

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

December 1967.

Bulletin No. 26  
Side 1

Dear Member,

FOOT & MOUTH

As you are aware, the present outbreak is the most serious known in this country and appeals have been made for all people to stay out of the countryside. We hope that you will take notice of the warnings and delay your visits to the Huts for a week or two until the all-clear is given. We have a good reputation in the valleys and we don't want people to change their minds about us.

As a Warden of the Lake District National Park (sorry, National Park), I was asked to attend and help to patrol and warn people off the rocks and fells - not an easy job! On the Friday night, I was the only person in Bishop's Scale and indeed, in the valley. No-one was at the Fell & Rock, the Wayfarer's nor the camp-sites, but some week-enders arrived in the valley on the Saturday, a London group, who didn't - or wouldn't - realise the dangers involved. It took a shotgun blast fired into the air to 'persuade' them to leave. So take warning, local opinion is against outdoor pursuits, for the time being.

I had a natter with certain people and found out something unknown to me before this. The Lakeland (Herdwick) sheep are bred for the mountains and are raised generation by generation in the same valley or area and so become acclimatised to the district. In bad weather, they know instinctively where to make for shelter. If a flock were wiped out by disease they could not be replaced as the new herd would take generations to become adapted to the locality. In other words, no more sheep! - the biggest disaster ever to hit the Lake District. Not only would the local farmers be ruined but the fells and valleys would be completely altered in a year or two, scrub, bramble and briar would spread over the hills and confine us to narrow tracks up the fells. The sheep have made the Lakes what they are today, open and free. If they go, then in a while you will see great changes take place - changes for the worse.

Please stay away - and hope that we'll be clear by the New Year!

If in doubt later on, then I suggest you ring John Bulman, at the 'New' - Langdale 213 - he'll tell you when it's safe to come, but not for the present.

200,000 animals slaughtered - £6,000,000 compensation.

TPB.

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BUCKBARROW - Paul Charnock reports:-

KEEP AWAY until the end of this outbreak, even if you are not going on the fells but just intend using it's excellent social assets - you are not wanted! The series 'Walks from Buckbarrow' is suspended for the time being.

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DUNMAIL -Marie Bailey reports:- The key to the Hut has now changed hands and in future must be obtained from Mrs. O'Halloran, 6, Benfield, Grasmere or her son, Liam. The location is up by the Catholic Church, Grasmere and first left. Membership cards will be required and Hut fees will be left at Mrs. O'Hallorans'. Liam will keep an eye on the Hut for us from time to time during the week. Your co-operation is requested, please.

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LANGDALE - The Annual Dinner on Nov. 4th was - as usual - a great success.

Contrary to expectations, no-one was crag-bound this year. The Guest Speaker was Tom Price, Warden of the Outward Bound School, Eskdale, who gave an entertaining speech. Bishop Pearson, Founder President, was unable to attend due to pressure of work, unfortunately. The meal was a good one and went down well - too well in the case of T. Hickey Esq., as his chair proved unequal to the strain and resolved itself into its component parts under him. Luckily, he'd finished his soup!

Reggie Rogers was prevailed upon to present the prizes for the 1st Annual Feel Race, Mick Pooler carrying off the Trophy and medal, remarking by way of thanks that he thought our Hut Warden was wonderful!

Ian Gartside (Fred Folksinger) and Geoff. Cross took second and third medals respectively. A new competition, a Point to Point, was announced (details elsewhere) and then we settled down to the main business of the evening, dancing. The 'Twist' was well fought but the eventual winners were Paddy O'Hara and his partner, Catherine Ryan.

The raffle went extremely well - for 5/- worth of tickets you also received a small torch, free, gratis and without batteries. Some people actually complained, not realising the deviousness of Gillie, who intends raffling off the batteries - next year! Gillie, off course (whoops) - Gillie, of course, provided the torches.

The 'breathalyser' was beaten very neatly by Barry Ayre, who laid on a coach to take us from Langdale and back again, which was an excellent idea.

We would like to thank our Guest for his speech, we enjoyed meeting him and Mrs. Price, also, we thank the staff of the Red Lion for the very good meal and all those Members who helped to make the Dinner the success that it was.

Thank you, again.

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TYN TWR - Bethesda.

\* CROESO I CYMRU !

(Welcome to Wales)

We have now completed purchase, Tyn Twr is ours! Bought and paid for, lock, stock and water-barrel, from your contributions. No point going into a song and dance about it, I did that in the last Bulletin, but it has been a tremendous effort on the part of everyone concerned.

We're on with the detailed planning and hoping to start WORK sometime early in 1968. It will not be open to Members for some time yet but working parties will be required, volunteers one pace forward, please, giving names to the Hut Warden. The Management Committee has appointed John Foster as Warden and we hope that you will give him every support.

