

Achille Ratti Climbing Club



**1999
Journal**

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

President Rt.Rev.Francis Slattery, M.A.

Chaplain Rev.Stephen Ashton

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1999 Journal

Introduction

The last journal of the 19th Century will hopefully lead us into an ambitious millennium, at least as far as presenting articles for the journal is concerned. The first journals were produced in the late 1940's, running from 1947 to 1951 and then ceasing. Another effort was made in the mid-fifties but again failed through lack of support. In 1988 George Partridge produced an issue as a tribute to our founder, the late Bishop Thomas Bernard Pearson. In 1989, as the new Chairman of the ARCC I decided to try and make the Annual Journal part and parcel of the Club, but this could only be done with the support of members. The 1989 issue was a paper back affair, some copies had a blue cover, some pale green and some red, whatever paper I could scrounge. Articles came from six members (three of whom have provided articles for this issue), so some members are still interested. The last eleven journals have varied in member support though generally it has been good and I am grateful to those providers.

The Meets Card 2000 has 24 activities of varying interests from working weekends to climbing walls, wouldn't it be a 'shot in the arm' if someone from each of those meets could write an article on the activity. It would certainly be a great start to the new century!

May I thank all those members who have contributed in the last eleven years, your records of activities have given pleasure to many people, please keep it up.

Derek Price



Bishop Pearson (centre) Founder President

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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the Chapel at Bishop's Scale on
Saturday, 27th November 1999**

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Roy and Dorothy Buffey, Doug Blackett, Marge Metcalf, Jack Hindle, Joyce Kent, Barry Rogers, Anne Gatiskell, Gerard McCabe, Pat Margiotta, Bryony White and Monsignor Slattery.

2. Attendance - 56 people.

3. 1998 AGM. The Secretary gave a brief summary of the 1998 meeting. Matters arising - none.

4. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman, Derek Price, welcomed everyone to the meeting and to our new venue. It was not what we planned but will suffice.

Around the huts.

A brief outline of hut developments.

Beckstones The National Trust have promised that a new water system will be installed in the next few months and members are asked to show a little patience with the present supply. Remember all drinking water has to be boiled. Negotiations for leasing all of the property are taking place at the present time.

Bishop's Scale Improvements still going ahead. The chapel has been used a number of times for services this year and hopefully there will be more in the future.

Dunmail The hard work put in by the warden and his team is now paying off.

Tvn Twr Improvements will be starting soon. A new bay window in the lounge is to be installed and plans will be made to update the mens area and the kitchen.

Winter Meet

This years venue is Torridon from the 5th to the 11th March 2000. Interested parties contact Ben Carter at 214 Rochdale Road, Shaw, Oldham OL2 7JA or 01706 841978

2000 Meets Card

Will event organisers please let Alan Kenny have the details as soon as possible. Main events will be on the corresponding week as this year.

1999 Journal

For many members the Annual Journal is their only form of communication with the club, be it because they live overseas or are unable to attend the huts. Whatever, they

rely on active members to provide them with their memories of the hills and mountains. Sadly, the response from the active members is very poor. Recent years have shown a drop in members providing articles. The 1998 journal was one third shorter than the previous year and one third of it was taken up by the AGM report and general notices. So we are completely lacking in support and have to decide whether we continue with future publications after this year. To date I have one article that will cover half a page and one two page article and one or two promised. We have many noted climbers, walkers, fell runners, mountain bikers and even canoeists and yet we still struggle. (I must add, that we also have a few members who promise articles but never come up with the goods).

I am prepared to carry on producing the journal and submitting the odd article, if you are prepared to support it. For those who are willing to donate, I would like recent articles, i.e., preferably something that occurred in the last twelve months I will accept articles up to Christmas but hopefully before then. Once again I would like to thank the M/C members for their support throughout the year and also Margaret for her support.

5. Secretary's Report (Austin Guilfoyle)

The main thing the secretary had to report on was the M2K Membership 2000 inaugurated by the BMC. In June of this year the secretary attended a meeting, along with representatives of seven other clubs, at the BMC headquarters in Manchester. They explained that they wished to use these eight clubs in a pilot scheme to eventually bring all clubs affiliated to the BMC onto a database. However, the bulk of the work fell to Nev as Membership Secretary and the relevant information was passed on to him. He has now put us in line with BMC wishes. Those present received a hand out that explained in simple terms, what it meant to us as individual members. The most obvious one is that all members should receive a copy of "Summit", the BMC's own publication.

The Access to the Open Countryside Bill still continues and the secretary has again written to his local MP urging him, as he has assured us he will, continue to support the Bill in its passage through the House of Commons.

The secretary thanked Jean and Mike Lomas for their assistance in producing minutes for the M/C meetings.

6. Treasurer's Report (Mike Lomas)

A written financial statement and accounts were circulated for the report. A brief outline of the report follows.

The year in financial terms has been reasonably successful with a surplus of £5804.27. as ever the credit for another good year should go to the people who have made use of the huts, and especially to the Hut Wardens and their support teams. The M/C have continued with a programme of planned maintenance and improvements of the huts. Significant work has been done, which I am sure Hut Wardens will refer to in

their reports. We also continue to look into the possibilities of acquiring further properties.

The Key Matters		
Surplus	£5804	(13% of turnover)
Accumulated Fund	£64,434	(Highest ever)
Turnover	£44,4889	(2 nd highest ever)
Subscriptions	£12,902	(Highest ever)
Hut Fees	£26,249	(Highest ever)

Hut Results.		
Surplus	Deficit	
Dunmail - £7,746	Beckstones	£158
	Bishop's Scale	£8572
	Tyn Twr	<u>£1049</u>
		9779

I think the Hut Wardens, and their support teams, are continuing to do a splendid job, both for everyone who uses the huts and the membership in general.

Longer term Trends

Over the past ten years there has been some wide fluctuations. Surplus 89/90 £20,201 A swing of £33,866

Deficit 92/93	£13,665
Surpluses 7 totalling	£54,324
Deficit 3	<u>11642</u>
Net	39682
Yearly Average	3968

The Club balance increased over the last ten years from £18,742 to £64,434.

The underlying purpose of the funds is to:

- Be available to meet any essential work costs or other expenditure immediately.
- Assist with the financing of the Club's medium and long term plans and objectives.
- Hopefully contribute to the acquisition of further club huts.

Major Heads of Accounts. Comparison 97/98 with 98/99

Income	Up	10.46%
Expenditure	Down	5.8%
Subscriptions	Up	12.7%
Hut Fees	Up	12.1%
Bank Interest	Down	1.1%

There followed a detailed account of individual items including rates, water rates, repairs and maintenance, special events, administration costs, BMC subs and insurance.

Auditor. The Club accounts for 97/98 have been audited and the auditor's report was considered and accepted by the M/C on 5th September 1999. Brian Cheetham is willing to continue as auditor for the Club.

VAT The threshold determined by the Chancellor at which point we would have to register for VAT is £50,000. The total turnover this year of £31587 is happily well under the limit.

This gives some continuing scope for increases in subs and hut fees!

General Comments.

The last twelve months have seen a useful surplus, and our reserves have reached a new highest ever level, and broken the £60K barrier.

Charges:

Subs: 1998 increased from £23 to £25

Hut fees: 1998 increased from £2.50 to £3.00

In the current year the hut fees at £26,249 exceeded the variable running costs at the huts of £23,331. Therefore the huts contributed £2918 towards the other running costs of the Club. In view of this I am convinced both subs and hut fees can be maintained at present levels. But I believe to achieve our longer term objectives I think will be sensible to look at more frequent increases, particularly bearing in mind comparisons with alternative costs for accommodation. The last two increases were 4 and 5 years apart. I think a cycle of increases at 2, or a maximum 3 years would be more appropriate, depending on other factors. If we want to hang on to what we currently have, and to maintain it, we have to pay for it. that is why I am planning for more regular increases in subs and hut fees. So please look on this idea as a positive approach to our intention to continue to develop.

Mike was asked whether there was any forward planning in view of the surplus we have. He explained various things that had to be done - like the take-over of all of Beckstones and Joyce is still looking for property in the West.

7 Membership Secretary's Report (Nev Haigh)

We had another good year. The number of members for this year is 658, 22 down on last year. The average membership over the last twelve years is 650.

Number of R.C. members is 432

None R.C. 226

The removal of Graduate Membership and the introduction of a probationary membership will lighten my work load and I hope improve on the number of new members to the Club.

I would appreciate a stamp addressed envelope with all correspondence requiring a reply.

I would like members to note that the lesser fee of £10 for students, members under 21 is, in some cases, being abused. Please ensure that I am notified when a member either commences work or reaches 21.

It was suggested that we get a rundown on the ages of club members to get an overall view of the categories of the Club. Dave Roughead is willing to look at setting up a website but it was pointed out that Dave Smith had already volunteered to do this.

8. Hut Warden's Reports

Bishop's Scale (Arthur Daniels)

Arthur mentioned many of the alterations that had been done and still are ongoing. The final phase of the men's dorm should start in the New Year - extending the mens toilets and partitioning the dorm. Arthur would like any comments on the improvements. The working weekend will be after John Hope has carried out the improvements.

The Family quarters has attracted a few complaints so Arthur is hoping to make a list of rules about what can and cannot be done in the F/R

Beckstones (Joyce Kent)

In Joyce's absence her report was given by Terry Kitchen.

As you will have heard in the Treasurer's Report, there was a considerable increase in hut fees last year. This was not only due to a rise in use by members, but also because on six weekends visiting clubs stayed, and three of them have booked again for next year.

The stove in the lounge has proved to be very economical with fuel and gives out a great deal of heat, the draughts were eliminated with the new ceiling and the storage heaters have had little use. So we almost broke even, even taking into account the rent which the other huts don't pay, and the council tax, which is higher than that paid by the other huts. I think we've done well.

The meet last December was well attended. The cottage was very busy all through the Christmas and New Year period. The working weekend in March wasn't well attended as in previous years, but we didn't intend any major works because of the concern about the renewal of the lease.

The Long Walk in May was well attended, all the beds taken and people camping outside. The weather was good, the route not too long, as it was last time, and plenty of helpers all made a very enjoyable weekend. The brew stop slaves worked really hard, the sweeper-upper rode miles on his bike. The beer in the pub at night was good and the landlord drove everyone back to the hut.

The July meet was also well attended and the BBQ went with a swing. The September climbing meet was particularly good, 14 people climbed on various crags on Saturday and on Sunday everyone went to Wallbarrow. It was festooned with Ratti ropes and later a proper old fashioned tea and cakes nosh at the farm above the crag.

We look forward to seeing you again at Beckstones in the near future. We've been there ten years. Ten years since we left Buckbarrow. Time to move on, accept the change and visit Beckstones.

