

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB



**2002
JOURNAL**

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

President - Rt. Rev. Francis Slattery M.A.
Chaplain - Rev. Stephen Ashton
Trustees - Rt. Rev Monsignor Slattery, Ben Carter

Management Committee

Chairman - David Ogden
89 Newton Drive, Blackpool. FY3 8LX. 01253 398252
Vice Chairman - Leo Pollard
2 Medway Close, Horwich, Bolton. BL6 6DA. 01204 694657
Hon Secretary - Austin Guilfoyle
6 Jubilee Way, Widnes. WA8 7NH. 01514 240742
Treasurer - Jean Lomas
21 Broad Lane, Upperthong, Holmfirth, Yorks. HD7 1LS. 01484 687030
Membership Secretary - Neville Haigh
752 Devonshire Road, Noebreck, Blackpool. FY2 0AD. 01253 354505

Ordinary Members

Faz Faraday - 13 Queens Park Ave. (TFR) Edinburgh. EH8 7EF.
0131 6612816
Dave Makin - 8 Canal Bank, Apply Bridge, Wigan. WN6 9AW.
01257 255930
David Hugill - 21 Washington Drive, Warton, Carnforth. LA5 9RA.
01524 734467

Hut Wardens

Beckstones - Joyce Kent, 4 Godwin Ave, Marton, Blackpool. FY3 9LG. 01253
697948
Bishop Scales - Arthur Daniels, 6 Ibbotroyd Ave, Todmorden. OL14 5NY. 01706
819706
Dunmail - Micheal Crawford, 102 Beaufort Ave, Bispham. FY5 9AG
01253 592823
Tyn Twr - Anne Wallace, 28 Cecil St, Sutton, St.Helens. WA9 3LB.
01744 811864

PATAGONIA - January 2002

We stayed overnight in the little town of El Calafate. The Argentinean peso was in free fall, they wouldn't change our US dollars so any shopping was out of the question.

We wandered along the single street in the evening promenade, looking in at ice cream; exquisite, hand-made chocolates; quality gifts; steaks sizzling and sheep spread on racks, roasting with the fat spluttering in the flames. Just then, we found a bank machine, our cards worked and with mouths watering we fled to the nearest B-B-Q restaurant and stuffed our faces with delicious, crispy meat.

We left early the next morning, by minibus on the stony, unsurfaced road. From the shore of turquoise Lago Viedma, more than half way and 100km still to go, in the distance sparkling, white glaciers reached the lake. There at the side with the summits ringed with cloud, were the soaring spires of Cerro Torre and Cerro Fitzroy. Fitzroy is named after the British Admiral of the Fleet, which explored the south of Chile and in which Charles Darwin and The Beagle sailed. We stopped for a brew and the walls were full of Italian Alpine Club climbers and posters.

El Chalten, is a cluster of houses just for tourists, no one there in the winter, too much snow. At the Hostale, we went out immediately, in case the notoriously changeable weather should break. Standing on a subsidiary ridge, gazing at the incredible view, the sky now a deep, cerulean blue with odd, cigar shaped, high white clouds, we saw our first condor. It glided across at eye level, with huge, black, upturned, fingered wings, white neck and its eye, all glistening in the sun.

Fitzroy base camp was our goal, given eight hours without rest time, but relatively easy walking. The sun was blistering, we hadn't expected sun and my knee was already very sore from the day before. The pure air was like champagne, the southern beech forest and the flowers; tumbling, blue glaciers on every side drew eyes downward, the 3045 metres of sheer rock mountains took eyes upward. Visible with binoculars were several teams of climbers, they too were extremely fortunate with the weather. Gazing, I was soon at the back, walking with a charming, tall, still handsome 84yr old Canadian Hungarian.

He was having foot trouble, for which I was grateful; it gave me chances to rest. It took me ages to limp back down the steep path from base camp, Zoltan waited and then Paula joined us, the others were behind. We sat on a fallen tree and watched a family of El Carpentiro - Magellan Woodpeckers, black with red crests, working the trees and hammering for grubs. It was a long, dry walk back; I was thirsty, with a sunburnt arm and ear. Like a dervish, I was continually turning to see those beautiful mountains again and again. Eventually down the ridge and onto the valley floor, Paula was away in front, being the youngest and the stones on the track were too big for comfort, jarring my knees again and again..

Then I saw it, a Micro Brewery, I hadn't noticed it before. It looked a bit like a Nativity Set, but Paula was sat in the window waving a glass at me so I staggered up the path and went in. Now I don't drink beer! It was superb, the first didn't touch the sides, we tried a differed one next, nectar! Zollie arrived and by the time the third was sunk we all had double vision, so we linked arms and warbled and staggered our way back.

Showered and rehydrated, I had sumptuous, melt in the mouth steak like I'd never had before, accompanied by a glass of fruity Malbec. And as I collapsed into my bed, there through the window was Fitzroy in the moonlight. Gleaming silver rock, against a navy blue sky hung with huge, star lanterns and the air was cold and so pure you could taste it.

I would not have missed it for the world !

Joyce Kent

LANGDALE to BECKSTONES MEET - JUNE 15/16TH 2002

John Braybrook

I had never stayed at Beckstones even though it has been a Club Hut for twelve years but when I saw a walk from Langdale to Beckstones on the Club's Meets card it, gave me the spur to make a visit.

In the eighties I had walked or driven over to Buckbarrow, Beckstones predecessor in the West, to make climbing trips to Pillar, Gable and Scarfell and I had also been round the Wasdale Horseshoe on the Club's Long Walk. My walk over to Beckstones brought back happy memories of those days.

I was fortunate to have the companionship of Jean Lockhead and George Partridge on the trek over to Beckstones. The route we walked was via The Three Shires Stone, Wetside Edge, Great Carrs and Grey Friar where we descended to Seathwaite Tarn. At the Newfield Inn in the Duddon Valley, we had refreshments and heard the result of the World Cup Match between Denmark & England. We then walked along the road and made a detour onto the fells. There is a steepish haul up from Ulpha across the fells to Beckstones.

