

## ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

April 1973

Bulletin 48

Dear Member,

The winter is having its last fling, providing a good covering of snow on the hills - at least as viewed from valley-level! The weather could be a very interesting factor in some of the club activities planned for the coming months.

Many thanks to those members who live at the same address and who answered my appeal for economy by requesting only one bulletin per address. This is a great help.

I would like to thank Jow Morrissey, John Foster and Bernard Carter for their contributions to this bulletin. The bulletin of a climbing club owes much of its interest to the articles about the personal experiences of its members. If anyone has any memorable mountain experiences, write to me about it. Everything is considered!

### The Annual General Meeting

Saturday, 12th May 1973 at 2.30pm in the St. Ignatius Social Club, Pump Street, Preston.

#### Notice of Agenda

1. Minutes of the last Meeting.
2. Matters Arising.
3. President's report.
4. Chairman's report.
5. Secretary's report.
6. Treasurer's report.
7. Hut Wardens' reports.
8. Election of one member to the Management Committee.

The position of one Ordinary Member is vacant due to the retirement of John Gilmour.

Nominations to be made in writing to the Secretary not less than 14 days prior to the A.G.M.

9. Proposals, if any, for amendments to the Constitution.
10. Any other business.

### A First Visit to Scafell Pike - Joe Morrissey.

I had arranged with a friend to meet him at his home in Gosforth on a Sunday morning early in January. The weather was not very promising as I set off to hitch from Whitehaven (whose bus service is not the most frequent), and so I was only really expecting a bit of a plod around Wasdale.

Drinking a cup of coffee in a warm sitting-room in Gosforth does not encourage one to plan a very active day when there is thick mist outside and foul weather seems set in for the day. However, we



decided to at least show willingness and set out by car on the now familiar road to Wasdale Head.

Only as we approached Buckbarrow did we find a weakness in the armour of the mist, with a hint of sunshine on Overbeck, tempting us to linger there. Undeterred, and pretending we were going to be really traditional, we continued to the parking place below the Fell and Rock Hut.

I then remembered my last visit there, almost exactly a year ago, when we plodded wearily up to Hollow Stones by way of what I think is the most soul-destroying plod in the Lake District: Brown Tongue.

Neither of us relished the thought as we began the plod, again in mist. I had been foolish enough to admit that I had never been up either Scafell or Scafell Pike, hence the masochistic trudge.

As we slowly wended our way upwards we became increasingly aware that conditions were going to be better than expected. The mist began to thin out, we walked into a warm breeze, and looking back over Wasdale it became increasingly obvious that we were approaching the upper limit of the cloud and mist. The Northern fells bounding Wasdale took on that beautiful pink hue favoured by writers describing a brilliant sunset. Illgill Head began to show above the cloud, and finally, just as we reached Hollow Stones, Lingmell and Pikes Crag were revealed in all their glory.

My imagination, fed by pictures of crags and hills in profile, had its own ideas about that moment when the sun bursts over a shielding hill and throws up the profile of a crag with all its detail. My imagination did not disappoint me for Pikes Crag was as though gilded, and high relief was emphasised by the sun shining almost horizontally from the right. We paused a while, and I was introduced, at a distance, to the delights of Pikes Crag. We cursed ourselves for not bringing our cameras, and for not bringing a rope. I was again shown, pleasantly this time, the unpredictability of the weather in the hills.

A rude awakening followed. I was pointed in the direction of the screes leading to the entrance of Lord's Rake, although I did not make amove until I had had explained to me the mysteries of Scafell Crag, which even looked appealing, a most unusual occurrence according to my companion.

Bracing myself I began the second most tedious plod in the Lake District, the walk up Lord's Rake. It was a question of two steps forward, one back, until we reached Lord's Rake.

Threading our way up the rake was no easy matter. There had obviously been considerable weathering of the rock, which was more than a little loose in some parts. The path down the other side provided an amusing diversion in the shape of some old snow, much to my delight as I had just bought a new ice-axe and was delighted to be able to try it out. Another snow-filled gully further provided more sport.



By now we were both getting very excited. We were now quite clearly above cloud level, and I was itching to get to the summit to get a complete view.

