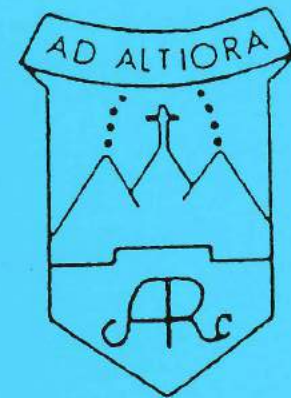


ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB



1994
JOURNAL

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

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INTRODUCTION

Unlike previous years, I have had to do very little 'arm twisting' in the process of extracting articles from members. It is encouraging to be asked, "When do you want my article?", or "Is there a deadline?". I am now beginning to feel confident that events are being recorded and will be there for future generations to read.

Anything printed in the journal needs to be a report of an event that occurred during the year, unless something written in the past relates to a recent happening or is applicable to the club itself. Every report on every meet that took place in 1994 is included and I am grateful to the authors of those articles and to all other contributors.

Ad Altiora

Derek Price.



Travellers' Rest

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Saturday 19th November 1994 at the Chapelstile Village Hall

48 members were present at the meeting, which was attended by The President, Monsignor Slattery.

Apologies were recieved from Mike McGovern, Dot Wood, Michael Pooler, Margaret Price, Sheila Thornton, Ivan Limmer and Nick Smith.

A summary of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting was presented.

Chairman's Report

Derek Price began by commenting on the numbers who attended the AGM in 1993 - a total of 62 members. Which must be one of the highest turn-outs and was probably boosted by having the Dinner on the same day. So it seemed sensible to do the same again this year.

Once again we had a very busy year with a crowded meets list and increased use of the huts. Junior meets, in particular, are growing in popularity, and it may be necessary for families to book places on the meets in advance so that we can accommodate them and supply enough leaders. Rock climbing and walking are very popular with many children, however, to quote the Mountain Training Boards National Guidelines, "The volume of people going on the hills has grown over the years and continues to do so. Unfortunately there have been a number of incidents. Some of these have been serious, particularly those involving young people, and have resulted in tragic and unnecessary loss of life. Many of these incidents could and should have been avoided". Derek believes that a club of our size should have its own guidelines for junior meets so that there is uniformity amongst the leaders be they walking, rockclimbing, potholeing or canoeing, and to that end had asked Mickey Pooler, Faz Faraday and Dot Wood, our junior meet leaders, to put forward recommendations to the Management Committee.

Comments on hut improvements and matters relating to the use of the huts were left to the hut wardens and their reports. However, he did wish to thank all those members who had given their time in assisting the various activities such as the CAFOD Race, the Bishop's Walk, Junior Meets, Working Weekends and so on. These activities are at the heart of the club and are one of the reasons for its success.

Looking to the future, we still have a lot of work to do at Dunmail, the Family Quarters in Langdale are being refitted this winter and the Chapel being pointed. Also, the water heating system is being checked to overcome wastage of electricity. As with Scotland, Derek had asked members to keep an eye open for suitable property to rent in the Yorkshire Dales. We need to be careful how we spend our money, and if we are to venture into

enough usage to warrant purchasing a property, and sees renting the best method of measuring this,

Derek completed his report by praising and thanking the Management Committee for their support and work, and for the unselfish way they give up their time for the benefit of other members.

Secretary's Report

John Meredith began by reading a letter from Dot Wood confirming that she would be in favour of a Scottish hut, and would propose getting rid of Dunmail and that whist she would still do the job of hut warden at Dunmail, it is a pain and not a pleasure.

He reported on the stage reached in negotiations with the National Trust as to the possible long term occupation of Beckstones. The NT have significantly moved their ground from the position which they adopted two years ago when they proposed that the club should undertake all the proposed repairs and renewals at the club's cost. Since the Trust had contemplated costs in excess of £13,000.00, in addition to an annual rent of £2,500.00, the Committee had not considered this a practical proposition. By May of 1944, the Trust were acknowledging that they would arrange and pay for many contemplated repairs and renewals and a substantially reduced rent level was now contemplated; negotiations are continuing.

The Secretary endorsed the Chairman's comments on the healthy level of participation in junior meets and events. He drew upon the success of the children's efforts to complete the Three Yorkshire Peaks in August as an encouraging indication of the prospects for the attempt to complete the three National Peaks proposed for the May Bank holiday in 1995. He appealed for members to help with the event generally, and driving in particular, recognising the importance of Pete McHale's contribution to the Yorkshire Three Peaks outing, in providing "brew stops".

There followed a lively discussion on the desirability or otherwise of continuing to rent Beckstones, selling or retaining Dunmail, renting or buying another property or properties in the West, Scotland or elsewhere, the extent to which the club can or should subsidise huts which, in purely financial terms, are uneconomic. The Secretary refused to accept Dave Ogden's assertion that the mood of the general membership was against renting any property and in favour of buying further properties, even if they are loss making, when only very few of those present at this meeting have expressed any view and, even then, a divergence of views have been expressed. Roy Buffey and Bryony White suggested a postal referendum of the members as a whole.

Treasurer's Report

Mike Lomas's delivery of the report took 16 minutes (making Barry Rogers the clear winner of the "guess the length of Mike's

Report" lottery).

The surplus of £6,048.00 for the year was considered a good result, particularly considering that £8,702,00 were spent on major repair and maintenance work.

Bishop's Scale and Dunmail made a profit; Beckstones and Tyn Twr made losses.

Income from subscriptions and hut fees had increased by 35% on the previous year.

The heavy expenditure upon repairs and maintenance reflected the Committee's concern to maintain and improve the club's existing premises.

The net cost of special events had reduced by 10% on the previous year.