Finally, thank you to everyone who helped on the long walk weekend, and to everyone who has helped in any way at all to make Beckstones successful, and especially to Terry, without whom the work would not get done.

Dunmail (David Ogden)

Bookings for the next year are building up with many groups booking a year ahead. During the last twelve months use of the hut has been good with few weekends free. Maintenance and improvements have been less this year with the hut in now reasonable condition. The next round of improvements is now under way.

- a) Construction of a porch on the Grasmere side of the hut and the fitting of a digital lock. This is to become the main entrance door.
- b) New floor in the gents toilet.
- c) New (to the ARCC) furniture in the lounge.
- d) New mattress covers for all the beds.
- e) New fire door in the middle dorm.
- f) Removal of gas lighting and installation of additional 24v secondary electric light points.

The cost of the above will come out of next years accounts.

A letter to the M/C from the club solicitor, John Meredith, concerning the Club's and Hut Warden's duty of care has prompted some thoughts on safety in and around the huts. This will lead to some over due work on hut safety to be put in hand.

Jobs that need to be done in the coming year include:

- a) treatment of woodworm,
- b) replacement of remaining wooden kitchen work top,
- c) improvements to the bunks,
- d) new window frame for some windows,
- e) improvement of water collection and overflow,
- f) would like to improve the appearance with photos that members have taken. These could be mounted and framed and put round, not only Dunmail, but any of the huts.

The cost of the planned work and the work in progress will reduce the surplus on next year's account.

I would like to thank on your behalf;

My wife Joan for all the work she does handling the bookings.

Mike Crawford who has helped me through the year and stood in as warden during the summer when I was on holiday

Dave Hugill whom I have not needed to call in much this year but who is always willing to respond when needed.

Terry Kitchen who has done some of the work on the hut and who helps to keep a watch over the building maintenance.

John Hope who moved in at very short notice to fix the floor in the gents toilet.

Those members who came on working weekends and who help in other ways.

Margaret Conroy suggested an advertising campaign or booklet to promote Dunmail that could be left at the other huts. Ken Jackson, referring to the safety aspects around the hut, said he could give account of real events that have occurred at Fell and Rock when claims have been made and he assured us that BMC insurance is satisfactory. Jim Cooper asked if David knew of the categories of the bookings. He said that he thought most were climbing clubs and he would rather have school or youth parties as this is what Dunmail was originally used for. But the cost of taking school parties has risen due to outside pressures (such as getting supply teachers for cover). Hence these bookings are not as numerous as before.

Tyn Twr (Anne Wallace)

Alaw's brother (Alaw does much of the work at Tyn Twr) repaired some rotten window frames and Alaw fixed some loose slates on the roof. A new vacuum cleaner has been bought to replace the one that went missing. We have asked for an estimate to cover the upstairs floors with plywood and vinyl flooring for about £2500. A new roof and door were fitted to the bike shed. Tyn Twr key went missing but was found in the river! A few weeks ago someone broke into the bike and coal sheds, no doubt looking for power tools. Alaw has taken up the broken drain pipe and replaced it with a plastic one.

We had a working weekend when cleaning the hut and tidying the grounds was done. A skip was hired and a lot of rubbish from the coal shed was cleared.

We have asked Alaw's brother to fit a new front bay window and Alaw to repair the roof above it. Alaw has also been asked to fit a cowl to the lounge chimney to prevent smoke blowing back. Anne asked members to let her know if the coal stocks were getting low so that she could order more.

Dave Roughead said that he had been to the hut and was greatly impressed that everything had its place and obviously displayed a woman's touch around the hut.

9. Election of Officer.

Honorary Secretary. Austin Guilfoyle. Proposed by Jean Lochhead and seconded by Mike Lomas.

10..Management Committee Proposal for a change to Rule 6 - Graduate Members.

Derek explained why we need a change of rule. Almost nine out of ten graduate members do not go on to take up full membership, very likely because they do not know anyone and being able to take a friend to the huts, will hopefully make a difference.

- i) Applications for membership will be considered from any person who has attained the age of 16 years, but will only be eligible for full membership on attaining the age of 17 years.

ii) New members joining the club will be subject to a probationary in which they will be entitled to all membership except the right to vote at the Annual General Meeting within their probationary year.

iii) Fees. If the applicant is admitted to membership fees will immediately become payable at the rate set by the Management Committee in respect of the remainder of the year in which the probationary membership was granted.

iv) The subscriptions and the hut fees shall be such as the Management Committee may from time to time determine.

v) The said subscription shall be due to be paid on 1st October. Any member who has not paid his or her subscription on or before the 1st January shall cease to be a member.

There were no objectors so the rule was agreed and passed. John Meredith agreed to update the rule book. The new rule will take effect immediately, Members were asked to keep an eye open for new members, look after them and make them welcome.

11. Any Other Business.

John Foster raised the question of a hut in Scotland again. It was pointed out that we have the use of a large number of huts in Scotland as it is and to select a site for a new one would be difficult. Margaret Price pointed out that we had no support from the clergy in Scotland when we seriously attempted to purchase unused property owned by the church in Balachulish. We had also have a hut in Wales but no Welsh members. Would the Scots join an English club? David Ogden pointed out that there is a strong feeling for a hut in the West, not so much for Scotland. The question of young people was raised and that we were not attracting them. It was acknowledged that the Internet may be an opportunity to regenerate interest from young people and the Club is taking action in this area.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members for attending the meeting.

The Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge

Leo Pollard

The inaugural run from Pooley Bridge to Wasdale was laid down by Joss Naylor in 1990. Starting at Pooley Bridge, it traverses 31 summits over a distance of some 48 miles with a total ascent of 16,000ft. with two road crossings. Joss completed the run in 11 hours and 30 minutes at the age of 54,

A challenge was offered to veterans over 50 to complete the run in set times according to their age group and Chris Brasher offered 20 engraved tankards to the first 20 runners to complete it, with the proviso that they also raised at least £100 for a charity of their choice.

The laid down times are as follows:-

Men	50 - 59 years	12 hours
Women	50 - 59 years	14 hours
Men and Women	60 - 64 years	18 hours
Men and Women	65+	24 hours

Over the past few years friends have asked do I fancy the Joss Naylor Challenge, but finding it difficult to commit myself to the training, avoided it. Then realising that I was fast approaching 65 years of age and time was running out for this type of excursion. A date was set for the 14th August 1999, a fortnight after my 65th birthday..

Edwin Coope who had completed the Challenge in 1998 took me under his wing and I started to train. Edwin and I had some very enjoyable days out reconnoitring the route, and as August approached I got fir, but I realised I was about a month short of training. But if in doubt crash on!

So on the 14th at 4 am in total darkness I was stood on Pooley Bridge with Robert Green, my son-in-law, with Edwin Coope to navigate, John Smith to record times and Arthur Daniels to beat the drum.

The first leg visits Arthurs Pike via Barton Fell, Loadpot Hill, Wether hill, Red Crag, Raven Rowe, High Raise, Kidsty Pike, Rampsgill Head, High Steet, Thornthwaite Beacon, Stoney Cove Pike, Pike Howe, then down to Kirkstone Pass. Although we made good progress the weather on a few occasion gave us cause for concern and a hint of what was to come.

Leg 2. Red Screes, Hart Crag Fairfied, Seat Sandal to Dunmail Raise. Bill Mitton, Paul Cooney, Brian Kenny, Michael Pooler. Red Screes always deserves respect and gets it from me. Having said that Bill seemed to get us up there without much trouble. Once on top the weather started to deteriorate further, but Micky was on form, so it was a laugh a minute.

You have to approach Dunmail from high up. To see all the cars assembled there, to witness and feel that sense of thankfulness to good friend for their support, it gives a you great boost.

Leg 3. Steel Fell, High Raise, Rossett Pike, Bowfell, Esk Pike Great End, Great Gable, Kirk Fell, Pillar, Scoat, Steeple, Haycock, Seat Allan, Middle Fell to finish on Greendale Bridge, GR 143056. (If only we had Buckbarrow). Alan Kenny, Peter McHale and Derek Price to go to Sty Head, Tricia Wakefoord to High Raise, Bill Mitton and Paul Cooney carried onto to High Raise, Alan Jones and Neil Sale to meet us at Rossett, Mick Donnelly providing a drink at Rossett.

The weather was up to its old tricks and I was getting colder, which seems to strike me in the small of my back these days and from High Raise to Haycock I was in pain. We had a change over point at Styhead so Derek missed out Great End to give a report on our progress to John Hope, Dave Hugill and Howard Smith waiting at Sty Head. Getting off Great End was a bind, so it was nice to see Kath Hope and Danny and Catherine also waiting at Sty Head.

I was concerned that I was behind on my schedule and if they had made arrangements for this set back. John said that we had until 4am tomorrow morning and this put me completely at ease and removed all pressure. So with Alan and Neil Carrying on to the finish we made our way slowly up Great Gable. The views around Gable, Kirk Fell and Pillar were spectacular and the weather was on the mend, but I was still in pain. So around Steeple John got two pain killers from Dave and I took them. They began to take affect on Haycock, so much so that I was able to run off Middle Fell and just dip under the 18 hour time. It was nice to see Joss and Mary there, they had never seen such a gathering at the finish before, but then he doesn't know Achille Ratti.

We sat about under parasols eating hotpot and drinking at 10,0'clock at night in the rain, it was great. Many thanks to Freda and my family and all the ladies on the road support points and all the runners and carriers on the hills. Thank you for the £120 which went to CAFOD and thank you for another big day.

Raw Head - A (very) brief history:

Tom Broderick

With thanks to the County council Archives Dept, Kendal Library and acknowledgements to the late Tom Buntin, Pye Howe, Great Langdale.

In the last century and earlier, a row of farms, connected by a track, ran along the valley side and was known as "The Row", culminating in the collection of buildings that are now the club-houses of the Achille Ratti and the Fell & Rock, which were built around 1670. As this farm was at the end of the line, it was the 'head' of the row, hence the name Row Head or in the dialect, 'Raw Head'. The road proper, ran along the valley floor nearer to the river, this was the 'old road', originally named Raw Lane, which turns off the present road a little distance below Harry Place and emerges in the car park opposite the 'New DG'. Due to regular flooding, this road was abandoned and the track past the various farms was widened and metalled with broken stone and fine sand and gravel, (sammel, in the Westmorland tongue) and in later years, macadam. Originally, this track would have been, in parts, the old Corpse Road, which used to run from Fell Foot in Little Langdale, behind Blea Tarn to Wall End and Stool End, then from the back of Middlefell to where the New Hotel is, (a nice quiet walk, if you've never tried it) then behind the Hut (part can be seen passing over the little bridge and going behind the Fell and Rock) and onto Pye Howe or Harry Place and over to Grasmere where was the only consecrated ground until the church was built in Chapel Stile.

