



2017

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE
SWISS ALPINE CLUB



Journal

MEETS PROGRAMME 2017

Date	Meet and Venue	Meet Leader
February 3-5	The Annual Dinner and AGM, Inn on the Lake, Glenridding	Brooke Midgley
March 18 - 21	The Whitehouse, Blacklunans, Glenshee, Scotland	John Dempster
March 31 - April 2	New Members Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mary Eddowes
April 27 - May 1	Douglas, Hotel based meet, Isle of Man	Judy Renshaw
April 28 - May 1	Royal Oak, Hurdlow, Derbyshire Bunkhouse/Camping	Andy Burton
May 14 - 20	Isle of Skye and Kintail, Sligachan Bunkhouse and Ratagan YH	Judy Renshaw
June 2 - 4	Joint ABM/AC Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Sandy Allan (AC)
June 23 - 25	Rhyd Ddu, Oread Club Hut, North Wales	Ed Bramley
June 30 - July 7	Hotel Alpine Meet, Selva/Wolkenstein, Val Gardena, N Italy	Pam Harris-Andrews
July 15 - August 5	Camping Joint Alpine Meet, Vicosoprano, Bregaglia, Switzerland	Keith Lambley
August 14 - 20	ABM Summer Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Judy Renshaw
September 1 - 3	GS Hut maintenance meet, Patterdale	HMC
September 9 - 17	Walking in the Pirin Mountains, Bansko, Bulgaria	Judy Renshaw
September 15 - 17	Beer Meet, Devon	James Baldwin
September 22 - 24	Alpine Reunion Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	John Kentish
October 6 - 8	Brecon Beacons, New Inn, Bwlch, S Wales	Paul Stock
October 13 - 16	Autumn Scottish Meet, Strathpeffer	Phillip Hands
October 20 - 22	Presidents Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Mike Parsons
Dec 28 - Jan 2	ABM Twixmas/New Year Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	Judy Renshaw

LONDON WINTER LECTURES

December 5	Expedition to Mount Logan	Cathy O'Dowd (AAC)
January 3	Route 66 - A climbing road trip across the Southern USA	Dominic Oughton (RC)
February 7	The West Ridge of Taulliraju, Peru	Rose Pearson (AAC)
March 7	Trekking in Peru	Judy Renshaw (TCC)

ABMSAC JOURNAL 2017

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to this years Journal. Last year we had a total of 12 meets in the UK and three in Europe. There was an increase in the number of UK meets compared to the previous year with the reintroduced of summer and Christmas meets at the Hut. In addition, the Skye meet was reestablished and we had a new venue - Brecon Beacons. These proved to be popular enough to include in this years programme. We also visited Italy, France and Poland in the year. Many thanks to the Meet Secretary, Andy Burton, and the meet leaders for setting up the programme.

I get sent meet reports from the meet leaders and photos from members during the year and I add these to the website. In addition, 'live' reports and photos are posted to Facebook - which are well received. There are now over 80 members on our Facebook page. This means that there are opportunities for members to keep up to date with what we are doing on meets. The Journal uses the reports and a selection of photos from the website to record the years activities.

During the year a new partnership with the Alpine Club was set up to run the George Starkey Hut. The hut is now looked after by the George Starkey Hut Limited and James Baldwin, the Company Secretary, has kindly written a short article about the new arrangements.

At this years Annual Dinner Mike Parsons asked for members to commit to getting more people to join the Association. So it is timely that the Membership Secretary, Ed Bramley, has written a review using the latest membership information.

Thanks also goes to the members have have contributed to the Journal with articles and photos.

I hope you enjoy the Journal.

Mike Goodyer, Editor, June 2017

Cover Photo: Tatras Border Ridge. By Ed Bramley

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS



Great Dodd looking towards Blencathra

On September 1st, 2016 we, the committee and directors, held the first meeting of George Starkey Hut Ltd. Step by step the new committee members are starting to embrace their new roles as agreed at this meeting.

October saw Mike Goodyer and I attend the SAC Geneva section 150th Anniversary, of which I am a new member, while Mike Goodyer has over 40 years. We also very much appreciated the hospitality of Pam Harris and Alan Norton together with other ABMSAC members.

Our AGM on Feb 5th 2017 in Glenridding went rather well in the rather sophisticated new dining room at the Inn on the Lake. It was particularly encouraging to see that hopefully our ABM dinner attendance had bottomed out last year and we had risen to 50+ attendees. Thanks to Brooke Midgley (and Arlene!) for continuing as dinner organiser.

Which brings me to a key point; new members.

At the AGM where approximately 62 members were present, I made a comment about the serious need for new member recruitment. I then asked the question, please raise your hand if you're not able to invite one new member to the club. Only about 10 people raised their hands so that means there are 50 people who feel they can introduce a new member. So with my next newsletter we will send out a redesigned membership form and look forward to being able to report a big success at the February 2018 AGM. At this meeting I will have completed my three-year term as president. I will be talking to all past presidents during June to see how we can find my successor. Also the successor for James Baldwin who stands down as Treasurer in 18 months which will mean some flexibility on the part of many committee and honorary position holders.

The UK Winter began early in a promising way in late November. When snow arrives one has to be instantly ready; no 'where are my skis, boots', its grab and go. Alone if need be, but preferably with friends.

I had three days locally on skis, making a ski traverse from Dockray Head across to Glenridding on Nordic skis, and two more days on alpine skis. By the weekend, the day of the George Starkey Hut Ltd AGM and Alpine Club AGM, it was already disappearing and no longer skiable!

Winter in the Alps and Norway was equally variable with the added hazards of high avalanche risks for much of the seasons. I spent three weeks in the Ecrins, a week in Queyras and two weeks in Norway. Here I had a head fall which has kept me out of action for the last few months and will possibly take 12 months to stabilise. So I make my apologies for lack of meets attendance. Club meets are the very essence of what we are about as a club and I have enjoyed so many memorable ones. The programme remains very strong, so many thanks to all our excellent meet organisers, with special thanks to Judy Renshaw for leading five trips in this year.

BMC issues were a long lasting saga and I feel confident the Executive directors and national council will drive forward now this unnecessary attack is finally over.

Mike Parsons President, May 2017.

MEET REPORTS

Fassfern Meet, Loch Eil, Scotland, 11 to 14 March - Report by John Dempster

This was our fourth visit in succession to Fassfern House and it proved as warm and comfortable as ever. Numbers had grown to 13 but fortunately there were no accidents.

On Saturday morning we awoke to the kind of soft gentle rain for which the West Highlands are famous. Most of us settled for a lowish level walk heading for the bothy at Glasnacardoch, but the going was rough and the conditions unpleasant so we turned back before the final descent to the coast, allowing us time to prepare for a most enjoyable evening meal at the house. Roger and Phil, the determined Corbett collectors, climbed Meall na h-Aisre in the Monadh Liath which they described as “navigationally challenging”, arriving back just in time for dinner.



Saturday evening meal, photo by Jim Strachan

The weather improved on Sunday. Two parties climbed Stob Coire a'Chearcail (the prominent Corbett directly opposite Fassfern across Loch Eil) by different routes. Margaret, Dinah, Jim and I followed the footsteps of Mike, Steve and Andy the previous year, and headed for Carn Mhor Dearg starting by following the excellent new path from Torlundy. We enjoyed splendid views of the North face of the Ben, but we found the long ascent so arduous that we didn't get beyond the first summit. Roger, on his own, notched up two more Corbetts in Morven, Fuar Bheinn and Creach Bheinn.



Monday was a beautiful day as we dispersed in different directions. David headed for Aonach Mhor for what proved to be an excellent day's ski-ing. Roger and Phil climbed Creagh Mac Ranaich above Glen Ogle which turned out to be anything but the "easy day" described in the guide book. The organiser's party limited themselves to exploring the disused railway in Glen Ogle before returning to Edinburgh in time for the late train back to London.

Although (with the conspicuous exception of Roger and Phil) we didn't achieve a great deal, I think we all enjoyed the meet, and once again Fassfern House proved to be an excellent and comfortable base.

Margaret, Dinah and John on the way up Carn Mhor Dearg, photo by Jim Strachan

Those attending:- High and Susan Chapman, John Dempster, Peter Farrington, John and Marj Foster, Phil Hands, Roger James, Dinah Nichols, David Seddon, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Jay Turner.

New Members Meet, George Starkey Hut, Patterdale, 1 - 3 April - Report by Mary Eddowes

For the second year running the meet was at the George Starkey hut, the idea was to encourage new people to become members of the ABMSAC. This year a hearty group of sixteen ventured up North, travelling from across the UK to get into the hills of the Lake District. On arrival we had a delicious (as always!) pub dinner in the White Lion. It was great to see familiar faces and also greet new people who were interested in joining the club.



We woke on Saturday to wet and dim day, but determined to summit we set off on foot, first to Lanty's Tarn and then crossing the Glenridding valley and into the fog of the Stybarrow Dodd ascent.

As we climbed, snow patches made for perfect handstand spots and figures loomed in and out of the fog.

Kips snowy handstand near White Stones



Upon reaching the summit we took the obligatory 'jumping' photo - Ed Bramley proving that he really does have the longest right arm in the club!

A few of the old timers opted for a second summit, but the majority of the group chose to head back to via the mine to the warmth and dry of aptly named Travellers Rest. A wild and rather boisterous card game of Dobble commenced as we dried off and thawed out. Heather Eddowes and Dave Matthews were missed and seemed to be taking a very long time to get to the pub. But we discovered that they had had a cheeky lift back on a trailer beating us back to the hut.

The evening saw gourmet chef Sabrina and her kitchen team, Mary, Yas and Jo cook a splendid vegetarian meal on a very low budget. Roasted vegetable tart, with butternut squash and goats cheese salad, minted new potatoes and a spinach salad surprise. Followed of course by Heather and Jonny's special apple crumble and custard. Thoroughly enjoyed by all!

Whilst dinner was being cooked Nan was devising her bespoke Easter egg hunt... After dinner the egg hunt began. Clues led us around the hut. To co-ordinates on a map, into the drying room, into the bunk rooms, to find little eggs and the next clue. There were the main enthusiasts for the game, but often upon hearing a clue, a back bench player would suddenly jump up and rush off to discover an ingenious hiding place.



The final huge golden chocolate egg was found and then broken up by Heather with the ABM ice axe.

Lots of merriment and laughter throughout the evening. A great end to a great day!



The team on Beda head. Photo by Mike Goodyer

Sunday was sunny and bright, with only a few fuzzy heads emerging from the dorms. Nothing a brisk walk up to Boredale Hause wouldn't shake.

A swift climb to summit BedaFell, then loop around the east of High Dodd, past Sleet Fell down to the lake, taking in the views and enjoying the beautiful spring weather.

We walked back along the lakeside path to the hut, chatting, singing and generally having a lovely time.



Pop band pose at Silver Crag. Car packing and farewells. And some new members signed up! Hurrah! Time to head home and look forward to the next ABM meet.

All photos by Mary, unless otherwise credited.

Royal Oak, Hurdlow, Derbyshire, May Day Meet - Report by Andy Burton

Fourteen attendees this year, some regulars and some first timers.

Friday evening saw most of us gather at the Royal Oak in time for a beer and the dash to Longnor to the ever welcoming fish and chip shop, with a sighting of a barn owl on the way. The view of the upper Dove valley as you negotiate the first hairpin bend down towards Crowdecote must be one of the finest unspoilt views in both Counties.

A cheeky pint in the Packhorse on our way back allowed me to speak to Mick the licensee, and book us in for dinner on Sunday night, as none of the forecasts shouted out BBQ weather.



Saturday saw the usual split between the Manifold Way cycle group, where Alison added some industrial archaeology to the day by showing us the newly restored hoppers at the Ecton Hill copper mine, and Ed and Judy and Paul climbing at Birchens Edge, and the others embarked on a 10km walk from the pub/bunkbarn.

All rounded off with a late feast in the Oak Room.

*Cyclists enjoying the lunch stop,
photo by Mike Goodyer*

On Sunday two walking groups set off from Hurdlow. One group to do Parkhouse and Chrome Hill from the Quiet Woman in Earl Sterndale, and the other group walking over the Roaches to Luds Church (*photo below right*), and then

Birchens Edge, photo by Mike Goodyer



on under the Hanging Stone to the Wincle Brewery just in Cheshire. Thanks to Tony Howard for the extension making it a three counties day.

Thirteen of us enjoyed dinner at the Packhorse Arms at Crowdecote, another great pub sat almost on the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border.

Bank Holiday Monday saw most attendees pack up and go home. Just the Class of 66 and their recently retired Matelot matey, Paul Stock, stayed on. Having seen glimpses of the Matterhorn of Cheshire from the Roaches we set off for Wildboarclough. Parking not far from the Crag Inn we climbed Shutlingsloe in good order, enjoyed a reasonable view across the Cheshire Plain to the west, including the Jodrell Bank radio telescope, and the Staffordshire High moorland to the east.



Matterhorn of Cheshire, photo by Mike Goodyer

On returning to the cars we quickly made our way to Blaze Farm café for savoury Staffordshire oatcakes and homemade dairy ice cream to finish, before starbursting in full rain out of the car park home.

Great weekend despite the weather, thanks to all the attendees, and Paul White, the licensee at the Royal Oak for redressing the issues of last year.

The chosen charity this year is Challenge Derbyshire run by the High Peak Radio DJ Danny Hopkins, which supports three North Derbyshire charities, and your kind donations were gratefully received.

Next year I think we will hold the Meet here where BBQ weather is more assured!

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Heather Eddowes, Mike Goodyer, Duncan Hogg, Tony Howard, Margaret and Nicholas Moore, Myles O'Reilly, Paul Stock, Judy Renshaw and Don Hodge, Rick Snell and Alison Henry.

Skype Meet, 14-20 May - Report by Andy Burton

Steve and I travelled up from Robin Hood country to Ed's late Saturday afternoon, giving Ed ample time to replace his garage roof, ably assisted by his son Simon and son-in-law Stuart. A quick comfort break and a chat with Janet before resuming our journey northwest. The evening drive afforded us great views from the A65 of the Yorkshire Dales, and the Southern Lakes, all the way up to the George Starkey Hut in Patterdale. Whale and chips and a pint or two in the White Lion rounded off the day.

After a good night's sleep on the new bunks, and recharging of all devices using the newly installed power points, followed by an early breakfast with the Mensa group who were booked in for the weekend, we enjoyed a lovely drive back along the lake, and out to the M6, Richtung Scotland.

Lunch saw us safely through the Trossachs along Loch Lomond, and pull in at the artisan cafe sign, good spot Ed, which turned out to be in the delightful Strathfillan church. Replete with haddock chowder and a cheese scone, we carried on up over Rannoch Moor and through Glencoe, fueling up on the outskirts of Fort William, before stopping off at the Spean Bridge Commando Memorial.

Steve pointed out the Well of the Seven Heads on the A82 south of Invergarry along the west shore of Loch Oich, and afternoon tea was taken in the garden room of the Glengarry House Hotel, with a view of the loch, where Steve regaled us with some of the Jacobite history of the Invergarry Castle ruins situated within the grounds, and the origins of the Well, steeped in clan traditions. Shortly after 4 o'clock we arrived at Ratagan Youth Hostel on the shores of Loch Duich.

The other three reprobates flew from Bristol to Inverness and hired a car, and within about an hour a message landed on my phone to say they were in the Kinloch Lodge Hotel having a pint. We were left with no choice but to join them.

Remembering that Scotland has the much lower EU drink driving limit I had to make do with a shandy, but with a quick glance at the menu and a bit of banter with the licensee, we booked a table for dinner, drained our pints and made our way back to the Youth Hostel.

The location of this hostel alone makes it worth a visit, but couple this with good rooms and showers, good bottled beers to buy, a breakfast thrown in, and a map of the area supplied by the ever helpful young Warden - because most of us had not bought one - quickly convinces you that this is a place worth revisiting.



Our first days walking in Kintail had us walking from a small forestry car park beyond Morvich up Gleann Choinnechain onto Beinn Fhada/Ben Attow (3385 ft./1032 m), and onto Meall an Fuarain Mhoir at 3136 ft./956 m.

Summit of Beinn Fhada, photo by Paul Stock

The large upper plateau with some snow remnants lead to the Sgurr a'Choire Ghaibh ridge, and some interesting scrambling leading us back down over Beinn Bhuidhe with improving views all round particularly out along Loch Duich towards Skye.

Tuesday we took our leave of Ratagan, and drove back to the same car park, and made our way up and over to the impressive Falls of Glomach, returning back to the cars just as the forecast rain took hold.

High tea/coffee was taken at the iconic 13th century Eilean Donan Castle cafe, where three lochs meet near Dornie, before making our way over the bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh onto the Isle of Skye.

Our accommodation for the next three nights was at the Glenbrittle Youth Hostel, much improved since Ed and I were last there in 2008, with another friendly warden running the show. Evening meal was taken at the Sligachan Inn with its own microbrewery, and such interesting local fare as haggis bonbons, clapshot and whisky jus.

