

Achille Ratti Climbing Club



JOURNAL -1991

ACHILLE RATTI JOURNAL

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ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

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INTRODUCTION - Derek Price

Quote from the 1990 journal. "It will probably take a little more time before individuals.....develop the habit of recording their achievements and submit them for publication in the journal". Little did I know I right I was in making that comment.Gathering articles for the 1991 journal has been hard work, to say the least, and, as is usually the case, there has been a flood of articles at the last minute. However, this journal contains some excellent reports and I am sincerely grateful to those members who have kindly donated them.

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club held on Saturday 9th November 1991 at the Sacred Heart Community Centre in Preston

41 Members were in attendance at the meeting.

APOLOGIES;

Were received from Monsignor Slattery, Frank Whittle and Dot Wood.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING were read, approved and signed by the Chairman; there were no matters arising.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT;

Once again the Club has continued to progress and follow the pattern of the previous twelve months by investing in the properties we own, and this is an on-going process. Without wishing to duplicate the reports of the Hut Wardens a brief outline of some of the developments already carried out and those in the pipeline, would not go amiss.

Bishop's Scale. External decorating and Rent-a-Kill spraying completed. In the future, improvements to fulfill fire regulations, e.g. fire doors smoke detectors, etc., new cookers, upgrading of main kitchen and lounge. Upgrading of family quarters, are on the drawing board..

Tyn Twr. New wooden bunks fitted. Firedoors in the kitchen area. Much more needs to be done, not only on maintenance but also on necessary improvements such as a new shower for the ladies, re-fitting the lounge with sensible furniture and possibly re-designing the seating in the kitchen, (even a kitchen extension).

Dunmail. The hut needs a lot of time and money spending on it, much of it beyond the expertise of the Warden and his Committee. Because of this, and the fact that the Club owns a lot of valuable property, a Maintenance and Repairs Committee has been formed. This small group of people are all professionals in the building and construction industry and they are also members of the ARCC. The Committee to be Chaired by the Vice-Chairman, will advise the M/C on maintenance, repair work and improvements when requested to do so by a Hut Warden. Getting back to Dunmail, the initial steps will be to install a generator for electric lighting and plug sockets. Other improvements will follow.

Beckstones. Whilst the hut scored 10/10 by most users, member users probably do not mount to more than 30 or so. It is a different kind of area with many interesting walks close to the hut and is not far from the high mountains and rock faces. I encourage members to take time to explore this part of Lakeland.

Scotland. Our efforts to lease the old presbytery of St.Mun's Church, Ballchulish were not successful. No reasons were given by the Bishop of Argyll and the Islands or by the Parish Priest.

Low Thistleton. Plans have been submitted to the Lake District Special Planning Board and should go before the Committee in December, and, if our application is successful, we will go back to the membership for their response, having investigated the rent agreement on offer, building costs and forward costing. May I remind members that two years ago we were mandated to seek property in the West to replace Buckbarrow. The only property available is Low Thistleton and until we know the results of the planning application we cannot make further decisions. I say this because there appears to have been a certain amount of criticism about the site and its position from people who have not yet seen it. The M/C has been accused of going for Low Thistleton at all costs. I appeal to members not to listen to idle gossip round the huts, if you have anything to say, put it in writing to the Secretary and it will be discussed by the M/C.

Club Activities. As usual the first event after the AGM was the Club Dinner and, as usual, another great success. Early March saw the Scottish meet, next the Old Counties Tops race, the Junior meet from Tyn Twr and a second one from Bishop's Scale, the new CAFOD race and the Bishop's Walk. I suppose the highlight of the year has to be the Chamonix meet, when almost 40 members enjoyed exploring the high peaks in the company of fellow members. The venue of next years Alpine meet is yet to be decided and I envisage even greater numbers. I think what is impressive about the Club, is the way members pull together to support our charitable activities; as an example, 56 members turned up to support the Bishop's Walk. I doubt if many similar organisations can boast this camaraderie.

Club Librarian. Paul Cooney has kindly volunteered to take over this role and would appreciate book donations from members.

1991 Journal. In spite of appeals and reminders articles are very slow in coming for the next journal. I have a lot of promises but nothing in writing. Please get your articles to me as soon as possible and don't forget to include photographs.

Management Committee. Once again the M/C has pulled together to look after the affairs of the Club and I am grateful for their efforts and support. Thankfully and after umpteen reminders the new membership cards, with photo, are now in operation. Life members have also been requested to provide photographs for their new cards. The other administrative improvement that we are planning is to have all full member subscriptions payable by Direct Debit. It will probably take a couple of years to see it through but it will be beneficial to the Club.

The Future. In the next two or three years, whether we are successful with Low Thistleton or not, it is essential that we consolidate our existing properties. As mentioned earlier, all the huts are in need of repairs and improvements. Some members will probably argue that climbing huts only need the bare necessities, fortunately, most members would disagree with this opinion, as would the Fire Prevention Officers and the Environmental Health Officers. We live in the 1990's and must respect the codes of hygiene and safety expected and desired by our members. On the activities side, I hope to introduce climbing meets again next year to encourage more people to get on the rock. Details of all events will be published in the next journal.

Golden Jubilee -1992. In spite of several appeals only two people have volunteered their services for assisting in planning events for next year. We will have a programme of activities but is it fair that the same people have always to carry the load whilst others sit back and wait for things to happen? Please help if you can.

Finally, may I publicly thank all the members of the M/C for their efforts in the last twelve months and also all those other members who turn up to assist at the various events throughout the year. Thankyou.

Arising out of the Chairman's report, Dave Ogden queried the extent to which money had actually been spent during the last 12 months upon the Club huts, drawing attention to the figure of £2573.62 mentioned in the receipt and payment of accounts prepared by the Treasurer, as having been spent on "major work". The Chairman commented that various works of repair and improvement were contemplated, as mentioned in his report.

John Foster argued that it would lead to unnecessary expenditure if we were to follow the recommendations of fire prevention officers, whose recommendations and/or requirements would be unduly taxing upon the Club's finances. This was not the view shared by the Chairman and other members of the Management Committee who responded in terms that whilst we would not lavishly follow their recommendations without question and would, for example, take account of the views of the newly formed Maintenance and Repairs Committee, it would be inappropriate simply to ignore the recommendations of fire officers; this is particularly the case in view of the fact that our huts are often in use by children and by handicapped people. Bernard Hayes echoed the views expressed by John Foster to the extent that he commented that, in his experience, the fire officers could vary wildly in the recommendations which they put forward.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the insurance cover available as a result of BMC membership was one of the advantages put forward at the last AGM, in support of the argument for BMC membership, the Secretary has obtained a copy of the policy and investigated the extent of its cover. His concern had been that since the cover provided by the Policy was stated to relate to "mountaineering activities", the insurance company might reject a claim unless it fell strictly within that description and he had been in correspondence with the BMC and with the relevant brokers. He quoted from a BMC letter dated 21st May 1991, from the BMC, which confirmed that the brokers had given the following assurances: all members of the Club are covered against the claims of negligence brought by fellow club members, committee members or the general public. This cover extends to fell running or any other mountaineering-related activity organised by the Club. The general public category includes any self-employed contractors. Since this letter had begged the question as to what would be regarded as "mountaineering-related activity" the Secretary had been in

contact with the brokers, quoting the example of the Bishop's Walk as an example of the type of activity engaged in by the Club. An assurance had been received that such events would be covered by the policy which would extend to all "outward bound" type activities such as climbing, running walking, abseiling.

