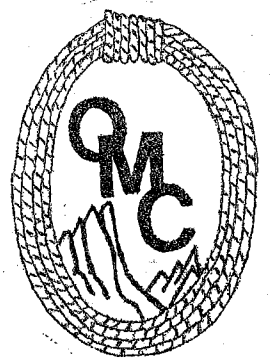
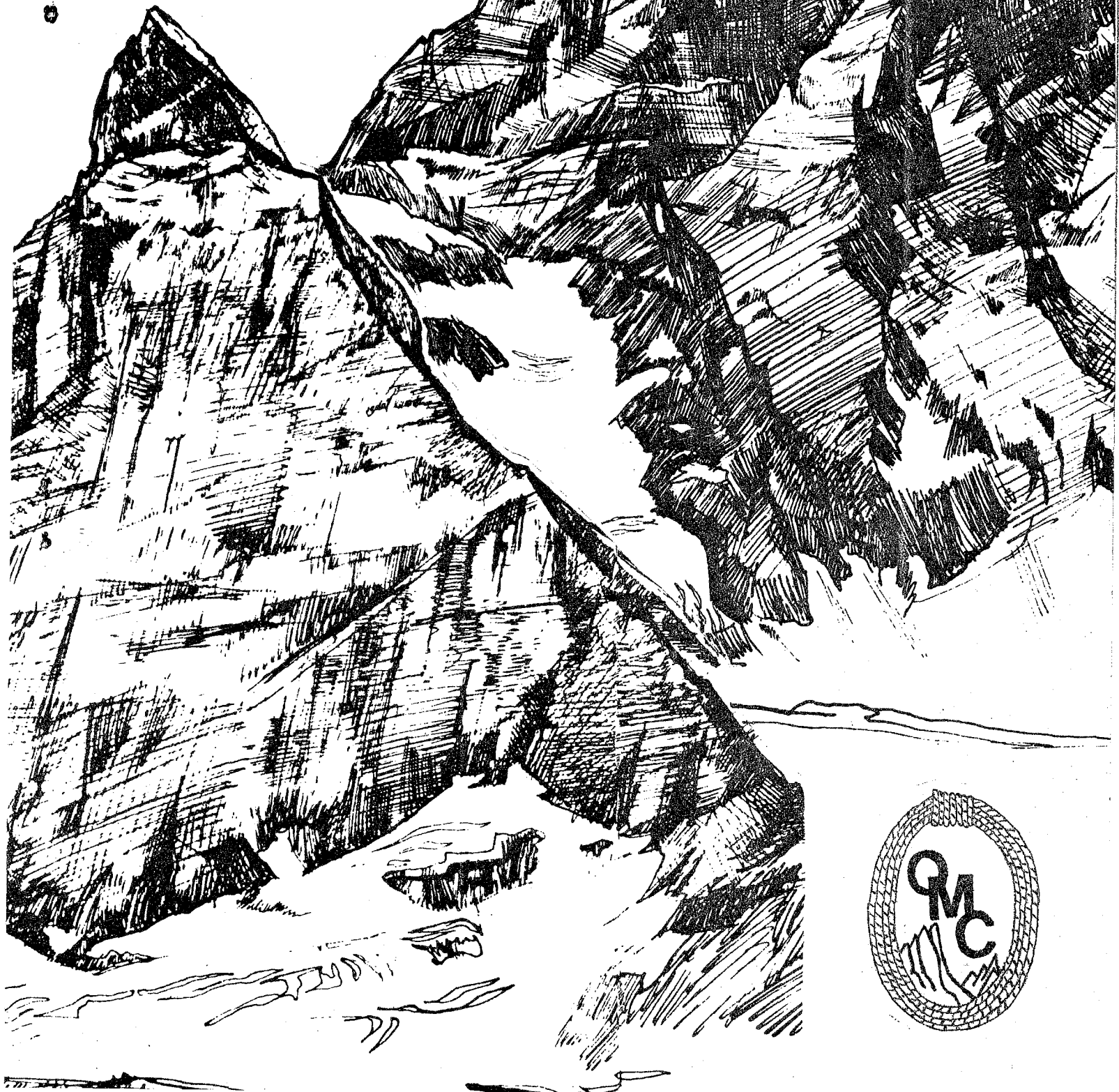
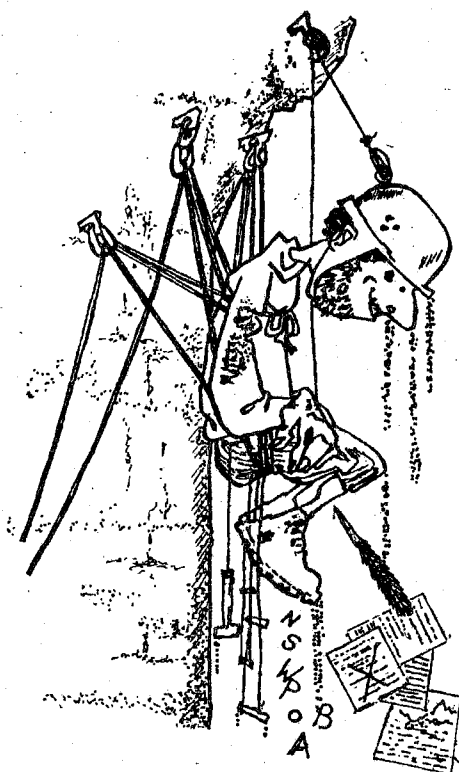


OREAD 85

OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL 1985





Well! It's the only likeness of the editor which could be found. Note the slight smile, that's because he's back in the mountains.

The supply of articles was slow, some only arriving just before the Alpine Meet, while others that were promised failed to appear at all. There loss is a pity. However, the final tally of more than thirty encouraging.

Yet again these contributions give a picture, albeit only a partial one of the wide spectrum of club activities. Within these pages you can go on long walks, explore underground or scale peaks, even cross the 'Dark Continent'. Some stories are serious others more light hearted. A member demonstrates how to choose a holiday but I doubt if many established members have found themselves spread-eagled on one of the hardest ice routes in Africa after browsing through an Atlas! I was hoping to read about the exploits of the 'hard men' on some E10, or something by a new hand written in the modern idiom - brash, bold, coarse and 'with-it' but nothing arrived. Equally I had very little from the 'founding fathers'.

Normally theres no theme running through the journal and none this year either, except one of rain, rain and more rain. May be during the good weather members were too busy ticking off routes and summits for write-ups.

Whilst striving for standardisation the keen eye will note 'Gore Tex' or Goretex and rucksack and rucsac - its not that important, or is it?

Its not possible here to detail all the club activities not recorded but I'll mention a few. The Fell Race was again a success, despite several computer crashes during the hours of calculating the winner. After eons, the venue for the Annual Dinner was moved to Callow Country Park which was approved of by the 132 members and friends who had a great evening. They were entertained by high quality 'artists' (forced labour?) - some with quite outstanding features (see photo). Later the traditional tankards were presented to Sheila and 'Rusty' Russell, John and Sheelagh O'Reilly. The Winter Talks were well attended due no dought to the Mike Pearce who organised topics ranging from caving, Baffin Island, club interests and Antarctic. Photo Competition was won by Richard Hopkinson closely followed by Gil Male, which only proves it's not fixed - though on the night most, as usual most thought so. Ken Wilson was judge and commented on the high standard - not a cropped head, blurred nose, unbalanced set of runners and any slides showing chalk were projected during the beer break.

What other images appear for 1985. Are they good? Could they be better? Meets failed to materialise. Why? Unsuitable venue, no hut booked, bad weather or something else? In the past, every meet had some interested parties, therefore whats different about the present 200+ members and prospective ones. Too many just doing their 'own thing', it's to be expected some of the time, but if all the time they become just names with no faces then surely thats not in the Club's interest. Cliques develop. Perhaps a lack of overhaul club identity. New faces gain membership, then fade. Why? Old don't appear to want to associate with changing attitudes and motivations, while young have forgotten the 'old-uns' were once on hard routes in plimsolls with no chance of 'lobbing', lacking protection. Tunnel vision by both, perhaps by all a little. Open your eyes. The Oread Club with all its members can I believe provide all the aspects of our sport - 'mountaineering', be it on rock or ice, from hilltop to alpine peak, from social evening to traumatic bivi, from grassy vale to rugged heights. If you can try as many as possible. We will all benifit in the long term.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those people who contributed articles or illustrative material to the journal - they make its publication possible.

Several people have helped in producing the journal. I would mention Colin Hobday who produced the photographic plates and later arranged for their duplication, apart from the cover which John O'Reilly organised. Pete Scott arranged for duplication of the text at Derby - Longsdale College and with additional helpers did the collation there. Some of the titles were provided by (BGS). I wish to thank Keith Adlam (BGS) for helping to guide me into the organisation of computer electronics, this has allowed me to set out the journal with the aid of modern technology. However, a good typist would I'm sure have done it in half the time! Alan Smith (BGS) gave much assistance in re-editing and correcting the inconsistencies of my English.

If there are any errors (I already know about Herford) don't tell me because there are no prizes for finding the most.

Photographic credits :-

COVER Gil Male. It shows Yewtree in Dovedale. This came 2nd in the UK Action Section of the 1985 Photographic Competition.

opp. page 13 Rock Hudson: opp. page 16 (top) Uschi Hobday, (L) Gil Male, (R) Roger Penlington: opp. page 23 (L) Robin Beadle, (top R) Mike Wynne, (bottom R) Gail Searby: opp. page 26 Robin Beadle, opp. page 43 Jack Ashcroft: opp. page 46 The late Brian Cooke, given by Marian Cooke: opp. page 55 Rock Hudson: opp. page 58 (top and bottom L) Colin Barnard, (top and bottom R) Rock Hudson: opp. page 67 (top and middle) Gordon Wright, (bottom) Chuck Hooley: opp. page 70 From a calendar. Reaching the Grande Plateau on Mont Blanc.

Pen and ink drawings:-

page 6 Mont Blanc du Tacul, Douglas Milner: page 58 Black Rocks, Douglas Milner: page 48 Saas Fee, Douglas Milner: page 34 and 35 Gordon Gadsby: page 60 Mountet Hut, Rock Hudson: page 61 Zinal Valley with the Obergabelhorn, Rock Hudson: page 62 Le Besso and Dent Blanche, Rock Hudson.

Other illustrations were obtained from the following publications and the other locational information might be of interest.

Contents pages, Toroweap - Grande Canyon, from Physical Geol. of ... Capt. Dutton; pp. 4 snow arete and Aig de la Brenva pp. 5 serac barrier, redrawn from Brenva, Brown; pp. 9 Colorado Plateau, from Canyons of the ..., Powell; pp. 21 NW Highlands - Morven, from Scenery of Scotland, Geikie; pp. 27 Lewis Glacier, from Glacial Geol. of ..., Gregory; pp. 29 Uralseaya Sopka, from Europe in Russia, Murchison; pp. 37 Sahara and Lake Chad, from Travels... Discoveries, Barth; pp. 38 from Travels... Africa, Park; pp. from Travels... Cameron; pp. 41 Savaia Peak (Stanley Range), Portal Peaks (Baker Range), from Outline of Geol., McConnell; pp. 42 Point des Ecrins, from Scrambles... Whympers; pp. 43 from Discovery of the Yosemite... 1851, Bunnell; Meet Reports page, Cathedral route Yosemite, Wasdale Head, Skiddaw from Derwentwater, Bosses Arete Mont Blanc. pp. 74 NW Highlands - Cansip, Suilven, Stack Polly, from Scenery of Scotland, Geikie; pp. 75 Mer de Glace, from Manual of Geol., Phillips; pp. 80 Mountains above the Colorado, from Canyons of the ..., Powell.

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THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING

COLIN BARNARD

The frost rakes your nostrils as you tip out of the hut, but your shoulders and forehead are still clammy from the breakfast fug of the Refectoire.

You check your gear, stumbling clumsily in the dark. Have I got everything? Crampons? Gaiters? Christ, I didn't fill the water bottle and now the pipe is frozen. Hurry! Must get ahead of that French team or they will kick stuff down.

On our way. It's frosty and starry. Good, that will make things easier. You trudge across the snow. However halting your breakfast conversation it's total silence now apart from the squeaking of the snow beneath your feet. At least it squeaks if you are lucky and it's frozen. Not much to say and anyway you are both tense and anything you do say will be misinterpreted, a lapse into heresy, a weakening of resolve. You know your oppo is anxious so you shut up. Concentrate instead on trying to get the pace right; not too fast, too sweaty already; not too slow, that French team are close behind. A trudge across the snow, nothing more. Watch the crevasses, otherwise switch off your mind. Try and forget that you are not enjoying it.

When will dawn come? You have gained a bit of height and a lot of distance, but it looks a long way. Then it starts to lighten. Too early yet to get the camera out, don't want to shoot at 1/30. Then the sun touches the upper snows of the east facing peaks planting them with a golden creamy kiss, and unblocking your silent throats as the Alpenglow makes you think of that competition winning slide.

Up to the bergschrund and easily across. This is it, looks quite reasonable really. You seem to make fair progress. Already you are at the shoulder that looked so significant from the hut. Ha! the French team have found their level, they won't get up till midnight! On and on. But gradually we seem to be making less progress. Not going any slower but the gendarme seems as far away as ever. Maybe the shoulder was a lot less far up the route than it looked. A nasty hiatus you did not expect takes too long, can't really afford the time it takes to pitch it but you have to anyway. Anxiety takes over - we're not going to do it, another bloody failure to chalk up. The gendarme at last. The angle eases, there are people ahead, the summit crucifix.

So that was it. It's a cold wind. You take a few hurried pictures - no winners here, a record that you made it, a tick in the book. Hurry off down, the snow on the glacier will be soft, we are fifteen minutes over Guide Book Time, got to move. Down to the gendarme, turn it, move together and try not to think about the exposure. The snow round the bergschrund is rotten, you don't trust your footing any longer, but somehow you are both across. The radiation from the glacier burns like needles in your temples. You want to stop, take off your sweater, daub yourself in glacier cream, find the snow goggles (why are they always at the bottom of the sack) eat that chocolate that you've been saving. You end up taking it, metamorphosed, down valley the next day.

The sump like glacier bowl is purgatory. On top of all your woes you have to keep an eye open for crevasses. Up to your calves in soft snow, then sink in to the knee, curse the glacier and yourself, feel guilty about your clumsiness. At last it's the moraine, no sweat, it's over. Stumble down to the hut. Your mates have come up. Greet them, but your mind is on the beer, on that first smoke of the day, the one that everything has conspired to deny you till now.

"How did it go?" "Bloody Great!" and you mean it. A release of emotional energy. "Hey, what about that bloody French team, didn't they have a gripper.. "Remember that move across the....!"

Then the myriad details of the route are sub-sumed into the distorted perspective of your memory, your journal, your slides. Boiled down and reduced to a few features, the neat undercut that saved you from embarrassment, the traverse under the gendarme, the moment of doubt above the schrund. It's a tick in the book. It's in the past.

BRENVA OR ABBO GIVES UP SMOKING

The first ten days or so of the holiday had been spent in the Bernina where we had taken in ascents of the North Face of Piz Roseg and the Cambrina Icenaze. We had now joined up with the rest of the Club at Epinel in the Gran Paradiso in order to round off the summer. Epinel is an excellent place to holiday with fine scenery, gentle walks, plenty of climbing (if that's what you want!), plus cheap beer - and wine for the bourgeoisie. On the frequent visits to Cogne, the local village, it is possible to see the great South Face of Mont Blanc and it was this familiar sight, and the result of the following morning beer session which seeded the idea. The perfect way to end the holiday, an ascent of one of the classic routes on the Blanc. A word with Rock brought the enthusiastic reply "don't be so bloody stupid", and I knew that the venture was on! Chris Bryan was the next to be worked on, which was easy - his mum and dad wanted shut of him anyway. Thus it remained to round off the quartet. It was during the afternoon beer session that Abbo (Stuart Godfrey) was seen sloping about doing nothing, so with a suitable topping up of glasses he was elected to the position.

After an interminable wait at the teleferique station in Courmayeur we were finally hoisted to the Torino Hut at about 2.00 in the afternoon. In fact this isn't quite true, as those of you who have experienced the trip will know. The teleferique station is some x-thousand steps below the hut! From the cable car the unsuspecting tripper is ushered into a tunnel where one is reminded of the hobbits' encounter with Gollum. A short inspection of the situation reveals that the only exit from this hole is via an extremely steep staircase - the like of which you hope never to see again. Imagine a typical underground stairway with no escalator, no lighting (except for the occasional glow-worm every couple of hundred feet), and no posters - only the cold damp rock (no, not him!). The tunnel is approximately six feet across with steps up one side and a sort of railway up the other. If you miss the edge of the step (a distinct possibility!) the consequence would be the breaking of : 1) both legs, and 2) the railway speed record. The monotony of the ascent is relieved every now and again by the passing of any parties coming down (an ideal situation for a grope, except all feelings in every extremity will have long since departed). There is also plenty of opportunity for the practising of cardiac arrest technique on other would-be ascensionists. Occasionally one has to step gently over whimpering bodies pleading only to be left to die, an undertaker's paradise!

We managed to walk past the hut, staggering over the many bodies and



Keith
Gregson

joined the beautiful people who were apres-skiing on the Geant Glacier. This caused Rock to exhibit heavy breathing symptoms so it was thought better to remove him into the mountains. Pointing him in the direction of the Tour Ronde we ushered him into the lead. Ten minutes later the aesthetic appeal of the scene was shattered by an irate Hudson returning to find where the hell the rest of his team had got to?! Thus harangued into action we promised to mend our ways and so the intrepid team set out, a strange sight - Rock leading, head down intent on making good time, followed by three rather wayward characters staggering and weaving in his tracks - walking backwards.

The scene at this point is idyllic with the sun beating down from a clear blue-black sky. As any veteran will tell you these conditions combined with our early start would ensure an enjoyable stroll across the glacier - it was! However, the heavenly plod through knee deep rice pudding under the brilliant afternoon sun was soon to stop. At the head of the glacier one has to cross the bergschrund and climb a steep ice slope to reach the Frontier Ridge and the sanctuary of the Trident Hut. In normal conditions I suspect that this is a climb of moderate standard. In our case however the mountain had a few tricks up its sleeve. First the sun went out, then the wind got up, then it started snowing - hard! Now climbing steep snow can be quite enjoyable, but being lured into this situation wearing shorts and a tee-shirt and without crampons was hardly cricket. The proximity of the hut tended to make one stick at it where good sense would have dictated stopping and getting dressed more appropriately, though this would have meant swinging about on an ice belay and probably dropping something (maybe everything) down the slope and into the bergschrund. Somehow we made it and burrowed our way into the hut to put on all the warm clothes we could muster. After a brew we were able to take a look around. There was an excellent balcony which was under six inches of snow and the view was stupendous (or would have been, so they said!). The hut is a new affair made out of corrugated iron on the McAlpine principle with head shattering doorways, knee shattering steps and endless possibilities for tripping 1000ft onto the Brenva Glacier. I don't see how the BMC can manage their cheap insurance rates with these sort of places in mind.

A check with the guardian confirmed our view about the weather (ow you say - puh!) and of the accommodating nature of the average Italian guide (soddo offo, mucho fulla!). Nevertheless we threw our gear and ourselves onto the communal bunk, at which point we were ripped off to the tune of a few million lire - it's supposed to be a free hut! Our position having been established we cooked and demolished the usual stew and went to bed, fully expecting a good long sleep and a steady walk back in the morning.

We were awakened at midnight amid the normal trappings of a McAlpine hut at the onset of a tea break - mugs being beaten into shape on the tables, stoves roaring, and steam percolating everywhere like a Trent fog. Add to this the ice axe producing the washboard effect down the side of the hut, the odd boot flying around looking for its mate, pausing every now and then to investigate the lump in the bed that happens to be you, and you begin to appreciate the early morning hut feeling. The feeling that you shouldn't be here. To our amazement the sky was clear.

Half an hour and a brew later we were established at the foot of the ladder outside the hut. Strapping on crampons and tackling up first thing in the morning is dreadful, listening to Rock do it is evil. It should be said in his defence that in anything less than mid-day sun his eyesight is suspect and so the handicap of working by torch is great. The proffered advice to switch his bloody torch on and not be such a tight bugger was received with his usual aplomb.

For some reason we set off in two pairs, Chris and I taking the lead. Due to our normal fumbling start the ice slope leading down to the Brenva Glacier was already littered with other more experienced parties who were busy cutting steps. Chris and I were in no mood for such toil and set off in fine rear point cramponing fashion. After a couple of hundred feet of this and a couple of tumbles, during which my anorak lost its virginity to the forced advances of one of Chris' crampons, a committee meeting was called for. It was proposed

that, since gravity was on our side and that we were totally incompetent in the art of climbing down, we may as well resort to falling. The proposition was passed by two votes and so we did. Six or seven hundred feet, a bit of luck and several irate Frogs later, we came to a bergschrund, though it must have been exciting - shame to have missed it really! We naturally assumed that the others would emulate our method for queue jumping and thus we set out for the Col Moore.

Some little time later in the middle of the Brenva Glacier we stopped to take stock of our situation (which means that we were knackered!). It took a while to relearn the breathing sequence, but once the in-out alternate principle had been mastered we were able to appreciate our surroundings. We were standing in the middle of a huge flat area of snow, overlooked by the upper slopes of Mont Blanc which were picked out in the light of the full moon. Overhead a billion stars and all around - silence - and that strange prickly feeling, the like of which catches you as you step into a cathedral. You imagine that at any moment the mountain may topple and obliterate you that it is only chance that allows another breath to come your way. And now the senses relish these moments - expanding them into years and committing them to memory so that eons away it's possible to step back in an instant.

Below us in Italy it was raining. We could see the lighting flashes in the clouds which obscured the real world. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a photograph of all of this. But then, who would you show it to? Who could appreciate the situation never having been in such a place? And if they had they too would know of all the dimensions lost in photography.

Ten minutes went by and no sign of the others. The mind switches back to more immediate matters. The round trip to the Torino Hut would take about eighteen hours according to the guide book. The weather is unpredictable, but certainly bad in the direction of the Paradiso. We have to cross the biggest mountain in Europe and we don't know the terrain. We shouldn't be standing about. Another ten minutes and two or three parties passed by. We shout, but to no avail. I'm furious and the air turns blue, and then second thoughts, suppose something's wrong? Maybe they've scored a bulls-eye in the bergschrund? Another few minutes and not only is the air blue but the snow round-about has taken on the hue of a well matured Stilton. I set off back and eventually see two points of light approaching and we exchange words - short, sharp ones! My frustration wins and explodes "How the hell are we going to get up this thing if we have to bugger about standing on the glacier for hours on end?". Rock says he's lost the spike off the end of his ice axe - I tell him it's nothing to what he's about to lose, and it's about time he bought some bloody kit which had its beginnings in the twentieth century instead of sticking his museum pieces with wode and baler twine. Abbo acts as peacemaker and we fix Rock up with a north wall hammer (with spike) which he threatens to test on me. The storm passes, and then begins again as we launch ourselves in the tracks of those who should not be in front.

We passed one or two parties before reaching the bergschrund under the col and another group as we forced our way to the foot of the ridge. There were a couple of parties on the ridge with no possibility of passing and so we



traversed a couple of rope lengths towards the Great Couloir. As we did so the ridge parties bombarded us with the mountain's cast offs despite our shouting. Then we found a gulley running parallel to the ridge and followed it for several hundred feet intent on regaining the lead in case there was no room to pass higher on the route. Our gulley took us back to the ridge and we celebrated by rolling snowballs on the assailants who were now below us. Abbo wanted to take a break so we stopped for a minute but convinced him the enemy behind wouldn't like us. The ice arete passed without incident and the team was at last going well. We gradually drew away from the chasers and were lucky to be following a party high above which must have bivouaced on the route.

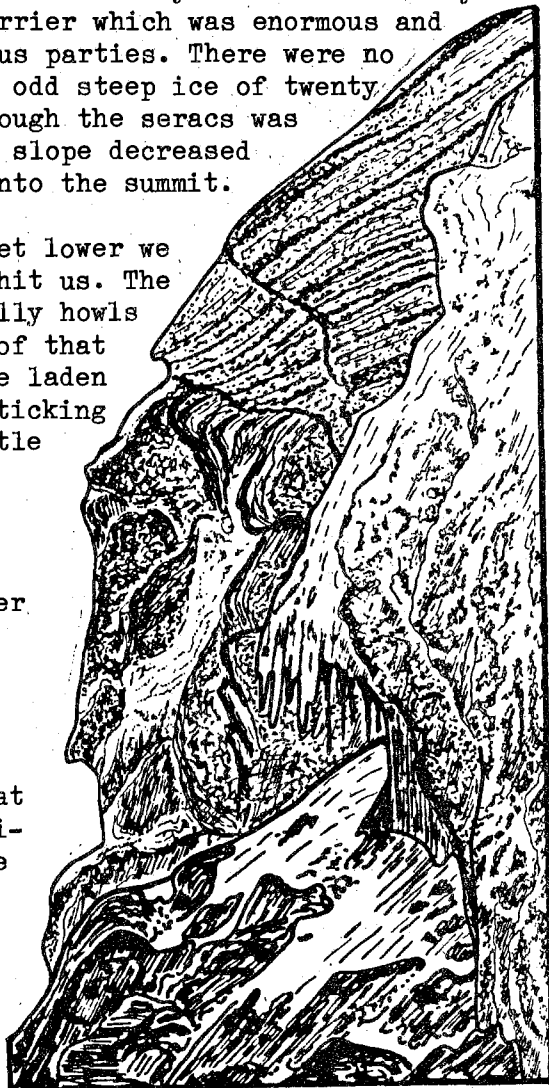
The situation at this point was incredible. The moonlight gave an ethereal effect to the surrounding peaks with the Peutery Ridge and the Eckpfeiler dominating the view to the left and the Brenva Face stretching above us. All the mountain features were in sharp relief with every snowflake intent on being a star. The storm below continued but up here all was quiet, as though in anticipation, but of what? Were we being lured into a trap, was the storm waiting to catch us on the summit?

I must admit that my motivation generally whilst on a mountaineering route is geared to an early completion and I seldom relax until the route and the descent is completed. I suppose that most people share these feelings, though I could be wrong; there were certainly occasions on this route when Abbo would have cheerfully killed for a fag break. I am sure that on this occasion we all shared the feeling that conditions were remarkable. The higher we climbed the more we were able to see that the only place in Europe with fine weather was the summit of Mont Blanc! The storm wasn't just confined to the Italian side for we could now see flashes of lightning to the West beyond the Bionnassay.

We eventually reached the final serac barrier which was enormous and we were glad of the tracks left by the previous parties. There were no really difficult sections, except perhaps the odd steep ice of twenty feet or so, but finding the correct route through the seracs was not obvious - it was still dark. Suddenly the slope decreased and we climbed out of a snowfilled crevasse onto the summit. We'd done it.

The contrast here was remarkable, fifty feet lower we had been sweating on the climb, now the wind hit us. The Brenva Col is noted for the wind which generally howls across it, now we knew the full significance of that reputation. Instantly sweaty shirts become ice laden and dog-collared. The hands froze with rope sticking to them and mittens solidified. The water bottle in my sack became an instant lollipop. I have never before or since been so thankful for a duvet jacket, on this occasion it was a necessity. I remember coiling the ropes which behaved like barbed wire, it was a matter of bending them into some sort of a knot. It was pointless trying to do the job in gloves, they just stuck to the rope.

