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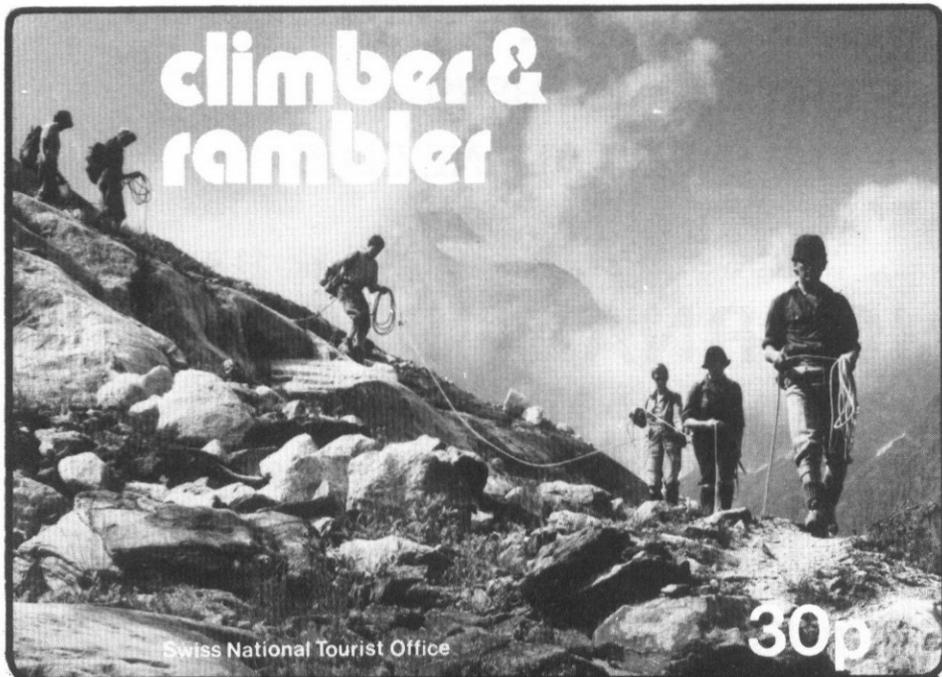
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THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

JOURNAL 1975

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Walt Unsworth, well known member of the Association, now edits *Climber & Rambler*, Britain's premier outdoor journal. Recent issues have included important articles by Dennis Gray, Don Whillans, Tony Howard, Leo Dickinson, W. A. Poucher, Klaus Schwartz, George Bridge, Doug Scott and many other leaders from the world of mountaineering ... all with superb pictorial layout.

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DIARY FOR 1975

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 22 January | Lecture, The Rockies by Mrs. Sally Westmacott |
| 8-9 February | Northern Dinner Meet, Glenridding - Leader, W. Brooke Midgeley. Speaker, Peter Gentil |
| 19 February | Lecture, Ascent of Phabrang, 20, 250 ft. by Mr. John Allen |
| 19 March | Lecture, Morocco by Mr. O. St. John |
| 26 March-
2 April | Easter Meet, Roy Bridge - Leader, Alasdair Andrews |
| 4-6 April | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader, Pat Hurley |
| 23 April | Lecture, The Dauphiné by The Rev. F. L. Jenkins |
| 25-27 April | Meet, Derbyshire - Leader, Tony Strawther |
| 2-4 May | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader, W. Brooke Midgeley |
| 21 May | Buffet party with short papers |
| 23-26 May | Meet, Cwm Glas - Leader, Debu Bose |
| 30 May-1 June | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader to be arranged |
| 18 June | Members' Evening. Slides of Easter and Whitsun Meets |
| 20-22 June | Meet, Kirkby Stephen - Leader, John Kemsley |
| 4-6 July | Alpine Training Meet, Patterdale Hut - Leader, Wendell Jones |
| 26 July-
16 August | Alpine Meet, Zermatt - Leader, Harry Archer |
| 1-3 August | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader to be arranged |
| 5-7 September | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader to be arranged |
| 12-14
September | Meet, Dolgellau - Leader, Tony Strawther |
| 19 September | Lecture, Quocunque by Mr. Frank Solari |
| 3-5 October | President's Meet - Patterdale Hut - Leader, Walt Unsworth |
| 15 October | Members' Evening, the Alpine Season |
| 31 October-
2 November | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader, Bill Comstive |
| 19 November | Annual General Meeting followed by the Annual Dinner, Connaught Rooms, Kingsway, London |
| 5-7 December | Patterdale Hut Meet - Leader to be arranged |

Fuller details of these events are notified in the bulletins. Lectures are held at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London, W.1 at 7.00 p.m. and are followed by an optional informal supper at the Waterloo Despatch, Adams Row, W.1. The cost has, inevitably, risen to £2.25 and it is essential that Members should book not later than the preceding Saturday with the Secretary, A.B.M.S.A.C., The Medical Centre, St. Luke's Hospital, Guildford.

Information regarding the meets is available from the leaders.

MAURICE BENNETT



Club Presidents are not infrequently somewhat remote people to the majority of Club Members. Nothing could be further from the truth in the case of Maurice Bennett who this year starts his three year term of office as President of the A.B.M.S.A.C. Maurice has for long been an addict of Association meets. Ever since 1957 Maurice and his wife Gladys have attended every Alpine meet and only one Easter meet has been missed through illness.

In the years immediately before the War and for some years afterwards he enjoyed rock climbing in North Wales on medium-grade classic routes. He has climbed extensively in the Bernese Oberland and Pennines and has strayed into other areas of the Alps from time to time. The Oberland has always been his favourite area with the Mittellegigrat on the Eiger probably the pick of the routes.

He joined the Association in 1939 and is an S.A.C. Veteran. He has served the club in many capacities notably as Joint Secretary between 1960 and 1970. He served as Vice-President 1971-73 and became Honorary Solicitor in 1974 a position which he will continue to hold while President. Naturally he is a solicitor by profession being a partner in a leading firm in the City of London.

Maurice has represented the Association on the B.M.C. for many years and has been Chairman of the London & South Area Committee of the B.M.C. since its inception. He also serves on the Committee of the Anglo-Swiss Society and on the Advisory Committee of the Bowles Mountaineering & Outdoor Pursuits Centre.

He was a keen club cricketer for over thirty years during which time he tried vainly a) to explain to fellow climbers what he could see in cricket and b) to explain to fellow cricketers what he could see in climbing. He served in the Royal Navy throughout the Second World War and saw service, inter alia, in Malta and Russian convoys and the D-day landing in Normandy. As a R.N.V.R. officer he commanded a tank-landing craft during the last two years of the war. He was mentioned in despatches in connection with the Normandy landings.

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- * 19 Aug—9 Sept: Hindu Kush Adventure. On foot £535; horseback £675
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BRITISH COLUMBIA by Keith Hindell

Keith went to the Melville and Westfall Groups in the Selkirk Mountains, one of the Interior Ranges of British Columbia, with the Alpine Club of Canada.

I wonder if, until this summer, the Westfall Group contained the most accessible unclimbed peaks in the World? For a twenty minute taxi ride from the ghost town Albert Canyon on the Trans Canada Highway took us to within easy reach of at least three virgin peaks. Did I say taxi? I should for accuracy's sake have said helicopter but for all the lack of fuss involved it might not have been more unusual than hailing a hackney carriage on a wet day in Piccadilly. Canadian mountaineers, I soon learned, have come a long way from the days of the mule. They are not now exactly tourists but nor are they quite purists.

Certainly not hard men. I did catch on the wind some snorts of complaint that these mountains were not really difficult enough, but as no one even attempted any of the three walls overlooking the camp (the South faces respectively of Redburn, Whitejacket and Proteus) even though the rock was black, menacing, steep and excellent, it might have been a marmot I overheard. Roughly speaking, and give or take the odd Dutchman and Pole, the party of twenty five consisted of one third Canadians, one third Americans and one third expatriate British. Anyway, it proved a low octane, mildly joky, mildly keen, genuinely competent mixture. And above all very friendly.

The 1974 Alpine Climbing Camp made its base at 6,700' at the headwaters of Houston Creek, beside the green pool which in summer forms at the bottom of the Houston Glacier. It is set in a magnificent amphitheatre with the main Moby Dick range on the one hand and Billy Budd on the other. Out of the bottom of the valley the Nemo Group form an enchanting and enticing prospect. Behind Billy Budd and within easy reach to the South lies the Westfall Group stretching from Wrong Peak to Charybdis.

It must be said at the outset that we saw these mountains in ideal conditions. The last thing I did before leaving New York was to buy an expensive waterproof anorak but the weather was so superb I never took it out of the bag. To me at least, used to the Alps, the Cascades and the Olympics, fifteen days of continuously fine weather was an unbelievable boon.

I would rate the Melville Group as moderate Alpine peaks and the Westfall Group as easy: the highest in either group was Proteus, ten thousand six hundred feet, and most were between nine and ten and half thousand. The glaciers were modest, not very steep and consequently not very crevassed. Certainly I saw none which formed a serious barrier and only one, on the North face of Moby Dick which would have made an interesting ice climb. The rock in the Melville Group was mostly good giving some fine ridge traverses at 'assez difficile'. But the rock changed in Billy Budd midway between the two main uplifts from conglomerate to schist. The East ridge

of Billy Bud, I'm told, was a fine climb but the summit ridge stretching West for a mile or so was loose and dusty ending in a particularly nasty col which formed part of the high road from Houston Creek to the Westfall Group. The rock on the Westfall Group was also pretty poor. In fact the long summit ridge of Priscilla resembled a quarry in full production. The shattered rock was so clean and unweathered it could have been 'blown' that morning.



Stygian Pool (foreground)
Priscilla 8450' and Charybdis 9350'

Photo by: Keith Hindell

The combination of fine peaks and fine weather kept us all up to the mark. Certainly every time I reached a crest the view took my breath away—snowy peaks in all directions as far as the eye could see. I suppose it is common in Canada; in which case how lucky they are! On this meet there was the added incentive of unclimbed peaks and new routes. The desire to be first generated a mild amount of competition between two parties who wisely plumped for different ends of the Westfall Group. And, although all four new summits turned out to be easy climbs, that did not diminish the childish pleasure of building the first cairn, writing the first route description and even naming three peaks.

Let me commend Scylla Mountain, 9550' and Priscilla, 8475', to all those who are lucky enough to follow in our footsteps. The first is an exquisite snow peak when viewed from the North and East with a sharp horizontal ridge on the summit. We built the first cairn but could we really have been first to reach such an easy but alluring top? And then Priscilla (our name, chosen to pun with its neighbour), a striking wall with four summits immediately to the North of Scylla Mountain. It must be a mile long—steep rotten cliffs on the North, easier snow and grass on the South. It overlooks what I nominate as the most sinister natural feature of the entire area, the Stygian Pool. I suppose it is a lake but there was barely any water actually showing in August. Instead the surface was covered with hummocky ice streaked with black rock dust and peppered with boulders and seracs which had fallen down from the Scylla Glacier. From the summit of Priscilla (which we shared with a senior mountain goat) we had a close view of the most beautiful mountain of all. Charybdis 9,350' looks elegant from the North East and I think would be an interesting, perhaps even a hard climb from that side. But it was too far for us from Houston Creek without an air taxi. Taking the party as a whole, most of the climbing was done in the centre of the Melville Group from Moby Dick to Proteus. But there were 'expeditions' to the Group's northern and eastern outliers, Butters and Ahab, Typee and Omoo. Three parties also visited the Westfall Group.

Speaking for myself it wasn't until the last day of all that I packed in my best climb. With Peter Roxburgh, an expatriate Welsh psychiatrist, I made the first ascent of the South East ridge of Whitejacket, 10,250'. It was a pleasing route which went directly up from the camp across the Melville Glacier and then straight up fifteen hundred feet of exposed slabs which formed the top edge of one of the walls I mentioned earlier. The standard was very consistent mild Grade IV—good rock covered in black lichen, small holds and rare belays, but not as steep as it looks from the valley. We started at six and returned in time for supper after an exhilarating day.