The Secretary commented upon the concern which had been expressed at the last AGM and during the Management Committees meetings about the need to recruit new members and appealed to those present to assist with ideas or comments upon how to "sell" the club and its activities. The possibility of attempting to improve the poster was mentioned by way of example.

The Secretary also mentioned that, as a relatively new member of the Club, he had found the limited archived material available to him to be very interesting, but that whilst some of it was well documented and described, much of it was not. Members were invited to put forward material which they thought might be of general interest to the Club's members and the Secretary also invited members to assist by, for example, helping to identify the events and personalities on certain of the photographs.

By way of post script, the Secretary also commented upon what he considered to be the very good impression created, in the eyes of outside participants and members of other clubs, by the hospitality shown at fell running events held by the Club; the Old Counties Tops race and the Cafod race were mentioned.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer circulated a financial statement and accounts for the year ended 30th September 1991. He then went on to comment upon the accounts submitted. The surplus of only £2597.00 is disappointing after such a good result (in the order of £20,000,) in 1989/90. This represents only 8.1% of overall receipts as compared with 50.76% of receipts for 1989/90.

Running costs are up by some £10,000 for 90/91. The following significant features were also noted:

Subscriptions are down by over £2000 (a reduction of some 23%).

Hut fees are down by over £4000 (a reduction of 21%).

Bank interest is up by £1200 (an increase of 39%).

Overall turnover is down by £7800 (a reduction of 19.5%)

Rates have increased considerably because of the impact of rating revaluation and NNDR as well as the cost of rates on Beckstones. Transitional reliefs still reduce the rate level but it is impossible to predict when these will be withdrawn.

The Treasurer did not recommend any increase in hut fees, notwithstanding the suggestion at last year's meeting that these should increase in line with inflation, as hut fee income is already down on the previous year. (The Treasurer commented upon his view that the recent results do not favour the sort of capital investment which would be involved in a project such as

Low Thistleton Barn).

Clearly, the Club needs to increase its membership in order to reverse the trend.

A question was raised as to whether the payment of annual subscriptions by direct debit would become mandatory. The Management Committee confirmed that whilst payment by direct debit would be strongly recommended, and would clearly reduce the workload of the Membership Secretary and improve the Club's cash flow, it would not be a condition of membership, except for new members.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership ratio at present is 70% catholic to 30% non-catholic. The total current membership is 621 comprising:

Graduates	25
Full members	467
Life members	129

The trend in membership in recent years as been as follows:

1984/85	546
85/86	579
86/87	615
87/88	632
88/89	668
89/90	677
90/91	621

The Membership Secretary had analysed the decline in membership during the last 12 months. The analysis was as follows:

18 graduate members had not applied for full membership.
2 members had gone abroad.
4 members had died.

13 members were children of existing members and the Membership Secretary commented that the pattern appeared to be that parents had decided to draw the line upon continued payment of membership fees which had then not been taken up by the children.

There was no readily apparent explanation of why the remaining 19 members had not renewed their membership. 10 had resigned within 3 years of joining the club

HUT WARDEN'S REPORT

BECKSTONES

In the absence of Frank Whittle (absent through illness) the Chairman simply confirmed that the hut had made £1151 and was considered to be operating satisfactorily.

BISHOP'S SCALE

Alan Kenny confirmed that the hut was well used with members providing 75% of income. He gave a short report on the works carried out upon the hut which have included replacement of window frames, re-pointing and installation of new doors in accordance with recommendations of the fire authorities. Cookers are to be replaced. There was a disappointing level of attendance at the working weekend: only three people attended.

DUNMAIL

No report was available in Rod Grimshaw's absence.

TYN TWR

Anne Wallace reported upon the replacement of various items of crockery and hut equipment, including vacuum cleaner and chairs.

All bunkbeds had been replaced and the fire doors had been fitted.

Although simple drilling and tests had been carried out, local opinion is that because of unfavourable results, the proposed Bethesda by-pass is likely to take a route well away from the hut.

Anne stressed the importance of completing the hut register properly.

Proposed work on the hut will include re-pointing and water proofing of the west gable wall, the recovering of the stairs and work on the showers.

A recent working weekend was well attended with a considerable amount of work being done.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The first item was the election of new officers:

Derek Price had been proposed as Chairman for a further term of three years by Clare and Alan Kenny.

Micheal Pooler had been proposed as Vice-Chairman for a further term of three years by Tony McHale and John Hope.

Dorothy Wood had been proposed as ordinary member for a further term of three years by Joyce Foster-Kent and Arthur Daniels.

All appointments were accepted by the meeting.

Dorothy Wood and Margaret Price had by letter dated 18th October proposed a change in venue of the AGM from Preston to the Langdale Valley to coincide in time and date with the Annual Dinner of the Club. Margaret Price spoke in favour of the

proposal. Before this proposal was considered by those present, the Secretary pointed out that the proposal was quite as consistent with the present rules of the Club as the existing arrangement for the meeting to be held in Preston, since rule 10i provides that the AGM will be held in the Autumn of each year on a date to be fixed by the Management Committee and does not specify a required venue. David Ogden challenged the right of the proposers to raise the proposal, suggesting that notice ought to be given to every member. However, since no rule change was being proposed, a vote was taken after discussion of the proposal. It was stressed that the result of the vote would not bind the Management Committee in their future decision as to the venue of the AGM but would be some indication of the views of the members. Of those present, 19 voted for the proposal and 18 against, with four abstentions.

As there was no further business, the meeting then closed after a vote of thanks had been put forward by Barry Ayre on behalf of the membership to the Management Committee for their efforts during the year.

GENERAL NEWS

Club 'T' Shirts, Sweat Shirts, Running Vests and Tracksters are now available in a variety of colours and sizes from Alan Kenny, 0524 414615.

Club Meets. A meets card is enclosed and it shows a wide variety of activities for the forthcoming year. Working weekends are not included on the list (these will be set by the particular hut warden). Other events planned (hopefully) for the Jubilee Year, such as a special Mass, the Zermatt Meet, to mention a couple, will be included in the Spring and Summer newsletters.

Club Dinner. This year there is likely to be a change of venue to allow for an anticipated increase in numbers due to the Jubilee. We hope to have the details sorted out by early summer and will ask members to indicate whether they wish to attend. The Dinner will be at the usual time of the year. More information will be given later.

David Smith. R.I.P. David fell and died in White Ghyll. He had only just joined the Club and was to be with us in Chamonix. David Hirst. R.I.P. David fell and died whilst climbing on the Isle of Skye. Our thoughts and prayers are with both their families. A Mass was said at the chapel of Our Lady of the Snows, Bishop's Scale, for both members.

Fr. Frank Hughes, Club Chaplain. The latest news I have is that Fr. Hughes is making good progress and should soon be back with us.

BMC Insurance. Only a few life members have notified the Subscription Secretary that they wish to have their names included on the insurance list. (See 1990 journal).

ARCC BOOK LIST (Available on loan from Paul Cooney 0772 690147)

AUTHOR	TITLE
B.T.Batsford Ltd., London	The Batsford Colour Book of the Lake District.
Claude E. Benson	Mountaineering Ventures,
Maxwell Fraser	Companion into Lakeland.
A.H.Griffin	Inside The Real Lakeland.
R.W.Hall	The Art of Mountain Tramping.
John Hawkridge	** Uphill All The Way.
John Hunt	Ascent of Everest.
John Hunt	Ascent of Everest. (Abridged for schools).
John Long	** Gorilla Monsoon.
William McKnight Docharty	The Supplement to a selection of some 900 British and Irish Mountain Tops, and a selection of 1,000 Tops under 2,500 ft.
Lorus J Milne and Margery Milne	The Mountains.
Hugh Rutledge	Everest 1933.
Audrey Salkeld and Rosie Smith	** One Step in the Clouds.
Joe Simpson	Touching the Void.
Nicholas Size	The Secret Valley.
Janet Adam Smith	Mountain Holidays.
Showell Styles	Modern Mountaineering.
Mountain Club Of South Africa	The Journal.
The Alpine Club (London)	The Alpine Club Journal 1970 (Vol.75).

