

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

BULLETIN No 81.

JUNE 1981

Dear Members,

Sorry this bulletin has taken me so long to prepare, but it is going to be thick, so take time to read all the information in it.

NEWS...NEWS... NEWS...

1. Well he did it! In appalling weather and in a time of 35 hrs and 29 mins Leo Pollard connected all the Lakes and Waters of the English Lake District in a single walk, covering a distance of approximately 100miles and 17,000' of ascent. He is the first person ever to have completed this walk, and he hopes that it will become another 'Bob Graham' Round, but would like it to be known as the 'Achille Ratti Lakes Walk'. He would like to thank all the members of ARCC who helped him achieve his goal, too many to mention by name, but especially George Partridge for co-ordinating everything, and John Foster and his Land-Rover and his wife and members of his family. People who saw Leo at 8 pm on Sunday just after he finished wouldnt have beleived that he would be in class for 9am on Monday. But he was and in before John Foster too! And where could Leo be found the following Saturday, apologising for not being at Buckbarrow working weekend, because he was upping his mate Pete Schofield who was attempting the Lakes Walk.
Congratulations to all who helped Leo, he couldnt have done it without you, he says the navigation was great!
2. Tony Brindle is back from the States. He showed the people at the junior meet his slides, and very soon he is off to the Alps for the summer.
3. Last Years Glencoe meet was a huge success. Contrary to rumour, it was not a group of friends, but twelve ill-assorted Arcc members who soon gelled into a group but didn't all do the same things at once. Now it is time to book next years trip. Suggestions have been, Braemar, Aviemore and Glencoe. If you would like to go please let me know, with your suggested venue.
4. Because the unemployment rate is so high, several of our members are finding times very hard and having difficulty in paying their Annual Subs of £10. The Management Committee decided at the last meeting to give a sympathetic hearing to genuine cases of hardship for students and people who are out of work. Please write to Barry Ayre, 51, Lythe Fell Ave, Halton On Lune.
5. Congratulations to Martin and Maggie Bennett, they were married in April and honeymooned in Chamonix. Martin is off to the Himalaya again in August, part of a five man expedition. They hope to make first ascents of two mountains in Kashmir of 20,000 and 18,000'.

NEWS cont.....

6. Catered Meet at Dunmail Many members do not know Dunmail! In order to introduce these members to Dunmail and to refresh the memory of older members there will be a catered meet on the weekend of Friday 23rd Oct. 1981. Bookings are essential and may be made now to Tom Baron, 2, Azalea Grove, Morecambe. Tel (0524) 410922. This could become an annual event.
7. Wanted for Tyn Twr. A 16 inch all night burner for the hearth. Also a small table or desk about 28' wide, to fit in the lounge bay window. The present one was tatty when installed ten years ago and is now falling to bits. (Needed by junior members for homework). Please phone 0744 894512.
8. Frame Tents and camping equipment for hire. From Barry Ayre, Tel Halton 811383. Minimum period of hire one week, reasonable terms. Please phone for more details.
9. Annual Dinner - 1 Date is November 21st at the Red Lion in Grasmere. Tickets £7.50 each. Coach from Langdale - extra.
10. Obituary Dunmail Key Keeper, Mrs Holohan died last November. She had kept the key for us for many years. Mrs Holohan came to Grasmere from Ireland about 1940 and worked as a chambermaid at the Dale Lodge Hotel. There were two or three other Irish girls there at the time and there is no doubt that Mrs Holohan had a hand in setting up the Mass Centre with Fr Atkinson at the Dale Lodge (in what is now Tweedies Bar). She met and married Jim Holohan and they lived in a cottage at Rydal. She told me that in the winter of 1946 when Grasmere was frozen she pushed her pram over the ice from Rydal to the Dale Lodge. Apart from devotion to ARCC she lived totally for the church built by Fr Atkinson at Grasmere. She had especially asked that there be no flowers at her funeral - instead she wanted donations to go to the Church in Grasmere. I was unable to attend the funeral myself, but Rita attended on behalf of the Club. (from Tom Baron).

REPORT FROM BUCKBARROW WORKING WEEKEND June 21st. 1981.