Wednesday started with poor weather so we took a leisurely drive to Elgol, where we booked on the next boat to Loch Coruisk. Sightings of a dolphin and several harbour seals and the coastal Bad Step enroute led to us disembarking in the sun and walking from the end of the loch up Sgurr na Stri, the Hill of Strife, with intermittent views of the Cuillin Ridge including the Inn Pin.



Cuillin Ridge from Sgurr na Stri, photo by Ed Bramley

On making our way down the eastern side we found the bridge across the river had gone, so several of us got wet feet, before negotiating the at times quite exciting coastal path back to Elgol, interspersing looking out west to the Small isles of Eigg, Muck and Canna backlit by the evening sun, with looking at the largest drifts of primroses we had seen, interlaced with the occasional orchids and bluebells with their elusive scent.

Shortly before 6.30pm Steve spotted a pair of eagles, so my little binos which I had carried most of the day finally came into their own.



Elgol out to the Isles, photo by Ed Bramley

Around 8pm saw us back in the Sligachan Inn to try some more hearty food and beers with everyone content with what they had seen today. On the way back to the hostel the three of us in my car were treated to the sight of a small group of Red deer running along the firebreak close to the trees easily keeping pace with us, until as one they all jinked right into the trees and vanished.



Thursday was a typical Skye day with low cloud and rain, so we donned our tourist hats. Visits to the Talisker Distillery in Carbost, and the Batik shop in Portree, where Ed purchased a new set of 'Wicked's', led to second breakfast in the centre of Portree.

Then more driving in the rain north along the coast road past the Old Man of Storr, and up towards the Quirang with no let up in the weather, forced the decision to return to Broadford and regroup in the Pizza restaurant on the main drag, before returning to Glenbrittle.

Steve, Mike and Andy enjoying a second breakfast, photo by Ed Bramley

Our final evenings dining took place in the Old Inn at Carbost, recommended and booked for us by the Hostel warden earlier on in the day. Just as well as by the time we got there it was rammed, but our table quickly became free with a view out across the loch only a few yards away, and in short order the six of us were back in my favourite comfort zone, so much so that I ordered my main meal, squat lobsters, on the strength of the fact that no-one knew what it was, good choice and as much visual entertainment as good grub.

Friday morning saw the group starburst out of the hostel and head home, with the weather improving the further east we travelled, finally popping out into full sun as we drove round the back of the Dalwhinnie distillery out onto the A9.

What followed was a beautiful leisure drive all down the eastern side of this part of the country, with me finally conking out at Berwick on Tweed. Ed took over driving to his abode, where we enjoyed the normal Bramley hospitality, before continuing on our journey home.

By the time I arrived at my flat we had been travelling for over 13 hours, and flying seemed all of a sudden to be much the preferred option! I must be getting older, but it was most certainly worth it.

Editors note: those that flew back to Bristol arrived around 4pm after a light lunch. Will do this in future!

Participants: Andy Burton, Mike Goodyer, Ed Bramley, Mike O'Dwyer, Steve Caulton and Paul Stock.

N Wales meet, 11 - 12 June - Report by Ed Bramley

As always, the Welsh meet offers something for all, whether that is long or short walks, opportunities for food stops, and even a train to the front door for those with weary legs (or who just like trains). Whilst Tan yr Wyddfa cottage and the surrounding area are now well known to us, it doesn't stop us from coming up with new possibilities for walks, and this year was no exception.

With that in mind, a group of us set off from the cottage on the Saturday morning, initially on the Rhyd Ddu path, and then straight on to the base of the most southerly ridge extending from Snowdon and the col at Bwlch Cwm Llan.



We haven't got a definite plan of campaign in mind, other than a map that shows some very level tacks traversing around from the old slate quarries next to the Watkin path, around the side of Yr Aran. The weather has been kind for the ascent – good enough for clear views of the surroundings, but not too hot for the ascent to the col. As we cross over the col, there is a most definite level track lower down the valley, contouring around the hillside – an old quarry tramway. We drop down to it, and we are soon moving along the old flat, dry trackbed. This takes us way around the hillside, with views over and down

Judy, Mike, Daniel and Howard on the tramway, photo by Ed Bramley

onto the Watkin path, before abruptly coming to a halt at the top of an incline which has now partly fallen away, which at one time would have connected right the way down to Nantgwynant. We retrace our last steps and join up with the Watkin path for a while, before picking up another set of trails around the hillside that take us all the way around to Craflwyn Hall, and a giant seat on the way, with a perfect view of the valley.

From there, it's only a short walk along the back lanes into Beddgelert, and the temptations of the ice cream shop. Whether it's the ice cream or the afternoon sun, we're all keen to keep on walking, and for most of us, that means the trail back through the woods to Rhyd Ddu. For a few hardy souls however, if it's worth doing, it's worth doing to excess, and we head off to the top of Moel Hebog, before catching the tracks back to the cottage.

The evening meal starts with cantaloupe melon and Parma ham, with sausage, mustard mash and onion gravy back by popular demand for main course. A variety of puddings fill in any last gaps and digestion is aided by a selection of red and white wines.

On the Sunday, we return to the route we enjoyed so much last year.



Starting in Beddgelert, we walk along the back lanes and tracks to Llyn Dinas and the Sygun copper mine. From there, our track climbs steadily upwards, eventually reaching a hidden valley at the back of Grib Ddu. At several points, there is evidence of the mining that took place, including the remnants of the aerial ropeway that descend towards the valley (*see photo on the left*).

Once down, we follow the Aberglaslyn gorge back to Beddgelert, and are even greeted by a photo opportunity as the afternoon steam train pulls its way up the slope.

Most of us head off on the Sunday night, but a few hang on for an extra day, and we make a simple ascent of Snowdon, up onto the ridge at Bwlch Main and back via the Rhyd Ddu path. The weather has been a somewhat murky Monday, but nothing that the multi-cultural delights of a Cornish pasty on the top of the highest mountain in Wales won't address.



Participants: Daniel Albert, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, David Christmas, Don Hodge, Tony Howard, Mike O'Dwyer, Judy Renshaw, Howard Telford and Richard Winter.

Alpine Hotel Meet, Cogne, 1 – 8 July - Report by Pamela Harris

Although most of us had been to the Val d'Aosta before, either at Brooke's meets based at his house near Morgex in the main valley, or in 2012 at Gressoney at the head of the Lys valley below the summits of Lyskamm and Monte Rosa, this was the first hotel meet to be held at Cogne, and everyone loved the small, unspoilt town which had escaped the invasive ski installations of so many Alpine resorts.

Cogne lies in the Gran Paradiso National Park, a beautiful area of remote valleys and high mountains which includes the Gran Paradiso, at 4061m the highest mountain wholly in Italy. The park was created in 1922 to replace the Royal Hunting Reserve, and ibex and chamois have been protected there for decades. The king had hunting lodges and tracks constructed throughout the park, and the trails are now well maintained for walkers. As well as being a haven for ibex and chamois, the park is also home to many species of alpine flora, and these were a delight on all our walks.

We stayed at the Hotel Sant'Orso, where Filippo and his team looked after us well. The bedrooms were large and comfortable, the dinners copious and delicious, and the swimming pool and sauna much appreciated at the end of a hot day's walk. Aperol spritz was still a favourite apéritif, enjoyed in the hotel grounds by most of us before dinner each evening. But what was most appreciated was the location of the hotel, for the grounds were south-facing, and looked straight across the Sant'Orso meadows towards the snows of the Gran Paradiso.

What made the meet so successful was the perfect weather - it was so good, in fact, that no one even visited the Roman remains at Aosta, our default plan for a wet-weather day. We set out day after day in glorious sunshine, with a light rain shower only on the first afternoon, and it got hotter as the week progressed, even high up. Fortunately the free buses enabled us to gain some altitude at the start of each day, and we made the most of this to explore a variety of walks from the nearby villages of Valnontey, Lillaz and Gimillan. Those with a GPS tracked our daily distances and height gains, the greatest distance being 17kms on the first day's walk, and the greatest height gain being the 1000m ascents to the lakes above the Vittorio Sella hut and Grauson.

With the hotel grounds looking across the meadows towards Valnontey, this seemed the obvious place to start our first

walk. So a group of eighteen of us set off southwards on a wide easy track, and then turned up on a steep climb, the path protected by cables in the exposed sections. The views opened up as we gained height, with snow-capped peaks ahead and a narrow stream far below us in the valley. The slopes were covered in flowers: bright pink alpenrose, white paradise lilies and small pink primulas.

Eventually we were high enough to see the shepherds' huts of Alpe Money ahead which we reached in time for our picnic, just as the sky began to cloud over and the first shower began. A lone and very tame chamois joined us there, coming so close that it seemed to want to share our food – we never saw another so close all week.

Lunch at Alpe Money, photo by Pam Harris



We had decided not to return the way we had come, but to make the walk a circuit by continuing on and descending to the stream at the southern end of the upper valley. This route crosses several small streams as well as a much larger one at the bottom, so we had checked the previous day that, after a very wet spring, the bridges were in place. All went well until most of us had crossed what we thought was the last large stream when we were confronted by yet another stream, this time with no bridge.

The Scottish walkers in the group were unfazed, assuring us that river crossings like this were normal in Scotland, but many of us appreciated Rick's long legs and helping hand. It was then that we realized that at least two of the group were a long way behind, so Geoff and Richard headed back up on a search party and rescue mission. It was still a long way down the valley back to the hourly bus at Valnontey, and we didn't all make this. Back at the hotel Pauline Causey and Niels headed off up the valley in their cars to meet the stragglers, and Pauline even managed to drive beyond Valnontey to collect the rescue party. It had been a long day of nearly 17kms, and we realised that the times on the signposts were totally unrealistic, especially for a group of our age. However, most of us still got back in time for a drink before dinner, and on waking to brilliant sunshine the next day after a good night's sleep, we were ready to set out on the next adventure.

An obvious place to visit at Valnontey was the Paradisia Alpine Garden, a large area with over 1000 plant species.



The path up to the Rifugio Vittorio Sella starts here, and wine-red martagon lilies, and even a solitary white one, had escaped from the garden onto our trail. Although the walk to the hut involved a height gain of 900m, many of us found it easier to keep to the signpost timing on this than on some of the walks with less height gain as it was a wide, well-graded mule track, originally constructed to take supplies to the king's hunting lodge and still used by the pack horse that carries supplies up to the hut.

Orange lilies at the Paradisia Alpine Gardens, photo by Carol Saynor

After passing a picturesque waterfall, we gained height steadily in wide zigzags, the scattered larches providing welcome shade, to reach an alpage with a few ruined huts. The path continued up, with moss campion and mountain avens growing at the side of the trail, and even a tiny white orchid. We then reached a bridge over a rushing stream, and started on the last steep section, up the shoulder of the hill. We finally came out at a small settlement, and just over the brow was the picturesque old hunting lodge, now home to the park rangers, with the Rifugio Vittorio Sella just beyond, in the two buildings which were once the stables of the lodge.

The welcoming hut warden provided gigantic bowls of soup, and we sat there over lunch, watching two ibex playing on the opposite slopes and a helicopter hovering overhead. It was a lovely spot to rest, and only three were tempted to

continue the short distance to the Lago di Lauson, another beautiful spot. They were fewer people on the return path in the afternoon, and we saw chamois and marmots as we wound our way steadily downwards.



Lago di Lauson, photo by Rick Saynor

Lillaz was another starting point for walks, just a short bus ride away but also a lovely walk beside the river. At one point or another everyone in the group visited the dramatic waterfalls, where torrents of foaming water crashed down the rocks. A well-maintained path leads up beside the lowest fall, past slopes of martagon lilies, to reach a series of lookout points protected by guard rails. At the top is a bridge over the torrent, with views down onto crystal clear pools at the foot of the rocks. The path goes further up, through a meadow of fragrant orchids, to reach the highest fall thundering out from a rocky cleft in a truly spectacular fashion.



An especially lovely walk starting at Lillaz was the Lago di Loie circuit. After an initial steep climb of 600m in the woods, we came out onto the open pasture of Alpe Loie, with glorious views behind us of the south slopes of Mont Blanc. From there it was a short ascent to the Lago di Loie, nestling in a flowery basin.

Mont Blanc above Lago di Loie, photo by Rick Saynor

We were surprised to find no café here as it was an ideal spot for a pause and a swim, so after a quick picnic we continued on our circular route towards Alpe Bardoney. The flowers on this section were spectacular, with bright blue trumpet gentians, white mountain avens and black vanilla orchids carpeting the meadows, interspersed with delicate soldanellas and pink primulas. Bypassing the shallow marshland and the farm itself, we descended towards the Torrente d'Urtier to join up with the Alta Via 2, the long-distance route that traverses the southern flanks of the Val d'Aosta. A few mountain bikers raced past us on the steeper sections, but apart from these, it was a tranquil descent, made memorable by a slope of large pale blue aquilegias and alpine clematis, a truly wonderful sight.

Gimillan was the third of the nearby villages, situated to the north of Cogne. A lovely walk wound up to the northeast into the Vallone del Grauson, alongside a stream. We could see a higher route winding up on the other side which looked much more difficult, corroborated by Pauline Hammond and Lin who tried it later in the week. We climbed up beside a dramatic waterfall and then reached the lower of the two Grauson settlements.

As we gained height the views of the Gran Paradiso got better and better and we could see the summit itself, not just the lower peaks. The slopes here were covered with the rarely seen purple pasque flowers, several varieties of primulas, many different saxifrages and dianthus, and a clump of white spring gentians, a first for most of us. The flowers were so glorious and the weather so hot that most of us relaxed in the sunshine at the huts of upper Grauson, and only a few continued up to the Lussert lakes. They got as far as the middle lake, still covered by floating ice, but had been warned that the snow level was not far off and that the highest lake was completely ice-bound, so stopped there. We all agreed that this had been a delightful walk, even without going higher.



Walking above Gimillan, photo by Rick Saynor

Some of us returned to Gimillan later in the week to do the long circuit to the northwest, up to the Alpeggio Arpisson. There was some welcome shade for most of this walk, much needed as the week got hotter. The path looked straight down onto the chalets and church of Gimillan, and as we headed further west, onto the roofs of the villages of Cretaz and Epinel. The alpine flowers began once we came out of the woods, and again the slopes were covered with alpenrose and black vanilla orchids. After a short exposed section on the ridge we reached the farm buildings at Arpisson, our destination. The cows had not yet been brought up to the alpage, but there were still signs of the previous year's occupants in the stables there, and just below the buildings was a stream of delicious clear water to quench our thirst. The way down did not seem nearly so long, and we had time for a welcome drink in one of the small cafés before wending our way back to the hotel for our evening swim and apéritif.

There were several possibilities for easier days, one of the most popular being to take the cable car from Cogne up to the Belvedere, which provided spectacular views of the Gran Paradiso and the south face of Mont Blanc. From here a circular walk went up to Montseuc 300m higher, and round an interesting nature trail. A few walked into the Vallone di Valleille, due south of Lillaz, up a gentle path beside a stream, with butterflies flitting amidst the flowers and little height gain. And most of us walked from Cogne itself up to Valnontey and Lillaz, both lovely walks through trees beside the stream, or from Gimillan down to Epinel.

Two excursions were made further afield, the first by Dick, Lin and Pauline to Courmayeur and up the spectacular Mont Blanc Skyway, completed just a year ago. After stopping half way at the Saussurea Alpine Garden, where the flowers were not yet at their best after the winter snows, the revolving cablecar went up to 3,466m at the Pointe Helbronner. From here there are close views of Mont Blanc and of the Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and the Gran Paradiso further away, but unfortunately it was rather cloudy on that day, and they reported that a wedding party up there looked decidedly cold!

The second expedition was by the Heerys and Causeys into the nearby Val de Rhêmes, a beautiful and unspoilt valley with few other walkers.



In the Val di Rhêmes, photo by Katherine Heery

From Rhêmes-Notre-Dame they set off through delightful larch forests into the Vallone di Sort, with lovely flowers at the side of the trail and chamois on the snow patches. After an 850m climb they reached the Col Gollien, with a spectacular 360° panorama. They met no other walkers on the ascent, this solitariness giving the valley a really wild atmosphere, although there were more people on the descent into the Vallone di Entrelor. Then it was back on a gentle contouring path through meadows and woods to Rhêmes, a most enjoyable day on a highly recommended walk.

While the rest of us were walking, Dick had hired a mountain bike and covered much longer distances. His most strenuous day was 42kms with an ascent of 1400m, from Cogne to Lillaz and eastwards along the Vallone del Urtier to the new Rifugio Berdzé at 2560m, with a detour to Alpeggio Taveronna on the way back. En route he passed a group of English who had stopped to admire a large clump of edelweiss which otherwise he would have missed - we were all very envious, as no one else found any. On another day he persuaded the driver to take his bike on the bus to Gimillan from where he headed up towards the snowbound Passo d'Invergneux at 2900m. Having failed to reach the pass on his first attempt, he returned the following day to succeed, starting from Cogne and cycling through Lillaz into the Vallone d'Urtier again and up via the Alpeggio Invergneux to reach the pass, another ascent of 1400m.