** New Book

This is the start of the ARCC book library. If anyone would like to donate walking, climbing or mountaineering books, or any other material appropriate to the library, please contact Paul.

TOUR OF THE OISANS

Clare Kenny

A schedule Friday flight to Geneva took us from the humdrum existence of work and gave us a fortnights breathing space to pursue some of the more important things in life; i.e, fine scenery, good walking, good food and sunshine. A lazy saunter along the lakeside and a leisurely train/bus journey the next day saw us relaxed and refreshed at Bourg de Oisans in order to begin the 'tour'. However, the luxury of a hotel room meant a lie-in and consequently a late start to the first day of serious walking, somewhat naive in view of the heat.

We managed the steep ascent towards Alp d'Huez through the trees and reached the dry-track in the hottest part of the day contouring to the next rise and Col de Sarenne before descending to the villages of Clavans les Hauts and Clavans les Bas for supposedly the first stopover - after a cold beer we did not relish the enforced continuation of the walk to Besse in order to find a bed at the Hotel des Alps, but this proved to be the best meal we were to experience - 5 courses washed down with a bottle of rose gave us a definite glow of satisfaction.

We encountered Pete Dowker and his wife Celia with Dave Hugill at the Gites d'Etape, this first evening and were to 'bump' into them frequently throughout the next ten days, doing the same tour.

The route continued over two passes to the village of Grave situated at the foot of the Meije and thus giving spectacular views of the glaciers and peaks. A pleasant place to spend some time had it not been so early in the tour. A picturesque stroll up and over the Col d'Arsine to Monetier les Bains and totally different views of a very arid landscape. A pizza and a few beers saw Alan locked out of this hotel unable to speak French or arouse 'sleeping beauty' escensed inside - and nearly having to spend the night on the street.

Day 4 over skiing terrain was less exciting and still very hot enforcing a rest day at Vallouise and a trip round the market listening to the buskers from Bolivia and sampling the peaches and cheeses on display while the others camped at Aillfroide and declared it a must on the list of 'places to see'. Spirits restored we caught the 6.45am bus next morning (did someone say holiday?) and continued our journey through marmot territory and a herd of goats to the Refuge de la Chaumette where the 5 of us joined up for the set menu and 2L of plonk, hic!

Saturday - a 5* day over 3 cols, with cloud inversion early on instilling an air of unreality and giving superb views. A long day and we appreciated a shower and a beer at the hotel in Chapelle de Valgaudemar, where the plastic card kept us fed and watered until the Post Office opened Monday morning! Armed with more francs plus bread and cheese for lunch we headed uphill again with refreshments en-route - wild raspberries - and reached

Le Desert, a quiet farming community where we stopped at the Gite d'Etape.

Three days to go - a lazy saunter over the col, sunbathing at the top before descending to Valsenestre, picturesque, again with a good meal and mucho plonko at the Gites. Following on from this a tough climb over the next col rewarded by a view of Lac de la Muzelle. Looking back, one could see the route covered over the previous two days. A long descent to Bourg d'Arud to discover no accommodation, thus a trip to Venosc, a pedestrian only village of rough stone alleys - worth the extra distance.

Last day spent following the river down the valley to Bourg de Oisans with a detour to the tourist venue of Lake Blauvitel. The latter stages became rather tedious with no variation in gradient or scenery and only the receding thunderstorms adding drama, but nevertheless a great sense of achievement on returning to the starting point - a worthwhile trip - capped only by a fleeting visit to La Berarde. One of those unnerving bus rides up numerous hairpin bends led us to what can only be described as a mountaineers paradise - a place to return to when time permits. I will say no more - go and see for yourselves!



THE SWISS ALTERNATIVE

Angela Soper

In August I put away my ARCC running vest, replaced it with my Pinnacle Club T-shirt, and stepped into a car bound for Switzerland with Stella and Caroline. We passed through Chamonix on a scorching day, stopping only to picnic and to identify the peaks to Caroline, I knew that the ARCC members would be up there somewhere doing great deeds. But the girls had plans for rock climbs, preferably fairly long, on South faces, and with uncomplicated descents.

To start with, I would climb with our Swiss Pinnacle Club member, Verena, who lives near Basel. She was to meet us at Sanetsch, a limestone area north of Sion in the Rhone valley, where she thought the climbs would suit our requirements. So we drove for 40 km up the narrow, winding road to the col de Sanetsch, and made camp in Alpine pastures under the crags. By the time we had slept off our weariness from the journey, Verena arrived with a lot of topos and enthusiasm.

So in the morning sun we all headed for the Orphee, the shortest and least serious of the crags. It turned out to be excellent limestone, steep enough to have only a few entry pitches from which different climbs then branch. The routes on Orphee are mostly four pitches long, and there are bolts for protection, which are shown individually on the topos, so we were prepared to find them quite spaced. Several parties were already climbing but it wasn't crowded so Verena and I went straight onto the Grand Finale (French 6b) while Stella and Caroline climbed the classic Fantastico on the left to give us all a very rewarding first day.

Next day we went to the adjacent crag, Moutons, where the routes are about ten pitches, to climb Follomi, a direct line discovered by the Remy brothers in 1990 and called after the climbing shop in Sion. After two introductory pitches it becomes sustained at 6b with varied climbing and dramatic situations and it leads satisfactorily to the crest of the ridge, from where an easy descent gully is soon reached. We really enjoyed Follomi and thought it very good of the Remy brothers to create such a splendid route for us.

For her last full day Verena chose the longest route at Sanetsch, Rock and Roll, which was thirteen pitches and starts along the side valley. It finds an improbable traverse across a hanging slab between two huge overlaps, gains a diedre where we needed a point of aid, and eventually reaches the ridge crest at a low place with several pitches to go. The ruggedness of the ridge was totally unexpected. We could see Stella and Caroline at the top of their route, Great Time, setting up abseils, but we couldn't have reached them. We finished Rock and Roll with sensational exposure up the final tower, and found to our relief that the ridge became a peak with grassy slopes on its other side.

Back at camp we met some very distressed German climbers; their

tents had been ripped to pieces by cows with their enormous horns. We were more lucky but it made us realise the hazards of wild camping in Switzerland. Apart from this problem, Sanetsch was a super place.

A threesome again, we next chose a mountain route from 'Extreme Alpine Rock', the south ridge of the Stockhorn, in German-speaking Switzerland. The path to the Stockhorn bivouac hut was full of surprises. At the parking place was a sign 'Stockhorn biwak 4 st', a long walk in any language. After five minutes the path turned into a tunnel and followed a water channel for half a mile in complete darkness - we had one head torch between us! The tunnel emerged in a narrow valley, the Baltschiederthal, now a summer pasture, and we could see the bivouac hut a long way above us on the Stockhorn ridge. It wasn't obvious how to reach it but as we gained height painted arrows pointed us to a steep gully helpfully equipped with chains. The 'Biwak' was a polygonal metal capsule with many sleeping places and blankets and electric light powered by a solar cell. Two Swiss climbers were already there.