For the second weekend in succession Buckbarrow was heaving. (Last week it was Leo's Lakes Walk). This time for the annual work week end. On what was probably the best hill weather for months, thirteen people attacked the hut like a team of demolition experts. Holes appeared in walls and ceilings from Arnold Foster's pick, only to be plasterboarded over again by Jack Greenwood as quickly as they had appeared. Then the plastering started. Arnold ably assisted by his mixer, hod-carrier, general dogsbody Ken Gunn seemed to be all over the place, and so did his plaster. By Saturday night the hut resembled a builders yard.

Work Weekend Cont....

The rest of the party were involved in painting, cleaning, digging and generally scraping up after the whirlwind plastering team. All the jobs on the agenda were completed, some of which cannot be mentioned for fear of repercussions from Leo Brown & Co. By Sunday night the Hut still resembled a builders yard. But then as someone commented 'We don't want it too nice or people may want to stay here'.

My only hope is that the Bishop doesn't arrive tomorrow for his quiet Monday off or the next bulletin will be requesting nominations for a new hut warden.

The bodies present were - Arnold Foster, Ken Gunn (guest), Jack Greenwood, Jim & Clare Harding, Joyce Foster, Sandra Corbett, Brian and John Fanning, Nelson Clarke and Murray Taylor (guest) and Pete Kirkbright.

I think it worthy of note that the two guests Murray Taylor and Kenn Gunn always seem to be around when there is work to be done.

F. Whittle, Hut Warden. 21st. June.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Report from the Junior Meet 6th June 1981.CGroup Members.

Gregory Cooper	Peter Mullen	Ann Clark
Rachel Cooper	Michael Pitchford	Sonya Durkin
Dominic Cooper	Kathryn Price	Fiona Durkin.

Leaders: Derek Price, Pete Durkin, Ben Carter, Sandra Corbett.

The mountains round Hard Knott and Wrynose looked just perfect in a slightly hazy evening. The road was free from the dreaded tourists - perfect, if only we could have a dry weekend.

It was not to be. I woke on Sunday morning to the depressing sound of very hard rain splashing against the windows. Despite the unwelcome nature of the weather the kitchen was alive with bodies and huge breakfasts were being consumed. Did I have enough food for them, I feebly thought - too late to worry, at least vast quantities of sandwiches and other goodies were finding their way into rucksacks. Everyone seemed eager to be off, alive with enthusiasm; that was the customers, not the leaders. Two coffees later and a hurried conversation with Joyce to procure us more milk and in a sudden panic more loaves. I felt better.

The leaders assembled. It was decided that the day merited a low-level route being taken. Departure would be at 11am, possibly by car, to ease the shock, to the 'Langdales' and then we would brave the elements alone.

The group had been ready for what seemed like hours, I could verify that. Excited whisperings at 6.45am in the female dorm had been suitably appreciated! The party toiled through incessant wetness from Chapel Stile to Little Langdale and found a dry refuge in a tunnel at Tilberthwaite. It seemed to be improving as we moved off after

Junior Meet Cont....

lunch; not so, a plan to go over the Low Fells to Coniston Coppermines from High Tilberthwaite had to be abandoned and the party continued along footpaths to Coniston.

It was on reaching Coniston that the 'true character' of the party emerged. I nobly suggested that I would retire to a cafe with the group so that the other leaders could go to the pub - which just happened to be open. I am a fairly new member and have found that the Achille Ratti have a tradition of perfect timing in these matters. I discovered, on starting off to the cafe, that my party consisted of one. The rest were seen disappearing hot on the heels of my co-leaders, into the pub!

On re-grouping we had some bursts of sunshine to help us up the steep hill to Walna Scar Track. We cut across to the Youth Hostel and had an interesting time crossing the stream, it was in spate.

Imagine the joy of walking into camp and finding all the tents already up, suitable liquid refreshment catered for, one dozen eggs already scrambled in their boxes plus shells and the support party beaming far too happily as they left us! The tents themselves were pitched on what seemed dryland, it was just a pity that one had to cross so much water to negotiate between them.

Once changed the cooking started there is nothing quite like getting to know people whilst battling with moody gas stoves, third division tin openers and too few pans. We all managed some food, some hot drink, memories that stand out were the rather fantastic tin sculptures made by Dominic Cooper whilst opening sixteen tins. Before dispersing after supper Mr Carter gave us a little chat on the aspects of Health and Hygiene for Campers, and Mr Durkin proposed the vote of thanks.

An evening of scrambling over and hiding in the boulders was enjoyed by the group, also floating sticks down the stream; some leaders went to see the Peltham Wheel in the old quarry workshop and I paddled, frequently, and unintentionally.

