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THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

JOURNAL 1979

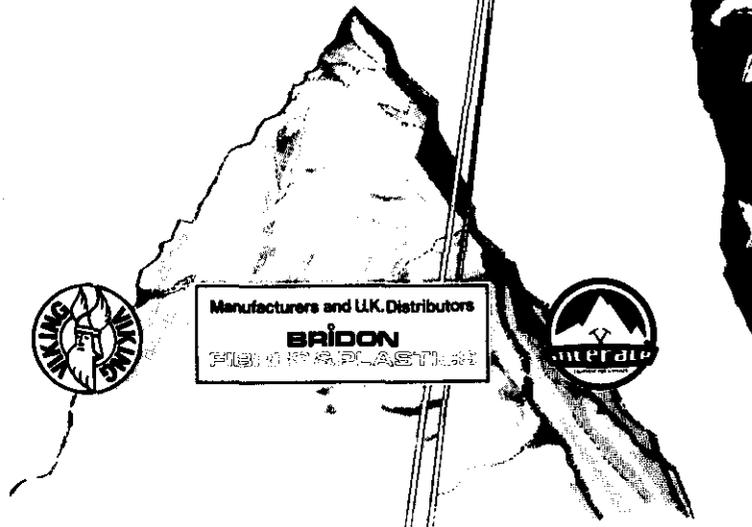
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DIARY FOR 1979

The outdoor events for the second half of 1979 were not settled at the time of going to press. The editor apologises for the omission, which will be made good in the Circulars. The list of indoor events is complete except for the venue for the Annual Dinner and details of the A.G.M.

January 9th	Lecture, Tony Husbands, 'Mountain Reminiscences'.
February 7th	Fondue evening.
February 10th to 11th	Northern Dinner Meet at Patterdale. Douglas Milner will speak on 'Mountains for Pleasure'.
March 3rd to 4th	Joint Meet with A.C., Brackenclose, Wasdale Head. Book directly through Peter Fleming.
March 7th	Lecture, Don Hodge, 'Bernese Oberland'.
March 9th to 10th	Maintenance meet Patterdale. Book through John Cohen.
April 4th	Lecture, Alan Hankinson, 'Early Climbing in the Lake District'.
April 13th to 16th	Informal Easter Meet at Patterdale. Hut reserved for members. Book through John Cohen.
May 2nd	Buffet Party.
May 4th to 5th	Informal meet at Patterdale. Book through John Cohen.
May 11th to 12th	Welsh Meet, Cwm Eigiau.
May 26th to June 2nd	Scottish Meet, J.M.C.S. Hut, 'The Smiddy', Dundonnell, Wester Ross. Leader Alisdair Andrews.
May 26th to 28th	Joint meet with T.C.C. at Patterdale. Book through John Cohen.
June 13th	Indoor meeting, Easter and Spring meets.
September 19th	Lecture, Frank Solari, 'Another Man's Mountain Flora'.
October 17th	Indoor meeting, The Alpine Season and Meet.
November 18th	Annual Dinner.

All lectures and indoor meetings except Tuesday January 9th are held on Wednesday evenings at 7.00 p.m., and all are held at the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London. They are followed by an informal dinner at the Park Coffee House, Britannia Hotel, Grosvenor Square.

Bookings by the previous Saturday to P. S. Boulter, Esq., c/o Medical Centre, St. Luke's Hospital, Guildford, Surrey.

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EDITORIAL

We record elsewhere in this Journal bequests made to the Association library from the estates of the late M. N. Clarke and N. A. Poolman. Gifts of this kind are not unique, but two acquisitions of such scope and quality in one year are exceptional enough to call for special mention. The Hon. Librarian has experienced particular difficulty in cataloguing and displaying his goods in face of extensive *constructional works in the basement* of the Alpine Club, and has indeed found it necessary to be preceded into his department by a vacuum cleaner in full spate, a reversal of the order more usually associated with the Lord Mayor's Show. Nevertheless, Harold Flook (with help from Debu Bose) has contrived to provide an account of the acquisitions and of the state of the collection in general. This leads to wider reflections on the facilities provided by the Association; some members and prospective members may be helped and encouraged by a reminder of them.

During the past year we have been given, through the generosity of John Byam-Grounds, an opportunity to use his cottage at Fron Francis in the Conway Valley as a hut. This gives us a Welsh base to supplement our Lakes base at Patterdale. The matter has been announced at indoor meets, and details have been given in the regular circulars, which are more up to date than this Journal. The editor wishes to take the opportunity to express the sincere thanks of the Association to Mr. Byam-Grounds.

The George Starkey hut was discussed, perhaps at undue length, in last year's editorial. It is a fine hut, none better. It thrives. It could be used more fully by A.B.M. members.

Last year we had 10 indoor meets, including the annual dinner and the buffet party. The eating meets were most happy social occasions, and the slide and film shows brought instruction and entertainment from the far corners of the earth.

There were 17 outdoor meets in Britain, with capacity crowds for the Northern dinner meet and the October meet with the Alpine Club. Other meets were less well attended, as can be learnt by studying the reports. Members are missing opportunities. Cwm Glas, Kintail, Ingleton and Nant Gwynant were the centres visited last year, in addition to the regular Patterdale meets. Most of these are intended for sociable mountaineering, and are equally suitable for solo mountaineers. There was one official working party meet; unofficial working meets are in addition to the programme. Members who are shy of such occasions might read past meteorological reports from Brooke Midgley. These reveal that perfect weather is invariably provided for these occasions; one can always go for a climb after dark when everyone is too tired to work any longer.

The 1978 Alpine meet was at Zermatt, and is reported later. We have never failed to organise such a meet during the years of this editor's membership, and everyone has done all he felt he could do or wished to do in the prevailing conditions, with every help from the others, whether the objective was climbing with or without a guide, walking, or less strenuous visits to

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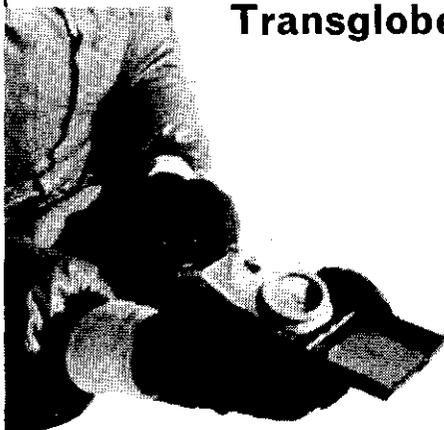
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public events and so on. It may well be that many members are not aware of the extent to which all tastes and strengths are catered for on these meets, and the skill and effort which go into the organisation.

The editor has no personal recollection of the origins of the A.B.M., but presumes that it grew out of less formal meetings of gentlemen who gathered together to discuss their plans for the Alpine season. The Association continues to provide these occasions, with greater frequency now than ever before. Furthermore, the facilities provided by the Swiss sections continue to increase.

One last event of which more could be made is the A.G.M. It might not be too much of an exaggeration to write that the cut and thrust of debate were not conspicuous at the 1978 meeting, nor were lines drawn and battle joined. As a fun event it fell short of the highest standards. The limited numbers present and certain environmental problems (see report) contributed to the difficulties. The attendance can be corrected by the members themselves, and they have sufficient time to take elocution lessons before next year; such a course may stand them in good stead in other ways. The members will not, however, attend unless the occasion is made convenient and attractive. The Committee will give thought to this problem. (The editor is of those who have long favoured separating the A.G.M. from the dinner, but this may not be the only solution. It has even been suggested in high places that we might one day have the A.G.M. in the country). Members will recall that we have known lively, crowded extraordinary meetings, when there was time and a controversial topical subject.

The Committee will also give thought to the possibility of fewer, longer decentralised committee meetings.

The views expressed in these editorials are those of the editor alone, though he does receive kindly and helpful advice, and he does try, so far as talents permit, to keep his ear to the ground. It has been suggested in the past that more contributions from members would be welcome. This year the pigeon post and runners have brought a response from the wild regions from which also originate the meteorological reports referred to earlier. The communication is set out as received, without editorial comment and with no more than a slight expansion of the original telegraphic style. The points should interest mountaineers, opinions may differ, and the editor would be interested to receive comments and other similar contributions.

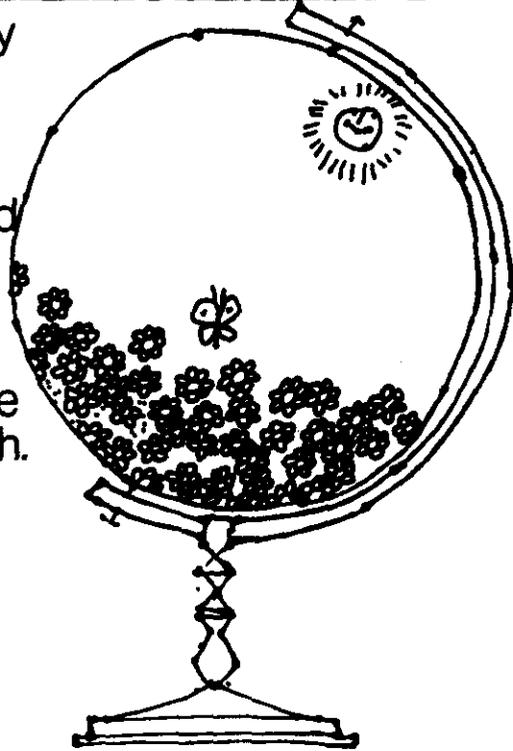
Brooke states that topics which interest him personally (and he claims no more) include

1. The sensational over-reaction of the media of communication to mountain conditions, especially when these conditions become 'interesting'. It is feared that, if this kind of reporting occurs too often, we shall end with restrictions imposed by laws which may be hastily drafted to cover some political deficiency which has no bearing on mountains.

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2. The over-use of the mountains for 'Character Training', causing over-crowding of the hills and damage to paths etc. where too many feet have trodden.
3. Increasing vandalism, senseless noise, disregard for others late at night. Who are the people who do this: are they climbers? Shall we see 'streakers' in Patterdale?
4. The possibility that climbing will go full circle as the modern rock climber carries more and more gear, which is made lighter and lighter to allow him to carry more, until the weight limit is reached and he has to have a porter to carry his gear! (The editor recalls a club-mate who was unable to climb in Greece because the temperature was too high to allow the necessary gear to be carried. By contrast one remembers the days when a climbing party was made up and equipped as soon as we found someone who owned sixty feet of hemp rope).

The copy for this Journal will have reached the printers before Christmas. This unusual feat owes much to the cooperation, not only of our contributing members, but also of such as our advertisers and Mr. Imoberdorf of the S.N.T.O. An early gathering of material was necessary because duty may call the editor abroad. It is possible that final proof reading may be delegated or skipped. This will probably make little difference, but if there are any laughable slips, the readers will get them as a bonus. Advance apologies are offered to the writers.

There are three special articles this year, for which the editor is most grateful. It may be pointed out that equally stirring deeds are described more briefly under 'Climbs and Excursions', which will repay study. No prize, beyond the pleasure of reading, is offered to those who discover, among other gems, a notable Cullin traverse, rock feats by a senior member, and a year of many long walks.



'PEAK 21': Donald Mill

THE SCOTTISH GARWHAL EXPEDITION 1977

Frank Schweitzer

It was in the cold, dark days of late Autumn 1976 when the most surprising letter appeared in the post from Hamish Brown. I suppose he thought it reasonable to write to me as an ex-secretary of the A.B.M. and as a doctor, but the thought of somebody actually wanting a doctor like me for an expedition to the Himalaya was quite a surprise. The Himalayas had always been somewhere to which other people went and for which there never seemed to be an opportunity in a busy professional life. Admittedly he asked for 'a' doctor, rather than me and it took about a couple of weeks before I could summon up a reply which said 'yes, I did know a doctor who might be interested if they were interested in him'! He, poor chap, had little choice but to agree that I would do and from then on the pace of life speeded up.

There were seven of us, I learnt, some of whom originally were part of Eric Roberts's official expedition to Nanda Devi, and all were from differing backgrounds. We didn't know each other well at the beginning and indeed had not climbed together on any occasion. However, the trip was to be organized in the pre-monsoon season of 1977 and there appeared to be enough time for me to get to know the party. It was just as well that we discovered subsequently that there was so much to do, we were comparatively unprepared and the post-monsoon weather was far more settled, especially for the sort of trekking that we had in mind. We decided quite quickly early in the New Year of 1977 to postpone the trip until the Autumn. Logistically, of course, this was a godsend for it gave us a great deal more time in which to sort out the incredibly numerous problems associated with even such a modest trip as ours.

It was our hope to enter the Sanctuary of Nanda Devi and to be free, once there, to explore it in depth but to make no firm plans about the mountains we were to climb. We were after all a group of people only one of whom had been to the Himalaya before, most of us early middle aged and probably not experienced in the sort of conditions we might expect.

Our initial meetings very quickly sorted out the work to be done and each member was made responsible for a particular series of items. Hamish and Peter were obvious people to collaborate over the food while Charles was the expert with gear. Donald had already done a lot of work on the geographical situation while my medical supplies were to give me quite a few headaches. Simplicity was to be our watch word—we were to be in the new tradition of small expeditions!

There were, of course, numerous problems to overcome and one of the most fundamental was the decision about climbing permission. We decided in the event to go 'unofficially' as permits for trekking up to approximately 18,000

feet were not required. We felt this would give us a reasonable margin to explore the Sanctuary. Tunnel tents, cooking gear, enough food for six weeks, basic medical supplies were all that we were going to take! In the event, however, the gear even for such a trip proved considerably more than we realised initially and it took 30 porters and 80 goats to carry our supplies in towards our goal. If I am recounting these facts in great detail, it is only to emphasise how much of an undertaking an expedition like this is. Our success was completely due to the meticulous planning that each member had undertaken. We had enough good, high quality food—a fact which undoubtedly contributed to the low incidence of medical problems—well organized reliable equipment and the geographical homework had been done so well that by the time we went our objective was mapped and logistics planned accordingly. It was largely to Donald we owed this.

Our basic plan was to arrive in two waves in Delhi—an advance guard and a rear guard so that we might more efficiently supervise and collect our baggage, part of which had been sent by air freight. It would also enable the advance party to 'recce' our route from Delhi to Josimath and Lata and it would allow problems to be ironed out by the rear guard party some 4-5 days behind. In the event, of course, this ideal timetable had to be modified. The first man out was Hamish who arrived in Delhi in the middle of August, followed a few days later by those who had a little less time.

Peter, Ian, Donald and Hamish met in the house of one of my friends and very effectively began the search for food and equipment. Their job was to assemble as much as could be found and to locate the shops where other items might subsequently be purchased by the second wave, who arrived in Delhi in late August. It was amazing what we had managed to lose about our person when it came to weighing-in at Heathrow. 54lbs of luggage went into my kitbag and rucksac while 35lbs at least was carried as 'hand luggage'.

