

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



JOURNAL 2012

ABMSAC JOURNAL 2012

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MEETS PROGRAMME 2012

Dates	Meet / Venue	Organiser
February 3-5	Patterdale - Annual Dinner Meet	Brooke Midgley
March 16-18	Onich, Scotland	John Dempster
April 21 - 28	Durness, N Scotland	Margaret Strachan
May 5-7	Camping Barn, Hurdlow, Derbyshire	Andy Burton
May 18-20	Rhyd Ddu, N Wales, Oread Club Hut	Ed Bramley
June 22-24	Britannia Hut Centenary Celebrations, Switzerland	Mike Pinney
July 7-21	Italy, Gressoney la Trinite, Hotel Meet	Pamela Harris
July 14 - Aug 5	Innertkirchen, Switzerland, Alpine Camping Meet, Joint meet with ABMSAC, CC, FRCC & Wayfarers	Mike Pinney
Aug 22-24	Patterdale, Hut Maintenance	Don Hodge
Sept 1-8	Trek in Karwendel mountains, Austria	Ed Bramley
Sept 14-16	Beer Meet, Devon	James Baldwin
Sept 21-23	Buffet Party - Patterdale	Ed Bramley
Oct 19-21	Tarbet Hotel, Tarbet	John Foster
Oct 26-28	Alpine reunion Meet – Patterdale	Mike Pinney

LONDON JOINT LECTURES

January 10	Nordic Touring - FRCC	Rosemary Scott
February 7	Songs and Stories - AAC (UK)	Paul Cherry
March 6	Kyajo Ri - a first visit to Nepal - ABMSAC	Mike Pinney

Editorial

Welcome to this years Journal. There was a total of 16 Meets in 2011, with three meets in Europe and a meet to Bhutan. The number and variety of meets not only shows how successful the Association still is but also shows the diversity of the mountaineering interest within the membership. The reports of last years Meets are presented in the Journal, along with several photographs. In addition, we have a selection of articles from members covering their thoughts and outdoor activities.

While we have had a range of successful meets this year and many members have enjoyed their trips away there is a sad side to our mountaineering life and in September we lost a stalwart of the Association when Alasdair Andrews died. As is described elsewhere in the Journal, Alasdair was responsible for organising over 150 meets. These included numerous Meets in Scotland, the popular Hotel based Alpine Meet and the Trek. I was privileged to work with Alasdair over the years during his extensive involvement with the Committee and he was a great support to me when I was President. I'm pleased to say that Pamela has taken over the role of organising the Hotel based Alpine Meet – keeping it in the family. Alasdair will be sadly missed at Meets and on the Fells.

The Meets Programme for this year, presented on the opposite page, shows the extent of this year's activity with many good meets still to come. Thanks to Marion, the Meets Secretary, and the Meet leaders for putting this programme together. I hope that you all get to attend the meets of your choice and I look forward to seeing you out on the hills. I also look forward to receiving articles; meet reports and photographs of the activities for the next Journal.

Once again I have been able to increase the number of the number of photographs in the Journal this year, both black and white in the articles and colour in the centrefolds. However as we are still limited to the number of photographs we can add to the Journal, we continue to add many more photos to the website (www.abmsac.org.uk). Meet reports and photos are added to the website during the year. In addition, we regularly send out Newsletters and news updates to members by e mail, with over 80% uptake. A printed copy of the Journal will still be issued at the end of each year for your personal record.

I would like to thank all the members who have sent me copy, photos and support to help compile this Journal and to keep the website up to date.

I hope you enjoy the Journal this year.

M J Goodyer June 2012

OBITUARIES

Alasdair Andrews 1939-2011



Over the past 30 years Alasdair probably did more for the ABMSAC than any other member. He organised over 150 meets for the Club, in addition to serving, at different times, in most of the key positions. The Scottish meets which he organised in the eighties and nineties, and his subsequent Alpine treks and meets succeeded in attracting much needed new blood into the Club. The health of the Club today is very much a result of Alasdair's unstinting work.

Alasdair was born in 1939. He was born and bred in Edinburgh and went to Broughton High School. Following National Service he joined Ferranti Ltd working in the accounts departments. He had a long and successful career with the Company, ending as Company Secretary of Ferranti (Defence Systems) Ltd. He retired in 1998. In all he worked for the Company for 39 years.

Aside from his work the two great interests in his life were music and mountaineering. At school he was a gifted chorister and he nearly became a professional singer. However, he elected for a safer career but choral singing remained one of his great interests. He joined the Edinburgh Practice Choir in 1975 and remained a member until his death. Later he joined the Edinburgh Festival Chorus and the Philharmonic Singers who became the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Choir. He sang with both choirs for over 30 years.

He seldom missed a rehearsal. Evidence of this is that his Alpine meets always had to end before the end of July so that he could start rehearsing for the Festival. Many members of both choirs sang at his Service of Thanksgiving. His climbing friends had an opportunity to hear his singing voice on a wet day in Fiesch when we visited the church at Ernen and he decided to test the acoustics by giving us a splendid rendering of the climbers' version of Om Mane Padme Hum.

But it was as a mountaineer that I knew him. Like many of us his love of the outdoors started as a scout, and he gained the Queen's Scout award. Following in his father's footsteps he became a keen member of the Scottish Youth Hostels Association. He was a leading member of the Ferranti Mountaineering Club, his company's club, a very active club in those days. He became Club Secretary and organised many of the Club's meets. He also joined the JMCS, the ABMSAC and subsequently the Alpine Club.

It was through the ABMSAC that we met. In 1974 we found ourselves sitting next to each other at what was then the Northern Dinner at Glenridding. We discovered we had a mutual love of the Scottish hills and he suggested that I come up to Scotland for a weekend. He borrowed a cottage at Fearnan by Loch Tay which subsequently became the base for many of his early meets. He invited a few other friends to join us. The weekend was a great success including a traverse of Meall nan Tarmachan in winter conditions. This led him to start organising Scottish weekend meets for the ABM. He arranged meets for us all over the Highlands and we used to joke about his encyclopedic knowledge of Scottish bunkhouses. These meets were soon an established feature of the club calendar. As is to be expected in Scotland the weather was not always kind but the meets were always enjoyable occasions thanks to Alasdair's unfailingly cheerful personality and his knack of livening up any party.

I have very happy memories of those weekends. There was a regular core of us who came. There were the Geordies – Alf Locke, now sadly dead, Colin Armstrong and Bert Bowes, Jim and Margaret Strachan from Edinburgh, John and Marj Foster from Lancashire, Mike Scarr from Glasgow and several others. We were sometimes accused of being a "club within a club". But Alasdair was always at pains to encourage new faces and make them welcome. I did not find the ABM a very friendly club when I first joined. I believe that Alasdair with his meets, first in Scotland and later in the Alps, played a big part in transforming the club into the much friendlier club that it is today. The Club's annual calendars illustrate his energy. In 1997 he organized no less than 10 meets, with similar numbers in other years.

Alasdair became increasingly involved with the administration of the ABM. At various times he was Meets Secretary, Treasurer, Secretary of ABMSAC Ltd and Vice-President. He was elected President in 2003, and on demitting

office he was made an honorary Life Member in recognition of his service to the Club.

But his enthusiasm did not wane and he continued to organise meets, now mostly in the Alps, helped by his wife Pamela whom he had met on his first trek, the Tour of Monte Rosa. Some were trekking meets, hut to hut walks in areas such as the Oberland, the Valais and the Dolomites, sometimes with gear transported by a willing volunteer. Others were hotel based, such as the successful Centenary meet in 2009 at Saas-Almagell. These meets entailed a vast amount of work in identifying suitable locations and then selecting and negotiating with the hotels, not to mention dealing with the inevitable problems which always seem to arise on Club meets. They were always enjoyable occasions and were often fully subscribed. I recall that at the Centenary meet we celebrated with a lunch at the Britannia Hut which Alasdair had organised through his links with the Geneva Section. After the meal our Swiss friends entertained us with some songs. When it came to our turn to sing typically we were at a loss. Alasdair saved the day by giving the company a spirited rendering of Climbing Clementine whose many verses he knew by heart.

In his last year he attended several Scottish meets, the highly successful meet to Bhutan, and finally what turned out to be his last meet, at Fiesch. He was already making plans for the next year's meet, and we saw no sign of the cancer which claimed him so quickly. Only 3 weeks before his death he attended the meet at Tarbet. I think he knew that this was his last chance to say good-bye to many of his friends in the Club.

Alasdair would be the first to agree that he was no North Wall tiger, but he had an enormous wealth of experience as a mountaineer, with a creditable list of peaks to his name. He had climbed all the 284 Munros, which is no mean achievement.

What we will miss, and Pamela most of all, is not just his energy in organising meets, but his personality. He was one of the most charismatic people I have known, always full of laughter and jokes. He was a good person to have with you when the ground was steep or the going was rough.

John Dempster

Dr Bill Parish
June 1928 – July 2011



It is with sadness that we record the death of Dr Bill Parish. He died in Sion, Switzerland on 5 July, aged 83, after a heart attack whilst walking down from the cable-car station on the Eggishorn. Bill was a long-time lover of the big outdoors. He was brought up in Bedford, and his love of natural history led him to explore the countryside widely, canoeing on the River Ouse, fishing and camping in the wild. He was also a reckless horseman. In 1947 Bill undertook a solo 500 mile trek through northern Norway and Sweden, living off the land as he travelled. Subsequent expeditions took him to the Pyrenees.

Bill Parish obtained his veterinary qualifications from Liverpool University in 1953 and following a period in practice, he joined the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct research on Warble Fly. In search of greater challenges he undertook a PhD in the Department of Pathology at the University of Cambridge where he published widely on mechanisms of anaphylaxis. In Cambridge he met Rosalind, a doctor in Addenbrookes Hospital, and they were married in 1963. They had two children, Glyn and Romola.

In 1963 Bill joined the Lister Institute for Preventive Medicine as a Senior Scientist. In 1974 he moved back to Bedfordshire, after being appointed as the head of Unilever's Environmental Safety Laboratory at Colworth House, with a laboratory staff of over 200. He remained there until his retirement in 1989. He was an astute, imaginative and meticulous scientist who made several important contributions to the field of allergy, inflammation and allergic diseases. He also published widely in the field of toxicology and

dermatology. In 1983 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Foundation for Allergy Research for Europe.

In 1985, Rosalind died, but with characteristic resilience through a difficult time, Bill's work ethic and philosophy that precious time should not be wasted, meant that retirement was never an option. Unilever had the good sense not to let go of him completely and offered him the chance to throw himself back into life at the laboratory bench. He developed techniques in skin culture and returned to his early work on milk-induced anaphylaxis hypothesis of sudden infant death syndrome. Bill was always ready to help young scientists with his ready smile and cheerful disposition. Whilst he had a reputation for not suffering fools gladly, he was a caring and supportive friend and manager, and inspired many of his young staff to go further in their scientific careers.

Bill was incredibly fit, actively beagling into his eighties, and famous for his long stride and stamina in the field. During his retirement Bill returned to the mountains. Hearing from Antonia Barlen that the 2005 ABMSAC summer meet was to be held in Cauterets, the call to return to the Pyrenees was too great to resist and he thoroughly enjoyed his first meet. Subsequently he attended the meets in Fiesch (2007), Stubai and Pitztal (2008), Saas Almagell (2009) and Pitztal (2010). Sadly he had only one day in Fiesch in 2010.

He will be greatly missed by family, friends and colleagues.

Glyn Parish

Nigel Cooper

Nigel died on 16th August after a month in hospital following emergency surgery, writes Nigel's son Martin Cooper. Although not so active in recent years, Nigel went on a number of summer meets together with his son from the mid 80's.

We send condolences to Martin and family. I hope that a full Obituary will be published in the next Journal – Hon. Editor

Members Articles

Our First Scottish Meet

Belinda Baldwin

Our first ABM Meet was as guests at Fafleralp in 1967. That is forty four and a half years ago. This year we made it to a Scottish Meet. Scottish meets have been going on all the time so where have we been? Well we have supported meets in Europe, Wales and the Lakes with many visits to the George Starkey Hut. We have hosted meets at home in East Devon but never been to Scotland.

The one we attended was Margaret and Jim Strachan's Braemar Meet in March (*see Meet Reports*). Our habit has been to go on a linear walk in England or Wales at this time of the year. This year we didn't go on one freeing up some time although James is off to the North York Moors in May. Six years ago we made it to Scotland soon after Easter but it didn't coincide with a meet. Clearly the opposite approach was needed. Find a meet at a convenient time and make the long trip north. Home on the south coast of Devon makes for a long trip but similarly so do the Alps so that is not the best excuse. Discussion with Marge Foster led to the recommendation of Braemar being our best bet and how right she was.

