



2015

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE
SWISS ALPINE CLUB



Journal

ABMSAC Office Holders 2015

Committee

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Vice-President	J H Strachan	2013
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Hon. Secretary	R W Murton	2010
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ABMSAC Ltd Directors

Chairman	M J Parsons
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ABMSAC JOURNAL 2015

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Journal. Last year we had a total of 10 meets in the UK and four in Europe. The UK meets varied from winter weekends up in Scotland down to autumn walks in Devon. We had a Hotel meet in Switzerland, a camping meet in Italy and two treks.

Reports and photos of the majority of the meets are presented in the Journal. In addition, there are also several articles from members who have shared their experiences and thoughts with us.

As you can see from this years the Meets Programme the Association still has some life in it. Over the last year we have also secured a 30 year lease on the George Starkey Hut, an act Ed was happy to complete during his Presidency. We also welcome Mike Parsons as our new President.

Last year we digitised all the Journals from 1975 and these are available to review on the website. This year we hope to digitise the pre 1975 Journals. We are also now on Facebook.

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

I hope you enjoy the Journal.

*Mike Goodyer,
Editor, May 2015*

Cover photo: Blencathra by Ian Mateer

MEET PROGRAMME 2015

Date	Meet and Venue	Meet Leader
February 6 - 8	The Annual Dinner and AGM, Glenridding Hotel	Brooke Midgley
March 20 - 23	Fassfern House, Loch Eil, Scotland	John Dempster
April 10 -12	New Members Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mary Eddowes
May 1 - 4	Bunkhouse/Camping Meet, Royal Oak, Hurdlow, Derbyshire	Andy Burton
June 12 - 14	Rhyd Ddu, Oread Club Hut, North Wales	Ed Bramley
July 11 - 18	Hotel based Alpine Meet, Madonna Di Campiglio, Brenta Dolomites	Pam Harris
July 18 – August 8	Camping based Joint Alpine Meet, Argentiere, France	Keith Lambley
September 5 - 13	High Level Traverse, Mattertal, Switzerland	Andy Burton
September 12 - 13	Beer Meet, Devon	James Baldwin
September	Scotland Meet, venue to be arranged	Roger James
October 2 - 4	Annual Buffet Party, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mike Parsons
October 16 - 18	Alpine Reunion Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	John Kentish
Oct 30 – Nov 1	Braemar Meet, Scotland	Philip Hand

LONDON WINTER LECTURES

January 6	The Caucasus from Both Sides	Ron Kenyon (FRCC)
February 3	A journey to Jordan, with a trekking company, to the desert of Wadi Rum and the world heritage site of Petra.	Don Hodge & Judy Renshaw (TCC)
March 3	In the kingdom of the Thunder Dragon	Pamela Harris (ABMSAC)

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS



When making a long journey, often it is difficult to notice the slow but sure progress you are making on your way. I remember a few years ago when it was the centenary of the club, traversing the Haute Route, and our journey across the Otemma glacier seemed interminable, almost as frozen as the ice we were walking on. And yet progress there was, slowly but surely towards our day's goal of the Vignettes hut, and our final destination, the Britannia hut.

As a club, it can also seem like we are equally frozen in time, but change is also taking place for us. We have secured the lease of the George Starkey hut as our physical base in the Lake District for the next thirty years. That removes one uncertainty for us, but equally now means that we now need to accelerate our thinking and action on how we use and look after the building going forward.

Equally, we know our membership is declining steadily, in common with many clubs in the UK, be that climbing or other clubs. And yet this belies the fact that we have had a slow but sure influx of new members, and that we continue to put on a full, varied and well supported meets programme, both at home and abroad. Things that we should be rightly proud of as a club.

Change is also all around us in the way we communicate with one another as a club. The format of the journal you are holding has changed significantly over the past year, and we now have an array of digital communications to help us keep in touch, from electronic newsletters, to our website and, most recently, our own Facebook page. As the club committee, we are increasingly using digital approaches to help us in our activities, whether it is teleconferencing to make meetings easier, or shared virtual computer space for holding key club information.

As I say my farewells as a President, what I am certain about is that both the club and our new President, Mike Parsons, are equally passionate about all of the above and how we actively take on these challenges, and I'm sure Mike will want to tell you of his plans. I can certainly see the green shoots of spring emerging – this weekend, I'll be up at the hut, helping support one of our young members run a potential new members meet – Wicked! All that remains is for me is to say thank you to all of you for all of your support over the last three years, and to wish everybody all the best for the future.

Ed Bramley, April 2015

WELCOME TO THE NEW PRESIDENT



Mike Parsons was elected President at the 2015 AGM in February and will serve the next three years.

Mike comes from an outdoor background and is well known both for his business and sporting interests. From 1960-1997 he was the Chairman, MD and co-owner of Karrimor International Ltd. Mike was responsible for a significant amount of innovation in the outdoor industry including the Karrimat in 1967, the world's first integrated hip-belt soft packs in 1974, KS-100e, the world leading pack fabric standard in 1976, KSB's, the first fabric boot in 1981 and new lightweight equipment brand OMM.

He is a part time university lecturer - Innovator in Residence at LUMS (Lancaster University Management School). In addition, he was co-author of "Invisible on Everest, innovation and the gear makers." The only book on the history of innovation of outdoor clothing and climbing gear. He is currently working a new start up called Outdoor Gear Coach, writing and editing eBooks.

Mike was born and bred in a bike store, started life as a road biker, then later become involved in skiing, alpine/Nordic/telemark, fell running, rock climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking, paddle (sea kayak) and of late, some horse riding with Marian.

Mike has climbed in all seven continents: Greenland, Spitzbergen, Lapland, Patagonia, Antarctica, India/Ladakh, Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, New Zealand, USA and the European Alps (over 15 seasons).

His trips have led to several first ascents on 20 virgin summits in Greenland and Khirgistan; dog sled journeys in Spitzbergen and Lapland; sea kayak trips around the western Isles - Mull, Scarba, Jura, etc. and horse riding trips in Kyrgyzstan, Pyrenees, Gredos mountains, Poland South Wales and Scotland. Mike has also completed 40 + 2 day mountain marathons KIMM/OMM's.

As well as being a member of the ABMSAC Mike is a member of the Alpine Club and an individual member of the BMC

Editor, May 2015

MEET REPORTS

Edge of Sahara trek – February - *Report by Ed Bramley*

It's sometimes said that the adventure begins with the journey, and that was certainly the case with the Sahara trek in February 2012. From Marrakech, the journey involves an eight hour ride by minibus over one of the three routes over the Atlas Mountains, via the Tichka pass, where the snow had cleared only the previous day.



The Tichka Pass

With hairpins strong enough to pin your hair back, and safety barriers that might have been made out of KitKat wrappers, this was not a journey for the faint hearted. Particularly when the transit van in front of us, complete with overloaded roof including kitchen sink, almost went round one of the corners on two wheels. On the far side of the pass, life got somewhat calmer, with the pink almond blossom displayed to full advantage against the reddy-brown earth of the foothills. We made Ouzarzate by lunch time, little known capital of the Moroccan film industry, which has made parts of such films as *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

In the afternoon, the journey takes us through the anti-Atlas, with the tilt of the sandstone making some slopes look like giant tables. Part way through the afternoon, we pull into a local shop to stop for turban material, and absolute necessity, as we were to find out. We wind our way through Zagour and on into the fertile Draa river valley, which stretches for miles, and is thickly covered with palm trees. A sign tells us that it's 50 days to Timbuktu. Eventually our route becomes a set of ridges and plains, before we finally start to meet the edge of the desert. We stop overnight at Oud Driss, where we have Bedouin tents, party made from cloth, with mud walls, and the luxury of light and power.



Anti Atlas scenery and below the stony ground at start of Day 2



The next morning, the call to prayer wakes us, but we realise we are up an hour before we need to be. Despite that, the early morning sky still looks something else. We thread our way out of the village on the start of our walk, crossing the dry Draa river bed, before we encounter our first piece of desert. Here, it's not sand, but mainly pebbly, with a few larger stones. At this stage, the scenery is nearly flat, with lone acacia trees standing in contrast, and providing a good shelter from the sun for our mid-morning halt.



As we journey on, the wind picks up in gusts, lifting up the sand in places, and we are temporarily enveloped in red clouds. Now the reason for the headgear becomes very plain. At lunch time, we reach an old army camp and hut that we can shelter in, and whilst we enjoy the break, the worst of the wind blows over.

Sand storm approaching



Our journey in the afternoon touches on the edge of the dunes, eventually arriving at our overnight stop. The deserted village of Sidi Naji, where we can still make out some of the walls of the abandoned settlement. As the sun sets and the stars come out, the night sky is incredible, with all the features of the moon particularly distinct. Not easy to photograph though, as the temperature drops markedly, and the teeth chatter if you're out of the tent for any length of time.

Camp at Sidi Naji

As with each of the days, we're up and off early, before 7:30am, so we are not walking in the heat of the day. Whilst the temperatures eventually top 30 Celsius, it's a very dry heat, so we have to be careful to drink enough, as we're not showing the normal signs of sweating profusely.



Our journey now moves into dune country, but we're taking a course that is not continually up one and down the next.



The dune areas change as we progress, and we come across several areas with pottery and even find half of a complete large bowl. We also find an area that has been used for copper smelting and there is evidence of crucibles and heated up copper slag. The copper has been used to colour the pottery green. In at least two areas are the remains of small cemeteries, whilst other areas look like old workshops, complete with pottery debris.

Each area of dunes is different. In one area are mounds of sand about twelve feet in diameter, bound together with tree roots, whilst another area is large and flat and covered with baked mud. As we crest a final set of dunes in the early afternoon, we reach our camp site for the day on a mud floor area, surrounded by vivid orange dunes.



Erg ez Zahar

After our lunch, we set off barefoot to the dunes to Erg-ez-Zahar (erg means dune), and this is the largest one in the area, at over 500 feet high; the dune we have been able to see in the distance all morning. The consistency of the sand varies tremendously, from very fine and flour like, which our boots sink into soundlessly, to vary hard and hardly giving underfoot. The last few feet of the dune, which are formed by wind-blown sand, are very soft, and there is a definite technique to making steady progress without too much effort. There are great views all around, right the way to the hilly ridge of the Algerian border, some miles distant. To see all a sea of dunes in front of you, stretching nearly as far as the eye can see, is a sight to behold. Back at the campsite, we watch the sun slowly going down and the sensuous curving shapes of the dunes change from stark oranges to pastel pinks. Truly a memorable day.

We rise again early for breakfast, which includes a pastry bread made with icing sugar, and other flat breads. Our journey now takes us across several areas of dried mud flats, several of which are raised above the general level of the landscape, which makes an interesting sight. We pass two camel trains coming the other way as ours is passing us – a veritable highway. Along the way, we spot the tracks of a desert fox. The scenery then changes to tamarisk bushes as we approach the Draa river bed, which has the first signs of green that we've seen for some days. Underfoot it now becomes stony, and we pass two abandoned forts that have now fallen down, along with the signs of another abandoned cemetery.



The camel train

The tamarisk trees provide great shade for lunch – a salad with lentils and flatbread. When the heat of the day has diminished, we set off again, with the tamarisk trees and associated mounds of sand forming the feature of the terrain for the afternoon. We reach our camp late afternoon, by the side of the dried up river, and there's even a well by the side, where we can get water for our first quick wash for several days.



Tamarisk tree on a hillock



Chef making the sand bread

In the evening, the chef cooks flat bread in the sand, where the fire has heated up the ground. Ten minutes either side buried in the hot sand, followed by a quick rub down, and the bread is piping hot and ready to eat. Crusty like a crumpet on the outside, but soft and moist on the inside, it makes a perfect accompaniment to our tagine for the evening.

The last morning, the scenery is similar to the previous afternoon, crossing the dried river bed again, and then across alternating areas of flats, tamarisk tree mounds and dunes.



We make the outskirts of M'hamid, the first civilisation since we started. We pause for lunch, another lovely salad followed by oranges, and shelter out of the early afternoon sun. When we eventually enter the village, we pass several craft working shops, including one person welding gates in the street. Further on, we get further reminders that we are now back in civilisation. The first tarmac road, and then the local school turning out.

It's only a short distance back to our start point, but the civilisation seems a world away from the experience we've had over the last few days.

The desert may be a hard place, but it also has a beautiful side.



Sunset looking towards Erg ez Zahir

Participants: Ed Bramley, Simon Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Myles O'Reilly, Rick Saynor and Bill Westermeyer.

Locheil Meet - March - Report by John Dempster

As we discovered last year, Fassfern House by Locheil is warm, comfortable, well appointed and an ideal centre for Munro and Corbett collectors.

We all assembled on the Friday night after an interesting drive over Drumochter in a blizzard. On Saturday we awoke to a winter wonderland, with snow down to sea level, ideal for photographers but less so for hill walkers. Two of the party set off for Glen Roy but were unable to drive up the road which had not been cleared. The rest of us enjoyed a walk along the shore of Loch Morar with excellent views when the hail showers allowed.

On Sunday the weather seemed more settled and the snow level had risen to about 250m. Peter, Phil and Roger climbed Braigh nan Uamhachan (765m) by its long South ridge. It took them over 8 hours, which was a good time in the conditions.



The rest of us climbed Sgurr an Utha (798m). It was slow going in the soft snow but fortunately we were overtaken by a group of younger climbers who made a trail to the summit. We were rewarded by spectacular views stretching from Eigg and Rhum in the West, round to the Nevis range in the East, all covered in new snow.

*On the summit of Sgurr an Utha.
Photo by Jim Strachan*

On Monday morning the weather was even better but most of us only had time for a walk near Spean Bridge along the line of the disused Fort Augustus railway, but again the views of the Nevis range were superb.

It was a very successful meet but it was overshadowed by the recent deaths of Bert Bowes and Mike Pinney. In his younger days Bert was a regular attender at the Scottish meets and several of us attended his funeral at Hartlepool on the Thursday. We were all sorry that logistics prevented us from getting to Mike's on the Monday, but at our dinner on the Saturday evening we drank a toast to Absent Friends.

Present: Hugh Chapman, John Dempster, John and Marj Foster, Peter Goodwin, Phil Hands, Roger James, Dinah Nichols, David Seddon, Jim and Margaret Strachan.

Hurdlow Meet Derbyshire, May – Report by Mike Goodyer

Once again the meet was at the Royal Oak in Hurdlow, my first trip but the fourth year of the Meet. Eleven members and guests attended the Meet, some coming for a day, but the majority meeting up on the Friday evening and staying in the bunkhouse or camping.

On the Saturday we split into a cycling group and climbing groups. The Meet Leader led a small group along the cycle trail in the Manifold Valley, promising around a twenty mile bike ride which developed into a thirty mile plus day out. However the scenery compensated for the extra distance, as did the cafe stop to refuel. We passed Thors cave on the way to the lunch time stop at Cauldon – the Yew Tree Inn for the famous pork pie. On the return we visited the disused quarry near to Waterhouses to discover dinosaur footprints.



