

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

10th September 1966

Bulletin NO. 21

Dear Member,

This is the 21st publication of the Bulletin and, I think, one of the biggest that we've produced. Many thanks, therefore, to all our contributors, both in the past and in the present, who have cudgelled their wits to provide us with material over the years. The first Bulletin was brought out in February 1961, edited by Jack Thornton, and I note that I follow the best traditions of Jack and Barry Ayre in producing these Bulletins by means of bashing the type-writer with one finger. To my mind, the purpose of these News-letters is not simply to report epic feats on the mountains, as many would-be contributors are put off by not having epic feats to report, but to reflect the activities of Members on the rocks, the fells and anywhere else they may be. Also, to keep those Members who can't reach us very often, in touch with the doings of the rest of us. Therefore, if I hear of interesting events which deserve mention and no article is forthcoming, then I shall coax, cajole, threaten, push and prod until I get one. Writing an item is easy once you get down to it - you just pick up a pen and start at the beginning. Then send it to me.

Now then, a word on subscriptions. These are due on April 1st each year, NOT July 1st. This latter date is the date that Membership ceases if subs. have not been paid. The Management Committee on July 7th ordered that 80 members who were in arrears, be removed from the list and they are no longer eligible to use the Huts. Members might consider using a Bankers Order so that subs. would be paid automatically each year. Again, Members who may be going abroad for some years can notify the Secretary and have their Membership placed in cold storage until they return - they also receive their Bulletins that way, too.

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THE SOUTH WEST PILLAR OF THE DRU (1965)

By C. J. Woodall

(forwarded by John Britt)

In retrospect of the two great climbs on the Montanvers face of the Aiguille de Dru, the Southwest or Bonatti pillar is to my memory the more vague although, of the two, more recently climbed. Perhaps its danger and beauty impress too greatly on the mind, numbing it and making it insensitive or perhaps the West Faces greater difficulties give more time for thought and meditation. Like all big climbs in the Alps, one's energy is devoted to getting off them as soon as possible, so giving the climber little of the experience he is really searching for - enjoyment and fulfilment.

The Chamonix weather during August 1965 was as bad, if not worse than usual, so giving plenty of time to discuss ambitions whilst festering in the National. Emmett Goulding and I discovered that we both wanted to climb the Pillar so decided to team up with our respective ropemate, Brian Wakefield and Johnny Britt, to make a rope of four. This, I thought, gave us a greater chance of getting ourselves out of difficulty if the weather became too bad. Plans were kept very quiet until the day arrived when the weather looked settled and good. Emmett told Brian of our intentions and I in turn informed a rather bewildered and tired Johnny, who had just completed a solo traverse of the Forbes arete in bad conditions!

Heavily loaded, we left Chamonix at 4 p.m. to reach the Rognon at the base of the Dru at about 7.30. Immediately hopes of an unhindered climb were ruined by the presence of two French and two Yugoslavian climbers with similar intentions.

After a few hours sleep

After a few hours sleep we rose at 2 a.m. with mixed feelings. There had been a frost and the constant roar of water rushing down the black, ice-etched couloir could be heard clearly. Emmett, detecting my uneasiness, reassured me saying that when it doesn't freeze there is no verglas. However, he too was worried that when there is no frost there is no ice to hold the crumbling shattered rocks in place some 3,000 feet above our heads. However uneasy I had been, this was magnified as we climbed up the wet snow cone to the Bergschrund. Emmett led up the steep rocks; it all looked different last year when it was light and warm. The couloir was not new to Emmett either; he also had experienced the barrages of rocks but that did not seem to affect him as he led up, climbing by the light of his headtorch. The Couloir is no place to climb fast in the dark, but also no place to stay for any length of time. After two hours of steady climbing we reached the traversing ledges of the West Face. It was beginning to get light and we looked

The South West Pillar Of The Dru (Cont'd)

with nostalgia and longing before once more directing our attention at the black problem ahead. Last year there had been snow, now it was crumbling, yellow slabs and black gritty sections of water-ice running and oozing with muddy water. For 300 feet there was no delay and no stances, just slabs, breaking holds, waterfalls and falling ice. Our thoughts concentrated on the amphitheatre above, where we would be safe from stones and could hang from pitons. Slowly we entered it; crampons on, we followed Emmett's steps up the last 180 foot pitch of steeply angled ice and gazed up at our next formidable problem - the pillar. It emerges from the amphitheatre with no apparent routes, like an arrow from the ground. We craned our necks in search of a route but only saw one overhang-capped groove after another until our eyes were lost on the crackless bulging granite of the "Red Walls". We were four times more in number than Walter but not so in confidence. We chopped the last steps back across the couloir to reach the snow covered chimneys at the base of the pillar. It was 7.30 a.m. just too late to hear the weather forecast but it looked good even if it was cloudy.

