

# ABMSAC Journal 2006

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## ABMSAC 2006 Meets Programme

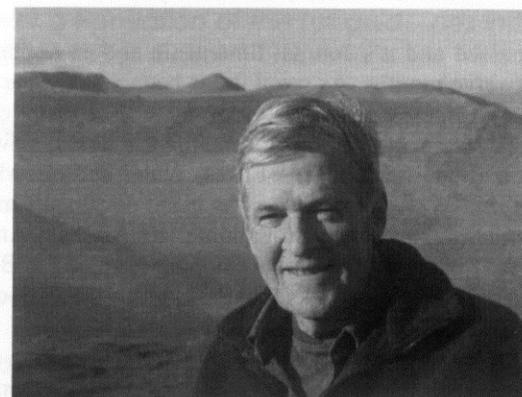
Dates	Meet / Venue	Leader
13-14 May	Maintenance Meet - George Starkey Hut	Don Hodge
10-11 June	Oread Hut, Rhyd Ddu, North Wales	Ed Bramley
15-29 July	Ortler Alps, Santa Caterina Valfura, Bormio	Alasdair Andrews
22 July-6 August	Valais Alps, Atermenzen Campsite Joint Alpine Meet – ABMSAC / AC / CC / FRCC Coordinators: Mike Pinney / Steve Hunt	
2-9 September	AlpTrek 2006 – Dolomites: Sella to Marmolada	Alasdair Andrews
2-16 September	Cortina, Dolomites – Camping Rochetta Campsite Joint Meet – ABMSAC / AC / CC / FRCC Coordinator: Jeff Harris	
23-24 September	George Starkey Hut, Patterdale	John Foster
30 Sept-1 Oct	Beer, Devon	James Baldwin
7-8 October	Maintenance Meet – George Starkey Hut	Don Hodge
21-22 October	Alpine Reunion Meet – George Starkey Hut	Mike Pinney
11-12 November	Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Mid Wales	Dick Yorke

## 2007

3-4 March	Annual Dinner Meet	Brooke Midgley
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For full and up to date information of the current Meets Programme please see the latest edition of the ABMSAC Newsletter.

## THE NEW PRESIDENT



**John Dempster CB**

John Dempster's liking for the outdoors began when he was a Scout, walking and camping on Dartmoor and youth hostelling in the Lake District. At college he joined the Oxford University Mountaineering Club and climbed with them in Wales, the Lakes and Scotland. He joined the SAC in 1967 and visited the Alps regularly thereafter. He climbed many of the classic 4,000 meter peaks including Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn (twice). Many of these climbs were done on, or following, ABMSAC meets, often with Roger James.

Although brought up in Devon his parents were Scottish and family holidays were regularly spent in Dundee. His father introduced him to the joys and miseries of Munro collecting. His first was Schiehallion which he climbed at the age of 14, direct from Kinloch Rannoch, which is one of the most tedious and unrelenting grass slopes in Scotland, and which nearly put him off Munros for ever. But the seeds were sown and he completed the Munros 35 years later.

Much of his working life was spent with the Ministry of Transport and he was made a CB in 1994. He left the UK Civil Service in 1996 when he was appointed Director of the Bahamas Maritime Authority. He is currently Director of the UK Major Ports Group.

Two hip replacements mean that he is not now as agile as he was but he is still a regular attender at ABM meets north of the Border and can still be observed, in good weather on top of a Munro.

## Editorial

by Richard Winter – Honorary Editor

Another year has passed and it's Journal time again and an opportunity to think back over the last twelve months. As usual it has been a busy year for ABMSAC with a very varied and interesting meets programme. Not many clubs can boast the variety of meets we have; alpine meets for all tastes, a winter Scottish programme and year round meets in the Lakes, Wales and elsewhere. Last year saw new venues in mid-Wales and Devon. As usual our thanks must go to John Foster who co-ordinates the meets programme, to Alasdair Andrews for his alpine meets, to Mike Pinney for the alpine camping meet and to Brooke Midgley for the annual dinner meet. Our thanks must also go to the various meet leaders who take on the final responsibility for the meet when it happens.

Another highlight has been the publication and distribution to members of James Bogle's book 'A History of The Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club'. This is the culmination of a project made possible by a legacy received from John Byam-Grounds and the feedback on the book has, I'm pleased to say, been most favourable.

In 2009 we will be celebrating our centenary and as part of this I will be publishing a special 'Centenary Journal'. This will take us into new territory as far as the Journal is concerned as the traditional folded and saddle stitched format will not handle the size I am aiming for. As a dummy run I want to publish a much bigger Journal next year so am counting on members for their support with contributions. I will be approaching some individuals for contributions but I will certainly welcome any contributions so please think about writing a piece for me. I will also welcome any ideas from members for content of the Centenary Journal.

Bill Peebles is co-ordinating the programme for the centenary and I know that he welcomes ideas and offers for assistance so if you feel that you have something to offer please get in touch with Bill.

The hut renovations have finally all been completed and I for one think that it has been a terrific success. We are now embarking on a significant marketing programme to try and increase the hut usage mid week and I have written an account of what's being done to try and encourage this.

I hope that you will find this Journal interesting and enjoyable. My final comment is to once again thank all my contributors and also all the other people who contribute to the success of the Association.

Members will recall that in the January Newsletter I published a translation of the introduction to the new SAC Guidelines with a promise to print a translation of the full guidelines in the Journal. This translation follows here - Editor

## SWISS ALPINE CLUB GUIDELINES 2005

### Mountains and change

#### SELF IMAGE AND VALUES

*The SAC brings together those who are interested in the mountains and encourages a wide public to participate in mountain sports. It is committed to sustainable development and to protection of the alpine environment where mountain sports are practised. The SAC respects the mountains and their importance for everyday life, culture and economy.*

#### An open community

The mountains are at the origin of our club, enabling our members to share experiences. The SAC is proud of its independence. It is open to all those who are interested in the alpine world as a natural and cultural landscape as well as in mountain sports, irrespective of their age, sex, language, religion or origin. The relationships between its members are characterised by tolerance, solidarity and respect. The SAC brings together different generations of men and women, families and young people who practise mountain sports.

#### Leaders in mountain sports

From recreational to competitive sports, the SAC offers a wide range of sporting activities to those who love the mountains: mountaineering, hiking, ski-touring, ski-mountaineering, snowshoeing, artificial climbing (indoor and outdoor), and ice-climbing. The club promotes the responsible practice of mountain sports by means of appropriate training and information. It undertakes to further various sporting disciplines: to this end, it arranges numerous meets and activities, encourages younger members, supports competitions and is committed to safety and mountain rescue. It sees to the upkeep of its huts which provide an important infrastructure for the members and a unique service for mountain tourism.

### **Alpine massifs, a precious heritage**

The SAC respects the mountains as important for everyday life, culture and economy. It actively supports the sustainable development of alpine regions, but also respects the value of untouched wilderness areas. It assumes a double role: it is committed both to an appropriate protection of the alpine world and to its careful utilisation. The SAC is aware of the changes that have taken place in the Alps, and of the fact that these are the result of climate changes caused partly by man. It accepts its share of responsibility for this.

### **The club's spirit of initiative**

The club depends on the activities of its sections for its very existence. The Central Committee develops the general strategies and organises the management of the club. It accepts present and future challenges and by so doing supports the sections in their activities. Voluntary representatives and salaried staff work together at all levels of the club.

### **Satisfied members**

The satisfaction of its members is of primary importance to the SAC. The club orientates its activities and services to meet the needs and interests of its groups of members while bearing in mind the interests of the club as a whole.

### **The importance of tradition**

Since its creation in 1863, the SAC has participated in the development of the alpine environment and mountaineering. This tradition constitutes the basis of its commitment to a responsible practice of mountain sports and to wide access to alpine regions. The SAC protects the diversity and the richness of this natural and cultural heritage. To this end, it makes use of the most up-to-date scientific discoveries.

## **CLUB POLICY**

### **Sharing experiences – mountain sports and training**

The club is open to people of all ages and sporting levels. It is committed to promoting training in all sporting categories, especially the training of instructors. The high quality of this training improves safety and encourages responsible practice in mountain sports. Competitive and non-competitive sports both benefit from sharing knowledge, infrastructures and training programmes. The SAC is open to new developments in the field of mountain sports. The regular practice of mountain sports is recreational, healthy and provides wonderful experiences for all.

### **Offering an infrastructure – SAC huts and rescue operations**

SAC huts are open to all and provide opportunities to share unique experiences. They allow members to identify with our club and also provide an important service to mountain tourism. Their lack of luxury is a distinctive characteristic which should be preserved. They are run on ecological principles in which hut wardens have an essential role. The SAC is open to architectural innovations; however, it does not build additional huts in untouched wilderness areas, preferring to maintain and renovate existing structures rather than building new ones.

Mountain rescue is an integral part of the SAC. This sector is organised in close co-operation with the Rega helicopter service and other partners. Rescue operations are carried out on a local basis by rescue workers from SAC sections familiar with the terrain in which they operate.

### **Accepting responsibilities – environment and culture**

Wide access to the alpine world – an indispensable condition for the practice of mountain sports – is very important to the SAC, as is its commitment to the protection and sustainable development of the mountains. It is a basic principle of the club to seek solutions by dialogue before considering legal action, though it has the competence to do so. The SAC sees itself as a mediator and a specialised authority between mountain sports on one hand and respecting the environment on the other. As a result, it favours public transport. The SAC takes an interest in culture, in the cultural landscape and in alpine art. It sees to the upkeep of the Swiss Alpine Museum and administers its own library.

### **Offering services corresponding to needs**

The SAC represents the interests of its members and provides services for the different needs of men, women, families and young people. The SAC is not linked to any political party. However, it will take sides if its interests are at stake. The principles in this document and its statutes define its policy. The SAC deals with current legal matters.

The magazine and publications such as guidebooks are important services of the club. An active internal and external communication strengthens the club. The leading representatives, who perform their tasks on a voluntary basis, are aided in the execution of their work by a professional secretariat; together they provide work of a high quality.

### **Incomparable diversity – one club**

Whether in a hut, on a trip in the mountains or while telephoning the Central

Secretariat, the SAC is seen as a whole by our members and clients. Life in the sections, voluntary work, the linguistic cultures of Switzerland, exchanges between the mountains and the plain, the town and the countryside, and the long tradition of the club, all make the SAC an incomparable organisation. The club is unique of its kind, and this uniqueness must be preserved and promoted.

The SAC is eager to expand. To achieve this, the loyalty of existing members should be encouraged and new ones gained.

#### **Healthy and open finances**

The club's activities are financed by means of the subscriptions of its members and the funds provided by services. These enable the club to balance its accounts. Members benefit from special offers. The SAC is grateful for all legacies, donations or other forms of financial aid. Sponsorship in keeping with the ethical principles of the SAC enables the financing of some activities. In order to perform tasks of public interest, the club seeks financing from public authorities. The accounting of the SAC is based on the current standards of non-profit making organisations. To ensure its long-term existence, the SAC sets aside financial reserves proportionate to its turnover.

