

2014

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS  
OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB



Journal

## ABMSAC Office Holders 2014

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# ABMSAC JOURNAL 2014

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Journal. Last year we had a total of nine meets in the UK and three in Europe. The UK meets varied from winter weekends up in Scotland down to autumn walks in Devon. We had a Hotel and a camping meet in Switzerland and a short meet in Austria.

The Meet reports and photos are presented in the Journal. There are also a number of articles from members who have shared their experiences and thoughts with us.

There are several changes to the look of the Journal this year. Firstly, as you will have noticed it is slightly bigger – this means the photos can be much bigger than previous years. In addition, the members list is now a pull-out.

Don't forget that Meet reports and photographs are added to the website during the year.

I would like to thank everybody who have sent me copy, photos and support and help to compile this Journal and to keep the website up to date. My final thanks is to Mike Pinney for his ideas and inspiration to help me update the Journal.

I hope you enjoy the Journal.

*Mike Goodyer,  
Editor, May 2014*

## MEET PROGRAMME 2014

Date	Meet and Venue	Meet Leader
January 31 - Feb 2	The Annual Dinner and AGM, Glenridding Hotel	Brooke Midgley
February 7 - 15	The Edge of the Sahara, Morocco	Ed Bramley
March 21-23	Fass Fern House, Loch Eil, Scotland	John Dempster
May 2-5	Bunkhouse/Camping Meet, Royal Oak, Hurdlow, Derbyshire	Andy Burton
June 13-14	Rhyd Ddu, Oread Club Hut, North Wales	Ed Bramley
July 5-12	Hotel based Alpine Meet, Pontresina, Engadine, Switzerland	Pam Harris
July 12-19	Pontese, Gran Paradiso, Italy. Pre Alpine Meet with AC, CC, FRCC, LMC and Wayfarers	John Temple
July 19 - August 9	Camping based Joint Alpine Meet, Cogne/Gran Paradiso, Italy	Keith Lambley
September 5-7	Beer Meet, Devon	James Baldwin
September 13- 21	Via Ferrata Week, Cortina Di Ampezzo, Italy	Andy Burton
September 20 - 27	Assynt and the Far North, Scotland	Roger James
September 26 - 28	Annual Buffet Party, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Ed Bramley
October 17-19	Alpine Reunion Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mike Goodyer

## LONDON WINTER LECTURES

January 7	A journey along the Arles Way, one of the historic pilgrim routes of Europe, starting in France and journeying towards Santiago Compostela in Spain	Richard Winter (ABMSAC)
February 4	The mountains of Cyprus	Don Hodge & Judy Renshaw (TCC)
March 4	"Nubra first ascent expedition - August/September 2013" An expedition to the Nubra Valley region of Ladakh, India	Dave Woolley (Rucksack Club)

## PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS



Our love of the mountains and the shared experiences we have in them generates strong and lasting friendships. So it comes as particularly hard news to learn of the loss of those friends, whether it is through accident, or longevity. In the journal, we will remember some of those great times we shared with people who are no longer with us. And we will do the other thing that those people would have asked of us, which is to continue enjoying what we do to the full, because that is the best way of keeping those memories alive.

In such circumstances, it's easy to lose sight of what we did over the past year, but let me take you back to the start of 2013, which arrived with a long and prolonged blast of winter, with snow in my part of the world lasting until March. By May however, the weather had put on a kinder face, and it turned out to be a great summer that lasted well into September. All this boded well for our meets programme, which included locations as diverse as Scotland, the Lake District and Peak District, Wales and, of course, not forgetting Devon, which I was fortunate enough to join this year. Our overseas meets programme was equally strong, with a joint camping meet with the AC, CC and Wayfarers based at Randa, a hotel meet based at Saas Almagell, and a late summer camping meet at Solden. In addition, Pam Andrews was able to make a return visit to Bhutan to see the classroom set up at the Choki Traditional Art School in Alasdair's memory. My thanks to everybody who either attended or organised meets either at home, or abroad, as a successful meets program is key to attracting and retaining members.

Our hut in the Lake District continues to be our physical base as a club, and we are currently on the point of securing a thirty year renewal of the lease, which will give us a long period of certainty going forward. On the question of the hut, I'd like to say a big thank you to Don Hodge, who has retired as HMC representative after over 30 years on the committee, and has been the driving force behind the upkeep of the hut for many years.

Keeping in touch with members is an integral part of our activities, and I hope you like the new format of the Journal, which means we can make it even more appealing to everybody. We are also looking at a number of other enhancements to our digital communications, and I hope to be able to bring you more on that before too long. Also on the communication front, as a result of the legacy left by Alasdair Andrews, we have now made significant inroads into digitising the clubs' journals, and we will ultimately make these available to members on line.

Earlier in my report, I remarked on last year's weather, and this year to date has been challenging for many, to say the least. One can only hope that the weather does a repeat of last year, and that we have another magnificent summer. We have a great programme of meets for this year lined up, both at home and abroad, and they're all marvellous opportunities to get out, enjoy the scenery, and meet new friends.

All the best for 2014, and hope to see you on a meet before long.

*Ed Bramley, May 2014*

## MEET REPORTS

### **Locheil Meet, 1- 4 March – Report by John Dempster**

The meet was based at Fassfern House, which is reputedly where Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed in 1745 after raising his standard at Glenfinnan. He had good taste, because it is large and comfortable and very well appointed.



*Elegant dining at Fassfern House, picture by Jim Strachan*

We were quite fortunate too with the weather. High pressure was sitting over Scotland, and although we had a good deal of cloud there was no significant rain. Although there was a lot of good snow on the high Munros they were mostly shrouded in cloud so the meet tended to concentrate on Corbetts, which are often as strenuous as Munros, particularly when, as here, they are climbed from sea level.

In all 6 were climbed, by different parties. The sole Munro climbed was Gulvain, a long route, climbed by an enthusiastic party on the first day, which reduced Peter F's unclimbed score to a mere 20. On the last day some went to Loch Morar, some to Glen Roy, while the two Peters found good snow conditions on Rois Bheinn.



*Peter Goodwin en route to Rois Bheinn with Moidart behind. Photo by Peter Farrington*

All in all an enjoyable and successful weekend, and there is already talk of returning to Fassfern next year.

Attended: Peter Farrington, John and Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Roger James, David Seddon, Jim and Margaret Strachan, John Dempster.

### **Torridon Meet, 20 - 27 April – Report by Margaret Strachan**

The accommodation was a grand well appointed house on the shore of Loch Torridon, the only house in the village between the road and the loch. We arrived and settled in on the Saturday with a less than optimistic forecast for the

week's weather. A new member to the Scottish meets David Hern (ABM veteran) joined us for the week staying in the Torridon Inn along the road from the house.

On Sunday a circular route was planned to the east of Beinn Damh. This however proved impossible as we were unable to ford the stream at either of the usual possible points. What had been a dry river bed the previous week was now a raging torrent. We beat the retreat to the road in heavy rain with the intention of reversing the route as the main road bridged the river. However with no let up in the downpour we decided to head for the shelter of the Torridon Inn. Not a good start to the week.

The weather on Monday was no better so we drove over to the Inverue gardens only to find them closed due to high winds! After a coffee break they decided to let us in. After a walk in the gardens and a visit to an Art Gallery we had some good views of Slioch (981m) on the return journey to Torridon.



*Margaret, John D and Fred on Beinn Damh*

On Tuesday we did a fairly strenuous coastal walk to Diabeg with a steep scrambling decent to the village, before returning via the circuitous inland road. As Peter Farrington arrived Tuesday evening, both Peters set out on Wednesday morning to do Beinn Liath Mhor, the rest of us ascended Beinn Damh (902m).

The summits were snow covered and the sky slate grey for most of the day with odd glimpses of the sun. Great views were to be had looking north to Beinn Alligin and Liathach.



*Vice President, Jim, on summit of Beinn Damh*

On Thursday Peter Farrington did Sgorr Ruadh. John D, Fred S, Peter G, Jim and I walked in to Corrie Mhic Fhearchair on Beinn Eighe hoping to ascend over the top returning via the shorter route. However on reaching the corrie it was raining stair rods and we took shelter under a boulder and watched intrepid Peter Goodwin (only one with crampons) set off up the snow filled gully into the mist towards the summit. The rest of us retreated in continuously heavy rain to the car park. Peter eventually joining us for dinner some hours later after having summited Ruadh-stac Mor. David Hern meantime did a circular walk in towards Beinn Alligin with similar weather.

Fearing another wet day on the Friday, we headed for Applecross on the coast. Stopping where the road crosses Bealach na Ba we noted there was considerably more snow on the summits with accompanying high winds. We

therefore did another good coast walk in the sunshine with views across to Staffin on Skye ending with late lunch at the Applecross Inn. Peter Goodwin walked in to the north of Liathach to do Beinn Dearg (914m) in very poor conditions.

With David Hern joining us we dined either in house or at the Inn. Good company and good food made for an enjoyable week with only the poor weather curtailing outdoor activity.



*Looking towards Beinn Alligin*

*Those Present: Margaret & Jim Strachan, John Dempster, Fred Semple, Peter Goodwin, David Hern, with John and Marj Foster and Peter Farrinton part week.*

### **Derbyshire Meet, 3-6 May – Report by Heather Eddowes and Myles O'Reilley**

Heather and Mary made their rendezvous in Buxton and got to the bunkhouse at the Royal Oak in enough time to find a bed, unload and meet up with the meet leader and others in the bar.

So, off to the Fish and Chip shop/café in Longnor with its gingham table cloths to wait our turn to be served. Andy, Myles, Mary and Heather enjoyed a traditional fish 'n chip meal with tea and bread & butter before they all adjourned to the Packhorse Inn in Crodecote en route back to Sparklow and the Royal Oak to meet up with the rest of the meet's participants.

After breakfast on the Saturday and with the weather forecast good the team went to their various activities. The biking contingent split up into two groups with Ed and Mike O'Dwyer deciding on an energetic 60K ride.

The other group, Mary, Heather, Andy B (leader), Myles and Andy H, set off at a steady rate south on the Pennine Bridleway, off through Hartington and on to the Manifold Valley bridleway to The Hamps bridleway to Waterhouse and up through the hillside to the village of Cauldon. An amazing pub was set here on the corner – The Yew Tree. In it was a fantastic collection of ancient (3000 BC) or simply old (decades or even centuries) oddments. Well worth a visit...

After a welcome drink here we headed back, along the same route, to our first port of call Wetton Mill. One or two folks were beginning to feel a little saddle sore but we pressed on through the delightful countryside of towering crags and then open Peak views with a quick look at the old Signal Box near Hartington on the trail.



The evening meal was taken in the Royal Oak, who as before looked after us very well.

*Photo shows the Meet Leader leading the way.*

Sunday dawned with the weather set fair and members dispersed to their various activities. Ed, Andy and Myles setting off for Froggatt so that Myles could try his hand at rock climbing. With thanks to Ed and Andy pointing the hand and foot holds and with a good deal of encouragement Myles managed to scramble his way up various routes without falling off. Routes completed that day, Slab Recess – diff; Heather Wall – severe; Nursery Slab – moderate; Trapeze – V Diff, Sunset Crack – VS and Sunset Slab – VS. The afternoon climbing was the highlight of the weekend for Myles who is off to buy a guide book and tick a few more routes off!

The cycling team were down to two – Mary and Heather. Off to Parsley Hay, across the main A515 and back into the gentle hills along the Long Rake road to Bakewell.



*Cycling in the Peak, photo by Mary Eddowes*

They then negotiated the busy town up to the beginning of the Monsal Trail and pedalled up the gentle incline, through the various tunnels to the junction of Rocks Dale and Wye Dale (3 miles short of Buxton) where they pushed their bikes up the steep Pennine Bridleway, bypassing Blackwell and Chelmorton and continued south to cross the A515 and so rejoin the northern end of the old railway (Tissington Trail) and back to Sparklow.

On returning to the Royal Oak the flysheet was erected, salad cut up and chairs out and the BBQ lit. Andy was off with non stop sausages and burgers for all to eat and eat and eat. An excellent finish to yet another dry sunny day.

Monday arrived warm and sunny and a number of the attendees made their way home, the Sunday cycling team left after breakfast as Mary (the newest ABM recruit) was heading back to Kent. Heather and Mary both thoroughly enjoyed their active weekend. This left the four remaining attendees to set off for an end of meet walk, stopping at Hartington for an ice cream before ending up at the Pack Horse in Crodecote for a final pint. The team then split up to make their various way home.

Another great Derbyshire Meet. Big thanks to Andy for organising it all.

## Rhyd Ddu Meet, 7-9 June – Report by Ed Bramley

At last - a break in the fickle British weather brought a weekend of sunshine, and people were able to take full advantage of it.

