

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB.

JANUARY 1979

BULLETIN 71.

Dear Members,

May I wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF THE OCT. MEETING

1. The Treasurer reported that major expenditure in the near future would be for Langdale roof and for Insurance.
2. Some discussion took place on insurance and it was agreed to leave the insured amounts to the discretion of the Chairman and the Treasurer, probably in the region of £70,000 for Langdale and £60,000 for Dunmail.
3. John Foster reported that the painting and renovation at Tyn Twr has been done extremely well, and attention was again drawn to the dangerous state of the gateposts. After discussion, it was decided that the front should be tidied up and an estimate obtained for the run-in walls as specified on the plans. Some discussion took place regarding the damp walls and the relative merits of silicone injection and slate hanging.
4. The Secretary gave the current membership figures: these show a non-Catholic proportion of 18%. However excluding non-voting members (graduates and junior members), the proportion was 20%, and accordingly it was decided that at the present time no further non-Catholic applications could be considered.
5. A letter was read out from the Vice-Chairman referring to proposed exchange visit with a Polish Climbing Club. The Chairman reported that some support could be expected from the Polish community in Blackpool and arrangements should go ahead to organise the exchange.

EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF THE DEC. MEETING

1. The Secretary reported that although a few Catholic Graduates had been accepted as Full Members, the overall percentage of voting members was substantially the same as previously reported at just under 20%.
2. A detailed list of income and expenditure was read out, and the Treasurer reported that apart from Langdale roof no further major expenditure was anticipated this year and that receipts should more than equal expenditure for the remaining part of the financial year.
3. Harry Wiggins had been given an estimate of £1,200 for thirty bunks. After some discussion Harry was given authority to spend up to £800 on new bunks and mattresses.
4. Tom Baron agreed to present to the next Management Committee Meeting his proposals for next years scale of charges for the use of Dunmail Hgt. He reported the income to date for 1978 at £2,541 and a healthy forward booking position.

MINUTES CONT....

5. John Foster reported that the Tyn Twr meet and the Bonfire had been well attended and there is a fairly steady booking from visiting clubs. An estimate had been received for the repair of the entrance pillars and after comprehensive discussion John was requested to authorise these repairs costing £67. An estimate for the run-in walls would be available for the next meeting.
6. The availability of Tyn Twr Key was again raised. It was decided that on Fridays and weekends the key should be left under the shell on the window-ledge as is the current practice. During the week it will be kept inside the house and available after 5.30pm. Derek Price suggested that a spare key should be kept at the Douglas Hotel.
7. Vice-chairman Mr George Partridge reported that he had received a reply from the Stoleczny Club in Warsaw to the effect that their Chairman was abroad and their next meeting would be on Nov. 17th, 1978. In anticipation of an exchange being agreed, George agreed to contact the BMC, SMC etc. for a climbing programme.
8. Frank Whittle proposed that planning permission for a septic tank at Buckbarrow should be sought. After discussion it was decided to defer this application until after the new lease has been finalised; in case this might affect the new negotiations.
8. The next Meeting will be at the Blue Bell Hotel, Preston on Fri 19th Jan. 7.30pm.

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NEWS

1. Mike Short of Horwich RMI and also ARCC has won The Fell-Runner of the Year award for the second time in his career. He last took the title in 1975 and has finished second for the last two years!! I am reliably informed that this is a unique achievement, and I am sure that Mike's fellow members of ARCC will join in wishing him heartiest congratulations.
2. Pete Chapman too, has been doing well with his fell-running. He was second to Mike in the Moffatt Chase and eleventh to Mike's second in the Nevis Race.
3. Several ARCC members ran in the Karrimor Mountain Marathon including our Vice-Chairman partnered by his daughter Elizabeth. This event is of course organised by another ARCC member, Gerry Charnley. But, bashful as ever they all kept their placings quiet.
4. Bob and Mary Whittam became proud parents on the evening of the Dinner. Angela Claire arrived just before midnight weighing 8lb 9oz, and all are thriving and well. Congratulations from us all.

NEWS CONT.....

