

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

BULLETIN No 99.

MARCH 1986.

Dear Members,

The best winter for ice in living memory. The first snow fell on the Crinkles at the beginning of November and is still there six months later. This must be a record I think.

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

1. A new chip shop has opened at Gilpin Bridge, Levens. Very useful for Sunday evening, it can be seen from the new dual carriageway. They are open from 4.30 - 9.00pm on Fridays and from 5.00 - 9.00pm on Sundays.
2. Fr Hughes sent us a letter from Monrovia, Liberia where he was on holiday at the Ganta Leper Colony. The inmates were delighted with all the presents that he took for them, especially the rag dolls and the beach balls. He will be back in the cold by now, on his usual round between Langdale and Patterdale.
3. Three club members, Vice Chairman Derek Price, management committee member Mick Pooler and Mike Lomas are attempting the 'Bob Graham' round during June.
Derek and Mick attempt it on the weekend of June 7th, and Mike Lomas going it alone on June 21st weekend. If you would like to HELP, either on the hill or back-up team please contact Derek at 10, Egerton Rd, Preston Tel 716540 and Mike Lomas at 85, Belmont View, Bolton Tel:27746.
(The BoB Graham Round is 75 miles, 30,000ft of ascent/descent and 42 submits within 24 hours; pacers, carriers and the back-up team are very important)
4. John Foster is touting for custom. Fancy Skye this year? Two large caravans to let, by Loch Sligachan, 2 miles from the pub, croft site, expert advice, what more can I say? Ring John on 047 852 302 or write 13, Sconser, Isle of Skye, or just call, he'll be pleased to see anybody!
5. I see that in Ochills M.C. newsletter there is a complaint that their younger members need some 'educating in the field of cheesy toasties, in the wee sma' oors'. I've noticed that its only the older traditionalists that still make them in our huts . . .
6. A new Bunkhouse has opened midway between Ben Nevis and Glencoe. Inchree Bunkhouse, caters for 25 people, is fully equipped, heated by wood-burning stove. There is a piano for entertainment and the outside wall is a high standard technical climbing wall and there is also an ice axe/crampon training wall. £2.80 per night £17 per week, discount for Clubs and parties.
7. It is proposed that a climbing wall be built at the Preston Dock Complex, ARCC is giving our support.

NEWS . . . NEWS . . . Cont.

8. STALYBRIDGE CLIMBING WALL for those who live close enough, is open every day from 9am to 11pm, except Tuesday and Thursday when it is open 9am to 5pm. Entry costs £1. The BMC say that technically this is one of the best walls in the country.
9. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS have been due for the last six months. If you don't pay up in the next couple of weeks, this will be the last bulletin that you will receive. The new membership list is about to be compiled. ARCC is a bargain at twice the price of £12 per adult member. Intermediate Youth Member 17 -21 years is £3, and please include your date of birth. Please send a SAE for return of your new membership card. If you hold a UB40 tell the subs sec and get a reduction. Ring Blackpool 54505. Write to Nev Haigh, 752, Devonshire Road, Blackpool.
10. The two saintly members, Spik and Span, didn't enter Frank Whittles Wasdale competition for the working weekend. And not many people went either. Only Barry Rogers, Dave Hall and Jim Cooper (Lancaster) accompanied Frank and they did as much as they could. Fifteen of us were away, that was our excuse. Shame on the rest of you, where were all the new members?
11. Mike Crawford ex-Wasdale Hut Warden, held his own working weekend at Buckbarrow. He brought with him and fitted, new gas hobs, a new top to the old cooker and a completely new cooker as well. Now a general re-furbishment of the kitchen is under way.
12. Extract from Fell-Runners Magazine. . . . Langdale Horseshoe Fell Race. "I am now glad to report that Ambleside Athletic Club, ably assisted by Achille Ratti Climbing Club, who manned all the check points, have restored the event to become once again one of the countries top fell races".
13. A friend who lives in Italy, tells me that whilst out guiding ski-tours this winter he stayed regularly in a hut where there was and is a large picture of Achille Ratti on the wall, and in pride of place too. The Italians were very interested to know of our existence, so now I am waiting to see if they do contact us.
14. Would you like to become a 'Friend of Dunmail Hut'? Dunmail serves a very useful purpose in that it keeps school parties away from the other huts. The work largely falls on Tom & Rita Baron, they do a sterling job and desperately need help. Please contact them at The Post Office, Stavely, Nr Kendal, Cumbria.
15. Hut Fees have been increased from the 1.4.86 to 75p per night for members, £1.50 per night for members guests and £2 per night for visiting clubs. The new rates are displayed in the huts. Junior members pay ordinary members rates of 75p per night.
16. The ARCC Fell Race will this year be run on Sat 20th September. The Three Shires Fell Race is on the day after 21st Sep.
17. Members may not be aware that the printing and despatch of the Bulletin is the work of Fr David Lannon of Sacred Heart, Oldham. Approximately 600 bulletins are duplicated and posted to you the members, by David and his band of helpers. This is a somewhat inadequate but sincere thankyou, to him, for his efforts.

