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DIARY

Date	Venue	Meet Leader
January 12 – 14	Fearnan, Loch Tay	John Foster
February 2 – 4	Annual Dinner/AGM – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
February 23 – 25	Onich	Margaret Strachan
March 16 – 18	Braemar	Bert Bowes
March 30 – 31	Hut Maintenance – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
April 6 – 8	Newtonmore	John Dempster
May 18 – 20	Peak District Camping Meet	Ed Bramley
May 22 – June 5	Rethymno, Crete	Buff Dolling
June 1 – 3	Snowdonia Meet – Rhyd-Ddu	Mike Goodyer
June 29 – July 1	Pre-Alpine Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mike Goodyer
July 7 – 14	Dolomites High Tour	Alasdair Andrews
July 14 – 28	Summer Alpine Meet – Dolomites	Alasdair Andrews
July 21 – August 11	ABMSAC/AC/CC Alpine Camping Meet – Dolomites	Mike Goodyer
Lat July/early August	Summer Alpine Meet – Saas Valley, Switzerland	Pam Caswell
August 3 – 18	Family Meet – George Starkey Hut	book with John Murray
September 28 30	Autumn Meet – George Starkey Hut	tba
October 5 – 6	Hut Maintenance – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
October 19 – 20	Alpine Reunion – George Starkey Hut	Mike Goodyer
Feb 1 – 3 2002	Annual Dinner/AGM – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley

In addition, the George Starkey Hut is reserved for members and guests on all Bank Holiday weekends, Easter and over the Christmas and New Year period.

At the Goldeck hut above Spittal where “The Guest is King” I willingly accepted an invitation into the kitchen for my meal. Super (seemingly the most used word in Austria this year) knoedel with schweinsbraten and sauerkraut. (note order!) Goldeck hut lies on the Rupertiweg, so I must be en route for Hermagor. No!, I insisted, to the Reisskofel, which I definitely wanted to climb; yes! well worth a visit, was the opinion. The evening ended rather remarkably with a tasting of excellent white wines from Steyrmarch (Austria’s best); the last, a Welschriesling, was considered so special that fresh glasses were called for. A memorable evening.

My route continued over the Latschur to Teechendorf on the shores of the Weissensee. This lake, like the Koenigssee in Bavaria, is mostly unencumbered by surrounding roads; delightful in September for peaceful walks along the shore (the bathing season is presumably more crowded). Boat trips are possible too, starting unusually from the middle of a bridge.

Weissensee was explored in overcast conditions which however gave more interesting lighting than on a later visit in perfect weather. The next morning was similarly cloudy; not ideal for the Reisskofel; another low level walk appeared appropriate. So I set off instead for Hermagor. Within half an hour of starting all cloud had vanished and the sun continued to shine every day for the next fortnight. Too late! That half hour completely changed the course of the trip and, as I believe, for the better.

After Hermagor, I followed the Traversata Carnica. But, at first, the super weather caused doubts; I should be somewhere higher, more demanding. However the extensive views, Triglav to Dolomites, Hohe Tauern to Zillertaler Alpen and beyond, need super visibility. Besides, at intervals, limestone peaks rear up, offering a challenge. Soon the doubts disappeared and I just wanted to keep on going though I certainly didn’t set out to walk all the way from Spittal an der Drau to Dobbiaco, source of the Drau, 120km as the waters flow and perhaps 250km as the Wanderer walks.

This route follows the ridge of the Karnische Alpen where one has a choice between the Austrian and Italian sides of the range, the latter (my usual preference) is quieter but the route often less clear; occasionally, following the crest gives the easiest option. Frequent changes of side are possible; convenient, since the majority of huts are in Austria. (many belonging to Section Austria) Between Hermagor and Sexten I crossed the frontier at least fifteen times in the course of nine days. Huts are numerous; usually I passed by one or two each day. The best map I saw is the Tabacco “Traversata Carnica”, much better than my Kompass Karte or the usual Tabacco maps.

At the Dr Steinwerder hut the third beer came with a complimentary schnaps. By the next schnaps I was in the kitchen admiring the warden’s photographic record of his recent Himalayan expedition. Next winter to Ben Nevis!, he said. – super! – Did I get up the Hoher Trieb? – No, too difficult! (not worth it, I thought; nasty grass, dirt and rock made safe by loose rusty kinked wire; glad I hadn’t tried the intended traverse). – Oh! The next ones are much harder. But I learned enough that evening to discover some of their weaknesses.

On into the deep cleft of the Ploecken pass, through a maze of fortifications originating from the 1915-18 war in which one could easily wander for hours all over the mountain-side. I thought I did rather well to emerge so soon and at the top of the pass where entrance into Italy was controlled but formalities limited to an exchange of Buon Giorno.

For the south side of the pass I had no map and so went quickly astray, eventually realising I was heading for a tunnel and the inevitable via ferrata. Not deterred by this reverse, I still managed to reach the Rifugio Marinelli in time for a beer in the last warmth of the sun. I was the only overnight guest,

slept well in my two berth room, and in the morning watched the sunrise over Triglav and the Julian Alps before stirring from bed.

I was pleased to reach the summit of the nearby Hohe Warte (2780m), the highest point of the Karnische Alpen chain, even if by the easier side involving a fair amount of limestone scree; the more so, since I believe that earlier I could just see it from my window at the Reisseck hut. Now I have been up that distant speck that I looked out at each morning. Even up here there are still many signs of the former military presence. Clear views to Grossglockner and Grossvenediger, even of the distant Wildspitze far beyond the Brenner pass, and in the east, of valleys filled with mist lasting most of the day and spreading on out over the eastern plains. Glad not to be down there!

Getting back to Austria involved the unexpected descent of a convex limestone face producing a steadily increasing interest in what would appear next. How much steeper will it get? These places are usually covered with a fair amount of loose material which doesn't seem to bother the locals at all. Fortunately, the best route was well marked with dabs of red paint without which the descent would have been demanding indeed. It seemed a long way down. After that, the Rifugio Lambertenghi was visited for much needed refreshments before continuing on to the Hoch-Weiss-Stein Haus by a route which crossed the frontier three times.

400 people came over the pass from Italy next morning, strung out over the hillside, coming into the hut for coffee; a pilgrimage to Maria Luggau. But from where? And so soon after dawn. I chose an avoiding route to Monte Peralba (2694m) ascending by the via Giovane Paolo II. A bell on the summit is to be rung in remembrance of the dead of two wars and as a symbol of peace. That evening, on my return, a well practiced choir was present in the hut, rewarded after every few songs by a schnaps which ever delayed their departure and eventually left the occasionally a little out. By the time they did leave, descending the narrow path, it was almost dark. They didn't seem to care.

Next morning the hut was enveloped in unpleasantly damp cloud. Perhaps the good weather was over. I even considered descent to Gailtal. But suddenly, as I waited for coffee looking out at the gloomy scene, the cloud momentarily parted to reveal a glimpse of blue skies. No thought of descent now! Not afraid of being lost in the mist?, was the question on arrival at the Neue Purze hut. No!, I replied. In fact after the first few minutes I had been above it all day.

As one approaches the end of this traverse at the Sillianer hut, the view of the Sextener Dolomiten becomes ever more imposing. The weather remained ever super. Why not pop across? Of course, my maps were left behind in Spittal. But who really needs maps? So I visited the Zsigmondj-Comici (here the paper napkins show a pretty useful map) and Locatelli huts and bagged a couple of good summits that had kept me waiting a couple of years. Both around 2950m with stupendous views to Dodici, Lavaredo, Cristallo, Sorapis with its great coomb, Antelao with its glacier, Tofane, Sella, Marmolada, . . . Magnificent! There can't be many better views, range after range of peaks, and all that detail of impossible spires. One always wants to stay up there to look just a little bit longer.

And so finally down to Dobbiaco in Pustertal for pizza diavolo and weissbier (really a very good combination) and then, following the example of the Alpini present, a Mertillo (bluberry schnaps) drunk from a glass with a bulb containing the fruit and a funnel above containing most of the brandy. A drink requiring some dexterity. Excellent!

But wasn't I supposed to be going to the Reisskofel? Certainly! And so at last I did, taking the train to Greifenburg and climbing up through the woods to the E T Compton hut situated just below the tree line. Arriving early, I did not miss the opportunity to enjoy a meal in the garden! This was the last night

of the season and members of the local mountain rescue team were present in force to celebrate with beer and barbecue. Of course, they overestimated their abilities and in the end I had to come to their aid. With the crowding in the guest-room, we overflowed and I finished the evening in the kitchen talking to the landlady, and explained why I had come. On a previous trip the Reisskofel had been clearly visible from the Reisseck hut, far off beyond the Kreuzeck group, with its characteristic steep-sided double-peaked limestone summit making it appear an attractive goal (which might well prove too difficult). And this hut is named after an Englishman; I was therefore curious to visit it, stimulated by pictures of the rather quaint old-style wooden building on view at other huts of Section Austria.

The previous year, during a long conversation with a German from Munich over a beer in Kufstein station buffet, I was asked who was the greatest artist of alpine scenes? I had no idea. Compton, was the reply, who lived in Bavaria by the Starnbergersee. (I should have paid more attention to A. C. Xmas cards). According to the landlady, the hut lies in one of his favourite areas.