Those of you who know India would need no reminding about the conditions, the climate, the bureaucracy and all the other thousand items which go to make up India—for the uninitiated suffice it to say the majority of the first and second waves' time was spent in the customs hall of Delhi airport trying to convince officials that we were a bona fide trekking party and we hadn't brought in our mountaineering gear for resale in India. In this context, my medical gear (total weight 15 Kgs) was the most contentious and, initially at least, we were expected to pay something in the region of £400 duty, i.e. chargeable at 100% of its value.

Many frustrating days were spent trying to obtain our air freighted goods out of pawn and the Greaves house in Delhi rapidly became a haven of rest, peace and air conditioning for weary, parched (from talking) and anxious climbers. It also became a repository for hundred of pounds of food, gear and paper.

The first wave eventually set off with as much equipment as they could handle on a train—for we had decided to use public transport to get to our base. The main reasons were financial and for interest sake as we felt we could imbibe far more of the spirit of the land on the railways and buses of

rural India. We were not to be disappointed! Our trip to the railhead of Hardwar took eight hours by express and covered 150 miles! The second wave took a first class, air-conditioned night sleeper. The journey by bus from Rishi Kesh to Josimath was an unforgettable experience. You must picture old buses with numerous dents, no lights, suspect springs and highly suspect brakes. Then recall the most precipitous journey you have ever experienced in one of those efficient post buses in the European Alps. Add to the mix a journey time of 13 hours, undertaken in a day of 12 hours light, four post-monsoon landslides and steaming heat and surely you have the stage set for a memorable occasion. Indeed, one of our members suggested that this was the most hairy part of the entire trip.

We arrived in Josimath on the 1st September and made our rendezvous with the advance party. We were based at an hotel of unparalleled luxury by Indian standards and spent the next two or three days trying to organize our porters and their loads and a lorry to the road head at Lata. We completed the porter loads in a frenzy of hard work only to discover subsequently that we could not obtain as many porters as we needed for the Japanese had run off with the majority of the hill villagers and all our careful packing would have to be resorted in order that the goats could carry them.

It was, of course, still the monsoon and raining hard when we eventually set off from Lata. The rain was very wet but our spirits were only dampened. The gorge has been described elsewhere in great detail. Lata is at 7,000 feet and the first two days are spent rising to 14,000 feet in order to cross the Dharansi Pass. We individually were carrying about 30lbs in rucksacks while the porters were carrying some 55lbs—they were always in front and we were always breathless. Once over this Pass and into the gorge proper the next week is spent in some of the most beautiful country which I have been privileged to see. The track runs along the side of the gorge, at one moment deep in the ravine close to the river and at another crossing shoulders of rock 3 or 4,000 feet higher. It is a precipitate, constantly dangerous, exposed way, culminating eventually after several days hard exercise in the first view of Nanda Devi. However, the gorge has more surprises in store in the form of 'the Tilman slabs' a vertical face of rock approximately 2,000 feet high up which porters, climbers and all the gear have to be taken. There are fixed ropes to help but the going is hard. A few more ups and downs, two awkward river crossings and all of a sudden we rounded a promontory and saw into the Sanctuary—this 'Y' shaped confluence of two glacier rivers with a big hill in the middle. The view is quite breathtaking. So breathtaking in fact that two silly asses took off towards the end of one afternoon to recce the way for the following day and succeeded only in benighting themselves at 15,000 feet in short trousers, with no food or other equipment in pouring rain!

We found a most glorious site for base camp and our porters dumped their loads. We tried to explain to them that we wished them to return in reduced numbers in exactly four weeks time and eventually they seemed to understand. We had debated the idea of retaining one or two at base camp to help us ferry loads around the Sanctuary and to help with the cooking but eventually decided against this on financial grounds

It was now 20th September and the monsoon was well and truly over. Of course, Nanda Devi is sufficiently far west to avoid the very worst of the monsoon and indeed, the mountain was first climbed during it. Nevertheless, the rains abated and base camp became a joy-time in which to rest, acclimatize and most necessary of all, dry out from the wet of the gorge.

We had originally decided that the aim of our expedition was to explore the Sanctuary without specifically aiming at a particular peak. We liked the thought of freedom to wander where it pleased us without the necessity for big build-ups prior to a summit attack. Our first exploration, therefore, took the form of a reconnaissance towards Rishi Kot and after two or three days at base camp we were off. We were rapidly able to establish an advance base and over a period of two or three days stocked it with supplies sufficient for five or six days exploration. Once comfortably installed a few hundred feet above a side arm glacier we enjoyed good weather and reasonable snow. We saw Rishi Kot from the side opposite to that seen by Chris Bonington (which he partially climbed on the way to Changabang) and were able to explore the mountain fully. The ridge running towards Changabang from Rishi Kot was also scaled and some of the party reached a most magnificent snowy crest between it and the big hill, which we believed was previously unclimbed. When our food ran out we returned to base camp, some two to three thousand feet lower than our advance base, and recuperated. Most of us were acclimatizing reasonably well and were not experiencing major problems of altitude sickness. However, my medical supplies were from time to time demanded for the usual minor ailments.

A party of Australians with whom we had kept company through the gorge were already established on the far side of the Changabang glacier in preparation for their ascent of that mountain and we thought that for our second exploration it would be pleasant to stay on the opposite side, i.e. the right hand bank and to ascend up that glacier under the very steep granite wall of Changabang. It was on this walk to the Changabang glacier that we regretted bitterly having sent all our porters home. The ground was very rough and the going hard and only after each one of us had carried numerous loads were we able to establish an advance base camp under an unnamed peak of towering beauty. Over the next few days we reconnoitred this arm of the Sanctuary, exploring the area up towards the Shipton Col and also the side of 'Peak 21' as this unclimbed mountain of 21,000 feet under which we camped came to be known. The views across to Nanda Devi from here were simply sublime and we often thought how we would miss it on our return to more mundane sea-level affairs! A week's supplies rapidly came to an end and we were forced to retreat to base camp again having accomplished a great deal within that time. While Peter and Ian were on 'Peak 21' the two support groups had explored the opposite side of the Changabang glacier taking photographs and obtaining different views of Changabang, Kalanka and Nanda Devi itself.

By now the majority of our time had passed and only one or two minor trips were planned by individual members exploring the Uttar Rishi glacier and also the area underneath that impressive northern face of Nanda Devi which

has been described as 'a curtain of ice rising sheer from the glacier some eight thousand feet'.

The weather which had up 'til now been fine and settled began to show signs of deterioration and while we were deciding what further exploration we could usefully do in the few days that remained, our porters suddenly appeared three to four days earlier than we expected. At first we were considerably cross since this meant that we would have to pay them if we wished to stay in the Sanctuary for one or two extra excursions rather than return immediately. They were most insistent, however, that we return straight away and were most unwilling to accept any form of compromise. At the time we did not know what motives lay behind this attitude and we ascribed to them all sorts of base reasons. In the end, however, two of our party decided to stay behind and explore Sakkram while the other five, quite tired after the excursions, marched out with the porters. It was only on this way out that we realised that our porters knew best. For scarcely had we started the long trek through the gorge when the weather changed dramatically for the worse. It began to snow and the temperature dropped like a stone. Overnight it seemed the snow level had dropped some two or three thousand feet and the tricky parts of the gorge became even more difficult to traverse. Luckily we had descended the slabs and arrived as far as Dibrughetta before life became difficult. We were, of course, concerned that the ascent from the base of the gorge over the high pass of Dharansi would be uncrossable, and our porters urged us to complete the trip as speedily as possible. While the walk-in took us eight or nine days, and, goodness knows, we thought this was hard enough, they urged us to complete the walk-out in three. I must admit we balked and they relented, allowing us a night at Dibrughetta prior to the ascent to the high pass. The northern gullies of Dharansi were wicked in the extreme and we found ourselves using ropes, ice axes and crampons to help the porters out and indeed to secure ourselves, for the exposure is quite considerable at this point. Eventually, however, we achieved Lata Kharak and then returned downhill to the civilization of Lata, which now appeared in an entirely different autumnal light—gone were the summer colours and ripening harvest to be replaced by the golden browns, a paler more watery sun and the distinct nip of autumn.

The celebrations in Lata on our return were considerable and while it was not a fatted calf but a rather stringy goat that was slaughtered for the feast, it was nevertheless enjoyed. The price of this goat exceeded that of prime beef in the average British shop but it was accompanied by large quantities of rakshi, the local wine which as the evening drew on became even more unpalatable than at first. We all woke up with hangovers the following morning which was, of course, the idea since all the 'goodies' which we no longer required (and would not dream of taking with us to the U.K.) were now distributed among the village folk who looked on this as a sort of baksheesh. We begrudged them very little as the porters had been so very expert and efficient at their job. In addition they were friendly, courageous and, unlike some of the other expeditions, we had had no serious problems with them whatsoever. It was a pleasure to see socks, gloves, watch straps,

cooking pots, primuses and all the other things disappear into their houses, with great speed.

Our journey from Lata to Delhi was as eventful as the original trip on the way in but, of course, the final irony undoubtedly came as I tried to get my medical supplies through customs. We had more trouble getting it out than bringing it in and indeed I still receive letters once a month or so from the customs at Delhi requesting that I remove my goods from Indian soil on pain of imprisonment for vast lengths of time. It really is quite difficult to tell them that we loved their country, we enjoyed their mountains but we have actually returned home.



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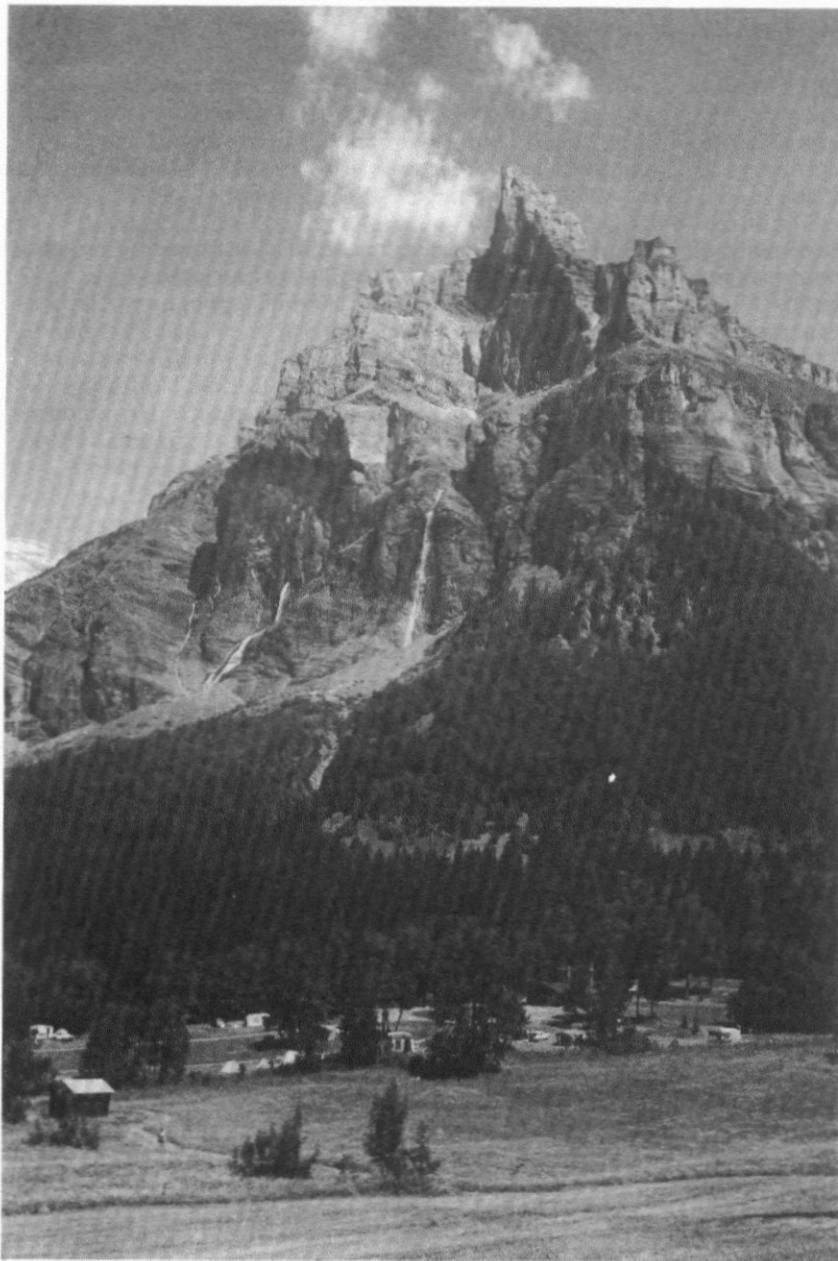
PRÉLUDE FRANÇAIS

Frank Solari

There are not so many valleys in the western Alps where one can enjoy charming villages, spectacular scenery, fine walks and a choice of worthy peaks up to 3,000 metres, a freedom from the bane of through traffic, and a well-furnished but sparsely-occupied camp-site at the foot of a splendid limestone cirque. Such a one is the valley of the Giffre which lies to the north of and parallel to that of the Arve—but the parallel ends with the generally western trend of the flow of the rivers since the Griffre knows nothing of the traffic, crowds and development that beset Chamonix, while its mountains are of an altogether cosier order than the frozen giants of the Mont Blanc range. The head of the valley is somewhat grandly titled 'Le Bout du Monde'—there is certainly no way out there but the way of the climber or at least of the competent and energetic mountain walker. On the way to the valley head from the road end (some 5 km) one passes beneath a magnificent wall of limestone, a continuation of the Cirque du Fer à Cheval which took us a little time to translate into Horseshoe Cirque. This fine range of crags from which by our count some fourteen waterfalls cascade or burst forth bears comparison with Gavarnie and greets the eye of the traveller above the delightful village of Sixt. It forms a glorious backcloth to the camp-site which is completely secluded from the traffic to the car-park at the road end and has first-class if spartan facilities.

John and Joan Whyte and Babs and I spent an idyllic week there as a warmer-upper to the 1978 Zermatt Meet. There are many walks there—abouts of any desired degree of strenuousness, either straight from camp or after only a short drive in the car. The IGN/Didier et Richard 25,000 and 50,000 maps and the D et R guide book (Massifs du Chablais et Faucigny-Genevois, Randonnées pedestres et à skis) will give you all the information you may need. We found that evergreen stand-by, Ball's Western Alps, also well worth reading, although we were reminded yet again that climbers must have been made of sterner stuff in his day. For instance, it was necessary to set out for Le Buet from the Chalets des Fonts, much lower than the lofty perch that was available to us, yet he took his climbers on to the Aiguille du Belvédère for their fill of the view of Mt. Blanc.