Baked beans and chocolate biscuits went down well and the juniors were in their tents by 10pm. The leaders disappeared with the liquid refreshment to discuss strategy for the next day, to talk of serious matters and to try to get warm; and thereby hangs a tale.

Sunday morning was warmish and fine. I celebrated by putting on my only dry socks, a short-lived luxury. On the way to breakfast I chose the wrong crossing place of the stream and slid knee deep into sinking wet greeness.

The girls were cooking and Rachael Cooper deserves a special mention. Pinned against rock and food tent for over half an hour, cooking was leisurely, producing a varying degree of cooked and uncooked bacon for all, she did a sterling job. The boys seemed very efficient in the collection of washing up items; too efficient, a larger variety of utensils seemed to make battleships on a swollen stream even more exciting. Everyone generally mucked in and tidied up. Michael Pitchford calmly ate up a pound of tomatoes and seemed OK for the rest of the day. The Carter machine doled out individually wrapped

Junior Meet Cont....

packs of butties with an efficiency the army would have been proud of.

The party set off to Low Tarn at 11am. A leisurely ascent of Conistone Old Man, but it was cold on the ridge and the weather worsened on top of Swirl How. Despite this the group coped admirably - Mr Price leading the way ably with his 'electronic compass'. When one begins to believe in the existence of such trifles, then the strain must be beginning to show!

By the top of Wrynoce the weather had settled for sunshine and showers. Some of the party left us there grateful for a lift back, the rest continued to Blea Tarn and the Hut where Tom and Rita had provided a slap up meal.

Despite considerable effort on the part of the weather, everyone seemed, not only to have survived, but actually to have enjoyed it. Once again it seemed to me, as a relative newcomer to Achille Ratti, that one of its strengths seemed to lie in these concerted efforts by so many. Thanks therefore to everyone who helped our walking party.

Sandra Carbett.

-o-o-o-l-o-l-o-o-o-

COMPETITION ON THE HILLS THE FELLSMAN HIKE

Foreword by Leo Pollard. Report by Roy Phillips.

Considered by many to be one of the toughest if not the hardest 60mile competitive hike staged in this country. The Fellsmans embraces a large part of the Yorkshire Dales and passes through some of the wilder parts of the dales.

The hike is considered hard because of the route finding skills required in bad weather and also one has to walk through the night. The night section usually finds one trying to cross Fleet Moss and to find Middle Tongue, an experience one must sample for oneself - it cannot be described. The Hike is also tough because it is 60miles long, and not many people can be competitive over such a distance.

It is to the credit of Achille Ratti members that they completed this 'gradely' walk.

May 16/17th 1981.

From our eleven entrants for the Hike, only six were favoured by the draw - the 'lucky' few being - Mary Conlan, Jack Greenwood, Derek Price, John Britt, Peter Durkin and myself Roy Phillips.

It ended as quite a club triumph - Firstly all passed the stringent equipment test and then proceeded to complete the course, with Mary becoming the first ever ARCC 'Fellswoman'.

All agreed the walk to be a unique experience, with some believing it

Fellsman Cont...

an experience not to be repeated. But when all the blisters have healed and the various aches and pains are forgotten, I'm sure that most of the participants will think seriously of having a second bash at this great walk.

The weather bedevilled the forecast (again) for in place of the promised heavy showers, strong southerly wind and thunderstorms, we were blessed with a perfect walking day; sun and a light breeze, plus spectacular views of the higher Lakeland hills and the Howgills. The night section too was near perfect, as we enjoyed a full moon for a considerable time until mist obscured the tops around 2am.

Mary, Jack and myself had teamed up with the great fellsman - Stanley Bradshaw, now in his 70th year and making his fifteenth crossing, so that our navigational problems were minimal. Derek and John (with gammy knee) were less fortunate. They were moving well and would probably have completed the round in a time under 24hrs, but were unable to locate the control on featureless Middle Tongue. They were forced to bivvy until first light and then discovered themselves to be within 100yds of the checkpoint!! This cost them 4hrs in time and they were not amused.

Coming off middle tongue, down to the control at Cray, to the accompaniment of May's early morning warble, we met Peter Durkin again, bathing badly blistered feet in the stream. This control is some 16mls from the finish, including ascents of Buckden Pike and Gt Whernside, (a bit of a mind bender when one has sore feet). However Peter's natural effervescence prevailed and he finished in fine style, but with a pronounced limp.