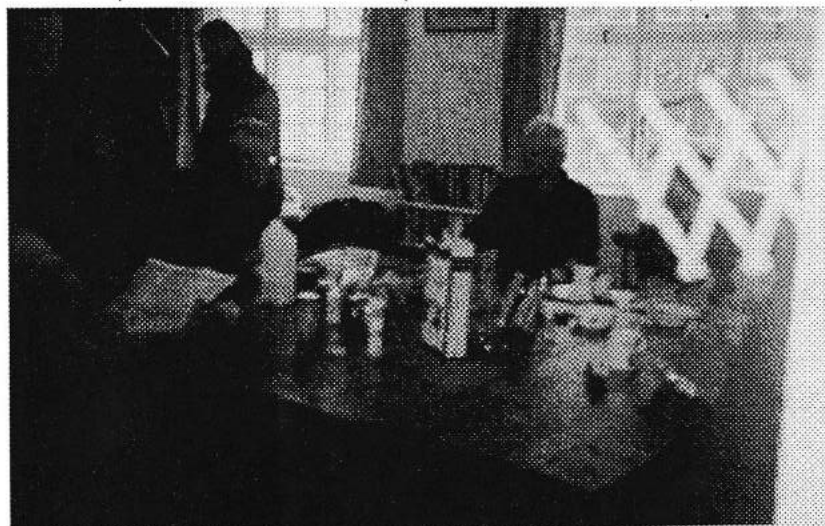


Fortune smiled on us weather wise, as the rain which had been teeming down for twenty-four hours abated as we left Bishops Scale though it was windy and misty on Wetside Edge but perfect walking conditions in the Duddon Valley.

We had plenty to talk about and stopped to have a look at the remains of the wreckage of a World War 2 aircraft near Grey Friar and then the Church at Seathwaite. Amongst the other topics of conversation were: ornithology, the Alps, George's National Service experiences, Jean's athletic and orienteering career and Club members past and present.

At Beckstones we were warmly greeted by Joyce Kent who asked me invitingly; "John, would you like tea and a piece of cake," which was much appreciated. Many thanks to Joyce and Joan Ogden for preparing a dinner menu consisting of soup, roast pork and trimmings, trifle and plenty of wine. The meal rounded the day off perfectly.

There was a full English breakfast provided on Sunday morning a packed lunch for the journey back to Langdales. Fourteen members attended the meet and our creature comforts were well catered for.



Finally thanks to all who helped with ferrying the baggage to Beckstones from Langdales, for chauffeuring us back to Bishop Scale and to everyone that made this a successful weekend.

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POEM

By John Braybrook

The rocks and grass below, above the vaulted sky
Sweet life of Lakeland Fell,
With views that lift the Soul,
Good fellowship and convivial chatter,
Memories of heart and eye are recalled
What a tonic to the mind,
And he that feels this can he say that he is poor?
For fortune's the birthright of joy
And for this blessed wealth of being,
I give thanks.

(After John Clare)

Minutes of AG.M. of A.R.C.C. held in the Chapel at Langdale
Sat. 11th Nov 2002 at 1.30pm

The Chairman the club welcomed the club President Monsignor Slattery and Club Members to the meeting.

Number Present: 52

Apologies: Roy and Dorothy Buffey, Alan Brighton, Frank Lord, Anne and Sharon Gaitskill, Barry Rodgers, Keith Foster, Michael Pooler, Geoff Oldfield, Terry Murphy.

Summary: The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on; Sat. 17th Nov. 2001 were read by the Secretary. John Foster mentioned that his proposal vis. the survival of the ARCC as a climbing club "Were inextricable linked to a but in Scotland" The secretary apologised to John and said that it was his mistake that he had omitted the words in bold type. The minutes were then passed as a true record and there were no matters arising .

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Chairmans Report

The Chairman gave a report on the club activities during the previous year as set out below.

The Last Year

For the most part I will leave others to give details on events and work at the various huts.

We should remember that this time last year we were just emerging from the foot and mouth crises and we did not know how things would pickup.

Overall there has been a good level of activity in the club with meets and events well attended.

Member use of the huts has increased but it has taken some time for the bookings at Dunmail to return to normal.

Major Work

At the last AGM I said that we intended to limit major work on the huts during the coming year to allow us to recover for the fall in but use and loss of income following the foot and mouth crises.

A fire alarm at Bishops Scale and improvements to the lounge were to go ahead.

These jobs have been completed.

A number of smaller improvements and repairs have been done. But for the most part it has been quiet year.

The hut wardens will give details of the work done on the individual huts.

Much of the expenditure on major works shown in the accounts relates to work done in the previous year.

George Partridge and Ben Carter have recently attended the annual BMC huts seminar at which papers were presented on all aspects of club hut operation.

At these seminars the responsibilities of clubs to those, particularly guests, who use their huts was stressed.

It is my intention that ARCC continues to ensure that all aspects relating to safety are brought up to current standards.

It remains the policy for the Management committee to continue to improve the standard of accommodation at our huts and to ensure that our properties are maintained to a good standard. In the coming year we hope to get on with further improvements and repairs.

Work in planning Includes: New windows Bishops Scale Ladies, Dormitory Bishops Scale

Work Under Consideration Includes:

Fire alarm systems for Tyn-Twr and Beckstones

Works Sub-Committee

A sub-committee has been set up to deal with all aspects of building maintenance and new work.

It is important that work is done in a professional manner with proper planning, costing, and supervision.

It is not the job of the but warden to carry out this work.

The sub-committee will not normally need to be concerned with internal decoration and general maintenance work which involves the replacement of like with like and which has no structural or safety implications. Work of this nature may be authorised by the Hut Warden. Jobs that fall into this category will not normally cost more than £250.

ARCC - TRUSTEESHIP

As promised at the AGM last year a motion will be brought before you at this meeting to make changes to enable the Trustees to better protect members interests and to protect the trustees against possible litigation.

The management committee is concerned about the exposure of the club members and officers to claims for negligence and we are in the process of reviewing our systems to ensure that they are in order.

Web Site / Club Pamphlet

The new ARCC web site is now available.

Thanks are due to Jean Lochhead Dave Hugill and others who have go this underway.

Dunmail Aerial

Vodafone are still interested in this and are now at the point of agreement with the planners.

Negotiations have gone on so long now that I will believe it when I see it.

Thanks

I would like to thank on your behalf the Management committee and all those members who have worked for the club in the past year.

I would also like to thank the management committee for the support they have given me during the year.

Austin Gilfoyle is standing down as secretary this year after, I think 6 years in the job.

I would wish to thank him on your behalf for all the work he has done.

In Conclusion

Overall the club is in good heart. A considerable the work done by many members, too many to mention by name, to ensure that we have a vibrant club.

The Chairman added the following comments following the reports given by the but wardens

Bishops Scale

The hut is generally in good condition but a number of jobs require attention and major work is planned.

