

Alan resumed normal procedure, Dave and John, refreshed after showers and Breakfast, continued over the Erskine bridge and around Glasgow, where hiccup no. 2 occurred ie, navigation and communication breakdown which threatened the venture. But it takes more than a new dual carriageway to deter these guys and a rhythm of 10 mile stints developed to maintain a good pace, with slick hand-overs that soon brought us to Dumfries and a fish and chip supper.

Gretna came and went in fading light as John-Joe led the team back into England and a brush with The Law! Lights attached, John M pedalled into darkness down the A74 and almost hiccup no.3, but fate was on our side and Carlisle was soon behind as giving rise to a new method of progress ie, support car immediately behind each cyclist to illuminate the road.

With Lakeland territory under our wheels and the hilliest terrain to come, shifts were reduced with no decrease in speed. Alan and John Mc having gained the height to Dunmail Raise, nobly handed over the swiftest descent to Clare, who continued through Grasmere to leave the biggest challenge - ascent of Red Bank - to real men! Dave and Alan achieved a mounted ascent to give continuation to the project and were joined by John Mc for the glory leg to Bishop's Scale, arrival 12.57am. 280 miles, 16 hours and we've made it, weary but satisfied.

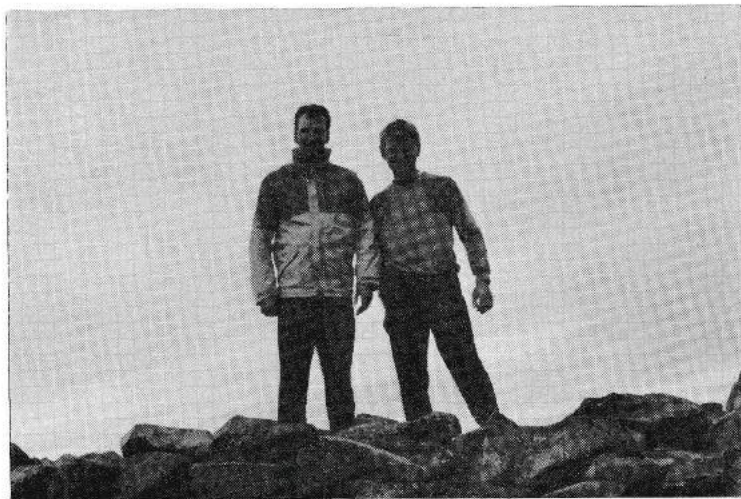
Alan's intention to cycle part way between Fort William and Crianlarich was thwarted, John-Joe's aim to be 'now't but a dumb college kid' was achieved admirably! Moral - think long and hard before inviting John-Joe next year, don't write a crib on the back of your hand if you intend to wear gloves, and stick to English fish and chips!



The Scottish' Team. John M, John Mc. John-Joe, Clare, Alan, Dave.

The Welsh Section

On Sunday, 3rd May at 0511, in perfect weather, Bill, Arthur and Paul left Langdale to cycle to Stool End Farm. The bikes were left there and the climb of Scafell Pike via Rossett Gill, continued on foot. The summit was reached at 0704 with good clear views over the tops. Back down Rossett Gill to the bikes and a sprint down Langdale and back to Bishop's Scale for 0830.



Paul and Bill on Scafell Pike.

John Hope set the first cycling section off, followed by Paul, Pete, Bill and Arthur, in approximately 10 mile sections. One car was used, driven by the support team (the three who weren't driving that section) carrying two bikes. The routine which evolved was - change cyclists, drink, eat, put second bike on car, drive to next change-over point (overtaking cyclist on section), get bike ready for change-over, and so on. Following this routine, there was no spare time to hang around.

The weather stayed fine all day, and the first good sections - Lakes, Lythe Valley, gaveway to the grotty sections - St.Helen's, Widnes (sorry Austin), Runcorn, which were followed by more good sections as Wales was reached. The only hiccup occurred in Leyland, where a confusing road system caused problems with a rendezvous point between cyclist and support car, but this was soon forgotten as the rhythm was picked up again. As with the Scottish team, a stop was made for fish and chips enroute, and the pace continued over the Clwydian Range from Mold to Bod Fari in the Vale of Clwyd, St.Asaph to Llan Fair, and over the Cambrian mountains, down the long steep descent to Llanrwst. From here, as the light faded, Arthur pushed along the valley Lemond style to Betws-y-Coed. At this point, everyone was

feeling the pace, but Pete Dowker volunteered for the first "category 1" climb past Swallow Falls to Capel Curig. He was followed by Paul (2 miles) Bill (1 1/2 miles) and finally Arthur (1 1/4 miles) who stuttered to a standstill at the top of Llanberis Pass at 10pm.

The climb up Snowdon was slow and weary, the summit of Snowdon being reached at 11.48pm. The descent was faster, and Llanberis was reached at 1.30am, with everyone well and truly shattered, but the mission accomplished.

Looking back, it had been a great weekend; a team spirit (or two team spirits) had evolved; it had been something out of the ordinary; and ARCC had achieved it's aim of climbing Britains three peaks, to celebrate its Golden Jubilee Year in one foul swoop.



Paul, Arthur and Pete on the summit of Snowdon

Distance travelled by each member:

| Scottish Section. | | Welsh Section | |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| JJMc | 49.0 miles | Paul | 45 miles plus 2 peaks |
| JMc | 36.1 (+38.6) | Pete | 48 plus 1 peak |
| CRK | 64.8 | Bill | 43 plus 2 peaks |
| APK | 49.6 | Arthur | 41 1/4 plus two peaks |
| DH | 41.5 plus 1 peak | John | 12 |
| JM | 34.9 plus 1 peak | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Total mileage | 272.6 | Total mileage | 189.25 |
| Hours Cycling | 15.8 | Total time | 20 hours 19 mins. |
| Average speed | 17mph | | |
| Grand total mileage - | 461.85miles. | Total time - | 39hr 36 min net |
| | (Inc. 4hrs 14min sleep) | | 43hr 50 min gross |

GREENLAND - UNSPOILT NATURAL BEAUTY ?

Richard Marsden and Bob Spencer.

Bob had wanted to visit Greenland ever since flying over the country on a trip to Canada. The idea of a small team ski mountaineering in such a remote area was very appealing. Three people for over three weeks in June was the plan. Having decided this much, it was here that the real problems of going somewhere untouched by tourism started.

The first of these problems was the general lack of information available, which made deciding an objective very difficult. Flights were the second problem, not the availability of them but the cost. We finally decided to fly to KANGERLUSSUAQ or SONDRÉ-STROMSFJORD, everywhere with a name has two or three of them, on the West Coast of Greenland as from here we could reach the ice cap on foot. Greenland has no road network and everyone travels by boat or airplane, both of which are expensive. Maps of some of the area were available from Stanfords and general information from several guidebooks. Everything in or on Greenland ends at the ice edge, maps and guidebooks certainly did. The only advice proffered on the ice was not to go onto it as it was very dangerous. Two useful things were discovered, namely you need a permit to trek around KANGERLUSSUAQ and a second permit to go onto the ice. As the ice permit takes three months to get we did not have enough time to get one, however, no one asked to look at either of our permits.

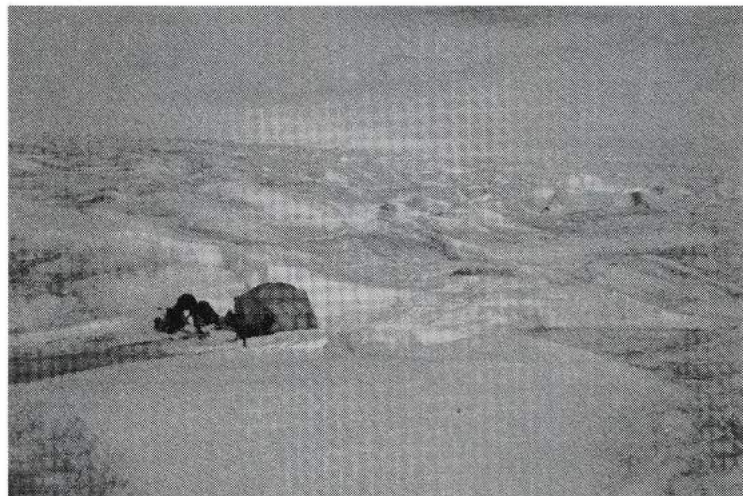
The plan slowly took shape! We decided that the best option was not to take skis. The lack of information meant that the plan was to get to Greenland and see what we might find. Pressing schedules at work and exams for part time courses compressed three weeks into just over two with ten days trekking.