5. Josie Ashton and Bernard Smith were married on Boxing Day and another member John Moriarty was Best Man. They spent a ski-ing honeymoon and will live in Longridge on their return from Italy.
6. Pete Durkin's Shop is branching out. In addition to calor gas and calor appliances he now has mountain clothing, boots etc., and is offering a good discount to members. His shop is in Tarporley and his home telephone no 082.93.2639.
7. The Club Orienteering Competition took place the morning after the Dinner, in Pasebrown Wood, Langdale. Winners:-
 Mens Trophy..... Tony Brindle....56 mins.
 Second..... Derek Price and Pete Durkin ... 61 mins.
 Ladies Trophy....Cherie Wiggans.....64 mins.
 Second....Liz Partridge.....74 mins.
8. The Dinner was most enjoyable at the new venue of the Damson Dene. Thanks go to Harry and Cherie Wiggans for their organisation. Thanks also go Rita Baron for the lovely and very professional soft toys which she made as spot prizes.
9. Two 8 berth self-catering flats between Glencoe Village and Ballachulish have been booked for the weekend of March 3/4th. The cost per night will be £1.25 per person and electricity is metered. Seven places are booked already, so hurry and phone Cherie Wiggans at 0539 24486 as soon as possible. It should be a good weekend; ski, walk or ice-climb; do your own thing.
10. Access to Tyn Twr: The key will be left on the window-ledge under the shell on Friday evenings and weekends only. This is because non-members have been using the hut without permission. Members requiring access during the week should request Frank Hughes to leave the key available on the particular date. Write to The School House, Pont Twr, Bethesda, Gwynedd or phone Frank at 0248 600196 about 17.00 or 22.30 hrs. Hopefully
11. After an epic six year battle by the Snowdonia National Park Society the famous Cromlech Boulders in Llanberis Pass have been saved from partial demolition for road widening. In 1973 the boulders were saved at the eleventh hour when the holes had been drilled and it was only a matter of hours before the fuses were lit. So these locally historical and geologically important ice-age boulders will continue to dominate the Pass for the foreseeable future.
12. Bishopscale now has scaffolding outside. The builders are starting on the roof as soon as the weather permits. Can any member help with the supply of new mattresses? Please contact Harry.

13. Threat to Wester Ross: Conservationists in Scotland are sharpening their dirks ready to fight a new threat to Carnmore; that splendid hinterland of unspoiled mountains and glens to the north of Loch Maree. Efforts are being made to revive the Hydro Board's Fada-Fionn hydro-electric scheme which was shelved during the 1960s. With the Kishorn Platform Site still awaiting further orders, Ross-shire District Council are concerned about lost jobs and have won written support from the Chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Bernard and Betty Heath, northern area organisers for the Mountain Bothies Ass. and doughty battlers for the countryside, are mobilising support to fight any revival of the Fionn-Fada Scheme. They have made these four points in letters to officials and newspapers:
We believe there is no need for this development as the maximum electrical generation that could be achieved would be quite insignificant.

Apart from the few years of the construction stage the permanent jobs would be very few.

Immense dams with access roads, pipelines and generating stations with overhead lines are no doubt part of the proposals for this wilderness.

Such a development would be needless spoilation of a natural heritage.

Anyone who has ever done the Munros in the area, backpacked or climbed on superb Carnmore Crag will surely support Bernard and Betty. Please write, their address is 18, Brownhill Road, Thurso, Caithness.

14. Now an item to gladden the hearts of many of our members: Macdonald and Muir Ltd. the last independant family-owned distillers produce a 10 year old malt "often acclaimed as the finest single malt available. It enjoys great popularity among discerning customers, who appreciate that quality costs a few extra pence. A substantial expansion programme was completed at the Glenmorangie Distillery at Tain, and although the benefit will not be apparent until after the ten year maturation period is completed, Macdonald and Muir believe that it is worth waiting for."

15. I received a letter from Jack Whiteside, as follows:-
"May I add my thanks to all who helped to make this years Sponsored Walk so enjoyable and successful, and especially to Joyce and all the Ladies for the very welcome brew and delicious meal afterwards. I also hope that next years Annual Dinner will be held again at the Damson Dene, a very enjoyable evening with most courteous staff."
Editors note: Damson Dene is booked - 17th Nov. 1979. Thanks too to the men who cooked the sponsored walk evening meal.