So we were home and dry, to relax in the showers and afterwards to relish the provided meal. No doubt during the next few days, incidents and particular sections of the walk will come readily to mind, to be relived with satisfaction or whatever.

The short caption on the finishers certificate summarises everything very nicely - "Twas a gradely walk - Well done".

-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Note from Roy:- The folk who were enquiring as to where he bought his new cheaper than Goretex wet weather gear from, the address is Mrs A Sykes, Dale Sports, Clough Head, Higher Calderbrook, Littleborough. Cags £18, overtrousers £11.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Bulletin Editor: Joyce Foster, 29, Braeside Cres, Billinge, Nr. Wigan
Tyn Twr Wardens: John Foster, above address, Tel 0744 894512.
Langdale Warden. Alan Kenny, 17, Rochester Ave Morecambe. 0524 414615
Buckbarrow Warden, Frank Whittle, Greengarth, Holmrook, Nr. Seascale.
Cumbria.

Hon Sec. Barry Ayre, 51, Lythe Fell Ave, Halton, Lancaster 0524811383.

Many thanks to Tom Walmsley for his sterling work over the last 3 yrs.

AROLLA - AUGUST 1980.

Two of the most important ingredients in making a memorable Alpine holiday and giving one a feeling of well-being, is a combination of bonhomie and good weather. On both counts I was lucky, in first of all having the companionship of Sydney deCruz and secondly, fine weather for the majority of our stay at Arolla, in the Pennine Alps of Switzerland.

For those who are not acquainted with this area, Arolla is situated approximately 60 mls S.East of Geneva and some twelve miles south of Sion in the Rhone Valley. It is a pleasant narrow valley with the village close to its head and is dominated by Mont Collan 3637m. The summits are composed of granite, gneiss and gabbro. One is reminded of the Lakeland connections with this valley - Col. Slingsby and O.G.Jones grave at Evolene and Dr Hopkinson and his son were killed in a mountaineering accident in these mountains.

Whilst in Arolla we climbed several peaks and made tourist trips to Chamonix and to see the Eiger.

The first of our conquests was Mt Dolin, a minor summit on the Western side of the valley; to gently break ourselves in and to acclimatise to the altitude.

The next day we set off for the Tsar Hut and to climb the Tsalion West Ridge, a classic gneiss rock route of the Grand Dente Chain, on the eastern side of the valley. The climb took longer than anticipated and this was caused by tackling a grade 5 alternative pitch and then erraneously making a lengthy and tortuous traverse on loose rock of a couloir some 600ft below the summit. Time slipped by and we only gained the top at dusk to discover dense mist at the other side of the ridge where we had planned to descend to the Bertol Hut.

There was no alternative to a bivouac. Fortunately the weather remained fine and though our flasks were empty and our throats parched the chat centred on thirst quenching fantasies of gigantic size tumblers of gin and schweppes and ice-cream sundaes.

There were rewards for the discomfiture of the night, when, at dawn from our frost covered poly-bags, we had a marvellous panoramic view stretching out across the Bernese Oberland, the Matterhorn, the Mont Blanc range with the cloud billowing up and down on the glacier below us. Shortly after day-break feeling jaded and thirsty we descended easy rock and trudged over snow-fields, passing the prominent Aiguille de la Tsar festooned with climbers and their guides. We had intended to climb this aiguille, it is not long or difficult, but we just felt too jiggered to attempt it. Finally we arrived at the Bertol Hut for lunch, where we quaffed litres of liquid in a variety of forms, beer tea and soup. Then a speedy descent to Arolla was made.

The climbing of Mont Blanc de Cheilon 3,870m which is primarily a snow route with a little rock, from the Dix Hut provided no epics.

On this outing we were accompanied by Judith Chapman, who was staying with us at Joan Prolang's Bunk House in Arolla. Sandra Corbett was also staying in Arolla and she lent Judith the necessary climbing gear. Judith managed it to the top in such fine style, and was so elated that we invited her to apply for membership of ARCC.

The final trip we made was to the Col des Vignettes close to Mont Collon. We had thought of climbing the Petite Mont Collon, but did not do so.