Altogether I found it a superbly enjoyable holiday devoid of the grind and discomfort we usually endure in the mountains. I've never climbed so much in such a short time. Even though I came straight from sea level I felt none of the effects of altitude that I experience every year in the Alps. Perhaps ten and a half thousand is the ideal height for a mountain; all the grandeur and beauty with none of the headaches and heart-pounding you get (well, I get!) at thirteen thousand feet. Thank you, Alpine Club of Canada, I hope to come again.

THE HIGH TATRA

Ernst Sondheimer

The High Tatra is a small group of mountains forming the highest part of the Carpathian range and lying between Czechoslovakia and Poland, about 350 miles east of Prague. The Carpathians for the most part consist of rounded and wooded hills, but the Tatra is composed of steep and rugged granite crags which rise from the plain without intervening foothills and—apart from the absence of glaciers—have all the character of a true alpine mountain region. The highest point rises to 2655 m, and the range is about 20 miles in length and 12 miles or so across. To the east there is a lower limestone range—the Belanské Tatry mountains—which is particularly rich in flowers. The whole area is a National Park where conservation is taken seriously and the flora and fauna, of both the human and animal kind, are strictly (but not unpleasantly) controlled. The highest mountains, and the main climbing areas, are on the Czechoslovak side of the range. Here, on the southern flanks of the mountains, there are a number of resorts which are being developed for summer and winter tourism. A small electric train runs between these places and connects them with the main railway line from Prague which passes through the valley to the south.



Vel'ká Studená Dolina

Photo by Ernst Sondheimer

In the summer of 1973 a colleague of mine, keen on mathematics, walking and Eastern Europe, suggested that a conference in Prague might well be combined with a visit to the Tatra. But our knowledge of the area was minimal, and up-to-date information, suitable for people travelling under their own steam, proved hard to get. Study of ancient journal articles whetted our appetites, but we suspected that much might have changed since pre-war days. Then during the winter, browsing through mountain journals, I spotted a letter from a young Czech seeking contact with British mountaineers. This was what we needed: my letter produced a cordial reply, the arrival of an English-language guidebook to the region, and an offer to accompany us there in the summer! That settled it; we were going. Our new friend proved most helpful with the planning, not least in the matter of finding accommodation. This, we discovered, is scarce and heavily booked up, so that local knowledge and influence were clearly essential. By late June all preparations were complete and I found myself in the train, contemplating three nights *en route* to our agreed meeting place and wondering with mild apprehension how it would all work out.

To travel to the Tatra by train one first goes to Stuttgart, from where there is an overnight coach to Prague. My itinerary allowed one day for sight-seeing in that city—it was as beautiful as the descriptions make out, and a good place in which to stroll about and absorb the atmosphere. After another overnight journey I emerged from the train to get my first glimpse of the mountains, towering over the pinewoods and looking impressive in the early morning sunshine. The electric train and a short march through the woods brought me to the mountain hotel Popradské Pleso, on a picturesque lake surrounded by pine trees, where the company was already assembled and breakfast was waiting. We spent five days here exploring the western part of the range before moving to our second base at Dolný Smokovec, convenient for the eastern valleys and the Belanské Tatry range. At Popradské Pleso there were six of us (two Czech couples and the British pair), sharing one large room in which self-cooking was possible, and one could also go to have meals in the restaurant below. We found that, at the tourist rate of exchange, costs were quite reasonable, in spite of a 50% surcharge on room prices for foreigners, and the food was simple and agreeable—the girls in the party were experts at constructing elaborate sandwiches in which excellent fresh tomatoes and yellow peppers were a tasty feature.

I had come to the Tatra in the hope of somehow fitting in a modest rock-climb or two, but—as so often—this ambition was to remain unfulfilled; a pity, as the region is obviously a fine climbing area, with routes of all standards and pleasantly short approaches. In fact our explorations were restricted by deep snow at the higher levels (there had been exceptionally large and late snowfalls in the spring); also the weather was declared too unsettled to make climbing possible. We knew that Tatra weather has a reputation for instability; we found in fact that good and bad days alternated, with rapid changes from hot sunshine to chilly rain and fog.

It seems clear that serious climbers—unless they have local contacts—have to make arrangements through climbers' organisations. I can only tell

them that an up-to-date climbers' guidebook exists, but is in Czech and copies are hard to come by, and—as regards accommodation—that huts are scarce and camp sites too far removed from the main climbs, so that climbers tend to stay in bivouac shelters which are basically caves under the rocks; local knowledge is needed to locate these.

Thus our activities (except for a little bouldering) were confined to mountain walking—agreeable enough and full of scenic and botanical interest. Most of the summits can be reached on good paths and without much strain: in 3 to 4 hours you are usually on top. For the record, we ascended the peaks of Furkotský štít, Kôprovský štít and Rysy, walked up the valleys called Malá studená dolina and Vel'ká studená dolina (each of which has a hut at its head), and spent a day photographing flowers in the Belanské Tatry range. Rysy is a popular mountain; from the summit you can look down into Poland—and you can also admire a large bronze plaque of Lenin commemorating the great man's ascent in 1913. Another day was spent, in fierce wind and rain, battling along the Magistrála, a broad path which runs along the whole southern edge of the range. We also inspected a 'symbolic cemetery', in a grand and gloomy setting, containing memorials to Czechoslovak mountaineers who had died in mountains all over the world.

My chief memories of our wanderings are of picturesque, heavily wooded valleys, much water everywhere—streams, waterfalls and tarns (the so-called 'eyes of the sea')—and glimpses of spectacular pinnacles and ridges looming out of the mist. I cannot give an expert account of wildlife and plants, but we undoubtedly heard marmots and saw chamois, one eagle and—close to our hotel—two nutcrackers (*nucifraga caryocatactes*). Amongst trees the limba fir was a striking feature, rising from an undergrowth of the notorious dwarf pine which covers the hillside with impenetrable thickets. Amongst flowers the following stand out in my memory: *soldanella carpatica* growing in profusion in the meadows, and vivid sheets of *primula minima* higher up; various kinds of orchid; and—on the ridge of the Belanské Tatry mountains—extensive mats of *dryas octopetala* in full flower and very beautiful specimens of *anemone narcissiflora*.

It should finally be recorded that our Czech friends proved utterly delightful company. Animated conversation went on non-stop, in English intermixed with bits of German; for the benefit of the girls our most banal observations were immediately translated into Czech and eagerly absorbed. When we eventually tired of discussing the affairs of the world and matters of deep philosophy, we turned to the game of bridge which was taken up with enthusiasm, the final rubbers being fought out throughout the night on the train journey home. As we parted from our new friends we felt that, as a change from the Alps, it had been an experience of a very special kind. Plans are germinating for the next visit.

A HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Oliver St. John

Owing to unusual circumstances, I shall have been on 5 'holidays' to the Alps this year, but for the first time in over 25 years I have not climbed a single peak. I have invested in the future however in the hope of providing better opportunities henceforth. I have never climbed from hotels: I have invariably used huts, tents or my motorised caravan, to keep as close as possible to where the action starts. So, to cut a long story short, I sought out and bought my own base in the mountains, from which I hope to be able to ski and climb in the years ahead.

For a long time I had considered buying a country cottage, but the problems seemed too great, the prices were too high and chances were let slip. Finally, in July 1973, we spent a long week in the Aosta valley in Northern Italy, and on the very last day we found our house, in a small hamlet about 8 miles down the main road from Courmayeur.

It was solidly built of stone, with a roof of stone slabs, and it seemed structurally sound, though lacking any services. As all the necessary facilities were nearby, this was not a serious problem, so we rashly shook hands solemnly and committed ourselves. For a long time nothing happened. Dealings with the Bank of England were finally concluded, the incredible legal procedures completed, and planning permission obtained on the basis of a sketch and two small photos showing it in its dilapidated state. This was May 1974 and we optimistically accepted assurances that the basic conversion would be completed for our holiday in July.

We duly arrived, fortunately with a large party, to find that nothing had been done at all: no water, drains or electricity. After an initial reaction to turn tail and run, we settled with a local stonemason to do the initial work on condition that we did the labouring. He was to be paid at an hourly rate, and thought it should take about a fortnight. In fact, he was about right, and apart from some procrastination on the part of the plumber, a miraculous change was made. The old wooden floors were replaced with concrete, walls were knocked down and new partitions built and plastered, new windows cut in the 24" stone walls and the whole outside transformed. A small plot nearby on the hillside was cut out and levelled to take two vehicles, as some form of transport is really essential.

We camped on site, encouraged and helped by our neighbours at critical stages, as well as by the helpful local authorities. The stonemason worked a 12-hour day, starting at 6 am and expected the mortar or plaster to be already mixed when he arrived.

Each time we drive out in our Microbus, it is loaded up with equipment and materials, a great saving when the Dollar Premium stands at about 75%. At Easter it was the sanitary fittings, in July and August (I returned

to the Office for three weeks, leaving my wife and family out there) it was the kitchen units, in knock-down form, including the kitchen sink. By now, following a week's visit coinciding with the school half-term, we have a fully operational kitchen and bathroom and have finished the electrical installation to the point where we have lights in every room and a ring main with plenty of sockets. Cooking is by gas from a cylinder. We have also persuaded the plumber to go ahead with a heating system and we trust, when we next go, at Christmas for some skiing, that we shall be warm enough to enjoy it, and get some work done as well, even though we are still sleeping on mattresses on the floor.

The accommodation is quite spacious, with about 800 square feet on each floor. On the ground floor is a former stable, with a fine vaulted roof in brick, which will eventually become a games room. The main entrance is on the first floor, which now comprises a living room, kitchen, bathroom, hall and two bedrooms. The outside staircase, which was badly rotted, has been dismantled, and a hole cut through inside to give access to the barn above which is of double height. Here we eventually expect to put in hut-type accommodation with two small bunk rooms and toilet facilities. Underneath all is a cellar.

It has been an enormous challenge, with endless frustrations and disappointments. Any form of remote control is almost impossible and, in the end, it is usually a matter of doing it oneself. But we are finding help, particularly from a carpenter from a nearby village, who made the extra windows, shutters and internal doors in the local idiom, with a high degree of craftsmanship and attention to detail. Overall it is tremendously satisfying to see the progress and, because we are having to do so much ourselves, the cost has been much less than anticipated.

The idea is to use it as a holiday home for our family and friends, on the basis, not of getting a return on our investment, but of breaking even on the running costs. In due course, when all is organised, I would be glad to hear from anyone interested.

In summer, it provides a quiet retreat in the middle of a farming community of some 25 people. But the main road from Aosta up to the Mont Blanc Tunnel is only some 250 yards away, with a good, if narrow, road up to the hamlet which is kept clear even in winter. So it is a fine centre, in that there is a wealth of climbing and skiing close at hand, in France and Switzerland as well as Italy. French is spoken almost universally in the valley as a second language, an advantage to the average Englishman. The National Park is only a few miles away and should the mountains not call, one can hunt, fish, play golf or tennis, or explore the many interesting cultural and historic aspects of the Aosta Valley.

TWO ALPINE MEETS

(1) Arolla by Tony Sperry

Sixteen people appeared, mainly from tents in a field below the village, at 7.00 p.m. on Sunday, 21st July, at the Hotel Mt Collon in fine fettle for dinner and discussions. Some were ambitious and some were modest in their aims; some were fit and some had only just emerged from their sedentary hibernations. Several had just done the walk to the Col de Tsarmine for a splendid view of the inside of a cloud. The wine flowed and two factions emerged: the Dix hut ('the Cheilon north face might be in condition') faction and the Vignettes hut ('my ambition is to do the Pigne') faction. Two nights away from the valley then separated the party. The first faction found Lurette/Pleureur rather a lot and returned with exhaustion, ill-fitting boots or altitude troubles (though three of them the next day traversed the Cheilon by its most straightforward routes). The second faction covered itself with glory on the Pigne, with nearly everybody climbing L'Eveque next day.

