

DIARY FOR 1994

January	14-16	Scottish Winter Meet (ABMSAC Training Meet)	Newtonmore
	26	London Meeting Speaker - Rev. James Bogle	41 Queensgate
February	5-6	Northern Dinner Meet	Patterdale
	25-27	Scottish Winter Meet	Onich, Argyll
March	18-20	Scottish Winter Meet	Braemar
April	15-16	ABMSAC Hut Maintenance Meet	Patterdale
	20	London Meeting - Speaker John Temple	41 Queensgate
	23	Walk Leaders - Belinda and James Baldwin	Bedfordshire
May	21-28	Skye Meet	Broadford
June	10-12	Snowdonia Scrambles - Oread MC Hut	Rhyd-ddu
	15	Joint London Meeting with Anglo-Swiss Society	Swiss Embassy Surrey
	26	Walk - Leader Jack Derry	
July	1-3	Lakes Scrambles - George Starkey Hut	Patterdale
	16	ABMSAC Alpine Meet (to 13 August)	Saas Fee
	23-3 Aug	Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC Alpine Meet	Ailefroid (Dauphine)
August	3-13		Courmayeur
September	14	London Meeting - Alpine Meet Reunion and Slide Show	41 Queensgate
October	7-8	Northern Buffet Meet	Patterdale
	14-15	TCC Hut Maintenance Meet	Patterdale
November	5-6	Joint Alpine Meet Reunion	Patterdale
	12	AGM and Annual Dinner	London
	13	"Morning After" Walk	Venue TBA

**THE ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH MEMBERS
OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB**

JOURNAL 1994

CONTENTS

PAGE

The New President	2
Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club <i>Peter Ledeboer</i>	3
For More Personal Responsibility <i>Translated by Trevor Bent</i>	5
Summer Alpine Meet 93 in the Lötschental <i>Shiela Cameron</i>	7
The Joint Alpine Meet, Grindelwald 24 July to 14 August <i>Mike Pinney</i>	7
Crete Meet: May 1993 <i>Jim Strachan</i>	8
Skye Meet (15-22 May) <i>Ben Suter</i>	9
House Parties in the Alps <i>George Watkins</i>	10
Fischbiel Meet 1993 <i>Edward Coales</i>	12
"On the Hockenhorn" or "Was Shakespeare a Member of MI5?" <i>Wendell Jones</i>	14
"Desert Song" on Joshua Tree National Monument, Sth California <i>Nikki Wallis</i>	16
A Walk on the Milder Side <i>Barrie Pennett</i>	18
An Old Time Everest Fan-Mail <i>Charles Warren</i>	20
Neptrek 93 <i>John Chapman</i>	21
Saas Fee 1984 <i>S. M. Freeman</i>	24
Members' Activities 1993	27
Book Review	31
Obituaries	32
Annual General Meeting	34
List of Officers	37

THE NEW PRESIDENT

Heather Eddowes, a qualified physical education teacher and accomplished hockey player, was first introduced to mountaineering through an Outward Bound course as a schoolgirl. She was developing her mountaineering interests through her teaching career and associated involvement with outdoor pursuit activities when she met her future husband, Mark, who was already a keen mountain walker.

They climbed with the Oxford University Mountaineering Club in the 1970s and, as the only regular member over 21 years of age with a full driving licence, she was an essential element of numerous weekend meets in the UK as the mini-bus driver. She travelled to other European mountains, including Norway, the Pyrenees and the French Alps before her first climbing trip to Switzerland in 1980.

In 1981 she began two years' residence in Lausanne at the beginning of which she joined the CAS Diablerets Section. During the time she climbed extensively in the Swiss Alps during all seasons on foot and on ski with the Swiss Alpine Club and others.

Her two children, Lucy and Mary, were born after her return to the UK and she attended her first ABMSAC meet with the family in 1986. Since then she has become an active participant in club activities, attending the club's climbing meets in the Alps and in the UK regularly. Many London-based members will know her through her support of evening meetings and, since moving to the North-West of England in 1990, she has taken the initiative in stimulating regionally based activities. She joined the committee in 1989 and took on the role of Registrar in 1991 when the SNTO could no longer continue dealing with membership matters.

During her relatively short period of membership of the ABMSAC so far, she has participated in a wide range of club activities with an equally wide range of club members. She sees the club's diversity, based upon its climbing and social activities in the UK and the Alps, as a major strength, to be promoted to sustain the club in the future.



Heather Eddowes

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

During the second part of the last century British alpinists played a considerable part as pioneers of Alpine exploration and first ascents of Alpine peaks. As time went on many of them joined the SAC, who were developing their network of Alpine huts, in order to support this work and to enjoy the status of members when using the huts.

In 1909 they joined together to form the ABMSAC with the object of having a common meeting ground in Britain and to encourage alpinism through the SAC. In particular, they were concerned at there being relatively few mountain huts (by today's standards!), and at their first Annual Dinner in 1910 under their President, Clinton Dent, decided to raise a fund to build a new hut as a gift to the SAC in appreciation of their hospitality. The site was to be below the Allalinhorn at Saas Fee, but the hut a wooden structure on a stone foundation with 35 bunks and 6 hammocks. The weight of components would be 20 tons and it would cost 20,000 Frs. The execution of the project was entrusted to the Section Genevoise.

By 1912 the money had already been raised, the hut built and the official opening of the Britannia Hut took place on 17th August (see photograph) in a great gathering of notabilities, and the keys were handed over by the ABMSAC through the SAC to the Section Genevoise.

But the Britannia Hut was not large enough. In 1929 it was extended to accommodate 80 bunks at a cost of 40,000 Frs, shared equally between the ABMSAC and the Section Genevoise. Again in 1952 it was further extended to provide 113 bunks. To quote Andre Roch, past President of this Section, "The new arrangements emptied the treasury of the Section Genevoise, but kept the hut full!".

The ABMSAC has marked its special link on two further occasions:

In 1959 it celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special dinner in Saas Fee and contributed 2600 Frs towards the cost of re-furnishing the hut.

In 1984 it celebrated its 75th anniversary with a dinner in the hut with exactly the same menu as in 1912, attended by their alpinist Professor Noel Odell aged 90, who was at the original opening in 1912.

Today the Britannia Hut is one of the most heavily occupied SAC huts, and there are plans for rebuilding being discussed.

The ABMSAC continues to thrive. Members have a Meet every summer in the Alps, quite apart from Meets in Britain. To serve as a base for these we have acquired our own hut – the George Starkey Hut – in the Lake District, which was made possible thanks to a generous contribution from the SAC by the then President, Hektor Meier, at the opening ceremony in 1975. This has put the seal on our continuing good relations with the SAC, which we feel demonstrates the importance of the special links that alpinism has between Britain and Switzerland.

To emphasise this symbolism it is worth repeating the words of the first President of the ABMSAC at the original opening of the Britannia Hut in 1912: "The Hut appears to be well and truly built on a solid foundation: and so, I hope, does the good feeling between the English speaking and all other members of the SAC".

Peter Ledebor

FOR MORE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

From Les Alpes January 1993

After reading the four instalments of Jürg Nef's article on the civil responsibility of a climb leader as well as the comments by Andrea Bianchi on the judgment delivered by the Federal High Court concerning the accident which occurred in the Val S-charl, I think a statement is necessary to clarify the situation: to lead people in the mountains means setting out on perilous ground, not only literally but also from the legal point of view.

In today's world, we are tempted, more and more, to make other people responsible for the risks we ourselves nevertheless choose to run. If everything goes off well, we are proud of our performance and of the fact that we did not back out of the risks. On the other hand, should an accident occur, we immediately look for a scapegoat on whom to pin the blame for what happened. This phenomenon is also observed in alpinism: when a misfortune is experienced, a danger threatens, when we look for or "designate" someone to take the can for culpable conduct. The question of *personal responsibility*, which should play a particularly important role in alpinism, is then relegated to the background.

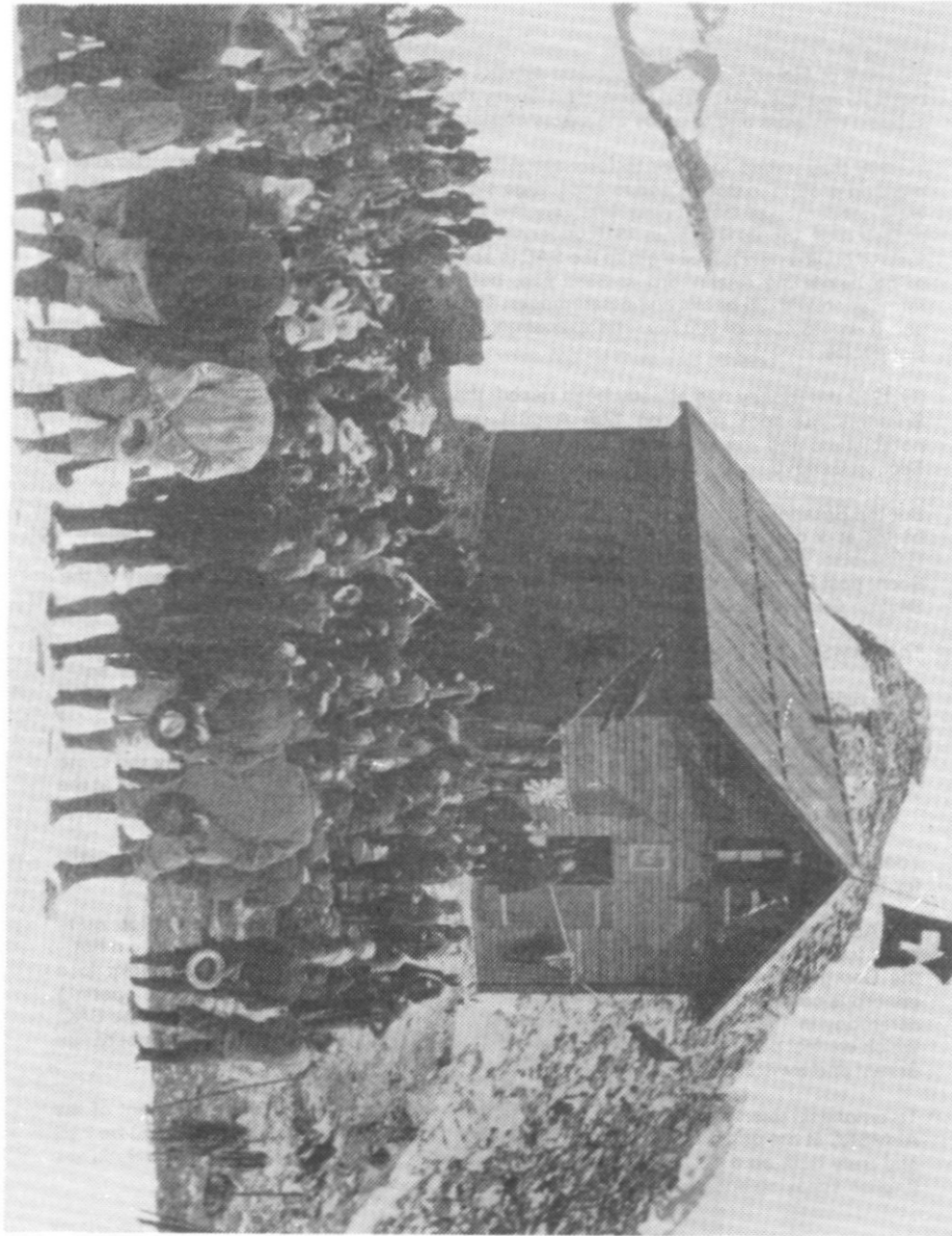
We forget that mountain climbing is inherently a sport full of risks. Even for the most highly-qualified mountaineer, it is never possible to foresee all the objective/subjective dangers and to evaluate them in such a way as to be able to circumvent or eliminate them. That is why "mistakes" are always being made; but in most cases nothing detrimental happens. The "mistake" rears its head, only afterwards, when an accident actually occurs. That is why the events, which, on one occasion, lead to the saving of human lives, are considered in other circumstances to be at least some of the causes of the incident. We can imagine all sorts of cases. For instance, this one: when the weather is changing, the mountaineers can choose between two descents: one long, fairly easy, but exposed from the meteorological point of view, and another, shorter but more difficult, comprising a certain danger. No matter which alternative the leader may opt for, it will always be possible to reproach him, in case of accident, with having chosen the wrong one, "taking into consideration the circumstances".