We were not disappointed. We had chosen one of those all too rare days in winter, that reward the persistent mountaineer. I felt overwhelmed by the view from the summit. In all directions, as far as the eye could see, the land, and sea, was covered by cloud. We estimated that the upper limit of the cloud was at about 1 800 ft. Again we cursed our forgetfulness in leaving our cameras.

Standing at what was virtually the top of the Lakeland Dome we had the whole Lake District spread out at our feet. The abrupt finish to the cloud provided a magnificent boundary to the valleys. From Wasdale all round the circle to Eskdale we identified the valleys, and then had much fun finding the major peaks. It surprised me that even from Scafell the Langdale Pikes retain their distinctive form. Far Helvellyn and even Conistone Old Man were visible. Although we did not have the Wainwright guide, I'm sure all was as Wainwright pictures it.

Two small bumps in the cloud to the north-west we took to be the chimneys of the power station at Sellafield, now hidden beneath a layer of cotton wool. The truly inspiring sight was that apart from the cairns on the summits of Scafell and Scafell Pike there was not a sign of the activity of man. No roads were visible, no houses or farm-buildings. This was a time to be savoured to the full. In splendid isolation on the summit of Scafell we ate our lunch, and I strained my eyes for a glimpse of my native Ireland.

All too soon we started off again, in the direction of the Mecca of English walkers, the summit of Scafell Pike. I was rather amused(!) at the negotiation of Broad Stand, reached after a slight detour to admire the magnificence of Scafell Pinnacle.

Feeling very pleased to be off Broad Stand (I have an intense dislike for slippery slopes) we continued to the summit of Scafell Pike, although this was now an anti-climax after the joys of Scafell.

Since we were pretending to be fit, and wanting a fitting finish to the day, we headed for Great End. I had only once previously seen Great End, and that was on my introduction to winter climbing by way of Central Gully. We had a look again at this Gully, and decided that it was not worth reversing in the condition it was in, with only patches of snow, and that had virtually a staircase in it. Besides, the interesting pitches were free of snow. So we decided instead to reverse Cust's Gully. I wish we hadn't. For those who like wet slimy gullies it was alright. I prefer dry rock faces or gullies nicely laden with snow. Suffice it to say that we managed to reverse Cust's Gully without much difficulty.

From there we headed back to the interchange at Sty-Head, and back into the cold, wet mist. Not quite the perfect end to the perfect day, but as we wended our way back to the car I found it hard to realise that in the previous five hours I had been in glorious sunshine, had experienced a sight I am unlikely to see for a long time to come, and that I had thoroughly enjoyed a 'traditional' day on the hills. I was more than pleased and impressed by my first visit to Scafell and Scafell Pike.



A Reminder.....

that members are responsible for the guests they sign in at the huts. Please don't risk the good name of the club by signing in people you don't know.

Annual Subscriptions

Your annual subscription of £2-00 was due on 1st April 1973. Please send your subs to Neville Haig (address at end of bulletin) enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope. Prompt payment means that proposed repairs and improvements to the huts may be carried out as soon as possible.

B.B.C. Broadcast

The religious service to be broadcast by the B.B.C. from the Chapel at Bishop's Scale will be recorded on May 27th 1973 and transmitted on the B.B.C. World Services programme on July 28th. The music for the service will be provided by the Folk Group from St. John Southworth School, Preston. (This Group has won various competitions in the past and are very competent.) The service will be conducted by Fr. Michael Turner. Any members who are in Langdale for the recording will be very welcome to add their voices to the singing. Remember, the only Catholic Climbing Club in the country will be host to the B.B.C. in this act of public worship of God. This must be a great act of Christian witness by the ARCC.

Report of the Langdale Meet

This very successful meet was attended by fifteen keen members, one even coming all the way from London. For the newcomers to rock climbing, Saturday started with informative talks, followed by some introductory pitches on Scout. The conditions were so cold that fingers went numb and the climbing had to be curtailed. The walkers went over to Patterdale for a walk along the lakeside around Place Fell and over a very windy Boardale Head. On Sunday everyone walked to Coniston (on four wheels). From there we went up onto the Old Man into a bitter hail storm. On the summit the party split, the ladies traversed onto the col and then down to Goats Water and back via the Walna Scar Road to Coniston; the heavy gang made it by foot over the top back to Langdale. At the end of the weekend the unanimous opinion was that it had been a very rewarding and first-class weekend and all look forward to the next meet.