Ladies dormitory, felling of trees, new windows

Thanks to Arthur Daniels

Tyn-Twr

The hut is much improved with and looks very well cared for Thanks to Anne Wallace and George Partridge

Improvements include new windows, improvements to the stairs and many other detailed improvements.

New furniture is to be bought for the lounge

Beckstones

Beckstones is a very comfortable hut. If you have not used the hut recently it will be well worth your while to visit this quiet corner of the lakes.

Thanks to Joyce and her team of helpers.

Dunmail

Sadly, this hut is often forgotten by members but it provides a very welcome hostel for youth groups and clubs that do not have, a hut of their own not to mention a very welcome income for the Club. Thanks are due to Mike Crawford and his band of helpers. The hut has suffered a drop in bookings following the foot and mouth crisis but I believe bookings are returning to their former level.

Vice Chairman's Report:

The Vice-Chairman, Leo Pollard reported that the club had had another successful year. The list of events on the Meets Card shows evidence of a full and active club. Each event has been well attended and we must thank the organisers, meet leaders and helpers for all their hard work. We have held 18 meets mostly organised at the various huts. The Junior Meets continue to be successful although as one would expect the age group fluctuates. Leo mentioned the great success of Robert and Danny Hope former Junior members who now represent England in international fell races. The Long Walk continues to be popular so much so that it is proposed to hold two such from Beckstones and the following year a walk from Tyn Twr and Langdale. Whilst the CAFOD Walk is a good club event, it needs to be revised both in what we do and the time of the year. Leo thanked all the well wishers for their messages during Freda's illness saying it really did make a difference. Finally Leo thanked Alan Kenny for organising the Club Dinner.

Secretary's Report:

The secretary said he seemed to have received much less correspondence from outside bodies and organisations than usual. The BMC usually sends lots of information: letters, forms, questionnaires etc, but it could be because they have changed their secretary. The most interesting thing that he received was a proposed scheme for the valley. The University of Lancashire proposed various ideas (e.g.) park and ride limited access only, access only to residents etc. The committee was quite concerned that the restriction may affect the club, but it was made known that we were strongly against any restrictions. The secretary thanked Jean for all the help she had given in compiling and distributing the minutes of the committee meetings,

and as he was standing down as secretary wished Dave Armstrong every success as the new secretary. Finally thanking all the members for all their efforts and time, in making the club an organisation that is so worthwhile.

Treasure's Report:

As usual Jean gave us a clear and detailed account of the clubs finances. Cash and bank reconciliation for the period 1/9/01 to 30/9/02

The bank balances of various bank accounts were detailed less unpresented cheques and other balances (ie) Langdale Co-op and Halifax Building Soc.

Bank balance	2000/2001	2001/2002
	£58063.84	£64049.17

Receipts and payments accounts for the period 1/9/01 to 30/9/02
The receipts were made by subscriptions, but fees, special events, bank interest, co-op interest,
Dividends, CAFOD and misc. donations.

	2000/2001	2001/2002
	£35100.37	£49837.62

The payments were broken down under but transactions (rent, rates, insurance, water testing fuel, repairs maintenance etc. special events, legal fees, bulletins, (subs-BMC NEAA). etc. Jean then gave a break down of the finances of each hut:

	TYN TWR	DUNMAIL
	2000/2001 2001/2002	2000/2001
	2001/2002	
Surplus	£155.85	£6347.27
Deficit	£7675.45	£1491.30
	BECKSTONES	BISHOPS SCALE
	2000/2001 2001/2002	2000/2001
	2001/2002	

Surplus		£909.32
Deficit	£5564.60	£8525.08
	£733.46	

Finally for the period 1/9/01 to 30/9/02 the summary of the income and expenditure for the special events (eg) sale of t/shirts junior meets, club fell race etc.

Income	Expenditure
£4277.51	£3475.84

Jean mentioned the club website the address for which is:

www.achilleratti-climbing-club.co.uk

Newsletter and bulletin reports will be found at this address.

Paul Charnock asked about the benefits of the BMC insurance cover commenting that this a costly item to the club. Ken Jackson explained that this was the only civil liability insurance we have and John Foster added how cheap was it for each individual, because you have access to three huts in Scotland which alone makes it worth while.

Adrian Crook asked whether mail could be sent electronically and was told it was all in the pipe- line.

Margaret Price proposed that the accounts be accepted and this was duly done.

Membership Secretary's Report

Neville said membership stood at 697 and with juniors made it a record 836. There were 69 outstanding subscription payments, and 10 non RC on the waiting list. He thanked his wife Anita for her help with the work.

Hut Wardens Reports

Bishops Scale

The Warden reported that the number of bed nights used at the but had increased on the previous year. It is intended to change the mattresses on the men's side and also to put up smaller plate racks in the kitchen. The Chairman mentioned that the trees lining the path to the Chapel need taking out and Bernard Sutton has this in hand.

Tyn Twr

The Warden reported that number of members using the but had increased so it was decided to change the maximum number of places for visiting groups from 20 to 15 (no under 16's at weekends), but to leave it at 20 mid week visits (not- Thurs night). The booking lists for Tyn-Twr are displayed on the notice boards of the other huts so members can see when there is a group in. The but is reserved for the use of ARCC members during the school holidays, Easter, Mayday, Spring Half Term, Summer, and Christmas. The Long Walk this year was the Welsh 3,000 round. The event was well attended with 31 participants and 13 helpers. Margaret Price and company of helpers put on a superb meal on Saturday night.

Seven adults turned up for the working weekend and Dot brought a van load of juniors. Various jobs were done and rubbish removed to the dump, and in the evening there was a bonfire with fireworks. Major works have been done at the but as well as a leaking roof repaired. New coverings and a handrail have been fitted to the stairways. The kitchen has had double glazed-windows installed. Anne mentioned that she had heard that a 'park and ride' scheme was being proposed. Cars parking would in Bethesda at £4 per hour and a bus would be provided to take people up the valley. Anne would keep the committee informed of any developments.

Beckstones

Joyce said that most of the major work was now finished, the corridor was built and the large bedroom was now private. The year has been good with lots of activities. The spring water is not connected yet because the N.T. put in the bore-hole without permission. The successful bird watching weekend will be repeated in 2003. Joyce gave a warm thanks to Terry Kitchen and Frank Lord.

