

TYN TWR TED

Bryony White.

One small blonde teddy bear was found after everyone had left, in the members room on the women's side at Tyn Twr, on the Sunday after the junior meet at the beginning of July.

Bryony and Faz gave this bear a lift to Langdale believing it to be a treasured possession of one of Dot's small brood.

Imagine their chagrin then, on offering the bear to Dot in Langdale to discover it was nothing to do with any of them after all.

The problem is, that bears have very short memories and this cannot exactly remember which family it belongs to. And while it is very comfortable driving around in Faz's car, it does take some explaining to some of his more grown up passengers.

So if there is a small person in the club who is missing a little blonde teddy bear with a sweet face could they telephone Faz or Bryony on 0131 661 2816. We will make sure that you are reunited as soon as possible. (There is no bill for bed and board as he has only slept in the car and his company has been delightful on long journeys).

LAKES 3000 TOPS ATTEMPT - by Bike and Foot.

Starting Bridge End Farm, Thirlmere - 17-18th June 2000

By Paul Cooney, John Hope Dave Makin, Peter McHale, Bill Mitton

John Hope.

Saturday, 17 June.

Starting out from the campsite at 9.00am on one of the best weekends of this summer, we made Keswick, then Borrowdale, to Seathwaite, where the bikes were stabled. Next was Sty Head via Stokley Bridge. The plan was to go up the Corridor Route skirting under Pikes Crag and Pulpit Rock, then ascending Scafell by Lords Rake; but due to mist and expert navigation we found ourselves part way up Scafell Pike. So change of plan Scafell Pike first, were we stopped for a snack and a chat to Joe Gabbarino who had walked up from Langdale.

Pete, Bill and Paul opted for the Fox's Tarn route to Scafell, while Dave dragged me up Broad Stand.

Scafell was descended by way of Lord's Rake, then back to Seathwaite via Sty Head.

After egg on toast and cups of tea in the cafe, it was back on the bikes, down Borrowdale through Keswick to Millbeck for the slog up Skiddaw, which is the shortest route but by far the steepest. The climb seemed to go on for ever even though it was only two miles. On the descent back to Millbeck Dave and I bumped into Bill and Paul and due to the state of our health at that time we came to a mutual agreement to save Helvellyn for the morning. Pete meanwhile had decided to go back to the campsite for a well earned rest, wise man!

The route back to Thirlmere was by way of the old railway track to Threlkeld and through St. John's in the Vale.

A few pints, a good meal and then a few more pints, plus England beating Germany 1.0 nil rounded off a satisfying day out.

Sunday morning dawned clear and sunny, and after a leisurely breakfast we set off to complete the round. Cycling around the back of Thirlmere to Wythburn Church were we left the bikes. A steady walk up to Helvellyn by Whelpside Ghyll rewarded us with panoramic views all round. A gentle jog back to the bikes then the same route back to Bridge End Farm.

A good weekend had by all.

Day 1. 35 miles by bike 15 miles 6300ft. on foot.

Day 2 15 miles by bike 5 miles 2800ft. on foot.

Total time including stops - 13-14 hours.

LON LAS CYMRU - A bicycle ride through Wales

Dave Hugill.

The chance of a ride up through Wales from Cardiff came in June this year, when a special charter from Carnforth to Cardiff and return, was run by Huddersfield based Green Express Charters. A quick 'phone call to check if a bike could go too, revealed that it would be OK in the guards van which was doubling up as a real ale bar.

After a splendid run down to Shewsbury, it was down the central Wales line in glorious sunshine, and a brief stop in Llandrindod Wells, and an arrival in Cardiff mid afternoon.

Cardiff - Merthyr Tydfil.

After a quick look around central Cardiff I picked up the Taff Trail near the castle and headed north. Surfaces varied from muddy woodland path, tarmac, gravel, old railway track bed to river bank tracks, but still with warm sunshine good progress was made.

The route generally followed the river valleys north, passing through Pontypridd, Abercynon and Aberfan.

Arriving in Merthyr about tea time, finding digs was no problem as I dropped on a small hotel run by a Frenchman (also a cyclist) and his German/Welsh wife. Saturday night in Merthyr proved very noisy and lively, the pubs were all packed and spilled out into the streets.

Merthyr to Brecon.

Up now into hillier country on quiet roads and forest tracks, past the Pontsticill Reservoir, the Brecon Mountain Railway and the Tolybont Reservoir, the route eventually joined the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal into the historic market town.

The Brecon Beacons guard over the old town which was built around the Norman fortifications at the confluence of the rivers Honddu and Usk. The town is noted for its turbulent history, and whilst under English domination, the castle was attacked by Owain Glyndusr during the reign of Henry IV, but never fell until the Civil War when it was largely destroyed.

An old inn was handy near my digs outside the cathedral.

Brecon - Llanwrtyd Wells

Heading north, taking the very quiet B4520, and over the watershed at Upper Chapel, I then headed down the B4519 through MOD territory, weaving through mist, rain and sheep, down to Llanwrtyd Wells.

Drying off and drinking tea in the cafe, after consulting the map, it was decided to leave the next group of hills until the next day, hopefully with better weather. Booking into the Nuadd Arms, the afternoon was spent drying gear, reading and drinking more tea.

The man versus horse race starts here, and the bar wall bear many photographs of the race, and the World Snorkelling Championship!

Llanwrtyd Wells - Devils Bridge

A cool dry morning gave way to warm sunshine as the route took me over the next range of hills, through slate quarrying areas, forestry and up a stiff climb known locally as the Devils Gallop. Passing a remote hotel at Blaencaron the road eventually dropped to Tregaron. A quick brew here, and a quiet B road led to Devils Bridge, where the Rhododendrons were out together with yellow gorse. The waterfalls here are well worth a look.

Not being able to resist a ride on the steam railway, I took the bike on the Vale of Rheidol down to Aberystwyth where I stopped overnight.

Devils Bridge - Llanidloes

Rain again, so donning waterproofs, I headed for the station to get the train again for a misty, atmospheric ride back to Devils Bridge, and back on route.

Climbing away over the watershed to Rhayader, the tail wind made the climb easier, and the long descent almost enjoyable, through mist shrouded deserted mine workings eventually down to the town. Wary of sheep looming out of the mist, the gradient and tail wind, sped me on to a welcome brew and soup in the old market town.

Following very minor roads along the upper reaches of the River Severn, the route took me to Llanidloes where I found good digs at Dolly's Farm just outside the town.

Llanidloes - Barmouth

A hilly route through wooded country was followed by a climb in open country to the Cofeb Memorial viewpoint, and a long descent to Machynlleth.

Passing through Corris, it was then up through slate mines at Aberllefenni, where the route interestingly took completely off road over a pass to join the A487 just south of Dolgellau. It was then all off road along the south bank of the Afon Mawddach to the old wooden railway viaduct into Barmouth.

Cader Idris stood sentinel over the glistening sands of the estuary as the afternoon sun sank towards the Celtic Sea.

and a narrow summit ridge leading to a very exposed summit, the seven of us just about squeezing round the cairn. After a brief stay we moved down (to make room for others) and descended to the col to prepare for the second summit of Beaghey An Bhethigh. From this top we had a lovely view of Errigal and the Derryveagh mountain range, hopefully to be climbed later in the week.

On our return journey we stopped to examine the ruins of a church and a slab cross shown on the map. These were in the grounds of an old monastery and we were fortunate to meet the keeper of the gate house, a little Irish American with one eye and a beard who had apparently graduated from Harvard University years ago. He led us to the slab cross, which was rather disappointing being quite small and half buried in the long grass, and also informed us that the property was owned by the Guinness family. We then made our way back to Burtonport taking in the magnificent scenery.

Wednesday 31st May.

Weather a little suspect but we made our way to the harbour for the 9.30 ferry to Aran Island lying about two miles off the coast. We roamed the island, took in the highest peaks and managed to get down to the village before the rain came in. Apart from the houses on the east side of the island, including a school, there seems to be very little to offer of any great interest.

Thursday 1st June.

Weather very poor, rain and a cold wind. Opted to go to the Glenveagh National Park and Glenveagh Castle. A pleasant drive through lovely scenery to the Park. Surprisingly, it is in the middle of nowhere but has an ultra modern visitor centre almost in the grounds of the castle. This displays the history of the area, the wild life, deer, foxes, mink birds, etc. Included in the £2.00 entrance fee is a bus drive to the castle and the opportunity to tour the gardens and take the hill walks to view the lough and the surrounding area. It was the ideal opportunity to fill in a wet weather day.

Our reverse route to Burtonport was via the Bloody Foreland, a somewhat disappointing drive not helped by the fact that no-one could explain how it got its name.

Friday 2nd June.

A magnificent Day. We planned the tour of Horn Head. Taking the N56 from Burtonport we drove to Dunfanagh. The walk started from the edge of a plantation and crossed sand dunes to the coast, then followed the coastal cliff track. The cliffs were full of a variety of nesting birds and in the glorious sunshine we took in the magnificent views from the cliff tops.

As the day went on the scenery got better culminating in the ascent of the Horn itself. From a distance the side view of the Horn looks like the head of a Rhino with the summit the rock forming the horn. A fine, extremely enjoyable and interesting walk of about 12/13 miles.

Saturday 3rd June.

A visit to Slieve League, the highest cliffs in Europe. This was roughly a 35 mile drive from Burtonport, following the N56 to Ardara then to Killybegs and eventually Carrick and the road leading off to the cliffs. After parking the mini-bus we walked the final mile to view the cliffs. They are quite stunning, especially when you are reminded that at almost 2000ft. they are higher than many of the mountains in the Lake District. After a photo session Peter and I headed for the top of the cliffs, closely followed by Keith and Tony. More snaps of the cliffs from the summit was worthwhile our efforts.

Summary

Donegal is a walkers paradise and this year we took full advantage of its natural offerings. Very little time was wasted although travelling on the roads in NW Ireland, whilst forever scenic, leaves much to be desired regarding the road surfaces. Fast driving is a very risky business so you need to allow plenty of time when planning your routes. Also, once out of the towns and villages petrol stations are few and far between, so keep your tanks full.

THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED

28-7-2000

Joanne Welding.