Starting from Harry Place, the farms were as follows: Harry Place, Robin Ghyll, Robinson Place, Ellers (Alders), Pye Howe, Long House and Raw Head, the last four making up the 'Row'. An eighth farm, white Ghyll Farm, disappeared long ago although a barn or hoggus still remains below Scout Crag which is near the original site. Behind our Hut the fell-side is called Raw Breast, the highest point, Raw Pike.

The farm house was taken by the Fell & Rock, as was the barn immediately next to it which is now the annexe. Across the road, Raw Head Cottage, was bought by Miss Lamb and presented to the Wayfarer's Club in memory of her brother, Robertson Lamb.



(The track past Raw Head cottage in the early part of the 'twenties)

The shippon, with the hay storage above it and a couple of store-rooms, one with a spring or stream under it, became in time, Bishop's Scale. I was told that at one time it was almost impossible to stand upright in what is now the lounge, members dug it out until they came to a large boulder, at which they rightly called it a day. Interested seekers after knowledge will find it still there in the NW corner. You may also see where a concrete fill has been channelled across the floor - that reputedly, is the stream.

Along the road was the hogg-house or hoggus (now the Chapel) - no, they didn't keep pigs there, a hogg was a lamb before its first shearing, after which it became a shearling, and later, a gimmer.

The Norsemen who came and took this part of the North by sword, settled the valleys and drove out the 'Welshmen' who were, according to some scholars, inhabiting Mickleden, and left names to mark their settlement - Langdale, the long valley; Arnside, above Baisbrown, 'Arne's saeter, or summer pasture; 'how' a small hillock; 'scale', a shelter, thwaite, a clearing and a hundred others. Curiously the Normans never really got a grip on this part of England, although they did try and got a bloody nose or two for their trouble.

It's interesting to see how local names have been in the valley for generations, although the spelling varies, probably according to how good the parish clerk was. For instance, I came across an entry for the baptismal records at St. Oswald's Grasmere for 1570 - 'The Christening of John Grigge, sonne of Robert of Loughbrige'. Note that only the father is mentioned, mothers had little or nothing to do with it!

1829 - Christopher Grigg lived at Millbeck; Joseph Grigg at Sidehouse; George Hodgson at Rawhead.

1851 - John Gregg at Blea Tarn; George Hodgson at Side House; Thomas Wilson at Raw Head.

1873 - John Gregg at Blay Tarn; Robert Hodgson at Milbeck; Isaac Tyson at Roe Head.

1885 - Nixon Armstrong at Rawhead; John Buntin at Robinson Place; William Gregg at Bayesbrown and Oakhowe.

1897 - John bunting at Robinson place; William Greenhow at Long house; Isaac Jenkinson at Raw head; at this time the Co-op at Chapel Stile was in operation.

1905 - John Bunting at Robinson place; John Fletcher Bunting at Pie how; James Dickinson at Raw head.

1921 - Ezekiel Myers at Wall end; Frederic Greenhowe at Raw head.

1934 - John Fletcher Buntin at Robinson place and Pye how; Joseph Park at Raw Head.

Later, in the fifties, Cyril Bulman, of the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, bought part of Raw Head Farm and the fell-side behind it, and in due course was persuaded to sell it to Bishop Pearson and the rest, as they say, is history. Well, as much of it as I'm going to write, anyway!

The Corsican GR20 High Level Route 1999

Dave Hugill

The route was completed this year by two parties containing Achille Ratti members, Pete Dowker, myself, Dave Gange and Graham Eccles in September and David Ogden with Ron Wayne, who set out one week earlier.

The following article may be of use to anyone contemplating a visit to Corsica in the near future.

Entirely within the Parc Naturel Regional de la Corse, the 110 mile route is all above the 3000 ft contour, reaching 7245 ft at its highest point, and completes 32,000ft of ascent and descent.

The crux of the route is the imposing granite Cirque de la Solitude, which is aided by considerable lengths of chain and steel cable, and is not recommended in a thunder storm!

Starting at Calenzana in the northwest, the route traverses the mountains of the Haute Corse to the pass of Vizzavona (rail and road links), and then the Corse du Sud section takes you southwest to the village of Conca, close to Porto Vecchio on the coast.

On our trip, we chose to fly to Nice from Liverpool (Easy Jet), and then took an early morning ferry to Calvi. A short bus ride then takes you to Calenzana for the start of the walk.

We used mainly mountain refuges en route, many of which do not supply food, but provide basic self cooking facilities and water. Sleeping blankets are not provided and torches are essential after dark. Washing arrangements are very basic too.

A considerable amount of food needs to be carried, as replenishment is a little uncertain, but our notes as to the current 1999 situation may be useful

The huts cost approximately £5.00 per person per night, but it is possible to bivouac outside the huts for £2.00. campers stoves are sometimes provided outside the refuges.

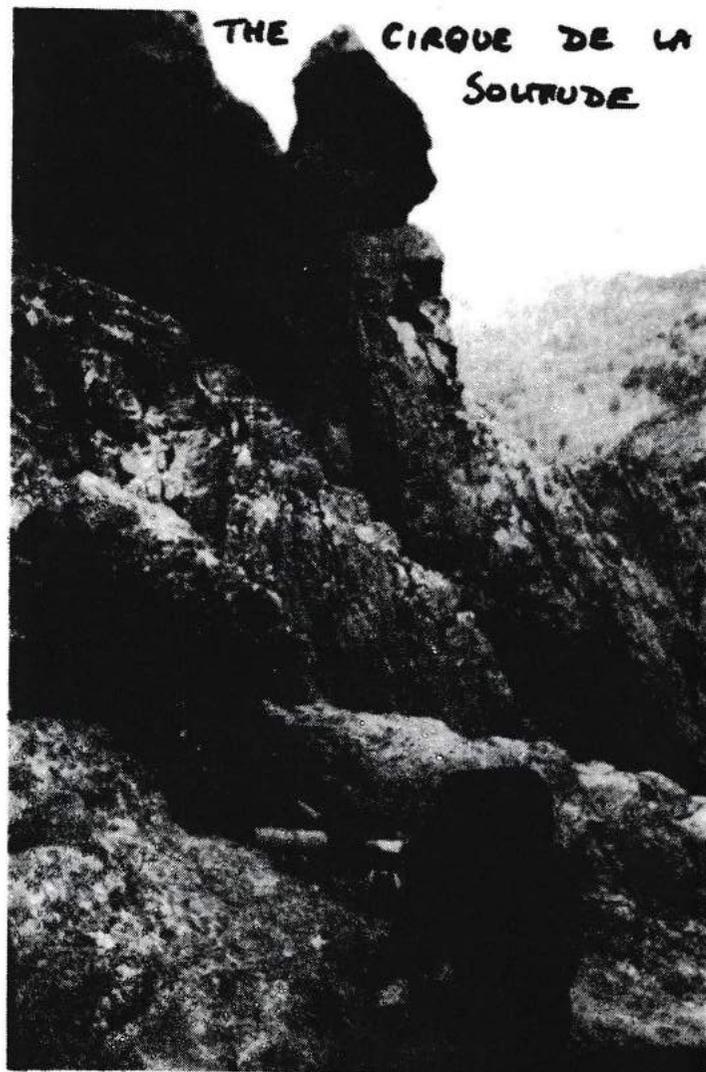
Our itinerary was:

Day 1. Calenzana (gite, restaurant, small shop) - Refuge d'Ortu di Piobbu
(No food available)

Day 2. Refuge de Carrozzu - just drinks and cakes which can run out.

Day 3. Refuge de Stagnu - gite, small shop, small hotel with gite and restaurant, road connection. This is a good place from which to climb Monte Cinto 8887ft. if you have the time.

Day 4. Refuge de Tighiettu (via the Cirque de Solitude) No food available.



Day 5 By passing the Refuge de Mori (brew possible).

Costal de Verg Ria - Small gite and hotel with restaurant and road connection. Watch out for the pigs!



Day 6 Refuge de Maganu - (via Col St.Pierre and Lac de Nino) no food available.

Day 7 Refuge de Petra Piana - no food available. A good place to climb Monte Rotundo 8611ft.

Day 8 Refuge de L'Onda - no food available. A shortish day from the last hut.

Day 9 Vizzavona village - An ascent of Monte d'Oro 7846 ft. is recommended from the col on this stage. The village has a shop, railway station and some accommodation. If it is full, try the refuge at Hotel Monte d'Oro up from the village, they will come and collect you if your ring.



Day 10. Caponelli - a poor hut, but nearby is a gite at the ski station, basic but OK. Evening meal and breakfast are provided.

Day 11. Refuge de Prati - Via col de Verde (small restaurant). No food at hut but it is brand new.

Day 12. Refuge de Usciolu - The warden has a small store with bread and fruit, etc and will cook an evening meal. This situation could change. We had heavy thunderstorms on this stage.

Day 13. Refuge d'Asinoo - no food available. This day includes Mt. Incudine with views to the sea. Descend to cross the road at Col de Bavella, shops, cafes, cars! An alpine variant is possible on this stage before Col de Bavella and is recommended.

Day 14. Refuge de Paliri - no food at hut. Spectacular setting, red granite crags and towering summits all around.

Day 15.. Descent to Conca. A longer day than one expects, the going never relents right to the end. A meal is possible in Conca and a small minibus to Porto Vecchio.

All in all, the GR20 is definitely worth doing, but it is necessary to carry loads and to take care not to get low on water. In early September the huts were fairly busy, but got quieter as we went south. It is varied going, top class scenery and great for photography.

To recuperate, we visited Bonifacio (fortified town and harbour), Ajaccio (Napoleon's birthplace) and Bastia (seaport) All interesting places with a scenic rail journey from Ajaccio to Bastia to round off.

The ferry from Bastia takes you back to Nice passing round the Cape Corse, with views of the Island of Elba out to the east.

Note: Didier and Richard Maps 20 (Nord) and 23 (Sud) may now be difficult to obtain as the firm has been in financial difficulties.



Tales of the Mountain Rescue No. VI

A Black Christmas. Part 2.

The alarm was raised at mid-morning of Christmas Day, when a dishevelled and somewhat disorientated Tom Carrol tottered down into glen Nevis. He came to a farmhouse (Achintee I suspect) but found no-one about. The timing of his arrival was most fortunate, as a delivery van arrived just then, and the driver took him into the police station in Fort William. There he told his story, and the rescue procedure was set in motion, but as he was obviously in a poor condition he was taken to Belford Hospital, where he was found to be suffering from frostbite and hypothermia. After treatment he was able to give more detail.

