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DIARY FOR 1997

January	10 - 12	Scottish Winter Meet	Perthshire
February	1 - 2	Northern Dinner Meet/AGM	Patterdale
February	21 - 23	Scottish Winter Meet	Kinlochleven
March	14 - 16	Scottish Winter Meet	Cairngorm
April	18 - 20	ABMSAC Hut Maintenance Meet	Patterdale
May	2 - 5	Yorkshire Dales Meet	Masham
May	24 - 31	Skye Meet	Skye
June	6 - 8	Snowdonia Meet	Rhyd-ddu
July	4 - 6	Lake District Meet - George Starkey Hut	Patterdale
June	28 - Jul 12	Italian Alps Meet	Val d'Aosta
July	26 to Aug 9	Pennine Alps Meet - Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC Meet	
			Randa Switzerland
August	2 - 16	Lake District Family Meet - George Starkey Hut	Patterdale
August	22 to		
	Sept 6	Alpine Trek	Austria
September	Mid	Lake District	to be arranged
October	3 - 5	TCC Hut Maintenance Meet	Patterdale
October	31 to 2 Nov	Alpine Reunion Meet - George Starkey Hut	Patterdale

THE NEW PRESIDENT

W BROOKE MIDGLEY

Brooke came to climbing rather later than some as his youth was mis-spent in competitive swimming and in failed attempts to join the 52 and 56 Olympic teams. He met his wife, Arline at the 57 National Championships in Blackpool.

During National Service in the RAF (56-58), he met a rock climber from Bristol who introduced him to Cheddar and Avon Gorges. This, combined with hill walking and scrambling which he had recently indulged in, started to oust swimming as the principal activity - except for two or three tours with the RAF team.

Large motor bikes were replaced by various MG cars and another love affair started - racing, hill climbing and rallying in the 60s and early 70s. The MGs are still a passion - one is currently being restored.

He married in 1960 and has two daughters, Denise and Gillian, born in 1967 and 1969. They have been to the hills from the age of three months. Denise had her first Alpine trip at 10 months and did her first alpine route at 6 years (with Prof. John Coales), and her father of course! Gillian was similarly mis-treated. They still attend meets and Denise is the Association's Solicitor.

Brooke is a Chartered Engineer who, until his retirement some five years ago, practiced as an independent consultant in the water industry.

Never an ambitious climber - although the first route attempted in Scotland was Tower Ridge (since re-climbed in Winter and again in Summer) with a partner who had never climbed before. Brooke has climbed a number of 4000m peaks and many lesser - always unguided and generally leading. His alpine climbing commenced in 1963 when he joined the SAC (Monte Rosa) and the Association. The starting point was Saas Fee and the Weissmies.

The family first visited Val d'Aosta in 1976 and bought a house there in 1983. For the past 10 years they have spent three months there each year: spring skiing, summer climbing/walking and autumn walking.

Brooke has served on the club committee, was Vice President 86/88 and has been associated with the hut from the very early days serving on the Company Board and the Hut Management Committee. He has organised the Northern Dinner Meet since 1974. He was made an Honorary Member of the Association in 1995.

He would like to see the future of the hut secured as he considers this to be a crucial element in attracting the new and younger members who are essential for the Association's future.

raining when I arrived - though had a good day - saw nothing yesterday - odd!, cross said 2985 but maps all insist on 2965 - pretty cold wind - can't have stopped there 10 sec - raining again by I got back - been raining ever since - not very glorious - could write up that idea I had - got some scraps of paper - and let's order a grog!

HOW LOW CAN ONE SINK?
OR
THE DESCENT OF A MOUNTAINEER

(WRITTEN AT REISSECK HUTTE. 12 AUG 96 BY J M SCARR)

A year or so ago two club members noticed the badge I was wearing : Flaggerscharten Hutte, 2481m. "How low!" they remarked with perhaps just a touch of scorn. Actually not so bad for the Tyrol, this cosy little hut is admirably situated by a small lake between two of the higher summits of the region. I was given the badge by the hut wardens as a souvenir for, I suppose, persistence. I took respectively 8 and 12 days during a period of storms to reach a pair of summits from the first attempts! There are extensive views to the Dolomites too, as I eventually discovered when I returned the following year! Some history: still known alternatively as the Marburg - Siegener Hutte (pictures of old Marburg hang inside and section Marburg still visits occasionally), the building was completed in 1914 and stocked ready for the opening festivities in August. They never took place. The hut first opened fully guarded as a CAI hut only sixty years later in 1975 after repairs from the destruction of two world wars. It is the only hut in the region where the guardians are native Italian speakers and has a good collection of Reader's Digest books for bad weather with titles such as "Una Citta come Alice" or "Il Ammutinamento del Caine". Ideal reading for a beginner.

Low this hut may be, but not the lowest. My decline began imperceptibly, starting even with good intentions, but before long addiction took over and I accelerated uncontrollably downwards to the lowest depths.

Ah!, the grog - "Danke Schön" - put in plenty of sugar - stir well - just a wee taste - then in with the rest - ah!, wonderful and warm!

A few years ago, after a week at Kaprun with some members of the club, finding snow levels very low, I chose to explore the Steinernes Meer (petrified sea) starting from Seefeld which lies some 15km north of Zell am See. These are limestone peaks, the Watzmann is nearby, but Schoenfeldtspitze (2653m) was quite enough for me. The high point of the few days tour, while staying at the Karlinger Haus, was a first stunning view, from the Halskoepl far above, of the wonderful Koenigssee which completely fills a narrow precipitously sided valley. The east face of the Watzmann soars over 2000m above the lake (the highest face in the Alps!, I was told): no room for roads here, the only easy way is by water. This view was followed by a steep descent form Wasseralm to the upper lake and a boat trip over the Koenigssee to St Bartholomae where there is a splendid tree-shaded Biergarten. Here I enjoyed my one and only ever Mass (1 quart glass - this is Bavaria!) of beer. The Karlinger Haus is easily regained by another route.

Setting out from Seefeld at noon, I chose a low hut as objective for the first day, the P Wiechentaler hut at 1752m. The ascent goes via an Einsiedlerei (hermitage) carved out at the base of a cliff where formerly a hermit with upraised eyes would be found kneeling at prayer beneath a crucifix set in the rock face above but now run by a monk (?) with long hair and unkempt beard, dressed in a blanket and sandals. Here very strong beer is served. Only afterwards does one discover that the next section requires absolute surefootedness on a vertical ascent. (If you should go there and find I exaggerate, then you didn't drink enough.) The hut, eventually reached after 5 hours (it should take 3), stands on a promontory with an excellent view to the Gross Venediger and is the first hut where I was able to eat my evening meal outside, an advantage of its low altitude. Very pleasant! Wiechentaler, Karlinger (in Germany: I initially only went there for this reason: Koenigssee made it an excellent decision) and Riemann huts were first class with meals served at most hours. At the last hut I was even allocated a bed at 10.45am - not possible everywhere!

This year (1996) flying to Munich without any clear idea of eventual Austrian destination, by a process of steady reduction to the absolute minimum I decided upon Kufstein, a pleasing place with an imposing castle overlooking the Inn. Immediately it became obvious that I must visit the Kaisergebirge. I started with a steep climb up the north side of the Zahmer (tame) Kaiser from Winkelalm to their summits and, after a sudden change of plan which turned out crucial to the success of the trip, arrived at the Strippsenjoch hut just before 8pm. This recorded a new low of 1577m where again eating outside was possible. The hut is situated on a col at the heart of the Wilder (savage) Kaiser, among magnificent rock scenery with soaring limestone walls and names like Fleischbank (the Butcher's!), Totenkirchl (Chapel of the Dead), Predigtstuhl (the Pulpit). While eating, I marvelled at a narrow path that disappeared from view after crossing a shear face, imagining that it lead to the start of some impossible difficult climb. Only next morning I did discover that it was my route ahead.

But this was not the end of my decline: sinking faster still, the next two nights were spent at the Anton Karg H. (829m) where, naturally, one can sit out all day eating and drinking in the garden next to the hut admiring the splendid view of the Totenkirchl which, as the evening sun sinks and shines up the valley, turns from dullish grey to shining white. This was the first hut built in the region: early climbers often starting out from here. The Wilder Kaiser are indeed serious mountains as witnessed by a large boulder near this hut which is almost completely covered with many plaques in memory of the fallen: Totenkirchl claiming the most.

And I did enjoy the garden too! The last day, after ascending Sonneck in slowly deteriorating weather, once down again, steadily increasing rain caused me to seek refuge in the same hut for a second night. Surprisingly, after an hour, a cloudless sky prevailed and I could sit out in the garden all afternoon and evening to eat and have a couple of beers in this pleasant spot until at last, towards dusk, the predicted storm arrived. Well deserved relaxation!

Immodesty requires I record that I did not sink directly from one hut to the other (easily possible) but travelled by way of the Steinerne Rinne, through the Ellmauer Tor to the Grutten H. on the south side for a short rest and a beer, and then on to ascend the highest summit of the Wilder Kaiser, the Ellmauer Halt (2344m), and subsequently back north by way of the Rote Rinnscharte. A very worthwhile excursion in good weather although rather anfractuous. Perhaps I am not completely finished yet, not quite ready for the Wienerwald where there are indeed Alpine Club huts. Unfortunately, the lowest I know of, perched on a summit of 541m does not meet my criteria. One can stay overnight only in emergency: indulged a little too much perhaps?

JOHN RUSKIN AND ALPINE CLIMBING

Nevertheless. I imagine there must be an even lower hut waiting somewhere, tables and chairs set out in the flower scented garden partly shaded by a grove of oaks where sparkling fountains play, with bronzed buxom girls, their fair hair worn in plaits, strong armed to carry glasses of foaming beer six or more at a time to the ever thirsty guests. Wonderful views too of the distant snow clad mountains sharply defined against the dark blue of the eternally cloudless sky. If I ever find it, I may never want to leave.

This tale of the steady decline of one who once aspired to the highest summits must end with a dire warning: I would not like to be responsible for encouraging others to follow a similar downward path of pleasure and ease. For in this admirably conceived universe where virtue and industry are invariably rewarded, if not in this world then surely in the next, sin and indolence may obtain devastating retribution sooner than expected. So, alas, the idle frequenter of low houses runs the risk of infection and serious malady: Ticks frequent lower levels in Austria, particularly woods and fields. Increasingly, infection with tick borne encephalitis is possible if bitten: see the posters common in Austrian railway stations entitled "Sicherheit nur durch Impfung" (safety only through vaccination) with splendid illustration of a tick or e.g. 3rd edition of Blue Guide to Austria (1992), p113. Vaccination is strongly recommended before a visit to these lower depths! For the record, my personal score of tick bites currently stands at 3 - take heed.

