

CLIMBER & Rambler

Make sure you're up to date on the latest events in the world of climbing by receiving **Climber & Rambler** every month for just £8.00 incl. post & packing. Order your yearly subscription by filling in and returning the coupon below.



Please send me the next 12 issues of **Climber and Rambler** at the cost of £8.00 incl. post and packing

NAME

ADDRESS

A.S.

Cheques/P.O. should be made payable to Holmes McDougall Ltd.

Send the completed coupon to:
Holmes McDougall Ltd.,
Subscription Dept., **Climber & Rambler**,
10/12 York Street, Glasgow G2.

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

JOURNAL 1982

CONTENTS

Diary for 1982	2
Editorial	2
The four thousand metre peaks of the Alps by Will McLewin	4
Celebration at the Section Uto by Walter Kirstein	12
Mountains' call to Mountains by Hamish Brown	13
Shorter reports of Members' activities	14
Association activities	
The A.G.M.	21
Association Accounts	23
The Annual Dinner	26
The outdoor meets	26
Obituary: F. E. Smith	31
Book reviews	32
List of past and present officers	34
Complete list of members	36
Official addresses of the S.A.C.	<i>Inside back cover</i>
Officers of the Association 1982	<i>Back cover</i>

DIARY FOR 1982

Wed 20 Jan.	Fondue party – F.A.W. Schweizer
5-7 Feb.	Glencoe – A. Andrews
12-14 Feb.	Northern dinner – Patterdale, W.B. Midgley
Wed 24 Feb.	Professor Edward Williams, Mount Kongur
5-7 March	Llanrwst, Ms. M. Baldwin
Wed 24 March	Patterdale, maintenance – R. Coatsworth
8-13 April	Easter – Patterdale, R. Coatsworth
8-13 April	Easter. Llanrwst, S. M. Freeman
Wed. 28 April	Don Clarke, Little Tibet
30 April-3 May	May Day – Llanrwst, C. G. Armstrong
30 Apr.-3 May	Patterdale with T.C.C., R. Coatsworth
Wed. 26 May	Buffet party
28-31 May	Spring B.H. – Patterdale, R. Coatsworth
29 May-5 June	Lochinver. A. I. Andrews
11-13 June	Rhyd-Ddu – D. Penlington
Wed. 23 June	D. Anton – Survival at altitude
2-4 July	Swanage – J. Harris
24 July-14 Aug.	Argentiere – M. Pinney
14-28 Aug.	Kandersteg – S. Beare
27-30 Aug.	Bank Holiday – Patterdale, R. Coatsworth
17-19 Sep.	Llanrwst
Wed. 22 Sep.	To be announced
1-3 Oct.	Patterdale – Buffet party, M. Porteous
Wed. 20 Oct.	Member's slides
29-31 Oct.	Patterdale, M. Pinney
Wed. 10 Nov.	Annual dinner
19-21 Nov.	Llanrwst, A. Lock
Wed. 24 Nov.	Annual General Meeting
24 Dec.-4 Jan. 1982	Patterdale, R. Coatsworth

Lecture meets will be held at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London, W. 1. at 7.15 p.m. Cash bar refreshments will be available from 6.30 p.m. and coffee will be available after the lectures. Please book with the person named for outdoor meets. Further details will appear in circulars.

Please note telephone numbers: R. Coatsworth 0903 815403 for Patterdale, J. Byam-Grounds 0492 640259 for Fron Francis.

EDITORIAL

For reasons of economy, it is desirable to keep down the number of pages in this year's Journal. An obvious contribution is a short Editorial. As a further measure, no attempt has been made to solicit articles. We nevertheless have an account of Will McLewin's very notable feat of climbing all the Alpine 4000m peaks, half of them solo, and it is hoped that this will give as much pleasure to readers as it has done to the editor. It would be interesting to know how many British-based climbers have achieved the feat; we know of Eustace Thomas and that is all; perhaps readers will enlighten us. The editor has failed to do the required research, largely through being kept somewhat house bound by natural causes.



*Will McLewin on the summit of Dent Blanche:
by W. McLewin*

The four thousand metre peaks of the Alps

Will McLewin

I didn't begin climbing in the Alps with the intention of doing all the four-thousanders, but then I don't suppose anyone would. The idea first emerged in 1970 after I had already done about 15 of them and it was certainly not consciously adopted until a couple of years later.

My first ascent of a four-thousander, the Allalinhorn from the Britannia hut in 1966 certainly had no trace of an auspicious beginning. After the first hour or so it was a case of just plodding up a snow path in mist and seeing absolutely nothing. Three years later, 1969, saw some improvement, with my first solo route, on the Weissmies, and two short but non-trivial north face routes, the Strahlhorn and the Ecrins, none of which featured in any guide books we had seen. However 1970 saw a major breakthrough. The most obvious feature was a good ascent of the NEE face of the Lenzspitze which was a clear indication of our increased competence and which gave us a lot more confidence. But two other changes were equally important. Firstly instead of being with several other climbers who were more or less interested in getting routes done I was either essentially by myself or with only one equally determined friend. The distinction between having a climbing holiday and going to the Alps single-mindedly determined to do some decent routes had been realised! Secondly we stopped staying in huts and began bivouacking. This meant better sleep (none of the inevitable snorers) better food (when and how we wanted it) and a more subtle change best described as a more intimate relationship with the mountains.

The same summer, idly looking at the mountaineering books in Saas-Fee, the way one does on rainy days, we found Karl Blödigg and Helmut Dumler's book "Die Viertausender der Alpen". Blödigg was the first person to climb them all and the book is a serious, semi-guide book giving routes, diagrams, grades, times, etc. and pictures and background chat about each four thousander in turn. At first it was just a vague notion that it might be nice to climb them all, but the idea stuck and became more and more the central theme of my alpine activities. By 1975 I was prepared to admit of it to other people, and by 1980, when I had seven left to do, there were not many weeks that passed without my thinking of the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey.

Anyone setting out to climb all the four thousanders has a number of questions of principle to decide. At one extreme would be the aim of a separate, serious route for each summit, starting from the road. At the other extreme one would choose the easiest way simply to get to each summit in turn, making maximum use of telepheriques etc. and of traverses from one summit to another. It's a personal choice which depends on practical aspects like limitations of finance, time and ability, as well as what I can only describe as one's own emotional involvement with the mountains. There is no doubt that I do feel a sense of personal involvement with a mountain and I've remained much more concerned with the doing rather than the having done. As a result, the question of what constitutes a four thousander has never bothered me. I know there are lists of 80 or more, but Blödigg and Dumler's list of 59 seems to be about right. Here, for example, the Grand Jorasses counts as one, but the individual summits of Monte Rosa all count; Mont Brouillard is included but Pic Luigi Amadeo is not.

The complete list divides naturally into three main areas and three isolated summits. Bernese Oberland (9):

Monch 4099, Junfrau 4158, Aletschhorn 4195, Gross-Schreckhorn 4078, Lauteraarhorn 4042, Gross-Fiescherhorn 4048, Hinter-Fiescherhorn 4025, Finsteraarhorn 4273, Gross-Grünhorn 4043.

Valais (34):

Rishorn 4159, Weisshorn 4505, Zinal Rothorn 4221, Obergabelhorn 4063, Dent Blanche 4356, Dent d'Herens 4171, Matterhorn 4477, Grand Combin 4314, Lenzspitze 4294, Nadelhorn 4327, Stecknadelhorn 4242, Hohberghorn 4219, Durrenhorn 4034, Dom 4545, Täschhorn 4490, Alphubel 4206, Allalinhorn 4027, Rimpfischhorn 4198, Strahlhorn 4190, Laggrinhorn 4010, Weissmies 4023, Breithorn 4165, Castor 4226, Pollux 4091, Lyskamm 4527, Monte Rosa: Dufourspitze 4634, Nordend 4609, Zumsteinspitze 4563, Signalkuppe 4556, Parrotspitze 4436, Ludwigshöhe 4341, Vincente Pyramide 4215, Punta Giordani 4046, Schwarzhorn

4322.

Mont Blanc Groupe (13)

Droites 4000, Aiguille due Jardin 4035, Grand Rocheuse 4102, Aiguille Verte 4121, Dent du Geant 4013, Rochefortgrat 4001-4015, Grand Jorasses 4208, Mont Brouillard 4069, Aiguille de Bionassay 4052, Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey 4112, Mont Blanc de Tacul 4248, Mont Maudit 4465, Mont Blanc 4807.

Others (3).

Piz Bernina 4049, Gran Paradiso 4061, Barre des Ecrins 4101.

There is no doubt that simply to get up and down, the Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey is the most serious, followed by the Aiguille Verte - Grand Rocheuse - Aiguille du Jardin trio and Mont Brouillard. After these it's more debatable. The least serious are those with short F or P-D snow trails, like the Zermatt-Breithorn, the Bishorn and several of the Monte Rosa summits.

My list of ascents that follows is in chronological order, and omits ascents of other mountains and almost all repeat ascents. Descents are by the same route if not mentioned. The comments are necessarily brief and simply about how I found it on the day. I have some regrets about routes listed without comment, in a sense they are all equally memorable.

1966

Allalinhorn: SW ridge; with Brian and Denise Wood

I've been meaning to do it again on a good day ever since.

Strahlhorn: NW Ridge; with Brian and Denise Wood and D.B. Williams.

Nadelhorn: NE ridge; with Brian and Denise Wood and D.B. Williams.

1969

Rimpfischhorn: SW ridge; with Brian Wood.

(Strahlhorn: N face direct descent by NW ridge with Brian Wood.)

A pleasantly interesting and worthwhile alternative to the ordinary route.)

Weissmies: W flank and N ridge, descent by SW ridge and Trift glacier; solo.

On the west flank is a tongue of snow reaching almost to the N ridge. This gives straightforward access to the ridge, above the awkward pitch, and provides a more interesting and enjoyable circuit than up and down the ordinary route from the Weissmies hut.

