he was pointed at, secretly I suspect rather glad to have the decision of which crag to

visit made for him, and capable of leading anything, at least up to E4 (which coincidentally was the hardest grade recorded in the Galloway Hills), whereas I faltered well before that. The downside was it was easy to slip into a mode where any pitch with a move that felt too hard automatically became Chris's lead – such as now.

After Lowland Outcrops had been published, I'd taken on Pillar Rock and Ennerdale for the FRCC's Gable & Pillar guide and Chris and I, armed with the secret weapon of a permit to drive up the forestry track, had thoroughly explored the crag, starting with the Shamrock and working our way westwards. In the course of this we'd discovered a few new lines and this blank wall was one of the most exciting, a pleasant looking E1 or possibly even HVS if it hadn't been for the lack of runners on the upper section which boasted, above the 5b crux, an almost 20 metre unprotected runout at a constant 4c/5a.

Chris was below it now, on the slim ledge of the Appian Way traverse, fixing what gear he could, a thin sling here, a small RP there, a poor cam high in a short groove on the left. Then he was back on the ledge and eyeing up the crux bulge. It wasn't too bad technically but the only runner, apart from those at his feet, none of which were very confidence boosting, was a wire slotted in behind a hollow hold on the lip of the bulge. Chris moved up to the bulge and inserted the wire, climbed back down and gave the rope a gentle tug - gentle as in not hard enough to pull the hold off. Then he was up again and stretching up to my high point, and all of a sudden, where I had dithered too long worrying about the poor wire behind the hollow hold, he was beyond it, moving steadily up the wall, first right, then left, until he finally reached easier climbing before the final headwall. 'There's a spike up there somewhere I called', concerned at the unfettered sweeping arc the ropes described beneath his feet, but he couldn't find it and moved up to a crack and a cam before pulling up and over to the belay: stunning!

I started up to follow him just as Jonathan and Karen, who had shared a lift up the forest track with us, appeared fresh from a successful ascent of Thanatos/Electron and added themselves to the team. Bolstered by a rope from above, I relaxed and enjoyed the cunning succession of incut holds that formed a natural path up the

wall. Never desperate, always in balance, but continuously interesting climbing, and without runners a very bold climb – a superb one though, in fact one of the best new routes we had done.

Savage Grooves

Carry forward three years and the guide had been published a year. All those days of joyful labour are now lines on the most superb photodiagrams courtesy of the painstaking Phil Rigby, who coincidently also wrote the Gable part of Gable & Pillar. All those years of checking Ennerdale and I really thought that I wouldn't be sorry if I never climbed on Pillar again, but then looking at those photodiagrams, you begin to notice the gaps... One was very obvious, a large wall seamed with cracks and grooves in between North-East Climb and Savage Gully. The upper pitches of Sheol encroached on the left side of this area but I had checked them a few years earlier for the guidebook and they didn't tackle the very obvious chimney/crackline that ran straight as a die up the crag. The only unknown was the Variation Start to Savage Gully first climbed by those outstanding Pillar pioneers, Young, Eilbeck and Lounds in 1968 and possibly not repeated since. It was one of the few pitches I hadn't managed to check for the guide and I wasn't at all sure which of the many cracks on the wall it took – but there was only one way to find out.

Now I've always been able to justify the fact that Chris King can climb rather better than me down to the fact that he is a little shorter, a lot slimmer and looks as though he only weighs about 8 stone wet through, but with Chris Dale* I can have no such recourse. Not only is this British Mountain Guide 6'6", he is so broad that he almost has to walk through doorways sideways or he won't fit. He also weighs many stones more than I do but makes up for this by being as strong as an ox. Needless to say he can also outclimb me any day, and has indeed, since he first bunked off school aged 16 and hitched up north to solo the Old Man of Stoer (up and down) with nothing more than his packed lunch to sustain him for four days, outclimbed just about everyone.

My forestry permit had long expired, so it was bicycles from Bowness for us and I soon lost sight of Chris. I caught up with him at the start of the walk-in as we shouldered our sacks and then lost

sight of him again until we reached Green Ledge at the foot of the North Face. Here we fortified ourselves with tea and sandwiches before scrambling up the first pitch and half of North Climb and taking stock. Looking up we still weren't sure where The Variation Start to Savage Gully went except that it didn't take the very obvious line above us. Chris had already tied on to one end of the ropes and I quickly tied onto the other to make sure I didn't lose sight of him again. No chance of that though as he stopped at a natural stance after 15 metres and took a belay. I followed up an interesting enough groove, the interesting bit being that everything was covered in a thick layer of black lichen, but as the Lakes had been bone dry for over a month all one had to do was rub it briskly to reveal the sound rock beneath. A second pitch of similar length took a little longer, but that may have been because I was leading, and finished at another good belay beneath an imposing V-corner. Chris set off on this, rubbing off lichen and bridging alternately and, incidentally, passing an in situ disintegrating old nut which looked like it might long ago have marked someone's high point. At the top of the groove we found ourselves in the huge slabby amphitheatre of Savage Gully, an historical place if ever there was one. Tweed clad ghosts replete with hemp rope, hats, haversacks and nailed boots seemed only invisible due to the flimsiest gauze of time.

Above was the wide shallow chimney of Savage Gully's finish. To its right was the short cracked wall that early parties used to lower down, 'stooping to conquer', in Haskett Smith's words, when finishing North Climb prior to the ascents of the Hand Traverse and the Nose, and to our left was the arête which the lowered climber would tentatively traverse around to find an easy chimney leading back right to a stance above the Nose and the end of the difficulties. In between them was a narrow chimney which I was sure had not been climbed. As I started up it this conviction grew, mainly due to the presence of several large loose precariously balanced blocks which were cautiously toppled to join the scree below. At the top of the chimney was a bulge and a lot of very atmospheric space. In fact it was just a little scary, especially as my last runner was almost at knee level, and I felt an attack of the dithers coming on. Desperate scrabbling in the grass above ensued and eventually revealed a runner

placement and, courage miraculously regained, I did a sort of side saddle shuffle over the bulge and sauntered nonchalantly (well it gets quite easy then) to the top. Chris followed, making suitably gracious remarks about how hard he had found it – but I knew he was fibbing.

Steve Prior bridging up the corner of the first pitch of Savage Gully en route to the first ascent of Savage Gully Direct (VI), Pillar Rock. *(Stephen Reid).*

Savage Gully Direct

Long before that day, whilst I still had the forestry track permit, I had made several winter forays to Pillar, mainly in an attempt to climb the West Waterfall – which we did finally do on about the fourth go. Another attraction was the possibility of a winter ascent of Savage Gully, which I had climbed in summer and which I was vaguely aware had previously been done in winter by Brian Davison and Nick Kekus. As a summer route it is interesting for the contro-

versy it provoked in June 1901 when PA Thomson tried to claim the first ascent despite having had a top rope on the last two pitches. Honour was restored when the Bartons and LF Meryon climbed the thing properly in August of the same year, an impressive lead for the time. However, the amount of turf and grass on it means it is unlikely to appeal to the modern crag-rat though it also meant it should make a superb winter route given snow and a good enough freeze.

Such were the conditions when Eden Valley Mountaineering Club star Steve Prior and I uncoiled our ropes at the foot of North Climb. Steve led up this to the foot of the Twisting Chimney where Savage Gully diverges leftwards in the form of a steep groove. Climbing this in winter was made considerably easier by the presence of a thin wiggly crack in its right wall which provided alternately pick hooks, wire slots and monopoint placements, enabling a steady wide bridging progression to be made until I gained a good turf ledge in a niche. It had felt reasonably hard and sustained but not too bad so I was secretly quite pleased when Steve (who's legs are a tad shorter than mine) fell off on the crux when attempting a particularly wide bridge, though he soon recovered himself and led through on the next pitch which gained the amphitheatre. Though this was slabbier, its few holds were far less positive, giving it a very committing and serious feel, and the only reason I didn't fall off was that Steve had the rope very tight as I negotiated the final tricky traverse left to gain the stance.

Above was a hanging wide square chimney, undercut considerably at its base but with a shattered detached pillar providing the key to overcoming the initial bulge. This is the line of the summer route and it was not until later that we discovered that the first winter ascensionists had avoided it by a long traverse left. I fixed a sling around the pillar and clambered awkwardly onto it. From here I could just reach into the base of the chimney which was more of a wide scoop. Poking away the snow revealed numerous small flat sloping holds but nothing at all positive to pull up on. Worse, there were no runners. I teetered a bit higher on the pillar and prodded a bit more – nothing. This went on for quite a while and, aware that dusk was fast encroaching and that I had now been in the same spot for so long that Mr Prior was in danger of becoming bored if not hypother-

mic, I stretched up precariously on the very tips of my front points and finally my axe pick slotted into a small crack, though only about an eight of an inch. The crack was formed by two little fragile-looking flakes of rock so it was with considerable apprehension that I pulled up another few inches and flailed at the snow with my other axe - Bingo! - a wide cam slot. Gratefully I pushed a suitably wide cam in at full stretch and hooked up more little flakes into the base of the chimney. It was all but over and I was soon belayed above the Nose, hanging from long ropes so I could see Steve as he came up. Alas the big stretch was a stretch too far and, with a startled yelp from both of us, the rope came tight, pulling me headfirst back down the chimney and sending Steve back to 'Go'. With the belay readjusted he made it on the second attempt.

Harlequin Chimneys

Fast forward five years and Colin Wells and I have formed a bit of a winter team, bought together by the fact that we both get days off midweek when major winter venues are often all but deserted, myself because my business is busier at weekends, and Colin because he works seven days a week all summer so that he can devote his entire winter to the important things in life – like ice climbing. A day out with Colin is never dull as he has opinions on anything, everything and everyone, and, being possessed of a prodigious memory, generally has the facts at his fingertips to back them up as well. Subjects range far and wide, from global warming, to who owns the Highlands and (more fascinating still) how they got it, to the best winter tyres to fit to an ex-Post Office van, and all points in between. He has consequently been a very entertaining companion on many winter outings.

Harlequin Chimneys is a line that I had never bothered checking for the Pillar guide. Far too vegetated to be attractive in summer, it looked to have excellent winter potential. It takes a straight up course bounding the left side of the main area of the Shamrock, crosses Shamrock Gully and continues for quite a way up the crag behind. Its most prominent feature is a deep cleft on what looked likely to be the second pitch.

We unpacked the bikes at Bowness Knott and fastened the latest aid to ageing climbers to their back wheels – mono-wheeled bike trailers. Into these were piled the rucksacks and gear and thus lightened the ride became almost pleasurable. An hour and a half later we sat at the bottom of the line scoffing lunch and marvelling at the scene above us. Pillar was plastered - a thick mantle of snow hid all but the most obvious features and it was quite hard initially to work out what was what. The cleft though was clear and, wiping the last crumbs from my face, I started up an initial section of rush covered turfy ledges all blanketed in deep powder. These proved trickier than they looked and led to a good belay at the foot of the cleft. However there was still plenty of rope left so I decided to continue, udging my way up and then back into the heart of the crag where there was a small ledge with twin overhanging corner cracks about a metre apart forming the back wall of the chimney. I arranged some runners and then tried to work out how I was going to get up the next bit. There was a little ledge about a foot up on the left wall, but after that the walls were completely smooth and too wide apart for back and footing. I decided to bridge it and reached as high up in the cracks as I could with my axes while teetering on the slim ledge with my left foot. The problem was to get my right foot into a small dimple that was somewhere level with my right shoulder. I pulled like billy-oh on the jammed axes and wriggled my crampon points up the right wall, then got my right axe out and tried to place it higher. There was an obvious small chock which I hooked. It promptly fell out and gave Colin a worrying moment as it bounced down the crag. I stretched even higher, left crampon points doing a passable ballerina impression and right foot scrabbling vainly as I tried for a higher hook. Almost... almost... just another inch... It was at that point that my crampon bale clipped into one of the quickdraws on my harness. I dangled helpless, arms draining rapidly whilst I tried to work out why my right foot was caught up by my waist and I couldn't move it. By this time my left axe was stretched so far up the crack that I couldn't unhook it without bracing myself with my right foot which I couldn't use. Eventually I solved the dilemma by hooking my right axe into the leash of my left axe and wriggling my left hand out of its glove – now I could lower myself into a sweating heap on the floor of the chimney and untan-

gle the total muddle that I had reduced myself to. That done, it was obviously Colin's go.

It was whilst belayed outside the chimney and watching Colin making little headway on the mauvais pas that I noticed that the little ledge on the left wall ran more or less horizontally to the outside edge of the chimney, a distance of some 15 or 20 feet. It was maybe 4 inches wide at the start but by the time it reached the outer edge this had dwindled to only quarter of an inch and although it started only a foot above the floor of the chimney, by the time it reached the outer edge it was some 15 feet above the belay ledge due to the base of the chimney sloping at about 45 degrees.

Stephen Reid on the crux of Harlequin Chimneys (V), Pillar Rock on the first ascent, where it is necessary to move from facing left to facing right before pulling steeply up the right-hand rib. *(Colin Wells).*

It seemed to me that it would be possible to back and foot outwards using this ledge for one's feet until one reached the outer edge whereupon a delicate bridging manoeuvre would be required to turn round and face the other way at a point where fortunately there were some small depressions for the feet in the otherwise smooth rock. The right-hand edge of the chimney lay back just above this point and was turfy so it seemed that it might be possible to pull over to the right wall and effect an exit. I suggested all this to Colin but unfortunately he graciously insisted that I as it was my idea I should have the honour of putting it into operation.

All went according to plan though there was a bit of an ooer moment on the lip when I realised that I was a long way from the last gear and probably a shorter way from the rocks below. However, having turned round, I was quite surprised when one of my axes disappeared several inches into the thin veneer of frozen turf on the rock above my head – hooray, a hidden crack. Cautiously I withdrew it and inserted a large ice-hook in its place which I then wellied in so hard that Colin couldn't retrieve it. Thus protected, a couple of steep moves gained easier ground and, not far above, a fine belay on a small Christmas tree.

The two pitches that followed were more traditional winter mixed, sustained with tricky moves and reasonable gear - interesting, entertaining and time-consuming climbing. One further short pitch landed us halfway up Shamrock Gully. By now, snow was falling heavily, and indeed had been for the last few hours, the wind swirling it around in the light of our head torches, for darkness had overtaken us. Ahead, cutting into the cliff on the far side of the gully, was a continuation chimney but as the day had gone on the turf had started to thaw and an initial foray up this was soon repulsed by a massive tottering soggy hanging garden which lurched out alarmingly when struck with an axe. With the wind getting up it didn't take much deciding to abseil off down Shamrock Gully, which we were interested to see showed little signs of being the grade I/II listed in the guidebook, having several vertical or overhanging rock steps in it. At the bottom the maelstrom raged ever more violently and this was a problem as we had left one of the rucksacks at the foot of the climb - worse, it was my rucksack. Of course I knew Pillar so well that I

shouldn't have had any trouble finding it which makes it rather hard to explain how we suddenly realised we had descended way past it, to the point in fact that the stream exits the cove. Several days later I followed the path in from Gatesgarth with the dogs and recovered it, a walk that I hadn't done for some twenty years and which seemed to have got both steeper and longer in the intervening period. It was not only the dogs that were dog tired when we had finally waded back through the Scarth Gap snow drifts and returned to the safe haven of the car.

A fortnight later, and winter had returned with a vengeance – it was freezing hard as we pedalled up the forest track. At the base of the climb Colin announced that the crux was a tall man's pitch and set off decisively up to the belay at the start of the cleft. Second time round and I didn't find it much easier, even though the ice-hook was now in situ, but the fact it wasn't snowing and that the turf was completely solid made for fast progress and there was still plenty of daylight left by the time we reached Shamrock Gully – time for a sandwich at least! Then I set off, tools thudding home reassuringly in the steep turfy gully ahead of us. Gradually this eased and I ran the rope out until under a huge and ominous chockstone. Fortunately a squeeze of a through route materialised and better still a runner. Contorted squirming gained the top of the chock and Colin took over for the final hard section. He stopped when the rope went tight and I carried on up another pitch of easy ground to the Shamrock Traverse path. A few more steps and we were sitting on a flat area of rock above Walker's Gully as so many have done, taking in the view of the South-East Face of High Man and Slab and Notch and the vast void beneath us that was snow-bound Ennerdale. A thin sun was filtering through the hazy sky and it was almost warm. It was time for tea and all was well with the world.

Auld Lang Syne

When I started climbing over thirty years ago, the young lads who had introduced me to Almscliff soon lost interest, if indeed they ever had much, and, though I will remain forever grateful to them for kindling a life changing moment, I was reduced to wandering around the boulders alone with my new EBs. This was before mats, spotters,

bouldering guides or chalk, so I had no idea where to start or what was possible and there were few other boulderers around to ask, and of the few there were, even fewer interested in helping out an obvious bumbly. That was until, one fortuitous day, I got chatting to Richard Tolley. We were soon climbing together and I kept getting pointed at pitches I didn't think I could do and then getting up them, with Richard showing me the ropes so to speak.

Sally Baxendale and Richard Tolley on the summit of Pillar Rock, 7th June 2006, the day of the first ascent of Auld Lang Syne (HS). *(Stephen Reid).*

I had lost touch with Richard over the years so it was good to renew our acquaintanceship via the FRCC and finally arrange a day out climbing together. With us came my new girlfriend Sally Bennett (though in first ascents lists she uses her maiden name of Baxendale – for, as she says, there aren't many Baxendales around, and indeed she is convinced that every time she sees the name Baxendale, it must be some long lost cousin).

So Richard, Sal and I used my Ennerdale forestry track pass and had a great day climbing the two Classic Rock routes, New West and Rib and Slab on the West Face of High Man – a day of perfect weather and with no-one else on the crag, an unbelievable privilege, no matter how many times it happens. Sal did much of the leading and posed for photos which made it into both the new edition of Classic Rock and the Gable & Pillar guide.

In the coolness of the late afternoon, there was just time for one more. Old Lang Syne, climbed a year after Mirror, Mirror..., was by no means the best new line I had found on Pillar, and far from the hardest - a two pitch climb on clean slabby rock that skirts the right-hand side of the West Face of Low Man, it finishes on the Old West, but it fitted the occasion and atmosphere of that lazy sunny afternoon, when to paraphrase Kirkus, it was being in the right place at the right time with the right people that was all that really mattered, what we did was purely incidental.

* Chris Dale succumbed to cancer in February 2011 after a short illness. It's hard to believe he is gone or that the Lake District will ever produce such a unique individual again.

Chris Dale

Napes Needle - monotype *(Susan Dobson)*

The Needle Climbed

Roderick A Smith

> 'The task of finding anything either new or interesting to say on the subject of the Napes Needle is one which is vastly easier for the light hearted editor to set than it is for the unhappy contributor to perform'
> W.P.Haskett-Smith, FRCC Journal No. 8, 1914

I am on the polished crux move of the Needle. A strong wind is tugging at me, below there is 'a drop into nothing, as straight as a beggar can spit', there seems to be no way of making upward progress. Retreat seems like the only wise move, but yet.....

Needles are closely associated with threads. It this case I need to draw together the threads of my own mountain background, the history of our Club and a serendipitous opportunity.

Great Gable was the first mountain I climbed in the Lake District. I was probably about six or seven, and was led by my father from the top of Honister, via Green Gable and up the stony approach to the summit. Maybe the strong name of Great Gable fixed in my mind that this was a big and important top. I was suffused with pride on getting there: a pride somewhat tempered by realising on my return I had left the woollen bobble hat, so lovingly knitted by my mother, on the top. Still, it was a memorable day and its images are still fresh in my mind. This was in the age of the first ascent of Everest, the film of which I thought was just about the most exciting thing possible. It was also the age of the Eagle comic of Dan Dare, coloured cut-away technology centre-folds and lots of wholesome advice to young boys. I carefully cut out and stored a short series of articles about beginning rock climbing, which included an ascent of what looked like an impossible pinnacle of rock, the Napes Needle. A year or so later we climbed Gable by the Climbers Traverse from Sty Head and the Needle in reality looked to me as fearsome as the pictures I had seen. Later still, the Traverse route taken became more adventurous, and treading the Needle through the gap between the rock tower and Needle Ridge gave an even closer view. I then started rock climbing in the age of the hemp waist band, army surplus karabiners and rather primitive protection. I was sent on a Mountaineering Association beginners course in Skye and then climbed regularly on

gritstone outcrops, rather less regularly in the Lakes and North Wales, with a friend from school. I think we were perhaps too rigidly fixed with the idea that the leader must never fall, and as a result never progressed beyond the easier Severes. University introduced me to a bigger world of the Alps and expeditions to remote ranges, but rock climbing became a sporadic pleasure still confined to the lower grades. It was at Cambridge that I met the lady with whom I thought I might share my life. But first I wanted to assess her in trying circumstances. Arrowhead Ridge on the Napes on a damp, misty and cold November day was the test. She passed with flying colours, but the test nearly backfired when we un-roped. 'I will never go anywhere with you again'. Well, she did and we are still married 35 years later.

Just over thirty years ago, when I was elected to the Club, I already had a appreciation of the history of rock climbing gained though voracious reading. The intervening period has consolidated this knowledge, whilst at the same time heightening the appreciation of the boldness of many of our predecessors. The Needle is of course the badge of our club. It appears everywhere from ties, to sweatshirts, to centenary wine goblets and on the cover of our Handbook. All members know how on 27 June 1886 our sport was firmly established by the first ascent of the Needle by W. P. Haskett Smith. My first care was to get two or three stones and test the flatness of the summit by seeing whether anything thrown-up would be induced to lodge. If it did, that would be an indication of a moderately flat top, and would hold out hopes of the edge being found not too much rounded to afford a good grip for the fingers. Out of three missiles one consented to stay, and thereby encouraged me to start, feeling as small as a mouse climbing a milestone. After the bold solo ascent, Haskett Smith left his white handkerchief fluttering on the top. This was a signal to awaken ambitions to repeat this bold climb. Indeed so many of these ambitions have now been fulfilled that the whole climb is highly polished, and over the years the designated grade has risen. But Gable itself has a greater significance. The high ground on Great Gable and surrounding fells is the Club's war memorial gift to the nation. The bronze tablet on the summit tells the story of the losses suffered by the Club during the First World War. It is hard to imag-

ine any heart not being moved by reading the words and, strangely, in our increasingly material society, the number of visitors to the top of the mountain to attend the Remembrance Sunday service has shown a marked and substantial increase in recent years.

So Gable and it's Needle is so entwined into the fabric of our Club, that it seems to me an imperative that it should be climbed. But the years have gone by for me. Active mountaineering has taken me to many places, but I have not yet climbed the Needle. Nor if I am to believe my doctor am I likely to: high blood pressure and too much weight (94 kg) being cited as the critical show stoppers.

Now the serendipitous bit. Some years ago, I was Warden of Stephenson Hall of the University of Sheffield. I was delighted to discover that Tom Stobart had been a resident in the Hall during the late thirties. Now Tom made the famous Ascent of Everest film that so stimulated my generation. I produced a display of Tom and his work to decorate the wall of what became the Stobart Room. By this means the students were aware of my interest in climbing. One summer at a garden party for JCR committee, a young man introduced himself to me as Tom the Treasurer and, much more importantly, a rock climber. And indeed as I listened to what he had already climbed, I could sense that he was something special. Being nominally charged with his care, I gave him a little homily about being cautious: you know the sort of thing, Whymper's, 'climb if you will but remember each step may be your last'. Then at the end of that academic year, I moved from Sheffield to London and so lost touch with this group of students. But Tom managed to find me and tell me that he had named a new climb that he had just accomplished, 'Professor Smith's Warning'. I was pleased with this for two reasons. First, it was clear that my warning had not just been dismissed as old fogie's rambling and had been taken seriously and secondly, to be frank, it was rather nice to have an eponymous climb even in this second-hand way. Imagine my surprise and delight when Tom contacted me about 18 months ago, to ask if I would officiate at the informal wedding ceremony he was planning in a Derbyshire barn! The quid pro quo for performing this pleasant duty was that Tom should get me up the Needle.

Our busy schedules finally permitted a gathering at Brackenclose, Tom and his wife Kim having left Sheffield at 4 am. The weather had been in keeping with the rest of the summer so far: that is terrible. But on Saturday morning the rain had stopped at last and we set off for the Napes. As the reality of achieving my lifetime ambition drew near, I was weakening with apprehension. The climb is now graded hard severe and I suspect that the polish on the rock gives this grade inflation rather more substance than the reasons usually given for A levels. As a concession to modernity and to maximise my chances, I have therefore equipped my self with rock shoes and a belay friction device. I hope Tom will have time to show me how to use the latter.

We are informed by a genuinely modest Tom that he recently climbed an incredible 510 named rock climbs in 17 hours and one minute, thus creating a world record recognised by the cognoscenti. On the one hand I am delighted for his success and know I will be on the rope of a true expert, but will he have sufficient patience to wait for the time it will take me? Conversation with Kim assists the grind up to Sty Head and helps to move my mind to other things.

The traverse across the screes of Great Hell Gate followed by the climb to the Dress Circle across from the Needle goes well: and still the rain keeps off. Before there is much time to think, we are geared up complete with truss-like harnesses at the bottom of the Wasdale Crack. Tom is up effortlessly, smoothly and rapidly. So fast that I have no chance of seeing the sequence of holds and moves. I move up a few feet, thrutch around and grunt, exploring the possibilities whilst admiring the polish on the holds and eventually move out of the crack over to face on the right and, not exactly in style, join Tom at the belay his has created at the top of the crack. The crux lies out of sight up and round to the right. Tom moves up the easy approach slab, shouts that the wind is very fierce at the corner. Perhaps he will call it off and save my face? No, in next to no time he announces he is on the top and fixing a belay. This belay fixing seems to take some time, leaving me thinking about what comes next. Climb when you are ready. Climbing. At least something recognisable from my day. The slab is very easy and now I am at the crux.

The crux consists of a 'strenuous and highly polished' mantelshelf. The shelf is about mid chest level. There appear to be no handholds

on the wall above the shelf. There are no footholds on the wall below the mantelshelf. It looks and feels impossible. The drop is sucking at my heels and my resolution is being blown away by the wind. It would be very easy and is very tempting to give up. But, problems can usually be overcome by concentration and application. I am most probably not going to get another chance at this and increasing age means things are only going to get worse. So this is most likely the last chance. Come on, take a grip, let's look round the wall on the right. I find a tiny footscrape just above knee high. Well, this is exactly what rock shoes are for. Tom is encouraging and drops me a rope end with a knot. Use that for a handhold and push hard. I push very, very hard. I cannot believe that my leg slowly straightens above the foot on the minute hold. I can balance into the mantelshelf. I stand up, toe traverse left for a couple of meters and here is the final slab. Looks hard from below, but in fact there are small but sufficient holds. I am on top!

My joy is unconfined although I know I could not have got up as leader. The satisfaction of achieving a lifetime's ambition is overwhelming. Only now do I realise that Tom's belay is thin. Someone should talk to him about safety. Coming down on the rope is surprisingly easy. As we arrive back at Brackenclose the rain begins again. We have been extremely lucky.

Great Gable and Scafell Pinnacle *(Tony Simpkins)*

You should have brought a wine cork

Ian Dobson

It was as an aspiring associate member, attending a Whitsuntide meet at Wasdale that I first met John Wilkinson. I was having problems committing myself to an overhang on Pillar Rock when this whitehaired man looked up and said ' Look Rodney, there's another poor so..... stuck on Thanatos' – that was the spur I needed.

Ten years later in Rawhead, over a glass of malt, we found we had something more in common in than that his brother was the author of my inorganic chemistry text book; also that John was retired and I had a day off during the week. We rarely made plans as regards routes or even crags but decided on Wales, Derbyshire or whatever. On this occasion , it was the Lakes and the question 'What do you think of Extol then?' was greeted by ' Might as well'.

When we we approached Dove Crag we spotted two other climbers and they were on 'our' route. Hiraeth was the chosen alternative. Starting the crux pitch I reminded myself not to jam my head under the overhang, however, it all went dark again – same mistake, but restful, head and footing.

It was starting to drizzle as we set off up the first pitch of Hangover, the usual start to Extol, one of the climbers who had 'stolen' our route shouted ' You need a wine cork'. What that was all about I didn't know?.

John announced that the drizzle had turned to rain. Normally we had little conversation during the climb but I remember one occasion when the voice floated up 'You'd better put all the runners on your rope' – this followed an unfortunate incident in Buttermere with John Hartley, Pete Grindley and some falling rocks which damaged the rope.

The overhanging wall was still dry and as I looked up to the right to see the overhang where the aid peg used to be and thought of Fred, who several years previously, thought he had clipped the peg, swung out only to find the crab was on top of the peg – he still had the sling in his hand when he finally stopped falling.

After the overhanging wall a short traverse led to the site of Fred's flight. A few feet up the groove and the rope became jammed in the

peg slot – climb back down, free the rope, set off again. The rope jammed. I really needed something to ram in the peg slot to stop the rope jamming; 'You need a wine cork' echoed in my head.

Eventually the only solution was to pull enough rope through to enable me to finish the pitch protected by the other rope. Things weren't looking too good really – the rain continued, the right wall of the groove was very wet and the drag on our servicable rope seemed to be getting worse.

However, I eventually topped out, belayed, and took in the one rope till John shouted that he was climbing. He climbed the whole lower section of the pitch with one rope hanging in a big loop and the other with several feet of slack. When John took out the 'friend' from under the roof, the rope drag vanished and he quickly reached the crux and freed the trapped rope. We now had two ropes in action, the rain stopped, and John climbed quickly up the top groove.

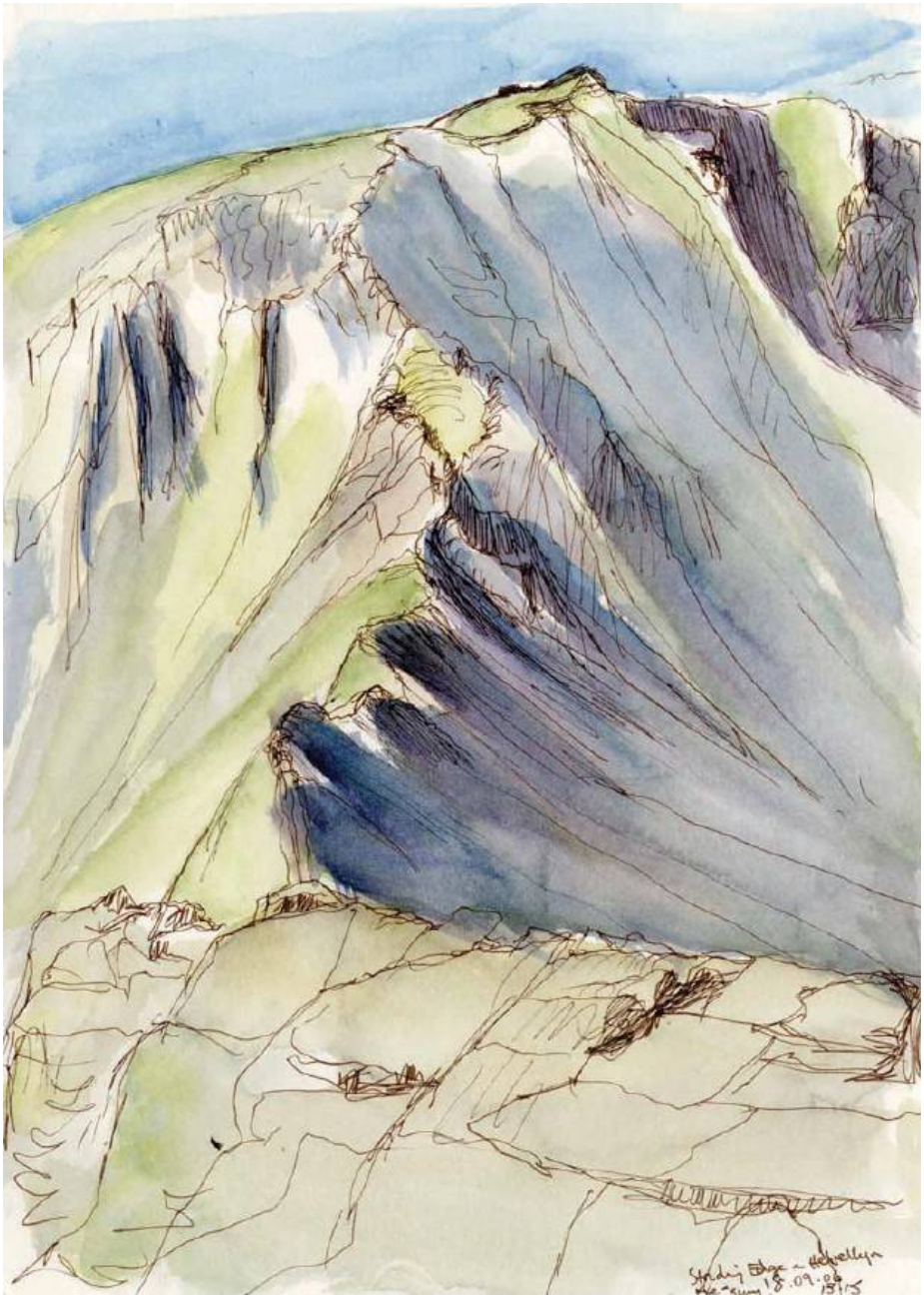
Not much was said. We put our names in the book at the top of the crag , and returned to the sacks.

It was a subdued and slightly bedraggled pair who went into the Queen's Head that evening.

'Better without the rain', said John, 'and with a wine cork!'. We chuckled, normality had returned.

I recently found an old diary, which is a place where some people record their own private thoughts and memories. In this case, the entry for July 25 1989 read Dove – Hiraeth, Extol – JW.

Striding Edge and Helvelyn - watercolour *(Susan Dobson)*



The Centaur - East Buttress

Ron Kenyon

Some years ago Scafell used to be a regular destination for a day's climbing however it is some while since I had been to East Buttress. On the east side of Mickledore on first seeing this crag it appears friendly with the morning sunshine falling on it, however as you walk below it and its overhanging faces loom above it gives off different vibes. It was first breached in the 1930's by the likes of Kirkus, Waller and Pallis with Mickledore Grooves then other lines by Linnell, Hargreaves and Birkett. On 24th May 1952 (one year after I was born) Greenwood and Dolphin climbed Hell's Groove and other classics followed – Phoenix (Ron Moseley), Ichabod (Geoff Oliver), Shere Khan (Cleasby/Matheson), Lost Horizons (Pete Livesey), The Almighty (Botterill/Lamb), Borderline (Sowden /Berzins) up to the modern mega routes of Dave Birkett. Top climbers for top routes on a top crag.

My wife Chris, son Michael and myself were staying at Brackenlose and we set off up to Scafell on the Sunday morning unsure of what to do. At Hollow Stones Scafell Crag looked big, empty and uninviting whilst from Mickledore East Buttress looked friendlier (an illusion !). I had done many of the routes up to E3 including a 'grand day out' with Chris Bonington on Lord of the Rings, however I had not climbed The Centaur – the 3 star HVS which weaves a way up the centre of the crag just right of Great Eastern or more noticeably just left of Lost Horizons. I thought this would be a 'nice' introduction to East Buttress for Mikes. Sue Jensen and Iain Small had done The Centaur the day before and had sung its praises (they had also done The Dyad and Saxon !).

I followed someone who was going up Great Eastern, which shares the same start. Going rightwards the atmosphere changes and I was heading off into the wrong direction up the start of Lost Horizons. I came back down into a corner groove just right of an arête. The route unfolded as I made my way up this amazing line. I moved right to what I thought was the belay (2 pitches in 1) but when I consulted the guidebook the next pitch did not look right. Back left I continued up in the most stunning position but with reasonable holds. Just

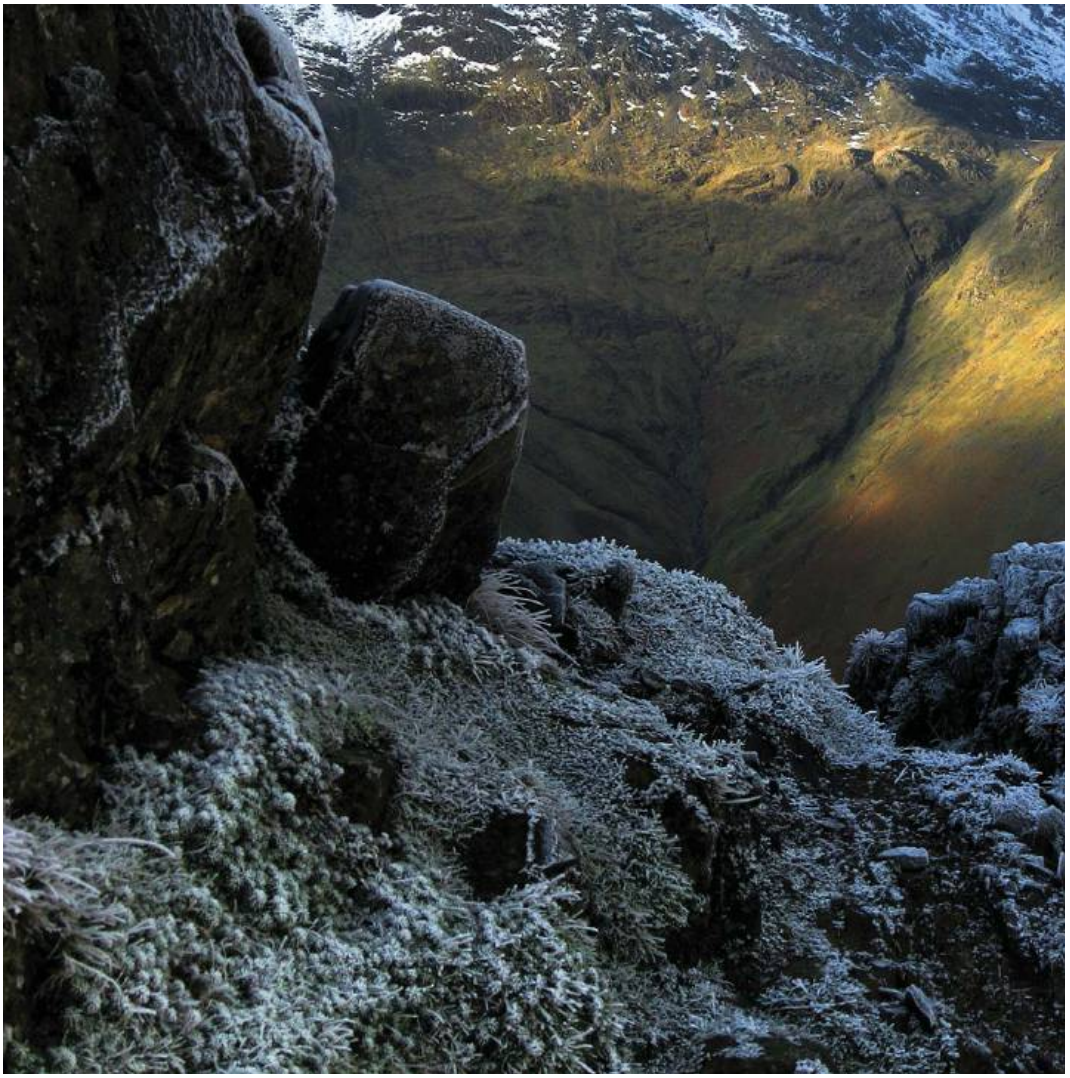
below a ledge on the arête some hidden holds allowed the ledge to be gained and some gear placed before a traverse back right, across the groove, to the belay proper. Mikes followed up the pitch and was impressed with the pitch and the situation.

Mikes led off on the next pitch which moved right with a view looking down onto the likes of Lost Horizons. A short corner led to a ledge and he managed to place some gear before a traverse back left, above my head, of about 20 feet to a corner (and no gear !) - what a place. He had a few goes at the corner which was quite short but the idea of falling was not good, so he retreated and we changed places. I followed his way to the right end of the traverse. The brain was sending out alarm signals which were helped with the placement of some more gear (not a lot!). The traverse left on undercuts was most alarming – however there were some additional placements in a couple of well used parallel cracks facing the wrong way (rightwards) – still, better than nothing. Tantalisingly close at the top of the corner there seemed to be a good hold. I had a few goes and it felt easier each time until, with the use of a small hold on the right wall, the hold was gained and the belay on Great Eastern established.

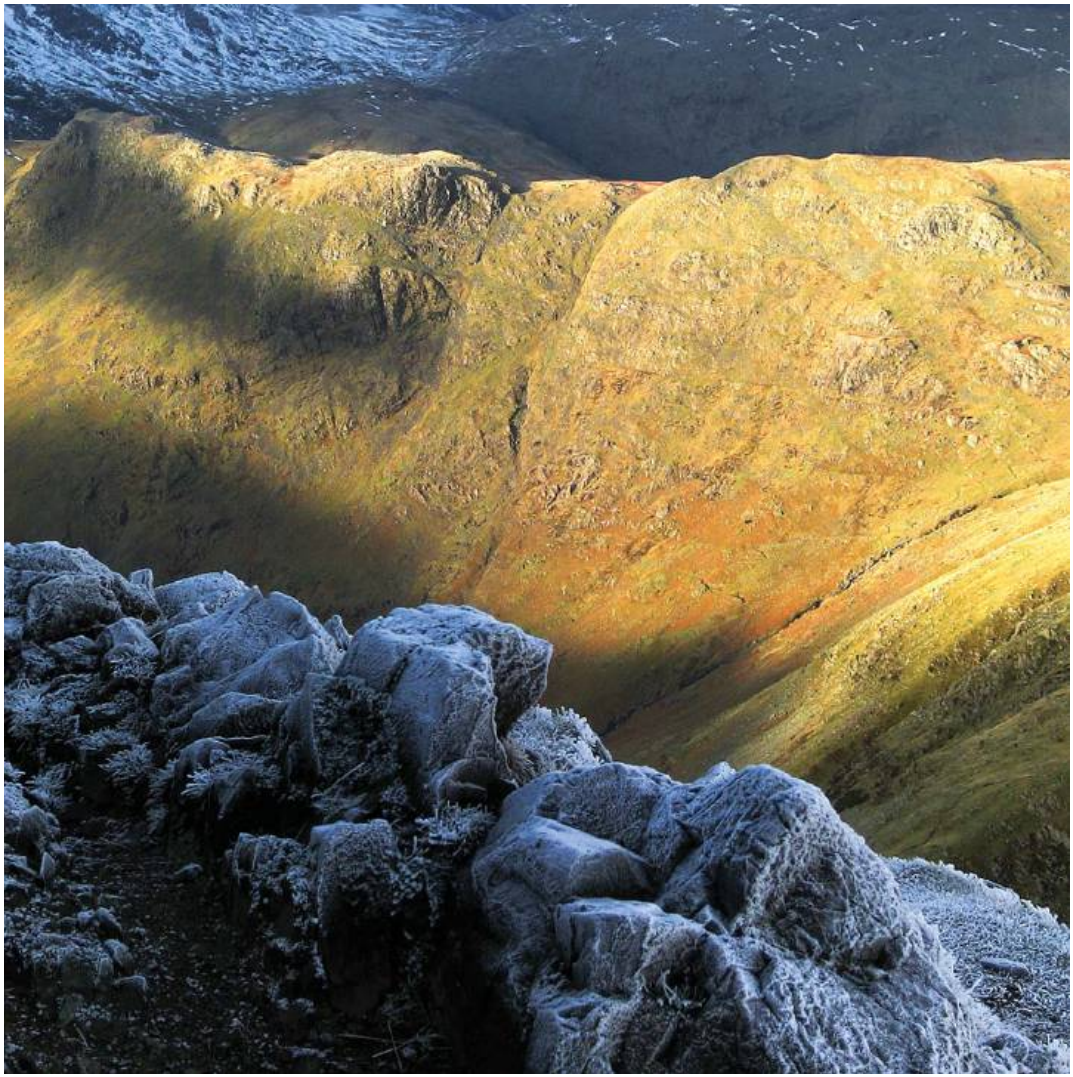
Mikes led the next pitch, again moving right and up, then again a heart stopping traverse back left, above me and up a short corner to the belay.

The final pitch started with a short but well protected crack to gain and use a detached pinnacle (it seemed solid !). An awkward move gains the wall above and beautifully exposed climbing up to two more poised pinnacles (I trust these are solid !!) to below the steep finishing crack - oh my gawd ! - a layback !! Some gear in at the bottom and off we go – the crack gets better and more gear was placed and the top of the crack and the route is gained – Wow !! Up comes Mikes really enjoying himself after his introduction to East Buttress.

The views from the top were stunning and we made our way back to Mickledore, met Chris, Sue and Iain and reflected on a truly magnificent route.



Rossett Pike from Pike O'Stickle *(Tony Simpkins)*



Correcting the Summit Plaque on Great Gable

Peter Smith

Readers of FRCC Journal 81 published in 2008 will see the account by lain Whitmey entitled 'Rewriting History on Great Gable'. The Summit Plaque bears the inscription 'In glorious and happy memory of the members of this Club who died for their Country in the European War 1914-1918' and lists the twenty members. The accompanying Tribute includes: 'Upon this rock are set the names of men ... this rock stands a witness that this realm of mountain earth is, in their honour, free.'

In his role as FRCC Archivist Iain had investigated the doubts concerning the accuracy of one of the names on the plaque and wrote: '... research into the war records of all the people shown on the plaque showed there appeared to be an error in the names shown: the name of B.H. Witty was included in error and the name B.H. Whitley was not shown.'

Honour bestowed by the club should be upheld and so the plaque was duly corrected on 1st October 2006.

I succeeded Iain as Archivist and found myself addressing a similar situation. Dr Malcolm Craig (no relation to the FRCC Craigs) was preparing a book entitled 'Gable: Biography of a Mountain and its Upper Valleys'. In the draft chapter about the Memorial he had included pen-portraits of climbers named on the plaque by doing family-history type research. Fifteen were done but five were proving to be elusive. An intended visit from Malcolm's home in Cambridge to research the deposits in the County Records Office at Kendal was thwarted when he tore an Achilles tendon on the Rhinogs and spent nearly two days getting off alone.

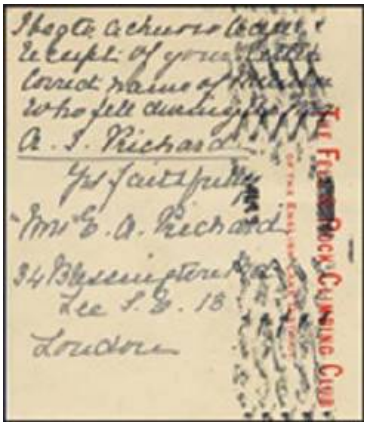
By referring to the FRCC Handbooks I was able to provide addresses for the elusive five which was a great help towards authenticating the correct link with the club. Malcolm wrote 'I have been able to follow up the five addresses you found and been able to cross check these with army records and census for 1911. This has given me enough to complete the pen-portraits for the three outstanding names: Rimer, Prichard and Clay. Interestingly, about Prichard, the

census gives this spelling but the army records include the 't'. Incidentally the FRCC Journal 1919 in the roll of honour prints the name as Pritchard. But there is another twist, it is not A.J but A.I his middle name was Illtyd as it was for his father who was a solicitor in the City of London. So Peter take your angle grinder up there again and grind the curvy bit from the 'J' ...'

I addressed the Committee Meeting in September 2010: 'The plaque must be put right'. Approval was forthcoming – 'Right!'although I thought that I could detect a mumble 'Make sure that it is right'.

Like Iain previously I was filled with trepidation at the prospect of 'not getting it right' and thereafter being labelled 'plaque wrecker'. I did not want 'archivist' to become synonymous with 'activist' or even 'anarchist'. Was our information correct?

Mark Scott provided the definitive answer by producing a postcard sent from Mrs E A Prichard to FRCC Secretary Leslie Somervell.



Her home address matched that of the member shown in the FRCC Handbook 1915. The postcard bore her hand-written message 'I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter. Correct name of member who fell during the war A I Prichard'

Mark asserted that we had the correct surname and continued 'Notice that in the first line of the card 'I beg' (etc) the letter 'I' is similar to the letter 'I' in A I Prichard. Therefore 'I' is correct and 'J' is not correct.'

Mark then wrote this letter:

'To National Trust, Richard Palmer, The Lodge, Wasdale, Cumbria CA20 1ET.

Dear Mr. Palmer, Please would you grant permission for the changing of the initial J to I with reference to the entry for Pritchard on the FRCC Great Gable Memorial Plaque?

This is a very small discrete change and will be done by a rotary file, removing the tail of the J to form the letter I. The FRCC are willing to undertake this task believing that the Plaque should represent a true record of its members who died as a result of the Great War. I will be grateful if the National Trust will grant permission for this important task.

I attach a consent form for you to sign on behalf of the National Trust.'

Richard Palmer, property manager of National Trust, Wasdale, replied on 12th November 2010:

'I hereby give permission for FRCC to alter the letter J to I on the Memorial Plaque on Great Gable with reference to the name Prichard.

Armed with that letter as proof for any would-be challengers the repair gang departed from Birkness on 4th September 2011 and progressed to Great Gable via Honister Hause and Green Gable. In beautiful autumnal conditions my invited guest Malcolm Craig conveyed his gratitude to FRCC for help in providing evidence for the correct matching of members against the correct address and the correct regiment. He cited the example of J S Bainbridge who appeared in Malcolm's writings initially as John Stuart Bainbridge; born in Lewisham in 1897; attended school in Bedford. Lieutenant in the Hampshire Regiment, 14th Battalion; killed in action on 26th September 1917. That entry was corrected to James Scott Bainbridge from Ravensworth, Richmond, Yorkshire; born in 1888; Lieutenant in the 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment; killed in action on 22nd March 1918. Luckily that did not affect the Plaque.

Malcolm related 'I did test out the Achilles by going with my son up Gable on a lightning visit via Little Hell Gate and it survived. From Sty Head, saw only four people on a fine Saturday in June.' He had suffered another set-back in April 'Peter, I am out on parole from

hospital, in on Monday for removal of gall bladder, and then hopefully all will be well.'

He was delighted to be able to witness the alteration on the plaque, from A.J to A.I for Prichard, ably conducted by Mark Scott.