#### **To create links, union gives strength**

Within the SAC, the Central Committee and the sections work closely together. Shared procedures and an open administration with clearly defined powers guarantee the cohesiveness of the club. The linguistic diversity is taken into account in an appropriate manner. The SAC is in contact with alpine sports organisations world-wide. These exchanges enable the club to reflect regularly on its direction and objectives. It maintains close links with organisations in the European alpine range. Partnerships with authorities, associations and public and private institutions all over Switzerland strengthen the SAC and result in co-operative action.

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#### **Components of the Guidelines**

*General idea (slogan):* Our slogan "Mountains and change" evokes the relationship between the SAC and the mountains.

*Self image and values:* In this section the club's self image and the values of the club and its members, as well as their relationship to the mountains, are expressed. All action is determined with regard to these statements.

*Club policy:* The club policy makes concrete statements concerning activities,

members, structures and finances. The club policy provides the basis for the philosophy and for long-term and annual planning.

#### **Terminology**

*The Alps:* The term *Alps* in the Guidelines refers to the high Alps, the pre-Alps and the Jura. The mountains and the alpine world are always used in a broader sense.

*Sustainable development:* The idea of sustainable development was defined at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held at Rio in 1992: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

*Translated by Pamela Harris and John Monks, SAC.*

#### **Marketing the Hut**

*by Richard Winter*

It seems like a lifetime ago but in fact it was only at the Dinner Meet in 2002 that I put up my hand and said that I would take over the editor's job from Belinda Baldwin. My first surprise was when the President said to me at the end of the AGM "Nine o'clock tomorrow morning OK?" "Nine o'clock tomorrow morning what?" I said "Committee meeting" he replied. It was only then that it occurred to me that the Editor is an *ex officio* member of the committee. So next morning there I was.

This was a time when we were still arguing about hut improvements and this subject took up most of the early meetings. As this was all new to me I listened and learned and came to the opinion that there were two things in addition that needed urgent attention; a drive for new members and a marketing programme to follow up the hut improvements. These two things I banged on about time and time again. In the end other people were asked to look into the membership situation and I was told that marketing the hut was the responsibility of the Hut Management Committee.

Time passed; committee meetings came and went; hut improvements were done, checked and completed and in the end – probably fed up with my asking about it – the committee asked the HMC to come up with their marketing plan for the hut. After a short further delay the answer came back that they didn't feel that they had anyone with the experience to carry out this job. This was a good point for

me to sit on my hands and do nothing but OH NO before I knew any better up went my hand and "I'll have a go if no one else wants to do it". Sounds of hands being bitten off resounded.

OK, so I used to work in the Marketing Department but my area was organising events but I guess something must have rubbed off. At least I was used to developing budgets and working to them; so that's a start. First thing to be done was to try not to step on anyone else's feet. I introduce myself to the HMC and find that they are all a) glad to have someone prepared to have a go at the job and b) both supportive and helpful. I was later to learn just how supportive and how they were also prepared to move things forward very quickly.

A series of e-mails and a long chat with Sarah Bridge (Chairman HMC) and we agreed that the areas we felt would be useful to target were things like the independent schools (have money and not afraid to do trips), youth groups, church groups, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, mountain bikers etc. and that appropriate activities would be some press advertising, mail shots and e-mail shots. Other members of the HMC agreed to help with researching some contact details.

I started doing costings and contacted some journals that could be useful for running classified advertising. One day I received a call from the publisher of Independent Education Today, a journal circulated to all independent schools in the United Kingdom, with an offer of a run of six monthly classified adverts for the price of four. This seemed like a good opportunity although I had no budget as yet. A series of frantic e-mails and phone calls and it was agreed to proceed and the wording of the insert was agreed all in time for the January 2006 edition.

This contact flourished and the publisher mentioned that the editorial feature for the February edition would be Outdoor Adventure and that they might be able to include some reference to the George Starkey Hut in their editorial. I sent him a copy of the flyer I had produced and in due course a copy of the February edition arrived. To my surprise and delight not only had they mentioned the hut they had reproduced almost the whole of the flyer including two colour photos. What we actually had was a full page colour advert – for free!

The annual Dinner Meet and all the associated committee meetings were approaching fast and I prepared a marketing proposal with its associated budget to present to the committee of ABMSAC Ltd. This was quite a daunting prospect as it is always a problem persuading people that they need to spend some money to do something they have never done in the past and that has never cost them

anything before. I was scheduled as the last item on the agenda and I had a cunning plan.

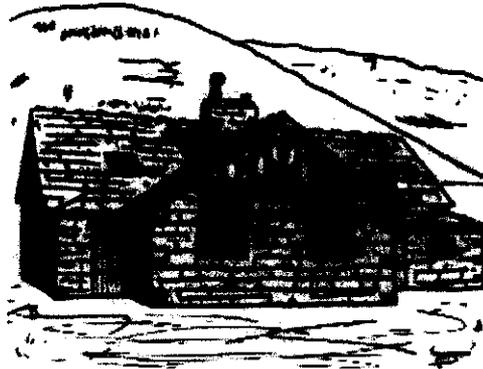
After a good dinner at the Glenridding Hotel we moved into the meeting room and proceeded to work our way through the agenda. I had positioned myself between the committee and the door out of the room so to get out they had to get past me first. At last my moment of truth arrived and I took them through the proposals and the budget. What was I worrying about? They could see the necessity to do something and here were some solutions; we agreed that one area of classified advertising was probably not a suitable target and suddenly all was agreed and the meeting was over. I am indebted to everyone who supported the proposals and pushed things through with absolutely no guarantees that any of the proposals will be successful; and all done with time left for a pint after the meeting.

Now I am receiving bits of information about possible contacts for the mail shots and e-mails, supplies of the flyer have been printed and, once the Journal has been sent out, the rest of the campaign will follow. We have also re-launched an existing promotion giving members of the Austrian Alpine Club a special rate for mid-week bookings.

New notices have been produced for the hut (we are martyrs to current Health and Safety regulations) all featuring a strong new logo. I want to tidy up all the notices and documentation associated with the hut and will be putting up a dispenser for copies of the flyer.

All members have the opportunity to contribute to our marketing activities. If any of you have contacts with any organisations that might make use of the hut, particularly for mid-week bookings then please let me or the HMC have the details. Any sort of organisation can be considered, not just those already mentioned. We can make a good offer to training organisations, corporate training organisers, in fact a very wide range of possible users who just don't know about the hut at the moment. We have re-established the George Starkey Hut as one of the best mountain huts in the country offering self catering bunkhouse accommodation but we do need to build up the business to maintain that position.

So as I finalise this year's Journal I look forward to getting on with some more of the marketing activities. It's all time consuming but will hopefully be successful but sometimes I wonder why I didn't just keep quiet.



*The new hut logo*

### **Excursions in the Rif Mountains** *by Sally Holland*

My climbing companion Chris and I enjoyed our one day expedition into northern Morocco in 2004 so much that in 2005 we decided to venture a little further inland for a short stay in the Rif mountains: we wanted more time to meet some of the people and soak up the local atmosphere as well as climb a mountain or two; we thought that three nights would just about allow us to do that.

We did a bit of research in England and acquired an excellent guide to Morocco, but failed to track down any reasonably large scale maps of the area. We thought that Chefchaouen, the main town at the western end of the Rif, would be a good starting point and Ketama a suitable place from which to kick off for the climb to Jebel Tidiquin (2448m) – the highest mountain in the range. However, we changed our minds about Ketama when we learned that it is the centre of the hashish growing industry and consequently is full of drug dealers and other unsavoury characters.

While holidaying on the Costa del Sol in June we drove to Algeciras and caught the ferry to Ceuta. Here we squeezed onto a very crowded bus for the Moroccan frontier then had a short taxi ride to Fnideq where we intended to track down our friendly taxi driver of the year before and see whether he was willing to take us to Chefchaouen. We found him alright but he suggested taking us only as far as Tetouan. This is where we discovered how the Moroccan taxi system works. There is one lot of taxis which simply drive you round the town (known as *petits*

taxis) and a second lot (the *grands taxis*) which take you from one town to the next. You can, of course, hire a whole *grand taxi* for yourself – at a price – but the custom is for as many people as possible to squash into a taxi, e.g., two on the front passenger seat and four in the back, and you all share the fare. At Tetouan therefore after waiting for some more passengers for Chefchaouen we all crammed into a taxi and very hot it was too! The advantage was that we each paid only 50 dirhams (approx £3.30) for a journey of about 60km. We were both in the back and I had elbows in the ribs each time we rounded a bend and practically stuck to the man next to me in the heat. Chris was by the door and had to hope it did not burst open or we would have lost him! A quaint custom is that the window winders are removed from the taxi doors because it is believed that a breeze is injurious to one's health. We were held up at some road works along the way and the heat was almost unbearable; the driver duly handed over the window winder which was passed round among us to lower the windows and when we eventually set off again it was in much demand to adjust them once more.

After travelling through countryside which reminded us in places of the Spanish Sierra Nevada, with pine and cork oak forests on the slopes, we arrived at Chefchaouen, unstuck ourselves and tottered out of the taxi with relief. We picked up another taxi for the final short drive to our base at the Auberge Dardara getting there in the evening just in time for a genuine Moroccan meal. The hotel fully met our expectations. It was a building which was still in the process of refurbishment, set in lovely gardens with not only flowers but vegetables too, as they grew their own produce for the restaurant. There was also a swimming pool and I kicked myself for leaving my bikini behind. The bedrooms and adjacent bathrooms were spotless and decorated in true Moroccan style, as was the rest of the hotel. The proprietor had made arrangements for us to leave for Jebel Tidiquin the next morning and, on the following day, to climb El Jebel Lakraa (2159m) which, he informed us, is the highest mountain in the western Rif. As we sat on the terrace with a drink before dinner discussing our plans, an eagle flew past and the neighbouring mountains showed up sharply against the skyline.

We thoroughly enjoyed our typical Moroccan meal: home grown vegetable soup in an unglazed earthenware bowl eaten with a wooden spoon, followed by tajine, a famous Moroccan dish which is a stew of meat, vegetables, fruit and nuts cooked over a charcoal fire; it arrived in a conical-lidded earthenware dish. We finished with a delicious lemon tart.

After a disturbed night with a constant volley of barking from the surrounding houses and farms and cocks crowing loudly from time to time even in the dark, I

decided to remain at the hotel being rather tired but Chris left early in a Land Rover to begin his excursion to Jebel Tidiquin which lies some 125km south-east of Chefchaouen. On reaching Ketama the driver, Mohammed, picked up a local guide and continued to Azila, a village below the mountain. The party then drove for some distance up a rough track before completing the ascent on foot. The view from the summit is extensive and far to the north the blue haze of the Mediterranean was clearly visible. Chris arrived back that evening having enjoyed the trip and I rather regretted my decision to stay at the hotel.

The next day we did not have to set off until 9.30am as our destination was much nearer. Away to the east we could see El Jebel Lakraa from the hotel grounds – a round bump on the skyline – looking very innocent, as though a nice country stroll would get us there without much effort. However, this was far from the truth as between the hotel and the mountain lay deep ravines and a row of cliffs which were only apparent if one looked carefully through binoculars. It is set in the beautiful Talassemtane National Park and to arrive at the foot of the climb Mohammed had to drive his Land Rover right round in a huge semi circle to the east side of the mountain over extremely rough tracks. We picked up his brother Abdul on the way – unlike Mohammed he spoke some English – and after about 2 hours' driving we parked in a clearing near the start of the climb. Unknown to us, the two brothers had arranged to meet a group of their friends at the clearing and for at least two thirds of the way up the mountain their shouts and laughter drifted up to us from below – hardly peaceful but at least we could locate our parking place.