His address is; 29, Braeside Crescent, Billinge, Nr. Wigan.

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PENGUINS HO !

By the time you read this, two of our Members, Ken Doyle and Harry Wiggins will be well on their way to Antarctica, Ken to Stonington Island and Harry to Halley Bay. I'm hoping to publish articles, providing they can write them - the first one is below. I've seen a P.C. from Ken posted in Montevideo, explaining its tatty appearance was due solely to its having been trampled underfoot in a riot ! Stirring times !

A YEAR IN GRAHAMLAND

- Ken Doyle

I am writing this just before returning to the Antarctic for another eighteen months. ~~XXXXXX~~ People always seem to be asking "Why go back?", so perhaps a description of life on a base and an account of one days dog sledging may help to explain my reasons.

Briefly, the British Antarctic Survey runs six permanent bases in the Antarctic, five of them in Grahamland. Staff are engaged not only in the more obvious topographical and geological surveying, but also in the fields of biology, zoology, meteorology and geophysics. To support this work the Survey also employs wireless operators, cooks builders, diesel and tractor mechanics and general assistants (often recruited from men with climbing experience).

I was fortunate to become a general assistant at the base on Stonington Island, on the western coast of Grahamland, about 67° South.

This small, low island is permanently joined by an ice slope to a glacier which gives a fairly safe route to the main 5000 feet plateau.

Once this is reached, almost unlimited travel is possible. The surrounding scenery of mountain, glacier and fiord is amongst the best in Grahamland and as the base is essentially a surveying one I was lucky enough to make several sledging journeys.

The base consists of a two-storied, insulated wooden hut, guyed down to a rock outcrop to resist the winds of eighty knots or over, which can funnel down the glacier from the plateau, getting up literally in a matter of minutes. It's a warm, comfortable hut which passing generations have improved, even to floral curtains and cushion covers. The main room has a library corner and a rather smart bar built by one of the carpenters in another.

For most of the year only two men are on base, but around Winter (when temperatures fall to the minus forties, the sun disappears for seven weeks and there are only three hours of daylight) all the complement of a dozen are there. Life doesn't need to drag. Everyone takes his turn at cooking, keeping the place tidy, feeding the dogs (90-odd of them) and filling the melt tanks with ice. Photography is a common hobby, there are books to read, records to play, sledges and harnesses to repair and laundry to do. Sometimes, (but rarely) people listen to the news to find out how the outside world is going on without them. On Saturday evenings the drink ration is traditionally handed out. Midwinters Day (June 22nd) and birthdays are excuses for other parties. In Summer, outside repair jobs and painting come to the fore, with some sealing when conditions allow. Food, incidentally, is mainly tinned and dehydrated, but quantities and variety are adequate.

(Cont)

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Side 4

Fresh meat is limited to the choicer bits of the seal killed for dog food.

Transport at Stonington is by dog teams. It's not simply an archaic British tradition to use them - they have their place still in mountain and crevassed areas, where tractors could be a danger, and can be very economical if transported into an area and supplied by aircraft.

Each of us had our own team of big, hairy, scruffy likeable brutes, (perhaps they thought the same about us!). Each is an individual character and nine have to be made to work together. The one thing in life they enjoy is a good free fight. As the idea is to join in on the winning side, these must be stopped at once, using methods which might appall the RSPCA. The dog's idea of real bliss is an inter-team fight, so dog sledging can be very enjoyable or very annoying but rarely dull.

One of the finest runs I remember was in the early summer of last year. A brief return to base had been lengthened by four days of wind. My geologist companion and I had to return to our working area forty-five miles away and we decided to travel during the night on firmer surfaces. On a cool, clear evening we dropped off the island onto the sea-ice, which had been hardened by the recent wind into a hard, almost ideal surface. Alternately sitting on the load and skiing alongside to keep warm, we steadily headed north, in and out of the fantastic shapes of the ice-trapped bays, up and down odd hard, wind-formed undulations. The sun slowly dipped southwards. Ninety miles away over the frozen sea the mountains of Alexander Land showed in a mirage. About 11.30 the sun dipped behind the mainland to the south, whose mountains prevented us from seeing a true midnight sun.

Dave and I paused for a flask of coffee and a block of chocolate and to give the dogs a rest, then we were off again. By 2.30 the sun was catching the 5000 foot ridge of Mount Verne ahead of us.

Another pause to pick up supplies from a depot on a headland an hour later and we were off again in early morning sunshine, past a great berg which I made one mile long by my sledge wheel.

By this time, forty miles out, the dogs were slowing.

