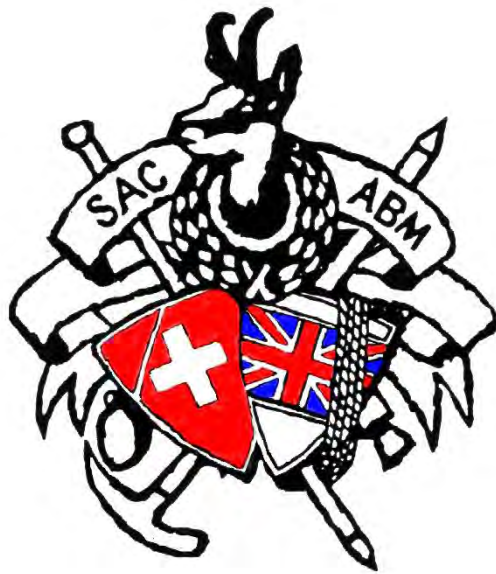


ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB



JOURNAL 2013

ABMSAC JOURNAL 2013

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MEET PROGRAMME 2013

| Date | Meet and Venue | Organiser |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| February 1-3 | The Annual Dinner and AGM, Glenridding Hotel | Brooke Midgley |
| Mar 1-3 | Scottish Winter Meet, Loch Eil | John Dempster |
| April 20-27 | Torridon, s/c cottage; also B&B or YHA | Margaret & Jim Strachan |
| May 3-6 | Derbyshire: Bunkhouse/camping at Royal Oak, Hurdlow | Andy Burton |
| June 7-8 | Rhyd Ddu, North Wales, Oread Club Hut | Ed Bramley |
| July 6-20 | Hotel based Alpine Meet, Saas Almagell, Switzerland | Pam Andrews |
| July 20-August 10 | Camping based Joint Alpine Meet, Attermenzen, Randa, Zermatt | Mike Pinney |
| August 31- September 14 | Camping based Joint Meet, Otztal, Sölden, Austria | Jeff Harris |
| September 6-8 | Beer Meet, Devon | James Baldwin |
| September 27-28 | Annual Buffet Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale | Ed Bramley |
| October 18-21 | Oban Meet, Hotel based | John Foster |
| October 25-26 | Alpine Reunion Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale | Mike Pinney |

The London Winter Lecture programme

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------|
| January 8 | Trekking in the Everest Region, FRCC | David & Christine Miller |
| February 5 | AAC – lecture details to follow | |
| March 5 | Trekking in Morocco with the Berbers, including an ascent of Mt. Toubkal, ABMSAC | Ed Bramley |

Editorial

Welcome to this years Journal. Last year we had a total of 14 Meets, four in the Alps. UK meets included winter walking and climbing in Scotland, walking, mountain biking and rock climbing in Devon, the Peak, the Lakes and Wales. In addition, we had an extended weekend in Switzerland for the Britannia Hut Celebrations, a Hotel based meet in Italy and the camping meet in Switzerland. The summer was rounded off with a high level trek in the Karwendel Mountains in Austria. The reports of the 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.

It is always with sadness that we lose members of the club and last year Peter Fleming and Merle Gartside, both long standing members of the club, passed away. In addition, as we were going to press I received news that Michael Austin passed away earlier this year. I'm grateful to Tony Strawther and Nikki Wallis for writing Peters and Merles obituaries respectively and for Penny in writing about Michael.

The Meets Programme for this year, presented overleaf, 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. This year the SAC is celebrating its 150th year and I hope that some members may take part in their SAC Sections celebrations. In addition, both our summer Alpine meets are in Switzerland, one in Saas Almagell and one in Randa. I look forward to seeing you out on the hills.

The Journal is the main account of our activities in the year and with this in mind the committee has decided to produce the Journal in colour. I have also included the photographs with the relevant articles and done away with the centrefold – I hope this makes for a better read. We have many more photographs than can be included in the Journal and I will continue to add them to the website (www.abmsac.org.uk). Meet reports and photographs will be added to the website during the year. A printed copy of the Journal will still be issued at the end of each year for your personal record.

Finally 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 April 2013

MEET REPORTS

Onich Meet - March 16 to 19 - *Report by John Dempster*

Scotland had an exceptionally mild spring this year, which meant that there was far less snow on the hills than usual at this time, but the weather was reasonable and we all had some good days.

There were more than the usual number of walking wounded in the party. The meet organiser was recovering from an operation to repair a torn tendon in his knee, and others were suffering from the after effects of winter colds. But the fitter members managed several hills.

Saturday was a day of showers and bright periods, more the former than the latter. A large party set off for Beinn a' Bheithir, and Margaret, Roger and the two Phillips reached the main summit in somewhat trying conditions.



Beinn a' Bheithur summit on the descent, photo by Philip Draper

James and Belinda lived up to their reputation as masochists by climbing Ben Nevis via the pony track, while the B party had a pleasant walk up the Steall gorge.



*Loch Leven with Pap of Glencoe and Beinn a Bheithir in the background,
photo by John Dempster*

Sunday dawned brilliant and frosty, but it was not long before the showers started again. The fitter members had an interesting day on Beinn a' Chrulaiste (the Corbett above Kingshouse). Others drove up to Mamore Lodge (hotel now closed) and walked along the military road enjoying beautiful views of Loch Leven between the showers.

On Sunday evening we managed to feed all 12 members in one of the tiny chalets at Inchree.



John and friends at birthday meal, photo by John Dempster

John F used the excuse of an imminent and significant birthday to provide ample refreshment, which was supplemented by a splendid cake cooked by Belinda.

Monday morning brought steady West Highland rain (no drought there) so we went our separate ways, but we could look back on a very good weekend, despite our various disabilities.

Attendees: Belinda and James Baldwin, Graham Daniels, John Dempster, Philip Draper, John and Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Roger James, Dinah Nichols, Jim and Margaret Strachan.

Durness Meet - April 21 to 28 – Report by Margaret Strachan

This was a well attended meet with excellent and well appointed accommodation in the village of Durness. Those attending included Jim and Margaret Strachan, John and Marj Foster Mike and Marian Parsons and Peter Goodwin. The weather in the main was bright and clear but with very high winds giving extreme wind chill and occasional heavy showers.

Good days were had on both Ben Stack 721m and Ben Loyal 764m.



Jim and Margaret on the summit of Ben Loyal

Jim, John, Marj and Margaret visited Handa Island from Tarbet, which proved to be an exciting boat trip in a rib, with choppy seas necessitating a trip to the

south beach to enable an easy landing. Not as many seabirds present on the island as one might have hoped to see, but an enjoyable walk.

Many beach and headland walks were undertaken by all at some stage of the meet and fine sea views were always present with waves crashing on to rocky islets and the rugged coastline.



The beach at Balnakeel was a most picturesque walk with the Balnakeel house on the higher ground and the sea, white and at times turquoise below. Good subject matter for photography.

Balnakeel Bay

Mike and Marion did Cranstackie 800m and Beinn Spionnaid 772m. They later walked out on to Sandwood Bay from Blairmore in the south.

Peter did Foinaven 914m on his own in high winds and heavy showers.

A Ferry (rowing boat with outboard) across the inlet in very heavy seas, after two trips landed four of us and a bus driver. He drove an old minibus that took us along a single track road for about forty five minutes to the Lighthouse at Cape Wrath. We could barely stand in the wind and were surprised to find a café in the old lighthouse, which we were advised is open for 365 days each year.

Most of the catering for dinner was done in the cottage with a couple of nights eating out at local restaurants. A most enjoyable week.

Derbyshire Meet - May 5 to 7 - Report by Andy Burton

This year a smaller group of eight gathered at the Royal Oak at Hurdlow on Friday night, with the early birds sampling the delights of the Longnor Fish and Chip shop. One of the campers retreated back home for the night due to a lack of pegs.

Breakfast at the pub is now an a la carte affair although for most the breakfast cob with unlimited tea or coffee and fruit juice sufficed. On Saturday morning the group quickly divided up into bikers, hikers and climbers.

It was a cold and initially overcast day as we assembled at the bunk house, five set off along the High Peak Trail which starts directly in front of the pub. We followed it as it contoured around the beautiful Derbyshire Dales to Middleton Top, where we stopped to admire both the view and the inventiveness of the Victorians on how they overcame the task of hauling heavy goods from the Derwent Valley. We retraced our steps and descended down to Carsington Water, typically as we stopped for the lunch the weather worsened slightly and as we made our way back onto the Tissington Trail the wind picked up and made the return journey much harder work, this was partially compensated by a short tea stop at Parsley Hay. Eventually returning to the Royal Oak, we all agreed it was a great day's cycling notwithstanding the head wind on the return journey.



Mike Pinney climbing at Wildcat Crags -



photos by Marcus Tierney

Over the weekend a climbing group climbed at different locations despite the inclement weather. Mike Pinney and Marcus headed for the Roaches but driving rain made them retreat to Wildcat where they did Catwalk (HS), Lynx (HS) and the now rarely climbed Tom Cat (VS) which finished on vertical vegetation and loose blocks (Some of which came away as Marcus followed Mike) and a traverse through a jungle. As Mike would put it Esoteric!

The climbing section also went to Alderly Cliff and were joined by Ian. They only did one route as it was so cold. Mike P led Mitre Crack (VS 4c). Marcus quote: "I could not feel my fingers by the time I got to the top, a good lead by Mike."

Saturday evening was spent in the Royal Oak where hearty food, good beer and good company were enjoyed by all.

The Sunday saw most of the bikers become hikers and the classic but relatively newly accessible Parkhouse and Chrome hills were ascended although the weather was not nearly as pleasant as the previous year.

Sunday evening saw us eating in the Pack Horse Inn at Crowdecote as the weather was not conducive for a barbecue, with a few games of pool to finish a very convivial evening.

The Bank Holiday Monday saw everyone doing their own thing weather permitting before going home. Attendees were: Marcus Tierney, Myles O'Reilly, Heather Eddowes, Andy Hayes, Mike O'Dwyer, Andy Burton, Mike Pinney, Ian Mateer, and Ed Bramley who joined us on the Sunday having been to his Manchester University reunion.

North Wales Meet – May 18 to 20

Something old, something new – *Report by Ed Bramley*

This meet was earlier in the year than previous years, to allow everybody to participate in the Queens' jubilee celebrations at the beginning of June. As a consequence, numbers were down slightly on previous years.

On the Friday, we returned to the north ridge of Tryfan and Bristly ridge, which made for great routes up mountains. Never too demanding, but always entertaining and occasionally thought provoking. For some reason, we missed the usual start of the ridge, but instead picked up an equally interesting variation. We're glad that the rain has held off, as otherwise some of the moves to descend the occasional pinnacle would have been a lot trickier. As it is, we arrive at the top of Bristly ridge in good time, and choose the simple descent

route by the side of Tryfan down into the Ogwen Valley. Meanwhile, other people have been enjoying a sunny day at Tremadog, sampling the delights of the foot and hand traverses that form some of the memorable moments on Creagh Dhu wall.

Saturday sees us heading for the Moelwyns, a place I've not been for many a year. We start off in Croesor, and immediately stop for a great morning coffee at the local café, complete with great fire and Welsh drop scones. Our track then rises slowly to Croesor quarries on old mine tracks, before we head round to other old quarry buildings at Foel Ddu.



Croesor Mine workings, photo by Mike Goodyer

Out of the mist comes another contingent of the meet, who had decided that it was a little too wet for a second days climbing. Up here, there are complete streets of buildings, with rail tracks partly hidden under the grass. We pass by some enormous holes in the ground on our way up to the summit of Moelwyn Mawr. As the mist is down, we retrace our steps and pick up more old quarry tracks that skirt the mountain, before we finally rejoin our ascent route to round the day off.