The flight involved an overnight stop in Copengahen, (a well known climbing capital!) looking somewhat conspicuous in mountaineering gear with ice axe and crampons. We arrived in Greenland in what the locals describe as uncharacteristically cold weather, it was +4C with the odd snow flurry, the normal temperature being in the low 20s, not at all what we expected. After negotiating to buy fuel at the airport petrol station (ever seen three 1 litre SIGG bottles being filled from a petrol tanker normally used to refuel aeroplanes?) we set off at about 4pm to find a camping spot outside the area of dwellings surrounding the airport.

Our trek started with glorious sunshine, wet feet for Bob and a paddle in very cold water for the other two. The rest of the day was spent trudging up an alluvial river valley to reach the snout of the nearest glacier, the RUSSELL GLACIER. Crossing the river involved a few problems but no wet feet this time. On the way up the valley we were lucky enough to spot a herd of musk ox grazing, apparently a rare sight.

Day three dawned with sunshine again, although the temperatures

were dipping well below freezing by night. With ice axes in hand and crampons ready for use we headed for the ice. We soon found a suitable position to get onto the ice from where we could see that it was one mass of partially snow covered crevasses and ridges, with no signs of any breaks or peaks. We headed directly into the ice to see if we could see any change at all. By 2pm the snow was becoming dangerously soft in places, so we decided to call a halt for the day and set off early next morning.



Camping on the glacier.

An alpine start (it must have been cold as Richard even had to don hat and gloves) with the signs of big weather front moving in our direction. With no indication that the ice might change and the weather looking as though it might change for the worse we headed for the opposite side of the glacier snout to the one we had come in on. So after two days we abandoned the ice and camped by a large frozen lake with some amazing ice cliffs where it joined the glacier. The weather front dumped a small amount of snow on us that evening but did not mount to anything else.

The two days on the ice had been fascinating although with so many crevasses and ridges route finding was hard and the going even harder. The glacier provided many spectacular sights not the least of which were the frozen lakes with their many shades of beautiful blues.

Days five and six were spent trekking through wild and untouched areas, reminiscent of the more remote areas of Scotland. We all had the feeling of being the first people there (we did not see anyone else for the whole trip). Over the two days we began to see more and more reindeer, at this stage still

sporting their winter coats, which were a dirty white colour. They were strange timid creatures, who would run off with their heads held high, making them look comical, every time they spotted us. So far the trip had been excellent - what could happen to spoil this paradise?

Every silver lining has a cloud and ours appeared towards the end of day seven, whilst walking across some low wet ground between lakes - great clouds of mosquitos. They got everywhere and were capable of biting you through several layers of clothing. "AUTAN" kept them at bay to some extent but could not stop them flying into mouth and nose. Camp was quickly made on high ground but the mossies were still present. We decided an early start the next day might beat them. By midday they were unbearable so we had to camp and suffer the heat of the day inside the tent. Walking at night was the only answer, 24 hour daylight making this easy. Leaving the tent for any reason during the day involved putting on as many clothes as possible and staying out for a short a time as possible, making some things very difficult to do - OUCH!!

The mosquitos finally disappeared about midnight making it safe to venture out. The nights were ideal for walking, cool and mossie free. The sun dipped below the horizon for a couple of hours providing a spectacular sunrise in stunning scenery. Day nine was again spent trapped in the hot and steamy tent whilst it was assaulted by mosquitos trying to get at us. Day ten was an all out early morning dash to get to the airport before the mosquitos began their assault, thankfully it was a race which we won, by a narrow margin!

Time for sightseeing and to readjust the body clock before flying back (there were not many sights - American Airforce Base, Rowing Club, Harbour - big enough for a rowing boat and, the highlight, the outside only of a radar facility for monitoring the ionosphere). It had been a great adventure in a vast unspoilt landscape and I am sure that in time we will forget the mosquitos.

To answer the question in the title - yes, this part of Greenland certainly is an area of unspoilt natural beauty. Will it last? As we left the Greenland Tourist Board were setting up an office in SONDRE-STROMSFJORD and had plans to mark walking routes around the area with painted boulders to help encourage tourism. This along with Land Rover trips to the glacier is bound to start spoiling the area. The flight out across Greenland provided an opportunity to look at the East Coast, a much more rugged, mountainous and inaccessible area. (This is the area of Bonnington/Knox-Johnson fame.) The East Coast should remain unspoilt for a long time to come as getting there involves internal flights or boat trips. As for the West Coast its days of remaining unspoilt by man are numbered.

TOUR OF THE QUEYRAS

Peter and Celia Dowker.

The evening of the 21st June saw us wandering through the streets of Grenoble amongst the milling crowds attending a huge music festival. I wrote in my diary later "I've never seen so many people so intent on hurting their ears with such awful music", however the Carnival atmosphere was something to behold. We were en-route to Briancon to start a two weeks backpacking holiday in the Queyras National Park. We had, on previous trips done bits of the GR5/TMB, the Tour of the Oissans and walks in the Vanoise and were looking for something a bit quieter and less well known.

The Queyras lies between Briancon and the Italian Border. It has a reputation for generally good weather, a wide range of plants and flowers, and splendid mountain scenery. The walk we intended to do was based on the GR58, described in detail in a guide book by Alan Castle, and followed a roughly circular route in the same way as the TMB or the Tour of the Oissans. Instead of circulating a mountain massif, it follows the edge of a large basin ringed by 3000m peaks, many of which are accessible to the walker. The standard GR58 can easily be covered in less than two weeks so we decided to use this as a basis and add our own variations. Our policy is not to hurry, but to spend as much time as possible on the trail soaking up sun, scenery, atmosphere and a little local plonk.

Here are the entries I made in my diary:

- 22nd June Left Briancon 2pm for Les Ayes, lovely walk through woodland and small hamlets, camped near Chalets De Vers Le Col at 2084m. Idyllic site, ate well, rained overnight.
- 24th June (At Chalets de Furfande) Morning broke with beautiful views over mist-filled valleys. Had breakfast outside with Aneka Didier and Jerome who we had shared the winter room with. After a sunny descent to Les Escoyers, a thunder storm drove us to find shelter in a disused bread oven where we had lunch. An hour or so later the weather cleared and we ascended to the Col de Bramouse, helped on our way by a shock from an electricity fence as I helped Celia over.
- 25th June Broke camp in a leisurely manner, hot sun beating down, headed through Ceillac toward Col D'estronques through meadows ablaze with colour. Lunched at 2300m, blue skies, wonderful cheese, pate, bread, fruit and drinks, lay in the sun for two hours, fabulous views of spikey mountains. Made Col after lunch, spent another hour soaking up brews and views.
- 26th June Left St.Veran in rain after stocking up on lunches for next three days, (no shops). Lots of wild camping sites en-route to Col Chamoussiere (9323ft). Deep

soft snow from just before the Col and down the other side to refuge Agnel made going slow and difficult. Looking back later we noticed that a small avalanche had crossed our route after we had passed. Met two friendly Dutch gentlemen, had a long and interesting conversation. As usual with the Dutch, they spoke perfect English giving us quite a guilt complex.

- 27th June Decided to give the suggested Italian excursion a miss because of the poor snow conditions, this also made an ascent of the Pan de Sucre impossible in Walsh boots. However the walk to La Monta down a valley with lakes, waterfalls, pine forests and glimpses of the spectacular Monto Viso was superb. Camped on a small alp on the slopes of the Tete De Pelvas at about 7000ft.
- 28th June Woke to clearing skies and superb views to the South and East. A dead marmot that we had found near the tent the previous evening had completely disappeared except for nasty bits! Walked round to Col D'Urine, no it wasn't hissing down there, but the cloud and mushy snow stopped us from doing the Tete De Pelvas, our second failed summit.
- 30th June Walked up past Malrif, Le Bertin, and Lac de Malrif through a narrow gorge into a large open coombe with a steep ascent to the lake, then after lunch over Pic de Malrif, (our highest point 9527ft) to Gite D'etape at le fonds. Here we met a young French climber, had a long natter after dinner.
- 2nd July Woke to a fine but grey morning but decided to do a decent top! Arrived at Lac Soulier to find lots of noisy kids, the silence was deafening when they left. Pic Ouest seemed to be permanently in cloud, but when we reached the summit the cloud was dispersing on the other side giving dramatic effects and good views towards Briancon. Skies eventually cleared and we walked back in hot sunshine to our camp at Brunissard. Ate well on ravioli, ratatouille, champignon, myrtle tarte, vin rouge and coffee. Woke in the night when something tried to steal our goody bag from inside the tent, twice, frightening the life out of me in the process.
- 3rd July Walked back to Briancon over the Col des Ayes having given the Furfande - Guillestre route the "heave-ho" on the grounds that we could have a more leisurely day ending with a Gite D'Etape and a good scrub at Villard, besides the Meteo said it would rain the following day (Saturday). We lunched, sunbathed and pottered about on the Col taking photos etc, then descended to Villard having had a perfect day. Had the best meal of the trip in the Gite D'Etape with Sebastian, a young French medical student, and Clive, the only Brit we were to meet during the whole trip.