Mike confirmed his continued support for the club's membership of the British Mountaineering Council. He confirmed an intention to review the level of insurance cover in the forthcoming year.

At Mike's invitation the members confirmed approval of the re-appointment of Brian Cheetham as the club's auditor.

The net surplus for the year has meant that the previous trend of reduction of the club's reserves has begun to be reversed although the reserve capital is still only 80% of the figure for 90/91.

He recommended no change in the current year in the level of annual subscriptions and hut fees but that they be reviewed next year.

In response to a question from Dave Ogden the Treasurer confirmed that the club pays for BMC membership for nine life members; evidently a number of life members at the meeting, who believed they were included in the BMC subscription and thus its insurance cover, were not in fact covered.

Membership Secretary's Report

The club has a current membership of 678, the highest figure ever, comprised as follows:

Graduate:	27
Full:	525
Life:	126
Total	678

Of that total, 454 are Catholic and 224 are Non-Catholic. Nev Haigh has confirmed that 335 members now pay by direct debit again acknowledging the benefits of the direct debit system from a point of view of administration and of reduction of the work load falling upon his wife Anita and himself.

Hut Warden's Reports

Beckstones: Joyce Kent confirmed that at the February working weekend work to improve the fire and the end room (for use as a family room) had been carried out. Usage had increased over the year. She appealed for sensible use of the hut's heating facilities and for a higher level of usage of the hut generally by members.

Although there had been some further discord with the National Trust and National Trust Acorn Groups, relations had improved.

Bishop's Scale: Alan Kenny reported that the hut had been well used, very largely by members rather than outside clubs. Although there had been no major expenditure, the Chapel had been repointed and replacement of rotten window frames and gutters carried out.

Dunmail: In the absence of Dot Wood, Jim Cooper reported on developments at the hut. Work done included new coal bunker, new drains, upstairs floor covered and the toilets replaced. Work proposed: water treatment, low voltage night-time/emergency lights and renovation of the kitchen area. It is again proposed to restrict the use during next August to club members although the hut was not well used in August 1994.

Receipts were slightly down on 92/93. Jim confirmed that the hut is a potential source of making money for the club. He expressed his view that there were really two options open; either sell the hut or to run it properly. The latter option would involve marketing and promotion and spreading the burden of running it, namely have more than one person as hut warden. There is a need for a sub-committee rather than a part time hut warden. It is a thankless and a very time-consuming task to run the hut. It would be possible to approach outside groups, producing a promotional brochure; should the club be in the business of running Dunmail for profit?

Roy Buffey queried whether the boiler house was finished; Jim confirmed that it was not. Derek confirmed that a letter from Rod Grimshaw indicated that he had one day's work left. Terry Kitching commented that being the warden of Dunmail was a different job from being warden of the other huts and suggested there may be a need to consider paying someone to run it. Jim raised the point that the more it is viewed as a commercial venture, the more one might have to consider health and safety issues.

Tyn Twr

Anne Wallace confirmed the hut's income had increased over the last year's level. 44% of income from members and their guests with 56% coming from outside groups. There have been problems with the smoke detectors. She confirmed that Barry Rogers had completed the re-pointing in Spring as well as some window frame repairs and outside painting. New showers has been installed in May. Some further electrical and plumbing work required.

Anne's report concluded with a moving tribute to Ffrancon Hughes, who had lived at the neighbouring property and who died on 7th November 1994.

Election of Officers

Derek Price was re-elected Chairman and Mike Pooler as Vice Chairman.

Any Other Business

The Chairman confirmed that a letter from Bishop Brewer has requested a change of route for the Sponsored Walk; a walk in the Ullswater area was under consideration.

John Foster alluded to the need to improve the water heating/insulation at Bishop's Scale to reduce the heavy costs, mentioning that he had provided a written report for the Committee's consideration a number of months ago. Other members supported his view that all reasonable steps should be taken to improve efficiency. Derek Price confirmed that the subject was not being ignored by the Committee and referred to the fact that it was contemplated that work would be carried out early in 1955 when improvements to the family quarters were being carried out. John Foster confirmed that he was ready and able to do the electrical work.

In conclusion Leo Pollard proposed a vote of thanks to the Management Committee and to Monsignor Slattery for the interest shown by him attending the meeting.

40 YEARS IN THE ARCC.

Derek Price.

3rd August 1949. Left Preston at 3.30am on my bike for a walking/ biking holiday with three friends. Our destination was Keswick. We arrived at about 3.00pm and whilst it may seem a long journey for the modern cyclist, our bikes were heavy and without gears, also the roads were pretty rough. I can still remember whizzing down Dunmail Raise towards Thirlmere when the bumpy road caused my front lamp to jump off its bracket, fly between my legs and knock the rear lamp into the spokes - the next few minutes were clouded in haziness as I was extracted from a stone wall.

Kitwise we were really unprepared for our fortnight of adventure having only school plimsolls and shoes for footwear, school gaberdine raincoats for weather protection and an assortment of sweaters for warmth. (I should add that we had sent our suitcases on ahead by rail - in the days when Keswick had a railway station!) Nevertheless, in spite of our poor equipment, we climbed Scafell Pike, via the Corridor Route, Great Gable, (very spooky to young lads in the mist), Skiddaw and the Catbells as well as biking and boating in the area. The ride back home was easier, being down hill most of the way.

Unknowingly, that first visit to the Lakes had made an impression on me as I discovered on my next visit four years later.

It was at Easter 1953 when the late John Britt and I, and a few friends, motorcycled to Langdale and stayed in the Wall End barn. The weather was typical of Langdale, raining, but the freedom and the sheer delight of open space made up for the wet and discomfort and the awful smell inside the barn. At Whitsun John brought a clothes line and we did a little scrambling on rock outcrops, but nothing serious.