Crossing an Arctic Plateau

Maureen Linton

Kinder Scout has long had a special place in the minds of climbers and walkers from Manchester and Sheffield. In the early days, this was due mainly to its accessibility by public transport when other means were beyond the financial reach of most young people. The 10a.m. Sunday bus from Manchester to Hayfield had its weekly regulars who would nod a greeting on boarding, go their separate ways during the day, exchange the odd word when catching the evening bus home and disperse from Manchester bus station with ‘see you next week’. Yet to meet any of these people by chance in any other area, say Skye or the Alps, was like meeting an old friend and closer acquaintanceships were often formed. Is this how Clubs are born???

One particularly bitter winter Sunday when it was felt that the conditions would be just right I set out with a small group of College friends, for some practice ice climbing at Kinder Downfall. The Downfall and nearby outcrops were coated in hard ice and the Kinder plateau stretched beyond in one smooth flat snowfield. All the peat groughs were hidden and the whole appearance was that of an iced Christmas cake just waiting for the final decorations. Despite the cold it was a dry sunny day and we had a good day’s climbing in splendid conditions.

By late afternoon when the light was fading and we were preparing to return home one of our group, a climber who already had several new routes to his credit and who was becoming quite well known for his achievements on Skye, suggested that he and I, instead of returning to Hayfield with the others, should cross Kinder by as straight a line as possible, descend to the Snake road and from there hitch a lift to Glossop for a bus back to Manchester.

Some stars were already showing in the darkening sky and, pointing upwards, he said that for the first hour we would follow 'that one' and then, moving his arm slightly, we’d follow 'that one'. By now there were so many stars shining overhead that I had no idea which ones he was pointing to and, although I realised that this was a challenge to adventure rather than an invitation to romance, I was delighted with the idea so, as the others left for Hayfield, we set out in the opposite direction across the plateau..

Any idea of a brisk level walk on crisp, crunchy snow was very soon dispelled. The peat groughs may have been hidden but they were certainly still there. With one step we would be on the surface of the snow, with the next up to our knees or even deeper in some hidden peat hag. At one stage I was in so deep that my feet could not find firm ground to brace against.. My companion who was much taller than me shouted 'swim out'. I cannot recommend breast stroke as a propulsive force in powdery snow, but it did work..

After an hour we changed stars. Our progress was slow but far from boring, there was just no knowing what the next step would bring but at least we were not pulling sledges or coping with dogs or ponies. Shamefacedly I admit that we were not even carrying torches, we just had the starlight. The sky was a mass of stars and the light reflected back from the snow illuminated a brilliant but silent silver world in which we were the only moving objects. The only contrast came from the shadows cast by ourselves and by the occasional boulder which protruded from the snow. The intense darkness of these shadows seemed to enhance the brilliance around while the only sound was the scrunch of our boots, for the silence did not encourage conversation. It was a magic, sparkling landscape in every direction. Looking back we could see our route traced out by our footprints. They marked a somewhat erratic course which was anything but the straight line which had been intended but we were definitely on course for, when we finally reached the far edge of the plateau, we could see a faint light below us in the valley - the Snake Inn. So no more problems, we only had to descend to the valley, then drinks in the pub and a lift to Glossop.

The descent was easy, we just slithered down the snow slopes but we had not taken the river into account. As we had not been on a normal route we had not arrived near any bridge and, although the edges of the river were frozen, the ice did not extend to the middle. It looked as if we would have a wet crossing until we noticed upstream a pipe spanning the river from bank to bank above the water level. Moving separately in case it was not as strong as it looked we each sat astride the pipe and shuffled our way across, then scrambled up the bank and straight into the pub. Although it was a little

later than we had anticipated, we still had good time for a leisurely drink before a lift back to Glossop

The landlord was idly polishing glasses behind the bar and only then did we realise that the room was empty. He asked where we had come from. His response to our reply was, 'It's folk like you keep folk like me out all night'. His laconic manner did not encourage us to inform him of my companion's extensive mountain experience, it seemed much more appropriate to look suitably chastened which seemed to mollify him a little as he asked where we were going; this was followed by the question as to how we proposed to get there. We now realised why we were the only people in the bar and why the car park had been empty when we arrived for he abruptly announced, 'Road's closed – has been for two days'. So much for our leisurely drink and lift back. We now had a road walk of about seven miles ahead of us but at least we would be able to walk steadily and should just make the last bus if we stepped out. So we left.

We soon discovered why the road was closed. It was a sheet of ice. Instead of stepping out we could only slither and slide trying to find the odd pebble or clump of grass to give us some foothold. Our progress was slow and time went by. It would have been an exciting end to our trip if we had not needed that bus but the journey seemed endless. It was like trying to hurry in a dream where despite maximum effort, little forward progress is made. Finally as the road began its descent towards Glossop the surface cleared and we could at last stretch our legs and walk properly. We could see the lights of the town in the distance but by now there was no chance of catching that last bus and, being cash-strapped students, we were contemplating having to spend the night on a park bench in Glossop or walking all the way back to Manchester Then unbelievably came the sound of a car. A vet was returning from a call-out to a nearby farm. He stopped, heard our urgency, piled us in and shot off.

As we entered the town we could the bus waiting at its stop but we were resigned to seeing it move off before we could reach it. However we had obviously given our driver a challenge which he was determined to meet. The bus driver was just pulling away, when our vet shot round the bus and pulled up in front of it impeding its depar-

ture. We almost fell on board and there was hardly time to thank him properly before he had to drive on to let the bus move.

I don't remember much of that bus drive as we were both trying to get our breath back but I will never forget the beauty of that starlit walk across Kinder or the excitement of the slippery return to Glossop .

The Bob Graham Round - a celebration

A short history

Robert Cooper

Wednesday June 13th 2012 marks the 80th anniversary of one of the most iconic fell running events, the first Bob Graham round. Looking back from the perspective of the 1700 people who have followed his footsteps it is easy to underrate the magnitude of his achievement.

Bob Graham's run should be seen in the context of a series of increasingly demanding 24 hour rounds starting in the mid 19th century. In 1920 a 54 year old Eustace Thomas wearing nailed boots completed a similar round with fewer summits in 21 hours 25 minutes beating a previous record in 1905 by Dr Wakefield, a Keswick GP. Bob Graham attempted to better this in 1931 but failed owing to bad weather and mistaken route finding. The traditional account is that the number of peaks was increased to 42 the following year to equal his age.

Brought up in Houghton near Carlisle, after a spell as a gardener he moved to Keswick to run a guest house in Lake Road. His training consisted largely of long walks on the fells, often extending through the night. He wore tennis shoes, long shorts and a pyjama jacket and ate bread and butter, boiled eggs, fruit and dried sweets- a diet familiar to modern fell runners!

His anticlockwise round started at 1:00am on a Sunday morning. He had four pacers, Martin Rylands, Phil Davidson, Robin Deans and Bill Hewitson. Although the route was essentially the same as that adopted now it included High White Stones, Hanging Knotts, Looking Stead and High Snab Bank rather than Whiteside, Helvellyn Lower Man, Ill Crag and Broad Crag. Arriving back in Keswick with 21 minutes to spare the five men shook hands, walked back to the guest house and five hours later Bob was up cooking breakfast. His unassuming nature is summed up by his comment that the round could be done by anyone of average fitness. Those who have attempted the round will confirm that it is far more than just a phys-

ical challenge, it is a mental challenge, and a psychological barrier analogous to the four minute mile.

His record was to stand for another 28 years until it caught the imagination of brothers Alan and Ken Heaton, both mountaineers and members of Clayton-Le-Moors Harriers. Alan completed in 22 hours 18 minutes. It was the Heatons, Fred Rogerson and other members of Clayton-Le-Moors who popularised the Bob Graham round leading to a series of successful completions in the 60s and a reunion dinner in January 1971 at the Old Dungeon Hotel in Langdale at which Fred Rogerson proposed the formation of a club. He remained chairman for the following 27 years. Laying down the rules for completion, issuing certificates at the biennial club reunion dinner and making contributions to local charities, the Bob Graham Club has become a fell running institution and membership a unique right of passage.

In Bob Graham's original spirit increasing numbers of peaks have been achieved in 24 hours, particularly outstanding achievements being Alan Heaton's 60 Peaks in 1965 and Joss Naylor's 72 in 1975. The current men's record set by Mike Hartell in 1997 is 77; Nicky Spinks holds the 2011 lady's record of 64. Rather than increase the distance in 24 hours many have sought to shorten their time and Billy Bland set an amazing record at 13 hours 53 minutes 1982. In 1986 John Brocklebank was the first of eighteen to do a winter round.

For those of 'moderate fitness' aiming only to complete in 24 hours the usual technique is to walk the uphill sections, running the flat and downhill. Many attempts have been made to walk it all particularly by members of the Long Distance Walkers Association. The first successful attempt was made by a LDWA member in 1977. The record is held by Billy Bland, after retiring from fell running, of 20 hours. He completed this along with his 17 year old nephew Gavin.

One of the most remarkable Bob Graham records is the only 48 hour double by Roger Baumeister of Dark Peak Fell Runners and the Rucksack Club (one of whose founders was Eustace Thomas). Roger and Brian Harney set off at midnight on Friday 29 June 1979 from Keswick clockwise passing Wasdale and ascending to the summit of Yewbarrow where they met the party of 9 runners who

were attempting the single round and who had left Keswick running anticlockwise starting at 9am on Saturday. They then all ran anticlockwise. Saturday night was a low point for both Brian and Roger and they had to take 2 periods of sleep totalling 90 minutes. Along the way they picked up two unsupported Irish runners. At Keswick they met Joss Naylor, who rising at 5 am had run over via Sty Head Pass from his home in Wasdale. They went anticlockwise as far as Yewbarrow. Though Brian dropped out Roger caught up the lost time on the Sunday and despite indifferent weather returned to Keswick at 10:53pm on Sunday. The route appears rather eccentric but it was determined by the runners need to work on the Friday afternoon and the Monday morning and to share as much as possible of the support with those attempting the single round. The solitary support vehicle was a Ford Escort. Both Roger and Brian were back at work at 8am on the Monday morning. The coming together of people from different and no clubs, the sharing of limited

Bob Graham and friends at Dunmail, 1932

resources and the grit and determination of Brian and Roger show fell running at its best.

The length and climb of the BG has been overestimated by many commentators, most particularly the newspaper report of Bob Graham's original round when it was described as being over 30,000 feet and 140 miles! The widely accepted figure and that quoted by the club is 72 miles and 27,000 feet. More recent GPS measurement have recorded values of 66 miles and 26,000 feet.

So as the 80th anniversary passes what does the future hold for the BG? What is clear from the graph is that the peak of completers in the late 80s has been surpassed and the numbers still appear to be climbing. This is likely to be due to increased participation in fell running driven by media exposure and the publication of 'Foot Steps in the Clouds'. When one considers that there are on average three times as many attempting the BG as who successfully complete, repeated training runs and supporters this amounts to substantial numbers along a very narrowly defined route. There is now a clear path throughout most of the BG.

With the passing of Stan Bradshaw, the second club member, Fred Rogerson in 2010 and more recently Bill Smith, author of 'Studmarks on the Summit', the generation who revived and nurtured the round is now passing.

What would Bob Graham have made of it all? I suspect he would have been overawed by the club dinners with 400 guests but would be proud to be have started a phenomenon which has brought out so much endeavour amongst those who love running in the hills.

Fred Rogerson – a commemoration

Wendy Dodds

Most who have heard of the Bob Graham round (BGR) will have heard of Fred Rogerson, who was responsible for popularising the challenge with his wife Margaret, primarily by initiating and being the first Chairman of the Bob Graham club, whose members share the privilege of having completed the BGR in less than 24 hours. There are a few associate members, recognised for their

support of contenders over many years or in one instance for having completed the round but over a number of days on elbow crutches on account of being paraplegic after a climbing accident.

Over the years Fred and his wife Margaret were at road crossings, at all times of the day and night, for many BGRs and 24hour record attempts, encouraging contenders. They were also there at the BGR dinner, held every 2 years, to congratulate new members with the award of the highly cherished BGR certificate.

Sadly Fred died in October 2010. He never did the round and the current Chairman of the Bob Graham club, Selwyn Wright, thought that it would be a tribute to Fred to take his ashes round the Bob Graham route. Members of the BG club were invited to join in a leg of the route and on the day about 70 members supported, either on the hills or for the final part from Portinscale to the Moot Hall in Keswick, the start/finish point of the round.

At midnight on Friday 15th July 2011 a few hardy souls set off up Skiddaw, just as Bob Graham had done 79 years before, but carrying some of Fred's ashes. In order to predict a finish time, to allow the maximum number of friends and family to be there, the start of each section was planned to start within a relatively narrow 'window', regardless of whether the previous leg runners had arrived at the changeover. This would only be a problem if conditions were bad, and they were. Selwyn had planned for this by having a second portion of the ashes to travel onwards if necessary. This was the case from Dunmail Raise, the one crossing point where the outgoing runners did set off before the incoming runners arrived. I only learnt of this part way through leg five when I carried 'Fred' up Dale Head from Honister. We had in fact delayed the start of this section as, at the appointed hour of departure at 5pm, the heavens opened and a thunderstorm began. There was however an advance party as Suzanne Taylor, Fred's granddaughter, was there to support the occasion. Not being used to being out on the hills she set off with Richard Lamb (an 'extended' BG man who has done 63 summits in 24 hours) and with whom she had done a training run. The main group did not catch this advance party until just after Hindscarth and I thought it would be appropriate for Suzanne to carry the ashes to the final summit on Robinson. This was when I learnt that Suzanne had the

other portion of ashes which she had already carried from Honister. It was therefore Anne Johnson, who from 1994 until 2 weeks earlier had held the women's 24hour Lakeland record, which had been an extended BGR of 62 peaks, who carried Fred to the end. Just after Newlands church we had a short refreshment break to enjoy more of the famous cakes made by associate BGR member Wynn Cliff. At Portinscale there must have been almost 50 supporters, including Fred's two daughters, to accompany Fred on his final journey to the Moot Hall.

By this time the sun was shining and before the evening was over there was a magnificent rainbow over Latrigg. A remarkable tribute to a remarkable man.

The Round - 32 Years On

Tony Peacock

On June 23rd 1979 I set off from the Moot Hall with fellow Clayton-le-Moors Harrier Stan Bradshaw (Jnr) and Graham Wright of Rossendale Harriers. We were young (mid thirties), fit, and apart from the odd tumble got round in reasonable style with an hour, or so to spare. In terms of the number of successful Bob Graham completions we were numbers 121 to 123. At the time of writing there have been around 1700 completions.

When I was asked if I could write something regarding my experiences of the BG round I pondered for sometime on what the content should be. By anyone's estimation 1979 is a long time ago and memories become a bit hazy, making a step-by-step account somewhat difficult. It would probably not have made very exciting reading anyway, so I decided to describe some of the background and motivations, as well as trying to explain why fell running came to run my life, rather than climbing.

Both Stan Bradshaw (see first ascent of Praying Mantis, Goats Crag) and I had been keen rock climbers prior to becoming involved in fell running and I can clearly recall times in the sixties and early seventies when I found it hard to imagine life without climbing. But, nothing stays the same forever and for various reasons we both found

ourselves drifting out of climbing in the mid seventies. In a bid to regain some fitness we started running over the moors on a Saturday afternoon and eventually someone (could have been a certain FRCC member J Loxham Esq.) suggested that we enter a fell race. After many visits to recce the course we entered the Langdale Horseshoe Fell Race in 1977.

This was the spur I needed and I became just as hooked on fell racing as I had been on climbing. The fact that I went on to complete the Langdale race 26 times probably has no merit other than to demonstrate how addictive and obsessive fell running can be. In the next two years we entered every long fell race and mountain marathon in the calendar, and if there was no race in the fixture list, we would spend a whole day running over the Lakeland hills. We became very fit and this bred a certain arrogance which manifested itself when we deliberated over when to have a go at the BG. 'Perhaps we should leave it until we are older', someone suggested. Fortunately the suggestion was overruled!

In the sixties and early seventies Clayton Harriers were the driving force in establishing the BG as a Lakeland standard, having many more completions than any other club. It was this that probably pushed us into having a go. During the 1980s the running boom was well underway and there was a significant increase in the number of people attempting the BG. The Clayton 'BG machine' was honed to perfection and more than thirty club members, including my wife, Vanessa, were supported round the course.

I often ask myself why I continued fell running for so long without a serious return to climbing. Both activities have the same essential ingredients of adventure and uncertainty, but running is easier to organise in that you can do it anywhere, anytime and crucially, in any weather. Equally, solo running is probably a little safer than solo climbing. The main reason is probably that I was a better runner than I was a climber, but there were other influences. I introduced Vanessa to fell running and she, quickly and quite literally, overtook me, but we made a great team in mountain marathons and other long distance events for pairs.

Of course there is always something else, and the one thing I have to admit to is that I loved the competition in fell racing. There was

and still is, a great camaraderie in fell racing and I have made many good friends, but no quarter was given, nor any expected during a race. All manner of tactics were employed to try and gain an advantage; some would recce routes to find the faintest sheep trod, whilst others would try to copy the Joss Naylor technique (hanging back and hoping your adversaries would at least take an inferior line, or better still get themselves lost).

Climbing was never abandoned completely. There were sporadic visits to climbing walls and local crags, and there have been few years when the annual pilgrimage to the Alps/Dolomites did not take place. In fact, Vanessa and I had a mention in an FRCC Alpine Meet report when we made an ascent of the Trelatete, from the campsite in Val Veni to the summit and back in the same day.

Eventually the old body called time on racing and my last race was the Langdale in 2008 where I took just 45 minutes longer to do the horseshoe than I had 31 years previously. So, where now? I still manage one arthritic shuffle over the hills each week and I have quite taken to biking which provides yet another opportunity to spend money on lots of snazzy gear. Will there be a grand return to climbing? It is probably a bit late now, and the routes would have to be very easy, but perhaps I am just waiting for a mate to drag me out to the crags!

High Peak Marathon -Beyond the BG

Phil Elliot

First weekend in March 2012, 4:00am. crossing Bleaklow in the High Peak Marathon (42 mile, Derwent Watershed). Our team of four was called 'Lost Lads'. Jim Lawrenson, Dave Shepherd, Dave Egan (only non FRCC member) and myself, Phil Elliot. We had won the vets' event in 2011 and were the holders of the Rucksack club trophy but unlikely to retain it on current form. Dave Shepherd was suffering with a hip injury, Dave Egan a back injury and Jim Lawrenson an Achilles tendon injury. This year I was the fortunate one who was fit.

We had been doing the event for perhaps 20 years with minor team changes as a result of injuries. We started competing in the High Peak Marathon about the same time as we were getting interested in the Bob Graham Round and LDWA 100s. We started from Edale at 23:22pm. about half way down the start list. The slowest teams start first and the fastest last. We were passed in the first hour by teams containing record breaking competitors, some of whom would have claimed their prizes and gone home by the time we finished. In our own defence, we were struggling to get four people who were prepared and willing to do the event this year. Dave Egan stepped in to replace Neil Drake (FRCC) whose wife had just had a baby and Jim replaced Helen Elliot (Chronicler, who was ill). Usually four out of the six of us could make up the team.

I started fell running when I was 37 after playing rugby for seventeen years, at which point I was 50% heavier than now. I had always enjoyed challenges and had walked the Pennine Way, Cleveland Way and managed to summit on Mount Blanc and rock climbed regularly. I had read about the Bob Graham round in a magazine a few years earlier and set off backpacking round it with a few friends including Martin Thackeray (FRCC). I called it a day at Threlkeld and walked back to the car at Rosthwaite. I did not believe it possible to do the whole route in 24 hours, let alone understand how Billy Bland, the Borrowdale farmer, achieved a time of just over 13 hours. Then I met Dave Shepherd at a local running club and we both had mutual interests in long distance events; we became more familiar with the distance running scene and I offered to support a leg of the BG with the Dark Peak Fell Runners. I supported Jim Lawrenson from Threlkeld to Dunmail Raise. We struck up a friendship as a result of our common interest in distance running and climbing. Jim completed the round in 22 hours, on his second attempt.

In around 1998 Jim, Dave and I were in a team for the High Peak Marathon. They had to replace me because I was injured and they turned in a storming time of under 10 hours and finished in 4th place; we finished in the top five consistently for a few years. However, over the last few years we had only just scraped in to the top half of the field. This year would probably be our slowest time, we were struggling near the back and would have been slower if it had not

been for our knowledge of the route, and lowere placed had it not been for our ages. The vets' prize (Rucksack Club Trophy) gives a handicap to the teams based on cumulative age.

Dave was the oldest in our team being 59, he had just completed the BG round the age of 56 on his first attempt after years of supporting other contenders to success. Dave's was a low key attempt at the beginning of May. Neil Drake supported on the first leg to Threlkeld, I covered the night section from Dunmail Raise to Wastdale and Helen Elliot, the final section from Honister Pass.

The weather conditions were perfect for the marathon; a stark contrast to our wet, cold crossing to Bleaklow stones. By 5:30am we could see without head torches, black cagoule clad figures, members of teams just in front, just visible through the swirling mist, disappearing into the peat and water filled trenches; then climbing out, crossing the featureless terrain. We take this type of event in our stride now.

Seventeen years ago, when I joined the 'Fell & Rock' we were in the Lakes most weekends, in all conditions, covering sections of the BG round and gaining intimate knowledge of the Lake District. Dave and I once had an exciting outing when we descended Broad Stand in winter with sections of verglass on the rock. He will still say he is not really a climber; not bad for a graded winter climb in Walsh running shoes! My first attempt at the BG was just before I joined the club on my 40th birthday. Sadly, I pulled out at Dunmail Raise with a twisted ankle. I made a second attempt on a family meet the following year with Dave, and got road crossing support from members on the meet. En route towards Robinson, we picked up a dog which followed us to Red Screes above Wasdale where it decided to follow another contender travelling in the opposite direction. Again we pulled out at Dunmail Raise after losing too much time in the mist but this time going the opposite way. We climbed into Graham's car just after 1:00 am to be surprised by the dog. Graham said, 'What happened to you? The dog arrived 3 hours ago'. We dropped the dog off where we found it and later found out it used to wait for runners going past and follow them; it is rumoured to have completed the round several times without support. I eventually got round success-

fully the following year supported on the last two legs by Dave and Jim.

Back in the Peak, we eventually crossed the Snake Pass at about 9:30, ten hours after starting out from Edale. The fastest teams would be changed and eating a well deserved stew cooked by the Sheffield University High Peak Club. We would be at least another three hours to the finish. On this finishing section we usually see Alan Yates and Ken Jones, both FRCC members and veterans of the High Peak Marathon and Bob Graham Rounds. It is usually a welcoming sight, seeing Alan who usually provides a tot of sloe gin and Ken with the jelly babies, still involved as spectators and offering support to competitors. As we cross Rushup Edge, we see the event centre in the valley and even though we are no longer in contention for a fast time or fame, we put in the last big effort to the finish. We had missed the prize giving, most of the teams had left but there is always the sense of relief at the finish and satisfaction of completing a hard course in difficult conditions.

One cannot become a member of the Bob Graham Club by wealth or fame. For most of us it involves several years of commitment, travelling to the Lake District at every opportunity to learn the route, strengthen legs for the near 27,000 ft of ascent, develop the skill of running down hill on difficult terrain and bouncing back from unsuccessful attempts. For some people who are successful it is an end in itself. For others it is the beginning; seeking out other challenges, supporting other contenders on the BG round but most of all enjoying long days out in the hills and mountains with friends.

And Finally...

Andrew Paul

There are those amongst us who plough their own furrow, and are quite happy to do so. They generate their own projects and quietly go off and execute them, on their own, only revealing the extent of their achievements in modest tones. No emails are forthcoming, no journal articles; their own satisfaction is enough.

I have to confess that I am not one of this group. My choice of objective is defined by my reading, but also by the crack in the pub, and an awareness of who has done/is planning to do 'route x'; there is nothing like your peer group to keep you on your toes. This attitude runs like a constant vein through a lifetime of midweek climbing trips, migrating from Northumberland, through Yorkshire, to the Wye Valley; at times it has got me into some taxing situations, but I survived them, and occasionally I set my peers challenges of my own (though not very often!). Now applying this mental attitude to midweek cragging is one thing, but taking it on to ultra distance fell running is quite another.

There were early warning signs which I chose to ignore. Early on in our relationship Christina introduced me to orienteering. Running round the forest with a map for an hour or so was pleasant entertainment, but then we progressed to two day mountain orienteering events. One baking hot midsummer's day, an ideal day for doing something hard in the shade on Scafell or Dow, found me running over Wild Boar Fell. In my hubris I had entered the 'A' class, although I had never competed in an event like this before. Some hours later, as I lay exhausted by one of the few remaining sources of water on the fellside, a passing runner (twice as fit, twice my age) commented that 'the last chap I saw lying on the fell like that was dead'. Such encouragement.

From thereon things went downhill. I hung out with fellrunners. A string of mountain marathons followed, and fell races in the Lakes and the Dales. Running across the Chew Valley skyline in driving rain, covered in peat, exhilarating five mile blasts on local midweek fell races, or the sheer exhaustion of having completed the Borrowdale – they were all wonderful in their own way. Behind all these achievements there lurked the 'big one', the one the elite did, the Bob Graham. I had a few skirmishes in that direction, an attempt on the Mountain Trial, which I failed to complete (more hubris?). Then I paced a section, on two separate, successful attempts, and the seed was sown.

Some seeds take a long time to germinate; this particular one took about ten years. At the time I was used to doing a half-marathon distance in the hills, but the BG was something else. But I was aware

that Dick had done it, as had Pete and John and Andy, and other 'friends in the north', and also that I was getting older. I just had to give it a try.

What followed was a systematic campaign over the nine months preceding the chosen day. It became an obsession; distances, elapsed time and height gained were recorded in a spreadsheet. Over the winter the distances gradually increased, long boggy miles in the Mendips, then the Black Mountains. A team was assembled, old friends from up north, and more recent friends in the West Country. The willingness of friends to take time out to help was touching and inspiring; pacing teams were formed and food and drink (and moral support) arranged at the key crossing points – Threlkeld, Dunmail Raise, Wasdale (Brackenclose), and Honister. As spring progressed the focus of moved north, and 'real' training runs and recce's of the terrain were undertaken. It became clear how vital it was for runners like me, with very little contingency in the schedule, to take the optimal route; the lost minutes would soon add up. As someone pointed out to me, a minute spent admiring the view on every peak adds nearly 45 minutes to the schedule. Luckily my team seemed to know their route (at least they convinced me that they did, and they got me round, which is what counts).

The ultra distance fraternity talk about getting high on endorphins, about the buzz that comes from stretching yourself to the limit, and then still keeping going. I would love to say that I could recount a similar experience, that I spent my day out in the Lakes in a rose tinted cloud of exhilaration; however the reality was not quite like that...

At the start I was really switched on, thinking about route choice (the way off Skiddaw towards Great Calva is not totally straightforward in the pre-dawn light), and taking pleasure in picking the descent route down Halls Fell Top. The stop for liquid and energy near Threlkeld was very cursory (I recollect there were midges), and then we started the long climb up Clough Head. In theory the rolling miles of the Dodds and Helvellyn should be sheer delight, easy going on short springy turf, but by the end of the section the cumulative distance was beginning to erode my reserves. Ian refuelled me on the

ascent of Fairfield, with a package of what appeared to be transparent slime. Nauseous though it was, it had the desired effect.

The team greeted me at Dunmail with food and a change of clothing, lots of organisation and efficiency, and then we were off again, with new minders (two this time). The memory thereafter is reduced to snapshots. Optimal route choices up Steel Fell, and later up Bowfell, from Rossett Pike, justified the investment in detailed reconnaissance. Little spurts of enthusiasm, up High White Stones and Pike O'Stickle. Over the whole leg a growing sense of oppression, as the day became hotter and more humid. The weather was heading in the direction of a storm, it was only a matter of time. There was a ladder up Broad Stand, which was a pleasant surprise, but the descent off the lee side of Scafell was interminable, my feet floated in a sea of pain.

Arriving at Brackenclose, my team had adopted the demeanour of those visiting elderly relatives, wanting to jolly me along while at the same time exuding the anxious feeling that I was not long for this world. Feet were soaked and shoes changed. The section from Brackenclose to Honister is a killer; it starts with the taxing direct ascent of the side of Yewbarrow. It is a tough section if you were doing it fresh as a day's walk from Wasdale, but with 16 hours already behind you it seems wildly unreasonable. Over Kirk Fell I had an altercation with one of my pacers, whose encouragement was grating on me. At this point I was probably beyond reason. I remember hearing of a friend who lay down on Kirk Fell and refused to get up until he was kicked.

Somehow we make our way round to Honister, and the mood changes again. I am way behind schedule, it is only 9:00 pm at midsummer, but a threatening darkness is closing in, and a kind of madness takes over. As the first drops start to fall four of us set off up Dale Head. We progress over the final three summits to a Wagnerian accompaniment of thunder, forks of lightening, and torrential rain. The descent off the end of Robinson is a running stream. Then we hit the road, the first farm track, high up Newlands, and a miracle occurs, we begin to run. Not just trot, but really run, and we continue; once past Newlands Church our progress is backlit by the following support car. Senses are heightened – waves of

honeysuckle scent drift from the hedgerows in the rain washed night, and the pace increases further. The thing is to set a short term target, the next lamp post, the next bend, tick it off, then set the next one. Across the bridge, along the side of a field, then suddenly we are in Keswick and sprinting (yes sprinting) for the Moot Hall. Lots of team congratulations, hugs and handshakes, photographs outside the Moot Hall (still in the pouring rain), and then it was all over.

Was it all worth it? Well the shared experience will I think stay with me until my dying day. It becomes a marker in your life, and a measure against which other obstacles can be judged - an experience which is reaffirmed when you pick up you membership certificate at the BG Annual Dinner. I am profoundly grateful to all those who helped me on the way.

As well as these deeper feelings there are also useful tips which you pick up in the way; for instance I have learnt that it is not possible to eat hot rice pudding while running in the dark, in a downpour, at midnight.

Honister 26/06/99 21:43. Chris asks for forgiveness after earlier trying force feed Andrew and half choking him

The killer section - Yewbarrow, Red Pike, Scoat Fell and Pillar, leading on to Kirk Fell *(Tony Simpkins)*

Striding Edge in Winter *(Tony Simpkins)*

The Thirty-Nine Tops of England

Alan Hinkes

One avalanche, thirty nine County summits of England. I have always been up for a hill challenge; I managed the fourteen 8000m peaks in the Himalaya, but that's another story. The traditional English Shire Counties have historical significance as far back as 1066; the boundaries only changed, or were 'messed up' in 1973/4. Bagging all 39 high points of these counties was a mini challenge I had been intending to do for many years. To make the whole event more meaningful I included a charity, raising funds and awareness for Mountain Rescue.

In March 2010 I had a close shave in an avalanche on Great End, when the summit slope released on me after soloing Window Gully. The previous day I had climbed Dove Crag Gully, Grasmoor with a mate, definitely three stars and as good as anything in Scotland, although shorter. He had gone back and I fancied another climb while the cold spell lasted. I had climbed Window Gully earlier in the winter and felt confident to solo it, both Central and South East Gully looked very avalanche prone so I decided to avoid them and be content with one route. My senses were warning me of the wind slab build up as I set off up towards the ice pitch on the right wall and it was with some relief that I thwacked my tools into the ice pitch and escaped the scary, unstable gully. The steeper, bare ice was in good nick, about grade 3/4 and I felt safe from being avalanched while climbing it, as I had been somewhat anxious in the gully. Topping out I felt relieved and, almost letting my guard down I continued up the easy angled slope above the gully. Suddenly I was moving back towards the edge and the 500m drop, a weird, helpless, out of control sensation. Instinct, rapid reactions, combined with a subconscious understanding of what was happening, kicked in. With only a couple of seconds to react, somehow I rolled and crab crawled out of the sliding snow and escaped being swept down the face. It was a classic wind slab avalanche with a clean cut crown wall and a chilling roar as the snow poured down the face.

As it was mid week only two other climbers were on the face and thinking I had been swept away they raised the alarm. The sight and sound of the avalanche must have been unnerving. After a bite to eat and drink and short reflective rest and recuperation on safer ground behind a rock, sheltering from the bitterly cold breeze, I started descending. Cust's Gully looked unstable and after my near miss I reckoned that descending towards Esk Hause and back below the north face of Great End to Ruddy Gill and Grains Gill would be the safest option. Arriving at the top of Ruddy Gill I met the two

lads, who informed me they had called out the MRT. At that moment two helicopters were steadily working their way up Grains Gill as three fast jets crossed their path. It was like a scene from a film. Three MRTs were scrambled along with two helicopters, somewhat embarrassing as I had extricated myself, but very reassuring that we have such superb, committed MRTs that can respond so quickly. The friendly crew of the Royal Navy Sea King from RN Gannet lifted all involved back down. It was a happy ending to the callout as no one was injured.

Cheviot summit in the mist

All Mountain Rescue Teams are charities and all team members are not only dedicated skilled professionals, but also volunteers.

The official launch of the 39 Tops Mountain Rescue Challenge was Friday 27th August 2010 in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, my home town, and I have to thank the sponsors of the trip for making it possible.

The tentative plan was to do all the tops in a week, starting in the North and finishing in the Lakes, sometimes linking up with MRTs for local hill knowledge and publicity for the various teams, promoting their dedication. That evening I headed off to Cheviot, the highest in Northumberland, for my first summit. Arriving in the dark on a Friday night I was fortunate that the gamekeeper at Langleeford, near Wooler knew me, so it was no problem to camp. Cheviot is a straightforward yomp following the fence to the sandstone slabs across the summit bog to the OS trig pillar and I topped out about 8am in damp hill fog, no glorious Northumberland views as a starter on my challenge. Years ago it was often only possible to summit Cheviot in a drought or hard frost when the bog was firm.

Mickle Fell, the highest in Yorkshire was next, the highest point is a cairn of piled up stones not the trig pillar on the plateau. I had a close shave on this hill a few years ago, when alone in the dark I ran into a sphagnum moss swamp. I was up to my chest and sinking into the morass, very scary; luckily I got myself out before drowning. This time I went up with Dave and Steve from Teesdale and Weardale

Search and Mountain Rescue Team, no dramas, but the weather was wild., August in the North Pennines and the lashing rain was almost sleet, the wind chill was well below zero. Nothing new there then, normal Northern hill weather. On the way down the lads showed me the remains of a crashed Stirling Bomber from the 1950s. Mickle Fell is usually restricted, because it is on a military range, but over the August Bank Holiday there is often access to this remote, but well worth climbing peak..Not far away is the highest point in Co Durham, Burnhope Seat. This is a walk up the line of the Yad Moss ski tow, England's only permanent ski lift. There is the usual ubiquitous North Pennine black bog on the top, protecting the summit OS Trig pillar.

Things were looking good, three big ones in the North bagged in the first day and I drove South on the A1 to bivi in a hotel near Doncaster.

The next day started with Linconshire, a trig point in a field in the Wolds; Notts – a landscaped slag heap with good views and a statue of a miner on top; Leics above a huge hard rock quarry, which looked too shattered and loose to climb; down to Rutland, the smallest county, a trig pillar in a field. The lowest high point is in Huntingdonshire, a County which no longer exists. I arrived at this top in the dark about 10pm, it is along a farm track and known as Boring Field. A local who lent me his 1:25000 OS map was miffed when I told him. He was very proud of

The high point of the Linconshire Wolds

his high point and said he liked the field and it had nice views. It did seem like a minature prarie in the starlight.

Monday and the first high point was Norfolk. Beacon Hill near Cromer is a Roman Fort with great views and you can drive right to it. Suffolk, Cambridge and Essex were next and interesting in a lowland sort of way. Dunstable Downs is the high point of Bedfordshire and a great viewpoint. I remember going there as a child. The National Trust have now built a visitor centre and car park there – all a bit urban really. We were on a roll and bagged Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire – the highest point in the Chilterns; up to Arbury Hill in Northamptonshire, a hill fort, and back down the M1 to Middlesex and Bushy Heath High Road where a set of traffic lights is the highpoint!

Tuesday was Kent, Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire. Wednesday was Sussex, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Brown Willy on Bodmin Moor was a glorious evening walk with the sun setting in the sea. Thursday started with Somerset and Gloucestershire before a sortie through Wales and the Brecons to meet James from Longtown MRT. With James's local knowledge I made the summit of Herefordshire, a point on Offa's Dyke just as it was getting dark. A quick descent in the dark and a welcome sleep over at James's set me up for Friday. Worcestershire was first in the mist, then Warwickshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, before a night in Hayfield.

Then it was back to the big hills of the Peak District. Kinder MRT lads helped to pinpoint the summit of Kinder Scout in the peat bog beyond the trig pillar, luckily it was dry in early September.

Cumberland, Lancashire and Westmorland county tops were my grand finale in the Lake District, which is now Cumbria with only one top. There are no black bogs on top of these three great Lakeland peaks. Scafell Pike, the highest in Cumberland or Coniston Old Man, highest in Lancashire and I finished on Helvellyn, the highest in Westmorland and one of my favourite mountains anywhere in the world.

It was a great whistle stop trip around England, bagging all thirty-nine County summits in a week, setting a record and helping Mountain Rescue.

SCOTLAND

Grandad Knows Best

Doug Elliott

Scotland's highest motor road across the Bealach na Ba on the Applecross peninsular is flanked to the north by Sgurr a'Chaorachain. The top is an open plateau, but over on its north eastern aspect is a deep coombe, Coire nan Arr, divided by the impressive spur of A'Chioch. From my collection of books, journals and guides I know a good deal about The Cioch Nose which is the classic route tackling the spur's imposing terminal buttress. Apart from a few unsuccessful earlier forays avoiding difficulties the First Ascent of the Nose was in 1960. The master-mind orchestrating this epic event was Tom Patey, famous for discovering numerous gems throughout the Highlands and elsewhere. The Cioch Nose is possibly his best in spite of only medium difficulty – yet Tom craftily prepared by inveigling a youthful Chris Bonington onto what he feared would be a serious climb.

The year after their success Patey wrote an article for the journal of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC) pronouncing 'it appeared from almost any angle to be of sustained difficulty and great exposure'. In his later book: One Man's Mountains, in his inimitable lampooning style he records how Bonington as 'the Lion of Llanberis' and in his 'favourite P.A.s' was on top form and flashed up the major forbidding pitch to proclaim it 'The Diff. to end all Diffs!'. The basic Nose is a little over 400 feet but more than 1,600 feet remains along the spur to the summit – yielding one of the longest mountain adventures in Britain.

Rock is of compact sound sandstone offering excellent friction, and though holds are plentiful these are generally rounded with a comparative absence of incuts or pockets. As with all sandstone in the North West Highlands it has been laid down as a form of horizontal parallel strata which is separated by shelves and terraces. Vertically the sandstone is divided by joints as gullies, chimneys and cracks. The Cioch Nose takes advantage of these features. It avoids

the lower tier via what is termed Middle Ledge, yet the scramble up to this is somewhat alarming. The Middle Ledge is itself described by Donald Bennet, veteran SMC mountaineer, as "surely the most spectacular and exposed footpath in Scotland". The route then follows fractures and fissures with occasional horizontal breaks, including overhangs, and with comforting stances on ledges between pitches. The SMC initially graded above average rock climbs by awarding 1, 2 or 3 stars. In the latest edition of the area guidebook The Cioch Nose is honoured by a scarce 4-star rating – and knowing this justifies inclusion on my 'wish-list'.

Visits to Skye, Torridon and further north in the late 1950s started my love affair with North West Scotland and it persists today. I first went for a 'look-see' at A'Chioch in the early 1960s, but then shifted attention to less remote and more popular areas such as Glencoe, Nevis and Cairngorms seeking sterner stuff. Over the years route details have varied in evolving editions of guidebooks, though without exception all extol the virtues of The Cioch Nose as a high quality classic. The first guidebook information I recall is from Hamish MacInnes and his two volume: Scottish Climbs where his description is most garbled, and for some reason he adopted a Continental approach with a grade of III+ which must be somewhere around V.Diff.. This is supported by accounts in 'coffee book' productions by Ken Wilson and Bill Birkett, but looking back I believe – indeed I know – these understate difficulties. At the time this misinformation convinced me to postpone The Cioch Nose and keep it for my old age.

A cash lump-sum on retirement in year 2000 allowed purchase of a campervan, and coupled to my son Steve living in Perth this prompted multiple Scotland trips each year. Applecross became a favoured destination and on four occasions The Cioch Nose was on my agenda – each time it rained! On one wet family holiday Steve offered to 'get it over with' but I declined – it was important to enjoy it rather than just tick it off. A likely ultimate opportunity arose recently [May 2012] as accompanied by wife Sylvia and friends we travelled on a meandering journey ending at Ullapool. I was disappointed with weather preventing a boat trip from Oban to Iona, disappointed by missing a sighting whilst whale watching in the sea

off the Summer Isles, and disappointed at drawing a blank deer spotting in the wild expanse between Stac Pollaidh and Suilven. However the pinnacle of the holiday was to be The Cioch Nose. It was planned that after work and school Steve and his son Sam were to arrive late Friday at our campsite in Glen Shiel, and we would make a three generation ascent on Saturday. I resigned myself to another disappointment – the weather got cold and it snowed!

My own temperature dropped but Steve is not easily put off – we motored round to Loch Kishorn and drove up a clear road to the Bealach na Ba with snow at the summit and evidence it had recently been ploughed. Snow patches were sprinkled on the track over Sgurr a'Chaorachain and yet more snow on the upper slopes of an exceedingly steep descent into a desolate corrie between the A'Chioch ridge and the greater mass of the mountain. Thankfully the rock climb and second buttress were free of snow so we donned harnesses and helmets on the corrie floor before soloing up hair-raisingly vertiginous vegetation and loose rock to Middle Ledge. Here we roped up with son Steve leading and placing gear, grandson Sam in the middle, and me tail-end grandfather managing belays and collecting gear.

Determining the exact start is not straightforward but some unknown benefactor cum vandal has scratched 'CN' and an upward pointing arrow at the base. Principal interest is in the first 300 feet with initial moves being possibly the most technically difficult of the route – Steve hardly noticed and Sam shimmied up easily, but I found it exacting and was duly impressed. All lower pitches are graded 4a and overall The Cioch Nose is now classified as Severe. It delivers exhilarating climbing via a series of absorbing cracks, grooves and corners, linked by entertaining traversing between features to bypass overhanging sections, and with an especially thrilling moment at mid-height where it is necessary to step boldly onto and up the sensationally exposed very edge of the Nose. Each generation of the team enjoyed both physical movements on rock and mental awareness at the stunning void beneath our feet. Steve demonstrated solid performance and took everything in his stride, Sam was remarkably unfazed and showed the makings of a mountaineer, and Grandad was awestruck and just revelled in the struggle.

We untied at the top of A'Chioch and after overcoming an awkward sharp notch, with Sam under Steve's stewardship, we individually scrambled up the succeeding buttress until brought to a halt at an abrupt V.Diff wall girdling the front of the ridge. Our trio roped for this and then resorted to soloing as we scrambled over a number of minor vegetated crests with yet more tricky rock clefts requiring great care where a couple of times the rope was again employed for protection. Some climbers descend via a gully on the south side involving abseils but we had set our sights on the summit. Those who know The Cioch Nose are aware the continuation ridge gets progressively easier – not for us! Instead it became more hazardous as melting snow turned rock ledges from damp to wet, and towards the top snow had filled steps and made it slippery underfoot. Added to this I found the gradient exhausting and it was punishing to try keeping up with Steve and Sam. A surge of well-being and consolation came with spectacular views from the summit – south across to the serrated Cuillin of Skye and Rhum, westwards to the Hebrides, plus mountains everywhere to north and east.

I was elated throughout our glorious mountain experience when all previous disappointments evaporated – as I knew they would. In Ken Wilson's anthology: Classic Rock he includes The Cioch Nose as one of the top outings from eighteen in Scotland, and there is a description of sublime appreciation 'after a great climb'. Similarly Bill Birkett's: Classic Rock Climbs in Great Britain selects The Cioch Nose as one of his eight favourites in Scotland, and in his article he refers to the 'intrinsic joy of rock climbing' and to the 'appeal of conquering a peak' plus his luck in sharing his ascent with an appreciative and affable companion. Such comments endorse my own feelings – I am particularly lucky to have shared a great climb as part of a three generation team. However as pointed out by my wife who waited for our safe return – her son is still recovering from a past accident, her grandson is only 10 years old, and her husband has heart problems and cancer. Does Grandad really know best?

Start of Gallipoli, Black Ladders

The Third Ice Age

Ian Arnold

A long time ago in the frozen North, primitive men roamed the valleys and glens, clad only in wool and fleece. The cold and icy terrain set the terrestrial stage while overhead came the eerie whistling sounds of pterodactyls swooping amidst the snowy crags and gullies.

But, enough of the 1970s. Fast forward to winter 2009. Same crags, same ideas, only now the pterodactyls have been replaced by their leashless descendants and the men sport trendy merino garments. Darwin would have been proud of this verification of his theory.

What a fantastic winter this was. So many fruitful mountain days, dependable conditions, new routes and, at last, full justification for having bought all that winter gear that has seemed to get used less and less as global warming has taken hold.

By the time spring broke through in mid April there were many of us glad to breathe a sigh of relief, reset the alarm clocks, put away the headtorches and find some warm, dry, spring rock for a bit of light relief. Baking in the sunshine at a reasonable hour of the day, rucksacks half their winter weight and bodies relatively scantily clad gives time for reflection on what has been. So which were the 3 best days?

Ysgolion Duon, or Black Ladders, on the Carneddau in Snowdonia has long been a favoured venue of ours. Over the last decade it has taken 3 attempts to find and climb Passchendaele Direct (V 5) in good winter conditions. Imagine then our delight at arriving at the cwm in early March, in pole position, to find conditions and visibility perfect throughout. It almost made the 0300hrs start from Huddersfield seem justifiable. We chose Gallipoli (V 5) on this occasion, using the rudimentary guidebook information that was the downside of winter climbing in Wales, prior to the new guide. This lack of information is my poor excuse for our brief, mistaken diversion into No Man's Land (V 6) before getting back on line and finishing the route correctly. By the time we were halfway up the crag, people seemed to be everywhere and the various lines of rarely-in-condition routes became immediately visible and obvious. What a stonking day to be out on the crags.

Beinn Bhan near Applecross in the Northern Highlands was a first for us this winter. Viewed from the road there appears to be an endless expanse of ice-covered walls and as much seclusion and isolation as you'd want. Add to that a midweek rendezvous and the theory says the crag should be yours alone. We found our way through the mist to the start of March Hare's Gully (IV 4) in Coire na Poite in the

March Hare Gully

hope that we had chosen a route we could succeed on rather than make a gentlemanly retreat as we had done the day before on Liathach. Roping up we exchanged pleasantries with two other climbers who appeared out of the mist and were searching for a route to climb; fortunately they had climbed our route before and told us we would not be disappointed.

Off we scuttled up our route, enjoying our day and a brief spell of seclusion only to find shortly afterwards that we were being followed. To our amazement, the two who had so positively endorsed our route choice just minutes before were right behind and chasing our tails.

Given the vast expanse of ice and the number of routes in condition it seemed incredibly lacking in imagination to be so gregarious and to spoil our isolation. Add to that the risk of ice falling from climbers above and you'd have to question the sanity of their decision. We continued to exchange rather one-sided pleasantries on the stances throughout the route, but it was no surprise that I heard nothing from the offer of exchanging photos that I'd pinned to their windscreen wiper on the return to the cars. The bonus factor of finishing the route first was that we had the descent all to ourselves and by following the ridge all the way it was easy to fantasise that we were actually in the Alps. What a beautiful situation that mountain top commands.

Having made the points about solitude and lack of imagination my third recollection demonstrates my hypocrisy. Transport yourself to the Ben and to the Orion Face in particular. This was the area where my climbing partner Chris and I first cut our teeth on Scottish ice, back in the mists of time. Memories of whiteouts on the summit, frozen spectacles and unplanned snow holes still feature in some of my worst nightmares. One route has always evaded us over the years. Orion Direct.

Leaving Huddersfield at 2130hrs on Friday night, we collected the North Face car park key from Water's Cottage as we passed at 0300hrs. Continuing on and making no less than two wrong turns on the car park track in the mist, we started the walk towards the CIC hut just as day broke. Close on our heels were faster parties catching us as we approached the hut, and ahead of us a few headtorches could be seen snaking their way into the upper corries. Remarkably,

Second Slab Rib Crux, Orion Direct

and with a bit of a sweat on, we arrived at the base of Orion Direct in pole position once again. Not bad for a pair of old gaffers, we thought.

As to what happened next I can offer no explanation, as within minutes we were not only surrounded by other climbers, but found ourselves below two ropes that had streamed either side of us and left us in their wake. Having already expressed my views about consciously following behind others on an ice route, this caused us to do a bit of soul searching. We took refuge in climbing the direct start to the normal route which kept us away from most of the falling debris and then landed on a shared stance further up the route. It was at this point that we understood how we had been outwitted. Both parties that had steamed past us were guided and as such they-weren't belaying. The leader simply ran out the rope and then the second climbed - that was how they'd pipped us to the post at the start. We followed obediently and avoided falling ice as best we could. The quality of the ice and the stunning beauty of the route were our consolation for sharing it with others. To be fair there was not a line on the whole mountain that wasn't heaving to capacity with climbers and this probably would have been one of the last weekends of the year with conditions this good.

Towards the top some of our guided ropes took tougher lines to finish, allowing us some time to revel in our situation. Visibility rewarded us with an easy descent to the abseil posts and a meeting with some mad Rangers fans celebrating their club's success a day early. The descent to the car park was warm and snow-free with us peeling layers off the further we went. I think at this point we realised that this would be the last big ice trip of the year and it allowed us to contemplate the rock routes to come.

Back at the car we prepared ourselves for the long drive home, aware we'd been on the go for a continuous 36 hours. This clearly weakened our defences as we met one of the FRCC journal editors on the way and while giving her a lift back down to Torlundy we were talked into writing an article for the journal. I'm sure there must be a lesson in there somewhere.

Point Five Gully, a personal account

John Hitch

The involvement in a successful climb by a team of two or more climbers may owe as much to the psychology of the individuals, as it does to the technical skills and experience of those individuals.