The hard ice conditions in the lower grooves gave way to easier but more technical ground higher up. Our wet clothes began to dry as we sweated up the first pitches of six and we began to feel more at ease and more confident. Brian and Emmett took a wrong line so Johnny and I found ourselves in the lead, running backwards and forwards along narrow terraces to find the right grooves. By this time Johnny had given up the leads to me as he was content to second with the heavier sack. It made things faster as we could rest every 150 feet instead of the usual 300 on two ropelengths. The day became a blurr, one artificial pitch after another, smooth jamming cracks, delicate slabs, the climbing was wonderful and we had hopes of reaching the summit that day.

A rest below the "35 metre", wall gave enough energy to climb this 50 metre well-pegged crack, but a belay in etriers exposed to the wind-driven mist soon had us shivering and numb. Duvets on, we continued, reaching the very crest of the spur with all the major difficulties overcome by sunset. We were now in a world of our own, engulfed in mist and racing against the gathering darkness, hoping against hope that we would reach the shoulder before dark. However, a rope fell off me some 200 feet below the shoulder, completely engulfing poor Johnny with kinks and tangles so it was dark by the time he reached me. There was snow on the ledge but it was sloping and exposed to the wind, so very cold and needing many pitons for our anchorage.

The night was spent shivering but happy. Two hundred feet above us was ground which I had climbed a year previously with Malcolm, so we could win through now with no doubts. Our only slight concern was for that of Brian and Emmett whom we had last seen some 400 feet below the 35 metre wall but we could not conceive any thing going wrong for a party as experienced as them.

As the first light reflected off Mount Blanc's proud dome we sorted our gear and began moving. It was cold and our fingers were insensitive to the holds and even karabiners could not be held properly. Our limbs were stiff from cold and the punishment of the previous day. A short groove was climbed, a scramble along a ledge and then an overhanging chimney. I swung out of the chimney, following pegs, onto a slab, and found myself wedged between the boulders of the ledge some twenty feet below. Cursing does no good to sprained wrists so up I went again, the half light only first betraying the clear verglas. streaked across the slab. Johnny followed, likewise a little shocked to have come so near disaster. A short pitch got us onto the shoulder and more climbing on verglas up the familiar grooves above led us onto the quartz ledges and the long tedious descent.

We had epics on the descent, finding that abseils with only one good hand are not fun but, whilst Johnny slept in the Charpoua hut and I in Chamonix, Brian and Emmett were route-finding by lightning flashes, desperately trying to get down before the inevitable storm was unleashed. They reached the hut at midnight, tired but safe.

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The South West Pillar of The Dru (cont'd.)

The story does not end here for as the storm raged for a week, the two Yugoslavians who began their ascent two hours after us sat patiently awaiting to be rescued. How they survived that week we don't know, but they owe a great debt to the Chamonix guides.

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An item in a newspaper (1.8.66) states that two injured British students, Malcolm Farrow and Christopher Woodall (both non-members) were rescued by helicopter from the slopes of the 11,490ft. Grand Chamois after falling while climbing on the north face. We have no further news but hope that they are making a good recovery.

MOUNTAINS AND ISLANDS

Angela M. Faller.

It is now six months since I decided to devote summer 1966 to mountaineering and five weeks since I resigned from work to put it into practice. If I had any doubts about the morality of doing this, they were soon dispelled by June's glorious weather, surely a sign of blessings on the scheme. You may wonder whether such a life would become boring after a while. Far from it; there has scarcely been a minute to think or to read, never mind put pen to paper and how there was time to work I can no longer imagine.

Whitsun found us at Cwm Silyn in North Wales, to climb a new route named Crucible. It was superb, not desperate in spite of its XS grading, and it inspired the catch-word for the week "hot as a Crucible"

Then for me two busy days elsewhere with novices before my long awaited visit to the Big Cliff, Clogwyn du'r Arddu. Unable to wait, I wandered up the Snowdon railway late on Monday evening and thus beheld the much-revered crags for the first time, rose-coloured and welcoming in the setting sun.