Our next visit was Easter 1954, again typical wet Langdale weather. However, that Whitsun the weather was glorious and I did my first real rock climb, seconding John on Evening Wall, then on Bilberry Buttress, and the following weekend I led it. From then on there was no stopping us. We hitch-hiked up every weekend and climbed non-stop, slowly ticking the V S's off in the guide book, even once being invited to join up with the Craig Dhu for a day on White Ghyll, the ultimate accolade for us at the time.

That same year we met up with another Prestonian, Ted Russell, who introduced us to the Achille Ratti Climbing Club. The club had bought a barn at Rawhead from Cyril Bulman the owner of the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. (As a matter of interest, the Fell and Rock C.C. have the original farmhouse and a small barn and we have the large barn. The house is dated 1689). It was possibly the greatest thing that ever happened to me, because not only did

it provide me with the opportunity to continue my outdoor activities in relative comfort, it also provided uncountable life-long friends and, of course, I met Margaret through the club.

The summer of 1955 was spent climbing wherever and whenever possible though our base had changed from the Wall End barn to Rawhead barn, (now Bishop's Scale), which had been kitted out with one or two cookers, three or four beds and a few hundred mice.

Our climbing was now taking us out of Langdale to other well known crags as our enthusiasm continued to grow. I knew my time was limited because Her Majesty's Minister of Defence had already informed me that my two years National Service was due in the next few months.

1956 saw only a couple of visits to the Lakes and the same to Widdop, climbing on gritstone. Both John and I had final exams and I had been ear-marked to join the Army on the 4th July.

My National Service was interesting. I was posted to North Africa and spent much of my ten months stay there training with the REME pentathlon team - a task which I enjoyed very much. In September of 1957 I was posted to Cyprus. Unfortunately, this was during the EOKA troubles and life was very different and difficult over the next few months, though I did manage to do some climbing in the Kyrenia mountains. However, time passed and eventually I was put on a troopship and sent back to England for demobilization.

The old army chant of troops in basic training, 'roll on death, demobs too far away', seemed another age as I stood in civilian dress and handed my kit back to the Quarter-Master. I had learned a lot about life and about people and had visited some very interesting places, especially in the Libyan Desert.

By this time Bishop's Scale had been completely converted and was more or less as it is now. (The family quarters did not exist, the present kitchen being the priests' room and the bedroom space the chapel). Mass was celebrated every Sunday at 10.00am by a priest from the junior seminary at Underley Hall, Kirby Lonsdale. We didn't have a Saturday evening mass until mid to late sixties and even that was stretching church law to the limit. Apparently, the only places where Saturday masses could be celebrated were naval bases and the like, however, minor details like that never seemed to bother Bishop Pearson, our founder President.

Our founder was at this time living in Windermere and it was not unusual for him to turn up at any of the huts riding his sit-up-and-beg bike. If he arrived by car at Bishop's Scale he was usually showing someone around his prized possession. He was so proud of his achievement and took an enormous interest in the Club's welfare.

Our local pub was the New D.G. (surprise, surprise!) and a great friendship was built up between the owners, the Bulman

family, especially John and his wife Jane, and club members. (A friendship that lasted until John died about three years ago). My family were also on good terms with many locals in Chapelstile and Elterwater, and though most of these have now passed on, we still have happy memories of the welcome that was always there when we visited.

Through the sixties it is probably true to say that there were more rock climbers than walkers using Bishop's Scale. Members went out to the Alps, not on official meets, just merely to enjoy themselves. On one occasion whilst climbing the Matterhorn with Ben Carter and an unknown female companion - John Britt and Frank Whittle were on a separate rope in front - the young lady collapsed suffering from altitude sickness just as we reached the shoulder. *We were just at the point where Edward Whymper had to cross the North Face because of the overhangs on the ridge. (An amazing and brave decision to make as anyone who has seen the difficulties and experienced the exposure will agree).* We had a long agonising wait for John and Frank to appear. At last they came into sight, collected the young woman, and disappeared down the ridge as we went up it to the summit.

The late sixties saw many of the regulars married and by the early seventies these regulars had many offsprings and the need for family accommodation became an urgent issue. *In 1967 ten couples, including Margaret and I, were married, all of us had met our partners through the ARCC.* Before the family quarters conversion the bottom dormitory was the family room, not very successful since one child crying in the night woke most of the others up, but we were grateful for anything at the time. The luxury of the family quarters was something else. This came about because the hog house in the field adjacent to Bishop's Scale was converted into the Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows, and the old mass centre became the family quarters. I was Club Secretary at the time and in those days applications for membership came to the secretary. The news of our family accommodation had spread and people with families were applying, many of them openly saying that 'it would be a cheap holiday at the hut'. This led to the Junior Membership rule, which briefly said that a parent must have been a member for at least five years before he or she could bring children up, since then the term has been reduced to three years. I am happy to see provision for children at all of the huts because our future must lie in our young people.

We all as new parents, benefitted from the family quarters. Whilst others were enjoying times at Butlins or in Spain, our children were building up lifelong relationships in wonderful surroundings. Every rock had a liquorice allsort on it (if Ceasar the dog didn't get there first), midnight feasts were held, canoeing meets and weekends of marvellous family walks; the culmination being summer holidays in Wales at the Tyn Twr hut as described in more detail below. Our children learned respect for all people, an ability to converse with people from all walks of life, confidence in themselves and above all, we had lots of inexpensive fun.

