

## ABMSAC Journal 2005

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### ABMSAC 2005 Meets Diary

Dates	Meet / Venue	Leader
w/c 29 April	Dornie (Kintail) – book your own	John Foster
29 April-2 May	Cornwall - <i>Joint TCC Camping Meet</i>	Judy Renshaw
Spring Bank Holiday		
	Ashbourne – Family Camping Meet	Andy Burton
10-12 June	Rhyd Ddu	Ed Bramley
2-16 July	Cauterets, Pyrenees	Alasdair Andrews
23 July-6 Aug	Vicosoprano	Mike Pinney
3-10 Septmeber	Bernese Oberland	Alasdair Andrews
23-25 September	George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Alasdair Andrews
14-16 October	Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Machynlleth	Dick Yorke
21-23 October	Alpine Reunion Meet, GSH	Mike Pinney
4-6 November	Beer, East Devon	James Baldwin
11-13 November	Brecon Beacons – <i>Joint TCC Hut Meet</i>	Judy Renshaw

**For full and up to date information of the current Meets Programme please see the latest Newsletter**

### Editorial

*by Richard Winter – Honorary Editor*

The year since the last Journal has been a memorable one for the Association in that the long discussed and much anticipated refurbishment to the George Starkey Hut has taken place. We even closed the Hut for a period so that the builders could get on without interruption. Don Hodge, who has been much involved with the whole project, has contributed a report that appears in this Journal. Personally I can't stress enough how much I enjoyed warm rooms and a HOT shower on my last visit. Well worth waiting for and now we are getting organised on doing some proper marketing to fill Hut places. Mike Pinney tells me that we can always sell weekend places to other clubs so we really need to concentrate on mid-week bookings. If anyone has any ideas on potential mid-week customers please let the committee know.

Our meets programme has gone from strength to strength. As a truly national club we need a full meets programme throughout the year. We have always had an outstanding winter meets programme in Scotland and now this is being expanded with a varied and interesting programme throughout the rest of the country during the whole year. John Foster is really getting to grip with this and is being helped by Meet Leaders who have particular local knowledge. Could you be a Meet Leader to an area that you know well? If so please give John a call.

On top of all this we have our annual Alpine Meets. Not many clubs are able to offer three organised Alpine Meets each year, but we can. Every year Alasdair Andrews organises a hotel based meet in the summer and the annual AlpTrek in the autumn, these are both well attended and I can only guess at the amount of work that goes into them. Additional to these Mike Pinney organises the Alpine Camping Meet in the summer; this is a joint meet with the Alpine Club and the Climbers Club. See the Newsletter for full details of all our meets and please make the effort to come on meets and to introduce some new members. On behalf of us all, a big Thank You to everyone who organises our meets programme.

Members in the South-East have been able to enjoy a series of London Lectures that are held during the winter. These are organised in conjunction with Rucksack Club, The Fell and Rock, and The Austrian Alpine Club. In addition to interesting lectures it also allows Members to meet up occasionally away from the meets and also to meet other people with similar interests. Details are published in the Newsletter and I very much hope that more Members will be able to visit London and enjoy these lectures.

Surely worthy of a mention in the Journal although written up in the Newsletter,

this year at the Annual Dinner we honoured our former President Paddy Boulter with Honorary Membership of the Association.

So on to this year's Journal.

Following the Editorial is a summary of discussions that have taken place in committee concerning the future direction of the Association. This is not a policy document but is to place some ideas before Members in order to keep them up to date with our thinking and to, hopefully, stimulate further thoughts and discussions. Please read it and discuss any ideas you have with any of the committee. I am indebted to our Honorary Secretary, John Dempster, for preparing this well balanced and informative summary.

Nikki Wallis is one of our younger members; this means that she is less than sixty three and in fact is considerably less than sixty three. Nikki works as a Snowdonia National Park Warden and, as members will know from previous articles she has written, Nikki has diabetes. Following her previous trip to the Dolomites that featured in the 2004 Journal, last year she went on a trip to Broad Peak in the Himalayas. I make no excuse for publishing her article in full and with pictures. It is too easy these days to write people off who have conditions like diabetes and Nikki is a shining example of what can be done with drive and ambition. I believe that this is an important article and hope that all readers will draw inspiration from it and perhaps change their views of what people can do if they really want something enough.

Besides Nikki's article we have another instalment from Wendell Jones' misspent youth, John and Marj Foster in Alaska between organising meets, Mike Scarr reminiscing, Sally Holloway in Morocco and John Mercer proving that there are interesting and challenging things to do when the knees mean that going up mountains is a problem.

Then there are the usual Meet Reports, Members Activities, AGM Minutes and, of course, the Lists.

I hope that you will all enjoy this year's Journal and that it will encourage many of you to take up your pens and send me something for the 2006 Journal. I look forward to hearing from you.

## ABMSAC - The Future

The Club is not facing any immediate crisis, but the future outlook is worrying.

### What the Club offers

The Club has a lot going for it. It has some 270 members, more of half of whom are active. It has a good meets programme, with three Alpine meets and about a dozen UK meets a year most of which are well attended and indeed some are over-subscribed. Its annual dinner in Patterdale is very popular. It has an attractive hut, recently improved, and well located in the heart of the Lake District. The Club has a stronger emphasis on Alpine climbing than most British clubs.

### The Problem

Although total membership has remained roughly static in recent years, the average age of members is 63, with almost a quarter of the members over the age of 70. Full members now represent only 40% of the membership and this proportion is steadily falling – virtually no full members have been recruited in recent years. There is an obvious and urgent need to attract new and younger members if the club is to have a long term future. Some steps are already in hand. A new leaflet has been prepared to be distributed to potential new members, and efforts will be made to increase usage of the improved hut. But other steps are possible to improve the attractiveness of the Club.

### A possible re-structuring?

The ABMSAC was founded in 1909. At that time the SAC did not permit non-Swiss members to form their own sections, so the British members of the SAC formed their own club, although each member had to belong to a Swiss section as well. Many famous British climbers were members including Mallory and Odell.

From about 1970 the attractiveness of the SAC to British climbers began to wane. The subscription was high, the discounts in the huts were modest (and could be obtained more cheaply by joining other clubs) and club's insurance policy was restricted to Swiss members. Membership of the ABMSAC was falling and the club faced a crisis. The decision was taken to introduce a new category of affiliate membership whereby affiliates could join the ABMSAC without being members of the SAC proper.

There was originally some uncertainty about the status of affiliates. Some thought that they should be treated as aspirants, and expected to convert to full membership in due course. Hardly any did so. The affiliates were initially treated very much as second class citizens. They were not allowed to hold office in the club or to propose new members. Gradually, as affiliates became a larger and

larger proportion of the membership (and an even larger proportion of the active members) these rules were relaxed as it became increasingly hard to find full members to hold office. Now, only the offices of President and vice-President are restricted to full members.

Nowadays, the distinction between full members and affiliates makes little practical difference, but it is arguable that the structure of the club (and indeed its name) is unattractive to potential new members. The name "Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club", besides being a mouthful, is inappropriate since the majority of members are not members of the SAC.

#### The solution?

These problems could be rectified by altering the constitution of the Club so that:-

- It was given a new name
- There would only be one class of membership
- Membership of the SAC would be offered as an optional add-on.

The link with Switzerland and the Swiss Alps is a valuable and distinctive feature of the Club which should probably be retained in the name. Possible names would be "Anglo-Swiss Alpine Club" or "Anglo-Swiss Mountaineering Club". There are many other possibilities.

The Committee recognise that such changes may not be welcome to all members, and some may argue that they would remove the distinctive character of the club. On the other hand they would surely make the club more attractive to prospective new members, which is arguably the more important consideration.

The Committee would welcome views on the proposals in this paper. If it appears that they would command support among the majority of the membership the necessary rule changes will be brought forward at the next AGM. Suggestions for a new name for the Club would be particularly welcome.

ABMSAC Committee  
February 2005

## BROAD PEAK 2004 "In sha'Allah" (if God wills it)

by Nikki Wallis

*"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, and then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no one could have dreamed would have come their way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."*

W. H. Murray, "Notes from the Scottish Himalayan Expedition"

### Introduction

I guess this story starts just before Christmas 2003. Marco Peruffo and his wife Sara from Italy sent me an e-mail asking whether I would like to participate in an expedition to Broad Peak and Gasherbrum II in Pakistan during the summer of 2004. Sara's e-mail went something like this:

*"Dear Nikki .....The rumours you heard about a coming expedition are true..... about Broad Peak expedition we are looking for sponsors and someone seemed to be really interested. What would you do if we could find money to cover your costs for the trekking to Baltoro Glacier and Concordia Circle? We are not joking. Please think about it and let us know what you would like to do"*

Silly question!

I remember sending a response back to them saying "yes – but also consider me for the mountain as well, not just the trekking". My thoughts were based around the fact that I would have been gutted if having arrived at base camp, feeling well and able to climb the mountain but then had to trek back out leaving the main expedition to attempt the summit. The commitment of 'yes' to her e-mail was before I had even thought of any logistics, difficulties, time off work and family, gear, fitness, or my minimal high altitude experience (i.e. zero). I thought, you have to start somewhere.



*Broad peak from the Godwin-Austen Glacier  
photo: Nikki Wallis*

For years, since my mid teens, I have had this yearning to climb high mountains, but this was thwarted in 1994 when I was out of the blue diagnosed with Type 1, insulin dependant diabetes. This diagnosis came at the worst possible time for me, if there is ever a good time for diagnosis of diabetes, as I was in the middle of a post graduate course which would ultimately start me on my outdoor pursuits instructor career path. Ten years later I have become 'the' expert in my own diabetes management. Over the years I have cautiously planned and ventured out on a number of short climbing and alpine trips away forcing me out of the safe

comfort zone of home. These tested my preparedness for dealing with my diabetes in remote and inaccessible locations.

Not knowing how my partner Neil, who is a scuba diver rather than passionate mountain climber, would respond to the statement of "Oh by the way I am going to Broad Peak this year", as opposed to a "Do you mind if I go?" This sensitive topic was broached whilst we were out in company one evening. I seem to remember that it just happened to slip it into the conversation at a natural opportune moment. I guess that in reality this gave us both time to think about the questions and answers we both had.

The subsequent 6 months were spent initially gaining permission from my generous National Park bosses in allowing me time off, albeit as unpaid leave, to become the first Welsh woman to attempt this mountain. The plan was to attempt the original Austrian Direct Route on the West Face of Broad Peak and also the Polish 1984 Variant. Our expedition philosophy was to be as 'pure' as possible, not using any high altitude porters or oxygen and moving alpine style as far as possible.

Whilst I love logistical planning, I hated the scrounging part of the planning. To get money, gear, this, that or the other you have to convince the person you are writing to that your venture is worthwhile and that you are somehow unique in what you are doing. You have to sell yourself and come up with words for the reasons why you are doing what you want to do. I go climbing and mountaineering to escape from all this bureaucratic red tape of life, and here I was submerged in late night grovelling letter writing to companies for gear, for money and other support.

One positive aspect of the numerous letters that I wrote was that it did force me to update, collate and just even remember some of my mountaineering and climbing trip. Ironically if I had to stop this passion now for some reason, I could feel very happy about some of the exciting adventurous trips that I have already done up to now.

Training for this enormous mountain was the next stage. If you know me, you know I don't train. If you see me at the wall or the gym, infrequent occurrences may I add compared to some of my colleagues, I am there for the fun of it and not for the really serious training. I would love to be able to live on three lettuce leaves a day and train day and night to seriously improve my power to weight ratio and fitness; but you know that never happens and I guess that much as I 'will' it, it never will happen. So once again the local Snowdonia mountains became my outdoor training ground as much as possible.

I had interviews with numerous gear suppliers to convince them that supporting me was worthwhile, basing my marketing spiel on the fact that I am an ordinary woman trying hard to do some extraordinary things that my passion drives me to do. Oh and by the way, I have diabetes as well. Happily high altitude gear started arriving from RAB, DMM, Mammut, SCARPA (Mountain Boot Company) and Thorlo whilst Dermatone in the USA sent me loads of sun block samples.

Over the years I had read, with some sceptical amusement, of climbers radically reducing the weight they were carrying by going to the extremes of cutting of excess labels on their clothing, excess tapes and cords and all sorts of things. I had always viewed this with a mild humour, but I now take it all back. My gear list was minimal, or so I thought, and everything had a weight attributed to it. 25kg was the maximum we could put in the barrel loads which were going to be freighted out to Italy, then to Pakistan and then ultimately carried on porters backs to the base of the mountain. Because this was going to be shipped separately to any of the expedition members, and not really with us or accessible until we reached base camp we had to ensure that all equipment contained therein was not going to be needed during that period. My spreadsheets thus had three levels: Kit list for the barrel, Kit list for my own rucksack, and then the obligatory 'miscellaneous' which never really ever fits into any category properly! That left a large amount of stuff that was thus going to have to be carried personally.

Believe me, cardboard packaging started to come off even emergency tablet packets and put into small plastic bags with labels and dosages. Clothing and footwear was carefully chosen. The old adage of choosing gear that had a multiplicity of uses was coming to the fore. And still the weight increased. Have you ever weighed your T-shirts, fleeces, hats and gloves and considered how much weight there is?

The freight company DHL was superb; reliable and exceedingly fast. A barrel that was in Llanberis at 3pm Monday was in Italy airport at 7am Tuesday morning.