The advance party of Ed, Andy and Steve ventured to Cnicht on the Friday (knight in English), and up onto the classic ridge which gives the mountain its nickname of the Matterhorn of Wales. A straightforward ascent, which brought great views over to both the Snowdon range, and out to sea.



*Steve and Andy on the way up Cnicht, photo by Ed Bramley  
(Insert – New technology (Steve) meets old technology (Ed) – photo by Andy Burton)*

Traversing round the head of the valley opened up vistas towards Blaenau and Dolwyddelan. The descent took us past the same slate quarry village we had come across last year, and on down via a number of tracks back into Croesor. We had travelled fast enough to be able to call in at Beddgelert for the first of the weekend's ice creams.

Saturday saw a wide range of activities taking place, befitting of such a grand day. Some people took the long walk in to Cwm Silyn to then climb Kirkus's route, whilst others were scrambling on a number of ridges in the area, including sentinel route on the Sunday.

Another team made the long traverse past Foel Goch to Llanberis (allegedly for a cream tea), before the long trek back past the halfway house, and a second tea stop.



*Looking towards Nantill Ridge from above the Ranger Path, photo by Mike Goodyer*

Lastly, Mike O'Dwyer and myself ascended part of the Rhyd Ddu path, to then drop down to the Watkin path, over Lliwedd, down to Pen Y Pass cafe for midday fuel, before pulling up the Pyg track to the top of Snowdon, and then descending the Snowdon Ranger path and back past the quarries to the cottage. This was a very popular day for ascending Snowdon. We counted several blocks of over 50 people either ascending or descending the more

popular routes. It was only by our timely intervention that we prevented one eastern European descending the Ranger path, thinking it was the main track to Llanberis.

For the Saturday evening meal we were joined by Terry Shaw and Dick Yorke for the usual communal meal. There was a partly Italian theme this year with tricolore of mozzarella, tomato and basil for starters, with spaghetti and meat balls for mains, followed by a variety of summer desserts. The conversation waxed long and lyrical into the night, helped on by the balmy summer weather.

Sunday adventures followed a similar theme, with one team making the ascent of yr Arran, before descending some poorly marked paths into Beddgelert. The return journey was by a new set of paths that link the railway stations at Beddgelert and Rhyd Ddu, and are suitable for either walking or biking. Well worth using, and form a great link with the train, if required. The last touches of the path are still going in, but the restored causeway by Llyn y Gader is a particularly fine feature.



*Mike, Paul, Mike and Mike on yr Arran, photo by Ed Bramley*

A great weekend, with great views and memories.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Mike Goodyer, Natasha Geere, Don Hodge, Steve Hunt, Mike O'Dwyer, Marian Parsons, Mike Parsons, Mike Pinney, Judy Renshaw, Terry Shaw, Paul Stock, Dick Yorke

### **Hotel Alpine meet, Saas-Almagell, 6 - 20 July - Report by Pamela Harris-Andrews**

Since 2014 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Swiss Alpine Club, it seemed appropriate that the summer hotel meet should be in Switzerland, and so arrangements were made to stay in the Hotel Monte Moro in Saas-Almagell as we had done for our centenary meet in 2009. Annette once again made us very welcome, and this time there was the added bonus that all cable-cars and buses in the entire Saas valley were included in the hotel price.

On the day prior to the meet, Niels Doble had arranged a guided visit to CERN, just outside Geneva. We met for lunch on the terrace of the cafeteria and had time to enjoy 'The Universe of Particles' *son-et-lumière* show in the wooden Globe of Discovery before joining the 3 1/2 hour tour in the afternoon. This was led by Mark Tyrrell who gave an enthusiastic introduction.



*Photo by Rick Saynor*

Visits followed to the Magnet-Assembly building to see the inside of the super-conducting magnets guiding the protons around the 27 km LHC (Large Hadron Collider) ring and down the 100 metre-deep pit to the CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid) detector, which was instrumental in the Higgs Boson discovery in 2012.

After this exciting start 30 of us gathered for the first week of the meet.

The combination of daily sunshine and the free lift pass enabled us to get high every day, although the snow was still low after a long winter and cold spring, and both the Monte Moro and the Antrona passes remained closed for the duration of our stay. But this was an advantage for some trips, and the shorter winter route to the Britannia Hut was still open.

For many the visit to the hut was the highlight of the meet, and a large group of 16 of us went there on a perfect



day of brilliant sunshine, as on the visits celebrating our centenary in 2009 and the hut's centenary in 2012.

*Egginerjoch. Photo by Rick Saynor*

We were able to inspect the solar panels donated by the Association in 2012,

with the accompanying plaque, and we were made a big fuss of by Dario, the guardian's son who is to take over his mother's position as guardian himself next year



Most of us wandered up the Klein Allalin from the hut for even better views of the surrounding peaks, and I marvelled how I had ever climbed the Rimpfischhorn back in 1969.

*ABMSAC group with Dario, photo by hut staff*



I returned to the hut a few days later, and Mark Davison was able to point out his route on our centenary meet in 2009 when he and Tony Arkley made a 28 hour non-stop ridge climb along the five kilometres of the Cresta di Saas, taking in 17 different tops.

*Mark showing ridge. Photo by Jeff Russell*

Ascents were made by mixed groups of AC and ABMSAC members, and the Allalinhorn was climbed in the first week by Roland Jackson, David Watts and Bill Westermeyer, and in the second by Howard Telford and Oliver Cooper, both teams using the Alpine Metro to start as high as possible.



*Allalinhorn summit, photo by Howard Telford*

The same five also climbed the Almagellerhorn from the top of the Heidbodme chairlift above Saas-Almagell, and the Mittaghorn from Saas-Almagell itself, Jeff Russell, Howard and Oliver by the north-west ridge, partly a via ferrata. After a night in the Hohsaas dortoir, Howard and Oliver climbed the Weissmies, and Mark Davison and Jeff Russell attempted the Lagginhorn. After making a recce of the route the previous day, they were thwarted by the weather suddenly breaking, although Jeff was able to return to climb it while on the Camping Meet the following week.



Walks were taken in all directions, and with the Saastal surrounded by 4000 metre peaks, the views were always magnificent. A favourite walk for all the group was the easy shelf walk up to Saas Fee, past the café with the dromedary, and at Saas Fee itself a happy hour was spent on more than one occasion watching the tame marmots.

*Photo by Carol Saynor*



From Saas Fee the more energetic walked up Hannig, Mellig and Gibidum, while others enjoyed a gourmet lunch at the restaurant at Spielboden or went up the Alpine Metro to the revolving restaurant and Ice Palace. On one occasion a large group of us planned to take the lift to Plattjen and walk along the 'Gemschweg' to Hannig, and it was only when we were half way up the lift that we realised that we were, in fact, on the lift going up to Spielboden. With free lift passes this seemed unimportant, and we simply took the lift down to go up on the right one for a lovely long contour path round the entire arena of peaks.

*Gemschweg, Photo by Carol Saynor*

Saas Grund and the lift to Kreuzboden were not far away, and were visited by most of the group on several occasions. Undoubtedly the most popular walk from here was the lovely 'Blumenweg' or Flower Walk, with 240 boards identifying each flower.



After a long cold winter the flowers were more prolific than usual, and we found alpine rhododendron, edelweiss, gentians, black vanilla orchids, yellow pulsatillas, a tiny white rock jasmine (*Androsace de Vandelli*), the bright blue flowers of the rare King of the Alps (*Eritrichium nanum*) and many others blooming in great profusion.

*Androsace de Vandelli*. Photo by Carol Saynor

The Flower Walk could be taken down to Saas Grund or, after crossing a narrow rocky outcrop, along a balcony path high above the valley all the way to Almagelleralp, giving splendid views across to the Strahlhorn and Rimpfischhorn, and south to Mattmark and the Monte Moro pass.

Hohsaas was the station above Kreuzboden, on our visits still snow-bound, and from here there was a spectacular 'Theme Walk' of one hour, with boards enumerating each of the surrounding 4000 metre peaks that could be seen, 14 in total.

With the chairlift now operating up to Heidbodme we were able to explore the new track up to the panorama viewpoint at the foot of the Almagellerhorn, though the onward path to the Antrona Pass was still snowed under, as was the path from Mattmark to the Monte Moro Pass when we attempted that. But there was plenty to do, and we all agreed that the Saastal had once again proved an excellent centre for a meet.

*Participants: Pamela Andrews, Ann Arturo, Geoff Bone, Derek Buckley & Ann Alari, Geoff & Pauline Causey, Oliver Cooper, Mark Davison, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Niels & Guni Doble, Richard & Katherine Heery, Roland & Nicola Jackson, Roger Newson, Jeff Russell, Rick & Carol Saynor, Terry Shaw, Les & Barbara Swindin, Howard Telford, Caroline Thonger, Jay Turner, David Watts, Tony Welling, Elizabeth Wells, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer*

## Camping Joint Alpine meet, Attermenzen, Randa, Zermatt Valley, 20 July to 10 August

*Report by Mike Pinney/Mike Goodyer*

The meet was based at the Attermenzen camp site, just above Randa. While most of the attendees headed up to the top field some of the campervans and large tent owners opted for the flatter ground lower down (and nearer to the electric hook up and loos?). The camp site was never too busy and we had plenty of options for tent sites. There were around 60 members and guests attending the meet over the three week period.

The weather was pretty good over the meet, but heavy rain and thunderstorms on several days also put fresh snow on the tops. The rainy periods enabled us to have rest days and do valley walks to be ready for the hills when the weather was good.

Most people made good use of the high level walks in the Zermatt and Saas valleys to help with their acclimatisation, although care had to be taken on the

route of the Europa Weg, as a big section of the walk had vanished and a large bridge was down. The *via Ferrata* course just above Zermatt provided a half day sport for many!

A hard core of attendees had day trips to the “local crags” for multi pitch rock climbing. Some of the grading caused some interesting trips. The 4000ers in the Zermatt and Saas Valleys were tackled by many groups. While the majority of people stayed in the huts there were a couple of folks who moved their campervan off the site and back backed their camping gear up the valley.

The end of the meet saw some thirty of us at the Camp site restaurant for a celebratory meal, complete with Swiss flag ice cream. Many thanks Mike for a successful meet with plenty achieved and new friends made.



“Fancy the Bietschhorn; the hut walk is only six hours; there is sport climbing at the hut, we can take the rock gear as well” – another Pinney tour!

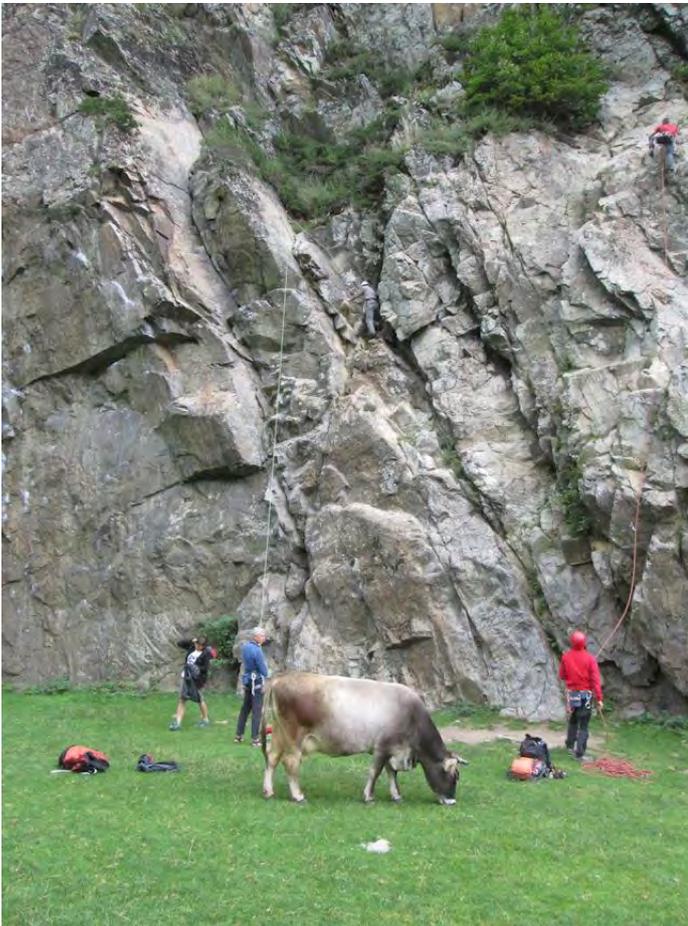
The Bietschhorn is the prominent mountain to the north of the Rhone valley visible from many of the viewpoints in the Zermatt and Saas valleys. We had all admired it for years so Mike, Paul, Kate and myself found ourselves putting our boots on at the start of the 1.5 km tunnel which leads into the Baltschieder valley and the long but enjoyable hut walk in a wild area.