A noticeable feature of the meet was its lack of organisation; people did what they felt like, or could find someone to go with them on. After the first attacks on the summits, there was a general splintering. Some of the Dix brigade went to the Vignettes to explore couloirs on the Petit Mt Collon (a summit of which was reached), two went up the Ruinette, and seemed to have explored large tracts of South West Switzerland by bus on the return, and a combined party thought it ought to try its luck on the Aiguilles Rouges. At this stage, an exploration was made by a party to the Col Collon, so the whole meet had become quite widely dispersed. However, the centre remained the sunny but sloping hay field below the town that had the tents on it. The weather now settled into a prolonged and very fine spell that lasted for the rest of the fortnight.

The Aiguilles Rouges proved a mixed success because the rope of three found the north peak sufficient for its skill and fitness and the rope of two didn't quite get the hang of them. There is a well-known false exit between the Central Peak and the Crête de Coq, and the gully at this point having proved to end awkwardly above the glacier, provided a precarious bivouac site. The next day, this rope retraced its steps and tried the next gully with similar results. Although the time involved on this adventure caused some concern in the village (and large expense to the two climbers), they were able to extricate themselves on the third day and return to the valley under their own steam (though one nearly had to make a third bivouac, in the woods above the camp site).

Time was now getting on and the main objective was looming into focus. The Dent Blanche. A rock-climbing party decided to approach the Cabane Rossier via the Bertol hut taking in the north peak of the Bouquetins. Support for them came via Ferpècle, with another group that wanted its glacier tour on the way home also going that way. Cloud discouraged all

but three of our multitude gathered at the Rossier from setting out on the climb of the long south ridge of the Dent Blanche. Because of the weather some of the continentals there only went part of the way, but the three persevered and arrived in reasonably good time and order at the narrow summit ridge and handed out mint cake to all and sundry in celebration. Descent was 'penible', as usual, but the promised storm didn't prove serious, so by 3 o'clock in the afternoon the meet had achieved a major objective and the climbers were safe back at the hut.

The next day the meet was over for some and the move to Zermatt had begun, but meanwhile a glorious day was granted for the return to Arolla over the Tête Blanche, with a fantastic descent from the Bertol. One member devoted to exploration spent that day above Les Haudères on some very rare mountains. (He later acted as guide for the meet's final rope on the Pigne).

So the fortnight went. A fortnight is not a long time in the High Alps, but the party was big enough to cater for most ambitions. Three weeks is better for an Alpine holiday and nearly everyone had that time available. Some of those who had come early had done the Tsa and the Petites Dents de Veisivi, some of those who stayed on did the Weisshorn or the Nadelgrat, or tried the Matterhorn (but the weather finally broke). Camping was free, and unexpectedly civilised, and Madame Pralong at the Post Office gave the meet valuable support.

(2) Meiringen by John Coales

By the select few who were there the Meiringen Meet will be remembered as well fed, thanks to Miss Glarner's ministrations at the Hotel Sauvage and the excellent packed lunches put together by Betty, Thea and Olive. Meiringen proved to be a pleasant town to stay in but was too low in altitude and too remote from the huts from the point of view of serious mountaineering.

Despite this and the weather, which, as usual, broke and became unsettled, we completed the programme as planned, with the exception of a day on the Rosenlauri rockclimbs, or rather at least one member of the Meet made the expedition on the appropriate day.

On Tuesday, André Wandfluh arrived from Kandergrund and Maurice, Mike, Bert and John had a very hot walk with him up to the Dossen hut. The last 1,000 ft. is very steep so on our first serious day it took us five hours instead of the guidebook four. The hut had no guardian but we found James Bogle, John Lawton and a friend in residence so there was a fire going and we soon had brewed up and made the soup for supper. This was just as well since there was no paraffin and not many candles. They had been up the Wellhorn and reported that it took a very long time to get across the glacier from the steep col above the hut to the Wellhornsattel. This

it proved to be, and so we only got to the Wellhornsattel before it was time to turn back.

On Friday the weather had improved so we all took the 'bus to Grimsel Hospice before setting off along the North shore of the Grimsensee to the Lauteraarhut.

Just before dawn on Saturday the men of the party set off for the Bächlistock and were within about half an hour of the summit when John had a handhold come away in a slippery gully and fell a few feet, not far enough for any serious damage but a blow on the head from a stone prevented him continuing to the summit. Bert, David and Maurice stayed with him, because we were getting short of time, while Mike and André hurried to the top. When they returned John was quite recovered and all got back to the hut at noon which enabled us to catch the last 'bus back to Meiringen.

On Monday all of us, except Maurice who had ruined his feet coming down from the Lauteraarhut, were ready for another summit so André drove Bert, Mike and John to the Berghaus on the Oberaarsee where we had lunch. We then walked across the dam and along the northern shore of the lake followed by a long, long trek up the glacier to the Oberaarhut. On Tuesday we climbed the Oberaarhorn in about 2½ hours and after lunch at the hut walked back to the Berghaus and so back to Meiringen.

Thursday saw the start of the planned assault on the Finsteraarhorn.

Mike and John met André who drove them to Grindelwald, where we took the train to Kleine Scheidegg and the Jungfrauoch. After lunch we set off in mist down the Jungfrau firn to the head of the Aletschgletscher where the mist cleared. Then over the Grünhornlücke to the Finsteraarhorn hut where we spent the night. Next morning the weather was reasonable and we set off behind a Viennese couple led by Roland Urban of Grindelwald. After a time we were passed by a lot of soldiers so there wasn't much room on the summit when we got there. We had hoped to be able to go down to the Strahlegg hut and return to Grindelwald early on Saturday but Roland Urban reported very soft and risky snow on the Agassisjoch so we changed the plan and after a very enjoyable evening and a good night's sleep we woke to thick mist so the only thing was to keep together and go down with Roland Urban and the others the 16 miles or so to the Grimsel. We set off at 6.0 a.m. and climbed the 300 m. to the Gemsluche and then to the Oberaarjoch and so down to the Berghaus which we reached at about 1.0 p.m. and got back to the hotel at 5.0 p.m. Mike was staying on for a day or two but the others had to catch a train at 8.16 p.m. for Luzern to get their sleepers home. So after an excellent dinner to celebrate Betty's birthday with a bottle of wine provided by the management, Mike helped us to the station with our luggage and saw us off. The 1974 Meet was at an end.



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ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

In a few years' time members of the A.B.M.S.A.C. will be able to judge whether the decisions taken in 1974 have had the desired effect of giving the Association a new lease of life and a change in direction. Over the last few years the activities of the Association have been broadened in the British Isles by the introduction of weekend climbing meets in Wales and the Lake District. It was felt that the majority of the members who did not live in the London area and who could not enjoy the monthly lectures and suppers would be able to come climbing. In addition the younger and more active members would be able to become involved in the activities of the Association. At the same time the familiar call for value for the apparently high subscription of the Association was answered in some measure.

From the outset the number of members attending the meets was encouraging and although a high proportion of members also belonged to their local climbing groups the feeling grew that the Association should establish a climbing base of its own and become a recognised climbing group on the British scene. All this not as a substitute for climbing in Switzerland but as a logical extension thereof.

Now in 1974 it has come to pass. The Patterdale Parish Rooms have been leased from the Church Commissioners for a period of 28 years and conversion work is currently proceeding at such a rate that by the time this Journal appears members should be able to use our new hut. The passage has not been easy as your Committee will testify. There have been the inevitable haggles over the rental to be paid and the conversions to be carried out. The planning authorities had to be won over and a builder had to be found. The ravages of inflation pushed up the cost of the conversion work to a point where the whole scheme was in jeopardy. Concurrently the appeal to members of the Association for gifts or loans to our Hut Fund proceeded slowly and it seemed that we must fall short of our target. At the eleventh hour the Tuesday Mountaineering Club asked if they could join in with us in the Hut project and offered their substantial Hut Fund. This made all the difference and so a company limited by guarantee 'The Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club Ltd.' was formed and in September 1974 the lease of the Patterdale Parish Rooms was signed.

The decision to launch into a brave new world was taken when talk of inflation-led gloom was mounting and when the Swiss franc-pound exchange rate was plumbing new depths. Both events may lead to a serious drop in the membership of the Association. Yet the Association has by its actions given a hearty vote of confidence in the future. We have laid the foundation for our growth and now it is up to us to use the hut fully and prove the decisions taken in 1974 correct.

Association Climbing Meets

The Northern Dinner Meet led by Brooke Midgley at Glenridding was the first meet of the year in February. Those attending stayed either in Beet-ham Cottage, the Fell & Rock Climbing Club hut in Patterdale or at the Glenridding Hotel. They awoke to a bright unseasonably warm day and were later seen on High Street and Helvellyn as well as fiercer places. The guest speaker at dinner was Colin Mortlock who spoke on the educational aspects of mountaineering. Sunday proved to be a more normal lakeland day and climbing was restricted to the lower crags.

Despite the petrol crisis the Easter Meet at Braemar led by Alasdair Andrews was a very successful meet. Accommodation was provided by the Fife Arms Hotel and the Cairngorm Club cottage at Muir of Inverey. In all 16 members and friends took part and parties were out on the hills each day devouring Munros with great gusto. We were very fortunate with the weather apart from the first day when the meet leader, probably due to overfamiliarity with the area, led a party in dense mist in the opposite direction to that in which they should have been travelling. Fortunately we soon discovered and corrected our error.

My fondest memory of the meet is of Walter Kirstein dressed like a Cooks Tour on the approach march to Everest in plastic mac, walking stick and crampons pounding up an icy slope inches behind me saying 'Please forgive my slow pace but I am 77 years of age and have just recovered from three weeks in bed with flu, and I hope that I am not keeping you back' whilst I, a mere stripling of less than half his age, was red in the face and peching like a cuddly (breathing like a horse). Meanwhile our other 70 year old, David Riddell, forged ahead chatting to Frank Solari about the merits of 1927 Bugattis and other vehicles of the same vintage. In the main snow conditions were not suitable for snow and ice climbing but the following Munros were climbed (excluding tops): Glas Maol, Broad Cairn, Lochnagar, Carn a'Choire Bhoidheach, Carn an t-Sagairt Mor, Beinn a'Bhuird, Ben Macdhui, Beinn Bhrotain and Cairn Toul.

The Welsh meet led by Richard Coatsworth was held in May of this year at Glan Dena, the Midland Association of Mountaineers' comfortable hut on the shores of Llyn Ogwen. About 20 members and wives had a pleasant weekend in the hills but although ropes were taken out no rock climbing was undertaken. The weather was windy and wet at times but this did not deter some members having a full 12 hours out on Saturday and a shorter day on Sunday stretching well into the evening. It is believed that members ascended all the 3000 foot peaks during the weekend with the possible exception of one. Dinner in the hut on Saturday night was à la Elizabeth Coatsworth.

In June John Kemsley led a meet at Helmsley with the Feversham Arms as a base. This was well supported with 21 members and guests joining in some or all the stages of a walk along the western escarpment of the North Yorkshire moors and back via Rievaulx Abbey. On the Sunday the main party followed the northern escarpment and braved a summer hail-

storm and the wrath of a farmer who contested the right of way along a signposted footpath whilst smaller groups explored their own particular interests.

The Alpine meets in Arolla and Meiringen are described elsewhere in the journal.

