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DIARY

Date	Venue	Meet Leader
January 14-16	Fearnan, Loch Tay	Alf Lock
February 4 - 6	Northern Dinner Meet/AGM- Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
February 25-27	Laggan Bridge	John Foster
March 15	London Lecture - Rembrandt Hotel	Peter Ledeboer
March 17-19	Braemar	Bert Bowes
April 7-9	Onich	John Dempster
April 7-9	Hut Maintenance - Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
April 21-24	Family Meet – George Starkey Hut	
May 5-7	Peak District Camping Meet	Ed Bramley
May 17	London Lecture - Rembrandt Hotel	Peter Ledeboer
June 2-4	Snowdonia Meet - Rhyd-Ddu	Mike Goodyer
July 1-2	Lake District – George Starkey Hut	Mike Goodyer
July 8-15	The Bregaglia Circuit	Alasdair Andrew
July 15-29	Summer Alpine Meet – Pontresina	Alasdair Andrews
July 22	ABMSAC/AC/CC Alpine Camping	Meet Leader to be
August 12	Meet – Pontresina	detailed in Newsletter
August 4-19	Family Meet – George Starkey Hut	
September 29-30	Buffet Party – George Starkey Hut	Cathy McManus
October 6-7	Hut Maintenance – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley
November 3-5	Alpine Reunion – George Starkey Hut	Mike Goodyer
November 8	London Lecture – Rembrandt Hotel	Peter Ledeboer
Feb 2-4 2001	Northern Dinner/AGM – Patterdale	Brooke Midgley

In addition, the George Starkey Hut is reserved for members and guests on all Bank Holiday weekends and over the Christmas and New Year period.

THE NEW PRESIDENT – MIKE GOODYER

Mike's love of the hills came about after attending an Outward Bound course as a 15 year old Scout. This was followed by participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at school. To celebrate completing 'A' levels, he, along with Andy Burton, visited Switzerland and backpacked across the Bernese Oberland. A year later, in the summer of 1974, he joined the SAC (Monte Rosa) and the Association.

During his time at Nottingham University Mike joined the Explorers Club and was introduced to rock climbing on the Derbyshire edges and ice climbing in Scotland. At University he met his wife, Anne, and they married in 1977 and have a son, Robert, born in 1988.

After University Mike worked for two years in Cambridgeshire, not renowned for hills and rock climbing. Long drives to the Lakes or North Wales encouraged a career move up to North Yorkshire in the late seventies. Over the next few years mountain pursuits became more important. Fell running developed from a love of the Yorkshire Dales and the Lakeland Fells and this in turn led to mountain racing. At the last count Mike has completed 39 two day mountain marathons and still running! He has also climbed extensively around Britain, France, Italy and Switzerland with a quick foray to Yosemite. As well as independent trips to the Alps for climbing and skiing he regularly attends the Alpine camping meets.

Mike joined the Committee in 1992 and was the Association's representative on the Yorkshire and Humberside BMC committee. In 1994 he took over as Meet Secretary from Ben Suter and has cajoled several members to lead the outdoor meets. Since moving down to Wiltshire in the mid 90s he regularly attends the Alpine camping meets.

Mike's continued passion for climbing and walking in the mountains is only surpassed by his passion for talking about climbing and walking after a good day out with friends over a drink.



"HARD BUT FAIR" – THE TOUR OF MONT BLANC AMERICAN STYLE

(from "Les Alpes" SAC Journal August 1999 by Christine Kopp, translated by Pamela Harris)

Every story has a prologue. And so had this Tour of Mont Blanc made by a group of elderly Americans led by a young Swiss woman. No, in reality this story has several prologues.

First prologue: somewhere in Nepal.

Autumn 1996, Manaslu area, Nepal. A group of trekkers led by the aforementioned Swiss are camping near where some American hikers have pitched their tents. The Swiss visits the Americans who ask her the names of the surrounding peaks still bathed in the last rays of the sun. Using her imagination, she thinks up a plausible name for each and so wins the first round. She finally wins the game by taking several bars of Swiss chocolate out of her capacious jacket pockets. Result: the Americans immediately think she will be the ideal companion for their next hike, a Tour of Mont Blanc. Back home, the Swiss digs down in her files, refreshes her knowledge of English, and sends a proposal to New Mexico. Twelve months later, a reply: "Begin organisation immediately; the group is formed; 8-12 participants; September 1998; we look forward to seeing you again." Well, so long.....

Second prologue: various offices in Europe.

As the date of the trip gets nearer, the Americans bombard our Swiss with more and more frequent faxes and e-mails about everything: is the food in the hotels protein-rich? Are there eggs for breakfast? From what platform does the Geneva-bound train leave for Paris? What is the height difference in ascent and descent for each stage? The organiser sees to everything and in the process turns the TMP into a luxury tour – a 4 star hotel in Chamonix, all accommodation in hotels, rest days and excursions, driver and bus to transport the luggage and tired walkers.....

Act I: Geneva – Chamonix

"Mad drive behind Christine to Geneva, and from there to Chamonix with seven Americans. A guardian angel is watching over us." This is the laconic note in the diary of Heinz, our bus driver, who has first to get to know his vehicle and, since he doesn't know any English, cannot apologise to the Americans who are stunned by his dangerous manoeuvres.

But all's well that ends well. A six course dinner in a 4-star hotel, then a rest day at Chamonix with an excursion to the Aiguille du Midi. The bus driver becomes an artist and on the second evening, with two water-colours in his portfolio and reconciled with the way things are going, notes: "Perfect day, no wind and temperature above freezing at the Aiguille du Midi. For me a day off with cherry pie at Plan Midi where I was painting."

Act II: Brevant – Les Contamines

Our luxury hike begins with a cable-car which we leave at Planpraz for leisurely climb to the summit of the Brevant. A spectacular start which enables us to see why the TMB is so well known and so enjoyable. We are exactly opposite Mont Blanc, the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Aiguille du Tour: an imposing sight. The granite Aiguilles contrast with the white summit-dome of Mont Blanc. The way up the Brevant is not long and the descent to Les Houches a pleasure. We take a scenic trail which leads through beautiful forests to the little village at the beginning of the Chamonix valley. The Americans – all Republicans – are so enthusiastic that they momentarily forget their favourite topic of conversation – the love-life of President Clinton.

The stage from Les Houches to Les Contamines begins with one of the highlights of the tour: a car journey to Le Fayet and then the Mont Blanc Tramway, an old style rack railway which will take us to

the Col du Tricot at the start of our walk. We miss the motorway exit and almost miss the train which only goes 3 times a day at the end of September. After the motorway we are even more enthusiastic about the scenery. The pleasant trail to the Col du Tricot winds up under the shining white north face of the Aiguille de Bionnassay. Then a steep but short descent to one of the most beautiful spots on the whole tour, the Miage chalets which form a hamlet amidst wide pastures at the foot of the Domes du Miage. A short ascent leads to the Col du Truc, then a rather monotonous descent to Les Contamines.

Act III: Les Contamines – Val Veni – Entreves

The following day we need a sense of humour. While the Americans try desperately to pronounce the word "föhn", the wind gradually drops. Bad weather arrives. We are lashed by icy blasts of wind and snow at the Col de la Croix and the Col du Bonhomme. Fortunately we are able to warm ourselves and dry our wet socks afterwards at the Auberge de la Nova at Les Charpieux. Then comes the climb to the Col de la Seigne where we are greeted not with a view of the south face of Mont Blanc but with thick cloud and a howling gale. This makes the decision even easier to make: we will spend the next day at Courmayeur visiting the Craft Centre and Alpine Museum.

An excursion to the Pointe – Helbronner high above the valley should give us a good view of the south face of the massif, but we don't see much except for the arctic-looking Dent du Geant and the tips of a few summits covered in snow.

The following morning we decide to make the most of the Indian summer and do a half day trip into the Val Veni instead of taking the high level route along it. Above us is the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, one of the most impressive summits in the whole massif, and in the distance high above the Val Ferret, the icy south-west face of the Grandes Jorasses. The hike ends with "insalata mista" and "formaggio e pane" (mixed salad, bread and cheese). At this point the romantics in the group become introspective, including Russell who for once doesn't want to listen to the latest news on the Stock Exchange. However he does listen to the weather forecast which is execrable and, since he's been wearing shorts even in the coldest weather, has to go and buy some Goretex trousers which would have cost him a third of the price back home in the States.

Heinz immerses himself in art – but the cloud completely envelopes the mountains before he can put anything in his portfolio which he deems worthwhile. For him this is "una grande catastrofe", and he entitles his last water colour "Impressioni nebuloze" (Cloudy Impressions). His mood improves when we end the evening at the Maison de Filippo at Entreves with a countless number of Italian specialities. Jack our "gourmet gourmand", laconically sums this up: "Five miles, some trouble – five courses, no problem".

Act IV: Blizzard at the Grand Col Ferret.