We were, perhaps, fortunate in the timing of our visit—in mid-July before the main flood of the French holiday season—for we were blessed by glorious weather which had followed on the heels of an unusually bad Spring. Prodigious masses of avalanche debris and snow banks down to 900 m spoke of exceptional late snowfalls and provided a remarkable range of alpine flowers, from the earliest of Spring plants just emerging from the receding snow to the blooms of high Summer a few yards away. The variety



Camp Site, Above Sixt: Frank Solari

was further enhanced by the transition from forest to open alp and by the underlying limestone.

Our week's perambulations ('training' would flatter them) culminated for John and myself in an ascent of Le Buet, 3189 m, from the Chalet-Hotel du Grenairon, 1949 m. A 5.30 start on a perfect morning took us easily up to and along the Frêtes du Grenier, a splendidly broken ridge which brought us up to the rising sun. Our ascent was subject to many interruptions as we vied with each other in drawing attention to fresh glories of the developing dawn over Mont Blanc, the summit of which was now in view across the intervening western ridge of Le Buet. After the grandest gendarme of them all, not inaptly named the Cathedral, the ridge changed character and we left it by the right flank to head for and cross the extensive snow-field of the Plan du Buet, 2545 m. Thence a long and steep bout of step-kicking took us to the north ridge of Le Buet; the splendid sight of the Chamonix Aiguilles in the morning sun which greeted our eyes as we topped the ridge gave us ample excuse for the breather we needed after the slog. Refreshed, nay, exalted, we turned our attention to the ridge—at first a steepish, broken, schisty wall, later gently rising broad flanks interspersed with more false tops than really seemed fair, and finally the summit itself where the full glory of the whole of the Mont Blanc range was laid before us, very much against the light as it was by now getting on for noon (the D et R guide-book time would have had us there two hours earlier!).

Our post-prandial snooze in the sun was interrupted by a developing bank of mist that hinted at route-finding problems, as I had rashly opted for a traverse to descend to Les Fonts by the route recommended by Ball for the ascent (and not mentioned by D et R), and we should be on unfamiliar ground. As it happened, the mist dispersed but it was as well that we left the top when we did as the descent seemed interminable. At first it was most agreeable, even including a short section of knife-edge snow ridge which brought the rope into play for the first time, but then we had a spell of disagreeably loose stuff that seemed more like steeply-inclined sludge than anything worthy of the name of rock. At length we were off that and on to steep meadow decorated by masses of white and yellow anemones, where we were secretly gratified to be able to put a French party, which had lost its way, on the track. Finally, down, down, down an abominable path that tried our endurance and patience as it wound its slippery way through chest-high vegetation that hid the uncertain footing from our sight so that we slithered and stumbled for what seemed hours. It did end, of course, though at times we doubted that it would, and we were able to slake our considerable thirst at the Chalet des Fonts which looked to have changed but little since Ball's day. It was another five or six kilometres to the car above Salvagny down the gorge of the Giffre Haut by a good track, and we were two weary climbers as we tumbled out at the tent to the welcome of our wives, but not so weary that we could not spare a thought tinged with awe for the climbers of the past who had followed Ball up that vexing and long-drawn-out route by which we had descended.

A SHORT WALK IN THE BLACK CUILLIN!

Gordon Gadsby

It was eight a.m. The great cloud galleons were slowly easing from the rough granite summits of the Red Cuillin and sweeping majestically across the wild and beautiful Glen Sligachan. Every now and then a wheatear with its prominent white rump would flit across the undulating track in front of us, whilst in the distance a cuckoo was singing in praise of morning.

Our party was comprised of Ken and Chris Bryan, Stuart Bramwell, Colin Hobday, John Welbourn and myself. The six of us had driven down from Mr. MacLead's campsite at Grenicle, Staffin Bay, in the early hours of that June morning. Now after four days of mist and rain, but with the barometer rising, it was great to be walking towards the high peaks at last.

We had two routes in mind. In the likely event of the bad weather continuing, our route would be a fairly modest excursion to Loch Coruisk, an ascent of the Corrie of Solitude (Coire an Uaigneis), then a crossing of the Cuillin ridge at the easy pass of Bealach na Glaic Mhor, descending on the north side to our starting point at Sligachan Bridge—a one day trip. If, however, the clouds and mist cleared away then our route was to last two days and would be one of the most magnificent mountaineering expeditions in the British Isles—a traverse along the jagged crest of the Cuillin Main Ridge, a bivouac on whichever peak we reached at nightfall and as many of the other summits as we could manage the next day before descending to Sligachan Bridge in time for tea.

In view of this our sacs were heavy but our hearts were light and the first four miles down the glen passed very quickly. Welbourne was in cracking form, his non-stop chatter even silencing the cuckoo. His deft footwork belied his age as he boulder hopped across the large boggy area beneath the Druim Hain Ridge. The long steady pull to the ridge crest gave us several excuses to stop and take in the view. To our left across the glen the black massiveness of Blaven was ringed at mid-height with a delicate white cloud, and further left the pinnacles of Clach Glas appeared and disappeared at will behind a thin veil of mist. The whole effect, like a page from Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings', was pure magic.

As Colin and Ken reached the crest, Colin turned to us excitedly. 'We can see Coruisk it's not far now'. Although over a thousand feet below us, the most famous loch in Britain seemed very near. Beyond the west shore of the loch, Gars Bheinn, the southern most Cuillin, was shrugging away the clouds. That decided us—come what may we would head for the Main Ridge and a night out under the stars. Its near neighbour, Sgurr Dubh, was almost ghostly as a veil of mist and rain swept between it and the ridge of Druim Nan Ramh. Coruisk, that dark dread lake, as Sir Walter Scott had called it in the eighteenth century, was as still as a millpond.



Chris Bryan and John Welbourn on the main ridge between Cars-Bheim (The Echoing Mountain) and Sgurr nan Eag (The Notched Peak):
Gordon Gadsby



Liskamm and Matterhorn from Lisjoch: Ernst Sondheimer

After an easy descent we skirted the shore and headed for Gars Bheinn, standing almost free of cloud 2934' above the dark green waters of Loch Scavaig. The South Ridge of the mountain was reputed to give a capital scramble. After several miles of rough but delightful walking, starting with crossing the Scavaig river, we began to round the steep wide flanks of Gars Bheinn and were rewarded with superb views of those magical Hebridean Islands, Eigg, Muck and Rhum. From here the ascent was steep and more or less straight up on very broken ground, until after about three quarters of an hour we reached a prominent point where the South Ridge proper began. Ahead the ridge looked sharp and interesting with at least two towers before the final summit.

At 5 p.m. we reached that peak with its large cairn. The view was impressive, the main ridge as far as Bidein Druim nan Ramh was bathed in brilliant sunshine, whilst beyond the clouds were slowly lifting and releasing that finest jewel of the Cuillin, Sgurr nan Gillean and its satellites. In the West on the Atlantic seaboard the islands of the Outer Hebrides gleamed like diamonds scattered across a silver sea—Barra, Uist, Benbecula, Harris, Lewis, Shiant, magical names all, most more than twenty miles away, yet seemingly beneath our feet.

Just then two climbers came up to us from the Sgurr nan Eag Ridge. They had just completed the traverse of the Dubhs and, obviously pleased with themselves, were on their way back to Coruisk via Gars Bheinn. We wished them good luck and as they carried on, one turned and said, 'There's a loner with three days food supply heading for the 'Gap'—your certain to catch him up—he'll be in trouble there! With that warning they were on their way.

We in turn were away, the easy scramble along the ridge over Sgurr a'Choire Bhig and then the steep ascent to the crest of Sgurr nan Eag, was pure delight. We agreed to rest and as I was eating my second Mars bar, wishing it was a cool lager, I was aware of someone behind me. I half turned just as this chap came down from the summit. I knew from past experience that loners on the Main Ridge of the Cuillin can cause one a lot of hindrance and anxiety. 'You must be really keen to attempt the ridge solo carrying all that gear' I said turning to the stranger. 'Oh, I've had two previous attempts in the other direction but failed each time. This occasion I've got three days supply of food and just intend to plod on steadily', he replied.

'We'd best be going' cut in Colin, reducing our proposed fifteen minute break to five. We wished the stranger the best of luck and set off for Sgurr Dubh. After five minutes I glanced back, the stranger was close behind us already engaged in earnest conversation with Welbourn.

After the slippery basalt of the ridge so far, it was sheer joy to reach the sun warmed gabbro of Sgurr Dubh and climb easily up the steep but broken rocks to the fine summit. Although it was 8 p.m. the sun was still high in the heavens and we could see several people on the very top of Alasdair the highest peak on Skye. We chatted about where we should bivvy and were all agreed that whatever happened we must cross the Thearlaich-Dubh Gap

before dark. This seemed simple enough at the time as the gloaming on Skye in June lasts until well after 10 p.m.

We continued along the main ridge and soon reached the base of a larger tower where we put on the rope and were soon above the impasse and on easy ground leading to the edge of the Gap. Below us three climbers prepared to tackle the impressive looking crack on the far side of the Gap. It was eighty feet high, very steep, and the only breach in the wall. Much to our surprise the leader of the party sat down below the fissure and started to take off his boots! He then produced a pair of light weight climbing shoes called P.A.s from his sac and proceeded to put them on. Welbourn arrived at this precise moment. 'Look at that—P.A.s!' he exclaimed. 'He's going to climb it in P.A.s! I'll never get up there in boots with my gammy leg'. Hearing this Ken bounded up to the edge and looked over at the difficulty. The crack seen in the half light of a Scottish gloaming looked very fierce, especially the middle section. 'You'll bomb up it Ken' I said, realising the time had come for some confidence boosting—'boots and all!'

Just at that moment the second man pulled at the rope to give the leader more freedom and as he jerked the rope from below him a heavy sac rolled free from the crevice where he had placed it. Slowly it slithered away, eluded the frantic grasp of the third man, gathered momentum and went bounding down the west gully towards Coir'A'Ghrunnda. We watched it disappear from sight, thankful at least that it wasn't a body. The time was 9.05 p.m. Almost an hour later that party of three reached the top, the third man on the rope very tired after climbing six hundred feet down the gully and back to retrieve the fallen sac!

For us sitting above the Gap the time has passed quickly as the sun dappled evening had turned to the shadow of foreboding night. In compensation we had seen the glory of a Brocken Spectre as the shapely spire of Alasdair had suddenly appeared on the clouds between Gars Bheinn and Sgurr Dubh, and just as quickly faded to nothingness as the clouds hurried away towards the Atlantic.

The abseil down the Gap was easy (although Stuart had to spend precious time showing the stranger the technique—what a time and place to learn.) True to form, Ken was up the crack like a bomb. Unfortunately the rope jammed under a small overhang and this delayed us yet again. It became a 'Backs to the Wall Job'. The only thing that mattered was to get out of that dark, damp, cold chasm and reach the purer warmer air above in the hope of finding a level stretch of ground to bivvy.

One by one the rest of us reached the top. John, gammy leg and all, went up like a rat out of a pump. Tony, a stranger no more, followed with a lot less skill but equally determined not to be left alone in the Gap. Last of all came Stuart. It was turned 11 p.m. when he reached us and he couldn't remember seeing any holds at all!

We then did a torchlight scramble up the Thearlaich Ridge and soon the two gaz stoves were humming away heating our precious brew on the col between Alasdair and Sgurr Thearlaich. All around was quiet, not even a breath of

wind to disturb the stillness. North westwards we had a limited view of the neighbouring peaks, An Stac and Sgurr Dearg, and behind them the sky still held a rosy glow. Just before midnight I passed round the tea laced with a drop of the hard stuff to celebrate my being half way to ninety. What better place for a birthday could there be than here halfway to heaven between the mountain crest and the sea.

The cold light of dawn and the rustle of John's poly bivvy bag woke me at about 3.20 a.m. Colin and Ken had already got the stoves going. The ensuing tea tasted great, even though it was brewed in last night's unwashed vegetable soup pan! We hustled another brew with the last of the water and I finished off my sardines.

A shout from Ken interrupted my thoughts. 'Come on chaps' he said, 'we'd best get on the top. The sun will be up soon'. Ten minutes later we were perched around the airy summit of Sgurr Alasdair, at 3251' the highest peak in the Hebridean Archipelago. There was a distinct chill in the air although hardly a breath of wind to motivate the eerie mist that enveloped the lower part of the ridges. Above the mist the dark saw-toothed peaks were clear and stark against a rapidly brightening sky. Beyond them the Trotternish Peninsular, the Old Man of Storr and the deep shadowed clefts of the Quirang, home of the golden eagle, showed the magnificent grandeur of Northern Skye. Looking eastwards the skyline was made up of the serrated rim of the Scottish Highlands with every valley and glen concealed from our view by the lurking mist.

Seconds later the rim of the sun emerged behind the Scottish Mainland and quickly gained height in the Eastern Skies. The transformation of dark forbidding shadows to delectable rosy hued mountains was immediate, as the once captive mist, freed by the warmer air, began to rise from the glens. Suddenly a large thin area of mist welled up from the Coruisk Basin and passed directly between us and the sun. The effect was incredible to say the least. We were enveloped in a fantasy world of pink, our clothing, skin, the rock and the sky being saturated with pink light. Around the sun was a giant halo of dazzling colour, like a rainbow, but a complete circle.

The phenomenon lasted about half a minute. In 25 years of mountaineering, I've seen nothing like it before or since. Later we realised how lucky we had been when we compared notes with our friends who had been on different parts of the ridge at the same time. They had seen nothing unusual apart from a magnificent sunrise! Whatever followed such an experience was bound to be an anti-climax and so it proved.

The seven of us carried on along the splendid main ridge from airy summit to toilsome depth, excited and eager at first, enjoying the climbing and marvellous views in all directions. But slowly an overall feeling of tiredness engulfed us one by one as we lost interest in photography and became desperately thirsty. Walking was no problem, but climbing became hazardous. Descending Sgurr na Banachdich the sight of a silvery burn thousands of feet below gleaming in the sun made up my mind. To hell with it, I must have water! I suggested that I would go down at the next opportunity. To

my surprise the other five agreed to join me. We waited ten minutes for Tony, who was lagging far behind, to reach us and told him our decision. Although looking completely shattered, he said he would carry on as he still had ample food and drink for two more days! I hope you made it mate.

We left him sitting on a boulder at 10.40 a.m., head bowed between his hands, and within minutes were zooming down the scree into the Corrie of Hares, our tiredness forgotten at the thought of reaching water.