The Italians ADIQ (Alpinisti Diabetica in Quota) were organising all the logistics and I found this pretty frustrating from my end, here on my own in Wales. Even though Giampaolo was the team leader and Sara (Marco's wife) was the main organiser, I still wanted the reassurance that various aspects had been addressed and sorted. Whilst Sara's English was exemplary, we still had lapses in key areas of information, which had I known in advance, I could have sorted out from the UK

I left the UK from Manchester on June 14<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Vicenza to stay with

Sara and Marco in Italy before the remainder of the expedition members assembled and drove to Milan Airport to fly out to Peshawar in Pakistan on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

I was the apprentice in a very experienced group of Italian Alpinists. Our group consisted Giampaolo Casarotto (Team Leader, has climbed on Everest, Alpamayo, Gasherbrum II, Denali and many others); Marco Peruffo (insulin dependant diabetic has climbed Kilimanjaro, Aconcagua, and Cho Oyu as well as extensively elsewhere); Mirco Scorso; Daniele Mirolo (also insulin dependant diabetic with high altitude experience); Alberto Magliano; Patrizie Pensa; Giuseppe Tararan ('Beppe' - our camp comedian, a wonderfully warm character with a superb chuckly laugh with whom a close rapport and laughter developed even though neither of us really knew what the other was saying!) and Anna Grego who had been on Everest with Giampaolo the previous year.

#### Italy to Pakistan

We arrived at Qatar airport in the United Arab Emirates, where our Western presence as women started to become immediately apparent. My head scarf was frequently used mainly to distract this unwanted attention that we were were creating.

An ominous quote was written on one of the walls in departures. "*The failings of today are the learning's of tomorrow*" (Roberto Baggio). My horoscope on the way out to Venice from Manchester read: "*Superheroes have many more responsibilities than mere mortals. They can't just shrug their shoulders whenever they encounter a situation that seems dauntingly difficult. They are morally obliged to find the nearest phone box and change into a Lycra stretch suit in a tasteless colour combination. Then no matter how evil their arch enemy may be, it is incumbent upon them to put up a fight. What a good job that you are not superhuman! This week Mars will enable you to achieve some impressive victories. But you should remember to quit while you are ahead.*"

This, followed by the incident at Milan Airport before we had even left Italy, where we found that no plane ticket had been booked for me to travel with everyone to Pakistan, and now this quote on the airport wall; well, I was becoming a little apprehensive.

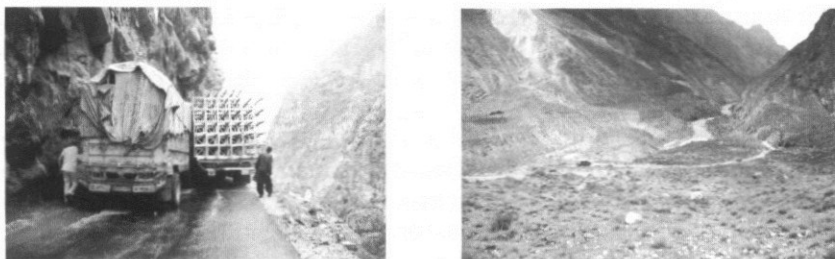
Was I reading a bit too much into things?

Was I only aware of these writings because I was apprehensive myself of how I was going to perform?

Or maybe this was the equivalent of 'pre-wedding nerves'.

### Skardu

We couldn't get a flight from Islamabad to Skardu which would have only taken a couple of hours because of the bad weather which had preceded our arrival in Pakistan. Consequently there was such a backlog of people wanting to fly, that it was quicker to arrange a minibus along the notorious Karakorum Highway. After two bone shaking days of travelling we eventually arrived, some people worse for wear from food eaten on the way, at the exclusive, "Hotel Masherbrum, Queen of the Karakorum" in Skardu.



*On the Karakorum Highway – photo: Nikki Wallis*

From this location porters were ordered, over 150 porters were to accompany us with all our gear into base camp. Barrels were critically checked and weighed to be exactly 25kg or under; anymore weight and the porters would refuse to carry them. After what seemed like aeons, but was actually only one day, we departed in a procession of Jeeps along stone strewn tracks, obviously frequently washed away during storms, to the last accessible 'village' called Askole at 2850m. It was only a few years ago that this section had to be trekked along as there was no road, this has now reduced the time it takes to get to the Baltoro Glacier region.



*Sorting out the barrels – photo: Nikki Wallis*

Askole was to be the start of our long arduous 6 day trek to Broad Peak and K2 base camp. Starting here, we would eventually end up at 5000m stopping en route at a variety of camps along the 85km trek in - Jhula (3000m), Paiju (3450m), Urdukas 4050m), Goro II (4380m), Concordia (4650m), and then finally to Broad Peak base camp at 5000m on the Godwin Austen glacier which feeds into one of the longest glaciers in the world the 62km long Baltoro Glacier.

The area we were heading to is classed as a restricted zone, which meant that we were obliged to have an Army Liaison Officer in attendance, a guide, and also trekking and climbing permits for each member, all of which was organised in the couple of days we had in Islamabad before heading north.

### Base Camp and Broad Peak

Broad Peak is an 8047m high mountain located in the Greater Karakorum, Pakistan close to the Chinese border. The Karakorum area receives less monsoon activity than the Himalaya. In fact, many of the valleys deep in the range are very dry, and pitted lower down with small vivid green oases of wheat and grass. The mountains, however, receive heavy winter precipitation, and, with or without monsoon rains, travel is often made difficult by the run-off from melting snow and ice in July and August, which otherwise are the best months for mountaineering. Although we didn't hear about it until much later during our trek in, five porters who were carrying loads for another Italian expedition to K2 had died while crossing a glacial river in Pakistan.

### Broad Peak History

During a search of the Alpine Club Himalayan Index before applying for various Welsh Sports Council grants in early 2004, from which I received not a penny, I counted at least 110 expeditions attempting various routes on Broad Peak since Herligoffer's team reached 6900m in 1954. Broad Peak was first successfully climbed in 1957 by an Austrian Expedition led by Marcus Schmuck, with three other members Kurt Diemberger, Herman Buhl, and Wintersteller

Kurt Diemberger was legendary on the successful 1957 expedition as he in fact summited the peak twice. He first reached the summit after having left his colleague Herman Buhl at the Col to wait for his return. While he was descending he met up with Buhl who was not waiting patiently as expected but in fact, slowly, but with great energy still trying to get to the summit. Diemberger decided to accompany him to the top and thus made two ascents on one day, a Herculean effort. Herman Buhl died later during their Karakorum expedition falling through a cornice on Chogolisa.

## The Expedition

Our porters were amazing. It was really humbling and put things into a different perspective for me seeing these young, but old looking, guys leaping their way up the glacial moraines with 25kg barrels on their backs. Here we were, clad with all modern equipment and technologies and tents and sleeping bags. All the porters slept in, were small circular sheepfolds built out of the glacial moraine rocks and boulders, and then covered in a piece of plastic lightweight tarpaulin. Their warmth was provided by a snug, tightly drawn in woollen blanket and body heat from their fellow porters. Speaking with many of the porters many of them were university students and this arduous effort was actually their summer vacation job!



*One of our porters – photo: Nikki Wallis*

Just before Concordia camp, I had developed some flu type virus and was feeling very weak and lethargic. This, combined with obvious altitude sickness made the going very difficult and I stayed an unexpected night courtesy of another expedition's tent at Concordia whilst the others carried on trekking to Broad Peak base camp.

The weather now was superb, crystal clear, cold but very, very hot during the days. Our trekking in had taken place during some really bad weather, rain, and as we progressed higher, this turned to sleet and snow – which made our progress very difficult across the glacial moraines.

There were 9 other expeditions on Broad Peak this year, and over 25 on K2 itself. 2004 was actually nicknamed "*The Italian Year – L'Anno Italiano*" as it was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first ascent of K2 by Lino Lacedelli and Achille Compagnoni from Italy.

It was already the beginning of July, and to assist in our acclimatisation, we had frequent sorties up and back from K2 base camp to the Gilkey Memorial; a memorial on the lower slopes above K2 base camp, which had been built in memory of Art (Arthur) Gilkey a geologist who disappeared on K2 in 1953. Since then, this place has become a sacred ground for many alpinists who have lost their lives in these mountains. Names such as Julie Tullis, Al Rouse, and many others, 1986 was the fateful year for K2 with over 13 year climbers losing their lives to the mountain. I was very moved by this place, reading all the metal food plates and saucepan lids that had been inscribed with eulogies to all the men and women who have died on this 'mountain of mountains'. I felt it disrespectful to take photographs of such an emotional tribute to so many high altitude climbers.

Back on our expedition, there had been some confusion with the expedition organisers regarding food. During the organisation of the porters and other logistics they had apparently 'assumed' or 'understood' that we, the expedition, were going to provide all the expedition food from arrival at base camp onwards. We, on the other hand, had brought numerous barrels of high mountain food (plus barrels of Italian pasta, Parmesan cheese, Parma ham and fresh coffee – well, you know it was an Italian expedition!) and were expecting the porters to have the basics to prepare base camp food and tea for us for the duration of the expedition. This turned out not to be the case, and at one point we only had two days worth of food and kerosene left. After much discussions and negotiations with our cooks and liaison officers, some porters were sent back to Concordia Base Camp to fetch more basic supplies, at extortionate cost to our team.

Our language differences quickly became hard work on the expedition. Whilst we could quite adequately communicate with each other at a general level, we lacked the normal banter and chatter that would normally occur between climbing colleagues. Things such as "*What do you think the conditions are like up there?*" "*What are you taking with you?*" "*What if that camp is already occupied with other expedition tents?*" and so on.

My diary became my companion, enabling me to express how I was feeling, but which of course lacked any moral positive support in return, only a bouncing to and fro in written conversation of my own thoughts and apprehensions. If it hadn't been for my steadfast determination and my contentment with my own company and my willingness to be alone on the mountain, I would have trekked back out after the first week. In fact, we were the only expedition that stayed 100% together for the duration. All other expeditions 'lost' at least one or two climbers due to homesickness, altitude sickness or just not being able to cope with the pressure of being at base camp for such long periods.



We had some cultural and climbing philosophy differences as well. Whereas I would be eager to get up really early and venture onto the mountain in the early hours before the searing heat of the Pakistani sun would start melting the snow into slush, other members would be quite happy to start much later. They were of course a lot fitter than I was: my training had consisted of sea level mountains compared to the 4000m mountains of the Italian Alps easily accessible to the other members.

I was left to try and work out solo logistics based on what the others were planning on doing and on the times I felt comfortable to leave base camp and climb the mountain, alone. Of course, some of this was attributed to my lack of high mountain expedition experience; you live and learn.

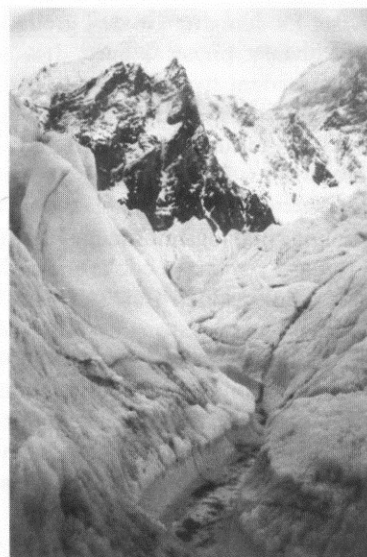
We were soon joined by some other Italian alpinists, Nancy and Maurizio (and also Kurt Diemberger whom I'd met up with at Milan Airport on the way out and who was trekking in with the big Anniversary Italian Expedition on K2) who had both been out in Pakistan for 6 weeks, climbing numerous peaks and acclimatising really well. During our early sorties on to the mountain, whilst we were all still acclimatising both Nancy and Maurizio summited Broad Peak on the 8<sup>th</sup> July. Excellent news and done with superb swift, typical Italian style and flair.

Unfortunately the weather started changing and becoming a bit more unpredictable after July 10<sup>th</sup> and it became increasingly difficult to plan long stays on the mountain. Other expeditions started giving up and going home. That was, for those expeditions that were still together. Individual members of other expeditions were finding the remoteness and stressful nature of expedition life too much and had left their team mates to return home.

My mountain philosophy, whilst it doesn't get me up mountains particularly quickly, is to always learn the moods and nature of the mountain. What are her moods in different conditions? How does she react to storms? Where does most of her snow fall, and what are the safe lines? My frequent attempts up to Camp 1 were thus impeded by this early lack of knowledge. Being alone, sometimes on and sometimes off the 7-8mm fixed ropes up to Camp 1 and not knowing the mountain, I played it safe. After all, it was my first high altitude expedition and I was here to learn. For me, despite the distance, cost and efforts involved in the planning, it was never a case of 'summit or bust'. When there were storms at Camp 1, albeit not serious high wind and snow storms, I would err on the side of caution and descend from the mountain to assess how long these storms would last. Looking at it positively, at least it was one way of getting acclimatised!

Even getting to the base of the mountain was not easy. I endearingly called the

lateral glacier which we had to cross to the base of the mountain 'toboggan run and ice fin alley'. Huge ice fins up to 25m high soared upwards though the glacier, at the base of which were small streams in solid ice channels, the 'toboggan runs'. In the early hours of the day these narrow ice streams were easy to jump cross, but later in the day as the temperature increased when the ice had melted they became torrents of gushing water. This made the earlier route in the day impassable and necessitated long detours to cross from one part of the glacier to the next.