For the communal meal, there are a variety of Indian starters with lamb Rogan Josh for main course. To round it off, it's either apple pie or trifle – unfortunately, I couldn't keep up the Indian theme for three courses. *(Great meal after a good walk in the hills, Editor)*

Sunday we also look for things we've not done before, and we initially head up to the Snowdon Ranger path, via Chwareli quarries. We cross the Ranger path

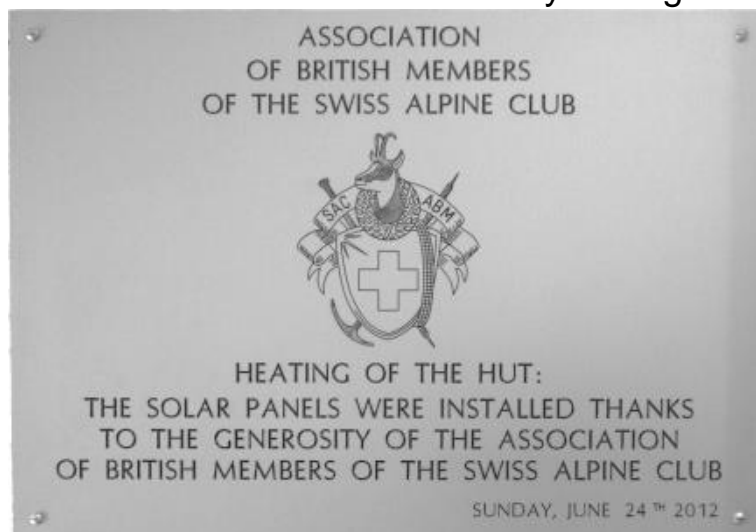
and head to the col between between Foel Goch and Moel Cynghorion, before descending the path towards Llanberis. On the outskirts, we contour Moel Eilio and eventually ascend it on a gradually rising path. There are great views out to the mountains and the coast from angles we've not seen them before. The ridge rolls along, and before long, we're on top of Foel Goch, beginning our descent to the col we crossed earlier, and the long trot back to Tan yr Wyddfa. Ten miles? The GPS tells us it's been over twelve. No wonder we're all tired – but yet another great weekend out.

Britannia Hut Centenary Celebrations - 22 to 24 June

Report by Mike Goodyer

The Centenary of the opening of the Cabane Britannia was celebrated by the Geneva Section of the SAC in June this year. Since Dr. O. K. Williamson, the Vice President of the ABMSAC, formally handed over the keys to M. Meisser of the SAC at the inauguration of the Britannia Hut on 17th August 1912 we have had strong links with the hut and Saastal.

Many of you will remember the ABMSAC Centenary Celebrations in the Saastal in 2009 when we had a special meal at the Hut. At significant anniversaries of both the Hut and the ABMSAC we have donated money for the upkeep/refurbishment of the Hut and presented various paintings of British mountains to the Geneva Section. For the Hut Centenary the ABMSAC continued this link with the Hut by raising a sum of money to enable seven state



of the art solar panels to be fitted on the outside of the hut for heating the water in the hut (donations were also received by the Eagle Ski Club and the Ski Club of Great Britain). A delightful plaque to mark the donation has been sited in a prominent position in the reception of the Hut.

In response to our continuing support for the Hut the Geneva Section Committee invited the current President, Ed Bramley, and the previous President, Mike Pinney, and guests to the weekend of Celebrations. In total 11 members of the ABMSAC, plus two guests attended the weekend.



Britannia Hut showing the new solar panels



On the Thursday, 21st June, Ed Bramley, Mike Goodyer and Julie Jones flew out to Geneva. The next morning Ed and Mike G met up with Mike Pinney and Julie along the lake at Aigle after a night of developing international relations and a restful stay at the Youth Hostel. Jon Halliday, from France, also joined us at Aigle. After a leisurely picnic lunch we drove up to Täschalp. From here we walked up to the Täsch Hut to meet up with Paul Everett and his friend Alex, from Geneva.

The bright sunshine and blue sky were in stark contrast to the weather back in the UK. A copious amount of Teewasser was drunk while we swapped travel stories and finalised plans for Saturday. Julie would return to Täschalp and drive to Saas-Fee and met up with Ed and Carolyn Hammond, from Verbier. They would go up to Felskinn and walk across to the Britannia Hut, where we would all meet up again. The rest of us planned to get to the Britannia Hut via the Allalinhorn or the Allalinpäss, depending on the snow conditions. In his rucksack Mike Pinney was carrying the banner presented to the ABMSAC by the Geneva Section to commemorate the opening of the Hut. Our aim was to celebrate the banners centenary by unfurling it in the mountains and photograph it. *(Editors note: The banner was last in Switzerland for our Centenary in 2009. Since its visit to the glacier in 1912 it had not been back into the mountains.)*



After a well needed dinner we watched a glorious sunset over the Weisshorn and then turned in for preparation of our early start.



The day was bright and clear and when we reached the snow line we were surprised to find the streams icy and the snow frozen. Donning crampons and ice axes we continued at our individual pace towards the Allalinhorn. We all made our way up to pt. 3753m on the South West ridge of the Allalinhorn.

Mike G, Ed, Paul and Mike P with ABM banner

After photographing the team with the banner we split into two groups. Mike P, Jon and Alex carried on up the SW snow/rocky ridge to the summit on indifferent snow and some loose rock. They descended by the normal route and while Alex returned to Geneva for a concert on the Sunday, Mike and Jon walked across from Felskinn to the hut. Ed, Paul and Mike G descended towards the ridge, traversed round and over the Allalinhorn and descended the Allalin glacier to

the Hut. We arrived mid afternoon in glorious sunshine and blue sky - although the last 100m ascent from the glacier to the Hut was unwelcome.

We were now eight. After we had all checked in we settled down to enjoy the view over a couple of beers. Nesrin, Paul's daughter, walked up to the Hut from Sass-Fee, much as the visitors did a century ago, and joined our table for the evening.

During the late afternoon several members of the Geneva Section arrived to spend the night in the Hut before the Sunday celebrations. Christiane Ody invited the ABMSAC contingent to join the Swiss in one of the dining rooms for aperitifs before dinner. After giving interviews to the Geneva Press and toasting each other with local Fendant wine we, much to the surprise of the Swiss, unfurled the banner. This gave rise to several photo opportunities for various committee members to pose with the star of the show – the banner! Ed Hammond gave several pictures of Saastal, taken by the famous Abraham brothers of Keswick, as a personal donation to the Hut. These delightful pictures were eagerly accepted. We were also fortunate to be introduced to Yvette Vaucher, an Honorary member of the Geneva Section and the SAC. Now in her eighties, she is one of Switzerland's most celebrated women climbers; she was the first woman to climb the North face of the Eiger (Schmidt route) back in the 1960s. Yvette was a lively character. Now in the party mood dinner was served. We were all presented with a book and a DVD on the history of the Britannia Hut and a commemorative Swiss Army pen knife.



Signed Centenary Meal place mat, photo by Mike Goodyer

Coffees and grappa/absinthe completed a long eventful day. We were ready for bed and a lie in on the Sunday – but no; the latest breakfast was at 6.30am so that the Hut staff could get ready for the Celebrations!

On the Sunday we were all up bright and early, breakfasted and packed rucksacks for leaving the Hut later that day. Mike G, Jon, Paul, Ed and Carolyn H were staying up until Monday, but the rest of us were returning to the valley. Another perfect day was forecast. We sat at a prominently placed table on the patio in readiness for the official proceedings.

During the morning people had been arriving via the Felskinn uplift and walking across to the Hut on the new path. However many people didn't like the descent from Felskinn with the subsequent climb up; especially on the spring snow.

Several die-hards braved the potential rock fall and used the old path. Several other guests and dignitaries arrived by helicopter, courtesy of Air Zermatt.

Pamela Harris-Andrews arrived with Bill and Rosemary Westermeyer from Saas Almagell via the uplift and walking. Now we were eleven. Many of us were wearing the ABMSAC Centenary polo shirts and all looked very smart; Paul donned an ABMSAC bow tie.



To prepare for the coming proceedings coffees were being served on the patio – many of us indulged in the house classic “Kaffee Britannia”.

Photo by Julie Jones

The hut guardian, Thérèse Andenmatten and her husband, Marc Renaud, and their staff were busy preparing the hut. A “soup kitchen” was set up in front of the hut for the informal lunch for visitors – soup, sausage, bread and salad. By now over 200 people were at the hut awaiting the start of the Centenary Celebrations. All were enjoying the magnificent views and the warm sunshine.



Thérèse Andenmatten and Marc Renaud

At 10.30am, with Swiss timing, the formal celebrations began. All the speeches were from the top of the steps outside the modern entrance to the Hut (The 1912 entrance is now the way into the boot room on the side of the hut).



The Master of Ceremonies was the Hut guardian's son, Dario, dressed in 1912 climbing gear. He kept the proceedings running smoothly throughout the day and he even displayed the now familiar banner to everyone.

The speeches started with a welcome from M. Legast, President of the Geneva section, followed by welcomes from the Mayors of Saas-Almagell and Saas-Fee. The British Ambassador to Switzerland, Mrs Sarah Gillett gave a short speech, followed by a speech from the President of the Canton of Valais. The presence of the Canton President and the British Ambassador showed the importance of the occasion. Both were popular figures with the crowd.

At the Inauguration in 1912 the Hut was blessed and at the centenary it was blessed by Monsieur le Cure Konrad Rieder of Saas-Fee and Monsieur le Pasteur Etienne Jeanneret from Geneva. The service with appropriate hymns, bible readings and sermons shared between the two churchmen fitted the occasion.



Following the service Fendant wine, salami, ham and gherkins were served al fresco to all the attendees – this was very reminiscent of our Centenary meal at the Hut in 2009. At midday the formal lunch started in the main dining room. The four course meal, with local wines Fendant and Dole, was delicious. The starter of game terrine was followed by veal in a sauce, spätzle

and green salad. Huge pieces of chocolate gateau were enjoyed before the local cheeses were eaten. The meal was rounded off by coffee and liqueurs. At the end of the meal the Chef came out and took a bow – well done sir! During the meal there was live music by an accordion player accompanied by an Alpine horn.

After the meal was over the speeches and presentations continued. Ed Bramley, our President, gave the following speech:

Your Excellency, Madame le President, President of the commune of Saas Almagell, President of the commune of Saas Fee, President of the Geneva section of the SAC, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen it is a privilege to be here today as President of the ABMSAC, celebrating the centenary of the Britannia hut with you all.

When the ABMSAC was founded in 1909, it set itself a number of objectives. The second of those was to collect funds and to present to the SAC a club hut. As we all now know, that objective was met less than three years later, when the Britannia hut became a reality.

Reading accounts of the time about how members regarded the hut, I am stuck by parallels with our own George Starkey club hut, at Patterdale in the English Lake District.

- *Firstly, members take a lively and often vocal interest in even the smallest changes to “their hut”.*
- *Secondly, we believe that our hut is the best in the region, like the Britannia, if not the whole country.*

Over the years, the ABMSAC has set out to continue to meet that original objective, by making further donations at significant anniversaries, towards the upkeep of the Britannia hut. It therefore gives me great pleasure on the occasion of the centenary of the

Britannia hut, to be able to formally hand over to section Genevoise of the SAC a contribution of CHF 25,000 towards solar panels for the building. This donation comes from the ABMSAC, the Ski Club of Great Britain and the Eagle Ski Club.

