

AGUILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB



1997  
JOURNAL

ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB

PRESIDENT RT.REV.FRANCIS SLATTERY, V.G.,M.A.  
CHAPLAIN REV.FR.FRANCIS HUGHES S.D.B., L.R.A.M.

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10 EGERTON ROAD, ASHTON, PRESTON PR2 1AJ 01772 768174  
VICE-CHAIRMAN ALAN KENNY  
81 STANHOPE AVENUE, TORRISHOLME, MORCAMBE LA3 3AL 01524 414615  
HON SECRETARY AUSTIN GUILFOYLE  
6 JUBILEE WAY, WIDNES, WA8 7NH 0151 4240742  
TREASURER MICHAEL LOMAS  
21 BROAD DRIVE, UPPRTHONG, HOLMFIRTH, YORKS, HD7 1LS 01484 687030  
MEMBERSHIP SEC NEVILLE HAIGH  
752 DEVONSHIRE ROAD, NORBRECK, BLACKPOOL, FY2 0AD 01253 354505

ORDINARY MEMBERS

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DOT WOOD 5 MILL ROW, ELTERWATER, AMBLESIDE, CUMBRIA  
LA22 9HR 015394 37105

HUT WARDENS

BECKSTONES JOYCE KENT, 4 GODWIN AVENUE, MARTON, BLACKPOOL  
FYY 9LG 01253 697948  
BISHOP'S SCALE ARTHUR DANIELS, THE SCHOOL HOUSE, FERNEY LEE ROAD  
TODMORDEN, LANCS. OL14 5NR 01706 819706  
DUNMAIL DAVID OGDEN, 89 NEWTON DRIVE, BLACKPOOL FY3 8LX  
01253 398252  
TYN TWR ANNE WALLACE, 28 CECIL STREET, SUTTON, ST.HELEN'S  
WA9 3LB 01744 811864



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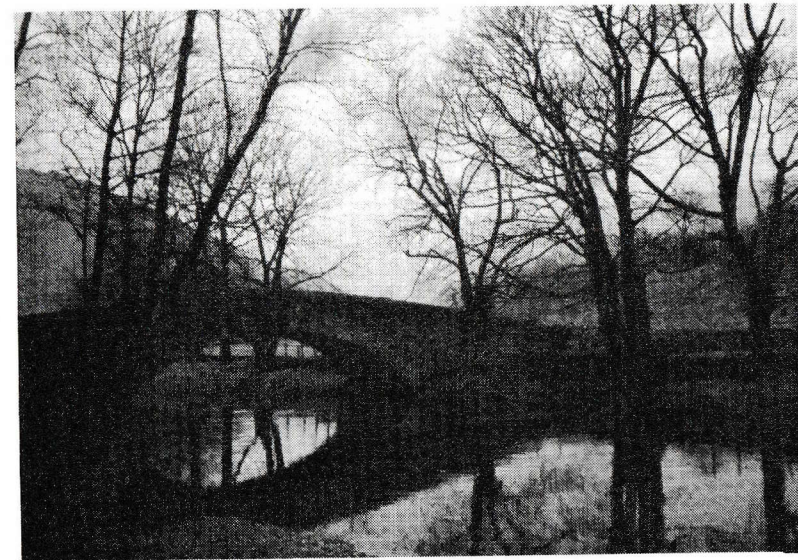
## INTRODUCTION

Once again there has been a comforting response from members willing to provide articles for the journal. I also had a stroke of luck coming across an article written by Bishop Pearson about the CBA, (this was found amongst a pile of papers passed on to me earlier in the year), and Barry Ayre provided the articles on the opening of the Chapel and the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Our Founder President's love was for the hills. His vision was for the ARCC to encourage the pursuit of mountaineering and to foster a love of the mountains, and most of the articles enclosed uphold that vision. My thanks to those members who contributed.

Ad Altiora

Derek Price.



Bridge over the Langdale Beck leading to Baysbrown Farm.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD AT THE CHAPEL STILE VILLAGE HALL  
ON SATURDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 1997**

**Apologies for absence** were received from Ray and Dorothy Buffey, Bryony White, Douglas Blackett, John McGonagle and Jim Cooper.

**1. Minutes of the 1996 Annual General Meeting.** The Secretary read a summary of the 1996 AGM.

**Matters arising.** None.

**2. Chairman's Report.**

Derek welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the direction his report would take.

**The 1997 Journal.** Whilst articles have been dribbling in most of the year I am still hoping for many more, so will those members who have something to write about please let me have a copy. I might add that hand written articles take twice as long to type into the computer than typed ones because I have difficulty in reading the handwriting.

**1998 Meets Card.** The pattern we usually follow is to use corresponding dates from previous years to set an activity. However, we still welcome other members to plan activities but would they please let Alan Kenny know the date and details of any such activity. Next year we hope to incorporate a graduate members meet which will give new members the opportunity to get to know each other and other members.

**Maintenance Officer.** George Partridge kindly volunteered to act as maintenance officer for the club. His brief being to report on the repairs, maintenance and improvements necessary on our properties. So that hopefully they will all be kept in a good state of repair.

**Property in the West.** It is common knowledge that we are showing an interest in a property at Hall Dunnerdale, near Seathwaite in the Duddon Valley. A recent structural survey disclosed a number of faults, none that we cannot deal with, but it does seriously change the asking value of the property. The location is approximately a one hour drive from Langdale and is four miles from Beckstones. Every member will be receiving written information regarding this property in the near future.

*Incidentally, (and this has nothing to do with my last statement), at a Management Committee meeting on the 11th of October 1967 the Chairman announced that number two Tyn Twr, Bethesda, had been purchased. It was also announced, at the same meeting, that outline planning permission for the conversion of the hog house into a chapel at Bishop's Scale had been approved. Hopefully, we will be making similar announcements for Cawfoot in Hall Dunnerdale and the work to be done at Bishop's Scale.*

**1997 Meets.** May I thank all those members who organised and/or helped on the various meets and club activities. In particular many thanks to Arthur Daniels who has done so much in arranging activities for the junior members.

Hut usage has again been good this year and last year I tongue in cheek hoped that members would put something back into the club in the way of attending working weekends. I make the same request again for next year for it is little to ask when we consider the pleasures we get out of the club.