Snow at Passo d'Invergneux, photo by Dick Murton

A large group of Jeudistes from the Geneva Section of the SAC were staying at the hotel when we arrived, although they were nearing the end of their week's meet. Some had never met any ABMSAC members before, and were delighted to finally make contact with the club which had been responsible for gifting their section the Britannia Hut over one hundred years ago. Amongst the group was Hans Jungen, previous President of the Huts Committee, whom I had met several times in the past, first when helping to organise the celebrations at the Britannia Hut for our centenary back in 2009, and then at the hut's centenary in 2012. We enjoyed reminiscing about those celebrations and comparing notes on our walks from Cogne. All in their group were past retirement age but many were still strong walkers and had had some very long days, including one of eight hours involving the airy traverse from the Rifugio Vittorio Sella to the Casolari dell'Herbetet and back to Valnontey.

All too soon the week came to a close and it was our last evening. We regretfully said our goodbyes and thanks to the hotel staff, hoping that before too long we will return to this beautiful valley.

Participants: Pamela Harris & Alan Norton, Geoff & Janet Bone, Derek Buckley & Ann Alari, Geoff & Pauline Causey, Sheila Coates, John Dempster & Dinah Nichols, Niels & Guni Doble, Pauline Hammond, Richard & Katherine Heery, Sylvia Mercer, Dick Murton & Lin Warriss, Roger Newson, Rick & Carol Saynor, Barbara Swindin, Caroline Thonger, Jay Turner.

Alpine Camping Meet - Ailefroide, Ecrins - 16 July - 6 August - report by Keith Lambley

Just over 70 people from seven clubs and guests attended the meet over the 3 week period and were blessed with good weather for most of the time, what rain there was being short lived.

The campsite in Ailefroide seems to get busier each year and there was a noticeable increase in numbers since the last meet there in 2011 but after the first weekend which was a national holiday in France it did get quieter but still queuing for the showers and the toilets was normal especially at peak times.



Barre des Ecrin, photo by Rick Snell

The campsite being surrounded by granite crags dictated that the rock climbing was more popular than the Alpine climbing and this was reflected in a higher turnout from the more rock oriented clubs such as the CC and the FRCC than on past meets. Many of the multipitch and single pitch routes were climbed as well as frequent forays to the limestone and quartzite climbing areas in the main Durance Valley and side valleys such as Fournel and Fressinieres.

The Barre des Ecrin being the highest peak in the area attracted a lot of attention all by the normal route as the Barre Noire Couloir was out of condition. Other teams climbed Roche Faurio, the SW ridge of Pointe Louise, Roche Paillon, Roche Emile Pic, Pointe des Cineastes, Montagne Des Agneaux, the Traverse of

the Glaciers (Pic du Rif & Pointe des Arcas), Dents de Coste Counier, Aiguille de Sialouze, Pelvoux and the traverse of the Meije.



Various via ferrata were ascended including the very spectacular Gorges D'Ailefroide located between Ailefroide and Pelvoux, it traverses the vertical or even overhanging walls of the gorge about 10m above river level and the second part is classed as a "Via Ferrata sportive" in the guide it certainly lives up to that name (photo, left, by Rick Snell).

SW Face of Aiguille de Sialouze, photo by Rick Snell



The meet was very sociable starting with an evening soiree on the first weekend so people could get to know each other, again we had the group tent where people could socialise and cook on the few occasions when it did rain, quite a few people came on their own and had no problem finding climbing partners. As people left we had several end of meet dinners at the Hotel Engilberge in the village, they provided very good food and service at a reasonable price.

ABMSAC Take On The Tantalising Polish Tatras - report by Paul Stock

On my last visit to the Polish Tatras we arrived a month later than the AMBSAC Trek held 1–8 September 2016 and the whole range was covered in snow. This time the trek was planned to avoid the need to carry winter gear and to miss the Polish school holidays to avoid busy mountain tops. Nine intrepid adventurers made their way to Krakow on two separate days. Ed arrived in Krakow a day earlier than the rest of us due to flight schedules from Leeds/Bradford and the rest of us flew from Terminal 5, Heathrow arriving. It was a late afternoon flight arriving in the dark at Krakow. Andy Burton had booked a taxi to take us to our hostel accommodation in the city centre. We met Ed at the hostel and made our way to two separate buildings for our bedrooms. The group was split with three in the main hostel and the rest of us in the annexe a few streets away. Once the bags had been dropped off we made our way to an Italian restaurant for

pizza and beer! At breakfast the following day it appeared that the main hostel was full of boisterous young people and Andy and Ed seem to have drawn the short straw, as they had to share a double bed.

The first day, Thursday, was spent travelling by bus to our base in the Tatras at Zakopane and investigating the bustling little town. It was a warm day and after settling into the hostel we made our way down to a nice restaurant which had an outside decked area with umbrellas for a late lunch.

That evening we witnessed a serious fire in an adjacent building from our bedroom windows. The local fire service were busy for several hours.

An early start on Friday had us leaving the hostel after breakfast at around 8am. The route for the day was Giewont, one of the nearest mountains to the town. It is a striking peak with a large cross on the top which dominates the skyline from Zakopane. We walked from the hostel to the edge of the village where we bought a week long group pass from the kiosk at the entrance to the Tatras National Park. The weather started cloudy, but soon the sun came out and it remained predominantly sunny until early afternoon, when it clouded over for a while. The route was a long up through forest paths until, a little after 1310m, we emerged onto a ridge, and had views of the surrounding mountains. We contoured around, with a couple of rock steps, until the path rose steadily to a saddle.



Giewont from the saddle, photo by Ed Bramley

From there the path climbed more steeply and then divided into a one way system up the chained part to the summit of Giewont. We reach it by 11:30. The large scaffolding cross is really impressive close up. The descent back to the col also has some chained sections, parts of which are polished by a multitude of backsides.



From the col, three of us go up onto the next peak (Kopa Kondracha, 2005m), which is higher, but much more rounded. From the summit there were fabulous views across to Orla Perc and other parts of the Tatras. A good stone step path takes us all the way down to a mountain hut where we meet up with the rest of the team. We had lemon tea and ginger cake. We descended to Kuznice down a cobbled track and caught a minibus back into town.

The group on the Giewont summit, photo by Mike Goodyer

Due to the hordes of folks on the summit of Giewont and the predicted weather forecast we decided to alter our plan for the whole week. You may remember that I stated that we planned to miss the school holidays. It appears that it makes no difference in Poland. So Saturday saw us set off early in a minibus at 7:45 to Morskie Oko. Another warm start to the day. The bus dropped us at the edge of the National Park. There were more parked cars than I have ever witnessed in a single place in a National Park and the associated passengers were all heading for our destination. We skipped the queues at the park entrance due to our weekly pass, result!



To ensure that we beat some of the folks to the walk start point several kilometres further up hill we caught a horse and wagon up to the turning point – about a 50 minute journey. There was then about a half hour walk up to the hut at Morskie Oko, and the lake of the same name. This is the route start point for today's target Mount Rysy, the highest mountain in the Polish Tatras.

Ed, Paul and Andy take it easy, photo by Judy Renshaw

We traversed the lake and then ascended up to the second lake (Czarny Staw pod Rysami). From there the path climbed steeply round a bluff for several hundred metres (Hala pod Rysami 2054m). This was a good place to stop for a break, and eye up the second part of the route. From here, the route changed to rocky slabs, well jointed, with plenty of holds, and with protection (chains) for much of it.



On the way up Rysy, looking down on the lakes, photo by Ed Bramley

Unfortunately there were still vast numbers of people on the route, and this slowed the pace in places, but we needed plenty of rest stops on our way up. The group were very spread out at this point and the first folks up there managed to visit both the Polish and Slovakian summits. The col before the summit was a massive bottleneck and it had long queues on both sides to cross the gap, which held us up for nearly half an hour. Four members of the group reached the summit and others had to retreat as time was marching on and the vast numbers on the route had delayed progress.



On the summit, photo by Ed Bramley

Surprisingly the way down didn't seem so busy and a descent pace saw us all manage to reach the horse and cart for the relaxing way down. Our journey down lasts half an hour, and we are on a bus to Zakopane almost immediately. Mount Rysy is a brutal mountain with very steep up sections and it had taken its toll on the group so the next day we decided to opt for a relaxing day. We take the funicular at the edge of the village up to Gubalowka (see photo). There were some great views back to the Tatras on a beautiful Sunday morning. The ridge initially had lots of little gift and food stalls and Ed and I tried a mini cheese pastry with cranberry sauce – like Halloumi – it was ok in small quantities.



At the edge of the ridge we descend through a forest area, and after a couple of detours eventually arrive in Kiry, where we had a very nice lunch break. After lunch we headed over the road into the National Park and followed the first part of Dolina Koscieliska. The path crossed a saddle before dropping back down to join the road back to Zakopane. Ed and Judy decided to trek along another path which joined with our route up Giewont (1310m).

Monday morning started and continued with rain, generally drizzly, but occasionally heavier. In the morning we revisited the shops on the main street, and had a mid-morning coffee and cake, but then returned to the land of diaries and crossword puzzles. After lunch, Ed, Judy, Myles and I headed over to the thermal spa by taxi for the afternoon. As well as a big indoor pool, there was an undercover hot pool, complete with jet beds, a small pool for ups and downs, and another with a current that takes you through an artificial cave. Then there were the slides – big blue, the highest, which is enclosed but has strobe lighting. Mid yellow was fast and threw you about like a washing machine, and the red chute, a straight steep slide which sent you half way across the pool. Also in the plunge pool is a seesaw circle which we watched others using later. Back in the main pool, there was an aqua aerobics session on the go. A great afternoon, and back on the local bus to rejoin the group for evening meal.



Tuesdays weather began where it left off the day before – drizzle, occasionally heavier, and low cloud. We passed the time reading, doing puzzles, or catching up on emails. After checking the weather forecast it appeared that there would be some improvement for the afternoon. So after lunch we walked up from the hostel to the Bogowka ski jump area. From there, we traversed the hillside to the hole cave at Jaskinia Dziura and descend back to the main path and to go further round the hillside to a limestone valley (Dol za Bamka) reminiscent of Dovedale. The route up to the waterfall was closed part way up the track, so we returned to the main Park entrance, where we enjoyed a coffee before walking back into Zakopane.

As Wednesday is our last walking day we make the most of it by getting away at 7:30 by taxi round to the cable car at Kusnitze. The weather was superb. There were large queues waiting to catch the uplift, but we were still at the top station by 9am. We had a quick coffee, before we admired the views across to Swinica and Orla Perc. There was some cloud in the valleys, but we were in the sun with very little wind.

We head away from Kasprowy Wierch westwards along the ridge.



looking along the ridge, photo by Ed Bramley

It was generally straightforward, but with one rock step that required a little more care. We passed the summits of Kondracha Kapa and Malolaczniak, before having lunch on the summit of Krzesanica. This summit had a multitude of mini cairns. The whole of the ridge from the cable car station formed the border with Slovakia, so we had zig zagged between the countries on our journey.



Team on the ridge, with Giewont behind, photo by Ed Bramley

After lunch we pulled up to the last peak on the ridge, Ciemniak, from where we began our descent. The path initially ran along a ridge before reaching the forest line and the valley of Dolina Koscieliska, and back along a path we had used a couple of days previously. Stop on the edge of the park for an ice cream, before taking the bus into Zakopane.



The final day saw Ed leave at an ungodly hour to catch a bus back to Krakow for his early flight home. The rest of us had a more relaxed trip back to Krakow where we explored the city for a few hours before our delayed flight home.

Central square in Krakow, photo by Judy Renshaw

A good trip was had by all and many of the group planned to return to the Tatras again at some point in the future.

Participants: Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Mike Goodyer, Mike O'Dwyer, Myles O'Reilly, Judy Renshaw, Dave Seddon, Paul Stock.

With thanks to Ed for his contribution to the report

Beer Meet, 16-18 September - Report by Belinda Baldwin

We had the customary good weather for the meet at the East Devon seaside base between Seaton and Beer. The South West Coast path passes by some 200 meters from the cottage. We wished to walk along it on the Undercliffe between Seaton and Lyme Regis so we parked where we wanted to finish, met up with Margaret and caught a bus to the start. We had a look at Lyme Regis as lots of work has been done to prevent further cliff falls then set off. This part of the coast path has recently been reopened following a land slip. A new route has taken three years to sort out so only James and I had had the pleasure of seeing what it was like. The change is for the better as there is an optional deviation that took us out of the woodland path to meadows and a hidden away summerhouse with views to Portland Bill, just right for lunch. Further along another change from the woodland path took us to Goat Island. It is not an island but a raised mini plateau formed from a 19th century landslip this time giving us views to the west. After tea at the Golf Course we said goodbye to Margaret, when we reached the cars.

The staycation habit had made it difficult to find an eating place for our supper. Beer was seething with visitors and we were forced to try a new venue and go upmarket, which worked out well. We enjoyed our bit of comfort at Steamers.



On the beach, photo by James Baldwin

On Sunday we set off from the top of Beer Hill northwards up and down through fields and woods giving views across the Axe Valley. When we reached Colyton we walked round the village and enjoyed the interior of the church. The village has lots of sitting areas and we settled for one by the River Coly. Dick had spent the morning on his bicycle so he was to return independently. The rest of us had the choice of the Seaton and District Tramway.



Passengers for the tram, photo by James Baldwin

I made the analogy of cheating by using a lift even though the terrain was flat. Antonia and Lin chose to walk back and the rest of us took a ride on the upper deck. The tram goes along the Axe Estuary, famous for bird life but there was more chatter than twitching. As the tide was unusually low we were able to partly return along the beach to Seaton Hole and up Beer Hill.

Present: Antonia Barlen, John Dempster, Sylvia Mercer, Dick Merton, Dinah Nichols, Margaret Moore, Lin Warren, James and Belinda Baldwin.

A Bimble in the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains - Report by Paul Stock

ABMSAC held its first meet in the Brecon Beacons National Park for many years on a pleasant October weekend. This meet proved popular with many of the new club members attending. The meet centred on the Beacons Backpacker Bunkhouse in Bwlch. It's a charming Bunkhouse with ensuite pub, the New Inn.

The attendees arrived throughout Friday with the earliest of them heading out for afternoon treks after settling into the bunk rooms. Mike Goodyer and I set off along the ridge heading north from the Bunkhouse. This ridge takes in a section of the Brecons Way to Mynydd Llangorse and then on other paths towards Crocket Hill. The tops were clear but broken low cloud prevented continuous views down into the valley and only fleeting glimpses of Llangorse Lake. The ridge ended abruptly after Crocket Hill where it is interrupted by a small road over a pass.



Paul on Crocket Hill with M. Troed behind, photo by Mike Goodyer

From the road we took a steeply ascending path to the summit of Mynydd Troed and then followed its ridge to the south. Just as the ridge starts to drop down to the valley we took a gradually descending line back to the valley floor and recrossed the road to join the path heading for Blaenau draw. We joined a bridleway which lead us back up onto the original ridge and retraced our steps to the Bunkhouse.

A steady start to the weekend with 12 miles and over a 700m of ascent. Andy Burton and Tony Howard also walked along the ridge that afternoon. The members gathered for a very pleasant evening meal at the Bunkhouse.

An early Saturday morning start saw the convoy of cars travel to the relatively new car park near the Upper Neuadd reservoir. The planned route for the day was the Brecon Beacons famous horseshoe including the big

three mountains in the region. We picked up the wide path heading from the car park and followed it to the col between Fan y Big and Cribyn. At the col the group made its way up the very recently renovated paths to the summit of Fan y Big. The usual photos were taken on the diving board overhanging rock.



Heather on the diving board on Fan y Big, photo by Mike Goodyer

The way up was reversed as we made our way back down to the col for the first coffee break of the morning.



At this point the main group pushed on with the ascent of Cribyn and Heather followed the path around the lower slopes of to the following col between Cribyn and Pen y Fan. By now the low cloud was beginning to show signs of breaking up as the breeze had increased slightly.

Fleeting glimpses of Pen y Fan were possible as we climbed Cribyn. However on arrival at the summit it was only possible to see the views down towards the town of Brecon.

Pen y Fan coming out the mist, photo by Mike Goodyer

Next up, Pen y Fan and lunch. The team found it difficult to find a spot on the Pen y Fan summit for lunch as it was very crowded and the best spots out of the wind had been taken. Eventually we settled on a rocky outcrop and the lunch break allowed the clouds to clear so on our descent of Pen y Fan we were starting to get views of the whole range.



There they are! The Brecons clear at last, photo by Pete Bennett

The wind increased chasing all the clouds away which enabled us to get a few photographs of the route. The final ascent of the day was a short one to Corn Du.