The Bay Hotel looked after all our needs bar a packed lunch but there was a handy convenience store nearby. There were 16 fellow members so we did not feel lonely except for the Saturday when James took John Dempster's advice to do the Devil's Pike, which involved a 14 mile round trip. John told James it was the best route to get a feel of the Cairngorms and that is probably what he meant rather than do it that day. As we left the other members set off in a different direction. Clearly they knew something we didn't. We didn't make our destination but they did. We had gone a reasonable way but not very high the snowy footsteps of others disappeared, whilst ours became groin deep so we decided turn back. On our way we had an interesting chat with a member of the Mountain Rescue Team, who was organising an exercise and arrived back before the others. They had had deep snow difficulties too but on the return rather than the way out so they made their destination but were back later than anticipated.

The next day we stuck with the gang. There was still a bit of deep snow but nothing alarming. We ploughed through it in mist like cotton wool and strong wind. It was another way of having a good day out. We were back in time to enjoy a prolonged drink and chat at a local hostelry. Our thanks go to Margaret and Jim for their wonderful organisation.

So if like us you have never been on a Scottish meet write one in your diary and make the effort to go. You will have a great time. If it's a long way from home you can do as we did and make it a proper holiday by prolonging your Scottish stay. We are looking forward to a Scottish Meet in 2012.

The Dales Way Summer 2011

Mike and Anne Goodyer

The Goodyer family lived in Harrogate for many years during the 1980s/1990s and often explored the Yorkshire Dales for day walks, encouraged by our successful multi-day walk along Hadrian's Wall in 2010; we decided to try out the Dales Way. Again we employed a trusty holiday firm to carry our luggage from place to place – no heavy rucksack for Anne.

One of the characteristics of the Dales Way is its change of scene as the 79 miles of the walk progress from Wharfedale up Langstrothdale, across the moors to Dent Dale and ending (for us at Sedbergh). It does go on to Kendal and ends at Bowness.

We started in the genteel splendour of Ilkley in a very pleasant hotel on the edge of the moor; it was a short stroll past the teashops to the start of the walk at Old Bridge, a former packhorse bridge. The weather was damp and overcast as we followed the river first to Addingham and then to the Quaker Meeting House which is well worth a visit. This stretch is across meadow land so very easy going, we soon reached Bolton Abbey. This was a tourist destination we knew well, the remains of the abbey nestling in the bend of the river are always worth a photograph. There were of course parties of tourists trying to decide if they would risk using the stepping stones (we didn't) but we pressed on to lunch in the Cavendish Pavillion just as the heavens opened. Fortified, it was onwards through the Strid Woods to The Strid itself, a place of legendary exploits and sudden death, its melancholy atmosphere was only intensified by the volume of peaty water following through its narrow gully.

From here the valley is more narrow and path criss-crosses the river until arriving at Burnsall. The view of the bridge elegantly spanning the Wharf has graced many a postcard and the village is of course now immortalised by a certain calendar. We stayed at an inn by the river and so actually on the Dales Way, easy for a good start in the morning.

Day 2 took us pass the limestone cliffs of Loop Scar onto Linton where travellers from times long ago have been welcomed by the view of Linton Church which dates back to the 12th century. From here a short stroll to the honey-pot of the Dales – Grassington. We stopped here to have morning coffee, explore climbing shops and then to find a pub for lunch that sold Black Sheep ale. (This was not an expedition under pressure). From here the scenery changes dramatically with

a steep climb up to Grassington Moor where there are extensive limestone pavements and old lime kilns. Having explored the clints and grikes for their own special flora we continued on past Kilnsey Crag across the valley to Kettlewell. We had noticed a large number of coaches going up and down the valley all day, the reason being that they were heading for the annual Kettlewell scarecrow festival. A surreal scene met our eyes with scarecrow chefs serving from the barbeque at our hostelry, a scarecrow wedding in full flow at the church opposite and a scarecrow policeman was keeping an eye of proceedings. Mike began to think that he had imbibed one Black Sheep too many. If you ever get chance to visit it is an amazing event with proceeds to charity.

This relaxed day was to get us warmed up for The Big Day - Day 3 – this would take us from Kettlewell up the valley to Buckden then a left turn up Langstrothdale, over the moors to The Railway Inn by the Ribblehead viaduct. This was a good 16 miles that our holiday firm has been unable to avoid. There are alternatives should you choose to do the same walk but this day needs very careful planning.

It starts pleasant enough with a good café for morning coffee at Buckden, past the old settlement at Hubberholme and then a steady meander up the valley alongside the bubbling juvenile Wharfe. After lunch the springy grass started to be replaced by bracken and true moorland began. We had to ring our host for the evening from “the last phone box before all phone signals end”. This we did and arranged a pick up time, by this time it felt like embarking on a “there be dragons” part of the map. Nor did it disappoint we trudged up hill through bog for mile after mile and what seemed like hour after hour. The target was to meet the firmer path of the mighty Pennine Way, it seemed an unattainable goal with the constant question from Anne of “is this the Pennine Way”. Inevitably we were behind time for our pick-up so Mike had to leg it down said Pennine Way to make the rendezvous. Later that evening, after many more pints of Black Sheep, we were able to laugh at the rigours of the day but it wasn't funny at the time.

The next morning dawned bright and sunny so Mike was able to take some fine pictures of the Ribblehead viaduct. The train from Leeds actually stops at Ribblehead so it's a great spot for walkers and cyclists. The walk down Dent Dale seemed easy compared with the day



before. There is a feeling that you have entered a very different area from the dales of previous days, indeed this is the west/east watershed and we were entering Cumbria. The valley has a few hamlets, fewer pubs and lots of sheep.

Our destination was Dent itself, we had camped there once many years ago and were looking forward to our stay. Dent is a remote spot in an unspoilt valley but still has the facilities that walkers and cyclists cherish. Talking about facilities we were staying in the inn that is the tap house for the Dentdale brewery. Poor Mike had to forsake Black Sheep for a beer menu card of the local ale. He coped.

Our last day took us down the valley to Sedburgh. An easy walk with great views to The Howgills as you head across the spur of land out of Dent Dale and into Milthrop. The Dales Way goes on across the M6 to Kendal and Bowness but we chose to stop at Sedburgh. It was a taxi ride back to Ilkley taking in more great scenery but resting our feet at the same time. At Ilkley we met up with the Bramleys so this could almost count as an ABMSAC mini-meet.

**No more high summits?
A reflection on the acceptance process**
Morag M. Macdonald

These words are neither accounts of hill or mountain achievements in 2011 nor do they concern future plans to walk or trek long distances. They are about the state of mind and body that recognise one has to bow to the demands of age and admit one cannot do as much as before. It is painful in many ways, perhaps for some more than others.

The head for heights, balance, condition of feet, knees and hip joints tell their own story and one has to admit that things will never be the same again. A fall (beware hidden bramble roots) adds insults to injuries instead of total recovery. The planning and setting of targets change and how to manage insurance takes on a new significance. Magazines are full of attractive gear. The many climbing and outdoor shops present ever increasingly tempting displays and offers leaving cupboards full of too many anoraks, trousers and fleeces, not to mention rucsacs, for all occasions. The last pair of three season boots has been purchased many times. Optimism rules over common sense. Is this a positive outlook?

There is also the nostalgia of uncomfortable hut nights, memorable for the *camaderie* of suppers with like-minded companions, with the nervous reality and tensions before an important climb. One has to ask if climbing, walking and skiing are different and why? Other activities such as golf, kayaking, and extreme sports such as paragliding must have their own angst approaching the euphemistically termed 'third age'. Sailing presents particular circumstances since not only does it entail the loss of well honed skills in a challenging environment but it often means parting with the boat, a friend indeed. All sports and pastimes bring the problems of acceptance as the years progress. We are not alone in the outdoor activity world.

Zermatt, Saas, and Chamonix have particular resonance with the painful realisation that high summits are no longer on the agenda. This also applies to the great ridges and summits of Britain. The dilemma remains. Does one reflect on past achievements with pleasure and satisfaction or is there a multi-faceted reaction to the inevitable physical deterioration that assumes more and more attention? Perhaps both views co-exist with the inexorable truth of the passage of time.

There are certainly many 're' words to describe the difficulties of acceptance: refuse; reject; rebel; refute; resent. Are there compensations? Wildlife, botany, birds, photography have always had a symbiotic relationship with walking and climbing. Now they seem to be ends in themselves rather than as adjuncts to the main activity. Rest days on courses based in Chamonix were usually spent on the Mont Blanc express, a vastly underrated experience, as it winds its way from France into Switzerland with spectacular views of the ever-narrowing Trient Glacier and vertiginous drops to a seemingly bottomless unseen valley. The museum and art gallery in Martigny was a respite from high places but now is an end in itself; not a bad alternative.

The plethora of hill and mountain books contains articles and beguiling photographs of places now impossible to visit or revisit. The literature, ever prescient, recognises the difficulties. Some writing is prescriptive. *Desiderata* (Ehermann, 1872- 1945) tells us to 'Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth'. This maxim is often difficult to accept rendering physical and mental resolution more difficult.

Goedeke (1991) is somewhat disparaging about the ordinary route on the Allalinhorn with rightly critical words on the devastating state of the glacier due to skiing developments. He notes that it is often the only, and often the last, summit, a person is capable of climbing given uplift help. However, one deserves points for trying and achieving the bonus alpine view from the summit arête which appears to change yearly depending on the snow. Having said that, the ascent of the Allalinhorn, given acclimatisation at 2-3 hours from the Mittalallin, is a great deal easier than many a Scottish Munro from sea level. Many of these hills, including their day-long approaches, will never be seen again.

Writers such as Macfarlane (2003) lyrically describe the positive and negative effects of altitudes and summits. The memorable words of poet and writer Geoffrey Winthrop Young, (1876-1958) whose leg was amputated above the knee in WW1 and who afterwards continued to climb mountains including the Matterhorn, are often quoted:

*What if I live no more those kingly days?...
I may not grudge the little left undone; I hold the heights, I keep the dreams I won.*

Other literature offers more a philosophical attempt to resolve the problem. Ending on a positive note, Fergus Fleming (2000) quotes the unusual words of Gesner (1541) who wrote to a friend:

I am resolved that as long as God grants me life, I will each year climb some mountains, or at least one, at the season when the flowers are in bloom, in order that I may examine these, and provide noble exercise for my body at the same time as enjoyment for my soul.

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Fleming, F. (2000) *Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*. Granta Books, London. (Fleming researched the vast mountaineering literature for only one year before writing his memorable book, A search on mountaineering quotes reveals much interest –note by Morag)

Goedeke, R. (1990) *The Alpine 4000m peaks by the classic routes*. Diadem Books, London.

Macfarlane, R. (2003) *Mountains of the Mind: A history of a Fascination*. Granta Books, London.

Young, G.W. (1876-1958) *I hold the heights* (The article on the life of GWY by Sir Arnold Lunn is well worth reading: www.alpinejournal.org.uk- note by Morag)

Kyajo Ri, a first visit to Nepal

Mike Pinney

Kyajo Ri, 6186 metres, is in Khumbu, about 12 km NNW of Namche Bazaar. The peak was opened to climbing by the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism in 2002, (classified as a trekking peak) and the first (official) ascent was made that year.

Two of the party went out a couple of days early to see friends, arrange permits and the loan of oxygen equipment and obtain sections of aluminium to act as snow stakes and sheets of plywood to act as bases for our stoves when we camped above the snow line. The rest of the team met up at Gatwick. A few kilos over limit, in spite of wearing my mountaineering boots on the flight & carrying a multi-layer jacket, I managed to avoid been charged and two of us even got an upgrade to Business class on the second leg from Qatar to Kathmandu. First task was obtaining a blue barrel from one of the many local climbing shops, which was then packed with the equipment I did not require until base camp. The rest of the day was then spent sightseeing then the following morning back to the airport for our flight to Lukla in a twin Otter.

The cabin is un-pressurised so the aircraft cannot fly above 4000m and has to keep in the valleys, with flights frequently cancelled in early afternoon when the cloud comes in. We were very relieved when our flight was called, although it was after dark when we reached our first tea house! The second day of walking up a crowded track brought us to Namche Bazaar where we had a rest/acclimatisation day when we went up to the Everest view hotel getting a distant view of the mountain.

The next day we headed west and our first night under canvas at Mende, 3800m, a terrace above the main track running west from Namche. The following day we walked up past a monastery on an indeterminate path, our Sidar getting increasingly concerned that our yaks would be



unable to follow. However a bit higher we found a cairns and a track leading over a couple of cols into the valley leading up to Kyajo Ri. We arrived at our campsite (4300m) at a levelling of the valley in mid-afternoon, the cook and his assistants arrived a little later and the yaks with our tents and bags just as it was getting dark. Much to our surprise, the yakmen took the yaks back down in the dark to Mende returning the following day with the remainder of the cargo. This was the first of our rest/acclimatisation days although some of us ventured further up the valley as far as the next step. We were also joined in the valley by a German commercial group. The weather seemed to be following a pattern, clear skies and quite warm in the sun until mid-afternoon when it clouded over. Overnight it got progressively colder as we moved up.