It is very much about how people feel and think with regard to the route chosen, the perceived degree of difficulty, and of course enjoyment and reward to be gained from becoming involved in the first place. By reading, studying maps and guides, and bouncing ideas, hopes and aspirations from one to another, positive thoughts of eventual success are generated. So it was one Saturday night as John Barrett and I sat drinking rather good beer with a friend and looking at pictures of Point Five Gully. The next day, once the conditions were confirmed by the weatherline, we headed north.

We left the golf course car park at 7:30am on Monday morning. The summit of the 'Ben' was clearly visible as we plodded up to the CIC hut. On the way up to the base of the climb, some would consider a climb in itself, we met two other climbers making for another route. 'Is that Point Five?' John asked them, as I looked up at what to me seemed a vertical gully on my left, stretching up some 300m to the summit of Ben Nevis. The reply was positive. That was a good start, no swanning around in the mist today looking for the start of the climb. The two climbers volunteered further information: — 'A good route, you'll enjoy it.... bomb proof belays, steep but not vertical,'. This was just the positive reinforcement that we needed, and for once no further debate took place. Gearing up, ropes run out, belt on, slings, screws, axes embedded reassuringly in the ice. No chit chat now as we looked at each other. 'Ready?' asked John. 'Ready' I replied. For the next seven hours only instructions and words of command would be spoken. In our now familiar positions of John Barrett leading and me as second, we would rely on each other to bring into play the skills and experience gained over a number of years, and that all important psychology of knowing that we would succeed.

The ice on the first pitch looked good as John swung on an ice screw about three metres from the bottom to test this, the first of the

running belays. Bomb proof, just as they had said. 'Got me, John?' He wriggled his ice axe loose and disappeared around the corner to complete the first pitch. At this point two climbers appeared at the bottom of the route and began preparing to climb, and a rack of Friends came out of the bag. I looked up at the solid ice wall in front of me and wondered what they were going to do with the Friends!

The first pitch was climbed without incident and we were both feeling comfortable as we looked out from the stance. We were at that point where we could abseil off, look out without a feeling of overwhelming exposure and generally enjoy the situation. John politely asked if I wanted to lead the second pitch. I declined on the basis that I had insufficient experience of placing gear on ice climbs, also I could see that the pitch was vertical, involving a complex bridging exercise and possibly a long runout. Ice tools thudding in on the first pitch and a slight incline to the ice gave me a sense of confidence which became haste as I began to climb the second pitch. At about 8m up my picks came out and I started to slide down the ice. As I shouted to John I wondered if he could hear me, or feel the tension on the rope as I came to a stop. I cursed myself for being hasty, more from wounded pride than a sense of danger. I vowed to be more careful and continued up to the stance.

We had started the route at 11:30am, a four hour walk from the car park, and it was now around 2:00pm, a clear day and with none of the signature spindrift coming down to impede our progress. Things were looking good. I mentally estimated the length of the climb covered so far ... about 80 of the 300m route. Not bad timing so far.

The route is billed as having five pitches, the second and fourth being more difficult than the other three. Anyone who has done any winter climbing knows that the conditions can alter both the grade of the route, and the overall length and contour of the pitches, and as I saw it all the pitches were proving equally difficult. The third pitch was becoming slow going; the rope was being fed through my stitch plate in short lengths and ever so slowly. I peered up the ice in front of me; John was long gone out of sight. He must be OK, the rope was still feeding through. I looked out from the face one more time; we must be at around 1300m. Including the snow slope at the start of the climb it must be 600m straight down ... a long way to fall!

A tug on the rope and a faint cry, 'Safe!' 'Climbing.' After a strenuous climb, this time placing and withdrawing my tools with great care, I could see John standing on hard packed snow. The rope leading to me was belayed in alpine fashion around an ice axe driven into the hard packed snow, although the pitch I had just climbed was 50m of near vertical ice. Barrett, the master of understatement commented, 'I'm glad you didn't come off on that one!' 'Would it have held?' I asked. 'Probably not!'

As we continued up the fourth pitch I looked at my watch; 4:30pm, two hours of daylight left. Could we make the summit in daylight? We were now tiring, and as I looked down from the climb I felt very isolated, yet in touch with the awesome beauty around me. What is it about mountains that draws us like a magnet to find ourselves in fading light, and still some eighty metres to go to the summit? One other thing had been of concern, although I had said nothing to John; the ice screws used for runners had come out a bit too easily.

We both stood at the beginning of the last pitch, this time viewing the rather loose looking snow ahead of us running up to the cornice. I looked at the ice screw into which we were both tied as John prepared, in the now fading light, to go for the summit. Some twenty minutes later John had stopped. He had decided to make one last belay about twenty metres from the summit. This time it took me ten minutes to dig out the ice screw, now frozen solid into the ice.

No sting in the tail as John disappeared over the cornice. I fed the rope through cautiously and then it ran out quickly, indicating that John was walking back from the edge to a safe distance. Minutes later I joined him on the summit. The moon was up. We offloaded the gear, and for the first time in eight hours had a brew and some food. We were well pleased with our achievement.

Some three hours later saw us drinking bitter in the pub in Fort William. At 11:30pm. we walked into Waters Cottage. Mike Carter was finishing off a beer and with a wry smile enquired as to our well being, whilst Paula informed us she would be off to bed. 'Have you been waiting up?' I asked. 'I couldn't go to bed until I knew you were both safe ...Goodnight' came the reply. Nice to know you've got friends.

Paddy Cave on Fragile Existence, 30/11/10 *(Tom Greenwood)*

Waters Cottage - a Home from Home for a Sea Kayaker

Robin Ashcroft

I write with a degree of trepidation, for this article has absolutely nothing to do with 'Fell', 'Rock' or the Lake District. Consequently I do worry about accusations of misuse of an F&RCC hut – although I do write with the conviction of the converted, so I'll press on!

It's often said that sea kayaking is something that mountaineers turn to in middle age – which makes sense as it's a lot easier on lower body joints – but if there are any younger members reading this, then do read on as well. For if you take that exclusive view you're missing out on something at least as wonderful as exploring fells and rocks and that will allow you to explore places that can happily hold their own in the company of the Lake District Fells and Crags. So perhaps my misuse of an F&RCC hut will be forgiven!

I suspect, like many others I've looked down from the Cullin – be that of Rhum or Skye – at the end of a hot, hard day; dehydrated, plagued by midges and with sore feet and aching knees (you know the form) to cast an eye across the deep blue panorama of the Hebridean Sea. From these magnificent heights, I'd not only wished that I'd got

myself down there already with the waves lapping my feet and en-route to a beer, but was also engaged and fascinated by the intertwined prospect of sea and land. For it's a landscape and seascape that embraces all the elements that make for a fascination and one that does demand exploration.

There's no place finer on a clear autumn day than the West Coast of Scotland; the weather tends to be more settled, the skies far clearer, the trees and bracken are turning into their most sensational colours and above all, there are no bloody midges! A long finger of a sea loch led my eye along cold blue-grey water, past the rocky and initially tree covered promontories of Eilan Shona and out beyond a last lonely skerry to the unforgettable profiles of the Small Isles. Muck, Eigg and Rhum seemed to hang suspended over the sea, the last traces of the morning's sea mist seeming to separate them from the rest of the line of the horizon.

Rhum in particular looked very striking set against the cold blue horizon, but further to the north Skye was living up to its Norse name and was wreathed in cloud. Now on our way back to the pretty hamlet-cum-cove of Ardtoe - having earlier paddled from there,

LochMoidart - Eigg and Rhum in the background

round the peninsula formed by Car Mor, to Loch Moidart and the spectacular Castle Tioram in a rising sea - we were quitting Moidart's south channel to return. Sticking our bows out into open water there was a sense of excitement as we breasted the first rollers.

Wind against tide and a headwind had made for a bumpy ride on the outward paddle. A rock girdled coast, that despite its modest cliffs had no accommodating beaches to retire to, should one of us end capsized and out of the boat. There had been the same hollow feeling in the pit of the stomach as there is on a long run out. But as is often the way with a climb, once the difficulty of the crux is faced, you tend to relax, enjoy the situation, your confidence and revel in the sense of exposure.

And if one of us did end up in the water – Eskimo roll having failed - sea kayaking engenders a similar self-sufficiency in its practitioners as climbing. So we had it within our capabilities to pull off a self-rescue. Now on the return leg the northerly wind helped rather than hindered and while trough to crest remained the same as earlier we started to enjoy the sense of motion the waves imparted and all too soon the rustle of surf on the white coral beach of Ardtoe marked the end of the day.

This trip out to Moidart, on the northern flank of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula – Great Britain's most westerly point - had been the undoubted highlight of the weekend. There was both a profound sense of wilderness, but also of the history of this remarkable coast. Castle Tioram had once been one of the many strongholds of the Lord of the Isles and its location on a narrow sea loch highlighted the strategic importance of the sea ways in a maritime fiefdom that regularly challenged the power of the Scottish Crown, maintaining its leadership of Gaeldom for several centuries.

Waters Cottage is at least as well placed for the sea kayaker as it is for the mountaineer. Overlooking Loch Leven, there's almost immediate access to salt water. While the remains of the navigation aids that once helped the pilots bring in the ships that once serviced the Aluminium Works are still there – well I assume that's what they were for – the ship borne traffic is now long gone. But the remains of the markers in the loch's narrows do highlight just how important these seaways have been throughout history, the vital link on a moun-

tainous seaboard. Historically the clansmen were at least as competent as seafarers as they were at reiving a neighbouring clan's cattle.

Save for the tide-mark, Loch Leven looks a lot like a Lake District lake (and a lot like Thirlmere), but even a relatively sheltered sea loch like this one - which it usually is if the wind's not out of the west - is very different from fresh water. The sea is continually moving, not just the up and down you witness as the tide rises and falls on the beach, but as swirling collection of powerfully flowing water, which when close by land manifests itself as tidal rapids and overfalls.

You have within easy driving distance of Waters Cottage one of the most spectacular and serious sets of tidal rapids on the planet. To the south, just north of Oban and at the entrance to Loch Etive, you'll find Falls of Lorne. Easily seen, and if you've a mind accessed from the road. If you go there a couple of hours after high tide you'll fully realise the power of a constricted tidal flow – the ground, never mind the bridge vibrates with the power of it on a Spring Tide.

There's a reasonable chance you'll find someone paddling here; it used to be the preserve of river running kayaks, but over the past 10 years, sea kayakers have pushed their craft's capabilities and now deliberately seek out this type of water to surf and 'play' the standing waves. In a set of constricted narrows such as this the sea behaves like a very much like a big river, but without the problems of access and drought.

The Falls of Lorne is definitely a sea kayaking 'E Number', but there are 'V Diffs' out there - and any number of other grades as well. About half way down Loch Leven – midway between Kinlochleven and the Ballachulish Bridge – there is a pronounced narrowing. On either a flood or an ebb tide a modest tidal rapid forms hereabouts as the flow of water is constricted between the steep rock banks. It's definitely at the 'Diff' level – to equate to climbing, but about a just Grade I for the river paddlers who are reading this – and series of modest boils and eddies form. It is easily accessed from the road that runs along the loch's northern shore and can conveniently be include in a day trip from Kinlochleven - going out with the ebb and back with the flood.

It's a good place to play and practice manoeuvring your boat – it's also just as interesting to be amongst and enjoying the forms that

water takes on when it's powering through, or over something. You can then take in a full paddle of the loch, including a visit to the burial island of the MacDonalds of Glencoe, in the shadow of the Pap of Glencoe. There's often a sense of darkness around Glencoe and Loch Leven , that's impressive nonetheless, but you do sense on the island that dark deeds have been done hereabouts – as is the case. This is very apparent from sea level in the approaching gloom of an autumn afternoon, but the atmosphere's there to be enjoyed and at the end of the day the warm showers, drying rooms and open fire of Waters Cottage provides the prospect of a welcome haven.

Despite the celebrated wildness of the West Coast of Scotland it has always been, and still remains today home to many, many people. Appin is noted for its fertility and there's a definite sense of prosperity, cultivation and established community hereabouts. Although the mountains do rear up magnificently beyond the lowland coastal strip and to the west the sea to is as fascinating a combination of rocky islands and clear blue water as anywhere on this coast.

One of the fascinations of sea kayaking is that you can still find a sense of wilderness cheek-by-jowl with mankind. The sea will always be the sea however close you are to a village, but Port Appin is as pretty a village as you'll find anywhere. It's surrounded by some very civilised houses and judging by the prices on the menu of the sea food restaurant by the quay, money isn't too much of an object around here – which if you can afford it would make a good place to start a trip, so you can end the day there. It was however, beyond – without a mortgage - our price range so it as just as well we'd started at the head of Loch Crerran and made Port Appin our lunch stop, with the contents of a sandwich box and flask to hand, rather than lobster and nicely chilled Muscadet off a well laid table!

Despite this lack of culinary excellence the paddle along Loch Crerran was well worth the effort. We put in close by the bridge that spans the loch – the previous year we'd seen a quite impressive wave train that formed at the narrows it crosses and had ambitions to paddle that. Sadly not this time, as there were no exceptional waves – perhaps wind against tide had previously kicked it up to show it at it's best. Still it was very obvious that the tide was ebbing and the inner loch was emptying.

The whole trick of sea kayaking is to work with the sea and 'ride the conveyor belt' that is the tide. The harsh reality is that you aren't going to paddle a sea kayak for that long at more than 3, certainly 4 knots. And if you're trying to paddle against a 7 knot tidal current you're going to be going nowhere very fast – in fact you'll be going backwards at about 4 knots! Which is why the most important piece of navigational equipment a sea kayaker can buy isn't a state of the art waterproof GPS, a shiny fitted compass or even a handsome Admiralty Chart (although they do have important uses), but a set of Tide Tables.

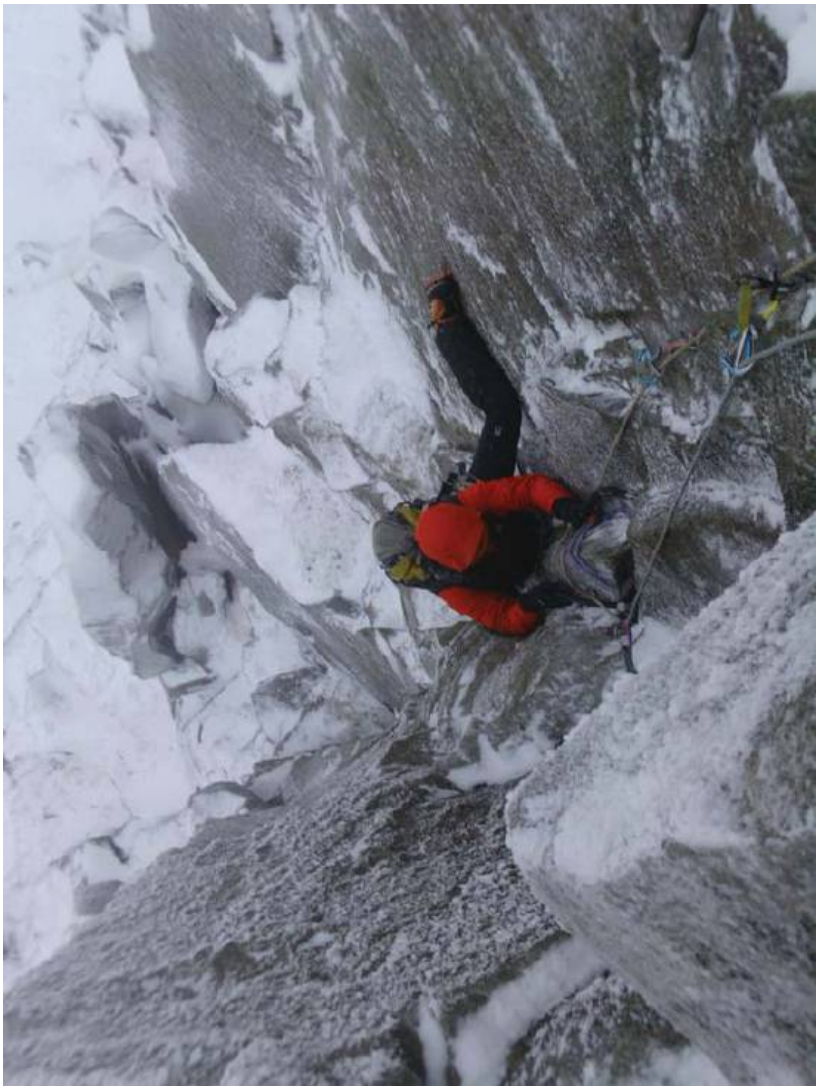
Going with the ebbing tide we soon covered much of the length of Loch Crerran – but for this assistance we could easily have been on Lake District water, for the banks were wooded and the water was calm. Things however, picked up is we entered the zig and zag that marks then loch's entrance. Our Admiralty Chart had shown tidal overfall hereabouts and sure enough the sea took on a life of its own. One moment you could have been paddling a lake, the next the water was doing all kind of strange things as it flowed over the submarine topography.

On Loch Creran

Clearing the entrance of Loch Crerran we entered the Lynn of Lorn and the world got a lot bigger with wider skies, wider water and the appearance of the low island of Lismore. To our right – or should that be starboard – the coastline got altogether more dramatic at Appin Rocks. The headland looked remarkably like limestone and the very apparent Raised Beach gave a sense that Sea Level Rise and Fall – and probably Climate Change – really isn't unique to our own times.

Standing off from the main headland were some low skerries and through the channel in between the tide was ebbing at a powerful rate – you could easily be on a river in flood. Lining up carefully, the current pulled you through, to then shoot you out like a cork from a bottle on the far side. The careful use of a back eddy forming behind the rock allowed you to re-cycle and then set yourself up to play the standing wave. Increasingly this is what modern sea kayaking is about – not just open crossings and multi-day expeditions, but playing the sea as you'd play on a river. In much the same way that a climber plays on a crag.

Eventually you do get tired – or the tide runs its course and the wave diminishes – which signals lunch. We took ours in the lee of the breakwater, close by the restaurant that was out of our league and convinced ourselves that the haggis and whisky was waiting for us back at Waters Cottage was superior – all we needed to do was to wait for the tide to turn and get back to the bridge and the car. And then hope that our fellows in the hut wouldn't feel too upset when we took over the drying room with wet paddling gear!



Campbell West on Sword of Damocles VIII -8. 2nd ascent attempt,
31/01/12 *(Paddy Cave)*

Beinn na Cille with Fuar Bheinn, Creach Bheinn & Meall Odhar

The Lure of the Lists or a Love of the Mountains?

How a casual trip led to me climbing over one thousand peaks in Scotland.

Karl Nelson

I first went to Scotland in the late 1970's. It was just a day trip to Edinburgh from the Lake District; a few months later, I drove up Loch Lomond to Crianlarich then on to Dalmally before returning over the Rest and Be Thankful. The stunning scenery just made me want to come back for more. My next trip to Scotland was in the early 1980's and took me down the Kintyre peninsula as well as over the sea to Islay, Gigha and Arran.

It was May 1988 before I drove north on my first serious visit to Scotland. The Uplands were pretty impressive but once in the Highlands, the further north I went, the more dramatic the landscape became. The pass at Killiecrankie, the Atholl hills, Drumochter and the Cairngorms. Not just the mountains but the lochs and rivers as well. The view that still sticks in my mind is descending the top road from Alness to Bonar Bridge and seeing the view of the Dornoch Firth and the distant hills. From here onwards, the views started to go off the scale with mountains of all shapes and sizes. The solitude of the area was striking. I drove for miles on a single track road without seeing another car. However, there was one mountain which seemed to be a different shape from all the others but I had no idea what it was called. I never saw it for long, just fleeting glimpses now and then as I drove on through Lairg to Ledmore Junction then past the long and lonely Loch Assynt, with its ruined castle, before reaching the beach camp site at Achmelvich, just north of Lochinver. Although the facilities were basic, it was a beautiful place to camp – a white sandy beach around which rocky outcrops had seemingly been piped on like black icing on a white cake.

The next morning, I set off from Lochinver, heading east on a long winding path which seemed to go on forever. The scenery was stunning with isolated dominant peaks towering over lochs and lochans The gorse was in bloom so many views could be framed within its yellow flowers. Soon, it was time to leave the path and head across

some boggy terrain to the foot of a wide open gully which had obviously seen thousands of boots. Climbing up then going west along a ridge soon brought me to the summit of Caisteal Liath better known

Suilven

as Suilven and, despite its modest height, one of the most recognisable mountains in Scotland with its "sugar loaf" shape. This was the mountain I had been admiring on the way up. The weather was good so the view was panoramic. Seascapes and tiny sparkling lochans were laid out below me with distinctive pointed mountains in almost all directions. I had never seen anything like it and my camera went into overdrive. The largest mountain seemed to be to the east. That was where I would go tomorrow, to look down on this watery landscape from an even greater height. It turned out to be two mountains, Conival and Ben More Assynt – my first two Munros – although I had not heard of the term by then. They looked like a long hard day from Inchnadamph. For some reason, I went north first to Loch nan Cuaran before turning south to walk up the long gentle north ridge of Conival. I passed a war grave and aircraft wreckage – a poignant reminder of the brave selfless sacrifices made by previous generations. Where would we be today without them? I met some people on the summits who started to tell me about the Munros. There seemed to be hundreds of them and some of were apparently monsters to climb. An Teallach (the forge) was described

as a rocky brute of mountain with no less than ten tops over 3000 feet. Some people were going beyond the summit of Ben More Assynt, out along a narrow rocky ridge (likened by some to the Aonach Eagach), to its south top. I went with them for an exhilarating extension followed by a steep descent through crags and then back to Inchnadamph.

Some one had mentioned a book shop at Inverkirkaig, calling it the 'best book shop in Scotland' so I went to have a look. I found a book called Munro's Tables and the SMC district guide for the Northern Highlands. I was surprised to find that there were only four Munros in the far north as the mountains had looked so dominant. I set off for Ben Hope, a long drive to the north east, and climbed it by its long south ridge – a route now discouraged but so much more pleasant and open than the usual direct boggy approach. The next day it was Ben Klibreck from the Crask Inn over some very rough ground. I felt quite a sense of achievement at having climbed a whole group of Munros, albeit the smallest group of all. During the week, I had driven across the impressive Kylesku bridge a few times. Each time, my eyes had been drawn to what seemed to be a massive mountain to its south west. It wasn't listed as a Munro so it seemed like a nice gentle end to the week. At the end of the day, my legs told me otherwise! It was Quinag, the only triple Corbett in Scotland! However, the views, again dominated by stunning seascapes, more than made up for the aches and pains.

Back home, I started studying Munro's Tables. At the time there were 277 Munro peaks with the tops taking the total to over 500. I decided to try and work my way through them all. That way, I would see most of Scotland and its stunning scenery. I had the excellent SMC Munros guide book by now and started to look at where to go next. I chose the Lochnagar hills and went there in August the same year. A few weeks later, I was in the southern Cairngorms, returning in October to climb some more. Two of these were Carn an Fhidleir and An Sgarsoch above Glen Geldie. The weather was poor and it was really too long a day for that time of year. I just made it back to the track in Glen Geldie before dark. As I was walking out of Glen Geldie, to join the main track to White Bridge, I could see an orange glow in the distance. Getting closer, I realised it was a fire seemingly

inside the old ruin I had passed earlier. 'What was going on', I thought. Then I realised it was 31st October and therefore Halloween. You can imagine what sort of thoughts started running through my mind especially as I had watched 'The Wicker Man' only a few months before! Well it was just someone out for the night who had lit a fire for light and warmth. We had a brief chat and then I pushed on back to the car at Linn of Dee.

The following May, I went to Skye for the first time. Like many, I found it brilliant when the sun was out and so frustrating when the weather was bad but at least the bad weather kept the midges at bay. The mornings were poor and the afternoons generally good. One night was spent in a bivvy bag just before the TD gap. A sleeping bag would have helped, it was freezing that night. Most of the Cuillins were climbed including the 'Inn Pinn' which I had to abseil off in a bit of a storm. Summer saw the Cairngorms and Monadliath, and finished with me heading for Glen Shiel in the autumn.

In May 1992, I decided to celebrate being single again so I went on a tour of some classic Scottish ridges. Ben Alligin and its horns, the mighty Liathach and its northern pinnacles ridge, Beinn Eighe and Slioch before doing a full traverse of the awesome An Teallach and its ten tops. On the way home, I took in the Forcan Ridge and the Saddle before finishing with the Aonach Eagach. Amazingly, it only rained for five minutes during the whole week!

That summer, it was time to go to the Fannaichs area. I camped at Dingwall, a site I was to use a lot as it was midge free and the nearby town had good facilities when returning late. One fine day, on a very good forecast, I set out from Corrie Hallie. The views of Loch an Nid from the top of the track were well worth the effort but all the height gained now had to be lost. I had just crossed the river when it started raining and it rained almost continuously for the next 36 hours. I was hoping to get as far as the shelter stone but only made it to the bealach just before A'Mhaighdean. The rain eased for the few minutes it took to get into my bivvy bag – with a sleeping bag this time. I slept well apart from the noise of the rain landing a few inches above my face and all my gear had dried out by the morning. I pushed on over A'Mhaighdean and Ruadh Stac Mor with the rain still coming down and, worse still, no views. I decided that the two

major river crossings to get out were probably going to be difficult so I decided to stay within the horseshoe to cut out the first one at Larachantivore. The first tributary was only crossed with a signifi-

Beinn Alligin

cant detour upstream. By this time, I had realised that even the outward river would be much more difficult to cross so I had little choice but to plot a route between Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Meall Garbh (the outward peaks) to reach the Bealach na Croise, the source of the river crossed the day before and follow it down on its east bank. I could not have crossed downstream as the rain was landing on the steep sided mountains and reaching the river within minutes. Got back to the campsite just before they locked the gates and flopped into my tent The Fisherfield round is well worth doing but, as I found out on my second visit, you miss some of the best

ascent routes such as the east ridge of Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair with its short knife edge arête and the north west ridge of A'Mhaighdean with its sandstone towers which the path weaves in and out of.

The following May (1993), I decided to spend the early bank holiday weekend in Knoydart – the last great logistical challenge. I left Lincoln at 3pm on the Friday and drove to Fort William. Saturday morning saw me driving to Kinloch Hourn. By 10.30 I was walking towards Barrisdale. Soon Ladhar Bheinn was in view but it took three hours to reach the very busy campsite. I was soon in Coire Odhar, onto the summit and back down the steep Stob a' Chearcail. Ladhar Bheinn has to be one of the finest peaks in Scotland with its long summit ridge, magnificent corrie headwall, other ridges going off in

Ben Alder

all directions and views to die for, especially the seascape and islands. The next day it was Luinne Bheinn and Meall Bhuidhe and was almost as enjoyable as Ladhar Bheinn. On the Monday, I walked out. It seemed a lot further and my pack seemed a lot heavier. I managed to get a sandwich and scone at the little café at Kinlochourn run by a lovely retired couple then drove home via Dalwhinnie, arriving well after midnight, and back in work the next day after a most memorable weekend.

The same year, I got into Loch Arkaig – the road is the longest roller coaster in the world – and the Glen Affric area: big tough mountains with long walk-ins but again scenery not to be missed. By now most of the mountains north of the Great Glen had been climbed. One of my most humorous moments came in late October in the Bridge of Orchy hills. The previous day, I had taken some friends up Beinn Dorain and we had been blessed with an inversion. Today, I was ascending Beinn Mhanach from Achallader. I went to its subsidiary top first, Beinn a' Chuirn, then headed for the main summit slightly off the path. I was in thick cloud and could not see much. There did not seem to be much chance of a repeat of yesterday's inversion although there was not even the slightest hint of any wind. About one hundred metres before the summit, I came out of the cloud – it was another inversion – and could see all the surrounding tops. For late October it was sunny, warm and still. When my eyes turned to the summit, I could see a couple hurriedly putting their clothes on. I looked away for a few seconds to give them some breathing space then walked up and said 'it's nice out today, isn't it'!

The next year saw me on Ben Alder, the Mamores, Ben Nevis, etc, and then to the southern highlands. The mountains were being climbed but not many of them were being seen! Easter of 1995 turned from summer to winter in a few hours. Ben Lomond was in winter conditions. Its ascent, from Rowardennnan, was easy but when I got to the summit, I wished I had climbed it from the north! I did so a few years later and it is a much more ssatisfying ascent from the north. By the end of May, only one peak was left: Beinn na Lap, above Corrour station. I climbed it with a small group of friends early in August. It was a bit of a struggle as we were carrying a fair few drinks between us In fact, I don't remember much of the descent.

So all the Munros were complete; but that was in 1995, and a lot of years have passed since then. In that time the obsession has continued. In 1996 I covered the Irish Munroes. Come the Summer of 1998, in a fit of enthusiasm, I got up at 2.00 am and drove to Scourie (540 miles), put my tent up at the lovely little camp site then went up Ben Stack to stretch my legs after a long drive. By 2002, I was in a routine of February in the southern highlands, Easter in Aviemore,

May in Fort William, July in the far north and October in Kinlochleven. The Southern Uplands which I had driven past on so many occasions started to attract me for shorter breaks such as the early May bank holiday. I was also revisiting the Munros, some because they were very fine mountains worthy of a second visit, others because I had not seen them the first time, if you understand Scottish weather. 2003 saw me discovering the hills of Galloway. By now, I had a copy of the Harvey map showing all the Munros, Corbetts, Grahams, Donalds and a few other peaks. Almost all of Scotland had something to offer. It was about this time that I decided I was going to try and climb every peak on the map. By the summer of 2009, the Grahams, Corbetts and second round of the Munros were almost complete. On 21st July and in very good weather, Ben Alligin became my final Munro.

That was it. Mission accomplished. I started out with good mountaineering intentions but I guess the lists got me in the end! What next? Do them all again? Maybe, but first I want to revisit all those hills climbed in mist, those which have other attractive routes of ascent and those attractive hills below 2000 feet. Bennachie has already been visited whilst it was plastered in snow making it much more interesting than it would be in July. Orkney and Shetland beckon as do places like Connemara and the Rhinogs I hope I live until I'm at least 150 then I have a chance of getting to them all.

Paddy Cave on Angel of Mercy VIII-9. First Winter Ascent 16/12/11
(Paddy Cave)

Vannakista

OVERSEAS
Sail and Ski in Arctic Norway

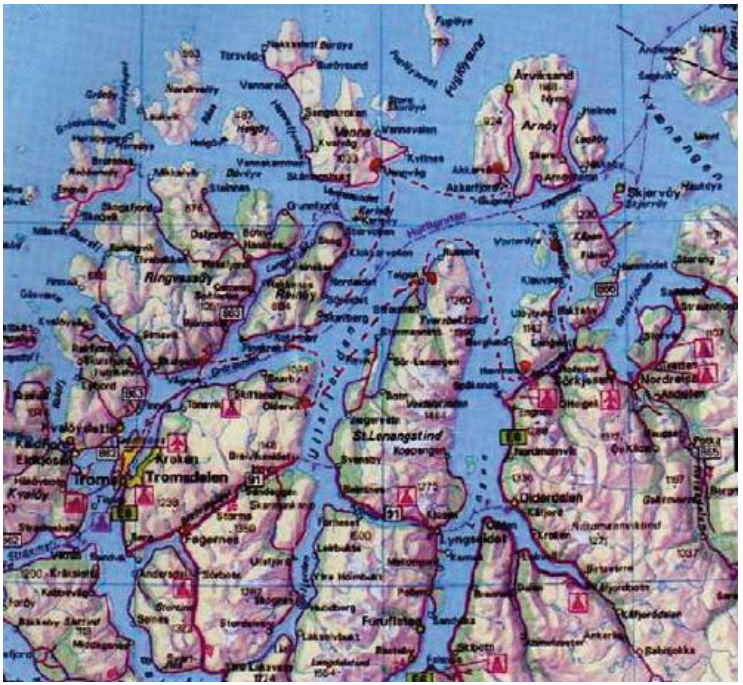
Bernard Smith

Several years ago whilst trawling the internet for information on ski mountaineering in Norway I came across an account of a French team who had accessed their mountains by boat, using the yacht, in effect, as a mobile hut. This seemed like a great idea, combining as it does two wonderful sports, and it was filed away in my memory banks for further investigation. Much later, in a conversation with Steve Jones, during a holiday in Leysin, it transpired that he had just the contacts. He knew a man with a large yacht who was a good cook and liked skiing. He undertook to organise the logistics while I promised to get a team together. The idea was about to become a reality.

We were to be a team of eight with Steve as guide, a skipper and one crew. We eight were a disparate crew, made up of Fell and Rock, C.C, S.M.C. and other non-aligned troops. We managed to get a flight into Oslo after the volcanic ash had dispersed and before BA went on strike. The team assembled in London on April Fools Day 2010; was this significant? From Oslo we flew north to Tromso where Steve was waiting at the airport with a taxi. The 'Hotel City Living' seemed a little inappropriate for a bunch of mountaineers but we booked in anyway as it was cheap. Well not really cheap, but then we were in Norway. There was plenty of snow lying right down to the quayside, but it had been relatively warm and it had thawed a bit, and now it was frozen hard, like glazed concrete.

Prior to joining the boat the following day, and by way of a loosener, we decided on a little excursion up the local hill. The city of Tromso is on an island but just across the water, on the mainland, is a little cable car. Using this gained us some height before donning skis to do a couple of small peaks, Floya and Botuva. The views were inspiring, snowy mountains to infinity. It was like the Hebrides in the Arctic. The ski back down on frozen, corrugated snow, however, reminded me that my knees were well past their best, but I was hopeful that they would last the week assisted by pills and a brace. However all was well, as we collected our baggage, to join what was to be our home for the next week, the good ship 'Goxheim'. What a beauty she is; a twin masted, gaff rigged cutter, but also equipped

with a large inboard diesel. The downside was that it takes so long to rig her that it was not worth it for anything less than a full days sail. We vowed to spend the first day of poor weather sailing rather than skiing. Unfortunately, or maybe very fortunately, we had full sun every day, a rarity in this part of the world, so we used the diesel engines to navigate round the fiords. This enabled us to ski a different mountain every day and return to our mobile "hut" in the evening. That evening as we chugged up the Grotsundert channel, with skipper Charles preparing a fish dish below and 'Jim' (we couldn't pronounce his real name) at the helm, I reflected that life could be a lot worse.



The route of the Goxheim indicated by the red dotted line

The following morning, with not a cloud in the sky, the tender ferried us and our gear ashore at Sjuresneset. It was a strange sensation to be donning skis and skins on a beach, but one to which we

were to become accustomed. The start was up through steep birch scrub, another activity we got used to, but it never became any easier. The sun was hot and the going was sweaty although the ambient temperature was well below zero. The trick was to choose south facing slopes for the descent and not to start too early so as to, hopefully, let the surface soften for the ski down. We eventually broke out on to an ever narrowing ridge which led us to our first proper summit, Nordfjellet, only 1000m high but feeling much higher. One of the advantages of this type of skiing is that you are not at any great altitude so acclimatisation is not an issue. We enjoyed a long lunch in the sun to allow the snow to soften a little, before a superb ski descent back to the beach, where we were met by Jim in the dinghy to ferry us back to the Goxheim. Back on board, hot soup and home made bread were waiting, together with chocolate eggs as it was Easter Sunday. This was luxury. Before long we were underway to our anchorage for the night at Vannvag and by way of a bonus, if one were needed, we were treated to our first view of the Aurora Borealis.

Morning dawned cold and sunny and, as we were moored to a jetty, it was quicker to get away onto our skis. A short walk through the village, where there seems to no sign of life, lead to a small track where we donned our skis. An easy skin got us to the top of Vannakista, just short of the 1000m mark but of Munro height.

The skiing was so good that we extended the day by a short ascent of a minor peak Sussanabakk which gave us yet another great descent. Whilst enjoying the soup we sensed the movement of the boat as we were off again to a fresh mooring at Akkavik. If we thought that the Aurora display was good yesterday, tonight exceeded all expectations. Great veils of green silk flashed across the sky and cameras were wielded with varying degrees of success. We wandered into the village to visit the pub, only to find that it really is a pub with no beer; morbid and drear. The door was unlocked and it was furnished as a pub but apparently you are expected to bring your own drinks. Disappointed we returned to the boat and had to make do with the duty free whisky from Oslo.

Fortunately there was no need for an early start the following morning as the snow was bullet hard. A short walk across the road and a leisurely skin lead to the summit of Troltinden which, at 850m,

is not even a Munro. We sunbathed on the summit in duvet jackets while waiting for the surface to soften. Our patience was well rewarded and we were treated to a magnificent descent which was prolonged by following the good snow as far as possible then having to re-ascend a little to regain our way home. Two special treats were in store. The first was watching Josie go for a dip in the Lyngen Fiord; bathing in the Arctic ocean is not for the faint hearted. The second was being able to shower as we could take on fresh water here. I settled for a hot shower. After this unexpected luxury we were off again, sailing down the Lyngen Fiord, watching the magnificent Lyngen Peninsula slide by. Kagen, a mountain of wonderful proportions, was tomorrow's objective and we anchored opposite this magnificent peak ready for an early start.

We awoke to a force six wind and Charles, our skipper, was reluctant to land us in case he couldn't get in to pick us up later, so we motored down the fiord to Havness where there is a harbour. It was an 11.30 start but that was OK. Up we went through the birch scrub, which was quite challenging at times, until we emerged on a wide hillside reminiscent of Scotland. A steady plod on skins for three hours brought us to the summit of Loytinden, our highest point yet at 1150m. It is important to remember that we always started from sea level. Our late start ensured a good ski down in the sun softened snow and we discovered a better way down through the birch much to everyone's relief. Back at base by 5.00pm we over indulged a little over a dinner of rehydrated cod. Not something that I would have anticipated but it is surprisingly tasty. The Norwegians eat a lot of fish and look upon the dried variety as a particular delicacy. Jim was often to be found at the wheel, coffee in one hand, hunk of dried fish in the other. When questioned as to how he managed to sail a one hundred foot boat single handed, moor it, anchor it etc. it emerged that his proper job was skipper of a tall ship crewed by several hundred cadets. He was on holiday and just came along for the skiing.

Woken by the engines at 7.45am. I felt a little jaded, so sat on deck as we sailed to our next jetty at Nordlenlangan. For once the day was less than perfect and a front moved in as we skinned up Storgalten. We reached a col where we were greeted by a blast of wind blown

snow and so took a mountaineering decision as they say. Our attentions were turned towards Lillegalten, which at 833m. served as a consolation. The cloud cover had served to soften the snow so the descent was easy and we were back at the boat early. On the quayside was the first shop we had encountered so far on the trip. It was searched from head to foot for tonic water, as we had the duty free gin, but to no avail. Life can be tough! That evening we sailed to Oldervik from where we would start our final day.

Our last day was not the biggest but probably provided us with the best skiing of the trip. Our objective was Brattfjellaksla, a lovely peak of nearly 900m. We were averaging about 350m. per hour uphill so we made short work of the ascent and were soon on the summit. We had a picnic on the top in the warm sunshine and posed for the compulsory team photos. We were reluctant to start the final ski down as it meant the end of a wonderful adventure. It turned out to be a superb ski, the highlight being a long pitch of 40° on beautiful spring snow. Back at the boat we had a beer while Steve demonstrated his emergency stretcher. Fortunately we had not needed to test it as the knee had survived. This is surely one of the finest ways to explore the Lyngen Alps. The combination of sea and snow lends a different dimension to ski mountaineering and having a mobile hut means light sacks and good food, providing you like fish.

Josie Smith on Loytinden

Threading a route between crevasses during the descent of Cotopaxi.

Hardly a whimper – or my family and other volcanoes

Dan Hamer

Travels Amongst the Great Andes of the Equator was one of the first mountaineering books that I bought using my own pocket money. I was 15 years old and had just read my father's copy of Whymper's Alpine classic - Scrambles Amongst the Alps. Eager for more, I was delighted to find an inexpensive, second hand copy of his Travels on the shelves of Gibb's Bookshop in Manchester. It proved to be an enthralling account of one the most prolific periods of high altitude summiteering in mountaineering history.

In 1880, Whymper and Jean-Antoine Carrel, his former adversary in the race for the summit of the Matterhorn, visited Ecuador and climbed eight of the fifteen highest peaks. Seven of these were first ascents. This impressive list included Chimborazo, the highest mountain in the northern sector of the Andes, which at 6310m was the first of the World's 20,000' peaks to be scaled. The results of Whymper's pioneering investigations into the effects of altitude on the body during this expedition, which earned him a Patron's Medal from the Royal Geographical Society, are less widely known but of equal significance.

In the late Summer of 2005, the Hamer Family discussed a climbing holiday to the Greater Ranges. The trip was scheduled for the Christmas break, before the oldest of the three children left school the following June. The destination was a topic for endless debate. Finally, it was my friend Roger Mear who focused our attention on Ecuador and I wondered at once why I had not given more thought to this suggestion.

The Ecuadorian Andes are attractive for a number of reasons. Firstly, they range from 4000-6300m; enough to provide an exciting challenge for enthusiastic teenagers, yet not so high as to be seriously committing. The principal summits consist of a double row of nearly twenty, discrete stratovolcanoes, of considerable geological interest and in varying states of activity or quiescence, which rise above the cloud forests and paramo grasslands of central Ecuador. The region has the dramatic appellation of the Avenue of the Volcanoes.

Secondly, access to individual peaks is straightforward and the standard routes on the higher summits do not require multi-day approaches or complex logistics. A major highway, the Panamericana, runs the length of the Avenue and passes through Quito, the capital. Thirdly, at 2700m, Quito offers a unique opportunity to intersperse acclimatisation for the higher peaks with an abundance of half day cultural excursions on the non-climbing days.

We booked air tickets to Quito via Houston and made a reservation for the first few nights at a backpacker hostel called The Secret Garden. I took Whymper's book down from the shelves and began to read it again.

Our subsequent journey to Quito almost came to grief in farcical circumstances. We were checking in for our Saturday morning departure from Gatwick, when an airline official pulled us out of the queue and mysteriously disappeared with both adult passports. We were used to this sort of thing happening at airports across Africa and thought nothing of it until he returned and explained to us that there was a serious problem.

Denise's passport had been issued by the British High Commission in Dakar; mine by a similar authority in Dar es Salaam. Unfortunately, neither was bar coded and anti-terrorism legislation introduced in the US two months previously now required all passports to be bar coded. Regrettably, he informed us, the airline would be unable to allow us to board - even though we were only supposed to be 'in transit' at Houston Airport for two hours! We argued our case with patient persistence but an inward sense of foreboding.

Consequently as our flight taxied away from the terminal building, we made our way out of Arrivals barely able to contain a paroxysmal eruption of collective outrage. There remained two options. One involved a delay until the Monday and required interviews at the Victoria Passport Office to procure new passports. We could then depart on the Tuesday flight. The second option involved a dash home to York and a frantic search through the files in my desk to find old passports with American visas issued for a trip to the US via Morocco in 1996! It was a long shot, but worth the effort because a Tuesday departure would deprive us of vital acclimatization days from our precious three weeks.

Leaving Denise and the children muttering the direst imprecations against the Bush Administration, I raced to King's Cross and booked a return train ticket to York. A taxi rushed me to the house and the driver kept the engine running on the doorstep while I rummaged through my desk. To my immense relief I located the two cancelled passports with their precious, bar coded visas. I was back in London, undeterred, around 21h00. Next morning we presented ourselves at the airline desk again and once our visas had been approved were whisked through the fast-track, check-in procedures and placed on standby. Fifteen minutes before the departure and after all the other passengers had boarded we were finally cleared and scrambled to our scattered seating in a state of considerable relief.

Unfortunately, the in-bound flight had been delayed by two hours and the elation of boarding was soon tempered by the realization that we would miss our connection to Quito and have to overnight in Houston! So, instead of sitting in transit for two hours at Houston Airport, anti-terrorism legislation obliged us to enter the US, using visas issued in Mali nine years previously, and spend 24-hours in Houston. Ironically this presented Denise with an unsolicited opportunity to vent her displeasure towards Mr Bush in his own backyard. In the event, however, she restricted her protest to a refusal to enjoy extravagant ice cream in a downtown shopping mall!

We reached Quito in the early hours of the Monday morning and made our way by taxi to The Secret Garden. Situated in the San Blas district, overlooking the picturesque, older part of the city, the hostel offered budget accommodation and wholesome catering to independent, overland travellers and was ideally suited to our purpose. All the staff were friendly and relaxed and included a blend of Ecuadorians and travellers pausing to catch their breath and earn a few dollars before heading northwards into Colombia or southwards into Peru. They made us welcome and we were soon assimilated into the routine of the establishment. Breakfast and sundowners on the terrace became regular parts of our day.

Quito is a busy metropolis cramped beneath the slopes of Pichincha, an active volcano the height of Mont Blanc. The City boasts a range of cultural attractions from Baroque, ecclesiastical architecture to colourful, Indian markets. Our first acclimatization day comprised

climbing to the top of the towers in the Basilica and then strolling through the old, colonial part of the City along the Way of the Seven Crosses to finish on the Panecillo, a small parasitic volcanic cone overlooking the City. Considering that the starting altitude was 2750m, this was not as straightforward as it seemed and I appreciated the ministrations of the Sisters of Eternity at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the Sixth Cross for the consecrated wine we purchased through a revolving wooden door in the wall!

Our mountain excursions began with acclimatisation ascents of both Pichinchas. At 4650m, Rucu is the lower of the two principal summits. Our guidebooks contained clear instructions to avoid the ascent of Rucu, because there had been an increase in violent assaults on trekkers in the suburbs that sprawl up the lower slopes away from the City. However, a new telepherique has opened recently and visitors are now carried from the City to 4000m in comparative safety.

The route away from the top station was well marked and ascended a sinuous grassy ridge that snaked into the clouds. Occasional glimpses of a rocky pyramid ahead showed where we were heading. We mounted the ridge making good progress. A rising traverse beneath the crags on the north face led to a sandy scree shoot and a short scramble to the summit. We had the top to ourselves but there was no view as the clouds swirled around us continuously. We lay flat out on the summit rocks, drank some warm sweet tea and then with faint headaches beginning retreated the way we had come. A violent burst of hail that turned into blustery, wind driven rain caught us on an exposed section of the ridge a kilometre and a half short of the top station and proved a timely reminder of our location.

Grabbing the first available car down hastened the unmistakable signs of altitude sickness - headaches and nausea - and the journey down to the valley in the cramped cable car was uncomfortable for everyone. At one point, we stopped and were left suspended in the clouds for a couple of minutes. This unnerving experience was enough to turn mild nausea into an urgent desire for several members of the family to be sick and they fought for space next to the tiny window at the top of the doors gasping for air. For a few uneasy moments I thought they were going to take turns to project vomit

from the tiny window onto the tephra strewn slopes below and worried that I would be obliged to follow suit.

Success on Rucu encouraged us to try Gaugua, Rucu's higher and more recently active sister. Joining a group from the hostel we took a Land Rover to 4000m on the southern side of Pichincha. Here we dismounted, shouldered rucksacks and set off towards the Refuge below the summit of Guagua. The boys quickly sped on ahead and were lost to view leaving Denise, Ash and myself to plod on at our own pace.

Everyone seemed fine at the Refuge, although the prospect of getting a view from the summit into the active crater seemed remote. After a swift cup of tea and a biscuit we set off again from the Refuge up a diagonal path towards the rim of the crater. However, within a hundred metres of the Refuge it started to hail fiercely again and within ten minutes this aerial bombardment of icy lapilli had blanketed the ground and it was snowing steadily. Thick mist continued to obscure the view.

At the rim, the steep walls of the inner crater dropped away westwards into a boiling mist. The final section was more rocky and required caution because it was snowing hard and the rocks were slippery. A flask of thick soup on the summit helped to disguise the sulphurous stench in the air. Sadly there were no dramatic views of the crater, which last erupted spectacularly in 1999 causing panic in the City below.

Around these preliminary excursions in the build up to Christmas we bussed out to the Equator Monument, the Mitad del Munda; were impressed by the Quito Climbing Wall and took part in a bizarre, multi-cultural, Christmas Eve parade, in the San Juan district, complete with Llamas, Three Wise Men on stilts, some Indians with a stuffed Cayman, Father Christmas and a jovial bunch of clowns in smiling negro masks who were liberally administering cane spirit from animal skin gourds! On Christmas Day we spent a sobering morning visiting European inmates at the Quito Women's Prison before returning to the Secret Garden for a Christmas Meal. The party continued well into the small hours. We were touched to find that the two older Hamers had become 'adopted parents' to many of the younger travellers.

At this stage we felt that the process of acclimatisation was going well. Thus, on Boxing Day we decided to move our base to a higher elevation and caught a bus southwards to Machachi. Machachi is a small town, beside the Panamericana, 50km south of Quito. It is one of the jumping off points for Cotopaxi. Our initial destinations, however, were the Ilinizas, to the west, in the Cordillera Occidental.

We had booked rooms in a Hacienda near the hamlet of El Chaupi. Situated at 3400m, the Hacienda San Jose was described as a suitable location to acclimatise beneath the attractive twin peaks of the Illinizas. It is a working dairy farm run by Rodrigo Peralvo, a

charming Ecuadorian, who was to prove invaluable to the next stage of our plans and with whom we formed an immediate and warm friendship.

What we needed was a break in the weather. I had expected favourable weather conditions during the Christmas period but up to this point we had been disappointed. It had remained overcast, cool and had rained hard during most days. On the way to the Hacienda

San Jose, it deteriorated appreciably into a continuous drenching rain. Snow had been falling regularly above 4500m since well before Christmas.

Although there are the remains of several small glaciers on the north side of Illiniza Sur, Illiniza Norte, at 5126m, is normally a rocky scramble. The clouds parted briefly before darkness fell on our first evening at the Hacienda and we noted with concern that there was fresh snow covering both Illinizas from 4300m! Rodrigo was confident it would improve and we decided to amuse ourselves in the vicinity of the Hacienda and wait for the weather to clear.

Two days later, the rain and the heavy clouds finally dispersed and we woke to find the rays of the sun shining through the curtains. There was broken, high cloud but the summits of the Cordillera Occidental were clear for the first time since our arrival. To the north, the pyramid of El Corazon was plastered in new snow; immediately west, the more rugged twin peaks of the Ilinizas were bathed in sunshine; eastwards, framed between two enormous Eucalyptus trees, the classic, concave upwards outline of Cotopaxi beckoned.