The master plan had included the possibility of taking in the summit of Mont Blanc, but the prevailing conditions and the fact that Chris and Stuart were both suffering from altitude and cold (not that Rock and I were in the highest of spirits) resolved the issue. We had to get out of the wind as soon as possible and so we set out across the Col de la Brenva and thence by way of Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc du Tacul. By now the sun had come up and its warmth brought with it the return of morale. The fact that it was obviously raining below us in Chamonix didn't bother us any more since at last we could



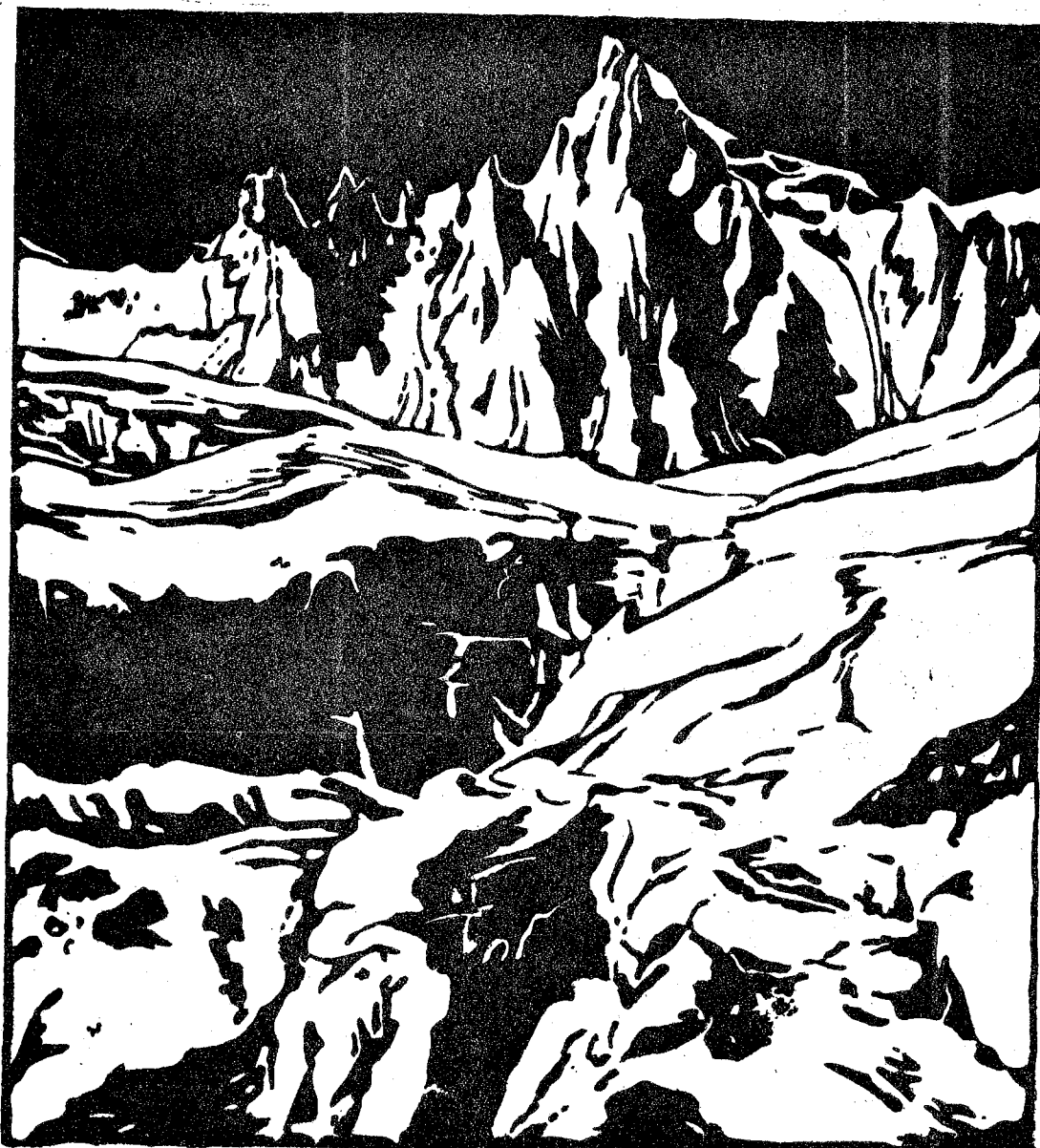
see our way off the mountain. On the descent from Mont Blanc du Tacul we did the British thing and had a brew in a glorious snow bowl of a sun trap. It was the first stop in eight hours and Abbo's first fag. A French party came by, and not realizing that we were on the down-line made with the sarcasm "Zees is no time fur le tay, allez! O les Anglais!" Abbo dropped his fag. They were put in the picture pretty damn quick then I can tell you!

The descent to the Vallee Blanche and the subsequent flog up the Geant Glacier can be left to the imagination of the reader, it's better that way! Eleven and a half hours after leaving the Trident Hut we staggered into the Torino Hut and ordered four beers. We'd done it, and shared an experience which none of us will ever forget.

Oh yes! and then we were back with the beautiful people!

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An account of the ascent of the Old Brenva Route on August 8th 1979 by Chris Bryan, John Hudson (Rock), Stuart Godfrey (Abbo) and Keith Gregson.



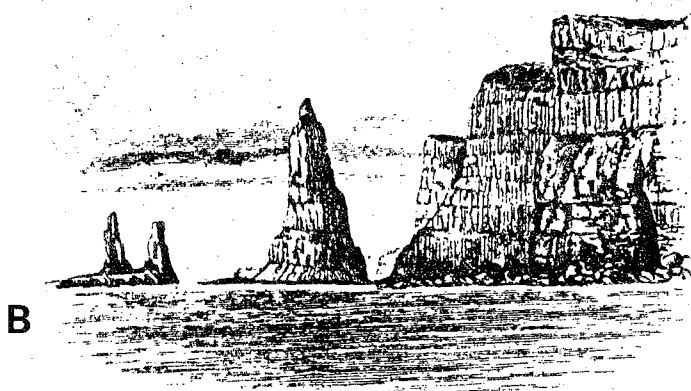
AN OREAD COMPETITION

EDITOR

Can you recall the places you've climbed on, walked up or seen illustrated - if so, this competition is for you. I hope it will also make readers take more notice of what's in the journal. Just name the features shown in the twelve illustrations denoted A-L. The first reader who provides all the correct answers can win a real prize - a voucher valid at a well known Derby equipment shop.

For those that travel through life with blinkered eyes - I'll even provide a few clues.

- A. Two-fifths of a skyline on the way to the Western Isles
- B. Basaltic sea stacks off a very large Scottish island.
- C. Seen when coming from a National meeting!
- D. Great North Face, but only rock ridge is preserved, the snow being very much reduced since this 19th century sketch was drawn.
- E. Right hand ridge of the snow peak provides a very long route in the Oberland.
- F. Remember your physical geography and you have the name for this small alpine lake.
- G. One of only 14 in the world.
- H. A view which could be gained while staying at an old Welsh hospital.
- I. 20ft gritstone pinnacle. Look at an old guide.
- J. Note the large English lake having a dogleg shape, the prominent ridge and small 'left orientated' lake on the right.
- K. Mountain Limestone and slates produce this feature.
- L. There's a valley of the same name in Switzerland.



GLEN CARNOCH

RAY COLLEDGE

In 1983 I was only able to obtain a holiday during the first week in July for a visit to Scotland. Prior to that week, the weather forecasts were not good, but they never are when heard in Derby. Over the radio, while driving past the western end of Loch Arkaig, I heard that there was the possibility of late afternoon showers in Western Scotland, but I knew that this did not necessarily apply to Knoydart. However, I was committed and didn't care anyway being keen to explore Glen Carnoch and see Glen Nevis.

Leaving the car at 9.15 I was soon happily bog trotting up Glen Dessarry, pleased to be seeing the glen whilst the thousands of forestry trees were still too small to spoil the view.

After several miles of interesting walking I arrived at two lochans then forded a wide though shallow stream. A short rise and at last I could see Loch Nevis a thousand feet below. No matter how often one reads a map, one can never know the complete details of a scene. In that instant as I looked down at the loch, from the saddle I knew that however many times I went that way, I could never repeat that magic moment of the first time.

Downhill now, past the Sourlies bothy and people rock climbing on a little cliff nearby. I walked along the beach of the sea-loch until eventually the cliff forced me onto the slippery seaweed covered stones at its edge.

At last another special moment and my first view of the remote Glen Carnoch. Remote now, in this modern age, but at one time there was a small community obtaining a bare living from the glen; likewise at Sourlies. I cut straight up the saltings heading for the upper glen and so missed the best place to cross the River Carnoch. However, I did cross eventually in about two feet of water, and after a long spell of level going started more steeply uphill towards the as yet hidden upper glen.

This steep enclosed section continued for some miles until I came to a small flat grassy and sheltered patch and beyond I could see the whole of the upper glen. Another mile or so and I could have dropped down to Barrisdale and Loch Hourn but it was already six o'clock and Barrisdale was not my destination, so I retreated to the sheltered grassy patch just as heavy rain started.

I soon had the tent up and prepared food and drink. The rain intensified as the wind rose to gale force and I worried about the ability of the tent to withstand the attack, especially as it veered to side on. I suppose I did doze off frequently. Although inside my sleeping bag I remained fully clothed even to outer waterproofs. The tent was now taking appalling gusts of rain laden wind, at times so bad that I sat upright holding the pole. I doubt if it helped, but at least I was doing something instead of just waiting for the worst to happen. If this was a sheltered spot what was it like elsewhere?

By six in the morning the roar of the River Carnoch had increased to such an extent that it drowned out the wind and rain although the wind had now abated. By eight o'clock the flood water which surrounded the tent was beginning to penetrate the tent itself. It was time to go, even though it meant packing up in still heavy rain. Early on there was a moment of slight panic as I realised I would not be able to ford the Carnoch. This was dismissed as I

recalled that my food could last a week. However, where should I go in the continuing heavy rain. Righty or wrongly I wanted to see this beautiful and exciting land in better weather, so I decided to retreat to Camusrory on Loch Nevis to think it out. From there I could go to Inverie if necessary.

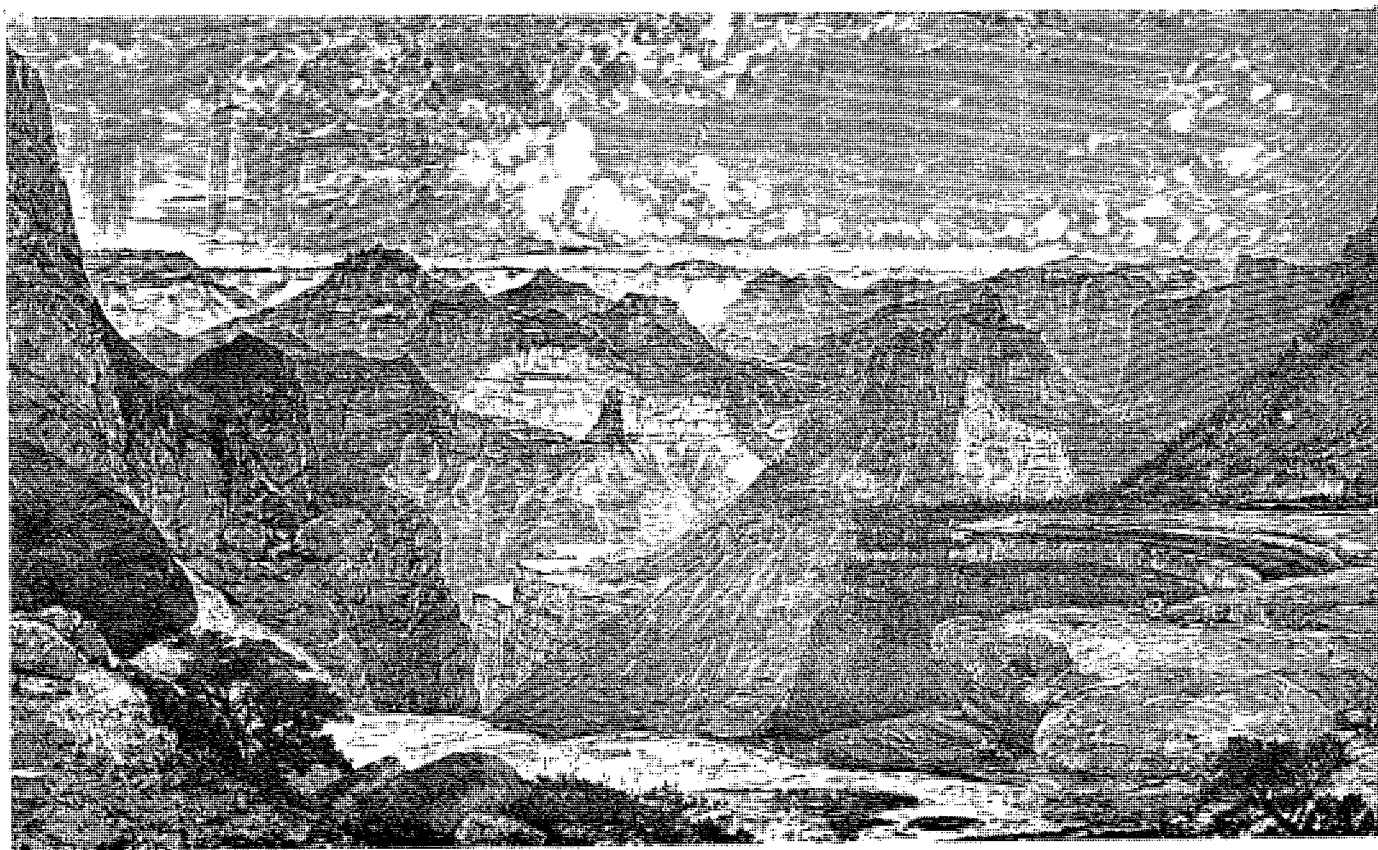
Right away I had to ford a raging torrent, which I had barely noticed the day before. The rain continued unabated as I ploughed through the sodden vegetation, until near Camusrory I saw it - a new rope and plank bridge across the Carnoch, which I had not seen the day before. To reach it I had to ford a wide raging burn, three feet wide. The Carnoch itself was now four or five feet deep and it was a relief to be on the otherside.

Soon I was slipping and sliding on the seaweed of the sea-loch. A man came out of the bothy to offer me a place, but in the continuing heavy rain I decided on a complete retreat. Thus I was faced with a thousand feet of ascent to the Mam na Cloich Airde, which I had crossed the previous day. Only one dark thought crossed my mind and that was the fording of the stream on the other side of the Mam.

At last I arrived and the sight of this now raging torrent was appalling. I had to cross where I had crossed the previous day, for both upstream and down provided no better place. Fortunately I did not then know that several people have been drowned at this crossing.

The water was well up my thighs and running strongly so I held on to the bank until I had its measure, then inched towards the opposite bank thirty feet away. I moved slowly not just because of the water pressure, but because I had to feel every slippery stone before transferring my weight onto a new foot. At last the opposite bank, so I lunged for it, only to step clumsily on a stone, then slip - down I went onto one knee with water round my neck. It flowed into my open neck front then down inside my waterproofs, but my head remained above water as I had already grasped the bank. A heave and I was out dripping water everywhere.

The rain continued as I squelched my way back to the car, where I decided to abandon Western Scotland for the moment. Of course a week later the sun was hot and continued so for the rest of July and August. One can't always hit the jackpot!



AN ALPINE

EXCURSION

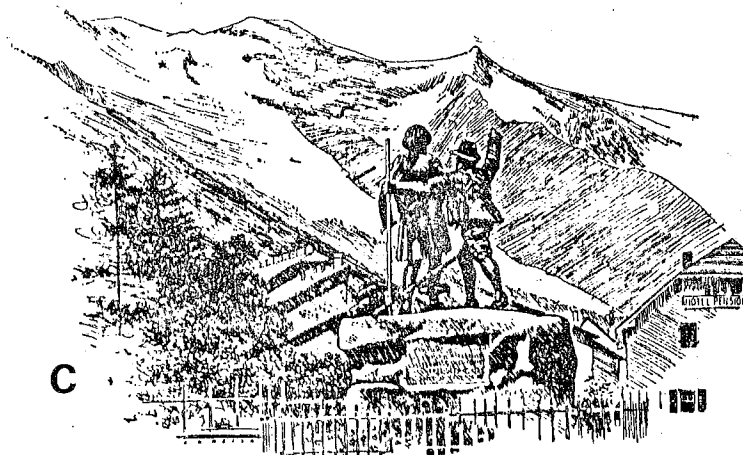
ROGER PENLINGTON

The Owen-Penlington alpine excursion got off to a slow start, poor weather, few routes and a ten franc trolly deposit at the supermarket in Chamonix. The 'hell on wheels' traffic system of Grenoble. The highlight of the Vercor being the entertainment provided by a skillful crane operator loading a lorry with tree trunks, while the crag lurked mockingly in a dense bank of valley cloud. So, it was off to that minor crag by a river near the village of La Palud, where after two enjoyable routes including the excellent 'Pillar of the demented Arab' the peace of the evening meal was interrupted by the arrival of the "O'Reilly road show" hot from La Bararde having been last seen at Dover. The next day was spent down by the river trying to capture the size of the gorge as wide angle lenses proved inadequate to take in all the rarely visited none road side crags. The next day saw climbers stumbling about in the cold dawn of an alpine start, sharing a head torch and deciding to walk-in wearing trainers and a sweat shirt as the only fly in the light weight (out goes the helmet) ointment. With Mars bars hidden in the chalk bag to provide an extra special dip when energy is lagging! Four pitches up and the morning sun hits us, into the sac goes the sweat shirt and up goes the pace until the shade of the chimneys and the stupendous penultimate (or could be ultimate if you fail to make the first placement!) pitch, and soon La Demande had fallen to another Oread team.

Next day our alpine 'wing ding' team visited Buoux, the Dentelles de Montmirail, then the supermarket and finally rolled onto the municipal campsite at Buis les Baronnies. This is the home of a route called Bibus, although Livsey's route discription bears no resemblance to the actual route, his comment "a superb route - classic", cannot be faulted. We also climbed Voie de Gastronome and a portion of the ridge, giving pleasant scrambling in a breeze after the heat felt while on the face.

The next crag to be hit was Les Saussois, where Livsey's guide would have gone floating off down the Yonne had we not borrowed it! After a couple of very polished routes we headed for Fontainbleau, where we spent forty minutes looking for the free campsite which was only 200 yards from the Gendarmerie, but they sent us the wrong way. Here normality was restored, climbing was interrupted by rain and the unfamiliar rock made the routes desperate.

So, it was back to the Peak and another wet Sunday.





THE FOREST'S PRAYER

Man! I am the warmth of your hearth,

on the cold winter nights,

the friendly shelter when the summer sun burns,

I am the beams of your house,

the board of your table,

I am the bed in which you sleep

and the wood from which you build your ships,

I am the handle of your hoe and

the gate of your paddock,

I am the wood of your cradle and of your coffin,

I am the bread of goodness,

the flower of beauty.

Hear my Prayer,

Do not destroy me!

Transcribed from a plaque in the Cabane de Moiry,

PRIERE DE LA FORET

Homme! Je suis la chaleur de ton foyer,

par les froides nuits d'hiver,

l'ombrage ami lorsque brule le soleil d'ete.

Je suis la charpente de ta maison,

la planche de ta table.

Je suis le lit dans lequel tu dors,

et le bois dont tu fais les navires.

Je suis la manche de ton houe et

la porte de ton enclos.

Je suis le bois de ton berceau et de ton cercueil.

Je suis le pain de bonte, la fleur de la beaute.

Ecoute ma Priere.

Ne me detruis pas!

Reservations Suggested: 255-1515

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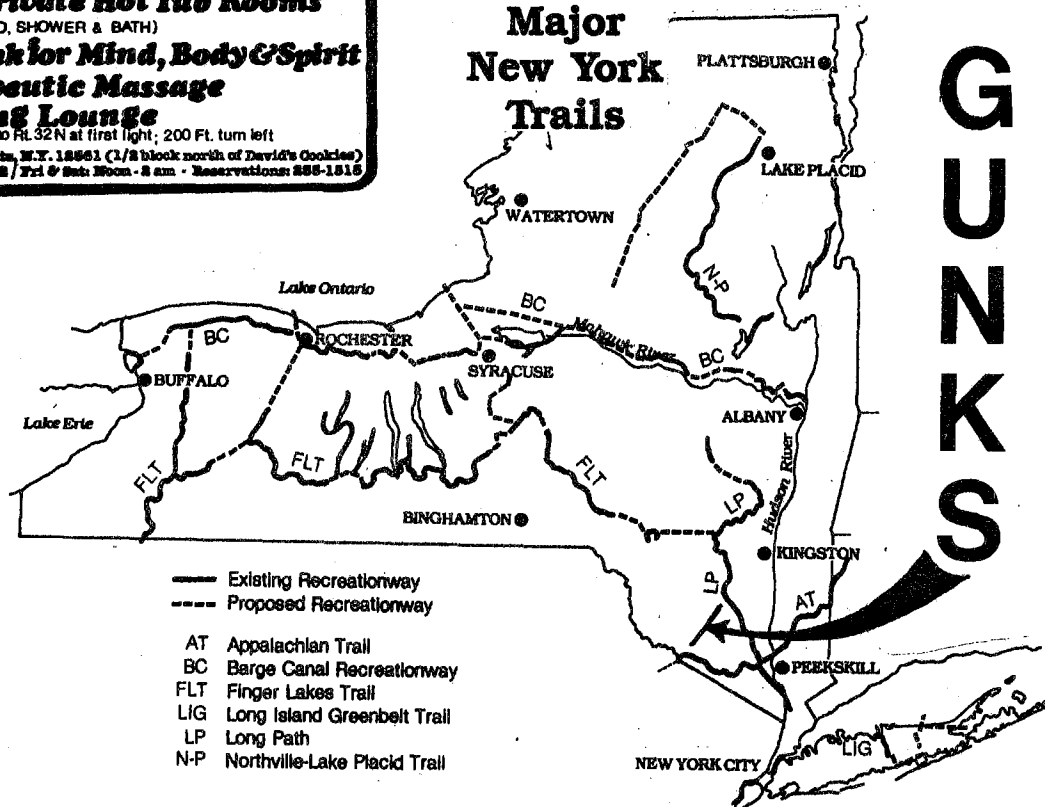
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THE

Major New York Trails



JILL WESTRICK

MARGARET OSMAN

The Shawangunks are the most popular and extensive area of rock climbing in the Eastern United States of America.

There are four major cliffs, The Trapps, Near Trapps, Shy Top and Millbrook. Due to wet weather and inexperience of American grades, we only climbed on The Trapps.

The Trapps is the largest cliff, has the greatest number of routes and is nearest the road. We spent a few days in the area, the first afternoon was spent soloing around on what dry bits of rock could be found - overhangs! The friction is fantastic, rough on the hands, a Gunks scar must be more impressive than a Stanage gritstone rash.

We did manage to touch the top of the crag several times, all in one day, the only dry day.

The routes were of fine quality, bomb proof protection, (pegs everywhere), hard for the grade, maybe easier for others, who cares we enjoyed ourselves.

A classic of the crag is Houseman (5.5) we didn't bother, for it looked more like E 10.

If you aren't interested in climbing, the Shawangunks area is beautiful, just to walk, but watch out for the snakes.

The Shawangunks are in the Mohoule Nature Reserve and a permit is required for walking or climbing.

For more details, see the ranger who drives along the bottom of the crag or write to Mohoule Trust, Mohoule Lake, New Paltz, New York. 12561 U S A



GUEST WILL HERFORD WITH
MRS HERFORD AND
PRESIDENT ROBIN SEDGEWICK
VICE PRESIDENT KEITH
GREGSON

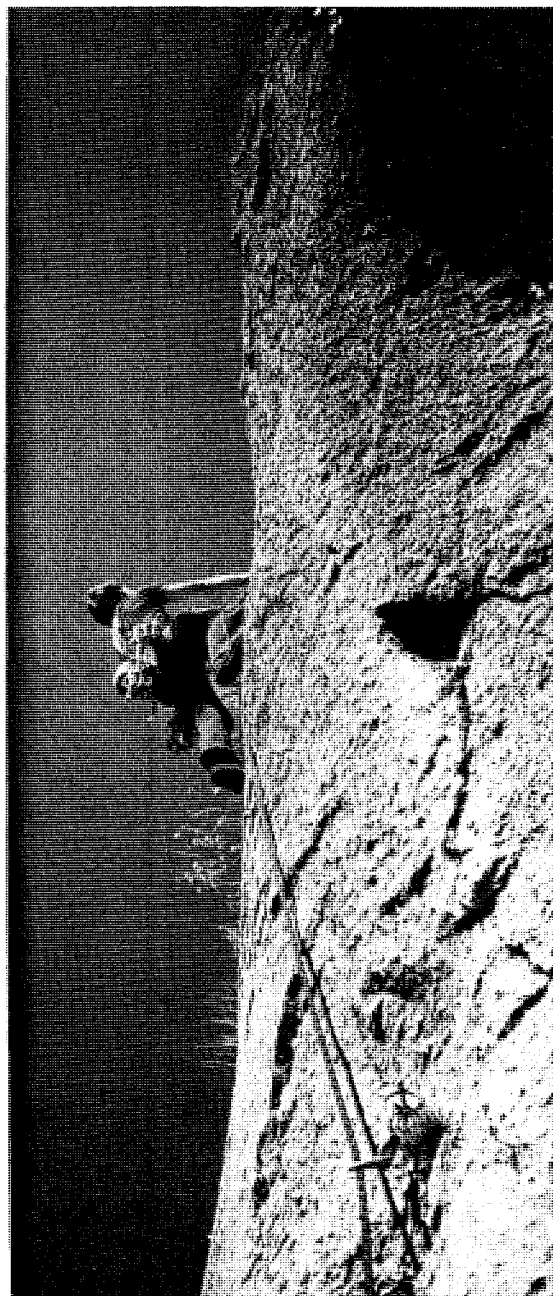
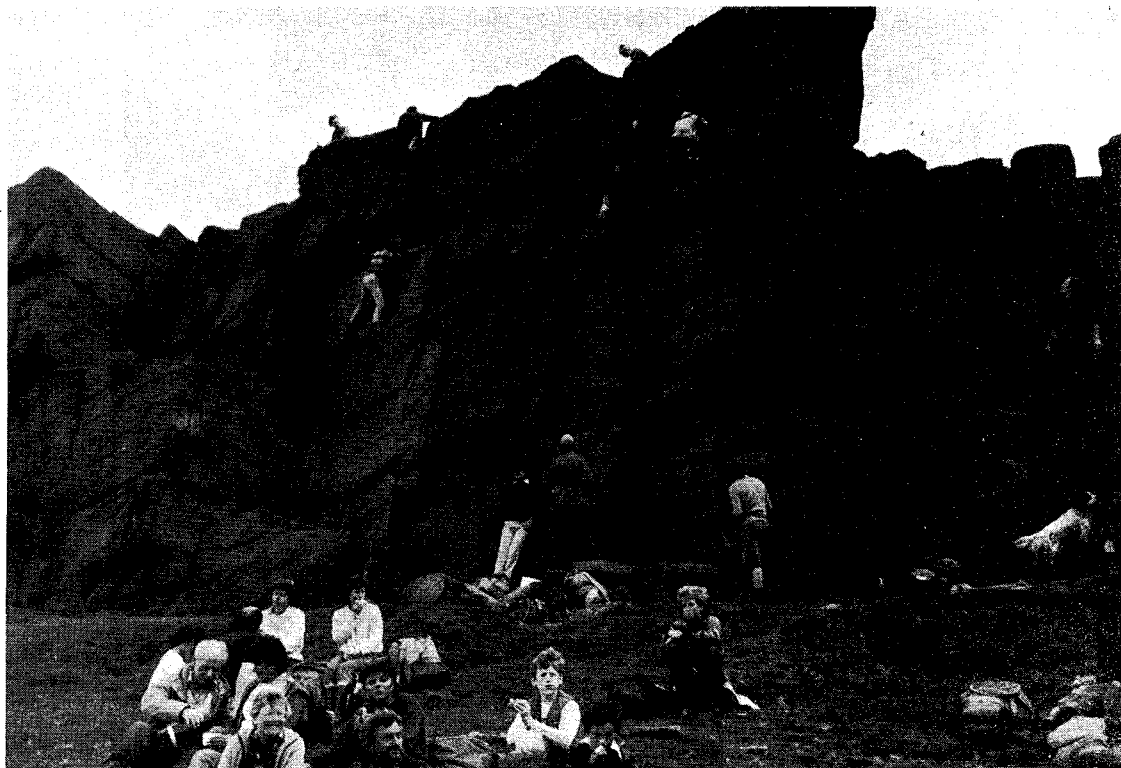


OREAD CABARET, WITH SHARON
RUSSELL,,PETE SCOTT, DAWN
HOPKINSON, RODGER LARKAM

GOYT
VALLEY
MEET.
YOUNG AND
OLD OREADS
AT
WINDGATHER
ROCKS

L.R.
DAVE OWENS
ON BILBUS,
BUIS LES
BARONNIES

L.L.
GIL MALE
ON
CHEQUERS
BUTTRESS,
FROGGETT
EDGE



WEST OF THE BORDER - 1964

(IN RETROSPECT)

Chuck Hooley

North Wales 1964, what does this mean? To the average person no doubt this conjures up a picture of a mountainous region with an abundance of picturesque valleys, numerous lakes and of course fourteen, three thousand foot peaks which have been under continuous assault by Mountaineers since the nineteenth century. In more recent times, North Wales has become the target for various schemes thought up by Electricity Boards, all with one aim, that is to provide more electric power and water for our so called affluent society. It is a fair surmise to say that there is a danger of some of North Wales' treasured history becoming buried for all time under the advance of progress.

One has only to look at the towering heaps of disused slate scattered throughout the area to start wondering what type of people wrested their livelihood from the mountains. Most of these so called slag heaps shelter row upon row of disused cottages indicating that whatever class of people lived then, some existed high above sea level in what must have been ferocious conditions during the winter and worked and lived at the quarry or mine. It is said that the old gold miners of Snowdonia could be seen each week walking single file over high mountain paths, each carrying a lantern, singing as they went, over to Llanberis to spend the week with their families, returning Sunday night, back to the mines to live and work for yet another week.

Some of these paths can still be followed and retain the names like the Miners Path over Y-Lliwedd and the Pig Track from Pen-Y-Pass Hotel, (now a hostel). To this day chains fixed to rocks to serve as hand lines in steep places can still be seen if one knows where to look.

