

DIARY FOR 1989

13-15	January	Fearnan, Loch Tay	Alasdair Andrews
18	January	London Fondue Evening and Lecture	Mary Boulter/ Ted Courtney
3- 5	February	Spean Bridge, Fort William	Alasdair Andrews
24-26	February	Northern Dinner Meet, Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
10-12	March	Spean Bridge, Fort William	Bert Bowes
15	March	London Lecture	Lord Hunt
14-16	April	George Starkey Hut Maintenance Meet (ABMSAC)	Don Hodge
23	April	Chilterns Walk	John Whyte
7	May	Harrisons Rocks	Harry Sales
17	May	London Buffet Evening and Lecture	Mary Boulter/ Paddy Boulter
27	May-3 June	Torricon	Harry Archer
18	June	Walk, "Over Surrey Hills"	Jack Derry
23-25	June	Welsh Scrambles Meet, Ryd-Ddu	Ben Suter
14-16	July	Lakes Scrambles Meet, Patterdale	Rudolf Loewy
22	July-19 August	Club Alpine Meet, Klosters	Harry Archer
22	July-12 August	Joint ABMSAC/CC/AC Alpine Meet, Courmayeur	Mike Pinney
9	September	Surrey Walk, Hindhead	Peter Bull
20	September	London, Alpine Meets Reunion and Slide Show	Mary Boulter
6-8	October	Buffet Party Meet, Patterdale	Marion Porteus
13-15	October	George Starkey Hut Maintenance Meet (TCC)	Don Hodge
28	October	Annual Dinner, Rembrandt Hotel, London	Peter Ledeboer
29	October	Chilterns Walk	Alan Partridge
3-5	November	Joint Alpine Reunion Meet, Patterdale	Mike Pinney
6	December	Annual General Meeting and Lecture, London	The President

For Meets: Book with the person named. For individual bookings at the George Starkey Hut at times when there is no meet, book with John Murray, 4 Sunny Point, Crook, Nr. Kendal LA8 8LP. Tel: 0539 821754.

London Meetings are at the Alpine Club at 7.00 p.m. Refreshments are usually available before and after the Meeting.

THE ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH MEMBERS
OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB
JOURNAL 1989

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NORDEND TO THE KLEIN MATTERHORN OR, FROM 27 TO 36 OF THE COLLOMB 52

Mike Pinney

Four thousand metre peak-bagging has been described by some of my friends as a tedious activity; just diverting one from climbing interesting routes. The Collomb list of 52 separate mountain tops includes six in the Monte Rosa group and one can concede this kind of peak-bagging could become boring. And yet, can climbing any high mountains in Switzerland ever be boring?

In 1984 a number of friends carried out a two day traverse from the Dufourspitze, taking in five or six summits. That was in their third week when my season was limited to two. And in 1985 we had climbed four peaks in successive days in the Oberland, (1986 Journal). So this year, with a little inspiration from Vaucher's "100 best routes" - who describes the traverse over five days - a plan evolved for the grand traverse, which would give me ten new tops and take me to 36 on the list.

Compared with 1987, the weather on the Joint Alpine Meet was excellent. However one did need to keep in synchronisation with the good weather. The first Sunday lunchtime saw us (Steve Town and myself) ascending in the rain to the Flualp Hotel. In the evening, as forecast, it cleared and we climbed the Strahlhorn and Rimpfischhorn in successive days. Then followed the Portjengrat (a very pleasant rock traverse below 4,000M), the Aletschorn, an abortive visit to the Schoenbiel hut to attempt the Dent D'Herens, and the North Ridge of the Weissmies, (a disappointing route), bringing me towards the end of my second week.

The Saturday forecast predicted good weather until Monday; after two weeks acclimatisation and fitness were reasonably good; so Marian (Elmes) had to be persuaded of the merits of the traverse. She wanted to climb Nordend; but was not particularly bothered about the Parrotspitze and Piramide Vincent, and she had climbed the rest, - Pollux and the Breithorn, - in the first week. However, by the end of the first day the traverse appeal had increased and I was glad I had not compromised on the choice of route.

After dropping Steve at Randa we got a lift to Taesch and took the train to Zermatt, then the Gornergratbahn to Rotenboden. From there one follows a path above the Gornergletscher before descending on to the glacier and crossing the clear ice to a point below the hut. On the path we met John (Mercer) and Stuart (Maudsley), who had set out two days earlier. It is always pleasant to stop and exchange news with other members of the meet. They had completed John's objective, all the summits of Monte Rosa, giving John five new tops after achieving no new 4000ers in the previous two seasons. They had found the ascent of the Dufourspitze from the Silbersattel quite interesting. (Scottish grade III?).



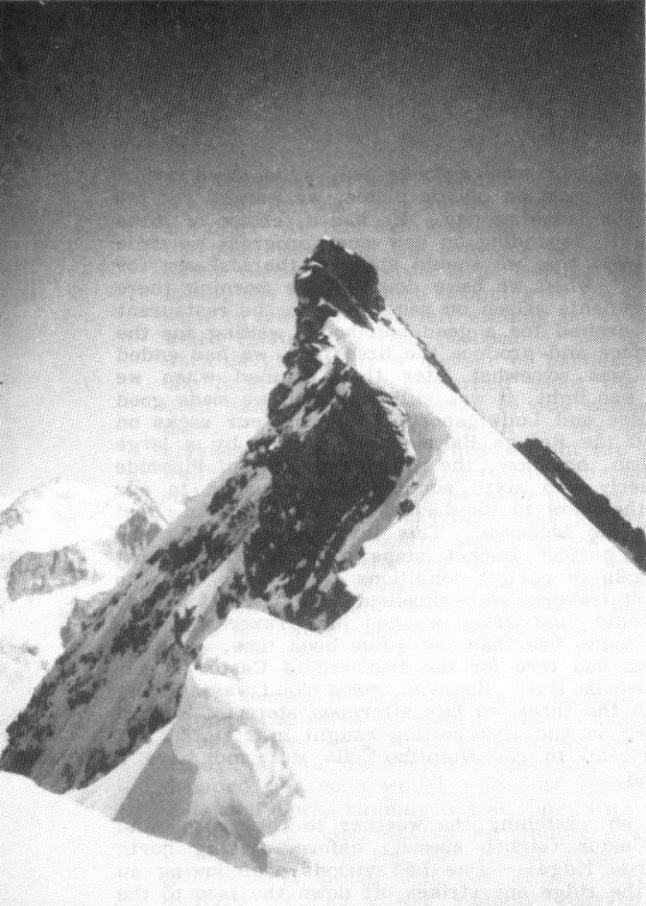
The Betemps hut was crowded, the meals poor, and I think we were charged for the tea water. So we were glad to be away in the morning. All this was forgotten as we struggled to follow, in the dark, the paint marks on the boulders making up the lateral moraine of the Grenz Glacier. At some large cairns, which we never found, the path forks, the right branch dropping to the Grenz Glacier (which we didn't want to take) and the left winding on to the upper Monte Rosa glacier. Whilst finding this trail (Collomb - "lots of cairns and false trails!") we were caught up by a number of parties who could see our lights. If one hadn't been so concerned about the loss of time, it would have been quite amusing to watch 30 odd climbers blundering around in the dark. We finally made it on to the glacier, across a quite badly crevassed area. Then, whilst all but two parties moved right to ascend Duferspitze, we headed up to the Silbersattel, the col between Nordend and Dufourspitze (or to be more precise, the Grenzgipfel) in a rather disappointing time. Leaving sacks at the saddle we followed the fine ridge to the top, mostly snow, with a few rock moves just before the summit. Whilst returning to the col, we were rather surprised to see the other party turning back at this point, descending, whilst we prepared to ascend the Grenzgipfel. We had made good time on the ridge and were somewhat encouraged to tackle what was possibly the crux.

There seemed to be two options, straight up the couloir or on the ice through the rocks on right, which looked slightly less steep. For both options there were signs of previous parties. We opted for the right hand, as, we discovered afterwards, had John and Stuart. Marian dropped her coils whilst I set off across and up the ice. Following calls that I was running out of rope, with no sign of a suitable belay, I dropped my coils, ending up finding a small bollard for a belay just before using up the 150 ft. of rope. The following two or three pitches were similar with few, if any, intermediary runners and rather dubious ice, so I was suitably relieved finally to reach the ridge leading to the Dufourspitze.

Whilst we were off-loading sacks and grabbing a bite to eat we were passed by a party who had ascended via the Zumsteinspitze and were returning by the same route. This was our proposed route after the Dufourspitze, and we watched their progress with interest. We then followed a mostly rock ridge over several small towers to the summit. There we met a party of four who were proposing to follow us to the Margherita Hut. We headed back to our sacks and then pitched it down a rather dubious snow covered slope before joining the ridge down to the Grenzsattel. Then a snow ridge, a rock outcrop, and more snow brought us to the top of the Zumsteinspitze. Here we met an Italian, who had been watching our progress and, more to the point, the group of four who had been following us. One of their party had fallen on the descent from the Grenzgipfel, near the top, and they were shouting for help. Whilst we slowly progressed across to the Signalkuppe (our fourth summit, where the Italians had built the Margherita Hut) in the hot afternoon sun, the Italian signalled across to a colleague by the hut who arranged for a helicopter from Zermatt. I don't think the girl was too badly hurt, but we were glad we had pitched that part of the climb and that we had been well ahead.

After getting up to the hut and some welcome tea, a lie down before dinner, and another pathetic meal on plastic plates, we worked out the schedule and options for the following day. We had a choice of three huts for the following night, depending on how much progress we made and we worked out the latest time we should start on the Liskamm (or stay at the Gnifettit Hut). When we came down in the morning there were a large number of students asleep on camp beds in the restaurant and we ended up sitting around for a good half-hour, waiting for the assistant guardian to surface and produce the breakfast, we had ended up having to buy. It was somewhat later than planned when we departed and although it was light, it was still cool, and we made good time across the Parrotspitze and Ludwigshoehe. Leaving our sacks on the col between Nero and the Refuge Balmenhorn, marked by a large statue, we crossed to climb, on snow, the easy North face of Piramide Vincent, our most southerly and sixth summit. We returned to our sacks and then crossed the snow to the Lisjoch, well within our latest time for the traverse of the Liskamm. This involved ascending the snow ridge in generally perfect bucket steps, following the crest between the summits - again in perfect conditions - and then down to the Feilikjoch, - a pleasant traverse with excellent views both forward, and also back into the Monte Rosa group we had just traversed. The traverse took us several hours less than the guide book time, - always a pleasant feeling. So we had time for the traverse of Castor rather than drop to the Quintino-Sella Hut. However, some cloud was starting to loom in the south, with the threat of late afternoon storms. We had to decide whether to carry on and risk getting caught in a storm, but get nearer home, or descend to the Quintino-Sella Hut and have a potentially long route home.

In the event we carried on, watching the weather to the south, and reached the summit of Castor (eighth summit) before striking north along a surprisingly narrow ridge; - One had visions of following au cheval. Part way along the ridge one strikes off down the face to the col before Pollux. There we met a large Swiss party about to traverse Castor (we had previously wondered if we were rather late to start). It was rather hot and we had long since finished our water and so decided to leave Pollux to the morning (the west face). We descended via the new hut under construction to the Mezzalana Hut, another 500 metres lower - height we would have to regain in the morning. Nevertheless we thought there would be a path down from the new hut to the old. In fact the best route was somewhat to the West and we took a good hour to descend to a rather crowded hut. The guardian was all for turning us away, but initially we signed on for an evening meal (again miniscule). I don't know whether we managed to look suitably deserving, but we ended up being allocated a bunk space. A late start in the morning, allowing time for those had had slept on the floor to get out of the way, then an hour's slog up to level with new hut (it should be open in 1989 and is somewhat larger and better situated!). Then, when we were clear of the worst crevasses, I left Marian with the rope and headed round to solo the West face of Pollux. I left my sack just below the bergschrund and went up the face, which was quite icy. The angle was not quite steep enough for a comfortable front pointing and one kept alternating style. A short break at the top for the view, and then the descent by the same route, passing a party



Left: Descent from Dufourspitze, -
"We ... pitched it down a rather
dubious snow-covered slope ..."
Seen from the Zumsteinspitze, with
Nordend behind.