We patted ourselves on the back for delaying our ascent to the Nuevos Horizontes Refuge in the saddle between the Illinizas. It would have been a miserable and fruitless exercise in the rain and snow. We left the Hacienda at12h30 and Rodrigo kindly transported us to the La Virgen starting point at 3900m. It was noticeably cooler as we descended the vehicle and adjusted our rucksack straps for the ascent.

The path climbed diagonally through indigenous woodland, mostly paper bark trees – Polilepsis incana, for the first couple of kilometres. We stopped to rest after an hour and had a drink and a snack. Ahead the track continued at the same incline to the foot of a steep moraine immediately left of a stream. I estimated another hour to this break of slope and we set off again. By this time we had cleared the trees and the tussock grass was giving way to the Alpine zone with scattered, half recognisable flowers set amidst the gravel and rocks. Meanwhile, the Ilinizas had disappeared in an afternoon build up of cloud.

Ten minutes later, we were overtaken by a gaucho leading several horses laden with equipment bags. Clearly others, less heavily

burdened, would be catching us and beds in the small Refuge would be at a premium. Perhaps the rest of the family registered this too, because to my surprise we reached the moraine in less than 40 minutes. I was forced to call a second halt panting for air.

As the trailing parties came into view, we shouldered our rucksacks and addressed the steeper incline of the moraine. The ground underfoot was accommodating and we were able to stay ahead of the following groups. Two thirds of the way up, we reached the snowline and were engulfed in the mist. The gaucho and his horses, minus baggage, re-appeared out of the mist and we knew that the Refuge was only a short way ahead. It began snowing lightly.

We reached the Refuge a few minutes later – a tiny, yellow box looming out of the snow and the mist. Inside, however, it was snug and warm. A single room, with a kitchen area near the door equipped with stoves, sink, running water and gas lamps! So much for the bothy-like description in our guide book! I had laboured up the moraine with a rucksack full of superfluous equipment!

The Guardian and a couple of Ecuadorian Guides were busy in the kitchen preparing food for a group already ensconced at the Refuge. We decided to grab the remaining bunk space as there were clearly more arrivals expected imminently. It was well we did so. There were fourteen bunk beds and a loft area above the kitchen for another four. However, the uppermost bunks on the two four-deckers were untenable because of leaks in the roof and dripping condensation. This left bunk space for sixteen only. I counted the Guardian, his assistant, two Guides and a party of eight Canadians, which meant that I was sleeping on the floor!

Throughout the late afternoon, the hut steadily filled to bursting with new arrivals and by the time our soup and pasta was ready I counted twenty five inmates. Three more arrived in the dark! When the lights were finally extinguished there was barely room to tread between the bodies littering the floor. The atmosphere overnight was thick and oppressive. We did not sleep well.

At 05h00 the Guardian and his assistant rose and got hot water on the boil. By 05h30 the hut was full of climbers packing their kit and getting ready to leave. Like us, most were headed for Illiniza Norte. The three late arrivals from last night had slipped out earlier and

departed for Illiniza Sur. We breakfasted on meagre rations having consumed most of our supplies the night before. By 05h45 we were ready and a few minutes behind the leading party of Canadians we set off from the Refuge in perfectly clear weather.

The snow was crisp underfoot but we had no difficulty kicking steps and settled into a steady rhythm. The new snow had done us a favour and the lower scree was much more consolidated than I had expected. Half way up the scree we zigzagged right to the crest of the East Ridge where the angle eased and scrambled up this to the base of a prominent pinnacle.

We caught up with the Canadians at the pinnacle and found that one of their Guides had fixed a rope to aid the short descent rightwards to the traverse. I judged it straightforward to traverse in horizontally, direct from the ridge below the pinnacle and in so doing we overtook one of the leading groups. My altimeter showed that we had just crossed the 5000m contour.

It was steep, broken terrain but the snow was reasonably firm and there was no need for crampons. We cautiously negotiated an open rock gulley called the Paso de la Meurte and then a rising traverse beneath the East Ridge to a shallow couloir below the summit. Another fixed rope was placed here by one of the Guides with the Canadians.

A further twenty minutes of scrambling up a series of rock ledges, punctuated by welcome pauses for an individual in the party ahead unused to moving on snow-covered broken ground, brought us to the tiny, crowded summit. We shook hands and shared the remains of our soup from last night's meal in the flask. Surprise was expressed at Ed's age and at our being a complete family.

We lingered on the summit for nearly half an hour, without the slightest feelings of discomfort from the altitude, and then began our descent. The fixed rope in the couloir was more useful in reverse as the snow was already becoming much softer in the bright sunshine. The first clouds appeared around 10h00, by which time we were on the lower section of the scree. We reached the Refuge again shortly before 11h00. We had been out for almost five hours.

After mugs of sweet tea, courtesy of the Guardian, and a couple of hours sleep we packed up and began our descent. The mist had

returned and a few large flakes of wet snow were falling. The descent proved uneventful until about half way through the Polilepsis forest a huge shadow appeared on the ground beside us. Gazing upwards a solitary Condor, not 20m away, was skimming the tree tops.

We amused ourselves playing silly games waiting for Rodrigo at the road head and talked to one of the Guides from this morning who was expecting more clients. He confirmed the stories we had been hearing about the higher summits. Cayembe had been climbed but both Cotopaxi and Chimborazo had too much new snow. Cotopaxi had not been climbed for nearly two weeks, because of the avalanche danger posed by heavy snowfall on the upper slopes.

The Guide was wearing an Adventureworks fleece so Sam surprised him by removing an outer layer to reveal his own. The Guide had worked previously for Jagged Globe and had been on Antisana last year with my friend Roger Mear. He was quite taken aback when I told him I had worked in the Antarctic with Roger 25 years ago!

Over breakfast next morning, we decided to head for the Jose Ribas Refuge later that day as the weather looked set fair. We hoped that there would have been several parties blazing a trail to the summit of Cotopaxi that morning. We left the Hacienda San Jose after lunch for the two hour drive with Rodrigo across to the Refuge. Cotopaxi remained hidden in the afternoon clouds but the snow line was clearly visible well below the limit of the glaciers.

There were two or three other cars and a couple of snow boarders amusing themselves in the new snow at the car park below the Refuge. Rodrigo wished us good luck and we headed off into the mist on a zigzagging trail towards the Refuge which appeared above us from time to time through breaks in the cloud. It took nearly an hour to reach the Jose Ribas Refuge which is considerably larger than Nuevos Horizontes and much better equipped. There was plenty of bunk space and we enjoyed our evening meal in comfort and tranquillity.

The news from the Guardian, however, was not as encouraging as we had hoped. Several Guided parties had attempted the summit that morning and had reached 5600m. Unstable snow on the final section had forced them to retreat again. The forecast was for a clear

and cold night and the remaining Guides in the Refuge were keen to try again and seemed confident that the snow conditions would be better.

We tried to grab a few hours sleep as soon as we had eaten and woke again when the first parties began stirring at 22h00. They left the hut around 22h30 and we were kitted up a quarter of an hour later. I had been watching the route they had taken from the door of the Refuge and we followed their tracks approximately half a kilometre to the rear of their winking head torches. The sky was completely clear, but there was no moon and it seemed unnaturally dark. No-one else left the hut behind us.

For the first three quarters of an hour we climbed the moraine to the right of the Refuge and then an ascending traverse to the edge of the glacier without a word spoken. Here we caught up with the leading parties who were roping up and putting on crampons. We did the same wrapped in a muffled silence.

Stepping onto the glacier from the lateral moraine proved straightforward. There was no ice cliff here - the glacier was lower than the moraine! Ahead of us we could count the head torches of approximately 20 people in five groups working their way up the steep snow covered glacier. We crossed several small, well-bridged crevasses and as the ground steepened our rate of progress slowed. It was hard going in the soft, powdery snow.

Around 01h00, I looked back and saw the first sets of lights from parties who had left later making their way onto the glacier behind us. We plodded on gradually catching up with the leading parties again. Some time after 01h30 a German lady, suffering from acute nausea, decided to return to the Refuge with her Guide. Shortly afterwards, I felt the angle of the ground beginning to ease and I cautioned the rest of the family that this heralded the approach of more crevasses. I sensed that Ed, the youngest and third in the line, was a little apprehensive.

I surmised correctly that he had pictured Joe Simpson at the end of the rope, hanging helplessly over the bergschrund on Siula Grande! We stopped and had a little team talk. Continuing once more I pointed out the disturbance in the ground ahead and we reached the first of the larger crevasses. The bridge across was wide

and solid but to either side the crevasse splayed open into yawning chasms.

Ed drew confidence from negotiating this crevasse and once across relaxed again as we plodded onwards and upwards. I don't remember anyone commenting on the next few crevasses. A second party comprising a German couple and another of the Guides retreated from 5300m with altitude sickness. 'We are not the Weakest Link!' came an encouraging squeaky voice from behind me as we left them sorting out their rope. How grateful I was for those extra nights with Rodrigo at 3400m!

Then I became conscious that Sam, bringing up the rear was feeling slightly uncomfortable. Perhaps some of this discomfort was due to his position in the line. At the next rest we reversed order and he went out in front, but this only partially alleviated the problem. Denise sensed an imminent explosion and a well-timed comfort break in front of a steep ramp across a snowed-filled crevasse proved both decisive and opportune!The ground steepened again and we found ourselves on a narrowing, elevated ridge of snow with crevasses on either side. There was a strong cross wind blowing from the left hand side and I noticed that there was sufficient spin drift to partially fill the steps made by the party ahead.

Next, Ash began complaining about the cold. I judged this to be exacerbated by the wind and hoped that we would soon get into the lee of the upper slopes and the prominent rock band. However, the wind continued and all we could do was muffle up and try to shield ourselves as best we could. It was at this point that I realised that Ash's anorak hood was not completely covering the side of her head and we stopped to adjust it. It was partially trapped and frozen beneath one of her rucksack straps. Once clear, it covered her head more satisfactorily and this seemed to solve the problem.

And then suddenly the looming mass of the summit came into view above the rock band as the glacier levelled off for 100m. It looked much closer and for the first time I began to entertain hopes of success. We paused for a mouthful of tea in the shelter of an impressive ice cliff festooned with icicles. Ahead of us the lights of the leading parties showed that the ground steepened dramatically

The Ice Cliff festooned with icicles beneath Yanasacha, Cotopaxi.

Hamer Party approaching the rim of Cotopaxi's summit crater at 5,897m with the distinctive dawn shadow of the volcano cast between the snow-capped Ilinizas and El Corazon

towards the rim of the crater. This was the area where the Guides had retreated the previous day.

Fortified by the tea and a few nuts we set off again slowly inching our way upwards. The party of three immediately ahead were going slowly and one member of their team had to be roped up a short section of steep, icy snow. I decided to do the same for our party and this slowed our rate of progress even more. I was thoroughly chilled when Sam finally joined us in my improvised bucket seat and I needed to stamp my feet vigorously to get the circulation going.

Spin drift was obliterating the footsteps we were following. I tried to accelerate to catch up with the party immediately ahead of us in order to make foot placements easier, but this proved impossible and

we continued at our own pace laboriously kicking our own trail. Dawn was breaking and the sky rapidly lightened in the east. I realised with a thrill that it was New Year's Eve!

Another short steep ramp, with a huge crevasse opening to our left, enabled us to gain access to a narrow horizontal corridor in a snow-filled crevasse. A short, but impending, ice wall blocked upward progress but the route continued leftwards along the corridor to a steep, snow-covered ramp in the ice cliff. We scaled the ramp and the angle eased briefly.The parties ahead were strung out on the final section. The summit dome was within reach. We just had to keep plodding on. It was 05h30 and I knew my party was tired. The snow was powdery and soft. My boots sank to mid-calf. Emotions were running high, but I knew we could make it now and kept plodding slowly on.

As the steeper ground eased off, I caught the unmistakable whiff of sulphur in the air and realised that we were almost there. Naturally my pace quickened but the others were still toiling up the steep section below me and were unable to respond. I slackened off and we inched forward onto the summit platform.

Tears and hugs. We'd done it! 'Where is the English family? We have been asking this all night!' said one of the Guides with the German party as they came across to shake our hands. 'And how old are you?' – they asked Ed. Three of them shook his hand vigorously and congratulated him. He visibly swelled with pride and reddened with embarrassment. So did his Dad. We were the first parties to reach the summit for nearly two weeks.

We lingered there for twenty minutes in the warm sunshine enjoying the panoramic view, staring into the steaming crater and taking a few photographs. Chimborazo was clearly visible to the south, together with the active volcano Sangay emitting clouds of ash-laden steam. To the northwest the line of the Cordillera Occidental continued from the Illinizas to El Corazon, already free of snow, to the Pichinchas. The delicate pinks of the sunrise were fading on Antisana and Cayembe to the north. It had taken us seven and a half hours to reach the summit. No-one seemed to be suffering from the effects of altitude.

Sam led off for the descent and we made quick progress to the ramp. I explained that this was the snowed up aluminium ladder, mentioned in the route description, across the bergschrund. No-one had realised this on the way up. The steep icy section proved easier in descent, but we were glad to get off the upper slopes as the snow was softening rapidly. We came out into bright, early morning sunshine again on the shoulder beyond the ice cliff festooned with icicles. I was glad that the darkness had hidden some of the more dramatic scenery from view during our ascent.

We un-roped and de-cramponed at the edge of the glacier and fifteen minutes later reached the hut. It was 10h30. We had been out for almost twelve hours! I was mentally and physically exhausted and once I had taken off my boots slipped into a state of blissful quiescence.

Everyone except Ed and myself grabbed two hours much needed sleep. Ed and I chatted in the dining area and worked our way through the breakfast leftovers of previous parties! Then we packed and set off down the main track direct for the car park where much to our relief we found Rodrigo already waiting. I think he was as delighted with our success as we were! Ten minutes later we were speeding away from Cotopaxi. Only Rodrigo and I were awake!

We cruised into the outer suburbs of Quito around sunset. There was abundant evidence of the forthcoming New Year's Eve festivities on the streets, with effigies ready for ceremonial burning and crowds of young, male Ecuadorians in drag at all the traffic lights demanding payment to secure safe passage. Rodrigo was pre-armed with a supply of boiled sweets and chocolate bars to satiate these lusty 'maidens'.

He dropped us off at a hostel run by his sister near the Basilica. We had a meal at a Chinese restaurant around the corner that was delayed by a fracas between the cook and a customer which spilled out onto the street and threatened to become a general affray. The arrival of a machine pistol-toting policeman calmed things down.

For the first time in many years we did not see in the New Year!

During the last few days of our holiday we took a bus eastwards through the Cordillera Oriental and descended through the cloud forest to the edge of the Amazon basin. Three days trekking in these

remarkably diverse forests provided a fitting contrast to the austerity of the higher peaks.

Edward Whymper spent several months in the Avenue of the Volcanoes – the Hamer Family a little over three weeks. It is not recorded whether Whymper made a visit to the Galapagos Islands, which are now by far the most popular and the most widely known tourist destination in Ecuador. We had neither the time nor the funds for such an excursion. Back home the children's exploits drew uncomprehending responses from their friends. 'Why go all that way just to climb a few volcanoes?' they quipped. Whymper would have both understood and sympathised with their predicament.

Nordic Ski Touring as it can be!

The Frost Report - Finger nippin' good

A Ski-mountaineer's Tale

Jim Gregson

Ski touring in the mountains. Blue skies. Sunshine. Sparkling snow. No wind. That's what we all like to remember. We all park away in the deeper recesses of our minds the less attractive aspects of our mountain ventures - the fog, the flat light, the vicious wind, the ski-snagging sastrugi, the cursed breakable snow crust, in your face snowfall, and we tell ourselves and our friends that we had a great time. Mostly. And usually we did.

But every once in a while the mountains bite back.

Just a few weeks ago, I was with my wife part way through our customary winter ski mountaineering trip in Norway's Jotunheimen range. We'd done a few good tops, found some excellent telemark downhill running, toured some distance visiting three different huts, and also met some old acquaintances and friends. But the weather had now deteriorated and we had to sit out a day or two of high winds and snowstorms.

At the comfortable hut where we were staying, the power suddenly failed and the staff worked to bring the auxiliary generator system into use - as well as lighting up dozens of candles. News eventually came through that a big avalanche some distance away in another valley had not only taken out the power lines, but had even carried away some of the pylons too, so there was no quick fix.

By now we were two days behind our original schedule, so the next day as we checked out I asked the hut manager, a good friend of ours, to try to phone ahead to the next hut but one where we had a reservation, to tell the people there that we were coming albeit later than intended. Our immediate destination was an unstaffed hut, normally just a fairly easy day's skiing away, a journey we had made many times in previous tours. The weather outlook was marginally better than the last few days, and we reckoned we could follow the marked route and hopefully travel in the lee of mountains along the way. We said our goodbyes to our friend and headed off.

The norm in Norway in winter is for main hut to hut routes to be marked at close intervals with twiggy tree branches or sticks plunged

into the snow every ten or fifteen metres, usually visible even in fog. It was our misfortune that this winter in Norway had been one of relatively scant snowfall and very frequent and persistent high winds. Thus on some routes many of the sticks were missing, fallen or knocked down by wind, so in a big blow of spindrift and fog it was blind travel. This system of marking has become the Norwegian norm over some years, following a tragedy involving the deaths from exposure of some schoolchildren who were caught out in atrocious weather.

As we progressed along our way the weather didn't do us any favours, but we pressed on as we felt we knew the route quite well and we were old hands at this game. We were to find that more and more of the sticks were missing and we had to make more compass checks than usual. Sadly for us, the wind did not comply with the forecast information and instead of being sheltered going into the lee of bigger mountains we enlisted ourselves into a veritable battle with the elements.

The Norwegians have a saying for mountain travellers : "Det er ingen skam aa snu" – "There is no disgrace in turning back". By the time this was revolving through my mind we had reached well over half distance for the day, and were on the frozen surface of a big lake which the route traverses. Here, where the wind had whipped away most of the snow we finally lost contact with all of the marker sticks. Indeed, the sticks themselves had lost contact and were all blown down and invisible to us. We tried to continue but the wind rose to a shriek, full into our faces, knocking us about, and the light seemed to be failing. In Norwegian terms, the weather had gone from "Sterk kuling" to "Liten storm" (and a bit more) or as we would say from Gale Force 8 to Strong Gale Force 9. Time for a decision, based on years of experience and judgement. I stopped and pulled my wife close to convey my thoughts.

We could try to go back the way we'd come, but we would not make it to our start point before darkness. We could battle on into the storm, but we knew that the way forward involved more climbs and descents and into a headwind we would be slow, and again darkness would capture us. Or - we could decide to make a bivouac, while sufficient light remained for us to make ourselves secure, if not

comfortable. After all, on a ski tour do we not normally carry shovels, a bivi sack, headtorches, sleepmats and even a lightweight sleeping bag each? We also had in our sacks food and two thermos flasks with hot juice in them. Sure it would be cold, but in a difficult situation needs must.

We agreed the decision. We would try to find a suitable spot to dig in and with luck find enough depth for a snowhole. Now, the middle of a frozen lake with only a few centimetres of snow on top of the ice would be a poor piece of real estate for an overnight stop. On the northern shore our prospects for finding a better location would be more favourable. Mindful of avoiding placing ourselves in the track of a potential avalanche we cast about on the lowest slopes of a big loomimg mountain. As it was a thin year for snow we had to look for a while before settling on a likely spot by some prominent boulders. Above, we judged the slope to be too steep and craggy to be loaded with too much snow, so commenced to dig with a will. We estimated that just over an hour of daylight now remained so there was urgency in our actions.

The fact of the thin snow year soon became painfully obvious. Our pit in the snow fairly soon bottomed out onto bedrock and stones before it had a really useful volume. Swearing gently, we now had no option but to build up a surrounding wall of snow to improve our meagre shelter into something which would give better protection. We shovelled furiously like a pair of demented stokers, elevating the wall until we felt we'd piled up enough snow. We also realised that our enclosure would provide only a sitting bivouac, with not enough space to lie out extended. As darkness fell we unshipped the foam mats to sit and lean on, and drew the thin red nylon of the bivi sack over our heads. Our rucksacks, with food and drink, were close to hand. As we settled in for a long night we accepted that this was for real. We were on our own; nobody else would have a clue as to our whereabouts, but we knew exactly where we were - in a hole!

As the night wore on, slowly but inexorably, we tried to talk to wear down the hours. We could eat quite readily from our stock of victuals, but decided we would eke out the thermos contents at intervals through the dark hours. The interior of the bivi sack gradually grew damp from condensation of our exhaled breath and the air

staled. Every once in a while we raised the hem of the sack to re-oxygenate our flimsy cell, at the expense of admitting copious amounts of very chilled air. We shivered, we shook, we rubbed, we wriggled, we jostled each other - to keep awake and to keep warm. The closed-cell sleepmats were a godsend, insulating us from the cold surface on which we sat, but after some hours we became more and more aware of lumps and bumps in the underlying icy rocks making an uncomfortable impression on our posteriors. The restricted legroom also led to some episodes of agonising cramp.

But, on the bright side, the wind eventually began to die away and the sky cleared somewhat. The temperature outside the sack took the opportunity to plummet, until we reckoned it had fallen to about minus 18 Celsius. This night was far from being a walk in the park. Drawing on reserves of psychological fortitude, stored away over many years of experience of Scottish winters, alpine climbing and expeditions to the High Arctic, plus all our previous sojourns here in Norway, we pulled ourselves towards dawn. As the light began to pick up and improve we decided that as soon as feasible we would emerge from our frosty cocoon, repack our kit and get on our way. Needing to pass water we clambered from the damp confines of the bivi sack - and were instantly frozen into suits of frigid armour. Our clothing creaked as we moved and we were clumsy in stuffing things away in our rucksacks.

With chattering teeth we looked around us, eyed up the weather, and checked our map very carefully. As the usual marked route was not in reality now marked, we decided to ignore it in favour of a contouring line into the next valley, which would lead unerringly towards the hut which was our destination of yesterday. In fact, there are two huts in close proximity, and we knew that there were supposed to be carpenters there making improvements and alterations. We reckoned that they would have the wood stove burning and water close to boiling. We clipped back into our ski bindings and a little stiffly moved off from the site of our big night out. Gradually we warmed a little, apart from our hands and fingers. We gained the next valley, where thankfully some of the marker sticks remained standing. As the sun rose, so too did our spirits and we increased our

speed. Where the markers for our original route should have re-appeared there was nothing but untracked snow.

The hut we were trying to reach the previous night

We closed on the two huts, hoping for the welcome whiff of woodsmoke but nothing met our nostrils. As we neared the buildings it was obvious that it was the upper hut which had been receiving the carpenters' attentions, but we were a little put off by a scatter of lengths of timber with long protruding nails, probably thrown about by the fierce winds. We repaired to the front of the smaller, lower hut, the one we usually used. No sign of life. We had a key for the standard padlock used on most unattended Norwegian huts, so we knew we could get in. But not just yet!

The building was very drifted up, almost to the eaves, and the door itself was invisible beneath a couple of cubic metres of wind-hardened blown snow. More shovelling - what a delight! At first it was slow going with our relatively small touring shovels, but we knew there should be a big hut shovel close by. There was - hanging on the

wall next to the buried door, sharing its snowy entombment! Suddenly, a brainwave - these huts have earth closet toilets and there is often a big shit shovel. If we found it we could press it into service to uncover the door. We did and we did, but only after a full thirty minutes of digging and hefting.

At last we could enter to familiar surroundings, as we have stayed here many times over the years. Soon we had the stove lit up with crackling wood, water on the hob, albeit from melting ice, and we installed ourselves as the sole occupying party. We drank, we ate, we ate, we drank. We toasted ourselves back to life by the stove. Nobody else turned up so we could spread ourselves and luxuriate in the warmth. We fired up the drying room stove too and had all of our frosted kit hung up to dry off. Outside, the sun shone and the wind sank away, and we rested.

That night we slept deeply and comfortably, for Norwegian huts are very well set up. The clear sky allowed the temperature to fall very sharply beyond the wooden walls. The window thermometer was reading minus 21 Celsius when we checked early the next morning. But as the sun rose and flooded the valley with sparkling light, we began to become more aware of the legacy of our night out in the open. Our hands, and fingers in particular, were still quite wooden and manipulating small objects was not so easy. We had no blisters but there was clearly a good dose of severe frostnip - and this was not fully recovered even several weeks later. We'd now need to be even more careful, particularly having to avoid touching metal objects with bare hands.

Fortunately, as we packed to leave we could see that this day would be one of the ones dreamed about - glittering snow, blue sky and flat calm air, a ski mountaineer's delight. We wound our way up over a steep pass and swooped down the other side in graceful curves, surrounded by a grand array of peaks. We crossed another frozen lake and skinned up into a narrow valley with a final wind-sculpted col at its watershed before a running descent of several kilometres into and along a final valley to the mountain lodge here we were now three days overdue.

The people there were relieved to see us roll up at last. As we had been unable to contact them, they had telephoned and e-mailed

round the staffed hut system to try to find out if we had been seen. We later learned that they had been asking about "the British couple", and that another hut guardian friend of ours had asked for a name-check. On learning that it was in fact us who were supposed to be missing, he had simply re-assured everyone that "Those two, they know what they are doing in the mountains, and they will be alright. There will be a good reason why they are delayed". A generous assessment, and so it proved.

Our tour was far from over, and we had more testing days over the next week. We skied glaciers new to us and topped out on summits which we have long coveted. But the time came for us to fly home soon enough. The fingers? At the time of writing they're still not completely recovered. They've shed layers of skin, but the sense of touch is not yet perfect. We'd had an interesting if uncomfortable episode, but we had measured ourselves up to the demands of the situation and come through mostly smiling. More memories to keep on deposit in the bank of experience.

Approaching the summit of Copa, 6188m

Popping Down to Peru

Jamie Goodheart

My foot broke through the snow's crust for what felt like one time too many; I was knackered. I asked Nick to take over breaking trail. Our little party had been on the move for eight hours, and I'd broken trail for over six of those, the major downside of being comparatively well acclimatised! I trudged on after Nick. We were at 6100m, the highest I had ever climbed, the sun was shining and the summit of Copa (6188m) was less than 100 metres above us. I was getting a rest from breaking trail and was with a great group of people who I had fortuitously bumped into. It was glorious, although the wind and my headache in thinning air didn't give me much of a chance to enjoy it.

In a few minutes we saw the summit step from from a new anglet, and with a sense of relief. It had not looked too easy while approaching across the plateau and thoughts of failure had been brewing, darkened by breaking trail. As we reached the step I took the lead again. On belay, and with some trepidation due to the thousand metre drop to my left, I climbed the final slightly dodgy snow slope and arrived on the summit.

I belayed Nick, Al and Dave up to me and we sat along the ridge grinning like little children. It was the first 6000 metre peak for Nick, Dave and I, and it felt all the more deserved because of my two failures on Chopicalqui (6354m). The last had been a few day before, where I spent my birthday at 4000m tending to Nick who was mainly tending to his bowels.

I had headed to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru after a trip to the Caucasus had fallen through when the Russians wouldn't let us in. The others were content to go to the Alps, but I had a couple of months and it could be my last long stretch for years, so I wanted to go somewhere more exotic. I popped to the Alpine Club library and started looking round the world for ranges which were higher than I had been before and in condition in July and August. Crucially they also needed to be near somewhere I'd be able to find climbing partners. In the end, assisted by Derek Buckle, the Cordillera Blanca and

the town of Huaraz were settled upon and I booked my extortionate plane tickets.

Just over a month later I stumbled off my overnight coach in Huaraz and was ushered by the usual press of shouting drivers into an obligatory overpriced taxi (it's just not worth haggling at 6am in a new town). Two minutes later I arrived at 'Joe's Place', my home for six weeks. It is just as wonderfully chaotic as the guidebook suggests and normally contains British mountaineers, often camping in the courtyard. It was too early for rooms so I was asked to wait with similarly bleary-eyed Dan, who like me had also just come off an overnight coach from Lima. We got chatting and two days later we were at the road head for the Ishinca (5200m) having our bags attached to the North Face Donkey. This was pretty much how I met all my climbing partners in Peru.

Yanapaccha (5460m) was an interesting climb. There were three guided parties on the mountain, and we let them leave for the summit an hour and half before us. At this point Nick (my new climbing partner) and I were pretty fit and acclimatised. We had caught a taxi directly from the Pisco (5752m) roadhead (3000m), having climbed up and down Alpine style in a little over thirty hours, slightly different from the Jagged Globe expedition we met when arriving back at base camp who had twenty laden donkeys, and I definitely saw six bottles of Champagne go up! But each to their own! Anyway, a conveniently broken trail let us catch the other groups by the time we reached the technical(ish) section leading to the summit ridge. It wasn't really all that technical and in fact I did very little technical climbing while in Peru, mainly because I didn't know my climbing partners well enough. However, Yanapaccha and Copa both involved pitches and abseiling. The climb from here was both delightful and eventful. It was about 75 metres up to the ridge, and the climbing was secure and enjoyable, my axes bit satisfyingly and rhythmically. Nick took over the lead and brought me up to the ridge where we were met by the sun and a fabulous view down and east over the mountains and onto the weather producing Amazon rainforest. We cracked on up the ridge and were almost at the summit when we found one of the guided parties seemingly going down the West Face This was weird, so I asked what they were up to. It turned out one of

the clients had dropped their ice axe and the guide was just down climbing to see if he could get it. On we went. We reached the summit just after the last party had left. It was truly lovely, so I reached for my camera only to find its battery had been killed by the cold. However fret not, Steve Jobs (RIP) came to my rescue and I turned my iphone on and took some surprisingly good photos with it.

It crossed my mind that Kenton Cool had just twittered from Everest, so I thought well why not, turned my data roaming on and Facebooked the photo from Yanapaccha (is this the first mention of Facebook in a Fell and Rock Journal?). I was quite pleased with myself.

Anyway we turned for home and about twenty minutes later we came across another of the guided groups seemly climbing up the South side of the ridge. Again I asked what was going on, and apparently a girl in the party had climbed down the East face for a pee away from prying eyes. Unfortunately though her camera had fallen out her pocket while she was doing her stuff and they were going to see if they could retrieve it! At this point there was a bit of a queue to abseil and I saw a rucksack on the ground. I looked around and everyone was wearing one, oh dear! It turned out that the guide of the peeing party had abseiled off without it. So I put it on and followed after, I caught them just as they'd finished roping up for the glacier. The guide was completely unaware that anything was amiss! It turned out to be a good thing though as we got a free lift all the way to Huaraz for services rendered.

My final climb of the trip was the one I was looked forward to the most, Artesonraju (6025m). This is fabled to be the peak from the Patagonia logo, and chosen for good reason, as it in many way looks like the definitive snowy mountain.

I had linked up with Stuart and we wanted to try something a little more technical (although still only Alpine D). The Paron valley was very different from the busy Ishinca valley where I began my trip. Past the lake, which is a minor tourist attraction, and dominated by the spectacular Pyramide de Garcilaso (5885m), Stuart and I were totally alone.

As we turn north east at the end of the lake we suddenly saw Artesonraju peering down on us in her full glory. It was mesmerising

watching the clouds seemingly being drawn into her face (see video on FRCC website). At the end of the lake and for the two hundred vertical metres up the moraine was a mysterious fly zone. People do put base camps here, but it must be miserable as we were being bitten, bothered and swatted incessantly. Just after the flies suddenly disappeared we found a wonderful little wooded camp. It was by a stream in a tiny valley formed between the lateral moraine and the valley wall proper. It was lower than we had planned to camp, but the running water and soft camping seemed too good an opportunity to miss. The next day we climbed to our intended campsite with its spectacular views of the glacier below and Artesonraju above, but it was rocky, windy and seemingly dry and we were glad of our dreaming amongst the trees. The loose terrain dropping down to the glacier from here was undoubtedly the most dangerous part of my whole trip. We felt like ducks in a shooting gallery and we took turns standing look out as the other ran across the scree and dived for cover

Huandoy Norte

as rocky volleys ripped down through a series of small decaying gullies. It was then a plod up the glacier to a camp surrounded by a ring of peaks which seemed to have been planned specifically to show off Andean flutings. Later looking out onto Huandoy Norte (6395m) with its trail of cloud red in the setting sun, I was truly happy (see video on the FRCC website).

Now this sunset is important, red sky at night shepherd's delight and all that. Unfortunately not! It is the other way around if the prevailing weather comes from the East. We awoke to no stars, and headed up the dark steepening glacier. The going wasn't difficult, but it was complicated. In an hour or so we reached a wall, which loomed above us and looked too hard to be the start of the face, we must have come too far left, so down and right we went. Sometime later we were climbing Scottish III type ground. Despite the hollow snow we shot up quickly. We were alone at sunrise in a Peruvian valley, climbing fast at 5000m. It felt brilliant. As the light began to give the clouds substance, the summit swirled past above us, once, then again, and then, we realised.... We were miles off route, instead of down and right we should have gone up and left. Very annoyed we traversed left and saw a vertical rock band, serac band and then another rock band separating us from the face. It was a bridge too far and soon we were hammering in snow stakes and abseiling for

Artesonraju

home, and it really was home. It was time to head to Coventry. I vow I will climb Artesonraju one day.

I had a wonderful time in Peru; I attempted ten peaks in all and would suggest that for anyone with more than three weeks the Cordillera Blanca offers a viable wilder, higher, remoter and more adventurous alternative to the Alps for a not altogether dissimilar price. Go for it!

To finish here is a collection of information, hints and advice:

- Spanish is really useful and you need to learn at least some to be independent (but don't be put off, I don't speak Spanish, you just need to try a bit). Huaraz is pronounced Whaa-ass, not Hoo Raz which was my attempt for the first week.
- Taxi's anywhere in Huarazare three Sol.
- Organising partners before you go isn't necessary, but is a good plan.
- Guides are a fraction of the cost of Europe.There is a brilliant guidebook (Classic Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca (2009 revised edition), Brad Johnson, Cordee distribute, Circa £25)
- Andre from Andean Kingdom is a great guy and will give you free advice and information.
- There is great bolted climbing at Hatun Machay.
- I would strongly suggest against trying to borrow a donkey from an old crone if you want to get home.
- It is quite possible that all three taxis in any village are broken; and if they are you will be invited to inspect them.
- If you buy a locally made snow stake ensure you can't bend it by hand and that the hole for the tat doesn't have a sharp serrated edge (both happened to me).
- Don't go too high too quickly on Chopicalqui.
- There are four Alpine style huts in the Cordillera Blanca, which get variable use, but the culture is not to use them.
- Diamox can produce a tingly beard.

Finally, in case you were wondering, the good news was that the ice axe on Yanapaccha was recovered, but unfortunately the camera was not.

Jamie climbed with Nick Whimster, Alex Shipp, Dave Bloomfield, Stuart Lade and Dan Bland. Please get in touch if you'd like more information about climbing in this part of the world.

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Artesonraju stood there proud,
High amongst the Swirling cloud
A pyramid of ice and snow
Peering down on us below

Her great white face we were to climb
In six hours of clock stopped time
So off we set in early morn
Climbing steady though till dawn

Axe bit ice and spindrift ran
Hampering the lower man
Then with first light she did appear
But to the left which seemed quite queer

Soon we realised we were wrong
But yet still going strong
A right not left we did take
On the glacier for heaven's sake

We tried to rectify our way
But with each step came on the day
Traversing up the hollow snow
Only serac and rock would show

Time won't stop despite our need
And down we had to make our lead
Knowing the error on our route
Was only ours to boot

One day I will return
A desire to summit in me will burn
The high top of that glorious peak
I will make, and no longer seek.

Ready for action ! - the team at the airstrip to the east of the Schuchert Valley, on the east side of the Stauning Alps

Greenland– Stauning Alps 2011 - Taking Sam for a Walk

Ron Kenyon

I have tended to keep holidays to two week periods, with trips to Europe and the States, but never been to the Arctic or the Greater Ranges. With retirement approaching I had more time to go off to places. Baffin Island came to mind and thoughts of Mount Asgard – I bought the guidebook (yes there is one – interesting reading !), bought a map and found out more about it and approaches. I tried to get a team but there was only Eric Parker keen to go. One day Stephen Reid contacted me, mentioning that Colwyn Jones was looking to get a team together to go to the Stauning Alps, under an SMC Expedition. Colwyn had been many times before and this seemed a much more feasible idea than Baffin – especially after having spoken to someone who had been to Baffin for a month and had three days good weather! The Staunings are known as the Arctic Riviera because of the excellent weather which they usually enjoy – due apparently to the dry winds blowing off the Greenland ice cap rather than from the sea.

A team was assembled with initially eight then seven going for July 2011. We had the expertise of Colwyn and his previous expeditions there and also the previous expedition reports. The idea was to land on the Sefstrom Gletscher, by Twin Otter, and spend some time there before moving over to the Storgletscher and climbing before being airlifted out. I had seen Stephen Reid give a talk on the previous expedition, with Colwyn, which had mentioned problems with soft snow and of the skids on the front end of the plane having sunk into the snow and experiencing a worrying time when relaunching the plane. Our transport was being arranged by Fridrik Adolfsson (Frissi) of Norlandair – and in April we received indication that they would not be able to land on the glacier due to the soft snow envisaged in July. We then had an option of either being landed at the bottom end of the Storgletscher, but not on the glacier, from where we would have to transport our gear up into the mountains, or be flown in by helicopter which would be very expensive. We

reviewed the options and chose the former. This would unfortunately limit the time we had to climb and also restrict where we could go, with only one base location. Two of the seven decided not to go, however the remaining five (for better, for worse !) decided to go for it – Colwyn, Eric, Graeme Tough and Martin Fitzsimons and me.

As with all good expeditions we had had our first team meeting in a pub, in Edinburgh, and then met at Muir of Inverey, one weekend, for Colwyn's final Corbett. The arrangements were made; we obtained additional gear from Needlesports with a generous discount from Stephen, and also obtained some sponsorship from Tunnocks and collected our wafers and logs from their place in Uddingston. We gathered at Glasgow airport for the flight to Reykjavik and then internal to Akureyri on the north coast of Iceland. Blue skies and some snow on the fells greeted us here. We arranged to meet up with Frissi to discuss the flights – however he indicated that there was problem with the landing site at the bottom of the valley. This had not been used for about ten years, it was covered with alluvial debris and some rocks and they were not sure if it was possible to land there. As an alternative there was a possible site further south or more likely on the other side of the valley at a col. With not much option we went for the col but would have a look first at the valley landing site to check it out.

After an extra day at Akureyri, due to bad weather over Greenland, we loaded our gear and climbed expectantly into the Twin Otter. Soon the icy Denmark Straights were below us and two hours later the coast of Greenland with its 'icy mountains' appeared. Flying across the Scoresby Sund we landed at Constable Point, the main air hub in this area. The scale of the region is difficult to appreciate. The east coast of Greenland is 2000 miles long but only 2000 people live there. The west coast is relatively warmer and has a higher population. This is a coastal area with snow on the mountains nearby. We were handed 'the gun' and ammo. Eventually we set off for the Staunings, flying across a huge area of nondescript (probably not nondescript to a geologist!) fells. With the Staunings to our west we inspected the possibility of landing on the valley floor but this was not on – so we flew up the valley and had a look at the proposed base camp and the surrounding mountains (getting our money's worth!)

and then flew back over to the col on the other side of the valley and landed ! What a place! There was no snow in this area and the hills were rather like Scottish peaks, with the main Stauning Alps to our west on the other side of the valley. All the gear was unloaded and the plane flew off (this was Wednesday) and we planned to see it again in two weeks.

It would not be feasible to get all the gear to the base camp so we decided to leave as much as possible and take the rest in a rucksack and also in a bag on a sledge (we had hoped to be on snow all the time). After some target practice with the gun we set off down towards the river – with thought that we would be across that and camped on the other side by the evening. As mentioned the scale was difficult to comprehend and sometime later we camped well before the river. What a view ! With twenty four hours of daylight the vegetation grows well. Bird life is plentiful and we had a visiting Arctic Fox checking us out overnight. The following morning we reached the river – to find that it was about one kilometre wide with various channels blocking our way. We set to go across – having to do double carries of our gear. The speed of the currents varied but slowly increased as the day progressed - though we did not appreciate that this was happening. We weaved our way across and thought we had made it but came to one channel which was not safe to cross and we decided to regroup and have a break. We became aware that we were getting quite cold and decided to retreat. We realised then that the river was rising and were relieved to regain the east bank again ! Now what? Do we stay here and have another go early in the morning or do we go upstream and cross higher up? We tried again but no joy. We continued to head up the valley and off we went, somewhat resigned to carting the gear along. We tried to cross higher up the valley but here the river narrowed to one channel where the water thundered along fast and deep. Just upstream there was a huge terminal moraine through which the channel cut. This channel cut off any possibility of gaining the western side of the valley without going through the moraine and probably over the glaciers. With double carries necessary it would probably take about four days to gain a point about 50 yards away on the other side of the river!

Crossing the river

We camped just below the moraines in a most pleasant place and discussed the situation. The moraine looked horrendous to cross and the only route now was back down the valley to try again in the early morning. There were signs of humans in the area with some wooden pegs in the ground and also some markers which we believed were for seismic surveys – linked to the potential mining of molybdenum in the area – but whether these people had managed to cross the river was unknown. Next day it was back down the valley, dragging my sledge behind me – I was beginning to realise that the design was not the best with its narrow base. I was however creating a link with it (Sam – it had acquired a name) and starting a conversation - it was maybe only a plastic sledge but we were starting to bond! His problem of turning over was a pain but we battled on – grass was best to run on – stony ground was difficult – and a rocky crag was impossible. The day progressed and eventually we gained a campsite at about the same place we had been to the day before. There was an island in the river. We had a few hours to fill so we settled down for a rest. While we were there a family of musk ox, with two calves, came wandering along the island to have a look at us – and needless to say we of them. What a sight – these fine animals in their true environment.

Our first camp was nearby, where we had left some provisions and gear – we decided to leave some more gear and went up to the dump with this. Early the next morning we set off across the river; though chilly we weaved our way across, tension built as each channel was conquered. It seemed unrelenting but eventually we gained the other side. We were somewhat wet but relieved. After drying things out and having built a cairn to mark our crossing point we set off up the slope towards the valley we planned to ascend. There was a massive lateral moraine in the valley rising to two hundred feet above the valley floor. We gained the top and made our way along just above the moraine on initially reasonable terrain. Martin persisted with dragging his sledge – the rest of us with double carries, which was slow progress. We gradually made progress but had some disheartening ups and downs. Time was ticking by and a campsite was needed – with water. Colwyn went ahead with determination and discovered such a campsite with a view over the valley and the bottom end of the glacier. We were slowly getting there – tomorrow we could be on the glacier!

In the morning I climbed the little hillock next to the campsite – we called it Col's Knoll – now adorned with a cairn. After packing up it was off again, gradually rising above the valley floor until we reached a point just past the bend in the valley where could almost see our proposed base camp. Here doubts started to surface. The glacier in the valley floor was quite a long way below with steep and loose moraine to be negotiated – was this safe with it having to be crossed fifteen times by the five of us? Getting onto the moraine looked challenging with glacial streams flowing down the valley. As the sledges were now in a bad state it might take us two or three days to gain the base camp, giving us only a few days before we would have to return. Was it worth the flog in – and we then had to get back – and what about the river? All these concerns were discussed. Eventually we agreed to call it a day and head back. We all had mixed feelings. So much time spent in organising the trip. We had not even reached the glacier – but in this environment safety and awareness is so important. After taking photos of our location we returned to our previous camp site. We were on the way back so we could get rid of some of the weight – especially the fuel. Unlike petrol

the kerosene does not ignite too quickly and it has to be vaporised before it will burn - hence the complicated ignition system for the stoves.

In due time we made our way back – we had a better plan for our return journey – I did a double carry and the others carried everything in one carry which was much quicker. Eventually we gathered to overlook 'that valley' again and then descended to our river crossing point for a camp. We decided on an early start to attempt to cross the river and at about 6.00am we were ready to go. However the temperature for the last few days had been well above freezing and the river was flowing quickly. We worked our way up and down the river trying to find a way across. At one point Martin was carried away with the flow and badly injured his legs. We attempted a section with a rope but this didn't work so we decided to go back to the side of the river and reassess the situation. First thing was the sat-phone – however the battery was flat. We had had a radio but for some reason we could receive but not transmit – and we had the emergency beacon, but, with plenty of food, we were not in an emergency situation YET! We had a solar panel with which we hoped to charge the battery for the sat-phone – but none of the adaptors fitted the sat-phone battery.

Suddenly there was the sound of a helicopter which was flying along the other side of the valley to the work camp near where we had camped days ago. We grabbed yellow and silver foil sheets and waved these but there was no reaction from the helicopter. The helicopter flew out again. We decided to go up the valley to opposite the work camp – taking the sheets and the gun. We positioned ourselves with a view of the camp and waited in hope. We had five bullets in the gun and fired one off in hope that someone would hear it – but no one appeared – four bullets left! We eventually heard the helicopter but could not see it. Then saw it, well over to the west of the valley at 12,000 feet, having a look at the Staunings. It then made it way back round to the work camp and landed. Two guys got out and we let the engine stop and then fired off another shot but no reaction – three bullets left! We watched them through binoculars and after about ten minutes we fired another shot and waved our sheets. Through the binoculars we could see them looking our way – then

they got into the helicopter and it was heading towards us. F...ING GREAT! The helicopter landed and two rather bemused guys, Bernt and Gerhard, stepped out of their awesome helicopter to greet us. We explained what had happened and they agreed to return and communicate with the outside world and come back in the morning – then set off back to base.

This left us somewhat relieved as we descended the valley to the camp. In the morning we waited expectantly for the sound of the helicopter; eventually we heard it and soon Bernt and Gerhard landed to greet us all. The plan was to take us across the river and for us to retrieve all the gear. They would take another load out from the work camp and the come back and take us out to their base at Carlsberg Fjord then return for our gear. The flight did not take too long in the helicopter but made us realise how remote we were. Along a long valley and over other valleys with a number of musk ox below. We crossed the icy Fleming Fjord and then arrived at their base at Carlsberg Fjord (the best fjord in the world!). This is the centre of operations of a Chinese / English consortium looking for copper in the area – with about ten Chinese geologists, a Polish/Danish site manger, a Danish odd-job man, three Inuits, a Malasian and Thai cooking team and Bernt and Gerhard, with their helicopter, from Austria. Their camp/home had been set up about a month earlier and this became our home from home in a collection of insulated canvas huts. They were a great bunch and we had an interesting time there seeing what they were doing. Martin had a walk up one of the nearby peaks, following a dramatic ridge – Jelly Snake Ride – the rest of us saw him on the summit with expectation of a walk the following day, however unfortunately the weather, with mist and rain, had other ideas. There was some commotion outside one evening when we had a visit from a musk ox which was seen off by the Inuit guards – at least it was not a polar bear! One interesting aspect of the base was a circle of stones located nearby which had been used by the Intuits for many years (and that is a lot) for tying down their tents when they camped there. This was a good indication that this is an excellent place to have as a base.

We stayed there a few days until there was a suitable flight back to Constable Point. On the day of our departure there was thick mist

and some doubt as to whether the plane could land. However it did land, and after farewells to the gang who had become our friends we set off south to Constable Point. What now – do we go home or do we go to the nearby 'metropolis' of Scoresbysund – the second biggest habitation on the east side of Greenland with 500 people? We had the time and Scoresbysund was decided upon. Arrangements were made for a boat to take us by sea , an open top motor boat. Sitting there as the iceflows went by I realised that we had no life jackets – c'est la vie ! Scoresby Sund is the largest fjord in the world – approximately 350 km long covering about 38,000 sq km. The fjord is named after the English explorer William Scoresby who in 1822 mapped the fjord in great detail. The boat whizzed along through iceflows and near icebergs and we took in the situation. After about forty-five minutes we arrived at Scoresbysund and disembarked into the settlement.

The Inuit name is Ittoqqortoormiit (I can't pronounce it either!) which means 'Big House'. Local hunters have for generations made a living from whale and polar bear hunting, and hunting remains, up to the present, a significant cultural-economic factor in the area. Flesh

A Summit at Last!

and by-products play a direct part in the economy of the hunting families. Income is gained by trading these products, but these options are seasonal and variable. Ittoqqortoormiit lies near large populations of shrimp and Greenland halibut, but the presence of sea ice prevents the exploitation of these resources year-round, and as a result fishing has never been extensively developed in the municipality. Tourism, on the other hand, is growing in importance. Tracks weave around the town and the collection of houses and building are scattered around the area.

After enquiring we were told that the campsite was along a track by the sea at Walrus Bay, about a mile from the town. Across the bay there is a sandy gravel beach which provided a superb campsite. Just off the shore there were some small icebergs floating which provided good targets to throw stones. Quadbikes are the main means of transport and Walrus Bay is a popular destination for a trip out from the town for the locals with couples and also families rattling along the track. Two lads were out fishing with their fishing rods and then out in a motor boat with a gun, looking for seal. We made visits into the town. The main shop is a supermarket which stocks a collection of guns and a stack of ammunition in addition to the usual items! The Tourist Office is run by Nanu Travel who also organise trips to this area. There is also a museum tracing the history of the region. The town was founded in 1925 by Ejnar Mikkelson however the area had been home to a dense population of Inuit in the past, as testified by ruins and other archaeological remains. It was near the end of the month and the 'pay' cheques had come through with large queues to cash these at the post office – and for many a trip to the supermarket to get stocked up with food and beverages – resulting in some inebriation. In the evening, our last in Greenland, Colwyn, Graeme and Martin went to the shindig in the hall – they arrived at about 8.00pm but folk did not trickle in till nearer midnight when some steps were made onto the dance floor. With it being the last night and not really having climbed much Eric and myself set off up the mountains above the campsite which were well covered in snow and provided an excellent mini-expedition – although the height gain was only 360 metres we had fine views both inland into Liverpool Land and the icecap in the distance and also

over Scoresby Sund. Not quite the jagged peak we had come out to climb but a fine vantage point.