We drank and drank endless brews by the burn. We paddled and splashed then ate what was left of our food. The last step of our journey over the gently rising Bealach a'Mhaim to Sligachan was pure joy. The gaunt Black Cullins beckoned us mockingly but we were well satisfied with our walk and our minds were still full of that magnificent sunrise, of the stillness of Coruisk, and a hundred other sights we'd seen. At about 3.40 p.m. we reached Sligachan Bridge. I thought of the words of that great mountaineer Geoffrey Winthrop Young from his poem 'Knight Errantry':

Ye who have climbed to the great veil,
Heard ye the chant? Saw ye the Grail?

We certainly had!

ROBERT LAWRIE LTD.

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DESCENT FROM THE MATTERHORN

Hamish M. Brown

Meadows of life: living, juicy scents;
Calm colours mingling as in clouds;
Waters that sprayed rainbow shocks
Of tiny clammy hands.

Alive!

Cow bells; warm fly-loved life;
Church bells; our kith and kin —
People, as dead, walking unawares;
Golden plums, pulp trickling down a chin.
God! After the thunderstorm, so close to death,
Life's bedlam was a welcome sound —
Even gaudy Breuil was joy
(Though under the pension rafters our heads beat
With a pulsing lust) Life?

Life,

Borrowed in the storm, bold life
Was handed mellow to our youth again.
Saxifrages starred the stones and scree
And a flurry of flowers flecked the grass.
As we came down, alive, from the Matterhorn.

ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.G.M. was held at The Washington Hotel, Curzon Street, London, on 29th November, 1978.

The President was in the chair, and the 24 members present included a lady for the first time.

The acoustical arrangements were imperfect as the meeting room was separated from the aperitif area by no more than a light screen. One fears that the noisy activities of the meeting may have interfered with the happy chatter of the drinkers. A further consequence is some possible lack of authenticity in this ear-witness report.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 1977 were approved.

The nominations already received for elections of Officers and Committee members were accepted without addition, and the elections were confirmed. The changes resulting are:-

Hon. Secretary	S. N. Beare in place of R. A. Coatsworth
Hon. Treasurer	R. A. Coatsworth in place of R. W. Jones
Committee members	A. I. Andrews, W. B. Midgley and J. R. Murray in place of H. D. Archer and K. J. Baldry.

All other Officers and Committee offered themselves for re-election and were so elected.

Mr. Wendell Jones presented the accounts of the Association for the year ended 30th September, 1978. These were accepted. He also discussed the draft accounts of the Company, but these have to be approved on another occasion.

The subscriptions for 1979 were set as proposed in the Circular, namely £4 Association membership and £20 S.A.C. with a discount of £1 for early payment. Apologies were made for the circumstance that the renewal notices were sent out before the rates were formally agreed, and that some notices were made out defectively, in that the discount was not mentioned.

It was proposed that the accounting date be changed, particularly to give more time for preparation of the report to the A.G.M. This was approved in principle, and the new Committee was instructed to settle the details.

Under any other business, the Chairman took the opportunity to thank Mr. Byam Grounds for his generous arrangements for providing the Association with a hut in Wales. The meeting agreed that these thanks should be recorded and that Mr. Byam Grounds should be so informed.

The Chairman further thanked the Auditor, the S.N.T.O., and Mr. Wendell Jones, who retires after 9 years' service as Hon. Treasurer of the Association, and in recent years of the Company too. These observations were received with acclaim. The Chairman's further thanks to the past Officers and Committee closed the meeting.

S. M. F.

ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS 1977-1978

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ended 30th September, 1978

		1977
<i>Income from Members</i>		
Subscriptions (Note 1)	766	1,761
Entrance Fees	32	11
Life Membership Credit	45	47
Profit on Sale of Ties	12	—
Insurance Commissions	(3)	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	852	1,819
 <i>Less: Expenditure</i>		
Hire of Rooms	200	175
Journal (Note 2)	740	611
Printing, Postage etc. SNTO	218	291
Printing, Postage etc. Association	170	129
Insurance	14	11
Entertainment	106	91
BMC Subscription	55	78
Lecture Expenses	—	11
Sundries	27	15
Welsh Hut Costs	8	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,538	1,412
	(686)	407
 <i>Add: Investment Income:-</i>		
Association Investments	162	165
Building Society Interest	110	118
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	272	283
<i>Less: Taxation (Note 3)</i>	76	67
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	196	216
 (Excess of Expenditure over Income)/		
1977 Surplus	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
	£(490)	£ 623

BALANCE SHEET

30th September, 1978

FIXED ASSETS (Note 4)		1977
Projector (N. S. Finzi Bequest)	1	1
Equipment at Swiss Tourist Office	1	1
Welsh Hut Fittings	214	—
INVESTMENTS at cost (Note 5)	1,872	1,872
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stock of Ties at cost	13	66
Debtors	184	180
Cash on Deposit—Building Society	1,542	2,258
Cash at Bank	9	74
	<u>1,748</u>	<u>2,578</u>
DEDUCT: CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current Account—ABMSAC Ltd.	904	1,112
Creditors	46	31
Subscriptions in Advance	296	184
	<u>1,246</u>	<u>1,327</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	502	1,251
	<u>£2,590</u>	<u>£3,125</u>
SOURCES OF FINANCE		
Life Membership Account	852	897
Accumulated Revenue Account		
Balance at 30th September, 1977	2,128	1,504
Add: Excess of Expenditure over Income	(490)	624
	<u>1,638</u>	<u>2,128</u>
N. S. Finzi Bequest	100	100
	<u>£2,590</u>	<u>£3,125</u>

P. S. BOULTER *President*

R. WENDELL JONES *Hon. Treasurer*

I have examined the books and vouchers of the Association and report that the attached accounts together with the notes are in accordance therewith.

J. LLYWELYN JONES

15th November, 1978

Hon. Auditor

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. <i>Subscriptions</i>	1978	1977
Income from this source is made up as follows:-		
Subscriptions: Affiliated Members		
Year to 31. 12. 78	20 @ £5	100
31. 12. 77	7 @ £5	35
Full Members		
Year to 31. 12. 78	271 @ £4	1,084
Year to 31. 12. 77		
Town	87 × £3	261
Country	219 × £2	438
	<u>306</u>	
	<u>1,184</u>	<u>734</u>
Less/Add: adjustments for subs in Advance	(113)	50
	<u>1,071</u>	<u>784</u>
(Loss)/1977 Surplus on Exchange	(394)	552
Credit re over-estimated Swiss Rates	78	420
	<u>755</u>	<u>1,756</u>
Subscriptions in respect of earlier years	11	5
	<u>£ 766</u>	<u>£1,761</u>
2. <i>Journal</i>	1978	1977
Cost of the journal is made up as follows:-		
Printing	684	583
Despatch cost and other expenses	120	123
	<u>804</u>	<u>706</u>
Less: Advertising Revenue	64	95
	<u>£ 740</u>	<u>£ 611</u>
3. <i>Taxation</i>		
The Association is liable to Corporation Tax on its income from outside sources.		
4. <i>Fixed Assets</i>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Depreciation to date</u>
New Projector (N. S. Finzi Bequest)	166	165
Equipment at Swiss National Tourist Office	80	79
Expenditure to date on Welsh Hut	214	—

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.
1,043 United States Deb. Corporation Ordinary Shares of 25p.
Cost of these holdings was £1,872. Aggregate market value at
30th September, 1978 was £2,883 (1977 £2,792).

THE ANNUAL DINNER, 29th NOVEMBER 1978

This was held at The Washington Hotel and was a little less formal than in former years, in keeping with the aims set out in the Circular. About 70 members and guests attended, and gave every indication of finding the new arrangements to their taste.

The speeches were few, comprehensive and apposite, and were received with acclaim. After the President had proposed the Royal Toast, Mr. F. A. W. Schweitzer proposed the health of the Swiss Confederation, coupled with that of His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador, whom we were so pleased and proud to have with us. Further reference was made to those *de facto* ambassadors, Mr. Rial of the Embassy and Mr. Imoberdorf of the S.N.T.O., who do so much to make the life of the A.B.M.S.A.C. easier.

Dr. Thalmann, in his gracious reply, offered us considerable sympathy and encouragement for the future.

The President reported on the state of the Association and then proposed the health of the guests and kindred clubs. His report included references to the facilities offered by the A.B.M. and thanks both to benefactors and to the past Officers and Committee, subjects which also feature in the report on the A.G.M. and in the Editorial.

Mr. P. Lloyd, President of the Alpine Club, responded. His speech was particularly notable for warm references to the cordial relationship between the Club and the Association, which have indeed a substantial membership in common. He expressed a belief and, it appeared, a hope that this relationship might tend to become even closer. The official business closed on this happy note.

The less formal purpose of the dinner is to provide a social occasion, an opportunity for friends to meet friends who are not always able to attend other functions. This purpose was achieved very effectively.

S. M. F.

THE OUTDOOR MEETS

THE ALPINE MEET—1978

Debu Bose

This year the Meet gathered at Zermatt hoping for the best climbing conditions since 1908 (or was it 1910?). The organisation was lacking in this respect and Zermatt experienced its worst August for 50 years.

The weather was made worse on the camp site by one member who un-faillingly brought the most gloomy weather reports. Indeed during one of our many squally days about half a metre of snow fell on Plateau Rosa. Nearly all the classic routes were out of condition but in spite of that a fair amount was attempted and done. Two of the largest rucksacks seen were carried up to Monte Rosa, and one party climbed Alphubel in the mistaken belief that they were on the path to Zermatt! There were many achievements and heartbreaks which no doubt every member will recount in his own way.

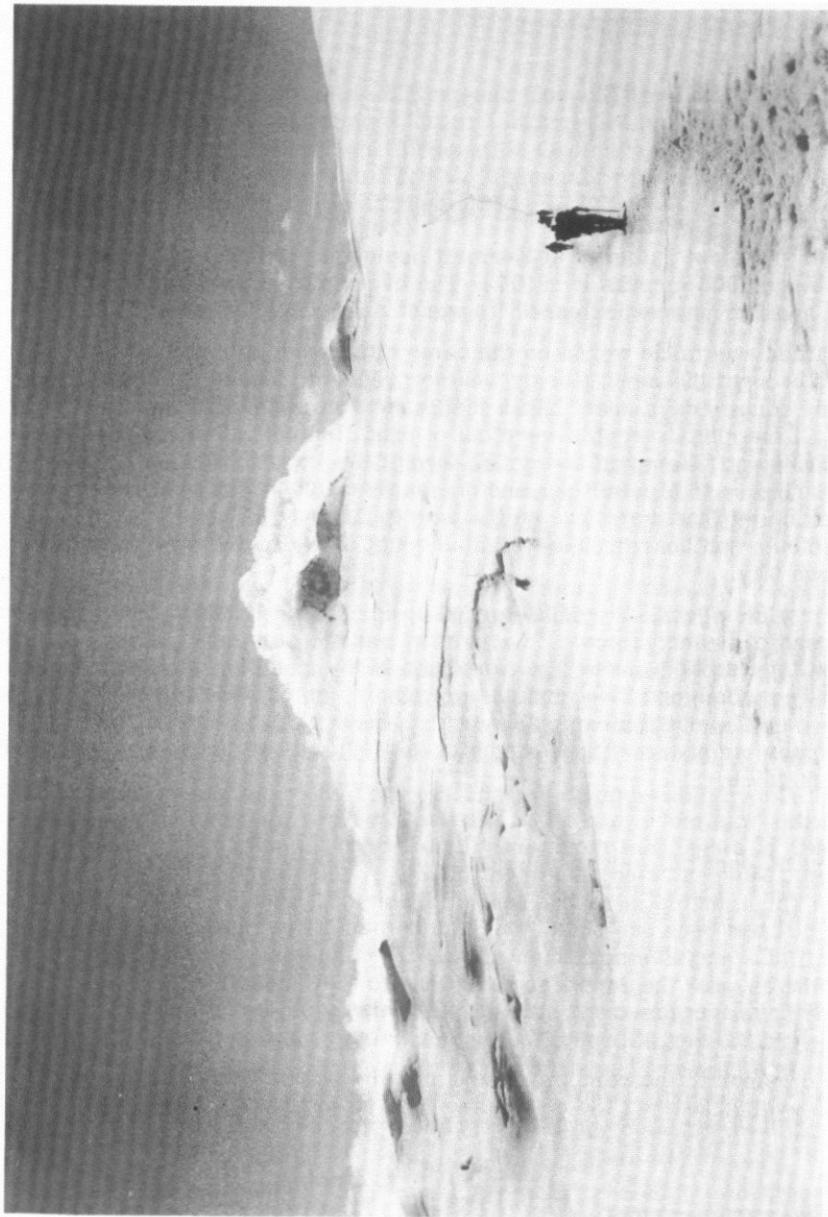
Over thirty members and guests turned up for the Meet, which this year was spread over accommodation at a hotel and the camp site. There was a very healthy mix both in the age range and in the climbing ability, a mix which only a combined hotel and camping meet can provide. Certainly, some of the younger members came away with a great deal of admiration for the more senior members. I hope a combined meet will become a regular feature of the club.

For me this was more than a bad season, for I saw what can only be the slow death of a beautiful mountain village. Soon the only open space will be the street. Multi-storied apartment blocks of very bland architectural design are springing up in Hydra-headed profusion. Even the traditional Swiss window box has been banished. Many an 'Alpen-Blick' now stares at the rear wall of a massive apartment block. The Swiss seem to be doing to their villages what the Japanese have done to their country. At least the Japanese have increased the size of their television screens from 18 inches to 19 inches, the height of the Matterhorn remains the same!

A word of cheer to the camper. The camp site will not be built on. It is too prone to avalanche! But the charges will be up next year.

HOTEL BASED SECTION

This account of the hotel based part of the Meet is incomplete because the editor has allowed his detailed notes to pass out of his hands.



Approach to Cima Di Jazzi 1978 Meet: Frank Solari

The Meet was a great social success, and the substantial attendance ranged in dignity from the President to the editor. There was more gathering together for pre-prandial drinks and conversation than one can recall ever in the past. We were comfortably housed and we went out together to dinner, joined on occasion by the campers. The administrative arrangements for social events (and almost everything else) were made by Rudolf Loewy with such quiet efficiency that we soon learnt enough sense to leave everything to him.

The weather fell short of what was desired by the seeker after high peaks. The few tops ascended included the Cima di Jazzi (in decidedly adverse conditions) and the Pointe de Zinal. A party attempting to traverse the Furgggrat was repelled by cornices and had to be content with the Furgghorn and the Theodulhorn. Innumerable parties ascended the Mettelhorn (the Trift Hotel is now very well run on hut lines), the Oberrothorn and the like. All huts within reach were visited frequently, and all paths traversed many times. Walking conditions were quite good, and the flora unusually so for the time of year. Those of us who can bear to forego the high peaks were therefore well satisfied with the Meet.