*The CAFOD race was again a success, thanks to Colin Jones and his team of helpers. The race sponsorship money stands at £1630.*

*Sadly the Bishop's Walk was way down on numbers, only 160 walked compared with 425 last year. Next year will be the 30th annual walk and the club will be more involved in contacting schools and parishes.*

Once again I would like to publicly thank the M/C for their support throughout the year. And special thanks to retiring Vice Chairman Mickey Pooler though we will be hearing more from Mickey tonight in his role of guest speaker at the dinner. And thanks also to Bill Mitton for his input to the club.

Needless to say I must thank my wife Margaret for the patience she shows when I am dashing off to the Lakes or Wales or to the printers or sitting for hours in the long winter evenings working on the journal. Her calmness helps me to keep my sanity.

*During Derek's report there arose a discussion concerning the New Property in the Duddon Valley.*

*The main points were as follows:*

- a. Mike Lomas thought a bank would not give a loan based on the figures of the Club's finances.*
- b. David Ogden was all in favour for the purchase of the property.*
- c. Micky Pooler pointed out the advantages of putting an offer sooner rather than later - planning permission could be granted more easily, conversion from a residential property to a climbing hut would be easier.*
- d. Micky pointed out that it would take several years to convert into a climbing hut in its present state. Improvements would take time.*
- e. Dave Roughead asked if we had enough young members to continue payment in the future.*
- f. We have not yet applied for planning permission because the vendor would not sell at the price we are prepared to offer.*
- g. Until the membership has decided to put in an offer the Club will not make a bid. Derek said that he was sending out a letter to sound-out the membership on giving donations towards the new hut.*
- h. The proposed development at Bishop's Scale would cost about £12000. Alan Kenny said he does not want the improvements to the other huts to be slowed down because we are pursuing this new hut in the west. Faz Faraday strongly endorsed this. The President, Monsignor Slattery said that Bishop Pearson would have said, "Go for it".*



### 3. Secretary's Report.

The water purity at the clubs various huts where ultra-violet purification has now been installed is sorted out. There having been one or two problems at Bishop's scale.

The strategy for the future development and use of Dunmail referred to at last years AGM is taking hold very well, thanks to David Ogden, Dave Hugill and Micky Crawford. The bookings are so good that the working weekend of 22nd November had to be cancelled.

The alterations at Bishop's Scale are now coming to a head and should soon be started. We are just waiting for planning permission at present.

The bike shed is to be located in the coal shed. It needs doors fitting and then a new location for the keys.

An annual Mass for deceased members will be said in future. It will probably be on the weekend of the CAFOD Race or the Bishop's Sponsored Walk.

There have been many activities and events during the year. One or two I might mention:

It was Fr. Hughes' Golden Jubilee this year and the Committee sent him a gift with congratulations on behalf of all club members.

Some of you may have seen the TV programme that Granada did on Sunday 9th November in the series "Bless This House", about the club. This seemed to be good P.R. for the club and thanks to all those who took part and thanks to everyone who has organised or helped in any way. It is all these events that help to foster such a good spirit throughout the club.

### Treasurer's Report.

A written financial statement and accounts were circulated for the report.

A brief outline of the report follows.

### 1996/97 Results.

The year as a whole has been modestly successful, with a surplus of £5,162.82, but for an exceptional item viz. the VAT refund of £6,519.06 we would have had a deficit of £1,350. We cannot depend on anymore good fortune from that source.

Accumulated Fund	£59,420 )	
Turnover	£45,076 )	All the highest ever.
Subscriptions	£11,697 )	
Hut Fees	£23,935	Second highest ever.

Hut Results:			
Bishop's Scale	£183 surplus	Beckstones	£1201 deficit
Dunmail	£4659 deficit	Tyn Twr	£270 deficit

Dunmail was slightly handicapped by the almost £10,000 of major works but the hut fee income did go up slightly to nearly £11,000.

### Club Balance.

The balance increased has over the last seven years from £46,004 to £59,420. This is £5162 up on the previous peak of £54,255.

Whilst having this level of accumulated funds is a useful safeguard as a healthy working balance, it needs to be borne in mind the under-lying purpose of the funds is to:

- be available to meet any essential work or other expenditure immediately
- assist the financing of the club's medium and longer-term plans and objectives
- hopefully to distribute towards the acquisition of further club huts.

### Major Heads of Account: Comparison 95/96 and 96/97

Income	up	13%
Expenditure	up	47%
Subscriptions	up	3% (Highest level ever, £11K in 4 years)
Hut Fees	down	4% (Over £21K in last 4 years)
Bank Interest	down	13%

### Repairs and Maintenance.

1995/96 £9132 down on 94/95 by £3616 - 28%  
1996/97 £19,128 up £9996 an increase of 109%.

When R & M costs are reduced it enables an increase in the annual surplus, and growth in balances. As you will see from the above account there has been a sizeable increase in R & M, mainly spent on major work, some of which has been done and some which has been started and has yet to be finished.

### BMC Subscriptions.

£1998 up £264

The practical contribution we can make is to help by our continuing membership/financial support to the BMC.

### Insurance.

For 97/98. Premium cost £2226 an increase of £86 which is 4%

Hut	Valuation Building	Buildings Cover	Contents Cover
Bishop's Scale	£350 000	£209 326	£12 976
Dunmail	£ 55 000	£104 662	£10 637
Tyn Twr	£ 55 000	£104 662	£ 5 406
Chapel (Included with Bishops Scale)		£ 41 865	£ 5 406
Totals	£460 000	£460 515	£34 425

Public liability is £1M (Up from £250K.  
BMC membership provides third party indemnity of £2M to all members on the club list sent to the BMC, and to ARCC itself in respect of any mountain-related activities organised by the club. (Long Walk, Bishop's walk, etc.)

### Hut Fees.

Hut	Fees 95/96	Fees 96/97
Beckstones	£ 2 039	£ 2 164
Bishop's Scale	£ 8 408	£ 7 609
Dunmail	£10 762	£10 896
Tyn Twr	£ 3 755	£ 3 265

Continuing good work by wardens and their helpers are deserving of congratulations for some very good results.

