



**OREAD MOUNTAINEERING  
CLUB**

**BULLETIN**

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## EDITORIAL

As the candle burns down, the ash-tray overflows and yet another empty bottle hits the pile, I remember the good advice 'Never volunteer for anything'! On reflection, I didn't.....only mentioned in passing that I had access to very good reprographic facilities at the College. Yet here I am, 12 months later, in a flat spin, trying to meet the publication date.

You will not find the exact format of previous years - which is only partly intentional! The inclusion of photographs is a new venture. Despite the excellent work done by Colin Hobday (for which many thanks), a few still lack clarity and this is mainly due to the difficulties of starting from colour slides. I hope in future years that those club members who regularly take black and white may offer these for publication. I should also like to record my thanks to Beryl Strike for providing many excellent cartoons which appear through the Journal and, of course, to everyone who has contributed in any way. The quality of paper could be improved to prevent the line drawings being seen through the page, but the cost would have to be considerably increased.

Ideally, a club Journal should reflect Mountaineering activities undertaken throughout the year, but inevitably it becomes a collection of items contributed by members who have taken the trouble to write about their experiences. If you find any obvious omissions then the fault lies primarily with you - the members.

I have purposely kept editing of articles to a minimum, as I feel that the personality of the writer should be allowed to come through in order to add colour to the written word.

Finally, by way of introduction to the Journal itself, may I commend to you the words of Geoffrey Winthrop Young, in his foreword to 'On High Hills'.

'For in a day of mountain climbing there are three strands twisted upon one another to make up a single length of experience, the things we are doing, the things we are seeing and the things we are feeling. Although only one of the three will be uppermost in our minds at any moment, we ourselves remain conscious of the other two; they form equally part of the adventure as we live through it. But in the telling afterwards, the three cannot be recalled simultaneously... and with all our good will, our veracity as chroniclers must depend for two strands of the story on the readers imagination'.

JILL GREGSON

Editor

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## A STUDY IN AUTOMATION

*The shades of night were falling fast  
As through a Border village passed  
A car, which bore through snow and ice  
A sticker with a strange device  
"Three tops or bust!", "Three tops or bust."*

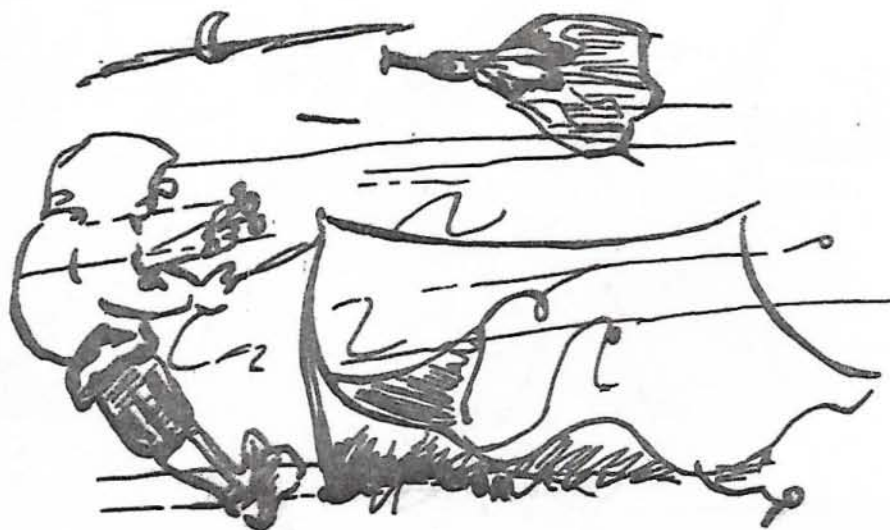
*O'er Rannoch Moor and down Glencoe  
That car did obstinately go  
And with persistence almost mulish  
At length arrived at Ballachulish.  
Then urged by power near daemonic,  
Attained Fort William via Onich,  
And aided by satanic levies  
Scorched up the salient of Ben Nevis.*

*From then 'twas southward ho!' and down  
Through Gretna Green and Carlisle Town  
And southwards still to Portinscale  
And through the jaws of Borrowdale.  
The peak of Scafell Pike was gained -  
The engine now a little strained,  
But, scattering cains to left and right  
The speed increased with the end in sight.*

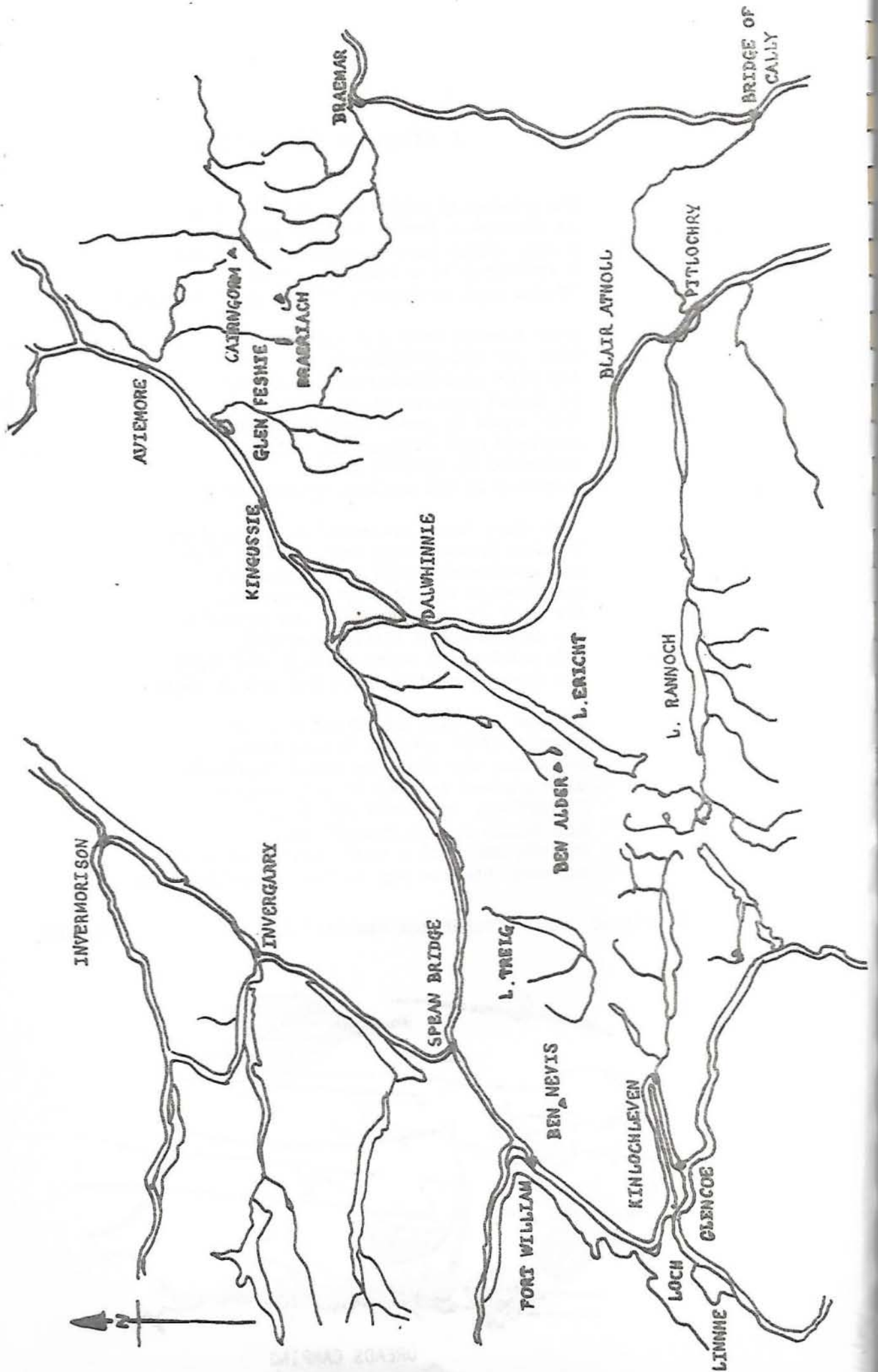
*So down to Wales and Snowdon's top  
Where, petrol gone it had to stop,  
And where the cheering crowds ecstatic  
Were stunned to find it automatic -  
The driver, in a kind of daze,  
Had fallen out on Dunmail Raise  
And the car with a much lighter load on,  
Had made its own way to the top of Snowdon.*

Reprinted from 'Climber and Rambler' 73.

R. CLOUGH



OREADS CAMPING



A HIGHLAND BAKERS DOZEN  
OR  
THE SCOTTISH 4,000's

by Landrover

25th - 29th May 1975

In 1924 four members of the Rucksack Club went to Scotland during Whitweek to attempt all the Scottish 4,000 foot tops within 24 hours. This they accomplished with ease in 22 hours 38 minutes, using car transport between the Ben Nevis Group and the Cairngorms, a 74 mile journey. They were all pleased with this performance until R.S.T.Chorley (now Lord Chorley) of the Fell and Rock informed the Rucksack Club men that he had forestalled them by a couple of days and had completed the round in 20 hours 20 minutes. This stimulated friendly competition and, not to be out done, Eustace Thomas for the Rucksack Club was up to Scotland the following June to see what could be done about Chorley's time. He chose not to repeat the walk himself, but with Mannering would marshall the two younger club members, Heardman and Gilliat, around the peaks. This they did on the 5th June 1925 when the 14 tops were covered in 14 hours 57 minutes.





In June 1954, Phillip Brockbank of the Rucksack Club felt that the drawback of his club's record was the car journey and so planned to walk the total distance. This was attempted by Brockbank and Frank Williamson 11th - 13th June 1954. The record was set by Williamson along who covered the 14 Tops, Ben Nevis to Cairngorm, in 45 hours 42 minutes, Brockbank having to retire three quarters of the way through.

This summarises the Rucksack Club Journal articles by Heardman, Brockbank and Williamson. No doubt the distance has now been covered by many and Williamson's record broken. However, the following is an account of the route traversed by a party of four at the end of May 1975. There was no plan to break records, just to enjoy the Highlands, and include as many Munros as reasonably possible.

"Thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven tops". We were drying out close to the fire in Ladybower Inn after a particularly wet and windy traverse of Win Hill, Lose Hill and the environs of Edale. Dave Penlington had his half inch Bartholomews Grampians map laid out on the table, as one of our number traced his finger over the off white simplicity of the mountain terrain between Ben Nevis and the Cairngorms. There was joviality in the discussion as we planned our equipment and food supplies. Dave would bring the shortbreads, honey and muesli, Roy cheese and paraffin, Chris powdered milk, tea and sugar. Jack tinned soup, tinned potatoes, tinned meat and tinned fruit - and carry them. It was 3.10pm, our discussion ended we bade each other farewell on the forecourt of the hostelry and arranged to meet in Fort William in a few weeks time.

When the sun shines Fort William is a pleasing sort of place - a worthy capital of the Highlands. So it was, to our good fortune on Saturday 24th May. We sorted out our gear overlooking Loch Linnhe at the home of Geoff Gibson who now lives in Fort William.



He joined us on our first two peaks - up the Ben and around the Carn Mor Dearg Arete and his wife Marion provided us with a very adequate English Breakfast on Sunday morning - more than enough calories to see us well through our first day. We drove through Fort William into a brilliant sun rise in the Great Glen and by 5.40am we were on our way up the pony track from Achintee. It was an unbelievably fine morning, the sun just touching the tops surrounding Glen Nevis. The walk up the Ben went with ease and soon after 8.30am we were on the snow covered summit plateau in a coolish morning breeze.

Our spirits were high as we viewed the full circle panorama. Conditions just could not have been better for our planned walk. About 9 o'clock we said cheerio to the Penlington family who had accompanied us on this initial stage of the trek and strode away - in the wrong direction. It was an inviting aspect but the descent of the North-East Ridge was hardly the way to start! We hastily about turned and launched ourselves on the Carn Mor Dearg Arete, which we chose not to rush, but enjoy. We had a further break on Carn Mor Dearg summit - photographing and soaking in the detail of the Ben's North face, before saying farewell to Geoff. There were now four of us; Dave Penlington, Roy Darnell, Chris Scolar and myself. We dropped 1,000 feet down the East ridge of Dearg and then laborously regained the height to the grassy shoulder between Aonach Mor and Aonach Beag.

We left our rucksacks at this point and walked swiftly to the summit of Aonach Mor commenting that the Ordnance Survey maps show the Aonachs the wrong way round. Aonach Mor (large) the lower of the two should be Aonach Beag (small) if height was the only criterion. We also commented on the one inch map showing the height of Aonach Mor as 3999 feet and the six inch 4000 feet. But all in all the O.S. have done well - we must give credit! Such

discussion soon got lost in the joy of physical movement - and besides, metrication makes a foot or two unimportant! We retraced our steps, collected our sacks, and set course for Aonach Beag. We walked over the snow covered summit and soon spiralling out before us was the ridge of the Grey Corries peaks. Down on our right was a wild open valley, Tom an Eite, the head of Glen Nevis and the direct route followed by Brockbank and Williamson in 1954. This was not our chosen route. We intended to keep high and at this point dropped down steeply to the col at the start of the Grey Corries (West) peaks. Sgurr Coinnich Mor, Stob Coire an Laoigh and Stob Choire Claurigh. It would be about 1.30pm as we rested and had a bite to eat before the pull up to the first of the Grey Corrie peaks. We found this a tiring ascent, but after this things came easily and pleasantly and by 5.00pm we were resting on Claurigh in the late afternoon sunshine, looking back on a fine panorama of peaks.

Our rest was more than adequate and by the time we moved ourselves we had changed our minds about taking in Stob Ban as our last peak of the day and skirted its North East slope and descended the Lairig Leacach to Creaguaineach Lodge at the head of Loch Treig. The setting of the Lodge is reminiscent of a wild west farmstead. Although 'alive' it was unoccupied and so we walked a little way behind the farm and found a comfortable bivvy site for the night and prepared a meal. Now you find all manner of things about ones companions on an event like this. Roy, for instance, had never tasted curry, but having been fairly active for the previous 15 hours he made no bones about accepting the menu of soup, beef and veg curry, muesli, honey and shortbreads. It had been a fine start to the trek. Perfect weather conditions and unbelievably fine highland scenery all day. We slept soundly in the open, close to the stream and woke at dawn with a frost covered terrain. The sun was shining again.



It would be difficult to decide which was our finest day but undoubtedly the latter half of our walk on Monday is indelibly impressed on my mind if only for the wild open grandeur of the Uisge Labhair. Our route went from the head of Loch Treig to Loch Ossian. Along the forestry track on the North shore of Loch Ossian to Corrour Shooting Lodge. It was then a 5 mile walk up Uisge Labhair to the Bealach Dubh a fine open glen - a thorough bore to some people but it just appealed to us that day. We reached the Bealach at 2.00pm and there Chris chose to wait whilst Dave, Roy and myself left our sacks and scrambled onto the summit plateau of Ben Alder. From the summit we looked back and viewed the Glen Coe peaks, Mamores, Nevis, Aonachs and Grey Corries in the West. Below was Loch Ericht and the snow covered mass of the Cairngorms far in the East. As we looked from Nevis - relative v close - to the Cairngorm massif - dimly in the distance - we thought of the magnificent effort of Brockbank and Williamson in 1954.

We descended to the Bealach, donned our sacks and continued our route for the Cairngorms. We walked down the track to Culra our chosen bothy for a night's rest. We made several stops on our descent looking back to admire the northerly aspect of Ben Alder and its ridges. It looked exceedingly fine in the shadow of the late afternoon sun light and a contrast to the uninspiring hump as viewed from the west side of the Bealach.

We walked into Culra at 6.20pm and found it rather dull after spending the previous 36 hours in the freedom of the open mountain landscape. I personally had a compelling desire to get out into the open again, but the roar of the primus soon adjusted my attitude. We fed well and settled for sleep just as darkness came. It was at this stage we discovered a problem. Dave had lost his watch whilst walking up the Uisge Labhair. The only other watch we possessed was mine which is a stop-go version; a peculiarity of

sticking about 12.30am as the date mechanism operates. We awoke at what appeared to be first light. Outside was dense mist. It could have been anywhere, anytime. Making a guess at the time, the watch was set and breakfast prepared. We left Culra with the watch reading 8.30am - rather late we concluded. As we trekked down to Loch Pattach and onto Ben Alder Lodge, time seemed unimportant particularly as the mist began to clear and herds of deer roamed in profusion. After the Lodge the track down the North side of Loch Ericht seemed endless, the only redeeming feature was a continued clearing of the mist from the tops and the sun starting to filter through.



Grey Corries (W), Ben Nevis and Aonach's.

Photo: J. Ashcroft



We had another problem to contend with as we walked along. Which route should we follow from Dalwhinnie? The choice was between following Brockbanks 1954 route, which certainly avoided ascent and descent but involved 6 or more miles walk along the A9 and around the north side of the Kingussie and Insh Forest to Acheum in Glen Feshi, or the '37 top policy' which would have involved a high level traverse through the peaks of the Gaick Forest and beyond. A third choice was to follow a route of intermediate character via Loch Cuaich upper Glen Tromie over a bealach nearing the 200 feet contour and drop into Glen Feshie near Glen Feshie Lodge.