The usual walking-in party (Coales, French, French, Riddell) performed their usual energetic feats, referred to in another section and written up brilliantly in the editor's missing notes.

S. M. F.

NORTHERN DINNER MEET 1978

W. B. Midgley

Amidst much comment from the 'media' upon the dangers of venturing out onto the 'lethal' hills we held our Dinner Meet in Patterdale,—amongst the hills. The weather was a little less than perfect, but we had snow and ice this year—nearly as much as we could wish for.

On the Saturday parties disappeared into the cloud above 1500ft. (as we were in England) the snow was very good, thin in places and very icy. The strong wind and cloud produced a 'white out' and a great time was had by all.

Nearly sixty members and guests enjoyed an excellent meal at the Glenridding Hotel and enormous quantities of Baked Alaska (seconds and thirds) disappeared. Paddy Boulter, our new President, presided and Guest Speaker was Tony Husbands who showed slides of his recent expedition to the Himalayas. He apologised for not showing any mountains and then proceeded to show some fine slides of mountains and many other more unusual ethnic subjects.

Sunday's weather was poor, it appeared wetter and warmer so 'horizontal' was favoured by some after the previous days (evenings) exertions. Others (the majority) sampled the mountains.

EASTER MEET

R. A. Coatsworth

The Easter meet was held jointly with the Tuesday Climbing Club at the George Starkey Hut, Petterdale and was a suitably informal affair. About twenty members and guests attended, and went in various directions during the holiday weekend. The weather was too warm for those members who had brought crampons to use their equipment on the faces and gullies, but ice axes were carried by parties most of the time. Some members spent a chilling day rock climbing in Borrowdale whilst a large party walked the Caldbeck fells in mist. One memory of that day was to look around the boggy wilderness and see nine souls in our party each following his own line and each walking on a separate compass bearing. On other days parties went to most parts of the Eastern Fells and large parties tramped over High Street. There being no dinner, congenial evenings were spent at the local hostelrys.

CWM GLAS MEET 1978

Eddie Tuck

Having just returned from hotter places and dreaming of my first rum cooler of the day, I was brought back to reality when my 10 year old son Alistair grabbed my sack and said what about doing this one then Dad. Looking and feeling lethargic we started walking up the Heather Terrace with Tony and Suzanne Strawther, they started a climb further down the terrace, but the one we had chosen was Gashed Crag. After reaching the top we decided to carry on up the Bristly ridge and on to the Glyders. Whilst we were enjoying ourselves pottering, a party of members and guests were battling around the Welsh 3s, a fine day in the main, turning sour toward late evening, when it was arranged that a car would pick our gallant walkers up. About 10.30pm. Tony and Suzanne Strawther set off to pick them up, eventually meeting them just around midnight. Well done Richard and Andy Coatsworth and better luck next time to the rest of the party that didn't just quite make it.

On Sunday the weather was typical Welsh grot, by the time we had decided to do something it was too late.

Myself and Alistair came home in the afternoon, other members made the best of it. Richard and Andy were deciding whether or not to go around again to fill in the afternoon.

The hut I am glad to say was full with our members and friends: a pleasant change.

KINTAIL MEET 1978

J. M. Scarr

Perhaps the expected rigours of Scottish camping were responsible for the slight interest in the Kintail meet planned for the Spring bank holiday. In the event, the weather was fine throughout.

The 'leader' was driven from the campsite for long hours each day by the heat (a promised rest day at the first sign of rain never arrived). As a consequence, he and other independently minded members in the area proved mutually elusive. I can therefore only mention the activities of the former. These included: visiting Brochs in Glen Elg and elsewhere; cooling off in river pools (warmer but muddier lochans were already occupied by deer); afternoon siestas at suitable altitudes (leading occasionally to rather late return to camp); meals cooked and eaten on the shores of Loch Alsh in the rays of the setting sun; sentimental revisiting of the old road to Skye high above Loch Duich; and escaping the heat on the pleasant shore road in the shade of Coille na Totaig. The dangers of dehydration attendant on most of these activities demanded special care over ensuring adequate liquid intake each evening.

In spare moments 12 summits over 1000m and various intervening protuberances were visited during the week, ranging from Mullach Fraoch-choire and A'Chraillaig (excellent views of the north face of Nevis, and of the Coullins including the Inaccessible Pinnacle) to a final recommendable excursion traversing from Sgurr Mor to Sgurr na Ciche between Lochs Quoich and Nevis.

JULY MEET—INGLETON

R. K. W. Casselton

With the intention of toughening our members in preparation for the Alps, a camping meet was planned based on Beezley's Farm, near Ingleton, with the objective of beating the existing record for the round of The Three Peaks. Exclusive squatting rights in a field were secured, provisional tables reserved for the Saturday night meal and selected Club members personally circulated with a reminder of the delights in store for them. There was no response—not one single one. Where were you all? I refuse to believe that everyone was away in the Alps, or for that matter sufficiently conditioned not to benefit from the meet objectives. The meet leader chose to drown his sorrows in a solitary walk over the Black mountains; meanwhile I send my apologies for absence to the two members who did, after all, arrive at the farm unannounced.

S. M. Freeman

There was uncertainty as to whether this was a joint meet, an A.C. meet to which we were invited, or our regular October meet to which the A.C. were invited. Whatever the formal situation may have been, both clubs were well represented, the hut was full and several people were accommodated elsewhere in the vicinity.

The weather was suitable for walking and climbing, though with some clouds on top. This was a great improvement on preceding weekends in the hills, where the rain has fallen whilst other parts have had drought. The editor at least was out all Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and other parties appeared to have covered most of the local ground and to have spread to Eskdale, Borrowdale and Blencathra.

The dinner was a success again, and the guests were distinguished, ranging in seniority from Rusty Westmorland downwards. The speeches were all they should have been. To meet popular opinion, the editor did not speak, nor did anyone else; eating, drinking and conversation filled the time.

The meet was such a success that it would seem well worth considering whether we can revive our October meet in 1979 and hint that the A.C. also hold a meet to which they invite us.

Harold Flook

The library is very happy to acknowledge bequests of mountaineering publications of the late M. N. Clarke and N. A. Poolman.

The former includes descriptive volumes on the Alps and mountains further afield, a number of guide books to climbing in Britain and some books of mountain photographs by eminent experts such as F. S. Smythe and W. A. Poucher.

The N. A. Poolman bequest is noteworthy for a fine collection of Scottish Mountaineering Club journals. Among foreign publications there are some three dozen maps of the 1:50,000 Landescarte der Schweiz, many maps of the Austrian and Italian alps and of the 1:200,000 series of the Italian Touring Club.

There is also a magnificent set of guide books to the alps written in the large majority of cases in German, French or Italian.

These two bequests form in several respects a splendid complement to each other and we are most grateful to the donors.

MEMBERS' CLIMBS AND EXCURSIONS

Jack Ashcroft

My attendance at ABM meets leaves a lot to be desired, but this year I came so close that a few words seem appropriate. It was Spring Bank Holiday 1978 when Dave Penlington, Jim Winfield (fellow Oread M.C. members) and I spent a fortnight on the Munros of Kintail, Affric and Mullardoch. We noted before we left that the ABM had a meet based on Morvich, and this would have been our retreat had the weather turned foul, as indeed had been the case in 1977 after a wet and windy week in Knoydart. In the event, this year was entirely different, and the need to evacuate the wild and remote areas for the comparative civilization of Morvich never materialised.

Our week took us over Munros in the following order.

A'Chralaig, Mullach Fraoch—choire, Beinn Fhada, A'Ghlas-bheinn, Sgurr-nan Ceathreanhan, Sgurr d'Bhealaich Dheirg, Saileag, Sgurr an Fhuairail, Ciste Dhubh, An Socach (Affric), Creag d'Choire Aird, An Socach (Mullardoch), An Riabhachan, Sgurr-na-Lapaich, Carn-nan-Gobhar, Toll Creagach, Tom a'Choinich, Carn Eighe, Beinn Fhionlaidh, Mam Sodhail, Sgurr-na-Ciste Duibhe, Sgurr Fhuaran—22 in all covered in 7 days. We spent 3 nights at Cambar Bothy—magnificent setting—2 nights bivvying in high corries and 1 night at Glen Affric Y.H. A great week, hard to fault except for a throat infection. For treatment don't rely on drinking plenty of mountain spring water and doing what you enjoy. It doesn't work.

The rest of the year was less strenuous. The Lakes for New Year with the family, but weather miserable and little more achieved than Cat Bells!

Snowdonia in February with Castle M.C. Snowdon horseshoe from Rhyd-ddu and Nantlle Y-Garn ridge.

Cairngorms in March with family. Ski-ing in the main except for myself who was unsociable and walked.

Marsden—Edale walk in May with Castle M.C. members and sons Ian and David. Three peaks of Yorkshire and Howgills with Castle M.C. members in July.

The Alps—East Graians—for a fortnight with Oread M.C. members July/August. Climbed Gran Paradiso and Gran Serra with wife Janet and sons Peter (14) and David (12). Also did Punta Nera and Punta Pousset with Roy Eyre and Colin Hobday in inclement weather conditions. Several local walks on Kinder, Bleaklow, the Edges and Derbyshire Dales. Several climbing meets on gritstone edges with Oread and Castle M.C.

Took part in usual fell races. One Oread and one Sheffield A.C.C. No Dove Dale Dash this year. Pulled ligament. David (12) was substitute.

Jane and Ken Baldry

As is now usual, our Mountain Year started with skiing, again in Zermatt and in even better snow conditions than last year. Jane finally reached the 'go anywhere' stage on Tiefbach, Zermatt's unimpressive but enjoyable version of the 'hardest run in the Alps'. Just over the frontier, Breuil was closed for three days but, when we finally got over, the avalanche damage to the ski tows was sobering.

It may be all right for skiing but the general weather seems to be getting worse and worse. As Jane had to go to Mexico in June, I went off by myself to the Berner Oberland for a week. Intending to cross from Adelboden to Leukerbad, I found myself cutting steps up the path to Engstligenalp, which was under a metre of snow. Obviously, I was too early and so, retreated to Adelboden then made my way westwards until I could get over the main ridge. This proved to be a protracted operation. I crossed the Hahnenmoos to Lenk which is a much nicer village than Adelboden. The landlady there took one look at me and gave me a free ticket to the swimming pool! I was warned not to cross the Truttlisberg Pass to Lauenen but this proved to be eyewash although there was still quite a lot of snow as well as a good selection of alpine flowers. I carried on over the very wet Krinnen Pass to Gsteig that day, making 25 miles altogether. The Sanetsch Pass looked open from below so I had my chance to cross the main ridge. The local advice was negative as usual but one old boy told me to follow the pylons if the road was buried in snow. It was. I believe I was the first walker over this year but I met some skiers on the Valais side who filled me up with Fendant, the local wine. The top of the Sanetsch is a long gentle slope from which you can see nothing below. It is a very pleasant three miles if you like your own company in wild surroundings. The long plod down to Chandolin in Valais nearly had me on my knees but I was rewarded by a folklore filled hotel run by a rather odd couple.

It was time for a rest day so I cadged a lift to Sion and took the train and bus to Leukerbad. I had no particular reason to go there but, as it had been my original first objective, I had got as obsessed as a First War general. From there, I walked over the Gemmi to Kandersteg. This too, was snowed up and an avalanche had run off the Rinderhorn into the Daubensee, like a Greenland glacier. With broken cloud, the lighting was magnificent. I stopped for lunch at the new improved, double-sized Schwarenbach where I was asked to give their regards to a list of my fellow ABM members. From Kandersteg, I caught a train to Bern where I achieved the only summit of the trip, the Gurten. At least, it gives a good view.

In the Autumn, Jane and I went to Sorrento, not a place for SAC members, perhaps, but we chalked up Vesuvius as another summit. The coach dumped us at the foot of the summit cone (where an opportunist sells training shoes) and the courier told the party to follow the guide, me! Lava makes a gritty scree and the crater was not heaving and bubbling. It was still worthwhile. Next year, we are skiing in Kitzbuhel but have no summer plans. Let us all hope for better weather.



Corsica: Donald Clarke

P. S. Boulter

In January we went to Switzerland again—this time however we had our two older grandchildren with us. At 5 and 3½ they made great progress on their 35 Franc supermarket skis and we hope that this is the start of a habit. The snow conditions at Lenzerheide were so good that we stayed on the local mountains and did day tours.

Apart from odd short week-ends we saw little of the hills until the end of May when we had a combined climbing and fishing holiday in North Uist and Harris. On North Uist we did the lovely walk round from Lõcheport by Loch Obisary to Eaval. This, the highest hill on the island involves a long and quite remote round with the reward of splendid views over the Minch and up and down the Hebridean chain. On Harris we did some of our favourites and had a good but very windy day for the Clisham.

The endless Hebridean June day allows so much to happen—fishing and climbing are easily accommodated in 22 hours of daylight.

Then with high hopes we set off for Zermatt at the end of July. The meet (described elsewhere) was very enjoyable and it is only a pity that the Oberrothorn, Mettelhorn and Cima de Jazzi were our high points of the holiday. However plenty of walking was done and the mountaineering fiasco was redeemed by the splendour of the Alpine flowers and the excellence of the company.

We look forward to a more adventurous mountain year in 1979!

Hamish M. Brown

Scotland actually had plenty of snow for once this last winter and gave some good climbing, ski-touring—and being snowed in in the big February storm (conveniently outside a friend's house!). It was almost sad to go off to sunny Morocco. With the Eagle Ski Club a long-desired crossing was made of the M'Goun Massif—a most enjoyable trek, climb and ski adventure despite difficulties. Other escapades ended in storm to continue the pattern. A bivy on top of Cezanne's Montagne Sainte-Victoire was rained on and a late winter prevented much being done on the bigger Corsican peaks—about which others have written. A coast-to-coast trek from Knoydart to Montrose with a 'client' was a good autumn trip and October was spent galavanting about the peaks of Ireland. Morocco is becoming an annual event now and there is always a coming-and-going of friends so any ABM members would be welcome too.

G. R. E. Brooke

A quiet but pleasant year, with visits to the hills of England, Scotland and Wales.

To Buttermere, Lakeland in late April for ridge-walks over Grassmoor, Wandhope, Eel Crag, Sail and Causey Pike, Hobcarton Pike and Whiteside in often cold but dry conditions.

Scotland in July, firstly to Killin, Perthshire, for an ascent of Meall nan Tarmachan on a day of passing showers; then a hectic traverse of Ben Ghlas and Ben Lawers in wild, stormy conditions. And so on to Spean Bridge for some longer days among the Grey Corries. Along the Lairig Leacach to Stob Coire na Ceannan with a traverse of the attractive intervening ridge to Stob Coire Clairigh. Cruach Innse provided a less arduous day under over-cast skies but Sgurr Innse, approached from Tulloch, proved a notably steep little peak.