Everyone left around 7 am, the Swiss wearing big boots and roped together, the Pinnacle Club in trainers. The south ridge has five granite towers before the Stockhorn summit, all clearly visible from the hut. The first tower was scrambling but I changed into rockboots at the second tower for a clean slab of Grade IV (UIAA) while the Swiss went in front, moving together expertly. I padded after them pausing only for the view from the top of each tower. On the fifth tower the standard was Grade V with various options and I soloed past the Swiss in my user-friendly footwear. Dark clouds were already forming in the west so I pressed on, and signed in the Stockhorn summit book at exactly 9.30.

After an intense stormy period Stella, Caroline and I moved camp to the Furka Pass for more granite on the Graue Wand. From 'Extreme Alpine Rock' the classic Niedermann was our main objective, but we hadn't realised how many other routes there now are. We camped on the way to the Albert Heim hut on a busy Friday night, and made an early start for the Graue Wand, reached via moraines and a steep snow fan. Already many parties were climbing, especially on the Niedermann, so route-finding was no problem. The face is less steep than its photos suggest, and the classic route features cracks that are best climbed by laybacking round them. We found it sustained at V+/VI-, with plenty of old pitons for protection, and equipped with big rings for linked abseils. Using them on Saturday afternoon was exceedingly sociable.

Caroline's holiday came to an end leaving Stella and me to make a new sport plan. We liked the look of the South Face of the Tellistock, seen when driving over the Susten Pass. The road to Tellihutte is supposed to incur a tax, but no-one came for money. We were glad to get away from the heat and humidity of the valley. The approach to the climb was a sequence of good path as far as the Tellihutte, no path up steep long grass, then scrambling. On a hazy, still morning we roped up under the towering face.

Most of the south face is a huge concavity of reddened

limestone, steep and loose, but the classic route takes the sound rock that borders it on the right, a triumph of route-finding by the Inwyler team who made the first ascent in the 1970's. The difficulties increased gradually so that we were nicely warmed up for the first VII- section. Old pitons were abundant, many upside-down but still firm. The first crux was quickly overcome by wide bridging and our progress was steady. From the stances we had intermittent good views of the Oberland but the mist swirled in and hid everything beneath us; we hoped there wouldn't be a storm.

All the climbing was steep and interesting with a wonderful space-walk traverse about half-way up which led to a hanging stance and the second VII- pitch. This was the most sustained section, steep wall climbing on sharp holds, no harder than a good British, and very safe. Through holes in the mist we could see the top of the mountain getting closer, and eventually the climb ejected us into a big scree-filled hollow, where the modern climbs converged with our route. There is only one exit, a full 50 m of wide chimney, not difficult in dry conditions but without protection; it would be an epic in a storm. The rope hanging straight down the chimney felt heavy as I gained the finishing notch. We topped out to see that the mist had cleared and Switzerland from the Oberland to the Engleberg would have a beautiful evening. Two hours later we were back at the car and into the foodbox and Stella spoke her thoughts softly: 'we did well there'.

The weather stayed fine and warm as we explored further eastwards into the limestone ranges of Uri such as the Ratikon, not well known to British climbers. These beautiful mountains are not high enough to retain snow in summer, so we continued to go around in trainers and rock-boots. We wondered how the ice climbers were getting on in Chamonix -surely the freezing level would be above 4000 m? Seems we chose a good season to go rock climbing in Switzerland.



Photo.

South face of the Tellistock, the day after we climbed it, August, 1991.

The route goes up to the skyline.

A.S.

CHAMONIX 1991

Derek Price

By bus, by car, by cycle, by 'plane, nearly forty members merged on the Chamonix Valley in August, 1991.

When three or four of us toyed with the idea of the Tour de Mont Blanc in 1990, we felt, or at least I did, that we might be laying down the foundations for the golden jubilee in 1992. In our wildest dreams we would never have anticipated the interest shown by members this summer. Even with two group photographs, the cover and the end of this article, we still have not included everyone.

From the first day it was all go, with teams shooting off in all directions. Everything was fairly controlled, no-one doing anything silly but a lot of action nevertheless. Thanks to Anne Wallace, who had gone out in mid-July and bagged a good spot on the site for us, all the Ratts where tented in the same area and provided one could negotiate the guidelines in the dark, it was a very happy atmosphere.

I knew that there were other members of the Club in Chamonix, but it is so busy these days that any chance of coming across them would be very remote. Harry Wiggans, Nina and Thomas arrived but stayed in Harry's apartment in Argentierre, and a BMC guide I spoke to on the Aiguille Verte had met Stuart and Chris Britt who were on an alpine course and they appeared to be enjoying themselves.

A storm half-way through the first week slowed down our activities a little, but only from going on the high peaks, and that was only for a couple of days.

On the Wednesday of the second week Paul Cooney, Peter McHale and I planned an easy day to Bellachat, not much over 7000ft, and close to a chalet refuge offering food and drink. We arranged to meet Roy and Dorothy Buffey who would travel up on the Telecar. We chose a way up through the forest that would take us close to the colossal 60 ft statue of Christ. After a few hundred feet of near vertical track, tree roots and blistering sun, we came to a road. (Our uncanny navigation always finds the hardest routes). Within a few yards we were standing below the huge concrete du Christ Roi. Christ is facing Mont Blanc with his arms held high and wide. To our surprise and pleasure when we looked through the viewing window into the statue, the bust of Pope Pius XI (Achille Ratti) was on the altar. We wonder whether the statue was built to acknowledge Pope Pius XI's mountaineering skills. Perhaps one of our readers may enlighten us.

The four occupants of Peter McHale's car, namely, Peter, Dot Wood, Arthur Daniels and I, had agreed rather reluctantly, (two against two) to go to Paris on the way back to England. I won't go into the long drawn-out details of our journey to Paris, enough to say that the car had caught a severe dose of French flu, coughing, spluttering and backfiring like something out of a Walt Disney cartoon. Eventually, we arrived at the Notre Dame, our first point of call, and decided to park the car and walk from there. So very sensibly, we thought, we used a parking

area between two police stations and began our Tour de Paris.

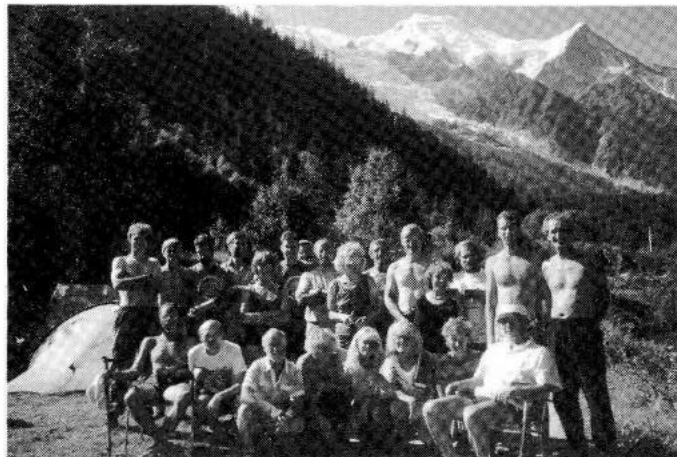
It was a stifling hot day as we made our way through the Paris sites towards the Champs Elysees and our objective, the Arc de Triomphe. (Incredibly, we met Leo and Freda Pollard sitting on a bench outside the Louvre - its a small world). After a very dicey crossing of the Champs Elysees and an inspection of the magnificent Arc de Triomphe we caught the Metro to visit the site of the Bastille. This area is quite a disappointment and I think the design of the new opera house is out of place, however, time was passing and as we were less than a mile from the car we opted to walk back.