Other teams went to the Roaches or Castle Naze for climbing. Several routes between V. Diff and HVS were climbed in good weather. Ian and Marcus did 11 routes at Castle Naze, Marcus described some of the routes as short but with quite thuggish starts, loads of jamming but on the whole little micro gems. Good sport was had by all.

Castle Naze, photo by Ian Mateer

On the evening we all enjoyed a good dinner in the Royal Oak after our day's exertions.



On the Sunday the whole group set off for a walk from Eyam that took us to Cressbrook Dale for lunch and a late afternoon pint at the Stags Head in Wardlow (it was open!). In the evening Andy set up his catering size barbeque on the camp site and kept us all supplied in burgers and sausages along with salad and trimmings. Many thanks to Andy.

Stags Head, photo by Paul Tierney

On the Monday folks departed, but a group went exploring from the bunkhouse. We ended up at the Arbor Low henge – a very interesting place, returning via the old railway track. A great weekend of good weather, good food and drink wrapped around cycling, outcrop climbing and walking.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Coulton, Heather, Lucy and Mary Eddowes, Mike Goodyer, Ian Mateer, Howard Telford, Marcus and Paul Tierney.

Rhyd Ddu Meet, 14-15 June – Report by Ed Bramley

For the second year in a row, after several weeks of changeable conditions, the weather finally put in a good appearance for the Wales meet, with a series of dry and largely sunny days.

Friday saw the advance party of Andy, Ed, Paul and Steve making a leisurely ascent of Mynydd Mawr (which literally means Big Mountain), that mountain on the shores of Llyn Cwellyn that many of us pass by on the way to the hut. After climbing up the minor road heading west out of Rhyd Ddu, we then strike off northwards at Llyn-y-dwarchen, part of what once was a much larger reservoir (A tip for anyone wanting to repeat the route – follow the path round the east shore of the lake, as this eventually joins the edge of the forest and the distinct path up the east ridge). After a modicum of toil and a couple of false summits, the path then levels out into a summit plateau. From the top, there is a great view of the top of the crags of Craig y Bera, including the classic scramble of Sentries ridge.



The views from the summit are superb all round, whether it is across to Snowdon and Tyfan peeping out behind, across to Caernarfon castle and Anglesey behind, or the peaks on the edge of the Llyn peninsula. We take the path off the summit north westwards, and eventually the path heading north eastwards through the woods to the main road at Salem. A long trek back along the road to the hut, but we break the journey at the Snowdon Ranger hostel for afternoon refreshment, whilst the only rain of the weekend puts in a very short appearance.

Towards Snowdon from Mynydd Mawr

Saturday sees groups heading off in different directions, and eight of us choose the tried but tested Nantlle ridge.



The climb up to the ridge is stern, but thankfully relatively short, and we are soon working our way along the ridge proper. Not long, but interesting moves give us glimpses down the eastern face and the rock architecture of the ridge. We continue onto the steep but grass slopes of Trum y Ddysgyl and then pause for dinner at the large cairn on the summit of Mynydd Tal-y-mignedd. Whilst there, a group of fell runners come past on their way to Moel Hebog and beyond. After dinner, we head off down the southern ridge of the mountain, which eventually brings us out at one of the many old slate quarries in the valley, and an old incline takes us down to a tramway that traverses the lower slopes of the mountain. With a bit of a cut off, we then meet up with the main quarries in cwm Trwsgl, which we have been passed on many previous occasions. We pause and look at how extensive the tramways in the area are, eventually heading off south to the port at Porthmadog. From the quarries, it's a relatively good set of forestry tracks back round the hillside to Rhyd Ddu. On the way, we heard about a café in the village run by a Dutch couple, so we call in for a Welsh cream tea, complete with Barra Brith, and drop scones. We can heartily recommend it, but do leave space for dinner!

Team at the start of the ridge

We've twenty of us for evening meal, and this year the weekend coincided with Sheila's birthday, so we surprise her with cake and aperitif. When she asks what the fuss is about, we have to remind her that it is her birthday in the morning! The communal meal starts with a pasta salad with asparagus, celeriac and a variety of cheeses, followed by Spanish chicken with butter beans and new potatoes, rounded off with a variety of seasonal tarts. We slowly wind our way through the evening, swapping stories of the day and the world in general.

Sunday sees the good weather holding, so Mike and I head back up our descent route of the previous day up to the quarries, and then onto the ridges leading up to Moel Hebog. The path to the top of Moel Lefn is surprisingly clear on the ground, and again we're enjoying the sunshine. To the north, and over Snowdon, blankets of clouds are tumbling down the side of the mountains, looking for all the world like the edge of a giant duvet. We progress over the various ridges, with the good weather continuing, and it's not until we reach the summit of Moel Hebog that we meet anyone else. The descent is a great piece of cerebral exercise, testing us as we move from rock to rock on the way down. Good practice for the Dolomites later in the year. Our progress has been so good that we make Beddgelert by dinner time, and top up on tea and ice cream. We take the new track back to Rhyd Ddu, which is now complete, and makes a very fast journey back to the hut. Our friends on the train are surprised that we're back not long after them.



Panorama from Moel Hebog, photo by Mike Goodyer

After a final brew at the hut and suitable comestibles, we pack the gear up and head slowly for home after a great weekend.

Personal note from Heather



Fri - I collected Sheila and Sylvia from Warrington Station. En-route to Rhyd Ddu stopped for a paddle at Penmaenmawr. It turned into quite a long walk as the tide was right out. Good foot massage had by all. Arrive cottage followed by dinner at Beddgelert.

Sat - Sylvia and I joined group to ascend Y Garn and part of Nantlle Ridge. Phew, we made it!

Sun - James, Belinda, Sheila, Sylvia and I headed north from cottage along lower flanks of Snowdon, through an old slate quarry to cross the Snowdon Rangers path. Sylvia, Sheila and I ascended Foel Goch and then returned the same route. J & B continued through the col and took a path up to Snowdon summit and then down to Rhyd Ddu. S, S and I, after a cuppa returned through a heavy storm to Warrington and so back to Knutsford and London.

We 'girls' thoroughly enjoyed ourselves along with everyone else. Excellent food by Ed chef and a happy birthday for Sheila.

Participants: Belinda Baldwin, James Baldwin, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Sheila Coates, Steve Caulton, Heather Eddowes, Mike Goodyer, Don Hodge, Ian Mateer, Sylvia Mercer, Myles O'Reilly, Judy Renshaw, Paul Stock, Suzanne Strawther, Tony Strawther, Marcus Tierney, Paul Tierney, Richard Winter, Dick Yorke

HOTEL ALPINE MEET, PONTRESINA – 5 -12 July 2014 - Report by Pamela Harris-Andrews

Although this year's hotel meet was officially for one week only, several of us extended our stay in the Engadine by arriving a few days early or staying on for a few days at the end. Those who did so were rewarded by more sunshine than we saw during the days of the meet itself, which locals remembered as the cloudiest week that Pontresina had experienced in decades. But although we were unable to do some of the high level walks that we had on the summer meet in 2000 – perhaps also due to the passing of years! – we were out on the hills every day, the only real downside being the lack of views of the highest peaks.

A much appreciated part of our hotel deal was the free lift, train and bus pass, and everyone made the most of this.



On more than one occasion we set out in cloud and rain, only to be rewarded at 3000m by a brief glimpse of snow-covered summits before the clouds drifted over again and the snow began gently to fall. But in general the rain was intermittent, and we got really wet on only one day. On the other days we were able to complete long walks giving views of the lower hills and the string of lakes in the valley, the drifting cloud providing subtle contrasts of light and shade.

The alpine flowers seemed in more profusion than in previous years, and the slopes everywhere were a riot of colour, including the bright orange of the rare Fire lily. Animals were less in evidence though, apart from a few marmots, and the ibex promised by a local guide on a high level hike above Alp Languard failed to materialise.

Fire Lily

The meet started with a large group of us catching the funicular railway up to Muottas Muragl and walking up to the Segantini Hut, some of us taking the higher route via Lej Muragl. The painter Segantini died here in 1899 aged only 41, and a few of his paintings were displayed in the hut. On the following day the same group took the cable car up to 3300m on Piz Corvatsch above Silvaplana, and then walked from the middle station up to Fuorcla Surlej and all the way down Val Roseg back to Pontresina. Piz Nair above St Moritz should have been another scenic viewpoint, but once again there was only cloud and snow at the top. One damp day a group walked up to the Morteratsch Glacier where a series of posts marks the dramatic rate of the glacier's recession, and although several started up the trail to the Boval Hut, Roger Newson was the only one to actually reach there.

On different occasions we all took the small train up to the Bernina Pass, where a variety of walks started. A few of us explored the Val Minor at the foot of Piz Lagalb, where we found a myriad of dark purple primulas and pale purple soldanellas. Others went on to Alp Grum, south of the pass, where the sun shone at Lej Palu and Lago Bianco. Some went even further, by train or bike as far as Tirano in Italy, making for an invigorating 2000m descent. The scenic bus ride along the lakes past Silvaplana to Sils Maria enabled us to explore the remote Val Fex, like Val Roseg accessible only by horse-drawn carriage, where the mountain torrents were almost impassable after all the rain. Some of us went as far as the edge of the National Park, visiting Zuoz and S-Chanf with their painted houses, while those with bikes were able to go further down the valley as far as Scuol, almost at the Austrian border.



View from Sergantini Hut

Included in our free pass was Val Bregaglia, location of the pre-meet trek in 2000 which six of us on this year's



meet had participated in. Some took the bus down from the Maloja Pass as far as the medieval town of Chiavenna in Italy, or up to the village of Soglio, described by Segantini as “the threshold of paradise”. Alan and I spent three days in this idyllic setting before the meet started, and had a glorious walk along the Sentiero Panoramico high above the valley, with cloudless skies and spectacular views across to the peaks of the Val Bondasca.

Soglio and Val Bondasca

Another popular cable car destination was Diavolezza, just under 3000m, followed by a trudge through the snow to the nearby Sass Queeder. Only those who stayed for an extra day at the end of the meet had sunshine here and were able to enjoy clear views of Piz Palu, Piz Bernina and the Biancograt, bringing back memories of earlier climbs. Despite notices warning that the descent path was closed, a couple who had taken it reported that there was “only one difficult passage”, so John and Dinah set off down the snow, followed by a group of Japanese schoolteachers. The “difficult passage” turned out to be a steepish ledge above a snow slope, protected by a wire handrail mostly buried in snow. They slithered down this, narrowly missing the rocks at the bottom and wishing they had brought their ice axes with them.

There was time for cultural activities too, with visits to the Segantini Gallery in St Moritz, the Alpine Museum in Pontresina, the cathedral in Chur, and the string quartet concerts in Pontresina church. Edward and Sue Coales disappeared one evening to the palatial Kulm Hotel in St Moritz for a special performance of Rossini’s opera *La Gazetta*, which they reported as an amazing experience. On another level, we had our own cultural evening back at the hotel, with Sue showing us her flower paintings and others talking about books they had written or helped publish.



Oxeye daises looking towards Silvaplana and poppies at Morterartsch, water colours by Sue Coales

One of the highlights of the meet was the hotel itself, the Engadinerhof, used previously by the club for the summer meet of 2000 and the winter meet of 2008 – for Geoff and Janet Bone, it was their third visit. The bedrooms were comfortable and the reception rooms had plenty of space for all who wanted to watch the Wimbledon finals and World Cup matches. The breakfasts and dinners were copious and delicious, and we especially enjoyed the Mövenpick ice-creams and Thursday buffet, which included a whole roast pig! But the proprietor, Herr Hissung, did more than run his hotel with efficiency; he included extras which helped make our stay so memorable. There were welcome and farewell drinks, a “wet weather” cocktail, and a fascinating tour of the hotel behind the scenes which included a visit to the pizzeria and wine cellars, where we were offered local wines and all sorts of delicious savouries.

And so, a good time was had by all, with good walks, good accommodation, good food, and most important of all, good company.

Participants: Pamela Harris-Andrews & Alan Norton, Geoff & Janet Bone, Derek Buckley & Ann Alari, Geoff & Pauline Causey, Edward & Sue Coales, Sheila Coates, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Niels & Guni Doble, Buff Dolling, Richard & Katherine Heery, Dick & Lin Murton, Roger Newson, Rick & Carol Saynor, Jim & Margaret Strachan, Caroline Thonger, Jay Turner, Bill & Rosie Westermeyer, Dick & Karen Yorke.

CAMPING ALPINE MEET, COGNE –19 July/9 August 2014 - Report by Mike Goodyer

Over 60 members and guests meet at Camping lo Stambecco in Valnontey, above Cogne over the three week meet. The owners of the campsite were very accommodating and looked after us very well. An area of the campsite reserved for the “English Alpinists” and there was a convivial atmosphere meeting people around the communal tent and sharing experiences over tea, beer or a glass of wine. The weather over the summer was very mixed before our arrival, with rain in the valley and snow on the higher ground. Lots of the ridges were covered in fresh snow and the snow levels were lower than a normal summer.

The area is a National Park and the Valnontey valley beyond the small village was traffic free and there is no mechanical uplift in the valley. All approaches to the bivouac huts were by foot, which helped with the acclimatisation. The valley abounded with wild flowers and marmots, Ibex and Steinbock were often seen higher up the slopes. The area was great for long day walks to fine tune fitness. Although the village was very quiet there was a small store for your basic food needs and there were several reasonably priced restaurants. A short (free) bus ride, or pleasant walk, took you down to the flesh pots of Cogne for a better selection of food for the weekly barbeque at the campsite – thank you Henry for your gas barbeque!



Vittorio Emanuele II Hut, photo by Jonathan Halliday

There were several forays round to the Vittorio Emanuele II Hut for climbs on the Gran Paradiso, Mont Ciaforon and Bec de Montchair. The hut was very busy at weekends and on occasions the Italian army were using the area for training. Several attempts were made on the l' Herbetet from the Leonessa Bivouac, but fresh snow on the ridges and extensive stonefall/landslip turned away all comers.



Mont Ciaforon and Bec de Montchair, photo by Jonathan Halliday

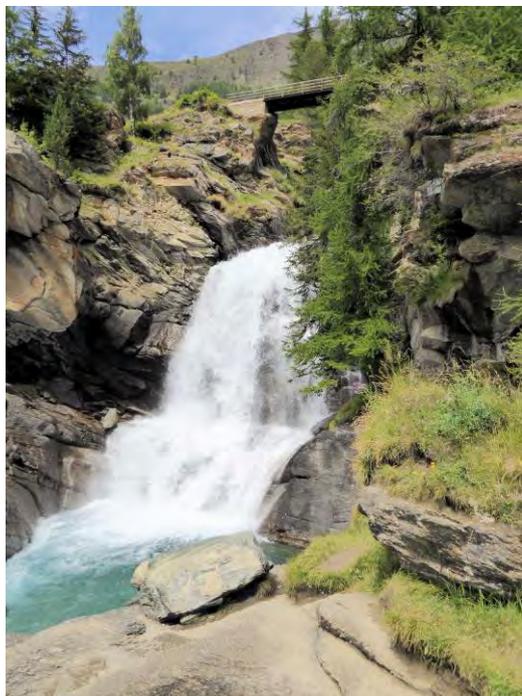


Several parties visited the remote Grafton Bivouac on the Col Pousset to do a circuit over the Punta Rossa to the Vittorio Sella Hut and return to the campsite.