When I am in Snowdonia, either climbing or walking, these thoughts constantly in my mind serve as a stimulus, urging me to explore all the disused workings I venture upon and to offer my nose into every sough or shaft I see. Occasionally, I have turned up a pearl or two but one which I stumbled upon near Croesor was in fact a real gem.

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Quite out of reach of any form of civilisation stood this deserted community situated on a terrace high up in the Molwyns. A double row of partly collapsed cottages stood as monuments to what must have been one of the larger going concerns of the day. Remnants of huge slate dressing sheds were in evidence, huge oxidised coils of thick steel cable lay around, crumbling at the touch of ones hand. On finding a number of decrepit narrow gauge railway slate trolleys I asked myself where did they obtain the slate? There was no large quarry in evidence which meant only one thing, there must be a sough level and possible underground workings. This led me to further exploration of the site, and in very short time I came upon the sough. It was in a small cutting in the mountainside to the rear of the cottages, adjacent to the remnants of possible workshops. The tunnel was approximately eight feet wide and six feet high with an arched roof. On the floor were signs which showed that a double track had been laid with a channel cut along the left side for water drainage. Interesting to note was the fact that the tunnel had been cut through homogeneous slate and not a single roof support was used in the whole of the underground system; the initial entrance tunnel being roughly half a mile in length.

At this stage my thoughts turned towards a potholing club of which I am an

associate member. The club then known as the Eldon Potholing Club was based at Buxton, in Derbyshire. I decided there and then to invite them to Wales to explore the underground slate quarry with me, accommodation would be at a mountaineering club hut of which I am the custodian, situated about seven miles from the quarry. This would in a way be some small measure of recompense for the adventurous times I have spent potholing with them in Derbyshire. On my next visit to Buxton I put my proposal to Tony Briggs, the club meets organiser and it was arranged for a party to go to Wales on the twenty eighth of August.

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Friday evening of the twenty eighth was one of those superb evenings where one drives the whole hundred and forty miles into the setting sun. As the evening waned this provided an ever-changing backcloth of panoramic beauty, marred only by a short storm near Llangollen; the sun however returned, lancing the sky with a fan of prismatic-coloured shafts giving promise of an excellent week-end. By 1am everyone had arrived at the mountain hut, having travelled by various routes from Manchester and Buxton. The people in the party were, Chris and Kath Inson, Tony and Barbara Briggs, John Semple and Elaine, Frank Shepherd, Michael Coupland and of course my wife Margaret and myself.

Saturday morning - after a late start and a seven mile journey through the mountains we arrived at the track which would lead us up to a point about half a mile from the workings. Owing to the amount of equipment, it was decided to take the vehicles up the track as far as possible. This was a first gear job with a prayer that we would not meet any vehicle on the way down. However the top was safely reached, the only casualty was my engine which boiled and the thermostat blew its top; someone suggested a brew. After much cogitation and manouvering the vehicles were parked safely off the track, which indeed had a sixty degree slope to the valley below on one side this angle continuing up the mountain on the other.

The half mile walk over the mountain saw us at the tunnel entrance at approximately twelve noon. We quickly changed into potholing garb and after sandwiches we set off along the tunnel. At this point I ought to mention that Tony Briggs had brought along his skin-diving equipment. We were hoping to look at some underground lakes in the heart of the mountain as I suspected the possibility of these from my original reconnaissance. He looked a strange sight trudging that half mile with an air bottle on his back, helmet on his head, weight belt in one hand and a suitcase containing a wet suit in the other, with his green suede Kletterschuhe - the surrounding peaks frowned at him in a most suspicious manner.

The only obstacles that stopped us walking four abreast along the tunnel were various steel rods protruding down from the roof, which at one time had carried power cables; the channel along which water raced swiftly to the daylight behind us; and the uneven floor made so by the removal of the wooden sleepers which carried the steel rails. These had long since been removed, possibly for their scrap value. A third of the way along the tunnel a large chamber opened out on the left. This was about fifty feet high at the lower end rising to roughly a hundred feet at the far end running parallel to the tunnel and fifty feet in width, the lower end being towards the tunnel entrance. The roof was as smooth as floated glass, a huge bedding plane angled at approximately forty degrees. About thirty yards further on a second chamber opened out on the left, the dimensions of this were roughly twice those of the first, I could tell that the E.P.C. members were suitably impressed by their comments, such as, "are we all right for Piccadilly"? "No this is the Bakerloo line".

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Approximately half a mile from the entrance, the main tunnel divided to the right and left, the right hand branch led to a cul-de-sac. Here at the bottom of a ramp rested a huge sledge of steel construction. Here too, the runners were angled at approximately forty degrees to keep the platform level. The sledge sank into a large pit to enable the loading platform to be at ground level. Attached to the sledge was a steel cable, which disappeared up the ramp far into the gods where a faint glimmer of daylight could be seen. Crossing over the sledge a small tunnel led into a cavern of enormous proportions, the angle of dip of the roof was the same as before. We had apparently entered at the top of the cavern for the ground dropped steeply away on the right, to unknown depths, too vast for our lamps to penetrate. However a well aimed rock sent back a resounding 'plonk' indicating water of considerable depth.

Retracing our steps to the fork we observed that this was some kind of junction, railway tracks were still in situ with an old slate trolley standing as mute witness, unable to verify or repudiate the story which unfolded in our minds. Facing the left hand fork with our backs to the entrance, just inside the fork let into the ground, one could see a steel framework which housed a large pulley wheel. This wheel was horizontally placed with a cable running round it which fed out to the main entrance, it also had a gate with a long steel screw attached, fixed at a point in the framework whereby the cable could be tensioned by turning a small hand wheel on the screw. Presumably this continuous cable allowed loaded trolleys to run out, at the same time pulling empty ones in.

The left hand fork was very short in length and soon led us into what must have been the main machinery house. Occupying most of the floor space were concrete bases from which securing studs sprouted in gay abandon, six inch diameter solid steel shafts with thirteen foot diameter gear wheels attached lay here and there, I had the impression that someone had dismantled Gulliver's pocket watch and had hidden the parts here to avoid detection. The dimensions of this machinery house were too great to be envisaged. Over on the far right of this chamber another huge ramp reared up into the heights, disappearing through a tunnel near the roof, to the left ran a gallery for a quarter of a mile. On the right hand side of this gallery the bedding plane had been quarried out leaving huge caverns with daylight filtering through three or four hundred feet above one's head.

The bedding plane formed the roof of the gallery dipping down almost to the floor on the left hand side, in various places one could peer through rough slots at knee level, again space and vastness were all that one could establish by shining a lamp through. Obviously, this gallery traversed the tops of lower caverns as well as serving those above.

Returning to the machine house we explored below the ascending ramp. Here we found another ramp leading to the depths well below the level of the entrance tunnel. Hastening down this, just managing to walk with our heads bowed we came upon two openings, one on either side of the ramp, these looked out into large caverns. It turned out that these were the ones we had viewed from the top for it was just possible to catch a reflection of our lamps on water below. The bottom of the ramp ended in a sump and a short passage led off left over the sump ending in a cul-de-sac. To the left and right of this, two short tunnels connected with two underground lakes, the lake on the left, the larger of the two would have easily housed two small submarines. It was obvious that the cul-de-sac was once the privy, thirty minutes spent turning over bits of aged newspaper produced the date November 1929. Could it be said that work ceased here thirty five years ago, at least we know that men were down here then.

At this point Tony Briggs held our attention. He carefully changed into his

Frogman's gear to the accompaniment of triggered flash bulbs and with the life-line attached slid into the clear blue waters of the smaller lake and sank like a stone! Spluttering and gesticulating, he was hauled ashore. "I had forgotten the weight of my knife cell," he ejaculated, and after removing lead from his weight belt to compensate, he resumed his dive. The small lake proved to be quite shallow, approximately ten to twelve feet deep, one hundred feet long and sixteen feet wide. Tony reported that the water was exceptionally cold.

Attention now turned to the big lake, a kind of tow path ran alongside this enabling me to walk along with the life line, watching Tony's lamp traversing the depths twenty or thirty feet down. Again the intense cold gave Tony trouble, causing him to lose his mouthpiece and do a free ascent, blowing like a Sperm Whale. This is essential for at thirty feet he has two atmospheres pressure in his lungs and this has to be reduced to one atmosphere at the surface, a dangerous manoeuvre for the inexperienced. On his return Tony said that the lake had much greater depths than thirty feet but the water was too cold to dive further, he therefore changed and we all went back to the machinery house.

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From here we set off up the ramp previously mentioned. As we entered the tunnel near the roof we stopped and looked around, neither the base nor the top of the ramp could be seen in the beams of our lamps, we were like earthlings on the ladder of Jacob's dream, though we were in doubt as to what awaited us above. As we neared the top of the ramp, daylight appeared, indeed, here we were in yet another gallery leading off to the right. The ramp up which the cable ran from the sledge dropped away behind us running parallel with the one up which we had climbed. Rotting baulks of timber, witness to our wisdom of climbing the vacant ramp, lay poised across the cable, ready to toboggan down should the cable be sufficiently displaced.

Entering the gallery into broad daylight the scene before us made us stop. On our left reaching up into the sky stretched a huge scree, above which spanned a gigantic arched roof, slate blocks as large as houses lay everywhere, wrought from above by winter's frost. The gallery continued for about five hundred yards, in this length several more caverns opened out similar to the first. We ascended quickly into daylight and found ourselves walking across the floor of a huge open quarry. Had we really arrived here from the heart of the hill? Looking back down the scree into yawning depths assured us that this was so.

The history of the formation of this intriguing underground quarry was now apparent. Presumably, the quarrying had originally started in the one we now stood in. The slate was quarried down the 40 degree dip, and galleries were cut across the dip to further quarries, the walls in between the vast chambers were formed, acting as immense pillars to support the roof. The slate was removed on the sledge for which two special ramps were built, one for the truck and one with the floor faced up with slate for a counter-balance weight to slide on. Eventually the slate was being quarried at such a depth along the lowest gallery that the effort of getting it up the slope was too great and a horizontal sough was tunnelled through to the far side of the mountain which served both to take the railway for the slate quarries and to carry away the water that always collects at the lowest levels.

I don't know whether the village was built before or after the driving of the sough but it must have been a great convenience for the slate dressers to have the slate arrive literally at the back doors of their houses.

Our exit from the quarry was not without incident however, for we had no

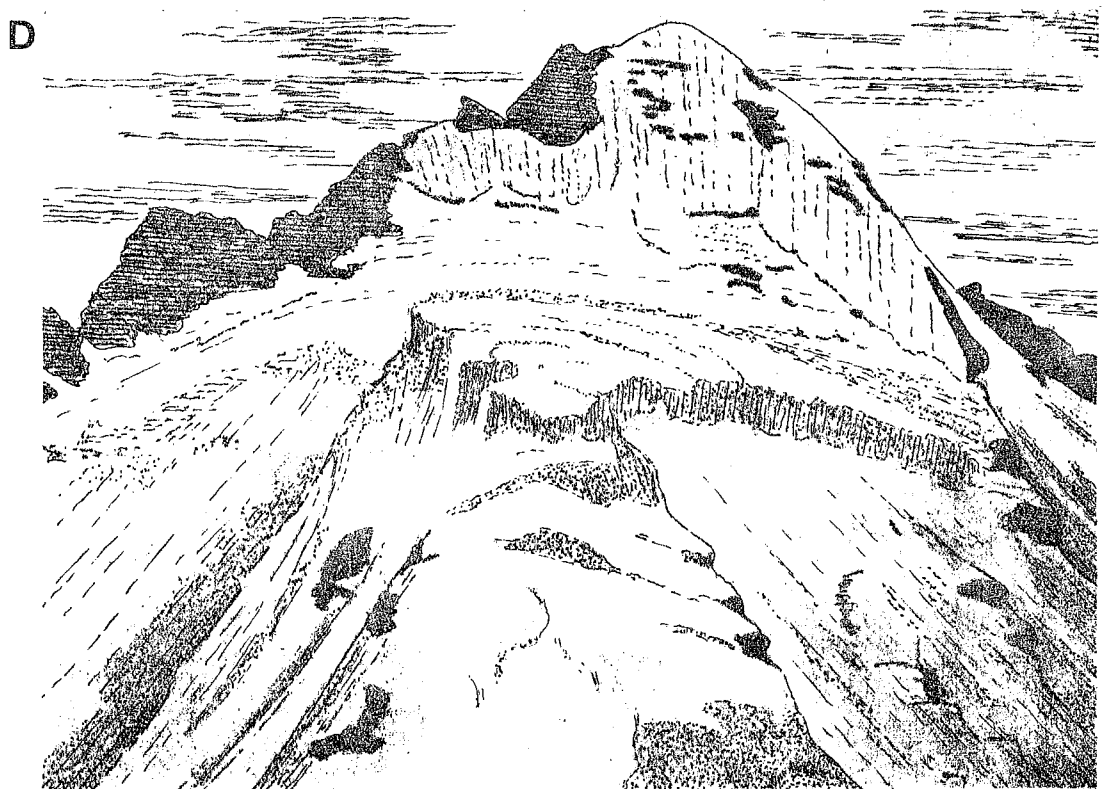
sooner climbed up the wrought iron bars, driven into the rock by quarrymen for the very purpose, when a sheep lost its footing and plunged to the quarry floor. Chris, Kath and myself descended again, tied ropes round the stricken animal then it was hauled out by the rest of the party above. None of the sheep's limbs appeared to be broken but it had lost the use of its back legs. Myself and Chris shared the task of carrying it over the mountain to the vehicles whilst the rest of the party shared the carrying of equipment. There it was placed in my van and on our return to the valley we called in at the nearest farm and handed the animal over to the farmer. He identified it as one of his and although he expressed some doubts as to its future, he said that he was extremely grateful for what we had done.

After a five hour trip, the day was naturally concluded with a good clean up (a bath if one wished) and a meal at the hut followed by an evening at the local, further enhanced by the arrival of Michael Mullen, Jim Kinsman and Jeff Dobson, who turned the evening into one of riotous entertainment, finishing back at the hut, ably assisted by Frank (Bols) Shepherd.

Sunday was spent swimming and diving in the sea off the Welsh coast. Tony Briggs attracted quite an audience in his Phantom wet suit so he sat on the ocean bed blowing bubbles whilst we all dived and kicked him. Jim, Mick and Jeff went to look at the quarry as they could not get on the Saturday trip.

Margaret and myself have rarely enjoyed such a week-end as this. The congenial company of the Eldon Club made the whole thing go with a swing, therefore we thank them all for sharing with us a journey into Welsh history, a change from the normal potholing routine.

Since 1964 several OREADS have visited the quarry, including Margaret and I, however the lower levels below the sledge as described in the article are no longer accessible due to flooding up to the sough level.



Munroving

Roger Chapman



Most walking tales tend to be dull and boring, truly pedestrian in fact. This is yet another one of the same ilk so be warned.....

My title is taken from the specialist vocabulary of the S M C who list the latest finishers in their annual journal, or at least those who have been foolish enough to admit to their affliction. 384 upto February 1985. How many closest Munroists there are I have no way of knowing.

So, there I was on the summit of Ben Lomond at last. No friend to help me celebrate, not even a drop of the hard stuff to improve the moment. What an anticlimax. At least it was not raining and I had the summit to myself apart that is from a trig point and the mist boiling up to obscure the view. For most of my adult life I had pursued a dream. Now it was over I felt curiously sad. Perhaps a wake was more appropriate but I still lacked the essential ingredients.

It had all began almost a quarter of a century ago, although I did not appreciate it at the time, when I climbed Ben Nevis with my sister and her boyfriend. The round trip in three and a half hours in typical mountain weather (thick clag, wind and rain henceforth to be referred to as T M W).

It was not until Easter 1964 that I added to my tally. A Mountain Club meet to Ben Nevis gave some of us at least a rare opportunity to knock the cement from our boots. Six Munros with a party which included Don Gilbert and Dave Steele two of the M C's leading walkers of the time.

Returning from that meet I almost brought my Munro bagging career to a premature conclusion when I crushed my right ankle in a rather messy car crash. I was left with a permanent limp and for several years an accurate predictor of bad weather.

Whitsun 1966 saw me making a comeback of sorts. My first visit to Skye where I was fascinated by the Black Cuillins, but I was desperately disappointed by my performance. On that rugged terrain it was as much as I could do to stay upright. Only three Munros that week.

For the rest of the decade I spent much of my spare time playing nursemaid to Bryn Hafod. By the end of the sixties I was still walking like a crab, but I was much fitter and thinking about Scotland again.

1971 and another Whit meet in Skye. Seven Munros and a failed attempt on the Main Ridge. Munros were back on the agenda, but so was the Main Ridge. Whitsun on Skye was to become the number one priority for the next few years. Number two being to find a brave leader to tie on to at the sharp end where necessary during the traverse of the Main Ridge and I would like to belatedly record my thanks to Derek Mountford (1972, 1974 and 1976) and Dave Steele (1975).

I passed three milestones during 1972. My first winter meet since I broke my ankle (Easter in Scotland is winter in my book), my first traverse of the Main Ridge and my first solo back packing expedition - Glen Nevis to Aviemore by way of the Fourthousanders. Judging by the snow on the Ben, June in Scotland is still winter.

And so the years rolled on. As did the cars! During 1974 I rolled my Lotus

after a failed attempt on the Welsh 3000's. (I was suffering from heat stroke, honest). Amazingly I walked away with a few bruises but the car was a write-off. 1974 also saw Ben Hope climbed in T M W with only an AA book for guidance. My best year so far with 37 new Munros.

1975 brought the hundred up - Ben Sgritheall with John Linney for company in more T M W. What a miserable peak in the wet.

1976 and a three day traverse round Loch Mullardoch. Fine weather for once but windy. I camped overnight near the summit of Carn Eighe and was woken in the middle of the night by a tremendous gust that blew my tent down and rolled me up in a neat little parcel. The next night I camped near the head of the Loch, half a mile out in the Loch in 50ft of water if the map was to be believed; a minor error the OS did not bother to correct until the second edition of the metric series.

Whitsun 1977, Sgurr nan Ceannaichean (a recent promotion) in fine weather with Colin Barnard before it even appeared in the tables and An Teallach in T M, with a host of Oreads. August the top of Ladhar Bheinn in more T M W.

1981 was my best year ever with 40 new Munros pushing me over the 200 mark. It should have been more but the mad axeman had been at work on The Tables lopping three Munros off one ridge. One of these was Carn Ban Mor, which had been eluding me for years. In 1972 I had passed within a few hundred yards of the summit while completing the Scottish Fours. Back in 1978 I was shuffling round and round the summit plateau in a white-out finding nothing but the remains of my own footsteps in the snow. When we sauntered along the ridge at Easter in brilliant sunshine the summit area was so flat it was impossible to locate the highest point, but by then it had already been demoted.

1984. Another productive year with 38 Munros including the remaining really remote hills. I bivied at 3000ft on Ben Alder and awoke to a sharp frost. I was reluctant to leave my nice warm pit, but eventually there was nothing for it but to risk instant frostbite and get dressed. At least it was not raining. It is easy enough to stay dry if you have a decent bivi bag but I have never solved the problem of how to get dressed without getting soaked through if it is still raining.

By now the end was in sight. At the start of 1985 faulty accounting procedures led me to believe that I had 31 left including Beinn Teallach (not to be confused with An Teallach), a dreary hummock that the OS had inconsiderately just elevated in status. Actually there were only 28 left.

Easter at Ballachulish was hard work. I was unfit as is usual these days and the weather was not of the best. On one of the poorer days four of us set out to climb Meall nan Eun from Glen Etive and carelessly climbed nearly to the summit of Stob a Bhruich Leith before we realised our error. I will not embarrass the other intrepid navigators by naming them.

Easter also gave me the chance to correct a longstanding omission. In 1975 I had done Stob Gabhar and Clach Leathad from Victoria Bridge in fine weather. I was convinced the next peak along the ridge looked higher but The Tables and the map said no and the snow was deep and exhausting so down I went. Clach Leathad was demoted in the 1980 edition and Creise elevated in its place.

This time I approached Creise from the opposite direction carefully avoiding the North Ridge which is supposed to give an interesting ascent. It had started fine but by the time I reached the summit the weather was deteriorating and the rising wind quickly filled my pockets with fine powder snow. The way down took me over Meall a Bhuiridh and as I struggled up the arete to the summit the wind frequently brought me to a complete standstill. Even with the assistance of my axe I could not move a step for minutes on end.

Whitsun came and went as the numbers left diminished. The pace hotted up and what seemed like every fine weekend was put to good use. Ben More on Mull provided a surprisingly sporting ascent in mist. The Arrochar Alps gave me one of my most strenuous days in years. On the same weekend , while on my way to Beinn Bhuidhe I was held up at gunpoint and interrogated at an army roadblock. Not a pleasant experience.

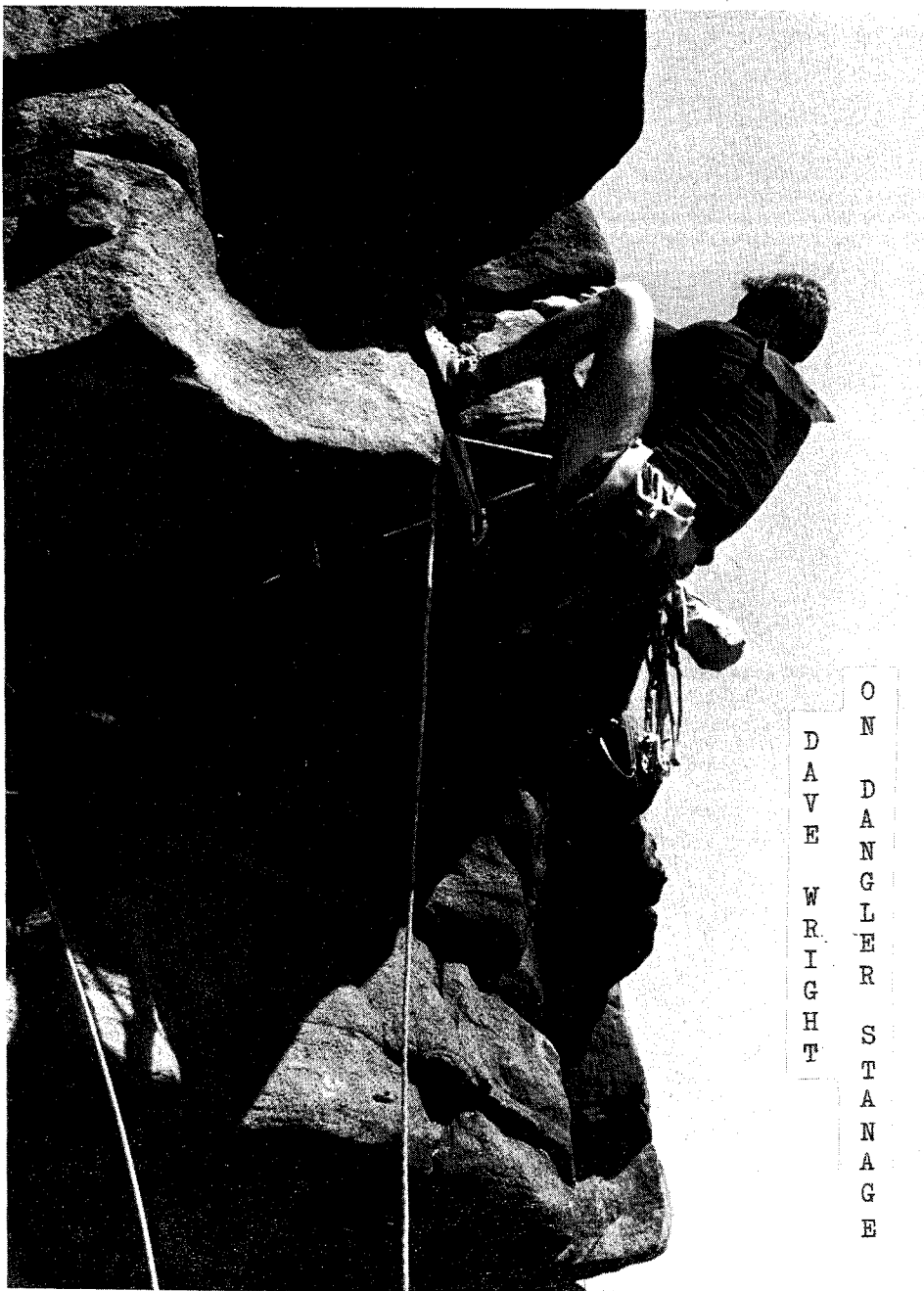
And so that final weekend eventually came round. Saturday started like a farce. I was sitting on my bed preparing my gear when the dreadful truth dawned. Although I had brought three pairs of boots I only had one pair of socks and a ankle length pair with a hole in one heel at that. Even so I managed to survive the day in reasonable comfort and so was left with just a Sunday morning stroll up Ben Lomond. The long march was over.

284 Munros (7 since demoted), 175 of them climbed alone. At least fifty trips to Scotland. Countless hours spent planning. But why did it take so long? I have climbed some more than once. On Skye's Sgurr Alasdair at least ten times, the rest on the Main Ridge at least five times and Bla Bhein only twice. On the mainland The Ben at least four times, Ben Macdui, Cairn Gorm, Ben Alligin, Ben Lui and Meall a' Bhuiridh twice. Nevertheless if you add my six best years together the total comes to 201. I really must have been slacking for the rest of the time.

What of the other memories? I could easily have written ten times as much. Ben Lui by the Central Gully with Derek. The overdressed climber (helmet and harness) who had to be hauled up out of the Thearlaich-Dubh gap - one of the few occasions I have seen someone with less rock climbing ability than myself. The gnarled old man and his wife who I met in the snow on the summit of Creag Meagaidh with his third round of Munroes nearly complete. Or the enthusiastic girl and her reluctant boyfriend who I met on two successive days at the head of Loch Arkaig -not more than twenty years old but already over the two hundred mark. She probably finished before I did.