Dunmail

Few members can or do use the hut, but is used by a wide variety of people. From January thirty University, Outward Bound and disadvantaged children's groups had used the hut. Working weekends are limited because of the heavy usage. The septic tank needs sorting out and the fence around it. The aerial is still ongoing but Mick was worried how long the generator would last. It has been very busy with bookings and Mick thanked all who have helped especially Terry kitchen, Paul Charnock, Frank Rogerson, Wilf Charnley and David and Joan Ogden.

A question was asked about proposed improvement to the family quarters at Bishops Scale.

Arthur Daniels said that improvements were under discussion, but the numbers using it had dropped and perhaps a family committee needs forming to report things back to the management committee..

Election of Officers

David Armstrong was proposed for the post of Secretary by Leo Pollard and seconded by Bernard Potter. There being no other candidates David Armstrong was elected.

Proposed Changes to Rules

As a result of work by Ben Carter to clarify the responsibilities of the trustees a proposal to change the club rules was put before the meeting. The Chairman pointed out that a proposal to change the club rules required the approval of at least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.

First Motion

Proposed by: David Ogden

Seconded by: Leo Pollard

Preamble

The trustees are the custodians of the club's property. The law puts a heavy responsibility on them to take all reasonable and proper measures to preserve the club's property and so secure it from loss or risk of loss.

A trustee is obliged to defend the club against claims against the club's property and must not knowingly facilitate any act or conduct of another person which would cause loss or risk of loss of the property.

If a trustee fails to exercise the duty which the law imposes he or she is responsible for the losses which may be occurred.

The following proposed amendments to the constitution are framed with a view to enabling the trustees to carry out their duties:

Rule 10. General Meetings

Para i)
line 6, delete Auditor, and at' insert Auditor. At' ,
line 9, after 'Committee' insert ' or the Trustees'

Para ii)
Section b)

Line 2, delete 'Such meeting shall be held within not less than 14 days and not more than 28 days from the receipt by the Secretary of the requisition.'

Insert'

c) At the request of any one of the trustees.
Such meeting shall be held not less than 14 days and not more than 28 days from the receipt by the Secretary of the requisition.'

Rule 16 shall be deleted and the following inserted:

(i) There shall be three trustees. At least two of the trustees shall be Roman Catholics and one of these shall be a member of the clergy. Trustees need not be members of the Club.

(ii) In the event of the death or retirement of a trustee the management committee shall as soon as is reasonably practicable, nominate another person to be appointed as a trustee, with the approval of the remaining trustees, whereupon the chairman shall confirm such appointment by deed.

(iii) Trustees shall have an indefinite tenure of office but may retire from office at any time by giving notice in writing to the other trustees and to the president of the Club.

(iv) A trustee may be removed from office by a two thirds majority of the voting members at an annual or special general meeting of the Club.

(v) The trustees shall be custodians of the Club's freehold and leasehold properties and shall be signatories to the deeds and leases of these properties, giving effect to any transfer, charge or other dispersion of the club's freehold and leasehold properties.

(vi) The trustees shall not be held responsible for preserving any moveable furniture or other moveable items nor shall they be responsible for preserving the Club's liquid assets.

(vii) The management committee shall fully insure the freehold and leasehold properties of the Club and shall produce the original insurance policies or current certified copies of these at the request of a trustee and shall notify the trustees of any change in the cover provided by the insurance policies.

(viii) The consent of the trustees shall be required before the deeds of the freehold properties, or the leases of the leasehold properties, may be offered for security against any loan.

(ix) Trustees may attend management committee meetings but may not vote on any matter except in the instance where a trustee is also a properly elected member of the committee

(x) Trustees shall be provided with agendas and minutes of all meetings of the management committee and shall be give due notice of when and where meetings are to be held.

(xi) The trustees shall not be liable (otherwise than as members) for any loss suffered by the club as a result of the discharge of their respective duties on its behalf except in respect of such loss as arises from their respective willful default, and they shall be entitled to an indemnity out of the assets of the Club for all expenses and other liabilities incurred by them in the discharge of their respective duties.

Rule 21 to be amended as follows:

Eighth line, delete the word 'proceed' and insert 'instruct the trustees'.

Following some brief discussion the motion was carried.

Second Motion

The following proposed change is to reintroduce a section omitted from rule 11 when the constitution was last re-drafted. This addition makes but wardens ex-officio members of the Management Committee and specifies the rules for the election of Management Committee Members.

Proposed by: David Ogden

Seconded by: Leo Pollard

Add to rule 11

In addition to this the committee will appoint a warden for each but all of whom will be ex-officio members of the Management Committee and will be appointed to serve for a period of three years. Nomination for Officers and Committee Members shall be submitted 14 days prior to the General Meeting at which the elections are to take place.

Alan Kenny suggested that nominations should be presented 28 days prior to the meeting.

The Chairman pointed out that the rules did not permit any amendments to be put at the meeting.

The motion was carried.

Any Other Business

John Foster took up the increase in but fees saying he was glad there was more use of the huts and of the improvements, but pointed out that any proposed increase is usually announced at the AGM. John still believed in his proposal for a but in Scotland and asked why we need improvements when we really need to invest in the future.

The Chairman replied saying that improvements made a prosperous club.

Ben Carter advised members that the next winter meet would be 23rd Feb the Alex McIntyre Hut.

Adrian Crook raised the issue of access, the Chairman replied saying that the BMC looks after our interests in this regard.

Dave Hugill said the Journal would be ready next week and that Club Calendars were on sale at £6.50. He asked for photos by club members for next year.

Dot Wood asked the management committee to re-consider fees for Juniors. She suggested an annual fee of £10 and an overnight fee of £1.

The Chairman asked members to support and publicise the club by buying and sending to friends a club calendar.

He thanked Dave Hugill, Pete Dowker and Barry Rogers for their work in producing the calendar.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 3.25pm.

A Lesson Hard Learned

In my early fell walking days I must have looked somewhat like a Christmas tree with bits hung about me. Almost the only gear available in anyway suitable for the outdoors was ex-W.D. khaki was the universal colour, starting with the webbing gaiters we wore, to stop small stones getting into our boots, baggy shorts (Benghazi Bloomers) reaching to the knee, a bush jacket with four patch pockets, on top a commando frame rucksack on my back containing my gas cape, over trousers, my butties, and a weeks ration of boiled sweets (it was still coupons for everything). Around my neck hung my camera and diagonally across my chest was the leather strap of my St. John's Ambulance style water bottle; a flat enamelled steel bottle sewn into a thin felt cladding in a cradle of leather straps riveted together. Experience taught us the inadequacies and excesses of our dress and equipment, we soon learned that a small pack was adequate, as the hills provided all the water we needed so the water bottle was abandoned. Now while that is generally true of the Lakes and North Wales it is a different story on the Black Cuillin of Skye. That rugged rocky ridge sheds rain as fast as it falls, so that only in a few places do pools of water persist for more than a few minutes after the rain stops. With the cuillin being a large part of my adult life I learned that the water sources were not far below the ridge and so planned my day accordingly.

