

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB



JOURNAL
2005

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB



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Introduction

This year we have another well-presented journal full of interesting articles. The piece by John Braybrook speaks of the Christian friendship that he has found within the club. I believe that this is the club's greatest strength. Many members, like myself, met their future partners at the club and formed close friendships that have lasted all their lives.

Some of the contributions look back at events and people in the history of the club and some deal with the current activities of members. I read with interest the article about Fr Joe Burns. When I first joined the club he was something of a legend amongst the old stagers at Buckbarrow. Chris Farrell's article shows that although the age of our members may have increased the members are as fit and active as ever.

As I said in my introduction to the journal last year the journal is an important part of club life. The newsletter and journal are read with interest by many members who are no longer regular users of the huts. Paul Charnock told me that when he recently visited Margaret Gas, she read the newsletters and journal with interest and was up to speed with all the club news. Margaret Gas is the former key holder for Buckbarrow and an honorary member of the club.

I would like to thank, on behalf of all the members, Brian Hodgkinson and Dave Hugill for the work they have put in to produce this journal and all those who have provided the interesting articles.

David Ogden
Chairman

Mountaineering Reflections

By John Braybrook

"Friends are the medicine of life"
Ecclesiasticus ch6 v16

MEMBERSHIP of the Achille Ratti has been for me the making of friendships and sharing of mountaineering experiences.

The Club's Christian foundations are important to me as I believe the hallmark of friendship is the meeting of minds in Christ's ways.

I am thankful to Bishop Bernard Pearson, the founder of the club, for bringing us all together.

Father Frank Hughes, a former Club Chaplain, I will always remember affectionately his outlook on life and his hospitality. His piano playing will always remain with me.

There have been numerous club climbing partners over the last 25 or so years: Jim Harding, Faz Faraday, Alan Kenny, Tony Brindle, John Kelly, Baz Rodgers, Mike Foster, Martin Holmes, Paul Cooney, Ann McCarthy, Mick Donnelly and Tony Barker.

With Sydney DeCruz I enjoyed many Alpine seasons in the 1980s, especially at Arolla in the Swiss Pennine Alps. We also climbed at Zermatt, Sass Grund, in the Bregaglia, in the Val de Zinal and at Chamonix. We had numerous escapades: Jumping a bergschrund, sleeping in the crevasse of a glacier and bivouacing out at night at 11,000ft near the Aiguille de Tsar at Arolla.

The club long walks were excellent training and proving grounds for the Alps beside the social gathering.

During school holidays I walked extensively in the Lakes with Austin Guilfoyle and climbed Bowfell Buttress with him.

Maurice Osman and Terry, two fellow teachers, provided me with amusing tales at Bishop's Scale and entertainment at the Langdales over a few pints and glasses of the Famous Grouse.

Father David Milburn I owe a debt of gratitude for being my club sponsor and I spent happy hours on the fells in his company.

Beside the climbing partners there are countless club members who I have walked and shared the fellowship of the huts with – George

Partridge, Jean Lochhead, Dave Hugill, Jim Cooper, Dot Wood, Tony Pearson, Leo Pollard and Leo Pyle come to mind.

The Spirit of those who I have known and been on the fells with but who have departed this life: Joyce Foster Kent, John McCarthy, Derek Price, Pete Durkin and Mike Lomas still live on in the club and in my mind.



The Antlers

by Phil Hodgson

IT WAS the end of the winter season. "Looks like that's it for this year," we groaned into our beers as we sat in the Old Dungeon Ghyll on the Friday evening. The ice climbing season had been short and patchy to say the least. We'd missed the rare appearance of deep snow and ice that had festooned the Lakes the previous weekend and the inevitable thaw during the following week had dampened our enthusiasm somewhat. Still, ever hopeful, Dave Makin and myself had chucked the ironmongery in the backs of our vans and driven up to the Langdale Hut on the off chance of a sudden rapid freeze. Some chance; Langdale was positively spring like. Although the odd patch of snow remained if you scrutinised the higher peaks and used your imagination our hopes for an abrupt reversal of global warming had been a tad optimistic. "Looks like mountain biking or running then," we agreed. A couple of local climbers had other ideas. "Blea Water Falls might still be in," they encouraged us, "and Birkett's Gully was the fattest I've ever seen it last weekend. It could still be there. You might as well check it out."

Thus we found ourselves driving down Haweswater early the following morning. It didn't feel like ice climbing weather, the sun was shining and it was quite mild, but the odd high gully above us on Harter Fell did appear to boast a thin smear of ice. We walked up Mardale Beck and, much to our surprise, as we rounded a shoulder we were transfixed by a vision of iciness. The whole of Blea Water Crag appeared to be embraced by winter despite the high fells being bare of snow and basking in spring sunlight. "Yippeeee," we shouted and upped our pace frightened that it would melt before our very eyes. As we contoured round the corrie to Blea Water Falls we realized it was doing just that. The tinkling of running water permeated the air and we saw that, despite their frozen appearance, the falls were coming to life again. Water was percolating down under the ice, making fascinating patterns and looking like one of those perpetual indoor glass fountains. The base of the falls was a veritable cascade as the water escaped the confines of its icy prison.

"Those look do-able," we concurred as we dug out the gear and eyed up some of the higher falls that appeared to hold a few continuous lines of ice. The climbing proved to be a little tenuous. Above the

ominous noise of running water the usual "chunk – chunk" noises you expect as your axes bite into thick water ice were replaced with worrying, hollow "thuds" belying the solid appearance of the column of ice upon which we were precariously balanced. We moved quickly, hopping the whole lot wasn't going to collapse under us. "That was interesting," we shuddered as we unroped at the top of the last pitch. Then we saw it.

A few hundred metres higher up, shaded from the sun, was a monumental boss of overhanging, wind sculpted ice, flowing out from a crag like a frozen wave. "It looks like a set of antlers," we enthused, as we got ready to climb this amazing feature. It was only a few metres high at the side but as you traversed out the exposure multiplied. Dave soloed what looked to be the easiest line, fighting his way past an overhanging tongue of ice with some aggressive axe manoeuvres. Me next. "I'll have a top rope if you don't mind," I said, cautiously weighing up the more than vertical pinnacle which Dave had made look so easy. Whilst it looked solid enough a belay would make it a far safer proposition. It was a good call. Dave's thwacking of axes had



Dave soloing up the side of The Antlers



Phil on The Antlers

created an unseen crack across the overhanging ice that formed the arching roof at the top of the climb. I was half way up and going well until, reaching up to place my axe, I touched the tongue of ice. That was all it needed to detach itself in what appeared to me as slow motion. It wasn't moving quite as slowly when its edge struck me a glancing blow across the forehead, just below the line of my helmet. Despite the shock and explosion of stars in my head I somehow kept contact with the ice, saved from further grief by the rope. "Are you OK," Dave called up, having dodged the canopy of ice that had just whistled past him. "I'm not sure," I replied. The warm sensation trickling down from my forehead confirmed my suspicion that I wasn't. Dave lowered me off. The half amused look on his face was enough to reassure me that it wasn't that serious. His

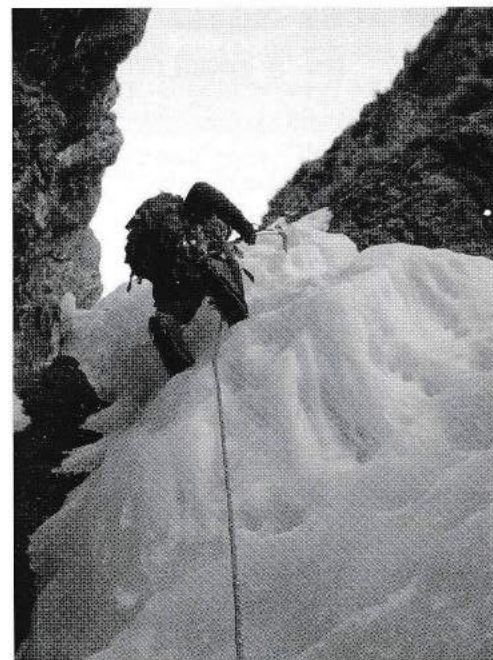


One - nil to The Antlers!

first aid revealed a few nasty cuts and bruises but apart from a headache I felt OK. "Right, one - nil to The Antlers," I grinned, "I'd better have another go."