It had been starlit when they settled down to await the dawn, and thought they knew they should stay awake, it had been a hard day and they slowly dozed off. In the early hours he was awakened by snowflakes blowing onto his face, and realised that they were in cloud. The snow was fairly light and soon ceased, but the night dragged on until eventually he could detect a greyness slowly creeping over them. The rocks about them poking through the snow and the recumbent figures of the others slowly took form, and he prodded the nearest to awaken them. Frank Wearden grunted and slowly sat up, as did Ivor Sumner, but from Mike Hornby and Jeff Bond there was no response. They pummelled them and shouted at them, but they were unconscious.

Tom told his brother much later that he thought they were already dead, but the pathologist's report to the Fatal Accident Inquiry estimated the time of death as 11.0' clock on Christmas morning. He said their bodies were extremely well protected (down duvet jackets had become very fashionable) but their legs were inadequately clad in cotton trousers.

Frank Wearden was in the best condition, with his thick woollen breeches and stocking, and Tom had to thank his dad for insisting that he wear his old woollen long johns, but he had frost bite in his fingers due to losing his gloves on the climb. Ivor too had woollen trousers, but one leg had been ripped by his ice axe, and he had frostbite in that knee. Frank, being the most experienced, must have felt responsible for the others, and he suggested that Tom make his way down alone to raise the alarm, while he and Ivor remained with Mike and Jeff to guide rescuers to them. The mist had cleared, and they could see Fort William and Lochan Meall an t'Suidhe (144727).

So Tom set off down the steep snow slope towards the lochan. In places the old snow was quite hard and bare, and he had to cut steps with his axe. But he soon lost his grip on it due to the frost bite, and dropped it. Inevitably, at the next patch of hard snow he lost his footing, and with no axe to brake with, slid and bounced off rocks for about 400 ft. He wasn't sure if he actually passed out, but was in a very confused state when he pulled himself together and struggled on, eventually reaching the farm.

The police and civilian search parties set off at midday for Carn Dearg, a request for assistance having already been made to the Rescue Co-ordination Centre at RAF

Patrevie. RCC alerted Pilot Officer Alexander in charge of 11 members of the Kinross MRT on exercise at Newtonmore, who immediately struck camp and left there at 13.15. Also Fl. Lt. Cooke (Officer in charge MRT.) and 4 members of the team on standby at Kinross were alerted by Air Traffic control, leaving there at 13.30 with a 3 tonner and a Landrover ambulance.



Tom Carrol on discharge from Belford Hospital

The Newtonmore party set Forward Base at Achintee at 15.00, and half an hour later Alexander and nine of the team started up the Tourist Path with a Thomas stretcher, casualty bag and first aid rucksack. By the time they reached the "Halfway Lochhan" it was dark, and the lights of the search parties could be seen at many points on Carn Dearg. At about the same time the Kinloss Party arrived at Achintee, and Sgt. Younger and S.A.C. Thompson went to join the search party. Shortly afterwards SAC Fraser returned to Forward Base to report that the climbers had not been found, and that because of the extremely high winds, freezing temperatures and darkness, the civilian parties were coming off the hill while the RAF team would spend the night in the CIC Hut and resume the search at first light.

To try to gain a more precise location of the climbers, Flt.Lt.Cooke and Fraser went in to the hospital to interrogate the survivor. They were joined by a member of staff, Dr.Duffy, a mountaineer with a great deal of experience of The Ben. But Tom was as vague as before about where he had left the others, and his offer to accompany the searchers was refused on medical advice. Cooke and Fraser returned to Achintee where the latter volunteered with LAC Comrie to take rations to their comrades in the CIC Hut. Fraser expressed the intention of going over Carn Dearg on the way in the hope of finding the missing climbers, but Flt.Lt.Cooke advised against this because of extreme weather conditions. The two airmen did in fact attempt to continue the search but had to give up in the early hours because of the danger of high winds and darkness, on very steep ground. It was 05.00 when they eventually arrived at the hut with their very welcome rations. That they attempted a search at all, laden as they were and in such conditions, reflects great credit on them.

The team left the CIC Hut at 07.30 to resume the search, and an hour later arrived at the Half Way Lochan. Comrie was sent to Forward Base to tell Flt.Lt.Cooke that a two star red flare fired from Meall an t-Suidhe (1338729) would indicate that bodies had been found. Fraser, having listened to Tom the previous evening, suggested that the area north of the summit nearer to the cliff edge be searched and they split into pairs and did this.

It was at 10.15 that LAC Muir and Sgt.Younger came across three frozen bodies, at 157722 approx. A red flare was fired from a Very pistol and the rest of the team converged on the spot to start lowering the bodies down the snow slopes until easier ground was reached. A police party with a Thomas and a Duff stretcher arrived, so that with the Thomas the team had with them, all three bodies were placed on stretchers to facilitate further progress.

Meanwhile, no news had been received at Forward Base, Flt.Lt. Cooke and Cpl. Hannon set off for Carn Dearg. On the way they saw the two-star red fired from Meallan t'Suidhe, and at about 500ft above Half Way Lochan saw stretchers being lowered down the northern crags of Carn Dearg, and met Fraser on the way down with the message that three bodies had been found. All three then returned to Achintee to prepare food, and to arrange for the stretcher parties to be met at the Aluminium works, and for the Work's rail bogies to be in position to bring the stretchers down the last mile to the factory.

Darkness had fallen again before the stretchers reached the bottom of the scree and the haul down the Allt a'Mhuilinn began. At 18.15 the first two stretchers arrived at the Aluminium Works on the railway bogie and transferred to a civilian ambulance, followed by the third stretcher half an hour later. Their Landrovers were waiting to take the weary Kinloss lads back to Achintee and the well earned hot food prepared for them. It was 19.00, almost 12 hours and the very arduous day since they had left the hut before first light that morning. But where was the fourth climber?

There was now little hope that he could still be alive, and it was agreed with the Inspector in Fort William to defer the search for this body until the 28th to give the RAF team and the police time to recuperate, unless civilian volunteers were available on the morrow. So at 22.00 the MRT left Fort William to return to Kinloss, arriving at 02.30 and I am sure the lads needed no rocking that night. But their rest was not to be prolonged, for later that morning the Inspector in Fort William phoned Kinross to say that no civilian volunteers were available to mount a search that day. The bodies recovered so far had been identified, and it was the lad from Darwen who was still missing, Ivor Sumner. So it was agreed with RCC and OC Flying Wing that a couple of trucks would take 8 members of the team back to Fort William that afternoon to start out as early as possible next morning. They arrived at the police station in Fort Bill at 19.00, and were accommodated there overnight.

By 07.00 on Friday 28th December 1956 the team augmented by 9 police and civilians was heading up towards the Allt a'Mhuilinn from the Aluminium Works. They had been fortunate on boxing Day that the weather had been calm when they had brought the burdened stretchers down, but now they faced a strong blustery wind and rain showers. First light came at 08.15, and the rain turned to snow as they continued up the Allt a'Mhuilinn for an hour and a half before bearing right to ascend the scree and heather slopes leading to the foot of the crags on the north side of Carn Dearg. As the snow slopes became steeper, the leading party cut their way to the foot of the crags and began traversing left, while the stretcher party followed round an easier ground lower down.

At about 10.00, after traversing for a couple of hundred yards, the searchers located a body lying on a steep snow fan 40ft below the rock face. A trail of blood smears on the snow showed that it had rolled down a very steep and winding gully for some considerable distance. The most obvious injury being a crushed skull. Because the snow was so steep and hard the stretcher had to remain 100ft below, so the body was lowered to it on a rope from an ice axe belay. This was where Plt.Off. Alexander's skill and snow and ice experience ensured the safety of those lowering the body.

The stretcher party made a shelf in the snow, the body strapped onto the stretcher, and it was lowered on ice axe bellays for another 400ft or so to the Allt a'Mhuilinn path. The difficulties were now behind, and the stretcher was dragged over the snow and heather to the head of the railway. There a pair of diesel loco's and a bogie awaited to take the whole party the last mile to the Aluminium Works. It was 12.30 when Ivor's body was taken by ambulance to join those of his mates in the Belford's mortuary, while the searchers returned to Fort Bill in the Bedford QL.

The MRT decided to stay another night in the police station to rest and dry gear (and no doubt relax with a well deserved pint or two). Most returned to Kinloss the following morning, but three remained behind. At 9.00 Cpl Hannon and SAC Thompson set off up the Allt a'Mhuilinn yet again to replenish the food reserves in the CIC Hut to compensate for that used by the team on Christmas night. At 13.00 LAC Muir attended the funeral of Ivor, Jeff and Frank in the Glen Nevis Cemetery. Mike Hornby's dad Bill had his body returned to Fleetwood for Requiem Mass and burial in his home parish. So ends the saddest of my tales of the RAF Mountain Rescue Service.



3 R.A.F. Kinloss M.R.T. a year later. On the left is Fl.Off. John Alexander, who with Ian Clough made the first ascent of Point Five Gully and many other routes on the North face of 'The Ben'

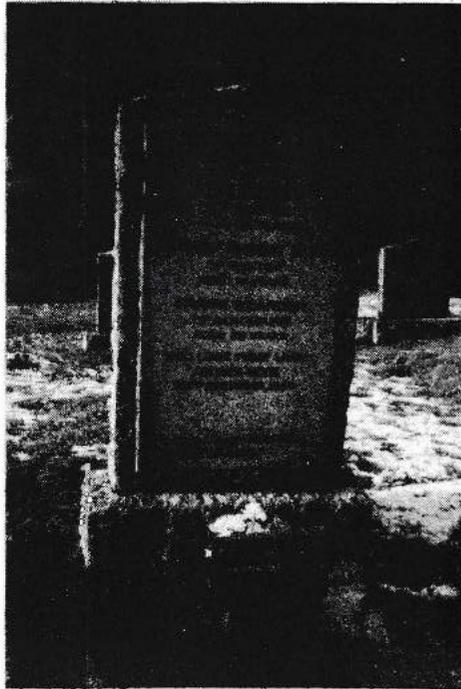
Epilogue. With hindsight, and in the light of modern knowledge and experience, it is easy to be critical. But we have all made mistakes on the hill, and it is kindest for us to admit that 'there for the grace of God go I'. For some, this tale will confirm their opinion that to climb steep rock, snow, and ice is madness. But I have no regrets. I have known the thrill of leading on steep rock, the satisfaction of crampons and axe biting into hard snow, the joy of breasting a summit ridge and seeing snowy ridge after ridge as far as the eye can see. Fatalities today are less in proportion to the great numbers on the hill than they have ever been. I have survived and my only regret is

that my hill days are over. The aftermath of the tragedy affected a great deal of people. The families of those involved greatest of course, but also so many of us who had camped, joked, climbed, walked and boozed with those who died. Never again would we swap tales with them of routes we had done (or failed on), motorbikes we had fallen off, or where we'd gone wrong in the mist. Bill Hornby later joined the Achille Ratti to learn more about the mountains which had become his son's life, and which had so soon taken it.