*Ice Channels and Climbing To Camp Two  
photos: Nikki Wallis*

On one of my exploits up to Camp 1, which was predominantly a Grade 1 snow slope up the Polish 1984 Variant Route not the Austrian 1957 Direct, I was passed by two climbers from an international commercial expedition who were going to assist two of their expedition members between Camps 3 and 4 who had succumbed to high altitude cerebral oedema (HACE). Despite having been injected with high doses of Dexamethasone, one of them showed no improvement and was actually unconscious during the entire slide assisted evacuation back down to the glacier from where the army helicopter could then take him back to Skardu medical facilities at Skardu.

At Camp 1 I often met up with a jolly quartet of Swiss climbers, who thought that

I was completely barmy being solo on the mountain. I jokingly told them that I had heard about their Swiss chocolate and was making my way to them for that reason. Sure enough, every time we then met up, small bars of chocolate appeared!

My oxygen sats were fairly good, at base camp (5000m) ranging between 89% and 93% and at Camp 1 (5400m) about 78%, normal sea level saturation is 98% - 100% and can be as low as 40% on the summit of Everest. It certainly didn't feel like it as soon as you started any physical exercise. Plodding up Grade I ground at altitude is very much more a mental challenge than a physical one. I would repeatedly tell myself "twenty paces, then stop and count twenty. Twenty paces, then stop for twenty." That was the only way I could will my body to get to where I wanted it to go. The easiest option would have been to turn around and go back to base camp.

Life at base camp was a mixture of resting, reading, playing mini jenga, and the delights of washing clothes in freezing glacial waters. I ran out of books and had to resort to reading our Liaison Officer's tome of a book Liddell Hart's History of World War II; and of course, having intensive involuntary lessons in Italian. All the essential words, such as "blister", "head hurts", "I feel hungry" or "I feel OK" were crucial to be able to convey how I was feeling! "Mini Jenga", built courtesy of my carpenter partner Neil, was also crucial to our sanity. We became experts in devising techniques to ensure 'as far as possible' that the next person's move was made exceedingly difficult. It happened to bring out the wickedest sides of each expedition member, day after day after day!

We had until July 25th to get as far as we were going to get on the mountain, after which our porters had been summoned to come back from another valley over in Hushe and collect our gear for the trek out. Many reports were coming back of 30cm of new snow above Camp 3 and Marco, Beppe, Patrizia and Giampaolo were having a very hard time getting any higher on the mountain because of the snow conditions.

Departure date soon arrived. No summit success. Moral was OK, but we were disappointed. We had stripped the mountain of all our high level camps and gear and our porters *in sha'Allah* were on their way to us from the Hushe valley.

As would happen, the weather suddenly started to improve, and there were now frustrations in camp that we hadn't persevered like some other expeditions, and stayed high on the mountain during the storms; wonderful thing hindsight. Small side meetings were held between Giampaolo and some members with view to, if the other expedition members agreed, a small elite team staying behind to try and

get to the summit, whilst the rest of us trekked out with our porters. Naturally this caused a bit of jealous tension but was agreed upon, and on July 27<sup>th</sup> when we left base camp to return via Gondogoro La to Hushe, Giampaolo, Beppe and Marco stayed to make a rapid ascent of the mountain. Concerns were rising for their welfare, after hearing reports of heavy snow conditions, as we had no way of communicating until we were back in the Hotel in Skardu.

However, the snow was too deep. They returned 5 days after being on the mountain. Broad Peak had not relented to us this year. But she is always there for another year, and maybe we will know her better then.

As George Leigh Mallory, said in 1922:

*The first question which you will ask and which I must try to answer is this, what is the use of climbing ..... and my answer must at once be, it is no use.*

*There is not the slightest prospect of any gain whatsoever. Oh, we may learn a little about the behaviour of the human body at high altitudes, and possibly medical men may turn our observation to some account for the purposes of aviation. But otherwise nothing will come of it.*

*We shall not bring back a single bit of gold or silver, not a gem, nor any coal or iron. We shall not find a single foot of earth that can be planted with crops to raise food. It's no use.*

*So, if you cannot understand that there is something in man which responds to the challenge of the mountain and goes out to meet it, that the struggle is the struggle of life itself upward and forever upward, then you won't see why we go.*

*What we get from this adventure is just sheer joy. And joy, is after all, the end of life.*

**Alaska 2004**  
*by John Foster*

In late June 2004 Marj and I set off for our first Summer holiday ever which did not include any mountain walking, nearly four weeks investigating Alaska and the Yukon. The plan was to take an RV (motor caravan) for about two and a half weeks, and then to take a short trip out to Kodiak Island to see the world's largest grizzlies. The result was spectacular, if not always as we had planned!

We picked up the RV in Anchorage and drove down to the coast at Seward, not realising that this had been the site of a serious earthquake and tsunami some years ago, the city authorities had deci area next to the sea was unsafe for locals, but presumably safe enough for tourists since it was converted to a series of RV parks! The disadvantages were immediately apparent, but we then spotted the advantages of this layout: sea otters floated 20 yards offshore chewing clams and looking puzzled, and bald eagles looked down their roman beaks at us from high poles and trees.

After a day here to take a boat trip watching whales, dolphins, and other marine wildlife, we had to drive through a railway tunnel, between trains, thankfully, to Whittier to pick up a ferry across Prince William Sound to Valdez. Prince William Sound is where the Exxon Valdez made its crude deposit, and while some of the wildlife is recovering, other elements are still suffering badly from the after-effects. Unfortunately the visibility was fairly poor during our crossing, but the ferry takes a diversion en route to give views of the Columbia glacier, dodging past floes and small bergs calved from it until the captain accepts defeat and we retire. Somehow I can't see CalMac doing the same!

From Valdez we set out into the interior, though when you look at a map of Alaska you realise that the roads only cover one corner of the state. After a couple of hours we surmounted a pass, and from there on the whole trip became a smoke avoidance exercise. Alaska and Yukon were both having one of the worst years ever for forest fires, and you could drive for a couple of hundred miles at a time before getting out of the smoke haze. In most areas the mountains are enormous but miles from the nearest road, and we were fortunate in that we managed to see most ranges eventually, sometimes by repeating the same route on a day when the smoke haze had cleared temporarily. We had planned to drive into ranges on a couple of occasions, but this involved dirt roads of such appalling quality that we feared for both vehicle and stomachs and backed off.

Whether the smoke had anything to do with it I don't know, but for someone used to driving in the Rockies there was remarkably little wildlife about until we reached Denali National Park about two weeks later. In that time we had seen one moose, four bears, and a disgruntled porcupine, and I mean really disgruntled.

Anyway, we made our way around to Haines for July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations, and then by ferry to Skagway for a trip on the White Pass and Yukon Railway. Skagway is the one bit of Alaska that we already knew, and has been left very much as it was in gold-rush days. However, my biggest disappointment of the holiday was to find that Skagway brewery, the only real beer brewer in Alaska, had closed down. The second biggest was driving the RV into a tree stump outside town, with associated

insurance implications.

Our route from here was more or less that of the prospectors en route to the Klondike gold-rush through Whitehorse to Dawson City, including one stretch in convoy with fire officers through a forest fire. Dawson is an absolute gem. The whole city has been kept either as it was in gold-rush days or in keeping with that period. Robert Service's cabin is still there, a Mecca for lovers of his verses on Dan McGrew and Athabaska Dick. Did you know that he was born in Preston?



*Dawson City – photo: John Foster*

I was persuaded to visit Diamond Tooth Gertie's Casino to watch a revue, and thoroughly enjoyed it, though extremely thankful not to be on the front row!

From Dawson we crossed the Klondike River and drove over the Top of the World Highway back into Alaska, being advised on the way that because of fires we could only stop at one place in the next hundred miles, Chicken. Chicken consists of three wooden shacks, and was named because the prospectors couldn't spell Parmigan! On towards Fairbanks, meeting up with the porcupine in the middle of a fire-ravaged landscape that stretched for miles in all directions, and stopping at North Pole, well who could resist calling at Santa Claus House, North Pole, Alaska, and so to Denali National Park, home of Mount McKinley.

Private vehicles are not allowed into the National Park, so we went on a bus trip into the park on a rare crystal clear day when McKinley was actually visible, and suddenly found where all of Alaska's wildlife was hiding – grizzlies, caribou, wolves, moose, dall sheep... why, then, did I watch another passenger spend ten minutes setting up his camera to take a photo of a magpie?

Having driven back to Anchorage and handed in the RV, we both thought that the stressful part of the trip was over; I mean we only had to catch two planes, to and then across, Kodiak island, to our bear-watching location. Planes to Kodiak hadn't been able to land for about three days because of bad weather, but the airline decided to try again, and somewhat late we managed to get in. The second plane, a four-seat float plane, was then grounded by the weather. That eventually got off the water about five hours late, and bounced through and around mountain ranges to our destination.

We joined two guides who took us up the side of a river a short way, and spent the rest of the day sitting on a knoll by the river watching bears catching salmon just below us, and their cubs climbing trees and playing. It was unforgettable, like being in the middle of a wildlife film. The accommodation too was pretty unusual. It was a cabin on a small island in a lake, with silver foxes and deer visiting occasionally, and plentiful supplies of wine and spirits, but with outside facilities and an air-horn to carry in case one met a bear at an inopportune moment, well they can swim.

The return trip on the float plane proved easier than the outward flight, the cloud dropped so low that we had to go round the Kodiak Island at about 100ft over the sea, and suddenly we were on our way home.

The highlights? Well, we had only fought our way through the fires to Dawson City because we would never get there again, but we are already thinking about a return visit, and Kodiak Island will see us again as soon as they build a road round the island, but not while we have to take the float plane!

### **South African Cycle Tour** *by John Mercer*

In an English-speaking country like South Africa, I would prefer to cycle tour independently rather than with a supported group. A group is more expensive and tends to isolate you from contact with the country and the local people. But South Africa is a potentially dangerous country, and car hijacking is common. A cyclist with loaded panniers would be an easy target, and the perceived risk is such that there are virtually no independent cycle tourists: I saw two in five weeks, whereas I had seen about five hundred in a similar time in both Australia and New Zealand.

So if I wanted to cycle tour in South Africa it had to be as a member of a supported group, and I joined Brian Curtis's CTC Tour of the Western Cape from 1<sup>st</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2004. This proved an excellent choice. I have been fascinated by South

Africa for most of my life, and had spent four marvellous months there in 1962 on coming down from university as part of a year travelling and working in Africa. To rekindle old memories and to see something more of the country, I spent three weeks touring by bus and hired car before the cycle tour. I visited various friends and my magnificent 88-year-old aunt in Cape Town, and saw the Garden Route, Durban, Zululand, a Zulu battlefield, some game reserves, the Drakensberg Mountains, Lesotho, and Cape Town. This was a memorable trip, but another story: now for the cycling.

The tour started from Cape Town airport, straight off the plane, and the party cycled 20 miles to Stellenbosch, which is the centre of South African wine production. I joined at Stellenbosch, arriving a couple of days early so I could do some cycling. The country was beautiful; vineyards backed by stunning mountains. I had no difficulty deciding where to cycle to: I managed to visit many of the top wineries on my bike before I had to fall into line and join the group. There were 32 of us, and it was a very good group. There were many pleasant and interesting people, and some formidable cyclists: as I had expected, I was very much at the bottom end of the ability range.

We had two support vehicles, driven by Dave and Cheryl Griffiths. They are keen South African cyclists, and Dave had organised much of the itinerary and overnight accommodation. His email is [outntour@mweb.co.za](mailto:outntour@mweb.co.za), and he would be an excellent choice for anyone looking for help in organising a cycle tour in South Africa for 6 to 32 people. The support vehicles carried the luggage, and provided frequent drink stops. These can be very important. For much of the time, the temperature was a pleasant 20C, but on one day it was about 35C. In these conditions, I need about 10 litres of liquid to keep going: it is very difficult to carry this amount without a support vehicle. The vehicles also gave a chance for anyone to take a ride if they were tired or hot. About half the group took advantage of this at one time or another. Obstinate, I rode the whole way.

The country varied. It got drier as we moved further inland, but it was usually hilly, with wide sweeping views. We were doing 50 to 65 miles a day, which I found quite demanding, even though our luggage was being carried in the support vehicles. We visited Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point of Africa, and then had two glorious days cycling along the coast towards Cape Town with a strong wind at our backs

The accommodation and food varied from place to place. In the more populated areas it was excellent: gourmet food and very good rooms. In the wilder areas we had to take what was available for such a large party, staying at the odd holiday camp or back-country hotel. This all added to the experience.

At the end of the trip we had four days in Cape Town, with the opportunity to do the standard tourist trips or go on organised day rides. There was also the chance to take part in the Cape Argus event, which most of the group entered. The Argus is the largest timed cycle event (race?) in the world: this year 35,000 people took part, including Miguel Indurain and I. Ian Nightingale, ex Seamons, had done it five years or so ago and had recommended it to me as a memorable experience, which it certainly was. I found the course quite challenging: it went for 68 miles around the Cape peninsula, and involved 1,000 metres of ascent and descent in a temperature of 30C. I took it very easily, with frequent stops at the many drink stations. I did not win, but neither did Indurain. But I did finish, and I have a bronze medal to prove it.

### **Shortfall For Skye**

*by Wendell Jones*

Many years ago my employers received a rare request; the factor (agent) of a large Highland Estate was leaving; the Trustees wondered if we could give the books the once over.

Tax Department located a map, I have it still, 1" OS setting out the boundaries of the estate, 28000 acres in two chunks of Wester Ross. The Western half bordered a sea loch, and included a Munro and the second highest waterfall in the UK; the Eastern portion seemed uninhabited but boasted three of the four highest peaks north of the Great Glen.