Next day I did reach the summit (2371m). Once on the summit ridge, the rock is commendably sound. From the cross I had the pleasure of reviewing most of the progress of the previous fortnight. Super!

*J. M. Scarr*

## SCOTTISH MEETS 1974 – 2000

### An Appreciation

Alasdair Andrews has organised a very successful series of Scottish Meets over more than quarter of century: a feat unlikely to be equalled. Now the time has come to pass on this onerous task to others.

The series began with Easter meets, the first at Braemar in 1974, followed by Roy Bridge and Onich in subsequent years. Since the weather was often "foul, and got steadily worse" (Alasdair's words) the meets moved to the Spring holiday starting with the Ling Hut (77) and Dundonell (79). For the past dozen years a series of frequent week-end Winter meets has been held. The total number of meets organised is astonishing: about 80!

A few members have had the great fortune to have been steady participants over all these years. All who have ever attended will always remember the great pleasures experienced and acknowledge Alasdair's great organisational abilities.

For me and maybe others, recent winters would have been bleaker without Alasdair's meets. Good format too: after dispersal over the hills, reunion at the excellent Saturday dinners.

Thankyou Alasdair.

*The last two of these meets took place at Braemar and Onich where the series began. This time both had excellent weather.*

JMS

## BURNHOPE SEAT

The following poetic gem was written by Colin Armstrong in the manner of Scotland's best worse poet – McGonagal. It recently resurfaced when I moved house. Prior to the walk I had been persuaded that the venture should not be missed, this being Durham's highest peak, with superb summit views and in the unlikely event of inclement weather our guide knew the hill better than he knew the back of his hand. Ho hum! This elegy was written following a mysterious, muddy, misty, meander through the mirk and mire avoiding old mine shafts, boot extracting bogs, wild sheep, adders, sink holes and other such nasties.

AIA.

### Mr A I Andrews Conquers Burnhope Seat

Penned by the poet McColingall

T'was in the year of 1988, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> December,  
A date which that eminent mountaineer and Alpine Club member,  
Mr Alasdair Andrews, of Edinburgh, will doubtless long remember,  
That early in the morning he packed his sack and turned his feet,  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising twixt the Tees and Wear,  
Your top will soon be conquered, never fear!

Leaving Teesdale at the ruins of Ashgill Mine,  
He struck out boldly on a northerly line,  
Accompanied by his faithful local guides,  
Messrs Lock and Armstrong, marching faithfully at his sides.  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising twixt the silvery Wear and Tyne,  
The attainment of your top will soon be mine!

The weather, being somewhat inclement and dull, and wet,  
Mr Andrews was in some doubt and soon began to fret,  
That due to low cloud and zero visibility,  
Finding the summit might be beyond his guide's ability.  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising twixt the silvery Tyne and Tees,  
Your top may not it seems be won with trifling ease!

However, Mr Armstrong, exuding supreme confidence, felt compelled to boast,  
That there wasn't a hill from coast to coast,  
With which he was more familiar – and made light,  
Of the fact that he could easily find the way, even in a blizzard and at dead of night!  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising proudly twixt the silvery Tyne and Wear,  
The route to reach your top, to me, is absolutely clear!

Blundering boldly across the plateau of morass and bog,  
He journeyed on, in spite of mist and fog,  
Protesting vainly that he was not lost  
And would find the summit at all cost.  
Saying –  
O cursed mountain rising somewhere twixt the muddy Wear and Tees,  
Wish to God your foul peat hags would freeze.

Eventually, by sheer persistence and inbred skill,  
They struggled on, mid mist and bog, until,  
The trig point finally hove in sight,  
A fact which gave them cause for much delight,  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising proudly twixt the silvery Tees and Tyne,  
The view from here is normally very fine!

But on this noble day, I fear,  
The view was nil, both far and near,  
And so, without waiting round for it to clear,  
They mutually agreed "Let's now get down from here",  
Saying –  
O mighty mountain, rising twixt the Tees and Wear,  
Thank God we do not need to come back here next year!

**ANNUAL NORTHERN DINNER PATERDALE MEET 4-6 FEBRUARY 2000**

The meet attracted only eighty-seven members and guests, which is the lowest number for fifteen years, even so it is quite respectable. There were thirty or so by the Thursday before the meet and a similar number stayed on afterwards. Unfortunately lengthening the stay as the whole period was beset with gales and precipitation.

The hut was half full and the hotel very full with an overspill at the adjacent B&B. This does not speak well of today's mountaineers. Well members did go into the hills with some going high in storm force winds. Nobody admitted to enjoying the experience, though some claimed to have stayed dry or perhaps they meant not soaked.

The AGM was held in the hotel before the dinner and has been recorded in the Journal 2000. The ABMSAC Ltd AGM followed.

Our guests at the dinner were Paul (Tut) Braithwaite, the Alpine Club president and his wife Jane. The Swiss Ambassador was unable to come and sent his good wishes. For the second year running we enjoyed the company of the Consul General of Switzerland Max Inhelder and his wife Sylvia.

Paul Braithwaite gave an interesting and humorous speech, reminiscing about climbing and mountains, much of it covering the Swiss Alps. The speech by Max Inhelder had a more serious content, touching on World War II and Switzerland's world standing.

Despite the weather the meet was very enjoyable.

*Brooke Midgley.*

**FORTUNE FAVOURS THE FIRST MILLENNIUM MEET**

**FEARNAN, 14-16 JANUARY 2000**

Feast not fast supports us on the hill. So deservedly that night, thirteen in all and careless of superstition, we sat down and ate our fill of an excellent and abundant four course meal with wine: worthy indeed of such a splendid day.

Rosy dawn had announced the azure day. The impressive views of snowy peaks, the highest thinly veiled by wisps of cloud, product of the light boreal breeze. Some went to Tarmachan (3241ft). Strangely they left crampons below, perhaps even intending to revive the lost arts of step-cutting. By such means they gained the summit but failed to traverse the ridge. These curious exploits were the talk of all Killin by evening. Others entered Glen Lochay intent on Sgiath Chuil (3050ft) but were discouraged by a fallen bridge and the thought of wet feet. So attention turned to the better Heasgarnich (3530ft): a pleasant ascent over snow apart from the icy cloud-enveloped summit. Other parties, on both days visited Glen Lyon to find yet another Ben Dearg and reported fine views.

A meet long to be remembered.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, John Dempster, John & Marj Foster, Roger James, Alf Lock, Shirley Mackay, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Geoff Urmston.

*JMS*

Saturday: Mostly dry but very windy. Slushy snow at lower levels. The majority, believing the best weather is always to be found in the east, went off to the Cairngorms, either to Glen Feshie or Glen More. Sooner rather than later they were repulsed by the strong winds and driving spindrift. None reached a summit. Meanwhile a determined pair reached the plateau of Creag Meagaidh via the Window but failed to find the summit in the difficult conditions.

Sunday: Very wet. All left for home, fleeing the rising flood.

A pity about the weather. Good Company as usual though.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Geof Bone, Bert Bowes, John Dempster, Peter Farrington, John & Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Alf Lock, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan. Tony & Suzanne Strawther, Geoff Urmston.

*JMS*

**THREE SEASONS AT BRAEMAR 17-19 MARCH 2000**

Two who arrived early on Friday were able to enjoy a walk from Invercauld Bridge through delightful pine forest in Spring sunshine. There was time enough for a traverse of Culardoch with views to Ben Avon. Later that evening, five found the inn at nearby Inver most recommendable.

On Saturday a party found warm Summer conditions on Ben a'Bhuird at 3900ft with the summit plateau almost devoid of snow. Various routes were followed: one traversing the mountain from south to north along the cornice – from the safety of terra firma – with fine views of the east face and frozen lochans in the corries below. Other parties ascended Carn an't Sagairt Mor and neighbours near Loch Callater. Distant mount Keen was also visited.

By Sunday, Autumn had arrived with a strong cool westerly wind. A party ascended Derry Cairngorm, pleasantly at first, but hampered by the wind in the final stages. It was a relief to descend to the shelter of the Luibeg burn which proved to be an agreeable route home.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Ian Brebner, John & Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Alf Lock, Roger James, Shirley Mackay, Morag MacDonald, Bill Peebles, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Geoff Urmston.

*JMS*

**THE ASCENT OF BINNEAU BEG SATURDAY 8th APRIL 2000**

**(ONICH MEET 7-9 APRIL)**

There are many different paths up a mountain. But we were agreed. Binneau Beg was the objective by way of the long stalking path. I have absolutely no idea why: the lowest and remotest of the Maluores. But I was promised Binneau Mor afterwards.

So five set out from Maluore Lodge along the roundabout, winding, undulating, stoney track bound for Binneau Beg. After half a mile, crossing the first bridge, Peter pointed to steep, wet, grassy slopes and said "I'd much rather be going up there!" "Right", I replied, and we left the other three and headed directly for Na Gruachau, even though a traverse over Binneau Mor, the highest summit of the Maluores, might not be everyone's idea of a short cut.

It was pleasantly sunny with splendid views down Loch Leven and to snow covered peaks all around. Peter was for the steepest line, myself for gentler slopes, yet we arrived together at the summit. Peter was soon off again, determined to prove our route was indeed a short cut. I remained to eat a sandwich before following.