This is a problematical way of proceeding, because, retrospectively, we always set against the accident which really occurred, other possibilities (theoretical) which would have prevented it. On the basis of behaviour variations considered afterwards and although they were not proved in the alpine context of the accident in question, we can throw doubt on almost any decision.

In mountaineering, it is therefore fitting to ask ourselves whether we must not start from the point of view that all the participants in a climb in addition to their responsibility for their own acts and gestures should not also assume at least part of the global risk incurred by the whole group. We know from experience how difficult it is to evaluate a situation in the mountains, the pressure brought to bear on the leader and what the group expects of him. Consequently, we may find it shocking, when something has gone wrong, to make the leader bear the brunt for everything.

It is not a question here of taking sides for or against imprudent or irresponsible conduct. Every position of leadership must go hand in hand with the special obligation to be careful. Apart from this, we must give much more importance than in the past to *personal responsibility*, indispensable as far as mountaineering is concerned.

However, the subject should not be broached only after an incident. This is a question to which every alpinist must give a clear reply, *even before* deciding to take part in a climb. He must seriously evaluate the climb planned by examining more especially if he will be



Britannia Hut

up to the demands made on him in unfavourable conditions. If everyone bows to this rule, not only will we avoid many accidents (and some legal proceedings), but each participant, having decided upon his personal responsibility, will be able to take upon himself part of the global responsibility. When these conditions are not fulfilled and that, furthermore, the subject has not even be raised expressly, we can wonder whether we are not dealing here with negligence, that the person taking part will have to assume personally, later on.

*Translated by
Trevor Bent*

SUMMER ALPINE MEET 93 IN THE LÖTSCHENTAL

The 1993 Alpine Meet was held in the Lötschental, accommodation being in Chalets at Fischbiel some 450 metres above Wiler. There was no period of settled weather but there were plenty of good days especially in the second fortnight of the Meet. Some 30 Members and Guests attended the pre-Meet and more than 60 attended the Main Meet. Climbs included the Tenbachhorn, Tellhorn, Sackhorn, Hockenhorn, Ebnefluh, Ferdenrothorn, Jungfrau, Balmhorn & Doldenhorn. Other outings were the Beichpass, Bietschhorn Hut, Hollandia Hut and long walks over the Restipass and the Lötschenpass and visits to Elmertatsch on the Petersgrat. The administration of a self-catered meet at a remote location such as Fischbiel with Members scattered over a number of Chalets is a heavy load on the organisers and the helpers, so much so that it was felt that the Meets have become too large, and that too much was expected of the organisers and helpers who are voluntary and unpaid. Hopefully these matters will be corrected in future Meets.

Others will write of particular events and achievements. This is just a note of appreciation to those who made the meet possible and gave us such a good time.

Shiela Cameron

THE JOINT ALPINE MEET, GRINDELWALD 24 JULY TO 14 AUGUST 93

The Meet was held jointly with CC and AC based at the Eigernorwand Campsite. It was the best attended joint Meet for a number of years with 45 attendees.

The weather was generally unsettled but those who managed to get in sequence (lucky) with the weather had successful seasons. The first Sunday, whilst most went for a training walk, two teams went up to the Gleckstein Hut in the rain. The following morning, although still misty and with a fresh snow covering, the precipitation had finished and a new track was made up the SSE ridge of the Wetterhorn. At the Wettersattel the cloud cleared giving good views and resulting in much of the fresh snow being burned off. The Wetterhorn was also climbed by this route by a number of other parties during the Meet.

Other trips in the first week included the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, involving the long but scenic walk up the Lauterbrunnen valley to the Mutthorn Hut, rock routes in the Englehorner and the start of tours from the Jungfrauoch.

Although, with the weakness of the pound against the Swiss Franc, the Jungfrau railway is expensive, the cost may be justified against several days' climbing?

One team had an eight-day outing – Jungfrau, Monch and down to Konkordia, Grunegghorn and Gross Grunhorn, Grunhornlucke to the Finsteraarhorn Hut, Finsteraarhorn and Fiescherhorn traverse to Obermonchjoch, Jungfrauoch and back down. Part of this team were perhaps misled by Goedeke's comments on the SW ridge of Finsteraarhorn "as only a slightly more difficult alternative" to the normal NW ridge. Conditions were such that this was not the case. Another party, after three instead of the five 4000 m peaks, traversed Fiescherhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Grunhorn and back up to the Jungfrauoch.

The second week saw the Schreckhorn come into condition. Times for the hut to hut, ascending and descending the SW ridge, varied from 12 hours upwards. The Lauteraarhorn and Strahlegghorn were also climbed from the Schreckhorn Hut and the Aletschhorn from the South.

Although it had been originally intended to move to another venue for the third week, the disruption was not considered worthwhile. However, a number of attendees had particular objectives (remaining 4000 s) and commuted accordingly. In the western Valais the Grand Combin was climbed from the Valsorey Hut by the west ridge, descending by the North-West Face and returning via the Col du Meitin. Unlike the epic times taken by the teams in 1989 due to the difficult conditions descending the NW face, going was good and the team were back on the campsite in time for the fondu party. Meanwhile another team had climbed the NW ridge of the Obergabelhorn descending via the Arbengrat and back to the Mountet Hut, also making the fondu party. In the Zermatt area one party made the Monte Rosa-Breithorn traverse and another climbed the Kin face of the Taschlhorn.

The weather north of the Rhône was not so kind, one team getting very wet on their approach to the Blumisalp Hut, another turning back on the way to the Aar bivouac. Although with a fresh covering of snow the Blumisalp traverse was considered out of condition, the weather cleared such that an enjoyable day was had on the Morgenhorn.

In addition to the high mountains there is good walking on the other side of the valley, the First-Schnige Platte trip was completed by a number of parties. In addition to rock climbing by the Gletscherschlucht, visits to the Engelhorner were assisted by Les Swindin's new Oberland guide (thanks for advance copy). However, the Kingspitz waits for a future visit.

Mike Pinney

CRETE MEET: MAY 1993

*Out in the dark blue sea there lies a land called Crete,
a rich and lovely land, washed by the waves on every side,
densely populated and boasting ninety cities.*

Homer (The Odyssey)

This was a well-attended meet with some 15 members and guests present over the three week period. Crete the largest of the Greek islands boasts a mountainous landscape, broken into three principal ranges, the White Mountains or Lefka Ori to the west (2452 m), Psiloritis or Ida (2456 m) in the centre and Mount Dikti (2148) to the east. The meet was centred on the small town of Rethimnon on the north coast, with its warren of narrow streets, old Venetian harbour and fortress it proved to be a very atmospheric and popular choice of venue.

Dragging ourselves from the diversions of the town a small party set out on the one and a half hour drive to the high plain of Omalos with a view to climbing Mount Gingilos (1664 m). The mountain's great rock buttresses tower over the entrance to the Samarian Gorge, reminiscent somewhat of the Buchaille Etive Mor In Glen Coe but on a much larger scale. The ascent proved interesting every step of the way with enormous rock formations, pillars and arches through which the path threaded a tortuous route to a high col. A rock scramble brought us to the summit but due to a local low cloud we were deprived of extensive views of the surrounding landscape.

Our second foray to the mountains was to Mount Ida (Psiloritis 2456 m) birthplace of Zeus and the highest on the island. Starting at 8 a.m. after a two hour drive the guidebook indicated a five hour ascent and three hour descent. With a slight detour a more interesting route was achieved enabling us to view the rock built igloo-like shelters used by the shepherds, spectacular views to the northwest over the plains around Rethimnon to the sea and taking in two lesser tops on the ridge before reaching the main summit at

about 3 o'clock. The guide book descent required the traverse of a steep extensive snowfield before entering a snow-filled gully descending at an easy angle for approximately 1.5 miles. This eliminated the need to descend over very broken and thorn scrub-covered hillside. Unrelenting sunshine made dehydration our main problem, and after a few miles over unmetalled roads we were only too glad to reach the first village taverna and down some liquid refreshment, before returning to Rethimnon as the sun set in a splash of red over the sea.

The Samarian Gorge, the longest (18 km) and deepest in Europe was the final expedition of the meet when a party of nine set off by coach at 7 a.m. reaching Omalos at 9 a.m. The entrance into the gorge was via a very steep zig-zag path which brought us down to the river bed, reduced to a small stream at this time of year. Half way down the gorge is the now deserted village of Samaria, which with its fresh water springs made a good stopping place for lunch. At its narrowest point the gorge was only two or three metres wide with cliffs towering thousands of feet above, making it necessary to pass by stepping stones in the river. Eventually the gorge opened out on to the south coast at Agia Roumeli where local tavernas were inundated by the hordes of people emanating from the gorge. A 90 minute ferry boat trip took us to Hora Sphakion where we re-embarked our coaches for a spectacular climb up and over the spinal mountain ridge to the north side of the island, reaching Rethimnon well after dark.

With other interesting days on the island this was a meet to remember, and with many mountains not visited a venue worth returning to at some future time.