I set to work.

Philip, originally selected for the assignment, was a renowned railway fanatic, never happier than locating some remote strip of track threatened by Lord Beeching. I persuaded him, not quite truthfully, that there was no line within fifty miles and that the hills and lochs would be wasted on him. My approach to management was in slightly different terms, might it not be better to send someone who would not begrudge temporary exile. I went on to negotiate a mileage rate slightly better than the normal three (old) pence.

The ABMSAC Easter Meet was to be staged at Onich, conveniently en route. Thursday night was spent perilously thwarting the lorries over Shap, no M6 then, and morning saw an exhausted arrival at a girl friend's mother's house at Bridge of Allan. A brief rest, well needed sustenance and a short walk in the Ochils was followed by a drive over Rannoch Moor and round Loch Leven and down to Onich.

The clientele included the President, Arthur Barton, author of a standard work on Physics from which I once suffered. Also present were the Bennetts, Lambleys and Starkeys (he of the Hut), Donald Clarke, Harold Flook, David Riddell and at the more eccentric end of the Association John Clements and Nigel Walker. From my generation came John Jesson and Robin Quine.

Onich provided a comfortable hotel and, given mobility, proved a good base. The weather though imperfect was judged not bad for Scotland. On separate days we traversed the Mamores from Binnean Mor to Am Bodach, scrambled the length of the Aonach Eagach Ridge, and climbed "The Buckle" by the Crowberry Ridge. The latter proved quite icy and the sight of the little Mini far below on Rannoch Moor made me wish I was in it.

On the Tuesday I left for Loch Duich.

Arriving early, I sought the factor. MacSporran had had to go to a funeral. "When would he be back?" "After the funeral will be the wake ..." Clearly there would be no MacSporran that day. I had tea and cakes with a delightful old lady instead.

We did meet the next day in the lodge, a mini manor house, amid sweeping lawns that glided down to the sea loch. Along the shore was the romantically sited Eilean Donan Castle, and across the water the Mam Ratagan Pass, The Saddle and a glimpse of South Kintail.

MacSporran and I got on sufficiently well to be found ensconced in the Dornie Hotel an hour after closing time in company with the local policeman; the latter was a keen fisherman and MacSporran had found him a good beat.

MacSporran rewarded my obvious enthusiasm for the hills by negotiating a permit from a neighbouring estate, giving access to Iron Lodge, twenty miles into the hinterland. A walk up a low pass was followed by a slight dip. Modern maps show Lochs Lungard and Mullardoch as one; older editions reveal separate bodies of water; hopping hopefully from one tussock to the next, I failed to find bottom with a long axe. "Och Aye, it'll gae over your top" said MacSporran when I complained to him later, and encouraged me to go again.

The iceaxe proved useful as a third leg when negotiating the burn.

The ascents of Carn Eige and Mam Soul which followed proved anti-climactic; the biggest peaks of the Northern Highlands had little else in their favour.

More, much more, could be said of Beinn Sgritheall (Sgriol) poised above Loch

Hourn and the narrow strait separating Skye from the mainland. A drive over Mam Ratan, down to Glenelg and up Glen Beag, was followed by a pleasant ridge buttressed by impressive crags leading to a broad and grassy summit. A lazy hour in shirt sleeves on a glorious April day passed quickly enough looking down at shimmering blue waters and wondering whether a stone dropped from the top would fall on Arnisdale at the end of the road.

The reckoning came next day; setting out from Dorisdudain, a series of tops took me to Sgurr Fhuaran, highest of the Five Sisters of Kintail, before further progress was inhibited by a blizzard; I dived down to the shelter of Glen Lichd.

Meanwhile work progressed on the Accounts. I needed to see up to date statements, and as word got round, the bills flowed in. The vet's account covered six years, the garage's four; the local tradesmen were testing their memories against the factor's. Agreement took time, and I began to understand that in the North West Highlands *manana* was felt to show undue haste.

Sgurr nan Ceathreamhan at the head of Glen Affric was climbed, as was the Saddle, quite an exciting peak, and a visit paid to the Falls of Glomach, where the burn tipped off the moor into a dank and narrow chasm and fell three hundred feet. It proved easier to fall down the gorge than to photograph it.

An over ambitious attempt on Ladhar Beinn involved a drive to Kinloch Hourn, eight miles by crow, and fifty by road, and came to an ignominious halt, when it became apparent that I had forgotten my boots.

Rather more time was spent on the road over one weekend; a friend was marrying an office colleague in Gloucester Cathedral, and *manana* was interrupted by one thousand miles of driving.

Weeks passed, interspersed with occasional calls from London Tax Department enquiring about this and that. News broke, Lady P daughter of the last Lord, and aunt of the present was coming; more alarmingly her spouse, a man of strong build, loud voice and short temper would accompany her. MacSporran visibly blanched and claimed that the laird's popularity was such that the crofters had sallied forth in the night and burnt his Rolls Royce in its garage. It was clear that a sighting by the laird might mean mortal injury for MacSporran and I acted as go-between.

The crisis came over an invoice for cream teas for the shepherds. The laird boomed, his ire exploding. This alarmed a small terrier, who barked frantically, leapt onto the lounge coffee table, did a pirouette, and fell off into the waste paper

basket. Lady P and I dissolved in laughter and the crisis was resolved.

It was time to go .... Back to EC2, "You" said my manager "were due to start the audit of a Birmingham engineering company at the beginning of last week."

Sic transit *manana*!

### A Trip to Jebel Musa by Sally Holland

For some years during our annual visit each June to Gibraltar we have had tea at the Rock Hotel while admiring the view of a mountain rising out of the sea on the coast of Northern Morocco across the Strait of Gibraltar. Chris was so interested in this feature that he made some investigations and found that this was Jebel Musa (842m), the highest mountain in the Andjara Range and one of the Pillars of Hercules which are situated on each side of the Strait, the other being Gibraltar.

In 2003 Chris with a Spaniard from Ceuta decided to climb the mountain and only discovered en route that it was in a 'no go' area for which one needed a permit. This is an extremely sensitive part of Northern Morocco for two reasons: the small war when Spain tried to annex a little rocky island just off the coast and the fact that the Strait is so narrow here makes it a favourite crossing point from Africa to Europe for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers. In addition the earlier terrorist bomb in Casablanca had caused security to be tightened up drastically.

Having been stopped at a road block by the local police, Chris and his companion spent most of the rest of the day being driven here, there and everywhere by taxi in an effort to get the permit and being passed on to ever more important officials. They finally got the necessary permission and climbed the mountain in the late afternoon and evening.

In 2004 Chris decided that he would like to do it again and I wanted to go along too. Forewarned by the problems last year, we obtained our permission in advance so on 19 June we crossed the border between Ceuta and Morocco and took a taxi to Fnideq, the small town which was the jumping off point for our excursion, and expected everything to be plain sailing. Not so! At the police station no one had been briefed about our journey and so they flatly refused to let us proceed. We wasted a considerable time here kicking our heels but finally, after struggling with a Moroccan public phone box, we were not allowed to use one in the police

station, and getting through to the Deputy Administrator of the Regional Government, the matter was sorted out via his friend the Chief of Police and we were on our way again. This time we took a taxi driven by a very friendly and helpful Moroccan named Mohammed who drove us the eleven miles to Bellunez, the little village on the coast at the foot of Jebel Musa. Luckily for us Mohammed was happy to wait while we did the climb as the village is very remote with no public transport.

The path left from the middle of the village and we plodded up through the houses and then on along very stony tracks in a wide valley leading to a col. The countryside was quite unspoilt limestone scenery with lots of lovely wild flowers and herds of goats, sheep and cattle but very few people. The day before had been extremely hot so I was thankful for the strong breeze which cooled us down somewhat. As we finally arrived at the col and looked over at the other side we had a marvellous view of vultures circling overhead in the thermals and an eagle, probably golden, flew past a short distance away and practically on a level with us.

From the col we had to scramble first across steep grassy slopes and then over a section of loose rocks, boulders and vegetation until we came out on the ridge between two peaks. Here the wind was almost too strong and at times it was difficult to stay upright. The easternmost and slightly higher peak was Jebel Musa and it was then a short walk to the summit. There is a very old ruin on the top which, it is said, is an ancient mosque and there is a rumour that treasure is buried in the floor. We were lucky that it was a clear day and there were the most stupendous views all round: looking inland fold upon fold of mountains faded into the distant haze of Northern Morocco. Ceuta was clearly visible just to the east while Bellunez could easily be seen below us and Gibraltar also showed up well; the Spanish coast stretched away in both directions.

We took our photos and had a snack and drink before going down by the same route. The most trying part of the descent was the many very loose stones which kept shooting out from under our boots and it is a wonder that we remained on our feet. However, we got down safely and, rounding the last bend, were delighted and relieved to find Mohammed and his taxi waiting to convey us back to the frontier. It had taken us five and a half hours altogether and was a thoroughly enjoyable experience, a pleasure to be able to visit such an unspoilt area on another continent.



Bellunez and Moroccan coast from col on Jebel Musa  
*photo: Sally Holland*

### **Two Days (a member's climbs) 2001** **J M Scarr**

Hot in May from two trips to Glen Nevis and the Mamores. Hotter still in August spent mostly in Kaisergebirge and Stubai Alpen. September with snow in the Dolomites and finally a few wonderful days back in the Kaisergebirge in October. But of course, Scotland is always best, especially in winter. So I recount two such days where pleasure exceeded initial expectations; both at Club Meets.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> January (at the Fearnan meet)**

At Auchessan I looked longingly at the snowy cone of Ben More, high enough to rise resplendent above the layer of cloud. I was indeed much tempted. Our object, however, was the lowly 'Munroe' Sgaith Chuil, the summit of which being just the right height to be entirely swathed in cloud. No view in prospect here.

**CTC Baltic Cycling Tour 14-29 August 2004  
(Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia)**

*by John Mercer*

After a slow plod to the base of the hill there followed a relatively quick ascent into thick all-enveloping cloud. While my companions disappeared to explore a minor rise, I decided to head in what I hoped to be the direction of the summit. After a few hundred yards the cloud unexpectedly began to thin with glimpses of blue sky above. Quick! To the summit before it closes in again. The way became steeper, the snow deeper; hard work for one in a hurry. Soon I stood on the summit, shortly to be joined by the others. The view to the south-west was over sparkling waves of an extensive cloud-sea towards the low-lying sun and Ben More rising above the waves like the tip of an iceberg. Turning about, passing mist presented a magnificent and persistent Brocken Spectre with three clear spectral rings and occasional hints of a fourth. We spent some time amusing ourselves, standing on elevations, waving our arms, pleased with the acquired haloes of our shadows. And I no longer had any regrets about Ben More.

Not long after leaving the summit all cloud had vanished. Perfect timing.

*(with John Dempster, Jim and Margaret Strachan).*

**24<sup>th</sup> February (at the Onich meet)**

The morning train to Mallaig passed overhead as we entered Glen Finnan through an arch of the viaduct on a day of low cloud and snow flurries. Objective: the traverse of Sgurr nan Coireachan to Sgurr Thuilm. From the head of the valley we approached Coireachan. At the foot of the ridge snow began to blow out of a drear sky and, sheltering behind a boulder, I felt morale sink; why was I here? Others, undeterred, pressed on, and I followed. We ascended the snow covered ridge, zigzagging up the steepish section to reach the false summit. Shortly beyond, hard snow was encountered. Crampons on! This was better; excellent condition with sporting possibilities on rocky rises. Not far to the first summit now. Then, in an instant, the cloud tore apart to reveal the ridge connecting our two peaks reflecting the diamond-glint of countless crystals, brilliantly contrasting with the deep blue of the sky. Enthusiasm for the traverse soared, eagerness as short-lived as the spectacle itself. Sheltering a little later at the exposed summit the only thought was of descent. And descend we did; the original plan being a little too ambitious.

Once more, just below the summit, we paused to witness a second fleeting moment of glory. Then descent continued avoiding the false summit and the steep ridge.

Poor weather, but a bracing day made memorable by two brief dazzling interludes.

*(with Peter Farrington and Bill Peebles).*

The Baltic countries are largely flat, with open fields, lakes and forests. The main roads are busy, the minor roads are dirt, with either ridges from grading or deep sand, and the intermediary roads often do not go where you want them to go. This can make the cycling some of the least interesting in Europe.

So why was the tour so enjoyable and successful? It's not just about the bike.

First we had a very good group of 14 people aged between 40 and 73. We all got on and had a lot of fun. None of us knew just what to expect, and we enjoyed finding out together. Cycling through a country is one of the best ways of doing this. There were several highlights, fortunately occurring quite frequently. On the first few days we saw something of Baltic agriculture. There were no hedges or walls, and the cows were tethered to stakes. Women milked them by hand out in the fields in the evening. Although there were a few tractors, much of the work was still done by horses. We saw two horses pulling a hay cutting machine, and men with pitchforks loading a horse drawn hay wagon.

The tour was organised by a Lithuanian travel agency. They booked all the hotels, provided maps and details of the route, and arranged bus transfers over long dull sections. They also provided cycling guides for half the time. This made our CTC leader largely redundant, a position he seemed entirely happy with. The hotels were adequate. Rooms were good and en suite, but most of the hotels were built in the Soviet era, and it showed. The food we had at lunchtime at roadside restaurants was generally better than that we had at the evening hotel, and service was often pitifully slow. It is difficult to change from Soviet to Western ways.