Barre des Ecrins: N flank and N face direct, descent by W ridge and N flank; with Brian Wood.

A short, steepish face of loose, slabby rock partially held together with verglas and a dusting of loose snow. Most of the enjoyment was afterwards.

Mönch: NE face, descent by NE ridge; with Brian Wood.

We bivouacked on the S. Eigerjoch, having done the S ridge of the Eiger. The snow was excellent and the route pleasant and straightforward. We hacked straight through the cornice at the top and had made a brew of tea when the first party arrived from the hut.

1970

Lenzspitze: NNE face, descent via Nadelhorn; with Brian Wood.

Our announcement at the Mischabel hut that we were just passing, on our way to bivouac below the face on the Hobaln glacier caused a certain amount of hilarity. This was repeated next morning when the alarm failed to go off and we were woken up by the approach of the two parties from the hut. We tore off to the bergschrund in an embarrassed frenzy and virtually ignored the difficulties there by my standing on Brian's head and diving upwards. The snow was quite good on the lower part of the face so we moved together, just putting in an occasional ice piton for security. The other parties presumably felt that our circus tactics at the bergschrund were beneath their dignity and took ages to get across, by which time we were about 200m up the face. A bit higher up, about half-way, 250m from the bergschrund, as the snow became thinner and the slope steeper, we cut a large step and stopped to rest and to untie the twists in the rope. At this point the face shimmers off to infinity in all directions, uniquely beautiful and also intimidating. Here I contrived to drop out peg-hammer, and we watched it bounce down the face and across the bergschrund. Brian, calmly pragmatic as ever managed to confine himself merely to observing that we might as well throw the ice pitons after it as we now had nothing to bang them in



Matterhorn from S. ridge of Dent Blanche:
by W. McLewin

with. Pressing on rather more soberly than before we climbed singly using our two ice screws for belaying. The other parties were going much slower and had both opted to ascend the less steep slope to the Nadeljoch. Perhaps this encouraged us and we ascended the steeper part of the face, on rather poor snow, directly to the very summit. Later on, having collected our bivouac and the hammer we were passing the Mischahel hut when the warden took us inside and gave us tea and congratulations. He had watched us on the final section with binoculars. We were even more surprised a couple of days later in Saas-Fee when he called us over from one side of the square to be introduced and shake hands with a couple of guides.

Nadelhorn, Stecknadelhorn, Hohberghorn, Durrenhorn: traverse SE to NW, descent to Ried glacier from Durrenjoch; solo.

Hohberghorn: NE face, descent from Durrenjoch; solo.

I thought the northern end of the Mischabelgrat deserved more than just the traverse.

This is a very nice route but getting onto it from the Ried glacier is a bit awkward.

Lagginhorn: S ridge, descent by W ridge; solo.

Alphubel: SE ridge, descent to Mischaheljoch by N ridge; solo.

Täschhorn: SE ridge; solo.

When I returned to the bivouac hut on the Mischabeljoch in the afternoon after reconnoitring the first hour of the SE ridge the weather was deteriorating rapidly and I was surprised to find two parties approaching the hut. At 4 a.m. next morning a moderate storm was still dying away but the other parties got ready and left at 5.45 in quite pleasant weather. I decided to be cunning for once and give myself another hour's sleep and give them an hour and a half start to sort out the crux section on the snow shoulder before I got there. When I did get there I found both parties politely insisting that the other should have the honour of going first. They should have been looking at the sky because that was where the problem was. I trotted across the snow and dashed up to the summit as fast as I could. There I could almost reach up and touch an enormous solid black cloud. I didn't dare stay more than 10 minutes and tore down again, passing the second party still belaying themselves off the snow. The clouds followed me down and I dived into the hut at 11.45 a.m. just as the first hailstone hammered on the roof.

Bishorn: NW flank; solo.

This absolutely simple route produced my worst of all moments. The weather was pretty poor and there were only two other people at the Tracuit hut. My aim was the Weisshorn, and I thought I might as well get some exercise and look at it. I had come round to Zinal from Saas-Fee and owing to a missed connection at Visp I had spent some time drinking the best beer in Switzerland at the self-service cafe by the station at Sierre (surely the nicest place in the alps for that sort of thing). But the result was that two nights at the Tracuit would leave me with insufficient money to return from Zinal, so I had to go back via the Mattertal and I felt that I should have a look at the descent from the Bruneggjoch in case it was misty the following day. About half way across from the Bisjoch, despite taking great care, I found myself spread out horizontally on the snow with one leg waving in space down a blind crevasse. Just as I eased that leg onto the surface it all gave way. The crevasse was about four feet wide, vertical, and went down for ever and I was really pleased to land a metre from the end of a snow bridge about 5 metres long and 6 metres down.

Weisshorn: N ridge via Bishorn; descent by E ridge; solo.

A terrific route, continuously interesting, but rather too much snow and ice on the rocks on this occasion, so that a couple of places were a bit awkward. If I had understood the warden at the Tracuit hut correctly it was the second ascent that year; there were certainly no signs of footprints and none on the E ridge either until a third of the way down when I met a party making some for me. At Randa station I found myself with too little money for the train fare, so I staggered off down the road and reached Herbruggen just as a train was arriving. I was still thirty centimes short. As I stood in front of the ticket clerk, absolutely spaced out, she slowly took out her own purse and solemnly added to my little pile of sweaty coins two more of her own.

1971

Piz Bernina: N ridge (Biancogrät), descent by SE ridge; with Bob McLewin.

Gran Paradiso: SW flank; with Bob McLewin.

Matterhorn: SW (Italian) ridge; with Bob McLewin.

My brother had never been climbing before! His preparation consisted of a wet walk up Tryfan and an afternoon on gritstone. He was quite amazing; tireless and nerveless. We did the Matterhorn because he wanted "to do something that other people will have heard of", and we had three fairly epic days. The weather was reasonable but the route was in desperate condition. There was so much snow that at least two of the fixed ropes were completely buried and we took nearly 14 hours to and from the Savoia hut. There was no-one else on the summit that day except two Austrians who had joined us at the Savoia and had asked us to take them to the summit, which amused Bob no end.

Dom: NW ridge; solo.

1972

Dent du Geant: SW face; with Brian and Denise Wood.

A nice day out, starting with the first telepherique to the Torino, spoilt a bit by some drizzle and too many other climbers.

Aiguille de Bionassay: S ridge; with Denise Wood.

We bivouaced on the Col des Domes, which we decided was far enough in one day from Notre Dame de la gorge via the Trélatête Hotel.

Aiguille du Jardin, Grande Rocheuse, Aiguille Verte: the Jardin ridge; solo.

An absolute epic. The weather soon became poor, intermittent icy drizzle and mist with short bursts of clear sky. I cannot believe I found much of the correct line onto the ridge; the icy couloir that finally took me onto the ridge a little east of the summit of the Aiguille du Jardin was quite horrid and my descent route was just as bad. Back at the bergschrund about 14 hours after leaving it I was a quivering wreck and bivouaced at the first flat bit of ground I found about 400 yards away.

Droites: S ridge; with Brian Wood.

Rochefort Arete: traverse SW to NE to Col des Grandes Jorasses; with Garry Dyer.

Quite delicious. We had bivouaced near the Torino but started quite later after an uncertain night's weather. After lunch and a couple of hours sleep at the Craveri hut we had a pleasant afternoon rock climbing up towards Pointe Young in preparation for the following morning.

Grandes Jorasses: W ridge (traverse to Pointe Walker, descent by SW flank.); with Garry Dyer.

We abseiled down a few feet too far and wasted over an hour trying to force a way round the rock spur between Pointe Young and Pointe Marguerite, before climbing up a bit and finding the correct line. This was nearly a serious error because we were caught by a fierce storm as we got to Point Whymper. I had just begun explaining about digging a hole in the snow when it eased off. The descent in mist was not without interest. Eventually we came to the bergschrund at the wrong place, where there was an enormous drop onto the other lip. Garry asked "What do we do now?", and while I was looking for a reasonable place to get across I said that we jump down, and before I could say another word he did! He went up to his armpits in the snow and was totally stuck, so in the circumstances the least I could do was to jump down as well.

1974

Mont Blanc de Tacul: S ridge (via Ferraro?) descent by N face; with Brian Wood.

Steep, loose rock, long and tedious; followed in the late afternoon by a hot, slow plod across the Vallee Blanche in time to miss the last telepherique down from the Torino by 2 minutes.

Mont Maudit: SE ridge (Frontier ridge), descent by N face and N face of Mont Blanc du Tacul; with Brian Wood.

After one look at the multilingual pantomime going on in the late afternoon on the steep slope up to the Col de la Fourche we settled for a comfortable dinner and bivouac on the glacier and an early start next morning up a shallow couloir 300m further long the ridge. A most enjoyable route in superb conditions, and this time the plod across the Vallee Blanche went quite pleasantly.

Mont Blanc: Brenva ridge, descent by Grises route and Dome glacier; solo.

The scene at the Ghigliione bivouac hut was one of incredible pandemonium and strop; every horizontal surface was covered with bodies and water and after a desultory attempt at the futile occupation of trying to sleep we had breakfast at



*Dames Anglaises and Aiguille Noir de Penterey,
from summit of Mt. Brouillard:
by W. McLewin*

10p.m. and left. On the first rocks above Col Moore Brian fell off when the hinge on one of his crampons snapped and as we couldn't really repair it he went back. I found myself at the "famous ice arete, usually snow" in what seemed to be no time at all, but this time it and the slope above were pretty well ice. I progressed upwards cutting steps about 2m apart but after what seemed hours it was still dark, the wind was still coming in strong, intermittent gusts, I was cold, the exposure was tremendous and my nerves were in shreds. At a tiny island of rock I tied myself on, got out my sleeping bag and duvet and waited for the sunrise. I discovered that I had lots of gear with me including a stove etc. but no food. The sun, when it came up, was fabulous and by then I was warm and more relaxed. Another party approached, thanked me for the steps and I let them find a route through the seracs above, which they did expertly.