Our subsequent routes up The Antlers became bolder, with top rope of course, before we decided to have a look at Birkett's Gully. Contouring round we could see that there was certainly plenty of ice higher up. Unfortunately the lower half of the precipitous gully was bare. The scariest part of the day was the steep climbing up greasy, moss-infested rock, on fingery holds, until we reached the ice. Then it was

great. No running water. No hollow sounds. No falling antlers. Just delightful steep ice. We were in the first throes of an English spring but, deep down in this frozen cleft, arctic conditions maintained their brief hold. And this year we're being told to expect a harsh winter. Bring it on!



Birkett's Gully

The Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge 2005

(or 'A small crisis on peak number 30')

by Chris Farrell

CAN the weather be too good for a long run like the Joss Naylor Challenge? On 9 July, Bill and I, with Pete and Neil in support, set off under a starlit, cloudless sky at 4am from Pooley Bridge, at the northern tip of Ullswater. Leg one was a 16-mile dream: still, cool air and magnificent views. Glimpses of Great Gable appeared so far away as to be on another planet; unbelievably, we were due there in 10 hours time. At 5.05, precisely, the sun burst from the horizon instantly giving us long dark shadows. We had seen badgers and a barn owl en-route to the start and on the path at Kidsty Pike a small group of roe deer was gathered round two small tarns. Glorious! And only 32 more miles to go...

It was getting a bit warm on leg 2. Arthur, sartorially challenging as ever, together with Martin and Andrew set just the right pace preserv-



Russ Buxton and Chris on High Raise with the route over Rosset Pike, Bowfell, Esk Pike and Great End in the distance

ing our 15 minute advantage to Dunmail where the usual enthusiastic support team raised spirits further. Sun hats and lashings of sun cream were now essential for leg 3. In the heat, Steel Fell was a proper test but High Raise with its miles of untracked tussocks was harder. I was hot and slowing down and Bill drifted further back. The day was taking shape. Micky's hot pie on Rossett Pike sorted me out – they had just decided that the knackered looking figure coming their way couldn't possibly be 'their man'.

By some geological oddity, the direct climb from Rossett to Bow Fell was far longer and steeper than in my Bob Graham year 18 years before. Once on the tops, though, we made good progress to Esk Pike and Great End where Martin (Sleath), navigator-in-chief, unexpectedly ushered us down the steep north eastern slope to Lamb Dubs tarn and the corridor route instead of the opposite direction. Martin and Russ enjoyed the rough descent rather more than I did!

Arriving at Sty Head Tarn presented us with a problem: no support team. We waited with John Hope and pals who were supporting on the final leg. It was just 10 minutes over our allotted time when the team appeared over the rise; they had been waiting just out of sight expecting our arrival from a different direction. Still, they didn't seem too put out! We extended our stay a little longer to get some food and drink down and a change of socks. For the first time we were behind schedule.

Then it was Great Gable, steep and hot. What had happened to my legs? Then Kirk Fell, still no legs. And Pillar, endless. Modest Steeple, when we got there, was almost a welcome diversion from the big hills. But in the distance loomed the final horror – the 30th peak: Seatallan, mean, trackless and steep, and I would be there in an hour. A brilliant descent route from Haycock – the one strip of grass in a massive boulder field – now put us at the foot of Seatallan. Time had slipped away as my steps had grown shorter and slower. If I could just get to the top by 9pm maybe I could get to the end of the challenge by the deadline of 10pm. Breaking my golden rule for the day I stopped half way up the climb to get some strength back in my legs. Martin, clearly thinking I had succumbed for good, would have none of it and had me back on my feet in under two minutes. We summited at 8.40pm. I could do it now I was sure. But even little Middle Fell required one more stop on the ascent and I lost a further 10 minutes on the descent. 9pm on Seatallan would have been too late!

Down below in Wasdale we couldn't see a welcoming party but a small figure was walking towards us through the waist high ferns. It was Joss himself; a great treat for me to shake his hand. He led us to Greendale Bridge, the finish, by his house (just 15 minutes within the 18 hour limit) and ordered us into the river! 'Best thing for tired legs' he said, and more firmly 'that hardly covers your shoe laces - gerr'over in the deep bit'. We obeyed.

Earlier that day 85 runners had dropped out of the Wasdale Fell race because of the heat and on a day when the UK was bathed in sunshine, Kendal had the highest temperature in the country. No wonder I felt more tired than I could ever remember.

Many thanks to all the fantastic supporters especially Martin and Russ who got me across the finish line and to Bill who set the whole thing up.

Gentlemen, please check your compasses! (RIP Fr Joseph Douglas Burns)

by Tom Gater



FATHER Joe was one of the earliest Members of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club. He used all the huts, although if truth be told, his favourite was probably Buckbarrow. He enjoyed the spooky atmosphere and the washing in the cattle trough and walking/running 60 yards to the outside Elsan toilet. He introduced hundreds of people (including me and my sons) to the Lakeland Fells and to walking in the area around Tyn Twr.

He always wanted to be a priest from the age of seven and he went to St Bedes in Manchester and then to Ushaw (which is where his love of the lakes was fostered when he and a number of his colleagues joined the Catholic Boys Club). He had an uncanny resemblance at this time to an American Crooner and acquired the nickname "Bing".

After his ordination he served at: -St Malachy, Manchester; St Mary, Burnley; St Hubert, Great Harwood; St Vincent, Openshaw; St James, Bolton; St Mary's, Eccles (as Rural Dean); St Michael, Ancoats; St Hubert, Dunsop Bridge.

When at St James the Great in Bolton he walked, wrote, checked and set up all the check and refreshment points for several fund raising sponsored walks over the moors around Belthorn, Rivington and Anglezarke. He also supplied all the partition walls from the school, which was being altered, for converting the Chapel and Priest's room into the Family Quarters at Bishops Scale.

As Rural Dean at St Mary's Eccles, he organised group visits to Dunmail for disadvantaged teenagers from the Manchester area. On one such visit I remember lots of grumbling because he would not allow them to go down to the pub to watch Coronation Street. Instead Fr Joe miraculously produced a black and white portable TV from the boot of his car plus a battery. We then spent the next half-hour trying every room/shelf/ledge in the hut at Dunmail trying to get a signal without success. As he was carrying the set and battery back to the car the set suddenly burst in to life and we got sound and picture

when he put it down to lift the boot lid. Picture the scene, 15 teenagers sat on wooden chairs huddled around the boot of a car, in a lay-by watching the TV, which was perched on the Cortina's boot lid. Passing drivers could not believe their eyes.

He did not take prisoners! I remember my very first introduction to the fells when we crawled on hands and knees in a raging wind on the top of Pike O'Blisco. He thought I would never come again. When he sent me up Great Gable on my own, for the first time, in pea soup fog, his words of advice were "you'll be all right, I'll be waiting here when (not IF) you get back."

He knew every peak and every path on the Lakeland Fells and in later years, when he found walking difficult he visited some 25 historic stone circles in the area. When my sons were young he used to organise singsongs in the car and it used to be amusing to hear a Catholic Priest singing "... and now I've got a mother-in-law, through sipping cider through a straw".

Three stories of him at Langdale spring to mind. The first was when he came down off the Langdales after a gruelling walk in driving wind and rain, arriving at the door of the Old Dungeon Ghyll only to find it packed to the rafters. He was about to turn away when he saw, coming towards him a large whisky, passed down over the heads of everyone in the pub accompanied by the chant "pass this to Fr Burns"! It was from his friend John Bulman.

The second was in the early days of attempts to ban fox hunting. The local Landlords had organised a film show in the Woolpack at Boot in favour of hunting. We travelled over Hardknott and Wrynose, returning at 3 am. On top of Hardknott we stunned a fox in the car headlights and Father Joe discussed leaping out of the car to catch it. It did get away!

