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DIARY

Date	Venue	Meet Leader
May 17 - 18	Welsh Meet, Rhydd Dhu, Wales	Ed Bramley
Mid June	Family Meet, Peak District	Andy Burton
June 28 - 29	Alps pre Meet, George Starkey Hut	Ed Bramley
July 13 - 20	Haut Maurienne, Lanslebourg	Alasdair Andrews
July 20 - 27	Vanoise, Pralognan	Alasdair Andrews
July 27 - Aug 10	Alps Camping Meet, Chamonix Valley	Mike Pinney
Sept 1 - 13	Mont Blanc Tour, TBA	Alasdair Andrews
September 20 - 21	Dartmoor Bunk Barns, TBA	Alison Henry
September 27 - 28	Autumn Lakes Meet, George Starkey Hut	Ed Bramley
October 18 - 19	Alpine reunion Meet, George Starkey Hut	Ed Bramley
January 31 - February 2	Annual Dinner Meet, Glenridding Hotel	Brooke Midgley

SWISS ALPINE CLUB HUTS

Minimum Requirements, Maximum Desires, and Reality.

Huts have always played an important role in the SAC: as starting points for practically all the big routes, as sure shelters in bad weather or in case of retreat, and as focal points for each Section. However, as a result of the evolution of both mountaineering and the hotel industry, the function of huts has changed dramatically in recent years. In addition, members have diverse and often contradictory expectations of "their" huts.

Sections which own a hut devote an important part of their activities to the hut, especially when major work is involved. In most cases, discussions last several years, plans being made, modified, and new ideas proposed. Members participate in many ways, especially in small Sections: in addition to various voluntary tasks, they donate money, materials and skill, often giving up whole weeks of their holidays to complete a project. This goodwill is essential for the existence of huts, which is why the inauguration of reconstructed or renovated huts is so important for the sections which own them.

Today's requirements for huts are the result of change in many areas. There are more legal prescriptions for food storage, as well as for toilets, washing facilities, kitchens etc. Above all, people want more comfort. Visitors now want rooms with only a few beds, not dormitories. Showers are no longer considered a luxury but as essential for hygiene and the norm in everyday life. Equipment has also changed. Thanks to lighter materials and better roads and access facilities, mountaineering trips take less time than in the past. Routes which previously necessitated an overnight in a hut have now become possible in one day. Mountaineering holidays are often organised from a base in the valley, where there is better infrastructure, and from where it is possible to beat a hasty retreat to another area if the weather is bad.

There is also a noticeable increase in the number of hikers and tourists in many huts - to the detriment of mountaineers - except in huts at high altitude which are only reached after a long, hard slog. As a result, Sections which own huts are faced with a choice in the function of their huts. For example, a hut can be used as a restaurant by the local Tourist Office organising a "fondue evening". Imagine the effect of this on a mountaineer spending the night there, and on the character of the hut itself.

The romantic image of huts is also changing. In the past, after a trip which was still a bit of an expedition, it was enough to find shelter for the night. For want of anything better, we were happy with what there was. The building of new huts and the modernisation of old ones has been unanimously greeted as progress. But, in the meantime, our everyday lives have become so comfortable that some, in a nostalgically romantic vision, look back with regret on the simplicity of the good old days.

But where is the romanticism of huts when the majority of our visitors arrive with a mobile phone? Does the "good old days" mean not having sufficient toilets or washing facilities, dormitories with narrow mattresses, and food kept in unhygienic conditions?

Surely if we admit to progress, romanticism can be compatible with a certain degree of comfort: well-lit rooms, bedrooms with 4-6 beds, modern toilets and washing facilities (and why not showers if possible), a well equipped kitchen with a deep freeze and also pleasant living conditions for the hut warden and his wife. An attractive, welcoming hut, with electric light and modern equipment, is certainly not contrary to today's interpretation of romanticism.

Given the choice between comfort and a romantic image, most would choose the former. Certainly, in

some less frequented areas it is possible and even desirable to preserve huts as they were in the past. But we should not harbour any illusions. These huts could never make enough money even to pay for their upkeep. Those who think that a hut which is romantically basic could easily "sell itself" to potential visitors forget two essential facts: first, that the "sale" of romanticism today is affected by a tourism organisation which is not interested in mountaineers; and second, that all huts ought to have modern equipment.

During 2001, several huts were inaugurated after reconstruction or renovation more or less in the style of recent developments. One was the Kesch Hut now one of the most modern of the SAC, thanks to the money which the Davos Section, its owners, could afford to spend. Another was the Albigna, owned by the small Hohe Rohn Section, where the renovations were in contrast, achieved by the hard work of its members, work which has made this hut romantic and welcoming as well as modern.

(The above article was originally published in the November 2001 edition of Les Alpes and illustrates a debate which is taking place within the SAC. We are fortunate that the task of looking after a roadside hut in Patterdale is simpler than that experienced by our Swiss colleagues but many of the points raised in the article are equally relevant here. Translation by Pamela Harris).

Three Welsh Mountain Poems

Sun on the Mountain

I walked on the brink of sweet steams - in the shy sound
Of nervous winds of the uplands.
And a white arm of sunshine was
On the old throat of the mountains.

Hedd Wyn.

Arenig Fawr under Snow (Christmas 1965)

A merciful cloak rests on it - giving dignity
To the heights of tranquillity
Grant us a portion of peace
From the spotless snow of your hillside.

Geraint Bowen.

In memory of John Closs

(John Closs was only seven years old when he set out from Betws Garmon to cross Moel Eilio to Nant Peris, and he met his death on the mountain. His grave can still be seen in Nant Peris churchyard)

Inescapable cold was the cause - of a death
Sharply agonising, it appears.
A mantle of mist in the darkness of the night
And twilight terror.

Dafydd Ddu Eryri

Translations by James Bogle.

WHY THERE'S NO NEED TO KEEP WALKERS OFF THE HILLS

(Reprinted from *The Scotsman* dated 17 December 2000
with permission of the author Paul Williams)

If the snow comes, as it probably will, we'll be out at least a dozen times in January. Most of the people we assist will be overdue or cragfast, some will be injured, a few will be dead. Then, just as surely as we will be trekking out onto the hill, the criticism will start. It may come from a news editor short of a story, a politician who wants his 15 minutes of fame or even (and this is unforgivable) from a mountain rescuer who is feeling virtuous and self-righteous.

The script is always the same. The casualties are foolhardy, inexperienced or badly equipped. The rescuers have been risking their lives for these idiots, the cost to the taxpayer is enormous. Surely we should have compulsory training for mountaineers, compulsory insurance, compulsory equipment? Maybe we should just close the mountains.

Or maybe we should just look at the facts. In Glencoe, there are about 120,000 trips into the hills each year. About 50 of these require our assistance, that's 0.04 per cent. Almost all of them are well equipped and experienced. The ill-equipped fool is a tabloid myth. Only about half these people are hurt and the injuries are almost all caused by a trip or slip - nothing reckless, just something you might do on your own doorstep.

In an average year we have about six fatalities in Glencoe. Each one is a tragedy but the death rate is very low. The death rate from coronary heart disease in Scotland is over 50 per 100,000 of the population. Almost all of them are avoidable but one missing climber produces a greater furore than a hundred heart attacks.

Heart disease costs the taxpayer millions but mountain rescue costs virtually nothing. Most teams are made up of volunteers and almost all our funding comes from the mountaineering community. The cost of the helicopters is covered by essential training costs. The RAF have stated: "The helicopters fly on routine training at least once, if not twice a day. Therefore, during an incident these training flights simply become operational hours at no additional expense and also provide excellent training experience for the crews".

This training experience is one of the reasons our helicopters are the envy of the world. During long searches we normally ask for the help of the RAF mountain rescue teams. They are maintained primarily to assist downed aircraft and are part of the government's obligation under aviation treaties.

They would continue to exist whether they were used for mountain rescue or not. In summary, all the public money spent on mountain rescue would be spent anyway. Funding for the civilian teams comes almost entirely from the mountaineers. Far from costing the taxpayer anything, mountaineers pour money into the public purse.

A 1996 study found mountaineers spend £150 million annually in the Highlands, generating £43 million of income and securing 4000 jobs. Throughout Britain they pay millions into the exchequer through VAT on expensive outdoor equipment.

Nobody has done any research but I'm willing to bet that mountaineers, and everyone else who takes part in physical demanding activities, save the NHS a fortune simply by being healthy.

A rational person would praise mountaineers and demand that the state should pay for mountain rescue but there's something hysterical about the criticism of so-called adventure sports. Perhaps the critics feel diminished by the energy, enthusiasm, skill and companionship that are fundamental to these activities. Perhaps they realise, but can't admit it, how dull and empty the world would be if we were all like them.

Paul Williams is secretary of the Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team.

MEET REPORTS

Crete - May 22nd to June 5th.

As the previous visit to Crete was in May 1993, we considered that some guaranteed sunshine and good walking was about due. The meet as before was centred on the old Venetian town of Reythimno on the north coast of the island.

The road from Heraklion airport to Reythimno winds along the coast, initially through hills and gorges before coming out onto the coastal plain where the road verges were ablaze with pink oleander and yellow broom. The oleander apparently keeps the wild goats off the road as they hate the stuff. The parties arriving independently quickly settled into their various apartments and hotels, meeting up at a town centre café, that was to become the regular rendezvous for the remainder of the meet. The first evening and early next morning were spent negotiating hire car deals.

A party of seven set off in two cars to visit the ruins of the Minoan summer palace at Phaistos. Being a hot day, the ruins were dusty and busy, the beach at Matala only a few miles away beckoned. The small sandy bay is hemmed in by sandstone cliffs on either side which are pock marked with rows of small caves along the strata lines. These were used as tombs, by the Romans, then more recently as homes by the hippies in the sixties. Scrambling over the cliff terraces it was possible to explore most of the caves. Following an extensive dip in the Libyan Sea and a light meal in a local Taverna we returned to Rythimno.

The Stylo to Katohori gorge (We did it in the reverse uphill direction) is a lesser known walk and therefore does not attract the same numbers experienced on the other gorge walks. The approach from Stylo is along an old track between orange groves on one side and the dried up river bed on the other. The wild herbs such as thyme, fennel and sage growing in abundance gave off a heady pleasant aroma more akin to the kitchen of a good restaurant. Switching the track for a river bed we scrambled on in to the gorge itself passing a few wild goats munching away in the dense foliage at the side. The walls of the gorge were of very poor sand and pebble stone conglomerate rising steeply to several hundred feet. Water erosion had caused recent landslides indicating this was not the place to dally or visit in the wet season. We walked through the gorge itself until it started to open out on to more wooded hills then re-traced our steps sampling a few deliciously sweet oranges from an abandoned section of the grove.