We drive along the Val Ferret, extremely crowded in the summer, to start the ascent of the Grand Col Ferret and the crossing into Switzerland. Even though this is a short day, it's a real adventure. It's snowing heavily, there are violent winds, and the visibility is reduced to a few metres; the trail becomes difficult to follow. The Americans take all this philosophically and chant in chorus: "Hard but fair!" When we arrive at La Fouly, soaked to the skin, we look forward to finding hot drinks and warm rooms, but we are disappointed. That afternoon the village at the foot of Mont Dolent has a power cut. The only thing that we can do is curl up under our blankets until a glass of Pinot noir wakes us in the evening.

Tucky has a "linguistic problem", as she puts it, and is trying desperately to learn a few words of the local language. But she's scarcely succeeded in pronouncing a few words in Italian when we've changed to French, and now she's found someone replying to her in German.

On the next stage we have a gentle descent from La Fouly then a steep climb to Champex. We pass through a lovely old village, which is rare on the TMB: Les Arlaches. It's the end of the season, and Champex looks rather desolate, with hardly any shops or hotels still open. This is the start of the magnificent crossing to Trient via the Fenetre d'Arpette, but it's already too late in the season for this tiring variant. There's already too much snow on the heights, and we continue our tour via La Bovine. This way is lovely too: there's a superb view over the Rhone Valley and a pleasant path to the Col de Forclaz. Although the noise there is almost unbearable in the summer, we are the only people as autumn draws to its close.

Act V: Col de Balme – Chamonix Valley

The Col de Balme, which leads from the Trient to the Chamonix Valley, should be the highlight of our tour. I said should. But, after a fairly promising morning, instead of improving, the weather deteriorates. Instead of a spectacular view of the Aiguille Verte, the Chamonix Aiguilles and Mont Blanc, the visibility is down to 15 metres, and what's more, it's snowing. Kelly, who has been everywhere, doesn't let it get him down; he even seems to like the bad weather. And, as we walk down into the valley, Norman reduces our hike to a complicated mathematical equation involving each participant and the number of kilometres walked each day, the difference in height, the drink stops, the late starts, even the "föhn" wind. Back down in the Chamonix Valley Mont Blanc is just a vague shape and its white snow slopes, which usually form a clear contrast with the Chamonix Aiguilles, can hardly be seen across the valley. However, despite the bad weather in the second part of our tour, the Americans agree that the hike has been "absolutely terrific". It's not necessarily the big trips or the high summits which leave us with the best memories.

Technical information may be found in the guide book – Tour of Mont Blanc by Andrew Harper published by Cicerone Press.

THE ALPINE 4000 METRE PEAKS

I was stimulated to write this account by a recent article in the Rucksack Club Journal by Brian Cosby. Brian had also climbed the Alpine 4000m peaks and I am grateful to him and Peter Fleming for providing me with much of the historical information.

Munro baggers will be familiar with the question "what is a peak and what is a top?" Similar questions arise in the Alps. I accepted Robin Collomb's list of fifty two peaks in the book 'Mountains of the Alps'. Collomb defines separate mountains using the rule of one kilometre separation and a drop to a col between summits but ignores these criteria if the history or situation of the peak warrants it. Other lists defined by Karl Blodig and Richard Goedeke list sixty one peaks. Will McLewin defines fifty three main mountains, which are not quite the same as Collomb's.

At the time of writing (November 1999) I know ten Britons who have completed various lists, namely:

Eustace Thomas 1929
Will McLewin 1984
Les Swindin 1985
Peter Fleming 1986
Brian Cosby 1987

Hal Taylor 1987
John Mercer 1990
Martin Moran 1993
Simon Jenkins 1993
David Penlington 1997

All the above will have many stories to tell. Eustace Thomas, the first Briton to complete, was a well known fell runner. Climbing without guides, he started at the age of fifty four and finished in eight years. Will McLewin has some strongly held and sometimes idiosyncratic views. He dislikes huts and hut wardens and many of his ascents were done solo from bivouacs. He has written an excellent book about his ascents 'In Monte Viso's Horizon'. Martin Moran and Simon Jenkins, both professional guides, did their ascents between 23rd July and 13th August in 1993 without using any motorised transport and 1993 was a bad season. David Penlington took an amazing forty eight years from his first to his last ascent.

I started the 4000m peaks in 1968 at the age of thirty. In those days we started off climbing mountains by learning to do a bit and trying routes at the same time. I had a penchant for snow and ice and in some of my best seasons I did a few 4000m peaks. However, nobody climbs them by accident and as I grew older and slower, it occurred to me that the list might be a possibility. I finished on 19th July 1990 with the ascent of the Aiguille Blanche de Pauterey by the north face. The 'AB' is in the order of magnitude greater than any of the other peaks. There is no easy way up and the best descent, via the Rochers Gruber and the Freney Glacier, can be frightening. After three failed attempts, we finally solved the problem of how to get across the Freney Glacier by deliberately walking under the overhanging seracs in the hope that debris fallen from above would have filled the crevasses sufficiently to enable us to cross. The 'AB' took me three attempts- I had previously tried by the Rochers Gruber and the Eccles Bivouac and Pic Eccles. I know three people who have done all the other peaks but not the 'AB'. Good luck to them.

With the exception of the 'AB', the easiest routes on the other peaks are of a reasonable standard up to the AD and should within the ability of any fit middle grade alpinist. So why bother to do them all? I found having a target very stimulating. Following the list took me to many places I would not otherwise have visited and led me to many memorable days. The Hauteraarhorn from the Scherckhorn Hut is a good example. So I recommend it. But unless you have skill and fitness of a Moran or Jenkins, as the bivouacing and soloing ability of and strength of a McLewin or the active longevity of a Penlington you will need help and support. I married my climbing partner and without Sylvia's love of the mountains and practical support the ascents would not have happened. The children camped in the Alps virtually every year from the time they were six months old until they were eighteen. (camping is so good for children). I am very grateful for all their support and for that of my climbing partners.

Old age, general debility and the collapse of my left knee have now brought my serious mountaineering to an end. The memories are the real and enduring benefits of doing the 4000m peaks. Memories of the mountains, the routes and conditions, difficulties, performance or lack of it and especially my companions.

No	Ht.m	Mountain	Date	Companions	Route
1	4807	Mont Blanc	1971	Tim Moss	Route Major
			1972	Jim George	Sentinella Rouge
2	4634	Dufourspitze	1968	Sylvia Mercer, Toby Norris, Martin Thompson, Roger Havelock	Ordinary route from Monte Rosa
			5.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	Traverse from Nordend
3	4606	Nordend	5.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	SSW Ridge
4	4563	Zumsteinspitze	5.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	Ridge Dufourspitze - Signalkuppe
5	4556	Signalkuppe	5.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	Signalkuppe
6	4545	Dom	1968	Sylvia Mercer, Toby Morris, Roger Havelock, Patrick Limerick, Marvin Goss	North Plank
7	4527	Lyskamm	11.7.73	Tony Williams	Norman Neruda Route
8	4505	Wiesshorn	1969	Sylvia Mercer, Mike Danford, P. Watson	E.Ridge
9	4491	Taschhorn	1979	Paul Hampson	NW Face
10	4477	Matterhorn	1969	Mike Danford	Zmutt Ridge
11	4465	Mont Maudit	11.7.90	Solo	From Aiguille de Midi
12	4436	Parrotspitze	6.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	Marghereta Hut
13	4357	Dent Blanche	8.8.88	Peter Hammond	S.Ridge
14	4327	Nadelhorn	1.7.73	Tony Williams	Nadelgrat from Lenzspitze
15	4313	Grand Combin Grafiniere	27.7.89	Marcus Masior	From Valsorey Hut
16	4294	Lenspitz	1.7.73	Tony Williams	North Face
17	4274	Finsteraarhorn	16.8.83	Jeremy Whitehead	SW Flank & NW Ridge
18	4248	Mont Blanc de Tacul	1978	Mike Jamieson, Mike Edwardes, Peter Foster	Arete
19	4226	Castor	4.8.77	Solo	Pollux Traverse
20	4221	Zinalrothorn	July 79	Marcus Masior, Paul Hampson, Phil Blanchard	SE Ridge
21	4219	Hohberghorn	July 79	Bill Parker	Nadelgrat
22	4215	Pyramide Vincent	6.8.88	Stuart Maudsley	Margherita Hut
23	4208	Grandes Jurasses	22.7.89	Marcus Masior	From Jurasses Hut incl Pt Whymper
24	4206	Alphugel	1968	Martin Thompson, Roger Havelock	W Ridge (Rotgrat)
			1969	Mike Danford, P. Watson	SE Ridge
			29.8.88	Sylvia, Clare and Beach Mercer	E Flank