Hm! - somewhat rambling - but tried my best - might do for the abm? - oh!, at last it's stopped raining - even a bit of sun - yes!

I'll put on my boots and go out for a while - perhaps reach the Rossalm Scharte - might eve get a view over the other side.

Postscript

Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) can be due to a number of different causes, virus, bacteria, fungus, chemical, etc. and can be difficult to treat if the cause is unknown.

TBE (Tick Borne Encephalitis) is caused by a virus, transmitted by the tick bite, for which a preventative vaccine is available. The predominant vector in Europe is the tick (deutsche = Zecke) *Ixodes ricinus*, a blood-sucking parasite of vertebrates, e.g. us, which is too hard to be destroyed between finger and thumb. In Britain *Ixodes ricinus*, the sheep tick common on uplands, carries Louping Ill, known to Scottish shepherd for centuries (lowp = jump, bounce: describes unsteady gait of affected sheep), which can also infect humans. TBE is not found in Britain.

Ticks transmit to humans more diseases than any other arthropod (invertebrates with legs, e.g. insects) except mosquitoes. Of some 500 known arboviruses (arthropod borne), half are carried by mosquitoes, and at least 100 are primarily or exclusively tick borne. Ticks also carry non-viral infections, e.g. Rocky mounted spotted fever in the US (try the nice wet Cascade range!)

"You have despised nature; that is to say, all the deep and sacred sensations of natural scenery. The French revolutionists made stables of the cathedrals of France; you have made racecourses of the cathedrals of the earth . . . The Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb, and slide down again, with 'shrieks of delight'. When you are past shrieking, having no articulate voice to say you are glad with, you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccup of self satisfaction."¹ That much quoted tirade seems to point to a deep antagonism on Ruskin's part towards Alpine climbers. The latter part of it was probably based on the return of Albert Smith to Chamonix after climbing Mont Blanc; Ruskin witnessed it and was disgusted. For all the bombast Ruskin's distress over climbing was real enough. In the 1860's he had lost his childhood evangelical religious faith, and it was virtually replaced by a religion of the mountains, so that he meant to be taken with great seriousness when he wrote of the sacredness of nature, of the cathedrals of the earth and of reverence for the Alps. It was not merely that he admired their beauty, which he did; beholding them exalted his spirit and evoked a feeling of adoration so that their desecration, as he saw it, elicited a passionate protest.

Ruskin's words were first delivered in a series of lectures in Manchester in 1864, which were shortly after published as *Sesame and Lilies*. The following summer saw the tragic accident on the Matterhorn after its first ascent by Whymper and his party, which provoked a vigorous public controversy. Ruskin added a preface, more sober in its tone, though not retracting his earlier words. In it, surprisingly, he defended climbing, and, just as surprisingly, defended putting guides at risk. But he attacked competitiveness in the Alps, in particular the competition for first ascents. "Whatever the Alpine Club have done, or may yet accomplish, in a sincere thirst for mountain knowledge, and in happy sense of youthful strength and play of animal spirit, they have done, and will do, wisely and well; but whatever they are urged to do by mere sting of competition and itch of praise, they will do, as all vain things must be done for ever, foolishly and ill."² It is not true that Ruskin was altogether opposed to athleticism in the Alps. He went on to claim that the real beauty of Switzerland could not be appreciated in the heights, but only from below "where all may see it, the child, the cripple, the man of grey hairs. There is more true loveliness in a single glade of pasture shadowed by pine, or gleam of rocky brook, or inlet of unsullied lake . . . than in the entire field of jagged gneiss which crests the central ridge from the Shreckhorn to the Viso."³ This was doubly unwise, for on the one hand he himself had never climbed much above 3,000m and on the other it was the vision of the high mountains from Schaffhausen and the Col de la Faucille that opened his eyes to that which was for him most sacred. Thus it was not difficult for Leslie Stephen to refute him.

Ruskin spent much time in the Alps and even resided there off and on in the early 1860's. He himself had done some guided climbing, if not to the highest peaks, and he had enjoyed what he had done. His mountain drawings, from every region of the Alps, meant considerable travelling on foot, sometimes to minor summits or passes; so did the observations which lay behind *Modern Painters*; so did his direct researches into geology and glaciology, and as a result he shared familiarity with the mountain terrain of the Alps with climbers. He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1869 and remained a member for thirteen years, until illness made it pointless to continue. It must be that at least in some ways he regarded Alpine climbers as kindred spirits. There was a common love of the mountains, however it may have been expressed, and a common knowledge of them. If he continued to criticise the vanity of climbers, their lack of sensitivity to the grandeur of the places where they tread, we may sometimes sympathise with him. It did not mean he was unwilling to be associated with them.

Because it is well known, and expressive, the 'soaped poles' passage in *Sesame and Lilies* is often taken to be Ruskin's last word on Alpinism, that he opposed it. This is misleading. Even if at its core was a passionate protest from deep conviction of the sacredness of the mountains, and even if he claimed in his doubts; they show all the signs of rhetoric. Actions speak louder than words; Ruskin's free association with Alpine climbers for over a decade speaks louder than the polemics of the Manchester lecture. For all the virulence of his protests it did not take Ruskin long to realise that the dichotomy between Alpine climbing and Alpine beauty was a false one.

1 ET Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (eds) *The Works of John Ruskin* London 1903 - 1912

Vol 18 p. pp.89F.

2 Ibid. p.23f

3 Ibid. p.25.

James Bogle

A GRAND DAY OUT

"Fancy climbing in Yosemite?" said Terry on the phone. Terry Trundle was working in San Francisco and was ringing to tell me how life on the West Coast was treating him. For a number of reasons, last year's accident being one, I had no plans to go to the Alps this summer, or to climb anywhere else for that matter.

However by the time Terry had returned to the UK for a week at the end of May to get married the plan for a quick foray into the Yosemite Valley had started to gel. I booked flights and at the end of July I was off to San Francisco via New York and LA - a 20 hour flight. Well, that's what you get for late booking! On arrival Terry and his wife, Bev, were waiting carrying a placard announcing "ABMSAC YOSEMITE MEET"; a welcome sight.

The next day, Friday, I slept, shopped and packed climbing and bivi gear. Terry knocked off work early and we set off to the Yosemite National Park. As we entered the valley we were both spellbound by the view and the sheer size of the granite domes and cliffs. As all the camp sites were fully booked we decided to bivi in the woods surrounding Curry Village at Upper Pines. After a quick beer and pizza in the village, we walked into the woods armed with Karrimats, bivi and sleeping bags and head torches. I was still tired from the previous day's flight, and as we wanted to be away by 6.00am we turned in early at around 10pm.

Rustling in the undergrowth and shouts of "Bear, bear!" from the campsite awoke us; shining our head torches in the direction of the rustling we lit up a couple of bears. Although we had been told that bears seldom attack people we felt very vulnerable lying on the forest floor wrapped in bivi bags. The bears rumbled past, but we both had a disturbed sleep as every branch moving or twig snapping had us waiting for bears to lumber out of the bushes. We were later told that five bears were roaming the woods that night. Getting up early was not a problem and by 6.00am we were shouldering our packs and walking up to Happy Isles.

We were heading for the South West face of Half Dome to climb a classic 1500 foot free climb, called Snake Dyke. The walk through the woods was easy going and as the dawn broke the fast flowing river at the bottom of the valley became visible. The huge Vernal Falls came into view and we soon climbed the track past them. By now the sun was up as we walked out of the woods past Liberty Camp. Here we had to head off the main trail. We expected a track, but the next three hours had us climbing little domes, descending their sides into valleys, past lakes through dense woods and finally up a jumble of boulders and slabs. Every now and again we spotted small cairns. However the way forward was obvious as the shape of Half Dome dominated the view. As we neared the climb the size of Half Dome became apparent, the rock seemed to go on forever in all directions. Around midday we arrived at the bottom of our route.

We had a light lunch. Donned harnesses, now had much lighter rucksacks. The route followed a dyke (an intrusion in the rock up to two foot wide and standing a couple of inches proud of the granite) which snaked up to the top of the mountain. The grade was equivalent to VS 4c/5a climbing. Our biggest surprise was the complete lack of protection between the bolt belays after the first pitch. The first pitch was the crux for us. It involved steep slab climbing to an overlap, which could be climbed on the left after a few poorly protected moves on the slab below. A bolt belay was then reached. The situation was fantastic; the pink/orange granite was warm to the touch, although the friction was not quite in the Yorkshire gritstone category, the views across the valley were stunning and the silence

was complete. The angle of the rock was such that, although no way near vertical, we were constantly climbing on our toes and all the belays were hanging ones so after a couple of hours the lower leg muscles were aching. As we climbed ever higher the mountains around Half Dome appeared to be becoming lower and soon the vista was truly magnificent. After eight pitches (rope lengths) the angle eased enough for us to solo the last few hundred feet. We arrived at the summit, tired, thirsty but happy after five hours of climbing.

After another quick bite, a drink and the mandatory summit photo, we walked over to the NE end of Half Dome where a steep descent is possible on wooden steps and wire hawsers. From this side of Half Dome walkers ascend using the wire hawser to pull up on and climbing wooden steps. Leather gloves are supplied at the bottom to ensure hands are not ripped up by any snags in the wire. However we were at the top and so were without gloves - what a hard life a rock climber can have. The summit of Half Dome is a little over eight miles from Curry Village so we had a long walk out. A steady gloveless descent on the wires saw us back on the trail in the woods as the evening was drawing in. In the gathering gloom we met two weary American walkers, a woman and her son. The woman had hurt her knee and was hobbling badly. Their friends had gone on ahead to try to get help. We assisted them down, the light from our head torches showing the way. As they had not expected to be out late the couple were not prepared for the dark. Eventually we arrived back at Happy Isles at 10pm. The couple were met by their friends who had been unable to arrange any help but they were very relieved to see them.

Terry and I were the heroes of the day. We jumped in the station wagon and taken back to our car and bivi site. We were rewarded with a 6 pack of beer for our 'rescue'. As the restaurant had long shut the beer was most welcome. No number of bears could have woken us up that night.