Volakis (Gingilos 3*m).** Gingilos stands at the head of the Samaritan Gorge and is reached by following a spectacular drive up a mountain road to the high saucer plane of Omalos. The mountain itself is a massif rock bastion steep on each side with the top of the gorge reaching up to a coll on the north east flank. The route up is actually on the adjacent hill above the gorge. The path snakes up through arches of rock and formations left by erosion to a final steep boulder scree slope before the coll. From here a steep scramble tops out at the cairn of the first top. The main top a couple of hundred yards further on is reached by scrambling over some very sharp serrated edged rocks. On this occasion good views were to be had in all directions.

Iron Gates (Samaritan Gorge). This is the longest and steepest gorge in Europe normally traversed from the top at Omalos to Agia Roumeli on the sea. This traverse with the long car and boat journeys at either end makes it a very, very long day. Ian and Morag crossed the island by car to Hora Sphakia, then by boat along the coast (there is no road) to the small settlement of Agia Roumeli. Here the Samaritan Gorge exits onto a small beach of black sand on the Libyan Sea. From here they walked in to the Iron Gates. These are vertical cliffs rising vertically to 1000m forming the narrows of the gorge. This section is normally traverses via stepping stones to the river bed. They retraced their route on the return.

Loutro to Sphakia Coast/Cliff walk. The intention was to catch the ferry from Hoya Sphakia along the coast to Loutro and walk back. However, as we were negotiating the steep zig zags on the approach road to Spakia we could see the ferry below us leaving the jetty. Following a few enquiries, Buff Dolling arranged a water taxi to take us to Loutro. This proved a most enjoyable and exhilarating ride, as the small boat was powered by a large outboard motor creating a huge bow wash. The trip gave us good views of the hills, cliffs and coastline from the sea. Loutro is a small bay with a few houses and tavernas hugging the water line, with the mountains rising steeply behind. Until very recently there was no road. Following a light breakfast of bread, cheese and coffee in one of the tavernas at the waterside we set off after some confusion in route-finding, on the walk back. The path on the hillside was about a hundred feet or so above the sea giving an easy walk with open views over the sea and coves in front and behind us. Topping a headland we came upon a secluded white shingle beach (Sweet-water Beach, so named because of freshwater springs on the shingle) with a single taverna on stilts a few metres out in the turquoise sea, reached by way of a gangplank. Following a refreshment we decided to have a dip in the sea only to be advised by Buff that we may be conspicuous as the other bathers already on the beach were only wearing hats. The exit from the beach was via a fairly exposed cliff path rising several hundred feet above the sea with an over-hang above. The path wound round another small cove before ending on the road down to Sphakia.

Imbros Gorge. This gorge drops about 2000 ft from the village of Imbros and exits to the Libyan Sea. At its crux it is very narrow and the walls are overhanging and almost intertwined giving the impression of walking through a cave. The walls bear all the classic abrasion patterns consistent with severe water erosion. We walked out at the foot of the gorge to the nearest village and as the temperature was approaching 30C we hired a taxi to return to our car at the top.

Participants: John and Marge Foster, Colin and Marion Armstrong, Bill and Kaye Cumming Canada, Morag MacDonald, Ian Brebner, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Buff Dolling, Alf and Shirley Locke.

Jim Strachan

Dolomites High Level walk

Round the Rosengarten - July 7th to July 13, 2001-12-20.

It brought back memories of a first day at school as I walked into the Hotel Piccolo on the Seiseralm above Bolzano knowing none of the others on high level tour round the Rosengarten Dolomites. This was my first ABMSAC meet. Although I had been a member of the club for more than 25 years, work and family commitments had meant that until last summer my participation had been largely confined to occasional attendance at a London lecture or dinner. How would I find it? It took only a few minutes to allay any concern. The greeting was warm, the hotel comfortable and welcoming and I soon felt reassured that it would be an enjoyable week among like-minded mountain lovers.

Seiseralm is a huge alp, beautifully set at nearly 1,900m at the foot of the Rosengarten Dolomites and covered with a profusion of flowers in early July. Its main disadvantage is the hoards it attracts and they were beginning to arrive by coach-load as, on a glorious Sunday morning, we started on the first stage of the walk to Schlernhaus at 2,457m, A comfortable track across the meadows leads to the Saltner Hut, the first of the numerous hostleries dotted along the route. Despite its allure, most resisted the temptation for so early a stop before tackling the long and hot climb to the col and the Schlernhaus. This large hut is no place for those seeking the solitude of the mountains. It was not until early evening that the crowds began to disperse. By then most of our group, relieved of their sacks, had walked to the top of the Schlern which at 2,565m has an impressive panorama across the Bolzano valley to the Brenta Dolomites and northwards to the mountains of Switzerland and Austria.

Monday was one of the longest and most spectacular days of the tour. From the Schlernhaus a broad open ridge to the south east leads to the Roter Spitz. Seven of the party (Mike Scott, Robin, Dave, Bill, Ed, Steve and Andy) set off to complete the ridge by the Maximiliansteg Via Ferrata to the Tierseralp Hut. But finding progress too slow, they abandoned their climb and followed the rest of us along the path that had descended steeply at first before climbing gently to the hut. Its pleasant situation on a grassy pass at 2,440m is only marred by an unsightly wind generator.

A short climb from the hut up slabby rocks is the Molignon Pass (2,598m) with dramatic views of the surrounding rock wall and a deep bowl below leading to the Grasleitenpass. The descent from the Molignin on steep snow and scree needed care and an ice axe would have been welcome in place of ski sticks. But the climb afterwards to the Grasleitenpass at 2,599m was less demanding and rewarded by the opportunity for more refreshment in the tiny hut perched on the col under the walls of the Kesselkugel 3002m. No doubt frustrated by his earlier reversal on the Maximiliansteg, Mike Scott speedily soloed the Kesselkugel Via Ferrata from the pass while the rest, fortified by various offerings of the hut, ambled down to the Vajolet Hut at 2,243m. Like the Schlernhaus, this huge refuge, dominated by the soaring Vajolet Towers, was crowded and hardly a haven of peace and quiet. A boisterous mob of Italian schoolchildren created a remarkable volume of noise late into the evening.

As we were returning to the Vajolet hut in the evening, Tuesday was day for lighter sacks and for a choice of excursions in the southern section of the Rosengarten. A party of nine walked over the Pas de le Zigolada (2,579m) to the Roda de Vael refuge where it split. The most energetic, Mike Scott, Robin Richards, Dave Penlington and Bill Westermeyer, raced ahead to the Rosengarten Hut and climbed the Santner Hut Via Ferrata before descending under the Vajolet Towers. Low cloud deprived them of decent photos of the towers. The remaining five, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Rosemary Westermeyer and I took things more leisurely and after refreshment at the Rosengarten hut, returned by traversing the 2,630m Pas de le Coronele.

Alasdair Andrews, Mike Westmacott and Jon and Rowena Mellor had a round trip via the Negritella Hut at 1986m, the Roda di Vael refuge and the Zigolada pass while Sally Westmacott and Deirdre Richards spent the day inspecting and photographing flowers. Everyone was back in time to avoid the thunderstorm that arrived before supper.

From the Vajolet hut, Wednesday's stage took us back to the Grasleiten pass from where Robin, Dave, Ed and Andy climbed the 3,004m Kesselkogel via Ferrata. A 2,831m peak south of the Antemoia pass at 2,770m provided additional exercise for Alasdair, Bill, Rosemary, Mike Westacott and myself but advancing mist cut short the views. Good glissading snow below the pass brought us swiftly to the Antemoia hut early in the afternoon. What a pleasure it was to arrive at a hut that was less crowded and had the atmosphere of a traditional Alpine refuge with many fine photos on the walls. The guardian, Almo Giambisi had been on 12 expeditions to 8,000 metre peaks and clearly enjoyed an exchange of high mountain reminiscences with Mike Westacott.

The path on the Thursday from the Antemoia to the Plattkofel hut crosses two passes at 2,518m and 2,282m before descending through larches and a patch of glorious Alpine flowers and shrubs to the Tal Pian alp at 1,900m. From the Pas de Doron at 2,168m above the alp, a long grassy ridge dotted with gentians leads to the hut at 2,300m. After beer and sandwiches, five of us walked to the 2,915m summit cross of the Plattkofel and peered down into the mist-shrouded depths of its north eastern cliffs. At the hut, we were well fed but the cramped sleeping accommodation gave many an uncomfortable night.

The final day began with a delightful high traverse above the Val Doron to the Della Joch from where the first mechanical aid we had encountered saved a long slog to the pass between the Plattkofel and the 3000m Langkofel. A steep descent over snow, rock and scree ended with lunch and refreshments

on the terrace of the Langkofel Hut just below the mist line. From here a variety of routes were taken to return to Piccolo Hotel in good time for a wash and brush up before an excellent end of tour dinner.

Appropriate thanks were conveyed at dinner to Alasdair for his immaculate organisation and for his choice of hotel to start and end the week. As I left the next day for an opera in Verona, I felt my first ABMSAC meet had been an unqualified success and that I had made many good friends.

Participants: Alasdair Andrews, Pamela Harris, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Jon and Rowena Mellor, David Penlington, Robin and Deirdre Richards, Mike Scott, Bill and Rosemary Westermeyer, Mike and Sally Westmacott.

Terry Shaw.

Brenta Dolomites Camping Mette - an overview

The summer meet was based at Madonna di Campiglio in the Brenta Dolomites. The venue was a remarkable spot, with the limestone of the Brenta Dolomites on one side of the valley and granite and high snowy peaks of the Adamello and Presanella ranges on the other side. The first week of the camping meet overlapped with the last week of the Hotel based meet and so there was an opportunity for the early arrivals on the camping meet to see friends on the Hotel meet.

The camp site was a couple of miles down the valley from Madonna and had great views of the snowy side of the valley. The camp site was in the process of being updated and the promised restaurant was not ready, which meant evening forays into the surrounding villages to eat in local inns. In typical Italian style the camp site shut between one and three in the afternoon, with the barrier coming down. You had to remember to move your car off the site if you wanted to go anywhere in the afternoon. The family running the site were very friendly and helped us as much as possible. The site was excellent with hot water whatever time we arrived back at the site! At the end of my stay I got a discount for the days spent in the mountain huts.

