

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

Saturday 22nd. August 1964

Bulletin 13/1964

Dear Member,

At last my pleas for contributions to the Bulletin have stirred several members to put pen to paper. John Britt's article was written whilst the details of his excursion to Scafell were still fresh in his memory. He wrote it in the Casualty Ward of Whitehaven Hospital whilst the plaster on his broken leg was still damp !

Mick Pooler's mammoth effort, complete with illustrations, was forwarded already ~~already~~ on the stencils, ready for duplication. I know we haven't all got the same charm as Mick with the office typist, but if any other member cares to do the same, I would be most grateful. (My typing is still at the two finger stage) Quarto stencils please !

News From the Huts

Buckbarrow

Eddie Kelly reports :-

The last working weekend at Buckbarrow was held on 6th.-7th. June, and when all the dust had cleared, it turned out to have been a very satisfactory and successful one. Amongst the jobs carried out were :- The decoration of the Chapel, a very thorough cleaning of the kitchen and scullery, re-fixing of guttering, cutting down (and up) one of the big trees behind the hut, and paving of an additional area in the yard. I am undecided whether the highest praise goes to the two non-member girls who helped with the belated Spring Cleaning in the kitchen and scullery, or to the new member who spent all weekend creating additional hard-standing for cars in the yard. He is a motor cyclist !

Our next Meet at Buckbarrow is on the weekend of 5th-6th. September. This will be another 'organised' Meet, when for the ridiculously low charge of £1, the hut committee will provide all meals and 'bagging', and pay all hut fees from Friday night onwards. If you decide to come, please give me at least a ~~xx~~ week's notice, to assist with the catering arrangements, and send a 5/- deposit with your letter. Write to E. J. Kelly, 5, Scotforth Road, Preston

Langdale

The Meet for the weekend 26th.-27th. September is for members only, and a full programme of climbing and fell walking is planned. Leaders will be provided, and instruction will be given to beginners on the rocks. The Hut Committee would like to see as many members there as possible, particularly those who have only joined the club recently or who cannot get up very often. Misk Pooler, the Meet Leader would be pleased to hear from members who intend to go to Langdale that weekend so that he can organise sufficient leaders and instructors. Drop him a line at 33, Wilson Street, Bury, Lancs. No equipment is necessary other than boots and plimsoles for the climber, and suitable footwear for fell walkers.

Those who stay at Langdale frequently, and who leave equipment and clothing at the hut, are asked to leave it neat and tidy, not strewn about the beds and floor.

Guests staying at the hut must be accompanied by members. They are not allowed to install themselves stating that Joe Bloggs will sign them in when (or if) he arrives,

A quantity of coal has been orderdd for use on the lounge fire only.

This is for a trial period, and members are asked to use it with logs and coke not instead. If it proves too expensive, it will be discontinued.

Written and illustrated by Mick Pooler (also featuring Mick Pooler) :-

TRAVERSE OF THE MAIN CUILLIN RIDGE 1964

It was the Thursday night of our first week in Skye when we had a glimpse of the ridge towering 3,000 ft. above the camp site at Glen Brittle. The wind was blowing from the west and brought with it more patches of cloud which threatened to cover the ridge. Still at least it was a sign of some break in the weather.