It would perhaps be fitting for me to conclude with remarks from one of the speeches made at the opening of the Britannia hut in 1912:

***We are united by the strongest of all bonds
The love of the everlasting peaks***

Thank you.

Ed and Mike P then presented the cheque for £17,500 for the installation of the solar panels. After the last of the formal speeches there were two surprise presentations. It was the Hut guardian's birthday and after a short speech the hut staff presented her with a gift– Thérèse was very shocked but happy. Finally Air Zermatt, who work closely with the hut, presented Therese with a clock mounted on rotor blade commemorating the Hut Centenary, she was speechless!

The afternoon was drawing to end as people started to return to Felskinn to catch the last lift down to the valley. The weather was still fine, although clouds were brewing up for the next day. The privileged guests were returning to Saas-Fee by helicopter from Air Zermatt.



So it was at 3.30pm Julie, Pamela, Ed and I boarded a helicopter for the seven minute ride to Saas-Fee.

This was an exhilarating ride diving down over the lower slopes of the Allalin glacier before turning to left to go down the upper part of the Saastal towards Saas-Almagell then turning just beyond the Mittaghorn and landing

at Saas-Fee.

The four of us stayed in Saas-Almagell overnight after an enjoyable evening at a Rösti/Pizza Restaurant. We awoke on the Monday to low cloud and rain. The weather was very poor at the Hut as well and after the a late breakfast Mike P and the others all walked back to the Felskinn lift and returned to Saas-Fee. Mike then continued to Zurich and plan the rest of his summer in the Alps and the others returned home. Pamela gave Ed, Julie and I lift to Geneva Airport – many thanks.

Well what a weekend. I think I can speak for all the ABMSAC attendees when I say that we were made very welcome by the Swiss and felt that we were special guests. I feel that even after a centenary there is still a strong bond between the Swiss and British Alpinists. We all made new friends and shared so many experiences – it is not a weekend we will forget in a hurry.

Hotel Alpine meet, Gressoney la Trinite, Italy - July 7 to 21
Report by Pamela Harris-Andrews

This year's hotel meet was based at Gressoney at the head of the Lys valley, just below the summits of Lyskamm, Monte Rosa and Castor. It was the last meet that Alasdair organised and we all agreed that it was an inspired choice of location, with superb views in every direction. We had first visited it on the Tour of Monte Rosa in 1999 and he had always wanted to return, so he was delighted to find the Hotel Dufour in Gressoney-la-Trinité on our recce in February 2011. But with the Dufour covered in scaffolding, our reservation was changed at the last minute to the family's other hotel, the Nordend higher up the valley at Staffal.



Emanuela and her team looked after our every need, and we enjoyed large breakfasts and delicious dinners, with a mouth-watering choice of home-made desserts.

Photo by Sue Coates

We quickly realised that the change had been to our advantage for Staffal, at 1823 metres, was in a better position for access to an enormous variety of walks and climbs, and we just had to cross the road to get to the lifts going up on either side. Most of us used these on a daily basis to avoid the steep grind out of the valley; some purportedly went up and down all the lifts in one day to get the best value from their seven-day pass, while only James, Belinda and Antonia added several more metres to their walks by not using them at all. Perhaps because we were south of the Alps there was sunshine almost every day, and we made the most of it.



A favourite walk for the first day of the meet was up to the Sorgenti del Lys, the source of the River Lys as it trickled out of the glacier. This was a lovely walk up past a waterfall, with several different varieties of orchids in the fields and woods at the side of the path.

Photo by Morag McDonald.

It was then that we discovered the inaccuracy of the maps, for the high point marked at 2161m turned out to be 2417m, an ascent of 600 metres above the hotel, not what we had intended on leaving at 3.30pm after our drive from Geneva. But the paths were all clearly numbered, which did coincide with the maps, and from then on there was talk not of places but of numbers to explain our routes. Descriptions like 'We went up 7a today' were frequently heard at dinner times.

On the east side of the valley was Lake Gabiet, and several different walks were made in this area. An exceptional viewpoint achieved by many of us was Alta Luce, or Hochliecht (3184m), a steep ascent from the lake, then a scramble up the rocks from Colle Salza to the summit, complete with summit book and bell.

The views were glorious as we were right beneath the Gnifetti and Mantova huts looking up to the peaks of Monte Rosa, Castor and Lyskamm, with Mont Blanc and the Grand Paradiso further west. Just below the summit was a herd of large male ibex with enormous horns, so tame that they just carried on grazing as we

approached. And, as on most of our walks above 2600 metres, there were 'King of the Alps' (*Eritrichium nanum*) in abundance, unmistakable in their brilliant blue and equally blue trumpet gentians. A variant of this walk was up to the Lago Blu ('But it's not blue,' was heard afterwards) and from there up Punta Telcio, or alternatively Colle Salza could be reached directly from the hotel, 1000 metres up a stony relentless path. Some contoured along the lake and up to the Bivacca Gastaldi, a steep path protected by chains, while others wandered down the flowery paths to Gressoney-la-Trinité, past Alpine rhododendron and a lovely pale blue aquilegia. The higher lift to Passo dei Salati was a good jumping off point for the Corno del Camoscio or a scramble beside the Stolemberg, with an even higher lift going to Indren at 3200 metres, mostly used by those going up to the Gnifetti Hut.

On the west side of the valley was the small chapel of Santa Ana from where there was a lovely walk past small lakes and edelweiss up to the Rothorn Pass, and higher was the Bettaforca Pass, attainable by lift or up a steep path from Staffal. This was the home of another herd of tame ibex, mainly females with young, and even more 'King of the Alps'

The path to the Quintino Sella hut started here, at 3585 metres a more difficult undertaking than we had envisaged, though the many agile young Italians racing down the track clearly did not find it so.



Photo by Carol Saynor

The ascent was steep and rocky, ending just 80 metres below the hut in a knife-edge ridge protected by ropes; it was only on reaching this point with Mark and Jeff on my second attempt that I noticed the map had marked this section as

'Via Ferrata'. But I felt a real sense of achievement having got even that high, and I was grateful to them for accompanying me.

There was a frequent Navetta-bus down to the lower villages, as well as a delightful though rather undulating walk, enabling us to explore the walks from the chair-lift above Gressoney-St-Jean. From here we took a circular route to a wonderful 'belvedere' with views up to the entire Monte Rosa chain, then via two cols up to the Punta della Regina, looking down into the Ayas valley. Tolstoy had crossed here in July 1857, commemorated by a plaque with a quotation from his diary. Those with cars were able to drive further down the valley to Gaby, then up a narrow winding road, with steep hairpin bends and precipitous drops, to the old Walser village of Niel. Whether the drive was worth the end result is a debatable point, but James & Belinda did it twice, the second time to check out where they had gone wrong on their first walk. Two cols could be reached from here up an old mule track, one with prayer flags on the top, and James & Belinda had made the mistake of crossing over to the other side to make their walk longer; this they succeeded in, returning to the hotel after a nine hour day. A rarely seen flower we found in great quantities in this valley was the perforate bellflower (*Campanula excisa*) which I had seen for the first time on our earlier Tour of Monte Rosa. John & Marj Foster drove to other side valleys in the Val d'Aosta, and had walks from Valnontey in the Gran Paradiso National Park, in the Valpelline, and above Courmayeur, all with splendid viewpoints.



A well earned beer after a day out on the hills, photo by Sue Coates

Most of us were content to stay below 4000 metres and just reminisce about past climbs; only Mark Davison and Jeff Russell put on crampons and ascended to the heights. They climbed the Pyramide Vincent (4215m) from the Gnifetti Hut,

and Castor (4228m) from the Quintino Sella Hut, both two-day exploits which they achieved in clear weather with dramatic views of the nearer peaks and from Monte Viso to the Combin in the distance. Jeff reported that the wind was a problem on Castor, and care was needed on the narrowest part of the summit ridge as some of the gusts were violent. They made a good team, and Jeff was obviously a good influence as Mark broke his record by not being late for a single meal. They joined the rest of us for some of their other walks, though on what he called a 'day off', Mark wandered up Testa Grigia (3315m) from Gressoney-la-Trinité, a 1700 metre ascent.

We all found time to visit Gressoney-St-Jean and the turreted Castello Savoia, built in 1904 for Queen Margherita of Italy, with a beautiful alpine garden in front. Her rooms commanded a spectacular view of Monte Rosa and the entire valley, which she loved.



Photo by Ruth Greenham

She spent many summers here walking in the mountains, and had even climbed as high as Punta Gnifetti where the Rifugio Margherita, at 4554 metres the highest hut in Europe, was built in her honour.

She also stayed at the large hunting lodge at Staffal, a guest of Baron Luigi Beck Peccoz. Some of our group had rooms in this lodge, and we were intrigued by stories of the relationship between the Queen and the handsome baron, ancestor of Giovanni who now runs the lodge.

But for me this was a very personal pilgrimage, as this was the valley where Alasdair and I had met, and which we had planned to re-visit together. I wanted to repeat the walks we had done back in 1999 on both sides of Gressoney,

when we had crossed from the Ayas valley in the west to Staffal, where we had stayed one night in the hotel opposite the Nordend, and had then crossed east to Alagna Valsesia. We had come from St Jaques d'Ayas over the Colle del Pinter down to Gressoney-St-Jean, and I was determined to walk up this route. There was no lift to help gain height, and as the total ascent was 1350 metres I had no idea when I started whether I would be able to reach the top. The first hour was a steep path up to Alpenzù Grande, a delightful village of old Walser 'stadels', but then the path rose more gently through flowery meadows, with Alpine rhododendrons, gentians, orchids, campanulas and asters. I passed a few small farms, and gradually gained height until I was so near the col it seemed a shame not to go on. I finally stood where we had crossed in 1999 and looked down onto St Jaques and the route we had taken on the first part of our tour from the Théodule Pass above Zermatt.

Going eastwards from Staffal was easier as it had been cloudy on the day we had been there in 1999, and we had taken the lift up to the Passo dei Salati. I did the same thing, and from there walked up the Corno del Camoscio as we had done then, and where I had seen the 'King of the Alps' for the first time. They were still there, and the whole slope was a veritable rock-garden. The views were better this time, and I was able to see our onward route after leaving Alagna the next day when we had crossed the Turlo Pass to Macugnagna. Before walking down to Alagna we had stopped for a drink in the Rifugio Guglielmina, and I wanted to revisit this. But it had been burnt down last winter, so I continued to the Colle d'Olen and this time down to Lake Gabiet and back to Staffal.



Pam celebrates her birthday in style at the start of the meet

These were days filled with memories of our first meet together, on this my first meet without him. But during the two weeks I had had the support of many good friends, and for that I am grateful.

Participants: Pamela Andrews, James & Belinda Baldwin, Antonia Barlen, Geoff & Janet Bone, Derek Buckley & Ann Alari, Geoff & Pauline Causey, Edward & Sue Coales, Sheila Coates, Mark Davison, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Niels & Guni Doble, John & Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin & Ursula Woodhouse, Ruth Greenham, Richard & Katherine Heery, Wendell Jones, Morag McDonald, Dick & Lin Murton, Roger Newson, Jeffrey Russell, Rick & Carol Saynor, Terry Shaw, Elizabeth Wells, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer, Dick & Karen Yorke.

Camping Alpine meet, Innertkirchen - July 14 to August 4

Report by Mike Pinney

The meet was held jointly with the AC, CC & Wayfarers' and based at the Grund campsite. A special price was arranged for the campers. Unfortunately the meet co-ordinator was not sufficiently switched on to sort out a similar deal for the campervans. For high season the campsite opens a second field. With 47 attendees in week 2, the majority of users of the site were on the meet.