This time there was no guide and the proprietor of the hotel had told us that the route was straight up the steep side and that it would take us about 1 to 1½ hours to reach the summit – little did we know! The bottom of the mountain is swathed in forest so once in the trees we couldn't see the summit or, for that matter, the Land Rover. The rock is limestone and there are no footpaths, just occasional animal tracks with lots of tree roots and loose boulders. Above all, the vegetation is prickly: there were multitudes of thistles of all shapes and sizes including a spectacular bright blue one; not only the flowers but the stalk and leaves also were blue! We had to take care not to haul ourselves up by a branch as the likelihood was that this also would be covered in spines.

The route was not at all obvious and we set off steeply up through the forest in a zigzag manner, clambering over roots and loose rock. It was all extremely hot work which became even hotter once we left the trees behind. We were then faced with various bands of cliff which had to be overcome by scrambling up fault lines; it seemed never ending. The shouts from below were suddenly cut off

after we had negotiated one such band and the last part of the climb was completed in peace. After 2¾ hours we were delighted to emerge on the wide expanse of the summit itself where there was a very welcome cool breeze; a vulture drifted by as we ate our sandwiches and admired the view which stretched away in all directions. An hour later we set off down by a slightly different route, negotiating the rock bands safely and being guided to the parking place by the brothers and their friends who were still shouting merrily! We completed the descent in just over two hours and felt very pleased with ourselves until Abdul remarked that we had taken so long that they thought we'd gone to sleep on the top!

We were expected back at the hotel in the evening for dinner but Mohammed and Abdul wouldn't leave until they'd had a meal with their friends – water melon and bread with little fish grilled over an open fire. While waiting for the fish to cook they spent their time playing football and kindly offered us some of their food when it was ready.

Our last day in Morocco was occupied with getting back to Spain. We had a short stop in Chefchaouen and could have done with much longer as it is a very interesting, picturesque place and full of history. Its name means 'Look at the Peaks': an apt description as it lies beneath the Rif Mountains. It was founded in 1471 as a base for the Berber tribes in the Rif to launch attacks on the Portuguese in Ceuta. Muslim and Jewish refugees escaping from Granada arrived there in 1494 to swell the numbers: they gave the town its distinctive Spanish atmosphere with the whitewashed houses, tiled roofs and patios often with a citrus tree in the centre. Until the 1930s windows and doors were painted green, the traditional colour favoured by Muslims, but under Jewish influence the pale blue wash which is now typical was introduced. The town became less isolated in 1920 when it was occupied by Spanish troops; before then it was barred to Christians who only entered on pain of death. The Berber leader Abd al-Krim threw the Spaniards out during the Rif War in the 1920s but they soon returned and remained until independence in 1956.

After crossing the border back into Ceuta, we had a quick meal before catching the last ferry of the day to Algeciras. We had both enjoyed our few days in Morocco enormously – it was so entirely different from Europe and a fascinating country with very friendly people.

## ROUGH GOING IN THE ROUGH BOUNDS

by John Dempster

It is often said that sailing and mountaineering have a lot in common and appeal to similar people. Edward Heath famously likened sailing to "standing under a cold shower tearing up £5 notes". Climbing is perhaps less heavy on the pocket than sailing but both sports involve coping with the elements while traversing a potentially dangerous environment. Experience, the right equipment and good teamwork are essential. The rewards can be great but so is the potential for discomfort.

Opportunities to combine the two sports in one expedition are not easy to organise. The most famous sailor-mountaineer was probably HW Tilman, and more recently Chris Bonington and Robin Knox-Johnston got together for an expedition to Greenland, described in their book "Sea Ice and Rock" In the UK the West coast of Scotland offers good possibilities, and for a Munro collector the use of a yacht can be an alternative to camping. Whether it is a preferable alternative is a matter of opinion.

The Rough Bounds of Knoydart contain some of the most inaccessible Munros in Scotland and a few years ago five of us hit on the idea that chartering a yacht to sail to Loch Nevis would save the pack carrying and camping which is otherwise almost inescapable in that area. (There was no accommodation at Inverie in those days). So we chartered 'Nan of Kyle' a Contessa 32 from Crinan with the idea of picking off Meall Buidhe and Luinne Bheinn "the easy way". But it was not exactly plain sailing.

We started well, aided by the very strong tides that run in the Firth of Lorne. The sea was rough off Oban (the whole crew experiencing varying degrees of sea sickness), but things got better when we entered the shelter of the Sound of Mull, and we reached Tobermory for the first night and worked off the effects of seasickness in the bar of the Mishnish Hotel. Next day we had to round Ardnamurchan, the most Westerly point of the mainland, which is like the crux of a rock climb – once you have passed it you are committed. We rounded the point without difficulty but we then hit a head wind as we pushed up towards Sleat. We decided to fit a smaller jib which entailed two crew members going up to the foredeck. One was Roger who, when he got there, parted company with his breakfast, which blew straight back for the benefit of the occupants of the cockpit. Eventually we decided that enough was enough so we ran for shelter into Arisaig. We found that Arisaig is not in fact a very sheltered anchorage so after

an uncomfortable night we crossed over to Eigg. We all felt we needed a spell on terra firma so we donned our boots and climbed the Sgurr, a famous landmark and excellent viewpoint.

The next day was better so we enjoyed a gentle sail across to Loch Nevis and anchored off Inverie. After a quick lunch the walking party set off up the West ridge of Meall Buidhe. The Rough Bounds are well named. None of the route poses any serious difficulty but a continual series of hummocks makes the going slow and tiring. When we reached the summit it was about 5.00pm, so we had the inevitable debate about whether to go on to the next. For the dedicated Munro collectors there was no real option so we staggered on over Luinne Bheinn reaching the Mam Barrisdale at about 8.30. We eventually got back to Inverie at 11.00pm, after a 9 hour day which had started after lunch!

Fortunately David had elected to keep an eye on the boat and not go on the hills and he had spent the afternoon usefully, gathering a large bucketful of mussels. These were ready for us on the boat when we got back, followed by a substantial curry and suitable quantities of beer. Dog tired we were about to fall into our bunks when I decided to check the late shipping forecast. As the strains of Sailing By faded away we heard the dreaded words "there are warnings of gales in sea areas....Hebrides....". We looked out. It was a calm night with a good moon. We were a long way from Crinan and when the wind got up it would be against us, at least as far as Ardnamurchan. The cardinal sin for a yacht charterer is to return the boat late. We decided there was no option but to set off then and there.

The rest of us were in no condition to sail, but David was fresh and an excellent yachtsman, so after we had raised the anchor and set the sails he sailed single handed through the night.

Roger and I took over at 5.00 am, by which time there was a fresh breeze from the South and the boat was racing along in a calm sea. We tacked round Ardnamurchan and made for the more sheltered waters of the Sound of Mull. There seemed no point in stopping so we just pressed on alternately sleeping and sailing and eventually made the sheltered anchorage at Puilladobhrain by evening. The promised gale never really materialised.

So we got the Munros and avoided camping. Whether it was a preferable alternative is, as I say, a matter of opinion but it was certainly different.

## CTC Cycle Tour to Kerala and Tamil Nadu, South India

February 5th to 19th 2006

by John Mercer

This was a very enjoyable and fairly demanding tour. It was also an excellent introduction to India. John Thorogood (JT) and I joined 12 others and the leaders in Trivandrum, near the southern tip of India. It was a very interesting group, and contained some formidable cyclists. One couple, in their late fifties, had recently cycled from Melbourne to Perth in Australia, via Sydney and Darwin, carrying a tent. They seemed to be able to cycle for ever. I was the oldest, and was very much at the bottom of the group. The other ages ranged from 45 to 66, with an American woman in her thirties.

The tour was something of a test for me. I had a knee replacement operation in January 2005, and I was worried how the knee would stand up to touring. And I had put on a lot of weight since the operation: how could an old fat cripple possibly cope? With difficulty, and help from the support vehicles.

We had three minibuses with drivers, and also an Indian coordinator, Rajesh. The organisation was highly complex. The vehicles carried both the bikes and us over dull sections and through towns. Indian traffic has to be seen to be believed, and traffic conventions are totally different from Britain. Indian traffic is based on priority for the most powerful. A hoot from behind means "get out of my way or I will run you over". This is hard for a British cyclist to accept.

Temperatures were high. I have a computer which registers both temperature and cumulative altitude climbed in the day. At sea level, it was usually above 30 C, the highest being 41 C. In the hills, it could be as low as 20 C in the morning, but up to 35 C in the afternoon. When climbing, it felt even hotter, as I was not going fast enough to get a cooling breeze. In these conditions, you need to drink lots of water: this was supplied by the support vehicles.

After 3 days on the flat, we went into the hills. The first hill day was dramatic, with 7000 ft of ascent over 50 miles in great heat. This was too much for me, and I had to take a ride in a minibus. I took a couple of other rides when I was going slowly and would have delayed the party if I had insisted on riding. But I did complete one day which was 50 miles and 4,000 ft of climbing. So perhaps I will be able to do some gentle touring in the future. The hills were very attractive, and were covered in tea estates. The cycling was all up and down, with scarcely and flat ground.

An important feature of the tour was the many trips and excursions. These varied from grand sightseeing, like the visits to the fifteen acre Hindu temple in Madurai, and to historic Cochin, to the idyllic 2 day trip on a houseboat on the backwaters of Kerala. These are a series of lakes, rivers, canals and waterways which stretch for about 50 miles along the coast. The backwaters provide the setting for the Booker Prize winning novel "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy. The visits to local activities were just as interesting. We saw a simple sugar processing plant, crushing the cane and evaporating the juice to produce lumps of crude sugar, manual spinning of coconut fibre and production of fibre doormats on a simple hand loom. All were done by labour intensive manual methods, and could have been done more cheaply and better mechanically. Likewise, all the rice in the area was harvested by hand. The justification of all this is to provide work: the Luddite argument. Manual labour is paid 50p to £1.50 per day. It is an interesting question whether this policy can be justified in the long term.

John, and particularly Pat Ashwell, are very good organisers. The tour organisation was pretty complex, with vehicle movements, accommodation, and food, including packed lunches all having to be coordinated. I expected something to go wrong, but it never did. John and Pat have fine tuned the trip with constant improvements like replacing inadequate hotels with better ones. I can heartily recommend any of their tours. The accommodation was good, and the food excellent if you like curry and spicy food. (It was pretty good even if you do not.) The cycling was only part of the story, and so mileages can be misleading. But here they are anyway: we cycled about 350 miles, and climbed about 22,000 feet, in 5 full days and 4 half days cycling.

After the tour was over, I left my bike in Trivandrum, and toured independently in Delhi and Rajasthan. Highlights of my trip included the Taj Mahal, the magnificent forts and palaces of Rajasthan, Delhi, a camel safari with a night spent sleeping out in the desert under the stars, and visits to a game reserve where I saw two tigers. But this is another story.