E





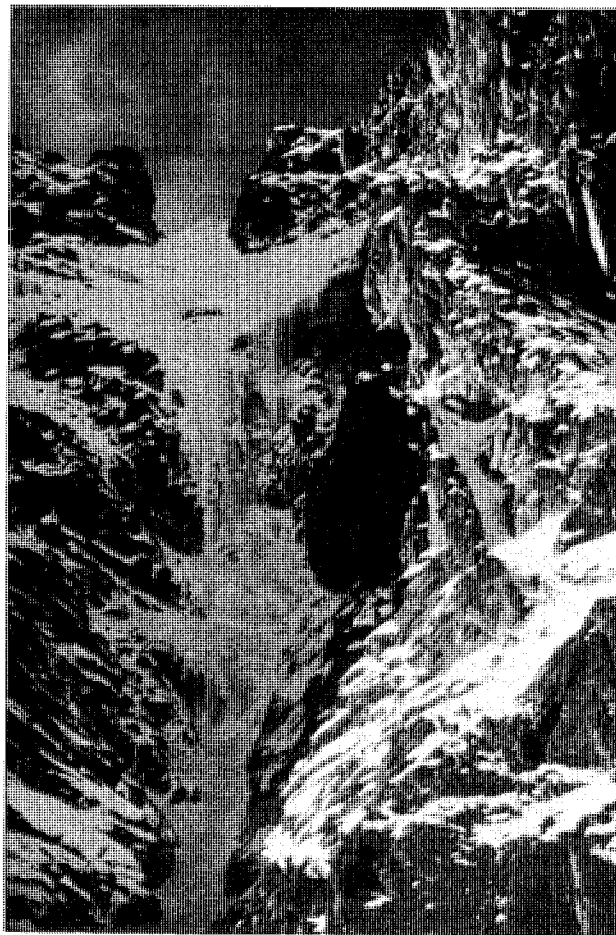
ON DAVENGLERSTANG
E WRIGHTS
T H T A N A G E



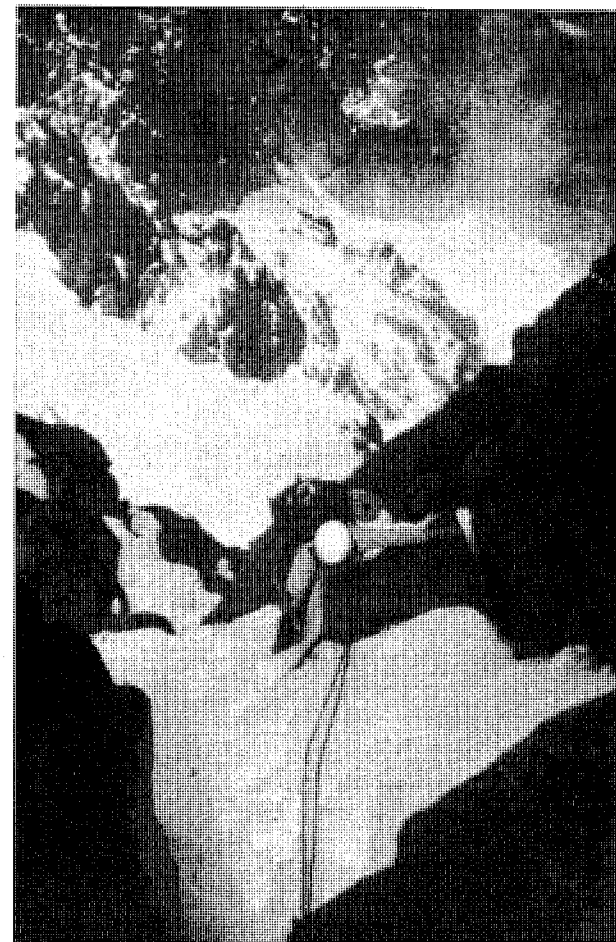
TIDJAMAYENE MASSIF HOGGAR MOUNTAINS
NORTH + SOUTH TEZOULAG FROM SAUINANE

LADIES
LEADING
MEET
TOP L-R
JAN
ANGELA
ANDREA
PHYL
BOTTOM L-R
BERYL
DAWN
GAIL
HELEN

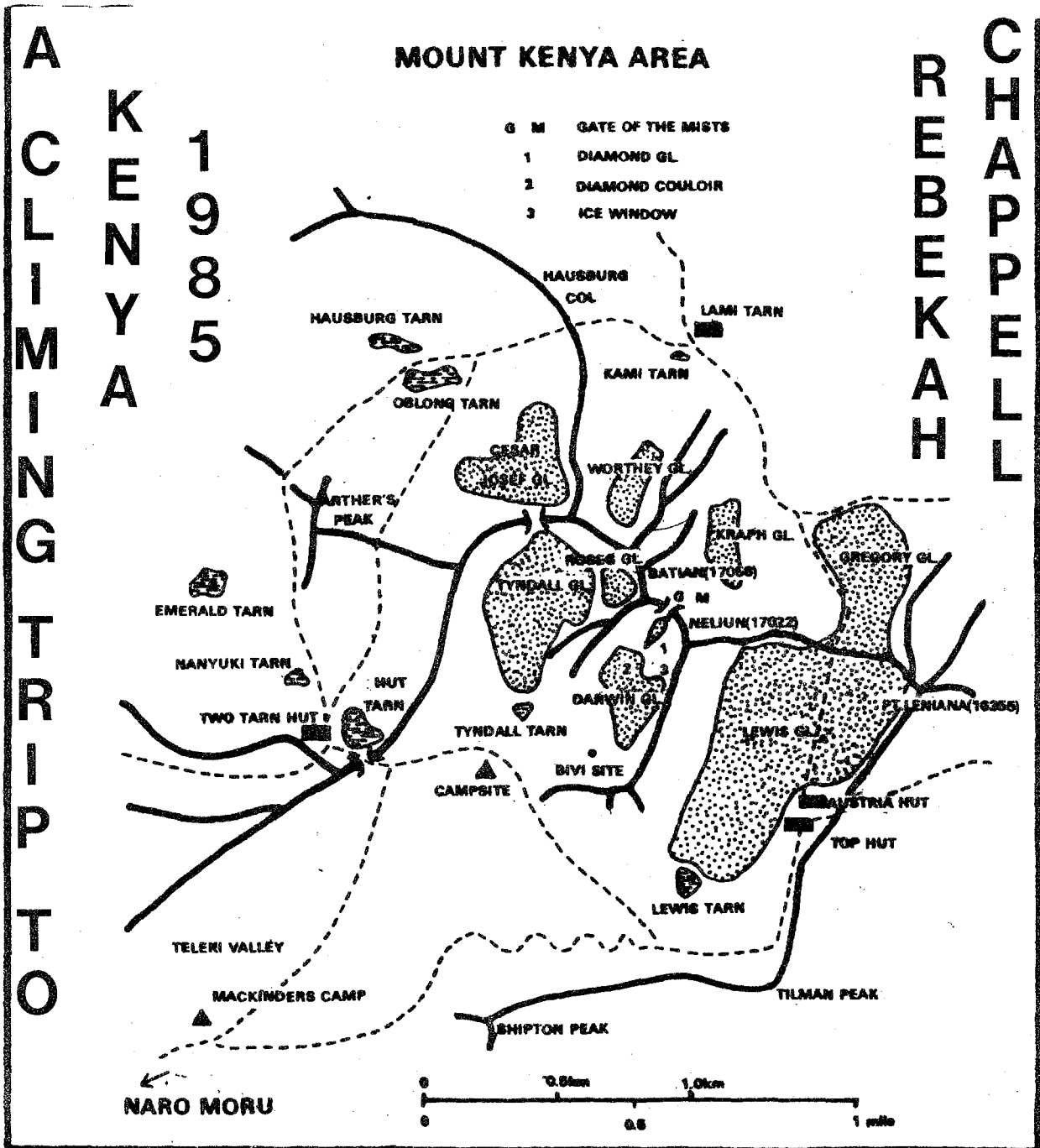




DIAMOND COULOIR - VIEW FROM DARWIN GL. BIVI
ICE WINDOW AND ICE CAVE ROUTES



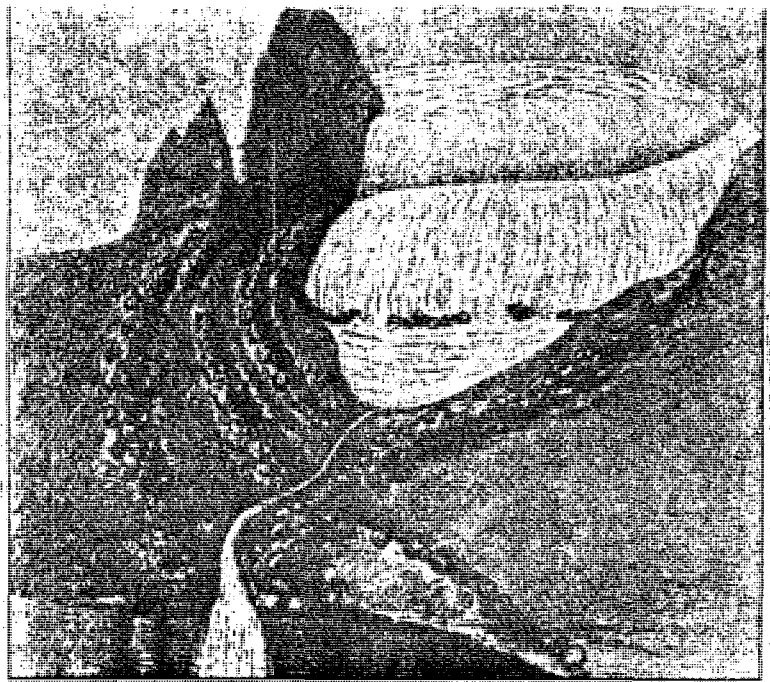
ASCENT OF BATIAN FROM THE GATE



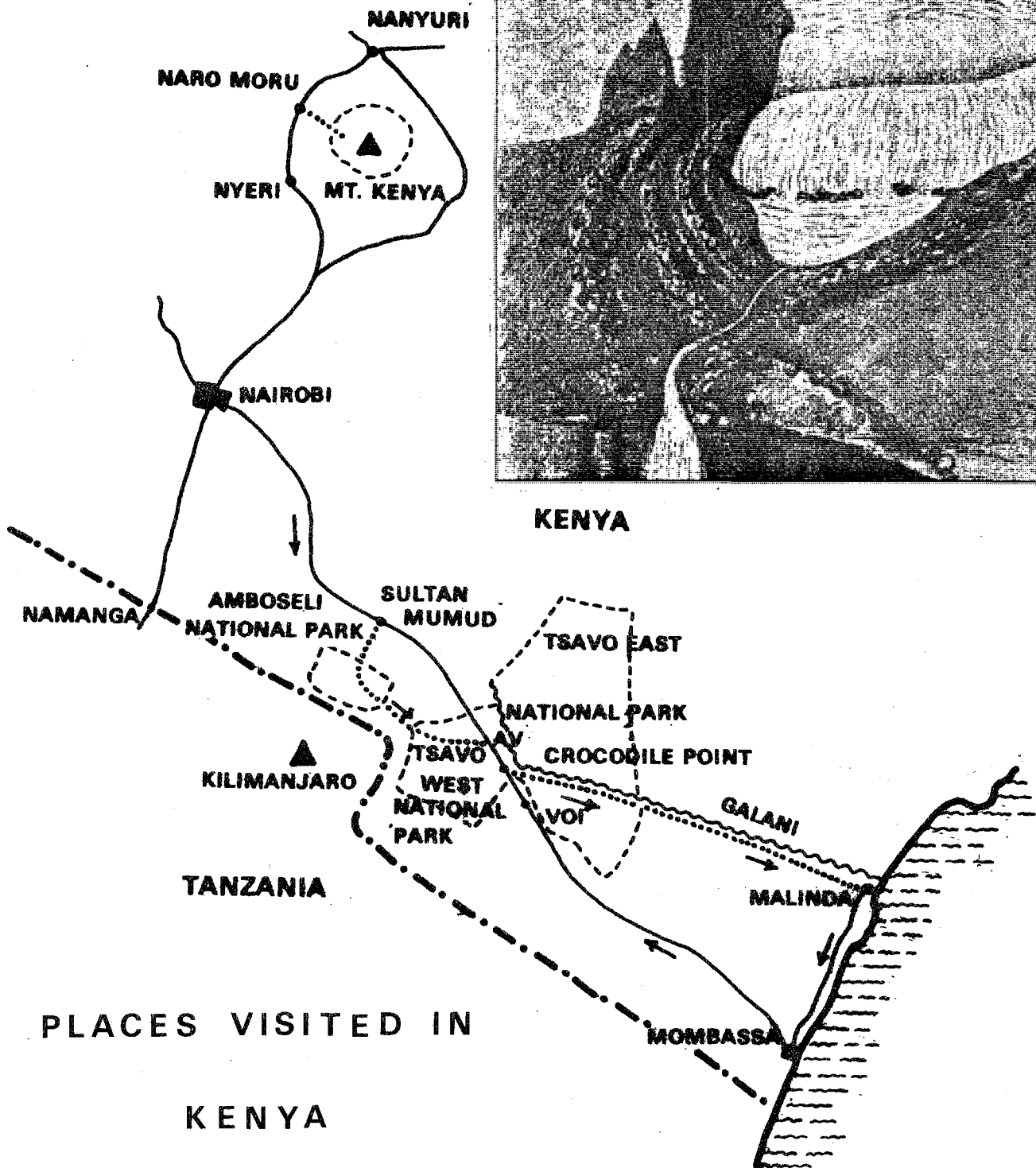
Having flicked through an atlas looking for mountainous areas, we found that Mt. Kenya, lying astride the equator and rising to 17,058 ft. was a suitable mountain to visit in the four weeks we had available. The idea became more appealing when we could also hope to reach the highest point in Africa, Kilimanjaro at 19,340 ft.

Robin Beadle and myself arrived in Nairobi in the early hours of August 10th and spent the day buying food and arranging transport to Mt. Kenya. The bus journey was very exciting, seeing miles of open savana, the women carrying amazing loads on their backs with neckbands, while the men walked empty handed. At the villages the bus was invaded by men of all ages selling everything from hard-boiled eggs to digital watches. It was hot and dusty when we reached Naro Moru, 100 miles north of Nairobi. We struggled down the track towards the westernised River Lodge with a pack on both our front and back. In typical friendly Kenyan fashion a lady caught us up and offered to take care of my sacks. I was very grateful!

Having spent a day acclimatising at 6,000 ft. we hired a Landrover and drove up early in the morning to the Meteorological Station at 10,000 ft. As we were planning to be up there for two weeks we hired two porters to carry our food. They were soon way ahead and we did not see them until we reached the campsite. Both the altitude and the upward nature of the track made it hard



KENYA



PLACES VISITED IN

KENYA

work. However, we did have an amazing view of the summit area to encourage us. We collapsed totally exhausted at Makinder's Camp at 13,700 ft.

Next morning the porters had taken our loads and returned to our campsite before we had packed up! They must be used to the altitude we said! By mid-morning we reached the campsite on the south side of the mountain below the Tyndall and Darwin Glaciers. It afforded us magnificent views of the routes we planned to do, we found ourselves always looking up.

Before we left my fears of various aspects of the trip changed. One of those was altitude sickness, compounded by the fact that Robin had seen someone die of pulmonary oedema on a trip the previous year. We went up to bivvy below the route a day too early; we woke up with dreadful headaches which thankfully cleared with an aspirin. Consequently we spent another day acclimatizing which I am sure benefited us.

Besides being only 4.00 a.m., I was too nervous to eat my muesli and felt it weigh in my stomach as we raced up to the start of the route. We wanted to

be the first to climb as we were not sure how slow we would be. The sun came up just as Robin reached the second belay. The climbing, mainly on easy angled snow was good and we moved together for several pitches. I had been worried at the start about a couple of short steep ice sections but they presented little problem.

By 10.00 a.m. we reached a very impressive natural ice cave, the outer wall formed by colossal icicles. We walked through the ice cave to step through a 'window', quite boldly onto the lip of the Diamond Glacier. It was now just a tiring slog to the majestic col between the summits of Batian and Nelion called the 'Gate of the Mists'. The ascent to Batian, the higher summit, was more difficult than we anticipated being mixed rock and ice. It was a relief in a way to reach the top but we knew we could not relax as we had a very long descent ahead of us. Another English couple reached the summit at the same time and we shared abseils with them. The short equatorial days meant we abseiled and scrambled for an hour in the dark.

Our water was finished and as altitude dehydrates you we felt it important to find water although it was dark. We stumbled along for one and a half hours tormented by the sound of what we thought to be running water. Eventually I was so physically exhausted we gave up and bivied where we were. In the morning we found we were only 100 yards from the water. The previous night we could not tell and the giant groundseils and some wreckage made the landscape unnerving. After several brews we wandered back to our campsite past some idyllic tarns!

Several climbers were now leaving but we planned to do another route. Robin had his eye on a route called the 'Diamond Couloir' reckoned to be the best ice route on the mountain. We had joked about doing it before we left, assuming at that stage, it would be totally beyond us. However after listening carefully to other climbers' assessments of the route at that time (ice routes are notoriously variable) we decided to try it. I think we were both worried and excited simultaneously.

The first two pitches involved 60m of 70 degree ice; a daunting prospect as it seems vertical when you are actually on it. The angle relented, thankfully, and we moved a little quicker until we reached the headwall, an impressive series of what seemed to me to be vertical ice steps. We both found this part difficult. I was tired by now. We realised we would not make it to the shelter on the summit of Nelion by nightfall so we made our way over rotten loose snow to an ice cave. The only flat area was small and enclosed by ice and icicles, a very unusual place to spend the night. I think I appreciated our situation more than Robin as he was convinced he had a frost bitten toe!

The following day we reached the summit of Nelion (17,022 ft.) and descended in poor visibility down the south face route to our bivi site. I felt totally exhausted as I stumbled and tripped down to our tent. I think I was too shattered to feel any sense of achievement; I hoped it would come later. However I was to discover something even more tiring - carrying all our stuff down to the roadhead. Down - no problem we thought, but our rucsacs were extremely heavy and by the time we reached the Meterological Station there were two very shattered people. We were very fortunate and had a lift to the lodge and that night sat down to a delicious meal. Our fellow diners might not have thought so as we had been unable to wash or change! I felt elated then.

By this stage we discovered it was going to be financially impossible to 'do' Kilimanjaro due to the high Park Fees which had to be paid in hard currency. Instead, on returning to Nairobi we hired a four-wheel drive two seater jeep and visited game parks, 'to see the animals'. It was very exciting spotting a particular wild animal for the first time!

We had mechanical trouble with the jeep, most 'bits' were eventually tied on with rope, even the engine at one stage. Our climbing equipment proved to be invaluable for fixing things. I was very thrilled when we eventually saw the Indian Ocean, it was idyllic; the swimming was wonderful, the water was warm even before breakfast!

Having had the jeep 'fixed' at Ali's garage, we thought our troubles were

over. However, driving back to Nairobi it overheated, lost what little power it did have and finally made some dreadful noise and stopped. We gave up, abandoned it and hitched back to Nairobi.

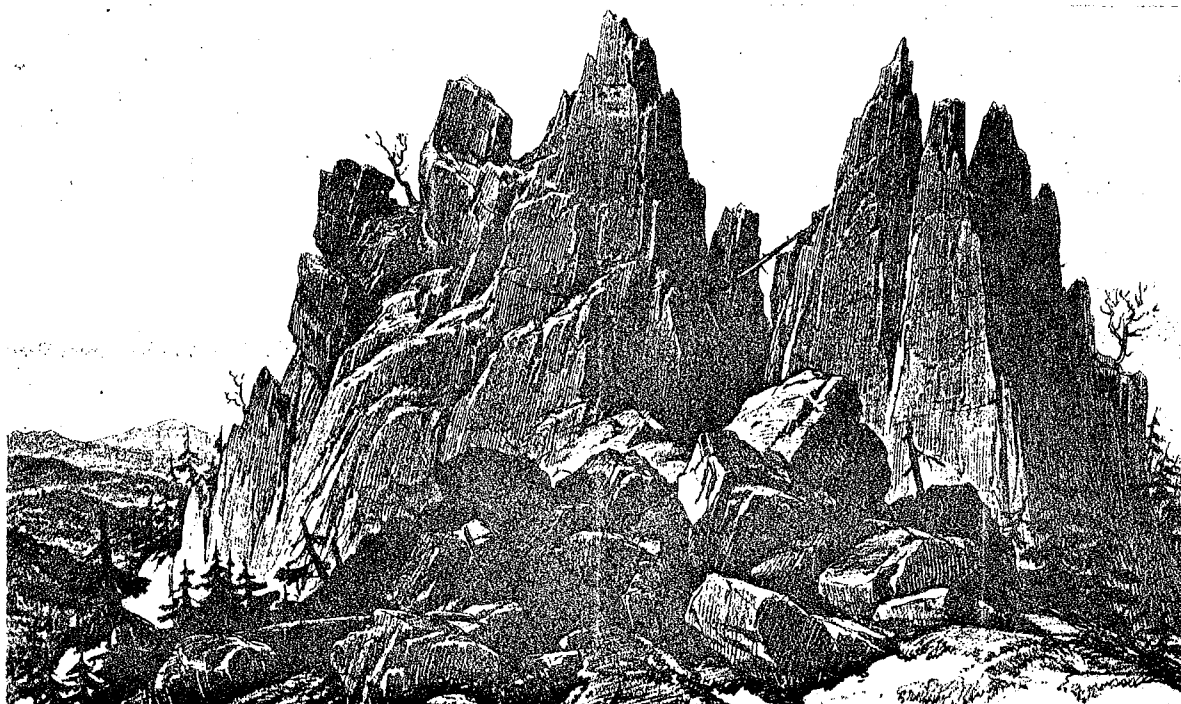
In Nairobi it seemed ages since we were on Mt. Kenya. I felt we had only seen a tiny part of Kenya. I would have liked to have seen much more and stayed longer on the beach! I think I will remember the incredible aridity and dustiness of the landscape and the friendly and helpful people encountered

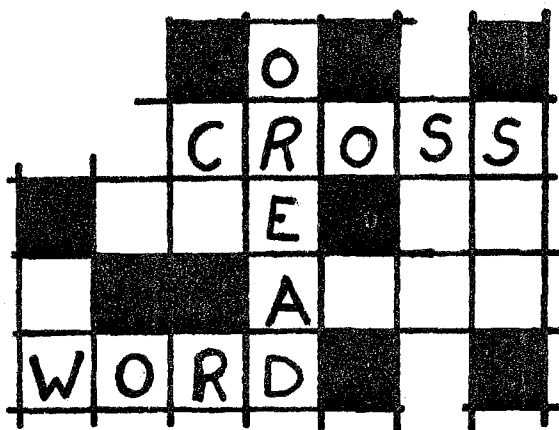
I would like to thank the Knowlton Trust and Expedition Committee for financial support, Neil a fellow climber for lending us some equipment and everybody who was so enthusiastic and helpful when I said I was going to Kenya.

FACTS IN BRIEF

Cost (Exchange rate was 23 Kenyan shillings to £1 sterling)
Return flight from London Heathrow to Nairobi was £345 with Iberia Airlines.

Food for 2.5 weeks (We did take 20 dried meals each, dried milk, teabags, muesli and hill food (Mars bars etc.) with us).	190/-
Food for 10 days safari	500/-
Bus from Nairobi to Naro Moru (single)	40/-
Camping fee at Naro Moru River Lodge (per person per night)	25/-
Hire of Landrover to Meterological Station	700/-
Hire of porter's rucsac (per day)	35/-
Hire of porters (per day)	55/-
Park fees. Non-residents	30/-
Porters	5/-
Driver (resident)	15/-
Camping (per person per night)	5/-
Hotel in Nairobi (double room)	69/-
Meal in Nairobi (good restaurant)	30-40/-
Hire of Suzuki Jeep (2 seater). 9 days unlimited mileage	5000/-
Petrol (per litre) (jeep - 9 km. per litre)	8-9/-





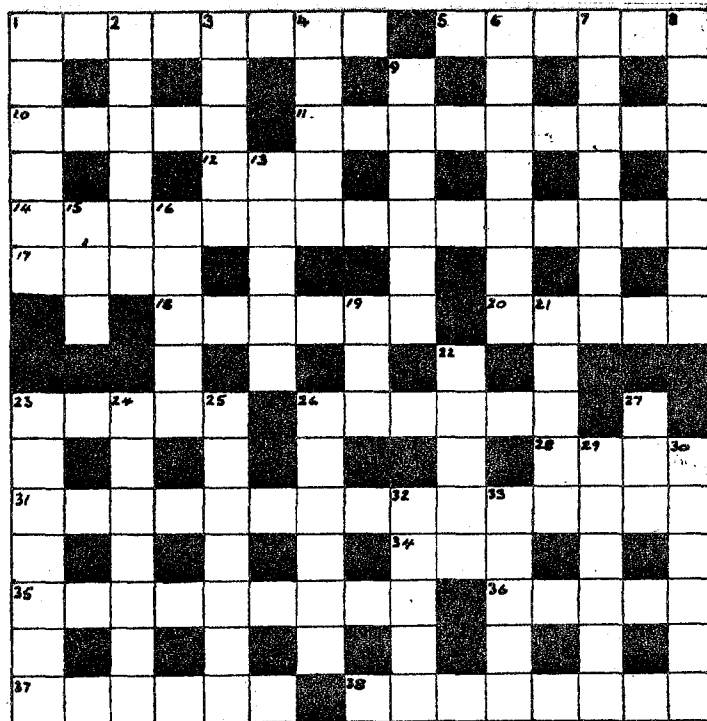
A crossword designed for both the walker or the 'hard' man. For those with a few moments to spare forget the pub or the box and use a few of the grey cells. The first with a correct (the editor's word is final) solution can win a voucher. Yes! A real prize - so have a go.

ACROSS

1. Gear redesigned by Eckenstein. 8
5. The hardest ice route in 1864! 6
10. Points of the compass. 4
11. Cross threaded protection, perhaps! 3,6
12. Village that gives the finest view of the Cuillin. 3
14. Longest mountain range on Earth, but only the tops are seen! 3,7,5
17. Traditionally a mounting area in the capital city! 4
18. Climber's reflex action in rock fall. 6
20. If lacking, no light from old type of 'lumin generators'. 5
23. A narrow buttress. 5
26. A town off the A5 near Six Mile Cross. 6
28. Sound of continuous strong wind. 4
31. Alpine road constructed to provide extensive views. 15
34. Exclamation of surprise - on a route! 3
35. Too much air in the Lilo. 9
36. Cares are present if reversing ice-falls. 5
37. The public question this state of a climber's mind. 6
38. A place to doss in a home for cattle. 4,4

DOWN

1. Yawning gulfs. 6
2. Gaelic for sheiling. 6
3. Highest point in the Engadine National Park. 5
4. In Hindustani the beautiful part of a 8000m peak.
6. The feeling on a cold damp windy day. 4,3



Editor

7. Mountaineer of no fixed abode. 7
8. Oreads have one if sent the newsletter. 7
9. Perhaps the unwritten principles regulating our sport. 6
13. Firsts on Crib Goch and route with Everest man on Cwm Silyn. 5
15. Required after losing your mates gear. 1,1,1
16. Heap of food. 5
19. A well known stone on Tryfan. 3
21. Climbing on a many headed water serpent while in the Greek Islands. 5
22. This ground will always stop a fall! 5
23. Technique needed to gain height at a 'reachy' move. 3,4
24. A high pasture 'stop' on the way from Grindelwald to Lauterbrunnen. 7
25. Not easy to cook while camping in Wales. 4,3
26. Tropical grass used in climbing gear. 6
27. Good climbing likely on this part of Arabic coast. 3
29. Scottish climbers may see one. A 'mixture' of Kite, Cuckoo-falcon and Honey-Buzzard. 6
30. Gets you off the mountains if in trouble. 6
32. Bay with fine beach, between Dyra-ness (Norse) and Cave of Smoo with possible limestone routes. 5
33. Too coarse for sharpening gear. 5

'Not the Pennine Way' or 'When did you last take your wife out'

**Jack
Ashcroft**

"To complete this chapter I should mention three ways into the (Peak) district, from the south-east of which I have no first hand knowledge whatever. One is over Alport Hill the top of which is now the property of the National Trust...."

"On foot in the Peak" chap. VIII
Patrick Monkhouse (1932)

I was reminded of the Pennine Way and its variations when glancing through some old books the other evening and realised how much we who enjoy the great outdoors owe to that backbone of England - The Pennines, from the gently rising Derbyshire countryside to the rugged Scottish borderland. All very well the Vale of Evesham and the Kent countryside, but how dull the landscape of England would be without that geological accident of nature - The Pennines.

It was a weekend in June (1985) that I thought it would be pleasant to take Janet for a walk in the Dales. She had little idea as we sped up the A1 in the rain of where we were bound. I with map, compass and topographical picture in mind of a walking route from Reeth to Bowes. I'd said we might come back home that night, but once launched on the route that was it. The rain having abated as we drove up Swaledale to Reeth we found our walk across the fields to Langthwaite a limestone country delight. Then came the rain again somewhat before 3pm which allowed us to take a jar and dry out in the homely little inn at Langthwaite.

Our route then went into the cloud bank over Low Moor and the spectacle of the most multitudinous hillside of rabbits we had ever seen. Must be Britain's most densely populated rabbit haven, with warrens galore and white tails bobbing all over the expansive hillside.

My intention had been to traverse Hoove and Scargill High Moor to Bowes, but with the cloud bank and steady drizzle I amended the route to walk along the road through the Stang Forest and across Scargill Low Moor. It is a section of moorland not often walked. There was a suggestion of a footway every now-and-again and at Eller Beck we crossed an exceptionally well constructed footbridge. And so we found our way into Bowes via Gilmonby with the cloud shrouded landscape steadily clearing in the calm of evening.

Janet was not over enthusiastic about the walk. The moor had been rough going and into the bargain - at 7.00pm! we still had got to find accommodation at Bowes. Do look down the main street of Bowes next time you have the opportunity. Now that the A66 bypasses the town some semblance of its former character is returning. A quiet road, the church and precincts, the castle remains - a tourist attraction - and some B and B houses - but not on a Saturday night! I came to one of the houses with an extremely ancient CTC sign outside but having walked the length of the main street twice it was now straight to the main hostelry of the settlement, the Unicorn, which was a contrast in luxury after the rainy day of moorland walking. All was foreign. I'd taken my wife out for the evening! The twelve mile moorland route in not the best of weather became a steadily diminishing memory as the evening advanced.

Suffice to say next day having visited the interesting remains of the Castle, we walked to God's Bridge to join the Pennine Way proper. We continued

via Sleightholme , the southern slopes of Cleasby Hill and Langthwaite from where we walked back to Reeth a total round trip I estimated of twenty six miles. The afternoon scones and tea in Reeth was a pleasing conclusion to an eventful weekend. I had said to Janet something about a nine mile round walk before setting out, not really expecting to link up with the Pennine Way proper that weekend. But there it was.

The corollary of this story lies largely in the past. A route steadily explored (or has it just fallen into place) over the years with Oread and Castle Club members. Its an alternative Pennine Way with dubious responsibility for trespass, access and rights of way. And with apologies to Harry Pretty, who I am sure would substitute the route "from the southeast" from the Bridge Inn Duffield via Holbrook (Hill) to Baslow.

Follow this for your summer hols!