The Matterhorn was Sydney's prime target which had eluded him on three previous occasions. Unfortunately bad weather in the middle of our second week put the Matterhorn out of condition and we were advised to wait a few days. Time was running out for me, so Sydney decided to attempt it with Andrea. When I left the weather looked good, but alas; the Matterhorn remains unclimbed by Sydney, the weather deteriorated with heavy snow and high winds as they made their way to the summit, they were forced to retreat. And so it remains, to be attempted again next year!

John Braybrook.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

A POKE AT 'THE NOSE'. by TONY BRINDLE.

It is difficult to describe the thoughts that race through one's mind as the trees suddenly part to reveal, for the first time, the true majesty of the walls that are El Capitan. I could wax lyrical for hours in an effort to put across just how I felt as I gazed, awestruck, at the route that had been in my mind ever since Brendon and I decided to visit the rock-climbing mecca that is Yosemite.

Somehow it just was not what I had expected. It wasn't, like the Verdon, just a vast expanse of high standard, technical rock climbing with superb, obvious lines that are, in reality, just another route.

The routes up El Capitan are not so obvious. Indeed some of the harder routes take very cunning and intricate lines up the face. There is an atmosphere about the place which is something else; and its position, coupled with its great height, make the short, desperate routes which epitomise Yosemite climbing, seem almost pointless.

Just two weeks after our arrival in the valley, we stood at the top of the completed route, after one of the most incredible

The 'nose' cont....

experiences of our climbing careers. We were black from head to foot, slightly dehydrated and totally exhausted, both physically and mentally.

The climbing had never been desperate, but the level of difficulty was so maintained that total concentration was required from the word go right up to the walk off at the top.

The climb had taken us four days, due to the fact that after two days on the wall, we caught up a slow moving American team, who refused to let us through. Since there are not exactly dozens of places at which to sleep, this meant that on the third day we had to be content to climb just four pitches, instead of going for the top. This explains why we were dehydrated a day later. We had taken three and a half gallons of water and calculated that we would require just three. However, on the first day we punctured one water bottle, sac-hauling, and lost our extra half gallon.

The route we had chosen was called, "The Nose Route", and is thirty five pitches from start to finish. It is approximately 3,200 ft high with the top third slightly overhanging. To do the route in three days most parties fix ropes up the first four pitches in advance. This gives access to a long broken ledge called 'Sickle', due to its shape. From the right hand end of Sickle Ledge, four rope lengths lead to a series of flared cracks; the infamous 'Stove Legs'. These lead, in four more run-outs to the first possible bivvy site, 'Dolt Tower'. Three pitches further on, lies 'El Cap Towers', the finest bivvy site on the route, with enough space for many teams. This is the target which everyone makes for on the first day. Not everyone gets there!

Just above El Cap Towers is the incredible 'Texas Flake'. What holds this sliver of rock in place I'll never know, although whilst back and footing my way up it, it occurred to me, that sooner or later the my mystery would be solved! Since there is no protection in nearly sixty feet, I was very relieved when I was sun-bathing on its perfectly shaped top. Next another flake, in the form of a boot, and called 'Boot Flake'. From the top of the Flake on Boot Ledge comes one of the six pendulums of the climb. This one is called 'King Swing', for painfully obvious reasons. Four rope lengths higher lies the next possible bivi site, a rather small ledge with room for two; Camp IV. Just above here is a huge overhang 'the Great Roof', and from this point onwards every single pitch is either vertical or overhanging. The best bivi site for the second night is Camp V and three pitches above this is camp VI, a small triangular ledge for two people. From here to the top is just six run-outs and nearly every stance is hanging - a very painful experience.

Due to never having climbed anything to compare with El Capitan, we spent the first day learning various techniques; how to haul a rather heavy sac and how to second pitches which had involved pendulums for

'The Nose' cont.....

the lead climber. This meant that after a full days climbing, we made it just to Dolt Tower, climbing the last Stoveleg in the dark. We had lost half a gallon of water and my hands were torn apart with sac-hauling. We were however, very optimistic about reaching camp IV the next day. We had now learnt many little tricks that made continuous climbing faster, and we had perfected our handling of the ropes.

The second day, we moved so fast that we amazed even ourselves; and reached Camp IV in the middle of the afternoon. Then we hit real bad luck. An American Team, who were on a different route which joined ours at Camp IV, had just fixed the next pitch and intended to stay the night where they were. Since there was only enough room for two people at this point, we had a problem. We could either stay just above the Americans and take painful hanging belays, or descend and take painful hanging belays someplace else. We chose the former and spent a very sleepless night dangling from as many separate belays as it was possible to engineer. Also that night we were shocked and horrified to learn that the other team had no intention of going to the top the next day, but were making for Camp VI.