#### Auditor.

The AGM has to appoint an auditor for the club each year. Brian Cheetham is will to continue.

#### VAT.

European Commission directive....should be able to re-claim VAT paid on subscriptions. This has been dealt with.

Year	Subscriptions	VAT %	Approximate Claim
90/91	£ 7 654	15	£1 148
91/92	£ 7 912	17.5	£1 385
92/93	£ 8 137	17.5	£1 424
Totals	£23 703		£3 957

Received: March 1997 - £4,032, plus May 1997 - £2,487 Total £6,519.

With a turnover of approximately £45,000 the Club is very near the threshold of £49,000, the point at which we would have to register for VAT. But a recent clarification of the VAT regulations has exempt subscriptions from VAT. With a total turnover this year of £45,000, we can reduce that by £11,697, to an amended turnover of £33,379, well under the £49,000 limit. This gives some scope for increases in subs and hut fees.

#### Charges.

In 1993 subs were increased from £20 to £23. Hut fees went up in two stages in 93/94 from £1.50 to £2.00 to £2.50.

In the current year the hut fees at £23,936 did not quite meet the variable running costs of the huts at £24,173. Last year the huts contributed £5,242 towards the overall surplus.

In the light of our position, and the plans for the future, an increase of annual subs to £25 from 1.1.98 for new members, and from 1.10.98 for existing members, and a rise in hut fees from 1.1.98 from £2.50 to £3.00 with related increases in guest and visiting club rates.

If we have genuine ambitions to develop and/or expand it is essential to build some additional income to help in the financing of any developments. So please look on these modest increases as a positive approach to our intentions to continue to develop, which is we believe, what the majority of members want.

#### Subscriptions Secretary's Report.

Nev Haigh reported that the total membership at the 3rd of September was 692, the highest in the Club's history. Membership has increased over the last ten years by 77.

The quota of 33% non-catholic members has been filled for the last 2 years and there is a waiting list of 18 at the present time.

#### Hut Wardens Reports.

##### Beckstones - Joyce Kent

Joyce started her report by saying that when she was appointed hut warden her brief was 'to find a hut for purchase in the west'. Wasdale is out of the question because nothing is available. Eskdale is too expensive. The Duddon Valley seemed suitable and she has looked at at least 30 properties and the one at Cawfoot is by far the best because:

- It is on a main road reducing the difficulties of icy and snowy hill roads.
- It is one mile from a pub.
- It will be able to make more money by letting to groups, which we can't do at Beckstones.

Many jobs were done at the working weekend by the 10 helpers who arrived, and the meets were well attended, the BBQ weekend being very enjoyable.

The NT have done various things - new water supply and septic tank, new gutters (which leak). The NT did not tell us when we closed the hut for the NT Acorn camp use that they were not using it in July, nor in September either.

The hut is used by many different members. She thanked Terry Kitchen for all his help, without him Joyce said that she couldn't be warden.

##### Dunmail - Dave Ogden.

I reported last year that a considerable amount of work had been done to improve the hut which included the installation of secondary lighting, alterations to the generator controls and installation of central heating in the dining room and the rooms above. The major cost of these improvements has fallen into this years accounts, hence this year the account for the hut has shown a loss of £4659.

The high cost improvements are complete for the present. It is therefore hoped that the hut should show a significant surplus next year. The condition of the hut is now much improved and this promotes favourable comments from the regular users of the hut.

The hut fees are only slightly up on last year which is a disappointment to me since the hut has been busy all year. Weekend bookings are good for the coming year but more mid-week bookings are required and so we are going to promote this more aggressively.

We have had one work weekend which was very well attended by members who did a fine job cleaning the hut and painting. St. Joseph's youth group from Sale in Cheshire, who have used the hut on a number of occasions volunteered to do some work on the hut. This they did and we paid all their costs for the weekend. As a result of their efforts the hut is looking well at present.

Some major repairs and improvements are at present in hand or being considered. These include:

- Installation of a new cooker.
- Provision of a new stainless steel kitchen table.
- Treatment for wood worm.
- Replacement of the kitchen sink.

I would like to thank on your behalf, my wife, Joan, for all the work she does handling the bookings, Mike Crawford who has helped me through the year and stood in as warden for nine weeks whilst I was in Ethiopia, Dave Hugill whose help is only a phone call away and all those members who turned up for the working weekend.



#### **Bishop's Scale - Alan Kenny.**

**Usage.** This was slightly down on last year, and is reflected in the hut income. Bookings have only been accepted from visiting groups for mid-week use and these have been relatively few.

**Improvements.** The improvement to the water heating involved the replacement of the two old non-insulated cylinders by two new factory insulated ones. The re-arranged piping made the system more efficient resulting in the reduction in fuel costs over the past year. An electric heater has been fitted in the drying room to compensate for the absence of any heat due to the lagged cylinders.

The second improvement has been to the water supply, where a UV water treatment system has been installed. This initially caused some problems but with the introduction of a monitoring system in the storage tanks together with the installation of a pump these have now been rectified.

**Working Weekend.** One working weekend was held, when 26 people attended a great turnout. As a result a great number of jobs were undertaken, the main one being the laying of gravel on the car park, although much cleaning, painting, creosoting and general tidying of both hut and Chapel were also done.

#### **Tyn Twr - Anne Wallace.**

Anne sent her apologies for her absence but her mother has broken a leg and does not have sufficient mobility to be left unattended.

The clients who visit the hut regularly made their usual bookings and clubs which have meets at Tyn Twr some years, have also used the hut. But enquiries from occasional users and new customers were down maybe because the information on the huts location (in the BMC guide) was wrong. A letter has been sent asking for the error to be corrected.

My thanks to members who have noticed a problem and either sorted it out or had been in touch so that an expert could be asked to do the job. The electrical installation has been checked and most was satisfactory, though some new wiring had to be done.

The Long Walk should have been the Welsh 3,000's but conditions were unfavourable. Much snow had fallen and on the Saturday the wind was strong. 21 people started, 13 went from Nant Peris but only 8 got to the checkpoint at Ogwen. Everyone decided to call it a day. The helpers did a great job of preparing food or transporting cold and dripping participants from car park to hut. A comment that has to be made is that some people had not paid but were expected. The food provided had to be on the assumption that everyone on the list would turn up. Two did telephone before hand to explain they could not make it. In one instance a name had been given in by mistake. That left others expected but not appearing. The cost of the food bought for them was £49. Another aspect was that the men's dorms were thought to be full and people were booked into the caravan site when they could have had beds in the hut.