I approached Innertkirchen from across the Grimsel pass, just having had a week in Arolla. I was somewhat surprised and alarmed to see icebergs on Grimsensee, not a good sign! On the initial Saturday some went for a walk above the campsite, one of those "we will just go a bit further". This took them past a high alp and goat farm, recently populated for the summer to a high point of 2061m, over 1400m of ascent and a 7hr excursion. It rained much of Sunday but in the afternoon some ventured up the Urbachtal valley, behind the site.

The forecast for the first part of the week was good and hoping Sunday's precipitation had not put down too much snow, most attendees headed up to a hut on the Monday. Many went to the Oberaajoch hut, climbing the Studerhorn (Tuesday) and traversing the Oberaarhorn-up west and down the south ridge (Wednesday) before returning to the site.



Traverse of the Alpistock, photo by Mike Pinney

A number of others went up to the Bachlital Hut (climbing at Azalee Beach, which had dried and was in the sun, on the way). One has become increasingly nervous of what routes are still getting done!



The Bachlital Hut guardian was happy with our plan, traverses of the Alpistock (2877m) and Gross Diamanstock (3162m). Both ridges were clear of snow. However, from the top of the Gross Diamanstock we were rewarded with views of the still snow covered Scheckhorn-Lauterarhorn and Finstraarhorn.

Traverse of the Gross Diamanstock, photo by Mike Pinney.

Thursday started dry with many rock climbing in the Susten pass at Steingletscher, then on Friday when the rock had dried at a lower venue to the east Interlaken. Saturday was wet!

Sunday should have been dry so parties got wet going up to huts. From the Tierbergli hut traverses of Gwachtenhorn and Sustenhorn were made.

Later in the week several parties went up to Salbit hut for the classic south ridge and others to Concordia for the Gross Grunhorn. Others climbed at Mittagfluh and in the Engelhorner- Klein and Gross Simelistock.

Following the pattern of previous weekends, Saturday was again wet. In week 2/3, mountains climbed included the Wetterhorn, Finsteraarhorn, Monch and Jungfrau, from Monchjoch hut and the Schreckhorn, SW ridge; now sufficiently clear of snow.

There were a number of thunderstorms during the week, not least on Swiss national day when the fireworks had to be abandoned! In all, a successful meet with plenty achieved.

Alpine Trek, Austria - 1 to 8 September, Over four Karwendel ridges *Report by Ed Bramley*

You would think we were a set of hobbits. We have been walking through the tunnel for 10 minutes, and emerge into the daylight to the sight of the Dammkar valley sweeping away below us. This is a different start to a trek, riding the Karwendel cable car to nearly the top of the Karwendel Spitze, before the passage through the mountain.



Our first afternoon sees us descending the screes of the Dammkar, over terrain that will become very familiar to us over the coming days. What is it about Dolomitic limestone scree that gives it such good ball bearing characteristics?

View into the Dammkar.

With the sun shining, we drop slowly down and then across the valley, our backs adjusting to the unfamiliar weight of our packs. We ascend a slope over an overhanging set of crags and emerge at the cross on the Predigstuhl, where the

character of the route changes abruptly. We are now on the north side of the Tiefkar Spitze, and the route crosses the mixed ground with a series of protected wire paths, interspersed with our favourite (not) sloping scree, all of which is still dripping after the rain of the previous few days. For anybody who has descended the waterfall at Goredale Scar, you will have a good idea of what this is like. Eventually, we emerge out onto further simple scree slopes and a simple traverse into the Hochland hut. Over evening meal, we contemplate what is in front of us, if this is just the first sample.



The next morning establishes the weather pattern for the next few days. It's misty and cool, and we slowly wind our way up to the Wornerkar saddle, on the Gjaidsteig. For the first few hours, it's traversing the northern flanks of the Hochkar Spitze, across the by now familiar scree slopes, with short interludes as we negotiate rock spurs. *Heading towards the Wornerkar Sattel.*

Then comes the interest of the day. To cross over the Baralpl, the path has to gain significant height across a large set of crags, which tumble several hundred feet down to the valley below.



The most exposed parts of the route are protected by wires, but in places the wires are over our heads, at full stretch, with wet greasy rock to boot. Ho hum. By lunch time, the weather is sunny, we have reached the saddle, and our path then has a deceptively long descent to the Karwendel hut.

Along the wired path

In many places, the paths are covered by masses of tree roots, which makes it more like a session in the gym. Part way along the path I come across an adder basking in the sun. Fortunately, it obliges by winding slowly off the path. The Karwendel hut is large and welcoming at the end of the day, with views of our route tomorrow. There is still snow on the top part of our route, but the warden is optimistic that it will have cleared by the morning.

The next day starts with cloud over the tops, which gives us a refreshingly cool climb up through three sets of cwms, towards the Birkkar Spitze, the high point of our trek, and the highest peak in the Karwendel.



The ascent of the third cwm, to the summit saddle, is the steepest, and the most ball bearing like for scree. We are treated to great views across much of the Karwendel, and many of the team make the short excursion to the summit of the Birkkar Spitze. Now for the entertaining part – the descent.

Birkkar Spitze from the col

Initially down the familiar ball bearing scree with your pack pushing at your back, before we are on a set of wires which wind down several hundred feet of rock rib, before emerging on to less taxing ground. The dangers from loose rock on this section are brought home as another party dislodges a rock and it is only our timely warning to people below that averts something serious. The route continues to descend slowly for several hours to the valley floor, passing a number of side streams on the way, one of which we use as a cooling balm for our feet. All around, the power of the water is evident, be in great gouges in the hillside, or pools and falls carved into the rock. We eventually reach the valley floor after being out for seven hours. Only another two to go to complete the day. Luckily, the path is a graded vehicle track, which takes us slowly but surely up to the Hallerangerhaus. The beer on the balcony was very welcome, and the sunset down the valley later that evening tops a long but enjoyable day off.



Sunset from Hallerangerhaus, photo by Ed Bramley

We're back to the misty start the next morning, slowly climbing up the Lafatscher Joch. On our way we pass sheets of limestone standing up, almost like sails. We also marvel at the accompanying rock walls on the Spekkar Spitze - everything from severe to E numbers - the walking alone seems hard enough at present. Crossing over the col, we then join the Wilde Bande Steig, which traverses across to our next climb up to the Stempeljoch. It must be some of the steepest scree I've ever been on that we ascend next, held in place by sets of rubber rings for much of the way, with some parts still having old and distorted logs in place. When we reach the col, it's a relief that the far side has a simple descent and it's less than an hour to the Pfeis hut.

A rest over the afternoon sees us set for the next day, but the weather has other plans for us. Heavy rain in the night, and it's still hard enough in the morning to need all our waterproofs on. A discussion with the warden about our intended route makes it clear that we need to switch to the low level alternative for the day.

This sees us walking along the Samertal for a couple of hours, before then starting the climb up to the next hut.



Fortune favours us, as not only has the weather cleared, but we've also found a delightful little alm, where coffee and damson cake are the order of the day.

Our ascent to the Solstein hut is straightforward and we are able to spend much of the afternoon in the sun, and getting the clothes dry as well.

view upwards the Solstein Hut

Our final day starts off spectacularly. We are above the clouds, and the air is cool and crisp. As we move towards our first col, the trees are casting Brocken spectres onto the clouds.



The route towards the Eppzirler Schartze

We pull over the Eppzirler Schartze into the next valley, and shortly afterwards come across a great herd of over fifty chamois on the hillside. Our traverse takes us round to the penultimate pull up to the Ursprungsattel, from where we can see the finish of our route. After a short snack, where the unwelcome chuffs start to announce themselves, we contour round to the final ascent to the

Nordlinger hut. A few steep pulls and a couple of wires see us on the ridge and then at the hut, where it's celebration beers and strudel.



We take in the Reither Spitze on our journey to the funicular down, and we all make it in time for the last descent of the day.

Steve at the summit of the Spitze.

We all agree that the guidebook was right. This was a strenuous trek, but boy, was it worth it!

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Anne Jago, Ian Mateer, Myles O'Reilly, Marian Parsons, Mike Parsons, David Seddon, Marcus Tierney

Beer Meet, East Devon – September 14 to 16 *Report by Belinda Baldwin*

This year was diminished in numbers but we enjoyed the best weather. Antonia Barlen, John Dempster, Dinah Nicholls, James and I made up the group on Saturday. The five of us were joined on Sunday by Anne and Mike Goodyer.

On Saturday we set off from Beer Hill inland going through woods and fields in a roundabout way to Branscome, a sprawling seaside village, where the Napoli came to ground. It must have been the hottest day of the year in East Devon, which meant we took a long picnic break looking out to sea beside an old quarry watched over by Devon Red cattle. We descended to the beach, which had everyone out to be beside the sea. We took another long break over a cup of tea before wending our way through the Underhooken, which is a long up and down path through a nineteenth century chalk landslip, which leads to the cliff top path to Beer. The lovely weather made it a slow and enjoyable day. We tested a new venue for supper and it was counted as a success.

The cars were out on Sunday taking us to Abbotsbury, where we were joined by Anne and Mike. We climbed to Saint Catherine's Chapel before taking the South West Coast path westward along Chesil Beach. We ascended before going eastward along the Inland Coastal path. How can a coastal path be inland? Well this is a much pleasanter route than struggling along the shingle of Chesil Beach. It provides amazing views of the lagoons and the Isle of Portland and although the day was overcast the air was crystal clear.



View of St Catherine's Chapel and the coast from the Iron Age hill fort, photo by Mike Goodyer

We picnicked on an iron-age fort and walked past numerous stone barrows. John and Dinah had to leave a bit early as there was a train to catch, whilst the rest of us walked on to Hardy's Monument. This is the Thomas of Nelson's 'kiss me Hardy' not the author. We ended the meet with a welcome cup of tea back at Abbotsbury. We had managed 23 miles over the weekend with over 600mt. of climb each day. So they were not climbing days as expected of a climbing club but two very satisfying days out.

Tarbet Meet - The Tarbet Hotel, Loch Lomond – October 19 to 22 *Report by John Foster*

Thirteen intrepid (or optimistic) souls congregated on Friday evening for this weekend meet in the Arrochar Alps. Although there had been significant precipitation in the area over the previous few months, the forecast for the next couple of days was actually quite good. Great plans were therefore made for Saturday over copious quantities of house red and other liquid refreshments.

Saturday started foggy, but groups set out in all directions anyway. Successful ascents were made of Beinn Ime, Beinn Narnain, Ben Arthur (The Cobbler), and Ben Vorlich, as well as trips across the loch to explore the nearest part of the West Highland Way. It has to be admitted, though, that while at least one party managed to ascend a path which has been out of use for some time (since a replacement was built), others managed to miss the start of this completely and never got onto the mountain.



The Cobbler (Ben Arthur), photo by Jim Strachan

On Saturday evening plans were again made for the morrow, some of which were truly frightening – 5 Corbetts in one day? Perhaps we ought to plan before opening the whisky bottle!

Sunday again dawned misty, but this time the mist broke earlier in the day, allowing An Caisteal, Beinn Odhar, Beinn Chaorach, and Cam Chreag, to be conquered with good views. Other groups explored lower walks in the area, and one (nameless) party got as far as the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar by car.

John Dempster climbed An Caisteal with the Fosters, and announced that this was his first successful Munro ascent since the initial knee problem which removed him from the hills twelve months ago. This event was of course suitably celebrated during the evening!