The following day we moved up to the rock step, the high point for our yaks. Here we met a couple from Chesterfield descending having ascended Kayjo Ri with their Sherpa guides getting an update on the route and conditions. A steep path then allowed us to progress to the next levelling and we set up camp just beyond a small frozen lake on snow covered ground (5000m). Although we helped carry up a little of our baggage, since the yaks could not manage the path, our local support staff made several trips to ferry up all of our equipment. We repeated the previous pattern of a rest/acclimatisation day and we had met up with and sorted our climbing gear which we would require the following day.

We had originally intended to have a higher base camp; this was not practical and above base camp we were climbing unsupported and catering for ourselves. Day 1 we took tents and some gear up a steep scree covered slope to make an advance base camp at 5350m, which we then occupied the following day, when we moved up the remainder of the equipment. Over the



next two days we moved gear up towards our high camp at the col, 5700m which we occupied on the third day. This involved crossing a glacier descending about 50m before ascending a rock filled gully. For the final 50m we put up a fixed rope for the final ferry of gear.

The next day was very windy. Initially we were going to delay our summit attempt until the following day but the wind dropped and we made a late start. The slope was a sustained 45-50 degree slope. Although we had ice screws the snow conditions meant that the ice stakes provided ideal belays (and abseil anchors on our descent). At 3pm we were at just over 6000m, about 150m height still to be gained. Even though it had not clouded over, this was our cut off time for abseiling down and getting back to our high camp before dark.



Needless to say the following day was still and the Sherpa guides supporting the German party placed fixed ropes to the summit to enable their clients to jumar at their own pace. A couple of our team decided to stay up for a second summit attempt the following day, making good use of all our spare food. For a number of reasons I decided to descend - the climb had been enjoyable and sustained, there was a great risk that we would not get as high on the second attempt and I had acquired a Kumbu (bronchial) cough which

knocked my fitness. In the event they did reach the summit, a clean ascent as all the fixed rope had been removed.

We got back to Back to Lukla just before the conditions became unsuitable for flying. The aircraft are dependent on line of sight, so low cloud means the flights do not happen. After a couple of days, two of us decided that waiting for a fixed wing aircraft or upgrade to helicopter was not happening and was silly - it would be more sensible to walk out and see more of the country. Four and a half days walking and 12 hours on a bus and we were back in Kathmandu.

The walk out was surprisingly arduous, not helped by my Khumbu cough, but I am glad I walked and saw more of the country. Mobile phones allowed us to reschedule flights and five days later than planned we were back in the UK.

Alasdair's Mountaineering Exploits

Pamela Andrews

In his last few weeks Alasdair talked to me a lot about how he began climbing, and in the end I decided to write down all he said. The following account is based on his memories, on mine after we met in 1999, and on the account written by Alan Ross.

Alasdair's love of the mountains started at an early age when he joined the Boy Scout movement. His father had already taken him walking in the Pentlands, which he had not enjoyed, but with the Scouts he found that he could keep up with much older boys and went on regular Scout camps in the Highlands with them. In 1956 he joined the Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland which organised weekend meets, and soon began to go on mountaineering and rock-climbing courses run by the Mountaineering Association. These took place in the Highlands and in Wales, and he remembered in particular two glorious weeks on Skye in the early 60's when the sun shone every day and he climbed with Hamish McInnes and Ian Clough, putting up new routes. Following in his father's footsteps he became a member of the Scottish YHA, and became treasurer of the Edinburgh committee.

When he started work at Ferranti in 1959 he joined the Ferranti Mountaineering Club which he remained a member of all his life. He became Club Secretary and organised many of the Club's meets in the Highlands, meeting life-long friends like Geoff Bone and Jim Strachan with whom he was still with on climbing meets even last July. It was with Alan Ross, a friend from this Club, that in 1968 he made his first visit to the Alps, and thus began a life-long love of Switzerland. They drove down through France in a tiny Fiat 500, and ended up at Saas Fee camp site. Despite bad weather they

managed their first Alpine ascent, the Mittaghorn, and planned to visit the Britannia Hut, little knowing how important this hut was to become in Alasdair's later life. But the weather did not improve, and they abandoned the Alps for the fleshpots of the South of France.



Alasdair in Glen Callater, 1968

It was clear that Switzerland had made a big impression on Alasdair for later that year, on the recommendation of Blackshaw's Guide, he joined the ABMSAC and the Geneva Section of the Swiss Alpine Club. In 1974 he began organising Scottish winter meets for the ABM, the first of which was at Braemar, and he continued organising these meets for the next 28 years. His records show an increasing number each year, some lasting a week, some just for weekends, the greatest number being in 1997 when he organised as many as 10 Scottish meets. This enabled him to start climbing the Munros, and in 1994 he completed his last of the 284, Seana Braigh, with great celebration.

In 1972 he made his second visit to Switzerland, to the Bernese Oberland, and from then on spent every summer in the Alps, first with small groups of friends, and then on ABMSAC meets. He began climbing higher mountains, and his records show the following ascents in Switzerland: L'Evêque, Weissmies, Breithorn, Piz Kesch, Piz Corvatsch, Piz Buin, Diavolezza, Rinderhorn traverse and Wildstrubel, among others; the Grande Casse and Aiguille du Tour in France; the Wildspitze, Gross Hockenhorn and Zuckerhutl in Austria; and Mount Ida on Crete.

He soon began organising Alpine meets himself, and after 1999 and the 90th celebrations of the ABM in the Saastal, these became an annual event. By this time he had taken early retirement so had more time, but he had become increasingly involved with the ABM even before this, over the years holding

the positions of Hon. Meets Secretary (1979 to 1983), Hon. Vice President (1985 to 1987), Hon. Treasurer (1999 to 2005), Hon. Secretary (2000 to 2001), and Hon. President (2003 to 2006). On demitting office in 2006 he was made an Honorary Life Member in recognition of his service to the Club; by this time he had organised 120 meets.

In 1984 he was elected to the Alpine Club, and it was this that led him to meet me on the trek round Monte Rosa which he organised in 1999 for the ABMSAC and the AC. Every year thereafter, aided by myself, he organised meets to different areas of the Alps, often in Switzerland, but also in the Austrian, French and Italian Alps, both hotel based and treks. These were often to areas that he himself had never visited and wished to explore, like Cauterets in the Pyrenees, Santa Catarina and Madonna di Campiglio in northern Italy, while others were to the well-known resorts of Zermatt, Pontresina, the Austrian Tyrol, and most recently, to Fiesch in the Valais. Though climbs on these meets were mainly to lower peaks or to passes, he continued to make ascents of higher peaks too and the last big mountains he climbed were Similaun, Cevedale, and Breithorn. He loved the week long Alpine treks he organised, travelling from hut to hut, or hotel to hotel if he could find a driver, in the Dolomites and the Alpes Maritimes, but mostly in Switzerland, starting with the Tour of Monte Rosa, and including the Bregaglia Trek, the Tour de Muveran, Tour du Trient, the Valais trek and the most successful of all, the Alpine Pass Route from Meiringen to Lenk in 2005 where the weather was gloriously sunny every day.

His visits to Switzerland increased after meeting me, and he travelled there regularly several times a year. Together we explored the local Jura Mountains, the Vaudois Alps, the Valais, and the Haute Savoie, on each visit climbing peaks between 2,000 – 3,000 metres. I soon discovered that he had enormous experience as a mountaineer, and felt absolutely safe when in the mountains with him. He was always keen to explore other parts of Switzerland too, and we had holidays walking in Ticino, in the Bernese Oberland, in Flims and Central Switzerland. Walks continued even in winter with the aid of snowshoes, and New Year 2011 was spent at Fiesch on the winter walking trails.

Our holidays to other parts of Europe always involved the mountains as well; even on our honeymoon to the Amalfi Coast several days were spent walking in the nearby hills. He was always keen to explore new places and new mountain areas, and climbs were made when holidaying in France, in the Chamonix valley, the Cevennes, the Dordogne, the Languedoc, the Queyras, Provence and the Côte d'Azur where we spent several winter holidays, often climbing a small peak on New Year's Day; in Italy, in the South Tyrol, Tuscany, the Cinque Terre and Sicily; in Greece, where we climbed Mount Parnassos and attempted Taygetos in October 2010; and in Spain, in Catalonia, Mallorca, and as late as June 2011 when we were climbing in the hills of Andalucia. In the 12 years we were together we spent almost 500

days walking in the mountains. Every time we visited a new place he explored it as a possible venue for a future ABMSAC meet, and many of our holidays were in fact reconnaissances for Alpine meets. One of his favourite places was the Val d'Aosta which he visited first in the 1990's with club friends, and later on several occasions with me. He chose this as the venue for the 2012 meet, at Gressoney-la-Trinité which we had passed through on our first trek together, round Monte Rosa, and was busy organising this when he became so ill.

Visits to me in Switzerland gave him the opportunity to further his links with the Swiss Alpine Club. When he was President in 2003 we were invited to Berne for lunch with Franz Stämpfli, then SAC Central President, and Peter Mäder, after which we were given a tour of the SAC Headquarters. He went on to invite Franz to be our guest at the ABMSAC Annual Dinner at Glenridding in January 2004. In 2006 he was invited as ABMSAC representative to the Swiss Embassy in London, and then in April that year we were invited to the SAC Everest Event celebrations, again in Berne, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Swiss ascents of Everest and Lhotse. In June 2007 we were invited to the AGM of the SAC and the centenary celebrations of the Grindelwald Section, where we were taken on the train to the glorious viewpoint of the Jungfrauoch, and walked along to the Mönchjoch Hut. Later that month we were present at the celebrations in Zermatt of the 150 years of the Alpine Club, staying in the Monte Rosa Hotel and joining in the dinner at Riffelberg and the unveiling of the monument commemorating the Alpine Club, a memorable occasion.



Alasdair at the AC 150th Celebrations in Zermatt, 2007

Alasdair was very conscious of the links between the ABMSAC and the Geneva Section with the gift of the Britannia Hut in 1912. His visits to me enabled him finally to make contact with his section, and we often walked up to their Cabane in the nearby Juras and visited the section's 'locale' in Geneva; in March 2008 he was very proud to receive his certificate of 40 year's membership from the President of the section. On the centenary of the ABMSAC in 2009 Alasdair worked hard to organise a celebratory meet for nearly 80 members in Saas Almagell, culminating in a lunch at the Britannia Hut. We made several visits to Christiane Ody, the hut representative in Geneva, to organise this, as well as several visits to the hotel in Saas Almagell, and Alasdair was responsible for the success of this meet. During his last months he worked equally hard to promote the centenary celebrations of the Britannia Hut in June 2012, and to ensure that a fitting gift was given to the hut on this occasion. Until the end he was looking forward to attending the celebrations himself.

Alasdair discovered the Himalayas late in life, and it was not until I organised a trek in 2007 for the ABMSAC in the Everest region of Nepal that he made his first visit. He was full of energy and had no problems climbing Kala Pattar, at 5545 metres the classic viewpoint of Everest, and making the strenuous crossing of the Cho La Pass. He loved the scenery and the people there, and when I organised a meet to Bhutan for the spring of 2011, he was more than happy to come along. This was his last big adventure, and he was supremely happy in what we all found to be a truly magical country.

He was still climbing on his last Alpine Meet in Fiesch this July, and we were on the hills together almost every day. He even managed to attend the meet in Tarbet only 3 weeks before his death, knowing that this would be his last chance to say good-bye to so many of his friends in the Club. He had so many plans for the future; I cannot imagine being on the hills without him.

Finally a review of Elisabeth Parry's book held over from last year.

THIRTY MEN and a GIRL
A Singer's Memoirs of War, Mountains, Travel, and always Music
Elisabeth Parry, Allegra, 2010, pp423, £18

Music dominated the life of Elisabeth Parry but mountains and memories of her adventures in the Alps became a lasting backdrop to her life as a singer and opera impresario. *Thirty Men and a Girl* is less radical than the title suggests; the name was chosen to introduce the forces concert party that toured the Middle East during the last war. As the girl in question and soprano soloist with the staff band of the Royal Army Medical Corps, Parry was voted a Forces Sweetheart. After the war she launched and ran the Wigmore Hall Lunch Hour Concerts and had a distinguished career with the English Opera Group formed by Benjamin Britten. She then established her own touring company, the London Opera Players, taking live opera on tour to schools and audiences with more than 3,000 performances over half a century. Her memoirs are detailed, largely drawn from her diaries, and mountains have hardly a mention before page 328 when Parry, then aged 40, developed a passion for climbing them.