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THE MEETS CARD FOR 1979

The Meets Card is included with this bulletin. It was decided at a recent Management Meeting to allocate one weekend each month to each hut, apart from the set meets. Hopefully, this will encourage members to use the smaller huts more often if they can expect to find other members there, and visiting clubs and party bookings will not be accepted for these weekends. The weekends agreed on are:- The Saturday being the operative date,

The first weekend in the month.....Langdale.

The second weekend.....Tyn Twr.

The third weekend.....Buckbarrow.

The recent working weekends have been very badly attended. And so that members can plan to help well in advance, two spring cleaning meets have been printed in the meets card. Please will some other members come and help the usual four or five. We have many members who feel that they only use the huts infrequently and openly admit that they do not wish to become involved. This means that the burden of cleaning and maintenance falls unfairly on a very few.

The Junior Meet this year is on June 9/10th. Meet leaders are required and unless some volunteers are forthcoming, it will be a non-event. We have

It is suggested that you write the weekends item (above) on the back of your card, and then refer to it frequently!

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BUCKBARROW BOOKINGS 1979

February 9/10th..... Barrow MC. 8 places.
 February 17/18th Austrian Alpine Club 12 places.
 February 18/24th Edge Hill Venture Scouts
 March 16/18th Plessey M.C. 12 places.
 March 24/25th Caper Montis 12 places
 April 2/6th midweek..... St John Southworth 21 places
 May 19/20th Gloucester MC.
 June 8/10th Wigan R.C. 12 places
 December 15/16th Gloucester MC. 12 places.

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Tyn Twr

The Meet of October 7th was attended by twenty-odd members. The weather being mild and sunny, inspired journeys outside the immediate district to sample the rock and hills of Cwm Silyn and on Craig Gogarth.

A similar number enjoyed an excellent bonfire behind the hut a month later. I believe about 80 members attended the club dinner, who presumably heard the announcement of a working weekend at Tyn Twr. An attendance of five was the result, of which grand total one was a graduate on his first visit and another not even a member. Which shows once again how shy are the majority of our members;
 WORKSHY.....
 John Foster: Hut Warden.

SOME HIGH GROUND IN IRELAND by GERRY CHARNLEY

An account of a five day excursion made by five members of Clayton Harriers in 1962, who seeking fresh mountain pastures decided to walk the eleven three thousand feet summits of Ireland and other neighbouring heights with emphasis on making the whole an enjoyable holiday:

Our first ascent was to be the single 3,039 ft summit of Lugnaquilla in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains. We drove past The Great Sugar Loaf an aptly named peak and eventually parked in a delightful wooded glade. We changed into shorts and running shoes and ascended the broad ridge running WSW to the summit. A continuous ascent brought us to the summit in one hour where the view extended west along the vales of Glenmalur and Glendalough to the coast at Wicklow Head. The return to the car was across a superb grassy terrain which provided a fast downhill run off bringing us to the valley 4½ miles in exactly 30 minutes. We spent the first night in Clonmel well satisfied with our first day.

Today's objective was Galtymore 3,015 ft., and the road to Michelstown revealed splendid views of the Knockmealdown mountains some ten miles to the south. We passed ruined Galty Castle and parked in a setting similar to yesterday, with Galtymore Mountain in full view. The track was followed through the farm and continued direct up the shoulder running from the SW side of the mountain. A continuous climb of 52 minutes brought us to a pile of stones supporting a large wooden cross marking the summit. The sun came out and we remained in shorts and singlets gazing north across a breathtaking scene towards Tipperary. This mountain was chiefly grass with a few outcrops exposed on the bare summit and perhaps resemblant of some popular uplifts in the Yorkshire Dales. We continued along the ridge westwards, stopping to admire a small barn perched high on the mountain and enclosed on three sides with precipitous slopes composed entirely of grass. A fast descent to a col, and a further ascent to an unnamed summit of 2,549 ft. Here we reclined in the sun and then to our delight another magnificent continuous run off, down a continuous ridge of three miles, and later found accomodation in Killarney.