We left the Baltschieder Hut at 3am and a good path led us to the glacier. The way onto the North Ridge was not obvious at first but some unlikely looking terrain led to the top of the first rock section, then a fabulous long snow arête led up to the summit rock ridge. Some tricky rock sections and exposure proved to be a great alpine final approach to the top.

On the descent the “fabulous snow arête” was quite challenging with 2” of soft snow overlying hard black ice and we were all relieved to reach the glacier. Back at the hut in the early afternoon relaxing in the sun we all agreed the route was “good value”. Thanks Mike.

Photo and text by Keith Lambley (FRCC)

**Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC/FRCC Meet, Solden, Austria, 1 to 14 September**  
*Report by Jeff Harris*



Sadly only 9 members from the 4 Clubs turned up. The campsite was excellent with a palatial loo block, nice flat grassy pitches and a comfy lounge area with its own climbing wall. The weather was generally good enough for rock climbing on valley crags and hill walking until the last couple of days.

The climbers visited most of the crags in the Otztal Valley with mixed results, the grading seemed very inconsistent, not just between different crags but even on the same crag, leading to some confidence sapping incidents. Overall we thought it had been worth a visit but to get the best out of the climbing one would need to be leading F6a and above. Several of the vie ferrate were enjoyed as a break from climbing and the hillwalking was good with many peaks accessible from the valley in a day. No one sampled the mountain biking but some did do a road ride or two and we admired the collection of very expensive road bikes in the sports shops.

*Keith Lambley belaying, Kate Ross climbing, cow grazing,  
photo by Jeff Harris*

**Beer Meet, East Devon - 6 to 8 September – Report by Belinda Baldwin**

This was the eighth Beer Meet and to find a coastal path not done before we had to go the furthest that was sensible from base. We had a group meal on Friday night that was a mite disjointed because some had to travel far after a day's work unlike the bulk who are retired and can take things more gently. So there was an early and a late sitting. On Saturday we drove to West Bay and met up with Mike Goodyer and managed to more or less stay together for the walk over the cliffs to Swyre where we convened at the pub. Afterwards different routes were

chosen for the return leg. Either back by the coast or inland. The weather was kind and views good with plenty of ripe blackberries to keep up energy levels. We have now covered what is doable of the Jurassic Coast comfortably from Beer. Next year we will have to start again, which means repeats for some but less use of cars.



*On the cliff path beyond West Bay, photo by Ed Bramley*

The weather forecast for Sunday was not good. A nearer walk from Lyme Legis encompassing the magnificent Cannington Viaduct, which pre Beeching carried the railway route from Axminster to Lyme Regis. We could only go underneath as it is unsafe to go over. There was a plan to get to the Ammonite Graveyard at the end of Monmouth Beach as the finale, but time and the promised downpour meant that that was completed by only four members of the meet. Those that made it were rewarded by yet another amazement quite disconnected from mountaineering. Don't think that walking the coast is easy. Just come to the South West and find there is as much ascent as on many a mountain day.

This was the best attended Beer Meet and over the weekend the following took part: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Sheila Coates, John Dempster, Heather Eddowes, Marj and John Foster, Mike Goodyer, Dinah Nicholls, Myles O'Reilly, John Percival, James and Belinda Baldwin.

## Lakes Buffet Meet, George Starkey Hut – 27 to 29 September – Report by Ed Bramley

Whilst it was a select gathering that enjoyed the President's meet in September, the good weather meant that we were able to enjoy the best of the autumn Lakes.

With only a few high clouds in the sky, Saturday saw us heading east on the Coast to Coast path, up Boardale Hause, via Angle Tarn onto the Knott and eventually Kidsty Pike, where we had great views out to the Pennines, and also to Haweswater in the valley below us.



*Kidsty Pike, photo by Ed Bramley*

By lunch time we'd descended to the Rigg, which gave us more great views of Haweswater and the Kentmere fells. After a suitably long and relaxing lunch, we set about a steady ascent of Rough Crag and Long Stile, which afforded us great views of Blea Water below to our left, and also the discovery of the small tarn perched on the ridge itself. Before long, we were on the High Street tops, and then heading back northwards over the Straits of Riggindale, before dropping down to Hartsop and along the valley floor to complete our return to the hut, just as the heat was going out of the day.

After our communal evening meal on the Saturday night, we adopted a slightly more leisurely approach on the Sunday, with an ascent of Helvellyn by that lesser used route, Nethermost Pike.



The weather was equally good, with the only clouds of note sitting along the Pennine Chain. On the ascent, our view across to Striding Edge revealed just how many people had taken advantage of the good weather – to say it was like ants would not be an exaggeration. The last section of route up to the top of Nethermost Pike always maintains interest, and yet is still one of the least frequented paths up the mountain.

*Ascending Nethermost Pike, photo by Ed Bramley*



When we reached the top of Helvellyn, we continued north to Whiteside to maintain our relative solitude, before eventually descending into the Glenridding valley. From the Greenside mines, we followed a miners water cut for a goodly distance, before cutting back over the shoulder to Lantys tarn and then down to the George Starkey hut, where we availed ourselves of afternoon tea and cake, ahead of our journeys home.

*Looking towards Ullswater from near Lanty's tarn, photo by Mike Goodyer*

## Annual Dinner Meet – 31 January to 2 February 2014

*Report by Brooke Midgley and Ed Bramley*

“You should have been here yesterday”. So the early arrivals, Ed and Andy greeted everybody who had braved the elements to join the hardy at the Annual Dinner.

It was only the Thursday before the dinner that showed what the Lakes could be like, offering a suitably winter ascent of Jack’s Rake on Pavey Ark, complete with several moves coated with verglas, and a sting in the tail, as the exit slab was coated in ice. With a few short intakes of breath, we were both across and enjoying dinner on the top, with a very friendly raven. A variation of the descent down Rossett Ghyll saw us back in the Old Dungeon Ghyll for a refreshing pint and a day stolen from the elements.



*On Jack’s Rake, Pavey Ark*



*Low level walk around Ullswater, both photos by Ed Bramley*

Friday saw the elements get the upper hand, which meant that anything up high was going to be an endurance struggle. Even the low level walk around Ullswater from the Howtown ferry to Patterdale turned into a survival exercise as snow blasted across the lake in lumps.

For those trying to travel to the Lakes on Friday, the situation was even worse. Kirkstone Pass was closed on Friday afternoon by a combination of snow, gale force winds, sleet and an eleven vehicle accident which included the ambulance. The mountain rescue team had to evacuate the two injured and also the other occupants. Various members had their journeys extended in mileage and time. It was a good day to stay indoors – some didn’t and got – unsurprisingly very cold and wet.

Saturday was less snowy but possibly somewhat wetter. Virtually all the members went out onto the hills and got spectacularly wet. There were no reports of great routes being completed or even attempted, which is just as well as it would have stretched credulity a mite too far. Even going out was more foolish than brave (Brooke's opinion and sour grapes!). The hills would have been empty in the afternoon as the bars were full of rugby fans.

Even our guest speaker, Professor David Collins, was caught up in the travel chaos and only arrived shortly before we went into dinner, causing a shortening of Ed and Brooke's fingernails. Whilst only 42 sat down to dinner, it was probably one of the best annual dinner meals we've had in years. Professor Collins dinner speech on alpine glaciers was humorous and interesting. His slide show after dinner not only had some great pictures of Swiss mountains, but provided a real insight into what has been happening with glaciers in the alps and beyond over the last century. Such was the interest that many members had an uncharacteristically late night that evening. As alternative interest, Professor Collins was even able to conjure up photos of our President in his student years working on the Gorner glacier, which rightfully attracted both laughs and cheers from the audience.

Given the weather, it could have been a disastrous weekend, but the Annual Dinner meant that it was anything but, and the noise level in the dining room, and in the bar afterwards, was a sure indication that all is well in the club.

## MEMBERS ARTICLES

### **The Arles Way Camino** *Richard Winter*

Some years before I was due to retire I had a conversation with my wife along the lines of doing something active to separate my working life from my retired life when the time came to stop working. She agreed that this was a good idea until she realised that I was thinking of disappearing for three months to walk the Way of Saint James from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Eventually we agreed that it could be done in stages over a number of years. I made some early enquiries and the general advice was to choose one of the other pilgrim routes or Caminos as the route from Le Puy was getting very crowded. Eventually I settled on the Arles Way which starts from Arles and is part of the ancient Via Tolosana that starts in Rome. I then shelved the idea and waited to retire.

Scroll forward to 2013 when I was booked to go with the ABMSAC trip to Morocco but had to endure further knee surgery following which I knew that Morocco was a non-starter so I cancelled my place and wondered what to do instead. At which point my wife said “what about that pilgrimage idea of yours?” And that’s how it happened. In mid-September I had a couple of weeks that I could use between two Bath Rugby home matches (I had just splashed out on a season ticket and wanted to get full value from it) and sat down to plan my rail journey to Arles. Frustration soon mounted as the price kept going up and none of the trains actually linked up as I wished. In the end I saved myself a load of money and booked a flight to Marseilles from where I could take a train to Arles quite easily.



I arrived in Arles on a beautiful sunny and hot Monday lunchtime and made my way to the backpacker hostel I had booked for my first night; then walked to the official start of the Arles Way in les Alyscamps and got my Pilgrim Passport stamped and explored my way out of town for the morning. An excellent dinner followed by an early night got me ready for the off.

*The start*

I'm not going to go through the details of every day's walking, particularly as the first three days are, frankly, a bit boring. More interesting are the places I stayed and the people I encountered. I had not booked ahead because I was not sure how far I would get.



The first night I stayed at a pilgrim gite at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard which was comfortable and cheap and where I first met "The Four French Ladies".

These four ladies and I kept bumping into each other for the next three days, they were from Brittany and had pre-booked all their accommodation for the next three weeks, a real commitment. I've never met anyone quite like these four, as they walked they pillaged the countryside like marauding Goths. At any time one of them was carrying a plastic shopping bag into which they would put whatever they could pick as they went along; apples, pears, apricots, grapes, melons, aubergines etc., anything was game to them. I introduced them to the English word 'Scrumpling' which they liked.

The first few days took me through agricultural land, orchards and the unattractive outskirts of towns and villages. I found that I was walking much more on roads than I had realised and in the very hot conditions I ended up with a massive blister on my left foot which left me hardly able to walk. Finally I felt that an unplanned break was called for and I took a tram into Montpellier and stayed there for the weekend, resting.

*The gite at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard*



*The four french ladies*

Montpellier turned out to be a real treat, I had not visited before and just loved it as it is small enough to limp round, has interesting things to do and see and is full of really, really good restaurants. Oh what a good weekend that was!

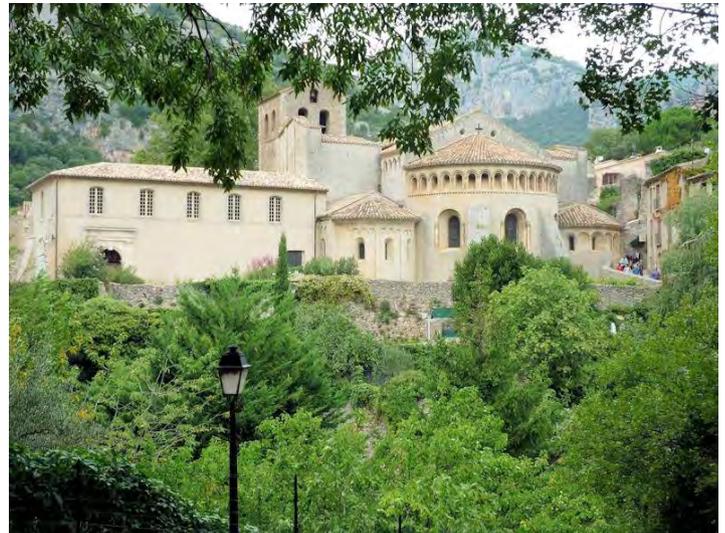
I left Montpellier early on the Monday morning and once I was clear of the suburbs the really enjoyable walking began and I was soon climbing up on to the Garrigue, the scrub covered plateau with all the strong scented herbs; this is what I had come for.



Because of my delay over the weekend I was never going to reach Lodeve that had been my target but I would terminate at St Guilhiem-Le-Desert a very famous pilgrim centre at the foot of the mountains of the Haute Languedoc and which proved to be a beautiful and interesting place to stop.

*The Garrigue*

Before I left my daughter asked me what I hoped to get from this journey and I said that I really wanted to meet and talk to people along the way. This is exactly what happened; I met people on the same Camino; I met people in restaurants and gites and if I ever got lost someone would appear and put me back on my way and would chat about what I was doing. I do have to admit that as pilgrims go I'm really not a good pilgrim, to me it was an interesting walk with very good dinners.