His own favourite tale (is there anyone who goes to Langdale who he hadn't told?) concerns a decision by a group of members to climb Coniston Old Man and Dow Crag one wintry day. They arrived on the summit in a complete white out. Suddenly, out of the gloom emerged a group of American tourists. "Say buddy we're lost, we're looking for this here Dow Crag". When they heard that Fr Joe was going there, they asked if they could join the group and there then followed much discussion and double and triple checking of compasses to choose the correct direction. After a short distance Fr Joe called them to a halt. "Gentlemen, please check your compasses!" They all checked

compasses and the Americans pronounced that they were happy that they were travelling North in the correct direction. Shortly after this Fr Joe called out again "I'm sorry gentlemen but will you please check your compasses again? According to my compass, we are going South!" Further mutterings, compass checkings and consultations occurred and then the leader of the American party exclaimed "He's right! No wonder you god_s damn Brits won the war!"

Our routines at the huts would always revolve round daily Mass. He was a devout Catholic Priest with a strong sense of humour. Although he was a priest, he kept in very close touch with the family where he was better known by his second name, as Uncle Douglas.

We do so hope that there are hills and lakes in heaven or at least a branch of Achille Ratti!



Tom Brodrick

TOM Brodrick died last October. Tom was a long-standing member of ARCC. He was editor of the club bulletin for a number of years and members will remember his sketch of our Bishop's Scale hut which has been used on a number of club publications.

Despite his disability Tom took an active part in club activities getting out on the hills whenever he could. When looking through some slides taken by Derek Price on the occasion of my sister Margaret's birthday I noted that Tom featured on a number of the pictures with one of the pictures showing him climbing with Derek. In his active days he was a great supporter of club events, particularly the Bishop's Walk, which he helped with up until we ceased to hold the event.

His funeral at St Joseph's, Kirkby Lonsdale, was very well attended by a number of ARCC members and by his wide circle of friends from the parish and local community.

Tom was a man of faith, an active worker in his parish at Kirkby Lonsdale, and a supporter of the aims of our club as envisaged by our founder president Bishop Pearson.

Weekends Start on Thursday

The following is a little bit of club history, the author has asked to remain anonymous just to see how many of the older members can guess who he is!

“WELL, are you going to work this weekend?”

It was always the same on Thursday morning, just after tea break. The foreman, affectionately known as ‘Pinkie’, came round to seek out those who wanted to do overtime work on Saturday and Sunday.

“No thanks, I’ve better things to do on Saturday”

“What could be better than coming to work and earning some overtime?”

“Climbing in the Lakes”

“So, I’ll take that as a yes”

On those Saturday mornings when I lost the argument and was persuaded to work, either by some form of covert blackmail, or plain straightforward bullying, it still didn’t stop me from enjoying a weekend in the lakes. I just arrived a little later and missed a morning’s climbing.

On the Saturday morning in question, which was very much like all the rest, an interruption in the planned start of weekend, the relaxed morning after the night before atmosphere prevailed. After opening your toolbox and putting on overalls the next highlight of the day was tea break. The task I had been given by ‘Pinkie’ was real mind numbing stuff, stamping brass inspection plates, 4° hours worth of them.

It wasn’t long before my daydreaming found a nice distraction. One of the brass plates would make a very good key fob, too big for your pocket, but just right for main key bunch that should never be put into pockets. It didn’t take long to mark out and file the rounded ends. Stamping the name on took a little longer, you had to be on the lookout for the foreman all the time, and if Pinkie caught you working on a ‘nix job’ life could be made very uncomfortable. Stamping, using individual numbers and letters, was not a favourite job, the chance of clouting your other hand with a one-pound hammer was a risk you ran.

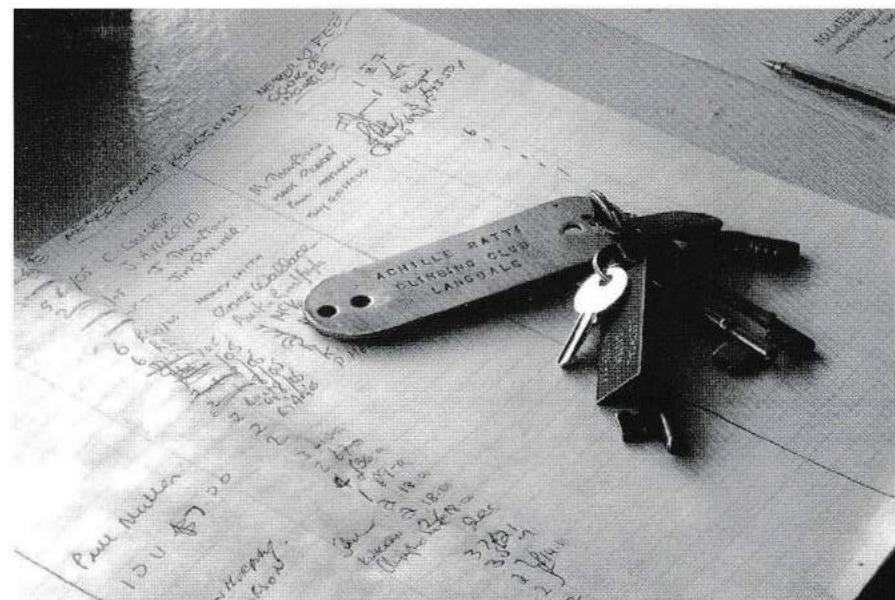
After stamping the name on the new brass key fob marking ink was painted over the letters to give a good contrast after the surplus had

been cleaned off and a good polish was put on the plate. I quietly slipped the new key fob into my rucksack lid pocket, unseen by the foreman, a good job of self-distraction had been carried out and the time to leave was fast approaching. At twelve o’clock I was off like a shot.

It usually took about 2° hours to hitchhike up to Ambleside, so it was possible to get to the Golden Rule in time for a pint before closing time at three. The final leg up the valley was very easy to get a lift, so I would be there before four o’clock. After claiming a bed in the downstairs dormitory I took the key fob out of the rucksack and fitted it onto the key bunch for Bishop’s Scale.

Whilst the passage of time and modern technology has overtaken the importance of the key ring, the fob I made on that Saturday morning is still giving good service.

September 1963



Team Kirkham Minibuses Triumph in Great Lakeland Challenge 2005

by Phil Hodgson

ACHILLE Ratti members Mandy Goth, Dave Makin and Martin Roberts, together with ex-marine Paddy Allen were members of the awesome foursome Kirkham Minibuses team winning the Great Lakeland Challenge at their first attempt. Completing the triathlon type event involves three members of the team canoeing ten and a half miles down Windermere, the longest lake in England, cycling 26 miles to Wasdale Head over two of the steepest passes in England, and running 9 miles to Langdale over the summit of the highest mountain in England; Scafell Pike. The fourth member provides essential support and transport for bikes and equipment as the team race round the Lake District. The Ford sponsored charity event, organized by rugby charity, Wooden Spoon, is one of the biggest in their annual calendar and is a major fundraiser for disadvantaged children. This year the event attracted its biggest field to date with 35 teams setting off to attempt the grueling challenge.

On Friday May 20, 2005, the thirty-five teams set off from the southern end of Windermere in windy and choppy conditions. Top team Pro-Mil, winners for the past five years, got off to a flying start, reaching the beach at Wray Castle in just over two hours in third position and with their best discipline to follow. Team Kirkham Minibuses made a poor start, tangling with other boats off the startline and hitting choppy water in the middle of the



The victorious Kirkham Minibuses team arriving at the finish

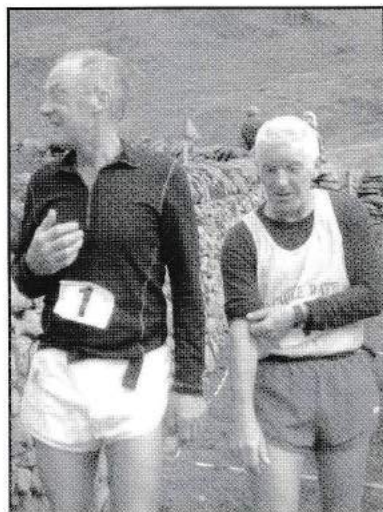
lake. This is not something you can gain experience of when most of your training is on the Leeds Liverpool canal. However, Paddy's strength helped them pull back to seventh place and only three and a half minutes behind Pro-Mil when they hit the beach. Although a slick changeover reduced the gap further Pro-Mil showed how good they are on road bikes pulling 15 minutes in front by the end of the ride. By now there were only two teams in it. Could Kirkham Minibuses pull back such a big lead on the fell? Team Captain, Dave, led the charge climbing strongly to the summit of Scafell Pike and reducing the deficit to just five minutes. With only four downhill miles to go this was where the fellrunners had the edge. They took Pro-Mil completely unawares swooping down out of the mist above Esk Hause and powering past them. They were just disappearing shadows in the fog before their rival's astonished looks had faded. Maintaining the fast pace to the end they ran over the finish line triumphantly, 15 minutes in front of their opponents.