Below was laid out the magnificent prospect of the mighty loch Hourn, the glorious rough Knoydart, Rhum, Eigg and... well OK, as usual anything beyond five metres was invisible. (No change there then. On a quick calculation 50 plus of the previous Munros had also been completely shrouded in mist.) So...the cloud swirled mysteriously around the ancient cairn, lending an eerie quiet to the high ridge. Beinn Sgritheall brooded inscrutably over the invisible Loch below, the only sign of human influence the gnarled trig point.

Ah, well, back to the walk. We had set out from Arnisdale several hours before to climb Beinn Sgritheal, my hundredth Munro. It was a lovely day. we were staying B and B with Len and Sheila Morrison at the Post Office - very much to be recommended.

We set out in shorts and T-shirts along the village street admiring the bay and fishing boats on one side and the cottage gardens on the other. Honeysuckle and lilies were blooming, the gnomes in the end garden lined up in neat rows and a sheep dog lay contentedly sleeping in the sun. All is not as it seems of course. A second later the sheep dog sprang up and nipped Dominic on the shin. So much for idylls.

We climbed up the steep path by the stream behind the cottages looking down on the crofts below. Len had told us that it had been the driest July in memory and the path was certainly hard and crisp. Strangely all the trees around the bay had brown leaves on the seaward side and green on the island side, a result, apparently, of a rogue force 10 in spring which whipped up the sea and "burnt" all the emerging leaves.

A couple of hours steep ascent brought us to the east top and cloud; a further kilometre and we were on the top, 1050m, and my century of Munros.

As we sat in the mist I thought about the high points of previous walks. I realise that many of the best moments haven't been to do with great views (just as well really) but the feeling of being out in the weather, being alive. In my "normal" life I hate getting wet and will go a long way to avoid being cold.

Why are so many of these great walks in snow? This Easter, staying in Breemar, we cycled up the Glen an t-Slugain to the ruined lodge. Two golden eagles circled above as we left the bikes and headed up Beinn a' Bhuird (1196m). The mountain was snow-covered from 600m and the "table-hill" plateaux stretched before us undisturbed, with startling corries to the east all overhung with cornices. The landscape was still and serene with Ben Avon's tor rising into the sky.

A couple of years ago on the ridge of Mam Sodhail (1180m), in severe snow and low cloud, the sight of the ruined ordinance survey hut completely covered in wind torn ice structures was amazing and haunting. The route back over Carn Eighe (1183) and the

slog back to a very wet Glen Affric lodge was a feat of navigation by Dominic (my constant guide and companion), Ian (my brother with whom I've done some of the best walks), and my dad (an experience and intuitive route finder). Catie and I followed as usual.

Or again, after a freezing boat trip up Loch Mullardoch with Carl the stalker, we walked up from the Loch blinded by sun and snow. By the time we reached the summit of An Riabhachan (1129m) the weather had deteriorated to a blizzard of spindrift. Suddenly just on the summit ridge, an eagle wheeled away into the cloud. We had to descend back to the Loch in a metre of snow, resorting to a combination of rolling and wading to make progress.

Other fantastic walks stand out; Skye at Easter in 1996 in deep snow (natch!) going up the Great Stone Shoot as easily as walking up stairs; Skye again in May 1997 in glorious sunshine for a whole week, coming down to Glen Brittle in a luminous red sunset; battling with fierce winds on Sgur 'nan Corbhairrean (1110m) above Loch Cluanie, again with Dominic and Ian, having to drop to the ground and cling on in huge gusts - an instinctive response I didn't know I had. (At the crucial moment we all dropped at the same time!)

All in all, I seem to prefer walks where we return battered, frozen or exhausted when we eventually descend. It must be as a contrast to my "I'll just sit in the car until this shower passes" weekday self.

So to the way down from Beinn Sgritheall, along the west ridge to the lochan, then through a lush woodland and back to the road. The sun was out again, the views across the loch were clear and there's a lovely honeysuckle tree. A honeysuckle tree? The wild honeysuckle had covered a holly tree in huge yellow blossoms. Things are not always as they seem.

Some of the things I have learnt from the first hundred.

- 1 Always walk with a good navigator if, like me, contour lines don't mean a lot to you even if you know they should.
- 2 A steady pace gets you there in the end.
- 3 Get out of the wind to eat your sandwiches.
- 4 A good conversation makes the steepest slope easy so if at all possible have someone with you to discuss life, love, house prices, the universe, other people's bad habits, etc., etc.,

THE LONG WALK - 2000

Martin and Nicola Kirkman

It was either over a pint of beer or a cup of tea that the long walk was first mentioned to us by Arthur Daniels (funny how these things always happen with the aid of liquid refreshment!) As new members of the club who had spent a little time in his company he felt that we should enjoy it and suggested that we joined in. (Several other people within earshot actually groaned and warned us that in their opinion it ought to be renamed the hard walk!)

We are Martin and Nicola Kirkman, we both enjoy being amongst the mountains and hills and despite the warning we had received we were both really keen to participate in The Long Walk.

Dawn on May 26th was bright and warm, people busied themselves getting breakfast and sorting themselves out for the day ahead. At about 6.30am people began to leave Bishop's Scale. The runners were still enjoying a further 1 and 1/2 hours sleep!

At first we were in quite a bunch of walkers heading up Pike O' Blisco and down to the Three Shire Stone where a lovely second breakfast was being prepared for us all. After a quick chat and a delicious bacon butty, together with a cup of tea, we headed towards our next rendezvous, over Wetside Edge, Swirl How, Dow Crag to Seathwaite Tarn Dam Wall. The drop to and climb up from Seathwaite Tarn seemed like such a big effort but the knowledge that drinks were waiting together with smiling faces urged us on! However, on arrival we were faced withSeathwaite Tarn Dam Wall, no drinks, no smiling faces? Disappointment mingled with the looming knowledge that we now had to climb Grey Friar ahead of us. Then we saw an orange object in the near distance and thought we'd found the drinks and some company! We headed across to a sheltered quarry area, ready to chat, drink and re-charge our batteries before the next climb. The courting couple canoodling in the quarry did not provide the welcome we had expected!

And so we plodded onwards and upwards towards Grey Friar summit. It is a long gradual pull up with no really obvious footpath. Some people that evening said that it reminded them of the Lake District that they loved first, in the pre-erosion, footpath and honeypot days of many of today's Lakeland peaks. Halfway up Grey Friar Arthur and his friends who were running caught us up. We had a chat and shared some chocolate. We listened in awe as the runners pointed out distant peaks naming them and describing in detail the various routes up and down.

It was a lumpy descent that we followed down to Cockley Beck. As we meandered our way down we knew that the runners would already be lying back in the sunshine enjoying their lunch. Lunch was a veritable feast of various sandwiches, biscuits and cakes together with a very welcome cup of tea!

Then we began our long afternoon. We plodded through the boggy stream side toward the bottom of the steep pull-up to Scafell Pike. It was hot and sunny, aglorious May afternoon. Eventually we reached the summit of Scafell Pike.

It was a perfect place to linger as the late afternoon mists began to nestle in around the Gables. We, however had other hills in our minds and so we had to turn our backs on the summit of England and head off down towards Esk Hause and onto Esk Pike.

As we reached the summit of Bow Fell the big challenge of the day tempted us to cut our journey short. From the moment we had seen the route description we both knew that The Band would be urging us down to the valley and Crinkle Craggs would not offer any encouragement to tempt us up to its tops. With sore feet and tired legs, by now will-power was all that was keeping Nicola going. Martin's encouragement made a big difference though!

The tops of Crinkle Craggs were a great place to be as the lights of Langdale began to glow in what was almost darkness. Up on the mountain tops it was really quite light and knowing that it was now down hill all the made us feel we were almost there.

Then two runners from the club passed us with their enthusiastic dog and we knew that we would be the next into the valley after them. The walk up the valley along the road was tiring but the lights of Bishop's Scale encouraged us onwards. Suddenly a voice and a shape in the darkness disturbed the quiet evening - Arthur come to welcome us home!

His contribution to our conversation lightened the last few steps to the hut and all of a sudden we had arrived!

A delicious three course supper made the home coming even more cosy. After a speedy shower and a change of footwear (ah... bliss!) we headed off to the pub in good time for last orders.

And so the day ended as it had been first introduced to us several months beforehand.....over a glass of beer!

The weekend of M 26th 2000 will definitely be remembered by us as one of the highlights of the beginning of the millennium. Everyone enjoyed themselves and the atmosphere at Bishop's Scale and amongst the hill was great. We had a brilliant day out and would like to thank everyone who was involved in making the day such a really enjoyable one.

NORTH COAST 2000 (or, I believe in miracles!)

Andrew J Morrison

Route: Culrain - Scourie - Durness - Cape Wrath - Durness - Tongue - Strathey - John O'Groats - Wick - Culrain

It was always Ben's idea and after some considerable planning, by him, of the route and accommodation for the week we met at Carbisdale Youth (!) Hostel on the evening of Thursday 22nd June.

'We' consisted of:

- Ben Carter
- Wilf Charnley
- Ken Jackson
- David Mercer
- Andrew Morrison

Carbisdale Castle is the SYHA's most splendid property and is situated in a prominent position on Carbisdale Heights, half a mile from the village of Culrain, Ross-shire. It's location makes it a superb centre for touring in Scotland and if you haven't visited it - you should!

Having had a very good evening meal and a comfortable night's sleep we wakened to a dull, overcast, but at least dry, day. After a good breakfast and a thorough check of equipment and bicycles we set off at about 9.00 o'clock. It was not the most auspicious start to a cycling holiday when, after only 300 yards, at the end of the drive, we didn't know whether to turn right or left - right it is.

The next obstacle was to cross a field of nettles (shorts wearers beware) to get to the bridge across the river so that we could get to the road and eventually start cycling. On reaching the bridge we had to negotiate a steep flight of steps at either end - not easy with a pannier-clad bike.

At last bums made contact with saddles and we were off heading Northwest towards Scourie on the Sutherland coast. It would be possible to describe in detail the events of the next 9 hours - suffice it to say that it was very windy - mostly straight into our faces - showery and, even for Scotland in June somewhat less than warm, which meant that extra clothing went on at regular intervals.