There would be no darkness that night; the moon was almost full, the sky cloudless; at ten o'clock it was still warm enough for bare arms. A party of climbers finishing late up White Slab sounded quite happy as I ventured to scramble up on the East, somewhere near the foot of Pedestal.

Gradually the rock changed from pink to silver as the moon rose; one could think only of making an all night vigil in such an awe-inspiring place.

The following night we did almost that with a planned bivouac in the sheep-fold. Chris Mitchell had led me up Llithwrig and Vember and we had refreshed ourselves with a swim in the sun-warmed Llyn before I was permitted to do some leading on Longland's. Even then it seemed a pity to sleep and miss the progress of the stars. I lay in my sleeping-bag and recaptured the day's climbing; Llithwrig with its entertaining rope move proved not too strenuous or demanding; Vember was considerably harder but the situation was relieved by my racing a gritstone lad on November and finishing the second pitch just ahead of him. Hunger and heat-exhaustion prevailed the next day. I jibbed at Shrike but we led through on Great Slab and Birthday Crack to justify our return to the valley. That week we also climbed the Grooves on Cynn Las, a Brown classic, and the inevitable Cenotaph Corner. Anyone near Cynn Las at the time would have seen a skilful leader with a cheating, giggling second, happy that the crux pitch of the Grooves takes a perfect vertical line. Technically, this climb is comparable with Vember.

After the concerted effort of following good climbers up extremes, it was relaxing to drive north (in different company), calling at Bishop's Scale en route for Skye. We crossed the Sound of Sleat on a sparkling morning, with views of Raasay to enjoy until the Black Cuillins appeared.

Camp established on the beach at Glenbrittle, it was decided to attempt the traverse of the main ridge the next day, should the fine weather hold.

A 6 a.m. start was rewarded eventually by a perfect day for ridge-wandering, warm, calm and clear. It was easy to understand why this expedition, with its 10,000 ft., of ascent, is reputed to be the finest in the British Isles. To enjoy it, one needs to be quite fit, happy on rock and accustomed to exposure. More than 24 hours later we hitched from Sligachan to the camp-site to find quite a reception committee.

Glenbrittle consists only of a handful of dwellings and the fine B.M.C. Memorial Hut, but for Syke this is quite populous. Care is needed when names on a map may only mean places where a boat can land. Despite the lack of trees, the island is fertile with flowers; buttercups, bluebells, sea-pinks, and wild strawberries grow on the shore, Broom and rhododendrons flower riotously at this time of the year. There are many kinds of birds, from puffins to golden eagles, and it is easy to catch fish and crabs to vary the camp menu. We found great creamy rock-crystals, semi-precious stones and natural narrow staircases in the rock. Islands everywhere, deep clear seapools ideal for diving, magnificent sunsets but almost no darkness - these are some memories of a first visit to Syke.

We also traversed Blaven to complete the Munro's on the island, visited the Starr with its famous Old Man and grotesque pinnacles and struggled round the coast to Loch Coruisk on a day too hot for climbing. To keep cool, I swam in the sea at half-mile intervals, feeling like a mermaid as I dived in off the rocks. The only rock route we did per se, was Cioch Direct, a pleasant severe. We paid our respects to the Talisker whisky distillery at Carbost and lingered in lovely, remote Talisker bay. Sunday Mass was in a tiny chapel in Portree, where the priest appealed for generosity to his parish, scattered as it is over an area greater than many a diocese. Only one rainy day precluded all activity and we were caught out in storms on our last climb, the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann. Sadly we left the Misty Isle, Colin homewards to anticipate next year's holiday, I to prepare for the Alps. During this Langdale interlude at the end of July (should be June, Angela. - Ed.) I look back to the bewitching Hebrides and make idle plans next year to get a boat and sail round them all. Meanwhile Chamonix and Zermatt approach. Mountains to climb at home and abroad, friends to climb with, dreams to dream - what more could a girl want?

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A.R.C.C. HUT IN WALES

There is no definite news as yet, look you, but negotiations are proceeding and I hope to have some 'info' for you later in the year.

With a bit of luck, however, this time next year you could all be Jonahs and go climbing around in Wales. (Eek!)