Now approaching her nineties she looks back on the time her family spent 21 successive years on holiday in Zermatt, staying at the Monte Rosa Hotel. Mountains were there to admire or to ski down and when friends invited her to climb the rocks of the Riffelhorn she hesitated, claiming she had "no head for heights". Parry soon developed one and began studying the sport at a Mountaineering Association evening class in St John's Wood. A rock climbing apprenticeship in the Dolomites with the guide Celso Degasper, "heels down, stand well away from the rock" and she graduated to a traverse of the Matterhorn, up the Hornli and down the Italian ridge. A late starter to the sport, she went through several seasons "in a sort of climbing frenzy", always modest about her achievements; holding her guide when a hold broke and he plunged into space, a tight rope on the Knubel Crack, robbed by bandits in the Hakkari mountains of south-east Turkey and, as confidence grew, her amazement at including a traverse of the Weisshorn and both the Peuterey and Innominata ridges of Mont Blanc in her list of successes. In 1961 Parry joined the Ladies Alpine Club, later to be amalgamated with the Alpine Club, and in 1981 she joined the ABMSAC; she is still a member of both clubs.

It has clearly been a rich and fulfilled life but, for the girl with thirty men, there came a poignant wartime truth; the only man she had ever wanted to marry, a soldier in the Parachute Regiment, was killed at Arnhem.

The above review by Ronald Faux appeared in the 2010/2011 edition of the Alpine Club Journal and is reproduced with his permission and that of Stephen Goodwin, Honorary Editor of the Alpine Journal.

MEET REPORTS

26 – 28 February - Onich Meet, Inchree Centre

Report by John Dempster.

After the downpour at Loch Tay in January, the second Scottish winter meet of 2011 was favoured with far better conditions.

The forecast for Saturday was for bright periods and blustery showers, and it was right. Most of us climbed Meall Dearg (the centre peak on the Aonach Eagach) from the North. Pam and Alasdair visited Ardnamurchan in search of sunnier weather and were able to sunbathe on the summit of Ben Hiant while the rest of us were battling through a snowstorm on the way to our summit.

On Sunday we woke to a fine morning with a covering of fresh snow above about 500m. Margaret, Jim, Roger and I had a bracing day on Stob Coire an Chairn in the Mamores, culminating in a knee wrecking descent to Mamore Lodge. Others opted for more cultural pursuits.



Marg Foster, John Dempster and Roger James (with an incredibly well packaged sandwich) on Stob Dubh. Photo by John Foster

Those of us who stayed for the Monday were rewarded with a cloudless morning and a hard frost. Roger and I had a look at Lagangarbh gully on Buchaille Etive Mor, but decided there was too much fresh snow in it, so we joined Marj and John on Buchaille Etive Beag. Cramponing over some snow patches we duly reached the summit and were rewarded with fabulous views particularly over Bidean, the scene of some previous epics. We then descended by a new engineered path which leads direct from the col to the main road. I could not help wondering if such a path is really necessary but there is no doubt that it made the descent faster and easier than it would otherwise have been.

All in all it was a very successful meet. The Inchree centre was a convenient base but it's a pity that the cottages were designed for small dwarfs with no gear.

Present: Alasdair and Pam Andrews; John Dempster; Marj and John Foster; Peter Goodwin and Ursula; Roger James; Margaret and Jim Strachan.

18 - 21 March - Braemar Meet Report

Report by Jim Strachan

This was a very well attended meet with 19 members booked to attend. Unfortunately Peter Farrington had to drop out at the last minute due to illness, from which we hope he has now recovered.

The Invercauld Hotel was the base for the meet, and once again it proved to be comfortable and good value for money. On the drive up on Friday there was lots of snow on the hills right down to road level and the forecast was reasonable with no precipitation expected over the weekend, although wind was predicted for the summits.

Friday - Morag MacDonald and Ian Brebner decided to ascend the Cairnwell (933m) from the Glenshee car park only to find high winds making walking difficult on the top. Alasdair and Pam did Mount Blair (744m) from Cray near the Spittal of Glenshee.

Saturday - Groups headed off for the hills with Morag and Ian heading for the Loch Muick area and reporting that due to deep wet snow conditions they settled for the circumnavigation of Loch Muick; which I understand was hard going. Alasdair and Pam set off up the nearby Corbett, Morrone, (859m) only to get bogged down in wet snow and high winds eventually beating the retreat.

Our group including J & M Strachan, J & M Foster, J Dempster, D Nicholls, P Hands, F & P Semple, J Urmston set off on the three mile walk up to Glen Callater Lodge, from where we contoured along above the loch until we reached the coll, before striking up to the summit of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor (1047m). The snow conditions improved as we gained higher ground, but not sufficiently hard to demand the use of crampons. As the temperature had come up considerably during the day wet snow lower down made the descent unpleasant. The round trip was about 10 miles and we arrived back at the cars about 5.30pm.

James and Belinda decided to attempt the challenge laid down by John Dempster. Knowing that they enjoyed long walks he suggested that they may wish to attempt "Devils Point" (1004m) - starting from the Linn of Dee taking the road to Derry Lodge and then track via the Luibeg Burn to the Corrour Bothy, before climbing the path up the coire, turning south on the ridge to the

point. They made a bold attempt, turning back short of the Dee but chalking up approximately 12 miles. Under the prevailing conditions this was quite a feat. Well done James and Belinda, you may wish to set a target for John's next foray.

P Goodwin & U Woodhouse set off for Glenshee with the intention of doing Carn Aosda (917m). Having attained the summit plateau they were beaten back by high winds, which made progress very difficult.

Sunday - Ian & Morag headed off looking for the Messiah in Dundee; I trust it was an enjoyable performance.

The large party of yesterday was joined by James, Belinda, Peter and Ursula. After the previous hard day, it was decided to tackle the Corbett "Morrone" (859m). Thanks to Alasdair and Pam's attempt the previous day we were able to use their tracks to start with. We encountered high winds on the summit, which proved uncomfortable in the extreme, and we sheltered behind a hut which was erected by the Braemar Mountain Rescue Team to commemorate someone who had died from exposure (probably trying to pick the padlock to get in). From the summit we headed south down the track to the old road leading back north to Braemar, and the Fyfe Arms, where we quenched our thirst to the strains of Hampden Roars as the locals were watching the Rangers V Celtic Derby. Alasdair and Pam did two walks, Craigendarroch to the north of Ballater and Craig Connich 538m just south east of Braemar.

Monday - Most set off home leaving a few hardy souls to sojourn out against the elements. Fred and Paul Semple drove to the Linn of Dee and walked into the wind towards Glen Tilt, turning beyond the "White Bridge" before driving back to Edinburgh.

J & M Strachan, J Dempster, D Nicholls and P Hands, parked at the Glen Shee car park with the intention of doing the Cairnwell (933m) and going on to Carn a' Gheoidh (975m). After an ascent up steep snow to just below the summit we encountered very high winds blowing us off our feet, making it very difficult to retrace our steps to the shelter of a cable pulley house. We agreed the tops were definitely not on, so descended beside a piste to the skier's café for a welcome bowl of soup before departing to the south.

J & M Foster with J & B Baldwin on route to Fort Augustus drove around to Cockbridge, just below The Lecht ski area, and climbed the Corbett behind the ski area – Carn Ealasaid (792m). "Not too much snow, but damned windy". However, the surprise was the wonderful views from it, particularly of Lochnagar and into the high Cairngorms from an unusual direction. It is a walk that John hopes to repeat, and recommends for future meets.

1-3 April 2011 - Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris, Mid Wales

Report by Dick Yorke

Five members met at the bunkhouse on the Friday evening. The weather forecast for the Saturday was good with the possibility of some rain on the Sunday. During the night many of us were awoken by thunder and lightening, the first in the area in 2011, and heavy rain. Some electrical damage occurred in the area but not at the bunkhouse. By morning there was still some low cloud but this cleared to give a sunny day which provided excellently clear views and members stuck to their overnight plans.

Tony and Suzanne went to Llanfihangell-y-Pennant to explore the valley and parts of the ridge to the east of Cadair Idris. Mike went into the Dovey Hills, ascending from Cwm Ratgoed to the ridge at Mynydd Ceiswyn. He then completed the circuit of the ridge above the Cwm with a diversion to Maesglase, the highest point in the range. He described the route as challenging being over rough ground and remote, although on the south side a car rally, held in the forestry, could be both seen and heard. Dick and Terry, nursing injuries, took the option of a less strenuous day, visiting the Arts Centre and the National Library in Aberystwyth, seeing interesting exhibitions including one on travel in Wales and by the Welsh abroad. In the afternoon the cliffs to the North of the town were visited providing excellent views north to the Llyn Peninsular and Bardsey Island and to the south to Pembrokeshire. A range of birds including choughs were seen.

The evening meal was taken at the Tafarn Dwynant in Ceinws with Mediterranean lamb and apple crumble proving popular. On Sunday we went our separate ways. Mike headed off to approach the sources of the Gwy and the Hafren from the south side of Pumlumon. Tony and Suzanne planned to climb Arenig Fach on the way back to Chesterfield, while Terry and I with Karen, walked on the hills above Abermaw to enjoy the views of the Mawddach estuary and the coast.

Overall members seemed to enjoy the meet and the local Purple Moose beer. As numbers were slightly down on previous meets I may well leave for two years before offering this meet again.

Attending: Mike Pinney, Terry Shaw, Tony and Suzanne Strawther and Dick Yorke (meet leader).

Bhutan Meet, 14th - 30th April - The Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon

Report by Pamela Harris-Andrews

A year or so after our 2007 trek in the Everest region of Nepal some of us started talking about another Himalayan meet, but something less strenuous,

at a lower altitude, and with more comfortable accommodation. Bhutan seemed the ideal choice as it has spectacular mountain scenery and a fascinating Buddhist culture, yet is still unspoilt and little visited. Rather than using a UK agency we decided to deal directly with a Bhutanese tour operator as this would give us the opportunity to individualise our programme. Boonserm Tours, run by Tashi Namgay and his elder brother, had been personally recommended, and Tashi arranged a customised itinerary with a short three day camping trek to get closer to the mountains and comfortable hotels for the other nights from where we could do a variety of day hikes.

Once in Bhutan we soon appreciated how lucky we were to have found Tashi and his company. Everything had been efficiently organised well in advance, and nothing was too much trouble for him: we were even accompanied throughout by a cameraman making a DVD of us and our trip. His knowledge and enthusiasm for his country and its culture were evident, and we all agreed that his leadership was a major factor in our enjoyment of the trip.

The short flight from Kathmandu was spectacular as we flew along the chain of the highest Himalayan peaks past Everest and Lhotse, then Makalu and Kanchenjunga – though we had to wait for the return flight to get window seats on the right side of the plane - and spiralled down into the Paro valley to land at the tiny airstrip. As we walked out of the plane we realised at once what a special country this was: the airport building looked like a brightly painted medieval palace, and in the distance we could see the first of the many fortress-like dzongs we were to visit and the watchtower on the hill above it. Ours was the only plane, and it was all very quiet and peaceful, even more so in contrast to the noisy, crowded streets we had just left in Kathmandu. Our hotel was nearby, also beautifully painted and decorated, with large rooms, modern en-suite facilities and splendid views.

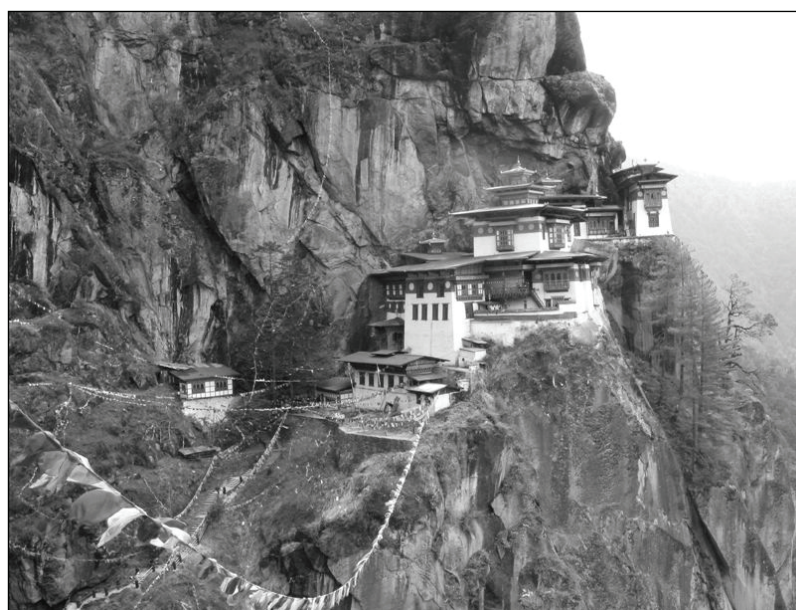
As we walked around Paro we soon got used to seeing the Bhutanese, including the schoolchildren, in traditional dress, part of the country's policy to preserve its cultural heritage. For men this is a *gho*, a knee length robe belted at the waist with large white detachable cuffs, and for women a *kira*, a long skirt with a short jacket, elegant and often brightly patterned. For formal



occasions, including visits to dzongs, a scarf has to be draped over the shoulder in a special way – not easy to arrange, nor to keep in place.