THE END OF AN ERA

TYN TWR will never be quite the same again, since John Foster handed over the Hut Wardens reins to Dave Armstrong.

As far back as I can remember, and I have been a member for twenty-seven years, John had a thing about Wales.

He caajoled the Management Committee for years, when the club was still in debt over Bishopscafe, to be looking for a hut in Snowdonia. He found several buildings, forestry cottages, derelict farms and the like and pestered us to go down and inspect them.

Terry Hickey, John Gilmour, John and I, and others viewed and vetted them one by one. The outcome was the purchase of Tyn Twr, though I suspect that it was the one John Wanted all the time.

At first we only had half of the house, with a bad tenant in the other side. A lot of hard work was needed to provide suitable accomodation for members. John far more than anyone else, spent countless hours and almost every weekend working at the hut. He had to squeeze money out of the Management Committee for the most basic requirements, and more often than not, he improvised.

We all owe John a very big thank-you for the many years of effort and time he put into the Welsh Hut.

He has not given up all interest in Club affairs, merely made way for someone else, in order to ensure continuity. I think he realise s that we should be growing our own timber from the newer and younger members fof the future well being of Achille Ratti.

My personal thanks and best wishes to you John.

Barry Ayre.

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CHEW VALLEY SKYLINE RACE - 2nd March, 1986 14miles/2,000'.

ARCC participants: Mike Lomas, Leo Pollard, Michael Pooler, Derek Price and Angela Soper.

Conditions: Deep ice-crusted snow; wind-chill factor -35C; ground temperature -9C.

The Arctic conditions caused concern to all competitors and several layers of Helly tops and bottoms could be seen on most runners. Many also wore tracksuit bottoms and cagoules. The going was unbelievably bad, deep mushy snow, topped with a thin ice crust which gave way at every step. The winners time was 30mins outside the record, and gives an indication of the hard going.

More than forty of the field of 390, were timed out at checkpoint 2, and scores of others were forced to retire later in the race. The snow never let up, and the traverse from Chew Reservoir to Alphin Pike was desperate.

All those representing ARCC completed, as did John McGonagle, Dave Parker Sheila Anderson and John Dixon - 8th place; each representing their own club. A good, if not strenuous day out.

Derek Price.

REPORT ON THE SCOTTISH MEET 8-16th Feb, 1986

IN past years there have been winter meets in Aviemore, Roybridge, and the Glencoe area several times. Much as I would have liked I couldn't go, as I was busy earning the fourteen weeks holiday I had fixed for me at other times of the year.

In the autumn of 1984 - relishing my newfound freedom, I realised I had my chance.

I got onto my contacts in the BMC to see if we could use the new National Mountaineering Hut at North Ballachulish. Unlikely, was the response, as it was being held for an International Meet. The Pakistani Alpine Club were too busy on the high glaciers of the Kashmiri border?, and six of us had the hut almost to ourselves. But all this was last year.

This year I booked 10 places, this resulted in : 13 members and guests, for all or for part of the week. We did have for three nights, two brave souls at a time camped below the North Face of Nevis to avert the long haul up each day.

As well as myself, Wilf Charnley, Mike Lomas, Barry Rogers, John Kelly, Keith Foster, Dave Linney, Jim Cooper (Lancaster), Pete Kirkbright, Dave Hall, Terry Kitching, Pete Dowker and Dot Wood.