PLACE	G. R.	MILEAGE	PLACE	G. R.	MILEAGE
Duffield	345 435	0	Thoraby	001 868	129
Alport Hill	305 516	7	Carperby	009 900	132
Black Rocks	295 558	9	Bull Scar	008 932	134
Bonsall	280 582	15	Apedale Head	002 952	135
Winster	241 606	17	Reeth	039 992	140
Stanton Moor	245 633	19	Langthwaite	005 025	143
Rowsley	257 658	21	Bowes *	983 135	150
Baslow	255 722	25	Blackton *	932 182	156
Longshaw House	265 799	31	Middleton-		
High Neb Stanage	228 853	34	in-Teasdale *	947 253	161
Margery Hill	189 957	51	High Cup Nick *	748 263	180
Fiddlers Green	141 002	56	Cross Fell	688 343	192
Britland Sill			Hartside Cross	648 419	198
Bridge	106 026	60	Cold Fell	605 557	210
Black Hill *	078 048	63	Midgeholme *	640 589	213
Standedge *	012 100	69	Gilsland *	643 664	219
White Horse Inn *	969 175	75	Spadeadam	585 707	224
Stoodley Pike *	974 243	80	Sighty Crag	601 809	232
Boulsworth Hill	930 356	89	Black Hill	570 845	235
Wycoller Hall	932 393	92	Deadwater Farm	606 969	243
Kelbrook	902 447	97	Peel Fell	626 998	245
Thornton-in-			Carter Bar	699 068	252
Craven	907 485	99	Hungry Low	748 061	255
Coniston Cold	904 550	103	Windy Gyle *	855 151	267
Airton	902 592	107	Kirk Yetholm *	827 282	281
Gordale Scar	915 640	111			
Arncliffe	932 718	117	Allowing for ascent and		
Buckden	942 773	121	descent, 300 miles.		
Buckden Pike	961 788	124	Accommodation - best take a tent.		
Naughtberry Hill	979 820	126	Three weeks walking.		
			* On the true Pennine Way		

Allowing for ascent and descent. 300 miles.

Accommodation - best take a tent.

Three weeks walking.

* On the true Pennine Way
(about 50 miles)

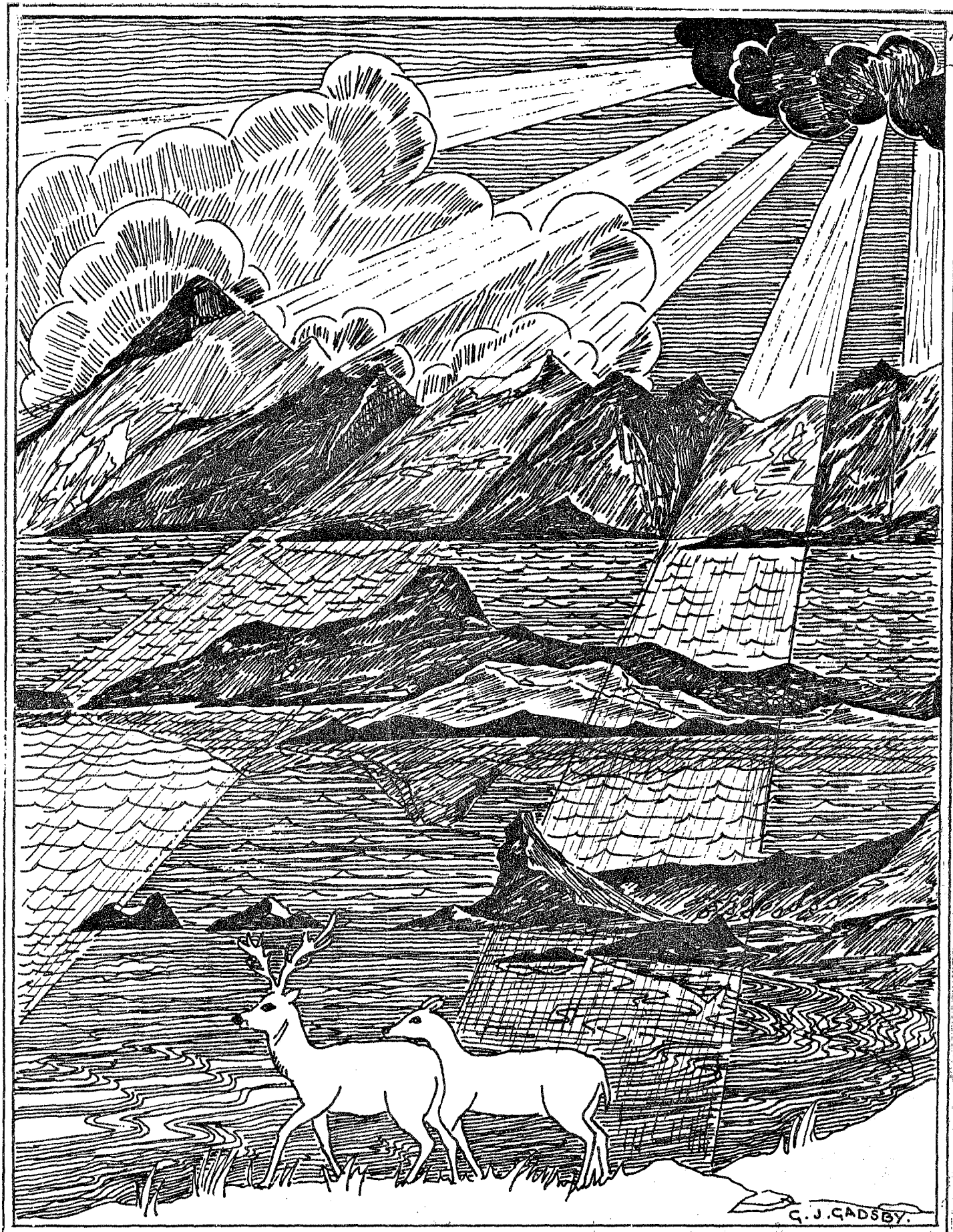


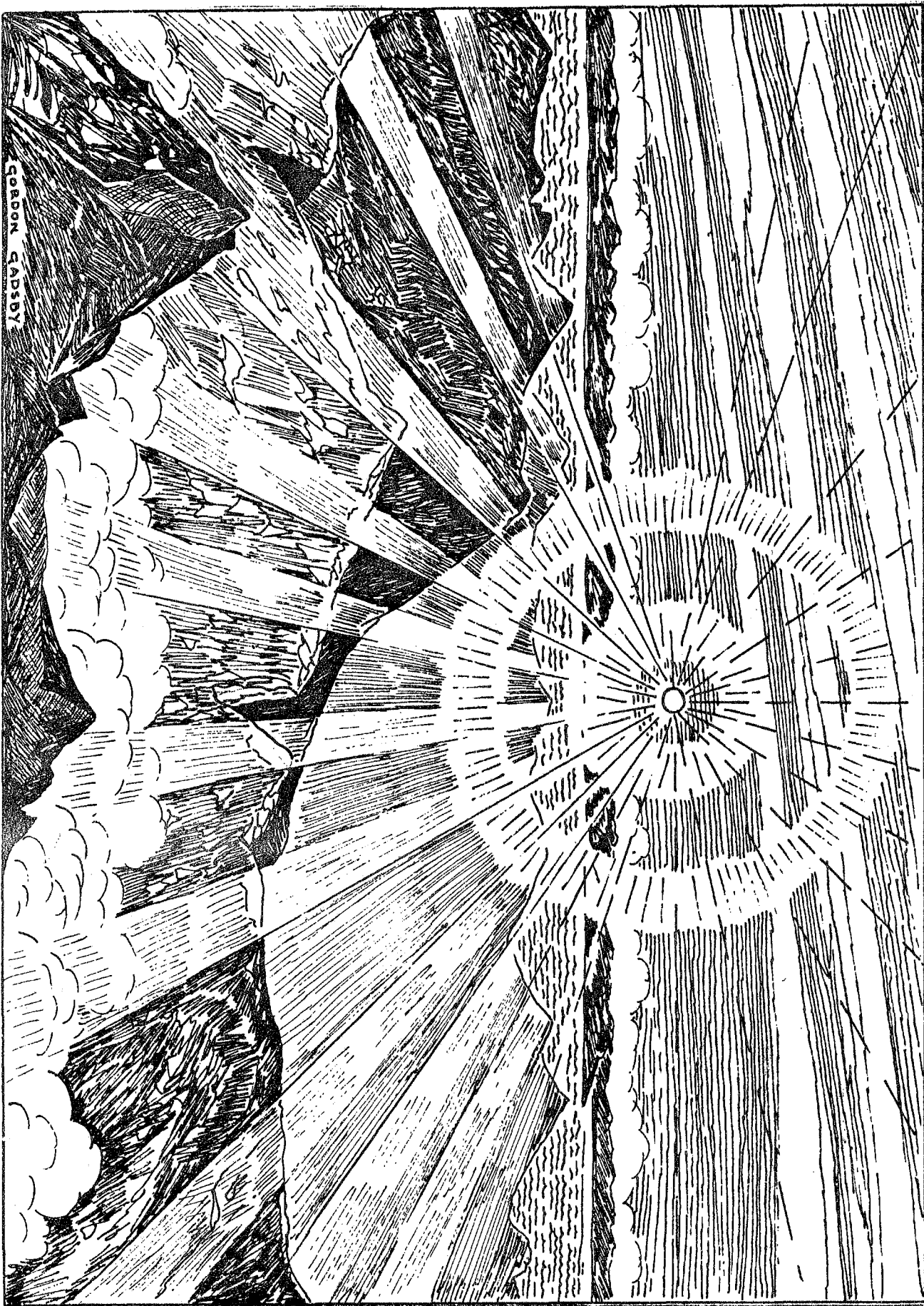
CUILLIN

SUNRISE

That welcome spread of light
Moves in the Eastern Sky.
Dawn's misty fingers loose their grip
On the shadowy crested mountain's tip.
The rising sun hides
Cloudbound for a time.
Then dragons' tongues of flame red light
Chase off that old assailant night.
Storm riven cleft and crack
Attract the rosy glow.
Then blackness overwhelms it
So deep it cannot go.
Past rising mist swells
From the valley haven.
It drifts and sways, then plays around
The pinnacles of Blaven.
High, high above
The Eagles makes his run
The talons stretched and wings set back
His shadow hites the sun.
Foxes, sheep, stoats
Scatter, scatter, run!
While rabbits stiffened ears
Confirm too late their fears.
Swoosh, swish, with flying fur
And feather torn the Eagles strikes his prey
Then lifts, with leaden wings
His carrion for the day.
The dark forbidding rocks
Frown down on meadow green.
Wildlife resumes its way,
Life and death forgotten in newly wakened day.

Gordon
Gadsby





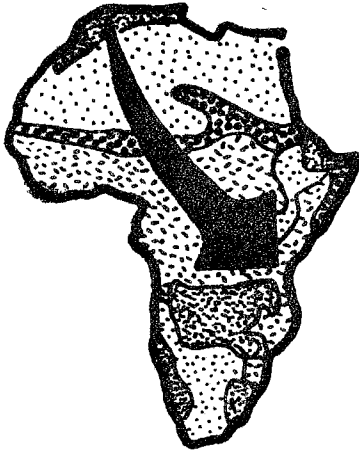
GORDON GADSDY

CULLIN
SUNRISE.

Annie Charrington

TRANS

Mike Wynne



AFRICA

PRELUDE

Our team of six, Landrover, trailer and an immense amount of gear got away from Bromley only one day late. It was the start of our 'Trans- africa Overland' trip, which had been in preparation for over a year; the brain child of Dave Mc'Intosh, who had put in an amazing amount of time planning and organising. The Landrover was ex-army and various parts were added or extended, which resulted in using heavy duty parts, together with sand tyres, overdrive, sturdy roofrack, but the list could be endless. Sponsorship was mainly from the following: Unipart, £200 from 'Lufiba Uni', Nikon, £50 from Linsey-Fynn Fund, drugs from Borough Wellcome and Eli Litty, Glaxo Complian and finally Bowater and Scott for 100 rolls, which nearly lasted until Kenya.

Our send off was a notorious do at Heathy Lea, where the hut was nearly splitting at the seams, but a good time was had by all.

Wynne, Annie, Dave Mc'Intosh, Ivan Jones, John Ellis and Diane Donelly finally met up. Work went on until the 11th hour and we eventually left on 29th Nov. 1984 after a mind-blowing Chinese take-away.

Finally ... overkeen to get away, little attention had been paid to a low voltmeter reading. With lights fading only three miles from home we had our only major breakdown, but this was soon rectified by a new alternator.

A C and M W

ENGLAND TO TCHAD

The ferry left on time and our first stop was for bouldering at Fontainebleau. We took eight days to cross France and Spain. In Andorra we stocked up with cheap liquor and fags (for bribery etc.) at the resort of 'Pas de la Cash'. The days were dry, but the nights cold and damp, while the Pyrenees looked impressive with a cover of snow.

We shared the ferry from Algeciras to Ceuta with a large proportion of the Spanish Army. Being Saturday, duty-free shops were closed, so even with a complete turnout we cleared Moroccan customs the same day. Two nights stop in Fez, one of Moroc's imperial cities, where we met many other overlanders (gleaned information), toured the city and lost a fair amount of washing.

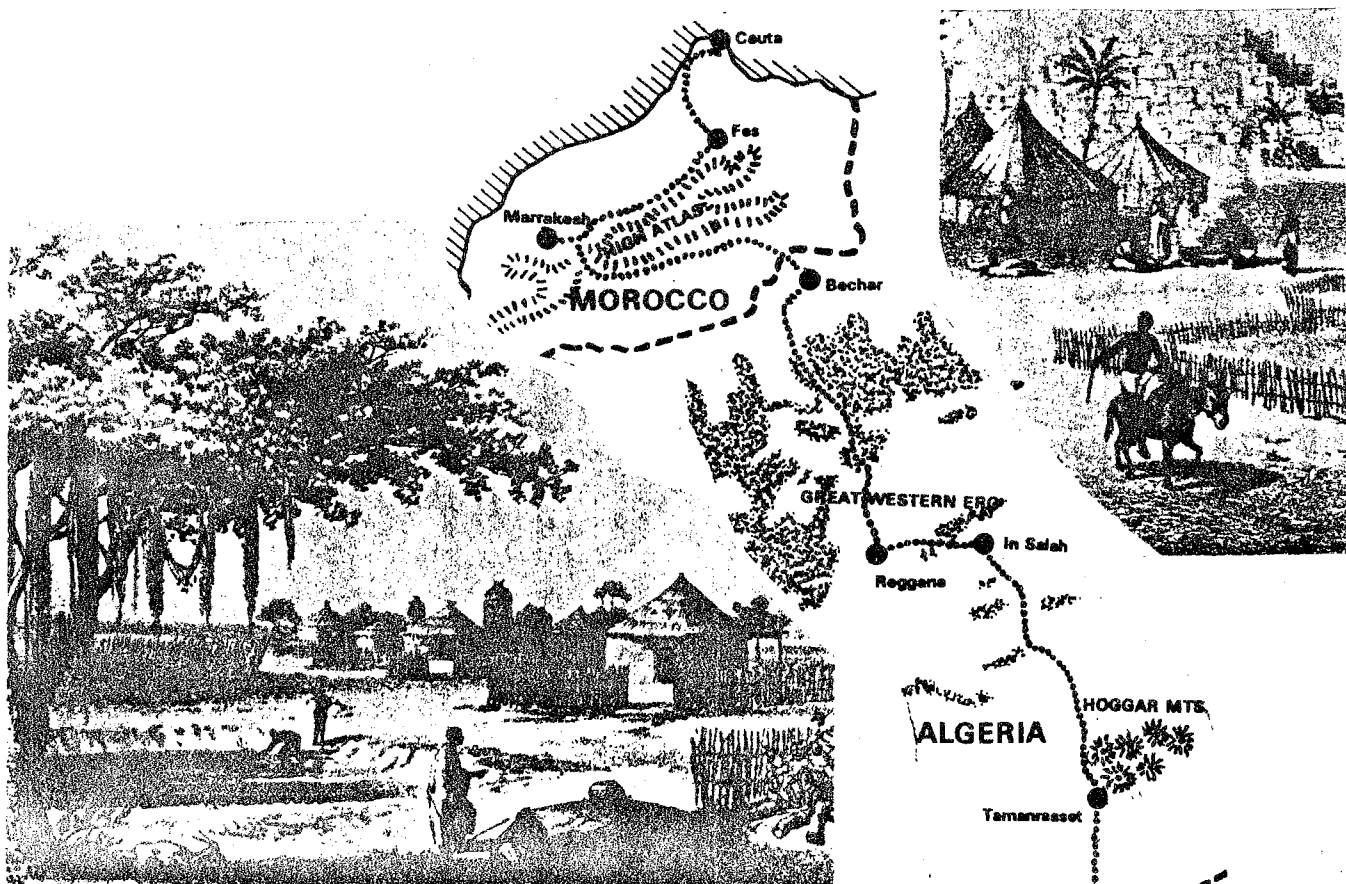
On to Marrakesh and to familiar ground for some. A quick tour and stock-up with dried food and spices, then into the Atlas for two days. Our Berber friends were very hospitable and we were well fed and watered. Our attempt to climb Toubkal turned into a near-epic due to foul Scottish type weather and our small party managed to get separated, hence we were benighted in three snowholes on the way to the Nelter Refuge. Luckily the morning was clear though bitterly cold. We emerged cold, but alive and well except for frost-nipped fingers and toes.

The Atlas was passed on the east. We now expected higher temperatures, but cool days and frosty nights were not uncommon while crossing the Sahara.

A near panic to hide away money at the Moroc-Algeria frontier on hearing that two Dutch were fined for trying to export money. In Algeria non-students

have to change £160, which was difficult with the banks closed. This enforced a doss for four days.

A new road runs from Bechar to Reggane through a sand sea (erg) formed of self type dunes, then 190 mile of open desert to reach In Salah. This section was a good test for the vehicle and trailer - in which the latter failed with a broken suspension torsion bar. Held up with Perlon and a tyre lever we reached In Salah on Xmas day. Boxing day was spent hunting for repair facilities. Eventually we opted for a pessimistic welding job for the cost of two bottles of whisky. After a massive load-lightening session we headed for Tamanrasset. The road! Well, there was one years ago, but now it's mostly destroyed and hence some rough driving. The trailer was a proverbial pain, the repair failing after two days: more rope and tyre levers were employed.



From Tamanrasset a visit was made to Assekrem in the Hoggar Mountains, with fantastic views of volcanic plugs having climbing potential. It was cold at 8500ft, so we decided not to see in 1985 there, but instead descended towards Tamanrasset.

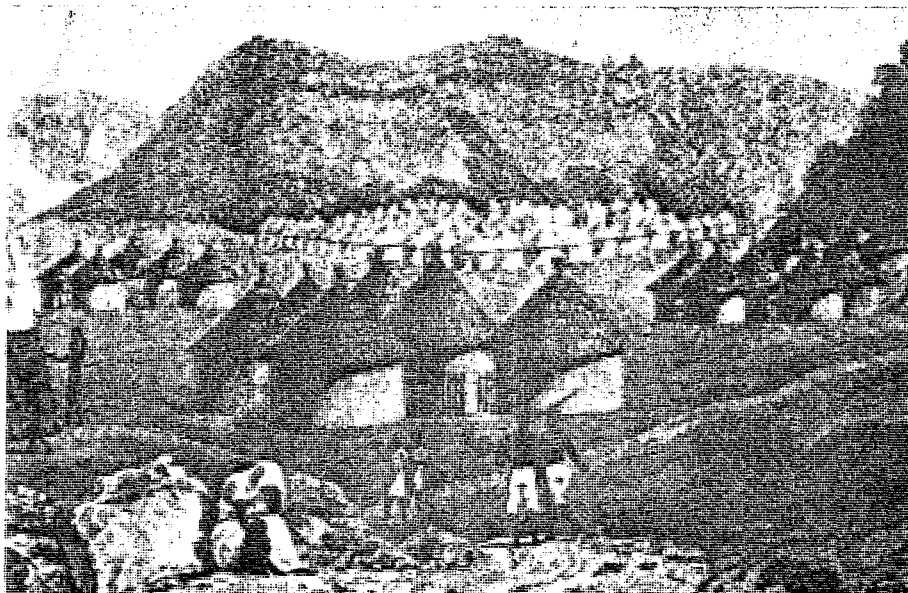
There followed 400 miles of desert, parts of which were superbly flat, others bumpy or soft, with just a few marker poles to show the way. We had tried to dump our trailer with the customs, but taking the tyres. This was refused, so we continued with it empty to the border then obtained a 'carnet de passage'. Miraculously all our gear went into the Landrover, but we cursed all the climbing gear needed for Mt. Kenya!

Slight misunderstanding with the police, before crossing no-man's land to reach the Niger frontier; papers in order, we dumped the trailer. The wood made an excellent campsite fire, while the remainder joined the other wind

blasted wrecks.

Nigeria was closed, so we had a four day detour to Niamey to obtain permits to drive east of Zinder. We whizzed along tarmac roads in our first 'Black African' country; viewing men in strange cloths and little Fez like caps. The women in very bright cotton wrappings and carrying teapots or stone pots on their heads, while babies perched on their backs. The heat hit us, while at stops we were surrounded by inquisitive people.

By the time we were due to set off for what we expected to be our most difficult section from Niger to Tchad's capital, N'djamena, we had become part of an amazing convoy composed of Belgians, French and Germans; driving a 2CV, Peugeot Pick-up or a 504. We skirted the bush and sand around the mostly dried up Lake Tchad, but in the heat it became frustrating to travel with the Pick-



up with it's enormous ice-making machine, with which the Belgians hoped to set up a business in N'djamena!!

We were now on the edge of the Sahel, which especially in Niger gives rise to miles of dead trees partly covered with drifting sands indicating the steady expansion of the desert.

The region has no

roads, but at times tracks weaving through the bush, or stretches of very soft sand, which the Landrover can power through, but cars have to literally fly over.

On our third day we lost the cars while finding the way by compass. The villagers understood no French, so we shouted the name of the next village and looked where they pointed. We waited at Bol in a bullet riddled building provided by the 'Commissaire du Police'. After 24 hours the others arrived, worried about us, for they had suffered endless punctures. Another night at Bol was necessary whilst police/douanes/gendarmarie, plus other 'uniforms' did their formalities.

N'djamena (ex Fort Lamy) is still a shelled and bullet-riddled dump from recent fighting. The heavy military presence made us feel it could again erupt. However, the people were friendly, but we were glad to cross into the Cameroon to find nosh, cool beer and loud jazzy music in a peaceful and beautifully relaxed country.

A C

CAMEROON TO KENYA

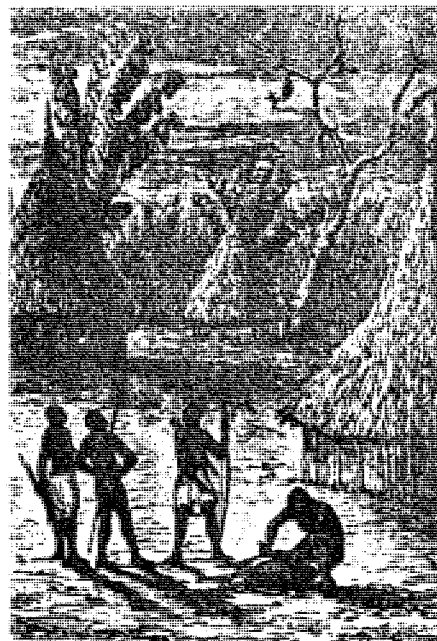
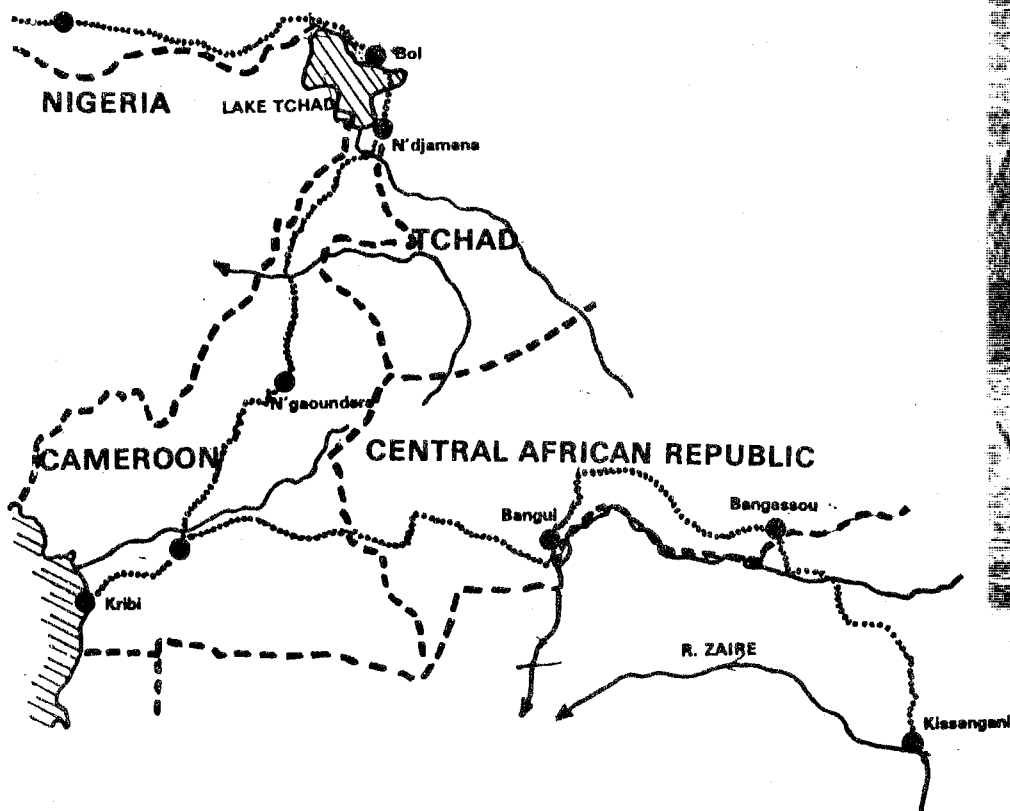
After two nights near a bar in Kissouri we headed south on good roads, for a while, towards Yaounde. Slowly the land became greener, higher ground appeared and roadside bars with cheap Guinness or a local brew. From N'gaoundere we opted for the direct route, which we hoped would be the better of the two available dirt roads.

Our adventures soon re-started, for just outside town our Jap friend tried to fend off a truck, which resulted in a smashed finger. Fortunately there was an efficient hospital in town, which even had an antique X-ray. A dislocated joint was diagnosed by myself and the quack and a team soon had him sewn up and back on his bike.

The road worsened and soon we were driving down what seemed no more than a

narrow overgrown footpath full of holes. We often had to get out and guide the driver around obstacles. Even this technique was not infallible as John guided Dave into a large hole and the vehicle slowly laid down on its side. We then found that the underside was in an excellent condition! With block and hawser we winched it back upright the first time. The only damage, a smashed mirror and flat tyre. That night we camped in the middle of the road, which shows how little it's used! Only 20 miles progress the next day, but the relief of reaching a village. Still from here the roads improved upto Yaounde.

A Friday evening arrival yet again, so another wait until Monday for the banks to open, but there were broken springs to repair while surrounded by friendly kids. However, some returned and broke into the Rover, taking cloths, camera and anything else they could reach. Fortunately the idiots discarded films, climbing gear, passport and traveller's cheques in the garden. After



much ado, a police statement was made. However, they wanted a full list of the missing articles in French and I admit that I became stuck explaining 'chalk bag' and 'Gore-Tex bivi bag'! The latter became 'une sac impermeable pour coucher' - not bad.

After this and having talked to two Frenchies, who had traversed the Sudan, we decided that a trip through there and Egypt would involve too much hassle and rush, therefore we would slow down and sell up in Kenya. Hence we opted for dossing on the beach at Kribi.

Here we found paradise, with sea, river, cascade, sand bar and bay, plus a beach with coconuts, where we parked for four days. Each morning the locals were out fishing in their dug-out canoes (pirogues) and selling the catch very cheap. It was incredibly hot and sunny and fortunately our stay was lengthened, as while repairing the water pump I broke the impeller, so we had to wait until Monday to buy a substitute. A local took us up river in his pirogue to visit some pygmies and also to a local Saturday night 'shuffle', where Spanish wine and beer were sipped together - resulting in a certain young lady being very ill.

We could have stayed for weeks, but the Landrover was temporarily fixed, so back to Yaounde. En-route our second-hand pump picked up in Kribi failed, resulting in a fan blade snapping off and puncturing the radiator. Still, God was on our side, for a gendarme flogged us a new one (at a price). The broken

fan was rebalanced by the standard engineering practice of chopping off the opposite blade, while Radweld fixed the radiator - which is still holding!

Now the trek across central Africa could continue. Only dirt roads through the Cameroon and the Central African Republic. The dust! Only near a sugar-cane processing plant was it kept down by spreading black treacle on the road - an excellent underseal? We reached Bangui a renowned robber's den, even having to pay £5 each to enter the city. We met up again with our Belgian friends, who we had left in the northern Cameroon. Stocking up with foreign food for Zaire was very expensive, so plenty of cheap rice, bananas and avacados were bought.

We continued to Bangasson, with a night at Kembe by some spectacular waterfalls and swam in lakes and rivers, even if it was not recommended due to bilharzia, which does strange things to you. Its said not to live in fast-flowing water, but I took a lot of convincing!