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, and we spent the first morning exploring the attractive medieval centre, before cycling to Trakai. This is a 14<sup>th</sup> century castle on an island in a lake, and was the major strongpoint in Lithuania. It was ruined, but was beautifully rebuilt in Soviet times, much to Khrushchev's annoyance. After visiting a fine Baroque monastery, we moved towards the Baltic's outstanding geological feature, the Curonian Spit. This is a 60 mile long sand spit built up by wind and waves over the years, enclosing a large freshwater lagoon. We took a one and a half hour boat trip to the Southern end of the spit, and then cycled up the length of the spit to cross the river to the mainland by ferry. This was an excellent day, and several people took the chance to swim in the Baltic. Your correspondent remained dry.



After cycling along the coast to Lithuania's major beach resort, we turned inland, eventually reaching a hotel on a lake. This involved some miles along a dirt road, which was both ridged and sandy: very hard work. We cycled 67 miles this day, the most we did on any day of the tour. The hotel was hosting a Lithuanian Conservative Party Congress that weekend for about 2,000 people, most of who were camping. Apart from the inevitable speeches, there was a lot of folk dancing in traditional dress. Although it was raining, some of our more lissom members joined in. Next morning we visited an abandoned Soviet underground nuclear missile base with a local woman guide. Dressed in military fatigues, she was rather reminiscent of the notorious Lynndie England, who terrorised the Iraqi prisoners. The visit was both *frightening and fascinating*. There were four underground steel lined silos, 22 metres deep and about 7 metres wide. The base was built by 10,000 Soviet soldiers, and was manned by soldiers from Asia so that they would not be reluctant to fire the missiles at European targets. It must have cost hundreds of millions of pounds to build.

Our next visit was to the Hill of Crosses, which was either inspiring or macabre, depending on your point of view. The hill is a little knoll just off the main road to Latvia. Locals had planted crosses on it to *commemorate the fallen* in a 19<sup>th</sup> century rebellion against Tsarist rule. Further crosses were planted in the 1950s in memory of Lithuanians deported or killed by the Russians. The Russians responded by bulldozing the site several times, but still more crosses were planted. Now the site bristles with crosses, planted about six inches apart, and with little crosses hanging from bigger ones. Most of the crosses have names on: I doubt if they did in Soviet times.

The next day we spent the day in Riga, the capital of Latvia and the largest Baltic city. It has a fine medieval centre surrounded by some impressive Art Nouveau buildings. But the most interesting visit was to the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. This goes into precise detail of just what happened in the occupation by the Soviets in 1940 after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had divided Eastern Europe in to spheres of influence, the Nazi invasion of 1941, and then the second Soviet occupation from 1944-1945 to 1991. The details are horrific.

Latvia and Estonia were invaded in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century by crusading knights from Germany and Denmark. The Germans founded the cities and towns, provided the merchant class, and developed large estates. The locals had a very subservient status: a 19<sup>th</sup> century Riga German newspaper editor said "to be both Latvian and educated is an impossibility". The Germans were thrown out after the 1919, but some of the estates have been preserved. We visited a couple, and stayed in a converted distillery on a third.

Finally, we reached Tallinn, the Estonian capital, after a ride along the north coast, with great views of the city over the bay. Tallinn is a very attractive medieval city, with the city walls largely intact. It was largely German, and was a member of the Hanseatic League, and was governed by Lubeck law. The Medieval Gothic Town Hall was outstanding.

Prices were variable but cheap. Beer was usually about £1 per pint, and we had soup and a main course for under £2. The beer was good in Lithuania, but got more and more dire as we moved north. It was the usual problem of a lack of hops. But the reputation of Estonian beer was partly saved by an Austrian designed brewpub in Tallinn. And I must recommend an orange-based liqueur called Vana Tallinn, which was both cheap and enjoyable.

The weather is the major topic in many cycling articles, and it was only after printing the first draft that I realised that I had not mentioned it at all. The Baltic countries are on the same latitude as Scotland, and although the winters are very cold, the summers are warm. Temperatures were similar to those of an English summer at 15 to 20 C, very pleasant for cycling. We had plenty of rain, as did most of Europe this summer. We cycled 500 miles in a fortnight, doing 50 miles most days.

I feel enormously grateful that I was born in England, and not in central Europe. Understandably, the Baltic countries have rushed to join the EEC, and plan to adopt the Euro within two years. The EEC was developed to reduce the possibility of European war. *It is worth the occasional bureaucratic nonsense if it can do so*

## OBITUARY

### **Alfred Lock**

1933 - 2005

*by Colin G. Armstrong*

His many friends will have been very saddened to hear of the death of Alf Lock. He was a well known and popular member of the ABMSAC for almost thirty years and a regular attender at our club meets.

I first met Alf over forty years ago through our mutual involvement with the Scout movement, of which he remained a life long member. At that time Alf was engaged in introducing teenagers to the joys of rock climbing on his favourite Northumbrian crags. When he later came to live near me we became close friends and constant companions on the hills over many years. Altogether I have a record of over five hundred excursions we made together in this country and abroad.

Many members will recall his firm handshake and warm welcome to the Club on first meeting Alf at one of the many meets he attended. He was noted for his ability to quickly strike up a rapport with everyone he encountered; even if they had no language in common!

Alf was a gentle giant of a man and beneath his tough appearance he was generous, kindly and sensitive to a degree. Those who knew him really well will remember his interest in mountain flowers and butterflies as well as his delight in the classical piano music to which he often listened in the car on the way to and from meets. He was also an avid reader of mountain literature and he had an ability to recall items he had read, long forgotten by myself.

Alf struggled with the onset of increasing ill health for almost the whole of his climbing career and his determination not to give in to illness was legendary and an inspiration to us all. I well remember him celebrating his return to the hills after his first heart bypass operation with a solo ascent of Helvellyn by way of Striding Edge, in very severe winter conditions, just to see how well he could manage it!

It is as an animated conversationalist that many will remember Alf. Who will easily forget his forthright views on that vast range of diverse subjects which formed the basis of his discussions with all who had the privilege of meeting him?

Those who mourn Alf's passing can perhaps take solace in the idea that if, in the afterlife, there is indeed a Celestial Section of the ABMSAC, then Alf will already be in earnest conversation with old friends such as David Riddell, Maurice

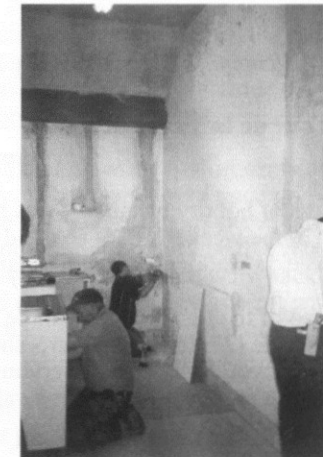
Freeman, Harold Flook, John Hunt, John Byam-Grounds and John Kemsley – to name but a few. What tales they will have to tell each other and what a welcome we can all expect to receive when we finally shuffle off this mortal coil and join that merry throng

## **George Starkey Hut Improvements**

*by Don Hodge*

The long awaited George Starkey Hut Improvements have been completed, or nearly, since a bit more wiring is needed to sort out the additional storage heaters to be fitted in the dormitories. The main purpose of the improvements was to improve the kitchen, to change the men's and ladies showers, to increase the warmth and reduce dampness, and to remove the need for electricity slot meters. The main areas affected by these improvements were the kitchen, and the men's and ladies washrooms.

The changes to the kitchen involved stripping everything out and removing the storage cupboard near the door, to improve access to the room, however, this also necessitated changes to the hot and cold water supplies. The outside facing wall was covered with a waterproof lining and double glazed windows were fitted. A revised layout of the kitchen had been provided to the builder by the Hut Improvements Committee, and new sinks, kitchen furniture and food storage shelves have been fitted. The floor has been fitted with a sealed surface, which will make it easier to keep clean.



*Work In Progress In the Kitchen  
photos: Don Hodge*

The changes to the men's washroom involved fitting two showers in place of the present one. The showers have been fitted with instant water heaters, so there is no possibility of running out of hot water! The ceiling has been lowered and insulated to help make the room warmer, and as in the kitchen, the floor has been fitted with a sealed covering.

The changes to the ladies washroom involved "reversing" the layout of the present shower, in order to accommodate a changing area and hot water is provided by an instant water heater. A full height fire exit door has been fitted to replace the previous low door, and all the windows have been replaced with double glazed units. Sealed floor covering is once again fitted.

The fire alarm system is being upgraded and as stated above, additional storage heaters are being fitted upstairs in the dormitories, to provide background warmth.

The Hut Improvements Committee, which comprised of three members of the ABMSAC and three from the TCC, should be thanked for the effort which they have put into this project and at last, all hut users can benefit from these improvements.

As always, the George Starkey hut requires regular maintenance, including painting, general repairs and cleaning (beyond that expected of normal hut users), and for this reason, we continue to have maintenance meets and all members should try and attend.

## Meet Reports

### Tour de la Vallee de Trient – 30 August to 6 September 2003

*by Mark Davison*

After months of hot dry weather it was nice to hear on the weather forecast that it would rain at the weekend. Not so good was the fact that the 'weekend' was the start of a week's walking in the mountains above Martigny, Switzerland.

Start and end of the tour was the Col de le Forclaz. I arrived early so I had a walk up Pointe Ronde (2700m). Weather:- showers and a stormy wind, snow was lying at the 2900m level. By evening everyone had arrived and the walking could start. Throughout the night we were kept awake by the storm and heavy rain that was blowing across the Col.

Sunday morning was dull; rain gear needed today. Through dripping trees up to Mont de L'Arpile 2085m, then started the long decent through more dripping

trees to La Creta and the river Trient. From the river it was a long trudge up to Salvan.

Karen was waiting with the luggage Yak and a hot cup of tea or coffee on the doorstep of our self-catering night quarters.

Monday: After a super self made breakfast, with bread fresh out of the baker's oven round the corner, it was an easy stroll up the Vallon de Van to Lac de Salanfe and our base for the next two nights. Just to make life interesting two members did a variation over Sex des Granges (2083m), Le Velard, Col Le Golette, past the old Arsenic mines and so to the lake. Low clouds covered the tops but at least it was dry.

Tuesday saw the tops still hidden by the low clouds but none the less we all set off in the direction of Col de Susanfe (2494m). We were greeted by an icy, damp wind so that no one stayed long on the Col. Some turned back, some went on to the Cabane de Susanfe for lunch and the rest set up the slag heap like slopes of the Dents du Midi, Haute Cime summit (3257m). A good, well used path wound its way up to the Col des Paresseux (3056m). The last 200 meters was snow covered but one could see the line of the path leading up to the summit, the last few meters over slabby limestone rocks. Gaps in the clouds gave us views down the vertical north side and out to the high mountains in the south. Cold, but pleased to have topped, we set off back to the lake. As we descended the sky cleared and the day ended with a wonderful sunset colouring the fresh snow on the surrounding peaks. We are treated to a fondue that evening and as an extra treat, all the summiteers receive a kiss from the waitress, made the hard work all worth while.

Wednesday: A clear frosty morning greeted us. To-day is the start off three days of ever changing scenery and impressions; we are travelling through some very interesting geological ground, on one side the old granites and on the other the overlying sedimentary limestone/ shale etc.. The first goal of the day is the Col d' Emany (2462m), then a scramble up Le Luisin (2785m) with frosted rock in the shady nooks, slowed us but does not stop the ascent or descent.

We then descend to Belle Combe (1970m), just below the 600 meter high limestone head wall of the Vallon d' Emany. What goes down must go back up, so after a short rest we set off up the long scree slopes leading up to the Col de Barberine (2481m). At long last we could look out on to the Lac d' Emosson, the end of which, thankfully, was the end off this day's walk. We were back in civilisation cars, buses, trains, funicular and tourists. In the evening it was still beside the lake and we enjoyed seeing the sun go down and the moon go up over the high peaks just across the valley.

Thursday: Clear deep blue sky, promises for a super day in the hills. Over the Dam and then up the paved works road to the hut just below the Dam holding the Lac du Vieux Emosson. The views and autumn colours compensated for the trudge up the road. From the upper dam a good path followed the lake side and then crossed scree slopes before going off to the sky line and Col de la Terrasse 2645m. At

about 2400 meters on this path are the fossil Dinosaur footprints, this was well looked at, Photos taken etc. Anything for a break! Le Cheval Blanc 2830m just of the TVT and on another path system was bagged as we passed by. In the area round the Lac Vert just below the Col everyone found a new path but all arrived one way or other at the Col. The following 300 odd meters is very steep down a scree couloirs, good for the knee's. Late in the afternoon we arrived at the Alp de Loria where our gourmet connoisseur's stopped and tried out all that was chalked up on the menu board. They arrived in Valloresne just in time for dinner.

Friday: Nice morning but the weather forecast talks about a weather front coming in from the West and should be with us some time in the afternoon. No time to waste. The group splits up for the first part of the day. One party up the TVT to Col des Posettes (1997m) and the other up to Col des Montets followed by a traverse of the L' Aiguillette des Posettes (2201m) to meet up at the Col des Posettes. Looking down the valley we could see the bad weather building up as one high peak after another was enveloped in clouds. A short walk saw most off the group united at the Col de Balme (2204m). Once more 'The Connoisseurs' were at work eating their way through an even longer menu card. Croix de Fer (2343m) was the last summit visited and it was time to descend before the rain set in. At a crisp pace we set off along the high level path leading into the upper part of the Trient valley. We pass through some wild areas that had been farmed in the summers of times long gone. Quick beers at the Ch. du Glacier before drops of rain send us scuttling down the path following the Bisse du Trient. Sheltered by trees we manage to gain the Col de le Forclaz worn-out but dry.