The three weeks of the camping meet went past all too quickly. It was good to see members coming in from other areas of the meet. The first week the weather was characterised by mid afternoon rain showers or thunder storms, but these generally died out for the last two weeks.

The mountain huts were all of a high standard with excellent food and most importantly not as busy as in some other Alpine areas. You were able to plan and book a hut place with certainty. One thing became that quickly apparent was that a day trip into the hills was a long one as the approaches were long and mainly on foot, there being only a couple of lifts. Many people stayed in the huts for several days to make the most of the mountains and cut down on the walk-ins. On rest days there were many good paths for low level walks and some good mountain bike trails.

Several rock climbs were done, notably the Amperer/Berger and Fehrmann routes on the Camanile Basso, Cima Margherita, the Castelletto Inferiore and the Brenta Alta and sessions on the rocks above the 12 Apostles Hut but several parties. These climbs generally took longer than the guidebook suggested and led to some late descents.

The via ferrata were very popular with most of the area well worked on by everybody. The late snow this year meant that the gullies were still full of soft snow; ice axes were a help! See Nikki Wallis's account elsewhere in the journal

There were a couple of forays into the granite and snowy side of the valley. Mike Pinney and Mike Goodyer have written accounts of these ascents. The team climbed the Cima Bianco, Adamello and the Care Alto from the Lobbia Alta hut over a two day period. On their return they enjoyed an abseil over cliffs, a river crossing and a night time descent through the forest to return to the camp site at 12.30am. A few days later the team went up to the Segantini hut from where they climbed the Cima Presanella in thick mist.

Mike Goodyer

"Dolomitic Delights" - The ABMSAC 2001 Alpine Meet

"Spflug!". A plate arrived in front of me. The flat-footed waiter gave a grunt of satisfaction, comprehensible only to a linguist fluent in Serbo-Croat.

We gazed at the latest product from Herr Oberosler's creative and imaginative - a quote from the Tourist Office - catering school and strove to identify it. What had been ordered? Was this it? If not, what was it? A hard decision had to be made. Rejection put one a fence back in the dinner stakes; acceptance a pleasant enough dish, sans veg in the local tradition. He of the large feet, regarded by some as not the greatest brain in Italy since Leonardo da Vinci, was rarely able to help.

The hotel's approach was to take dinner orders at breakfast, thus settling the needs of each table. This might have worked but for the ABM's urge for all-round social contact which caused half the denizens of Table A to move to table B and vice versa for the next meal.

We did a little better on the booze front. Herr Oberosler produced a nice line in gluhwein on the hall table, accompanied by quantities of denture-removing chocolate. The house wine was good and reasonably priced and turnover must have been good in the first week. During the second the number of empties being removed surreptitiously to the bottle bank across the road rose exponentially, as the ABM's flair for preprandial entertainment spread to every balcony.

The Oberosler establishment stood on rising ground with a view across the little town to the western peaks - not dissimilar to the situation of the Engadinerhof last year, although there were no frontal shops. A row of parking spaces straddled the foot of the steps and I never experienced a repetition of last year's parking saga - perhaps because the new Volvo never left its slot.

The hotel was comfortable and Alasdair had negotiated an excellent price; its balconies were extensive, as was the array of gold plated taps and pipes; the plumbing system also erred on the exotic side. The staff were friendly and coped with the linguistic difficulties and ABMSAC eccentricities with mystification and aplomb.

Madonna di Campiglio, a pleasant little town most of the way up to the Carlo Magna Pass, has had its centre pedestrianised, and its traffic removed by a brand new tunnel, driven through the western slopes. Its main square was the scene of a concert in Hapsburg Imperial court dress which was received with great applause; this might suggest that Teutonic influence and culture extends further than Alto Adige/Sud Tirol into Trentino province - Obersler too seemed hardly an Italian name.

I had been there in 1960 but recognised nothing.

Access proved hard; the map suggested a crossing of the Alpine watershed followed by a valley ascent. Practise produced the Fern Pass (easy), the Brenner on a Sunday (road works in Austria, ticket queues in Italy - don't think of it on a Saturday), the Mandello (16 hairpins) and the Carlo Magna another 800 metres of ascent just when you weren't expecting it. On the way back I was on my fifth Alpine Pass by 11 a.m. Others fared worse, Alasdair and Pam taking any number of hours to get back to Geneva. Those who flew to Verona had to master two flights, a train and a bus, only possible if all ingredients are punctual. One gathers they weren't.

Panem et Circences - bread and circuses, the story of the Roman Welfare State. Enough of the Panems; what about the gladiatorial thrills in the hills which the ABM - in moderation-seeks?

To set the scene, Madonna di Campiglio lies between contrasting terrain; on one side 3,000 metre lego bricks sticking out of the top of the forest in every bizarre form that the Dolomites can conjure; on the other ridge after ridge of more traditional rock summits, backed by the 3,500 metre snow domes of the Presanella and Adamello. Three or four lifts disfigured the lower slopes and the ABM accepted theses with alacrity and cashed in on the discounted pensioner rates.

Climbing choices lay between snow peaks, big walls and via ferrata. The former followed traditional lines getting up the peak because "it is there" and coming down again. Via ferrata are paths and rockways, ladders and metal ropes and handholds which rarely reach a summit. Their origins go back to the Austro-Italian battles of the first World War, with a vital need to move troops quickly along the commanding heights. Not too many miles away a Lieutenant Erwin Rommel enhanced his name with lightning movements through the mountains from Mount Matajur to the Piave valley and took 9,000 prisoners - not bad for a Lieutenant - later he was no slouch in the desert.

In more peaceful times, the ABM took to the via ferrata with varying enthusiasm. Penny Austin "Flower Power Penny" revelled in them - even to the extent of counting all 300 steps on one ladder.. However even her workload was exceeded by our two Tynesiders, Tony and Mark.

The latter born a Geordie, but now a citizen of Schaffhausen of thirty years standing, proved an interesting combination of Alan Shearer (or was it wee Georgie Milburn?) and William Tell and spoke with great humour in a delightfully accented form of Scheitzer Deutsche Geordie which entranced us all. Our two heroes spent their waking hours in 8 hour days, 10 hour days and 12 hour days; with the latter they solved the dinner problems, served in the bar by admiring staff at around 10 pm. Climbs included most of the peaks and via ferrata between the Cima Tosa and the Pra Castron Pass. On more than one occasion they escorted maturer members of the ABM along via ferrata, Mark leading and Tony taking down Geoff Bone's autobiography in longhand at the rear. This may be overpolite since Mark likened them to a couple of fishwives down on South Shields quayside.

We were joined by a South African AC Group in the Alps for 5 weeks. Mike Scott, clad in the smartest of drill shorts seemed to have dropped in after 40 miles across the veldt without breaking sweat. He ascended the Campanile Basso dragging a breathless Mike Binnie behind him. Also in the group were Robin Richards, a fund manager, built on ampler lines and his Wife Deirdre, both good goers.

And then there were the Westmacotts, a bit cranky downhill, so most of us could keep up with them but once on an upward slope we were in the wake of a couple of Porsches.

The difference between a budding entrepreneur and a conman is that one is a man of promise and the other a man of promises. The weather fell into the latter category. The thunderstorms that drove in on the first Sunday evening lasted 5 hours and was both spectacular and noisy; it ushered in a period of fine mornings which clouded up and led on to afternoon storms. Only over the middle weekend were we not deceived by early promise.

As in Pontresina snow levels were unusually low (2,200 - 2,400 metres) and the via ferrata paths were heaped with banks of snow which concealed both ropes and handholds and iced up the ladders. This seemed not to worry the locals and David Watts proved his worth by lowering a rope to one young Italian who had fallen axeless on a 40ft snowslope and become lodged precariously over the next band of cliffs. Tony intervened in the impending divorce of one couple and cut steps for the frightened and abandoned lady; he also went to the aid of another lady seriously injured in a fall. The rescue helicopter was both efficient and busy. Via ferrata enable the less competent to go where they should not go and axeless suddenly to leave. On the other side of the valley, several parties attempted the Presanella, and

most were defeated by time and snow conditions. The only winner was David Penlington - strictly a member of the camping meet - who waltzed up when others withdrew.

In an account of this nature, it is impossible to give even the briefest character reference to most of the participants (Paddy Boulter giving a view of Tony Blair and the Foot and Mouth crisis was a memory to treasure). However our Journal forms an historical record - however biased - and with this in mind the attendance list reads as follows: - Harry Archer, Tony Ashley, Penny Austin, Mike and Carol Binnie, Geoff and Janet Bone, Paddy and Mary Boulter, John Chapman, Mark Davison, John Howell, Wendell Jones, Lottie Norton, Bill Peebles, George Watkins, David and Wendy Watts, Elizabeth Wells, Mike and Sally Westmacott and of course our trusted organisers Pam and Alasdair.

It was sad that the first day of the Meet coincided with Peter Ledebor's funeral which none of us could attend. Perhaps Peter who had been on more Meets than most of us have had hot dinners would have enjoyed the Meet as we all did, thanks to the abilities and hard work of Pam and Alasdair who enabled us all to be there performing suitable heroics and indeed to Herr (Signor?) Oberosler and his team for tolerating us.

Wendell Jones.

Donegal 29 October - 1 November 1999

Following an uneventful sea crossing to Larne and a rather dull journey across Northern Ireland we eventually arrived at the little seaport of Dinfanaghy. Our destination was a reconstructed railway station at Correggan masquerading as a bunkhouse, owned by an Irish Army officer and run by numerous refugees from the antipodes. Dinfanaghy was jumping; It was the weekend of HALLOWEEN which is an important celebration in these parts so the restaurants were overflowing.

Next day we thought that we might have a look at Errigal which is one of the most attractive mountains in Ireland. During the drive the weather veered from glorious sunshine via torrential rain to hail storms all accompanied by a violent wind. We parked near Dunlewy and in steadily worsening conditions Jim and I set off for the summit which we reached in record time having been blown uphill. We crawled along the summit ridge to witness a splendid view which reminded me of Western Sutherland except that Donegal is still populated. Journeying downhill was more difficult than the ascent because the strength of the wind slowed downwards progress. I was wearing overtrousers which were frequently lowered by the wind until they resembled Billy Connelly's incontinent disco dancer's breeks.