4th July Rain hammering down this morning, but we didn't mind we were heading for home more than satisfied with two weeks spent in yet another wonderful area of France.

JUST ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE

Angela Soper.

Think of a beautiful and spectacular mountain valley where you can climb in the hot sun on perfect granite all summer through. There's a route for everyone - some are big walls that need several days, others are only a couple of pitches, some are very bold, others quite safe. When you've had enough, there's a clear, cold river to swim in and fruit of the local vine to drink.

No, not Yosemite, but nearer home - the Val de Mello in Northern Italy.

I discovered it last summer, again through the R.H.M. annual meet. As the eagle flies, Mello is not far from Bregaglia, or from Lake Como. You can locate it on the Sondrio map. By road you approach from the broad Valtellina and the narrow Val Masino, gaining height until everything opens out again into meadows flanked by domes of granite.

We all stayed at a spare schoolhouse in Filorera, as guests of the community. Small though the village was, it had several churches, each with its own bells and chiming clock. One always rang the Lourdes hymn - Ave Maria - instead of striking just the hour.

My first climb at Mello was short but famous; Nuovo Dimensione, the first seventh grade route in the valley. It had three bold slab pitches, each with only two runners in 50m. I suppose it would have been more scary to belay someone than to lead it. Other people went for routes with evocative names like the classic Luna Nascente, a great curved arch, and the amazing Oceania Irrazionale which is long, hard and inaccessible.

But there were mountain routes to be climbed, like the Cengalo, and most people soon went up to the hut. Though we were on the wrong side of the mountain, my ambition was the North East Face of the Badile, and fortunately others were of the same mind. So, after a morning's climb on the biggest boulder in Europe, the Sasso di Remenno, five climbers and two 'porters' set off to drive round to Switzerland.

Local knowledge is a wonderful thing. At Bondo, the Italians knew how to pay a toll and drive up the forest road, making the Sasc Fura hut much nearer. I was to climb with Gloria, the Meet Leader, from Bergamo, her friends Mauricio and Cristina would climb with Vreni, the R.H.M. president, who is Swiss. Alberto and Fabio were just coming for the night at the hut; they kindly carried our ropes (for penance?).

The Sasc Fura was full to overflowing, but at bedtime the guardian put down mattresses in the dining room, so efficiently that we thought he must do this most nights. We could see the Badile towering above as the stars came out, and they were still out when we set off in the early morning to approach it. I can't speak Italian, but to show willing would borrow suitable expressions from opera. 'E lucevan le stella' was the one for now.

The classic route up the North East Face of the Badile is the Cassin, but last year a direct one was made. The climbing is more sustained, the stonefall risk lower and (dare I say it?) there are bolts for protection and belays. It's called 'Just Another Day in Paradise' and is now the most popular route on the face.

From the col where climbing proper starts on the North Ridge, you scramble down a gully and across ledges to start in an obvious place on the great concave sweep of granite. It was particularly obvious that morning as there were already several parties (who had presumably bivvied on the col) starting to climb. We had to wait about three quarters of an hour in cheerful international company, people singing and dancing about. The rising sun came over the ridge of the Cengalo and began to warm the rock.

Gloria led the first pitch, given VII-, which was tricky, on quartz veins in the granite, but there were big safe rings in for protection. My continuation was less technical but wet, and then the climbing became more straight forward. All you had to do was advance 50m, and there would be two rings for a belay. In between the rings became spaced and hard to see because the big feldspar crystals in the rock glinted just as much as the metal. As the start was the hardest section, parties became separated and there was no more waiting; Mauricio leading Vreni and Cristina would sometimes catch the second of us on a stance.

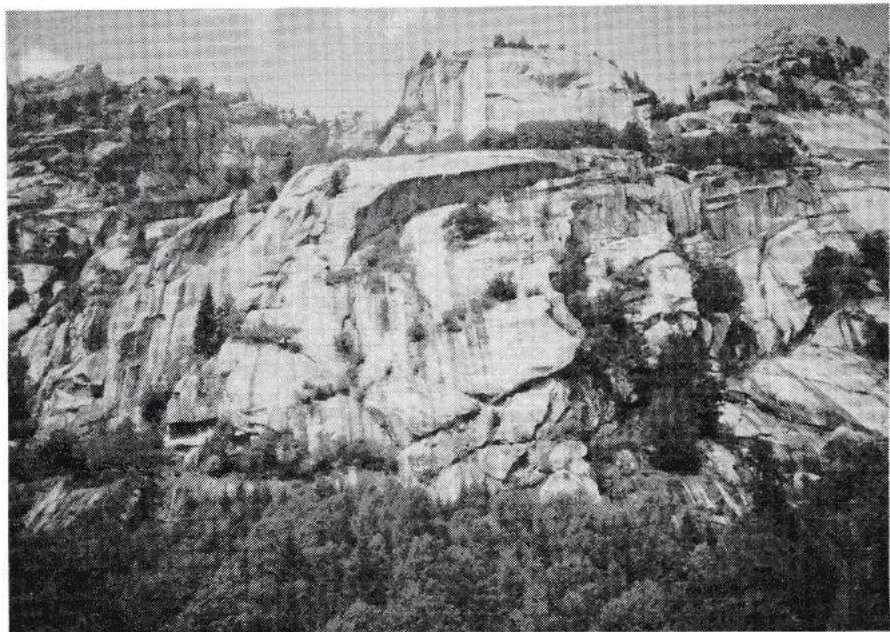
I took the second VII- pitch higher up, an overlap, but with plenty of holds. We gained height steadily, facing out on the stances to the magnificent Bondasca cirque, with the Sciora hut perched on its moraine in the distance. Spectacular stone falls kept coming down the gully between the Badile and the Cengalo and bouncing all the way to the glacier. We could see that they came from a bare section high on the Cengalo that used to be a snowfield. Our route was slabby in the second half and fairly sound but, as so often happens, we lost time on the less defined easier section near the top. All the same, after a comfortable six hours of climbing we were ready to descent the north ridge.

This was the part I'd been dreading. So many parties have taken much longer to get back down the Badile than to climb their route. And many people were converging - all those on our route plus others who had climbed the Cassin route and the North Ridge itself. With coiled ropes around our shoulders Gloria and I joined a queue of strangers, noticing how much colder it was on the ridge than on the face.

Suddenly everyone stepped back and indicated that we should

abseil next. Thankfully we realised it was a big 'leapfrog' operation; we had to go down ropes that were already in place and set up the next abseil. Several lengths down willing hands helped with our ropes. This worked wonders in saving time; in less than three hours the five of us were all back on the col. We had the wrong ropes, but our own soon arrived, and we ran joyfully down to the hut just in time to miss the evening storm and with hours of daylight to spare. Though it was a two hour drive back to Filorera, and we stopped for a pasta meal on the way, we still arrived in time to make 'Another Day in Paradise' everyone's bedtime story.

We'd had a wonderful mountain day and the name fits the climb perfectly. It was very different from the solitary mountain experience, but shared with many more people than we'd expected. Maybe we can hope that our Day in Paradise was a foretaste of the real thing.



Granite Walls in the Val de Mello, North Italy.

(South of the Badile and Cengalo)

Dot Wood

A prior booking in May had meant the cancellation of our usual date for the Long Walk so this one was arranged for later in the year. Too late for most people it seemed, so it was rather a select gathering for the event at Dunmail this year.