Mike Goodyer

AUSTRIAN MOUNTAIN HUTS

The August meet organised by Wendell Jones uses eight Austrian huts and everyone was very pleasantly surprised at the high standards they offered.

Most of us had had plenty of experience of Swiss huts but there is no fair comparison between Swiss and the Austrian huts we visited. Swiss huts are usually at between 2500m and 3000m, inaccessible except by foot or helicopter, catering for those who only wish to leave at 4 or 5 am to climb a peak and mainly used by the serious climber. The eight Austrian huts we stayed in varied between 1700m and 2400m and were all accessible by a track or goods lift. Each hut was within 4-6 hours walking of its neighbour with usually a steep ridge or col in between requiring an ascent of between 500m and 1000m. This accessibility means that the huts are well serviced and well visited by anyone who is a strong walker.

We found a warm welcome by the guardian in most huts and we were quickly showed to our sleeping quarters. We always asked for a room and on only three occasions had to sleep in a dormitory. Rooms had bunk beds with two blankets and a pillow and generally had six beds in them. One was expected to use one's own sleeping sheet to protect the blankets and pillow. Only later on did I discover blankets were marked with their 'foot end' so that one could ensure a more pleasant night! The Darmstadter was the only hut to provide duvets. The Niederelbe even gave us individual towels and a spacious room with a table and chairs. Rooms were naturally more expensive than dormitories and cost 90-100 Schillings per person per night.

In the dormitories we were troubled by late night revellers and giggling young persons. The biggest inconvenience was a herd of cows that decided to spend the night under our windows at the Tilisuna and persistently clanged their bells.

The washing facilities varied between troughs with just cold water to wash basins with mirrors and hot water. The Tubinger had a shower room for an extra charge. Hot water was available in 3 out of 8 huts although one of these provided it only in the morning. Loos were a problem as they were always in short supply and consequently got rather unpleasant.

The food varied considerably. The most disappointing food was at the Tilisuna where the 'bergsteigeressen' was unappetising and there were no puddings - so I had soup to follow. Generally there were several choices of main course and apfel strudel for pudding. We had a delicious meal of weiner schnitzel, chips and salad at the Niederelbe for 115 Schillings when celebrating Antonia's birthday. A quarter litre of local wine cost 40 Schillings and the cheap main course 75-100 Schillings. Breakfast was usually 75 Schillings for sufficient bread, cold meats, cheese and jam with coffee or tea. Coffee and tea were expensive but a half-litre of 'teewasser' could be bought for 10 Schillings so that you could make your own. The bill for supper, bed and breakfast was something over 300 Schillings or £20 for hungry men and less for ladies with smaller appetites.

Generally the facilities such as eating areas, drying rooms and washrooms were sufficient for the numbers staying, although one should remember this was late August. All the huts were clean and tidy. The Austrians have evidently invested heavily in their huts and there has been much enlargement and modernisation over recent years. The Tubinger had a very attractive dining area and furniture and the Niederelbe had its walls covered with pictures of Hamburg and district, giving it a special atmosphere. The Darmstadter was the least modernised but it had a very jovial young guardian and an

attractive old fashioned style with narrow passages making rooms difficult to enter. It also owned a cat.

Overall we were delighted with the friendly and efficient service and the general comfort. After our final hut we rated them from 1 - 5 for welcome, service, facilities, bedrooms, food and atmosphere. The Niederelbe won with 28 points out of 30, the Darmstadter had 26 points and the lowest managed 13 points. *The clientele were mainly German and we were told that on average only 5 British visit a hut each week. Judging by our experiences it seems surprising that more British don't stay in Austrian huts. Like us, they may well be pleasantly surprised at what they find.*

Edward Coales

SWISS EXPEDITION TO ALBION

For three weeks in the summer of 1996, Trevor P Bent once again led a mixed contingent of senior members of the Diablerets (Lausanne) section of the SAC to some hillier parts of Britain. As on the previous occasion in 1992, it was organised through HF Holidays Limited. The first week, from 27 July, was spent at Conwy.

So it was a small group, with two cripples out of 5, who left Cointtrin. Apart from the delayed departure of the plane, the train missed at Manchester and an unexpected change of carriages half-way, everything went well. Our inevitable late arrival at Bryn Corach caused a stir. We were scattered to the fourwinds for dinner. The sacro-saint group of the "unholy" were not, for once, together.

In accordance with HF practice, each day there was a choice of guided walks: "High level", "middle" or "low" according to inclination and capability.

Of the walks during our first week, we remember more especially the superb scenery along tree-covered river banks, rock slabs and water falls; 3 metre high rhododendrons, alas no longer in flower.

During this week the weather was acceptable: every day - except the last - a little (a lot for some) rain and agreeable temperatures.

The rest day was devoted to a visit of Bodnant Gardens (suggested incidentally by Mary Boulter) who reputation has spread world-wide. Absolutely fabulous. What they must be like in full bloom is difficult to imagine. A short visit turned out to be three-hour (almost forced) march.

Our last excursion Wales took us from Betwys-y-Coed to Capel Curig. A journey full of memories for some members of the group as we stayed at Plass-y-Brenin at the beginning of August 1988. On that occasion we even succeeded in climbing Snowdon among other summits.

For the well-ordered Swiss, customs and habits in trains left us aghast. How to occupy the seat reserved for you long in advance requires a solid knowledge of English and negotiating skills reserved unto the British civil service! (?)

And so it was we repaired to Sedbergh for our second week, to tread the carboniferous and silurian terrain of that part of Cumbria. The weather was seasonably mixed, but an astute (of fluky) choice of itinerary avoided anyone getting seriously wet. The highest point reached that week, the Calf, at no more than 676m, but all the walks were deemed full of interest. On the Wednesday the visitors were royally entertained by George Watkins (AMBSAC) at his home in Lancaster. The menu for lunch was staunchly British, including the wine, and the group gormandised with gusto. To walk it off, George led the way to the nearby summit of Clougha Pike (415m). Pity the clouds obscured the view over Morecambe Bay. But that was made up for on the Friday when George came along on the HF walk called the "Limestone link" from near Holme to Arnside Knott (159m). Bright sun and superb views this time. Thanks for everything, George.

Long-distance rail travel in Britain on a summer Saturday is definitely not recommended, even with reserved seats. Above all, by middle-aged or elderly tourists from abroad with imperfect knowledge of British ways - they get a dreadful impression. Notwithstanding the scrummage all the way from Oxenholme, the group alighted at Pitlochry for the Scottish week only slightly scathed, on the heels of

a rain shower. It proved to be the last: quelle chance! The first day Schiehallion (1083m) was climbed by some, with Ben Nevis and the Cairngorms in full view. Marvellous. Then followed some lower-level walks in the Tay and Garry valleys with an excursion to visit the Discovery Point Antarctic Exhibition at Dundee. On the last day everyone was driven to Killiekrankie, from where part of the group climbed Meall an Daimh and Ben Vrackie (841m) while the rest took a lower route back to Pitlochry.

Uneventful flight back to Geneva from Edinburgh via Heathrow, apart from the tragic breakage of the leader's duty-free souvenir of the Highlands.

Robin Perry/Jean-François Muller

REPORTS OF CLUB ACTIVITIES

SCOTTISH MEETS 1995/1996

11-12 Nov 1995: Cheviots

Our first ever southern meet at an address on Dere St. The area turned out wet and windy and appeared gloomy and featureless as well as low: no wonder legions have been lost there. However, participants enjoyed immensely (presumably) walking and cycling as well as (certainly) the dinner at Morebattle. The highest summit reported, high cairned Windy Gyle (2034ft), was reached by two experienced members.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Geoff Bone, Bert Bowes, John and Marj Foster, Alf Lock, Cherry Norris, Steven Paulin, Mike Scarr, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Tony and Suzanne Strawther.

2-3 Dec 1995: Lock Tayside

Saturday: cloudy and windy, but people went out . . . the majority walking between Glen Lyon and Loch Rannoch . . . and came back wet, glad of the roaring fire and hot drinks, beautifully red, aromatic, and suspiciously alcoholic at our excellent cottage at Fearnan. All dined later at Ben Lawers Hotel. On Sunday our stalwarts, though mostly resident far to the east, headed westwards into the weather and were rewarded by passing through to serene blue skies, ascending Beinn Tulaichan and the notable peak of Cruach Ardrain from the Balquidder valley.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, John Dempster, John and Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Rogers James, Alf Lock, Cherry Norris, Steven Paulin, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Jim and Margaret Strachan.

13-14 Jan 1996: Newtonmore

We stayed in reserved 1st class bunk house and dined daringly in the adjacent hotel, operational in spite of exploding just two weeks previously.

Saturday: low cloud. Neither the mountains nor the activities of those present were revealed to this correspondent. Sunday: Wet.

Present: Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes Buff Dolling, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Roger James, Alf Lock, Terry McManus, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Jim and Margaret Strachan.

2-3 Mar 1996: Appin

Always innovating, we enjoyed excellent home cooking, four course meal with wines, coffee and liqueurs at the spacious cottage overlooking Lock Linnhie.

Saturday: plenty of snow, but warm, occasional slush. Good weather made Glen Nevis a popular destination. Parties were out on the Mamores, "ring of Steal" (Sgurr a' Mhaim, Am Bodach, An Garbhanach) and Ben Nevis (including the Carn Mhor Dearg arete). The former (possibly the more

interesting expedition) proved the better choice, in sunshine after the first couple of hours. Sunbathing in the snow was delightful. Ben Nevis remained invisible in cloud (even to those on it) as usual. After their various exertions these parties regrouped in the bar of the Onich Hotel to enjoy splendid views over Loch Leven.

Sunday found seven members together on the snowy summit of Buachaille Etive Beg, again in excellent conditions, having ascended by three different routes.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Stephen Bowes, Ed Bramley, John Dempster, Peter Farrington, Peter Goodwin, John and Marj Foster, Alf Lock, Mike Goodyer, Roger James, Mike Scarr, Jim and Margaret Strachan.

30-31 Mar 1996: Loch Rannoch

This meet was based in a house on the banks of Loch Rannoch and dinner taken at Bunrannoch House. The main Saturday expedition started with the 9am train from Rannoch to Corroul (with stragglers on the 11.30am). Walkers followed the shores of Loch Ossian to reach Sgor Gaibhre and then traversed to Carn Dearg, a pair of remote Munroes. Our two skiers favoured the traverse in the opposite direction. *dazzling plodding pedestrians with immaculate telemarks*. Corbetiers ascended Beinn a' Chuallaich, a pleasant hill of some 2900ft near Kinloch Rannoch.