On the descent we met an Oriental gentleman who was inscrutably plodding upwards - we never saw him again! Later we met John and Marj Foster who decided that death and glory was rather passé this year so we retreated soon afterwards. A late lunch at the excellent National Park centre at Dunlewy was followed by an exploration of the district to find somewhere to eat that night.

We awoke on Sunday to discover that the wind had strengthened but buoyant from our success the previous day we decided to climb Muchish Mountain following a zig zag path. Well, we managed the zigs at about 4mph but we almost on our hands and knees for the zags, so after about a thousand feet of climbing we turned tail and fled.

The journey back to Dinfanaghy was enlivened by John and myself taking different turnings at a junction and after driving up and down and around a myriad of narrow lanes we eventually regrouped by meeting head-on on a blind summit right outside a pub which unfortunately was shut. The afternoon was spent exploring the spectacular sea cliffs not far from our base.

On the radio the next morning we learned that some of the ferries were confined to port so we decided to return to Larne as soon as possible but when we got there we discovered that initially all sailings

were cancelled. We were offered a luncheon voucher for a local hotel but decided to stay with the car in case there was a change of plan. This proved wise because soon after the other passengers had departed for their free lunch a boat came in and as none of the ticket holders were around we were offered one of their places which we accepted with alacrity. The crossing was not too bad and we were home by the early evening.

A most enjoyable meet to an interesting area and I hope that we can return there some day.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Colin Armstrong, John and Marj Foster and Jim Strachan.

Alasdair Andrews.

Newtonmore 11 - 13 January 2002

When we arrived in Newtonmore on Friday evening, the weather was "warm" in winter mountaineering terms but was nevertheless cold enough inside our accommodation for the central heating to be welcomed when the bunkhouse owner came and switched it on shortly after our arrival. Unfortunately, on our return from a local hostelry 2 or 3 hours later it appeared that the heating had gone off some time earlier (at 8 o'clock it later transpired) and the inside air temperature felt roughly the same as that outside in the street. After a search for spare blankets, a number of people spent the night in balaclavas etc.

The following morning found most people up very early, the heating on at 7 a.m. and everybody briskly out to their various hills. The weather was rather better than the forecast but unfortunately there were strong winds throughout the day.

- Bert and Colin made a circular walk around Glen Banchor
- John F, Marj, Bill and Miles, walked fairly deeply into the Monadhliath mountains to Cam Sgulain
- Phil struck off West of Creag Meagaidh to traverse Beinn Chaorainn
- Jim, Margaret, Graham, Buff and John D, made perhaps the "slog of the day" to the South of the prominent Binnean Shuas at the end of Loch Laggan, climbing up onto Beinn a Clachair
- Mike went up from Glen Banchor and onto A'Chailleach, modestly described in the evening as "Tin Pot Hill".
- Peter G and Peter B drove to the Cairngorm car park, where the wind was strong enough to rip the hatchback from one of the hydraulic stays on Peter B's Volvo before they set off to Corrie an t-Sneachda (with an OS map of Ludlow and Wenlock Edge as well as one of the Cairngorm tops!). They then had some sport on Jacob's Ladder, one of the two climbing routes which were continuous.

Sadly, Alf Lock's illness meant that we were denied the in-house feast which had originally been planned for that evening, but we had an excellent meal in the Glen Hotel. We had asked the bunkhouse owner if he could leave the heating on a little longer in the evening, and found the bunkhouse warm on our return, but the heating remained on (and uncontrollable) all night and we wondered whether this was the "owner's revenge"! By Sunday morning, even keeping the outside door open did little to disperse the sauna effect.

Sunday excursions were mainly short because of the travel constraints, though Peter G, Peter B, Graham and Mike (again), made a successful trip to Tin Pot Hill.

Participants: Colin Armstrong, Bert Bowes, Peter Boyle, Graham Daniels, John Dempster, Buff Dolling, John Foster, Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Miles O'Reilly, Bill Peebles, Mike Scarr, Jim Strachan, Margaret Strachan.

John Foster.

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

Alasdair Andrews

The year began with ascents of the hills in and around Athens and ended on the Pic du Cap Roux, one of the flame coloured rocky peaklets in the Esterel peninsula of southern France. The Foot and Mouth disease epidemic prevented much climbing in the UK but together with Pam Harris I was able to investigate the Jura Mountains, the Vaudois Alps, the Western Valais and Haut Savoie. The Jura have the well deserved reputation of being the coldest part of Switzerland but are worth a visit. The best looking mountains are the Dole and the Dent du Vaulion. The pre-alps to the north of Montreux and around Martigny were explored in a series of day trips often in searing heat. The most memorable being the Grammont, the Pointe de Bellvue and Le Crevasse a modest peak above Martigny whose summit has a near 360 degree view of the Valais and Mont Blanc ranges.

When the FMD crisis abated Geoff Bone and I made up for lost time by tackling many of the more important mountains in the southern Highlands. One of the first mountains to be opened were the Arrocher Alps and we tackled it on a warm humid Sunday accompanied by many others. All car parks were full; the Police were directing parking operations at the foot of the hill. Hordes moved upwards towards Narnain and The Cobbler and those who have climbed Narnain will know that the climb from the sea level to the summit is relentless. Numerous stops (to take photographs) were essential and after a while one got to know one's fellow ascensionists well enough to exchange badinage regarding whether it would be better to cull the Cabinet instead of the cattle. A bit risky since many of those on the hill came from the former city of culture where politics are somewhere to the left of J Stalin but lack his tact and diplomacy. At one point when we had begun to flag we were overtaken by a comely wench wearing a pink bikini top and not much else. The spirits thus revived we reached the summit, ate our pieces, looked across The Cobbler whose summit ridges were crawling with people which reminded me of the cowboy and Indian films of my youth then headed downwards via the Narnain Boulders which, forty years ago I was able to climb. Back at sea level every pub was bursting with humanity and we had to travel on to Inverbeg to find a quiet watering hole.

In the Spring I visited southern Tuscany. The hills are pleasant but unexciting. During the summer I attended the ABM alpine meets which are recorded elsewhere in this Journal.

In September and October I explored the mountains in the western Valais and during recce trips for this year's alpine meets walks around Pralognan in the Vanoise and the Chalets du Money traverse in Valnontey near Cogne. This traverse provides wonderful view of the Gran Paradiso range. I can recommend the Hotel Ristorante Chateau in Aymavilles near Aosta. This 3* hotel offers half board for less than £25 pppn. Its pizzas are wonderful and cheap and the whole village seems to dine there. Their wines are produced from vines grown on the adjoining hillside. Heaven!

Two other days are worthy of mention. In January Geoff and I decided to walk on the Loman Hills; the modest pimples on the right hand side as one drives north up the M90 through Fife and Kinross. On a grey January morning as we were walking up West Lomond we met a grouse which decided that he or she was our friend and decided to accompany us for a while, probably thinking that he or she would be fed. This dozy bird accompanied us on foot for at least fifteen minutes before turning back, meeting us once more on our descent but by this time it had transferred its affections to a younger walker.

One September morning accompanied by Geoff, John Evans and Dave Jamieson, all former Ferranti and Marconi employees, born raconteurs and bon viveurs, we drove to Rowardennan at the foot of Ben Lomond. We followed our sticks up the hill on the newly reconstructed path. Much to our surprise we

arrived at the summit in less than guide book time. The weather was splendidly sunny and warm and the views were magnificent. As the mountain is close to the central belt the summit area was busy and we observed our fellow summiteers with interest. One claimed to climb the hill every week, another without rucksack carried a bottle of water, a stove and a billy can in his jacket to the top in order to have a brew; presumably he had still to discover new technology in the shape of a thermos flask. Eccentric perhaps, but they too enjoy the freedom of the hills. Let's hope that 2002 affords many more opportunities to enjoy our eccentricities and that the FMD plague does not return.

Ken Baldry

I had intended to complete and correct my Cross-Swiss Walk in June 2000 but, after finishing the hard alternative to the Klausen Pass, the Chinzig Pass and walking up to Brüsti, I had to abort the tour because of family problems. The corrections, those parts done west-east instead of east-west still had to be done. So, in June 2001, I picked up where I had left off at Brüsti and went over the Surenen Pass the 'right' way. A surprise when I reached the top through the snow and ice: I met Dan Hesson, one of my e-mail correspondents from my alpine website (www.art-science.com/Ken/Alpine/) He took the photo and went to Attinghausen, to meet me that evening in Engelberg. I then did the Joch Pass to Meiringen by a different, higher-level and harder route. The other correction was Grosse Scheidegg and now there is a road over it, a delightful new footpath has been laid out to the South of the road. While I had done Grindelwald-Wengen east-west by a boring path in 1974, I did the better path from Kleine Scheidegg to Wengen this year (having often done Grindelwald-Kleine Scheidegg). So the record is now straight. Skiing in 2000 was at St. Anton, Avis' first experience of chalet dwelling and where we saw a World Cup race but it is better on the telly. In 2001, we reverted to a posh hotel, the Schweizerhof in Zermatt, while our younger friends, Michey and Alan (who married in Zermatt while skiing in 1994), staying in a really crummy chalet. A great week except that Tiefbach was closed.

Peter Farrington

A varied but fairly low key year starting with a week's skiing at Val d'Isere, followed by the Association Meet at Onich. Preceded the Foot and Mouth restrictions by a few hours to capture a superb sun blessed day over a snow covered Paps of Jura, then like most others had to seek out compensatory diversions. In my case, skiing in Glen Shee, walking with my wife on the Turkish Lycian coast and Cal Dag and walks and runs on the Islay and Jura coastline.

In the autumn I ran and walked the Black Mountain between Tywn and Tafarn y Garreg in rather wet and windy conditions. The Association Meet at Tulloch provided similar weather but nevertheless allowed an old score to be settled with Creag Meaghaidh via the S. Ridge with Phil Hands. Better weather was found in Morocco where I enjoyed some easy walking with my wife in the Atlas Mts., based in a gite above Animeter.

Peter Goodwin

With Foot and Mouth causing cancellation of the Highlands Coast to Coast event, I spent a few weeks in Southern Turkey, with Maria, another would-be eventers from Holland. Whilst I try to travel light, she thinks nothing of trekking long distances with 45 - 50 lbs. on her back. We followed a considerable part of the Lycian Way encountering numerous ancient monuments, large goat herds, many terrapins, spiders' webs and two snakes, probably just as frightened as we were!