It really was a great week, conditions almost perfect, a bit more sun would have been appreciated. Many good walks and routes were done including No 6 Gully on Aonach Dubh, Boomerang Gully on Stob Coire nan Lochan, Christmas Couloir on Aonach Dubh and also Chaos Chimney, Number 3 Gully; On the Ben - The Curtain, Tower Ridge, Point Five Gully, Hadrian's Wall; N E Buttress of the Ben - Minus No 2 Gully. Peregrine Gully on Gearr Aonach, and the walks done - Aonach Beag, Aonach Eagach Ridge, Buchaille Etive Beag, Stob Ban, Carn Mor Dearg, Ben Lui, Ben Bheithir Horseshoe and Ballachulish to Duror via the Forest. A very respectable week.

Next year I have booked the whole hut and am trying for places in the CIC Hut to run concurrently. More details in the next bulletin.

John Foster

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MERIBEL, THREE VALLEYS.

It seemed doomed from the start. First we couldn't get a booking, then six days before we left, the Tour Company changed our venue. The bus journey was very long, although by some miracle we all managed to catch it this year, and from different departure points too. It was foggy at the channel, and we were delayed, fog in France and then traffic jams, five miles an hour Eventually we arrived ten hours late and fell into bed to wake to Blue, blue skies, hot sunshine and crisp, white, squeaky snow . . . it was wonderful. Our three flats were some distance apart instead of next door to each other, so it was nine in the morning at the corner, or for 'Happy Hour' in the French Connection where they sold wonderful cocktails 'Piste Noirs' for £1.75.

The ski-ing was great, 500 miles of pisted runs, the A team tried to ski them all in the first three days. The Ski-school beginners did very well, one of them thinks he has found something as good as fast motor-biking. Unfortunately two of the racers collided and broke ribs and a leg, but are both well on the mend now. We all got very brown, the south facing balcony suited me for two hours at lunchtime. So where next season? Thankyou Christine for all the hassle doing the organisation of it all.

SEPTEMBER BREAK - Tony Brindle

We had been planning the trip for weeks and weeks. I had always wanted to visit Hoy, and September break seemed like an ideal opportunity to go. Besides which after the intensity of the work preceding the Break, a relaxing holiday was just what the doctor had ordered.

Kathy meanwhile had other ideas. I knew she was up to something as soon as we met after I had returned from a few days camping with my group. When she mentioned going to the Alps I was more than a bit taken aback. I mean, whoever heard of going to Chamonix for just one week? My protests carried little weight against the ferry tickets that she had procured during my absence. In simple terms, I had been totally out-manoeuvred.

I slept all the way to Chamonix. Years of being jammed amongst various items of luggage has enabled me to perfect this technique. Having been there so many times before, I couldn't help wondering, just what one could do with just one week based at Snell's Field.

To begin with, we decided that we couldn't afford to spend much time in the valley. So, the first afternoon we boarded the Aiguille du Midi téléphérique, loaded down with three days supplies, and leaving our bivouac kit at the old 'Cosmiques' refuge, we made a late afternoon traverse of the Cosmiques Arête. A lovely mixed route and adequate compensation for the effort of getting there. Back to the hivi and Kathy's first Alpine night. The sunset was the usual miracle of colour and the night a very relaxed and comfortable one.

Long before sunrise we were on the move again, to the ordinary route on Mont Blanc du Tacul. It was Kathy's first visit to the Alps, and we didn't want to paint any illusions about the various facets of the climbing. This route is one, long, tedious slope, so typical of the area. A mindless perseverance needs to be developed to overcome such simplicity. Sitting on the summit at sun-rise, we viewed the Brenva face of Mont Blanc with critical eyes and scheming minds. At least mine was. On the descent we did some ice-axe braking, it seemed a good time to start, and then dispensed with the rope for the first time in two days, for our return to the hivi. After a while, a few brews and a nap, we donned climbing gear again for the 'Eperon de Cosmiques'. This is a brilliant granite spur with a sustained crack route up its centre. The setting is out of this world, and by the time I had finished lying about the length of the route, and the beauty of big boots on extreme rock, Kathy too was out of this world. Moving on automaton, we solaced back down the Cosmiques Arête to the hut.