At Bangasson we entered Zaire, with spectacular rising mists above the river. Although Saturday, officials kindly completed formalities for some fags and we set off into the equatorial jungle, along some of the worst roads imaginable. Thank God it was the dry season! Huge holes, water-cut channels, fallen timber and grotty bridges produced only 50 miles a day for four days and rather too much interest. We were very weary, often balancing the vehicle by hanging off one side. The 2CV shone by leaning at horrific angles and charging through holes with no problems. Produce was swapped, or sold for next to nothing. A mighty sized pineapple for a grotty handkerchief, or a sackful of local weed for a Mickey Mouse T-Shirt, therefore, not surprising everyone was happy!

Two days on better roads got us to Kissangani (ex Stanleyville), now little more than a ghost town, but formerly flourishing in the middle of the jungle. Here we could at least have a steak, chips and beer, plus two nights in a hotel. Few cars, so the 2CV plus spares was sold for \$900, having been bought for only \$150.

East of Kissangani more rough roads. We gave the local Red Cross bloke a lift for two days, a good chap and very keen to ensure beer was available at each stop, even if having ordered it, we still payed! One night, Big John returned from the bush with a good sized tree trunk, but followed by five pygmies humping even bigger ones.

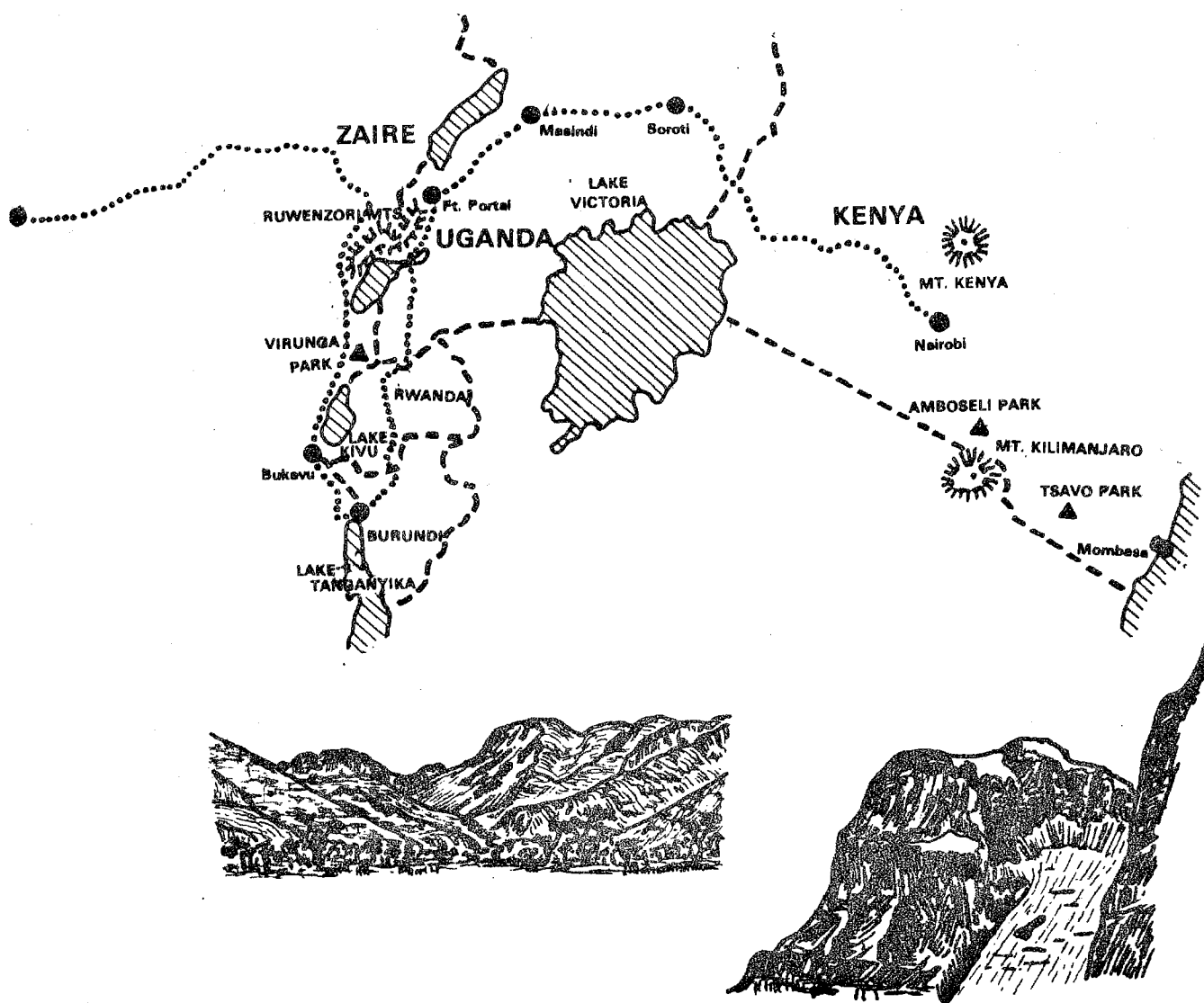
The next change of scenery occurred as we climbed out of the jungle towards the mountains of Uganda. These the Ruwenzori, or Mountains of the Moon have great potential if the area is opened up again. We passed by these and the beautiful Lake Kivu and Nyiragongo volcano. A long drive to Bukavu for Burundi visas, then into Burundi for Rwanda visas and then into Uganda. The route passed through areas with farming which reminded us of home and it rained for the first time since leaving Spain!

The Virunga National Park of Zaire provided us with views of much wild life, while at the southern end of Lake Kivu we took to the jungle to see the endangered Mountain Gorilla. A short walk and gorilla proximity became evident by the piles of shit and soon they were seen, but retreating from us. Machete men hacked a path in pursuit and after calling our bluff a few times an enormous silver-backed male sat down to eat by his family quite happy to observe us only five metres away. An amazing experience.

A wait for visas in Bukavu and a hassle from kids, who stared as if we were gorillas, then pinch what they could. Cures were a large stick or stare back at them with binoculars. One night they managed to steal a half full water container, tied under the Landrover with Dave beside it - we believe they thought it contained fuel.

A day's drive south from Bukavu via a narrow mountain road, (this avoided





entering Rwanda and any visa hassles) landed us on Lake Tanganyika at Burundi. At Buyumbura, we obtained Rwanda visas, then camped by the lake with hippos, bilharzia and thieves, which required a night watch to be posted.

Burundi and Rwanda appeared fairly wealthy, fertile and with better roads. At Kigali we collected our mail before passing into Uganda at a quiet border, so quiet officials had to be found to let us in. There were no signs telling us that in Uganda one drives on the left, but we soon found out!

Rather than use the war-destroyed Kampala road we intended to swing further north to Fort Portal, then onto Masindi and Soroti. A passing Scot (rare to see a white man here) told us to stay in his house near Kilembe though he had to go away on business. Naturally the offer was not to be refused, so we made ourselves at home, with assistance from Paul the cook. Despite the mists the house provided views of the Ruwenzori. While enjoying this luxury doss, Jimmy's boss, a snotty-nosed Englishman, appeared and was rather annoyed to find six in what he called 'his house'. Embarrassed, confused, but highly amused, we beat a casual retreat, but felt sorry for our Scot, (also laughing because he was off to the Solomon Islands two weeks later!).

We continued on dirt roads to Masindi, through many road blocks but without difficulty. Lacking tourist facilities we asked to camp at a police post, where we were warmly welcomed, given firewood and even an armed guard! Later we heard that rebels were in the area. On better roads now we crossed the Nile, already a raging river at the Karuma Falls. Throughout Uganda the people were always friendly and hospitable.

At Soroti we looked up Gideon a friend, who was at university with Dave studying water engineering, but now trying to help his country. The town once rich was now in disrepair, even Gideon awaiting a house, but meanwhile like many others living in squalid conditions. We felt that if Uganda remained

politically stable it would be a great place to work or revisit. Little did we know!

And so to Kenya, what a contrast, with more traffic, well stocked shops, even fish and chips and fresh milk. Nairobi is cosmopolitane and ultra modern. We stayed with Diana's mother and stepfather, residents for decades. We intended to visit gameparks, climb Mt. Kenya, sell the Landrover and go for a long doss on the beach at Mombassa.

The main journey over, it was holiday time. It had been a most memorable trip. One thing has been tested and proved; on the equator water does go straight down an orifice without forming a vortex!

M W

POSTSCRIPT

We did have more adventures. Whilst in Mombassa Mike and the Belgian Marc decided to buy the Landrover in order to drive to Tanzania, Uganda or Zaire to sell it. Uganda was chosen, but Marc only got as far as the border before being refused entry by a drunken official for having no visa, even if he protested he'd passed through three times already. He returned to Nairobi despondent.

Mike and I picked up a great English guy - rather a 'Neil' type character but with BLONDE hair, for a trip to Soroti to find Gideon, who was interested in the Landrover, but he then had to go to Kampala to 'arrange' things. Two weeks of pure frustration, driving round and round on cratered roads, for with no phones working if you need to contact anyone it's a drive to their abode, usually to find them out. Things got pretty desperate so we paid a visit on a 'friend of the family' - the Prime Minister, 3rd in line who wanted it, but even he failed to turn up. We were back to square one and only a week to go before leaving Kenya. After more hassle and running around to find the correct method of car importation, we finally left the Rover with Gideon.

The last week was in Amboseli and Tsava West game parks, in a jeep, seeing the widest spectrum of wildlife, while to the south was Mount Kilimanjaro.

Back to Nairobi for souvenirs, then two nights enjoying (?) Moscow, an amble around Brussels, before we docked in Dover, feeling a little sad around the edges and decidedly cold!

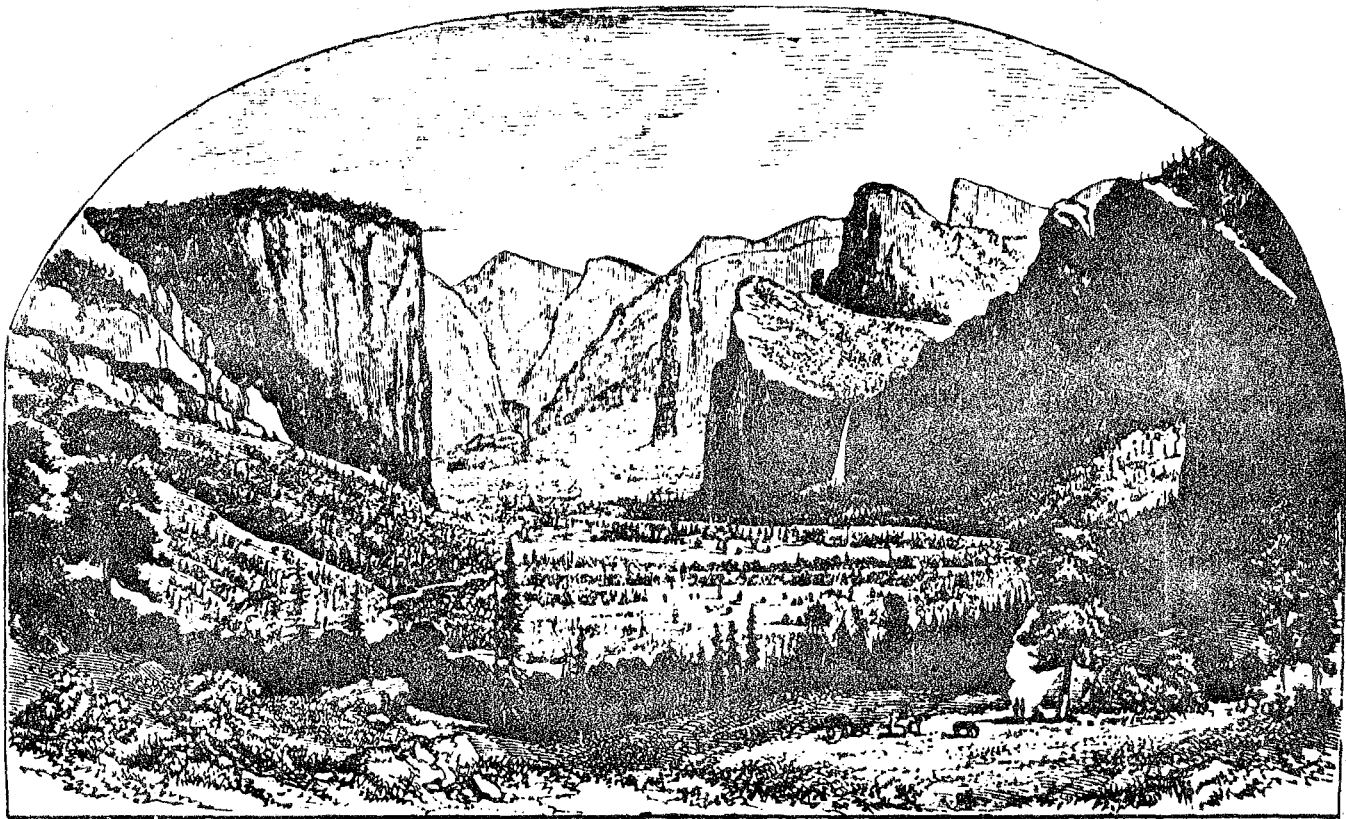
A C

THE END (Till next time)



FROM OREAD 2000

Oread team in action during International
Overhang Climbing Competition.

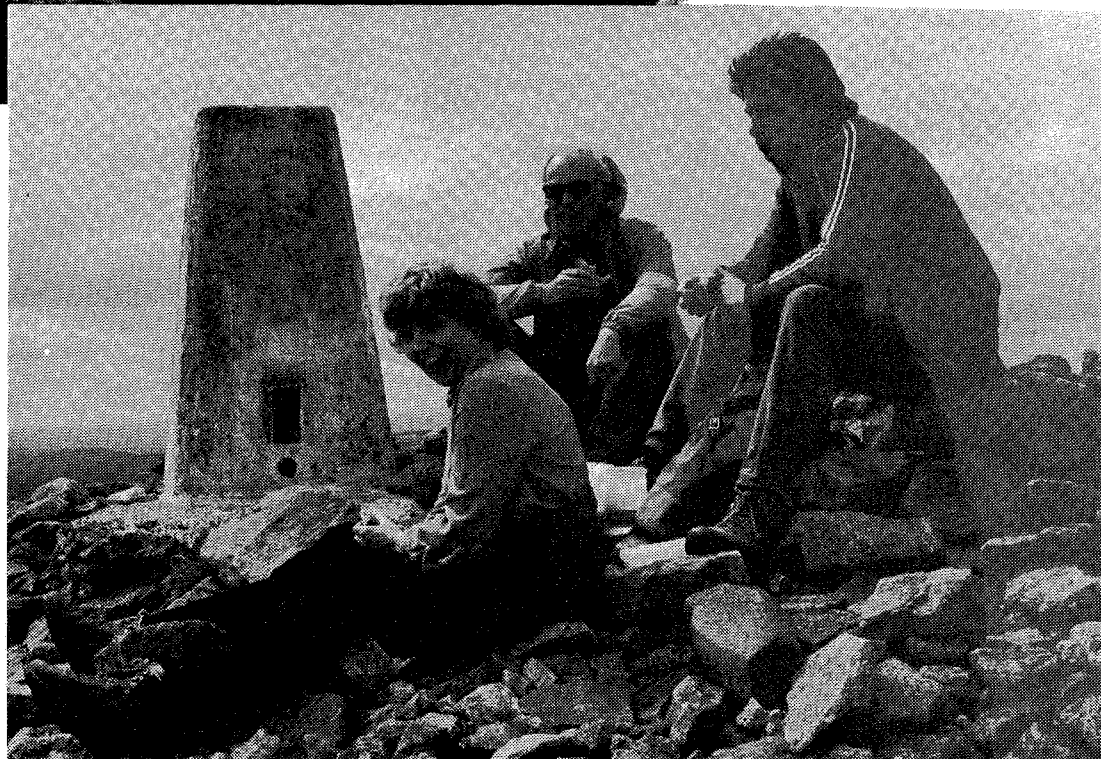


*The existence of some terribly yawning abyss in the mountains
... was frequently described to us by crafty or superstitious
Indians. Hence the greater our surprise upon first beholding a fit
abode for angels of light.*

—Lafayette Bunnell, member of the Mariposa Battalion,
on discovering Yosemite Valley in 1851



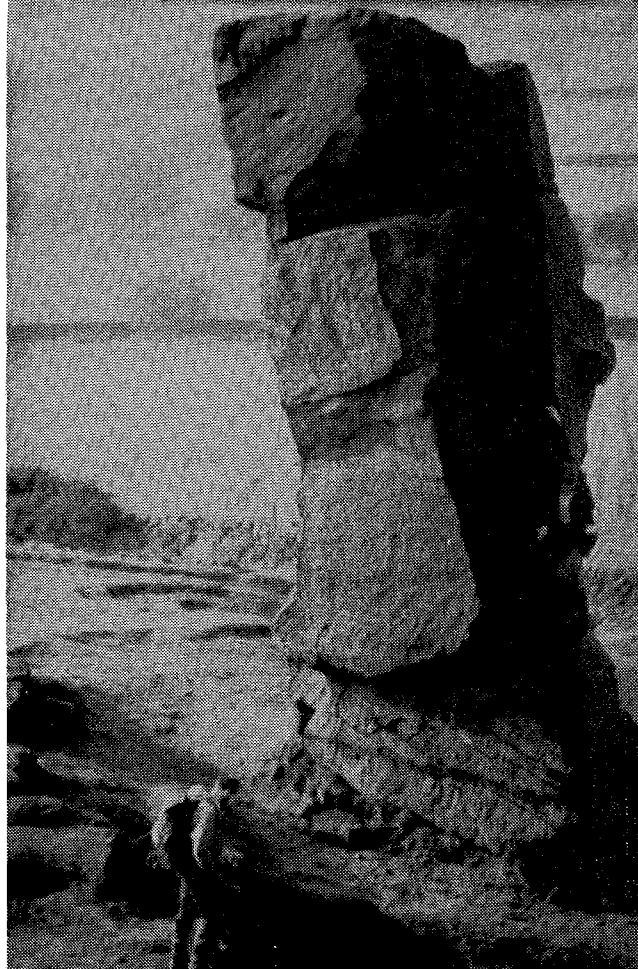
GOD'S BRIDGE ABOVE
BOWES



JANET, JACK
AND PETER
ASHCROFT ON
WINDY GYLE
SOUTH OF
KIRK YETHOLME



CROSS FELL - MAY 1973
WITH L-R< D PENLINGTON
J WINFIELD
- R DARNELL

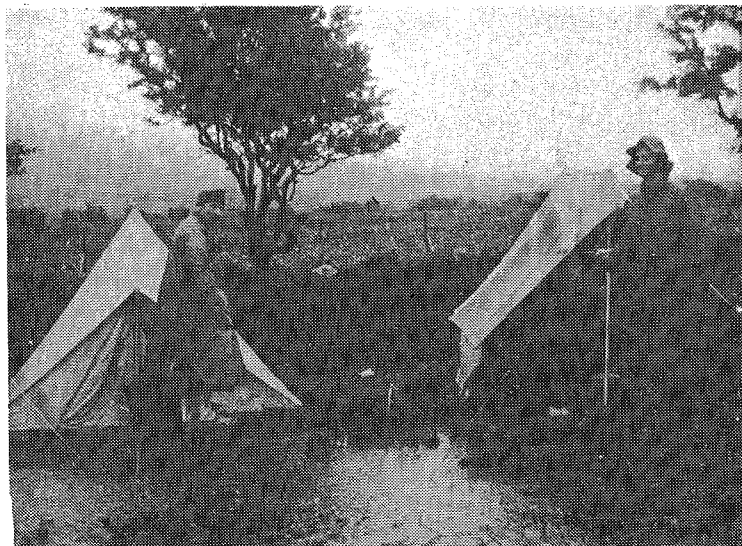
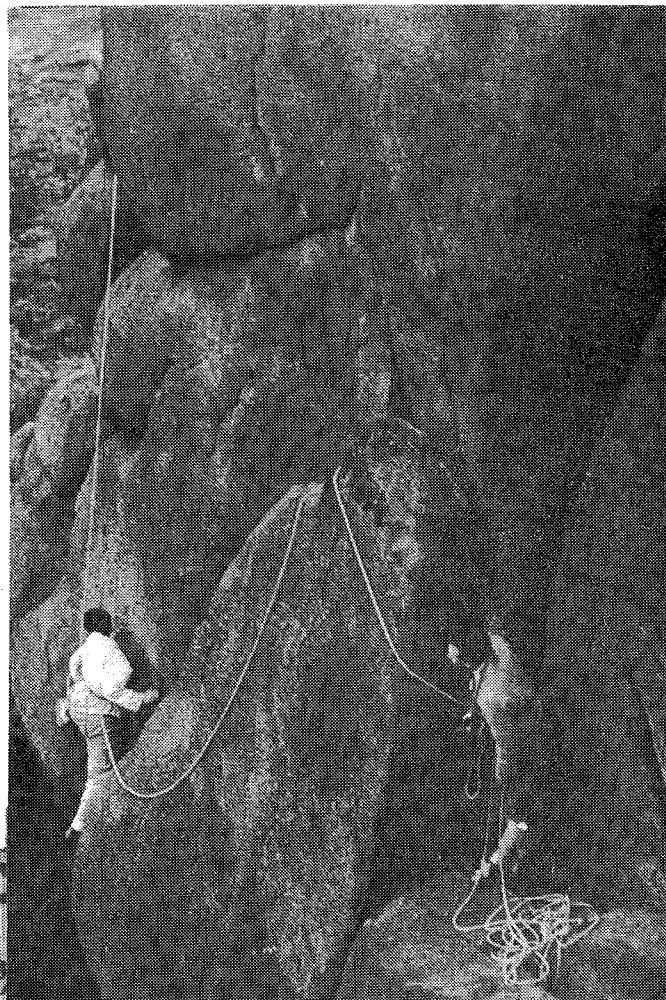


ALPORT STONE - DERBYSHIRE



A PIPE WITH JOHN WELBOURNE
ATTACHED

VALKYRIE ON THE ROACHES
CAN YOU NAME THE CLIMBERS?



SAMPLING A WET SKYE
CAMPSITE
WITH (R) BRIAN COOKE
(L) GEOFF THOMPSON

GROUP OF OREADS BELOW BASLOW
EDGE

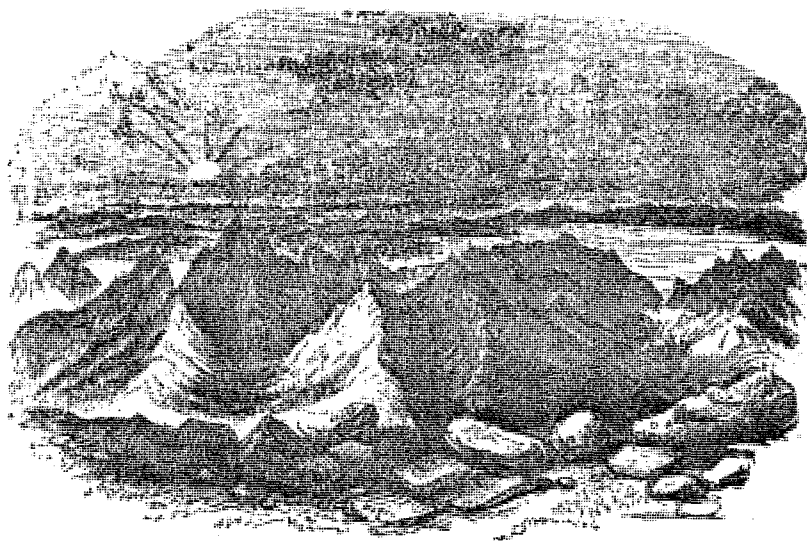
TOP L-R

BETTY WRIGHT, CLIVE WEBB
MIKE MOOR, MOLLY PRETTY
WITH LAURA, RUTH WELBOURNE
(BOTTGER), PAUL MORRIS,
CHARLIE ASTBURY, JOHN FISHER

BOTTOM L-R

LOL BURNS, ANN LEVERTON
(GADD), BETTY GARDINER<
ALISON HARBY, MARLET TURNER
GORDON WRIGHT, PHIL FALKNER
MOLLY HATCHETT, MARY CULLUM





THIRTY YEARS AGO

Rock Hudson

For 1955, there are 18 reports on club meets lodged in the Oread Log Book. These show that 40% of them were in Derbyshire, no doubt due to the lack of private transport to go elsewhere. However, despite this 30% of meets were in Wales and a further 10% in the Lakes. Generally meets provided the opportunity for undertaking a spectrum of activities which are appropriate to members of a mountaineering club.

On 55% of meets rock climbing predominated, while walking took place on 60%. Snow and ice climbing was only practiced on 5% of meets - again due to the difficulty of reaching the mountains, or perhaps because it was a poor winter. Interesting to note that for the year only 5% had a social content.

I checked up on the weather reported in these meet reports and found 20% were blessed with very good conditions, 20% had good weather, while only fair conditions accounted for 20%. Bad to terrible weather was reported for the rest. To keep this journal consistent, at least to the overall weather conditions reported by Oread members in 1985, I've published two articles which did not have the best of weather!

One author complains about the lack of support, a sentiment still heard from someone who has taken the trouble to organise a meet, only to have it very poorly attended.

New members will not unfortunately have the pleasure of staying at the Barnsley M. C. hut on the Snake Pass, for hill creep has made it unsafe and it had to be closed - a great pity. As an innocent youth (some still say so) it was here that I first came into contact with mixed sex sleeping arrangements and that mad rush down to the pub, in this case the Snake Inn, after a day out on the hills.

I'm really just a 'young-un', thus lacking in a vast amount of Oread history and of course associated mountaineering folk lore of the past - omissions for which I apologise. I don't know the derivation of the name Chinese Butress, but I know some older Oread will. With all those accumulated years of being part of our sport they must surely hold a vast store of knowledge. Perhaps one of them would like to answer the above point on Chinese Butress, or on any other facet concerned with the Oread's past. The editor looks forward to future contributions to the next journal.

Brassington Feb 12-13th

1955

RH



A group of Oreads arrived at the foot of Brassington Rocks, to camp in perfect South Georgia conditions. A blizzard sprang up while the tents of the last contingent were being erected, and in the meantime a party of scouts arrived with a bucket of ice.

Eventually the happy roar of primus stoves echoed from tent to tent. But louder and far more fierce was the voice of Pete (Abominable) Janes who flinging his primus into the snow shouted, "The *--! stoves out, *--! about waiting on you *--!"

The night was cool, and Sunday dawned bright. Uncle Eric and Charlie arrived wishing everyone a bright breezy good morning; the time was 12 noon!

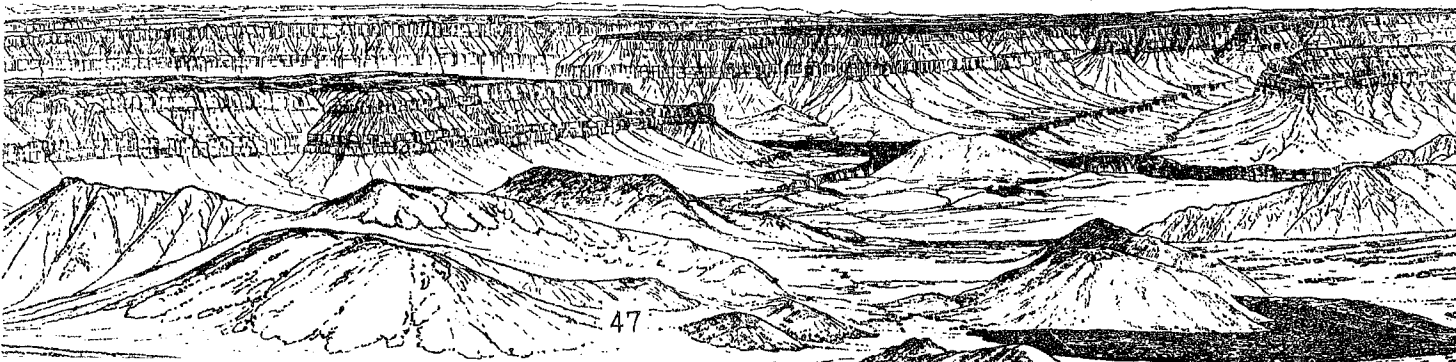
The climbing was excellent, especially as Moore buried his head in a hole in the rock and cried for a top rope. I have always thought that his posterior would look better than his face and this was proved true.

Laurie Burns and his mechanical leader, after rescue, proceeded systematically to tick off all the best routes available, until dropping with fatigue, the winch hand crying "I'm *---!"

Two parties ascended Brassington Face, saying the reason their knees were shaking was because they could beat a tattoo on the rock with their toes, so keeping their circulation flowing.

Some very interesting ski-ing on the grass slopes approaching the rocks was had by one member of the meet, who introduced an acrobatic method of somersaulting on his ski when stationary so as to turn round.

The meet broke up eventually late in the afternoon. We all agreed it had been a highly successful week-end. My only comment is that it was a pity more Oreads did not get out for the full week-end.