As we approached the car I noticed a gendarme stood by it writing notes. When he had moved off, Arthur and I crept forward to see what was happening, nothing really dramatic, he had given us a parking ticket for 250 francs. Peter and Dot arrived on the scene, and as the friendly cop was still booking other people we decided to disappear for a while until he had gone away. One hour or so later, we cautiously made our way back to the car, relieved that there were no police about. Then the fun began. Dot had been persuaded to drive, (working on the assumption that the French police would go easy on a lady), and as soon as she turned the key the engine started back-firing and the noise echoed round the tall buildings sounding like the Gunfight at OK Corral. What made things worse, there was so little power, the car would only creep along at about 10 miles an hour, and that in fits and starts. However, in spite of anxious moments as we passed the police station - we could feel dozens of eyes glaring at us - a convenient side street allowed us to stop and get the engine warm.

The next seven hours were spent coaxing the car to Calais and on to the ferry. On arrival in Dover, Peter contacted National Breakdown, who completely wrongly diagnosed the problem, saying that it was carburettor trouble, but kindly gave us, and the car, a lift back to Leeds.

One thing about ARCC outings - they are never boring.

(The repair to Peter's car cost £3.15. A new condenser)



Bits and Bats from the Past

The Presidents Report - 18th April 1961

When I look back and think of the heavy burden that lay on my shoulders during the days after the war when the Club had reached its lowest ebb, and especially to the time when it looked as though the financial burden of the Langdale project might crush us out of existence, I am amazed at the prospect that presents itself today. Stout Cortes 'gazing on a peak in Darien' or Hilary or Tensing emerging on to the summit of Everest, can hardly have felt more satisfaction than I feel at the achievement of the Club today. Somehow I feel at last, that what I have worked for has come about. That from the dead ashes something new has been born. There is more than a collection of properties, there is a spirit; there is a bustle of activity; there is a keenness and a loyalty, there is an Achille Ratti Climbing Club.

I think your climbing exploits are good; and I hope that your spirit of adventure is aflame. I don't want to hear of you dropping off crags, but I do want to hear of you sleeping at the base of them, so that you can be ascending the last pitch just as the first rays of the rising sun hit the dewy top. Be imaginative and earn the social carousals that you enjoy at night.

Finally, the ARCC is not just any Club. It is always impelled by a Christological urge and it finds unselfish expression in providing at Dunmail a place for youngsters to holiday and learn the spirit of the hills. Let Dunmail then be the concern of you all just because, in a material sense, you get so little out of it.

Thomas Bernard Pearson
Bishop of Sinda
Founder President.

Extract from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting 1961

18th October, 1961 - Bulletin No.6

Journal. (Plans for production of)

Articles are still required. As yet there is insufficient material to embark on this project at the moment!

HAS NOTHING CHANGED IN 30 YEARS?

Thursday, 13th June, 1963 - Bulletin No.10

Dear Member,

To commemorate the 21st anniversary of the founding of the ARCC, an Open Air Commemorative Mass at Bishop's Scale is planned for the 1st September 1963 at 4.00pm. Mass will be offered by our Founder President, His Lordship T.B.Pearson, and members will have the opportunity of placing a stone on the Memorial Cairn that has been erected in the field at the back of the hut.

All members are invited to attend and commemorate this memorable milestone in the Club's history.

Bulletin 21. - 1966

THE ASCENT OF MONTA ROSA. Monsignor Achille Ratti (Pope Pius XI)
July 31st 1889.

Here we are on the Ostspitze, but we were unable to remain there long. Driven by the wind which, was now insufferable, and by approaching night, we soon began to descend, till we found, about thirty metres lower down, a projecting rock which was almost free from snow, and there we took up a position as best we could. It was 8.30pm and the aneroid showed a height of 4600 metres above the sea. The spot where we were was not indeed one of the most comfortable, and for people who had spent the day as we had, it was certainly not as good as the beds and the comforts of Riffel. On the other hand, it was perfectly safe for anyone who was reasonably sure of himself, though it was extremely small. It was impossible to take a step in any direction. Anyone sitting down found his feet dangling in space; we had, however, every facility for stamping them, provided we were careful not to lose our balance. And these elementary gymnastics were most necessary.

The cold was intense; without being able to reckon the exact degree, I may mention that our coffee was frozen hard, and our wine and our eggs resembled it in that they were neither respectively drinkable nor eatable. We again had recourse to our chocolate, and to a generous quantity of excellent kirsch, which we still had with us. In such a place and such a temperature, it would have been the height of imprudence to allow sleep to overcome us. But we would have slept in that pure air, which pierced our marrow, and in face of such a scene we had before us? At that height.....in the centre of the grandest of all the grand Alpine theatres... in that pure transparent atmosphere, under the sky of deepest blue, lit by a crescent moon and sparkling with stars as far as the eye could reach...in that silence.

N.B. Achille Ratti climbed Monte Rosa by the Dufour peak from Macugnaga and made the first traverse of the Zumsteinjoch to Zermatt. Five days later he climbed the Matterhorn.

TYN TWR

The Birth of a Hut

CHAPTER FIVE

John Foster

The first real step in the purchase of Tyn Twr was taken by the end of September (1966), with the payment of £150 deposit (10% of the purchase price). During October, the Penrhyn Estate solicitors drew up the contract, but we rejected it because clauses safeguarding our interests ('subject to planning permission', etc.) had been missed out. It took until January for the contract to meet our approval and be signed.

The delay was advantageous to us, in that it gave us time to draw up the loan scheme and put it to our members. The Bishop's original idea of paying interest was dropped because of possible complications with the Inland Revenue. The target was £2000 for the purchase of the property, construction of a septic tank, and other items. It was decided to approach all members individually by a special bulletin giving the history of the hut and its purchase and price, and requesting members to finance the property in 2 ways. An interest free loan in units of £10, secured by a Promissory Note, repayable in not less than 3 years. Life membership was the other option, on a payment of £15 (10 years subs) in one lump.

The bulletin went out on 31st. January 1967, followed by a letter from the Club's solicitors on 17th February with a stamped addressed envelope and a form on which to declare a loan, with a closing date of 1st April. At the committee meeting of 1st March it was reported that £110 in loans had been received in 4 days. By the next meeting on 4th April, the loans amounted to £540, and life membership had brought in £210. This was considered an excellent start in spite of the closing date being passed, as our members are always tardy at making payments, (Nev. will confirm this with the subs).

Meanwhile, planning permission was also slow in coming. Application was made on 25th January, which brought immediate response from the Public Health Inspector of Ogwen R.D.C., that he would not recommend 'change of use' (from domestic dwelling to climbing hut) without a guarantee that the Elsan (in the privy by the school wall, still there), would no longer be used, and a septic tank installed. This suited me, as the Club already had one 'Petty Officer' (warden of Buckbarrow), and I had no desire to be the second. Our assurance was given straight away, but within a week the County Planning Officer in Caernarvon wanted to know how many people would be accommodated and what we proposed about car parking. The number we told him was about 12 (in the half nearest the A5) with parking at the side and rear. This space was small, there being a hedge from the kitchen window to the small open shed, our tenant had all the rest. The C.P.O.

then suggested we might use the old school playground (now builder's yard). When we asked the Penrhyn Estates if this was possible, we were told it would be upto the Trustees of the Tyn Twr School Management Committee. On enquiry, these turned out to be much the same as the Penrhyn Estate, so we were going round in circles. Eventually we got an agreement to use the school playground for parking for 5 years, at which it would be renewed. With this, planning approval for change of use and vehicular access was granted on 26th July, 1967.