It subconsciously affected my attitude to Ben Nevis (Beinn Nibheis, the 'evil mountain') more than I realised, for the following June, Joyce and I rode straight past it on my Triumph and headed for Skye. So much so that I never went near it for 30 years, and made my first and last ascent at the age of 52 by Tower Ridge.

I think it fitting to end with the words of Edmund Whymper after the tragedy on the Matterhorn. 'Climb if you must, but remember that courage and strength are naught without prudence, and that a momentary negligence may destroy the happiness of a lifetime. Do nothing in haste, look well to each step, and from the beginning think what may be the end.

Enjoy your hills safely.



Way of the Gull

Leo Pollard

Everyone is good at something, it's just a matter of finding out what we are good at. I have tried a few things, darts, billiards, dominoes all with little success. I thought I was reasonably good at drinking when I was in the Navy until I was on leave at the same time as my brother, he being a sergeant in the Grenadier Guards, and my 8 pints to his 18 seemed to pale into the mediocrity class, especially when my Granddad said "if you drink 8 pints a night people will think you are a drunkard, but if you drink 17 half pints a night like me, no one will notice". This coming from a 70 year old man made me realise I was out of my depth. Being an observant of individual I had noticed that when chased by farmers, the Police, or intolerant fathers of pretty girls or to the pub for the last pint, I was never caught. So good at speed and distance became what I was good at, that was until old enemy, time, brought me down to a walking pace. *Tempora mutantur, nos et. Mutamur in illis.*
The times are changed and we with them.

Then Freda suggested to walk Raad-Ny-Foillan, 'The Way of the Gull'. This is a 96 mile footpath around the coastline of the Isle of Man, Marshall and Sheila would accompany us. Two months before the walk Marshall rescued a dog from the Animal Shelter, a pup with only three legs, named Robin, after the Robin Reliant, Freda said it was a proper Isle of Man dog. This got Marshall thinking, the result being the radio, local business and newspapers on both sides of the water getting involved, also money being pledged if the dog got around the island.

A week before the walk was to start Marshall realised that he had committed himself on radio and in the papers to walk 96 miles, panicked, fell off his motorbike and broke his foot and arm just to get out of it. A friend had put his farmhouse, which situated about 3 miles from Douglas, and his car at our disposal. Giving us an excellent base to attempt the walk from.

Day 1. Ramsey - Point of Ayre-Jurby, distance 20 miles.

Terrain dead flat, or should have been. We decided to start the walk at Ramsey at 10am, so Marshall with his enthusiasm, arranged an interview with the local newspaper. So in Arctic conditions near the pier at Ramsey we gave an interview and a photo call and 30 minutes later we set off to walk the way of the gulls, along the shoreline. We made good progress but as the cliffs started to rise we encountered more shingle which reduced our speed and as the cliffs rose higher and higher the tide came nearer and nearer. On the harbour bridge at Ramsey I had read the information board that said high tide was 1.00pm, it was now 12.30pm the cliff towering above us, 'decision time' do we paddle, swim, drown or climb, we chose to climb. So Freda in front, held, pushed and braced by me, Sheila with Robbie on the lead, we tackled and I am very relieved to say completed a first ascent a 100ft cliff climb on Shellag Point. On reaching the top we look down and see the sea lapping against the cliff base. This had been a trying time for a 83 year Grandma of 10 with a touch of angina but, nil

desperandum, she carried on along the cliff edge, over hedges, locked gates and an electric fence up to the Point of Ayre.

The Point of Ayre with its lighthouse, wild life and flowers, is a nature reserve, a botanist paradise and if we could have forgot the driving rain, wind and cold, I am sure is it beautiful. We were now walking along the edge of the sand dunes, on a carpet of burnet roses and rare flowers. So the miles slipped by, evening brought us to Ballauchistory Farm and the hospitality of a lovely family, a shower, good food and a warm bed.

I hope the seals which accompanied us all day had a sound a night sleep as we, and would greet us on the shore the next day. As for Robbie, he settled in front of the large fire with the farm cat.

Day 2.

After a proper breakfast consisting of fruit juice, cereal, bacon, eggs, sausage, black pudding, beans and fried bread and numerous cups of tea, we could hardly move to walk, so the kind lady of Ballauchistory Farm drove us in her car the two and a half miles to the beach and the start of day 2.

Another beach walk with cliffs. Estimated high tide 2pm. And it was 9.15am. Plenty of time to walk the six miles along the beach I told Freda, but it fell on deaf ears. Off she set at a steady pace. Once again we were to have the companionship of friendly Atlantic seals.

The cliffs along this section have been sculptured by water, glacial drift and sand avalanches, resembling giant egg timers counting the tides. Freda, keeping an eye on the sea and cliffs noted a large cave high up on the cliff face with a gigantic nest in it, it really was enormous, she enquired what kind of bird builds a nest so big, only a Sea Ostrich can build one so big, I replied, I don't think she believed me. I found a birds nest amongst the pebbles with four eggs set perfectly aligned with the four points of the compass. Now being an Indian Scout in a past life it seemed to imply to me that the bird was not expecting the tide to come up to the cliffs today or any other day, but still she was impeccable in her determination to get off the beach and away from the cliffs. It was head down to the distant glen reaching down to the beach. \\\no more cliff climbing for this girl! It was a tired but relieved Freda that climbed the steps leading off the beach and into Glen Trunk, with its wild flowers and blossom. At the top of the glen we came to the disused rail track which takes you to the centre of Kirk Michael. At the old railway station, which is now the fire station, we finished the days walk. I noted the time, 12.55pm, well done Freda. The bus for Ramsey was due in 5 minutes, so our timing was perfect.

Day 3. Port St. Mary to Port Erin

Having walked at least 27 miles in the first two days Freda elected to have a rest day. Marshall having been isolated at the farm for two days was eager to have a day out, so Robbie accompanied by the four of us drove to Port Erin. We parked the car on the promenade so that Freda and Marshall had a base in case of bad weather. It was'nt

needed as the weather was perfect. Robbie, Sheila and myself caught the bus back to Port St. Mary to start the walk.

This section of the Raad Ny Faillin is a casket of pleasure, memories of which I can select on long winter evenings. The Chasms, Bay Stacka, Black Head, Spanish Head where the views are breathtaking. The Chasms are great rifts in the earth caused by severe earth movements, they vary in width from several feet to a few inches in depth, they split the rock below sea level. The edges of the fissures are overgrown with heather and vegetation and extreme caution must be exercised when approaching them. Directly below the Chasms lies Sugar Loaf, the islands finest sea stack. It was first climbed in 1933 by Dr. A.W. Kelly, yes, he was from the Isle of Man. There have been few subsequent ascents for the rock is loose and well lubricated with bird droppings. This footpath along the cliff edge is coastal walking at its best, and after the leisurely pace of the first two days Sheila and myself getting into are stride, and rediscovering the delight and sheer pleasure of walking at speed in beautiful surroundings.

On rounding a bend the magnificent view of the Calf of Man and the Sound unfolded before us and with Robbie sliding and tumbling on her three legs down the steep slippery grass we ran down to the Sound of Man. Leaving the Sound we climbed the cliff edge again and in what seemed no time at all we descended to the marine Biological Research Laboratories run by Liverpool University.

Walking round the bay at Port Erin we had the frustration of watching two small girls being blown out to sea whilst their father chatted to a 'Dolly Bird'. On reaching Freda we found her talking to two old ladies, they informed her that they came from Kent, Freda said she came from Horwich near Bolton. One lady replied, "my mother was born in Horwich"!

Day 4. Kirk Michael to Port Erin

Another glorious day, one Freda was not going to miss. The route, apart from one mile along the beach, followed a disused railway track. This track is situated on the very edge of the cliffs, but its cutting gives shelter to the plant life, so that our way was one blaze of colour. We had to descend from an old viaduct which only had its pillars still standing. The glen into which we descended was dotted with brightly coloured tents, each with a powerful motor bike in close attendance. This was TT practice week and these bikers give the island an atmosphere unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Thoughts came to mind, would they get home safely? But, as I say, this was a glorious day, the gradient easy, the views spectacular and Freda was achieving again, the knees that had ached from months were becoming pain free. We only needed Marshall to have a meal ready and the beer chilled to make a perfect day.

Day 5. Ramsey to Old Laxey

After having an easy day, I decided to put in a longer and harder section today. Freda decided a day reading and sunbathing around a beautiful restored farmhouse would be a better way to spend Sunday. When I told Marshall my travelling plans, which was car to Laxey, Manx Electric Railway to Ramsey, he immediately grabbed

his crutches and said "I'll have a penn'orth of that", he loves to ride on trams, trains and boats.

This section is a mixture of high cliff edge contours, beautiful remote glens and some minor roads. We departed Ramsey at 11.25am climbing the path on to the cliff edge and after a few heart stopping experiences with Robbie and sea gulls. Sea gulls being equally at home riding the thermal's a yard off the cliff edge as being perched on it, and Robbie not knowing different. Sheila decided to heed the warning given at the beginning of the path. *All dogs must be on leads.* We now made good progress on to Maughold Head, the highest point in this section. Maughold Head church and village is seeped in history. Maughold or Machud was a pagan robber whom St. Patrick converted to Christianity, as a penance, St. Patrick, the kind man he was, bound him in chains and set him adrift in a wicker coracle and left to the mercy of God, he made land at the spot that now bears his name. He spent the rest of his life in the service of God, and became Bishop of the Island. St. Maughold died in 553 AD and on his cross is a shield with the Three Legs of Man. This is the one of oldest representations of this well known emblem.

After leaving Port Mooar, Port of the Great Glen, we took to the road, Robbie was pulling hard on the lead, the tarmac was hot and it was uphill. She appeared to be getting tired, so Sheila put her in the papoose. On this road section we were to pass the remains of a Neolithic burial site, an ancient keevill, church and a Quaker burial ground. The Quakers were severely persecuted by Bishop Barrow (1663) and many died in dreadful circumstances. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Religion seems painful to me, but all that was a long time ago. It didn't put me off my sandwiches as I read the inscriptions. We now made our way down Glen Cornna, Glen of the waterwheel, with its tidal lake, leaving by Glen Mona. On reaching the road Sheila put Robbie back into the papoose, although she seemed tired she appeared uncomfortable and would not settle, so out she came. She had not gone 100 yards up the road when she spotted a large Rhode Island Red cockerel at the entrance to a farmyard. Now the cockerel has two legs, Sheila has two legs, Robbie has three legs, there was no contest, around the farm they went, one chasing the other until Sheila decided to double back and as the cockerel and Robbie came round the house corner Sheila struck just as Robbie grabbed the cockerel. Afterwards we reflected upon likely newspaper headlines. Dog saved by £500 operation shot by farmer. Sheila has never allowed me to express my concern Robbies state of fitness again, but she said from now on the little b.....walks. It was now just a few miles to Laxey where I was to receive a severe blow. The pub was closed!