## A Chapter of Accidents

by Wendell Jones

Risk comes in two forms – avoidable and passive. Climbers gravitate to the wrong place; others like the unfortunate London commuters on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 are merely in the right place at the wrong time/

*Many years ago I flirted with both situations...*

Chartered Accountants used to give their underpaid articled clerks six or seven weeks study leave before exams. My Intermediate fell in late November; leave would begin in October. A fortnight's walking cum scrambling in the Oberland had stirred something, and I floated a scheme to spend a week in the Lake District, backed of course by textbooks. My parents were unenthusiastic; the partner who had charge of me agreed readily enough. Years before, and younger than I, he had been sent, newly commissioned, to the Western Front; in a matter of days he was both wounded and a prisoner, and left with pain and a limp that lasted all his days. Perhaps my activities would give him some surrogate pleasure.

On Monday I caught an early train from Canterbury, bought a frame Bergen rucksack and a map, but not a compass and set forth on the express from St Pancras to Penrith and places north. After paying for a return ticket, I had six pounds left.

The bus to Patterdale was tardy, the Youth Hostel shut on Mondays, a storm was coming and I opted for B&B (No Hut! I had neither met George Starkey nor heard of the ABMSAC).

Tuesday gave better weather, and I and my twenty five pound load, which included a bulky edition of "The Principles of Auditing", were across Striding Edge and on the summit of Helvellyn in good time; I ranged south over Grisedale Hause, over Fairfield and down to Grasmere.

Whilst Wordsworth had been dead for a hundred years, the village had yet to be served up as a them park in his honour; far worse, the hostel closed on Tuesdays, so it fell to be D, B&B again; another one pound blow to finances, against the YHA's more modest six shillings and three pence (thirty one pence in today's money).

Had I bothered to consult the YHA Handbook, I could have travelled on the Wednesday and stayed in both hostels. But...

Wednesday's train sped though the North London suburbs and approached Harrow; fog was apparent, signalling errors less so, until their lethal combination put the express and a commuter train on the same length of track. Wreckage spilled over the adjoining lines and a third train slammed into it. It was headline news for a day or two, *but in a less litigious age, not far removed from a war in which disaster was commonplace, no one sued British Rail.* Yet with more than one hundred dead it was then and remains to this day, Britain's worst railway disaster since 1915.

All unwitting, I set out once more past Sergeant Man and the Langdale Pikes to Rossett Ghyll, Bowfell and Crinkle Crag; on the latter a further navigational error led down to Cockley Beck and a steep climb over Hardknott Pass. It was already dark when I reached Eskdale Hostel and I fared poor in the supper stakes.

Next day meant Eskdale in a clearing mist, an ascent of Scafell Pike and a return by the Westwall Traverse and Sca Fell. For once I was back at the hostel in daylight and in time for supper, and listened to the strictures of a lady bent on condemning solitary climbing; my stout defence rested on a lifetime's – say fourteen days – experience.

Friday dawned with a further walk up Sca Fell and a scramble up the Pike followed by a couple of more or less anonymous three thousand footers; on approaching Great End a time check made the case for a descent to Wasdale and a walk over Burnmoor.

A stream gurgled nearby and I resolved to follow it down. Initially gentle enough the slopes got progressively steeper, whilst the river alternated level gorge beds with vertical falls. I edged down a grassy bank, looked for an exit and failed to make it; progress continued by way of tufts of grass and the sides of the soles of my Timpson boots. A little more experience might have revealed that in a battle between strength of arm and the tenacity of grass, the latter will lose and after an airborne interval I came to in the bed of the gorge rather like an upended beetle. A cautious hand edged up to the back of my head and returned daubed with blood and hair, I have the scar still. Further investigation revealed cuts in about fifty places. A glance valleywards showed the next drop about four feet away. I struggled to my feet and found all parts in reasonable working order. I had fallen twenty to thirty feet and shock was a new experience. It proved a relatively easy grassy scramble out of the opposite side of the gorge but I did it shaking uncontrollably.

Out at last! I took stock; my watch had stuck at twelve minutes past four and was

losing hands by the minute. Fortunately the way ahead seemed easier. Going down with exaggerated care I met a kindly farmer's wife who looked me up and down, and invited me to a cup of tea and some necessary running repairs. I lurched over Burnmoor and darkness had fallen by the time I reached the hostel. Good food, a wash and further running repairs produced a new man and a conspicuous bandage round my head gave a suitably piratical look; by good fortune yesterday's combative lady had moved on. A new found friend escorted me to the Woolpack where the bandage created widespread interest and the odd pint. I felt more hero than idiot, but perhaps that was merely the afterglow of alcohol.

Nevertheless it remains my worst fall ever!

After a rest day I got back into gear, traversing the peaks on to Black Sail and down to Seatoller. After a night in Keswick I returned again to Eskdale, only to exit over Wetherlam and the Coniston Fells to the train.

My week had extended to ten days but I might have escaped totally if our daily char had not discovered a blood-stained vest and reported it to Mother. I returned to my studies, putting in a little more effort than the ten minutes devoted to the joys of auditing in Grasmere.

Two months later Mother brought a letter down to the office. I retired to the loo, shut the door and opened the letter. It was terse, impersonal and to the point. "At the Intermediate Exam 932 candidates were examined and Number 257 was placed second... This seemed not unsatisfactory, although I wondered whether bad handwriting or the knock on the head had made the greater contribution.

My tutors, publishers of the offending "Principles of Auditing" and various other tomes, were kind enough to offer a prize of ten guineas (a month's pay) and my employers generously matched this. The Institute of Chartered Accountants expressed a willingness to invite me to attend a ceremony at which the President would present me with my certificate, but this came without a cash offer.

Perhaps this account should end on this moment of comparative triumph. However fate had another card to play.

Success and unusual wealth called for celebration and I invited a number of young golfing friends, including a young lady whom I was trying to impress – the ploy failed signally – to dinner at the Miramar Hotel at Herne Bay. Rather than revert to my normal form of transport, a golf trolley pulled by bicycle, I felt it

better to stay the night (B&B 19/6).

In the afternoon Bernard and I played eighteen holes; the wind was in the North but not very strong. We heard that a gale in the Irish Sea had smashed in the doors of the Stranraer – Larne car ferry but Stranraer was four hundred miles from East Kent.

The dinner party proceeded well enough, my guests departed and I retired to an undisturbed night's sleep.

At breakfast I heard that the hotel's tennis court had fallen into the sea. I hadn't previously stayed in a three star hotel on my own; maybe this sort of thing was a regular occurrence, so I refrained from going to look.

I met Bernard in the town and we went towards the seafront. The tide was in and half Herne Bay was there, a wave was breaking over a three storey house on the front and spray was landing three streets inland. Bernard and I agreed that it was impressive. Enquiry revealed that the low cliff on which the tennis court had stood had collapsed over half a mile front without the damage extending very far inland. Further East, beyond Reculver, the Isle of Thanet had just about returned to the insular state it had enjoyed in Roman times.

Kent had escaped quite lightly, for the wind that sunk the Princess Victoria had roared down a narrowing North Sea too, building up a head of water that had collapsed the seawalls from Lincolnshire to Ramsgate. Where the walls were intact the flood had driven up the rivers and attacked towns from the rear. In Holland the dykes had broken. Presumably the war time air raid sirens had been scrapped so no warning was given to householders, who woke to the roar of the sea crashing into their homes. The sea that had ended the Miramar's tennis had also taken two thousand lives, the worst flood disaster since 1703.

So, three accidents in three months – but only one was my fault.

## **Onich Meet - February 2005**

*by Philip Hands*

There were 10 attendees at this meet Peter Farrington, John and Marj Foster, Roger James, Mike Scarr, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Kathryn and Stewart Strachan-Davis, and myself. Morag Macdonald joined us on the Saturday for the walk.

The meet was based on the Inchree Centre located between Ballachulish and Fort William. Accommodation comprised of two Swiss-style chalets that although comfortable and warm could not be described as spacious. We met up for dinner on the Friday evening at the adjoining restaurant.

Saturday morning dawned cold, clear and dry so we were all eager to make an early start lest the weather changed later on. An all too common event in the Scottish highlands! The party decided to split into two expeditions.

One group, John and Marj, Jim and Margaret, Kathryn and Stewart, Mike, Morag and Roger planned to climb Aonach Beag from Glen Nevis passing the Steal waterfall and via Sgurr a' Bhuic. The Aonach Beag party set off in high spirit but under-estimated the effort needed to reach the summit. Aonach Beag is a big hill only 110m lower than Ben Nevis. The lower slopes were very boggy and as height was gained the ground turned progressively icier and snowy. The effort to reach the summit gradually took its toll as party members decided to call it a day and turn back opting instead for R&R and shopping in Fort William.

Jim and Roger pressed on experiencing increasingly wintry conditions and emerged on the summit plateau that was a dome of sheet ice. They reached the summit cairn but not without incident. One of the party was without crampons necessitating some agile and precarious footwork on the summit dome with the aid of companion support!

Peter Farrington and I set off from the White Corries car park at the head of Glencoe in perfect winter conditions. We climbed the east face of Creise with the aid of ice axe and crampons. We emerged on the summit ridge to be met by an easterly blast, spindrift and cloud. The summit cairn of Creise was soon quit for the relatively sheltered descending ridge towards Clach Leathad. Midway between the two summits we turned east and climbed to the summit of Meall a Bhuirdh by which time the wind had dropped and the sun was out again. We then descended north to the White Corries following the Glencoe Skiing Centre pistes.

We had a very enjoyable dinner on the Saturday evening at the Four Seasons restaurant in the Inchree Centre.

Sunday morning dawned cold, still and cloudy.

John and Marj made their way home stopping en route in Glen Ogle, south of Killin for a walk along the disused railway track of the old Oban and Callander Railway that was closed under British Rail in 1965.

Roger also made his way home stopping en route to climb Meall Garbh, a Corbett on the south side of Loch Leven midway between Glencoe village and Kinlochleven.

Mike climbed Sgorr nam Fiannaidh at the western end of the Aonach Eagach.

Jim, Margaret, Kathryn and Stewart crossed on the Ardgour ferry and went for a drive around the Moidart area. They visited the Woodland Trust oak forest regeneration project at Loch Sunnart just north of Strontian. There is a magnificent hide built overlooking the loch from where you can view seals, herons and if you are lucky enough, sea eagles along with lots of other wildlife. They came out on the Mallaig road and headed for home via Loch Eil and Fort William.

Peter Farrington and I climbed Stob Coire a' Chairn and Am Bodach in the Mamores from Mamore Lodge. Conditions were perfect, still and clear with the cloud base above the summits. It was icy underfoot again necessitating ice axe and crampons. The day was rounded off with a pint next to a roaring fire in the Mamore Lodge hotel.

A very enjoyable weekend with the bonus of perfect winter walking weather!

## **Braemar Meet, March 2005**

*by Roger James*

There is a growing air of comfort entering into the Scottish meets with the majority of members and guests opting to stay in increasingly salubrious guesthouses, of which Braemar – as befits its royal connections – has more than its fair share. A few stalwarts preferred the more traditional fare of the Braemar Bunkhouse while one of our number went for the youth hostel – demonstrating the enlightened and non ageist credentials of that organisation.