In the summer of 1972 along with the late Terry Hickey

(Chairman) and his wife Ginge, we took our three children down to Tyn Twr for a fortnight and we have been down every year since. Then in 1974 Peter and Dawn Durkin and their three children started going down and later Mickey Pooler with his team, and so it goes on. In 1979 John Britt, Peter Durkin and I did our first (and only) Fellsman. The same year Peter and I did the first of eleven Karrimors together, I later, during Peter's illness, did two more with my son Simon. Alas, since then, along with many others, I have become somewhat disenchanted with the organisation of the event, plus the fact that I made my feelings very clear in writing to the organisers after the debacle of the 1991 Arrochar Karrimor, and have not been invited to partake in recent years. However, they were great fun, and usually we would join two other well known members at the overnight camp to have a natter and listen to their jokes. *One of the snags of the camps is that two adults are crammed into a small tent and when the call of nature comes, usually in the early hours of the morning, it takes a strong will power to drag oneself out of the tent, especially if it is raining. However, the two well known members got around this problem by using a plastic bag, unfortunately, one year one of them rolled over on the bag and burst it. Since then they have used the same system as everyone else.*

One of my problems, and it is possibly a family trait, is that when I am not active I tend to put on weight rapidly, my father and his brothers were all six-footers and 15 stone plus. John Britt and I had trained with Preston Harriers as teenagers and I had run for the REME in North Africa and the Dekhalia Garrison in Cyprus and for Alsager College during my teacher training. So in my forties I started serious running again, several times a week, to keep fit. Eventually this led me to running road races, e.g. 10K, 10 mile, half marathons and three classic marathons, the Pony, Wolverhampton and London. Also, I have run on the fells for pleasure most of my life and so when I was in my late forties, to keep the momentum going, and under a certain amount of pressure from Leo Pollard, I started fell racing, which eventually led to completing the Bob Graham at the ripe old age of fifty two.

In 1990 an organised party of ten members completed the Tour of Mont Blanc. One particular incident will always remain in my mind, and that was the night we spent on the Col de Bonhomme, the highest point of the Tour at around 10,000ft. We had just set up camp when the heavens opened and we experienced a very violent thunderstorm. En masse we decided to eat in the refuge rather than attempt cooking in the storm, and after an excellent meal, several carafes of wine and good company, we made our way back to the tents. It was still raining but had eased a little. Unfortunately, a number of tents were washed out, including Peter Durkin's, and as mine was on a well drained site and dry, (it would be! I can hear people say) he crawled in with me. Sometime in the early hours of the morning I was awakened by Peter nudging me vigorously, gasping that he couldn't breathe and asking for an aspirin, at the same time saying he was having a heart attack. After a struggle - it was really only a one-man tent - I found a couple of paracetamols, ignored his cursing because I had no water and fell asleep again. When I awoke at about 6.30am I could feel Peter breathing, and happy that I didn't have a corpse

next to me, dragged myself out of the tent to make a brew of tea. It was a lovely cloudless morning, with the high snow-covered peaks glittering in the morning sun, incredible to think what it had been like just a few hours before. I heard Peter stirring, and eventually he climbed out of the tent. I turned to hand him his brew and nearly collapsed at the sight. He was covered from head to toe in feathers. They were up his nostrils, in his ears, in his hair and when he opened his mouth to speak it was like looking into a birds nest. This was the reason he couldn't breathe properly; his sleeping bag had obviously burst during the night and he had been feasting himself on eider down.

A number of us later climbed Mont Blanc, and amongst the party was Peter. Peter was not a mountaineer but an extremely tough, experienced and determined walker, though terrified of heights. It was a great measure of his strength and character and the guidance of Dot Wood, Mike Lomas and Barry Rogers that led him to this achievement.

In 1991 we had a club met in Chamonix and almost forty members gathered together to enjoy the mountains.

Many of the developments of the sixties and early seventies, including the purchase of Tyn Twr, were at the hand of the Vice Chairman, Terry Hickey, and a hard working Management Committee. I can remember Terry and I driving down to Wales in his pick-up truck on many occasions loaded with plumbing materials, furniture and the like.

Terry and his close friend, John Gilmour, a former member of the Catholic Boys Club in 1940 (from which the Achille Ratti Climbing Club developed) and an absolute live-wire, were constantly organising crackpot activities. On three consecutive New Years Days they persuaded us (us being the regular visitors) to swim in Stickle Tarn, climb White Ghyll slabs in the snow and play dominoes on a frozen Tarn Howes.

We used to have Old Time Music Hall concerts in Preston, organised by Frank Rogerson's wife Mavis. There were two groups of singers, the Preston Operatic Society and the singing waiters. Six male members of the club were the singing waiters. We wore straw hats with the words of the songs inside the hats. The idea being that we held the hats in our hands and could read the words. Unfortunately, on several occasions we failed to have the same songs at the same time, resulting in absolute chaos.

Terry became Chairman in 1972 and immediately made attempts to purchase Buckbarrow (before it went into the hands of the N.T.) but we were too late. According to the owners (West Cumberland Farmers) agent, had we tried in the early 1960's, we might have had a chance. Apparently, a fairly recent covenant had been drawn up to pass all the West Cumberland Farmers properties to the N.T. Prior to this property had been sold.

Dunmail was also a concern. In the sixties and seventies and part of the eighties, the main usage was from school parties and the wear and tear on the building was heavy, so work had to be carried out constantly. Thanks to Tom Baron the hut slowly

improved and now with a generator for electricity and another caring warden, Dot Wood, (we seem blessed with them at Dunmail) improvements are continuing. Incidentally, the property had been purchased in 1946 and was regularly used by members, in fact it was the first club hut that I stayed at. There was no warden at the time and the upkeep of the hut was in the hands of the 'Ladies Committee', organised from Carlisle. I was warden from 1962 to 1965 and the hut would be full of youngsters from Easter to the end of September. (Two years ago I tried to trace the history of the building, with very little success. It apparently started life as a backbarn and the front extension must have been added between 1803 and 1856, since Raise Cottage, as it was known, is not mentioned in Dorothy Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal (1800-1803) on her many visits to Wythburn, though she does mention most of the other farms and houses in the area. The age of the barn can only be guessed - probably 18th century - as early maps do not include the common land on the Raise. The complete building is shown on the first O.S. map of 1856).