Now my relationships with continental climbers over the years, have had their ups and downs. This particular evening my powers of constraint were remarkable... actually Kathy held me down. And after one, maybe two hours sleep, the alarm clock awoke, as did our continental friends. Their wakefulness was helped considerably by my clumsiness whilst packing, but I am sure they understood.

The Midi-plan traverse that morning was quite stunning. Only one other party on it, and they behind us. The summit of the Aiguille du Plan is remarkable. A tabletop perched up in the heavens. Quite hard to get to in crampons, but I suppose we could have taken them off. The descent to the Requin Hut, know it? Done it late September? Don't. This was to be Kathy's introduction to difficult glacier terrain and it fully lived up to its reputation. After ten minutes of easy but worrying snow, we came to the first hole. Hundreds of feet deep and a brave jump across.

SEPTEMBER BREAK Cont...

" Do you want to go first or last?"

" What happens if the first one blows it?"

" We die."

Kathy goes first, an important discovery made, that the Alps don't play, and that the consequence of decision is final. We were committed to the descent and the guide behind us was also taking our route. Not much later and many worrying moments we reached an impasse. The whole ice-fall had collapsed in a generally confused, downward direction.

I knew the route of old, so headed for the rocks on the left bank. Mid-afternoon now and collapsing seracs added to the whirl of falling masonry. The guide and his clients followed, finally asking me if I knew where I was going. Eventually, we made an abseil down through a hole in a serac, and like rabbits, bolting for their holes, made our escape back onto the mainstream glacier. The total descent time to the Requin was in excess of six hours. The Mer de Glace followed, with its ritual monotony, and finally the walk down from Montenvers. We decided to eat out that night.

Kathy, having gone off glaciers, we headed next for the Pipillons Ridge on the Aiguille du Peigne. Nice, short route we thought. The telepherique cables were iced up, so our early rise allowed us to get to the route, just about lunch-time. We didn't make the last cable car down. The route was very hard in large boots, and occasionally serious, but the 'piece de resistance' was the descent to Chamonix in the dark. Not anticipating such a late start, or for that matter, finish. We hadn't carried headlights. Light and fast was the order of the day, but sore and slow was the descent.

The ever dependable lasses at the Bar Nationale, served us yet another very late meal. A rest day was required, so Kathy led the Sarre Roof, over in Italy. Debbie and John, two friends from Eskdale, accompanied us, one to climb, the latter to sunbathe. Somewhere during the rest day, the conversation happened on climbing. Imagine that? The following evening, I asked my rather lonely brain cell, just what we were doing? I should mention that this conversation took place in the Trident Bivouac Hut, where we had gone without bivvi gear. We, being Kathy, Debbie and myself. Before us lay the hardest days alpine climbing my two companions had undertaken. Not wishing to carry heavy rucksacs, they had opted to walk across the Vallee Blanche late afternoon, climbing up to the hut, and sitting in it until the late evening, whence we could descend the other side and cross the Col Major at the base of the Brenva Spur of Mont Blanc. All we had to do then, was climb the Spur, ascend Mont Blanc and descend to Chamonix. The next day we had to drive to Calais. Well even the best laid plans don't always work out, and just twenty hours later, after leaving the bivouac, we arrived at the Vallot Hut. Having completed an extra-ordinary and memorable days climbing. We had climbed to the highest point in Europe via one of its most beautiful faces, and descended via one of its most well known ridges, to yet another bivouac.

As I was falling to sleep en route to Eskdale the following day, Kathy murmured about not going to the Alps for honeymoon. Maybe we will go to Orkney instead.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

This is an update on local representatives. If you live in the areas listed, why not contact your local rep. You may be encouraged to go out on local hills, share petrol costs for the weekend, go for a pint, go further afield or even a friendly bicycle ride. If you would like to represent your area contact Club Chairman George Partridge, 16, Centurion Close, Meols, Wirral. 051 632 5903.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Local Rep. . .</u>
Blackpool & Fylde	Joyce Foster, 19, Torquay Ave, Blackpool Tel: 692221
Deep South/Hampshire	Jennie Massie, Coombe Farm, Rake, Nr Liss Hampshire. Tel; Liss 892336
North East	David Hall, 17, Gladesfield Rd, Norton Stockton on Tees, Cleveland. 531813 John Kelly, 62, Kells Lane, Gateshead 091 4876562
Edinburgh	Nicki Baker, 8, Bellevue Terrace, Edinburgh. 031 556 5178
Merseyside	George Partridge, address above
Midlands	Ken Godfrey, Moorfield, Dunsley Rd, Kinver, Staffs 0384 873628.
Leeds	Peter McHale, 533, Foundry Rd, Leeds 8
London	John Parsons, 22, Bencombe Rd, Purley.