Overall, this was a very successful meet with much better weather than last year, but with a lot of water underfoot after the wet summer.

Annual Dinner Meet – February 1 to 3 2013

Report by Brooke Midgley and Ed Bramley

As this is my 40th Annual Dinner report, I feel like I'm starting to run out of originality in describing them. To cut to the detail, it was at the usual place - Glenridding hotel, usual time - early February - even another earlier meet leader was there - Tony Strawther who led the meets from 1969 to 1971 and very good they were too.

This year the weather was kind, Saturday especially so, sunny and virtually cloudless, but the wind was cold. There was snow in the gullies but Brooke relied on the bar descriptions of our 'younger' contingent to fill in the blanks for him.



Mike Parsons, Natasha and Steve went up to the gullies above Red Tarn. As you can see true winter conditions were to be found and they had some good sport!

No 1 Gully, Red Tarn , photo Mike Parsons

Snow was down to low levels on Helvellyn and the surrounding fells, and a large contingent took a long walk up past the Greenside mines, wending up onto Whiteside, before reaching the top of Helvellyn.



Helvellyn plateau, panorama by Ed Bramley

There were great views across all the Lakes and away into the distance of Morecambe Bay. Then along the long whaleback ridge to Dollywagon Pike, before descending to Grisedale and a long leg back to the hut for a late afternoon cuppa.

Fifty four sat down to dinner and the Hotel and Staff did us proud. Our guest was Alan Hinkes, who was staying with Mike and Marian Parsons and joined us on the top table. Alan is the first, and only British climber to have climbed all fourteen 8,000 metre peaks. At dinner, Alan gave a very frank and candid account of his experiences as a mountaineer, as is only to be expected from a fellow Yorkshireman. After dinner, there was a mass exodus to the conference room where Alan showed highlights of videos he had shot of those ascents, including working out his limited odds of survival when ascending one particularly unstable snow face solo.

A convivial and extended evening that was enjoyed by all.

Members Articles

The North York Moors from both sides

Mike and Anne Goodyer

This year we visited the North York Moors to walk bits of the Cleveland Way. Home is Brewers Cottage in the grounds of the New Inn and Brewery in Cropton just outside Pickering - a good spot for sea side and hill walking. The summer of 2012 was one of great contrasts; hot days interspersed with very cold and wet days and so on our trip to Yorkshire.

Off to the seaside with a picnic and a forecast of a sunny day. Parked at the roadside adjacent to the Raven Hall Hotel at Ravenscar. We were off to Robin Hoods Bay via the disused Whitby to Scarborough railway. It is a bright sunny day with great views along the coast. We set off down the path pass the National Trust Coastal Centre and join the line of the railway. The path is easy going and often tree lined and now only used by walkers and cyclists. Early industry can still be seen off the path – the old brickworks, kilns and quarries, slowly being taken back by nature. Shortly after crossing the little lane to Boggle Hole we turn down Mark Lane to join the coastal path into Robin Hood's Bay. We descend pass by the "best fish and chips in town" to emerge in the small square next to the old Lifeboat Station.



On the coastal path looking towards Robin Hoods Bay

We joined the many day trippers and had our picnic in the sunshine next to the slipway accompanied with a pint from the Bay Hotel. It was a lively atmosphere in the village. After lunch we return to the Cleveland Way Coastal Path pass the chip shop and up some steep wooden steps to a walkway alongside fields.

The path has a couple of steep descents almost to sea level and steep back up again. These sea side walks are never as flat as you hope! One such descent is to Boggle Hole, where there is a small café and the Youth Hostel – no stopping here as we have our own supplies. Looking back Robin Hood's Bay seems perched on the cliff top and looks magnificent in the sunshine. We have a coffee stop on the cliff top and take in the view. All too soon we leave the coast path and head uphill through the woods until we reach the path leading to the railway. We return to Ravenscar up the final rise to ice creams at the National Trust shop. A lovely walk in spectacular countryside.

The next day was August Bank Holiday Monday and we have invited Ed and Janet Bramley over to join us for a walk and a meal in the New Inn. We should have known better to think that the weather would hold. The plan was to park at Rosedale Abbey and complete the Ironstone Railway circuit. So after donning waterproof coats we set off in the late morning of a cold, grey and windy day – rain was in the air. The walk climbs up from the village to the rugged moors passing old iron ore mine workings and walking around the head of the valley on the track bed of the old railway. Just before we climbed up to the ruined mine workings we spotted a small bench and all squeezed on to it for a quick sandwich lunch. The rain started as we stopped, so it was swift eating so not to get wet sandwiches! We continued uphill past a farm house and passed the first ruins, the rain now came serious – overtrousers were donned it was that bad.

Huddled into our hoods we carried on until we reached a sign saying "Farm house teas – Bank Holiday Weekend" pointing down a steep track. I don't know who made the decision but we were off down the farm track, leaving the windy walk for a better day. A short while later we arrived at the farm house and a surprised lady welcomed us to a lean-to shelter on the side of her farm. We were the first customers of the day; the day before dozens of families were scattered around the lawn enjoying the teas, homemade cakes and sunshine. We stripped off very wet waterproofs and enjoyed the comfort of the plump cushions on the benches under cover. Soon we were fortified by big pots of Yorkshire tea and slabs of tea bread. The cake was made with beer from the Cropton Brewery. A few more people turned up in cars, having abandoned their days out and enjoyed afternoon tea. Replenished we kitted up and set off into the rain to return to Rosedale Abbey – the rain started to slacken. Soon after leaving the farmhouse the rain stopped and we enjoyed the walk down the valley, the tops were still shrouded in cloud. We returned to the cottage and adjourned to the pub for a hearty supper and beer.

So two contrasting walks in very different weather, but fond memories of a pint in the sunshine on the quay side at Robins Hoods Bay and afternoon tea in a lean to of a hill side farmhouse.

Alasdair Andrews Classroom, Choki Traditional Art School *Pamela Harris-Andrews*

In April 2011, a group of ABMSAC members, including Alasdair and Pamela, were in Bhutan where they visited the Choki Traditional Art School. They were all impressed by the work of the Choki family in helping disadvantaged students, by the school's goals, the hard work of the students, and the dedication of the teachers. On 15 November 2011 Alasdair passed away.

In his commemoration, Pamela and her friends raised funds to support a new Computer Classroom at the school. The new Alasdair Andrews Classroom was inaugurated on 16 May 2012 at the 12th anniversary of the school. Photographs of building the classroom are on the website. A copy of commemorative plaque at the school is presented below.



Alasdair Andrews and his wife Pamela together with friends from the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club visited the Choki Traditional Art School on 22 April 2011. On 15 November 2011 Alasdair passed away.

In his commemoration, Pamela and her friends raised funds to support a new Computer Classroom at the school. The new **Alasdair Andrews Classroom** was inaugurated on 16 May 2012 at the 12th anniversary of the school.

The Choki Traditional Art School in Bhutan thanks Pamela and her friends for their generous contributions towards the new classroom, which will enhance the skills of all students at the school.

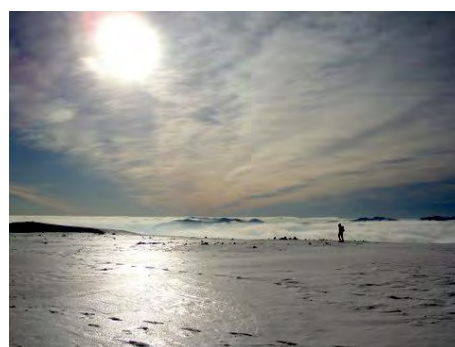
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Marian and Mike Parsons' year, 2012



After our usual January ski trip, staying with John Brailsford, the retired UIAGM Guide, at Les Vigneaux in the Ecrins we had some great winter days out around home in Patterdale



In April, we joined ABM members in Durness on the North coast, and were treated to some cold wet snowy windy weather, but magnificent coastal scenery. Seabirds were great fun to watch, as it was the nesting season, and skuas (bonxies) were diving around looking for an easy meal – they harass other gulls and rob their fish. Cliffs and beaches were explored,



including the fine expanse of Sandwood bay, and hills were climbed, mostly around the Arkle/Foinaven area.



The second half of May was taken up with the TGOC (Scottish coast-to-coast) where we'd planned a high route from Strathcarron to Catterline. We mixed the wild camping with a few B&B's as our tent, a Vaude Power Lizard, is truly tiny. Tiny but mighty – winds of 100mph were forecast for the second night out: after a steep and exciting snowy traverse of the west end of An Riabachan, we were forced by the increasing blasts and lowering cloud to escape down to Loch Mullardoch, but we were hard put to it to find shelter after 12 hours on the hoof.

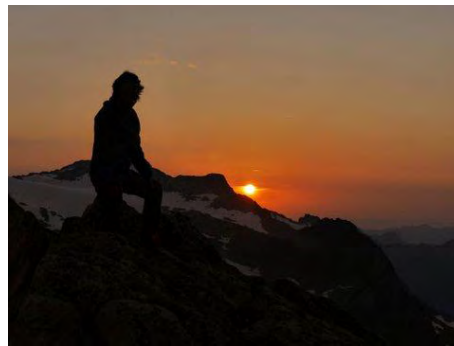
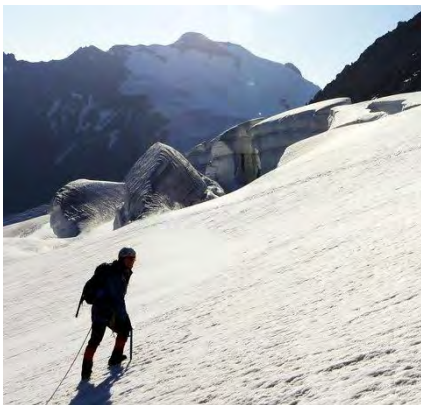


There is just one tiny steep wood close to the loch shore, so we scrambled up and found a little pitch behind a fallen tree bole which gave a little shelter – and amazingly had quite a comfortable night, with



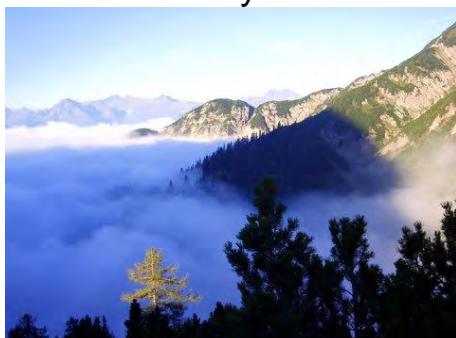
the raging gusts passing just overhead. Later on in the hike, a sudden heatwave caught us off guard and we panted and sweated the last few days over the eastern Cairngorms to the east coast.

Travelling to the Joint Camping Meet at Innertkirchen in July, we learned of the sad death of Roger Payne, and a few days later, we attended the funeral in Leysin, along with many luminaries from the climbing world. The weather wasn't always kind to us on this meet, but we got up a few peaks, such as Gwachtenhorn, a nice rocky scramble, and Sustenhorn, a pleasant snow plod.



There are a couple of long, high Via Ferratas to go at, too, and we had a great day out with Daphne on the Talli route, accessed by a DIY telecabin to a hut, then an hour's walk to a long ascending climb which eventually crosses the main valley ridge and dumps you off on the other side, necessitating several hours of hiking back to the hut where a bowl of home-made soup before descending was well worth the expense!

In September, we joined Ed's jolly gang to tour the Karwendel, but first there was Mike's 70th to celebrate with a huge icecream in Innsbruck – pity the weather was as chilly as the dish!



