

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

Bulletin 38

OCTOBER 1970

Side 1

Dear Member,

The current political catch phrases seem to be concerned with the "pollution problem" but quite apart from quietly choking on the roads to and from the Lakes, there are times when life at the huts seems on the point of disappearing under the welter of dirty crockery. The tip of our pollution iceberg is the aforementioned stack of pots and pans that always accumulates after breakfast or dinner - to the great annoyance of those who must spend considerable amounts of time clearing up after people's mess.

Some people still don't seem to appreciate that the nightly fees of three shillings are only to meet the cost of the available facilities, and that the domestic chores such as the sweeping of floors, cleaning of toilets, and of course "washing up", have to be done by the members themselves.

It is so easy for everyone to do their own washing up - including those apparently unmentionable grill and frying pans - that it is a great pity that the lack of any sort of activity of a few should be allowed to disrupt the life of the other members.

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A R R A N, EASTER 1970

We made it, this time. No strikes, breakdowns. or Acts of God; just a mad dash for Fairlie, arriving 5 minutes before sailing time; but no sign of the ferry. It was running an hour late, due to high winds.

My memories of Arran were of that glorious July day 6 or 7 years ago when I first set eyes on it from the mainland. Across a 'duckpond' sea, the grandeur of its mountains was warm and inviting. How different now, as the ferry (at least 1000 tons) heaved and rolled, and occasional squalls of sleet swept over us. We had intended to camp in Glen Sannox, but as we drew nearer and looked straight down it, the impression it gave was of a swirling cauldron of mist and vapour (no doubt with rain and hail). Indeed, the Witches Step is high on the ridge at its head.

Joyce was already saying "Let's go back down to The Lakes", it was so cold. But that wasn't the way the Empire was won, so when the ramp dropped onto the quayside, ashore we went. Nor were the crowds waiting to embark any encouragement. Bedraggled youngsters with hastily packed tents and sacks; worn out cyclists. It was only Maundy Thursday. Had they arrived on Wednesday and already had enough?

We had seen enough of Glen Sannox from the ferry. It has a North Easterly aspect, whereas Glen Rosa runs mostly S.S.E., so it was in the latter we set up the tents. It had been a long day, and in such Arctic conditions we were soon in the most comfortable place, our 'pits'. But not to sleep (at first, anyway). The wind had got up, and its gusts were beginning to roar down the glen, just like an express train approaching a station. We cowered in a flat calm, waiting, and as they hit us the tent became alive, as if to fly away. I soon tired of waiting for this to happen, turned on my side, and knew no more till morning. But not so Joyce. She couldn't relax, so when a guy broke, on both our elderly Jamet and the kids' newish Good Companions Minor, she was aware of it and got up to mend them. (She's worth her keep, if only for moments like these.)

By morning the wind had dropped, but the cold was so intense that we were only just warm enough, so it wasn't too much hardship to crawl out and face the frozen world. The small burn by which we were camped was solid, and there was a sprinkling of snow. The lads were soon up and out, breaking the ice on the marsh nearby in their 'welly boots'. But by the time we had finished breakfast, it was frozen over again. At first we could only blame ourselves, for coming over the Border and camping in March, but then we heard on the news that snow had fallen in Kent. After breakfast we drove into Brodick to check the time of mass (July, August, and Sept. only) and have a look round. Not very much, 3 or 4 shops, 2 or 3 smooth hotels (bar round the back) as well as the ferry terminal. Heading north up the east coast we found half a dozen herons fishing by the spit of rock. All up the coast we came across bird life, various ducks, peewits, and the usual herring gulls and black headed gulls. After passing through the village of Corrie, I turned the Landrover up the track into Glen Sannox, but only  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off the road was a locked gate. Leaving the 'battlegon', we walked on and found several excellent camping sites by some old mine workings. Barytes had been extracted from several drifts into the hillside. There were the usual forlorn remains of man's activity, a low dam, roofless sheds, a collapsed water conduit, and a wrecked iron water wheel half buried. On the ridge above a herd of about 30 deer grazed slowly along the skyline.

So passed most of our week on Arran, cruising right around the coast road, short walks to places of interest; a dun and a chambered cairn, the old castles at Kildonan and Lochranza. The weather was very mixed, rain, snow, hail, but with some long sunny periods. However, it wasn't that which kept us off the tops. There was snow on the top 300 or 400 ft of the hills, which must have been quite hard, and I had not brought the axes. I do not know these hills, and some of the ridges looked quite sharp and spiky, and the lads are not sufficiently experienced to be taken on unknown ground with possibly dangerous conditions.

There is, however, one excellent walk which barely reaches 1500 ft., the traverse of Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox. So on the Monday,