25	4199	Rimpfischhorn	1969	Sylvia Mercer	WSW Ridge
			1988	Clare and Beach Mercer	WSW Ridge
26	4195	Aletschhorn	1984	Phil Bartlett	NE Ridge
27	4190	Strahlhorn	22.7.77	Solo	SSW Flank
28	4171	Dent d'Herens	July 79	Bill Parker	WNW Face
29	4165	Breithorn	3.8.77	Solo	SSW Flank
30	4158	Jungfrau	14.8.83	Jeremy Whitehead	SE Ridge
31	4153	Bishorn	4.7.73	Tony Williams	NE Face (1*British Ascent)
32	4122	Aiguille Verte	1970	Sylvia Mercer, Mike Danford	Whymper Couloir
33	4107	Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey	19.7.90	Manuel Shnieder	N Face (last four thousander)
34	4101	Barre des Ecrins	5.8.76	Solo	Couloir Barre Noir and Traverse
35	4099	Monch	8.7.74	Tony Williams	NW Face (Lauper Rib)
36	4091	Pollux	4.8.77	Solo	Castor Traverse
37	4078	Schreckhorn	5.8.85	Charles Malherbe	SW Ridge
38	4063	Obergalbelhorn	July 81	Frans Pabt	ENE Ridge by Wellenkuppe
39	4061	Gran Paradiso	July 78	Mike Jamieson, Mike Edwardes, Peter Foster	NW Face
40	4052	Aiguille Bonnassay	7.7.90	Stuart Maudsley	NW Face
41	4049	Grosse Fiescherhorn	15.8.83	Jeremy Whitehead	NW Ridge
42	4049	Piz Bernina	11.7.75	Tony Williams, Daphne Pritchard	Biancograt
43	4043	GrossGrunhorn	17.8.83	Jeremy Whitehead	From Finsteraarhorn Hut via Grunhorn Lucke
44	4042	Lauteraarhorn	12.8.85	Andrew Bakes	From Schechhorn Hut via SW Ridge
45	4035	Durrenhorn	July 79	Bill Parker	Nadelgrat
46	4027	Allelinhorn	23.7.77	Solo	SW Ridge
47	4023	Weismies	27.6.73	Tony Williams	SW Ridge
			26.7.88	Sylvia, Clare and Beach Mercer	SW Ridge
			11.8.99	Joe Park, David Watts	SW Ridge
48	4013	Aiguille de Rochefort	19.7.89	Marcus Masior	SW Ridge
49	4010	Lagginhorn	19.7.77	Murdock Matheson	W Ridge
50	4000	Les Droiles	28.7.84	Phil Blanchard	S ridge of East Peak

ANNUAL NORTHERN DINNER PATERDALE MEET 5 – 7 FEBRUARY 1999

An ever increasing number of members are extending the weekend meet into a week. Occupation of hut and hotel started on the Wednesday prior to the Meet weekend and it was the following Wednesday before nearly everybody had departed.

The weather was fair but windy on Saturday, and Sunday sunny, clear, windy and cold. Some snow on the tops and ice everywhere – rather lovely – and it continued so for much of the following week and everything in sight was “multiclimbed”.

Whilst the hills were, as always, interesting, great pleasure was derived from the company of distinguished members. Out Honorary Vice President Bryan Richards GM., and his wife Ita joined the Meet. The Association this year celebrates its 90th anniversary and so does Bryan. At the AGM before dinner Bryan gave a talk explaining his unusual office and some historic detail of the Association.

We had guests representing Switzerland and the Alpine Club. Max Inhelder is Consul General of Switzerland, who with his wife Sylvia and son Christoph represent our Swiss roots and Dr Jim Fotherington and his wife Marcia represented the Alpine Club.

The speeches were enjoyable, brief and arranged to provide the maximum opportunities for socialising.

The dinner was attended by 103 members and guests or 104 if our Hon. Solicitors son is counted, who at six weeks to the day was remarkably well behaved. Other prospective members attending the Meet were Lucy and Paul Irvine's six children, ranging from Thomas aged eight to two year old twins, which is a valiant effort to boost Association membership! There were other regular teenage attendees and it is heartening to see them enjoying the hills.

Brooke Midgley

This year's ABMSAC Meet at Saas Grund was preceded by a week's walking tour of Monte Rosa, beginning at Tasch, traversing the Italian valleys south of the Pennine Alps, and ending at Saas Grund. Eleven ABMSAC/AC members participated, five of whom had at one time climbed Monte Rosa. Luggage was transported by car so the day's walk could be enjoyed with just a light sack, and hotel accommodation, all excellent, was arranged on arrival each day.

Height was quickly gained on the first day by means of the train to Zermatt and cable car to Trockener Steg, and as we plodded up the glacier past downhill skiers, the north face of Monte Rosa, the Breithorn and the Matterhorn towered above us in a cloudless sky. We reached the Theodule Pass at 3301m. the highest point on our route, in the heat of the midday sun, and as we sat and gazed at the surrounding peaks, members reminisced over their more active past and the various routes they had climbed over the past 50 years, including a 1952 ascent of the east ridge of the Dent d'Herens by Michael Westmacott. We rapidly descended the bleak waste-land of moraines southwards, past sun-tanned Italians lazing outside cafes, and down into the centre of Cervinia, where our first day's walk ended to the chimes of church bells.

After a mini-bus ride down the valley, the next day's walk began at Cheneil above Valtournanche, again with cloudless skies and sunshine. The path wound up through a veritable Alpine garden of gentians, alpenroses and saxifrages, and we finally reached the Col de Nana (2775m.) to be greeted by the magnificent sight of the south face of the Breithorn, Castor and Pollux, with Monte Rosa just appearing behind, and the Gran Paradiso on the other side of the Aosta Valley. Two of the fitter members of the group scrambled up the Becca Trecare (3033m.) at the side of the pass, while the rest of us set off down into the beautiful Ayas Valley, past the newly built Tournalin Hut and small farms, with men and women haymaking in the fields. Our day ended at a hotel near the lovely old village of St. Jacques with a truly gourmet meal and an animated discussion of the following day's route over two bottles of grappa.

Day three started with a gondola lift to Crest, after which we wound our way up to the Colle di Pinter (2777m.), stopping several times to watch the marmots at play. As we reached the pass the weather clouded in and we hurried down the other side, deprived of our views of the high peaks for that day. We descended into the Gressoney Valley on the Walser Trail, a reminder of how in the Middle Ages a group of Valaisans under the auspices of the Bishop of Sion had made their way via our route over the Theodule and other passes to settle in Gressoney.

After a night of heavy rain and thunder, most of the group opted to take the lower and much longer route to Alagna by bus and car. Only four intrepid members set off up the cable-car to the Colle d'Olen (2881m.) where much to our surprise the clouds cleared and we could see directly up the south ridge of Monte Rosa towards the Piramide Vincent. We ascended the Corno del Camoscio (3026m) at the side of the pass, the summit of which was covered with the vivid blue flowers of the King of the Alps amidst patches of pink rock jasmine and moss campion. After a quick drink at the Rifugio Guglielmina we set off on the 2000m. descent into the Alagna Valley, over the Passo Foric, past typical Walser farms with hay drying racks on the sides of the buildings. We strolled into the Alagna in the late afternoon much earlier than the other group, after a surprisingly enjoyable day.

The next day was the longest of the tour with no lifts to help us. We climbed out of Alagna in a light

drizzle which stopped well before the top of the Turlo Pass (2888m.) 3½ hours later. Again there was cloud at the top depriving us of our views of Monte Rosa, but we did see a large group of ibex on the rocks just above us. The trail was wide and well-made, but still a long way down to the lake and resort of Macugnaga where a well earned rest awaited us after a 9 hour day.

After deciding to spend two nights at Macugnaga, our "rest" day began late with a chair-lift to Belvedere and walk up the glacier to Rifugio Zamboni-Zappa (2065m.). The sun was shining again as we ate our picnic in an idyllic spot by the stream and gazed up at the snow-covered peaks on the east side of Monte Rosa towering above, trying to pick out the Marinelli Couloir and the various CAI huts. Some of the more energetic members of the group then continued up to the Loccie Lake and all the way down to Macugnaga via a circuitous route beneath the Pizza Nero, visiting the Walser Museum and Exhibition commemorating the 1000th anniversary of the town on the way.

The final day of our walk dawned cloudy again, and we decided to take the cable-car up to the Monte Moro Pass (2868m.). On arrival we scrambled up the rocks to the statue of the Virgin Mary, then round in circles in the dense cloud as we tried to find the way to the actual pass. Once located, we quickly descended the rocky path and soon saw the Mattmark lake and dam far below as the cloud cleared. As we neared the dam a bus approached, and some decided to take the easy way down into Saas Grund whilst the rest of us walked all the way into the village in a torrential rainstorm. On our arrival at Chalet Moonlight we were greeted by the ABMSAC President with a welcome pot of tea and the tour was over, though some members did decide to continue on towards Grachen and Tasch on the following day.

We should all like to express our gratitude to Alasdair Andrews for organising such an enjoyable tour, with special thanks also to Alf Lock for sharing the driving. The tour is to be highly recommended, with several variations of route, all set out in Chris Wright's invaluable guide book "The Grand Tour of Monte Rosa, vols. 1 & 2", Civerone Press.

Participants: Alasdair Andrews, Jack Ashcroft, Colin Barnard, Pamela Harris, Alf Lock, John & Sylvia Mercer, Hugh & Renate Romer, Mike & Sally Westmacott.