The Kirkham Minibus Team set two new records. An improvement of nearly 30 minutes on the fell run record and a new overall event record of 6 hours eleven minutes. Only another six teams made it to the finish with most being timed out before the summit of Scafell Pike. It was certainly a great challenge. It was definitely a great performance. And, the generous sponsorship provided by Kirkham Minibuses helped the team contribute to the record amount of £184,000 raised to help disadvantaged children. Proudly receiving the Great Lakeland Challenge Fastest Team Trophy the team were asked if a total event time less than six hours was possible. 'Just watch us next year,' was the reply.





**SUNDAY 2 OCTOBER
2005**



John Hope and Alan Kenny at the completion of leg three

Ian Hodgson Mountain Relay 2005													
Visit www.sportident.co.uk to view your split times at each hill checkpoint													
Pos.	TEAM	Cat	LEG 1		LEG 2			LEG 3			LEG 4		TOTAL
			Runners	Time	Runners	Time	AggPos	Runners	Time	AggPos	Runners	Time	
	Number			Posn		Posn	Gain		Posn	Gain		Posn	Gain
47	Kendal A.C.	Mix	Nick Wharton	01:26:36	Evelyn Dugdale	00:46:09	35	Jon Broxap	01:28:46	43	Kath Finn	01:19:18	05:00:59
	40		John Dickinson	39	Rebeca Robinson	35	4	Nick Hambrey	49	8	Paula Leurelius	52	-4
48	Cumbria Police	O	John Chambers	01:25:57	Debbie Chambers	00:54:53	49	Steve O'Keefe	01:35:22	52	John Sealby	01:06:12	05:02:24
	19		James Hyde	35	Richard Mavin	57	-14	Mark Graham	56	-3	Craig Smith	29	4
49	Dallam R.C.	O	Hazel Jones	01:27:29	Emma Aspden	00:50:31	43	David Aspden	01:24:07	44	Gary Dowthwaite	01:21:29	05:03:36
	20		Mike Meadowcroft	43	Duncan Hurley	45	0	David Griffin	41	-1	Steve Jeffs	58	-5
50	Achille Ratti	O	Mark Laithwaite	01:22:22	Andrew Pooler	00:54:23	40	John Hope	01:33:55	49	Martin Kirkman	01:15:33	05:06:03
	1		Dave Makin	27	Dave Hugill	55	-13	Alan Kenny	53	-9	Brian Kenny	48	-1
51	Z Team	V	Richard Bellaries	01:31:34	George Thompson	00:48:23	48	Tony Peacock	01:35:13	51	Andrew Haworth	01:12:25	05:07:35
	69		Geoff Newsome	51	Doug McCallum	40	3	Andrew Walmsley	55	-3	Dave Hindle	40	0
52	Lothian	O	Colin Eades	01:24:34	Fraser Kingscott	01:06:30	59	Tosh Brannan	01:23:32	50	Dave Godfree	01:13:30	05:08:06
	45		Gillian Godfree	32	Emily Coon	68	-27	Gillian Godfree	39	9	Richard Docherty	42	-2

The Achille Ratti fielded a team of eight runners in this year's Ian Hodgson Relay Race based on Brotherswater campsite.

Leg 1: Mark Laithwaite and Dave Makin, Brotherswater to Patterdale Hall.

Leg 2: Andrew Pooler and Dave Hugill, Patterdale Hall to Hartsop.

Leg 3: John Hope and Alan Kenny, Hartsop to Kirkstone Pass.

Leg 4: Brian Kenny and Martin Kirkman, Kirkstone to Brotherswater.

Run in good weather, the team completed the 25 mile/8,500ft course, finishing in 50th place overall.



Brian Kenny and Martin Kirkman complete the final leg



Martin Kirkman and Brian Kenny prepare to take over for leg four



Alan Kenny (ARCC) and Paul Bates (L & M AC) compare notes after leg three



Runners come into Brotherswater campsite at the end of the fourth and final leg

Climbing in the Land of the Midnight Sun

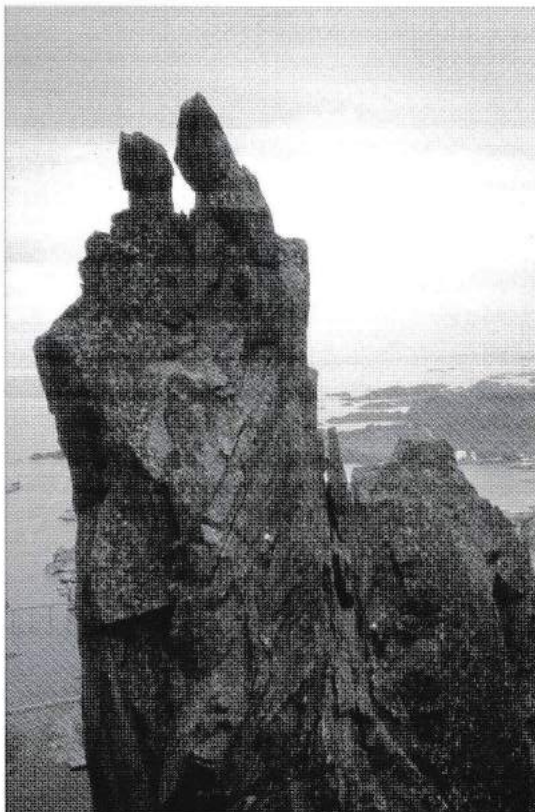
by Neil Hodgkinson

THE Lofoten Islands are usually up there on lists of top climbing destinations, the subject of much pub talk and the occasional television documentary. The islands lie off the north-west coast of Norway in the Arctic Circle and enjoy a brief warm summer, with 24 hour daylight throughout June. There are four main islands with most of the developed climbing areas on Austvågøy. The attraction of climbing right through the night, if one wished, on immaculate granite was compelling, but Lofoten seemed impossibly remote, with a reputation for very unpredictable weather.

Whenever I went climbing with Jim Duffy though, it became a recurrent topic of conversation, as Lofoten is home to one of the best E2s in the world, Vestpillaren, which we finally felt was within our capabilities. We decided to go for it.

Jim got on the case and had soon found cheap flights and accommodation in rorbuer, traditional fishermen's houses let as holiday homes in the summer months. In mid-July, a group of six of us flew to Oslo and then up to Bodø, from where we had a three hour ferry journey to Svolvær, the capital of the Lofoten Islands.

Svolvær is a prosperous fishing port, famed for a 150m pinnacle of rock on the mountainside behind the town, the Svolvær Goat. The pinnacle is topped by two granite blocks, known as the



The Svolvær Goat

Horns of the Goat, and the classic climb of this part of the island involves an ascent of the pinnacle and a leap from one block to the second, slightly lower block, with a 1,200 foot fall should the climber be unsuccessful. Ironically the town's cemetery lies directly beneath. Think of Adam and Eve on the summit of Tryfan, but 10 times more exposed. We decided this would make a fitting objective for our first climb.

A two pitch "Severe" led to the base of the blocks and Jim offered to lead the final pitch and jump first. I felt quietly relieved. I am a reasonably competent climber but my jumping abilities were untested.