Day 6. Castletown to Port St. Mary

This a very easy 7-mile walk at sea level, so Freda decided to stretch the legs. Leaving Castletown we followed the coast road until it gave way to a smooth grassy path leading to Scarlett Point, which is a nature reserve. Near the visitors centre we met two Marine Biologists studying at Liverpool University, one of them an American from California. Along this coastline the seascape panoramas are captivating and continually changing. Scarlett Point takes its name from Skarfakluft, a Norse word meaning Cormorants C. It was also one of the day watch hills, the duty of Ward and Watch, when men were obliged to report from dawn to dusk, for serious duty and

properly. It seems they had National Service in the year 1630 A D. The rock around this area is limestone and natural rock gardens are everywhere. When we rounded the headland we passed a marble works at Poyllvaish Quarry, Pool of Death. The limestone in this area has been metamorphosed, heated by volcanic contact, three times, stone steps from this quarry were the islands contribution to the building of St. Paul's Cathedral. On reaching the road that takes you round the bay we stopped for sandwiches and a drink. As we were about to start walking again a man got out of a car, we thought that he would ask directions so I got the map out, he however enquired if we were the charity walk and gave Sheila £10. This kindness put a spring in our step and with one brief stop to view the Llamas in a field, we made Port St. Mary. That evening Sheila and I ran the hilly section Port Soderick to Douglas,

Day 7. Port Erin to Peel

Distance 15 miles. This section of the walk is without doubt the hardest; it takes in three mountain summits, Bradda, Lhiattee-ny-Beinee and Cronk-ny-Arrey Laa, each one higher, wilder and more remote than its predecessor. Each hill plunges in sheer cliffs to the sea, and as the weather was atrocious serious thought had to go into navigation in the thick swirling mist. We had parked the car in Port Erin at 8am and set off on what was to be a very wet and trying day. We had a short stop in Glen Maye trying to shelter under a large beech tree. As we left Glen Maye the weather improved slightly. Dropping down the steep slope of Peel Hill we met a young couple walking an unusual dog, not that Robbie is usual having only three legs. I asked what breed, the man replied Staffordshire Bull Terrier and I have the Kennel Club registration to prove it. I said I think a Great Dane must have stood at one side watching when it was bred. The lady side that they had tried to get compensation but gave up because they loved the dog that much.

On entering Peel bus station, which is a large garage with a port-a-cabin type waiting room. The inspector, recognising me, came over. I verified the time of the bus and entered the waiting room. I enquired of the three old ladies if they objected to us sitting in wet clothes, not at all, they said. But by the time I was down to my wet underpants and Sheila down to her wet panties and bra, they made a quick exit.

Once in dry clothes we ate our sandwiches and whilst eating my last banana I read the notice. Food not to be consumed in this waiting room. And one saying no dogs allowed. It was time for the bus to Port Erin. Outside I said to the inspector I thought you said the bus came at 2.40pm. Yes, he said, but not today, tomorrow, it's the Southern Hundred Motor Bike Race today and the roads are closed. It would be correct to say that I did not see the funny side of it for at least three days.

Day 8 Castletown to Port Soderick

Distance 13 miles. We parked the car at Port Soderick station and caught the 10.30am white-knuckle ride to Castletown. There is not one yard of the Isle of Man steam train track in alignment. Consequently it tries to throw you around the carriage. I love riding it.

Leaving Castletown we soon passed King William's College. King William the Fourth was approached to give a donation to building this fine public school, but he had no money at the time, he gave his name instead.

As we descended to Port Grenaugh I thought Robbie had fallen the eighty feet or so to the beach, but it turned out to be a mallard duck faking injury to draw attention away from twelve very tiny chicks all huddled together on the path, which Robbie had walked seemingly without notice. Near Port Soderick there is a detached rock pinnacle near sea level and it is called the Nunschair. The naughty nun's from Douglas Nunnery had to sit on this rock to do penance. I wonder what they had done wrong!

Day 9 Old Laxey to Douglas

Distance 10 miles. Old Laxey is a pretty little harbour somewhat like a Cornish village, Laxey in Manx talk means salmon, and salmon still run up the River Laxey. This is the most populated area of the island and the Raad-ny-Foilin takes to the main road on a few occasions.

Places like Garwick Bay and Glen Groudie are quiet places and make the walk surprisingly pleasant. Rounding the Onchan Head in Douglas and the end of the walk came into view.

Douglas takes its name from the rivers Dhoo and Glass. As we walked along the promenade with its horse drawn trams, beer tents, sixteen thousand motor bikes and a great party atmosphere going on all around us.

We were quite pleased with ourselves and on reaching the footbridge that spans the harbour we were met by Freda and Marshall. Freda had bought us a present, a coloured glass and lead lined map of the Isle of Man, with a blue line tracing the shape of the island, just like the blue line on the Ordnance Survey map traces the Way of the Gull.

Thank you Freda for the present but most of all thank you for walking fifty miles with me along the Way of the Gull.

Spring Walks in the Langdales 1999

Dave Hugill

These walks were reasonably supported and enjoyed by all who came.

20th March.

Tilberthwaite via Hodge Close quarry with coffee at the Three Shires. (Twice).

17th April

In glorious sunshine, with snow above about 1000ft. Dot Wood, Cath Harth and myself did a round of Sergeant Man, High Raise, Pike O Stickle, Harrison Stickle and Loft Crag.

the intended route was saved for another day.

15th May.

With one supporter, Dot Wood. After getting a lift in Adrian's BMW to Coniston, our route took us back to Langdale via the Old Man, Swirl How, Wet Side Edge and Blea Tarn.

19th June.

Great support for this one, but not too brilliant weather. We did a circuit of High Close, Loughrigg Tarn, Elterwater, Skelwith Bridge and Baysbrown Woods. Again two leisurely coffee stops on route. Anyone in a hurry is not allowed on these walks!

Dave's Walk - 20th March

Margaret Conroy.

Great Spring weather was specially provided for this first of Dave's walks.

A party of 16 or so assembled for a leisurely journey, via the Three Shires, to Tilberthwaite. Some dedicated members visited the Three Shires twice, while others contented themselves with fresh air and butties. We avoided having the picnic plundered by a roving greyhound but hung on fiercely to our remaining crusts!

A blistering pace was set at the start and maintained throughout, we didn't see a single taxi - unfortunately for one or two of the less hardened members of the party - but great camaraderie was had all day.

Many thanks to Dave for organising it so patiently - it was a grand day out, share with some new company.

Pins and Needles

Allan Brighton

Whilst on the third Irish Trip the whole group decided to have a go at a section of the 12 Pins or Bens in Connemara. In perfect walking conditions the team comprising of Chairman PRICE, Past Chairman PARTRIDGE, the 2 McHALES, Secretary GUILFOYLE, BRIGHTON and MACKAY assembled at the foot of BEN BAUN at 10,30am. In typical ARCC fashion the tops chosen and the route to be taken was known to one member only. He had the map, the guide book and the confidence of the other six that he knew what he was doing. However, Derek did let us know that this route took in the highest of the 12 Pins and so we departed feeling that there was a reasonable challenge ahead and that 7 seasoned hill walkers would take these humps in our stride.

Once over the barbed wire fence there was a 100 yard stretch of bog before the ascent started. An Irish bog is what it says it is - bog! With no pressure whatsoever a walking stick could be pushed upto the hilt at any location in this bog so speed and lightfootedness were of the essence.

My limited experience of the Irish hills tells me that there is a very marked absence of footpaths to follow. There are numerous sheep tracks traversing the fell but nothing going upwards. Not until the summit cone is reached and then perhaps there may be a hint of a track for the last 200 feet. Needless to say our team swept up the first 1000 feet in a broad band approximately 200 yards apart choosing whichever route one thought easiest. The ascent was quite steep over 50/50 rock and vegetation. At the top of this first spur we regrouped and admired the view of the Atlantic coastline and the rocky steep horseshoe that stretched ahead. Meanwhile, the Chairman went tadpoling in a shallow tarn. The weather still excellent and everyone wearing shorts. The second section took us across a flat plateau of 8 feet thick peat bog, criss-crossed with many steep sided troughs. Again the group dispersed and advanced on a wide front only intermittently being in full view of each other as we dipped into and out of the depression crossing this plateau.

On all our outings I always felt that there is a competitive element in the way the group tackles the natural obstacles. That to be in front is paramount and to admit to stopping for a rest is something lesser mortals do. There are 'browny points' to be gained by being first to the top or finding the best route. At close on sixteen stone, two of which are not really necessary, I rarely gain any points but I console myself that at least I saw the butter-wort and had a possible sighting of a ring ouzel.

After half an hour we are all across the plateau and starting the final long ascent of Ben Baun. There was a distinct change in the geological features at this point. Due to the steepness soil and vegetation were non-existent and the way upwards had to be carefully selected over limestone slabs and large loose rocks all the way to the summit. Trevor was to claim the points on this section reaching the top ten minutes ahead and in time to climb into his survival bag and assume the appearance of a caterpillar going into metamorphosis! No one else thought it cold the skies being still cloudless.

No one doubts the Chairman's physical fitness but at this point one wonders if he is drifting into senility. He declared that he had lost his 'bum-bag' containing his money and cards, etc. and so, with Pete to show him the way back, left in search of his valuables. We all said what a pity it was and in true ARCC style decided to wish him well and carried on. We had no map, no knowledge of where we were going but before he departed Peter McHale told us which way to go! He is like that. It was a very steep descent onto the col with good, little used screes to help speed us downwards. We later read in Derek's guidebook that the screes were dangerous and should be avoided, but he wasn't with us to tell us was he!

We all marvelled at the way the past Chairman George was keeping up the pace but we did notice the disappointed look on his face when he was asked to forgo his sweet course and rejoin the group who were anxious to get on with the next section. This guy must have been quite formidable when he didn't have an artificial knee and hip replacement.

Another very rocky ascent with precipitous crags on either side. We followed the ridge upwards and as the next summit was approached thought we could see Derek and Peter a mile behind and below us. Binoculars proved that this was the case. We decided not to wait for them and pressed on. At this point another fantastic horseshoe was revealed to be accessed from the Clifden side to the S.W. but that's for another day. Still fine but to windward we noticed that the first Ben had its summit obscured by 'clag'. We still had half the route to do and now that we were on it, committed to do the whole ridge. These mountains are not the place to be in clag or rain with all the ways off extremely steep and over slippery marble. For me and I'm not sure for some of the others there was a private urgency to crack on and get of A.S.A.P. Another steep descent off this summit was rather remarkable in that we were walking over Connemara marble, large round mounds of it with veins of deep pink running through its contrasting vividly with the predominant white. Once again the team scattered with each of us selecting our own route ahead. We now had to traverse a steep rocky incline to gain access to the main ridge, the other half of the horseshoe. This was rather tortuous for the stone were large and loose and upto this point we had made 5000ft of ascent and had been on the go for 5 hours.