A large stretch of the route is a single track road which is used by huge lorries and fish delivery wagons that don't exactly hang about. One of the more memorable events of the day was David nearly being knocked over by a hearse (complete with coffin) - perhaps the driver was trying to drum up some extra business.

Laxford Bridge came into view after 46 miles, leaving only another 7 miles to Scourie and a much needed bath and a pint- these miles seemed longer than the rest as they were in the wrong direction and we would have to retrace our steps tomorrow on our

way to Durness. General condition was not so bad - bum not too sore but an inflamed knee joint would mean an uncomfortable night for me. Good dinner and a very comfortable B&B.

Saturday. After a night of painkillers and Ibuleve the knee was no better, but it was less painful cycling than walking and by the end of the day it had nearly cleared up. On route to Durness there is a very good coffee stop at the Rhiconach Hotel - plus home-made scones. A total of 27 miles brought us to Durness YH which is a couple of wooden ex MOD buildings in sharp contrast to Carbisdale. Nevertheless a friendly atmosphere and reasonable facilities. We dined in after a large shopping expedition to the local supermarket but then had to go to the licensed grocer to restock on wine for Sunday.

Sunday. A good night's sleep followed by a light breakfast got us in the saddle again to go to Cape Wrath. However our original plan to put our bikes on the ferry and cycle to the Cape were revised when we discovered that the boatman (a member of the Morrison clan no less) was somewhat unreliable - in that you might get across but if he decided to go to the pub you might not get back. Leaving the bikes tied up at the landing stage, we opted to take the mini-bus trip out to the lighthouse - this was a roller-coaster of a ride of about half an hour but well worth it for the scenery, and certainly safer than cycling - you could get knocked down by the mini-bus on the single track, and very narrow, road! Back to the Cape Wrath Hotel for lunch then a ride to Balnakell which as well as having a beautiful beach also has some Black Death graves in a spooky churchyard and an 8-hole golf course. Durness itself has the famous Smoo cave which is interesting. The weather improved all day and the early part of the evening was spent sitting in the sunshine. As this was a 'rest' day we only cycled 10 miles. David cooked corn beef hash which gave us an excuse (reason) to consume large quantities of liquid.

Monday. Left Durness with promising weather and managed to travel all of 7 miles before having to stop for coffee and carrot cake - you are never quite sure when the next watering hole will appear in this desolate but beautiful part of Scotland. Our route now took us down the western shore of Loch Eriboll and then all the way back up the eastern one. Loch Eriboll was where the German submarine fleet surrendered at the end of WW2. By this time there wasn't a cloud in the sky and was fairly warm as well. Lunch on the high point of the route before dropping down to Kyle of Tongue YH where we dumped our luggage and cycled into the village to suss out a evening meal. Afternoon tea and freshly made scones are highly recommended at the Ben Loyal Hotel, but we ate at the Tongue Hotel. Day's mileage: 35.

Tuesday. Tongue YH fails to live up to it's image and potential - it's not very user friendly and scruffy. So it was with a light heart that we left on a fine day to ride to Strathey. The morning's mileage was somewhat curtailed by the need for intensive care on Ben's (or, to be exact -his bike's) bottom bracket. Eventually we reached Betty Hill Hotel for a fish & chip lunch. We never saw Betty but we certainly saw plenty of hill especially after that lunch with a big push over to Strathey - then another couple of miles to Macaskill's B&B - a very friendly and well appointed house where we were to eat dinner that evening. Ben is still trying to sort out the indexing of his gears. Total of 29 miles.

Nicknames fell into place finally - from the outset I have been known as 'corkscrew' for some obscure reason: Wilf is 'bottom gear'; Ben (see above) is 'bottom bracket'; Ken is 'easily led' (probably something to do with my corkscrew!) and David has enough to put up with the comments about his snoring that to give him a nickname would be too unkind. However he has got a double room to himself tonight - I wonder why?

Good evening meal sitting in the dining room with magnificent views across to the Orkneys. After dinner, a stroll to the lighthouse, television and so to bed.

Wednesday. On a good warm and dry day we left Strathey Point having eaten a breakfast that could keep us going all day (but won't). This was probably the easiest day with light winds and sunny weather. Despite the fact that most of our route all week was along A-class roads there was very little traffic and today was no exception. 14 miles into the day and we were passing Dounreay with the Orkneys as an impressive backdrop.

Progress was good and steady as Ben was still concerned about his bike - but when we got to Thurso we were given directions to the local bike shop. The owner said he could sort out the problem while we went and had lunch.

On returning to the shop we suggested that as Ben was a 'poor' pensioner he might be entitled to a discount - the bill was a fiver!

The rest of the day was even quieter as we went inland and took the back roads to John O'Groats YH with a total distance for the day of 41 miles.

The plan now was to book the bikes on the train from Wick back to Culrain the following day. The local phonebox devoured all our coins in trying, and failing, to connect us to Scotrail. A quick call on my mobile, with failing batteries, to Jill back in Bolton with instructions to get in contact with Wick station and report back left us waiting with bated breath. Back came the bad news. There are only 3 trains a day, Scotrail only allow 2 bikes/train, and they were fully booked all week anyway. This is a very strange policy when you consider the numbers of cyclists that do the Land's End to John O'Groats run and don't feel up to riding back.

What to do now? Carbisdale is 100 miles away. Then it happened! - on returning to the Youth Hostel we saw lots of lads lying about the place - on chatting to them we discovered that they were from Arnold School in Blackpool and were doing a charity bike ride back to the school to raise money for the McMillan Nurses. They had been brought up in 2 minibuses, and believe it or not, their first leg of the ride was to Carbisdale Castle YH, being followed by the 2 empty vehicles. Negotiations then took place with the drivers (members of staff) - they readily agreed to take us south, and we made a donation on behalf of ARCC of £75 to their fund - this being approximately the cost of the 5 train fares plus a bit more.

The lads from Arnold were up bright and early for a 7.30 a.m. departure, and we got up as well to make sure the vans didn't leave without us. No problem - we left at 8.30 with Wilf and the bikes in the van driven by Pete Stansfield and the rest of us in the

minibus with Tom Beck at the wheel. They dropped us off at Kirktown so that we could cycle the 31 miles via Lairg back to base. From Lairg to Bonar Bridge (11 miles) took about half an hour, whereas last week, going in the opposite direction i.e. uphill and into the wind took over an hour.

We arrived at Culrain and were passing the station just as the train we would have been on was pulling in and reflected that with a stroke of good fortune we had had a much better journey and helped a good cause.

We stowed the bikes in the cars and had just booked in and showered when the Arnold School group arrived having completed the 100 miles at an average of 15 m.p.h. - with the prospect of another 100 miler the next day - what it is to be young!!

Overall we had a splendid week with over 225 miles under our belts, clement weather for the most part and good food and lodgings throughout - but our eternal thanks go to Pete and Tom of Arnold School - without whom we would have faced the prospect of another 100 miles. As the words of the song go: I believe in miracles!

KLETTERSTEIG AND THE ALLGAU ALPS

Alan Carr

In August, my neighbour Rob, a Maths Teacher and skilled and enthusiastic climber, popped in and asked if I would like to join his school's Klettersteig Expedition to the Allgau Alps in Southern Germany in two weeks time due to a teacher having to unexpectedly cancel. I immediately accepted his offer and then perhaps belatedly asked "What's Klettersteig?" Rob produced a contraption consisting of a body harness to which was attached two enlarged carabiners on metre lengths of sling tape. (Apologies at this stage if I am preaching to the converted!). Rob went on to describe how difficult and exposed sections of Alpine peaks and ridges could be tackled with comparative safety by clipping into an assortment of fixed wires and ladders. These are installed and maintained by the Deutsche Alpen Verein mountaineering club. Two weeks later saw the team, consisting of Rob and I, together with 7 students heading for Luton Airport to catch our Easy Jet flight for Zurich. The plan was to travel from Zurich Airport by rail through Switzerland to Germany. All travel including rail connections had been booked on-line using the relevant internet pages. These also showed departure and arrival times. With legendary Swiss and German efficiency, these timetables proved to be extremely accurate and train journeys and connections were made without hitch on clean, comfortable and tourist-friendly rail services. I wonder if Great Britain could make the same claim! After 4 connections we arrived at Obersdorf in Southern Germany near the Austrian border. This lovely town is a popular winter ski-resort as well as being something of a summer, tourist honey-pot. There are plenty of shops dedicated to the needs of walkers and climbers, with prices that are temptingly cheaper than at home. We were fortunate in catching the last cable-car up to the Ernst Probst Haus, our accommodation for the first night. We were unfortunate in that a few weeks earlier an accident had damaged the upper part of the cable car system and services terminated at 1280m, so we had a fair trek up to the hut at 1932m. We all had full packs and the going, although on good roads, was hard and steep. We were very pleased to drop our packs at the hut, freshen up and enjoy the excellent fare provided at dinner.

We set off the following day for our next stop, Prinz Luitpold Haus, some six to seven hours walk away. The route was along good paths, amongst stunning scenery with alpine flowers in abundance, the vivid green of the slopes contrasting with a radiant blue sky. Good maps are available for the area and the huts and tourist offices supply a very useful range of leaflets, timetables, etc. For most of the route to Prinz Luitpold Haus walkers maintain height at around 2100m. Prinz Luitpold Haus is situated in a spectacular location at 1846m on the edge of a hanging valley. It is necessary to lose some height at the head of the valley on approach to the hut before a zigzag slog up to the lip of the ridge. Here the hut sits somewhat incongruously, amongst the surrounding wild landscape. Once again the hut provided very comfortable lodgings and good sustaining food. The following day we set off for our ascent of the Hochvogel 2593m. Soon after leaving the hut we started crossing snowfields in the corrie behind the hut and took the opportunity to practice arrest techniques. Reaching the steep corrie walls I was happy to don the Klettersteig gear and clip into the fixed wires to aid our ascent. At the top of the corrie ridge the bulk of Hochvogel looms into view and it is difficult to see a route amongst the steeply sloping scree. After negotiating more wires we crossed a narrow exposed bridge onto the mountain itself.

A ledge cut into the rock, again protected by wires and reminiscent of an Indiana Jones movie, leads to a series of zigzags over loose scree which eventually brought us to the summit cross and its commanding views of the surrounding landscape and down into Austria.