Below: Descent from the East
summit of the Breithorn, - " ... I
quickly set up an abseil which took
me down to the col ... we then
headed along the ridge towards ...
the central summit."

who were just attempting to ascend past the bergschrund. They got as far as knocking in an ice screw before abandoning in favour of an easier but slower route. I collected my sack and rejoined Marian who had been enjoying a sit down in the sun, soaking up the atmosphere, (she had climbed Pollux two weeks earlier). Then we headed across the glacier towards the Breithorn.

Having reasonable time, and the option of traversing beneath Breithorn or traversing its three summits we opted for the "Icing on the cake". Just before crossing the bergschrund to join the ridge we roped up. A couple of rock moves on the snow ridge, and then we followed the ridge over the east summit of Breithorn to an abseil point. I think one can possibly leave slightly earlier on the south face, but still having arrived at this point, I quickly set up an abseil which took me down to the Col. Marian joined me shortly afterwards moaning that it had "gone free", - neither of us having a descendeur. We then headed along the ridge towards the three steps leading up to the central summit. I couldn't see a route up the first step so I took the other option, following a doubtful snow ledge on the left. The guide book was somewhat vague on the route to the start of the third step, but we found a route up the flank of the second which was quite time consuming, before descending to foot of the third and an obvious line up the crest. (I have a feeling that some of the ledges were snow covered hiding the tell tale crampon scratches). We then followed the crest to the central summit slightly concerned since the guide book time meant we would miss the last cable car. In the event either we were slightly further along the ridge, or the book was wrong in its allocation of time, or we had made very good time along the pleasant ridge, leaving us an hour for the descent from the west summit. The descent, - the ordinary route, - had become very icy but ten minutes in descent followed by a half hour slog across and up the plateau brought us to the Klein Matterhorn cable car station. We had been concerned that they should shut up the entrance to the tunnel early but the cable car was late, then kept stopping, until we were relieved of our fares. In the end we had a smooth ride down to Zermatt, with fine views of that and the previous day's climbing.

Back at the camp site the weather forecast indicated good weather for the remainder of the week! So after a much deserved rest day (36 hours climbing and 10 summits in 3 days), we headed, on the Thursday afternoon, in gathering cloud, to the Arben bivouac, which is actually a delightfully stone built hut funded by the Dutch Alpine Club, fully equipped with places for 18. Most of our parties out that day, including a Hornli team, of which we had a bird's eye view, turned back before achieving their objective because of the build up of storm cloud. There was some snow overnight and although we set out there was no sign of the sun breaking through and clearing the snow off the west facing rock ridge. It was almost as if we were being told "you have done enough for '88!"

It is hoped other members will find this account useful for planning such a traverse.

ASCENT OF CHULU EAST (19,000 ft).

19th October 1988

John Chapman

I heard Kami get the primus going. It was a perfectly still night. The inside of the tent was coated with hoar frost, which fell like ice-cold fine rain whenever I moved. I felt very well having had a warm and comfortable night. I felt very thirsty, and I had a just perceptible headache, which disappeared after drinking three large mugs of water, each hotter than the last until it was hot enough to make tea.

I had trouble getting into my plastic boots, so I was last starting again, but by 4 o'clock we were on our way in the dark across loose rock and snow, rather discouraging by going downhill. The moon had set. All we could see was in the circle of light thrown by our head torches. Then Glenn became a little uncertain of our whereabouts - he would have preferred us on top of the fifteen foot high rock ledge to our left, but soon we came up to the edge of the glacier, so we put on our crampons and tackled what in the dark seemed to be a steepish ice slope, fortunately well supplied with foot-sized ledges. Gradually the slope lessened and we found ourselves on delightfully crisp snow. We were on the glacier and it was beginning to come light. The crevasses were few and far between, and easily negotiable. They seemed old and slow to change and were well filled with snow.

As we crossed the glacier the eastern sky began to brighten, just like it does on a fine dawn in the Alps, but even more so. Appropriately, the first mountains to get the sun were the Annapurnas, and clearly visible to the west, Machhapuchhare, Tarke Kang, Tilicho Peak and Dhaulagiri, and to the east Pisang Chuli, Kang Guru and Manaslu.

The sun hit us just as we got to the ridge. Here I moved off Glenn's rope to go solo with Christophe. Glenn's pace was slow on account of Sue and Linda, and I just could not find a comfortable rhythm. I think I'd have had trouble getting to the top if I had stayed on it. With Christophe things were much better and after an initial rather painful loosening up, we were on the eastern summit half an hour ahead of the rest. And there we stopped. I was disappointed at not getting to the main summit, perhaps 2-300 feet above us and half a mile away, but also relieved that I didn't have to negotiate what looked quite an exposed traverse. There were no tracks further on, and so this was as far as yesterday's party had come. There is a lot less snow this year than when the reconnaissance was carried out and this has made the route distinctly hazardous.

Then down we came; Christophe and I at the run. Christophe said I should run with my feet up and down the slope, even when quite steep. And the inevitable happened - I got over-confident and caught my right crampon on the bindings of my left and went head over heels. The rope came taut and I hit the arrest position at the same instant - passing up a silent prayer of thanks that Harry had taught me how to do it. Feeling doubly secure, off we went again. It was really most enjoyable bounding down the mountain in the bright, cool, still air. The snow remained firm and crisp to the end.

We arrived back at 11 o'clock and I had a mug of tea, two mugs of soup and a mug of noodles. Porters to take the camp and climbing gear down were already at the camp site, sitting around uncomfortably cold in the chill breeze, notwithstanding the hot sun. Soon everyone was down from the summit, safe and sound, and the camp was struck with nothing to show that we had been there. Then helter-skelter 3,000 feet down to base-camp, first on scree and then on sun-burnt grass, caution thrown to the winds after Kami bounded airily past me.

For all their grandeur there is something curiously companionable about these hills. I can see them now, coloured every hue and shade from the dark green, almost black, of the pines on the north-facing slopes of the Annapurnas below the pale blues of the shaded icy flanks; through the browns and ochres of the dried grass and the blue-greens of the ground juniper on our side of the valley. Even the bare rock and the moraines have endless subtle shades of red and brown and blue. In my mind's eye the whole is bathed in a crystal clear light under which every detail stands out and seems hardly more than an arms-length away. It gives me a sense of well-being and of one-ness with the whole of creation when nothing seems impossible.

At base camp came an overwhelming contented sleepiness. I drank lots of tea, had a wash, ate a huge supper and went to bed even earlier than usual to a long, sweet, dreamless sleep.

BASE CAMP, - ANNAPURNA III IN THE BACKGROUND



ONE MAN'S MEET - SKYE 1988

Ralph Steadman

I was the least experienced mountaineer in the club, on my first meet, which I had approached with no idea at all of what or who to expect. Frankly, I was testing the water before plunging in at Saas Fee in August. Nevertheless I found myself nominated to write the report.

First impressions were excellent. I rang the door-bell of a house in Broadford, and a young lady's voice instantly called "Come in!"; a meet surely can't have a better start. It was Margaret Archer, who had arranged the accommodation and who had prepared a magnificent dinner for the twelve of us who assembled that evening.

Over dinner I hinted that I would like to try Pinnacle Ridge on Sgurr nan Gillean, and this was immediately adopted as Sunday's route. I was warming to this group, with my chosen route to be done on the first day.

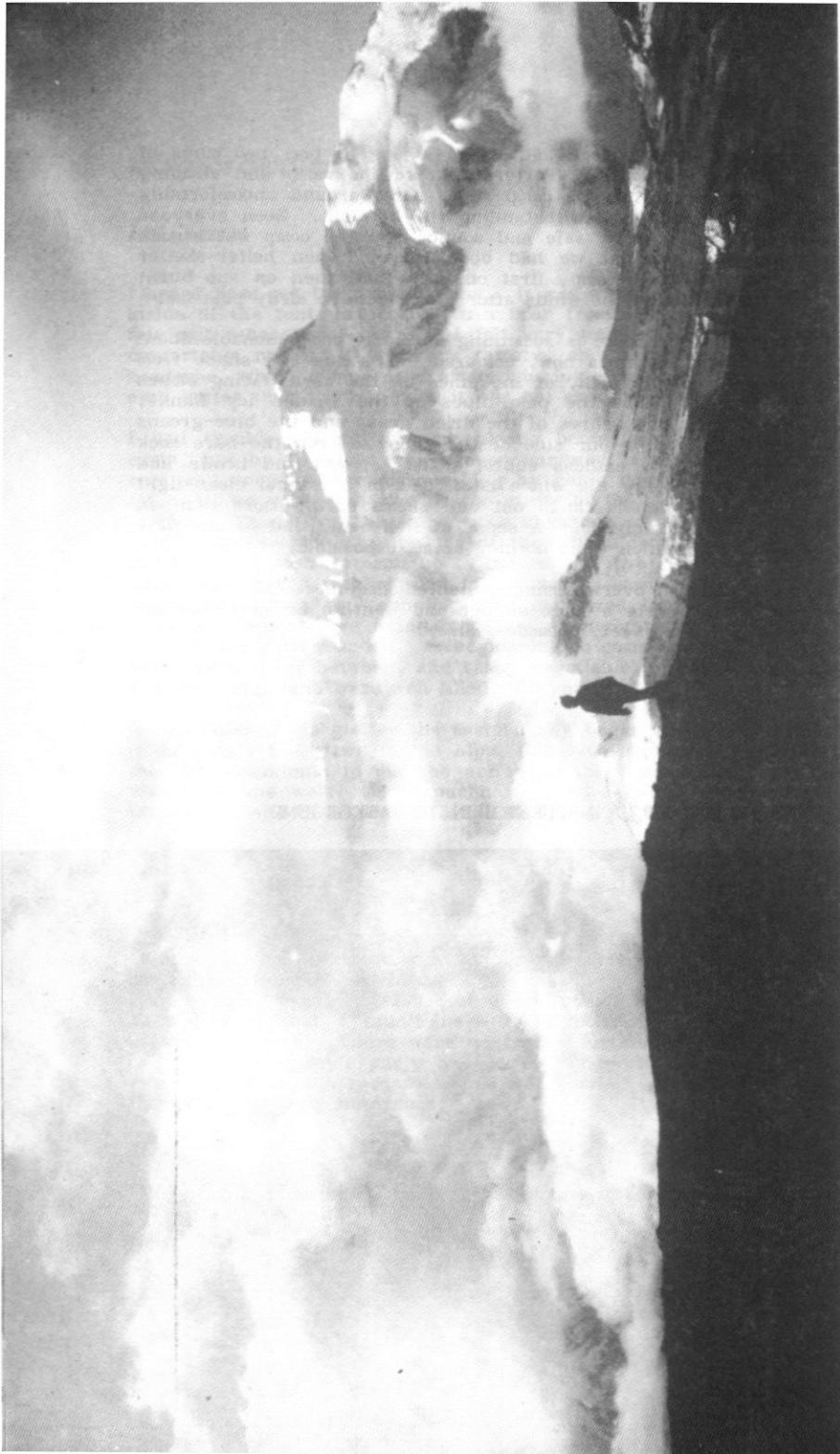
The weather was favourable for the ascent, fortunately as things turned out, for it was possibly the slowest ever, so slow that a small group who chose the longer ascent by the south-east ridge spent over an hour at the summit hanging about waiting for us before clearing off. The Pinnacle Ridge group produced the hero of the week, John Nash, who tripped on uneven ground on the first pinnacle, but finished the ascent despite being badly shaken.