Derek and Pete caught up with us. The Chairman was rather embarrassed to have to declare that all the time his valuables were in his day sac, but he reinforced our doubts about his senility by following Pete onto a summit which wasn't on our route. There was an abundance of reasons why they had done so not the least being that 'we had cheated by not doing so'. By now it was obvious that the weather was beginning to close in on us and there was still a mile of undulating ridge to do before we could think of descending. I was striding out in front with some urgency With Austin and Trevor behind. A man and his wife asked me the way off but I couldn't help them for I had no map and Peter McHale wasn't present to help either.

At last the undulating ridge came to an end and the way forward was all down hill - very downhill. There was also a hint of rain in the wind and we were still at 2000 feet surrounded by very steep craggy mountain side. I thought of waiting for the group leader who had the map but thought again. It seemed to me from here onwards it was every man for himself. I could see a cottage in the valley which was close to our cars

and remember wishing that I was walking passed it instead of looking down at it from my lofty precarious position. Austin was with me for a few minutes of the initial descent but chose to catch up with Trevor who was 150 yards down to our right. He probably thought Trevor would be off quicker than me. I don't blame him for thinking that. From then on I was in total isolation for the whole descent which I personally thought was quite hairy in parts - twice I had to climb back out of situations when the way forward seemed to lead to sheer drops. Underfoot there was a covering of loose peaty vegetation on hard rock. I was grateful that it was relatively dry and in most instances held my weight. Whilst I never panicked I was quite relieved when after half an hour of picking my way slowly down, the angle of descent began to level off somewhat. Tony had obviously found a good route off for I could see him about a mile in front crossing the bog in the valley floor. Soon, to my right Austin and Trevor came into view about half a mile away and at the same height, I didn't know how George was managing or if anyone was with him. I was genuinely concerned for him particularly in view of the manner in which teamwork had prevailed hitherto this outing. As I reached the bottom I could see George and Pete 400ft. higher up the mountain with a clear way off which left the Chairman still unaccounted for. I felt sure that he would either be doing another summit for good measure or would be back at base having a hot shower in the knowledge that us mountain men would be quite capable of looking after ourselves.

I took the shortest route to the car across a bog, was this to be the sting in the tail? Careless footwork and one would be up to the waist in no time. Once across a river where it passed over an outcrop of rocks I was quickly onto the road. Derek by now had caught me up saying that his descent had presented no problems whatsoever and strode away to the cars. It started to rain and looking up to the mountain I could see that clag was down to 1000 feet.

On reflection we all had a superb day and one that will stay in my memory for years to come but should we start thinking about changing the ARCC's motto? I'm not very good at languages but what is the Latin for "Every man for Himself".

Ireland 1999

Derek Price

The Party: Allan Brighton, Austin Guilfoyle, Peter and Tony McHale, Trevor Mackay, George Partridge and Derek Price.

Destination: Leenaun on the border of Galway and County Mayo and staying at Killary House with the King family.

We gathered together at Tyn Twr on Saturday of the May Bank Holiday Weekend and spent much of Sunday on the hill and afterwards collecting our gear together, loading bikes onto the trailer and preparing for the long journey ahead.

Monday, 31st May.

We sailed from Holy Head at 9.00am on the Stenna H.S.S. and arrived Dun Laoghaire around 11.00am. Non-stop driving, apart from lunch, saw us in Leenaun at about 6.30pm and pleasantly surprised to be greeted by all the King family when we arrived at Killary House. An extra bonus came in the shape of light refreshments.

Later in the evening we went for a sandwich in the Hamilton bar followed by a taste of the Guinness in Gaynor's Bar and another pleasant welcome from Hillary Gaynor, the landlord. That evening, using Hillary's contacts, we arranged a fishing trip for Wednesday afternoon.

Tuesday, 1st June.

We awoke to a cloudless blue sky and agreed to climb Ben Gorm and Ben Creggan. Two towering hills on the other side of Killary Harbour. The ascent route that we chosen started only half a mile across the water but a good five miles round by road, so we drove to the start in cars. In this part of Ireland there are no tracks on the hills, apart from sheep tracks going in every possible direction, so until a clear ridge is reached it is natural for people to choose their own particular route, with a result of us being spread out along the hillside. However, we did all manage to meet on the summit cairns.

On the way up, Peter (on his chosen route), had seen two birds that he didn't recognise but had a very noticeable cry - which he demonstrated several times. His mimicking was so good that Allan Brighton, one of our three bird experts guessed to be a Golden Plover. Further investigation proved him to be right.

From the summit of Ben Gorm we had magnificent views of the Twelve Pins or Bens in the distance, and only a few miles away across the valley, the sharp ridges of the Mweelrea Horseshoe, climbed by us two years ago on our last visit here. Its highest point at 2700 ft overlooking the entrance to Killary Harbour.

The descent of these steep sided mountains is painful on the knees, certainly on mine, so there were moans and groans from several quarters as we descended, some through

deep bracken, others crashing through the heather, Apart from the Devil's Mother or Magairli an Deamhain at 2200 ft we had now climbed all the in the immediate area and had plans to climb some of the Twelve Pins on Thursday.

After making our way back to Leenaun and enjoying the pleasure of a hot shower the party went in search of food at the local restaurant and afterwards a well earned drink in Gaynor's Bar.

Wednesday, 2nd June.

We had arranged to repeat our fishing trip of two years ago and again hired John Mongon from Oceans Alive and his boat for an afternoon session in the mouth of the harbour. The boat was berthed at Ballynakill Harbour near Letterfrack so we spent the morning visiting Cliffden, browsing and topping up our Irish punts. Peter and Austin had chosen to go for a bike ride rather than go fishing.

John suggested a different part of the bay than last time and our journey out, quite close to the cliffs, provided wonderful sightings of numerous sea birds. He took us to where he thought we might find mackerel or pollock and within minutes Allan had a strike and landed a fish called a Cuckoo Wrass. This amazing fish was about 9 inches long with a brilliant blue and orange colouring, more fitting for the Great Barrier Reef than the cold Atlantic Ocean. These fish are not edible, so after a photo or two for evidence, it was returned to the sea. Later more were caught and let off the hook! Several of the edible form of wrass were caught as well as pollock and dog fish which we were convinced would find their way to Hillary Gaynor's fridge.

Having returned to port about 6.00pm and had a meal at the newly renovated Killary Hotel. (We were the first people to dine there for two years and had a free pint and reduced charges for our trouble). Peter and Austin had dined in the Village Grill and had apparently been told of our presence in the hotel almost as soon as we arrived there. The 'English boys' seemed to be tracked wherever they went!

That evening we bartered with Hillary for a salmon he was trying to sell. This is a long, long story which resulted in us buying a 'wild' salmon which was too big for us to barbecue. Hillary is in to everything concerning money and there had to be a catch in his offer of a salmon, plus the fact that he was looking after the fish we had caught earlier on our fishing trip. So the day ended with us having a fridge full of fish, an oversized salmon and the hops that we could persuade the King girls to cook them for us.

Thursday, 3rd June.

A beautiful morning with an almost cloudless sky, though the weather forecast promised rain before the end of the day. We had outline plans to climb some of the Pins and had planned a suitable route before hand. Straight after breakfast we collected our gear and set off for our chosen starting point and the plan to do the Gleam Eidhnsach Horseshoe.

Our route headed up a trackless hillside towards our first top, Binn Charrach (Knockpasheemore) at 415m, then along a fairly level but very boggy ridge to

Lugnevagh at 456m and up the steep and rocky ridge to the summit of Ben Bahn, the highest of the Pins at 729m. It was here that I thought I had lost my bumbag which had my cards and wallet, so I had no choice but to go back down looking for it. Peter kindly offered to go down with me and we thought that if we had to descend as far as the car, we could perhaps reverse the Horseshoe. Fortunately that didn't happen, we had almost reached the lower slopes and I recalled removing my wallet and cards into my day sac and if I had lost the bumbag it only had loose change and odds and sods in it. So for the second time in an hour we made an ascent of Ben Bahn.

We had a lot of catching up to do and as we descended the steep hillside towards the col at Maumina Mam Eidhneach, the rest of the party could be seen high up on the ridge leading to the summit of Binn Dhubh, 688m. It was a very steep ascent which involved some serious scrambling over quartzite and Connemara marble. We caught up with the rest of the party on the descent. Our next top was Bencor, then along and over Chaire Bhig at 658m and a savage descent down an extremely steep-sided Ben Corrag, 577m, to the easier ground and back to the cars. We came down as a scattered group, descending off the hill in several places, not really sensible but this happens when there are no tracks to group people together. I had mentioned a similar scattered descent off Ben Gorm. Fortunately, we were all experienced enough to make the descents safely.

The weather was changing, clouds now gathered and covered the Pins and there was rain in the air. This had been a long challenging day. The Pins are serious mountains, very similar to the Scottish Bens though not as high, but completely trackless. The polished Connemara marble is slippery enough when dry, in wet conditions it must be a nightmare. However we still have eight more to climb and will require further visits to the area to complete them all.

That night we had our salmon, cooked by the King's, and it was delicious. There was plenty left over but we couldn't interest the King's in eating it. apparently, salmon is so common in the locality that it is treated like any other fish. Later that night we had a few drinks in Gaynor's Bar.

Friday, 4th June.

Morning dawned damp and cloudy so we had a drive round and passed Croagh Patrick to Westport where we potted around and some of us visited the whole in the wall to replenish our pockets with Irish punts again. On our way back we checked the start of the route for an ascent of the Devil's Mother, 645m, which we hoped to climb the next day.

We dined at the hotel again - a bit more expensive but a free pint of Guinness for keeping us waiting squared up the cost. It was still wet when we entered Gaynor's Bar, and even wetter when we came out!

Saturday 5th June.

Surprisingly the sky was cloud free so we could carry on with our plan to climb the Devil's Mother. Allan and Tony had opted to go around the harbour to take

photographs and do some bird watching. The rest of us went in Tony's car to the start of the ascent of the Devil's Mother. It took a while to clear the low ground because of the bog. Our route, completely trackless again, was pure Irish peat bog. Surprisingly, even the summit at 1000ft was black with peat. It even had a small cairn sticking out of it. The Devil's Mother has little to offer except magnificent views in all directions. It also reminded us that we still have many tops to climb in the area. The descent, completing the horseshoe, was very much like the ascent, bog, bog, and more bog.

We returned to the village hoping to be in time for the annual curraugh race between the three local pubs and the salmon farm, but the tide had only just turned and it would be well into the evening before the race could start.