After Corn Du we made our way down the long Craig Gwaun Taf ridge and sharp gully descent back to the reservoir and car park. The group was reunited with Heather at the car park and made its way to the local tea rooms for some welcome tea and cake.



Paul, Heather, Rachel and Mary enjoy afternoon tea! Photo by Mike Goodyer

For the Saturday evening meal we were joined by Mike O'Dwyer. The en suite pub was proving to be a major success. Sundays walk started a little later than the previous day as we made our way through the country lanes to the walk start at Heol Llygoden. The weather was very encouraging with clear blue skies. The first pull of the day was up a very steep grassy hill to the site of Castell Dumas ruins.



After taking in the spectacular views from the castle we made our way down to join a path leading towards Blaenau Uchaf. We soon arrived at the start of our second pull of the day up the side of Bwlch Bach a r Grib ridge.

*Striding out to Blaenau Uchaf,
photo by Pete Bennett*

After regrouping on the top we traversed the hillside to join the central ridge path leading to the summit of Waun Fach. Quite a lot of work was taking place on the summit and adjoining paths with a helicopter making frequent bag drops.



Preparing for path repairs, photo by Mike Goodyer

We followed the repaired path down the ridge Mynydd Llysiu and made our way across country to the walk start point to bid our farewells.

All together it had been a very productive weekend with some interesting walks, relatively good weather for the time of year, good company and enjoyable meals in our en suite pub.

Attendees: Pete Bennett, Andy Burton, Heather Eddowes, Mary Eddowes, Celine Gagnon, Mike Goodyer, Tony Howard, Rachel Howlett, Mike O'Dwyer, Myles O'Reilly, Margaret Moore, Nicholas Moore, Paul Stock.

Annual Dinner Meet at the Inn on the Lake Glenridding - Report by Brooke Midgley

A doubtful benefit of ageing is memory loss, I hope you agree and can't recall the past few years' reports or repeat the same old thing. Must try harder seems to ring a bell.

We filled the hut and nearly half the hotel but for illness we would have exceeded 60 at the dinner. We had 57. The best attendance for 5 years, which was due to an influx of youngsters introduced by Mary Eddowes. She even brought her mother.



The dinner, for the second year running, was at *The Inn on the Lake* in a new dining room. The setting was impressive; a sort of Alpine chalet and looked splendid bedecked with Swiss flags and canton bunting. Heather displayed some of the Association trophies. Paul Everett, who was guest speaker in 2011, brought an album of photos of a celebration at the Britannia Hut. He is trying to obtain information on some of those named on the photos. Can anyone help? See membership list for Paul's details.

Top Table, photo by Don Hodge

The speaker was Lindsey Griffiths (Past President of the AC), who had been a member of the ABMSAC from 1968 to 1975. He features in James Bogles book *History of the ABMSAC* for a climb of the Aig. Moir on Mt Blanc. (It also features the meet leader's photo). Lindsay's talk was good and rather too brief so maybe we should invite him again. The usual toasts and responses were enacted and judging from the noise levels members enjoyed the event. The hotel catered with the food and watering with the latter still being enjoyed at midnight.

The weather was better than forecast with members making the best of the hills, which had a light covering of snow. Early arrivals, accompanied by the President, made use of the good weather on Friday with a foray into Borrowdale to explore Langstrath and Glaramara, returning in heavy rain and in the dark!



Langstrath on Friday, photo by Andy Burton

Expeditions were made to the Newlands/Buttermere area, Lantys Tarn and Sheffield Pike and over Helvellyn and Place Fell on Saturday.



Helvellyn summit plateau, photo by Pete Bennett

On Sunday several groups walked to Aira Force and made that their destination and enjoying the café, whilst others went on for a longer low level walk getting back to the hotel after dark.

Extra reporting by Belinda Baldwin and Mike Goodyer.

MEMBERS ARTICLES

Walking on the Aeolian Islands by Pamela Harris



Ancient home of Aeolus, the Greek god of the winds who helped Odysseus, the Aeolian Islands lie in the Tyrrhenian Sea off the north coast of Sicily. There are seven in total, the most well-known being the active volcano of Stromboli, but on this, our first visit, we decided to stay on only two: Lipari, the largest, and Panarea, the smallest.

We set out from the port of Milazzo in one of the frequent hydrofoils, calling first at the island of Vulcano where Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and metal-working, reputedly had his forge. The volcano is now dormant and the crater safe to

Stromboli and Basiluzzo from Panarea

walk to, although the ever-present smell of sulphur testifies that it is not totally inactive. The island's northern promontory of Vulcanello almost touches Lipari, and the hydrofoil soon landed at Marina Lunga, the main port of Lipari town.

Lipari has a long history going back to Neolithic times, when early settlers discovered that the volcanic black obsidian found on the island gave a sharper cutting edge than flint. This provided a lucrative trade all over the Mediterranean, and a citadel was constructed on the heights above the harbour. The Greeks and subsequent invaders strengthened its walls, and we walked



Lipari town

on the paved way round these ramparts to see the display of Greek and Roman sarcophagi in a park overlooking the harbour and rooftops of the lower town. Steps led up to the ornately decorated baroque cathedral dedicated to San Bartolomeo, the patron saint of Lipari, and the adjoining cloisters built by the Normans. Well worth a visit is the Aeolian Museum, housed in several buildings surrounding the cathedral, which contains prehistoric and classical finds from all the islands in the group, including a large collection of Greek theatrical masks and a section on the exploitation of obsidian.

After exploring the citadel we set off on our walk to the southern headland, past the old fishing harbour of Marina Corta and the church of San Giuseppe. From here a narrow road, lined by walls covered with straggling broom and cistus, led up to Capistello, from where we got a clear view of Vulcano and its vast crater just across the straits.



Volcano from Lipari's southern headland

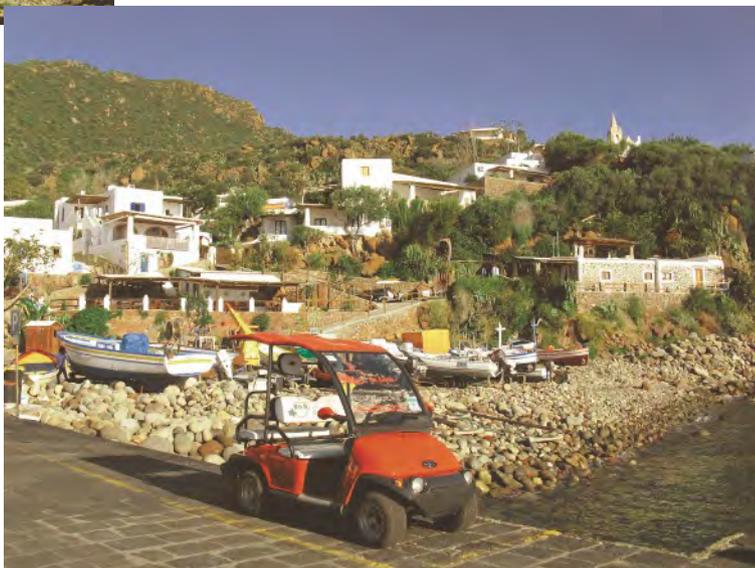
The following morning we set out for our next destination, the tiny island of Panarea, which was even more beautiful. It is just a short ride from Lipari, but most of our fellow-passengers stayed on the hydrofoil to go to Stromboli, unaware of what they were missing. As we docked at the small port of San Pietro, we could see fishing boats drawn up on the beach and the Da Luca family's small red buggy come to meet us.

We were driven up lanes too narrow for cars, past white-painted houses covered with colourful bougainvillea and oleander, to their house at the foot of the mountain. From the terrace in their garden we looked down on the sparkling blue sea and rocky islets of Basiluzzo and Dattilo – paradise indeed. This was

Directly below were rocky cliffs and pinnacles rising out of the sea, and as we neared the headland overlooking Punta della Crapazza, the vegetation became denser, almost covering the narrow path. But there was a paved road further on leading to some very upmarket modern villas, all very secluded and with spectacular views – perhaps the retreat of those who had made their fortune with Mafia money!

The path wound up to its highest point at the Osservatorio Geofisico, and from here there was a wonderful panorama of the islands to the north-west: Salina with its twin volcanic peaks, and Filicudi and Alicudi furthest away. For us this was the ultimate viewpoint, and we wound our way downhill, back to the harbour with its cafés and ice-cream stands, a fitting end to a glorious afternoon's walking.

Arriving on Panarea



where we had our breakfast of delicious home-made cakes and freshly squeezed orange juice each morning, with a welcome cup of tea on our arrival and a glass of the local sweet malvasia wine on the eve of our departure. Luca and

his mother Angela were the perfect hosts, treating us as part of the family and appreciative of the fact that I was able to speak to them in Italian, albeit not very fluently.

It was Luca who gave us a map of the island and directed us to the start of the walk around it and up to its highest point, Punta del Corvo - at 421m perhaps not high, although we were starting from sea-level. It is possible to do the walk in three hours, but with continual stops to enjoy the views, we took considerably longer. From their garden we turned north, and were immediately greeted by the cone of Stromboli rising out of the sea ahead, a plume of smoke regularly erupting from a vent in its side. We started up a narrow paved lane, past the houses and small church of Ditella, with the sparkling blue sea always on our right and Stromboli always ahead. A steep path on the right led down to an idyllic small beach below us, where a love-lorn Italian had outlined *Ti amo Cate* in pebbles on the sand.



Lovers' beach looking towards Stromboli and Basiluzzo



Stromboli from Punta del Corvo

After about 30 minutes there was a signpost pointing up left to the craggy peak of Punta del Corvo above, and we turned off the paved lane onto a narrow path which wound steeply upwards, through banks of flowering bushes – bright yellow broom, pink and white cistus and dark purple vetch, amidst tall green fennel and caper plants. As we climbed higher the cliffs plunged dramatically down to the sea and more rocky islets came into view, with Stromboli continually erupting its plumes of smoke. We soon reached the summit rocks from where there was a glorious 360° panorama of all the islands spread before us, a perfect picnic spot tempting us to linger in the warm sunshine.

But we still had a long way to go, so we headed off along the ridge towards the lower summit of Punta Cardosi. Ahead of us we could clearly see Lipari, where we had been the previous day, with

the twin peaks of Salina to its right and the gaping crater of Volcano to the left. We made our way carefully down the steep rocky path, through tree heather and prickly pear, the large spiky cactus-type leaves tipped with surprisingly attractive small yellow flowers, with dramatic views down over the cliffs to the sparkling sea and rocky islets.

As we approached the coast at Scoglio la Loca, the path flattened and turned eastwards to join the paved way leading to the azure blue waters of the beautiful Cala Junco cove and the prehistoric Bronze Age village on the headland of Punta Milazzese. More than twenty huts were excavated here in 1948, and the pottery found, now in the museum on Lipari, shows the influence of the Minoan civilisation of Crete on these islands.

After this brief historical interlude the path crossed a sandy beach where a few families



Walking towards Lipari



Walking back to San Pietro

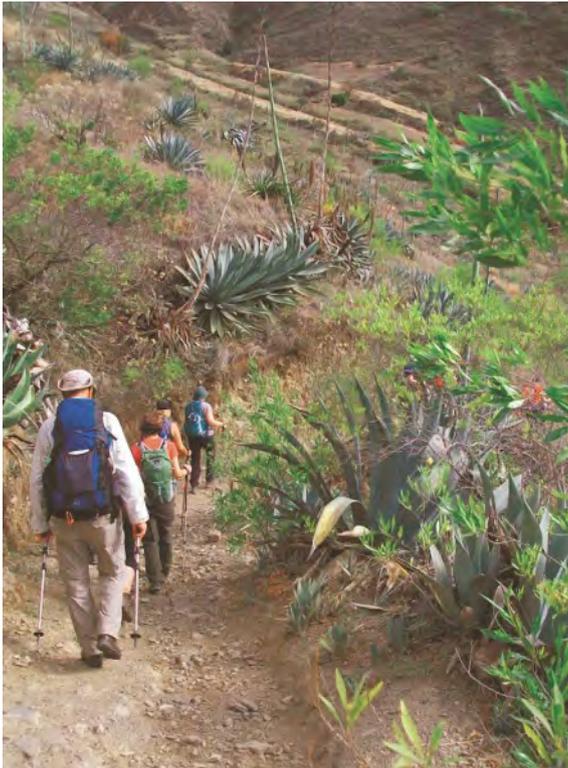
were enjoying the sunshine. In the heat of the day it was tempting to join them for a swim in the clear waters, but we carried on, past the attractive white houses and church of Drauto, back to the port of San Pietro, where we sat over a glass of apérol spritz, gazing towards Stromboli and the nearer islets, and already planning our next visit.

(Gillian Price's Cicerone Guide to Walking in Sicily gives lots of ideas for walks on some of the other islands as well as on the mainland of Sicily.)

A trek in the Peruvian Andes – and other highlights by Judy Renshaw

I had been promising myself a trip to South America for some years, to visit places I had not seen on previous trips in the 1980s, when visiting my brother and family. This time I was determined to go to Machu Picchu and also the Galapagos - and I still had to fit in a family visit too. As I wanted to do a fairly long and challenging trek in Peru in a more remote and less frequented area than the 'classic' Inca trail, I chose one arranged by KE, from Choquequirao to Machu Picchu, run locally by Lima Tours. The travel arrangements were complicated, as I was also going to Ecuador, the Galapagos and Asuncion in Paraguay, so I asked Journey Latin America to arrange the flights, as well as a Galapagos boat trip. Don opted out of the trek but joined for the other parts of the trip, so we met up at Guayaquil airport.

I left on 1st October, via Madrid, where a delay meant a missed connection to Cusco, but it was straightforward to book onto another one. I had a day in Cusco (3329m) to acclimatise to the altitude and jet lag, where I met several members of the trekking group who had arrived a few days earlier. The next morning we met up officially, including five who had just arrived, having suffered more delayed flights. In various dazed states we were all taken to see the Inca sights around Cusco and began to learn about their meticulous building techniques, such as the way they fitted huge stone blocks into walls without mortar, orientated and designed to withstand the frequent earthquakes of the region. Cusco was the administrative, political and military centre of the Inca Empire from early 13th century until it was conquered by the Spanish in 1572. A major sight near Cusco was the Sacsayhuaman temple complex, overlooking the city.



Start of the trail

Although I did not feel any ill effects from altitude, the fact that water boils at a lower temperature (around 86 degrees in Cusco) can lead to problems with the water, which is not safe to drink in Peru. On the trek it was boiled for 10 minutes before drinking, but the hotel did not even bring it to the boil for tea making. As a result, I had stomach problems for a few days and missed out on a couple of meals, which was pretty annoying.

The trek took 9 days, with 8 nights camping, our gear being taken by mules and donkeys, so we only had to carry a day pack. Mules are very highly valued in Peru and cost around three times as much as horses, presumably because of their strength and stamina in carrying loads over rough terrain and long distances. The treks no longer use llamas as they cannot carry very much. Our group consisted of 14 people, ten English, two Americans, one Australian and one German.

After a half-day bus journey, partly on dirt roads, the trek began from a ridge at about 3000m in the Apurimac region, descending to the first campsite, above the Apurimac River. We were given lunch at the road head, where we saw four huge condors flying overhead, an unusual sight even there. We heard later that one of the mules had fallen off the track, down the hillside and not survived, which may

have been the reason for the condors' interest. The first campsite was quite low down towards the river (1875m) and was very warm.

On most of the trek the temperature was more often hot than cold, with only 3 campsites being cold at night. The camping was pretty luxurious, with all tents put up before we arrived, sleeping mats provided and a bowl of wash water both morning and afternoon, as well as three cooked meals each day.

Most of the trek days began at 5am with a mug of coca tea (the local brew which everyone drinks over there though it is illegal here), breakfast and off by 6.30. The meals were quite varied from day to day. For breakfast there was porridge of quinoa or oats, a dried quinoa cereal with yogurt, locally made bread and sometimes omelette, fritters, bacon, avocado or pancakes. We were also invited to help ourselves to nuts, fruit, biscuits and chocolate to carry with us in specially provided snack bags.

The trail took us down to the river, across a new bridge (the previous one was swept away and temporarily replaced by a metal cage suspended on a wire) then steeply uphill for 5 or 6 hours in hot sunshine to a pass at 2930m, where we stopped for lunch in the beautiful village of Marampata. There were a few houses, terraces for agriculture, colourful flowers and hummingbirds, and a small child with a wheelbarrow who kept us entertained while we waited.



Judy at Choquequirao

The next day involved only a few hours walking to the main site of Choquequirao, through cloud forest with bamboo and flowering plants, including bamboo orchids (see right).

The afternoon walk continued less steeply into the Choquequirao region, where we had our first views of the ancient Inca terraces and reached camp around 4pm. We stayed two nights at this camp which had great views down to the valley and up to the glacier above, though it was often shrouded in cloud. There were hummingbirds here too, although fewer flowers.