With an un-promising weather forecast, which just managed to hold off it's onslaught till most people were on the last leg of the walk and at their most vulnerable, nineteen club members left Dunmail for Seat Sandal at around eight o'clock on Saturday morning. A quiet frenzy of activity followed with the food prep for the breakfast and lunch stops and for the dinner to be held later at the hut. The helpers, Beryl, Mavis, Sybil and Joyce could show the commis chefs at work a thing or two, all I had to do was stand back and watch. Mike Lomas and Ben Carter then went off to do the breakfast stop at Kirkstone Pass with Sybil. Joyce went off to see Keith who had just arrived back from his one year trip to the Far East and the Antipodes and I went off to buy yet more provisions. We returned at noon to relieve Beryl and Mavis who were going round to Patterdale to help Mike, Ben and Sybil with lunch, but in fact turned out to be more like afternoon tea. Joyce was dispatched to buy yet more veg. for the ever increasing numbers of people who were coming to dinner and then it was time for me to put on my chef's hat and do some work.

Nearly four o'clock now and the first runners/walkers were beginning to return, they were the lucky ones who beat the forecast rain and wind. Dunmail is fortunately blest with an efficient boiler and lots of hot water for the showers. A gallon of petrol was donated to the generator and the recent installed light fittings at Dunmail were illuminated for the first time. And then there was light! but only for a couple of hours, just long enough for everyone to enjoy their meal and wine and a piece of Alan Kenny's birthday cake. Some people went to the pub, no prizes for guessing who, the rest of us were happy just to sit in front of the fire in the lounge, the lights soft and low again.

Not the usual account of the long walk with its wondrous views and aching limbs, but still a large and by no means the least part of it.

Dave Hugill.

The original summer mountaineering route from Chamonix to Zermatt, pioneered in the last century, became the classic ski mountaineering route from 1911, when the difficult section from Bourg St.Pierre to Zermatt, became established as a winter route in the January of that year. Another classic route exists, taking in eleven mountain passes, a glacier crossing, and, using mountain huts and valley lodgings, can be managed in a fortnights holiday. This is the "Walkers Haute Route" and provided several members with a memorable trip this year.

The walk starts in the spectacular Chamonix valley where Peter McHale and myself teamed up with Alan and Clare Kenny to start our long journey to Zermatt on a warm but rainy August 1st.

The next day saw us over the Swiss border, having passed through rising woodland paths and the high pass of the Col de Balme, to descend to the town of Trient for the night, (a good basic gite at Le Peuty).

The spectacular Fentre d'Arpette is the next days high point, and provides a welcome rest stop after the climb up the side of Glacier du Trient with its savage tangle of seracs and crevasses. Then it was down the Val'd'Arpette to the town of Champex with its dominating lake, after which the route departs from that of the Tour de Mont Blanc.

An easier day follows, through working Swiss countryside, abounding with unusual butterflies, to the town of Sembracher, and by the La Drance river to Le Chable. If you pass this way take the path below the firing range -not through it!

At Le Chable, fortified by an excellent meal in the company of George Partridge and Ann Cammack, later to be joined by Mike and Jean Lomas, the next destination was the hut at Mont Fort. This is a climb of nearly 5,500ft, but with a slight detour to Verbier village provided quite a hard day. But, recovery was swift after the food, beer and warmth of the hut seeps into ones limbs.

The main dominating mountain on the climb to Mont Fort is the multi-summitted Grand Combin and its glaciers to the south, (its 4134m summit was first climbed in 1859), and of course, Mont Blanc.

An excellent mountain day follows next, passing over the Col de la Chaux, Col de Louvie, the Grand Desert Glacier, and the stony region of the Col de Plafleuri, and down to the austere but welcome Plafleuri hut. This proved a good area for ibex who seem to like the stony wilderness hereabouts. The kindly guardian couple give us freedom of the kitchen here, and even gave us some "English meusli" to carry with us the next day. The route has now taken us round to the north side of the Rosablanche 3336m.

A short climb over the Col de Roux brings you to the Val de Dix, with its long (dammed) lake, a walk to its head and a stiff

ascending walk to the pass over to Arolla. Dominating the view ahead is the Mont Blanc de Cheilon 3870m, vividly recollected by George who had climbed it a few years earlier. There is a choice of passes at the dip in the ridge of the Monts Rouge here, either the Col de Reidmatten, or the Pas de Chevres (rock ladders). George and Ann took the former, we took the ladders (or latter?). This brought back recollections too, as I remember passing this way on a ski mountaineering trip three years earlier in full winter gear, roped up, and the ladders covered in ice. This time it was sunhat, shorts and a blazing suntan session on the pass, looking across to Mont Collon, the Pigne d'Arolla, and the Boquetins aiguilles across the valley.

An early start next day with a quick bus trip to La Sage/La Villa to avoid a valley descent, the climb begins again up to the Col de Torrent 2919m. Here disaster struck, our brew billy rattled off down the mountain as we set up the stove. Peter volunteered to get it back, and guided from above, located it among the rocks far below. He certainly earned his brew that day, looking out to the snow capped Weisshorn and Zinal Rothorn. That evening saw us in the Cabane de Moiry, spectacularly placed in the valley head, surrounded by snow capped peaks, and right on the glaciers edge. Just time for a quick wash in the trough outside, before the evening meal, and a spectacular sunset.

The following day brought us to the town of Zinal after passing over the Col de Sorbois. As we descended into the town, the sounds of brass bands heralded the finish of the Sierre-Zinal mountain race which by coincidence was on that day. Here, we met up with Selwyn and Elaine Wright, fell runners from the Lakes who were on their way, via Zermatt, to the Swiss Karrimor.

In the first real rain of the trip, the ascent to the eccentric Victorian Hotel Weishorn was wet and misty, but soup and coffee brought us round for the climb over the Meidpass to the village of Gruben in the Turtmantal, one of the least developed valleys in the Pennine Alps.

Onward next day to the last high pass before Zermatt, the 2894m Augstbordpass, and an increasingly spectacular descent to the Mattertal valley. The views open out in a sudden burst here, especially when you turn south west on the path, and rounding a shoulder, the Dom, Lenzspitze, Tashhorn, Nadelhorn, forming the Mischabel wall across the valley, dominate the view. Up towards Zermatt, the Briehorn, Liskham, Castor and Pollux can all be seen but the Matterhorn is just out of sight.

To the left, the Aletschgletcher, the longest glacier in the Alps, can be seen coming down from the Oberland peaks of the Junfrau and Monch. It's a long descent now, through the tiny village of Randa, onto Tasch, where fortified by a couple of brews and cake from Joyce, Dot and Jim on the campsite, we made our way through woods and river bank, finally to Zermatt. It was time for a couple of beers, and coming across Paul And Sean, time to congratulate them on their ascent of the Matterhorn!

The Chamonix-Zermatt route must be one of the best long walks in the Alps, and carrying only food and clothing, we had totalled

104 miles, done 36,100ft of ascent and enjoyed some of the most spectacular views in Europe. A walk well worth doing.

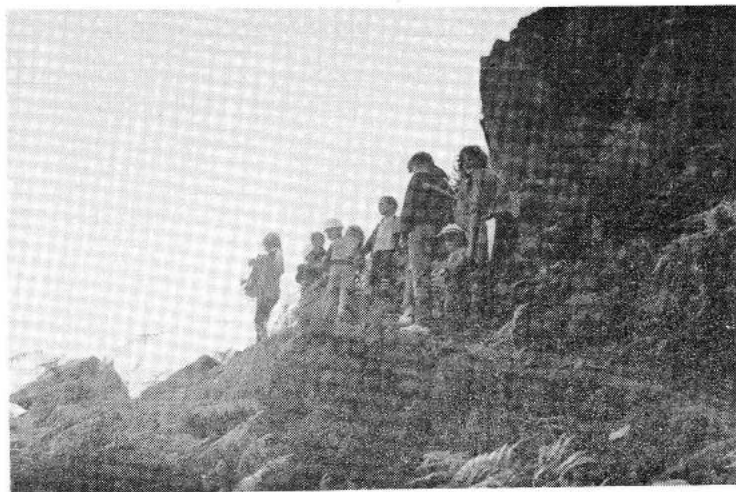
JUNIOR MEET - BISHOP'S SCALE. SEPTEMBER 1992

DOT WOODS.

Saturday, 19th September.

Earlier plans were thwarted by low cloud and rain so plan 'B' was put into operation.