We explained that we could easily make the top, and requested that they let us through as we only had enough water for one more day. Just to further Anglo-American relations, the pair adamantly refused to let us pass, and next day we were forced to stop at Camp V, just four pitches up. We hadn't had any sleep to boast about, and now had to bake in the full heat of the afternoon sun, whilst exercising strict discipline on how little water we could afford to take. The coming of the third night was a blessed relief, as the temperature had been in the middle nineties all afternoon.

The fourth day we moved like a well oiled machine and by 8.00am had caught up with the Americans. It took maybe two or three hours longer to reach the top because of the 'seen to be believed' speed of this team. But finally at 4pm we both stood on terra firma, with the experience of a lifetime behind us.

Some incidents spring immediately to mind as I think back on our ascent. The huge pendulum that gives access to the Stovelegs; a full eighty feet of rope out, and racing back and forth across the face, losing it once, and then after maybe five minutes, the palm of my right hand sliding into the first stoveleg and taking my weight; and there I cling exhausted, before inserting some protection on which to rest. The ledge that is Dolt Tower, as it appeared at last, to bring relief at the end of the first day..... The start of the second day, with Brendon taping up both my hands, in order that I can even use them The top of the Texas Flake, the most amazing ledge imaginable The King Swing, another 'fun' pendulum, although not so 'fun' for Brendon to have to follow The whole of the third day and finally sitting on the penultimate belay and watching the Americans haul sac, as it swings out a good sixty feet in space, to float with ease over the top overhangs.

The 'Nose' cont.....

In retrospect, the climb was a really deep experience for both of us, and which I have no doubt, I shall repeat. It required a great deal of hard work and at times, great faith in bits of tape and old, old copperheads and the like, and at times some quite difficult free climbing. It was not quite what I had anticipated and the amount I learnt was amazing.

When we started the climb, we didn't really know whether we were capable of such a route. Surely this is the reason for trying. Or is it?

(Received in December 1980 when Tony was working on an oil-rig in Sidney, Montana in order to pay for the rest of his USA trip. He started my letter I am now in my 59th day without climbing!)

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

LONG WALK - MAY 10th 1980 - DUNMAIL HUT.

Report by Barry Ayre.

For the 47 members and guests, Saturday 10th May dawned clear but with a cold south westerly wind. The weather forecast was good, with the possibility of a little rain coming in from the sea later. As it happened the day blossomed into one to remember; blue skies, hot sunshine and a cool wind on the more exposed stretches of the walk. The 27mile route was a tough and arduous assignment, with approx. 9,500ft of climbing according to Wilf Charnleys reckoning.

The five runners had started from the Dunmail Hut by 5am and proceeded via Wythburn and the Armboth Fells to Keswick before joining the walkers route for Skiddaw. They had 24 miles ahead of them before the first official refreshment point at Threlkeld. For the majority it meant a drive to Keswick, and for those in the Land-rover an unexpected bonus, being dropped off at the car park at the back of Latrigg. This turned out to be a bone of contention for the other purists, who set foot from Moot Hall in Keswick as though under Handicap for jumping into the wrong vehicle at Dunmail.

The two miles or so difference split the field, and for the enthusiasts was a challenge throughout the day to make up lost ground.

As we puffed up Jenkin Hill for Skiddaw, the 5.20am start quickly thinned out the hares from the tortoises.

The brisk pace compensated for the chilling wind, and by 6.30am the skyline of Skiddaw was punctuated with ARCC lemmings, or were they sheep? Visibility was good and maps and compasses were rarely used, and the first off Skiddaw were quickly followed by others, scurrying down the road beyond Skiddaw House. The thick heather which is a feature of Skiddaw Forest, was in some places almost knee high, but the beck and drainage ditches were bone dry, and soon the ascent of Gt Calva was underway. Though not a major Lakeland peak, and not

Dubmail Long Walk cont...

