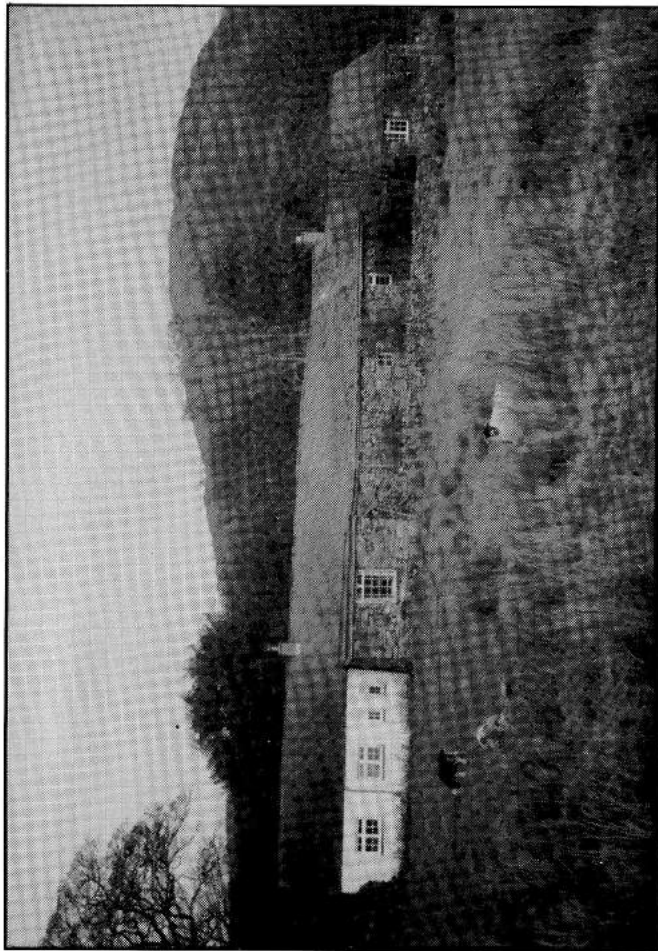


Achille Ratti Climbing Club



BECKSTONES

JOURNAL - 1990

ACHILLE RATTI JOURNAL

Typesetting by Chris Bagot
CHAPTER ONE - 303 Eaves Lane, Chorley Tel: (02572) 41606

Printed by
INPRINT - Units 9/10 Fylde Rd. Industrial Estate, Preston, Lancs.
Telephone: (0772) 562540

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INTRODUCTION

The pattern of a Spring, Summer and Autumn Newsletter supported by a 'members' Journal has now fallen into place. I use the word 'members' deliberately, since it is your opportunity to contribute reports of your activities for the pleasure of other members to read.

It will probably take a little more time before individuals and perhaps even groups of members develop the habit of recording their achievements and submitting them for publication in the Journal. In the meantime, we have a loyal band of supporters who have taken the trouble to put pen to paper for the benefit of us all. I sincerely thank them for making my job a little easier.

D. W. PRICE

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Extracts from the

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on the 10th November, 1990, in Preston.

1. Apologies were received from George Partridge, Alan Kenny and Fr. David Elder.
2. Minutes of the previous AGM were read, approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. Matters arising. None.
4. Chairman's Report. In the last twelve months there had been several developments in the Club: VAT registration, new membership cards with photographs, a new rule book, associate membership for juniors, another hut near Ulpha and the possibility of property in Scotland.

WASDALE

The situation regarding Low Thistleton Barr. The Club is now employing a planning consultant. The first set of plans submitted to the NT were not accepted. A second set is now with the NT and we are awaiting comment.

SCOTLAND

As mentioned in a newsletter, we are seeking a particular property in Scotland. It is the old presbytery at St. Mum's Church, Ballachulish, and will satisfy our needs in the West of Scotland. However, progress cannot be made until a new Bishop is appointed to the Diocese of Argyll and the Islands.

TYN TWR

As far as we can ascertain at this time, the new Bethesda by-pass will not affect the hut, and we are following closely any developments.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The activities within the Club are attracting more participants; fell walking, fell running, climbing, mountaineering, caving, canoeing and now cycling. Three well known 'older' members have purchased "Sticky Boots", so we could possibly have a geriatric climbing group next year.

As a M/C we are continually striving to improve the facilities within the huts and the organisation and administration of running a Club like ours. The necessity for VAT

registration for example, not only means extra work for the Treasurer and Hut Wardens, it also means that we must be more organised with our everyday house-keeping. The continuous increase in membership also requires a more professional approach, hence the introduction of membership cards with photographs. Communication is also vital, the publication of several pages of bulletins with articles four times a year, has been slimmed down to three newsletters in an Annual Journal. (The latter is designed for, and dependent on, member participation). We have also introduced an Associate Junior Membership scheme for the young relatives of existing members. This is for children who wish to use the Club facilities and whose parents are not interested in or are unable to join the Club. The child must be an immediate relative of a member.

THE FUTURE

Assuming that Scotland and Low Thistleton look after themselves, then the Golden Jubilee of the Club in 1992 must be our next target. It was with 1992 in mind that the 'meet' in Chamonix and the Tour of Mont Blanc this year was planned. In every possible way, the achievements, the atmosphere and the friendship worked better than anyone had hoped. Next year, from 3rd to the 25th August, we are again using Chamonix as a base and encourage as many members as possible to join us for walking and climbing expeditions. (No organised routes, people can do their own thing). More specific information will be given in the Spring and Summer newsletters. The whole aim of this, apart from the obvious enjoyment of those involved, is for it to act as a preparation for 1992, when we hope to climb as many of Achille Ratti's routes as possible and we hope by then to have more information of his routes available. (On the subject of 1992, if anyone has any ideas for activities, will they please contact Christine Benjamin. Chris is the co-ordinator of events).

I would like to thank the M/C for their time, advice, expertise and co-operation. The Club is very fortunate to have such a responsible group of people looking after its affairs.

I would also like to give a special thanks to our retiring Secretary, Gordon Cooney, and on behalf of you all, sincerely thank him for his services.

Finally, I have to report to the meeting that Tom Baron, the warden of Dunmail for some 18 years, is retiring. Tom and Rita really brought Dunmail out of the doldrums and made it into an outdoor centre where many, many young people made their first visit to the Lake District. The Chairman thanked Tom and Rita for everything they have done, not only at Dunmail, but in so many different areas of the Club.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary briefly reviewed the major events of the year starting with the Winter Meet in Scotland. Whilst the weather was mixed everyone did have some good days on the hills. The Long Walk in May started at Bishop's Scale. In perfect weather the walkers and runners made their various ways for a last but nostalgic visit to Buckbarrow, where they enjoyed the excellent hospitality that had been laid on. The base for the 1991 Long Walk

BMC MEMBERSHIP

The Club paid £386 to the BMC in 1990. From the 1st January 1991 the BMC are asking for their membership fee to be increased to £2.00 per head and will include Third Party Liability Insurance for all named members. The M/C have discussed this and agreed to put the following options to the meeting:

- i)Leave the BMC
- ii)Pay the charge for all members excluding juniors
- iii)Pay for full members only with an option for life members
- iv)Pay a lump sum as in the past

The Chairman asked Angela Soper, who is Vice President of the BMC, for her comments. Angela told the meeting of the benefits of full membership of the BMC. She also reminded the meeting that the ARCC are entitled to have members on all the BMC Area Committees.

She recommended the third option proposed by the Chairman. On a show of hands, the meeting unanimously agreed to the third option as proposed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The first item was the election of officers to the M/C. John Meredith had been proposed as Secretary by Leo Pollard, seconded by John Hope. Christine Benjamin had been proposed as Ordinary Member by Frank Whittle, seconded by Mike Quinn.

Both appointments were fully accepted at the meeting.

John Foster had written to the Secretary prior to the AGM with a proposal he wished to put before the meeting. Should there be a maximum ratio and what should it be between,

- a) Members hut fees and subscriptions,
- b) Members hut fees and visiting clubs ?

will again be Bishop's Scale, with the routes to be decided. The weather took its toll on the Bishop's Sponsored Walk in October. Fortunately, we had more helpers than ever before. They deserve a special thanks as do the ladies back at Bishop's Scale who presented such a delicious evening meal. To date there had been two successful junior meets.

In conclusion, the Secretary thanked all the members of the M/C he had worked with for their help and support.

Leo Pollard spoke briefly about the fell running scene. He told the meeting that the Club championship this year had not been as successful as previous years because of the choice of events. However, the Three County Tops race was becoming more popular.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A surplus of £20,000 for the year was reported. The Club had been registered for VAT since 1st May. No changes were proposed for hut fees or subscriptions. The Honorary Auditor will send a report and certificate to the M/C. Mr Cheetham was proposed and seconded to continue as Hon. Auditor of the ARCC.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Neville Haigh provided the current membership figures:

	Catholic	Non-Catholic	Total
	466	211	677
%	68.8	31.2	100%

HUT WARDENS REPORTS

Beckstones

Frank Whittle reported that the newly acquired hut would be ready for use by mid-December after another working weekend.

Dunmail

Tom Baron presented his last report to the meeting by stating that the hut income was £9,000. Work on the hut included painting by Barry Rogers, the stairs repaired, beds improved, door locks changed and a fire door fitted. Tom hoped that the Club would continue to use the hut with the same objectives in mind. He wishes that Dunmail be retained especially for the benefits it provides for less privileged children. Rod. Grimshaw will be taking over from Tom and initially will need assistance.

Tyn Twr

Anne Wallace presented her first report on Tyn Twr. A working weekend had just been held and she wished to thank those who attended it. Quotations had been received from three joiners for constructing new beds. The bedroom floors also need recovering. Both these jobs will have to be done piecemeal. Current hut bookings are good from visiting clubs and almost fill the huts (on visiting club weekends) to Easter.

John Foster explained his reason for the proposal strongly objecting to the fees being paid by visiting clubs. During the course of the debate that followed, Michael Pooler and Leo Pollard expressed concern at the lengthy objections raised each year by John Foster to the financial decisions made by the M/C, whether it be for increased hut fees or for hut improvements.

John Foster concluded by saying he was disappointed with the views of the membership on this subject. There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4 p.m.

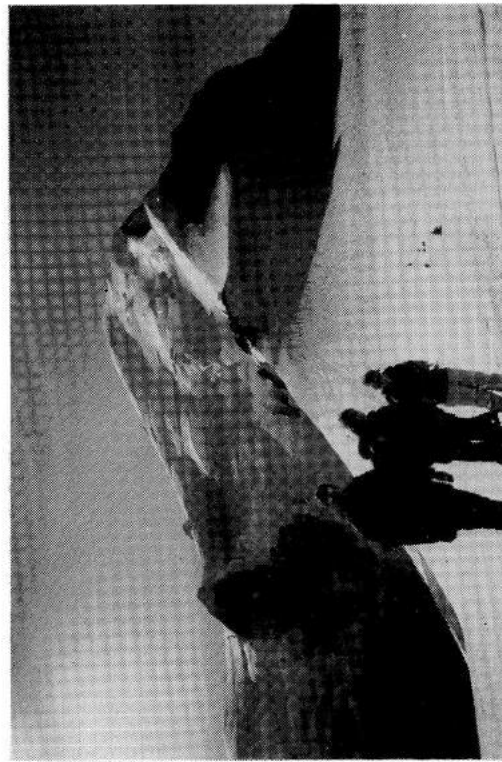
ONE CENTURY LATER

PAUL COONEY

We finished the Tour of Mont Blanc with only a few blisters and feeling quite proud of our achievement. Our next objective was naturally to climb Mont Blanc. We had a good forecast so we had the necessary time to plan our ascent. We decided to go via the Gouter hut and return the same way. We thought this was the most reliable way to the top. It also enabled us to make use of the telepherique and the train to aid our ascent.