Pamela S Harris

Photographs: Page 28

ABMSAC 90th ANNIVERSARY MEET

I was privileged to attend the Association's 75th Anniversary Meet, famous on at least two counts; for the Long Stagger when 48 members crossed over the range from the Britannia Hut to Tasch Alp, and for the protracted Anniversary Lunch in Zermatt, during which, it was alleged, a member used a short pause between courses to visit his dentist.

Meanwhile the chief of Saas Fee's Tourist Office regaled the Alphubel Hotel with the programme for the following Sunday with the immortal phrase, "And after that we shall have a Holy Mess (Mass)". Our Swiss friends are noted for their sense of humour, and it is said that he laughed uproariously when the joke was explained to him two years later.

Having thus set the scene, I took the view that I should be safe from similar activities until 2009, by when I would be too decrepit to perform anything beyond a supernumerary role. In this I was defeated by our worthy President, who decided to stage a 90th Year Meet, and, less wisely, commissioned your humble servant to write account of it.

The Meet was held at Saas Grund from the 31st July until the 13th August, and followed the walk round Monte Rosa of which an account is given above. Saas Fee sits on a shelf below the precipices of the Mischabel; Saas Grund unsurprisingly lies at the bottom of the valley, occupying a slot between Saas Balen and Saas Almagell. The higher peaks are set back, and the village is dominated by the Mittaghorn, a mountain which I have held in affection since discovering a cache of beer on its summit in 1984. My namesake David Jones "Jones the Print" may view it differently, since a chunk of it fell on his head.

Like many an Alpine village, Saas Grund has grown like Topsy; this I only realised, when, punch-drunk from driving 800 miles from the Cotswolds on what the BBC informs us was France's Black weekend, I searched unavailingly for the well-christened Chalet Moonlight. Only after accosting four locals, and reflecting uncharitably on the ancestry of a Scottish Meet leader who had not thought to supply a map, was I successful.

Chalet Moonlight turned out to be an attractive building, brand new, and set back some 30 yards from the main road in the centre of the village. Its beds, duvets apart – a pet hate – and its rooms were comfortable, some even boasting cooking facilities. Down below were a large commercially equipped kitchen and a spacious lounge-cum-dining room, where up to 30 ABMSAC members were to be found expounding on the day's climb and exploring possibilities and parties for the next. A big advantage over Saas Fee was the availability of free parking; unfortunately this freedom extended to other tourists who blocked one in without a qualm. However, judicious positioning of one's vehicle aided by possible imitations of an English Football hooligan usually provided lebensraum.

The remainder of The Meet was installed very comfortably at the Hotel Adler a mile up the valley. This enforced division had not been in our respected leader's game-plan, and both he and the President could be relied upon to be less laid-back than usual when the conversation erred in that direction. Visits between the two centres were frequent, and a dinner for the departing Alastair was held at the Adler and enjoyed by all; Harry Archer and George Watkins who were staying in Saas Fee came to see this, and shook hands all round the room, rather like visiting royalty.

It is thought that 50 people attended the Meet, although precise figures are hard to come by; the ABMSAC being something between a third and a half of attendees arrive and depart on Saturdays, the remainder coming and going throughout the week as the mood takes them.

I had thought the bottom of the valley base might be a disadvantage; however what was lost by the bus ride, car ride or 40 minute walk up to Saas more than compensated for by the immediate access to the Weissmies cable station which would waft one up to 3,200m in less than half an hour.

Not too many desperate ridges or faces were conquered. Suffice to say that the Weissmies, Allalinhorn and Alphubel were ascended by various parties; it would of course be unkind to decry these triumphs to suggest that whilst these peaks have not got noticeably lower, their kicking-off points have got decidedly higher. Yet, no mountain in the Saasertal has been reduced to the level of the 3,800 metre Klein Matterhorn, a peak that can now be ascended without actually touching it!

Many long walks and hohnewegs were covered, the traverse up the Ofental and down the Furggtal, with a short diversion into Italy, was quite exciting in either thick mist or thunderstorm.

A certain aura of mystery surrounds the activities of the three Musketeers, Two Johns and a Ron, some of whom were involved in a traverse over the Almagellerhorn to the Plattenhorn and possibly the Sonnighorn. Whilst all returned safely, one has to put the brake on an otherwise light-hearted account of the Meet, to report that a week or two previously, tragically the President of our sister club the TCC lost his life in a fall from an ice slope on the Sonnighorn.

It is nearly 40 years since I first went on an ABMSAC Meet; in those days these were always hotel-based. It was usual to acquire an amenable and usually elderly guide to lead the first rope of the club caravan, followed by two or three more under the immediate command of some of our less competent members. Nowadays neither guides nor more relevantly their insurers would tolerate this, although I cannot recall an instance where anything befell an amateur rope. In some ways Alistair's meets have re-invented this earlier tradition, although chalet and hotel have replaced pure hotel.

In the intervening years we have had much cause to be grateful for Harry's long series of meets, where the logistic feats of supplying and feeding 60 or more people put mere mountaineering forays in the shade. One recalls visions of rows of estate cars staggering the 4,000 feet from Sierre to Arolla, or Sion to Fafleralp, triumphs of ordering, transporting, catering and finance, counterbalanced by attempts to keep unruly climbers in some sort of order for which we owe a great debt.

Styles of leadership change. I was accosted by John Brooks, with whom I was at school about 50 years ago; John was sipping his beer in a roadside café, but had mislaid his fellow musketeers somewhere above the Allalin Metro. I didn't see John again that evening and took it upon myself to inform our President, who had replaced Alastair. "Yes," said Brook laconically and swallowed another mouthful of soup. Both he and Alastair have cultivated a laid-back style which does them credit; sometimes one sees a likeness to ducks gliding serenely over the surface of the water with two little legs going like hell beneath. A few days later John had lost his team again; I collared on to the system, misquoted an aphorism from Oscar Wilde, and suggested he should inform the President himself.

Most climbers are characters, not perhaps when they start, but the persona can be developed. The editor and I need to be mindful of the laws of libel, so I will leave anonymous the lady who, halfway up the mountainside, proposed to lay herself down on a flat and prominent rock, and immediately did so; the rest of the party trudged upwards with only an occasional backward glance, until she became a mere dot on the fellside. So too shall be the eminent gentleman who within the compass of one brief day managed to attach the loop of one bootlace to the toggles of the other boot – I had never seen this done before – with unfortunate if spectacular results, and secondly clad in shorts on a day which started misty and ended in torrents of rain, had to be abandoned in the first crowded mountain restaurant, suffering from incipient hypothermia. Need I say both were prominent members of the healing profession.

It was pleasant to see 17 year old Jo Cater on her first Meet, faced with a Jagihorn which she proclaimed to be vertical, shoot up it when she found it wasn't, only to discover descent a different ball-game. Ah, the innocence of youth.

I haven't commented on the weather which I will do briefly. In the first week it confined itself to Italy stopping at the Monte Moro; in the second week it didn't.

Every Meet has its lows and highs.

The former saw me poised at 3,200 metres waiting for the oft proclaimed eclipse. At 11.30 it was foggy, grey and inclined to snow; at 12.00 it was grey, foggy with occasional flakes; at 12.30 it was trying to snow, full of dirty cloud and murky. I advocated descent and found the liftman had gone off for lunch.

Antonia Barlen, Bill Peebles and I, walking Meet veterans all, had scrambled the 1200 metres from Saas Grund to the Mellig (2,764m), a small peak fudged in against the headwall of the Lenspitze and Nadelhorn. As we lunched below the peak, a young lad in a cowboy hat led a bevy of attractive young ladies to the summit. Once there they began to sing, first hymns in German and then perhaps for us in English finishing with "Amazing Grace".

It was not just that their singing was good – it was excellent – but the sound of soft voices, drifting over the serried array of peaks and glaciers, with a backcloth of the icy major summits, left a long-abiding memory. They told us they were not a professional group, just a party of friends who had never sung on a mountain before. Bill and I might have sung an aria in return; Antonia ever sensible, persuaded us not to spoil the memory.

R Wendell Jones

GLEN COE 26-28 February 1999

The Meet was based at a primitive but clean bunkhouse not far from the Clachaig Hotel. Saturday dawned wet, cold and blustery. Attempts (mainly unsuccessful) were made on a variety of climbs and hills at Glencoe, the Blackmount and the Mamores. One pair of experienced idlers crossed over to Ardgour and drove along snow covered sea level roads to explore the area behind Strontian and the dramatically situated Castle Tioram. That evening an excellent meal was enjoyed at the Clachaig. The following day the weather deteriorated and little was attempted though one enterprising party enjoyed a walk over the Ochils where it was sunny and dry!

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Peter & Alex Boyle, Bert & Stephen Bowes, John Dempster, John & Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Geoff Urmston.