We then informed the Estates solicitors, and requested permission to construct a septic tank in the field opposite. To this they were agreeable on the payment of £20, and on condition the land would be reinstated to their satisfaction, and also of the farmer tenant. At about the same time Ogwen R.D.C. advised us that no grants for improvements were available to climbing clubs. The purchase of Nos. 1 and 2 Tyn Twr was completed on 2nd October, 1967.

If reading the foregoing chronology seems tedious, then that is how the delays really were over the year it took to buy the place. But there was to be another 2 years of frustration and blind alleys before the hut could be opened to members. To this end a sub-committee was formed of Nev Haigh, Terry Hickey and myself. Nev immediately got to work on detailed plans for the conversion, which needed Council approval. At the committee meeting of 11th October it was agreed we should now send out the Promissory Notes to the members who had made loans, signed by the Chairman and Secretary (does anyone still have one?). I well remember John Gilmore saying, 'What's bothering me is who's going to run it, who'll be hut warden? Everyone looked at me, and so unintentionally I had made a job for myself.

October, 1991.



FORBES OF COURSE

Stuart Britt (with Chris)

It sounds brilliant, just the route for us, so after talking fanatically with two guys freshly rescued from the jaws of death, one with a useless arm strapped to his bruised chest, the other a broken leg, I had to ask, "On what route did all this occur?"

"Forbes of course."

Somehow I knew this would be a great adventure into the unknown, well, unknown apart from everybody else who had done the route.

Full bivi gear was totally necessary, Gortex bivi bags for those possessing them, super-large carrier bags for the less fortunate.

Luckily, Cham' buses are built for overloaded mountaineers, this is a damn good job as we crawled on under the weight of our day-sacks! Destination La Tour, a quick shop, then onwards and upwards. But whats this, Sunday closing?

Food had been organised for a large meal that evening, but there was nothing for during the route. A bit of quick thinking soon took us to raiding the bar. Just how long two Bounty bars each would service wasn't known, but we were as sure as hell going to find out.

Before we knew it the Albert Premier Refuge was reached and a good bivi site was required. Eventually right on the very edge of the Tour Glacier with a large stone block for a table was chosen, but not without grumbles of disapproval. It had been decided democratically - we both agreed.

Site cleared and sleeping gear ready we set about the task of food. By a great fortune a group of holidaying Marines we befriended donated their ration packs. The contents of these were emptied into two large pans. This included curry, peas, mash, apple flakes and many other wholesome ingredients. Our stomachs didn't seem to care what it contained and with great zest it was consumed with crude eating instruments, to be more precise, a figure of eight descender covered in plaster around the smaller hole.

Sleep came slowly, in fact, if it did I don't think many of us actually realised.

Weather being the predictable element, it decided, in its infinite wisdom, to add to our adventures. In the distance, over the Chardonnet towards Argentiere, lightning lit the sky in a fantastic show, but, there's no smoke without fire, and the rain began to fall.

Great, thats all we needed, bivi bags were zipped to the hilt by those owning them and into the overgrown Tesco bags the few disappeared, every move made echoed across the glacier.

Before we knew it morning had arrived, all clothing then excess gear stashed, a quick brew raised the spirit and off onto the Tour Glacier we journeyed.

Five flickering lights wandering towards the Chardonnet when a sudden rumbling could be heard in the distance. No, it can't be, so onward we went following the small flags someone had been kind enough to place. Then another rumbling, on we pressed, no time to waste.

At long last the route came into range and upon reaching the start our fears were confirmed. We stood looking over the avalanche debris, chunks of ice jutted in all directions like gems, an amazing blue in colour.

After much debate a decision was made, no way would we walk back across that bloody glacier. We convinced each other that the temperature had dropped considerably after the avalanche, so anything left above wasn't going anywhere. With this thought to keep us warm we began.

Two axes and crampons with 6 inch front points turned the leader into an ice monster climbing the unclimbable. This was a little annoying as it was possible to walk up about two foot to the left, after a brief team talk and the removal of several ice axes from the leaders back we were on course again.

Turning under the remains of the seracs made you gasp, as we hoped they had frozen. Next obstacle, "The Bosse", it could be said that we had heard some stories about this next move. The guide book says "a steep bulge 50m, 53 degrees", who are they trying to kid? For every 10m another 10m appeared, and so on, but at last the Bosse was surmounted and a few photos were taken. It's a pity photography always seems to make even the most severe climb look tame.

The ridge was reached, rock at last, lost time could be made up or so we thought. Being in a group of three roped together our highly honed technique began to disintegrate, talk about fun, we pressed on as fast as possible.

After much teetering across small snow ridges, clambering over rock and generally missing every peg and bolt runner, we sat on the summit elated. There was no time to muck about, we had to get off this heap of rubble before the sun took its toll on our descent route.

By now the rations, reduced to one partially chewed piece of Bounty bar, was devoured gratefully. Clothing was shed, it was almost like emerging from a cocoon, I felt ready to fly.

No problem, the West Ridge could be the only way down for us.

The West Ridge turned out to be a huge stone shoot and after several rappels we found ourselves standing below like targets from a fairground attraction. A descending party then started using us for target practice. For some reason when dislodging rocks a call would go out to one of their colleagues, "perre"?

We sat in the warm sun on the Col Sup Adam Reilly, (what a name

to remember), looking at a tape partially buried in the snow, obviously the rappel point? Using this a descent over a rather large rimaye was made simple.

Now a short walk from the La Tour Glacier somebody swore, "all we got to do is fetch bivi gear."

No way would we travel to the Albert Premier, instead, a short cut straight across the glacier. It seemed simple enough - a big mistake - the dry glacier quickly changed, crevasses became less obvious as we wandered onto a wet glacier. Twice my leg vanished into the abyss, both times managing to pull clear. A less fortunate third party tried to jump a point we'd just cleared, turning round we saw his body drop out of sight.

Pretty good job we'd stayed roped together!

At this point our madness dawned upon us (better late than never), so we retraced our trail back to the start.

A glance at our watches told a desperate tale, there wasn't long before the last 'freak'. We raced across toward the hut feeling hungry and dehydrated under the hot sun. At long last the edge was reached and a vote was taken as to whom the collector of the bivi gear would be. I was of course greatly honoured to be chosen.

We eventually arrived at the Albert Premier hut where large quantities of water were consumed at great speed.

Running in plastic boots is not an experience to be repeated too often. During the process of running down, dodging people and trying not to knock them off the path, I could hear shouts from behind. On turning round, I saw Tom Walkington and Dave Linney a few metres behind, I'd waltzed right past them without even noticing.

The usual conversation took place, "Fancy meeting you here!".

Still with plenty of ground to cover and with every corner turned there seemed to be another club member, would we ever make it? We did.

Waiting for the bus it started rain lightly, but we didn't care. Everyone felt happy with themselves and each other.

Well, for the moment anyway!

Stuart and Chris also climbed:-

Petite Aiguille Verte, Traverse of Aiguilles Crochues, L'Index, Mont Blanc - Gouter Ridge, Aiguille du Midi (Cosmiques) and the Midi-Plan Traverse.

THE BOB GRAHAM ROUND

Arthur Daniels and Peter McHale - supported by ARCC.

Midnight, Friday 21st June 1991. The Moot Hall clock strikes and suddenly the hours of training, waiting and the decision whether or not have another pee are behind us. Leo gives the word and away we go down the glistening streets on the way to the hills beyond.