We called in at the weekly open-air market first where the local produce was displayed on the ground: hard chunks of yak cheese and the many vegetables we were to taste in all our meals, including curly fern fronds and the ubiquitous chillies which, together with red rice, form the basis of the Bhutanese diet. Nearby an archery contest was taking place, the participants in brightly coloured ghos. Archery is the national sport, and though taken very seriously is great entertainment. Powerful metal bows fired arrows at an amazing speed towards a small target 150 metres away, yet the target was frequently hit; when one team did miss, their opponents delightedly mocked them with a derisory song and dance.

We set out the following day for ‘Tiger’s Nest’ Monastery, perhaps Bhutan’s most famous site, clinging to the side of a sheer cliff high above us in a dramatic location. The trail was steep and dusty through a forest of red rhododendrons, and we were occasionally overtaken by those less active than ourselves riding ponies. As we passed prayer-wheels and many



brightly coloured prayer-flags, it became increasingly evident how integral a part of everyday life Buddhism is. All Bhutanese monasteries are beautifully carved and painted outside, with statues of Buddha and even more splendid paintings within, and this was no exception. Tashi explained how the Guru Rinpoche had flown here from Tibet on the back of a tigress to subdue a local demon and bring Buddhism to the valley, hence the monastery’s name.

On our return to the valley we visited the ruined fort guarding its entrance, and were invited into a local farmhouse nearby to see the hot-stone baths in the outhouse, and for drinks of butter tea and ara, the local firewater. A few bowls of this helped us to get to know each other, and we soon became a most harmonious group, most of us past retirement age. With some resident in the UK and others in the Nyon region of Switzerland, there was always someone different to talk to and something different to talk about.



Trekking into the Haa Valley

The following morning we visited the National Museum in the old Ta Dzong watch tower, then the huge Rinpung Dzong, once a fortress but now an administrative and monastic centre, again with beautiful carvings. After lunch we started on our trek into the unspoilt Haa valley, part of the ancient trade route to the Chumbi Valley in Tibet and not opened to tourists until 2004. We met no other trekkers in the three days we were there, a welcome contrast to the crowded trails of Nepal. The ponies had left earlier with our gear, and we arrived after a gentle two hour walk to find the tents already up, including a large dining tent with tables and chairs. We were quickly served tea and biscuits, and bottles of whisky and brandy were produced later before a delicious dinner. The following morning we were brought 'bed tea' and a bowl of warm washing water before an al fresco breakfast.

The hardest day was the next with a steep ascent of over 800 metres through rhododendron forest to the Saga La at 3725 metres, with prayer flags blowing in the strong wind and views of the distant high peaks. Then it was downhill to a picnic lunch and our next campsite, an idyllic spot carpeted with sheets of purple primula denticulata, with a baby yak and its mother grazing nearby. It quickly grew colder as this was 3350 metres, and that night the temperature dropped to -4°C and the ground the next morning was covered in frost. But we soon warmed up once the sun rose, and as we ate breakfast we were rewarded with clear views of the snow-capped peaks across the valley. It was a gentle trek downhill past more primulas, white rhododendrons tinged with pink and sweet smelling daphne, with our other guide Karma at hand to identify the flowers and birds for us. We wandered through small villages, past women working in the fields in their long kiras and a family building a house in the traditional way, with rammed earth walls and carved wooden frames and windows. Once it was finished the house would be decorated with paintings of animals, flowers, or even a large phallus, part of the cult of the 'divine madman' to ward off evil spirits.

That afternoon we drove to the capital Thimphu for a two night stay in another splendid hotel, and then for a further two nights at the old capital of Punakha, it is beautifully situated dzong at the confluence of two rivers. Our days consisted of a variety of walks, some steeply uphill to a brightly painted temple or monastery high on a ridge, others through terraced fields of rice and wheat, with oxen ploughing as in medieval times. The flowers were always lovely, with huge rhododendron, magnolia, and poinsettia trees all in flower, and tiny primulas and gentians at the side of the trail. We visited many spectacular dzongs, learned to walk clockwise round all Buddhist monuments, heard the fable of the Four Friends, listened to boy monks practising musical instruments, marvelled at the 108 stupas at the Dochu La, and saw the strangely shaped takin, the national animal of Bhutan. We were all impressed by our visit to the Choki Traditional Art School, started by Tashi's father and now directed by his sister Sonam. Here economically disadvantaged students were given the chance to learn the traditional skills of painting, carving, weaving and embroidery which would enable them to earn a good living back in their home villages, and as we toured the various classrooms we could see the progress they made over their years of disciplined training.

The furthest east we visited was the Phobjikha Valley where our hotel rooms were heated with wood-burning stoves – not easy to keep alight. The valley is renowned for the rare black-necked cranes which spend the winter months here, flying back to Tibet for the summer, and there was great excitement as we hiked along the Nature Trail and spotted the one crane which this year had remained behind. We saw a film about these birds at the Black-Necked Crane Information Centre, and then walked up to the Gangtey monastery which these birds circle three times when they first arrive in the valley every autumn.



Embroidery class at Choki School

That afternoon we had our final hike up to the Shashi La at 3480m, with more rhododendrons, prayer flags and yaks on the summit, and more views of the distant peaks.

All too soon it was our last day and time for the drive westwards back to Paro. Bhutan is not a large country, about the size of Switzerland, but our drive took several hours as all roads are very slow, being poorly surfaced, narrow and winding, often over high passes; it is said that the longest straight stretch of road in the country is the runway at Paro airport. We were blessed with clear skies for our final drive, and as we crossed the 3350 metre Lawa La we could see the highest snow-capped peaks of Bhutan, including Jhomolhari, sparkling in the distance.



The Group at the Dewachen Hotel - picture by Choki

As a farewell Tashi had organised a cultural show for us where we were treated as honoured guests. We were presented with gifts of Bhutan tee-shirts, and sat down with aperitifs to enjoy the generous hospitality of Boonserm Tours and watch the traditional songs and folk dances, and the masked dances normally seen only at religious festivals. The dancers looked magnificent in their brightly coloured costumes, with huge animal or demon headed masks, and as they whirled increasingly faster to the music of horns, drums and cymbals we were caught up in the spell. As the evening drew to a close we appreciated once more how lucky we were to have visited such a special country, with such a special guide. Bhutan is indeed a magical place, a true 'Shangri-La'.

Participants: Pamela & Alasdair Andrews, Geoff & Pauline Causey, Susan & Elaine Chapman, Edward & Sue Coales, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Niels & Guni Doble, Richard & Katherine Heery, Anne Jago, Horst & Mecky Kroha, Roger Newson, Rick & Carol Saynor, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer

April 29 to May 2 - Derbyshire Meet

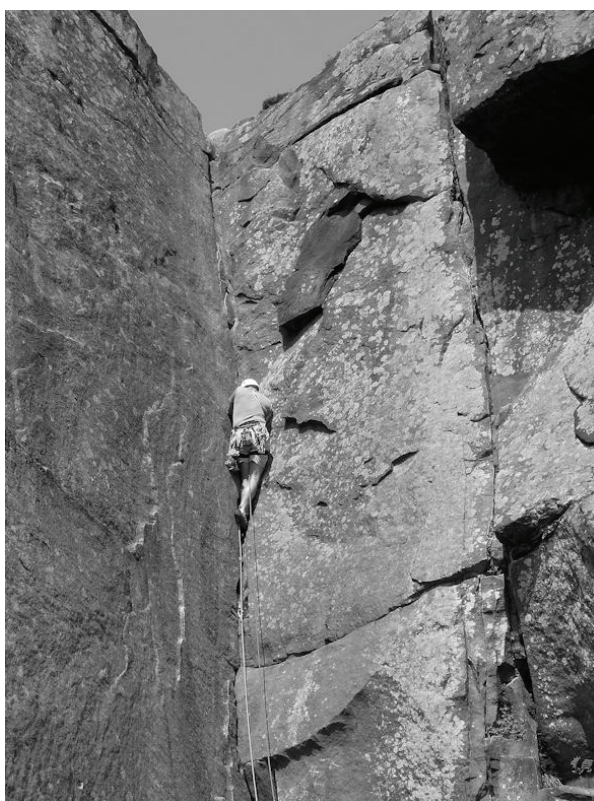
Report by Andy Burton

This was a joint AC/ABMSAC meet over the double Bank Holiday weekend. In total there were 13 attendees, 2 got a better offer of going to Nepal (Steve and Natasha) otherwise it would have been fifteen. A good start for an old destination revisited. Myles had never been to Derbyshire before. Weather was mainly very sunny with a strong cool north-easterly breeze. Cool at night. Pub and Bunk barn provided good clean basic accommodation and washing facilities and good food on Saturday night which everyone seemed to enjoy.

Ed, Marcus and Andy met up at the pub at 1pm Friday and went to Aldery cliff for a pleasant afternoon on this now well gardened BMC owned Limestone cliff with crag side parking. They climbed did Ash Tee Slab (HS), Clothesline (S) and Surface Plate (HVS), some in better style than others!

On the Saturday Laura Millichamp (AC) and partner Mark went over to the Roaches and had a good day out there.

Myles, Heather, Dick Murton and Lyn cycled against strong head winds along the High Peak and Tissington trails and Mike O'Dwyer did his own thing on a mountain bike, the one the burglars did not steal.



Ed leading Green Gut, Froggatt Edge.

Photo by Mike Pinney

Mike Pinney, Ed, Marcus, Gemma Hagen (AC) and climbing partner Julian, and Andy went to Froggatt, where all the favourite routes were climbed, Sunset Crack/Sunset Slab, Green Gut, Allen's Slab, Heather Wall. Julian led

Today's Wall and Three Pebble Slab on sight and Marcus and Mike P climbed Pedestal Crack (HVS) to the right of Green Gut in the sun, not bad for two 50 year olds. Ed talked in the bar the previous evening of doing 20 routes but only managed nine, I guess he meant everyone's total together! Still a beautiful day especially for the dedicated seconds (Strong cool breeze at the top of the Edge).

Sunday saw Laura/Mark/Gemma and Julian make for Willersley and Matlock Bath areas for some limestone climbing. Mark and Gemma did Lobo and Sphynx both VS on Wildcat.

Myles, Heather, Ed, Marcus, Mike P and Andy did the walk from Earl Sterndale over Parkhouse and Chrome Hill finishing off at the Quiet Woman for a pint in the sun.



The team on Chrome Hill. Photo by Heather Eddowes

Mike P and Marcus had to forego the pint in the Quiet Woman as they went to Aldery Cliff and climbed Nettlerash (HS) and Carmen (VS) before it got too cold. Everybody else returned to the Royal Oak and pitched the tent, outer only, for the evenings BBQ. Then the team prepared for the evenings entertainment. The BBQ lasted until it was cold enough to warrant going into the pub.

Monday saw Mike O'Dwyer gone at 6-30am for some more serious off roading. Heather followed Mike, only about 3 hours behind.

Mike P., Ed, Marcus and Andy went to Gardoms Edge where activity was confined to the Apple Buttress area. Mike P and Marcus climbed NMC crack (HVD), Flake crack (HS), Apple Buttress (VS) and Velve Cracks (VS). Andy and Ed did Apple crack (VD) and NMC crack, but unfortunately Andy put his shoulder out and that terminated their day.

Members Photographs



Dales Way – the Wharfe at Burnsall. Photo by Mike Goodyer



Kyajo Ri, Nepal, Advance Base Camp. Photo by Mike Pinney

Members Photographs



*Kyajo Ri, Nepal, Looking down 45 degree slope to our high camp
Photo by Mike Pinney*



Kyajo Ri, Nepal, Descending lower step. Photo by Mike Pinney

ABMSAC Meets



*Onich Meet, February - Sunday on the ascent of Stob Coire an Charin in the Mamores.
Photo by Jim Strachan*



*Onich Meet, February - Monday - on the ridge to Stob Dubh.
Photo by John Foster*

ABMSAC Meets



*Derbyshire Meet, May Day Holiday - All at the top of Chrome Hill.
Photo by Heather Eddowes*



*Derbyshire Meet, May Day Holiday - Mike and Marcus on Apple Arete, Gardoms Edge.
Photo by Marcus Tierney*

Bhutan Meet, April



*The Tiger's Nest Monastery
Photo by Pamela Andrews*



*Trekking into the Haa Valley
Photo by Pamela Andrews*

Bhutan Meet, April



*Punakha dzong
Photo by Pamela Andrews*



*Masked dancers
Photo by Pamela Andrews*

Bhutan Meet, April



*Phobjikha Valley
Sketch by Sue Coales*

Beer Meet - September



*Lunch at Sea Level!
Photo by Mike Goodyer*

***Fiesch, Upper Valais, Switzerland
Hotel based summer meet***



The walk to Riederalp



Aletsch Glacier from Belalp

Ascent of Barre des Ecrins, July/August



*N face, Barre des Ecrins from the Ecrins Hut
Photo by Andrew Moore*



*Looking down North Couloir.
Photo by Andrew Moore*

Ascent of Barre des Ecrins, July/August

*Mike Pinney on ice leading up to NE
Ridge
Photo by Andrew Moore*



*Looking back along the upper part of the East Ridge
Photo by Mike Pinney*

The Frontier Trek - Le Chemin de la Liberte, September



*Day 1- Woodland outside St Giron
Photo by Ed Bramley*



*Day 2 – Cabane De Luzurs
Photo by Ed Bramley*

The Frontier Trek - Le Chemin de la Liberte, September



Day 4 - Above Étang Long



Day 6 - All safely arrived - Esterri d'Aneu

Myles having newly discovered the Peak District set off home. We hope to repeat this meet next spring.