Young Frankie, on her first long trip, no longer tried to play with old Angus on the more frequent halts. Soon we pulled onto a sloping beach below a pink granite ridge in the warm sun. Up went the bright orange pyramid tent, the dogs were fed, a quick meal was made, and soon everyone was asleep at the end of a tiring but superb night.

There were other days, of course - days of chilling mist; soft heavy snow to plough through; cold mornings with hoar frost on the sleeping bags, solid ice in the dixie and frozen dog clips to fumble with; sledges to be dug out after blizzards; and nights of sitting fully dressed hoping the tent would not blow away. But the things you remember and the reasons for returning are the happy days and the companionship in a beautiful, sometimes cruel, land. These things will readily be understood by anyone who is happy in our hills.

\* \* \* \* \*



The Warden's Song.

When I was a lad, not yet in my prime,  
 To the 'Tricity Board I served my time.  
 They taught me of volts and amps and watt  
 Not to do with the fuses when the things got hot,  
 But now I am a man, mature,  
 They've appointed me the Warden of 2, Tyn Twr.

I stand at the door in reflective mood,  
 A-chewing at my beard when I'm short on food.  
 It ain't part-ic-u-larly sweet,  
 But it's got a lot more protein than has Shredded Wheat.  
 And since it adds to my stature,  
 My beard and me are Wardens of 2, Tyn Twr.

I climb in the hills and walk in the dales,  
 From the North to the South of this land of Wales.  
 At night I sleep in the topmost bunk,  
 But often fall out with an echoing clunk.  
 So, on the floor I sleep, secure,  
 For am I not the Warden of 2, Tyn Twr ?

Tune: The Ruler of the Queens Navee - 'H.M.S. Pinafore'

TPB

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SCRAMBLES WITH A LAND ROVER - Joyce Foster

Last year, John read an article in the Scots Magazine about the Corrieyairack Pass, which ended by saying the pass was just navigable by four-wheel drive vehicles. So, having bought a Land Rover last January, and knowing John, I realized we would have to go.

General Wade built the road over the pass in his efforts to suppress the Scots, but unlike most of his other roads, the Corrieyairack has been mostly left to nature.

That morning, while John went to buy an O.S. map in Fort Augustus, I ~~stayed~~ gazed longingly into a shop window which boasted "We stock ninety-nine brands of whisky". We found the turn-off easily and the rough stuff started straight away. Half way up the hill was a sign which said the road was kept open by the Scottish Rights of Way Society, and then we saw two lads with camping gear, who must have walked over. The road was in surprisingly good condition, but the Hydro Board pylons follow the road, so they must keep it up to service the line. We stopped at a deer fence and could see the length of Loch Ness almost to the sea. The moor fell steeply to the left, into the ravine of Glen Taiff and although we couldn't see the river we could

hear it thundering along.

Just upstream from the Black Burn ford, was a sheiling in a beautiful, tiny green valley. The house was roofless, but the article in the magazine had told us that the roof had been removed to prevent deer poachers sheltering there. Up on the plateau, by the side of the track, I found a huge piece of amethyst quartz, and as I picked it up a small flock of snow buntings flew away. We stopped for lunch near the automatic weather station at the top of the pass, 2507 ft. surrounded by peat hags and pools, the mud full of deer tracks.

Whilst John and Mike went off to glimpse the North face of the Ben, Keith and I scanned the horizon with binoculars for deer.

I spotted a large herd of fifty, half a mile away, then I thought I saw more quite near. Crawling stealthily on hands and knees round towering hags and over mud criss-crossed with tracks, we disturbed six ptarmigan which chukkered off into the distance, putting any deer to flight.

As we began to descend, the road deteriorated rapidly, although we were following recent Land Rover tracks. And then we came to the hairpins. It looked terrible, the stream in a deep gully on the right, and at the left, black, oozy bog. The first hairpin was too tight for our long wheel-base to get round in one, and the gully edge was crumbling as we lurched sideways into the stream. The kids and I jumped out, would it hold or topple sideways, over and over down the hill? John managed to back up into the bog and cut across the hairpin, avoiding the worst, but then the gully crossed the road.

By this time the kids were worried, so we sent them ahead to prospect. They grew smaller and their voices faded as they shouted back "This bend's O.K.", until they were dots on the corrie floor.

Meanwhile, we began to repair the road, my heart chugging like the diesel 'jenny' at Wasdale Head. We flung stones for what seemed hours into the gully and bog beyond. Then, very carefully, John eased the Rover round into the bog, hoping it wouldn't continue and slide over the edge, because after all, we weren't insured to drive off a metalled road, and no flight of the imagination would get a recovery vehicle up there.

In all, we rounded eleven hairpins, only backing up on three, and according to the map, all were in the 250ft. above the 2,000ft contour. When we reached the bottom, even John was looking white, but the road seemed straightforward again. The scenery in the Corrie Yairack itself, which is one of the main sources of the Spey, was magnificent.