The following day saw us leaving the train station and entering into the alpine world of rock and snow. The walk and scramble to the Gouter hut can only be described as a grind but offering magnificent views of the Bionnassay on our right, and the Aiguilles on our left. The final ridge to the Gouter comprised of scrambling, with the odd cable to assist our ascent. Climbing in the Alps is something special and to reach the hut with the throngs of people appeared to reduce this dimension, but once a welcome brew and a dish of pasta were consumed, my view mellowed. We settled into an evening of relaxation amongst the multi-national gathering of alpinists with same objective as ourselves.

After a restless sleep, I awoke to the chunninger of the many foreign voices in the Gouter hut. In what felt like slow motion, I made my breakfast of dried french bread, dried



DESCENDING
MONT BLANC
1990

Paul
Peter McHale
Jean

cheese, and what felt like a dry cup of tea. Derek, Peter and Jean had also slept on the floor and looked pre-occupied with their breakfast. At 3.30 a.m. we walked out of the hut into the cool night air. From 12,000 ft., the neon lights of Chamonix twinkled. Above us, on the Dome du Gouter, a procession of torches snaked its way into the void.

Morning, filtered into the darkness, and a host of yellow and green light filled the glaciers

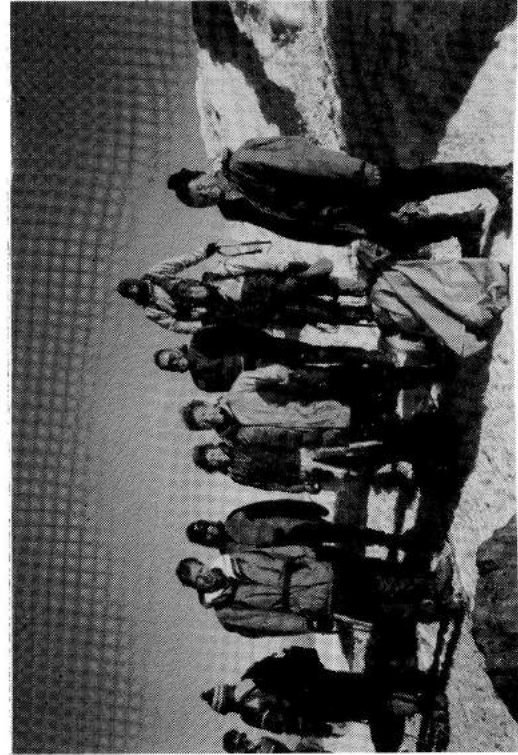
and snowfields. To the west, pink and crimson followed the night round the revolving world. A profile of Mont Blanc was also visible in the western hemisphere. Whilst climbing the Bosses Ridge, the summit looked deceptively close, but each lung gasping step told me otherwise.

By 7 a.m., the ridge declined to a first plateau, we shook hands, we had reached the top. Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in Western Europe. Achille Ratti, at the age of 33, climbed Mont Blanc with Professor Grasselli one hundred years and 23 days before us. This was 32 years before he was elected Pope. We all took numerous photographs of the Aguille Du Midi, Mont Blanc du Tacul and Mont Maudit - all elegant, arduous and possibly dangerous, but retaining a mythical quality for us. Descent of the Bosses Ridge was not as difficult as I had imagined. Whilst negotiating an ascending guided party I followed the Chairman's solution to the overcrowded ridge, he promptly sat on the ridge "a cheval" style, while the rushing party ascended around us. With the ridge behind us we met Harry Wiggins who was ascending with not far to go to the summit. At the Vallot hut we met Dot, Barry, Mike and Pete. They were having a refuelling stop of chocolate and drinks and from the cheerful smiles, they must have known the summit was in the bag.

Further descent brought us to the Gouter hut, we had a brew, collected our sleeping bags and descended the 5,700ft to the green meadows below. The appraisal of the Tour of Mont Blanc and the ascent of Mont Blanc was conducted over a meal in Argentier. The wine flowed along with the stories: Barry's ascent and descent of the "Blonk" from the Valley floor, and the two Peter's exchanging crampon tripping experiences on the mountain.

In conclusion, the success of the trip was measured by all of the team achieving our two objectives, the Tour and the ascent of Mont Blanc. The "Spirit of the Hills" remained with us throughout the trip and to achieve this in Achille Ratti's centenary ascent of Mont Blanc was clearly a successful and happy experience.

Paul Cooney



MONT BLANC
1990
Successful party
by Vallet Hut

Paul
Peter
Jean
Derek
Mike
Barry
Dot
Peter McHale

SEVEN SNAPS FROM A FAMILY HOLIDAY IN CHAMONIX

JOHN CRIX

1. Where to put the knees

And first, a tip for all six-foot-three club members who travel National Express Euroways. You have a decision to make. Either you learn yoga, sit' in the body of the coach, and practice sleeping with your ankles wrapped around your neck. OR. You sprawl in a back seat and experience how the air conditioning just doesn't cope with a three tonne rear engine which has the heat output of Sizewell B.

2. Who was the large jolly party ?

Stephen (10), Beth (8) and I (father of), travelled from Manchester to Chamonix mid August. The presence of numerous ARCC members, laden with Tour of Mont Blanc Guide Books and free-dried curry, alleviated our long dark night of a journey. The Wasdale guidebook (not required on a trip to Chamonix) recommends that Piers Gill is best tackled by a 'large jolly party' - well, so is twenty hours of Euroways hospitality.

3. Sid the Sexist

Lac Blanc (Aiguilles Rouges) is probably a very good place to camp (Grand Balcon etc) in dry weather. In electric storms and downpours of assorted intensities, it's down to cowering in your tent, drinking tea, and reading back issues of VIZ.

Moral dilemma here - should pre-teens be exposed to Sid the Sexist and Johnny Fartpants? Given the alternatives (eg. lateral thinking to do with the Trangia and how it's almost as good as central heating), I gave in and handed out the grubby mags - with strict understanding that Stephen and Beth would pretend not to understand the very rude bits . . . and wouldn't mention any of the less rude bits to mum.

We went to Coruisk in June and practiced what you do when you wake up at 2 a.m. and find your sleeping bag floating (but not quite like the Nikwax advert) in four inches of water. So we were pretty expert by August and at least the gardiennes (nice ladies - kept wagging fingers and talking about meteo) of the Lac Blanc cafe let us spend the rest of the night on the floor.

A highlight of this bit, however, was the early morning when it wasn't raining and I looked out across at the Aiguilles du Chamonix. I watched the light conquering those black cliffs and understood the fear and need that made sun-worship a feature of pre-Christianity. I prayed the sunrise and at last 'the heavens proclaimed the glory of God and the firmament showed forth the work of his hands' (Psalm 18).

4. Stoned on Bossons

The idea was that we'd kick around on the Bossons glacier for a bit and come to terms with our spiky feet and hands. Joined by Alan, Alison and their two kids by now - so

there were seven of us abseiling off the tongue (how uncool can you get?) - and all the while squinting at the stones (boulders) the afternoon sun was picking out of the ice and slinging down close enough for concern.

5. Refugees

There is a place in Vallorcine where the camping is savage and there's even a notice signed by the Mayor which says he doesn't mind, as long as you take your ordure home with you. This is an excellent retreat when the holiday budget moves from tight to strangulation. I was less sure about the French guy with a beat-up van and a luxre thong - but we locked all the valuables in Alan's car when we went out, and tried not to worry excessively.

We even had a campfire - try that on your average Argentiere dome tent suburb.

One evening run, on my own up around les Saix Blancs, was interesting, almost epic (can you have an epic fell run on forest paths?). I was stopped by a family of friendly woodcutters - worried that there wasn't much of a path between me and the valley. Pas de problem - but then I got significantly lost and ended up somewhere in Switzerland.

Having planned the necessary grunts and gestures that might be required to let them know that my passport (and everything else apart from my shorts, shoes and a singlet) was way up the road in France, I was deeply disappointed when the border guards completely ignored me as I crossed over. So much for The Great Escape - maybe all Steve McQueen really needed was a pair of Reeboks.

6. Johnny Fartpants

Alan and I strolled up Mont Buet one morning. At 3000 plus metres Buet reveals the Aiguilles Rouges and the Brevent as no more than a dark trellis, a frame for the white bulk of Mont Blanc - with the Midi, Mont Blanc du Tacal, and Mont Maudit also in their true perspective. And, much more than this even, Mont Blanc itself placed in context of miles of peaks stretching away into the haze.

This one recommended - good for half a roll of Kodacolor Gold - and also no Brits, which refreshed considerably after a week or so of hearing High readers articulating the Chamonix experience.

Less refreshing was the combined effect of the altitude and our pate butties. The beans scene in Blazing Saddles came to mind and soon the whole crowded summit was giggling along with this pair of anglais tres peculiaries, whose sphincter control had just about reached the wrong side of marginal.

7. We shall return

... and maybe do a proper route next time.

With cigarettes at 40p a pack and beer at 55p a litre, do Stephen and Beth have any other option ?

IAN HODGSON MOUNTAIN RELAY 1990

STEVE ASHLEY

The First Leg

It all started on the Saturday night after the Bishop's Walk. I entered the kitchen at Bishop's Scale minding my own business. There was a huddle of people around one table and someone called me over. "Do you still do a bit of running?" asked John Hope. "Yes", I replied tentatively, "What do you want me to do?". He explained that due to the regular runners being injured, the Club's B Team was one member short for the following days 'Ian Hodgson Mountain Relay'. After a few minutes discussion and an explanation by myself that I had never run up anything bigger than Winter Hill in Lancashire, (that was last Spring), I agreed to take part.

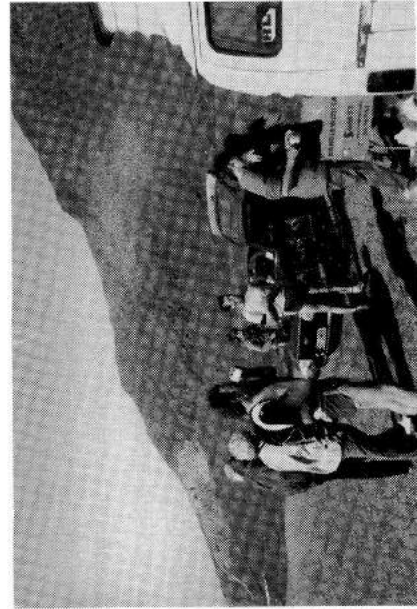
On Sunday I borrowed a Helly top and a pair of climbing tights, I actually wore my own T-shirt. Bill Mitton, my partner for the first leg, gave me a lift to the start. We arrived at Brothers Water at 9.30 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start. At this stage, Leo Pollard and Bill ensured that I had all I needed and gave me lots of encouragement, I was even told not to start off, or run down hill, too fast.

We were called to the start. Bill and I found ourselves at the back of the starters, this suited, as Bill was carrying a knee injury and I was quite nervous. We started off at a nice moderate pace on a gentle uphill stretch from Hartsop Hall along Dovedale. We were running along a narrow track and I now noted my first lesson - there is no way past on sections like this, so it is better to get nearer the front at the start. Anyway, we both managed to pass a small number of other backmarkers, things didn't seem too bad, then we turned a corner. I was not the only one to utter a four-letter word expletive, it was Houndshape Cove, a steep,

rocky section. I didn't run much of this section but neither did a lot of others. By the time we reached the top my achilles tendons were telling me something, but, fortunately, the terrain eased off as we approached the first checkpoint at Dove Crag and the pain went away. Bill did the business at the checkpoint and we were off again on a nice moderate section past Hart Crag, Fairfield and Cofa Pike before the long gentle climb up Deepdale Hause and St. Sunday Crag.