The Junior Meet was well attended. On the Saturday there was rock-climbing. Sunday was given to fun and games on an Anglesey beach.

We may be getting new neighbours as the builders yard is said to have been sold to another builder. Frank's house has been for sale and prospective buyers have viewed it.

#### **Election of Officers.**

Chairman. Derek Price. Prop. W.Mitton Sec. Arthur Daniels  
Vice-Chairman. Alan Kenny. Prop. Mike Pooler Sec. Tony McHale  
Ordinary Member. Dot Wood. Prop. Terry Kitchen Sec. Joyce Kent

#### **Any Other Business.**

David Roughead asked if there was any upper age limit to membership and was informed there was none. He also wanted the rules on bringing children to the hut by members clarifying.

Margaret Price proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee and the Hut Wardens.

There being no other business the meeting was closed.



## THE CBA. (Catholic Boys Association)

**Bishop Thomas Bernard Pearson.**

*This article, written by T. B. Pearson, (known to members as 'The Bish'), was discovered amongst a pile of ARCC papers handed in for the Club library. Unfortunately, it is only the first of three articles - we will never know whether the others were written.*

*For members of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club who joined in recent years and did not have the pleasure of meeting or knowing 'The Bish', this article should give them some insight into the kind of person he was and why we have such a flourishing club today.*

*This article will be followed by Bishop Pearson's sermon given on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, celebrated on the 16th July, 1970. Also the Solemn Opening of the New Chapel at Langdale on 18th July, 1970. (Our Lady of the Snows).*

I have been asked to write the memory of my early days in Blackpool when I first came there as a priest in 1934 having come from Rome where I was ordained on the 1st November 1933 but stayed there for a year to complete my studies. It was before the war, before the 2nd Vatican Council and life within the Church and in the family and society is so different now that all I can do is to remember things exactly as they were at that time. Therefore I propose three successive articles. The first an account of the Catholic Boy's Association, the legendary CBA from which was formed the Achille Ratti Climbing Club which flourishes today. Secondly an account of what it was like to be a curate at St. Cuthbert's from 1934 to 1944; and lastly what it was like to be a parish priest 1944 to 1949 when I became a Bishop.

In the mid-nineteen forties the CBA was a household word in Blackpool and the Fylde. It's headquarters were in Bagot Street. It was open every night of the week from 7pm to 9.30. At 8.30 there was a break for a few words from Fr.P and a short prayer. The most popular games were anything but civilised - British Bulldog; Barricades - a barrier was erected and one side tried to prevent the other side getting over, and let off all the pent-up energy until everyone was screaming for 'pop' to slake their thirst. This was intended because the Club ran largely from profits! We even got wrestling maps from a club in St.Helen's that was discarded because of the yellow dust they contained. The dust filled the air as the wrestlers thrashed about and soon wrestlers and spectators were thirsting for pop. The boxing club became famous because boys from Mulberry Street, the Little Gem church of Manchester were evacuees from the bombing and they were toughened from the bare-fisted fighting on the streets of Manchester. We beat the clubs from Preston, Liverpool and Ronnie Clayton, who became a national star, trained with us. Table tennis, billiards and the usual club games were there of course, but just think of the spread of other activities and you will understand what a monumental and popular club it was.

Lessons in piano playing; type writing, painting. There was an air training corps and army cadets with fully commissioned officers. Our army cadets during one of the summer camps at Ambleside took on the Home Guard there (Dad's Army) who trained to defend Ambleside in case of invasion and threw most of them into Lake Windermere; Great stuff! We had a troop of scouts; a drama group, but a special word about that in a moment. Each August there was a 'camp' in the old tin catholic church at Ambleside - 60 boys for the first fortnight, and 60 boys for the last two weeks.

How did all this come about? In 1935, my second year as a curate, a meeting was called at Sacred Heart of all the Parish Priests of Blackpool. My PP was 85 and asked me to represent him. All the Parish Priests had met to deplore the indifference to religion of all the young people of Blackpool when they went from primary school and thereafter took no part in parish life, especially the boys who went to St. Joseph's College or St. John Vianney's Secondary on Glastonbury Avenue. The girls weren't so bad because they floated about in blue things, the Children of Mercy Church and the parish priests liked that. They moaned and they groaned. I was appalled and though not asked to speak - curates had no rights except to a Christian burial - spoke up. Look here, I said, you have been complaining about the boys because you have lost contact with them when they left primary school and began to grow up. Are you not asking the wrong questions; you are their pastors, you are ordained and made parish priests to lead them, to serve them. Tell me, what have you done for them? A stunned silence and a prayer closed the meeting forthwith. No discussion; full stop. One stayed behind and emotionally thanked me. He was not a priest, he was Brother Malone, headmaster of St. Joseph's College and he said he felt that the whole meeting was to get at him.

After that I had to do something about it - at least for St. Cuthbert's - someone had to blaze a trail. For two weeks we urged the teenage boys of the parish to come to a meeting in Bagot Street to start a club. About 35 turned up, dragooned by their parents, and deeply suspicious. I outlined my plan - largely a good time to be had by all, not least by myself, and the news went round the rest like wildfire. "He never mentioned religion, its dead good"; come along and set Bagot Street alight. We did.

The noise was appalling. On arrival they signed in and paid threepence. The boys were divided into Greeks and Romans and healthy hatred was established. There were all kinds of games but at some stage a rough house was organised and when all were exhausted 'pop' was served and they were glad to sit around and listen to me talking to them about their importance in God's eyes. A short prayer followed - quite intense, especially during the war when the Dads were fighting and we waited for the German invasion.

In those early days we could only meet once a week. Wednesday nights. Naturally opposition was fierce. The CWL (Catholic Women's League) objected to finding pop bottles in their piano; the club members of the St. Cuthbert's Institute - the top players of the billiards league in Blackpool - were constantly bringing people from Accrington to repair the tears in the cloth of the tables. I bore the criticism meekly.