Garhwal India Mid-September to mid-October 2012

Mike Pinney

In June 2007 as part of the Alpine Club's 150years celebration, a joint meet had been held in the Semartoli Valley. Although they made a number of first ascents they identified a number of other peaks with no recorded first ascent. They experienced a lot of snow, such that, it was considered a later trip could be advantageous. An application was thus submitted to climb Barmal which at 5879m is the highest mountain bordering the valley.

The trip was designated by the Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) as necessitating an X-visa (mountaineering), just after most of the team had applied for the standard tourist visa. New visa photographs were obtained and a second submission was made. However we understand that the X-visa is a new process and 1 of the team who applied by a branch office failed to obtain the visa in time and was thus unable to join the expedition. Thus we were down to 8 when we gathered at Dubai airport prior to the second leg of our journey to Delhi. We arrived early morning so after dumping our bags at the hotel were able to spend the afternoon at the Red Fort.

The following morning we were joined by the Rimo sirdar, who was to accompany us on the trip and headed to the IMF complex on the edge of Delhi. Here we were joined by our liaison officer, a recent graduate working in the travel industry who had taken a month's leave to take on this role. After a briefing from the President and Secretary and paying our peak fee, it was late morning before our chartered bus was able to get away on its journey NE. That evening we got caught in a residual monsoon, stopping for dinner before we got to our designated hotel. During dinner a number of the staff were having to brush the water away and we had to wade through the floods to get back to the bus. The following night we failed to make our booked hotel as we were delayed getting past a number of landslides. At one such delay, we were amused to see that a few monkeys had worked out that if they threw a small stone at a bigger boulder, this could create a spectacular stone fall! Should we have delayed our trip a week for the monsoon to end?

It was thus early afternoon before we could get away from the road head at Govind Ghat. We were joined by 57 porters, a disconcerting number. The first day's walk was common with the approach to the Valley of Flowers and Hemkund, a Sikh religious site. Although late in the season, there were a number of pilgrims some walking and some on mule and the tea shops were open. It was after dark before camp were established. The following morning it thus took a while to get organised with the path a complete contrast from the previous day. At the first river crossing the bridge was in place. Then after finding a tortuous path through the jungle at the second crossing we found four tree trunks.



One trunk was lost down the river, but after a couple of hours the remaining three trunks together with one of our climbing ropes was made into a bridge. Our rope was recovered and we headed on for another hour to our campsite. Initially we thought this was just a lunch stop, but our porters had other

ideas. A number spent the afternoon harvesting, their crop to be collected on their return. Base camp was established the following afternoon and we paid off our porters.

The following day we were keen to see our primary objective and get a better understanding of the topography. How had conditions been effected by the monsoon? Although further down river the path had all but disappeared, by the campsite there was a comparatively solid but rocky path in place for the pilgrims. Since it was dry underfoot we found it more comfortable to walk alongside the path. To get a view of Barmal and a site for an advanced base camp, we followed the path which crossed the valley and along the top of the lateral moraine on the left bank of the glacier. Our planed walk out was over the Kankul Kahal and there was some speculation as to where we would leave the lateral moraine.

Although we did not get a good view of Barmal, we achieved sufficient confidence to return laden the following day to our high point and carry on somewhat further, to establish an advanced base camp on a grassy site with access to running water. Whilst some of us returned to base camp for a rest, half the team populated the camp.

The following day they went under Barmal's NW face up to a col at 5008m where they were able to also inspect the SW ridge. Although there was a fresh covering of new snow, there was dramatically less snow than in June 2007. The couloirs were rock filled rather than with good snow which we could quickly ascend.



NW Face of Barmal

The NW face although comparatively easily angled was also in poor condition either rocky slabs with a light covering of unconsolidated snow or threatening hanging glaciers. The first peak climbed was immediately to the right of the col and overlooking Barmal's NW face. This involved scrambling up a boulder filed gully before snow slopes led to the summit ridge. From the summit one also had views of the Kagbhusandi valley and the peak (5301m) has been called Kagbhusandi Parbat (Alpine PD+).



Kagbhusandi Parbat, Pk 5210 and Pk 25120

It received a second ascent two days later. Meanwhile from the same camp, two of the team attempted a couloir leading to Oti-ka-danda. Above the

couloir was a rocky headwall and after a pitch of loose rock, discretion seemed in order. They got back to camp just before it started snowing.

We had taken short range radios to facilitate communication back to base camp. As part of the package from Rimo we were supported by two high altitude Sherpas so the following day they, together with our Sirdar and liaison officer, helped strip the camp. On the walk down we assessed the available options.

Three of the team established a high camp above the left bank of the Semartoli glacier from where they climbed a peak 5210m, effectively the next in the sub range to our first peak. The other team of four required an intermediary camp before establishing a high camp on the subsidiary glacier above the right bank. From the camp we were able to view the progress of the other team and vice versa the following day. Heading up the glacier we chose the easier and more attractive of the two couloirs leading on to ridge of peak 5855m.



Photo by Jo Cambell

Unfortunately an intermediate peak lay in the way. This we climbed by a narrow rock/snow ridge to its summit 5515m.



Summit of Pk 5515 with Pk 5855 behind.

It was not practical to continue, so we had to be satisfied with this peak (Alpine AD). Getting back to our advance camp heavy snowfall discouraged a further attempt by the other couloir.

After exploring a side valley downstream of the camp, two of us as a last outing, before the return of the porters, set up camp just below Kankul Kahal. Ice axes were put to good use as gardening tools to create a large enough platform for our small tent. Besides a recky for our planed walk out, we hoped to climb a peak by the col. On the 2007 trip, the two peaks either side of the col had been climbed, but with the dearth of snow these did not look an attractive proposition. However we spotted a glacier leading SW from the col. This led to peak 5120m, the third in the sub range. We thought it more convenient if we returned to base camp rather than wait to be collected the following day so after a good lunch using that nights hill rations we headed back down, pleased to have grabbed that final peak.

The following morning, now with only 40 porters we headed back over the Kankul Kahal making camp shortly after the col. The weather pattern had continued with a late afternoon snow storm, so we were relieved when all the porters had arrived and were inside the tents. The walkout took a further couple of days and crossing a couple more high cols. I think we were all pleased to see Joshimath in the distance even if we had a final 2000m of descent.

The expedition gratefully received sponsorship from the MEF, AC expedition fund, AAC (UK) expedition fund and Alpkit.

Antarctica January 2013

Mike Pinney

This was the third expedition that Phil Wickens had led to Antarctica, 2010/11 for the AC & 2011/12 for the Eagles Ski Club. As with the previous two expeditions the 'Spirit of Sydney' was chartered for the expedition.



The yacht was 60ft long and built in 1986 for round the world races and now has a second life taking groups out to Antarctica.

As part of the charter we were looked after by a young French couple, not only excellent sailors but proficient cooks.

Six of us flew down to Buenos Aires where we transferred to its second airport for the internal flight to Ushuaia. Here we met up with Phil who had been lecturing aboard some of the cruise ships. Prior to setting sail, we were able to explore the hinterland. First port of call was Puerto Williams in the Chilean part of Tierra del Fuego where we obtained permits, prior to leaving the Beagle Channel and crossing the Drake Passage. During the crossing it was 3hrs on and 6hrs off. In particular, we were on the lookout for ice flow which would not show up on the boats radar. Compared with 2010/11 we had a smooth crossing but, whilst putting on lots of warm clothing prior to a late night watch, I lost focus on the boats motion and had a bad few hours. On the crossing we were joined by albatross and cape pigeons, but we were still pleased to see the Antarctic Peninsular after four days without site of land. Our first port of call was the Ukrainian base, Vernadsky which was previously known as Faraday. Compared with when it was owned by BAS, it had a very small staff, who made us very welcome, but with all the old pictures still on the wall, at times it felt a little like the Marie Celeste.

One of our objectives was to explore the Trooz Glacier. Unlike the previous two years there had been a good dispersal of ice such that we were able to sail into Beascochea Bay, an area that no previous expeditions have managed to enter. Our first objective was to identify a landing spot. Across the mouth of the glacier there were unstable ice cliffs. However to its right we spotted a snow ramp. Initially it looked too steep, but a closer inspection

indicated that it should provide a route onto the glacier. We returned to moor by Vernadsky and sort our gear, prior to landing using the yachts zodiac, the following day. We had eight days' worth of food and we also left a cache on the shore in case our boat was unable to get in on the required day. The boat went back to moor at Vernadsky and we made contact every evening by satellite phone to report progress and obtain the latest weather forecast.



The landing proved uneventful and we carried our gear up the slope to the levelling of the glacier.



Rather than use sledges, the Eagle Ski Club have developed the use of haul bags with a 2 metre length of water pipe to stop the bag getting caught up in our skis. Our haul bags were filled with food, gas and camping equipment to reduce the weight on our backs.

Skins on skis and 8km of hauling took us to our first camp. Although the centre of the glacier was badly crevassed the edge was more or less clear of crevasses.



From our first camp we climbed Alencar peak (1592m), previously surveyed from the sea, by its north-east spur then the following day, the adjacent peak (1333m). In both cases we skinned part way up leaving our skis for the return.

Ascent of Alencar

Alencar was an easy snow climb. Pk 1333m was more challenging, the crux being crossing a monster crevasse via a 30m ice fin.

The following day was low cloud so we took the opportunity to move our camp another 8km further up the subsidiary Belgica glacier. Although initially cloudy, the following day we were able to skin through the cloud to ascend a dome shaped peak 2032m. Whilst three of us had a leisurely ski back to camp, four of the team decided to descend to a col before ascending the adjacent and higher peak, 2270m. This turned out to be Valiente peak, not quite where it was supposed to be. Their return involved descending back to the col before re-ascending Pk 2032m so it ended up quite a long but satisfying day.



The following day we attempted an adjacent peak but failed to break through the cloud. However the following day was cloudless and we ascended Peak 1475 from the north. Skis were left at the start of a short ice face with a snow ridge above.

Peak 1475

On day 8, we decided to return to the boat and investigate other objectives. The 16km back to the boat took less time than expected-it was moderately flat and we had our haul bags to contend with. Thus when it was suggested we should bag Lancaster peak on the way past, we left our kit at a suitable point before skinning up to the east summit (616m). A kilometre further on was the west summit (642m) which we also climbed before returning to our kit and the final descent to the coast.

What next after six first ascents? Whilst we had been on the peninsular a French team had made the first ascent of Rio Branco, one of our objectives. With plenty of time that afternoon, we sailed further south to establish a landing spot to make a second ascent by an alternative route before returning to anchor at Vernadsky. However, it was not to be as the wind was forecast to pick up from the north and push all the ice which had previously dispersed back into the bay. We thus sailed further north for a couple of days with a view to investigate other objectives.



En route we saw a number of penguin colonies and whales, a hump back playing with our yacht for nearly 30 minutes. Again not to be, as we had a forecast of big storms the day we would wish to pass round Cape Horn. (These did materialise and even the big cruise ships gave the Horn a miss that day.) With a few days back in Tierra del Fuego we took the opportunity to explore the Cordillera Darwin.

The expedition gratefully received sponsorship from the MEF and the AC expedition fund.

Sonnet by G H Radford

I'm indebted to Pamela Harris-Andrews for finding this link to the past.

Mr. G. H. Radford M.P. was present at the inauguration of the Britannia Hut on 17th August 1912 and opened the speeches at the dinner in the Dom Hotel at Saas Fee later that evening (photo below).

It was his daughter Ursula who carried the ABMSAC banner to the hut for the inauguration ceremony (see website for details and photo). After spending a night in the hut, Mr. Radford wrote the following sonnet which was published in the Westminster Gazette.