*Abbey at St Guilhiem*

The next stage will hopefully take me from St Guilhiem across the mountains to Castres; this will be challenging as it much more rugged country and will need just a little bit more than two weeks. Hopefully I will be back on my Camino this autumn.

## Back to Bhutan, October 2013

*Pamela Harris-Andrews*

Once we had decided to sponsor a classroom at the Choki Traditional Art School in Alasdair's memory, I knew that one day I would have to return to see it. A group of us from the ABMSAC had been to Bhutan in the spring of 2011 and had loved the country and its people. One of our visits had been to the school, a charitable foundation set up by the Choki family to give students from disadvantaged families the opportunity to learn the traditional craft skills which will enable them to earn a living, while at the same time preserving Bhutan's unique traditions. We had been most impressed by the goals of the school, and the hard work and dedication of the students ([www.chokischool.com](http://www.chokischool.com)).

So when Alasdair died suddenly six months later, I approached the Fontana Foundation in Zurich, organisers for the fund-raising for the school, to see what we could do to help, in his memory. The most pressing need was a computer room, and with the help of those who had been on the 2011 meet and other friends and relatives, we soon had enough money to build the room itself and to equip it with tables, chairs and computers. Named the Alasdair Andrews Computer Room, there is a plaque at the front with a photo of Alasdair taken in Bhutan and a list of all those who assisted in the sponsorship.



*Pamela, Sonam and her husband with Alasdair's plaque*

Our visit was once again organised by Boonserm Tours and Travels, run by the younger sons of the Choki family, and on our second morning we were driven up to the school near Thimphu, the capital. Sonam, the Principal, is their sister, and she had organised a special morning at the school in honour of our visit, starting with morning assembly.



After prayers, one of the students came forward to speak on the topic of his choice: the importance of hard work. Then the students went off to their different classes, and we had a tour of the classrooms, visiting the different levels of wood-carving and painting, thanka painting, weaving and embroidery.

At mid-morning all the students and teachers gathered in the meeting room for a special prayer session dedicated to Alasdair. His plaque had been moved to the platform at the front of the room, with 108 butter lamps. We were asked to light each of these and as we did so, to say a prayer for his soul. The students then commenced the Buddhist chants for the dead, after which tea and biscuits were passed round to all.



The students went back to work, and we continued our tour by visiting Alasdair's classroom where we saw how much the students are benefiting from the computers, as well as enjoying using them. Classes are taught by Sonam's husband, an IT expert, who has installed Graphic Design software to help the students with their artistic training. Sonam and all the students are extremely grateful for this facility, and the computer classes are eagerly looked forward to by the students.

Next door was the Bernina Room with four Bernina sewing machines donated by the Swiss through Mario Fontana's fundraising efforts, and upstairs the Handicraft centre where the students' work was displayed for sale, from the large brightly wooden coloured masks used in the Tsechu festivals to smaller decorative items for daily use. Our visit ended with a Bhutanese meal prepared by Sonam's family, and as we said our goodbyes, I was profoundly thankful that I had made the effort to visit the school once again and to see how much our help was appreciated.

Tashi Namgay, who accompanied us in 2011, is now in Australia doing a Master's degree and so was unable to be with us, though his elder brother Tashi Dorji met us on several occasions. Our guide this time was Chencho, whom some might remember as the Arsenal fan of our last trip. Everything ran smoothly, and we visited several dzongs, monasteries and temples in Paro, Thimphu, Phobjika and Punakha, as before. We walked the Nature trail to the winter grounds of the black-necked cranes, but this time we were too early for their arrival, and none had stayed behind for us. We went further east to Trongsa and the Bumthang valley, a lovely fertile area with beautiful houses and enormous dzongs, where we participated in a Tsechu festival with spectacular masked dancers whirling around the courtyard of Jakar Dzong in brightly coloured costumes.



October is generally a good time to visit the Himalayas, and the weather for our first week was sunny and cloudless. We were blessed with marvellous views of the whole chain of the Himalayas on both flights between Kathmandu and Paro, and as we crossed the high passes on our journey eastwards, we could see all the 7000m peaks of Bhutan, their snow-covered summits sparkling in the sunshine. The colours were lovely too, with red rice being harvested in the fields, the trees changing colour, and the people in their brightly coloured *ghos* and *kiras*. Everyone was smiling and happy, and as we flew out of Paro past the dzong and watchtower for the last time, we reflected how lucky we were to have visited such an unspoilt country, and to have been able to help such deserving people.

## What happens on tour stays on tour even on its 40th Anniversary

Andy Burton

My first ABMSAC Camping Meet in July 2013 actually had its roots in a series of articles written by Showell Styles in Climber and Rambler in 1972, which Mike Goodyer and I read avidly whilst studying for our 'A' Levels, but that is not how Mike Pinney's latest Camping Meet was sold to me. I was merely asked if I would like to share the driving out to the Alps, and as Mike had recently taken delivery of a new Mitsubishi 4x4 I readily agreed.

So slowly and separately we made our plans. I recovered the family Vango tent from the Swimming Club for a small fee, and my Karrimat bought in 1974 and cut in half to save weight? Mike found his old



style crampons, which together with my original set of Stubai's mackled up quite well into one useable pair and and some vital spares.

On the weekend prior to driving out to Switzerland I was invited to stay at Mike and Anne's for some pre-Meet training. Anne's idea of training is very akin to my own. We started with Steak Night at their favourite local, and continued the next day with a visit to their favourite Coffee House in Cirencester, and the beautifully restored church in the city centre. An

evening BBQ al fresco in their lovely back garden and a modicum of wine and we were ready to tackle



virtually anything. All we lacked were the 'T' shirts, but Anne had that covered. With the help of some 40 year old slides carefully removed unseen, scanned in and emailed to a purveyor in secret, she presented us both with our own personal Tour 'T's.

D-Day had arrived. I emptied the contents of my car onto Mike's driveway, and he then quickly reconfigured the loading space in his car to accommodate all our kit. No 30kg rucsac weight limit this time.

It was around this time that I began to learn what Mike's plans for the trip were. He stated that it was his intention to get me up a 4000 metre peak before the end of the fortnight. I in turn indicated that I would like to revisit the chapel at Schwarzsee (2582m), where we had overnighted in 1974, whilst looking for Ed, and attempting the Matterhorn. On that occasion we failed on both counts.

So with some of the rules of engagement declared

we drove in quiet introspection through France, via the fuel tax-free enclave of Luxembourg, and the brand new eco-friendly services on the N83 near Kayserberg in the Rhine valley which was a refuelling stop for us, and the many storks roosting on the lamp standards in the car park.

A brief stop at the Swiss border near Basel to purchase the vignette and we were in the country. We quickly found ourselves on the motorway above Montreux with that view of Lac Lemman which over 40 years I have never tired of. With a fleeting glimpse of

the campsite at Villeneuve, our first overnight in 1973, we entered the Rhone valley, hung a right at Visp, and wended our way up the Mattertal to Camping Attermenzen at Randa.

Here we found Mr Pinney's tent and pitched ours nearby and settled in. A pleasant evening was spent meeting other attendees, of which there were over 70 during the whole meet, having shared dinner with Mr. P., and learning what walks were worth doing in and around the area where we were camped, and what mountain adventures people had been up to.

We began with a couple of day walks. The first a walk through Zermatt and up into the Trift Gorge, where the flowers and wildlife were even more spectacular than I remembered.



Look for the Steinbock sheltering from the heat of the midday sun under a large perched boulder in the gorge itself. Here the path pops out of the gorge at the conveniently placed Trift Berggasthaus (2337m), where a large glass of iced tea was enjoyed, and with a peek at the menu and what people around us were eating we decided we had found our first hut accommodation.

We continued our exploring in brilliant afternoon sun, finding the higher footpath towards the Mettelhorn (3406m), Mike's training peak of choice for the first week.

Then we followed the signs for the aptly named Matterhornblick on Hoehbalmen (2665m), a short steep pull in semi-shade with views over the Hotel Du Trift onto a grassy plateau with great views across the valley towards the Dom (4545m) and Taeschhorn (4490m), a short step around a final corner, and there it was the most iconic pyramidal peak in the Alps.



*Andy at the Matterhornblick*

For several minutes we just drank in the view, then we took photos, and Mike told me the names of the mountains I did not know, and I reacquainted myself with the ones I did. With such a glorious panorama it was with great reluctance that we tore ourselves away, but we had an appointment with a large beer in Zermatt, and that was still more than two hours away, albeit all downhill!

Zermatt itself also did not disappoint, with many of the houses still maintaining their allotment style gardens and fruit trees when you wander round the back streets, and the butchers, with their selections of cured meats and sausages and cheeses, combined with the Baeckerei/Konditorei selling all sorts of fresh breads, rolls and cakes that even such a mundane task as buying everyday food items becomes a taste adventure, with Mike and I trying various things that we had liked all those years ago. It took us three goes to find a Nussgipfeli that even approached the ones we took for granted in our memory, but with the Bratwursts we struck lucky first time.



The second walk that led us up through the woods above Taesch to the Europa-Huette (2230m), and underneath the now closed, due to stonefall damage, Europa-Weg.

See if you can spot the section missing in the aerial footpath.

With rain in the valley there came snow above 2000 metres so in the evening as the weather cleared the Mettelhorn now had a dusting of snow on top, but as the forecast was an improving one our accommodation at Trift was booked, gear was carefully selected, and provisions sourced and stored in readiness for the next day.

The evening was spent in convivial company as Mr. P. had loaned out part of his tent to two ladies (Julie and Pip) for a few days, and with the rain many had returned to camp to dry out, refuel and socialise.

The next day saw us toiling back up the Trift gorge, and despite heavier rucsacs we made good time up to the hut. We then tested ourselves a bit further up over the rock band which would be our start the next morning. With good views of the Rothorn-Huette (3200m) above, and our route towards the back of the Mettelhorn clear of snow, we returned back to the hut for dinner and an early night.

A simple breakfast and away up the rock band before the heat of the sun caught us, and a steady trog up the long green upper valley, a place of quiet emptiness with a cooler breeze, letting us know we were reaching higher than we had been previously that week.



Then up through the rocks and scree onto the col, a traverse diagonally upwards across the snow trapped on the northern side, and around and above a small green lake onto the final rocky ridge saw us at the top of the Mettelhorn.

Clear blue skies afforded us a 360 degree view of the mountains, but I found my eye drawn to a peak I had not seen before, with pronounced left and right ridges leading to a perfectly shaped triangular peak, and I realised I was looking at the Weisshorn (4505m), a peak that Mr. Pinney had been waxing lyrical about in camp as one on his tick list, and I clearly saw why.

*Andy on the summit*

After taking in the sun's rays for ten minutes we set off back down not stopping till we were well clear of the rapidly melting snows, and back in the sheltered upper valley, where we sat and had lunch in the sun looking at the Matterhorn.



Hard-boiled eggs, cheese, bread and Landjaeger style sausages never tasted so good.

Returning to the Trift Hotel for one last iced tea we were treated by the owner to a masterclass in Alpenhorn playing, which only further served to lock this idyllic little corner in my memory before returning to the fleshpots of Zermatt.

That completed our first week. It was time to move into the unknown

*Lunch stop looking at the Matterhorn*

The 1st August, Swiss National Day, saw us walking from Zermatt up to the little preserved hamlet of Zmutt, (1936m), and on up to Stafel, (2199m) where it is still possible to buy mountain cheese direct from the farmer.



Here we struck up left quickly climbing out of the trees onto a boggy moorland area situated directly below the Matterhorn, and made our way to the little chapel at Schwarzsee, (2582m).

Now there is a large lift-station and hotel/restaurant on the hill above, but ignoring that everything remained as I remembered it. We both lit a candle in the chapel, and looked at the numerous shoals of fry in the small black lake before climbing up to the saddle that leads up to the HoernliHuetten, and looked down to where Ed had lived in the tunnels under the mountain in 1974. We did not spot him this time either. This view towards the Gornergletscher confirmed

more than any written article could ever do, what had steadily become obvious to me during the day, just how much the glaciers have retreated since I was last here.

A fast descent down the ridge saw us enter the stone pine forest which only really thrives where the nutcracker (a grey-black jay-sized bird) population remains intact, due to the bird's habit of storing the seeds from this particular conifer in the cracks and crevices of the numerous boulders scattering these slopes. A welcome cold beer sat on the terrace of a restaurant nestling in the trees near Hermettje watching the early evening sun playing across the meadows above Furi was a little bonus granted us by the owner who was clearly closing up for the day.