On Sunday seven of the party (including skiers) severally ascended Schiehallion from which wide-spread views as far as Ben Bheithir (*Ballachulish*), etc, etc. *Only Ben Nevis was invisible (of course)*.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Stephen Bowes, Stuart Bradley, John and Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Roger James, Shirley Mackay, Morag McDonald, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Ernst Sondheimer, Jim Strachan, Geoff Urmston.

We all thank our Chief Executive (the initiator and driving force of these events) for many, many pleasures; the Managers, Chefs, Sous-Chefs (recent innovations), Trainers Drivers, Baggage Masters (a host of talents) for their work, the participants too for attending (often from very far afield): in short, everyone according to their desserts.

Mike Scarr

NORTHERN DINNER MEET FEBRUARY 1996

It must be some years since it was quite so evident that this was a winter meet - not a lot of snow, by plenty of ice.

The pattern of the past few years was continued with members arriving early and spreading the meet over a week. Those who went out on Thursday had a lovely, clear, sunny day and frozen water-falls in abundance to attack. Friday was not quite so clear but the sun put in a appearance and the waterfalls were abused. Even horizontal paths had 8" (200mm) of solid ice on them for continuous lengths of 100's of metres.

The working population arrived Friday evening and the meet took serious hold of hotel and valley. On Saturday all the local hills were visited and more waterfalls thrashed. Parties were reported on Blencathra and further afield. Our Guest Speaker, Jill Aldersley, joined us for a couple of days on the hill.

Attendance at the dinner was lower than last year, but two separate groups had gone to the New Zealand Alps, so they were forgiven, as were some who cancelled due to damaged appendages - the winter had spread further south than Kendal! 103 sat down to dinner and were again well served and fed by John and Doreen Melling and staff.

Our guests were the Rev. Ben and Mrs Turner, our new neighbours at the Rectory. Guest Speaker was Jill Aldersley, FRCC President and a noted Lakeland watercolour artist. Jill gave an amusing and informative talk of her painting experiences in the mountains of the Lake District, European Alps and the Himalaya. A frequent painting companion and neighbour was Syd Prentice (our first Hut Warden) and Jill had enjoyed his company for many years. A practical hint for the budding mountain artist to prevent the painting water from freezing is to mix a little gin with it - a tip that stuck in the writers memory. It's known to scientists as Hydro gin as opposed to oxygen which is needed to climb hills. The party was still going strongly at 1.45am to the writer's knowledge.

Jill presented us with a print of Striding Edge of Winter for us to raffle in aid of the Britannia Hut Appeal. This "round" of the raffle made around £250. Further "rounds" will be held at meetings later in the year.

Sunday was a good day and those who stayed were rewarded with sun, long views and much reduced wind velocity. About 30 stayed to enjoy it. However, Monday was a different proposition and some sensible folk departed early while the going was possible. The morning was quite pleasant if you are addicted to high velocity snow which rapidly deepened underfoot. Those who intended to depart on Tuesday had the pleasure of staying until Wednesday and then some serious digging to release the transport. It was, however, a photographers paradise with deep powder snow - dead calm dispersed-a pity to depart.

W B Midgley

Yorkshire Dales Meet. May Day Bank Holiday Weekend

The meet returned to the Black Swan Camp Site at Fearby, just outside Masham with the option of bed and breakfast up the road for the less hearty.

Saturday was overcast but did not prevent the Friday night arrivals from having a days walk in Wensledale. We started at Aysgarth and took in vistas of the various falls. We walked through a number of field systems and those quaint hole in the wall styles that remind you of how much weight you still have to lose before rejoining the river Ure. We walked gently upstream for a couple of miles before pausing for lunch. Afterwards we went up to the waterfall at Disher Force and on to the old lead mines at Ivy Close. There was plenty of opportunity to collect samples or maybe ballast to slow down the fast ones. We returned through Carperby and more field systems and styles for ice creams at Aysgarth.

There was a mega barbecue that evening at the campsite.

We went to Brimham on Sunday, with most having a days rock climbing on the various buttresses. *The children joined in. both on the rocks and the boulders in the area.* Entering into the spirit of the weekend, the president enthusiastically scaled a number of classic routes including Heather Wall and Presidents Progress. Who says there is nothing in a name?

The family theme was repeated on Monday, with a walk in the pasture and woodland in the Swinton and Ilton area, finishing at Ilton Temple in the middle of the woods. This is a Stonehenge shaped folly, build in the 1820s, complete with trilithons, monoliths and caves. The memory of the week end must surely be the children around what looks like a sacrificial alter tucking into their dinners.

Meet attendees were :

E J J and S Bramley, A and S Andrews, H L and M Eddowes, M A and R Goodyer, P and D Goodwin, L P G and I Burton, R and G Jones, R B Trundley

Ed Bramley

The Snowdonia Meet - Rhyd-ddu, June 1996

Twenty five members and guests enjoyed a weekend at Tan-yr Wyddfa, the Dread MC's hut at Rhyd-ddu. The hut was fully occupied, with some members staying in their own cottage or camping. Most people arrived in good time on the Friday for a pub supper and to sample the guest beers in the village pub.

The weather was the best that we have had for a few years. Saturday was sunny and warm with a light breeze. Everybody had a full day out. There were several groups climbing in the Ogwen Valley, in Carnedd Llewelyn and on Cloggy. In addition several parties were walking on the Snowdon range or on the Glyders. Ed Bramley accompanied me on a training run over the Glyders and around the Ogwen Valley - Preparing for a race in July in the Lake District. On the evening we booked the whole dining room at the village pub and had an enjoyable time.

Sunday started fine with parties climbing on the Idwal Slabs and Carreg Alltrem while others went walking on the Snowdon range or left for an early drive home. The rain that came in around 3pm did not dampen the spirits of an excellent weekend.

Mike Goodyer

The Lake District Meet - Patterdale, July 1996

There were three major walks ongoing on this weekend. Wendell Jones once again planned a marathon walk. Two members started at 6.00am and headed for Hartsop and on to Thornthwaite Beacon. Backtracking briefly towards High Street they dropped down to Nan Bield Pass and over Harter Fell. There followed a 3 mile descent into Longsleddale and on to Kentmere. A further ascent to Garburn pass led to the Kentmere Ridge of Yoke, Ill Bell and Foswick before returning to the hut by the time-honoured track of High Street, The Knott and Angle Tarn. A distance of 24.3 miles with 6,300 foot of ascent covered in 13.5 hours - well done Wendell and Antonia!

The second 'long' walk involved a team of AMB stalwarts entering the Patterdale Parish Boundary walk. The team, led by Brooke Midgley, began their attempt on the 30 mile walk with 10,000 foot of ascent at "some ungodly hour". The start from the Glencoyne Dale car park was in cold and drizzle which quickly gave way to sun and clearing skies on Helvellyn and thereafter. On the way to Kiristone Pass various joints and bits of body succumbed to the hard terrain and two members of the team had to retire. This meant that the remaining two raised nearly £300 for the church and school. A total of 56 people took part in the event raising £2342. (Another member, John Bradley, entered in another team, did complete the round - well done!)

The third event was the Saunders 2 day Lakeland Mountain Marathon and was entered by Mike Goodyer and Ed Bramley. We entered the 'A' class which meant that we would be navigating over steep and rough terrain for a couple of days. The event started at Stool End Farm in Langdales and went roughly over Cold Pike, Crinkel Crag, Howell, Scafell and onto Illgill Head and down to the overnight camp at Beckfoot in Eskdale. The second day started through Boot to Whinscales, Hard Knott, Yew Bank, Birker Fell and up to Ore Gap via Yeastyrigg Crag and then round Bowfell and Mickelden to the finish at Stool End Farm. A total of 35 miles, 10,000 foot of ascent in around 15 hours. A great weekend out for all concerned!

Mike Goodyer

ABMSAC/AC/CC Camping Meet at Argentiere 1996

Over 70 people (including children) from all the clubs attended the meet over the three weeks in July and August. The weather began encouragingly enough with two or three hot sunny days but over 20 hours of heavy rain soon dampened down our spirits not to mention the inhabitants of Chamonix who suffered considerable flooding. Unsettling weather followed the floods and unusually for Chamonix the forecasting was not very reliable. This meant that success on the mountains relied on being in the right place at the right time, a skill which relied on a large dose of luck.

In spite of this a considerable amount was achieved with ascents of many of the major mountains in the Mont Blanc range including the Aiguille du Tour (various routes), Chardonnet (Forbes Arete), Droites, Argentiere, Tour Noir, Bionnassay, Mont Blanc, Mont Maudit, Mont Blanc du Tacul (ordinary route and Boccalette Pillar), Mont Dolent, Midi-Plan traverse, Rochefort Arete and Domes de Miage. Some roamed further afield making ascents of the Dents d'Herens, Grand Combin and Monte Rosa. Other activities included rock climbs on the Vallorcine slabs and the Aiguilles Rouges and some very scenic walks.

Socially the meet was somewhat less cohesive than normal as we were spread out all over the campsite. The leader suffered from a French neighbour who insisted that there was absolute silence after 10.00pm thus preventing any social gatherings outside his tent, although the antipodean contingent on the other side of the site managed to have some very lively evenings around their stove.

Overall an enjoyable time was had by all despite the less than perfect weather.

Jeff Harris

Voralberg and Tyrol 1996

The long descent over, we climbed up the small hill from the station towards Pettneu's main street; came a sound of disturbance from the front of the party; our putative landlady had run into the road, and was engaged in dragging individuals into her Fremdenzimmer. It is always good to be made welcome, doubly so, when wet and cold from rain and snow. Hot baths all round proved a further boost to morale.

A fortnight earlier, seven of us, Michael Austin, Isabella Baldwin, Antonia Barlen, Edward Coales, Nigella Hall, Peter Ledebor and I had met up at the village of Brand in the Voralberg, Austria's westernmost province. Next day started easily first by bus, then by lift to the Lunersee, a strip of shining blue set under the Schesaplana. An ambling start to the hard grind took us round the lake and over two easy passes beneath a fringe of rock peaks, only a few miles north of Klosters, scene of the 1989 Meet.