The war that broke out in 1939 turned out to be a blessing for us. The men of the club went off to war; the CWL turned from sipping tea to running soup kitchens for soldiers and looking after evacuee children and so the CBA swept the lot out and took over the whole place on a every night basis and built up to what I have described at the beginning.

## Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

**Bishop Pearson's sermon to members and friends on the 16th July, 1970.**

This Mass, in this place on the open fellside, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is at once a commemorative Mass, a Eucharistic celebration of thanksgiving, and it is also my intention that as long as I am able and then in those who follow me that it should be celebrated each year and that this altar of rough hewn timber, this derelict shelter should be built little by little into a permanent open-air shrine where people will gather and do what we are about to do today.



The background is this. Exactly thirty years ago today forty boys and young men from school, college and university left Blackpool with me at midnight in a coach with hooded lights which were brave enough to pick out the road, and drove through barrier after barrier, challenged repeatedly by the armed Home Guard, to Dungeon Ghyll. It was England's darkest hour as we waited invasion, pitifully armed, alone amongst the nations, before the Battle of Britain gave us hope. We left Dungeon Ghyll at four in the morning and stumbled in the dark up Rossett Ghyll, over the Esk Hause with the dawn, and having carried up a table and everything for Holy Mass, offered the first Mass ever, so far as is known, on an English peak, Scafell, the highest.

Why did we do it? It was a simple act of sacrifice in order to offer sacrifice to show our complete dependence on God. The same simplicity with which Abraham in utter faith was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac; with which as was here foreshadowed on another hill Golgotha the Son of God sacrificed himself at the will of His Father, for us. We did not go up Scafell to petition and beg for victory. The whole atmosphere was too serious for that. All those careers were shattered; some already called up; many knew they would not live and did not; but all knew that to acknowledge our dependence on God and to do His Will was to leave history in safe hands.

The feast day itself was the inspiration. Carmel is the mountain where Elias lived alone in the desert. Today there are in Britain 37 Carmelite monasteries where nuns live as in a desert, in silence and in contemplation day and night in prayer before God. Each age has its own manifestation of evil and getting and spending and being too much with the world is a perpetually recurring one.

#### **Solemn Opening of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows on 18th July, 1970.**

**Bishop T.B.Pearson.**

This chapel to Our Lady of the Snows is redolent of the Langdale Valley. Its walls of rough stones from the fellsides; the beams of ancient oak; the pitch-pine of the pews; the severely rich beauty of the Westmorland slate altar resting on twin cairns sacrificially as on a mountain top; and the limpidity of the exquisite stained glass window all give tongue now, and will proclaim for generations to come, the spirit of those who belong by love and long association with this Valley. Achille Ratti Climbing Club has taken root in this Valley as surely as the mountain ash, and its members who are bonded together by love of mountains, becks, ghylls, ridges, crags and screes are fortunate in that the dwellers of the Valley have found in them a response to their own genuineness and deep but undemonstrative Christian Faith. Mutual help, respect for the traditions and properties; social exchanges in the local inns; an instant closing of the ranks to preserve the God-given beauty, all these things have created an intimacy too precious for words.

This is the background then to this evening's event, a quality of the human spirit, a slow growth, but as palpable and real as the landscape of the Valley visible from these windows. This chapel has taken its present shape from what was known as the "Hog House" through the toil, the skills, the enthusiasm and vision of a team of members and local men. The driving force and masterly co-ordination of all activities has come from this year's Hut Warden, Barry Ayre. What the ARCC owes to the organising ability and dedication of Barry can never be assessed but the evidence is here and now in this chapel tonight in the noble simplicity achieved by attention to detail so as not to mar the sacredness of its purpose. The architectural reconstruction and design has been done by Neville Haigh and it is to him that we owe the sensitivity to the local scene both in the porch added on, the window style, the use of materials and the ruthless elimination of any purposeless ornamentation. The only thing he regrets is that the oak flooring has to wait awhile to spread out the period of spending. No one but a Lakeland builder could have broken through this massive dry-stone walling in so many places and left it standing; have added on a porch in exactly the same manner of building that has been done in Langdale for timeless generations past, and using even the huge boulders as in days of yore. No one, I say, could have done it better, nor with more pride than Albert Bowness of Little Langdale and his men. Look at the woodwork, the window frames, the massive oak door; feel the texture with your fingers; see the finish of all the woodwork and

give thanks that in Peter Stott of Ambleside we have, not only a joiner, but *the* craftsman of these parts. These benches were, until a few months ago some of the pews in St John's, a very dear neighbour in Windermere, and it is Father Robson, its Vicar, that we owe not only the munificence of the gift which would have been far, far beyond our resources but also that the solidity, design and beauty of the pitch-pine has embellished and put a finish to the whole church. We are asking another local Artist, Mrs Banner, Sculptress of the highest order in this land, to carve in oak a Cross in place of this temporary design with the figure of the Risen Christ free-standing from it. Raise your eyes to the window above me designed without remuneration and with love, by Mr. Walmsley of Chapel Style in which he captures, even on the dullest day a gleam of summer sky, a glimpse of mountains surmounted by a cross with radiant stars of glory and the proud motto of our Climbing Club, "Ad Altiora" *"to higher things"*.

Such then is this Chapel, a Lakeland gem; created by the pride of those who love the Valley and offered for worship to God in simple faith and love.

In a few minutes I shall be joined with you all as we offer the first Mass here and may God who will be present amongst us as we pray, bless us, protect us, keep us close to Him tonight and for evermore.

#### **Translation of the Address by Don Caprile, from Badalucco, Italy.**

I have two things to confess: The first is that I am really sorry that I don't know your language a little better so that I could express more directly to you my thoughts; and the other is that in this my very first visit to England I have discovered how beautiful is your countryside and how friendly the people, so instead of coming amongst strangers it is like coming amongst old friends.

Today, as you inaugurate your new chapel of the Climbing Club I find this personal impression fully justified for various reasons. Your Club is called after Achille Ratti who was an impassioned mountaineer (indeed an Alpine Peak is named after him) but who is also most loved by Italians because as Pope Pius XIth. he restored religious peace for us between Italy and the Holy See.