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THE LAKE, A CENTURY AGO.

The Westmorland Gazette is a newspaper with a fine tradition of reporting going back nearly 150 years. Its first Editor was, I think, Thomas de Quincy. Each week, it prints an extract from its files of 100 year ago, and throws a fascinating light upon the times and customs of those days, in a beautiful and leisurely style of English which we rarely find these hectic days. I am indebted to the present Editor for his kind permission to print these items.

"June 25th 1865. John Bluncl, Fleming Coward, guides at Mackereths Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, and Thomas Grisedale, Shepherd at Langdale Head, started from the Hotel at 3 a.m. and arrived on the top of Scawfell at 5 a.m. Three hours later, they were at Lowdore. The diary continues as follows: 11 a.m. Skiddaw, 2 p.m. lunch at Logberthwaite, 5 p.m. Summit of Helvellyn, 7.30 p.m. Chapel Stile, 8.30 p.m. Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. After this, Grisedale went around Langdale Pikes against a fresh man and returned at 10 p.m. This was an unprecedented exploit in touring. . . ."

"July 23rd 1865. A pedestrian named Charles Elson has been amusing the Kendal public with the undertaking of a feat which was to walk to Kirby Lonsdale and back twice a day for six days in succession. This would have amounted to 52 miles a day or 312 miles in all, but for some reason or other the man broke down on Wednesday and was unable to continue."

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The Westmorland Gazette.

As regards the first item, what times have our own Members set up? - without adding in the Langdale Pikes, of course.

There have been one or two incidents recently, which are causing some concern to the various Committees and Hut Wardens. Last year, a transistor radio was 'removed' by a visitor and only some fast work by Bill Thompson, the P.C. at Chapel Stile, restored it to its rightful owner. More recently, strangers have been discovered in the kitchen at Langdale, late at night, having apparently dropped in for a warm and a chat before the fire - without permission. Other people have been known to enter and expected to be given a bed and have seemed surprised if this was questioned. We are a Club, a Club with subscribing Members and Membership Cards issued to all fully paid-up Members. The Huts are not, repeat not, doss-houses for all and sundry!

Therefore, Members are reminded that:-

- a) Graduate Members may not bring or sign in guests.
- b) People who arrive at a Hut and say that Joe Soap will sign them in, are out of order. A Guest must arrive with a Member and his good behaviour is that Member's responsibility. Guests may stay only for the duration of the member's stay.
- c) A non-member may not be brought into a Hut without reference to the Hut Warden or a Committee Member.
- d) Members arriving at a Hut should sign-in at once, not when they depart.
- e) If subscriptions are not paid by July 1st, then that person (save at the Management Committee's discretion) is no longer a Member and may not use any Hut.

Members are also reminded that the note inside their Membership Card states that it 'should be retained for production when called for as evidence of Membership. You are warned that there is a likelihood of these cards being demanded in the future, no matter how familiar the face may be, so for your own sakes always carry this card on you. If you don't, you'll have no-one to blame but yourself, if one dark, soggy night you get the old heave-o on to your left ear!

One other thing, the Committee feel that application forms for membership should not be signed 'ad lib' by Members and that the suitability of applicants should be the prime concern of all.

'RAINMAKER'

Of course, had we known from the beginning what great efforts Rainmaker was to cause us, there is not much doubt that we would never have gone near the thing. As it is, we look back on our trials with great pride and on our final success with satisfaction.

Rainmaker is one of the new and very fine routes climbed by Allan Austin during his work on the much awaited Langdale Guide. Descriptions of these routes are not yet in print and scruffy bits of paper with hastily hand-written lines are fought over, studied and even memorised with almost fanatical zeal by young dedicated climbers who have nothing better to do with their time. These are exciting days and it will be a shame when all we have to do is open a guide-book to find our routes. Anyway, Rainmaker was discovered via this climbers 'underground' and that is where we also learnt that it was awaiting a second ascent. Now climbers are as vain as anyone else and the opportunity of making the second ascent of a hard, new route presents an almost irresistible lure to them.

When Monday morning was fine and clear, there was little we could do to help ourselves as we made our inevitable and grudging way up to Stickle Tarn and Pavey Ark. Contempt rarely succeeds, so ever-respectful we warmed up on 'Golden Slipper' which is only an 'ordinary' hard V.S. (How smug can one get?)