A holiday weekend played its part in the overcrowding of the Lindauer Hut. "I have 160 people here for the night; you must be made to come" Opined the Huttenwart. Notwithstanding this untypical welcome, we survived the night and enjoyed the Alpine Garden built outside.

At the next hut, the dessert ran out and Edward was reduced to a second bowl of soup.

On the third day we flirted with Switzerland, a sloping shoulder between two passes, before re-entering Austria for the descent to Gargellen. A little above the village Nigella slipped off the path and sprained an ankle; limping pluckily on, she reached the village, but was out of the fray; Peter elected to keep her company. We sat around under a blazing sun, watching Michael consume a Gargantuan ice cream; our waitress knew a hotelier - a cousin? - who offered to do our washing free, which clinched the deal and an excellent supper. Next day a rapid passage over the passes above the village brought us to the Tubinger Hut. We seemed to lose the fine weather as we climbed, and whilst dodging the first few storms, a brief foray on to the glacier above ended in a wet and noisy climax.

The morrow brought an ascent of the Hochmaderer followed by a damp descent to Partennen, where our friends had already secured accommodation; there followed a much-needed rest day.

Our route, previously running roughly South East along the line of the Swiss frontier had now swung north east through the lower Silvretta across the main valley leading to the Silvrettahohe. Continuing north east it was to cross a series of high passes through the Verwall massif and down to the Rosanna (St Anton) valley and the limestone ridges of the Lechtaler Alps.

The last fine day for a week took us to the Neue Heilbronner Hut, the first of five huts reached in steadily deteriorating conditions before snow and rain drove us down. A projected ascent of the Hohe Riffler was abandoned in favour of descent to Pettneu and our devoted landlady, just recruited through the wiles of Peter and Nigella. During the last few days, one of which proved fine, various day trips were made to huts in the Lechtaler Alps, where broad grassy slopes were surmounted by sharp and angular limestone peaks.

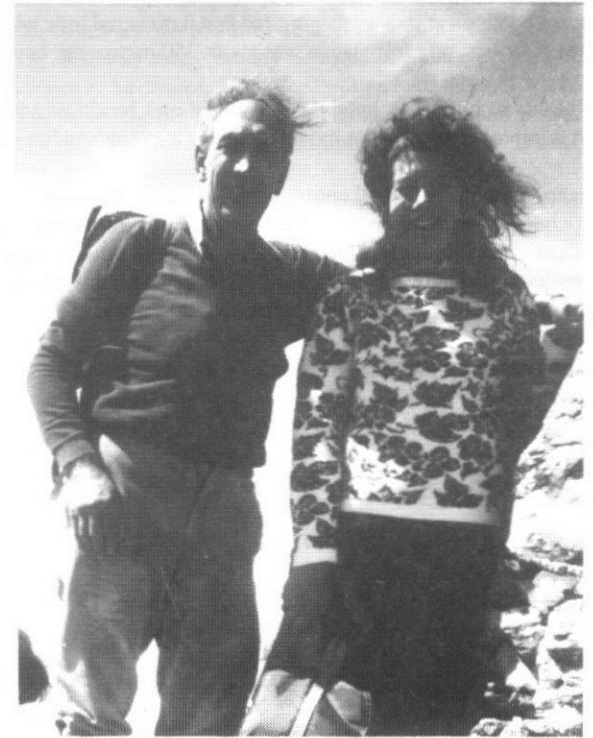
The second ABMSAC Alpine walk invites comparisons with last year's Pyrenean venture.

Although the peaks were of similar height (2,800 to 3,200 metres), the terrain, especially through the Verwall, tended to be rougher and steeper. The passes through the latter range (2,600 to 2850 metres) were almost as high as the summits, and tended to be glacial on their North Eastern flanks. In common with many Alpine areas, climatic change has reduced extensive snowfields to hard ice, and the borderline between glacier and ridge to an unstable mass of boulders, tending to make descent more awkward. Following the usual red flashes provided problems particularly on the way down from the Kuchenjoch, where an alternative route followed steeply descending fixed ropes on the sidewall.

Days tended to be shorter than in 1995, and with the party normally reaching its hut soon after lunch, opportunities for afternoon expeditions unencumbered by heavy packs, were available, when not ruled out by the weather. Some people regard the huts as a necessary evil, part of the price of climbing high and wandering through the Alps; we found the Austrian variety perhaps designed for walkers such as ourselves, more comfortable than those of the French, and it has to be said those of our Swiss friends. Accommodation was either fairly spacious matratzen lager or small rooms with bunk beds; washing and toilet facilities were far superior, always inside, and some of the hot taps were known to produce hot water. Meals could be obtained at most times of day, and apart from breakfast - never a strong feature in any hut - were of good quality. Rather curiously for those who expected Teutonic regulation and orderliness, each hut was run on different lines; this caused minor problems until we understood each new system. The staff, usually family, were often young and very friendly as were our fellow climbers, although the rather relaxed atmosphere did cause occasional unwanted noise late at night.

The small hotels and guest houses we stayed in at Brand, Gargellen and Partennen were usually comfortable with good food; having been led to expect high prices in Austria, we were agreeably surprised to pay a mere 400 Schillings (£25) for Dinner, Bed and Breakfast and 170 odd (£11) for B&B in Pettneu. (The buying rate for Schillings in August was approximately 15.60; the current rate of 17.60 makes the place an even better bargain).

Although our venture took place two weeks earlier than in 1995, this produced only minor accommodation problems; the weather unfortunately followed a similar pattern, good initially, deteriorating in the second week, with snow down to 2,000 metres.



Peaks climbed included the Sulzfluh. (2,818 metres) a walk over a large plateau of limestone pavement. Hochmaderer (2,823) a more rugged and generally looser mountain and Klein Riffler. (3014) a brief afternoon reconnaissance for its bigger brother called off through snow.

Size of load was again a subject for conversation, and whilst some of us had spend 1995 discovering things we could manage without, further discussion was provoked by the pros and cons of retractable sticks and ice axes.

Distance walked was about 100 miles, height ascended 41,000 and descended 42,000. Michael produced a new toy, an altimeter which measured our upward progress and rate of ascent; the latter varied between 0 and 700 metres per hour, and cynics suggested that it mattered little whether we were going up or down at the time. (Our best rate fully laden was about 350 metres per hour).

In all we spent eight nights in huts, 4 in hotels and 3 in bed and breakfast accommodation, rather different from 1995, but improvements in hut living standards made this rather more acceptable.

Once again it was a happy party to which all contributed: Edward was renowned for his expertise in Times Crosswords; Michael for bringing rope - 1930 vintage never unravelled; Isabella (Belinda) for ensuring we got up on time; Antonia for tackling language problems with heroism, particularly when our chief linguist Peter was down below, and both Peter and Nigella for providing a constant supply of excellent accommodation whenever we chose to move down the valley.

And shall we go to Austria again? Oh, Yes!

Wendell Jones

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Ken Baldry

In my Cross-Swiss Tour, I had missed the Foo & Richetli Passes, which come near the beginning, because of the weather. I did these formidable plods this July, starting from Sargans and walking up to Weisstannen. I made heavy weather of them with a broolly up, because of the heat and despite carrying twice as much water. The Foo is attractive all the way but both have long walks-in and the Richetli has too much military building at its foot, messing the ground up. This very long walk down to Linthal. I had a 'rest day' walking up to Braunwald. Then, I did the weird Bärentritt pass, a limestone desert plateau with very steep climbs at each end, going down being the most dangerous actual path he has seen, as it was steep, muddy and had blocks of greased limestone required the utmost care, dropping 500m to Feldmoos. That was enough hard work. I walked down the Muotatal to Schwyz, the attractive little city the country takes its name from and boated to Luzern for some tourism, including at last, a visit to the Wagner Museum at this house at Tribschen.

The photo is the view form the Richetli Pass, looking north-west.

Ken Baldry



John Chapman

A Himalayan Diversion

I was away out east for ten weeks last year - not by design but because difficult getting flights meant that that was how it was to be if I was to be in Nepal to lead a group of friends round the Annapurnas 16 October to 10 November. We didn't get round the Annapurnas because unseasonable snow had us holed up for four days in Manang with little sign of letting up, so we retraced our steps and had a delightful walk cutting to the south of the range, with splendid views of the Annapurnas and of the Manaslu mountains, especially from the marvellous hill-top campsite at Baglung Pani.

I arrived in Kathmandu on 10 September - at the tail-end of the monsoon and set about getting a visa for India with a view to fulfilling a long-held wish to go to Darjeeling, especially to ride on the 2ft narrow gauge 'toy train'. This has climbed the 8000ft from the Ganges Plain to Ghoom and thence to Darjeeling for the last hundred years - using the same steam locomotives and relying entirely on friction between wheel and track.

Monsoon damage to the track below the town of Kurseong was still being repaired, but there was the promise of a limited service starting between Kurseong and Darjeeling later in the week. So, having installed ourselves in the New Elgin hotel - a nostalgic if rather shadowy reminder of more glorious times under 'The Raj' - to pass the time Ang Kami and I arranged a short trek on the Singalila ridge. This is a long spur running south from Kangchenjunga. We were lucky with the weather and although we had a few heavy showers and spent some time wandering through damp mist we were well regarded with splendid views from Sandakphu of the sun rising on the massive twin peaks of Kangchenjunga.

Back in Darjeeling the view was hidden by monsoon cloud, but we walked up to Chowrasta, the fashionable 'parade' when this was a hill station and the summer seat of the Bengal Government. At this 'out-of-season' time of the year it was almost deserted. We hired ponies to carry us the mile and a half to North Point and St Joseph's College.

