

**THE ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH MEMBERS
OF THE
SWISS ALPINE CLUB**



JOURNAL 2010

ABMSAC JOURNAL 2010

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Meets Programme 2010

Dates	Meet / Venue	Organiser
January 8-10	Machuim Farm Cottages, Loch Tay	John Foster
February 5-7	Annual Dinner at the Glenridding Hotel	Brooke Midgley
February 26-28	Caledonian Hotel, Fort William	John Foster
March 26-28	Ariundle Bunkhouse, Strontian, Ardgour	John Foster
April 23-28	Inchnadamph Lodge Hostel, Assynt	John Foster
May 12 to 26	High Atlas Trek and Toubkal climb, Morocco	Alasdair Andrews
June 11-12	Rhyd Ddu, North Wales	Ed Bramley
July 17-24	Hotel Riffelsee, Mandarfen in the Pitztal	Alasdair Andrews
July 24-31	Hotel Bellevue, Neustift in the Stubaital	Alasdair Andrews
July 24 – Aug 7	Bernina and Bregaglia, - Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC/FRCC camping meet	Mike Pinney
Aug 28 – Sept 11	Dolomites Meet based at Cortina – Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC/FRCC camping meet	Jeff Harris
Sept 24 – 26	Buffet Party, George Starkey Hut	Mike Pinney
October 8- 10	East Devon Meet, Beer	James Baldwin
Oct 22-24	Alpine Reunion Meet, GSH	Mike Pinney
Feb 4 -6 2011	Advance Notice of Annual Dinner and AGM	
Spring 2011	Bhutan Meet	Pamela Harris- Andrews

London Joint Lectures

January 13	Over the Hill	Lyn Noble, RC
February 10	Climber's View of the Structure and Behaviour of Mountain and Valley Glaciers	John Moore

Editorial

Welcome to this years Journal. After last years Centenary Celebrations there are lots to report and we have comprehensive accounts of all the Associations activities in the Alps and the UK. In addition to the Centenary Celebrations and the regular meet reports we are fortunate to have articles from members of their exploits in Alaska and Bolivia. We have also reprised our Presidents account of his ascent of the 4000 metre peaks of the Alps.

Since I took over the editing of the Newsletter and Journal I have used the technology to work for us and improve our communications. The feed back I have received from members has been very favourable. The e-Newsletter has increased in popularity and now more members have forwarded their e mail addresses I hope to improve upon this in the coming year. New software that a BMC grant enabled us to buy has helped in the e Newsletter and the incorporation of photos. We are limited, by cost, to the number of photographs we can add to the Journal, but we have added many more photos to the website (www.abmsac.org.uk). Meet reports and photos are added to the website during the year. A printed copy of the Journal will still be issued at the end of each year for your personal record. In addition, this year we have the Centenary year DVD to look forward to with extensive photographs of the Associations past exploits.

I would like to thank all the members who have sent me copy, photos and support to help compile this Journal and to keep the website up to date. I hope you enjoy the Journal.

M J Goodyer May 2010

THE REVIEW OF THE CENTENARY YEAR

by Mike Pinney & Pamela Harris-Andrews

Annual Dinner 2009

The first major event of the year was the formal Centenary Dinner at the Glenridding Hotel in February. Our official guests were Frank Urs Muller, President of the Central Committee of the SAC; George Band OBE, Chairman of The Himalayan Trust; and Paul Braithwaite, Alpine Club President. Unfortunately, both Frank Urs and Paul were on crutches, so unable to join us on our walks or climbs.

The hotel did us proud and I cannot remember when we last had such good winter conditions, even if it was a challenge for some of us to make it to the Lake District! You will see Brooke's meet report in the 2009 Journal.

Swiss Celebrations

Association celebrations have always been centred in the Saastal and at the Britannia Hut, for this was our gift to the SAC soon after our foundation. But whereas past celebrations had been assisted by the Saas Fee Tourist Office, to the extent that at the 75th anniversary in 1984 proceedings were virtually taken over by them and the media, for 2009 they offered no assistance. Saas Fee is now the only place in the Alps providing summer skiing and was hosting a large number of national ski teams. This was a blessing in disguise for it enabled the Association to celebrate its centenary more privately, with the involvement only of the Geneva Section, administrators of the hut, rather than being a tourist attraction.

The focus of the celebrations was the luncheon at the Britannia Hut on Sunday 26th July, which coincided with the middle of Alasdair Andrews' hotel based meet at Saas Almagell and the start of Mike Pinney's camping meet based at Saas Grund. Ed Bramley also organised a high level glacier trek which started at Chamonix a fortnight earlier to finish at the hut on the Saturday. The weather during the first week of the trek was not good, but I am pleased to report that it improved and they completed the trek, admittedly with a 12 hour day. They crossed from Flue Alp, up the upper Adlergletscher (which has now become very complicated), over the Adler Pass and then down towards the Britannia Hut, with a final climb from the glacier to the hut. I had hoped to welcome them as I had taken the painting we were to present up to the hut. However, I had to be content with text messages reporting progress and seeing four dots on the glacier before I rushed off to get the last cable car down from Felskinn. (*Eds account of the trek appears later in the Journal*)

I had been somewhat nervous about the Luncheon at the Britannia hut as, according to Pamela Harris' History of the hut in last year's Journal, previous celebrations had been plagued with bad weather. At the 75th anniversary in 1984, the weather had been so bad that only eight members were able to continue to the summit of the Allalinhorn on the Jubilee ascent, and during the official ceremonies which followed, the snow was falling so heavily that the final speeches had to take place inside. Then, at the reopening of the hut in 1997, when Peter Ledebor and Brooke Midgley were guests at the Gala Dinner, a blizzard was raging outside with heavy snow, thunder and lightning. The ceremonies of the following day had to be curtailed for the cable car from Saas Fee could not run in the strong winds, and no more guests could reach the hut.

In addition to the possibility of bad weather, there was also concern about getting to the hut. The normal route is by cable car from Saas Fee to Felskinn followed by what used to be an easy 40 minute walk on a track across a benign glacier. However, the Geneva Section had reported that in recent years

the glacier has receded and the track from the Egginerjoch to the hut could be tricky; if there was not enough snow cover this would mean traversing a boulder strewn glacier snout, necessitating the use of ice axes and crampons and possibly providing a problem for the less experienced. Another concern was that if the cable car was used, members would be ascending from 1800 metres to 3000 metres in a very short space of time with little time for acclimatisation.

However, my worries came to nothing, for the high winds of the previous days had dropped and 26th July dawned bright and sunny, with not a cloud in the sky. We were doubly fortunate as, after a long hard winter, the track was still covered with snow, resulting in an easy walk for all.

For the centenary we had commissioned a painting of Ardgour looking across Loch Linnhe from Ballachulish for presentation to the hut, kindly arranged by Bill Peebles in time for display at the annual dinner. I had accepted responsibility for its delivery to the hut and John Dempster had delivered it to Yeovil. It was just too large to go flat in the boot of my car so it had to take the place of a fourth passenger. Although it had been reasonably well packed, I decided this needed improving such that it was sandwiched between two sheets of plywood, with some corner reinforcing acquired from a local framer. It had been quite windy on the campsite and we thought I would be inventing a new sport, Picture penting, not to be confused with Para penting! Having managed to get jammed in the turnstile at the cable car station and requiring rescue, I was somewhat relieved that by the time I started my walk across to the hut on the Saturday afternoon, the wind had dropped.

At the inauguration of the hut in 1912, the Geneva section had presented us with a silk-embroidered banner which had been carried to the hut for the opening ceremony. When we sold most of our library, the Alpine Club agreed to act as custodians and I was fearful it had been put in “safe” storage during their move from South Audley Street. However, when Heather Eddowes was President she had seen the banner stored next to Whympers’ tent, and this provided the reference for its recovery.

Britannia Hut Luncheon

It was a perfect summer’s day as 62 members and their guests, mostly from the Hotel Meet, assembled on the sun-drenched terrace of the hut, everyone looking resplendent in their bright blue centenary shirts (organised by Mike Goodyer). The view of the surrounding 4000 metre peaks was magnificent, and the hut itself was festooned with British and Valaisian flags. Even the rare black and white goats of the Valais came close to join in the festivities, and an accordionist played lively Swiss tunes. The ceremonies commenced with an aperitif of Fendant wine from the Valais and a ‘cold collation’, as at the opening of the hut in 1912, all generously offered by the Geneva Section. Mike Pinney, our President, began the speeches, recalling the origins of the Association and our special relationship with the Geneva Section which had been so instrumental in our foundation, and with the Britannia Hut, our gift to that section. He then made a formal presentation of the painting. Our principal guest, Paul Everett, President of the Geneva Section, responded by thanking him for the painting and especially for the years of support the Association has given to the hut by the donation of funds at each significant anniversary for both structural rebuilding and interior refurbishment.

We were led into lunch by Belinda Baldwin, daughter of one of the first lady members of the ABMSAC, carrying the silk-embroidered banner that had been the gift of the Geneva Section in 1912 and carried up to the opening by the daughter of one of the early members. We were served a delicious four course meal, beautifully prepared by Thérèse Andermatten, the hut guardian, and her team. This consisted of typically Swiss specialities of the Valais, and included terrine chasseur, followed by émincé de veau zurichoise with rosti and salad, local cheeses, and a tart made from apricots grown in

the Valais, accompanied by more local wines. The accordion player kept up his lively tunes, and after the meal, Thérèse entertained us with spirited yodelling. Not to be outdone, Alasdair Andrews responded by singing 'The Climber's Clementine', and we all joined in the rousing chorus. The meal ended with Wendell Jones, our longest serving member present, proposing a vote of thanks to Thérèse and her team, and especially to Christiane Ody of the Geneva Section who had worked so hard to make this day the success it was.

Those staying in the valley had to leave in the early afternoon to catch the last cable car back to Saas Fee, though quite a large group elected to overnight at the hut for the traditional jubilee ascent of the Allalinhorn the following morning. They were able to enjoy the sun on the terrace for much longer, and to enjoy the warden's special 'café Britannia' that evening.

The George Starkey hut

Over the years the emphasis of the Association has changed and 61 years after the opening of the Britannia Hut, the George Starkey Hut was opened. This is a joint venture with the Tuesday Climbing Club. The Committee decided that an appropriate gift to the hut for the Centenary would be new dining furniture as when the hut improvement programme was carried out in 2004, the budget did not allow this to be replaced. New tables and chairs were installed and have been much admired and already put to good use. At the Annual Dinner in 2009 George Band presented the Association with a painting from the Himalayan Trust, which has now been framed, (thank you John Dempster for arranging this) and hung just to the right hand side of the fire place.

The Centenary Buffet Party, 19-21 September

In recent years a Committee meeting has been held on the Saturday evening of the September Patterdale meet, but for the Centenary it was decided to resurrect the buffet party. These had previously been organized by Marion Porteous, who had then handed over to Kathy McManus.

On Saturday there was patchy cloud with a few isolated showers, most having a good day's fell walking. Four, however, headed for a day's rock climbing on Raven crag, Thirlmere, getting nicely established on their climbs when it started to rain! After some deliberation, ("an exposed & delicate" climb), common sense prevailed and the meet leader was lowered off. The route, Communist Convert, runs diagonally left to right so a diagonal descent provided its own challenge followed by having to address jammed abseil ropes.

Twenty six attended the buffet on the Saturday evening, of whom 19 were staying in the hut. Heather Eddowes had arranged cantonal flags to decorate the inside of the hut. Extending the Swiss connection, Pamela Harris-Andrews arranged cheese raclettes, which had the added bonus of encouraging attendees to circulate. The wine, also from Switzerland, was Fendant and Dole. My thanks to Marian Parsons, Margaret Strachan and Pamela for the main course and Heather, Judy Renshaw, Myles O'Reilly and Roger Aldred desserts. Thanks also to Mike Parsons for providing and setting up the wide screen television, for easy viewing of pictures from the Swiss meets.

Natasha Geere & Steve Hunt were cycling from Lands End to John o' Groats and by good management had arrived at the hut on the Friday. On the Sunday morning, whilst others enjoyed a day on the sun kissed fells, they continued their journey north.

It is intended to repeat the buffet party in 2010 so put the 25th September in your diary.

Annual Dinner 2010

The Swiss Ambassador had been unable to attend the 2009 dinner, so we were pleased that Alexis and Gabrielle Lautenberg were able to attend the 2010 Annual Dinner. The other official guest was Dr Charles Clarke, former President of the BMC and a former Vice President of the AC. It had been quite mild during the preceding week but there was still snow above 2000ft, so a sharp frost on the Friday night followed by a sunny day meant good days on the fells.

And we now look forward to 2012 and the next centenary celebration, that of the opening of the Britannia Hut. Whereas for our centenary we made a symbolic presentation to the hut, I hope to organise the raising of funds for a more tangible project for the hut's centenary, in line with previous anniversaries and the second of the Association's objectives. It has been agreed with the Geneva Section that an appropriate project would be the provision of solar panels, which I hope you will support. I know for one that I would be embarrassed if I were to work out my carbon footprint. Although the hut is profitable, it should be noted that profits are used to subsidise the running of the Mischabel Bivouac, of which some of us have very fond memories.

Particular thanks to Alasdair Andrews for initiating the project and for arranging all the celebrations in Switzerland, to John Dempster & Bill Peebles for furthering the plans, to Brooke Midgley for organising the Annual Dinner weekends, and to Ed Bramley for arranging the trek.

CENTENARY TREK – the Haute route, from Argentière to Saas Fee

by Ed Bramley

It was over twenty years ago that I first received a publication from the SAC describing the Haute Route, including the Zermatt to Britannia hut section. At the time, it was good to read about such adventures, but I never envisaged myself undertaking the journey. With the coming of the club centenary however, old thoughts were reawakened, so it was with a renewed vigour that planning began, and the call for others who wanted to participate went out. Myles O'Reilly, Mike and Marian Parsons and Anne Jago all indicated that they were clearly as mad as I was. Months later, it was with some trepidation that we all met up in Argentière, on the eve of our great exploit.

Good weather is the key for a successful and enjoyable trek, but as we try to sleep before the start of our epic, the light and sound show from the thunderstorm threatens to put a damper on our dreams. Morning brings no signs of the weather abating, even after a prolonged breakfast, so it's time to reconsider our options. Clearly, the first day over the Col du Tour to the Cabane du Trient is out of the question. Remembering a previous excursion on the Tour du Vallee du Trient, a hasty rearrangement of the first two days follows, with a detour northwards to the Col de la Forclaz. This decision is further stimulated with the knowledge that our overnight stay in Argentière entitles us to a reduced price train journey to Vallorcine.

When we arrive in Vallorcine, the rain has at least stopped, and after an early lunch we head north for Le Chatelard. On our way, the original route round a small hydro electric reservoir is blocked, so we have to contend with a lengthy detour. As we leave however, the heavens really open, and everywhere is awash with water. We later learn that there has been over three inches of rain in less than two hours. No wonder we are completely soaked. We slowly pull into Tête Noire and then made the final ascent

for the day up to Col de la Forclaz. The dry bed and warm food are very welcome.



The team at the start, *by Ed Bramley*

Day two sees us joining the Tour de Mont Blanc route, to rejoin our original route at Champex. The weather is still not good, with low cloud and new snow down to under 2,000 metres. Around Bovine, we come upon a lovely bouvette, with replenishing coffee and cake, which certainly lifts the spirits, if not the cloud. We slowly wind our way across to Champex and the cloud clears by the middle of the afternoon. On the way, we pass a phenomenal number of parties on the TMB, including a group of Japanese. Thanks to Mike's knowledge, we are able to astound them with greetings in Japanese. At Champex, there is a brief respite from the walking, as buses take us to Orsières and then on to Bourg St. Pierre, at the foot of the St. Bernard pass. This pass, as a local sign tells us, is not only famous for the monastery and dogs, but also as the place that Napoleon camped on his way to the battle of Marengo and promised money for each rifle to cross the pass. This duly happened, but it was only many years later that President Mitterrand symbolically repaid the debt.

At last, the next day looms bright, as we make our climb out of the valley, up to the Valsorey hut. The track is straightforward, with lots of wild flowers including vanilla orchids on display, but with the altitude now starting to cut in our pace now slows. Nonetheless, we reach the hut by early afternoon, and spend the rest of the day admiring the nearby mountains, particularly Mont Velan. That evening, there are only 24 of us at the hut, and only we are undertaking the Haute Route the next day. Unfortunately, Anne is poorly in the night and has to reluctantly take the decision to descend to the valley the next day.