Dalwhinnie eventually came. We took a rest just before entering the settlement and spoke to some telephone maintenance workers. They told us the correct time. Our guess had been three quarters of an hour out - on the right side. It was 10.45am. At Dalwhinnie we called in at the Grampian Hotel for a drink, visited the shop and settled for a cooked meal at the transport cafe. It took us 2 hours to traverse the habitation. Personally I wish it hadn't been there at all. We'd appreciated this fact when looking at the map in the Ladybower Inn. Penlington had advanced all kinds of schemes to 'bridge' Loch Ericht and gain the Pass of Drumochter. During our 2 hour break, a consensus slowly emerged, we would make for Loch Cuaich.

We started along the aquaduct track in the heat of the day, not particularly enthralled with our lot. We had walked about a mile when we heard a vehicle speeding up behind us. 'The Water Authority' I thought. What now! It was a landrover. The driver stopped and asked us if we would like a lift. I was left standing there muttering about ethics - but soon realised that no one was going to sit around whilst I examined my deeper motives and so scrambled aboard still muttering "the Scottish 4000's by landrover".

No one had questioned how far the landrover was going, but in the event a halt came in 2 miles at the point marked 'dam' on the one inch map.

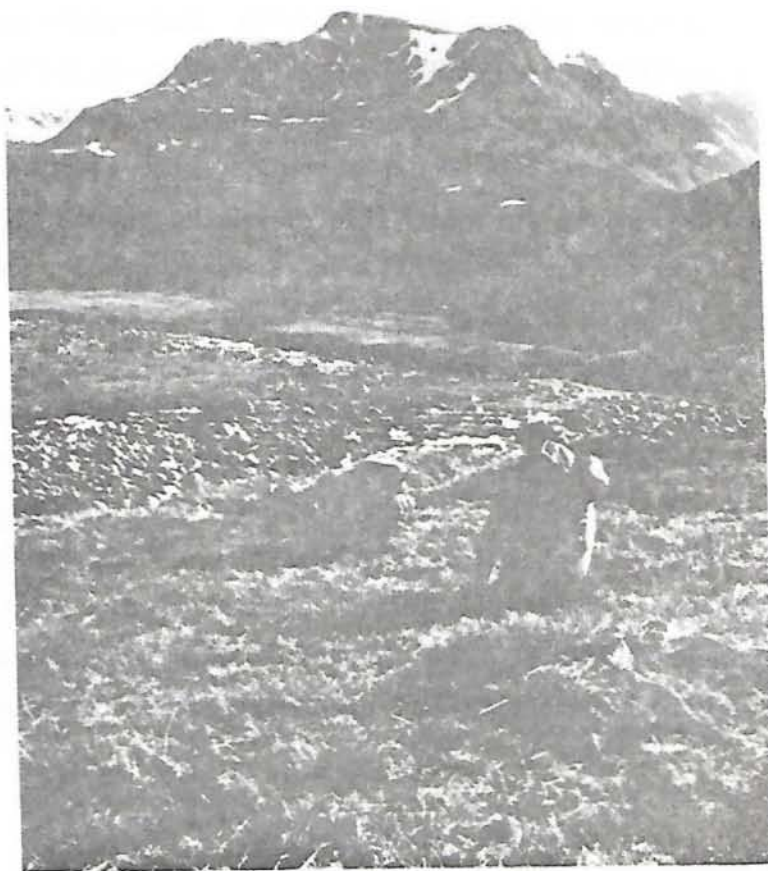
It was still a long walk to Glen Feshie but it proved of interest. We had a long afternoon break in Glen Tromie at a particularly idyllic tree sheltered lagoon at the entry to the Allt Bhran - and then we filtered our way through the forestry plantations of Allt-ra-Cuilce. We came to Lochan-an-t-Sluic and followed the track down to Glen Feshie. It was 7.30pm and there was discussion as to whether we should go up the Glen or down to the bridge below the Lodge. We finally settled for walking up the Glen and wading the river. This proved an interesting exercise to say the least. The river is wide, fast-flowing, and particularly slippery. We originally had thoughts of continuing up the Glen and making for the Eidart Bothy. However, after fording the river we found an ideal bivvy site in the midst of the Caladonian Firs and settled for a meal in the last of the evening shadows.

The next morning we got up at the crack of dawn and set the watch. We estimated it 4.45am and decided to walk the few miles up the Glen and breakfast at the Eidart Bothy. The mist was down and it was cold, but we soon got a rhythm going and reached the Eidart bothy about 6.00 am. It is not a bothy which would have offered a preferable alternative to our night under the stars. It certainly gave shelter in the event of inclement weather but we all agreed our decision of the previous evening had been a wise one. We had a lengthy breakfast at Eidart and by the time we were on the move again, about 8.00 o'clock, the mist was clearing and the sun filtering through quite strongly. We hadn't really seen Glen Feshie at its best which had been one reason for aiming up the Glen the previous evening, but there will be another time no doubt.

Our route now followed up the River Eidart with the intention of striking up to the col between Cnapan Mor and Monadh Mor. In the

event we found trouble in crossing the river and finally aimed straight up Monadh Mor in more or less an easterly direction. The summit was a fine vantage point giving fine panorama of the route we had followed from Nevis. The four 4000 feet peaks we had spent three days walking towards, were now very close. It was hot and still as the sun poured down. Wednesday was the warmest weather we experienced.

Our route was now to drop down to Loch-nan-Ltuirteag where we met a solitary walker who told us the correct time. It was about 12 o'clock and our estimation of time earlier in the day had been 10 minutes out, which meant that we were 10 minutes early.



Looking back to admire the Northerly aspects of Ben Alder and its ridges.

Photo: J. Ashcroft



The next 4 hours were rather leisurely. We left our sacks on Angel Peak, scrambled up onto Cairn Toul and then back and round to Braeriach summit. I say it was leisurely because of the time we spent on Angel Peak - resting - absorbing the scenery which was exceptionally fine with still a fair amount of snow around. Past the Wells of Dee and onto Braeriach we suddenly became aware of people. There were several parties on Braeriach. We had only encountered three other parties during the whole walk from Ben Nevis until reaching Braeriach.

At three o'clock we were on Braeriach summit looking over to the Cairngorm - Maodui Plateau quietly hopeful that our traverse of the 4000's would be complete in the 4 days. This was not to be. We got onto Sron-na-Lairig and investigated a way down to the Lairig Ghru. Each time we commenced to descend to the Lairig we found steep soft snow or unsuitable gullies and ribs. A strong wind had suddenly got up and Dave was in a foxhound mood streaking in a northerly direction dismissing descent point after descent point to general annoyance. We had, of course, made an error in not descending approximately opposite the Pools of Dee, but we felt in no mood for retracing our steps and so having shouted a few harsh words to each other above the wind we settled for getting out of the wind on the West side of the ridge and there the calm and the view of the snow filled northern corries of Braeriach caused a certain lethargy to set in. It was quite superb really that late afternoon rest. We dozed and then a consensus emerged, that all in all we were a little tired to carry on that day and so settled for descending to the Angus Sinclair Memorial Hut in the Lairig and finish the walk the next day. That might all sound rather feeble - but we had set out to enjoy the walk and to complete the walk wearily in the dark above the 4000 feet contour - and probably bivvy high, was hardly in line with our more aesthetic objectives. That's a nice way of saying we chickened out.



We were at the hut by 5.30pm and found its two bunks occupied by leaders of a camping party a little lower down the Lairig. Fellow human beings galore. Crisis then hit us when the primus refused to hold pressure. The ingenuity of Penlington came into play by manufacturing a new washer from a tooth paste tube. After our meal Dave and Chris chose to sleep out on the hill whilst Roy and I slept on the hut porch floor.

Six forty-five, Thursday - our last day dawned with thick mist again. We made good time over Creag-an-Leth-choin past Lochan Buidhe and onto Ben Macdui. We felt fit and in good spirits as we rested at the summit between 9.00 and 9.30am. At one stage it looked as if the mist was clearing and the sun about to come out, but it was not to be so. As we strode away to our final peak the mist thickened and it went darker. In addition, the poltergeist of Macdui was around for we simply missed the route and found ourselves descending towards Loch Etchachan and had to retrace our steps. The odd curse or two and attention to map and compass soon put us right only to be followed by the next anti-climax - rain! It was a damp misty finish to a magnificent 4½ days in the Highlands, but you can't win them all. We sat on the mist shrouded summit of Cairngorm, damp but happy at 1.30pm. We dropped down to the Ptarmagan for a cup of tea and found a fitting finish to our trek by following the Strath Nethy down to Ryvoan past the Green Lochan and so to Glen More in steadily improving weather. It would be 6 o'clock at Glen More when we phoned for the Ashcroft/Penlington wives. They had spent the week at Boat of Garten with the five children and played golf, swam, canoed but had been nowhere near a hill. That was their loss - I would say, but must give credit - they are not always valley lubbers.

So ended 100 miles or so over Scotland's highest mountains. I hesitate to say it is the finest walk, when you consider what there

is in Scotland. All I will say is that the pony track up Ben Nevis offers more than is at first apparent. Follow it again sometime. It was Geoffrey Winthrop Young who said "The thrill of a mountain first seen or of a first climb attempted remains for each newcomer a unique sensation".

J. ASHCROFT



The Lairig Ghru - Glen Dee from Sron-Na-Lairig, Ben Macdui behind.

Photo: J. Ashcroft

## A QUIET DAY

It was going to be one of those days. I could tell as we passed Caernarvon Castle for the third time on our way to the Rivals. You see, Natman had said "There's this quiet secluded crag youth, it'll be away from the bank holiday crowds and there's this great climb". So there we were, breaking all kind of speed records, and limits, screaming along in Dufftown's E type Fiat. Himself lit another fag from the stub of the old one - then put both hands back on the wheel and reversed out of the field! "Just browsing you know".

Eventually we ended up in the middle of nowhere with the "oggy" approaching at something over sixty so we stopped. Natman and I got out in case Navolari changed his mind. "S' nice here flat on me back" - "Gerrup youth and get your PA's on, we can walk to the crag from here". We set off along the cliff top, through lush meadows with the birds singing and the sun shone. We came upon a young couple in the corner of a field and had to shield our eyes - from the sun. It was to be quite an eventful day this.

Down to the beach and a mile of pebbles - in PA's. "It's hell on wheels this Nat!" "C'mon, the crag's just round this corner". I couldn't see a crag - just a lot of steep, very steep, grass. Well maybe there was just a hint of rock somewhere up there but the whole place gave me the creeps. Imagine 600' of vertical/overhanging grass and earth, well we needed no imagination, this was for real and it looked about twice as big and twice as steep as any mind blowing freak out that your imagination can do. "Can't we go swimming?" - "No!" - so I had this idea and fell over. It worked a treat, I cut my finger end off and it bled nicely (it had to look good). "I don't think I can climb with this" Natman was not to be deterred, "Don't be so bloody soft - get 'old o' this rope". So I



tied a hankey round the excuse and got down to business. At least I'd worked it so that I was in the middle of the rope. I couldn't possibly be asked to lead from that position, and in my state of health.

Up he went, and then down again. "Don't think this is the route - I'll try over there". "I thought you'd done this before?". "Yes, but that was ten years ago and the route we climbed then is probably in the sea now". He was probably right. I put the belay rope round a few more grass sods and tried not to think of the sea below. Dufftown lit another fag and the fog improved the view. The rope disappeared steadily and the grass sods drizzled down, bounced on the steep grassy slope, leapt over the edge and ..... splashed, hell its a long way to the sea from the bottom of the climb!

"Eyup, I've found a peg", five minutes of firkling about, then "come on". Ah well, here goes nothing, can't back off now. All the same, I wished I had gone to the beach with the C party. Actually, the climbing wasn't bad, the hide and seek pantomime of finding the holds was sheer blind terror. But at least I had the pleasure of chucking them all off and thinking "follow that without the holds". He did and arrived preceded shortly by an ascending cloud. We talked for a while - its funny how the need to talk grabs you when you're in the middle of some big black nasty crag. Everyone talks and no-one listens. We did another couple of pitches, with tiny stances so we didn't meet up again until the bottom of a big overhanging chimney/diedre.

You could tell the next bit was going to be hard - Natman remained firmly tied to the belay. Dufftown and I sat and passed the time of day, both secretly hoping that our leader would go away. I kept waving the all excusing digit and the smog went into a coughing fit. Eventually our main must have decided that he was fighting against



hopeless odds - not only wouldn't we talk to him, he couldn't even see us. Anyway, he set off upwards again. At least that's where I assumed he'd gone because the rope suddenly started moving up into the cloud. And then he confirmed the issue, he must be up there because everything else was coming down here. It was like El Almain with shrapnell flying all over the place, the demon trundler was making a meal of the situation. Dufftown and I were the star performers at the shotput heading championships.

Eventually we heard a peg being placed, then the rope went up, then it went quiet. Presumably this was the signal so I left the battlefield. At least up here there was a bit more rock, but it also was unhappy with its situation in life and needed little encouragement to go swimming. The splash (about an hour after you've dropped the hold!) does wonders for your nerves, doesn't it? I think I did the pitch in about twenty seconds flat and was frantically laybacking up our leader with a fingerhold in his ear and legs flailing all over the place before he managed to convince me that I should stop messing about. I'd clearly upset him because he told me to sit down and shurrup! Dufftown arrived - fag first, looking as though he was enjoying himself. Natman left us. "I'll kick you off this b..... thing if you don't start looking gripped up!" He went for a walk along the belay ledge - "Christ! get yourself fixed on will you!" the hysteria was really percolating through.

After a few more pitches the angle relented as we neared the top of the cliff. Dufftown took command and promptly got us lost on the only piece of desperate rock in sight. Still, it did get us to the top of the crag. The adrenalin drained away and we all became matey again. Then Natman slipped the crippler - "You see that hill over there", pointing vaguely at a mountain which could barely be seen through the haze "we've got to walk either over it or round it to get back to the car!". Dufftown and I gaped - "Holy P.A. foot Natman".

So we did, went over it I mean, and ended up descending through a slate quarry. Somehow we got separated and Dufftown and I found ourselves at the top of a forty foot wall. Natman had done it again, there he was below grinning at us. There was nothing else for it but to abseil off the slate workings. What a fiasco.

We eventually arrived back at the car, P.A's in hand. Our leader had been right. We had avoided the crowds, we had only seen a couple of people - and that had made the whole expedition worthwhile! Or had he been avernus on all the time?

And then there was the drive home.



K. GREGSON



## A NEW EXPERIENCE

The train on the rack railway took us up out of the cloud enshrouded valley. We left behind demi-light pervading the grey and frosted Chamonix, demurely awaiting the energy, life and money of the Xmas visitors.

We rose through the dark hoar frosted woods, out into the clear atmosphere above and marvelled at what seemed to us to be virgin Alps, the Dru and Verte thrusting out of the pure snow - no more those crumbling grey glacial morraines but transformed they appeared as folds in a white Alpine carpet.

We detrained at Montenvers amongst a handful of tourists and I stood awhile to admire the mountain vista, particularly the distant Grand Jorasses, that icy bastion with its nordwand defiant beyond the sun. That was our objective, to experience life upon its icy precipices. Hopefully we would succeed in overcoming the difficulties of the miles of intervening glacier, with their inherent problems of deep snow and hidden gaping crevasses and reach that 3,500 foot wall of ice and rock.

The summer trippers trail, leading from the station to the ladders which give access to the glacier below, was non existent and we were faced with a hazardous slope of deep crusted snow. We strapped on our new snow shoes and forced our way across the slope, until we eventually decided to rope up as the way became seriously endangered by the precipitous drop to the glacier. The snow surface became more crusted and we had to remove the snow shoes in order to kick steps across that interminable slope, until with great relief we gained the steel ladders which led us more easily down to the Mer de Glace itself.



One and a half hours labour needed for what is but a short summer stroll. The Mer de Glace, carpeted with deep snow, was completely unmarked by human trail. The wind chilled us as we equipped ourselves for the glacier march and we donned snow shoes again and attached prussikers to the rope before we moved off to break a trail through the turmoil of crevasses.

The train had long since left Montenvers station and we were alone with the mountains and as ants on a highway, we steadily progressed along the length of the huge glacier, not direct, but across it through the crevasses and finally through to a long, even snow gradient up the back of the glacier. Our platform feet broke through the crust and sank ankle deep at most steps, legs tired of the effort, but most of all the burden of our huge rucksacks strained the muscles of our backs - so heavily laden did we trudge through the snow. Our trail grew in length, step upon step, each won with great effort, slowly we passed beneath the towering granite Aiguilles. How magnificent they looked, red and yellow in the sun, but grey and icy in the shade, reaching thousands of feet above us. Once more they seemed unassailable. It would be so easy not to try, patently futile in fact, but no, the ants still crawled on and link by link the trail grew until the terminal moraine of the Leschaux glacier was connected to Montenvers with a tenuous line of steps.

Here a rest, to eat and prepare for the arduous task of finding a way through to the Leschaux glacier, through the complex moraine slopes and ridges, perched boulders and crevasses all covered with soft snow.

The short bright day was nearly ended as we emerged on to the Leschaux glacier. With a weary stagger and strained limbs we headed up this with the realisation that the Leschaux Hut was beyond our reach for that day. We wandered on into the dusk, until

fatigue made us call a halt and so we choose a convenient granite boulder, against which to stop.

It was a clear starlight night and the evening breeze rolled icily across the surface of the glacier, whilst we quickly stamped out a platform in the snow to make a bivouac. We settled down to the first of our long cold nights and passed the time by preparing food and drink over the primus stove and then we sought comfort from the wind from within our bivy sacks.