Monday morning, rain and a bad forecast, and not a day for the heights. Six of us drove to Kirkibost on the Elgol road and walked over to Camasunary, crossed the river by the stepping stones, and then took the coast path by the bad step to Coruisk. As often happens in Skye's changeable weather, the day brightened, and Johanna Merz and I chose to continue on to Sligachan while the others returned to the cars. It's a wonderful walk from Coruisk up by Loch a Choire Riabhaich with the entire Cuillin from Sgurr nan Eag to nan Gillean against the sky, the black plates of the Dubh ridge sweeping down to Coruisk and the mass of Bla Bheinn behind you. I had not seen the Cuillin from that side before, and it's remained a memorable day.

Though no climbing was done, Monday was exhausting, and a long day too, from Rudolf bringing a cup of tea at 6.30 a.m. to Ben Suter's gentle tutorial on malt whiskies in the Broadford Hotel late at night, so a thoroughly wet Tuesday was a welcome rest day. We drove to Dunvegan Castle, and some determined souls went further north to the Quirang. I've not enquired too closely what happened there; I believe some went off in the mist and returned safely, only to wait an hour for others who had got lost searching for them.

With renewed enthusiasm, seven of us set out for Glenbrittle the following morning and walked from the camp site to reach Loch Coire a Grundda for lunch. This was hardly good progress for a clear, mild, windless morning. I would be hard put to find any fault at all with this meet, but I think a justified criticism would be the lateness of the starts, and some days saw four hours of clear morning go by before we set foot on the mountain.

PORTER LEAVING CAMP, - ANNAPURNA IV IN THE BACKGROUND



From the loch we climbed through thin, still mist which shrouded the ridge itself, first south to Sgurr nan Eag then north to Dubh na da Bheinn. We continued north, confidence in our leader not a whit diminished when he observed that the watery sun also was due north of us, for it reverted to its normal situation some way further on.

We skirted the T - D gap, for no other reason than that, with seven of us, it was quicker; there's such a queue there. A member of the party who knew those parts led us unerringly through the mist to a point which could only be described as being somewhere on the Cuillin; not to put too fine a point on it, we were lost. A young couple fortunately appeared, striding along the ridge, each carrying a 12-month old in a back-pack, and as they put us right I'm sure I detected a contemptuous sniff from those infants.

We followed the ridge up to Sgumain and on to Alasdair, avoiding the bad step, then down the stone chute. With four peaks, after a late start, it was a good day.

Bla Bheinn had been a target from the outset of the meet and three of us climbed it by the usual route from Loch Slapin on Thursday. The peak is noted for the views it affords as far as the outer islands to the west and Ben Nevis in the east, but our view, for much of the climb, extended only to the next cairn. We returned for tea in Elgol with the sky clearing and a sunny view of the hills. Even more remarkable was the sight of three cuckoos together; Elgol appears to have cuckoos where other villages have starlings.

Numbers had been diminishing daily, and by Friday only the President and his wife remained with me, and since they used their last day for a trip to Andvasar, I climbed alone. The plan was to climb Banachdich by way of Coire an Eich, then turn north to Sgurr a Mhadaidh. I wondered as I lunched at the summit cairn in drenching rain whether, strictly speaking, one climber constituted a meet, and crouching under my hood and enjoying the sandwiches which the President's wife had prepared for me, I also tested the rock's magnetism. A compass held close to the rock face is deflected very powerfully, but if you stand and hold the compass well away from it there should be no confusion. It's useful to understand these things.

After pressing on some way northwards through the clouds along the ridge in the rain, I caught a momentary glimpse of the loch. A loch north of Banachdich? And it's Coruisk too. So we're going south. Well, anyone can make a mistake, and at least I was following the pattern established earlier in the week. I carried on south, with the rain clearing, to Sgurr Dearg and the In. Pinn. (There's a seam of extremely magnetic rock there) and down the An Stac screes to Coire Lagan in what had become a glorious sunny evening. (Watch the cairns if you descend that way or, like me, you'll arrive at the head of a waterfall and find yourself reascending the said screes in the late evening).

The entire week was, despite indifferent weather, hugely enjoyable, thanks to the excellent company. (Harry Archer, Sheila Coates, Rudolf Loewy, Morag MacDonald, Johanna Merz, John Nash, Ben Sutor, David Watts, Joan Whyte, John Whyte, with Alf Lock, Bert Bowes and Seth and Colin Armstrong camping.

Ralph Steadman's claim that he was the least experienced mountaineer in the club must be countered by the contention that he was also the most intrepid. Arriving at Zermatt two or three years ago, before joining the club, and on a walking tour with the Holiday Fellowship, he had the temerity to go to the Guides Office and ask for a guide to climb the Matterhorn. The swarthy great gentleman on the opposite side of the counter looked Ralph up and down - clad only in Tee shirt, shorts and trainers - asked him what mountains he had climbed - Ralph could not think of any! - and flatly refused to provide him with a guide. In great dudgeon Ralph then stormed up the Mettelhorn to catch up the rest of his walking party, getting more wroth with every step. From the top he immediately charged down again determined to beard the giant in his den once more. Ralph asked him; "How long should it take a fit mountaineer to go up the Mettelhorn?". 4½ hours was the reply. "I have just done it in 3½", said Ralph. He got his guide! But it was not to be. Next morning at the Hoernli no one went up the mountain. However, a year later Ralph did climb the Matterhorn, but with a British guide. (Ed.).

MIND MY CAMEL

Esme Speakman

At the end of January 1988 I had the opportunity to join a small French party who were planning a circuit of the Tefedest mountains in Algeria. As well as the travel, the object was to search for hitherto undiscovered pre-historic paintings, such as are found on the Tassili n'Ajer and other parts of the Sahara.

I persuaded an English friend to join me, and we met the eight French members of the party in Paris, before flying on to Algiers, and, the following morning, to Tamanrasset. Here we were met by Landrovers and driven to the foot of the Tefedest to await the arrival of our camels.

The French party consisted of three couples and two single women, one of whom was Marie, the leader of the party. All proved to be charming and friendly and never once did we become two groups, "we" and "they". We had 21 camels, one for each person to ride, and the remainder, baggage camels, and these were accompanied by three Touareg, who owned them. We were encouraged to help in the loading and unloading of these animals, also in hobbling them and in caring for them generally.

We got up in the dark at about 6.30 and after rolling our bedding and baggage - no tents - and leaving them by our camels, we had breakfast, bowls of hot tea, coffee or chocolate, cereal and bread and jam, round a blazing fire of acacia wood, which is always available in this area.

The morning stage was from 3 to 4½ hours, non stop. Camels do not pause for a rest, they go on...and on...at 6 km an hour until a place is reached where they can be outspanned and hobbled to wander off to find fodder.

The French and Peggy found this pace, even in deep sand or on broken rocks, quite reasonable. Not so I, seventy four and by nine years the oldest, and I rode more than the others. This was not the relief it should have been. On the first day I demonstrated clearly that I was incapable of balancing on a Touareg saddle (never made for the female form); which surprised me as I had ridden on one happily on an earlier Saharan journey. I had not yet realised that I had completely lost my balance due to deafness in one ear, a fact I only discovered months later.

Marie had the solution: I would ride on a baggage camel, on a foam mattress. BUT, the baggage was slung on either side of the camel and in between lay a cat's cradle of knotted ropes holding the kitbags in place. The mattress was very thin, and with no stirrups to support one, riding was sheer agony. Mounting was not much easier. One always mounts a camel from the left, but for the elderly, with arthritic hips, it was extremely painful to stretch out the right leg over kitbag, camel and kitbag, and I fear my yelps of pain were interpreted by the Touareg as cries of alarm.

Hunting for paintings was done mostly during the lunch halt, when one had cooled off in the shade of an acacia, and at the bivouac if one arrived early enough. Paintings and engravings were plentiful, and we found them in caves, under overhangs, and in many other places where direct sunlight did not penetrate. We found people and animals depicted: horses, which came to the Sahara before camels; cattle, from the period when the Sahara had dried out from tropical forest and swamp to savannah. There were also many of whose meaning one could only guess. The oldest probably dated from about 8,000 years, and the most recent from 2,000 - similar to those of the Tassil' n' Ajjer.

Having walked in the mornings, as a rule we rode after lunch when the day was hottest. The weather was mostly rather hazy, so sadly, we had no distant views. One night it actually rained, and an extraordinary contraption was produced, something like the roof of a marquee, with no sides. This was held up by innumerable thin aluminium poles, which obviously could not be inserted into rock and would not hold in sand. Eventually it was balanced precariously and we crowded under it with our baggage. Lashed by near horizontal rain and blown sand, we endured the seemingly endless hours of a very long night. (Peggy tells me I slept soundly through it!).

The French were exceedingly strict about litter. Nothing was left on a bivouac site; every tin was burnt out, flattened and taken back to France for disposal, we had been told to bring matches for burning

toilet paper and Peggy and I were wearing paper pants which, of course, we burnt as well. However, problems arose on windy nights and on one occasion I found myself madly chasing a pair of flaming pants across, it seemed, the breadth of North Africa.

Water was always scarce, but we each carried two litres a day for drinking at odd moments and there was always the ritual three glasses of tea at lunch and supper.

We visited three "gueltas" - water holes - one of which was a really deep hole in a rocky mountainside, the other two being running streams where one could even draw water for washing, much to the delight of some local Touareg who suddenly appeared on the rocks above us. We saw no tourists in the course of our journey, and few Touareg. Few animals, also, though one day we passed a herd of wild donkeys, and saw gazelles from time to time.

The food was good on the whole. There was always some sort of fresh salad at midday, even if only potato, and we ate this with shared tins of fish or pate, bread and cheese, fruit and tea. Supper consisted of soup, some sort of stew, and tinned fruit or tinned "creme" and tea. On two unhappy occasions the Touareg insisted on our sharing their meal. This stew contained lumps of soggy unleavened bread, meat - camel we were told - and many other nameless horrors. To quote from the "Ballad of Nebuchan-ezzar", "It may be wholesome but it is not good".

Since starting to write this I realise that there is far too much to tell. Skipping madly, I come to the last act, Peggy and I staying with one of the French couples for a night in Paris on the way home. We had invited our kind host and hostess out to dinner at a restaurant of their own choice - a wise precaution.

Having taken far too literally the instructions to come on this journey with the very minimum of luggage, Peggy and I had no suitable clothes to wear. It had, therefore, never struck me that one day I should go out to dine in a Paris restaurant wearing a filthy duvet unwashed in the 24 years of its life; a torn jersey, a very sweaty shirt, Helly Hanson longjohns worn as trousers, odd socks and men's corduroy bedroom slippers. The restaurant proprietor never blinked. We had a wonderful reception, a wonderful meal and, at long last, a wonderful sleep in a real bed.

By way of interest, though he was not with us on this trip, the man who organised it all was Monsieur Jean-Louis Bernezat author, artist and retired Alpine guide.

The mountains of the Tefedest are granite and there is some lovely climbing to be had in that area.

SCOTLAND AT ITS BEST

Tony Husbands

Early in 1988, in one of Wainwright's TV programmes on Scotland, he went to Sandwood Bay in Sutherland and described it as the most beautiful bay in the U.K. Fortunately, a friend living in Edzell also saw the programme, so we decided to go and see for ourselves.

When we went through Bonar Bridge on the morning of June 3rd it was raining, but we had plenty of time to get to Kinlochbervie so we decided to go via Loch Eriboll, and on the downhill approach to the loch we could see that only the top 400 feet of Ben Hope was in cloud so we went up in the hopes that the cloud would lift. Unfortunately it didn't so we weren't able to see the Pentland Firth and the Orkney Islands. Next day my legs were very stiff so the easy walk to Sandwood was much appreciated. I am not sure that I would describe it as the most beautiful bay in the U.K. It is certainly very lovely and well worth a visit, although we didn't see the mermaid reputedly living there.