The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was closed on that occasion, but later my diary records:

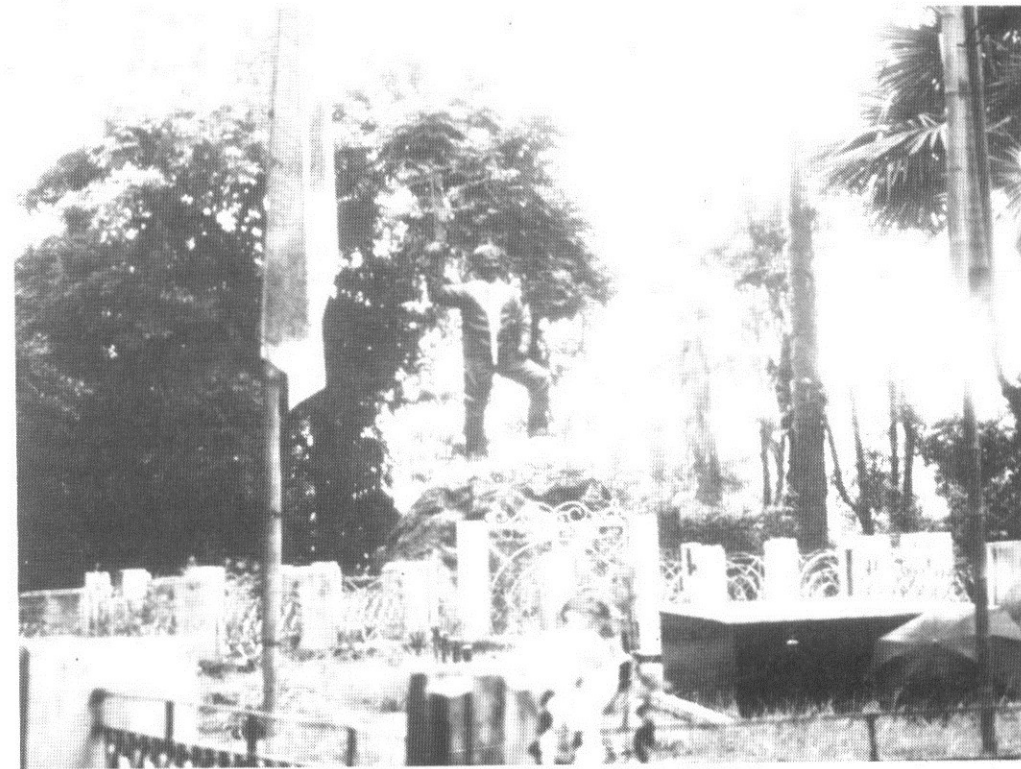
Next, the long hike down hill to the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute where there is a unique, I imagine, collection of memorabilia recording the major Himalayan epics, especially, of course the ascent of Everest. I was wryly amused to observe how subtly the Brit contribution was played down and the Indian played up. But then it is their show, and fascinating it is. I've always understood that the Institute was funded by the Indian Government as part of a deliberate ploy to claim Tensing Norgay as an Indian. In fact he was born in Nepal in the Kumbu at Thame on the way from Namche Bazar west to the Teshi Labtsa and the Nangpa La leading to Tibet.

However, there were very many interesting artefacts and photos. John Hunt features several times, including a youthful portrait of him as leader of the 1953 expedition, a 'reunion' group photo of 1973 and the first draft of his book recording the successful attempt.

Of course, the museum was dominated by the personality of Tensing Norgay Sherpa, especially by a large, life-size oil painting based on the famous summit photograph.

Just above the Institute in a quiet grove is the plain marble slab marking the place where he was cremated in May 1986, with the life-sized bronze of him as summiter to one side, wearing a fresh white ceremonial scarf - all strangely moving in the still, cool, misty air.

The Toy-Train did run, and I spend a very happy couple of hours riding its foot-plate.



Peter Farrington

The only conventional mountaineering of the year took place in March starting with the Association Meet in Appin and continuing with some winter Munros amongst the Mamores, Cairngorms, Einich, Drumochter and Monadhliath hills.

Thereafter, I concentrated on fell-running, competing in the Stuc a Chroin, Jura, Durisdeer and Corrieyairack Pass races and Lowe (Mamores/ Grey Corries) and Karrimor (Galloway) Mountain Marathons.

There are plans to go further afield in 1997 starting with a trip to Langtang and Helambu in March.

Wendell Jones

As usual the year opened with the Northern Dinner Meet, its greatest success a speedy exit on the Monday before the blizzard moved in. More snow in March and a family visit to Chester finished in brief scramble up the Cardingmill valley from Church Stretton to an ice strewn Long Mynnd.

April brought the Black Mountains Marathon and early July the annual Lakes Marathon, reduced to two people this time!

June gave a visit to the beautiful Italian lakes, but the great heat (93) put paid to all be a few short walks.

August produced a visit to the Brecon Beacons to break in a pair of boots and the Voralberg/Tyrol walk, covered elsewhere.

A visit to France in October was marred by some uninvited guests, who, not content in removing a quantity of our possessions, had the nerve to use my best rucksack to take away the loot.

Barry Pennett

I HAVE enjoyed an interesting walking and scrambling year with visits to the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and the Black Mountains of Wales.

On a cool March day we walked in the Skipton area taking in Flasby Fell. Then later in the month we parked the car at Kildwick and walked on Farnhill Moor. From March 17 to 23 we spent a most enjoyable week in Eskdale (Lake District). It was extremely cold and there was plenty of thick snow lying on Birker Moor. We had to park the car at the road end and walk about half-a-mile to the cottage we had booked.

The following day, March 18, we walked from Birkerthwaite Farm to Stanley Ghyll Force, down to Beckfoot Station and then climbed up to Blea Tarn, Siney Tarn and returned to Birkerthwaite.

It was cold and misty on March 19 so we decided to do a short walk in Wasdale. It was worthwhile for the views were superb despite the mist.

We walked the circuit of Devoke Water on March 20. It was cold and bright and the walk took in Rough Crag (1,049ft), Water Crag (997ft), White Pike (1,370ft), Yoadcastle (1,610ft), Woodend Height (1,597ft) and Seat How (1,020ft). Thursday March 21 was extremely misty so we climbed Great Worm Crag (1,400ft) just to keep our limbs working. Although it was only a short walk it was quite hard work because of the thick snow, which in places was more than a foot deep. The following day Friday March 22 was cold and hazy so we drove to Kiln Bank and did a walk in the Duddon Valley.

On Good Friday (April 5) we visited the North Yorkshire Moors and did a walk from Thornton-Le-Dale.

At the end of May, my wife Val and I and friends took a cottage at Llangarron, Herefordshire. Throughout the week we walked every day. On the Sunday we did a walk from Skenfrith Castle. The following day (May 27) we parked the cars at Llanthony Priory and walked to Hatherall Hill and The Ridge. Other walks included: May 28 - Forest of Dean; May 29 - Goodrich Castle, River Wye and Symonds Yat; May 30 - Malvern Hills (Worcestershire Beacon and Herefordshire Beacon); May 31 - Hay-on-Wye.

In June my wife walked the Cumbria Way (70 miles).

Later in the summer we did a superb walk on a highway route to Bolton Abbey from Draughton. Throughout the summer we walked in Wharfedale and Wensleydale. In August we began the Ebor Way - a 70 miles walk from Helmsley to Ilkley, which is glorious.

September saw us in Scarborough for the cricket festival but we managed a couple of lengthy cliff walks.

In October we spent four nights in the Lake District. We stayed at Sawrey and apart from one day the weather was poor. Rain-showers-more rain. However, we still managed a few wet days on the fells taking at Cartmell Fell (500ft), Claife heights (900ft), Loughrigg Fell (1,101ft) and High Knott (901ft) in Kentmere.

The most rewarding day was October 17 when it was warm and sunny. We walked in Little Langdale where we had marvellous views of the Langdale Pikes.

Further walks in Wensleydale, Wharfedale and North Yorkshire were enjoyed in November.

On another weekend we visited the Lake District (November 23-24). We got called out in the heavy fall of snow. A walk in the Solway Firth area had been planned by my wife but had to be cancelled because of the weather.

Christmas was spent in Keswick and proved to be enjoyable, the weather was just right - cold and frosty. On Christmas Day we did a seven mile walk along the old railway line and eventually finished on Latrigg Fell (1,203ft). We had Christmas Lunch on the summit.

Boxing Day was spent on Catbells (1,481ft). It was a glorious day and a fitting ending to Christmas in the Lakes.

OBITUARIES

Margaret Darvall

Margaret Darvall was born in 1909, the youngest and only girl in a large family. Her first climbing was in Dorset, scrambling on the limestone with her brothers. She went to Somerville at a time when only the brightest girls went to university, and ended up, eventually, as Principal of a Secretarial College in Hampstead.

But mountains were her passion. At first she walked alone - in Wales and the Lake District - but in her mid-forties, while on a climbing course at Capel Curig, she met members of the Pinnacle Club which led to Alpine Meets and membership of the Ladies Alpine Club, of which she became Hon. Sec. for ten years and President in 1973. It was largely due to the warmth of her personality and her efficient approach to problems that, during the year of her Presidency, the merger of the LAC with the Alpine Club when through smoothly.

Except for one year when she went to Corsica, and one on an expedition to Greenland, she climbed in the Alps every year for twenty years, often guideless. She also took part in the International Women's Expedition to Cho Oyu (1959) with Dorothea Gravina, and led an expedition to Turkey in 1963 to climb Demirkasik by the SE ridge.

By the time she joined AMBSAC as an Affiliate in 1982 her best climbing years were over. She became a keen supporter of the London social events. The Home Counties walks (until sadly her knees became too troublesome), and frequently attended the Northern Dinners. She will be remembered with affection for her dogged enthusiasm, her sense of enjoyment and for her determination to keep going. In recent years she had served as Assistant Archivist to the Alpine Club, hardly missing a weekly visit until only a couple of months before her death in March 1996, even the journey from and to her home took two hours each way.

Margaret's other main interests were the Liberal Party (she was a lifelong member, and once stood as a candidate in Council Elections) and water-colour painting. But the hills claimed the biggest share in her life.

L. Gollancz

J R Files

During his life of almost 90 years, Bobby Files, accompanied by his wife Muriel (nee Dick), whom he married in 1935, made 31 visits to the Alps or other European ranges. Sometimes he climbed with guides, as was the custom in his day, but often enjoyed the freedom of guideless alpinism. Long-limbed, authoritatively spectacled, with a raking stride, he liked, on big snow mountains, to move fast, hour after hour, on the better sort of standard routes. On rock he was rather more ambitious, and just as fast. He loved the steepness of Dolomite climbing. Living and working in the north of England he could rarely attend meetings of the Alpine Club (elected 1950) or the ABMSAC (elected 1947), but he treasured his membership, read the journals, and in retirement enjoyed receiving greetings and anecdotes from Harry Archer's meets.

His principal contribution to British mountaineering was through the Fell & Rock C, in which he and Muriel together held office during 43 years, and whose totem, Napes Needle, he ascended 215 times. He was the thrifty, ingenious Warden of Raw Head who established the barn conversion, like the cottage, as a popular and civilised base for climbers. He was President 1966-8. Preferring quality to novelty, he enjoyed over and over again a repertoire of about fifty choice rock routes in the Lake District.