The snowy traverse along the narrow ridges to Binneau Mor was one of the most pleasant of all those I have enjoyed and I was pleased too that someone else had the labour of making all those footsteps which made my passage so much easier. We regrouped on the summit.

The East ridge looked attractive, steep at first, but not too steep, and I suggested descent. Peter, leading, soon discovered unexpected ice. I paused to arm; the bite of teeth into the ice beneath the thin covering of snow was a very pleasing sensation considering the impressive plunge below. Soon crampons could be discarded and descent continued down the snowy arête.

Once below, we came upon our companions resting beneath Binneau Beg and after a short exertion all five of us stood together on the summit.

Down again, it was discovered that, disgracefully, there were no Gentlemen in the party; the sole Lady was to be abandoned to retrace her steps alone. Her former escorts were determined to ascend Binneau Mor by the East ridge, while we two intended another short cut home around the northern slopes. So we parted once again; this time three ways.

We aimed to cross the North ridge of Buinneau Mor below the snow slopes, and as we approached I began to climb so as to clear the ridge the sooner, while Peter, on a more level course, remained below. "Are you not going to climb?" I asked. This was taken as intent to ascend the ridge, at first up steep, trackless, quartzite screes. Still, devoid of snow, it was certainly easier than ascent of the East ridge and so we had the pleasure on regaining the summit of seeing the other party still some way below. We could now enjoy a welcome rest while they still struggled, eventually forced to cut steps on the final steeper icy section.

Having ascended Buinneau Mor the pair naturally wished to include Na Gruachau in their itinerary and Peter went too. "Time for another short cut", I thought, and a lucky passage around the end of the ridge got me back to Maluore Lodge one leisurely pint ahead of the others.

Of course, the Lady had already been back an hour.

#### The Cast (in order of appearance)

I	JMS
Peter	Peter Farrington
The Lady	Margaret Strachan
Her Escorts	Bill Peebles, Jim Strachan

P.S. This account does not imply that others accomplished nothing that day or indeed that we were incapable of further ascents on Sunday – far from it!

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Ian Brebner, Peter Farrington, John & Marj Foster, Alf Lock, Roger James, Shirley Mackay, Morag MacDonald, Bill Peebles, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan.

JMS

## ABMSAC FAMILY MEET – PEAK DISTRICT- MAY 2000

The family meet was again held this year at Callow Top, just north of Ashbourne, in the Peak District. As well as meet leader Ed Bramley and his family Janet, Jennifer and Simon, and friend Louise Minogue, the meet was also attended by Mike, Anne and Robert Goodyer, Andy, Lynne, Paul, Gail and Ian Burton, and Mike Pinney.

On the Saturday, we set off for a walk up Wyedale, starting at Ashford-in-the-Water, a delightful Derbyshire village, whose bridge over the river has featured in countless photographs. The first part of the walk saw us moving through typical limestone farmland scenery, with pasture fields and drystone walls. The weather was good, and all of us were in shirt sleeves. Dinner time saw us at Monsal Head, with a superb picnic spot overlooking Monsal Dale, and Monsal Head viaduct on the disused Peak railway line. To cap it all, the Monsal Head pub was but a stones throw away. It really was like dinner on the balcony. After lunch, we descended down to the trail by the river, and headed slowly off back towards Ashford. The riverside scenery was interesting and varied, and gave plenty of opportunities for those interested in birds, fish, and flowers. The most observant of us even spotted orchids.

You would think that all that fresh air would tire out young bodies easily, but not a bit of it. When we got back to the campsite, all the children were straight into the pool. As for us older souls, we were joined by Brooke and Arlene Midgley for an evening aperitif, before we made the most of the evening weather, and slowly worked our way through a barbeque.

Sunday saw us with no lasting effects from the previous evening, and so we set off to Alstonfield, which is a small village on the tops above mid Dovedale. From there, we descended into the valley at Milldale, and then moved up slowly through Milldale and Wolfscote Dale, towards Hartington. The pleasant babbling river, with its many small weirs and features made a perfect backdrop to our wanderings. By dinner time, we had reached a set of limestone caves by the side of the river, which again proved a hit with the children, who then set about exploring them with a vengeance. In the afternoon, we made our way back over the fields to Alstonfield, arriving just in time to avoid the worst of a downpour, which was just starting.

Another good weekend had by all!

Ed Bramley

## THE BREGAGLIA CIRCUIT 8-15 JULY 2000

For the first few days of our circuit we were based at a hotel at Vicosoprano and began day one at Maloja, from where we set off up a good path through slopes full of flowers towards the Lunghin pass. After a brief stop at the lake, four of the group climbed the easy ridge to the summit of Piz Lunghin 2780m, while the rest went directly to the pass 2648m then on to the Septimer pass and down a steep path into the Val Maroz and Casaccia.

On the second day we had to retrace our route from Casaccia back up to the Val Maroz where we were met with a cold wind as we headed up into the bleak Val da Cam but the flowers were spectacular, with edelweiss and several varieties of primulas. By lunch time the clouds were closing in, making our path more difficult to find as we contoured across landslides and washed-out gullies. Then the rain really set in, and the way down to Soglio seemed unending as the path became increasingly waterlogged. The view from Soglio of the Badile Peaks is legendary, but all we could see was cloud and rain. A long day for all of us, but even longer for the final group who missed the last bus and had to return to the hotel by taxi.

Rain fell all that night and the post bus arrived from St Moritz the next morning covered in snow. The forecast was no better, so we decided to have an easy day, most of us driving up to Soglio by car. But by late morning the skies had cleared, and we were able to enjoy lunch in the sunshine gazing at the Badile peaks gleaming under a fresh covering of snow. However, with the snow so low, we guessed that our plans for the next few days would have to be amended.

So, instead of continuing the circuit by going up to the Sasc Fura hut, we decided instead to go directly to the Sciora hut, up the Val Bondasca. After a gentle start the path steepened to go up a wooded gully, and 1300m. above Promontogna, we finally arrived for our first hut overnight. A brief reconnoitre up towards the Cacciabella Pass established that we would not be able to take that route the following day, so we decided instead to reverse our original route of the previous day and cross the Colle Vial to the Sasc Fura hut. The path crossed unstable boulders and streams, with a final scramble up to the top of the Vial. The snow covered faces of the Piz Badile and Piz Cengalo were at their best in the early morning sun, but it was a wild, rocky, winter/spring world we were in. Then lunch at the Sasc Fura hut in the sun, and steeply down another 1100m back into the valley to get to the postbus and cable car up to the Albigna dam, just 45 minutes below our objective, the Albigna Hut, snowbound at 2331m. There we were told that a party had crossed the Casnil pass that day, leaving a trail in the new snow, so half the group decided to try that route down to the Forno Hut and Maloja the next day.

*The route was easy to find at the start, but then the tracks in the snow seemed to go in the opposite direction from our path. It was hard going plodding through the soft new snow, and we eventually reached the summit of the ridge between the north and south Casnil passes, with no tracks going down the other side. We decided to call it a day and return to the hut when the clouds closed in and it started to snow hard. We staggered into the hut at 1 pm for a welcome rest and meal, then took the easy way out by returning to the valley by cable car. The rest of the group had walked all the way down on another steep path, climbing under and over fallen trees blocking the way.*

Though most members completed the walk, others spent much of the time doing shorter walks from Vicosoprano. We would all like to thank AIA for organising the trip, and all the participants for making the week so memorable.

Participants: Alasdair Andrews, Mark Davison, Buff Dolling, Richard Fohn, Livia Gollancz, Rosemary Greenwood, Pamela Harris, John & Rowena Mellor, Hugh & Renate Romer, Ernst Sondheimer, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Bill & Rosemary Westermeyer, Michael & Sally Westmacott.

*Mark Davison*

## “OUT BY THE INN”

### ALPINE MEET 2000

The Millennium Alpine Meet was based on the Hotel Engadinerhof in Pontresina from 15<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> July, and followed a dampish “Walk-in” Meet.

Our party was about thirty strong, dwindling slightly as the second week proceeded. It included our Senior Past-President, Bryan Richards, come, with his wife, to relive his memories. He had been President at my first ABMSAC Meet, when I had been one of the young Turks, a description no longer applicable. There were the Musketeers, not perhaps so adventuresome as in 1999, due to intervening illness. Another feature, bringing back memories of Slovenia was Don Hardy’s little gang, quiet and purposeful, getting up more things than anyone else.

In an attempt to keep accounts of the Meet within factual bounds, Pam and Alasdair sent me a small volume, headed “Travel” in Italian, and featuring a hitch-hiker in glasses, blue sweater and orange and black striped trousers. It is unclear whom this was intended to represent. Within were recorded the ABM’s exploits.

Whilst truth should never be allowed to get in the way of a good story, I, nevertheless, went through the exercise book up to the point at which its editors gave up.

Accounts begin with the activities of Don Hardy’s close-knit band, who had booked in early, because their leader had to return to whatever he does in Cowes week. (It must be very strenuous, else why put so much effort into training). The deeds of the group are couched in brevity.

“Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>, Muottas Muragl” (spell that Ed) – Val Langua in deep snow”. Successive expeditions all ended with those three words. My thoughts ran on similar lines, as a fairly mature Swedish Tank (not Wendell’s Rust Bucket, please, Alasdair) chuntered over the Julier Pass, against a flow of Swiss vehicles all bearing bicycles, and towards a late breakfast. The snow was a great deal lower than it had any right to be in Mid July.

Next day brought the first mass trek, with the exercise book revealing the Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all walked up the Roseg valley, last visited in a horse drawn coach in a thunderstorm (original for that classic French punchline “The postillion has been struck by lightning”) and up to the Tschierva Hut.

Already doubts are creeping in; there is mention of two baby marmots which prevented one member from reaching her objective. A few days later the same lady is detained by some good primulas.

A learned professor from Manchester, arriving late from a horrendously expensive journey through the Shuttle, is so overcome that he devotes a whole page to buying a postcard and getting as far as the postbox. The rot has set in. By the second Sunday a party gives a description of how they had coffee with the rabbits.

By now our Mancunian friend has ventured along the ridge of the Corvatsch, amid the usual mass of snow, and for once brilliant sunshine; so spectacular was the resultant sunburn that the management were considering hiring him out as an additional heat source in the hotel’s large lounge.

Either sunstroke or the discovery that he had paid 180 times as much as your scribe to get through the tunnel, caused our man from the North to wax eloquent in his account of an ascent of Piz Kesch with details of how the Edwards pipe bowled over every girl he (Edwards) met; he even likened the Chief Musketeer to James Bond – even though Sean Connery has now become a Scots Nationalist, I still can’t see the resemblance.

It is with some relief that one turns to read of the enjoyment experienced by several members at various concerts in the town; the ABMSAC has occasional climbing limitations; at least it is cultured.

In short a good idea Pam; next time clutch the book tight and make all the entries yourself.

Pontresina is a small town, little more than a main street, with a gorge on one side and a mountain on the other. It lies on a road and rail route leading from the Engadine over the Bernina Pass to Italy. Its hotels are Edwardian, large and geared to quantities of folk coming by train; car parks are small.

The Engadinerhof, obscured by shops at ground floor level, forms quite a large block, set back a shade

from the main high street. Its name is inscribed in large letters clearly visible from well up the mountain, a source of encouragement to weary travellers staggering down beside the chairlift which they have just missed. From the front observant drivers notice its name in small letters on the side of the second floor as they circumnavigate the one-way system for the third time.

It has remarkably large public rooms and equally remarkable small baths, some with a pit for the feet and a much higher section for one's seat – quite suitable for drinking whisky but not for much else.

Herr Hisseng, a genial German, proved an indulgent host, whom we suspected to be making an earnest study of the British sense of humour, which occasionally baffled him. His young Swiss wife, Carina, encouraged us all with prettily delivered homilies over the breakfast table.

Herr Hisseng's property interests included a field at the back to which he had no right of access, and a strip of land opposite the hotel, of which the lease appeared to have run out, since a block of flats was rising before our eyes on the site. May be life in Switzerland is not always simple. A hotelier's real estate is seldom much of interest to his guests. At the Engadinerhof however, and in consequence of these little difficulties, parking was limited to three spaces backing on to the street, quite safe if the car was left in gear, with the hand-brake on, and a chock under the wheels, together with a minute grassy paddock, adjoining the dining room and inclined at an angle of 15 degrees and featuring a few smallish rocks at around sump level.

The majority of the party had flown out and could view the struggle of a small band of British drivers with the equanimity common to viewers of spectator sports. For the motorist retaining one's space became a matter of life and death, failure either involving perpetual placation of the Gods of the public parking meters down the road, or use of the station facilities, ¼ mile away and 300 feet lower. The chief Musketeer created an additional space for himself by arranging his car behind and at right angles to two other ABM vehicles, a ploy which only worked until one or the other moved out.

Her Hisseng took pity on us – he had found a space. The chief musketeer was showing the rest a clean pair of heels, until, as we arrived, a Frenchman eased into the vacant slot.

But what of the mountains? There was much talk of climbing Piz Palu, but the only relevant entry reads "Piz Palu from Diavolezza. Hardy/Dillon/Slater. I persuaded Don to enlarge on this cryptic note and he confirmed that unconsolidated snow had prevented the party from going beyond the first peak.

Other Pizzas were done in plenty, Kesch, Nair, Ot, Languard, Corvatsch; non Pizzas included Munt Pers and La Streta, climbed by some on the return from a booze buying spree in that curious Italian enclave/duty free state of Livigno. Snow in depths unprecedented for July contributed to the dearth of major Pizzas. Neither Bernina, nor Roseg, nor even Morterasc, done long ago with John Byam-Grounds who died this year, became a subject for discussion. Piz Languard, normally considered a good walk, command such respect that most abandoned the snow-covered track for the alcoholic content of the Georgy Hut, sixty metres below the summit. Going a little further, I met the chief musketeer, whom I had no reason to believe to be on the mountain. "This is no place for you, Wendell" said he. It was nearly 4.00 p.m. Pontresina lay due West; I missed the lift and was down by 7.00 p.m. The two Musketeers, Edwards and Brooks went South, over another col, and caught a train – eventually – and were duly clapped into dinner at 8.30.

One noted that many of the huts were within a hundred metres of the summit. Perhaps that is why the London chain of restaurants, Pizza Hut was so christened.

Memories abound; the Gluhwein consumed at the Paradis Hut as the rains swept in. The teenage party

met on a narrow path – "yes, there are 460 of us!" The lady who announced in a voice audible perhaps in St Moritz and certainly in the hut 100 feet below, and had no intention of visiting, that she wanted a comfort stop. The market, and giant chess game that suddenly sprang to life in the village, as we were post-prandially perambulating.

It would be wrong to close this account without paying a tribute to Alasdair for his skills in organising a holiday for the 30 or so eccentrics who dropped in from time to time. Like the Duke of Plaza Toro, he led his army from behind and could usually be found astride a boulder doing his administration. Rank has its privileges, and on his own admission Alasdair had a large room and a large bath; I have never heard the full story but understand that on the way from one to the other, he made contact with a bar of soap; it is a relief to know that he suffered no lasting injury.

On the final Friday it rained; a quick decision, and some rapid packing. Leaving pyjamas under my pillow, followed. I had no Swiss Motorway ticket and rushed beside the torrents into Austria. Out down the Inn – my pyjamas followed later.

*Wendell Jones*

#### **HAYDON BRIDGE MEET 11-12/11/2000**

The first meet of the winter season was to Haydon Bridge, close to Hadrian's wall. Accommodation was rather extravagant, consisting of two cottages in a hotel complex between the village and the wall. Unfortunately, the weather before the met precluded several of the intended activities because most of the group had not packed wetsuits!

However, an intrepid group set off on Saturday morning for a walk along the wall to Once Brewed, returning via Vindolanda. The weather, whilst it could not be described as kind, at least permitted intermittent good views in all directions, and the hostelry at Twice Brewed was reached in good (if moist) order. After a chance to savour the local liquid speciality, discretion overcame valour and a motorised return was unanimously approved.

Sunday dawned dry, and parties left for various destinations before retuning home. Unfortunately the rain set in again before lunch, and retreat (via an unexpected midden in the author's case) again became the order of the day – oh well, better luck in 2001.



## **MEMBERS ACTIVITIES**

### **James and Belinda Baldwin**

We attended the Northern Dinner and the summer meet, which are recorded elsewhere. We admit we were amongst the group Wendell Jones makes fun of for getting excited about having morning coffee with rabbits but their photograph does show what special rabbits they were. We had never encountered tortoiseshell rabbits before.

In April, with five others including ABM members Penny Austin and Antonia Barlen, we spent a week walking the South West Coast path from Padstow to Zennor. This is a spectacular stretch with much interesting wildlife. In September we did the second half of Wainwright's Coast to Coast Path from Kirkby Stephen to Robin Hood's Bay. It was marred by bad weather especially in the high scenic stretches. Mud and poor visibility were the order of the day. In October we embarked, with two others, on the Hardy Way in Dorset, doing it in day excursions. In order to appreciate the exercise meant making up for deficiencies in literary education so there was also an intense period of reading some of Hardy's novels. Walking in the winter months certainly recaptured the atmosphere of his often gloomy scenarios. We have covered two fifths of the path in extremely muddy conditions and with the path obstructed by fallen trees and floods at times. Dorset is gently undulating but the conditions have presented us with challenges.

As usual we have taken advantage of our locality and had many walks along local stretches of the South West Coast Path, in the Blackdown Hills and on Dartmoor.

### **Buff Dolling**

This year, by way of a change, I took a winter break on the Island of La Gomera. "Where's that?" you might ask. La Gomera is a small island, very mountainous off the coast of Tenerife, 35 minutes by hydrofoil from Los Christianos.

La Gomera is a mountain walker's paradise with dozens of paths and tracks criss-crossing isolated valleys where you rarely see another person. I stayed at a small fishing village called Playa de Santiago, which is, I'm afraid to say, about to be developed. The village is about 30.35km from the capital San Sebastian where the ferry docks.

San Sebastian gets its place in history because it was the last place Christopher Columbus stopped to take on fresh water and to pray in the local church, before setting sail for his voyage of discovery to America. The church and well can still be visited and are of course local tourist attractions.