Grafton Bivouac at dawn with la Grivola behind, photo by Mike Goodyer

In addition, there were many successful attempts on the South flank of the La Gran Serra from the popular V. Sella Hut.

In between the climbing and the weather there were visits to Lillaz, on the free bus again, to see the huge cascades that are very popular ice routes over the winter. There was also an opportunity to top up on culture with a visit down the valley to Aosta, visiting the roman bridge at Pont d' Ael along the way.



Cascade at Lillaz, photo by Mike Goodyer



Roman Aosta, photo by Andy Burton

At the end of the meet the campsite owners treated us to a special goodbye meal in the bar. A great evening was had by all and I don't think many of us had seen so much cheese on the cheese board. Many thanks to Keith for running up the meet after Mike Pinney has laid out the ground work earlier in the year.

Beer Meet. 5 -8 September -Report by Belinda Baldwin

This was Beer Meet number ten with mostly returnees except for Sylvia Mercer, Graham and Alison Daniels. The earlier date than usual provided us with summer weather so that for those who think a visit to the seaside means a dip in the sea had them. For those who wish for hillwalking, as we are a mountaineering club, we did that too but only reaching a height of 1750ft. on Dartmoor.

Saturday started beside Bonehill Rocks near Widecombe. We had caught up with Mike Goodyer on route who had joined us for the day. We had a glorious up and down walk in the sunshine going over Hameldown, Honeybag, Chinkwell and Bell Tors.



On the Two Moors Way on Saturday, photo by Mike Goodyer

Sunday was a local walk straight from the house. It did include some fixed rope work and a bit of a drop as we descended to the beach at Littlecome. Then it was a bit like scree as we walked about one mile to Branscombe mouth. So our mountaineering experiences came in handy. It was hot and so Sylvia and Sheila had their first dip but it was a bit rocky and not much fun. John D and John F decided sitting on the beach was not their thing and proceeded on to Beer for a beer in the Anchor Garden overlooking the sea, where the rest of us caught up with them. Beer beach is good for bathing so Sheila and Sylvia had a successful bathe.

The 2 official days were busy but there was added value either side for some. On Friday John F and James headed off to the Tank Museum in Dorset whilst Marge and I went to Peco Pleasure Gardens in Beer, where we enjoyed the flowers and had a trip on the miniature railway. On Monday Alison, Graham, James and I had a walk along Monmouth Beach at Lyme Regis to the Ammonite Graveyard and Devil's Pavement.

Present: Antonia Barlen, Sheila Coates, Alison and Graham Daniels, Mike Goodyer, Marge and John Forster, Sylvia Mercer, Rosemary and John Percival, James and Belinda Baldwin.

Via Ferrata Meet, Cortina 13-21 September – Report by Marcus Tierney

This meet was an opportunity to sample the Via Ferratas and interesting history of the First World War front lines in the Cortina area. The meet was based at a local hotel, the Meuble Oasi which is situated close to the centre of Cortina. All five members met at the Marco Polo Airport in Venice and travelled together using a tightly packed hire car to Cortina, arriving early on Saturday evening. At the hotel the party were met by jovial owner, Giovanni, who was able to recommend several good eateries with the added bonus of 10% discount at each one.

On arrival it could be seen that there had been a recent snowfall. The snow level was at about 2800m which meant that the original itinerary carefully prepared by Andy had to be rejigged a little. A common occurrence it would seem with September Alp meets. However a new plan was soon formed over beers and pasta.

On the first day a short car journey led to the Passo Giau at 2236m. Today's peak was to be the Nuvolau 2575m via the VF (Via Ferrata) Ra Gusela an easy grade Ferrata and a good introduction to the weeks climbing. The morning was clear and crisp and the views were panoramic with a particularly good vista of the Marmolada group and what is left of the glacier.



Ra Gusela on the way to the Nuvolau

The route started under the fine rock peak of the Ra Gusela and traversed path 443 around to a rock chimney which overlooked the Cinque Torri area. A short set of wires led to an interesting path through dolomitic boulders to a short ridge that lead via a short ladder to the summit of the Nuvolau. The summit has a preserved old style timber hut with reasonably priced food and beer.

At the hut, where the chef in traditional outfit cooked sausages on a griddle outside, decisions were made. The original plan had been to consider continuing on and climb the Averau, however a low black cloud began to descend so the party continued down to the Rifugio Averau before traversing back to the Passo Giau as the rain weakly tried its best. A pretty little Wallcreeper was spotted picking flies off the rock face at this time unbothered by its watchers.

Day two, Monday, was intended as a double peak day. The road to Passo Falzarego was taken until a left turn along a narrow road (Route 439) led to the Cinque Torri where the car was parked. A steady uphill path continuing on path 439 led to the base of the Averau where the previous day's objective was to be concluded.



Ed and Andy preparing for the Averau.

The route chosen was the VF Averau. After donning harnesses, helmet and VF gear the route started up a steep wall before heading up chimneys, gullies and a ridge for about 20 minutes. Eventually a steep path climbed to the summit at 2649m. The view from the summit was particularly good across to the Tofana group which looked like it was on fire with the cloud hugging to its slopes and summit.

The team descended from the route by the same wires and a visit was made to the open air museum at the Cinque Torri. Harrowing accounts were read from the information boards about what life was like in the trenches as the Austrians and Italians exchanged shell and gunfire.



Heather on the steep wall



The guns at Cinque Torri were regularly aimed at The Sas' de Stria our next destination that afternoon. A Marmot stood sentry in the rocks below the imposing rock faces of the Cinque Torri and posed nicely for the tourist cameras. It was assumed by all that it was a real Marmot and not stuffed as it did not move much!

After driving up to and past the Passo Falzarego the car was left at the Passo Valparola car park with the intention of nipping up the Sas' de Stria. Unfortunately at that moment the heavens opened and a dash was made to the nearby museum situated in the remains of the Tre Sassi Fort built in 1897 by the Austro Hungarian army. An hour was spent viewing the huge amount of WWI exhibits and reading the accounts of the fighting. The soldiers of the

area suffered terrible conditions with thousands being killed by the severe weather and avalanches. There was fierce fighting much of it hand to hand between former neighbours and friends. Upon exiting the museum it was decided to save the Sas' de Stria for another day as it was getting late.

Tuesday dawned reasonably and the predicted thunderstorms for the week had still not materialised. Heading north the car was left at the car park at Valle di Fanes.



A gentle walk along path 10 through woodland led to an impressive gorge, viewed from the Ponte Outo (Ladin for high bridge) with a modest 70 m waterfall, the Cascade Val di Fanes tucked away a little to the east. Gearing up with the usual VF kit a simple VF led along an exposed path and behind the impressive waterfall. The way continued along the VF Giovanni Barbara which eventually reached the bottom of the gorge by way of a steep slippery face equipped with cables and metal staples.

The guidebook description stated that a bridge was to be crossed. As there was only the remains of a bridge and no way to cross, there followed a tricky fording of the fast flowing stream. The crossing led to the inevitable soaked leg for the careless and much laughing by the clever so and so's who had managed to stay dry. There followed a slippery rock face to reach the start of the VF Lucio Dalaiti which climbed back out of the gorge to the starting point.

After completing the gorge the first half of the VF was descended again to reach the stream before the other side of the gorge was climbed by a cleverly constructed zig zag path up a gully which led to a pleasant path back to the Pian de Loia. All in all a very pleasant day with glimpses of birds of prey circling the peaks and many Dippers working the river.

Ed going behind the waterfall

A very gloomy Wednesday saw a return to the Passo Valperola and although marked as a Via Ferratta on the map, the peak of Sas' de Stria does not require VF equipment. Notwithstanding the lack of climbing this is a lovely peak normally with stunning views. Only glimpses of surrounding peaks were had as cloud remained over the peak for much of the ascent that day. However the interest in this peak is enhanced by the WWI trenches which were followed virtually all the way to the summit where gun emplacements overlooked the valley. From here the Austrians traded shots with the Italians who were dug in at the Cinque Torri, visited earlier in the week.

After descending The Sas' de Stria a further short car journey saw the group arrive at the Rifugio Dibona and lunch. After just over an hours steep climb and the Rifugio Giussani was reached. This hut lies in the middle of the Tofana range between the Tofana de Rozes and the Tofana di Mezzo. A developing temperature inversion was observed before everyone scuttled back inside as the temperature dropped quickly. A pleasant evening meal and a couple of drinks were enjoyed before everyone turned in.



Tofano de Rozes

Thursday dawned clear with again a photogenic inversion which got the cameras snapping away. Everyone headed off to the Tre Dita 2694m. This is at a point about two thirds up the VF Giovanni Lipella. The lower part of the route was completed by Marcus and Ian Mateer in 2010 but the two were unable to complete the route due to the cables and rock being iced.



The group split at this point with Andy and Marcus completing the top half of the VF and the others heading for the summit of the Tofana de Rozes by the Normal (or “Common”) route. The VF was interesting and on the upper half which was running with water there were millions of small water fleas dancing around on the wet rock. Upon finishing the VF the group rejoined and descended via an unpleasant scramble through loose rock and the odd snow patch. Eventually all descended to the Rifugio Giussani. A snow finch pecked happily around our feet outside the hut, feeding on a few crumbs from Andys biscuits. The group then headed down to the Rifugio Dibona. On the descent a crack was heard like thunder as an avalanche of rock fell from the steep south facing side of the Tofana de Rozes. Fortunately the blocks a few of which were the size of cars missed the numerous parties traversing under the face at the end of the day.

Returning to the hotel at Cortina took only half an hour and the group were soon having the luxury of yet another meal in Cortina before turning in for the night back at the hotel.

Andy on the top section of VF Giovanni Lipella

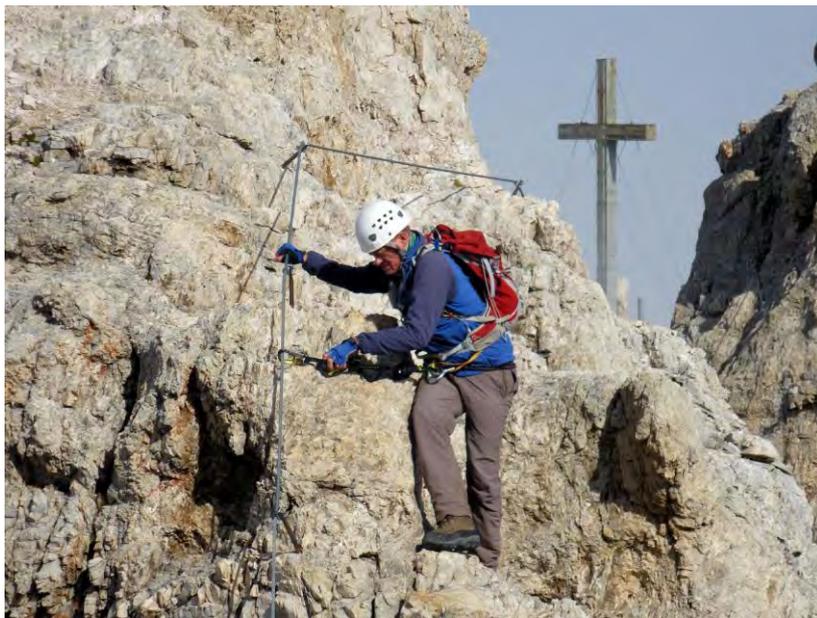
Friday saw a return to one of the original intended routes on the itinerary as most of the snow seen earlier in the week had now disappeared. The peak of Cima di Meso, 3154m, was to be ascended by the VF Marino Bianchi.

Two cable cars are used to get to the Rifugio Lorenzi, which was in the process of being shut down as the season was coming to a close.



Great fun was had leaping on and off the different type of cars used on the cables before arriving at the hut. The cloud was going up and down all day and there was an inversion below. Peaks popped in and out of view and the suspension bridge of the VF Ivano Dibona was seen clearly a few times whetting the appetite for a return to complete that particular route

The VF Marino Bianchi begins by stepping straight off from the wooden platform outside the hut. The route rose steadily following ridges gullies and steep faces with continued interest. Several steep ladders, one in particular having a tricky exit were followed before the top was reached after about two hours.



The route could have been completed quicker but with the clouds parting to give great views many photos were taken and time was taken to enjoy the route which had very little traffic on it. Descent was again via the cable cars stopping only for refreshment at the Rifugio Son Forca. A superb end to the week's ascents. The predicted thunderstorms never arrived and the only soaking that was had was whilst walking to the restaurant that night when a sudden downpour caught everyone out.

Ed descending from the summit

The evening meal was at El Bronsin, a particular favourite restaurant discovered early in the week, recommended by Giovanni as one where the dishes were like his mother used to make. The food was typically local and we were well looked after there. As we walked dripping wet into the restaurant the two Chefs were sharing a bottle of wine at a table. One Chef saw us and quipped "With water you should have wine". A glass of Merlot was promptly offered to us. This was typical of the friendly welcome that we had received all week.

Cortina rarely disappoints. A great weeks Via Ferrata climbing was enjoyed by all. The evenings were fun in the town with good food and drink. A very comfortable hotel meant that the whole trip was a relaxing mountaineering event without the hardships relished by some. Apres climbing perhaps?



Last night in Cortina.

The end of the week saw the team head to Venice for an afternoon sightseeing which included thousands of tourists, huge cruise ships and not surprisingly one or two canals. We learn lots in the hills on each new adventure. On this trip we learnt that if you have not tried a lemon Sorbet with Prosecco and vodka then you really should.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Heather Eddowes, Mike Goodyer and Marcus Tierney.

Lake District Buffet Meeting: 25-26 September – Report by Ed Bramley

With a scramble in mind, we set off on the Saturday morning up Grisedale to the base of Pinnacle ridge on St. Sunday crag. The weather was getting into autumn mood, with the temperature distinctly lower than it had been recently, and with patches of low cloud drifting around and up the valley. So much for clear visibility and warm dry rock. As ever, the pull up the old tracks onto the flanks of St. Sunday crag gives the body a good aerobic workout, as if one were needed, or desired, but before too long we are finding our way across the screes to the base of the route. The cannon rock is poking out of the grey gloom, confirming we have arrived at the base of the right buttress. 'Take the

right hand side' comes the shout from Mike with his local knowledge, and we have soon finished battling with the scree to arrive at the base of the ridge.