It was actually raining when the race took place and we could watch it from our bedroom windows. Gaynor's were the eventual winners

We dined at the Village Grill and spent the last night in Gaynor's Bar. Hillary Gaynor actually bought us *alla drink* and sent a message via his daughter, *that the salmon just might have been a little expensive!*

Sunday, 6th June.

We breakfasted at 8.00am, said our goodbyes to the King's and to Hillary Gaynor and set off for Dublin via Westport, Castlebar and the A160 and the N4. Unfortunately the Stenna H.S.S. was an hour late so we didn't dock in Holyhead until 7.00pm. Then a long drive to Tarpoley and on to Leeds, Liverpool and Prseton.

This had been another successful holiday, with surprisingly good weather, (considering that the weather had been awful in England) and plenty of activities enjoyed by all. No doubt the year 2000 will see us on a similar trip.

Long Walk - Beckstones - 8th May 1999

Beckstones log book.

Last time the long walk was at Beckstones, the route was too long, so this time twenty-eight walkers and runners completed their designated routes. It generally went along the skyline to Devoke Water, Stanley Ghyll, Harter Fell, the Newfield Inn, Caw Fell, Stickle Pike, The Blacksmiths Arms and back to the hut, with the addition of Coniston Old and Dow Crag for those interested. The weather was in turn, cloudy, misty, sunny, wet and sunny again and was quite warm.

Doug and Marj and Peter McHale serviced the breakfast stop and Peter pedalled about being sweeper, on his bicycle. Barry and Anne arrived and they helped with the lunch stop. Joyce stayed at the hut and cooked and organised and then two spice girls came, Kath and Sue, and served all with a smile at the evening meal. Some stayed in and some went to Mason's in Broughton and after closing time the Landlord very kindly taxied them home.

A very successful and pleasant weekend enjoyed by all.

Climbing Meet - Beckstones - 11/12 September, 1999

Beckstones log book.

On Saturday people went their various ways in typical ARCC fashion.

Dave Makin and Neil Hodgkinson went to Esk Buttress where they did 'Trespass Groove' and 'Red Edge' in light, drizzly rain. They departed the hut before others were up or still asleep. Joyce went down to Broughton to buy papers and fresh bread for everyone, and later Faz went to Crag Y to clean a new route. Barry and Anne arrived at lunchtime with Sharon (new member) and Geoff and went to Wallowbarrow Crag where they all climbed 'Wall and Corner'.

The weather was mostly warm and dry but with a very peculiar low cloud cover.

On Saturday evening a full team had arrived so the latest members were, Neil Hodgkinson, Dave Makin, Joyce Kent, Anne Gaitskill, Barry Rogers, Sharon Gaitskill, Geoff Oldfield, Jim Cooper, Tom Walkington, Kathryn Harth, Stuart Harth and Faz Faraday. The meal was late, and the gathering meant that the evening was very convivial and sociable. Fortunately, due to Stuart's presence, the average age of the members was greatly reduced (thanks Stuart).

Sunday was fine and sunny and Dave and Neil went off early again, to let it be known that standards are being kept (by some). Barry and Anne and Sharon and

Geoff had to go back with all the camera gear. The rest went to Wallowbarrow and climbed 'Great Western, Paradise, Digitation and Bryanston', and then the waeather closed in and we were threatened by rain. A retreat to the café nearby, above the crag was made, and the sun came out. Joyce had arranged to meet us, she was riding her bike through the forest, but was bitten by dogs at Grassguards Farm and couldn't get through, so we sat in the garden in the sun and ate home made pie and cream and drank lots of Assam tea. A very good café, very cheap and very friendly, thanks Tom. (Joyce later bought a Dogdozer machine to zap dogs with and returned, but the dogs were not there....)

Although Terry, the meet leader was not able to be there, he had gone to Norway to fetch his mates boat back from its summer sojourn, there were enough of us to maintain a hisst (can't read this word in Faz's writing) in good spirit and all vowed to come back in better conditions next time.

Thanks Joyce and Beckstones for a good weekend.

Be Thankful

Lucia Kenny

I see the sky, I see the light
I see the clouds, sun shinning bright
I lift my eyes, I say a prayer
I see your love in a cloak of care

I see the sky, I see the night
I see the stars, the moon gives light
for these wonderful gifts I praise thee Lord
Without them we would live a void

The trees stand tall, they kiss the sky
Their leaves fall a season goes by
We thank thee father for our seasons of life
And for being with us in our toils and strife

When our last season comes and time is cold
Let us remember your warmth as we grow old
Guide us to be thankful for what you've done
And be content as our goal is won

Crowberry Gully

Paul Cooney

In my eyes, Glen Coe has always been one of the most appealing areas of North West Scotland. The majestic grandeur of Buachaille Etive Mor contrasts sharply with the remoteness of Rannoch Moor. The whole area has a constant feeling of untamed wilderness where man comes second best to nature and the earth's seasons.

Unfortunately, the weather conditions are seldom reliable enough to permit and long term planning for snow and ice climbing. This unreliability is because of the close proximity to the sea and the prevailing south westerly air flows. However, if the winds turn and blow from the North, it will reduce the temperatures to below zero and form ideal snow and ice conditions, so eagerly awaited by Sassenach's, south of the border.

On Thursday the 4th of February, 1999, the snow and ice did arrive, and Phil Michelewski and myself drove optimistically up to the Kingshouse in Glen Coe. The next morning, we decided to attempt the classic line of Crowberry Gully. The climb had classic status because it is one of the finest examples of grade III/IV in Glen Coe. At 1000 feet high, it has no local peers. It is a deeply cut scar carved directly down from it's summit to the screes below.

It was a perfect start to a day on the hill, with blue skies and no wind. We parked at Lagagarbh and traversed round the base of the hill to the enormous bolder, aptly called the Waterslide. There was no flowing water, just a frozen cascade. We surmounted the frozen Waterslide and decided it was time to put on harnesses, helmets and crampons before we began to solo up the initial pitches. With the snow conditions perfect each step elevated us to another world, a world of frozen snow and ice but also a world of commitment. As with all ice climbs, they are temporary objects and subject to change, and in my opinion that is their attraction. Inside the gully, the scenery was impressive with steep walls completing the feeling of entrapment. We covered the 500 feet to the thin crack chimney in one push, briefly stopping to take a belay and a welcome rest. The climbing became steeper at the start of the chimney and I was thankful for the feeling of security offered by the rope. We alternated the leading from now on as the route had certainly moved up a gear. The ice became steeper, the exposure increased but never too demanding due to the positive tool placements.

The junction was the next feature of the climb and we opted for the traditional right hand fork. Phil traversed underneath the rib leaving solid protection behind but was bolstered by the bomber axe placements. I followed with pleasure, enjoying the space below my front points and relishing the thickness of the ice for my axes. An easy section led to the cave pitch which was the final difficulty of the climb. Upon arrival, we clipped into the insitu peg and weighed up the difficulty. It was my turn to lead and I had become at one with the climb, totally focused and not wanting it to finish. I moved off from the belay, front pointing and pulling up on my axes. After a couple of moves, I placed an ice screw and continued pulling up on my axes and completing a series of very satisfactory moves and I was soon 40 feet above Phil. I took one last look down, buried my axes to the hilt and pulled up onto easier ground. Phil followed

and stopped to remove the ice screws where he muttered something to the verse of "how well the ice screws were driven in". He soon reached me and carried on to lead the final snow slope which led him directly to the summit. It was an appropriate finish to one of the finest gullies in Scotland,

We had overcome a challenge in an untamed wilderness and I justifiably felt satisfied with the result. To some the route is considered tame and with today's equipment, it probably is, but still demands the utmost respect. It is a true winter classic of the highest quality and it will stand out in my memory for many years to come.

A.R.C.C. WINTER MEET 2000

TORRIDON Y. H. TORRIDON, ROSS-SHIRE

FROM SATURDAY 4TH MARCH TO SATURDAY 11TH MARCH

- OS Grid Ref. - 904459 OS Map no. 25
- Situation - Upper Loch Torridon, Sheildaig 7 miles
Kinlochewe 10 miles.
- Accommodation - Standard grade youth hostel accommodates 60,
12 places booked, mainly in bedrooms of between
5 and 8 beds.
- Facilities - Self catering, hostel has store and laundry.
Shopping 1 mile distant. Nearest station is
Achnasheen, 19 miles. Bus service nearby.
Beinn Damph bar (bar snacks) 1.5 miles.
- Hostel Rules - Open 0700-2345 hrs. Please use the bed linen
provided, not your own sleeping bag. Smoking is
limited to designated areas. Wine and beer may be
consumed on the premises, generally with meals.
- Fees - The accommodation has been booked for a seven
night period. The fee is £64.75. This to be paid in
advance with a cheque to ARCC and posted to Ben
Carter at the address below. Places will be reserved
on receipt of the full amount.

*Enquiries to Ben Carter, 214 Rochdale Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 7JA 01706
841978*

ARCC Meets List 2000

- Jan 14 Kendal Climbing Wall Faz Faraday- 0131-661-2816
- Feb 11/12 Edinburgh Climbing Wall Faz Faraday
- Feb 18/19 Dunmail Working Weekend David Ogden- 01253-398252
- Feb 25/26 Yorkshire Dales - Hubberholme David Hugill- 01524-734467
- March 4-11 Scottish Winter Meet Ben Carter- 01706-841978
- March 24 Bishop's Millenium Mass and Walk- Latrigg - Derek Price
- April 1/2 Beckstones Working Weekend Joyce Kent 01253-697948
- April 21/22 Climbing Meet - Langdale Faz Faraday
- May 12/13 Long Walk - Langdale Arthur Daniels-01706-819706
- May 19/20 Old Counties TopsRace Arthur Daniels
- June 9/10 Climbing Meet - Tyn Twr Faz Faraday
- June 23/24 Climbing meet Langdale Faz Faraday
- July 1/2 BBQ-Climbing-Walking-Biking Beckstones Joyce Kent
- July 7/8 Junior Meet - Tyn Twr Faz Faraday
- July 29/30 Climbing Meet - Tyn Twr Faz Faraday
- Sep 1 CAFOD - Grisedale Horseshoe Colin Jones-01204-690013
- Sep 15 Junior Meet Langdale Arthur Daniels
- Sep.16 Club Fell Races Langdale Leo Pollard 01204-694657
- Sep 22/23 Climbing Meet- Beckstones Faz Faraday
- Oct. 6 Bishop's Walk-Glenridding Derek Price
- Oct 20/21 Climbing Meet - Kendal Wall Faz Faraday
- Nov 3/4 Working Weekend - Tyn Twr Anne Wallace 01744-811864
- Nov.25 Annual Dinner and AGM Alan Kenny- 01524-697948
- Dec 1/2 Climbing-Walking-Biking-Beckstones Joyce Kent