There are some short walks from Playa de Santiago, but the most rewarding and longest are from the centre of the island mostly around the National Park of Garajonay. This area has been declared an area of natural beauty by UNESCO, the highest category given to a protected area.

To reach the park you have to take the local bus which is quite a long way round, or you can go by taxi, as I did.

Our first walk took us through the forest of El Cedro taking 2½ hours through a thick and misty laurel

forest reputed to be the largest in Europe, with 43 different types of laurel. Some were 20m high and 300 years old and there are many other trees mostly from South America, but some also from Europe. There are dozens of paths through the forest, most of which are well marked. When you leave the forest you come into a lush valley where you can hire old renovated cottages. You have a magnificent view over the rest of the island and a clear view across the bay to Tenerife. From the top of Garajonay 1,487m on a clear day you can see the islands of Tenerife, La Palma and El Hierro.

My next trip I took a taxi to the Rock of Ajando 1250m. From the road I took a little used path through trees and bushes and slippery rocks for ¾hr, after emerging from the bushes I was met with a spectacular view down the valley as far as the eye could see. A very good mountain path dotted with palm trees, giant cacti and different coloured bushes and plants. Every 5-10 minutes I stopped, silence except for the occasional drone of bees.

After 1½ hours I came to a small hamlet called Benchijigoa which has a restaurant and bar, closed of course, with a few houses and renovated cottages for hire. Here I met two German hikers.

After taking a couple of photos I continued down the valley along a path which had been cut out from the side of the mountain and along dry river beds. After 2hrs I reached the hamlet of Pastrana. I stopped for 15 minutes to admire the views, I then continued down the valley for 1½ hrs before I reached Playa de Santiago for a welcome pint of lager. In nearly 5 hrs of walking the only people I met were the two German hikers.

My final hike of the holiday involved a bus ride to a village called El Cerado which is about 1200m high, you take a very steep mountain path into the valley of Gran Rey. This path was for hundreds of years the only way out of the valley. It winds its way along the side of a deep ravine and along the side of the mountains until you are met with fantastic views of the Valley Gran Rey. This walk is quite hard work and not recommended in wet weather. The walk takes about 2 hrs to get to the first part of the village of Gran Rey, which is spread along the valley. It is another good hour to get to the resort which is becoming popular and commercialised.

There are dozens of walks among deep ravines and craggy mountains which I hope to visit in the near future.

Accommodation is plentiful from Hotels to Hostel apartments and renovated cottages. I have a few brochures if anyone is interested.

## **A SIGHT OF EVEREST**

### **James Bogle**

I made a tour of Tibet which ended up with a visit to Everest Base Camp. We made the crossing of the Himalaya at Gyatso La (5220m), a bare plain where there were a great number of prayer flags on poles, as is customary at a Tibetan Pass, and descended by the main road - in truth an execrable track where vehicles were turning over in the huge potholes - to the little hamlet of Shegar (New Tingri) where the night was spent in a surprisingly reasonable hotel considering it was so remote a settlement.

The next morning we made a further long and steep ascent to another pass, the Pang La, and to our

excitement and pleasure we were given a distant view of Everest, partly obscured by cloud, but clear enough to see the summit, the north east ridge and the south col. Cho Oyo showed its summit also. The ground at the pass was remarkable too, consisting of a shattered red rock for all the world like a disused brickyard, but in spite of being so elevated and exposed a spot it sustained quantities of very attractive flowers.

It was still some considerable distance to Rongbuk (4980), where we set up camp. The monastery did not appear to be thriving, though there were some monks and nuns around. The view of Everest was now both closer and clearer. There was a rough track which vehicles could manage from Rongbuk to the Base Camp (5200), and it wouldn't have been Tibet if there hadn't been some yaks, though what they found to feed on was a mystery. The Base Camp itself was a level space surrounded by rock walls. It was damp, with pools of water here and there. There was a small monument inscribed Qomolangma; a quite large wooden hut, which was firmly shut; a small concrete edifice that looked as though it might have been a public lavatory, but I doubt if it was; and a mound about ten or fifteen metres high covered in prayer flags, which we ascended. Also, when we were there, there were several well pitched, but deserted tents, belonging, we assumed, to a party on the mountain. I formed the opinion that anyone willing to spend six weeks there, let alone climbing any higher, deserved congratulation. The altitude alone made exertion an effort and the surroundings were hardly 'camper friendly'.

We returned to Rongbuk for our supper, and were joined by a hungry young American, whom we fed, as there was plenty left over. He told us that he had read there was no need for ice axes or crampons to reach the site of Camp IV. "Was he an experienced climber?", I asked. "Oh yes - I have done great things in Colorado." When we left the next morning we were relieved to see his tent quite undisturbed. Our best view of Everest was in the gloaming, altogether unobscured, and looking as imposing and unwelcoming as it truly is. Indeed I am pleased to have seen it, but I am not raring to go back!

#### Peter Farrington

Started the year with some more winter Munros, first with Tony Perrons and then during Association meets at Laggan and Onich. Having passed by some of the more accessible ones like Meall nan Tarmachan, Cruach Ardtrain, Beinn Dorain and Beinn an Dothaidh, for many years they were long overdue. Less easy to get at were Sgurr Choinnich Mor, Sgurr Eilde Mor and Binnein Beag but equally enjoyable. A visit to the summit plateau of Creag Meaghaidh via The Window with Phil Hands in deep fresh snow and poor visibility failed to locate the essential cairn. Consolation was found on Stob Poite Coire Ardair.

A spring week with my wife in the village of Selimiye on the Loryma Peninsula of Mediterranean Turkey, produced some pleasant walks and prickly summits. Gaiters are a 'must' for these coastal areas.

In August Tony Perrons and I joined a four man expedition led by Chris Hooker of Andean Trails to the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru. The walking circuit of this compact range is around one hundred miles long and crosses eight passes between 4,200 and 5,000 metres. The great pleasure of the route lies in the constant proximity to the huge glacial faces of some of the most spectacular peaks in the Andes, the best known probably being Yerupaja, 6634m. Siula Grande, 6344m. and Jirishanca, 6094m. Below them are several glacial lakes which provide the most impressive campsites imaginable. Towards the western tail of the massif we traversed the peak of Diablo Mudo, 5250m. by its N.W. Ridge and North Face on good snow and poor rock at about P.D.; an interesting route with tremendous views. The overall weather was very good with frosty nights and sunny days. Our UIAGM guide throughout was Hernan Oropesa-Lullya from Huaraz. Both he and Chris Hooker were excellent and are highly recommended.

Apart from walks on my local Islay hills, a wet and windy autumn weekend with Associate member Danny Clark-Lowes on Aonach Mor - Grey Corries and Beinn a Bheithir completed the year's activities.

#### Peter Goodwin

Late August, Dominic and I took up an invitation to climb Mt. Ranier with two friends, Scott and Marj from Milwaukee. For acclimatisation we climbed Mt. Adams, 12,276ft., another outlying Cascade Mountain. The approach to Riogh camp proved steeper in places than the Mazane Glacier route to the summit.

Mt. Ranier is an imposing mountain, having the largest glacier cover of any mountain in the contiguous United States. According to a previous American acquaintance "Mt. Rainier eats your ass!" Setting off from Paradise Valley, a beautiful spot full of colourful long-stemmed flowers, marmots and chipmunks, it is hard to believe that the world's largest recorded snowfall accumulated here over the winter of 1971-72; 1,122 inches of snow. At the John Muir campsite, running water is reserved for those using the guide services, so we made do with more dubious supplies off the glacier below. We chose the Ingram Glacier route, technically easy but with considerable objective danger - fatalities in June - from immense seracs. Dominic's urgings - "must go faster", "can't stop here" etc. resulted, despite 20 mins off route, in our reaching the summit, 14,411ft. in 5¼ hours against 6 - 8 hours expected. The eastern crater rim is kept partially free of snow by steam and heat from within the mountain, having an area of 'penitentes' reminiscent of the Andes.

Less favourable weather upset our plans for rock climbing up the jagged crags of Liberty Bell, though Scott and Dominic enjoyed some severe pitches down valley. With the others returned home, I spent a few days in N. Cascades National Park. Known as the American Alps and though lower than the Rockies, these are steep mountains rising to an average 7,000ft from close to sea level. Setting off well before dawn, I headed up forest zig-zags for Cascade Pass. Coming round a steep bend in thick dark mist two large spooky eyes confronted me at six yards. I had been hoping to see a bear but not this close! Fortunately it proved to be an elk. At the pass, drizzle turned to downpour, continuing for some 20 hours. Much of the evening and night at high camp was spent attempting to divert streams away from the tent.

In dazzling sunshine, a straight forward glacier crossing leads towards Sahale Mt. 8484ft. For an 'easy' mountain, the final pointed rocky peak proved more exacting than expected. That I had not chosen the easiest approach was confirmed by the number of abseil slings on the final block. Some are unhappy with the permit system, but the spirit of John Muir runs strong here, unspoilt country with not a hint of rubbish to be seen on tops or at high campsites. Also the quality experience (partly weather related) of a mountain-top to myself, wonderful views and the nearest sign of life - a mountain goat stripping along the glacier below. My final walk was up Sourdough Mt. which could well be renamed Huckleberry Mt., most refreshing!