In the Indian summer of October, a brief visit to Machynlleth, Central Wales, with walks over Taren y Gesail and Taren Hendre.

Mike Clayton

The mountains change and yet are ageless.

I left my car at Ogwen at about 23.00 on the Friday of Spring Bank Holiday just as I have done for the last 15 years or so, and as it was a clear, warm night, I had the chance to reflect upon how this little bit of mountain has changed. Fifteen years ago the path from Ogwen to Idwal was an adventure in miniature. Torchless, bowed beneath a heavy sack, it presented a challenge to reach the Cwm without getting lost, breaking a leg or at least avoiding a boatful of mud. Now drained, engineered and fenced it has become a pleasant stroll.

I suppose one should not complain about abundance of riches but the following two days were blessed with such fine weather that walking became a struggle to evade the flies and find a breeze. Elidir Fawr and Craig Llugwy will be remembered kindly, but the effort required to reach these points was too great. One Monday I matched Alpine tactics to Alpine conditions, emerging thankfully from a hot sleeping bag at 04.00. Spending 1½ hours over breakfast did not seem wasteful as with golden light rising like a curtain from the east I gazed at the placid lake and drowsing peaks as yet unobscured by haze. Exhilarating and effortless walking took me to the top of Tryfan by 07.00 and after a short break I was away up Bristly Ridge where the cool rock seemed to slide downwards as I stood still. A second breakfast on Glyder Fach gave me another chance to savour the glorious morning. A low sun throwing peaks and ridges into sharp relief, soft greens and browns in the valleys, blue distant ranges and above all complete silence. This is the ageless face of mountains which seemingly can never change. A romp down the Gribin and by 10.15 I was back at the tent drinking tea and feeling somewhat smug as I watched the first of the day's back-packers slogging up from Ogwen in the growing heat. By the time the flies emerged I was on my way home.

September found myself and my sister in Switzerland again and, like last year, we spent the first 5 days in the Val D'Hérens.

Day 1 was a training walk to Arbey and another chance to see that superb view of the Dent Blanche. Trying to contour through La Niva, La Creta and La Couta we got partially lost when the old path disappeared under new tarmac but we eventually found a way down to Les Haudères and so back to Evolène.

During the following night it rained and in the morning clouds still partially filled the sky, so we cancelled a projected trip to the Cab. Bertol and decided instead to walk from Forcla over the Col de la Couronne to the Cab. Moiry, returning next day via the Col de Torrent.

I was still suffering from the effects of English flu which slowed us down considerably, and it must also have impaired my other faculties for halfway to the col I changed direction for the Col De Breona which looked easier, but failed to give due attention to the map. The result was that on reaching our col, we found that the descent and climb necessary to reach the hut could hardly be accomplished before dark, so we abandoned the route and returned to the fleshpots.

The next two days were occupied by a traverse of the Pigne D'Arolla from the Cab. Des Vignettes and returning to Arolla via the Cols de Brewey, de la Serpentine and Pas de Chèvres, a route which we first did in 1976 and one well worth repeating. The snow conditions were perfect and the weather impeccable apart from a vicious wind on top of the Pigne, whose effects we failed to realise until hataches set in on the way down across the Col De Brewey. I feel that a second ascent is often worthwhile, especially for the person at the sharp end of the rope who, unfettered by cares of route finding and timing, can then appreciate the situation better. Certainly this particular route is a little gem for low standard/unfit alpinists such as ourselves.

On the 16th we moved over to the Mattertal hut again, used the odd half day by going round to the Saastal and taking the Felskin lift to reach the Britannia hut.

Saas Fee seems to sprout new 'facilities' each year, this time in the shape of all-weather tennis courts and football pitches, though there are at least four cows still in the vicinity of the village.

Those who have not visited the Britannia hut recently will find that the warden now has a penchant for notices and an unusual line in alarm calls, to wit martial music (presumably recorded) played very loudly at 03.30, but these things are no doubt made necessary by the large number of day visitors who are encouraged by the Felskin lift by which we ourselves had ascended etc. etc. and that could be a long argument.

However, the mountains are the same as ever and this year we hoped to complete a long projected ascent of the Strahlhorn. Once again conditions were ideal and we followed 'without possible error' the route via the Alder-pass, a bit of a trudge but a fine day.

Note that all routes south from the hut now seem to pass (E) of point 3143.3, rather than above as described in 'Selected Climbs' and that this, along with a general recession of the Hohlau and Allalin glaciers can add about 500' to your day and necessitates an unpleasantly stiff pull up to the hut on return.

After a 'rest' day we decided to visit the Schönbiel hut as we had never really explored this side of the Zermatt area. We cheated by taking the lift to Schwarzsee but were rewarded by the beautiful walk down over Stafelalp and our first close up view of the Matterhorn north face. During the late afternoon clouds rolled up from the west and began to swirl round the Matterhorn. Anyone who has read 'Scrambles' could hardly witness such a thing without calling to mind Whympers's graphic accounts of storms on the peak, but I could not help wondering what he and his comrades would have made of Sommerski and Hallenbaden.

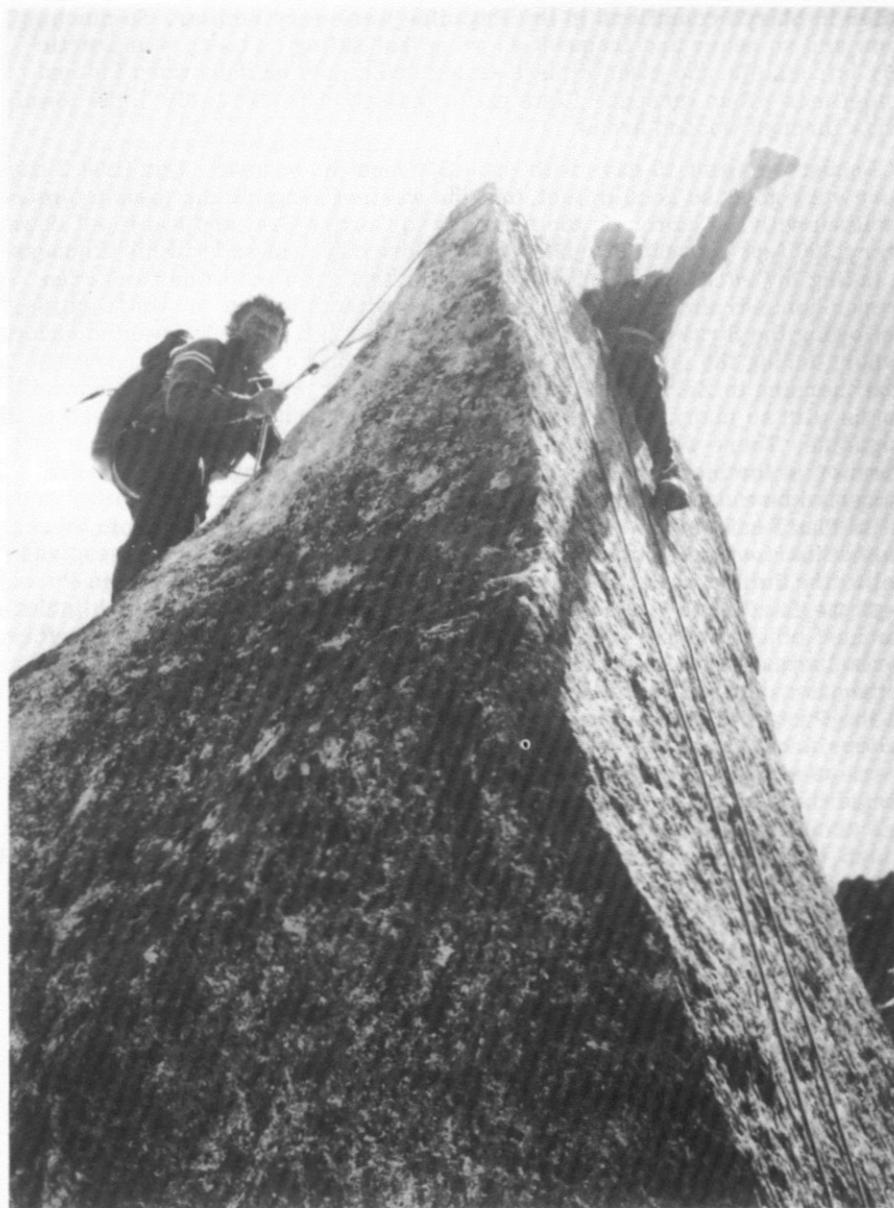
We had hoped to have a look at Pte. De Zinal or Mt. Durand, and contrary to all expectations the weather was favourable, with just a sea of cloud filling the valley at about Schwarzsee level. However, a late start and two long halts to admire the rising sun on the Matterhorn and Dent D'Herens meant that we did not reach the saddle overlooking the Hohwang glacier until 09.00. Furthermore we were not going well, probably due to our exertions of the previous days and a failure to replace lost weight with an adequate food supply, (too much wine and not enough chips?) so we told ourselves that we had reconnoitred the route for another year and stayed on the saddle for an hour watching the clouds disperse. Then back to the hut for another long laze on the terrace before walking back to Zermatt.

Considering the fine weather and ideal snow conditions we ought to have done more big peaks, although in total we climbed more and walked further than ever before on an Alpine trip, so I think we can say that we did our best.

W. Kirstein

In December 77 I skied with my daughter's family in the Sierra Nevada, California. My 14 years old grandson won all races in his age-class. Snow was good, but visibility poor, except when skiing through the woods, because it was snowing practically every day.

In January we, Bertha and I, flew from Las Vegas to and across the Grand Canyon. It had been snowing the day before, and during our one day visit it was sunny and clear. I had told the pilot of the little plane that I was used to photographing mountains in the Alps—and he told me that he was the president of that airline and that he would try to fly in such a way that I could be sure to get some nice photos. I got them, but the ones he was interested in later were the photos which I took during our stay on the ground, the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.



On the Gallo: Walter Kirstein

Later in March conditions in the Engadine were very similar. So much snow and so heavy and frequent snowing that skiing on tours was practically impossible, and even offpiste skiing could only be done when the sun sometimes broke through. Piste skiing was good, particularly in the lower parts through wooded areas.

In August we spent 10 days with the ABM meet in Zermatt. Our first 3 days were very good, so good in fact, that the weather tempted me to do too much. I walked with the editor on the first day to Gorner Grat and had to sit down every 200 feet between Rotenboden and Gornergrat in spite of his kindness in taking my rucksack. It only shows again, that good conditions and even proper home-training are not good enough without proper acclimatisation. Following the Strawthers up to the Rothornhut on the 3rd day was no success either: during the night in the hut the weather broke and we returned the next morning to Zermatt. By the end of the week, which was very enjoyable for us with so many of our old friends with us on our walks, we moved to the Engadine. There we had the most gorgeous weather I have ever had in summer in the mountains. First I went with Stuart Ferguson on the Piz Languard on a day when the view from the summit was more beautiful and clear than I have ever seen Palu and the other high mountains from there. Later Stuart walked with me from the Silser Lake across the Grivasalvas Col to the Julier, whilst Bertha took the car round to fetch us, and in the next week we, Stuart and I, climbed the Gallo in the Albigna Valley, which included amongst other things a free abseil, a kind of abseil I had never done before. We had a marvellous day for our climb, warm sun and blue sky; the only setback was an accident resulting from a rockfall, which we could observe on the Punta d'Albigna, 2½ miles away on the other side of the Albigna valley. A horizontal slab, sticking out of the vertical face and used for many years as stance for taking the following rope members up, collapsed and buried the leading guide with the other 2 climbers on his rope. I mention this accident because I had once, near Saas Almagel, the experience of such a slab, though much smaller than the Albigna one, moving downwards when I touched it. I could ease it back into the original position, but I feel one should never trust such a slab.

Will McLewin

Not a bad year overall: disappointments over the small amount of rock climbing and my good intentions regarding club meets were balanced by some very satisfying fell running and some superb days in the Alps. 'Running' is a rather generous description—I think that really I am pioneering a new activity, called fell-shuffling, but after so many years of walking in boots and carrying a rucksack I do wonder ruefully why it took me so long to discover just how fantastic it can be trotting round Bleaklow on a sunny morning while the rest of the world is still asleep.

Overall impressions from the Alps were of long approaches, mostly in the Bernese Oberland, which revealed more wild life than usual, and the best spell of mountain weather I've ever known.

Solo

Lauteraarhorn by the S-W ridge. A fourteen hour epic in dreadful snow conditions. The description in the English guide book omits a very nasty section just before the traverse on the S. face, which makes it a rather more serious undertaking.

With B. Wood

Aletschorn by the Hasler rib—excellent pleasant route. Gross Grünhorn, via the Ewigschneefeld—the serac zone was rather tricky, but very beautiful. Finsteraarhorn by S-W flank and N-W ridge. The long approach walk from Fieschertal really is not so bad, and there is an excellent bivouac site just below the hut.

Solo

Dent Blanche by S ridge. Having twice before used a day's good weather to walk up and bivouac by the Rossier hut only to be snowed on and to have to walk down again, I decided to put the fitness gained so painfully in the Oberland to good use and left Ferpècle at 4.00 a.m. Walking up with a lighter than usual sack was very pleasant and after a few minutes sit for a late breakfast at the hut, I left there at 8.00 and was on top just before 11.00.

There must have been about 12 other parties on the route which made life a bit awkward in places. One party in particular went to some trouble to add to the interest of the only really difficult bit by the Grande Gendarme. Their leader gave me an impassioned impromptu lecture on the dangers of soloing and his three companions reinforced his remarks by walking to and fro along the cornice above and kicking down lumps of snow and ice.

Solo

Obergabelhorn by E-N-E ridge over the Wellenkuppe. An avalanche had blocked the road and the railway to Zermatt just above Randa, so I had a detour through the woods and then the walk along the road to Zermatt as an overture to walking up to the Rothorn hut. Yet another superb bivouac made it all worthwhile. Next morning no-one else was about, even when I left at 4.15, and to my surprise I did not see a single person until I was going back over the Wellenkuppe at about 9.25, having sat on the summit for nearly an hour.

Brooke Midgley

In 1977 I didn't write up my activities as I couldn't make time so why I should this year when I've even less time I will never know. Possibly reminders from Hon. Ed. must have stirred my laziness—He must be desperate for copy!

New Year—Patterdale at the Hut—one fair day, one poor day and one perfect day with powder snow; very new, which blew in a plume from Catsy Camm. The children had not been on Catsy Camm in winter so they had a new experience and tested their new gear.