On Saturday Peter Farrington, John Percival, Marj and John Foster tackled Carn a Mhaim. This was John's first Munro success since he developed a worrying *problem with his hip last August and he is now clearly on the mend*. As luck would have it the cloud surrounding all of the Cairngorm summits only cleared 15 minutes after they had left the top, so no views. With a later start Roger and Hannah, now Corbett baggers, ventured up Carn na Drochaide and enjoyed impressive views south over Braemar and north to the higher and more remote Cairngorm peaks. Jim and Margaret Strachen, arriving later, contented themselves with a thorough reconnoiter by bicycle of remote ground to the west of the Linn of Dee ready for a big push on two Munros the following day. Mike Scarr went "walkabout" while Peter and Ursula explored the loch shores below Lochnagar, with Morag and Ian going on to the summit. The day was completed with a fine meal in The Bistro.

On Sunday Peter, John and Marj climbed Carn Aosda and Carn a Gheoidh, with the ever energetic Peter continuing onto the Cairnwell. Views were spectacular of the main Cairngorm summits, and they encountered the largest number of arctic hares they had ever seen – all in winter white. Mike was dropped off at the start of the valley up to An Socach and again went "walkabout". Hannah and Roger ventured up another Corbett, Ben Gulabin, while the Strachens building on their previous day's work launched an expedition of almost military proportions involving a 16 mile bicycle ride, 3 river crossings and 6 miles on foot before subduing the remote Munros of An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhidhleir – is Jim making a pitch to join the Territorials?.

**Attendees:** John and Marj Foster, Jim and Margaret Strachen, Peter Farrington, John Percival, Mike Scarr, Peter Goodwin and Ursula, Morag Macdonald, Ian Brebner, Hannah Dinah and Roger James

### **Kintail Meet - 30<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2005** *by John Foster*

This was the last Scottish meet of the Winter programme, and ten members (Alasdair Andrews, John and Marj Foster, Miles O'Reilly, Mike Scarr, Terry Shaw, Jim and Margaret Strachan, Geoff Urmston, and Dick Yorke) descended on an unsuspecting Kintail on Friday night. Some had cheated by spending the previous few days in the far North getting fit, but others had not shared this foresight and some suffered accordingly.

After sampling the local liquid specialities, various ambitious plans were made for the Saturday, all of which were subsequently completed with only minor injuries! Parties completed ascents of The Saddle (both by the formidable Forcan

Ridge and avoiding the same) and Sgurr na Sgine, the Five Sisters of Kintail, and Sgurr an Airgid. Fortunately the weather, which had not promised much initially, cleared sufficiently for views from the tops.

Amidst groans of anguish at the thought of ever moving again, somewhat less ambitious plans were developed for Sunday. Fortunately the weather was less kind and gave the opportunity for *reasoned abandonment of some of the proposed routes*. A particularly intrepid (and by the end of the day particularly damp) group climbed Ciste Dubh, and a second investigated Ben Killilan, while most others toured Applecross and Skye.

Though the number of injuries was growing by the day, muscular recovery was swift. *Determined parties started out on Monday morning to The Saddle, again via the Forcan Ridge, and A'Chralaig and Mullach Fraoch-Choire*. The ridge between these latter two mountains is reported to be the most pinnacle ridge in the Glen Shiel hills - an opinion now shared by some of the group, who spent much of the afternoon clinging to it for dear life! Once again the cloud lifted as the day progressed, and superb views were had from the summits. The descent from Mullach F-C was of the nature of a vertical bog-snorkel, and resulted in several soggy posteriors, including that of one who proudly announced on the lower slopes that *she had not slipped once, and then immediately revised that opinion*.

Most of the group headed for home on Tuesday, leaving a few die-hard types to ascend Creag a'Mhaim, Druim Shionnach, and Aonach Air Chrith in worsening weather, culminating in a foggy and somewhat stressful ridge descent! A solo member (regular attendees at Scottish meets *will have little doubt who!*) also started out towards Sgurr na Moraich intending to complete the Five Sisters the hard way. I understand that this was also successful.

True to form, the weather on Wednesday was the best of the meet, producing superb views throughout the Highlands as the remaining members headed home.

This meet was extremely successful and enjoyable, and I understand that *Bunnahabhain distillery is taking on extra staff ready for the next invasion of this type*.

## Cauterets Meet – July 2005.

by Belinda Baldwin

The Hotel Welcome was tucked away in the rue Victor Hugo and presented several of us with a navigating challenge before we started on the mountains. We found the bedrooms cramped but all was forgiven when Pierre served us with a five-course dinner, which was repeated along with the vegetable soup for the next two weeks. We were not going to go hungry but there was a bit of hassle in the *salle a manger* when someone over went his or her ration of one *croissant* at breakfast. Who was it?

We were there for the mountains being a climbing club and there were daily expeditions to tackle a wonderful range of paths that took off in the immediate and further valleys. Many of us went up the Pic de Cabaliros, Col d'Ilheou, every version of the combined valley and higher lakes walks from Cauterets and from Gavarnie the Breche de Roland and the Cirque de Gavarnie. Sturdier souls reached the summit of Pic de Chausenque the west face of the Pic de Monne.

Whilst on these expeditions flowers were discussed and recorded. A special mention has to be made of the amazing irises in the Gavarnie valley. The animal kingdom did not let us down with sighting of isards, marmots, lizards, salamanders and snakes on the ground and griffon vultures overhead. Our club artists John and Sue busied themselves with so much richness and cameras kept snapping, with side discussions about the intricacies and advantages of digital cameras.

There were cultural visits to old churches and castles and one party spent a day following the old railway track to view its technological remains. Two of us visited the spa. Cauterets laid on a Latin American Festival. The museum was fascinating. The town was charming with its *Fin de Siecle* architecture. Alasdair was brilliant to think of it and to find us somewhere so reasonable and friendly to stay. No one was sick or hurt and all returned safely home.

## ALPINE PASS ROUTE – BERNESE OBERLAND

(AlpTrek 2005)

3rd to 10th September 2005

by Pamela Harris

Less than two weeks before we were due to start the annual September walk in the Bernese Oberland, torrential rain flooded the area, sweeping away houses, roads and rail tracks. Alasdair's worries were twofold: that landslides would close the high level paths, and that Karen's yakmobile would not get through to each night's hostel with our luggage. But by the time we arrived, the Swiss, with their customary efficiency, had already re-opened roads and replaced trains with buses, while the army cleared mountain paths and built brand new wooden bridges over mountain streams.

Our walk formed the central and most spectacular section of the classic Alpine Pass Route, linking Meiringen and Lenk. With high passes to cross every day, and the possibility of adding a few minor peaks of just under 3000 metres, there are magnificent mountain views, and the good weather we experienced day after day ensured that we enjoyed these to the full.

Alasdair's directives had been simple: where there is a choice of route participants are free to wander at will; on some days public transport is recommended whereas on others it is only for wimps; never be late for meals or you may starve.

We took him at his word. No-one missed a meal, though Ed and Andy's gang of four (aka the four boys) twice arrived just as dinner was being put on the table; however, we suspected that, after their customary lunch of rösti mit spiegelei, they would not have starved. Participants certainly wandered at will, and the whole group did not take the same route on a single day. A variety of public transport was used, though the Murtons and the four boys generally lengthened their days by avoiding this, and there were more wimps on some days than others. Even Alasdair himself took a day off, allegedly exhausted by the heat on the long ascent to the Sefinenfurke on the previous day, but more likely because of the drink given him afterwards by the owner of the *gasthof* – coffee laced with neat alcohol and topped with cream.

Each day was different but all were equally spectacular. After a comfortable night at Simon's Herberge at Meiringen, which the owner's photos showed had been partially flooded less than two weeks before, we climbed up to Schwarzwaldalp by bus, thus avoiding a steep uphill slog through trees. As we walked up the

grassy slopes to Grosse Scheidegg then along to First, the Wetterhorn and Schreckhorn dominated the skyline in front of us, while the Eiger north face came gradually into view. The flowers were equally spectacular, with several different varieties of bright blue and purple gentians. Mark and Myles set off on the first of their peak-bagging ascents up the Schwarzhorn (described by Mark as a slagheap), while the four boys climbed up to the lovely Bachalpsee, thus ensuring an even longer descent into Grindelwald. Our hotel there was the only luxury of the week, and we all made the most of it.

The next morning again dawned bright and sunny. Most caught the train to Alpigen to enjoy the spectacular walk beneath the Eiger north face to Eigergletscher with golden eagles soaring overhead. Bill got so carried away by the good weather that he took the train up to the Jungfrauoch for views which were even more splendid. Meanwhile Mark did his first and only via ferrata up to the Ostegg hut. Only six of us walked the whole way from Grindelwald to Kleine Scheidegg where we sat on a grassy slope looking up at the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau in perfect conditions. Not even the crowds could spoil the views, though Alasdair and I remembered that on our last visit in the ski season it had been even busier. After various beer stops on the way down, most of us caught the train at Wengen, only the Murtons and the four boys walking all the way into Lauterbrunnen.

David had been having trouble with his knees and decided to leave for home the next day, so the remaining 18 of us got an early start on what was to be our toughest day by taking the train to Mürren. Once again Mark and Myles diverted to a peak, ascending the Schilthorn by cable-car then along the ridge to the Hundshorn, thus reaching the hostel first. Meanwhile the rest of us traversed round lovely slopes to the Rotstock hut for a welcome beer and lunch break, then up increasingly steep and stony slopes to the Sefinenfurke. The last part up a zig-zag path on gritty black scree seemed never-ending, redeemed only by the myriad of saxifrages and other alpines clinging to the rocks. The view from the top of the pass was stunning, looking back to the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau in cloudless skies, but ahead it was even more stunning: a vertiginous scree slope with timber steps embedded in it and a fixed cable at the side. Three hundred metres below and with shaking legs we finally walked onto the grass, but Griesalp was still a long way below us. It was an idyllic spot, with llamas and alpacas grazing nearby, but we were all too exhausted to appreciate it. Dinner was very quiet that evening.

The thought of the 1370 metre ascent up to the Hohtürli the next day, with no uphill facilities to help, was too much for Alasdair so he opted to take the bus to

Kandersteg, accompanied by John and myself – my excuse was that I had done that day's walk before. The postbus route down the Kiental is the steepest in Europe, and as the driver negotiated the tight turns, we appreciated even more Karen driving up it with our luggage. There was plenty of flood damage further down the valley, and from the bus we could see an army helicopter hauling trees out of the river. We spent the rest of the day finding a lift in Kandersteg to help us on the next day's walk and enjoying rösti mit spiegelei for lunch – a good move on our part in view of the dinner at the hotel that night - enough said! Meanwhile the others described the 5 hour ascent of the Hohtürli, at 2837 metres the highest pass on the walk, as an unrelenting slog. Fortunately the Blümlisalp hut just above it was no longer alkoholfrei, and the views of the Blümlisalp as they descended to Kandersteg past the lovely Oeschinensee formed a spectacular ending to another hard day. Once again the Murtons and the four boys were the only ones to walk all the way to the hotel, and it was so far from the centre that Karen even drove to the rescue of some.