Grand Combin: W ridge: solo.

A pleasant enough route with peculiar mica-like rock and superb unique views from the summit.

1975

Zinal Rothorn: N ridge; with Brian Wood and Andrew Hartley.

Our first attempt at this pleasant route came to an end when a guide leading a party across towards the SW ridge fell down a crevasse. The second, carrying the usual coils, did nothing to arrest his fall and had he not hit the bottom the whole party would have gone down. I abseiled down and found he had a broken femur. The rest of his party had no idea what to do but would not allow us to organise them because they had a guide in charge. Brian resolved this problem by pointing down at me and announcing emphatically "guide Anglaise!" When the helicopter finally arrived they didn't have a stretcher. He was hauled up, with great difficulty, in a net(!) with his legs tied together in my carrymat which I never saw again. The poor guide was from Chamonix and the route was to celebrate, with a party of close friends, his having been made a full guide.

1976

Vincente Pyramide: SW ridge; with Brian Wood.

Punta Giordani: NW ridge (from Vincente Pyramide); solo.

Schwartzhorn, Ludwigshöhe, Parrotspitze, Signalkuppe, Zumsteinspitze: traverse anticlockwise; with Brian Wood.

An excellent day out with marvellous snow colours, flat cloud at about 3500m and not at all tedious.

Dufourspitze, Nordend: traverse S to N from Colle Zumstein; solo.

Quite interesting in places, especially descending from the Dufourspitze to the Silbersattel. On the way to Colle Zumstein from the Balmenhorn bivouac hut I was overtaken by a solo dog!

Lyskamm: traverse E to W; Castor: traverse SE to NW; Pollux: W face; with Brian Wood.

Our second visit to the dilapidated squalor of the Balmenhorn hut was enlivened by the presence of two Italians. They seemed to be trying out a mountaineering-without food theory, but we converted them to our non-stop-eating method. They must have shared our six course meal only out of politeness however, because they spent most of the night being sick and pretended to be asleep when we had breakfast. Lyskamm was superb, Castor and Pollux would have been more enjoyable with less heavy sacks. Sitting at the foot of the W face of Pollux we looked at the Cesare and Giorgio bivouac hut below the Roccia Nera and thought that we need not have carried so much bivouac gear, but it did not matter because it had begun to snow heavily. So we walked down to the Mezzalama hut, and on to the Pian di Verra where we fortified ourselves with a few beers before walking over the Bettafurka pass to our campsite in Gressoney for 8.30p.m. A long day.

Breithorn: traverse E to W from Roccia Nera (Frontier ridge), descent by S face; solo.

Fairly straightforward, very enjoyable. I left the Cesare and Giorgio bivouac hut at 6 p.m., sat on the W summit for half an hour and was back at St. Jacques at midday.

1978

Lauteraarhorn: SW ridge: solo.

A fourteen hour epic in dreadful snow conditions. The traverse across the S face and the steep, loose rocks leading up to it were especially nasty.

Aletschorn: N (Hasler) rib; with Brian Wood.

Gross Grunhorn: W flank; with Brian Wood.

The serac zone was complicated and a bit frustrating but was a quite enchanting place in bright sunlight.

Finsteraarhorn: SW flank and NW ridge; with Brian Wood.

Very good value, and the longest approach walk of all, from Fiesch, is really not so bad.

Dent Blanche: S ridge; solo.

I had twice before walked up to the Rossier hut only to be heavily snowed on during the night. This time, arriving in Ferpectle on what was clearly the evening before a clear night and a good day my nerves would not stand the idea of using the next day on an approach walk, so I left at 4 a.m. with a lighter than usual sack, left the cooking gear by the hut at 8 a.m. after having breakfast there and was at the summit before 11 a.m. There was only one tense bit, the little couloir by the Grande Gendarme, which was icy rocks instead of snow. One party went to some trouble to add to the interest. While their leader delivered an impassioned impromptu lecture on the dangers of soloing his three companions reinforced his remarks by walking to and fro on the cornice above and kicking down lumps of ice and snow.

Obergabelhorn: ENE ridge, over Wellenkuppe; solo.

An avalanche blocking the road and railway just above Randa led to my walking to Zermatt which made going up to near the Rothorn hut a bit of a slog. A superb bivouac and excellent conditions next morning more than made up for it. Despite the luxury of nearly an hour at the summit it was not until nearly 9.30 when I was going back over the Wellenkuppe that I met the first party from the hut, who had carefully timed their ascent so that the snow on the crux pitch had begun to soften.

For 1980 and 1981, see *Members' Activities* - Ed.

Looking back over the whole set of ascents, some do stand out a bit as particularly memorable: the Lenzspitze of course, Mont Maudit, Weisshorn, Lyskamm, Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey. Also occasions when I, the route and the weather were all at our best. Dent Blanche, Grand Combin, Lagginhorn, Breithorn, Obergabelhorn are examples. But every ascent has its own character and something that makes it special. It is ironic that the summit itself is quite frequently cold, windy and uncomfortable and the need to descend safely in deteriorating snow conditions means that one dare not stay there long. On the other hand there are few situations as profoundly pleasing as a good bivouac. To get past the approach stage onto the route proper, to find or construct a comfortable site, to have a leisurely meal of delicious food (as opposed to dehydrated lightweight products) and then to be out anticipating the next day's climbing, looking at the sunset colours, the moon, and the stars hung across the sky like a net: that is just as much what it is all about and why one does it as the cliché of sitting on the summit. One of the items I always carry, a half-a-pint of good scotch, adds that little bit extra to both occasions.

I am aware that there is an inconsequential aspect about wanting to climb all the fourthousanders, but completing them need not become the over-riding purpose, and I have appreciated the underlying structure and sense of continuity it has given to my alpine climbing. A frequent metaphor associated with climbing is that of conquest. I was asked recently what I will do now that I have conquered all those peaks. But the question misunderstands the situation because I have no sense of having conquered anything. What I am conscious of is that I have achieved a sort of communion with the earth which is much more worthwhile and which is more durable and continuing than having beaten something.

Will had reported some of the years before 1980 in previous *"Members Activities"*. The editor decided that some repetition was justified to sustain the elegance and continuity of the narrative.

Celebration at the Section Uto

by *Walter Kirstein*

It is my pleasure to report the celebration which I spent with my Section Uto in Zurich on April 10th. This event was to honour those who have been members for 25, 50 or 60 years; I have been a member for 50 years. About 400 members were present in the greatest hall in Zurich, which was decked with flowers for the occasion.

The president spoke to me, particularly expressing his regret that the president of the ABMSAC (disabled with a broken ankle) had not been able to attend. He repeated this point in his speech, and also kindly devoted considerable time to me. He read out the letter of thanks which I had written after a similar meeting 25 years ago, an evening which I well remember, with its warm feelings coming from the heart.

After the meeting we stayed a long time together, and every Uto member with whom I had toured last year, and all those who remembered me from past tours, all came to me to exchange memories of those happy times.

The president asked me especially to give his regards and best wishes to the ABM, which I have great pleasure to do.

MOUNTAINS CALL TO MOUNTAINS

Hamish Brown

I. The Citron

It was in hot Meknes I sat; sipped
The glass of the citron,
But in my mind I sat with ghosts
In Zermatt or by Rhone.

A Martigny patisserie
Perhaps. Its pool of dreams:
Mountains climbed — each a glad sojourn
In youth's sweet surety, seeing the long
Years endless, on and on . . .

Now! seeing all those faces, all those joys,
And all those years — all gone. All gone.

II. In Joshimath

Sheep and peewits and the empty wind:
These are the things that creep to mind.
In the greater hills, in the sterile snows,
One longs for home — where memory flows,
Where dreamsight tumbles its stars on the grass
And phantoms go tramping up to the pass . . .
The hills where one ran, young with zest,
Are best when, returning, one seeks for rest.

ROBERT LAWRIE LTD.

54 SEYMOUR STREET,

(Marble Arch)

LONDON — W1H 5WE

Telephone: 01-723 5252

Telegrams & Cablegrams: Alpinist, London W.1

Business Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9 a.m.—5.30 p.m.

Late closing Thursday — — — 9 a.m.—7 p.m.

Early closing Saturday — — — 9 a.m.—12 noon

Temporary lunch-time closing 1.45—2.00 p.m.

**MOUNTAINEERING,
POLAR
&
ROCK CLIMBING**

Clothing & Equipment Specialists

Handsewn Bootmakers

U.K. agents for *Thommen Swiss Altimeter/Barometers*
Jumar Rescue Stirrups & Recta Compasses.



Catalogue temporarily discontinued until
prices and supplies become more stable.

A.B.M.S.A.C. TIE



Association ties (red and silver badge on blue background), may be purchased from the address below.

J. S. Whyte, Wild Hatch, Coleshill Lane,
Winchmore Hill, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0NT

Cheques for £2.75 (post free) to be drawn payable
to J. S. Whyte

SHORTER REPORTS OF MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Ken Baldry

I don't suppose anyone was surprised when I neglected to report last year. This year's trips have rather been conditioned by last year's. I funk'd skiing in January, going to Tenerife instead. But at the end of February, I had a business trip to Germany and, with a lot of encouragement from my colleagues, I took my skis and went to Zermatt. This was not much fun but less grim towards the end of the week. I discovered that my usual landlady in Zermatt had also lost her spouse on the hill. We had thought her very reserved in 1975 and now I know why. Encouraged by the ski trip, I made another attempt to meet problems more than halfway by going out in July. I went to Brig and bought a wreath. Then I got a bus in Simplon Dorf and, next day, which was in fact my wedding anniversary, took the wreath up into the Laggintal as far as I could walk to under the cliff where we found Jane in the helicopter. There, I deposited the wreath with a bit of a ceremony of which I made a careful movie film, mainly in order to give myself something else to think of. The next day, I walked from the Simplon Pass over the Bistinen Pass and Gebidem Pass to Gspon. This is the start of the high path to Sass Grund which I did the next morning. Having arrived in Saas Grund, I was beginning to feel I was overexposing myself a bit so I thumbed two lifts to Zermatt where I spent three days glumly walking around old haunts. My trips this year have not been very sensible but there was only one way to find that out. I would not recommend anyone else *unfortunate enough* to find themselves in the same boat to do it.