The Langdale Meet in October was as usual led by Walt Unsworth. Saturday presented us with one of the few reasonable days of what was mostly a wet summer and parties were eager for the hills. Enthusiasm was dampened by the meet leader's suggestion that a walk to Glaramara was just the right thing for such a day. Glaramara from Langdale? The meet leader's band reduced considerably, most members defecting to a mass assault on Scafell Pike. Brooke Midgely, with conflicting loyalty, did both Scafell and Glaramara aided by the leader's expert advice. In consequence he nearly missed his dinner.

The informal dinner was this year held at the Salutation, where the bar facilities proved superior to those of previous occasions. The Sunday proved wet and uncompromising and there was little to do except collect the fees and lock up the hut. This may well prove the last of the annual Langdale meets in October as moves are afoot to transfer the whole thing to Patterdale, where one hopes they will be equally successful.

London Lectures

The monthly series of lectures followed the usual pattern and were usually attended by 30-40 people.

Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held immediately prior to the Annual Dinner and the following officers were elected:

As President:

M. Bennett

As Vice President:

J. S. Whyte

As New Members' Secretary:

D. J. Abbott

As Meets' Secretary:

A. Strawther

For the Committee:

P. V. Andrews

S. M. Freeman

In Place of:

D. G. Lambley

Rev. F. L. Jenkins

J. E. Jesson

S. N. Beare

Wing Cdr. H. D. Archer

D. E. Charity

A. N. Sperryn
F. E. Smith
J. E. Jesson
S. N. Beare

F. P. French
R. A. Coatsworth
J. S. Whyte
D. J. Abbott

After discussion two resolutions were passed.

1. That this meeting approves the action taken by the Committee with regard to the Patterdale Hut as set out in the September circular from the President to all Members.
2. That the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club be approached with a view to obtaining a reduced subscription for Association Members by foregoing the receipt of Les Alpes.

The Annual Dinner

The Connaught Rooms, Kingsway, London was again the venue for the Annual Dinner on 20th November, 1974. The guests of the Association were:

Dr. A. Weitnauer (Swiss Ambassador)
D. Baldock (Climbers' Club)
G. Hall (Tuesday Climbing Club)
Miss D. Lee (Ladies' Alpine Club)
Sir Jack Longland (Alpine Club)
R. Serex (First Secretary, Swiss Embassy)
G. Unseld (Swiss National Tourist Office)

The after dinner speeches followed the usual pattern and this year the toast of the Swiss Confederation was proposed by Dr. Arthur Barton. He recalled that he has been to the Alps in each of the last 27 years and in that time he has had the pleasure of introducing 10 and his 11 nephews to the high hills.

The Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Arnold Weitnauer, replied to the toast and said how pleased he was that we had managed to have our Annual Dinner on a night that did not clash with H.M. The Queen's reception for the Diplomatic Corps. Dr. Weitnauer suggested that in our eyes he as a Swiss who did not climb or ski must be rather odd. He explained that he had grown up in Basle which is the only major city in Switzerland from which the Alps cannot be seen. In consequence his mountain pleasures came from the lower mountains which could be seen—the Jura and the Vosges.

After a brief interval our President, Derek Lambley, proposed the toast of the Association. He recalled an exciting year in the history of the A.B.M.S.A.C. which included the usual programme of climbing meets and the progress towards our own hut in the Lake District. He mentioned the help of the Tuesday Climbing Club and the sad recent death of George Starkey. He was pleased to be able to say in the presence of Mrs. Mary Starkey that it had been agreed that our hut would be known as the George Starkey A.B.M.S.A.C. Hut. He thanked all his officers and committee members who had helped him during his Presidential term. Graham

Daniels proposed the toast of the Guests and Kindred Clubs and Sir Jack Longland replied. He commented on the climbing scene generally and remarked that a little less ballyhoo and tortured introspection and adoration of climbing idols might lead to a healthier spirit of comradeship in the hills.

The Library

Pre-occupation with other matters has resulted in the library being rather neglected this year so far as new acquisitions are concerned. There is also an appreciable backlog of periodicals (including the Journal) waiting to be bound, and binding has now become very expensive. If there are any amateur binders among our members who feel they might be able to contribute to the binding of periodicals or to the repairing of some of the older books, their help would be very much appreciated.

Obituaries

SIR ARNOLD LUNN

With the passing of Sir Arnold Lunn the Association has lost its last surviving founder-member and also one of the most eminent members of the mountaineering and skiing community of this century.

Sir Arnold was known far beyond the borders of England and was much loved by the Swiss, who considered him, rightly, one of their truest friends. He loved the mountains, especially the Swiss ones, and the Swiss people. In his youth he was a great skimountaineer and made the first ski ascents of the Dome and the Eiger. He was a very gifted man, a man of great sincerity and of an inexhaustible energy. He put his gifts to very good use. British skiing life was practically created by Sir Arnold. With his friends he founded a number of clubs, the Oxford University Mountaineering Club, the Ski Club of Great Britain, the Alpine Ski Club and a bit later the Kandahar Club, celebrating its 50th anniversary whilst these lines are being written.

For more than half a century Sir Arnold was the editor of the British Ski Yearbook and later of Ski survey, the present journal of the Ski Club of Great Britain. One would think a man that closely connected with British skiing and the British attitude to it might be rather restricted in his outlook towards continental standards and ways. Far from it; all his books—50 alone about skiing and mountains, show an understanding of the other, the foreign person which is amazing.

However, in all his dealings with other nations as the British representative he made it clear that 'the racers meet not as representatives of nations, but as members of the skiing brotherhood. They race not to prove that one political system or school is superior to a rival system or school, but to prove that they are faster downhill than their rivals.' (quoted from:

'Switzerland and the Swiss'). Sir Arnold was the most loyal of friends; when Hannes Schneider was arrested, he left no stone unturned until he had managed to get him free. Sir Arnold revolutionised skiracing and introduced the modern slalom; he will be remembered not only as a wonderful lecturer and writer but also as the upright and brilliant man he was. W. K.

JACK SIMS

Actively interested in outdoor pursuits including chiefly athletics and rowing Jack Sims did not succumb to the lure of Mountaineering until relatively late in life when he climbed in Zermatt, the Oberland and the Dauphiné regions as well as British hills.

This year a nostalgic return to India and Nepal saw him on the Everest Trek where he fell victim to a respiratory infection midway through the holiday and although returning to Kathmandu for hospital treatment he did not recover and was buried in the British Cemetery there in sight of the hills he enjoyed.

The subsequent gathering of some 200 friends at the service held at St. Giles, Cripplegate testified to the wide range of interests which he pursued with characteristic vigour. Reticent, reliable and modest, he will be missed in many circles. M. A. W.

GEORGE STARKEY

With the death of George Starkey the A.B.M. has lost one who played, during a period of more than forty years, an outstanding rôle in all its activities.

George became a member in 1935 but had joined the S.A.C. some years before. In this time before the war many of his best climbs are recorded, but to mention a few:— the traverse of the Grand and Petit Drus, the Mer de Glace face of the Grepon and the seventh ascent of the Mayer-Dibona route on the Requin. In all of these he climbed, as almost always throughout his life, with his wife Mary.

The war years were inevitably difficult ones for the Association but the Easter Meets were carried on as usual in the Lakes and Wales. They owed not a little to his presence, readiness to give his help and encouragement to all and, even more important, to take the lead in the climbing. But it was during the immediate post war period that George really became the Association's anchor man. It was obviously most important that, with the re-opening of the Alps for climbing, Summer Meets should take their place alongside the Easter Meets but it was not obvious how these could be successfully organised. Travel allowances were minimal, the lowest ebb being reached when these were cut to £35, if one's memory can be relied upon. The cost of guides, though not excessive, created a big problem for the impecunious British. Our loyalties to Switzerland had, for the time being, to be sacrificed to the economic appeal of Austria, where costs were considerably lower than in Switzerland. One can well wonder where we should have been without George Starkey, or someone of his rare calibre, to organise the climbs, make the utmost possible use of all potential leaders in our parties combined with the smallest number of guides and above all to lead himself in his always confidence inspiring

way, whether on rock, snow or ice. As the years passed these problems became less difficult but so many of our younger (or, if not always all the young, at any rate not very experienced) members must look back, as does the writer of these notes, with gratitude to George's help and confidence.

Apart from all these hitherto mainly unsung but not unhonoured activities the name of George Starkey appears impressively frequently in the list of Officers since the formation of the Association. From 1949 to 1956 he was one of the two joint Hon. Secretaries. He became President in 1957 and was thus Jubilee President in 1959, his last year in office. In 1965 a new office was created, Hon. New Members' Secretary, in order to ease the burden carried so generously by the Swiss National Tourist Office. George was the first to take this office and held it till 1968. Finally in 1970 he was honoured by being included among the small number of Honorary Members.

George Starkey died, as one feels sure he would have wished, quite suddenly after a happy day spent with Mary on the fells above Patterdale. Our loss as an Association and the loss of all our many members who were privileged to know him well and climb with him is indeed a sad one. His wife Mary played no small part herself in all his long and active life in the A.B.M. and our very real sympathy is with her in her great loss.

F. R. C.

It is with regret that we also record the deaths of the following members:

D. McArthur
John Grey Broadbent
T. L. Forbes
I. V. Hazard

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ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS 1973-74

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ended 30th September 1974

	1974	1973
<i>Income from Members</i>		
Subscriptions (Note 1)	728	566
Entrance Fees	49	44
Life Membership Credit	46	47
Profit on Sale of Ties	5	—
Insurance Commissions	28	22
	<u>856</u>	<u>679</u>
 <i>Less: Expenditure</i>		
Hire of Rooms	100	100
Journal (Note 2)	378	372
Library	—	18
Printing, Postage etc. SNT0	164	123
Printing, Postage etc. Association	122	56
Hut Appeal Costs	216	—
Insurance	17	21
Entertainment	40	40
Visit of Swiss Climbers	(25)	113
BMC Subscription	73	80
Lecture Expenses	3	15
Sundries	6	16
Depreciation, New Projector	33	33
	<u>1,127</u>	<u>987</u>
	(271)	(308)
 <i>Add: Investment Income:-</i>		
Association Investments (Gross)	114	106
Building Society Interest	72	62
Bank Deposit Interest	—	—
	<u>186</u>	<u>168</u>
 <i>Less: Taxation (Note 3)</i>	 32	 40
	<u>154</u>	<u>128</u>
 <i>Excess of Expenditure over Income</i>	 £ (117)	 £ (180)

BALANCE SHEET as at 30th September, 1974

	1974	1973
<i>FIXED ASSETS (Note 4)</i>		
Projector (N.S. Finzi Bequest)	66	99
Equipment at Swiss Tourist Office	1	1
<i>INVESTMENTS at cost (Note 5)</i>	1,872	1,872
 <i>CURRENT ASSETS</i>		
Stock of Ties at Cost	29	42
Debtors	217	113
Cash on Deposit - Bank	—	1
Building Society	909	989
Cash at Bank	51	150
	<u>1,206</u>	<u>1,295</u>
 <i>Deduct: CURRENT LIABILITIES</i>		
Creditors	186	154
Subscriptions in Advance	159	167
	<u>345</u>	<u>321</u>
 <i>NET CURRENT ASSETS</i>	 861	 974
	<u>£2,800</u>	<u>£2,946</u>
 <i>SOURCES OF FINANCE</i>		
<i>LIFE MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNT</i>	874	903
 <i>ACCUMULATED REVENUE ACCOUNT</i>		
Balance at 30th September, 1973	1,943	
<i>Less: Excess of Expenditure over Income</i>	117	
	<u>1,826</u>	1,943
 <i>N. S. FINZI BEQUEST</i>	 100	 100
	<u>£2,800</u>	<u>£2,946</u>

I have examined the books and vouchers of the Association and report that the above accounts are in accordance therewith.