Jim Strachan

SKYE MEET (15-22 MAY)

This year we managed to fill both the Broadford flats, a total of 13 plus three more in B&B. In the event, however, there were three late call-offs, so on the first day a slightly depleted party broke in two and set out for Camusnary with a right hook up part of Blaven, the others going for the Old Man of Storr in very blustery winds. Monday was rain on and off all day but this did not prevent parties going down to McLeod's Maidens at the southern-most point of Duirinish. This day brought our only really poor weather; later in the week there were showers, intermittent but not enough to stop a walk from Sligachan over the pass to Glenbrittle; a boat trip over to Raasay and an attempt on the flat-topped Dun Caan; a route pushed up the Coire na Ghrunnda to Sgurr na da Bheinn in mist with snow flurries; and an investigation with photography of the peculiar rock formations of the Quirang at the north end of the island.

Thursday was our best day, sun and cool breeze throughout. Foremost in achievement was a ridge traverse from Clach Glas to Blaven, arriving home for supper at 9 p.m.; another group was on Bruach na Frithe with the ladies walking the shores of Loch Brittle down to the south headland. The final day, Friday, was overcast, a pair going to the Aird of Sleat and others walking locally after the heavy day before. Departure day was of course bright and cool, perfect for the hills, but we had to go.

Ben Suter

HOUSE PARTIES IN THE ALPS

In *Officers and Gentlemen* Evelyn Waugh described an imperious hostess. Her grandparents had spent their lives at the court of Queen Victoria, so that "*Mrs Stitch grew up with the conviction that comfort was rather common. She enjoyed the sumptuous and, within certain incalculable limits, the profuse, but she did not like male guests to live soft.*" One of her victims, Tommy Blackhouse, said: 'I love Julia, but you have to be jolly well to stay with her.'

Likewise with Harry Archer – at least in the Alps. At the ABMSAC's chalet meets in Switzerland, which he and his late wife Valda began at the now vanished Pension Supersaxo in Saas Fee in 1975, the principles of the Edwardian house party have prevailed. Married couples, roughly in order of seniority, have had the best accommodation; unaccompanied women in similar order the next best; single men the pits. Seniority has not always coincided with age: the elderly indestructible have been deemed young, and have dossed accordingly. You have had to be jolly fit to stay with Harry.

You have been expected to contribute, too: sing, recite, mend plumbing, do animal impressions, play Trivial Pursuits, run for the bread, work the luggage winch, translate, jangle a keyboard, operate a free taxi service, stand in as relief cook, make light and improving conversation – all according to talent and equipment. Without exception and regardless of aptitude, you have been expected to wash up, usually primitively, up to the elbows in nail-blanching detergent, but if lucky playing scrum half to the titanic commercial dish-washing machine at Klosters (1989).

A concatenation of circumstances started it all off. The pound had declined against the Swiss franc, so that hotel holidays became prohibitively expensive. Guideless climbing was becoming standard practice, not just to save money, but also for the fun. Active alpinists with young families wanted arrangements more easy-going than could be got in hotels, but less spartan than under canvas. If members would muck in with the chores, Valda and her friends would see to the food, and Harry and his friends would see to the climbs. This was not to the exclusion of the invaluable and much loved Otto Stoller: members who preferred guided climbing continued to enjoy it, and those who could afford hotels sometimes used them; but from 1975 onwards the alpine meets developed as house parties – chalet parties, really – for guideless climbers.

In 1984 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the ABMSAC at Saas Fee, living in hotels and more or less ascending the Allalinhorn with or without guides in various stages of . . . er . . . excitement. That special meet was the last of its kind. It was, incidentally, the occasion of my own return to alpine climbing after a break of nearly twenty years. It confirmed my opinion, formed in the early 60's, that the ABMSAC was my club of amiable eccentrics. After it, Harry's house parties, eccentricities and all, became the norm.

Until 1984, they consisted of twenty or thirty members, and were sometimes not the "official" meet, but supplementary to it. Subsequently, we have had ten of Harry's meets in an unbroken sequence. Numbers peaked at about 100 at Saas Fee in 1988; but apart from the still homely affair at Fischbiel in 1985, attendances have been 80 or more each year, with up to 65 people in residence at any one time. That is an astonishing achievement in popular alpinism for a strictly amateur organisation.

It is not as though the climbing was soft: West Ridge of the Dent de Tsalion, traverse of the Bietschhorn, Verstancla Chaputschin, and so on. In 1988, 175 person-summits were achieved in a month, 125 of them by only 25 members in the first two weeks. Repeated mass assaults on the Pigne d' Arolla (1986 and 1991) and the Aiguille du Tour (1987) were enough to make your hair curl. The walk-ins rate as considerable treks with peaks en route.

One walk-out was the tour of Mont Blanc. Training walks have been such things as outings to the Petersgrat or picnics on the Hornli Ridge. The Association itself numbers fewer than 400, yet all those members and their families and friends have been able to enjoy the best of the Swiss alps year after year in congenial company. Eccentric or not, it is probably unique.

Prodigious feats or self-catering made it possible. True, at Champex in 1987 and at Klosters in 1989 meals were provided by the establishments, and at Saas Fee this year suppers will be taken at a hotel; but at all other meets since 1984 our friends and families have carried on the practice of Valda Archer. Ray Scott recruited his colleagues Margaret Attree and Rosemary Whitehead (now Mrs Westermeyer) from the administrative staff at the House of Lords, and they recruited their successors Lesley Minter and Sue Brown. Ray's daughter Michelle Kearsley joined in. I was happy to introduce Vera Atkinson and Jane Geoffroy to the Alps and to Alpine kitchens. Trevor Bent, representing sous-section Morges of the SAC, sommelier and Mr Fix-it in three languages, recruited himself. Just think of making hot dinners for more than 60 people, using ordinary domestic equipment. Come to that, just think of getting half a ton of supplies at a time up the one-track hairpins from Gampel to Fischbiel, or on the amateur-operated cable-way from the Haueten rough road up to haus Morgenrot above Zermatt. It was not for the faint-hearted or the inflexible. Nor were the financial hazards of an annual turnover of S Fr 50,000–60,000. But it did have its own distinctive frisson.

Not everyone fully understood what it was all about. On one occasion Harry, followed by several ropes who were content to be led, threading an unmarked way through jumbled crevasses on an unfamiliar glacier, was surprised to be reproached for not knowing the route. On another, a distinguished past County Captain of the Lancashire ladies' golf team and a fairly senior local government officer from the Midlands were designated – fortunately not in their hearing – "the kitchen staff". On yet another, evening visitors dispersing to their own chalets kindly gathered up their used coffee cups and presented them for washing up to a vice-president of the Association who lived on the premises and was quietly making his next day's sandwiches in the kitchen. But, they learned, of course. They learned.

I write as though Harry's meets already belong to the past. In fact they do. The 1994 meet at Saas Fee will be the last of its kind. Times change, and people with them. Death, marriage, age, and careers have dispersed the domestic team. Diversity of expectations among large numbers has made it increasingly difficult to co-ordinate the climbing. Only a few resorts in Switzerland can offer self-catering accommodation for our numbers, and we have visited all of them several times. Even self-catering itself, on a very large scale, may no longer be cost-effective. Organisers would quite like to have a bit of a holiday themselves. So a cycle of twenty meets at which room was always found for anyone who wanted to come, which began at Saas Fee and burgeoned at Saas Fee, will conclude at Saas Fee. Let's make it a good party, and not forget to say, what so many of us have said so many times: "Thanks, Harry."

George Watkins

FISCHBIEL MEET 1993

There was a need, I had decided, for some further energetic training before an attempt on the Jungfrau later in the week. Two many days had been mainly spent having a good lunch in Wiler or Kippel. Hopefully tomorrow Dave Brooker, Sam Coley and myself would burn off some of this excess eating by going to Blatten, taking the lift and then a fast walk to the Oberaletschutte at 2640 m, a small bite to eat there and then an equally, if not faster, descent.

Having persuaded Dave and Sam reluctantly to join me, the previous evening we looked at the map and decided that as Blatten was not far away a 9.30 am start would suffice. The next day we drove down to Wiler, turned left towards Fafleralp and soon arrived in Blatten where we parked the car. We noticed a very enticing hostelry as we strode through the village with our rucksacks and ice axes and decided that had the hour been later we would definitely have made a visit.

A quick tour of the village failed to discover any clue to the lift's whereabouts so Dave, the only German speaking Anglo-Saxon amongst us, approached two elderly Swiss locals. Sam and I looked on while a lengthy conversation took place, hands pointed directions and our map was carefully consulted. Dave returned displaying a wry smile. "We are on the wrong map and in the wrong Blatten", he said. "We should have gone to Brig and up to another Blatten!" As we walked back to the car we pondered on the reaction in the local hostelry when the two locals told our tale.

So off we shot down to the Rhone valley only to be trapped in a huge traffic jam at Visp where the Saas Fee/Zermatt traffic squeezes on to the main road. We were stopped for half an hour and it was nearly midday before we reached the correct Blatten. Soon the lift whisked us up to 2094 m and the sign read 30 minutes to the Belalp Hotel. In only 19 minutes we reached the hotel and we had actually gained 36 m in height – a really exhilarating start to the day!

As the time was 12.30 pm it was only proper that we should take advantage of the Belalp Hotel and lunch at a sensible hour. We soon settled down to a beer, then soup, wieneschnitzel with rosti, apfelstrudel and coffee; as well as another beer. We sat back as the sun shone and we looked at the breathtaking panorama. And then the thought of the intended walk up to the Oberaletschutte struck us. We had already made excellent time from the lift to the hotel but could we sustain the pace to our destination? We considered the situation carefully and calculated that there were probably another three hours to the hut, a two hour descent back to the hotel, a necessary drink (altitude dehydration), a wait for the lift, another traffic jam and the lengthy ascent from the Rhone valley to Fischbiel.

A quick decision had to be made and we reluctantly concluded that it would be irresponsible to continue the ascent as it would inevitably mean that we would be late for supper at Chalet Douni which could in turn mean facing an apoplectic Harry Archer and a steaming George Watkins. No, far better to know when to turn back than to recklessly continue our expedition into the late afternoon.

With heavy hearts we donned our rucksacks and prepared to leave. I sought out the hotel's conveniences and as I did so I was accosted by an irate proprietor who gibbered away in an agitated manner. I was wondering how on earth to decently explain in sign language that all I wanted to do was to relieve myself when Dave (the Anglo-Saxon who speaks German) intervened. Having then been allowed to do what I intended to do, Dave explained that the proprietor did not recognise me with a rucksack on my back and was saying that as he had seen no climbers eating that day I could not have been a customer. Dave's intervention was a blessed relief.