We tackled a number of other Klettersteig routes during our stay in the Allgau. Many of these involved an ingenious mixture of ladders, steps and wires. They provided spectacular, exposed, high-level walking in relative safety across spectacular terrain. As a base for such activities, Obersdorf is an ideal choice and the mountain huts of the Allgau Alps offer reasonable accommodation and good food. It is advisable to book ahead if you wish to use them. Personally, the trip was the 'next-step' in terms of my hill walking experience and an introduction to the Alps. I'm afraid it's got me hooked!



AND I THOUGH I KNEW LANGDALE

John Foster

So I did. Until the 1999 Edition of *On the Hill*, the journal of the RAF Mountain Rescue Association, arrived that autumn.

Glancing through it, a photograph of a gravestone caught my eye which, I found, has stood in the graveyard at Chapelstile for nearly 40 years. The name on it which is of the greatest significance to any ex-member of an RAF rescue team is that of George Graham. Who's he? Well, if you refer to my very first 'Tale of M.R.' in our 1993 Journal, you will see that it was Flt.Lt. George Graham who set up the first effective mountain rescue team at RAF Llandwrog in 1942, which stimulated the Air Ministry into officially establishing the RAF Mountain Rescue Service in 1943. In that year alone, there were 571 aircrew deaths on British mountains. There can be no doubt that a good many crashed aircrew since then owe their lives to the service which he inspired, but also a far greater number of climbers and walkers who have gone astray in our mountains.

Recognition of his achievement came quickly, with the award of an MBE in June 1943. Now you might have supposed that he would have been allowed to stay put, doing what his skill as a mountaineer equipped him better to do than most medical officers. Or maybe sent to other RAF stations in mountain areas to repeat his success at Llandwrog. But no, he was posted to India. The mystery of how such decisions are made in armed services has baffled many a brilliant mind.

In early March 1944 he arrived at RAF Dum Dum, where No. 357 Squadron was flying a mix of Liberators, Dakotas, Lysanders and Hudsons to supply Burmese guerrillas fighting the Japanese, and drop agents of Force 136, the South East Asia version of the SOE in Europe. A few days later a Lockheed Hudson failed to return from a night drop of supplies near the Sino-Burmese border. No signal had been received from A-ABLE, and it had to be assumed that it had crashed. The guerrillas shortly radioed that 2 survivors (of a crew of six) from the crashed aircraft were seriously injured and in need of medical attention.

Although he had no parachuting experience, recently promoted Squadron Leader Graham promptly volunteered to be parachuted in to attend to the injured airmen. Nor was there time to make a practice jump first. He had to go that night. Being an experienced rock climber no doubt helped him come quickly to a decision to make his first parachute jump behind enemy lines.

He was given as much instruction as could be fitted in, jungle boots, bush hat, revolver, cyanide pills, and silver rupees for escape money. Take-off was set for 23.30 hrs, calling at Chittagong to refuel, with ETA over the dropping zone (DZ) at 05.00. F-FREDDIE, another Hudson, was loaded with containers to be dropped as well, then some more instruction as to how to leave the aeroplane. Then came take-off, and little to do but try to get some sleep.

As the first streaks of dawn lit the hills below the DZ was identified, a 6000ft riidge. The red light came on, and when the green replaced it, the containers went first, followed by Graham and the parachute instructor. The latter manoeuvred himself close enough to shout instructions, telling Graham how to pull on the cords to spill air. They drifted slightly off target, but made a safe landing on the slope just below the ridge. It was the Feast of St. Patrick.

The Kokang guerrillas met them, and took them on mules to the wrecked Hudson 4 miles away. The last survivor of the crash (the co-pilot had since died), Flying Officer Prosser of the Canadian Air Service, had been the navigator. His skull was fractured, a really bad wound, which Graham cleaned up and filled with crushed M and B tablets, and covered it with Elastoplast. A fractured ankle was immobilised by a plaster cast, reinforced by bamboo splints.

There were British and American intelligence officers in the area, Liaising with guerrillas, and on 20th March Graham was joined by Captain Hookman of the American Medical Corps, who had travelled 5 days by mule from their HQ in China. Prosser had been slowly weakening, and the two doctors tried various treatments, which produced some improvement.

On 28th March came reports that enemy troops had crossed the river at Kunlong, only 4 hours march away. A litter was made ready and bearers hired, and mules supplied by Colonel Young, the guerrillas leader, to carry their supplies. A couple of days later the Japanese troops had been reinforced, and showed signs of moving out. Despite Prosser's condition it was time to move. The date was April 1st.

They headed NE towards China, in torrential rain at first, with men and mules slipping off the narrow mountain tracks. For ten eventful days they trekked staying overnight in village huts, occasionally with American or Chinese units, and one night in a village schoolroom, which they had to vacate promptly the following morning to allow lessons to start.

One day they managed 30 miles, on other days 20 or less. In sweltering heat in the valleys, then freezing in a hailstorm crossing a high pass. The original bearers and mules had been sent back, but replacements were inadequate, with only 4 coolies to carry the litter one day. Graham kept them going with rum until he could get more, but even then had to draw his revolver to keep them moving. In the morning the coolies had gone, not liking the look of the Colt 45, but the mules and baggage were still there. The local Sheriff was ordered to replace the missing men.

On 11th April they reached Shunning, the HQ of the American Y Force in China, where the patient was given a days rest. Being carried over rough tracks was not the best treatment, but Prosser seemed stronger. The bearers were paid off, and a weapons carrier took them to the US-Chinese hospital at Yunshien. Another three days drive to Yunnani Airport, and after a days waiting boarded a C46 Commando for India.

But the adventure was not over. Bad weather forced the plane back to Kunning Airport, where a faulty undercarriage was repaired. Relaxation was provided by the

film Madame Curie at the base cinema. The next day, a month after parachuting onto the 6000 ft ridge, the Commando flew them over 'the hump' to Assam, and thence by Dakota to Calcutta, where they were taken to the British General Hospital. It was 17th April.

George Desmond Graham was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, and the parachute instructor who had been his greatest support throughout this saga the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. Prosser recovered, returned home to Canada, married and raised a family, and died in 1990.

There were no more 'cloak and dagger' trips for George Graham. Instead came a pleasant summer in Kashmir at the Aircrew Mountain Centre, organising and leading treks and climbing trips for heat jaded aircrew. This had been set up by Wing Commander Tony Smythe (son of Frank), with his old schoolmate Wilfred Noyce as his leading mountaineer, no doubt as happy as anyone to get away from army life in India. On one of his trips the party were very hot and thirsty, so he decided to milk a herd of yaks. But when he fumbled his way through their hairy coats, he found they were all male. (I wonder, did he get them to cough?).

He spent the winter at Air Command South East Asia, in Kandy, Ceylon, then a leave in Ladakh the following summer. With the surrender of Japan that August, the plight of our prisoners of war at camps in Burma became known, and he was involved in dropping supplies and medical teams to them. By February 1946 he was in Nepal, apparently enjoying what most of us would consider a wonderful life.

But then it all went pear shaped. Shortly afterwards he was seen at an RAF station in India under armed guard, and when he arrived back in the UK in March entered a psychiatric hospital in Dumfries. Schizophrenia was diagnosed. A spell in a hospital in Northampton, then his final move to Cheadle Royal, another psychiatric hospital, where he ended his days in 1980. Such was the tragic second half of the life of this remarkable man, to whom is due the credit of instigating the RAF Mountain Rescue Service, and who now lies buried in the little graveyard at Chapel Stile.

So how come he is buried there? Well, as a native of Carlisle, it is fairly certain that his earliest climbing days would have been in the Lake District. So too for his sons, who were taught to climb in Langdale and Borrowdale by their father's old friend Dr. John Pyle. When Patrick died following his accident on the Matterhorn, Langdale was chosen as a fitting location for his grave.

It was from Llandwrog that Graham took some leave to be with his wife at her family home in Crosby, for the birth of their second son Patrick on 27th November, 1943. So he was a few weeks short of his 19th birthday when he and his older brother Mike set out to climb the Matterhorn on 3rd September 1962. At a little past 8.0'clock, Pat took over the lead from Mike near the top of the Hornli Ridge. Just below the summit an Italian climber dislodged a large boulder which gave a glancing blow to Pat's head and arm, but smashed a leg below the knee. Although a guide set off immediately to raise the alarm, it was 6 hours before the rescue team got to them. The leg was so badly smashed that on arrival at the hospital in Zemat it was amputated straight away. But Pat died on the operating table.

So there it is, the story behind that simple headstone in what I consider my 'home valley', from which I made my first serious fell walks over 50 years ago, on whose steep crags I learned how to use the various types of foot and hand holds, and whose roads I occasionally fell off motorbikes, but fortunately never off the crags. If some day you are at Bishop's Scale when the clag is right down, and you are wondering what to do, I suggest you try to find George Graham's last bivvy in the little graveyard behind the village school in Chapel Stile. And when you do, remember this piece of modern history, and the sad end of the man who made it, and that of his youngest son too.