Back to base and some sleep to get ready for the pick up at the beach by the motor boat at 8.00am. We were sad to leave Walrus Bay but were soon whizzing over the sea dodging iceflows and settling down for the trip back to Constable Point. Suddenly we sighted three polar bears on one of the iceflows. Wow ! Fantastic looking creatures that regarded us suspiciously then dived into the sea. We kept our distance and cut the engine (but did not stop it!) to watch these fine animals. They then climbed back onto the iceflow keeping an eye on us – and we keeping our camera eyes on them. What a moment and what a finish to the trip. Eventually we had to leave and then cruised on to Constable Point and ready for the flight back to Iceland.

The trip was nothing like what we had planned. We had not been anywhere near the main Stauning glaciers or peaks. We were on our way home much sooner than expected. For some it would have been thought of as a failed trip. However we all felt we had had such a varied time - seen a lot of wild life and flora - had a great trip in by

plane but also the rather gripping time of hitching a lift out - we met some great folk at Carlsberg Fjord and at Scoresbysund - we were in the media spotlight (not a good thing when it is in the local newspaper and EVERYONE you meet has read about it!) – and had been to such a great area. We had all survived reasonably unscathed and we had made some great friends with others on the expedition. Plans are now being hatched to go back and finish what we started.

The glacial lake from which we started climbing *(Tony Burnell)*

Terror Peak

Tony Burnell

Terror Peak, The South Island of New Zealand, January 2010 - it seems a long time ago now. The trip had a strange start; Nick Flyberg had asked if I would make up a four with himself, Hugh Banard and Martin Wilson, to go into Terror Peak and attempt a new route. By the time January arrived the team was down to two, just Nick and myself.

We left Christchurch and had a leisurely drive to Queenstown to pick up an EPIRB and, as it turns out, to have a beer with Stanley and Thomas at Small Plane. Beer duly dispatched we headed straight to Te Anau and had dinner before bivying out in the Eglinton Valley.

Day 1: A cold dawn breaks and at six thirty we were packed up and headed for Milford Sound and the promise of a hot breakfast. Breakfast was hot and over coffee we had time to consider the trip. We were heading for a remote area, the Llawrenny Mountains. I say remote because, if we were clagged in by bad weather, it would take us at least two days to walk out. At the moment the weather gods were smiling and come nine o'clock we were packing about 150 kg of gear into a small Squirrel helicopter. Once the gear was stowed Nick and myself were shoe-horned into the remaining space.

The chopper struggled off the ground and appeared to drag itself out and across Big Bay on the Tasman Sea, before rising up the shear face of the sound and out into the sunshine. Four minutes after take off we were carefully unloading beneath the whirling rotor blades of the chopper. Another five minutes and we were alone, standing at the outflow from a small, unnamed, glacial lake beneath the summit of Llawrenny ,with the sound of rotor blades receding into the distance.

The lake was deep blue and crystal clear as you looked down into its depths, clear of ice at this time of year, but at regular intervals ice fell from the hanging glacier beneath the summit. From here our prime objective, Terror Peak, was not visible.

We set about making camp which, out here in this granite wilderness, is easier said than done. We collected gravel and rocks from the

immediate area, filling in a depression to make a level platform. Once this was done the tent was rolled out and bolts drilled into the granite to hold it down. After a couple of hours of work and a large lunch we were able to sit back and reflect on our surroundings, new to me but not to Nick. He had visited the previous year with an American client. The granite walls around the lake are immaculate, perfect sweeps of rock rising sheer out of the lake before leaning back at the top. We both spotted a line, starting about twenty five metres off the shoreline, the lower wall steep and leading up to a roof at half height. From here we could see what appeared to be a curving crack line leading to the upper slabs.

We decided to give it a go. The first thing to do was blow up the dinghy, a novel method of transport that was going to take us to the base of the climb. The second thing to do was to repair the leak. An hour later we were paddling out across the lake armed with rack, rope and drill. Nick took the first lead, his first challenge was to get out of the boat; thirty minutes after leaving the boat Nick was around twenty metres up the wall and making good progress. Another fifteen minutes and twenty five metres later Nick had found enough space to stand and place a bolt. My turn - tying the boat off as securely as possible I followed Nick to his perch above the lake. The climbing was good, around grade 21 and we

were soon both hanging from a single bolt and a wire. I took the rack and set off, standing above Nick on that smooth slab was a bit unnerving. After 6 metres with no gear the wall suddenly steepens. With still no gear in sight discretion was the better part of valour and I retreated back to the stance and from there back to the boat. Five minutes of pumping and there was enough air in the dinghy to head back to the camp to lick our wounds and have another go at repairing the boat.

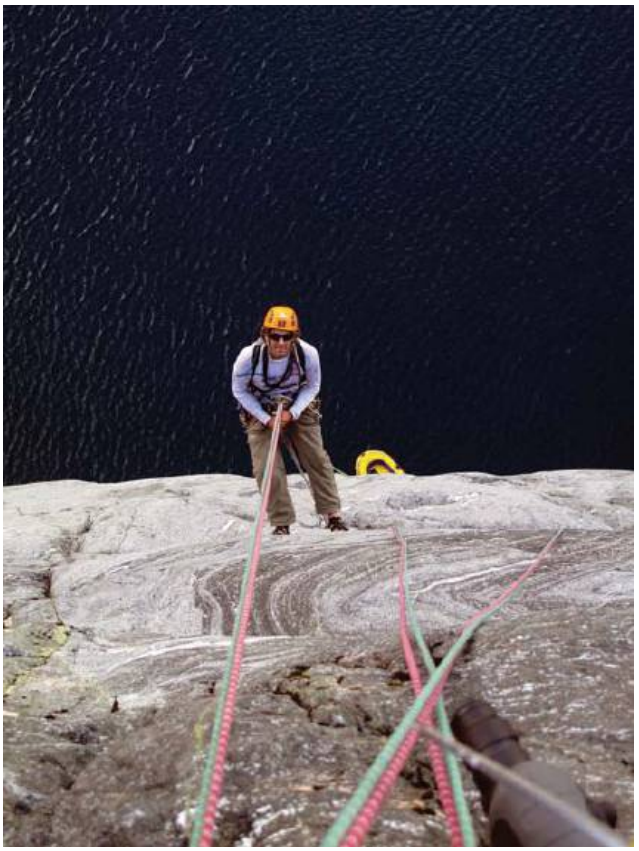
Day 2: Next day we took the more scientific approach, carrying 200 metres of static line, two 60 metre climbing ropes, a full rack of wires and friends, hammers, drills, bolts, etc., we headed up the slabs to the left of the main face making our way toward a pile of rocks that we had picked out as the top of the line. Nick rigged the belay as I uncoiled the first static line. Abseiling down we placed two bolts, not that there were any runner placements on this blank section of rock. After 50 metres we were at the top of the "crack" we had seen from camp, it wasn't a crack but a groove some two metres across. We'd underestimated the size of the crack and, as it turned out, the route. What we had envisaged as a 120 to 150 metre route, turned out to be a good 250 metres, 5 pitches of perfect rock mixed slabs and grooves with a roof thrown in for good measure. We had to place 8 protection bolts and 8 belay bolts. Pitch 2, with which I had made acquaintance the day before, was superb, as were pitches 3 and 4. By the end of the day we'd climbed a classic line on perfect rock. It was late and we made tracks back to camp and a well earned supper.

Day 3: Filled with pancakes we headed back up the hill to retrieve our gear; it took three hours. Back to camp and after lunch we packed our gear again and headed for Terror Peak. We were entertained on the way by a chamois which was determined to pose for the camera and we spent a good hour watching it, before it eventually lead its family away down the bluffs. We moved on, stashing the gear in a small cave just off the edge of the scree. The next job was to scope out the proposed line from the safety of the ground before heading back across the scree and the snow fields, back over the hill to our little camp.

Day 4: Dawned bright and sunny. Again filled with pancakes we headed over the hill to Terror Peak, no need for drills in this neck of the woods. The face was littered with cracks. With no chamois to distract us we made good time, and I was up first, tackling a relatively easy, if somewhat damp, groove that led up to a pillar of rock capped in quartz, which looked somewhat like a candle. Nick soon joined me, then left, leading out onto the steep face above. Nick was at home here, after all it was his second new route on this face. The climbing was not necessarily hard but somewhat intimidating, unlike the blank walls of yesterday where the only way was up. Out here the way was not obvious, cracks abruptly ended leaving you with tenuous moves to gain the next crack system. Nick was unfazed, carefully picking his way up the wall. I left him to it, stepping in to finish up the last pitch which ended just below the summit ridge.

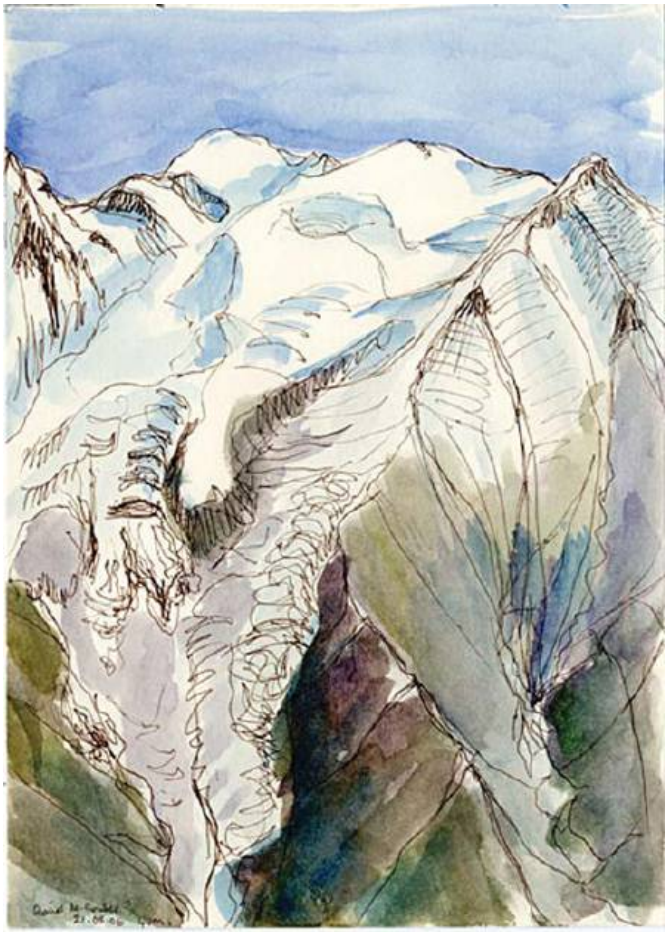
Getting off was easier, a single abseil off the South side and we were on a snow field traversing our way back round to the packs. Spirits were high in the camp; we had ticked off another 4 pitch (200 metre route) but the weather had packed in. Sadly, we were due to be picked up tomorrow and the weather was deteriorating fast. During the night the wind got up. Luckily Nick had moved out of his bivvy bag and into our second tent. I spent the evening trying to read whilst Nick was keeping his spirits up with a bottle of malt whisky. The tents were repeatedly flattened and sleep was impossible. After 10 hours of being flattened and buffeted around, the wind eased, we rolled out of our tents and had enough time to stretch our legs and eat some food, then get back into the tent for round 2. The tents spent more time horizontal than vertical.

Day 5: We rose as the wind sank. It was 11.00am and we were due to be picked up at 3.00pm but were unsure what would happen as it was grey and misty and visibility wasn't good. It was about now I began to think that a sat phone would be more use than an EPIRB. After breakfast we did our best to dry and pack the gear. We also stashed the dinghy, some ropes and other gear that was to be left for future trips, the gear was walled up in a crevice to protect it from the weather and the Keas.



Abseiling back down to the boat

All we could do now was wait. Around 3pm we began to think that we may have to unpack again. At 3.30 there was a slight clearing in the mist, was it a window? Another ten minutes and we heard the drone of the chopper, the landing was on one skid and there was no turning the engine off, we ducked around ferrying gear and packing it into the helicopter. Last of all there was only Nick and myself to squeeze in. We were off again, struggling to get lift above the outflow before lurching over the void, apparently going down quicker than we were going forward, but only for an instant. We levelled out and swooped around the face below Terror Peak. It was a short ride down the valley, over the ridge line and out over Big Bay back to Milford Sound airfield. We'd made it out. I had expected another night on the hill and we'd been lucky because that night the weather closed in again and didn't clear until the Sunday, four days later. All we had to do now was pilot the old Subby back to Christchurch.



Mont Blanc *(Susan Dobson)*

MOUNTAIN WRITING

Le cavalier fou

Translated from Contes des Cabanes et des Sommets *by (René D Jeandre, published in Geneva 1925) by John Lagoe*

I have just heard of the death of the celebrated English Alpinist C W Richardson. At last I feel able to tell of an adventure in which he and I were involved some twenty years ago. Perhaps in recounting it I can free myself from the weight of a remembrance, almost remorse, which has obsessed me ever since....

There are not many people in the high mountain regions at the beginning of July. In the hotel where I was passing a short convalescence I found only three others: the two Wills ladies, and Richardson.

The Wills sisters were two English spinsters, between forty and forty-five, always dressed in grey: grey skirt, grey cardigan, grey hat and veil. Despite their appearance they were a friendly and companionable pair. Petite, well-built and fresh-faced, eyes and mouth in a permanent smile, they talked to each other from morning to evening with great volubility, about countless pleasant trivialities. Their father had died on a mountain in the Caucasus. From him they had inherited a passion for high mountains and a small income which enabled them to devote three weeks each year to Switzerland: a week of training, then a fortnight of climbing with two Grindelwald guides they engaged a year in advance. I had already met them in Saas and in several Club Alpin huts. I was pleased to renew our acquaintance and enjoyed hearing, without always understanding, their happy chatter.

Richardson was also an old acquaintance. Aged about seventy, very tall and very thin, his face tanned and wrinkled, nose and cheeks blotchy, heavily grey-bearded, he was in fact rather ugly; but about him he had an energy, even a little fierceness, which caught one's attention and commanded respect. The look in his pale blue eyes, the eyes of a north country man, was strange and piercing, but veiled

with a soft melancholy. Once you had seen this man, you never forgot him.

Each morning he rose before dawn, made his own tea and, in spite of the arthritis which had twisted his fingers and made him limp, set off on a slow walk to no-one knew where. He returned each evening half an hour before dinner, at which he always wore his dinner jacket. Having eaten little during the day, he had a large appetite in the evening, and washed down his dinner with a bottle of expensive French champagne. In the salon he would practise a few cannons on the billiard table, then read the Times, without apparently finding anything of interest in it. At ten o'clock he would take a glass of whisky, and retire.

One evening after dinner we were all admiring the twilight view from the hotel terrace. The Wills sisters were pointing out to each other the alpine glow on the Valais summits, naming each one. Richardson smoked in silence, leaning against a drystone wall. At my feet I contemplated the immense Aletsch glacier, which seemed covered in a transparent shroud of bluish cold.

One could see very clearly the huge longitudinal moraines and even distinguish the largest blocks of granite and the fissures in the ice. Suddenly, I seemed to see a moving figure. A man alone at this time, and moving upwards? Hardly possible! Besides, the figure appeared noticeably bigger than the lines of ants one saw each morning traversing to Bel-Alp.

I went for the hotel telescope, set it up, focussed it, and after a brief search saw, despite the twilight mist, a horseman riding up the glacier. He was following the edge of a moraine at the point where the ice appeared under sand and small pebbles. The slope was not steep and the horse moved at a short regular trot; one could see its long tail floating behind and the mane rising at each step. The rider, leaning slightly forward, seemed very much at ease.

A man riding on the glacier! How had he got there? What was he doing there? Where was he going? He must be mad. Or perhaps I was the mad one? Was I hallucinating? Without saying a word I took Richardson's arm and put his eye to the telescope. He saw nothing. I looked again; my hallucination had gone, or the rider had move

out of sight. The Englishman returned to the telescope, looked, then grunted and dropped his pipe.

At this moment the Wills ladies approached. We signalled that they should look too, and each in turn spent a moment at the lens.

–Is it really a horse? ...is it?...oh! yes it is...

If it was an hallucination, I wasn't the only sufferer.

The horse was now moving at a walking pace, but getting further from us, and the light was rapidly dying. Nothing could now be seen with the naked eye. Richardson had taken back the telescope and retained it, but we could see from his movement of the instrument that the rider was still advancing. At last the Englishman lifted his head. I tried another look, but it was now dark. Only the high summits reflected a mauve light from the west.

-'Let's go,' I said.

–'Too late,' replied Richardson.

–'Tomorrow morning,' chorused the two Wills.

I don't know if Richardson slept, but neither the Wills sisters nor I could settle to sleep. At two o'clock in the morning we were already down in the dining room. The Englishman made us swallow some tea made on his alcohol stove, then by the light of a lantern we descended the narrow path which leads to the glacier. We each had an iceaxe; Richardson carried some provisions, a bottle of rum and a ten or twelve metre rope he had borrowed from the hotelier

It was still dark when we reached the glacier and had some difficulty in getting on to it. Then after traversing the zone of lateral crevasses and two or three low moraines, we found ourselves near the one we had each carefully noted through the telescope. In the early dawn we walked up the glacier for half an hour, and as soon as there was enough light began to look for tracks. They were not easy to spot, but here and there we found flat stones with three small parallel scratches, and further on the ice was marked as if it had been hit by the picks of three axes fastened together.

– 'The horse must have had crampons,' I suggested.

– 'Certainly,' replied Richardson.

Certainly! So he was sure of something about the strange figure we had seen yesterday evening!

Richardson was now walking confidently, then suddenly stopped.

– 'I saw him as far as here,' he said.We continued for a time alongside the moraine, encouraged by vague tracks, but soon there were no more clear marks and we hesitated.

We were now at the edge of a band of white ice three or four hundred metres wide, separated from the rest of the glacier by two long longitudinal moraines. On our left the moraine we had been following was steep and covered in large boulders. It was very unlikely that the horse had crossed this. Ahead the ice was covered with sand and small rocky debris: the rider must have gone on this way, even in the dark.

We retraced our steps a short way and built a small cairn by the last observed trace. We decided to explore systematically the ice between the two moraines. Richardson continued to follow our original line; I steered obliquely to the right to follow the edge of the other moraine; the Wills sisters spaced themselves between Richardson and me. We were quite a long way from each other, but still within hearing.

In this way we moved up the glacier for half an hour, finding no tracks. The sun was up now, and the high summits surrounded us in light and silence. Not fully recovered from my illness and tired from the bad night, I felt weak and unsure on my legs and was breathing rapidly. What were we doing? Our search, probably in vain, could take us far. But there was no question of abandoning it; worry, pity and curiosity, and also the need to keep up with my three companions, pushed me on.

The snowy crests cut into the blue-black sky. The heavy silence of the heights oppressed me. Then suddenly the birdlike voice of the younger Wills called:

– 'Come here, come here!'

She had stopped on the rim of a small crevasse filled with old hard snow, on which one could distinctly see the imprint of a shoe and the deeper holes of the crampons, three on each foot.

– 'He was still galloping here,' said Richardson.

How could he tell that? Probably from the relative position of the imprints.

The tracks showed us the direction to follow, and soon we reached another snow-filled crevasse, and another, and so we could easily

follow the horse's progress for about three kilometres. But the ice now became more gritty and uniform, and it was impossible to see any tracks. So we again spread out, still between the two moraines which apparently had not been crossed although now less steep.

We were already well up the glacier. My lassitude increased. I allowed myself a few sips of water from the streams flowing over the ice, but this put my mouth and stomach on fire. With each heartbeat I felt my throat gripped and my head battered. At times I seemed to have a black mist before my eyes and feared I would faint.

It was in this state that I arrived at the rim of a small crevasse half filled with water; in it I could see a mass of brown which in my state I could not at first comprehend. A large male body was in the crevasse, immersed to the waist. In the calm clear water one could see, shortened by the refraction, two twisted legs trapped between the walls of blue ice. The upper body was leaning against the ice wall; the head, covered in blond hair, leaned on one shoulder. A sodden straw hat floated a few metres away.

Only slowly did I realise this was the rider. I tried to call out but no sound came from my dried-up throat. I waved, but the others did not look my way. At last I managed an 'ahh' which was more of a rattle than a cry.

My companions approached. Richardson showed no surprise. He showed us, on the edge of the crevasse, the deep marks of the crampons where the horse must have stopped abruptly before the unexpected obstacle. The rider, perhaps dozing, had been thrown over the horse's head and into the crevasse. Although it was only a miserably small one, he had not been able to climb out; the smooth sides had no possible holds, and his legs were jammed between the narrowing walls.

He had certainly not died at once. We could see that he had tried to cut a hold in the ice, probably with a pocket knife which had slipped from his hands. A shredded cigarette made a brown stain in the flat water among several floating matches.

What should we do? I thought of going for official help, but it would take at least a day down and a day back up. Richardson objected: the weather was fine and tourists might chance on the

corpse. The older Miss Wills, member of the English RSPCA, wanted to find the horse to give it some food.

Richardson decided that we had to get the body out and move it to some place where we could hide it. We had great difficulty, the four of us, in releasing the dead man. His legs were tightly jammed by the crevasse, one spur was caught in the ice, and we had no firm footing, but at last with the help of the rope we managed to lift him on to the edge.

He was a tall young man of around thirty years, very elegantly dressed: polished boots, fustian breeches, linen jacket, and elaborate blue cravat with a large turquoise set in gold. On square solid shoulders his head was very small with handsome wavy hair. His face, unshaven for two days, showed clear signs of his suffering, but one could see his fine, almost feminine features. Wide open expressionless eyes were already glazed; but he could not have died many hours before as there was still a little warmth in his chest, and he was not yet rigid. As we lifted the body we realised that his right thigh was broken.

Richardson, as if he had some rights over the dead man, searched his clothes: he found two handkerchiefs, a new red leather wallet, a silver cigarette case with the initials H.W.O., a map of the region, several letters, soaked with the ink run, a watch made in Geneva, a locket, a pen, a sealing ring, a compass. After twenty years I remember the smallest details of this inventory.

The map and compass, with the horse's crampons, showed clearly that we were not looking at an ordinary lost traveller.

We began the transport. The Wills ladies took a leg each and walked in front, while Richardson and I held the shoulders. We did not move very fast. The dead man was thin but very tall. In spite of our efforts the body folded and the back dragged on the ice. Every thirty steps we had to stop to take a better hold.

Mid-day approached. I was exhausted, and declared that I could see little use in this form of transport. The Wills sisters agreed. Richardson gave us all some rum and asked for another effort. Half carrying half dragging the body we came at last to the edge of one of those rapid streams with a polished cylindrical bed in the ice.

That was what Richardson was looking for. He passed the rope under the dead man's arms, held both ends, and slid the corpse into the water. The heat was intense, the stream very rapid. The water built up behind the obstacle for a few seconds then, gently at first, dragged it down its slippery bed. Soon the speed increased so much that the Englishman had to pull back on the ropes to slow the body.

Several tributaries joined the stream. Richardson asked me move to the other bank and to hold one of the ropes. The Wills ladies took over our axes. To follow the corpse we were almost running. Then I heard the muffled sound of the moulin, the bottomless well into which the stream was quickly engulfed. I wanted to warn my companion, to tell him to slow down; at the same instant I felt a jerk and thought I must have let go the rope; and I saw the corpse escape from us, sliding swiftly on its polished bed. I ran a few steps. I had no axe. I could do nothing. The body disappeared into the depths of the glacier, not even altering the dull, continuous roar of the cascade.

I turned round. I saw Richardson, further back, perfectly calm. I went to collect the rope, one end of which lay on my side of the stream. So it was the Englishman who had let go the rope, and I realised in a flash that he had done so deliberately. I have thought much since then, and I believe that he tried first, by giving the rope a pull, to make me lose my hold, and when this failed he released his own end. Or did he want us both to let go at the same time?

The Wills sisters rejoined us.

– 'It's the finest resting place,' said one.

– 'I wouldn't wish for a better one,' said the other.

Then they approached the edge of the roaring gulf and sang, in their thin voices, an English hymn. Richardson and I took off our hats. It was a strange experience, this little English melody, lost between the powerful turbulence of the waterfall which made the ice vibrate under our feet and the immense silence of the sky and the summits.

We set off back to the hotel; but Richardson left us after a few moments; he retraced his steps towards the moulin. Fearing that he was going to throw himself in, I watched him from a distance. Several times I saw his arms move above the gulf as if bestowing blessings.

I spent the rest of the day in bed, in a fever. I dreamed that the horseman was Richardson's son. I had to make a huge effort to go down to dinner that evening. I found Richardson there, in dinner jacket, drinking chanpagne, and the Wills ladies, who announced that their training week was over and they were leaving the next day with their two guides for the Schreckhorn and the Finsteraarhorn.

After dinner I approached Richardson who was reading the Times.

–'We must,' I said, 'look at the letters and the pocketbook to see who he was.'

He replied in a few brusque words which I can best translate as: 'I slung everything in the hole'. And he returned to his paper, with an air of saying that our conversation was finished.

I had had enough of the Aletsch glacier. I went down the next day, A young shepherd in Ried told me he had seen a gentleman on horseback two days earlier. In Brigue I discovered that a tall distinguished stranger had spent an hour at the hotel and fed his horse there, but I dared not ask too many questions for fear of being questioned myself. However I went to see the blacksmith, who told me he had made, on the insistence of a stranger, some bizarre three-point crampons and fixed them to his horse's shoes.

That is all I could discover about the man. About the horse, even less. It was never found. Had it also died in a crevasse? Or died of cold and exhaustion? Five years ago Peter-Ambros Zurbriggen of Zermatt showed me "a funny crampon" with three points which he had picked up on the glacier when descending from the Jungfrau, much higher, I gathered, than where we found the corpse.

At first I was very angry that Richardson had deliberately lost the body and everything that would have allowed the rider to be identified.

Now I am older, now that Richardson is dead, I wonder if after all he hadn't a higher reason for his actions. My dream of the rider as Richardson's son is not perhaps completely absurd. Without doubt there was between these two men a strong spiritual bond. Who knows if the taciturn Englishman himself had not aspired, in his youth, to similar mad adventures on the huge glacial deserts? Who knows if he

had been obsessed throughout his life by some insane ideal? He must have sensed, through an instinctive empathy, that the rider's journey was a desperate attempt, demented but superb, to escape his destiny. And he believed he had the right to keep the dead man's secret safe from petty curiosity.

He Walked the Fells we Walk

An Account of Norman Nicholson's Selected Poems

Stuart Pickford

Scafell Pike

Look
Along the well
Of the street,
Between the gasworks and the neat
Sparrow-stepped gable
Of the Catholic chapel,
High
Above the tilt and crook
Of the tumbledown
Roofs of the town—
Scafell Pike,
The tallest hill in England.

How small it seems,
So far away,
No more than a notch
On the plate-glass window of the sky!
Watch
A puff of kitchen smoke
Block out peak and pinnacle—
Rock-pie of volcanic lava
Half a mile thick
Scotched out
At the click of an eye.

Look again
In five hundred, a thousand or ten
Thousand years:
A ruin where
The chapel was; brown
Rubble and scrub and cinders where
The gasworks used to be;
No roofs, no town,

Maybe no men;
But yonder where a lather-rinse of cloud
pours down
The spiked wall of the sky-line, see,
Scafell Pike
Still there.

Norman Cornthwaite Nicholson OBE (8 January 1914 – 30 May 1987) was one of the foremost modern poets who lived in the Lake District and wrote about its landscape.

I met Nicholson once when I drove him from his house in Millom, 14 St George's Terrace, to Lancaster for a poetry reading that he gave at St. Martin's College, as it was then. I was accompanying the poet U.A. Fanthorpe who was writer in residence at St. Martin's. Nicholson was elderly at this time; he had his characteristic sideburns, cravat and suit. He spoke with the quiet, wheezing voice he describes in his poetry having contracted tuberculosis as a boy. I remember Fanthorpe complimenting Nicholson on his bone china cups with an autumn freeze. 'I fear they are too tasteful,' said Nicholson. He was not one for ornamentation. Nicholson lived all of his life in the same house and, I think, never went abroad. Occasionally he went to London for poetry readings, but his heart was in his beloved Millom. Whilst at Nicholson's, he described for Fanthorpe and me where the birds nested in his yard and showed us his front room that was once his father's draper's shop.

As we drove towards Lancaster, Nicholson described how his family had gradually migrated from Lancashire and East Cumbria to the west, as his last collection, 'Sea to the West,' partly suggests. Perhaps as you might expect, Nicholson knew many short cuts and the journey was a tale of family stories, aunts and uncles who has been farriers and wheelwrights and the like. This narrative was punctuated by Nicholson pointing to where the bog pimpernel and a particular type of ragwort grew.

Nicholson knew the mountains of the Lake District as well as being an amateur geologist. His sequence 'The Seven Rocks' examines the characteristics of different rock types that account for the titles of the parts: Skiddaw Slate, Scafell Ash, Coniston Flag, Eskdale Granite, Mountain Limestone, Maryport Coal and St Bees Sand-

stone. The sequence begins with snow and '...the lower hills/Fleecy as ewes at tupping time...' The landscape is imbued with a sense of time, initially frozen due to the weather; the '...grey decades/Fade and stain the stone like lichen...' as '...time is frozen/To a long, shining icicle of light.' Then, as the snows melt, rocks become visible again, they seem to grow upwards, they '...flower/High on their stalks...' Nicholson describes the patterns, colours, durability and uses to which the different rocks are put: Coniston flag '..dip[s]/ And undulate[s] like tracks of snails/Written in silver on blue walls...,' Eskdale granite can be found high up, above '...the collar of the crags...' where 'The granite pate breaks bare to the sky...' St Bees sandstone is also scrutinized; it is 'Smooth as walnut turned on a lathe...' Nicholson's physical and textured language is well suited to capture the varied surfaces of rock. The sandstone is weathered by spray that '...Pits and pocks the blocks like rain on snow.' The alliteration and internal rhymes capture the process of constant weathering. As the mountains are shaped by seasons and weather, change slowly occurs:

> To wait, accept,
> To let the wind blow over, and the sea
> Ebb and return, raise and destroy—that
> Is the one virtue...

The vast processes of nature need to be observed, acknowledged and accepted as, indeed, such cycles also shape smaller human concerns.

Elsewhere, as you would expect of a poet from Millom, Nicholson's work captures a sense of place but without a sense of nostalgia or the picturesque. Nicholson writes about the landscape with a gritty realism, with a sense that the winds are cold and the landscape often inhospitable. In 'To the River Duddon,' he writes of '...the ribs of bald and bony fells/with screes scratched in the turf like grey scabs...' Such detail is typical of his work, down to earth with figurative touches that are not lofty or grandiose. Hence, '...rocks stride about like legs in armour,/And the steel birches buckle and bounce in the wind...' ('To the River Duddon'). The vigour of the description is characteristic of Nicholson. There is also a sense of perspective in

Cloud on Black Combe

The air clarifies. Rain
Has clocked off for the day.

The wind scolds in from Sligo,
Ripping the calico-grey from a pale sky.
Black Combe holds tight
To its tuft of cloud, but over the three-legged island
All the west is shining.

An hour goes by,
And now the starched collars of the eastern pikes
Streak up into a rinse of blue. Every
Inland fell is glinting;
Black Combe alone still hides
Its bald, bleak forehead, balaclava'd out of sight.

Slick fingers of wind
Tease and fidget at wool-end and wisp,
Picking the mist to bits.
Strings and whiskers
Fray off from the cleft hill's
Bilberried brow, disintegrate, dissolve
Into blue liquidity -
Only a matter of time
Before the white is wholly worried away
And Black Combe starts to earn its name again.

But where, in the west, a tide
Of moist and clear-as-a-vacuum air is piling
High on the corried slopes, a light
Fret and haar of hazy whiteness
Sweats off the cold rock; in a cloudless sky
A cloud emulsifies,
Junkets on sill and dyke.
Wool-end and wisp materialise
Like ectoplasm, are twined
And crocheted to an off-white,
Over-the-lughole hug-me-tight;
And Black Combe's ram's-head, butting at the bright

Turfed and brackeny brine,
Gathers its own wool, plucks shadow out of shine.

What the wind blows away
The wind blows back again.

---

his poetry, how the natural world is imposing and even intimidating; when talking of the Scafell Pike that could be seen from Millom, he sees it as a 'Rock-pie of volcanic lava/Half a mile thick...' ('Scafell Pike'). Walkers often measure heights but seldom widths. Nicholson also shows an awareness of how human activity is small and short-lived in contrast to the timelessness of the enduring fells; he sees '...the loud/World of the wind and the map-making clouds and history/Squinting over the rim of the fell...' ('From a Boat at Coniston'). This is Nicholson's view of the Lake District: cold, windswept and realistic.

No Lake District poet would omit another important aspect for his or her work, the weather. In 'Cloud on Black Combe,' Nicholson captures the brooding and dark weather, the transformation of the sky, the strength of the westerlies ripping over the pikes: '...the starched collars of the eastern pikes/Streak up into a rinse of blue...' The weather is infrequently balmy or warm. In Millom, he describes how '...the roofs are sulky as the dead,/With a snuffle and sniff in the gullies, a drip on the lead:/No wind at all, and the street stone-deaf with a cold in the head...' ('Weather Ear'). This is the landscape where a bit of northern gumption is required, where you just have to grin and bear it.

Nicholson's view of the landscape also involves looking closely at the small details as well as the large and ancient vistas. Nicholson knew his flowers, their proper nouns abound in his work and give a concrete sense to his work. In a similar way, the Lake District of Nicholson's poetry does not abound with hawks or eagles but, with a lightness of touch and often wry humour, he describes the ordinary birds: '...dippers rock up and down on rubber legs,/And long-tailed tits are flung through the air like darts...' ('To the River Duddon'). Again, Nicholson gives us their specific names, the verbs are carefully considered and energetic and the figurative simile is

transparent. In an anti-pastoral move, the sheep on the fells are treated with bluntness and realism; they are '...parasite-tormented sheep...' ('The Tune the Old Cow Died Of').

That is not to say that Nicholson's poetry is entirely landscape-orientated without the presence of humans. There is an honesty and eccentricity in the people he encounters. There is his grandmother, 'She watched her fourteen sons grow up around her/In a back street,/Blocked at one end by crags of slag...' ('The Tune the Old Cow Died Of'). With some indifference, this, or another, busy grandmother does not care for the young Nicholson grieving for his recently dead mother: she 'Banged the floor with her stick to greet me,/Tossed me a humbug and turned again to the goose...' ('Comprehending it Not'). Such characters, like Nicholson, are small players against the background of the vast and eternal. Nicholson recalls Halley's Comet passing over Millom in 1953 on 'Its thirty-seven-million-mile-long kite/Across Black Combe's black sky...' ('Halley's Comet'). As he observes in 'Great Day,' the "Universe [is] poised on the tip of one parish...' This larger universe is not always a benign or ordered universe but it is infused with an understated belief in God. The fells are '...a blackboard for the scrawls of God...' ('To the River Duddon'). In 'On Duddon Marsh,' Nicholson not only notes the negative, the pollution, but he is also aware of the beauty of the rugged beauty of the place. As he notes referring to the tide, '...this is the mark/That God laid down on the third day...'

The Irish poet Seamus Heaney said of him, 'Nicholson's diction and images realise the texture and pieties of a whole way of life...poems that are half-humorous, half-melancholy written in a relaxed and colloquial style.' Nicholson's work is rich and detailed in that his focus does not stray far from Millom. He described himself as being 'Blessed/...with a certain home-bred gumption...' ('Nicholson Suddenly'), something that is true of his work. Its landscape is local, realistic and bleak. The people that inhabit it play a small part in a larger world. They are people that are ordinary, colourful and sometimes quirky. Their lives are tied to and shaped by their small town, but they are representative more general struggles. Nicholson observed, 'My ways are circumscribed, confined as a limpet/To one small radius of rock; yet/I eat the equator, breathe the sky...' ('The Pot

Geranium'). I recommend Norman Nicholson to you. He has walked the fells we walk and his world is so skilfully drawn, it is also our world.

Bibliography

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Blencathra monotype - Susan Dobson

The Colder you are, the Warmer you'll be

Ellis Lader

Bob was a practical man. He knew good advice when he saw it. So when he received a collection of winter mountaineering textbooks and catalogues full of tips on keeping warm, he knew he had it made.

For Bob was a winter mountaineer, and he never seemed to have enough tips on how to stay warm. In fact, he stayed miserably cold for the duration of every winter trip he had ever gone on. Understandably, then, he jumped at the possibilities these hot tips seemed to offer.

First, he bought all the equipment the textbooks recommended. He bought Dacron underwear, Dacron ensolite, Dacron shirts, and Dacron ice-axes. Then, he threw away the Dacron rope, ice-axes, and ensolite because even though they were warm when they were wet, they were useless when they were dry. Next, he bought wool underwear, wool socks, wool pants, wool scarves, wool shirts, wool long-johns, wool hats and wool sweaters, and threw away his Dacron underwear, pants and shirts, since one book said that only wool clothing should be used, and wool is wet when its not dry, and warm when it's not wet.

Then, he bought a fifteen-gallon Stetson hat to annoy Ken, who only had a ten-gallon Stetson. With an eye towards utility, Bob had chosen the hat because someone had advised him that he could always carry water in it. Someone else had said that a woollen hat was just as good when it was wet, but Bob was a practical man. He knew that the argument just wouldn't hold water.

The day of the next expedition rolled around, and Bob was ready. He donned his wool apparel and shouldered his Dacron pack. Before beginning, he swallowed a chunk of rock salt and slugged a hearty slug of cold water since Yukon Pete's Medical Manual said 'Salt stimulates blood circulation and retains body fluids, thus reducing the possibility of dehydration, frostbite or hypothermia.' He immediately felt nauseous, but Bob was a practical man. He might feel

nauseous now, but he reduced the possibility of his getting frostbite later. Looking down, he noticed he had spilled some water on his fingers as he was drinking, and they had suddenly become frozen and numb.

When they had thawed Bob's hands, the climbing party began marching up the mountain. It was a clear, cold day, with a bright sun, so Bob slipped on his new snow goggles with the narrow slits, and stepped into a crevasse when he couldn't see where he was going. After he was rescued, he swallowed some more rock salt and a few ice cubes, since his water had frozen. He felt sicker than before.

As they trudged along, Bob suddenly began to itch all over, and realized that his wool clothing was asserting itself. But, practical as he was, he knew this was a small price to pay for being warm if he ever got wet. He thoughtfully munched some more ice cubes and rock salt as he walked along, feeling sicker than ever, and longing to get wet.

The party put on crampons and readied ice-axes as they reached the base of a precipitous ice-wall. But Bob's left foot was getting cold. Remembering that one textbook said, 'If your feet are cold, wear a hat,' he stuffed his Stetson into a boot, strapped on his crampons, and began to climb. As he got about half-way up, he realized his fingers were becoming cold. He recalled some wise words of advice from Yukon Pete, who said, "If your fingers get cold, a simple way to warm them is to whirl the arms like propellers around your head. This pushes blood to the fingers and gets them warm immediately." Forgetting for a moment that he was fastened only by crampon-tips to a vertical wall of ice, he dutifully whirled his arms and plummeted gracefully earthwards, knocking three other climbers off the ice as he fell. He successfully made it to the summit of the wall on his second attempt, and stumbled along after the group, nursing his bruises, scratching madly at his red, itching skin, and sucking on some more rock salt.

Ken rigged a traverse across a roaring glacier-fed stream. As Bob swung across, Ken let a rope go slack, since he was still annoyed by Bob's Stetson that was five gallons bigger than his. Bob struck the water with a resounding 'Splat!', but was quickly towed to safety. The leader announced that they would bivouac there for the night, so Bob

quickly set up his Dacron tent and crawled inside. Using an ice-axe to undress, he realized that wool was cold when it was dry and frozen when it was wet. He rubbed his sore, red itching body down with various organic salves, and noted that the Dacron in his sleeping bag dissolved upon contact with the liquids. But Bob was a practical man, and he knew that worrying about dissolution would not help solve the problem. He crawled into his depleted sleeping bag.

Bob recalled another tip from the Medical Manual advising that 'eating cheese before retiring into the sleeping bag will help one stay warm on cold winter nights'. He reached inside his pack and pulled out a chunk of cheese and a handful of crackers, since he never ate cheese without crackers. He stuffed some chocolate bars into his sleeping bag too, since another textbook suggested he take some candy to bed with him, and eat a bite or two whenever awake. He ate the cheese and crackers, saving the chocolate for later. He suddenly began to itch again, and realized that it was from cracker crumbs in his sleeping bag.

Bob felt cold and began to shiver. The cracker crumbs dug into his tender skin, and made him feel even worse. He chewed frantically on some rock salt to keep from getting frostbite, and cursed Yukon Pete's Medical Manual. His teeth chattered violently; Bob lost four fillings that night. But he was a practical man. A catalogue had said that 'Shivering in your sleeping bag is an excellent way to warm your bag,' so he didn't feel so bad lying there shivering from the cold. He knew he was warming up his bag.

A short while later he felt the need to urinate. Recalling that one textbook said, 'Be sure to urinate (even though it may seem inconvenient) when the feeling first arises,' Bob shrugged philosophically, thinking about the cold outside. But then he recalled the extra admonition, 'Don't wait.' He unzipped his bag and sprayed the inside of his tent. Yes, Bob was a practical man.

So he lay there, shivering, teeth chattering, cracker crumbs scratching, until he remembered some more of Yukon Pete's advice: 'Tensing and relaxing muscles will also help to warm ones body by generating body heat.' He quickly arched his back and flexed his neck and thigh muscles. There was a resounding crack as all the seams of his mummy bag split and filled the inside of his tent with a

swirling cloud of Dacron fluff. Bob noted with a start that there was something warm and sticky trickling down his body, but was relieved to find that it was only his chocolate bars that had melted. He was also aware that he was shivering more violently than ever, but was glad of that, since he would be warming up his sleeping bag more rapidly. Bob began sneezing and coughing as the Dacron began to irritate his nose and throat, but the itching became less as the cracker crumbs became coated with chocolate and lost their potency. Bob stuffed as much loose Dacron as he could back into his sleeping bag, munched some more salt, urinated again, and shivering quietly to himself, went to sleep.

Well, Bob was a practical man. He left the expedition the next day. When he got home he sold all of his equipment except for his evil-smelling tent, which he donated to the Brooklyn Hiking Club, and his chocolate-covered, Dacron-filled (with sprinkles) sleeping bag, which he donated to the manufacturer's research laboratory. They are still feverishly working to determine the origin of the sprinkles.

Bob now lives happily by himself in Death Valley, going once a month to Yukon Pete's Dialysis Center for treatment of a blood salt imbalance.

Yukon Pete, you see, was a very practical man.

[Reprinted from the Himalayan Journal 1974-75, which in turn reprinted the article from Off Belay.]

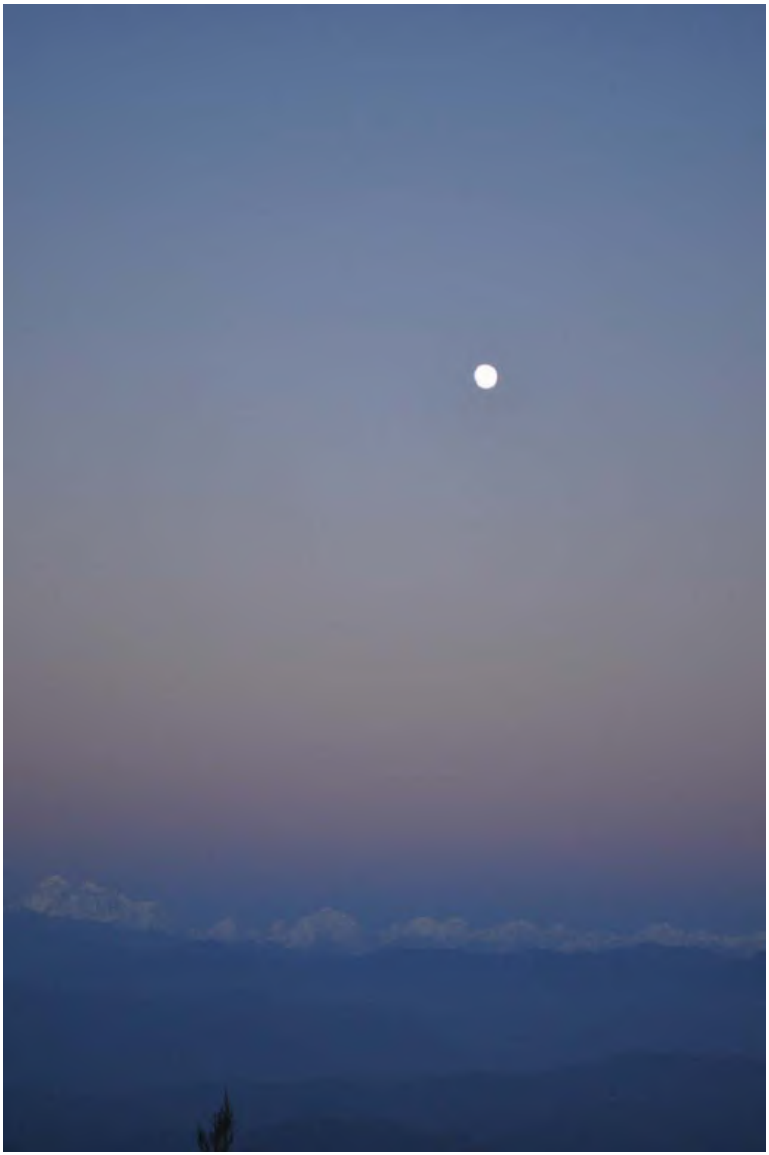
The Prelude: Fourteenth Book – Conclusion

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun
Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the door
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

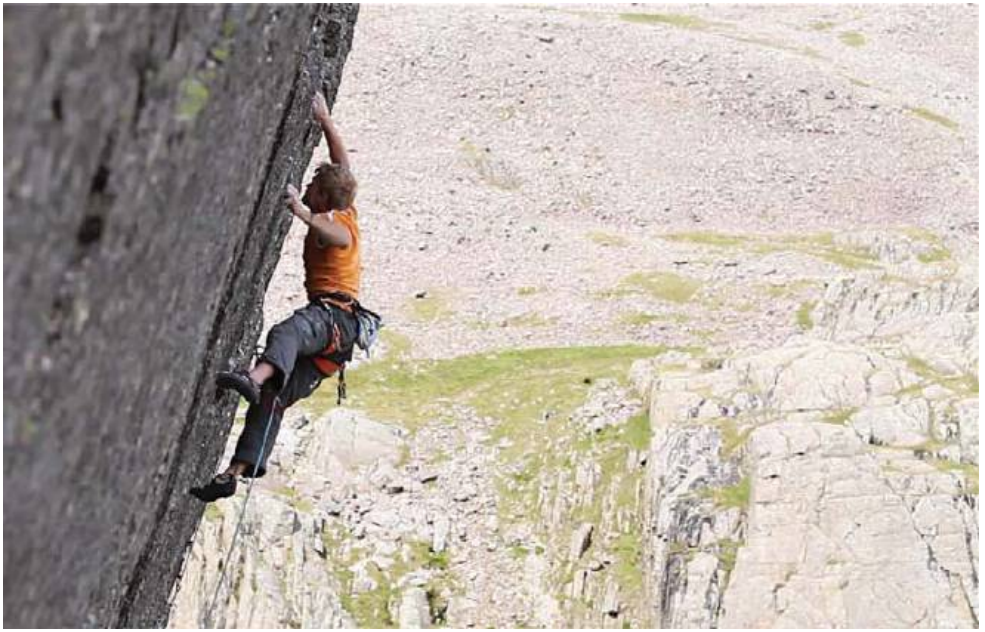
It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked
Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,

Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift–
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place–
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

[In 2011 Radio 4 broadcast the whole of the Prelude, which for me, as a poetic novice, was a revelation. The preceding two pages particularly struck a chord, as nocturnal ascents can sometimes be very memorable - Ed]



Dusk at Nagarkot, Katmandhu Valley *(Andrew Paul)*



Adam Hocking on Return of the King, first ascent.

NEW ROUTES – LAKE DISTRICT 2010 – 2012

The routes still keep coming ! It is amazing what route appear from year to year and this period is no exception.

There are lots of hard lines following once thought impossible ways up crags – these are in the 'little black books' of climbers. Adam Hocking is a brilliant Keswick climber and he has spied a few lines and continues to do so with Campaign (E7) on Cam Crag Crag, The Keswickian (E8) following the much eyed arête left of One Step Beyond at Gouther Crag in Swindale, and Sick'ard Shiver (E6) – another new route on Napes Needle ! With his trusty mate Mike Norbury they developed Castle Crag in Wythburn – this had been looked at by various folk over the years but deemed too testing – though not big its southerly aspect and clean rock would give a good day out, and a good walk as well.

James McHaffie has been paying visits back to the Lakes which included an ascent of Abraham's Covenant (E7) on Dow Crag with Woodie.

In the west Graeme Read and Simon Litchfield climbed The Bayeux Variation to Tapestry (E5) on Pillar Rock and developed some excellent hard routes on Raven Crag in Ennerdale which is just up the valley from Pillar Rock – it is amazing what you find if you go for a look !

Max Biden found a cracker of a VS with Coati on Pavey Ark during his guidebook work for the new Langdale guide.

Al Phizacklea is now back into action after his bad fall about three years ago. With his trusty mate John Holden (and John's trusty son – Joe) they are finding some real gems – Copper Dragon (E1) on Great How Crag is being compared to Nimrod, and Red Admiral (HVS/E3) on Esk Pike has one of the been HVS pitches done for years in the Lakes.

Mike Przygrodzki has been filling the gaps between the old gaps in Borrowdale with new routes in the valley including Shepherds Crag (yes !) and Sergeant Crag Slabs.

Other routes continue to be done on a finite quantity of rock.

What is happening with the winters – winter of 2009/2010 was fantastic - 2010/2011 – not too bad but 2011/2012 !!! Winter routes have continued to be produced usually on mixed terrain – with the odd icicle if one is lucky. A new winter guide is due out at the end of 2012 and Langdale guide in 2013.

These descriptions and others of new routes are on the website – www.frcc.co.uk - thanks to all who have sent in details of new routes and to Stephen Reid for keeping the website up to date.