17th November, 1974

Signed A. H. Hart, Hon. Auditor

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. Subscriptions

Income from this source is made up as follows:-	1974	1973
Subscriptions—Town Members	290	317
Subscriptions—Country Members	336	363
Surplus on Flat rate of Subscription levied against the sterling equivalent of Subscriptions due to the Swiss Sections of the S.A.C. (1973 Deficit)	86	(114)
Miscellaneous	16	—
	<u>£728</u>	<u>£566</u>

2. Journal

Cost of the journal is made up as follows:-	1974	1973
Printing	360	333
Despatch cost and other expenses	52	54
	<u>412</u>	<u>387</u>
Less: Advertising Revenue	34	15
	<u>£378</u>	<u>£372</u>

3. Taxation

The Association is liable to Corporation Tax on its income from outside sources.

4. Fixed Assets

	Cost	Depreciation to date
New Projector (N.S. Finzi Bequest)	166	100
Equipment at Swiss National Tourist Office	80	79

5. Investments

These are as follows:

£1,000 4½% Agricultural Mortgage Corporation Deb. Stock 1977/82
 1,080 Brunner Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p
 710 London Scottish American Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p

Cost of these holdings was £1,872. Aggregate market value at 30th September 1974 was £1,219 (1973 £2,202)

6. Patterdale Hut Fund

Contributions to the Hut Fund which by 30th September 1974 amounted to £4,756 have not been included in these Accounts.

MEMBERS' CLIMBS

Jane & Ken Baldry

Scafell Pike on New Year's Day makes a good start to a year. In February, we went to Obergurgl to ski for the first time. We would recommend any beginner to spend a lot of time on a plastic slope first as it helped enormously. Good weather and a gold gong for Ken in the beginner's races crowned a new mountain experience.

In September, we walked round the Berner Oberland. Starting from Grindelwald, we headed for Faffleralp in the Lotschenthal via Wengen, Murren, Griesalp, Kandersteg, Lammerenhutte, Montana and Leukerbad. There was new, wet snow on the Sefinenfurka and Hohturli passes between Murren and Kandersteg. The interesting mixed geology here shows clearly in the vegetation, with lime-hating Arnika surviving in essentially limestone country. The bunkhouse at Griesalp was the only grotty accommodation on the trip. In Kandersteg, the cattle and peasants, both in full-dress, were coming off the summer pastures. The herd-queens wore hats with sprigs of fir tied on.

Ignore the West Col guide, the Lammerenhutte is now very posh, with separate dormitories for those getting up at different times and a guardian who chases the trippers off to bed at 9.30. From here, we traversed the Wildstrubel in a storm so no view and we were too exhausted to take advantage of the summer skiing on the weird Plaine Morte Glacier. Montana must have an odd, chilly local climate for the pastures look poor and black hill cattle are run. The vast amount of skiing uplift cuts the views up with its wires.

The hoheweg to Leukerbad reveals gradually improving pastures into the rich Dala valley. This path is not marked completely on LK50 but well waymarked. Leukerbad was the only village with many visitors, mainly for the cure. We always have trouble getting a bed there.

The last pass was the Resti into the Lotschenthal. This is tiring but has a magnificent view along the valley from the hause. There are only six hotels in the valley as agriculture is the prosperity of its people. It's a lovely place to walk but the skiing is quite trivial. When we reached Faffleralp, we had 200 miles and 38,000 feet behind us. On rest days during the walk, we had visited the Gleckstein and Schilthorn huts and the Gasterntal.

On the way back, we visited the Basel Kunstmuseum, a splendid collection with no rubbish in it. Like good tourists, we boated on the Rhine and listened to the trombonists on the Cathedral towers. Jane's collection of carefully recorded alpine flower photos has expanded considerably, with many variations of species from different environments. The geological LK25s in the Geological Museum at South Kensington are helpful here.

This was a very satisfying year in the fells.

Paddy Boulter

In February we went back to Lenzerheide and had excellent skiing with some easy day tours in beautiful snow. The Parpaner Rothorn and Schwarzhorn were the best tops that we did with fine runs down to the village.

Easter was spent in North Wales and we made a determined effort to avoid people. As usual the Carneddau and the Nantlle ridge gave good value. Soon after, a medical meeting held in Inverness provided an excuse for a couple of days in the Cairngorms in rather wintry weather—however Carn Ban Mhor and Meall Dubhag were ticked off the Munro list and the Glen Feshie herd of well over 100 red deer made a dramatic appearance through a snow shower.

Our holiday in the summer had to be early and rather brief and we just could not get to the Alps so we spent late June with some of the family in Scotland. Mary and I started at Rodono Hotel at St. Mary's Loch and had two days in the Border Hills. As usual the hills were deserted and very lovely—this is not the most dramatic hill walking in Britain but there is nothing more rewarding and lonely. Next we went up via Drumochter and climbed Geal Carn on our way to the Cairngorms. A second good pub was found at Lynwilg and we did the Cairngorm—Cairn Lochan—Creag an Leath Choin round in perfect conditions. The real treat of the whole holiday was our few days on the Isle of Harris. This island is very lovely, hilly and peppered with lochans. We camped at Drinishader on the east coast and climbed each day. We did the Clisham a couple of times—once by the long ridge walk over Mulla fo Dheas and Mulla fo Thuath and down to Bunavenadar. The Clisham is the highest hill in the outer Hebrides and has really outstanding views of the long golden sandy beaches on the west coast of the island with an endless line of isles down as far as South Uist and of course Skye and the mainland hills make a dramatic skyline across the Minch. The only thing missing was the view of St. Kilda which resolutely failed to appear despite several pilgrimages to hill tops at various times of day. Harris had hardly changed in the 28 years since we had been there last. The roads are better and there is a drive on and off car ferry but few people and very little traffic. A little gentle Munro bagging was done in Kintail and Glencoe on our way back to the south.

As a late autumn bonus we had three days in the Alps on our way back from a conference in Florence. For anyone who likes middle sized (and middle aged) mountains the Alps of Haute Provence have a lot to offer. On the spur of the moment we went over the Col de Larche from Cuneo and found a splendid and very cheap hotel. This was the Hotel des Alpes at Barcelonnette in the Ubaye. Superb food, a comfortable room and an extremely reasonable bill put it firmly on our revisit list—that is if they will have us—our car burglar alarm went off at midnight and woke the whole village before it woke us. From this nice place there is a great choice of hills in the 2,500-3,000 metre range with good access by the roads over the Cois de Larche, de Vars, d'Allos and de La Cayolle. The weather was clear, extremely cold and as everywhere in Europe this autumn there was

a lot of snow very early. Our three days were capital value for late October and we did six good tops.

The rest of the year has been fairly pedestrian. We have had a series of week-ends away in mid Wales, north Wales and the Lake District and have done a lot of walking, a reasonable bit of scrambling but nothing at all dramatic.

G. R. E. Brooke

In April I spent several days in Rannoch visiting Schiehallion and other neighbouring heights and then moved to Aviemore from where I made the traverse of Cairngorm and Cairn Lochan, followed by a long day up Glen Einich to Braeriach and Cairn Toul.

In July from Chamonix with Michel Bellin Aiguille de l'M normal route, traverse of Aiguille des Petits Charmoz, Aiguille du Peigne by S.W. arete.

Hamish M. Brown

Most of March, 1974 was spent winter climbing and ski-touring in the Polish Tatras which receive surprisingly few visitors from the west despite enthusiastic reports from those that go. Possibly the impossible-looking names have something to do with it. Mieguszowiecki may have as long, hard and good routes as anything in the west but. . . .

It is a small region, an enclave almost, in the larger hunk of Carpathians owned by Czechoslovakia but offering dramatic contrasts: jagged crests, deep set lakes, pine forests, granite ridges, limestone faces, Skye-ridges or forest tracks—very much something for everyone, and at prices the west cannot match. We spent about £80 for the visit.

We had some straight climbing, of course, but were chiefly there to make ascents *mit ski*—the highlight of that being a three-day traverse of the Western Tatras, over 15,000 ft. of ascent with a score of pleasant peaks passed. Rysy at 2499 metres is the highest Polish summit. It gave an enjoyable ascent through dramatic scenery—and a 3000 ft. bum slide off!

Accommodation in the huge chalet huts at forest level was a delight: the people are very hospitable and any group would be welcomed. Much of the restriction the ordinary tourist faces, and the expense, can be overcome if an official invitation is offered.

This is beautiful country and refreshingly different. I'd be happy to pass on information to anyone interested.

The Tatras gave the only overseas visit—squeezed in at the end of the preparations and before the start of 'The Long Walk': a single trip over all the Munros (Scotland's 279 three thousanders). This took 112 days



Chocholowska Valley below High Tatras, Poland

Photo by: Donald Mill

(April 4-July 24) over 1639 miles and 449,000 ft. of ascent. It's been fairly well publicised in the climbing magazines, so no need of details here. Worth an Alps season!

Now working freelance at anything to do with mountains, travel and writing Hamish runs regular holiday courses over the popular periods besides some for other organisations.

Ski-ing, canoe-ing, sailing on the 'Captain Scott' (our biggest training ship) all helped make the last year a busy one. An interesting development has been 'tours' for older people who want to be off the beaten track, off season, and explore Scotland with expert guidance—with of course some hill activities. In 1976 hope to have parties in Morocco again to revisit the High Atlas (7th time!). Any A.B.M. folk interested would naturally receive special treatment—so be warned!

A. E. Burke

After a lazy winter Neil Hawksworth and I went to Skye during Whitsun. After a day 'getting fit' doing the round of Coire Lagan we took the car round to Sligachan and did the traverse of the main Cuillin ridge. A long day when one isn't fit! The next seven weekends were spent getting into condition for the Alps. Living close to the Peak District I was able to

work out a circuit which involved five thousand feet of ascent without travelling too great a distance. We walked this route each Sunday carrying a heavy load and completed the day by climbing twenty or so routes on Stanage or one of the other gritstone edges. I spent four weeks in Zermatt working as an instructor teaching Alpine techniques to small groups and acting as guide on the 4,000 metre peaks. Our best day was on the Zinal Rothorn when 3 instructors took 12 clients to the summit. On another occasion I climbed the Dufourspitze with Brian Finlayson the Scottish fell runner. Perhaps climbed is the wrong word—we found ourselves on the summit ridge 1½ hours ahead of guide book time. Brian's idea of a rest day was to go for a wee run. On one occasion he ran from the Zermatt station to the Hörnli hut in just over one hour! A week after arriving home he ran in the Ben Nevis fell race gaining second place. This involves running from the car park to the summit of the Ben and back. His time was 1 hr. 31 mins.! Obviously his alpine training just wasn't good enough!

R. A. Coatsworth

The year got off to a bad start with an eye injury caused by wind blown Millstone grit in Derbyshire in January. February saw us in Arrochar and Glencoe for a most successful long weekend which was the forerunner of satisfactory weekends spent in the Lakes and Wales.

The summer was soon upon us without holiday plans formed but a quick telephone call from Tony Sperryn decided us on the Arolla meet. I arrived mentally unfit and following some good tramps to the Col de Tsamine and the Pas de Chevre, decided to train on the Pigne d'Arolla, which Elizabeth also ascended. Later, after climbing L'Eveque we aimed for the Aiguille Rouge but here the lack of fitness really showed. We stalled after the North Peak and after a rest aimed for Dent Blanche which was duly climbed on one of the poorest days of the holiday. This marked the end of the meet proper but Tony persuaded me to go round to Zermatt to try the Weisshorn which I duly accepted. The hut was rather full—44 in a dortoir for 20—due to the good weather than weekend. However less than a third of those in the hut climbed to the summit that day, the English being the slowest party as usual. A storm on the descent fired a warning shot but although the Matterhorn was beckoning still we were tired and my holiday was at an end.