PH/AIA

LAGGAN BRIDGE 14-16 May 1999

The 98/99 Scottish winter meets used previously unvisited bases ranging from primeval in Glencoe to a railway carriage (first class of course!) at Glen Finnan station. The present and last of the series was held in a pleasant and unusually "hostel". A return visit has already been booked for February 2000 – Creag Meagaidh awaits.

Meet weather was dry with excellent visibility though cloudy with a cool breeze from the north. On Saturday the main party traversed Scotland's largest high plateau from Cairngorm to Ben Macduh and back. Others, pairs and soloists, visited Ben a' Chlachair and neighbours, Ben a' Chaoruinn, or traversed the summits of Creag Meagaidh. All enjoyed wide spread views. On Sunday a party visited Chno Dearg near Loch Treig while four ascended am Faircamh (2986 ft) from near Dalwhinnie. This last hill with its two mile long summit ridge of excellent going and extensive views is a tip for any with five hours to spare when crossing Drumochter.

All the participants of these always splendid meets (whatever the weather) can only await with anticipation the next season and thank Alasdair for pleasures past and future.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Ian Brebner, John & Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Alf Lock, Morag MacDonald, Bill Peebles, Mike Scarr.

JMS

GLENFINNAN 16-18 April 1999

This was an unusual meet in that the base was a converted railway carriage, with overflow accommodation ten miles away at Corpach. Three members arrived mid Friday morning and following the purchase of provisions traversed Sgurr an Utha in warm, sunnt weather. Views from the summit were extensive and the *Cuillin of Rum and Skye* looked inviting.

The other nine members arrived on the Friday evening to occupy their berths while answering demands for rail tickets and voicing worries as to where they might wake up (Constantinople being one suggestion!). The overflow bunkhouse proved to be well appointed, to such a degree that its parking area was totally occupied by Ferrari's and TVR's! The interior offered 'the complete Scottish experience' which included a web surfing P.C., Pool table, Bar, Malt Whiskey tasting demos, a copy of the Treaty of Arbroath on the wall and numerous natives of Oz lying about the floor usually in close proximity to an empty glass, their eyes glued to wide screen TV.

Saturday dawned with a clear blue sky which unfortunately deteriorated to end in high winds, snow and rain. The hills in this area are well away from the nearest road so parties departed early with great plans. Expeditions were mounted to ascend Sgurr Thuilm (wet), Sgurr nan Coireachan (very wet), Gulvain (dry and clear) and Druim Fiaclach (horrible); to circumnavigate Sgurr an Utha (partially trackless, interesting, but very wet); and to cycle to Strontian via Loch Shiel (almost successful but atrociously wet!).

An additional contingent joined our (by now drying) party for dinner on the Saturday at the Glenfinnan House Hotel. This Hotel enjoys a magnificent situation, regrettably the staff were surly and indifferent and the food could have been warmer.

On Sunday the weather was poor and quickly worsened which led to the customary visit to Nevis Sport in Fort Bill to read the guide books, gaze in wonder at the high tech gear and with incredulity at the prices and finally to sup a coffee and reminisce about climbs allegedly completed before many of the younger members were born. Thereafter an exciting plough through the newly fallen snow all the way to Callendar. An excellent meet, we must return again.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, John & Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Alf Lock, Myles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Morag MacDonald & Ian Brebner.

JF/AIA

THE 3rd SCOTTISH LONG WALK 11-13 JUNE 1999

The walk traversed Glens Tilt and Feshie; previous walks crossed the Minigaig Pass and Lairigs Ghru and Laoigh.

Surprised but undeterred I set out unaccompanied on Sunday from Linn of Dee bound for Glen Feshie. An often stony jeep road led six miles to Geldie Lodge (ruin). Thereafter, despite the desolate open moor, the way is surprisingly pleasant as the path traverses the hillside above the burn. Soon the gentle descent to the more enclosed Glen Feshie begins and the Eidart is reached, a fierce torrent rushing through a rocky gorge and plunging over a 30 foot fall: a formidable obstacle without the bridge. A remarkably good stalking path leads to where the Feshie also flows through a deep gorge worth a pause to contemplate the view. Further on where the river begins to turn northwards the way

passes through extensive woods of Scots Pine. Finally, an unsafe bridge (and it looks it) is crossed to gain the easier west bank. At Auchlean the car was waiting and I was immediately whisked away just like a laird. The 20 miles covered in 8 hours I now consider of greater interest than Glen Tilt. (Meanwhile the driver and his entourage drove round to Glen Livet where most climbed Ben Rinnes and others investigated the delights of the many famous malt whiskey distilleries nearby.) (AIA)

On the previous day 5 participants walked the 20 miles from Blair Atholl to Linn of Dee traversing Glen Tilt, a valley passing between Ben a' Ghlo and Carn a' Chlamain, and whose remarkable straightness over six to eight miles is due to lying along the continuation of the major Loch Tay fault. Perhaps the most scenic section is the narrow defile beyond the Tarf which leads out suddenly into open country shortly before the Geldie burn. A second party, responsible for transport, ascended Carn a' Chlamain.

This reporter set out a few days earlier by a more easterly route via Loch Loch and Fealar Lodge and included a traverse of Ben a' Ghlo and Carn a' Chlamain, and ascents of Carn an Righ with Beinn Iutharn Mhor and Beinn Bhrotain.

Idea and organisation were, as ever, due to Alasdair, who, in supervising the so essential transport always nobly foregoes the opportunity of these long walks. And where to next year? I rather hope Alasdair missed the sign at Linn of Dee - "Right of Way to Tomintoul 29 miles."

Attendees: Alasdair Andrews, Peter & Andrew Boyes, Bert Bowes, Ian Brebner, Phil Hands, Alf Lock, Morag MacDonald, Mike Scarr, Jim & Margaret Strachan.

JMS

CHEVIOTS 19-21 November 1999

A new meet location near Preston Tower some three miles inland from Beadnell Bay on the Northumberland coast.

All day the long bank of cloud lay over the Cheviot Hills. A splendid sight when viewed from afar with its range of towering cumuli. Less splendid, no doubt, for those within: for most chose to visit the Harthope valley and Langleeford, ascending the Cheviot or Hedgehope or both. Wet underfoot, restricted views, and the going reported as rough.

Weaker souls, preferring sunshine, visited Bamburgh or Craster on the coast or Ros Castle inland. This last, site of hilltop fort, is a fine outlook with the Farne Islands clearly visible and attractive views through interior lowlands towards Rothbury.

It was towards Rothbury next day that the main contingent set out in dry but overcast conditions for the ascent and traverse of the Simonside escarpment.

Accommodation was found in the well appointed if rather chilly Jopiners Shop Bunkhouse at Preston and in the Pack Horse Inn in the village of Ellingham where we ate on both evenings.

Present: The President & Arline Midgley, Senga & Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Ian Brebner, Alison & Graham Daniels, Marge & John Foster, Alf Lock, Morag MacDonald, Bill Peebles, Hugh Romer, Mike Scarr, Margaret & Jim Strachan.

JMS/AIA

Ken Baldry

In February we went skiing in Ischgl – eventually, after being stuck in Innsbruck for 2 nights in the grotty Hotel Sailer, hastily pressed into use. At least, on the 2nd day, we bussed to the Axamer Lizum (old 1964 Olympic area) for a day's skiing and then went on to Ischgl in the evening. The avalanches the Austrians had to blast through were formidable. Then we were trapped again but (unfortunately?) this was cleared in time for our return. We stayed in the whacky Hotel Solaria again and the snow, now we were on it, was superb. But it was bitterly cold, down to -22°C on Friday at only 2800m. We did trips into Switzerland to Samnaun by two different routes.

My Alpine trip this year was from Mauvoisin in the Val des Bagnes to Breuil in Italy. Thanks to Easyjet, I left home at 05.15 and was in the Chanrion Hut at 10,000 feet by 19.15, a three and a half hour walk up from the last bus stop. I crossed the Fenetre de Durand, one of the very few walking routes across the Pennine Alps, pleasantly up but tiring step-cutting beneath me on the way down. A long walk to Valpelline finishes day 1. Then, up the Valpelline to Prarayer in the heat but fortunately given a lift for 4 miles in the middle. The hut at Prarayer is very good. Next day is the Crux, the Colle de Valcournera, a diabolical pass between the Valcournera and Valtouranche but the view from the top is spectacular, unusually dominated by Pollux. Then, a half-day walk to Breuil by a nice high-leel footpath from the Barmasse Hut (expensive). It took a day's hitch-hiking over the Great St. Bernard Pass to get to Zermatt, a 200km trip to save 9 but the snow conditions over the Theodule Pass precluded walking across. Vast amounts of snow were still there from last winter. Yet, the temperature never went below freezing, making for unsuitable conditions. More details of trip to Breuil are on the web at www.art-science.com/Ken/Alpine.

Photograph: Page 28

Belinda Baldwin.

There was even less this year in the way of summits than last year but quantity was made up for by quality. I had a glorious day with fellow members in October during the Buffet Meet, going over the Grisedale horseshoe, in the clearest of conditions. We made excellent time, managing all the peaks plus being back in good time for the committee meeting. Thank you Hugh and Mike for having me at my slower pace with you.