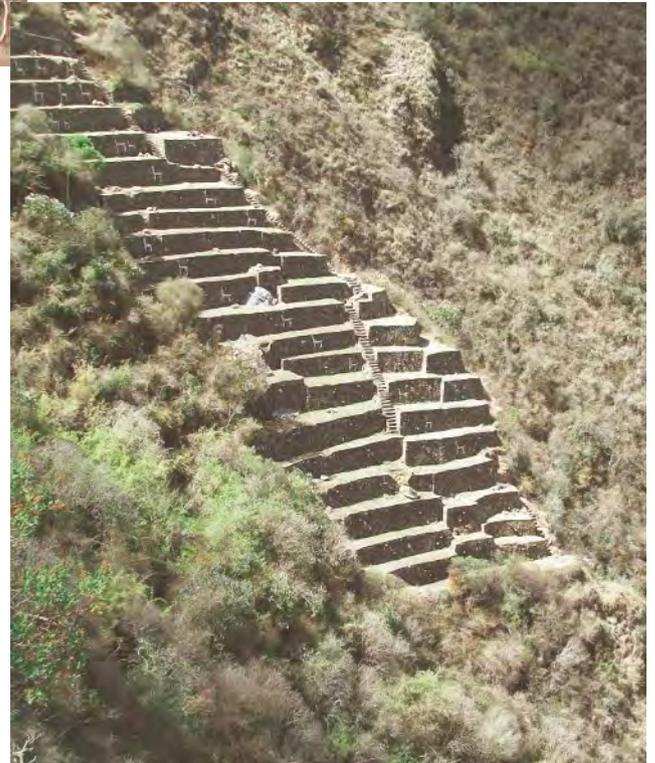
The group above Choquequirao

The Inca Empire, which extended to the mountainous parts of Ecuador and Argentina was established from 1200 or so, but had already begun to decline prior to the Spanish invasion in 1572. There is no written information, as the Inca did not use writing which makes facts difficult to obtain. However, they introduced potato, corn, quinine, cocaine and other plants to the western world and had a very sophisticated system of agriculture. This included over 20 varieties of soil, complex irrigation, fine architecture, roads, terraces, and fertilizers. They were also able to store food in large quantities, using special herbs to prevent them from being eaten or destroyed by bugs or animals. And they even had time to carry out rituals and sacrifices, including occasional human ones.

Over the next few days the trail continued to cross river valleys with steep ascents and descents, with some camps in isolated places, others close to houses. My favourite campsite was a half day's walk from Choquequirao, on the upper levels of a bank of elegant curving terraces, where the mules were able to enjoy the grass on some of the lower levels. The site had wonderful views towards the high mountains and down towards the river, as well as constant running water thanks to the Inca irrigation system, which was good for washing our hair and everything else. We had the place to ourselves and could wander down towards the valley for photo shots and climb back up, using projecting stones in each wall, similar to stone stiles in the Lake District. Later we found huge

The number of tourists here is minimal, as it takes some days to walk in, so we had the site to ourselves. This Inca site is only about 30% excavated and many more terraces are still covered by forest, as it has not yet been possible to clear them. The Peruvian government is attempting to encourage students of archaeology from around the world to help but, so far, not enough have come along to complete the work. The sights include a ceremonial temple, partly reconstructed houses, irrigation channels, grain stores and Llama Terraces with life-size images of llamas constructed into the walls in white stone, all the way up the hillside.

Llama terraces



tarantula spiders (by torchlight) that came out of the walls at night. Fortunately they did not want to join us in the camp but were more interested in smaller creatures.



Judy at Llama terraces

The last of the high passes went up from the village of Yanama (where they are reputed to grow over 800 varieties of potato) to a pass at 4648m.



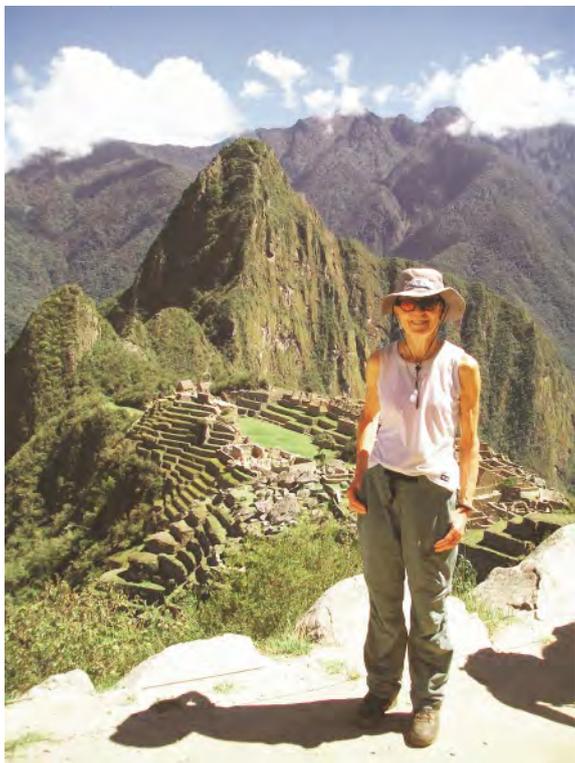
Farmer planting potatoes

This took us above the cloud forest to bare mountain slopes that looked similar to the Scottish highlands. The similarity was enhanced by the weather that day which was cloudy and drizzling, with a little sleety snow as we approached the pass. It was good to get down to the other side to a nice campsite in Totora village. There we said goodbye to the mules and muleteers, as there was a road so our gear could be taken by bus. Since I was the only member of the group who could speak any Spanish, I was nominated to do the farewell speech to the crew. Fortunately I had a small dictionary and time to prepare it the night before, so I was able to thank the muleteers, the people who put up tents and assisted in camp and the cook team for all their great work. They did seem to appreciate being addressed in a language they could understand (even though they speak Quechua most of the time).

Our final camp further down the valley at 1800m, Lucmabamba, was warm, with bananas and coffee growing in profusion and plenty of mosquitoes. In this area there are many more campsites, as it is on the main Inca trail although

we were the only group in ours. We were invited to tour the coffee plantation, pick some of the ripe (red) beans and go through the process of shelling, roasting and grinding them, before tasting the final product. Although I am not much of a coffee drinker, it seemed pretty good. We were also treated to the third birthday cake of the trek, as three of the 14 people had had birthdays during the nine days' trek and the cook team had made cakes every time, even in isolated camps in the mountains. That night there was a football match between Peru and Chile, so everyone crowded into the one building with a TV. Unfortunately Peru lost the match, so there were a few long faces in the morning.

We continued along the trail the next day, with the usual 5am start, uphill for some hours to a viewpoint at Llactapata, from where you can see Machu Picchu in the distance across the valley. We were treated to an amazing meal of fresh trout in a restaurant with a panoramic view, a couple of hours walk away from any road access. Later we took the trail down to the river and the train terminus which was something of a culture shock, as it was full of people, baggage, noise and chaos. The train took us into the small but busy town of Aguas Calientes, where we stayed in a hotel with hot showers!



Judy at Machu Picchu

The next morning we left at 6am to get ahead of some of the queues for Machu Picchu. A fleet of buses were constantly ferrying people there from the town, which worked efficiently, as did entry arrangements. Despite no longer having the place to ourselves it could not disappoint. The spectacular setting and the completeness of the ancient city make it one of undoubted wonders of the world. Machu Picchu itself is far more complete than any of the other former Inca settlements, as it was never discovered by the Spanish invaders. It has also benefitted from being almost completely excavated, so it has a range of temples, royal residences and houses for ordinary people, as well as terraces with numerous different kinds of soil and crops, developed to suit the climatic conditions. We were fortunate to have clear skies and sunshine so it was possible to take all the classic photos, but it was uncomfortably hot. We spent a couple of hours walking up to the Sun Gate, to see a different view and then to the Inca bridge, which enables a narrow trail to traverse a sheer rock face (now closed to visitors!), as well as seeing all the main buildings. Later there was time to wander around Aguas Calientes, before taking a late train and bus back to Cusco, where this part of the trip ended.

I had a further couple of weeks in South America, travelling to Guayaquil in Ecuador where Don was able to join me, then we both visited the Galapagos Islands and Paraguay where my nephew lives. Each country felt different, despite having the Spanish language in common. Guayaquil, an industrial port, has done much to improve its image and waterfront, so was a pleasant place to explore for a couple of days. We took a five day boat trip in the Galapagos, visiting four different islands as well as snorkelling and swimming. In different places we saw at close proximity much of the famous wildlife, including giant tortoises, marine and land iguanas, flamingos, sea lions, blue-footed boobies, finches, mockingbirds, albatrosses, sea turtles, manta rays and sharks. The interest that has

been generated over the years by the Darwin voyage and its consequences has undoubtedly contributed to a commitment to keeping this area pristine and unique.



Sea lion on Galapagos



Blue footed boobies

Paraguay was a complete contrast. The weather was very hot (hotter than the Galapagos on the Equator!) until the last day, when there was a tropical downpour and floods. My nephew's flat was close to the market area in Asuncion, the capital, which was colourful and chaotic with vehicles and people everywhere. The riverfront and older part of town were good to visit later on in the cool of the evening.



The family group!

We also spent a day in the village of Cerrito, where the extended family lives, with a number of other families of indigenous Paraguayans. We drank the local maté tea, bought some of the local handcraft and had a lovely swim in the village pool, which was reputed to have a few caiman living there, though we did not see any.

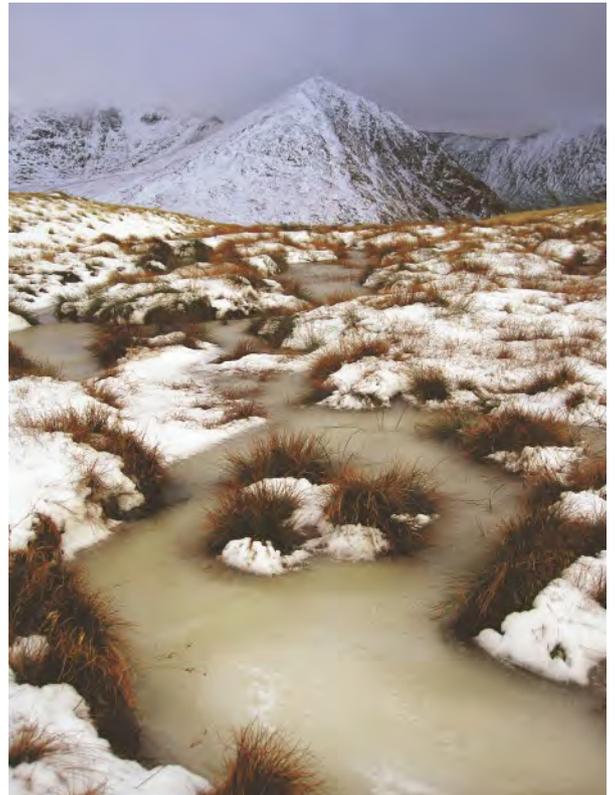
We came home just before the end of the month, happy not to have to take any more flights for a while. The Inca treks to Machu Picchu are becoming more popular all the time and new campsites are being developed, even on the route I took. So if you are planning to go there, go soon!

Marian's Patterdale Wanderings - by Marian Parsons

Here is a selection of my wanderings around the Patterdale area. Many will be familiar to you and perhaps some less so. If they are new to you then give them a try when you next visit the Hut.



A fine April day for a round of Hartsop Dodd and Stoney Cove Pike, gave a great perspective on Brotherswater and Patterdale, and the skylarks singing overhead.



A chilly winter day with some occasional unwilling brightness, but worth a yomp up to Hole in the Wall then lunch behind a rock, retreating smartly along Birkhouse Moor where these little icy pools softened the coldness of the background.



An April half-day ramble around Angle Tarn, towards Brock Crag then through the wall and down the old miners' track which cuts a steep line down the south face of Brock Crag to Hartsop. The splendid proud profile of Gray Crag and High Street's long bulk frame little Hayeswater nicely.

The quietest retreat on any Bank Holiday, long lonely Deepdale can just be an up and back hike, as it was for me on this wet walk. Always rewarding in any weather for its remote atmosphere and wildlife: newts and frogs in the peaty pools; wheatears and ring ousels up on the rocky slopes, with ravens and buzzards circling overhead.

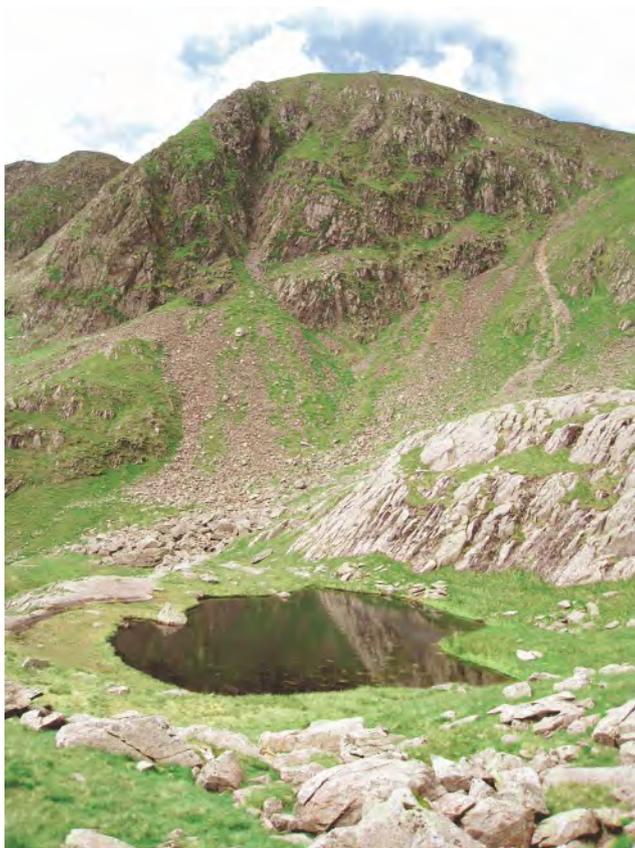




Wandering up behind Patterdale Hall and up the Dairy Field towards Lanty's Tarn, I went higher onto the slopes of Birkhouse Moor where the sun was lighting up the russets and golden browns of the autumn bracken and reeds. This path makes a nice route over the ridge and down the fellsides to Gillside and Glenridding.

For a rewarding couple of hours, start behind the Patterdale Hotel, through the little wood and then a gate onto the fell. Just before a second gate, go left and struggle up the steep path past (or up) little Oxford Crag to the rocky bump of Arnison Crag, then across the bumpy little ridge with wide views of the Hartsop fells to the neat little col at Trough Head. Turn right, descend the little narrow valley where you get a sudden glimpse of Ullswater, to a stile over a wall, and follow the beck boggily back down to the Grisedale path.





Hard Tarn is hard to get at, and you could be in the middle of the Scottish Highlands for the feeling of remoteness. Yet you only have to go up Nethermost Cove or Ruthwaite Cove, then the fun of locating it can take over. I went up the scramble on Eagle Crag, and ate my sandwich at Hard Tarn in the company of a couple of ravens and the odd frog. Then up the ridge onto the Helvellyn massif for a quick descent to Red Tarn.

The Stangs. I caught the bus up the pass, then up Red Screes where a large gang of rambblers just beat me to the summit, coming up the ridge from Ambleside. I scurried down to Scandale Head, then cut up and over into Dovedale on a line I've been up several times, which avoids everyone except the odd sheep. Down steeply to cross a developing ravine, to follow the crest of Stand Crag then descend to The Stangs, a lovely grassy hummocky ridge overlooking Dovedale. I didn't camp there this time, but made for the easy path down to the cattle pastures in the water meadow.





Rest Dodd and Rampsgill Head. Starting up Boredale Hause, a quick morning hike up the Beda Fell bridleway brought me to the ridge path where there are many little humps and bumps to explore, and views over Rest Dodd and The Nab to High Raise across the gloomy depths of Martindale and Rampsgill. Both summits of Angletarn Pikes must be climbed before heading down to Angle Tarn and the descent back to Patterdale.



Martindale Hause. Cheating a bit by catching the Howtown ferry on my annual season ticket, I was reminded of the Grimsel Pass when I glanced down from the lovely little path round the back of Hallin Fell. The zig-zags used to be fun when riding around there with my farmer friend who lives in Howtown, as a fit horse can take a direct line at quite some gallop! This time, I followed the nice field paths with their many and varied little stiles down to Sandwick, then home over Sleet Fell, High Dodd and Birk Fell.

Ascent of the Dom, 4545m in August 1968 - John Mercer

“John, I hope you don’t mind”. Toby was just back from Zermatt, where he had been getting fresh bread for breakfast. What had he done now? We were soon to find out.