Arriving back in Zermatt via a series of little hamlets and hay meadows as the sun retreated from the valley we fought our way through the crowds to our favourite hotel terrace, and sat watching the Swiss enjoying themselves.

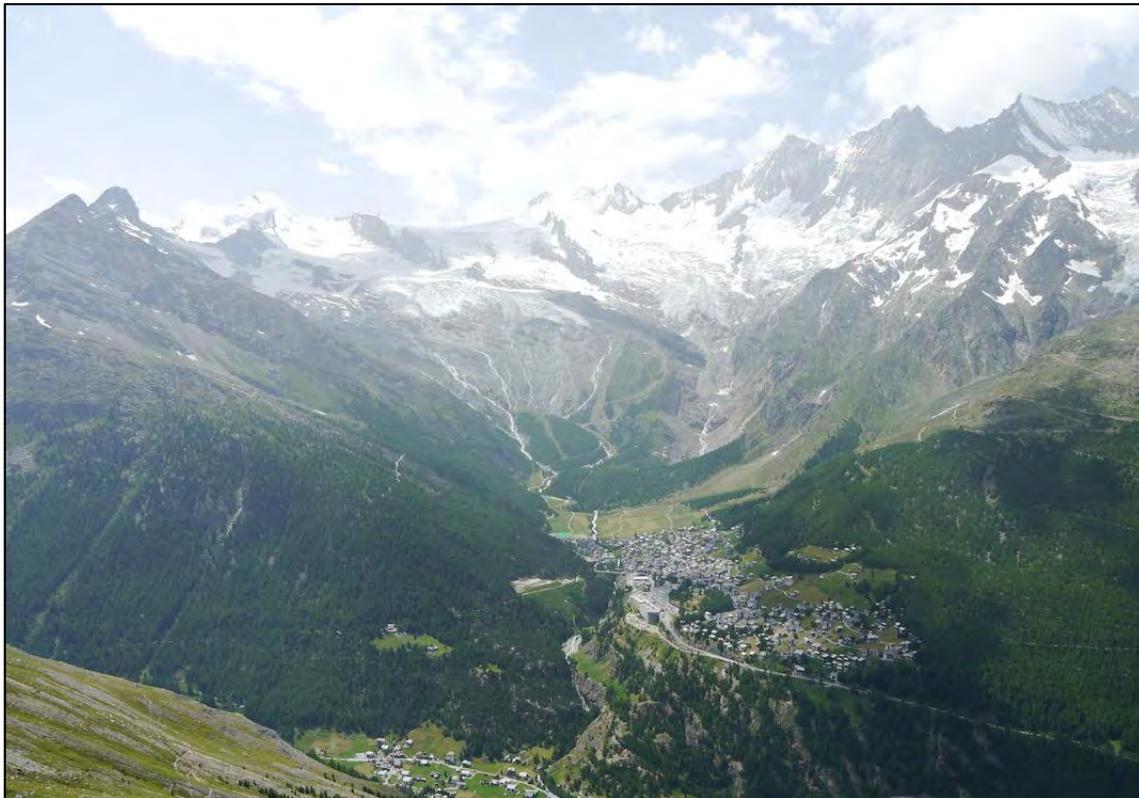


As luck would have it the street corner that we were sat on looked back up towards the Trift gorge, and it was from there that the main firework display was set off. I made the most of these celebrations because I knew what was coming next.



*Swiss National Day in Zermatt*

Mike drove me to the next valley for my first views of the Saastal. Parking at Unter dem Berg we took the cable car up to Kreuzboden and walked along the Blumenweg/Panorama path where Mike was able to point out the 4000metre peak he had in mind, the Allalinhorn (4027m), which was clearly visible across the valley. He was also able to show me where the Britannia hut was situated, as well as a plethora of peaks and glaciers I had not seen before.



*Saas Fee and the Allalinhorn form the Blumenweg*

It was easy to see why so much of our club's history has been inextricably linked with this particular valley as we walked among steep mountainsides full of drifts of assorted alpine flowers and stunning views. A very enjoyable Kaffee und Kuchen stop at Almagellaralp (2194m) under the Triflhorn (3395m) and a short steep descent through the woods into Saas- Almagell saw us donning waterproofs for the first time, before a brief Postbus ride took us back to the car, and onto Randa, with me already looking forward to our return to the Saastal.

On our return to the campsite that afternoon it was clear that something had occurred as a large group of people were gathered near the entrance looking at something closeby. On further investigation it became clear that two large boulders had fallen from much higher up, crashing through the avalanche defences and forestry, narrowly missing the main power lines to land one on the road and one on the golf course, only a few minutes prior to us getting back.

Now had these boulders fallen in the UK they would quickly have been adopted by the BMC, and in short order been sporting several Grade 9 routes. But the Swiss had quite a different approach involving a blast fragment containing blanket and some powerful explosives. Suffice it to say within less than 24 hours both boulders had vanished and the road was repaired and open, and all that remained was a large earthy depression in the golf course, and some understandably nervous campers.



A rainy day enforced a “rest day”, which we spent in Zermatt with a visit to the Alpine Museum with its rich mountaineering history both locally and internationally and glimpses of the future with a detailed display of the new Monte Rosa hut. The English Church with its poignant plaques and obituaries was another tick on my list, as was the Moevenpick fruit sorbet that I enjoyed despite the weather. We had a picnic lunch with Mike and David on the church steps watching the Swiss flag throwers showing off their skills.

Returning to Saas-Fee Mike graciously agreed to use as much of the mechanical uplift as was available, only so we did not lose the two day weather window you understand.



So there we were, for me only 3 years late, at the Britannia Hut (3030m), but at least I was able to see the solar panel array that the Club had recently paid towards.

Shame there was insufficient water for them to fully function. 5am came soon enough. Those setting off for the Rimpfischhorn (great name) and other more difficult ascents breakfasted at 4am.

Returning along the new path under the Chessjengletscher to Felskinn we caught the first Metro Alpin train up to Allalin (3500m), and in brilliant sunshine we donned our crampons and set off up the remaining 500 metres to the summit.

*A selfie at the Britannia Hut*

Shortly before 10am saw us there. Mike had done it, but both of us looked pleased with ourselves in the obligatory summit pics. Back to the Felskinn lift-station, this time to use the upper sun terrace where unusually a whole set of tables and chairs had been set aside for people having bought their own food with them.



With a little British Airways bottle of wine, and some fresh apricots as well as the usual fare, we toasted our success, and looked back up at the mountain with the weather closing in, safe in the knowledge that we had a return ticket for the Gondola in our pocket.

On returning to Saas-Fee we slipped back into tourist mode, stopping off at the La Gorge restaurant that had rapidly become a favourite, before exploring the town a little as we made our way back to the car.

*The summit team!*

Returning to Camping Attermenzen was no hardship either, as Steve and Natasha had returned to the site with their new mobile home. As the Club's new young ones, they are certainly raising the bar with regard to onboard camping facilities, but a car for the town centre car park it is not.

A final group evening meal in the Campsite restaurant with Mr. Pinney and friends was a fitting end to our fortnight's stay, with Mike being thanked for all his efforts, especially in organising the 12 days sunny weather that we had enjoyed, which as I understand it from regular Camping meet attendees is not always a given.

*As a postscript to the above you might think that only I benefited from the various training strategies employed, but I am lead to believe that in this years Mountain Marathon, Mike's team posted their best time for several years, so I will leave you to decide!*

## **Scottish Sea Cliffs and Beaches in 2013**

*Morag M. Macdonald.*

The Scottish summer of 2013 was memorable for sun. That elusive factor enabled and enhanced East Coast visits in early June to Tantallon Castle with views towards the Bass Rock and thousands of diving gannets. The precipitous cliffs at St. Abbs were crammed with nesting sea bird colonies although the diminished number of kittiwakes, probably due to lack of food, was distressing. The abundance of luxuriant thrift made a photographer's paradise.



In August, an unexpected expedition to St. Kilda was the next venture. St. Kilda lies approximately 110 miles from the Scottish mainland and 45 miles from Uist in the Hebrides. The most westerly point of Britain, dual UNESCO site for cultural, scientific and environmental reasons and managed by The National Trust for Scotland and the MOD, this was on the list of places to visit. The literature on the Archipelago is extensive with comprehensive accounts detailing the life and eventual sad, painful evacuation in 1930 due to population decline, ill health and detrimental effects of excessive religious practices and encroaching financial tourism, a hitherto unknown entity. A way of life was lost forever.

*St Kildas with Hirta in the background*

Often visits to this unique site, including some very expensive cruises, fail due to mist and rain. Landing on Hirta the main island is often impossible in gales and high seas. This was our experience when we tried to sail from Harris some years ago. Planning can be very unpredictable.



*Ian on bowsprit of the Wylde Swan*

However, the second attempt, with three days aboard the tall ship *The Wylde Swan* partially under sail, was successful. Sailing from Ullapool in early afternoon under engine power, we were given lessons in safety, initiation to ropes, and ship routine. Panoramic views of the Scottish NW coast were revealed with the *Old Man of Stoer* on Skye clearly visible. Later, the ship slipped through the buoy markers of the Sound of Harris into a golden sunset.

At 5 am on a calm, sunny morning, the ship was anchored off the cliffs of *Stac an Armin* which guards the approach to the islands. The ship sailed close to *Stac Lee* and the white-streaked cliffs of *Boreray* renowned for the climbing skills of St. Kildans as they garnered eggs and birds to sustain their way of life. The scenery was mesmerising,

compelling, almost impossible to absorb. Thousands of gannets, fulmars, razorbills, guillemots and shearwaters wheeled above and below the ship's 43m masts. Puffins and gulls in the water added to the dissonance of bird calls in a trinity of black sea, white cliffs, and sea birds, each aspect competing for attention. It was difficult to take photographs.

On Hirta, where permanent human habitation has existed for thousands of years, the ruined dwellings with some rebuilding for management and scientific purposes, are surrounded by hundreds of *cleits*, stone shelters used to keep food, artefacts, even sheep, dry. These gentle Soay sheep, descendants of the earliest feral breeds in Northern Europe, roamed free everywhere. A research study of these animals is in progress. Almost unbelievably in warm sunshine, we climbed the highest point *Conachair* 430m and viewed the tallest sea cliffs in Britain by dint of lying down for safety's sake. Even lying flat, it was impossible to see where cliff met sea. Great Skuas patrolled overhead dive bombing intruders from the ship. Before leaving the island, there were glimpses of indigenous St. Kilda wrens. We left Hirta, after seven hours on the island, under sail but unfortunately the visit to the Shiant Islands was cancelled due to encroaching bad weather.



*Balnakeil Bay, Durness*

A late August booking took us back to Ullapool, the far Northwest near Kinlochbervie, and the sands of Durness. Sadly, we missed the early flowering unique Scottish primrose. This area has some of the best beaches in Europe. In 2012, we had cycled the 22 miles return trip to Cape Wrath but this had left no time to explore the cliffs before the return ferry. The mini bus allowed a longer period at the lighthouse but perhaps after recent experiences, the cliffs were disappointing. The area requires better facilities with only a café for the many bus loads of visitors. The main interest was looking out towards America in the knowledge that there is nowhere further to go on the Scottish mainland. The TV series 'Coast' was being filmed here before the crew moved south to Sandwood Bay. The programme could be scheduled for 2014. A BBC cameraman's photograph is proof of our visit!



*Cathedral Rock near Cape Wrath*

The bird reserve Handa Island, reached by small boat from Tarbet near Scourie, proved a fitting climax to this year of Scottish sun and sea. In early summer, this area might be compromised by too many people seeking nesting cliff birds but later, with the heather out, the scenery was impressive with yet more dramatic seascapes. There is a long, and in places roped boardwalk, to aid land preservation and guard against dangerous cliffs.

Further north, the beaches and sands provide endless walking opportunities. Many rare birds including divers can be seen here. The walk linking Oldshoremore, Pollin and Sheigra is very rewarding with the option to carry on to Sandwood. The latter is not so deserted as before with many cyclists and walkers taking in camping gear. Rangers operate here as part of John Muir Trust management. At over three to four hours from Inverness depending on the route, the far NW is wild, empty, and infinitely worthwhile. An invaluable series of pocket-sized books published by Pocket Mountains Ltd. covers mountain routes and coastal walks in the NW and other parts of Scotland.

### References

P. and H. Webster (2010) *Caithness and Sutherland: 40 Coast and Country walks*. Pocket Mountains Ltd. 6, Church Wynd, Bo'ness, EH51 OAN.

R. Rowe. (2006) *Wildlife Traveller: Scottish Mainland*: Pocket Mountains Ltd.

There is a great deal of information on St. Kilda on the internet.

## Zanskar 2013

Mike Pinney

In September I went back to India. In 2012, the day after I applied for a tourist visa we had an email saying we needed an X mountain visa, so when my passport came back I had to start again.