The lettering on the gravestone reads:

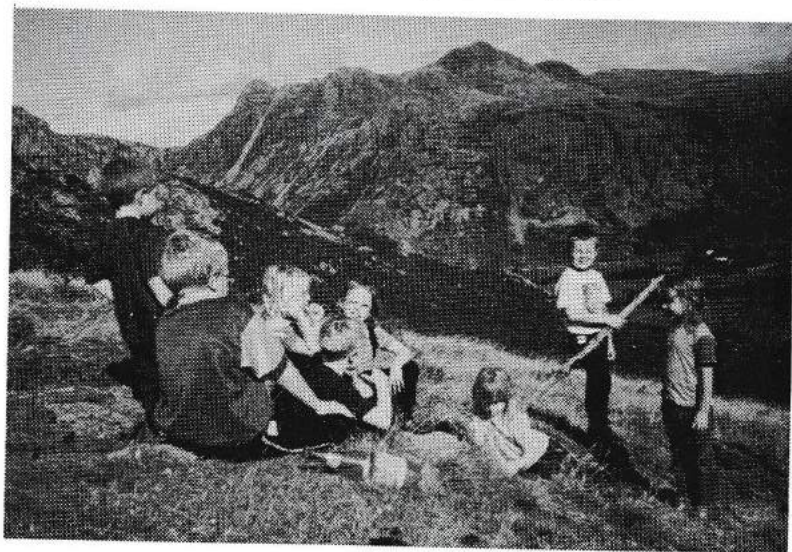
In Loving memory of
Wm. Patrick David Graham
Killed on the Matterhorn 27.11.43 - 3.9.62
Also his Aunt
Irene Joan Russell 6.9.10 - 25.9.62
And his Grandparents
Charles Frank Russell 1882 - 1951
Irene Kathleen Russell 1886 - 1973
And his Parents
George Desmond Graham 1913 - 1980
Evelyn Ann Graham 1916 -

Dot Wood

Now Leo's grandchildren are almost too old to attend Junior Meets, though their Gary has started a new generation, Dot and Arthur have stepped in with their new proteges and account for seven or eight of the thirteen children in attendance. Saturday dawned bright and clear, a good day for us and also for the Three Shires Race. Black Crag and Pike O' Blisco was once again the venue and with an almost 1 - 1 ratio of adults to children we set off. Dot gave the eight youngest ones, age range 4 years - 10 years a lift to the cattle-grid and we all met up again at the top of the steps up Red Ghyll, where we sat for a while for refreshments and to watch the first runner through on the fell race. Then it was on to the crag, where Faz and some of the others had gone before to set up ropes and things.

Lots of climbing was done and plenty of food consumed. The day stayed sunny and warm until mid-afternoon when it started to rain a bit, but by this time we were packing up anyway. The young ones received a lift back to Bishop's Scale with Freda and Diane and some of the not so young elected to walk back.

A good day out was had by all. A big thank you to all those adults who came along to help and also to the children who make the junior meets possible.



Dot Wood

Thor Heyerdahl has long been my inspiration - ever since I read the Kon-Tiki at a very early age I have wanted to go and explore new worlds. Then Hillary and Tensing climbed Everest and I added mountains to my dreams.

To paddle in the waters of the Magellan Straits was a dream come true. It didn't matter that there was an oil rig a couple of miles away and a city behind me. I was there, Tierro del Fuega was the land I could see across the water and albatrosses were wobbling about in the sky above my head. What a tremendous feeling it was to be there where so many of the great explorers through the ages had been before.

It was all thanks to Terry Kitchin and Dave Hall that I was there at all, but I'm sure I would have made it someday. The Towers of Paine were our main objective - not to climb, not enough time to do that (at least that was the excuse we were using), but to look and see and to walk around the mountains on a seven day trek which is what we did. It wasn't all straight forward of course, none of our journeys ever are. We arrived in Santiago but our luggage went to Havana. We didn't know this at the time and just thought it hadn't changed planes in Madrid when we did. So the airline said Manyana and off we went the next day to Punta arenas and expected our baggage to follow us - well it did but not for another three days with each day Terry becoming more fluent in Spanish as he tried to make sense of the different airline officers he was passed on to.

We spent the three days in Punta Arenas shopping or looking in shops and museums. Visited a Penguin Sanctuary which was pretty good and walked up the hill at the back of the town, me all the time looking longingly across the Megellan Straits to Tierro del Fuego but with the 'Equipagne' always going to arrive manyana we didn't go. Eventullay though we decided to go on to Puerto Natalas and on to the National Park that the Towers of Paine are in and buy or hire the equipment we needed but, low and behold, the luggage turned up at the airport and all we had to do was to pick it up. It was all there, nothing missing so off we went.

Puerto Natalas is a small town quite a long way inland but it is still the ocean and must be one of the windiest places that I have been to. Didn't spend much time there just overnight and then on the the Parque del Torres del Paine the next day.

Sunny day brilliant views of the towers on the approach to the Park, lots of photos taken and then it was time to shoulder the packs and start walking. This is always a tricky moment as I for one are never quite sure until we've been going for a while, that we're actually going in the right direction, anyway Terry and Dave seemed convinced so I just followed them. Took lots of photos of the Towers, just as well we did as they were shy of making any more appearances.

The first day was a beautiful walk across meadows full of dog daises and buttercups and white clover. Saw our first condor and camped in a meadow full of wild flowers.

It rained the next day and the next and the one after that and on the day we crossed the pass it snowed. Not all the time, just showers mostly and the views in-between were quite stunning, different to the Alps and Himalayas. The contrasting colours, white, grey, green and blue, all very clear or maybe that was because I'd had my eyes 'done' last year. However, it was all very beautiful and not so hard work as I'd expected. We camped by a beautiful blue lake, in spite of being called Lago Grey, upon which icebergs floated or rather sailed up and down depending on which way the wind was blowing to eventually land upon a beach and slowly dissolve until nothing is left. The glacier was just around the corner from the campsite and was one of the branches of the Southern Patagonian Ice Cap. It was an horrendous night in the end as this peaceful environment was shattered by the party that went on in the large tent next to us, until dawn. We set off late the next day to a camp four hours away where we hoped got quieter company (in vain). The next day we visited the Camp Britaniqua made famous in the late sixties by the many British climbers of that time.

Saw the Flight of the Condors which was a truly wonderful sight to see. After a day of heavy rain, the skies cleared around about five p.m. and this great flight of birds left the sheltering cliffs and poured out across the valley, over the lake and circled up on the thermals to disappear into the blue, blue sky. It was stunning. We were camped among trees at the time and I had been making a visit to the screes above otherwise I would have missed them, I did eventually go running back to tell the others and they managed to see the last few before they disappeared. I reckon there was more than fifty condors, what a sight. It happened again the next day as we left the camp at tea time after the side trip up to the Campo Britanica so it must be a regular thing I suppose that it's the right time of the day for hunting their evening meal. It certainly made more impact on me than the sighting of the three Magellan's woodpeckers in the forest which I'm told are quite rare.

A wonderful place to be in and in good company too. The fields and hedges were all in flower, like July here only more so. The air was very clear and had a blue tinge to it. It was windy at times but no more than Scotland. The people were smiling and friendly a bit like the Nepalese, altogether a wonderful experience.



CAFOD IN SOUTH AFRICA

Colette McLoughlin

Members might be interested to learn of the following. Twelve months ago I had just returned from visiting South Africa as a CAFOD Millennium Awardee. You may have had a visitor to your parish who, like me, benefited from the once in a life-time experience to see CAFOD at work. I was given the award along with 15 other parish youth workers from across England and Wales. Four of us travelled across South Africa taking in all the sights and sounds of this dynamic country. We visited three CAFOD funded projects each day for three weeks in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban and still managed Robben Island, the Drakensburg mountains and Kruger National Park. CAFOD works in partnership within Diocesan, Parish and National networks. It seemed to me that the church is one of the strongest opponents of Apartheid and its churches and schools and at no small cost, remained open to all. Now the Catholic Church faces new challenges of fair economic, restoring church land to its rightful owners, responding to the rise in crime and most significantly AIDS which is devastating the major bread winners.

One project we visited would be close to the heart of the ARCC. It was situated in the valley of a Thousand Hills inland from Durban in Kwa Zulu Natal, a most beautiful area of rolling green mountains. I could well understand why there had been fighting for ownership here and if I was a Zulu I wouldn't give it up easily! The project is run by Outward Bound and aims to bring together young people from poor rural and township communities so that they can share their skills and develop leadership qualities. To qualify for a place on a course young unemployed people have to be nominated by their priest or other community leader for showing commitment to positive action. Such young men and women have very little chance to break out of a cycle of poor education, lack of skills training and long term unemployment. And just like our youth they relished the challenge of outdoor activities. Their mentor was an extremely athletic young Kenyan who challenged them mentally and physically. Township youth knew the latest Kwaito (pop) music but the country dwellers knew how to make a bed on the floor and build primitive shelters on their expeditions. Those who showed potential were given the chance to stay in the centre and undertake mountain leader training. This takes two years at the end of which young men and women can hire themselves out to work within the booming adventure tourism industry as expert outdoor pursuits instructors, many of them return to the centre as volunteers. It is an excellent, innovative way for CAFOD to spend some of the money you so kindly raised each year and who knows if any of you visit these glorious mountains you may meet them.

Please note: Colette is available for parish talks or workshops in the Manchester area. A Terry Mattinson is available in the Lancaster Diocese.

Joyce Foster-Kent.

In February, when the Games fever had not yet reached its pitch, I went to Ozz to visit Christine Benjamin. She was previously a very active member of the who used to serve on the management committee, and amongst other Club work, was the organiser of several club skiing trips. Her handsome, Australian born husband enticed her to Brisbane seven years ago, they have a thriving 'Heritage Tree Care' business and I was really looking forward to seeing her again.

When I arrived it was WET. Vast area of Northern Queensland were flooded, rivers were raging and in South Australia, the shimmering expanse of salt crust on Lake Eyre, had formed floes on the surface of the flooded desert. But where Chris lives outside Brisbane the weather was lovely, a comfortable 27 degrees and sunny. So we decided to go camping at the coast.

We went South, in Chris's new, white, four-wheeled drive Ute', just over the border into New South Wales, to Byron Bay, close by the most easterly point of the Australian mainland. The cliffs at Byron Cape lighthouse are a good vantage point for observing humpback whales on their migratory route in the winter. No whales for us, but we did watch a large pod of Pacific dolphins leaping and diving. The municipal campsite was by the beach. The beach was superb; a vast, under-populated sweep of sun-bleached white sand, unspoilt and backed by trees. The bank at the back was covered with creeping, magenta, morning-glory flowers, and bordering the sand the turquoise-blue ocean. White-edged, green, rolling surf, thundered with flocks of foam, and in the distance, bronze gods balanced on their boards. Between the tides the ocean left a warm lagoon big enough and deep enough to swim in. A gentle breeze hid the extreme strength of the sun, so we swam early, when five year old Jessica awoke, and before breakfast. Power walking people were out early too, joggers, and one or two practising the art of Tai Chi; and the air coming from over the ocean was pure. Back at the tent under the tarp. (auline shade) we certainly had an appetite, as did the bush turkeys wandering about us with their scratchy feet and big beaks.