After an enjoyable breakfast, we drove along a maze of country lanes in the general direction of Macgillicuddy's Reeks. We left the car and today we wore boots and anoraks because of the more rocky terrain and possible slower progress across the high ridges. We followed the Hag's Track and after one mile started to ascend the slopes above the track and make direct for the summit of Beenkeeragh 3214 ft. The views were exceedingly fine north and west across Lingle Bay. Particularly clear were the Sleive Mount fairs and further west was Beenoskee 2,713 ft. with the Inch sandbar in the immediate foreground. The route from Beenkeeragh followed a narrow ridge similar to Crib Goch, at first descending to a level traverse which continued for half a mile before rising to the summit of Carrauntoohill and the great wooden cross marking

HIGH GROUND IN IRELAND Cont....

the highest ground in Ireland. We each in turn signed the Visitors Book and increasing wind brought the first proper rain. Caher was the third summit and this was gained by another fine ridge walk completing a superb horseshoe on the 3,000ft mark. From Caher we returned the same way as far as Carrauntoohil and then traversed to the right across the face of the mountain. The remainder of our walk across the five summits of Knockacullion 3,441 ft., Ballaghnaageeha 3,160 ft., Coomeenapeasta 3,190 ft., Lackagarrin 3,100 ft. and Knockapeasta 3,062 ft. was undertaken in rain with visibility down to 20 yards. We finally arrived at the car and returned to Killarney.

Brandon Mountain was our eleventh and final peak, lying in the remote north west of the Dingle Peninsula. Our road followed Killorglin, Milltown and Castlemaine and later the coast bordering Dingle Bay. The weather was not promising, all the land above 2,000 ft being obscured in a blanket of cloud. The occasional glimpses of mountain to the south across the waters of Dingle Bay impressed one with the magic attraction of the mountains in this part of Ireland. We parked the car on the peats road of the hamlet of Tiduff, and whilst changing into shorts observed that more light was penetrating the cloud. The initial climb led via a track to a col overlooking Brandon Head, we then turned south onto a gradually climbing ridge to the summit. At 2,000 ft. we turned onto the ridge proper and the sun came out, the cloud lifted and then a superb panorama on all sides. The summit is marked with a large tubular metal cross erected on the ruins of St. Brandon's Oratory and we had a most interesting vista of the whole tour. Few mountain summits could be more rewarding with such contrast in landscape. To the north and west 3,127 ft. below was the blue Atlantic, to the east was the wide expanse of Brandon Bay, the low lying peninsula out to the Magharee Islands and beyond the Bay of Tralee. Immediately at our feet was the great corrie on Brandon's east face and a cluster of tarns above the village of Clophane. To the south was continuous high ground to Brandon's Peak and a further ridge to Gearhane which we ran across before descending a broad grassy shoulder most conducive to fast running and then found accommodation in Limerick.

The remaining 130 miles to Dublin was made in one journey and arrived in the City in the early afternoon. Our boat did not sail until 8pm so we drove to Santry Stadium the headquarters of Cloncliffe Harriers and in absolute privacy enjoyed an hours training on the track which has seen many an historic track performance and claimed more than a few World Best Times. The sea crossing was quite uneventful, we disembarked at 7am and two members of the party returned to work that day.

(Grateful thanks to Gerry Gharnley, He doesn't know I've got my hands on this!)

An extract from the novel
'THE SWEET AND BITTER EARTH' by ALEXANDER CORDELL.

With acknowledgments to the author and Hodder & Stoughton Ltd publishers.

"Our team in Victoria was much like any other.