W. A. Comstive

Lack of snow was again a feature of last winter in The Lake District. Most of us in this area have despaired of ever having a hard winter again, particularly if the weather experts prophesies are correct. Those members who attended the Northern Dinner Meet in February expecting some snow were disappointed, but the lack of it was compensated to some extent by the good weather on the Saturday. Based at Beetham Cottage I was in the party which traversed High Street, Thornthwaite Crag and John Bells

Banner with two elder brethren who, at the outset, told us to—'go ahead' and they would catch us up. Needless to say they both steamed round with the fittest of us and at the end of the day were in the forefront of the charge back to Beetham Cottage from Hartsop Dodd.

The Spring Bank Holiday was traditionally spent in Scotland with the family in a rented cottage on the shores of Loch Fyne. We explored the surrounding hills and on one perfect day bagged two Munros in the Arrocher Alps, Ben Ime and its neighbour Ben Narnain. We were fortunate in having the hills to ourselves and the views all round were magnificent.

Our main holiday was spent with the family in Germany staying with friends at Neubaldham south east of Munich. We spent torrid days in a new swimming pool at Graffing and one week in a farmhouse at Berchtesgarden. We had our eyes on the Watzmann but the weather was wet most of the time. In between gazing at the mountains we visited the Fuhrer Bunker and other earthworks at Obersalzburg. Rather than pay the extortionate fare we donned boots and rucksacks and walked up the Kelstein to take the view from Hitlers former tea house. We might as well have paid the bus fare as we paid super-extortionate prices for two coffees and two ices in the splendour of what was once The Fuhrer's study.

Enid and I attended most F & RCC meets in the Lake District and Wales. The traditional meet in Langdale in October was most enjoyable and on the Saturday I traversed the main peaks at the head of the valley from Bliscoe to Stake Pass with four members. On top of Bowfell we learned of the marriage of the Meets Secretary with whom we exchanged a few words. I nearly ended on all fours after a race against the clock down Mickleden only to be told by the Secretary on arrival at R.L.H. that the Hut Sub-Committee meeting had been cancelled.

N. M. Davison

Fine autumn weather enabled the climbing of the Frieheit S.Wand (Alpstien) and Plattenwand direkt, Kl. Verschneidung, on Brüggler above Näfels. New Year, Ski-ing at Andermatt with runs from Gemsstock via Guspistal and unteralptal.

Feb./May. Ski touring. During a week piste bashing a solo ski tour from Cassons Grat to Piz Sardona. In bad snow conditions to Leitschachut from Arnisee (Cable car, Amsteg-Arni). From hut to Kronten via Sasspass, Krontenlucke with run down to Krontenhut in a Fohn storm. Next day with better snow down to Erstfeld Cavardirashut via Piz Ault. Next day over Brunnifirn to Oberalpstock then over the Staldenfirn into Maderanertal. Gemsfairnstock from Urnerboden on the Klausenpass.

Weeks ski touring in Berner Oberland. Spent two days at Kl. Scheideg waiting for improved weather for the run to Konkordiaplatz, Grunhornlucke and Finstaarhorn hut. Ascent of weissnollen before returning to Konkordia-hut. On the only fine day of the week we acted as guides to one of a party who had to get the first train down. Up to Jungfrauoch at all out speed and

an easy trip back over Ob. Monchjoch and Ewigschneefeld. In bad visibility over the lötschenlucke to Blatten.

Weeks ski-ing in the Julia and Maloja pass areas. Based at Jürg Jenatsch hut we ascended, during 4 fine days, Piz Calderas, Piz D'Err, Piz d'Agnel, Tschima da Flix, Piz Traunterovas and Surgonda. Forno hut with a 15 hour round tour over Monte Sissone and Monte Disgrazia ended the ski-ing.

June/Sept. Treschhut with ascents Börtli Rüchen, SW-Grat and S-Turm & S-Rippe, Taghorn, -Schwarzstock traverse and over Fellilucke to Andermatt. Solo, Bristenstock and Chli Windgällen both from Bristen Dorf. Büelenhorn S-Wand with Ernst Rinner from Alpine Sportschule Gotthard Ansermatt. Tinzenhorn S-wand direct, an experience if just for the stone fall set off by the rope party above.



Grosshorn from the Rottalhut Path

Photo by: N. M Davison

Peter Farrington

March: Glencoe—Bidean nam Bian south face via Fionn Ghleann solo. Cramponed from 2,500' in superb conditions to find the Bidean ridge untouched and all to myself. Descended via Stob Coire nam Beith and Ant-Sron. A marvellous day. April: Failed attempt at Clachaig Gully. Bidean via Boomerang Gully on Stob Coire nan Lochan. North Buttress on Buachaille Etive Mhor. Heatwave weather. May: Ben Nevis via No. 3 Gully and descent to Achintee. 'Bowstring' on Aonach Dubh East. June: 'N.W. Facè' Douglas Boulder. Aonach Eagach Ridge. September: Tower Ridge, Ben Nevis. November: 'Lower Bow' and 'Quiver' on Aonach Dubh East.

From CIC Hut—Beaten out of No. 2 Gully by rain and stonefalls. Tower Gully on good hard snow. Carn Mor Dearg Arete. Also rockclimbing and walking on Islay throughout the year.

Gordon Gadsby

New Year's Eve Staying at the Oread Hut in Rhyd-ddu. Traversed Snowdon via Lechog ridge and down Snowdon Ranger—glorious sunset on the way down. Also climbed Moel Hebog with my wife, Margaret and Julie Bramwell.

Feb. Weekend Newland valley, staying at Fylde M.C. hut. Sat. very wet. Sun. a magnificent day, traversed Causey Pike with breathtaking views of the Lakes. Feb. 17th—climbing at the Roaches, Staffs. also an afternoon walk to Luds Church in the Dane Valley.

March. Climbing at Birchens Edge. March 9th—spent Sat. morning abseiling down the 90' tower of Beeston Parish Church in readiness for our big night on March 14th when we abseiled by floodlights to launch the Oread book 'Climb If You Will'.

April —Walking over Carls Wark, Higgarr Tor and Burbage then four routes on Stanage Edge—weather excellent—all with Margaret and Ken Bryan. Easter—Pembroke. Fine warm weather ensured four days of good walking and climbing. One new route on Ramsey Island and two in New-gales area with Frank Goldsmith and Ken Bryan. On Ramsey Island Margaret and I saw a rare visitor to Britain, a Snow Goose on a small tarn below Carn Lundain. Arennigs walk over 2800' Arennig Fach and then across the moors to the lonely deserted cottage of Cefn Gawr.

May Annual visit to Skye, camping at Staffin Bay and an opportunity to visit the Quiraing, the Trotternish Ridge and some rock climbing on the sea cliffs of Flodigarry Bay. A superb day on the Island of Raasay reaching the summit of Dun Caen, not very high but a heck of a long way. At the end of the week I did the Clach Glas traverse on the Blaven group with Margaret, Stuart Bramwell and Reg Squires.

June—Weekend in Snowdonia and some evening climbing on Froggat Edge. Then in July during our main holiday spent on Skye and Rhum we experienced the worst possible weather but managed two peaks on Skye and 7 on Rhum.

August—Camping in the Duddon Valley. The weather seemed almost as bad as our main holiday on Skye.

October—Sunshine at last, a super weekend at Little Langdale staying at the Fylde M.C. Hut. On Sat. we traversed six summits including Dow Crag and Coniston Old Man. In the late evening the Isle of Man was clearly visible from the top of Swirlhowe. The autumn colours on both days were the best we've seen for years. Back to normal, a very wet weekend in the Llanberis Pass. On Sat. we walked over the Glyders in foul conditions. On Sunday Lockwood's Chimney was shared with a party of six Americans—Gee! Accommodation for the weekend was in the ideally situated Cwm Glas cottage belonging to the Climbers Club—a great place.



Hallival 2, 365' Isle of Rhum

Gordon Gadsby

J. Gregson

The highlight of a poor winter was an ascent of Tower Ridge on a still sunny day. This made up for a largely wet week in the Cairngorms and a lightning visit to Creag Meagdaidh.

I spent Easter in perfect weather among the Glen Dessary hills at the head of Loch Arkaig. Then followed a long spell of climbing and walking with the Alps in mind, which took me throughout the Lakes, North Wales and the Peak. In June this included the Lakes 3000's, a success after a week in Scotland, mostly at Carnmore in monsoon conditions.

Arriving in Chamonix where there was a lot of snow, plans were laid. Starting with the Aig. d'Argentiere from the new hut I next looked across at Les Courtes. Next morning I retreated from the bergschrund on the north east face as streams poured into it. The weather now intervened for several days until a trip on the Midi lift led to the trudge round to the Trident bivouac. In excellent conditions I then climbed the Brenva Ridge to Mont Blanc where the ice in the serac barrier was really peculiar. The long way down to the Col du Midi via Maudit and Tacul where, very tired, a bivouac was installed at the old hut. This was interrupted by a very heavy snowfall during the night and a hasty retreat was made via the telepherique. After another spell of poor weather I was left with little time so traversed the Midi-Plan arete and descended via the Requin hut and then down the Mer de Glace.

Since arriving back in Britain the number of wet weekends has greatly outnumbered the dry ones but I'm hoping for a good winter.

Max Horvat

My mountaineering holidays this year were not quite orthodox. Not only that we started on a very long, perfectly level plain, but this plain was not even 'terra firma'. The first week consisted in a canoe journey from Geneva along the northern shore right to the other end of the lovely 'Lac Lemman'. For this purpose I took my two seater 'Ottersports' touring kayak with me from London (on top of a Morris 1000) and we borrowed another canoe, a single seater, from a member of the Geneva Canoe Club.

It was late June. On the whole the weather was first class. As we had no support party the canoes had to absorb everything: tents, sleeping bags, air mattresses, some food, cooking utensils, spare clothing, mountaineering equipment, the lot. Much to our amazement we found there was ample room for everything.

On the first day we reached Coppet, the next day Rolle, then Morges, Lausanne-Vidy, Vevey and finally Villeneuve. All camping sites were first class, and so was the food available there. We stopped on nearly every beach and took it easy indeed. The scenery of course was grand, and we had an opportunity to look closely at more than a thousand and one magnificent villas and gardens realising fully why this part of the world is called 'the millionaires' playground'.

As we did not take the shortest route, and covered certain stretches more than once, our total was in the region of 80 miles. This required some 28,000 paddle strokes. The longest leg of the journey was that from Coppet to Rolle, some 14 miles. Not at all too much for one day. The whole stretch of the lake could actually be done in two days, but a swift progress would, in my opinion, be equivalent to a cardinal sin against the beauties of swiss scenery.

On completion of our canoe expedition I took my non-mountaineering partners, Joy and Anthony Jones, up to Les Avants, to the Col de Jaman and the Rochers de Naye. There was plenty of new snow there, and they loved it. The weather was good and the alpine meadows full of narcissi in full bloom were magnificent too.

From a mountaineering point of view this does not add up to much, but does one have to stand on top of a mountain in order to say 'I love the mountains'? Had it not been for Joy and Anthony I would not have done this canoe trip, and had it not been for myself they would not have had their first taste of Swiss mountains. This holiday was a memorable event, and I believe I have come back with two mountaineering converts.

F. L. Jenkins

Easter: N. Wales with Duke of Edinburgh Award party. Climbs on Tryfan and Milestone Buttress. Skiing at Val d'Isère with J. J. Whitehead and J. Roche, and S.C.G.B. Party. Traverse of Maritime Alps from St Martin-en-Vésubie to Briançon in nine days, followed by a crossing of the Dauphiné-Vallouise to La Grave in six days.

August: Dauphiné with P. A. Brownrigg-Pic Coolidge, Monviso by Col de la Traversette and Quintino Sella Hut, with return to France by the Forcellione Glen and Col da Vallante. Dôme de Ecrins, Pointe du Vallon des Etages and finally we were washed out of a bivouac on Pic de l'Olan.

John Kemsley

Freda and I started the year in Derbyshire on a crisp New Year's Day with a walk in the Kinderscout area, and we followed this up with a couple of good rounds on the Lakeland hills during the February Meet at Beetham Cottage. Scotland saw us in March for a winter ascent of our last Munro in the Glen Moriston group, and again in July on Ben Attow and Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair.