#### Wendell Jones

Over the years the ABMSAC Northern Dinner Meet has indulged us with snow, iced up paths and frozen waterfalls, torrential rain and occasional sunshine. 2000 proved to be a horizontal Meet, judging by positions adopted when the wind blasted across the fells. Knocked over four times in as many minutes, the year 2000 suggested a 2000 foot ceiling.

My first continental holiday of the year involved golf which has no place in a climbing Journal, save that the first day's heatwave was succeeded by a magnificent pyrotechnic display on one of the Le Touquet courses, with shafts of lightning diving into the fairways. No one stopped play, because no one wished to admit he was scared stiff!

June took us to Northern Italy, a week on Lake Garda, where heat-induced debility prevented more than gentle lakeside pottering. Selva in the Val Gardena proved healthier, or would have done, if I had not lingered on the top watching a storm brewing over the neighbouring Sella massif; a pass had to be crossed in descent, and a lightning bolt gave me a sore head as I scuttled over it. A safer day was spent on Col Dia Pieres (a peak not a pass) above a valley where 85% of the people are neither Italian nor German but Ladin. Typical Dolomites, with big flat tops and nasty vertical sides.

A fortnight later I drove out to the Pontresina Meet; 867 miles in 24 hours is something that one is advised not to do at the age of 70. However, there is much to be said for non PC behaviour, and the art of the cat-nap is a new and valuable discovery. Additionally one was able to be a participant in the great Engadinerhof car parking saga. Un-motorised activities were limited by new snow to pottering up peaks of 3,200 metres or less as reported elsewhere.

A visit to Patterdale in September gave a day in the hills around Grisedale Pike, and Kathy's excellent party, where the guests outnumbered the incumbents.

In between times I potted in the Black Mountains, Brecon Beacons and Malvern Hills; in the case of the latter, the main problem lay in crossing the Severn.

## DOLOMITES 2000

Mike Pinney

In 1998, see the 1999 Journal, I had a week's tour in the Ortler followed by a couple of days in the Dolomites. Thus when Jeff suggested the Dolomites for September, I was very keen to revisit the area.

The Loughton MC team, Jeff Harris, Vic Odell and Chris Raves drove out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September. The Yeovil MC team, Gerry Martyn and myself with less available leave, flew out with Ryanair on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The flight was initially billed as Verona, which would have given us the shortest drive up along the side of Lake Garda. The destination was then advertised as Verona-Brescia. In practice the aircraft landed at Montichiari, a small airport with a brand new terminal building. Fortunately our rucksacks were amongst the first to appear on the conveyor belt and we headed for the car hire office. Although there were 3 agencies, since most had obtained a special deal by booking through Ryanair, a long queue developed at the Hertz counter, with other agents somewhat under employed. The Hertz agent seemed not to have made any preparation and each booking took an age to process. Although we were third in the queue, it was still half an hour before we were away. Moral, the driver heads straight for the car hire office with the remainder of the team collecting luggage.

We had supposedly been upgraded, but we were issued with a little Hyundai – the first time in Italy I had not received a Fiat! The boot was even smaller than a mini and we had to fold down the rear seats in order to load our rucksacks. I subsequently discovered that whilst shutting the tail-gate, I had dented the panel! Thus before returning, we had to remove the trim and were able to then easily push out the dent. However, I was able to wind the car up to Italian autostrada speeds. But due to the delay at the airport and the extra distance, it was about 10 pm before we arrived at Canazei. At the bar in the centre of the village we were able to obtain excellent platters of ham and cheese besides a welcome beer – we had arrived! By the time we arrived at the camp site it was after 11 pm and the barrier was down and we had to carry our bags across to our encampment having talked our way past the campsite manager, which involved parting with passports. The advance party had had a productive week with good but cool weather, but getting warmer.

The following morning after a leisurely breakfast, we headed up to the Sella pass. The Hyundai, being so small, was a treat to park! Gerry and myself headed for the Trenker route, the SW corner on the First Tower. Jeff and Vic, having done the route during their first week, headed for the North West Arete. When we got to the base of the climb there was fortunately no-one in sight on the first few pitches and we geared up packing our approach shoes in our rucksacks already containing water bottles and light waterproofs, ready to sample the delights of the Dolomite limestone with rucksacks on our backs! The first pitch led across easy slabs to belay below the polished Trenker crack! We had taken the AC guide, which was half the weight of the Kohler-Memmel Classic Dolomite Climbs. The AC guide showed this as the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch compared with the other guide, which correctly showed it as the second. On subsequent days we Xeroxed the relevant page from the Classic climbs guide to have with us on the route! Gerry had thus drawn the short straw for the crux pitch!

Fortunately the crux move is protected by a horizontal stake, but it felt very precarious on the polished rock with an off width crack, (like a Froggat Dif Chimney – not good for morale). The subsequent pitches were somewhat easier with a chimney leading to the top of the climb and a late lunch. This also gave us a chance to survey the Kostner route on the second tower, so having quickly visited the top, we descended to the col. between the 2 towers, before traversing about 30m leftwards along a ledge to a large block, the start of the route. The rock did not seem polished, but a couple of easy pitches brought us to the foot of a corner with peg belays. The corner provided delightful climbing with good nut placements. A further pitch brought us to the top where we met a party who had come up a north face route. Whereas we were in thin trousers and tee shirts, they had Alpine trousers and fleece jackets. Part of our rationale for a September trip was that we would be able to climb south facing routes without getting too roasted, whereas in a July trip we would be looking for the shaded climbs. From the top of a well marked but circuitous path led us back to the car, with a stop for ice creams.

Sunday was less successful from a climbing view point. We chose the South pillar of Piz Pordoi, the one occasion when we met queues. Part way up, 2 routes merge, so in the end we abandoned climbing and headed up to the Pordoiscarte. The contrast between the grassy valley and the lunar landscape of the hinterland was very marked.

On two occasions we drove across to the Falzarego Pass. The Falzarego towers provide a compelling line. Arriving at the Piccolo, the first 2 pitches were clear with a guide and client starting an adjacent route. The first pitch is the crux, starting up the SE face at about HS. The route then tends across to the left and directly up the arete, 150m of climbing. A short abseil to the notch, then down the gully to the west face of the Grande, which we had to ourselves. This gave 130m of climbing, the second pitch providing the crux moves. After admiring the views from the top, the peaks above Cortina, an easy path initially northwards led us to the base of the towers. The Via del Buco provides 250m of climbing on the Langazuoi. The mountain, or what is left of it, is riddled with tunnels cut by the Austrians and Italians in World War I. Each side would progressively blow away larger sections of the mountains to dislodge their opponents' emplacements. An English guide is available from the cable car station. The south rib of the Hexenstein was yet another fine line saving its crux to the finishing crack. This mountain too had a network of tunnels, the tunnel behind the summit providing welcome cover from a passing shower. The path to the north again gave an easy descent.

The guide book gives 5-6 hrs for the 600m, 22 pitch traverse of the FunffingerSpitzen (5 fingers), followed by a 4hr descent. In September this requires good time keeping, if a long descent in the dark is to be avoided! Tuesday morning saw Jeff and myself at the cable car station for the first challenge of the day. The "cars" keep moving, the first person stepping smartly into the car from the first line. The second person starts from a second line 5m along, stepping in behind the first. The attendant promptly shuts the door dropping the latch. With rucksacks it was rather friendly! At the col there is a CAI hut and we could see 2 parties on the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch of their selected climbs. One party claimed they were doing

our planned route, which was disconcerting! The first pitch in fact led up easy but unprotected slabs before an easy scramble led to the rib. The rib was followed with exposed and steep moves to the top of the thumb. After 1 pitch of down climbing, an abseil station materialised and we abseiled into the notch. 3 slab pitches across the index finger led us to a notch before the middle finger. We had to squeeze under a huge chock stone before climbing to the top. 25m of down climbing and we then traversed the ring finger on its right and the little finger on the left. A combination of abseils and down climbing then brought us to a scree filled gully, the path improving as we got lower. We arrived back at the car an hour before dusk.

We felt that no trip to the Dolomites would be complete without a via ferrata! Thursday morning saw the team, each with rucksacks containing helmet, harness and slings arriving at the large car park just to the east of Pera. From here there is a regular minibus service to Rif. Gardeccia in the Rosengarten (the road is closed to cars). We headed westwards over a col with good views down the *Costalunga* valley. A northwards traverse took us to the start of the via ferrata, the Santner pass. The grade 3 turned out to be of similar difficulty to Jakes rake and a few ladders and fixed wires so our gear stayed in our sacks. At the far end we had lunch, watching others completing the route and looking across to see parties descending the Rosengarten. A descent eastwards brought us to the Gartl hut and the Vajolet Towers. After viewing the routes we continued down to the Vajolet Hut and south back to our starting point. The following day we returned to climb the Vajolet Towers, which contrary to previous information were not too polished. The Gartl Hut looks very tatty from the outside. The inside was just the opposite and we enjoyed tea and cakes after completing our routes.