Matt Bennett.

Discount!

Pete Durkin is able to obtain 25% discount (we haven't asked how!) on certain camping equipment. This includes Calor and Primus appliances, including the cartridge type. This applies to cookers, lanterns, fires, etc. Write for details to: P. Durkin, 23 Oathills Drive, Tarporley, Cheshire.



A Date for your Diary:

Annual Dinner Dance - 17th November 1973 at the Windermere Hydro.

Hut Fees

The Achille Ratti is being hit by price increases. There has been no change in hut fees since 1961. The club has managed to absorb the dramatic increases in costs of materials, insurance, repair bills, etc. It was inevitable that hut fees would have to be increased. The Management Committee has therefore decided to raise the fees at all the huts from May 1st 1973. The charge for one member-night will be 20p and for one guest-night 40p.

The increased costs are also being passed on to parties using Dunmail. The fees there from 1st May 1974 will be £45 per week or £7 per night.

Forthcoming Events

May 19th The Fourteen Peaks (Welsh '3000' Meet) - Tyn Twr.

Which 14 peaks?

If this is the question that springs to your mind, it is obvious that you are long overdue for a visit to the Principality(?). Of Wales, of course.

In North Wales there are twice as many peaks over 3 000 ft as there are in the Lake District, half of them higher than Scafell Pike. Of course height is not the only criterion of quality as far as mountains are concerned. Ruggedness and shape are of great importance in deciding the aesthetic appeal of any mountain. Here again Wales scores, in that Tryfan (3010ft) is regarded by most climbers as the finest peak south of the Scottish border, and the knife-edge of Grib-Goch (Red Ridge) (3023ft) knocks Striding Edge into a cocked hat. Snowdon itself is a graceful pyramid; it is a pity that the summit would pass for a council tip, thanks to the hotel and 'the great unwashed' who flock to patronise the railway in high summer. Still, a cool pint is much appreciated after a hot ascent.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that I'm anti-Lakes. I'm not, since it was on the fells that I learned to love mountains more than a quarter of a century ago, and most people have a soft spot for the area where, for them, it all began. It's just that, living 90 miles from Ogwen and Langdale, I have come to know and love the Welsh hills as much as those of Lakeland.

The Fourteen Peaks are split naturally into three groups by the Llanberis Pass and the Nant Ffrancon. Perhaps the classical way to tackle them is to start at sea level at Aber Falls, and finish on Snowdon at 3 561 ft. I think most of us will be happy if we complete them in the reverse direction, having started from Pen-y-Pas at 1 170ft.

The Snowdon group is the smallest section, being only 6 miles down to Nant Peris, with less than 3 000 ft of ascent, but ending up at only 370 ft above sea level. The middle section starts with the



worst drag of the walk, more than two and a half thousand feet onto Elidir Fawr. Y Garn, Glyder Fawr and Glyder Fach follow, descending by the Bristly Ridge and the traverse of Tryfan, depositing us at the half way mark, Llyn Ogwen. Though half the distance is still to come, more than two-thirds of the climbing is now behind, so I anticipate that this will be the point where the sheep will be separated from the goats. Food and drink will be provided from a 'Naafi Wagon' at Nant Peris and Ogwen, and the refuge on Foel Grach will become Tom's (Finney) Tea Stall.

The 2 200 ft of ascent onto Penryrole-wen (Hill of the White Light) is the last big climb, only a few 100 ft of ups and downs follow over Carnedd Dafydd, Carnedd Llywelyn, Yr Elen, Foel Grach, to Foel Fras the fourteenth. Yr Elen and Snowdon are the only 'spurs' off the route.

The Caneddws are one of the biggest roadless areas south of the Scottish border, and Foel Fras is as near as dammit slap bang in the middle. So with the fourteen peaks behind you, there are still 4 miles of descent to the pick up point at Gerlen, only a mile from Tyn Twr.

So there it is, 28 miles of the finest country in Wales, and 11 860 tough feet of ascent. If Wales is too far for you to get down often, this is your chance to do 'em all at one go. How does it compare with the Wasdale Horseshoe? I don't know, but I expect that some of the tigers who completed that will be able to tell us on the night of Saturday 19th May.