Jim sorted his gear out and sprang nimbly across the abyss without any hesitation. He said later "If I had thought about it, there is no way I would have done it!"

As Jim set up the belay, I had time to dwell on what was in front of me. A four foot wide block, which sloped steeply downwards, so that once I took a run up, that was it, I was committed. What was the worst that could happen? An embarrassing slither off the second block with fingernails scraping into the rock like some manic cartoon character? Or perhaps I would overshoot and fly off the other side with arms flailing before Jim took me tight on the belay? I focused my thoughts and leapt, landing right beside Jim. Helen even managed to take a photograph of me in mid air!

After a couple of days bad weather, spent fishing for cod in the fjord next to our rorbu, we decided to tackle Vestpillaren. The route is situated on the south side of Presten, which translates as the Priest, a mountain at the southern tip of Austvågøy.

It is a magnet for climbers of all nationalities, known as one of the World Classics. Twelve pitches of steep granite, sustained at the grade but with excellent protection and good belays.

Jim and I had been training all year for this climb but our friend Roger decided to have a bash too, despite having climbed only two



Neil jumps the Horns of the Goat



Jim tackling the dihedral on pitch eight, the crux of Vestpillaren

ning views from the belay stances of the Arctic Ocean beneath our feet. I could make out children playing on the white sandy beaches and scuba divers in the rocky inlets, tiny figures in the ink-blue and turquoise water. Further south, the jagged peaks of Moskenesøy, the most southerly of the Lofoten Islands, stretched out before me, in a continuous curve like a dragon's back.

We were making good progress as Roger led off on Pitch 6, a relatively easy HVS section. Roger struggled to place the right size protection, tried to downclimb but slipped off. The next thing I knew he was hanging upside down, facing me and looking rather shaken. Fortunately only his pride was hurt and we completed the rest of the route

or three times since the winter.

Its well-deserved reputation has made Vestpillaren one of the most popular climbs on Lofoten so we made an early start and were first on the route.

Roger led off in very cold conditions but the sun came onto the rockface at pitch 4, which made the climbing all the more enjoyable. We took turns in leading pitches, which mostly consisted of steep corner cracks, or dihedrals. Gear had to be placed carefully with feet relying on friction and fingers wedged into the cracks at the back of the corner. The intense concentration needed for each pitch was countered by stunning

without incident. We topped out in the early evening sunshine and drove into Henningsvær, the nearest town, to celebrate with the most expensive beer I have ever tasted, £5 for a half pint of lager, quite a distressing experience for a Yorkshireman.

The following days were spent climbing some shorter routes around the Djupfjorden area. The easiest and most frequently climbed route in Lofoten is situated here, Piano Dealer Lund's Route, a Severe with delightfully varied climbing. Jim and his partner Anne, made an ascent of Applecake Arete, a quality VS on the next crag along.

The most popular climb in this area is Only Blueberries, another Lofoten classic. A four pitch VS, the route snakes its way up perfect granite slabs split by a network of finger and hand cracks.

The route is also notoriously difficult to find. A couple of insignificant cairns mark the way through dense undergrowth and rough boulders, and should parties veer from the faint path, there is a good chance that they would need to resort to some serious bushwhacking to locate the base of the crag, or give up and thrash their way back out again.

The scenario is all part of the great tradition of the Norwegian outdoors. There are few footpaths in the Lofoten Islands and even those that do exist are rarely marked on maps. Despite the spectacular scenery, humans have



Neil on pitch two of Only Blueberries

made little impact here. Per, the owner of our rorbu, explained that Norwegians like to regard each day in the hills as an adventure and to preserve that sense of adventure for future visitors. They are firm believers that mountains should be experienced on their own terms with as few man-made intrusions as possible. Therefore walking routes are documented infrequently and backpacking trips are unheard of. If you do decide to go for a walking holiday in Lofoten, take a machete.

Roger and I struck lucky and found the faint path that took us straight to the foot of the climb. We started the route in glorious sunshine but as we neared the top of the final pitch, ominous dense cloud crept across the steel grey fjord. Fortunately we had begun abseiling down when the anticipated deluge hit. The rockface was transformed into a river, and the crack system we had just climbed became a waterfall. I regretted leaving my rucksack at the bottom of the route, fearing it would be washed away, such was the force of the water. But there it lay, untouched by the torrent, another stroke of luck. I stuffed in my sodden climbing gear and we scrambled back through the thick vegetation to the shelter of the car.

All in all we had three days of rain during our fortnight's trip. By July, the sun dips below the horizon for two hours each night, but it was still possible to climb in the early hours of the morning, a slightly surreal, but unforgettable experience.

There is plenty to attract non-climbers to Lofoten: great sea kayaking, cycle touring and fishing. We caught our own cod and saithe from the surrounding fjords and went diving off the jetty in front of the house, just so we could say we had been swimming in the Arctic Ocean. The people everywhere were friendly and welcoming. I hope we will get back there some day.

Ben Nevis – January 2005

by Phil Hodgson

"WILL there be any ice?" we wondered. The odds were against us. So much for the harsh winter those oddball forecasters predicted back in November.

"Eeeh lad, there's a lot more berries this year you know, ... and my budgies been hanging upside down all week."

Bloody charlatans. So far, while lots of snow had fallen on the Scottish hills, it had melted or washed away within a few days and the climbing chat rooms were awash with the wringing of hands on keyboards. Every other thread started with, "Will winter ever arrive?" The Met Office was forecasting yet more gloom, if you're into winter climbing that is. If you were a keen yachtsman it was probably the kind of weather you looked forward to. You could even sail round Carlisle town centre if you fancied. For us, it looked like our first ever trip to the famed CIC Hut would see us out jogging over heathery slopes covered in spring flowers rather than our hoped for full-on, two-tool assault on the classic ridges and gullies.

The long drive north was at least rewarded with a spectacular lightshow. "What's that?" Richard enquired as we motored across Rannoch moor. We stopped the car and joined other awe-inspired travellers standing by the road admiring a stunning display of light: the Aurora Borealis. "Fantastic," we agreed, having decided to ignore the ill omen of the blood red colour of the night sky.

Imagine our surprise. It felt cold. Whilst you might anticipate that it would be a little chilly halfway up the Ben, at midnight, in the middle of winter, in light of the mild forecasts we'd half expected a T-shirt ascent up the Allt a Mhuillin path to the Hut. But no, it was freezing. It was cold enough for the bogs to be crunchy, and was that ice on the path? As we looked up we could see snow glittering. Our spirits rose despite the late hour. Pen-



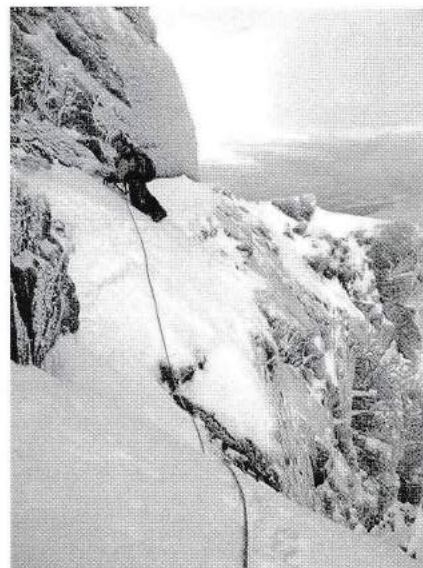
Will winter ever arrive?

etrating further up the valley we could discern tentacles of ice, embracing the recesses and brooding crags of the north face, gleaming faint blue-white in the moonlight. We peered into the gloom to absorb the frozen image.