Monday sees us rise at 4am, to be off for first light, and onto the crux of the whole route, the ascent from the hut up onto Plateau Couloir. After an initial rise, we are onto the meat of the ascent; 400m of

steep frozen snow, also acts as a stone shoot, before a final puzzle through the cornice onto the plateau. Up we go as two roped pairs, slowly but surely plodding our way up the snow. After two hours, I reach the cornice, which is less fierce than it looks from below. Not quite vertical, but still needs some handholds cutting to get out onto the plateau. What a great feeling it was. We are the only people up here, and there aren't even any tracks from anybody else. The glaciers stretch onto the next col, but the angles are now much easier. We pass over the Sonadon glacier, and onto the Mont Durand glacier, where we pick up tracks of other climbers, who are descending from a nearby peak. Their tracks take us round a rock and icefall band that would have blocked our way.

We spend a long time descending the Durand glacier, dodging the odd obvious crevasse, trying to find the right place to exit the glacier. Unfortunately, we follow the middle of the glacier for too long, and end up amongst lumps of medial moraine, rather than sticking to the right. Some backtracking follows, and finally we exit the glacier, on a sketchily marked path. For the next couple of hours, we spend time traversing the gorge below the glacier, over fields of assorted blocks. Even when we descend onto the grass, the path is still sketchy, so it is with relief we finally reach the path in the main valley, and ascend the final 300 metres up to the Chanrion hut. All in all, it's taken us twelve hours to go between two huts, and it certainly feels like it. At the hut we also experience what will be common over the next few days; groups of five or six people with a guide, doing the 'interesting' part of the Haute Route. Certainly not doing what we've just done!

Tuesday sees us off for 6:30 am, and the initial going is easy. A wide constructed track, followed by a good path takes us round into the next valley, to the foot of the Otemma glacier. The roughly gritty surface of the glacier makes for travel without crampons, right the way up to the Col de Charmotane. Walking up the glacier, a distance of about four miles, is easy but slow, particularly after the previous days exertions. There are lots of false summits on the way up, so it is difficult to judge distance. As we cross one area of the glacier, it looks like snow on the surface, but it's really slush about a foot deep which we keep sinking into. It was just like walking on the peat in Kinder Scout, but colder. At the col, we put on crampons and traverse beneath Pinge d' Arolla, up to a snow terrace which takes us to the final arête leading to the Vignettes hut.

What a location it has, right on the side of a massive cliff. The hut has been modernised and is well laid out inside, with dorms, storage areas and even showers and inside toilets, although still with the up draught. Whilst we are here we improvise a set of anti balling plates for Myles. It must be the Blue Peter instinct in us that rustles up a very workable set from old plastic drinks bottles and gaffer tape.

Wednesday we are off by 6:15, retracing our steps onto the Col de Charmotane. Our route today is a massive horseshoe shape, firstly ascending and traversing a group of mountains, followed by a long descent into the valley, only to have to regain the height and more in the afternoon. We are out with all the other parties who are doing the shortened Haute Route, which at least makes our route finding easy. Initially, the route climbs up and round the back of L' Eveque via Col de l' Eveque and Col Collon, onto the Arolla glacier. All the travelling, even the descent of the steeper exposed parts of the glacier, is straightforward.

As we drop down, it's time to cross more moraine and that mixed ground that always exists below glaciers, before we then begin the 700 metres of ascent up to the Bertol hut. This is slow going at the end of the day, particularly when the weather decides to temporarily take a turn for the worse and starts a deluge just as we reach the final snow slopes up to the hut. If we were impressed by the location of the Vignettes hut, then the Bertol does so even more. Situated on the col, amongst a collection of rocky aiguilles, it juts out into the wind like the prow of a ship, with 200ft of rigging in the form of

ladders and cables to ascend, before you reach the captains cabin which is the magnificent semi-circular dining room. Sleeping accommodation is two floors down steep stairs, and the wind can be heard whistling all night. What a place!

Next morning, to beat the inevitable queue on the ladders, we are amongst the first down them that day, at 4:30am. As we start out over the ice, a look back shows a veritable Christmas tree of lights from other parties as they descend the series of ladders. There is a slow rising ascent of the Mont Miné glacier, made even slower by the wind blowing through Col des Bouquetins. It's veritably Cairngorm like in nature, buffeting people and occasionally stopping us in our tracks. As we swing into the lee of the Tête Blanche, the wind thankfully drops off, but there is still low cloud covering the summit, which we skirt the top of.



Dente Blanche from the Tete Blanche, *by Ed Bramley*

As soon as we're over the top, we come out of the cloud again, to be greeted by the sight of the Dent Blanche straight in front of us – marvellous. We descend the Stockji glacier, which is made easier by the tracks of other teams just in front of us. Nonetheless, Myles still manages to find a crevasse, but only drops in up to his waist, so he is soon out again. The track takes a winding path through the glacier, eventually dropping us out near the foot of the Stockji. After a few false trails, we pick up the path along the moraine, which is fine until we need to descend to cross the remnants of the Schönbiel glacier. It is a few hundred feet of steep, poorly consolidated rubble that seems to make up the moraines hereabouts. Similar fun on the moraine on the far side of the glacier, until we pick up the 'improbable path' to the Schönbiel hut, as it's described in one guidebook. Translated, this means scramble start and then sketchy exposed traverse above big crags to reach the hut; a nice little sting in the tail for the day. The Schönbiel is a very welcoming hut however, and after a beer and a rest, we are feeling much better about the day.

Our penultimate day means no rush for an early start, as we head off for Zermatt and beyond. We are initially above the clouds, and our bodies create Brocken spectres on the swirling mist. The descent is initially straightforward, but a recent landslip at Stafel creates a significant diversion and associated frustration. The beckon of Zermatt cannot be denied however, and we arrive at the main church at 12 on the dot.

The bar we end up in is owned by the same Taugwalder family who own where we will be stopping this evening, so we get good advice on the best path up, and also messages to take up to the Berghaus. We indulge in a small amount of funicular luxury to climb out of Zermatt to Sunegga, and then take the marmot trail to Berghaus Flue, which is a comparatively resting walk. We get there in time for tea, and even enjoy the luxuries of a shower and a shave. Better still, the dorm has individual beds, although the reddish lights and adverts for Cuban rum give the place the air of a boudoir (not that I know what one is like!)

Our last morning sees us rise early, to be out of the Berghaus for 4:30, setting out along the moraines towards the Adler glacier. After a few false starts, we head out along the top of the moraine, with a long fall off to the Findeln glacier. As we progress along the moraine, it's clear there's been some big landslips around the Rimpfischwang, so it takes us a careful extra couple of hours to finally reach the Adeler glacier, which these days is significantly detached from the Findeln glacier. Up we steadily go again, until we reach the final snow bowl below the Alder pass. For a last time, we all bend into that slowly upwards rhythm up over 600 foot of hard snow. It's a big effort for all of us, and the relief is palpable as we know it's almost all downhill from here. We stop to embrace one another, and drink in the views all around us, including the Matterhorn, Strahlhorn and Rimpfischhorn.

The slow last miles down the Allalin glacier unfold, and even my attempt at stuffing a leg down a crevasse doesn't impede progress. And then before we know it, we're pulling up the final small slope to the Britannia hut. We're all very pleased to be there, and slowly absorb what we've just done. The route has lived up to all expectations, and some. Even more important though is that sharing of experiences and growing of friendship with a great group of people who all set out to make a dream a reality.

The Allalinhorn from the Britannia Hut

by Mike Pinney

An ascent of the Allalinhorn has become a traditional part of anniversary celebrations at the Britannia Hut, so after the centenary luncheon, whilst most rushed towards Felskinn to ensure they caught the last cable car, a select bunch were able to lounge on the hut terrace in the sunshine. I think the greatest activity was a 39 metre ascent of the adjoining Klein Allalin. We were gradually joined by other members of the camping meet, making us a group of 34 for dinner.

The hut was very busy so it was quite late before we were able to check our proposed routes with the guardian's husband. Three of the team were planning the Hohlaubgrat AD route, two were planning the North-East Ridge (AD+/D-), whilst twelve of us intended to ascend the ordinary F route by the West-North-West Ridge via the Hohlaub glacier, 56a option (ii) in the 1999 AC Guide to the Valais Alps East. The guardian's husband was happy about the first two options but, with the shrinking of the glacier, was not aware of anybody having done the third option since he had been involved with the hut! What to do? It was over to plan b, to cross to Felskinn and ascend via the Fee glacier.

The guardian was most insistent that for plan b we should take breakfast at 5.00am, even arranging an additional sitting; at the time we could not understand why. A slight problem was that most of the team had already retired to the dormitories, unaware of the change of plan. Dick Murton & Robbie Robinson got up at 3:00am for the North-East Ridge, and Jon Halliday & team got up at 4:00 for the Hohlaubgrat. However, some of the West-North-West team also started to get up. Having had a disturbed night (the result of various gentlemen snoring), some were grateful to be told they could have another hour's sleep but Anne Jago took some persuading to go back to bed, most concerned she would miss breakfast. It was starting to resemble a Whitehall farce!

So we were up at 5:00 for breakfast, then at first light across towards Felskinn with the early morning sun catching the Mischabelgrat. Just before the cable car station it looked possible to cut the corner off so our lead team, David Christmas, Ed Bramley & Mike Goodyer, went across to investigate. Unfortunately there was a significant drop down onto the Fee glacier so we had no alternative but to go into the cable car station, inside which there is a tunnel going past a No Entry notice leading on to the glacier. By this time there were signs of life in the station, so we then had the option of going up with the staff on the Alpine Metro, thereby saving ourselves nearly 500 metres of ascent. Now it became obvious why breakfast had been delayed! The majority of the party opted for the Metro, whilst Jeff Harris, Roger James & Julie Jones started out onto the glacier.

From the top of the Metro at Mittel Allalin we headed out on to the frozen snow, then having put on crampons, up towards the Feejoch. Part way there was an open crevasse and we roped up as three ropes. A leisurely ascent on a good track saw us past the Feejoch and on the final summit slope. On the summit there was quite a cold northerly wind so after quick stop for photographs and to admire the view across to the frontier ridge it was down to the Feejoch for second breakfast. I am pleased to report that for Paul Everett, President of the Geneva Section, it was his first 4000 metre peak of the season.

Meanwhile Dick & Robbie had found that there was insufficient glacier left to do the North-East Ridge so had transferred to the Hohlaubgrat. They made a quick ascent, and their early breakfast meant they were able to spend 45 minutes on the top before anyone else appeared. They returned to the Britannia Hut by the same route, abseiling through about thirty people who were still coming up the rock step. Jon, & team, who had also gone up the Hohlaubgrat, descended by the WNW ridge and then went down to Saas Fee via Langfluh; neither team was held up at the rock step where people had queued for an hour the previous day.

After leaving us at Felskinn Jeff and Roger had walked up the glacier to Mittel Allalin then climbed the WNW; we passed them on our descent back to Mittel Allalin. Julie had no crampons so they had left her there where she was awaiting our return. It was her first outing onto glaciers: hopefully this has whetted her appetite! By the time we came to descend the summer skiing was in full swing, and the number of National teams based at Saas for their summer training was quite noticeable.

So it was down to Saas Fee and a celebratory drink at a road side bar - a great meeting place after a great day out.

ABMSAC Summit teams:

Mike Pinney, Paul Everett, Heather Eddowes, Anne Jago; Steve Bowes, Jim & Margaret Strachan; David Christmas, Ed Bramley, Mike Goodyer; Jeff Harris, Roger James; Dick Murton, Robbie Robinson; Jon Halliday and team

CENTENARY HOTEL MEET -Hotel Monte Moro, Saas Almagell

by Pamela Harris-Andrews

Since all major celebrations of the Association have taken place in the Saastal, the committee decided at an early stage that this would be the setting for our centenary meets. Alasdair Andrews began his search for suitable hotel accommodation in July 2007 with a visit to the Saas Fee Tourist Office: suitable meant a hotel with en-suite rooms for a group of 50-60 members on a half board basis, parking for cars, and proximity to shops and public transport, all for a reasonable price. It was clear from the start that the Tourist Office could not help since mid-July is the beginning of their busy high season, and it was also clear that hotels in Saas Fee itself were considerably more expensive than in the other villages of the Saastal.

So we began to widen our search, though several months passed before an offer came in from the Hotel Monte Moro in Saas Almagell. They were planning an extension for the spring of 2009, and thus could provide us with the accommodation we required for an excellent price. They could also host the Gala Dinner we planned for the final night there as the culmination of the Swiss ceremonies; this would require a room seating as many as 70 since all members staying in the vicinity would be included, as well as those staying in the hotel itself.

During the following months we made several visits to the hotel, and Annette Andenmatten, the proprietor, entered enthusiastically into our plans with suggestions for the menu of the Gala Dinner and the decoration of the room; she also offered the Gala Dinner to those staying in the hotel at no extra cost, with wine and apéritifs beforehand for all. We had planned to go up to the Britannia Hut on one of these visits to check out the track to the hut for ourselves, but each time we were prevented by the bad weather and high winds which closed the cable cars.

We also made several visits into Geneva to discuss plans for the celebration with the Geneva Section of the SAC, and quickly came to realise how much Paul Everett, then Vice-President and now President, and Christiane Ody, Committee member responsible for the Britannia Hut, were prepared to assist. The Geneva Section is aware of how much the Association has helped the Britannia Hut in the past, from raising funds for its original building to helping with subsequent renovations, restructuring and interior equipment, and has always been grateful for this. Christiane contacted the hut guardian for us, and worked with her to organise a special menu for our centenary luncheon as well as the decoration of the hut and musical entertainment. In addition, they offered to provide wine and apéritifs outside on the terrace before the meal.

Everything seemed in place. More than 60 members were booked into the hotel, and when Alasdair and I arrived a day early, the only thing needed to make the meet a success was good weather. But we were lucky with this too, for after an initial day of cloud and high winds which closed the cable cars, we had sunshine almost every day.

The hotel proved an excellent base for walks and climbs of all abilities, and we were out every day. Walks were taken in all directions, and with the Saastal surrounded by 4000 metre peaks, the views were always magnificent. A favourite walk for all the group was the easy shelf walk up to Saas Fee, with the descent of the Kappellenweg down to Saas Grund past 15 shrines illustrating the Stations of the Cross. The Midgleys met a wedding party here one day, though they were not invited to share the champagne being passed round. From Saas Fee the more energetic walked up Hannig and Mellig or the Langfluh, whereas others just enjoyed coffee and apfel strudel in the numerous open-air cafés. Plattjen

and the much higher Mittaghorn could be climbed from here and even from the hotel itself, and proved a good area for spotting ibex and chamois.

Paths to the east side of the valley started near the hotel, and there were the thrills of the via ferrata type rope bridges to enjoy, with Almagelleralp and its café a popular excursion. Some of us went on from there up to the Almageller hut, built only in 1982; Dick Murton commented that it made him realise how old his guide book is for the hut did not exist at the time it was written. It was a long haul, with a total of 1220 metres height gain, but the views were glorious and the rocks at the side of the track were covered with the bright blue flowers of the rare King of the Alps (*Eritrichium nanum*). Saas Grund and the lift to Kreuzboden were not far away, visited by most of the group on several occasions. Undoubtedly the most popular walk from here was the lovely 'Blumenweg' or Flower Walk, with 240 boards identifying each flower. After a long cold winter the flowers were more prolific than usual, and we found alpine rhododendron, edelweiss, gentians, black vanilla orchids, yellow pulsatillas, and many others blooming in great profusion. The Flower Walk could be taken down to Saas Grund or, after crossing a narrow rocky outcrop, along a balcony path high above the valley all the way to Almagelleralp, giving splendid views across to the Strahlhorn and Rimpfischhorn, and south to Mattmark and the Monte Moro pass. Hohsaas was the station above Kreuzboden, and from here there was a spectacular 'Theme Walk' of one hour, with boards enumerating each of the surrounding 4000 metre peaks that could be seen, 14 in total.



Weissmies summit ridge, *by Mike Goodyer*

An early morning lift to Hohsaas meant that the Weissmies could be climbed in one day, and a group of six from the hotel, together with other members staying nearby, made this ascent. Heather Eddowes and John Foster descended by the same route, whereas Steve Bowes, John Dempster, Phil Hands and Jim Strachan completed the traverse by descending the south ridge via the Zwischenbergenpass and the Almageller hut, then down to the hotel, a long tiring 13 hour day. Mark Davison, Tony Arkley and

Dick Murton had already climbed this route on the Weissmies in the opposite direction, starting at the hotel, making an even longer ascent. Other valleys on this side were also explored, including the remote Furggtalli leading up to the Antrona pass, and the Ofental leading to the Ofen pass.

South of Saas Almagell was the Monte Moro pass and the Italian border, another popular objective. One cold windy day, a group of us walked up to there, across lingering snow-fields in ever worsening weather, so that the view of the great east face of Monte Rosa was completely obscured, and we even had difficulty seeing the gilded statue of the Madonna at the top. On sunnier days the less energetic contented themselves with wandering around the Mattmark lake and visiting the chapel commemorating the 88 dam workers killed when a mass of ice crashed down onto the building site back in 1965.