Northern Dinner Meet is reported elsewhere (I hope). One good day out on the meet on which Tony Husbands dangled me over a crag in a 'white out' to test how far down it was (I think)!!

The weekend after the dinner we returned to Patterdale amid dire warnings from the media not to venture onto the hills as they were in lethal condition. The children (8 and 10) roped, with ice axes and crampons, had a great time, as we all did, just going up to Red Tarn. It was too cloudy, windy and cold to take them onto the ridge. We managed one day skiing (lousy conditions but it made a change) and two days walking (the adults managed a route or two) and I managed to give a television interview. The television crew had turned up in the valley at mid-day—so I was the only one around!!!

A maintenance meet in March brought us back again in good weather as it always is for maintenance meets. (Work that one out). But work ensured we did not set foot on the hills. (It is rewarding being perfect).

At the end of March/early April we had a couple of glorious weeks skiing in Val d'Aosta. It was the childrens' first skiing holiday and we used the mechanical 'up' around La Thuille which provided suitable 'Blue' runs for the children and me. They were skiing parallel before we came home and Gilly, the younger daughter, took me down a black run which she had been using for part of the day. She nearly frightened me to death and was uncatchable as far as I was concerned. I comforted myself with the thought that I had to drive them back and couldn't afford a broken leg.

The last weekend in April we were back in Patterdale at the hut. A number of children and parents walked around Place Fell—a splendid short day out. On the Sunday we had a really foul day on the Dodds and down Sticks Pass starting from Dockray. We had extremely thick cloud and horizontal sleet.

The next trip to Patterdale was early June and it was almost too hot. We did a short walk in Long Sleddale and another in Deepdale—both have good swimming pools.

The next trip to Italy was at the end of June/early July, again to Val d'Aosta. We borrowed a good friend's house which seems ideal for family holidays. This year it was much cooler than previous years and the snow line was fantastically low—it appeared not to have changed much from Easter. We had a few days skiing on the Géant Glacier and Petit St. Bernard; a few days good walking and an abortive attempt at the children's first peak from the Refugio Deffreys. At least they had their first night at a hut although the day designated for the climb was bad—low cloud, soft new snow (about 30 cms fell during the morning). A very enjoyable holiday despite not having set foot on a peak (that may even be the reason I enjoyed it).

First weekend back we went to Ingleton (for a change) to a very 'thinly'

attended but enjoyable meet. Camping at Breezley's Farm in good weather and luxury! The children now have their own tent.

Back to Patterdale in early August for 3 poor days. One spent climbing with the children on a small crag close to the hut; another spent collecting rocks in Mungrisedale; the third screwing bits and pieces together in the hut.

Tony Strawther's meet in Wales at the Pinnacle Club Hut was up to his usual standard—B wet and equally windy—enjoyable nevertheless.

October and another maintenance meet in perfect weather—it never fails—maybe Tony could work out some ploy to fool the weather—for just one meet!

October must be a good month as we had yet another three days in Patterdale which coincided with the joint A.C./A.B.M.S.A.C. Meet. Pleasant days out over Hart Crag, Fairfield, St. Sundays etc. Even had a day over Helvelyn via Swirral and Striding Edges which was enjoyable. A less enjoyable day, but pleasing nevertheless was spent in thick cloud (practising using a compass and map—I need the practice) from Kirkstone Pass over High Street to the hut.

Missed a weekend then back again to Patterdale in early November with friends and families. Saturday was damp with cloud to valley level so we did a group low level walk missing all the pubs much to the childrens disgust. Sunday was much the same so we all went up to Grisedale Slabs and most managed the hard(diff) start. Little Gilly insisted that she must do it also as all the others had—so she and I did just that in a screaming gale and lashing rain!!! All the others had returned to the hut before the really bad weather had started. It's a long time since I've been keen enough to rock climb in weather like that—one forgets how nice it is to stop!!

We now look forward to Christmas in the hills—but where? and will there be snow again? and planning next year's visits to the hills and meets. If we go at Christmas how do we manage to transport all the presents—it was never like this when the climbing sack was not unpacked from one weekend to the next—life is full of problems—I shall give up and take up serious drinking!!!

John Milburn

Once again I continue from my last entry in the 1978 Journal.

As in the previous year, 1978 turned out again to be a very successful year. Because of the number of long distance walks I did, many of the smaller hills in other parts of the country, and the countryside itself, were visited for the first time. Many new friends were made, whom one usually meets again at some future events.

1977

Dec. 4th Ennerdale; Great Borne to Scarth Gap ridge. Gatesgarth.

Dec. 18th Millbeck; Carsleddam, Carl Side Col. Skiddaw. Skiddaw House. Keswick.

- 1978
- Jan. 8th Stonethwaite: Dock Tarn. Watendlath. Brund Fell. Falcon Crag. Walla Crag. Keswick.
- Jan. 15th Gatesgarth: Pillar.
- Jan. 22nd Braithwaite: Newlands Pass. Little Town. Dalehead Tarn. Rigghead Quarries. Grange. Keswick.
- Feb. 18th Gutherscale: Catbells to High Spy. Return by same route.
- Feb. 19th Glenridding: Sticks Pass. Raise. Sticks. Threlkeld. Very bad snow and ice conditions with high winds. Conditions in parts were very dangerous.
- Mar. 4th West Cleveland Circuit. A 26 mile circular walk from Osmotherley. This route largely encompasses two routes in the middle section of the White Rose Walk, known as the Foliage Section. From Osmotherley it picks up the Lyke Wake track to Huthwaite Green. From here, a steep climb up to Live Moor, then ascending *Holey Moor*. On to Carlton Bank and past the glider field. A descent is then made to the Carlton Road, and an ascent of Cringle Moor. From Cringle Moor a slight descent, and then a short climb up to Cold Moor. Keeping to the edge, an ascent of the rocky outcrop of Wainstones and onto Hasty Bank, before descending to the road and Clay Bank Top. By now the sun had come out, liking it to a summers day. A brief break for coffee. From here the route is continued to Botton Head. A descent is then made over Urra Moor to the road at Seave Green, then by road for about a mile to Chop Gate. Liquid refreshments can be had at the Buck Inn. Ascend Cock Howe, then join the Arnsgill Ridge track, which eventually brings you out at Wheat Beck. A steep ascent to Arden Moor and on to Whitestones, then the long descent to the starting point. A most enjoyable circuit.
- Mar. 5th Troutbeck: Garburn Pass. Yoke. Ill Bell. Froswick. High Street. High Raise. Wether Hill. Pooley Bridge.
- Mar. 12th 2nd Workington to Keswick Charity Walk.
Distance: 32 miles.
By road, first to Ullock, then down the Lorton Valley to Buttermere. From there, over Honister Pass to Seatoller, Grange, and ending in the Moot Hall, Keswick. I managed to run the first fifteen miles or so, then knee trouble slowed me down to walking pace, so losing me the fast time made at the start. A good fun walk and one to do again next year.
- Mar. 19th Lamplugh Fells, and Tatle Pot at the Horse Shoe Inn, Lorton afterwards.
- Mar. 25th Malham: Stayed at Malham Youth Hostel. Visited Gordale Scar, then over the moor to Arncliffe, and a beer at the local.

- Mar. 26th Great Whernside: On the second day of our visit to Malham, we climbed Great Whernside from Conistone via Mosedale Scar. Due to a combination of snow on heather the walk proved rather strenuous.
With members of the Workington Rambling Club.
- Apr. 8th 16th Mid-Wales Mountain Marathon.
Dinas Mawddwy Y.H.A. to Kings Y.H.A. Dolgellau.
Distance: 25 miles.
A short walk by road and then up onto Bwlch Siglen. The route from there followed the edge of Craig Maesglasen and onto Maen Ddu. The going was easy over the Maesglasen plateau, after the steep climb up beforehand. Over the Summit of Waun Oer, then a descent of about 1500 ft. into Cwm Ratgoed, followed by an ascent of about 1200 ft. A descent to the A487 then up onto the Cader Idris group, Mynydd Moel, Pen-y-Gader, Rhiw Gwredydd, to end at the Kings Y.H. A most enjoyable first visit to the Welsh mountains.
- Apr. 16th Steel Fell. Calf Crag. Head of Far Easedale. High Raise. Sergeant Man. Blea Rigg. Silver How. Grasmere.
- Apr. 23rd Workington British Legion Sponsored Walk.
Coniston to Workington.
Distance: 41 miles.
Only four people took part in this walk, as was intended, and the sponsors were found by the British Legion.
- Apr. 29/30 Yorkshire's Three Peaks Walk.
Pen-y-ghent. Whernside. Ingleborough.
On the Saturday, with two friends, I did the Three Peaks, and on Sunday we saw the start of the Three Peaks race.
- May 14th Patterdale: Greenside. Helvellyn. St. Sunday.
- May 20th Spring in Lakeland.
CAMRA Walk (Campaign for Real Ale).
The route, of approximately 28 miles, and taking us through some very beautiful parts of Lakeland, started from Ambleside Y.H.A. through Troutbeck, over Orrest Head, Bowness, Far Sawrey (crossing Windermere by ferry), Hawkshead, Eiterwater, Grasmere, Ambleside, and finishing in the Golden Rule.
- May 27/28 Glen Shiel.
Saddle and Forcan Ridge. The Five Sisters.
- Jun. 4th Chevy Chase Walk. Wooler Y.H. and return.
Distance: 17 miles.
Route: Broadstruther Ruin. Cheviot summit. Hedgehope. Langlee Crags.
- Jun. 10th Howgill Fells.
Fairmile: Fell Head. Bush Howe. White Fell Head. The Calf. Bram Rigg. Calders. Arant Haw.

- Jun. 11th Eden Valley Walk. Wetherall to Armathwaite. Approximately 9 miles of the Eden Valley Walk, following the River Eden along the riverside path and through woods.
- Jun. 17th 14th Annual Lakes Four Three-Thousand Peaks Marathon Walk. Distance: 46 miles. Route: Skiddaw and return to Keswick. Borrowdale Valley to Seathwaite. Scafell via the Corridor route. Scafell Pike. Esk Hause. High Raise. Steel End. Helvellyn. Stanah. Keswick.
- Jun. 24th Mallerstang Marathon. High Seat. Lamps Moss. Nine Standards Rigg. Tailbridge Hill. Dalefoot Farm. Wildboar Fell. Turner Hill. Garsdale Head Y.H. Distance: 25 miles.
- Jul. 9th Grasmere: Helm Crag. Sargeant Man. High Raise. Greenup Gill. Stonethwaite.
- Jul. 15/16 8th North Yorks Moors Crosses Walk. Start and Finish: Goathland. Distance: 53 miles.
- Jul. 22nd Ennerdale Horsehose: An attempt at the Ennerdale round, but had to come off it on Pillar due to very bad weather conditions.
- Aug. 20th Langdale: The Band. Bow Fell. Crinkle Crag. Pike O'Blisco.
- Aug. 26th Robinson from Newlands Church. Descended by the Hindscarth ridge.
- Sep. 2/3 3rd Bullock Smithy Hike. A circular from Hazel Grove, Stockport, and a distance of 56 miles.
- Sep. 9th Kendal Gathering Walk. Preston to Kendal. Transport took about two dozen of us from Kendal to Preston, where at midnight on Friday we set off to walk the full 57 miles along the tow path of the Lancaster Canal back to Kendal. A rather boring walk I thought, with very little change in scenery.
- Sep. 16th 2nd Teesdale Marathon.
- Oct. 1st Threlkeld: Blencathra. Gategill Fell Top. Mungrisedale. Burnt Horse. Skiddaw. Ullock Pike. Bass Village.
- Oct. 7/8 12th Longmynd Hike. Start and Finish: Church Stretton. Distance: 50 miles. Taking in The Lawley. Stiperstones. Corndon. Caer Caradoc, and other high ground. Nice countryside.
- Oct. 15th A stroll down the Borrowdale Valley.
- Oct. 27/28 Captain Cook Memorial Walk. This was a 44 mile walk to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the birth of James Cook. Starting from Marton, nr. Middlesborough where he was born, and finishing at Whitby where he was an apprenticed seaman. The route passed through Great Ayton

where he spent his childhood and was educated, the Cook Monument on Easby Moor, and Staithes where he was an assistant shopkeeper. After a descent into the narrow streets of Staithes came a steep ascent to join the cliff path to Whitby. This part of the coastal path is some 10 miles long and is part of the Cleveland Way. In bright sunshine, some fine views of this stretch of rugged coastline were to be seen.

- Nov. 3/4 Patterdale: G.S. Hut. Arrived Friday night with my son. No one else there, and continuous rain all day Saturday made us decide to return home Saturday night, sooner than intended.
- Nov. 12th Fleetwith Pike. Great Gable. Wasdale.
- Nov. 26th Seathwaite: Corridor route. Lingmell. Scafell Pike. Great End. Grains Gill. First fall of snow and a beautiful sunny day.

Barrie Pennett

My year commenced with an enjoyable ramble in Wharfedale with my wife, Valerie and son David (8). On January 2nd we walked in the Dob Park area to Timble where welcome refreshment was enjoyed at the village inn. On January 3rd I had a walk in the Otley area taking in the Chevin.

February saw us at the hut in Patterdale where we spent four enjoyable but bitterly cold days. We enjoyed skiing and sledging at Kirkstone Pass and short walks around Patterdale and Glenridding. One walk, which proved delightful, was to Lanty's Tarn, Keldas to Glenridding and then onto Glenridding Dodd (1425 ft). Another day we did a short excursion to Arnison Crag (1424 ft) in the morning and then up to the Kirkstone Pass for more winter sports. On our way home we walked up Gowbarrow Fell (1579 ft) and then stopped at Windermere where we visited the view point of Orrest Head. During our stay we met Brooke Midgley and family.

On Good Friday we visited the Lake District for the day and did Helm Crag (1299 ft) and Gibson Knott (1379 ft).

April saw us back in Patterdale where we attended the Meet at the George Starkey Hut. On the Saturday we had a full day in the fells covering Hartsop Above How (1870 ft), Hart Crag (2698 ft), Fairfield (2863 ft), Cofa Pike (2700 ft), St. Sunday Crag (2756 ft) and Birks (2040 ft). On the Sunday we walked up Red Screes (2541 ft) from the valley and returned by Middle Dodd (2106 ft).

We once again returned to the hut at Patterdale in May where we met Mr S. M. Freeman, editor of the Journal. My wife and myself and our son David drove over to Seathwaite in Borrowdale where we climbed Scafell Pike (3210 ft) by the Corridor route. It was extremely hot and on our return journey over Great End (2984 ft) my son and I bathed at Cockley Bridge.

On May 31st we climbed Helvellyn (3118 ft) by Striding Edge and returned to Patterdale by Nethermost Pike (2920 ft) and Dollywaggon Pike (2810 ft). On June 1st we completed a short walk taking in Place Fell (2154 ft).