When I took the chance of early retirement nearly 20 years ago, I began to spend the summer half of the year on Skye, I let it be known at Sligachan Hotel that I was available if any of their guests needed a guide on the hill. Custom was very sporadic and varied, but produced a small supplement to my pension. I only had one regular client, a real gentleman who not only paid my fee, but insisted that after our day on the hills I joined him and his wife for dinner in the hotel at his expense. He was much older than myself, but a very competent Hillman who coped very well with the more difficult sections where I used a rope for security, such as on the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr Nan Gilleann or the traverse of Clach Glas and Bla Bheinn. So we shared many enjoyable days together and became good friends and we still correspond.

In June 1988 he called in as he returned to Sligachan for a few days, saying that he had read that the buttress to the left of the Waterpipe Gully on Sgurr an Fheadain was not too difficult and did I think we could try that on the morrow. I happily agreed and at 9 o'clock the following morning picked him up at the hotel. There was hardly a cloud in the sky as I drove round to the head of Glen Brittle and parked in the top forest gateway. From the road we descended into Coire na Creiche (the Corry of the Spoils), where the last battle on Skye between the MacDonalDs and the Macleods was fought in 1601.

The MacDonalDs had been on the rampage for some days throughout Bracadale and the Minginish and had gathered the cattle they had lifted at the head of Glen Brittle awaiting the stragglers before driving their booty over the Bealach a' Mhaim to Sligachan and the MacDonald territories beyond (the river Sligachan is still the boundary between the estates.) The Macleods rallied and attacked the MacDonalDs but it was to no avail as they were without their chief Rory Mor, who was 'playing away' that weekend attacking the MacDonalDs of North Uist. (MacDonalDs Won, Macleods Nil, at both matches.)

On reaching the river Brittle we followed it upstream past the Fairy Pools, eroded by a series of waterfalls flowing over basalt sills. The river subsequently dwindled to two small streams as the corry was split by the base of our target. The buttress was quite steep at first, but with an abundance of holds; nowhere was difficult. I cautioned Peter to test every hold thoroughly for those centre section of the Cuillin does not get as much traffic as the north end or Coire Lagan, and frost shattered rock from the winter is more likely to remain into high summer. The angle soon eased but the need for care was still great because of the increasing exposure below us. Our way became very much easier but narrower as we approached the pointed summit. From this a delightful sharp ridge led us at right angles towards the main ridge of the Cuillin with a sharp descent of about 100ft, but then a bouldery slope below the triple peak of Bidein Druim nan Ramh. The descent of the centre peak on its north side is very awkward and exposed, so I skirted its base and we ascended the north peak for lunch. From this central point all the great arc of the Black Cuillin is visible and looking over Harta Coire and Druim Hain, a broad side view of Clach Glas and Bla bheinn on the other side of Glen na Creitheach. Below us to the south Druim nan Ramh (Drim nan Rav), 'the ridge of oars' is so named because with many parallel ghyls flowing from it into Loch Coir'Uisk someone likened it to an oar driven galley. A pair of golden eagles were hunting along the ridge, working their way towards us in effortless sweeps, with ne'er a wingbeat exploiting the thermal currents.

A perfect day but in one respect the weather was too good. There was not a breath of wind not the slightest breeze to cool us as the midsummer sun beat down in early afternoon. Peter had a small can of some fizzy drink which we shared but was nowhere near adequate to replace the pints of sweat we had shed. We needed a large water bottle each but did not realise the grilling we had in store. Just as we were about to leave there came a strange noise of engines sounding muffled and distant. A full sweep of the horizon revealed nothing, and I wondered if it was a small helicopter in one of the coires. Then something made me look directly above, a couple of microlights were heading due west. We watched them pass over Loch Brittle and continue out to sea and I wondered if the pilots wore lifejackets.

Our intention was to continue along the ridge to Bruach na Frithe, then descend its north west ridge to the Bealach a' Mhaim and back to the van. But time was running out and at An Coisteal (The Castle), I decided to descend into Coir'a' Fairneilear, a hellishly rough coire of big blocks fallen from the ridge. We soon reached flowing water, but foolishly I decided to save my thirst for the bar at Sligachan. When we reached the hotel there was no time for a drink as dinner was served only until 8 o'clock and I had to dash back to the croft to feed Zeke and get change before joining Peter and his wife in the dining room. When I did get my can of cider it really was nectar, but it was too little and too late as it turned out.

During the main course I began to feel odd, remote physically but not part of the scene. I cleared the plate and said yes to Peter's offer of another can but then felt an urge to go to the toilet. I stood up and the last thing I remembered was trying to focus my eyes on the curtains over the dining room windows. When I came to I was lying on the floor and I heard someone say 'The doctor's on his way' Peter was holding my wrist and he told me later that at first he could feel no pulse at all, but then very feebly. It was just a few minutes before Dr. Pearce arrived from Satran

(7miles this side of Carbost), with his portable E.C.G.s which had just become available. His assessment of the graph was that I hadn't had a heart attack, but there was an abnormality which he could not understand. He wanted me under observation for 24 hours as a precaution but there were no beds available at the two hospitals on Skye when he phoned, so Raigmore it would have to be. That meant the 100 mile trip to Inverness, but it took ages to get an ambulance. By the time it arrived I had recovered and regained my strength so that I felt like giving up and going home. It was quite late by now and with the last ferry due at 11 o'clock, the Cal Mac office at Kyle Akin was phoned and the ferry crew retained. So it was that at 23.30 hours I (in the ambulance) had the ferry all to myself.

The journey seemed interminable in the darkness, but it was just light again when we arrived about 03.00. I was given a bed in a darkened ward and a house doctor came and took a blood sample, another E.C.G. which gave the same trace as Dr. Pearce had obtained. He was back in 20 mins. saying they had the analysis of the blood sample and I was being moved to another ward. This had but one bed in it, with a continuously monitoring E.C.G. machine alongside to which I was coupled with a big window in one wall and a nurse sat at a desk opposite it. I found it embarrassing that if I made a sudden movement or twisted round to twiddle the knob for the radio earphones an alarm sounded which she had to come to reset. When I apologised for bothering her she just said "That's what it's for." I was quite happy and unconcerned and it was only later that I realised how worried they had been about my condition.