On different days several groups took the bus to Stalden then the tiny cablecar up to Gspon, to walk back along the Hohenweg to Saas Grund. This was a long beautiful balcony walk running high above the valley, with glorious views across the Rhone Valley to the Balfrin and the Bietschhorn at the start, then later across to the Allalinhorn and the giants surrounding Saas Fee. The flowers were again spectacular, and as we traversed pastures and larch woods, we passed old chalets, chapels and crucifixes along the way. The flower-bedecked restaurant at Heimischgarten provided a welcome refreshment break, and we were all glad to find a bus waiting at Saas Grund to save us walking the last few kilometres back to the hotel. Those with cars were able to explore further afield with excursions to Zermatt, Grächen and Crans-Montana, all lovely walking areas.

More climbs were made than usual, often in conjunction with members of the Camping Meet, for in addition to the Weissmies, the Allalinhorn was climbed by 8 members of the Hotel Meet. Steve Bowes, Heather Eddowes, Anne Jago, and Jim & Margaret Strachan did it by the normal F route on the day after the Britannia Hut lunch as part of the centenary celebrations, Dick Murton tackled the harder PD+ route on the same day, accompanied by Rob Robinson from the camping meet, and Ian Brebner and Morag MacDonald did it a few days later from the Alpine Metro at Mittel Allalin, with a guide. Dick Murton made the traverse of the Fletschhorn-Lagginhorn with Rob Robinson, and together with Myles O'Reilly, Mark and Tony made the ascent of the Alphubel, at 4206 metres the highest peak of the Meet. Mark and Tony were up above 3000 metres on almost every day, their most memorable exploit being their 28 hour non-stop ridge climb along the five kilometres of the Cresta di Saas, taking in 17 different tops. Their resulting night out was unplanned, but they knew Alasdair's rule that no rescue would take place until after breakfast the following day, and just managed to return in time. By the end of the fortnight both they and the Baldwins had ascended and descended more than 10.000 metres.

The highlight of the meet was undoubtedly the Centenary Luncheon at the Britannia Hut, attended by 41 from the hotel (reported elsewhere). Though six stayed on for the traditional ascent of the Allalinhorn the following day, unfortunately most of us had to rush away early in the afternoon to catch the last cable car down. It was still hot and sunny as we walked back across the now melting snow, meeting a large herd of ibex at the Egginerjoch en route. The Baldwins made the most of the sunny day and walked all the way from the hut down to the hotel.

The centenary ceremonies ended at the Monte Moro Hotel on the last Friday with a Gala Dinner, where those staying at the hotel were joined by other members to make a total of 63. We began on the terrace outside with an apéritif of Fendant wine and snacks, offered by the hotel, then proceeded into the dining-room, this time led by Mary Boulter, our oldest member present, carrying the 1912 banner. Annette had decorated the room for the occasion with Swiss flags, and had made SAC badges for each table napkin. The five course meal which followed was a fitting culmination to our ceremonies,

beginning with a fish speciality, followed by multi-coloured soup, salad, and a main course of fillet of beef and pork with cognac sauce and vegetables, all accompanied by local wines. The meal ended with a 'dessert fantasy' and with speeches by Mike Pinney, our current President, and Alasdair Andrews and John Dempster, past Presidents. Ed Bramley gave a lively account of his High Level Route Trek, and Wendell Jones ended the evening with a vote of thanks to Annette and the hotel staff, and to Alasdair who had organised it all.

The following day was 1st August, Swiss National Day, and eight of us stayed on to enjoy different celebrations, with another Gala Dinner at the hotel, and fireworks and music in the village square, a memorable end to a memorable meet.

PARTICIPANTS: Alasdair & Pamela Andrews, Colin & Marion Armstrong, Tony Arkley, James & Belinda Baldwin, Antonia Barlen & Bill Parish, Geoff & Janet Bone, Mary Boulter, Stephen & Janice Bowes, Edward & Sue Coales, Alison Coales, Sheila Coates, Graham & Alison Daniels, Mark Davison, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Buff & Val Dolling, Heather Eddowes, John & Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin & Ursula Woodhouse, Phil Hands, Anne Jago, Wendell Jones, Morag MacDonald & Ian Brebner, John & Sylvia Mercer, Brooke & Arline Midgley, Gordon & Ruth Ainscough, Dick & Lin Murton, Roger Newson, Lottie Norton, Myles O'Reilly, Bill & Janette Peebles, Renate Romer, Mike Scarr, Peter & Susan Sharpe, Terry Shaw & Zuesi, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Robert Thornton & Peg Stiller, Geoff Urmston, Elizabeth Wells, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer, Dick & Karen Yorke.

CENTENARY CAMPING MEET – Saas Grund

by Mike Pinney

The meet held jointly with the AC, CC & FRCC was based at the Kapellenweg campsite. It was the first meet that I had arranged in the valley and arriving a day early I was rather concerned as to how all the projected attendees would all find space! Almost miraculously, space seemed to materialise and the 66 attendees, the largest turn out since 1981, were accommodated as we took over most of one field. Also of note was the number of attendees who had upgraded from tent to camper van.

The start of the meet coincided with the Sunday lunch at the Britannia Hut. Whereas in most years, I tend to steer attendees to a range of huts, on this particular occasion I had made a block booking and 34 stayed at the hut with the Allalinhorn climbed on the Monday morning by a number of routes, (see separate report). Other mountains ascended in the first week by a variety of routes included the Weissmies, Lagginhorn, Fletchorn, Portjengrat, together with the Aletschhorn from the Mittelaletsch Bivouac hut. The hut approach was possibly more difficult than the climb!

A number of Via Ferrata have been developed in the valley, most notable that on the Dri Horlini with a high wire traverse & cargo net to negotiate & these proved popular. In recent years Valley rock climbs have been developed, sampled in place of the more traditional rest day. There is also a good network of paths through magnificent scenery.

Compared with 2008, the weather was very good and we were able to collect detailed & accurate weather forecasts from the local tourist offices. The only bad weather was on the Sunday & Monday at the start of the second week. The keen youngsters were up to the Mischabel hut on the Monday whilst it was still snowing, ascending the Nadelhorn on the Tuesday morning, but put off the bare NE face of the Lenzspitze. Others took an early cable car on the Tuesday for a rock route on the Dri Horlini, hoping the new snow would be burnt off the south ridge of the Lagginhorn by the following day. They

were in luck. Some fully trusted the forecast & waited until the Wednesday for an ascent to a crowded Mischabel bivouac for an ascent of the Taschhorn on the Thursday. This was Kate Ross's remaining 4000m peak and that evening we were pleased to celebrate the occasion at a local restaurant. Kate is the first British lady that we are aware of, to have completed her tally of 4000m peaks. She was accompanied by Robbie Robinson, Jeff Harris & Keith Lambley.

Elsewhere, in addition to routes from the Almageller hut, other achievements included the Breithorn sky line traverse & the Weisshorn East ridge with a descent via the North ridge. A number departed before the Friday evening, but the restaurant still struggled with the numbers at the end of meet meal.

OBITUARIES

Patrick “Paddy” Boulter 1927 – 2009



Paddy Boulter, President of the Association from 1978 to 1980, died on 30th November aged 82. Paddy was born in Dumfriesshire in 1927 and always prided in his Scottish ancestry; he was however no dour Covenanting Scot, but a man of infinite charm. He married Mary Barlow in 1946, and they enjoyed a long and very happy marriage.

After training at Guys and a spell at the Middlesex, he returned to Guys as a Senior Registrar, before going on to become a consultant surgeon at Guildford Hospital. Whilst a talented surgeon, it was with a radiologist colleague that he made his name by developing the use of mammography to detect the earliest cancers; he set up a pioneering unit in Surrey in 1978, with Mary running a team of 100 volunteers, who guided people in outlying clinics in the area.

After 10 years the two consultants' joint study showed that early diagnosis had reduced breast cancer death rates by 25%, an achievement that persuaded Government to adopt such screening nationally.

When Paddy retired from Guildford he and Mary moved back to Cumbria, where he had spent his childhood. However Paddy's medical career continued; he became President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh from 1991 to 1994 and was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons. He travelled the world lecturing and teaching and was greatly respected by his students, although enthusiasm dimmed occasionally when they were dragged up mountains in his wake. He never travelled without his boots!

Paddy was brought up in Carlisle, in range of the Lakes, and this imbued him with a life-long love of the Hills. He joined the ABMSAC in 1968 and advanced rapidly becoming a Committee member in 1971, Vice President in 1973 and President in 1978. He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1972.

He was an active mountaineer. A past Journal shows that 1971, perhaps a typical year, included two weeks in the Lakes, skiing at Obergurgl, climbing in Chamonix, St Luc and Zermatt, a family holiday in Corsica, all finished of with an ascent of the Puig de Teix above Valdemosa in Majorca – all this on top of his medical duties! Later he and Mary developed a special affection for Bivio by the Julier Pass.

Other claims to fame were to have played cricket on the Glacier de la Plaine Morte, a 22 hour day in Colorado, 200 miles of walking and 56 tops in Galloway and a visit to the Khyber Pass.

He climbed with John Hunt in Nepal and he and Mary went ski mountaineering with Harry Archer in the Engardine on many occasions.

The meticulousness of his medical research emerged again in a record of every hill and mountain climbed from 1961; in 30 years he ascended nearly 4,000 named tops.

For the ABMSAC he was a good friend and a wise counsellor, a man of great charm and humour and a shrewd chairman of meetings, who will be greatly missed. Our thoughts go out to Mary and the rest of his family.

Wendell Jones

**Sir Kenneth Berrill, GBE, KCB
1920- 2009**

Kenneth Berrill was born in London on August 28 1920 and studied at the London School of Economics before being called up to serve in REME during the Second World War; after demobilisation he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, to continue his studies in economic history.

In 1946 he was elected to the Climbers Club, serving as secretary from 1950 to 1953 then as treasurer in 1960 & 61 and was made an honorary member in 1969. He joined the Association in 1953. In 1950, three years before Edmund Hillary's assault on Everest, he joined an Anglo-Swiss expedition to climb another unconquered Himalayan peak, the 7,355m Abi Gamin. "However, it was also possibly typical of Berrill that he did not himself seek the limelight, and allowed three Swiss climbers the privilege of being the first to scale the summit."

Kenneth Berrill was a lecturer in Economics, University of Cambridge, 1947-69. He served as a Special Adviser at HM Treasury (Public Expenditure), 1967-69, Head of Government Economic Service and Chief Economic Adviser, 1973-74, Chairman of the University Grants Commission, 1969-73, and Head of Central Policy Review Staff, 1974-80. He subsequently had a successful business career and was Chairman of the Executive Committee, NIESR, 1988-96. Sailing, gardening and music were his pastimes in later life.

He married first, in 1941, Brenda West, with whom he had a son, and secondly, in 1950, June Phillips, with whom he had a son and a daughter. He was married for the third time, in 1977, to Jane Marris; she and his three children survive him.

This is a summary of Obituaries that appeared in The Guardian, The Times & Telegraph, currently still accessible via the Internet.

Mike Pinney

**Allan Ross Cameron, F.Eng., F.I.E.E., F.I.Mech.E.
1921 - 2009**

Ross Cameron joined ABMSAC in 1983 when he and his wife, Sheila, were invited by John Coales, to be his guests at the Bivio meet. That autumn Ross was going on a photographic trek in the Himalayas led by Alf Gregory, who had been the photographer on the 1953 Everest Expedition, and some exercise in the Alps beforehand would be beneficial. Ross and Sheila obviously enjoyed their time at Bivio as they attended nearly all the ABMSAC meets over the next twenty years.

In 1991 Ross followed John Whyte as President of the Association for two years. This he did very successfully and he presided over the 1991 Annual Dinner, which was a very special one, being attended by John Hunt, the Swiss Ambassador and the Vice-President of the SAC. The occasion marked the 700th anniversary of the Swiss Confederacy.

Ross was born in Galston, near Glasgow, the son of a Church of Scotland minister. After several moves around Scotland, the family settled in Aberdeen where Ross attended Gordonstoun School. Here he rubbed shoulders with the future Duke of Edinburgh and, amongst the many outdoor pursuits pupils were expected to perform, he was taught to sail by the local fishermen and also to rock climb. Rock climbing at the school was particularly strong as Robert Chew was headmaster at the time. F. Spencer Chapman was on the staff and Geoffrey Winthrop Young, that great promoter of mountaineering, was a school governor.

The war delayed plans for Ross to attend university and so he went to work as an apprentice for Metropolitan-Vickers, a heavy electrical engineering company in Manchester. While there he joined the Manchester University Mountaineering Club and he stayed until he was needed for the war effort. He joined the Admiralty Signals School in Portsmouth as an Experimental Officer, working under John Coales, who became a lifelong friend. After the war he obtained a degree in engineering at Aberdeen University where he was an active member of the Cairngorm Club. He then worked for Elliot Bros, who were developing the very first commercial computers in the UK. Elliot Bros soon merged with an atomic power company and Ross worked in the nuclear power industry for the next twenty years. In 1989 Ross was honoured by being elected a Fellow of the Fellowship of Engineering. He was also a Fellow of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. After his retirement he did consultancy work on the safety aspects of the Channel Tunnel.

Ross sang in the Greenwich Naval College chapel choir for 25 years and he enjoyed playing the cello and country dancing. He never lost his love for his native country and with Sheila and their four children spent many happy holidays in Scotland. He had a wry wit, an excellent sense of humour and he is remembered with great love and affection by his family. He is also remembered fondly by all those who came to be his friends on any of the ABMSAC meets that he and Sheila attended.

Edward Coales

**Wing Commander John Richard Wilson Edwards
1933 - 2010**

John Edwards was born in Shrewsbury but spent most of his early life in Welshpool. He was a Welshman and a fervent supporter of all things Welsh, in particular Welsh rugby. He took great pride in the fact that he went to Shrewsbury School and at every opportunity he pointed out to certain friends that Shrewsbury School was older than Repton (Shrewsbury was opened in 1556 and Repton in 1557).

From his earliest days, he had a love of the great outdoors and of the mountains, and he spent much of the rest of his life in the mountains. At the age of 15 or 16 he and a group of other young like-minded men formed the Shrewsbury Rock and Ice Club and climbed in North Wales and the Alps.

He joined the Royal Air Force as a pilot in 1957 and, after earning his 'wings' at flying training school he was not able to continue to advanced training due to the onset of chronic air-sickness. In 1961, whilst he was thinking about the future direction of his career, he was posted to RAF Eastleigh in East Africa where he again did some flying to try and overcome the air-sickness, but he was not able to do so. John, however, appreciated the opportunities presented by his posting to East Africa where he would have access to the tremendous array of mountains previously visited by his great hero Eric Shipton. Moreover, he would also be in striking range of the many uncharted mountains in the Ruwenzori and the notable peaks in and around Mount Kenya. Whilst he was in East Africa he became a member of the mountain rescue team and in that capacity undertook a number of ascents of Kilimanjaro, both as a member of a rescue party and as a guide for RAF visitors to Eastleigh.

He lost no time before taking advantage of his situation, and John, together with Harry Archer and others, made expeditions into the Ruwenzoris. He and his party climbed a number of peaks in that area, some of which they believed to be unclimbed. On one particular climb, John recorded finding a very old ice-axe embedded in the snow on the summit ridge of Mount Stanley (5109 metres). This axe had a note on it dated 1906 and was said to have been left behind by the Duke of Abruzzi, an earlier pioneer to that area.

However, John would say that his major achievement in East Africa was in October 1964 when he and Tommy Thompson made the first ascent of the 1200m sheer East Face of Mawenzi – the Eiger of Africa. This epic was described in the Alpine Journal in 2007. It is believed that that ascent has never been repeated. During the recce in 1963 they found the remains of a DC3 aircraft on a high ledge, complete with dead passengers and crew that had mysteriously disappeared over 20 years earlier. John's photographs of the scene appeared in the national press and he was particularly pleased to receive congratulations from the aircraft tyre manufacturer as the photos showed the tyres still to be in excellent condition even after all those years exposed to the high level elements.

He decided to continue his career in the RAF as a supply officer, and subsequently served at RAF Stafford, where he was officer in charge of mountain rescue, RAF Hereford, the Middle East, RAF Old Sarum, MOD London and MOD Harrogate. During this time he set his eyes on the Himalayas, and in 1979 went with a small team organised by John Whyte to climb Kwande and Mera both over 20,000 feet. The team received some support from the RGS in return for capturing and returning some leaping spiders, but whilst they were there they took photos of footprints believed to be those of a Yeti, and collected some 'Yeti droppings' for analysis by the sponsors. As far as I can remember, the droppings were identified as being similar to those of apes! Later, in 1983 John returned to the Himalayas with a party that included his son Simon, and together they climbed the unnamed Peak 42 at 26000 feet??