So ended the TVT, once more a memorable round tour supported by a turbo charged Yak fondled by Karen and set up by Alasdair. We look forward to the next.

#### **Rhyd Ddu, June 2004**

*by Ed Bramley*

Once again, a very popular meet with over twenty people, at the Oread hut in Rhyd-Ddu.

Saturday was cloudy but otherwise clear, and people took the opportunity to enjoy a variety of routes up popular mountains. To avoid Snowdon and the hordes, we made the short journey round to Ogwen Valley, and firstly took in the north ridge of Tryfan, which was a new experience for some of the party. Whilst having been on it before, we managed to find even more wander at leisure pieces of scrambling than ever before. On to the top of Tryfan for dinner, before dropping down to pick up Bristly ridge. This just made the easier scrambling even better, with lots of neat moves, before pulling out onto the top in mist. What an experience, with the giant slabs looming out of the mist and obligatory pose on the cantilever stone. Round onto the Glyders, with the visibility now improving, before dropping down to

Cwm Idwal and the start of our trip.

As now seems to be the custom, it was the communal meal at the cottage in the evening. This year, it was poppadums and chutneys to start, followed by chicken tikka massala, rounded off with a selection of fruit tarts and sponges and all washed down with several glasses of wine. How we manage to get everybody round the tables is still a mystery.

Sunday was a great piece of sunshine, so we decided an early start up Snowdon was in order. Nothing overly adventurous, just a meander up the Rhyd-Ddu path and back, with some variations around the slate quarries on the ascent. As ever, with the train in steam, the world seemed to have come to the top of Snowdon that day, and the gulls were growing fat on the remnants of sandwiches. Off we went again, before even more people arrived on the top. Easily down, with great views out to sea, and along the coast. The gentle breeze deceptively cools us, and it's only when I'm down again that I realise how much I've caught the sun.

Another great weekend in the hills.

#### **Zermatt 11 July-25 July.**

*by Belinda Baldwin*

The Hotel Atlanta is situated in a quiet spot away from the modern main street but beside the old one of wooden chalets. It had amazing views of the Matterhorn from many of its bedrooms and was presided over by the ever smiling and beautiful Amelia. Clear weather for much of the time meant that the famous peak could be seen and enjoyed but not climbed. Frequent late day and night - time rain left it with too much snow so that those with ambitions were thwarted. Nigella and Geoff could at least look on and remember their past moments at the top.



Views of Zermatt  
*photos: Bill Peebles*

The guide book *Zermatt and District* by Robin G Collomb published in 1969 states that most of the Zermatt walks can be tried by anyone between the ages of six and sixty in perfect safety. That excluded a high proportion of the meet. Members above sixty tried nearly every walk in the book, though whether we were perfectly safe is not for me to judge. We enjoyed, from day one, long and short expeditions in all sorts of combinations, as Zermatt is rich in routes high and low. Several over sixties managed to get to the top of the Breithorn from the Klein Matterhorn station.



The Breithorn and Breithorn Summit  
photos: Bill Peebles

Not everyone was in the senior category. The sub sixties did adventurous things. Fergus on his own, without an early start ascended the Mettelhorn on day one and Mark and Tony repeated this in similar style. Some of their later plans were spoilt by rain mid meet but they were not without successes. Mark and Tony reached the Rimpfischorn saddle at 4000m but could go no further because of snow though earlier Fergus had gone up to the top with a guide and a slow and 'strange' person. Mark and Tony climbed Castor after an early start from the hotel and mechanical ascent to Klein Matterhorn. Fergus, with a guide, climbed Castor and on to the Sella Hut for a 3 am start over the ridge of Liskamm and back via the Grenzletcher to the Monte Rosa Hut. The three of them went up to the Stockhorn returning down snow slopes to the Findelletcher and on to Zermatt.

Many went up to huts, including the Hornli Hut, the Monte Rosa Hut and the Shonbiel Hut. Long and rough walking was done on the Europaveg, with Fergus managing to walk from Taesch to St Nicklaus comfortably in a day. Not all the excursions were about how high or how far one could go. There was much recording of flowers seen and *apfelkuchen* and *rosti* consumed. Marmots, ibex and chamois were seen at close quarters and a quiz done at the herb garden at Blatten.

ABM members enjoy more than being out on the mountains. High culture was fitted in to many schedules. *Chef's-d'oeuvre de la Phillips Collection*, Washington at Martigny was visited by Morag on the way in, Antonia on the way back and someone, who didn't give a name in the diary, in the middle. *Auryn Quartet Koln* and the *Concilium Musicum Wien* put on Thursday night chamber concerts in the church and were appreciated by many. Popular culture in the form of folk concerts diverted us on Wednesday evenings.

Zermatt was a great place for a meet with so much on offer. It filled the needs of those whose ambition was to reach peaks, those who wanted long days out walking, those who wished to potter, those who wished to paint, those who did consumer tests on *rosti* and those who wanted to botanize. The place is amazingly beautiful. We have to thank Alasdair for his brilliant organization. It all went so smoothly with all happy and healthy at the end.

**Innertkirchen Switzerland - July 10th to 24<sup>th</sup> 2004**  
by Mike Pinney

The meet was held jointly with the Alpine Club & Climbers' Club based at the Grund campsite. The first meet for at least twenty five years to this side of the Oberland so as to be better sited for the rock climbs in the Grimsel & Susten Passes.

The first few days were cold and wet with snow down to two thousand meters. Acclimatisation walks and the indoor wall at Meiringen proved the order of the day. A number of parties were seen leaving the campsite for Southern Italy. Was it too early for a meet in this area?

By the middle of the first week the temperature rose dramatically and the rock dried very quickly. It continued to be showery and we rapidly learnt to carry waterproofs on multi pitch climbs. Most attendees abscoiled off at least one route but ropes, and climbers, soon dried.

In the Susten Pass, Platten at Steingletscher proved popular and two teams tackling the recently developed Via Ferrata above the Talli hut. One team picked the right day for the Salbitschijen south ridge. A couple of parties climbed the Wetterhorn from the Dossen Hut, their start delayed by avalanche risk on the hut approach. In the Grimsel Pass, teams climbed the 350 m high Mittagflue (gneiss) before moving onto the granite at Handegg. Two teams climbed the classic Fair Hands Line with its unique descent down steps at the side of the funicular, there is a handrail at the steeper parts. The multi-pitch slab climbs at Ratenichsboden provided some

interesting padding. At Elderado the Septumania team were more successful than the Motorhead enthusiasts. The Lauteraarhorn is typically climbed from the Aar bivouac, a good six hours walk from the Hospice. The successful team sat it out for two days before making a new trail up the mountain.

By coincidence the meet leader's birthday occurred during the second week and eighteen dined at a local hostelry to celebrate. Thank you all for making it such a good evening besides an enjoyable meet.

### Alpes Maritimes - 12-19 September 2004

by David Seddon

This was a one week circular walk in the Mercantour National Park to the west of Tende and St Dalmas-de-Tende beginning and ending at the Gite Neige de Merveilles near Mesches.

Our first day was more of a half day for those who wished to take luncheon at the Refuge Merveilles where in any case, we were due to spend two nights. However, some did venture out for a little exercise before supper. What began for three of us as a minor excursion to the Cime du Diable(2685m) from the Pas du Trem concluded with a traverse of Cime du Trem and Cime des Lacs(2510m) and its airy connecting ridge. The remains of observation posts on the ridge and a possible gun emplacement below Cime des Lacs contributed to the interest of the day.

On the following morning, a largish group walked or in some cases staggered, up Mont Bego (2872m) before continuing North West along an unmarked and somewhat precipitous path that led to Baisse de Valmasque. Here, Terry and Mark became detached from the main body of the expedition and proceeded independently before returning to the refuge with a highly improbable tale of strange lands visited, mighty peaks climbed etc.. It seemed more likely that they had got lost but modesty prevented me from suggesting as much. Anyway, on the 'morrow, the entire expedition departed in a series of staggered starts with the hope I suppose, that we would all arrive at our destination, the refuge Nice at about the same time. Hmmm. Anyway, an elite detachment of Myles and myself scaled Cime Nuffie by mistake, before staggering up Mont du Grand Capelet(2935m). *En route* to these two peaks we were able to observe the majestic progress of the main van of the expedition, as it wound its way, snail-like over the Baisse de Valmasque and the Baisse du Basto before finally debouching into the valley above the Refuge Nice. To be fair this was tough walking over exceptionally rough ground, especially on either side of the Baisse du Basto.



In the Maritime Alps

photo: Richard Winter

From the Refuge de Nice, it was possible to see the summit of our next objective, Mont Clapier(3045m) and on our fourth day, most of the party clambered up the rocky slopes to the summit where the views were extensive with distant views of the Dauphine and Mont Blanc. After some prolonged basking in the sun we returned to the Refuge to bask in the sun some more. Another fairly tough day awaited, our fifth, with an ascent of the rightly named Pas de las Fous. Somehow, Ed, Andy, Stuart and I managed to lose what we were subsequently informed was an obvious path and take a more direct path weaving either side of the stream issuing from Lac Gele. This provided some amusement for the others who had for some time been quenching their thirst at Refuge de Valmasque where as well as beers and good food, a shower waited.

Our final day dawned bright and windless as indeed had the previous five and we crossed the Baisse de Fontanalba with, for some, an ascent of the Cime Bicknell (2641m). From there a long traversing path led under the almost vertical cliffs of the east ridge of Mont Bego. Most resisted the attempt to descend for lunch at the Refuge de Fontanalba preferring the short ascent to the Baisse de Valauretta where the country suddenly opened out to reveal upland pastures as opposed to the cliffs and forest of the previous few hours. The sound of cowbells from the Vallon de

Fontanalba provided a note of pastoral idyll as we rested. Almost too soon we descended from this restful place. A myriad species of butterflies danced around us, providing a final lift to the spirits, as we descended through the forest above Mesches.

Our thanks are due to Alasdair Andrews for organising this week of walking in the Alpes Maritimes. I suspect this area would be very hot indeed in the height of summer and once again mid-September proved an ideal time to be walking in the Alps.

#### **Present**

Alasdair Andrews, Pam Harris, Stuart Beare, Cheryl Wells, Geoff Urmston, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Stuart Caulton, Terry Shaw, Mark Davison, John and Rowena Mellor, David Seddon, Myles O'Reilly, Richard Winter.

#### **Aviemore - October 2004**

*by Bill Peebles*

In true Scottish fashion the Wednesday night prior to the meet was extremely wet with very heavy rain and strong winds. Not very nice for the coming weekend, especially as the burn at the bottom of the garden was in full spate and very brown. The hills were going to be very boggy and the rivers and streams would be well up and difficult to cross.

The meet was again based at Ord View House situated on the road to Loch Morlich. Ten members attended namely John and Marge Foster, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Buff Dolling, John Dempster, Roger James, Geoff Urmston, Peter Farrington and Bill Peebles. The new people found the house very well appointed with its three showers, one bathroom and a loo. They were also quite taken with the decoration of stags heads and fish. The house was also made very comfortable because it was always heated and was provided with adequate hot water. A new conservatory had been added on at the Kitchen and this provided better accommodation for eating. This was much appreciated by John Foster because smoking was permitted in this room and so he could enjoy a cigar in comfort and not outside in the cold and wet.