With the increasing heat we were happy to take time out in delightful coastal resorts; Uçagiz is highly recommended; also for the Turkish massage. In Kas there seemed to be a competition between the Mullah and the cockerels to be first with early morning call - *potential for Turkish Mountain huts perhaps.*

The final week we walked through the edge of the Taurus Mts., our map proving no help. In rural areas hitch-hiking is not frowned on, it is expected with all manner of vehicles, including tractors and trailers helping us on our way. The friendliness and generosity of Turkish people is exceptional. One local loaded me up with tomatoes from his car boot when dropping us off. Any requests for permission to camp near by villages always resulted in invitations to eat with the family and stay overnight. Payment, if any, was reluctantly accepted more preference being shown to the idea of a family photo.

Scott and Mary from the States, joined Dominic and I in Chamonix in late July. We got off to a disappointing start with Dom ill below Les Courtes. The following morning, after losing his ice axe down a crevasse and eventual retrieval, Scott found Alpine climbing a different proposition to his usual confident (U.S. grade 5 - 10) rock climbing. Frustrated by an icy rock rib - in the dark and slightly off route - our disappointment became distinctly muted after hearing the news the following day; a Chamonix guide plus client had fallen off the Wymper Couloir.

After a few days relaxing by rock climbing in the valley, we set off for the Dent Géant. Once on rock, Dom and Scott being determined to make the climb without using fixed ropes and now wearing rock boots, were as a result soon suffering from frozen feet. After an hour's rest and defrost - including novel use of gloves (!) - we progressed slowly to the summit with sensational views below. On descent, traversing below Pointe Sella I renewed my acquaintance with the Lobbers club. As ever, Dom's protection system was first class.

Our final climb was on Dent Blanche, memorable for sharp ridges, steep faces and grand views to Dent d'Lerens and the Matterhorn. We were most fortunate to reach the hut with the onset of a fierce storm. An English couple, some half-hour behind us, were obliged to drop their "singing ice-axes" and sit out the storm arriving back three hours later.

Mike Goodyer - Cima Presanella

A couple of days resting my knee after twisting it on the long descent to the valley off Care Alto I felt I should try another hut approach and climb. Cima Presanella (3558m), the highest peak in the area, was our objective.

Mike Pinney and Susanne Muhlen were rested and had enjoyed some rock climbing in the 12 Apostles area and were keen to go. We managed to convince Chris Raves that he would enjoy the walk up to the hut and he would then see how good he felt for the ascent of the peak. Hut reservations were made and we four had a lazy lunch in the sun at the campsite. Rucksacks were thrown into the boot and I drove up the pretty Valle di Nambrone until the main path to the hut started. The approach was immediately uphill and we set our own pace, arriving at the Rifugio G. Segantini in plenty of time for dinner. We were housed in the annexe across the way from the main hut as a large party (20+) was arriving later. Those of you who visited the area in the summer will understand the pleasure of the evening meal - the food at all the Italian Rifugios visited was delightful. From our dining table we looked across the valley at the Brenta Dolomites and watched the rock turn orange in the setting sun - a truly memorable view. The large party had arrived and the hut was full and noisy, so we were pleased to retire to the silence of the annexe.

The next day came and the cloud was swirling around the hut. After a hut breakfast supplemented with cheese (I still can't get myself sorted with a satisfactory breakfast) we contrived to set out after the large party, who were also ascending Cima Presanella. The route behind the hut was well marked, the glacier had greatly retreated and climbed over smooth rocks and grassy flat areas to reach the moraine. We managed to overhaul the party and plod up the ridge of the moraine. By the time we had reached the upper glacier the four of us were out in front. The day was still cloudy and dull, but we could see the next objective - the niche on the ridge the Bocch di Monte Nero. We were now following old tracks up the ever steepening glacier until we reached the ridge. The route descended to the glacier on the other side of the ridge via a 30 metre ladder. The ladder was old, but sturdy looking and unlike the ladders on the via ferrata had no safety wire to clip on to. At the bottom of the ladder there was slight drop where the snow had melted away. We dropped down to an area of flat ground and boulders for a second breakfast. I had loosened up by now and my knee was holding up; Chris was also enjoying himself despite his reservations the day before.

We set off to the head of the glacier and donned crampons to get us quickly and safely back onto the ridge. The large party had caught us up (no second breakfast stop) and we travelled along the ridge with them. The cloud had come in now and we could not see down the valley or to the summit. The bivvy hut on the ridge loomed out of the cloud, only 200 metres to go. Suddenly we arrived at the large cross on the summit. We felt cheated that the great view from the summit was denied. We quickly dropped back down the bivvy hut to recharge ourselves for the descent to the hut. The way back to the ladders was slowed by the thick cloud making route finding awkward. After ascending the ladders we were met with a wall of dense cloud. We were confident that the track down the glacier would be straightforward to follow; and so it was on the steep upper slopes. As we descended the glacier we ran out of tracks and it started to rain, slowly at first and then heavier and heavier. The tracks seemed to vanish at a rocky area and much searching failed to reveal any tracks going off the rocky area! After many false starts we eventually found the moraine and tired and wet we all plodded back to the hut.

Stripping off wet clothes and stepping into the hut was a delight especially after bowls of soup, large slabs of cake and large coffees were consumed. The rain started to lessen and we set off down the valley, the rain soon stopped, the cloud lifted and the sun came out. I arrived back at the car dry and in the full afternoon sun. We had missed the views from the summit this time - still my knee had held up. That's the last snowy side of the valley done, so off to the limestone next week.

Mike Pinney - The Traverse of the Rimpfischhorn

I had a long unsettled score with the North ridge of the Rimpfischhorn, its crenellations a distinctive sight of the Zermatt skyline and for me the missing link in my traverse of the Mischabel summits. After two weeks in Madonna we moved across to Valais. It was drizzling as Susanne Mühlen and I arrived at Taschalp. However we had a hut booking and the forecast for the following day was good, so we gritted our teeth, quickly packed sack and donned boots before setting off to the Tasch hut. A hut crowded with tourists did not add to the pleasure of the evening. An early rise (much to the displeasure of the tourists who were trying to sleep), a minimal breakfast then off along the rising path into the Chummiboden. Whilst all other parties turned off left to the Alpubeljoch we carried on, descending to the glacier which led us back up to the Allalinpass. From where we found a faint track zigzagging up the north ridge which we followed until it petered out. Although it was clear there was a viciously cold northerly wind and we were glad to reach the Grand Gendarme (4108). Looking down we could see a number of parties following the trail from the Britannia hut round to either climb the west flank or cross over the Zermatt via Fluealp, but we had the ridge to ourselves.

From the top of the Grand Gendarme two abseils took us down to the Col before the next gendarme.

We then had a number of gendarmes to traverse before the final summit climb. The best rock was on the exact crest. Even on a minor excursion looking for an easier line I had rock breaking away in an alarming manner and I quickly moved back to the crest. At times the crest looked improbable, but as we investigated further we were able to traverse the various gendarmes at a grade III. A few gendarmes from the summit, we could see and hear a party on the summit who had come up the WSW ridge - we thought we would soon be joining them! However the distances were deceptive and it was some while before we reached the foot of the summit rock. The guidebook describes a traverse across the east face before ascending a chimney to the summit. We found a traverse line with no great evidence of previous climbers and no sign of an obvious chimney. We finally spotted above us on the right a short hole in the ridge, a chimney pot?, and moved across to investigate. Without sack, a short pull brought me onto the ridge. Susanne passed up the sacks and then climbed up and through to the summit. After a short break admiring the views including the weather coming in from the west, we headed down the WSW ridge route. Route finding was more of a challenge than I remembered and therefore expected. This was possibly due to a lack of snow, but we were partially aided by sighting of the other party who we saw reach the glacier just ahead of us. We then descended the Mellichen glacier and thence to Taschalp. The following day it rained, so we had caught the only good window in the weather.

Mike Pinney - The Adamello

One can drive up the spectacular Val Genova with its many spectacular waterfalls to Rifugio Bedole. From there it is a 4hr walk up bare rock, exposed by glacial recession, to the Lobbia Hut. Alternatively, one can approach via the remote Val Folgorida.

Mike Goodyer, barely recovered from his epic crossing of the Gavio pass (land slips meant the road was marked as closed to vehicles!), Susanne Mühlen and myself left the car in late morning. Initially the path zigzags steeply upwards for 400 metres out of Val Genova through the dense forest along the side of a waterfall. The angle eased as we entered Val Folgorida, the vegetation becoming less dense until we got above the tree line. Route finding was not easy, but just in time we found a way mark. The path led out of the valley to the ridge, then a rising traverse across snow and large boulders to a col. Progress had not been aided by a heavy thunderstorm and it was three drowned rats that surveyed the Lobbia Glacier and what looked like a hut. Would it be too late for a dinner? We finally made it to the hut and a welcome glüwein.

The next morning was bright and we headed for the Paso d Italiano, traversing Corno Bianco to the Paso d Inglesi, then along the snow and rock ridge to the Adamello summit. We were rewarded by good views of Presanella to the north and Caro Alto. We returned across the glacier spending the afternoon lounging in the sun at the hut.

Another early start, across the Biv. Monticelli, where there was much evidence of the First World War with bullets, clothing, webbing straps and heaps of rusty barbed wire. We then continued up the glacier towards Carlo Alto, taking the NW ridge to the summit. There was a cloud inversion with just a few of the Brenta tops showing, so we were reluctant to start our descent. We passed the way marks for the path down Val Seniciaga, our plan was to descend Val Lares which would bring us out nearer the car. The guardian had confirmed our choice of route so in spite of a lack of way markings we descended the couloir into the valley. I can confirm the merits of crampon anti-balling pads!

The angle started to ease as the snow gave way to a block filled stream. The chamois on the hillside watched our progress as we reached the top of a waterfall. The map suggested a line down the left bank

and we fought our way through the bushes past buttresses until we came to an impasse. Fortunately two abseils through the trees and over the odd buttress brought us to level with the bottom of the waterfall. We thought our difficulties were over as we removed harnesses, but we soon had a rude awakening as we reached a raging torrent descending the boulder strewn mountain side. Crossing the main river looked more attractive which tied up with the map. However a couple of 100 metres further on a grassy bank was replaced by a blocks and we had to cross the swollen stream. Harnesses back on and Susanne, the lightest set off wading through the cold water with the two Mikes paying out the climbing rope. The rucksacks were then floated across hoping that the contents would stay dry followed by the remainder of the team. After emptying the boots of water and coiling the wet rope, we headed down the bank, finally coming on to a path and the start of way marks. It is not a short valley and it was nearly midnight when we completed the descent into Val Genova. Who needs to go to Nepal for lush mountain approaches?