The start of the ridge is easy scrambling, but the move up to the cannon give us our first food for thought, with some mantleshelf moves to make the feature proper. Further threading our way up rock, choosing to make it as hard or easy as we want, before we arrive at the main challenge on the ridge; the short wall cum corner. Avoiding the temptation to seek sanctuary in the corner, I take the cracks to the left of it, and after a couple of moves up the crack and wall, I'm at the next ledge, and the next person up is now sizing up the challenge. Threading the pinnacles follows soon after, with the interesting descent from the last pinnacle back onto the ridge proper. Always a place to pause for pictures back down the ridge. We move easily up the rest of the ridge until we are confronted by the last obstacle, a curious block at waist height that overhangs the route, and requires a bridging move combined with a western roll

tactic to overcome it. Managed with at least a little style.

On the top, the cloud has closed in, and we make our way along the ridge towards Fairfield, before descending to Grisedale tarn. As we near the tarn, the weather decides to relent and begins to brighten up, and as it's not too late in the day, a group of us decide to press on to the top of Helvellyn, over Dollywagon and Nethermost Pikes. Descending Striding Edge, the weather keeps getting better all the time, and it's great to have the very crest of the ridge almost to ourselves. We make good time moving along the various pinnacles, and it's almost a shame when we come to the very end of the ridge. The remaining descent is almost a formality, but the improving afternoon light gives us great views on the way down.



The photomontage in the hut



Dinner completed

In the evening, we being the buffet party with an unveiling of a photomontage commemorating Mike Pinney, and we are privileged that Mike's sister Margaret and her husband, Nicholas are able to join us. As the montage is unveiled, we all pause for a couple of moments, to remember Mike in our thoughts. The buffet is a grand affair, starting with a mixed fish salad, with lumps of crusty bread. Main course is a mix of local pies, and I can personally commend the beef one, packed full of filling, with a rich shortcrust pastry. No surprise then that most of us had seconds, complete with home made gravy and all the trimmings. The dessert doesn't disappoint either, with offerings of both Eton Mess and chocolate cake enough to salve the sweetest palate. No wonder that we all sink slowly into the settees, as the usual tales unfold.

On Sunday, Margaret and Nicholas join us for a walk in the locality, and we head towards Hayes Water, where the reservoir has recently been demolished and landscaped. We start with a variation to our usual route, wandering along the bank of the river, past the White Lion, until we meet the next road bridge. We follow the tracks through the hamlet on this side of the river, and eventually arrive at Hartsop. Following the track up, there is now a new bridge across the river, which joins up with the original right of way in this area. Hayes Water is no more, replaced by sculpted sloping banks and a stony river bed. It all looks raw now, but the plan is for it to return to its natural state in the coming months and years. From the reservoir, we head up the hill towards Angle Tarn.



Here again, local knowledge from Mike and Marian see us stood on a local top with great views down Bannerdale and across Angle Tarn. All the years I've been here, and I can't recall visiting this particular vantage point before. We wind our way to Boardale Hause, and the diagonal that is the descent back down to the valley.

Back at the hut, we polish off the last of the local pie, and reflect over a cup of tea on what has been another great weekend out in the hills with friends.

Margaret and Nicholas join us on the fell

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Heather Eddowes, Mike Goodyer, Sheila Mercer, Marian Parsons, Mike Parsons, Myles O'Reilly, Paul Stock, plus Margaret and Nicholas Moore.

Pitlochry Meet 24 26 October – Report by Philip Hands

Twelve members and guests gathered on the Friday evening at the Pitlochry Hydro. The weather forecast for the weekend was not at all encouraging rain, windy and cool and very windy on the summits.

However, Saturday morning dawned promising, cool and clear, so we were eager to make an early start. On the Saturday Graham and Alison, John, Dinah, Jim and Margaret climbed a Corbett, Beinn a' Chuallaich (892m) just north of Kinloch Rannoch. They encountered some difficulty at the start in achieving the correct route up the south ridge, but the summit was reached in bright sunlight with a strong wind blowing.

Hugh and Susan drove to Aviemore to look at mountain bikes. John and Marj abandoned their proposed Corbett as it was too windy and showery, and instead, visited the grounds of Blair Castle, Stanley Mills and then went on to visit ABM members Bill and Jeanette Peebles who live near Perth.

Roger drove to the top of Drumochter Pass and from there, climbed two Corbetts, The Sow of Atholl (803m) and Meall na Leitreach (775m). Both Corbetts are conveniently located close to the A9.

Sunday saw Susan, Graham and Alison, John, Dinah, John, Marj, Jim and Margaret ascend Ben Vrackie (841m), (Pitlochry's local hill). The weather was worse than on Saturday, again with strong winds and frequent rain squalls. No views were to be had from the summit, which was quickly vacated. The party retired to our hotel and spent the rest of the afternoon in the pool

Hugh and Roger climbed two Corbetts, Morrone (859m) and Creag nan Gabhar (834m), both near Braemar - very high winds probably 80 mph.

On the Monday and before heading home, John, Dinah, Jim and Margaret walked round Loch Faskally in less than pleasant weather, arriving back at the car dripping wet. John and Marj visited the Pitlochry fish ladder by the dam on Loch Faskally. Roger and I drove to Glen Isla and climbed Monamenach (807m). It was a dreich day with no views from the summit but the wind had died down.

The weather could certainly have been kinder but we did get out onto the hills and we all had a very sociable and enjoyable weekend.

Participants: Hugh and Susan Chapman, Graham and Alison Daniels John Dempster, John and Marj Foster, Philip Hands, Roger James, Dinah Nichols, Jim and Margaret Strachan

Derbyshire Meet, Ferny Lea November – Report by Mike Goodyer

The meet was not in the original annual plan, but the Meet Secretary wanted to try out the venue. The Oread Hut is in a secluded area close to the main Chesterfield to Baslow road and almost part of the Chatsworth Estate. Indeed the hut is part of an old mill. It is just down the road from the Robin Hood Inn where we had evening meals and a Committee Meeting on the Saturday evening in a "back room". The basic equipment in the hut was offset by the welcoming landlord at the pub and his wholesome food and good ale!

We enjoyed two days good walking. On the Saturday we walked along Chatsworth Edge and then into the Estate and past woodland and lakes across to Beeley for a late lunch at the café. The Meet Leader can recommend the sandwiches. After lunch we walked back to the Hut via the river Derwent and Chatsworth House.

On the Sunday we were joined by Lynne and Dick, who have recently moved to Chesterfield. The weather was slightly better but still with a cold wind, so nobody wanted to climb on the exposed Gardoms Edge as we walked past on the way over Big Moor and Totley Moor to a beer at the Fox Houses. We returned via Froggat Edge. An enjoyable walk.

We thought that although the Hut is in a good location it isn't really big enough or equipped for a meet of more than a half dozen.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Heather Eddowes, Mike Goodyer (+Lin Warriss and Dick Murton Sunday only)

Annual Dinner Meet 6-8 February 2015 – Report by Brooke Midgley & Ed Bramley

The weather this year was remarkable for an unusual reason – it was rather nice. We were lucky and dropped into a period of clear skies and sunshine. There was snow on the tops, ice in the gullies and temperatures generally below freezing at high level, plus hard frosts in the valley at night. In fact, pretty much what the meet leader had ordered! It is rumoured that some members even went up a hill to check it was real.

For some of the extended weekend team, Friday saw an excursion across to the Newlands valley, and a reverse of the Robinson round, starting at the church in Newlands, and going in an anti-clockwise direction. Parts of the outcrops on the upper slopes of Robinson had a coating of ice on them, which made for added value on the route, and stronger winds higher up meant that collars were turned and heads down against the icy blasts. Over and on to Dale Head where the views were non-existent. A long descent took us back down to the valley, where shafts of the late afternoon sun were spotlighting the hillside.



With the weather so good on Saturday, a group of us headed away from the crowds on Helvellyn by making the walk along to Deepdale, and eventually up onto the col between St.Sunday Crag and Fairfield. A few snow banked slopes added a soupçon of excitement as we exited the valley for the ridge up to the summit. The clear weather brought great views all the way across to the Pennines, with the radar station on Great Dun Fell standing out clearly in the winter mantle.

The dinner was attended by 42 members and guests, exactly the same number as last year. There were some new attendees (very welcome), but this was “balanced” by some who were unable to come. Menu cards were circulated during dinner for signatures, greetings and get well wishes to Mary Boulter, Terry Shaw, Buff Dolling and Walt Unsworth, who’d sent his (and Dorothy’s) good wishes. Walt had been involved with the early dinners (40 plus years ago) and had been a guest speaker on a few occasions – some when the invited speaker hadn’t turned up!

Our guests this year were Martin and Jenny Cooper; locals, from Ullswater Outward Bound Centre, where Martin is the current Head. His speech was very interesting and outlined the activities and aims of the organisation. The outgoing President Ed Bramley responded and thanked all those who had assisted him in his three year term and especially during the period following Mike Pinney’s sad death. The “hole” left in the organisation by Mike has taken some filling.

So the dinner went well, hotel and staff were duly thanked.

Sunday was a time for taking it steady, with a short walk up to Lanty's tarn, and some great views down to Ullswater and to the hut. After an excursion along one of the old water cuts up to the Greenside mine, we rounded a short day off with a refreshing pint in the Travellers Rest.



Looking across Ullswater from Place Fell on the Sunday, photo by Ian Mateer

The Annual Dinner, AGM and electing the New President all went according to plan. The weather was near perfect and the company enjoyable. Come and join us on the next Annual Dinner meet on 6th February 2016.

For more photographs of the Meets visit the website www.abmsac.org.uk

MEMBERS ARTICLES

MIKE PINNEY'S ICE AXE *Pamela Harris-Andrews*

After Mike died in March 2014 as a result of a climbing accident in North Wales, his sister Margaret found his old ice axe in the boot of his car. Bought in 1975, the year he joined the ABMSAC for his first climbing season in the Alps, it was a Chouinard with a long wooden shaft, and Mike was still using it.

Knowing Mike's attachment to the Britannia Hut, Margaret decided that she would like to present the ice axe to the hut, in his memory. Mike had been proud to participate in the ABMSAC centenary celebrations at the hut in 2009 when he was President, and in the hut's own centenary celebrations in 2012, when the ABMSAC had been instrumental in financing the new solar panels; on both occasions he had carried the original banner of the Association, dating from 1912, up to the hut.



Margaret wanted to visit the hut herself, together with her husband Nicholas and their son Christopher, so they arranged to spend a week in Saas Fee in early August. I planned to accompany them, and once I knew their dates, I contacted Dario Andenmatten, now hut warden after his mother's retirement in 2013, and Christiane Ody, President of the Geneva Section Huts Committee and in charge of the Britannia Hut, together with Jacques Bondallaz.

The Moore family at the Britannia Hut

Christiane arranged for Jacques to meet us at the bottom of the Felskinn cable car and to escort us to the hut, on the new path. On our arrival Dario greeted us warmly, and we were seated in a private dining room and offered glasses of Valaisian white wine – which Mike had so often brought back in his car for buffet evenings at the George Starkey Hut – and plates of cold meats.



Enjoying the Valaisian wine in the dining room



Margaret and Dario with ice axe

Margaret formally presented Dario with the ice axe, embellished with a small plaque bearing Mike's name and dates, and this will be displayed on a wall inside the hut. As Dario remarked, now a little bit of Mike will always be at the hut.

Dario then took us on a guided tour of "his" hut, proudly showing us the dining rooms, dormitories, wash rooms, winter room, and even the basement where the waste tanks are stacked ready for disposal by helicopter. He explained how efficient the solar panels are in heating both the water tanks and the hut itself, and how grateful he and the Geneva Section are for the ABMSAC's part in providing these. We then went back to the dining room, and after tea and apple tart, were presented with the Britannia Hut centenary book and Britannia Hut caps as mementos of our visit.

It was indeed a special day for Margaret and her family, and also for myself, and we are all extremely grateful to the Geneva Section and to Dario for arranging this, and for making us so welcome.

Next time a member of the ABMSAC visits the Britannia Hut, they will see Mike's ice axe displayed there, a reminder of what an important part of his life the mountains were, and especially the mountains of Switzerland.

Morocco: Beyond the End of the Road (or Unplugging South of the Atlas Mountains)

William Westermeyer

Civilization is almost always with us, and even more so in this hyper-connected age. However, many feel the need to escape from time to time or at least to disconnect from all of the electronic devices that have increasingly come to dominate our lives and, if only briefly, to immerse themselves in pristine nature, free of the distractions of daily life. This is why I recently jumped at the chance to join a group of my hiking club friends for a short trek through Sahara sand dunes south of the Atlas Mountains of Morocco.

When most people visit Morocco, Marrakech is the principal destination—and justifiably so. The ancient medina, the souks, the riads, the incomparable Majorelle Gardens once owned by Yves St. Laurent, and the three-ringed circus that is the Place Jemaa El Fna make Marrakech an exotic destination overflowing with sensual stimuli. However, Marrakech was the starting point for our adventure beyond the end of the road into the vast desert landscapes of the Sahara, not our primary objective. From here, our guide Hassan, a Berber who spends half his time guiding for an adventure travel company based in the UK and half as a farmer in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, picked us up at the airport and deposited us in a hotel near the medina.

At the hotel, I sent a quick SMS to my wife: “Arrived safely Mrkch. C U 1 wk. Lv” and put away my ancient cellphone. However, my friend and desert tent-mate Rick was having a harder time disconnecting. He immediately downloaded the latest edition of the Times of London on his Ipad so he could keep as up-to-date as possible in the desert. He called his wife on his smartphone and then finally made sure that all his electronic devices were fully charged. He did not want to set off to regions where access to the Internet or cell phone service would be impossible, or at least very difficult, without being as prepared as possible.



Ready for the off

The next morning, with our group now assembled, we set off on an eight-hour drive south to the edge of the Sahara. Crossing the Atlas Mountains, we topped the 2,260-meter Tichka Pass, marvelling at snow on the higher peaks of the Atlas as we began the long descent to the desert. Our journey was a slow transition from the cosmopolitan world of Marrakech to the increasingly lonely and isolated lands near the southern Morocco-Algerian border. Along the way, we passed through Ouarzazate, a sizable town on the edge of the desert where such movies as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Gladiator* and parts of the TV series *Game of Thrones* were filmed. Beyond Ouarzazate, our group felt civilization slowly falling away, to be replaced by simpler and more basic modes of living. By the time we saw our first camels, this feeling was complete.



About this time too, we stopped to buy traditional head coverings, long blue scarves that could be wrapped around head, shoulders, and neck to keep out sun and blowing sand. Looking much like Tuaregs from the neck up in our new scarves, we were ready for the desert.