J. L. Belton (B. G. Grantham)

After a serious car crash in 1979 I decided to make a pilgrimage to the Alps as a celebration for my recovery. We went to Arolla, which given the weather, was an ideal choice. On arrival the mountains looked like Scotland in winter but after ascending the Pigne d'Arolla in atrocious weather we had 10 good days. They included L'Eveque, NE ridge of La Louette (far more interesting than the ordinary snow plod), traverse of Mt. Blanc de Cheilon, S ridge of the Dt de Perroc and a traverse from Arolla to Zermatt via the Bertol and Schönbiel Huts. I was delighted to discover that my first ascent of the SW face of the Dt de Perroc was featured in Michel Vaucher's '100 Plus Belles courses dans les Alpes Valaisannes' but dismayed to see that the first ascent was incorrectly attributed and no mention at all was made to our English party especially as the quality of the rock was our discovery and the publication of the route in Les Alpes produced several other good routes and then the construction of the Tsa Hut.

Max Horvat

I would venture to state that the height of mountains gets less in direct proportion to the age of the mountaineer. I believe this to be a general rule to which I myself am no exception. Equally I would venture to say that only a fool would choose Bilbao in Spain as the base for his mountaineering ventures since Bilbao's altitude above sea level is ZERO and there are no real peaks there at all. However, by a strange coincidence of circumstances this is exactly what had happened to me this year. My good long-distance companion Laurie Green and I were touring central Spain, Don Quixote's La Mancha region in particular. We were off the tourist track for most of the time and the altitude in general was around 3,000 to 4,500 ft above sea level. Some mountain passes were, of course, higher still. The El Pico pass, used even by the Romans, appealed to me in particular. The scenery was grand and, believe it or not, the distances there are still indicated in leagues. Thus, in general, we were hugh up until, in the end, we descended to Bilbao where our "mountaineering" began. The nicest hill, with best views, was Monte Serantes with an altitude of 446 metres. We were quite pleased with it. later I did my best to compare it with its Swiss equivalent, but, sorry to say, all my attempts failed. Given that the surface of Lake

Geneva, at its head, is approx. 1,350 ft above sea level, it is obvious that the very top of this "Monte" would be just a pimple above its waters. Convert the meters into feet and see for yourself.

The moral of this story is two-fold:

First: If you wish to mountaineer, for God's sake, do not go to Bilbao.

Second: If you are 71 years of age like myself and are able to get to the top of Monte Serantes with ease say "Thank God for that". This is what I did. Amen.

Will McLewin

The previous season, 1980, was something of a disaster.

Four weeks in July produced very little good weather, even less good climbing weather, and ascents, with Anne Brearley, of only the Tour Ronde, Dent d'Herens, and Mont Brouillard via Quintino Sella and Col Emil Rey. A minor redeeming feature was a sentimental trip to Crissolo in the Po Valley to climb Monte Viso. This is the isolated peak that one always sees far away on the S-E Horizon from Alpine summits on clear days, and I had long wanted to enjoy the reverse view.

Well, I was determined that this season was going to be better although the early portents were not good. Somehow I never found time for any rock climbing and my *fell running form* had been disappointing. The end of June however produced a tremendous boost to my confidence when I did the Bob Graham round in the Lakes: 42 summits starting and finishing at Keswick; 72 miles, 27,000 ft of ascent in 26 minutes under the allowed time of 24 hours. Most of the credit goes to friends in Dark Peak Fell Runners whose organisation and support was magnificent. In the Alps I started, early in July, with a couple of days at the Bergli hut. With Anne Brearley Gross Fiescherhorn by N-W ridge. Quite hard near the top because the snow slopes were ice. Anne, who was rather unwell, chose the most exposed bit to test whether I really was looking after her and later sat at the Fieschersattel undecided whether to sleep or be sick while I solved the Hinter Fiescherhorn.

Gross Schreckhorn, traverse S-W ridge and S-E ridge. We were lucky to choose the only two good days in a long dreary spell, but even so it was a pity to have an otherwise pleasant route spoilt by a strong and bitterly cold wind. The new Schreckhorn hut, near the site of the old Schwarzegg hut, is superb, but few parties of two will have it to themselves as we did.

Mont Blanc, by the Brouillard Ridge. This was supposed to be training for the Peuteury, but turned into a three day epic. The Brouillard glacier was very awkward and we went quite close to the Eccles Bivouac before swinging round towards Col Emil Rey.

One or two pitches from there up to the ridge were surprisingly hard. Perhaps it was just the size of my rucksack, perhaps it was the ice on the rocks, I was certainly tired. The outcome was an uncomfortable bivouac on the ridge. Next day we were cold and slow going up to Pic Luigi Amadeo. It may be a superb high level ridge from there to M. Blanc, but when the wind is very strong and cold it becomes tiring, tedious and awkward in places. With Anne troubled by a mysterious foot injury and more altitude wobbles we decided on the Midi and the telepherique, but when it was clear we would be too late we settled for another bivouac behind Mt. Maudit, again very cold, but this time comfortable.

A couple of days later, after a visit to Aosta hospital to treat a hideous infected toe and alarmingly swollen foot and caf, Anne flew home from Zurich and I, sensing good weather, rushed back to Steckelberg.

Solo

Jungfrau, by Inner Rottal ridge. A dreadfully hot walk up to the hut, but next day was lovely and two other parties obligingly made a mess of the early part of the ridge and let me have the route to myself. On top at 8.00 a.m. I was able to sit there for longer than usual and hardly noticed the parties arriving from the Jungfraujoeh. I arrived back at the rocky part of the ridge in time to direct the other parties back onto the easiest route and when they were safely on to the snow I went leisurely back down to the hut, and then to the valley.

The next few days were "time-off" relaxing in Sierre, one of my favourite places, and doing a bit of running in preparation for the Sierre-Zinal race. This was an absolute treat and I was delighted to finish in the first third of the field instead of the last third which I am used to in English fell races, and to overtake over 300 competitors over the last 20 km.

Solo

Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey, by S-E ridge. Perfect weather, amazing conditions (very little snow) and no real problems (if you don't mind stonefall). I had a superb bivouac on the E side of the Freney glacier (ignore the guide book! the best and safest site is on the top of the rock rognon below the couloirs), waited until 6 a.m. and was on top by 10 a.m.

Sitting there was a pretty emotional business. Its a fabulous place to be by any account but for me it was rather special. The Aiguille Blanche was my last 4000er, I had climbed all 59 of them, 25, including all the awkward ones, solo. I had a long look at the ridge to M. Blanc, but I'd left my bivouac gear at the glacier and I'd had this year's epic, so eventually I turned my attention to descent the same way I'd come up which was pleasant and straightforward enough accompanied by my persistent litany of "keep calm, no heroics, take the easy options!"

W. D. Macpherson

Our member W. D. Macpherson celebrated his 80th birthday with an ascent of the Balmhorn from Schwarzenbach. He is believed to be the oldest person to have ascended the mountain. It was his 50th year of membership of the Alpine Club, and 44th of the ABMSAC.

F.P.F.

G. B. Pennett

We spent Christmas 1980 and the New Year in the Lake District. Christmas was spent at a small guest house in Stonethwaite, Borrowdale, where we climbed in snow Catbells (1481ft) on Christmas Day and later climbed Grange Fell (1363ft), King's How, Causey Pike (2035ft) and Latrigg. On December 28 we drove to Crook to stay at a cottage with friends. During our New Year stay we enjoyed walks in the Grizedale Forest, on Scout Scar, Stockghyl Force, Troutbeck Tongue (1191ft) and a delightful ramble round Grasmere Lake. Although the weather generally was poor we managed to get out each day in order to work up appetites for dinners at the Wild Boar Hotel at Crook and Hodge Hill at Cartmel.

Shortly before Christmas we enjoyed a ramble in Wharfedale taking in Almscliff Crag.

We again visited the Lake District on February 18 when we did a most enjoyable walk from Kentmere. We walked to Shipman Knotts (1926ft), then onto Kentmere Pike (2397ft), the Knowe (2400ft) and then to Harter Fell (2539ft). We returned to Kentmere by the Nan Bield Pass. It was indeed a good walk with snow on the tops and good views all round.

Good Friday (April 17) again saw us in Kentmere where we did a 12 mile walk taking in Yoke (2309), Ill Bell (2476), Froswick (2359), Thornthwaite Crag (2569), High Street (2718), and Mardale Ill Bell (2496). We returned to Kentmere by Nan Bield Pass. There were plenty of newly born lambs and a red deer in the valley.

During late May and early June we had a holiday in North Wales and North Devon. We took a cottage at Pontylfni and did a little walking in that area which included Foel Fort, an attractive earthwork with good views of Snowdon. Climbing any real heights was out because of rain and thick mist on the tops but one day we did manage to get to the top of Moel Hebog (2566ft), Moel Yr Ogor (2020ft) and Moel Lefn (2094ft). Unfortunately when we were on the tops thick swirling mist at times restricted the views.

We also did a lovely coastal and cliff walk in the Porthdinllaen area. We later moved to North Devon where we took a caravan at Morteheo. The hot sunshine was a good excuse for a few lazy days on the beach but we did do a few delightful coastal walks by Bull Point, Rockham Cliffs and Morte Point.

In June I did a short walk in Aireborough taking in the Billing at Rawdon. During July I did a walk on Buckden Pike (20302ft) and there were other walks in the Otley Chevin, Almscliff Crag and Beamsley Beacon areas of Wharfedale later in the year. The year started off in fine style for us and looked as if it was going to be a good walking year but as it progressed we just did not have enough spare time for the hills.