Some words of introduction are required. It was my first visit to the high Alps, and we had chosen Zermatt, where the average height of the principle mountains is greater than anywhere else in the Alps. We were camping on the old campsite, some distance below the village: hence Toby’s daily bread expedition, for which he had volunteered with typical generosity. There were five of us, and brief character assassinations of the other members of the party may be useful. Toby Norris was an international orienteer, and understandably was the fittest member of the party. He had done the Haute Route over the passes and glaciers from Chamonix to Zermatt the season before, but was very definitely not a climber: he quickly got nervous and very vocal in exposed or difficult situations. Martin Thompson, 37, was rather older than the rest of us. He was fit and a good cyclist. He had been to Zermatt on a course the previous year, and had done some climbing both on rock and ice. But he was more of a follower than a leader when things became technical. Roger Havelock was quite fit and daring, and could lead V Diff. Rock. But he was somewhat obtuse and very argumentative, almost invariably challenging any decision. We called him “Havoc”. My wife Sylvia was technically competent and had a fairly cool head. We had done quite a lot of moderate climbing in the Lake District, Wales and Norway, and had been on a course in the Austrian Alps. But the high Alps were different.

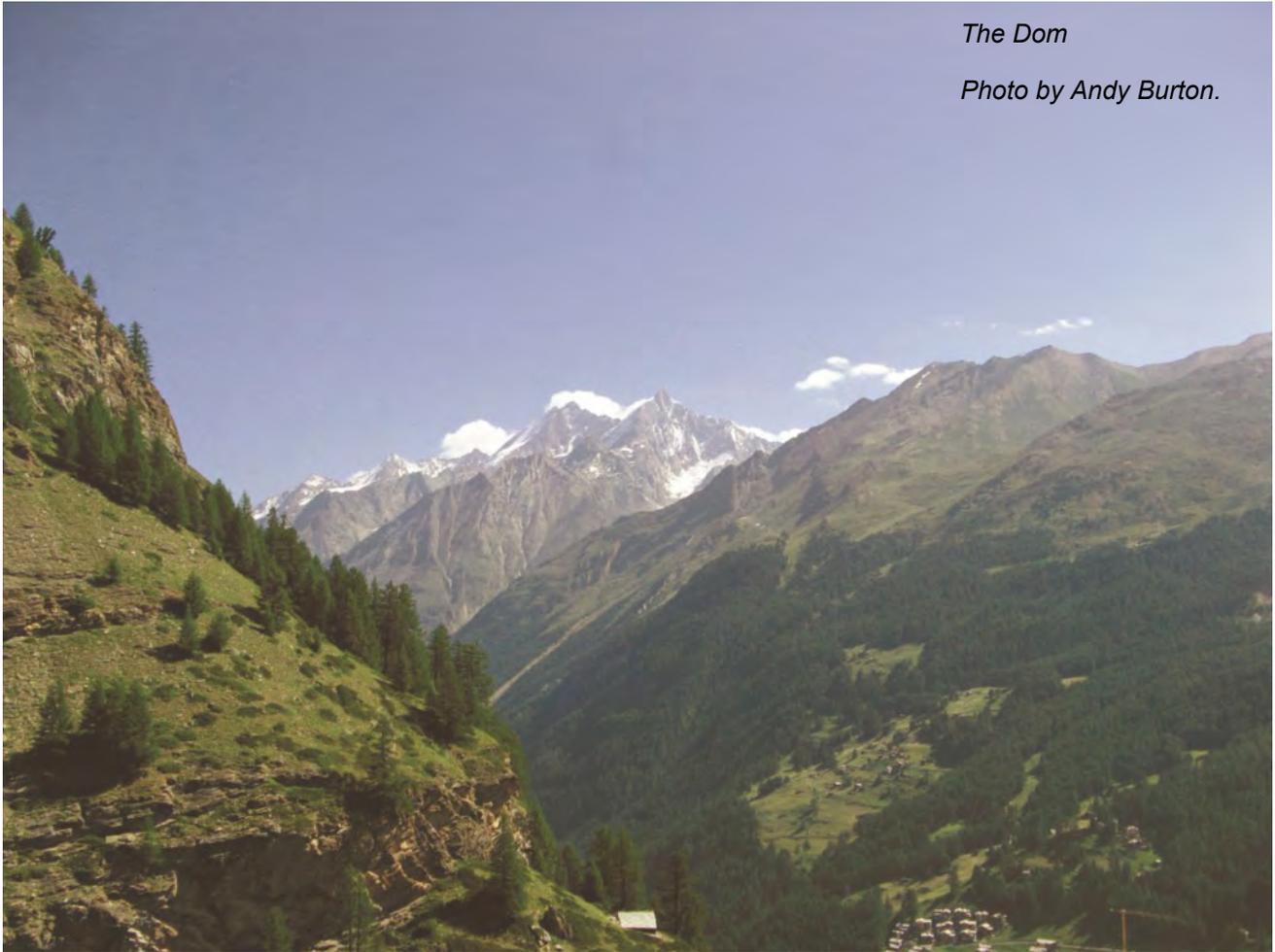
We underestimated the effects of altitude, the difficulties of sleeping in high huts and of carrying heavy climbing gear, and the importance of moving together quickly over difficult ground. But we learned fast, and after failing on the Zinalrothorn, we climbed the Alphubel, 4206m (an epic), Monte Rosa, 4634m and the Trifhorn, 3728m. Sylvia was so affected by the altitude at the top of Monte Rosa that we had to tie her to the summit cross. Now we hoped to climb the Dom, 4545m, the highest mountain entirely in Switzerland.

What Toby had done was to meet an American called Marvin Goss and, subject to my veto, had invited him to join us on the Dom. Marvin was in the US Air Force, and was stationed in Germany. He was one of the most disorganised people I have ever met: if he were told to bomb Iraq, Iran would be in dire peril. I acquiesced in his inclusion in the party. But help was at hand. We had met two very experienced Alpine Club members, Anthony Rawlinson and Patrick Limerick, aged 38. Anthony had got injured and Patrick asked if he could join us. He was very welcome. He was very upright and “pukka”, having served in a cavalry regiment and been on Himalayan expeditions. We later found out he was the Earl of Limerick.

On the next day our assorted party set out for the Dom hut, 2928m. We first had to catch the train from Zermatt down to Randa, and then a steep walk to the hut involving 1500 metres of ascent. We left the hut at 3am the next day, staggering uphill by the light of head torches. When the time came to rope up, I played my masterstroke: I invited Patrick to lead one rope with Marvin, Toby and Havoc, while I led the more amenable Martin and Sylvia. Marvin’s rope management was appalling. He was constantly treading on the rope with his crampons. Patrick took it all with a stiff upper lip. The route went up the North Flank of the Dom. This sounds dramatic but it was in fact a straightforward snow climb. It was long with over 1600 metres of ascent in snow at high altitude, and involved considerable effort. We all got to the summit and safely down to the valley that night.

The Dom

Photo by Andy Burton.



This account was written at the request of Toby's daughter who was collecting stories for a book to commemorate her parents 25th wedding anniversary in 2003. Sadly, Patrick Limerick died on January 8th 2003, and his obituary appeared in the newspapers giving details of his political, merchant banking, skiing and mountaineering achievements. He served as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under Edward Heath for two years, which he described as "absolutely not to be missed and absolutely not to be repeated". Surprisingly, there is no mention of his ascent of the Dom with Marvin, Toby and Havoc. Perhaps his comments on his time at the DTI would apply.

Editors note: This article has been published with the kind permission of Silvia Mercer to celebrate Johns first trip to the Alps.

Writing a Cicerone Walking Guide – with the help of the ABMSAC - Pamela Harris

When Cicerone Press asked if Alan and I would revise their Haute Savoie walking guides we readily agreed, little knowing how this would totally dominate our lives for the next two years. The new editions of *Walking in Provence*, which we had helped to complete, had just been published, and we had very much enjoyed our visits to this beautiful part of southern France to check some of the walks.

But even though the Haute Savoie is on our doorstep, preparing completely revised editions of these guides was a much bigger project. There were two books with 30 walks in each, and all had to be re-walked to check the accuracy of the route description, with two new walks added. This had been the first walking guide written by Alan's late wife Janette back in the 1990s, and a lot had changed since then. New buildings and roads meant that some walks had to be re-routed, and the new signposts, which had sprung up everywhere, had to be incorporated into the route descriptions. Whenever we re-did a walk we were scribbling notes on all the changes, as well as trying to take lots of photographs and struggling with the technicalities of the GPS needed to plot each route.



*An ibex on La Tournette, posing in front of Mont Blanc,
photo by Rick Saynor*

In addition, Cicerone now had a policy to include short sidebar comments on the flowers or wildlife seen on the walk, and longer paragraphs on places of historical or cultural interest. It was this aspect of the walks that I began to enjoy more and more, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that an area which I had previously regarded as worth visiting only for the walking had lots of other interest as well, from medieval monasteries to monuments commemorating the French Resistance Movement, and associations with the eminent Victorian alpinist Alfred Wills.

Once back from a walk, the updated routes with the additional comments had to be written up, and Alan spent hours on his computer working on the sketch maps, checking the GPS trails and adding details to the base maps provided by Cicerone. Then there was the general introduction to revise, new introductions to be written for each of the six sections we had re-structured the book into, and hundreds of photographs to sort out and label.



Bill sharing his lunch with an alpine chough on the summit of Roche Parnal: photo by Rick Saynor

But first, we had to make sure that the 60 walks were all completed. Since we wanted new photos there was no point in setting out in bad weather, and hardly any of the walks could be done even in a mild winter, and the higher ones not until early summer, when the snow had melted from the trails. We soon realised that we did not have time to do them all ourselves, and in any case felt we were getting too old to do the longer and more challenging ones involving height gains of over 1000m and some exposed sections, often protected by fixed cables. Consequently, a few younger - and fitter - friends who live locally were co-opted to help, including ABM members Rick Saynor and Bill Westermeyer.

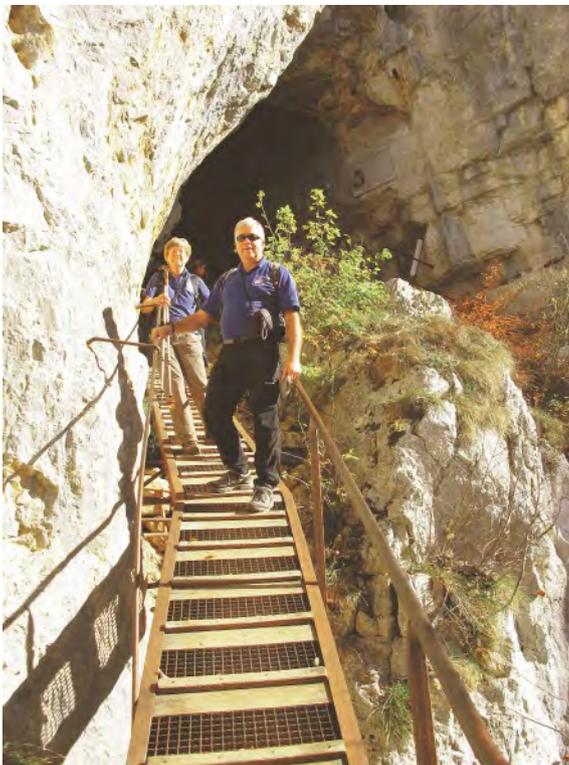
They happily set off early in the mornings, often on a two-hour drive, to clamber up the steep rocks of the Dent d'Oche and Cornettes de Bise in HS North, and the exposed sections of the Tournette, Trou de la Mouche, Roche Parnal and Sous-Dîne in HS South.



Rick negotiating the fixed cables on the Sous-Dîne: photo by Philip Jenkins

They also did other, less demanding walks for both books, accompanied at times by Carol or Rosie. On a sunny June day Katherine Heery, another ABMSAC member, accompanied me on our favourite walk around the Montagne de Sulens to find the lady's slipper orchids we knew grew there. Even Mike Goodyer, on a brief weekend visit to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Geneva Section of the SAC, was commandeered to join us on one of the walks up the Salève, Geneva's local mountain.

Pamela and Mike entering the Grotte d'Orjobet on the Salève: photo by Alan Norton



However, even the less challenging walks were not always straightforward, and we had a few interesting experiences. Perhaps the most hair-raising was when we were walking through the grounds of the monastery on the way up to the Voirons Ridge and an irate man suddenly rushed out of the trees towards us, brandishing a chain-saw and shouting loudly that we were trespassing. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, we beat a hasty retreat. But it was not so easy to beat a retreat from the herd of about 300 goats which stampeded towards us along a narrow path when we were on a steep traverse heading for the Lac de Lessy. They were totally oblivious of the fact that any other living creature might want to share the path with them, and we climbed higher up the slope as rapidly as possible to avoid being knocked over the edge. And then there was the large group of French army cadets and their officers on a training mission, who set out up the Taillefer Ridge near Lake Annecy at the same time as we did. They were considerably younger, and quickly overtook us. But every so often they would stop and take up a defensive position in the undergrowth at the side of the path, their rifles pointing at anyone coming up. Once we had passed them they rapidly moved ahead, to repeat the exercise further uphill. This went on for about an hour, until they finally stopped for a break at the top of the ridge -

by which time we were wishing that another army would arrive to shoot them! Then, to add insult to injury, they clustered around the signpost which indicated our way down, blocking the directions. Needless to say, we took a wrong path, with the result that the walk had to be re-done another day.



Alan having escaped the French army on the Taillefer Ridge, photo by Pamela Harris

Some of the walks were firm favourites which we had done many times, but others we had not done for years, or even at all. One of the things we enjoyed most was that they were all circular walks, and as we ticked them off, we appreciated once again what a beautiful area this is, with stunning views of high mountains, small lakes and dramatic waterfalls. Yet there were lower peaks to enjoy too, and the countryside at the start of the walks was quiet and pastoral, with dairy farms and small villages. Several were in nature reserves where animals and plants are protected, and we frequently saw marmots, and sometimes ibex and chamois. I especially enjoyed the walks in spring and summer when the alpine flowers were in full bloom, with daffodils and dog's tooth violets on the Vuache, bright red alpenrose and brilliant blue gentians everywhere, and tiny delicate field orchids in the most unexpected places.

We think that all the walks are worth doing, but my favourite is one of the new ones in HS South - the Arête des Saix in the Chaîne des Aravis. We set off up to the Refuge de Doran in thick cloud, so had none of the spectacular views of Pointe Percée that Rick and Carol had when they did the walk later and took the lovely photo for the cover of that book. But when we reached the top of the Arête we broke into brilliant sunshine, with one of the most stunning views of Mont Blanc across the Vallée de l'Arve that I have ever seen. Even better, this view stayed with us for the rest of the walk, making it an unforgettable day.



As we sent off the final edited proofs to Cicerone we breathed a deep sigh of relief, but also felt a real sense of achievement that the two books will soon be published. *Walking in the Haute Savoie: South* will appear on 15th June, and *Walking in the Haute Savoie: North* on 15th November. (You can read about them on the Cicerone website, www.cicerone.co.uk - click on 'coming soon'.)

Mont Blanc on the walk down from the Arête des Saix, photo by Rick Saynor

So, what will we do next? Well, as some of you know, we are busy preparing a revised edition of Janette's final guidebook, *Walking in the Dordogne*. This is a very different and much lower area, where the walks are considerably less demanding. However, they are equally enjoyable, with even more historical and cultural interest, and spectacular flowers. We have already made four visits, and the book is well under way for its production date of next spring. Keep looking at the Cicerone website!

George Starkey Hut, a review of the new arrangements-James Baldwin,Company Secretary

It is now twelve months since the TCC decided to disband and cancel their partnership with ABMSAC to run the George Starkey Hut in Patterdale.

As reported at the AGM a lot of changes have been made and a new partner found.



Discussion with the Alpine Club began in September 2015 and we're successfully completed in May 2016 after members of the ABMSAC, ABMSAC Ltd. and the AC agreed to a new equal partnership. The partnership came into operation on the 1st July 2016. At the same time the name of the company was changed to George Starkey Hut Ltd and the Articles of Association together with their interpretation were updated.

The partnership was set up to be equal with three directors, three Hut management committee members and a maximum of 100 members from each club and the Chairmanship of the board alternating between the clubs at 3 year intervals. To equalise the financial position a sum equal to the net assets of the company at 30th June 2016 was deposited by the AC into the company accounts. Prior to the agreement, Phase 1 updates were completed using funds from the company account and a donation from the TCC of £9,000. A further donation from the TCC of £1,500 was made to the company in April 2017.

The day to day operations of the George Starkey Hut has not changed with Marian Parsons continuing as Hut Booking Secretary and Hut Warden

The new Directors and Hut Management Committee are actively looking to introduces an online booking system and upgrades to both washrooms.