When we set off on foot from the small oasis village of Ouled Driss the next morning we were truly beyond the end of the road--and out of contact with the rest of the world. It was exhilarating to be on foot in unknown desert terrain on a cool February morning. We were soon overtaken by the camels carrying our gear, creatures that seemed to float through the desert and that were not distracted every few minutes by some curious new aspect of the landscape or the urge to photograph every new feature encountered. Superficially, perhaps, there was less to see in the austere terrain of rocky desert pavements, crunchy mud flats, or majestic sand dunes than in most natural environments. Only a few tamarisk and acacia trees and some small bushes here and there were hardy enough to survive the harsh climate.

However, this bleakness was part of the desert experience, and soon we began to notice small features that would have escaped our attention in everyday life, things like the track of a desert fox through the sand, the frantic scurrying of a single small beetle up a sand dune, the way in which windblown sand was deposited downwind of small bushes to create mini-dunes, or the broken eggs of desert-dwelling snakes and lizards. There were even signs of a previous human presence here and there, as marked by traces of a former settlement that was slowly disappearing under the sand, numerous pottery shards, and several shallow stony graves, one of which had been exposed to reveal a whitened human skull. This was spooky. Who was this person? How did he or she die? We wondered what had brought any people to this area, where at least for more than a thousand years the climate would have made living

conditions difficult. What we didn't see on our trek were other people, telephone wires, or vehicles. Even jet contrails were missing as silence reigned supreme.



Our camels were remarkable creatures, ideally suited for desert travel by the ability to go long distances without water, walk easily in sand on dinner-plate-sized feet, carry heavy loads, and (with their multiple eyelids) see during sandstorms. These camels were not for riding, and they were not pets. Our camel drivers treated them as the beasts of burden they were and had not bothered to give them names. Although the camels frequently complained when gear was loaded onto their backs, these curious creatures had no trouble carrying our food, tents, water, and personal belongings. We, of course, had to give a name to the leader, a large white camel especially wise to the ways of trekkers. Christened "Basil," soon even our Berber guide was referring to our lead

camel by the name we gave him. Curiously, neither he nor the other camels seemed to mind being hobbled in a sitting position at night, something that I no doubt wrongly imagined would be very painful for more than a few minutes.

The food we ate, contrary to my expectations for a trek through the desert, was not at all basic. Cooking with gas but in quite primitive conditions, our cook Mohammed managed to prepare some of the best tagines and couscous I have ever eaten, both in quality and quantity. We ate so well that the calories we burned during the average 13 miles per day that we trekked were easily put back on at lunch and dinner. Just about anything tastes good after sufficient physical exertion, but the quality of the food we ate rivalled that of the best restaurants of Marrakech. When not on a trek, could Mohammed have been a chef at one of these? The camel drivers also helped out, and they made a surprisingly good treat—sand bread. To make this specialty, they placed dough directly on the desert sand beneath a pile of hot coals. Once it had risen and baked, they scraped away the coals and sand, and the bread, with no trace of any grit, was ready to eat. How could one say no?

We were fortunate in that during our trek the moon was full or near full each night. While this had the effect of dimming what would otherwise have been stars as bright as they could possibly be, the moonlight made it easy to walk at night without the aid of a flashlight. Strolling alone through moonlit dunes, one's thoughts easily turn to contemplation of the larger issues in life. On the first night, around 2 am, I was torn between the desire to remain warm in my down sleeping bag and the curiosity to see what the stars would look like after the moon had set. Curiosity won, and I was rewarded not only with a night sky filled with stars much brighter than I could possibly see at home but also with several short-lived meteors. Just before dawn I went out again, and Venus was so brilliant that one could make out its disc shape, clearly indicating that it was not a star.

Perhaps the highlight of our trip was pitching our tents among the magnificent dunes of Zahar and then, toward sunset, making our way to the highest of these dunes. The scramble to the top took some effort, since for every two steps forward we slipped back one. Sometimes, we needed hands as well, as we scrambled up crab-like on all fours. From the summit of the highest dune, we looked out over the seemingly endless expanse of desert. Far off in the distance we could see a mountain range across the border in Algeria. Although we felt completely alone, we were told that here and there the border area was fortified with military installations—relations between the Moroccans and Algerians have not been ideal in recent years. And then the sun began to sink to the horizon and the shadows over the dunes increase in length, turning the sand to hues of orange and red.



As we slowly made our way back to camp, even my friend Rick, still out of range of a cell tower and with no charge for his Ipad, began to appreciate the splendid isolation. The world would be a little different when we returned to civilization. Who could know what triumphs and tragedies we had been missed while wandering in the wilderness? But perhaps also those few days away from the distractions of daily life would give us some new insights about ourselves or new ways of perceiving the world that just might be valuable. Even so, we were already anticipating the return to the chaos of Marrakech—and to checking our email.

FOUR NEAR MISSES

John Dempster

It is said that before he died Norman Collie used to sit in the corner of the bar at Sligachan looking up to Sgurr nan Gillean and remembering his many climbs in the Cuillins. He died at 83, and although I have not yet quite reached that age I fear I am at the stage in life when one tends to look back rather than forward. So I have been recalling some 50 years of mountaineering. I wondered about writing a short climbing autobiography, but there is little of any great interest in my climbing career such as it was. However there were four incidents which I recall vividly, when I narrowly avoided what could have been a nasty accident. I thought these might be of greater interest than a catalogue of commonplace routes successfully completed.

Langdale I started rock climbing as a student and had been climbing for about a year when I went on an OUMC meet in Langdale. We spent a day doing routes on White Ghyll, and as we were coming down a friend and I decided to do a last climb on Scout Crag. We alternated leads, and I led what I thought was (and indeed was) the last pitch. It was quite straightforward and ended on a ledge about 3 feet wide. I couldn't find a good belay, but I found a bracket of rock, like an inverted L, at about shoulder height, on the face behind me. I was sure my second would have no difficulty with the pitch, so I put a sling on the bracket, which would help me to hold him in the unlikely event that he slipped.

He duly climbed the pitch with ease, but then said. "I think there is another pitch up here. I'll have a look at it". I said "Well watch it, I don't have much of a belay here". He tried to get up the face behind me, but after about 10 feet he decided, correctly, that there was no route there and started to climb down. About 4 feet above my ledge he decided to jump. He landed on the ledge but promptly fell straight off down the cliff. He came on the rope with a huge jerk – there was a fair bit of slack out because he had come down quickly – but my belay held. My bracket belay could hold a downward strain but with an outward pull it would have come straight off. I could never have held a falling leader in that situation and the two of us would have gone straight down the cliff, adding to the OUMC's unenviable record of fatal accidents. I still shiver at night thinking about it.

Aonach Eagach Not deterred by the Langdale incident I subsequently went on another OUMC meet in January at Lagangarbh at the head of Glencoe, which was my first experience of winter climbing in Scotland. The hills had a heavy covering of soft snow. On the second day the meet leader proposed that we traverse the Aonach Eagach, the two mile ridge on the North side of Glencoe. We were late starting, we had no cars, and by the time we had walked down the glen and climbed Am Bodach, where the ridge starts, it was about 1.00pm. The guide book advises that you should allow a minimum of 4 hours for a winter traverse, and may well take considerably longer, and warns that there are no escape routes. When I pointed out to the leader that it would be dark in less than 4 hours he said "We'll have to go faster then".

Quite apart from going faster we went at a snails pace. We were very inexperienced, and one member did not have an ice axe, so we had to belay him for much of the way. It got dark when we were barely half way along, so progress got even slower. We reached Sgurr nam Fiannaidh (the end of the ridge) at about 8.00pm. The normal descent is towards the Clachaig Inn, but conscious that we had to walk back up the glen to the hut it was decided to try to force a way down direct to the Glencoe road. The result was chaos. It was steep ground with small cliffs which were impossible to detect with our failing torches. I was on a rope of 3 with only 2 axes. We were very tired and people were continually slipping and being brought up on the rope. At one point all 3 of us were sliding. I tried to stop the fall by digging in my new wooden ice axe, whereupon the shaft broke. Eventually we ground to a stop, and pressed on with only one usable axe between us. We reached the road at 10.00pm and the hut at midnight, much to the relief of our friends who were about to alert the mountain rescue.

I returned the following day in the vain hope of recovering the shaft of my axe. Looking at our tracks of the previous night I was amazed that we had managed to get down in the dark without injury. It was a very different incident from Langdale, but if someone had, say, broken a leg, rescue would have been quite a challenge in those conditions.

Stuchd an Lochain Despite the unpleasant experience on the Aonach Eagach I developed an affection for Scottish hills and started collecting Munros. Some years later we were in Glen Lyon at Easter and decided to pick off Stuchd an Lochain, an undistinguished Munro near the head of the glen. Like many Scottish hills it is gentle on the South side but steep on the North. It was a windy day with cloud on the tops but the route up the ridge was quite straightforward. When we reached the summit cairn I said "Let's try and find some shelter" and walked a few paces away from the cairn in the mist. Suddenly my foot went in deeply. I thought I had stepped into a snow drift but I immediately realised this was no snow drift as I shot through the cornice and started sliding down the steep slope below. Attempts to stop the fall with my axe were futile and I slid down the slope for perhaps 200 feet. Gradually I slowed up as snow accumulated in front of me, and I eventually came to a halt on a faint ledge. I was uninjured apart from a few bruises.

My companions were not a little alarmed at my sudden disappearance, but John Percival very bravely lay down on the snow and edged up to the hole through which I had disappeared, while our companions held on to his feet. He could see where I was, but in the wind communication was impossible. They decided the best thing to do was to descend by the route we had come up and see if they could discover what had happened to me. Meanwhile I managed to traverse across the face and reached the car before them. When they eventually saw me sitting in the car the relief on their faces was amazing— they fully expected to have to organize a rescue party.

Zinal Rothorn My fourth escape was many years later, on an ABMSAC meet at Zermatt. Mark Eddowes, Roger James and I decided to do the Zinal Rothorn, by the normal route from the Rothorn hut. The route starts easily up the South East Ridge, but when the ridge steepens the route traverses across the South face to a notch on the South West ridge which you climb to the summit. The top was fairly airy but we reached it without undue difficulty and started to descend by the same route. I was in the middle of the rope of three. As we were crossing the South face I heard, rather than saw, a rock coming, about the size of a football. It was whistling as I believe shells whistle on the battlefield. It passed about 6 feet from my head. We were moving Alpine style and not belayed, and had it hit me it would certainly have knocked me off my feet, quite apart from any injury I sustained. The ground was pretty steep and I doubt if my colleagues could have held me.

The guide book made no mention of rockfall at this place, but we subsequently learnt that it is a well known danger spot. I can still hear the whine of that rock.

Conclusions

We all know that climbing has its dangers, and for someone who has walked and climbed in the hills for 50 years, 4 narrow shaves is probably not an unusual record. Of the 4 incidents I have described, I would attribute the first 3 to a mixture of inexperience and carelessness, and the 4th to bad luck, a proportion which again is probably typical of mountaineering accidents as a whole. Being careful reduces the risk of accidents but does not eliminate it.

It is presumptuous to compare myself with Norman Collie, whose climbing achievements, particularly in the Cuillins, were in a totally different league to my modest career. But one thing we do have in common is enjoyment in looking back on our days in the hills. I have described my near mishaps because they are the events that I most keenly remember. But I have many happy memories as well. And the next time I am in the Sligachan I will raise a glass in memory of Norman Collie.

The Ups and Downs of Walking

Morag M. Macdonald

The first notable walk in 2014 was in May, in the Cinque Terre Mediterranean area of Liguria north of Tuscany, where a scenic coastal path links five harbour towns set against steep cliffs and vegetated hillsides. A National Park requiring an entrance fee, this area became a Protected Marine Area in 1997. Many experience the scenic views from yachts anchored in picturesque harbours while cruising. Italian Alpine Club (CIA) members usually complete the five-centre walk on an autumn or spring day. Due to a bad accident on the route the previous day, only the section between Monterosso and Vernazza (or vice versa) was open. Theoretically, this section is only 3km and 2 hrs but with considerable ascent and descent, it can take much longer.



We reached the area by two trains from Castelnuovo di Garfagnana and started at Monterosso. The walk was marred in places by too many people some of whom were clearly in difficulty due to steep terrain and heat. That there were too many walkers, perhaps because of only one open section, did not affect the remarkable views, unusual vegetation and the profusion of wild flowers. A cosmopolitan atmosphere prevailed and led to many languages and greetings. On the return, the second train did not arrive and 'a phone a friend' situation led to a drive and a pizza supper. It was a very successful walk although the area is perhaps suffering from too many tourists in summer.

Looking towards Vernazza



M. Giovo 2991m, is part of the Apennine chain forming the Eastern boundary of the Serchio valley in N. Tuscany. The area is often subject to strong winds and clouds. For these very reasons, our first attempt called for a change of route. Accessible from a CIA hut/rifugio serving excellent coffee and homemade cake near Barga, the Cathedral town with many Scottish connections, it is not a difficult climb but a small snow field in May added some interest near the summit. Due to personal recent ill health, a friend took his 4 by 4 up through steep beech and chestnut forest to an easier start point. The profusion of spring and trumpet gentians, violas and many other flowers against a background of vast, empty mountain landscapes remain in the memory. After a period without walking, it was a privilege to be on a summit.

Descending M. Giovo, looking towards the Apuan Alps

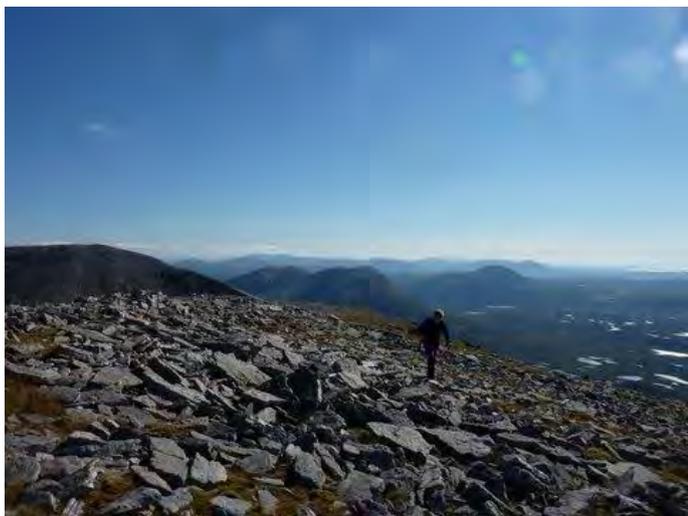
Foinaven, the massive grey-white 911m Corbett in NW Sutherland just short of Munro 914.4m status, beat us in August 2013 and 2014 due to weather and inability to attempt the long traverse of many summits with transport support. We attempted the climb twice from the A838 Durness road near Gualin House. The estate does not permit bicycles up Strath Dionard and the path, although excellent, is long and tedious. In 2013, in spite of initial sun, we beat an ignominious retreat in later mist and bad weather having failed to find a path from the valley floor.