After this little contretemps we did actually do a rapid descent from the hotel down a zigzag path dropping about 100 m and then returned to the hotel again as fast as it was possible in our condition. We then started to return to the lift looking as if we had actually done some serious walking. As we walked we overtook two nuns (no, this is not a joke), who seeing our ice axes asked us where we had been. Dave looked them in the wimple and explained that we had set out with good intentions but, lieber Gott, unexpected complications meant we had got no further than the Belalp Hotel. I am sure that the holy sisters were impressed with his honesty because as we left they gave us their blessing – at least I think that is what it was in German.

The journey back to Fischbiel was uneventful and we arrived back in good time for supper. We did go to Grindelwald the next day and after bivouacing at the Jungfrauoch six of us, including John Edwards, Mark Eddowes and Ian Thompson, made good time ascending the Jungfrau reaching the summit (4158 m) at 9 a.m. Perhaps the good pace was the result of the exercise the previous day. Or did the holy sisters really give us a much needed blessing.

Edward Coales



“ON THE HOCKENHORN”

OR “WAS SHAKESPEARE A MEMBER OF MI5?”

“Wendell! That’s the second most stupid thing that you have said this Meet,” said Harry. He did not enlarge on what the first was.

It is a truism that climbing consists of putting one foot above another for an inordinate length of time. Granted the breath for it, conversation permits a pleasant passing of the hours. *George, a good man for a historical gambit, had been expounding on the fate of the unfortunate Duke of Clarence, allegedly drowned in a butt of malmsey; some have thought this a “Good Way to go” but in George’s view there had been an error in translation; the unlucky Yorkist peer – another George – had been ducked to his death in a less palatable liquid. (For further details contact 70 Scotswood Road, or better still go on a climb with George.)*

We climbed steadily on into gathering mist.

Several hundred feet higher, the talk veered towards general political skulduggery, and the fate of Marlowe, the Elizabethan dramatist, stabbed to death in a drunken brawl in a Deptford pub. Marlowe had been one of Walsingham’s men, possibly a double agent, or so some expert had said. Sir Francis Walsingham, had been Elizabeth’s spy catcher, had “set up” Mary Queen of Scots with the Babington Plot, had been the Renaissance equivalent of the Head of MI5.

Not only was Shakespeare Marlowe’s contemporary, but they had collaborated together over several of the Plays.

Snow filled gullies alternated with odd sheets of neve – visibility fell to about 50 yards

I warmed to the subject. Shakespeare’s patron was the Earl of Southampton, a crony of Essex, the Queen’s favourite. Essex went off to fight the Irish rebels, botched it, and secretly met their leader, Tyrone, at the *Yellow Ford (shades of dealing with the IRA – History doesn’t change that much)* and someone told Elizabeth. Essex rushed back unasked, was poorly received, tried to raise a revolt and went to the block. Southampton was let off with a fright and a caution. So, *where was Shakespeare in all this?*

“I don’t think HE was a member of MI5”, I said. By the time this gem had passed up the line to Harry, our leader, the negative had disappeared. *His train of thought, concentrated perhaps on the next victuals trip to the Rhone valley, the inability of ABMSAC members to perform ice-axe arrests, or merely on whether my crampons would fall off on this trip, was broken.*

His forthright comment was a conversation-stopper.

I did what I suspect Shakespeare did and kept my head down. I studied the upward progress of George’s boots; one slipped a trace and excited my interest. Momentarily it scabbled again, undermining a coffee-table sized boulder, which slid and bounced down. I picked myself up from a horizontal position on the opposite side of an adjacent rock rib, and listened to sundry noises, as it were, off-stage. I demanded, and in due course got, a bottle in recompense.

The mists closed in. “Could that be the Klein Hockenhorn; where was the pass?” Harry’s steps became uncertain; he stopped and after a while I went up to look. *With no shadowy*

figures in front, there was only a faintly pencilled line across the snow, possibly a cornice. Nothing else; nothing horizontal; nothing vertical; the snow only started where one’s boot touched it. Wallowing and staggering we had reached the point of total “white-out” – a land full of airiness and insubstantiality.

Shakespeare would have expressed it better.

Wendell Jones

“DESERT SONG” ON JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT,

STH CALIFORNIA

Joshua Tree – a vast desert of countless granite formations located in the High Desert of East Southern California. Situated approximately 140 miles east of Los Angeles, Joshua Tree offers hundreds of short routes of all grades from the American grade of 5.4 up to the extreme grades of 5.13 and 5.14. The climbs are on warm sun kissed rock where friction is the name of the game and protection is scarce on all but the crack lines.

Its “elevation of 4000” offers a congenial climate for the desert inhabitants – coyotes, rattlesnakes, squirrels, scorpions, as well as the in situ climbing population that tends to be mainly sited in the Hidden Valley Campground. The landscape is punctuated by a desert tree which gave the National Monument its name – the Joshua Tree, so described in the 19th century by the travelling Mormons who likened the upraised branches to the outstretched welcoming arms of the prophet Joshua. The scattered quartz monzonite boulders were formed by subterranean lava flows through the soft sandstone layers. Years of erosion have resulted in these rock formations. Storms in the desert being fierce, with lashing rain and harsh winds restoring life to the sun scorched land.

Within the Joshua Tree National Monument are a number of campgrounds that provide the basics of tables, benches, fire pits and pit toilets. There is no water available within the monument until the nearest town of Joshua Tree or Twenty-Nine Palms, which are approximately 15 miles away, depending on which campground you are based.

There is an entry fee into the National Monument and depending on the length of your stay you can buy a pass to suit your needs. GOLDEN EAGLE passes cost \$25 and permit unlimited entry and re-entry into any of the U.S. National Parks and monuments, and is valid for a period of 12 months. A “7” DAY pass is available for \$4 which allows unlimited entry into Joshua Tree Monument for the seven day duration of the pass.

I arrived at Joshua Tree early November 1991, my final destination following climbing in the Yosemite Valley, Utah’s Canyonlands and further north in Colorado, and marking the near end of three months of wonderful climbing in the Western United States of America. Travel had worked out cheap and relatively hassle free after teaming up with a French climber called Stephane, who purchased a car in the Yosemite Valley. This car, not completely on its last legs, managed to take us up through California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and return to the Southern half of California.

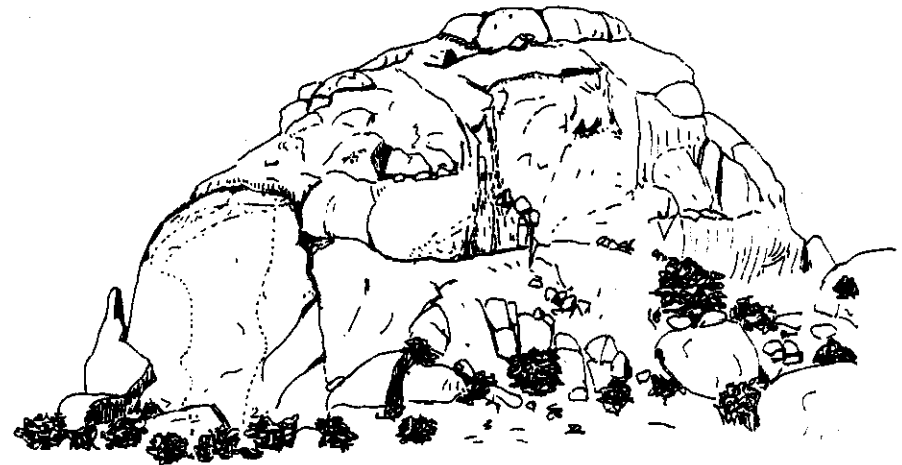
With neither of us knowing much about Joshua Tree we arrived on a Friday night to find that the Hidden Valley Campground appeared to be fully occupied. The notorious rangers system only allowing two vehicles and a maximum of six people per site, and morning and evening they proceeded to check up on it all as well. However patience and thorough searching resulted in me finding one car space and four people spaces which was more than enough for us as we were only two. It also turned out after initial introductions that I had met the other two occupants in the Yosemite Valley some four weeks earlier.

Following a cold starlit night we were keen to start climbing the next day, and our eagerness took us to an unfrequented rock within the campground. We however were unaware of this and both of us succeeded in mangling our knuckles on a vicious hand crack making the roughest of Peak Gritstone seem tame in comparison. Undeterred by the apparent masochism required to climb this crystalline rock we managed to find very pleasurable climbing elsewhere and the purchase of a guidebook indeed helped us in finding suitable routes for both of our standards.

On every day climbing was halted midweek when we proceeded to near YUCCA VALLEY for groceries, beer, and more importantly WATER from the fire station in Joshua Tree town which we stored in five gallon plastic containers. Washing wasn't really a problem, we didn't, not very often anyway! The desert atmosphere was very clean and dry so we hypothesised that any pathogenic organisms would be destroyed by the blazing overhead sun.

The thought of returning to wet Britain was looming and my final desert days were spent climbing to the full and absorbing as much tranquility as possible. I was awake at the crack of dawn on my final day, just as the howls of the coyote were diminishing and just as the sun was beginning to rise. I was alone whilst everyone else was still asleep, alone to climb my last desert route to the right of Papa Woolsey on the Blob. Being free with only my boots and chalk bag, totally absorbed in the fluidity and accuracy of movement, to sit at the top watching the morning sun rewarm the ground and re-awaken life for another desert day.

By Nikki Wallis
March 1992



Drawing of the Blob

A WALK ON THE MILD SIDE

Having already completed the Cumberland Way, Westmorland Way and the Furness Way, during the past two years, my wife Valerie and I decided to tackle a fourth long distance walk through the Lake District – the Cumbrian Way.

The walk compared favourably with the other three. Covering 70 miles of delightful Lakeland scenery the Cumbrian Way starts at Ulverston near to the shores of Morecambe Bay and finishes seven days and 70 miles later at Carlisle.

We had toyed with walking the West Highland Way but changed our minds and we were glad for it was seven days of superb and relatively easy walking in valleys, by rivers, over passes, up and across fells in hot sunshine with the exception of the final afternoon when our final walk into Carlisle was done in heavy rain.

Completing the walk now means we have covered 323 miles of long distance tracks in the Lakes.

The Cumberland Way is 80 miles in length, the Westmorland Way (98 miles) and the Furness Way (75 miles).

This year we walked in parts of Lakeland and on paths we had never visited before and after almost 30 years of walking in this delightful part of England, it was quite a change and most enjoyable.

Cumbria has an abundance of fine inns and we came across quite a number of them including the superb Britannia Inn at Elterwater. Throughout the walk we sampled good food and beer – 12 different brews – but the highlight of our walk was our stay at the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel which is to be found in a magnificent setting at the head of the Great Langdale Valley.

For 300 years the old hotel has offered a home to fell walkers and climbers. At breakfast we were presented at our table with a weather report for the day.

That day the sun shone as we walked up Mickleden, climbed the Stake Pass and walked down the Langstrath Valley to Borrowdale for a swim in the beck.