frequented by most fell walkers, it has a reputation for even more thick heather than the descent of Skiddaw. We seemed to be well up on time and Blencathra looked to be no more than an hour away. Perhaps we could make the butty stop at Threlkeld by 9.15am. Wishful thinking! The distance is deceptive and the terrain though gentile, took a little longer. Johnny Britt was striding out in front of us to join Bernard Potter and companion. With memories of the last Welsh Walk when I almost became crag bound on Crib Goch in the company of JB and on a later Long Walk when he fooled many of us with his unboundless energy, I vowed not to follow in his footsteps. It was not to be! From the top of Blencathra he disappeared down one of the gullies behind Bernard Smith, and like fools we followed - Disaster!! Even Wainright has few kind words for the Gullies to the south of Blencathra, and the instructions did say 'descend by Hall Fell'. We slipped and scrambled cursing and regretting our folly. In wet weather it must be a miserable descent - in fine weather the twelvelft dry waterfalls of Gategill had to be negotiated, and in Wainright's words, "Its charms vanish when put to the test however, the lower part being rough and all of it tedious". Meanwhile Bernard Potter, though behind us on the summit, had followed the ridge of Hall's Fell and was at the butty stop some 20mins ahead of us.

Matt and Janet Bennett and team had a picnic area prepared and food generously provided whilst the quick change artists donned shorts. Not to be outdone, Johnny Britt also discarded his rucksack. Alan Holmes was suffering from a rash of blisters and administered his own first aid. New member David Smith joined us as we set foot once more, and seemed to be enjoying himself. As he remarked later in the Traveller's Rest, 'An adult walk at an adult pace is relatively new to me'. Others might remark 'not for the fainthearted at an idiot pace, never again'. Clough Head, although only 2,382ft is no easy summit to reach after 4hrs fell bashing, but most walkers ignored the coach road and went straight up the side. Ahead lay the Dodds, new ground to me, and to most other members I suspect. The journey now seemed almost downhill with more than half the distance covered. How deceptive that last half can be!

The short walkers were already on this stretch, (How can Frank Whittle be described as a short walker?) and it was quite easy to pick out up to a dozen people, mainly in two's at regular intervals up to the distant skyline of Great Dod. How many people followed the path and missed out the cairn on Watson Dod? Quite a few I would imagine, including myself. The last of the Dodds - Stybarrow Dodd was soon reached and then the eagerly awaited tea stop. As always Tom Finney had organised it magnificently, and was ably assisted by Terry Hickey and his grand-daughter Cath. I've never seen a full size tea cosy in use at 2,400ft before, but Tom is a past master at his art, and once again had found the ideal sheltered hollow to set up his base camp.

Dunmail Long Walk cont..

I believe that Alan Kenny and Phil Michelewski had even beaten Tom to Sticks Pass. They really must have been moving. Funnily enough for the next 5 miles, six of us kept together at the same pace, including Wilf Charnley, Frank Whittle, Alan Holmes and my two guests Alan Denham and Robin Burr - normally fell runners, but on their first long walk. They were surprised how much more there was to see, having joined in a humble fell walk; time to talk, to rest, to take in the views etc. etc.

Low Man and Helvelyn were crowded, by now it was almost 1pm and the hordes were out, though mostly travelling in the opposite direction. One middle aged couple sheltering in the rocks by the side of the path were treated to several ARCC anecdotes, mostly unprintable, as the unwary walkers passed by oblivious to the audience!

Nethermost Pike, High Crag (Wilf insisted that we went over the lot, though I suspect he missed out on Great Calva), then Dollywagon Pike and the miserable descent to Grisedale Tarn. The path is very cut up on this stretch, and was only matched by the next stage up and down Fairfield. Alan Holmes and I decided on a quick foot inspection by the Tarn, then a quick slurp of orange and a bite of chocolate. Alan suffered severe cramp as we rounded the Tarn and resorted to salt tablets which seemed to do the trick. He insisted that I carry on ahead as Pete Durkin and John Hitchen had appeared on the Dollywagon skyline behind me (after starting at Moot Hall). Wilf and Frank opted for an early bath at this stage (or was it a last minute pint - it was approaching 2.30pm) and descended to Dunmail by Raise Beck.

Clive Millard had chosen a strategic hollow for his checkpoint, thus enabling him to mastermind the detour to Fairfield top for the foot weary. His only offer of assistance was to keep an eye on sacs left in his care until the ascent and descent were completed.

By way of reward, the obedient received a third of an apple, as stocks were running low.

By this time I was on my own, and the ascent of Fairfield I met John Britt, pounding down with Bernard Smith. Close behind them were Bernard Potter and friend plus my two guests.