The usual discussions took place on Friday about where to go on Saturday. Since failure was the outcome of last years attempt on Braeriach this became the first choice for Jim and Margaret who were to be accompanied by Peter, John Dempster and Roger. The preferred route was an approach from the ski road through the Chalamain gap into the Lairig Ghru. The rest were more inclined to wait and see what the weather was like in the morning. Needless to say there were



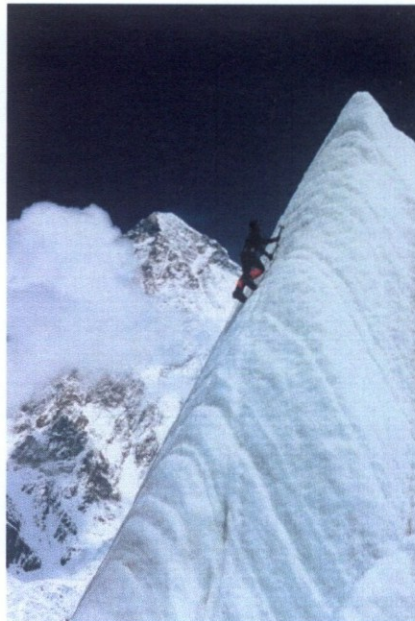
Nikki on Gondogoro La with K2 in background  
*photo: Nikki Wallis*



Old Man and Child, Rawalpindi  
*photo: Nikki Wallis*



Broad Peak Base Camp with K2 in background  
*photo: Nikki Wallis*



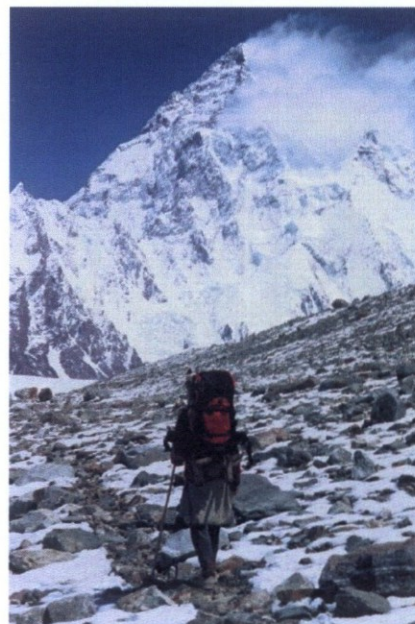
Ice climbing with K2 behind



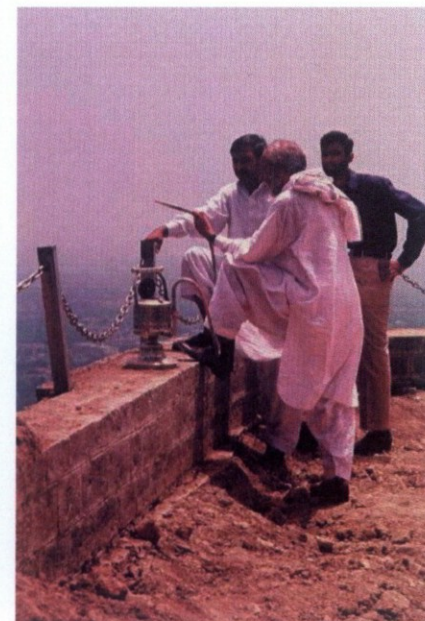
Glacier crossing beyond Concordia



Broad Peak from Concordia  
*photo: Nikki Wallis*



Porters on the Godwin-Austen Glacier



Locals in Islamabad

*all photos: Nikki Wallis*

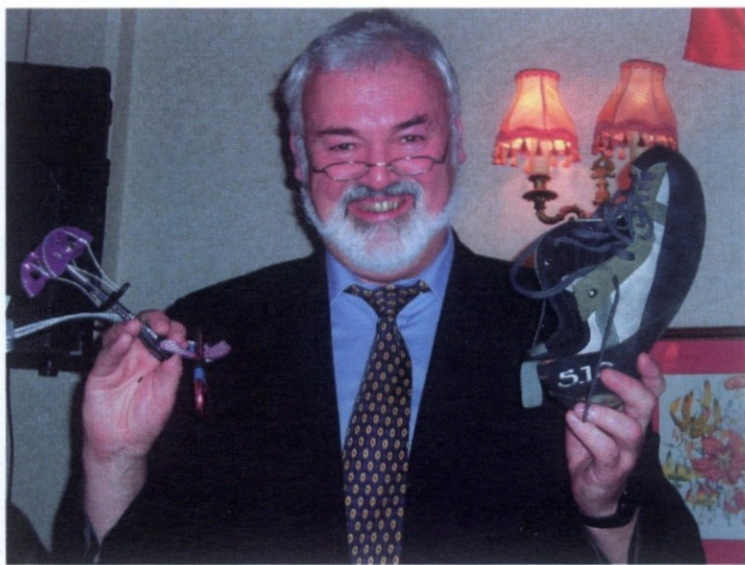




Alaskan wildlife—Now, where's that Goldilocks?  
*photo: John Foster*



Jebel Musa across the Strait of Gibraltar  
*photo: Sally Holland*



2005 Annual Dinner—Tony Howerd (guest speaker)  
*photo: Richard Winter*



Zermatt Meet—The Matterhorn  
*photo: Bill Peebles*



Looking down into Zermatt  
*photo: Bill Peebles*



Findelalp  
*photo: Bill Peebles*



Monte Rosa  
*photo: Bill Peebles*



Zumsee  
*photo: Bill Peebles*



Scenes from AlpTrek 2005—Alpes Maritimes  
 photos: Richard Winter

two weather forecasts – the optimists who claimed that on Saturday it would be reasonable and the pessimists who preached gloom and doom or at least wet and windy.

The weather in the morning was not very encouraging but the Braeriach party set off in good spirits. A second party off Marge, Buff and Bill set off at the same time for Bynack More. The outcome was the same for both parties; we all climbed our respective mountain and had a good day. The type of day was totally dependent on the weather, which could best be described as subtle. The Bynack party set off in poor conditions with low cloud base and threatening rain. It was so threatening that when we reached the stables after an hour's walk we held serious discussions and considered our options for staying low. After consideration and noting a surprising clearance way out to the East where we could in fact see blue sky we carried on with our original plan, in other words if you don't know what to do stick to the original plan. Climbing up from the stables the weather was really subtle. Clearances were forthcoming and the cloud base gradually crept upwards. Occasionally glimpses of sun appeared and all in all the weather improved.

After climbing up through the various small torrs with the summit always hiding behind the next torr we eventually reached the summit in what Marge informed me was the "book time". As far as I was concerned we arrived there in my time of three and a half hours. By this time the weather had improved dramatically and we decided to visit the Barns, which are an interesting rocky outcrop five hundred feet below the summit. We spent some time there in sunshine and then retraced our steps to the summit and back to the car. On the way back the weather again showed signs of deteriorating and we felt that Sunday might be poor.

It took a long time for the Braeriach party to return. The virtuous ones sitting in the house drinking tea knew that they were in the pub celebrating their success on Braeriach and so it proved. They arrived back full of high spirit and some other spirits having had a wonderful day very similar to the Bynack group.

Geoff who felt that he was not fit for the high tops had spent the day walking to the Chalamain Gap. He in fact was following in the footsteps of the Braeriach group. He had a lovely day but felt that it had been quite enough for him. He was quite intrigued to find that a party was busy rebuilding the path from the ski road into the Lairig Ghru through the Chalamain Gap.

John Foster who was unfit due to a bad leg had a railway day. He went up Cairn Gorm on the new train. This was fine until he tried to return at which point he was stopped and almost sent back outside because he was carrying a rucksack and a walking stick. The ticket man thought he was a stray walker who had sneaked

inside for a lift down and that is strictly against the rules for walkers. John, however, with his gammy leg managed to convince the collector that he was not fit to walk down and did in fact possess a return ticket. From there he went off and looked at the Speyside Railway.

After the wayward Braeriach party had freshened up we all repaired to the pub and enjoyed excellent food and drink.

Sadly the Sunday quickly degenerated into a wet day. Marge, Peter and Bill tried the Corbett Meall a Bhuachaille but quickly resorted to a walk at lower levels in increasing rain. John Dempster and Roger rapidly disappeared down the A9 to climb Corbetts at Drumochter and if they did climb they would certainly be wet. Geoff, probably the wisest, set off home after breakfast and Jim and Margaret along with Buff were heading for Falkirk to see the Falkirk Wheel that is a device or lift to raise canal boats from one level to the next. The wheel is fast becoming a tourist attraction.

By lunch time all were on their way home in one way or another. Personally I set off by driving the secondary road from Aviemore to Kingussie to look at the trees. Why look at trees on a wet day? Well, dressed overall in their autumn colours of yellows through to gold they were a magnificent sight. In fact if there had even been a glimpse of sunshine they would have been out of this world and a photographer's paradise.

### Galloway Meet, August 2004

by Richard Winter

Two things tempted me to Galloway, firstly the Meets Secretary chiding me for never attending Scottish Meets and secondly my friend David Edwards had retired to the bosom of his West Cumbrian family to Carlisle. The first I could ignore no longer and the second had been evading my attempts to get him away to Galloway for over a year, although this was not always his fault. So I e-mailed John to book two places then told David what I had done, a good result all round.

I drove to Carlisle on the Friday and parked my car in Carlisle and David, who knows the area, drove to the Loch Ken Sailing Centre where we were to stay. Bill Peebles arrived at the same time as us and John and Marj were there to welcome us and while we supped tea and caught up on events the others arrived a few at a time. Eventually we all set off to the pub in St John's Town of Dalry, where we dined very well.

Following an icy night David and I set off to Loch Trool and made our way up the Merrick where we enjoyed wonderful views all round, which I enjoyed but could not take any pictures as the lens on my camera refused to come out, perhaps it was too cold and it came back to life when we got down. It was bitterly cold on top and as we sheltered from the wind we were joined by Roger James and David Ellis from the opposite direction.

We decided to go back down via the lakes. We were warned against this by those who knew the area and we should have listened but it looked great from the top. I don't think I can ever remember rougher or wetter ground and such hard work. As we reached the road we enjoyed some wonderful views down Glen Trool with the sun shining through the autumn leaves.



On the way to the Merrick  
photo: Richard Winter



By Loch Neldricken  
photo: David Edwards

When we got back we found that everyone we had not already seen on the hills had climbed Corserine and the Rhinns of Kells, apart from John foster who was convalescing and had driven round most of the local area. In the evening we enjoyed another excellent meal at the pub.

Sunday morning dawned as a complete contrast to Saturday, dull, damp and cloudy. Much discussion over breakfast as to potential routes but in the end we all headed for home and we left Mike and Marion arguing about where they would go. Not far down the road it started chucking it down with rain so it was probably a good decision to leave when we did.

This was my first visit to Galloway although it had long been planned. Someone has described it as that bit between the Lake District and Glencoe but it really is worth the effort. Superb hills and mostly empty hills, with some of the most bizarre and amusing names you could find. Have a look at the OS map if you don't

believe me. I'm really looking forward to my next visit.

**Attendees:** Alasdair Andrews, Mike Scarr, Bill Peebles, Mike and Marion Parsons, John and Marj Foster, Roger James, David Ellis (guest) David Edwards (guest) and Richard Winter.

### **Loch Tay Meet January 14th – 16th 2005**

*by Margaret Strachan*

Most members gathered at the Kenmore Hotel for dinner on the Friday night. With the weather wet and windy, and a poor forecast in prospect it did not auger well for the weekend.

Saturday morning dawned with the cloud almost down to the loch side i.e. almost zero visibility not a hill in sight or even any high ground for that matter. The mountains being out, Bill Peebles being the local guide suggested a walk from the high ground above Kenmore down an old un-metalled road to Aberfeldy returning on a slightly lower route via some woodland. One car was deposited at Aberfeldy for those that did not wish to do the return stretch. As our cars raced up the small road to the car park at the start of the walk, we were followed by a policeman. He probably thought we were up to no good as any normal person would not be out in such bleak conditions. Following some reassurance from Bill Peebles that we were here for the walk he departed, probably thinking we were mad.

The rain stopped and it did brighten up a bit making it a pleasant, mainly downhill walk following the line of the Urrlar Burn for about four or five miles. As we neared Aberfeldy the party split with the hardy lot doing the uphill return journey completing the loop to the starting point. The remainder: John, Jim, Margaret, Katherine, Alasdair and Geoff carried on to Aberfeldy via the 'Birks' and the Moness Waterfall which proved to be a spectacle with the volume of water enhanced with the previous months rain. Various tea shops and hostelrys were visited before returning to the house.

Marg and I self catered for dinner on the Saturday evening as this had proved successful on a previous meet. Fifteen people proved to be squeeze for the dining area and additional seating was provided courtesy of Alasdair and Bill.

Sunday again dawned wet and dismal with most people heading for home, one party via the Palace of Linlithgow, which proved to be an interesting visit.

**Present:** John & Marg. Foster, John Dempster, Roger James, Shirley MacKay, Alasdair Andrews, Bill Peebles, Peter Goodwin & Ursula, Stewart & Katherine

Davis, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Jeff Urmston, Geoff Bone,

### **Annual Dinner Meet – January 2005**

*by Brooke Midgley*

Maybe we should invite the vicar to the dinner more often. Although I'm sure she would be the first to disclaim any credit, we did have the best weather for many years. I could check the records for the past thirty two dinners I've organised and see if good weather coincided with a vicar on the guest list but I'll desist, I wouldn't wish to tempt fate.

So the weather was delightful for the weekend: better still it was good for a week. There were reports of parties on High Street walking in shirt sleeves, maybe that's why the numbers were low, some of them got 'locked up' for indecent exposure. At eighty for dinner, this was the lowest attendance since I started counting twenty years ago. So a lot of people missed a really good meet!

Our guests at the dinner were our local vicar Revd. Mary Helen Brett Young and her husband Patrick; the President of Oread Mountaineering Club Tony Howard and Mrs. Jackie Howard; the Chairman of Tuesday Climbing Club Max Peacock and Mrs. Vivien Peacock. The speeches were good, being short and humorous. The President was barracked by the youngest attendee Kathryn (one year), she'd been quieter last year when she slept through his speech (she was only ten days old), mind you some older members did that too!

The meal was truly excellent and the hotel staff was commended.

Presentations were made to Professor Paddy Boulter on his elevation to Honorary Member and to Mary for the work done for the Association over many years. The Photographic competition awards were made to Merle Gartside and John Edwards who had their entries reproduced on the toast list cover. John's entry was forty years late being of the first ascent of Mawenzi 16898 ft (5150m), Kilimanjaro Range in 1964 and an account of the climb was on the back of the toast list. The Alpine Journal is still awaiting the 'copy'!

To those of you who missed this year's meet, come and join us next year, we may be lucky two years running. We used to be but that was thirty years ago when we had sun and good snow!

## Members' Activities

### Ken Baldry

I set out to complete the Chamonix-Zermatt walk in June 2003, starting from Chamonix but only got as far as Sembrancher on the second full day when my feet refused to tolerate my boots any longer.

So, this year, I started from Sembrancher, got up to Verbier for the night but the next day, the guardian at the Mont Fort Hut said the Three Passes were impossible. Further questioning showed he was not being over-cautious. So I walked down and thumbed and bussed round to Arolla, somewhere I had never managed to get to in the past.