June 24 - 25 - North Wales meet
Report by Ed Bramley

A weekend of contrasting outings for us all.

We had managed to arrive a day early at Tan yr Wyddfa, so on the Friday we headed out for that old classic – Crib Goch. The biggest surprise was the cost of the car parking at the top of the pass - £10 for the day! Still, we were out early and winding our way up onto the main ridge before many other people were about. As always, it's great when the effort of reaching the ridge is complete, and you can experience the joy of progressing along Crib Goch itself – the turns, balances and moves making it a cerebral delight. All too soon the ridge is over and we're in Snowdon summit café for some quick refreshment. After lunch, we descend the top part of the Watkin path, before climbing up Lliwedd. Great views of the slabs and we ponder what it would be like tackling one of the great classic routes of the crag. Before long, we're descending to Llyn Llydaw and the last mile back to the car park.

Saturday starts inclement, so we head out to somewhere I'd not been before – Anglesey. We spend most of the day visiting and walking round Parys Mountain – a great mass of ground near Amwlch that was extensively mined for copper in the 18th century. The great holes in the ground and the unnatural colours of the ground make us think that we're in the middle of some Tolkein set. Later on, we pay a brief visit to South Stack and view the bird colonies, not to mention the obligatory visit to the café. That evening, twenty of us tuck into our communal meal and tales are told long into the night.



South Stack – Anglesey (photo by Mike Goodyer)

Sunday is also somewhere I've never been before – Yr Aran, although it's very close to the hut. A straight pull up to Bwlch Cwm Llan before the angle changes and it's then a steep pull up to the summit. A straightforward descent brings us back to our original path and down to the hut for afternoon tea and the journey home.

July 1st – 16th FIESCH HOTEL MEET, UPPER VALAIS

Report by Pamela Andrews

This year's summer meet was once again based at the Hotel Park in Fiesch in the Upper Goms valley. Rolf and Rosemarie Frei were delighted to welcome us back and looked after us as hospitably as in 2007, serving delicious meals in the hotel garden.

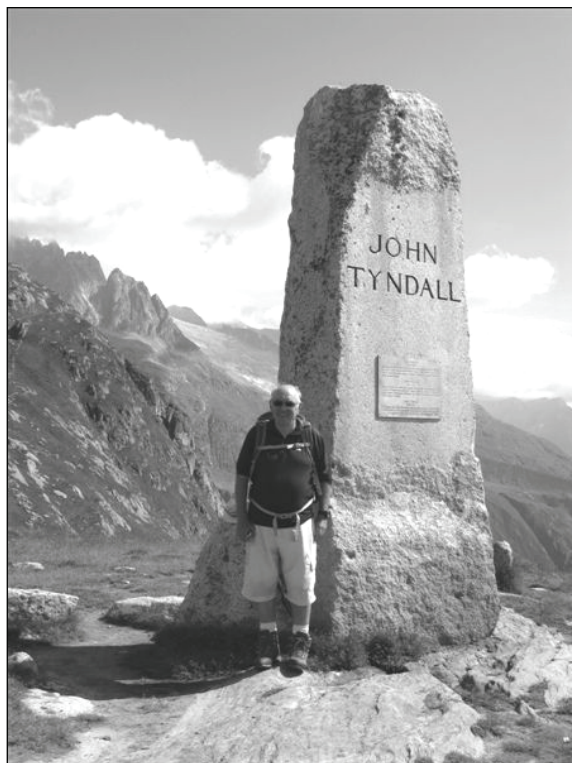
The weather was perfect on the weekend we arrived, and I spent an unforgettable birthday climbing the Eggerhorn from Ernen in glorious sunshine with panoramic views of the surrounding peaks. There were myriads of edelweiss and small purple asters at the summit,



and flowering alpenrose covering the slopes on our descent into the Rappetal. Alasdair had even organised a surprise birthday party for me back at the hotel, with champagne in the garden followed by a delicious cake, complete with candles, made by Belinda Baldwin.

Everyone made the most of that sunny weekend, most using the cable car up the Eggishorn to get as high as possible. As the week progressed this cable car was made frequent use of for a variety of walks from Fiescheralp: to the Märjelensee at the edge of the Aletsch glacier; along to Bettmeralp, Moosfluh and the Bettmerhorn; and to Riederfurka and Villa Cassel, all giving splendid views of the Matterhorn, the Pennine Alps and the peaks of the Bernese Oberland.

From Belalp some of us walked up to the Tyndall Memorial, erected in memory of the Victorian scientist and mountaineer of the Golden Age who was an honorary citizen of the nearby commune and an honorary member of the SAC and the AC, while others made the long steep descent down to the new Hängebrücke suspension bridge high above the glacier, linking Belalp to Riederalp.



Several excursions were made into the Binntal, up to the Binntal Hut, more steeply up to the Mittlenbärg Hut, and following the Mineral Tour to the Mässersee. New destinations were discovered, up the Risihorn from Bellwald, and the Folluhorn from Rosswald, both giving panoramic views of the surrounding peaks. There were plenty of lower walks too, into the Fieschertal, along the Gommer Höhenweg, and to the lovely village of Ernen with its ancient church and painted houses.

Those of us with cars were able to explore further afield, and the Sidelhorn from the Grimsel Pass, the Brudelhorn from the Nufenen Pass, and the Monte Leone Hut from the Simplon Pass were favourite choices, as was the Lotschental, setting of many of Harry Archer's meets. When the weather was less good we resorted to sightseeing, visiting a variety of places: Locarno and Lake Maggiore, Andermatt and Disentis, Interlaken and the Reichenbach Falls, and the Monet Exhibition at Martigny.

Mark Davison and Tony Arkley as usual aspired to higher things and managed to climb a 3000 metre peak on every day of the first week. These included the Klein Furkahorn and Sidelenhorn from the Furka Pass, the Wasenhorn above the Monte Leone hut from the Simplon Pass, and the Piz Gallina and Blinnenhorn from the Nufenen Pass, at 3374 metres their highest summit. All necessitated long days and, keeping to their record, more than one late dinner. Once Mark departed Tony was left to his own devices and set off to cross the Aletsch glacier and attempt the Rothorn. High on the ridge he was caught in a storm and decided to beat a hasty retreat, staying on the same side of the glacier. The long walk out took most of the night, and we were relieved to see him back at the hotel for breakfast the following morning.

The flowers were as spectacular as in 2007, and on our walks we saw edelweiss, alpine rhododendrons, gentians, campanulas, martagon and paradise lilies, and many more, including the rare eritrichium nanum or 'King

of the Alps'. The far-sighted spotted ibex, golden eagles and a grouse family with chicks, while the Fosters had the record for the number of marmots seen, as many as ten on several of their walks.

Alasdair had once again organised a highly successful meet in a beautiful area, though there are many sad memories too. On the first weekend Bill Parish collapsed while walking down from Fiescheralp and was helicoptered to Sion Hospital where he died two days later. And this was to be Alasdair's last meet, for soon after our return he fell ill and was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; he died in Edinburgh on 15th November. His meets have taken us to so many different areas over the years, giving us so much enjoyment. Whenever we are in the mountains, we will remember him.

Participants: Alasdair & Pamela Andrews, Tony Arkley, James & Belinda Baldwin, Antonia Barlen & Bill Parish, Geoff & Janet Bone, Derek Buckley & Ann Alari, Sheila Coates, Mark Davison, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, John & Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin & Ursula Woodhouse, John Monks, Dick & Lin Murton, Roger Newson, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Terry Shaw, Jim & Margaret Strachen, Tony Welling, Elizabeth Wells, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer, Dick & Karen Yorke.

July 16th - August 6th - Ecrins Summer Alpine Meet

Report by Mike Pinney

The meet based at the Ailefroide camp site was held jointly with the Alpine Club, Climbers' Club, FRCC and, for the first time, the Wayfarers'. Turn out continues to be good with over 60 attendees for some or the entire three week meet. On the second day of the meet, an inch of rain fell on the campsite, represented by a foot of new snow. Conditions could only get better?

Perhaps because of the weather or because this is the first time the meet had coincided with Tour de France, a surprising number of members developed a keen interest in the race on the first Wednesday. The race went from Gap to Briancon then over into Italy with the route closed to traffic from early in the morning so we parked in Argentiere a couple of hours before the



bikes were due to pass then walked up the route to get a good vantage point opposite the Whymper statue. We watched a carnival procession of the sponsors floats followed by the race itself. For the spectators it was a very relaxed atmosphere.

It had been the start of the improved weather such that by the following day the new snow had cleared from Col Galibier and the tour was able to keep to schedule.

Ailefroide has something for everybody. High passes to cross for views & to build up acclimatization; single and multi pitch rock climbs down in the Durance valley, within walking distance and in view of the campsite together with routes involving a hut night; together with more tradition mixed Alpine routes.

Most of the routes in walking distance of the campsite and well documented in the local Escalades autour d'Ailefroide are generously bolted and quick drying. Thus, even with a limited weather window, it was possible to grab 200m routes with perhaps a wet abseil although I do not remember too many complaints about wet descents.



For some of us, shortly to be heading to Khumbu, it was necessary to remember our Alpine skills and achieve some acclimatization. Starting from Ailefroide with an overnight hut stay routes included Ailefroide E Summit, Pelvoux and the Barre des Ecrins/Dome de Neige.



Looking back along the upper part of the East Ridge

“I had climbed the Barre des Ecrins in the mid 80’s. However for a number of reasons, I was attracted by a traverse of the mountain starting up the north couloir-an attractive line, the highest in the region & most representative of the climbing we would experience on Kyajo Ri. The north couloir was in very good condition. This was balanced by the start of the NE ridge which was initially hard ice then snow covered rock and I was very relieved to get established on the ridge proper. We lost a lot of time on the start of the NE ridge such that we had another 17hr day getting back to the car just as it became dark.”

Elsewhere in the massif one team climbed the N ridge of Sirac (unfortunately not now matching the pedigree of its first ascension by Lloyd & Longland in 1932) and further a field Monte Viso - “Just to the East of the Ecrins is an attractive isolated peak Monte Viso from where it is reputed one can see most of the 4000m peaks of the Alps. For my last route of the trip we drove round & walked up to the hut. We had a choice of routes, the route of first ascent and a harder rock ridge. On the way up to the hut we met a couple of French guys who were returning from having ascended the rock ridge. However whilst we were at the hut there was low cloud & we could not see the start of the rock ridge. We thus decided to ascend the route of first ascent meeting a couple of local Italians on their way up to celebrate 150 yrs since the first ascent-an enjoyable day.”

The local restaurants saw good service supplemented by take away cooked chicken & pizzas together with a barbecue in the first week. I think a successful meet with plenty achieved.

September Trek – The Freedom Trail *Report by Ed Bramley*

This years trek followed one of the hardest wartime escape routes across the central Pyrenees into Northern Spain. Set up in 1994, le Chemin de la Liberte follows much of the original wartime route, and is a fitting reminder to the 30,000 people who escaped along the route and the more than 1,000 people who perished assisting them. The route starts in St.Girons, some 60 miles south of Toulouse, and ends in Esterri d’Aneu, over the Pyrenees, in Spain.

It seems traditional that these treks start with rain, and this year was no exception. Exiting the hotel in our waterproofs, we posed for the obligatory group photograph.



The route soon winds out of the town and heads up into the woodland that is a feature of this region. Initially a trail goes through close packed woodland, but soon opened out into

forest rides, passing several large sink holes on the way. Before long, the weather had changed to a mix of drizzle and mist, so we were able to pack the encumbering waterproofs away. At one part, giant boulders loomed out of the mist in the woods. By midday, we started to come into more open country, with a lovely hamlet where we were able to replenish our water supply.

Never far away from the purpose of the route, the afternoon brought a salutary reminder. Outside one barn was a memorial to a Frenchman who was shot whilst assisting others to escape. Elsewhere there were more joyful reminders of the present, including an old couple who were passionate about restoring an old water mill. At 15 miles, we knew the first day would be long, so it was a relief to reach the auberge at Aunac where we stopped for the night. A great communal meal with the family and other people on holiday, including one person who was touring the region in his red Ford Mustang – now that's style!