Next day we went up Foinaven. The long spell of dry weather made it easy. Normally the longish approach is so boggy it is often necessary to start from another direction still further away. The sides and top of the main part of the mountain are all scree and broken rock with not a blade of grass in sight. The cloud base was several hundred feet above us so we did have quite a good view and one could easily see the Outer Hebrides.

We then left for Lochinver but made a little detour to the South so that we could do the traverse of Stack Polliadh and the following day go up Suilven. It was very hot and sunny and we had some marvellous views. The approach must be about six miles, with a good track for about four but, unlike our experience going to Foinaven, we found most of the last two miles quite boggy and were surprised to see, as we approached the car, how well two old English sheep dogs, which had been absolutely filthy not long before had managed to clean themselves up by going into a loch. We had been given a bottle of Ballantine by an old friend at Miltonduff Distillery and were very much in need of it, but we had no water. Charles had lost the bet on the length of time it would take to return so he went to get some, but the owners of the dog had some in their car and he managed to effect an exchange. The young wife seemed to enjoy her dram very much and when we asked her if she would like another she said she thought perhaps she should refuse because she had never drunk whisky before!

Charles had to go to Edinburgh so we had to leave for Edzell but stopped by the Balsporran cottages near the summit of Drumochter to go up Geal Charn. Tony and Suzanne Strawther and I had had a wonderful day on Ben Alder on Good Friday, 1987, so I wanted to see what it looked like from the south, looking across Loch Ericht. We went on to collect another Munro - A'Mhaerconaich - which Charles, although being a Scot, found easiest to call Ah Macaroni. By the time we got back to Edzell I was feeling reasonably fit and the weather forecast was very good for some days more.

I had always thought that there must be a very fine view from the top of Ben Starav on a fine day and here at last seemed to be the chance so I drove over to Rannoch Moor. When I got up the next day it wasn't possible to see anything due to the thick mist but after breakfast the top of the Buachaille was visible, bathed in sunshine. So I set off down Glen Etive, a glen I had never been down before but would certainly have done so if I had known how beautiful it is.

The cloud base was still very low when I parked the car and it wasn't long before I was in it and the humidity made me perspire so much that I was glad eventually to get above it and into the sun. Then it seemed like being in the Alps as the cloud below lying in the corries looked like snow.

The 3,541 feet north ridge is the second longest in Scotland and when I did eventually reach the summit the view was superb and better even than I had imagined, with Loch Etive down below and Ben Cruachan eight miles away to the South, and to the West of it two little tops sticking up out of the clouds. These could only be the Paps of Jura, over forty miles away. The top of Beinn Mhor on Mull was also visible above the cloud and to the North Bidean nam Bian and Ben Nevis stood out well. Looking round a full 360° I counted 104 tops, many of which I had been on at some time or another. Apart from the road down the west side of Loch Etive and one or two houses near it there was no sign of humanity at all, although I did meet one man on the summit.

I eventually set off for Glas Bheinn Mhor, 3,258 feet. On the way the descent of a long very narrow ridge caused me quite a lot of unexpected trouble and proved very slow going and on the other side of the summit it was necessary to keep going East before it was possible to get down into the Allt Mheuran and eventually back to the car after nearly nine hours most enjoyably spent.

I wanted to get a photo of Ben Starav but it is so huge I had to drive about three miles back up the glen before I could get it all on film. A fitting end to a visit to Scotland when the weather was the best I have experienced over a period of 43 years.

THREE GOOD CLIMBING DAYS ON THE ALPINE MEET

David Jones

It was Harry Archer who suggested that Matthew ought to take a party on a traverse of the Alphubel from the Feejoch, and next morning Matthew Archer and David Jones, with Ann Dewar and David Braine (guests) took the first car out of the Felskinn Cable station. The one-way ticket takes one up to the Mittel-Allalain by way of the new Metro Alpin, and taking Laingfluh cable car down it's now possible to make the Allalain and Alphubel mountains into one-day outings.

We crossed over the ski-piste to pick up the start of the "trench" wending up over the glacier slopes of the Allalain, where an unbroken line of "ropes" moved slowly up. The slow pace was rather tedious but

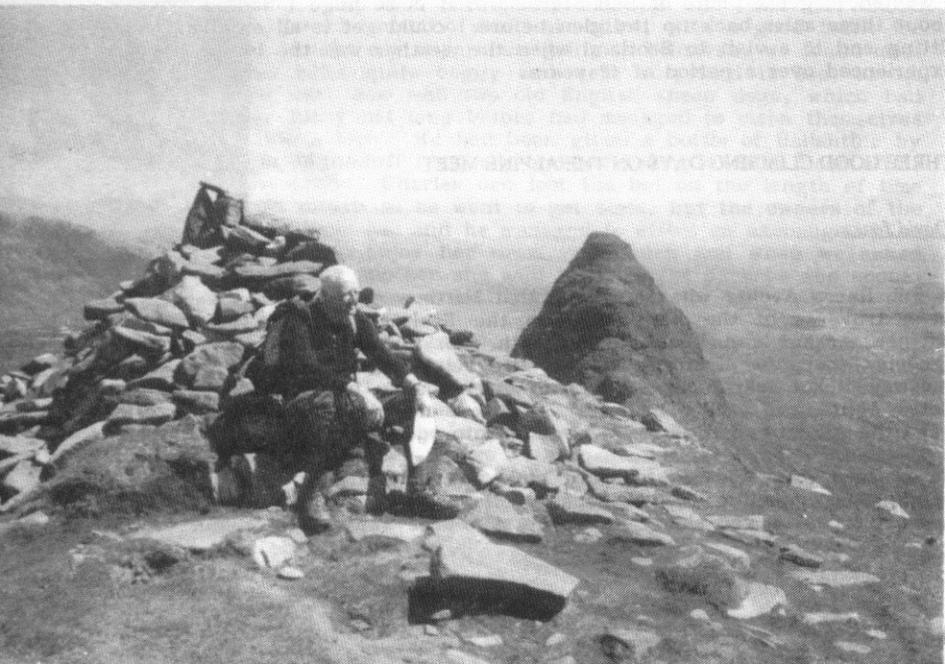


ABOVE: RALPH STEADMAN ON THE MATTERHORN, A RARE VIEW OF THE SUMMIT WITH NO OTHER PARTY ON IT



TOP: ESMÉ SPEAKMAN (AND JOHN WHYTE) ON THE BRITANNIA HUT TO ZERMATT TRAVERSE IN 1984 - PART OF THE CLUB'S 75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

TONY HUSBAND ON ONE OF HIS MUNROS



BOTTOM: JOHANNA MERZ ON THE SENTIERO ROMA, BELOW THE GIANETTI HUT



at the pass we turned off, with relief, and scrambled over the icy "Sckrund" into the Feejoch. Once on the ridge we moved quickly; short rock scrambles alternating with traverses on ice around cornices. The "gendarme" of the Feekopf, leaning slightly to the left, loomed up in front and gave us the first rock climb and the way onto the Alphubel pass. It was an interesting little climb with plenty of holds, only the tendency of the "Kopf" to lean over towards Taesche made the climb feel very odd.

Looking around it appeared as if we had the mountain to ourselves. The first problem to tackle was the narrow, spiralling snow ridge that would take us steeply to the rocky outcrop at the base of the final ice face. The ridge was double corniced, the way wending through the cornices, alternating from the Taesche to the Sass sides. Towards its end it took off steeply to the rocks, leaving us a delicately narrow ice edge to crampon up. The perfect arrete!

A short break here, then Matthew asked David Braine to continue the climb and lead onto the face. From below the face had a shiny veneer to the snow; in fact it was ice, and the soft coating of snow didn't make the climb easier. Pressing hard, the crampons just afforded enough grip as we zigzagged up making use of any slight indentation in the ice. Occasionally there was a pause when a few steps had to be cut. This gave us the chance to look down the face and admire its white smoothness as it plunged down, ending abruptly at the lip where it disappeared into the Taesche Valley. The situation was calculated to concentrate the mind wonderfully to reach the snow dome above safely.

It really is difficult to pick out the true summit of the Alphubel; the summit ridge is long and wide and almost flat. Eventually we opted for the most widely trodden area to have lunch and admire the views. It was a beautiful summer's day.

Matthew now led us off the top and down to the Bergschrund, through it, and on to the Alphubel glacier. It was a start of a fast competent lead, that would take us through all the problems of glacier travel without mishap and not once having to retrace our steps, and the Alphubel glacier is wide and long and only at length did the Leingfluh cable station below begin to draw nearer and larger. At last we moved on to the dry glacier, and then finally onto the firmness of the rocks. Another fine mountainsering experience.

The Nadelhorn is not visible from Sass Fee, the best view of the mountain being from the Allalhorn. From there it stands out between the Dom and the Lenzspitze, two of its three rock ridges lifting to a superb rock plinth. And to climb the Nadelhorn you must first get up to and pass a night at the Mischabel Hut. Both are testing experiences!

The pleasure of the climb therefore began at 4.30 a.m. the next day up the spine of the ridge behind the hut till the point of access onto the Hohbalm glacier is reached. There pools of light dotted the snow as parties roped up. Not far off a seemingly tremendous rockfall thundered down unseen as we also made up our two ropes and crampons. Matthew Archer with Simon Dewar and Judith Ogden (guest), on one rope, and Harry Archer with David Jones and David Irwin on the other.

The "trail" led in and out but despite the darkness the crevasses were easily picked out by torches. Dawn saw us approaching the Windjoch and as the light of day improved so did the pace of other parties going up who passed us on either side. In the shelter of a crevasse on the "joch" we were with them again as they had all stopped to breakfast. We also had to stop a few minutes later, but only to don jackets, hats and gloves as we stepped into the bitter wind blowing from the West. The route first followed the crest of the ridge, then up steep snow banks alongside. As we moved higher small gendarmes forced the climbing onto the steep melt-water ice out on the face, followed by a short ice climb back onto the ridge and each subsequent little ice climb became steeper and nastier than the one before. Matthew's party were climbing strongly and having passed other ropes, were well above us. Visibility however became very restricted as the clouds, which had been gathering on the peaks, dropped down to envelop everything. The climb continued, but with no view of a summit to inspire, as if the ridge would never end.

We had by now come up to Matthew again who was held up by a large party struggling up ice covered rocks. Seeing us all together seemed to inspire Matthew and he led off along the ice beside the rock. Cutting and front pointing quickly up on to a small slope of fresh snow, he stamped the way up this to the ridge, crossed it, and moved over to the ice on the other side, well in front of the party still on the rocks. Looking up suddenly we saw the iron cross on the tiny summit. There were big smiles all round as we went up the bucket steps cut into the ice and joined Matthew, Judith and Simon clinging to the cross. Amazingly we were only the second party on the summit. Before long the summit area became very crowded and we moved down to a quieter spot for breakfast.

All the way down to the Windjoch the snowridge of the Ulrichshorn had stood before us. Harry now suggested we should climb it. He met with no enthusiastic response, nevertheless we set off to climb it! Leaving the rucksacks with Judith and Simon we were led off at a storming pace by David Irwin seemingly determined to get it over. At a third of the way up the rope came tight on him and he was finally told to 'go slowly' by Harry! What can be said of the climb of Ulrichshorn, well, one gets a nice view of Sass Fee far below!

A party of nine organised by Matthew Archer and David Watts set off to traverse the Weissnies from the Almageilertal. The three ropes comprised David Watts, with David Jones and David Lidbetter (guest). Matthew Archer with Judith Ogden and Simon Dewar; David Brain with Ann Dewar and Ian Dewar (guests).