Kinderscout

June 11-12th 1955

Pete Jones

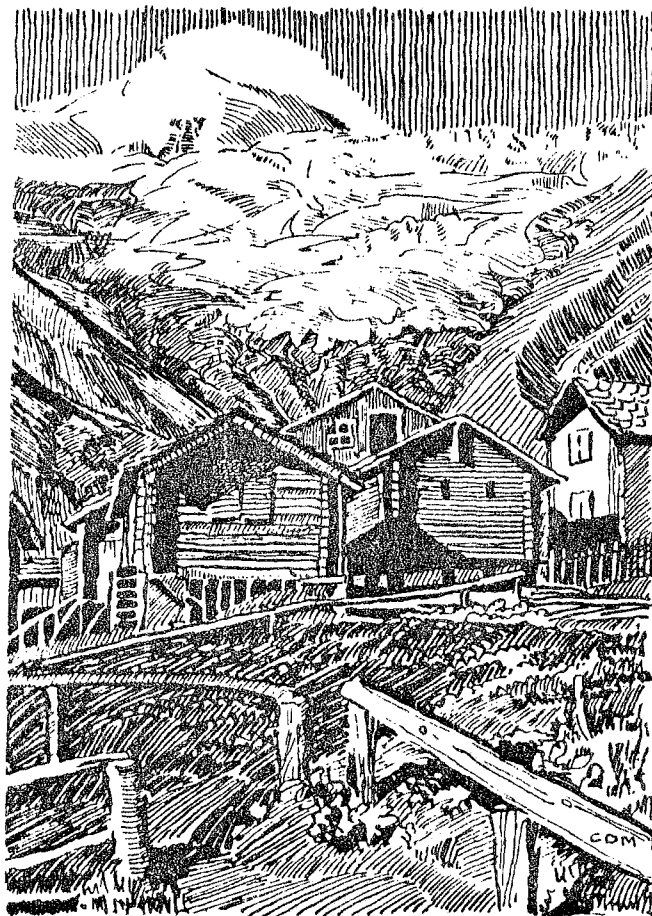
Weather conditions on this meet bordered on the monsoon. Heavy and continuous rain fell on Saturday, and during the rest of the time everything was shrouded in a fine drizzle. The shelter of the Barnsley hut, however, somewhat atoned for the nasty climatic conditions.

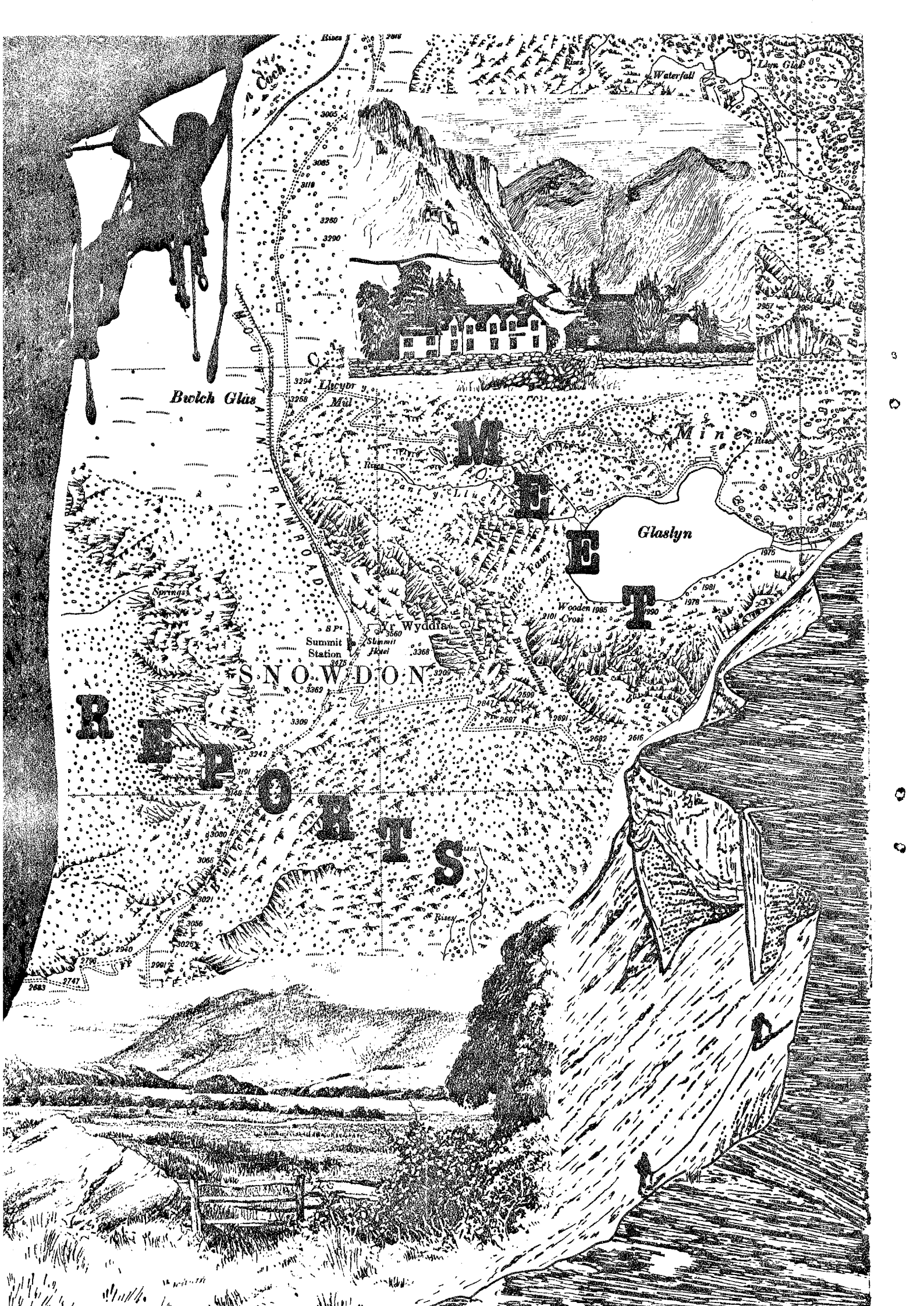
On Saturday Brian Cooke and Mick Harby, with the ladies, braved the dampness in search of rock. This they found in the shape of Chinese Buttress. The Vice-President walked up from Baslow in the company of Rene and Ted Holland, and John Adderley was present after sleeping out on the Sheffield moors on Friday night. The other notable thing which happened on Saturday was that the Meet Leader arrived.

Sunday was the sort of day to forget. Dinnertime saw the departure of the South Georgia Sutton and 'caravan' over Kinderscout via the Downfall to Hayfield. Nothing else happened except that the Meet Leader went home.

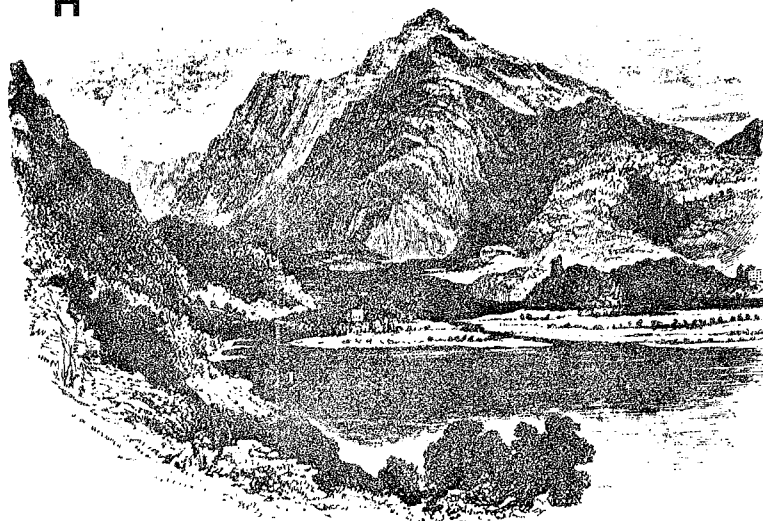
The Barnsley hut is an excellent affair and all our Club members should use it whenever possible. A cordial welcome is always assumed.

I am awaiting confirmation that John Welbourne is changing his boot-maker. I've heard that Freeman, Hardy and Willis have been mentioned. Sabots seem to me to be the best answer to his problem.





H



NORTH WALES

FAMILY MEET

OCTOBER 1985

GORDON GADSBY

This years meet was without doubt the best ever attended with 19 in the hut and 5 in a cottage.

SATURDAY dawned bright and clear, not a cloud to be seen. As we drove towards Chapel the lakes were as still as mill ponds, mist rising gently from the Gwnant. Having parked with difficulty we started the ascent of Moel Siabod from near the Cyfyng Falls through thick white mist. Half an hour later we emerged into glorious sunshine and obtained superb views over the valley and peak after peak rising above the clouds.

The sun was hot and a long line of Oreads plus children was soon strung out along the margins of two attractive little lakes. The party regrouped in time for lunch beside the sparkling waters of Llyn y Foel ringed by the rocky bastions of the peak.

The rock scramble on warm rock up the far ridge was delightful, the kids all having a great time. Bev Abley organised the children on some short climbs on the summit crags while the rest of us enjoyed the sun, some even removing their shirts. Two hours later we made our way down the North East Ridge in the warm evening sunlight.

SUNDAY Another fantastic day, so to Black Rock Sands for football and beach-combing with not a breath of wind!

On the meet were: Paul, Jean, Michael Bingham. Bev, James Abley. Brian, Liz, Simon West. Graham, Margaret, Alex, Nick Foster. Stephen Bradley. Ernie Phillips. Shirly Goldsmith. Gordon, Margaret, Rich, Peter Gadsby. The Brown family.

Thankyou all for coming, see you all next year.

PATTERDALE

GEORGE STARKEY HUT

2-3rd March

JOHN LINNEY

Saturday morning was greeted with cloud and mist covering the tops. The inevitable question of what to do had to be answered. At the pub the previous night we had considered a number of options including, Pinnacle Ridge on St. Sunday Crag. So after some debate and checking of map and guide book, we set off.

We left the road and took a steep path towards Black Crag. Soon the whole party was strung out along the northern flanks of 'BIRKS'. Some indecision crept in, the ground got steeper and rocky. In the mist ahead could be heard voices and by some unexplained miracle the party forgathered beneath a gully. Above and to the right was a fairly prominent buttress. A cover of snow made the ground slippery on reaching the foot of this buttress. Someone asked for a rope, Rock I think. Chris Bryan, who had made the firsts moves up, shouted back that he had the rope and if anyone wanted it they had better follow him. We moved off. Big holds led up to some large blocks with interesting moves, then easy ground was followed upto a steep wet corner. Bridging moves and a strenuous pull up and the crux was passed. There followed a very pleasant ridge, requiring the traversing of several pinnacles, before the sting in the tail appeared. From the top of the last one a steep descent landed us on a narrow col with steep ground on either side giving a sense of exposure as you climbed down. Easy ground followed and eventually we sat for lunch on the top of St. Sunday Crag.

A fine little scramble.

After lunch the party went over Fairfield - meeting up again at Grisedale Tarn. Most of us decided to go onto Helvellyn. The summit was bleak, most people either giving up the top, or were already on the way down by then. I was approached by a youth who wanted me to take a picture of him, his mate and a female. Well it was by now getting a little murky, not your ideal photography conditions and in any case I was cold tired and looking forward to a hot cup of tea at the hut. I was just about to say "NO" when this fine young man produces a bottle. Quickly eying the label I noted it said Whisky. Now I like a little dram, so we struck a bargain. Drinks all round for us and I'll take your picture. After a few words with his mate the deal was on.

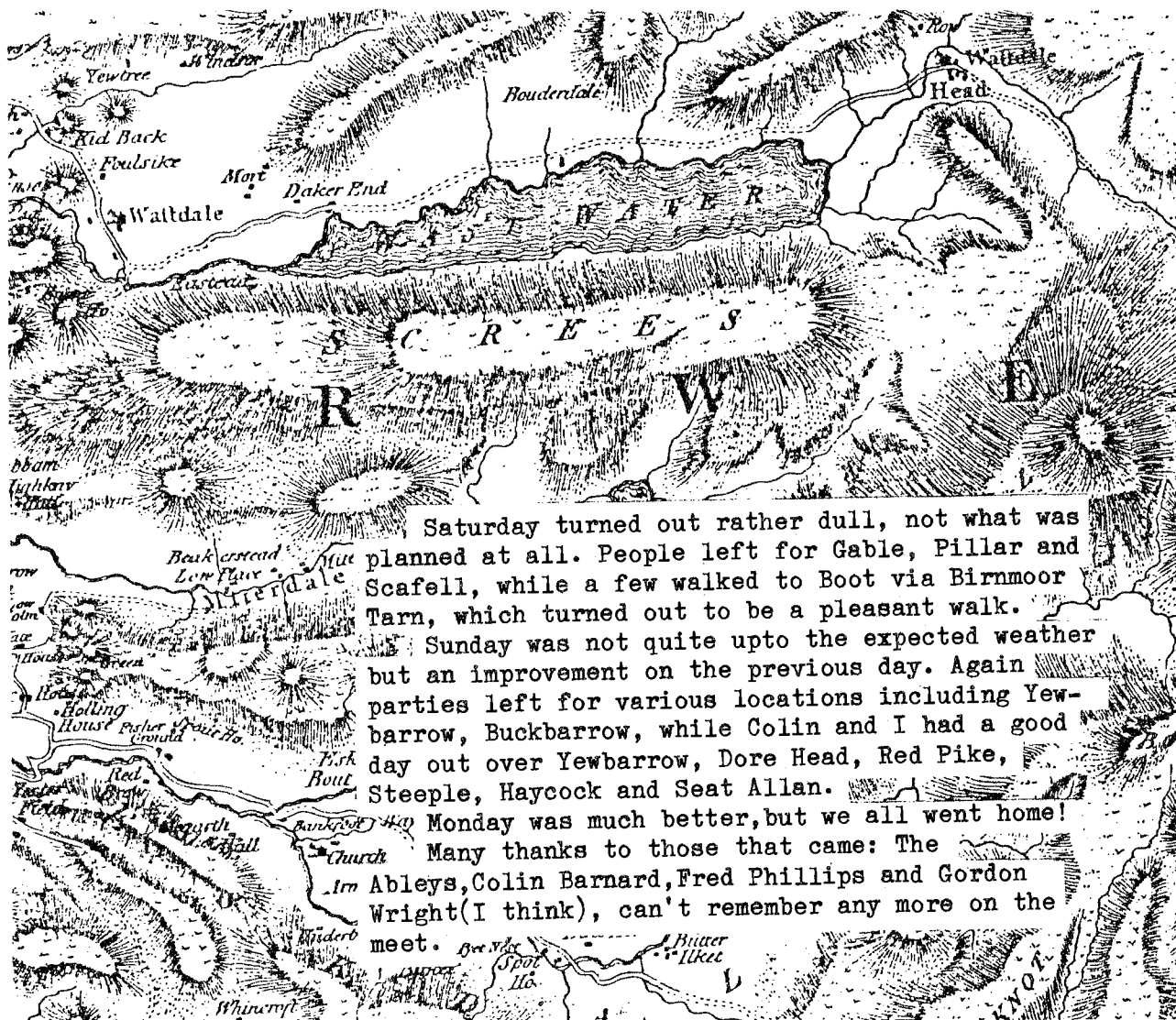
I went to get my sack and when I turned round, damn me all the buggers had disappeared, whisky and all. In our eagerness to follow them, we missed the start of Striding Edge, then having retraced our steps we reversed down a steep snow slope and set off along the ridge. We did catch them up but by then he had run out of film and said my slides were no good because he did not have a projector. I did notice that the Glenfiddich was 2/3 down! We headed for the hut and a cup of tea.

Sunday it rained, therefore some headed for the sunnier south, though others walked to Martindale-Hawtown and back along Ullswater to the hut, while a third group headed for High Street.

For those who booked and turned up, many thanks. For those who booked but did not come, I hope you can explain your absence to those I had to turn away.

On the meet were: Colin Barnard, Ian Brindle, Chris Bryan, Dawn and Richard Hopkinson, Rock Hudson, Derek Mountford, Mike Wren, Andrew Brentfield, Roger Chapman, Pauline and Gordon Wright and last but not least the ABLEYS.

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Saturday turned out rather dull, not what was planned at all. People left for Gable, Pillar and Scafell, while a few walked to Boot via Birnmoor Tarn, which turned out to be a pleasant walk.

Sunday was not quite upto the expected weather but an improvement on the previous day. Again parties left for various locations including Yewbarrow, Buckbarrow, while Colin and I had a good day out over Yewbarrow, Dore Head, Red Pike, Steeple, Haycock and Seat Allan.

Monday was much better, but we all went home!

Many thanks to those that came: The Ableys, Colin Barnard, Fred Phillips and Gordon Wright (I think), can't remember any more on the meet.

John Linney

DUDDON VALLEY

Friday night found Derek Mountford, John Linney, Rock Hudson, Colin Barnard, Helen Griffiths, Brian West, Fred Phillips and several other friends pitching camp at Turner Hall Farm in heavy rain.

On Saturday morning the mist hung low across the fells, while rain poured down, filling up the hollows and generally giving rise to a very soggy campsite. Nobody stirred until 11.55, whereupon people stumbled down to the pub at Seathwaith. It closed at three o'clock so we all returned to the tents for cups of tea, chat or sleep until hunger forced the primuses to be lit for cooking the evening meal. Even their roar did not diminish the continuing patter of rain upon canvas. By 7.30 the group were established in the only dry environment, yes - the pub!

Sunday was dull with rain still falling but we hung on for a couple of hours to see if things would improve - they did not, so we all packed up our soddened gear and headed for home.

Yet another very wet weekend. Was 1985 really the worst one for weather since the Oread started? Old members might like to answer this question.

Editor

March

Heathy Lea

Rock Hudson



A small group of Oreads stopped at Heathy Lea on the Saturday night.

Sunday found them, plus additional members and friends setting out in bright sunshine, with a patchy covering of snow on the ground from the A 57 north of Stanage Edge. We wandered along the edge, with some of the group taking in a few routes on the less frequented buttresses. In continuing warm sunshine we passed down the Edges meeting a number of Oreads resting after a hard climb or perhaps before committing themselves to another period of punishment (sport!) on perhaps a somewhat harder route. The walking party became rather strung out as it passed over Baslow and Gardoms Edges, but all reached the hut in the glow of the evening sun.

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YORKSHIRE DALES

6-7TH JUNE

EDITOR

A small group of Oreads camped at Armcliffe Cote, but only after considerable pressure was brought to bear on the owner. The problem was caused by picking the one weekend in the year when the site was occupied by Scouts, Guides, Boy Brigades and various other unspecified organisations of that ilk. The Oreads found a few tiny niches and so pitched tents between cars or under the flysheets of marquees, all of which was to produce a very low profile to the camp commandant.

Saturday saw the Linneys walking to Kettlewell and returning by The Nick, while Keith Gregson, and Rock Hudson headed up the dale to Litton, then over Moss Top to reach Hubberholme. They returned down Wharfedale and over Hawkswick Moor in pleasant weather. Lol Burns and friend found plenty to occupy themselves, but they were in no rush because they planned to stay for a whole week - lucky folk. Rodger Larkam and friend went to climb on the crags above Gordale Scar, while Tony Smedley and Dave Wright did their own thing, but what?

Sunday was again fine, but before any activity could commence a proportion of members polished off a pint (or more) below the Cow and Calf at Ilkley. Dave continued to complain about his legs, but found little difficulty in seeing off some good routes including Blucher, while the others struggled on much easier ones. Keith took pleasure in leading Curving Crack at HVS, but it was short lived, for on viewing the new guide book noted it was down graded to VS.

A pity more members did not take advantage of this meet, in 'God's Own Country' as the meet leader would say.

Goyt Valley Meet

Uschi Hobday

As Colin had the opportunity to go to the famous Oktoberfest in Munich - apparently 4 million pints of beer were consumed in the first 48 hours - he kindly left me and Annette to lead the meet for him.

I did not have much hope for a good turn-out as we approached the Goyt Valley car park, but to my amazement a record number of 47 Oreads, friends, kids and dogs arrived. Is this a record for 1985? Can you do better? If so, let the editor know.

It was good weatherwise, one of the first good Sundays of the summer. We set off at a brisk pace, led by Rusty, who completely ignored my route plan for the day as he headed straight for Windgather, obviously keen to get onto the rock. We arrived in record time and soon everybody had their climbing gear on and started scrambling solo up all the routes available. We managed to get most of the ladies, the young and the not so young onto the hard rock doing a route; some with more shaky legs than others. After a couple of hours we proceeded up to Shining Tor and looked over to Jodrell Bank gleaming in the sunshine, while hang gliders soared overhead. From here onwards, we managed to lose part of the large group, some taking short cuts to Erwood Hall, while Reg Squires and his team walked happily towards the Cat and Fiddle hoping for a pint, not realising that it had closed two hours before. As I had his map in my rucksack he consequently had trouble finding the best way back, finally arriving back at the car park with his group one hour later than everybody else, just before we sent out a search party for him.

The main team followed Deep Clough to join the Goyt, where the younger and energetic members did a bit of 'goytering'.

Some observations made during the walk should be given:

Vincent Smedely never took his earplugs out and I found it hard to communicate with him.

Dawn Hopkinson's dog drank out of every puddle on the way.

Richard Freestone was hurried on his way by his two lively English Setters.

Rusty leaping up Windgather Rocks on impulse, then getting himself into a situation where he could move neither up nor down. In other words he got stuck! Has he lost his strength or his technique?

A lot of members voiced an opinion that they would welcome more local day meets. So Meet Organisers please note.

Anyway a good day was had by all. Thank you all for coming. For those that missed it, why don't you join us next year. Those that came were: Reg Squires + family + Mike, Ian Tucker + family, Tony Smedely + family, Shirley + Julie Goldsmith, George + Janet Reynolds, Richard + Dawn Hopkinson, Colin Barnard, Richard Freestone + friends, Gordon Gadsby + family + friends, Mike Wren + family, Rusty + Sheilagh Russell, Gill + Gail, Derek Mountford, Graham Weston + Bill, John Doughty!!!

Sorry if I have missed anyone out.



Tan-y-Wyddfa Meet

January 19—20 th

Richard Hopkinson

All that remains now are a few memories of the weekend - it was nothing special - just a good club meet at the hut.

Sixteen folks arrived on the Friday evening and everyone was grateful to Pauline and Gordon Wright who had arrived a day early and thawed out and warmed up the hut.

Saturday was cold, though not clear, but gave nobody any excuse for not getting out. Several parties found good sport on the Llechog. In fact the 'sport' was nearly too good for some who almost missed their meal at the pub as a result. Those who went high found a lot of deep powder snow, little ice and few people, whilst those who went low (Cwm Idwal) found ice and long queues. Anyway, everybody seemed to have a good day.

I don't know if the reason I can't remember what people did on Sunday is because I had too much beer on the Saturday night or nobody did anything. I suspect the former. Anyway the weather was similar. Dawn and I went to the 'kitchen' only to discover Dawn had kindly carried my spare crampons up instead of her own! After a certain matrimonial discord, for I had packed her sack, I climbed one of the frozen streams using a new style of ice climbing - crampons, hands and feet - whilst she walked round and the day was completed with a walk over Y-Garn.

All together a good winter weekend.

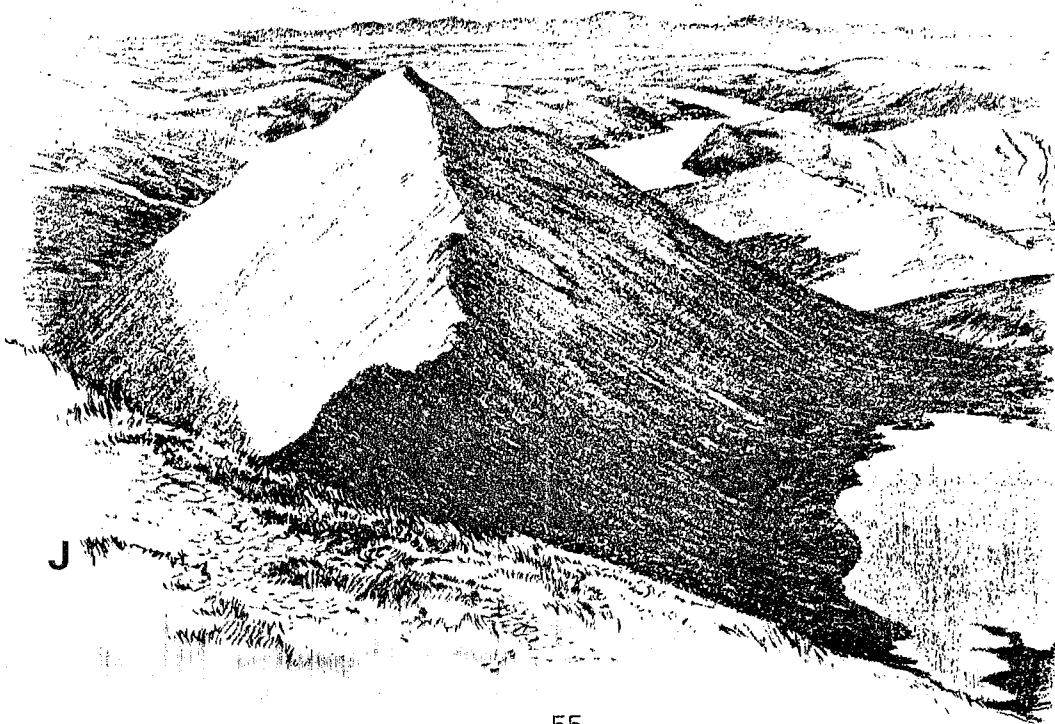
Those on the meet were: Tony and Freda Raphael, Gordon and Pauline Wright, Nat and Ruth Allen, Brian West, Pete Scott, Helen Griffiths, John Gresty, Alisdair Gordon, Ruth Conway, George Fowler, Terry Wyatt, Derek Tucker, Tony Lewis, Dawn and me.

**** * * * *

Postscript. The trouble with the new journal editor is that he is too keen. I'd anticipated a request from Rock for the 1986 January meet, but the 1985 as well!!

**** * * * *

Editor. I hope that Richard's keenness will prompt others to provide meet reports quickly, then they will not be harangued by the editor every time they meet.





OREAD FELL RACE. RUNNERS KEITH GREGSON AND HELEN GRIFFITHS AND ORGANISER CHRIS JONSON

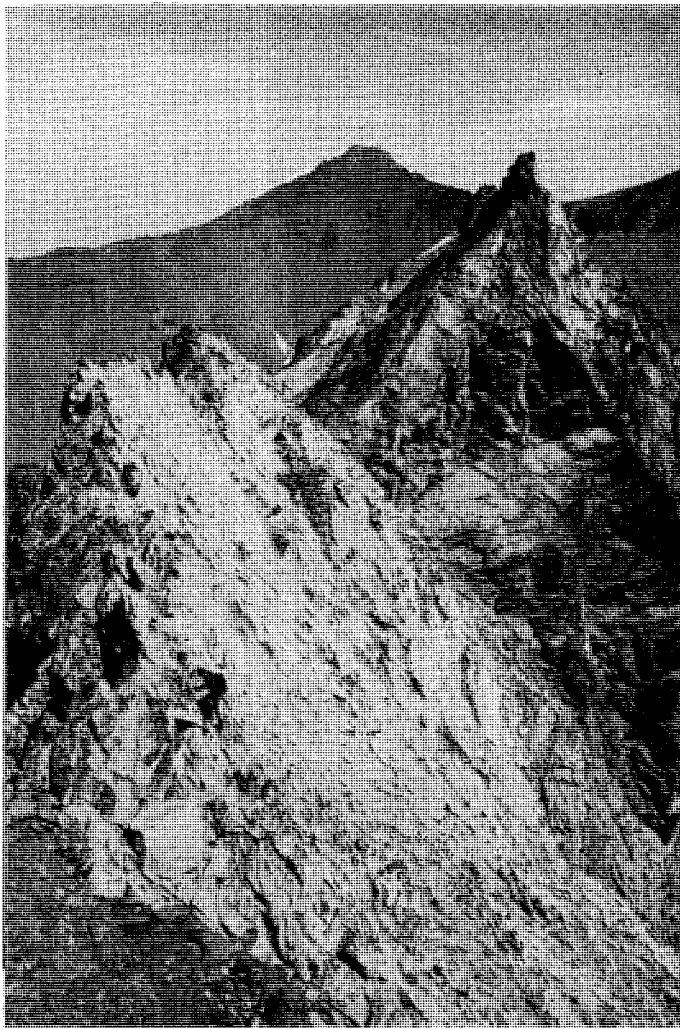


A WHITE CHRISTMASS: A VIEW TO BEDDGELERT AND LLYN CWELLYN FROM FOEL-GOCH WITH MARGARET BRYAN



VIEW FROM SOURMILK GILL TOWARDS BORROWDALE

THE MATTERHORN FROM THE TOP OF
THE ZINAL ROTHORN



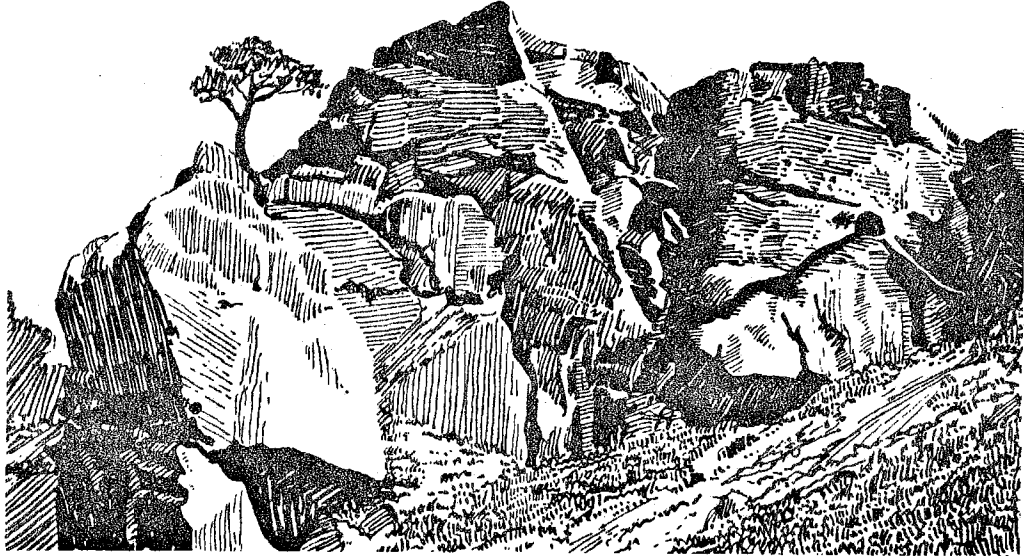
ON THE TRAVERSE OF THE AIG. DE LA LE

KEITH GREGSON ON THE
AIG. DE LA LE

REACHING THE SNOW
ARETE ON THE ZINAL
ROTHORN



DECEMBER 11TH ON BLACK ROCKS EDITOR



Yet again the meet leader had been able to provide a black December evening! This allowed some 20 people ample parking so that they could sally forth to crags hidden somewhere above.