The South West Coast Path continues to challenge and odd bits have been filled in as well as a week covering Minehead to Bude. For the latter the weather was murky, the going hard and a tummy bug did not contribute to a happy trip. A stretch was ticked off but it would have helped if we could have seen the glorious views. The final stretch from Hartland to Bude is the most spectacular, but we abandoned the path at mid day as we feared we would be blown off into the sea, the gale was so fierce. I was reduced to going over footbridges on all fours and none of the party of six was happy to continue. Despite this experience another stretch is planned this April, westwards from Padstow.

The Blackdown Hills, Exmoor and Dartmoor have provided me with forays inland. They do not provide great summits, but with the local coast have provided me with the bulk of this year's walking which has been done from home.

My best climb this year was Mount Sinai (2285m.) – on a camel! A word of explanation is necessary. I arrived at St. Catherine's Monastery, at the foot of the mountain, when it was already dark, and prospected (correctly) the start of the path up the mountain. I made an Alpine start at 3.30 a.m. and followed the route begun the evening before, though I had only my head-torch to see by. I was gratified to find myself ascending steadily. However, I was less pleased when the path took an uncompromising turn downwards. It took a little while to be set right by a Bedouin boy and I was warned that I was now *running late to catch the dawn from the summit – my intention*. So when a camel appeared I succumbed. It was pitch dark, with only the ridges of the mountain just visible against the sky. The stars were brilliant in the desert air. It was very still, with just the steady padding of the animal putting distance behind us a good deal more quickly than had I been on my own. It was a great ride and I found it very satisfying. I did have to justify my existence as a climber for, as I approached the summit, there was a considerable ascent of steps cut in the rock which the camel would not take. And I fulfilled my intention to be there for the dawn, which was very spectacular indeed, with the sky pink, deep red, golden, silver and flame by turns. In the light of the day the mountain was somewhat drab, not helped by various rather tatty soft drink stalls. Nevertheless it is a worthwhile ascent, whether on two legs or four.

Peter Farrington

Apart from local outings all my activities in 1999 were on hills abroad starting with a week's skiing on Whistler and Blackcomb whilst on a family holiday in Vancouver in March.

In May I completed my tenth Isle of Jura Fell Race albeit in a slow time. An ankle injury and the apparent onset of old age deterred any further racing during the year.

Ukanc by Lake Bohinj in the Julian Alps proved a good base for a walking holiday with my wife in August. We made several easy walks on a good network of hut paths as well as more strenuous ones on the Vogel and Debela Pec, (2014m.) I made a solo traverse of Triglav, (2864m.) from the Planica Hut, an enjoyable diversion despite wind, mist and an excess of ironmongery on the summit ridges. The descent via the Seven Lakes Valley in warm sunshine was a delight; a place well worth a visit in its own right.

In mid October, seeking easily accessible hills with still dependable weather, I returned to the Ak Dai in Lycian Turkey with Tony Perrons. Due to the unavailability of detailed maps we operated from a 1:500,000 road map following general compass bearings, our nose, the lie of the land and a need to find water to bivouac. After meeting shepherds descending with their flocks and giant mastiffs on the first day we had the hills to ourselves. The rough limestone terrain and heavy sacks made the going slow, but over the week we managed a circuitous course over several summits up to 3000 metres. The weather on high was dry but cold and windy, deteriorating towards the end until we were forced down by a spectacular thunderstorm. In the villages of Dereköy and Arsaköy we were shown great kindness and overwhelming hospitality. We will certainly return.

Peter Goodwin

Coast to Coast

Some time ago I had thought about 'The Great Outdoors Challenge'; crossing Scotland on any route from one of ten different start points on the West coast finishing at Montrose. When Myra Watson said she was also mad enough to have a go, well, attractive company and no cooking was an offer too good to miss!

Starting at Shiel Bridge, we had allowed two days for the South Shiel ridge with its seven Munros. Having completed the ridge on an ideal day, I awoke to thoughts of a gentle stroll into Tomdoun, a few beers, siesta and more of the same. However, Myra had other ideas, so across Glen Lloyne, up the stalkers path, Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach being added on a beautiful day.

After a day through deserted Glen Cie-eig and Achnacorry, the Grey Corries beckoned. I managed to lead Myra, who was expressing doubts as to my navigational skills, up the wrong ridge! So now we were heading away from Montrose, but towards splendid views of the Ben, and on to a delightful campsite in Glen Nevis. After Beinn Eibhinn and Carn Dearg, above the Lancet Edge came the highlight of the trip; a Golden Eagle within 20 yards. Another beautiful day past Loch Erich, the Ben Alder Transport Café allowed considerable indulgence – Myra with numerous scones and me with two full breakfasts. We continued on to Gaick with its broken bridge and obligatory river crossing, fortunately before a torrential evening deluge. Still bucketing the next morning, we abandoned Carn Ealer route for a welcoming fire and lunch-time comfort at Rugeachain Dothy. Reluctantly departing, we forged on up Glen Feshie, camping in a heavy snow storm two miles short of our intended stop at White Bridge. My brand new Saunders tent did not enjoy the experience – both end guy ropes plus attachments taking off into the night!

With a rest day in Braemar, Myra was chafing at the bit, but my feet were very grateful! Our route continued over Tolmount and Tom Buidhe to Clove, followed by Loch Brandy, Ben Tirran and Water of Saughs. Leaving hill country, with some four-pronged antlers on my back pack, there is anti-climax. This is broken by the friendly welcome coming into Brechin and school kids, "Look at that man carrying a reindeer!" The celebratory dinner at the Park Hotel is a fitting conclusion to a highly addictive event. And in case any of you are thinking you've left this one too late, you haven't: just ask Jack Griffiths, he's 90 years old and threatening to do it again.

Photographs: Page 28

Mike Goodyer

A short day in the Alps

The unsettled weather looked here to stay and a pattern was emerging. Sunny afternoons, wind and rain in the evenings and often overnight, and misty damp mornings. Freezing level was several hundred metres above any summit. During a break in the weather we had managed one Alpine peak, Le Bans, but several other teams had abandoned climbs in the mist, rain and poor snow. Time to rethink our climbing plans.

Terry and I had driven out to La Berade to join the ABM camping meet. We had arrived during the second week and, inevitably, were told, "you should have been here last week, before the weather

changed!" So, there we were sitting in the campsite having a late lunch, after completing a day route on the South Face of the Tete de la Maye. We were leafing through the guidebook looking for a good route that had a short hut walk, a short approach from the hut and a low level top. The answer is on the back cover of the Ecrins massif guidebook – a wonderful looking peak, the Aiguille Dibona at 3130m.

The next afternoon Terry and I drove down the valley, parked and started the short steep climb up to the Soreiller Hut. The zigzag path leads up into the gorge and as you cross the wooden bridge the Aiguille comes into view. It is a very dramatic sight as the pinnacle stands out alone against the sky, looking bigger than it really is. The rest of the walk continued to zigzag up an alpine pasture and the hut is quickly reached. The hut really is close to the foot of the mountain; about 10 minutes walk to the first route. Our plan was to climb the Voie Boell. Unfortunately we found that we were not the only climbers to work out that the mountain is ideal in poor weather as many others were planning to do the same route. Terry and I are never happy to share our climbs with hordes of others and the delays that normally follow. We were a bit down.

As we ate another hut meal of veal stew we watched the storm clouds gather across the valley. Breakfast was at 6 a.m so I hoped for a good nights sleep. However the rain lashing against the windows kept disturbing me. At 6 a.m it was still raining and the Aiguille top was in cloud.

Back to bed. Later the rain stopped and the mist lifted, but more bad weather was forecasted for later in the day. During the evening before we had talked with a group of German and English climbers who had completed a modern route on the East face of the mountain. The route was described in the New Route Book in the hut and was first climbed by a friend of the hut guardian in August 1998. We thought that if the Voie Boell was busy or the weather poor we would go for "The Garden Gnome" route. Now that the rain has stopped the rock was drying quickly; we packed our gear and at 10 a.m set off in search for the gnome.

The start was at the Eastern end of the ledge at the start of the Voie Boell. We reached the ledge at the same time as a French team – we geared up before them and set off first. The route was four bolted pitches of flake and crack climbing before a rising traverse up to the North ridge a little way below the Breche Gunneng. The friction on the rock was good and the flakes and cracks meant that we climbed rapidly. At the top of the fourth pitch, cemented into a niche, was a 30cm. high garden gnome – the name of the route explained. The cloud was lifting, but the wind was increasing. We now joined the original route up the mountain. Luckily we only had to wait for two parties to descend from the summit before we could climb the final pitch. On busy days there is normally a considerable delay at this point as all the routes descend the North ridge. The view from the summit was limited by the cloud and we set off abseiling to the Breche and walked back down to the hut. The route was a quick way to the summit, needlessly bolted, at a grade of VS 4c and was ideal for a short day after a late start.