The bivouac is such an important part of Alpine mountaineering, particularly those endured during the winter. The night is long and cold, but perhaps the worst problem of all is the condensation which forms on the inside of bivy sack to make everything unpleasantly damp.

Dawn light eventually arrived at 7.45 am and we breakfasted and prepared to move off for the Leschaux Hut. The rucksack was again quite backbreaking and made that day's trail blazing into an ordeal. The redeeming factor for the day was the magnificence of the surroundings, with the sun lighting up the Verte, Droites and Courtes, and before us was gradually revealed the mighty Grand Jorasses nordwand.

For many this is the most magnificent wall of granite and ice to be found in the Alps, - splendidly dominating the Leschaux basin; for us it was winter grey and sunless, but most of all the mountain was still and silent, no sound to be heard upon its flanks, no stone fell, all remained inert within a relentless icy grip.

But before we could begin the climb, we knew that we must attempt to recoup the strength sunk long and deep into the snowy glacier and so we ploughed on towards the Leschaux Hut.

The rise from the glacier to the hut is not great and in summer is easily done along a path, but for us it was exasperating and we struggled in deep snow for over an hour before we reached the hut. But even then we had to set to and dig out the door from beneath the snow bank, before we could begin to relax within the damp interior.

So tired were we that we decided to spend a whole day at rest to prepare ourselves for the Cros Spur. Alone in the vastness of the mountains we felt happy at the experience we had enjoyed so far in our isolation from all other human life.

The day passed and on the next we left the comfort of the hut, abseiled directly to the glacier and began the final march to the foot of the face. The initial glacier basin was crossed steadily, but as the slope steepened and we began to wind amongst the complex of crevasses we broke through the snow to greater depths and it became a struggle to press on. The danger of hidden crevasses was very real and much care was exercised as we teetered across snow bridges above blue icy depths, until at least we reached the bergeschrund at the foot of the initial icefield on the face.

How pleased we were to take a rest and prepare for the climb, to reduce the weight upon our backs and rid ourselves of the need to wear the snow shoes.

We crossed the bergeschrund on crumbling snow and gained the main icefield by way of an ice ramp. The icefield above was covered with powder snow which was none too cohesive and we had to kick hard for security. Pitch followed pitch of exhausting work, the days of snow plodding had strained our muscles and we felt our lack of condition up that relentless seven hundred feet of snow and ice. Belays were mostly made with drive in ice pegs, but occasionally only with the axe driven in.



Darkness found us still front pointing upwards on the last of the hard ice, until we gained the initial rock buttress in which we placed pitons to secure the bivouac. There, where the snow swept up steeply to meet the rock wall, we set to and carved out a ledge sufficient for us both to lie down. In that icy niche above the void we thankfully prepared our meal and then fitfully dozed the long night away.

In the event we misjudged the long awaited moment to commence the dawn ritual of brew preparation and thus it was full daylight before we geared up and were ready to move off.

The first steep ice pitch was a severe strain for the stiffened limbs and I struggled ineptly with passages of hard grey ice, sugar snow and rocky protrusions. A rising traverse led us into the main couloir which we followed for several pitches on steep snow and ice with rock belays on the side walls.

At the top of the couloir, we ploughed through deep snow to the col behind the first rock tower. Above this we came to grips with the first of the rock difficulties and suffered from the intense cold as, with bared hands, numbed and clumsy, we cleared the snowy rocks and searched for ill-felt holds.

A vertical rock step forced us to make a precarious traverse back into the couloir and we rope tensioned and groped across an overhanging wall, on ledges banked with bulging snow. The couloir is forbiddingly steep there, bound by a leaning rock wall on one side with the main bed reminiscent of a classic Scottish ice gully and the far side a temptingly easy angled rock ridge, but ice glazed compact rocks barred access to this. The time was late and we feared benightment in that constricted spot, so an attempt was made to force the groove above, which formed the base of the leaning wall. That ended after 25 feet of desperate fighting

with loose rock, bare hands clawing at the snow filled crack behind a detached flake. Retreat was made from a sling and pained hands sickened the stomach and caused the head to swim and roll as tear stained agony pulsed through the stubbs.

A chocolate bar diverted the mind and gave the stomach something else to cope with. The pressure was then on to extricate ourselves from the hell hole that the couloir became in the fading light. The problem was solved with a series of tension moves from the high sling and then a placed piton, enabling a traverse to be made, to reach easy ground on the far side of the couloir, which led to a good belay above the main difficulties.

The gear was taken out in the dark by a strenuous complicated prussiking exercise. Above and across the couloir, a possible bivouac site beckoned and this was reached by climbing one pitch more in the dark, having to scrape near blindly across the ice glazed rocky bed to reach a steep snow slope, which was followed with a powder snow swim amongst projecting rocks.

Once more the bivouac ledge was hewn from the snow, and each of us fashioned his chosen spot in a whirl of spinning spindrift created by an excess of zeal for that warm productive labour.

The second night on the face passed much as the first and once again it was daylight before we began to climb upwards.

Two pitches on steep snow took us to the knife edge col above the second tower and above there we had to climb the snow plastered rocks. Good climbing which necessitated great care with ice filled cracks and verglassed holds. After two rope lengths we were confronted with a very steep wall of rock, beneath the first icefield. A solitary piton, high up in a clean corner, seemed to indicate the route, but the way was obviously difficult.

This pitch gave some fine climbing, but could only be negotiated by the leader without his rucksack, which he hauled up afterwards with great difficulty. Another impressive pitch followed and was overcome with aid, and this led to the lower edge of the first icefield.

Whilst engaged with the difficulties presented by the rock step, we had not concerned ourselves too much with the massive build up of cloud, but once having gained the belay above, we began to be disturbed both by this build up and also by the fierce cold wind which was then tearing at us. As we looked to our left, we could see that the distant Matterhorn summit was shrouded in a grey cloud, likewise was the grand Combin and so too was the much nearer Aig Verte.

The prospect of sitting out a prolonged winter storm was not inviting on that exposed wall and we both knew that our slow progress so far demanded 'fair' weather for us to continue at such a pace.

We also knew that we did not have it in us to sit out such a storm. The decision to descend was not difficult to make, for down below we could see clearly the site of our last bivouac and this offered some respite from the ensuing storm.

Four full abseils took us quickly down to our snowy ledge and we rapidly donned our down clothing and got into our bivy sacks to protect ourselves from the fearful gusts of wind, laden with spindrift, which plagued us as we prepared a drink and food.

After darkness fell, the storm matured to a wild fury of violent blasts of wind, which threatened to tear us from the mountain and with shrieks and roars the impetuous air relentlessly battered at



our flimsy shelters. At times the bivouac sack trapped some of the fury of the raging wind and thus, energised, it attempted to take off from its slippery ledge, instilling momentary fear and panic into the cocooned erstwhile dozing occupant. This propensity of the nylon sack to fill with air and balloon out, was too disturbing, so this was overcome by tying the corners of the sack tightly around the legs and thus restrained and cramped we dozed away the rest of the night.

The storm eased as dawn approached and the sky cleared, though the wind remained strong. We were amazed that it could blow itself out so quickly. But, we were committed to a retreat, the prospect of which had disturbed our minds throughout the long night.

The first abseil of the day proved to be the most troublesome, as the rope jammed and a prussiking exercise was required to free it. After this bad start, the rest of the descent went extremely smoothly, in a series of almost enjoyable abseils, taking us easily down the main snow coiloir onto the ice field, where we linked up to projecting broken rocks which led us down to the final granite buttress and down this to the glacier. On the glacier descent we became extremely warm as we struggled down through the deep snow and this, with our great fatigue, added to our feeling of general frustration at having to expend so much effort to simply go down hill. Was that the end, or was it just the end of the beginning?

PETE HOLDEN and CHRIS RADCLIFFE attempted the Croz Spor on the Grand Jorasses over Christmas 1975.

P. HOLDEN

We arrived at the Whitesands Campsite at 10.30pm on Good Friday. Everyone there had enjoyed a scorching hot day - Thelma Wright in particular looked as if she had just returned from the Med. (but only on one side!). The site was almost full but mainly with Oreads, in fact counting Derek and Nat's team over the bay, we had an attendance of 61.

Saturday was cloudy at first, but very good climbing weather. As Meet Leader, I introduced one of our ex-Presidents, Brian Cooke, to the joys of climbing in this area. It was Brian and Marian's first visit to Pembrokeshire. We climbed on Craig Coeton with Stuart Bramwell and also on the crag were Brian West, Peter O'Neil, Beryl Strike, Ron Sant, Ken and Doreen Hodge, Derek Burgess, David Cheshire, David Brady and Christine Craddock, to name but a few! Further North Chris Radcliffe, Pete Holden, Ray College, Ron Chambers, Bev Abley and Paul Bingham were giving the crags hell. Margaret, Ricky, Marian and Kath Bramwell walked together over the mountain Carn Llydy whilst we were climbing and we all met later on the beach in the evening sunshine to explore some of the coves. Brian and David Wright passed us doing a traverse of the local cliffs. That night most went to the Ship Inn at Solva.

Sunday was a lovely day and a large party left the campsite for the seacliffs near Porthclaise, whilst the rest went to St. Brides Bay to get the boat to Skomer Island. Alas the boatman's licence had not arrived and we had to be content with walking the coastal path South from St. Brides Bay and Martins Haven. On the way we watched the antics of a large owl flitting about in the heather and gorse bushes and also saw a magnificent Yellow Hammer near the Coastguard Lookout. We visited the uninhabited island of Gateholm and at low tide went to crags up and down the coast - John Green and friend climbed the

Grooves on Carn Llydy among many other routes, Ron Chambers and David Cheshire did the classic Reptillian, Ron Sant and Beryl climbed Surprise Slabs and Reptillian - there were so many Oreads it was impossible to keep track. As most people arrived back late in the evening, including the Meet Leader, football was superceded by Frisbee Flinging until Pub time.

Monday was another warm and sunny day and while some headed for home, more than 20 of us visited the cliffs and coves at Dinas Fach near Newgales. Brian Cooke, beginning to feel more at home on the rock, began an exploratory route leading Stuart and I on the 120 foot cliffs. All was going well, then Brian was just beginning to find it harder than it looked so he inserted a runner and was preparing to force the issue when Ron Sant came round the corner with Yvonne - "Er, it's just above there that Nat had to have a top rope last year" said Ron in a quiet voice. That was it! Out came the sling and down came a slightly less adventurous Brian. However, about 15 minutes later Brian had some consolation when he climbed the magnificent V.S.Cream Groove with Ron. I took Yvonne and Stuart up one of the new routes we did last year. Then we all went back to the cove for football with the Bev Abley/Paul Bingham team while Jean, Cathy, Margaret, Kathleen and Marian went scrambling. In the evening over 20 of us went to the Grove Hotel, St. Davids - the only seats were in the Cocktail Bar. Eventually the Oread made a complete take-over of this room - even Burgess released his hold on the bar and came in to make the evening complete with one of his seafaring yarns.

Tuesday was another good sunny day and while most of us headed for home a big team comprising Nat, Alf Gregory, Dennis Davis, Jo and Brian Royle, Derek Carnell, Les Peel, Ken Norman and two friends again went to the crags. I'm sure they had a great time.

Thank you all for coming.

GORDON GADSBY



## BEN DOON

EASTER 1976

During the Easter sojourn, a selection of social outcasts eschewed the possibilities of sinning and sunning themselves in South Wales with the seaside section of the Oread. Instead they headed north to Fort William, where the sandcastles were reputed to be a good 400 ft higher than in Pembroke and less vulnerable to the vagaries of maritime motions.

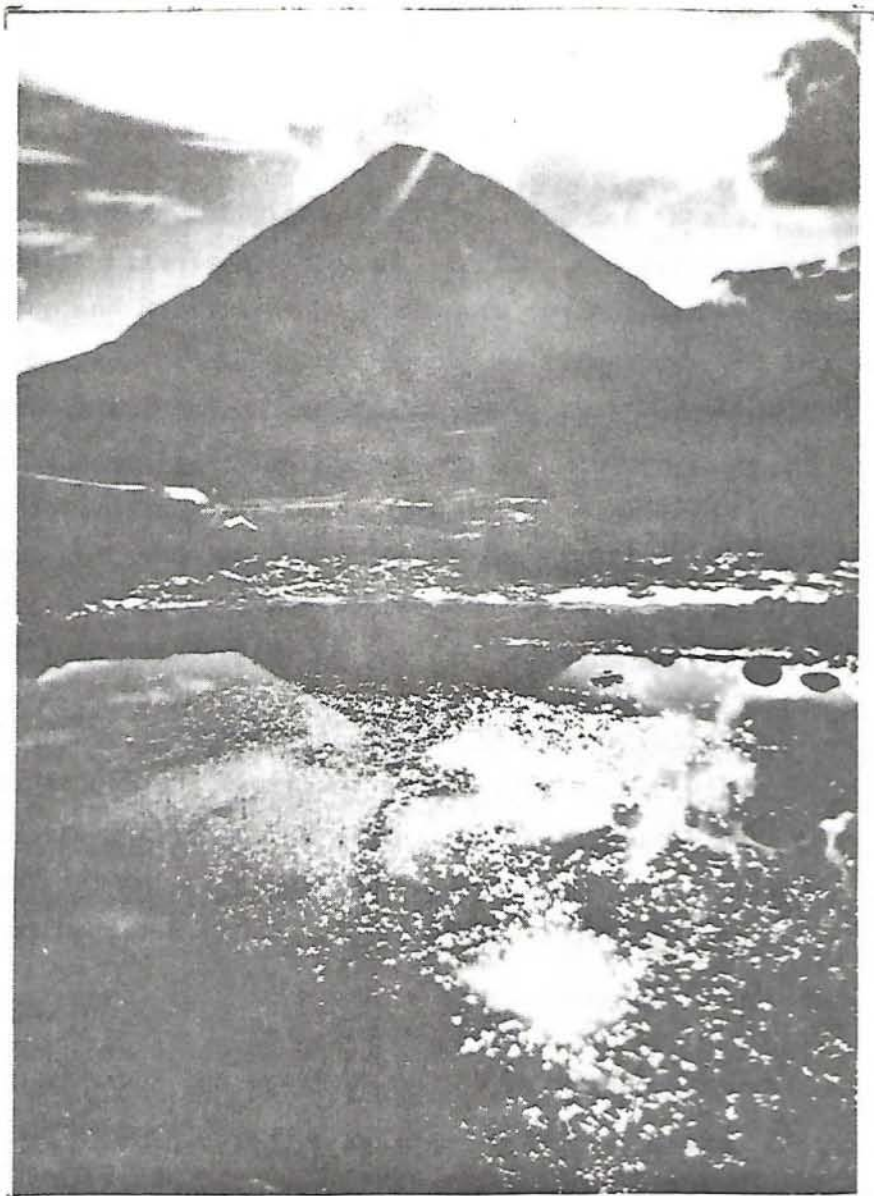
Good Friday's weather was predictably followed by foul on the Saturday, which only served to dispel any doubts the team may have had on the decadence of dossing in Mr. Cameron's caravans. Thencefifth, the weather improved dramatically until, on the Tuesday, Fort William became the hottest place in the UK and remained sunny for the rest of the week.

The party consisted of the Gregsons and Rock, Paul Beverley and friend (Andy), Graham Slater, Chris Wilson, Robin Sedgwick, Fisher, Firth and friends (John Mike, Tony and Ang). The three caravan loads took it in turns to form the A, B and Zzzzz teams in order to maximise sportsplan productivity whilst minimising soil erosion.

The list of climbing achievements included several ascents of Observatory and Tower ridges and North East Buttress; Polldubh gave a lot of enjoyment during 'easy days'. The Ben Nevis horseshoe, Carn Mor Dearg arete and the Westerly end of the Mamores all received a lot of attention. Beinn Bheither also provided an entertaining day's walk; Graham managed to slot in a slushy day's skiing in Glencoe.

This was mostly pretty standard stuff but nevertheless very enjoyable - all the more so because the weather was excellent and the crowds in the hills most notable by their absence. Just to cap it all, we even managed to find a respectable pub in Fort William!

S. FIRTH



Above: Morning sunshine on Glamaig from Sligachan Bridge, Isle of Skye.

Photo: G. Gadsby

Below: Ben Macdui with Corroul Bothy.

Photo: D. Guyler





WORKING PARTY TAN - Y - WYDFFA

May 1st/2nd 1976

The weekend was very well supported with a strong work force of 17 people. John Shreeve, who had travelled down on the Thursday, had already made a good start having painted the loo and part of the outside front wall of the hut. Special mention, and a word of thanks, must go to Mike Key for supplying a landrover for transporting all the paint, plaster, cement and timber to the hut.

Work carried out

In charge of the exterior painting 'slap it up and down' Dave Weston and his team made a strong start on Saturday morning, completing the large west facing wall before the rain arrived. Welsh rain is the best paint stripper you can find (and its free) so that by Saturday evening it looked as though the wall had not been painted. With an improvement in the weather on Sunday, the team got stuck in and painted the whole of the outside. A remarkable one day achievement, although perhaps Keith Gregson's beer helped. It was also noticed that Chuck Hooley had a magnolia coloured anorak, and was seen up a ladder holding hands with June!