The second day started in woodland, which slowly thinned out to higher pastures. Passing through the hamlet of Esbints, we were surprised to see a street dedicated to John Lennon. By midday we had reached Col de Core, and significant views into the valleys on either side of the pass. There is also a road passing over the col and writing and graffiti on the road identified this as a previous route of the Tour de France. The afternoon saw us out of the woodland and into the high pastures. Our accommodation for the night was the unmanned Cabane de Suberra, one half of which is a bothy, and the other half is lived in by the local shepherd. Whilst our food is spartan, we have the wood fire going, and plenty of brews of tea. We are also joined by two other trekkers doing the route, but are surprised when we hear local East Midlands accents – one of them is from Derby – small world.

The next morning we are treated to a glorious sunrise and we now start to climb significantly. Firstly through high pasture land, where we see a herd of the local black Merens horses. Shortly afterwards, we come across another

wartime reminder – the broken and twisted skeleton of a Halifax bomber that crashed just after the war had ended, whilst out on a training flight. A memorial formally identifies and recognises the unfortunate crew.

There's then a big pull up to the Col de Craberous, at 2,382m. It's a straightforward ascent, but we all take our time, as the height and weight of our sacks start to make themselves felt. At the col, we are greeted by an equally steep descent which strains the quads, but which then opens up into high moorland and easy walking to another refuge. Passing a lovely



clear lake, we start to pull up to the next col, over sets of rock slabs which almost stretch to the horizon. It's now late afternoon, and we're all aching from a long day and minimal food over the last 24 hours. As we reach the Col de Pécouch (2,494m), we can finally see our evening's accommodation at the Refuge de Estagnous. We're there in little over half an hour, and with the food, beer and hot showers, the body soon starts to recover from the day's efforts.

We start the fourth day with excitement, as we know we're crossing into Spain today. To add to it all, we see a flock of seven lammergeyers circling on the thermals. But first, there is the little matter of the immediate route. We descend from the hut into a large cirque, complete with lake and surrounding peaks. At the back of the cirque, a stream rises steeply, at one point breaking into a waterfall over a set of steep slabs. And yes, this is where our route goes. It looks improbable from afar, but when on it, there is a great track up to the level ground above, with occasional wire handrails. Whilst easy enough now, imagine what it must have been like for those people doing the same in civilian clothes at night with snow on the ground, and all the time the threat of capture, or worse, looming over you.

At the end of this part of the ascent, we are greeted by a lovely lake nesting in the hillside, with lovely shades of blues and greens in the morning sun. The pull up to the border is up a steep scree strewn ravine. After a slow haul, we arrive at the Col de la Pale de Clauère (2,522m) and are greeted by our own fly past by a lammergeyer. It's a long slow descent, firstly to a small tarn, which we stop by for our lunch. Then down again, into the main river valley on the Spanish side, which we then follow unerringly. It's sparsely populated on the Spanish side, so apart from some herds of cattle and a couple of

farmsteads, the valley is fairly deserted. We are now on a forester's track which we follow for about five miles to where we intend to stop for the night.



For some years now, the refuge at Fornet has been shut, something we've been aware of before even starting the route, so it's a bivouac for all of us. We get our shelters rigged and enjoy the small amount of food that we've been able to carry with us. My minimalist approach of a

sawn off Karrimat and a polythene survival bag to sleep in leave me cold in the night, and I'm greeted by the knowing smiles of those who've burdened the extra weight of a sleeping bag for the past few days.

The following morning, it's a long walk of over ten miles to Esterri d'Aneu, much of it along a minor tarmac road. We pass some small villages on the way, but at this time of the day, none of them have anywhere open for food. With some relief we make Esterri just after midday, and before long we are sat in the local bar with tapas and beer in hand, somehow managing to converse with the locals. It was a delightful little village and a great place to end our trek.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Steve Creasey, Mike O'Dwyer, Myles O'Reilly, Marian Parsons, Mike Parsons, Marcus Tierney.

September 23 - 25 Buffet Party, George Starkey Hut

Report by Mike Pinney

The buffet had a select turnout, with many going for a walk leading to Carrock Fell on the Saturday, exploring some old mine workings. This meant for a late(ish) return for the evening buffet. The evening was spent enjoying the buffet and wine in the George Starkey Hut.

A somewhat later start on the Sunday saw a party ascending Pinnacle Ridge on St Sunday Crag. The walk continued over towards Fairfield and down to tarn and back to the hut via the valley bottom for a well earned afternoon tea.

Particular thanks to Marian Parsons and Belinda Baldwin for arranging and preparing the evening meal.

Beer Meet, East Devon, October 2011

Report by Belinda Baldwin

We started the meet with tea at Beer Hill Cottage Friday teatime. Antonia Barlen, Shiela Coates, John and Marj Foster plus James and I joined John Dempster, Dinah Nicholls and John and Rosemary Percival for dinner in Beer. Soon Heather Eddowes joined the gang in the back room of *Gina's*.

At the Rhyd Ddu Meet we had agreed that we would stick to the Jurassic Coast. The point being that there was not much point in going to the seaside and not walking beside it and maybe enjoying the beach. On Saturday we were joined by Mike and Anne Goodyer and Mike Pinney west of Sidmouth. We started in mist with the sea below out of sight. Soon we could see as well as hear it. We walked along the cliff tops to Budleigh Salterton admiring the stacks at Ladram Bay along the way.



Ladram Bay Stacks, photo by Mike Goodyer

We had the rare event of eating sandwiches at sea level on the beach rather than at the top of a mountain. We returned inland. There was some debate as to whether we should stop for a beer as a pub came into view. You can guess at the resolution.

Sunday was a glorious sunny day. We drove east to Eype, walked to West Bay, where magnificent waves were crashing in, then over cliffs to Seatown taking us over Thorncombe Beacon. At Seatown there was another pub argument. We sat in the sun outside the Anchor enjoying the moment before our return inland.

We had two glorious days far from any mountains but the walking up and down cliffs got us puffing. Good company and good food added to the joys of an Autumn ABM Meet.

October 21-24 - Winter Meet at the Tarbet Hotel

Report by John Foster

Twenty one of us eventually met up at the Tarbet Hotel on Friday evening, in spite of a weather forecast which predicted we were likely to finish the weekend with gills and webbed feet! Suffice it to say that the forecasters were remarkably accurate.

Optimistic parties started out on Saturday morning, however, before heavy showers discouraged most of us from leaving our vehicles. One group managed a low-level walk on the far side of Loch Lomond, one party performed an in-depth study of Cruachan power station, and several of us inspected the 'Vital Spark' at Inverary before moving on to Kilchurn Castle on Loch Awe – which was closed.

On Sunday, the forecast was for slightly better weather until lunchtime. Some of our more intrepid (?) members started up Ben Arthur (The Cobbler) and others up Beinn an Lochain. It is further claimed that a sub-set of these reached the tops. In any event all returned safely.

A third group investigated the furthest extremities of Glen Kinglas and Gleann a Mhill Bhig before investigating similar areas of a hostelry in Arrochar, and a more prudent party limited themselves to an ascent of the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar (in which I believe they were successful).

Monday dawned as damp as ever, and any ideas of excursions were abandoned in favour of getting home.

Although the weather was a little inclement throughout the weekend, the meet was a great success as a sociable gathering. Members from all over the country got together with the common aim of emptying the hotel bar of its liquid contents – if we were not totally successful in this, it was not for want of effort – and catching up on everyone else's news.

Attendees: Alasdair & Pam Andrews, Colin & Marion Armstrong, Pauline Batchelor, Hugh Chapman, Graham Daniels, Buff Dolling, Peter & Pat Farrington, John & Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Roger James, Wendell Jones, Bill Peebles, Fred Semple, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Ursula Woodhouse.

February 3 – 5 2012 - Annual Dinner Meet

Report by Brooke Midgley & Mike Pinney

For the 40th time the Dinner Meet was in Patterdale and the Dinner at the Glenridding Hotel. The current Meet Fuhrer has not been in charge of all of them. Numbers were slightly lower than last year but would have been about equal, had we not had some late cancellations. The weather was much kinder than last year when the meet leader was regretting not having placed an order for an Ark! Thursday and Friday were sunny but icy conditions required care.

The weekend provides a great opportunity for socialising and with a less than ideal forecast for Saturday; attendees were sat around the hut fire until the early hours of the morning, perhaps putting the world to right! The forecast was warm (above freezing) & windy with precipitation by mid-afternoon. For those having a leisurely breakfast, it seemed that every attendee passed the hut windows on their way to Side Farm. A popular outing was a south –north traverse of Place Fell with wind assistance returning along the side of the lake. The snow materialised by mid-afternoon, when most were down from the hills, particularly advantageous for those wishing to watch the six Nations rugby.

Firstly Kirkstone was closed, and then an accident blocked the lakeside road to Glenridding, delaying the arrival of our guests for the Dinner, Fiona & Keith Sanders. Keith assured the Police that he had winter tyres and they were let through. Fiona is President of the Climbers' Club, the first serving President to have attended a dinner at the Glenridding, (Mike Westmacott & Mark Vallance are former Presidents). She made an amusing and interesting speech, proposing the toast to ABMSAC. The response was by our [retiring] President, Mike Pinney, A notable attendee was Paul Everett, President of SAC Geneva Section who was our Guest speaker last year.

The meal was enjoyed by 64 Members and Guests. Thanks were voiced to the Hotel Management and Staff for an excellent meal.

Sunday was pleasant, sunny and quiet as morning access to the valley was problematic. The gullies were not ideal for winter climbing with new snow on a warm base. However the ridges were in ideal winter condition with Striding Edge to Helvellyn returning via Swirral edge an excellent outing.



Above Greenside mines, Glenridding, photo by Mike goodyer

Monday was sunny- EAST of Pooley Bridge! It was forecast that the hills were clear but we've not heard from Belinda or James for confirmation.

So to next year-what will that bring? Come along and find out on February 2nd 2013.

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 4th February 2012

The president Mike Pinney was in the Chair, approximately 30 members were present

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from David Harland, Roger James, James Bogle, Antonia Barlen, Ed Coales, John Percival

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 5th February 2011:

The minutes were approved (Terry Shaw, Heather Eddowes).

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising

Election of Officers and Committee:

The term of office of Mike Pinney as president expired at this meeting. The club accepted the committee's nomination of Ed Bramley to succeed him.

Ed Bramley wishes to retire as Membership Secretary. In the absence of any other nominees the committee's nomination of Mike Pinney was accepted. John Dempster suggested that the club should look for another person to avoid over burdening Mike but supported the motion in the meantime. (Andy Burton, Wendell Jones)

James Baldwin and Don Hodge have completed their 6 year terms, under clause 7 (d) the committee proposed that they be re-appointed. All other office holders and committee members had indicated their willingness to remain in role and all were duly re-appointed.

Hon Treasurer's report: The report and accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and presented by James Baldwin.

The costs of the anniversary DVD will pass into 2011 / 12 accounts, approximately £1k.

A donation of 25,000sf from ABMSAC funds was approved by the committee and given to the Geneva section of the SAC. The donation was made to cover the installation of additional solar panels and to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Britannia Hut.

In addition to the contribution from the ABM, a sum of £4,125 has been received from the Ski Club of G.B, Eagle Ski Club, and individual members. This will be forwarded to the Geneva section.

Two investments were sold in August and the proceeds were used to cover the majority of the donation to the Geneva Section. The sale of these funds has cleared an anomaly in the trusteeship of investments.

The subscription bands for 2012-13 are to be held

Single Membership	£22 - £25
2 nd member at same address	£14 - £16
Junior Membership	£9 - £13

John Dempster raised an objection to a donation of the size (£17609.27) of that for the solar panels at the Britannia Hut being made without prior reference to the membership. He expressed no censure of the committee but wanted to propose a motion whereby this could not happen again, it was pointed out that such a proposal needed to be submitted in advance in accordance with club rules.

Amendment to Rules

It was proposed and accepted that the period of notice required for a general meeting (Meetings section 6b) be changed for 3 to 4 weeks and that nominations for officers and committee should be made 20 rather than 10 days before the date of the AGM.

It was proposed and accepted that the changes in votes (Meetings section 6e) should be implemented.

President's report

My term as President has now finished, so it is appropriate to start my report by thanking the committee and officers for their support, guidance and plain hard work over the last 3 years. Of particular note, this year, has been the issue of the centenary DVD- thank you Ed for all the hard work. It has been well received. I am sure you will be glad that it is now out of the way as you take over as President. A mistake I made was not actively finding a replacement or stand-in as hut booking secretary. Ed is sensibly handing on the membership secretary role. Over the next few months I hope to introduce an online booking system, similar to that adopted by other clubs to reduce that workload.

When taking on the role of President I should have registered that, if it were the Centenary, then 3 years later it would be the Centenary of the opening of the Britannia Hut. Since the provision of the hut was the original reason for the formation of the Association, this could not be overlooked!