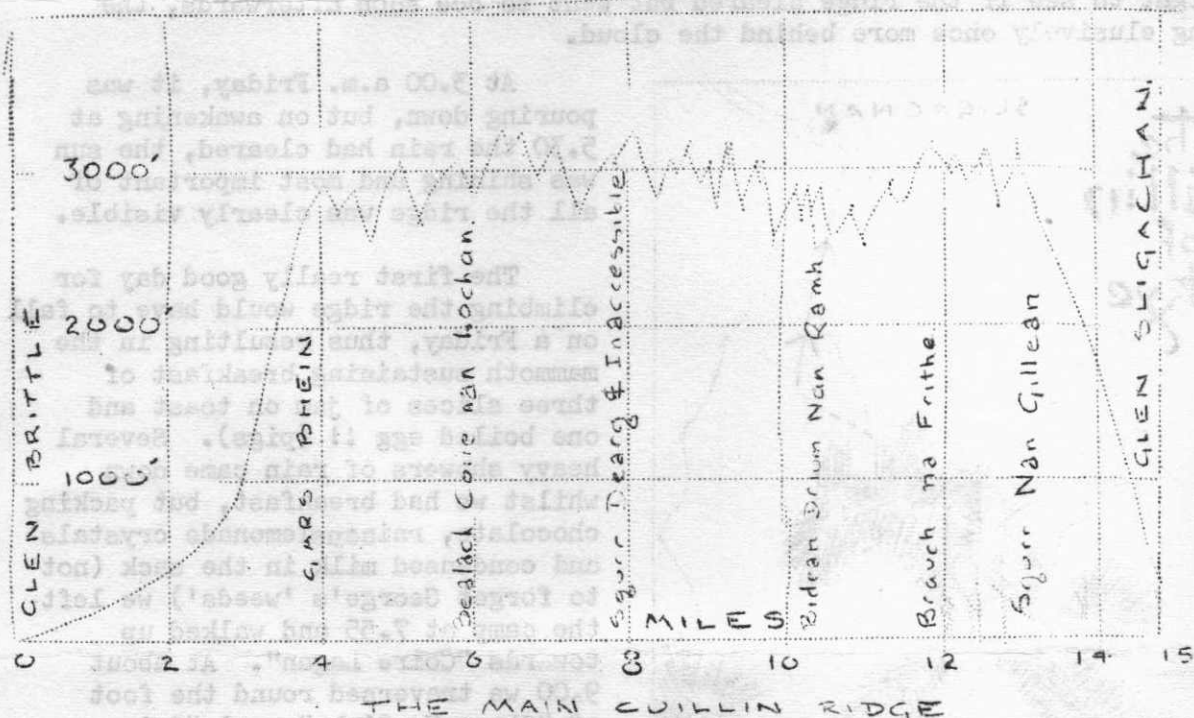
The party (George Maddison, G. Walsh and myself) had come to Skye having heard tales of the uncertain weather and decided that should the signs of good day be eminent, then we would take a chance in attempting the ridge rather than wait for a settled spell of good weather. The ridge is over eight miles long and nowhere does it fall below 2,500 feet above sea level. We waited until just after midnight to see if the ridge cleared but went to bed soon afterwards, the ridge hiding elusively once more behind the cloud.



At 3.00 a.m. Friday, it was pouring down, but on awakening at 5.30 the rain had cleared, the sun was shining and most important of all the ridge was clearly visible.

The first really good day for climbing the ridge would have to fall on a Friday, thus resulting in the mammoth sustaining breakfast of three slices of jam on toast and one boiled egg !! (pigs). Several heavy showers of rain came down whilst we had breakfast, but packing chocolate, raisins, lemonade crystals and condensed milk in the sack (not to forget George's 'weeds') we left the camp at 7.55 and walked up towards "Coire Lagan". At about 9.00 we traversed round the foot of "Stron Na Ciche" past "Coire a Chrunnda" and "Coire Nan Laigh" arriving at the foot of "Gas bhein" (pronounced Cars Ben) at 10.00. Whilst the walk up the scree to the summit of "Gars bhein" was rather a slog we were amply rewarded with the views looking out to sea. The Islands of Soay, Canna, Eigg and Rum being clearly visible. During the walk up, the weather had slowly deteriorated and we arrived at the summit of "Gars bhein" at 11.00 midst heavy rain and mist, continued over "Sgurr and Choire Bhig" and "Sgurr Nan Egg".

Descended towards the west a little early to miss the ridge running to "Sgurr Dubh Mor" but on seeing "Coire a' Ghrunda" in the bottom returned to the main ridge and on to "Sgurr Dubh na Da Bhein". Did a 40 ft. abseil into the Thearlaich Dubh gap. By this time the cloud was lifting and the sun was shining again. As we climbed out of the gap (Diff. grading) initially, the rock was very cold, wet and smooth, making ascent quite awkward. George led through and by the time Gerry and I had finished climbing was some way on "Sgurr Thearlaich (pronounced Chairlack)". All traces of mist had vanished and looking around we could see the whole of ridge rising and falling in the distance somewhat like the teeth on a saw. Looking east we could see the deep blue of Loch Coruisk and further away the towering mass of "Blaven" and "Glach Glas" rising from Glen Sligachan. We pushed on and soon were at the foot of the Thearlaich Connich Gap. Not knowing the correct and shortest route up the rock we made our own way up climbing about severe standard.



Arriving on the summit of "Sgurr Mhic Connich" we realised how terribly thirsty we all were. Imagine our joy when we came across a large footprint in some earth, full to the brim with cool water!! Slurp, Slurp, Slurp, etc. Refreshed we moved on descending into "Bealach Coire Lagan" (Bealach simply meaning a pass) and continued up the 600 ft. rise to the Inaccessable Pinnacle. More stops taken to suck films of water running down rocks and other drinks of water collected in hollows in the rock. Noticing an overhang dripping profusely with water and climbing up with a large mug (not George) we managed to collect over $\frac{1}{2}$ hour a mugful of water. Being too liberal with the lemonade crystals resulted in the foaming over of this lovely liquid from the cup followed by harsh words from the rest of the party, not to mention a frantic dive by George who with mouth wide open nearly swallowed the mug.

After soloing up and down the pinnacle we continued towards "Sgurr Nan Banadich" passing some climbers from camp who left the summit of "Gars Bhein" at 8.00.