The crux pitch of this climb is a fine 80' slab steadily steepening towards its top. Though not unusually hard, this pitch feels very serious because of the total lack of useful protection. As we were scrambling down Jack's Rake after the climb, Harry (Wiggans) attempted to do, what proved for him, to be the impossible. That was, divide his attention between some pretty young thing climbing up the Rake, and the intricacies of the descent. This nearly cost him dear, as he shot over the edge and just avoided serious damage by grabbing hold of a tree with one hand as he shot by. It is my far-fetched contention that this incident set the pattern for the next two hours and that it is all Harry's fault and not mine that I fell off twice!

At the top of pitch (3) of Deception, is an extremely steep corner with an overhanging start. Rainmaker follows this corner in a single pitch of 110'. The

main difficulties are in the first 25' the remainder being quite straightforward. To gain a sloping ledge at the foot of the corner proper is a difficult move. A bold layback and swing round on an undercut flange or some difficult climbing, using a thin crack on the left of the ledge solves the problem. After some half-hearted attempts, I made a determined attack using the latter method - it was more like some gymnastic gritstone problem than the start to a sedate Lake District route. However, it went quite well; so far, so good. The next thing was to reach a peg, up a bit and out on the left. That wasn't hard and soon I was clipped in to the peg and resting quite happily. Theoretically, the hardest bit was over but the rest didn't look much easier.

Above, a shall corner with a thin crack at the back led in about 10' to a tiny grass ledge with a small sapling on it. The holds looked good, but then they would have to be as the whole set-up was gently overhanging. I made two moves and immediately got into a hopeless position. To panic in such a situation does no good at all but it's difficult telling yourself that at the time. It was obvious that I was going to fall off anyway but like the drowning man I did some pretty feverish clutching. A few seconds later I was dangling upside-down from a sling in the peg and wondering where my specs had gone.

Harry tied my rope to the belay and went looking for my eyes whilst I struggled free from the sling, got myself the right way up and clipped back into the peg. He couldn't find them and I was getting fed-up of just hanging there swaying in the breeze, so I parachuted down to the deck and together it didn't take us long to find them. We sat down, thought about what had just happened and smoked; my first cigarette for nine years - and the last. The ropes were still hanging from the peg, well free of the rock and looking rather lonely without a climber fastened to them. Not sure that those difficult initial moves would go so well this time, I preferred to climb up the rope hand over hand and clip quickly into the peg. Before long I was once more trying to reach that small and elusive ledge 10' above the peg. Graham (Beech) who was stood at the bottom taking photographs, shouted up, "Don't fall off again, Chris, I caught you in mid-air last time!" I was trying my best to oblige.

With both hands on the ledge and as near in balance as is possible on such steep rock I thought it must be all over. "I can afford to give the impression of being a safe competent climber now", I thought, so, instead of shantle-melfing straight onto the ledge I nonchalantly took one hand from the rock, fiddled for a line sling and looped it gracefully round the sapling not forgetting to clip in to it. The trouble was that I was so tired after putting that silly, useless line-runner on that I hadn't the strength to make the move. Attempting to reverse to a good foothold, I slipped and fell onto the line-runner which of course pulled the sapling up by its tiny roots. In an amazingly short time I was dangling from that self-same peg, only this time the right way up and complete with spectacles. Harry (the hateful) thought it was time to call it a day. I think his Jack's Rake injuries were hurting him and anyway he wasn't particularly struck on being violently jerked from his stance and suspended a couple of feet up. A retreat was organised but not before we had promised each other to the fray as soon as possible.

The next day it rained violently and ceaselessly until four in the afternoon. Significant? I suppose it depends on how superstitious you are - it certainly impressed us. Wednesday was fine; doubts as to whether the crag would be dry were worrying us but with Wee Willie Sterling joining us and with renewed determination we were quite optimistic. The footholds under the initial overhang were soaking and a useful few minutes were spent drying them out with a towel while William, who doesn't fancy flying, belayed himself to an impressive-looking arrangement of pegs and jammed nuts. This time, the whole thing went remarkably well though I was shaking a bit when I got to the grass ledge which was even smaller than it looked and not at all easy to stand on. A move to the right and I could rest comfortably at last with a great big flake belay at my shoulder. There followed a brief moment of great well-being which is one of the reasons for climbing and is difficult to recapture in other circumstances. The rest was easy. Bill and Harry followed very well, making one feel a bit stupid but I was gratified when they both said that it was hard. That night there was great rejoicing and much drinking. In the darkness big black clouds tumbled over Bowfell and the Crinkles. The rains started and didn't stop for five days. The following two weeks were extraordinarily wet and on one of those days it rained the hardest for five years, causing great damage, total destruction of the Blea Tarn road, rockfalls and landslides. We were even more impressed. On one of those wet days we went up Deception to retrieve a belay-peg we had left behind and so cleared up the last loose end of what had proved a dramatic and arduous campaign involving, let it be admitted, a mere 25' of steep mossy rock.