For the Centenary of the Association, a painting of Ardgour was presented. However for the Centenary of the hut opening it was considered a more tangible gift was required. With the topical nature of global warming, a green project was particularly attractive. The Geneva section moved rapidly from undecided to a project which they needed to implement in parallel with other work. In addition to a donation from Association funds in line with our original objectives, a number of members have contributed and there have been donations from the Ski Club of Great Britain and the Eagle Ski Club. A recent report: - *"The warden's husband went up to the hut on Sunday 13th of November. Thanks to the solar panels, the temperature was 9 degrees Centigrade in the room holding the water tanks. We can thus keep 15,000 litres of water without any frost threat. This will also allow energy saving when opening the hut in March, because when starting from below zero, we used a lot of energy thawing the water left over and heating the hut."*

Moving on to the George Starkey Hut. When it was first opened in 1976, it was one of the best. However, standards have changed and led to the major refurbishment 7/8 years ago and more recently the fitting of night storage heaters in the 2 wash rooms. I particularly appreciate Sylvia Mercer's input and support in bringing the hut up to a level of which we can be proud, which I mention now as she retires from the Hut Management Committee-Thank you. The hut continues to be in much demand from the mountaineering community.

Following the last company AGM, John Dempster retired as Chairman and Terry Shaw as Company Secretary. Please accept the thanks of the Association for your efforts, in particular for seeing through the somewhat difficult rent review. I think it is appropriate to wish the current directors good luck as they prepare for negotiating a new lease, required from October 2016.

As a final item, I wish to express my appreciation of the bequest from Alasdair Andrews's estate.

Any other business: No items were raised and the meeting duly closed.

Dick Murton, Hon Sec
10 April 2012

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB LTD

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel Ullswater, on Saturday 4th
February 2012.**

Present: Directors J.A. Baldwin (Chairman), D. Buckley (Treasurer), E. Bramley, D. Hodge,
M. Pinney (Secretary) and about 20 members.

Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from P. Clarkson (director).

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday February 5th 2011 and circulated in the 2011 ABMSAC Journal were approved and accepted without dissent on a proposal by J. Strachan and seconded by M. Pinney.

Directors' Report and Accounts:

The chairman wished to record his thanks to the Hut Warden for her handling of the issues associated with the "cold" winter of 2010/11. Storage heaters had now been installed in both wash rooms and additional stop cocks had been fitted to enable zones to be isolated.

In introducing the accounts for the year ended June 30th 2011, the treasurer said income from hut fees had increased by 5% to £19887 but profit for the financial year had decreased to £1851, primarily due to a major refurbishment of the hut electrical installation. It was noted that there was a typo on page 8, note 9-it should read 2014 and not 2012. Adoption of the accounts was approved without dissent on a motion proposed by Mrs B. Baldwin and seconded by R.W. Jones.

Any other business:

It was suggested by R.W. Jones that some of the money held as cash at bank be moved to try and obtain a better rate of interest.

There was some discussion on the renewal of the lease, due in October 2016. The Secretary reported that the Climbers' Club were currently in negotiation for a lease on the church hall at Grange, also owned by the Carlisle Diocesan Board of Finance and we were watching their progress. The current understanding is we have a statutory right of renewal. The Directors will be preparing for negotiations later in 2012.

The meeting ended at about 7pm.

*M. Pinney,
Hon Secretary.
9 March 2012*

LIST OF OFFICERS

List of Officers since the formation of the Association

PRESIDENTS

1909-1912 Clinton Dent
1913-1922 A E W Mason
1923-1926 Dr H L R Dent
1927-1930 Brig Gen The Hon C G Bruce CB MVO
1931-1933 W M Roberts OBE
1934-1936 A N Andrews
1937-1945 C T Lehmann
1946-1948 Dr N S Finzi
1949-1951 Gerald Steel CB
1952-1953 Col E R Culverwell MC
1954-1956 F R Crepin
1957-1959 George Starkey
1960-1962 B L Richards
1963-1965 Dr A W Barton
1966-1968 Vincent O Cohen MC
1969-1971 Frank Solari
1972-1974 D G Lambley FRCS
1975-1977 M Bennett
1978-1980 P S Boulter FRCS
1981-1984 J P Ledeboer
1985-1987 Wing Commander H D Archer DFC
1988-1990 J S Whyte CBE
1991-1993 A Ross Cameron ARC FEng
1994-1997 Mrs H M Eddowes
1997-2000 W B Midgley
2000-2003 M J Goodyer
2003-2006 A I Andrews
2006-2009 J W S Dempster CB
2009-2012 M Pinney
2012- E A Bramley

VICE PRESIDENTS

1948 Gerald Steel CV & Colonel E R Culverwell MC
1949 Colonel E R Culverwell MC & Brigadier E Gueterbock
Colonel E R Culverwell MC, Rev G H Lancaster (died April 1950)
& Dr C F Fothergill
1951-1952 Dr C F Fothergill & Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman
1953 Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman & J R Amphlett
1954-1955 J R Amphlett & Robert Creg
1956 Robert Creg & Dr J W Healy
1957-1958 Dr J W Healy & B L Richards GM
1959 B L Richards GM & Dr A W Barton

1960-1961 Dr A W Barton & D G Lambley FRCS
1962 D G Lambley, FRCS & V O Cohen MC
1963-1964 V O Cohen MC & F Solari
1965 F Solari & J G Broadbent
1966-1967 J G Broadbent & J S Byam-Grounds
1968 J S Byam-Grounds & W Kirstein
1969-1970 W Kirstein & Dr D R Riddell
1971 Dr D R Riddell & M Bennett
1972-1973 M Bennett & Rev F L Jenkins
1974 Rev F L Jenkins & P S Boulter FRCS
1975 P S Boulter FRCS & J S Whyte
1976-1977 J S Whyte & F E Smith
1978 F E Smith & J P Ledeboer
1979 J P Ledeboer & F P French
1980-1982 F P French & S M Freeman
1983-1984 S M Freeman & F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1984 FA W Schweitzer FRCS & Wing Commander H D Archer DFC
1985 F A W Schweitzer FRCS & A I Andrews
1986-1987 A I Andrews & W B Midgley
1988 W B Midgley & C G Armstrong
1989-1990 C G Armstrong & R W Jones
1991 R W Jones & G G Watkins
1992 G S Watkins & F B Suter
1993-1994 F B Suter & Commander J W Chapman OBE
1994-1995 Commander J W Chapman OBE & D R Hodge
1996-1997 D R Hodge & R N James
1997-1999 R N James & M Pinney
2000-2001 M Pinney & Dr D W Watts
2001-2003 Prof D C Watts & D F Penlington
2003 D F Penlington
2004-2007 W L Peebles
2007-2010 T J Shaw
2010 - Mrs B Baldwin

HONORARY SECRETARIES

1909-1911 J A B Bruce & Gerald Steel
1912-1919 E B Harris & A N Andrews
1920-1922 A N Andrews & N E Odell
1919-1928 A N Andrews & W M Roberts
1929-1930 W M Roberts & M N Clarke
1931-1944 M N Clarke & F W Cavey
1945-1948 M N Clarke & F P Crepin
1949-1953 F R Crepin & George Starkey
1954-1956 George Starkey & R C J Parker
1957-1958 R C J Parker & H McArthur

1958-1960 R C J Parker & F E Smith
1960-1962 F E Smith & M Bennett
1963-1970 M Bennett & J P Ledeboer
1971-1972 J P Ledeboer
1972-1976 FA W Schweitzer FRCS
1976-1978 R A Coatsworth
1978-1983 S N Beare
1984-1986 A G Partridge
1987-1988 S M Freeman
1989-2000 H F Romer
2000-2001 A I Andrews
2001-2006 J W S Dempster
2006-2010 Mrs A M Jago
2010 - D Murton

HONORARY MEMBER'S SECRETARIES

1965-1968 George Starkey
1969-1971 F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1972-1974 J E Jesson
1975-1977 D J Abbott
1978-1980 A N Sperryn
1980-1984 J W Eccles
1985-1997 T G B Howe MC

HONORARY MEETS SECRETARIES

1971-1974 S N Beare
1975-1979 A Strawther
1979-1983 A I Andrews
1984-1988 J C Berry
1989-1994 F B Suter
1994-2001 M J Goodyer
2001-2003 E A Bramley
2004-2009 J C Foster
2009-2010 J F Harris
2010- M Parsons

HONORARY SOCIAL SECRETARIES

1971-1977 P S Boulter
1978-1980 P V Andrews
1980-1983 F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1984 Professor E H Sondheimer
1985-1990 Mrs P M Boulter
1991-2001 J P Ledeboer
2001-2002 Wing Commander H D Archer DFC

HONORARY TREASURERS

1909-1911 C E King - Church
1912-1925 J A B Bruce
1926-1954 C T Lehmann
1954-1957 J A Amphlett
1957-1969 F R Crepin
1970-1978 R Wendell Jones
1978-1980 R A Coatsworth
1980-1997 M Pinney
1997-1999 K Dillon
1999-2005 A I Andrews
2005- J Baldwin

HON. CHAIRMAN - HUT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1974-1977 J P Ledeboer
1978-1980 D R Hodge
1980-1987 W B Midgley
1987-1990 D W Edwards
1991-1994 D Beer (TCC)
1995-1998 S Maudsley (TCC)
1999- 2005 W B Midgley
2005- 2010 S Bridge (TCC)

HONORARY LIBRARIANS

1909-1918 J A B Bruce
1919-1928 C T Lehmann
1929-1932 A N Andrews
1933-1938 George Anderson
1939-1952 S de V Merriman
1953-1963 C J France
1964-1966 J Kemsley
1966-1968 R Wendell Jones
1968-1970 S N Beare
1971-1974 W R H Jeudwine
1975-1979 H Flook
1979-1981 K J Baldry
1983-1984 Miss J Gamble
1985-1986 S N Beare

HONORARY SOLICITORS

1909-1932 E R Taylor
1933-1973 The Lord Tanglely
1974 M Bennett
1991-1995 S N Beare
1996-2003 Mrs D K Lewis (nee Midgley)

HONORARY EDITORS

(The following officers carried out the duties of Hon. Editor until the post was created in 1949: 1909- 1911 J A B Bruce, 1912-1928 J A B Bruce and A N Andrews, 1929-1948 M N Clarke).

1949-1962 M N Clarke

1963-1964 W R H Jeudwine

1965-1968 G A Hutcheson

1968-1974 Graham A Daniels

1975-1986 S M Freeman

1987-1992 M R Loewy

1992-2002 M I C Baldwin

2002-2009 R B Winter

2009- M J Goodyer

HONORARY EDITOR - NEWSLETTER

1992-1995 F B Suter

HONORARY AUDITORS

1909-1914 A B Challis

1915-1922 Reginald Graham

1923-1930 W L Adams

1931-1940 F Oughton

1941-1952 J A Marsden-Neye

1953-1956 S E Orchard

1957-1967 R A Tyssen-Gee

1968-1974 A Hart

1975-1977 J Llwyn - Jones

1978-1979 G A Daniels

1979-1980 C J Sandy

1981-1984 N Moore

1985-1999 D Bennett

1999-2005 K N Ballantine

2005-2009 P McCulloch

2009- N Harding

HONORARY MEMBERS SECRETARY

(Formerly Honorary Registrar)

1991-1993 H M Eddowes

1994-2002 Dr M J Eddowes

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

2003 Dr M J Eddowes

2004-2012 E A Bramley

2012 - M Pinney

Current Honorary Members

Hector Meir

Brooke Midgley

Wendell Jones

ABMSAC Office Holders and Useful Contacts

ABMSAC Committee 2012

OFFICE	HOLDER	ELECTED
President	E A Bramley	2012
Vice-President	Mrs B Baldwin	2010
Hon. Treasurer	J Baldwin	2005
Hon. Secretary	R W Murton	2010
Hon. Membership Secretary	M Pinney	2012
Hon. Meets Secretary	M Parsons	2010
Hon. Editor	M J Goodyer	2009
Hon. HMC Representative	D R Hodge	1978
Committee Members	Mrs M Foster	2009
	Mrs P Harris-Andrews	2010

ABMSAC Ltd Directors

J Baldwin	Chairman
M Pinney	Company Secretary
D Buckley	Treasurer
E Bramley	
D Hodge	
P Clarkson	

Hut Bookings Secretary

Mike Pinney

4 Arnewood Gardens, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2LQ

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Tel: 01935-428131

Hut Warden

Marian Parsons

Decollage, Patterdale, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0NL

Tel: 01768-482437

Secretary – Tuesday Climbing Club

Maureen Stiller

20, Parsonage Road, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9JG

E-mail: mo@stiller.org.uk

Tel 01273-494210

Hut Bookings Secretary – Oread Mountaineering Club

Colin Hobday

Einhorn, 28, Cornhill, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2FS

E-mail: colinanduschi@talktalk.net

Tel: 01332-551594