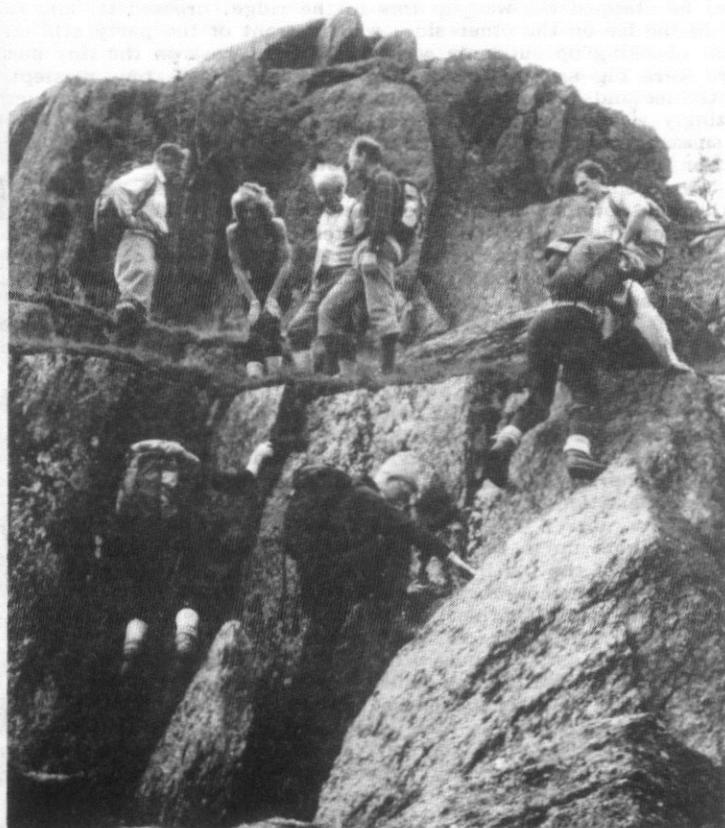
A pleasant walk up to the quite new Almageiler hut situated alongside the rock wall of the Dri Hornli and the luxury of electric light, spotless indoor toilets and showers and comfortable mattresses. The dinner was excellent and plentiful, then we had the rare hut experience of a good night's sleep.

At 4.45 a.m. we set off and joined the line of torch lights contouring upwards to the Zwischbergen pass. Dawn came before we reached the pass and when we did the view eastwards was black with storm clouds which threatened the day. A halt to rope up and fit crampons and a chance to take a bite to eat. Then the climb past a series of schist knolls. From the last of the knolls we contemplated the snow and ice slope going up steeply to the base of the rock face.

On zigzagging up to the right the surface appeared less icy than in the centre, but the ice steepened near the rocks. A snow gully then led us up and past loose rubble but hard ice finally forced us out of the gully to clamber onto rocks that were reasonably firm. We took off crampons and had an interesting scramble involving route finding until the crest of the ridge came into view. Following this we arrived at the dome of the first summit. The black clouds had vanished but despite the blue skies fluffy white summer clouds were rising from the valley which blotted out the views.

Replacing our crampons we set off for the summit, not far off, along a delectable narrow corniced ridge. The trail kept just below the lip; a tentative poke with the ice axe shaft now and again met no resistance in the snow of the cornice. Finally a short snow rise brought us up to point 4032 and the true summit.

The descent began easily until all came to a halt at a very icy patch in an area of crevasses. We took great care going down on a tight rope, as other parties were coming up on the same narrow bridge. Then steep snow slopes took us quickly down towards the snout of the glacier and the path leading to the cable car station.



NOT THE CLASSIC SCRAMBLING MEET! - BUT EFFORT, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND AMUSEMENT ON EAGLE CRAG, - LAKES SCRAMBLES MEET

THE APPROACH MARCH

Ben Howe

Many members over the years have asked what happens on the approach marches which were organised, since 1959, by Paul French. What is an Approach March? It's not an exploration of uncharted terrain, nor is it in the league of intrepid members' first ascents. It's just a uniquely pleasurable experience of alpine travel shared by like-minded friends, and it's one way of getting fit for the Meet proper.

But, things happen on approach marches and there are traditions, practical ones, that are observed. Marchers travel by train, mid-day, mid-week from Victoria. A party of six, though sometimes exceeded, seems ideal. It occupies an overnight sleeping compartment. Members will have provided themselves and each other with a shared supper of gourmet standard where especial care will have been taken with the choice of wines. The bagging of an adjoining seating carriage for supper only is an acquired skill and is usually entrusted to one of the more worldly-wise members!

Arguments occur on approach marches and the first is always likely to be about what is the correct level of ventilation when the sleeping compartment is fully occupied. This is won by the two marchers who occupy the top, draughty berths. Suitcases, six in number, packs, ice-axes, crampons, two days' rations and the remainder of the evening's wine will tax the stuffing skill of the party, but harmony prevails; sleep is intermittently accepted and rejected as the train clanks its way across Europe.

"Four a.m. and change at Basle". Paul will already know the departure time and platform of the train to Kandersteg or Martigny or Chur . . . he will also know at what time and where breakfast will be taken . . . at a station buffet or at a named restaurant across from a bus-stop or at the next change of train. The party needs no initiatives to display, no questions to ask. It's all made clear, each quiet word as the need arises. For it's all been planned in advance in meticulous detail.

But things happen on Approach Marches! What happened when an ancient medic achieved a self-diagnosed hernia on a steeply sloping scree? Nothing. He lay down gently along the line of contour until normality was re-asserted and the downward march continued. Sometimes, firm instructions issued prior to departure are remembered wryly. "You won't need crampons on an approach march". The party gingerly edged its way from the Forno Hut along little parallel ridges of glacial ice separated by rivulets of melted snow! Other, more pleasant surprises, occur. On a day when a post-bus connection was essential, two taxis awaited the group as it clambered down to road from hut. Again, all knew that Juf at 6998 feet is the highest inhabited hamlet in Switzerland, but the sight of its tame Llama gave additional pleasure.

Advanced organisation, always first-class, can't predict the weather, so some unexpected snow will mean knee-deep passage over the Muretto Pass. New members, delighted to be invited, also sometimes give cause for concern. Kandersteg Post Office is not large. Six members'

suitcases due for onward posting and open on the floor evoke much quiet local interest as the contents of an overweight case are redistributed. A testy silence is broken only by Paul's quiet "Did you really need all that?" - a comment agreed with then and remembered annually since!

Approach March routes are thoroughly researched from knowledge carefully stored over the years, but each march has the capacity to surprise, so the unexpected becomes the norm. Traversing round a cliff face, halfway up and on a ledge, some eighteen inches wide, the party rounds a right angle bend and suddenly Virginia, out in front, calls "Hush; - chamonix!" We creep up to peer round the corner, we face goats, still, curious and extensive. It's a long way back, and down, difficult indeed for us to turn. But not for goats. Delicate, dignified and slow to prouette, they turn and lead us gently on our way. And, sometimes, marchers become careless, needlessly and dangerously so. Crampon-less, unroped, confident, we walk across a snowfield, deep and steep. A slip, a collar grabbed, a change of stride and all is well - this time!

The route is considered by Paul in October and November and has been finally selected with letters of confirmation completed by February. Each day will have something special. The route, the overnight stay, the geographical and historical character are all known and passed on succinctly to the marchers as the days unwind. Huts and mountain inns, some large and visible like Schwarenbach, others sheltered and shy like Lago Palu, are chosen with care. Each is different, but all are the same - hospitable places of character where a welcome awaits and often re-awaits a valued party of now elderly travellers. And, occasionally, the party finds itself at an hotel whose character has changed. At Maloja, the Hotel Schweitzerhaus (Osteria Vecchia) was chosen from past association. Six travel-stained marchers, washed but grubby in boots and trows march boldly between dressed and gowned German, Swiss and American tourists to a table of damask and a meal of quality. Our leader upsets a pot of coffee and a lake floods the table, but a booming Cambridge member's voice congratulates the wine waiter on his choice, and the situation is retried. The tourists are impressed with our bearing - clearly British, and probably impecunious!

So, approach marchers don't have to stay up high. Descents, brief ones, are permitted into villages with special attractions. Like Soglio with the Pallazo Salis, the ancestral home of the aristocratic Salis family, complete with fortifications and barracks to house their private army. The family has left a unique hotel, complete with upright grand piano on a minstrel gallery where an elderly marcher could entertain visitors and staff alike with a selection that only a venerable F.R.C.O. could immediately compile.

Marchers get lost too! They forget the R.V., both time and place, and other marchers spread out to search village and countryside. The missing man is always right, and all members are always right, too, when a route decision is to be made. All marchers read a map accurately, but sometimes come to different conclusions and the leadership is challenged by five free and energetic souls. But Approach Marchers never make unwise decisions; if the route becomes a little rarified and a detour occurs, it is banished from public utterance as befits the reputation of the group.

But once on the path the pace is leisurely and enjoyment is absolute. Conversation is wide-ranging with flowers and butterflies, mountain animals and identified peaks all adding to the adrenalin which fires the group. And the knowledge that before leaving U.K. Paul has re-checked the next hut's availability and the next and the next means that the march is a confident and relaxed undertaking. But it can't command the weather. There is a path which leads from the Cabane du Mont-Fort via the Col de la Chaux and the Col de Louvie to the privately owned Cabane Prafleuri. It's a fine weather path somewhat ill-defined in places, not very often used, but well within the capabilities of an approach march party. Except that at the final pass recent snow and low cloud had obliterated all route traces and an itinerary planned with such care was reluctantly but unhesitatingly abandoned and the arduous long haul back to Cabane du Mont-Fort began. The unexpected happens on approach marches.

If you make your way via the precipitous path to the Doldenhorn Hut, you will early on come to Fisialp. There you will see a small farmstead and probably two or three generations of farm folk busy in and around the buildings. The Approach March party passes by. Glances and greetings are exchanged and Paul produces a photo of years and years back. Children on the photo, now seemingly middle-aged, come forward smiling in warm hearted and delighted recognition. They well remember Paul. Once again, one feels privileged to have been present, to have been invited to enjoy a very special mountain experience, - to have participated in an Approach March. The marches are all different, but they all bear the unmistakable imprint of Paul French.

THE MATTERHORN

From the beginning of time
 She has stood motionless,
 Looking over all of creation,
 Witnessing the evolution of
 primate to human
 wheel to space shuttle
 and finally fire to the devastating power of nuclear fission;
 This is the Matterhorn

As the sun emerges over the horizon
 Her colossal shadow begins to spread outwards,
 Smothering the surrounding countryside,
 Only to retreat again as the sun grows in height and strength.
 As the wind picks up and the heat from the sun begins to
 penetrate the atmosphere,
 The swirling vortex of mists guarding her base gradually,
 almost hesitantly, begins to disperse,
 Looking like spectres of lost souls dancing to the wind
 As it gently whistles down through the crags and crannies,
 and finally reaches the valleys far below.

Behold the Matterhorn stands for all to see in her supreme majesty.
 The sun's rays glitter and twinkle as they're reflected on her snow
 covered summit.
 Streams sparkle as they wind their way down through the tortuous
 boulder-stricken gullies,
 Bubbling and gurgling as they gently work their way down,
 Slowly but surely gathering speed and strength, soon to become
 a racing, frothing torrent of water that will one day join
 the ocean.
 Only the few, such as Everest and Kilimanjaro can boast about
 size and fame as the Matterhorn can.
 Even the clouds kneel down before her as she towers above them,
 like a pillar holding up the heavens.

As night falls, you can sense another side to the Matterhorn:
 Without even being in the vicinity
 You know the wind will no longer be whistling
 But now howling through the crags and crannies.
 Snow and rain flurries get whipped up into a frenzy,
 The rumblings of an avalanche can be heard and felt underfoot.
 All the elements are at a constant war against her,
 But she knows nothing can harm her.
 Not even the world's worst enemy,
 Man;
 Even he cannot harm her.
 But she has taken quite a toll amongst him.
 Who knows how many times her dazzling cloak of snow has been
 stained by the blood of man?
 How many more times will blood be spilt before man realises
 his own folly?
 Man or beast - no one will rule over the Matterhorn.
 From a safe distance she appears to be Serenity itself;
 In reality she's as cruel as death.