Mike Pinney - Rock Climbing in the Brenta Dolomites

I had every intention of supplementing the route information I had from the AC and Kohler/Memmel with the local guide, until I discovered it was the reprint of a 20 year guide and needed a magnifying glass.

The Kohler/Memmel guide has only nine routes in the Brenta ranging in grade from V to VI+ and they tend to be very popular.

The Campanile Basso was climbed by the Ampferer/Berger and the Fehrmann routes. It first takes a spiralling line to the, top second follows the sustained SW corner. Unfortunately our team got held up by other parties, which gave them a rather long day!

The Castelletto Inferiore was climbed by the South Face. In order to get ahead of other parties, our team started the route in the afternoon before abseiling off and leaving their ropes in place. The route is only 15 minutes from the Tuckett Hut so they were back on the route by 0720 the following morning.

Brenta Alta was climbed by its south face and Cima Margherita by its SSW face. This has become somewhat harder since a large section in the middle of the route has fallen down. The lack of a tie up with the route description caused others to retreat.

In order to encourage climbing the guardian of the 12 Apostoli Hut has developed a number of sport climbs (topos available from the hut). A route on the Cima XIII Apostoli was done from the valley. The descent to the valley after the cable car has finished running cannot be recommended. Some sports climbs were also found in Val Brenti details obtained from a local mountain bike shop.

Nikki Wallis - Bochette Way

We were nearly at the end of our fortnight adventuring in the Alps, now based in St. Antonio in the Brenta Dolomites. We had planned to go from the Groste cable way to the Pedrotti Hut via the Sentiero Orsi (group b).

Geoff, doing a fine job acting as campsite chauffeur, enabled us to catch the very first cable car up to the Groste Pass and we walked in very warm, early morning weather to the Tuckett Hut. From there we continued up the harmless Tuckett Glacier up to the Tuckett Col.

Our planned route was supposed to descend the either side of the Col down a "steep descent into the uppermost part of the Val Perse". After our experience of the Jaegigrats 'Unappealing Puiseauz couloir' in Switzerland, we figured we were now somewhat experts in steep couloir! We hadn't however, anticipated an incredibly steep snow couloir. This somewhat changed things.

We had ice axes and short length of emergency walking rope, harnesses etc., but my climbing partner was experiencing her first season in the Alps, and was not very keen on descending this long couloir without crampons or at least a back-up climbing rope.

We were at our first decision time of the day.

Glancing through the guide book, I read that the Via delle Bochette from the Tuckett to the Brentei option, (group d) should take about three hours, thus leaving us plenty of time to make it, although we knew then that we would not make it to the Pedrotti Hut.

The description said "Technically relatively free of difficulty and without problems, but airy in places". We hoped that one of the other huts would be sufficiently empty for us to stay overnight, and more importantly feed us! We had heard excellent accounts of three and four and even five course dinners in these huts, which made our efforts seem worthwhile.

Mention was made in the guidebook of airy ladders, and exposed climbing, which we were quite prepared for. The only other route was a grade (e) "A high alpine traverse, very exposed in places, couloirs with danger of stone fall and icing, ice axe and 25m rope recommended. Weaker partners only accompanied by experienced Alpinists. 5 - 6 hours".

We carried on.

The iron ladders took some getting used to, whilst although not technically difficult, because the iron rungs were so close to the rock, it made climbing up and down them very delicate, with only a few millimetres of our boots actually on the rungs. Similar to mixed climbing with crampons on. The mist started to drift in around the immense Dolomitic spires, and although we were not initially alone on the route, we soon felt a sense of isolation.

Some of the positions we found ourselves in were very exhilarating, and I soon found myself descending a very old iron ladder which led onto what appeared to be quite an awkward looking snow couloir. We suddenly felt quite daunted, as a party of two coming the other direction started on this snow couloir, and we then after much difficulty, turned round and returned the way they had come. This did not bode well.

The difficulty was a very exposed section of snow, which had an initial difficult couple of steps to gain balanced access on the traverse.

I went first, and having dropped the lens cover from my camera down the couloir which only succeeded in accentuating its steepness and vast drop off, and gave Esther directions from the other side. The cable that was in place, actually made things more awkward, and apart from preventing a terminal slide, was held way out to one side, out of the way.

It was easier than what we had expected, but by now we had been 4 hours on the route. Guidebooks translators started becoming our scapegoats, as we were not moving that slowly, and 2.5 hours was now well past. I was heard starting to repeat, very sarcastically ".5 hours?!? There is no way... We can't go any faster?!? Wait till I catch up with the guidebook writer 2.5hrs?!?!?"

We seemed to be slowly progressing on when we reached a very narrow section of ridges which had to be traversed, which was followed by a very long section of ladders ascending into the mist above. I then started questioning the guidebook, as we should have started dropping off to the Brentei Hut by

now. We were now however on a summit crest of snow, which led to very steep zig zagging climbing down to a gloomy, bottomless col.

This Col, was the very worst of our nightmares of the day, and according to the guidebook, our route was supposed to continue as follows "At the end of the ledge one goes down through a short chimney on a ladder. Now either down to the Brentei Hut which is already in sight, or keeping to the right, up again on a good path to a flat limestone pavement on which the Alimonti Hut stands." We couldn't see a hut,...but it was misty..., we had also down climbed a lot of short chimneys. Had we missed one of the obvious waymarking paint blobs?

This couloir was even steeper than the first couloir that we had decided not to do. It had a massive wide crevasse on the right hand bank. It was littered with stone fall. And we were getting tired. We did not have sufficient rope, and we were now faced with a seemingly deathly descent down this ice couloir. Where was the short chimney and descent? We could see a party of five Italians who were obviously doing the continuation route, complete with ropes and crampons and loud voices, and we then left alone.

Options were spinning in our heads.

Back track the route? and down the glacier to the Tuckett Hut? Follow the Italians who seemed to be finding the terrain very easy? How much daylight have we got left? It's not that cold, perhaps if necessary we could bivvy out and retreat tomorrow? There was no way we were going to safely get down this couloir. We didn't even want to try.

We suddenly heard voices echoing from the depth of the couloir below, and yet could not see where exactly they were coming from. Perhaps they were the echoes of the Italians' voices above? Descending a bit further, feeling a little more optimistic, we were elated at finding another traverse line, leading away from the couloir, which seemed to have innumerable overhanging ladders descending into the abyss above the lower glacier.

I was still murmuring criticism at the apparent error of the guidebook writer to have written that this route should take about 2.5 hours, but all talk and whispers soon subsided as we were concentrating on the repetitive motion down climbing the out in space ladder descent. Clip - clip... Climb down.. stop.. unclip.. clip - clip... 300 steps later, we were on to the glacier. Looking at the time, we had worked out that party in front of us, were the pair who had retreated on the snow couloir earlier on. It was unlikely that they had booked in to the hut, so we rapidly decided to overtake them, basing our hopefully good night's sleep on a first come fist serve basis.

The sight of the hut was more that welcoming. Booking in, and given a quick briefing on hut etiquette, we spent our spare money on a couple of well earned beers, which we consumed on the hut balcony, whilst the sun slowly sank into the distance.

We glanced over the guidebook trying to fit our route into what we had actually experienced. Our previous criticism of the guidebook writer, soon paled as we realised that we had not followed the route we had thought we were on, but had actually followed the route which the previous night had decided against due to the described difficulties, which weren't as bad as expected.

The rewarding "boldly improbable ladder system" we had descended was "the very daring, Scala degli Dei - The Ladder of the Gods". Its name fitted perfectly.

We chuckled, at our elementary miscalculation, that never happens to us (!) and retreated inside for dinner and bed. Tomorrow we would return to the campsite, and prepare for our transit trip home.

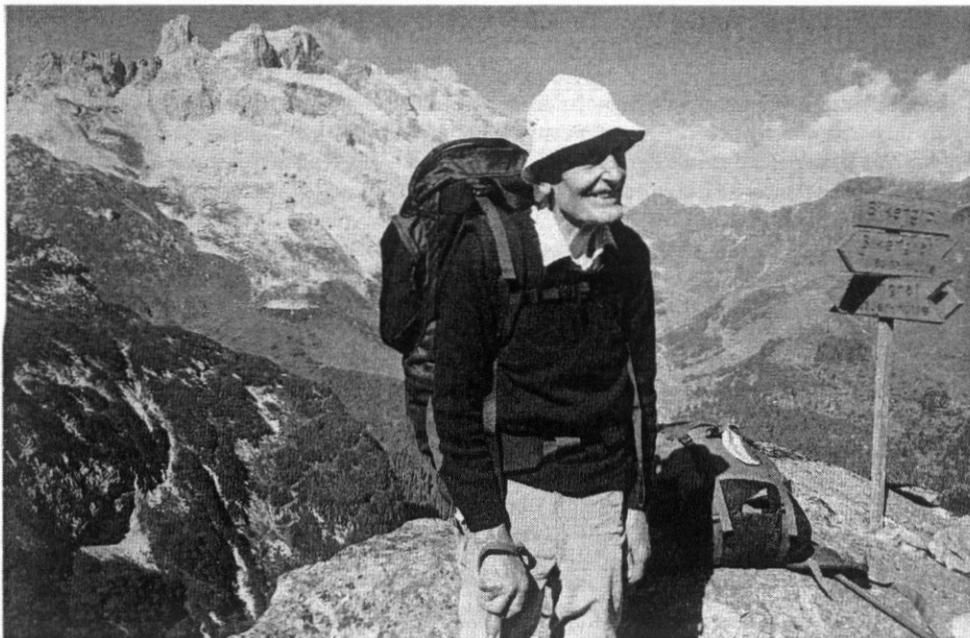
Peter Ledeboer

Peter, who sadly died last summer, was a wonderful administrator and played an important part in the BMC, AC, the Fell and Rock Club and of course made a huge contribution to our Association. His kindness, courtesy and impeccable manners made him an excellent diplomat. As well as in this country, Peter had many friends in Switzerland and worked tirelessly towards closer relations in mountain affairs. One of his main achievements was in connection with the Britannia Hut, both the jubilee celebrations and fund raising for the extension and improvements to the Hut.