On my descent I met the first two runners, Ted Southworth and Peter Barlow who had missed out on liquid refreshment for the first 24 mls. All I could offer them was glucose as my orange juice was down with Clive. Seat Sandal, the last climb of the day, with the exception of the ascent to the top bunk at Dunmail Hut, looked daunting, but was much easier than I imagined after the first two or three hundred feet.

Pete Durkin and John Hitchen had reached Clive by this time and were within shouting distance. Unfortunately for them, they still had Fairfield to contend with, and we disappeared from each others sight in opposite directions.

At last, the descent to Dunmail, but foolishly I came over the top and had to scramble down the steep broken fell to the road. A much easier route is via Raise Beck.

It was 4.15pm when I reached Dunmail Hut, to find all the early finishers in the lounge. Alan Kenny had streaked round the peaks in order to be back to listen to the cup final on steam radio. Tom Baron's

Dunmail LongWalk cont..

portable T.V. provided a fitting reward for Alan's determination, being the first one home in approx. 9hrs.

Everyone arrived back safely, including Jim and Clare Harding. Clare had gamely struggled on, having suffered on every descent with painful knees. Cyril Hodgson (the Stan Bradshaw of ARCC Long Walks) had dislodged one of the biggest boulders on Seat Sandal only yards from the finish and received a nasty hand injury. Alan Holmes hobbled into the hut, but managed to make the Travellers Rest with everyone else. Hot baths were hard to come by, but the five star meal provided by Tom and Rita Baron and their team of cooks and waitresses was more than compensation. What a fabulous job Tom has done at Dunmail. With only a little help from members he has transformed it into an incredibly homely hut, a place the club can be proud of. Those members who have never been have a delight in store.

Well done Tom & Rita, well done Matt & Janet, Tom Finney, Clive Millard and all the many non-walkers who helped to make the day one to remember for many, many years.

The club has nothing to fear for the future if the calibre of members at Dunmail for the Long Walk is anything to go by..

The Travellers Rest proved to be an apt venue for the 'apres walk' activities, with all the participants sharing their joys and sorrows of 'a day on the fells'. I am sorry if I've missed a few names in this account, I was a middle order walker and didn't see most of those in front or to the rear. Apart from that I recognised some faces but was unsure of the names.

Barry Ayre.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

ANNUAL SUBS ARE NOW DUE OVERDUE!

If you haven't already paid your annual subs they are overdue.

Please send them without delay to :-

Nev. Haig, 752, Devonshire Rd, Blackpool, Lancs.

Annual Subs are now £10 per year per full member. Junior Members pay a once only subscription from birth to 17 years of £2.

Name.....

Address

.....

Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to ARCC.

Amount enclosed

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB NEWSHEET. March 1981.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting to be held on 4.4.81. at Knights of St Columba Hall, Beech Grove, off Blackpool Rd, Preston at 2.00pm. is as follows;

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Minutes of the AGM held April 26th 1980. | 6. Treasurer's Report. |
| 2. Matters arising. | 7. Reports from the Hut Wardens. |
| 3. President's Report. | 8. Proposals for amendments to rules. |
| 4. Chairman's Report. | 9. Elections. |
| 5. Secretary's Report. | 10. Any other business. |

Instructions on how to find the venue can be found in the last newsheet Bulletin 80.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Leo's Pond Walk. Sat 13th June.

For further details see last newsheet.

A subcommittee has now been formed to help Leo organise this marathon. George Partridge is now to act as Co-ordinator for Leo. If you feel that you can help in any way, please complete the tear off strip and send to George Partridge at 16, Centurion Close, Meols, Wirral. Tel: 051:632:5963.

I would like to help with Leo's Pond Walk.

Name:

Address:

I am prepared to help (please delete) as pacer, carrier, driver. and return as soon as possible.

A full schedule, map and instructions will be issued to each helper.

Annual subscriptions are now due: At the Management Committee Meeting on Feb 28th it was decided to increase Annual Subscriptions to £10 per annum, Junior Subs to remain a once only payment of £2 and overnight members fees to remain at 50p. All guests fees to be increased to £1.50p. per night. To take effect from May 1st 1981. Please complete and send to Nev Haig, 752, Devonshire Rd, Blackpool.

I enclose cheque value £10 per full member annual subs.

Name

Address

.

New Junior Member Name :

£2 payment until full membership age is reached.