By now a squadron leader in the RAF, he lead teams to the Zagros Mountains of the then Persia and, to the Atlas mountains of Morocco. He was extremely proud to be elected as a member of the Alpine Club in 1982. After a number of years attending ABMSAC meets as a guest of Harry Archer, with whom he shared many of his previous climbing expeditions in the RAF, he was encouraged to become an honest man and join the ABMSAC. In the years that followed, John was a regular attendee on the annual alpine meets, and became a popular and well respected member of the Club.

He retired from the RAF in 1984 as a wing commander and joined his cousin in a new venture to build and operate nursing homes throughout the UK. The company expanded rapidly, largely due to John's negotiations with health authorities to take care of their elderly patients in new and much better surroundings. John left the company in 1996 and spent more time at his home and with his family in Shrewsbury.

Undeterred by his advancing years, John was still undertaking serious climbing in the Alps. He had already climbed all the 4000 metre peaks in the Alps, but had failed, due to bad weather, two previous attempts on the North Face of the Eiger in the 1960s. This he corrected by completing the ascent with his son Simon as recently as 2008. In 2009, he led a group of students up Mont Blanc, and, afterwards, made a successful attempt at the Freney Pillar, a climb that had previously eluded him.

During these latter years, he gave much of his time to charity work, including a number of lectures on mountaineering to the Womens' Institute and other organisations, and worked with the Shropshire Wild Life Trust, but one of his major contributions was to his local church, where he was a member of the fund-raising group attempting to find the money to replace the church roof. As part of that work, John and I made a sponsored climb in the Alps, and carried a small cross made by his church to the summit of the Ortler (3905 metres) and placed the cross with the much larger cross already at the summit. This effort was tremendously successful in raising over £3500 towards the church roof.

Whilst still in apparent good health, he was planning more ambitious climbs for 2010, but, tragically, he collapsed and died on 19th January due to a pulmonary embolism.

He leaves a wife, Enid, whom he married on 3 March 1956, a daughter and two sons, 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. John will be sadly missed by all who came into contact with him. He loved to talk about mountains and would do so with anyone who showed some interest – providing, of course, that he could smoke his pipe! The world is a poorer place without him.

Ron Hextall

Members Articles

Passing time in the Quimsa Cruz *by Peter Farrington*

Reaching pension age then having a medical scare was more than a good reminder that age was catching up with me. So, with the consultant's good news still ringing in my ears, I decided I hadn't time to waste if I really wanted to experience a few more high places. One of these was a small mountain range called the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz or Tres Cruces, situated around 50 miles south east of La Paz.

The attraction was that, although fairly accessible, it was almost totally ignored by visitors despite its concentration of valleys, lakes and peaks up to 5,700m. within a length of only 25 miles. Descriptions such as "Bolivian Yosemite", "High Altitude Aiguilles" and "South American Karakoram" all added to the lure. I contacted Bolivian friend and trek guide, Julia Catunta, with whom I had walked and scrambled in Bolivia, Peru and Scotland. The response was fast. Yes, she was free for a month from late April. No, she hadn't visited the Quimsa Cruz before but would like to and here was her suggested itinerary. In a few days it was all arranged. I would arrive in La Paz in the early hours of the 25th April, 2009.

And so, on cue, I found myself stepping out with a large sack and a little trepidation to a warm welcome in the high cold air of El Alto Airport. Apart from being at loggerheads with Julia over the format of our expedition, I was not in the best of health. A sinus infection, which had defied two courses of anti-biotics, and a persistent dry cough were already impairing fitness that now seemed likely to worsen at altitude. I had envisaged a lightweight flexible venture with time to explore and perhaps bag an easy snow peak. Julia favoured a recommended trekking route or hiring a mountain guide to climb designated routes. Her information was gleaned from friends and colleagues, mine from books and Google. We had much to talk about.

Advice was sought from Felix, a respected and experienced cook/porter who had accompanied us on my last visit and more to the point had actually been to the Quimsa Cruz. He confirmed our outlined trek plans were feasible and was happy to join us, as well as recruiting the two more porters required. He also mentioned that there were possible small rock peaks to climb along the way. It was only later that I discovered that it had been so misty during his visit that hardly anything had been visible. However, he had helped produce a compromise and the expedition was taking shape. I had a week to acclimatise before our departure date.

Next morning we took the bus to Lake Titikaka and the Isla del Sol for some pleasant walking at 4,000m. level, with great views east to the huge white peaks of the Cordillera Blanca. Two days later, an overloaded public mini-bus carried us up to Sorata at its northern end. From there we trekked, with Julia's sister Angelica as cook and the help of a hired horse, up the flanks of Nevado Ancohuma to camp at 4,200m. beside a small lake. The main attraction above is the spectacular Laguna Glaciar, lying at 5,100m. with its blue waters and icebergs. However, at around 4,700m. I decided that attempting to reach it would defeat the object of painless acclimatisation. It served more purpose to enjoy a long lunch, enjoy the scenery and dawdle down.

The following evening we were back in La Paz ready to meet Felix, only to find that he had been delayed on his current expedition. After much discussion Julia suggested that we should turn tourist and take a trip south to visit the Salar de Uyuni and the northern reaches of the Atacama. Apart from it being one of the most incredible landscapes in the world, I would remain high enough to continue acclimatisation.

It was an amazing experience. The flats cover over 4,000 sq. miles. Driving across their dazzling white surface, I found it difficult to accept that it was salt beneath our wheels and not snow and ice. Beyond the flats our 4WD bounced and lurched over a vast weathered volcanic landscape swept by a relentless wind. Welcomed breaks came at lakes coloured by minerals and microbes and inhabited by pink flamingos. Geysers, hot springs and smoking fumaroles were constant reminders that this barren terrain was far from dormant. At Laguna Verde with the 5,960m. Volcan Licancabur rising from its shores and straddling the border with Chile, we turned back towards Uyuni and the night train north.

The Conquistador's lust for gold is well documented and the search for precious metals still goes on today. The legacy is an extensive network of roads and paths hewn and blasted out of the Andes. The Quimsa Cruz is still mined, mainly for tin and supports scattered communities around its periphery, all connected by precarious rubble highways. It is possible to reach these by public bus from La Paz but the thought of a twelve hours journey to our starting point was enough persuasion to the hire of Julia's father's Land Cruiser. In half the time, the expedition arrived in Vilaco, a small town long past its best, at the northern end of the range. Rendezvous would be at the even more dilapidated Mina Caracoles, 16 miles to the south-east, eight days later. Locals directed us to a good campsite on the rocky lip of a hanging valley above the town.

The main glaciers of the Quimsa Cruz flow south westerly and can be fairly easily accessed from the road to Vilaco. To the north lies a parallel lesser range and between the two, a string of lakes, the largest being Laguna Chatamarca, are separated by four high passes. This was our intended route but first I wanted to visit an area of granodiorite peaks situated at the Cordillera's northern tip. Known as the Araca Group, it has already an international reputation for its challenging and spectacular rock climbs.

The approach from Vilaco was short, traversing the mountainside on miner's tracks to a good campsite at the head of the next valley. One of the most accessible walks was fortunately one of the finest. The route to Paso Torrini, c.5000m. winds up into a high corrie, cuts through a spur into a higher one and climbs to a narrow gap beside a huge obelisk. Sometimes things long anticipated disappoint but not here. It was a magical world of shattered buttresses, ridges, pinnacles and summit spires, dripping with the last remnants of glacial ice above deep corries and emerald lakes. A place I will long remember.

Two days later found us on harsher terrain, ensnarled on the steep friable moraines and glacial debris of Nevada Knori Chuma. Somewhere the trail south had mysteriously disappeared, leaving us to toil up a slope of unstable blocks to reach the 5,000m col. Surprisingly, a short scramble above the col revealed a beautifully engineered rock stairway descending steeply into the next valley. We camped at around 4,500m amongst boulders and tall ichu grass. At a junction, mile or more down, we turned uphill into a narrow verdant valley, gradually ascending a fine paved path towards the saddle between Nevado San Lorenzo and Cerro Mina Kholu Grande.

I had come a long way to reach the heart of the Quimsa Cruz but it was a bittersweet moment to look down with satisfaction from 5,000m. on Laguna Chatamarca and then up with frustration to the 500 metres of ridge to the summit of Nevado San Lorenzo, the perfect peak for a lightweight party. Instead we used our spare day to walk up from our lakeside camp to a rocky knoll, c.5100m. by San Lorenzo's glacier for a tantalising view of the major peaks.

Our penultimate day's walk followed a good path beside the lake then rose, kindly angled, to the Abra San Enrique, another 5,000m. pass. After a long lunch we descended steeply to Laguna Khota Khuchu, one eye on its turquoise waters, the other up to the snow capped Nevados Jacha Pacuni. We could have continued to the hamlet of Mina La Argentina but camped early by the Rio Caracoles to avoid the intrusion of this

untidy outpost. Next morning as we climbed up towards it, a bus bizarrely traversed the hillside above. Following in its wake, we headed up a dusty road towards the last pass before our rendezvous, only to run into Julia's father and vehicle who having arrived early had come over to meet us. Being purists we handed over our packs then continued on foot. A shortcut off the long steep zig-zag descent to Mina Coracoles led us to traverse an exposed band of cliffs, its brittle ledges glued with frozen snow. No axe or crampons. There seemed a certain irony about it.

Despite feeling comfortable at altitude and trekking at a leisurely pace in superb weather, I needed a rest. My nose had bled daily, my throat was raw with coughing and I had lost a stone in weight. Energy was running low. We decided to stay local and after a day's shopping in La Paz took a taxi, along with Angelica, up the 25 km. of steep road to Chacaltaya and Paso Zonga.

Cerro Chacaltaya was once the world's highest ski area but now the glacier has disappeared and its main attraction is an easy path up scree to its 5,395m. summit. Whilst Julia and I descended by a scenic route, Angelica set up camp at the top of the 4720m. pass. Immediately opposite lay the beautiful 6088m. Huayna Potosi. Its voie normale, a glacier plod, is probably the most frequented route in Bolivia. Julia suggested we climbed it with a mountain guide friend. I decided it was 500m. too high to be completed with any pleasure and a walk next day up to the refuge, c.5200m., wearily aborted short of our goal, confirmed my decision. Instead I opted for nearby 5,392m. Charquini and its exposed approach along a cliff hanging aqueduct. With flora littered moraines, a high lake, simple glacier and airy rock and snow summit, it was the perfect finale. By lunch we were back at the tents. I flopped down happy but exhausted in the warm sun. The tank was empty and time certainly was catching up.

Northern Exposure – Denali, May 2009
by Natasha Geere and Steve Hunt

We arrived in Anchorage in the evening with one full day to go and buy all of our provisions for 4 weeks on the mountain, little did we realise what an exhausting day it would prove to be. Trying to find the equivalent foods for a list we had created back in the UK proved a bit of a challenge, but after numerous visits with our rucksacks, we decided enough was enough. That evening was spent dividing the food up into individual bags of tea, sugar, milk powder, biscuits, chocolate bars and sweeties and then putting enough of these bags into bigger three day packs. We also had to pick up from REI (an outdoor Shop) 56 freeze dried meals. There was also our kit to double check and re-pack and then we were ready for the off. The next day we were up early for our taxi ride to Talkeetna, we arrived early afternoon and checked into our hostel which came free with our flight into Denali, with Hudson Air. The airstrip was just at the end of the road so we wandered down to go and introduce ourselves and find out what time we would be flying the next day. We also had to fit in a briefing with a National Park warden who told us all about the mountain, he kindly provided us with a number of bags for our rubbish which would be flown back out with us, and a supply of biodegradable toilet bags, with instructions on where we could dispose of them.

The day started leisurely with a couple of visits to see Amber, the Flight Manager, but this soon changed when we were told that cloud was coming in and we needed to hurry if we were going to fly in that day. The flight in was exciting, flying over the tundra and watching it slowly change to snow, and then the mountains, and then even bigger mountains and knife edge ridges. Our plane was a little four seater, which included the pilot's seat. The flight lasted about 40 minutes and soon we were coming in to land on the Kahiltna airstrip. Waiting to greet us was the base-camp manager, Lisa, along with other teams gearing up and getting ready to go. Our fuel, (white gas) which we had pre-ordered through Hudson was waiting for us along with our choice of sled to help carry the load. The sleds were basic

plastic sledges, it took us a while to load them up, making sure not to load them too high so as to avoid them turning over. We cached 3 days of supplies for our return and then as the weather looked stable and we now had almost 24 hours daylight, we were ready for the off. So on went the snow shoes, it's either that or skis, and the fun began. Sledges are very useful when you are going up hill but going down hill with one will start to test your sense of humour, there are ways to try and slow them down with knotted ropes around the base of the sledge, but this must be quite a skill because they kept whizzing past our ankles or worse still bashing into us and tripping us over, and with a heavy pack on you often did a full blown face plant. You're definitely less agile when you have snowshoes on. So we made our way down Heartbreak Hill, it's name becomes meaningful on your return journey, and started working our way up the Kahiltna Glacier. After about 6 hours we suddenly realised we were in the middle of a storm and needed to find somewhere to camp. One of the skills needed on Denali is the ability to build walls around your tent with snow blocks in order to protect you from the bad weather. We were now desperate to get our tent up and with luck spotted the remains of some walls, that night we appreciated the importance of good, solid well-made walls, as we spent the night and next day digging the tent out of the ever increasing snow drift that was engulfing us, and trying to re-build the deteriorating walls.

We were tent-bound for a day, but finally the storm subsided and we were more than ready to start making progress. The trudge up ski hill was exhausting, it was our first real hill of the trip and the sledge weighed heavily on our hips pulling on your harness with each step forward. It was a relief when we arrived at our next camp.

At Camp 3 we started to see people we had met before and things became more sociable with the sharing of stories and food, and we enjoyed a relaxing rest day allowing our bodies to acclimatise. We were now starting to get higher and the altitude was starting to be felt. With this in mind we decided that we would double carry to the next camp and stash our sledges and some food ready for our return trip. All stashes needed to be buried quite deep as we were advised that ravens would attempt to dig the food out if it was too near the surface, all stashes were marked with very long wands and labelled with the team name and date of the stash.

Motor Cycle Hill was our next objective, which proved a lot easier without the sledges and with half the load. We made our stash and returned to Camp 3. The next day we took the remaining load on the same trip and arrived at Camp 4, 4300m, Advanced Base Camp. There were many other teams here from all over the world, and a small team of semi-resident National Park Rangers. We spent a few days here acclimatising and building our walls, using our snow saw that we had acquired in Anchorage. We were slowly becoming obsessed by the quality of our walls, which rewarded us with comfortable nights of sleep.

After a couple of days rest we decided to make a carry up the headwall. This was the steepest part of the route and ropes had been fixed by the guided parties to help speed things up. Loaded with 6 days of food and fuel we headed up. We attached ourselves to the fixed ropes with a couple of prussic loops, and after a lot of effort arrived at the ridge. It was very windy here so we buried our kit and headed back down for a well deserved rest. We were now ready for our summit bid. Every evening at 6pm people would gather round to listen to the radio weather forecast, after which plans would be made. We were fortunate because we had given ourselves plenty of time, but many other people were on a fixed schedule, and poor weather would often be the reason for them failing to get to the summit. Eventually a 2 day window of good weather appeared, and we needed to be in position at the high camp to take advantage of it, even though that meant getting there in less than ideal weather.

We always seemed to be the last to set off but eventually we were ready, we buried all our spare kit and set off with full packs. Slow and steady progress took us up the headwall, and we made our way along the ridge. Eventually we arrived at high camp very tired, and clearly feeling the altitude, but unfortunately there was still plenty of work to do. Poor weather during the past couple of weeks meant that there were no ready made shelters, so we had plenty of digging and building of walls to make ourselves comfortable and our tent sheltered enough to cope with the strong winds. Finally we were happy and settled down for drinks and dinner. The following day we returned down the ridge to collect our spare food and fuel, and then we were ready for another rest day. This was the first of the good days, but we knew we needed to rest and acclimatise ready for our summit attempt. As it happened, most parties failed to get to the top that day as the winds were too strong. The camp was getting very busy now as there were plenty of people arriving from below trying to take advantage of the good forecast, unfortunately this window was only predicted to be short, and then to be followed by a big storm.