For 2013 I was equally suspicious, even though we were told a tourist visa would suffice. Just before we flew out, we again were told that we required an X visa, but too late to do anything about it. We changed our official objective to another peak, fortunately in the same valley.

After an overnight flight, our first port of call was the Indian Mountaineering Foundation where we paid our peak fee & met our liaison officer, a 25 year old sociology graduate with an interest in mountaineering and trekking. In other words, a lad who wanted to be going with us, rather than the historic situation, an army officer, who would rather not be going. From there we went to our tranquil hotel on the outskirts of Delhi, giving the team member who had not visited India before a totally false impression!



Next morning we went back to the airport and took an early flight up to Leh at 3500m. We spent a couple of nights in Leh, primarily to acclimatize but also an opportunity for sightseeing; in particular we visited a number of Buddhist temples.

We then had a couple of days overland by 4x4. The first day took us to Kargil, again visiting a number of Buddhist sites en route such that we were Gumpa'd out.



From Kargil we travelled south to the Pensila and made a leisurely 1 hour walk to just below the snout of the glacier where we established base camp.



This year we had “only” 12 porters from the local village but they did do a double carry.

At base camp we had a cook, assistant cook and four young Sherpas, who had travelled across from Nepal/Sikkim for work (L.O. on left).

I had been quite nervous about having the four Sherpas (18 to 35 years old) that they would not be bored. In practice my fears were unfounded and they were very supportive.

We had picked an interesting glacier to explore with 5 side glaciers coming in from the right bank. From the main glacier we were able to see possible routes up the side glaciers.



From Google Earth we had identified a possible objective in side glacier 3

From a high camp of 5200m we set off just after dawn. We could not see our objective until we got onto the upper tier circa 5600m.

From there we identified a line that took us on to the snow then a few meters of rock to the summit, just 5800m.

On the basis we had almost climbed it before we saw it & with no previously recorded ascent, we named it Hidden Peak.



Back to base camp, then after a rest day when we found evidence of a local university project measuring the recession of snout of the glacier, a staggering 11m a year.

Next day we went up to camp at the foot of side glacier 4 at 4950m.

This proved too low since we ran out of time about 150m from the summit. Very annoying as this peak was visible from base camp. In retrospect we should have spent another day establishing a higher camp.



Thus for our third summit attempt in side glacier 2 we made a point of establishing a camp at 5200m. From the camp we could see our objective.

Head on, the snow slope leading up to the ridge looked steep! An early morning start and we wound our way up the glacier through the crevasses to the steepening of the head wall.



Heading straight across the bergschrund and up to the ridge looked the best line. It is always difficult to judge the angle of the slope head on.

Fortunately it was not too steep & we were able to move together joining the ridge at 5615m.

From there we continued to the summit, the last 50m involved scrambling over loose rock to the summit at 5820m.

Again there was no record of a previous ascent. About 50m away, there was a second summit (higher) which looked about to fall down, so we did not investigate further.



On our last day we investigated side glacier 1 and saw the route taken by an Italian team in 1986 who had climbed Z8. It was 3 days return to Leh which was in the process of shutting up for the winter. We had, I think been exceptionally lucky with the weather, mostly clear skies and very little precipitation. There was however a rapid drop in temperature when the sun went behind the mountain.



From Leh it was a flight back to Delhi and we ventured out on the metro, guided I should add by our liaison officer, who had been a great addition to the team.

Next morning after visiting the IMF and paying additional peak fees we headed down to Jaipur to visit the tourist sites.

## OBITUARIES

### **Charlotte Norton 1927 - 2013**



Charlotte Norton – Lottie – was born in Hamburg in Germany in 1927, but when her father realised the threat from Hitler he moved the family to France. When the war came Lottie's father was interned by the French and initially that was not a great worry to them. However after they interned her 18 year old brother when France was taken over by the Nazis, it was realised that they had been handed over to the SS, and in fact both died in concentration camps.

So Lottie and her mother grabbed what they could carry, got on a train and ended up in a village in Provence. There the villagers helped them, found them somewhere to live and disguised their presence for the rest of the war. Lottie told of how she, as a teenager, would work on a farm to get milk and look after the baker's children to get bread etc., as of course, they had no official papers.

After the war Lottie and her mother were able to return to their home in Dijon, but after a time travelled to South America where Lottie's uncle had gone before the war. It seemed that he was her only close relative, as all the others left in Germany had died in concentration camps. Lottie spent holidays walking in the mountains which she always loved, including a visit to the beautiful Bariloche in Argentina. After a few years she returned to France to teach English and on a visit to Manchester met Herbert, her future husband.

Herbert had left Germany with his parents before the war and ended up in England, where he put himself through Medicine and Dentistry. He was also a lover of walking and mountains, and so the couple made many trips skiing and walking in the Alps and in the Lake District from their home in Manchester. Through Herbert's professional life the couple travelled to meetings around the world and always walked and climbed in the local mountains. In 1971 they bought a cottage in Cumbria, which they loved and visited regularly- Lottie even a few weeks before her last illness. Herbert was a keen and talented amateur viola player and music played a large part in their lives – Lottie right to the end. Lottie also played good golf and at one time was Ladies Captain of her Club. In 1972 Walter Kirstein, another dentist, introduced them to the ABMSAC and they became enthusiastic and regular members, attending many meets and dinners over the years.

Lottie was a very warm and affectionate character, always very interested and caring about the families of her many friends – always cheery and outgoing, which belied her tragic early years, also great to travel with as she spoke French, German and Spanish. She could never let a day pass, if possible, without being outside in the fresh air and having a walk and continued this until the last few weeks of her life, when she was too weak to walk.

Lottie was a light in our lives, and we shall miss her.

*Mary Boulter*

## Mike Pinney 1951 - 2014



Mike Pinney was born in Solihull, Warwickshire in 1951 to Gerald and Barbara. In 1954, a sister, Margaret, arrived. Mike spent 1962 to 1969 at Tudor Grange Grammar School, Solihull. In 1969 and 1970, he was a University Apprentice at Lucas GTE, Birmingham. He then attended the University of Southampton from 1970 to 1973 and graduated with BSc in Mechanical Engineering.

Mike spent the whole of his professional career at Westland Helicopters, later to become AgustaWestland, and he retired in 2011. In 1982, he had become a Chartered Engineer and Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Mike died on March 9, 2014 as a result of a climbing accident. He slipped and fell from a footpath on a hike between Pen yr Helgi Du and Carnedd Llewelyn, in the Carneddau range in North Wales. . Mike suffered severe head injuries but initially survived the fall. Fellow members of his local club, in Yeovil, battled in vain to save him, calling the emergency services, administering first aid and CPR. Mike died in the helicopter on the way to hospital.

A Memorial Service for Mike was held at The Church of St John the Baptist, Yeovil, on Monday, March 24th. There were over 200 attendees, friends, former colleagues, fellow climbers and ramblers. There were four personal tributes read out which have been presented below.

**Memorial Tribute by Margaret Moore** - As a family, we said goodbye to Mike at a private service in Warwickshire last Thursday and we are here today to pay tribute to Mike and give thanksgiving for his life.

From an early age, Mike was interested in outdoor activities, using the garden swing as a climbing frame, canoeing and dinghy sailing with schoolmates, hill walking and rock climbing with friends.

Mike was always very good at keeping in touch with people and would make a point of visiting friends and relatives. He would organise and invite groups of friends on hill-walking weekends. On one trip to North Wales, the party included myself and his school friend, Nicholas. One thing led to another, and two years later Mike was best man at our wedding and, later still, uncle and godfather to our son.

Mike graduated from Southampton University in 1973 with a degree in mechanical engineering and he came to work at Westland Helicopters here in Yeovil, where he set up home. He stayed at Westland for the whole of his career, and earned the respect of his colleagues as a professional and dedicated engineer.

But Mike's true passion was climbing, initially rock climbing and then mountaineering, both in Britain and the Alps. Over time, Mike joined a number of climbing clubs and became an active member, taking positions of responsibility, so that he could put something back into the sport.

I have fond memories from 2011, when I travelled with my son to the summer Alpine meet in France to see Mike

and celebrate his 60th birthday. His organisational skills were legendary and he even managed to arrange for the Tour de France to pass by the road right in front of us!

Mike took an interest in people of all ages. He was an attentive uncle to our son and he took an interest in the children of his close friends, as they grew up. He encouraged and guided young and new climbers on their first attempts. And he was a dedicated son and nephew, helping to look after his elderly father and aunt in Solihull.

I share Mike's love of the mountains although, these days, I prefer the ones with cable cars to gain height! I understand the challenge and sense of achievement from completing a difficult ascent or high traverse and I can see why Mike was always planning new mountaineering adventures.

**Memorial Tribute from David Gibbings, MBE** - Mike Pinney, Engineer and Mountaineer (I might have got that in the wrong order)

I first met Mike shortly after he arrived at Westland. You didn't have to know Mike for long before climbing crept into the conversation. He was one of handful of us who formed the Westland mountaineering group, which has grown into the thriving Yeovil club. Yes, that's right, Yeovil is a climbing centre (a well-kept secret).

At Westland, Mike represented a new breed of engineer. They didn't deal with power or levers or structures. They talked about computers, sometimes in English. We are all much more aware of them now; can't live with 'em- can't live without 'em, but this was the 70s.

Mike was part of the Instrumentation and Data Analysis part of our business. Instrumentation and the interpretation of test results are the payload of test aircraft. If anything was going to keep the test programme moving smoothly this was it, our whole business depended upon it and, for some of us, our lives.

In those days, we flew and laboriously plotted out results, sometimes horrified at how close we had gone to the limits. Mike and his colleagues changed all that. The data are transmitted back to the ground as things happen and the interpretation process is already in hand by the time we return to land.

Mike and those who worked with him have transformed the way we worked and, in doing so, have made the test business safer and more efficient. Few of us can make such a claim for our life's work. Thank you, Mike.

If you listen carefully, you might hear Mike saying 'Yes', several times over. He was a man of few words.

How about Mike Pinney the Climber?

For Mike, the mountains were everything. I doubt if he would regard it as a sport, few climbers do. The only competitor is within yourself, and the whole world is your stadium. The mountain environment is all embracing: Beautiful, Menacing, Challenging and Exhilarating. None of us can explain why we do it. Those who know the sea will understand.

It's hard work going up, and often even harder coming down. But, Oh, that moment at the summit! Mike travelled far in pursuit of all this, and I am sure he found it, many times.

The relationship between climbing companions is also very complex, you get to know each other very well. I climbed with Mike in Wales, Derbyshire, Switzerland and the Lakes. In the Lakes we climbed a classic 'Napes

Needle', a sort of mini Shard. The trick is to stand on the point. The other climb was Troutdale Pinnacle, a long multi-pitch climb, where you lead through. I often look back on these two as the best ever.

Thank you, Mike, for being there. I always felt safe with you.

Why do they do it, you can almost hear it right now. Going into the mountains, expecting others to risk their lives rescuing them. 'Because it's there' comes the uninformed reply. But the truth is that no serious climber expects a rescue. But neither will any serious climber leave him in peril.

'A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?' [Robert Browning]

**Memorial Tribute from Mike Goodyer** - Last month I was skiing with Mike and a couple of other friends in the Four Valleys ski area of Switzerland. This was a favourite spot for Mike and me, this being our sixth visit. On a cold blue sky day we were skiing down from the Mont Fort area. Mike was ahead of me, he stopped and waited for me, offered tips on my off piste technique and he was off through the steep mogul field. At the end of the moguls he waited for me again to make sure that I got through this awkward section safely. I gave him a thumbs up and he was off again to join the others, with me in pursuit.

This simple act of watching and waiting, helping others in the mountains so characterised Mike. The many tributes that I have been sent from Club members emphasise the help and support that Mike has offered them over the years.

Mike joined the ABM in 1975, the year that the George Starkey Hut in the Lakes was opened. His first Alpine season was in 1978 at Zermatt. This started a long association with the Alps and Switzerland in particular. His passion for Alpine climbing soon turned into thinking of completing all the 4000m peaks in the Alps. He completed this fantastic achievement in 2007, but only after a 12year pause after which he climbed the AB with Jeff. The summer Alpine Climbing Meet has always been a feature of the ABM/AC Meets Programme and in the 1970/80s was largely a family meet, but now everybody has grown up. The Meet developed under Mike's stewardship and over the years he incorporated the CC, FRCC and the Wayfarers and introduced the popular reunion meet in the autumn at the George Starkey Hut. Last year at Randa over 60 people spent two to three weeks peak bagging, exploring, rock climbing and meeting up with friends, old and new. Mike's tent was the centre of attention, with him offering advice, making a brew for new arrivals and taking the opportunity to sell guidebooks and AC buffs. He also welcomed new members and first timers and introduced them to potential climbing partners and still found time to go off climbing himself. Since Mike had completed the 4000m peaks he was much more inclined to go to other areas of the Alps for the summer meet and this year we are off to Cogne in Italy.