Dawn returns;
 A shaft of sunlight catches the ice-covered precipice;
 The Matterhorn saga continues.

If you dare, you too could try to take her on,
 But beware!
 You too could become part of the Matterhorn story.

"David" H. M. Prison. Garfree

*The poem was sent in by a member who takes a class at this prison.
 "David" wrote the poem after being reminded, in the course of
 conversation, of a brief visit he had made to Zermatt some years ago.
 It recalls the abiding impression the mountain had, and has, on him. He
 is steadfastly resolved to go back some time.*

ONLY AN INCIDENT

*One of our members, and two friends, last summer received this letter
 "out of the blue". It speaks for itself. Clearly the event described
 was unforgettable for those concerned but it is also for others a
 remarkable letter to read, and not only for mountaineers. (Ed.).*

"On a June day exactly fifty years ago (1938) you helped
 to save my life as I dangled at the end of a rope in the
 chilly depths of a hidden crevasse on the Hornspitz glacier
 in the Zillertal Alps. Although not fractured, one of my
 legs could carry no weight and the sun was already low in
 the west.

This is more than a normal working life (and a world war)
 away and it would not be surprising if you no longer
 remembered what for you was probably only an incident.

But it was a desperate business for me and I can never
 forget the debt I owe to you all. To Eric for knowing
 exactly how to get me out without falling in yourselves.
 And to Colin and Stanley for helping to achieve this. Then
 there was the risky business, in the semi-darkness, of
 getting me off the heavily crevassed glacier onto the
 safety, if not comfort, of the moraine and a night's
 bivouac.

I don't know what inspired me to write this letter; looking
 at old photos I think. We were never exactly friends: just
 a scratch climbing party. But no real friends could have
 done more.

I hope you are well and have had a happy life.

Sincerely yours

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST YEAR

Wendell Jones

1988 proved a varied year. Visits to a son at Bradford University gave walks in Wharfedale and Dovedale; a homeward detour from our golf group frolics in the Wirral provided a tour of the Clyds, including Foel Fannau with a sort of Barracks on top. ABMSAC meets produced a further three forays to Patterdale, one of which did not include an ascent of Helvellyn, and a first visit to The Oread Hut and some happy scrambling on Tryfaen and the Glyders.

Five days of culture in a damp Florence was followed by a contrastingly sunny week on Elba off the Tuscan coast. The brochure had a provocative reference to mountains behind our hotel, and I was delighted to find a granite ridge, higher than Sca Fell, rising above the maquis. The rock was good, the barbed wire bad, and the thorns sharp, and the views magnificent, save for the highest peak, Monte Capanne, looking like a spaghetti version of Fylingdales. The Medici one felt would not have given planning consent.

One son, Michael, had sold the ABMSAC Alpine Meet to his elder brother Howard, and the three of us drove out to Saas Fee. Highlights of the holiday were a long day from the Bordier Hut over the Bigerhorn to the Balfrin and the traverse from the Britannia Hut to Zermatt - encompassing a failure on the Rimpfischhorn. When last there in 1954 the couloirs above 4,000 metres were of snow and family commitments were nil; in 1988 they were icy and with two inexperienced heirs in tow, my natural cowardice prevailed.

Franz Mason-Hornby

In late July I went to Grindewald with three friends, none of whom had done anything other than hillwalking in the British Isles.

Our first objective was the Eiger. Took the last train of the evening to the Eigergletscher Station and bivied in a station storeroom near the tunnel entrance. An early start, up the first bluffs in darkness. Stopped for a bite of breakfast where the route looks over the Nordwand; could see several parties on the face, a busy year for it as 1988 was the 50th anniversary of its first ascent.

Had lunch on the summit, and as it was such a peerless day descended via the Kleine Eiger, a route not to be recommended. While trying to traverse back to the ordinary route we fell 400ft down very steep snow, straight over the bergschrund. Shaken we picked our way interminably across the West Flank, all very loose rock, nasty slabs and outwardly sloping holds. At last reached the route and had to race down the final bit as darkness fell. Arrived back at the station twenty hours after leaving it.

The Swiss railway and hotel staff were very kind, they had seen our fall through binoculars, seen we were alright, and prepared an excellent dinner washed down with litres of Fendant, all for no charge.

After the Eiger epic things went much more smoothly. We had an excellent ascent of the Wetterhorn ordinary route. The great secret, as told to me by a Swiss Guide, is to cross right, onto the rock rib, immediately after the traditional breakfast place. That way one avoids most of that nasty shale.

On next to Zermatt for the Matterhorn. Unfortunately the weather was very stormy, with a lot of fresh snow so we were confined to the Hornli Hut. One party was caught on the summit by the storm and abseiled down in darkness, all the way to the Hornli. A Spanish team at the hut kept disappearing out to lay fixed ropes up the start of the North Face.

Our next destination was Chamonix, to do the ordinary Gouter route on Mt. Blanc. I had done it before but I'd forgotten how stunning the view is from the Gouter Hut as the sun sinks to the west and the lights of Geneva twinkle up from the valley floor. The summit was bitterly cold as usual in the pre-dawn, but a marvellous feeling watching the sun come up over Switzerland. We traversed the summit and descended the corridor route to the Midi halfway station. Back in Chamonix for lunch and a beer.

All in all an excellent holiday, what struck home yet again is how long one needs in the Alps just to climb a few routes. When planning a trip of say a fortnight's climbing one must remember to add in days spent travelling, shopping, rest days and days lost to bad weather.

Johanna Mera

During the past year I seem to have had more than my fair share of excitement and challenge. In June 1988, soon after the enjoyable Skye meet, I completed the northern half of Corsica's magical long-distance footpath, the GR20. The simple refuges along the way are widely spaced and often provide neither food nor blankets, so that we had to carry all our own supplies and bivvy gear. The terrain was always rough, often rocky and the ascents and descents were long and arduous. However, the beauty of the country (and the seductive smell of the maquis) made all this effort worthwhile. Several times we departed from the route in order to take in a summit, including Monte Cinto (2,705m), Corsica's highest peak. This was a most enjoyable climb - not technically difficult but very much more interesting than the dreary trudge I had half expected. I would advise anyone walking the GR20 from south to north (the best way) to allow time for this dramatic climax.

In September I returned to the Ortler range, for a climb of the Cevedale (3,769m). Unfortunately, my favourite Italian guide, Maurizio, had to join a rescue party to retrieve the body of someone who had fallen fatally in a crevasse while descending the mountain unroped. However, I was able to make the climb with another party. From the summit I admired the '13 Cime' [13 summits] stretching away southwards; the three-day traverse is on this year's itinerary. My next port of call was the Bagni dei Masino, a favourite spot at the foot of the southern slopes of the Bregaglia. Here I met up with the Editor of the Alpine Journal for a short wander along the Sentiero Roma. I thought I'd lost Ernst once when he dived down an enticing (but

wrong) side-turning; however, after a lot of calling and shouting and retracing my steps, I discovered him unconcernedly taking photographs!

I then made my way westwards to the Gran Paradiso area (while Ernst met up with some friends in the Ticino). I had booked Steve Jones fully a year ahead, since I knew that his calmness and reliability were just what I needed in order to tackle the east-west traverse of the Gran Paradiso. Robin Collomb describes this route as 'a superb glacier expedition, one of the best of its class in the Alps'. We walked up to the remote Pol bivouac at the head of the Cogne valley and the next morning I saw, with mounting excitement, the sun-tipped summit of the Paradiso just visible high above us to the west. Although only PD/PD sup, the route was quite hard enough for me and provided a bit of everything: rock-climbing, ice-climbing and magnificent views. I was glad to have achieved another fourthousand by a route other than the 'normale'. After that there were some heavy snowfalls which prevented me from climbing Monte Viso as we had intended. However, we spent two days walking round it - an expedition which I can highly recommend to anyone who values uncrowded huts, friendly guardians and unspoilt mountain scenery.

In mid-October I was invited by Alan Atkinson to the Climbers Club dinner up in Wales. Anyone who was there will remember the Indian-summer perfection of that weekend. My adrenalin was flowing freely both on the Saturday, when I scrambled up the committing Horned Crag on Lliwedd, and on the Sunday, when Alan led me up the excitingly exposed Outside Edge on the Great Slab at Cwm Silyn.

And so to 1989. In March, with Brian Desmond and a small party, I made a most enjoyable tour in the northern Setesdal of Norway on Nordic skis. I am now a XC ski addict and find that traditional, waxable, wooden skis are absolutely ideal for the type of undulating terrain one meets in Norway. Again, we encountered uncrowded, though well-provisioned huts and, in between them, a scenic wonderland above the snowline, providing a safer and less exhausting alternative to ski-mountaineering in the Alps.

Finally, in May I spent a week riding through the Spanish Sierra Nevada. We were able to cover a 100-mile circuit through rough mountain terrain and still have time in the afternoons for walking and exploring. I only fell off once (when my horse was bitten by an insect!) and believe that riding is the ideal way to travel through these mountains. Since I hadn't ridden for 30 years (apart from a few lessons in Richmond Park at the last moment), this was, indeed, yet another challenging adventure.

G. B. Pennett

The Dales Way, a delightful 84 miles walk from Ilkley to Bowness in the Lake District, has been tramped by thousands of walkers of all ages over the years and will no doubt be walked by thousands more. Some have back-packed their way to the Lakes, others have used bed and breakfast facilities or done it in stages at weekends, while the more energetic types - the centurions - have done it in one big walk. It is

a riverside path along each of the major rivers in the Yorkshire Dales and is indeed a delightful walk with superb scenery, including views of the Three Peaks, Pen-y-Ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale, as well as the Howgills.

My wife and I decided to tackle the walk with our pet cocker spaniel. We chose to back-pack and do the walk in easy stages over a week. Back-packing has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that you can walk, take your time, and camp almost where you like without having to rush along to the next bed and breakfast place. You can enjoy the scenery at leisure. The main disadvantage is having to carry a tent and sleeping bags, particularly if it proves to be a very hot week as it did in our case. We all suffered but we made good use of the many delightful inns on the way. The walk is not a strenuous one and the only steep climbing one does is in the Cam Fell area.

Good food and hospitality at the inns throughout the walk - Appletreewick, Grassington, Kettlewell, Buckden, Lee Yeat, Dent and Burneside - helped us along the hot and dusty trail and most people we met were helpful. Where else but in Cumbria would back-packers be allowed to pitch a tent on someone's lawn? This happened to us towards the end of the walk. We were having difficulty in finding somewhere to camp, - we were in an agricultural area, sheep and cows everywhere - when we came across this property. The owners offered us their lawn and then provided myself and my wife with ample platefuls of bacon and eggs and a large pot of tea. This sort of hospitality is heartening.

The year had started with a walk in Wharfedale on New Year's Day. Other walks in January and February were in the Pateley Bridge area and in the Craven Dales around Bell Busk. In March we did several walks in Nidderdale including a circular walk in the Gouthwaite Reservoir area; another from Middlesmoor taking in Dale Edge. On March 16 we walked round The Gib from Cononley; March 17 saw us in the Winterburn Reservoir area; March 18 we did Pinhaw Beacon; April 1 (Good Friday) we were again in Nidderdale for a walk to Fountains Earth Moor; April 2 we did a walk taking in Haw Crag in the Craven Dales. There were more walks in Nidderdale during May. On August 6 we did a superb walk in the Semerwater area of North Yorkshire and then on August 9 we walked from Skipton over Flasby Fell and back. On a very wet day in August we walked on Harden Moor from Harden and on another took in Beamsley Beacon.