Ron Kenyon – Guidebook Secretary

ROCK CLIMBS

LANGDALE

RAVEN CRAG
MENDE'S WALL (PAGE 133)

Carrion Climbing 40m VS+

An unlikely line, but giving steep airy climbing on good holds and with good protection. Start 2 metres left of the large pinnacle of Bradley's Damnation.

1 30m (4c). Move up and left to a steep wall, which is climbed via a long reach to better holds. Trend up and left to a square cut recess and make very steep moves (crux) up the recess, before moving up and left into the obvious break in the overhang. Climb this strenuously to easier ground and move right to a grassy terrace.

2 10m (4a). Either climb the 2nd pitch of Prometheus to the top or up easy but pleasant rock.

FA: (14/11/2011) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham

Prometheus 43m HVS+

A fine route with a well protected crux, which takes the short dark groove left of Bradley's Damnation. Start one metre left of the large pinnacle.

1 33m (5a). Ascend the wall direct via a blunt pinnacle and step right to gain the steep groove. Climb this, moving right on good holds to exit delicately rightwards to easy rock, which leads to a

large terrace.
2 10m (4a). Climb the juggy wall at the left end of the terrace and scramble upwards to good belays.
FA: (06/11/2011) Martin Scrowston, Paul C Bennett

RAVEN CRAG BUTTRESS (PAGE 136)

Ilex 45m E3+
(6a). Climb pitch 3 of Holly Tree Direct to where it goes right, then battle up the overhanging niche and wall above to a rest. Continue directly up the front of the fine pillar (much easier) with delicate moves up a thin crack level with the oak tree. From a ledge continue up the rib as for pitch 4 Holly Tree Direct.
FA: (27/09/2010) M Bagness, J Kelly (Led with pre-placed gear on crux. Could be E4 to on sight)

Pavey Ark (Page 109)

Coati 61m VS-
An excellent addition to climbs of this grade on the crag. A direct line on superb rock throughout and without the usual ledge-wandering typical of the easier routes hereabouts. It does not suffer from undue seepage and should dry quickly. It gives varied and continually interesting climbing, of similar character to Golden Slipper, up grooves, slabs and cracks right of Aardvark. It required no 'preparation' and minimal cleaning on the lead, but will improve further with subsequent ascents.
Start halfway between the quartz glacis of Aardvark and a prominent juniper bush some 5 metres lower down Jack's Rake, where the steep wall above is split by a groove. (Overall, some 11 metres right of Gwynne's Chimney.)
1 18m (4b). Scramble up rightwards to a block ledge at the foot of the groove (or climb direct to it) and climb it, exiting rightwards onto the rib at the top. Step up and go across left to a small ledge and belays. The groove is steep but with some satisfyingly good holds.
2 22m (4b). Above the belay, the face rears up into a steep wall. Climb a narrow slab rightwards to a ledge at the right-hand end of this. An innocuously awkward bulge guards entry into the easier-

angled right-facing corner above. Once this bulge is overcome, step up and pull round left into a parallel narrow corner. Step up and pull round left again into another parallel groove which fades immediately into a crack-line up the slab. Climb this to a spike at the top, which is used to swing down rightwards around the rib and across to belay on a large jammed flake in the ramp-like groove (just above where pitch 4 of Cook's Tour traverses out to the right).
3 21m (4b). Step off the jammed flake and pull onto the right wall of the right-facing corner above. The angle eases quickly but then steepens dramatically. Bridge up the corner on good holds to reach flakes that lead rightwards into the final left-facing corner, which is followed to the top. Nut belays in the slab behind. The mountain top and descent options are then gained by easy scrambling.
FA: (29/08/2011) RM Biden, C Harrod

DOW (PAGE 56)

Abraham's Covenant 30m E7
The route tackles the huge overhang/ roof above Abraham's Cave. Arrange some good cams in the breaks and tackle the overhang via some hard moves, then boldly move up to some good jugs and the next protection. From the jugs some very hard climbing leads to the wall above. Continue more easily to the belay.
FA: (19/04/2011) James McHaffie, Stuart Wood

GREAT HOW CRAG (PAGE 101)

Copper Dragon ** 90m E1
A big mountaineering route with considerable variety and interest. A classic of the valley. Longer than Nimrod, just as entertaining, but is it as good? Start 8 metres left of Original Route, at the second crack system.
1 18m (4b). Climb easily to the foot of the steeper wall, where a fine crack leads up and left to the blocky ledge.
2 14m (4c). From the shorter block at the left side of the ledge, pull up into a short steep groove to reach a large ledge. Block belay further back.
3 18m (5a). Step right onto the slab to reach a small horizontal break (Friend and nut runner). Climb delicately up and right using

the edge of the slab to gain a dank corner. Swing left onto the front face and climb straight up to the crest of an arête. Move up this to a block belay.
4 12m. Easily along the ridge and over a pinnacle to belay in the gap (as for Original Route).
5 28m (5b). Pull up right to a ledge and block below a smooth steep corner. Climb this to a difficult exit onto a slab on the right, then continue to a grass ledge system. Using a short vertical crack in the headwall, pull right into a recessed scoop and follow this to the top.
FA: (09/04/2011) Al Phizacklea, JL Holden

Red Barrel 46m HVS+
Start about 30 metres below a short dry stone wall on the descent rake, at the point where the descent rake drops steeply away, right of Trio. An interesting and entertaining route
1 18m (5b). Climb from the right to gain short ribbed slabs which lead to the base of a steep little groove. Bridge up this awkwardly (the crack is often damp) to a large ledge.
2 28m (5a). Climb the central groove which has a thin crack in its left wall and some entertaining pockets, to a ledge. Easier slabs lead to the top. Scramble or Abseil down left.
FA: (09/04/2011) Al Phizacklea, JL Holden (almost 3 years after Al's accident!)

WALLOWBARROW

Far East Buttress (Page 211)

Nirvana 18m VS
Good climbing taking the steep wall right of Paradise and left of Parallel, with adequate protection.Climb the first pitch of Parallel or traverse in from the right. Climb the wall just right of the flake and just left of Parallel direct to the top.
FA: (18/03/2011) Paul C Bennett, Martin Scrowston
Men of the Plough 35m HVS
An excellent pitch, giving sustained, but well protected climbing and complimenting the two other routes (The Furrow and The Plough) on this part of the buttress. It starts 2 metres left of The Furrow at the lowest point of the buttress and follows the left-

bounding arête of the buttress.(5a). Step right onto the blocky arête and follow the crest to a small heather ledge at 25 metres. Climb the vertical crack on the right and make a bold series of moves (crux) to gain the horizontal crack at foot level. Traverse delicately left for 2 metres to a short undercut crack and follow this to the top.
FA: (05/08/2011) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham, Paul C Bennett

Ploughman's Lunch 30m VS
A good pitch which climbs the right side of the mossy wall. Start one metre right of The Plough at the top of the grassy ledge. Awkward moves up a short pillar lead to the wall above. Climb this directly on good holds to a large ledge. Using the large jammed flake, make some exciting moves to reach the top.
FA: (31/08/2011) Paul C Bennett, Martin Scrowston

Under the Plough 25m VS
Star about 6m right of the Plough and immediately right of the dry stone wall.
A pleasing and technical pitch. Climb the corner and arête above to a ledge. Move left onto the next arête via a hidden side hold and climb directly to the top.
FA: (19/03/2012) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham, Paul C Bennett

Shear Line E1
(5b). The obvious thin crack that runs down the wall right of The Furrow. Start two meters right of The Furrow. Ascend the steep wall to access the crack, follow this to a bulging wall. Step left to gain the large ledge of Furrow. Move up then back right to finish up the wide crack. The bulging wall can be climbed direct at a much harder grade.
FA: (27/03/2012) Paul C Bennett, Martin Scrowston

The following 4 routes all finish at the same belay point, where it is possible abseil back down from the large flake (Page 226)

Pensive 25m VS
An excellent pitch which follows the line of the jagged corner left of A Quick One. (4b). Start 1m left of A Quick One and climb the slab and corner direct to a wide flake crack, which is followed to the top of the pillar.
FA: (14/06/2010) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham

Penance 30m HVS
An interesting pitch with a bold committing crux. Starts 2 metres right of Ball Point at the obvious right-facing corner. (5a). Climb the corner until level with the large ledge on Velvet Underground, where a rest can be taken. Pull boldly left onto the hanging slab (crux) and then more easily, follow the slab to a small oak sapling. Traverse left for 2 metres to finish at the top of Ball Point.
FA: (22/07/2010) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham

Penance Direct 28m S
Start just left of the corner at some obvious cracks, climb these and the crack above direct. Rejoin Penance at about 10 metres.
FA: (20/10/2010) Paul C Bennett, Jim Loxham, Martin Scrowston

Penultimate 40m VS+
Starts 7m right of Velvet Underground and just left of Penned In beneath the obvious corner. This is a high quality climb only slightly marred by vegetation at the end of the first pitch, but this should improve with traffic.
1 25m (4c). Climb the corner direct to the overhang. Move intriguingly left around the rib into the next corner and climb the steep slab until it is possible to traverse right across the slab and up delicately, to pass a smaller overhang at its right side. Scramble up a short section of vegetation to an oak tree belay.
2 15m (4a). Climb the fine slab on small holds on excellent rock to the top.
FA: (22/07/2010) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham, Paul C Bennett

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword 45m S
Start 7m right of Velvet Underground at an obvious detached pin-

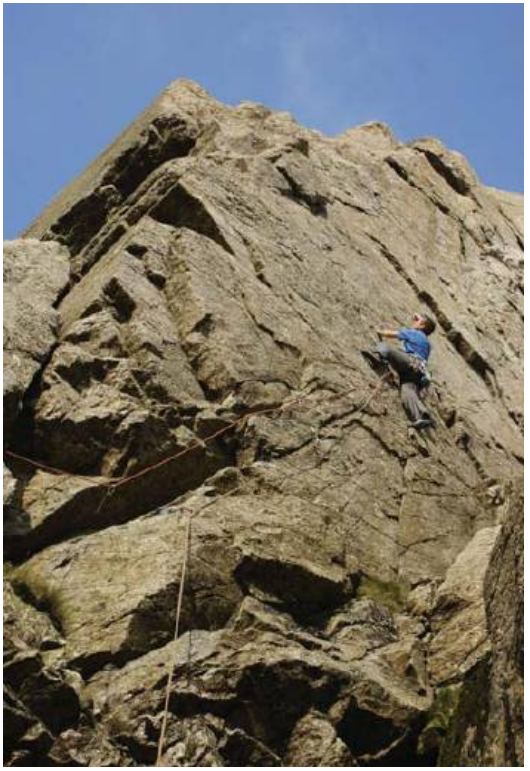
nacle. The route provides varied climbing, with a superb traverse. Climb the face of the pinnacle and step off the top onto the slabby wall. Continue to, and pass a perched flake towards a blocky arête. Follow this above for a few metres, before a surprising traverse left on good holds is made across the face for a few metres before following the fine cracked slabs to the top; enjoy.
FA: (19/05/2010) Martin Scrowston, Jim Loxham, Paul C Bennett

SCAFELL

ESK PIKE – WEST FACE (PAGE 287)

Red Admiral - Pitch 1 67m HVS / E3+

The first pitch is superb at HVS grade up the beautifully clean (and vertical) south-facing wall on the left of the gully. It is the best added to the Lakes since Scenic Cruise ? Start about 6m below the start of the gully. 1 32m (5a). Climb the short chimney in the left wall and move right to the foot of the wall. (This avoids the gully base) Climb a short diagonal groove and cracks until steep moves can be made up to a good flake. Follow the thin crack above to a flake on the left, then pull out left onto the arête and move up to a sloping ledge belay about 6m below the final crack of Esk Edge (Erroneously named Esk Ridge in the last guide). Follow



Red Admiral - pitch1

this to the top, or climb the second pitch.
2 25m (6a). Step around from the mossy ledge onto the steep gully wall with the protection of a high runner. Cross right with difficulty to a good flake crack, step up to a traverse line and move right to the vegetated corner. Traverse right again onto the undercut arête, where bold moves lead to the finishing slab. Abseil off, from a thread over to the left. Beware rope drag on this pitch!
FA: Pitch 1 - (03/09/2010) Al Phizacklea, Joe Holden (alt leads)

GREAT GABLE

THE NAPES (PAGE 107)

Sick'ard Shiver 21m E6
(6a). Climbs the wall right of Thirty Nine Steps (small wires and a cam can be arranged in a flake on the right). Start as for Thirty Nine Step or Sick Heart River and take a direct line above the traverse. Thin moves lead to better holds and the shoulder. Serious.
FA: (28/04/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury

PILLAR

PILLAR ROCK

NORTH FACE OF LOW MAN (PAGE 238)

Tapestry - Bayeux Variation 12m | E5
A bold, direct and serious alternative finishing pitch to Tapestry, making its way straight as an arrow from above the in-situ belay to join the final crackline of the original route.Pitch 3 (6a). From above the in-situ belay a rising line of good holds lead up the left-hand side of a black streak to a tough crux move off a poor crimp. Rejoining at the finishing crack of the original route brings relief and gear. A single very poor RP can be placed before the crux, but it is unlikely to prevent a failed ascensionist from crashing to a defeat similar to the one that befell King Harold at Hastings.
FA: (30/07/2011) Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read

RAVEN CRAG (ENNERDALE) (PAGE 203)

Once Upon a Time in the North-West 24m E7-
A superb, fingery and sustained route on excellent rock. It takes the line of the crag direct up the centre of the vertical wall follow-

ing the obvious white streak. Although the route is low in the grade, the numerous RP placements take considerable effort to place. On the first ascent a DMM Wallnut 0 was pre-placed at the crux. Start directly beneath the white streak and below a large flake against the wall. (6b/c). Climb easily up to the top of the flake then make a hard move to become established on the wall. This is followed by strenuous fingery climbing up a thin crackline to reach a tiny break. A further series of difficult moves lead to a good hold in a small break up and left. Pull back rightwards to reach a good flake, then finish direct.
FA: (24/07/2011) Graeme Read, Simon Litchfield

The Searchers 26m E5
A fantastic route that tackles the obvious line of the corner and groove system to the right of the main face. Start on a platform beneath an obvious innocuous looking corner/crack. (6b). From the very first move this corner is brutal, but eases higher up where the sanctuary of a left-trending glacis is reached - gear can be arranged at the top of the ramp before the crux. A hard and insecure-feeling move up a thin crack in the bulging wall to the left of the blank groove allows for a fabulously precarious position with your hands on a sloping shelf to be reached. A move back right to the base of a crack gains a bridging position and brings welcome respite and gear. Things ease with the final crack-line, but the climbing remains steep and brilliantly positioned.
FA: (31/07/2011) Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read

The John Wayne Variation 26m E4
An alternative finish to The Searchers that provides good and well positioned independent climbing but avoids the shoot out with the upper groove.(6a). Start as for The Searchers. From the top of the half-way ramp a tough move out leftwards gains a rising crack-line. Follow this steeply, initially towards Once upon a Time in the North West and then back right to the top with maintained interest.
FA: (24/07/2011) Simon Litchfield, Graeme Read

BUTTERMERE

BUCKSTONE HOW (PAGE 72)

The Way of Skallagrim 45m E1

This starts up the short wall just left of Groove 1.

1 20m (5c). Starting at the V-groove near the centre of the wall move up and right to gain and use the crack on the right to attain a small ledge. Continue using the crack on the right then the crack-line on the left to gain the ledge above. Continue up leftwards to belay on Groove 1.

2 25m (4c). Continue up to gain a slanting corner to the left of the groove of Groove 1. Climb this with interest to join and finish up Cleft Rib.

FA: (18/08/2011) Ron Kenyon, Michael Kenyon (alt)

Silent Skies 55m E5

Starts just right of The Asp. Climb a fin of rock to reach a steep pillar, climb this direct to a grassy stance. Climb the blunt arête of the large slab, right of Cleopatra, and follow the left edge of this steep slab via a hard step left at mid height to a small stance. Two sky hooks and small RPs protect the crux. Traverse left then climb a flaky arête to the top.

FA: (27/03/2012) Mike Przygrodzki, Chris Swanepoel

ST BEES

Poseidon (Page 277)

(F7c). The old project to the right of Elysium, providing a good companion to that route.Follow the curving flake up to the overlap then, utilising the obvious mono, gain the sloping break. Move past this with difficulty and climb directly up the wall above to a lower off over the lip.

FA: (06/11/2011) Chris Fisher

BORROWDALE

GARROTTE BUTTRESS (PAGE 86)

Fleet Street Hackers 30m E1

A bold climb. Start in the bay 8 metres right of Supercrack.(5b). Scramble rightwards up steep grass then back left to reach the base of a steep open groove. Climb this and pull out left. Move up right then left to a rest below a dubious block. Pull up to this then move out right into a chimney/groove which is followed to a tree at its top. Belay on a ledge on the left. FA: (10/07/2011) Andy Dunhill, Dave Wood, Hal Rzadkiewicz

SHEPHERDS CRAG

NORTH BUTTRESS (PAGE 131)

Warsaw 38m | E5

The wall between between Gemma and PPS. Start just left of corner.(6b/c). Make delicate moves on small holds passing a tiny flake hold to gain a flat hold up on the left (small wire and skyhook). Span right on layaways and gain a large pinch up on the left. Make a hard move right to reach a pocket and move up past a mono to gain a pinch. Continue past another mono to a good edge. Finish up the slabby wall and exit right to a tree belay.
FA: (26/09/2010) Mike Prygrodzki, Harry McGhie

Katyn 50m E5

Start behind rock pinnacle just right of Sin.(6a). Climb directly up the left side of the wall passing a block to gain an arête (sling runners and fragile holds). Continue direct up the arête to gain a gangway going left. Move along this then up a wall to join Eve at the mantel. Cross Eve and climb the wall on slopers to gain the rising crack of Eve. Using a shield of rock, climb direct up the overhanging prow (crux, sling runner). Exit onto the slab and continue up the easy rocks to the top.
FA: (25/09/2010) Mike Prygrodzki, Vickie Crookes

Islands in a Deep Blue Ocean 50m E6

A direct line up the wall between Sin and Eve, finishing up the

groove right of Katyn. Start just left of Golden Delicious.(6b/c). Scramble up a spikey block below the midpoint of the steep wall left of Eve. Climb steeply up a crack to gain and undercut hold. Make powerful moves on semi-undercuts and a sidepull to gain the 'mother of all undercuts' (this first crux is protected with a Slider and small RPs). Move steeply upon small edges to gain a leftward-slanting crack. Continue up the wall on small positive holds to gain Eve. Continue up the centre of the slab to a small overlap. Go over this and another slab to gain a steep pillar left of Delight Maker. Climb this to gain the slanting ramp on Eve. Step left to below the overhanging groove. Climb this boldly using dynamic moves and a precarious rock over onto a flat hold to a rounded finish (protected by a Rock 4 in a good slot). Climb easily to the top of the crag and a block belay.
FA: (19/04/2011) Mike Przygrodzki, Duncan Sperry

BROWN CRAG (PAGE 142)

Shadow Wall E3
Start as for Brown Slabs Corner.(5c). Climb the corner-crack until a wall is reached on the right. Establish yourself on the wall by a hard move and then follow a series of small ledges, moving up and right to reach a wide crack. Exit the wall at a spike and climb the blunt rib and slab to a steep groove and wall (protection in pocket up on left). Climb the groove to finish at a stance on the left.
FA: Mike Pryzgrodzki,

Dark Side E3
(6a). Start as for Shadow Wall but climb the left arête and edge of the wall direct (good wires in the arête). Traverse the flat top of the wall and finish as for Shadow Wall.
FA: (04/09/2010) Mike Pryzgrodzki, Steve Metcalf

Dark Matters 55m E3+
1 27m (5c). Start as for Shadow Wall, and do the first few hard moves (very small RP). Then continue rightwards towards a fascinating undercut shelf that is past the large crack. Go straight into the undercut pressing upwards with your palms to keep you in (an-

other small RP in the cracked bun-like rock). The next hard move is to reach for a rightward-sloping crimp (amazing!). From here climb up towards a tree that is a little worse for wear. Move rightwards again, first on crimps then on some beautiful examples of Lake District slopers and you will be rewarded with a Friend 1 in the crack on the right above you. Make your way over to the little ledge on the far right and make a belay from the obvious cracks on the left.
2 18m (6a). The second pitch varies in character completely. Climb up the cracks to reach very incut crimps on the left, from here make a biggish move to the crack's top with a good hold. The hanging slab has a wonderfully firm hold protruding from its furthest point use this and another fine Lakes' sloper to gain little crimps high in the hanging slab. Continue up the deceptive slab that does not yield much in the way of protection. Fortunately this isn't long and the use of trees is usually possible. The belay is best using the big oak tree past the ants' nest.
FA: (08/10/2010) Harry McGhie, with Mike Meaney on P1

LONG BAND CRAG (PAGE 226)

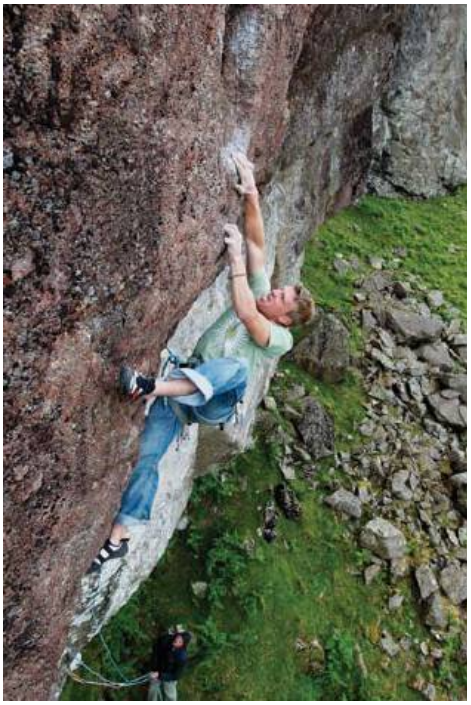
The Gymnast 33m E7- **
(6c). Start as for The Technician and follow it to the base of the large groove (pegs). Make wild moves left and up to better holds then follow the arête to the top. Great climbing.
FA: (01/05/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury

SERGEANT CRAG SLABS (PAGE 268)

An Turas E4
Start just left of Aphasia.(5c). Go up the thin slab to the central overlap. Climb this direct (skyhook protection) and move up the slab to a good pocket (and good gear). Overcome the bulge (good pocket to right) keeping in a parallel line to Aphasia. Overcome another bulge (good wire thread on right) and gain the large ledge. Finish direct or as for Aphasia.
FA: (21/08/2010) Mike Przygrodzki, Vickie Crookes

CAM CRAGS (PAGE 271)

Campaign 20m E7
Start up the steep groove right of Cam Crag Crack.(6c). Moves up the groove lead to small wires and small cams in the roof. Move out to a spike undercut and up via hard moves to better holds. Keep your nerve and follow the crack to the top.
FA: (01/07/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury, Alan Wilson, Wez Hunter (RP1 pre-placed)



Adam Hocking on Campaign, Cam Crags.

EASTERN CRAGS

CASTLE CRAG, WYTHBURN (PAGE 117)

Alt: 600m GR: NY 306 119 Direction: South
A great little crag that has a fantastic panoramic view of the South Lakes and Morecambe Bay.
The crag is south-facing and is sheltered. All the routes are short but testing. It had been spied previously by various climbers however was left for better climbers to develop.
Park in Steel End car park at the south-west end of Thirlmere and follow the footpath up the valley of Wythburn. Follow this path for 2km, then strike up right up the steep but short hillside.

1. King Dunmail's Last Stand 15m E4
(6a). From two good holds slightly left of the roof, pull out right and battle your way up the steep groove above.
FA: (04/05/2011) Mike Norbury

2. Trebuchets 15m E4
(6a). Attack the crack above to take a resting position in the niche, then climb the wall to top out slightly right.
FA: (04/05/2011) Mike Norbury, Adam Hocking

3. Mangonel 15m E4+
(6a). Strenuous climbing leads to a semi rest under the roof. Drift slightly right and reach up to find large hidden holds which lead to the top.
FA: (04/05/2011) Mike Norbury, Adam Hocking

4. Onager 15m E5
(6a). Battle your way up the steep bouldery start to a small rest on a good foothold. Move left to the arête and up to a small roof. Make fun moves to better holds which lead to the top. FA: (04/05/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury

5. Ballista 15m E4
(6a). Follow the corner, making a hard move at its top.
FA: (04/11/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury

6. Pendragon 15m E1
(5b). Follow the corner and crack to the top.
FA: (04/05/2011) Mike Norbury, Adam Hocking

EAGLE CRAG, GRISEDALE

SOUTH CRAG (PAGE: 249)

86 Years Young 24m E1
A fairly bold route taking the slabby wall between Original Route and 90 Years Young. (5b). After gaining the ledge where Original Route branches leftwards, climb in a direct line up the thin slab to the right of this, the crux is protected by a good small nut in the middle of the wall. Finish immediately to the right of the dry stone wall on the pasture.
FA: (26/07/2011) J Lynch, M Lynch

KIRKSTONE CRAG (PAGE 198)

Old Magic 12m E4 **
(6a). Climb the deceptively steep arête and wall right of The Great Game.
FA: (27/04/2011) Nick Wharton, Stuart Wood

GOUTHER CRAG, SWINDALE (PAGE 359)

The Keswickian 28m E8
A much eyed line ! Start as for Hindleg Crack.(7a). Climb the short wall and crack to a ledge underneath the left-hand side of the large roof and arrange gear in the corner (making sure you extend it well). Now make wild moves through the large roof till finally the slab can be gained. Follow the wonderful wall/arête (hidden wire on the slab/arête at half height, in a pocket) to a junction with One Step Beyond and the top.
FA: (15/06/2011) Adam Hocking, Mike Norbury

LOW CRAG (PAGE 366)

Still At It 22m HS
Start as for The Crystal Maze but after a few metres move left onto a good ledge below the overhang. Climb the short hanging groove at the left hand end of the ledge and continue up the arête to the belay at the top of The Crystal Maze.
FA: (28/09/2011) Dave Berry, Mike Bebbington, Ian Knight

London's Burning 18m VS-
A few metres left of Linjeston's Climb is a tall narrow slab bounded on the left by the slope of the descent gully. Start below a prominent spike.(4b). Climb the arête to gain the slab on the left. Easy climbing leads to a good foothold on the left edge then delicate moves right and up to the top. Not well protected on crux.
FA: (09/08/2011) Ian Lawton, Liz Lawton

201 Not Out 18m VS-
Takes a line to the right of London's Burning. Start as for London's Burning, 6 metres left of Linjeston's Climb.(4c). Climb the stepped arête direct to a sloping ledge a few metres below the top. Move left

and climb the steep wall on small holds.
FA: (28/09/2011) Dave Berry, Ian Knight, Mike Bebbington

THE DANDLE (PAGE 374)
CHURCH DOOR BUTTRESS
The small church door-shaped buttress 200 metres right of the Dandle.

Nicole ** 11m E1
(5b). The left arête of the buttress. Technical moves and minimal protection make this an exciting little lead. Fortunately the landing is good.
FA: (20/08/2011) George North, Ian Lawton, Liz Lawton

Carry on Clio 11m HVS
(5b). The obvious central groove on the buttress. Climb the groove to exit direct onto the slab above. Perfect rock, interesting moves and good gear - superb!
FA: (20/08/2011) George North, Ian Lawton, Liz Lawton

Papa 11m VS
(4b). The right arête of the buttress. Start 2 metres right of Carry on Clio and gain the arête on the right by steep moves.
FA: (20/08/2011) George North, Ian Lawton

WINTER ROUTES

LANGDALE
BOWFELL
NORTH BUTTRESS (PAGE 68)
Fragile Existence 50m VII+
This route climbs the wall of the summer route The Scabbard (VS) though it varies slightly from the summer line throughout, taking a more logical winter line. The crux is sequency and action packed with a big move off a very thin and crucial hook, the gear protecting this move is a bit dubious but held a leader fall which was taken on the first attempt when the thin hook popped.
1 7m (5). Climb the crack up the shield as for the first pitch of The

Scabbard. Cross the big ledge and belay.
2 15m (8). Starting 4 metres in from the left edge of the wall, climb up and rightwards into a corner, pull out right onto the face using a small hook. Climb directly up to a dubious looking block/flake which a sling can be placed around. Pull up and left to a positive scoop, then move up and rightwards by using a very thin hook, a long move off this gains a pinch constriction in the main diagonal fault which continues all the way up the crag. Climb leftwards up onto a good belay ledge with a high thread.
3 28m (7). Climb up the fault to gain a large crack. Follow this almost to the top until a rising diagonal flake crack runs up rightwards. Follow this with a footless swing around the arête onto the face of a slab. Climb straight up into a stepped turf groove. Easy ground leads to the top of the crag.
FA: (28/11/2010) Chris Sterling, Tom Greenwood, Paddy Cave.

PIKE O' STICKLE (PAGE 76)

Optimists' Corner 100m IV
Descend on the west side of Pike o' Stickle alongside the summer scramble of West Ridge. From the base of the ridge traverse horizontally across North-West Gully heading for the prominent large buttress on the skyline. The route starts below this buttress.
1 20m (3). Climb up grooves to a large terrace and traverse 15 metres right to belay below an area of icy grooves and slabs.
2 40m (5). Directly above is a large detached block and left of this is a prominent short steep iced corner. Climb up icy grooves to the corner, then follow the steep corner to a ledge and belay.
3 30m (3/4). Just left of the belay is an icy left-facing corner. Climb this and the steeper iced slab above it. From the end of the slab, move right over a slabby bulge to easier ground leading to the summit. The grade of this pitch will vary considerably depending upon the amount of ice present.
The name comes from the fact that we optimistically went to Pavey Ark in the morning hoping to find Deception and Cook's Tour in condition; the appearance of the sun did for that, so we decided to look at Pike o' Stickle in another display of optimism and were rewarded with this route. The line is likely to be in after snowfall and

freeze-thaw, which we think makes the ice upon which the route relies.
FA: (09/01/2011) Adrian Dye, Matt Griffin, Angus McCulloch

GIMMER CRAG (PAGE 77)

Woolly Juniper 85m IV
Probably the easiest winter line up Pallid Buttress (and the only one so far?). This is the most shaded part of the crag and seems to hold snow and ice.
1 35m (4). start just up the gully to the left of Pallid Slabs summer route. Gain and climb a line of turf / juniper / heather that slants up rightwards into the centre of the crag with a bold section up a steep vegetated groove. Belay at the end of the ramp system, at the left end of a ledge ('The Haven' on Pallid Slabs).
2 50m (4). As for pitch 3 Pallid Slabs. A better protected pitch. Climb straight up grooves from the belay to a tiny cave. Step right then up through a bilberry overhang to gain and climb a fine corner-crack then up easier ground.
FA: (20/12/2010) Martin Bagness, John Kelly

HARRISON STICKLE - NORTH-EAST FACE (PAGE 77)

Bryn's Edge 120m IV
A good turfy mixed route, following the right edge of the buttress facing Pavey Ark. Start on a large terrace at the base of a steep slab which is visible when approaching from Stickle Tarn.
1 30m (4). Trend rightwards for 5 metres up the slab following blobs of turf, then cut back left and up a turfy crack passing a block (good gear). Continue up to reach a large ledge. A bold pitch (ice-hooks useful).
2 50m (4). From the ledge, traverse right, then step up left heading for an obvious steep groove (good gear at bottom). Climb the groove with conviction using good turf, and pull out left at the top. Continue up easier ground to reach a nut belay.
3 40m (2). Continue directly up turfy slabs with occasional steps to the top.
FA: (08/01/2011) Bryan Wakeley, Andy Charlton

DOW CRAG (PAGE 92)

E Buttress 200m III

Start a little below the chockstone in Easter Gully and follow a rising shelf rightwards for 30 metres until it finishes in a narrow gully. Climb the gully with an awkward start and then follow a rising ramp rightwards. The route trends upwards to a through route behind a chockstone. Move right to a basin overlooking North Gully. Take the icy groove on the left of the basin (a good pitch) and follow this to the ridge. The summit is a short distance ahead.
This route follows the line of the summer scramble until the basin, making use of the abundant turf. We decided to try the line because Evans' scrambling guidebook uses the word 'grassy' eight times in describing it. We were surprised at the quality of the route and it deserves to get plenty of traffic, as it is climbable whenever the turf is frozen.
FA: (19/12/2010) Ross McGibbon, David Bell

LOW WATER CRAG (PAGE 93)

Lost in the Wild 65m IV

This route follows an obvious groove in the lower buttress below the large right-slanting terrace at the foot of the main buttress containing the route Wild World. Strenuous climbing, but good pro.
1 30m (4). Climb easy snow, then climb a steep bulge on the left using a wide crack for protection and good torques. Pull out of the awkward bulge and continue up steep turf to belay on the right below a steep groove.
2 35m (5). A steep pitch. Climb boldly using turf and poor footholds to reach a wide crack (large hex/cam). Continue strenuously up the groove and pull out awkwardly onto easier ground. Continue for a further 20 metres to reach a good belay on the terrace. From the terrace it is possible to descend, or continue up the right edge of the buttress to the summit (150m, I/II).
FA: (09/01/2011) Bryan Wakeley, Andy Charlton

BRIM FELL - SOUTH CRAG

Brim Fell Icefall 48m IV-

Starting 5 metres right of the short steep rock wall of Brim Fell

South Crag, this route provides a good upper icefall that is hidden from view. Located just above and right of the finish of Low Water Beck means that a good day out can be had by combining both routes.
Climb the icy gully line then break out left and follow a slabby V corner to the base of the icefall. The icefall is climbed direct with the angle becoming easier with height. The pitch could be split by taking an ice screw belay at the base of the icefall.
FA: (05/12/2010) John Daly, Neil Harvey, Ross Purdy

PILLAR

SHAMROCK AREA (PAGE 176)

Electron-Positron 100m VII
Excellent and a very logical link up and the first bit of Pillar Rock to get white.
1 26m. Pitch 1 of Electron. Brilliant, well protected and technical.
2 24m. Pitch 2 of of Electron. Broken and a little naff.
3. Climb across the grassy gully to finish up the final (4b) pitch of Positron, which gives fantastic climbing on good hooks with good gear.
FA: (26/12/2010) Will Sim, Chris Fisher

We attempted Pitch 3 of Electron, the wide 4c crack. However without specific kit (big cams and Hexes), it was completely unprotectable. The wide crack pitch would definitely go if you had the specific kit.

Tower Postern 92m VI
A great turfy mixed route, based on the summer line, following corners and cracks up the front face of the Shamrock. Large hexes/cams are required to protect the first pitch. Start on the Great Heather Shelf at a turfy groove just right of the huge corner of Electron.
1 25m (6). Follow the corner with escalating interest, exiting direct at the top via an offwidth crack, to reach a thread belay below the vertical cracked wall.
2 15m (5). Climb the cracked wall, which is strenuous and exposed

but soon relents, and belay below the obvious steep corner above.
3 25m (6). Ascend the steepening corner; sustained and brilliant.
4 27m (3). The corner on the right is followed more easily to the summit of the Shamrock.
FA: (08/01/2011) Chris Fisher, Andi Smith

THIRLMERE - SHOULTHWAITE (Page 280)

Zipsor 30m III/IV

North (right) from the base of the easily identifiable tapering cigar of Shoulthwaite Gill three shorter icefalls readily form; the central icefall directly above the bridge is Diclofenac (20m IV+ 2009); right of this, identifiable by its steep top pillar, is the two-tiered fall of Zipsor, (30m III /IV 2010). Zipsor is identifiable by the steep pillar of its second pitch above a fat apron which can be seen clearly from the bridge to above the line of the wall. Follow the wall and then break up steep grass to its foot.
1 20m (2/3). Climb the apron to a bay.
2 10m (4). Climb the pillar (on this ascent we climbed the pillar starting at the lowest point from right to left).
Descent: walk round to the north and descend steep grass to the foot of the route.
FA: (14/01/2010) Steve Scott, Dom Donnini

HELVELLYN

BROWN COVE CRAGS (PAGE 284)

Grace and Favour 100m III

Start just in from the left-hand side of the Two Grooves Buttress, where an obvious notch is visible on the crag photo. The route takes as direct a line as possible from this notch with short sections of pleasant, technical climbing. Climb the left-slanting groove which makes this notch and step right at the top. Climb the slabby wall directly above, first by a turfy recess and then by a delicate and shallow right slanting groove. Continue above to belay from a selection of big blocks. Climb directly above by a series of steps and one steep move on massive hooks and then pick a line to the summit.
FA: (04/12/2010) Jonathan Bursnall, Toby Woodhead

Chimney and Crack 120m IV
Start 50 metres up the descent gully to the right of Right Buttress Crack beneath the short chimney. A worthwhile route.
1 60m (4). Climb the left wall of the gully up a steep grassy ramp to the base of the chimney. Ascend the awkward chimney to easier ground and good belays.
2 60m (3). The large slab above is split by two obvious diagonal cracks. Take the left hand crack - slanting to the right - to a ledge. Climb the short buttress directly above to easier ground.
NB. Alternatives may be possible (i) to the left of the chimney up a ramp and crack (ii) up the left slanting crack in the slab - both not climbed.
FA: (18/12/2011) Karl Telfer, Graham Telfer, Paul Morgan

HIGH CRAG, NETHERMOST PIKE (PAGE 300)
High Crag Grooves 105m V
This route climbs the 'North face' of High Crag, opposite Jogebar Gully. The face is split by a wide turfy scoop up the centre of the crag. High on the buttress to the left of the scoop is an obvious chimney. This route climbs up to the chimney from below and left via turfy grooves, and then follows the arête / buttress above. The climbing is similar in style to that found on Dollywaggon North.
1 20m (4). Start about 8 metres up from the left had end of the buttress. Climb a short wall via turf up and then left to gain a turfy groove. Follow this up and right to a large ledge. Belay at the right hand end of this.
2 40m (6). Climb a rocky groove, (difficult moves, initially with no gear) directly above the belay. Follow a second turfy groove above around a bulge and up to the chimney. (The chimney cannot be seen until you finish the second groove.) Climb the chimney and broad arête above until stopped by a rocky tower on the crest of the narrowed ridge.
3 45m (2/3). Drop down to the right to avoid the tower, then climb a turf groove to the broader buttress above. Climb this for 30 metres.
Above this point is a further 50m of grade I/II mixed ground to

reach the top of the buttress and summit cairn.
This route relies heavily on turf and has a certain amount of loose rock on it. I wouldn't go anywhere near it unless you are sure it is properly frozen.
FA: (28/11/2010) Huw Davies, James Bumby

Dollywagon South (Page 305)
St Sunday Crag
Slab Route Buttress 160m IV
This route climbs the Summer V. Diffs Slab Route and Slab Route Continuation. Start at the lowest point of the buttress to the left of East Chockstone Gully.
1 55m (6) Climb turfy ledges to a rock slab split by two cracks. Climb the right hand of the two cracks to the top of the slab. Move leftwards and climb a groove and continuation chimney with a jammed flake in it. Belay on ledges above this. Great climbing but be careful of a little loose rock as you pull out of the chimney.
2 45m (3). Climb up rightwards over turfy ledges to a left-trending groove. Follow this to easier ground above. Belay below the rocky buttress.
3 30m (6). On the left of the buttress is a crack. Climb this through a bulge to a ledge. Climb the short slab on the right into a short groove. Follow this to easier ground above. Belay at a large boulder below the final rock buttress. Again, great climbing.
4 30m (4). Climb the nose of the buttress above. From here 60 metres of easy ground leads to the top of the crag.
FA: (19/12/2010) Huw Davies, Chris Thorpe

Flaky Rib 140m III
Follows the line of the summer rock climb Dimanche and then takes the continuation rib to the top. We think a grade of III/IV (5) appropriate as the difficulties are well protected, escapable and short lived. A good route; like a harder version of Pinnacle Ridge. Start at the extreme right end of the Tiger Banded Rocks.
1 25m (3/4). The initial steepening contains a good looking turfy groove, which was not well frozen so we climbed the rib at the ex treme right end of the Tiger Banded Rocks to a ledge.

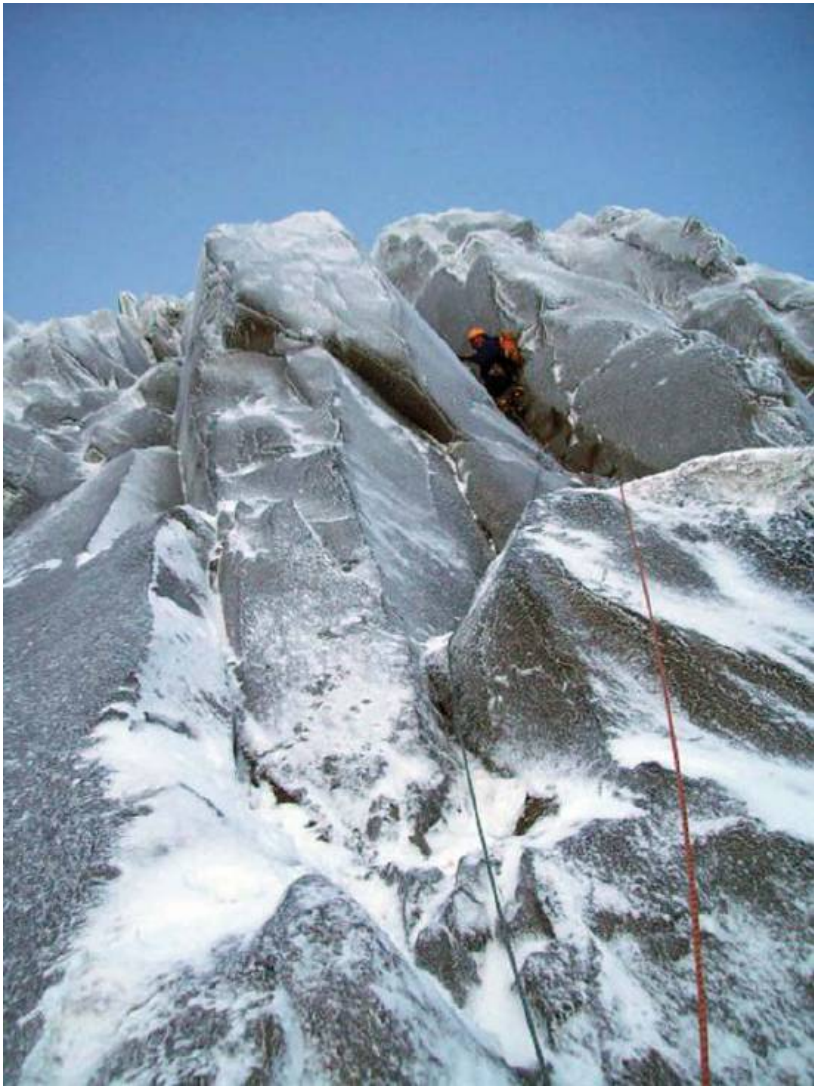
2 55m (5). Cross the shallow gully on the right to the skyline rib and climb it through a steep grooved section (crux) to a good platform.
3 30m (3). Continue up the groove above, over a short, steep wall to a ledge below a 3 metre steep wall. Most blocks on this ledge are loose.
4 30m (3). Climb the short wall and continue up the knife-edged arête above. Scrambling remains.
FA: (28/01/2012) Adrian Dye, Matt Griffin (var)

UNKNOWN CRAG, DOVEDALE - BETWEEN BLACK CRAG AND DOVE CRAG (Page 345)

November Sunshine 25m IV
(4). Thick vertical ice for approx 15 metres, followed by approx ten metres of angled iced slabs. Climbed left pillar using ice protection, belaying well back.
FA: (03/12/2010) Matt Seaman, Simon Woolley

KENTMERE

Ullstone Gill Quarry 40m IV
A worthwhile route that comes into condition after a prolonged freeze. Climb the frozen waterfall in one or two pitches.
FA: (05/12/2010) Alan Dickinson and Amanda Turner



Paddy Cave on Mindbender VIII-8 First Winter Ascent, 6/12/2008
(Korbi Hort)

In Memoriam

Ardys Valerie Alferoff
Peter Appleyard
James Bannister
Rolf & Margaret Braithwaite
Jack Carswell
Stanhope Coxon
Dr Brian Dodson
Oliver Geere
Robin Plackett
Sandy Sanderson
John Seedhouse
Margaret Thompson
John Thurnhill
Barbara Wilkinson
Alison Williams
Alan Wright

Ardys Valerie Alferoff

Ardys Valerie Alferoff joined the Fell and Rock Climbing Club in 1951, aged eighteen. Having spent her childhood in the South Lakes, a love of the mountains was already instilled. It was hardly surprising really, considering her background coming from a thoroughly Fell and Rock family, and she became a third generation member. Her early diaries are full of joyous recounts of mountain activities around Langdale, Borrowdale, Buttermere and Coniston, and many tales of evenings spent round the fire in the huts and at the ODG, enjoying the company and camaraderie of other Club members well into the early hours.

Ardys was born on 21 February 1933 in Bury, Lancashire. Her parents Basil and Marjorie, maternal grandparents Herbert Porritt Cain and Florence Cain, and uncles Billy and Tommy Cain were all

members of the Club. She spent her childhood at Lightbeck, just below Scout Scar on the Underbarrow to Kendal road. She was educated at Wennington School, then trained to be a school teacher at Bedford College. She later studied art at Goldsmiths College in London. As a member of the Bury Art Society, she was delighted when LS Lowry visited the annual exhibition in 1957 and bought one of her paintings.

Ardys was very active on the fells and with the Club during those early years, with weekends spent on the mountains, attending meets and of course the annual dinner. At the Club meet at the K-Fell Farers hut in Seathwaite in December 1952 she met John Wilkinson. They married in December 1954 at the village church in Underbarrow, living first in Durham then later in Todmorden. They had two children. She enjoyed walking in the Lakes, Highlands and Skye, and skiing in Glencoe and the Cairngorms in the days before there were ski lifts and no roads beyond Loch Morlich.

One memorable event was the September 1958 Club camping meet at Glenbrittle, particularly the day when Ronald Macdonald's boat transported the meet to Loch Scavaig. As usual, Ronald was a late starter and by the time the meet had traversed the Dubhs Ridge it was getting late. A concerted team effort got the meet over the Thearlaich–Dubh Gap just before dark (a following party was benighted) and the Alasdair stone shoot was descended in darkness.

Following the failure of her first marriage, Ardys married George Barrow in 1968, and lived near Ramsbottom. She taught at St Paul's Primary School in the town. Many trips a year took them to the Lakes and the far north of Scotland, with Durness, Kinlochbervie

and Achiltiebuie being particularly favourite places. Unfortunately, her second marriage failed and was dissolved in 1976.

Through the late 70's and 80's, she concentrated on developing her artistic skills, studying at Manchester College and founding a small pottery at home with the kiln in the kitchen of her cottage. In her spare time she would take the train to Oxenholme and cycle solo through the Lakes, camping on the Lot next to Lightbeck and staying in the Club huts. She also cycled long distances through Wales alone, tent and belongings packed in a small trailer towed behind her bike. In 1990, Valerie (as she then preferred to be called) settled in North Wales with her partner, David Barrett, on an isolated smallholding, high on the side of a mountain above Caernarfon with views across to the mountains of Snowdonia and over the Irish Sea. Here she was very much in tune with nature and through her surroundings gained the inspiration to return again to formal art education, achieving a 2:1 in Illustration from Coleg Menai in 2001.

People who knew Valerie will remember her as an unconventional, independent and free spirited person having strong ideals and principles together with a huge sense of fun and humour. She had a deep love of and respect for all living things, and chose to be vegan for most of her adult life. She was a keen gardener and established a small wood of native trees in a field next to her home in North Wales. She loved the wild places of Wales and the Scottish Highlands, but also enjoyed the culture of British and European cities, being very well travelled as a young woman and conversant in French, Italian and German. She also learned Russian, having an interest in the culture and country of her father's birth.

Although she was less active on the fells in later years, she enjoyed many family holidays in Raw Head and Birkness cottages. She was a very kind and compasSionate person, ever generous with her time for her grandchildren and would spend hours with them down by the lake looking for birds and wild flowers, sketching and watching the sun go down in the peace of the valley.

Valerie died on 29 January 2011, aged 77, after several years of illness. She leaves her partner David, children Joe and Beatrice, and grandchildren Louis, Ella and Jack. Her love of the Lakeland fells

has been passed down the generations of her family, just as she inherited it from her forebears.

Beatrice Haigh, with thanks also to John Wilkinson

PETER APPLEYARD

Peter was a life member of the FRCC from 1951-2011, a 60 year span during which he provided practical support to the club. He was responsible for much of the heavy stone walling around Rawhead Barn and the car parking area. He was particularly adept at moving large stones by hand with consummate ease.

Peter was a strong fell walker and could cover the ground silently and swiftly. The family origins, in Torver, in High Furness, meant that he understood instinctively how Lakeland farms, barns and walling should be and above all, how they should look.

Peter Harland Appleyard was the son of John Appleyard and Eve Harland. He was the second of three children. His younger brother died tragically in a tractor accident in New Zealand in 1952. His sister Rosemary has been an FRCC member since 1957.

Peter was a founder member of the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team along with his father. Early photos of the team show Jim Cameron assisted by a police constable in a shoulder cape, whilst other members carry heavy Bergen framed ex-army commando rucksacks, in common usage at the time. There was also a wireless aerial which has a distinct army look of an '88' set, or its precursor.

Farming was his strength, but not always his livelihood. He worked in the Coniston and Torver area, though his initial agricultural training was in Dumfriesshire. He had a love for Lakeland ways and collected a substantial array of artefacts used in marginal fell farms, with attendance at farm auctions being a hobby. He became an authority on many aspects of sheep farming through the ages. He spanned the transition from the use of horses to tractors, lamenting the way that so many marginal farms have been allowed to fall out of use. Peter was a great huntsman, finding it difficult to understand how the balance of nature could be assisted in shooting the fox. He

was a quiet man with a strong sense of loyalty and did not suffer fools gladly.

We mourn the loss of a true Lakeland mountain man. He leaves a wife, Dorothy, a daughter, Susan and a stepson Colin. He was buried in Torver after a service in a packed church, a reflection of having been a loyal friend to many.