Born at Kearsley, a pit village near Bolton, and graduating MSc from Manchester University, Bobby followed a family tradition of school-teaching and climbing. He was influential as senior Chemistry master at Lancaster RGS, where his nickname was Jasper. Oarsman, geologist, photographer, handyman, sharing Muriel's interest in music, ballet, books, pictures and the United Reformed Church, he was an all-rounder, and the archetype of a club climber. The Fell & Rock Library is enriched by the bequest of their notable collection of books on mountaineering.

G Watkins

A B Hargreaves

With the death of A B Hargreaves on 14th November 1996, aged 92, the British Climbing fraternity lost one of its great characters and a long serving devotee.

AB, as he was generally known, was a contemporary of several pioneer climbers of the 1920s and the 1930s, whose names have gone down in history, including Colin Kirkus, Jack Longland, J Menlove Edwards, and Ted Hicks. He was with Ted Hicks when he made the second ascent of Pigott's climb on the East Buttress of Clogwyn Du Arddu in July 1929, when disaster nearly struck. Ted, with little protection, fell from the final moves at the top of the route. It was due to their instant reaction that they were both saved. Years later AB recalled this as his narrowest escape in over 50 years of climbing. The bold new ascents he made with Colin Kirkus, often in wet conditions, resulted in their being referred to as "the suicide club".

AB seldom lead routes but he was always at the forefront of the climbing scene, being a strong and competent second for the best climbers of the period. He was renowned for excellent rope management and knots, a skill he acquired from the training he received on a sailing ship.

In 1935 AB married Maud Gordon and Ted Hicks acted as best man at the wedding. The marriage was dissolved in 1953.

In the Lake District, climbing with Maurice Linnell and Alf Bridge, AB did many of the hardest routes of the period, including early repeats of the Central Buttress of Scafell, the first complete girdle of Pillar Rock in 1931, and the first ascent of Bridge's Route on Esk Buttress in 1932.

He joined the Wayfarers Club in May 1927 and later in the same year the Climbers Club and the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. He became President of the FRCC from 1952 to 1954, and President of the Climbers Club 1960 to 1963. He was invited to become president of the Wayfarers in July 1979, but in October, after much consideration he declined due to his failing eyesight. It was a pity he could not make the 'triple crown'. He was already an honorary member of both the Climbers Club and the FRCC.

In 1928 he joined the AMBSAC. His membership lapsed in 1938 but he rejoined in 1947, becoming an honorary member in 1993. For many years he was also a member of the Irish Mountaineering Club and was instrumental in setting up the British Mountaineering Council in 1934, for which he was later awarded honorary membership.

His Alpine climbs were considerable, beginning in 1928 with the traverse of the Dent des Bouquetins and an ascent of the North Face of Mont Collon, plus two other worthy routes.

During the 1930s he was skiing in the Andermatt area of Switzerland, but it was in the 1940s and the 1950s that AB notched up many fine Alpine climbs, often involving serious rock routes and traverses of the smaller peaks. The four thousand metre peaks featured prominently in his activities as well and he made fourteen ascents above this altitude, mainly in the Pennine Alps of the Valais, including Dent Blanche, the Zinal Rothorn, the Lenzpitz, Weissmeiss and the Schreckhorn. His companions during this period were C M B Warren, M H Milne, J L Longland and Marco Pallis.

He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1960, but from this date onwards his visits to the Alps became less frequent. In 1970, he had to be rescued from the Aiguille de Argentiere due to arthritic problems with his legs. He never climbed in the Alps again, but in 1984, with his daughter Susan, he attended the ABMSAC's 75th anniversary meet in Saas Fee and reached the Britannia Hut. This was to be his last visit to the Alps.

By then poor eyesight had caused him to give up driving a car, but he occasionally managed the odd fell walk in the Lake District. Around this period he was often heard to say in his loud voice "I keep three hospitals going", one for his arthritic undercarriage, one for his eyes and another for his ears.

He had an equally long record as a conservationist. He was a founding member of the Friends of the Lake District which at that time, 1934, was a body promoting the idea of a national park. He served as treasurer for thirteen years and then remained on the their executive committee until 1984, when he retired after 50 years service.

AB was also a founder and director of a non-profit making company, known as the Lake District Farm Estates, which purchased typical, old Lakeland farms within a twenty-mile radius of the Langdale Pikes and let them to tenants who would maintain them in the traditional way. This was in 1937. The company prospered for over thirty years, acquiring at least twelve traditional farmsteads. As inflation began to erode the ability of the LDFE to fulfil its objective, several farms were sold and finally in 1975 the remaining seven farms were all handed to the National Trust for safe keeping, one of the largest bequests ever made to them. Shortly after the society was dissolved.

In 1962 the Minister for the Environment appointed AB as a member of the Lake District National Park Special Planning Board. He served as chairman of the access and accommodation committee and as a member of several other committees for fifteen years. On retirement in 1977, he was awarded the Queen's Silver Medal for his services to the Lake District. His concern for our heritage and the mountain environment was not confined to the Lake District. As was evident from his work with the BMC. In addition he was a member of the Snowdonia National Park Society almost from its inception and for a number of years he was on the advisory board for the Outward Bound Mountain School in Eskdale.

You could be excused by now for wondering if he had time for a profession. Anyone who knew the 'little man' as he was known by close friends (he was barely 5ft tall) would know that he was a veritable power house of drive and determination, a man with a sharp brain who would meet any challenge. He was educated at Denstone College in Staffordshire and in 1919 embarked on a career as a Royal Naval Reserve Cadet when he joined HMS Conway, a training ship in Mersey. He passed-out with a first class certificate, but never got to sea because of the great post war shipping slump. In a change of direction he became articled to a chartered accountant in Liverpool and duly qualified in 1929. He then went into the financial side of local government with the County Borough of Wallasey on the Wirral.

In 1931 he was offered a job as a company secretary and accountant to Lakeland Laundries in Barrow-in-Furness. The company was controlled by W G Milligan, who was a prominent member of the FRCC. They got on well together and by 1940 AB had become the financial director as well as the company secretary. Then in 1969 he took over a group chairman. The company by then had a turnover of nearly 2 million pounds and employed over 900 people. AB retired from the group board in 1980, after almost fifty years service, at the age of 76.

Running parallel to this, from 1970 AB was also on the board of the family business, James Hargreaves and Son Limited, Tobacco Wholesalers and Retailers in Blackburn. He was a non-executive director and retired from this at age 83.

He was an opera fan and would travel great distances in pursuit of this interest. In 1982 his daughter Susan accompanied him to Hungary and Austria where they had seats for a performance at the Vienna Opera House. In his 80s he went on several cruises, carefully watched over by his daughter. The Norwegian Fjords and the Spanish coast featured in these trips and he also went to St Kilda with a National Trust cruise.

Right until the end, AB attended the AGM and annual dinners of most of the clubs of which he was a member, relying on lifts from a wide circle of friends and carers. Supported on two sticks his small frail figure became a familiar sight on these occasions to a new and much younger generation of climbers, few of whom would realise he was giant of a man in terms of achievements in climbing history and in the conservation of our mountain heritage. His wake was a remarkable occasion. Many people travelled many miles to be there. Alan left us with a bang. Just the way he wanted to.

Peter Fleming

Eric Loewy

Eric Loewy, will be remembered by many members for his wonderful hospitality and kindness. His climbing record covered much of the Globe. All the continents had his footprints on them. He had trekked in the Andes, Alaska, the Philippines and the Seychelles to mention a few. His climbing included the Alps, often with his brother Rudolph.

Eric has an outstanding career as a civil engineer with his main area of interest being river maritime transport and navigation. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society of Engineers.

With his wife Pat he attended ABMSAC Summer Meets at Sas Fee, Champex and Zermatt.

M I C Baldwin

Frank Solari

Frank Solari, who died on 15 March 1996, was born in 1912 at Kingswinford near Birmingham and educated at King Edward VIth School, Stourbridge. He started climbing in 1932, and was a founder member of the University of Birmingham Mountaineering Club, becoming its President from 1933 to 1934. In 1934 he joined the Midland Association of Mountaineers and in 1936 he also joined the Rucksack Club, remaining as a member of both clubs throughout his life.

During the war Frank was sent to the USA as a roving progress chaser and trouble shooter on UK government defence contracts, where he remained until peace had returned. This experience had at least two consequences: he acquired a seemingly inexhaustible fund of stories about technical and human problems which arose and which had to be resolved quickly, a repertoire which was later to enliven many UK and Alpine climbing expeditions, and he also acquired a wife. Soon after his arrival in New York, Frank had joined the Appalachian Mountain club and was a frequent attainer at their weekend walks. It was during one of these that he first met Babs, who he later married. Babs used to say that Frank had some binoculars and she had a bird book, so it seemed a logical union.

Very soon after his return from the USA Frank was assisting in BMC affairs. His professional experience of equipment testing was called upon to develop testing methods and specifications for climbing equipment, initially for climbing ropes and karabiners. Working with Dr Bill Ward and Dr Joe Griffiths of the National Physical Laboratory formal methods for dynamic testing were devised and these soon led to new specifications and practical recommendations on the use of climbing ropes and karabiners. The interest that this work aroused led to the involvement of the British Standards Institute, with Frank being appointed as convener of the BSI subcommittee on mountaineering ropes, and in 1955 as vice-chairman of the BMC Equipment Sub-Committee. For more than 25 years Frank was involved with these equipment matters on behalf of the BMC, and he served as its vice-president 1968-1970.

Frank joined the Swiss Alpine Club Monte Rosa Section in 1954, and as a member of the ABMSAC he was a regular attendee at our annual Swiss meets for many years, as well as being President in 1969-71. In several recent years he enjoyed joining Swiss members of the Monte Rosa Section for walking tours in Switzerland and was delighted by the warm reception he was given by the Swiss.

Although mountaineering always occupied a central position in Frank's activities it did not do so to the exclusion of other interests. Three in particular were important to him: music, botany and photography. He came from a family who were musically gifted, and was himself an accomplished cello player, playing in quintet groups and performing with the Slough Philharmonic Society for many years. His second musical love was opera, a passion which he shared with his wife Babs, and which took them regularly to Covent Garden and Glyndebourne.