During the day, we went up into the mountains to the World Heritage Rainforest National Parks. Lamington National Park with its Binna Burra and Green Mountains lie on the southern side of the scenic rim, a chain of mountains stretching from the Gold Coast to Mt. Mistake, and is the most extensive sub-tropical rainforest in the world. It is impossible to walk, except on the prepared tracks because the bush is so thick. The smell of bush, the call of the whip-bird, it sounds like a cracking whip, the colours of the gallahs and the parrots were incredible as we traversed the walkway 150ft up in the canopy at O'Reilly's. At Mount Warning it poured, and from the top of Witches Falls 300ft down, it was a superb, cloying, damp view, across and above the trees, down along the valley. Such huge trees, with buttresses; lianas hanging, small creatures and birds turning the leaf litter making rustling, the gloom, and the plops from the drips as we walked down to a water-hole where you could swim from a rock, but I didn't fancy that. We went to Rocky Creek Dam and walked by the river and lagoons to look for platypus, and it poured, stair rod rain, we were soaked in a second.

We ate our lunch under a shelter, and then I noticed that in several places my toes and feet were bleeding, and there were lots and lots of small, black, looping things. Realisation brought horror! Leeches! We beat a hasty retreat back towards Byron Bay, when Jessica's voice from the back of the Ute, informed us that she too had a black wriggly thing, a 'Bleach', coming out of a lace-hole on her trainer. We couldn't stop just then, because of the traffic, and so we sang with actions, 'One potato, two potato, three potato, four' and it became our anthem. We sang it all the time in the car, the louder the better, and Jessica loved it, we didn't get rid of her leech until we stopped in the supermarket car park, where we discovered she had more than one.

The next week we went North, to the Glass House Mountains and the pineapple fields, and on to Cooloolah in the Great Sandy National Park. In the hinterland at the houses and the road junctions had names of places in Mull and Skye, it must have been a very different world for the settlers from Armadale and Struan.

We camped at Elanda Point on Lake Coutharaba. The camp-site man was very grumpy and told us there was a typhoon on its way and we should go home. There were only two other tents there, so we carefully storm-rigged the tarp and back into the wind, and made sure the tent was properly pegged into the sandy soil beneath the Paperbark trees and the Scribbly Gums.

We were a long way from the loo, and in the morning when I opened the tent door a big kangaroo twenty yards away, was leaning on its elbow, holding its tail in the air and scratching it with its other hand, whilst it watched me. We were surrounded by kangaroos, some with joeys in their pouches and all of them looking at me, but I had to go; so I gave them a wide berth and they slowly moved away, grazing all the time. There were birds too, avocets and waders that I'd never seen the like of, probing the nearby marshy ground.

We had to hang the rubbish from the top of the tarp, so the possums couldn't get it. We fed the kookaburras with the bacon rind, and the flocks of crimson parrots, salmon coloured galahs and bright green lorikeets were beautiful. When I took the rubbish to the bin I saw a big lizard about three feet long. The kids at the next tent told me that if it chased me, to run zig-zag, because goannas can only run straight. A useful tip, I felt, as I hurried away.

Chris drove us across the Noosa Ferry and onto the beach, and we drove north for 50km. We stopped because the tyres were making a funny noise, and realised that where the surf had been there were myriads of bluebottle jellyfish, they were only as big as a twenty pence piece at the most and with a bright, royal blue sail. The noise we could hear, was the sound of the bladders popping.

Near the coloured sand cliffs we stopped again, and so a beautiful, creamy white dingo and then we saw another later. The march flies and the sand flies were awful, real, bad biters. There were lots of Brahminy Eagles looking for titbits in the edge of the foam. I'd seen Brahminy ducks, one of the rarest ducks in the world up at Gokyo Lakes just below Everest and I wondered why they had the same name?

It was a little bit scary driving up the beach. Although it was low tide, we didn't know how far up the strong wind was holding the tide, and in places there wasn't much space between the sea and the bush, and the water channels draining across the beach were fairly deep. So we decided to carry on. We went as far as the wreck 'The Cherry Venture' and then turned back, but I was ever so glad I'd been. There was space, isolation and wilderness.

Back at the camp site, Jeremy, Chris's husband had arrived earlier than expected. The weather was deteriorating, so we cooked our bar-b steaks, drank the wine and retired, Jez sleeping in his new swag like a jolly swagman, but under the shelter of the tarp. He took some stick from us two, and he didn't get much sleep. The possums were dropping off the trees onto the tarp, trying to get the steak rubbish hanging from the poles, the 'roos hopping around him chewing the grass and scratching and the goannas were running backwards and forwards all night.

We slept well in the tent. But it was raining, so we decided not to stay and went home.

Soon afterwards I was at the airport, and my promised visit had come to an end, and I was sad. It all seems years ago now and its still sunny and warm in Queensland.

SLIPPING AND GLIDING IN NORWAY

Ken Jackson

Every spring I go with a group of friends ski mountaineering. At one of our annual planning meetings Brian suggested that we consider Norway instead of the Alps. Some friends of his had been ski touring there and gave it top marks. We were invited to go round to their house to see slides, maps and inspect the Nordic ski equipment we would need. We all got very excited by the prospect of this area and decided that our next trip would be to Norway.

We all had traditional ski mountaineering equipment but this would not be suitable for the terrain in Norway. The Nordic equipment is much lighter and is designed for traversing undulating country rather than ascending and descending steep slopes. We had been told that it was possible to hire the equipment in England and take it with us. This proved to be rather difficult as there were only two places to hire from and they wanted all their equipment to hire out at the time we would have needed it. After much heart searching we all forked out about £450 for skis, sticks, boots and skins. The big unknown was how would we get on with the different techniques required to use skis with bindings that did not hold down your heels. So tallyho off to the ski slopes of Glenshee we all went to see how we coped. We spent the morning away from the pistes walking uphill, which is possible because the skis have a special fishscale pattern on the soles, and skiing in unbroken snow. The results were not entirely successful but we had not expected perfect telemark turns without any instruction. In the afternoon we decided to buy half day tickets which would allow us to use the ski tows and ski on downhill pistes. To our delight we found that our downhill technique worked quite well on green and blue runs if you remembered that you could not put weight on the front of the skis.

The planning was greatly eased by using the services of a company, in Ambleside, who specialise in Nordic ski tours. They are called Mountain and Wildlife Ventures and they ran organised holidays to various destinations in Norway. They would also undertake to book flights, trains and hotels for parties who wanted to travel independently. They were also the only agent in England for the Norwegian Mountain Touring Club (DNT). It is essential to take out membership of the DNT as this allows you to get a key to their unmanned huts and gives you good discounts off all their hut fees. Unfortunately this firm now offers a much reduced service as one of the owners developed a serious illness and died.



We loved the first trip and have been back on two other occasions. I could go on at great length but I will refrain and only give you the bare bones to whet your appetite.

The first trip was to Hardangervidda in the west, not too far from Bergen, which is a large plateau with relatively small mountains although one mountain does have a glaciated cap even though it is only 1840m high.

The second visit was to Jotunheimen which translates as "The home of the giants" and is Norway's best known mountain area. This area contains a lot of big

..... mountains including the biggest two in the country, Galdhopiggen at 2469m high and Glittertind at 2464m high. It is relatively easy to ski right to the top of both of these mountains.

The third visit took us to Rondane which is the oldest national park in Norway. The mountains are not as high as the Jotunheimen and there are large forests making this region the most scenic of those we had visited.

On all our trips we carried only our personal gear, clothes, emergency food and a sheet sleeping bag. The manned and unmanned huts provide duvets. The former provide wonderful food, especially the enormous breakfasts, while the latter are stocked with a good supply of tinned and packet food.

There are also simple huts which do not have stocks of food but we have not stayed in any of these yet.

In the mountains there are relatively few roads and these are seldom driveable in winter. There are also literally thousands of lakes at all altitudes and the Norwegians make use of these wherever practical as a means of transporting people and goods to remote dwellings. This is by boat in summer and skidoo in winter. The frozen lakes also provide ski routes in winter as there is usually a thick cover of snow over the ice. The Norwegians are enthusiastic cross country skiers and have developed a wonderful gliding action, a bit like skating, which propels them over flat ground at a fair speed. Our attempts to imitate this gliding action results in a slight improvement in speed but I bet we don't even travel at half the speeds the locals achieve.

I could go into raptures about the wonderful views but it must be said that although they are truly stunning they are very often shrouded in cloud and mist particularly in March and April.

Hopefully this article will give some members the urge to try ski touring in Norway. I can recommend it although unfortunately it will dent your bank balance because most items, particularly booze, are more expensive than in England. Some ARCC members have tried it but if anyone new wants to chat about it please get in touch with me.



PRALOGNAN 2000

Margaret Conroy.

"Well, it was the best holiday we've ever been on!" - Ciaran and Tris's verdict of Pralognan 2000.

Here's a flavour of how it went.....

The plan grew out of the Summer 99 Tour de la Vanoise undertaken by Arthur Daniels, Dave Hugill and Gerard McCabe. They had stayed in Pralognan and been impressed by the setting and facilities.

A group of us decided to give it a go for Summer 2000 using the Camping Isertan at Pralognan as our base.

Unbelievably, on 20th July the flight party assembled at Liverpool airport. There we discussed the prospects of ever seeing our advance packing again as various members had witnessed the heated exchanges about proposed routes and timings between the members of the montage team - Arthur and Peter, who were travelling by car and ferry.....

Our overnight stay in Geneva YH allowed time to explore a little, see the famous fountain and visit the funfair which was just being set up.

We continued our journey by train, and appointed Bec as chief trolley dolly. She and Ciaran did a fine job steering approximately 20 pieces of luggage around several station platforms.

Arrived at the campsite late afternoon. We were greeted ecstatically by the owner Regis, and less ecstatically by A and P WHO WERE STILL ARGUING!! After the action replay of their first two arguments (the one from Wed. afternoon to Thursday lunch and the other from Thursday lunch to our arrival) we all joined in and argued our way into various tents, after which we somehow co-operated long enough to eat a shared meal! Later that evening the Wakeford/Conroy/Limmer/Daniels went to the Pralognan v. Albertville ice hockey match. It was fast and very violent to the untutored eye - we never did discover what exactly constitutes a foul....