Our advice had been to set off when the sun hit the mountain, rather than set off in the cold. So once again we one of the last to set off. It wasn't long before we were at the back of a long snaking chain of people heading up to Denali Pass, so we patiently followed on behind. It was of some concern that there were a number of people heading down already; they clearly hadn't had time to be returning from the summit. We met a group of Scots who told us that the winds were very strong, so they had decided to turn back. Armed with this knowledge we stopped just short of the pass, and put on our down jackets and braced ourselves for what was round the corner. They were right; it was extremely difficult to make any real progress. The winds were strong blowing spindrift everywhere reducing visibility to only a few meters. We made a decision to take shelter at some rocks, and got into our Bothy bag, and tried to keep warm. The Bothy bag is a great invention, having sat out the storm for about an hour we felt that it was time to move, either up or down. We noticed that there were groups still heading up, so we continued. Eventually after an hour or so of steady climbing we realised that most people had disappeared and the weather was now very good. There were about three other groups around us and we all used each other as encouragement to keep going, taking it in turns to overtake each other. Eventually the summit came into view, which although was good news, it did reveal the last steep final climb. As we made progress we passed discarded rucksacks as climbers were trying to give themselves the best chance of success, and finally we succumbed and left ours, before eventually finding ourselves on the final summit ridge.

This knife edge ridge was between us and the summit, with a big drop all the way back down to the glacier on the right side and a drop of a few hundred metres on the left, fortunately for us the wind had dropped completely, but the minds and feet were still focused. We did have to negotiate past a team returning from the summit but before we knew it we were there, it was 9pm. There was another group enjoying the top and we helped each other take photos. The sun was still up, and it was starting to get colder, we enjoyed the view of Mount Foraker basking in the evening sunlight to the south west, and deep cloud banks to the north, although we were already thinking about our decent. As it happened this proved to be straightforward and at about midnight we found ourselves back at camp, elated but too exhausted to make any dinner. If the forecast had been good we would have rewarded ourselves with a rest day, but a storm was forecast so we packed up our kit and headed down. We had made a double carry to get to this camp, so descending in one journey meant we were carrying the heaviest bags so far on the trip, which meant descending the fixed lines was a battle against gravity. Eventually heading through the mist we found ourselves back at the main camp. It would have been nice to have continued further down but the weather was bad and we were exhausted so we set up camp. After four days of bad weather, we eventually decided to head for burger, beer and chips, 36 hours later we were at Base Camp.

Unfortunately, there were a lot of people already there. The bad weather had meant that nobody could fly into the mountain, and nobody could fly out. So the beer and burger had to wait. Occasionally there would be a call that the weather was clearing, and everybody would get out of their tents, put on skis or snow shoes, and together we would stamp down a runway. Finally we got a call that there was a spare seat available, so one of us departed, with the other getting on the next flight, and thus we were back in the bright lights of Talkeetna. The treats of a shower, food and beer lay ahead of us, but also the satisfaction that we had had a great trip. All the planning had been successful; we hadn't run out of Yorkshire Tea Bags, though we probably would not be able to face porridge for a while.

WEISSMIES TRAVERSE – or “Achtung Gummi Bears”
by Mike Goodyer

After the successful Centenary celebrations at the Britannia Hut we were in Saas Fee browsing the shops. I bumped into Steve, who said that a small group were looking at the traverse of the Weissmies on the next day. Now there was an idea – Steve had no objections to me coming along, just find a partner. Ed needed little pushing to join in.

So it was on the next morning, after an early breakfast at our Hotel, that Ed and I met a mighty throng of Alpinists on the 7am bus to Saas Grund. We made our way to the Hohsaas gondola and caught one of the first cabins up to the foot of the Triftglacier. At the bottom of the glacier the ABM throng and a few AC hangers on kitted up – crampons on and ropes tied. There was a short delay while the ABM group sorted out rope teams and then we were off. The day was well advanced with the late start from the gondola station. The sun was already hitting the middle of the glacier. We were following the normal route to the summit. It is a straightforward glacier route, but through some magnificent glacier scenery. The glacier steepened and the crevasses and seracs became bigger and bigger with some really solid snow bridges to cross. Ed, at the front of our rope of four, was providing sustenance to our rope by placing handfuls of gummi bears on the ice for us to pick up as we passed. As I was at the back I got to Hoover up the leftovers. Groups who had started at first light were now heading down the glacier and back to the gondola station. One group coming down at speed would have trodden on our sweet supply had it not been for Ed warning “Achtung Gummi Bears” – disaster was averted! The bergschrund was easily crossed. The sun had turned the top few inches to soft snow and the ascent was well marked out by the many previous climbers so there was no difficulty. The end was in sight as we got to a ridge and climbed up the final steep slope to the summit, the views across the valley to the Mischabel chain were outstanding in the perfect weather. We arrived at the summit (4023m) about midday, in guide book time but late in the day.

As it was late the majority of the ABM/AC group decided to return to the valley by the ascent route. However Roger with an AC member, Steve, Jim, Phil and John and Ed and I undeterred pressed on with the traverse. Now we had been told that the traverse was over the crest and down a snowy ridge (neither Ed nor I had checked this out in the guidebook), but this proved to be incorrect. What fun Ed and I had! The snowy summit crest quickly came to a rocky ridge, several hundred metres long with many unstable sections. We moved together, still roped up, across slabs, down short chimneys and walls, creeping round steep scree slopes until we hit the snow. After a quick lunch we unroped and set off down the snow slope – thank goodness for anti-balling plates, and made good progress down the ever softening snow to the Zwischbergenpass.

Once at the pass we were off the snow and we legged it down to the Almageller Hut and without stopping we pushed on down the beautiful Almageller valley. When we reached the woods above Saas

Almagell we could see our Hotel on the edge of the village and we followed lots of criss-cross paths down to it. We arrived back at the Hotel in time for a beer and shower before dinner with Anne and Janet. The other groups followed us down at a more leisurely pace. So a chance meeting with Steve gave Ed and me a memorable and enjoyable day out in the Alps.

And the ladies came too.....
By Anne Goodyer and Janet Bramley

Janet and I have been ABMSAC wives for over 20 years but, apart from the very occasional visit to the George Starkey hut and the Lake District Annual Dinner, we have not been actively involved in club meets.

This changed as a result of a chance discussion over dinner in late 2008 when I realised that the venue for the centenary celebrations was Saas Fee and the Britannia Hut. I had visited both many years before with Mike and had always thought it a beautiful part of Switzerland to go back to one day – and so an idea was born. Why didn't Janet and I go along to enjoy some low level walking, take part in the celebrations and become part of this special event?

Months of planning later and with slight disbelief from our respective spouses the idea became reality and we were not disappointed. So to record the impressions of two no-climbers for prosperity, what were the main memories?

The walk across the snow was fun (in retrospect) and we were glad that we had cut the size of our packs down to a bare minimum. (Shoes and handbags left back at the hotel ;()

There were some surreal touches which I assume only long standing club members could understand. Why was such a large picture of Scotland carried so far and why did we have to wear rubber clogs even when outside?

Of the not so good bits – best not to think about the toilets – why was bottled water dearer than champagne and who really was snoring all night in the mixed-sex dormitory?

The setting and the weather were perfect. We will always remember the ceremony outside the hut in glorious weather with a backdrop of the most magnificent views imaginable.

The day will also be remembered for the obvious pride you show in your club and the love of the Swiss mountains. You made us very welcome and it was an honour to share your centenary celebration.

Visits to the Britannia Hut
by Pamela Harris-Andrews

The Britannia Hut has always been central to ABMSAC celebrations ever since it was built in 1912 with Association funding and gifted to the Geneva Section of the SAC. And so, on 26th July 2009, it was the setting for our Centenary Luncheon. I was one of a group of 62 who stood on the terrace outside the hut on a perfect summer's day, enjoying Fendant wine and the "cold collation" generously provided by the Geneva Section, in memory of that provided on an equally sunny summer's day back in August 1912 at the opening ceremony. Again as in 1912 the Presidents of both the Association and

the Geneva Section made speeches, and another historical memento was the silk-embroidered banner displayed outside the hut. This had been a gift of the Geneva Section in 1912, and carried up to the opening of the hut by the daughter of one of the oldest members; one hundred years later it was to be carried into lunch by the daughter of the first lady member of the Association.

Before these ceremonies some of us had climbed the nearby Klein Allalin giving us a perfect view back down onto the hut itself, but also up towards the 4000 metre giants of the Rimpfischhorn, Strahlhorn and Allalinhorn. The sharply pointed ridge of the Rimpfischhorn reminded me of my first visit to the Britannia Hut exactly 40 years previously, back in July 1969, for it was in order to climb this that I had made this visit. It was a much smaller hut then, for it had been totally renovated and enlarged in 1997, but it was a similar summer's day, sunny and cloudless. When we left the hut after our night's stay I had no idea of what was in store, and had little experience of high mountains or of any route more difficult than the PD scramble up Lo Besso from the Mountet Hut above Zinal. Dai, the friend leading me, had recently arrived to work in Switzerland after years of honing his rock-climbing skills in Wales, and he decided we should attempt the traverse of the mountain, a long AD route. I have few memories of the climb itself, except that it seemed to go on forever and at one point Dai was clutching the Guide Book in his teeth, cursing his inability to find the route. But we did succeed, and I can remember staggering back down to the hut in the now melting snow, losing a crampon in the descent, and being full of pride at what was my greatest mountaineering exploit until then – and in retrospect what was to be the most difficult route I was ever to achieve.

My next visit to the Britannia Hut was to be even more dramatic. It was less than a year later in the spring of 1970, and we approached the hut from the Felskinn cable car station on skis, with the intention of crossing the Adler Pass to ski down into Zermatt. But the weather rapidly deteriorated as we approached the pass, now enveloped in thick cloud, so we decided to ski back to the hut and spend the night there. We were a group of 12 and the hut was full, so we hurriedly strapped our skis back on to get the last cable car down to Saas Fee. We set off in ever worsening conditions, and two of us fell behind after returning to the hut for forgotten goggles. By this time the visibility was non-existent, and it was snowing so heavily that the track back to the cable car was obliterated. It was slow going and when it became clear that we were going to miss the last lift and would have to ski all the way to Saas Fee, we started downhill. But in the total white-out we misjudged how far we had gone and soon realised that we were skiing into a dead-end valley. It was getting later and later as, thoroughly demoralised, we wearily attached the seal-skins onto our skins and trudged back up.

We were almost reconciled to the fact that we would have to spend the night out, with no emergency bivouac equipment, and were discussing the possibility of digging a snow-hole, when the clouds briefly parted and lights appeared. It could only be the hut, and we set off slowly in that direction. We finally arrived back at the door, five hours after we had left it, and this time the warden had no choice but to let us in. We were cold and extremely tired, and even getting skis and boots off was a slow job as by this time my friend had frost-bitten fingers. There were no beds or blankets left, but we curled up on the benches of the still warm dining-room, only thankful to be safe from the storm now raging outside. The room quickly grew colder so we slept little until the first climbers got up and we were able to crawl upstairs to the now vacated dormitories. By the time we emerged for breakfast the sun was shining and the conditions were perfect as we skied over to Felskinn and back down to Saas Fee where we were reunited with the rest of our group. Fortunately they had not called out the helicopter rescue, assuming we had spent the night in the hut, though they had been unable to phone to check this as the storm had been so violent that the lines were down.

My immediate reaction to this ordeal was never to go ski-mountaineering again, but this resolution lasted a very short time and in subsequent years I went on to experience my best trips in the mountains on skis, including the High Level Route from Argentière to Zermatt, and the ascent of the Jungfrau. But I never went back to the Britannia Hut until this summer's celebrations, and after writing the History of the Hut for the Centenary Journal, was eager to see the renovations, as well as to re-visit the scene of what had probably been my two most memorable adventures in the Alps.

THE 4000m PEAKS of the ALPS

By Mike Pinney

As reported in the 2008 Journal, along with Jeff Harris I completed the Collomb list of 52 4000m peaks in 2007, bringing the number of current members who have completed this list up to five. The other four are Peter Fleming, John Mercer and Les Swindin, all unguided. (*Photos will be on the Centenary DVD – editor*)

1975: Bishorn 4153m with Gerry Martyn

This was also my first Alpine route. We had driven out on the Saturday to Zinal, 1675m. On the Sunday we had a gentle walk up the valley, then on the Monday morning set off for the Tracuit Hut, 3256m. I was aware of the altitude and the hut was very crowded with late arrivals sleeping on and under tables. At that time - the good old days - one did not book hut places and people were not turned away; also the SAC card gave you a higher standing. The next morning we managed to make a quick departure and headed up the NW flank by head torch to arrive at the summit shortly after daybreak. In 1997 I ascended the East ridge, descending the NW flank and passing the now enlarged Tracuit Hut on the way back to the Turtmann Hut, bringing back memories of this first route. Our subsequent peaks in 1975 were less than 4000m.

1976: Mont Blanc 4807m with Richard Linford & A Woods

In spite of failing on our previous routes, in near perfect conditions we headed up to the Goûter Hut, dodging the stones descending the couloir which must be crossed on the way to the hut. Again a crowded hut, but we were up and away at about 1:00am. We made good time and were one of the first parties on the summit, enjoying the views across the Alps. We regretted having bought return tickets for the tramway and téléphérique to Les Houches as we felt conditions were ideal to traverse Mont Maudit to the Aiguille du Midi. Instead, we made a leisurely descent back past the Vallot and Goûter Huts: a good end to the season.

1978: (2) Allalinhorn 4027m, Alphubel 4206m with Tony Banaszek & John Berry

My climbing partner had managed to get himself stranded at an Argentinean base in the Antarctica, so I attended my first Alpine Meet. The weather was not good, but on one of the few days it was we went up to the Täsch Hut. The following morning we headed across to the Allalinpäss and then scrambled up the SW ridge to the summit. Whilst heading towards the Feechopf we met another rope who were uncomfortable about their descent. We thus decided to accompany them down to the Längfluh hotel where we spent the night. The following morning, whilst one of the other rope descended by lift to Saas, we headed up the Alphubel East flank in the mist. I had not been feeling too well and my idea had been to cross the Alphubeljoch back to the Täsch Hut, missing out the summit. The others had a different idea, and I was not particularly pleased to arrive at the summit, having climbed the mountain by mistake! (I have subsequently climbed the Rotgrat and the SE ridge before crossing the Feechopf to the Allalinhorn.) From the summit in the mist we descended the East flank for a while before turning right to take us across to the Alphubeljoch.

1979: (2) Grandes Jorasses 4208m with John Wright & John Eccles, **Aiguille de Rochefort 4001m** with John Wright

After a week acclimatising on the Chamonix side, we went through the Mont Blanc tunnel to join the meet in Val Veni. With a good forecast we headed up to the Grandes Jorasses Hut. The hut was comfortably full and we were well looked after. With most others we made an early start to follow the route up the SW side to Rocher Whympfer, then across the snow plateau to ascend directly to Pointe Walker. From the summit we followed the frontier ridge to Pointe Whympfer, scrambling down the ridge to join our ascent path and getting back to the hut by early afternoon and to the campsite by late afternoon.

Later on the meet we went up to the Torino Hut, the next morning crossing the glacier and up to the Salle à Manger below the Géant. From there we traversed the narrow ridge before the final scramble to the Aiguille de Rochefort. We then returned to the Salle à Manger. The plan had then been to climb the SW Face of the Géant, but we were too early for the sun to have hit the face. Since John was suffering from cold feet we decided to return to the Torino. This gave us a good rest before an ascent of the N face of the Tour Ronde on the following day.

1980: Mönch 4099m with John Eccles

After two acclimatisation routes, the Wetterhorn SW Flanc via the Hick couloir (no longer considered feasible) and the Eiger SW Flank (the second ascent of the season), we felt we were ready for a tour of the hinterland culminating with the Hasler rib on the Aletschhorn. We thus had two ice tools with us, so whilst walking across to the Mönchjoch Hut from the Jungfrauoch decided the South face was still in condition. The following morning we made quick work of the face, descending by the SE ridge and back to the hut before lunch. Unfortunately the weather broke that night, so instead of continuing our tour we returned to the valley the next day.

1981: (7) Lenzspitze 4294m, Nadelhorn 4327m, Zinal Rothorn 4221m with Brian Chase, **Täschhorn 4490m, Dom 4545m, Lagginhorn 4010m** with John Eccles, **Weisshorn 4505m** with Phil Smart

Again new snow just before we arrived, so I made my first visit to sample the rock climbing in the Engelhorner, getting back to Attermenzen late on the Monday evening. After a leisurely lunch with suitable liquid refreshment whilst watching the royal wedding on the camp site television, we were faced with the 4-5 hour ascent to the Dom Hut. The following morning up to the Festjoch then across to join the south ridge of the Lenzspitze, which we traversed to the Nadelhorn, then across the Stecknadelhorn to the Hohbergjoch. We descended the loose scree, then back across to the Festjoch and down to the hut and valley. Next, up to the Rothorn Hut. There were not many staying in the hut and it was very windy in the night so we were the only party to set off the following morning to climb the Zinal Rothorn. Initially we had planned to climb the SW ridge but revised our plan, ascending to the SE ridge via the couloir still filled with snow. The Biner slab was clear of snow and without queues, and we made our way to the summit, returning by the same route.