Later in June we spent a week at Mortehoe, near Wollacombe, North Devon. We were fortunate in having hot weather but nevertheless we did manage to do a little walking on the Downs taking in parts of the Coastal Path route. On June 20th after a day on the beach we walked to Potters Hill and later onto Morte Point. On June 22nd we walked from Mortehoe to Bull Point, Bennett's Mouth, Damage Cliffs, Kinever Valley and Lee. We returned from Lee by Damage Barton, Yarde Farm and Easewell.

On June 23rd we walked from Mortehoe to Grunta Beach, Combegate Beach, Barricane Beach and then walked along the Combesgate Valley to Twitchen and back to Mortehoe.

Household chores (gardening, painting etc) plus a sprained ankle put a curb to my activities for a number of weeks but when October arrived my family and I once again found ourselves in the Lake District. We stayed at a farm in Borrowdale and did quite a lot of walking, taking in some of the lesser known fells for a change. During a most enjoyable few days we climbed Buttermere Red Pike (2479 ft), Dodd (2000 ft), High Stile (2644 ft), High Crag (2443 ft), Lord's Seat (1811 ft), Dodd (1612 ft), Binsey (1466 ft), Longlands Fell (1580 ft), High Rigg (1163 ft), Rannerdale Knotts (1160 ft), Bleaberry Fell (1932 ft) and Walla Crag (1234 ft).

The heights gained on most occasions were not great but the walking was superb and the views magnificent. To have gone much higher one would have lost the views due to mist.

David Riddell

Easter meet Patterdale. Gently walking up Aira Force to begin with, then solitary wandering in windy, cold and snowy conditions up from Hartsop to an unidentified combe.

The best part of the trip was an 'excursion' to Dalemain Hall, at the foot of Ullswater, probably the only time it was not raining, just stopped raining or just about to start raining again.

6th April 'excursion', Cambridge A.C. Dinner. A joyful meeting with friends from the 1973 Everest Trek and from Hamish Brown's Moroccan trip of 1970.

Zermatt meet. The 'Approach March' is covered elsewhere, but I must record my appreciation of the outstanding experience of the visit to the G.B. Ferraro Hut above San Jacques d'Ayas at Resy. The atmosphere there was an uplift of spirit as the hut is now a religious 'retreat' for young people from all over Northern Italy. Their behaviour and their singing were really splendid. The hut itself was well found and run.

As for the Meet proper, the weather conditions and probably laziness meant that the Cima di Jazzi was the only mountaineering effort, but the 'social' side of the Meet could not have been bettered.

For me the walk up the Mettelhorn from the revitalised Trift 'Hotel' (it is now a 'hut') was the best of three visits to that splendid viewpoint spread over 53 years.

Patterdale meet in October. No climbing but some hairy motoring 'excursions' over Hard Knott and Wrynose with John Coales. Lastly the splendid dinner at the Brotherswater Hotel, graced by the presence of the one and only Lt. Col. Westmoreland. 'Rusty' is 92! Made me feel a positive (and lazy) youngster.

Oliver St John and Peter St John

It is four years exactly since we started to convert our home in the Aosta valley: in spite of having been there some 15 times, we are continually 'discovering' whole new valleys. We went there to ski in March, but the weather was very uncertain and we had a great deal of snow in the village, with more than a foot overnight at a height of only about 800 m. When the sun came out finally, the skiing was perfect, both at Courmayeur and La Thuile.

In July, we arrived again to find there had been plenty of snow, but the weather changed and we had a fortnight of virtually continuous sunshine and were able to spend a few days in the mountains. Our first expedition, with my son Peter and a young friend from Canada was to the Victor Emmanuel Hut above Pont. On that day, the sky was slightly overcast and, as we arrived about mid-day, the snow was firm enough to be able to climb La Tresenta 3609 m, one of the three peaks which form a fine view from the front door of the Hut. In the morning, as an alternative to the Gran Paradiso, we traversed the other two, Ciarforon 3609 m and Becca di Monciair 3544 m. The weather was perfect and the views superb on both sides of the interesting ridge.

Finally, Peter and I went off on our own to the Val d'Ayas. We were aiming for the Quintino Sella Hut, which can be reached from either Gressoney or San Giacomo and we chose the latter as it was our first visit to the valley. In spite of driving a long way beyond San Giacomo up a very bad road, it seemed a long way to the hut, but we were given a warm welcome from the hut-keeper with an ambience reminiscent of an old-style Swiss Hut. Early next morning, along with a solitary German climber who asked if he could join our rope, we traversed Castor 4226 m and Pollux 4091 m returning via the Mezzalama Hut to San Giacomo and home. It is a fine expedition, nowhere difficult but with splendid situations on steep slopes with magnificent views of the Lyskamm and Monte Rosa behind, and the Matterhorn and other Valais peaks ahead. We must return next year to traverse the Lyskamm and the remaining peaks of Monte Rosa. Peter also feels that we should climb Mont Blanc before I get too old for it!

In between times, we explored more modest peaks and ridges, including crossing over from the Val di Rhemes to the Valsavarench. The mountain-side was quite devoid of any tracks and was a botanist's paradise, with carpets of Edelweiss and other rarer plants such as I had seldom seen before in such profusion.

Ernst Sondheimer

New Year: At the G.S. hut. Over Striding Edge in a gale, with Roger Craig of York. Next day to Bowfell with Harry Archer, John Edwards and offspring, in search of a snow gully (we only found mist).

May/June: A Corsican fortnight, with Hamish Brown, Don Clarke and Martin Waddell (Glasgow). Our main camp was at Corte, the island's old capital—a good campsite in beautiful surroundings. From here forays were made into the mountains, but bad weather and masses of snow prevented major ascents. Squeezed into two one-man tents by the Lac di Melo, with the wind howling and the rain beating down, we debated whether the scene was more reminiscent of Scotland or of Norway. But morale was well sustained by wizard Hamish's ability to produce tasty meals under any conditions. And the sun did come out from time to time to warm us; the flowers of the maquis were magnificent, some minor peaks were bagged, and I went home with impressions of a wild and beautiful country—and the list of desirable unclimbed mountains lengthened once again.

Early August: A week in Graubünden gave us the Rheinwaldhorn, from the Lenta hut via the Lentalücke. A crazy way to go (with all the snow about, the proper track went straight up the glacier), but after all it was the route which had beaten us in 1976, so we felt quite pleased to have 'conquered' it this time, even if it was a 13-hour day... Subsequently spent two days wandering through the Albula mountains (Tiefenkastel—Fuorclettas—Ela hut—Fuorcla da Tschitta—Bergün) on the way to friends in Pontresina.

Late August: A week on the South side of Monte Rosa, with my two Swiss plus son Julian. From the Gnifetti hut we went up to the Margherita hut on a brilliantly sunny day (but the Monte Rosa wind is cold!). Found the hut closed for rebuilding; the main hazard was the helicopter coming in to drop materials and doing its best to blow us off the ridge. Next day wind and cloud prevented the 'Naso' traverse to the Quintino Sella hut, so we descended to Gressoney la Trinité (lovely walk) and found that the chairlift to the Colle da Bettaforca didn't run on Wednesdays. Festering in the beautiful Val de Lys gave consolation. Next day we enjoyed the airy ridge walk to the Sella hut, and then more cloud frustrated designs on the Liskamm. But our last day was fine again and we crossed the Naso back to the Gnifetti hut, where there was standing room only, so we fled down to Alagna.

For my way home I had routed myself via the Bregaglia, to fulfil an old ambition to walk through the Val Codera. One starts at Novate Mezzola, just north of Lake Como, where the granite walls to the east look huge and impregnable. But then one finds a most beautiful rock staircase, winding its way up through the chestnut forest into the wild valley, through the village of Codera and to the Rifugio Brasca for the night; next day the Tegiola pass and a long descent led to Promontogno on the Swiss side. A very fine, lonely walk. Unfortunately most of the rock scenery was invisible (mist!), so I'll have to return next year for the photographs.

A good summer for me, but it ended on a very sad note. On the way to the Bregaglia I spent a night in Esino, above Lake Como on the way to the Grigna. The pensione there had been recommended by John and Freda Kemsley, who had sent me much advice on the Italian Alps which they knew and loved so well. The people at the pensione were delighted to receive a friend of the Kemsleys and gave me flowers and messages to send on; then, as soon as I arrived home, I read of their tragic death on the Dent d'Hérens.

Les Swindin

I think I could sum up this year's mountaineering as extremely satisfying in the British hills, but rather disappointing in the Alps.

A week in the Cairngorms at New Year made a good start. Some remarkable changes in temperature led us to a variety of activities. Early in the week we did some ice-climbing in Coire an t-Snaechna, then after a heavy snow-fall a short ski-tour spoiled by poor visibility. This was followed next day by the most brilliant winter weather one could hope for. We climbed the magnificent Deep cut Chimney on Hell's Lum enjoying superb early morning views from the top of the Fiacail ridge. A day later we skied in slush on the pistes of Coire Cas.

Nearer home, whilst we were being strongly advised to stay off the hills, I took as much advantage of the perfect conditions as I could. Two memorable weekends in Wales during which I climbed Western Gully and Snowdrop with Robin Pearce in addition to a few shorter routes are worth reporting. I also did a little ski touring in the Lakes in preparation for Easter in the Alps.

Our intention was to do the High level route, but conditions were so appalling that we didn't even reach a hut. On the day we were due to start it was snowing heavily in Martigny, the Col de la Forclaz was closed and the meteo predicted no improvement. Later in the week we reached Chamonix, via Sauze d'Oulx, and were greeted by even more snow. Even the pistes were closed. Five days of this were too much and we retired to the Jura and some

excellent Swiss hospitality. Some skiing there and in Lenk saw us to the end of our holiday.

Home again I looked forward to the Spring holiday. It was Skye again after two years' absence with the intention of doing the main ridge in 'style'. Geoff Causey had a mind to doing the Greater traverse and I agreed to accompany him. I don't think that any mountain day could give more satisfaction than the one we had. We left Glen Brittle at 4.45 a.m. and Gars-Bheinn at 7 a.m. Completely enshrouded in mist which limited visibility to about 25 yards, we caught up with several parties at the Thearlaich-Dubh gap, having discovered an excellent descent route from Sgurr nan Eag that in perfect conditions in previous years we'd never found. A little persuasion was required, but the parties at the gap (who had started from Gars Bheinn at 5 a.m.) allowed us to pass thus avoiding a delay in our progress. From Banachdich onwards the sun shone and we progressed well to reach Sgurr nan Gillean at 2.35 p.m. On the way Geoff managed an extra 700 ft of climbing. He climbed An Stac twice. I think he enjoyed it so much the first time that he went back for another go, his excuse being that whilst resting for a moment he'd sat on some gear and then left it behind. He suffered for a while later for his excesses.

Gillean was fairly busy, but once in Glen Sligachan we met no-one until we finally returned to the road. Clach Glas and Blaven went well, reaching the summit of the latter at 7.40 p.m. and, after 5 minutes rest, the road an hour later, just 16 hours from the start.

Before the summer trip to the Alps with Barbara I joined friends from the Lincoln M.C. for a weekend climbing on Pillar. Mostly with John Oaks I did 2400 ft of V.S. and H.V.S. climbing in ideal conditions. The weather was good in the Alps but somehow things didn't go quite so smoothly. On the Tré la Tête I broke a crampon and turned back below the summit. Next we climbed the N.E. face of Les Courtes, but then were turned back at the bergschrund on the Whymper couloir by the sound of water running from the face alongside. In Switzerland the Weisshorn was in poor condition so we opted for the Alphubel which was worth climbing for the view alone. The Lyskamm from the Gnifetti hut followed, but our intended traverse of the mountain was foiled by the onset of bad weather. We retired to the Dauphine which is really a mistake in August. At the Sélé hut I experienced one of my most crowded nights in a hut. What made matters worse was the storm outside. However, a 7.30 a.m. start didn't stop us climbing the Ailefroide E. summit. (Don't rely on the English Guide for the route to the W. summit) and we had it to ourselves.

Returning to Britain and the rock climbing scene was very rewarding. The Indian summer seemed to go on and on so I took full advantage, generally with John Oaks, climbing in N. Wales and the Lakes. We included a number of 'Hard Rock' routes amongst others. Later in the year I attended the joint meet with the A.C. and climbed once again with Walter Kirstein. This year it was something of a contrived line, because of the popularity of the crag, but involved the hand traverse of Corvus which Walter managed extremely well in the rather wet conditions. How does he do it?

Jeremy Whitehead

- | | |
|---------|--|
| January | 'Tour of the Queyras', ski tour with Fred Jenkins. 7 excellent days. |
| Spring | Ski touring in Dauphine, including Pic Blanc du Galibier, Aiguille du Goléon and Traverse of Col Des Rouies. 2 weeks of unsettled weather. |
| Summer | Oberland and Engadie with Fred Jenkins. Wetterhorn, Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, Blumlisalphorn, Piz Palù—Bellavista traverse. |

Nigel E. D. Walker

With a spell in hospital, my climbing activities were sadly curtailed. In October visited Mittenwald. Up to Hochland Hut in the Karwendals from the valley and descended via Damkar with Wilhelm Winneberger in poor weather. And, in the Wetterstein Range walked to Saschen Haus in better weather from Gasthof Elmau.

OBITUARIES

Robin Fedden

Robin Fedden was a member of the A.B.M.S.A.C. from 1965 until his death in 1977, and his activities in connection with the Association included a spell of three years service on the Committee. Obituary notices have appeared elsewhere, and that in the Alpine Journal is accessible. We wish to pay our brief respects to the memory of a widely accomplished and highly regarded climber, who was also a great deal more. He was a traveller and an organiser of expeditions to wild places, he wrote books, he did great work for the National Trust, and he will be remembered for all these things.

S. M. F.

John and Freda Kemsley

Every member who attends outdoor meets in Britain will have known John and Freda, and all will have been shocked and distressed to read of their deaths on the Dent d'Hérens in August 1978. They were splendid hill companions: strong, safe and assured, as could be plainly seen by the minority who could keep up with them, and perceived with admiration by the rest of us. They were equally agreeable socially; John a little taciturn and surely none the worse for it, and Freda notable for the high spirits and fortitude which helped her to climb strongly in spite of a disability which would have deterred most people completely.

John had been a member since 1960, and was Hon. Librarian from 1964 to 1966. He was best known to many for his leadership of meets in the North; Teesdale, Ingleborough, Helmsley, Kirkby Stephen, Arncliffe and the like seemed annual events, which were led vigorously and efficiently yet kindly. He and Freda were also regular attenders at the annual dinner and the various dinner meets in the field, and must have been widely known and loved. They will be sadly missed.

S. M. F.