Going down St. Sunday Crag I had it confirmed that I was not the quickest man downhill as those in front disappeared into the distance. I was about 20 yards behind Bill when he disappeared over the edge and as a dutiful partner, I followed down Blind Cove. In normal circumstances I wouldn't have walked down slopes that steep, but I was determined to finish without being overtaken. At the next checkpoint, Bill again did the business - I just kept running. We then had to cross Grisedale Beck and then up a short slope onto the footpath. It was here that my legs felt like lead but I was still determined to finish. We seemed to run for miles and just as I thought we would run for ever, I saw Leo and Dave: it was just a couple of hundred metres to the end of the leg. It was a good feeling to finish (our time was under 1 hour 50 minutes), and Bill passed the map across, and the second pair were off.

My legs felt as though they belonged to someone else, one wouldn't stop shaking, but it was OK. Worse was to come. I couldn't walk down stairs without wincing for three days: even so, in retrospect, I enjoyed it.



RENDEZVOUS IN BOHEMIA

ANGELA SOPER

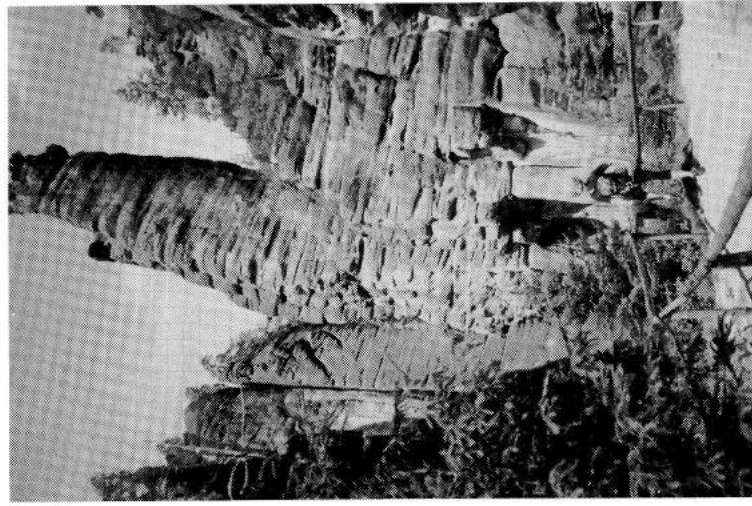
The Rendezvous Haute Montagne (RHM) holds a meet every year for women climbers, and people come from most European countries, east and west. Despite the name, the emphasis isn't always on high mountains, and in 1989, by popular demand, we hosted the Meet in North Wales.

Two very full cars came from Czechoslovakia with climbers who stood out for their ability and their boldness. At the end they offered a warm invitation to hold the 1990 Rendezvous for the first time in their country. They explained that we might have to bear with 'administrative problems'. Little did they anticipate the changes in Czechoslovakia that were only weeks away.

So, in due course we received our invitations, obtained our visas (with no problem at all) and in late August, nine British female climbers flew to Prague - up the Russian tank that stands in its side in Wenceslas Square. Visitors add graffiti to it as they pass on their way to a respected monument, the statue of Wenceslas and the memorial to those who died under the regime; here they place flowers and light candles. Post-revolution Prague was a city of happiness, people dancing on the pavements, making music in the open air. You could buy a Russian helmet at stalls on the pavement.

A swaying tram took us to the station where our tickets to Teplice nad Metuji, a hundred miles north, cost only 45kr (£1). Our Czech hosts gave us a very warm welcome and it was good to meet again with climbing friends of many nationalities.

So, to the sandstone towers. Imagine hundreds of pinnacles like a gigantic Brimham only more sandy, emerging from a forest of tall pines. Footpaths wind between them through narrow gorges and



Footpaths wind between them through narrow gorges and

tunnels, Lord of the Rings Scenery. Someone had drawn monster footprints in the sand. Walls, bulges, overhangs, corners, cracks (mostly off-width), every feature you can think of sculpted in sand. No metal protection is allowed, only jammed knots, natural threads, and the big rings cemented into the rock for belays. Climbing on wet rock is also forbidden (can't imagine anyone wanting to), so is chalk, except on the hardest routes, and everyone respects these rules.

Being a gritstone climber I was keen to lead. Our local guides showed us routes with thread protection, and lent us lengths of rope and knotted slings. Their methods make sense . . . if you fell on a camming-device, it could gouge its way out of the crack while a well-jammed knot would hold. We never put it to the test. Grades were confusing as several systems seemed to be in use. I was happy leading VIIb (East German grade), which could have been gritstone E1 but some people thought them harder. I seconded a long IXa, led in excellent style by Zbysek, a student of English at the University of Prague, in his old football shoes modified by sticky rubber soles. This climb was hard and from entries in the book on top of the pinnacle, ours was the fifth ascent.

Between us, we RHM members must have climbed hundreds of towers but never any easy route. Descent was always by abseil, and the top ring was always placed for easy retrieval of the rope and minimum damage to the rock. Waymarked trails gave pleasant walking/running circuits of up to ten miles. The Dutch girls found the border with Poland and stepped over it. Most days ended with a swim in the beautiful lake at Adrspach and a few drinks outside the climber's bar - at 5 kr, beer costs less than 10p. We were told that there were few Czech climbers around since the revolution because many were now concentrating on 'enterprises' or using their new freedom to travel abroad.

On our single-pitch climbs there would be many seconds so each pinnacle might have its own international mini-meet, and we would fill up lots of lines in the summit book. Thus we got to know a different kind of climbing and members from other countries at the same time. Most of the Czech women have made major ascents in the Pamirs and Alena: the main organiser has climbed the 8000m Dhaulagiri. While they climbed, their young children would play happily in the sand.

Everyone agreed that Bohemia was something special and even better for discovering it through the RHM. At the same time there was a feeling that next year we should place more emphasis on the 'Haute Montagne' aspect. So the members from Munich promised to arrange the 1991 RHM in the Wetterstein, again in the late summer. Looking further ahead and further east, we welcomed an invitation to the Crimea in 1992.

Any woman climber is welcome, irrespective of her standard (and nobody minds if she brings a 'fella' along). So, if anyone wants to know more about RHM for next year, please get in touch with me.

Angela Soper

TYN TWR

The Birth of a Hut

CHAPTER FOUR

JOHN FOSTER

The location did not suit everyone, however, when word got out. 'Too far from the Pass' (Llanberis) cried the hard rock men. 'Who wants a hut at the foot of a slate tip' asked others, and some wanted to see what else may be available, not realising I had been looking for nearly three years.

The Committee's interest had been quickly roused, and on the first weekend of May I proudly showed off my find to Terry, John Gilmour and Barry Ayre, then Club Secretary. We also called in Owen (the gent) in the Estate Office at Port Penrhyn, and he told us a woman was interested in the house, and had offered £800. The following Tuesday, Terry reported to the Committee on the state of the building and what would need to be done. I was enthusiastic and wanted to offer £900, but Terry was far more worldly - wiser than me after running his own plumbing business for some years. 'We are not entering a blind auction with a Welsh Wizard' quoth the voice of experience, 'We'll match the bid'. On Wednesday, Barry sent off a letter offering £800, and although I was worried we might lose out again, there was no mention of our shadowy competitor.

I must explain here that No. 2 was that half of Tyn Twr nearest to the A5. No. 1 was occupied by a tenant, and was not initially for sale. But at the end of June, Owen asked that if we were prepared to pay £800 for the empty half, would we be willing to offer £1500 for the lot, tenant and all? The subsequent Committee meeting accepted the proposal by John Gilmour, seconded by Mick Pooler, to do so.

It was about this time that a red herring appeared. Someone had heard that the Forestry Commission was offering properties for lease in Snowdonia, which led

to a few of the Committee inspecting Diosgydd Isaf and Wyddfyd, respectively a little north and south of the A5, just west of Bettws-y-Coed. A committee meeting in early August (while I was on Skye) decided to offer 15 shillings per week for Wyddfyd on a lease of 21 years. So this was now the first choice, with the intention to stall on Tyn Twr to keep it in reserve. This worried me when I heard, as it was outside the preferred rectangle, 10 miles from the nearest rock.

Meanwhile, Owen was getting impatient for a decision as the week slid by, sending letters claiming that another party was very interested in the purchase, (the earlier 'ghost?'). Barry fobbed him off with the excuse that it was holiday time and difficult to get the Committee together. So Tyn Twr hung in the balance until the middle of September. By then the Forestry Commission had rejected our offer, and I still remember with excitement the scene on Wednesday 14th in the Garstang home of Bill Carter (then Chairman) as we agreed to send £150 deposit for the purchase, subject to planning permission being granted.

This much we had in the coffers, but not a lot more, barely enough to complete the purchase, and nothing for the essential improvements and fitting out, (there was only a chemical toilet and a single tap). There was a credit squeeze at the time, so Banks and Building Societies could not help. Nor could we turn to the Lancaster Diocese, to which we were still in debt over the purchase of Dunmail and Bishop's Scale, and which was itself somewhat strapped up just then. But the lack of mere money did not deter that man of faith and courage who founded our Club and had taken on the purchase and development of Rawhead Barn into Bishop's Scale, with a membership of only 60.

It was Bishop Pearson himself at that meeting who suggested that we should raise a loan from our own members, and pay a fair rate of interest. After all, the lenders would be the main beneficiaries of the loan, with a new hut among mountains new to most.

AH, WEA!

ANNE WALLACE

G.R.5 is an abbreviation of Sentiers de Grande Randonnée Cinque. So long is this system of footpaths that one end is in Holland, or alternatively, Belgium, and the other at Nice. Its traverse of the French Alps is from Lac Léman, a.k.a. Lake Geneva. This year's Summer holiday started there. Why? In Spring, the thought of never having been to the Mediterranean beaches came to mind. Walking to the Riviera seemed like a good idea.

The journey was planned using guide book and maps bought before departure. Martin Collin's book gives profiles of the route. These were copied (enlarged) on to A4 paper. Main points were noted. The book would be left in the car parked-up at the camp-site. All available information having been considered, a schedule for the walk was drawn up. So much for the planning. Then came reality.

Trains from Chamonix make connections (in Switzerland) for a starting point at St. Gingolph. Thinking there would be a camp-site, or simple lodgings in the town, departure was left until early afternoon, to arrive around 6 p.m. Enquiry about:- Le Camping/Pension/Dotoir/Gîte d'Etape, resulted in silence which broke in a statement that nothing of the sort was to be found there. Oh!

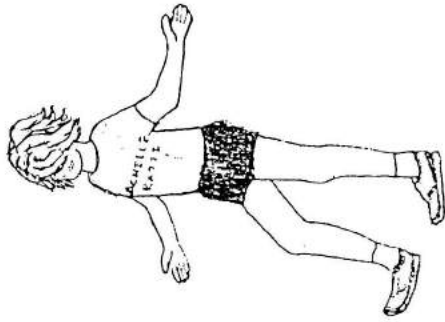
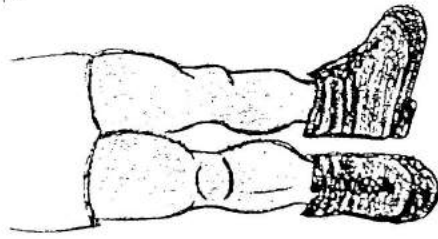
Sweaty after lugging the sac around those platforms and trains, I sat by a water trough, in the evening sun-glare, having a drink and a think. The think, which lasted about five seconds, ended with, "I'll have to get out of here". The drink took a bit longer.