The hut proved to be small but cosy once we got the potbelly stove going. And we had it to ourselves. Having snatched a few hours sleep we were up at first light eyeing up the weather. It looked promising. A traditional Scottish breakfast of porridge with whisky set us up for the day and we geared up to face a challenge we'd looked forward to for a number of years. Tower Ridge, the classic winter ridge route on Ben Nevis. It was hard to tell what conditions would be like from below the Douglas Boulder but there looked to be plenty of snow on the ridge. We traversed in from Observatory Gully, climbing a short ice chute to gain the ridge above the Douglas Gap, moving together as two ropes of two: Dave and Jim; Mandy and myself. Although a little lean there was enough ice in the right places and we only needed to pitch the Little Tower, the Great Tower and the infamous Gap. The Eastern



Tower Ridge

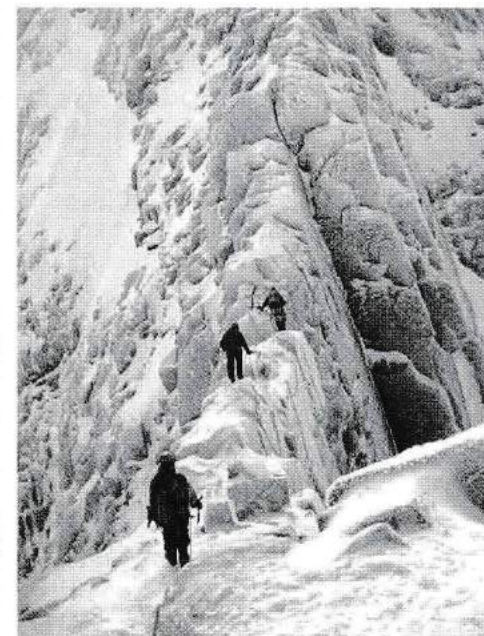


Eastern Traverse

up to the gap in Glover's Chimney. Having protected the descent as best we could we plucked up courage and took it in turns to slide backwards and downwards, hugging the icy boulder that forms the edge, kicking crampons into unknown territory trying to find purchase. An array of tat half a metre down provided a welcome handhold. A few heart stopping moments and we were safely down, but we still faced the ascent up the other side of the Gap. This proved to be another battle, particularly for the short in stature; which was most of us! At one stage my only points of contact with the steep wall and slab above were one crampon point and a chin smear as I

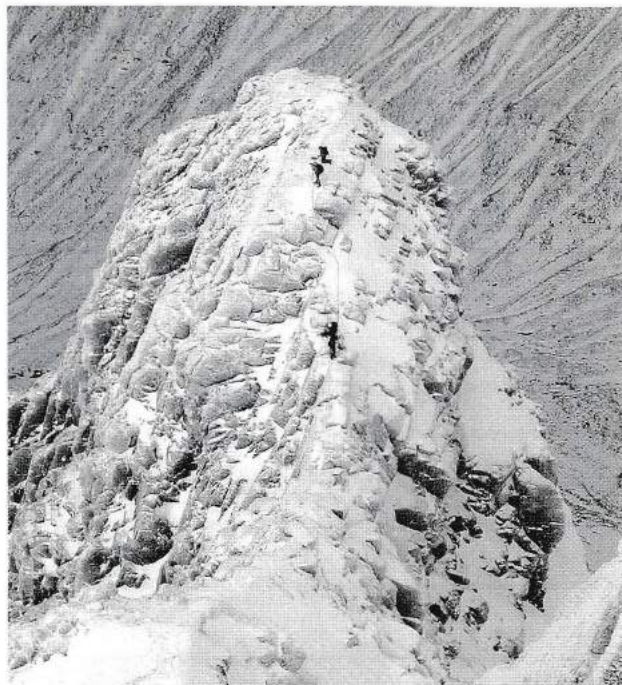
Traverse, although well banked out and requiring a steady nerve as you edged out over the nothingness below, wasn't too disconcerting. Tower Gap however, was a different matter, and provided the hairiest moments by far.

Not knowing quite what to expect you sidle out along the narrow, icy arête to peer over the edge. It's only a few metres down into the gap but it looks to be overhanging. I'm sure it is. And there's not a lot to get hold of. The narrow clefts dropping vertically to either side of the gap add to the extreme exposure. We could see a party straight down below us climbing



Tower Gap

flailed axes blindly and tried to find some ice. It's impossible to describe that thankful moment when panic turns to resolve as you feel your axe bite. It may be only a few millimetres of steel penetrating a brittle smear of ice but you know when its placement makes all the difference as you pull up, whack the other axe in ice you can now actually see and use



Great Tower

brute strength to extricate yourself from the clawing abyss. The ground eased above and we romped up the final easy slabs to pop out into bright sunshine close to the summit. What a route. Its classic status is well deserved.

For me, the long and exhilarating bumslide down No.4 gully is one of the highlights of a winter climb on the Ben. As we exited the gully, covered in snow, laughing and spluttering, we could see the profile of Tower Ridge across Corrie na Ciste. The queue of ant like climbers, stood on the Great Tower waiting to cross the Gap, emphasised the benefits of our early start and fast ascent.

Aching limbs from yesterday's exertions and aching heads from a dram or so too much whisky in the evening conspired to curtail our ambitions on the Sunday. Most of us were happy to do a lower grade gully so the same pairings were, after a more leisurely breakfast, soon trudging up the corrie. Yesterday's blue skies were replaced by mist and a cold wind buffeted us. The whole atmosphere felt more threatening. As we climbed Observatory Gully towards our objective, congratulating ourselves on our wise choice of a straightforward snow

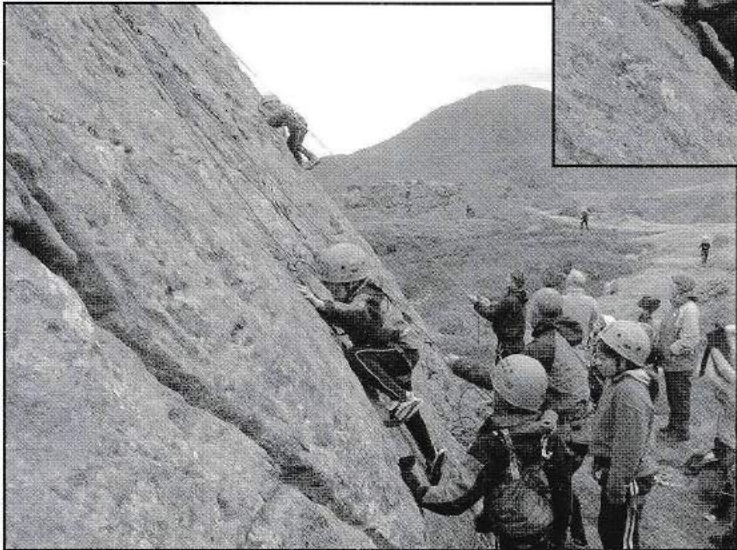
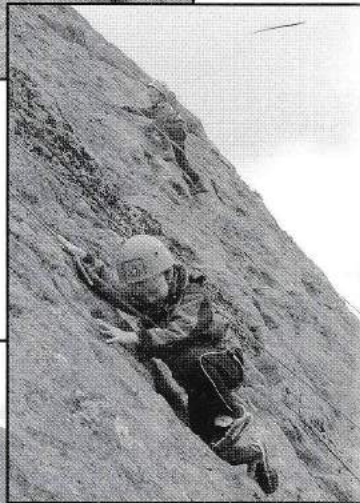


Gardylloo Gully

slog, we spied the start of the climb above us. A narrow, menacing cleft funnelled upwards, pregnant with snow, and appearing much steeper than its II / III grading. This was Gardylloo Gully, the Observatory Hotel rubbish chute. "Watch out below!" was the cry, as all manner of refuse used to plummet past where we now, rather precariously, geared up. As we climbed up into the jaws of the gully the noise of the wind disappeared. We were in our own white world, icy walls imprisoning us as we swam upwards through thigh deep spin-drift. In places the snow hardened but there was no chance of any protection. No ice, no rocky cracks. Just keep moving. There was a cave under the chockstone but the steepening below it was bottomless powder. Still no gear. Mini avalanches cascaded down as I ploughed my furrow, digging down through the loose stuff to gain tenuous psychological reassurance from axes rammed in snow the consistency of icing sugar. Finally arriving at the ice pitch I managed a reasonable belay below it using icy cracks and an icicle. The pitch was the highlight of the route. Up vertical ice for a few metres, side step over the void, and power over a bulge to finish up the steep funnel shaped exit onto the summit plateau. Another good route ticked. And the bumslide still to come!