The fords across the next streams were good, except one, which was very steep down and out again. The spare wheel on the back door hit the road as the front end lifted to climb out, and cracked the back door, but luckily not badly. Further along, the glen began to broaden, and I saw two men climb out to the crest of a small hill half a mile away.

They stopped and watched us through glasses, so we stopped and watched them through ours. One was wearing a white mac and had something under his arm. Was it a rifle, and were they gamekeepers or poachers? Dark suit man began to run to the track behind us,



whilst White Mac strode along to cut us off in front.

They must be poachers, I thought, and they think we're police in our navy-blue Land Rover. I sat terrified, waiting for the crack of a bullet in the glass. Dark Suit was running down the track behind us, ~~xx~~ catching up with us, and White Mac marching along in front. We reached the gate in the wall together. As we went through, White Mac gave us a cheery wave with his rolled umbrella, and at the other side of the wall was a white car with Belgian registration and two women having a pic-nic.

They clapped their hands, cheered and pointed to a notice which said, "This road is impassable".

There was still a long way to the main road, it had taken all day and we had been in low ratio, four-wheeled drive for fourteen miles.

Imagine red-coated, white-breeched soldiers, dragging cannon up that hill.

\* \* \* \* \*

Stop-Press - Just seen the News on the goggle-box of the final party leaving for Antarctica and caught a glimpse of Harry Wiggans waving us good-bye. Hope you get a hair-cut before you come back, Harry! I have a letter from him asking me to pass on his address to anyone who requires it, 'specially girl friends. It also holds good for Ken Doyle.

C/o ' British Antarctic Survey '  
Stanley,  
Falkland Islands,  
SOUTH ATLANTIC via Montevideo.

'Far away places, with strange sounding names'. Ah, me!

\* \* \*

From New Zealand, comes a letter from Gordon and Rosemary Fox - now there's a mystery, where's that letter got to now? I had it three days ago and put it in a safe place; I've searched high and low but darned if I can remember where I've put it. Hope it turns up for the next Bulletin.

I'm sorry, when people take the trouble to write a decent letter full of news and I carelessly mislay it, it makes me feel guilty. My apologies to you. Arising out of a comment in this letter, I would like to point out to all our far-flung Members that their Subs. are automatically suspended for the period of their absence overseas. Provided, of course, that they notify us of their departure and return. This will keep them on the books as Members and Bulletins will be forwarded. We hope in return to hear from you especially if it can be printed for the Bulletin.

I won't lose or mislay them again.

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#### British Mountaineering Council.

We are invited to send a representative to the meetings of the B.M.C., from time to time in London. We are too far away to send anyone from here, regularly. Is there any Member, in or near London who would like to help by attending these Meetings and acting for us?

If so, please contact Barry Ayre for more details.

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PRIDE GOETH.....?

At a recent Buckbarrow Working Week-end, Wilf Charnley spent a considerable amount of time putting in a new window. Full of pride in a job well done, Wilf pulled the frame down - and the other half of the window shattered !

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POINT TO POINT

(Liable to cancellation)

At the Annual Dinner, Bill Hornby generously presented us with a handsome Cup, to be known as the 'Michael Hornby Trophy' and competed for each year in a Point to Point Event. An engraved Medal for First, Second and Third will be awarded by the Club, which the recipients, of course, will keep.

The Contest was to have been at the New Year week-end but the foot and mouth epidemic shows little sign of coming to an end yet, therefore, if cancelled, then it will be run later in the Spring.

However, just in case you're wondering about details, I may as well tell you something about it. It is meant to enable ALL Members to have a chance of winning, regardless of age, sex or their speed over the ground. It is not a Fell Race. Competitors will make their way, at their own speed around a course of approx. 5 - 6 miles, using simple directions to reach a series of checkpoints. This is where brains are of more value than brawn, where low cunning and ability to use one's loaf will stand you in good stead. A compass is necessary, special maps would be provided. It's just the thing for the average fell-walker to enter.

The event was to have been on the Sunday (New Years Eve) after Mass. What the position is now I won't know until this week-end.

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Well, that about wraps it up for another three months.

I have a bit of difficulty printing these Bulletins, as we haven't our own duplicator and so I have to shop around finding someone who has. I don't like asking the same person to do it all the time, so if there is anyone in Accrington or Blackburn areas who can help me to duplicate once or twice each year, could you contact me ? I provide all stencils ready typewritten, and all paper and printing ink. It's the facilities that I need.

A Merry Christmas to you all, a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

EDITOR

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

Cheers,

BRODDY.

SECRETARY

Barry Ayre,  
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MORECAMBE. Lancs.

STOP PRESS:

Point to Point cancelled.