Out into the dark roads beyond Portinscale in a light drizzle and freshening breeze. Swinside, Stair, Little Town soon behind and onto Newlands Church at 12.43 - nicely warmed up. A quick change into fell shoes then off to High Nab, the valley beyond and Robinson. The rains heavier now and on the climb up Robinson the wind becomes quite strong from the South, the way we are heading. A slight contretemps coming off the top but we are soon back on course and over Hindscarth, Dale Head and onto the long slippery run down to Honister.

Quick refreshment here, thanks and goodbyes to the first team and away we go with the new team on the climb to Grey Knotts. The dry socks are soon wet and though the sky is lightening slightly, the weather conditions mean that it will not be light for a couple of hours yet. Apart from a heavy fall on Grey Knotts and a bruised knee, no major problems as far as Great Gable. Slightly off course from the summit due to the conditions but eventually righted and we are again away. Kirkfell, Pillar, Scoat Fell, Steeple and Red Pike without incident, then another fall but landed on the other knee to balance things up. Picked up the traverse round Stirrup Crag and onto Yewbarrow where a cold Frank Whittle was waiting to point us to the descent to a brighter Wasdale and a welcome rest.

Food forced down and a full change, thanks to the ministering angels, then away to struggle up into the clouds and rain crowning Scafell. Gingerly down to the dreaded Broad Stand, heart in mouth down the rope, then away to the Pike. Here we became split up in the mist and Paul and I were not to see the others again until Dunmail except as distant figures always on top of the next peak ahead. After Bowfell we dropped below the cloud base and in brightening weather we made good time to Dunmail. Here we met Peter again looking just as tired as I felt. It was time to switch over to reserve tank.

More welcome attention from the ladies then off again now 90 minutes down on schedule. Pulled 30 mins over Seat Sandal and Fairfield and kept it up to Helvellyn. Struck a bad patch around Sticks Pass, but cajoled and encouraged by Clare Kenny and Pete Dowker got over it and by Watsons Dodd was racing again. On the run to Clough Head we passed Peter and his team. Peter was now suffering from a bad attack of cramp. Made Threlkeld just 30 minutes down but feeling good. Peter, however, was really suffering and required extensive massage.

Battled up Halls Fell pulling back another 10 minutes and kept

up the momentum until halfway up Skiddaw. We had gained enough now however to be able, with a mixture of jogging and walking, to make it fairly comfortably to the Moot Hall with 20 minutes to spare. Peter, with the aid of massage halfway up Halls Fell, had also managed to pull things back together and arrived some 12 minutes later. A fitting end to a memorable day and heartfelt thanks to all the helpers, most especially the ladies on the support car who kept us going when all else failed in such fine style.

Arthur Daniels.

BOB GRAHAM 24 HOUR CLUB

Derek Price

Since Bob Graham's successful round in 1932 there have been thousands of attempts to gain membership of this prestige organisation. It is a fact that acceptance to the Bob Graham Club is based on the ability to climb 42 Lakeland peaks over a distance of 72 miles, with 27000ft of ascent, in 24 hours. In a recent conversation with the Bob Graham Club Secretary, Fred Rogerson, I was informed that even in recent years, with the surge in popularity of fell running as a sport, the failure rate on BG attempts is still in the region of 60%. The ARCC running section, masterminded by Leo Pollard, (44th person to complete the Round), and a relatively small group compared with other fell running clubs, can boast 23 members of the B.G.Club. This number, according to my calculations, is almost 75% of the senior runners - an amazing record and one that we should be proud of.

In 1992, as part of the ARCC golden jubilee celebrations, there will be a Bob Graham relay and other attempts, details not yet finalised.

ARCC Bob Graham Club members

Sheila Anderton
Andrew Barbier
Peter Barlow
Tony Brindle
Paul Cooney
Arthur Daniels
Peter Dowker
Chris Farrell

Dennis Gleeson
Jim Harding
Alan Kenny
Clare Kenny
John McGonagle
Mike McGovern
Peter McHale
Ray Miller

Bill Mitton
John Nixon
Leo Pollard
Michael Pooler
Derek Price
Mike Quinn
Ted Southworth

STARS ON THE MIDI!!!

David Parker - Friends on the Frendo Spur.

When sitting by the winter fire, my ego I do prime,
Reading of adventures and the mountains I could climb.
There seems no limit to my skill, I'd climb the hardest wall,
I cannot wait for Alpine times, I don't feel old at all.

But summer days are here at last, the weather is set fine,
The things of dreams are in my grasp, my neck is on the line.
I feel no longer resolute, is my prowess in decline?
Oh why am I so nervous now it's the "doing-it" time.

The "Frendo Spur" is looming high, our chosen test of skill,
Bob Bowdler's drawn the route out, a bus ticket it does fill.
With spirits high our camp we leave, to catch the cable-way,
There's thousands standing in a queue, "you'll have to try next day".

So negotiations are commenced, at last a place is won,
At "Plan de l'Aiguille" we are set down, but in the evening sun.
Then foot by foot the rock we climb, we reach our bivi perch,
We find we have no pan on board as through our gear we search.

Now Robert medicine can prescribe, and issue us with pills,
He has the rations and the spoon, alas no pan to fill.
So a hungry night we have to spend, suspended without food,
We could have used an old coke tin, but Eric it abused.

A dawn start see's we reach the snow, a shimmering spur of ice,
We need a winter expert, Bob goes in front that's nice.
I have not lost a single thing, I'm feeling it's a first,
When Robert drops my borrowed peg, now death could not be worse.

The rocky headwall's reached at last, our energy is flagging,
The last few pitches we do climb, with rucksacks and Bob's
dragging.
And then relief the summit's gained, at last my nerves are
steady,
So no more fireside climbing books, in future I'll watch telly.

Then summer days are at an end, and it starts getting cold,
I sit beside the fire and pick up that book of old.
The Midi wasn't all that hard, next time perhaps the Peigne?
"Oh no" I'm feeling young and bold, it's all begun again.

David and friends also climbed:-

Aiguille Purtschelle - South Ridge. Matterhorn - Hornli Ridge.
Val Ferret - Azone Slab. Petite Aiguille Vert - North Ridge.

A COAST TO COAST WALK - 200 miles - McWatt version.

On Sunday 28th August 1991, Denis, Edmund and John McWatt set off for Keswick. We left the car for safe-keeping with sister Ann (Cammack). She kindly drove us across to St.Bee's where we found our B&B - Stonehouse Farm - very comfortable. We donned our boots and walked down to St.Bee's beach. The evening sun was beautiful and we were promised a lovely Irish Sea sunset, which subsequently was not fulfilled. As is traditional we dabbed our boots in the sea and set off up St.Bee's Head full of enthusiasm. Denis actually went for a radioactive swim in the bay. We walked along the Head to the lighthouse and then cut in to Sandwith where we had a very poor pint of keg Theakston's Bitter (what a difference compared with the real ale Theakston's in the Wainwright!). We then returned back to St.Bee's along the road. We had done the first 3 miles of the 200 mile walk. On our return to the B&B we found our bedroom door lock had jammed and one of us had to climb a ladder and enter through the bedroom window and unscrew the lock from inside the room. The landlady was very apologetic. We hoped it wasn't to be prophetic for our trip. The Queens Hotel then provided us with a few lovely pints of real Theakston's Bitter and John (hollow legs at 15 years old) with a basket of chips.