The next day it was Jon and Rowena's turn to take a day off as the rest of us caught the cable-car up to Allmenalp, again in brilliant sunshine. We crossed a lovely flower-filled meadow then climbed up towards the Bunderchrinde pass where five of us, led by Mark, ascended the Bunderspitz, for Alasdair and myself the only peak of the week. There were glorious views from the summit looking back to the previous day's walk from the Hohtürli pass down to Oeschinensee, with the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau further back. The walk down to Adelboden was through tranquil meadows with almost Biblical scenes of haymaking, past chalets with flower-decked balconies. But it was a long way up the valley to our gasthof and most of us wimps took the bus for the last part. The four boys had taken a different and longer route, but faced with a steep descent at the end of a long day, spoilt their record by coming down in the cable-car. Dick and Lin had taken a circuitous route to walk all the way to the hostel, the only ones to do so.

For our final day there were several passes over the ridge separating Adelboden from Lenk, and we took a variety of them. Bill and Terry went by bus to the centre of Adelboden and walked up under the ski-tows to the grassy Hahnenmoos pass; the four boys were the only ones to set off from the hostel on foot, up towards the Regenbolshorn; while most of us again started with a cable-car towards the Ammertepass. Once there Mark and Myles, this time accompanied by the two Dicks, climbed two more peaks while the rest of us set off down a steep scree slope beneath the towering mass of the Wildstrubel. As we descended beside the river to the famous Simmenfalls, the clouds caught up with us for the first time in the week and it began to drizzle with rain. We escaped into a nearby café for our last apfelstrudel of the trip, and watched cows being herded into

trucks to descend from the upper pastures, a sure sign of the end of summer. It was not far to the hostel so we decided to finish the walk in style: on foot.

This was the seventh of Alasdair's walks since 1999, and all agreed that it was the most demanding. But equally we all agreed that it had been the most enjoyable, with spectacular mountain scenery in perfect weather, beautiful flowers and excellent company. Our thanks go to Karen for driving our gear every day, to Mark for his linguistic skills, and of course to Alasdair for putting it all together. On our last evening in Lenk he was seen with the four boys huddled over a table covered by maps of the Dolomites. See you all there next year!

Participants: Alasdair Andrews, Stuart and Cheryl Beare, Ed Bramley, Andy Burton, Steve Caulton, Mark Davison, John Dempster, Pamela Harris, Jon and Rowena Mellor, Dick and Lin Murton, Mike O'Dwyer, Myles O'Reilly, Bill Peebles, David Seddon, Terry Shaw, Dick and Karen Yorke.

### **Braich Goch Bunkhouse, Corris - October 2005**

*by Dick Yorke*

The bunkhouse situated four miles north of Machynlleth is well placed for exploring the wide range of mountains in Mid-Wales and Southern Snowdonia. There has been an hostelry on the site for about five hundred years and the then hotel pub was refurbished as a bunkhouse around two years ago. This was done effectively to provide a comfortable, convenient and welcoming environment. Accommodation is in four or six person rooms, many en-suite, there are good self-catering facilities, dining room with inglenook, sitting room and bar. The staff are knowledgeable and helpful. A good bar meal was had in Machynlleth on the Saturday evening and there is a pub of some character which serves real ales within a hundred yards of the bunkhouse.

Given the range of mountains available, the attendance of three: Terry Shaw, Richard Winter and I was disappointing. The choice of possible walking areas led to considerable discussion. Cader Idris, the obvious and very local attraction, and the major Rhinog peaks were rejected as we had all been there previously. Two of us had also recently experienced the wild delights and isolation of the Northern Rhinogs including the fine views, the Bronze Age monument Bryn Cader Faner and the cliff girt peaks of Ysgyfarnogog and Penolau. An ascent of Aran Fawddwy, at 2969ft the highest mountain in Wales south of a line between Llanwrst and Tremadoc, was selected for the Saturday with a shortlist of one from Arenig Fawr, the Dyfi Hills or the Tarrens for Sunday. Other possibilities

could have been Rhobell Fawr or further away the Moelwyns or Pumlumon, or a range of local woodland or estuary walks.

Saturday was a dry day, but with cloud moving around the summits, this cleared in the afternoon with some sunshine providing excellent views of the southern cliffs of the Arans and including the cliff encircled lake of Creiglyn Dyfi, the source of the Dyfi a noted sea trout river. On both days the entrapped low level haze provided general views which were ethereal and impressionistic rather than clear. More suited for painting than photography.

Aran Fawddwy was ascended from the cliff girt Cwm Cywarch leading to a fine if in places boggy ridge walk to the summit with a return via Drws Bach, with its memorial to a member of an RAF mountain rescue team member killed by lightning in 1960, and Drysgol leading to a traversing descent down Cwm Hengwm.

Richard returned on the Sunday having aggravated an existing back injury and Terry and I set off to the Tarrens hoping for good views of Cader and the Dyfi estuary. Setting off from Abergynolwyn the walk encompassed the oak woods, waterfalls and upper station of the Tal-y-llyn railway in Nant Gwernol, some forestry tracks, a steep ascent to the ridge and then onto Tarrenhendre. After following the ridge to the east, descent was made via Pont Llaeron and through the Bryn-Eglwys quarry site. Although peaks were clear of cloud, views of Cader and some Rhinog peaks were ethereal rather than clear and those of the Dyfi and Dysynni valleys somewhat fleeting.

Overall, an enjoyable meet providing the opportunity to walk in some of our less crowded hills. I intend to offer a similar meet sometime in the future.

### **Beer Meet, East Devon – November 2005**

*by James Baldwin*

Eight members were based in Beer, with Myles staying at a Seaton B&B, Mike attempting to join us driving each day from Yeovil and John Dempster meeting us half way round on Saturday completing the walk and joining us for dinner in the evening.

Saturday was dry and slightly overcast. We walked the Seaton to Lyme Regis Undercliff, which is part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Sight. The path weaves its way through woodland, with glimpses of the sea and passes huge

landslips making the route a unique experience. We veered off to Uplyme for a pub lunch and returned inland. The ABM is accustomed to mountains so this walk was something quite different. It was not flat but the challenge was in having endless smaller ups and downs making a fast pace impossible and we made it back to the cars just before darkness fell. We never met Mike; he thought we were in front of him so hurried to catch us up. James had seen him set off but we could not go even faster to catch him! We dined cheaply and generously at the Dolphin in Beer as we had done on Friday.

The plan for Sunday was adjusted after Saturday had proved tiring enough and there did not seem any great call for an equally long walk but we woke on Sunday to a raging storm so an early start was out of the question. Mike was told to take his time driving over. By the time he arrived the wind had dropped but the rain continued to fall. We set off on the shortest route to the picturesque village of Branscombe, the home of the Mason's Arms, which is something of a gastro pub. We had a long lunch and emerged to find the rain had stopped so that we were able to walk back to Beer along and between chalk cliffs, which are a complete contrast to the Undercliff of Saturday.

Present: Alasdair Andrews, Penny Austen, James and Belinda Baldwin, Sheila Coates, John Dempster, John and Marj Foster, Myles O'Reilly and Terry Shaw.

### **Aviemore Meet—October 2005**

*by Bill Peebles*

Again in true Scottish fashion the week prior to the meet was extremely wet with very heavy rain and strong winds. Not very nice for the coming weekend especially as the burn at the bottom of the garden was in full spate and very brown. The hills were going to be very boggy and the rivers and streams would be well up and difficult to cross.

The meet was again based at Ord View House situated on the road to Loch Morlich. Five members attended namely John and Marge Foster, Buff Dolling, Stuart Beare and Bill Peebles. Illness and other commitments reduced the attendance. Stuart as the new boy was intrigued by the house with its three showers, one bathroom and a loo. He was also quite taken with the decoration of stags heads and fish. The house was also made very comfortable because it was always heated and was provided with adequate hot water.

Braeriach was the first choice for the Saturday but doubtful weather forced a less

ambitious plan. In fact the weather conned us because the early morning reasonable weather rapidly turned into gale and wet conditions on the high plateaus. Having reached the summit of Cairn Gorm the party quickly realized that to proceed further was going to be unpleasant and very wet so retreat was the only sensible option. We were back at the house for lunch and found the weather in the valley much better and managed to sit outside whilst eating.

The afternoon was spent visiting the alpine nursery where plants were bought by John and Marge. Bill and Stuart finished the day by walking round loch an Eilein. The weather threatened rain but never came to much and the walk was most enjoyable. The evening meal in the pub was most enjoyable with good food and adequate wine that no doubt added to the height of the tall tales.

Sunday weather proved just as poor. John, Marge and Buff walked round loch an Eilien and then went south. Bill and Stuart looked at the Speyside Railway and also then set off South. Driving over Drummochter the weather was appalling with strong winds and very heavy rain but not surprisingly we all met up at House of Bruar at lunch time. The weekend was over and although no serious mountaineering was possible everyone enjoyed the company and especially the colour in the trees.

Attending: John Foster Marge Foster Stuart Beare  
Buff Dolling Bill Peebles

### **Galloway Meet – November 2005**

*by John Foster*

Two years ago when a meet was held at Loch Ken Sailing Centre two attendees searched the proprietor's house by mistake, looking for the bunkrooms. This year the proprietors got their own back!

The Fosters picked up Mr. Percival at Carlisle and arrived at Loch Ken on Friday afternoon to encounter a very perplexed employee who thought that we were a canoe club. Eventually we established that the bunkhouse had been double booked because the owners had assumed that the two bookings were for the same club! Once all ABMSAC members had congregated, together with several canoe club members, our party elected to move out into nearby hotels. Four of our less intrepid members determined to stay only one night, and stayed in one hotel, while three of us who were to remain for the full weekend went to another about 5 miles away. This fortunately also divided up the cars and drivers appropriately.

We gathered in a third hotel for an excellent dinner, and decided to make an in-depth assault on Cairnsmore of Carsphairn. The one exception to this was John Foster who seems to be making a habit of arriving on this meet with lower limb injuries, and decided to make a solo attempt on the bookshops of Wigtown and the Bladnoch distillery.

Saturday dawned bright but hazy (and well below freezing), and arrangements were made for recovery of Marj and John P after the walk. Alasdair, Geoff, Marj, Mike, John P., and Bill, ascended Cairnsmore of Carsphairn in cold hazy conditions which sadly did not permit views of The Merrick and its associated Range of the Awful Hand. One member who constituted the advance party pronounced the hill to be "very boring", though when you consider his choral interests....

There was a hard frost on top, and after a quick lunch the reluctance of most to prolong the walk resulted in a rapid descent to the cars, with only Marj and John P. extending their route by walking via Dunool.

The solo expedition failed in its endeavours (the distillery doesn't open on Saturdays now), and John F arrived back at the end of the walking route to find Marj and John P looking for shoes behind a road sign. Apparently a message to take their shoes out of a vehicle heading for Perth had not been passed on to its owner, and John P. at least was going to have to eat out on Saturday night in his boots. The remaining three participants adjourned to a bar to drown their sorrows, but a couple of hours later a phone call from Bill clarified the situation – with Mike he had waited for the shoeless in a different bar, and then driven 10 miles back to the hotel and left the shoes there.