The bad weather forecasted never came and we enjoyed a late lunch in the sun outside the hut. The apple flan, made by the hut guardian, was worth the trip alone. The walk down the valley was very warm and the cool beer at the bar at the bottom didn't touch the sides. The next day it rained.

Barrie Pennett

My walking and climbing year has been curtailed somewhat by illness. However, my first walk of 1999 with my wife Val on January 1st was to Beamsley Beacon, a superb view point over Wharfedale in Yorkshire. It was a cold day with clear views but unfortunately as we were descending the beacon we got caught in heavy rain.

On a bitterly cold day (February 7) we did a nice walk from Draughton (Yorkshire) to Bolton Abbey, taking in Haw Pike, another fine view point. February 12, my birthday, saw us do a delightful walk in the Fountain's Abbey area.

On March 26 we completed a muddy walk to Counter Hill from Addingham. Although it was hard going in parts it was a most enjoyable walk.

A highlight of our year was a short break in Northumberland where we stayed at the Dunstanburgh Castle Hotel at Embleton from March 30 to April 2. After a hearty breakfast of two large kippers each – Northumberland is famous for its kippers – we then did a short walk on Wednesday March 31 to Craster where we visited Robson and Sons Craster Kippers. After a snack of crab sandwiches and drinks at The Jolly Fisherman at Craster we then walked by the golf course and seashore to Embleton. In the evening a small group led by the landlord of the Dunstanburgh Castle Hotel, John Fyffe, a former Settler, entertained.

On April 1st, we drove to Holy Island, where, after visiting Lindisfarne Priory and Castle, we did a short walk by the seashore round the small island. We then drove to Bamburgh where we enjoyed another short walk by the castle and seashore to Budle Point and back to Bamburgh.

On the last day of our short break (Friday April 2nd) we walked from Embleton to Newton-by-the-Sea and then did a coastal walk to Football Hole and the Snook. Drinks were enjoyed at The Jolly Sailor at Newton-by-the-Sea.

On Sunday April 11th we did a walk entitled Rombald's Moor Skyline from Crossflatts in West Yorkshire. This was a superb walk taking in the summit of Rombald's Moor (1319ft.)

On Friday April 16th we walked by the River Wharfe at Ilkley, and on Saturday April 17th we walked from Bridlington on the East Coast to Danesdike. Lovely scenery.

A walk from Bradley to Skipton Moor summit (1224ft.) was enjoyed on Sunday April 2nd. We combined a cricket match – Cumberland v Cheshire at Penrith (our son David plays for Cumberland) with a delightful walk on Saturday May 15th. We stayed in Appleby and visited Dufton where we did a memorable walk to High Cup Nick (2151ft.) On our return to Dufton we had drinks at the Stag Inn and then completed the day with a meal at the Royal Oak Inn in Appleby.

The following day, Sunday May 16th, we relaxed at the cricket match. We were in Cumbria again on Saturday and Sunday, June 12th and 13th for a Minor Counties cricket match at Millom. On the Saturday we walked to Humphrey Head (172ft.) After taking in the view we visited Cartmel for drinks at The King's Arms. Our base was at Lowick Green where we had a meal at The Red Lion.

Val and I and a number of friends spent a weekend in June at the Berghoff Inn, Todmorden where we did a walk to Stoodley Pike, a walk my wife and I intended to do 20 years ago. We parked at Lumbutts and walked by Langfield Edge to Stoodley Pike and then returned by Mankinholse, had drinks at The Rose and Crown in Todmorden.

On Wednesday June 23rd we did a short walk to Ruskin's View at Kirkby Lonsdale. Again we fitted in a walk during a cricket holiday in Norfolk and Suffolk. We stayed at Castle Acre where we did a short walk from the village taking in the castle and priory. This was followed by a meal at the Ostrich Inn, Castle Acre. In addition we have also done several short walks to Billing Hill at Rawdon, which is nearer our home, and on Otley Chegin. On December 10th we did another short walk to Jervaulx Abbey in Wensleydale.

OBITUARIES

Dr CHARLES WARREN 1906 – 1999

Charles Warren died on 30 March 1999 at the age of 92 after a very full life. He was born in April 1906 and whilst at Cambridge he joined the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club and started his climbing in North Wales. Like many other English climbers that first visit to North Wales included ascents of Tryfan and the Cwm Idwal climbs. His first alpine climbing was undertaken in 1925 when he made guided ascents of the Riffelhorn, the Mettelhorn and the Furggrat. Returning to Zermatt the following year he rapidly progressed to more serious ascents on the Ober Gabelhorn, the Zinal Rothorn and the Matterhorn, and started climbing guideless.

In February 1931 whilst a medical student at Barts he applied for membership of the Alpine Club. He was proposed by George Gask and supported by T. Graham Brown, who will always be remembered for his three great routes on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc. He soon established himself amongst the leading climbers of his day and in 1933 he accompanied the Marco Pallis expedition and summited Bhargirathi 3 with Colin Kirkus. At that time this was considered to have been one of the hardest rock climbs achieved at 21,000 feet so far. It was perhaps that success which led Eric Shipton to invite him to join the 1935 expedition to Everest. The intention was to examine the practicability of climbing the mountain during the monsoon weather. The party reached the foot of the mountain in July and after three days work reached the North Col and established a camp stocked with 16 days food. The monsoon theory was quickly shown to be fallacious and after being pinned down on the Col for four days by atrocious weather a very dangerous descent was made to advanced base camp. No more climbing on Everest itself was possible that year. Despite this setback attention was turned to the lower hills in the region and 26 peaks over 20,000 feet were climbed. One of these was Khartaphu, 23,640 feet, which Warren climbed with Shipton and Kempson.

Warren went twice more to Everest, in 1936 and 1038, but on both these expeditions the party was dogged again by bad weather. In 1936 under Shipton's leadership the North Col was once more the highest point reached, although in 1938 Tilman and Smythe reached a height of 27,200 feet before the weather forced retreat.

The war then intervened and expedition climbing had to wait more favourable times. Charles joined the Geneva Section of the SAC in 1925 and later joined the ABMSAC. In more recent years he attended some of our Swiss meets. His activity in the mountains continued until late in life, and he traversed the Cuillin Ridge at the age of 72, and undertook his last rock climb in the Lakes at the age of 80. Appropriately this achievement was celebrated with champagne on the top.

In his professional life he achieved distinction as a paediatrician, making important contributions to the techniques of treating jaundiced infants and in studies of Wilson's disease. He held senior posts at Chelmsford and Colchester, after having spent the war years at an emergency hospital at Bishop's Stortford. It was there that he met his wife Dorothy, who was a radiographer. She died in 1992.

He had a lifelong interest in literature and art, particularly in mountain pictures, and for many years he was the Curator of the Alpine Club's pictures, a task shared at one stage with Peter Bicknell. Following a very long association with the Wordsworth Trust and Dove Cottage he left the Trust a large collection of manuscripts and several important pictures, which included a Gainsborough and a Turner. The Alpine Club also benefited from his generosity receiving several Alpine pictures including a Ruskin. Charles Warren was a quiet individual having a very friendly disposition and possessing considerable personal charm. He will be missed by those of us who had the privilege of knowing him and climbing with him.

JS Whyte.

Prof. JOHN COALES

John Coales who died after failing health in June this year reached the impressive age of 92. He was known mainly to the longer standing members of the Association, but his achievements are of significance to all.

He had a most distinguished career. As a highly qualified engineer he was responsible for the development of radar which became of crucial importance to our survival in the Second World War. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society and continued to lecture in the Engineering Department at Cambridge on the applications of electronics and automation. His consultancy was widely sought both at home and abroad, and he received a prestigious prize from the Honda motor company.

His interest in mountaineering was focussed primarily on the Alps, where he took part in the Association's Alpine Meets for many years. As late as 1998 he insisted on driving to our informal meet in Bivio with his special method of negotiating Alpine passes. He was as good company as ever, re-living old times and managing to get around.

Apart from his support for the Association, he was also a member of the Alpine Club and founded the Cambridge Alpine Club. This unique institution had a number of well known members with the not too exacting duty of meeting for an excellent Annual Dinner in Clare College, which he organised.

John was an extremely knowledgeable man and got through a great deal of work. But he had a great sense of humour and a remarkable facility for creating a good atmosphere, assisted at times where necessary by his expertise on wines and a stentorian voice. He also had great pride in his wonderful alpine garden in Cambridge.

We regret the passing of a great character and extend our sympathy to his widow Thea, his son Edward and daughter Alison with the rest of the family.

Peter Ledeboer

Tribute to Professor Coales by Professor Paddy Boulter given at his Thanksgiving Service.

JOHN FLAVELL COALES

If you had happened to be at 10,000 feet on a certain Swiss mountain on the 28th of August of last year, you would be forgiven for thinking that you were seeing the ghost of a Victorian climber. A tall figure in a deerstalker hat, tweed breeches, long wool stockings and a pair of brown boots polished like two large horsechestnuts and made by Mr. Lobb of St. James'. It was, of course, John Coales about to descend by a steep and exposed track from his last Alpine summit at the age of 91. You would have been left in no doubts about his identity a few minutes later when John's voice boomed out in excitement on his way down as he found a rare and beautiful Alpine plant, *Eritrichium Nanum*, the King of the Alps. John's love of the mountains was only matched by his love of their flowers which led to the wonderful rockeries that he made in his own garden.