A walk up the river path for an hour and a half, came out near Novel. The owner of a Gîte d'Etape put a mattress on the floor. If the Gîte does not provide meals, a nearby restraint will. For randonneurs, they may offer a good feed for less than the price of a menu choice.

Towns tend to be around 1,000m and the cols about 2,500m (3,000ft to 8,000ft or so). It is not rough-stuff mountaineering, nor even rambling by British muddy legs and slutch-slide standards. The well-maintained footpaths and bulldozed swathes take any zipping and zagging at a steady angle. Signposting and waymarks are good, almost overdone: although, in bad weather, a different opinion would be held. Unfortunately, map 26 could not be obtained, even in France. It would have been useful.

At Novel, a woman from Briançon looked at the Walsh 'Marathon' upon my feet. Where are your boots? There were no boots. Don't you have anything else? A pair of Reebok 'Explorer', with explanation - same but different. On behalf of her friends, she gently suggested the nature of the terrain required more substantial footwear than "les tennis" even for a journey of a few days, let alone a few weeks, duration. Their amazement on

being informed (unless there are winter conditions) such shoes are normal for many hill-goers in Britain, re-occurred whenever big-booted souls questioned the lightly-shod Anne.



Meadows of striking colour and pervading scent, set amongst forests, surrounded by peaks. About the necks of cattle are bells which jingle, or clang-dang, as the brousing continues. Ah, this uphill work causes profuse sweat. But what matter that, when it is so good a life?



Clegs!! Great, white-winged creatures - zooming in for a change of diet. My thoughts were, "In being an omnivore, my carnivorous traits may be detrimental, considering their usual parasitic association with herbivores". They did not accept the reasoning.

There were no insect attacks beyond Col de Bassachaux. Meadows, forests and peaks continued. How to protect this? The route goes in and out of National Parks.

Imagine you're walking across an Alp and hear a reed instrument being practiced. The sound comes from the Refuge stone cluster. Then, three children of the Guardian play a game. The clouds lower. The col is higher. Beyond lies the great, white mountain range. Marmot chitters but does not show himself. Thunder is heard but no lightning seen yet. At the col, grey creeping envelopes all. Some

brain part asks, "Remember me?".

Jane and Sandy Sanderson, plus son, were at Refuge du Col d'Auterne. Not Club members but know to some of the ARCC. They were walking in the reverse of my direction for a few days.

Next morning was clear-skied. We looked across the Aguilles Rouges to the Mont Blanc Massif.

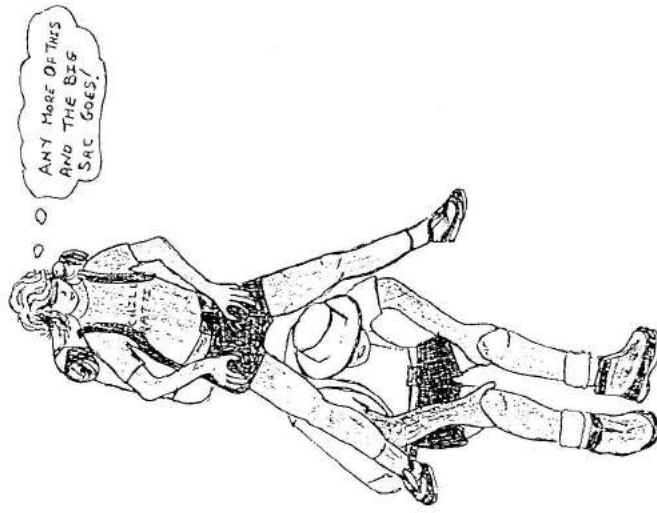
To change the large sac for a medium-sized one had been decided some days earlier. It was very hot. Walking alone, gear could not be shared. Weight was reduced somewhat: flysheet instead of whole tent; spare clothes and maps not yet needed, sent to Post Office ahead. However, the cooking stuff and set of warmer clothes were now felt unnecessary. Accommodation, with food, would be no problem (the French are a nation dedicated to feeding people), their extra cost not great and preferable to giving up having walked into heat exhaustion.

Away off le Brévent. On the other side: les Houches Poste for next area's maps etc.: hitch to Chamonix for sac change and next posting ahead: return to les Houches and back on route. Yes, got it sussed now. No problem. Plus a few other happy thoughts.

The day involved 1,925m (6,316ft) of descent. Would the knees come out of it alright? Of course they did. The Achilles tendons didn't.

William had been in Novel. Although we had not stayed in the same place since, we leap-frogged along. One occasionally appearing at the other's rest stops, saying hello and wandering off. We last met outside the supermarket in les Houches.

A few kilometres before Refuge Plan de la Laie, a couple watched my descent to their rest stop. A very friendly greeting ended with, "We see you've changed your sac". I was flabbergasted. Not remembering having seen them before, yet they knew a great deal about my journey so far and seemed to have expected to meet me. They also commented on being the only person walking around in trainers instead of boots. How did they know? All became obvious, once the grey cells had re-connected. They spent the previous evening talking to William in Refuge da la Balme. His holiday being nearly over,



he had pushed on in order to reach Landry by the following day. The Dutch couple became my leap-frog partners for a while.

School Ski Trip; the faltering attempts at control, in the Alps of course, guaranteed snow. Well, it was in my 'teens. So, the Alps is synonymous with skiing in many minds. Those of us who equate Alps with ice-axes are in the minority. Are we concentrating upon later interests, forgetful of our first holiday there?

Thankfully, there are restrictions in areas such as the Vanoise National Park. It can be disconcerting to spend three hours toiling up to a col, only to realise a lift is 100m down the other side. Pylons spoil the scene. An insult after the great beauty just experienced. Is Anne prejudiced?

Is it all to be condemned? Employment is created. Skiers have a right to sport without some disinterested walker being peevish. They are enjoying the mountains. Following an accident, would the way to hospital, via lifts and bulldozed tracks, be refused by the die-hard purist? Maybe we had better leave him out of this discussion.

The mind does become accustomed to views of the land which, though ever-changing, are within the expected, any surprises being those which give greater pleasure. Sight of the resorts came as a shock. The best part of having to go Val Claret, was in finding a C. Lh. M. hostel set in a clear space away from the towers of concrete. It is on the south edge of Lac de Tignes.

They were having a family re-union. The few other randonneurs were self-catering. That evening with the family is memorable, not only for the meal but our gathering on the balcony to watch a yellowing and reddening sky as the sun set in a thunderstorm.

GR5 swings eastwards to pass more towns. GR55 is a variant which leads westwards. After reading the guide and talking to Joyce, the variant was the preferred way. Over a snack at Refuge da la Liesse, a French couple enthused about the area, especially the views from Col de Chavière. At Pont de Croe Vie, a decision has to be made. A blister was not infected but sore. The tendons were causing me to consider calling it off. The sensible option was to take a more direct line for Modane, still some distance but less ascent and descent. Perhaps there was also a mid-term-blues factor? If so, giving up, instead of having to be carried off, would be regretted later.

By the time Fourneau was reached, the sun-tan was developing nicely but the hair needed a trim. I thought my french adequate to ask for a little to be taken off. Obviously not, for most of it ended up on the floor. Surely, one of the Golden Rules of Life must be, "Don't argue when a Frenchwoman's wielding a cut-throat razor!"

I was advised that Pamplinet is a very small place. There would be more chance of a night's shelter in one of the two Cîte d'Étape at Névaiche. One is vegetarian. My advisor took great lengths to point this out, asking whether it would suit!

The reason for comment upon the food is that, in Refuge and Gîte, dinner almost invariably included meat. The exception was the C.Lh.M. hostel. Perhaps because it was a Friday, they served fish? Wondering about this, dining rooms had been scanned. In thirteen days, only one couple were observed with a requested dish.



A group of four were noticed in Ceillac. They appeared in Fouillouze. It was a puzzle whom Ken (of Liverpool C.H.F.) meant when he thought we have a mutual acquaintance in St. Helens. The name on the tip of tongue. It stayed there.

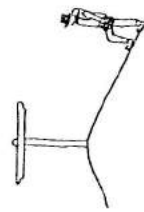
One of Ken's companions was a New Zealander. In Larche, we spoke more. His opinion agreed with everyone else with who I had spoken about walking GR5's whole length. There is interest to be found each day, even in the flatlands, and mountains do not have to be big to be beautiful. He had more adventures during scrambling on lower ridges than walking the broad tracks amid the massifs.

Ken wondered about the chances of reaching Nice by the following weekend. His French associates thought it over-optimistic. "When do you hope to finish?" "By next Thursday". N.Z. smiled and said "Go for it!"

What a day in Mercantour National Park! Sunlight spreading across mountain tops. In the valley shadow marmots scamper. Not from fear, just their normal occupations. Ascent by lakes and descent into a large combe. Flowers, insects, a toad and marmots. Another col; a long time looking back. Happy and sad, because all this will end soon.

The twentieth day could have been the last. It started well enough. During the afternoon, the camera whired amongst the Barres de Roya and below Combe de Croussette.

A shrill whistling. Bells and bleating as thousands of sheep are gathered into the combe. Two dogs sense me and come, full-belt. It is some comfort to think dangerous



planned a solo attempt, wishing to keep it so?

It just happened that the walk had been solo so far. An easy day? Well, the section showed over 600m of descent at the start with almost 1,000m of ascent in the 35km. No, this was not too much but it could be a long day and very hot. He had said his guide was inaccurate, causing him to follow old ways to dead-ends on a few occasions.

Thoughts not voiced were; One who gets himself off route has only himself to blame. One is more likely to speak to others and ask for directions when in doubt. Two may have the idea the other is a better navigator who can make sense of complex terrain. Perhaps we could overcome the odds (entering an unknown area minus map but with suspect directions) and end the day as friends.

The 626m descent is to the gorge floor. Does the sun ever reach it?

White rock. Heat.

What is that by the path below Levens? A rubbish dump!

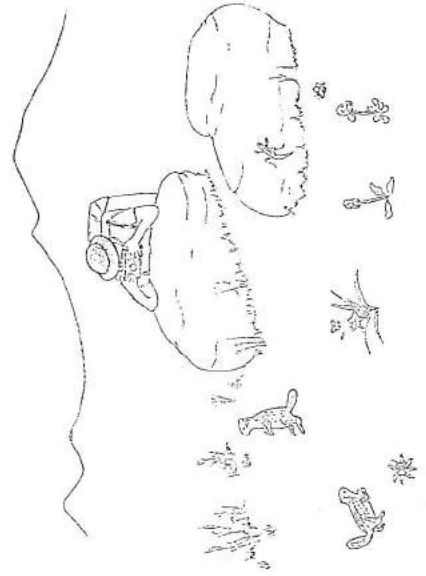
"François, I think the way to Sainte Claire is over to the right". "No. The book says . . ." "The route goes up here now". "What makes you think that?" "Because there is a mark". "It is only just visible". "Maybe they don't take as much care of this section". "We are going the wrong way". "I don't know". The errors were not one-sided. There were no harsh words. We went in search of a route to Nice separately.

It seemed OK on the path around Mont Cima. Until the second tip came into view. It appeared to be scenic again between Aspremont and L'Aire St. Michel. Then I saw Nice. Maybe the advice to finish on GR52 variant at Menton should have been heeded.