'Get it off' Digger Williams was assisted by C. Hobday in fetching all the loose plaster off the walls in the bedrooms and landing. They got completely carried away by it all and had to make a trip into Caenarvon for more plaster board. All the walls have been made good. The landing was covered with woodchip and painted. Ken Hodge and Mike Key did an excellent job in glossing the woodwork on the landing and staircase.

Outside, John Welbourn assisted by Laurie Burns succeeded in getting a good erection with his coal bunker, though it still has to be finished.

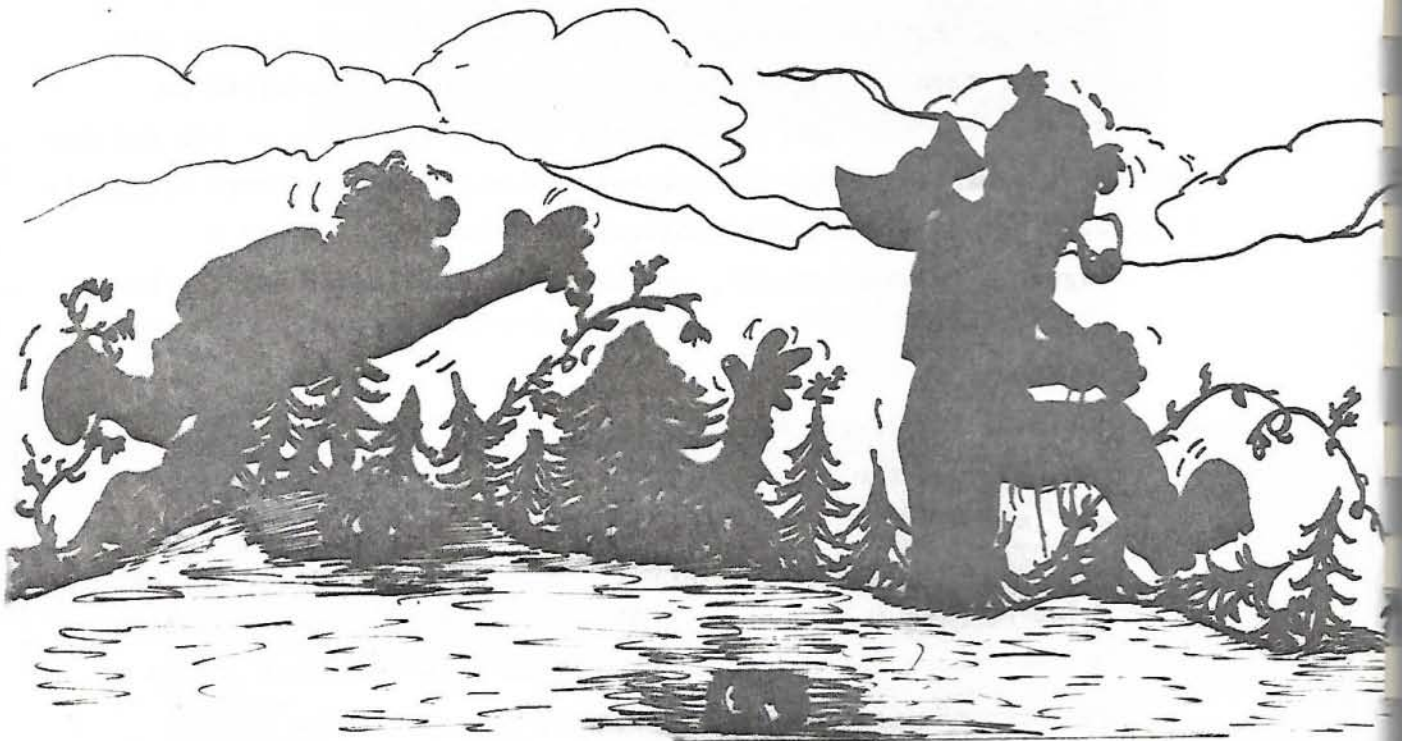


Stuart Firth fixed a door in the passageway, finishing by painting it his own special colour, 'nipple pink'.

Finally, to Ruth Welbourn and Margaret Hooley for the endless supply of mugs of tea and sandwiches, many thanks. And a special thank you to everyone who came, and the hard work put in.

Present:

J & R Welbourn, L.Burns, D.Williams, D.Weston, C.Hobday, S.Firth, M.Key, D.Cheshire, C & M Hooley, G.Slater, J.Price, K.Gregson, J.Dunster, J.Shreeve, M.Mussen, K.Hodge.



Welbourne's Wander

## INGLEBOROUGH, WHERNSIDE AND PEN-Y-GHENT

15th/16th May

Peter Scott tries hard. In 1970 he had hopes of leading members of the Club on the famous Yorkshire three peaks walk, starting from Horton in Ribblesdale. Alas he failed, for the Saturday morning on April 24th produced heavy rain and he could only get us as far as the bar of the Inn behind which we were camping, although unkind rumour suggested that he was more interested in an attractive new-comer called Sue than the three peaks, but if so who could blame him? At closing time, the cruel British licensing laws drove us out into still heavy rain and on to Pen-Y-Ghent, where we found quite deep snow on the top, before returning back to Horton.

He tried again next year, taking us to another campsite behind the New Inn in Horton, the 1970 pub having closed for good. It was a repeat of the 1970 weather, except that when driven out of the New Inn at closing time, we picked our way through the rain onto Ingleborough this time, calling at Gaping Ghyll on the way down. We were knocking them off one at a time. After this Pete Scott abandoned any pretence of being interested in the three peaks and married the attractive new-comer.

Yet some of us are made of sterner stuff, and so it was that in 1976 Rock Hudson decided to lead the Club on another attempt, but choosing a date three weeks later than the earlier attempts, 15th May, when better weather might be expected. It would seem that I was the sole survivor from the two earlier attempts and so accordingly was blamed by Keith Gregson for any inclement weather.

The 1976 expedition consisting of Rock Hudson, Keith and Jill Gregson, Beryl Strike, David Cheshire, Ray College, John Linney, Colin Barnard and Laurie McCullum, set off by car from the Gordale campsite on Saturday morning, just as the rain was threatening. It was indeed raining well by the time we reached Horton and the party was slightly depressed, for no one wanted to do the walk in poor visibility and continuous rain, since after all the scenic beauty of the area is the main reason for the walk in the first place.

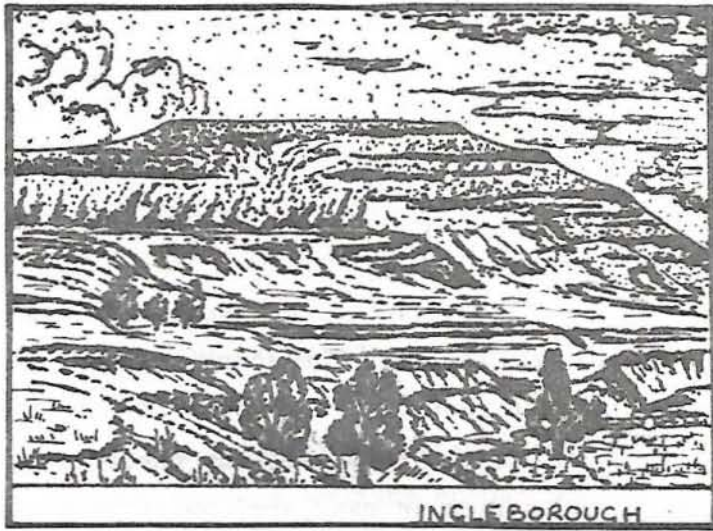
Due to lack of parking space in Horton, we drove beyond the outskirts of the village to find a place. Donning water-proofs, four of us sheltered under a railway bridge to wait for the others, who in turn were sheltering in their car further on, waiting for us to arrive.

Contact re-established, we started picking our way up trackless terrain in the direction of Ingleborough, under similar conditions to 1971.

The mist was fairly well down after we had gained some height, and so a glance was made at a map and compass. This was not very helpful as we no longer knew our precise position, because chattering away we each assumed someone else was route finding from the start. Evidently, our line was more or less correct as we arrived with no trouble at the damp and windy summit of Ingleborough. After a short stop for nourishment, we headed through the mist for the descent on an initially steep track and then easy walking in better visibility without the rain. By now, Whernside, our next peak, was completely clear so that we were looking forward to a splendid day's walking in improving weather.

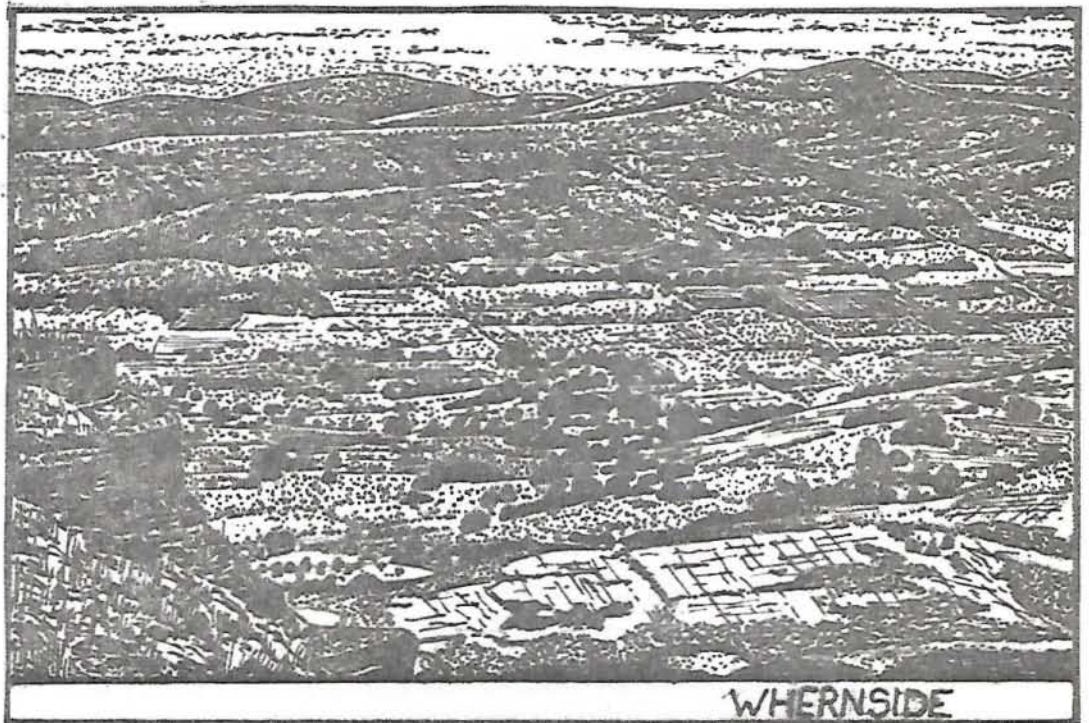
By the time we reached the valley floor it was raining again, and as we drew close to the Inn in Wheathercote, the rain became quite heavy. The bar was crowded as an important fell race was in progress with the competitors expected soon. I preferred to





INGLEBOROUGH

i



WHERNSIDE

stand at the entrance, discussing the race with a young lady marshall who was also sheltering, but the others disappeared into the bar with almost indecent haste. The rain was in fact so bad that I glumly feared that a retreat would have to be made, yet eventually it eased sufficiently for me to consider that it was only a heavy shower after all.

Accordingly, I entered the bar to joyfully alert my comrades. My joy was not to last. The scene that was revealed to my now horrified gaze resembled that of a Chinese Opium den. Most people had gone out to see the race, but the team Oread were spread round an open fire in easy arm-chairs with abandoned attitudes and beer mugs in their hands. My tentative suggestion about continuing was met with sullen looks. "Get yourself a pint!" they snarled. Were these really the same stout members who had fought their way so valiantly over Ingleborough? I walked out and slowly they shamefacedly followed. Their appearance could not have been too bad however, for five minutes later, as we passed through a check-point we were asked if we were taking part in the walkers section of the fell race.

The walk towards Whernside was idyllic, through soft luscious farm land where even the numerous walkers and runners could not detract from the peaceful nature of our passage. The rain had stopped, visibility was very good and only Ingleborough still wore a dark hat. Most people seemed to be ascending Whernside to return the same way. As the track steepened, it became wet and slippery, so that care was needed to avoid a mud bath. The long ridge of Whernside was pleasantly relaxing. Behind us, Ingleborough became increasingly more interesting in appearance, whilst the valley to our right was fascinating in its apparent remoteness. Beyond, misty ridges crept to distant hidden summits, one of which we knew must be our next peak, Pen-Y-Ghent.



Another stop for food, and then down another steep very wet and slippery hillside to the valley, where a farm track took us under a railway viaduct to a crossroads. Here we found a mobile tea bar where the less disciplined team members (that is everybody except the author!) indulged themselves. Some main road walking temporarily interfered, but soon we could turn down a side track which took us far into the hills towards Pen-Y-Ghent.

Somewhere along this track we received another heavy shower of rain, but at least it was in the valley and not on a hilltop. Eventually the rain stopped, allowing shafts of sunlight to make their appearance. By then we were walking across beautiful springy turf in the most idyllic of upland scenes. Yet it was not to last, since quickly we were stumbling across acres of tufted grass or heather where the track was a sodden runnel of water. It was hard going, but we were not unaccustomed to such terrain. At this stage, however, an unaccustomed blister made its painful appearance and yet one could only press on regardless.

As we breasted yet another rise, we at last saw Pen-Y-Ghent looking magnificent in the rays of the western sun. We had been told that we were doing the walk in reverse to normal, as it is supposed to be more difficult our way, and yet seeing Pen-Y-Ghent as we did, I think we were all grateful we were there at that time. It was a highlight in a day of many highlights.

We were not home yet. A lot of difficult walking terrain still had to be traversed and a swollen stream forded. It was quite wide and up to two feet deep in places. Most people crossed in style but others had to be talked across, so that it was a chastened group which gathered on the far bank to remove boots and ring out socks. Soon after this the steeper slopes of Pen-Y-Ghent began to offer resistance and the wind got up to gale force. It was a head wind so that one found uphill progress increasingly difficult.

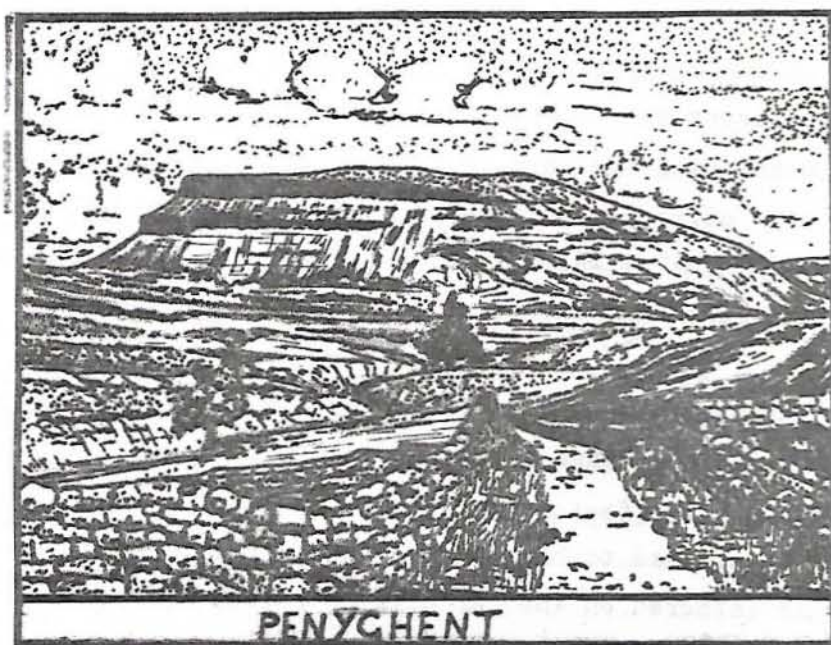


The summit was very cold, or so it seemed to ungloved hands in the high winds, and so after a quick snack we retraced our steps down Pen-Y-Ghent to where another very wet and slippery track took us to a farm track which gave a pleasant relaxed stroll to Horton. Perhaps not so for the car drivers who had to press on through Horton to find their vehicles, but we all met up in the New Inn.

In all a most rewarding day in which we took nine and a half hours for the round trip. Our thanks to to Keith Gregson and John Linney for providing the transport from Gordale.

The following day Gordon and Pauline Wright also completed the walk but in better conditions.

R. COLLEGE



Drawings by R. Hudson

## TRANEARTH

11th-13th JUNE 1976

When I arrived at Traneearth on the Friday night, I could barely see through the rain. As I trudged into the hut, I saw Paul Bingham surrounded by steaming socks, etc., trying to dry his draws sufficiently to go to the pub. "Oh! My God!" I thought, here we go again - another soggy weekend.

It did, however, stop raining during the night, but Saturday morning dawned breezy with the clag down to quarry level. A party of 12-14 people therefore betook themselves to Wobble barrier, or some such crag, near Seathwaite via Walna Scar track, and of course the Newfields Inn. A number of routes of all grades were then performed (I use the word advisedly) on good rock in fine dry weather. Perhaps this crag should be renamed ANT BUTTRESS in recognition of the vast quantities that infest every part of it. It comes to something when you have to share your belay with a heaving nest of the creatures.

Following the climbing, it appears that two members of the party were so overcome by their efforts that they had to be car-lifted back to the hut by members of the Oread Mother and Baby Club! One of these lads was seen to be sporting footwear rather resembling fully fashioned 60 Denier diving boots, so perhaps that explains it.