John's affection for the mountains began in the early 1930's when he went for his first Swiss holiday with an injunction from his mother that put a ban on climbing. However, when he married Thea in 1936, their Honeymoon was spent in the Lake District and Skye. Then followed holidays when they

stayed at the Bridge Inn at Buttermere and in 1961 he bought a farm at the head of the lake which he kept for over 10 years. Thus a distinguished scientist with a life of academic research, teaching and the distractions of committees had another and contrasting existence. When he was well away from his university and industrial responsibilities, he enjoyed the hard work of trials of a Cumbrian farmer and the fellowship of a remote Lakeland valley.

His love for Switzerland was rekindled when he and the family holidayed in the mountains and in 1961 he commenced his long and happy membership of the Swiss Alpine Club and of the Association of British members of that body. In 1976, he was elected to the Alpine Club, the senior of all mountaineering bodies. I first climbed with John on a Club meeting at Courmayeur in the mountains on the South side of Mont Blanc. This was the start of a series of holidays usually at ABM meets when many club members will remember the pleasure of John's company and his contributions to the enjoyment of evenings of wining and dining after days on the mountains. My wife and I will always cherish the memories of these occasions which we shared with fellow climbers and with John and his family.

John was a gregarious man and enjoyed meeting with his friends and he excelled as both host and participant in post prandial discussions when he made his points with clarity and some decibels. I wonder whether I could be forgiven for making a plea: The Cambridge Alpine Club was established some years ago by John as a dining club for his mountaineering friends and it would be a gesture that would please many of us if it were to be renamed "The Coales Club" as a lasting memory of this great, remarkable and delightful man.

We all remember him as a wonderful companion, a raconteur of distinction, and the world of climbing as well as that of Engineering is the poorer for his loss and we all grieve with Thea and their family.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at the Glenridding Hotel, Glenridding, Cumbria on Saturday 5 February 2000.

The President was in the chair with 30 members present.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Alasdair Andrews, Ed Bramley, Paddy and Mary Boulter, Peter Boyes, Peter and Gillian Bull, Andy Burton, Edward Coales, Ross and Sheila Cameron, Phil Hands, David Harland, Peter Ledebøer, David Penlington, Hugh Romer and David Watts.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on 6th February 1999 were approved and signed. One matter arising was that the accounts were audited and accepted by the committee, but were not available in time for the publication of the journal. The accounts were offered to members via sac, if required.
3. Election of Officers and Committee

Vice President Roger James and Committee members Peter Bull and Edward Coales retired in rotation. The President thanked them for their contributions. The President also retired after his three years in office.

The Committee had proposed Mike Goodyer as President. This was seconded by Don Hodge and passed unanimously.

The Committee had proposed David Watts as Vice President. This was seconded by Nigella Hall and passed unanimously.

The Committee had proposed Wendell Jones and Bill Peebles for the vacant places on the Committee. They were seconded by Graham Daniels and Roger Aldred and passed unanimously.

All other Officers and Committee Members offered themselves for re-election. Proposed by Colin Barnard and seconded by Antonia Barlen and passed unanimously.

The President thanked all Officers and Committee Members for their help over the last year.

4. Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer offered his apologies for absence. Mike Pinney presented his notes and the audited accounts which had been distributed.

The income from members was higher than the previous year due to having two more members than last year (3 more full members and 1 less affiliate member.)

Expenditure on the journal, newsletter and printing/postage was down on last year. The London meetings were still running at a loss and therefore as a cost to the club. This issue will be looked at by the committee in the future.

An excess of income over expenditure of £1,019 resulted, compared to £351 in 1998. The accounts were in a healthy state. The adoption of the audited accounts was proposed by Wendell Jones, seconded by Alf Lock and passed unanimously.

5. Subscription Rates for 2000 and 2001

The subscription rates for 2000 and the bands within which the rates for 2001 may be set are unchanged from last year and are as follows:

	2000	2001
Single membership	£16.00	£16.00 - £18.00
Joint membership	£24.50	£24.50 - £27.50
Junior Membership	£7.00	£7.00 - £8.00

6. President's report

We have had yet another successful and active year – vary satisfactory in most respects.

Membership

Our membership numbers are much the same as the previous year, as you have just heard.

Finances

We have had the Hon. Treasurer's report and so I need to say little more on the subject. In the last years report I mentioned some problems we intended to address – this was achieved and many thanks to Belinda Baldwin for her hard work in this area, the technological switch appears beneficial. Thanks to Keith Dillon and his successor Alasdair Andrews for their work as Hon. Treasurer. Thanks also to Mike Pinney for presenting the accounts.

Meets

Our programme of meetings and meets continues to be very comprehensive – more than two events per month!

Our thanks to Peter Ledebøer for organising the London Lectures and to Robert Muller for his lecture at the Swiss Embassy – a memorable evening.

Alasdair Andrews, and increasingly others, are putting together a grand programme of Winter Meets in Scotland, which are well attended by members from all over the country. Our thanks to Alasdair, Alf, John, John, Burt and anyone I've missed. Other meets have been held at the usual venues – Lakes, Wales, Peak District etc. Thanks to the organisers Ed Bramley, Mike Goodyer and others.

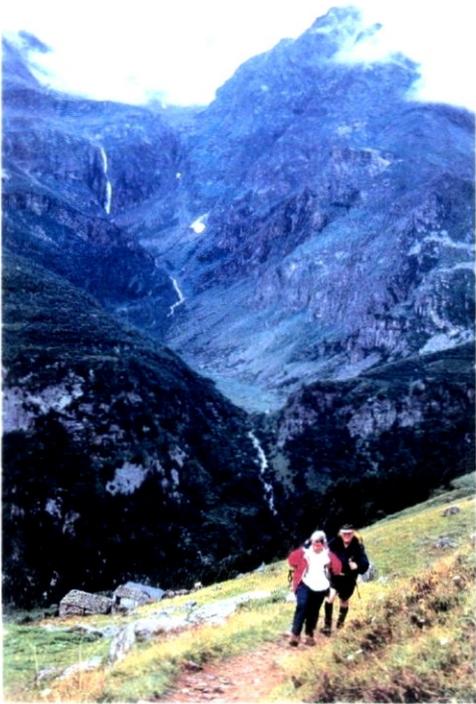
Kathy McManus again organised the Patterdale Buffet Party to which we again invited the PCC. It was a good party and our thanks to Kathy and her assistants. We had successful Alpine Meets – the combined camping meet in the Ecrins and the Monte Rosa Tour walk-in to Saas Grund, where about 50 congregated for two weeks. Our thanks to Alasdair Andrews, Alf Lock and others for their work on our behalf. Also thanks to Jeff Harris for organising the camping meet. I won't introduce a note of sadness by even mentioning Maintenance Meets.

George Starkey Hut.

There has been no progress on the Freehold purchase; but we seem to have made some progress on another front. Our Landlords have offered a new 14 year lease which will start from the termination of the original one in October 2002. The new lease documents are at the drafting stage (possibly a little more of this in AOB). Possibly Kathy's food has got parts that logic couldn't reach!

Committee

During the year we have had six committee meetings held at Meet venues – one in Switzerland of 15



Renate Romer & Alisdair Andrews.
Valle Alagna - Valsesia
Monte Rosa Tour. *Jack Ashcroft*



East Ridge
Dent d'Herens *Jack Ashcroft*



Peaks above Mallmark Dam *Wendell Jones*



Nordend - Dufourspitze from Theodule Glacier
Moute Rosa Tour *Jack Ashcroft*



Moute Rosa Tour



Glen Nevis *Peter Goodwin*



Enroute
Manvoism-Valdes Bagues *Ken Baldry*



On Grey Corriel *Peter Goodwin*

minutes duration according to the minutes! The meetings were well attended and I thank on your behalf all the officers and members of the committee.

Obituaries

Two prominent members died during the year – Prof. John Coales and Dr. Charles Warren. Obituaries will be published in the Journal.

Finally I would like to give my personal thanks to you all for your support for this event over the last 27 years and – providing I don't get the "push" – for a few more years yet. My thanks also to the Officers and Committee, who have given me much needed support over the past three years – Thank you all.

7. Any Other Business

The President mentioned that although the Committee was working to buy the Freehold of the Hut and the lease had been extended for a further 14 years it had never been put to the membership to see if the club wanted this course of action.

The Committee recommendation to the members is that: ABMSAC Limited on our behalf try to agree the new lease and continue to pursue the purchase of the Freehold of the George Starkey Hut as a primary aim. This was proposed by Don Hodge and seconded by Wendell Jones and passed unanimously.

A proposal of thanks to Brooke for his time as President was given by Heather Eddowes for all his efforts on the Northern/Annual Dinner and work on the Hut.

8.

There being no further business the President declared the meeting closed at 6.43 pm.