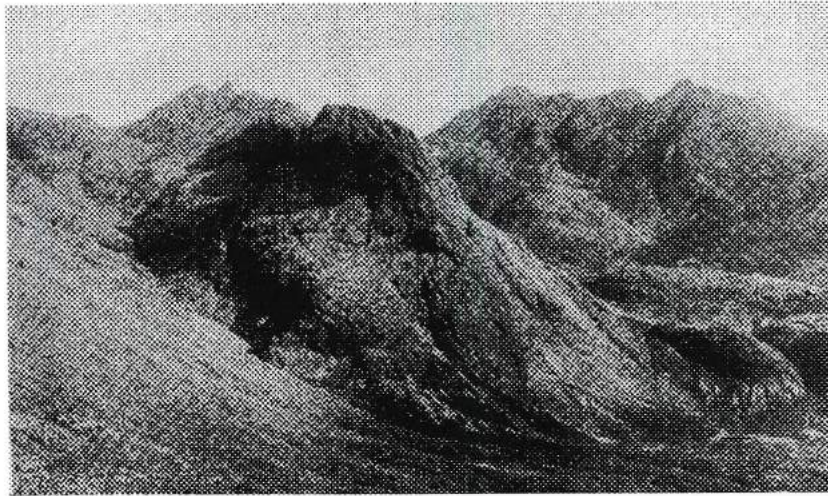
Later that morning (Saturday) a consultant was called in. He interrogated me and discussed my case with the two house doctors (both climbers it turned out). The blood sample had shown a potassium chloride level of 7.9 mill molar, which really had them puzzled because they could find nothing wrong which could have caused such a high level. I asked could it be something I had eaten, and they said yes, but only if I had eaten a pound and a half of bananas, which are rich in potassium chloride. I found out later from another source that the average normal level is 4.16 mill molar and that it is the balance between the electrolyte levels of the potassium chloride and sodium chloride on which depends the electrical pulse, which triggers the heart to beat. Also muscular activity produces potassium chloride, which with the loss of sodium chloride due to sweating was what had upset the balance, causing my heartbeat to weaken so much. I have been told that I was probably never closer to death than at the time I collapsed (Potassium chloride is the principle component of the lethal injection used in some American states).

I was put on a drip (glucose I think) to absorb the excess and kept under observation for another couple of days, then told to drink more and was discharged on the Monday. The weather was glorious and the train journey from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh was most golden I have ever enjoyed.

So a near fatal lesson was learned not just to replace fluid loss to avoid eating bananas on the hills unless sodium chloride is taken at the same time. And I think I may have set a record too, in probably being the first person to collapse in Sligachan Hotel through lack of DRINK!!!

John Foster

La Gare de Concoules 5th to 13th October 2003



Coire na Creiche from the Bealach a'Mhaim, where it is split into Coire Tairneilear (on the left) and Coir'a'Mhadaidh (Vatee) on the right, by Sgurr an Fheadain. Bidein Druim nan Ramh is behind it on the left, and Sguor a'Mhadoidh on the right skyline

I have just returned from a very interesting trip to the Cevennes in Southern France. We stayed in a converted Railway Station owned by two friends of mine, and which I had heard mentioned by other Achille Ratti members who had enjoyed visits in the past.

The area benefits from a Southern French climate; we were there mid October and saw no rain whatsoever. We flew Easyjet from Liverpool to Nice and hired a car from Easycar, all very reasonably priced. There are many alternatives, particularly from Stansted - Nimes, St Etienne etc. The ancient Roman town of Nimes is only one hour's drive from La Gare.



The beautifully wild, and remote mountains of the Cevennes offer a plethora of activities from mountain biking on a brilliant network of tracks, to walking, climbing, canoeing, and swimming in the many gorges to be found across the region, from the Ardeche in the east to the Gorges du Tam in the west. There are many GR routes which cross the region, the best known being the "Chemin de Stevenson" which follows the itinerary described in R. L. Stevenson's book

"Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes".

On our first visit we walked up to the Pic Cassini, one of the highest points on the Mont Lozere at 1699m. The views were stunning - the Mediterranean could be clearly seen 100km away to the south, as could the snow-capped peaks of the Alps to the east.



La Gare itself has accommodation for 8 people in 4 bedrooms, 2 doubles, 1 triple, and one single. The kitchen is very spacious and well equipped with everything you could think of. Ample hot water for showers and washing is provided from a huge electric water heater on a time switch.

There are two living areas, one large, one small, both with wood burning stoves and there is a large stock of wood in the wood store. A considerable amount of work has been carried out by Cliff Price, Derek's brother, and what a good job he has made of it. The larger living room has a fantastically efficient stove and we spent many a pleasant evening in there eating, drinking and putting the world to rights.

There are several good restaurants in both Concoules and Villefort, which cater for all tastes, the speciality being chestnuts. They are in abundance and you will find them on most menus, in some form or other. There is even a liqueur, which I believe is very nice. We roasted our own and placed them on the fire, which made a pleasant accompaniment to aperitifs.

The location is fantastically quiet, apart from the occasional passing train, which will toot at you in response to the obligatory wave! The Gare is hidden away at the end of a long tree-lined avenue and is the ideal place if you want to unwind. While we were there the ground was covered in edible chestnuts.

It was a shame to come home, but I'll definitely be going back.

You can view La Gare and surrounding area on www.ambiancesci.freeserve.co.uk

Or you can contact Dave Gange on: Tel :01524 410233
E-mail: dave@ambiancesci.freeserve.co.uk

Thanks to Dave and Lyn for the invite
Phil & Yvonne Michlewski

THE CLUB

THE "Achille Ratti" Climbing Club is now well-known in Catholic circles, and to many other people besides. Since it has been mentioned in the Catholic press so many times recently, numbers have wondered at its origin and purpose. Few know that for a long time it was called the "Catholic Boys' Association Climbing Club," and that in those days it belonged to a few mountaineering enthusiasts of the Blackpool C.B.A. It was started simply because a number of us from the Boys' Club wanted to climb the hills and found it very inconvenient not to have a base from which to operate. Almost from the beginning we realised that it was too selfish to keep such advantages to ourselves and so organised it as a Catholic Mountaineering Club without any restriction as to its being a sub-section of any other organisation. It was at the suggestion of Mr. Arnold Lunn that we changed the name to "Achille Ratti," for the obvious connection with the late Pope, who was a skilled and keen climber, and also because the whole development of the Club was in the line of an ordinary mountaineering Club, and the name "boy" was likely to be misleading. When you read further on in this article how the acquisition of the most recent Hut has been made in response to a need to introduce boys to the hills it will indicate how quickly the Club departed from its original purpose.