Nine juniors: Alison Seed, Sarah, Kate and David Meredith, Sarah and Michael Kenny, John McHale, Sean Gilhooly and Martin Ogden accompanied by Brian and Sylvia Kenny, Dave Ogden, Tony McHale and Dot Wood all went to Tilberthwaite Ghyll and enjoyed a wet and slippery scramble. There was a fiver bonus for whoever kept their feet dry but it was quite safe. There were at least two partial immersions but nobody drowned and no serious injuries.



Arriving back at the car park for lunch and a change of clothes we were met by our climbing leaders who had been to the Ambleside Wall to practice climbing and to make sure that they still knew how to climb. The weather had made a change for the better, the grey, dismal morning had now given way to blue skies and sunshine, so we decided to go climbing after all.

Dot Wood, Sarah and Kate Meredith. Middlefell Buttress 'D'
Faz Faraday, Sarah Kenny and Alison Seed. Middlefell Buttress 'D'
Mike Seed and Martin Ogden. Middlefell Buttress 'D'+ V Diff pitch
Jim Cooper, John McHale, Sean Gilhooly. Michael Kenny. Mamba 'S'
Jim Cooper, Mick Donnelly, Brian Kenny. Rowan Tree Groove VS



Catch them young!

Sunday 30th September.

The Junior Meet this year co-coincided with the Club Fell Race so we entered all the juniors for this event. 15 years. Danny Hope, in a class of his own broke the previous record set up by Gary Pollard eight years ago.

U15 years. Boys. 1st Michael Kenny
2nd John McHale
3rd Martin Ogden
4th Sean Gilhooly

U15 years. Girls 1st Sarah Kenny
2nd Sarah Meredith
3rd Kate Meredith
4th Alison Seed

U10 years. Boys 1st Chris Daniels

2nd David Meredith
 3rd Tristan Conroy
 4th Joel Green

U5 years. Girls 1st Debbie Green

U3 years. Boys 1st Robert Green

The day was still fair, warm and sunny so after lunch we decided to have another climb. This time we went to Upper Scout Crag where routes 1 and 2 were climbed and a couple of juniors got the chance to abseil over Middle Scout Crag and the junior juniors climbed on the practice slab on the west side of the upper buttress.

An enjoyable meet well attended.

Thanks to the parents and also to Jim Cooper, Faz Faraday. Mick Donnelly and Mike Seed.

See you all again next year.

GOLDEN ORIENTEERING COMPETITION - RESULTS.

John McGonagle.

| Course A. | Hours | Minutes |
|------------------|-------|---------|
| Alan Kenny | 1 | 53 |
| John Hope | 1 | 57 |
| O'Neil/Atkinson | 2 | 15 |
| Leo Pollard | 2 | 34 |
| Dot Wood | 2 | 40 |
| Lenny Clarke | 2 | 41 |
| Bill Mitton | 2 | 46 |
| D.Hugill/C.Kenny | 3. | 00 |

Course B.

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Derek Price | 37 |
| Dave Linney | 40 |
| George Partridge | 40 |
| K.Hampson/P.Goode | 43 |
| Faz Faraday | 46 |
| Thomas Carter/Simeon Mitton | 47 |
| Tim/Richard/Geoff/Peter | 48 |
| Arthur and Chris Daniels | 52 |
| Wilf Charnley | 53 |
| Kath and Alex Bateson | 56 |
| Tony McHale/Margaret Conroy | 67 |
| Pat Mitton/Alwynn Cooper | 74 |

WEDDING IN LANGDALE

Anne Appleton (nee McCarthy)

On Saturday, 5th September, 1992, Anthony Appleton and Anne McCarthy, a life-long member of the ARCC, were married at Our Lady of the Snows Chapel, Langdale by the ARCC chaplain, Fr. Francis Hughes.

The chapel proved to be a perfect setting for our small and informal family wedding. Many of our guests, who had never been to the Lake District before, were thrilled with the scenery and the beauty of Langdale, which was especially lovely in early autumn. Fortunately, the weather was perfect and stayed dry and sunny all day. The wedding ceremony was followed by a reception at the Cragwood Country House Hotel, Windermere, overlooking Lake Windermere.

Tony and I are very grateful to the ARCC for allowing us to be married in the chapel. It meant so much to me to be married in my beloved Langdale, in the chapel where I have been attending Mass all my life and by the priest whom I have known all my life, who also conducted the memorial service for my late father John in the chapel in 1989. We are indebted to Fr.Hughes for such a lovely and moving ceremony.

We both had a super day which we will never forget, and thank the ARCC for helping to make our wedding so memorable.

See you at Bishopscale!



A NIGHT ON MONTA ROSA

Achille Ratti. (Pope Pius XI) 1989.

We were on the Ostspitze, but only for a few moments could we stay there. Driven off by the wind, which up there was unendurable, and by the approach of night, we descended quickly to a rocky protuberance almost bare of snow, about a hundred feet below. There we settled ourselves for the night as best we could. It was half-past eight and our aneroid gave four thousand six hundred metres as our height above sea level.

It could not in truth be called a comfortable spot, and for people who had spent the day as we had done, it offered less attractions than the beds and other comforts of Riffel. On the other hand it did offer complete security to anyone who was sufficiently secure of himself, though it was extremely restricted. It was impossible to take a step in any direction; anyone who sat down had his feet dangling over the precipice. We were able to stamp our feet to our heart's content, provided we did not lose our balance and of this simple gymnastic exercise we had very great need. The cold was intense; I cannot say exactly what the temperature was, but I remember that our coffee was frozen, and that our wine and eggs were near enough to that condition respectively undrinkable and uneatable. We fell back upon chocolate and a plentiful supply of excellent kirsch that was left.

In such a place and in such cold it would have been madness to let ourselves be overcome by sleep. But who could have slept in that air, whose purity made our blood tingle and with that spectacle before our eyes. At that height...in the very middle of a theatre, great even among the grandest of Alpine theatres, in the limpid air, under that deep dark sapphire sky, lit by the thin crescent of the moon, sparkling with stars in every part the eye could reach, in that silence....But I forbear, I will not try to describe the indescribable. Both Professor Grasselli and myself have the feeling in our hearts that no scene of more transcendent splendour could have been given us to see. We seemed to be looking at a tremendous and, for us, a new revelation of the omnipotence and majesty of God.

How could we have given even a thought to the weariness we suffered, much less complained of it! Many are the climbers - I know it to be so, from all that I have read and heard from their own lips - who have felt, as we did, then, the profound truth of that line :

Del mondo consacro Jeova le cime

We were rapt in contemplation when the great silence that enveloped us was broken by a roll as of thunder. It was an avalanche breaking off and beginning its fall below us, but at far to great a distance to threaten our security. Shaken and dazed, we followed with our ears, as we could not with our eyes, the terrible crashing descent, growing louder and louder, hurling itself right down to the levels of the lower Glacier. The silence, when it returned, seemed even deeper and more solemn than before.

WHITHER IN OUR NEXT HALF CENTURY?

John Foster.

There is a wide spread of talent among our members, but I know of no one skilled with a crystal ball. Nor am I, so I will not attempt any predictions, but suggest a way forward in the next quarter century in keeping with our club's origins and aims.

Why only the next 25 years ? Well, the first reason is that I may just last out that number of years, and would be well contented if my dreams for the club came to be in that time. I have never had any personal ambitions in the club, and only became a hut warden because I was a proponent of a hut in Wales, and someone had to take on the job. My ambitions have always been for the Achille Ratti to be a truly national mountaineering club of equal standing with any of the older clubs, and even greater.

In membership I think only The Climbers Club and the Fell and Rock exceed ours. Hutwise, the SMC have four, all in Scotland; Fell and Rock, six, all in the Lakes but for one recent one at Kinlochleven; Climbing Club have four in Wales and two in England. No club have huts in all three countries, and we should be first when we do get a Scottish hut.

There has been the disappointment of our two attempts so far (but so there were with the Welsh hut, and over six years passed from starting the search to Tyn Twr being opened). Both properties we tried for are in the Glen Coe area, which is the most popular with our members. But would one Scottish hut be adequate? It is feasible to get to all parts of the Lake District National Park from Bishop's Scale. Similarly, all parts of Snowdonia, and some crags outside it, are accessible from Tyn Twr. But the mountain areas of Scotland are so vast that no one hut can be convenient for them all.