Paul Beverly and Steve went to Dow in spite of the weather and did one of the classic 'Diffs' in greasy conditions.

Sunday, weather-wise, was much the same, resulting in a fragmented effort. Some went again to Wobble barrier, some to Ambleside and some went home. Ron Chambers, Dave Cheshire and Stuart Firth went to Dow for a greasy gripper. I, together with Paul Bingham and Ken DeVille,

went for a trek across Little Arrow Moor via an ascent of the Pudding Stone to view the bulldozed desecration of the upper copper-mines valley. This has to be seen to be believed. There are new roads almost to the summit of Coniston Old Man and to Levens water, plus enormous new spoil heaps, water management scheme and settling tanks etc. A row of old miners cottages (one of which was leased to the Karabiner Club until the roof blew off) have been refurbished into what look like weekenders, complete with Georgian bay windows - would you believe!

A tentative exploration of an abandoned tunnel working with a weak torch was hastily abandoned when Ken almost stepped into a puddle which turned out to be a water-filled vertical shaft of indeterminate depth!

All in all, a very enjoyable meet, I thought, but prevented from reaching its full potential by the weather, as on our last visit. A total of 25 attended, including one mini Abley but not including Kath Chambers lump! My thanks to all.

One word of warning - about cars. A grumble was relayed to us by an LC and CC member from the local farmer who reiterated that cars are NOT allowed on Tranearth, but must be left in the car park. This I knew about but decided to ignore as I knew everyone would. He was also a little annoyed about being kept awake by cars returning from the pub, a totally unnecessary journey in his view. Whether you agree with him or not, it is his road and he is responsible for its upkeep. So, if we organise another meet at Tranearth, we must be prepared to stick to the rules and leave the cars in the car park all weekend.

G. FOSTER



## AN EASY OPTION

It was the summer of '76. For weeks the weather had been scorching hot and enervating. For days we debated what to do during the weekend in question. On the one hand we needed to become fit for the Alps, but on the other too strenuous activity in this heat was more likely to destroy our reserves. The official meet was the Peak Horseshoe; in view of the weather we thought that too long. A splinter group was doing the 14 Welsh Peaks; we thought that too steep. Neither of us had the moral fibre to suggest doing nothing, so on Friday evening we were forced to commit ourselves. We did; we went to the pub and discussed routes which we might do in the Alps.

On Saturday morning we made the decision - we would walk from Wetton to the Roches, stay the night there, do a few routes and walk back to Wetton. The weather was so settled we need carry no tent but would bivvy. It wouldn't rain, so waterproofs were unnecessary. There was no wind so anoraks would not be needed. We would travel light.

Having arrived at Wetton and parked the car, we sweated off into the Kalahari. Hours later we happened upon Dennis Davis's oasis at Butterton and there we found Les Peel who made us a welcome cuppa. More hours later we arrived at the Roches campsite in a thoroughly dehydrated state of body and in a thoroughly "why-do-we-do-it" state of mind. The sun was still beating down from a cloudless sky as we took off our rucksacks and spragged ourselves out in the grass. No sooner had our eyelids touched bottom centre than - FLASH BANG CRASH - the predictable - with hindsight - thunder introduced itself. Fortunately no rain. Or, rather, no rain yet.

After a kip, some nosh and a couple of routes on Hen Cloud, we adjourned to the Rock where we were to meet non-Oreads John and Martin. Three hours later, after the traditional half-pint of shandy

we staggered back to the campsite and went to sleep. At two a.m., it started to rain. Ron got into his bivvy bag and spent the rest of the night listening to the rain drumming on the plastic. I invited myself into John's tent and spent the rest of the night trying to decide whether snores were like waves in that the seventh is always largest.

By morning it had cleared up and by nine we were on the crag. By eleven it had started raining and we were off the crag. The scorching sun soon returned however as we started the walk back to Wetton via the Mermaid. It should have been obvious, since we had run out of food, that the Mermaid would be one of those snotty pubs with scampi but "No Sir, we don't do crisps".

For a change we decided to follow Warslow Brook; this was a mistake. After we had overcome the Mango swamps, the thick Brazilian jungle obliged us to wade down the stream bed. This became unnavigable so we hacked our way into the seven-foot ferns. Here, stinging things, both animal and vegetable, forced us to don long trousers and shirts - the temperature still being in the high eighties. After an hour we had completed a mile of this and reached a road whose molten tar would have made a Javan fire-walker wince.

We regained the brook whose banks were by now agricultural and therefore liberally blessed with barbed wire fences and irate farmers. At Wettonmill we recharged our batteries with cold pop prior to the final flog up to Wetton via Manor House.

On opening the car door, there on the seat was a letter headed "WARSLow POLICE, Dear Mr. Firth.....". My heart sank. Could this be a parking fine? Alas, nothing so simple.....

"The local residents, having seen you walk in the direction of Ecton Mines on Saturday, became worried on your non-return by Sunday lunchtime and so we have alerted the local cave rescue. If you should return, please leave a note to that effect with the people in the house opposite. In future please leave a suitable message with someone to avoid unnecessary alarm."

How embarrassing!

Having left a note as requested, we shot off to try and avoid the teatime Dovedale traffic pouring into Ashbourne. On the way I decided to phone the police to speed up cancellation of any search which might be in progress. Better still, why not call in at the cop-shop in Ashbourne? This we did. It was shut. The phone "for use when this station is shut" had been vandalised. At a phone box I called the number suggested on the cop-shop phone. No answer. No surprise either since Ron could hear the phone ringing inside the empty station!

In desperation I dialled 999 and explained the problem. The emergency police had never heard of Warslow police and asked me where it was. I had been hoping they could tell me. I was given another Ashbourne number to ring. Again, no answer, so I gave up and drove back to Derby. There I became determined to meet this bureaucratic challenge and rang Derby police. Just as I got through to the chap who is too slow a thinker to pass the buck further, my 2p ran out and its successor was rejected by the coinbox. I re-rang Derby and asked them to ring me, since my money would run out.

"Are you a member of the force?" "No". "We can't ring non-members of the force - not allowed". "But I'm trying to save you guys some work". "Ah, in that case, we might ring you back. What's your problem?". I explained. "Well actually", said the policeman probably with a smirk, "Warslow police come under Staffordshire. You'll have to ring



them". At this my sangfroid lost some of its froid. I said "Perhaps you could pass the message onto the Staffs. police for me, please?".

I was at the end of my tether by now "Ah, er, um, just a minute". The phone is throttled at the other end but I can hear muffled voices debating the issue. "Hello Mr Firth" "Yes" "In the circumstances we will contact Staffs police for you". "Good. Thanks very much - Bye - Phew!".

The saga finally ended at 11.00pm when an astonished policeman turned up on my doorstep wanting to know why I wasn't dead, missing or both. Earlier in the day, my neighbours had assured him (erroneously) that I went caving every weekend and had even gone as far as to give him my next-of-kin's address.

So much for the easy option! Next time I'm sticking to the official meet.

S. FIRTH



Rural studies on the Ladies' Meet

## ISLE OF HARRIS

July/August 1976

If good weather could be guaranteed, there is no doubt that South and North Harris in the Outer Hebrides would fast become the holiday playground of millions. As it is, however, with rain at least every 15 hours and sunshine being the exception rather than the rule, this magical island is visited by a minority. This year it was our turn along with the Bramwell family, the Bryans and Beryl Strike.

We arrived at Tarbert, the only town, on a damp dismal Saturday evening in July after a two hour crossing from Uig in Skye. The shops were small terraced cottages huddled along the Stornaway road, leading away from the harbour, most of them selling all manner of provisions, souvenirs etc., with here and there one specialising in Harris Tweed.

We made our way South West along a narrow adventurous road towards the Atlantic seaboard and after about ten miles we set up camp at a beautiful spot called Horgabost Bay - there were no facilities, no restriction and nothing to pay! Across the bay we could see a bank of grey cloud where the mountains of North Harris should have been, whilst in the West the hoped for sunset was completely hidden by ominous masses of black clouds seemingly resting on the ocean.

As expected the following day was poor with scattered showers; the rain at first seemed very welcome after the heat of our English summer. In the afternoon we visited the interesting church at Rodel with its remarkable MacLeod's tomb.

The next morning was clear and bright and we marvelled at the glorious golden sands, the turquoise sea and the backcloth of wild inviting mountains. After breakfast we walked up Chairpaval

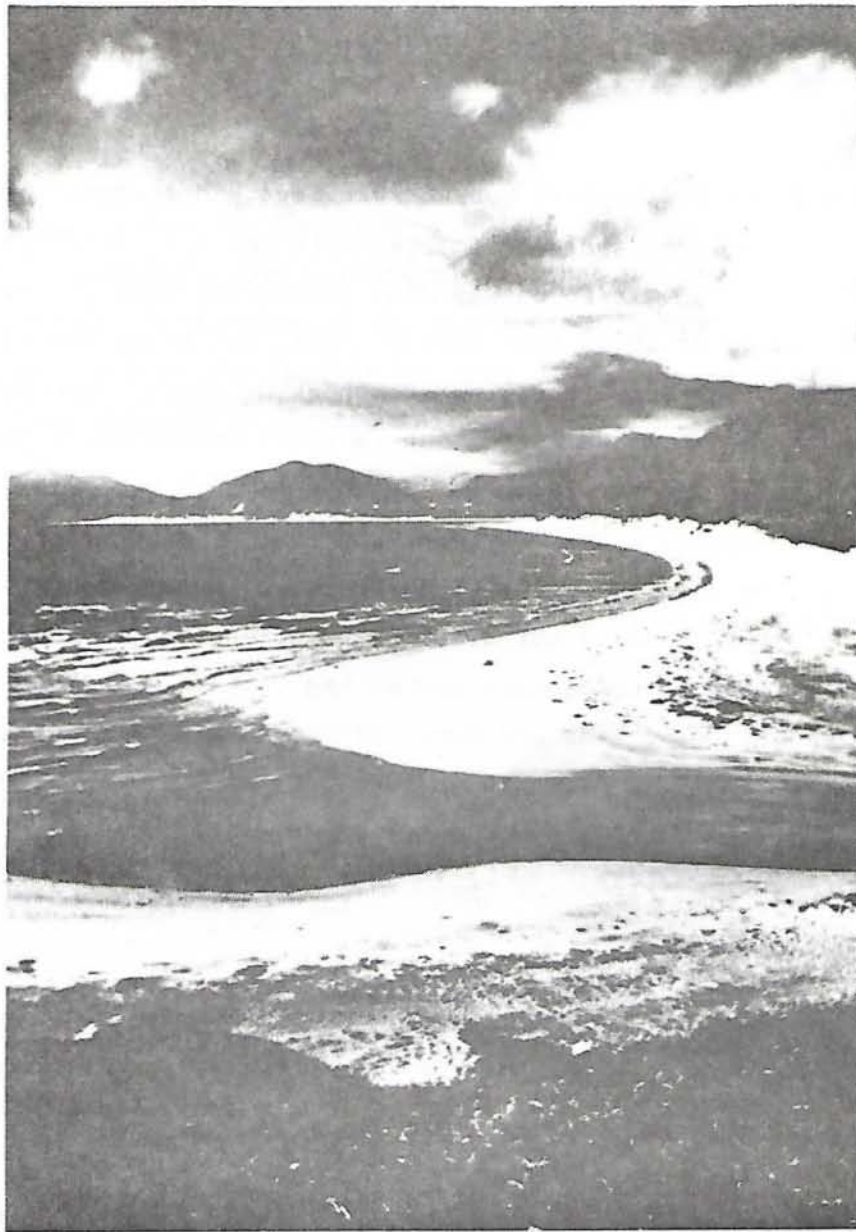
1201 feet a modest hill, but according to W.H.Murray one of the finest view points in the world. The ascent of the East flank with the sea on either side was easy, wild flowers were in abundance and on the South side we saw gannets diving, giving a spectacular display. Further South we could see the chain of the Hebrides, North and South Uist, Benbecular, etc., preceded by numerous tiny islands, mostly uninhabited, dotted across the silver Sound of Harris.

As we neared the cairn a sudden ferocious squall robbed us of our hoped for view of far away St. Kilda. We were battered by wind and rain as we traversed the summit and quickly headed down the southern slopes towards the white flecked sea. On the shore the wind and heavy rain gave way to a steady drizzle and for a while we watched two ring plovers with their young on a lonely beach of pure white sand. We then set off for camp and a welcome meal followed by a campfire on the headland and roast murphys.

Wednesday was a wonderful day with white fluffy clouds and dazzling sunshine. In the morning, Margaret, Ricky, Stuart, Kath Julie and I climbed Roneval a great hulk of a mountain rising from the South East corner of Harris. Near the summit we saw three Golden Eagles soaring into the sun. In the afternoon we visited the South Harris Show at Leverburgh, from whence we made the ascent. In the evening we had a great time at the Ceiledh in the Village Hall.

The next day everywhere was shrouded in mist - Ken and Chris went birdwatching along Seilabost Bay and some of us walked in the opposite direction exploring the coastline to the South.





Horgabrost bay - Isle of Harris.

Photo: G. Gadsby

I looked out of the tent on Friday morning to find the mist had blown away and the sea and mountains sparkling in the morning sunlight. Ken and family plus Beryl were soon up and away towards the hills of North Harris, a drive of about 12 miles. Stuart and I soon followed accompanied by Margaret and Ricky. This was our best day in the mountains as we traversed the three main peaks of the Clisham Group, the highest in the Outer Hebrides.

The first and highest top at 2622 feet had a magnificent summit cairn, a large sheltered circle with the trig point in the middle. The ridge from here on was easy scrambling made interesting by the onset of thick fast moving cloud, but every few minutes it would clear away revealing breathtaking views, especially to the South and West. We were about 1½ hours behind Ken's party and whilst we had our lunch we saw them through binoculars perched on the summit of Mulla Dheas 2439 feet. They went on to traverse all five summits, we settled for three. On the long walk round Coire Dubh back to our starting point on the Stornaway road, the skies cleared completely and we had views of Skye, the Shiant Islands, Rhum, Eigg and Muck. Although walking round on different sides of the massive, we arrived back at the cars within minutes of Ken's team. The two young ones, Linda and Ricky, had done exceptionally well. Just as we were preparing to get into the cars, a Golden Eagle appeared high above and as we watched spellbound it started to swoop. Through the glasses we could see the evening sun highlighting the edges of its widespread wings. It zoomed towards us, a magnificent sight, but to our disappointment it disappeared behind a huge boulder on the rim of the mountain just before landing. We waited five minutes in vain for a reappearance, then all went back to camp having had a marvellous day.

On Saturday Ken, Chris and Beryl went back to the same area and climbed a large slab on the West face of Skeau Tosal 1740 feet - probably a first ascent. The rest of us visited the peninsular of Huishinish with beautiful white sands and lovely cliff walks. From the top of the highest point the islands of St. Kilda were visible over 50 miles away.

At the beginning of our second week, we visited the Island of Lewis including a bivvy at the most northerly point, the Butt of



Lewis (I got soaked to the skin in a 20 minute downpour of monsoon proportion). The weather cleared again next morning and we enjoyed fabulous views of the North West Coast of Scotland, from Cape Wrath to the Cuillin of Skye. The most spectacular peak of all from this angle was the fairy tale cone of Suilven.



J. Welbourne and C. Bryan on the Cuillin main ridge, between Gars-Bheinn and Sgurr Nan Eag

Photo: G. Gadsby

Back on Harris once more the rest of the week remained damp and cloudy - the mountains were completely clagged down with only our nightly fires to lift the gloom. We toured the villages and coastline along the Golden Road on the Eastern shores of the island with its incredible lily pools.



On the last night we visited the pub at Rodel. The Queen called here in 1957, so the wall plaque says, and we reckoned that almost twenty years ago must have been the last time the place had had a spring clean. Cobwebs hung from every corner, the pictures were of old wartime aeroplanes and a single dirty light bulb without a shade hung from the centre of the room. Behind an old mahogany bar, stacked to overflowing with every kind of whisky known to man, was the most piratical bunch of men I've ever seen. The room was packed with locals and visitors alike and the whole made an atmosphere of these islands going back for a hundred years or more (a must for any Oread visiting Harris!).

On Friday evening we sailed back to Skye, leaving Harris still enshrouded in mist. Within an hour we could see the coastline of Skye dazzling bright in the evening sun - we thought of the five good days we had had and of Laurie Burns' fortnight of rain and, I suppose, we had been lucky.

G. GADSBY



THE JAVLIN JACKET WAY TO ONE-UP-MANSHIP

1976 ALPINE MEET

CHAMONIX



Chapeau a Cornes route  
S.E.Ridge Dent du Requin  
Photo: R. Sedgwick



THE AIGUILLE DU TOUR  
VIA THE TABLE DE ROC RIDGE

(3542 m Grade AD)

The starting point for this route is really the Albert Premier Hut (2702m) but this was my first Alpine ascent; every metre a new experience each one remaining vividly in my memory. Queueing for the telepherique and then gliding through the air, enjoying the views on the way up to the next station and from there a pleasant, easy walk up to the hut, made more enjoyable by the frequent stops to admire the plentiful alpine flowers which lined the way.