Whilst all these property improvements were going on there was also the activity on the hill. Like most fathers, I was somewhat restricted with three young children, though with Margaret we made good use of the family quarters, and whilst I couldn't get on the rock as much as I would have liked, I did get out quite often.

The death of Terry Hickey in the early eighties was a shock, he seemed to have been around so long, hardly ever missing a weekend at one of the huts. He was a real character and did much to develop the club after the purchase of Bishop's Scale. He was replaced as Chairman by George Partridge who continued with hut maintenance and updating of the huts and also increasing club activities. He and his wife Pat gave a period of stability and growth to the ARCC all based on sound principles.

I was elected Chairman in 1988 and have aimed at carrying on where George left off, that is in maintaining and improving our properties, encouraging club activities, be they fell walking, fell running, rock climbing, Scottish winter mountaineering, Alpine mountaineering, mountain biking, orienteering, caving or canoeing. The club has so much to offer and thankfully members appreciate the unique situation that they are in. An example of this is the Meets list, it is becoming busier each year and a quick look at the 1995 winter card shows meets, in Spain, Scotland and the Howgills, within a few weeks of each other, all apparently to be well attended. Neither is it the same old faces, new members are involving themselves all the time. The childrens' meets are becoming so popular that we are having to start a booking system. All this is what the club is about and fulfills the aims and objectives of the founder.

The one area of improvement I would like to see is in attracting new young members. (As would every other climbing club). In 1990 we sent posters to every Catholic Sixth Form College and Youth Club in the North West, explaining the clubs activities and quoting the annual subscription, - £5.00 at that time for under 21 years. To my knowledge, not a single application for membership was made. The only way we can attract

young people is through other young members. They are certainly not going to be impressed by 40, 50 and 60 year olds. Neither can we go on about the vast numbers of young people we had in the sixties, though I suppose that I can claim some of the credit for many of them joining. At that time I was running a winter night school class in basic mountaineering for the Mountaineering Association, and I made sure that every class member was encouraged to join the club, including Harry Wiggins, Geof Cross, Chris Farrell, Pete Henry, Joan Kerrins (now Ogden), to name but a few, and these new young members introduced other young friends. I was also an organiser for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in the Preston area and this pulled a few more in. But then I was young and could lead by example. What we now have to do is to encourage junior members attaining the age of seventeen to retain their membership and hopefully introduce their friends, and when they visit the huts to make them welcome.

Nevertheless, during the period of the sixties to the eighties and beyond, membership was (and still is) increasing. Which meant new rules being brought in or old ones adapted to satisfy the changing needs and attitudes. In retrospect, I think that most of the time we get it right otherwise members would have let us know in no uncertain manner.

In many ways I am in a very privileged position, having been an active member since 1954 and having known all of the club officials from that time allows me to comment from experience. Over the years a lot of thought, time and energy has gone into forming the Achille Ratti Climbing Club. We do not have climbing standards for entry but we do insist that members are of good character, and whilst our graduation system is not 100% perfect, it rarely lets us down. In writing our constitution, Bishop Pearson said that, *The object of the ARCC shall be to encourage amongst men and women the pursuit of mountaineering and to foster a love of the mountains.* I firmly believe that this is precisely what we do, also, the support of other organisations in their activities, the Bishop's Walk, the CAFOD race, childrens' activities, and so on, all illustrate the good that is generated by the unselfish attitude of members, and is something that we should rightly be proud of. Our members not only enjoy the camaraderie within the huts, they create it, and I am certain that our founder would be delighted to see the way *his* vision of the club has developed.

Whether I will be around to celebrate 50 years or even 60 years in the club is in the hands of God. If I am it is a bonus, if not, then I have no complaints. A number of close friends have already departed this world but their memories live on and they all played a major part in the development of the ARCC. My life has been enriched by the members I have met over the years and I hope that others will be as fortunate as I.

Ad Altiora

The Kenny Family (Leeds branch)

(This is not a report about the walk to the pub from Dunmail, although that is a long walk!)

This year the Long Walk started at Dunmail. The hut gradually filled up during Friday evening and emptied shortly afterwards as people descended the hill to the Travellers' Rest. On their return, those unused to 'lights out' at Dunmail stumbled around in the dark trying to remove contact lenses and feel their way to their bed (or someone else's in the case of a few late arrivals). A few of the more sensitive members had made their own sleeping arrangements - under canvas or behind the wheel!

Mickey Pooler woke with the birds and decided on an early start, obviously attracted by the weather(?). Despite the bad weather another 39 runners and walkers followed Mickey into the rain and mist throughout the morning. So, on this occasion, the early birds caught a cold shower.

Early conditions on the fell were not good and resulted in a number of navigational errors at Red Screes. It is said that at least one runner arrived at Kirkstone Pass via Ambleside!

The weather improved dramatically around 10.30 and the rest of the day was clear and sunny giving superb views over the fells.

The bacon butties at Kirkstone were much appreciated as was the excellent hospitality at Father Hughes' house at Glenridding. The only complaint was that the abundance of food and drink made the climb up Mires Beck and Catstycam heavy going.

Runners and walkers returned to Dunmail during the afternoon, weary but cheerful, and sat around outside soaking their feet in buckets of water. After hot showers (well showers anyway) everyone sat down to a delicious meal prepared by Dot and her band of helpers. Refreshed and revived everyone managed to summon the energy for.....yes, yuo've guessed it, that other long walk where travellers rest.

Thanks to the organisers, helpers, runners and walkers for making it such an enjoyable event.