A couple of years ago the Countryside Commission for Scotland (now merged with the Nature Conservancy into Scottish Natural Heritage) recommended to the government that four National Parks be set up. Lomond, Cairngorms, Glen Coe/Lochaber and Western Ross (the Torridon area). In reserve were the Cuillins of Skye and the Ullapool Area, as places which would need protection in a few years as pressure increased on them. National Parks cost money, so this benevolent government of ours turned them down.

My proposal is that, if we are really serious about being a mountaineering club, our aim should be to have a hut in each of these areas before our club is 75 years old.

Now I can well imagine some of you thinking 'The old lad has finally flipped his lid. Four huts at maybe £50,000 each? Ridiculous.' Well, as on the hill when the way ahead seems difficult and uncertain, it can be useful to take a back bearing on where we have come from. So I will remind you of the chronology of our huts, each major steps in the evolution of our club.

The Achille Ratti got off to a flying start in that there was not only a ready made membership from the CBA but a hut in Langdale as well. I don't think that there is now any record of when that was acquired, but I remember the late Cyril Bulman telling me many years ago that he left the Old D.G. in 1938 when he bought the New Hotel. It was from him that Father Pearson agreed to rent the barn at the western end of the farmhouse (just behind Stickle Barn) for £20 per year. Then came Buckbarrow in 1943, also rented. A major step was the first purchase of property, Dunmail in 1946, for £1100. Then a set back in 1951, when Cyril Bulman repossessed the barn to convert it into a retirement flat for himself and wife. But he promised Bishop Pearson (as he became in 1949) that when he was selling any property in Langdale he would give him first chance.

That chance came in the summer of 1955, when the barn of Rawhead Farm and 110 acres of fellside was offered at a price of £2,000. There was still debt on Dunmail, but the lack of mere money did not deter that man of faith who founded the club.

The purchase price and the £5,000 it took to convert it was raised by donations, various fund raising devices (mainly by the 'hard core' in Blackpool), and also further borrowing from the Diocese of Lancaster. We were still in debt when in September 1967 we paid £1,500 for Tyn Twr, which took another £3,000 to bring the first half into use.

So, every one of our huts (substituting Beckstones for Buckbarrow) was acquired in the first 25 years of the club's existence. Is it too much to expect another four in the next 25?

We paid off the last of our debts in the early seventies, so new members of the past twenty years have never known the austerity of the early years. Then it was usually the case that whenever a job needed doing, the only question was could we afford the materials to do it ourselves. There was a marvellous feeling of comradeship, with EVERYONE pulling their weight. Now it seems that money is available for whatever whim takes the fancy. I get the feeling that some members go round the huts thinking what can we spend money on next, not what work is essential to maintain our huts. And 'EVERYONE' today is much bigger than it used to be.

In the late forties membership rose to about 100, but possibly because of the loss of the Langdale hut it had dropped to 60 in 1955. What must those few members have felt when they heard what the Bishop had taken on. It was just about possible to squeeze every member into Buckbarrow and Langdale on the same weekend, so how on earth could they use (let alone afford) an enormous hut in Langdale. Yet it is quite possible that if the challenge of Bishop's Scale had not been taken on, then the Achille Ratti might have fizzled out. Certainly the essential recruitment campaign turned out to be a rebirth of our club. The headline 'Bishop Buys a Mountain' fired the imagination of Catholics up and down the country. 'Chapel in the Hills' also provided inspiration, so that donations came in from people with little or no interest in climbing or walking. And it brought in me and my mates from St.Helen's, about a dozen of us, all from the same

parish boys' club.

At last year's (1991) AGM Nev reported that membership had fallen by about 50 or so. This may be due to many factors, but if a trend which continues, definitely worrying. Many of us are retired now, so many grizzled veterans (and there would be more but for 'Grecian 2000'). We do have some young members, but they are greatly outnumbered. A headline like 'Catholic Mountaineering Club Establishes a Scottish Hut. The only club to have huts in all three countries,' could well provide the stimulus to recruiting the young Catholics we need, on both sides of the border.

Yet I know some members will say 'I never go to Scotland, so why do we need huts there'. Well some members never went on the Welsh hills until we got Tyn Twr. And the right decision for any loyal member must be what is best for the Achille Ratti, not what suits the individual. I get a feeling also that we have members who think that our club is complete as it is, with just our present huts and membership. Ten years last March there died a member to whom we all owe a lot. A man whose drive and commitment to the Achille Ratti has been matched by few others. From the start he was right behind the idea of a Welsh hut, even though as a resident of Blackpool he lived 130 miles from Tyn Twr. And those of us who knew Terry Hickey well will remember him often commenting that, as in business, we cannot stand still. We either go forwards, or go back.

Remember too that the very first roots of our club arose from the pastoral care of Father Pearson for the boys of Blackpool, not just St.Cuthberts, his own parish. And then, as the boys grew up and the CBA became the Achille Ratti, it brought the folk from Preston, Manchester and Liverpool, even London (Clapham College). Certainly Bishop Pearson had his sights set on Scotland as he reported to the M/C in 1968 of a hut for sale in Glen Coe, which turned out to be too expensive. Not long before he died, when asked by our then Chairman George Partridge how he saw the future of the club, the answer was 'catholic with a small c'. Now in no way can I accept that he meant our club should break its connection with the Catholic Church. Rather the dictionary definition of 'universal' or 'all-embracing'. Our club was not founded just for you or I, and we all must play our part in investing our time and energy for its future well being. For children who do not yet know they will be mountaineers, as members of 20, 30, 40 years ago invested for benefit of members today.

Some members think we are doing a good job with Dunmail, and maybe we are. But is it enough? Dunmail is a watershed in more ways than one. It is our northernmost hut, the others are all further south. So too with our membership, only a small percentage live in the North Lakes and Scotland. There are five million people in Scotland, 20% of them Catholic, so the scope for recruitment is as great as the mountains.

I will be eternally grateful to the priests who introduced me to the hills, the biggest single influence on my life. Who showed me that there were higher things than factory chimneys. And much of the central belt of Scotland is as industrial as

Lancashire, but pit bings is what they call their colliery slag heaps. There is a need for Achille Ratti to show the local lads here that there are higher things in life, who will be just as thrilled as I was on Gummers How.

There lies are destiny, but it will not happen unless we make it. And for me it is more than a destiny, it is a duty, that unfashionable word at this end of the century. So now that the red herring of Low Thistleton, which took too much time and effort, has faded away; now that our golden jubilee year is behind us, now is the time for Achille Ratti to get up off its bum and go forward once more.

There can only be one reason, only one excuse, if we fail. That is that man, that climber, that priest, who founded our club and inspired earlier members to such efforts, is no longer here to lead us. Let us hope that his spirit lives on in the Achille Ratti Climbing Club.



No prizes for identifying all the people on this photograph.

A LOOSE ROCK

Taken from The Mountains of Youth - by Arnold Lunn - 1909.

Arnold Lunn was a founder member of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club, in fact it was he who suggested that the club be named after the climbing Pope, Pius XI.

The day was perfect. The burnished silver of the sea melted into a golden haze. Light shadows cast by scudding clouds drifted across the blue and distant hills. The sun flooded down on the rocks. I slid down the crack and reached the top of the steep face of rock above 'The Table.' The usual route dodges the top fifteen feet of this face, and by an easy traverse reaches a lower ledge. But on that glorious afternoon I longed to spin out the joys of Cyfrwy, and I found a direct route from the top to the bottom of this wall, a steep but not very severe variation.

It was one of those days when to be alive is 'very heaven.' The feel of the warm, dry rocks and the easy rhythm of the descending motion gave me an almost sensuous pleasure. One toyed with the thought of danger, so complete was the confidence inspired by the firm touch of the wrinkled rocks.

In this short span
Between my finger tips and the smooth edge,
And these tense feet cramped to a crystal ledge,
I hold the life of man.

Consciously I embrace,
Arched from the mountain rock on which I stand
To the firm limit of my lifted hand,
The front of time and space;

For what is there in all the world for me
but what I know and see?
And what remains of all I see and know
If I let go?

I was glad to be alone. I revelled in the freedom from the restraints of the rope, and from the need to synchronise my movements with the movements of my companions.

I have never enjoyed rock-climbing more. I have never enjoyed rock-climbing since. But, at least, the hills gave me of their best, full measure and overflowing, in those last few moments before I fell.