Junior Meet 2005
Climbing on Black Craggs
Saturday 18 September



Junior Fellraces
Sunday 19 September



The Fellrunning Year

by Rob Hope

THE traditional basis for a good summer season is a solid winter's training in preparation for the races ahead. The autumn had been going well with a varied mix of track sessions, hill repetitions and runs to and from work, however that was brought to a grinding halt with a nasty bout of flu over Christmas and New Year which lingered for several weeks. Consequently, the cross country season was written off for the year.

An early season race took place at Blake Fell in West Cumbria, which threatened to be the scene of my first defeat to brother Dan, who has been breathing down my neck for some time. Fortunately, a last gasp sprint finish in horizontal rain/sleet, across Somme like fields allowed me to narrowly avoid a demoralising setback.

The following weeks showed signs of progression only to be knocked again with a broken hand sustained during the Winter Hill Fell Race. This race included possibly the most extreme winter racing conditions I had experienced and again I had to contend with Dan pushing the pace. On a long descent I fell and landed awkwardly but the freezing conditions held off any real pain. The race continued and I again held



Danny and Robert Hope with England manager Mark Croasdale in New Zealand

on to record victory, although outside my record time from the previous year. A visit to the A&E several days later revealed a fractured hand bone and a plaster cast was set.

Several weeks later the first counter in the English Championships

was held, at Fiendsdale in the Trough of Bowland. I managed to downgrade the plaster cast to a supporting brace containing a steel rod, which was less cumbersome but I was feeling less than prepared after an interrupted start to the year. My concerns were realised soon into the race, which turned out to be unseasonably hot especially in the deep gullies, and I drifted off the pace. Fortunately, a few of the leading runners went astray and I pulled through to finish second behind Simon Bailey of Mercia. Days earlier, Dan was having a lump removed off his head, which given his squeamish constitution, left him slightly traumatised and struggling back in the main field on race day.

A fleeting visit to the Mourne Mountains for the Spelga Skyline followed in April for the "Hope Clan". The race was an absolute beast with relentless climbs totalling about 8,000ft and continual rough ground, which inevitably induced a severe "bonk" and slide down the finishing order for the whole family. Shortly after it was Rivington Pike Race, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary in the open era and took place in my ex-hometown of Horwich. In addition, I last won the race back in 1995 so it was also an anniversary year of 10 years since my one and only victory. This combination made it a particularly special event. Several of my archrivals appeared on the line but I pushed hard for a memorable win and beer money totalling £150. If you haven't competed in this race, you might think that 3.25 miles on tarmac and tracks up to Rivington Pike is unlikely to be too demanding, however the ensuing stiff legs and burning lungs are matched during few races.

April, May and June included a further three championship races with Moelwyn Peaks, Buttermere and Edale (I won't bore you with the details) with consistent top three positions and reasonable form but not quite reaching the top gears to achieve championship victories.

The next race was viewed with most trepidation and this was Wasdale, perhaps the most challenging race in the fell calendar. This was compounded by the hot conditions that greeted athletes at the start-line. The race was a 'double header' being a British and English counter and Dan and I endeavoured to complete the course in one-piece. Upon reaching the slopes of Great Gable after several hours the thighs and calves were already starting to cramp up and at least another hour and a half of running/walking remained. Significant time was spent quaffing copious amounts of stream water and energy gels with vital support provided by father Hope and my fiancée Sarah. Scafell was finally reached and then followed the body shaking de-

scent down Lingmell to the finish. I hung on for 10th, which was OK for me over a two hour plus race and Dan made it round in the 30s.

South Wales was the next port of call with a trip to the Brecon Beacons for the Pen y Fan race, a short steep event with a vertical drop off the summit. Right up our street! The drive was found to be worthwhile as I gained my first victory of the Championship whilst Dan finished 3rd.

August included the Whittle Pike race and another opportunity to run well in a short fast race with good form and confidence behind us. After a brisk start pushing the pace from the gun, a leading group developed over the rough tussocks of the moors of Rossendale, however I managed to pull clear in the later stages to record another memorable victory and Dan was 4th. The race also incorporated the Lancashire Fell Championships.

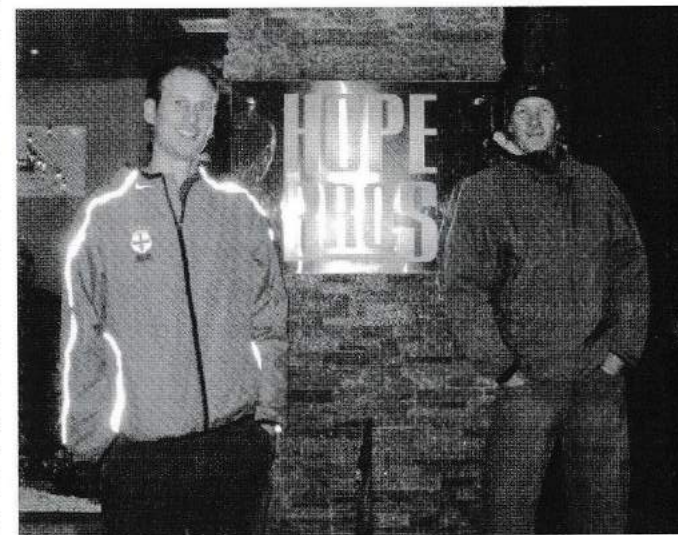
The August Bank holiday includes Grasmere Show and Kilnsey Show, which are two highlights of the year being very short races at events attended by thousands of spectators. Kilnsey Show must have an attendance pushing 10,000 if not more and the race can be viewed from the showfield. In some respects, this race is a bit of a suicide number with a vertical drop off down a limestone chute infamously nicknamed the 'Chimney'. One generally has to hold onto a barbed wire fence to maintain some control. Fortunately I survived and won to claim £150 and hold aloft the show trophy. It's the nearest you can get to Wembley in fellrunning circles!

The World Mountain Running Trophy took place in September in Wellington, New Zealand and Dan and I had booked our places in the England Team through performances at a selection race in August. This was the first or perhaps second time that brothers had competed at the same World Trophy event. I decided to extend the event by staying in NZ for three weeks touring round with Sarah. As expected the race took place on a course as smooth as a baby's bottom so there was no scope for demonstrating technical expertise. The course was still very demanding and I finished 43rd. Dan was suffering with a cold and struggled in 87th. The England Team just missed out on a medal in fourth place. The holiday part of the trip involved touring around the North and South Islands in a campervan and an action packed adventure of geysers, mountain tops, skiing, surfing, seal watching and a few runs along the empty beaches.

Prior to the NZ trip I'd pre-entered the Langdale race as I was still in

contention for the overall English Championship after my victory at Whittle Pike and the points achieved through the previous races. Unfortunately, I'd already booked the NZ flights and was due to land back in England on the day of the race. After a leg numbing, sleep deprived 24 hour flight from Christchurch to Manchester, via a four hour stopover in Singapore, we touched down at 7.15 am and I rushed to collect my baggage in the knowledge that I still had three hours before the race. I called in at home in Wheelton, Chorley, and wolfed down some breakfast and made it up to Langdale for 10.30 am, half an hour before the start. Not surprisingly, racing was not high on my list of priorities but I set off nonetheless.

During the race I perked up slightly and managed to hold on to the leading runners before we hit the usual bank of mist on the Crinkle Craggs. At this stage, three of us had established a lead of up to three minutes, however that was cancelled out after the chasing pack selected a better line and emerged near the bad step in our company. By Pike o' Blisco a large group was still together and a rapid descent was required to ensure victory. Surprisingly, I found some hidden reserves and strode to a fairly comfortable win. As Simon Bailey finished 2nd we tied as joint overall English Champions on equal points. Nevertheless, I was pretty chuffed and my team, Pudsey and Bramley claimed the Team Championship, whilst Dan finished 5th overall. Needless to say, a jovial evening was enjoyed with the Rattis and Pudsey team at the NDG, which along with the race and travelling combined to be intensely soporific.



Robert and Danny in Wellington, New Zealand, outside the Hope Bros Pub!