John Braybrook

I pay tribute to the RAF helicopter rescue service. Over the past ten years I have assisted in two rescues in the Langdales when the distinctive yellow coloured helicopter has been of immense assistance.

The downward pressure from the helicopter's rotors is tremendous and the vortex created swirls debris around. Caution has to be exercised if you are on the ground underneath the helicopter as it hovers. A climbing helmet is useful.

One of the incidents I attended, a hiker walking along the shore of Stickle Tarn gazed up at the helicopter and tripped over a rock and broke his leg. The RAF had two casualties that day to deal with!

We are fortunate in this country that the service is free to the injured party.

I have witnessed the helicopter crews practising, on numerous occasions, to get in as close as possible to the rock face. A risky operation I suspect.

Years ago, in the early 1980's I was climbing solo on a route on the Napes. I reached the ridge to see a helicopter ascending on the otherside. To me the sight in the afternoon sun was reminiscent of a scene from the film 'Close Encounters of a Third Kind'. Speilberg could not have set the action and atmospherics better.

The cover photograph of the 1993/94 Langdale and Ambleside Accident Report shows a RAF helicopter cooperating with the local rescue team.

In June, I was talking to two RAF personnel when I was out walking in the Lakes. I mentioned to them my interest in the Tucano turbo-prop trainer that is a familiar sight in the Lakeland skies. On my return home I received literature, in the post, on the Tucano and the Hawk trainer. I thought this was a kind gesture.

Well done the RAF.

A TRIP TO THE ECRINS

Dave Hugill and Peter Dowker

After visiting the Ecrins National Park a couple of years ago to do the Tour of the Oisans, we decided to visit the area again to explore a little deeper, and to attempt a summit or two.

Driving down through France, with temperatures in the high eighties, good progress meant that we were nearly in the mountains when we made our overnight camp at Cote St Andre', just north of Grenoble. A short drive next day brought us to Bourg d'Oisans to pick up provisions and then it was over the Col du Lauteret, to Ailfroide where we made camp at the excellent wooded site used two years previously.

Loading up full packs next day, it was off up to the Glacier Blanc Hut (2550m) through spectacular rock and glacier scenery.

Our first objective the next day was the Pic du Glacier d'Arsine, reached at 8.30 am that morning. From the summit, Mt. Blanc, the Barre des Ecrins, and L'Ailfroide were all visible in the morning sunshine. A small family of bouquetin crossed the glacier as we prepared to descend.

Next day, a glacier plod took us up to the Refuge d'Ecrins (3175m), where the afternoon was spent enjoying the sun outside the hut.

An early start (4.30 am) next day saw us plodding up the glacier towards the Barre des Ecrins. Both of us had headaches, mine clearing fairly soon, but Peter felt rough all day. The ascent was steep but technically not difficult. On reaching the Dome des Ecrins (4015m), we decided to be content with that summit, so after a rest and lunch, we started the descent in increasing heat, back to the refuge.

Returning down to the campsite at Ailfroide the next day, with temperatures in the nineties, and after a slap up meal, we dropped down to Vallouise, and Argentiere la Besse for provisions.

At Vigneaux, near Argentiere la Besse, we discovered a good via ferrata, with great exposure, but very safe, to entertain us for half a day. The descent path was a butterfly photographers paradise.

Our second week began with a visit to the Pelvoux Refuge (2704m). From there we did a route to the summit of Mt. Pelvoux (3943m) via the Coolridge Couloir. The summit views were tremendous with Mt. Blanc and Mt. Viso (Italy) on the far horizon. Descent was by the same route, but softening snow and a small rockfall lower down added a touch of excitement. After a rest and food, the afternoon was spent descending to Ailfroide and the camp.

The next day, retracing our steps up the Torrent de Niere, we ascended to the Refuge du Sele (2511m), passing grazing chamois high on the valley sides. The last few hundred feet to the hut were up steep crags, with wire ropes bolted to the rock for security.

The refuge here is fairly new (1982). and in a superb situation just below the Sele and Ailfroide glaciers.

After an early start next day, the east summit of L'Ailfroide (3927m) was reached by 9.00 am. The route was graded F + PD, and was an interesting mixed route, and we had good clear weather again. The big summits of Mt. Pelvoux, Le Barre des Ecrins and Le Bans towered around us.

Descending by the same route, after brews, soup and a rest, it was down to Ailfroide for a camp meal and a couple of beers in the evening.

A rest day followed, and then an interesting drive via the Col d'Isoard to Briancon (old fortified town), Sierra Chevalier, the Col du Galibier, and up to Chamberg to camp.

An 18 hour drive the next day saw us home, after a trip to be long remembered for its fine mountains and our great fortune with the weather!

SCOTTISH MEET. 5th - 12th FEBRUARY, 1994. McKintire Hut.

Derek Price

Meet Members: Ben Carter, Jim Cooper, Peter Dowker, Dave Hugill, Alan Kenny, Terry Kitching, Dave Linnet, Mike Lomas, Jean Lockhead, Dave Makin, Peter McHale, Sean O'Hagan, Derek Price, Dot Wood.

The first half of the week was spoilt by poor weather and members kept to the lower routes or skied or mountain biked or went on the climbing wall in Fort William. Thursday and Friday provided the best weather and members took full advantage of the improvement.

Although the conditions were very disappointing, members were out for most of the daylight hours and 17 Munros were climbed on the last two days by various members of the party.