It must be said in our defence, that it is not normal for us to have such epics in getting up our routes and that it was the first time that I have fallen off in over two years of climbing. It was just one of those things and alls well that ends well. Besides, it's all Harry's fault - or the girls!!

Chris Mitchell.

The Ballad of Harry Wiggans

or

The Rake's Progress

Tune: Cwm Rhondda.

1. Harry Wiggans went out climbing,
On Rainmaker, set a mark.
Gaily climbed the path to Stickle,
Up the screes to Pavey Ark.
Chorus: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Alleluia, alleluia.

2. First of all, did Golden Slipper,
Ne'er a problem did it make.
Then around the top of Pavey,
Started trotting down Jack's Rake.

3. Half-way down and doing forty,
Put the brakes on, failed to stop,
Heard a tourist scream "Good 'Eavens",
As he sprinted o'er the top.

4. Friends above looked down in horror,
As he disappeared beneath.
Thought they'd take a quick collection,
Have a whip-round for a wreath.

5. Passing down to view the wreckage,
O'er the edge they chanced to see.
Nothing less than Harry Wiggans,
Hanging grimly from a tree.

6. Brought him back to terra-firma,
Brought him back to kith and kin.
Nothing more than lots of bruises,
Stiffened muscles, loss of skin.

7. Two days later, full of fire,
Back again they went for more.
Forced Rainmaker, did it neatly,
SECOND ASCENT - EXCELSIOR!

8. All you climbers pay attention,
Climbing's dangerous, you see.
Don't go off the rails like Harry,
Be a little tram - like me!

T.P.B.

To be sung on all ceremonial occasions,
by the massed choirs of the Achille Ratti.

Someone recently calculated that if all the A.R.C.C. Members were laid end to end, they'd be stretched out from Bishop's Scale to the New D.G. What voice from the back remarked that they often were?

PERSONAL COLUMN

A couple of resounding crashes in Langdale recently, announced the toppling of yet two more mighty pillars of bachelorhood.

The engagements were announced of:

Peter (Dhobi) Durkin to Miss Dawn Backhouse, both of Morecambe.

Derek W. Price, of Barton, to Miss Margaret Ogden of Blackpool.

We offer our best wishes to them for every happiness, both now and in the future.

MARRIAGES -- Maurice (Mo) Barker to Miss Jean Mills, on July 9th at Lancaster.

BIRTHS -- To Terry and Margaret Mason of Morecambe, a daughter, born I think, in June. Congratulations to the proud parents!

ORDAINED -- Rev. Fr. David Lannon, in March.
-- Rev. Fr. Robert Livesey, in June at Padiham, Lancs.

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"TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN"

by Barry Ayre.

From Morecambe, the Lakeland mountains only look to be a stone's throw away across Morecambe Bay, but by road it is forty miles to Langdale. A few weeks ago Terry Mason and I had the opportunity of taking the 'short' cut across the sands to Ulverston. Although the 8 mile walk to Grange is frequently completed in between tides, the 20 mile route to Ulverston had not been covered for over 100 years, when the horse drawn coaches from Lancaster to Furness used this route. The Guide who lead the party knew that the distance would have to be covered in less than 5 hours to beat the tide. This entailed following the tide out, and crossing three river estuaries en route.

A cracking pace was set right from the start at Hest Bank at 2.15pm. Within an hour we had crossed the Keer estuary and shortly after 4 p.m. arrived at the Kent estuary. This was ebbing at a tremendous pace, and much too dangerous to cross for a further half hour. The breather was very welcome, and we eventually ventured across, roped together to avoid being swept away. (For the Rock Apes we didn't peg the route!) The water was almost waist deep and still flowing at a rapid rate. After reaching Grange the coach route goes overland for 4 miles to Flockburgh before returning to the sands to cross the Leven estuary. A local Guide had come out to meet us, and the tricky crossing avoiding shifting sands was completed. By the time we reached the shore at Ulverston we were both pretty shattered, and the 20 miles had taken 4 hours 50 minutes.