In the distance we could see the ridge seeming to go up and down endlessly, still we continued, traversing the tops of "Sgurr Thurmaid" the two tops of "Sgurr a Greadaidh" and the four tops of "Sgurr a Mhadaidh". Each peak having considerable scrambling descents into gaps followed by more climbing cum scrambling to get out of the gaps. More than once we descended down the wrong side of the ridge into gaps, spending much time retracing our steps. All this plus the now inevitable stops for drinking out of rock puddles. The final degradation came when we discovered a rusty tin full to the top with rust coloured water. George looked at Gerry, Gerry looked at me, I looked at George - Slurp, Slurp, Slurp. Vintage rust water, late 62. Rougher going over the three peaks of "Bidean Druin na Ramh" each time saying more or less that once we had climbed this one or that one the main difficulties would be over, knowing full well we were all liars since the ridge is well sustained throughout its length. To cap it all the mist was now coming down covering the tops of "Bruach nan Frithe" and "Sgurr Nan Gillean".



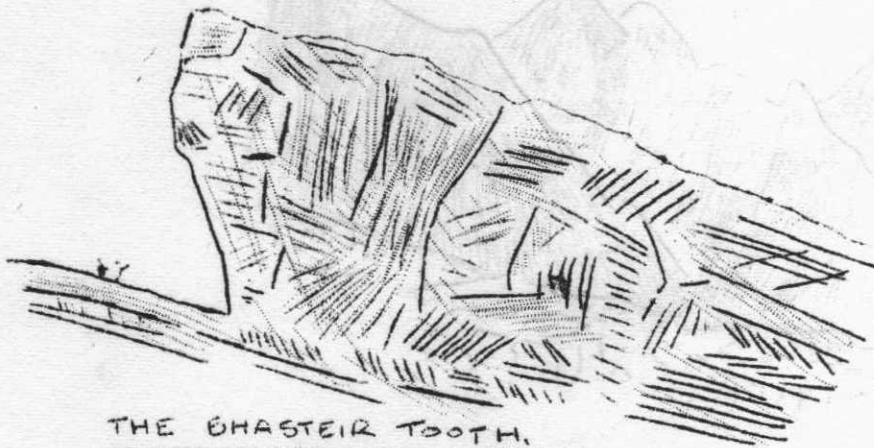
THE CUILLIN RIDGE FROM SGURR NA BANADICH

13/10/64 Sheet 3

THE CUILLIN RIDGE FROM SLOUGH

A short pause for a maximum of five drags from a bag and we pushed on. Whose idea was this anyhow? Arrived on "Bruach Nan Frithe". Care was required to follow the correct ridge and visibility reduced to about 10 yards. Continued on and reached the Bhastier tooth towering above us looking very sombre and frightening in the mist. The climb up it was about V.Diff. but the rocks were now wet and tips of our fingers sore or bleeding from the Cuillin Gabbro. Still up we went onto "Am Bhastier", only one more peak to go. A short descent then up for a short but steep 100ft. scramble on to "Sgurr Nan Gillean". The Peak of Young Men. The only thing being that these three particular young men didn't feel as young as they did earlier in the day. Time 9.00. 10 hours to the ridge, opened and ate the tin of condensed milk. 'Dropped' at "Sgurr Nan Gillean" into Glen Sligachan and arrived at the Sligachan Hotel at 11.00. Thumbed it back to camp and had some coffee. Before retiring for the night, took a walk along the beach at Glen Brittle with everything quiet save the gentle lapping of the ocean as the tide went out. Looking up we could see the peaks of the Cuillins standing out proudly against the deep blue of the night sky. We, too, felt proud as we finally retired to bed at 3.30 a.m. Saturday.

Our "fierce" walkies over.



THE BHASTEIR TOOTH.

An Introduction to East Buttress, Scafell By John Britt

The air was cold and fresh as we scrambled down to Broad Stand and walked down the path to East Buttress. We planned to climb Tia Maria which was an easy V.S. and a good introduction to the crag.

We quickly roped, and I moved rapidly up Mickledore Chimney to the bottom of the first pitch of the chosen route -- a crack. It was running with moisture, but looked clean. Harry Wiggins belayed, and after a few false starts I managed to grip the small chockstone from which was hanging a dilapidated loop of nylon line.

I attempted to insert a line runner, but the presence of the old line jammed firmly behind the chockstone, prevented this.

Well at least it's something, I thought, and clipped my main rope into it. The move entailed friction with the left foot, and the consequent placing of the right foot on the chockstone. From this position, holds above the bulge, which appeared at this point in the crack, seemed to be in evidence.

Having taken good stock, I gave a quick nod to Harry, and gripping a small incut just inside the crack, raised my right foot and placed it firmly on the chockstone. As I straightened up, I was pleased to see my left hand almost on the hold above the bulge.

Suddenly there was nothing under my right foot and my bridged left foot gave no support.