A few minutes later Lindsay, who was admiring the view from Cader, was startled by the thunder of a stone avalanche. He turned to a stray tourist, urging him to follow, and dashed off in the direction of Cwfrwy.

And this is what had happened. I had just lowered myself off the edge of 'The Table.' - conspicuous in Mr. Abraham's excellent photograph. There was no suggestion of danger. Suddenly the mountain seemed to sway, and a quiver ran through the rocks. I

clung for one brief moment of agony to the face of the cliff. And then suddenly a vast block, which must have been ten feet high and several feet thick, separated itself from the face, heeled over the top of me, and carried me with it into space. I turned a somersault, struck the cliff some distance below, bounded off once again and, after crashing against the ridge two or three times, landed on a sloping ledge about seven feet broad. The thunder of the rocks falling through the hundred and fifty feet below my resting-point showed how narrow had been my escape.

I had fallen a distance which Lindsay estimated at a hundred feet. It was not a sliding fall, for except when I struck and rebounded I was not in contact with the ridge. The fall was long enough for me to retain a very vivid memory of the thoughts which chased each other through my brain during those few crowded seconds. I can still feel the clammy horror of the moment when the solid mountain face trembled below me, but the fall, once I was fairly off, blunted the edge of fear. My emotions were subdued, as if I had been partially anaesthetized. I remember vividly seeing the mountains upside down after my first somersault. I remember the disappointment as I realized that I had not stopped and that I was still falling. I remember making despairing movements with my hands in a futile attempt to check my downward progress.

The chief impression was a queer feeling that the stable order of nature had been overturned. The tranquil and immobile hills had been startled into a mood of furious and malignant activity, like a dangerous dog aroused from a peaceful nap by some inattentive passer-by who had trodden on him unawares. And every time I struck the cliff only to be hurled downwards once again, I felt like a small boy who is being knocked about by a persistent bully - 'Will he never stop?...surely he can't hit me again....surely he's hurt me enough.'

When at last I landed, I tried to sit up, but fell back hurriedly on seeing my leg. The lower part was bent almost at right angles. It was not merely broken, it was shattered and crushed. I shouted and heard no reply. Had Lindsay returned home? Would I have to wait for hours before help came?

Solitude had lost its charm. I no longer rejoiced in my freedom from intrusion. On the contrary, I raised my voice and called upon society to come to my assistance. I set immense store on my membership of the Human Club, and very urgently did I summon my fellow-members to my assistance.

And then suddenly I heard an answering cry, and my shouts died away in a sob of heartfelt relief.

And while I waited for help, I looked up at the scar on the cliff where the crag had broken away, and I realized all that I was in danger of losing. Had I climbed my last mountain?

General Information

ARCC Fell Running Championship Fixtures.

The races for this year have been selected with the location of our club huts in mind. All fixtures are easily accessible from Bishop's Scale, Beckstones or Tyn Twr and with the exception of the Langdale Horseshoe all races are "Entry on the Day".

| Date | Race | Category |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 6 March | Moel Y Ci | 2.25m 1000ft AS |
| 14 March | Black Combe | 9.0m 3800ft AM |
| 17 April | Moelwyn Peaks | 9.5m 2800ft AM |
| 16 May | Fairfield Horseshoe | 9.0m 3000ft AM |
| 5 June | Duddon Valley | 20m 6000ft AL |
| 17 July | Moel Siabod | 6.2m 2300ft AM |
| 29 August | Kentmere Millrigg | 5.0m ? New |
| 4 September | Grisedale Horseshoe | 10m 4400ft AM |
| 9 October | Langdale Horseshoe | 14m 4000ft. AL |
| 6 November | Dunnerdale | 5.0m 1800ft AS |

Meets Card, A reminder for organisers. Please nominate a participant to write a report for the journal.

Subscriptions. Have you paid your 1992/1993 Subs?

1993 Summer Meet. If you have any suggestions for next summers meet please them to a member of the Management Committee.

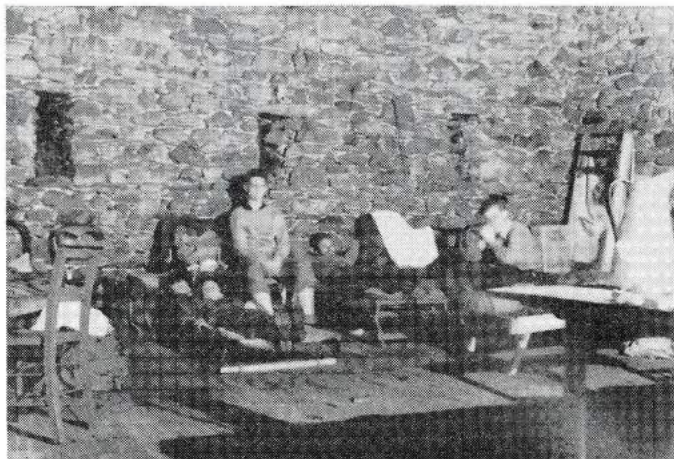
Book Library. The list of books in the Club library is too long to print in this journal. If you wish to borrow contact Paul Cooney on 0772 690147.

Dunmail will be free in August for members and families to use. Anyone wishing to make use of the premises should contact Dot Wood.

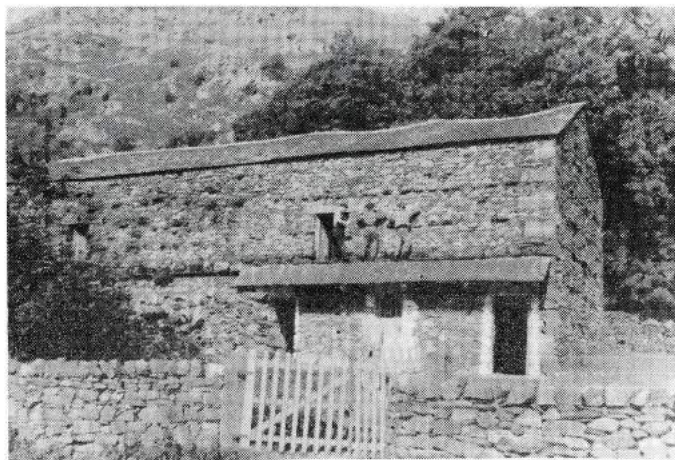
A reminder that junior members automatically become full members at 17 years and subscriptions are £5.00 per year until 21 years. Over 21 members may apply for reduced subs if they are students or unemployed. (A letter in writing to Nev Haigh).

Tyn Twr has been fitted with security lights outside. They will not operate when the mains are turned on. If you leave the hut at night during a stay, switch on the normal outside lights. (The security lights are for when no-one is in residence).

Now the womens'
dormitory.



The hut traverse.
(Now forbidden).



Photographs provided by John Foster.

Can anyone identify the people in the photograph?



Suggestions are Dave Hugill, Clare Kenny and Jean Lomas on their recent Haute Walk.

THE GRISEDALE HORSESHOE RACE

Faz Faraday.

At the time it was all too easy to accept Derek's suggestion that I be sponsored as the Club's token climber in the Cafod race. I had always covertly admired the Club's Fell Runners. They seemed to make a mockery of age and pain and I was struck by their tenaciousness - going out in all weathers. Perhaps it reminded me how, at one time people, used to climb in all weathers and achievement was gained by climbing in adverse conditions as well as by dry routes of high technical standards. So, when the Club Chairman announced at the 50th Anniversary Mass that I, as a non-fell runner was seeking sponsorship, I was suddenly drawn into fantasy land, the ego - thirsty for the kudos of being a Fell Runner for the day.

On the day of the Race an identity crisis arrived: and the self aggrandisement changed to fear and the only certainty I had in life was that I wasn't a Fell Runner afterall and soloing a 6a on some quiet crag would have been more reassuring. And on the day it was only the close presence of my personal coach, Alan Kenny, that kept me going. With wisdom that comes from experience he slowed me down when I entered fantasy land and wanted to speed up, and he spurred me on when I entered the land of reality that consisted of pain and breathlessness and hazy vision. He was my Guardian Angel although at times I thought of him as the Angel of Death - or was that Derek?