D. R. Riddell

1979

G.S. Hut for the Northern Dinner Meet. Climb by Route 3 of the "Helvellyn 13" in Wainwright. The summit ridge provided a 40 mph wind making occasional halts on the axe and both legs obligatory to obviate being blown away. Descent to Grisedale tarn, Alpine under the snow and wind conditions.

At the Dundonnell Meet we, the Freemans and I, walked up to Loch Toll and Lochain to get a magnificent view of An Teallach.

Thanks to the absence of anything to suggest the scale of the precipice of the "Anvil" the prospect equalled anything I have seen in the Alps, Morocco or even the Himalaya - with the exception of Ama Dablam from Thyangbooke!

The Hon. Editor and I went to Glas Meall Mor on An Teallach but mist prevented further progress along the ridge.

The "excursion" was Inverewe Gardens, thereby fulfilling a 20 year ambition. Perfect day.

Stac Polly had been seen before, from an Onich Meet - a round trip of 329 miles.

This time the Freemans and I did get on to the ridge and scrambled about a bit. There is nothing to touch Stac Polly. It is unique and splendid.

The Approach March to Courmayeur was over new ground to me. Most rewarding.

The unexpected juxtaposition of the main party of the Meet on the Checrouit ridge with the approach marchers, in perfect weather, was a high spot of the Meet!

At Courmayeur we had modest and enjoyable walking. Splendid company both tented and tiled. My tiles were on the Hotel Crampon, run by the Grivel family of crampon fame.

Walking apart, my most vivid recollection of going in an equatorial downpour to Aosta to enable the President to buy some new boots.

That important mission accomplished we adjourned to the "Vecchio Ristorante Cavallo Bianca" for lunch. The "White Horse" has a balconied courtyard similar to the George at Huntingdon.

In the restaurant (most Italian) the ambience was such as to deserve stars from M. Bibendum.

1980 The Far North. Tongue.

Ben Loyal from Cunside, Ben Hope from Altnacahlich and Ben Stack from Lochstack Lodge.

Ben Stack is no Munro, but like Suilven - and Stack Polly - it stands out as a "real" mountain.

We had an attack on Ben Klibreck from Crask, achieving Creag nan Lochan at 2,270ft, Anno Domini having caught up on some of the party. My excursion was to Handa Island. To anyone thus Far North this trip to the island is an experience not to be missed.

The Freemans and I were allocated to the harbour masters' house at Fanagmore on Loch Laxford. A more delightful spot unimaginable. Together with the situation and the splendid hospitality of the McCaskills this was the high spot of the excursion into the Far North.

The Bivio Meet was, like all ABM-SAC Meets, impeccable. The Approach March starting from Lago Palu in the val Malenco, with an "excursion" to the Alp Musella took us over the Muretto Pass to Maloja with a deviation to the Forno hut in the Bregaglia. Then it was bus to St. Moritz and the Julier to Bivio.

Piz Languard, Piz Segundo and Piz Turbo were climbed and some expeditions by road. Must express my thanks to the President for professional advice and Jimmy Stewart for much needed support during the trying time when my physical troubles made me slower.

1981

Northern Dinner. Patterdale. Feb.

First outing in the Hills since minor op. last October.

Caudale Moor, from Caudale Bridge by the Brotherswater Hotel, to the highest point, Stony Pike, across to the col called Threshwaite Mouth Pleasant going in snow. Thornwaite Crag and down to Low HARTSOP.

Ben Howe went with me next day to the head of Haweswater where we met the President's party before going on the horseshoe of Riggindale Crag and Kidsty Pike. Splendid day, most reassuring for the future.

Kintail Meet:

1. Sunday 24th. Ben Fhada (Attow).
2. Creag-a-Mhaim from the old road to Loch Loyne
3. Pilgrimage to Sandaig (Gavin Maxwell's "Camusfearna) and the brochs of Glen Beag.
4. Falls of Glomach: not nearly as fearsome as made out in the "pedestrian" guides but well worth while.
5. Beinn-a-Chapuill from Gleann Beag.
6. Scurr na Sgine from Achnagart.

Arolla, August.

Approach MARCH. Chickened out of the "grand traverse" from Mt Fort Hut to the Prafleuri hut and the Pas de Chevres and just as well, as the main party had to turn back because of snow obliterating the route, but the rest of the Arolla Meet was fine with mostly fine weather, especially in the mornings. Not a good meet physically, but enjoyable nevertheless. Grateful to all those who helped me over the snags of physical decline.

Ernst Sondheimer

The year started with another Hogmanay visit to Kintail. A year earlier the sky had been blue and the snow fresh – this time a message arrived in London, a few minutes before my train left, to warn of bad weather. But how could I stay at home twiddling my thumbs? The warning was true, and it was impressive, and for me almost frightening, to sit in our bothy with the heavens raging outside. When we wanted to make our getaway the insignificant stream, so easily crossed on the way in, had become a dangerous torrent, but Hamish Brown's knowledge and navigational skill were as usual equal to the situation. Two days later our friend and acquaintance Donald Mill was drowned in Knoydart.

After this it was worthwhile returning to Scotland: conditions could only improve. A cold bright weekend at the end of April with Alasdair Andrews, when blizzards were reported in England, gave me Schiehallion and Ben Lawers; on the latter hill (famous for its flora) purple saxifrage was found peeping out from the snow, a cheering sight. Then, in May, a week in Skye and Knoydart. Scurr Alasdair by the Great Stone Shoot in superb weather (yes, it does happen) – last done in 1946, and still (deo gratias) ascended without excessive effort. Photos of the Cuillin ridge at last! (I leave it to fitter and stronger veterans to do the ridge). Next day Scurr nan Gilleann by the Tourist Route, with more dramatic views. Met a youngster just below the south-east ridge who asked excitedly 'which way to the mountain?' We gathered that he was on the second 'hill walk' of his life, and the incurable fever had obviously gripped him already (bless him for that). Then to Inverie via Fort William and Mallaig, and on foot to the bothy in Glen Barrisdale, taking in the 'loony-bin' Munro on the way (see Hamish's Mountain Walk). Arguments at the bothy with assertive lady as to who had the right to the comfortable quarters (gallantry won). Next day Ladhar Bheinn from Coire Dhorrcail with descent by Stob a Choire Odhair: black clouds and gleams of sunlight over Loch Houran – the Loch of Hell indeed, 'dramatic, remote and wild' (H. Brown). Finally we walked out to Kinloch Houran along the justly renowned path that follows the loch, to await the post bus which (the timetable assured us) should arrive there on Friday afternoons. It didn't look like a bus, but (rather to our surprise) it duly arrived!

June brought a departmental outing to Derbyshire, spent cycling in the Derwent valley. For the end of July I had arranged to go climbing with Swiss friend Richard,

from his Alpine chalet. Because of family illness he had to call off at short notice, but I had already bought my train tickets and freed the week from engagements, so (undeterred by the usual end-of-July reports of foul weather in the Alps) I set out on my own, having first phoned the hotel on the Belalp to book a room. I had long wanted to visit the place, so well known from its Victorian associations. I found the hotel almost empty, very comfortable (too much to eat), thick fog all around, and John Tyndalls house now owned by a dentist from Basle. But the fog lifted enough on the top of the Sparrhorn (the Belalp Hausberg) to give fine views of the Fusshorner and the Oberaletsch glacier with its dramatically situated hut. Nearby Rideralp and Bettmeralp have been ruined by 'development': Balalp is still fairly unspoiled and alpine dairy farming still carries on – but I read of plans for huge hotel developments in that spot also ('2000 beds for the year 2000'). In fact my overwhelming impression of the Alps this summer was of commercial ruination beyond hope and repair. And yet . . . A few days later I was at the Terri hut, in Mittel Switzerland, having walked up from Campo Blenio (with an earlier look at the Chiesa di Negrentino on a hillside in the Val Blenio, a Romanesque gem decorated with early medieval frescos). The hut was packed with ramblers, but on my long solo traverse walk to the Medel hut, over the Greina pass, the Furcla sura de Lavaz and the Lavaz glacier, I saw only wild unspoiled nature, a profusion of mountain flowers and no human soul. The Greina, where the Somvix Rhine originates, is a remote mountain pasture plateau with a highly individual atmosphere, fortunately still untouched but under severe threat from a hydroelectric scheme.

A month later three of us were at the Valsorey hut in clearing weather, hoping to do part of the High Level Route. Unfit and heavily laden as we were, an exposed ice slope below the Col de Sonadon discouraged us and we turned back; but peace and restfulness back at the hut, with the look across to beautiful Mont Velan and its glaciers, were compensation enough. If you want a comfortable valley base in that region of the Alps, the Hotel de l'Union at Orsieres is strongly recommended. From there we took the bus to the Great St Bernard pass and walked across the Pas des Chevaux and Col des Bastions to La Fouly in the Swiss Val Ferret. This is a walk which, with its varied ups-and-downs, flowers, lakes, views to the Combin and the Mont Blanc range (the hute tooth of the Grandes Jorasses dominating the scene), must rank high in the competition for the best mountain walk in the Alps. From the Val Ferret we went up to the Saleina hut. With our packs and 1500m. height to gain in the heat of the day it was hard work, but once again the beauty of the scenery – with the wild Saleina glacier at our feet – made it all amply worth while. We were glad to find that the hut is still a nice old-fashioned wooden edifice, luckily uncrowded, working to a system whereby wardens are sent up for a week at a time; we were greeted by a most friendly and obliging pair, one of them English with a job in Neuchatel. In the evening light we admired those two famous mountain structures, the Aiguille d'Argentiere and the Aiguille du Chardonnet. Next day we coped successfully with the Fenetre de Saleina to cross to the Trient plateau and were rewarded by another superb evening of views from the Trient hut. We were lucky to have chosen a Friday to stay there – the warden told us it was always quiet on Fridays. Next day, on the path and in the chairlift down to Champex, we saw the weekend multitudes on their way up and were glad to escape.