I think Peter's father was something of a mountaineer himself. He took both Peter and his sister, Janet, to Chamonix where they went on the Mer de Glace when quite young.

Peter read modern languages at Caius, Cambridge and went to work for a German film company, but had to rush home at the outbreak of the war. He joined the Hertfordshire Regiment, but was seconded to the Intelligence because of his languages and spent the rest of the war with them. He was in the battle for Caen, the advance through Belgium and was in Germany for the Armistice.

After the war Peter joined Unilever, was involved in setting up their first Market Research branch, and later became a member of the International Market Research Society.



Peter Ledeboer

Nigella Hall

Peter joined the SAC (Diablerets) in 1957. He was a steady climber and made many ascents in the Alps, the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, and in Turkey as well as, of course, in the UK. It was in Turkey that he had a great adventure in the Hakkari - the Kurdish and difficult part of the country. During this expedition in 1966 he led a new peak with Sydney Nowill in the Sat Dag named Bobok Tepesi. He, Elizabeth Parry, Esme Speakman and the Guide Henri Salaman got held up at gunpoint by brigands for many hours, they were robbed, the loss of camera and films being particularly sad. When eventually

they reached camp, where Sydney was, who had been in the advance party, Peter just asked him quietly the time as his watch had been stolen! Very cool after what must have been a very shaking experience!

Peter's outstanding contribution to the Association was his support for the membership by his many years and jobs on the Committee. He was first involved in 1963 as Hon. Secretary, a job he kept until 1972. This was followed by a stint as Vice-President in the late 1970's and then an extended term as President in 1981 to 1984. Since 1991 Peter was the Hon. Social Secretary and organised the London Lecture Programme. When the Association in the early 1970's considered we needed a Hut, Peter was one of the leading organisers and was the first chairman of the Hut Management Committee. In 1999 Peter was made an Hon. Member of the Association in recognition of all his work.

Peter was a wonderful companion in the mountains, with a love of flowers, he was always good company and full of fun. He will be missed greatly by all his friends and we send our sympathies to his sister, who lives in Holland.

Nigella Hall

Bryan L. Richards

Bryan had already visited the high Alps in the 1930's and was familiar with some of the climbing routes before 1939 and the outbreak of war and the consequent banning of foreign travel. He joined the ABMSAC in 1937 but had not taken any part in the activities which were, of course, very restricted during the war.

Bryan joined the Royal Engineers and became a member of a bomb disposal team. He undertook a particularly dangerous task - the defusing of a large unexploded bomb dropped on the City of London. He succeeded and prevented a disaster with many casualties and severe damage, in particular, to St. Paul's Cathedral. This was a particularly courageous act. He was awarded the George Medal for his bravery.

He left the Army as a Captain and his time was spent in getting back to normal and, for the Association, to start the customary policy of holding Meets - a week at Easter in the UK and a summer holiday one of a fortnight in the Alps, usually based in Switzerland - both based on hotels.

The first that Bryan attended was at Easter - the Isle of Arran Meet in 1949. The first few days were spent in exploring pinnacles around Glen Sannox. On Easter Saturday the local bus was taken to Glen Rosa and after a walk down the Glen to the foot of the pinnacle Chir Mhor by the Cubit route. Four ropes would ascend led by Starkey, Roberts, Rudge and Colonel Culverwell and to ascend in that order. All went well until there was a delay in the last rope reaching the summit. On investigation it was found that Colonel Culverwell had fallen and was lying at the bottom of the top pitch unconscious and badly injured. It was impossible to return by the route up so a rescue party was sent for to bring a stretcher.

Eventually the bearers set off over the hills to get off the mountain. Bryan played a useful part by organising a rota for the bearers it being impossible to carry for more than ten minutes., due to the difficult terrain - scree and stretches of heather - by hand flashlights, - as well as taking his turn at carrying. The road and waiting ambulance were reached at 8.30 a.m the next morning.

Happily, Colonel Culverwell recovered and later was able to return to the Swiss Alps and resume gentle climbs.

Bryan was elected a member of the Committee in 1950. He was on the Malaga Meet in 1949. He took an active part in the climbing and, at one point, cut steps up a gully for an hour. He was also able to

enjoy another of his pleasures - music - by walking over to Sils Maria where the Vienna Octet, from the Vienna Philharmonic, gave a Sunday afternoon concert in the Hotel Waldhaus.

In 1950, Bryan attended the Austrian Alpine Meet at Vent with his wife Chrystine. She usually spent the time he was climbing enjoying relaxing on the Italian Lakes.

In the summer of 1951, Bryan took part in an experiment to test the feasibility of extending the time spent in the climbing huts in order to devote more time on climbing the peaks. Instead of reserving accommodation in hotels for a fortnight a booking would be made in a reasonably large and centrally situated mountain hut. In this case the district was the Bernese Oberland and the mountain hut selected was the Concordia hut. A Swiss guide would be engaged for the whole fortnight and would therefore be free to stay up as well.

Provisions would be taken out from the U.K. in a large old suitcase consisting of tinned provisions. All arrangements were made and then, two days before the departure, poor Bryan was rushed to hospital with appendicitis.

All arrangements were transferred to the next year which was 1952. Swiss Air were persuaded to take the suitcase of provisions on payment of excess baggage and the flight was made to Berne. From there the trip to Wengen was made to meet up with the guide and pack for the journey to the Concordia hut. A sack containing ten loaves of bread was added to the food.

Next morning, baggage and provisions were packed in the baggage truck and travel was by the first train up to the Jungfraujoch. Here everything was cached and the snow ridge taken up to the summit of the Monch. A speedy descent, a quick lunch at the Jungfraujoch and a sledge borrowed from the Joch was packed for the trip down the glacier. The transfer from the glacier to the hut path was a bit hair-raising due to the lack of snow. In order to reach the path, a 60ft. ladder had to be negotiated. This done, supper was prepared by the hut guardian opening the first tin.

An early start was made next morning for the walk down the glacier and the start up the ascent of the Aletchhorn. Thus the climbing programme had commenced.

In due time, visits were made to the Finsterarhorn Hut and Hollandia Hut. It was quite evident that there was no restriction on the amount of climbing which could be undertaken, especially when there was no necessity to go back down to the hotel at regular intervals.

The main drawback was the total lack of any, even the simplest, facilities. This was considerably worsened by the lack of water, due to low annual snowfall since snow is collected in churns and carried up and melted. This was usually used for cooking. This meant that, at the end of the fifteen day period, it had not been possible to wash! All this was, of course, long before the unfavourable rates of exchange and a very expensive tariff at all the hotels.

Peaks climbed:

Finisterarhorn, Grunhornlucker, Fiescherhorn, Wannhorn, Aletscherhorn, Kanzberg, Sattlehorn, Eben fluh and Jungfrau.

In 1953, Bryan was at the Easter Meet at Langdale. He seemed by now to have resolved a pattern of alternatives - Easter and the Alpine meet. He was elected for a further term on the Committee and was elected Vice-President in 1958.

The Jubilee Meet was held at the Hotel du Glacier at Saas Fee in August 1959 and Bryan and Chrystine were present. The Swiss dinner was held on August 8th at the hotel. This was held at the same time as the re-opening of the enlarged Britannia Hut. A plaque was presented at the dinner in appreciation of

the donation made by the ABMSAC towards refurbishing the hut. This was to be fixed to the hut wall and dedicated the following day. The next morning a party of members and friends went up to the hut to attend the dedication ceremony.

The next day, Bryan and Chrystine set off with the party who were set to climb the Allalinhorn. Unfortunately, Chrystine found this expedition too strenuous as she suffered from back problems. They kept to the lower slopes for the remainder of the Meet and, on return to the UK, Chrystine visited an orthopaedic hospital for diagnosis. This was found to be much more serious than at first thought and extensive treatment followed. This did not prove very satisfactory and reduced activities in the hills.

Bryan was elected President of the Association in 1960 following George Starkey. During Bryan's term of office as President, he and Chrystine visited the 1961 Alpine Meet at Kanderstag. Bryan brought Chrystine and her wheelchair - to which she was then confined - by car. It soon became evident that Alpine villages were unsuitable for wheelchairs and they left Kandersteg for more suitable resorts.

The Easter Meet of 1962 which was at Fort William - which was also the last year of Bryan's office as President - was the last time they attended any formal gatherings.

In 1964, Bryan was elected an Honorary Vice-President. He was soon examining alternatives to take the place of the summer meets in the Alps and he took to the sea. He obtained a pilot cutter which was seaworthy enough to sail the English Channel visiting ports on both sides and crossing the North Sea to visit northern capitals and exploring the Norwegian fiords. Sadly, Chrystine passed away in the seventies and Bryan gave up the sea. Some years later, he renewed his acquaintance with the Swiss Alps by attending the 1980 Meet at Bivio near the Engadine.

It soon became evident that his long absence from the rigours of the high peaks and that he was considerably older, made taking part in a climb on a rope impossible and activities had to be restricted to walks on the hills. He enjoyed the Meet and particularly seeing his old friends. In the years that followed, Bryan took more to touring and visiting capital cities and other interests on the continent.

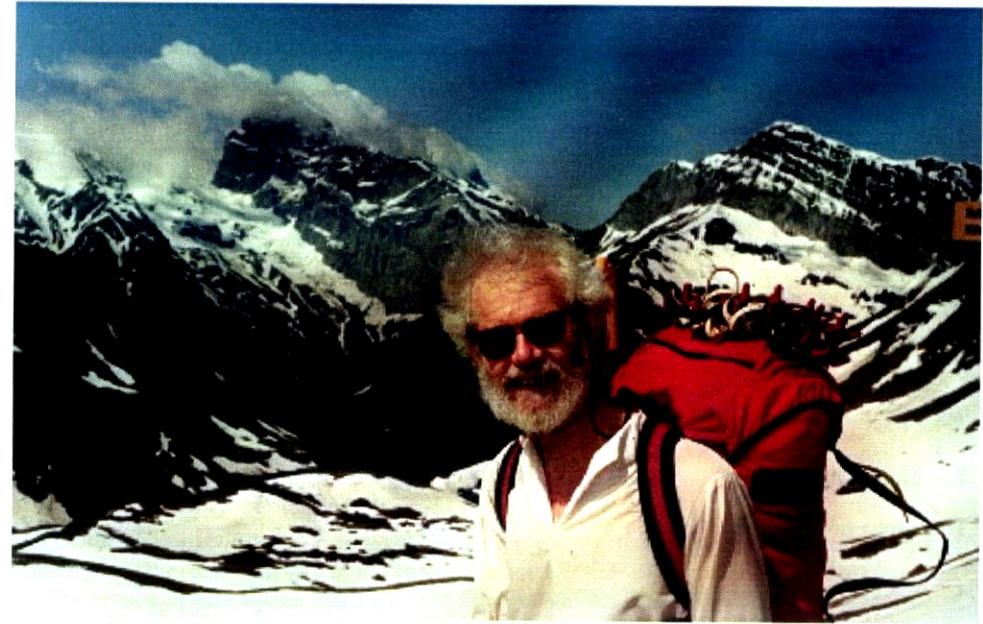
Bryan had met a lady at the North London music club of which he was a member. They were both very keen on opera and were often in the audience together at Covent Garden. They married in the 80's and lived on Highgate Heights, north London. They enjoyed attending concerts and opera and visited music festivals in the UK and in Europe.