I have rarely had such a strenuous day out, even on the fells, and found that rippled sand can be very tiring, as can crossing the estuaries against the current.

Although the panoramic view of the Lakeland hills from Morecambe takes a bit of beating, the different views from the various points en route were even more impressive. Even so, once is enough, and I think we will both be sticking to the fells in future.

ACHILLE RATTI

The questions sometimes asked by new Members are 'what does the Club's name mean?' or 'who was Achille Ratti?'. The short answer is that Achille Ratti was a climber and mountaineer of international repute, born in a little town near Milan on March 31st, 1857. He was ordained in 1879, later became Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal, and then finally, was elected as Pontiff, taking the name of Pope Pius XI. He was well known for his published works, both theological and his Alpine experiences. He was the first Italian to traverse the steep face of Monte Rosa above Macugnaga, bivouacking at a height of 15,000 ft. He also climbed the Matterhorn in the day from Zermatt, but was forced by bad weather during the descent to spend the night on the Shoulder. These were the latter days of the 'Golden Age' of the Alps, when climbers had to pioneer their way in what was largely unexplored country. Perhaps one of our Members may care to try their hand sometime with an article concerning the experiences in the Alps of Mgr. Achille Ratti, Pope Pius XI. I print one extract from his writings overleaf.

The Ascent of Monte Rosa

Here we were on the Ostspitze, but we were unable to remain there long. Driven by the wind which, was now insufferable, and by approaching night, we soon began to descend, till we found, about thirty metres lower down, a projecting rock which was almost free from snow, and there we took up a position as best we could. It was 8.30pm. and the aneroid showed a height of 4,600 metres above the sea. The spot where we were was not indeed one of the most comfortable, and for people who had spent the day as we had, it was certainly not as good as the beds and the comforts of the Riffel. On the other hand, it was perfectly safe for anyone who was reasonably sure of himself, though it was extremely small. It was impossible to take a step in any direction. Anyone sitting down found his feet dangling in space; we had, however, every facility for stamping them, provided we were careful not to lose our balance. And these elementary gymnastics were most necessary.

The cold was intense; without being able to reckon the exact degree, I may mention that our coffee was frozen hard, and our wine and our eggs resembled it in that they were neither respectively drinkable nor eatable. We again had recourse to our chocolate, and to a generous quantity of excellent kirsch, which we still had with us. In such a place and such a temperature, it would have been the height of imprudence to allow sleep to overcome us. But who would have slept in that pure air, which pierced our marrow, and in face of such a scene as we had before us? At that height .. in the centre of the grandest of all the grand Alpine theatres ... in that pure transparent atmosphere, under that sky of deepest blue, lit by a crescent moon and sparkling with stars as far as the eye could reach ... in that silence ...

Mgr. Achille Ratti, 1889. Pope Pius XI.

THE DAY THE RAINS CAME.

The recent heavy storm in Lakeland (13.8.66) was described as being one of the worst this century. After a day of constant rain, it developed into a cloudburst over the Central Fells. About 9pm. water began to enter the bar of the New D.G. through the back door and quickly reached a depth of between two and three feet. Heavy boulders were swept down the Ghyll into the garden and great drifts of rubble littered the grounds of the Hotel. Mr. Bulman said that about £1000 worth of damage was caused to the stock and property. Hughie Parker of Middlefell had three cows swept away, all were recovered, two of them from Baisbrown, nearly four miles away - alive! At Rossett, a family had to climb through the window of their caravan when Dungeon Ghyll changed its course. It was fortunate - if that is the word - that the floods came comparatively early in the evening before people had retired for the night, otherwise there would have been casualties. Flood waters built up behind the walls at Wall End, which then collapsed allowing a three-foot tidal wave to sweep across the camp site. The bottom 300 yards of the Blea Tarn road ceased to exist. Wrynose Pass was blocked for several days. Birks Bridge in Dunnerdale was severely damaged, as was Stockley Bridge in Borrowdale. Styhead and Grains Gill footbridges were reported as damaged, and all footbridges in Langstrath washed away. Footpaths on the Fells are also reported as being either swept away or buried under landslides. It was stated that if the farmlands at the heads of Langdale and Borrowdale had been ordinary agricultural land it would not have been worth reclaiming, but the National Trust say that they will be restored. The pastures although normal to a casual glance, are choked with mud and will probably be unfit for grazing for the remainder of the year. Nearly two hundred lightning flashes were recorded and it was later calculated that nearly 5 inches of rain fell in an hour. The weight of water tore several gashes in the fell-sides, on Pike of Blisco and the Band. Footbridges at the head of Langdale, Hell Ghyll, the Fell and Rock Memorial Bridges in Ennerdale are also believed to be either damaged or washed out. The flood water in Langstrath reached a height of 20 feet above normal. A working party went from Bishop's Scale on Sunday to help at the 'New', clearing away rubble and demolishing a wall to enable flood-waters to escape. I think all Members will agree with me when I say that we regret the damage at the 'New' but we're thankful that the Bulman's are safe. As John remarked, 'It could have been a lot worse, at least no-one was carried off in a box!'