In October we spent a week at Portinscale near Keswick and had many fine walks. On our journey to Keswick on October 9 we had a short stay in Windermere and took the opportunity to walk up School Knott, which is a superb view-point. Then on October 10 we also did Skiddaw, Skiddaw Little Man and Latrigg. The following day we drove to Mungrisedale and climbed Bowscale Fell and Bannerdale Crags; next day a short walk taking in Walls Crag and Ashness Bridge. We climbed Causey Pike, Scarr Crags, Sale, Eel Crag, Wandope and Whiteless Pike. Next day Grisedale Pike, Hopegill Head and Whiteside. We had intended returning by the valley route but the weather was so good it would have been wrong to leave the tops so we retraced our tracks over Hopegill Head and Grisedale Pike. It was well worth it.

We visited Cray Gill and Scar Top in Wharfedale on November 2 and then on a cold and misty Wednesday in November we walked in the Kirkby Malham area. Boxing Day saw us again in Nidderdale and then on December 27 we did a superb walk up Hebden Gill, Hebden in Wharfedale.

Ernst Sordheimer

Another good year, without any visits to outlandish places. Scotland six times - it is habit-forming. Torridon for Hogmanay, warm and wet most of the time, but on one day we walked to Gerry's hostel through a magnificent landscape of sun and snow. About the conditions on two later weekends that winter, the less said the better; but the return to Torridon in May (with Richard, Ingrid, Alasdair and Senga) made up for it. At long last I got my photos of the Triple Buttress (see the 1978 Journal) and discovered the secret delights of Slioch. Glen Clova in October glowed in golden autumn colour, but winter had set in on Broad Cairn; and in November the last Munro of the Carn Mairg round fell to our determined assault, and so did Creag Uchdag, one of the many Corbetts in Hamish's latest book that no one has ever heard of - oh, for a second lifetime. A fortnight in Orkney and Shetland, under the auspices of the Historical Association, though most interesting, hardly belongs to Scotland, or to this tale - crawling into all those chambered cairns has more to do with caving than with mountain climbing.

In the Alps I discovered the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain and 'the most ruined in the Alps'; two countries have competed in the effort to give access to the multitudes. In fact we much enjoyed the scramble up the (Austrian) Klettersteig and the long descent via Schneefernerhaus, Knorr hut and Gatterl to the Ehrwalder Alm; away from the summit-crowds we were on our own, in a superb setting of forests, streams and rocky ridges. A few weeks later I was off to the Alps again, to join Johanna Merz in the Bregaglia - the Italian side of course. We stayed at the Bagni del Masino, where one's aches and pains dissolve in the ancient thermal baths, and were sorry to find new 'developments' at the entrance of the Val di Mello; but higher up all was as tranquil and wildly beautiful as ever. Then a blissful Ticino week with the two Swiss, Base Camp being the Hotel Aniro in Castagnola where meals were taken on the huge terrace overlooking the romantic lake, and days were spent wandering in the nearby hills. Many of the old, disused tracks are being restored for walkers, though - away from the big city - there are few people about. Wild cyclamen accompany you on your climb through the chestnut forests, and from the tops there are dramatic views over the Lake of Lugano with its many arms, over picturesque villages and hills to the snow mountains in the distance. What more could the elderly mountaineer desire?

Les Swindin

1988 was intended to be a special year. I was to celebrate my 50th birthday and 25 years of mountaineering. Five friends with whom I've spent many great days in the hills were celebrating the same birthday and so a week-end in the Lake District was planned for June. Fortunately it was one of the rare fine ones of the summer when we all

met, climbed and dined together. Nothing particularly difficult was attempted as some of the participants had remained less active than myself in recent years, but enjoyable ascents of Gimmer Crack and a mass one of Bow Fell Buttress led to the consumption of several bottles of bubbly on the summit of the latter.

This year had started with a trip to the Canary Islands instead of the usual skiing holiday, dictated by Barbara's shoulder trouble, where we did at least manage one long mountain walk.

When it came to Easter and the annual ski-mountaineering trip there was too much snow with the resultant avalanche dangers. Add to this the prevailing unsettled weather conditions and it is easy to see why my party only managed to climb one summit and that on a day tour from the valley. So at this stage my special year was not doing too well.

Whitsun saw us in Scotland once again. We had some good hill walking and managed to add most of the Munros in and around Glens Lyon and Lochay to our list and we only got really wet once.

I joined the Joint Alpine meet in Randa at the start of my summer holiday with a view to climbing some of the routes in the Zermatt valley that have remained unticked on my list. I wasn't entirely successful but came away satisfied with the ascent of the Triftgrat on the Breithorn, with Peter Fleming, but disappointed that I didn't manage to get Barbara up the Lenzspitze. We tried its east ridge and had passed all the difficulties when the predicted bad weather set in and persuaded us to descend.

An unsettled spell of weather followed so we decided that instead of waiting for the improvement to do more routes there, that it would be better to spend the time travelling and be in position elsewhere for the next fine spell. This manoeuvre worked perfectly and took us to the Bregaglia where we climbed the Corda Molla on Disgrazia and the north ridge of Piz Badile. Both of these were long days out, the first, as a party of three, meant that we were slow on the upper part of the route and on the abseil descent. It is worth noting for anyone contemplating doing this route that the upper part of the snow ridge is a bit steeper than the guide-book suggests (and was very icy) and that it can be avoided fairly easily by following the rocks to its left (the descent line). The long day on the Badile was not because we were slow on the climb - far from it - but because we chose to return to the Swiss side the same day. This involved descending the south side of the mountain and then circling round it over two cols back to the hut. A measure of how tiring this was is that when we returned to the valley it took me as long to descend to the car as it had taken to walk up to the hut the day before.

Most of my rock climbing during the year has been done in the Wye Valley and at Avon with the odd route in the Pass, at Tremadoc and, in the Lakes, on Dow, and restricted to the wet weather routes.

All in all an active year which didn't quite match up to my expectations.

Peter Ward

I'm not sure whether the less significant activities of new members are of any interest. On the other hand, if one doesn't say anything the assumption may well be that the year has been spent in the garden.

So - new members Mr and Mrs P Wood spent the 1988 spring and summer seasons skiing and climbing in the Adelboden area based at Engstligenalp and spring 1989 touring in the Dachstein.

The Editor was glad to receive this brief communication which shows that the two Monte Rosa members have clearly had a far from insignificant year in the Alps. It also points to the unhappy assumption which may arise when the editor receives no account of members' activities.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

There were 23 club events in 1988.

Of the 16 outdoor meets, 6 were in Scotland, 5 in the Lakes, including the Northern Dinner meet, the George Starkey hut maintenance meet, the Buffet meet and the Alps Reunion meet. One meet was in Wales and two in the Alps, - the club's own Alpine meet and the joint meet with the CC and the AC. There were also two Sunday country walks in the south east, - one in the Chilterns and one in Surrey.

The outstanding event of the 7 indoor functions was the annual dinner at the Rembrandt Hotel in London, celebrating in 1988 the 125 years of the SAC. A further meeting in this connection was a joint evening with the AC for the premiere showing of the English version of the SAC film marking 175 years of Swiss alpine mountaineering. The remaining 5 lecture meetings in London included the Fondue and the Buffet parties and the annual slide-show evening of members' mountaineering activities during the year.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held at the Alpine Club, South Audley Street, London, at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 7th December 1988.

The President, Mr J.S. Whyte, was in the Chair, and forty members were present.

1. The minutes of the 1987 A.G.M., as published in the Journal, were accepted.

2. There were no matters arising.

3. Election of Officers and Committee: Mr. R. Wendell Jones was elected Vice President in place of Mr. W.B. Midgley, who retires in rotation.

Major F.B. Suter was elected Hon. Meets Secretary in place of Mr. J.B. Berry, who retires after five years of service.

All other officers were re-elected.

Mrs. H. Eddowes and Mr. B.F. Dolling were elected to the Committee in place of Mrs. G. Bull and Mr. G. Attridge, who retire in rotation. Mr. A. Lock was also elected to the Committee.

The new Committee will be:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Mrs. B. Baldwin | A Lock |
| J.W. Chapman | D.F. Penlington |
| B.F. Dolling | A. Strawther |
| Mrs. H. Eddowes | G.G. Watkins |

EASTERN APPROACH TO THE GRAN PARADISCO; CRESTA GESTALDI AND THE ROC, FROM FINISTRA DEL ROC. " ... A SUPERB GLACIER EXPEDITION, ONE OF THE BEST OF ITS CLASS" (COLLOMB). PHOT. JOHANNA MERZ



4. The President's address is summarised below.

"The Association has enjoyed a very active and successful year. One or two of the many events may be picked out for special mention. As usual, the Northern Dinner was fully subscribed and very successful. Particular thanks are due to Arlene Midgley, who puts in so much work.

"The President attended the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the SAC on April 19th. This took place in the Station Buffet room at Olten, where the original meeting to found the SAC was held.

"There were two Swiss Meets: a camping meet jointly with the AC and CC., based in the Zermatt valley, the other at Saas Fee. A record attendance of about 100 were at the latter meet. Thanks are due to Mike Pinney for organising the Zermatt meet and to Harry Archer, John Chapman, Ben Suter and George Watkins for the Saas Fee meet. The logistics of fitting everybody into hotels and chalets for varying times, and then feeding them all, became very complex. If one has a complicated organisational job to do, there is no one better than the Armed Services, and our joint services team did a wonderful job.

"The Annual Dinner, held on 8th October at the Rembrandt Hotel, attracted 112, the largest attendance for many years. We were honoured by the presence of a number of distinguished guests, including Jakob Hilber, President of the SAC and His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador. The innovation of follow-up events on the Sunday was well received. The Central President joined in a 12 mile Chilterns walk and was impressed by the fortitude of the U.K. members facing hours of pouring rain.

"At a meeting jointly with the AC., Viktor Wyss showed his film of 175 years of Swiss mountaineering, the world premiere of the English language version.

"The Committee has been examining the possibility of purchasing the freehold of the George Starkey hut. Negotiations are at a very early stage and there is nothing of substance to report yet.

"All the activities described above come about because many people do a lot of work, and thanks are due to them. It is dangerous to name names, because some will inevitably be left out, but mention must be made of Peter Ledebuer for the Annual Dinner, and Mary Boulter who who organises the refreshments at London meetings so successfully, with her main helpers Bertha Bennett, Barbara Rees, Sheila Cameron, Belinda Baldwin and Joan Whyte. Finally thanks are due to Brooke Midgley and other officers and committee members who are retiring, for all their efforts on behalf of the Association.

5. The Hon. Treasurer's report and accounts were adopted.

6. The proposed ABM subscription rates as set out in the Agenda notice were adopted. They are:

£10 for Ordinary, Affiliate and Retired members.
£14 for joint membership
£ 5 for juniors.

all as in 1988.

7. The new draft of the Rules of the Association, as circulated to members, was adopted and becomes the official statement of the rules.

8. Votes of thanks were passed unanimously to the Working Party on the Rules and to the Swiss National Tourist Office.

LORD HUNT AT THE ANNUAL DINNER 8th OCTOBER

A full report on this successful event appeared in the Newsletter for November 1988, which also summarised the three speeches at the dinner, - by Lord Hunt, Jakob Hilber and the President, John Whyte. Lord Hunt, in proposing the health of the many guests especially referred to the achievements of the SAC, and singled out the great Swiss guides as the key figures in early Alpine mountaineering. This roll-call of famous names is here recorded in full.

"It is a privilege, on this very special occasion, to be asked to welcome our guests and the kindred bodies which they represent.

We welcome His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador and Mme Pictet, who have been such very good friends of our Association during their service at the Court of St James. You survived a tough introduction to the ABMSAC on the occasion of our 75th birthday celebrations at the Britannia Hut in 1984. When you shivered in the wind and drizzle, while we comforted you with soup served in Swiss Army billicans. We are very glad indeed that you are with us again tonight and we hope that you have fared rather better than you did four years ago.