Saturday evening passed without mishap for those who remained, and Sunday was to be a trip round to Bruce's Stone and a walk into the centre of the main hill area before returning South. Sunday morning at the hotel was beautifully sunny and crisp, but after a few miles freezing fog was encountered. The fog didn't lift as by the time the turnoff point for Bruce's stone was reached, so a change of plan was made - to make for the coast and do some sightseeing.

However, the fog extended all the way down to the Solway Firth. Having visited an Abbey where a sign said it was closed because the guardian wanted a day off, and patrolled most of the coast looking for a break in the murk, the intrepid explorers gave up and retreated to the pub before heading South.

## AlpTrek 2005

Photos: Mark Davison



The four boys at Grosse Schiedegg



Alasdair Andrews and Bill Peebles—Griesalp



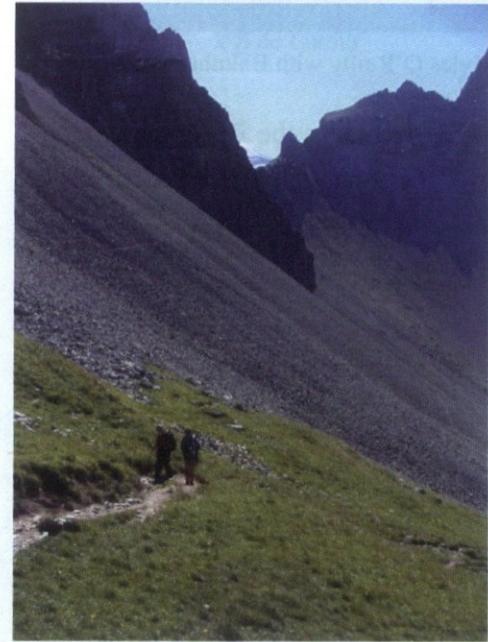
Kandersteg—Here we come



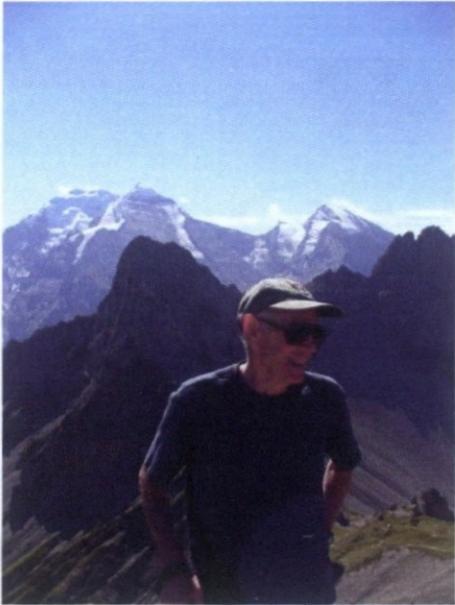
Lin and Dick Murton on the way to Hohturli



Bunderspitz summit

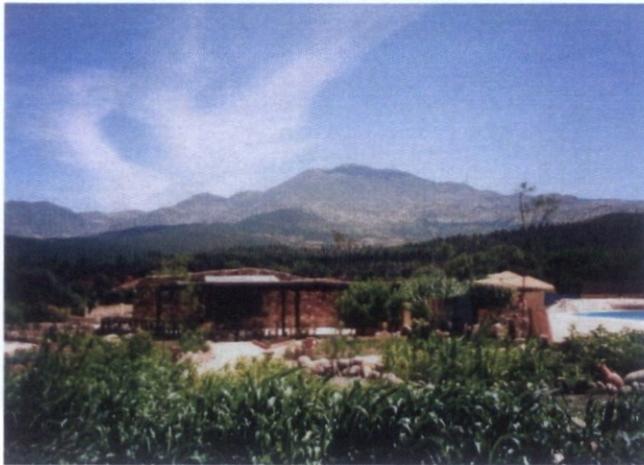


Down from Bunderspitz



Myles O'Reilly with Balmhorn and Altels

Excursions in the Rif Mountains  
*photo by Sally Holland*



El Jebel Lakraa

Cauterets Meet



Val de Lutour



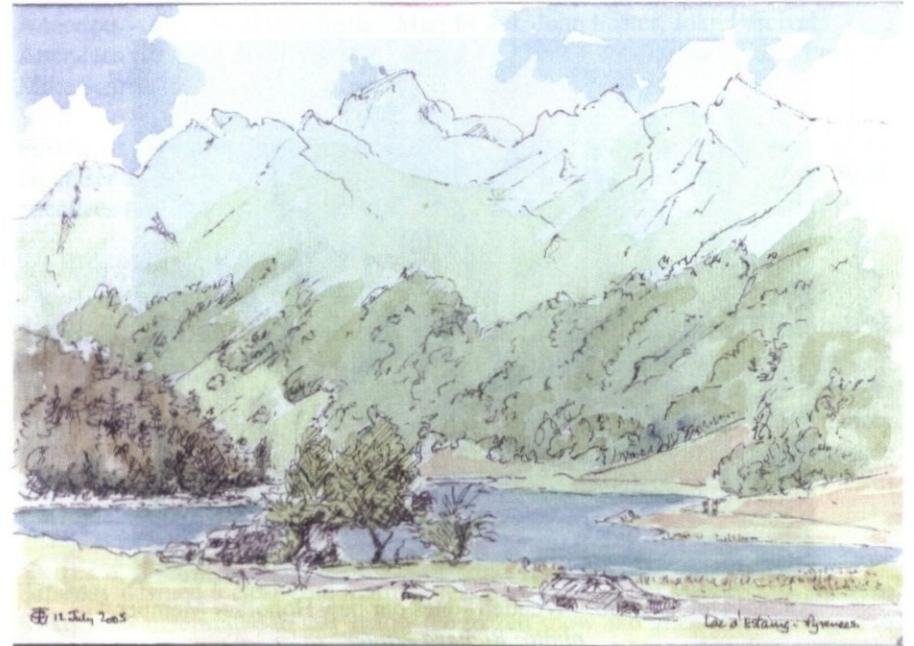
Pic du Peguere



Breche du Roland  
*photos: Bill Peebles*



Cirque de Gavarnie  
*photo: Dick Yorke*



Lac d'Estaing, Pyrenees  
*watercolour: John Chapman*



Terry Shaw and Dick Yorke—Mid Wales, November 2005  
*photo: Richard Winter*



Annual Dinner 2006—Wendell Jones our new Honorary Member  
*photo: Richard Winter*



Forcan Ridge from The Saddle , April 2005  
*Photp: Dick Yorke*

Attendees – until the final whistle : Marj Foster, John Foster, John Percival,  
 Attendees took an early bath: Alasdair Andrews, Geoff Bone, Bill Peebles,  
 Mike Scarr

Postscript: The proprietors of the Sailing Centre sent a letter of apology to the  
 organiser after this meet, and reimbursed the full additional costs incurred by all  
 attendees for hotel accommodation.

**Crianlarich Meet - January 2006**  
*by Margaret Strachan*

The meet was based at the Crianlarich Youth Hostel, which was opened for its  
 first winter season, normally only opening between March and October mainly  
 for West Highland Way parties. The hostel is very well appointed with ample  
 space in kitchen, dining room and lounge. The resident warden made us most  
 welcome.

Saturday dawned a clear cold morning and parties set of for various destinations.  
 Mike Scarr determined to stay below the frozen snow and grass line, managed to  
 ascend two thirds of An Caisteal (995m) and two thirds of Beinn a Chroin  
 (942m). John Dempster, Jim and I decided on Ben Lui, walking in from Lower  
 Tyndrum Station walking four miles in to a swollen burn which would have  
 required a lengthy detour upstream to find a safe crossing point, coupled to our  
 lack of fitness and being minus the necessary crampons we opted for the lower  
 Corbet, Bein Churin (880m) returning to Tyndrum using the same route.

Peter, Ursula and Peter Farrington set of for Ben More (1174m) and Stob Binnein  
 (1165m). Following a bad start the party split with Peter and Ursula doing Ben  
 More and Peter Farrington doing Stob Binnein both returning after dark.

Sunday was overcast so John, Jim and I settled for a walk in the woodland above  
 Balquhiddy using a walks guide book which proved somewhat at odds with the  
 terrain. The rest of the party headed home.

Present: Peter Farrington, Mike Scarr, John Dempster, Peter Goodwin & Ursula,  
 Jim & Margaret Strachan.

## Annual Dinner Meet, February 2006

by Brooke Midgley

This year's meet again had delightful weather, (well providing you don't go beyond last year!). We also had a new dining room in the Glenridding Hotel which caused some surprises to the hotel staff and meet organiser. It was all right on the night, but some bits weren't quite complete and the "Auld Lounge" was out of commission all weekend.

The hills were dry underfoot and sunny overhead for Friday and Saturday; Sunday was overcast and dry. There was no sign of climbable snow; some found the rock dry, others complained of it being too wet – this was on the same climb! Most just got on with enjoying the weather.

Most of the faces were familiar but two were certainly new - (prospective new members?) – Isobella (five months) brought Katherine and Stuart Strachan-Davies. Michael (twenty one days) came with his sister Kathryn (just two years) who was attending for her third time with Gill and Andy Birrell. A new SAC member – Rob Robinson – came for his first time and hopefully we will see him in the future on meets.

In all we had seventy nine at the dinner, just one less than last year, but then we had the official guests. This year we only had two guests so we actually had more members attending.

Out two guests were Phil Wickens, Alpine Club Vice-President, who stood in at the last minute for Steven Venables and Mike Westmacott who gave a slide show after the dinner to an over full house (the writer couldn't get in!). Phil's speech was based around his experiences of climbing and sailing in Antarctica.

The guests were introduced by Bill Peebles and Alasdair Andrews, our outgoing President, responded to the toast "The Associations". Honorary Membership was bestowed on Wendell Jones. The photographic competition was won by John Edwards with two photos of the Dru which were reproduced on the cover of the Menu / Toast List.

The meal was excellent but the organiser needs to learn how the new room works – it looks identical in size and shape to the original but it isn't and tables don't quite fit as they did previously. It was, of course, also a first for the hotel staff and they coped magnificently.

Next year's dinner is booked for Saturday 3 March to avoid any clash with the Alpine Club centenary celebrations, a date for your diary – it's in mine.

## Braemar Meet - March 2006

by Jim Strachan

This meet was hotel and B&B accommodation, so the group met up in the Fife Arms on the Friday evening to discuss possibilities for the Saturday. As there was a lot of snow it was decided to keep the walk in to the hills as short as possible and Lochnagar (1150m) was selected as it was about a 9.5 mile round from the Loch Muick car park.

Saturday was an overcast morning with only occasional light shower forecast, so the whole party set off up the track. Thankfully other parties had preceded us forming a reasonably compact track through the deep snow for several miles. Although the car park had been full we met only another two guys heading for the top, it would appear that the others were mainly climbing in the gullies on the north facing crags. We occasionally glimpsed the odd climber topping out and setting a belay for others below. The conditions on top were almost white out and we had to carefully follow the cliff edge round for about a mile to reach the cairn, which was encased in snow ice. It was a bit disappointing not to obtain a view from the summit as my previous ascent was also in bad weather and heavy rain, and I am assured by others that spectacular vistas are normally to be had as well as views of the magnificent cliffs on the north face of the mountain. The only wild life observed apart from red deer on the valley floor was ptarmigan, fairly high up on the hill, their presence being given way by their distinctive croaking call, as they are difficult to spot against the snow.