Saturday - the generation gap emerged as the younger members set off for sports facilities and the rest of us set off to the Refuge at the Roc de la Peche. This set the style for much of the holiday and meant a great time all round.

We had chosen our dates to coincide with the Mountain Guides Festival. The celebrations began with an open air Mass (for which we were not late!!) ropes and ice axes were blessed to the accompaniment of alpine horns - beautiful mellow, haunting sound - and the whole town seemed to be gathered in traditional costumes. Little boys gave flowers to their Mums, everyone was in party mood and a procession of carts and troupes of various kinds would its way to the square where a full day's entertainment

unfolded. The flag flingers of Savoie were the most spectacular, there were stick smashing dancers from Italy and a clog dancing and singing troupe.

The day also saw Chris Daniels 15th birthday, celebrated in style. 14 of us in one tent hiding from the rain ate pizzas, chips, etc. and had a cake complete with candles. By now the arguing had come to second division stuff.

Over the next few days we got down to some more exploration of the immediate area (and of the bars - of which more shortly). Mid week the "real" mountaineers set off for La Valette. A classic ARCC start saw the party on a plan of campaign. Meanwhile everyone else has time to put other plans in place - gourmet lunch, ascent to see the Via Ferrata at the Cascade de la Fraiche, market, sports and so on.

It's hard to pick out the highlights, but the discovery of the Bar Restaurant Le Chardon Bleu must be one of the great moments of club history. This became our evening HQ and the owners Françoise and Alain became our friends, giving us a real inside view of this little Alpine town. They were very generous to us and happily sat and talked with us after the evening's business was done. Fran told us of her family history, they are from Pralognan, and one of the hurdy gurdies used at the festival is a family treasure. Her Grandfather made the cheeses they serve in the restaurant. They sorry about the young people who will maybe leave as they grow up for jobs in the towns. Pralognan's population outside the holiday season is only 600 or so and almost all the employment revolves around tourism.

They introduced us to Jean-Yves Roche, one of the mountain guides, who took Tris and Chris on their epic ascent of the Via Ferrata at the Cascade de la Fraiche. Three worried parents (Beryl, Arthur and me) and one freaked out sister (Ciaran) endured the climb and the abseil, two young mountaineers came back with a gleam in their eyes and we all celebrated back at the Chardon Bleu (Slides of the climb will be shown at New Year 2000/01).

Alain also ensured a warm welcome for us when we decided on an overnight trip to the Refuge du Col de la Vanoise.

We arrived after a glorious day's walking to be met by a marmot almost as tame as a dog. We had a good meal, good company and a noisy night of ghost stories from PMCH, Austin head butting the bunks, and everyone being very, very hot despite all warnings to the contrary. Just for the record, the upper tier of alpine bunks went to the Kenny clan, other ranks were in the pit.

I'll leave other members to tell of their own highlights and close with many thanks to everyone involved in the trip especially Beryl, whose home was turned into the equipment dump preparing for the big departure and to Peter and Arthur, who, as we left the campsite were just brewing up for round 27.....

Who went? Alan and Lucia Kenny, Peter McHale, Austin Guilfoyle, Mickey Donnelly, Arthur, Beryl and Chris Daniels, Tricia, Tim and Bec Wakeford, Ciaran Tris andme.

SILENCE OF THE STONES

Joe Garbarino.

Walking on the fells in the Lake District provides its own reward. Nature has created enough beauty to satisfy any walker. However, some walkers like to combine their walk with the pursuit of a personal interest and through this they can gain even more satisfaction and enjoyment from their trek. These interests can cover a wide range of topics. They could include bird-watching, flowers, chimney pots, graveyards, packhorse bridges or even pubs.

Although I am quite interested in some of these my main concern when fell walking is the locating and recognising prehistoric sites. I am not referring to those sites with signs up advertising where they are. Some are like that but I like those sites that are just out there, lying half hidden and unsignposted, on the fells. Even with a map or guide book these sites can be missed. I have seen people looking all around to spot a certain site and all the time they were standing on it!

I would like to pass on some information about some of the prehistoric sites (i.e., pre-Roman) that are to be found within the Lake District. Perhaps, if you have never thought of looking for this sort of thing previously then this might get you started.

Stone Circles

Perhaps the earliest of prehistoric remains in the Lakes are the stone circles. The most visited and most photographed is at Castlerigg, west of Keswick. This is a late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age monument, 100ft by 109ft, slightly oval in shape but deliberately so designed. It has 38 stones with a further ten, in oblong shape, arranged inside. I think the entrance can be detected in the northern part. This site is signposted.

Another circle, not 'oval', is at Swinside on a grassy plateau on the eastern slopes of Black Combe. This is my favourite circle. It has about 55 stones and is in a lovely setting. It can be approached by path either from Thwaites Fell to the north or from Cragg Hall to the East.

Perhaps the most intriguing circle is Long Meg and her Daughters near Little Salkeld. This is another 'oval' circle approximately 100 yards across. Long Meg is a huge monolith of Penrith sandstone 70 ft outside the circle and the four stones nearest it in square formation are the 'daughters'. One side is slightly flattened and there used to be a large ditched enclosure joined to the circle. It had a flattened side to fit to the circle. What makes Long Meg different is that it had engravings of spirals and other motifs. This circle and a burial cairn nearby are the only examples of prehistoric rock carving in the Lakes that I know of. The style of carving remind me strongly of those connected with the River Boyne Passage Graves in Ireland, such as New Grange.

My last circle is on Moor Divock (Askhan Fell). Known as 'the Cockpit', it is sited in moorland and is an attractive monument. The surrounding area is rich in prehistoric

remains especially burial sites. The Roman road High Street passes close by it. Access is by paths from Pooley Bridge or Askham Village.

Henges.

To the north-east of 'the Cockpit' lie two henges also from the Neolithic/Early bronze Age period. They are close by each other at Eamont Bridge near Penrith and are under English Heritage care. These henges were never defensive. They were probably for public gatherings for communities from a large surrounding area. Today they both lie close to the busy A6.

Mayburgh is the larger and the oldest henge of the two. It is also the most 'atmospheric'. It is estimated that about 20,000 tons of stones were used to build the huge enclosure encircling it. The henge is about 330ft (100m) across with an entrance to the east. Only one huge stone stands within the area but Stakeley recorded three others near to it and two pairs flanking the entrance.

The second henge, known as King Arthur's Round Table, is smaller and of a later date. It has the more traditional type of construction with a ditch and a bank on the outside. The centre is a flat circle and had two access causeways across a ditch. Sadly one of these has been lost due to road building.

Burial Cairns.

Probably the most numerous type of prehistoric sites likely to be encountered on the Lake District fells are the burial cairns. Several of these had as 'Kerb' or circle of large stones around the perimeter. In some cases the burial mound has gone leaving a small circle of stones. These are not true stone circles, they are Cairn Circles. Most of these are Bronze Age.

Burial Cairns can be seen individually across the Lakes but I would like to deal with sites where several remains are to be found. Moor Divock is one. Approachable from Askham or Pooley Bridge there are to be seen here, burial Cairns, Cairn Circles and a Standing Stone (the Cop Stone) which may have been part of a cairn circle. If the walker is lucky and a real 'detective' there are the remains of a stone avenue to find but it is difficult to identify, due to the vegetation. These are all within sight of the 'Cockpit' stone circle.

Another area with much to see is Burnmoor. It lies near the path from Wasdale to Eskdale via Burnmoor Tarn. The name means 'the moor of borran's' or stone heaps. This is my favourite large site. Leave the main path and walk along the ridge between Whillan Beck and Miterdale. There are earth works all along this ridge although they are not all of the same date. They include cairn fields, cairn circles, burial mounds, round barrows, cairns and hut circles. Give yourself plenty of time and wander about seeing just how much you can find and identify. Access from Boot is easy.

Devoke Water, accessible by path from the road which runs from Eskdale to Dunnerdale, is also covered with prehistoric remains. Most are thought to be from

the Bronze Age. About 1,200 cairns have been identified within a two mile radius of the tarn. These will mostly be clearance cairns but some are burial cairns.

Barnscar on Birkby Fell is another site with a mixture of antiquities. It lies west of Devoke Water or can be approached from Dyke Farm at Waberthwaite on the A595. Remains of a former settlement with enclosures, cairns, hut circles and field systems are found here.

About a mile south of Barnscar site is another similar area with evidence of settlements, burial cairns and cairn circle. This lies on the lower slopes of Stainton Fell and can be approached by leaving the A595 at the old quarry near Broad Oak and then by lane and footpath via Whitrow Beck.

On Stockdale Moor, a remote area above Worm Gill, between Wasdale and Ennerdale is a Neolithic burial named Sampson's Bratful. This is a long barrow type about 96ft long by 44ft wide. The area, now remote, was once quite occupied in prehistoric times. In addition to the long barrow the area contains evidence of settlement enclosures, hut circles, tumuli, cairns, clearance cairns and even cultivation terraces. Probably the best access is from Blengdale via Bleng Tongue Bridge and can be reached from the Gosforth road.

The southern fell slopes from Coniston towards Torver is also a prehistoric area. Banishead Moor and Bleaberry Hows, west of Torver, have cairns. Homesteads, embanked circle and a cairn circle. There are also traces of round barrows.

Hill Forts.

There are only a few Iron age hill forts in the Lakes that I am aware of. The best example is on Carrick Fell, to the north east of the Skiddaw hills. This fort has substantive remains and is well worth the stiff climb from Mosedale. It's walls are several feet high in parts and the entrances can still be discerned. It covers an area of about five acres.

Other smaller hill forts with single ramparts and possibly ditches can be identified in the Lake district. The most accessible is on the summit of Castle Crag near Grange in Borrowdale. It is in a crumbling state having been much walked over and disturbed over the years, but is well worth a visit and has good views down the valley. Easy path from grange village.

Another example is on another Castle Crag. This one is below Birks Crag near upper reaches of Haweswater in Mardale. There are rock-cut ditches and a stone rampart. It is in a spectacular setting. Drive to the end of the valley and walk round via The Rigg and Gate Crag.