'I'm off Harry', I plunged past the point where the chockstone had been, in time to see the line runner practically on the ground -- useless.

Crash ! -- I landed on my right leg and heard it crunch before rolling ungracefully on my backside.

'It's broken Harry', I shouted, 'there goes Chamonix this Summer'

An account of the Chamonix Expedition that John Britt should have been on appears below and is a joint effort from those who went, after much prodding from me.

CHAMONIX 1964

After a tedious train journey across France we finally arrived at Chamonix early Sunday morning during a heatwave. Loading ourselves with food (12 loaves "French bread keeps for weeks!") we caught the téléphérique up to the Plan de l'Aiguille to camp for the first week.

On the Monday after teaming up with a fourth member, "Des" the party, suffering by this time from severe sunburn, conquered the all British route the N.N.E. ridge of the Aiguille de l' 'M' (Difficile) without any serious difficulty.

The following day we descended to Chamonix to enable M. Barker who was suffering from tonsillitis, to visit a doctor, this however proved to be rather expensive and we had to call upon the services of Dr. Tom Patey, a British climber who was camping with a group of up and coming young climbers which I believe included Joe Brown and Chris Bonnington. M. Barker now claims the proud distinction of being the only A.R.C.C. Member to share a tent with Chris Bonnington and H. Wiggins the only one to have beaten Joe Brown at Bar Football.

Fully cured but having infected half of Chamonix we returned to isolation at the "Plan de l'Aiguille". A fierce thunder storm early on Thursday morning put all snow and ice routes out but M. Barker and Des, after drying out, climbed the Petits Charmoz (P.D.) After an early start on the Friday we ascended the Nantillon Clacier and then the Batière by way of the Rocher de la Corde. The after effects of tonsillitis forced M. Barker and Des to retire only 3 rope lengths from the summit. The descent proved entertaining. M. Barker disappeared down a bergschrund and G. Cross harpooning H. Wiggins with his crampons.

Still suffering from acute sunburn but chiefly due to the lack of liquid refreshment we returned to Chamonix for the week-end, to be met by another A.R.C.C. expedition consisting of Jack Case, Val Flynn and Frank and Margaret Whittle, who after informing us of the cheaper source of Bier and the direct route to the swimming pool left for Austria. The "week-end" proved so successful that G. Cross returned to Angleterre a week later without completing another route but having improved his swimming tremendously.

The following Thursday M. Barker and H. Wiggins the only two remaining casual workers proceeded to the Couvercle hut but had to bivouac outside due to the lack of financial resources. From here they spent the next day attempting the East Face of the Moine (Très Difficile) but had to abseil off after three hours when a recumbent Frenchman informed them that the first 300 ft. required pitons, they had none (wrong route!)

CHAMONIX 1964 (continued)

After another week-end in Chamonix they completed the Chamonix face of the Peigne (Très Difficile) without any serious mishap other than M. Barker being struck on the shoulder by one of the many rocks dislodged by proceeding Frenchmen. The descent of this peak proved tricky due to a series of long, blind abseils off loose pitons.

Later in the week M. Barker completed the West face of Pointe Alberte (Extrêmement Difficile) with a member of the Bristol Climbing Club and then returned to England to be deloused after having spent two nights at the Chalet Austria (known Colloquially as the "Flea Pit")

At the same time H. Wiggans ascended Mont Blanc but was prevented from breaking another A.R.C.C. record "Top Crib Player" by the lack of a partner. He then climbed the North Face of the Aiguille du Midi by means of the Frendo Spur (Difficile) and was forced by bad weather conditions to bivouac at the téléphérique station on the summit. The descent of the peak by téléphérique proved expensive and he was forced to sell his return ticket and hitch-hike back to England thus bringing the expedition to an end.

M. Barker. G. Cross. T. H. Wiggans.

All characters referred to in this article are fictitious and any slight resemblance to anything living is purely coincidental.

G. Cross.

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE

The venue for the Annual Dinner Dance this year will be The Red Lion Hotel, Grasmere, and the date - Saturday 14th. November. Tickets £1 inclusive. A 3 piece band has been booked, and an extension applied for. Reception is at 7-30 p.m. Due to the success of last year's event, and the demand for tickets already, they will be available on a 'First come, First served' basis, and must be paid for on application. Write to me at 17, Scafell Ave., Morecambe. **EARLY !**

Wilf Charnley is going ahead with plans for a Three Peaks Walk on either the 19th. Sept or the 26th. (Langdale Meet) He tells me that no-one attempting the walk will be compelled to finish. His address (For those interested) 493, Blackburn Rd., Darwen, Lancs

Finally, my thanks to all those people who have contributed to this issue, and made the idea of a Bulletin really worth while. Keep it up!

Yours Sincerely

17, Scafell Ave., Morecambe.

Barry Ayre