Planning for the walk began during the winter. Valerie, in between carrying out household chores and rehearsing for musical shows, managed to find time to plan the route and book accommodation well in advance. We had to do this because of Susie, our six year-old cocker spaniel, and what a time she had swimming in the many becks, streams, tarns and lakes every day.

We used bed and breakfast facilities and these proved to be excellent throughout.

Our journey to the Lake District began at Shipley where we caught a train to Carnforth and after an hour at Carnforth we continued our train journey to Ulverston where the walk commenced. That day we only did six miles to Lowick.

Day one: Ulverston to Lowick (6 miles) easy.

Day two: Lowick to Coniston (8 miles) moderate.

Day three: Coniston to Great Langdale (12 miles) moderate.

Day four: Great Langdale to Stonethwaite in Borrowdale (8 miles) moderate.

Day five: Stonethwaite to Keswick (8 miles) easy.

Day six: Keswick to Caldbeck by Skiddaw House and over High Pike, 2159 ft. (14 miles) strenuous.

Day seven: Caldbeck to Carlisle (14 miles) easy.

Barrie Pennett



Looking at Stake Pass from Laughdale

I have been turning out some bits and pieces from an old Everest file and in the course of doing so turned up this rather charming schoolboy's letter; charming because so delightfully dated. Even the heading of the letter: Empire Correspondence Scheme, brings back memories of the days of the British Raj in India. Perhaps they weren't such bad days, after all? But here it is, this letter from my young correspondent of March 10, 1938, in all its delightful phraseology.

Empire Correspondence Scheme
Troy Town Council-Boys' School,
Rochester, Kent
March 10 1938

To Dr. C. Warren, Member of 1938 Everest Expedition

Dear Sir

I am writing to wish you the best of luck in climbing Mount Everest. I am very pleased to hear you have been picked for this journey, and I am sure you will do your very best. We have learnt quite a lot about you and the six other men, in our lessons at school. I expect you will be very handy if any of the men fall sick. If you do reach the top you may find some slight traces of Irvine and Mallory, but I expect most of the traces have been covered over with snow, or long since rotted.

I think you are very plucky to go on such a dangerous errand. I was not at this school when our class wrote to Mr Hugh Ruttledge, but our master has still got his reply. The following poem I wrote, is number 1016 in the school collection.

Title: Mount Everest
Author: Montague Gumbley 1926

Verse 1

I hope Mr Tilman's mountaineers,
Will climb Mount Everest, without any fears,
To climb that mountain I shouldn't have pluck,
So I wish them all the best of luck.

Verse 2

I hope that they'll succeed this time,
And also the weather keeps quite fine;
Their journey will be over by June
Or else they'll be caught in the great monsoon.

Now I must bring my letter to a close.

A scholar of Troy-Town School.
Montague Gumbley
(Age 11 Years)

Every time I went to Mount Everest in the Thirties, we were "caught in the great monsoon"!

Charles Warren

Five of us trekked to the north-west Kangchenjunga Base Camp at Pang Pema. We left Heathrow on 23 October, arriving in Kathmandu late the following afternoon.

The trek proper started from Basantapur (7950 ft; 2423 m), the road-head north of Dharan and Hele, about midday on 26 October. We took 12½ days to reach Lhonak, our highest camp, the following day walking to Pang Pema (16,875 ft; 5143 m) and returning to Kambuchen. We retraced our footsteps to Basantapur in a further eight days. The "direct" route to Pang Pema deviates only a little from a straight line running roughly north-east from Basantapur. It starts on a ridge, rising to 9725 ft; 2964 m beyond Gupha Pokhari before descending to Dobhan on the Tamur river at 2150 ft; 655 m. Thereafter it follows the valleys of the Tamur and Ghunsa rivers, initially in the valley bottom, but later having on occasion to deviate high to the left (right bank of the river) to avoid the worst of the gorge. Because of the relatively gradual ascent, except, perhaps the last couple of days, acclimatisation is not a major problem on this route. As there are no passes into Tibet at the head of the valley the paths are little used, even by the locals. The route is described in considerable detail in the 1991 edition of Bezruchka's "Trekking in Nepal" if one pieces together the appropriate alternatives he offers.

As is so often the case returning by the same route was neither boring nor disappointing – there was so much to see and experience that it was rather a relief on the return trip to be able to take a better look at things and sights one had only glimpsed on the way in or missed altogether. Nevertheless there is an alternative route south from Ghunsa (two days below Pang Pema and the highest permanently occupied village in the valley) over the Lapsang pass (19,464 ft; 5932 m) or the more southerly Mirgin pass (15,250 ft; 4648 m) and then to the south of the Yalung Glacier, high to the east of the direct route, which would have added about three days to the trek.

Given time, reasonably settled weather (experience on this trek suggests that the weather in East Nepal is not so reliable as elsewhere) and appropriate fitness and mountaineering skills, there is considerable scope for variations and extensions on the "standard" routes, notwithstanding the enormous scale of the country. Third Pole Trekking, allows a more realistic 25 days for what we accomplished in 22 days, which implies a Heathrow to Heathrow time of about five weeks. Bezruchka says that at least three and a half weeks on the trail are needed to link the direct route with the alternative route via the Mirgin La "through four to five weeks are preferable", or six weeks Heathrow to Heathrow. If I was to go to the region again I would give myself at least eight weeks, spending the extra time around Pang Pema and Lhonak and exploring the approaches to the Yalung Glacier.

One can save perhaps a week by flying into Taplejung air strip, but this can be unreliable because of the prevailing rather cloudy conditions. We met a trekker whose pilot had had to make eight passes to land, by which time the passengers were verging on hysteria! We had private transport to Basantapur, a very bumpy twenty-two hour drive from Kathmandu. In addition to greater reliability, this had the advantage of being able to take with us camping staff hand-picked from the large numbers offering themselves for work in Kathmandu and known to the Sirdar. It also gave us the opportunity to see an unexpected aspect of the topography of Nepal – the fen-like rice fields of the Terai. Those contemplating travelling through the Terai will be pleased to know that the road is being resurfaced.

The Kangchenjunga area is attractive mainly because it was only opened for trekking in 1988. This, its remoteness, the great distances and the hard work involved, mean that so far the impact of tourism is minimal. There are very few tea houses or lodges, and what there are are very rough and ready. The last place with a shop of any pretensions is at

Chirwa, some seven days short of Pang Pema, so a fully supported tented trek is essential, except perhaps for the young, strong and very fit.

So what impressions remain after four weeks crowded with impressions? There was the first night in Basantapur with its howling dogs, and from four in the morning the howling buses as they summoned would-be passengers from whatever sleep the dogs had left them. The magical morning a day later at Chowki when we woke to Makalu and the Everest massif floating high in the clear blue sky and a similar sighting of Kanchenjunga, and especially Janu, another day later. There were the smart Rai and Limbu houses and the cheerfully inquisitive children who lived in them and were enjoying the high swings especially erected for the Desain festival and surrounded us at every halt. Then there were lots of small green but very sweet oranges straight away from the tree. Getting loosely involved when a crowd of drunks from a rival hamlet invaded the one where we were camping. Our first meeting with the broiling, boiling Tamur river at Dobhan which together with the Ghunsa Khola was to be our more or less constant companion for much of the rest of the trek. The policeman with a bloody big toe at Dobhan having lost the nail while chasing two murderers. Trails frequently destroyed by the unusually severe monsoon, obliging us to boulder-hop for miles in the margins of the river. The bamboo fish trap and the cider apple mill and the flimsy temporary bamboo bridges flung across the roaring river. The delightful waterfall, small when compared with the many others we saw pouring out of the hung valleys into the main gorge, where a German trekker had fallen off the trail to his death just a few days before. The tree-size poinsettias, bourganvillia, mimosa and cotoneaster, especially the dwarf alpine sort just a couple of inches high and clinging skin-tight to the rocks. The sustained mild exposure approaching Amjilassa as the path negotiated steep open slopes 2000 feet and more above the gorge bottom for hours on end and the airy spaciousness of it all. The Tibetan settlement of Gyalpa with its wooden gompa (Buddhist temple) its dark interior mysteriously quietening, with its three generations of monks and where we lit fourteen butter-lamps in honour of the Presence there and for our past and future good fortune. Guide Dendi Sherpa forever humming his catchy tune. Kaje Bau the immensely strong kitchen porter, though there was little enough of him, cheerfully washing up three times a day in glacier-melt. Fleeting glimpses of one or more of Kanchenjunga's peaks, blue-white against the blue sky – ever closer, yet ever remote. The porter discharged from a group ahead staggering breathlessly into our camp with symptoms of acute mountain sickness and pneumonia (he recovered). Arriving at bitterly cold Kambuchen and thankfully drinking large mugs of salt tea in the self-styled "hotel" – just a large dry-stone hut with a small central open fire and stone sleeping benches around and a potato pit outside. The wide sandy plain of the old lake bed at Lhonak surrounded by rocky mountains rising straight from it, now autumn grazing for five hundred yaks, and temporary tented home to the extremely hardy people who tend them. Our extremely hardy porters who survived, irrepressibly cheerfully, a night in the open there at – 18 degrees C. The wide open valley on the last leg to Pang Pema with the huge debris covered Kangchenjunga glacier down the steep slopes of the lateral moraine to our right, backed by the 6000 ft snow and rock wall and shapely peak of Chang Himal. Finally, the vast icy northern flanks of Kangchenjunga itself appearing and disappearing through veils of thin cloud.

The Kathmandu valley was another world, and the days spent viewing its wonders, another story.

We were looked after very well throughout our stay in Nepal by Third Pole Treks and Expeditions. The total cost per head, including international flights, trekking insurance and incidental trekking expenses, but excluding most meals in Kathmandu, was about £1550 – or about £1400 for comparison with UK agency prices.

So where does this trek fit in with the rest? Like all the great Himalayan treks it has tremendous diversity – of scenery, of route and of people. This trek becomes unique above

Ghunsa. There is a strong feeling of having arrived when arriving there. Beyond it is wild and it is remote, yet plenty of hardy people live there for at least part of the year; and in a *curious way this ages-long association with people has impressed itself on the landscape* – one never feels alone. The trek was not remarkable for views of the high peaks. This may be because of the prevailing rather cloudy conditions, at least while we were there, but I suspect is rather more because the trail for the most part was within the confines of a massive gorge. But one does have fleeting glimpses of remote white summits, and perhaps appreciates them more for their coyness. The "direct" valley route has its moments though. Bezruchka describes the approach to Amjilassa as follows: "The trail . . . then follows one of the steepest valleys you'll find an open trail on in Nepal. Don't let your mind wander from your feet and sense of balance. The exposure is fierce, and slides you traverse remind you that active erosion is taking place". This goes on for about four hours, but it is not so bad as Bezruchka makes out. In fact one soon becomes accustomed to the airy sensation and begins to appreciate the amazing spaciousness of it all.