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JUNIOR MEET 1986

The response was a trifle muted. ONLY ONE ENQUIRY. We can but try and have made provisional arrangements for the weekend of 5/6th July at Bishopscote.

If there are bookings, we hope to organise Rock climbing, Fell walking and a high level overnight camp.

Will volunteers to help, please make contact as soon as possible.

Those taking part in the High Level Camp, will carry all personal gear including sleeping bag and food. Tent and stove will be shared among the party.

Parents please note - Please provide your child with food for the hill, and breakfast on Saturday. Dinner on Saturday and breakfast Sunday is provided.

Make sure your child has adequate clothing, gloves, hat etc, and waterproofs. There will be a charge of £5 to cover food and petrol etc.

Junior Meet Please return this slip to George Partridge, above address.
Name age M/fem. Address Walking Rockclimbing High-level

Parents Name Amount enclosed. . . . All parents
 will stay at Langdale, childrens age limits 10 - 16yrs. Parents should
 organise a ghyll walk for younger children.

THREE COUNTIES TOPS WALK

SAT MAY 10th

By now you should have used your booking form in the last bulletin, as plans are well under way. However if you have'th because you are a new member, you've only just made up your mind' Then telephone Alan Kenny to see if there is room for you Alan's number is Morecambe 0524 414615

Here id the route, take this with you, you may need it.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION THREE COUNTIES : TOPS

Start from Mill Bridge at 4.30am. Mill Bridge GR336092 the usual route to Helvellyn Summit via Grizedale Tarn, Dollywagon and Nethermost Pike. From the summit retrace steps to the path junction and take the right hand fork, making haste to Wythburn feeding station at GR 325137. Up the road to Steel End, turning into Wythburn Valley, follow the stream up to the saddle at Green Up Edge, then via the broken fence to High Raise summit. Cross country now, no path to Stake Beck, ascend the longish spur to 1,800ft contour, track to Angle Tarn, soon to reach Esk Hause control GR234081. Quietly onward to Scafell Pike summit by the usual route. Proceed by Mickledore, descend via Cam Spout to the river Esk, pick up the path on the East bank of the river, follow downstream until 90 degree bend is reached. Cross country again until slight rise and then descend and aim for large bend in Lincove Beck, cross beck and proceed down Mosedale until GR018243 for further nourishment. From Cockley Beck ascend to Grey Friar Summit, swing south onto approach ridge to Conistone Old Man, the last of the Three Tops. Retrace steps along ridge making for Wetside Edge via Swirl How and Little Carrs. Descend to Three Shires Stone GR 278 028 for final brew. Proceed down road, contour below Hollin Crag, pick up Blea Tarn path and up to road. Over stile at the cattle grid and down through the camp site to the road and hut Estimated distance 34 miles.

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THE NEXT BULLETIN IS THE 100th ONE TO BE PRINTED.
SHALL WE MAKE IT SOMETHING SPECIAL? ONLY IF YOU SEND NEWS, VIEWS,
AND ARTICLES FOR PRINTING TO THE
EDITOR . . .

JOYCE FOSTER, 19, TORQUAY AVENUE, BIA CKPOOL.

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HUT WARDENS:

Tyn Twr: Dave Armstrong, 26, Elmfield, Shevington, Wigan.
Langdale: Alan Kenny, 24, Rochester Rd, Morecambe.
Dunamil: Tom Baron, Staveley Post Office, Nr Kendal, Cumbria.
Buckbarrow: Frank Whittle, Old Strands, Nether Wasdale, Gosforth
Cumbria.

THE NEXT BULLETIN WILL BE THE CENTENARY EDITION.