Filled with resolution and optimism in 2014 we read a book¹. It was recommended to 'walk south between lochans and over a vast bog, aiming for the bulk of Ceann Garbh', (901m) follow 'a vague ridge', and gain access to the true summit Ganu Mor via another more sharply defined ridge.



The approach walk over the bog is approximately 4km. Maybe suitable after a long spell of dry weather this is a possible approach but the bog walk is awkward, tiring, relentless, circuitous, and in our experience, very wet. Reaching the summit of Ceann Garbh with some difficulty, the wind became more and more problematic. Yes, we failed again to reach the main summit, the final ridge impossible in the aforesaid wind. Compensations? The views over myriads of lochans towards Kinlochbervie, the sands of the West coast, Durness and Cape Wrath were exceptional.

Morag ascending Ceann Garbh, photo by Ian Brebner



The return, still in strong winds over kilometres of bog, burns, lochans, tall grasses and the inability to remain upright, still lingers painfully in the memory. At sunset, we gratefully accepted a 1km lift to the car from an Italian family who had called for a rescue vehicle from Tongue after several punctures. We offered our fluent Italian, 'Buona Sera' and 'Grazie' with more than usual fervour. It does seem true that Corbetts can be more difficult than the Munros.

Ian re ascending Ceann Garbh after assessing the wind was too strong to permit the ridge to the true summit.

¹ *Northern Highlands, Nick Williams, pocket mountains ltd. 2003.*

Jordan Holiday

Don Hodge

In 2013 Judy Renshaw and I decided to have an Autumn holiday in Jordan, having read an article in the Tuesday Climbing Club (TCC) magazine "Arete" and heard about Jordan from various other people. For the trek we decided that the only sensible way to do the trip was to go with a trekking company for part of the holiday. We used KE in Keswick just as the other TCC member had done, for the trip to Wadi Rum and Petra, and then organised another week there ourselves.

We flew to the Queen Alya airport close to Madaba, where we joined up with some of the other trekkers all with bright red KE issue holdalls, and were met by Yusaf our guide, who took us by coach to our hotel. Next morning all eleven of our group plus our guide, boarded the coach for the four hour trip along the Desert Highway to Wadi Rum. The road is a newish dual carriageway used by a lot of lorry traffic, which avoids most of the towns and villages, whereas another north-south road "the Kings Highway" goes through them. The route passes through a very dry and sandy terrain and you don't see much greenery on the way south. Although it is a dual carriageway, you often encounter cars driving towards you through the gaps in the central reservation, as they take short cuts to adjacent dwellings rather than do a 'U' turn further up the road!

I had not realised that much of Jordan is quite high, as we landed at over 500m and stayed over this height on our drive south. Wadi Rum is a very large area of sandstone outcrops rising from the desert level of 800m to their summits up to 1000m higher. We reached the visitors centre opposite the "Seven Pillars of Wisdom" and then Wadi Rum village in time for lunch at the Bedouin house of our other guide Saleem. Sitting on the floor, we had a very good lunch based on chicken, which was served with various cooked "salads" and fresh fruit for pudding.



After lunch, we walked into the sandstone outcrop above the village to Lawrence's Spring, where we saw practically the only flowing water over the holiday! We then descended and all squeezed into our 4-wheel drive truck, which took us to our first camp below Jebel Burdah. The trekking gang had already erected all the tents and had two blackened kettles ready, one with sweetened tea and the other unsugared. The kettles were kept warm by a smoky brushwood fire, which explained their colour. In addition to the two guides, there were two other staff who did all the cooking, setting up the tents and moving all our kitbags in another 4-wheel drive truck.

South from near Wadi Rum village



Sunset at this latitude comes suddenly, so you have to keep a torch handy as we had no moon visible and no other sources of light. Also as soon as the sun sets, it quickly gets cold and a fleece and hat were needed. Dinner was again good and based on chicken and was eaten around a low table, sitting cross legged (if you can) on the foam mattresses, which also served as our sleeping mattresses. The table had a couple of candles for lighting and a brushwood fire, but we found it necessary to use our head torches to eat using the spoon, which was the only eating implement available.

Sunset at our first campsite



We got up quite early each morning as breakfast was at 7.00am or even before, and we had to pack up our sleeping bags and carry our kit bags to the truck in time to leave by 7.30am. Breakfast and lunch were always served with pita bread, which was warmed on a grid supported on stones above a small brushwood fire. On the first day, we climbed the sandstone outcrop, opposite the campsite up to the Burdah Bridge.

It's a spectacular rock bridge, giving lots of opportunity for photography. Our guidebook did give a route to the summit of the outcrop, but it needed an abseil rope and involved grade 3 climbing so we did not attempt it. Just as we were going to descend, another trekking group arrived and they had set up a rope on a short steep section below the bridge, so we used it for protection. Our guides took us down a different way via a steep groove directly towards our campsite, and we wondered if they were trying to find out our capabilities on the rock. Back at camp, we had a lunch followed by a rest period of about 1 hour, when the sun was at its hottest, however, we found it cold sitting in the shade. In the afternoon, we walked south from our camp across the desert in the direction of Um Fruth and climbed onto another rock bridge on the way to our next camp.

The Burdah Bridge

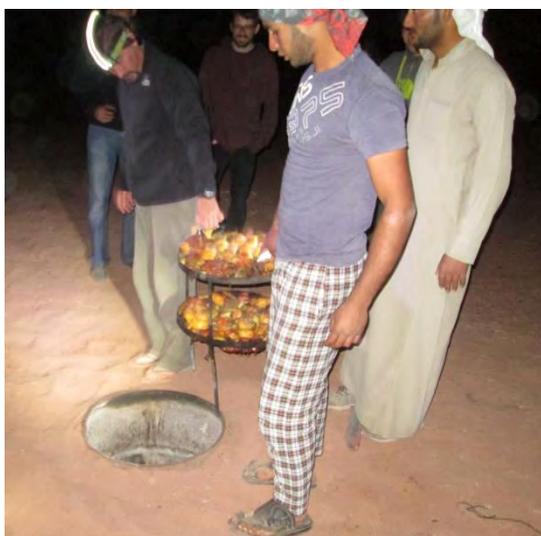
Next day we all squeezed again into our truck which took us to another sandstone outcrop Jebel Khasch. We climbed up to a summit plateau at 1700m giving stunning views in all directions before descending a different way to our transport, which took us to our lunch spot. In the afternoon and after a rest, we walked through the desert to our next camp.



The following day, we were taken by truck to the base of the highest point in Jordan, Jebel Um Adaami at 1830m. The climb to the top was not difficult, but one had to get used to using the good friction, which dry sandstone provides. Our guide Yusaf had picked some herbs on the way to the summit and had brought one of the blackened kettles and water. He found some brushwood on the way, so that he could boil the water to make herbal tea. At the top we were very close to the border with Saudi Arabia and it was the first time that we could get a phone signal on our mobile phones from networks across the border.

Ascending Jebel Um Adaami

We descended by the same route back to the truck, which took us to our lunch spot near Wadi Nugra.

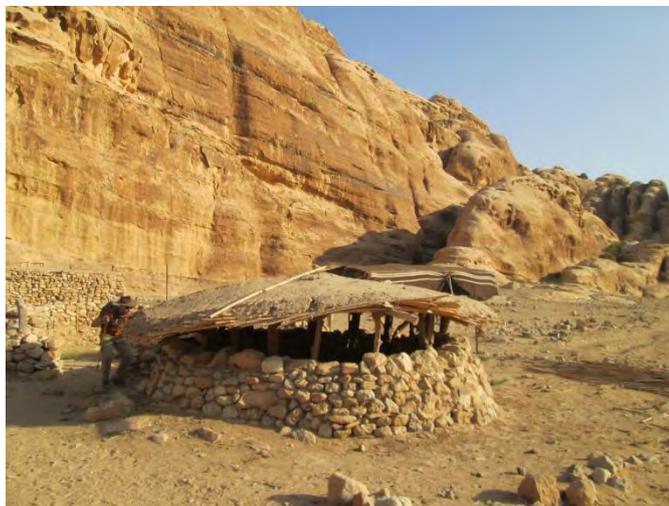


After lunch, we walked quite a long way through soft sand to a permanent campsite, comprising cloth covered lodges with beds and one shower! Other trekking groups were staying there and we were all fed in the evening with a meal that was cooked on hot embers in an “oven” under the sand. As usual, it was chicken, but the two tiered cooking arrangement, included all the vegetables and everything was cooked perfectly.

Lifting out dinner from its underground oven

In the morning, we took a short ride in the truck, to the base of the outcrop closest to Wadi Rum village. We followed the guides up an indistinct path to a col, where one of the party decided to show off his cragging skills on a short overhang. Unfortunately, his soft sandstone hold broke and he was lucky to only fall a short way, sustaining a few minor grazes and bruises. After the guide had done a bit of first aid, we descended to Wadi Rum village, where once again we were given lunch at Salim's Bedouin house.

After lunch it was time to leave Wadi Rum and make our way to Petra (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) on a comfortable small coach on tarmac roads! To get there, you drive over a ridge at about 1600m and we were told that the road can get blocked in winter by over a metre of snow.



The Neolithic village at Little Petra



The Monastery at Petra

Our plush hotel was just outside Old Petra and at 7.30 next morning, we were taken by the coach to “Little Petra” with a Neolithic village, which was empty of tourists at that time in the morning. From here we walked a back trail to the “Monastery”, one of the best rock-hewn buildings in Petra. At this point, we met up with the many tourists who had climbed up the 800 steps from below, either on foot or on the back of a donkey. On our descent, we passed many carved rock-faces and our guide told us the significance of each place. At the bottom of the steps, there were so many fantastic carved tombs and temples, that it was difficult to stop taking photographs. We stopped to buy sandwiches for those who had not brought any lunch, and then Yusaf led us up a small path away from the main area, to a tea place run by a Bedouin who lives in an adjacent building carved out of the rock. After our stop, we took another small track which descended towards a Roman amphitheatre and then to an area where a mosaic floor was covered by a canopy to protect the vulnerable display from the elements.

Passing by very many carved rock-faces, we eventually entered a siq (gorge), which led to the world famous “Treasury”. There were very many tourists here having their photos taken against the building and with the many camels for hire. Normally the tourists ride them near to the Treasury, but two of our group paid just to have photos of themselves just sitting on the camels with the Treasury in view. We exited from Petra via the narrow siq (where some tourists had drowned some years before, when they were caught in flash floods). That day was dry and hot and the main danger was being run-over by donkeys, horses or horse-drawn carriages.

The next day was the final one with our group, as most would be going back to the airport in the early afternoon. Judy and I had arranged to stay two further days there, but staying in a cheaper back-packers hotel further away from the Petra entrance.

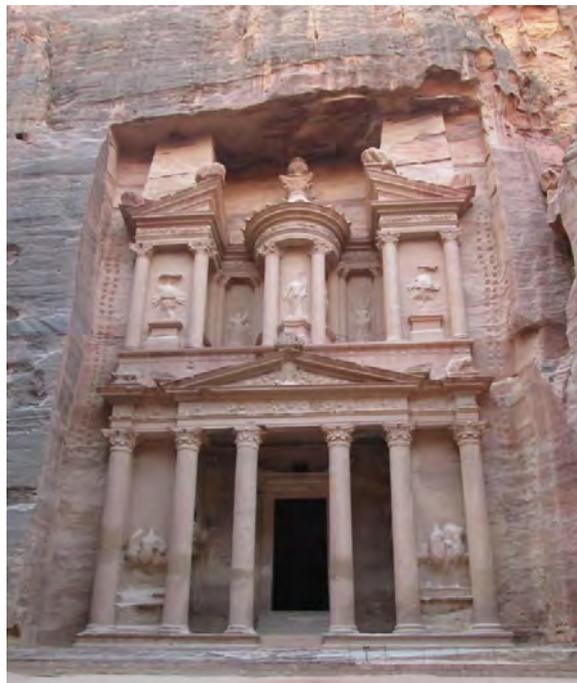


We decided to follow a route in our guidebook, which headed north from the entrance along a siq with an ancient water channel cut into its side. We started correctly, but missed where the siq and water channel turned left and eventually found ourselves at the “fortress”. Since it was impossible to cross from one deep siq to another, we retraced our steps and found the correct route, which led to our goal, the remains of an aqueduct. Here we turned left and followed a very narrow siq (3 to 4ft), which also involved climbing down 6ft drops. Luckily it did not rain, as escape from this 100ft deep gorge would have been impossible.

Rock domes below Jebel Khubtha

We eventually emerged into the open and continued towards the “House of Dorotheos” until we found the steps up to Jebel umm al ‘Amr. The path to Jebel Khubtha (1130m) passes by very many rock domes and the guide warns you “to remember the way, as it is a real maze up here”. We followed a few cairns until we found the important steps cut into the skyline ridge, which allowed us to reach the top from where we had a very good view all round and over Petra

The first part of the descent was straightforward, but we went the wrong way at our previous top and found ourselves looking down onto the Treasury and had to retrace our steps back to the top, before we could start our descent and eventually walk back to our new hotel.



The Treasury at Petra

We had one more day to explore Petra and we decided to go to the summit of Jebel Harun (1270m), the reputed tomb of Aaron, brother of Moses. We passed by one or two Bedouin houses, where the children called out in English to try and persuade us to buy tea. We followed our guidebook route up to a col, where we mistook the description and headed for the wrong mountain top! After some time, we realised our mistake as we could see the white tomb on a distant summit. We headed towards it, which necessitated losing some height, before climbing up the flank until we reached the correct path. We passed a couple of tourists descending on donkeys with their driver, and then followed the path towards the top. The last part of the ascent is up a partly carved and concrete staircase and we reached the summit with its shining white tomb. From here, we had a 360 degree view in all directions, but unfortunately that day it was a bit hazy. The return trip was easy as we followed the correct track to the col and subsequently passed the Treasury again and back to Petra entrance.



On route to Jebel Harun

That was the end of the “trekking” part of the holiday. All that was left for the next few days, was to head south for swimming amongst the coral in the Red Sea, then drive north in a hire car to float in the Dead Sea, finishing up at Jerash, an excellently preserved Roman city dating from 170BC, but that is another story.

Up to the Eagle's Nest and a hasty retreat: Don and Judy's latest klettersteig venture

Judy Renshaw

Don and I usually spend our main summer holiday doing *via ferrata* climbing routes (*klettersteig* in German speaking countries). We have already done almost all of the Italian ones in the Dolomites, some several times, so have been exploring those in other countries in more recent years. Switzerland has a good number of them, so one holiday was spent around Grindelwald and then Gstaad; France also kept us busy with *via ferrata* routes for a couple of years.