Many people have wondered why we started a mountaineering Club. The real answer is that we did not group together and say: "There is no Catholic Mountaineering Club, and so we must begin one." It just came into being as we have already said, and having happened, we found that it evidently responded to a long-felt need. Priests in particular hailed it with delight because it solved for them the almost insuperable problem on such holidays of daily Mass. Catholic young people welcomed it because it was somewhere to go where they could be sure of meeting their own company. More than that the friendship that exists between Catholic Priests, the Religious that teach in our Colleges and the Laity has very deep roots, and when to this is added the common passion for mountaineering one can easily understand how such a Club should begin to flourish at once.

Perhaps the part that some are least able to comprehend is the mountaineering! We have often been charged with introducing young people to a dangerous sport. Now that is taking a very narrow outlook on mountaineering, for to us the definition of a mountaineer is simply "one who loves the hills." Once a person loves the hills he delights to read about them, to hear about them, and above all to be amongst them. Rock climbing is only a part of his mountaineering. It is not the purpose of the Club to encourage people to take up rock climbing. Rather it

begins from the fact that there are many who are very keen rock climbers and many others who are anxious to begin. Keen spirits of this kind who go amongst the hills, when they are faced with the challenge of the rocks, will climb whatever happens. It is all to the good that they should belong to a Club which has sound traditions, and which has amongst its members those who are able to lead and to train in the art of good climbing, and also to teach the right attitude towards the sport. It must be admitted that there are far too many who rush at the rocks and think every climb is easy until they get on it. It is too late then to find that it has obstacles that are beyond their powers. All climbing clubs deplore this type, and still more the accident, which is not really an accident at all, but the result of foolhardiness.

The existence of the Club is a great help both in avoiding such mishaps and in directing this fine pioneer spirit into proper channels. During the mountaineering course that we held recently we saw on the one hand the amazing keenness of our Catholic young men for the hills and their great capability of endurance born of years of youth hostelling, and on the other hand their entire underestimation of the difficulties of rock climbing. Perhaps it would be better to say that they had not a nroner respect or reverential fear of the rocks, for the difficulties are not great except in relation to the exposed positions and the vagaries of our English weather. It was by seeing really experienced climbers take the greatest care, and having to feel their dependence on the rope, that taught them that "cleverness" was no substitute for rock-sense and skill.

However, this article is meant to be merely historical but since we shall be read by large numbers of young Catholic men who intend to join the Club, and, what is more important, by their parents, it seems advisable to say a word or two as to our *raison d'être*.

In the Autumn of 1940 I was taking a party of boys up Scafell Pike. As we were walking along the Mickleden, just where Gimmer Crag towers like a Dolomite over the valley, John Schofield was listening with adolescent ardour to accounts of life in the Alpine Refuges. In his innocence he asked why we did not have similar Huts for the lads of the C.B.A. When it was pointed out that such a project needed money he remarked that it had always been said that "in the bright lexicon of Youth, there's no such word as 'fail.'" These facile phrases are apt to come back upon one, and the challenge had to be accepted, especially as the motto of the C.B.A. was "*ad Aitiora*," and should at least then lead to the hills. It would, however, have remained a pleasant day dream, but for its being mentioned to our friend Mr. Cyril Bulman, of the Dungeon Ghyll Old Hotel. Now Mr. Bulman is not like a placid tarn that just reflects ideas, he is rather it cataract of productive energy. Before long he had found its a place that we could convert into climbing Hut, namely the superbly situated Langdale Hut behind the Dungeon Ghyll New Hotel.

Mr. Bulman is our first honorary member, and shares that privilege alone with Mr. Arnold Lunn, and has ever been our source for sound advice and practical help. And it is right that he should be so, for in spite of his fine business acumen he has all the spirit and zest of a boy. With the formation of it Club, Father Atkinson of Ambleside, became the Secretary. There have been many famous names amongst the Clergy connected with Lakeland, but his name will live on in Lakeland annals for many a year to come. He is an enthusiast who has spared nothing, least of all himself, to make mountaineering a practical reality for Catholic Youth. Plans would have remained plans had he not fulfilled the role of carpenter and plumber, painter and decorator, furnisher and fitter. The comfort, the utility, the splendid altar of the Langdale Hut, are all the result of hours of patient work, and it is to the edification of the people of the valley that they have come to know him best in his working attire, tired out and having a cup of tea with them when he had been working for "those boys." Behind this practical gift there is a keen apostolic spirit that sees great possibilities in the mountains to help those adventurous youths who are suffocated with the artificialities of modern town life to regain perspective in the grandeur of the hills.

Langdale is the most popular Hut amongst the climbers. It is the most accessible by rail and road from the South, and itself provides the most accessible approach to the rocks. The nearby crags are convenient for all weathers, and Pavey, Gimmer and Bowfell are within easy reach. Added to this the fact that there is not a climbing Hut in the whole of Great Britain that commands so magnificent a view as the alpine aspect of the trees, with the numerous cascades of Mill Ghyll rising in tier on tier and flanked by the imposing crags of White Ghyll, Pavey and Harrison Stickle.