A short distance before the Station came a shout, "Anne!" I knew no-one around. It was for some other. Again, "Anne!" Recognition of the voice. We'd both had a hard day. "A beer in the Station Buffet? . . ." "Another?"

Antibes. Juan les Pins. Cannes. François, never having travelled First Class, decided upon comfort for his journey home. He came to my compartment as we turned inland from the resorts. "Did you see the Mediterranean?" "Yes, between the tower blocks". "Can you imagine anyone wanting to come here?" "It takes all sorts".

The woman smiled as she came to the camp-site bureau. "Ça va?" "Ça va tres bien".



animals are not allowed in public areas. Hang on, they are probably guard dogs. Anyway, working animals are under control. Where's the shepherd? Is the dark one a Rottweiler? There is a Savoy Shepherd dog, hope it's one. Not that breed matters, teeth are teeth. Just checking, huh!

The rumbling of some time ago, could have come from a plane, or be thunder. The second time, I asked a herd of goats for local's opinion on weather prospects. The nearest stared at me, scratched its head and went to protect the kids.

Grey clouds. Just touching the summit of Mont Mounier. Move fast down the ridge! One kilometre on, clouds half-way to the valley. I do not like this. Feel tickling as hairs on arm and eyebrow stand up. Bright light here. Then, two seconds, a bang! Yellow sky, orange above the ridge opposite. A flash up there, where the refuge is. Foolish to ascend for those seven kilometres. Find shelter from the downpour. Too late!

The walk along a forest road was long, twelve kilometres to Roubion. Red cliffs lined the upper gorge. At my level, water had worn white rock, leaving bowls, potholes and pillars.

Almost dried-out but hobbling, the welcome sight of Roubion came at last. Excuse me. Is there a Gîte or Hotel? There is no accommodation here. You will have to go to St. Saveur. Another fifteen kilometres? No!! Road. Hitch. Hope. Little traffic — hoping.

The couple, who will be blessed for ever, had many questions. Fortunately, others had asked the same things, so my French had been tuned to answer more or less comprehensively: You have walked all alone! My friends do not have the same holidays. Some arrived in Chamonix last Saturday. Will they join you in St. Saveur? they are doing a different walk. I finish in two, or three days. Then, return to the camp-site. My friends may return during the weekend. Aren't you afraid, walking alone? No, because people in the mountains are always friendly. Why did you come so far in one day? There wasn't much choice in the storm.

Before leaving Britain, pronunciations and how to ask certain things, were checked with my sister. Even then, knowing that some of her advice would not be followed; GRammar School French and everyday speech differing considerably. For a few days, when showing agreement, or understanding, oui, was pronounced the 'hwi' of my sister's guidance. Everybody else said, 'Ah, wea. Ah wea'. I overcame the temptation to add, 'the lads!'

The profiles, copied from Martin Collin's book, had been very useful. However, there was a section after St. Dalmas which caused some pondering. He gives a full description in the book but that was in the car. Collet des Trous is not named on the map. Maison Forestier is called les Granges de la Basque.

Le Brec d'Urelle, having to put hands to rock - Wow! Then, I walked off the map. Urelle is just two kilometres away. It will finish tomorrow. Another storm coming? The town and hotel are close. Yes, Hotel, on the last night a treat is needed, having been told, "Staying in Nice is not for you".

A familiar in the dining room. He had realised I was looking for the Gîte in St. Sauveur and directed me. We shook hands and gave our names. Since we were both alone, would I joi him for dinner? François was Swiss. He too was on GR5. His companion had broken an arm, so returned home. He had not been able to buy map 26 either but had a guide (in German). Anyway, it would be an easy day. Perhaps we could walk together? Had I

SCOTTISH WINTER MEET

February 1990

DOT WOODS

Members present — Derek Price, John Foster, Barry Rogers, Dave Hall, Terry Kitchin, Mike Lomas, Wilf Charnley, Arthur Daniels, Micky Donnelly, Peter Dowker, Roy Buffey, Peter McHale, Paul Cooney, Dave Linney and Dot Woods.

Mike and Brian Fanning made a brief appearance the first weekend but soon decided that the weather wasn't going to improve and went back to Keswick. Joyce Foster-Kent joined us on Thursday night to enjoy what was to be the best day of the week, but I think everybody except John went home on Saturday pursued by torrential rain which was washing away the snow through which we had doggedly ploughed the previous few days. Even the lure of the Fort and Creagh Mhor bar had failed to keep us.

Sunday and the hut bogs failed yet again. This was the third year running that this had happened to us, so John gave us all a rebate for the inconvenience or rather non-convenience. It also meant that we spent even more time in the Hotel next door as the landlord very kindly let us use the Hotel loo's. He quickly realised his mistake and redirected us to the outside toilet at the rear of the Hotel. He was well repaid for his kindness as we sampled the 80/- and the Murphy's in great quantities each night. He remarked to John, after we had gone home, that he wished he had custom like ours for a few more months of the year. Sunday would have been a good day to stay in and watch the horizontal rain across the loch, but some of us never learn and with a forecast of gale force winds with sleet and snow on high ground, we looked for some low level alternatives. Half of the team went to Glen Crean and walked in the forest, John, Barry, Dave Hall and Terry stayed behind to help a plumber search for a blockage, but after digging up the yard and hiring a JCB to dig up the road, they didn't have any luck and we had to wait until the next day to get the local council's plans of the sewage system. The rest of us went to Fort William and did the first leg of the West Highland Way. The first day just happened to finish at Mamore's Lodge, of which we had been given such glowing reports about last year, but this year turned out to be just the opposite: no fire, reluctant service. It made the Greagh Mhor all the more of a haven for us.

Monday's forecast was pretty rotten and we sat for ages over breakfast, reading books and papers and looking at maps, waiting for the weather to break and watching the sun play hide and seek with the clouds. Cynthia Grindley called in to see us and was a bit astonished to find us still indoors waiting for the rain to start. We were duly chastened and set off on various pursuits, but sure enough the weather disintegrated at the same time. We all ended up in Fort William, and, as we were all wet by now, we went for a swim followed by a coffee in Nevis Sports.

Tuesday it snowed then snowed some more. Arthur and I went for a walk over the back way to the Fort, some of the others went up a small hill at the back of Inchree; nearly

everybody did something and we all met up at Fort William again.

Wednesday was a better day. Peter Dowker went off to Glen Etive and did Stob Coire an Albannaich. Terry and Dave Hall did Ben Sgulaire in Glen Creran. Arthur and Dave Linney went off round the Beinn Bheithir horse-shoe. The rest of us were supposed to follow them after first inspecting the church house at Ballachulish as a prospective hut for the Club. Unfortunately, a heavy squall of sleet and rain split the party. Nobody felt like trailing after the others and we all went back to the hut. Then the sun came out again, so Derek, Pete, Mick and Paul went for a run, Wilf and Roy ploughed a huge furrow up the Lost Valley and Mike Lomas and John Foster and I took advantage of a line of footprints going up like zig-zags on Gearr Aonach, which eventually led us all the way to the summit of Stob Coire Nan Lochan as well. It was pure magic as the clouds cleared and gave us the views that we all hope to see in Scotland in Winter. It was a long, long way down through deep snow, but well worth the effort.

Thursday was one of those days when the weather looked as if it might clear up and then again maybe not. Terry, Mickey and Dave Linney and Pete Dowker decided to try the skiing facilities on Aonach Mor. Dave Hall went for a bike ride along the far side of Loch Eil, Roy and Arthur stayed in to keep John and Barry company and the rest of us went out to try and force our way round the Beinn Bheithir horse-shoe. The snow really was deep, probably perfect for skiing but not much good for walking in without snow shoes. We floundered our way through the forest and out onto the open hillside, Pete McHale managed to fall in the stream on the way. It was obviously going to take too long to go up the valley where the snow was thickest, so we followed Paul up a minor ridge to the top of the hill. It was cold, windy, grey and cloudy, so we decided not to try the horse shoe but to come straight down again. The snow was really dodgy and I kept expecting it to avalanche under our combined weight, but it didn't and we got safely down to the forest again. It was a different world in the forest, a magic wonderland in black and white, a silent stillness that engulfed us one by one and only lifted its spell as we came out onto the road again.

Friday was one of those absolutely superb days that we all hope for - a brilliant blue sky with shining, snow covered peaks, sparkling diamond bright in the crystal clear air. We couldn't wait to get out and revel in this perfect day. Dave and Terry went off to Ben Starav in Glen Etive, Joyce, Mickey and Roy went skiing at Aonach Mor, John went skiing in Glen Coe, Peter Dowker, Wilf, Arthur and Barry drove to Spean Bridge to bag the Munro's on the eastern end of the Creagh Meagheagh massif and the rest of us went over to Ardgoiur on the Corran ferry. Garbh Bheinn was our objective. What a beautiful mountain it is, with its skirts in the sea and crowned by soaring crags. No crowds either as it's not a Munro. We ascended the easy south eastern ridge over a mixture of snow and rock in the hot sun and reached the summit as the shadows were beginning to turn blue. The views were everything we had hoped for, but then we realised that it was later than it should be and we had to find a way off before it got dark. Paul especially needed to catch the last ferry because he didn't have enough petrol left for the long drive round by road. Going down wasn't easy had nobody knew the way, and the gullies were full of deep snow with hidden ice pitches as Derek and Paul found out. They came back to join us as we were casting about the North Ridge and we sent Dave Linney down to have a look because he was the youngest and when he didn't come back we followed him. We joined

FELL RUNNING SECTION

JIM HARDING

This year fewer people have turned up regularly at the races designated for the Club Championship, but a lot of running has been done elsewhere with some creditable results. Joe Garbarino is Club Open Champion for the second year in succession. Well done Joe! As third eldest of our regular runners, that puts a fair number of us to shame! John Hope has to be satisfied with the Vets 40 Trophy and Leo with the Vets 50, both by default. Clare Kenny won the Ladies Trophy by just one point, in a year when only two ladies ran. Come on you femmes!

Joe is setting the races for this year's competition and will be including the Chevy Chase, a tough long race in Northumberland. I did much of the course this summer when I was on holiday there and I can recommend it. (It took over 4 hours but that was in a drought and heatwave; it's bound to be easier in rain and thigh-deep peat!). We hope to organise a minibus or similar for this event and perhaps set up a telephone tree for regular contact amongst runners to remind people of what is coming up.

The Club performed very well in the 3 Counties Tops Race which we organise on the route of the long-established Long Walk. John Hope and John Nixon were second overall and 1st Vets Team. Alan and Clare Kenny were 1st mixed team and Leo Pollard and Pete McHale 1st in the over 100's age group. (I know Leo's old, but I didn't think Pete was quite 100 yet!) Our first three teams also won between them the overall Club team prize. Perhaps we should organise some more races if we do so well in them.

Elsewhere highlights were—

A very impressive Veterans Team win in the prestigious (and difficult) Lake District Mountain Trial: John Nixon 5th, 2nd Vet., John Hope and Alan Kenny. Alan was also winner of the trophy for 1st Mountaineer for the second year running.

John Hope has won the Vets category in several races; Stanbury, Long Mynd and Saddleworth, to name only those I know of. He also won our Club fell-race, but was upstaged here by the old stager where in the "guess your time" stakes Leo was accurate to 5 seconds, to the considerable annoyance of the present writer, who was 0.9 secs further out and saw a bottle of wine he might have drunk himself titillating another's palate.