Guy Plint

James Bannister

James Bannister was a lifelong lover of the Lake District and enjoyed the hills in all seasons and all weathers. He joined the Fell and Rock in 1959, having been introduced to the club by his brother-in-law and Club member, Jack Duckworth, who put up several new routes in Deepdale in the 1950s. My father, known to most as Jim, introduced me to the hills, led me up my first Lakeland rock climb when I was 12 and later encouraged me to apply to join the Fell and Rock. Since joining he had over fifty years of walking, climbing and skiing before his death in February 2012 after a short illness.

Born in Preston in 1932, Jim made early walking trips to the Lakes by bus with the Leyland Rambling Club. After studying architecture at The University of Sheffield he returned to Preston where he married Kath and worked as an architect up to his retirement in 1992. He was involved in designing many large buildings, Nottingham Hospital (Queen's Medical Centre) being his largest individual project. Jim loved walking on the Lakeland fells, especially the Eastern hills, and climbed on rock and snow in the lower grades. He was always happy to be out on quiet Lakeland crags in sunshine or on Helvellyn in full winter conditions.

My father was particularly fond of Wasdale; his favourite club hut was Brackenclose and together we made many visits there, of which

two were particularly memorable: One misty October day we headed up to Gable and climbed Needle Ridge, emerging into glorious sunshine in the upper pitches accompanied by a cloud inversion and a Brocken Spectre. Midweek one April we walked up to Great End, optimistically carrying ice-axes, crampons and rope with hardly a patch of snow to be seen. We found perfect snow-ice running the length of Central Gully, which we had to ourselves, and returned to the hut feeling rather pleased at our good fortune. My father also liked the quietness of Birkness Combe and we often climbed there linking the classics of Grey Crags to the top, 'Oxford and Cambridge Direct' being a particular favourite.

Jim was an accomplished skier, a passion which he maintained throughout his life, and each winter he made numerous ski trips to the Alps with Kath. He was an active member and past president of the Lake District Ski Club, frequently skiing on Raise and even ski-touring on the Dodds when conditions permitted. With the opening of Karn House, weekends in the Cairngorms became easier and he and I undertook several ski tours on Ben Macdui.

My father was also a regular visitor to the Alps, and after taking part in the Austrian Alpine Club's first 'Rock and Ice Course' in the Stubai in 1954 with Kath he became a regular visitor to the Austrian Alps. Some decades later he and I made several annual ski-touring trips there and his ascents of the Wildspitze in the Oetztal and Piz Buin in the Silvretta brought him great pleasure. He made a ski-mountaineering ascent of the Aiguille d'Argentiere when he was 70. After a little encouragement for the final ridge which was bare ice, the pleasure of the summit to ourselves and my father's delight at being there remains a moment I shall always remember.

Jim was still enjoying the hills in good health right up to the onset of his illness, and he maintained a lifelong love of the Lakes. A few weeks before his passing we all made what he knew would be his final visit there. The combination of snow and mist on the tops, sunshine in the valley, was the Lakes at its best and he was happy to be back where his hill days had first started. An enthusiast to the end, he will be sadly missed.

Adam Bannister

WR (Rolf) Braithwaite
Margaret Braithwaite (nee Newton) Braithwaite

Rolf (right) and Margaret (centre) on Taranaki

My father Rolf Braithwaite was born in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. He was introduced to rock climbing by his elder brother and soon became an enthusiast. In 1941 he starting studying at Sheffield University and joined FRCC .

Margaret Newton was born in Millom, Cumberland. She was a keen athlete and enjoyed being out on the hills of the Lake District. She also studied at Sheffield University, and met Rolf as a result of their shared interest in climbing, and in due course they were married.

Rolf worked as a industrial chemist specialising in metallurgy, and Margaret became a high school teacher of English and Latin. Their spare time and holidays were spent walking and climbing in the Lake District, Scotland, Wales and the Alps.

I was born in 1953, followed by my sister Marian and my brother Alan. This seriously curtailed Margaret and Rolf's rock climbing activities, but they still had great times in the hills and mountains. We had some fantastic holidays in FRCC cottages, particularly Birkness on the shores of Buttermere. We enjoyed playing along the lakeshore and in the lake, walking, and the spectacular scenery. It always felt like an adventure staying at the cottage, with no mains power and going to bed by candlelight. We had one family trip to Wales rock climbing, but it was not a great success - climbing with three young children took a lot longer and was more difficult than anticipated.

In 1968 the Braithwaite family moved to Wellington in New Zealand. Margaret and Rolf still enjoyed receiving the FRCC journal which reminded them of their old haunts and enjoyable times in the UK. They had fond memories of their times with the FRCC.

Once we children left school, Rolf and Margaret dug out their old climbing gear, became active members of the New Zealand Alpine Club and recommenced serious mountaineering. Then in 1983 they moved to Motueka in the South Island, which made access to the Southern Alps easier. There they had a kiwifruit farm for 10 years, before retiring. They enjoyed life in the South Island and had more time for expeditions into the mountains.

In 1999 Margaret died after suffering from cancer. Rolf continued to live in their home even when his health deteriorated, staying fiercely independent until he was admitted to hospital shortly before his death in 2010.

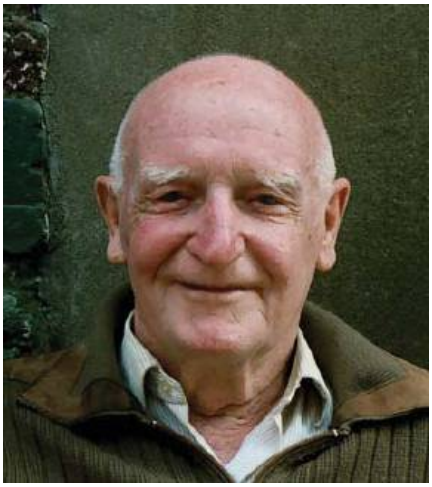
Helen Braithwaite

JACK CARSWELL

Jack Carswell was born in 1915 in Workington and after leaving school he served an apprenticeship with Distington Engineering Company. His job at the outbreak of World War 2 was thus in a reserved occupation and, having already started ranging the fells from the age of fifteen, he began rock climbing well before many returned from the war. Jack's work took him to various steel plants in the north of England but, as the proud owner of a Vincent (Black Shadow) motorbike, he was still able to get frequently to Cumbria. He finally returned to Workington to live

Much of Jack's best climbing took place in the thirties and a great deal of it was done with Mabel Barker, a progressive school teacher and an ardent hill walker, camper and rock climber who was twenty seven years older than Jack. It was during this period that Jack climbed Central Buttress both up and down and he also used to speak of great difficulties and a near accident on Deer Bield Crack. He climbed with Ieuan Banner-Mendus, a Welsh solicitor who took lodgings with Jack's aunt when he came to live in Workington.

From the late forties until the end of the fifties Jack's main rock climbing partner was Tom Price who had come to Workington to take up a job at the grammar school. They climbed together right



through until the beginning of the sixties when Price moved to Eskdale as Warden of the Outward Bound School. They would go out weekend after weekend, winter and summer and often stay out for both days as neither had a car at that time, so it was easier to use climbing huts instead of going home. They also made weekend visits to Scotland and once to the Alps. For transport they sometimes used Workington Ramblers Club hired bus to reach the Buttermer crags or Pillar and, on occasion, the 6a.m. Saturday workman's train to Keswick taking bicycles. Then they would pedal up to Seathwaite, have a second breakfast at Edmondson's and so get to the Scafells and even to crags like Gimmer (starting their climbing at the summit). At one time as a young man Jack had walked over Scafell, Scafell Pike (including Scafell Pinnacle) Skiddaw and Helvellyn i.e. all summits over 3,000 feet in one day. He found on toiling up Helvellyn that one of his legs refused to step up. He then made a sort of stirrup out of a sling and used his hand to heave his foot up at each step. After some time the leg improved. Jack was not one to give up.

These were the days of leather soled boots, clinkers, ortlers, tricounis, and often plimsolls sometimes just socks. A hundred foot hawser-laid rope was used, with two slings each with karabiners and bowlines round the waist. They regarded themselves as cragsmen who could move quietly and efficiently up and down climbs invariably 'leading through'. In winter, ice axes were all they needed, crampons were only for the Alps, and helmets unheard of. They were often on the fells in the dark and often on the crags in rain. This was a good partnership leading to many fine days out and usually at the end of a long day on the crags they would return to Workington to enjoy a hearty meat-and-potato dinner at Jack's home.

Tom Price

Maureen Linton continues.....

Jack Carswell joined the Club in 1936 when he was already renowned for his achievements on Central Buttress. He used to recall that, at that time, there was a feeling in West Cumberland that climbing was a "Nob Sport" for the wealthy and more leisured. His own experience on attending his first meet gave a very different impression when he was greeted as an equal. This left a lasting memory which he treasured.

His love of the fells began when he was six and had his first view of Grasmoor. He claimed that from then on he never wanted to do anything else but be involved in the hills. When he was ten he followed the tradition of the local lads by walking from Workington to Loweswater to prove that he was 'grown up' and he started ranging the fells soon afterwards. When he was 15 he made a week long solo circuit of the Lakes. Starting from Lanthwaite Green, and taking in Gable and Helvellyn (by Striding Edge), he returned to Lanthwaite via the Buttermere fells and then walked back to Workington. Not bad for a lad of his age.

Jack treasured the memories of his climbing days with Banner-Mendus and Mabel Barker and later with Tom Price. His first rock climb was on Pillar with Mendus at the age of 17 and while still a teenager climbed Kern Knotts Crack – in plimsolls. He was one of the first to make a free ascent of Central Buttress which was rated, at that time, to be the hardest climb in Britain and, together with Mendus and Dr Barker, he made the first descent of CB keeping himself last thus having no protection from above. He liked to recall that his climbs with Dr Barker usually became epics and that he accepted risks because he loved rock climbing with its accent on adventure.

His first Alpine trip was with Charles Tilly in 1951 during which they climbed the formidable Via della Pera, the Pear Buttress, on the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc. On that occasion their guide, Andre Roch, chose Jack as his second having recognised him, he said later, 'as a strong man'. The weather became atrocious and, as the Vallot hut was full, they continued to descend to Chamonix in appalling

conditions. This resulted in a comment in one of the leading Alpine publications to the effect that 'if you want to see how to get off a big mountain in a blizzard, take a lesson from Les Deux Anglais.'

After his climbing days, Jack continued to travel to distant mountain ranges in Nepal, Kenya, U.S.A, Peru, Greenland and Jordan. As part of a three-man expedition to Peru he found himself separated from the others without food or money and knowing no Spanish . With his usual resourcefulness he managed to get himself back to Lima and eventually arrived home looking gaunt and emaciated yet he maintained that the experience did him no harm at all. His greatest adventure was taking part in a three month expedition crossing the Greenland ice cap. After battling appalling conditions, the team reached the coast to see the boat which was to meet them sailing away in the far distance, having given up waiting for them. Jack and a Danish member of the group made a determined dash over difficult terrain to attract attention from the boat which did return for them. On reaching Reykjavik they learned that the whole party had been presumed dead. Jack maintained that this was the highlight of all his trips and called it his 'Big Experience'

A man of many interests, his wide reading made him an interesting conversationalist and he was a splendid photographer. He had no problem with foreign languages - for he did not know any, but this did not prevent him mixing easily with complete strangers who spoke no English and he would recount a chance meeting with a foreign stranger in some far away place with '...well we got talking and ....'. He was modest about his achievements, very sensitive to atmosphere and to people, never pushing but always ready with sensible advice when approached. Pillar was always special for him and he liked to reminisce about sitting in Jordan's Gap after a day's climbing, watching the moon rise. He also felt that there was something of a 'cathedral feel' about Hollow Stones. After retiring he chose to live in Skinburness to enjoy the serenity and beauty of the views from his home. Surprisingly he had no ear for music which anyone who ever heard his attempts to sing will confirm.

Jack valued his membership of the Club which formed a large part of his life. He served as Meets Secretary and Vice-President and felt greatly honoured when he was elected President in 1974. He liked to

claim that he and Sid Cross were the first 'working class' Presidents of the Club. He well deserved the Honorary Membership which he received in 1995

He was a very special person who will be remembered as witty and intelligent, as an outstanding climber and mountaineer, a committed Club member and a loyal friend..

Maureen Linton

LOUIS STANHOPE COXON

Stanhope Coxon joined the Club in 1932 and he died on 24th August 2011, just two weeks short of his hundredth birthday. He was the Father of the Rucksack Club – our longest serving member, for over 14 years. I had the pleasure of talking with Stanhope in his last few years. He loved mountains and mountaineering and it was a privilege to listen as he remembered the famous names from our past and reminisced about his pre-war climbing trips to Scotland, the Lakes, Wales and the Alps.

Stanhope was born in Derby on 12th September 1911 and when he left school in 1926 he was articled to a local accountant. In 1942 he moved to Manchester to work as the Secretary/Accountant at Crossley Brothers, the diesel engine manufacturer. Then, as he told me some seventy years later, one day in 1948 he saw an advertisement in the paper for an accountant's job in Addis Ababa working for the Emperor, Haile Selassie. He and his wife Marion lived in Addis for two years and whilst there they made an early guideless ascent of Kilimanjaro. When he returned to the UK, Stanhope worked for the Colonial Development Corporation in London and he ended his career as Finance Director of the literary agents, Curtis Browne. Stanhope married Marion Mackay in 1942; to their great regret they had no children.

When Stanhope retired in 1977, he and his wife looked for somewhere close to the mountains to live, Cockermouth and Glen Affric were both considered but they decided to move to Inverness. They lived there for the rest of their lives; Marion died in 2006 aged 102 and Stanhope continued to live by himself right to the end. He enjoyed a full life in his retirement. Beekeeping: he was Treasurer to

the Scottish Beekeepers Association and an honorary Vice President. Piano playing: he learnt to play as a child, rekindled his interest in Manchester and played every day until a few weeks before his death. Gardening: when I talked to him in 2009, Stanhope was 97, but even so he was very keen to tell me he had just ordered a new 20ft greenhouse ready for summer crops of tomatoes, strawberries and flowers.

However, mountains and mountaineering were his great love. Stanhope applied to join the Rucksack Club in 1931, but he had barely turned 20 and the Committee of the time, which included some formidable men, sent him away to get some more experience. He was more successful a year later and he was elected to the Club on 4th November 1932. Stanhope attended many Rucksack Club meets in the 1930s and whilst in Arran on the 1938 Easter Meet he led a new route on Cioch na H-Oighe. Coxon's Route, [SMC Rock Climbs in Arran, 1958 p60], was first climbed by LS Coxon, GS Bower and AS Pigott on 18th April 1938.

Stanhope also climbed in the Alps in the 1930s. He was on the FRCC's 1936 meet at Chamonix when he climbed the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon with amongst others, Anthony Medlycott another Club member, described in Stanhope's own account (Rucksack Club Journal 1937:273). He led the FRCC 1938 Alpine Meet to Fafleralp in the Oberland, and his report in their 1939 Journal talks of exciting days and nights when they made 'a dash to the summit of the Finsteraarhorn over rocks that were becoming glazed by the freezing mist' and on the Bietschhorn: 'wandered about narrow ledges that might have seemed foolishly dangerous by daylight'. He is also credited with a guideless ascent of the Matterhorn in the 1930s or 1940s, though the actual date is unknown.

Stanhope was Outdoor Organiser for the Rucksack Club between 1940 and 1943. A difficult task since, as he reported in the Rucksack Club Journal in 1941: 'Outdoor activities in 1940 were much restricted by the difficulties of travel and the war-time occupations of our members'. Nevertheless, 'the Rucksack Club is fortunate in having within easy reach excellent country, to which an occasional escape during these days of long working-hours and black-out is a relief that is almost essential to those who have been in the habit of spending nearly every week-end among the hills'.

With Stanhope's going, we have lost our last direct link with the origins of the Club because, as he proudly told me, Arthur Burns a co-founder of the Club in 1902 was a witness at his wedding in 1942. The Club may not have seen anything of Stanhope since the war but he remained one of us right through to the end of his very long life.

Stanhope Coxon was a member of the Rucksack Club for 79 years and in his own words to me just a few months ago; 'the Club has been one of the greatest things in my life'.

Carole Smithies

With thanks to Margery Hobson and also the FRCC.

This obituary was written for the Rucksack Club Journal and the FRCC are very grateful to both Carole Smithies and the Rucksack Club for permission to reproduce it in the FRCC Journal.

DR BRIAN DODSON

Brian 'Doddy' Dodson lived his life in the fast lane. Particularly he loved the mountains, climbing, the Lake District and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of which he was immensely proud to be a member.

Born in Preston, the son of a Commercial Traveller, Brian first started rock climbing during 1949 when doing his stint of National Service in the Medical Corp. On being released from National Service in 1950 he dedicated his summer to rock climbing and following his meeting with Bill Peascod, at Raw Head, his rise was meteoric. In 'Journey After Dawn' Bill described him thus;

> 'He was a lad of twenty-two – medium height, open faced, strongly built and, I was to find out, possessed of a remarkable repertoire of songs of the kind that are more frequently enjoyed in the shower of the Rugby Club. – He was extremely fit and, I discovered, climbing very well.'

He certainly was and soon demonstrated that not only was he a very able, but also an extremely bold climber. With 'Ginger' Cain, mountain artist, he travelled to Skye to climb in the Black Cuillin and they put up the first ascent of 'Commando Crack' 305m Severe which showed the immense possibilities of Alasdair - Thearlaich Crags above the remote Coir' A' Ghrunnda. A fine climb, one of the

few to be allotted a three star rating, which is described as 'A very good and quite exciting climb' in the SMC Guidebook. Praise indeed for a climb by a couple of young, then unknown, Sassenachs.

Bill Peascod invited Brian to stay with him in Buttermere's Gatesgarth Barn in August 1950. Following on from Skye he and 'Ginger' did so and Brian was soon to make the 2nd ascent of 'Cumbrian's Climb' on Buckstone How in the pouring rain and in socks. It still has a modern technical grade of HVS+ 5a! And now lodging in the Gatesgarth Farm Barn he went on with Peascod to make the 2nd ascent of 'Dexter Wall' - another difficult and precarious 5a pitch which in those days was un-protectable. Bill wrote; 'His lead of it was a masterpiece of concentration, delicacy and fine climbing.'

Photo - Bill Birkett Photo Library

Also in the fabulous year of 1950, Brian teamed up with Bill Peascod to make two important ascents on Ben Nevis: along with GG Macphee they climbed 'Gargoyle Wall' a 400ft VD on 28th Aug; and Brian and Bill climbed , on the Orion Face of Ben Nevis (a major scent), 'Minus 2 Gully' a 900ft Severe on 29th August.

With 'Ginger' he went on to make the first non Peascod ascents of Eagle Front (Ginger remembers that they climbed Eagle Front in the wet with only one pair of socks between them which they somehow passed up and down the rope!) and Fortiter, the latter which they climbed flamboyantly in nailed boots – most probably in the wet. As the weather turned inexorably wetter, as it can do in mid summer in the Lake District, within the shelter of the barn Brian and Bill turned their restless mental agility to the development of a climbing harness. A combination of Brian's medical knowledge and Bill's engineering

ability produced the 'Gatesgarth Sling' the forerunner of the modern climbing harness developed so successfully latterly by Don Whillans.

Alas it was never to see the light of day. Shortly after this Bill emigrated to Australia to pursue a career as a mining engineer and Brian decided to follow his other great passion - medicine. As a humble working lad from Preston, Brian knew that to become a doctor he had to pass his medical exams first time – there was no back up for him and, at that time, no such possibility as a career in climbing.

Brian passed those exams and subsequent hospital training to become a General Practitioner. During his training as a doctor a colleague took him back to his home in Somerset and they walked the Quantocks. Brian immediately decided this was the place for him and set up in practice at Taunton. During this time he played for Taunton Rugby Club and had a great affinity with the club throughout his life.

He first practiced at Warwick House – a small property in the town and by the late 1960's he had identified the need for an improvement in Taunton's medical care. His drive, unquenchable enthusiasm and not least his stubborn bravery and determination to overcome all, including bureaucracy and planning red-tape, brought about the launch of the purpose built Warwick House Medical Centre – the first government funded Medical Centre in Britain. This was later expanded and improved and Brian was instrumental in including a facility for Complementary Medicine within the Health Centre. Another first for Doddy. June was centre manager and their subsequent partnership lasted for some forty years.

However, there was to be a second unexpected return to climbing on Bill Peascod's return from Australia in the 1980's. They repeated many of the Buttermere routes and there was a visit to the hallowed ground of the Black Cuillin, again meeting up with 'Ginger' who at that time was working from his studio in Plockton, before his move to Llanberis. This was the time that I first met Brian and June and we began to climb together on occasions. Tragically it was Bill's death, from heart failure, whilst climbing between Don Whillans and myself on Cloggy in 1985 that brought Brian and June closer in my life. They simply dropped everything and gave total support to

myself, Don and Audrey, and Bill's family – his widow Etsu and young daughter Emma.

Throughout this time Brian and June remained active in the great outdoors frequently visiting the Lake District and staying in the FRCC huts. In 1990 they trained hard and successfully trekked to Everest Base Camp. Later, on an Alpine course with Brian Hall, Brian Dodson tripped over his crampons on the Mer du Glace and fell into a crevasse. Quickly and expertly rescued by Brian H, Brian D was returned to Taunton and to his GP in quick time. After the initial X Ray, Brian's GP, Dr Philip Penny, phoned him and said:

'I think you better come back in, you've broken six ribs impaling and collapsing your lung which is half full of blood and half full of water.' Brian's response: 'Thank God for that, I though I was being a wimp!'

Thankfully Brian recovered to enjoy a wonderfully varied and full life, though he was never again clear of breathing difficulties which markedly curtailed his climbing and walking exploits.

I remember talking to Brian shortly after Dave Birkett's 1st ascent of Skye Wall and Brian, delighted to hear the news, commented that a new route in the Black Cuillin guaranteed Dave's place in British Climbing history. That it does Brian, as yours with 'Ginger' Cain did in 1950.

Brian passed away peacefully with June, his partner and rock for some forty years, by his side. He died without ever growing old and in his final days he made plans, with June duly making the arrangements of course, to make one last visit to his beloved Lake District. For all those that were fortunate enough to know him and only a few of his many friends knew anything of his climbing achievements, he will always be remembered as an individual with special charisma, someone with a vital energy running through him, a person that would always reach out and help. He holds a very special place in our hearts.

Brian leaves behind June, his wife and partner for some 40 years and his daughter, from a previous marriage, Susan.

Bill Birkett

OLIVER GEERE

Oliver at Brackenclose

Oliver Geere, (often referred to as 'Cog') was born in London. During the war his family moved to Arnside and eventually to Ulverston.

He started work at Vickers in Barrow-in-Furness as an apprentice draughtsman, working there for 28 years. On leaving Vickers he joined the postal service, a job he enjoyed as it involved travelling and making deliveries throughout the South Lakes region.

His interest in the Lakeland hills was generated and he became a member of the 'Barrow Boys', a group of five or six lads who headed for the hills for rock climbing and walking most weekends. Travelling was difficult, involving bus or train, often finishing with a long walk into the hills. It was common for them to stay at the Cove hut, near to the track which led to Dow crag. This hut, Spartan in nature, was originally used for storage of gunpowder for the slate miners. It had two bunks, occupied by the first arrivals, with others sleeping on the floor.

I first met Oliver at a Fell and Rock club meet at Brackenclose. Oliver had a passion for the Brackenclose hut and those hills surrounding Wasdale. We met up regularly for walking, to do work on the hut and to tend to the trees in the hut grounds. He established a tree nursery to bring up young trees to plant in Brackenclose wood and looked after established trees planted by club members (sometimes as memorials).

Oliver was a good DIY man and could turn his skills to most things. In my 13 years as hut warden he acted as assistant warden on two occasions and as would be expected of him, he always did a good job.

We occasionally met up on a Friday evening after he had completed a full day's work, had a meal and then sat by the fire. It would not be long before Oliver drifted off to sleep, eventually waking up to say 'I'm bushed, must go to bed'

He enjoyed our twice yearly get-togethers at the Birkness Coach-House in Buttermere. In February 2011 he and I had a good day walking into Mosedale, skirting Melbreak and then on to Kirkstile Inn for refreshments. We had a lot to talk about, trying to put the world to rights, about his family of which he was very proud, about his recent coach trips with his wife Nell and about his involvement, including gardening, for the Parish church in Ulverston.

Summing up, I had a great respect for Oliver, as did many others and have many pleasant memories of his company that I shall never forget. I feel honoured to have had the privilege of knowing him. Illness overtook him and he spent 13 weeks in hospital in Barrow prior to his death on 11th August 2011.

He was a good man.

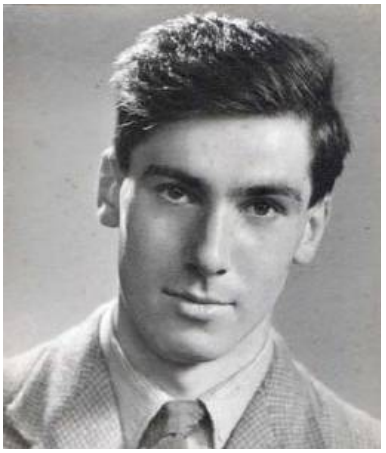
Eric Iveson

ROBIN PLACKETT

Robin was born in Liverpool on September 3 1920 and died in Newcastle upon Tyne on June 23 2009. He was a northerner born and bred and was never happy to stay long in the south. He first explored mountains on a cycling trip to the Scottish Highlands and climbed his first Munros on his own.

He was at the Liverpool Collegiate School and then went up to Clare College, Cambridge in October 1939 to study Maths.

The first club Robin joined was the CUMC (Cambridge University Mountaineering Club) with whom he went on meets to Brackenclose and Helyg.. A lecture to the club was given by GR Speaker, president of the FRCC, who handed out signed membership application forms. Robin duly joined. He also joined the Climbers Club, and while staying at Helyg had the privilege of fetching a stretcher party for a certain Major John Hunt who had fallen off a crag and broken his leg.



Robin c1941

Through my brother Geoffrey Curtis, also a CUMC member, (women were barred) Robin and I first met and climbed together in June 1941, in Wasdale. Later that summer we climbed on Ben Nevis and in Glencoe. Robin had obtained an exploration grant so, more distant lands being inaccessible in wartime, he explored the Bidean nam Bian massif, and we made a new climb there, South Buttress, Stob Choire nan Lochan.

In 1942, having graduated with a First in Maths he was directed to work in the Ministry of Supply in Baker Street. In 1943 we married and were both working in London but visited the crags whenever possible.

In June 1944 we were staying in the CIC hut on Ben Nevis where we met Brian Kellett who, as a Conscientious Objector, worked in forestry nearby and climbed a lot solo at weekends. He had reconnoitred a route on Carn Dearg Buttress from bottom and top and invited us to join him in tackling the crux. In the end we each took our own route; Brian led up a slimy crack on the right in stockinged feet; I went up the bulge in the middle on very small holds; Robin took what I believe is now the standard route on Left hand Route, Minus Two Buttress. There were no more problems. It was a splendid day.

The sunshine continuing, we made an attempt on what became Centurion which didn't get very far. It turned out Brian hadn't ever abseiled so he was instructed from below. (There were no harnesses in those days).

After the war Robin returned to an academic career and eventually became Professor of Mathematical Statistics at Newcastle University. When we started attending FRCC Meets, AGMs and Dinners he rejoined the club. It was a lot harder work than the first time he joined.

When he retired Robin put in 10 years as Footpath Secretary of the Ramblers Association, Northern Area and we tramped many miles of Northumbria and along the Border in the work of preserving rights of way.

He was a quiet man, but this hid a real kindness and concern for others, also a dry wit. He had a talent for parody and his verses entitled 'Hollow Stones' appeared in FRCCJ 40.

Carol Plackett

JOHN NEVILLE 'SANDY' SANDERSON

'Great things are done when men and mountains meet; this is not done by jostling in the street..'[1]

This is so true of Sandy, his passion for the mountains, from Scotland, Wales, the Lake District, Ireland, the Alps, Wadi Rum, Corsica and his beloved Peak District, led him to many great things, some of which I was privileged to share. My potent memories stem from the first climb, 'Flying Buttress' a wonderful introduction to the Pass, of learning to 'udge' on grit stone, to the wilder mountaineering days of Avalanche, Red Wall and Longland's continuation where we finished below a feral goat, plainly displeased at our company and on to our true love: superlative winter climbing in Cwm Beudy Mawr and the Snowdon Trinities, Atlantic Wall and most memorably, Gully no. two on the Ben in April, followed by the CMD arête and the delightful Sron na Lairig: all under his patient guidance. A great day out with Gil on the Aonach Egach, where Am Bodach (Old Man) was Gil's last Scottish top, but the descent was made spectacular by the fleeting appearance of a Scottish wild cat. Later on, exploration of the Vercors and the magnificent Balcon Ost with our young son, Ian, in tow, and a trip to Austria where we all climbed the Staufenspitze in boiling cloud and torrential rain. Sitting at Scarth Gap eating Christmas cake after an epic winter ascent of some nameless and filthy gully filled with vertical, slithery, semi-frozen moss, hearing the lonely call of geese flying over as we sit in contentment, before making our way back to Birkness. Perhaps our finest mountaineering

1 William Blake M.S Notebooks p.43

trip was on Beinn Eighe, climbing the triple buttress and then the three Munro tops, coming down in a glitter of shooting stars. Such extraordinarily happy days. Other notable days were shared with friends, David Ketley and Sandy on their mammoth walks, The Three Shires from Kettleshulme, The Langdale Horseshoe, the Snowdon Horseshoe in winter. An ascent of Nightfall in winter on Lliwedd, with James Bolton, where they were pushing the limits of winter climbing, due both to James' ability and his poor eyesight, according to Sandy. Add to this, ascents of the Weisshorn, Matterhorn, Tre Cime, some spectacular climbs in the Dolomites and this gives a flavour of Sandy and his life.

The largest part of this obituary I leave to Tony Edwards who was Sandy's principal climbing partner and friend for nearly fifty years: 'An exceptional man, whom I miss so deeply'. We must have climbed well over a 1000 routes together over the years. What always comes to mind is his strength of character, despite all the knocks, he always came backing fighting right to the end - he just would never lie down.

In truth I suppose it is the drama that perhaps becomes deeply ingrained in the soul.

Way back at the start in the 60s we did a very early ascent of the route Gogarth on Gogarth itself. Having started late and by the time I was cranking up the final pitch, dense sea fog had rolled in. There was a surreal green light punctuated by the boom of the foghorn - enough to raise the hairs on the back of your neck. Eventually, belayed below those final horrendous grass slopes, Sandy nonchalantly arrived in almost pitch black. 'What took you so long?' he quipped as he zoomed through – ' I want a pint at the Mermaid'!!

Not that long after his accident on the Milestone we found ourselves down the Lleyn peninsula on the very steep Fantan B. Big holds in the main but right at the top a challenging overhang. 'Got a slight problem here', he says, 'can't lift my arm up to reach over this'. So with a tight rope he uses the good arm to lift the other one up to reach the hold - followed by a one and half arm straight pull through - serious determination there.

We all fly occasionally but the one where we both nearly fell off again laughing, was in Dovedale. Sandy was high on a very exposed and difficult second pitch, which like many climbs was in full view

from the path alongside the river. As he moved up on a smear he gracefully flew out against the perfect blue sky. A voice drifted up from below: '**** that for a game of soldiers' - neither of us could continue for at least 5 minutes as we were doubled up.

Sandy on Centurion

Turning to the ice, our pinnacle was Point 5 on the Ben. Sandy started and as I followed I shouted – 'bloody steep this is'. 'You want to see your pitch mate', comes the reply. So half way up we are both swinging on this peg – 'thought this was Grade 5', says Sandy, 'not A3,'. I eventually exit on to the 'easy' bit. We look up, it's late in the season and there are some very big sagging cornice seracs above us. 'It'll be good night Vienna if one of these comes down', says I. This is where his ice and snow craft were superb. He floats up below them, elegantly traverses and exits without a crumb of ice coming down - whew.

A couple of years later we are back on the Ben in May. Still plenty of ice and snow about, but he makes pitch one of Centurion look easy; not so, water and water ice in many holds. We meet a couple of guys in the hut later who had spent the previous day on E3s in the glen who backed off that pitch - we were given the hardmen sobriquet. As always this incredible steadiness when the going got tough underlined his character.

Only about 5 years ago we had that brief spell of freeze that made a day in Wales possible. Ladies Gully on Snowdon's headwall was not really in condition, but as always when with Sandy it went, we topped out in a perfect roseate Alpenglow. That was another climb

where, if either of us had flown, it would have been good night Vienna.

Sandy only went to Pandy, a local crag for me, on the one occasion. He absolutely fell for it and it is a very painful memory for me that he never made it back with me again. Since he died I have been a couple of times on my own, on similarly beautiful days, where apart from shunting up the climbs we did together, I sat on the top in the twilight recalling all our years. He seems so near and yet so far. [2]

Perhaps, the most moving memory of all was only 3 years ago when he was very weak, he insisted on walking into Stoney. Even those 300yds from the car were a painful struggle. He propped himself below Gabriel, uncoiled the rope, put the belay plate on and said, 'Tie on, it's about time you did some climbing when you come out with me'.

It is all too easy list achievements and then they become that person's life. Sandy was so much more than a mountaineer – a husband, father to Piers, Holly and Ian, friend and wise counsel to all who knew him, a cultured and literary man whose Buddhist study gave him such quiet strength and calm - the gentlest of gentlemen. The gentle mind by gentle deeds is known.[3]

Jane Sanderson

JOHN BARRY SEEDHOUSE.

John joined the FRCC in the early 90's, shortly after his wife Margaret died. They had always enjoyed a passion for 'the mountains' and with their family, had completed many Munros and Wainwrights. John enjoyed hut life and was beginning to get to know other FRCC members-especially at Birkness - which was always his favourite hut.

Sadly the stroke he suffered in 1997 had a huge impact on his life. Not only was he unable to drive, but his stamina and understanding were effected. With his usual determination however, John gradually fought his way back, and did manage to make it to Birkness a

2 In Memoriam - Cantos. Alfred, Lord Tennyson

3 The Faerie Queen. Book VI c.i Edmund Spenser

couple of times each year with friends.

Circumstances dictated that we were unable to visit Buttermere over the last two years, but I know John had a raft of 'hut' memories to dwell on. Fittingly, Buttermere will become one of John's final resting places - looking down the Valley from Haystacks.

Those of us who loved John will then be able to visit regularly and share the view that was always so special to him.

'Thank you' to all at the FR*CC.*

Jane Lambert

MARGARET NOREEN THOMPSON

Margaret had an early introduction to the hills. She was taken up Helvellyn at the age of five and her parents continued to spend many holidays in the Lake District with Margaret and her sister Joan. By the time she went to college she was a strong hill walker and had done some climbing.

She met Stan, her future husband, over the communal dinner table at Mrs Naylor's at Middle Row, Wasdale Head where Stan had become a regular visitor and an old friend of the Naylors. It was Easter 1942 and he gave a graphic account of that day's ascent, with Vince Veevers, of Great Gully on the Screes - the deep snow - the water ice - and a dramatic exit from the hard top pitch.

Margaret was very impressed and Stan lost no time in cultivating the further attention of such a pretty young

lass! This led to them meeting up for many trips to the crags and Margaret joined Stan as a member of the Fell and Rock in 1943. They married in 1944 just before Stan's war service was to take him to the Far East, and combined their wedding 'celebrations' at Middle Row with doing some classic routes in winter conditions.

After the war, Stan, as a Civil Engineer, contrived to get jobs which were close to or among mountains, often in Scotland, so Margaret was able to develop her climbing and skiing skills there. Both together and separately, according to Stan's work commitments, they climbed and skied extensively in Scotland and the Alps. Through the friends they had made during those early years Margaret was able to join a number of expeditions to Norway, Sweden, Spitsbergen and West Greenland - climbing, ski touring and canoeing. Stan, meanwhile, was earning the money but was able to accompany her occasionally, notably on a trek to the Everest Base Camp.

In 1958 Stan and Margaret acquired a property at Guardhouse, near Threlkeld. This became their Lakeland base for over thirty years. Margaret enjoyed having a home in the Lakes and was able to assist Stan in his wardenship of Birkness over a period of fourteen years, taking bookings and maintaining supplies when he was working away. She did a lot of walking and scrambling on her own and with a favourite terrier Cindy, who climbed all the Wainwrights with her.

When Stan retired they moved to Keswick and this later period allowed them more time to do things together. They skied and walked almost full time despite Margaret having both hips replaced. In her eighties Margaret developed the Alzheimer's disease which led to her death and life changed for both of them. She died in August 2010 after suffering a severe stroke. She donated her body to Newcastle University's Dept. of Ageing and Health for the purpose of brain research.

Stan Thompson

John Thurnhill

John was born in Preston in 1936. During the war, with his father posted in India, he began his love of hill walking with his uncle in the hills of east Lancashire and a few visits to the South Lakes.

John continued his fervour for the outdoors through his involvement in the Scouts where he became a Queen's Scout. Furthermore as a member of the Preston Mountaineering Club his love of the fells grew, with regular weekends and trips to the Lake District, Scotland and Wales.

On one such weekend he was at the Old Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale, at a climber's dinner, where he met Yolande Gregory. Following this meeting and an 18-month courtship, they married in Chapel Stile.

Throughout their marriage their shared love of the fells and mountains was a central part of their lives. John was in his element walking regularly with Sid and Jammy Cross, Alf Gregory and Dick Cook and this in turn led to his growing interest and confidence in the hills of Lakeland. This led to many wonderful days out as a family, which always finished off with tea and cakes at the Cross's in Clappersgate.

John's knowledge of the Lake District became vast and his greatest gift was passing on his love of the region to family and friends. This gift meant that John, although happy as a lone walker, would almost always have a friend, neighbour, or relative in tow.

John was also an avid traveller which meant that he was able to enjoy walking in mountain regions throughout the world. He enjoyed walks in the Himalayas, Andes, Alps, and Rockies and in later years John also made many trips to Scotland with his sons and grandson.

In walking terms he was able to make the most of any weather and any walk, be it walking the Three Peaks or a quick potter up Loughrigg. I can never remember him not enjoying a walk in the

hills and even on the very worst weather days he was always full of positivity. John will be greatly missed by his family and friends but leaves a tangible legacy of a love of the fells which he was able to pass on to so many people.

Ben Thurnhill

MISS BARBARA WILKINSON

Barbara died aged eighty seven in a Todmorden nursing home on March 3rd 2012 after a long illness. Educated at Todmorden Secondary School and Crossley and Porter Grammar School, Halifax she then trained as a P.E. teacher at the I.M. Marsh College, Liverpool.

On completing her course she joined our elder brother Geoffrey, who was working at the University of California, Berkley. A keen hill walker, she and Geoff. made many walking trips in the Sierra Nevada, Grand Canyon, Yosemite and the Canadian Rockies, where a car accident left her with a broken collar bone. When Geoff. moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Barbara went with him and spent a year in Boston.

On returning home in 1952 she took up a teaching post in March, Cambs. and in 1953 she joined the Fell and Rock . She subsequently taught in Liverpool and on the death of her mother in 1962 moved back to Todmorden and became deputy head at Ryburn School, Sowerby.

She was an active fell walker in the Dales, the Lakes and Scotland where she attended the Skye September meets which I led in the late 1950's. She had walking holidays in Norway and several in the Alps, but had an unfortunate experience as a passenger on an Austrian State bus which was involved in a head - on crash on the Brenner

Pass. Barbara suffered concussion and head injuries which resulted in a several week stay in a hospital in Bolzano.

In later years she was obliged to take early retirement from teaching as a result of hip replacement surgery, but she continued her contact with the Club mainly at the Annual Dinner. She was a kind gentle lady who will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

John Wilkinson

Alison Williams

Alison (who died on 17th February 2012) was a member of the Club for over 60 years. She loved the Lakes and was knowledgeable about much of the terrain. The younger daughter of Dick and Kath Plint, her formative years were spent around the family home in Kendal, where they had moved in 1941. Many well known Club members of that era would often use Town View as a 'tea stop' when arriving or leaving the Lakes at the weekend.

Her Father's interest in botany was shared with Alison, whose ready and able response led to a lifelong knowledge of and passion for trees and plants. This enriched long Lakeland walks and led to searches for unusual flora as she passed through the habitats that suited them.

Alison's early years were spent walking the fells more accessible to Kendal, using local bus services. This was in the late 1940's and 1950's before increasing car ownership transformed personal mobility and the Lake District. Days were spent in Longsleddale and Kentmere using the Saturday Market bus. Family holidays were spent at Heathwaite, in a rain soaked Coniston or at High Swinklebank, a farm at the top end of Longsleddale where home churned farm butter was a real luxury!

Early rock climbing was on The Pudding Stone and Buckbarrow Crag. The rope used to bite into the slim middle of small children and left memories of the aroma and prickly nature of hemp!

The acquisition of the Birkness property in 1950 saw the family holiday in consecutive teenage years in Buttermere. The simplicity of the cottage was a great draw though the early drying room's poor performance was not, meaning having to wear damp clothes following a wet day. Milk was fetched from Gatesgarth. This could be quite a task with cans having to be carried home along the lake shore - more challenging if the carriers had been on Pillar and Steeple that day! One memorable time saw the capture of all the Grasmoor tops when a violent thunderstorm had the family's hair standing on end on the wide summit of this mountain.

Alison met her husband, Richard, through the club when they were both teenagers and over the years they attended many Meets, particularly enjoying the New Year Meets at the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel when Sid Cross was master of that wonderful place!

Although family life reduced opportunities for enjoying club life, Alison and Richard ensured that their three children had the pleasure of family walking holidays at Hassness and Brackenclose and the opportunity to grow up having a love of the Lakes.

Once free from family commitments Alison relished time in Scotland, particularly on the club's Scottish Meets. She loved nothing better than to climb a mountain enjoying the wildlife and flora but above all the reward of the vista. One particular pleasure was to reach the summit of Stac Pollaidh which had been pointed out to her as a navigation mark when on a fishing boat years before.

The FRCC was a valued part of Alison's life. She looked forward to the Annual Dinner, making every effort to attend whatever the conditions. She continued to walk the extensive paths across the fields and hills accessible directly from her home in Windermere until her final months. She loved open spaces, Lakeland was her home.

Richard Williams

Alan Wright

Alan was a man who, born into and living his early and school years in a rural setting, spent his working life in industry, but followed his lifelong determination to be outdoors whenever he could.

He was a committed athlete; sprinting at school and cycling long distances were early interests. In the 1950s, still in his teens, he explored and wrote up the possibilities of Wharncliffe Crags with friends from the Sheffield area, when access to this private land became available and when pedal power was replaced by a 120cc motor bike. This also allowed trips to Rivelin Edge.

National Service intervened, Alan claiming he demanded a 'home posting' aware (hoping) that to the army, this would mean 'overseas'. This wish granted, he spent much time in Malaya, installing radio systems in remote areas, but above all enjoying contact with local people and sharing their cuisine – in relieved exchange for the rations issued by the British army – and once needing their help to get his truck out of a ditch. Much later he received a medal for his part in helping to assure a democratic future for that country, a delightful but ironic recognition for a man with a breadth of tolerance for his fellows rather than being a political activist.

After discharge from the army on Christmas Day 1960, Alan was quickly back on the crags by spring 1961, again on Rivelin Edge, opening new routes over the following few years with other climbers

based in Sheffield. He was seen as an imaginative, supportive partner, on both ends of the rope.

Further afield, from the early 1960s onward, he spent much time in the Lake District, feeling very attracted to the varied possibilities for both climbing and walking and the scale and scope of the whole area. After long journeys on his 650cc BSA Gold Flash, he often arrived soaking wet but keen. New routes in this period were on Bram Crag, Raven Crag, and in Borrowdale and Buttermere. Many family holidays, in all seasons, were also somewhere in the Lakes

Access to the climbers' ubiquitous transport of choice, the mud-coloured Morris 1000 van, meant trips to the Alps in the 60s, with early (British) ascents on the Civetta, the Bonatti Pillar, the Dru, the Badille, Cime Ovest and the Gugliermina. These affirmed his far-sighted approach and safety and reliability in changing circumstances, and willingness to accept others' qualities in achieving an outcome.

Much of the mid-1970s must have been spent locally, on Stanage Edge, in work towards the joint editorship, with Brian Griffiths, of the 1976 Guide Book. Alan liked to say he repeated all the (then) 500 routes on the edge. He also said his choice of home in Dronfield, was to be able to reach a gritstone crag within 15 minutes. He never said he was a good driver! A couple of hours climbing, followed by a visit to 'The Moon' were regular Wednesday summer evening activities.

In the late 70s – 80s Alan climbed in Peru and Alaska. Modesty and honesty ensured he didn't claim total success for these expeditions.

The 1980s saw changes, with marathon road running and many 'ultra' off-road events. A highlight was the 1985 Bob Graham Round, finished in the allotted time (apparently aided in some undisclosed way by the full moon), and supported by members of the Dark Peak Fell Runners, who also, when Alan's sight began to be a problem, literally, and loudly, guided him back to Keswick.

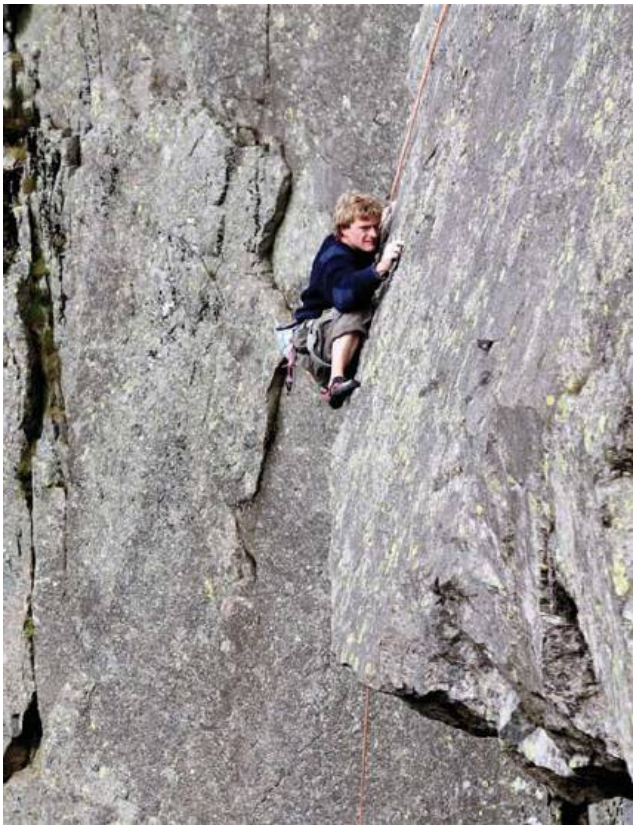
There were always 2 ski trips a year, and again with duration in mind, Alan and others completed the High Level Route, from Zermatt to Chamonix, in 1988.

The 1990s were a mixture of skiing, long distance runs and summer sport climbing in warm parts of France, Spain and America.

Latterly, Parkinsons disease restricted Alan's mobility, but he maintained his interest in outdoor and mountain activities, and followed many sports, particularly local cricket and his grandsons' football.

Alan was always keen to share his activities with others. He was a member of many organisations, and contributed positively to them all. His contacts in climbing from early years were with the Peak CC, the Alpha, the CC, and the ACG/AC. His membership of the Fell and Rock came relatively late, in 1992. An enthusiastic DIY man, especially on big (outdoor) projects, he was strangely reluctant to join in working meets, but this membership was recognition he particularly cherished.

Phine Wright

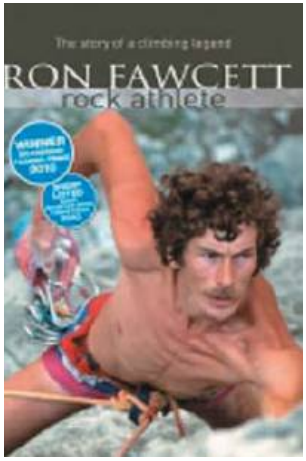


Adam Hocking working ‘The Keswickian’ E8, Swindale

ROCK ATHLETE (RON FAWCETT) AND FULL OF MYSELF (JOHNNY DAWES)

Author: Ron Fawcett
Publisher: Vertebrate Publishing, Price:£20.00
ISBN: 978 1 906148 17 1

Author: Johnny Dawes
Publisher: Johnny Dawes books, Price: £25.00
ISBN: 978 0 957030 80 0



In the beginning, there was Ron. The first professional rock climber in the UK, the prophet of what would become modern rock climbing (bold grit, free climbing 'impossible' limestone, bouldering, proper training) and star of TV and Video ('Rock athlete' and 'The body machine'). Whilst all of these claims can be debated, the fact is that Fawcett was there at the start of so much, and casts a long shadow over the last quarter of the twentieth century in British rock climbing. How then does his book sum it all up ?

Well, with typical understatement. A pretty standard Dales childhood when nobody had much money, a normal (normally complex, that is) family, and the discovery of and falling in love with climbing. His accounts of the aid and free climbing in the sixties is a reminder of how far equipment has changed since then- how is anyone still left alive from those days ?

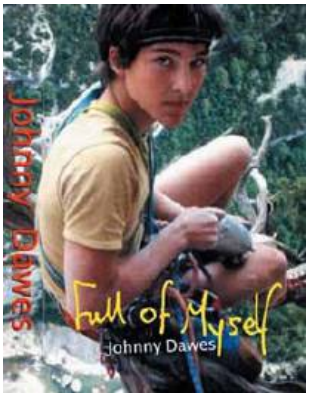
Fawcett really started to push things on his home crags 'Yorkshire limestone was a tough school to learn in', gaining technique and fitness as well as an intimate knowledge of the crags from lots of aid climbing, which stood him in good stead for free climbing many of those routes later on. From there he branched out to the Lakes, Pex Hill, the Peak and the rest is legend.

His relationship with Pete Livesey is honestly recounted and he is open in acknowledging the influence Livesey had on him, as well as capturing some of the complexity of the hugely competitive and canny Livesey persona. He was also introduced to climbing abroad by Livesey and the legendary Phoenix Club, leading to productive trips to Verdon where they set tough standards even for the local climbers- you get the sense that Fawcett was now realising that he had the potential to do great things, and this sets up nicely the middle section of the book.