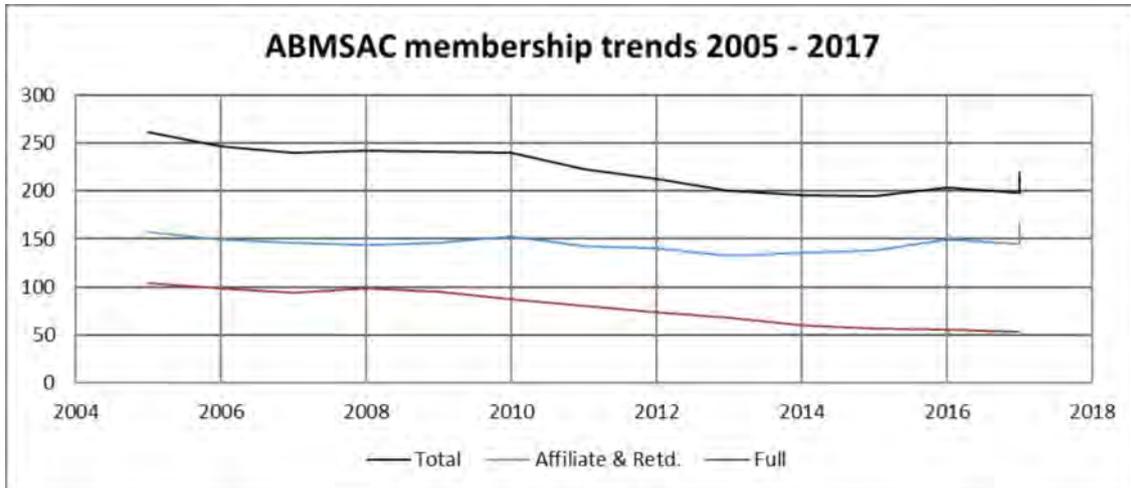
The role of the TCC over the past 40 years has been key to the successful running of the Hut and the Directors, members of the company and ABMSAC thank them all for their hard work, enthusiasm and the cash injection from their funds at the closure of the club.

Fings ain't what they used to be – A review of the latest membership information

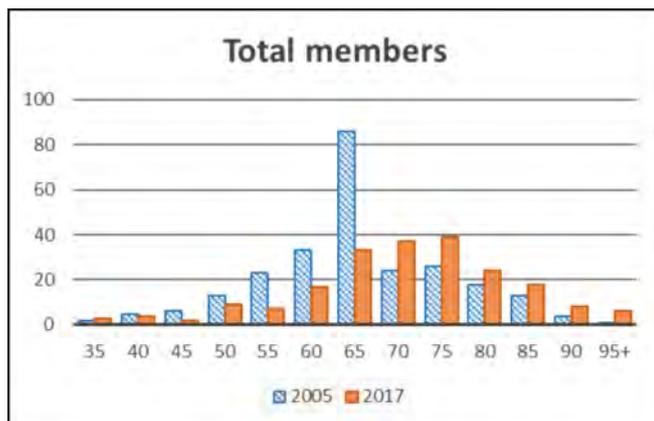
- Ed Bramley, Membership Secretary

Fings ain't what they use to be, or so goes the lyrics of the 1960 West End comedy musical, written by Lionel Bart. As the membership secretary, I regularly get asked versions of that theme, so I thought that a dip into the membership statistics archive would help to throw a little light on this number.

Since 2005, our total membership as a club has gone down from over 260, to a current figure of 220. This includes 28 new members, who we welcomed at the beginning of this year from the Tuesday Climbing Club.

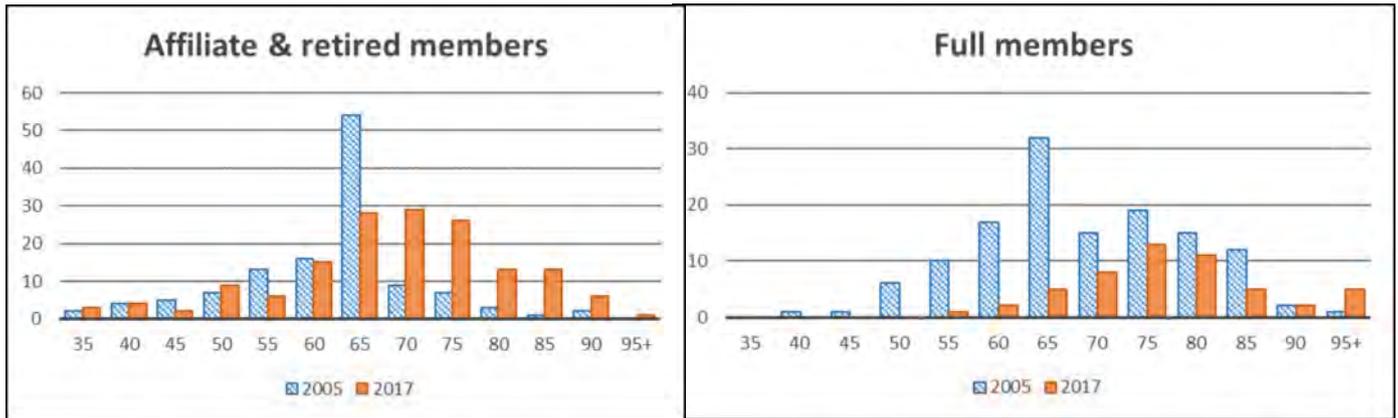


Until 2009, the year of the club centenary, whilst club membership had shown some consistent downward trends, it was not as marked as the changes in the years immediately after the centenary, when there was a sharp decline in both the full (SAC) members, and affiliate membership (including retired members). Since that period, Affiliate membership has shown an overall year on year rise (even allowing for TCC members joining), and now stands at 167, whilst full SAC members have declined to about half what they were in 2005, to 53 members.



Looking at the age make-up of the club, and how that has changed since 2005, what is evident even in 2005, is that we are not a club of young members (*see figure on left*).

In 2017, club ages span from mid 30s, to well into 90s, with the bulk of the membership in the 60 – 85 year age range, and the most common age band being early 70s. This contrasts markedly with just over a decade ago, when 65-70 was the most common age range, but there was a sizeable membership from early 50s upwards, and with few members in their 90s.



Dividing the membership into Affiliate and Full members reveals some striking differences between the two groups (see figures above). Affiliate numbers have been broadly maintained within the 35 – 60 age range, and only the 65 – 70 year category has declined. Beyond that, in the 70+ age range categories, there have been significant increases, both through new members, and from older members transferring from full to retired membership. In contrast, our SAC membership has changed radically, and we now do not have any full SAC members under 55 in the club. There has also been a significant shift in the average age of full members, so that most full members are in the 75+ age range.

So does this mean that the club is in overall decline? As always, there are many ways to read statistics. Certainly, overall numbers are declining slowly, but recent years have shown when there are positive membership campaigns, we can turn the numbers sustainably upwards, but this requires consistent effort. This is not out of line with either other mountaineering clubs across the country, or other forms of clubs.

Will we ever be a “young” persons club? Our numbers show that even our youngest members are not young, but we are at least maintaining our age profile amongst affiliate members, until nearly retirement age. It is of concern that our full SAC membership is in decline, and that is something particularly we will need to give serious thought to in the coming years.

Are most of us now in our armchairs, rather than doing things? If one looks behind the headlines at the number of active members we have, then currently our active membership is around 80 – 100 people, or around 40% of the club. Furthermore, we know that many of the meets we are well subscribed, the meets programme itself has grown, and even on the most hardy of meets, people of 75+ are still very active. We are looking to collate more data on the active part of the club over the coming year, and I look to provide a further update in next years’ journal.

If we want our club membership to remain healthy going forward then that will depend on a wide range of factors, but to come back to our Presidents’ challenge at the Annual Dinner, to encourage further new members to keep joining, and remaining with, the ABMSAC.

Obituaries



Brian Frederick (Buff) Dolling (1933 – 2016)

In the early 1980s the ABMSAC advertised for new members in *The Climber* magazine. Amongst those who responded to this advert were Buff and his wife Val. They were invited to attend a club meeting at the George Starkey Hut over the 1981 May bank holiday.

Arriving on the Friday evening, they were warmly welcomed by the group of members from Scotland and the Northeast of England who formed the bulk of those present that weekend. The next day Buff and Val participated in their first club activity – an ascent of Blencathra via Sharp Edge.

From that weekend on a close affinity grew between the new members from Bedfordshire and their found friends from the North. In August of the same year Buff and Val were back at Patterdale and climbed the Pinnacle Ridge of St Sunday Crag with members of the Northern group. Later in the year Buff

attended a Scottish winter meet for the first time and from then on the pair of them were rarely missing from club meets in this country and the Alps.

Buff and Val played a leading role in the ABMSAC 75th anniversary celebrations at Saas Fee in 1984 and became regulars at the club's annual dinner weekend at Glenridding.

In March 1986 Buff and Val made their first trip to Crete to join members from the North who regularly visited Greece at this time of year. Buff became captivated by the Greek mountains and by the folk music of Crete. For the next twenty years he could be relied upon to appear somewhere in Greece each spring and became something of an expert on the mountains and gorges of western Crete.

At about this time Buff developed an interest in, and talent for video recording and made memorable recordings of the ascent of Psiloritis, the highest summit of Crete and of the traverse of the Samaria Gorge by ABMSAC members. Following the untimely death in 1991 of his wife Val, Buff expressed his appreciation for the friendship and support he received from his friends in the club and he continued to visit the north regularly and seldom missed club meets. Apart from his mountaineering, Buff had a long interest in sailing off the Essex coast. He was a keen golfer, painted landscapes and had a lifelong interest in military history.

After a long struggle with a very painful illness, which he bore with unflinching courage and cheerfulness, Buff passed away in November 2016. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him and counting him their friend.

Colin Armstrong. (Photo by Jim Strachan)

JOHN SHERWOOD MERCER 1938 - 2016



John was 69 when he had a massive stroke the day after a routine 50 mile bike ride. He lived for another 8 years suffering repeated minor strokes until his death in August 2016.

Born in Edgware he went to Haberdashers' Aske's Hampstead school where he became a Prefect. He did his National Service as a Signals Officer then travelled in South Africa working as a mining engineer and visiting relatives. He studied natural sciences at Christ College, Cambridge then joined ICI in Liverpool. It was here that he developed his interest in the mountains and where we met. We married in 1967 and had two children Clare and Beach.

We moved to Manchester where John worked as a Plant Manager for Lankro Chemicals and where we were well placed for Wales, the Lakes and the Peak District.

Our first trip to the high alps was in 1968. John was 30 and we were with a group of friends none of whom had any mountaineering experience but were athletic and fit so John naturally became the leader of the party. We climbed the Dom, Alphubel, Rimpfischhorn and Monte Rosa - a good bag of easy 4,000ers. Although not a great rock climber John developed a penchant for snow and ice and learnt how to move together and was good on mixed terrain. The following year we were with two friends and climbed the Weisshorn and Zinalrothorn. John then decided on the Zmutt ridge of the Matterhorn. I waited for their return in the Hornli hut. Come nightfall they were still not back. They appeared sheepishly in the early hours having bivouaced a stone's throw away because there was no light on the hut. Undeterred John set his sights on the list of 52 x 4000ers.

From 1973 to 1975 he climbed seven more with Tony Williams including the 1st British ascent of the NE face of the Bishorn. In 1977 he climbed solo 6 more. By now a member of the CC and ABMSAC, with various climbing partners available he secured all but one of the 52.

After three failed attempts of the Aiguille Blanche de Peutrey he succeeded by crossing the Freney glacier under the overhanging seracs. He was the seventh British climber to climb all 52 x 4000ers. He was aged fifty.

Alongside climbing activities John was running with the Cheshire Tally-ho Hare and Hounds running club where the hare laid a paper trail and the hounds followed until they reached the finish: a pub where they all washed in a tin bath before the evening meal.

When weakening knees put paid to running and climbing he turned to cycling and joined the local Ravens club on weekly trips. Always looking for a challenge he cycled from Lands End to John O'Groats and joined the CTC trips in Europe, S. Africa, India and New Zealand. He also had a short skiing career in his fifties. When virtually beginners, John and son Beach joined Pete Hammond's group in Chamonix and were taken down the Vallee Blanche. Pete carried a sun umbrella, a deck chair and picnic including a bottle of wine to celebrate John's 4000ers achievement.

John was passionate about wine. His knowledge was encyclopedic and every year he presented a tasting of Rhone valley wines at the Manchester Wine Society and every Easter the family camped and toured the vineyards where John would buy direct from the vigneron.

John was a larger than life character with a wicked sense of humour. He was interested in life rather than work and packed a lot into his. He will be remembered with great fondness by family and friends.

Silvia Mercer. *(Photo by Tony Williams)*

Some additional thoughts from climbing companion Tony Williams:

John was the formative influence on my climbing career. I first met him whilst standing shoulder to shoulder waiting to be served in a packed pub in Manchester. He had an arm in plaster. His reply to the obvious question was, "I fell off Eagle Front" in Buttermere. I had been living in Manchester for a couple of years, had discovered climbing but had not progressed beyond lots of walking, working my way up to severe on rock and courses at Glenmore Lodge and in Austria. John introduced me to Sylvia that evening and I was soon invited to join them on camping trips to the Lakes where I found my climbing standard pushed up.

One of John's hallmarks was research and preparation including careful assessments of the weather forecast and I benefited greatly from this and from his vastly greater experience – to say nothing of more gear, such as was available in the early 1970's.

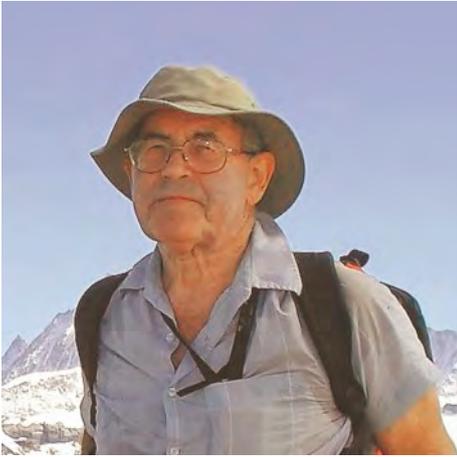
These first alpine achievements whetted John's appetite and he set his sights on the list of fifty-two 4,000 metre Alpine peaks. From 1973 to 1975 he climbed seven more with me including the 1st British ascent of the NE face of the Bishorn. With various climbing partners he secured all but one, the Aiguille Blanche de Peutrey which he finally managed using a route that crossed the Freney glacier under the overhanging seracs. He was the seventh British climber to climb all the Alpine 4000 metre peaks.

Before the advent of indoor climbing walls fitness was kept up by walking and winter climbing in the Lakes and North Wales. John introduced me to the delights of snow and ice climbing on Great End and Ben Nevis, staying at the CIC Hut. Another winter activity that John cherished, as much for the great characters participating and the conversation in pub afterwards as for the running, was the Cheshire Tally-Ho Hare and Hounds running club.

When weakening knees put paid to running and climbing John turned to cycling and he cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats and joined CTC trips in Europe, South Africa, India and New Zealand. I recall stories of a memorable solo cycle ride from Melbourne to Sidney which involved a measure of wine tasting en route. He also had a short skiing career in his fifties.

He will be remembered with great fondness by family and friends. Those in the climbing community will recall the determination, energy and enthusiasm with which he tackled every project, his wonderful conversation both serious and witty and his astute observations of people and events both inside and outside of the mountaineering world.

Terence (Terry) John Shaw 1939 - 2016



Terry started climbing when he joined the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club and attended several of their Alpine meets. He also took up ski-touring and joined the Grindelwald section of the SAC in 1975. He further enhanced his links with Switzerland when he married a Swiss lady, Esther. Sadly the middle years of his life were occupied by looking after Esther, who was diagnosed with MS shortly after their marriage. She died in 2004 which allowed Terry to rekindle his love of the hills. He became an active member of the ABMSAC, attending meets in Scotland and the Alps, and joining treks in the Alps and Nepal. He was a popular figure, with a twinkle in his eye, and an uncanny knack of finding the nearest bar in every Alpine Village we visited. He and Esther had purchased a flat in the village of Sigriswill above Lake Thun and many of us have happy memories of sitting on the balcony there enjoying the view while sipping a glass of excellent wine.

In 2003 he was made Company Secretary of what was then ABMSAC Ltd, where his legal background was put to good use. In 2007 he was elected Vice President of the Club. At the Club's centenary dinner in 2009 he proposed the toast of "The Swiss Confederation", with a brilliant and amusing speech, gently poking fun at some of Switzerland's odder characteristics, while emphasising the strong links between the Club and the country.

In recent years he too became confined to a wheelchair but this did not deter him from visiting family in France or attending the Club's annual dinner. He was always pleased to see visitors and enjoyed being pushed to his local pub in his wheelchair. The Club is poorer with his loss.

John Dempster. *(Photo by Bill Westermeyer)*

The following obituary was published in the Daily Telegraph and is reproduced with their kind permission:

Terence Shaw, who has died aged 77, was a *Daily Telegraph* journalist called to the Bar who practised briefly before returning to be the paper's legal correspondent for more than thirty years.

An accurate, straightforward reporter with copperplate shorthand and an unflashy style, Shaw knew how to place the right emphasis on any story and had a talent for using a telling quotation.

While at home covering the House of Lords and the High Court, he also took the pulse at the lower end of the profession of the Law Society and the Justices' Clerks Society.