Robert Hope also had a good year, beating dad several times and winning the 3 Shires under 18's event at the age of 16.

Achille Ratti's only world champion (past or present) put our name on the international scene again with a win in the Vets Section at Sierre-Zinal, the most famous of the Swiss Mountain races, so far as British runners are concerned. Well done John Nixon!

Finally, an event which saw the best of the Club's team spirit, the Ian Hodgson Relay. We entered two teams, made up the second team with a road runner who had the misfortune to be at the hut that weekend, came 21st and 42nd overall out of 53 entries, and enjoyed

Dave on the col without mishap and then had to wade through waist or chest deep snow, depending on how tall you were. The valley floor wasn't much better, covered as it was in mud, but all good things come to an end eventually and we reached the cars just as it got too dark to see any more. Paul drove off at a great rate of knots and managed to get to the ferry. It had actually started to leave but came back for him. We got on by the skin of our teeth just as the ferry was about to pull away again. What a tremendous day it had been. All the others were just as full as us of their perfect day as well, and it needed many pints that night as we all talked over our exploits of the week.

Saturday. It was a bit of an anti-climax when we woke up to the sound of heavy rain and tyres swishing along the road outside of the hut. We could hardly see across the Loch for rain and when we could see, it was to see all the weeks accumulation of snow being washed away.

Apart from John, nobody stayed until Sunday, but after Saturday I don't think anybody was bothered. It had been a good week in spite of the conditions or maybe because of them.



Photo
DW Price

ourselves. People were there for fun and to run for the Club even if they'd done a long "A" race the day before or come up for a quiet weekend. Our youngest runner was, I think, 13, our oldest at least 55, our sexes were various. Draw your own moral.

Finally, finally . . . This has inevitably been a limited survey of the Club's running year, biased by my prejudices and ignorance. To the shy flowers who did not wish their achievements lauded, my apologies. To the winner of the first trans-antarctic fell race, which I somehow haven't heard about, ditto. To Joe Bloggs and Sue Bloggs and every other Bloggart who keeps running and keeps being last, congratulations, keep going: how else can I keep finishing next to last?

Jim Harding

A TALE OF TWO ISLANDS or three counting the base

JOHN FOSTER

The tops of most mountains are excellent viewpoints, and the Peaks of the Cuillin of Skye are among the best. Those who have yet to experience the magic of Skye, or who have always been unfortunate to find the clag right down in the glen, will have to take my word.

On a fine day there is nowhere else I would sooner be than on that ridge. Its own grandeur, as it snakes from top to top, is breathtaking, but that is far from the whole story. To the east are the Red Hills, and beyond them the mainland peaks; ridge after ridge in a sweep from Ben Alligin to Ben Nevis. To the north, beyond Portree is The Storr, and the fat, upended cigar called Old Man. Not far across the shimmering sea are the islands of the Inner Hebrides, (there was once a man called SANDAY, who was born in EIGG, lived on RHUM, and is buried in MUCK, but I CANNA believe it). Further across The Minch, in an arc of more than 90 degrees from west to north, lie the Outer Hebrides.

I have been blessed with many such days over the past thirty-odd years, the pleasure sometimes heightened by sharing it with other members. There is much to be content with, but two far peaks in particular have tantalized me for some time. To the south, across the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, rises the classic shape of Ben More, the only Munro on Mull. To the north-west, beyond MacLeod's Maidens at the entrance to Loch Bracadale, stands The Clisham on Harris, the highest point of the outer isles. Oft have they beckoned, and oft have I sworn to tread their tops someday, and look back at my beloved Cuillin.

The trigger came when the weekend meet of the Ochills M.C. (a Scottish club I joined a few years ago) was planned for Harris. A group was coming up from Stirling in a long landrover, but what was the cheapest way to get me and my van across to join them? They were using a cheap weekend ticket from Saturday to Tuesday, but I wanted to stay until

Friday to get the most for my money. Perusing the possibilities in the Caledonian MacBrayne brochure, Island Hopscotch jumped out and hit me. Three multiple tickets link different ferry crossings together at a discount on the sum of the single fares. The one which was designed for me links Oban to Craignure (Mull), Fishnish to Lochaline (on the Mòrn peninsula), Malaig to Armadale, and Uig to Tarbert (Harris) and back to Uig. So Ben More and The Clisham came within range; two birds with one ticket. The discount came to 22.5%, but there were two other prizes. Because I bought my tickets at the end of April, I paid the winter rate, which is about 20% cheaper than the peak rate from mid-May to the end of September. The ticket is valid for three months, and can be used in any order, which enabled me to make my Mull trip up to the end of July. A summer holiday at a winter price.

I joined the Landrover crew at Uig on a warm sunny afternoon, but an hour later the Hebridean Isles were nosing into a grey murk. The drizzle on the windows did not hide the rocks only yards away on either side as we slid up East Loch Tarbert on a leaden sea. In bright sunlight, Tarbert is an attractive place, but the only cheer among the dripping houses was the sight of a Hotel, which presumably had a bar. The campsite was even more bleak, on a bed of peat which sank and rose again as vehicles drove across, and facilities best described as 'Hebridean'.

Sunday was drier, and I squeezed into the Landrover for the drive up to The Clisham. The ground was sodden, and the snow on the top nearly so. With clag down to 1500ft, I was cheated of the view across sunlit seas to the Cuillin. But it was a fine summit ridge, and it will be a fine view next time. Monday was even worse, with a thick sea mist, so a drive down to Rodel, followed by a cliff top walk when it brightened. It may seem harsh, but I was glad as well as sad when the Jonahs in the Landrover sailed away at lunchtime on Tuesday taking the mank with them, and it steadily brightened as I headed north to Lewis. I played the tourist in glorious sunshine for the rest of the week along the craggy cliffs and golden beaches of the north west coast.

It was late June before the chance came to complete the rest of the Hopscotch. A dash at 16.00 on Sunday to Craignure. On landing, the rain drifted away, and the overcast sky began to break up as I meandered towards the Ross of Mull, nearly running down a hare in a cutting on the single track road. Just beyond Bunessan, the declining sun found a break in the clouds, and a golden sunset established fine weather for the week.

Over to Iona the next morning, a lovely island enhanced by the Abbey, so beautifully restored. A boat trip to Staffa, and while no music emanated from Fingal's Cave, the rhythm of the swell was exactly as portrayed in Mendelssohn's overture. A fine experience, but this was not what had brought me to Mull. A good forecast for Tuesday, so to solve my conscience as a mountaineer, the traverse of Ben More. My approach was from the south, near the head of Loch Scriain. Up the east ridge, and down the south west, but the cloud cap did not lift, so, as on The Clisham, no view of the Cuillin. Which means that Mull is another island I must visit again.

The rest of my trip around Mull, Morvern, Ardnamurchan and Morar was pure tourism in wonderful weather, and I'll just mention one incident. Driving east from Tobermory to the ferry at Fishnish Bay, an otter nonchalantly walked across the road just a few yards in front of the van and disappeared into the bracken. Animals can usually cope with traffic on

single track roads, but when widened and straightened, the speed is beyond their ability to judge. About three years ago, I found an adult otter with its head crushed at the side of the road, just around the corner from mycroft.

Now this tale will not rank high in the annals of mountaineering, but I hope to show what bargains are available. My five ferry trips cost £69.10, for me and the van. An Easter to May day holiday on part of a winter Hopscotch means a cheap summer holiday up to three months later, and all at the best time of year.

Go to it.

A.R.C.C.'s ALPINE MEET 1990

DOT WOODS REPORTING

"Going to the right place at the right time with the right people is all that really matters. What one does is purely incidental".

Colin Kirkus to Alf Bridges on the summit of Sgurr Alisdair.

This just about sums up our holiday in the Alps this year. Definitely the right place to be, it must have been the right time because the weather was almost perfect and the company was great. That we also happened to complete the Tour de Mont Blanc and then get to the top as well was purely coincidental, it would have been a good holiday whatever we had done.

There were nine of us assembled at the Victoria Coach Station by late morning on Friday 10th August, not without incident of course, but we all arrived in time to catch the coach at midday for Chamonix and Mont Blanc. We managed to get seats close together on the coach so that we could share sweets, pop, biscuits, papers and snores! The ferry crossing was pleasant, sunny, warm and fast. The bar was the favourite place to be, closely followed by the duty free shop. Then it was heads down for the rest of the journey to Chamonix. The two drivers that we had were extremely voluble and carried gin and tonics. I also felt I was quite fluent as well and went to join in the conversation, the only trouble was that the driver felt obliged to look at me when I was speaking, which didn't go down too well with the rest of the passengers. Sleep wasn't very easy to come by, but somehow it was suddenly dawn and we were almost there.

Chamonix was grey and damp when we arrived and the Blanc looked huge and uninviting. It was still early and the town hadn't woken up yet. We shouldered our ungainly rucksacks and set off to find the campsite. Arthur wanted to set off straight away on the Tour but he was out-voted by the rest of us. It was understandable really, as he and Neil (Arthur's nephew) had only one week's holiday and the rest of us had two. We staggered off down the road after Barry, who reckoned he knew where the campsite was. We did eventually find one, but it was full. Then Derek remembered the postcard he'd had from Anne Wallace, telling us where her car was, so's we could leave some of our spare

gear in it. Anne was doing the G.R.5 and we would see her later next week. The campsite wasn't too far away and we were soon putting up tents and making brews. Judging by the performance, some of us definitely needed practice at camping, but by the time we got back to this spot, we were all fairly expert.

The sun came out, the clouds disappeared and it was glorious. Arthur couldn't believe it and was totally enthralled by it all. The mighty Blanc, the glaciers, Midi, Aiguilles, the Dru, Brevant, forests, flowers and people. He was overwhelmed by it all and I think he wanted to stay for ever. We still had some shopping to do, beer to buy; "Cham" to explore and we visited Snell's where there was a note from Anne and also one from Jean who was to join us on the trip. Jean is a friend of Mike Quinn and Jayne and had asked if she could come along as well. We bumped into Harry Wiggins and Nina in the town and arranged to leave some of our gear with them as well. Then it was back to the campsite to sunbathe and drink beer and sort out the gear for the umpteenth time. Then the sun went down and the mountains went from white to pink, the stars came out brilliant as diamonds, we drank some wine and it was time to go to sleep.