Les Swindin

1981 turned out to be a most satisfying year for me at least as far as the Alps are concerned. It started with our usual trip at Easter when we spent the best part of two weeks ski-mountaineering and touring in the Bernese Oberland. Starting at Realp at the eastern foot of the Furka Pass my party, which consisted of myself and Barbara, a couple of friends from the Pinnacle Club and another from the Lincoln M.C., spent two nights at the Albert Heim hut from which we climbed the Galenstock enjoying excellent skiing conditions on the return to the hut, conditions which were to prevail for the whole of our expedition. Two days were then spent getting to the Oberaarjoch hut by way of the Furka Pass, Belvedere, the Rhone glacier, the Grimsel Pass and the long hot slog from there to the hut past the reservoir and Oberaar glacier.

Having got into the Oberland we concentrated on climbing peaks and during the next week climbed the Gross Wannenhorn, Hinter Fiescherhorn, Ochs, Lauhorn, Kranzberg and Ebnefluh. By this time we had arrived at the Hollandia hut and were looking forward to the descent of the Lotschental in much better conditions than the last time we were in the same position. This time the descent was made to Blatten in under two hours whereas previously we'd spent six hours on the same course. The only disappointment was that we did it too early in the day when the snow was still frozen hard.

Not content with having returned to the valley we went immediately up the hill again, using uphill transport for the first time, and traversed the Petersgrat on the way to Stechelberg in the Lauterbrunnen valley, the last descent providing probably the most wonderful downhill skiing of the whole trip.

Before our summer visit to the Alps the usual Whit week was spent in Scotland, in the west which luckily had the best of the weather, adding several Munros to the list and usefully developing fitness for further ventures on the continent.

A wedding to attend in late July delayed our journey to Switzerland, but this turned out to be most fortuitous since we missed the bad weather and in the event enjoyed excellent weather and conditions and climbed more routes in three weeks of climbing than ever before.

Our first three routes were climbed from the Chanrion hut, which can be driven to if you feel so inclined. We did the Pic d'Epicoun, Ruinette and Mont Gele. The best route to each is different from that described in the A.C. Guide, ask for local advice. Following this we visited the A Neuve hut, apparently not much visited by British climbers but very worthwhile, from which we did two routes, the Tour Noir and the Grand Darrey. Being now well acclimatised we joined the Club meet at Randa. My intention here was to complete all the 4000ers that I'd not done in the region and in about 10 days climbed Hohberghorn and Durrenhorn, Rimpfischhorn, which had been my first alpine peak many years ago, via the N ridge, Pollux and then the traverse of the Breithorn from the excellent Cesare e Giorgio bivouac hut and finally all the Monte Rosa summits. That leaves me with the Dent d'Herens still to climb. Apart from the meet at Randa I've not done much with the Club other than attend the Northern Dinner early in the year. In the Autumn Walter Kirstein visited me in Gloucester and we spent a damp day climbing together in the Wye valley at Wintours Leap. My rock climbing during the year did not reach my expectations mainly due to the very damp conditions in the second half of the year so now I look forward once more to winter and with an ascent of Bowfell Buttress in winter garb already achieved can only hope for continued 'bad' weather.

Jeremy Whitehead

After spending Christmas skiing at Puy St. Vincent with Fred Jenkins, we moved on to Briancon for a week's touring. After crossing the Col des Freres Mineurs from Montgenevre to Plampinet we moved up to the Ref. Drayeres. The effect of a 5 course New Year's Eve dinner and bad weather prevented our doing Mont Thabor, but when the weather improved we did Roche Chateau and the circuit of Pte de Moutouze. At Easter I followed a week with a school party at Claviere with a crossing of the Vanoise, from Briancon to Moutiers, leading a SCGB party. The thaw conditions of the previous week changed dramatically, and we were able to climb Dome de Polset and Dome des Picheres, as well as crossing six passes, three over 3000 m. At the end of May it was Vanoise again, on my own. Bad weather foiled two attempts on the Bellecote, and the rest of the holiday was spent on the pistes of the Grande Motte. Only here was there any reasonable snow to be found; off piste was execrable. In the summer I joined the AC meet near Randa, and managed 12 summits in 3 weeks, including eight 4000'ers. It was good to get my revenge on the Weisshorn after a failure 20 years before, but the best route was the NE face of the Lenzspitze, followed by the traverse to the Nadelhorn, which I did with Fergus Ungoed-Thomas. 20 years ago one would never have considered such a route, but modern ice-climbing equipment makes it quite a reasonable proposition.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

The A.G.M.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Alpine Club at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 25th November, 1981.

The President, Mr. J. P. Ledebor, was in the Chair and 10 members were present. Minutes of last Meeting.

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 26th November, 1980, as recorded in the Journal, were approved.

Officers and Committee 1982

After having been duly proposed and seconded, Miss J. E. Gamble, D. Hogg M.P. and D. A. Milwain were elected as Committee Members for 1982 in place of Dr. D. J. Lintott, P. V. Andrews and J. R. Murray as retiring Members. In the absence of a nomination for Hon. Librarian in the place of K. J. Baldry, who had been obliged to resign, it was agreed that this vacancy should be filled at the discretion of the Committee. All other Officers and Members, being eligible, were re-elected for the year 1982.

Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts for the year ending 30th June, 1981. It was resolved that these be adopted and the thanks of the Meeting were expressed to the Hon. Treasurer.

Hon. Auditor

After being duly proposed and seconded, Mr. N. Moore (Affiliate Member) was appointed Hon. Auditor for the forthcoming year.

Subscriptions 1982

The Hon. Treasurer reported that the Committee had fixed the S.A.C. flat rate subscription for 1982 at £16.50, a figure unfortunately necessitated by the deterioration in the sterling exchange rate. This compared with £20 for 1979, £17 for 1980 and £14 for 1981. It was hoped, however, to have information shortly on new special "husband and wife" rates.

The Committee's proposal to raise the Association subscription for Full and Affiliate members to £7.50 to keep pace with inflation was endorsed unanimously.

Any Other Business

In response to a question on what action it was proposed to take about the B.M.C. card for admission to Alpine huts, the President explained that options were limited. However, British members of the S.A.C. were still entitled to priority and discussions were continuing with the Central Committee on possible easement of the S.A.C. subscription.

A Vote of Thanks to the Swiss National Tourist Office for all their help was passed with enthusiasm.

The President thanked all Officers and Committee members for their work and declared the Meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the year ended 30th June, 1981

	1981	1980
Income from Members		
Subscriptions (Note 1)	1305	1236
Entrance Fees	—	20
Life Membership Credit	50	50
Profit on Sale of Ties	—	—
Insurance Commissions	—	11
	<u>1355</u>	<u>1317</u>
Less: Expenditure		
Hire of Rooms	200	200
Journal (Note 2)	1102	894
Printing, Postage etc. SNTD	192	179
Printing, Postage etc. Association	97	91
Insurance	17	16
Entertainment	13	(140)
BMC Subscription	65	35
Lecture Expenses	(20)	20
Sundries	54	18
Welsh Hut Rent less receipts	—	(22)
Depreciation fixtures Welsh hut	—	—
	<u>1720</u>	<u>130</u>
	(365)	(104)
Add: Investment Income:—		
Association Investments	213	205
Building Society Interest	261	75
	<u>474</u>	<u>280</u>
Less: Taxation (Note 3)	190	92
	<u>—</u>	<u>84</u>
Add: Surplus on exchange	(143)	621
	<u>(224)</u>	<u>705</u>

The golden key
to Switzerland!

Swiss
Holiday
Card

Unlimited transportation to all
Swiss resorts by Rail, Postal motor
coach and Lake steamer.
25-50% reduction on excursions
to mountain tops.

Available to anyone residing outside
Switzerland. On sale at Swiss National
Tourist Offices and Travel agencies
outside Switzerland, at Swissair offices
outside Europe and North America and at
the Rail information offices in Zürich,
Geneva Airport and other gateways.

Prices in Swiss Francs (subject to change)

	4 days	6 days	8 days	10 days
1st class	145	195	245	345
2nd class	105	145	175	245

Children 6 to under 16 years half price

Railconnection Zürich Airport
160 trains a day

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

BALANCE SHEET
30th JUNE, 1981

	1981	1980	
Fixed Assets (Note 4)			
Projector (N. S. Finzi Bequest)	1	1	
Equipment at Swiss Tourist Office Welsh Hur	1	1	
Investments at cost (Note 5)	1872	1872	
Current Assets			
Stock of Ties at cost	93	93	
Debtors	207	30	
Cash on deposit in building society	1695	1712	
Cash at Bank	145	650	
	<u>2140</u>	<u>2485</u>	
Deduct: Current Liabilities			
Current Account - ABMSAC Ltd.	-	240	
Creditors	180	53	
Subscriptions in Advance	630	608	
	<u>810</u>	<u>901</u>	
Net Current Assets	1330	1584	
	<u>3204</u>	<u>£3458</u>	
Sources of Finance			
Life Membership Account	752	802	
Accumulated Revenue Account Balance at 30th June, 1981			
Add: Excess of income over expenditure	2556 (224)	1851 705	2556
Donations & Bequests	120	100	
	<u>3204</u>	<u>£3458</u>	

J. P. Ledebor - President
M. Pinney - Hon. Treasurer

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR

I have examined the books and vouchers of the Association and report that the attached accounts, together with the notes, are in accordance therewith.

N. Moore
Hon. Auditor

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

Notes	1981	1980
1. Subscriptions		
Subscription income is derived as follows:-		
Members Year to 31.12.80 184 - £5		920
Year to 31.12.81 192 - £5	960	
Affiliated members		275
Year to 31.12.80 55 - £5		
Year to 31.12.81 62 - £5	310	
Subscriptions in respect of earlier years	68	138
	<u>1338</u>	<u>1333</u>
Adjustment re subscriptions in advance	33	97
	<u>1305</u>	<u>1236</u>
2. Journal		
Cost of the journal is made up as follows:-		
Printing	988	834
Despatch cost and other expenses	146	112
	<u>1134</u>	<u>946</u>
Less: Advertising Revenue	32	52
	<u>£1102</u>	<u>£ 894</u>
3. Taxation		
The Association is liable to Corporation Tax on its income from outside sources.		
4. Fixed Assets	Cost	Depreciation to Date
New Projector (N. S. Finzi Bequest)	166	165
Equipment at Swiss National Tourist Office	80	79
Fixtures and Fittings etc.	234	234
5. Investments		
These are as follows:-		
£1,000 4½% Agricultural Mortgage Corporation Deb. Stock 1977/82		
1,080 Brunner Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p.		
1,043 United States Deb. Corporation Ordinary Shares of 25p.		
Cost of these holdings was £1,872. Aggregate market value at 30th June 1981 was £2,955 (1980 £2,708).		