Mystic Meg

by Faz Faraday

IT was a late, end of summer morning at Tyn Twr and a typical Achille Ratti slowish start to the day. The others had gone some days previously. Tom and I had the hut to ourselves or so we thought. We were surprised therefore to find a rather radiant lady in the kitchen when we descended for breakfast. She had appeared as if from nowhere. She wasn't there the night before. Where had she come from? What was more, where was she going?

For some members, morning is a fragile time and even the sound of an egg being broken is hard to the ear. Tom was left to talk to what seemed our apparition. He has, after all, the social skills needed to hold breakfast-time conversation, and an enquiring mind that even at that hour finds things out. I went off to make a brew and busily sort some gear. It was like a Martha and Mary moment but of the masculine kind. By the time I returned Tom was surprisingly quiet as if in a trance. He chewed on his staple diet of oatmeal, powdered milk and added water. And the lady? She had gone.

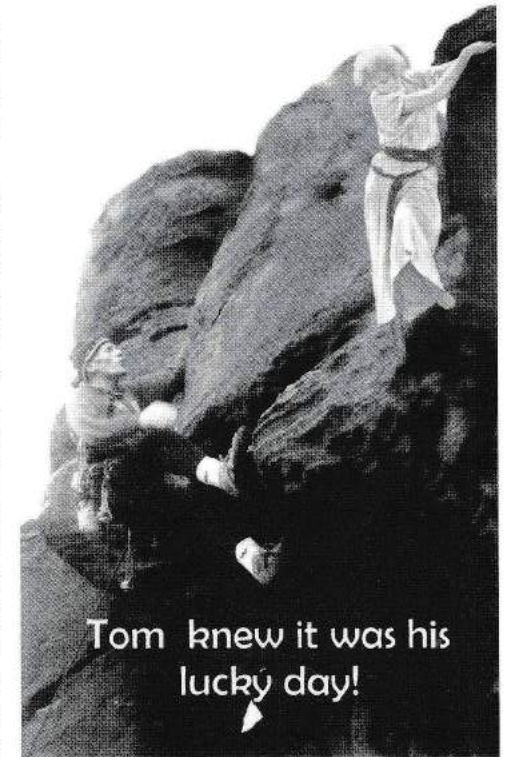
Quietly we got into the car and headed to Holyhead Mountain to climb "King Bee", the best line on there. Tom wanted to lead it before the weather broke. I was thinking of attempting the "Strand" but had doubts about it. It was a long time since I had climbed it. Neither of us felt fully in the mood. The spirit was lacking that morning. So, as is the norm on these occasions, we delayed climbing with a cup of tea at South Stack café.

We dragged ourselves out of the caf and then walked, too heavily it felt, towards the Mountain. Tom wandered more lightly on. Something seemed to have revived his spirit. He told stories of his birding adventures and about birds he had seen and some he hadn't, and about how half the twitchers in Britain had raced to the north of Scotland, catching speeding fines on the way, all because a rare sea eagle had been sighted, when in fact it turned out to be a seagull of the Morecambe breed that had been blown off course to Skye. His story cheered me up as I clung to his slipstream and hobbled in unison towards "King Bee".

"King Bee" is a deceptive route. It looks easier than it is because there appear to be big holds and resting places, but all the time, seductively it leads one on and up and out, and the rhythm is thrown,

and strength has to take over, and then the balance, which is the art of climbing, becomes nothing and every move seems lost.

Tom climbed it easily in his own prodigious style. He seemed to be in some sort of dream. Why was he climbing that day so well, even better than ever? Some Newtonic moment seemed to be in force. What was the answer? I didn't know until Tom gave it. "All to do with style not strength", he shouted down as he paused and breathed, and caringly placed his feet and touched the rock with hands that merely hinted in good humour, at their tenacious strength. The rock then seemed to submit more to



Tom knew it was his lucky day!

kindliness than to aggression. And then, as if he was a real sea eagle of the liveliest kind, real in flight he floated up.

Eventually I joined him at the anchor point and said how easily he'd climbed the route but his mind seemed to be on other things less solid than the rock. Perhaps it was the thought of the expensive equipment I had failed to retrieve? But no, it wasn't that; perhaps it was the time I took to climb? It wasn't that. Then maybe it was disenchantment with my language which had hinted at defeat? It wasn't even that. What was it then? Suddenly I got an inkling.

"Tom", I said. "You're thinking of our morning apparition! What went on when I had gone? What did you learn?"

His reply was ambivalent but I gathered she was a hypnotherapist who could wonder-make improvements to one's skills and do so even at a distance. What had I missed at breakfast time! Tom seemed in a dream, but his state of mind had an effect on mine and with renewed hope we went to climb "The Strand".

"The Strand" lies on Gogarth's Upper Tier and is not affected by the

tide. In the mid seventies all the routes were well marked as then was the cliff's heyday. It was the "in place" to be. Now much of it has reverted to what nature intended: to be covered by green lichen which absorbs water like a sponge. Nevertheless "The Strand" still stands out, thanks to the quality of its line. To day it is still graded E2 5c, but this a mere promenade by modern standards.

Tom's mesmeric state passed to me. His sense of calm enveloped me. My body relaxed. I started to climb. It was many years since I last climbed this route. Then it had been hard and I had fallen. This time it was easier; sticky boots and chalk and lots of friends to protect me. Today I took my time, urged on by our morning apparition. Quiet caution ruled the route, no haste or aggression or empty bravado. And this time the route was friendly. "Take your time", it seemed to say, "Put in more gear. Relax and dance and float, just float". It sounded like the voice of Pan. Years ago it had been different. The route had been the enemy. Then I had been threatened and the best weapon against it had been strength and aggression. To day I was being welcomed. This time I would befriend it, embrace it, dance with it. So, slowly I moved up, resting when necessary, feeling with the fingers, touching with the toes. No rush, no force, no rage nor aggression; a vertical dance; no battle, no victor; a blend of movement and peace; a quiet word of encouragement from below; no panic, no threat; a calmness; no win or fail. A oneness with the rock; a waltz in the afternoon sun; the rock and I, in a movement that flowed and a rock face that let itself be embraced.

Tom followed easily, and so, as if in a trance, we arrived at the top. We paused and looked out to sea. Even that was calm, and then suddenly we turned and looked up. Who should be there but our apparition, the lady of the morning. She stood on safer, higher ground, looked down and waved and then in the early evening light disappeared as suddenly as she had that morning arrived.

We headed back still stunned. "Who was that, Tom?" I asked. "What was her name?" Tom was a bit abashed. He hadn't asked her name. "Let's call her Mystic Meg", he said.

P.S. When we got back we forgot to look to see if she had signed in. Maybe apparitions can't physically write and we felt sure they don't have to pay hut fees. With apologies to the good lady and our respectful thanks. As to whether Tyn Twr is haunted... All enquiries to John McGonagle!!

*The following article appeared in The Catholic Herald
in August this year*

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

"I HAVE bought a mountain – but I have not paid for it." This is the challenge sounded in a special bulletin by Bishop Thomas Pearson, auxiliary for the Lancaster diocese, to the members of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club.

High by lonely Dungeon Ghyll in Great Langdale there rises a stretch of mountainside – by name, Broad Crag. And, as the Climbing Club's Chairman, the bishop has signed a contract for its purchase.

He has less than two months to raise £3,000 – the sum required to buy the land. Then the buildings will have to be converted.

Given the chance of a private purchase, the bishop seized it swiftly. "I did it," he says, "because it was the last chance to secure for ever a home for young men and women who seek exercise and beauty in the mountains"...

So, says the bishop, "I have bought a mountain – rocks, becks, waterfalls and buildings complete – and it's a mighty big object to pay for." And he warns his club members: "We have climbed many mountains, but this is going to be the toughest."

A keen mountaineer since his student days, Bishop Pearson's aim has been to provide young Catholics with a fine outdoor life in each other's company. Their non-Catholic friends can join in, too.

"You do not need to be a rock climber to join the club," says His Lordship, "nor even a tireless fell walker. A love of the mountains is the sole qualification and a desire to foster that love among Catholic men and women."

*From The Catholic Herald,
August 19, 1955*