Tour — Day One

It was pretty chaotic as we all tried to make the gear we thought we would need for the next few days go into our rucksacks. Barry and I sat back a bit smugly and watched as we "knew what to do", but in the end we nearly missed the bus to Les Houches (our starting point) and my sack was most uncomfortable for the rest of the day. Les Houches, that was it, the start of the Tour for us. It was a bit like the start of the Grand National, as everybody set off up this steep hill, jockeying for position as if we had only two days to do the walk in and not two weeks. Barry stayed with me for a while, then he too left me and I was on my own. Luckily, I had made sure that I had my own guide book and map and would maybe see the others at some later date. However, they did wait for me but promptly left me again on the next stage. They were stopped eventually by the Glacier de Bionassay and we had lunch whilst figuring out what to do next. We crossed the glacier but because we couldn't agree which would be the best way, we went ten different ways but did all meet again at the Col de Tricot, before descending to the Chalets de Miage for a welcome beer and lemonade. Our first camp was to be at Les Contamines, but we did a long, unintentional detour before reaching it and we managed to lose Pete McHale and Barry on the way, or rather, they lost us. They had run ahead to make sure they got to the supermarket before it closed so that we could all have a drink of beer, but they hitched a ride and missed the fork in the road which led to the campsite. They got the beer alright and then sat drinking it whilst they waited for us to turn up. We of course had found the campsite by this time and were wondering where the hell they had got to. Pete then decided to look for us and ran back down the road as far as St. Gervais, realised that he had missed the road and that we would be down, so he ran back to join Barry. Barry was well-oiled by this time, but he had looked at the map and seen where we might be. They hid the rest of the beer in the undergrowth at the rear of the carpark and went off in search of us, or a place to camp till morning. It was dark by now and I had recovered enough to look for them. Arthur was going to come with me, but just as we were setting off, I heard Pete's voice. Barry insisted on going back for the remaining beer, taking Arthur with him. Pete was pretty shattered and went for a meal in the pub. I put both of their tents up and

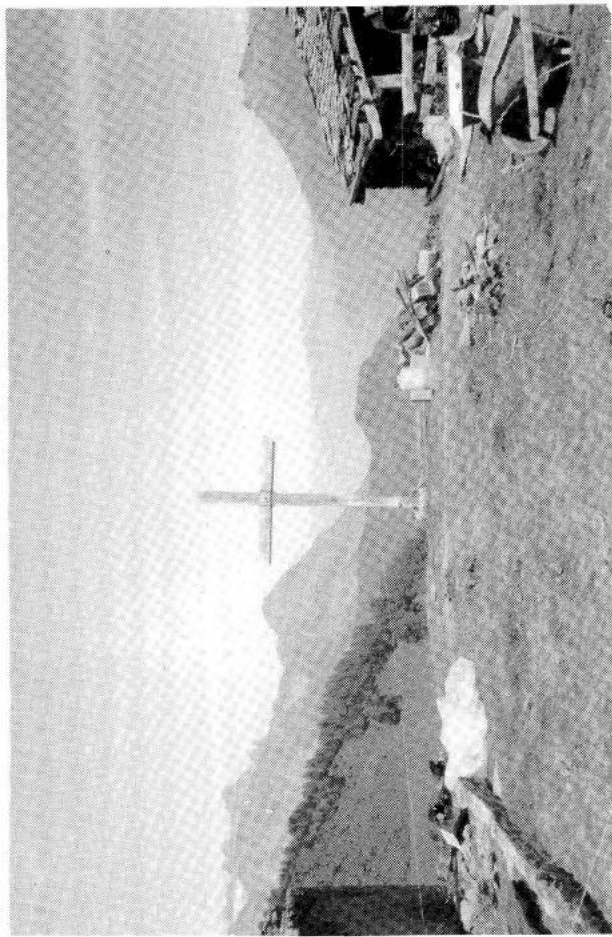
when Barry and Arthur came back we sat around having a drink. We were all too tired to appreciate this by now, but after all the effort that had gone into it, we felt obliged to. When they told the story it was even worse. The car they had a lift in wasn't going their way, but the guy took them anyway, and just as they got out of the car, another car ran into the back of it and the door came off in Barry's hand. The driver didn't seem to be bothered by all this, which is just as well. We hoped that next day we would do better at navigation and of course, we would all stick together.

Day Two

This was pretty tame in comparison. There was a slight difference of opinion as to which way we should go at the first fork in the road, but we resolved that by splitting into two groups for a mile or so. We gathered together again at the church de Notre Dame du Gorge before the first ascent of the day. It was hot and sunny as we headed up the Col de Bonhomme, but then the weather began to change and big storm clouds began to gather and it got windy and sultry. We were hoping to camp at the Col de Croix de Bonhomme and we just made it at the same time as the rain and the start of one big thunderstorm. We got the tents up and dived into them. Jean didn't bother at all, hers was strictly a sunny weather type tent and she quickly decided that the refuge was the best place to be. The others joined her shortly afterwards but only for the meal and vino. Barry and I stuck out the storm but we did get rather wet and frightened, especially when the thunder and lightning came at the same time, and I was trying to dig a drainage trench to try and divert the water that was running under the tent. Barry jumped a mile and I squealed. He told me to get lower, but I couldn't get any lower than I was already. We joined the others eventually when the rain stopped and there was a spectacular threatening sunset. They were all well immune to anything that the weather could throw at them by now.. This refuge was really spectacular and I wish I had bought a postcard of the view.

Day Three

It was grey, but luckily not wet. Sometime during the night Pete Durkin's sleeping bag had burst (he was sharing with Derek at the time because his own tent had been washed out in the storm) and both he and Derek emerged like half plucked chickens. Today we would be walking over the Col de la Seigne into Italy. We were keeping together a lot better, on the downhill sections at least. We had lunch in France and then set off up the long pull over into Italy. Somebody here decided that the Chairman was going too well and put a dirty great rock in his sack which Derek didn't find until the next camp site. He was none too pleased and nobody dare own up to this deed. It began to rain as we started up the Col, Mike waited for me on the top and pointed out the direction the others had gone and then he too was swallowed up by the mist. It was bitterly cold and I had to put all my gear on. The others waited below the cloud for the stragglers before we commenced to walk along this superb valley. The clouds began to lift and by the time we reached the Elizabetta refuge the sun was beginning to shine. The mountain dominating the view was the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey. Totally impressive, everybody took photographs. We had intended to stop here but as it was still early we carried on down the valley towards Courmeyer. It was hot in the sun and the road was busy with cars and



people. I thought the road would never end but we found a campsite that was prepared to take us, though we had to camp on the carpark, and it wasn't the best of spots. The storm came back again but it wasn't half as frightening here in the valley as it had been on the ridge.

Day Four

It was lovely to wake up to blue skies and the sunshine again. We made the universal decision to take the chair-lift up to the ridge behind the campsite and walk down into Courmeyer from there. We were all glad that we had made the right choice as the views were tremendous from the top of Mont Chetif, where the chair-lift had deposited us. We could see all the way back to the Col we had crossed yesterday; the huge glaciers that descended from the summit of Mont Blanc, the soaring Aiguilles and the Blanc itself. We had a lazy, short day planned and wanted to spend some time in Courmeyer. Pete McHale proved himself to be useful here as he spoke reasonable Italian and he was in great demand as an interpreter. We eventually dragged ourselves away from the fleshpots of the town and back on route for our next campsite. As we passed through La Saxxe, we were engulfed by swarms of people all staring at the crag. It was the guides festival and they were putting on a climbing exhibition. Barry and Pete being the first two past the crag, received a free glass of wine, but when they saw the rest of us they quickly put it away again. We stopped for a little while to watch but nothing seemed to be happening so we carried on up the Val Ferret to our next campsite. It was hot, noisy, full of Italian families, but as this was where all the others had stopped, we stopped as well. We did find a good spot to camp, away from the maddening crowds and it was idyllic. The views were really stupendous. I'm sorry to go so much about the views but they really were something else. The campsite was called Grand Jorasses and the views of the South Face were really spectacular. It was Arthur and Neil's last night with us, tomorrow they were

going to take the chair-lift back over the Valley Blanche to the Midi and then down to Chamonix. We celebrated or commiserated with them over a few bottles of wine. The sunset was glorious and the others decided to make a night of it. We heard them much, much later coming back from the bar, singing and shouting, and waited for the fights to start, but apparently the Italians were all very friendly and equally intoxicated. Derek even managed to demolish his tent and had to share with Peter again.

Day Five

Barry got up early to take some photo's of the sunrise on the mountains. It was beautiful, the sky was blue and when the sun finally reached us, it was hot. There were one or two thick heads amongst the others, but nothing drastic. Pete McHale had a spare tent pole for Derek, none of us could believe that he had carried a spare pole with him, but he had, which proves something but I'm not sure what. It was sad parting from Arthur and Neil, but we had had a good time and they were quite content and looking forward to their trip over the Vallee Blanche. We were heading for the Col de Ferret and Switzerland. It was hot work but again the views compensated for the effort involved. Now that we had lost Arthur and Neil, Pete and Derek were the front runners with Paul and Jean close seconds, Barry and Mike Lomas were now in third place and me and Peter Durkin tried to see who could be last. After the superb views of Italy, the view down the Swiss Val Ferret looked quite boring, but I was probably too tired to appreciate it. It had been a super walk up the Italian side, but we were now faced with a long, long descent to our next campsite. No wild camping allowed in Switzerland, so we had to keep slogging on till we eventually arrived at a massive campsite. It did have good facilities and the ground was flat, but after saying that, that was it. Derek said we should try to get an early start the next morning so that we could have a good rest at Champex.

It was an awful grey wet morning and we couldn't see the tops of the trees, never mind the mountains. Pete McHale was up early, bouncing around, but the rest of us were not so enthusiastic. However, by ten, the others were getting restless and decided to brave the elements and set off in the clag for our next campsite at Champex. I flatly refused to go and Barry had to stay as well. It was a good decision as the weather cleared after midday and the sun came out, so we packed up and followed the others. The path alongside the river was really nice, through the forest at first, then below the Amoné Slabs with people already climbing there. Along the road for a little way, where the others had stopped for lunch, then back up the hill again and into the trees. We made it into Champex just before the shops shut and spent our last few francs. We found the campsite where the others were already esconced. It was small and full but we managed to hide our tent amongst theirs. Derek and the rest had decided to go round by the way of the Bovine Alp to the Col de Forclaz on the next day, but after looking at the guide book and map, I wanted to go over the Fenetre de Arpette, because it went back into the mountains again and over a fairly high pass. We would make for the Col de Balme and hope to meet up with the others there.

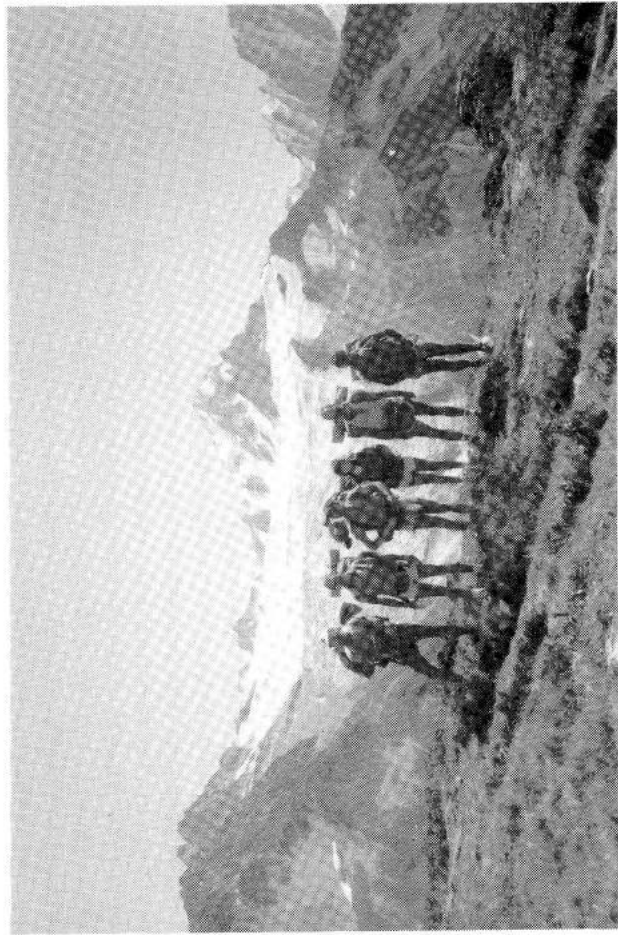
Next morning was lovely and sunny again. We were up early to avoid the guardian and the first away this time. We were both going well today, it must have been the long lie-in yesterday morning. We met an English family walking up to the pass and the young boy walked with us for a while. We caught up with a French party who had been on the

campsite, young kids on an adventure holiday and some of them were on the Col with thirty or forty people who had walked up from the other side. We rushed up the south ridge for a short distance till we were out of sight and sound of everybody. We were looking across the Trient glacier and onto the back of Le Tour; it was really brilliant. Barry pointed out where he had been the year before with our Sue and Sydney De Cruz and John Baybrook. We sunbathed for a couple of hours before descending to the valley floor.