Thursday 10th February. Peter Dowker, Dave Hugill And Terry Kitching put Aonach Beag, Aonach Mor, Aonach Behg, Sgurr Choinnich and Sgurr Choinnich Mor under their belts. Jim Cooper, Alan Kenny, Dave Linney, Nick Smith and Peter Mchale completed the Aonach Eagach Ridge from top of Glencoe, up to the Col, the Chancellor, over the pinnacles to final summit. Snow was plentiful, but soft with occasional ice. Some members of the party had to rely on the skill and experience of Jim and Dave. Descended Clagaig Gully, and were greeted by two beautiful ladies, two dogs and an orange van.

Ben Carter, Mike Lomas, Jean Lockhead, Sean O'Hagan and Derek Price completed the Beinn A Bheithir Horseshoe in excellent weather and with superb views. Variable snow, especially on rock steps at strategic points!



Jean Lockhead, Mike Lomas and Derek Price on Sgurr Dhonuill.

Friday, 11th February. The highlight of the week was probably the completion of the Ring of Steall by Mike Lomas, Jean Lockhead and Nick Smith, partly in semi-darkness. Visibility was very poor, strong winds and snow conditions varying from very good to very bad.

Next year we may be moving to another venue, and hopefully the weather will be a bit more kind to us.



Relaxing in the MacIntyre Hut.

SPRING CLIMBING MEET AT BISHOP'S SCALE. APRIL 23RD/24TH.

John Braybrook



On the Friday morning, as a prelude before the Spring meet gathered, Nick Smith was playing on his French horn amidst daffodils outside Bishop's Scale, with bleating lambs providing a pastoral accompaniment. Nick might have hoped to usher in the climbers dream of blue skies, plenty of sun and high pressure but luck was not with him - or us.

On Saturday morning the Langdales were covered with mizzle. Deliberations were made around the breakfast table, looking for suitable crags to the south. Eventually Nick 'phoned Tom Walkington, our Southern Lakes guide and meteorological expert. He prophesied dry conditions at Farleton near Carnforth. I might mention that Alan Kenny was "poached" by Arthur Daniels to walk the 'Four Passes.' They were caught in a hail storm at Scarth Gap and Nick has gleefully recorded this episode in the log-book with 'ha ha!'

Rose Humphreys and Kath Farrell were likewise caught in the storm at Grisedale Tarn and aborted their attempt on Helvellyn;

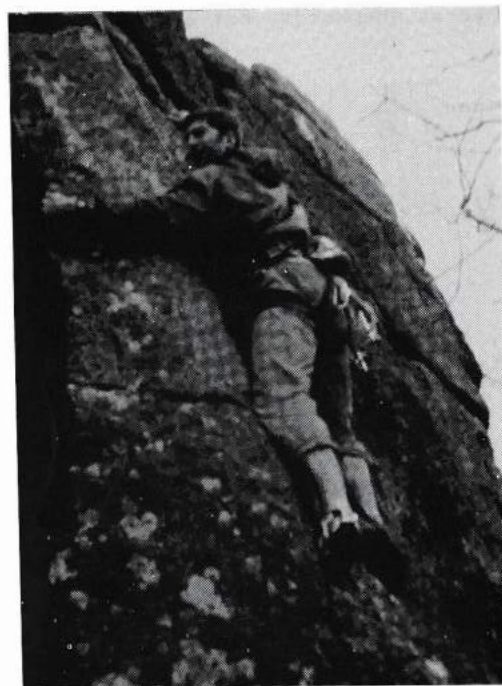
though they still managed to walk twenty miles. A good effort!

At Farleton it was dry and at 3pm we were blessed with brilliant sunshine which everyone basked in at the bottom of the limestone crag.

We gazed out from the heights across the M6 and W.H.Andens 'Nightmail' train route to Scotland, then further over the rich farmland to the glitter of Morecambe Bay. The yellow gorse bushes on the lower limestone slopes added a dash of colour.

Farleton from the M6 motorway is identifiable by the pungent smell from the piggery at Holme Park Farm. This is where the path up to the crag starts. You can also approach from the A65.

Numerous routes were climbed and I photographed most of the members and guests showing their prowess. Tom Walkington stated that generally he considered the climbs here to be one grade higher than in the guidebook; and with slight seepage in the rock everyone did well. Grades up to H.V.S were tackled, and the scale of the crag is reminiscent of a gritstone edge.



Stuart Britt

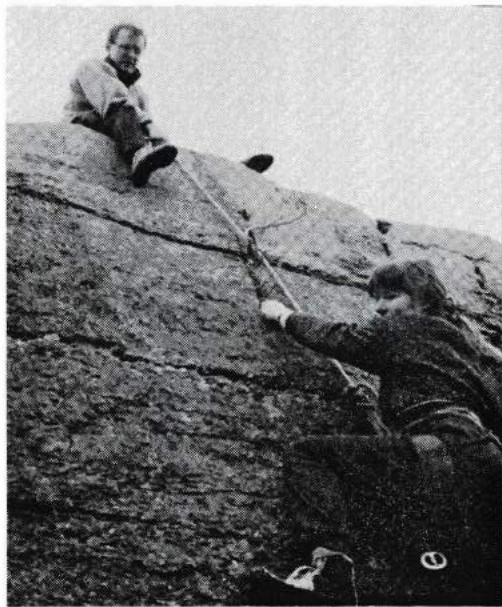
Walking back with Faz Faraday and Bryony White to Faz's car we met Tom Walkington who showed Faz some new lines he had been eyeing up. At the same time, about 5 o'clock, it started to rain.

On Sunday Nick 'phoned for a weather bulletin from Ann Cammack the Club's resident in Keswick who gave an encouraging forecast for Borrowdale.

The meet divided into three. Alan Kenny and Ray Baptiste went to climb on Tarn Crag on the way up to Pavey Ark. The situation there contrasted with the previous weekend when we enjoyed blue skies and sun drenched mountains. The two other groups went to Borrowdale, to Black Crags or Shepherds.