The hut itself was very modern and in all ways far superior to what I was anticipating. The next few hours were spent in eating, preparing food for the next day and final discussions about the intended route. I had complete faith in all my companions, Jill and Keith Gregson, Rock Hudson, Paul Beverley, Laurie McCollum and John. As I'd had absolutely no previous experience on snow and ice in the Alps, I had nothing to base any arguments on, so I listened carefully to the plans and later retired to bed with feelings varying from immense excitement to down right fear!

Well, of course I didn't sleep, but my wakeful hours were not without entertainment. First somebody would open a window because it was too hot in the room, then not five minutes later, somebody else would get up and close it. This alternating pilgrimage continued through the night. Clearly I was not the only one awake! At 3.00am I was once again vertical, trying without success to get my eyes accustomed to the dim gas light. (We had intended to get up at four but misunderstood the call!).

By 4.30am we were on the edge of the Tour glacier, strapping on crampons and roping up. Looking around there were dozens of 'glow worms' indicating other parties on the glacier. Sadly I didn't remain



a glow worm for long; after a while my light hiccuped and then went out all together. So I just followed the rope hopefully. Anyway, very soon afterwards the first light of day was apparent and I could at least see where I was going.

Up the glacier we trudged, snaking round cravasses and stepping gingerly over snow bridges. I kept wondering if we were every going to stop for a breather, but remembering what Rock had once said about walking for at least an hour before a rest, I ignored my nagging calves and panted without a murmur of protest until those 60 minutes had passed. When we eventually stopped the views were magnificent. I don't suppose mountains will ever look so beautiful to me again. The sun was casting a pink glow on the Chardonnet - the Forbes arete was pointed out to me as we were thinking of doing this route the next day. In the distance was the Dome du Gouter and Mont Blanc. Behind us, the Aiguille de Ruges appeared through the morning mist, and there, on our left, was today's goal, the Aiguille du Tour with the Table du Roc in evidence. Well, it certainly didn't look very far away and it had been easy up to now. Rebuffat reckoned 4-5 hours from the hut, so it looked like a swift romp up the crag, across the ridge, then back down the glacier with Alpine route number one in the bag!

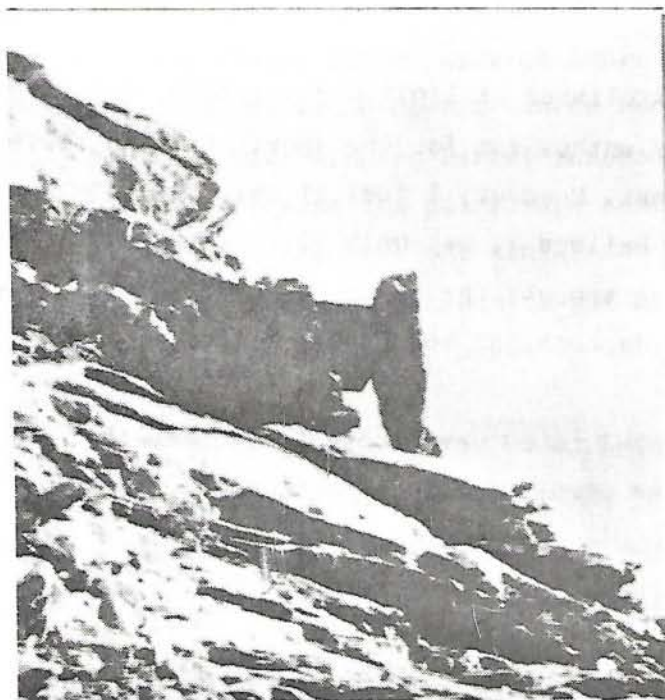
Being a rock climber of limited experience, and with only brief outbursts of enthusiasm for the sport, this AD route was not without its excitement. However, I feel it only right to mention that I had been led to believe it was only PD, and with the exception of Rock, everyone else thought the route was of the lower grade - shows how well the guide book had been read!

The rock proved to be very loose indeed, so that every move had to be made with the utmost caution. Accordingly, we split up into three

ropes, each taking his own route, intending to reunite below the Table. In spite of the extreme care taken, huge boulders were too often heard crashing down the mountain side. We were so glad that no other party was following us.

After umpteen hours of tedious climbing, the seven of us were at last surveying the Table. According to Rebuffat, this is 'the most amusing part of the climb'. I had not the vaguest feeling of mirth at this point. Its title was an exact description, but how on earth did one get onto it, I wondered standing on a small rock pinnacle beneath the Table, with my finger tips just about reaching the top! The athletic members of the team leaped onto it, but for once I wasn't the only one to find difficulty with this move and was not ashamed by the method in which it was overcome - grasping Keith's hand, I just made a bold leap upwards and 'belly flopped' on to the top.

At this point it was generally agreed that the route was far harder and considerably more dangerous than anyone had expected and all agreed that Rebuffat was to be regarded with great suspicion. By now the guides name had undergone many changes and henceforth was generally called Ghastly Rubberfat and similar unprintable titles.



The Table de Roc Aiguille du Tour

Photo: J. Linney



We were absolutely hours behind schedule and it was quite obvious we would not be back onto the glacier till late afternoon. I was mentally preparing myself for a bivvy so that I would not over-react if it was suggested. Fortunately the weather was just about perfect for a prolonged day in the mountains and it remained sunny and clear for most of the time.

After leaving the Table, I fully expected all the difficulties to be over - no chance! I spent the next four hours struggling upwards banging my bruised and battered knees on every protruding bit of rock, and swearing like a trouper all the way. My stock phrase became 'can I use the rope?' when my lack of experience and height or my tired aching body couldn't make the effort to reach the next hold. So the afternoon was spent climbing up this delicate rock, sometimes abseiling to safer ground so as to avoid a tricky traverse or exceptionally loose rock. By this time I was so exhausted I relied more and more on my 'permanent hand-hold' occasionally allowing myself to ponder on the thought, 'if it's been this hard getting up - how the hell are we going to get down?'.

Well, we did make it! At 4.00pm, just 12 hours after leaving the hut, we were sitting on the summit. After a lump of cheese and a couple of Penguins, the inevitable pictures were taken and the descent commenced. As always when going downwards, I frequently used my bottom as another limb! To my delight we arrived at the abseil point to get us over the bergshrund very soon after leaving the summit. Contrary to what I had expected, the glacier was still in reasonable condition, so we set off for the hut at great speed, arriving there at about 7.00pm.

The plans for the next day's ascent of the Chardonnet via the Forbes Arete were dismissed without any consideration (as the weather changed during the night it's doubtful if we would have started anyway). So we



gathered our things together from the hut and began the long trek to the valley. All the way down, the cattle were constantly evident by the clanging of their bells and the lights twinkled in the villages along the Camonix valley.

Nineteen hours after the start of the epic, I was back in Argentiere, crawling into sleeping bag, leaving John warming up the stew which he devoured whilst I fell asleep.

And that was that! My first Alpine route over! My thanks go to the combined efforts of the rest of the team and for their unending enthusiasm, humour, skill and practical help which never faltered throughout the day, giving me great encouragement to carry on when every ounce of me was longing to give up.

M. LINNEY



Party on the summit of the Aiguille du Tour

Photo: J. Linney

## FORBES ARÊTE ON THE CHARDONNET

Summer 1976

*The Albert Premiere hut, drew nearer up the track,  
Bivi gear and climbing ropes, began to strain the back.*

*Temperature was around freezing, but sweat made clothing wet,  
Looking around for a bivi spot, before the sun was set.*

*Dossing in a sleeping bag, watching the stars glow strong,  
Hoping for a few hours kip, until just after one.*

*Awakening at an unearthly hour, infact a little late,  
Donning gear and rushing coffee, what was to be our fate?*

*With only one torch between us, fumbling in the black,  
Treading carefully over crevasses, not falling in the crack.*

*Dawn began to break as we neared the start of the climb,  
The approach had taken longer than the required time.*

*Clouds were a little dubious, determination at a peak,  
Fitness, training and practise climbs to help from becoming weak.*

*Starting upwards smoothly, on easy angled slopes,  
Cramponed boots and ice axe, no need to use the rope.*

*The first of many obstacles, was staring us in the face,  
A poor conditions bergschrund, with ice peg screwed in place.*

*A tricky iced up slope led to an easy crest,  
Careful footwork being required, then a little rest.*

*Climbing together Alpine style, following an easy ridge,  
Another bergschrund loomed before us, eased by a large snow bridge.*

*Cloud was just above us, turning into rain,  
Traversing round the corner the ice boss we did gain.*

*The angle was irregular, in places sixty degrees,  
Ice in poor condition, brought a tremble to the knees.*

*Cloud lifted for a while, a view of unrivaled splendour,  
We'd climbed past the ice boss now, too late to think of surrender.*

*Approaching the Forbes Arête, passing the gendarme to the right,  
An obstacle taken direct, gained us too much height.*

*Abseiling from a rock spike, the cloud clagged in again,  
The wind began to strengthen, snowed instead of rain.*

*Time was getting on, weariness starting to show,  
A break for biscuits and chocolate, then we were ready to go.*

*The ridge seemed unending, the summit still unknown,  
Snow had turned to cloud once more, time behind us had flown.*

*The last gendarme reached, to be passed upon the left,  
Yielding the summit chimney, an easy looking cleft.*

*The Descent was made rapid, down the Western flank,  
Behind a ridge far away the sun had slid and sank.*

*Excitement was not over, problems to over-ride,  
Iced up gully and steep snow slope, a fall with dreadful slide.*

*Dropping towards infinity, was it the final test?  
Digging axe into the snow, stopped by self arrest.*

*Bergschrunds met and conquered, by jumping over clean,  
Reaching the glacier floor, wonderful sights that day were seen.*

M. MUSSON

ALPINE HAIRCUTS



Classic



The Ethnic Look



Who loves ya baby?



## MONT BLANC WITH THE MASSES

Summer 1976

We are going to do Mont Blanc by the ordinary route. Well, that suits me fine. Conditions are so bad this year and everything seems so serious that such an expedition is about my limit! The list of routes this aspiring tigress had planned have been whittled down to a precious few, and considering that my first steps on steep ice ended in a spectacular peel and busted knuckles, I begin to wonder if even this snow plod may prove too much.

But this attitude is hardly likely to get me to the top of Europe's highest mountain, so I must get gripped up, committed, what ever and get this damned rucksack packed.

I can't say that I fancy a bivvy outside the Gouter hut, but as the guardian didn't seem to know what day of the week it was when Gordon 'phoned, we may have to. Duvet, spare socks, warm hat, 2 gloves, lamp, food ..... God! Its heavy already and there's a ton more to add.

So we shall be a team of 7. Pauline and Gordon Wright (I must take Mum up Mont Blanc), John and Margaret Linney (it can't be another epic like La Tour), Laurie McCollum (damn these new boots!) and Paul Beverley (have I got everything?).

I thought we were supposed to be away by 10.30am. Heavens! We're off! I don't know which telepherique we're to take but Paul is navigating. Houche? Yes! The car park looks full. If I prang the car now.....blasted French drivers! Oh! That's lucky, two just moved off. Park it there. Excellent, space for all three cars, but I notice that the telepherique wires go right over the roof..... one due in five minutes. Better hurry up and hang the queueing. We

have been in France long enough to know that the great British tradition is not observed over here. 'Trample 'em to death' seems to be the rule, and let's face it, ice axe and crampons should be a good bet against shopping bags and cameras. Not many people going up after all. Do they know something we don't? We are obviously on the supply car, tins of fruit, I think, probably for the hut.

Have you ever studied the car attendants closely? No! I don't fancy him! It's just that they all seem very young, bored to death and, well, incompetent. Not someone who would inspire you to believe that if something goes wrong they will do anything but holler in terror like the rest of us. I can't imagine this one nipping nimbly onto the wires and knitting them together, or whatever they do. Not being the film set for 'Where Eagles Dare' we arrive safely at the top having gained a considerable amount of height (1000m) to reach the Col du Mt.Lachat, which gives a splended view of the Chamonix valley and the Aiguilles. Must have a photo of that. Damn pylons get everywhere!

Next part of the journey by train. Good. I don't fancy walking yet. Not in this heat. The station is just a small hut and the lad in charge is certainly efficient organising everyone into groups. We are obviously going to be called in by numbers. What on earth is 14 in French? Well, that was a complete waste of time, ending up in the usual dash for places in an already crowded train, leaving us all standing in the corridor between the doors. The track looks pretty steep, but you soon get used to leaning at 45 degrees to the vertical - I just hope it doesn't stop suddenly. I can't believe these people are mountaineers - must be tourists. They keeping eyeing us with suspicion and we them with distate. I suppose they just come up for a sniff of alpine air, let the kids put a foot on a glacier, kick the dog round the rocks and back down for tea. Is that it? As far as we go? Well, someone said there was a five hour

walk to the hut. I believe them. It looks a hell of a flog up there, especially as the sun is really hot now. Oh well! Head down mind in neutral, and just plod....plod.....plod. I don't know about you, but I always find a good tune is useful at times like this. Played over and over in my head with a rhythm that matches the pace. Mind you, at the present rate of progress I reckon the 'death march' would be appropriate. Nothing but mounds of shattered rock and a zig-zag path that winds ever upwards. This is the first part of the track to the refuge de Tete Rousse. Only 795m vertical height, but it is hard work with a heavy sack. Finally the angle relents and we are on the shattered rock rib leading to..... a likely spot for lunch! I'm starving! Overlooking the glacier de Tete Rousse I can see the hut of the same name, and a large party of people crossing the glacier towards it. I suppose we go on up? Yes! I thought so!

I wonder how all these boulders came to be on the glacier. Well, you idiot, they certainly didn't come up from below! Come to think of it, there was something in Gaston's book about a couloir which has a nasty habit of chucking boulders at the unwary. Eh? Is this the couloir? Nobody knows. Ah, here it is! A very steep section of ice sweeping down between shoulders of rock and surprisingly, in this heat, there seems to be very little activity. Just a few quick strides across rather dodgy looking ice and..oops! Nearly slid off there! Below, the ice sweeps away dramatically and its good to feel the safety of rock. Phew! Should have used an ice axe there.

This is the main flog. No doubt about that. Mind you it looks quite interesting - like Bristly ridge. Is that the hut? A shiny metallic object perched high on the top of the Aiguille du Gouter like Noah's ark. The number of people ascending to the hut is reminiscent of a summer Sunday on Crib Goch, but this mountain is far more loose and I am sure I can detect some reluctance on the part of my legs to get a move on, usually a sign of altitude with me. Despite the sunshine



its pretty cold now. We all adopt our own pace, silently suffering our own particular brands of misery. The initial rush to get moving dies a death as height is slowly achieved. There is no spare energy for annoyance at people who will not let you pass, or sudden bursts of activity as you break step to leap onto a boulder. It must look like an action replay and I'll swear that hut gets no nearer. Towards the top hand rails, iron footholds and even ladders appear, but I have no energy to resist the easier passage they offer and finally stagger onto the balcony of the Gouter hut, and lie in a heap breathing rapidly. After 10 minutes life seems bearable again, and you can take in your surroundings. No view behind the hut as a snow bank rises steeply to a ridge, but from the front a wonderful view of the Aiguille de Bionassay and its snow plastered North face. It looks cold, silent, brooding in the early evening light. I often think 'What am I doing here?' not because of the physically shattering effect of gaining this height, but because such grand mountain scenery always makes me feel an intruder, that I should dare to pit my puny strength against such giants. By what right do I stand here alone to behold such splendor.

Alone! That's a laugh. Inside the hut is like a Turkish bath, a seething mass of bodies. The warm, thick atmosphere hits you like a slap in the face and the continuous babble of many different languages, French, German, Italian, and even Japanese) flows over you in waves. No hope of eating inside. Better brew up on the balcony. The rest of the party arrive in various states of distress and we eat our bread and jam and melt snow from the roof to make tea. It's getting very cold and we are forced inside to do battle with the masses. Calls for beds send people scuttling and we manage to get some seats. It becomes clear that we were booked in for tomorrow night! Ah well, we can sit round the tables and natter. We were going to make an early start anyway!

We are all so thirsty and fed up with dodging people that we rashly order some vin rouge. The guardian is babbling some incoherent rubbish about putting stools on tables and getting down on the floor to sleep. Rubbish! I'm not going to.....well, that's marvellous that is! Suddenly, everyone has gone horizontal, like a field of corn mown down. Paul under the table, Gordon and Pauline, and John and Margaret seem to have found some room. Laurie and I look at each other in disbelief. We are standing literally with our backs to the wall and just enough room to stand! We shuffle down and begin the process of booting and shoving until we have enough room to crouch with our knees under our chin. I'm going to get cramp staying in this position. The wall proves to be our strongest ally for in about half an hour we have managed to straighten our legs. Now they have switched the lights out (about 9.00pm) you can't see whose face your boot is resting in, which is perhaps just as well. Sleep is impossible, the atmosphere is thick and I am getting a headache. No one will open a window and would you believe it someone is actually snoring! We mutter to each other to pass the time. Our biggest problem will be setting out in a few hours time. How are we going to negotiate this human carpet in the dark? People are already getting ratty as they remove boots from their ears and elbows from their ribs. I keep looking at my watch, but time passes very slowly. I dose and wake feeling stiff. Thus we pass four miserable hours, until at about 1.00am we decide we cannot stand it any longer and prepare to move. Boots off, and using Paul's head torch we begin the hazardous trek to the door. My stockinged feet slide past ankles and ears and I nearly stand on one poor devil. Surprisingly we don't get shouted at in six different languages, and finally make the door. In the porch there are bodies everywhere and an incredible mound of rucksacks. We rummage about and finally emerge outside in a thoroughly dishevelled state clutching our belongings. The cold bites after the super heated atmosphere, but it is a relief to be outside and finally free of people. I seem to be



rather muzzy and make a complete hash of putting on all available clothing.