Our next plan was the Viereselsgrat on the Dent Blanche. We set out from the Schönbiel Hut several hours before first light, but part way up the ridge finally concluded that, in view of the lack of freezing overnight, retreat was advisable. Our next outing took us to the Täsch Hut. The following morning several ropes climbed the Rotgrat finding the correct line. From the Alphubel summit, whilst the other parties descended to the Täsch hut, we headed north descending to the Mischabel Bivouac Hut, which was unoccupied. We enjoyed the sunshine on the hut terrace with a leisurely preparation for the following day. Somewhat later in the afternoon we were joined by Brian and Steve Town who had

ascended the Alphubel West rib, but had managed to cut their ropes by disturbing loose rock. The tranquillity of the evening was disturbed when a large party turned up. The following morning we decided to let them get out of the way first, so we did not leave until first light. This meant we made good time and reached the summit of the Täschhorn in an hour under guide book time. Suitably encouraged, we then started the traverse to the Dom. Apart from a rope of two who soon turned back because of the amount of snow on the ridge, the four of us had the traverse to ourselves, climbing as two ropes. Because of the snow we took somewhat longer than guide book time descending the narrow ridge to the Domjoch. We then had the South ridge of the Dom to ascend. There was a marked deterioration in both the quality of the rock and the weather, with thunder and lightning hitting the surrounding mountains. We thus progressed slowly to the summit, watching the lightning nervously. Whilst we descended slowly to the Hohberghorn glacier and then back up to Festijoch, the other rope rushed on since Brian had to drive back to England the following day. I had been at the Festijoch ten days earlier, so unlike my companion was mentally prepared for the next part of the descent. However, before we reached the Dom Hut it became dark. This was before Petzl torches had appeared on the scene, so since we were carrying a stove and plenty of fuel, we decided to stop for the night. The following morning we descended to the hut for a late breakfast, to the amusement of the hut staff, but we had saved the cost of a hut night.

There was then a break in the weather, so just before my return to England we went up to the Weissmies hut to do the Fletschhorn-Lagginhorn traverse. For some good reason which I cannot remember, instead of grabbing a route on the Weissmies the following day, we returned to Randa then walked straight up to the Weisshorn Hut, arriving just in time for dinner. We slept well that night! In spite of our exertions the previous day we made good time and were the second team back at the hut. In 1981 the couloir leading up to the ridge was in perfect condition, but when I subsequently ascended the East ridge in 2000, this had to be avoided on its left.

1982: Aiguille Verte 4122m with Brian Chase & Nick Allen

Another season mostly spent rock climbing since the winter snow had not been burnt off, but towards the end of our trip we were able to do the Forbes Arête on the Chardonnet before a couple of days later heading up the ladders to the Couvercle Hut. An early start meant we ascended the Talèfre glacier in the dark before finding our way on into the Whymper couloir, disturbing a couple of teams who had bivouacked on their descent. We continued up the couloir to join the ridge. From the summit we started down the Moine ridge, but this proved hard going as it was still mostly snow covered. Looking across, the Whymper couloir was clear of stone fall and we decided to abseil down the face to join it. This was a slow process and we got back to the hut having had a 23 hour day!

1984: (2) Dürrenhorn 4035m, Hohberghorn 4219m with Jeremy Whitehead

A shortened season, but as a first outing we went up to the Bordier Hut. That year the couloir leading up to the Dirrujoch was in good condition, and we were able to ascend this before following the SSE ridge to the summit of the Dürrenhorn. From there we returned to the joch before traversing the Hohberghorn to the Hohbergjoch, previously visited three years earlier. We descended the same loose scree, then back across to the Festijoch and down to the Dom Hut and valley. It was interesting to note when returning to the Bordier hut in 2006 that the Dirrujoch is no longer climbed, and the guardian has way-marked a route onto the North ridge of the Dürrenhorn.

1985: (4) Jungfrau 4158m, Gross-Fiescherhorn 4049m, Finsteraarhorn 4273m, Gross-Grünhorn 4044m with James Coxhead

After an acclimatisation climb on the Mittelhorn we were keen to carry out a tour of the hinterland, having failed in 1980. Back up by train to the Jungfrau joch and across to the Ober Mönchjoch. Much

to our dismay, when we looked outside at 3:00am on the following morning it was thick cloud, so back to bed panicking about our investment in an expensive rail ticket. However, by 9:00am it had cleared and we could see a number of parties heading across to the Jungfrau. We were able to overtake all but one by the Rottalsattel and were the second team on the summit.

The next day we ascended the North ridge of the Gross-Fiescherhorn above the Fiescherwand before crossing to the Hinter Fiescherhorn. From there we took a slightly circuitous line down onto the Fiescher glacier and across to the Finsteraarhorn Hut for lunch. The next day another late start, and we broke the trail for the other parties in an ascent of the North ridge of the Finsteraarhorn. The guardian persuaded us against the SE face route on the Gross-Grünhorn (I note that it is not recommended in the current AC Guide), so we headed up to the Grünhornlucke then made a rising traverse to join the SW ridge of Grünegghorn. We followed a narrow crest over the Grünegghorn to the col, then up the SW ridge to the main summit. We returned back along the ridge then glissaded down an easy angled snow slope to the Grüneggfirn, followed by the haul up the ladders to the Concordia Hut.

The Hasler rib had been going with parties descending to the south, but not for us as the weather finally broke with an overnight storm. The next morning, during a break in the weather, we decided to set off for the Jungfraujoch. After an hour the cloud came in again and we were forced to navigate by compass. The Jungfraufirn is quite heavily crevassed and since we did not have the time to move one at a time taking back bearings, we set our compasses to take us well to the east of the joch. After three hours on this one setting, weaving around crevasses, we arrived at the ski draglift and from there found the tunnel leading to the station. The sight of a pair of snow covered climbers connected by a frozen rope provided a highlight for the Japanese tourists who had come up in the train, despite the lack of views!

1986: Barre des Ecrins 4101m with Marian Parsons

We were based at La Bérarde so the approach to the Refuge des Ecrins took a full day going up the side of the Glacier de Bonne Pierre with its alpine flora. We used a prussic on the fixed wires leading up to the Col des Ecrins, then spent the night at the Ecrins Hut. The Dôme de Neige is a popular route so there was a good trail up past Brèche Lory. From the Dôme we descended to the Brèche and whilst all other parties descended, started the scramble which took us up the West ridge to the main summit. We descended back down the ridge, then traversed to the col and a leisurely descent back down the Bonne Pierre valley.

1988: (14) Strahlhorn 4190m, Rimpfischhorn 4199m, Weissmies 4023m with Steve Town, **Aletschhorn 4195m, Nordend 4609m, Dufourspitze 4634m, Zumsteinspitze 4563m, Signalkuppe 4556m, Parrotspitze 4436m, Piramide Vincent 4215m, Liskamm 4527m, Castor 4228m, Breithorn 4164m** with Marian Parsons, **Pollux 4092m** solo.

After the Friday night drive out from England and limited recovery on Saturday evening, Sunday afternoon saw an ascent to Fluhalp, having made good use of the Sunnegga express. The following morning down onto the Findeln glacier, then having decided to miss out the Adlerhorn, we headed up to the Adlerpass and followed the WNW flank to the summit of the Strahlhorn, returning by the same route. The following day we ascended the WSW ridge of the Rimpfischhorn. We had had grand ideas of traversing, but we were still tired from the previous day, so the North ridge had to wait until 2001.

After the drive to Blatten and the lift to Belalp, it was down on to the Oberaletsch Glacier then up the middle until we reached the ladders which led up to the hut. The next morning it was back down onto the glacier, which meant 1700 meters of ascent up the SW rib of the Aletschhorn.

A few days later up to Hohsaas. During the day it acts as a restaurant, but in early evening becomes a mountain refuge. We had gone up in cloud with a favourable forecast for the following day, and about 6:30pm the cloud started to lift and we were rewarded with an excellent view across the valley of the Mischabel chain. The next morning with two or three other parties we set off for the Lagginjoch to join the North ridge of the Weissmies. Apart from one short pitch we mostly moved together, descending by the SW ridge and NW flank.

We then headed to Zermatt for the Monte Rosa to Breithorn traverse, completed by a number of teams over two or three days after I had gone home in 1984; in his book *Les Alpes Valaisannes: Les 100 Plus Belles Courses* Michel Vaucher describes this as a four day route to take in all ten summits. We made good use of the Gornergratbahn to Rotenboden, then down on to the glacier and up to a crowded Monte Rosa Hut. En route we met John Mercer who had just completed the Monte Rosa summits. We were glad to be away early the next morning, finally finding our way on to Grenz glacier. Whereas most headed for Dufourspitze, we along with one other party headed up to the Silbersattel. Leaving sacks, we followed the ridge up Nordend, mostly snow but with a couple of rock steps just before the summit. We were rather surprised to see the other party turn back.

We returned to the col to contemplate the Grenzgipfel, possibly the crux. Slightly to the right there looked to be a line through the rocks, with signs of a previous ascent. I set off, running out a full 45 metres which involved us both dropping coils before I found a reasonable belay. Another couple of full run-outs with poor intermediary runners brought a suitably relieved team to the ridge. Again leaving sacks we traversed over a few towers to the summit of Dufourspitze then, after returning to our sacks, we descended a dubious snow covered slope to join the ridge down to the Grenzsattel. From there, up over Zumsteinspitze and up Signalkuppe, our fourth summit of the day, which also houses the Margherita Hut, a 16 hour day.

We had a choice of huts for the following night, depending on our progress. After a delay waiting for breakfast, we made good time across Parrotspitze and Ludwigshöhe to Piramide Vincent. From there we headed across the still frozen snow to the Lisjoch. Almost perfect bucket steps took us to the east summit of Liskamm. The crest to the west summit was in good condition and from there we descended to the Felikjoch. We had been making good time, so rather than drop down to the Quintino Sella Hut, we continued over Castor and then down to the old Mezzalama Hut, 500 metres lower than the new hut still under construction, height we would have to regain. Another 16 hour day but again four summits achieved.

The following morning back up and across to Pollux. Marian had ascended it earlier in the meet, so while she enjoyed the views, I went up the West face. After descending we headed across towards the Breithorn. The original plan had been for just the Western summit, but in view of the conditions and the available time we opted for the traverse. We easily gained the Eastern summit then headed west to a free abseil down and across towards the Central summit where there are three steps. After some route finding difficulties and snow covered ledges, we reached the third step and an obvious line up the crest to the summit. By now we were behind schedule for the last cable car from Klein Matterhorn but fortunately were significantly faster than guide book time on the traverse to the western summit. From there, down and then an unwelcome slog up to the cable car station in the heat of the afternoon. We caught the last car of the day and were able to enjoy the panoramic view of our three days effort as we descended to Zermatt.

1989: (7) Dent du Géant 4013m, Dôme de Rochefort 4015m, Aiguille de Bionnassay 4052m, Mont Maudit 4465m, Mont Blanc du Tacul 4248m with Dick Murton, **Gran Paradiso 4061m, Grand Combin 4314m** with Marian Parsons

A mid morning cable car ride to the Torino where we left some gear, then across the glacier and up to the Salle à Manger below the Géant. It was mid afternoon and most parties were descending. However, we were not held up on our ascent up the side of the fixed ropes and when we got to the summit, we had it to ourselves. After abseiling back down we hurried across for a late dinner. Next morning back to the Salle à Manger, then along the Rochefort Arête to the Aiguille. Ten years earlier I had not been aware of the Dôme as an objective and reflected that we could easily have climbed it then! We were the only party to carry on over to the Dôme, returning by the same route.

Based in Val Veni, the South ridge of the Aiguille de Bionnassay followed by a high level traverse seemed a logical outing. We took a full five hours crossing the Miage glacier to the Durier Bivouac Hut where we found two lads already there who had just traversed the Dôme de Miage. They had left at 1:00am, and although we left at 2:00 it was still dark as we negotiated the rock step leading to the summit. Daybreak at the summit, then a delicate snow crest led towards the Dôme du Goûter and hence Mont Blanc at 9:00am. It was still and sunny, and very tempting to lie down and fall asleep. However, the traverse beckoned! There had been considerable traffic and a proverbial motorway led us over Mont Maudit towards Mont Blanc du Tacul. The current AC guide made mention of a “wooden stake for abseiling useful in crossing the bergschrund” but, apart from a couple of points where we had to queue, the route was entirely straightforward. After a brief diversion to collect the Tacul, our fourth 4000er of the day, we arrived at the Col du Midi. The guide book allows 14-22 hours for the traverse and in 1989 the Cosmiques Hut was being rebuilt, so limited accommodation was available for parties who missed the last cable car. We, however, had a choice: an hour’s climb up to the Aiguille du Midi followed by queuing for the expensive cable car to Pointe Helbronner or, what was our choice, the two hour walk across the Géant glacier in the hot sun to the Torino Hut. At the Torino, we each downed a litre of mineral water, then took the cable car down, followed by effortless buses back to the campsite in Val Veni.

Fit and acclimatised, we then had aspirations for a route on the Aiguille Blanche. However, the weather broke and my next route was the ordinary way up the Gran Paradiso in the mist, one of the easiest 4000ers. Fortunately there was a brief clearing whilst we were at the summit and we were rewarded by the views of the main chain. There was still quite a lot of fresh snow and our next outing was to the Valsorey Hut. About half an hour after leaving the cars we met the guardian on the way down, necessitating some reflection on conditions! Since there would be no food at the hut that night, some of us went back down to the local village to obtain provisions. Unfortunately that did not mean the hut was empty, though the other occupants did not seem to have much idea. There was a pot of water on the stove so huge that it would never boil, and they did not take too kindly to us decanting some of it to speed up proceedings. Perhaps we made more noise than usual when we got up at 2:00am! We went up the snow covered SW face of the Combin de Valsorey, then traversed to the Combin de Grafeneire, the highest summit. The decision was we should descend the NW face. Although it was not that steep, we felt it necessary to pitch, and winding through the seracs then down the face to the Corbassière Glacier and back over the Col du Meitin took a long time. However, the guardians were back at the hut so we got a good evening meal!

1991:(4) Dent d'Hérens 4171m, Dent Blanche 4356m with Steve Town, **Lauteraarhorn 4042m** with Jeff Harris & Dave Wynne-Jones, **Matterhorn 4478m** with Dave Wynne-Jones

After an exhausting acclimatisation route, the Lenspitze-Nadelhorn traverse from the Mischabel Hut, the weather broke with a heavy snowfall and we had a couple of days welcome rest. As the weather



Centenary Celebrations – Britannia Hut
By Mike Goodyer



Centenary Celebrations – Britannia Hut
By Mike Goodyer



Haute Route Trek –on the Otemma glacier
By Ed Bramley



Haute Route Trek –the crowds leave the Vignettes hut
By Ed Bramley



Pyrennes meet – Peter Goodwin on Perdiguero 3221m
By Jeff Harris



Quimsa Cruz – Paso Torrini Araca
By Peter Farrington



Denali – first camp after storm
By Natasha Geere/Steve Hunt



Denali – the summit ridge
By Natasha Geere/Steve Hunt

started to improve we headed up to the Schönbiel Hut, then the following morning found our way over the Col de Valpelline and round to the Aosta Hut. We knew the hut was in a bad state of repair, so we had taken food but no stove. Fortunately there was plenty of wood around, (what used to be the hut), so we were able to cook an evening meal, and the next morning scrounged hot water for a drink before we ascended the SW flank and West ridge of the Dent D'Hérens. We descended by the same route, then after a further night in the hut, made our way across the Col de Valpelline and Col d'Hérens to the Dent Blanche Hut. In continuing good weather we ascended the South ridge. From the summit, it was interesting to note there was no evidence of parties having come up the Viereselsgrat. The following day back over the Col d'Hérens to the Schönbiel Hut and Zermatt.

Saturday morning was not a good time to drive round to the Grimsel Hospiz, so we lost over an hour due to the heavy traffic. I tried to gain time by not eating, but ran out of energy before I got to the Lauteraar Hut. After refuelling and a kip on the hut terrace, it was down on to the glacier covered with spent shells from the spring firing, then across and up to the Aar Bivouac Hut. Unfortunately it was full and we were relegated to the old hut, entered from underneath. The next morning we made good time up the SE ridge of the Lauteraarhorn. From the summit we started down the North ridge, wishing to traverse to the Schreckhorn, but with the fall back option of descending from the col. However, as we got closer the descent from the col did not look to be in condition, so lacking commitment we retraced our steps to the Aar Bivouac Hut. That night we had it to ourselves, making a leisurely return to the valley the following day.