Dan Morgan was our foreman, and he argued the 'bargain' with the agent, which was the amount of yardage we had to cover at a time: Tom Booker was the splitter ... he cut the slate to handable sizes after Harri, the best rockman in Llochwedd, dropped them down from the bargain. And he had an eye like an eagle, did Harri, hanging on by his eyebrows up in the roof. In the guttering light of his candle you could see his 'jumper' tool gleaming as he bored for the explosive charges, chug-chug-chug, bump, bump, bump, then in with the gunpowder, and he'd take that rock down the vein as neat as a curlew's whistle. Once down, Tom would get at it, driving holes for his plugs and feathers, hitting them in to the metallic ringing of his hammer; and he'd run them apart with the accuracy of a knife - just small enough for a block and tackle to lift onto a wagon. Down the line to the turn-out I'd push the wagon then, with my arms as stiff as black bars; on to the turn-out for the mill, where our two dressers were waiting: known as the countess and duchess, ladies and standards, all sizes would come out, clean as boxwood and ready for the roofs of Europe: half the Continent would have died of pneumonia long since, said Dan Morgan, if it hadn't been for us. And the best reward in the world was in the mill shed with the engines going: the very best brand of silicosis for the very best slates: ten years in the mill shed is where Dan Morgan caught it. 'Give me Bethesda and the Great Hole anytime,' he used to say. 'You dangle in fresh air, summer sun and winter cold. But rockmen don't get the dust so bad, and a hundred foot drop to the lower galleries is a decent death compared with the choking. For slate is razors: clean amputations, a decent way to die!'

"Remember what the old fella said," Harri had said. "Get on the face - you be a rockman".

"Ay ay!" I cried delighted.

"Right, you, come up and show me your guts. You scared of heights?"

"Don't know."

"You climb, bach, you'll soon fink out."

He was queer, was Harri, for he was never happier than with his feet off the ground and nothing below him, in darkness. I've seen him with the rope half-hitched around one thigh - the standard rockman hold - and the rest of him in space, eating his dinner. But Mrs Ogmore said, "There ain't no sense to it, Toby Davies." (She was a London cockney.) "The man's just a flower. Two years from now I needed my chimney pointing, and the fella's too frit to climb the roof, ain't you, Ogmore?"

"But I'll do it after dark, missus," cried Harri. "I could break my neck from ten feet up, in daylight."

"Ye daft ha'porth - how can ye point a chimney in the dark?" and

THE SWEET AND BITTER EARTH Cont...

she emptied her hands at me.

"But that's the trick of it," explained Dan Morgan, "Anything goes in the dark - no head for heights, see?"

I stared up at Harri's candle swinging like a glow worm in the roof of the Big Victoria. "You goin', son?" asked the foreman.

"Aye," I said.

It is eerie to be rising from the ground, in darkness. It is as if the night is enveloping you in prayer-book arms: before you your candle-tack on your hat flickers blood on the rocks, the slate is cold and wet slippery to your fingers. Up, up, hobnails scraping for a hold, don't look down for God's sake, says Mr. Morgan, lest you see a candle; fingers slither for loose places, rubble falls in little avalanches: and Harri Ogmor, swinging in space with his candle, the show-off, comes nearer, nearer: the dust is in your eyes, your mouth, your blood; sweat rickles its ice down the middle of your back.

"Come on, come on, what's bloody holdin' ye?" yells Harri in the dome of the roof.

In the pity of Jesus

"Don't look down, Toby!" This from Mr. Morgan, the unseen pygmy on the ground.

This, they tell, is when the man is made: he either rises or falls. All men look the same when they fall on slate: I sensed the terrifying desire to let go with my hands, to enjoy a brief sensation of hissing space, the impacting smash of flesh and bones. Already I had seen a man fall from forty feet in Lefal: I saw again the shapeless limbs grotesquely akimbo, the live, red bones thrusting up through the rags. I paused, flattened against the face, gasping.

"Come on, lad, don't make a meal of it."

Whimpering with fear, I climbed higher, hands seeking a hold.

Now within reach of him. I tore away one hand and reached up for Harri's boot. "Oh, God, I'm going to fall!" I yelled.

"Bugger me, I wouldn't do that," said Harri, cool, and pulled his boot away. "You climb and like it, son."

The air was cleaner here, fifty feet up, for the dust had lain; and I heard an elemental song of freedom that diminished my terror. I looked down for the first time, seeing below me two pin-points of flickering redness, and these were the candles of Tom Booker and Dan Morgan: above me, swinging on a chain from the domed roof of the Victoria was the spider body of Harri Ogmor, and he was rodding out a bore-hole with his auger and whistling.

"There's me lad," he cried, grinning down in the light of my candle. "Come up 'ere and be a rockman."