In addition to Mike's passion for climbing he was a great supporter of the Climbing Club tradition. His commitment to the ABM over years was immense. After joining the ABM in 1975 he joined the committee in 1977, after his first Alpine season, and a year later he was elected Treasurer – a post he held for 16 years. After joining the ABM Mike also joined the AC and the CC, making good use of the AC archives for his future forays into the mountains. He was unstinting in his committee work and after standing down as Treasurer was elected Vice President from 1997 to 2001. He always brought a balanced approach to proceedings, and was able to both bring a sense of the club's history and where we wanted to go in the future, to many of our deliberations.

In recognition of his work Mike was elected President in 2009 – the ABMs Centenary Year. We celebrated our centenary at a joint Hotel and camping meet in the Saas Valley in Switzerland and we had a celebration day at the

Britannia Hut. In 2012, when it was the centenary of the Britannia Hut, we were back in the Saas valley and it was Mike who had the idea of taking the original 1912 flag over a 4,000 metre peak to the Hut. And judging by the reception it was received with, Mike had captured the sense of occasion perfectly. We have received a number of heartfelt messages from our Swiss friends in the SAC, reflecting the esteem Mike was held in.

One area that was Mike's passion, as it is for a number of us, is the ABM Hut, the George Starkey Hut in the Lake District. He served as a Director for the Hut Limited Company and was the Company Secretary as well as the Hut Booking Secretary. A few years ago, when the hut was being refurbished, Mike was one of the key players ensuring that our hut was going to be as prestigious in the future as it had been to date. Most recently, Mike was the person leading the renewal of the leasehold of the hut, giving the club security of tenure for the next 30 years. The ABM has lost a great ambassador of the club.

There are many of us who have turned up at a Club Meet at home or the summer Alpine meet without a partner, or as a novice, or a new member of the Club to be welcomed by Mike and made to feel part of the meet. I would like to think that this is Mike's legacy introducing and encouraging many of us in our own mountaineering exploits. We have lost a great friend and companion on the mountains.

Mike thank you for your support and friendship.

**Memorial Tribute from Tony Westcott (Alpine Club)** - Mike was a very experienced and accomplished rock climber, skier and mountaineer; steady and very safe, equally at home on snow and rock having completed all 50 of the major 4000m+ tops of the European Alps. The words which come to mind when speaking of Mike with friends are much loved, much respected, totally reliable, safe, unassuming, conscientious, kind and generous. In David Watts' tribute to Mike, he says: "Even among the many professional guides and leading stars of the Alpine Club, Mike was an outstanding mountaineer and alpinist and certainly he was the most accomplished 'mountain man' in the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club over the past decade and more."

Several tributes have made reference to Mike's quiet confidence and motivating leadership. Marion Parsons' tribute story of a memorable traverse of the Meije reminds me of a personal example when Mike & I, with Chris Storie, were invited by the Italian Alpine Club in June last year to celebrate the centenary of the death of the Victorian mountaineer from Bristol, Frank Tuckett, and associated book launch, at the hut in the Brenta Dolomites named after him. Our Italian hosts were embarrassingly generous in their hospitality, but Mike was well prepared to respond with presents of AC buffs and guide books. When the speeches, lunching and general revelry were over and we had a few days to ourselves to enjoy the mountains, Mike suggested we climb the stunningly impressive, but for me very daunting, rock tower of the 300m Campanile Basso. Initially we made slow progress to the base of the tower, having to use ice axes and crampons to traverse the rock access terraces, which were still banked up with steep snow. Mike lead off confidently and quickly up the vertical cracks of the lower face, but progress slowed as difficulties increased some three-quarters of the way to the top. Without hesitation, Mike suggested our retreat to ensure we made a safe and timely return. The decision was quickly agreed. Mike double-checked abseil gear at each of the many rappel points and soon we were safely back at the hut. It was a most memorable day out – for the experience of the journey, irrespective of not having summited.

Retirement from Westlands gave Mike the opportunity to extend his horizons to the greater ranges of the world. On an Alpine Club expedition to the Semartoli (Kagbhusandi) region of the Indian Himalaya in 2012, he made first

ascents of three peaks between 5100 & 5500m high (Kagbhusandi Parbat (5,301m), Peak 5,515m and Peak 5,120m).

In 2013 Mike went to the Antarctic Peninsula with the Alpine Club, making five further first ascents of peaks between 600 & 2000m high - Belgica Dome (2,032m), Alencar Peak (1,592m), Peak 1,333m, Peak 1,475m, and Lancaster Hill E & W summits (642m & 616m). Mountaineering summits were not the only enjoyment. Expedition climbing partner, Derek Buckle, commented that "As well as enjoying the exploratory ski-mountaineering, Mike was intrigued and entranced by the wildlife."

Also in 2013, Mike & Derek organised a small private expedition to the Zaskar region of Ladakh in the Indian Himalaya, where we made first ascents of two 5800m peaks from the Pensilungpa Glacier - Hidden Peak (5,802m) and Twin Peak (5,825m). We turned back some 100m below a third unclimbed summit, but this did not diminish his and our enjoyment of the journey and the quality of the experience, which included Buddhist monasteries, temples and palaces in Jaipur and the people from different cultures we met.

Early 2014 saw Mike ice-climbing in the Canadian Rockies, with further plans for an expedition to Peru in June and a more exploratory mountaineering expedition to the Spiti Valley in the Indian Himalaya in September. These will still go ahead, although it is with considerable sadness that they will not include Mike as we know he was looking forward to these trips enormously.

Complementary to his passion for mountaineering, Mike was unstinting and unassuming in his service to the mountaineering community. With quiet efficiency he has organised the annual summer Alps meet for longer than most members' memory. Many a new Alpine Club member, including myself in 2004, remembers with affection that friendly welcoming smile, thoughtful introduction to more experienced regulars, encyclopaedic advice on routes and careful checking to ensure the safe return of all members on his meets; each year's meet was followed by the Alps Reunion at the George Starkey Hut in Patterdale.

Mike joined the Alpine Club in 1982, but it wasn't until retirement in 2011 that he joined the AC Committee and served as Honorary Treasurer. He's been a keen and much-valued supporter and contributor to the AC SW winter lecture programme since it started in 2007.

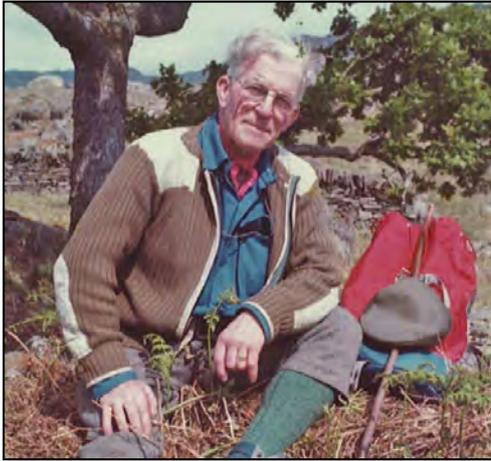
Mike was a great adventurer, who truly loved the wild open spaces; especially the mountains and the challenges they present to those who seek to safely soak up the experiences they offer. He devoted many years to honing those skills, not necessarily to do the highest or most difficult, but rather to be able travel safely and confidently where others fear to tread. Not solely for self-gratification, but also to enable others to share in that life-changing and life-fulfilling experience.

I would like to conclude with the words of Jeff Harris, Mike's close friend and mountaineering partner: "We must celebrate his life, he packed a lot in. Fantastic mountaineering achievements, a great all round mountaineer and faithful friend who also put a lot back into the mountaineering world with his unstinting work with the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, the Alpine club and Yeovil MC."

Thank you Mike.

*Compiled by Mike Goodyer*

## Frederick Ben Suter (Major rtd) 1920 - 2013



It is with regret that Frederick Ben Suter (known as Ben) died recently at the good age of 93 after a short illness in Surrey County Hospital.

Born on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1920 at Burgh Heath, near Reigate, Surrey, with a Swiss father and mother of Polish descent, he spent his early years enjoying a very free and outdoor life with his 4 brothers and sister, until Ben was sent to Bedford School in the footsteps of his older brothers. His father had developed a very successful shellac importation business based in London in the early part of the 20th Century, and the family were able to enjoy the benefits this brought as well as a close family ethos that endured for the generation and beyond.

Unlike his brothers, who had all trained in the sciences, Ben elected to move into the armed services from school and joined RMA Sandhurst for training as a Commissioned Officer. Before he had a chance to complete his training, he was posted to the Indian Army with the Sikh

Regiment, where he volunteered for the North West Frontier and the South Waziristan Scouts on the Afghanistan borders at the foot of the Himalayas, where at the tender age of 19 he commanded the platoon and learnt local tribal languages and became an interpreter for Pushtu.

In a period where world politics were significantly changing, in 1946 British officers were required to hand over to their Indian counterparts in short order, and they returned to the UK, many to return to civilian life after the war years. Ben chose to stay in the Army and served for a spell in Germany, by which time he had married and had a young family, and he then joined the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and volunteered to be parachutist for the heavy drop section of the RAOC based at Salisbury and later in Surrey. Having always loved the outdoor life, he was never happier than jumping out of aeroplanes, falling off mountains or horses, or sinking in boats!

He also saw action in North Africa, Cyprus and exercise in Greece, was stationed at the storage Depot in Bicester, Deepcut and the Junior Leaders Battalion at Pirbright Camp, where he often led young soldiers on mountain climbing expeditions in Wales and Italy. He was also at that time refereeing rugby matches.

Retiring from the Army at the age of 50, Ben worked part time at Robin Fulton's gunsmith shop at Bisley, was a bursar for a local girl's school and was able to enjoy his passion for water and dinghy sailing, becoming an instructor for school boys & girls, spending weeks at a time at Salcombe with the Island Cruising Club. He continued climbing mountains and made regular trips over many years to Mont Blanc to climb with colleagues, with a special trip by invitation to climb with the Italian Alpini in 1970. He became increasingly involved with Pirbright village affairs, was Chairman for some years of the Parish Council, helped with entry to the Surrey Best Kept Village competition, and assisted in arrangements for the twinning of Pirbright with Cagny, France, now such a strong link within the Pirbright community.

Ben joined the ABMSAC in 1985 and quickly became involved in the running of the Association. He was Meets Secretary from 1989 to 1994, Vice president from 1992 to 94 and combined this with editing the Newsletter from 1992 to 1995 and supported many meets over this period.

Ben kept up his military contacts all his life, and attended annual get togethers with old comrades at Sandhurst and other locations over many years. He maintained close contact with the Sikh Pioneers and Light Infantry Association and exchanged greetings every year with comrades of both his and the next generation of Sikhs. Keeping his experiences live were a large and important part of his life, and he will be remembered by many in many different ways.

He is succeeded by his children, Simon, Sarah, Victoria and Lucienne and 4 grandchildren.

*Adapted from notes written by Ben's son, Simon Suter.*

## **Bert Bowes**

Bert passed away peacefully at home on 15 march 2014. He was a member of the Association since 1974. A number of members were able to join Steve Bowes and family to pay their respects at the funeral in Hartlepool.

We send our condolences to Steve and family.

*Mike Goodyer, Editor*

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# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014

The president Ed Bramley was in the Chair, approximately 24 members were present

**Apologies for absence:** Antonio Barlen, Mary Boulter, Derek Buckley, Nigella Hall, David Harland, Dick Murton, Mike Pinney, Terry Shaw and Lin Warris .

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013**

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved. Proposed Marian Parsons, seconded Richard Winter.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

### **Election of Officers and Committee:**

The following officers stood down

Hon. HMC Representative	-	Don Hodge
Co-opted member	-	John Foster

The following new committee members were elected

Hon. HMC Representative	-	Marian Parsons
Co-opted member	-	Heather Eddowes

The AGM also agreed to Pamela Andrews serving a further one year as co-opted member. All other members of the committee are to remain as before.

### **Hon Treasurer's report**

The report and accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and presented by James Baldwin.

The membership fees are to be held for the current year.

It was noted that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, the BMC are proposing to increase their fees by £2, subject to ratification at the BMC AGM in April.

It was also agreed that Malcolm Reynolds should act as independent inspector of accounts.

The accounts were accepted. Proposed Andy Burton, seconded Heather Eddowes.

### **President's report**

Firstly, I would like to thank the Committee for all the support and counsel they have all provided over the past year, including those who have just completed their respective terms in office, and to welcome the new committee members who are taking over from them. I would particularly like to recognise the work of Don Hodge who is retiring from the committee this year, and has been our Hut Representative since 1978. With his leadership by example on the hut maintenance meets, he has ensured that we continue to have a club hut which has stood the tests of time and use.