Part of Frank's professional life had been concerned with aerial photography and photogrammetry, so it is not surprising that he was a very skilled photographer. This skill was put to good use not only in producing superb lecture slides from his various expeditions but also it complemented his interest in botany. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of alpine flora and over the years he accumulated an outstanding collection of photographs of alpinists in their natural habitats. It is good to know that after his death the Alpine Garden Society accepted with enthusiasm this collection to add to their library, so that Frank's years of work assembling it will be available to a wide audience for many years to come. ABMSAC members will also remember with gratitude Frank's dedicated service of the years as honorary projectionist at the London indoor meets.

With his projection, his flower pictures, his lectures, and his photographic work on behalf of the Alpine Club he was a perfectionist. This perhaps epitomises Frank's character and life; unlimited patience to achieve the best possible result for the task in hand, never seeking the limelight but always ready to help. He lived a long and very full life and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

JS Whyte

Ivan Waller

The December 1996 Newsletter gave a grim list of departed members which included Ivan Waller. I had not seen much of him during the past 20 or so years, just bumping into him on the odd occasions in the Lakes. In fact, I never really knew him well even though we climbed together on and off for about ten years - mid 60s to mid 70s.

I first met Ivan and the Red Lion in Patterdale where we were both staying for a weekend in February. It was Saturday night, after dinner, and I'd lost my usual climbing partner that afternoon to an accident where he had gashed his hand with an axe and Arline had escorted him down to have it sewn up and then he had gone back home to York. So I began chatting to this wiry little bloke in the bar who seemed able to sink pints with very little effort.

We chatted about our day on the hill and he'd been soloing a number of gulleys. Well, I'd done some also when Arline had "rescued" my partner, and as this bloke, Ivan he said his name was, seemed to be stretching the truth a little I was not to be out-done (I rarely am in that respect). Just before closing time he asked if I'd like to join him for the following day and I rather thought I'd like to see how much he'd exaggerated (he may have been thinking the same thing!).

So, on Sunday morning, his wife took us up to Greenside mines in their car and we walked up, on snow to Red Tarn. I found out his surname - Waller, but it didn't mean anything to me and he didn't talk about his past rock climbs. We discovered we were both Engineers and I found his sense of humour enjoyable - very, very dry. He was, at that time, about 60 and I was half his age and only half as fit. He steamed up hill (and down) at a fantastic rate and I began to wonder if his ability to exaggerate wasn't as advanced as mine!

We paused very briefly above Red Tarn to remove axes from sacks, don crampons and he then stormed off into the combe. It was the first time I'd seen anyone use two axes and he said he'd not long been employing the technique - it looked comforting. These were two shortish "proper" axes, not today's high tech droopy things and he had them tied to his waistline - no harnesses in those days. Before we got very far up the slope he veered left saying that the arete looked interesting. At this point we were unroped and he was not showing any sign of using it. I was revising my theory of relative exaggeration. Before we started on the rocks, which were iced and powdered with a few inches of snow, I managed to have us roped up. We moved together and I was very impressed by his ability - smooth and decisive and two axes - fantastic.

No pause when we came to the top of the ridge and onto the summit except to unrope - I did not get chance to tie on again - ever. Ivan dived down the gully (easy) to the Red Tarn side of Striding Edge, then back up another strip of snow and over the edge into Nethermost Cove and then down another strip of snow, along the ridge, then back down the next strip until we came, like demented yo-yos - sans string! to Nethermost Pike. By then it was mid afternoon and I don't remember stopping for

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Glenridding Hotel, Glenridding, Cumbria on Saturday 1st February 1997.

The President was in the chair with 40 members present.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs A Jago, Mrs M I C Baldwin, Mr M Pinney and Mr K Dillon.
2. The Minutes of the 1995 AGM as published in the Journal were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.
3. Election of Officers and Committee.

The President announced that Mr M Pinney had resigned at Hon. Treasurer with effect after the AGM, and that due notice had been given that Mr K Dillon had been nominated for the position.

The President, Mrs H M Eddowes, Vice President, Mr J W Chapman, and Committee Members, Mr J H Strachan and Mr D Brooker retire in rotation.

Proposals for election of the following Officers and Committee Members were put forward:

President: Mr W B Midgley	Proposed: Mr J S Whyte
	Seconded: Prof. P S Boulter
	Passed unanimously

Vice President: Mr R N James	Proposed: Mr J H Strachan
	Seconded: Dr D C Watts
	Passed unanimously

Honorary Treasurer: Mr K Dillon	Proposed: Mrs H M Eddowes
	Seconded: Mr W B Nidgley
	Passed unanimously

Committee Member: Mr E Coales	Proposed: Rev J M Bogle
	Seconded: Mr R W Jones
	Passed unanimously

Committee Member: Mr P J Bull	Proposed: Mr D R Hodge
	Seconded: Mrs N M Hall
	Passed unanimously

All other Officers and Committee Members offered themselves for re-election and were returned unopposed.

4. Accounts
The Hon. Treasurer having offered his apologies for his absence, the Hon Secretary presented his notes on the unaudited accounts which had been distributed to the members present.

Due to the change in date of the AGM the financial year of the Association had been changed to end on 30th September 1996, resulting in a 15 month period for the last "year". The proportion of subscriptions for the year had been correspondingly adjusted, and extra expenses were incurred for sundries, rooms and an extra newsletter.

A loss of £268 would have occurred in a normal year to 30th June 1996, but this is accounted for in non-recurring expenses relating to the Britannia Hut Appeal and postage for Summit magazine.

An excess of income over expenditure of £357 for the 15 months was recorded, but a tight rein will be required over the year 1996/7.

The Treasurer expressed concern that income from membership subscriptions was down.

The adoption of the draft accounts, subject to satisfactory audit, was proposed by Mr W B Midgley, seconded by Mr R W Jones, and passed unanimously.

5. Subscription rates for 1997 and 1998.

The Committee proposed that the subscriptions to the ABMSAC should be unaltered for 1997 and 1998.

The rates would therefore remain at:

Single membership: £15.00

Joint membership: £23.00

Junior membership: £6.50

Proposed: Mr J W Chapman. Seconded Mrs A Barlen

Passed unanimously.

The SAC rates for 1997, which are fixed by the Committee, will be based on each member's Section charge in 1997 converted at the improved rate of SF2.10 to the pound. The new member's joining fee and first year's subscription will remain at £65, including the ABMSAC membership.

6. The following amendments to the Rules of the Association were proposed by the committee:

Rule 4. SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ENTRANCE FEES.

The first paragraph shall be replaced by:

"The rates of subscriptions and entrance fees applicable to the different classes of membership shall be within a band set from time to time by the Committee and approved by a majority of not less than two thirds of the Members present and voting at a General Meeting."

Proposed: Dr D C Watts

Seconded: Mr D R Hodge

Passed unanimously

Rule 6. COMMITTEE

The first sentence shall be replaced by:

"The management of the Association shall be vested in a Committee to be elected at the Annual General Meeting and to hold office for one year from the day after the AGM. One year will be one Association year, i.e. AGM to AGM."

Proposed: Mr J W Chapman

Seconded: Mr P Bull

Passed unanimously

7. President's Report

During 1996 the Association had a membership of a little over 300. I am sad to report that several members of the Association have died during the year:

Eric Loewy, A B Hargreaves, Bobby Files, Ivan Waller, N E D Walker, N E Peart, G H Hovey and Frank Solari

However, 13 new SAC members have joined, and 4 affiliate members.

Many members have participated in various of the meets arranged by our Meets Secretary, Mike Goodyer, and others. Alasdair Andrews' Scottish meets were well attended as usual. Other meets included Ed Bramley's family meet in the Yorkshire Dales, Wendell Jones' Lakeland Marathon, Rhyd Ddu in Snowdonia and the Lake District meet. Abroad, the Alpine meet was held at Argentiere with Jeff Harris in charge, and Wendell's Walkers went to Austria this year.

Various other excursions have been made by members, including visits to South America, Switzerland and the USA.

Back in Patterdale, the committee investigated the idea of uprating and refurbishing the men's shower area. Brooke Midgley made detailed plans and quotations were obtained, but as these began at £10,000 it was agreed not to proceed while the future of the lease of the Hut is unknown.

The committee are still of the opinion that the purchase of the lease is desirable and over the last three years have been aided by Derek Hanson in trying to find a way forward. Whilst progress has been made, the "ball" is yet again in the hands of the Diocese.

As we are all aware, Peter Ledebor has initiated a fund raising effort of the improvements to the Britannia Hut. He has achieved a current total of £9,640 and is still aiming to reach £10,000. The work has gone to schedule with the interior nearing completion so that the Hut can open on 1st March for the ski touring season. The official re-opening will be in June.

The co-opted member of the committee from the Swiss Embassy, Jaques de Watteville, left Britain on 14th January. Peter Ledebor and I were able to attend a farewell reception at the Swiss Embassy, and pass on to him the Association's thanks and best wishes. He made a much appreciated contribution to our Association during his time at the Embassy.

Mike Pinney, as you are all now aware, has resigned from the post of Hon. Treasurer, which he has occupied on the committee since 1980. He could be relied upon for answers relating to the Rules of the Association, procedures, etc. and of course for his efficiency in dealing with matters relating to our finances.

I would like to extend our thanks from all the membership, past and present. He will no doubt fill some of his extra time achieving more routes - thank you Mike.

Another resignation from a long-standing member is Richard Coatsworth. He has served as Company Secretary and Director of ABMSAC Ltd for many years. Our thanks and appreciation are extended to him for his time and effort on our behalf over the years.

The committee continue to work in their own free time to enable the Association to function. Without members voluntarily contributing to the ABMSAC it simply would not be able to operate.

Therefore, thanks to all the committee members; their efforts are appreciated by us all.

8. Any Other Business

Mr J S Whyte suggested that the amount required to bring the Britannia Hut Appeal Fund to the target of £10,000 could be raised at the meeting, and offered a generous opening contribution. The President however stated that the raffle at the previous Northern Dinner had been well supported and the target was expected to be reached.

Mr G G Watkins proposed a vote of thanks to the out-going President. Not only was she the first lady to hold the post, but her pleasant manner and her efforts on behalf of the Association, in particular with regard to the Britannia Hut Appeal, had made her term of office a memorable one. The members showed their appreciation in the traditional manner.

There being no further business, the President declared the meeting closed at 6.44pm.