Austria, however, seems to have the most *klettersteig* routes now; some are older mountain routes but there are hundreds of new ones, some being added all the time. We invested in a massive tome of a guidebook, containing at least 300 or more. It comes with a DVD, from which you can print out individual route details so fortunately there is no need to carry the book up the hill. The first edition we had was all in German, so we had the additional challenge of understanding it! The latest one has some words of English on each route, which helps a great deal in finding them. Now we are trying to work through as many of the Austrian routes as possible, weather and ability permitting. In 2013, we did many very good *klettersteig* climbs, helped somewhat by the purchase of new safety gear for clipping onto wires, which gave us greater confidence.

Our Austrian *klettersteig* holiday this year was different from usual, in two ways. Firstly we spent most of it in Bavaria, Germany; secondly we left early due to continuing rain and low cloud in the entire Alpine area, which coincided with the start of good weather in the UK.

Since the weather at home began to get warm in May and June, we were hoping for a good trip to Austria for yet more exciting *klettersteig* climbing in July. However, on checking the forecast in all the likely areas before leaving, I was dismayed to see forecasts of rain just about everywhere for 10 days and possibly longer. The best area looked to be around Salzburg, for the first few days at least. Since we had already done many of the routes south and east of the city in previous years, we headed into the small nose of Bavaria that dips south into Austria, just west of Salzburg. The first few days were hot and sunny, as hoped. We found a good campsite with a swimming pool and excellent restaurant near Berchtesgaden and set up camp. A stroll down the road took us to a fast flowing river, good for paddling, and some wild raspberries and strawberries.

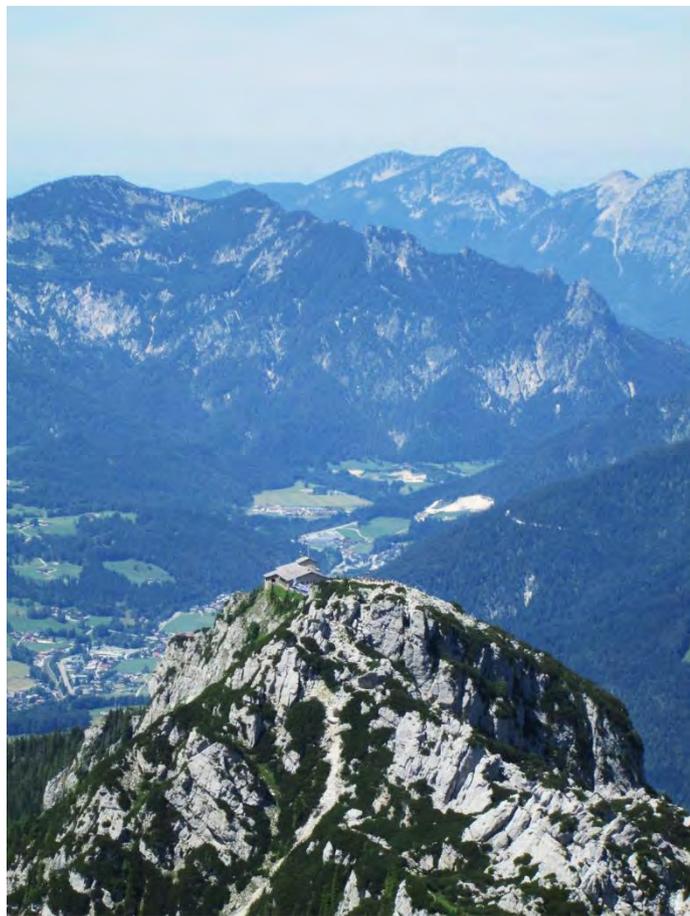


We did the nearest *klettersteig* route the next day, at the head of the Königsee. A path from the lake led up past a bobsleigh run (used only in winter) to the Grünstein Klettersteig. The first section has 2 options, Grade C and Grade E (very hard). Since we were still tired from the journey, had not climbed anything since last summer and the rock was damp after overnight rain, we opted for the easier one. The main part was pleasant, a bit awkward in places but not too difficult. We stopped for lunch at a col with great views, watching a few other people go past. There appeared to be a further choice of routes up to the final top, which had not been indicated in the guidebook. One of these traversed around the side and 3 people went that way.

View of Königsee from Kehlsteinhaus

We decided to follow, even after one person came back, saying it was too hard and she could not get up it! She was not joking; it was a newly constructed 'sport' route, with several overhanging ledges to pull up onto and was strenuous all the way. So much for our easy start to the holiday! Though not listed, we guessed it would be graded at least D/E. But we did manage to finish it and were soon standing on the top of the Grünstein, looking over the lake and surrounding area, with a view our campsite in the distance. It rained for a while on the way down, but fortunately not for long.

The next day we chose a route listed in the guidebook as the Mannlsteig, via the Mannlgrat ridge, also very close to Berchtesgaden. The book mentioned having to take a shuttle bus to the 'Kehlsteinhaus' to reach the start, so we had expected a small bus going up a track to a mountain hut, which is not uncommon. However, the reality could not have been more different. We drove up to the village of Obersalzberg to find a series of gigantic modern car parks and prominent notices to the bus station. There we bought tickets from a large kiosk and were allocated specific places on the 10.10 bus. This turned out to be not just one but four full-sized buses, all full, with a recorded commentary in both German and English. By now we had realised that this was the famous Eagle's Nest, Hitler's command centre and location for entertaining dignitaries in WWII.

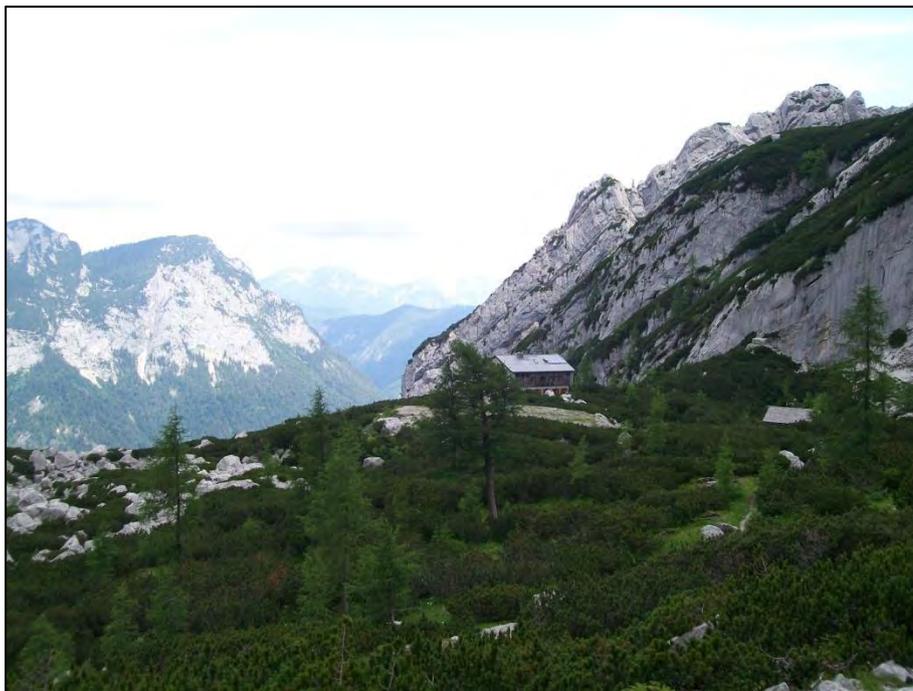


The Kehlsteinhaus had been built in 1937-38, as had the steep winding road towards it, and completed in 1938, in time to be a present to Hitler on his 50th birthday. The commentary elaborated at length on the construction of the road, which is said to be the most spectacular in Germany, with sweeping views and several tunnels on the way up. Only a very brief mention was made of Hitler and the location's role in the war. We found this very interesting, especially in the light of the hundreds of tourists, both German and foreign, who visit it every day. The bus dropped us at a viewing area and a tunnel to a lift deep inside the mountain, which takes you up to the building itself. The lift has polished brass surfaces and mirrors that look very much 1930s, so we assume they are original. Following capture by the allies in 1945, the building was returned to the state of Bavaria in 1960 and is now a restaurant and venue for cultural events. The views of the mountains and surrounding countryside were impressive and it was not difficult to imagine the Nazi leaders believing they could conquer the world from here. At 1834m, it is almost impregnable, with steep cliffs on all sides. From the campsite below, we had been able to see a light on the mountain, high above, so now we knew what it was.

Kehlsteinhaus in an impregnable position

After suitable pauses to look at the views, it took us some time to find our way through the crowds and the network of paths to the start of the route proper. It was reassuring to see a notice telling you to go no further, the path ahead was for experts only; this meant it had to be the way to the klettersteig along the Mannlgrat ridge. The crowds soon thinned out to a few parties of walking/climbing people.

The route itself was a traditional type of ridge path, with protected sections and some climbing, including a squeeze through a short tunnel in the rock. The views were extensive on all sides, including those down towards the Königsee. The day was hot, so we were glad of a shaded ledge for our lunch stop. We reached the top of the ridge but did not have time to go on to the top of the Hoher Göll, the highest summit in the area (2522m). The way down was steeper than much of the ascent and protected by wires most of the way, so we kept our ferrata gear on. This path took us down to a col below the ridge, from which you could see the Kehlsteinhaus standing out prominently. We passed a normal Alpine hut, the Putschellerhaus, stopped for a quick drink and descended to a small road which wound through forest and eventually took us back to the car park at about 6pm. Fortunately it was not far to drive back the campsite so we still had time for a short swim before the light faded completely.



After this long day, we had an idea of doing something shorter the next day, but the weather was still good, so we headed towards another interesting route. This was a few kilometres away at Ramsau, near the Hintersee. The initial walk up to a hut, the Blaeishütte, took a couple of hours. Several other groups were going that way, many of them carrying climbing gear as there is plenty of good rock close to the hut. We also saw a large party of army people on a steep climb that was not in our guidebook, nor in the updated version that we now have.

The Blaeishutte

From the hut you enter a large rock bowl, with patches of snow in many places and grey rocky ridges all around. Our route took us through part of the bowl and up to a ridge onto the Schartenspitze. Since the climbing was easy (grade B) we did not need to use harnesses but the setting was spectacular. We saw no one on our route until we reached the top (2153m), where there were 3 people with whom we chatted briefly. At that stage the day was very hot, so I was disappointed to hear that the Hintersee was not suitable for swimming. However, part way down the descent (which was the same as the way up) the clouds started to roll in and rumbles of thunder became louder and louder. We actually jogged down the lower part of the path and managed to reach the car just as the first heavy drops of rain fell. These turned into a magnificent thunderstorm, with wind gusts that broke some tree branches and knocked over stands and noticeboard outside the shops in the town. No swimming was done that day.



Don on the approach to Schartenspitze



Don on the summit of Schartenspitze

It rained on and off during the night and the next day started with damp and low cloud. By then we were happy to have an easy day, so a walk around the lake was acceptable. It was more interesting than we expected, as there is no official path but people had obviously been along the edge, with some balancing on rocks in the water necessary as well as and some short scrambles. We were surprised to meet a few other people exploring it too. Back in camp the ground was getting pretty muddy, after a fair amount of rain which continued in to the night. The following day we spent ages checking forecasts on the internet but nowhere showed anything at all promising, so we opted to move to a campsite we knew, near Zell am See in Austria, which was less muddy, if nothing else.

We stayed a further 3 or 4 days at Zell am See, managing to do two good, low level klettersteig routes at Weissbach, one of which we only discovered through the tourist office. The harder one (Weisse Gams KS, Grade D) was quite strenuous and awkward with the rock being wet in places. We met a Danish family who let us past as they were struggling on the harder sections. In the afternoon we went up an impressive narrow gorge with waterfalls, which has with a suspended walkway for several kilometres. It has a controlled entrance with a fee to go in, but is well worth seeing. Below it, a timber plant uses the powerful flow of the water to drive its machinery.



Judy on Weisse Gams KS

The weather continued with very low cloud and dampness each day, so we did not feel inclined to go up high to do wet climbing routes. One day we had a nice walk above the campsite in reasonable conditions, but it stayed too cloudy to go up very high. Another day we had intended to do the Hochkranz, a small peak above Weissbach, but were prevented for several reasons. First, the mountain road leading to the start was completely closed all day for a car rally. Crowds of people, well supplied with cans of beer, lined the steep, windy road up the mountain. Souped-up cars raced around the bends, looking seriously unsafe – including for the spectators - on the wet surface. This was quite interesting for a while, but not for too long, so we made our way with difficulty along the roadside behind the onlookers to the start of our path. Shortly after we reached the main path the drizzle turned to torrential rain. We continued for a while then took a short cut down, past the klettersteig route we had done a couple of days before. Much later it cleared enough for a wander around the lake at Zell, and even a brisk swim, but further checking of forecasts persuaded us to set off for home almost a week earlier than planned.

The damp theme seemed to have been consistent throughout much of Europe at that time. Our usual campsite stop at Bad Durkheim, near Mannheim, was almost deserted. Normally it is full of families and activity, with games and pony rides, people cycling around and swimming in the lake. This time we had the pick of almost any place we wanted and were told it had been their worst year for business in a long time. However, it just happened to be the final of the world cup that night, shown live on the TV in the restaurant – so at least we were in the right place to enjoy the celebrations as Germany won. The main Alps, too, appeared to have had a bad season, with many reported avalanches and accidents due to poor weather. We understood that some other people on the ABM/AC meet also came back early due to the weather.

The timing of our retreat turned out well in the end. It clearly had rained at home while we had been away, as all the water butts and buckets were full. Then it turned to sunshine and warmth almost immediately, so we had a lovely few weeks around the garden and our own swimming places nearby (not admitting to anyone resembling a work contact that we were back). Next year, we may have to consider going out at a different time if we want to get many of our desired routes climbed, but it is difficult to know when might be best.

OBITUARIES

Peter Goodwin (1942 – 2014)



It is with great sadness that I report the death of Peter Goodwin. He fell on the final descent from Ruinsival towards Harris on the Isle of Rum in the Scottish Highlands, on Saturday 23rd August 2014. A few hours earlier, he had talked with friends, who were doing a shorter route. By all accounts, it was a beautiful day and he passed away at a happy time in his life in the hills he loved. He was the adored father of Kate and Dominic. A cherished granddad and brother. Loved and so dearly missed by all his family and friends.

Peter was born in Hereford on 21st August 1942. He was an accomplished sportsman, playing for Ledbury Rugby Club, and also a successful tennis player. From an early age, he loved the countryside, particularly the hills, becoming more enthusiastic when he finished playing competitive sports; he spent much of his time in the hills after he retired.

Peter completed the Munros in 1995 (No. 1413) with his son, Dominic. He also climbed 51 of the Blodig/Goedeke/Dumler list of 60 Alpine summits, all unguided - quite an achievement considering that he was already 50 when he climbed his first Alpine summit! However, he was more interested in spending time in his favourite places, rather than slavish list ticking. He frequently returned to the Scottish Highlands, and especially liked to visit some of the more remote areas such as Knoydart and Torridon.