Our meets programme continues to be strong and varied, both at home and abroad. My thanks to everybody who either attended or organised meets either at home, or abroad, as a successful meets program is key to attracting and retaining members.

In the UK, we had meets in locations as diverse as Scotland, the Lake District and Peak District, Wales and, of course, not forgetting Devon, which I was fortunate enough to join this year. Our overseas meets programme has been equally strong, with a joint camping meet with the AC, CC and Wayfarers based at Randa and a hotel meet based at Saas Almagell, as well as a late summer camping meet at Solden. In addition, Pam Andrews was able to make a return visit to Bhutan to see the classroom set up at the Choki Traditional Art School in Alasdair's memory.

For the forthcoming year, we already have a strong program of meets, including some additional Scottish meets being organised by Roger James. For our overseas meets, the hotel meet to Pontresina is already well subscribed, and the camping meet to Cogne and the Gran Paradiso is similarly attracting a lot of interest. A via Ferrata week is in the process of being finalised for Cortina, and further details of that meet will be available shortly. In the immediate future, a number of us, including myself are returning to Morocco in a weeks time, this time to trek to the edge of the Sahara.

Whether people are actively able to participate in meets or not, keeping in touch and sharing experiences is something that many of our members value highly. I'd therefore like to say a big thank you to our editor, Mike Goodyer, for all the work he does in ensuring we are all kept in contact with what is happening in our club.

Last year in my dinner speech, I mentioned that Alasdair Andrews had left the club a small legacy in his will, and that following consultation with Pamela, this would be used to digitise the journal history of the club, so that it is available to everybody online. I am now pleased to be able to report that all the preliminary work this involves has now been completed, and that scanning of the clubs' journals will begin shortly. Given the cost involved in carrying this out, the club will be making a small financial contribution to this project.

Lastly, it is always with sadness that we lose members of the club, and last year was no exception. I would therefore like to conclude my report for 2013 by remembering Ben Suter and Lottie Norton, both long standing members of the club, who passed away last year.

#### **Any other business:**

Pamela Andrews updated the meeting on the Britannia hut, where the access route is now much worse, and the hut is now losing money. Dario Andermatten is now warden, and Christine Oddy has become Vice President of the Hut Committee.

Pamela also drew people's attention to the new edition of the Cicerone walking guide to Provence she has been involved in producing with Alan Norton, which will be available in the near future.

#### **Date of next meeting:**

It is proposed the next AGM will be held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale in early February 2015, to coincide with the Annual Dinner. The details will be confirmed at a later date once hotel availability, costs etc. are known.

The meeting closed at approximately 6:20 pm.

*Ed Bramley, Hon. President, March 2014*

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB Ltd**

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014

**Present:** Directors – E Bramley (Chairman), M Parsons, D Hodge and about 19 members.

**Apologies for absence:** Directors: Derek Buckley, Peter Clarkson and Mike Pinney.

Members: , Antonio Barlen, Mary Boulter, Nigella Hall, David Harland, Dick Murton, Terry Shaw and Lin Warris.

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2013:** The minutes of the previous AGM were approved. Proposed James Baldwin, seconded Belinda Baldwin. There were no matters arising.

**Directors Report and Accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013:** The Chairman reported that the finances of the Limited Company were stable. The Accounts were examined and approved by the Directors on 8<sup>th</sup> January. They were then laid before the AGM and accepted by simple majority.

In 2013, bed nights were up by 14%. To ensure that this continued, the Directors were looking at the patterns of bookings to identify and action areas where additional hut income could be generated on an ongoing basis. With the changes in energy prices, this aspect of running the hut is being kept under review. Examinations of both the amount of energy use and the price paid are consistent with a wet year.

As the premises have a low rateable value, rates are not paid at present. With potential changes in this area, a watching brief is being kept on this. As the Limited Company made a small profit this year, this will be the first year that any Corporation Tax has needed to be paid. It is not expected that this will occur next year, as there are a number of capital outlays that will be made.

On Health and Safety, specific issues such as fire alarm and extinguisher testing are carried out by suitably qualified external companies. To complement those specific issues, a generic set of Health and Safety checks are in the process of development, which form the basis of future checks.

In addition, with the retirement of Don from the role of Hut Management representative, a general review of how hut maintenance was carried out would be conducted by the Directors.

**Renewal of lease:** Discussions have been held with St.Patrick's Parochial Church Council and their lawyers have drawn up a new lease which should be with us shortly, as follows:-

- i. 30 year term
- ii. The present rent will continue until October 2014, when it will rise to the previously agreed figure (or such figure as may be determined by reference to RPI if higher). Reviews will be every 4 years thereafter to open market rental or RPI, whichever is the greater.

All other terms and conditions will be as the existing lease dated 21 February 2001 as amended by the subsequent Deed of Variation dated 2 July 2008.

**Any other business:** John Dempster asked if the possibility of buying the freehold had been investigated by the PCC. The chairman responded that it had not.

John also asked if the new lease had a break clause in it. As the Chairman did not have a copy of the Lease to hand, he was not able to answer this question at the AGM, but it can be reported post meeting that this is specifically covered by Clause 40 of the Lease.

Judy Renshaw asked whether the Directors had considered getting another club involved in the running of the hut, including its maintenance. The Chairman responded that the Directors would be considering a number of aspects in relation to the future running of the hut.

It was noted by Andy Burton that by the PCC agreeing to renew the lease for the hut for a long period, they were signalling their ongoing support for the existing use of the George Starkey hut as a climbing hut.

The meeting closed at around 6:50pm

*Ed Bramley, Hon. President, March 2014*

# LIST OF OFFICERS

List of Officers since the formation of the Association

## PRESIDENTS

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

## VICE PRESIDENTS

1948	Gerald Steel CV & Colonel E R Culverwell MC	1966-1967	J G Broadbent & J S Byam-Grounds
1949	Colonel E R Culverwell MC & Brigadier E Gueterbock	1968	J S Byam-Grounds & W Kirstein
	Colonel E R Culverwell MC, Rev G H Lancaster (died April 1950) & Dr C F Fothergill	1969-1970	W Kirstein & Dr D R Riddell
1951-1952	Dr C F Fothergill & Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman	1971	Dr D R Riddell & M Bennett
1953	Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman & J R Amphlett	1972-1973	M Bennett & Rev F L Jenkins
1954-1955	J R Amphlett & Robert Creg	1974	Rev F L Jenkins & P S Boulter FRCS
1956	Robert Creg & Dr J W Healy	1975	P S Boulter FRCS & J S Whyte
1957-1958	Dr J W Healy & B L Richards GM	1976-1977	J S Whyte & F E Smith
1959	B L Richards GM & Dr A W Barton	1978	F E Smith & J P Ledeboer
1960-1961	Dr A W Barton & D G Lambley FRCS	1979	J P Ledeboer & F P French
1962	D G Lambley, FRCS & V O Cohen MC	1980-1982	F P French & S M Freeman
1963-1964	V O Cohen MC & F Solari	1983-1984	S M Freeman & F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1965	F Solari & J G Broadbent	1984	FA W Schweitzer FRCS & Wing Commander H D Archer DFC
		1985	F A W Schweitzer FRCS & A I Andrews
		1986-1987	A I Andrews & W B Midgley
		1988	W B Midgley & C G Armstrong
		1989-1990	C G Armstrong & R W Jones

1991	R W Jones & G G Watkins	2000-2001	M Pinney & Dr D W Watts
1992	G S Watkins & F B Suter	2001-2003	Prof D C Watts & D F Penlington
1993-1994	F B Suter & Commander J W Chapman OBE	2003-2004	D F Penlington
1994-1995	Commander J W Chapman OBE & D R Hodge	2004-2007	W L Peebles
1996-1997	D R Hodge & R N James	2007-2010	T J Shaw
1997-1999	R N James & M Pinney	2010-2013	Mrs B Baldwin
		2013-	J H Strachan

### HONORARY SECRETARIES

1909-1911	J A B Bruce & Gerald Steel	1971-1972	J P Ledebor
1912-1919	E B Harris & A N Andrews	1972-1976	FA W Schweitzer FRCS
1920-1922	A N Andrews & N E Odell	1976-1978	R A Coatsworth
1919-1928	A N Andrews & W M Roberts	1978-1983	S N Beare
1929-1930	W M Roberts & M N Clarke	1984-1986	A G Partridge
1931-1944	M N Clarke & F W Cavey	1987-1988	S M Freeman
1945-1948	M N Clarke & F P Crepin	1989-2000	H F Romer
1949-1953	F R Crepin & George Starkey	2000-2001	A I Andrews
1954-1956	George Starkey & R C J Parker	2001-2006	J W S Dempster
1957-1958	R C J Parker & H McArthur	2006-2010	Mrs A M Jago
1958-1960	R C J Parker & F E Smith	2010 -	D Murton
1960-1962	F E Smith & M Bennett		
1963-1970	M Bennett & J P Ledebor		

### HONORARY MEETS SECRETARIES

1971-1974	S N Beare	1989-1994	F B Suter	2009-2010	J F Harris
1975-1979	A Strawther	1994-2001	M J Goodyer	2010-2013	M Parsons
1979-1983	A I Andrews	2001-2003	E A Bramley	2013-	A Burton
1984-1988	J C Berry	2004-2009	J C Foster		

### HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES (Formerly Honorary Registrar)

1965-1968	George Starkey	1975-1977	D J Abbott	1991-1993	H M Eddowes
1969-1971	F A W Schweitzer	1978-1980	A N Sperryn	1994-2003	Dr M J Eddowes
FRCS		1980-1984	J W Eccles	2004-2012	E A Bramley
1972-1974	J E Jesson	1985-1991	T G B Howe MC	2012 -2014	M Pinney

### HONORARY EDITORS

(The following officers carried out the duties of Hon. Editor until the post was created in 1949: 1909-11 J A B Bruce, 1912-28 J A B Bruce and A N Andrews, 1929-48 M N Clarke).

1949-1962	M N Clarke	1987-1992	M R Loewy	2002-2009	R B Winter
1963-1964	W R H Jeudwine	1992-1995	F B Suter –	2009-	M J Goodyer

1965-1968	G A Hutcheson	<b>HONORARY</b>			
1968-1974	Graham A Daniels	<b>EDITOR NEWSLETTER</b>			
1975-1986	S M Freeman	1992-2002	M I C Baldwin		

## HON. CHAIRMAN - HUT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1974-1977	J P Ledebøer	1987-1990	D W Edwards	1999-2005	W B Midgley
1978-1980	D R Hodge	1991-1994	D Beer (TCC)	2005-2010	S Bridge (TCC)
1980-1987	W B Midgley	1995-1998	S Maudsley (TCC)	2010-2012	D R Hodge

## HONORARY TREASURERS

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

## HONORARY AUDITORS

1909-1914	A B Challis	1957-1967	R A Tyssen-Gee	1985-1999	D Bennett
1915-1922	Reginald Graham	1968-1974	A Hart	1999-2005	K N Ballantine
1923-1930	W L Adams	1975-1977	J Llwyn - Jones	2005-2009	P McCulloch
1931-1940	F Oughton	1978-1979	G A Daniels	2009-2011	N Harding
1941-1952	J A Marsden-Neye	1979-1980	C J Sandy	2012 -	M Reynolds
1953-1956	S E Orchard	1981-1984	N Moore		

## Posts no longer in use

### HONORARY LIBRARIANS

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

### HONORARY SOCIAL SECRETARIES

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

FRCS

### HONORARY SOLICITORS

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

## Current Honorary Members

Hector Meir, Brooke Midgley, Wendell Jones

## Useful Contacts

### **George Starkey Hut Warden and Hut Booking Secretary**

**Members must book beds in the Hut before the visit to ensure space is available**

Marian Parsons

Decollage, Patterdale, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0NL

E-mail: mpparsons1207@googlemail.com

Tel: 01768-482437

### **Tuesday Climbing Club Secretary**

Maureen Stiller

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

E-mail: mo@stiller.org.uk

Tel 01273-494210

### **Oread Mountaineering Club – we have reciprocal rights at the following Huts**

#### **Hut at Rhyd Ddu, North Wales**

Hut booking secretary - Colin Hobday

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

E-mail: colinanduschi@talktalk.net

Tel: 01332-551594

**Hut at Heathy Lea, Baslow** (Grid Ref: SK 273722): Twenty places mixed, offering basic accommodation, 12 in the cottage and 8 in the barn

Hut booking secretary – Derek Pike,

19 St. Johns Drive, Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire, DE216SD

E mail: derekpike1234@btinternet.com

Tel: 01332 67045