A NIGHT at the CABANE BRITANNIA

Five thousand feet we climbed by zigzag ways,
Rock and moraine, and tracts of ice and snow,
And reached at dusk the cabane which we owe
To British climbers of these latter days.
Supper dispatched, we issued forth to gaze
On cloudless sky enriched with gleam and glow
Of everlasting silent stars, and so
Turned in, in quest of sleep which toil repays.
Vain quest! Wood-sawing, doors that slam and slide,
Nailed boots in movement, voices in despair,
Shouts of defiance, threats of homicide
Conspired to murder sleep, and fright the air,
While the few sleepers (who all sleep denied)
Snored inharmonious through the whole affair.

G. H. Radford



GROUP OUTSIDE THE GRAND HOTEL, SAAS FEE.
Left to right—Ormond, W. Larden, J. Bruce, E. Harris, E. Foa, G. Radford,
C. King-Church, G. Wilson, W. Adams, W. S. Dixon.
Seated—F. N. Ellis and C. Wybergh.

OBITUARIES

Michael Austin 1938 –2013

Michael Austin, PhD, Hon FRPS, died in Entebbe, Uganda (where he had been living since 2008) at the age of 74, having been ill with cancer of the stomach for the previous six months. In 2007 he had prostate cancer which was treated with Radiotherapy.

Michael was born in London and after attending the City of London School he read a four year degree course in Chemistry at Magdalen College Oxford. After graduating in 1962 he joined Ilford Ltd as a research chemist. In 1965 Michael moved to the International Publishing Corporation where he was involved in the dramatic change from letterpress to litho printing for national newspapers in the UK, in particular the setting up of the satellite litho printing plant for the Daily Mirror in Belfast. In 1971 he moved from industry to academia and joined the staff of the Polytechnic of Central London (formerly the Regent Street Polytechnic and now the University of Westminster). He was course leader of the first degree course in Photography and introduced holography into the BSc honours degree course. He was President of the Royal Photographic Society from 1990 to 1992 and editor of the Journal of Photographic Science from 1986 to 1988.

Michael's first interest in mountaineering began when our two sons joined the Scout Movement and Michael became a Scout leader. He introduced the young lads to caving, canoeing, orienteering and mountaineering.

In 1987 Geoffrey Attridge, a colleague of Michael's, invited us to our first ABMSAC meet at Champex which we enjoyed so much that we became affiliated members in 1988. We always looked forward to the Annual Alpine meets which were first organised by Harry Archer and then by Alasdair Andrews. The company, the climbing, the scenery and the flowers made the many meets in the Alps irresistible. We also enjoyed several trips to Skye organised by Ben Suter. We were grateful to the more experienced members of the club who showed us how to respect the mountains and taught us all our climbing skills. We are indebted to their enthusiasm which brought wonderful horizons into our lives.

We discovered that Michael shared some of the interests of his Great Grandfather, Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen, who explored the mountains of the Himalayas and surveyed the glaciers at the base of K2, and who was also a great naturalist and ornithologist. In 1994 Michael felt that we should take a trek to the base Camp of K2 and see the glacier that was named after his ancestor. This was a very moving and memorable expedition.

Outside his professional involvement in the science of photography, Michael was an enthusiastic amateur photographer, particularly combining his lifelong interest in butterflies with photography. He convened and led a Digital Imaging Group for the Chiltern U3A for a number of years prior to his move to Entebbe. He was also a keen ornithologist and enjoyed caving, sailing, fly fishing, Scottish dancing and wine tasting. He will be greatly missed by his family.

Penny Austin

Peter Fleming 1936 - 2012



I first met Peter at the “Bahnhof” in Zermatt in Bernard Biner’s kitchen; a second home to British climbers in the late 1950s, early 1960s. We didn’t bump into each other then, for a few years until meeting again on an ABMSAC meet in the Lakes and we became firm friends; on the hills and off.

Peter was born on Barrow Island (Barrow-in-Furness) and lived in the area all his life, apart from the five years he spent in the Merchant Navy, having completed his apprenticeship in Vickers Engineering Works. The years he spent at sea travelling the world influenced him greatly and right up to the end of his life he was eager to explore other continents and their cultures.

In 1968, he married Margaret and over the decades their house became a veritable treasure trove, filled with artefacts brought home from his travels; from the Far East, the Americas and all the other places he visited during his lifetime. Peter’s numerous interests were represented by his fascinating collections, and he always delighted in showing you his latest finds.

Early childhood illness meant that he never developed the good hand to eye coordination necessary for the usual boys’ sports, but he had a neat wiry frame, an excellent asset for a rock climber. Aged 14, he joined the Barrow Rambling Club and never looked back. This was his sport. He found fell walking and climbing effortless and loved it. Also he enjoyed the friendship and social interaction of the Club, going out on the walks every Sunday.

At the age of 20, the year he joined the ABMSAC in 1956, he and three friends from the Barrow Ramblers drove across France to Switzerland to try Alpine Climbing. On arrival in Zermatt, with the happy ignorance of

inexperience, the first alpine ascent they attempted and achieved was the Matterhorn; a mountain he was to climb four times in all by various routes.

After leaving the Merchant Navy in the early 1960s, Peter became a sales and service engineer with Hoover, later setting up his own business.

He kept returning to the Alps in his two weeks' holiday every summer. The original group had dispersed or married and Peter had to find others to climb with or sometimes did solo ascents. He was extremely fit and fast and found Alpine Climbing easy. On later occasions he trekked in the Himalayas, where he found the altitude more of a problem.

In the mid 1960s he was introduced to the Fell and Rock Climbing Club. He became a member in 1965 and always looked on this as one of the best things that happened in his life as it widened his activities on the hills and gave him so many friends with the same interests. He served the FRCC as Vice President and Hon. Assistant Librarian. His interest in books was reflected in his own vast collection. Peter was not only a prolific reader, he also wrote articles for journals and magazines.

Whilst on holiday in the Alps, he met Sally and Mike Westmacott and after climbing with them, they encouraged and helped him to become a member of the Alpine Club. It was through a winter ABMSAC/AC meet, that Peter was running in Wasdale, that he met Les and Barbara Swindin. There began a long period of summer meetings to climb in the Alps each year. As the list of mountain ascents grew longer they realised they had climbed a large portion of the 4000 metre peaks and decided they would try to complete them all. There were some thrilling and demanding times in order that they both achieved this goal. By the end of the summer season in 1986, they had climbed all 52 peaks, guideless, achieving this at a time when only about four Britons had ever done so.

However in the course of their annual visits to the Alps together, the Four Thousanders were rarely their only objective. Frequently they would have other goals; the North Ridge of Piz Badile is a particular good example. Peter delighted in this sort of climb. Sometimes Four Thousanders were repeated to climb particular routes, such as the Kanzelgrat on the Zinalrothorn; one of the finest climbs Peter and Les did together. Many of the routes were done as a rope of three, with Les and Barbara, and it was Peter who encouraged Barbara to write and publish her memoirs.

Peter had a prodigious knowledge of the Lake District, not just above ground, but below. In the 1970s, he with two other friends started exploring the mines, quarries and industrial heritage of the Lake District, forming a small society, which has grown into a respected Society in its field. Peter's special interest and knowledge was of the Coniston Copper mines.

On retirement Peter went back to travelling the globe with Margaret and with friends, and spent time pursuing his many interests. However it is on the Lakeland fells that I will remember Peter, roaming the tops, but being taken to see some curio or artefact or to check up on the state of some mine workings on the way, and then laughing and “yarning” in the hut at night.

Our thoughts go out to Margaret; she has lost a loving, loyal husband, and we have lost a very special friend.

Tony Strawther

Merle Gartside 1941 – 2012



Merle was born in Chilwell, Notts and was educated at Brincliffe Grammar School for Girls where she gained a number of qualifications before going on to the Nottingham Technical College where she was taught typing, shorthand, and about the “British Constitution” – a subject which nowadays would draw smiles.

Merle was a champion ballroom dancer, winning bronze, silver and gold bar medals as a result. Her deft footwork placed her well when she decided to take up climbing solely because her optician had “advised her to get out more”. Her first rock climbs were at Froggatt where she led, seconded and soloed a number of routes on the gritstone including the well known Black Slab (Severe 4a) on Stanage. Merle met the Oread Climbing Club whilst out climbing with Paul Grainger at Stoney Middleton doing various second and third ascents. It was through the Oread that she met Eric Wallis to whom she later married and had two children, Ashley Craig (Craig) and Nicola Gail (Nikki). Numerous classic routes were accomplished in Wales including an unplanned bivouac on White Slab (E2 5c) on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, as the spike (allegedly!) took longer to lasso than intended.

Merle was a confident, prominent female climber and joined the Geneva section of the Ladies Swiss Alpine Club after falling in love with the Swiss mountains climbing the Matterhorn. Merle and the family spent the next summers in Zermatt whilst Eric balanced his mountain guiding, expeditions and civil engineering work, and over the next four years they did some major ascents in Switzerland and France plus lots of walking and climbing at home. Craig was born, and Merle and Eric moved to Wales in 1968, living in The Oread Climbing Club Hut Tan Yr Wyddfa in Rhyd Ddu until their flat was ready on Llanbeblig Road in Caernarfon.

Merle continued climbing and mountaineering with their young family and accomplished some very good leads and all women ascents of many rock climbs in North Wales. Merle lead an all female ascent of Ivy Sepulchre (E1 5b) on Dinas Cromlech with Collette soon after Nikkis birth, and also gained a very early certification of the Mountain Leader Award signed by Jack Longland. UIAGM Guide Terry Taylor remembers an impressive ascent of Grasper E2 5c in Tremadog which they “climbed in the wet!”

The family emigrated to South Africa with Erics work during the early 1970's. They met up with members of the South African Mountaineering Club and had good weekends climbing in the Drakensberg's. Craig and Nikki in their early years completed numerous mountains including Sentinel Peak in the Drakensburgs and Thabana Ntlyana in Lesotho, peaks both above 3000m.

Eric and Merle separated in the late 1970's and Merle became single parent. She continued to keep her mountain fitness during the early 1980's by fell running in the Welsh mountains for as long as her health and time allowed, and continuing her membership of the Swiss Alpine Club, the ABMSAC and actively attending annual meets and joint Alpine Club meets in the Alps. She knew that she was doing this on borrowed time during this period as her hands and feet were becoming very weak and painful. This was the era of the “Llanberis Alpine Group and the Slateheads”, and in between Rheumatoid Arthritis flare ups, she led through on Cemetary Gates on Dinas Cromlech (HVS 5a) and the girdle traverse on Carreg Hyldrem, also HVS 5a.

Various new ascents were done such as FEU-123 on Gogarth named after her Raleigh Elf car, plus the friable mini alpine sea stack “Aiguille de Merlet” off the Lleyn Peninsula, a terrifying crumbling group ascent consisting of Ray Kay, ‘Pidge’, Cliff Philips, and John Tombs. The team topped out on the climb and had a glass or two of her renowned alcoholic homemade elderflower wine to celebrate, the route being written in the guidebooks as “Aiguille de Merlot” something to do with the amount of wine that was consumed after they all topped out!