The Cad, Lord of the Flies and Strawberries each get their own chapter, a reminder of one were needed of how influential Fawcett was in the late seventies. His account of Sid Perou filming the Lord of the Flies is an insight into how much work went into one short programme- and so it goes on. The world travel, the Peak district years, marriage and divorce. It's all here, written honestly and openly, and the sense of a thoroughly genuine good bloke shines through it all, well illustrated with some new photos and a few old classics. This is a fine book and worthy of a place on your shelf.

Now he is fell running and still gets out on the grit, still as keen as ever. My own memory is of visiting Woodhouse Scar at the height of the Foot and Mouth when it was one of the few open crags, and bumping into Ron, who I used occasionally to see there twenty odd years before, and he had that same open friendliness and the same big grin. Just happy to be out climbing, arms still "doing their stuff".

Which is where we start with Johnny Dawes. He and his brother were so influenced by Ron on LOTF that they watched a video of it regularly and built a traverse on the brick walls of their family mansion house complete with runner placements chipped out and runners hung nearby so they could practice placing gear when pumped. This sort of anecdotal detail crops up regularly in the book, giving some insight into just how driven Dawes was to be a good climber. He spent hours bouldering round their home in the long holidays



from his public school, where he was bullied and miserable, so far so good - the climber as loner, social misfit, familiar territory for climbing biographies. What puzzles me is that when he tells his father that he is unhappy, it turns out Dad too was bullied at the same school. So why send him there? And how does Johnny feel about that?

Here lies the major problem with this book, in that it promises real insight into one of the most intriguing personalities in our sport in recent decades, and yet it shies away from any real treatment of the big themes. A dodgy school master is alluded to then no more is said, Dawes' father arrives one morning when he is in bed instead of at University lectures- what did he say? Was there tension or did he just drive his son in to the campus? How did his parents feel when Dawes Jnr was a full time climber and his older brother a Chartered accountant? Were they disappointed, or supportive? There are hints that he was not as hard up as some of the dole boy climbers in the Eighties, was that family support?

Now, you may say that none of this matters, it's a book about climbing so stick to that,

but:

- the book sets itself up to be the searingly honest account of his inner turmoil and dodges the issue,

and

- books about climbing and nothing else tend to be dull. To be fair, Dawes does write very well about the physicality of climbing, but too much of 'A chunky layback press start leads to a stand. I suss how to get right foot super high onto a chest high smear.....' does pall. And there is a little too much of that here, which will put off the many non climbers who might otherwise have read this book. He is far better on the spiritual side of climbing at his limit, and there are some beautifully written passages that bring to mind W H Murray at his best, someone with whom Dawes might have had a good deal of empathy. On several occasions this book reminded me of Murray's 'The evidence of things not seen', both being about how someone who is a talented climber seeking greater truth outside the sport. This would have merited further exploration in the text, and is a missed opportunity.

The book charts the history of British cutting edge climbing in the Eighties, as our hero modestly says on moving to steel city 'Manchester was the hub of British rock climbing when I was there, now it would be Sheffield'. Perhaps he is being playful, one certainly hopes so.

Again, one feels slightly cheated in that his gritty account of the characters and lifestyle are full of funny and disturbing incidents (Dawes and John Redhead sharing the controls of a car being just one) yet there is no mention of the drugs scene which at the time was lively, to say the least. Meeting a friend who had moved to Deiniolen to pursue being a full time climber around this time, I asked about what he actually did all day; —'Go climbing if its dry, take drugs if it rains, it keeps your weight down' was the answer. There were victims as well as victors, and they get no mention. Odd, when someone as sensitive as Dawes clearly is must have been aware of this aspect of the Llanberis community.

Dawes alludes to some sort of spiritual/psychological crisis, but never spells it out. Surely this would inform the latter part of the book, where is exploring therapy, Buddhism and motor racing as part of his ongoing quest for whatever it is he seeks? How much did these help him deal with whatever his problems were? We are not told.

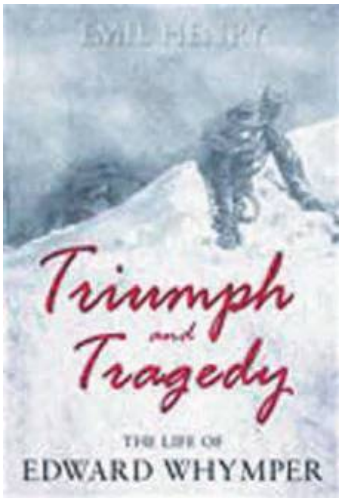
It occurs to me that I should say that I really enjoyed this book and contextualise my quibbling. There is some very good writing here, some insight into the spiritual side of the sport, and some great accounts of the slate boom and the Sheffield scene at a time when standards were soaring. The photographs are plentiful and illuminate the text. As someone who knows nothing about motor sport the chapter when Dawes races a Peugeot at a series of track events is some of the most compelling in the book, his passion and knowledge combining to make something special. More of this excellent writing, more honesty about his own demons, and better proof reading (to remove errors like 'meat out' for mete and 'braking' for breaking) and this could have been a riveting book which would appeal to readers interested in extreme sport, personal development and of course climbing. Sadly I feel it is only likely to be read to the end by

climbers, and we are left feeling that so much more needed to be said. Not quite full enough of yourself, Johnny.

Nick Hinchcliffe

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

THE LIFE OF EDWARD WHYMPER
Author: Emil Henry
Published by: Matador, 2011, Price: 17.99
ISBN: 978 1848765 788



The title 'Triumph and Tragedy' may not be unique and the story of the Matterhorn first ascent and disaster descent is familiar, but as a biography of Edward Whymper this new interpretation from Emil Henry is exceptional. Like its author I purchased a copy of Whymper's 6th edition of 'Scrambles Amongst the Alps' on my first visit to Zermatt (in 1960) and later I obtained a beautifully bound copy of the 1880 third edition titled 'The Ascent of the Matterhorn'. Together with Whymper's 'Travels Amongst the Great Andes of the Equator' these two books form the wellspring for a huge volume of detail in the new biography, and Emil Henry manages to retain much of the drollness and witticisms to be found in Whymper's narratives.

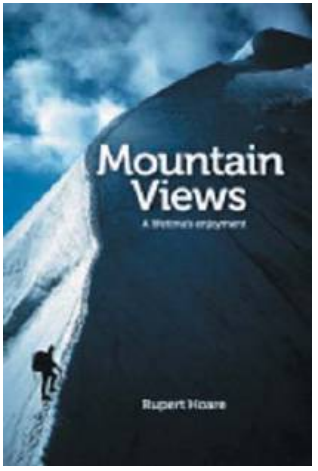
Numerous other sources have been trawled through and rigorously analysed together with private papers and new material. Notes on sources indicate the breadth and depth of research, and amongst many references is F S Smythe's earlier biography of Edward Whymper where disparaging opinions are expressed. This is often the case with books relating to the Matterhorn ascent and its aftermath, which remained with Whymper throughout his life. Without overlooking his subject's competitive and forceful nature Emil Henry takes a more charitable view and he picks up on imbalances between

'Scrambles Amongst the Alps', journals, various accounts and commentaries. Biographers tend to reflect their own times and make retrospective judgements on outdated criteria, and it is worth noting how Smythe's own writings suggest a colonial superiority in his dealings with inhabitants during his Himalayan adventures. In similar manner there are several earlier assessments that are patently prejudiced. Emil Henry clearly demonstrates how Edward Whymper came to understand the ways of guides, porters and other locals, and he developed high degrees of appreciation and even affection. He was definitely a 'hard man' (a description well understood by modern climbers) but also he was more sensitive than previously portrayed.

In chronicling the life of Edward Whymper the author embraces his Victorian upbringing and family matters plus his complete alpine career with many notable 'firsts' on peaks and passes besides the Matterhorn. Then follow Whymper's explorations in Greenland and South America where over and over again there is evidence of his mental determination and remarkable physical performance, and personal relationships up to the end of his life. In addition to his prowess as a mountaineer and explorer Edward Whymper was a skilled artist, photographer, natural scientist and presenter. Emil Henry captures brilliantly Whymper's dedication and perseverance with whatever he faced, whether climbing mountains, studying the effects of altitude, investigating glaciers etc. or his business dealings, engraving and printing expertise. This latter point introduces my only negative criticism of 'Triumph and Tragedy' as unfortunately engravings are not as well produced as in Whymper's original books from which some illustrations have been reduced in size (Almer's leap is a glaring example) and the quality of printing is poor (particularly the maps). That said – the descriptive narrative of 'Triumph and Tragedy' is of the highest order, and the book deserves to become a 'classic'.

Doug Elliott

MOUNTAIN VIEWS: A LIFETIME'S ENJOYMENT
Author: Rupert Hoare
Publisher: Vertebrate Publishing, 2011 Price: £22
ISBN: 978-1-906148-33-1



This is an unusual book on a number of counts. Two clues are given in its subtitle: 'lifetime' and 'enjoyment'. The book is about a lifetime of mountaineering experience, albeit a shortish one (38 years) by today's standards. Rupert Hoare was diagnosed with terminal cancer in February of last year and given a half year life expectation. He reacted by rolling up his sleeves, digging out diaries and photographs, and wrote the book he had planned to craft in his retirement. One can only admire his resolve and tenacity. The book shows few signs of being rushed: in fact the prose has a freshness and spontaneity arising from the lack of time to fine-tune the text.

Enjoyment? Rupert states that he set out to convey his enthusiasm and the delight he has derived from his extensive experience. He succeeds. Rather than rue the shortening of his mountain life he rejoices in the experiences he has had and shares them generously with his readers.

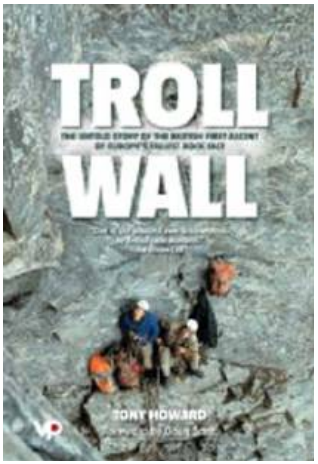
Rupert was not a full time mountaineer: he was a professional geologist and mountaineering had to fit in with making a living. His account, therefore, is one that most of us can relate to.

The book covers Rupert's early years ranging from Arctic Norway to the heat of the deserts of Libya and central Australia. It relates his development as an Alpinist and, later, as a fine ski-mountaineer with notable traverses in the hostile terrain of Corsica and the Pyrenees. It ends with accounts of happy Scottish days with his wife, Jay Turner who will be known to many members. It is very well produced with many of the author's excellent photographs.

I enjoyed the book. It aims to inspire teenagers to follow in Rupert's footsteps. It can certainly do this. It also, in my case, sparked off so many memories of my own to add to the pleasure of reading it.

Paddy O'Neill

TROLL WALL
Author: Tony Howard
Published by: Vertebrate, 2012 Price: £17.99
ISBN: 9781906148287



When I started climbing in the mid - 70's the Troll Wall was still news in the mountaineering press. Naturally over the decades other 'last great problems' have been discovered and climbed and the events of 1965 have faded in the memory of those who were around and are, probably, largely unknown to the younger generation. It is timely then that events from the summer of '65 should have at last been published to remind us what a milestone in British climbing the ascent of the Rimmon Route was.

The manuscript was in fact written just weeks after Tony Howard returned from Norway and for that reason it is a fresh and enthusiastic account of the expedition, despite the 45 year gap. The writing is factual and to the point, the book gallops along at a quick pace with very little of the background detail that was a feature of many expedition accounts from this era. Howard concentrates on the technical aspects of the climbing and, apart from an epic descent from their early high point in atrocious weather conditions, the route appears to unfold quite smoothly and without major incident. And yet the outcome was never a forgone conclusion.

Although the climbing team, now reduced to three, had worked out a line of possible weakness as seen from the valley this proved very different in reality. There must have been moments of

doubt and anxiety as they climbed past the point where retreat was virtually impossible and yet still could not see the line of the route ahead but these are given only the briefest mention. Even crouched on uncomfortable bivouac ledges in wet clothing the three remaining climbers seemed to have maintained a high spirit of optimism.

For those who were around at this time the book will bring back memories of climbing with equipment now considered primitive. There were no sit harnesses only waist belts (it would be another 14 years before Howard designed the world's first belay loop sit harness), heavy steel krabs and an awful lot of pegs to carry. There is a wonderfully evocative photograph of the team preparing to retreat in heavy rain and wearing those orange cagoules which went curiously transparent, and pretty much useless, once they became really wet.

For those whose memories don't go back this far you might well wonder how they managed, for make no mistake, this was a ground breaking climb and the first route to take on the challenge of the main face. I had always believed that there was a race between the British and a Norwegian team and the book clearly explains how this, completely incorrect, impression came about. Each chapter is cleverly prefaced with a quote from a media source, most of which were not only inaccurate but which stoked the flames of competition for public benefit. The fact that the line of the Rimmon route collapsed in the 1990's (there is an amazing picture of this actually happening) only adds to the mystique.

The book brings us up to date with a very brief account of Tony's and the other members' exploits over the intervening period, including his work with the equipment manufacturer Troll and developments in Morocco, Jordan and other parts of the world. I imagine there is more than enough material for another book but I doubt that we will get one. A final nice touch is a chapter by Ole Enersen, one of the Norwegians who reached the summit, by a different route, just hours before the British team succeeded.

If you climbed in this era the book will bring back memories but everyone who reads it will learn something of a major event in British climbing history and for this reason I recommend the book. And anyway it is a thoroughly enjoyable read. *Rick Barnes*

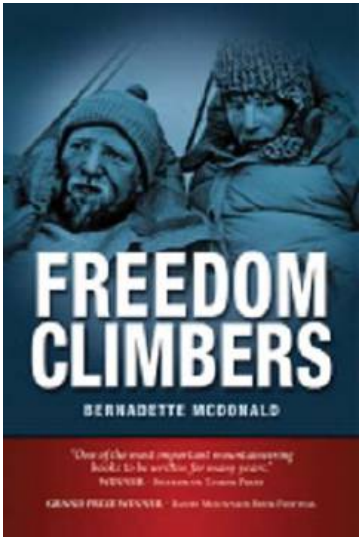
FREEDOM CLIMBERS
Author: Bernadette McDonald
Published by: Vertebrate Press, 2011 Price: £ 12.99
ISBN:9781906148447

After the usual pleasantries Martin landed the sucker punch, 'would you like to review a book for The Journal?' Caught off-guard I said yes, luckily I was then offered a choice of titles of which the obvious choice for a committed rock climber was Tony Howard's Troll Wall. However also on offer was Freedom Climbers, which I wanted to read and without giving it another thought I opted for it. Later it dawned on me that I had made the toughest choice – reviewing a book that had already won the Banff Mountain Book Festival and The Boardman Tasker Prize!

The material that so impressed the literary judges is an analysis of the incredible record of Polish Climbers in High Altitude Mountaineering between the 1970's and 1990. This is no simple descriptive expedition book; it delves deeply to understand why they became pre-eminent. This is achieved by looking at and the social and political upheavals that formed the backdrop to their lives. Along the way the character of the key players is gradually revealed, their strengths, motivations and weaknesses.

After a Prologue that I thought should have been woven into the narrative or covered on the sleeve notes the author writes in an engaging style that is easy to read; the more I read the more I was hooked. The text is supported by a collection of photographs, unfortunately many are too small and a fair proportion have been printed with so much contrast that the faces are hidden in the shade. I think that a map to show the location of the peaks mentioned should have been included.

The story starts in the early 1970's; a world far removed from that we live in today; especially for those living behind the 'Iron Curtain' The Poles were materially poor, oppressed and lived in a bleak environment; however they had an incredibly resilient national character. The Communist State controlled every aspect of life, supporting communal activity not personal freedom and individualism. Those who escaped to the hills were faced with many bureaucratic hurdles



– tests to pass – rules to follow; all designed to stifle the freedom that climbing brings. Their equipment was rudimentary and often home-made – a far cry from the items available to western climbers who just 'flashed the cash'. Poles did have some decent mountains to climb – including the Tatra which, in winter, proved a good training ground for bigger things.

The hurdles faced by those wanting to travel abroad were even greater, the early chapters illustrate some of the methods used to get funds and visas; included are hints of paid espionage, the establishment of illegal import - export businesses and the early advent of roped access work painting factory chimneys. With growing international fame they learned how to play the system and get state support for their personal adventures glorifying Poland. Throughout this period the domestic social and political tensions were heading towards boiling point with the emergence of Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement. The impact of, and climbers' involvement in, this movement is included.

Rather than adhere to the strict chronology of events the author prefers to focus on individual climbers and climbs. Getting to the Himalaya demanded such an effort that they had to make the best of their chances once there, often experiencing exceptional suffering as they climbed. It is suggested that this characteristic stemmed from the austerity of their everyday lives. In the Epilogue the author describes recently meeting modern young Polish climbers who were just like their Western counterparts, wrapped up in the material world and their careers wanting only comfortable and convenient forms of climbing.

Although there were many cutting edge Poles during the period, 80% of whom died following their dreams, much of the writing relates to four of the best known.

Andrej Zawada, a great expedition leader who got the ball rolling in 1971 with the first ascent of Kunyang Chhish (7852m) in the Karokoram and continued to lead expeditions including Everest (Twice, 1st winter ascent and a new route on the South Pillar), Cho Oyu (new route and first winter ascent) and Noshaq (first winter ascent).

Voytek Kurtkya, an almost mystical guru who specialised in climbing new routes up futuristic and enticing lines in impeccable style. He was viewed as being more considered than some of his contemporaries thus surviving a Himalayan career of almost 20 years; a lesson for us all!

Two chapters close to the end are a tragic and emotional read; they concern the final climbs of two of the greatest of them all.

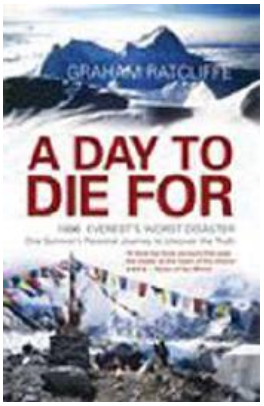
Wanda Rutkiewitz, the first internationally famous Polish mountaineer is the subject of much analysis. Her incredible strength as a climber is put alongside her troubled personal life and reputation for being selfish and poor leader on expeditions. She was determined to be the first woman to climb all 8000m peaks and lost her life on Kanchenjunga in 1992.

Jerzy (Jurek) Kukuczka, the second person to climb all fourteen 8000m Peaks, having raced Messner for the crown. The contrast drawn between these rivals is striking; Messner concentrated on the normal route on each peak, often using supplementary oxygen; Kukuczka climbed all fourteen by a new route or first winter ascent (sometimes both) only using oxygen on Everest. Even amongst the Poles his tenacity and willingness to put up with appalling conditions was extraordinary. He lost his life in a fall from close to the top of an amazing new route on the huge South Face of Lhotse.

In summary this is an excellent read telling a gripping story which was in danger of being lost in the mists of time. It lives up to the hype on the cover and, yes, I would spend my money on a copy.

Trevor Langhorne

A DAY TO DIE FOR -1996: EVEREST'S WORST DISASTER, THE UNTOLD TRUE STORY
Author:Graham Ratcliffe,
Published by: Mainstream Publishing, 2011 Price: £11.99
ISBN:1845966384



This book tells the story of two obsessions. Graham Radcliffe's desire to be the first British climber to summit Everest from both the north and south sides of the mountain is easy to comprehend. The second obsession, his unrelenting quest for the truth about what really led to the multiple deaths on Everest in May 1996, is less easily explained. Although the first of these obsessions makes for interesting reading, it is clear that Graham Ratcliffe only decided to write a book about Everest when he became convinced that the truth about May 10th 1996 had not properly been revealed. In assessing his book it is necessary to evaluate whether he really does have new information, a new angle or an 'Untold True Story' to tell. A massive amount has already been published about the events on Everest in that year.

I have a couple of things in common with Graham Ratcliffe. We both live in Whitley Bay. At least, Graham Ratcliffe used to live in Whitley Bay. We both like mountains. Well, that's about it really. I haven't summited Everest from any direction. Graham climbed Everest for the first time in 1995, on an expedition led by Henry Todd from the Tibetan side of the mountain. On his summit day he was accompanied by Anatoli Boukreev . Before twelve months were up, Graham decided to attempt to climb the mountain from the south side as well. This would be a double first, since no British climber had actually been to the summit twice and no British climber had summited from north and south. He joined Henry Todd's 1996 expedition, via the south col route, but was unsuccessful. On his third attempt (1999) Ratcliffe did indeed become Britain's first double Everest summiteer and the first British climber to ascend Everest

from north and south, an admirable achievement. However, the deaths of five climbers between the 10th and 11th of May 1996 on their summit bids from the south col had a profound impact on him; Graham had spent the night of May 10th in his tent on the south col, before his team's own summit bid was abandoned.

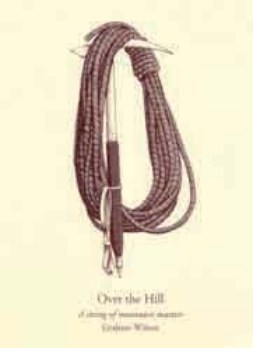
There is nothing particularly significant to recommend in Graham's account of his own successful and unsuccessful summit attempts. Both routes are so well known and well documented. But it is this fact of the apparent 'ordinariness' of climbing Everest which is inextricably linked to what happened in May 1996 and to Graham Ratcliffe's subsequent desire to know why it happened. Perhaps we can't have it both ways. Once the ascent of a particular mountain becomes relatively 'easy' we should not be surprised that so many people want to do it, nor that if it is now relatively 'easy' there will be a furore when things go badly wrong. So why exactly did Graham Ratcliffe feel the need to add yet more to the debate about Everest 1996? Hadn't Boukreev, Jon Krakauer, David Breashears, Beck Weathers and many others exhausted this topic? Is there an untold true story?

In late 1997 Ratcliffe chanced upon an article in a climbing magazine written by a member of Rob Hall's 1996 team which stated that Hall's team chose 10th of May for their summit day, 'Because we knew the weather was going to go bad the next day.' This was shocking news for Ratcliffe on three counts: (a) he had not known that Rob Hall and Scott Fischer were receiving accurate weather forecasts at Base Camp, (b) this suggested that Hall and Fischer had been irresponsible in choosing such a short weather window, (c) the team that Ratcliffe belonged to had not been given the true reason for the request that they should summit on May 12th.Despite the anger that this aroused Ratcliffe stuck with his decision not to read any of the books on the disaster until 2004, when he read Krakauer's book. He found no mention of accurate weather forecasts affecting decisions about summit days. Why not? Now began a quest. Were accurate forecasts for the summit of Everest available in May 1996? Who could have supplied them? To what extent did they affect decision making? Why weren't they mentioned in any of the books?

Ratcliffe's obsession with these questions over a number of years is the main reason for publication. He deals with these questions in forensic detail and his pursuit of the untold truth leads him over dangerous mixed ground and to many false summits. You will have to judge for yourself whether this is indeed a new route, shedding a different light on what was clearly a very significant set of events on the world's highest summit. What kept my attention to the end was not what Ratcliffe had eventually discovered so much as a desire to understand his own motivation. Not only is he highly critical of Hall and Fischer but also of some of those members of their teams and of members of the IMAX Expedition, with whom they worked closely, who have subsequently written about the tragic events of May 1996. Was there really a conspiracy of silence about weather forecasting? Graham Ratcliffe makes it clear that he couldn't read about these events until years later, partly because of the guilt he felt about not doing more to help at the time. Could those who had written about what happened, from their own first hand experience, also have not told absolutely everything they knew, out of respect for Rob Hall and Scott Fischer? Sometimes a mountain presents us with a number of angles. We should respect all of them.

Martin Cooper

OVER THE HILL
Author: Graham Wilson
Published by: Millrace
IBSN: 978 – 1 – 902173 – 337



Over the Hill is subtitled 'A string of mountain matters' and each chapter covers a topic dear to the heart of mountaineers and climbers. It is the stuff of conversations in the pub or round the fire, from Graham's personal perspective underpinned by the depth of knowledge he has gained as an avid reader of mountain books and journals.

He reminisces about how and why he first became a climber, discusses the grading

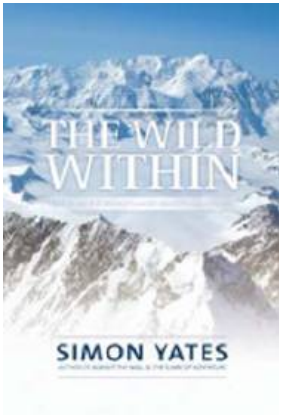
system, bolting versus natural protection, the issues of access and the Right to Roam. Like many of us Graham is fascinated by maps and has a love of climbing books. He talks of the pros and cons of bothying and bivvying, and tells us about the time he fell off, and about his partner's more serious fall. It is self-indulgent, but unashamedly so.

Reading this book, I found myself thinking 'What is the point?' It is certainly a book to dip in and out of rather than an engrossing read. Having said that however, there is something rather nice about it, and it is leavened by little gems of (not so useful) information such as his description of LG Shadbolt's attempts in 1912 to train limpets as footholds!

The book is a good quality little hardback written in a slightly quaint but entertaining style. It should be given as a gift rather than bought for oneself. A book to be received at Christmas and read on Boxing Day.

Anne Daykin

THE WILD WITHIN – CLIMBING THE WORLD'S MOST REMOTE MOUNTAINS
Author: Simon Yates,
Published by: Vertebrate Publishing, 2012 Price £20.00 Hardback
ISBN: 9781906148423



Simon Yates is an internationally acclaimed mountaineer, adventurer and author who first came to prominence in 1985 after the first ascent of the West Face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes and the ensuing epic descent described in Joe Simpson's book 'Touching the Void'. Of course to many he is known simply as the guy who cut the rope.

The Wild Within is Simon's third book, and with his first book as runner up for the prestigious Boardman Tasker Prize, I had

high expectations. The Wild Within describes Simon's mountaineering adventures in the mountains from the 1980s until now. He is particularly drawn to remote places, and this book is his journey, with particular attention to the Cordillera Darwin in South America's Tierra Del Fuego, to Milne Land in Eastern Greenland and the Wrangell-St Elias ranges in Alaska and the Yukon.

It is clear from the outset that Simon likes a simple life, and you can see as the book unfolds that he is increasingly drawn to remoteness. The book begins with a quest to climb an unclimbed and unnamed peak in Tierra del Fuego, and Simon is clearly disappointed when they arrive in this remote location along with a cruise liner. He also doesn't get on with mobile phones, and whilst initially during his mountaineering career these were not available, in his later career he purposefully leaves them behind.

But this book is not just about Simon's trips to the mountains. Simon describes some of the filming of the Void, and his clear disapproval of the media and how they're trying to get a story out of what happened to him and Joe on Siula Grande. Simon is also a father of two, and when his first daughter is born he is excited about this new adventure, but also sadly acknowledges that 'you become a mega consumer – unconsciously or not'. He also in great details describes his life as a climber-lecturer, jet setting from one continent to another to give lectures, without much time for climbing or seeing his family.

The writing in The Wild Within is very matter of fact. Whilst Simon does try and embellish his language, it is clear that he is no Shakespeare, and some of his writing is on the slightly cheesy side. The structure of his writing is very descriptive of events, and this again is disappointing. But the most disappointing bit of this book is that it's not very clear what the purpose of the book is. Right from the first chapter, you wonder where this book is going. I'm all for the Journey rather than the Destination, but in this case it seemed to me a journey that wasn't really going anywhere. And as such, sadly, I didn't find it gripped me in the way that these books are supposed to.

Eva Diran

EXPLORING GREENLAND
(Twenty Years Of Adventure Mountaineering In The Great Arctic Wilderness)
Author: Jim Gregson
Published by: Vertebrate publishing, October 2012, price £20
ISBN: 978 -1 -906148 -09 - 6

Exploring Greenland is a large-format book with lots of photos. I received this book for review as a PDF file before it had gone to print so it is difficult for me to comment on its physical impact, and that is clearly important in a book of this type. With that proviso, however, I was delighted by everything I saw and will personally be looking out for Jim Gregson's book when it appears in print this Autumn.

The book is well-planned and the photos are stunning. Jim writes about what he knows: this is a personal account of trips to Greenland over many years, each chapter detailing a different trip. At one level this must have been a book waiting to happen, purely because Jim has such depth of experience and love of the Arctic that takes him back time and again. The photos were there for the taking and the text written from diaries he kept. But Jim has made a very good job of it. He has produced a beautiful picture book for any-one who loves wild places, who dreams of visiting Greenland, or who has done so.

The end result suggests that a lot of care and thought have gone into the writing of this book. There is an extensive appendix of books for further reading at the back, and a full bibliography. There is a complete list of ascents (more than a hundred of them) with dates, heights and grid references. The locations of all Jim's expeditions are shown at the beginning of the book, and at the end of each chapter he lists when, where, and expedition members. In short, it is a useful reference source. The stories of each trip are linked together by short informative chapters about towing pulks, skiing, camping in the Arctic, and about the wildlife, for example. These are not in depth because that is not the aim of the book, they simply add variety and help build a background knowledge for the reader. The text has a lot of detail, almost a blow-by-blow account of daily events, but the un-sensational style works well and the reader gets a clear feel for

expedition life. It puts the wonders of the Arctic, and Greenland's unclimbed peaks, within range of any competent mountaineer.

A very nice book which must surely tempt those of adventurous spirit.

Anne Daykin

SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF MOUNTAIN AND WILDERNESS TALES
Edited by: Catherine Moorhead and David Dunmur
Published by: Moyhill Publishing (2011)
ISBN: 978905597307

'Spirit of Adventure' is an unusual and praiseworthy publication which is unlikely to be easily matched by any rival competitor publication for the foreseeable future. Despite the current government's desire to encourage new, exciting 'Free Schools', it would be difficult indeed for a newly founded school to match the mountaineering achievements chronicled in this book, for 'Spirit of Adventure' is, quite simply, an extremely impressive compilation of the climbing and mountaineering achievements of pupils, past and present, of the Royal Grammar School of Guildford. The school can be proud of its mountaineering heritage. It should also be proud of the two authors who put this book together, David Dunmur, an 'Old Guildfordian', and Catherine Moorehead, currently working as an English teacher at the school. Prospective parents should be wary of the book. Straying into the wrong hands, it may serve to convince prospective pupils that they will climb in Scotland and the Alps on their school trips before undertaking expeditions to the Karakoram. If only all schools had such ambition.

The book begins with a tribute to the two most notable Old Guildfordian explorers and mountaineers. Algernon Durand was an explorer and leader of the British Army on the North West Frontier of Pakistan in the 1890s. More familiar to mountaineers is the name of H. Godwin-Austin who explored the Baltoro Glacier in 1861 and gave his name to the glacier which leads directly to K2. 'If we consider his mountaineering, his science, and his art,' 'the book asks, 'Is there not a case for describing this Surrey scientist, soldier,

landowner and RGS schoolboy as our greatest explorer?' Whatever the answer to that question, the achievements of Godwin Austen have clearly been an inspiration to countless members of the school community.

The editors divide the thirty seven articles chosen for the book into five sections: Death Zone, High and Remote, Alps Near and Far, Munro and Below, Eclectic Adventures. One or two examples will give you a flavour. Death Zone begins with two Himalayan articles, the first by former Guildford Grammar student Mike Norris who made a solo ascent of Cho Oyu in September 2005. In the same month Rupert Dix was part of an unsuccessful attempt on Gasherbrum II. Defeated in the end by the weather, Dix comments that this was a truly memorable and testing experience, highlighting the contrast between, 'Mighty nature and fragile man.' Both writers credit Guildford Royal Grammar with helping in the development of a passion for the mountains.

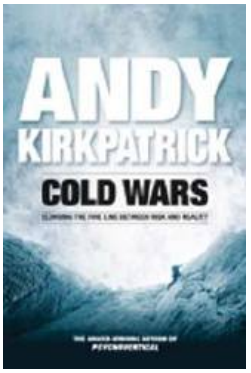
David Dunmur contributes an article, co-authored by Mike Smith, on school trips to the Austrian Alps in the late 1950s, travelling from Britain by train, climbing in the Hohe Tauern, summiting the Grosse Venediger (3674), learning the basics of ice-axe work and glacier travel, meeting Austrian climbers and learning the lore of Alpine Huts and hearty meals. But not every ascent was as untroubled as the first. However, again the debt of gratitude is paid to the school. Finally, some words from Catherine Moorehead, who one suspects is the driving force behind this book. She writes about an early visit to the Cairngorms and an abortive visit to the Lochan Buidhe Shelter to sit out a storm. The interior, she says, resembled, 'The guts of a crevasse.' Something had to be done.

The countless Guildfordian students who have followed in the footsteps of the early pioneers have, Catherine Moorehead argues, perhaps in reaction to the intensity of school term times, been given the 'emptiness of remote places' and 'a kind of reflectiveness which the hurly burly of term time does not permit. .....something of great pleasure and enjoyment for the rest of their lives.'

Could any school offer its students more?

Martin Cooper

COLD WARS
Author: Andy Kirkpatrick
Published by Vertebrate 2011
ISBN: 9781906148256



This is an excellent book. It is Andy Kirkpatrick's second, the sequel to "Psychovertical", winner of the Boardman-Tasker Prize in 2008. In his Preface, the author describes it as the second volume of a planned trilogy. By the time you have reached the end you will be impressed by his optimism!

The Prologue begins with an account of the aftermath of his solo ascent of Reticent Wall on El Capitan, the subject of 'Psychovertical'. Back in the Valley, he has a chance meeting with Pep Masip, a Spanish Climber, who had climbed Reticent Wall some years before. They compare notes about the climb and Masip probes a little into Andy's domestic life. After divulging his domestic circumstances (wife, child, another on the way) Andy and Masip talk about the conflict between the risks of hard climbing and family life. Masip ends by saying 'It's not dying that is the problem. Climbing is like a lover and your wife knows this. Whenever you are together, no matter how much you love your family, your thoughts are only of your lover, of climbing'. This is an interesting and important passage because it sets the tone of the book. It is not just an account of many desperate and impressive climbs it is a very personal insight into the balancing act needed to combine the life of a professional climber with the needs of a family.

The main action gets underway with an account of the author's ascent, with Ian Parnell, of the Lafaille Route on the Dru described as the "hardest route on its hardest big wall". The added ingredient of winter and conditions described as 'full Scottish' might seem to be enough, but add into the mix a storm lasting for seven days and you begin to realise that when the author began a speech to an audience of scholarly Swiss (at the German language launch of 'Psychovertical') 'Hello. My name is Andy Kirkpatrick. I am mentally ill' he was probably right. Back in Chamonix, Kirkpatrick and

Parnell seek out Jean-Christophe Lafaille and after he has satisfied himself that his route was indeed hard, he also relaxes into describing his 'real' domestic life and the difficult balancing act needed to combine it with his climbing career.

The action then moves to Patagonia in both senses of the word. After signing a contract with the eponymous manufacturers, Andy and Ian head to South America to climb the Devil's Dihedral on Fitz Roy. Ironically, upon arrival they discover that a bag containing essential hard ware had not arrived with them in Buenos Aires and they are reduced to scrounging around to construct a rudimentary rack of gear. Undaunted, they apply themselves to the route. After several days of effort they realise that their lack of equipment makes further progress and the possibility of retreat increasingly unfeasible and descent is inevitable.

They turn their attention to Mermoz where they meet with success, though not without some desperately difficult climbing. The account of the pair of them moving together on exceptionally steep ground with a single peg between them for protection is one of the most exciting accounts of epic climbing I have read.

These accounts of extremely difficult routes climbed in the hardest of conditions are interspersed with the normality of family life back in the UK. This does not in any way detract from the book and in fact makes the contrast between the two aspects of the author's life all the more vivid.

After a family Christmas we are then transported to Norway for a winter attempt on the Troll Wall with Paul Ramsden. Unfortunately, Paul's back goes after a few days on the Wall and retreat is inevitable. A bold decision is made to leave the fixed ropes in place for a return visit.

An even bolder decision to return and climb the route solo leads to a sudden determination by Kirkpatrick to get fit. You like me may be perplexed by a chapter with the title "Hard" which begins "36:01" but the scene is a gym and the action is taking place on a rowing machine. It is a credit to the author's writing skills that he can make even the tedium of half an hour spent in the gym seem compelling.

The description of his return to the Troll Wall alone is one of the best chapters in the book. Success eludes him but the account is

compelling. He begins by describing an encounter with an elderly Norwegian woman, who, upon learning about his intentions, tells him 'I am very, very old, but I know life is very, very short, and it is precious. Don't waste yours on the Trollveggen'.

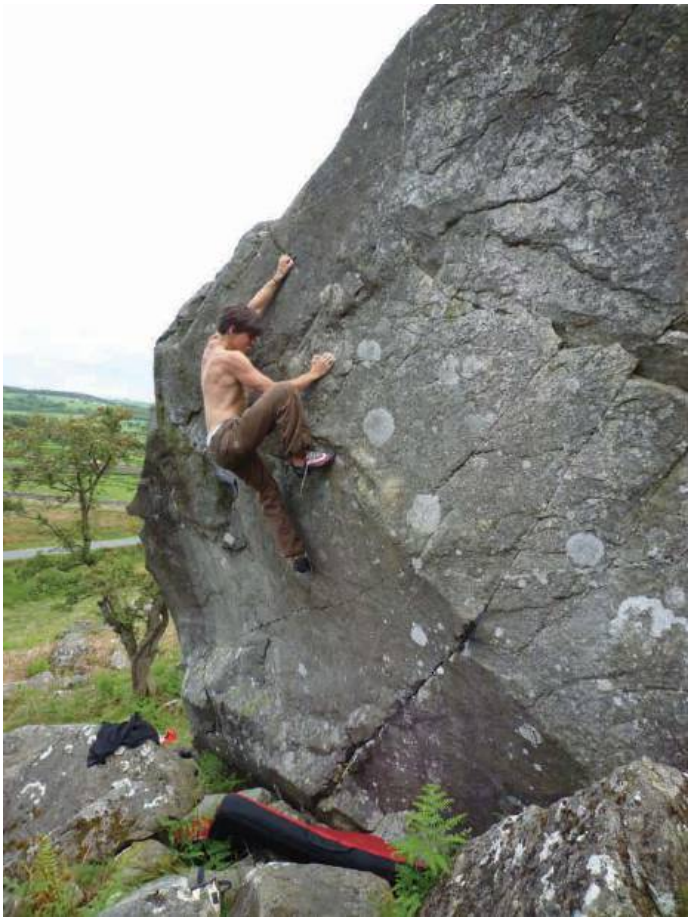
At the Wall, he finds that the ropes left from his previous attempt remain in place but has no way of knowing their condition. He begins to jumar, only to find himself falling when one of the anchors fails. Fortunately, a back up placement holds and he stops after falling 20 feet. After gathering his composure, he continues and reaches his previous highpoint. The pages which follow rival his account of Mermoz for grip factor and they have the palms sweating. He perseveres, but eventually has to admit defeat and undertake an epic abseil retreat from the Wall.

After another sojourn home in Sheffield, it is back to Chamonix for a winter ascent of the Lesueur Route on the Dru. Oddly, he finds himself with a partner unknown to him, a mystery Scotsman whose identity is never revealed. Although he has been described as a Guide it subsequently emerges when they are well established on the route that his Guide qualification is a walking, not a climbing one. Nevertheless, he proves himself to be up to the difficulties of the route, despite the precarious bivouacs, a wholly inadequate sleeping bag and a stomach bug and, in fact takes over the lead from Andy for the summit push.

The photographs are a mixed bag though the best are very good. The shot of Ian Parnell on the Devil's Dihedral is an outstanding example of photography 'in extremis'. All in all, this is a very fine book, and well worth reading. In his Preface Kirkpatrick makes a contrast between this book and 'Psychovertical'. He states that book was an answer to the question: 'Why do you climb?' but that 'Cold Wars' asks a different question: 'What is the price?' You may, after reading it, ask yourself whether that question really is fully answered and there are certainly one or two unanswered ones. For example 'Did the author's marriage collapse or not?' and 'Who exactly was the enigmatic Scotsman on the Lesueur Route?'

However, none of this detracts from what is a very good read.

Stephen Porteous



Michael Kenyon on Buck Rogers,
Kirk Stone, Carrock Fell - V7 (6)

Officers 2011

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Neil McAllister	Cath Sullivan	Jim Gregson
Ian Craven	Pam Prior	Sue Walker
Ken Daykin	Hatty Harris	Ian Grace
Nick Hinchliffe	Peter Smith	George Wostenholm

*Not a member of the main committee.

Meets List 2011

Note	Date	Venue	Coordinator
	New Year	Waters Cottage- Hogmanay	Anne Chevalier
	07/08 Jan	Raw Head	Ian Steen
	14/15 Jan	Beetham Cottage	Pauline Bird
	21/22 Jan	Salving House	John Barnard
D	28/29 Jan	Raw Head – Burns supper joint YMC	Martin Tetley
CM	04/05 Feb	Raw Head Committee meeting	John Leigh
	11/12 Feb	Karn House	Cath Sullivan
	18/19 Feb	Birkness	Bill Hargreaves
	25/26 Feb	Brackenclose	David Wright
	04/05 March	Birkness joint KMC	Chris Thickett
	18/19 March	Raw Head – Music weekend	Ron and Ruth Chambers
	18/19 March	Waters Cottage	Penny Clay
W	20/24 March	Ben Nevis CIC Hut	Tom Fox
MM	25/26 March	Karn House – Maintenance meet	Graeme Ralph
MM	08/09 April	Beetham cottage Maintenance meet	Barbara Duxbury
W	10/14 April	High Moss	Richard Ivens
	16/30 April	French Easter Climbing meet - Orpierre	Ian and Evelyn Dobson
BH	22/25 April	Brackenclose Easter	Les Meer
BH-F	29April/1 May	Raw Head - Family Meet	Mark Senior
CM	06/07 May	Birkness –Committee meet	Anne and Ken Daykin
	08/13 May	Skye –Glen Brittle Memorial hut	Peter Latimer
	13/16 May	Geology meet – Count House	John Moore
MM	20/21 May	Birkness Maintenance meet	Norman Haighton
	20/21 May	Raw Head	Pete Kelly
W	21/28 May	Scottish Hotel Meet – Killin hotel	Maureen Linton & Don Lee
Y	03/04 June	Birkness – 18-30 meet	Martha Taylor
	03/04 June	Joint FRCC/CC BBQ Grange School Houses	Keith Sanders
	10/11 June	Brackenclose joint MAM BBQ	Nick Hinchliffe
	10/11 June	Raw Head – Langdale guide book meet	Ron Kenyon/Max Biden
W	12/16 June	Glan Dena	Ken Fyles
PM	17/18 June	Birkness – prospective members	Pam Prior
W	19/23 June	Roaches Climbing meet – Don Whillans Memorial hut	Phil Elliot
	24/25 June	Waters Cottage	Stuart Thompson
	24/25 June	Salving House Lakeland challenge	Bob Graham round Phil and Helen Elliott
D	02 July	V P Dinner Crown Inn, Coniston	Vice-presidents.
	03/10 July	Karn House – special family access	Book - Graeme Ralph
	08/09 July	Beetham Cottage	Steve Lyon
F	08/09 July	Birkness – Family Meet	Roy Lemmon
	15/16 July	Salving House	Jean & Louise Richards
	15/16 July	Brackenclose joint Pinnacle Club	Hilary Lawrenson
	16/30 July	Joint Alpine Meet AC/CC/FRCC ABMSAC –Ailefroide, Ecrins	Mike Pinney
	22/23 July	Brackenclose	David Armstrong

Note	Date	Venue	Coordinator
F	05/11 Aug	Brackenclose – Family meet	Norman Haighton
	19/20 Aug	Beetham cottage	Hatty Harris
	21/28 Aug	Karn House – special family access	Book - Graeme Ralph
	27 Aug-10 Sept	Joint Dolomites meet AC/CC/ABMSAC/FRCC, Camping Dolomiti, Cortina	Jeff Harris
CM	02/03 Sept	Birkness Committee meeting	Neil McAllister
MM	09/10 Sept	Raw Head Maintenance meet	Alan Strachan
PM	16/17 Sept	Raw Head – Prospective members	Ken Daykin
	16/17 Sept	Londoners' Open Meeting, Birkness	Anne Hartley
MM	23/24 Sept	Brackenclose Maintenance meet	Mike Carter
MM	30Sep/1Oct	Salving House Maintenance meet	Trevor Morgan
Y	30Sep/1Oct	Raw Head – 18-30 Meet /joint meet with LUMC	Pete Hart
MM	30Sep/1Oct	Waters Cottage – Maintenance meet	Peter Cunningham
W	30Sep/07 Oct	Dale House, Kettlewell, Wharfedale	Bill and Lesley Comstive
	07/08 Oct	Deiniolen, LMC hut,	Martyn Carr
	14/15 Oct	Karn House	Jim Gregson
F	21/22 Oct	Birkness Family meet -	Heather Hardy
D	04/05 Nov	Shap Wells Hotel - AGM	The President
	11/12 Nov	Brackenclose Bonfire meet	Mark Scott
CM	25/26 Nov	Raw Head – Committee meeting	Pam Shawcross
	02/03 Dec	Birkness –Temperance meet	Jackie Brindle
	09/10 Dec	Beetham Cottage	Sue Leyland

Officers 2012

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Ian Craven	Ian Grace	Cath Sullivan
Anne Chevalier	Jim Gregson	Peter Simcock
Brenda Fullard	Hatty Harris	George Wostenholm

*Not a member of the main committee.

Meets List 2012

Note	Date	Venue	Co-ordinator
BH	31Dec/1Jan	Hogmanay – Karn House	Iain Whitmey
	06/07 Jan	Raw Head	Ian Steen
	13/14 Jan	Beetham Cottage	Jim Gregson
	20/21 Jan	Salving House	Simon & Sheila Jefferies
D	27/28 Jan	Burns supper, joint YMC, Raw Head	Martin Tetley
CM	03/04 Feb	Committee – Raw Head	Jim Gregson
	10/11 Feb	Birkness	Dee Gaffney
	17/18 Feb	Ski mountaineering – Karn House	John Moore
	24/25 Feb	Brackenclose	Bill Hargreaves
	09/10 March	Waters Cottage	Richard & Helen Tait
	09/10 March	Joint meet with KMC - Birkness	Chris Thickett
	23/24 March	Music meet – Raw Head	Ron & Ruth Chambers
MM	30/31 March	Maintenance meet – Karn House	Graeme Ralph
W	31Mar/14Apr	French Easter Climbing meet –Mont Sainte Victoire, joint CC and PC	Graham Townsend
BH	06/07 April	Brackenclose – Easter	Les Meer
	13/14 April	Young Persons meet - Raw Head	David Evans
	20/21 April	Mountain biking meet – Birkness	Norman Haighton
	20/21 April	Scrambling meet – Beetham Cottage	Stuart Thompson
W	22/26 April	High Moss –	Richard Ivens
MM	27/28 April	Maintenance meet – Beetham Cottage	Barbara Duxbury
BH F	04/06 May	Family meet Raw Head	Janet Hogan
BH	04/06 May	Bob Graham round, Salving House	Phil Elliot
CM	11/12 May	Committee – Birkness	John Leigh
	11/12 May	Scotland, Naismith hut	John Mackenzie
W	11/16 May	100miles/100hrs hut-round joint with RC	Alan Yates
MM	18/19 May	Maintenance meet - Birkness	Norman Haighton
W	19/25 May	Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar	Hatty Harris
W	19/25 May	Skye – Glen Brittle memorial hut	Peter Latimer
	25/26 May	Raw Head joint with Wayfarers, BBQ	Ken Fyles
BH	01/04 June	Raw Head	Alan Strachan
	08/09 June	Younger Members meet – Birkness]	Brenda Fullard
	08/09 June	Joint FRCC/CC, BBQ – Grange School House	Keith Sanders
	15/16 June	Joint MAM – BBQ, Brackenclose	Nick Hinchliffe
	15/16 June	Guide book meet [Dow/Slate] Raw Head	John Holden & Ron Kenyon
W	17/21 June	Glan Dena [24 places]	John Oaks
	22/23 June	Introductory meet Birkness	Simon Jefferies
	29/30 June	Waters Cottage	Marian Parsons
	29/30 June	Geology meet - Brackenclose	John Moore
D	06/07 July	Vice Presidents' meet & dinner, Crown Inn, Coniston	VPs
F	13/14 July	Family meet, Birkness	Denise Andrews
	13/14 July	Beetham Cottage	Steve Lyon
	20/21 July	Salving House	Cris Daly

Note	Date	Venue	Co-ordinator
	27/28 July	Brackenclose	Cyril Joyce
WF	03/09 Aug	Family meet, Brackenclose	Chris Haighton
	17/18 Aug	Don Whillans Mem. hut - Roaches	Peter Metcalfe
W	25Aug/2Sept	Lundy	Andrew Paul
MM	31Aug/01Sep	Salving House – Maintenance meet	Phil Elliot
CM	07/08 Sept	Committee meet - Birkness	Phil and Helen Elliot
MM	14/15 Sept	Raw Head - Maintenance meet	Alan Strachan
	14/15 Sept	Beetham Cottage – Londoners' Open meet	Anne Hartley
MM	21/22 Sept	Brackenclose – Maintenance meet	Mike Carter
	21/22 Sept	Irish climbing meet - Glendalough	Stuart Thompson
MM	28/29 Sept	Waters Cottage - Maintenance meet	Peter Cunningham
W	01/05 Oct	Dale House, Kettlewell, Wharfedale	Margaret Loy
	05/06 Oct	75 years at Brackenclose	Mark Scott
	12/13 Oct	Karn House	Penny Clay
F	19/20 Oct	Family meet - Birkness	Gary Hill
D	02/03 Nov	AGM - Shap Wells Hotel	The President
	09/10 Nov	Brackenclose - Bonfire meet	Humphrey Johnson
CM	23/24 Nov	Committee – Raw Head	Chris Ottley
	30Nov/01Dec	Temperance meet - Birkness	Charles Skeavington
	07/08 Dec	Beetham Cottage	Katie Elliot
	New Year	Hogmanay – Waters Cottage	Hazel Jonas

The Langdale boulders *(Tony Simpkins)*