T.P.B.

ROUND AND ABOUT

Still awaiting news of several expeditions to the Alps and elsewhere, Angela Faller has been out there in Cham. and Zermatt since June, so has Mick Pooler and a few others ... Ben Carter and Frank Whittle have set up in business with a mechanical shovel and are looking for a few big holes to dig, mainly in the Preston and Blackburn areas, terms reasonable, contact Whittle, 331. Fletcher Road, Preston. back home from Uganda for a few months, is Fr. Norbet Cammack, pottering around on

George's old mo'bike ... Leo Brown became the first A.R.C.C. Member to cross Scotland in bottom gear, when his gear-box blew up recently, also reported climbing a mountain but wasn't sure which one, as it was dark at the time ... Judy Dixon is in South Africa and mentions an ascent of Table Mountain - by cable-car Cath Ludden paid us a short visit from Tobruk ... Jean Duckett has been in America for six weeks, taking round a party of students from the Blackburn area...

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REPORT FROM BUCKBARROW

Paul Charnock reports: We would like to express our gratitude to the twelve members who came along to our working week-end and put up such a good show despite the atrocious weather conditions. This is the time of year that the mice start to come out of the fields, so please do not leave perishable goods at the Hut to attract them. There will be a Meet at Buckbarrow on the week-end of 8 - 9th October. The all-in charge is 21/-, please send your deposit of 5/- to Eddie Kelly, 5, Scotforth Road, Preston.

Do not send them to me as I will be in Scotland for two weeks prior to the Meet. Could you please send your bookings before the 30th September?

Hang on,
Paul.

ANNUAL DINNER

As previously announced, the Dinner will be held at the Red Lion Hotel, Grasmere on Saturday, 12th November 1966. The price of tickets is 21/- each, cash with order, from Miss Marie Bailey, 63, St. Mary's Terrace, Heaton, Bradford 9. Enclose stamped addressed envelope. Reception is at 6.30pm. and dinner is at 7.00pm. prompt. Tickets are limited, so first come, first served, and enjoy a first-rate night-out!!

* * * * *

Well that's it for the time being and I hope that those people who asked for more climbing items are happy - but remember that if you don't write them, then how can I print 'em? Contributions please, next Bulletin will be around December or January, but let me have your effort before then.

Watch your step on the rocks and fells and remember that of the fifteen deaths on the hills this year, thirteen occurred on Scafell - mainly to walkers! Many fell paths are badly eroded by the recent storm and care is needed.

- * Since this report was made, another heavy storm has hit the district. No news yet but more severe damage has been caused.

I know of several Members who are changing their addresses. If you don't advise us of the new one, you'll miss the subsequent Bulletins and some very excellent articles - besides messing up the Secretary's beautiful filing system!

As I print my little Bulletin,
With many ifs and buts.
I can cope with all the full-stops,
But the commas drive me nuts!

Cheers,
Broddy.

Editor

T.P.Brodrick,
22, Fairfield Street,
ACCRINGTON. Lancs.

Secretary

B. Ayre,
17, Scafell Avenue,
MORECAMBE. Lancs.

(By Appointment)
(to H R H)

No responsibility accepted
for incorrect statements -
The Editor will cheerfully
plead insanity at the drop
of an ice-axe!

10.