THE ANNUAL DINNER, 11th NOVEMBER, 1981

This took place once again at the Washington Hotel, and the attendance, about 60, was again slightly more than last year. Tradition was properly followed in the speeches. The President proposed the Royal Toast. Frank Solari spoke on the Swiss Confederation, and Mr. J. Doswald, representing the Swiss Embassy, responded. The President proposed the health of the Association and our guests, and gave a short account of the state of the Club. Mike Baker responded on behalf of the Alpine Club.

S.M.F.

THE OUTDOOR MEETS

Brackenlose 30th January to 1 February

Peter Fleming

The weekend was generally mild and overcast, with no sign of the winter conditions we had hoped for. It did, however, remain dry. Sixteen people attended, many having driven considerable distances for this short annual meet.

On the Saturday different areas were covered by various parties, including Pillar Rock by the Slab and Notch route; Red Pike, Scoat Fell; Scafell, Scafell Pike and Harter Fell. The evening was spent very pleasantly over a bar meal in the Screes Hotel.

On the Sunday the Scafells were once again traversed, Ill Gill Head by another group and some climbing was done on Wallabarrow Crag in the Duddon Valley. The Leader took no part in any of this as he was busy succumbing to 'flu. He left for home early on Sunday afternoon and spent the following week in bed.

Llanrwst Meet 13th-15th March, 1981

John Murray

Fourteen people attended this meet at Fron Francis.

The snow which fell during February's cold spell had disappeared and there were only very small patches left on north facing slopes. Most of the party went round to Ogwen on Sunday to go over Tryfan and up Bristly Ridge to walk across the Glyders. One rope climbed Grooved Arete. The day was dry and cloudy although tantalizing patches of sunlight were seen mainly across the valley on the Carneddau where it turned the dead bracken to a glowing red gold.

It rained that evening and night and Sunday was much colder with heavy rain showers intermingled with sunshine. A foray was made on to Carnedd Llewellyn from Cwm Eugiau over Craig-Yr-Ysfa. It was clear that there would be no more winter climbing and that crampons and ice-axes could be put away until we went to the Alps.

Easter Meet, Fron Francis

S. M. Freeman

An incredible four days (plus two more coming and going) of beautiful weather, shirt sleeves on hilltops. Present were H., M. and M. Archer, R. Bartlett, A. and S.

Strawther and the editor. The last named, to his shame, was visiting Fron Francis for the first time. It is a new world of experience; luxury apartments with the freedom (and low price) associated with huts. This is combined with the opportunity to see John Byam-Ground's fine collection of saxifrages whilst resting between outings.

The fine weather led to the editor, encouraged by Tony, actually climbing easy rock on Tryfan. We also went up to Snowdon by the Parson's nose, traversed the Nantlle ridge from Rhyd-ddu and walked back along the valley, and finally traversed Siabod

on a shorter last day.

That accounts for Tony, Suzanne and me. The others were with us on some occasions, and about their own excursions otherwise. A very successful mini-meet. Fron Francis can take more people, and advantage should be taken of it. It is your loss.

Spring Bank Holiday, Kintail

S. M. Freeman

It was hardly to be believed, after the fine weather at Easter, that the next big Bank Holiday meet could provide much the same again, especially in Kintail, just about the wettest part of Britain. Nevertheless it was so; whilst London suffered floods, we basked. Admittedly, it was a little hazy for the photographers. We were Andrews, Armstrong, Bartlett, Bowes, Lock, Riddell, Scarr, two Solaris and the editor, some indoors, some in caravans.

Kintail is a splendid place both for those who wish to traverse long ridges and those who tick off Munros, besides being a joy to the eye. Its place names are not a joy to the printer, and the spelling problems combined with the large number of tops covered make a full recital unfair and difficult. In outline, the walks included the Beinn Fhada ridge, the S. Cluanie ridge, the Five Sisters and the continuation which Hamish Brown calls the Brothers, Beinn Sgriol and its neighbour, the Saddle by the Forcan ridge and nearby tops, Ciste Dhubh and neighbours, and Scurr nan Ceathreamhnan. I make that about 30 Munros, not too bad as the party mostly kept together so that most of the tops were traversed by most of the party. We also managed to shop at Kyle of Lochalsh, visit the falls of Glomach and make a pilgrimage to Sandaig. A most successful meet.

From Francis, July.

Tony Strawther.

This must have been one of the best attended meets at the cottage to date, with some seventeen people along. The overspill had to camp in the field, with one party having the luxury of a ready pitched tent supplied by John Byan-Grounds.

The weather was good, and being July most parties went their own separate ways to get to grips with Welsh rock. Apart from the usual crags, people seemed to spread far and wide: several ropes went to Tremadoc and one party to the Moelwyns.

The Alpine Camping Meet 25 July-15 August 1981

Mike Pinney.

The meet, held jointly with the Alpine Club, with Climbers Club members invited to attend, was based at the Atermersen campsite, between Randa and Taesch. Over 60 members and guests attended, ages ranging from a few weeks to mid sixties, and S.A.C. membership varying from first year, through Veteran to just short of 50 years. For the record, not least for those camping, the attendance in approximate order of arrival was as follows: F. Jenkins, J. Whitehead, B. Phillips, A. Pines, J. Harris, C. Raves, J. Berry, B. Chase, V. Odell, M. Pinney, S. Town, M. Baldwin, I. Thompson, C. Stone & F., T. Maden & F., J. Loy & F., E. Rhodes & F., K. & S. George, R. Townsend & F., P. & D. Howard, J. Smythe & F., R. & J. Isherwood, J. Mercer & F., J. Durant, J. Eccles, S. Coxhead, W. Edginton, E. J. Wright, P. Marsh, J. Gambler, F. Ungeod-Thomas, P. Robertson, I. & S. McNaught-Davis, A. & S. Greenwood, G & J Salt, L. & B. Swindin, I. & S. Stirrups, D. Stephenson. The previous week had seen a metre and half of snow, with even low level rock climbs such as the Leiterspitzer plastered with snow. A number of people on the campsite were packing to head for the South of France. On this basis part of the party headed off to sample the rock climbing delights in the Verdon gorge. Others, having heard favourable reports from those attending Grindelwald last year, headed to the Engelhorner. Meanwhile the nucleus of the party, making an early start from the campsite, climbed the Mettelhorn, wading through the snow, as a start to the acclimatisation. This was followed by the easy approach to the Weissmies Hut and an ascent of the Weissmies.

The date coincided with the Royal Wedding, so certain enthusiasts were able to plant

their commemorative flags. Others celebrated in more normal means watching the ceremony in colour, followed by other festivities whilst some suffered on the approach to the Don Hut.

There had been a significant improvement in conditions with a few days sun and overnight freezing. Thus, whilst some of the party climbed the Lagginhorn, a few more ambitious traversed the Fletschhorn and Lagginhorn whilst others returned to the campsite with other peaks in mind. The meet took on a more normal line with small parties attempting their chosen peak. Some of the party had pre-arranged climbing parties, but for various reasons, most climbed with others as well or instead and mostly people found partners with comparable aspirations.

The remaining few days of the first week were: from the Dom Hut – the Lenzspitze-Nadelhorn traverse an ascent of the Dom and the Nadelhorn-Lenzspitze traverse; from the Taesch Hut – the Rimpfischhorn and an attempt on the traverse; from the Rothorn Hut – the Obergabelhorn, the Zinal Rothorn and an attempt on the Trifhorn – from the Weisshorn Hut an attempt on the Durrenhorn – Nadelhorn traverse.

Whilst a majority of the party spent the Sunday recouping, a late arrival set out for the Cesare Giorgio bivouac to the south of the Breithorn to test his theory that rapid acclimatisation would be achieved by spending a few days at high altitude.

Routes in the second week included: from the Hornli an attempt on the Hornli halted by the queues on the fixed ropes; from the Schonbiel an attempt on the Dent Blanche Viereselsgat; from the Britannia Hut the Allalinhorn, from the Weisshorn Hut the Weisshorn, from the Dom Hut the Kin face of the Taeschhorn, the Dom; from the Rothorn hut the Zinal Rothorn; from the Monte Rosa Hut Monte Rosa.

The Taesch hut becomes very crowded, and booking is necessary to avoid being turned away (even S.A.C. members); a combination of its easy approach, the choice of routes and its location on the "high level" route. Several ropes climbed the Alphubel by the Rotgrat, one rope descending to the Mischabeljoch bivouac. The west ridge of the North Summit was also climbed, the pair arriving at the bivouac with 4 x 75 feet length of Kermantel, having met a lot of loose rock. Early evening brought a large party of climbers, rather overcrowding the hut, and a lot of cloud. The large party, planning to climb the Taeschhorn by the Alphubel, made an early start. Our two ropes waited until first light to minimise route finding difficulties, since there was no glacier snow plod to the start of the rock (and to get some impression of the likely weather) enabling an hour to be saved on the guide book time in a pleasant ascent of the Taschhorn.

Apart from another rope who soon turned back because of the amount of snow on the ridge our two ropes then had the traverse to the Dom to themselves.

The first half of the third week saw some bad weather, visits being made to the Turtmann Hut – Brunegghorn; the Border Hut – Balfrin and Taech Hut-Rotgrat, whilst some went round to the Val d'Herens in search of better weather. It was misty on the walk to the Cab des Aig Rouges, the party returning in sleet and rain the following day.