The forecast for the Saturday was not good, so we headed down along side Lake Garda and to look around Verona, camping just outside the city. I look forward to the 2001 meet in the Western Brenta Dolomites and a possible excursion back into the Ortler.

## OBITUARIES

### JOHN BYAM-GROUNDS 1917-2000

John Byam-Grounds who died in April may only have been known to older members of the Club; he joined the Association in 1937, and was a Vice-President in 1966-1968; a man of integrity and presence, he would have made an excellent President had business commitments and, latterly, health permitted.

His mountaineering career started dramatically at 9 when he joined his grandfather's party to walk from the Platje to the Britannia Hut; this involved getting lost in a blizzard, a 40 foot fall by one of the party and a return at 10 p.m. just as a search party was leaving. At 16 he climbed the Matterhorn with Emil Perren in under four hours; the Zmutt ridge with the same guide at 20; twenty years later he capped these exploits with the Furggen ridge with B. Perren.

In the UK he became a member of the M.A.M. and met his future wife, Muriel, at one of its Meets; later they rock-climbed together on honeymoon.

His climbing was usually Swiss-based and included the Young Grat on the Breithorn and the Marinelli Couloir on the East Face of Monte Rosa; most climbs were with guides usually with Emil Perren and his family.

A career in engineering entailed visits to many parts of the world, and as his daughter puts it "He always took his climbing boots". In off-moments he ascended Table Mountain and Point Lenana on Mount Kenya, and attempted Malte Brun (New Zealand) and Popocatapetl.

Educated at Summerfields and Eton, John was invalided out of the Royal Artillery, and became involved in engineering research with Alvis; when Coventry was bombed, John came in to find his workshop all that was left of the factory. He went on to become sales Director and Managing director of a number of engineering companies; one project was the design and production of prototype metal axes, based on the inventions of Hamish MacInnes.

I first met John and his family at Sils Maria in 1964; in those days the ABMSAC usually employed one Guide to lead three or four ropes; John would always be in charge of one of the unguided ropes. At the end of the Meet, following a not to be forgotten coach journey in a thunderstorm up Val Roseg we climbed the Morteratsch. Next day John took his guide to climb the Biancograt and travers across to the Diavolezza via the Piz Palu. In 1966 with Paul and Virginia French we had a thirteen hour day on the travers of the Aiguille Rouges d'Arolla in difficult conditions. Earlier when Hamish Brown, John Jesson and I returned belatedly from an ascent and circumperambulation of the Ruinette, it was the guide and of course John who reascended from the hut and met us on the glacier.

Later in the same year John represented both AC and ABMSAC at the installation of the commemorative cross on the Dent Blanche, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first ascent.

Although still a very good "goer" in his late forties, John inexplicably met up with a heart problem, which prevented him from going high, and brought his climbing to a premature end. Undeterred, like many mountaineers, he then switched to sailing. In the 70's he and his family moved to North Wales, and most generously allowed the ABMSAC free use of a cottage there as a Welsh Hut.

John had always an interest in the Alpine environment, and in his latter years a hobby of collecting saxifrages became a passion; so much so that he combined with a distinguished Czech professor to write a book on the subject, which is now a standard work.

His closing years were shadowed by illness; an operation in 1984 went horribly wrong and left Muriel totally paralysed. John, Gay and her husband Roger nursed Muriel devotedly for many years. Latterly John's own heart condition worsened and ultimately caused his death. A little before this, I sent some prints of our climbs together in the 60's; they were intended as a gift, but each came back with a humorous caption on the reverse. A fine gentleman

*Wendell Jones*

### Dr. HERBERT D. NORTON M.B. Ch.B., FDS RCS Edin.

It is with sadness that I report the death on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2000 of Herbert Norton who was a very faithful member of the ABM for over 20 years and who with his wife, Lotte was a regular and welcome participant in Association meets over the year.

Herbert was born in Hammelburg in Germany on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1914 and died 10 days after his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. His education started in Wurzburg and after passing the equivalent of A levels, he left Germany as the evil days of Nazi rule were starting and went to Holland where he was a farm labourer for a time prior to his move to Manchester where he graduated in Medicine and Dental Surgery and where he had a career of great distinction. His hospital and university contributions made him an ambassador of British Dentistry and he gained international respect as a surgeon.

He was a regular player of the viola in string quartets and his music and the mountains were a source of pleasure throughout his life. Many of us will remember him as a very good friend and a faithful

member of the ABM. He remained an active climber up to a year or so before his death. His kindness and charming personality will be remembered with respect and affection by all of us who enjoyed his friendship.

We will all sympathise with Lotte in the loss of her delightful and gifted husband and we too will miss him greatly.  
*Paddy Boulter*

### HAROLD S. FLOOK 1909 – 2000

Harold Flook died suddenly, and peacefully, on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2000. Harold spent his early years in North London and, following graduation, joined the staff of University College School with responsibilities for Chemistry and Music. He was especially interested in music and received much acclaim for the annual choral concerts he put on with the school choir and an orchestra which he conducted. He was an accomplished musician being the organist at All Souls, Langham Place and also the official accompanist to the Goldsmith's Choral Union.

Early on, Harold became interested in mountaineering and spent a number of summer seasons in the Swiss Alps, climbing 4,000m peaks with Swiss Guides. He visited the Bernese Oberland, Engadine and Penine Alps. His notable successes included Piz Roseg and the Matterhorn. Harold joined the ABMSAC in 1958, the Jubilee Year and attended the Jubilee Met at the Hotel Glacier in Saas Fee taking an active part in the climbing programme.

His first ascent with the ABMSAC was with the party which attended the presentation of the Plaque at the Britannia Hut. On the following day they completed the traverse of the Allain Horn down to the Langeflüh Hut; and later in the week the Port Jen Grat. The following year the Alpine Meet was held at Kandersteg. This was more a social Meet but there were climbing parties and Harold joined a rope ascending the Weisse Frau with Fritz Ogi, the Frundenhorn with Getfried Brugger and the Lotschen Pass. He was at the Zinal Meet in the summer of 1964 but the weather prevented many climbing expeditions. On the Sumer Meet of 1965 at Sils Maria Harold managed to complete an expedition on the Cima di Rossi with a sprained ankle. He was also at the Obergurgl taking part in climbs which were not too strenuous.

He continued to join in the Summer Meets and, when this was not possible, he would link up with friends, usually at traditional resorts in Switzerland – Saas Fee and Zermatt doing high level walks and then travelling to the Engadine by the Gkacier Express from Zermatt to San Motitz. Climbing from Pontresina, Piz Moteratsch was successfully ascended but Piz Palu was doomed to failure by the storms in the night. A start was made from the Hut but the guide decided to abandon the attempt due to the deep snow and it meant a walk down back to Pontresina.

This meant he had ascended a number of the 4,000m peaks in the Alps.

He was elected to serve on the Committee in 1960 and for a further term in 1973. He was elected a member of the Alpine Club in 1960.

Two of his endearing traits – particularly when with a climbing party – were firstly his abilities as an organist. When the route ran through an Alpine village a visit to the church would be made and, if accible, Harold would give an impromptu organ recital to entertain the group – failing this, there was nearly always a piano available and he would play a selection of pieces which always included his favourite "Sheep may safely graze".

He was often called upon to accompany after-dinner recitals by members of the Meet and seemed well able to cope with old and neglected pianos.

Another more important technique employed by Harold – when on an expedition the party suddenly went quiet. Maybe it was discovered that we had taken the wrong route and it was 4 miles further to the journey's end, or maybe the descent was more difficult than our present route. Harold, at the appropriate moment would recite a few lines from one of Hilaire Belloc's books "Cautionary Verses" e.g. "Sarah Byng who could not read and was tossed into a thorny hedge by a bull". The party listened to the rendition chuckling at the humorous bits and soon all stress was gone and everyone proceeded onwards and arrived back safely.

An award which he won and of which he was secretly rather proud was a silver medal for Ballroom Dancing.

Harold was also a regular attender at the Association's Easter Meets in the United Kingdom. In the sixties, he visited, and climbed in most traditional centres – Fort William, Onich, Bettws-y-Coed and Brodick showing a preference for the mountains of Snowdonia.

His profession meant that he had the advantage of long vacations and he paid regular visits with two or three friends to the guest house run by Fred Taylor in Capel Curig. Fred was an instructor for the Mountaineering Association and was proficient on most of the rock climbs. It was always possible to join up with Fred for some expeditions on the rocks. The first day usually started with the Milestone Buttress but continued with climbs on Tryfan, Idwal Slabs, Grib Goch and others on Snowdon. These were followed after dinner on a fine evening with some practice climbs on Capel Curig Pinacles. Fred eventually retired from the guest house but Harold and Lawrie were often invited by very kind friends to visit their farmhouse near Llanrwst for wonderful days spent walking over the Welsh Hills. They continued to pay visits long after Harold's retirement and how enjoyable they were.

The years rolled by and Harold began to approach retirement and, in 1981 – 82, he and Lawrie, his younger brother, who had completed his tours of duty in Malawi, Africa, left Chorley Wood to live in the bungalow at Portscatho on the Cornish coast where he tended the house and garden aided by Lawrie and also cared for his *Pittisporum*. He had tried to encourage this shrub in his large garden in Chorley Wood but it did not like the climate there. With Harold's outgoing temperament, they soon made numerous friends with similar interests – in music, gardening, the church, walking and, of course, the mountains. Both paid regular visits to the ABMSAC meetings and events and also to visit their large circle of friends.