We are reduced to four. John and Margaret, Paul and myself. Pauline suffered badly from altitude walking up to the hut and Laurie's feet have swollen so much that he cannot get his boots on. Finally we are ready to move off. It seems very dark, the moon flits nervously behind the flying clouds and our crampons make a deafening clatter on the metal of the balcony as we trudge round the hut and up the steep snow slope at the back. I am gasping as we reach the top of this trivial obstacle and wonder if the party should not be reduced still further. We rope up. Paul, Margaret, Me and John.

Someone should get a Nobel prize for designing head torches that actually work. Margaret's blinks a few times and finally goes out, and mine is giving as much light as a constipated glow-worm. We move off. It's hard going on steep snow and I cannot seem to match stride and breathing. It's very cold and little moonlight. The wind howls past my ears and I feel slightly sick. I'm never going to make it! Oh yes you are! Keep going! One step, another, pant, one step. I'm never going to make it!

About half an hour out from the hut Margaret decides she cannot go on, the altitude has finally defeated her. We debate the issue. We decide that John should take her back and Paul and I will go on. I know I am right to try. A wave of terrible disappointment hit me at the prospect of turning back. Despite the physical hell I seem to be going through at present, a little voice keeps saying that I am not beaten yet!

Paul sets off. I keep stopping him to suggest a yet slower pace. Finally I can manage at the pace he sets and we slowly, very slowly ascend. 'The track up Mont Blanc is like a motor-way' they said. Well they were right. Too right infact, because at this point the track widens into a mass of scattered foot prints. We go on up taking one side of this wide path. My mind switches off. I am



concerned only with keeping my legs going. But it is getting increasingly difficult. Think! Why? We are in steep snow, off the track, its deep and powdery and I am sinking in up to my knees. How could we have lost it? We stop. My lamp has finally given up. The wind howls, no moon, it's very cold and either snowing or blowing powder snow. Paul switches out his lamp to see if any other parties are in the area. There is nothing. No sound, save for the wind, no light and thick mist closing in. I feel fear, a cold hand grasping my throat. Where the hell are we? What are we going to do? Upwards looks the same difficult terrain. Ok, then down. Retrace our steps, regain the track. We descend, grudgingly, and then see in the distance the tiny lights jerking up the mountain. Thank heavens! Another party. Two climbers slowly plodding. They do not speak but trudge past keeping step. We follow. Now they seem to be travelling very fast and in no time are out of sight again. We are still not back on the track, but moving over slightly easier ground. We go on and eventually regain the track, the angle eases, and is it my imagination or is it getting lighter? Yes, it is and the snow has stopped. I'm feeling better!

The track goes up and down gently until we reach a rock ridge and as the mists swirl around we see a hut. The Vallot hut. No word is spoken. We both feel frozen and would welcome any respite from this bitter wind. We clatter up the steps and wrestle with the door, finally getting inside to comparative warmth. The inside is occupied so we stay in the porch and squat down, coiling the rope about us on the floor. My hands are frozen, I can't feel my feet. We remove our crampons and wriggle our toes to get the circulation going again. A kind of drowsiness comes over me, a compelling desire to drift off into oblivion. I must fight it. People arrive. They seem numb with the cold and to our entreaties not to stand on the rope. Reluctantly we decide to leave this other world and press on. As we leave, two more climbers struggle in, John and Gordon. Its good to see them but we do not waste words.

It is light now, and although the wind has not relented the clouds are patchy. Paul sets the pace again. A clear track and a series of steep snow slopes with plateaus between. One section offers some real ice, but steps have been cut and there is no difficulty save that imposed by cold and altitude. I stop to take a photograph of the sun emerging through a solid horizontal mass of dark cloud obscuring the valley. The deep purple sphere seems to have made a dent in the cloud blanket, which looks so thick and glutinous that it must surely suck the sun back down and never let it shine on this cold white landscape. As we ascend, morning light touches the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Aiguille du Midi stands out above the floor of cloud. A truly magnificent sight which alas I cannot record on film as the shutter has frozen solid. I stop Paul once again and lean gasping over my ice axe. My vision mists and I feel giddy.



A few glucose tablets later I am setting the pace and finding each step more difficult than the last. Each white mound slowly surmounted only to find another beyond, and another. Surely it cannot be much further! A steep winding snow ridge narrow enough to permit only two boots width, I decide this must be the summit ridge and throw all my efforts into what I hope is the last obstacle. The angle eases to a wide snow platform and then slowly moves downwards. I stagger on and then realise that I have walked straight over the top of Mont Blanc! We stop and mumble congratulations to each other but we do not linger on the windy summit. It is incredibly cold. We turn back and almost run down the summit ridge, narrowly avoiding collision with ascending parties and reach a sheltered spot below the ridge. Paul produces a thermometer from his rucksack and we marvel at the fact that the mercury has retreated into the bulb. It must be about minus 10<sup>o</sup>C. Not to be outdone, I produce a celebratory can of beer from my rucksack and triumphantly remove the cap. The spray freezes instantaneously and we manage to sip a few mouthfulls before the whole can is frozen solid! The sun shines briefly as clouds race across the scene. No view of the surrounding mountains to crown our achievement, but there is an inner glow of satisfaction that not even this freezing environment can chill.

J.GREGSON



## NO REST FOR THE WICKED

Summer 1976

"Gimmer tomorrow then?". Ian agrees as begrudgingly as I had asked the question and we're morally committed. I started my climbing diversions with him nine years ago, struggling up V.Diff's at Ilkley and Almscliff (that makes me realise how little I have progressed; I still struggle up V.Diff's at Almscliff). Langdale was always popular, being so much easier to hitch to than Wales. The first time I visited Gimmer Crag in the summer of '69, Ian, a veteran of the place (he had been there before), pointed out Kipling's Grove as one of the most notorious routes and arguably the classic of the valley. In the last couple of years, I have been to the valley in the company of other people, and have always felt like evading the issue, by not doing the route. It's a feeling that most climbers must have; a classic route at the top of your standard, that you want to do, know you should be able to do, but somehow never quite get round to it. Not fit, not climbing well, too hard for my second, might fall off and hurt myself, etc., ad infinitum. A tirade of excuses thrown up by the blue-meannies of the subconscious.

This time I am struggling to think of excuses. Four weeks in Chamonix and the Vercors, followed by a week in Scotland, knock most of them right on the head, and K.G's infamous peg runner makes it a safe route to fall off. It has to be tomorrow, the day after is Saturday and I don't want a vast audience or to queue for the route.

Its grey and cold and blustery as we rope up and Ian leads off up Ash Tree Slabs. We've decided on a nice easy warm-up and I motor up behind him with my brain in neutral. I lead through to the stance common with F - route, and we stand there smoking

nervously, eyeing up the first pitch. Eventually we run out of excuses for procrastinations and I push Ian off the ledge onto the traverse. He leads it with little trouble and disappears up the groove. The traverse surprises me by being easier than expected. The start is supposed to be the hardest, but a bit of soft shoe shuffle on the first sloping hold brings a more comfortable situation and for the rest of the traverse I am in balance. Fifteen feet of jams and jugs up the groove brings me to the stance and Ian esconsced in a cosy sheltered niche. "There it is then", nodding at the groove rearing out behind him. "Looks steep". "Aye". It looks impressive but we both know the crux is round the corner on the face, seventy feet out. I pull out my cigarettes and offer one to Ian. He stubs out the one he is already smoking and accepts. Neither of us is really saying much. He envelops himself in a web of belay slings like a giant genial spider and pulls his gloves on, while I light another cigarette. I check my gear and relace my boots until, with the third cigarette burning down to the filter, I sense the jibe from Ian that he reckons I ought to be away. "Got me?". "Aye". "See you then". "See you".

Off the stance and easy bridging moves to the bottom of an overhanging flake that splits the groove. Its pushing me out of balance and a bold layback appears to be in order. Not caring for bold laybacks, I ferret about for a runner, but all the cracks are useless. I reckon I can get past the flake alright onto the footholds at head height, but they're twenty feet above the stance and I fancy a runner. Looking up, a perfect Moac slot is yawning at me from five feet above, and 'God's gift to climbers' passes into the bowels of it at the second throw. "Your lucky day. Do you often do that?". "Only when I'm gripped!".

The layback proves to be a needless extravaganza, and I swing up onto a large jug to footholds on the right of the groove. I feel a bit shaky hanging about trying to get the runner in, but now mind and muscle are starting to become resigned to their task, and I start to enjoy myself. Twenty more superb feet up



the groove, jamming, bridging, jug pulling, to just below the overhang where a dustbin sized hexcentric, dropped behind a spike in the crack, makes me feel even happier. A couple of moves on good holds lead me out of the womb-like shelter of the groove to a small sloping foothold on the arete at the base of an undercut crack. The next bit looks steep and awkward; the footholds are high up and the only handholds I fancy are at full stretch. It's getting windier and I become aware of Ian's waiting face on the stance and the floor of the gully 200 feet below. "Are you in balance there?". "Just about". "See the peg yet?". "Not yet". Another runner and then breath in, reach high, pull up, scamper feet, jam, step high, breath out and I'm in balance in the crack. It's still steep above but the good holds keep coming and soon a vision of an inch angle in a horizontal crack comes into view. I rise to meet it and gratefully clip in.

"At the peg, Ian". "O.K. to there?". "Fine, just follow the holds!". I can't see the diagonal crack mentioned in the description, but know the crux isn't too far away as the rock above is bulging alarmingly. A pull up on a protruding flat topped spike above and a peer right reveals it 10 feet away, round the bulge. I scuttle back to below the peg for a rest and a think. A second excursion, moving right from the spike, takes me halfway across the intervening wall, but I am still feet short of the crack. Back down for a serious think, my brain starting to change into overdrive. The third time I try lower. Both hands on the spike, run my feet up, stretch right for a square block hold, discover a previously hidden right foothold in the base of a shallow groove and step right. Left hand on the block, stretch right, but still short, run my feet up, push, lean, stretch, fingertips brushing the start of the crack. No good. Gibbon-like on my arms back along the jugs to below the peg, back to the same familiar foothold, half an E.B. on the hold, left foot



swinging free, two small handholds, poised on the edge of balance. I need more reach. Perhaps if I layaway on the edge of the block?

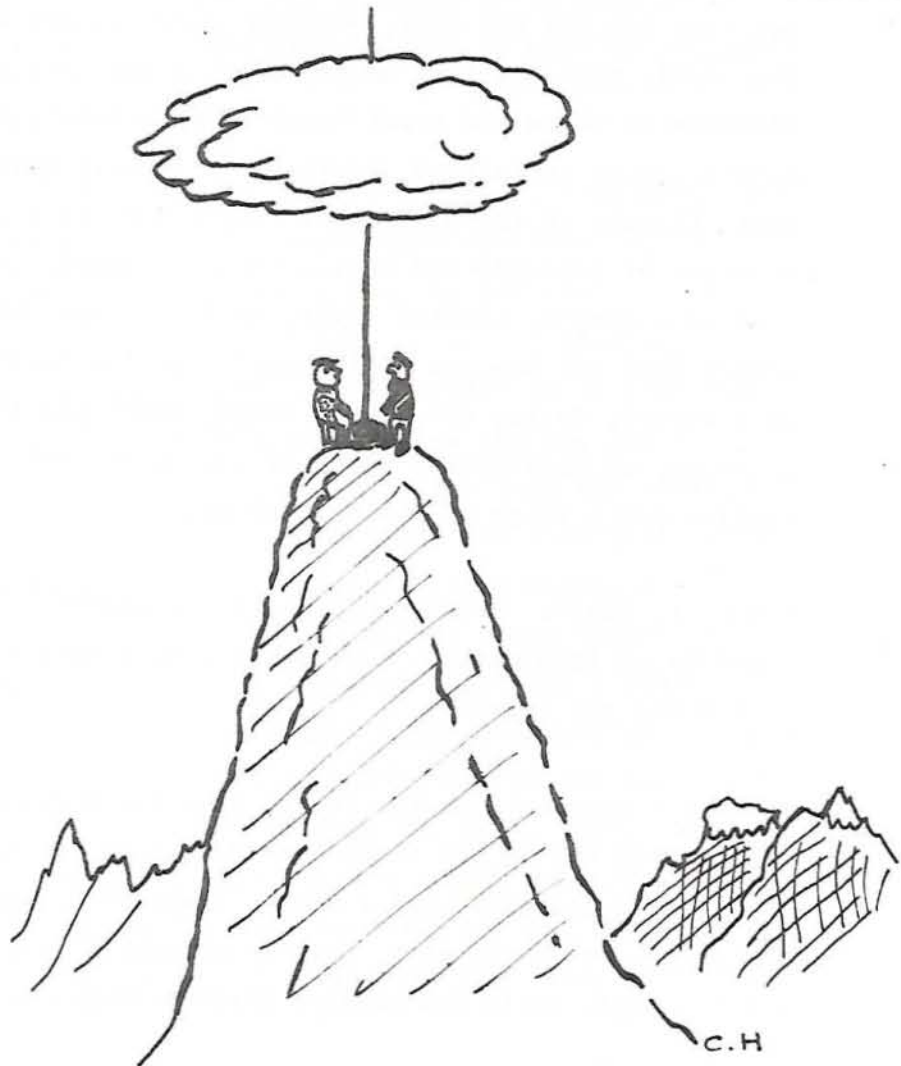
Time passes, probably only a few minutes, but it seems longer as I try and rest my fingers and try not to become aware of the fly on the wall situation and the blustering wind. I don't feel like making another try straight away, but force myself to pull off right again onto the first familiar moves. Both hands on the block, left down the side this time, layaway, feet dancing on the rock, trying to find the key position for equilibrium; out of balance, not quite got it, left foot frictioning bare steep rock, right hand off.....Christ this is insecure! Stretch stretch, a finger jam in the crack and a microsecond of debate. No! Yes! No! Go! And away, swinging right (no way will I reverse this one), pull up, feet on friction, a two move rising hand traverse to where the crack breaks off horizontally, and I find myself almost in balance. Rest? No! It's only another ten feet. Fingers in the horizontal crack, but not a crack, more a series of disconnected slots. Change fingers, jump, change feet on a dimple, stretch right, another finger-straining hold, (Don't fall off now you silly bugger, you're nearly there), foot across, swing, and..... a ledge, seemingly the size of a ballroom, an involuntary whoop of joy, a climatic feeling of elation and a surge of ebbing tension.

"Done it, Ian!". "Well done, what's it like?" . I respond with a babble of information, more words than I have said in the rest of the day put together.

I smoke a cigarette on the ledge, then fix a runner and bumble and grip my way up the final twenty feet of severe rock. The top is cold and bleak and I find a sheltered cranny in the rocks to sit and belay and wait, high on adrenalin, taking in and paying out the rope, while Ian makes a dozen attempts at the crux,

finally penduling across it. I don't envy him. The psychology is so much different on the other end of the rope. We share the last cigarette we have between us and then move off across the tops towards the descent. A great day, a great route. Ian's already saying he's got to come back and do it properly sometime, and won't feel happy until he does. But I'm O.K. The classic of the valley, my ambition in Langdale. But even as we leap down the scree of the descent gully my mind is working again. Arcturus is supposed to be quite good, isn't it?.....

R. SEDGWICK



The trouble with Gordon Wright is, that he's too keen.

PATTERDALE  
THE GEORGE STARKEY MEMORIAL HUT

15th-17th October 1976

Driving up the M6 on the Friday evening through torrential rain and taking into account the previous weeks weather, one had the feeling that once again we were fated to another wet weekend in the Lakes. However, it was not to be, and the somewhat tentative suggestions made that evening in the Glenridding Hotel, were soon enlarged and turned into concrete plans the following morning, spurred on, no doubt, by the blue skies, Messrs Ashcroft and Penlington and the promise of a ride on a Mountain Goat. They, plus Roland and the two Mikes, set off by CAR to Pooley Bridge to walk along the whole ridge of High Street, eventually descending to Troutbeck and on to Ambleside intent on catching the Mountain Goat Bus Service back to the hut.

The Stafford Provo's went on secret manouvers over Stony Cove Pike. Their midday break was exercising their crowd control techniques along the Kirkstone Pass Road. A diversionary tactic by one of their party, saw them ascending Red Screes en route for Fairfield, having missed the Kirkstone Inn due to the navigators glasses steaming up from the heavy gasping of his younger assistant who was breaking in his new ankles with old boots (or was it new boots with old ankles?).

Meanwhile, Musson's Mountain Marauders had divided ranks. Martin and Peter did much the same as the Provo's but threw in High Street for starters and finished over Dollywaggon Pike, Helvellyn and Striding Edge, the latter in case their fellow Marauders Jim and Robin, were still looking for it!

The remainder of us made High Street summit for lunch and reading our Wainwright sat in deep thought contemplating the view. We then



continued over Thorthwaite Crag via the Beakon and onto Stony Cove Pike. Here we received the thoughts of Chairman Hudson, aided and abetted by those two militants of the mountains, Margaret and Doreen. Ken and I just kept the pot boiling with the occasional stir. We returned to the hut via Brothers Water and Beckstones, an excellent walk in near perfect conditions.