The weather improved for the second half of the week and in a final burst of activity before returning home, routes included the Fletschhorn-Lagginhorn traverse, the Weisshorn, Monte Rosa (Nordend-Dufourspitze) and from the Mischabel Hut, the Lenspitze N. Face and Nadelhorn.

In spite of many of the party spending roughly half their nights in huts, the camp site restaurant and, worth the extra walk, the Sporting Restaurant in Randa, proved popular eating and evening meeting places. For those with more sensible ambitions, the Zermatt area provided very pleasant walks.

Alpine Meet August 1981

S. M. Freeman

This meet was held jointly with the Alpine Club and was led by Harry Archer. It was centred on Arolla, a welcome return to a most attractive area after about 15 years. On two mornings there was some cloud clearing later, but otherwise there was continuous sunshine from dawn to dusk, and climbing activity was completely unhampered by weather. It was generally agreed that this was unprecedented on an A.B.M. Alpine meet, and all the more remarkable following the extreme good luck at Easter and



*Mr. Collon seen from above Arolla:
by F. Solari*

Spring Bank Holiday. We were based on the Glacier Hotel, and there were substantial contingents in camp and apartments. Those noticed in one place or another included C., H., M. and M. Archer, B., J., J., P. and S. Baldwin, N. and M. Cooper, A. Dewar, H. Flook, M. Freeman, P. and V. French, M. Fulford, B. Howe, A. Husbands, R. Laurie, P. Ledebor, C. and R. McCall, N. and O. Milwain, H. and L. Norton, E. Parry, P. Ridgewell, D. Riddell, B. and F. Solari, A., J. and J. Weller and J. and J. White.

Various groups spent the week before the meet in Alpine activities. The regular walk-in party came from the west and were thwarted near the end by deep snow and obscured routes. They had to retreat, but satisfied honour later by going back to complete the missing bit. Another party camped in such a place as to ascend the Grosse Mythen, on the way over. Yet others had a week of walking and climbing in the Lotschental.

After we gathered at Arolla movement flourished in the good weather. Huts visited included Aiguilles Rouges, Bertol, Dix, Rossier, Tza and Vignettes. One party reported an ascent to a hut by boat. Climbs included Dent Blanche, L'Eveque, La Louette, La Pigne, Mont Blanc de Cheilon, Mont Collon, Petit Dent de Veisivi, Tza. Tony Husbands went afield and returned to report a traverse of the Grepon. No doubt other trips escaped the reporter's notice. A lively and enjoyable meet.

Buffet Party Meet - Patterdale

2-4 October, 1981

Marion Porteous

The October Meet marked the third of our Buffet Parties at Patterdale. At each one we see a regular group of members but each year we are pleased to see some new faces. The Friday evening was very wet, the Lake level being the highest I have known it. However the Saturday turned out to be fine and members went out on the hills, Scafell, Helvellyn, Fairfield etc. They all returned in time for a wash and brush up before the Party in the evening. The sherry reception was followed by a buffet with main course, sweet, cheese and biscuits and, of course, plenty of wine. Coffee was served to end the evening and the general opinion was that a good time was had by all (28 of us). I even got a cup of tea in bed next morning from a grateful member (female!)

My thanks go to the ladies who assist me with the food side. They are always most willing to help.

The Buffet Party Meet will be held again on 1-3 October this year. If you haven't been to one yet what about this year?

OBITUARY

Frederick Ernest Smith

Freddie Smith died in February of this year after a long, rare and so far incurable illness. He joined the Swiss Alpine Club in 1954, a member of the Diablerets Section, and served the Association as joint Hon. Secretary with successively Reg Parker and Maurice Bennett from 1958 to 1962, and as Vice President from 1976 to 1978. He was elected a member of the Alpine Club in 1959.

Freddie was a regular attender of the Easter Meets and equally happy to join a rope on the rocks of Tryfan or a walking party on the Carneddau. He climbed and walked widely in the British Isles, mainly in North Wales but also in the Lakes, Peak District, Scotland and Skye. Abroad he climbed in the Swiss Alps, but also visited the Sierra de Gredos and the Picos d'Europa.

A senior law lecturer at the London Polytechnic, his interests ranged widely. Books, ballet, opera and the theatre, a regular concert-goer, his accomplishments were not only academic, for he was a competent performer on piano and organ. His interest in and knowledge of prints and early English Watercolours was exemplified by his contribution to the selection of prints for the R. W. Lloyd exhibition, and he had a good eye for the mountain scene, which he reproduced with all the flair of the skilled photographer.

Freddie refused almost until the end to recognise that he could not recover from the illness that beset him, and, though greatly weakened in bodily strength, retained all his mental vigour, meeting each setback of the last months with the greatest courage. He will be much missed, especially at the meetings he so regularly attended. J.B.G.

BOOK REVIEWS

HAMISH'S GROATS END WALK

One Man & his Dog on a Hill Route through Britain & Ireland

Hamish Broan

Victor Gollancz Ltd.

£9.95

Storm, Hamish's new dog and, according to the Publisher's review, "a most beautiful, obedient and friendly collie" just might have stolen the show from the writer in his latest book — an account of a five month journey from one end to the other of the British Isles — for Hamish obviously prefers that species to a constant companion of his own. In his first chapter "Picking up the Threads" we hear of his bachelorhood and of his "only occasional feelings of regret" and we also hear of the philosophy which has proved the main spring to his life and travels. The hill-walker will find a lot with which he has sympathy in this and those with less familiarity of the open country may discover a little more of what makes walkers tick. When the narrative proper begins we are immediately transported to this different world and to a new view of these islands which captures all the essences that hill-walkers remember and love. The book comes to life in the descriptions of the small episodes which make up such a trip e.g. "The paths round the back of The Terrett to the A54 brought a reward: we found a £5 note blowing across a field. (Later I was to find two £1 notes, one Irish, one English, besides several odd coins. In Scotland I found nothing at all.)"

Some of us will smile gently on the occasions when lesser mortals, who may have begun to understand the calls of the wild, are pilloried — "We met various groups of people, most of whom looked weary and muddy. They were generally splendidly garbed with heavy climbing boots and Haston Alpiniste rucksacks — splendid examples of overkill. (I wish I could afford such gear for climbing, never mind strolling along a pedestrian motorway!)" or when the poor old Tourist Board interviewers surveying the use of the Pennine Way on Great Dunn Fell (2780') are beaten at (presumably) their own game. The cover review relates that "as a personal odyssey the book is notable for the author's quiet determination to keep going at all costs" and this is perhaps one of the great traits in Hamish's character which comes across very strongly in the writing and is confirmed by all those of us lucky enough to know him personally. Hamish writes in a most attractive style, seemingly able to address the reader as an individual person — or perhaps that is just because he is so well known in the mountaineering fraternity and to his innumerable friends who feature prominently on the pages.

This is a book to be read and enjoyed by the fireside during the evenings of winter when the walker is constrained by the weather. It will prepare him for the new season and will widen his curiosity and horizons for the following Spring on the hills. It makes a very attractive twin to "Hamish's Mountain Walk" and is to be recommended thoroughly to all who tramp and camp in the mountains and wild places of these islands. Triplets, however, might just be "overkill" for any but his most dedicated and ardent companions.

F.A.W.S.

"HIGH AMBITION". A biography of Reinhold Messner by Ronald Faux. (Victor Gollancz Ltd). 180 pp., 44 photographs, 3 sketch maps. Published 28 Jan. 1982. Price £9.95. The subject of this biography is one of the rare few who have gained the stature of a legend in their own lifetimes. His ascents of great peaks, solo or with minimal support, without oxygen and with no more equipment that he could carry in his rucksack, have no parallel.

From his student days he was a vigorous advocate of his own methods. His subsequent successful application of his methods, coupled with the circumstance that he has been no more immune from misadventure and disaster than anyone else, have made him a figure of controversy, strongly disapproved of in some quarters. Such matters are touched on by the author, as is Messner's private and inner life, but not at such length as to disturb the flow of narrative.

The book opens with an aperitif in the form of an account of the ascent of Everest without oxygen by Messner and Peter Habeler. The author, Ronald Faux (a Times journalist specialising in mountaineering) was present at base. It is no surprise that the climb is described graphically. More surprisingly, the quality of immediacy is sustained through the rest of the book, despite the circumstance that the author cannot have been so close on most occasions. He has, however, visited Messner and observed him in his work at home, and has reached as good an understanding of a complex man as could reasonably be hoped for.

The result of his efforts is a book which this reviewer could not put down until he had finished it. Messner's feats appear to be less well known in Britain than on the Continent, and this book should help to redress the balance. There has been no climber like Messner, and all readers of mountaineering books (and all adventure lovers) are urged to get a copy of this one.

The rest of the book is chronological. Messner was born and grew up in Villnoss in S. Tyrol, in close contact with the hills. He climbed the highest of the local Geisler peaks (led by his parents) at the age of five. At fourteen he was leading climbs in the Dolomites. In his student days he began to publish his views. He preferred natural routes with minimal artificial aids to dirtiestimas taking artificial lines and requiring extensive aids. He was fanatical about fitness, and appeared to rate preparedness of body and mind above technical proficiency. To travel quickly and light was an essential part of the philosophy.

The methods were pursued subsequently with astonishing success, in the Alps, in S. America and in the Himalayas, where ascents were made solo or with but one companion of peaks and cliffs that had defied big parties.

We read of such feats as the ascent of the Eigerwand in ten hours. En route there were Nanga Parbat on which his beloved brother died, and Manaslu with further disaster. There were critics who considered him to be at fault in these matters. Further on we read of his marriage and subsequent divorce, all these events driving him more deeply within himself.

Nevertheless he became, between expeditions, a very public figure, a business man whose life is filled to overflowing with writing, lecturing, photography, advertising and publicity. His expeditions continue, and the book ends with what seems at present to be the ultimate dramatic feat, the successful ascent of Everest, solo and without oxygen, backed up by a base camp organisation comprising one girlfriend, no-one else.

S.M.F.