It was a great tragedy that, sadly, Bryan was badly injured when he fell heavily and did not recover. He lived to a great age but it was unfortunate he had to suffer pain at the end. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Our sincere condolences go out to his wife, Mrs. Ita Richards.

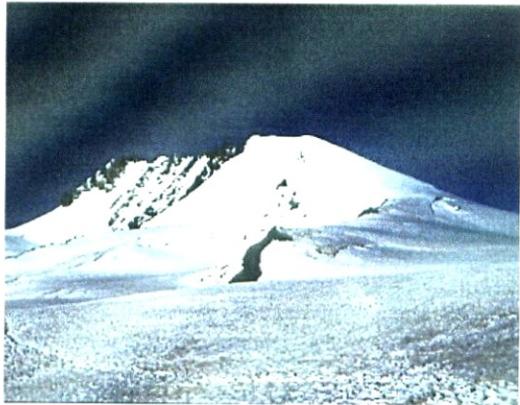
Reg Parker.



Lilium bulbiferum spp *croceum*. Penny Austin



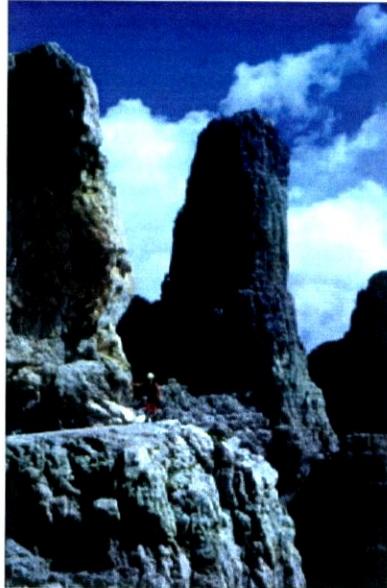
Ken Baldry on Surenen Pass



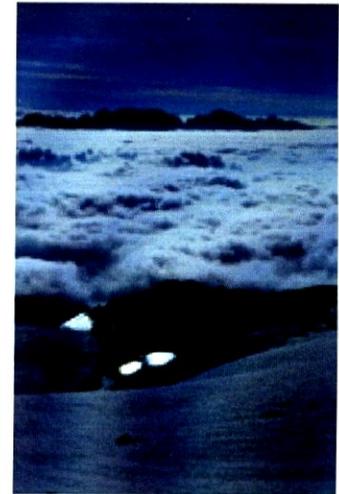
The Rimpfishhorn.

M. Pinney

Camponile, Basso.
M. Pinney



Imecik Yayla. Peter Goodwin



G. Gendarme N. Ridge of Rimpfishhorn. M. Pinney

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the Glenridding Hotel, Cumbria on Saturday 2nd February, 2002.

The President, Mike Goodyer, was in the chair. 51 Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Roger Aldred, Antonia Barlen, Pat Brennan, Georgette Butler, John Chapman, John Foster, Alf Lock, Elizabeth Parry, Bryan Richards, George Watkins, David Watts and John Whyte.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 3rd February 2001

The Minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

There were none.

4. Election of Officers and Committee

The President thanked Belinda Baldwin for her hard work as Hon. Editor over the past ten years. Richard Winter was proposed as her successor, and was elected unanimously.

Roger Aldred retired from the Committee by rotation. Peter Boyle was proposed as his successor and was elected unanimously.

The other Officers and eligible Committee Members were re-elected unanimously.

5. Hon. Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts for the year to 30th September 2001

Membership was down by 12 compared to the previous year, but an operating surplus of £854 had nevertheless been achieved. The finances of the club were in a healthy state, and the accounts were adopted unanimously.

6. Subscription rates 2003

The BMC Subscription was due to increase by £1 per member for 2002. The Sterling exchange rate against the Swiss Franc had also dropped during the year from 2.50 to 2.39. Nevertheless, in view of the generally healthy state of the club's finances the Committee proposed that the subscription bands for 2003 should remain unchanged, and this was agreed.

7. Proposed rule change

The President explained that the rules presently provide that Affiliate Members are not illegible to serve as President, Vice-President, Treasurer or New Members Secretary. Since more than half of the Club's members were now Affiliates it was proving increasingly difficult to find volunteers to serve as Hon. Treasurer. It was therefore proposed that the rules should be amended to allow Affiliates to serve as Treasurer, and this was approved unanimously.

8. President's Report

This is reproduced below.

In answer to a question the President explained that the proposed improvements to the hut would involve refurbishment of the toilets, the kitchen, the dining area, and *making good the fabric of the building*. Cost estimates had not yet been received, and the final decision to go ahead would not be taken until these had been received and considered.

In further discussion it was recalled that the Club had agreed that the primary objective should be to purchase the freehold of the hut, and it was questioned whether it was wise to spend so much of the Company's reserves on improvements while the Club only had a 14 year lease of the premises.

In reply the President said the Committee had considered this point, but had been advised that it was very unlikely that the Club would be offered the freehold in the foreseeable future. If the freehold were to be offered the necessary funds could probably be raised by other means. Moreover the present facilities in the hut were poor by modern standards, and the improvements should increase the earning capacity of the hut.

9. Any other business

Merle Gartside drew attention to a proposal to limit car parking in Snowdonia to a small number of locations where the maximum stay would be two hours: other visitors would be required to use a Park and Ride service. It was agreed that these proposals would entail an unacceptable interference to access to the mountains, and that the President should write to express the Club's strong opposition to the proposals.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 18.55 hrs.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This last year has been a difficult one for all of us walking and climbing in the UK because of the foot and mouth disease and subsequent restrictions. This time last year was almost the last time many of us could get out into the hills until late summer/early autumn. Despite the worst epidemic since the sixties, when the Northern Dinner had to be cancelled, many of us tried our best to get out and about.

Membership

As you have just heard our membership numbers have remained much the same as the last few years. We have had several new members joining the Association - I hope you enjoy your time with us.

Finances

We have had the Hon. Treasurer's Report so I need to say little more about the finances. The London meetings have been running at a loss and, as before, as a cost to the Association. We have cut down the number of meetings and Harry Archer has been looking at the format and venues of the meetings. This should control the costs in the future. Thanks to Alasdair Andrews for his work as the Hon. Treasurer and for presenting the accounts.

Meets

Well, the foot and mouth outbreak put paid to a good part of the year's Meets programme. Undaunted the Scottish Meets were cancelled and rescheduled for later in the year and over this winter. John Foster, ably assisted by his band of Meet Leaders came to the rescue and have enabled members to get out into the hills.

By coincidence Buff Dolling had arranged a Meet in Crete in May/June and this enabled members to get out mountaineering after missing the Scottish Hills. The pictures on the web site show the good weather and the rugged scenery. Other UK meets have been held in Wales (very limited areas open) and in the Lakes.

Many thanks to all the Meet Leaders for their time and effort in helping us enjoy the hills.

The usual dedicated members continue to attend the Maintenance Meets and help keep the Hut in working order. Many thanks to those unsung heroes.

The Alpine Meets were the highlight of the of the Meets Programme. Similar to last year the Hotel and the ABM/AC/CC camping Meets were held at the same venue with an overlapping week. The Brenta Dolomites were a delight. In addition to a Dolomite High Tour was organised, before the Hotel Meet, walking from Hut to Hut for a week and another Meet was held in Saas Fee. Over 50 members and their guests attended these popular venues, with one group climbing at Saas and the Dolomites. Many routes on big mountains, rock climbs and via ferrata were completed. A full account of the Meets are presented in this year's Journal.

Many thanks to Alasdair Andrews and Pam Caswell for organising these Meets.

George Starkey Hut.

It is disappointing to note that after the impetus last year on the Hut improvements that no progress has been made on starting any work. We have had a year of clarification and decision making on issues, but no progress. However the Committee have now taken some fundamental decisions and I hope that in the next year we can make a start on the now much needed improvements.

Committee

During the year we have had several Committee meetings in London, as well as in the Lakes.

My thanks go to Roger Aldred, who has completed his three years on the Committee. Thanks must also go three people who have taken on Committee jobs over the past year. Harry Archer has taken on the role of Hon. Social Secretary, John Dempster the role of Hon. Secretary and Ed Bramley as Hon. Meets Secretary.

Finally a big thankyou to Belinda Baldwin for her 10 years as Newsletter and Journal Editor. This job is pivotal in an Association such as ours with members spread across the country. Members are kept informed by the Newsletter and Belinda has successfully managed the task of keeping us informed of Meets and news over the past 10 years. The annual account of the Association's activities presented in the Journal is an essential part of our record and I thank Belinda for all the hard work that has gone into it.

Obituary

Peter Ledeboer, an old stalwart of the Association and Committee, died after a short illness in July last year. Peter worked hard for the members through his Committee work and will be missed by all his friends in the Association. An obituary is published in the Journal.

Finally I would like to look to the forthcoming year. The United Nations has designated this year as the Year of the Mountains. I hope that we can all get out onto the hills and mountains this year and enjoy ourselves. The Swiss have set up an initiative Called Dialogue across Mountains and are planning events across Switzerland and the UK. Dave Penlington, with other co-workers and representatives of the Swiss Embassy, has been working on a project to bring together a mountaineering exhibition that will tour the Lake District from April this year. There will be more information available at the dinner later this evening. I hope that this will be a great success.

Thank you for your time.

Mike Goodyer.