Postponing the inevitable of her rheumatoid arthritis, living on numerous steroid injections and striving to achieve as much as she could in a typically “carpe diem” attitude, Merle took off on numerous trips and expeditions across UK and Europe. One of the renowned memorable trips in her well-known Riley Elf, took Merle and Cliff climbing through the UK, down to Cornwall, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and down to the Verdon and Buoux back via Fontainebleu. They climbed many memorable peaks in Aiguille Rouge including a ridge Grade V behind L'Aiguille du Midi which almost, once again, had them benighted on the way down. Cliff and Merle climbed Cosmiques Arête on the Aiguille du Midi, Aiguille La Brioche, and “R Merles Route” – a very apt route for her to do and camped at the then Pierre Orthaz

campsite. It is said that numerous subsequent pub quizzes included questions “Who did their National ‘Elf’ Service in Chamonix and the Lleyn Peninsula”!

The rheumatoid arthritis was to change her due to numerous surgeries at Gobowen Orthopaedic Hospital and long term side effects from various drug treatments. Despite all this she was a dedicated mum to Craig and Nikki helping them with their outdoor pursuits.

Merle became the area coordinator for the Friends of Gwynedd Youth Music during the 1980’s which helped her to ensure that Nikki participated in her music and orchestral roles. She studied for a diploma in Theology, and became an early lady holder for the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). After meeting and marrying Bob Gartside in the early 1990’s, she became an active fundraiser for the Welsh Highland Railway and various national pharmaceutical initiatives, and was an active member of local WI’s especially Caernarfon Tangent, and assisted the local Trefoil Girl Guides.

By then they were living in Beddgelert and involved with St Marys Church. Merle maintained her membership of the Swiss Alpine Club, thereby introducing Bob to mountain circles and she also became Warden for the Oread Club Hut in Rhyd Ddu, ensuring that despite her health she continued her friendships as much as possible. Her adventure seeking spirit continued, such as the trip down the Zambesi River. She still kept up with family matters, helping Criag and Nikki whenever possible.

Creative writing classes gave her some confidence in putting her thoughts into prose, about her life, and her bedroom walls and diaries were full of inspirational quotes and poems that she had written or collected on her travels – these provided courage and strength in times of despair and darkness. Merle did her last route, a new route at that, up near Inverness on her 70th birthday. After a courageous period in and out of hospital, Merle passed away in August 2012.

She will always remain in our memories as a fighter, a determined lady, determined not to let the world show she was suffering so much from her condition and a true lover of the mountains. “Merle Gartside” is also now officially a twinkling star far up in the sky, and will be up there looking down when you think of her. Over one hundred people have written little memories via Facebook, and the prominent feature in all of the tributes, were her lovely smile, her warmth and welcoming which continued until the end.

In her various diaries and notes her adventurous spirit now still lives on as she described a desire *‘for her ashes to go somewhere she had not been before, like the Himalayas, choose a high spot’*.

Nikki Wallis

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on
Saturday 2nd February 2013

The president Ed Bramley was in the Chair, approximately 30 members were present

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from John & Silvia Mercer, Graham Daniels, Colin Barnard, David Harland, John Percival, Lotte Norton and Mike Pinney.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 4th February 2012

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved. Proposed Belinda Baldwin, seconded Colin Armstrong

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Election of Officers and Committee:

The following officers stood down

Vice president - Belinda Baldwin

Meet secretary - Marian Parsons

Co-opted member - Marj Foster

The following new committee members were elected

Vice president – Jim Strachan - proposed Colin Armstrong, seconded John Foster

Meet secretary – Andy Burton - proposed Mary Boulter, seconded Richard Winter

Co-opted member - John Foster - proposed Roger James. seconded Don Hodge

Note that in the agenda, it was proposed to co-opt John Foster. It was pointed out that John was to be an elected member of the committee, though without special responsibility.

All other members of the committee are to remain as before.

Hon Treasurer's report

The report and accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and presented by James Baldwin. Apologies were given for not distributing the notes on the accounts via Mike Goodyer prior to the meeting.

The membership fees are to be held for the fourth year running. The BMC fees have again been held as before, valuable help in controlling costs.

Payment of membership fees by direct bank transfer is going well.

The accounts were accepted. Proposed Marj Foster, seconded Myles O'Reilly.

Amendment to Rules

It was proposed, on the recommendation of the BMC, to add a clause to the membership rules, requiring prospective members to complete an application form prior to attending their first meet. This has been advised so that both prospective and existing members are covered by insurance, particularly the liability cover.

It was opposed on the grounds that completing a membership form prior to joining an activity would deter prospective members. However it was pointed out that this problem would apply to any and every club.

It was proposed that it should be clearly stated to prospective members that they attend at their own risk entirely and are not covered by the club's liability insurance.

This point is to be further clarified by the committee, and may be raised again.

President's report

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to the Committee for all the support and counsel they have all provided in my first year as President. In particular, my thanks go to Belinda Baldwin, Marj Foster, and Marian Parsons who have just completed their respective terms in office, and the new committee members who are taking over from them.

Our club thrives on its meets activities, and last year saw a strong and varied set of meets, both at home and abroad. In the UK, we had meets in locations as diverse as Scotland, the Lake District and Peak District, Wales and, of course, not forgetting Devon. Even despite the continued rainy weather we experienced in this country over the last year, the spirit for getting out does not seem to have been dampened. Our overseas meets programme has been equally strong, with a trek in the Karwendel range in Austria, a joint camping meet with the AC, CC and Wayfarers based at Innertkirchen and a hotel meet based at Gressoney.

Many thanks to everybody who either attended or organised meets either at home, or abroad. In particular, I would like to thank Pam Andrews for organising the Gressoney meet, her first as a meet organiser, and one that I know had special meaning for her.

There was one other overseas meet that took place last year, and that was the centenary of the Britannia Hut in June. I was very pleased to be able to attend this meet, along with other club members. As part of the celebrations, we pleasantly surprised the Swiss by taking the original 1912 banner over the mountains to the hut, where it was received with what I can only describe as celebrity affection. At the hut it was great to see the fruits of our donation to the centenary in operation, with the new solar panels helping to ensure that water at the hut isn't lost over winter due to freezing. If you would like a copy

of a book and DVD celebrating the centenary of the Britannia hut, these are available from Pamela Andrews, priced £20.

Whether people are able to attend meets or not, being able to keep in touch and still share those experiences is something that is key for many members. Either through traditional means such as the journal and paper newsletters or the newer media of e-news and the internet, all are vital means of communication to our members, so a big thank you from me to Mike Goodyer for his unstinting work as editor.

Another key component of the club is the George Starkey hut, just down the road in Patterdale. Without the hut, we would not have a physical base as a club, and both ourselves and many other clubs would find it more difficult to enjoy this part of the Lake District. I would therefore like to record my thanks to Don Hodge as HMC representative and Marian Parsons as hut warden in the work they both do towards the upkeep of our hut. In the forthcoming year, a key activity that the Limited Company will be taking forward is renegotiation of the hut lease and, to that end, a communication to both clubs will be sent out shortly.

Lastly, it is always with sadness that we lose members of the club, and last year was no exception. I would therefore like to conclude my report for 2012 by remembering Peter Fleming and Merle Gartside, both long standing members of the club, who passed away last year.

Any other business:

Pamela Andrews brought attention to three books of possible interest to the members.

The Britannia Hut centenary book and DVD, a limited number of copies being available that evening, but additional copies could be ordered.

A book by Barbara Swindin – “All but one” – her description of climbing all but one of the four thousand metre peaks.

“Mountain Views” by Rupert Hoare - a personal account of thirty-eight years of walking, climbing, mountaineering and ski-mountaineering in Britain, the Alps and farther afield.

Date of next meeting:

It is proposed the next AGM will be held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale in early February 2014, to coincide with the annual dinner. The details will be confirmed at a later date once hotel availability, costs etc. are known.

Dick Murton, Hon. Sec

March 2013

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 2nd. February 2013.

Present: Directors J.A. Baldwin (Chairman), E. Bramley, D. Hodge and about 16 members.

Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Directors D. Buckley, M. Pinney, P. Clarkson.

Minutes of previous meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 4th. February 2012 and circulated in the ABMSAC Journal were approved and accepted without dissent on a proposal by Terry Shaw and seconded by Belinda Baldwin.

Directors report and accounts: The chairman stated that it had been a successful year with none of the weather related problems of 2010/11 however there was some concern about the Velux roof window units as one had become damaged in high winds in December 2012. Temporary repairs had been carried out to make the roof safe and watertight but a review of all the windows would be undertaken in the better weather.

In the absence of the treasurer the chairman pointed out that there had been a significant increase in electricity costs. Analysis showed that whilst there had been an increase in usage due to the installation of heating in the washrooms additional factors, poor weather over the summer period, increase in VAT and unit price rises accounted for the increase. The reduction in Rates was the result of a short term "holiday" given to small businesses.

Adoption of the accounts was approved without dissent on a motion proposed by Terry Shaw and seconded by John Dempster.

Any other business: There was discussion on the renewal of the lease, due in October 2016. It was noted that the Climbers' Club accommodation in Grange were in the process of being granted a twenty five year lease (Confirmed as thirty years after the meeting) and that this gave a pointer to the attitude of the Carlisle Diocesan Board of Finance. It was agreed that initially discussions should be held with the Patterdale PCC. Marian Parsons stated that Patterdale Parish was without an incumbent. Ed Bramley confirmed that he, as President of the ABMSAC, would be setting out his views on the renewal and requesting comments from the membership. He anticipated that his note would be published in the Spring Newsletter.

The meeting ended at about 18:50

J.A. Baldwin
Chairman
27th February 2013

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 Ledebøer |
| 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 F A 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
 2003-2004 D F Penlington
 2004-2007 W L Peebles
 2007-2010 T J Shaw
 2010-2013 Mrs B Baldwin
 2013- J H Strachan

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 F A 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 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
2010-2013 M Parsons
2013- A Burton

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES (Formerly Honorary Registrar)

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
1985-1991 T G B Howe MC
1991-1993 H M Eddowes
1994-2003 Dr M J Eddowes
2004-2012 E A Bramley
2012 - M Pinney

HONORARY EDITORS

(The following officers carried out the duties of Hon. Editor until the post was created in 1949: 1909-11 J A B Bruce, 1912-28 J A B Bruce and A N Andrews, 1929-48 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
1992-1995 F B Suter - **HONORARY EDITOR - NEWSLETTER**
1992-2002 M I C Baldwin
2002-2009 R B Winter
2009- M J Goodyer

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)
2010-2012 D Hodge

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 |

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- 2011 | N Harding |
| 2012 - | M Reynolds |

Posts no longer in use

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 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 Ledebor |
| 2001-2002 | Wing Commander H D Archer DFC |

HONORARY SOLICITORS

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

Current Honorary Members

Hector Meir
Brooke Midgley
Wendell Jones

ABMSAC Office Holders and Useful Contacts

ABMSAC Committee 2013

| OFFICE | HOLDER | ELECTED |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| President | E A Bramley | 2012 |
| Vice-President | J H Strachan | 2013 |
| Hon. Treasurer | J Baldwin | 2005 |
| Hon. Secretary | R W Murton | 2010 |
| Hon. Membership Secretary | M Pinney | 2012 |
| Hon. Meets Secretary | A Burton | 2013 |
| Hon. Editor | M J Goodyer | 2009 |
| Hon. HMC Representative | D R Hodge | 1978 |
| Committee Members | Mr J Foster | 2013 |
| | Mrs P Harris-Andrews | 2010 |

ABMSAC Ltd Directors

| | |
|------------|-------------------|
| E Bramley | Chairman |
| M Pinney | Company Secretary |
| D Buckley | Treasurer |
| D Hodge | |
| P Clarkson | |

Hut Bookings Secretary

Mike Pinney

4 Arnewood Gardens, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2LQ

E-mail for bookings **ONLY**: hutbookings@abmsac.org.uk

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