At the end of April during an archaeological-cum-botanical visit to Greece we managed some mild wandering in the foothills of Mount Parnassus around Delphi, but our hopes of climbing the mountain itself were thwarted by cloud and rain of the West of Scotland variety.

In May we again completed the Fellsman Hike in Yorkshire, walking on this occasion from Threshfield to Ingleton, that is in the reverse direction from that of previous years—a somewhat more strenuous expedition for the

ageing in that they had to face the ascent of Whernside and Ingleborough towards the end of the fifty-three miles and after a sleepless night of walking.

In August we set out to fill in a few gaps on our scattered Alpine map and as a start we crossed from Mürren to Kandersteg via the Mutthorn and Blümlisalp Huts. Mixed weather gave us sunshine on the tops of the Mutthorn and Tschingelhorn, a thunderstorm on the Gamchilücke, and mist on the Blümlisalphorn which shrouded the surrounding peaks but in no way lessened our enjoyment of the elegant north-west ridge. The rich limestone flora above Mürren and Kandersteg added greatly to the interest of this cross-country expedition.

We moved next to Zinal and climbed Lo Besso from the Mountet Hut on a high cloudless day, first detesting the long and tiresome approach across the shrunken Besso Glacier to the western ridge, then revelling in the devious route up the rocks that led to the wonderful views of the Valais peaks from the summit. We had the delight on this climb, too, of finding many a natural rock garden on the ledges and we were especially thrilled with the bright blue cushions of *Eritrichium nanum* which Reginald Farrer so deservedly named the King of the Alps.

Our final move was to Chamonix which we found bathed in sunshine that continued long enough to let us make our hoped-for crossing of Mont Blanc by the Gouter and Grands Mulets routes—an expedition that far exceeded our expectations. The Tête Rousse and Gouter Huts provided a warm welcome and excellent food as well as superb views and glowing sunsets over the western foothills. Long will we remember the freezing darkness of the early start from the Gouter enlivened by the chain of torchlights that curved without a break ahead of us up the Dôme du Gouter and into Orion's dangling sword-belt. Still vivid, too, are our memories of the beauty of the final snow ridge, our surprise at finding a trio of scavenging choughs on the very summit, and our consciousness that the vast surrounding panorama lay all below us. Tourist stuff this may be for some but it was full reward for us on that lovely day. Our more sporting descent to Chamonix amongst the labyrinthine crevasses and seracs of the Bossons Glacier past the Grands Mulets Hut (unwelcoming, dirty and unhelpful even on our fleeting visit), and down to the stonefalls that threatened our final departure from the ice, offered a complete contrast to the straightforward ascent on the Gouter route and rounded off our thoroughly satisfying day and holiday.

W. Kirstein

Skiing at Mammoth (Sierra Nevada, California) with daughter and her family. March: skitouring Engadine with Combined Services, Piz Murteel (from cablecar station only) and many off piste tours on good powder, including Gorgy Glacier, Fuorcla Palud Marscha to Bevers Valley and Morteratsch run. Also: 'Engadine Marathon', 26 miles, 90% of 7400 participants arriving in the allotted time of 6 hours. I made it with 5 minutes to spare after not more than 1 week's training. One Swiss had the audacity

of being born a few months before me, which did not stop the Berne radio to interviewing me at Zuoz (target station—start had been at Maloja).

August: just Piz Languard in deep snow, which even covered our car down in Pontresina.

Will McLewin

A reasonably successful summer camping in the Val Veni, made especially memorable by absolutely perfect weather on every route I did, and also by the hospitality of the British Army who provided us with cheap booze and magnificent hot showers.

With Brian Wood: Mont Blanc du Tacul by a rock route on the South Face (via Ferraro?). Quite pleasant I suppose but we found it long and tiring. The long trudge back to the Torino was quite dreadful and we missed the last telepherique by 2 minutes.

With Paul Goldammer: Tete de Valpelline by the west flank. It started out as the Dent d'Herens but was one of those trips when everything went wrong. Nevertheless a very enjoyable easy route with magnificent views, especially of the W.N.W. face of the Dent d'Herens and the Matterhorn.

With Brian Wood: Mont Maudit by the Frontier Ridge. We arrived at the snow/ice slope up to the Col de la Fourche bivouac about 6 p.m. and decided against participation in the pantomime that was already in progress. Instead we walked higher up the Maudit/Tacul glacier bay, had dinner and slept out. Starting at 2 a.m. next morning we went up a steepish couloir, the last one to the N.W. which goes right up onto the ridge. Probably as difficult as anything else on the route but recommendable if you want some sleep. This time everything went well and we were on the summit by 8.50 a.m., early enough for a long sit in the sun to really appreciate where we were and to convince ourselves that it really was true. This time, the Vallee Blanche seemed not nearly so bad.

Solo: Mont Blanc by the Brenva Spur. An evening's absolute chaos in the Giglione Hut so we went over to Col Moore early, arriving there at midnight. On the first few rocks one of Brian's crampons snapped at the central hinge causing him to fall off. Luckily he was scratched and shaken rather than hurt, but decided to go back. I carried on with that fearful energy one has when soloing and was soon on the long slope up to the seracs. This proved to be very icy with a very strong gusty wind and I was not happy. After what seemed a very long time I reached a bit of rock immediately below the first seracs and sat there in my sleeping bag and duvet waiting for the morning sun to appear and bring both warmth and my nerves back. Then, with the serac passage easy, I trudged on to the top to find that there were other people in the world after all, rather too many in fact. Down to the Gonella hut was pleasant and easy but the Miage glacier was depressing and apparently endless.

After this I waited during a week of indifferent weather until a heavy storm ended thoughts of the Brouillard ridge and I left for home, stopping at

Bourg St. Pierre for a solo ascent of the Grand Combin by the West Ridge over the Combin de Valsorey.

Eric Radcliffe and others

It is unnecessary to extol the virtues of the High Level Route. There is something particularly attractive in climbing adventures which include travel and on this route the traveller can easily feel that he is reliving some of the history of the heroic age a century ago. It has also the peculiar advantage that it can accommodate parties of varying degrees of vigour. The route itself is easy enough and there are peaks in plenty by the way for the more energetic to climb.

Everyone had covered some sections of the route; only one of our party had covered the whole route in one expedition. For all of us it was a memorable few days. The need to acclimatise provided us with an excuse to visit Schwarenbach again. Most of our party travelled as usual by train and enjoyed again the splendid coffee and rolls provided at Basle station. We had omelettes at the Zur Post at Kandersteg opposite the Hotel Schweitzerhof which was the headquarters of the A.B.M.S.A.C. meet in 1969, and soon had the great pleasure of seeing Otto and Dorli Stoller at their comfortable hotel. The weather was perfect.

On Thursday 1st August, independence day, we walked to the Lammern Hut and in the evening watched a firework display at Schwarenbach, on Friday over the ridge to the East and on Saturday over two cols to Engstligenalp. On Sunday we travelled by way of the Gemmi télériférique to Leukerbad, Martigny, and Mont Roch and thence to Le Tour and the Refuge Albert 1^{er} where our whole party was assembled—Paul and Virginia French, David Riddell, John Coales, Dennis Heath, Harry Archer, Eric Radcliffe and Otto Stoller.

The first part of the route is not exciting. Views from the railway itself are superb and from the track which runs above the icefalls of the Tour Glacier on the way to the hut. Nothing can be more agreeable, more hospitable than the wide expanses of the snow plateau above the hut. The walk from the Albert 1^{er} over the Col du Tour Superior to the Trient Hut was easy going in perfect weather and a start at 5.45 a.m. early enough as it was still cold on the Col. We were at the Cabane d'Orny a little before 1300 hours.

From the Cabane d'Orny to Orsières—a descent of over 5000 ft.—is a rough, steep, and uncomfortable track, and in its lower parts through the woods hot and humid. Bourg St. Pierre, reached by bus, is a delectable village where you are scarcely aware of the Great St. Bernard highroad which runs only a hundred yards above. The pension 'Au Beau Valais' where we spent a very comfortable day has indeed as it claimed a 'Situation tranquille' and the beer at the 'Déjeuner de Napoleon' was good too.

On Wednesday 7th August we walked up to the Velan hut in four hours after lunch and for the first time met its most excellent guardian, M. Albert

Dubois, who had left the life of the city for this position in the hills. He was gay and happy and as much attentive to our needs as if we had come down from a major ascent. We noticed from the hut book that his guests the previous day had been our friends Charles Warren and Ian Ogilvie who had done the Velan and gone before us to Valsorey. The situation of the hut is very lovely but the weather broke. Paul and Dennis were deprived of the Velan and our short journey to the Valsorey Hut was made uncomfortably over swollen streams. On Friday snow was still falling and we were unable to start till nearly 6 a.m. and stones falling down the notorious couloir made us abandon our route to the Col du Sonadon and turn to the Col du Meltin, where the upper snow slopes were iced, and here one of our two ropes made a rapid and unplanned descent. Eventually we all got down to the Cabane de Panossière and the next day to Fionnay. From here Paul and Virginia and Otto went straight up to the Cabane de Chanrion and in uncertain weather by the Otemma glacier to Arolla while the rest of the party perforce enjoyed the expensive comfort of a journey by taxi.

At Arolla we met Patrick and Margaret Andrews and were rejoined by Harry who had had to leave us at Orsières and on Tuesday 13th August Paul, Virginia, Harry, John and Eric continued our journey to the Bertol Hut.

The route to Zermatt is too well known to need any description. From the Rossier hut Paul, Harry and Otto climbed the Dent Blanche in perfect weather though the descent by the Wandfluh proved to be difficult. There is of course no technical difficulty in the route over the Tête Blanche which the rest of the party followed. Conditions can never have been better and the clear weather made the route very easy to find over the Stockji Glacier and the Stockji. Our descent to the Schönbühl Hut gave us continuously glorious views, surrounded as we were by the noblest of the Valais peaks. It had been a most enjoyable expedition.

David Riddell

In 1973 I failed to supply details of climbs in time but they were Hogmanay with Hamish Brown at Lagangarbh in Glencoe, Buchaille Etive Mhor. A.B.M.S.A.C. Easter Betws-y-Coed. Our party was within a few hundred yards of the benighted schoolboys who made the headlines that Easter. Tryfaen and Moel Hebog and Snowdon Horseshoe.

Saas Almagell—all that is in the Journal apart from Paul French's approach march to Macugnaga with a visit to the Zamboni hut before going over the Monte Moro. The Monte Rosa South and East Face was magnificent, better even than expected! Only equalled by the whole vast panorama on the way up to the Monte Moro Pass. For the rest see the 1974 Journal.

Late in October went on the 'Everest Trek' with W. H. Murray as leader 30 October to 11 December. 34 nights under canvas culminating in an unforgettable sight of Everest. The most impressive of all the mountains was Ama Dablam. Nothing can surpass the reality of that mountain. Only second was Thamserku. There was no climbing but an experience for a

mountain-addict that ranks as the highest of highlights in over 50 years of wandering about the 'hills' (Hamish Brown refers to all mountains as 'hills' whether Arthur's Seat, the Andes or the Himalaya).

Easter 1974, Braemar. Something worthwhile every day. Lochnagar climbed after years of anticipation. The reality was superb.

The 'Approach March' to the Meiringen Meet ended prematurely in an involuntary 'slide' down from the Col du Meiten in the Grand Combin.
?Finis!