His interest and love of the mountains was maintained by regular annual summer coach tours to the Lakes, Scotland and later it was more often the Welsh Hills and Snowdonia. The excursions to Snowdon brought back fond memories of holidays spent at Capel Curig and excursions on the rock climbs on Idwell slabs, Trifan, Crib Goch and countless others.

Harold remained reasonably active all his life, walking every day on chopping trips and tending the garden – he was, in fact, working in the greenhouse when visited last July. They had given up the car and, when a troublesome leg ulcer caused problems, Harold drove an electric buggy. It was for treatment to this ulcer that he was taken into hospital. Then, quite suddenly, he slipped away quite peacefully in his sleep, just before Christmas. He will be sadly missed by all his friends. He was a dear friend, kind, generous and always helpful in every way possible. We are grateful that his long life ensured he was with us all for so long.

Unfortunately, Lawrie has mobility problems and is unable to continue living alone in the bungalow in Parc and Dillon road but now lives in the local nursing home.

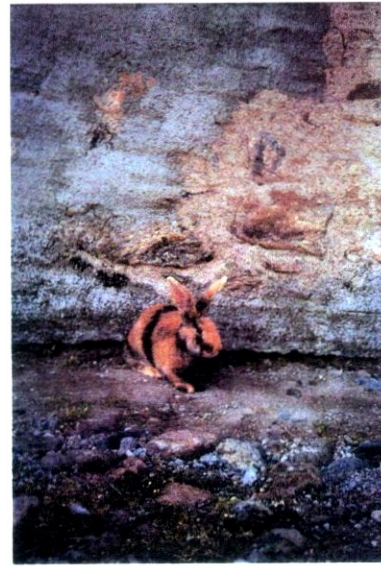
Our commiserations go out to Lawrie.

*Reg Parker*

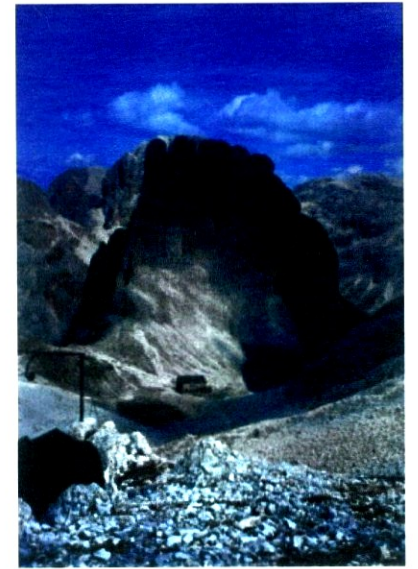




Eastern Crozer Rim  
*Peter Goodwin*



Rabbit at coffee stop in  
Val de Fain *Belinda Baldwin*

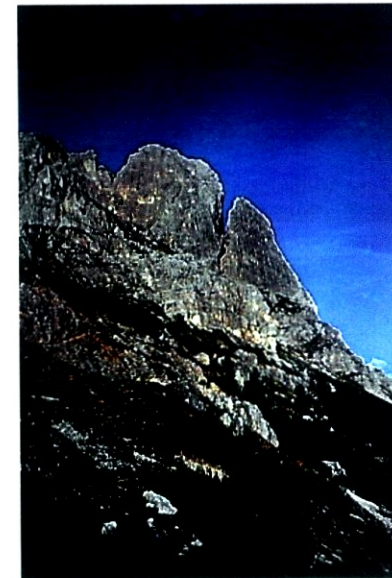


Vagolet Tower Earth Hut  
*Mike Pinney*

Mt. Ranier  
*Peter Goodwin*



Looking towards  
Sandiago in the Valley of  
Benchijigua  
*Buff Dolling*



Fabarego Tower West Face  
*Mike Pinney*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Glenridding Hotel, Glenridding, Cumbria on Saturday 3 February 2001.

The Meeting was chaired by the President and over 40 members were present.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Cooper, Meryl Gartside, Phil Hands, Bryan Richards and Hugh Romer.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 5 February 2000 were approved and signed. There was no business arising from the minutes.
3. Election of Officers and Committee

Vice President Mike Pinney and Committee Members Peter Goodwin, Nigella Hall and Phil Hands retired in rotation. The President thanked them for their contribution.

The Committee had proposed David Penlington as Vice President. This was seconded by Colin Armstrong and passed unanimously.

The Committee had proposed Penny Austin, Ed Bramley and John Foster for the vacant places on the Committee. This was seconded by Antonia Barlen and passed unanimously.

The President announced that Hugh Romer had indicated that he would like to stand down as Hon. Secretary due to ill health and that Alasdair Andrews had agreed to act as Secretary until a suitable replacement could be found. The President thanked Hugh for his many years as Secretary and for the help and assistance that he had given to him and his predecessors and hoped that Hugh would make a speedy discovery and that it would not be long before he would be able to participate in Association activities.

All other Officers and Committee Members offered themselves for re-election. This was proposed by Colin Barnard and seconded by Jim Strachan and passed unanimously.

The President thanked the Officers and the Committee Members for their assistance during the past year.

#### 4. Annual Accounts.

The Treasurer presented the annual accounts for the year to 30 September 2000.

The number of members paying subscription remained at 255 with the number of full members decreasing by four with a corresponding increase in the number of affiliate members.

Income had risen by £78 and expenditure by £139. The surplus of income over expenditure has declined from £1019 to £892 and the net assets had increased to £37,477.

The adoption of the accounts were proposed by the Committee and seconded by Mike Pinney and passed unanimously.

#### 5. Subscription Rates for 2001 and 2002.

The subscription rates for 2001 and the bands within the rates for 2002 may be set are unchanged from last year and are as follows:

	2001	2002
Single Membership	£16.00	£16.00 - £18.00
Joint Membership	£24.50	£24.50 - £27.00
Junior Membership	£7.00	£7.00 - £8.00

#### 6. President's Report

See separate from Mike Goodyer.

7. There was no further business, the President thanked everyone for attending, and declared the meeting closed at 6.40p.m.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Well, my first year as President is over and we have had another successful and eventful year.

### Membership

As you have just heard our membership numbers have remained much the same as the last few years. We have had several new members joining the Association – welcome.

### Finances

We have had the Hon. Treasurer's Report and so I need to say little more about the finances. The London meetings are still running at a loss and therefore as a cost to the Association. This is one area that still needs to be looked at. Thanks to Alasdair Andrews for his work as the Hon. Treasurer and for presenting the accounts.

### Meets

Once again our programme of outdoor meets were well attended. The social meetings in London, although enjoyable and interesting evenings have not been well attended. Our thanks to Peter Ledeboer for organising the London lecture evenings. Sorry to say that Peter is not in the best of health and we hope he gets well soon.

We had over twenty meets last year. Our UK meets have been generally well attended. The winter meets in Scotland, organised by John Foster, continue to be a great success. John has been helped by several members acting as Meet Leaders. Other meets have been held in the Lakes, North Wales and the Peak District. Many thanks to all the Meet Leaders who made these meets possible. At the Patterdale Buffet Party we once again invited the PCC. It was another good evening, although we were outnumbered by our guests! Many thanks to Kathy McManus for organising the meet and the buffet.

A few dedicated members continue to attend the Maintenance Meets and help keep the Hut in working order. Many thanks to those unsung heroes.

The Alpine Meets were a highlight of the Meets Programme. This year a number of unusual events came together – the ABM/AC/CC camping meet and the Hotel meet were not only both at the same venue and almost at the same time but they were both in Switzerland (Pontresina). Over 30 members and guests attended the meets. The weather was not kind, being unseasonably cold and snowy. The emphasis was more on mountain walking rather than more serious exploits. Everyone enjoyed themselves nonetheless. Many thanks to Alasdair Andrews for his hard work.

### George Starkey Hut

The 14 year lease has now been signed. While we have been waiting the Hut lease to be available we have spent time, along with the TCC, consulting with members and the major hut users on the need for improvements. By the autumn this process was complete. The key areas identified for improvement were the washrooms, and kitchen, with the cold and the damp also needs addressing.

A small team of members from both clubs have been developing ideas over the winter months and we are approaching the position where those ideas can be progressed to fruition.

This is an exciting time for the Association as we move to bring about significant renovations to our Hut, which has stood us in good stead for many years. As we continue to make progress we will use the Newsletter and our new website to keep members up to date.

### Committee

During the year we have several Committee meetings at meets, as well as in London.

My thanks go to Nigella, Peter and Phil for their support and encouragement whilst on the Committee. Many thanks also to Mike Pinney, Vice President, for invaluable input at Committee meetings and encouraging new members and for helping me keep sane on our journeys on the M5/M6 on Friday nights. I would like to thank Alasdair Andrews for stepping into the Hon. Secretary's job back in the autumn and for organising the AGM and the Committee meetings.

### Obituaries

Three well known members died during the year – J S Byam-Grounds, H Flook and H Norton. Obituaries are published in the Journal.

So, to finish on a high note we have the Hut improvements in hand, a good meets programme planned for 2001, and a strong Committee to see things through. Thank you.