We set off, after a hearty breakfast, towards Cleator, followed by our first "mountain", - Dent Fell. We started to meet other "coast to coasters" very shortly. The weather was humid and hot - not good for walking. The wrong route was followed down Dent and the familiar view of Cleator started to come into focus, so we doubled back and it cost us an extra 3 miles! Our arrival in Ennerdale Bridge merited a visit to "The Fox and Hounds". Four pints of Theakston's Bitter (keg) were swiftly swallowed, the first one not touching the sides. Denis asked for his pint to be topped up (as one often has to), so the delightful barmaid (innocent lass), poured some lemonade in! Ennerdale Water soon came into view and the heat being what it was, there was an instantaneous unanimous decision to plunge into the lake - sweet relief. The final stage to Ennerdale Y.H. was more of a drag than we expected. We arrived to find that some idiot of a warden had booked us in the following night instead of the correct one (as per my receipt). 22 out of 24 beds had been booked by a party of girl guides. We were a little irate to say the least. Fortunately, Karen, the warden, (who hadn't made the mistake) found accomodation in a bunkhouse next door - run by a previous Langdale Guide and his wife, who knew ARCC well.

After a poor nights sleep we set off on the boring trek through Ennerdale Forest by which time blisters were starting to appear on my feet (I had lent my good Zamberlan's to John). I attended the blisters outside the Blacksail Hut. Our route then left A.W's. and we went up to Windy Gap down to Sty Head Tarn and over Esk Hause to Rossett Ghyll, thence to the Old D.G. where a few well deserved pints were quickly quaffed. It was lovely to reach Bishop's Scale to a lovely hot bath and lots of friendly ARCC faces. We even had the luck to go to a quiet Mass in the chapel; after which we had a couple of poor pints in the Stickle Barn.

Next day we bade farewell to Langdale and walked over to Grasmere in sweltering heat and flies. We were able to purchase much needed surgical spirit to harden our feet and also many plasters. John was able to appreciate the young female walkers whilst Denis and I were shopping. The next stage to Grisedale Tarn was quite reasonable after which we dropped down to Patterdale Y.H. (very swish).

The next day saw a large number of "coast to coasters" beginning the climb to Angle Tarn and Kidsy Pike. A slight navigational error due to taking advice from another walker saw us on High Street instead of Kidsy Pike. However, we had a lovely walk down Riggindale Crag with superb views of Blea Tarn below. A long trek along Haweswater ended with Denis skinny-dipping in the lake. The final 5 miles to Shap seemed to take forever especially as we crossed 3 fields with large bulls in - fortunately they were more interested in the cows than us. We were too tired to appreciate the ruins of Shap Abbey near the end. Shap was a welcome sight and much more pleasant than I had remembered. Only one pub was open by 6.45pm after we had dumped our gear in the B&B. We enjoyed a good meal and met some lovely people in The King's Head (Stones real ale). By this time we had developed a certain camaraderie with several other groups.

The next stage (22miles) was to Kirkby Stephen and with the blisters so bad it turned out to be a killer. Wainwright's original route had been altered and the new one was longer due to footpath diversions. The terrain was fairly boring to Orton and didn't improve much until Smardale near Kirkby Stephen. We did face some fantastic erratics en route. There was a little rain near Orton which fortunately quickly ceased. The Y.H. at Kirkby Stephen was extremely welcome and the food excellent. It is a converted Methodist Chapel with the lounge up in the choir. Kirkby Stephen is a lovely, friendly little town, which is totally unspoilt by tourism. We stocked up on blister gear. The previous evening another kindly gentleman had given us a "Compeed" plaster which helped the worst blisters which were on the ball of each foot. By now it was like treading on eggshells. A few lovely pints of Marston's Bitter enabled us to get chatting with the manager of the Co-op in K.S.(Ken), who kindly offered to look after a large plastic bag for each of us with discarded clothes, so as to lessen our 30 lb packs. The biggest mistake we made was to carry too much. One needs to carry only one change of clothes and be prepared to rinse every day and/or smell (of course!) The huge packs caused the blisters along with cheap boots (for Denis and I - John didn't really have any serious foot problems!). One "coast to coaster" packed up at this stage because his blisters had gone septic (he had done the Pennine Way 3 times!).

Our next stage on a dull day took us over Nire Standards Rigg (2170') which was a 2 hour 30 minute slog. On top we met a Dutch couple who had just completed the West Highland Way and were over halfway on the coast to coast going East to West. Next the boring terrain over black moorland to Ravenseat near Swaledale where the scenery became much more beautiful and so did the weather. A swim by Wain Wath Force was enjoyed tremendously and helped to fill in time until Keld Y.H. opened at 5 pm. This is a poor, overcrowded hostel with inadequate facilities which is

awful considering the nearest pub was 3 miles away at Muker. The hostel is used by "Pennine Wayers" and "Coast to Coasters" so there is no excuse for the YHA, as it is so heavily used.

The route for the next day followed the River Swale along to Grinton past Reeth. The Wainwright route went up the moors to Arkergarth which we didn't follow because we wanted an easy day. Unfortunately, the flies were a curse and no cream seemed to appease them. However, we sought compensation in the King's Head in Gunnerside by way of Theakston's XB (the Best Bitter proved to be cloudy). The blisters seemed to ease a little today. The final half mile was a steep slog up the hill to Grinton Y.H. - a magnificent old shooting lodge with excellent facilities. A few lovely pints of John Smith's Bitter (real ale) were enjoyed with feet up in the Bridge Inn in Grinton. We all fully understood what the significance of "putting your feet up" really was.

The following day was a beautiful high level route through the rest of Swaledale to Richmond - a nice little place, especially the castle. We carried on to Bolton -on -Swale, which has the grave of a man called Gerkins, who lived for 189 years. We spent the night at a terrific farmhouse - Layban Farm, where an en suite bathroom was taken full advantage of. We were so comfortable that we eschewed the chance of walking to a pub two miles away.

In many ways this next day was very boring because most of it was on roads across the Vale of Mowbray. It also lashed it down from the moment we stepped off at 9.45 am until 3 pm, even with Goretex I managed to get wet with sweat from inside. Deliverance appeared at 10.50 in the form of the landlord of The White Swan in Danby Whiske. There was a pint in front of each of us by 11 am and a cooked lunch (delicious) by 11.30. We were joined by dozens of other "coast to coasters" fleeing from the deluge. We ventured out at 12.30 pm into boring countryside and more rain. We passed the two-thirds mark at Caterick Bridge near the A1, and arrived, very weary, at Osmotherley at 5 pm. No pubs were open so we did some shopping and returned later that night to sample the alcoholic delights of "Queen Catherine's Hotel" - reputedly, where King Henry VIII's Catherine Parr came from. The Y.H. at Osmotherley was delightful in all respects. We managed to get some "compeed" plasters which helped the blisters a little.

A day we will never forget followed on Wednesday, 7th August. We set off at 9.15 am from the Y.H. and headed along the Cleveland Way but somehow managed to get off the right route (easily done with poor way marking and many different footpaths). To cut a long story short we ended up doing an extra 3 miles across virgin heather moorland in order to get on the right route. The route carried us then on A.W.'s way to Hasty Bank where many walkers spent the night in a nearby village. The route had been very "up and down" so far, which was quite wearing in the searing heat. We carried on to Urra Moor and then along to Bloworth Crossing and traversing the old Rosedale railway for several miles and thence down the "Esklets" path to Westerdale Y.H.. We arrived in a state of exhaustion (particularly Denis), at the Y.H. We had walked for 11 hours to do 25 miles (20