The weekend is fully catered for, as are all the meets this year, so at least one week's notice of booking must be given. There will be at least two parties, fast and slow, taking up to 18 hours. This requires an alpine start at first light, 04.00 from Pen-y-Pas. Reveille will be at 03.00, so it is imperative that no matter how far away you live, you must set off as early as possible, aim to arrive at Tyn Twr by 22.00 to ensure a few hours sleep.

The best access to N. Wales from Preston is down the M6 to Winnick (exit 22), then through Warrington, only 5 miles south of which is the present termination of the M56 bypass of Helsby and Frodsham. When the middle section of the M56 is completed in 12 to 18 months, it will intersect with the M6 at Lymm, giving a vast improvement in access from north and east Lancs. Tyn Twr will then be about the same travelling time from Preston as Buckbarrow.

See you in Wales then?

John T. Foster.

Editor's Note: A booking form is enclosed with the bulletin. As I have had a number of enquiries as to the exact whereabouts of Tyn Twr, here is some information as relayed to me by John:

#### Tyn Twr - How to get there

(Map Ref. O.S. Sheet 107, 625659) Turn south off the A5 on the Llyogwen side of Bethesda onto the B4366. Tyn Twr is about 200yds down. Outside there is a slate cross with ARCC engraved. The key is kept by Mrs. Hughes at the last house before reaching Tyn Twr from the A5 (ie about 50yds before Tyn Twr).



June 9th     The Mountain Handicap - Bishop's Scale

Well, how do you handicap a mountain. On second thoughts, why. The mountain handicap is being run (though run is the wrong word) to replace the fell race; then all members, regardless of ability, will have a chance to win the Bill Hornby trophy - hence the word handicap. Mind you, if we did a fell walk in pairs then the chap with Terry Hickey would have the biggest mountain handicap ever.

The handicap will take the form of a three hut walk. Walkers will leave Bishop's Scale by car to another hut of their choice, then walk to the third Lakeland hut, to return by car - John Foster wanted to include Tyn Twr but we voted him down. There will be check points but between them route finding will be the walker's choice. Steps will be taken to see no-one gets lost.

The trophy will be awarded to the person who, in the opinion of a judging panel, has made the best effort - even if a non-finisher. Top rate walkers have a chance too because an exceptionally good time could qualify.

So you see folks, there is a chance for everyone. The date is June 9th, and the place is Bishop's Scale. - By the way, we need marshals.

Bernard Carter.

Around the Huts

Langdale After the work weekend, April 14th -15th, it is hoped that the new Family Quarters will be ready for use. The quarters consists of two rooms with six beds and one room with nine beds. There is a hand basin in each room. The bunks are in wood and built-in, with wooden bottoms; at the moment there are only a few mattresses, so air beds would be needed. There are no pillows and a limited number of blankets. There will be a kitchen with two cookers, a stainless steel sink with drainers and working surfaces. These cooking facilities will not be ready until summer so, for the present, the existing facilities in the main kitchen will have to be used. There is also a toilet and bath in the family unit. Work will be completed as soon as funds allow. Families using the quarters are asked to work together.

Buckbarrow The large Calor butane gas cylinders used up to now are no longer available. Hence they have been replaced by propane gas cylinders. These are situated outside the hut. The opportunity has been taken by the hut committee in changing the gas to re-pipe the whole hut.

Secretary's Address:

Derek W. Price,  
Eskdale,  
615 Blackpool Road,  
Ashton-on-Ribble,  
Preston, PR2 1LH.

Subs. Secretary's Address:

Neville Haig,  
752 Devonshire Road,  
Norbreck,  
Blackpool,  
Lancs.

Best Wishes,

Fr. David J. Elder (Editor)



Booking Form - Welsh '3000' Meet - Tyn Twr

I will be attending this meet from Friday 18th May to Sunday 20th May 1973.

- (1) I will be taking part in the 14 peaks walk.
- (2) I will be attending to work in the support parties  
(in the hut, transport, etc.)

Delete (1) or (2).

Name.....

Address..... Tel:.....

Please return this booking form before 11th May to:

John T. Foster,  
29 Braeside Crescent,  
Billinge,  
Nr. Wigan, Lancs.