However, popular though Langdale is, it was only to be expected that the time would come when Wasdale would attract our attention. It was our original idea merely to seek a "bivouac" where we could lay our heads at night when we had tarried too long on the Gable, Pillar or Scafell. Several times we treked over the Esk Hause and the Sty Head Pass to seek such a place, but all in vain. And then Father Atkinson took up the quest, and when he had only just learnt to drive a car ventured up the fearsome hill at Ulpha by the Travellers' Rest, and made his way over Birker Moor to Wasdale. Providence was kind. As he was retreating from the valley, disappointed, he heard of Mr. Gass at the Ghyll Farm, and a new era opened up for the Club. Mr. Gass had the farm at Buckbarrow and offered it to us. After a further discussion all was settled and Buckbarrow became our second Hut. The character of the Wasdale Hut is entirely different from that at Langdale. It is a lonely farmhouse, situated on the Fellside right under the rocky shoulder of Buckbarrow. This splendid cliff on the North, and the imposing sweep of the Wastwater Screes on the South, form a wild setting, whilst to the East, aloof and inspiring, the Scafells are in full view from the level of the lake to their summits. The house is cosy, with thick walls and casement windows of little white-framed panes. After a long day on the Fell, or a battle in a blizzard of snow to the top of

a peak, it is the climbers reward to spend his long evening by the huge fire-grate full of blazing logs, and savour in anticipation the aromas coming from the oven. The nearest farm for supplies is the Gasses, at The Ghyll, and they are also our next door neighbours, even though they are half-a-mile away. Still, if they were literally next door there could not be more neighbourliness, and many have been the happy times when visits have been interchanged. The remoteness of Buckbarrow, and the difficulty of easy access, have conspired to make it less popular than Langdale, but to many it has an atmosphere and a charm that can not be found anywhere else, and from a climber's point of view, if he possesses convenient transport, which most conveniently is a car to take him to the head of the valley, it is the key to all that is best.

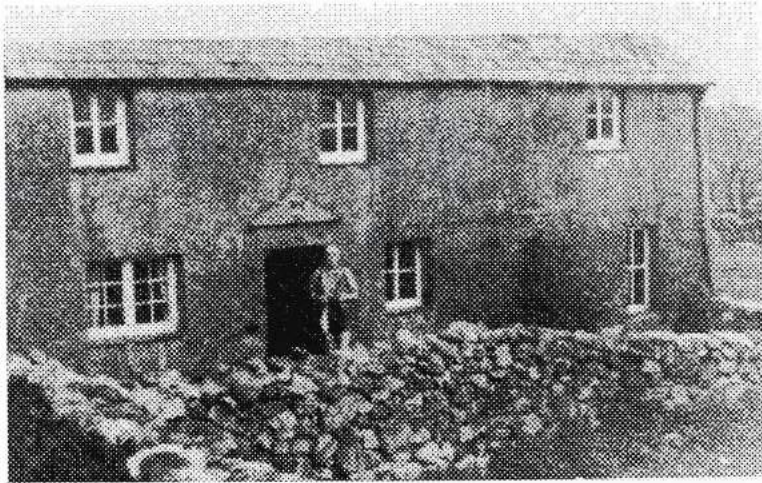
The acquisition of the next Hut was more in the nature of an accident. We had no further aspirations at the time. But Father Atkinson heard of the cottage, shown on Bartholomew's map as "Raise Cottage," and in reality the old Isolation Hospital towards the top of Dunmail Raise. We first went to view it on a morning when it was raining in truest Lakeland style, convinced that if we saw any possibilities in it on such a day, then it must surely be worth while.

The entry was not promising. Indeed it looked as if there had been a bomb on the ground floor, it was so pitted and mutilated. But one glance upstairs was sufficient to indicate to us the possibilities, and soon we were in negotiation with the owner. Eventually an agreement was concluded, and the third Hut, the Dunmail, came into our hands. Plans have been got out for its conversion, and we hope that it will be on modern and convenient lines, including such items as a drying room, and hot and cold shower baths, as well as good central heating, all of which are necessary for its purpose. Perhaps it should have been said earlier, but the real reason of this Hut was because there are so many who have charge of Colleges or Clubs who are 'anxious to introduce boys to the hills and yet cannot take them to the Climbing Huts that we felt that something ought to be done to meet this need. Here was the ideal situation, on the slopes of Helvellyn, centrally situated between Keswick and Grasmere, and easy of access, being on the main road and connected by a regular bus service with Windermere station. At the same time there can be separate quarters for the Club members, who will appreciate them for fell walks as well as for some nearby rock climbs, and perhaps most of all for its possibilities in the way of winter expeditions in snow on Helvellyn, and even skiing on the north slopes when the snow is good.

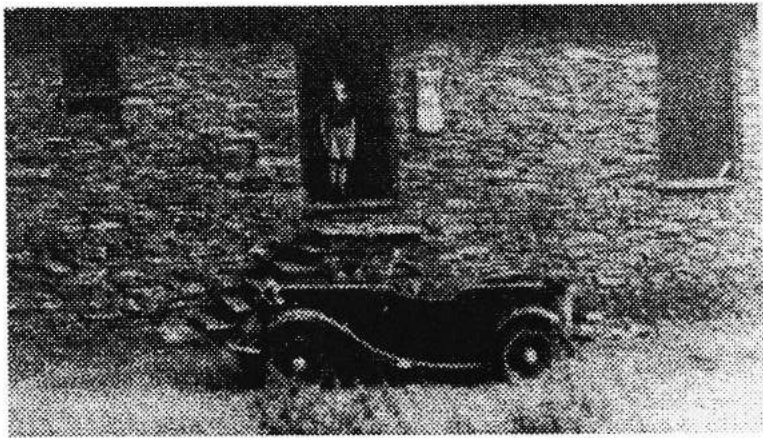
One does not want to say too much in this first account of how the Club came into being and so rapidly took root. But one must mention the two vice-presidents, Mr. Tom Donnelly and Dr. Francis Rickards. Mr. Donnelly brought to the Club an almost passionate love of the Lake District, and has rendered invaluable service by his sound business experience and caution without timidity.

He is best known for his photographs, for he has now a complete record of the Club's activities by means of his Leica camera, and his photographs will often, we hope, appear in this journal. Dr. Rickards brings enthusiasm and always work. He is the life and soul of any expedition - the first to present himself for work and the last to be downhearted. What more can a young Club trying to face difficulties and disappointments ask than that? We are thankful to say that we have not had need of his professional skill. And, though, there are many other names whom we hope to include in good time, we ought to mention the Editor of this journal, Dr. Park. A keen alpinist and well-versed in all things connected with the mountains, he took us up, as it were, from outside, and gave us great courage and help to carry on the work that we had begun. For that we shall always be grateful, and now still more for this proof of his interest by editing this first little journal from the Grampian Sanatorium where he is at present detained.

May he soon recover.



Buckbarrow 1943



Langdale 1945

That, then, completes the story of how Achille Ratti Mountaineering Club came into being. But it is only the beginning of the story. It is up to the enterprise and spirit of the members to see that it develops into a saga of adventure and progress. There will be more. difficulties, we can see some on the horizon even now, but our lessons of the hills would be superficial indeed if we had not learnt that the spirit of the hills is to overcome obstacles and to venture new and better things.

T. B. Pearson