I still had one remaining peak in the Zermatt area! Up to the Gandegg Hut, then next morning over the Furggjoch and across under the Matterhorn South face to join the route up to the Carrel Hut. After lunch we reconnoitred the route above the hut. The next morning it was very windy and although some parties set out, we decided to sit it out. It was a nerve-racking day: had we made the correct decision? The following morning was much better, although it was quite cool on the ascent, achieved in about four hours. After a short break we started the descent of the Hörnli route. We were still fresh and were able to easily wind our way through the crowds, getting down to the Hörnli Hut in just over two hours. Yes, it had been worth waiting!

1992: Les Droites 4000m with Jeff Harris

After the Dômes de Miage traverse, my next outing was to the Couvercle Hut. I had never considered it necessary to book, but times were changing and we were not popular. It was quite a shock the next morning to see how few of those staying at the hut had got up for an Alpine start. I had a 16 year unsettled score with Les Courtes, so we headed up and across the snow runnels to the Col de la Tour des Courtes to join the classic traverse, giving us views of Les Droites, our target for the following day. Another early start to join the South ridge from the western side leading to the rocky head wall, followed by a snow slope to the summit where we met a couple of guys who had taken two days on a North face route. Whilst looking across to Les Courtes, we were horrified to see a significant rock fall from the Tour des Courtes down the snow where we had been 24 hours earlier; we subsequently learnt that Les & Barbara Swindin and Peter Fleming had had to take shelter in similar conditions! We descended back down the South ridge after abseiling down the head wall and then down the side of couloir on the east side of the ridge, getting back to the hut for mid afternoon. After a short time for the feet to recover, we hurried back down the ladders, then up to Montenvers, just making the last train.

1993: (2) Schreckhorn 4078m with Dave Wynne-Jones, **Obergabelhorn 4063m** with Denis Mitchell
After the Wetterhorn SW flank and the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn West ridge, I felt sufficiently acclimatised to tackle the Schreckhorn SW ridge. After an early start from the hut we found our way up into the glacier bay of the Schreckfirn. Initially we climbed the snow but had to cross over to the

ramp of rocks on the left which we ascended to join the ridge leading to the summit. Whilst another party descended by the Schrecksattel, we descended our ascent route, abseiling for much of the ridge, getting back to the hut for mid afternoon tea and cakes.

Having now completed all the Oberland 4000ers, and with one remaining in Valais, I made use of the Kandersteg rail link to go through the Lötschberg Tunnel to the Rhône valley and then walked up to the Mountet Hut at the head of the Val d'Anniviers above Zinal. The hut is in a magnificent position and although it was crowded, it was disappointing how few were intending to climb the big mountains. After an overnight freeze, the NW ridge was in good condition. As one gets to the top one is rewarded with views of the North faces of the Matterhorn and Dent d'Hérens. We descended the Arbengrat and traversed Mont Durand on our return to the hut. Returning through the Lötschberg and round to Grindelwald, we got back in time to participate in a buffet party in full swing on the campsite.

1995: Piz Bernina 4049m with Susanne Muhlen

I had been told that unless I did the Biancograt it would not count! A slow start to the season, but after failing on a peak in the Bregaglia and being unable to find a route across the glacier in the dark to the North ridge of Piz Roseg, things started to improve with rock routes above the Albina and an ascent of Disgrazia from the south. I was pleased that we were then able to obtain places at the crowded Tschierva Hut. In spite of starting in the dark we were able to follow the poorly defined path which led us to the Fuorcla and the start of the photogenic North ridge. After the snow crest leading to Piz Bianco, a rocky crest with a number of gendarmes, either climbed or turned, led us to the main summit, photos and an early lunch. A descent of Spallagrat took us down to the Marco e Rosa Hut where we negotiated bed and board. In 1982, a number of friends had had to sit it out here for a couple of days before making an epic descent to the valley. Not for us: we were able to enjoy a high level traverse along the frontier over Piz Zupo, Bellavista and Piz Palu before descending to Diavolezza and catching the local train back to Pontresina, where we had left the car.

2007: Aiguille Blanche de Peuterey 4112 with Jeff Harris

By the 1990's the approach from the SW via the Schneider Couloir was no longer considered a sensible option due to frequent stone fall in the couloir. We decided that the N ridge would be the best option. This involves ascending to the Eccles Biv. via the Monzino hut, up to Col Eccles then across the Freney face of Mont Blanc to Col Peuterey & the N ridge.

In 2006, I was persuaded to drive round from Zermatt ascending to the Monzino hut that afternoon. Having gone up to the Eccles Biv at 3850m the following morning, in the afternoon we went up Pic Eccles 4041m, obtaining excellent views of the Brouillard pillars to the west and Freney pillars and the Aig Blanche to the east. The snow/ice slope leading up to Col Eccles was in very bad condition and the weather, contrary to forecast was deteriorating. We went up to the col the next morning, then returned to the valley the following morning.

In 2007 at the end of June we had gone out to Zermatt for the AC 150th celebrations. A week later we went up to the Eccles Biv. We had been told of the "easy route" on to the upper Brouillard glacier. With a better snow coverage, it all came clear. It was possible to traverse across from just above the upper Biv. hut. However it was not freezing at night so although we went up to Col Eccles the avalanche danger was too great & we retreated, having confirmed the route to Col Eccles & the need to be there at first light.

4 weeks later, we were back. We left the biv hut at 0300hrs taking 1.5 hrs to get to the col in spite of climbing by head torch. 50 metres up the Innominata ridge, there was a new abseil sling with a 50m

abseil down a ramp to a peg. A horizontal traverse led to the edge of the snow. We diagonally crossed the snow to the bergshrund, before moving horizontally across the Freney face and climbing up to Col Peutrey. Starting on the N ridge we moved together, but pitched the final 50 meters before getting on to the rock at an abseil point. The first 50m was quite steep (more than grade 2) but the angle then eased for the 2nd 50m to just below the N summit. We traversed round both N & the Central summits on the east face before ascending the south ridge and reaching the Central summit, our elusive 4000m peak .

We abseiled down to the col, then ascended the N summit. 2 abseils took us down to edge of snow followed by a third abseil down the steeper part of the ridge. It was then then an easy angle back to Col Peutrey. Whilst we had been ascending the N ridge we had met 2 parties abseiling down who were doing the Integral. The 1 party we saw continuing up M Blanc. The other we did not see. However there was a new set of tracks across the Freney face leading straight up to Col Eccles, which we followed. There was only a very few stones falling from the Freney face & sliding down the snow. After some deliberation we decided to follow their steps right up to Col Eccles (rather than reversing our approach) - Damilano gives it Facile II. We were sorting ropes 45m from the col when we were hit by stone fall from Pic Eccles into the couloir. Fortunately, I was able to get a phone signal & arrange a helicopter. Within 6 months, we were both fully recovered.

2009 MEET REPORTS

March 27-29 - Crianlarich Youth Hostel Meet

by Peter Farrington

The weather had been wet and windy for several days but by the time the small group assembled at Crianlarich the sky was cloudless and starry. Expectations were filled when Saturday presented a fine sunrise and sent parties in several directions to enjoy the snow covered hills.

John and Marj Foster were persuaded by Mike Scarr to join him on one of his “off the unbeaten track” ventures on Ben Vorlich above Glen Falloch. The party split higher on the peak to seek feasible routes to the summit, John and Marj forced to retreat from steep snow but Mike reappearing some hours later having reached the top by a still unfathomable route.

Jim and Margaret Strachan drove round to Balquidder to climb Beinn Tulaichean from Inverlochlarig. Unfortunately a good day was marred when Margaret slipped and injured a leg nearing at the end of their descent. This was to stop her going on the hills the next day.

Peter and Dom Goodwin, friend Kevan and Peter Farrington traversed Ben Oss from Dailrigh. Hard glazed snow and strong winds made life interesting on the summit ridge as well as superb views across Lochaber and out to the islands.

Phil Hands also suffered from the buffeting winds and aborted a solo walk up Beinn Ghlas from the Lawers Visitor Centre.

The conveniently placed nearby Rod and Reel Inn provided a substantial dinner and the hostel an excellent retreat for several nightcaps.

Sunday morning sunshine encouraged some members to return to the hills whilst others were forced to make alternative plans, the Goodwins most troubled by car starting problems.

John, Marj and Mike took off for Beinn Achaladair but were foiled by increasingly strong winds as were Philip Hands and Peter Farrington who changed their plans to continue onto Clach Leathad after being blown off their feet on the summit of Meall a Bhuiridh. By late afternoon the wind direction had changed bringing in rain from the west. This was a blow for Phil and Peter who had plans to climb Sgurr Mor in Knoydart. Instead they spent a wet, windy and misty few hours visiting Ardverikie Wall and the summit of Binnein Shuas, 746m.

June 13-15 - Rhyd Ddu Meet

by Ed Bramley

The Wales meet always seems to attract a goodly number of people and good weather, and this year was no exception, with 18 people on the meet. For the few who arrived early, Friday was another warm summers day, and just right for an excursion on Crib Goch and around the Snowdon horseshoe. Even having arrived at the Pen-y-Pass car park just after 9am, it was already nearly full, perhaps having something to do with the fact it was the grand opening day of the refurbished summit café.

Along the Pyg track we started, but before long we were branching right onto the rising ascent to the start of Crib Goch. A few steeper sections soon saw us at the start of the ridge proper, and what a great scramble along the summit crest, never difficult, but demanding just the right

amount of respect. Ups, downs and balancing across the changing blocks, what a buzz! All too soon we were at the far end of the ridge and negotiating the pinnacles before the pull onto Crib y Dysgyll and the Snowdon itself.

We ventured inside the new café, all resplendent in its new stone exterior and wood panelled inside, looking a distinct improvement on its predecessor. If there has to be a summit café, then this is the right way to do it. The panorama window is magnificent, with a view straight down to Rhyd- Ddu. As it was opening day, there seemed to be more camera crews than people, including BBC, ITV and S4C, with the Rhyd-Ddu car park as relay satellite central.

No rest for the wicked, so off down the ridge to then traverse over to Lliwedd, longer than we thought, but a great route all the same. We finished our day via the miners route back to the car park, another great day to be out.

Saturday, we took the path round the lake (Llyn y Gader), and headed off to Moel Hebog via the slate quarries. The extent of even these quarries, after all these years, continues to impress. We ascended Moel Lefn and Moel yr Ogof, before the final pull up to the top of Moel Hebog itself. By now, the hot weather was making itself felt, and we were all starting to get sunburnt. A descent into Beddgelert helped ease this with a beer and an ice cream, before catching the last train of the day back to the hut. What a way to round off the day, in an open sided carriage, with the little steam train chugging its way up the valley. Now that's what I call style.

Saturday evening meal lived up to its culinary billing with sausages, parsley and mustard mash and madeira and onion gravy, followed by apple pie and custard. If any of you need the recipe, it is in the Nigel Slater 'Real Food' book.

Sunday continued in the same good weather vein, so we were off up Snowdon via another route. Snowdon Ranger path this time, one of the few routes I'd not been on previously, and offering a different perspective on a well known mountain. Soon we were on the summit again, this time with the normal Sunday masses, so it was virtually standing room only in the café. Back down the Rhyd Ddu path to finish before a final cuppa and the road home, still with the sun beating down. Another successful meet.

June - Joint ABMSAC/AC/CC/FRCC Pyrenees Meet, Benasque

by Jeff Harris

The Meet was held at the excellent Camping Aneto site just outside Benasque in the Spanish Pyrenees. We arrived on a lovely sunny afternoon to find that a nice area of the campsite had been roped off for us. The spot had been chosen by John Holland who had arrived a day or two before. That night we were treated to a spectacular thunderstorm and torrential rain. In fact the rain was so heavy that in the morning we found that a tree had come down narrowly missing John's tent! However, from then on the weather was very good for the next ten days or so.

As a warm up route some of us spent a day climbing Pic de Boum from the Vall de Remune. Due to misreading the guide book (my Spanish is non existent!) I ended up soloing a very loose west ridge at AD (III) from the Collado de Boum when we should have ascended an easier couloir to the right of the Collado!

The access to the Renclusa hut is very easy in summer, only a 40 minute walk up from the car park at La Besurta. On a previous ski touring trip in spring it was 2hrs of skinning from the

Hospital de Benasque. This meant that many of the 3,000m peaks in the Maladeta Massif could be climbed in a day without needing to use the hut. In fact one party decided early on in the trip to use the hut for an ascent of Aneto, at 3404m the highest peak in the Pyrenees, while I elected to 'bag' some of the 'Punros' on the Eastern end of the crest of the massif without using the hut.

During the following week and a half many peaks were climbed including Pico de Posets, 3375m, the second highest peak in the Pyrenees and Perdiguero, with stunning views. There had been a lot of late spring snow which still lingered on many slopes above 2,500m which probably made the ascents easier as the snow undoubtedly covered loose scree slopes which are exposed later in the summer. The quality of the rock on the 'cresterios' linking peaks is often excellent giving fine exposed scrambling and solo climbing reminiscent of Skye, but longer, higher and very airy in places!



The Cresterio del Medio, by *Jeff Harris*

Terry Kenny and John Holland sampled some of the cragging in the valleys and reported excellent days out on good quality rock, though they thought the grades were a bit hard. It was frustrating to find that despite contacting Barrabes the huge climbing shop in Benasque before the trip I'd been unable to get hold of any climbing guide books when in fact they had several in the shop.

The Aneto campsite was excellent, lovely grass to pitch on, friendly staff, very clean facilities and a beautiful swimming pool. Being there early in the season meant it was not crowded. There is also a bunkhouse and many chalets available for hire if one does not wish to camp. The nearby small town of Benasque was quite pleasant with a charming old centre.

So all in all a good time was had by those on the Meet - superb mountains, good weather and a welcoming campsite. It was just a shame that only 5 of us were on the Meet! With a combined membership of the 4 clubs of over 4,000 people it was surprising that attendance was so low. I guess people just don't appreciate what a fine mountain range the Pyrenees is.

Those on the Meet were Jeff Russell, Peter Goodwin, John Holland, Terry Kenny and me. Martin Whittaker and Pat Cocks would have been there but for a serious climbing accident intervening, hopefully Pat is well on the road to recovery now.

September - Centenary Buffet Party

by Mike Pinney

In recent years a Committee meeting has been held on the Saturday evening of the September Patterdale Meet, but for the Centenary it was decided to resurrect the buffet party. These had previously been organized by Marion Porteous, who had then handed over to Kathy McManus.

On Saturday there was patchy cloud with a few isolated showers, most having a good days fell walking. A team of four however headed for a days rock climbing on Raven crag, Thirlmere, getting nicely established on their climbs when it started to rain! After some deliberation, (“an exposed & delicate” climb), commonsense prevailed and the meet leader was lowered off. The route, Communist Convert runs diagonally left to right so a diagonal descent provided its own challenge followed by having to address jammed abseil ropes.

The buffet was attended by 26 members and guests on the Saturday evening, of whom 19 were staying in the hut. Heather had arranged canton flags to decorate the inside of the hut. Extending the Swiss connection Pam arranged cheese raclettes, which had the added bonus of encouraging attendees to circulate. The wine was Fendant and Dole. My thanks go to Marian, Margaret & Pam for the main course and Heather, Judy, Myles and Roger for the sweets. Thanks also to Mike for providing and setting up the wide screen television, for easy viewing of pictures from the Swiss meets.

Natasha & Steve were cycling from Lands End to John o’ Groats and by good management had arrived at the hut on the Friday. On the Sunday morning whilst others enjoyed a day on the sun kissed fells, they continued their journey north.

It is intended to repeat the buffet party in 2010, so put the 25th September in your diary.

October 2-4 - Mid-Wales Meet, Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris

by Dick Yorke

This was the fourth meet to be held at the above venue, these meets are held at around 18 month intervals, in part as an attempt to increase the chance of intercepting ideal walking weather. This time we should have hit the jackpot. Wales had been basking in an Indian or perhaps, more appropriately, a Celtic summer for most of September. However, the forecast for the start of the first weekend in October was for high winds and rain. Despite this, eight members were either brave, or perhaps foolish enough to attend the meet. Six of us stayed at the bunkhouse and two at a local guest house. The latter is an option which will also be open to members on future meets. The bunkhouse was again found to be comfortable, well equipped and furbished, and the owners helpful and welcoming, however, the nightly charge seemed to have increased appreciably. Again on the Saturday evening we had good food and excellent service at the Railway Inn in Abergwynolwen.