We returned by the same route, straying slightly to the south in the mist. This involved us in an exciting descent of a long and steep snowfield, the bottom of which had been glimpsed through a momentary clearing of the mist. A member of one of the other parties following us down, descended by 'sitting glissade' he shot past me at a considerable rate of knots ploughing into the soft snow at the foot. We returned to the car park about 5.30pm. We all dined that evening at the Morefield Hotel in Braemar.

On the Sunday, which dawned clear and bright, Peter and Ursula set off for the drive south. John, Marg, Margaret and I set off for a walk down Glen Ey south from the hamlet of Inverey. I was keen to reconnoitre this track as I intended to return in better weather with mountain bike to do Carn Bhac (920m). This proved to be an interesting area. We observed a pair of Golden Eagles circling the crags

of Creag an Lochan very close to us, using glasses it was possible to see the twigs being carried in their beaks probably to build their eyrie high on the crag. They occasionally alighted perching precariously on the branches of a birch tree growing from the side of the crag. At one point one of the eagles swooped along the hillside above us giving us a very good view of its colouring and tremendous wing span. On the return walk we stopped off to view the narrow gorge through which the River Ey runs, attracted by a small sign post indicating 'The Colonel's Bed' (also noted on the Map). John Foster on checking, after the meet, advised that this was so named after a Colonel Farquharson, who apparently hid here following the battle of Killiecrankie.

Present: Peter Goodwin, Ursula Woodhouse, John & Marg Foster, Jim & Margaret Strachan.

## ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 5.30pm on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2006 in the Glenridding Hotel Cumbria.

The President Alasdair Andrews was in the chair. 27 members were present.

#### Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from David Harland and Anne Jago.

#### Minutes of the AGM held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2005

The minutes were approved.

#### Matters arising

There were none.

#### ABMSAC-The future

The President introduced his paper. If the Club was to continue to prosper it was essential to attract new and preferably younger members. At present full members represent only 40% of the membership, and only about 20% of the active members, and these percentages were steadily falling. Prospective new members were unlikely to wish to pay the full SAC subscription, and affiliate membership gave the impression of second class citizenship. The committee were therefore minded to propose revisions to the rules to remove the distinction between full and affiliate membership, with membership of the SAC available as an optional addition. It was also for consideration whether the name of the club should be changed to reflect the new structure.

In discussion there was general support for removing the distinction between full and affiliate membership, but concern was expressed at the suggestion to change the club's name, particularly with the club's centenary approaching. It could also send an unfortunate signal to the Swiss. Summing up, the President said that the new committee would be guided by what had been said at the meeting, and would consider what proposals to bring forward to the next AGM.

## 5. Election of officers and committee

John Dempster was elected President in succession to Alasdair Andrews whose term of office had expired. Anne Jago was elected hon Secretary in place of John Dempster. Natasha Geere and Margaret Strachan were elected to the Committee in place of Jon Mellor and Myles O'Reilly who had resigned. The remaining office holders and committee were re-elected. The meeting placed on record its appreciation Alasdair Andrews' work for the club, both as President and in various other offices which he had held, as well the organiser of numerous successful meets.

### Hon Treasurer's report and adoption of the accounts for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Members again questioned whether the cost of affiliation to the BMC represented good value for money, particularly since a large portion of the cost represented the cost of third party insurance for the club and its members. It was agreed that the committee should obtain an estimate of the cost of obtaining similar cover independently.

The accounts were adopted.

### Subscription rates

The subscription bands for 2007 were agreed as follows:-

Single Membership	£19 - £22
Joint Membership	£30 - £34
Junior Membership	£8 - £10

### President's Report

This is reproduced below.

### Any other business

James Bogle asked whether there were any arrangements in place to ensure that a full set of back numbers of the Journal was maintained. It was thought that a full set was kept in the Alpine Club library, but this would be checked, to ensure that

a full series was available for the centenary in 2009.

The meeting closed at 18.10hrs.

John Dempster  
Hon Secretary

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In 2005 the long debated improvements to the George Starkey Hut were at last completed. We are indebted to Gaeron Davies, Don Hodge, Mike Pinney and others who managed this project to completion. Unfortunately the rental negotiations with the landlord remain stalled and I hope that a satisfactory solution will soon be reached. The hut reservations system was revised and improved by Mike Pinney. As a result of a plea from the HMC for Publicity & Marketing expertise, Richard Winter kindly offered to assist. It should be noted that use of the hut, particularly midweek and on summer weekends, is low and it is hoped that improved marketing techniques will lead to an increase in usage. Most members rarely use the hut and I hope that they will take the opportunity to do so in 2006.

During the year four Newsletters, several e-newsletters and a Journal were produced. We are indebted to Richard Winter for producing such high quality publications. Work continued on the History which will be issued later this year. For several months our website ceased to operate when the website provider arbitrarily withdrew support without reason or warning. However, thanks to the efforts by Mike Goodyer, normal service has been resumed.

Our finances remain sound and will be reported elsewhere. The accounts will indicate a positive improvement to the bank balance due to the correction of an error which occurred when I was Treasurer. Many library books were sold to ABM & AC members; the remaining books, other than those which we currently wish to keep, are expected to be sold later this year. I am grateful for the efforts of Alan Lyall and Jon Mellor assisted by Myles O'Reilly for their work in connection with the sale of our library. BMC subscriptions increased once again. I note that at the BMC AGM in April 2006 it will be proposed that all individual and club members of the BMC will have equal voting rights. The future role of the Clubs within the BMC is at present uncertain.

The summer meets to Cauterets and Vicosoprano, and the Trekking meet to the

Bernese Oberland, were popular and well attended. Reports of these meets will be recorded in the Journal. The Scottish winter meets continued to be popular even though the weather was occasionally unkind. John Foster arranged a few meets to new venues in England and Wales and though the attendances were low, from small acorns....etc. The Annual Dinner was held at the Glenridding Hotel and was attended by more than ninety members and guests. The official guests were Tony Howard, President of the Oread Club, Max Peacock, Chairman of the Tuesday Climbing Club, and the Revd. Helen Mary Brett Young, Vicar of St Patrick's Church, Patterdale.

During the year several new members were recruited but unfortunately the drop out rate due mainly to anno domini resulted in a slight drop in overall membership. Your committee have noted this downward trend and initiatives to retain and recruit members are under active consideration. Our membership records are now held on a computer database which was enhanced with the purchase of new software, the cost of which was met from the John Byam-Grounds legacy.

In 2005 a discussion paper was prepared on behalf of the Committee and published in the Journal on the future of the Association. There were very few responses and there will be an opportunity to discuss this topic at the AGM.

During the year there have been a few personnel changes on committees. David Edwards, who with his wife Chris has given sterling service on the Hut Management Committee for many years, stood down by rotation and was replaced by Richard Billings. As reported above, Richard Winter has been co-opted to the HMC with special responsibility for marketing the hut. Vice President Bill Peebles has taken on the tasks of recording the whereabouts of our archives and artefacts, and has also agreed to chair a small committee which will plan the format for our centenary celebrations in 2009.

Recently the committee agreed to award Wendell Jones with Honorary Membership of the Association for the outstanding service that he has given to the Association for over fifty years. A presentation will be made to Wendell at the Annual Dinner.

Finally I would like to thank all the officials, committee members, meet organisers and others who have helped to make my term in office enjoyable and who have assisted in the smooth, efficient and successful running of the Association. I have enjoyed my three years in office but now look forward to

more free time to enjoy the mountains. The committee has proposed John Dempster as your next President and I am certain that he will serve in that capacity with distinction.

Alasdair Andrews

#### ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB LTD

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Glenridding Hotel, Ullswater, on Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Present: Directors R.W.Jones (Chairman), A.I.Andrews, D.Buckley (Treasurer), J.W.S.Dempster, D.R.Hodge, W.L.Peebles, T.J.Shaw and more than 20 members.

**Apologies for absence.** G Davies.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting.** The minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005, and which were circulated in the ABMSAC journal, were approved. *There were no matters arising.*

**Directors' Report and Accounts.** In explaining the accounts, the treasurer said there had been a net profit of £1,039 in 2005 compared with a net profit of £841 in 2004. During the year £50,566 had been incurred in refurbishing facilities of the George Starkey Hut and £46,000 of this had been charged against a specific reserve designed for the purpose. The balance of £4,566 had been capitalised as a fixed asset to be written off over the remaining period of the lease. Further costs of £4,312 to complete the refurbishment would require the sale of some of the company's shares. The treasurer pointed out that, although the company had made a net profit of £1,039, bank interest of £1,331 received during 2005 would in future be greatly reduced or disappear with the use of reserves to fund the hut improvements and that the hut rent review from October 2002 had still not been resolved. Mr Andrews proposed and Mr Hodge seconded acceptance of the accounts and they were approved without dissent.

**Amendments to Articles of Association.** The secretary explained that the proposed amendments to the Articles were to permit members of the Tuesday Climbing Club to become members of the company, to regulate the share of directors between the two clubs and to give the committee of the TCC the same powers as the committee of the ABMSAC to appoint and remove its directors. The amendments, set out in five resolutions in the notice of the Annual General

Meeting and all approved without dissent,

(i) Amend Art 1 to add after the subparagraph beginning with the words: "the Association" the following:- **"the TCC means (the unincorporated association) known as The Tuesday Climbing Club."**

(ii) Amend Art 2 (b) to read:- "The subscribers to the memorandum of association and such other persons (being members of the Association or **the TCC**) as the directors shall admit to membership shall be members of the company."

(iii) Amend Art 2 (c) to read: - "Any person becoming a member of the company pursuant to sub-clause (b) of this Article shall forthwith cease to be a member of the company on ceasing to be a member of the **Association or the TCC**".

(iv) Amend Art 28 (A) to read: - "The number of directors shall not be less than three and **not more than nine. The number of directors appointed to the Board by the TCC shall not at any one time be more than one third of the total number of directors.**"

(v) Amend Art 28 (C) to read: -"The Committee for the time being of the Association shall have the power by resolution from time to time and at any time to appoint any person or persons as a director or directors either as additional directors or to fill any vacancy and to remove from office any director **it has appointed. The Committee for the time being of the TCC shall have the same power to appoint its directors to the Board and to remove from office any director it has appointed.** Any such appointment or removal shall be evidenced by an instrument in writing signed by two officers of the Association or the TCC as **appropriate on their behalf** and shall take effect on lodgement at the registered office of the company".

**Reappointment of accountants.** As there were no other nominations, the accountants, Carpenter & Co, of Richmond, Surrey, were reappointed.

**Any other business.** The chairman welcomed Mr James Baldwin and Mr Richard Winter as directors in place of Mr A. Burton, who had resigned, and himself who was standing down after serving for a further three and half years on the Board. Mr Dempster would take over as chairman of the company. Mr Jones was thanked for all his work as chairman and as a former treasurer.

The meeting closed shortly before 18.30.

T. J. Shaw,  
Secretary.  
13.2.2006