Peter was a very active member of the Swiss Alpine Club (ABMSAC) and Over the Hill Club. He also walked with the South Shropshire Rambling Club and West Bromwich Mountaineering Club. He was a member of the Austrian Alpine Club, and will be known to some members of the Alpine Club from joint meets with other clubs. He participated in the Scottish Coast to Coast challenge on 14 occasions.

The funeral was at Hereford Crematorium in September.

Donations received in Peter's memory were divided between The John Muir Trust and Lochaber Mountain Rescue. The John Muir Trust does work in the Scottish Highlands to preserve our natural heritage. In recent years, Peter did voluntary work for them on several occasions, often doing work of a very physical nature, despite his age. It is a charity that was very close to his heart. Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team assisted in the search for Peter. The outstanding courage and bravery of these men and women (and Tara, the dog) who search the mountains over a wide area of Scotland all year round in any conditions is highly commendable. This is entirely voluntary, and the team rely on donations for equipment and training.

Dominic Goodwin

Postscript to Mike Pinney

In January 2015 over 100 climbers and friends were invited by the Yeovil Mountaineering Club for the official opening of the Bouldering Wall at Sherborne in memory of Mike Pinney. The wall was built by generous donation from Margaret Moore, Mike's sister, and Sherborne Girls School.

Following a donation from Mike's sister Margaret Moore and her husband Nicholas, the Yeovil Mountaineering Club (YMC) has built a 4.2 metre long bouldering wall at the Oxley Sports Centre, Bradford Road, Sherborne. The official opening involved speeches from senior staff at the school and the Yeovil Mountaineering Club chairman, Rick Snell and an old friend, Gerry Martyn.



Rick Snell, a friend of Mr Pinney's for more than 40 years, said: "Mike was always the most modest and generous man, and a careful climber. He was always keen to encourage others, and would be delighted to know that some of his estate had been used to just this purpose. Although not a great user of bouldering walls himself it would have given him great pleasure to know that he was responsible for this addition to our club's ability to develop climbers' skills and maybe encourage more people to start a sport which might lead to "proper" climbing. I'm sure he would have been one of the first to give the new wall a try."

The Moore family at the opening.

Moira Lyons-Montgomery, who knew Mr Pinney for around ten years, speaking on behalf of the YMC she said: "We had already been working towards putting a bouldering wall in the Oxley but it is thanks to the incredibly generous donation from Mike's family that the project has finally come to fruition. I think this is a wonderful way for everyone to remember Mike. He did a lot of work with young climbers and I'm sure he would be happy to know that this facility will be used by future generations of young climbers."

After the official opening the wall was eagerly used by a number of the young people and guests.

Representing the ABMSAC were Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Belinda and James Baldwin and Mike and Anne Goodyer. It was a very friendly evening meeting up with old and new friends. The evening concluded with a group of over 20 enjoying supper in an Italian restaurant.

Mike Goodyer

(The quotes are from the Western Gazette)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

Minutes of the meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 7th February 2015

The president Ed Bramley was in the Chair, approximately 26 members were present.

Apologies for absence: Derek Buckley, Mary Boulter, David Harland, Antonio Barlen, Terry Shaw, Buff Dolling, Sylvia Mercer, Ian Mateer, Andy Hayes, Pamela Harris-Andrews.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 1st February 2014

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved. Proposed Andy Burton, seconded Belinda Baldwin.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Election of Officers and Committee:

Mike Parsons was elected as the next President. Proposed Don Hodge, seconded Heather Eddowes.

Ed Bramley was elected the Membership Secretary. Proposed Marian Parsons, seconded Richard Winter.

All other members of the committee are to remain as before. The committee members are therefore as follows:

President	–	Mike Parsons
Vice president		Jim Strachan
Treasurer		James Baldwin
Hut booking secretary	–	Marian Parsons
Membership secretary	–	Ed Bramley
Meets secretary	–	Andy Burton
Secretary		Dick Murton
Hon. HMC Representative		Marian Parsons
Editor		Mike Goodyer
Co-opted members		Heather Eddowes, Pamela Harris-Andrews

Hon Treasurer's report

The report and accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and presented by James Baldwin.

It was proposed that the subscription bands for 2015 - 2016 be increased to:

Single Membership £23 - £27, 2nd. Member at same address £15 - £18, Junior Membership £10 - £14.

This increase is to cover the increase in BMC fees which took place this January (reduced from the originally proposed £2:00).

The accounts were accepted. Proposed Steve Bowes, seconded Heather Eddowes.

It was also agreed that Malcolm Reynolds should act as independent inspector of accounts. Proposed James Baldwin, seconded Myles O'Reilly.

President's report

In giving my report for 2014, I think it is only correct for me to start by remembering the passing of Mike Pinney in such tragic circumstances in March. Mike, who held many of the offices in the club, including being its President in its centenary year, will be sorely missed, both as a fellow mountaineer, and a friend.

Unfortunately, tragedy on the hills has struck the club twice this year, with Peter Goodwin suffering a fatal accident on Rhum in August. The club has also lost members due to old age, and we particularly remember Bert Bowes at this time.

With the loss of Mike, a person who performed many key roles in both the club and the limited company, it would be understandable if the normal functioning of the club was significantly affected as a consequence. The fact that this has not been the case is particularly due to the efforts of the committee, whether this has been in taking on additional responsibilities, or providing wise counsel at such a time. My thanks to you all.

One of the aspects of the club that Mike and many of us are rightly proud about is that we have a physical base in the Lake District, the George Starkey hut. With his Limited Company hat on, Mike was instrumental in securing the renewal of the lease of the hut, which I'm very pleased to be able to report has been successfully secured for another thirty years. To recognise the role Mike has played in the club, the committee thought it would be fitting for a photomontage of Mike to be installed at the hut, and again I'm very pleased to be able to report that Mike's sister, Margaret, and her husband, Nicholas, were able to join us and be part of the occasion.

Whilst on the subject of the hut, many of us will be aware that last year Don Hodge stepped down from the post of Hut Representative, a post he had held since 1978. On a more practical note, for many years, Don has also led the hut maintenance meets, which has helped to ensure that we continue to have a club hut which has stood the tests of time and use. In recognition of his services to the club, we would therefore like to award honorary membership of the ABMSAC to Don.

Returning to matters closer to hand, our meets programme continues to be strong and varied, both at home and abroad. My thanks to everybody who either attended or organised meets, and to Andy Burton as the Meets Secretary. Special thanks to John Dempster, who has added a new Loch Eil meet to the Scottish programme, and also to Roger James who, with some dogged persistence, has finally made a meet to the far north of Scotland a reality.

Our UK meets in 2014 covered many areas, including Scotland, the Lake District, Peak District, and Wales, as well as the perennial favourite, Devon. Our 2014 overseas meets programme started with a difference with a trek in the Sahara in February. Our summer alpine meets program remains strong, with the hotel meet taking place at Pontresina, the camping meet at Cogne and a via ferrata based meet in Cortina.

An integral part of our club is staying in contact with one another, whether that's at the various meetings or through the various publications that are produced, and I'd like to say thanks to Mike Goodyer as editor for all his work. Not only do we have a new style journal, which has been very favourably received by members, but we now even have a club Facebook page, which helps people keep in touch with what is currently happening. At the same time, we are not losing touch with the past, and all the club journals, from 1975 to date, are now available to view on line via the club web site, something we have been able to achieve thanks to the bequest from Alasdair Andrews.

This will be my last speech as President, so I'd like to conclude by saying thank you to you all for supporting me over the last three years, which is much appreciated. Like many clubs, the future holds many challenges for us, particularly

in attracting and retaining new members. What I am certain of though is that if the support I have received during my term in office is anything to go by, then we are more than capable as a club of meeting those challenges.

Any other business:

John Dempster commented on the declining and aging membership, and queried what was proposed to maintain / increase the membership so that the club does not become extinct as appears to be happening with the TCC.

Mike Parson responded that he sees this as perhaps his key role as president during his term. Other key areas include preserving the heritage of the club whilst maintaining / increasing the membership, and to improve the systems for running the club and the hut. He would like as a starting point, to see each existing member propose at least one new member.

The decision making re the hut is complex, and particularly with the potential demise of the TCC, there may not be a need for the ABMSAC Ltd, and separate hut committee. The structure is to be reviewed and simplified if at all possible.

Date of next meeting:

It is proposed the next AGM will be held in February 2016, to coincide with the Annual Dinner (6th February assuming this is the first weekend as usual). The details will be confirmed at a later date once hotel availability, costs etc. are known.

The meeting closed at approximately 6:25 pm.

Dick Murton, Secretary, March 2015

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB Ltd

Minutes of the meeting held at Glenridding Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 7th February 2015.

Present: Directors - Ed Bramley (Chairman), Marian Parsons, Don Hodge, James Baldwin (Company Secretary), and about 18 members.

Apologies for absence: Directors: Peter Clarkson, Derek Buckley.
Members: Antonio Barlan, Terry Shaw, Buff Dolling, Sylvia Mercer

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 1st February 2014

The minutes of the 2013 AGM were approved. Proposed by Colin Armstrong and seconded by Marian Parsons. There were no matters arising.

Director's report and accounts to 30th September 2014

The Chairman reported that the finances were stable but that bed night income had reduced in the previous year. He went onto to comment on some of the challenges the directors had met after the untimely death of Mike Pinney who was both Company Secretary and Hut booking contact. He thanked Marian Parsons for stepping in as Hut booking contact and to James Baldwin who came back onto the Board as Company Secretary. The Accounts were examined and approved by the Directors on 30th January 2015. They were then laid before the AGM and accepted.

Renewal of lease.

James Baldwin stated that the new 30 year lease had been signed and that it was currently with the Land Registry. He anticipated that it would be returned from the Land Registry later this month. He went onto confirm that whilst the new lease was for 30 years there was a get out clause which could be invoked in the September of any year giving twelve months' notice of termination. The lease was a fully repairing one and it would be for the Company and the lease holder to agree what level of repair was required if the lease was terminated. Brook Midgley reminded the AGM that when the lease was originally taken out the building was a shell and in very poor condition.

Any other business.

In response to a question from Dick Murton, Judy Renshaw stated that the TCC were in decline and that she anticipated that they would wind up the club at the AGM in two years' time. Don Hodge, as Chairman of the TCC considered that it might be possible for surplus funds held by the TCC to be transferred to the ABMSAC Ltd. He thought that a specific project such as the replacement of the south window would be suitable. He went on to state that the TCC AGM was due in late February and that their position would be clearer after that meeting.

The meeting closed at 6:37 pm.

James Baldwin, Company Secretary, March 2015

HISTORIC 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 C 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
 1969-1971 Frank Solari
 1966-1968 Vincent O Cohen MC

1972-1974 D G Lambley FRCS
 1975-1977 M Bennett
 1978-1980 P S Boulter FRCS
 1981-1984 J P Ledeboer
 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
 2009-2012 M Pinney
 2012-2015 E A Bramley
 2015 M J Parsons

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 F A 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 Prof D C Watts & D F Penlington
 2003-2004 D F Penlington
 2004-2007 W L Peebles
 2007-2010 T J Shaw
 2010-2013 Mrs B Baldwin
 2013- J H Strachan

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 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 F A 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 MEETS SECRETARIES

1971-1974	S N Beare	1989-1994	F B Suter	2009-2010	J F Harris
1975-1979	A Strawther	1994-2001	M J Goodyer	2010-2013	M Parsons
1979-1983	A I Andrews	2001-2003	E A Bramley	2013-	A Burton
1984-1988	J C Berry	2004-2009	J C Foster		

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES (Formerly Honorary Registrar)

1965-1968	George Starkey	1978-1980	A N Sperry	1994-2003	Dr M J Eddowes
1969-1971	F A W Schweitzer FRCS	1980-1984	J W Eccles	2004-2012	E A Bramley
1972-1974	J E Jesson	1985-1991	T G B Howe MC	2012 -2014	M Pinney
1975-1977	D J Abbott	1991-1993	H M Eddowes		

HONORARY EDITORS

(The following officers carried out duties of Hon. Editor until post was created in 1949: 1909-11 J A B Bruce, 1912-28 J A B Bruce & A N Andrews,

1929-48	M N Clarke).	1987-1992	M R Loewy	2002-2009	R B Winter
1949-1962	M N Clarke	1992-1995	F B Suter	2009-	M J Goodyer
1963-1964	W R H Jeurwine				
1965-1968	G A Hutcheson				
1968-1974	Graham A Daniels				
1975-1986	S M Freeman				

HONORARY EDITOR NEWSLETTER

1992-2002 M I C Baldwin

HONORARY TREASURERS

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

HONORARY AUDITORS

1909-1914	A B Challis	1957-1967	R A Tyssen-Gee	1985-1999	D Bennett
1915-1922	Reginald Graham	1968-1974	A Hart	1999-2005	K N Ballantine
1923-1930	W L Adams	1975-1977	J Llwelyn - Jones	2005-2009	P McCulloch
1931-1940	F Oughton	1978-1979	G A Daniels	2009-2011	N Harding
1941-1952	J A Marsden-Neye	1979-1980	C J Sandy	2012 -	M Reynolds
1953-1956	S E Orchard	1981-1984	N Moore		

Posts no longer in use**HON. CHAIRMAN - HUT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1974-1977	J P Ledeboer	1987-1990	D W Edwards	1999-2005	W B Midgley
1978-1980	D R Hodge	1991-1994	D Beer (TCC)	2005-2010	S Bridge (TCC)
1980-1987	W B Midgley	1995-1998	S Maudsley (TCC)	2010-2012	D R Hodge

HONORARY LIBRARIANS

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

HONORARY SOCIAL SECRETARIES

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

HONORARY SOLICITORS

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

CURRENT HONORARY MEMBERS

Hector Meir, Brooke Midgley, Wendell Jones, Don Hodge

Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club – Membership Details 2015

Useful Contacts

George Starkey Hut Warden and Hut Booking Secretary

Members must book beds in the Hut before the visit to ensure space is available

Marian Parsons

Decollage, Patterdale, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0NL

E-mail: mpparsons1207@googlemail.com

Tel: 01768-482437

Tuesday Climbing Club Secretary

Maureen Stiller

20, Parsonage Road, Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9JG

E-mail: mo@stiller.org.uk

Tel 01273-494210

Oread Mountaineering Club – we have reciprocal rights at the following Huts

Hut at Rhyd Ddu, North Wales

Hut booking secretary – Derek Pike

19, St. John's Drive, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6SD

E-mail: derekpike1234@btinternet.com

Tel: 01332 670459

Hut at Heathy Lea, Baslow (Grid Ref: SK 273722): Twenty places mixed, offering basic accommodation, 12 in the cottage and 8 in the barn

Hut booking secretary – Derek Pike,

19 St. Johns Drive, Chaddesden, Derby, Derbyshire, DE216SD

E mail: derekpike1234@btinternet.com

Tel: 01332 670459