Again, you have called this church that belongs to your Club Hut, 'Our Lady of the Snows' Bishop Pearson knows that on one of the peaks of the mountains that dominate our little town there is a lovely little church, a shrine that carries the same name. To Our Lady of the Snows our people on many occasions turn in prayer as to their Mother and they never forget that during the war it was not in vain when they suffered so much, as you did too. We are joined together then tonight by common affection for, and simple trust in the protection of a common Mother, Mary.

Lastly, an old Latin proverb says 'The friends of my friends are mine also', and all of us here have a friend in common in Bishop Pearson, President of this Club. To him I say 'thankyou' for the friendship with which he has honoured me. And if our common friend is for you also a fellow countryman, I can say that too because my town has given him honorary citizenship and he is well known by the people of my parish as he is at Windermere. He has invited to this celebration my friend Nino and we know that he has done this because he wants the whole population that is a thousand miles away to be represented and share with you this happy event tonight. For all this I thank Bishop Pearson and all of you and allow me to speak my special prayer that Our Lady of the Snows will take under her special care Bishop Pearson our common friend and fellow citizen, you and your friends; your O work; your recreations; your Club - in a word all that is yours.



## THE DOLOMITES AGAIN

Keith Cooper

My last visit to the Dolomites of Northern Italy was two years ago and as I flew into Verona for a week's climbing my heart sank - it was still raining! Gerard, his son Jamie and brother-in-law John were there to meet us and we piled into his van and headed up the motorway towards the Brenner Pass in the dark and wet. We arrived at Misurina, NE of Cortina well after midnight and so we just pulled onto some spare land and slept in the van. Early next morning we chipped the ice off the windscreen and pulled onto the small bare campsite for breakfast. Our spirits rose as the sun came up and the coffee and eggs took effect.

Misurina is a good base for several days exploration of the Sexten Dolomites. Monte Piana (2324m) was the scene of much fighting during the mountain war of 1915-17 and is now an open-air museum - it makes a very interesting and moving day out. The following morning the sun continued to shine so we walked up to the Refuge Fonda Savio on the delightful path No. 115. John and I were seduced by the beer and pasta on offer at the hut so Gerard and Jamie went off to climb the NE Cadin Spitze (2790m). This via ferrata (or iron way) although short in distance, ascends 423m and takes 3 hours for the round trip. It is mainly on ladders and is extremely hairy. When they returned, Jamie and I set off to tackle the Bonacossa Way which links the Cadin group with the Tre Cima Lavaredo. This spectacular route is not unlike Climber's Traverse on Bowfell and is more of a protected high level path than an out and out via ferrata.



The Bonacossa Way with the NE Cadin Spitze in the background

Next day we all walked from the campsite up to the world famous Tre Cima thus avoiding paying the £11 on the toll road but still enjoyed wonderful scenery amid the pine trees. From the col overlooking the Tre Cima, Gerard and Jamie set off to climb Monte Paterno (2746m) via protected war-time path De Luca - Innerkofler. This via ferrata is extremely interesting as it includes a 600m long tunnel up through the mountains and demands absolute sure-footedness and freedom from verigo. Meanwhile, John and I enjoyed the sunshine, had a beer at the Lavaredo hut and then wandered back down to the campsite amid breathtaking scenery.

Wednesday morning was moving-on day, so after a delightful stroll around Lake Misurina, we drove once again in sunshine to Cortina and over the Falzarego and Pordoi Passes into the Val di Fassa. Being the middle of September we had no problem finding a campsite and we stayed in an upmarket one in Pozza di Fassa. Thursday dawned with another cloudless sky so we took the lift from just west of the Karer Pass up to the Refuge Paolina. From there a path leads round to another hut, the Roda di Vael and the start of Via Ferrata Masara. This can be linked to an ascent of the Roda di Vael (2806m), together with a descent via the Vajolon Pass to make a very exciting day. It took Gerard, Jamie and me 6 hours from the top of the lift and back again. This is not an easy via ferrata. It demands some climbing ability as well as surefootedness and a head for heights but is very enjoyable indeed.



Via Ferrata Masara on the left leading to Roda di Vael (2806m)



Our final day was spent wandering about in the Rosengarten Group after taking the lift up from Vigo di Fassa and following the path to the Refuges Gardeccia and Vajolet.

We had wall to wall sunshine all throughout our week-long stay. The scenery of the Dolomites is unique in the world and it should carry a health warning. Once you are bitten by the Dolomites bug you will want to return time and time again. I know I do!

## OLD COUNTY TOPS RACE - 1997

### Alan Kenny

A brief description of the race may be in order for those members who are not familiar with this event. The race is for teams of two over a distance of approximately 37 miles with 10,000 feet of ascent and is organised by the ARCC. The race is run in accordance with the rules of the Fell Running Association and appears in their calendar. The route takes in the highest fells that were in the old counties of Westmoreland Cumberland and Lancashire, (Helvellyn, Scafell Pike and Conistone Old Man). As well as these checkpoints there are a further 6 (including the finish) that all teams must visit.

All the checkpoints are manned by Club members assisted by Raynet who provide radio links back to the race control/finish. At several of the checkpoints the competitors are provided with food and drinks. Every year, without fail, letters or comments have been received after the race from competitors expressing their appreciation of the organisation, but especially the friendliness and helpfulness of the marshal on the checkpoints.

However the weekend tends to be more than just a race. It is also very much a social occasion, providing as it does an opportunity for members to get together, both old and new. Unlike some other events everyone has a chance to be involved on an equal basis, being expert rock climber/walker/runner, etc., is not important. A testament to this is the fact that 35 people turned up this year to lend their support, a marvellous response.

As regards this years race it was once again held in un-seasonal conditions. Low cloud, strong winds and showers all conspired to make this a testing day out for the teams. The race was won for the second consecutive year by the Ambleside team of Mark Fleming and Stuart Shuttleworth in 24 seconds over 7 hours, an excellent performance in the conditions. First team home for Achille Ratti and in third place overall was Colin Jones and Robert Green in a time of 8 hours and 38 minutes. They were followed by Dave Bateson and Mike Simm in 10 hours 5 minutes this being Mikes first attempt at this race. Our third team to finish of Bill Mitton and Brian Kenny in 10 hours 16 minutes ensured that Achille Ratti won the team prize after a gap of several years.