If there was a charge of liable brought against me, then Derek (Price) would be a wealthy man today! Somewhere between the top of St.Sunday Crag and the last check-point before the finish, the cloudless sky was blotted by a haze of blue smoke that hung over me and the good name of the Chairman was called into question. Where at first I had easily grasped at the kudos, now near the end of the race I hated fell running - and Derek - with a perfect hate and shouted out my displeasure as if I was a dervish in despair. My Guardian Angel and coach reminded me that pain (even hate) doesn't last forever and he reminded me of the Chairman's forgiving nature. So as a much humbled man I made it to the end. One thing was certain I no-longer had an identity crisis I knew I was a climber by choice and not a Fell Runner.

What really kept me going when the ego's shattered bits were left on the hill-side was the thought of all those people who had sponsored me. It is impossible to mention everyone but I thought of those who had sponsored me only for the last mile but generously, (and they fed my determination if not aggression). I thought of those who had sponsored me only for the first mile but equally generously though rather concerned whether I'd make it much beyond that. And I thought of those many who had in objective terms given a little but so objectively at great cost to themselves: and I thought of those whom I had the pleasure to receive from at the 50th Anniversary.

I have allowed myself to name only THREE people out of all those who gave so much: Alan, my personal coach who was there on behalf of CAFOD to make sure I completed the race; Derek, who's

idea it was that I be the token club non-fell runner. And anyway it's cheaper to make a public apology in the journal, than to pay out damages for liable! Sorry Derek !! And lastly I want to thank Ciaran (Limmer-Conroy) who not only sponsored me but prayed and willed me round with her good thoughts and assured me that her Mum's brand new green fell running shoes would see me round the course and add magic to my feet, which they did. So, thankyou one and all for your support and generosity. May next year's CAFOD race be a long way off!

(Glad to be back to being a climber)

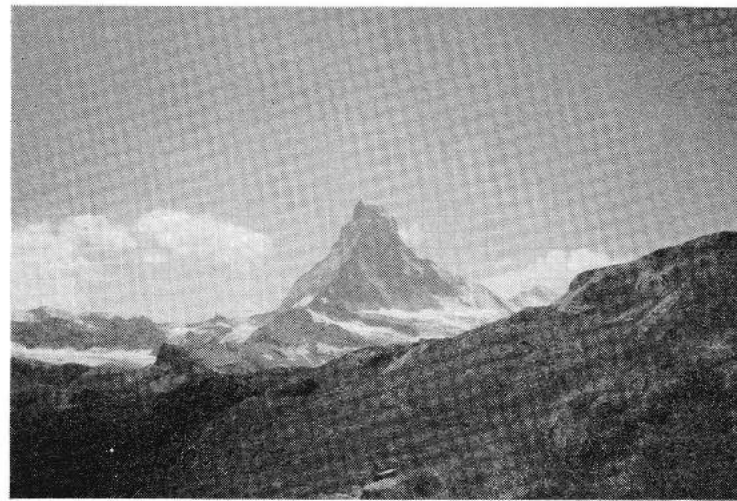
Nice to go round the course with you Faz. Derek

THE MATTERHORN - AUGUST 1992

Dot Wood

I have had various ambitions over the years, some which have been fulfilled and others that are still to be realised. This years summer meet in Zermatt was to put one more milestone behind me, the Matterhorn.

The Matterhorn must be one of the most photographed mountains in the world. She stands in almost what seems like isolated splendour and her magnificence draws the eye from most of the Zermatt area. The whole area abounds in beautiful mountains and scenery but it is the Matterhorn that dominates.



The Magnificent Matterhorn

My sole intent and purpose in going to the Alps this year was to climb the Matterhorn. I have made two attempts previously, July 1976 with George Cammack and September 1983 with my mate Dave. We had been snowed off both occasions, surely this time it would be third time lucky.

We travelled out in my van, Joyce, Jim and myself. There was much scepticism about this venture amongst our fellow club members who variously opted for planes and boats and trains at much expense. It was easily the most relaxing trip that I have ever made to any destination overseas. The weather was brilliant when we arrived and stayed that way for most of the next fortnight, it did rain and there was a thunder storm, but it didn't last long.

Jim and I had different opinions about getting acclimatised and fit, but as usual I had my own way and we went walking every day up and down thousands of feet and many kilometres. The paths were just for walking and everywhere you looked you got stunning views. We spent a night out on the Klien Matterhorn to acclimatise, which made me feel incredibly ill, followed by an easy ascent of the Breithorn, which made me feel even more ill. I recovered rapidly on the descent and after a rest day we decided to go for it.

Paul and Sean had done the ascent the previous Sunday so we had the benefit of their experience, not that it did us much good. "Don't climb the first tower", they said. I tried to tell Jim this has he followed two blokes who were going up the first tower. They did seem to know where they were going but of course didn't. That was where we nearly fell out as I required a rope to descend back on to the route, which Jim didn't think I should have. It was straightforward after that. The weather was brilliant, a little too warm and I was wearing far too many clothes. We had a late start, not much sleep due to noisy foreigners and now we were sweating in the heat of the sun. I think we must have been the last party to leave the hut but in spite of my extreme slowness we started to catch people up, which is why we went up the first tower, to pass them. And it wasn't until we got to the Mossley slabs below and above the Solvay Hut that we began to meet people on their way down. We did leave some gear at the Solvay which helped and after a short rest and something to eat we carried on. Above the Solvay are some slabs which must be about V.Diff and then you are out onto the ridge where the climbing becomes mixed, i.e., snow and rock. The tremendous North Face of the Matterhorn drops away below your right elbow whilst to your left the slope eases its way to the equally impressive East Face.

More people on their way down now, but they were more spread out and not a problem, it was rather the people we were still catching up who began to impede our progress. The fixed rope didn't particularly inspire confidence even though you could have tied up the Ark Royal with it, it was so thick, but we clipped a sling onto it just the same. A short over-hanging wall followed, Jim had to give me a hand, and then we were onto the summit snowfield and it felt like the roof of the world. We finally put our crampons on here, not before time, and carried on towards the

summit. Jim raced ahead to take photo's as I plodded up the last .pa hundred feet to the top. A large grin split my face and I couldn't stop even though I knew that the way down wasn't going to be easy.



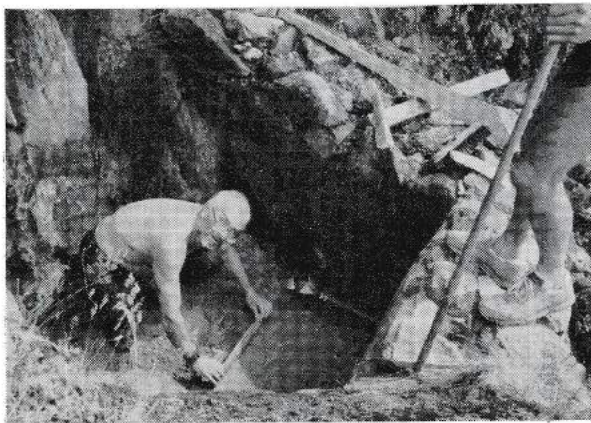
Jim and Dot on the Summit

The top was very narrow, less than a yard wide in places and we had it to ourselves for a short while. Blue skies, infinite horizons, Mont Blanc in the distance, the Alps laid out like a relief map below our feet, it was truly breathtaking. But it was soon time to go. I realised almost immediately that it wasn't going to be a doddle. I felt as though I was stood on the top of an ice-cream cornet and my anxiety level rose even higher than the Matterhorn. A rope was asked for, luckily it wasn't one of the things we had decided to ditch at the Solvay and Jim then roped me down till we reached the fixed ropes where we proceeded to abseil. We passed people still attempting to go up as well as people who were descending. Jim was pretty aggressive and rude, I thought, but we were going faster than the people we caught up with and so we went through. We picked up our gear at the Solvay Hut, one more abseil down the difficult slab and then we unroped to scramble down the rest of the mountain.

I didn't want to spend another night at the Hornli Hut but I knew that the last telepherique had gone and probably Joyce as well. Joyce had intended to come up to the hut to wait for us, but we had such a late start that she must have had to leave ages ago to catch the last cabin down. We stopped for brews and food at the Hornli and then, much against Jim's better judgment, set off down to Zermatt. It was dark by the time we got to the Schwartz and of course we got lost on the way down. We collected

a Japanese lad who was also lost, and by the time we did reach Zermatt the last train to Tasch had gone so we bivied in the park and got the first train in the morning.

THE UNSUNG HEROES



Re-furbishing the water tank at Bishop's Scale.

'Checkpoint Charlie'
on
Coniston Old Man
Old Counties Tops Race.



Some of the helpers
on the Bishop's Walk