From this limited experience I think that trekking in the Kangchenjunga region is primarily for the connoisseur – one who has already learnt to appreciate the finer points of the Nepal Himalaya in more obvious areas, such as on the popular trekking routes, and who seeks to enjoy them without distraction and at leisure. Newcomers should not be deterred, though, if they can readily afford the time, but there is the possibility that they might be put off by the austerity of the remoter parts, especially if they are not fairly fit and so have to concentrate too much on coping with the terrain.

John Chapman

SAAS FEE 1984

For the A.B.M. 1984 means our 75th anniversary. It has been said that some newer members of the association would welcome a reminiscent essay concerning the celebration of that notable event, which was reported in the 1985 *Journal* at greater length than is appropriate here. Not everyone will have a copy of that issue. It is unlikely that the writer of the article will have fresh thoughts but perhaps some things may be put more bluntly as we see the funny side.

The A.B.M. decided to meet at Saas Fee and in particular at the Britannia Hut, which we built and presented to the S.A.C. in 1912. A plan was prepared by a sub-committee which was satisfied to remain anonymous. We soon realised that we could not do everything from London and that we needed help. Happily the Swiss National Tourist Office joined in from the beginning and the S.A.C. did a great deal on the spot. Despite the modesty of the sub-committee, mention must be made of the massive advance contributions of our president Peter Ledebor and of Albert Kunz of the S.N.T.O. When the day came our vice-president Harry Archer was equally active.

We had, daringly as we thought, expressed the hope that 75 might attend. In the event there were 126 of us for the fortnight, with many more joining in the festivities from time to time. This sometimes led to overcrowding, which was taken in good spirit.

The meet was preceded by a walk in led as usual by Paul French, who has led us so often in the outdoor part of our activities (see obituary in this issue). The star event was to be a mass ascent of the Allalinhorn in 1909 costume and equipment. Numerous banquets and other events were planned but not all could be fitted in.

Limitations were imposed by the circumstance that, even at a great anniversary, there are only 24 hours in a day, and we were reminded that man proposes but God may dispose with inclement weather. We had only a short spell of storm but it occurred at a most unfortunate time. For the rest of our stay it was beautiful. Whilst our activities were curtailed at a vital time, it was probably better to have a too full programme than a scanty one.

The first official event was the ascent to the Britannia Hut on Monday 20 August. Next day a party of more than 40, led by Lord John Hunt, crossed the Allalin Pass to Zermatt. Another party travelled by special bus and train. By someone's happy thought the gymnasium was placed at our disposal for washing and dressing. There was a service at the English Church, where the Bishop of Dunwich gave the address and our member Fred Jenkins read the lesson. Then a reception in the garden of the Hotel Mont Cervin, where Daniel Lauber and Constant Cachin spoke, with Lord Hunt and Peter Ledebor replying.

Official events resumed on Friday 24 August with the great centrepiece. We put on our 1909 climbing clothes to visit the Britannia Hut and ascend the Allalinhorn. Few of us can have found such clothes in our wardrobes and hours must have been put in visiting second-hand shops. Some had garments made by tailors and some made their own. The Swiss Army added to the authenticity by providing old hemp ropes. The results were wonderful. My favourite was what I called the Four Ladies unnamed but memory says Esmée Speakman, Elizabeth Parry, Babs Solari and Joan Whyte. (See 1987 *Journal* for obituary of M-E Solari.) The prize for colour must have gone to the Swiss, but one wondered, perhaps unworthily, whether they belonged more to 'Three Men In A Boat' than to the Alps. There was little opportunity for a fancy dress parade at Saas Fee or on arrival of the hut, which was regrettable as it turned out that there was no further opportunity for a catwalk display. Most of us used mechanical transport to approach the hut but there was still the glacier crossing.

Among those reaching the hut was Noel Odell then 94 years old by my reckoning. (See *Obituary, Journal* 1988. Noel Odell had a wonderful climbing career. He is best remembered for Everest 1924, when he put up one of the toughest mountaineering feats ever, in his solo attempts to trace Mallory and Irvine.)

People continued to arrive at the hut until it was crammed full and after that in increasing numbers. Still, we were glad to be indoors, as snow was falling. Some kind soul had seen to it that beds were reserved for the British party. We re-enacted by candlelight the first dinner in the Britannia Hut in 1912, with the same menu, which was plain tuck, increasing our respect for the pioneers. Sadly with the dim light and the crowding, we could not get round to inspect the costumes: indeed, once seated, we could not get out. The singers, players, entertainers, press, television and Swiss Army all had to stand up. They kept themselves in good humour by performing continuously until it was time to get up. This was an occasion of great jollity but some of the weaker ones amongst us could have used more sleep than half an hour we got before reveille. This was signalled by electronic music far outdoing in volume the players and singers earlier. We got up and it is to be hoped that those then standing managed to lie down.

The climbing party set off for the Allalinhorn at 2.30, intending to descend to the Mittelallalinhorn in time for a second breakfast at 9.00. This might have been done in favourable weather but we were not so blessed and for those who had obligations down below it was not possible. A number of Swiss climbers and eight A.B.M. members, who were either quick or who put first things first, completed the ascent and declared it enjoyable. A second group ascended later to join the climbers at the Mittelallin, where breakfast was provided by the Valais Tourist Office. We had no time for the ski demonstration and the visit to the Metro Alpin but the other events took place as planned, in worsening weather. We had drinks provided by the Saas communities, then the snow began to fall and we were mostly caught without waterproofs. The show went on. There were singers, yodellers and instrumentalists. Hans Wyer gave a welcoming speech and Lord Hunt replied. Benjamin Buhmann unveiled the "steinmannli" holding the treasure box containing the document bearing the signatures of guests and other symbolic items. Then Holy Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Sion and the Bishop of St Albans. These brave souls completed the ceremonies in full, undeterred by the falling snow despite their lack of waterproofs. Weaker souls huddled less bravely. One German speaker referred inadvertently to the Holy Mess, which struck a chord with the rest of us. Luncheon was provided by the community of Saas Fee served in army billycans which we kept as souvenirs.

We were forced indoors by the worsening weather. André Roch unveiled a plaque and our President presented a Lake District picture painted for the occasion by Sid Prentice.

Then down to Saas Fee for the Grand Procession. The snow gave way to heavy rain and the beautiful people had to cover their fancy dress. The Swiss carried on as if nothing were amiss providing bands in finery, ladies in traditional dress, the fire engine, a wood chopping display and all manner of other things. We were forced indoors for a celebratory drink and the Mountaineering Festival, with yodelling, horn blowing, bands playing and so on to a late hour. The final formal event was a grand midday banquet, attended by all manner of Ambassadors, SAC Presidents and representatives of guides, the Swiss Tourist Bureau, church, press, A.C. and B.M.C. Hermann Mitz presented a mounted crystal and Louis Pictet gave a silver tankard.

We had good weather after this, and everyone climbed or walked. Notable among the social events was an organ recital by Lady Susi Jeans (*Obituary, Journal* 1993. Susi was considered by many to be the finest of all organists in the years preceding the war. She was an able climber and a charming companion.) Another musical event was a brief piano recital by Harold Flook.

Since 1985 other people involved in events then have sadly died. Journals containing relevant obituaries include 1986 Cicely Williams, 1989 Donald Clarke, 1991 Maurice Bennett, 1991 Dorothea Lady Gravina, 1992 David Riddell and Paul French this edition.

S. M. Freeman

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES 1993

Peter Farrington

A year of high hopes and disappointments starting in January when rising temperatures and soft snow foiled an attempt with Tony Perrons to reach the Susanfe Hut from Champéry. The following day strong winds and rain halted an alternative approach to the Haut Savoie over the Col de Cou. We retreated to the Jura where use of a hut, high on La Raculet, allowed some damp walking. It was said to be the warmest January this century in Geneva which the sight of a gentian in bloom below the Cret de la Neige seemed to confirm.

In early June rain again spoiled reunion plans with my first alpine partner, Dennis Brown, (Blumisalhorn, 1963 when Bert Bourne kindly took us under his wing and introduced me to the ABMSAC.) to traverse the Cuillin Ridge. A quick scramble up the Sgurr Eader nan Choire ridge and over Sgurr a Ghreadaidh and Sgurr a Mhaidaidh preceded an unpleasant gale and rain lashed midnight descent from an intended bivouac in Coire a Ghrunnda. Better weather was found further south where we traversed Ben Nevis via the Carn Mor Dearg Arete and climbed Great Ridge Direct on Garbh. Bheinm, Ard gour.

A few weeks later I took time out from a family holiday on Lefkas to bike/walk up its highest hill, Stavrota, 1158 m, which provided fine views of the Ionian islands and some interesting wildlife – snakes, scorpions, lizards and jackals. A couple of other "alpine" starts resulted in pleasant scrambles up limestone ridges above Perigiali; the main problem being access through an impenetrable barrier of prickly bushes, the answer lying in a hidden dry stream bed which rose for 1000 feet like a canopied staircase.

In mid-September I made a solo trip up from Brig via Rosswald and Rothwald to the Monte Leone Hut where the Section Sommartel made me most welcome at their 100th anniversary celebrations. After descending to Simplonpass I continued over the Bistinepass to the Nanztal and on again to Visperterminen. A third day of good weather encouraged a walk up to the Binntal Hut with D.A.V. friend Stephen Hennecke. Plans to cross the Albrunpass into Italy next morning were spoiled by an impressive storm which forced a retreat through torrential rain back to Brig. The following day, for no other reason than it being my 50th birthday, we walked up a snow plastered Augsbordhorn, 2972 m, from Moosalp in wind, mist and rain. After another night of heavy rain and with no sign of conditions improving I decided to leave Brig early, fortunately so as a few hours later it was cut off when La Saltine overflowed filling the town with up to ten feet of water and rubble.

Between the above mentioned trips I spent many enjoyable days walking and running on the hills of Islay and Jura which enabled me to record my best time in the Bens of Jura Fell Race and compete in the K.I.M.M. on the Lowther Hills in October.

R. Wendell Jones

Once more the year started with Brooke Midgley's Northern Dinner Meet, excellently run, with a great meeting of the clans before the meal, and the obligatory ascent of Helvellyn.

In tepid imitation of our worthy Secretary, "Hundred Mile Hugh" Romer, I joined the Long Distance Walkers' Association, and discovered at the cost of sore shins and painful heels just how far and how fast its members walk. One of these forays covered some 26 miles and 6,000 feet of ascent in the Black Mountains, with a compulsory kit inspection half way round; I got back to Crickhowell before everyone else had gone home. Notwithstanding all this training I still came last in the ABMSAC Patterdale Marathon.

An idyllic three weeks was spent at Fischbiel, gazing across the valley at the Bietschhorn, on perhaps the last of Harry's self-catering meets – the end of an era? Only once did I breach the headwall cresting the South side of the Lotschental.