The classic route of Troutdale Pinnacle was climbed, but there was another party making slow progress ahead of our teams. Jim Cooper and George Herus streamed past them but Dave Makin and Dave Linney were not so lucky and had to wait in the queue. When their patience was exhausted, they decided to abseil off the route from half-way up. Just as they got to the bottom the heavens opened up! The time was now about 3pm.

Nick told me over our evening meal of haggis that quite a few routes were managed at Shepherds, but again there was congestion.



Nick Smith and Christine Kirk

This was a well attended meet. The statistics were seventeen members and four guests climbers. Included in the women climbers were Dot Wood and Christine Kirk.

In addition a number of fell runners and mountain bikers were in the hut, including the Chairman, Derek Price. The total staying at Bishop's Scale was forty.

Fortunately at the conclusion of the meet Nick was NOT dramatically borne away skyward - like a Wagnerian hero - as he was after his accident in 1992.

Many thanks to Nick Smith for orchestrating such a successful and enjoyable meet in spite of variable weather.

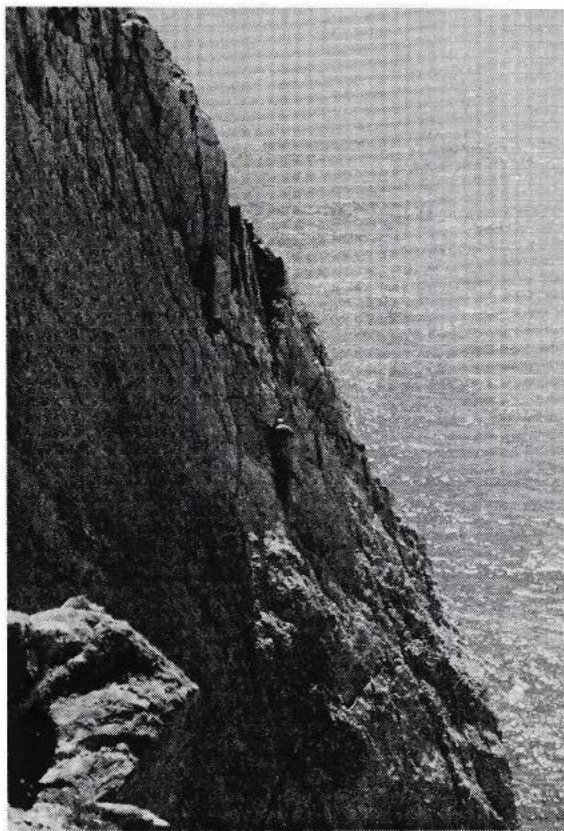
MEET REPORT. 22nd April 1961.

Meet Leader - George Cammack.

An exceptionally wet weekend with only four members present; two found themselves in Llanberis, and two in Ogwen. (Meet leader present where scheduled). Neither pair met. The two in Ogwen climbed on Milestone Buttress; the two in Llanberis, climbed on Dinas Bach and Clogwyn-y-Grochan. Both parties exceedingly wet, but not downhearted. Why is it that Welsh meets are both unpopular and wet.... Can members transport only know the road to the Lakes, can they not find their way to Wales. In any case, members do not need passports to go 'abroad'.

Tyn Twr - July 16-17th.

While most of the country had a good start to the season, North Wales suffered a deluge of rain which dampened the hearts of many Cambrian climbers. But by some miracle the weekend of this meet turned out to be one of the best with glorious sunshine to spoil us with choice of venues. The meet leader arrived early with a guest on Thursday to find the hut empty but for the elusive presence of Ray Baptist. Late arrivals of Faz Faraday, B.White and R.Smith were enough to declare the meet opened and on Friday (still no sign of R.B.) a trip was arranged to Angelsey. Here N.S. and N.W. climbed A Dream of White Horses while F.F and B.W, tackled the more difficult Emmulator Direct on Craig Gogarth. The evening saw the hut fill up but with still no sign of R.B.



Nick Smith on A Dream of White Horses

On Saturday morning the club descended on the small town of Llanberis and, like a plague of locust, stripped it of all goods from toothpaste to rock boots. We then made our way to the pass where, owing to poor management by the meet leader, the company became dispersed over several crags. While several men and their several dogs were giving a chaotic display of sheep redistribution below us, the meet leader gathered his flock and shepherded them to Carreg Wasted. Here most of the easier lines were done and F.F. and J.C. found increased respect for Don Whillans when they tackled his 1955 route Erosion Groove Direct. The day saw the reappearance of R.B. who confessed to having been "wild" camping. He was quickly tamed and obediently followed B.W. up Flying Buttress on Dinas Cromlech.

Cwm Idwal was the venue on Sunday. As might be expected given the weather, the slabs were very busy but we joined the queues and climbed all the old favourites. An ascent of Tennis Shoe by N.Smith, R.Smith and A.Cammack was noteworthy, not only for Ron's seniority at 77 years young, but also for his not having climbed for about forty years. No sticky boots could be found to fit so he achieved this feat in bendy walking boots. Despite this handicap, he showed a great deal of style on what are now very polished holds, whilst muttering something about it being easier in nails. The party was joined at half height by Dot who soloed up nonchalantly taking photographs and enabled us to split into two ropes.. Members also visited Craig Facett. Here Yob, Llyn and Slab Route were climbed, the latter being Alan Brighton's debut lead. This completed the official meet but on Monday in continued good weather the meet leader was able to sneak in an ascent of Great/Bow-shaped Slab on Cloggy which came under the category of unfinished business and was thus a suitable conclusion to the weekend.

Climbers.

R.Baptist, A.Cammack, C.Kirk, J.Cooper, D.Wood, A.Brighton, T.Mackay, B.White, F.Faraday, R.Smith, N.Smith, N.Warnes (guest).