There was a ledge in the rock: on to this a short length of steel rail had been laid, buried under stones; around this rail Harri had linked his thigh-chain; from this he swung, making his web; I got my hand around it like a drowning man.

THE SWEET AND BITTER EARTH Cont.....

"Now, come off it !" protested Harri, "that's my blutty chain." Through the sweat of my eyes I saw his face square and strong above me, floating disembodied against the roof of the cavern; nothing but that candle-lit face moved in my world of fear; below me was the echoing voices of the team in blackness. I gasped, "Arglwydd! Giverus a hand mate."

"Balls to you," said he. "We got to think o' the bargain - we haven't got all day. Look," and he swung on his chain towards me. "Here's your rail and here's your rope, and don't you drop 'em or you'll crown the blutty foreman."

I flattened myself against the rock face in horror.

I don't know how I took it and I don't remember burying the rail on the ledge. Harri said, swinging away to his borehole. "Right, you - now tie your rope to the rail and half hitch the running end around your thigh."

This I managed to do, clawing with bleeding fingers.

"Right," said he, "now swing out into space - go on, let go of that rock and swing out."

Shivering, with the rope around my thigh, I clung to the face of the drop, and he cried, "Swing out, or I'll give ye one," and he struck out at me.

Eyes clenched, I clung there as if stitched to it.

"Let go, what's stopping ye?" Grabbing me, he braced his feet against the roof and hauled me off the rock by sheer force. Drifting out we swung like twin pendulums in the darkness while velvet voices thudded in my ears: legs thrust out, Harri pushed again, and we swung out again in wide arcs, clasped together in the hissing blackness. Round and round we went, dangling from the Victoria roof, as generations of rockmen had done before us.

"So you want to be a rockman, yeh?" cried Harri.

Fear convulsed my throat; I clung to him.

"Then get off my chain and swing on your rope".

He prised me away from him, levering off my clutching hands. I was slipping down the front of him to the length of my rope; it was the first sensation of the total drop. I yelled; no sound came forth; I fought him, but he had the greater strength.

"Go on, get off!" and he thrust me away.

Isolated, held by my own rope for the first time, I began the circular pendulum swing from the roof. The very action of the swinging I interpreted as dropping, and awaited, my nerves clutched tight within me, for the smashing blow of the floor. But, when I dared open my eyes, there was nothing of violence; there was no sensation save that of absolute freedom; weightless, I was swinging like a star in an arc of darkness, with Harri's candle circling above me, the moon of my night. The pendulum slowed, gravity brought us together in a succession of gentle bumps.

"Good man - now climb."

With him beside me, I did this ? and reached the ledge upon which he was working. "Now this," said Harri instructively, "is

THE SWEET AND BITTER EARTH Cont...

the borehole ... Get the right charge in here and we've got half the bargain down, yeh? You drill just the same for splitting, understand?" His grimed face went up and he grinned at me, a handsome devil in that eerie light.

"Just you and me and two candles - sixty foot up - yeh?"

"Aye!"

There was growing within me a large sense of pride.

You like it up here?"

"Ach, indeed!"

He laughed bassly and bawled down between his feet:

"Got another rockman, Mr. Morgan!"

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I'm sure that you will enjoy the whole novel.

Later on in the book, he moves to Bethesda and lives in Caerberllan, the row of cottages by the Austin Taylor Factory.

Sneak into the Quarry on saturday afternoon when the men aren't working and walk to the old part at the back. The cabans that the men lived in are still there, along with the crumbling terraces and rotting ladders and catenary ropeway. Food for thought..... you'll have more respect for the dour Welshman in the pub.

Penrhyn Quarry is the largest hole in the ground in Europe, and at one time employed more than 3,000 men!

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LATE NEWS

Mike Short and Pete Chapman joined forces for the Karrimor Mountain Marathon and in a record entry of more than 2,000, they were placed 6th. Ted Southworth did well too at 30th. They all ran in the 'elite class'.

Dont forget to look for Dot's Film in the Men and Mountains Series, (see last bulletin), due for screening in February, Friday night? BBC2

USEFUL ADDRESSES

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Thanks to all contributors. Articles and news items urgently by middle to end of March.