After a day of strolls there, I did the next two stages to Grimentz in one day but the weather was poor, so it was possible without over-heating. The next half day, I walked round to St Luc, thus completing the Arolla-Zermatt walk. However, someone at Arolla had been over the Pas de Chevres, so I then bussed and thumbed to the Grande Dixence.

The next day was glorious overhead but underfoot, rather challenging. However, I did complete the stage, leaving only the frustrating Three Passes section to fill in sometime.

### Belinda and James Baldwin

We have walked weekly on Wednesdays and Sundays within driving distance of home. This encompasses Dartmoor, Exmoor, The South West Coast Path from Exmouth to Swanage, the Blackdown hills and the coastal hinterland. Belinda is out on Tuesday mornings in term time contributing to an adult education class concerned with the Jurassic Coast. As we take out Rambler's walks many reccies have been needed as well so, many of our weekly walks are done twice.

Our away time from home last year was mostly with the ABM; namely the Northern Dinner Meet, Rhyddu, Zermatt and Patterdale. We had a trip to the Highlands in April, spending two comfortable and friendly nights with Janette and Bill Peebles. With Bill we climbed Ben Vorlich. We spent a week at Spean Bridge with the hope of ascending Ben Nevis but the weather was as bad as it could be except for departure day. We did manage Beinn Teallach and walked at lower levels so though there is not too much to report except that we enjoyed ourselves.

On the way home we ascended Stob Ban, which makes our record slightly more respectable.

So it has been a year of many hours out walking over mountain, moorland, footpaths over fields and along cliffs in every kind of weather. As a couple we have walked approximately 1100 miles and climbed 61000 metres in 590 hours.

### Peter Farrington

Following some winter Munro bagging I visited Crete in May with my wife Pat and friends.

Walks included the Imbros Gorge, the Kallergi Refuge and beyond in the Lefka Ori and an ascent of a snowed covered and misty Psiloritis, 2456m.in the Ida Massif.

In June I spent a week in the Pyrenees with old friend Tony Perrons, based at Gavarnie. There was still widespread snow cover above 2000m. which presented some unexpected terrain. After a warm up walk to the Refuge des Espuguettes and Horquettes des Alans, 2360m., we set off for the Refuge de Goriz from the Port de Gavarnie with the intention of climbing Monte Perdido. The route via the Refuge des Sarradets, Breche de Roland and Pic du Taillon, 3144m.in warm sunshine was most enjoyable. The descent across and down steep snowfields to within half a mile of the Goriz proved more tiring than expected. Gathering cloud next morning persuaded us reluctantly to retrace our steps, correctly as it proved when we descended from the Breche in thick mist and drizzle.



Peter Farrington in front of Pic du Taillon, Pyrenees

The following day conditions continued to be misty but with the hope of better things we walked up from the Barrage d'Ossoue to the Refuge de Baysellance to attempt the Grand Vignmale. 3298m. A brief period of dawn visibility helped us to the Ossoue Glacier, its snout obliterated by thick snow, before the wind rose and mist thickened. Able to take a direct approach and with snow cover reaching to within a few metres of the rocky summit ridge it proved a fast ascent. With no reason to linger we descended quickly and were back in Gavarnie by early afternoon. The trip finished with a visit to Cauterets and a relaxing walk up the attractive Lutour Valley.

In October a holiday in Lycian Turkey with Pat and friends provided some coastal walks as well as ascents of Kirat Peak, 1415m. near Uzumlu and Aygir Peak, 2184m. in the Cal Dag.

### Richard Winter

During the last year I have made an effort to do two main things :1) visit some of the places I have been promising myself for years and never got there and 2) get on more trips with my "other" club -- the Aylesbury Climbing Club. Looking back on the year I have had mixed results, like my old school reports '.... could have done better'!

In April, following some beautiful spring like days I went off to Dartmoor on Alison Henry's meet. Arrived in time for a couple of pints before the pub shut; nice warm and dry bunkhouse, everything looking good for the weekend. Saturday morning set out with Mike Pinney and David Christmas on a chilly morning with a feel of rain in the air. Feel of rain be dashed, before long it was lashing down and the visibility on the moor varied between poor and nothing at all. It was interesting using my GPS and watching myself being blown off course. We all arrived back soaked but did enjoy a particularly good meal in the pub. Sunday looked not much better so I went off to visit my daughter in Bath.

Three weeks later I was in North Wales with Aylesbury Climbing Club and by contrast we had wonderful sunny and warm weather -- and sunburn. As the weekend was the start of a week off I headed north, with peeling head, to stay with an old friend in Carlisle. Monday morning saw us in Dufton and a trip up to High Cup Nick on another glorious day to fulfil my first 'tick' of promised visits. The next day we were on Hadrians Wall, second tick, on a cold and windy day. After visits to Housteads Fort and Crag Lough and we just beat the rain to the pub so that was a good result too.

The summer and autumn saw AlpTrek and ABMSAC meet then in November on John Foster's excellent meet to Galloway and tick three. A visit to the Peak with Aylesbury in November and 2004 finished quite well.

2005 has started well with ABMSAC Dinner Meet in January. A day in the Malvern Hills, tick four, in February and trips to North Wales in February and Duddon Valley in the Lakes in March with Aylesbury. The latter trip resulting in yet more sunburn, I really didn't expect to be fried in the Lakes in mid-March, it must be global warming.

Not a bad tally and I hope to keep the ball rolling through the next twelve months.



High Cup Nick



Crag Lough

photos: Richard Winter

## ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 5.30pm on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2005 in the Glenridding Hotel Cumbria.

The President Alasdair Andrews was in the chair. 24 members were present.

#### Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Antonia Barlen, Sheila Coates, Nigel Cooper, Graham Daniels, David Harland, Gay Leese, Denise Lewis, Jon Mellor, Dave Radmore, Nikki Wallis and George Watkins.

#### Minutes of the AGM held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004

The minutes were approved.

#### Matters arising

There were none.

#### Proposed rule changes

The hon sec apologised that when the papers for the meeting were circulated the wrong note had been attached. However efforts had been made to circulate the correct note by e-mail or by post, and it was agreed that the proposals could be considered notwithstanding the fact that not everyone had received details within the 3 week period specified in the rules.

The hon sec summarised the proposed changes. First, it was proposed that the requirement that applicants for membership of the club should be proposed by a full member and seconded by a full or an affiliate member should be dropped, as this had proved an unattractive feature in attracting new members. Second, it was proposed that the post of hon membership secretary should be made open to all members. Third it was proposed that the Rules should provide for committee business to be transacted by correspondence or e-mail, given the dispersed locations of committee members. The proposed changes were agreed, subject to the addition of the words "or telephone conference call" in the third point.

#### Election of officers and committee

James Baldwin was elected Hon Treasurer in place of Alasdair Andrews. The remaining office holders and committee were re-elected.

#### Hon Treasurer's report and adoption of the accounts for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004

It was pointed out that the affiliation fee to the BMC was now over £8 per member, and it was questionable whether this represented good value for money. The President explained that the steep increase in the BMC fee was due to the rising cost of third party insurance. Although many members might have their own civil liability insurance the BMC policy covered the club itself and its officers which could be important in the event of an accident on a club meet. The committee would continue to monitor the situation.

The accounts were adopted.

#### Subscription rates

The subscription bands for 2006 were agreed as follows:-

Single Membership	£19 - £21
Joint Membership	£30 - £32
Junior Membership	£7 - £8

#### President's Report

This is reproduced below.

#### Any other business

There was none, and the meeting closed at 18.10hrs.

John Dempster  
Hon Secretary



## President's Report 2005

by Alasdair Andrews – Honorary President

In earlier years events relating to the hut have dominated the proceedings of the Association and this process continued in 2004. In late January the Church withdrew their offer to sell the freehold of the hut. In addition the rent review, which is considerably overdue, has still to be agreed. Since early 2004 the Directors have sought to meet with the Church to discuss both these issues and a meeting is scheduled to take place this week.

The hut was closed during the summer months enabling the contractors to carry out the work specified in phases 1 & 2 of the Hut Improvements programme. Much of that work had been completed by mid September and in November a TCC work party redecorated the hut and, but for the storms which hit Cumbria recently, most of the remaining work would have been completed. Our thanks are due to Gaeron Davies, Don Hodge and to the members of the Hut Improvements Committee for their skills and time afforded to this project.

The agreement between the Association and the Tuesday Climbing Club on the administration of the hut and in particular on the duties of the Hut Management Committee was reviewed, and after considerable debate, revised. Our thanks are due to John Dempster for steering this review to a satisfactory conclusion.

During the year the Monte Rosa section offered the Association for an undisclosed sum, the custody of the Hornli hut, or any of the other Monte Rosa section huts. In July a meeting was held in Zermatt with four representatives of the Monte Rosa Section to discuss the details of the offer. At a subsequent committee meeting it was agreed that the offer should be rejected.

The alpine meets to Zermatt, Innertkirchen and the Maritime Alps were well attended. Unfortunately there was little demand for the meet to Grindelwald. The weekend UK meets were also mostly well attended but there is still a need for more members to organise weekend meets to venues in England and Wales. There was a high turnout for the annual dinner and we were pleased to welcome Franz Staempfli, President of the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club, as our principal guest. Franz presented the Association with a magnificent quartz crystal ornament quarried from a rock high in the Bernese Alps; we reciprocated with a crystal glass and a bottle of Malt Whisky. The London lectures held at the Hoop & Toy in association with other climbing clubs have proved to be popular with our London & Home Counties based members.

During the year we published four Newsletters, the Annual Journal, several

E-Bulletins and a number of Hut Improvements newsletters. The information sheet for new and prospective members was updated and circulated to the membership. Work continued on the production of the Association's history.

Membership numbers remained constant but they disguise the fact that we managed to recruit seventeen new members; unfortunately *anno domini* led to a similar reduction in the number of existing members. It should be noted that most new members learned of the Association via our web site, maintained by Mike Goodyer.

Our finances remain healthy and are reported elsewhere. However subscriptions were increased for the first time for several years. The increase was due to an increase to the BMC subscription which had previously been absorbed. A further increase will occur in 2005 due to the increasing cost of the BMC's public liability insurance policy.

Work has continued on the cataloguing, pricing and cleaning of the books which are held in the Alpine Club Library. Later this year most of the books will be offered for sale to members. The more valuable books will continue to be held on our behalf by the ACL. Thanks are due to Alan Lyall and Jon Mellor, assisted by Myles O'Reilly for their work on this project.

During the year the committee has met on four occasions. As committee members are scattered throughout the UK it has proved difficult to find times and venues which are suitable for all members. The Committee have suggested that the use of telephone conference calls and the exchange of emails be permitted as alternative forms of meeting and this will be discussed at the forthcoming AGM.

Our constitution indicates that the President, the Vice President and the ordinary members of the Committee should serve for a maximum of three years. No such limit had been placed on the other office bearers or to members appointed to the Board of Directors or to the Hut Management Committee. The Committee have proposed that such officials should also serve for a period of three years, renewable for a further period of three years. This should prevent incumbents from feeling trapped in office and unable to resign and may lead to flow of new ideas from new appointees. The Committee also agreed that, where possible, ABMSAC appointments to the Board of Directors should be from the membership of the ABMSAC committee.

Looking ahead we must attract new members. As indicated earlier we have made a good start in 2004 but as our membership age profile is high we shall have to increase our efforts if the Association is to survive. The Committee has debated

the possibility of forming a SAC UK section but have agreed not to proceed with that proposal. Currently fewer than 40% of our members belong to the SAC and as this % is unlikely to increase it may be timely to take stock and plan for the future.

It has been ABMSAC policy for many years to award honorary membership to individuals who have given outstanding service to the Association. I am pleased to announce that the Committee has agreed to award our former President Paddy Boulter who has given outstanding service to the Association in many capacities for more than thirty years. A presentation will be made to Paddy at the Annual Dinner.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the officials, committee members and others who in any way have worked to ensure the success of the Association and its activities.

#### **Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club Limited**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel,  
Glenridding on Saturday January 29<sup>th</sup> 2005.

#### **Present:**

Directors R.W. Jones (Chairman), A.I. Andrews, D. Buckley (Treasurer), A. Burton, J.W.S. Dempster, D.R. Hodge, W.L. Peebles, T.J. Shaw and more than twenty members.

**Apologies for absence.** There were none

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting.** The minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup> 2004 and which were circulated in the ABMSAC Journal were approved. There were no matters arising.

**New Director.** The Chairman welcomed the appointment of Mr. A.I. Andrews as a director and stressed the importance of the President of the ABMSAC being a member of the Board. Warm thanks were paid to Professor P.S. (Paddy) Boulter, who has resigned from the Board after being a director since the formation of the company in 1974.

**Directors' Report and Accounts.** In explaining the accounts, the Treasurer said there had been a net profit of £842 compared with a loss of £936 last year. Mr. S. Beare proposed and Mr. R. Winter seconded acceptance of the accounts and they

were approved without dissent.

**Reappointment of Accountants.** As there were no other nominations, the accountants, Keen Phillips, were reappointed.

**Any Other Business.** Mr. Winter asked whether BMC affiliated clubs making hut bookings were required to pay the whole fees in advance and was told this was not the case. Mr. Hodge commented that he understood that previous policy had been to try to "get the money up front." The Chairman told the meeting that steps were being taken to amend the Articles of Association to permit TCC members to be members of the company and it was hoped that the next AGM would be asked to approve the amendments.

The meeting closed shortly after 18.30.

T.J. Shaw  
Secretary  
20<sup>th</sup> February 2005