Harry Sales

Like many other members, probably, I have up to now felt inhibited from contributing to this column, but this is a year to conquer inhibitions. Having given up my old job I had no less than three holidays before really getting down to work again. In the first we climbed nothing higher than the enormous tower on the Palazzo Pubblico in Sienna. The second saw several first ascents of the cliffs of Sark, hardly touched before, so far as we could find out. Six of us, mostly from the Climbers Club, sailed there in an army club yacht chartered, if that is the word, by Hugh Wright, now sadly dead. We went via Swanage and did the odd desperate route on Boulder Ruckle, anchoring off it in threatening seas. Then on to Cherbourg, where two of us made an ascent of the big slab under the Castle, ending by a traverse into an old German gun emplacement! But Sark itself was a delight and I must write it up more fully elsewhere. We were mainly at anchor in le Havre Gosselin and it was a marvellous sensation to come in to the cliffs by rubber dinghy, with all the wealth of sea birds around. The rock was beautiful.

Finally, the Mount Robson area of the Canadian Rockies, where I joined the Canadian Alpine Club at their camp—a long trek in. One volunteers for one's chosen climbs and a committee decides what one can do. I did all I wanted, with one exception. Lynx and Resplendent are as splendid as they sound. Phillips was a good substitute for Whitehorn, from which we were weathered off. A smaller interesting peak we did is called Whitehorn East on old maps, and Anne Alice is a delight, particularly the easy descent. But Robson itself, the King of the area and the highest of the Canadian Rockies, eluded us. It is a very serious and dramatic mountain and we left it to the end because it is better tackled on the trek out. But having pushed up the dreadful mile high grind to the Forster hut, the cloud came down. Four of us set off at three the following day and went up Little Robson, a subsidiary peak on the way up. There we sat for an hour hoping things might get better, whilst one of the party made a snow cave. But apart from the complete cloud cover over a heavily crevassed and difficult area, the snow conditions were dangerous and we had to retreat.

Since then, back to the normal round of Wales, the Lakes, the Derbyshire grit and the Kentish sandstone, which in a wet November has a peculiar charm of its own!

Ernst Sondheimer

1974 was a pleasantly varied year in the mountains for me, even though I didn't manage any serious climbing. A solitary ramble in the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons in April was followed by the A.B.M.S.A.C. weekend at Glan Dena and, in June, by an approach to my examiners' meeting in St. Andrews via Corrour Station and Dalwhinnie. This gave a long and soul-stirring day—all alone—past Loch Ossian, where the yellow azaleas were in flower, and over the top of Ben Alder. (Alas, this year I examine in Kent). The July visit to the High Tatra is described elsewhere. In mid-August I was on my way to the Chanrion hut, to meet David Cutforth and his boys for the eastern half of the Haute Route. This gave us two memorable long days, from the Chanrion hut to Arolla and from the Bertol hut to the Schönbiel, over the Col d'Hérens. Both days included a botanical experience: the first a whole meadow full of Edelweiss, and the second *eritrichium nanum* in full flower, in a marvellous spot overlooked by the Matterhorn. Later Janet joined me for a motor tour of Graubünden. Apart from its beautiful scenery, this canton is noteworthy for churches with medieval wall paintings, many of them only recently brought to light. Our most interesting hotel was undoubtedly the Krone in Vicosoprano, a 400-year old palazzo where the Gästebuch is worth studying. The Bregaglia guides Christian Klucker and Walter Risch appear, of course, and—50 years to the day before our visit—we found: D. E. Pilley, L.A.C., C.S.F.A. ('Journaliste') and I. A. Richards, A.C., S.A.C. ('Author'). In 1913 one finds an even more distinguished entry: Professor Albert Einstein, of Zürich, 'mit Frau und Sohn', who expressed himself as 'sehr zufrieden'. So, indeed, were we.

Returned to England I subsequently met I. A. Richards (now over 80) and Dorothea Pilley at the Ladies' Alpine Club. I reminded them of their stay in Vicosoprano in 1924—they were appalled to hear it was 50 years ago.

Les Swindin

I was fortunate to be in the Lake District in late November at the tail end of a cold snap. On a wonderful clear winter day I climbed Raven Gully, Combe Ghyll. It presented two excellent pitches of water ice. Not a bad start to the winter's climbing but as you well know the remainder of the winter was just too mild to be true, so mild in fact that on a February day we found ourselves positively overdressed climbing at Tremadoc. My only other winter routes were done on a weekend early in March when, with Barbara, I had a good day on Snowdon. We climbed R. H. Trinity gully and then soloed down Central and up L.H. and then down Great Gully. The following day we climbed Central Gully, Ysgolion Duon just beating the thaw.

We visited the Cairngorms for a few days at Easter and then Glen Finnan and Glen Etive. The contrast in conditions between East and West was quite remarkable. The Cairngorms were still wintery and besides walking we were able to climb a few routes in Coire an t'Sneachda. In the West we had hot sun, so warm that I was walking on the summits clad only in shorts.

The weather wasn't so fine in May when we visited Skye. I abandoned the idea of attempting the Greater Traverse and settled for the Main Ridge Traverse with Barbara who excelled herself. We were accompanied by Geoff Causey who is also a habitual visitor to Skye at Whitsuntide.

I had great ideas for training for the Alps. I was going to walk round Wasdale and in the process climb a V.S. route on Scafell, Great Gable and on Pillar. In the event the weather was so appalling that we settled for Slingsby's Chimney and even that was almost epic in the conditions. I cannot remember being so miserably cold and wet on a climb for a long time. At least we finished the walk.

The weather was no better when we arrived in the Alps. Five days rain greeted us in Fionnaye. It was better in Arolla from where we visited the Vignette hut bumping into the A.B.M.S.A.C. meet members on the way. We climbed the Pigne in a lot of fresh snow and then traversed l'Eveque. Our last route from that centre is well worth attention but not mentioned in the A.C. guidebook. It is the N.E. ridge of the West peak of Petit Mont Collon. The route crosses the bergschrund below the right hand of two prominent rocks in the snow slope to the left (E.) of the N. face and then climbs up to the ridge passing between the two rocks. The ridge is followed at a reasonably easy angle until the first rocks are reached. The rock on the whole mountain is extremely loose and is best avoided. This is possible by keeping to the face to the right of the ridge. We encountered a fair amount of ice for the next 300 ft. as we worked our way through the rocky section. We were forced on to the rock for about 30 ft. and found this the most difficult part of the climb. Once above this section the ridge continues easily to the top. We followed the ordinary route down the south side of the mountain but would recommend an investigation of the S.W. ridge which looks much less dangerous. The route as a whole we thought was A.D. and took 3 hrs.

A few days later we climbed the S. ridge of the Dent Blanche before moving to Chamonix. We hoped to climb the N. buttress of the Chardonnet but were advised against this by the Office de Haute Montagne. It's the last time I ask them for Advice. On the day we planned to do the climb we did the Papillon Arete instead sharing a bivvy with a party setting out for the N. face of the Plan and if it was good enough for that it was good enough for the Chardonnet. We did do the Chardonnet route a few days later and it proved to be just as good as I had expected it to be.

To end the holiday we visited the Dauphiné. Never again in August, it's even more crowded than Chamonix. We climbed the Barre des Ecrins from the Caron hut. What a hut! To beat the crowds we got up early. I made it out of the dormitory, Barbara wasn't quite so fast and was barred from leaving it for fifteen minutes by one of the hut staff. Apparently 3.30 a.m. is the approved time to get up and not a moment earlier even if you are looking after yourself. About 100 people set out on the route so the prospects of climbing the rock ridge were not very pleasant. It didn't turn out as badly as I feared since 90% were satisfied merely to reach the Dome de Neige leaving the rock ridge for those with higher aspirations.

The summer ended with a week split between the Lakes and N. Wales when I climbed several good routes with John Oaks. Probably the most impressive was Hardd done on perfectly dry rock in the pouring rain. Despite the rain I had several enjoyable outings in the autumn, mostly in the Lakes, keeping an eye open for likely winter routes. If all the pundits are right this will be the winter. Still they say that every year.

Mike Turnbull

An 'Oh, you should have been here a week ago' year—up to September, that is; since then there seems to have been little to choose between one weekend and the next as far as weather is concerned.

I can only remember three decent weekends; Easter (spent in Cornwall, thanks to Post Office's handling of my letter to the leader of the A.B.M. meet at Braemar!); the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at Wasdale; and a weekend in the Pass in June. Also one fine day in N. Wales in October.

Towards the end of August I and three accomplices spent ten days at Arolla, contributing our mite to the efforts of the British contingent there to paint the place a little bit red white and blue and trying to find our level on the peaks. An attempt on the Petite Dent de Veisivi in unsettled weather (a mildly electrifying experience) which took 16 hours from leaving the tent to arriving at the bar was followed by an excursion to the Aiguilles Rouges hut to watch a 12 hour thunderstorm. In the middle of this an alarm clock went off triggering a stampede to breakfast in the small hours. Happily no-one succeeded, as far as I know, in identifying the owners.

The weather changed just in time to prevent us from adjourning to the Maritime Alps and we had two quite pleasant days out from the Dix hut. The English guide book gives the wrong height in its description of the alternative way onto the Luette ridge; obvious enough of you rely on the map and common sense, of course. When it became clear that campsite rumours to the effect that the Vignettes hut was inaccessible were unfounded we rushed down to the valley. Next morning three of us woke up with colds. Not to be wondered at perhaps. If anyone can give me the address of the warden of the Dix hut I'll send him a handkerchief for Christmas.

Nigel E. D. Walker

August: With J. E. L. Clements. First week in the Karwendels. Climbed Nordlich-Linderspitze, Sudlich Linderspitze, Sulzleklammspitze, Kirchlespitze, Brunnsteinanger to Tiroler Hut (The Mittenwalder Howenveg, First British Climb). Two-day tour in the Soiern Group of the Karwendels climbing to Huttelbachklamm, then onto Schwarzkopf, Seinskopf, Feldernkreuz and Schöttelekar Spitze, and finally to Soiern Hut for the night. Second day: Climbed to Jagersruh Jöchel and descended down to Fereinalm. All in fine weather with Wilhelm Winneberger.

Second week: In the Otztal Alps. From Vent climbed to the Hochjoch Hospitz in poor weather and on the following day climbed Mutspitze from the South-west ridge and descended from the West ridge onto the Kesselwand Glacier. After a second night in the hut, we then climbed to the Brandenburg Hut and in the afternoon climbed Dahmannspitze by the ordinary route. Following day, climbed Vord-Hintereis Spitze from the North Snow ridge and descended the South-west Rock Ridge and proceeded onto Mittl-Hintereis spitze, descended the South-west ridge onto the Gepatsch Glacier. Last day, climbed Fluchkogel from Ober Goslar Joch and descended down to Vernagt Hut for one night before returning to Vent. All in glorious weather with Hans Gstrein.

October: Back in Mittenwald for another week's climbing. Due to adverse weather conditions, all climbing was abandoned and the week was spent in pleasant valley tours. Nothing exciting but all very enjoyable.

Occasional week-end visits to Dovedale and the Derby Vale with Beryl Isgrove in good weather.

Jeremy Whitehead

April Planned and co-led S.C.G.B. tour in French Alps. Training climbs at Val d'Isère included Pte de la Sana and Grande Motte. Then the classic Nice-Briançon traverse, actually from Madone de Fenestre to Briançon. A smaller group then traversed the Dauphine from Ailefroide to La Grave, via Col Emil Pic, Col de la Casse Deserte, Col du Replat, Col de la Lauze. We were fortunate to have in the main excellent conditions for this tour.

Aug-Sept Rather disappointing weather conditions on the whole. Training climbs on Chueplanggenstock and Diechterhorn, in Central Switzerland.

E ridge of Herbetet and E.N.E. ridge of Grivola in Paradiso group. Mont Dolent by Arete de la Maya, from the new Siwss bivouac hut. An excellent climb from a very snug new hut, with an easy return by the Italian route.

Dent du Requin by normal route. Pta Innominata by S.W. ridge. Les Ecrins traverse S-N. Other peaks were attempted and given up through bad weather. On all these climbs Jim Roche was my companion.



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