Our main family holiday to "Green Spain" took in the Picos de Europa, "like the Dolomites, but steeper", well worth visiting for their fantastic limestone gorges. A longish walk took me through one of these, the Giganta de Cares, to Cain and back again; another to the peak-flanked plateau above Fuente De, with its still substantial snow covering in early June. One interesting feature was the prevalence of curious grassy valleys, from which all routes led upwards, larger versions of the sump holes of South Wales; herds of cattle grazed among them. Features to watch were the bulls which ranged free in the herds, and the mists which would sweep in from the Bay of Biscay and in an hour or so change blue sky to horrendous storm. Close by was the shrine of Covadonga, where the half mythical Pelayo turned back the Morrish conquest in the eighth century.

The climbing year closed with a trip to the Borders to see my younger son Michael, who came on the 87 and 88 Alpine Meets. This time we lounged up the Eildon Hills, not very high, but a good viewpoint.

Mike Pinney

The weather pre Alps seemed far from kind with walking being the order of the day for most visits to North Wales and the Lake District. However, this did include the Welsh 3's and Wendell's Patterdale-Rosthwaite-Patterdale 24 miler! The conditions in the SW were not much kinder, but good days at Wintour's Leap and Guillemot Ledge (Swanage).

I was somewhat luckier with my timing at Grindelwald. Although we got completely soaked on our walk up to the Gleckstein Hut (trying to convince ourselves that the training and acclimatisation must be doing us good and, somewhat tongue in cheek, discussing the breakfast arrangements for the morning), the precipitation stopped overnight. The cloud cleared as we reached the Wetterstadel and after breaking through the summit cornice we were rewarded with excellent views from the Wetterhorn. I had not climbed from the Lauterbrunnen valley and thus the ascent to the Mutthorn Hut at the head of the valley and the Breithorn was inviting. As we strayed under the Tschingelhorn the mist cleared and we climbed the west ridge, possibly the first ascent of the season.

Having run out of time in 91, attempting the traverse from the Lauteraarhorn, I had an unsettled score with the Schreckhorn, my last Oberland 4000er. Although the SW ridge was in good condition the Lauteraagrät had not cleared of snow, so the traverse must await a future visit. I had one remaining 4000er in Valais, the Obergabelhorn. I was attracted to the approach from Zinal, visited in my first Alpine Season. The Mountet Hut is in a magnificent situation and although the hut was crowded it was disappointing how few were climbing the big mountains. After a good overnight frost the NW ridge was in good condition. We then descended the Arbengrät, traversing Mont Durand and then back to the hut.

Post Alps, in spite of a generally wet autumn, my luck continued. Ahead of the queue with Kinkyboots followed by Pink Void then Pickpocket and Lost Horizon provided an excellent day at Baggy Point. The following weekend, Swanage Boulder Ruckle included Finale Groove. The following Cornwall, with a first visit to Kenidjack and Gneiss Gnome, Saxon and In The Gallery, all to be recommended. Later in the Autumn I actually enjoyed a visit to Portland, a place I previously generally avoided, sampling its popular "sports" climbs for the first time!

Mike Goodyer

The year ended as it started – up in Fort William. On New Year's Eve, Terry Trundley (Harrogate Mountain Club) and I went up to the Achintee bunkhouse and met other members of our club. We had plans to climb on the Ben on New Year's Day and were in bed by 10 p.m. After an early breakfast we went up to the Halfway Lochan. The cloud was low and as daylight broke the sleet started. The path around the front of Castle Ridge was frozen solid and hard work. We made our way up to the start of Waterfall Gully as the sleet gave way to rain. With ice blocks falling down the route out of the clouds above we gave up our attempt and retreated to the CIC hut for a second breakfast. The bad weather continued and we returned home. The rest of the winter was a little better. Once again Ed Bramley, Andy Burton and I spent a long weekend at the Patterdale Hut over the Northern Dinner meet weekend. The weather was mixed but we had enjoyable walks in Buttermere over High Stile, in Grasmere over Helm Crag, over the Helvellyn range and after an excellent dinner over Place Fell.

In mid March I went skiing in Val d'Iseve with Chris Pugh and Chris Wilson from the Harrogate Mountain Club. This year we took our ice climbing gear with us. After three days' skiing Chris Pugh and I took a morning off to go climbing. On the drive up the valley we had noticed a large icy cascade just above the road. So after a leisurely breakfast we caught the ski bus to the edge of town and waited for 10 minutes to the bottom of the cascade. The rock on the left side of the cascade was bolted at the main belay points. Only in France can you find this safe ice climbing! The route was 300 m high and about grade 3/4. The ice was as hard as concrete, a contrast to Scotland at New Year. The climb was a delight with good views, sun and blue sky. The easiest and quickest way off was to rappel, using the bott belays, to the road. We were back on the pistes in the afternoon.

During the early spring and summer I went out to the Dales and the Lakes with the family. My son is enjoying his walking even more this year, providing there is a lot of interest and a picnic is included. We had trips to Ingleborough, Askrigg Waterfalls, How Stean Gorge in Nidderdale, Longhrigg Terrace at Grasmere, Aira Force and Derwentwater. I also had my first ever trip on the steamer on Ullswater.

My rock climbing activities were limited this year and included the usual trips to Brimham, Almscliff, Spofforth, Rylstone and Ilkley. I spent an abortive Spring Bank Holiday weekend driving to Pembroke and back in poor weather for a morning's climbing before the weather broke again.

The poor weather seems to have been a feature of this year. I was to be unlucky again at the start of July. Terry Trundley and I competed in the Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon, based this year in the Howgills. We entered the A class and the two day course took us from Sedburgh over the Howgills for 40 miles and 11,000 feet of ascent. The two days were spent navigating around the hills in thick mist, wind and rain.

The bad weather followed us to the Alps. At the end of July Terry Trundley and I joined the ABM camping meet at Grindelwald, organised by Mike Pinney. We travelled via Basle, where we attended Terry's cousin's wedding and reception. An enjoyable experience. We arrived at the campsite amid storm clouds and met the unusual campsite manager. At least we did not have to move our tents, unlike some others. This was Terry's first visit to the Alps and the other members made him feel very welcome. Terry's aim was to climb a 4000 m peak and to do some alpine rock climbing. Our first peak was the Wetterhorn – the normal route is quite unexciting and a bit of a let down. However, on the Wetterhorn we saw the profile of the Schreckhorn and Terry decided this would be his 4000 m peak. The thought of walking in deep snow and staying in crowded huts did not appeal so a more remote rock peak was ideal. After a pleasant walk up to the hut the weather broke and we had a night and day of sleet, rain and high winds. We spent a day at the hut with two Danish and two Dutch climbers and a very unusual hut guardian. Everybody who visited

the hut from the meet have a story to tell about the guardian. We climbed the Schreckhorn on Swiss National Day and were the first British climbers on the mountain that summer. The weather had been so bad earlier in the summer that the first summer ascent was only four days before. In perfect weather we climbed the mountain with the Dutch climbers and reached the summit at 1 p.m. Rappelling and down climbing was tediously slow and we were still above the bergscrund at nightfall. The glacier was eventually reached and was knee deep in soft snow after the day's sun. After getting lost on the "Gaag" we waited on the scree until first light and returned to the hut at 6 a.m. A total of 26 hours. A fantastic day out! We also climbed on the limestone cliffs of the Engelhörner above Resenlauri. Excellent climbing on good safe routes. All we need now is for the German guidebook to be translated. A visit to this area is a must for anybody in the Bernese Oberland. There is ample camping in the area around the hut and the walk in is only two hours.

I returned to Switzerland later in the summer for a family holiday in Weggis on Lake Lucerne and Grindelwald. We had several excellent days walking in the Engelberg area and on the Rigi. Robert enjoyed the steamer rides and the ice creams. In Grindelwald the weather was mixed – bad and awful. Walks to Steiregg, around Trummelback, Alpigen and Ballenberg salvaged a wet week.

After the summer fun the autumn arrived with the KIMM in Scotland. Terry Trundle and I completed in the B class. On this mountain marathon the two days were perfect weather and good running conditions. The good weather remained for the Alpine Reunion Meet in the lakes. I enjoyed a good walk with Mike Pinney and Dave Christmas over High Street returning via Red Screes and Hart Crag. We arrived back at the hut in dark in time for the fireworks and the slide show. It was good to see everybody again. In mid November the Harrogate Mountain Club returned to Torver for the Annual Dinner. The weather was good again as we walked over St Sunday Crag and Fairfield. A trip to Hodge Close completed the weekend. At the end of November I met Ed Bramley and Andy Burton in Edale for a walk. There was fresh snow on Kinderscout. The weather had returned to the usual and we walked to the Downfall in the mist for a chilly lunch stop.

To round the year off I returned to Scotland for New Year's Eve. This year there was too much wet snow for climbing so we had some enjoyable skiing at Aonach Mori. The party at the Fort William Rugby Club completed another enjoyable year.

Barrie Pennett

Earlier in the year we spent a week at a small village on the Yorkshire Moors and then in October we visited the Lake District, staying at Knipe near Bampton Grange. One day we did two short walks taking in Knipescar (1118 ft) and Heughscar (1231 ft). Another day we did the Naddle Horseshoe visiting Scalebarrow Knott (1109 ft), Harper Hills (1358 ft), Hare Shaw (1639 ft) and Hugh's Laites Pike (1390 ft). A walk taking in Penrith Beacon (937 ft) was undertaken on a wet morning. On 21 October it was bitterly cold and breezy but we decided to climb Loadpot Hill (2201 ft) via the Pen. We then walked along the ridge to Wether Hill (2210 ft).

On 22 October we drove into Swindale where we parked the car and then walked along the Old Corpse Road to Selside Pike (2142 ft). Had lunch at the cairn before walking to Artlecrag Pike (2209 ft) and Branstree (2333 ft). From Branstree we made our way down to the Mosedale Valley where we returned to Swindale in deplorable conditions underfoot. For something like three miles we walked through what seemed to be endless bog.

On other occasions throughout the year we have walked in Wharfedale and Nidderdale and paid two visits to Beamsley Beacon, a superb view point on the moors above Beamsley and looking towards Bolton Abbey.

BOOK REVIEW

One Foot in Snowdonia Bob Allen, Michael Joseph 1993, pp.228. Hardback £14.99.

This book describes some 100 walks and scrambles, almost all high level, almost all within the confines of the Snowdonia National Park. The descriptions are clear and accurate. There are small scale sketch maps which need to be supplemented by 25,000 or 50,000 Ordnance Survey maps (recommended for each area). I walked three routes I did not know and followed them easily; I read through a much larger number which I do know and found little to quarrel with. Indeed the author often suggests variations and improvements which commend themselves to me. He has a pleasant style and his judgements and advice are sensible. There are many photographs, a good number taken in winter, which add greatly to the appeal of the book.