We welcome George Band, President of the Alpine Club, and Pat Limerick, President of the Anglo-Swiss Society. Whenever I have been in your shoes, as a guest about to be welcomed by some old climbing companion at a club dinner I show signs of acute anxiety, lest the toast proposer should reveal that he is no true friend by retelling some embarrassing anecdote from our mutual store of mountain memories. So let me reassure you both that I have no such intention.

We welcome John Murray, representing the Tuesday Climbing Club, that Club and our Association share a climbing hut in Patterdale. Many years ago I discovered the Tuesday Climbing Club as the most up-to-date and comprehensive source of data and statistics about matters mountaineering, and then I discovered Audrey Salked.

We are especially glad to have two representatives of the Swiss Tourist Office as friends and guests tonight. Josef Buehler has taken over from our old friend Albert Kunz as its Director. Alvin Breitenmoser has for many years eased and speeded many of us on our way to Switzerland. We hope that you will stay in post for another 20 years to help us celebrate the centenary of the ABMSAC in the same unforgettable manner which Albert Kunz master-minded things at Saas-Fee in 1984.

There is just one other person, whom I perceive as an absent guest, and whom we would all wish to remember with affection. This year is the centenary of Arnold Lunn's birth. How he would have loved to be with us tonight.

I have reserved the biggest welcome of all to our chief guest, Herr Jakob Hilber, President of the Central Committee of the SAC. You are here tonight, Jakob, so that we may congratulate the SAC on completing 125 years of its history since its foundation at Olten in 1863. Olten is in the centre of Switzerland. It is also a centre of rail communications; the 'Crew' of Switzerland. Our own President and I had the honour of dining with your members there last April, in the Station Buffet, the room where your club was inaugurated.

Jakob, tonight your British members greet our ancient parent. Like the fabulous Caucasians, we are a very elderly child ourselves. We have shared nearly eighty years of life since our foundation in 1909.

But the Association of Swiss and British Climbers goes back even further than the origin of the SAC. Our two National Clubs, the Alpine Club and the SAC were founded during the Golden Age of Mountaineering, which began in the early 1850s. We celebrated with you the Centenary of the Alpine Club at Zermatt in 1957. Among many memories of that historic event I recall a Raclette party on the Riffelalp, at which the dispensation of Fendant made the subsequent progress of some of the guests to the Betemps Hut an arduous and erratic journey, but we redeemed ourselves! For there followed a British-Swiss traverse of the Lyskamm, to recall one of the achievements of that Golden Age, and a traverse of the Breithorn from the Betemps by the Young Grat as a tribute to the later pioneers of that great classic climb.

In 1965 we celebrated with you the Centenary of the first ascent of the Matterhorn, when another Anglo-Swiss team made a largely symbolic attempt on the Hoernli Ridge, in deep snow and mist.

And thanks to the public relations expertise of Albert Kunz, we were able to mark our own Association's 75th birthday at Saas-Fee in 1984, dressed and equipped as mountaineers of our Edwardian era.

And yet such events, marvellous memories as they and their anniversaries are, are less important than the heroes of those earlier years. Let us look back tonight to those magnificent men in that "Golden Age" when the Swiss Alpine Club was born. There were the Oberlanders: Melchior Anderegg and Christian Almer, and the men of Wallis, Josef Pennen, Franz Biener and Ferdinand Imsegg and their employers Kennedy, Whympfer, Matthews, Walker, Moore, Tyndall and Stephen.

There was Melchior, who on his one and only visit to London guided his "Herren" Stephen and Hinchliffe unerringly from London Bridge to Lincoln's Inn, in a dense London 'Smog', and Almer, who was observed by Wills, as their two parties approached the summit of the Wetterhorn during that first ascent in 1854, carrying an entire pine tree, branches and all, to plant upon the top.

And let us think of that second wave of heroes, as the Old Century drew to its close and the 20th Century dawned. There were the great guides of Wallis: Franz and Josef Lochmatter, Peter Knubel and his famous son Josef, all of St. Niklaus: Alexander Burgener and Matthias Zurbriggen of Saas-Fee, and again the Oberlanders, Johann Fischer and Heinrich Zurfluh of Meiringen and there was Christian Klucker of Sils-Maria, and their partners included such extraordinary men as Mummery, Donkin and Fox, Ryan and Young. They ushered in a new vision of achievement on High Hills, I use the word 'Partners' to describe that new relationship between our compatriots, Andre Guex has described the partnership between Burgener and Mummery as a marriage (NOCE). "Happy is the Climber" wrote Mummery, quoting Ulysses, "who has drunk the delight of battle with his peers",

Perhaps it would be right, while speaking of that male dominated age, that I should say a word on behalf of the Ladies. Was it not Mummery who wrote that even the most difficult climbs in the Alps would one day be an easy day for a Lady.

And yet male chauvinism died slowly, even in 1929, a year after his death, I found an entry in the Gipfelbuch on the Cima Dei Largo (Bergell) written by Christian Klucker to his friend Walter Risch, "Diesmal auch mit Damen Hier, Mein Lieber Risch!!!". Colonel Strutt and Dr Claude Wilson were staying in the Forno Hut at the time and when I told them about this entry on my return, they didn't want to know. So let us tonight pay tribute to the boldness, skill and sheer strength of our forbears, men and women, Swiss and British, who showed us the way.

And then there was a third phase, a sequel to those great events, separated in time by some 40 years, which took climbers from our two countries to the top of the world. It was predictable that after so many joint enterprises by Swiss and British climbers in the Caucasus, the Rockies, the Andes, the Hindu Kush and the Himalayas, we should arrive at that ultimate place, Everest, more or less together.

I recall the mild sense of affront in 1952 that you - the Swiss - should presume to trespass upon our traditional preserve. I recall our anxious waiting in December of that year, while we were testing our equipment on the Jungfrauoch. How we prayed that you would fail! and yet, how much we owed to Gabriel Chevallet, Rene Dittert, Andre Roch and Raymond Lambert. We followed their footsteps to the South Col and on to the S.E. Ridge. The battered remains of a little tent high up on that Ridge which I found on 26th May 1953 was a memorial to their achievement. They left some useful things on the South Col too, oxygen bottles and some welcome food. So welcome indeed, that when I came across a tin of honey and tin of tuna fish, I kept them concealed and carried these precious treasures into a little empty tent and ate them all myself.

And how we rejoiced, in our turn, when Albert Egger's party made the second ascent, three years after us.

Our 18th Century Poet, William Blake, wrote "great things are done when men and mountains meet". Indeed, what great things were done when men from our country met with your native mountaineers in the Swiss Alps.

The SAC and its British Members have good cause for pride and good cause for gratitude, as we look back over 125 years and more, but we also look forward, and so I give you the toast: to the SAC, its past and its future, coupled with the name of Jakob Hilber.



THE OLD MOUNTAINEERS
Suggestion for the Alpine Club

OBITUARY

Donald M. Clarke

With the passing of Donald Clarke at the age of 81 the Association has lost a very unassuming but competent mountaineer. He became a member of the Association and of the SAC in 1951. In 1962 he became a member of the Alpine Club. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

Donald walked and climbed widely in the British hills and was a steady leader on rock climbs up to mild severe. Prior to 1951 he had walked in the Maritime and Bavarian Alps and in that year he started climbing in the Valais. In subsequent years he made many ascents in various areas of the Alps, most of the climbs being guided. In 1957 he had a very successful season in the Oberland, the Monch (by the ordinary route but descending by the S.W. ridge) being included in his climbs.

Although he enjoyed climbing in the Alps, the less frequented mountain areas held a fascination for Donald. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, in company with Arnold Galloway, he visited Northern Norway, Swedish Lapland and Iceland. In Norwegian Lapland they spent three weeks exploring the then little known Lyngen peninsular. They spent a similar time in Swedish Lapland exploring the rather remote Sarek region and climbing (inter alia) Sarekjakko, the highest peak. In Iceland Donald and Arnold climbed Hekla and several peaks in the Akureyri area. On other occasions their fascination with volcanoes took them to Etna and Stromboli.

In 1962 Donald went to Greece and climbed on Olympus with Wynne Jeurwine and Wendell Jones. 1963 found him in the High Atlas with Wendell Jones and Peter Ledebor and they climbed many of the higher peaks in the area. Later the same year Donald and Wynne Jeurwine were climbing in the Picos de Europa in northern Spain.

Donald was again in Spain in 1967, this time in company with Fred Jenkins and Freddie Smith. They climbed first in the Sierra de Gredos and then revisited the Picos de Europa. In 1978 Donald visited Corsica with Hamish Brown, Ernst Sondheimer and Martin Waddell but bad weather with a lot of snow severely restricted the climbing.

The above resume of Donald's climbing is no doubt incomplete, due in no small measure to his modesty. It has for many years been the practice of the Editor of the Journal to ask members to send in details of their climbs in the previous year but Donald rarely did so except to the extent of an occasional article on a particular area. I have thus had to rely on the writings of other members, various conversations I had with Donald and considerable help from Arnold Galloway. I know that he did have at least one trekking holiday in the Himalayas and that latterly most of his Alpine ascents were guideless, generally with Donald leading.

As he began to ease up in his later years, Donald became much taken with long distance footpaths and walked many of them, including the Penine Way and Offa's Dyke. With Arnold Galloway he also tried to work out a "Hebridian Way", in the course of which they climbed the other Hekla on South Uist.

Donald was born and lived all his life in the Caversham area of Reading. He took a great interest in local affairs and was an active member of St. Andrews church, the Caversham Heights Society and the Chiltern Society. He frequently gave lectures to local groups on his travels and climbs and led parties of ramblers through the Berkshire countryside.

Donald's quiet and modest manner belied his considerable strength of character and physique. He was very determined but never foolhardy. He was supportive of and considerate to the other members of his party. Donald did not waste words but what he said was to the point. He had a dry sense of humour. When I met him once, he was limping and my enquiry as to his health brought forward the reply that he had fallen when climbing solo. I asked which rock climb had been involved and he replied "It wasn't a rock climb - I was picking apples and I fell out of the tree!"

Donald was one of the older school who did not aspire to great technical heights but was very competent and safe in all that he did and he loved his mountains. He will be much missed by all who climbed with him.

Maurice Bennett

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SWISS AND THE BRITISH John Wraight, London

Michael Russell, 1987, 474 pages, bibliography, £16.95

This is a mine of information on Swiss/British relationships from the fifth century to the present with many fascinating nuggets of history in the making. Sir John Wraight's interest in and love of Switzerland and its people did not end with his time as British Ambassador to the Confederation - in his retirement from the Foreign Service he has compiled from innumerable sources a chronology, - running to nearly 280 pages, - at first century by century, then year by year, of events and personalities that have shaped our relations with the Swiss. It is full of surprises (to me, at any rate) and delight and it could well inform many a toast at future Annual Dinners to the health of the Swiss Confederation.

The chronology is preceded by a survey of the development of our relations with the Swiss and of Swiss institutions set against the background of European history, which is as notable for its breadth as for its depth, covering, as it does, travellers and visitors, cultural relations, education, science and economic relations. Some measure of the author's research is given by the 61 pages of bibliography.

The book is copiously and appositely illustrated with pictures from a wide range of sources, many from the Alpine Club Library - but who would have thought that 74 South Audley Street could provide an early illustration of bathing in the nude?

It is highly recommended to anyone interested in how our happy associations with the Swiss developed over the ages.

E. Solari

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Association

pp 94 £5.20 incl. P & P. Obtainable from Mr Peter Cliff, Ardenbeg, Grant Road, Grantown-on-Spey, Inverness-shire.

This book traces the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue Team from its inception in 1963 up to 1988, so giving a rare insight into the development and work of one of Britain's busy mountain rescue teams. It is not only a book to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Cairngorm Team, but with factual accounts of many hair-raising rescues it is a book for anyone interested in Scottish mountaineering.

Alasdair Andrews