Therefore despite the poor weather a sprained ankle and several retirements it was another successful event. I would like to thank again all those who helped and contributed to the events success. So, if after reading this you would like to be involved in the 1998 event please contact me.



John Foster

The areas of responsibility allocated to the rescue teams are usually delineated by county boundaries. The Valley's territory, being the whole of North Wales, stretched from the Irish Sea to the border with England, and south to a line roughly inland from Aberystwyth, which included part of Cardiganshire. Teams can in fact be required to operate anywhere, and frequently do so in support of the responsible team whenever a big search is mounted, or a major disaster occurs such as Lockerby. But they are expected to know their own territory very well, and not just the hills; the quickest routes to various locations (which are not always the shortest), campsites or other bases from which to mount an operation, and shepherds and farmers who often proved useful information. Caernarfonshire and most of Snowdonia were within easy reach after we finished work at mid-day on Saturday, but mountain ranges close to our boundaries, such as the Berwyns and Cadair Idris, needed much more travelling time. And it wasn't just distance but the narrow twisting roads of 40 years ago, with many steep gradients, were not conducive to good average speeds for a convoy of Land Rovers and Bedford 3-tonners.

It was normal practice in most military establishments of the day to grant a 48 hour pass once a month, commencing Friday night. This was intended to give servicemen the chance to get home and keep in touch with their families. Because RAF Valley is near Holyhead, with the next land to the west being the Irish Republic, it was way out on a limb, with 60 miles by train to Chester before personnel could head north, south or east towards their homes. The long weekend pass at Valley was therefore a 72 hour one from Friday night to Monday night. Though not devised for the benefit of the team, it provided a really worthwhile weekend to familiarise ourselves with the furthest flung mountains of our patch.

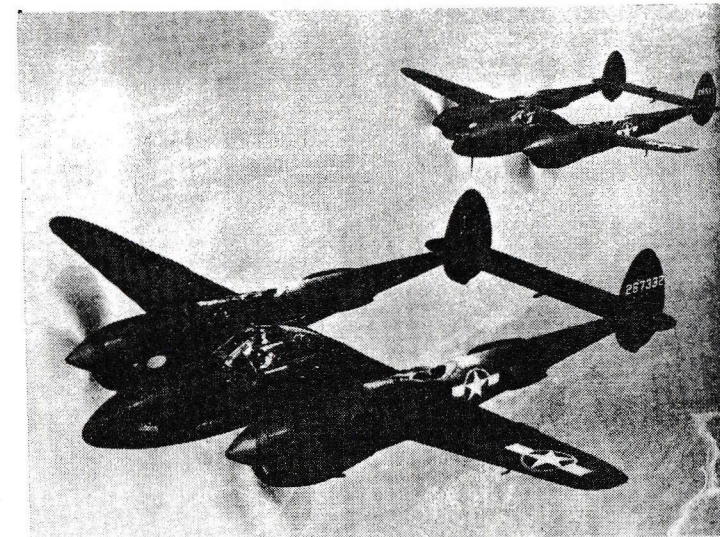
Thus it was that the 'August 72' in 1957 was used to visit a mountain right on our southern boundary, Plynlimon. Although not comparable to the giants of Snowdonia, it is the highest peak (2468ft.) between Cadair Idris and the Brecon Beacons, both over 2900ft. The area was beyond reach on Friday evening, so we stopped overnight at the fire station in Dolgellau. This was also one of the sub-units Valley had established many years before in the hope that local firemen, who are trained in first aid, should be able to get to a known crash site more quickly than the team, and thus give aircrew a better chance of survival. They were supplied with a stretcher, a couple of ropes, and given spasmodic training. There was no accommodation for us, so the lads made themselves as comfortable as they could on coiled ropes and sacks in the back of the trucks, and I found a corner in a disused Austin fire tender of second world war vintage. On Saturday morning we had only about 50 miles to go to the campsite St. Athan team had recommended, as south of Plynlimon was their territory. It was ideal, on the site of an old mine with open shafts to dispose of our rubbish, right opposite a pub called the Dyffryn Castell on the main road east from Aberystwyth towards Llanidloes. Before midday we had the tents set up and 'the bomb' roaring (petrol fired field cooker) to provide a cooked lunch, as we had made do with sandwiches and tea from breakfast. This left sufficient time for a reconnaissance of the area which was new to us all, before the evening meal and a good session in the Dyffryn Castell as it was the Sabbath on the morrow (the whole of Wales was dry on Sundays then).

The following morning we split into two large groups to ascend Plynlimon by different routes. My group comprised about 8 aircs, Johny the T.L. and the officer i/c team, one of the flying instructors (Valley is the only fast jet flying training school, flying the Hawks you see over Tyn Twr). We drove a few miles up the road to the watershed, which was the boundary between Cardigan and Montgomery, where we parked the truck and headed north up the valley to the east of Plynlimon. Initially a good track followed the stream, but both slowly dwindled to insignificance. We were aiming for a saddle which linked the northern end of the Plynlimon ridge with a lower top to the east. It was on the northern slopes of this hill that we noticed something gleaming quite brightly in the sunlight. Now North Wales has appreciably more quartz than the Lake District, and sometimes it occurs in quite large sheets, but at that distance we could not make out if it was quartz or aluminium. We were a bit strung out, and

Johnny and the officer i/c were nattering in the rear. We called back to them, pointing out the gleaming object, and saying it might be an aircraft. We got the answer we should have expected; "Go and see".

It was off our intended route, so we cut across, and as we drew nearer it became obvious that it was the wreck of an aircraft. It was the main planes which gleamed, and nearer still we could make out a twin boom fuselage carrying the tail plane and twin fins and rudders, similar to the vampires then flying from Valley. The engines, which had been mounted on the front of the twin booms, were missing, as was most of the main fuselage which had contained the pilots cockpit and the guns. Having seen squadrons of this type of aircraft flying over during the war, I identified it as a Lockheed Lightning designated the P38 by the American Airforce. This aircraft had been ordered by the RAF in 1940, but it was discovered that the straight eight Alison engines were inadequate in some respects, the order was cancelled. Weather and sun had removed any markings, but it was probable that this aircraft was one of the long range fighters with which the 8th U.S. Army Airforce was equipped when it came to Britain in July 1942. In fact range was its finest quality, being able to go all the way to the target to protect the B17 Flying Fortresses and the B24 Liberators, but it was not as nimble as the Me 109@s it faced.