Because we had told others that we would be camping at the Col de Balme, we had a bite to eat and a brew and began to walk up to the Col. I had misread the guide book and said it was only two hours up but turned out to be three. There was a cold wind blowing and no sign of the others. We camped above the ski station and managed to get the tent up and have our meal before the sun went down. It was worth all the trouble just to see the sunset on the Blanc and the Verte, it was doubly worth it when we got an equally incredible sunrise next morning.

We lazed around waiting for the others to arrive but when it got to one, we decided to set off. We were hoping to camp across the Le Lac Blanc, and as the views got better and better, I still can't make up my mind which valley was the most spectacular. It was hard work walking up to the Lac from the Col de Montets, but now we were in the shade we couldn't blame the sun. The iron ladder was fun but the Lac itself was disappointing. There was a crane and a new building going on, the original hut had blown down in a gale. It was cold and windy but we managed to find a good camping spot with views across the valley and the whole panorama of the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Blanc.

I sat outside in my sleeping bag and cag to watch the sunset, and I would not have changed places with anyone for anything. The sunrise was just as good with even better views than yesterday, something I didn't think was possible.



I felt a little bit sad to be packing up as this was the last day out on the Tour. Tonight we would be down on a campsite in Chamonix, with hundreds of other people. We walked along to the Index just to keep up that much higher for a little longer and then we went down to Chamonix, and the crowds. The others arrived an hour or so before us and had already got stuck into the beer that Anne Wallace had provided - we quickly joined them. They had stayed the first night, after Barry and I had left them, at the Col de Forclaz. The next day they had been at the Col de Balme about two hours before I had expected them, walked over the Aiguilles de Poinsettes to the Col de Montets and then gone down the valley into Argentiere. They had a good night there with a superb meal at Luigi's. The next day they had walked back up to join the TMB path and along to La Flegere before descending to Chamonix. Mike Lomas and Jean hadn't had enough as they carried on to the Brevent and then descended.

It had been a tremendous outing for all of us, and I suppose it would have been nice just to relax in the sun for the next few days, but the Blanc was beckoning and we were unable to resist the lure.

Dot Woods

THE LONG WALK 1990

ANON

This year's long walk was based at Bishopscote, and catered for both walkers and runners using two routes. Both converged at Buckbarrow, thus allowing what, for many, would be a final visit to the Wasdale hut.

We awoke on the day of the walk to a perfect morning of sunshine and blue skies. By the time the "runner" made it to the kitchen for breakfast, the walkers were long gone (although it was still only 7 a.m.). Slowly the runners began to emerge from the hut in small groups and made their way down the road to Stool End Farm, and on up to Bowfell. For once the fells were deserted save for ARCC members strung out along the length of the Band. Eventually the summit of Bowfell was reached and what a marvellous sight greeted us - a magnificent cloud inversion; all the valleys were hidden by a sea of cloud. However, while this cloud provided a wonderful spectacle for the runners, it was viewed somewhat differently by the walkers. Their route had taken them over Pike of Blisco to the start of the Crinkles and then they had to descend Adam-a-Cove to Lincove Beck. In doing so they had to descend into the cloud, resulting in many people taking in an extra valley (Eskdale) on their intended route to Buckbarrow.

Fortunately, the runners did not have this problem as their route stayed above the cloud, although for some the heat was becoming a problem. We had been told that there might be drinks available at Sty Head, however, there was no-one there - perhaps we had misunderstood and the drinks were at Black Sail. Alas, no, the top of the pass was deserted. It was still very hot as we continued over Pillar and up towards Scoat Fell - and then familiar faces came towards us bearing much needed drink. These were Mike Quinn, Mike Lomas and Jane Nicholson who provided excellent refreshment which was much appreciated. Thus fortified, we pressed on over Haycock and the stiff pull up to the summit of Seatalan. From here it was downhill all the way to Buckbarrow.

We sat outside the hut in the sunshine (apart from those who found sunshine too much and sprawled in a tent that had been provided by the helpers). We were supplied with vast quantities of drinks, soup, sandwiches and cake by an excellent team of helpers, including Roy and Dorothy Buffey, Chris Benjamin, Joyce Foster and Frank Whittle.

Eventually, it was time to leave Buckbarrow and make our way to the Screes (not the Pub). However, the temptation had proved too much for some, who had decided to linger a little longer, and so our party was now somewhat smaller. On such a hot day it was good to get this climb behind us and then descend to Burmooor Tarn. The haul up to and over Quarry Rigg Man was not too pleasant, but soon we had descended to the River Esk and were making our way to Lincove Beck. From here the climb up into Adam-a-Cove proved to be the hardest of the day. To the start of the Crinkles and down to Red Tarn was fairly easy, then we had only one more climb up to the summit of Pike of Blisco, down to

the cattle-grid on the Blea Tam road, and through the fields to Side House Farm. On the way we caught up with our Chairman shuffling along the path and together we arrived back at the hut.

This year, with the weather being so hot, tables had been set up outside the hut and so we sat in the carpark area drinking our wine and eating the first rate three course dinner prepared by Margaret Price, Kath Hope et al.

So ended another memorable long walk: glorious weather, good company and above all, excellent support from all the helpers, without whom there would be no long walk.

See you all next year.

Anon.

GENERAL NEWS

SAUNDERS LAKELAND MOUNTAIN MARATHON : 7/8th July 1990

A report by Dave Hugill

Peter Dowker and Dave Hugill won the veterans over 40 prize in the Kirkfell 2 Class, after a 200+ team field was reduced to 12 finishing teams on the second day. Most of the retirements took place on Day 1 due to adverse weather conditions. The overnight camp was at the northern base of Helm Crag and was still fairly full, despite the vast numbers missing.

A FEW weeks ago, I received a letter from Fr. Dermot Mills, a member for some years, and who is now living in South Africa. I have taken the liberty of printing an extract from his letter.

Dermot writes: 'For the past five years I have been in a parish in Soweto - doing normal parish work in abnormal conditions. These eight years in South Africa have been the most fulfilling and enriching of my life. They have also been the most difficult. I find it a deeply moving experience to share with people their lives - it is a privilege, a humbling privilege, to be allowed to do so'.

TOM BARON has retired as warden of Dunmail. Tom and his wife Rita were guests of the Club at the Annual Dinner. Our President thanked them for their services and presented to them a painting of Grasmere and Dunmail Raise. We wish them both every happiness in the future.

BECKSTONES

The keyholder is Mrs Brakewell of Logan Beck Farm, Ulpha. On approaching the Duddon Bridge from Broughton in Furness, the first signpost will point you right for Ulpha, cross the bridge and turn immediate right, (signposted Corney Fell). Proceed up the road for about a mile and as you clear the forest you cross a cattlegrid, turn right in 200 metres and the first building on the left is Beckstones, (GR 183903). Over the bridge and about 113.5 metres up the road is the Logan Beck Farm. Mrs Brakewell has requested that members arriving after 11 p.m, ring her, and she will leave the key behind the door of the outhouse with the large rectangular oil tank outside it. We ask members not to abuse this system and remind them that they must carry membership cards with them. If there are more than 8 in a party, contact Frank Whittle. Please note the two following telephone numbers:

Mrs Brakewell — Broughton-in-Furness (0229) 716248

Frank Whittle (Warden) — (09406) 265 (if further information is required).

LIFE MEMBERS

Advanced notice that all Life Members will be issued with a new card in the next few months. It would greatly assist the Subscription Secretary if they would send in a passport photograph with name and address on the back, PLUS a SEA, as soon as possible.

BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The new system of BMC membership includes a third party liability insurance and will cover all Full Members. Life Members are asked to write to the Subscription Secretary informing him on their desire to be included in the insurance scheme. We are aware that many of these members were, let us say, in the twilight of their lives when they became Life Members, and this is as much an exercise to see if they are 'still with us', as it is to award insurance cover. Individual names and addresses of the members qualifying for the insurance will have to be sent to the BMC, those objecting to this must inform us as soon as possible.

ALPINE TRIP 1991

After the tremendous success of the 1990 Alpine adventure, we have been encouraged to plan a similar visit this year. From the 3rd to the 25th August we invite as many members as possible to use Chamonix as a base for climbing and walking. Details of the

campsite we will use is to be included in the next Newsletter. There is already a hard core of members going and we hope to increase the numbers. There will be no planned route: members will simply 'do their own thing'.

GOLDEN JUBILEE 1992

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, we hope to climb all the ascents achieved by Monsignor Achille Ratti. We also want to celebrate in other ways; with meets, functions, etc. We will be making full use of the media and will certainly mark the occasion with a Mass. Christine Benjamin is the co-ordinator of all events and she needs support. Chris will be forming a Jubilee Committee and we are looking for people to join her, not only with ideas, but with expertise and knowledge of planning, the media etc., etc. The ARCC has a lot to be proud of and we hope that the members will lend their support.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS FOR 1991

- February 23rd to March 3rd.....**WINTER MEET** at the MacIntyre Hut, Ballachulish
- March 2/3rd.....**WORKING WEEKEND** at Bishop's Scale
- April 6/7th.....**WORKING WEEKEND** at Tyn Twr
- May 12/14th.....**ANNUAL LONG WALK** from Bishop's Scale
- June 29th.....**THREE COUNTIES TOPS RACE**
- July 6/7th.....**JUNIOR MEET**, Bishop's Scale
- August 3rd - 25th.....**ALPINE MEET** in Chamonix
- September 15th.....**CLUB FELL RACE**
- September 21/22nd.....**JUNIOR MEET**, Bishop's Scale
- October 5th.....**BISHOP'S SPONSORED WALK**
- October 12th.....**LANGDALE FELL RACE**
- November 2/3rd.....**WORKING WEEK END** at Tyn Twr
- November 9th.....**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
- November 16th.....**CLUB DINNER**
- November 30 - December 1st.....**JUNIOR MEET** from Bishop's Scale (Potholing)

Members will be notified of any amendments and given further details in the Newsletters

**ACHILLE RATTI
FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIP**

1990—91

EVENT	DISTANCE	DATE
Winter Hill	.....Medium	.....25th November
Wansfell	.....Short	.....27th December
Ilkley Moor	.....Short	.....Late February
Calder Valley	.....Long	.....Early March
Kentmere	.....Medium	.....1st Week April
3 Peaks	.....Long	.....Last Week April
Coniston	.....Medium	.....Early May
Fairfield	.....Medium	.....Late May
Chevy Chase	.....Long	.....22nd June
Bootle Black Coombe	.....Short	.....Mid July
Gategill	.....Short	.....Early August
Eston Nab	.....Medium	.....Late August
3 Shires	.....Long	.....Mid September
Club Run	.....Short	.....Same Weekend
Langdale	.....Long	.....2nd Week October

EXACT DATES ARE OBTAINABLE FROM THE F.R.A. FIXTURES BOOK

15 Fixtures — 5 Long — 5 Medium — 5 Short

IF EXTRA SHORT RUN NEEDED — INCLUDE THRIEVEY PIKE
 Anyone doing Chevy Chase (over one hours drive north of Newcastle)
 may possibly take advantage of an overnight stay at the home of
 JOE GARBARINO

Please contact in advance