There are other sites with traces of small defended enclosures but it is not certain whether these are in fact of Iron Age date. One is at Dunmallet Hill at the foot of Ullswater near Pooley Bridge. Another is Castle Crag, below Raven Crag on the north slopes of Thirlmere. The site is above Shouthwaite Gill and access is by the path up the Gill side or by the path from the road near the dam. There is little to see at this fort

but it will be a challenge for those attempting the journey. At Castle Howe on a wooded hill by the old road side near the Pheasant Hotel at Bassenthwaite Lake there are traces of a hill fort. This one I have no knowledge of, never having visited it.

Kentmere Settlements.

Kentmere deserves a mention on its own, having several settlement sites. I'm not sure what age they truly belong to. Some say Romans/British, some say Iron age. I think that they overlap having originated in Iron Age times and have continued to be occupied into Roman times. First, there is the enclosed settlement on Hugill Fell near High Knott with access via Ulthwaite Bridge. Then on the opposite side of the valley at Millriggs there is an unenclosed settlement. Further up the valley near Tongue House is an enclosed settlement with outer buildings and a fourth site of a settlement is right up at the head of the valley, above the reservoir on the east side of the River Kent.

Other Settlements.

Finally I'd like to mention two other sites that are settlements only. One is at Aughtertree Fell about four miles west of Caldbeck village. This farming settlement is enclosed by banks and ditches and has platforms for circular buildings. The central enclosure has a sunken lane heading to it. It seems to overlie earlier burial mounds.

The other is on Threlkeld Knotts just south of Threlkeld Quarry but north of the path leading from St. John in the Vale to Dockray. Also a farming settlement with remain of several hut circles, field boundary walls, clearance cairnfields and lanes leading to the settlement. It's a good example of its type.

THREE PEAKS - A NEW RECORD

Derek Price.

Roughly copied from the Dalesman, June 1954 and re-produced in the Fellrunner, 2000.

A further chapter has been added to the history of achievements at the Three Peaks, Ingleborough, Pen-y-Ghent and Whernside. On April 24th Preston Harriers and Athletic Club organised the Three Peaks race. They had in mind the existing record of four hours twenty seven minutes for the circuit, set up in 1948 by international athlete D. Birch, of Leeds Harehills Athletics Club.

Consequently a similar route to that taken on the previous occasion was chosen, the result being that the first two men home broke the existing record. The winner, Fred Bagley, of Preston Harriers reduced it by thirty nine minutes. His own time was three hours and forty eight minutes. Following him closely home was Stan Bradshaw of Clayton-le-Moors Harriers.

The race started at the Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale. The weather was fine and clear, with a strong easterly wind keeping the temperatures down. Ground conditions were good because of a recent dry spell.

The new record holder, Fred Bagley, is a keen cross country and track runner. He is also a fell walker and walks in the Peak District and the Lake District.

NB. Fred Bagley is now a member of the ARCC and a close friend of George Partridge.

BICYCLING THE PACIFIC COAST

A Journey of a Lifetime

Ann and John McGonagle.

Reaching the age of 50 makes you stop and think. A time to look back and reflect on the things you have done and the things you might have done. The children no longer children but young adults. Adequate material possessions and very fortunate to be in good health. Some friends around you have not been so lucky and are no longer with us. What is in the future? Three score years and ten, if you are lucky is fast looming. There are so many things still to do and so many place to go. A time now to think of our dreams - which could become reality if we really tried.

A chance find of a book in the bargain section of the cycle shop in Ambleside - Ann never could resist a bargain - was the seed that began to grow. "Bicycling the Pacific Coast by Tom Kirkendall and Vicky Spring" - a guide and route description on a journey down Highway 1 from Canada to the Mexican Border. John, the planner and organiser, who read and re-read the sections were convinced that this was a possibility, even though Ann had never owned a bike until two years previously. Those first trips down Meins Road with gears crunching was enough to make a saint swear but with determination and patience we progressed to a ride out to Waddow Hall and back - what an achievement! The final arrangements were made in October 1996, the flights booking made in March 1997 for lift off in May 1997. What to take was a problem. We would be landing in Canada in Spring time which could be cold and wet, travelling with the sea permanently on our right, with winds coming off the Pacific Ocean and the possibility of no real warmth until we landed in California. We intended to use the International Youth Hostel system, where possible, and to camp the rest of the journey using the State Parks as recommended in the book. The tent, lightweight sleeping bags, carry mats, stove and basic cooking equipment was essential - along with maps, guides, camera and usual documentation whilst travelling abroad. Clothes had to be carefully chosen, windproof and waterproof jackets, thermal tops, cycle shorts - and Ann insisted on six pairs of knickers! Two panniers, each for personal gear, plus a top box (on handlebars) was the maximum space allowed. John had two front panniers for the cooking and camping gear and for the food we had to carry on some sections where civilisation was limited.

A family party on the Sunday served as thanksgiving for Confirmation for Harriet and Bon Voyage for the two of us. With excitement and anticipation we set off from Manchester Airport bound for Vancouver. Our first three nights had been booked at the Hostel and this gave us the opportunity to view this wonderful city and prepare ourselves for the journey. Following repairs to the bike damaged in transit we were ready for off. As we had planned to make our journey at a steady pace, we were following the book almost to the letter. At every stage of the journey there were side trips which enabled us to see all the places of interest along the way - places of outstanding natural beauty and of great historical significance, and this proved to be a wonderful experience that will live with us for ever. The people we met who were so kind and generous and took tremendous interest in these English people who must be

slightly mad to undertake the journey. There was also admiration, respect and great envy that we had actually done something so many would have liked to have done.

The Journey.

The first stage of the journey was through British Columbia - Roberts Creek, Saltry Bay, Rathreavor to Victoria. Wonderful scenery with mixed weather. From here island hopping on the Sunshine Coast to Washington - San Juan Islands, Anacortes, Fort Worden, Potlatch, and Twin Harbours, onto the magnificent coastline of Oregon with the huge sea stacks and wonderful sunsets. Then Nahalem Bay, Cape Lookout, Beverley Beach, Sunset Beach, Humbug Mountain to the Californian border. On the journey we met up with fellow cyclists who were doing parts of the route - using the same book - starting and stopping as their time allowed for a "normal vacation". From California we were able to shed some of our thermals for tee shirts and we parcelled some of the items no longer required and sent them home. We entered the home of the giant redwoods on unbelievable sight. These huge trees in profusion which have been on the earth for thousands of years really is a sight to behold. Eureka, Manchester, Bodega Dunes - sand dunes as high as houses - Half Moon Bay to San Francisco. We sent four nights in San Francisco and visited all the famous places! We actually stayed at an hostel on Marrin Head with a wonderful view of the Golden Gate bridge. The Fourth of July was spent at Montara a hostel within a lighthouse - a wonderful evening in a hot tub, looking down the coastline with flocks of pelicans flying overhead - what could be nicer! Santa Cruz, Monterey - excellent aquarium, sea lions and our first close up of a sea otter in the open sea. The passage through Big Sur country was my favourite. The scenery was spectacular, reminding me so much of the childhood stories of magical places in the clouds. On to Paskett Creek and San Simeon where we paid a visit to Hearst Castle - a museum on the life and times of William Randolph Hearst - spectacular. Continued down the coast to Pismo, Lompoc and Lake Cachuma in the Santa Ynez Valley and on to Santa Barbara - my favourite city of the journey, where we visited the mission. We crossed the Los Angeles state line after cycling through Malibu, Venice and Manhattan Beaches (where the cycle path actually crossed the sands on a concrete cycle path!) - and on to Santa Monica and down to Hermosa Beach where we had the luxury of a motel room for the night - John's 50th birthday. Crossing the San Diego County line into Camp Pendleton Military base through Oceanside. Carlsbad Torrey Pines State Reserve and into San Diego itself - our journey is nearly at its end. We enter the Border Field State Park experiencing great difficulty with incessant Border patrols and helicopter presence, not at all what we expected. The Border patrol allowed us to go as far as the wire fence but this was not the climax we wanted to this wonderful adventure. To rest is not to conquer and so we pressed on to the International Border crossing at San Ysidro - this was just as expected, thronging traffic and lots of people. Journeys end 2,410 miles later at 4.45pm on Monday 21 July 1997.

The rest of our time was spent in and around San Diego as real tourists, watching the parade of ships and aircraft. A visit to Universal Studios and of course a day in Mexico itself. From here we flew back to Canada and a week in Toronto with John's brother before returning to England and reality.

Was it a dream? It was certainly an experience that we will never forget. Three months doing exactly what we wanted - and a great joy in sharing each other's undivided company.

You should try it.

ARCC MEETS CARD 2001

January 20 th	Working Weekend - Bishop's Scale	Arthur Daniels 01706 819706
February 10 th	Yorkshire Dale's Barn Weekend	David Hugill 01524 734467
March 3 rd - 9 th	Scottish Winter Meet	Ken Jackson 01706 229364
March 30 th -31 st	Working Weekend - Beckstones	Joyce Kent 01253 697948
May 12 th	Annual Long Walk - Beckstones	Joyce Kent 01253 697948
May 19 th	Old Counties Tops Race	Arthur Daniels 01706 819706
June 29 th - 30 th	Climbing, Biking, Walking, BBQ Beckstones	Joyce Kent 01253 697948
July 14 th - 15 th	Junior Meet Tyn Twr	Faz Faraday 0131 661 2816
September 1 st	CAFOD Grisedale Fell Race	Colin Jones 01204 690013
September 15 th	Junior Meet - Bishop's Scale	Arthur Daniels 01706 819706
September 16 th	Club Fell Race - Langdale	Leo Pollard 01204 694657
September 22-23 rd	Climbing, Biking, Walking, Beckstones	Faz Faraday 0131 661 2816
October 6 th	CAFOD Walk - Glenriding	Derek Price 01772 768174
November 3 rd	Working Weekend - Bonfire - Tyn Twr	Anne Wallace 01744 811864
November 17 th	AGM Bishop's Scale Chapel - 1.30pm	Austin Guilfoyle 0151 420742
November 17 th	Annual Dinner - New Dungeon Hotel	Alan Kenny 01524 701648
December 1 st	Climbing, Biking, Walking, Bird Watching. Beckstones	Tom Walkington 01524 730240