There was also spectacular cases such as the government's attempt to ban the former MI5 officer Peter Wright's *Spycatcher* book and the arrest of General Pinochet. In addition he reported on the growing volume of sex discrimination cases.

The son of a *Daily Express* journalist, Terence John Shaw was born in Willesden on January 5 1939, and went to Harrow School, where he was a keen musician, playing the piano, cello and timpani; he once received a wink from Sir Winston Churchill, an earlier timpanist in the school orchestra.

At St John's College, Cambridge, he read Law, was a useful wicketkeeper and developed a lifelong love of mountaineering.

On coming down, he worked briefly at the *Express*, switching to *The Telegraph* in 1960. He proved his worth as a busy home news reporter, and was posted to New York for a year. There, his major concern was the steady build-up of the Cuban missile crisis.

Back in the Fleet Street newsroom he began to read for the Bar in his spare time and was called by Gray's Inn. But he did not enjoy his pupillage and returned to *The Telegraph*, initially as a general reporter before concentrating on the law.

Any possibility of further extensive foreign assignments was restricted after his marriage, in 1967, to Esther Loeliter, a Swiss nurse who was confirmed to have multiple sclerosis on their return from honeymoon.

But he made occasional trips to report developments in EEC law at Strasbourg (where he became an expert on the best restaurants) and also extradition hearings in the Dublin High Court, after which he would have a couple of pints at Mulligan's in Poolbeg Street before flying home.

Shaw was on holiday in the Swiss mountains on April 10 1973 when a Vanguard airliner crashed outside Basle, killing 110 people from four villages in Somerset. He was the first reporter to struggle through the snowstorm with the medical teams who reached the wreckage in a forest at 1,900 ft, where only the tail was recognisable. He watched the bodies being laid out in rows and interviewed survivors. Two days later he reported the ecumenical church service in German and English, where a soloist sang Handel's *I Know that my Redeemer Liveth*.

Eleven years later he encountered another disaster when, while cycling from his home in Windsor, he saw a woman walking fully clothed into the Thames on the other side. Stripping off, he plunged into the swollen current and pulled her out. With the help of a passer-by he resuscitated her successfully, though she later died in hospital.

Returning home he had a shower and a brandy before setting off again for the London train. He received a Royal Humane Society award for bravery.

Terry Shaw retired from *The Telegraph* in 2000. He was a member of MCC and a steward of St George's Chapel, Windsor. He kept up his French and German and remained a keen mountain walker in the Alps and Nepal. He was celebrated for his witty speeches at Swiss Alpine Club dinners.

Shaw's wife died in 2004, and he is survived by his son.

Terence Shaw, born January 5 1939, died September 8 2016.

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

Minutes of the meeting held at the Inn on the Lake Hotel, Patterdale on Saturday 4th February 2017.
The president Mike Parsons was in the Chair, 37 members were present.

Apologies for absence: Colin Armstrong, Paul Stock, Tony Howard, Mary Boulter, Antonia Barlen, Steve Bowes, Mick Stout, Tony Armstrong, Rick Snell, James Bogle

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 7th February 2016

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved. Proposed, Belinda Baldwin, seconded Mary Eddowes.

Matters Arising: None

Election of Officers and Committee:

The following office holders and committee members indicated that they are willing to be reappointed:

Treasurer	James Baldwin
Membership secretary	Ed Bramley
Meets secretary	Andy Burton
Secretary	Dick Murton
Editor	Mike Goodyer
Elected member	Pamela Harris-Andrews
Hon. HMC Representative	Marian Parsons
Co-opted member	Heather Eddowes
Hut warden	Marian Parsons
Vice president	Jim Strachan, agreed to stand for a further year.

All approved together by a show of hands.

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 2017 – 2018 remain as follows: Single membership - £23 to £27. Actual rate £23.50. Second member at same address - £15 to £18. Actual rate £15.50. Junior member - £10 to £14. Actual rate £10.00.

A sum of £1,000 was donated to the BMC appeal Mend our Mountains. This has included work on Helvellyn and Dartmoor.

Meet costs increased due to a change of venue for the Alps hotel meet as the hotel cancelled at short notice, the Presidents futures meet and a shortfall on the Sky meet.

Investment value increased significantly during the year to £131k. It must be noted that this is a snapshot at 30th. September 2016 and there is no guarantee that they will remain at this level. The markets are in a degree of turmoil and until the final outcome of the Brexit decision has been worked through significant fluctuations will be seen.

The current value of investments, cash and savings accounts is approximately £160,000.

The report and accounts were accepted. Proposed Jim Strachan, seconded Heather Eddowes.

James then made a request for someone to train up to replace him as treasurer, having carried out the role for 13 years, 7 or 8 on extended tenure. Most transactions are now made on-line. The volunteer would be a co-opted committee member during the training up period.

There were no immediate offers.

President's report

Phase 1 of the hut update was completed at a cost of approximately £25,000 before the end of June, and prior to the new partnership with the AC formally started.

We have a new hut partner, the AC, the arrangement commencing 1st July 2016.

The hut management committee has equal numbers of directors, and financial input. The funds remaining in the GS Hut Ltd following the phase 1 refurbishment was approximately £53k. This cash sum was matched by the AC, giving a total from the two clubs of approximately £106k. The hut, as a limited company has up to 200 members, with a maximum of 100 from each club. There are currently 98 ABMSAC and 28 AC members of GS Hut Ltd.

The TCC will disband next month (March 2017), and £9,000 has been handed over to GS Hut Ltd. As a result of this generous financial donation, and the substantial work carried out by TCC members, all remaining 28 TCC members have been offered life membership of the ABMSAC. They were welcomed as new ABM members and thanked again for their generous donation and hard work driving the partnership and operations of the hut over the years. Even in the last year, the TCC have led 5 meets, showing how active they still are.

George Starkey Hut Ltd

The first meeting of the new arrangement for the George Starkey Hut Ltd committee took place in early September at the hut. This first day-long meeting had the objectives of bringing everybody up to speed with hut operations and finances, and to identify the volunteer roles needed to run the hut.

The GS hut now has 28 years of the lease left to run. An architect has been brought in to help a development group develop long term plans to ensure the hut is still fit for purpose at the end of this period, and further in the future. No decisions have been made. A key decision is to decide what the future purpose and therefore functionality of the hut is to be. To compare it to recent decisions in some of the Swiss huts – is this hut a mountain restaurant, or is this simply to provide more basic overnight accommodation?

There is to be a hut maintenance work weekend, the first w/e in September, where hopefully, there will be the opportunity for more than just maintenance work.

A number of groups were identified, as follows

H&S director: Tom Curtis. During December, Tom and Mike Parsons reviewed all systems paperwork which was found to be in good order. Tom has now taken over responsibility of devising and implementing improved systems.

Hut booking system. Jonathan White, Paul Hudson, Mike and Marian Parsons are members of this group. It is intended to operate a web based booking system, with a specific G S Hut Ltd website, where both members and nonmembers can book. The aim of this is to reduce the workload of the hut bookings secretary, and to make bookings more robust. It is noted that the G S Hut booking secretary, Marian Parsons, wishes to step down once the new system is up and running. Much experimentation has taken place to try to use standard systems but this has not proven successful so far. The F&RCC system appears to work well and may make a good template. It is intended to ensure all payments are made on-line to reduce paperwork and visits to the decreasing number of high street bank branches.

Hut maintenance – Duncan Hogg – ABM, and David Dunk – AC.

Hut improvement project Ian Mateer – ABM, Duncan Hogg – ABM, Tom Chatterley – AC, Jonathan White – AC, plus Mike Parsons as chair.

Mike has set up a system whereby all documentation/drawings/minutes/legal docs, is now shared online by all G S Hut Ltd directors and committee in a special folder with 11 sub folders within Google Docs.

New membership recruitment

There has been a strong meets program throughout 2017, and 2017 is following in a similar vein.

Mary Eddowes was thanked for recruiting a number of new members, and running a new members meet. Those present were all asked to do their bit for the future of the club by recruiting one new member each this year. Approximately 85% of all in room agreed they could recruit one new member. That means that 30 new members should be possible before next year's Dinner / AGM.

Succession - roles and functions

When Mike took on the role of President, he warned of the risk of having to close the club in 6 - 7 years because there would be no-one left to run it. This risk remains, and there are significant problems filling roles to take over from members who have already been too long on these roles according to the rules. Simply rotating roles will not be sufficient. New faces are required, perhaps initially as co-opted members to ease into the harder roles later. Mike is beginning the search for both his successor as president and Jim's successor as VP.

Any other business: None

Date of next meeting:

It is proposed the next AGM will be held in February 2018, to coincide with the Annual Dinner (3rd 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. Provisional date of next year's AGM – Saturday 3rd February 2018. 18:00

Please also note that the GS Hut Ltd AGM takes place at the same time as the two clubs. The AGM for 2015 – 16 took place at the same venue and date as the AC AGM. The next GS Hut Ltd AGM will take place following the ABMSAC AGM.

The meeting closed at 18:45

Dick Murton, Secretary, March 2017

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING GEORGE STARKEY HUT LTD

Minutes of meeting held at the Skiddaw Hotel Keswick on Saturday 26th November 2016.

Present Mike Parsons (Chair), Derek Buckley (Treasurer), John Dempster (acting secretary) plus 14 members.

Apologies for absence Pamela Andrews, Belinda Baldwin, James Baldwin, Ed Bramley, Richard Coatsworth, David Dunk, Mike Goodyer, Andy Hayes, Ian Mateer, James Mehigan, Brooke Midgley, Geoffrey Neuss, Dinah Nichols, William Peebles, John Percival, Jim Strachan, Howard Telford, Jack Whitaker.

Introduction MP explained that the Company which operates the George Starkey Hut had previously been called ABMSAC Ltd. Following the decision to invite the Alpine Club to take a share in the hut the Company had been re-named George Starkey Hut Ltd. This was the first AGM of the Company under its new name.

It had been the previous practice to hold the AGM on the same day as the Annual Meeting of ABMSAC. It was now planned to alternate the date of the GSH Ltd AGM between the two club AGMs. The next AGM would therefore be held in early 2018.

Minutes of previous meeting The minutes of the AGM of ABMSAC Ltd held on 6th February 2016 were approved.

Directors Report and Accounts DB introduced the Report and Accounts for the year to 30th June 2016. Although turnover was almost exactly the same as in the previous year the accounts showed a loss of £7804 compared with a profit of £2524 in the previous year. The main reason for this was expenditure of £8784 on maintenance and minor improvements which it had been agreed would be undertaken before the AC became partners. The Report and Accounts were approved unanimously.

MP reported that a steady flow of AC members were using the hut and that meets for Young Alpinists and Alpine Training were planned. It was hoped that the hut would be used for a UIAA meeting in 2018. It was noted that the hut was well placed for astronomical observation.

MP said that he and the Hut Warden were currently assessing an online booking system which had been proposed by James Baldwin.

Any other business There was none.

The meeting closed at 15.25.

John Dempster, Acting Secretary
28th November 2016

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 C Parsons

VICE PRESIDENTS

1948 Gerald Steel CV & Colonel E R Culverwell MC
 1949 Colonel E R Culverwell MC & Brigadier E Gueterbock
 1950 Colonel E R Culverwell MC, Rev G H Lancaster (died April 1950) & Dr C F Fothergill
 1951-1952 Dr C F Fothergill & Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman
 1953 Lieut-Colonel A E Tydeman & J R Amphlett
 1954-1955 J R Amphlett & Robert Creg
 1956 Robert Creg & Dr J W Healy
 1957-1958 Dr J W Healy & B L Richards GM
 1959 B L Richards GM & Dr A W Barton
 1960-1961 Dr A W Barton & D G Lambley FRCS
 1962 D G Lambley, FRCS & V O Cohen MC
 1963-1964 V O Cohen MC & F Solari
 1965 F Solari & J G Broadbent
 1966-1967 J G Broadbent & J S Byam-Grounds
 1968 J S Byam-Grounds & W Kirstein
 1969-1970 W Kirstein & Dr D R Riddell
 1971 Dr D R Riddell & M Bennett
 1972-1973 M Bennett & Rev F L Jenkins
 1974 Rev F L Jenkins & P S Boulter FRCS
 1975 P S Boulter FRCS & J S Whyte
 1976-1977 J S Whyte & F E Smith

1978 F E Smith & J P Ledeboer
 1979 J P Ledeboer & F P French
 1980-1982 F P French & S M Freeman
 1983-1984 S M Freeman & F A W Schweitzer FRCS
 1984 FA W Schweitzer FRCS & Wing Commander H D Archer DFC
 1985 F A W Schweitzer FRCS & A I Andrews
 1986-1987 A I Andrews & W B Midgley
 1988 W B Midgley & C G Armstrong
 1989-1990 C G Armstrong & R W Jones
 1991 R W Jones & G G Watkins
 1992 G S Watkins & F B Suter
 1993-1994 F B Suter & Commander J W Chapman OBE
 1994-1995 Commander J W Chapman OBE & D R Hodge
 1996-1997 D R Hodge & R N James
 1997-1999 R N James & M Pinney
 2000-2001 M Pinney & Dr D W Watts
 2001-2003 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 FA W Schweitzer FRCS
 1976-1978 R A Coatsworth
 1978-1983 S N Beare
 1984-1986 A G Partridge
 1987-1988 S M Freeman
 1989-2000 H F Romer
 2000-2001 A I Andrews
 2001-2006 J W S Dempster
 2006-2010 Mrs A M Jago
 2010 - D Murton

HONORARY MEETS SECRETARIES

1971-1974 S N Beare
 1975-1979 A Strawther
 1979-1983 A I Andrews
 1984-1988 J C Berry

1989-1994 F B Suter
 1994-2001 M J Goodyer
 2001-2003 E A Bramley
 2004-2009 J C Foster

2009-2010 J F Harris
 2010-2013 M Parsons
 2013- A Burton

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES
(Formerly Honorary Registrar)**

1965-1968 George Starkey
 1969-1971 F A W Schweitzer FRCS
 1972-1974 J E Jesson
 1975-1977 D J Abbott

1978-1980 A N Sperry
 1980-1984 J W Eccles
 1985-1991 T G B Howe MC
 1991-1993 H M Eddowes

1994-2003 Dr M J Eddowes
 2004-2012 E A Bramley
 2012-2014 M Pinney

(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)
 1949-1962 M N Clarke
 1963-1964 W R H Jeurwine
 1965-1968 G A Hutcheson

HONORARY EDITORS

1968-1974 Graham A Daniels
 1975-1986 S M Freeman
 1987-1992 M R Loewy
 1992-2002 M I C Baldwin
 2002-2009 R B Winter
 2009- M J Goodyer

HONORARY EDITOR NEWSLETTER

1992-1995 F B Suter

1909-1911 C E King - Church
 1912-1925 J A B Bruce
 1926-1954 C T Lehmann
 1954-1957 J A Amphlett

HONORARY TREASURERS

1957-1969 F R Crepin
 1970-1978 R Wendell Jones
 1978-1980 R A Coatsworth
 1980-1997 M Pinney

1997-1999 K Dillon
 1999-2005 A I Andrews
 2005- J Baldwin

1909-1914 A B Challis
 1915-1922 Reginald Graham
 1923-1930 W L Adams
 1931-1940 F Oughton
 1941-1952 J A Marsden-Neye
 1953-1956 S E Orchard

HONORARY AUDITORS

1957-1967 R A Tyssen-Gee
 1968-1974 A Hart
 1975-1977 J Llwllyn - Jones
 1978-1979 G A Daniels
 1979-1980 C J Sandy
 1981-1984 N Moore

1985-1999 D Bennett
 1999-2005 K N Ballantine
 2005-2009 P McCulloch
 2009-2011 N Harding
 2012 - M Reynolds

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

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

HONORARY LIBRARIANS

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

HONORARY SOCIAL SECRETARIES

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

HONORARY SOLICITORS

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

CURRENT HONORARY MEMBERS

Brooke Midgley, Wendell Jones, Don Hodge

**Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club - Membership Details 2017
(Insert)**

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

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

Hut at Rhyd Ddu, North Wales

Hut booking secretary – Michael Hayes

Tel: 07771700913

Email: hayes_michael_j@cat.com

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 – as above

ABMSAC Office Holders 2017

Committee

OFFICE	HOLDER	ELECTED
President	M C Parsons	2015
Vice President	J H Strachan	2013
Hon. Treasurer	J Baldwin	2005
Hon. Secretary	R W Murton	2010
Hon. Membership Secretary	E A Bramley	2014
Hon. Meets Secretary	A Burton	2013
Hon. Editor	M J Goodyer	2009
Hon. Hut Booking Secretary	M P Parsons	2014
Committee Member	H Eddowes	2014
Committee Member	P Harris-Andrews	2014

George Starkey Hut Ltd Directors

Chairman	M C Parsons
Company Secretary	J Baldwin
Treasurer	D Buckley