One or two minor details could do with correction or improvement in a future edition (which I feel sure will be produced). On p.31 the route up Arenig Fawr should be by the east, not the west, ridge. On p.76 Rhyd Ddu is mis-spelt. Rather more explicit directions for the start of the Heather Terrace from the South Ridge of Tryfan would be desirable (p.126); it is easy for the uninitiated to miss it following the scree slope into Cwm Tryfan. The Snowdon Horseshoe route (9.16) is missed off the table on p.178.

My only major criticism of the book is that it is scarcely one to be carrying round in one's rucksack at 10" x 7" and not far off 2 lbs weight, certainly not one to be consulted in a Welsh downpour. Users will have to devise their own ways of making the information in it portable and weatherproof.

Nonetheless I would strongly recommend it as a guide for the hill walker and scrambler in North Wales.

James Bogle

OBITUARIES

Paul French

Paul French enjoyed being in the mountains; his enthusiasm coupled to his wide knowledge was infectious and an inspiration to those with whom he climbed. His "walk-ins" to the Alpine Meets were a combination of impeccable transport arrangements, hospitable accommodation and interesting, usually out of the way, places; these tours ended not too far from the Meet venue. All this and Paul's enthusiasm and knowledge made each "walk-in" a memorable occasion.

For some 10 years he ran the summer Alpine Meets, applying, with the assistance of Otto Stoiler, a measure of organisation which not only made the climbs more enjoyable but enabled more demanding routes to be undertaken successfully even with large parties.

He climbed many, many mountains but made light of it. Twenty six years after his ascent of the Bietschorn, and shortly before his death, Paul came again to the Lotschental for what were to be his last days in the mountains, and how much he enjoyed it.

In all these activities Virginia was Paul's constant companion and together they made an indelible impression on the ABMSAC and on those who knew him well. He made our activities more enjoyable and worthwhile than they would otherwise have been. He will be sorely missed.

Harry Archer

Margaret Attree

Margaret Attree was one of those recruited from the Staff of the House of Lords to assist in the running of the summer Alpine Meets. She mastered the problem of catering for large numbers of hungry climbers and walkers, using inadequate equipment and novel supplies. Calm in emergencies, such as twenty more for supper, tolerant of the eccentricities of the Meet and Members and helpful to all, Margaret soon became a vital part of each Meet and we were very grateful for her work. But this was not all, for Margaret enjoyed the Meets and made many friends; she joined the ABMSAC and when she felt that she could no longer do the work she liked to come and be with us. This year she was looking forward to coming to the Lotschental and when she decided that it was not possible, it was clear that she was very ill. A great loss – we will miss her and remember her.

Harry Archer

Sir Jack Longland

Sir Jack Longland died on November 29 1993 aged 88. Lengthy obituaries appeared in the national press at the time and no doubt the A.C. will do him justice. He was a member of the A.B.M. until 1971. I do not recall seeing him on outdoor meets, but we enjoyed his company at Northern dinners at Edale, when we heard some of his anecdotes, of which he was a past master. One story remains in my memory. In the 1930s he was considered unacceptable by the A.C. despite his great fame as a mountaineer. (This difficulty was evidently cleared up later, as he went on to become President). His offence, he told us, was that he had been heard to utter the then naughty word "crampons". In those early days gentlemen employed peasants, who spent the winter chopping logs. They developed great skill and stamina in the art of using an axe and could cut steps all day long. Crampons made this skill superfluous and climbers who used them were in effect taking the bread from their mouths and were thus not suitable companions for mountaineering gentlemen.

S.M. Freeman

Syd Prentice

Some members may not know that Syd Prentice was the first warden of the George Starkey Hut, which was most appropriate since he joined the Association in 1959 and climbed extensively in Switzerland for eight years. A most careful and conscientious worker, he contributed greatly to the setting up stage of the Hut. It is largely due to his efforts with his local contacts that we have the right type of trees surrounding the car park and the quality of Lakeland slate in the fireplace.

After his retirement as a dentist in 1972 he devoted much of his time to painting. An accomplished watercolour artist, he was a founder member of the Ambleside Art Society and became its President in 1979. He exhibited widely in the Lake District and had some influence on Jill Aldersley, notable among Lakeland artists. He designed the drawing on the booking card for the Hut, and it was his painting of the view from there that we presented to the Britannia Hut at our 75th anniversary celebrations in 1984.

He was still painting at 82 shortly before his death in January this year, which was reported prominently in the Westmorland Gazette. Unduly modest, he was much liked and he will be widely missed as a man of great talent.

Peter Ledeboer

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Rembrandt Hotel, South Kensington, London, on Saturday 13th November 1993.

The President was in the chair with 21 members present.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Miss M. Porteous, Lord Hunt, B.L. Richards, J.S. Whyte, R.W. Jones, W.B. Midgley, A. Lock and B.F. Dolling.
2. The Minutes of the 1992 AGM as published in the journal were accepted. There were no matters arising.
3. The President welcomed M. Milz, Past President of the Central Committee of the SAC, and Mme Milz, and expressed his pleasure that they were able to attend this meeting of the ABMSAC.
4. Election of Officers and Committee
Messrs. Cameron, Watkins, McManus and Dr Scarr retire in rotation. The Committee's recommendations for their replacements were put before the meeting:

President: Mrs H.M. Eddowes.

Proposed: Mr R. Loewy. *Seconded:* Mrs M.I.C. Baldwin. Passed unanimously.

Vice President: Cdr. J.W. Chapman.

Proposed: Major B. Suter. *Seconded:* Mr P. Ledeboer. Passed unanimously.

Committee member: Mr J.H. Strachan.

Proposed: Mr M. Pinney. *Seconded:* Mrs M.I.C. Baldwin. Passed unanimously.

Committee member: Mr D. Brooker.

Proposed: Rev. J.M. Bogle. *Seconded:* Mrs G.L. Butler. Passed unanimously.

Registrar: Dr M.J. Eddowes. (Mrs Eddowes having been appointed as President.)

Proposed: Mr D.R. Hodge. *Seconded:* Mr P. Ledeboer. Passed unanimously.

All other officers and committee members, with the exception of Mr N.J. Legg, offered themselves for re-election and were returned unopposed.

The President warmly thanked all those who have retired for their helpful advice and assistance.

The new Committee will comprise the Officers and:

Mr A.I. Andrews	Mr M.J. Goodyer
Mr R.N. James	Dr D.C. Watts
Mr J.H. Strachan	Mr D. Brooker
M.J. de Watterville (co-opted)	

5. Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts and reported that subscription income was up slightly.

Journal costs were substantially lower, but investment income was lower due to lower interest rates; taking provision for 1994 SAC fees into account, an excess of income over expenditure of some £680 resulted.

"Investments at cost" have increased substantially due to movement of short term deposits to medium term investments.

The adoption of the accounts were proposed by Wing Commander H.D. Archer, seconded by Mr G.G. Watkins, and passed unanimously.

6. Subscriptions

The Committee recommended that the subscriptions to ABMSAC should remain unaltered at:

Single membership:	£14.50
Joint membership:	£22.00
Junior membership:	£6.00

Proposed: Wing Commander H.D. Archer. *Seconded:* Mrs M.I.C. Baldwin. Passed unanimously.

The SAC rates for 1994, which are fixed by the Committee, will be based on each member's Section charge in 1993 converted at a rate of SF2.17 to the £.

The new member's joining fee and first year's subscription will be increased to £65. (This includes the ABMSAC subscription.)

7. President's Report

I am glad to report that, once again, the Association has had a busy and fruitful year with a great many activities at home and abroad. The finances continue to be satisfactory under the guidance of Mike Pinney.

Our first concern is always with membership and although 27 new members joined, we lost some 35, giving a net loss of 8. This just shows that we have to continue to recruit new members and I hope that under new management next year, more young climbers will be encouraged to join. The total membership at October 1993 was 376.

Following the result of the questionnaire on Swiss Meets, Alasdair Andrews has led a sub-committee during the year to review many aspects of the Association and he will be reporting next year. John Chapman has initiated a Peak District Section to look after the interests of our members in that area and to provide a venue for members to get to know each other.

We greatly regret the loss of Mrs Margaret Attree, who contributed so much to the success of some of the Swiss Meets. I very much regret to report the death of Paul French only a week ago. Paul was one of our oldest members who had a unique knowledge of the history of the Association which he was always willing to share with us. He was particularly pleased to be able to join with us in Fischbiel last summer. His wise counsel will be greatly missed.

During the year, there were, as usual, two Alpine Meets, one in the Lotschental and one at Grindelwald, both of which were well attended. We are again most grateful to the organisers of these events: Harry Archer, George Watkins, Mike Pinney and their many helpers.

There have been meets in Scotland, Wales and the Lake District. In addition, some of our members went to Austria, France, Norway, China, Crete and Turkey. John Chapman is at present in Nepal.

We were very pleased that Kathy McManus was able to take up the challenge of organising the Northern Buffet which continued to be a great success. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Brooke and Arline Midgley for organising the well attended Northern Dinner.

The London lectures were of a high standard with a diversity of subjects: "The First Ascent of Mont Blanc" given by Jerry Lovatt; "A Twenty Thousander in Ladakh at 80" by Ashley Greenwood; and "Everest" by Lord Hunt. It was the 40th Anniversary of the first ascent of Everest and a number of celebrations were attended. One of the most interesting was at the Alpine Club, at which many of Lord Hunt's team were present.

In closing, I would like to thank the officers, the committee and the organisers of meets, lectures and social events for their support during the year. I should like to thank Mike Pinney and David Bennet for producing the accounts in time for presentation at this meeting; the Hut Management Committee for keeping the Hut in such good condition, and Hugh Romer for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

I have enjoyed my term of office, which has encouraged Sheila and me to get out and about rather more than we would have done otherwise. I am delighted that we have elected a new President who will be able to present a more youthful and athletic image which can only enhance the standing of ABMSAC. I wish her every success for the future.

8. Any Other Business

Mr P. Ledeboer reported on the Annual Assembly of the SAC which he attended on the Association's behalf:

Eight huts are due to be renovated in 1994, which puts a considerable strain on finances.

The Velan Hut is now open; the Pannosiere not yet.

No firm plans have been finalised for the renovation of the Britannia Hut.

Mr D. Hodge enquired about progress towards buying the lease for the George Starkey Hut. Wing Commander Archer promised that further attempts would be made, but at present the owners are not willing to sell.

Mr G.G. Watkins thanked Ross and Shiela Cameron for all the hard work, travelling and support they have both given to the Association during Ross's term of office, which was warmly applauded by the members.

There being no other business, the President declared the meeting closed at 6.15 pm.