Alas, the Mountain Goat failed to link up but the proverbial thumb came to their rescue. The Provo's returned to a strict debriefing (something to do with a perspiring Functional Jacket). Jim and Robin had found Striding Edge and Helvellyn, but as yet Martin and Peter had not, it seems, found the hut.

Eventually we all got together and formed a circle in the Glenridding Hotel for sustenance and good cheer.

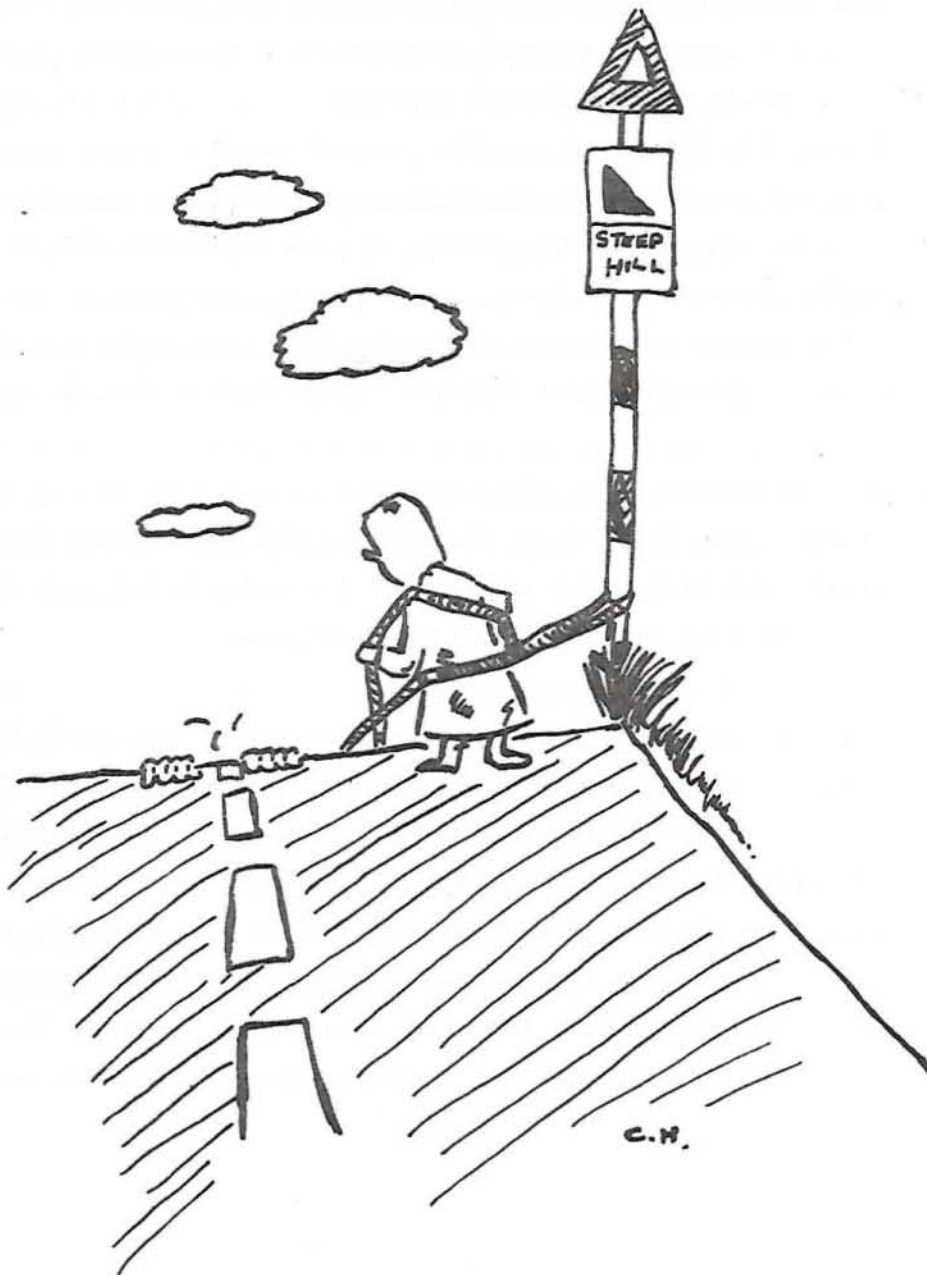
Sundy morning broke bright and clear (for some) with all the promise of another perfect day; and so it was. A little cragging mixed with a walk had been the order for the day. So, the majority made due pilgrimage to Dove Slabs where many variations on a theme were exacted on this delightful little crag amidst much wind (both kinds) and wit. Eventually, most people made their way to Hart Crag and then on to Fairfield, descending to Grisedale Tarn. Here the more conservative of us returned to the hut, whilst the extremists carried on over Dollywaggon Pike and Helvellyn, returning to the hut, (yes, you've guessed) via Striding Edge which had also been crossed earlier that day by Roger. Martin and the Marauders we suspect, attacked Dove Crag with some success no doubt. (They did Westmorlands Route H.V.D.). The young navigator remained in the hut obviously planning more Provo's action for the future.

The success formulae for a meet is reliant upon the people who attend and it is with this very much in mind I say thank you for a most excellent meet in an excellent hut with excellent company.

Thank to you:

Roland Anthony, Jack Ashcroft, Colin Barnard, Roger Chapman, Ken and Doreen Hodge, Rock Hudson, David Jefferies, Mike Key, Martin Musson, Dave Penlington, Mike Wren, Robin Sedgwick, Peter Wrag, Jim Watts, Margaret Linney, John Linney.

J. LINNEY



## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OWNERSHIP OF TAN-Y-WYDDFA

A recent review of the deeds of Tan-y-Wyddfa, undertaken in connection with the proposed alterations, has revealed most of its legal history since it first appeared on the landscape of Eyreri.

In 1895, still no doubt a patch of peat bog and heather, it was Plot 15 of land forming part of the Fridd Isaf estate, owned by Lady Anne Watkins of Cheshire. On 27th October that year, the plot was leased for building purposes to David Jones, Quarryman and Proprietor of the "Snowdon Temperance Hotel, Rhyd-ddu". A thoroughly appropriate predecessor to the present straight laced, clean living incumbents. Presumably the hotel was the present Cwellyn Arms, and one can be excused for thinking that occasionally history balefully reasserts itself. Lady Anne, surprising, signed the lease with " ", her mark. Maybe she wasn't no lady. Incidentally, the solicitors involved were Lloyd George and George of Porthmadog. This maybe has something to do with the well-known refrain "Lloyd George knew my father (George)".

On 24th August 1906, the lease was transferred to two true sons of Cymri - John Ogwen Owen, Quarryman, and Idwal Owen, Stationmaster. The latter was also known as Owain - the older Welsh form found in the tales of King Arthur and in Owain Glyndwr.

Not much happened in this saga until 1921, when Ogwen Owen died and left his half share of the lease to a Mrs. Williams (of no known gainful occupation). In 1928 Mr and Mrs Williams jumped in and bought the freehold of the plot, plus the strip which runs down to the main road, for £30 from Sir James Worsley Taylor, Bart. (a lieutenant colonel in H.M. Army - at last a man of substance). We're not quite sure where he sprang from, however. Idwal Owain threw in the towel in 1932 and in September, J.H. Owain (female-presumably wife or daughter),



sold the half share of the lease to Mrs Williams, so at last the Williams were in complete possession. I am told that Williams is a fairly common name in Wales, and there is absolutely no clan connection between these people and a certain Celtic Fringe member of this club.

The 1928 conveyance included some still valid covenants which we should look to:-

- (i) Walls of good stone, 4'6" high to be built on the North and West sides of the plot, and along the boundary of the strip to the road. (Where are they, who pinched 'em?).
- (ii) Owners shall not use, occupy, suffer or permit any offensive trade or business, or cause annoyance to owners or occupiers of Ffridd Isaf estate or parts thereof. I suppose that refers to Long Lankin who lives up the hill in his welly boots and ankle length mac tied up with baler twine.
- (iii) For ever hereafter, save the strip of land open, permit for use as a road and forthwith construct a road. They must have been jesting - the peat swallowed up a tractor when I was last down there.

In 1947 Mrs Williams died, and the lease passed to Mr Williams and was extinguished. He died in 1956, leaving Lloyds Bank Trustees in proud possession of a small Welsh estate, until 28th May 1958 when the Oread kindly took it off their hands.

The story since then has been at least as interesting, but cannot yet be revealed due to the 25 year secrecy ruling on matters of State.

R. SQUIRES

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

You may recall the letter received by the committee from I.M.I. Mindbender, which made serious allegations against a well known club member. For those who cannot immediately call this to mind, you are severely reprimanded and referred to Oread M.C. Bulletin, "A Dangerous Man" Vol. 23, No. 1, Series A, P 31, paragraph 5, approx. Spring 1976. Very shortly after the publication of this Bulletin the committee received a letter defending the actions of the meet leader and this is published here in order to allow both sides of the argument to be adequately represented.

To the Oread Committee:

Re: "A Dangerous Man"

Sirs,

I did not like the casual airy fairy manner in which I.M.I. Mindbender criticised the leader of the 1975 Marsden/Rowsley walk. This meet was an exercise planned with considerable precision to gainfully use the daylight hours from sunrise to sunset - - what better for a day on the hill? Your correspondent gives the impression that a mountain day is not complete without being interposed with tea shacks, hamburgers, cafes, pubs and things. I suggest Blackpool tower and environs would fit more in line with this philosophy - and no particular discredit to those who frequently enjoy such meets.

However, I must admit that there were moments during the walk when the most callous would have pangs of conscience, as for instance, witnessing Ron Chambers obviously in excruciating pain attempting to raise his body from an all fours position after the traverse of Strines Edge. But there was no danger you will recall.

The Police were fully aware of the event and it was to be noted that a detachment of the Royal Marine Commandos were in position as we marched over High Neb. The whole day was planned as a 40 mile traverse of Yorkshire/Derbyshire moorland, passing the minimum of habitation and split second timing was essential if the operation was to be successful. It was unfortunate about the hard boiled egg.

In spite of all accusations against the leadership, might I suggest that the team put on a very commendable performance. Most walkers had returned from the Alps the previous month, which demonstrates the necessity of an Alpine season as training for peakland bog-trots. How Mr. Pretty has got away with it for so many years without Alpine seasons makes the mind boggle. It was to be noted that one of the Chesterfield dynamos on the walk, who is well acquainted with the necessity for hard training for the British winter season, visibly wilted as the miles ticked by. He was decorating this past summer and missed his Alpine season. It says much for the stamina of Mr. Pretty - - - and those who were on the 1975 Bullstones meet will appreciate what is meant.

I am forwarding copies of this letter to Mr. R.G. Pettigrew of the BMC sub-committee for Mountain Training and the Secretary of the Lyke Wake Walk Club.

Yours,

I.M.I. Mindbender II

Factual Addendum

Marsden/Rowsley 13th/14th September 1975

Present:	Ashcroft J	
	Beverley P	Saturday 13th
	Bridges T	06.00 hrs. Marsden
	Chambers R	19.00 hrs. Robin Hood
	Darnell R	
	Firth S	Sunday 14th
	Gregson K	11.00 hrs. Routine crag training, Birchens and
	Hobday C	16.00 hrs. Gardoms
	Radcliffe C	
	Slater G	16.00 hrs. Robin Hood
	West B	18.00 hrs. Grouse and Claret, Rowsley
	Weston D	



P.S. I understand from the meet leader that a bag of potatoes is on its way by registered parcel post for I.M.I. Mindbender I.

Editorial Note

This letter was received in March 1976 and Mr. R.G. Pettigrew was elected to the Presidency of the BMC the following June.

Test Paper

1. Which do you consider to be the correct version? Mindbender I or Mindbender II, or vice versa (be brief).
2. Discuss in Latin or French (but not both) the necessity of Alpine training for British bog-trots (be bright).
3. Which came first, the chicken or the hard boiled egg? (be careful).
4. Does it really matter? (be honest).



"Every time I start to crawl my pants fall down"

Quote: R. COLLEGE

## PROFILE

As I strayed in the shade of the Buachaille  
One cold and wintry day,  
I trod on a bod in a bog hole,  
'Twas a climber, old and grey.

T.PATEY

David joined the Oread in 1962, whilst working on a rocket for Rolls Royce. He joined the club after serving a short aspirancy, and following an introduction by Janes (an act he lived to regret) as the seventh son of Gareth (the slack) Williams. David had his early years in the 'Rhondda' and was educated at Ton-Y-Pandy High. 'Dia Bach', as he was affectionately known in the valleys took to the slopes like a natural. Weaned on the 'Beacons' and the Black Mountains, he perfected front-pointing on the village slag heaps, using discarded pit pony shoes screwed back to front on his pit boot toes. Dave's service in the armed forces still remains something of a mystery. A popular rumour that he was chief scout to General Wingate's chindits was flattened on the '67 Welsh walk, when the already suspect qualities of his map reading were highlighted by a series of diversions. This proved that Bombadier Williams D, 217414 C.M.D. spent all his map reading sessions in the N.A.A.F.I. bar.

Dave emigrated to Derby after 'the wars'. He met Janes by accident during an equally accidental rocket launch over Sinfin Moor, when the warhead failed to breach 'Stenson Bubble'. Dave insisted on an introduction to the Oread and our unwitting member obliged. In short, Dave quickly won favour with the club's veterans, serving an early apprenticeship as Pretty's Gentleman's Gentleman. Nom-de-plumes fell on Dave as roof leaks on 'Tan-Y-Wyddfa' and the 'Dave' was dropped immediately for 'Tiger Williams'. Others followed, usually from Pretty, such as 'Silly Welsh Twat', until all settled for 'Digger' and it stuck.

He is an appalling cook, poisoning many until 'rumbled'. On Williams and his culinary fiasco's Geof Hayes amazed stare rested, as his

plastic cup dissolved when trying to contain a helping of 'Digger's Concomme Ospiz'. As a tea-maker he is even worse. On the '68 Welsh walk he achieved the impossible by brewing a 'good strong cup of refreshing tea' without water!

His determination is without question. In his pre-rover days, when representing the Oread at the Summit Dance, Dave cycled, in his best suite, from Chaddesden to the 'Pervril of the Peak', Thorpe, leaving at 2.00am 'blotto', he rode off into the night to arrive home almost sober at 4.30am. An accomplished artist in oils and Crown Plus Two emulsion, Digger is also a terrible photographer. His Alpine shots in '68 gave Milner a case of popping monacle and Pretty had convulsions. He fortunately pulled out of active photography after producing 200 pale cream white-outs on an unsuccessful attempt on the 'Strahlhorn'. His other fancies are classical music and Shakespeare. The least said about his renderings of the 'Bard of Avon's' work the better and it was only 'Longshanks Kershaw' who would rise to his defence.

Digger is no 'extreme rock man', but is good value on a mountain, always turning failure into success. Whether it be the Welsh walk, Peak Horseshoe, or the round of Raynesway, Digger is there. He was even seen carrying a Dulux dog on the '71 Peak horseshoe, until the dog, a bitch, packed in. In the higher mountains, Dave is at his best, with many classic peaks to his credit. He will grace the ranks of the Alpine Club one day if it takes Jack Longland to fix it. He likes the 'big uns', Monte Rosa, Weissmies, Mont Blanc and Mrs. Mills have all felt 'Diggers' boot. One wonders what it was that gave him the most satisfaction on Mont Blanc in '70. Was it the summit, or was it the wrestling of the 'blue ribband', high altitude (bowel evacuation section) from Lol Burns with his splendred effort near the top on the crowded 'Bosses ridge' or possibly the trumping competition in the Weissmies hut in '69.

So what is it we have in Williams the man? Son of a Rhondda miner, owner of the 'Ponte Rosa' Wood Road; Rover 2000 at one end of the



garage, a 20 inch diameter, touch of the Patrick Moore's at the other? There is a full disc jockey outfit of Japanese Hi Fi gear in the lounge and a selection of rare trees in the extensive grounds, looted from an assortment of National Forests. He is a high placed dignitary on the Oread committee, rivalling only his friends Janes and Fred Allen as the most dubious Assistant Secretary of all times. In concluding, what better than to see his youthful presence in the 'Moon' on Tuesdays. Just a hint of the 'Grecian 2000's' bike clips at the slope, galoshers of course, generous to a fault, our one and only 'Digger'.

Live it up, fill your cup, drown your sorrow,  
And sow your wild oats while ye may,  
For the toothless old tykes of tomorrow,  
Are the tigers of yesterday.

#### GOSSIP COLUMN

On the opening Wednesday evening climbing meet at Black Rocks, one of the Oread's leading female personalities was overheard, through the woods, to make the following remark:-

"I think I've had enough, Chuck, for the first time this year".

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Does anyone remember Mr. Robin Reeve.....long of leg, short of hair and given to fancying Judy's?

Those who do may be interested to learn that he recently embarked on an extensive coaching program at Black Rocks, specialising in slab climbing techniques. Regretfully, however, this new career has been brought to a sudden end. Having failed miserably to talk J.W.D. into falling off 'Railway Slab' Mr Reeve proceeded to demonstrate to the Bank holiday crowds, his unique technique of uncontrolled descent, breaking his foot in the process! Not entirely satisfied with this, he subsequently succeeded in breaking his shiny new plaster cast 'doing something in the Bathroom' ..... now where did I put that insurance form?