We all had great intentions for the Saturday, for instance a traverse of the main Tarren summits, or the northern Rhinogs. The forecast dampened enthusiasm and a low level walk above the Dovey valley was chosen by most, with the remainder taking on a tour of Machynlleth and its pleasures, including the art gallery. The walk started at Furnace with an inspection of the furnace which had been involved in the extraction of silver and later iron using the available charcoal

supplies and waterpower. From here we ascended Cwm Einion to access a hillside giving good views over the Dovey estuary, the Tarrens and Ynys Hir RSPB reserve. On descending to a minor road I took a route back to the valley and the RSPB reserve with the group going for an inland circuit which provided a good example of the delights and challenge of walking in the less tracked parts of Wales. I got some stick for this but had not previously traversed the less used part of the marked right of way concerned. The weather other being windy was relatively dry until late in the afternoon which only soaked those who undertook the full walk.

The forecast for the Sunday was much better; the cloud base was higher with only the highest peaks such as Snowdon covered. The wind was still fresh and wintry but the day remained dry. The main party went to the Northern Rhinogs approaching from the East and parking by a quarry near Llyn Trawsfynydd. The walk-in passed some now deserted farms and crossed an area of boggy moor land to a pass leading over to the west coast and Harlich. From here turning north the peaks of Clip, Moel Ysgyfarnogod and Foel Penolau were crossed as part of a horseshoe rated in a recent edition of TGO or was it Trail, as one of the six best in the UK outside the Lake District. The going was typically Rhinogdd with rock walls, slabs and heather, but isolated and relatively unfrequented. Good views were obtained of the coast and estuaries and the mountains of Snowdonia to the East, South and North.

Overall members seemed to enjoy the meet and I hope to repeat it in about 18 months or so when perhaps the weather will be perfect! Attending: John Dempster, John and Marg Foster, Terry Shaw, Tony and Suzanne Strawther, Richard Winter and Dick Yorke.

October 7-10 - Beer Meet, East Devon by Belinda Baldwin

John and Marge Foster arrived on 07.10.09, Sheila Coates and Heather Eddowes on 09.10.09, Mike Pinney on 10.10.09. All were based at Beer Hill. John Dempster joined for Saturday's walk.

On Thursday morning the sun shone and four of us set off for a circular walk that took in part of the Jurassic Coast near Budliegh Salterton. We started at East Budliegh, the birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh and acquainted ourselves with some of his history before setting off. The route conveniently passed Otterton Mill at lunchtime, where we enjoyed the good food on offer, sitting out in glorious sunshine, which John and Marge greatly appreciated as they had seen nothing but rain for two months in the Far North. There was no walking on Friday, which proved to be a good thing as it was wet and miserable but on Saturday the sun was back. We had a great day on Dartmoor starting at Shipley Bridge, doing a cross country route that took in quantities of industrial archaeology and an interesting stream crossing. On Sunday we did another loop that included the Jurassic Coast and by chance hit a hostelry at lunchtime so we could have a beer with our sandwiches.

The evening were spent at different eating houses some new and some old. All fed us well and made us welcome. So the meet was an excellent mix of glorious walking accompanied by quantities of good food and the odd bit of drink. James did a splendid job of sorting the routes beforehand.

October 17-19 - UK Alpine Reunion, Patterdale by Mike Pinney

The early birds, missing the worst of the delays of the M6 met at Castle Rock Thirlmere on the Friday morning. Out of the sun it was quite cool, so they started on routes at the right hand of the

crag, then as the sun moved round progressed leftwards, finishing on routes on the North crag. The evening was then spent preparing the spaghetti bolognese for the following evening.

On Saturday another sunny day, whilst many headed for Raven crag, Langdale to catch the sun others ventured out onto the fells or climbed more locally at Gowbarrow. Twenty six sat down to dinner followed by a slide show. On the Sunday it was drizzling so a day on the fells was the order of the day, a large team ascending 2nd pinnacle rib on St Sundays crag.

February 5-7 2010 - Annual Dinner Meet by Brooke Midgley

This year the meet was graced by the Ambassador of Switzerland his wife, Alexis and Gabrielle Lautenberg. They entered into the spirit of the weekend and enthusiastically joined in. Fortunately Saturday's weather was perfect which gave them (possibly) a false impression of Lakeland and a grand day out. Even Sunday was dry, but Monday turned "mixed".

Members were out on the hills in force on Saturday as the snow above 2000ft was good. Possibly too good for some and Patterdale MR Team seemed to be busy all weekend. In Nethermost Cove Natasha Geere and Steve Hunt had their start delayed when a climber fell into the gully they intended to climb. They did the preliminary work prior to the rescue team arriving and then climbed the route. They arrived only two courses down for Dinner and got a round of applause. Others had a gentler day with a trip on the lake. Alexis and Gabrielle started with that group and then abandoned ship at Howtown and walked back. Our other guest, Dr Charles Clarke arrived Saturday afternoon, but he had had a day on the hills with Chris Bonington and on Sunday ascended Place Fell with Mike Pinney and other members. Charles made good use of his newly acquired Yaktrax on the subsequent descent of High Dodd.

A pre-dinner glass of wine was provided by the Ambassador, which unsurprisingly was well received, but made "shifting" the members from the bar into the dining room more difficult. The dining room looked splendid-Swiss flags in abundance and it appeared quite full even though only 68 members and guests were present. The hotel staff gave us a good meal even catering for special dietary requirements.

Our "Newish President" instituted a couple of new features. The circular top table was good for conversation and for those who wished to see the back of the meet leader-Midgley! The other was a toast to "Absent Friends" which included two Past Presidents, Ross Cameron and Paddy Boulter, also John Edwards who died only two weeks prior to the dinner and had booked in for the meet. The speeches were thoughtful, humorous and short, so well received. The after Dinner party looked set for well into the early hours.

So if you weren't there you missed a good event. It's too late to rectify that, so book early for the next one-February 5th 2011.

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 6 February 2010

The President Mike Pinney was in the Chair; 36 members were present.

Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Dick Murton, Alasdair Andrews, Sheila Coates, Heather Eddowes, Antonia Barlen, Bill Parish, Wendell Jones, Robbie Robinson, Mary Robinson, Roger Aldred and Natasha Geere.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 8 February 2009:

The minutes were approved.

Matters arising:

Mike Pinney reported on the question of affiliation to the BMC. A survey of our membership found that the great majority of our members were in favour of maintaining the status quo.

A survey conducted by the BMC found that an overwhelming number of clubs were also in favour of maintaining the status quo. The club will therefore not make any changes.

Proposed Rule Changes:

A copy of the proposed rule changes was appended to the agenda for this meeting. Mike Pinney explained the changes and said that for the most part the changes reflected current practice. After some discussion a vote was taken and the new rules were accepted in their entirety.

Election of officers and committee:

The committee nominated Belinda Baldwin to succeed Terry Shaw as Vice President and Dick Murton to succeed Anne Jago as Honorary Secretary.

Dick Yorke & Margaret Strachan retire by rotation this year.

All other office holders and committee members indicated that they were willing to be reappointed.

There being no further nominations they were all duly elected.

Hon Treasurer's report and subscription bands:

James Baldwin as treasurer presented the accounts which were duly adopted.

The subscription bands for 2011 will remain the same as in 2010:

Single membership	£22 – 25
2 nd member at same address	£14 – 16
Junior membership	£9 – 13

President's report:

Firstly thank you to John Dempster & Brooke Midgley for starting our centenary year with such an excellent Annual Dinner weekend.

Secondly, thank you to those retiring from the committee, Terry Shaw (VP), Anne Jago (secretary), Margaret Strachan (who agreed to stay on for a 4th year) and Dick Yorke- I much appreciate your contributions. Also thank you to those continuing & welcome (or rather welcome back) to Belinda Baldwin as VP; I am sure I shall appreciate your input.

Although Richard Winter retired at the 2009 AGM, he produced the Centenary journal, thank you very

much. It was a bumper edition & if like mine yours has exploded, I can let you have a replacement. Mike Goodyer has taken over and extended Richard's work on electronic distribution & is starting to collect copy for the next journal. I am pleased to see that more members have advised their email address.

Thank you to Ed Bramley for managing membership & collection of subscriptions. In Dec 2008 we had 96 full & 144 affiliate members. In Dec 2009, we had 95 full & 144 affiliate members.

Meet attendance has been good. Thank you to Jeff Harris for taking over as meets secretary & to Marj & John Foster for the Scottish programme. I hope to finally to attend a meet since it is over 5 years since I last climbed a Munro. The meet programme is fully reported elsewhere and on Ed's forthcoming DVD, but thank you to all meet organisers & attendees.

Thank you to John Dempster for being the Association's interface for the London lecture programme. Thank you to James Baldwin for looking after our finances which continue to be strong.

On behalf of the Association, a thank-you to those involved in the running of the hut, John as Co Chair, Terry as Co Sec, Derek Buckley as treasurer, Don Hodge as maintenance co-ordinator & not least Marian Parsons as hut warden. The hut made a small operating profit.

Anne Jago, Hon Sec
22 March 2010

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB LTD

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Ullswater, on Saturday February 6th, 2010 at 6.35pm.

Present: Directors J.W.S.Dempster (Chairman), J.A.Baldwin, E.Bramley, D.Buckley (Treasurer), D.R.Hodge, T.J.Shaw (Secretary), R.B.Winter and about 25 members.

Apologies for absence. P.Clarkson and M.Pinney. The chairman informed the meeting that since the last AGM, E.Bramley had replaced W.L.Peebles as an ABMSAC-appointed director and P.Clarkson had replaced G.Davies as a director appointed by the TCC.

Minutes of Previous Meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Sunday February 8th 2009 and which were circulated in the 2009 ABMSAC journal, were approved without dissent and signed.

Directors' Report and Accounts. In explaining the accounts for the year ended June 30th 2009, the treasurer said the cost of lighting and heating the hut had gone up by about 50 per cent but this depended on usage which was difficult to forecast or control. Administrative expenses had risen largely because of HMC conference calls. Income from investments was slightly down on the previous year and could be again this financial year. He was forecasting a similar modest surplus for the financial year 2009-2010. But with a 25 per cent increase in the current £5,400 a year rent for the hut, due to come into force in October, it was an open question whether there would be a surplus in the next financial year. He paid tribute to M.Pinney, the hut booking secretary, for increasing the bed-night use of the hut. But while there had been some success in increasing hut bookings, more were needed to offset the rising costs of running the hut. The meeting adopted the accounts without dissent.

Any other business. Mr S Beare suggested that the list of ABMSAC members in the annual journal might indicate those who were also members of the company. The secretary who keeps the Register of

Company Members said he would discuss with the editor of the journal whether this could be done. Mr Beare also asked whether people who resign from the club cease to be members of the Company. The Chairman confirmed that this was the position as Art (2)(C) of the company's Articles of Association provides that: "Any person becoming a member of the company pursuant to sub-clause (b) of this Article shall forthwith cease to be a member of the company on ceasing to be a member of the Association or the TCC".

There was no other business and the meeting ended at about 7pm.

*T.J.Shaw,
Hon. Sec.
12 February2010*

LIST OF OFFICERS

List of Officers since the formation of the Association

PRESIDENTS

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

VICE PRESIDENTS

1948	Gerald Steel CV & Colonel E R Culverwell MC
1949	Colonel E R Culverwell MC & Brigadier E Gueterbock Colonel E R Culverwell MC, Rev G H Lancaster (died April 1950) & Dr C F Fothergill
1951-1952	Dr C F Fothergill & Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman
1953	Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman & J R Amphlett
1954-1955	J R Amphlett & Robert Creg
1956	Robert Creg & Dr J W Healy
1957-1958	Dr J W Healy & B L Richards GM
1959	B L Richards GM & Dr A W Barton
1960-1961	Dr A W Barton & D G Lambley FRCS
1962	D G Lambley, FRCS & V O Cohen MC
1963-1964	V O Cohen MC & F Solari
1965	F Solari & J G Broadbent
1966-1967	J G Broadbent & J S Byam-Grounds
1968	J S Byam-Grounds & W Kirstein
1969-1970	W Kirstein & Dr D R Riddell

1971	Dr D R Riddell & M Bennett
1972-1973	M Bennett & Rev F L Jenkins
1974	Rev F L Jenkins & P S Boulter FRCS
1975	P S Boulter FRCS & J S Whyte
1976-1977	J S Whyte & F E Smith
1978	F E Smith & J P Ledeboer
1979	J P Ledeboer & F P French
1980-1982	F P French & S M Freeman
1983-1984	S M Freeman & F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1984	FA W Schweitzer FRCS & Wing Commander H D Archer DFC
1985	F A W Schweitzer FRCS & A I Andrews
1986-1987	A I Andrews & W B Midgley
1988	W B Midgley & C G Armstrong
1989-1990	C G Armstrong & R W Jones
1991	R W Jones & G G Watkins
1992	G S Watkins & F B Suter
1993-1994	F B Suter & Commander J W Chapman OBE
1994-1995	Commander J W Chapman OBE & D R Hodge
1996-1997	D R Hodge & R N James
1997-1999	R N James & M Pinney
2000-2001	M Pinney & Dr D W Watts
2001-2003	Dr D W Watts & D F Penlington
2003	D F Penlington
2004-2007	W L Peebles
2007-2010	T J Shaw
2010	Mrs B Baldwin

HONORARY SECRETARIES

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

2006-2010 Mrs A M Jago
2010 D Murton

HONORARY MEMBER'S SECRETARIES

1965-1968 George Starkey
1969-1971 F A W Schweitzer FRCS
1972-1974 J E Jesson
1975-1977 D J Abbott
1978-1980 A N Sperryn
1980-1984 J W Eccles
1985-1997 T G B Howe MC

HONORARY MEETS SECRETARIES

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

HONORARY SOCIAL SECRETARIES

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

HONORARY TREASURERS

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

HON. CHAIRMAN - HUT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

2005- S Bridge (TCC)

HONORARY LIBRARIANS

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

HONORARY SOLICITORS

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

HONORARY EDITORS

(The following officers carried out the duties of Hon. Editor until the post was created in 1949: 1909- 1911 J A B Bruce, 1912-1928 J A B Bruce and A N Andrews, 1929-1948 M N Clarke).

1949-1962 M N Clarke
1963-1964 W R H Jeudwine
1965-1968 G A Hutcheson
1968-1974 Graham A Daniels
1975-1986 S M Freeman
1987-1992 M R Loewy
1992-2002 M I C Baldwin
2002- 2009 R B Winter
2009 M J Goodyer

HONORARY EDITOR - NEWSLETTER

1992-1995 F B Suter

HONORARY AUDITORS

1909-1914 A B Challis
1915-1922 Reginald Graham
1923-1930 W L Adams
1931-1940 F Oughton
1941-1952 J A Marsden-Neye
1953-1956 S E Orchard
1957-1967 R A Tyssen-Gee
1968-1974 A Hart
1975-1977 J Llwllyn-Jones
1978-1979 G A Daniels
1979-1980 C J Sandy

1981-1984	N Moore
1985-1999	D Bennett
1999-2005	K N Ballantine
2005-2009	P McCulloch
2009	N Harding

HONORARY MEMBERS SECRETARY

(formerly Honorary Registrar)

1991-1993	H M Eddowes
1994-2002	Dr M J Eddowes

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

2003	Dr M J Eddowes
2004-	E A Bramley

Current Honorary Members

Hector Meir

Brooke Midgley

Wendell Jones

Alasdair Andrews

ABMSAC Office Holders and Useful Contacts

ABMSAC Committee

OFFICE	HOLDER	ELECTED
President	M G Pinney	2009
Vice-President	Mrs B Baldwin	2010
Hon. Treasurer	J Baldwin	2005
Hon. Secretary	R W Murton	2010
Hon. Membership Secretary	E A Bramley	2004
Hon. Meets Secretary	J F Harris	2009
Hon. Editor	M J Goodyer	2009
Hon. HMC Representative	D R Hodge	1978
Committee Members	Mrs M Foster	2009
	R W Murton	2009

ABMSAC Ltd Directors

J W S Dempster CB	Chairman
T.J.Shaw	Company Secretary
D Buckley	Treasurer
J Baldwin	
G Davies	
D Hodge	
W L Peebles	
M G Pinney	
R B Winter	

Hut Bookings Secretary

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BA20 2LQ
E-mail for bookings **ONLY**: hutbookings@abmsac.org.uk
Tel: 01935-428131

Hut Warden

Marian Parsons
Decollage
Patterdale
Penrith
Cumbria
CA11 0NL
Tel: 01768-482437

Secretary – Tuesday Climbing Club

Maureen Stiller
9 Nicola Close, South Croydon, Surrey, CR2 6NA
Tel: 020-8680-1216

Hut Bookings Secretary – Oread Mountaineering Club

Colin Hobday
Einhorn
28 Cornhill
Allestree
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DE22 2FS
Tel: 01332-551594
E-mail: colinanduschi@talktalk.net