On the way up to the aircraft we had noticed both propellers a few yards apart on the other side of the valley, on the eastern slopes of Plynlimon about 100 yards below the summit ridge. That was the first puzzle. Why had someone bothered to carry those heavy steel propellers up there from the wreck? We poked around, wondering how it came to grief, with sad thoughts of the pilot, who probably died on the spot. I poked my head through an open inspection aperture and immediately found another mystery. Just to the left was a yard of 3-core flexible cable, and on the end of it was an MK 5A 3-pin plug. Along with 15A round pin plugs, this was the standard British system for portable appliances until 13 A fused plugs appeared round about 1950. So they would have been in use in wartime, but this was in an American aircraft.



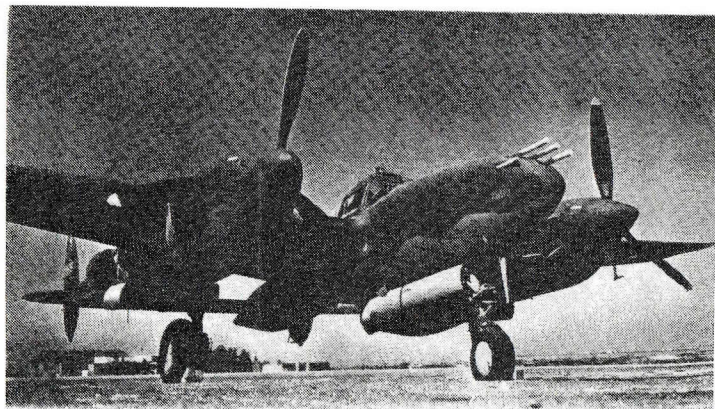
American Lockheed Lightning P38



Instead of carrying on to the saddle, we crossed the valley and headed straight up to the propellers. We lifted them and could see that they had lain there for some considerable time, but didn't fancy carrying them down. On both props all three blades had been bent. We puzzled and wondered how they came to be there, but gave up and headed up to the ridge. The summit ridge was completely grassy, the only sign of rock being among a patch of disturbed soil a few yards down the western slope. Realisation came that this was the impact site. The P38 had been flying approximately due east when it struck less than ten feet below the ridge. From this we could reconstruct the sequence of events. Both propellers had immediately been damaged, destroying their perfect balance, and putting abnormal shear forces on the bolt which secured them to the flange on the end of the crankshaft. As the aircraft bounced over the ridge, these bolts sheered, the props dropped off onto the eastern slope where they had lain ever since, and the plane went in on the other side of the valley.

So one mystery was solved, there being sufficient evidence. But I have only surmise to explain how a British 5A plug came to be in an American aircraft. To provide bases for 8th USAAF to operate from, the RAF evacuated many of their established airfields while more were built, and handed them over to the American squadrons. Naturally, hangar and workshops were wired to the British system, and American ground crews had to get used to them. So that 5A plug may well have fed an inspection lamp or power tool which, due to carelessness, had been left in the fuselage. This was a very dangerous mistake, and would normally result in detention for the careless mechanic.

I have often found aircraft wreckage not far below a summit, and been saddened that an aircrew had very nearly survived. Conversely, how many aircraft have skimmed a summit or ridge, and the crew never realised just how close they had been to eternity? With no evidence, we'll never know.



American Lockheed Lightning P38 - Armed

## COTTERLESS CRANKS AROUND THE HEBRIDES.

Dave Huggill.

*The cycle trip also included Kath and John Hope, Alan Kenny and Peter McHale.*

A cold, wet morning preceeded our departure from Oban. With loaded bikes, Alan and I travelled down the ramp of the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry to Craignure around lunchtime. In steadily improving weather, the half empty ferry glided majestically across the Sound of Mull. (Bikes go free if you buy an Island Hopscotch ticket).

Taking the Iona road, which is narrow, winding and undulating, we made steady progress despite a strong head wind towards our digs at the head of Loch Scridan. Joined later by John, Kath and Peter, who came on a later ferry, the party was complete for our tour across Mull.

Riding the next day on the coast road below Ben More 3169ft. (the only Munro on Mull), negotiating highland cattle and sheep on the narrow, single track road, we headed round the southern shore of Loch na Keal. Out to the northwest lay Ulva, the Treshnish Isles and Tiree.

Halting to change footwear etc., an ascent was made of Ben More via a'Chioch, with Peter choosing the direct route from the road, and Kath riding gently on towards Salen.

Alan and I admired the panorama from the summit before descending, now in warm, dry weather, to the bikes for the second half of the ride to Dervaig via Salen and Glen Aros.

Dervaig is a tiny village just one street, mainly of B&B's, but with a good pub which does meals.

The next day, a stiff climb straight away, took us over and past the head of Loch Frisa, to Tobermory. Here we took the small ferry across to the Ardnamurchen peninsular at Kilchoan.

### Ardnamurchen.

A very scenic road, narrow and undulating leads eastwards towards Salen on Loch Sunart. To the south lie the Morven Hills, and the peaks of the Ardgour loom ahead. At Salen, a massively over engineered road junction turned us west towards Mallaig.

Stopping overnight at Minngary, our B&B stop was the former priests house next to the church.

The following morning we said goodbye to Alan who was heading towards Glencoe and Oban, and in cold bright conditions, we pedalled off up the climb past Captain Robinson's Cairn and down to Loch Moidart. On the lochside is a cairn to mark the original landing point of Bonnie Prince Charlie who landed there with seven followers. Seven trees commemorate them. Heading north we could see Rhum, Eigg and Skye away to the north west.

At the head of Lochailort, just as the Mallaig railway line came into view, the steam train from Fort William majestically climbed the curves at the head of the loch on its way to Mallaig.

By the time we reached Mallaig, it was definitely shorts weather, and after watching seals in the harbour, it was over the sea to Skye.