Points of light, but exceedingly dim due to people not having checked their torch batteries (perhaps since that last Alpine start) zig-zagged irrationally through the blackness to the foot of what should have been a gritstone crag. Never before had this crag presented such a slimy greasy carapace to the climber. Seconds swore at the time it took the leaders to inch slowly upwards; at each move scraping away tons of S----. Below the owners of high quality Edelrid ropes cringed at the sight of them being encased in green slime.

The Moon kept hidden and as the evening progressed the atmosphere became more cold, damp and raw.

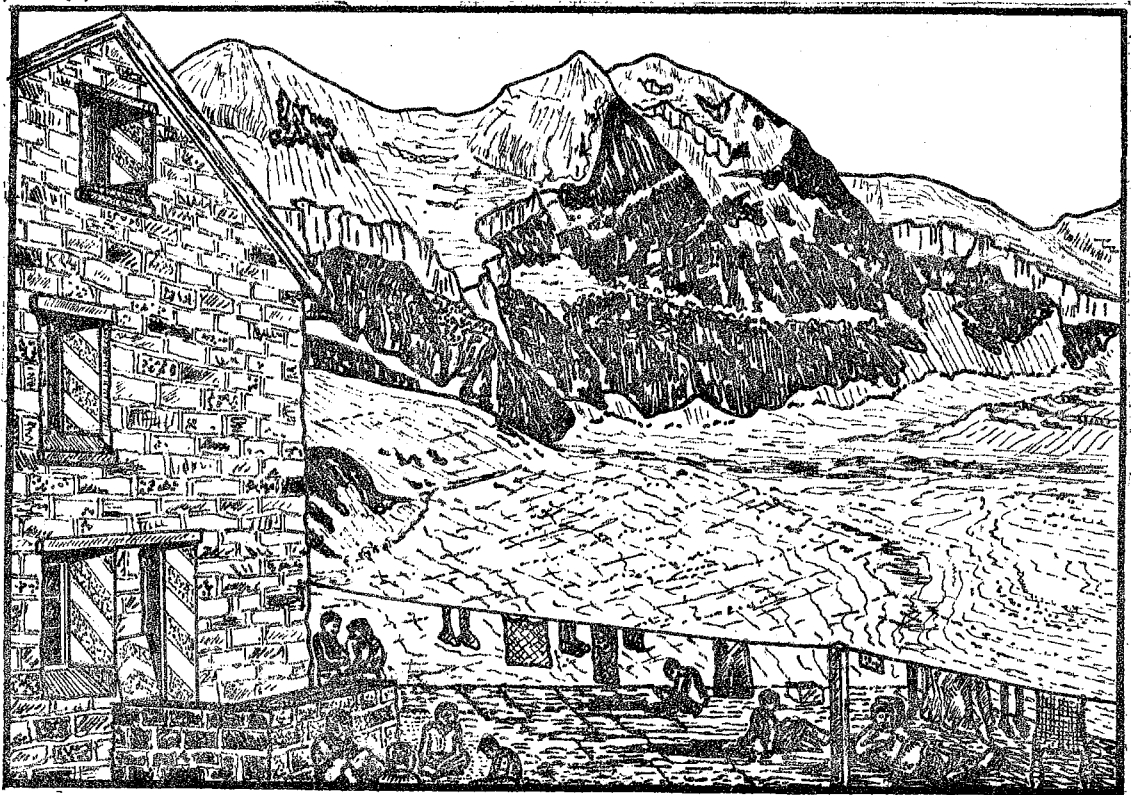
Imprisoned in a steadily diminishing circle of light, one called out greetings to other patches of brightness, then wondered if you had fitted the correct name to it when it answered. Why am I here cried out the mind. A black patch called out 'does anyone have a spare torch?' It was promptly answered by a light falling from above, but yet more quickly by *----- I've dropped *----- mine.

For most, a couple of routes was enough, so the group headed for the Gate at Brassington, leaving the crag to revert to silence. The Gate was packed with 30-35 members plus guests and all were in some deep meaningful discussions by 10.00 o'clock. I think it so 10.00, though some say later, that the discussions were cut dead when the door was flung open by two Jolly Green Giants still tied together by three inch diameter 'stuff' - never yet illustrated in any climbing gear catalogue. The pitch of climbing talk increased again, only to be again terminated by the arrival of others who had been delayed many hours due to the need to repair punctured tyres - a likely story!!

For those members who only climb at Black Rocks on this evening, I would draw their attention to the sketch provided, which will prevent any future benightment if viewed by the light of a constipated glow worm.

ZINAL VALLEY OREAD ALPINE MEET

Y IAN BRINDLE



For two months this year Oreads sported themselves on the mountains that crest the Val d'Annivers and enjoyed generally good weather in a year of generally bad.

The meet started half way through July when the Gadsbys, Gordon, Margaret, Ricky and Peter, plus their friends Steve and Glenis established themselves at the apex of the Mission campsite near the village of St Jean. Cris Bryan and Ian Brindle joined the throng after suffering a wet night at the Tasch campsite.

Undeterred by mediocre conditions Chris and Ian sallied up to the Moiry barrage and took a pleasant walk of only one hour to the Moiry hut. The following day was more traumatic; a two mile slog through soft snow to the north-west forepeak of the Grand Cornier, which reduced the pair to debilitated wrecks. A month later Alistair, Ruth, Richard and Dawn stormed the peak in perfect conditions, after walking from Zinal the day before!

The Gadsbys paced the fells, took in the odd peak, spotted Ibex, noted the swimming pool and the good weather arriving.

One Friday found Chris and Ian comfortably ensconced in a superbly positioned bivouac high above Zinal in steadily improving weather. Gordon had gone up to the Moiry hut so a good day was guaranteed.

A crisp, clear dawn crystallised. The Dent Blanche cut into an azure sky and nearer the Grand Cornier showed the sweep of it's north face. The Besso, that canine rock peak which dominates the Zinal Valley was just tipped by the sun. The perfect white pyramid of the Obergabelhorn shone, while the Zinal Rothorn, that stupendous rock fin completed the spires along the rim of the cirque.

The crest of Les Diablons gives a traverse over interesting terrain for over two miles, with views towards the Weisshorn - often described as one of the most beautiful mountains in the Alps, which produces a magnificent day out. The solitude of the mountains was enhanced because retreat was soon more difficult than completion of the traverse, for escape to the east is by a long descent into the remote Turmanntal valley while to the west tottering towers, ridges and couloirs of loose scree sweep down into the Val de Zinal. There

isn't a hut available for the traverse, so a quiet day is usual on this peak and in fact we were the only people on the mountain.

The Gadsbys, Steve and Glenis traversed the Pigne de le Le, a route with glacier crossing, a rock ridge and a return to the Moiry hut under the shadow of ice cliffs. From the summit uninterrupted views of many spikes and spires of the Valais may be seen to the south and east.

The weekend brought Colin Barnard, Rock Hudson and Keith Gregson onto the scene; to be followed not long afterwards by Ken and Linda Bryan.

Colin, Rock, Keith, Chris and Ian headed for the Mountet hut, while Ken and Linda made for the Moiry hut. The Mountet hut walk is varied with continually changing views and interest all the way. The north face of the Grand Cornier grows more impressive and is obviously a more difficult ascent than the guide book would lead one to believe. To the east brooded the towering mass of the Weisshorn and nearer the angular rock peak of Besso is seen to lie in the centre of a huge cirque surrounded by great peaks. Snaking deviously along, the path follows the lateral moraine of the retreating Zinal Glacier before sneaking through crags, down ladders, up a river bed and then onto the glacier. The way is now across the dry glacier, a place of boulders, melt water and groaning ice before making a final brutal ascent to the hut. What a position!! This hut is worth visiting just for the view. The Dent Blanche, Obergabelhorn and Zinal Rothorn can be touched from the door. However, this is deceptive for glaciers, curving crevasse lines, ice falls, blue ice cliffs and dark moraines separate the hut from these peaks. The most beautiful of mountains, the white pyramid of the Obergabelhorn glowed for a brief moment as the sun sank, then was cold and soon the streams were stilled.



Rock, Keith and Colin attacked the north ridge of the Zinal Rothorn, whilst Chris and Ian made for the Rothorngrat. The peak is a fine piece of rock and deceptively foreshortened from the hut.

Back at the hut we met the solitary Englishman who had been seen late the previous evening descending from the Rothorngrat; he turned out to be John Theobald who had climbed the north ridge and abseiled down the Rothorngrat. He was his usual ebullient self having just come down from the fine viewing point of Mont Blanc de Moming. He teamed up with a Dutchman and the next day traversed the Trifhorn to the Rothorn hut.

A Gadsby inspired bivouac resulted in a party of twelve including young children and feeble-minded adults spending a night in the open watching lightning strike the surrounding ridges and feeling the caress of an alpine rain storm; I went merely as an observer. A clear morning dawned and the assembled group thronged upto the Col de Torrent and hence to the summit of Sasierre.

Keith, Rock and Colin made good use of the fine weather to make a quick traverse of the rock spikes of the Aiguilles de la Le above the Moiry. Soon afterwards Colin, Rock and John took on the traverse of the less well known Couronne de Breona, which gave a day out in the quieter mountains; often more rewarding than being lost in the teeming masses on the well known routes.

The Bishorn was assailed by Oreads on two occasions; Roy Ayers, Bev Abley and Dave Penlington and Rock with Colin. Both parties suffered appalling weather, which was a poor reward for a long hut walk and the trips turned into exercises in navigation rather than to a vantage point for fine views of the Weisshorn. However, Roy, Dave and Bev had the consolation of a traverse of the Besso; another fine peak with spectacular views.



In a hectic fortnight Ruth Conway, Alistair Gordon, Dawn and Richard Hopkinson lost no time in climbing many fine routes; the Besso one day, the Zinal Rothorn the next! A consensus view of the peak is that it is a fine mountain with a good south-west ridge, but the descent isn't worth the stone-fall.

A sojourn to the valley was followed by a trip over the Col du Guardian to the Moiry hut, by desperate trackless scree covered terrain. However, remote places have their reward and two Ibex were spotted. The north-west ridge of the Grand Cornier was swiftly dispatched on an excellent day out and the Pigne de le Le being taken in on the walk to Zinal the next day.

The party returned to the Mountet hut and an ascent of the Obergabelhorn - the white pyramid, which though not the highest mountain of the cirque is still dominant - was in prospect.

The north ridge provided fine sport; crevasses, loose rock and scree soon lead to a snowy knife ridge rising four hundred metres to the summit. A traverse is traditional, for an ascent of the peak for to reverse the north ridge would be a daunting prospect indeed. The east-northeast ridge leads down to the Rothorn hut; and so, taking in the Wellenkuppe, the party descended.

Return to Zinal from the Rothorn hut was barred by the mountain chain which the party had just crossed; a col must be crossed or a peak traversed. Dawn, Richard, Alistair and Ruth opted for a traverse of the Trifhorn via the south ridge, an excellent rock climb. The party was encouraged on by black clouds massing at an alarming rate; then just as fast as the threat appeared it dispersed as the party hurried through a crevasse zone. Ice cliffs, snow bridges and meandering foot tracks made for a circuitous route to the Mountet hut and hence to the valley; with a visit to some copper mines by Alistair and Ruth taken in on route.

Many other Oreads were out and about in the Alps this summer and in particular Gordon Wright enjoyed a successful three months and continued to add to an impressive number of four thousand metre peaks with a traverse of the Aiguille de Bionassay via the north-west face and south-west ridge (Gordon and Brian Wright) and ascents of Les Droites (G and B Wright) and Mont Blanc (G Wright and T Smedley).

ROUTES UNDERTAKEN IN THE ZINAL AREA

Couronne de Breona (II+) traverse	C Barnard, J Theobold R Hudson
Aiguilles de le Le (II-IV) traverse	C Barnard, K Gregson R Hudson
Pigne de le Le (F) traverse	G and R Gadsby +friend Steve and Glenis; B and J Abley; K and L Bryan; R Conway, A Gordon; R and D Hopkinson
Grand Cornier N.W. Ridge (PD+)	R Conway, A Gordon; R and D Hopkinson
Ober Gabelhorn and Wellenkuppe N.N.W. Ridge and E.N.E. Ridge (PD+)	R and D Hopkinson; A Gordon, R Conway R Conway, A Gordon; R and D Hopkinson
Trifhorn S. Ridge (PD)	J Theobold + friend B Abley, R Ayers, D Penlington; R Conway A Gordon; R and D Hopkinson
Trifhorn Besso S.W.Ridge (PD) traverse	J Theobold C Barnard, R Hudson, K Gregson; R Conway, A Gordon; R and D Hopkinson
Mont Blanc de Moming (F)	I Brindle, C Bryan
Zinal Rothorn N. Ridge (PD)	J Theobold
S.W.Ridge and N. Ridge (AD) traverse	B Abley, R Ayers, D Penlington; C Barnard R Hudson
N. Ridge and S.W. Ridge (AD) traverse	C Bryan, I Brindle
Bishorn N.W. flank (F)	
Les Diablons N-S (AD/D) traverse	



BORROWDALE JUNE 15-16TH

(The friends weekend)

Mark Pearce

The club actually had fine warm weather on an official meet in the Lake District, and one of the few good weekends of the year - to boot. The weather previous to this meet had been one of boringly fine day after day. This had brought out a large contingent of Oreads, all of which were keen to get out on the hills or crags.

On Saturday a strong contingent descended on Esk Buttress and ascents of such classics as Red Edge, Square Chimney and Bower's route were completed.

There were ascents of Gillercombe Bastion and Buttress and Cam Crag Ridge. For those who were off the hill by nightfall a good evening was had at the Scafell Hotel restoring the body fluids.

Sunday saw the club well spread out with an ascent of Gimmer by one party. Closer to home, Fools Paradise saw a number of Oreads follow this interesting route. There were some action packed ascents of North Crag Eliminate at Castle Rock. Launching off the tree seemed to produce most comment from short seconds!

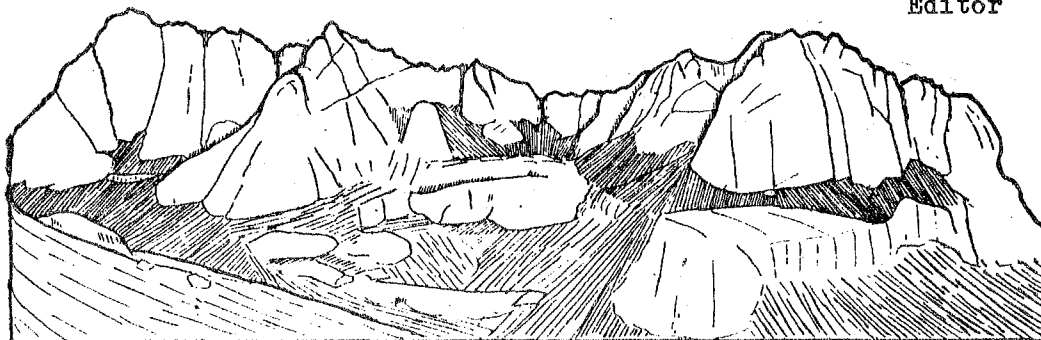
On recalling this meet I could not help but add a rider to the title provided by Mark.

To me and I believe others, this weekend proved that some of the present climbing fraternity must have more money than sense, or that a high proportion of the exponents of modern protection gear have little idea of how to place it and even less knowledge of how to then extract it. No wonder climbers are having to take more to the face routes - the cracks are becoming so full of metal I've heard that RTZ are thinking of mining them!

I believe six parties, climbing on various routes found 'friends' abandoned (No! not those that refused to pay for their round at the pub the previous night) in cracks. On Gillercombe a fine number four in near pristine condition was fielded by one member who only led that single pitch, thereby depriving the second from collecting £17.50 of hardware. On Fool's Paradise Keith Gregson dangled on his string late into the afternoon extracting, but only after superhuman efforts in dismantling a jigsaw of jammed boulders and then with modern conservation ethics in mind replacing them, before showing his sleepy string attendant a less than fine number one. His pleasure evaporated on being informed that clusters of them were awaiting picking in cracks only metres away!

From members comments, the value of 'hung' friends amounted to between £70-100 for the weekend. At least it keeps the gear market buoyant!

Editor



Christmas at Tan-y-Wyddfa

Editor

Christmas Eve found Lol Burns, Ray Colledge, Rock Hudson, Shirley Goldsmith Ronnie and Ernie Phillips installed around a log fire, but not for long, as a detachment headed for the local - where surprise surprise they enjoyed a splendid free buffet. Nice start to Christmas!

Christmas Day was cold and clear and the hut was emptied with the exodus of people to Snowdon, the Five Cois walk and the Creosor Valley.

Boxing Day was beautiful; what a surprise after suffering terrible weather for the last few years during the festive season. All except Ray, who tackled the Nantlle Ridge, walked along the coast to the Ty-Coch Inn. Later we called in at the Deserted Village where the epic tale was told of the efforts needed to recover an Oread's limousine back in the mists of time; and the parsimonious (deep pocketed) attitude of one P. Scott who begged for help from a local farmer. Pete had driven down the very steep narrow twisting dirt road to the village in his normal cocky manner but was unable to return. The farmer being a kindly type spent the best part of a day recovering the car and hauling it to the main road. Naturally he expected a small remuneration for his trouble. Alas he was to be sadly disappointed.

That evening the Fishers arrived, while on the following day Julie Goldsmith, Margaret Bryan and friend came. Ray and Sheelagh had to return to home or work. Some walked the local hills while others rested after excessive eating.

We awoke on the 28th to find a real Christmas atmosphere - yes a white one. Snow lay quite thick around the hut. A party walked around Llyn Padarn. The Goldsmiths headed home and their warm bunks were quickly occupied by the Welbournes, or was it the Ableys, or even the Raphaels.

In the evening a knock at the door was heard and upon opening it two Dutch lads appeared. These were immediately recognised by Ruth as the same two who had arrived five years ago to the very day, perhaps the very hour. That time they were cold, wet and much fatigued after traversing Snowdon (in clogs, carrying rucsacs bulging with daffodil bulbs), but were now suitably clad. In minutes, with typical Oread hospitality, tea, cakes and places by the fire were provided. In those five years they had often recalled the friendliness given and the pleasure of the North Wales hills. Later that evening most of those present had a mega meal at the Cwellyn Arms.

Next morning parties set out rather late in clear cold weather. A large group walked to Llanberis by way of the col southeast of Foel Goch, while another, including a sledge contingent, went on towards Moel Eilo. Members gave a slide show in the evening, of photographs old and new, local and distant.

The weather deteriorated on the 30th allowing many to catch up on food and drink, but the keen ones including part of the Abley and Gadsby families walked the Morfa Nefyn Circuit.

For New Year's Eve a splendid buffet was organised, with everyone providing something, be it cake, meat, cheese or a bottle of plonk. Later many went to the pub, where they were expected to, and did, consume yet another excellent and free supper. The building was full with revellers, tottering drunks, youths parking their parents cars inside the restaurant and a group of butch girls fighting over each other and even accosting one of the the lady Oreads.

Well that was it for the Oread Meets of 1985. January saw the Raphaels and Gadsbys heading for the Aran Col and Tony braving Y-Aran in rain. We hoped this did not herald yet another wet year.

'BULLSTONES 85'

BRIAN WEST

Having been importuned quite relentlessly by the Hon. Editor to provide a Meet Write-Up, I have had to cobble together something to shut him up. Unfortunately I can raise little enthusiasm for Write-Ups, Journals and the like. To my mind climbers exhibit an amazing conceit, childish almost beyond belief, that their doings are of surpassing significance, their reports awaited eagerly by a world agog. In most circles the subject 'What I did in my holidays' is exhausted usually towards the end of Junior school. It will be less tedious for me, and probably for you if I write not about this Bullstones in particular, but of Bullstones in general.

It occurs to me that there must be a substantial number of what Radcliffe would call 'activists' (a nebulous term referring to the constituents of one's clique) to whom Bullstones connotes nothing at all. Well, the name Bullstones belongs properly to an outcrop on the south flank of Outer Edge, and by association to the cabins once situated nearby. Oread meets were held here until the cabins fell into desuetude and were eventually wrecked. Both the name and the meet live on: a winter weekend traversing the hills, carrying all one's gear and generally roughing it. A form of back-packing, I suppose, if one wishes to use that dreadful neologism.

As a digression, it is interesting to note that these shooting cabins came in pairs, or, if only one, it would be divided internally with separate entrances. The Gentlemen would use one cabin, the others the other. Interior fittings will usually show which one was used by which, but in cases of complete demolition a statistical analysis of the surrounding bottleglass should give the Socio-Archaeologist a ready means of demarcation: a preponderance of clear glass indicating a Them region; of brown glass an Us region.

Now for the heavy going and a pertinent question. The Bullstones and like Meets, have they a place in the Oread of '86 and beyond? I think that their importance is increasing and will explain why.

These meets are needed to maintain the balance of the Oread. They remind us of a simpler and easier time when money was shorter and climbing broader; and they provide links with the origins of the Club, origins rooted in a love of hills for their own sake, of wild places in wild weather, and of the unique camaraderie engendered thereby.

It is by such continuities, insignificant perhaps in themselves, that is preserved the nexus which enables a club to change with time without altering its precepts or its character; an evolution that presently perplexes the Oread.

Climbing clubs today are ten-a-penny; as often as not so are their members. It is not all their fault; one cannot miss what one never knew. The shame is that without some effort they will never know. As in all matters of personal choice, the undiscerning will always take the easy option; they will always follow the crowd; and modern pressures conspire to promote the athletic at the expense of the aesthetic, the shallow at the expense of the profound.

Meets are now anything but. Affluence and personal transport have removed the necessity for making the best of conditions as found and of companions as found. Much is lost thus.

The demand now is for hard rock, dry rock, --- quick rock. Indeed, one suspects that for some climbers one of life's dirtier tricks is that rock tends to outcrop in nasty wet windy places, miles from anywhere and usually distinctly uphill. The hill is in fact an embarrassment that could well be done without. Now these conditions, so abhorrent to the rock-athlete, are the very ones which bestow character on our native hills, and which, to the mountaineer, give them their perennial appeal.

It should now be clear that we are playing different games: at the limit, mutually exclusive games. It is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile

these two aspects, both at a personal and at a Club level; and it can only get worse. This is the dilemma which confronts the Oread. I will outline one way to avoid the horns; drastic, but logically rather elegant.

Despite what some would have us believe - some, indeed, who ought to know better - the Oread is not a climbing club. By its very constitution, the objects of the Club are defined as 'mountaineering in every aspect'. Climbing is only a part of that manifesto. Well would it be to remember this.

At present, rock-climbing is rapidly becoming an end in itself; it is attracting the attention of the media manipulators; competition climbing is a possibility. Bullstones, Welbourne's Wander and the like can maintain the balance of the Oread until extreme rock-climbing reaches the stage, as it almost has, where it abandons any allegiance to mountaineering. At this point, when rock-climbing is de facto a sport in its own right, it can be safely declared beyond the terms of reference of the Oread constitution and consigned to whatever private hell it has wrought for itself. This will leave the Oread free to sneak off quietly whilst the competition climbers and their ilk are belayed by the Sports Council or whoever. I shan't miss them.

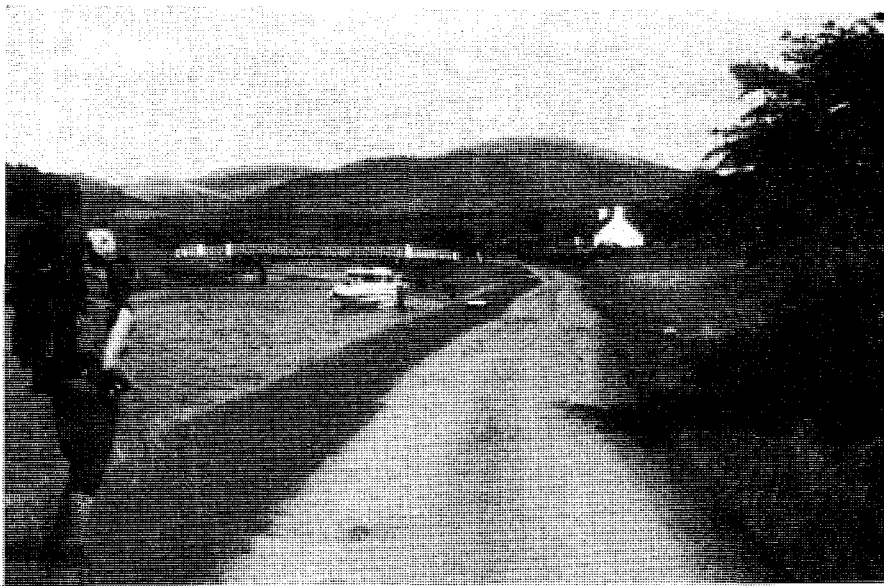
Oh yes! This is supposed to be a Meet Write-Up! Bullstones '85 - seventeen people, one dog. I hope that everyone got something out of the weekend: I know that the dog did.

Thanks very much for turning up in the wrong pub on a foul night (my fault). Come again next year.

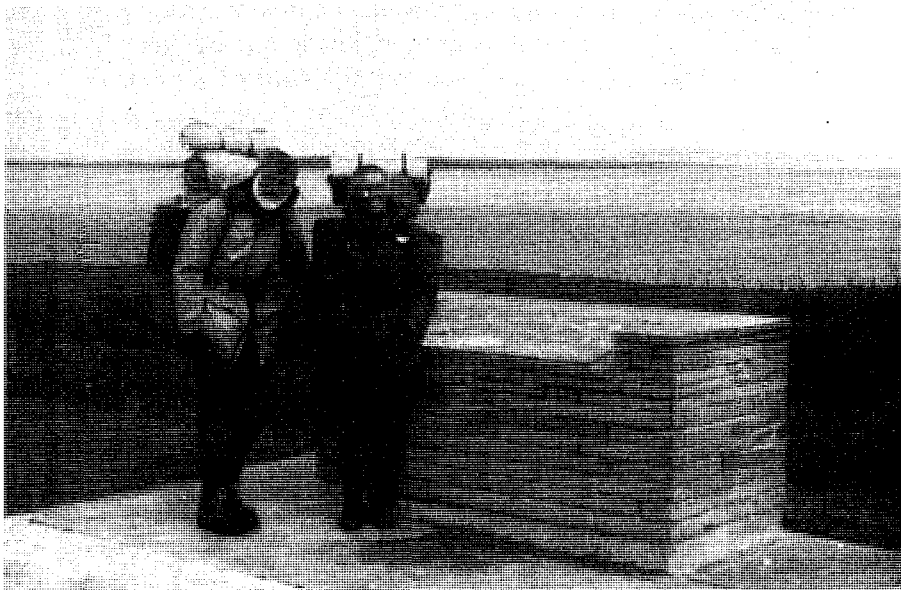
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L



CALEDONIAN
CANAL



JOURNEY'S END
GORDON AND PAULINE WRIGHT
AT DUNCANSBY HEAD



PREPARING TO DIVE IN THE
LOWER LAKES IN THE
SLATE MINES
ABOVE CROESOR



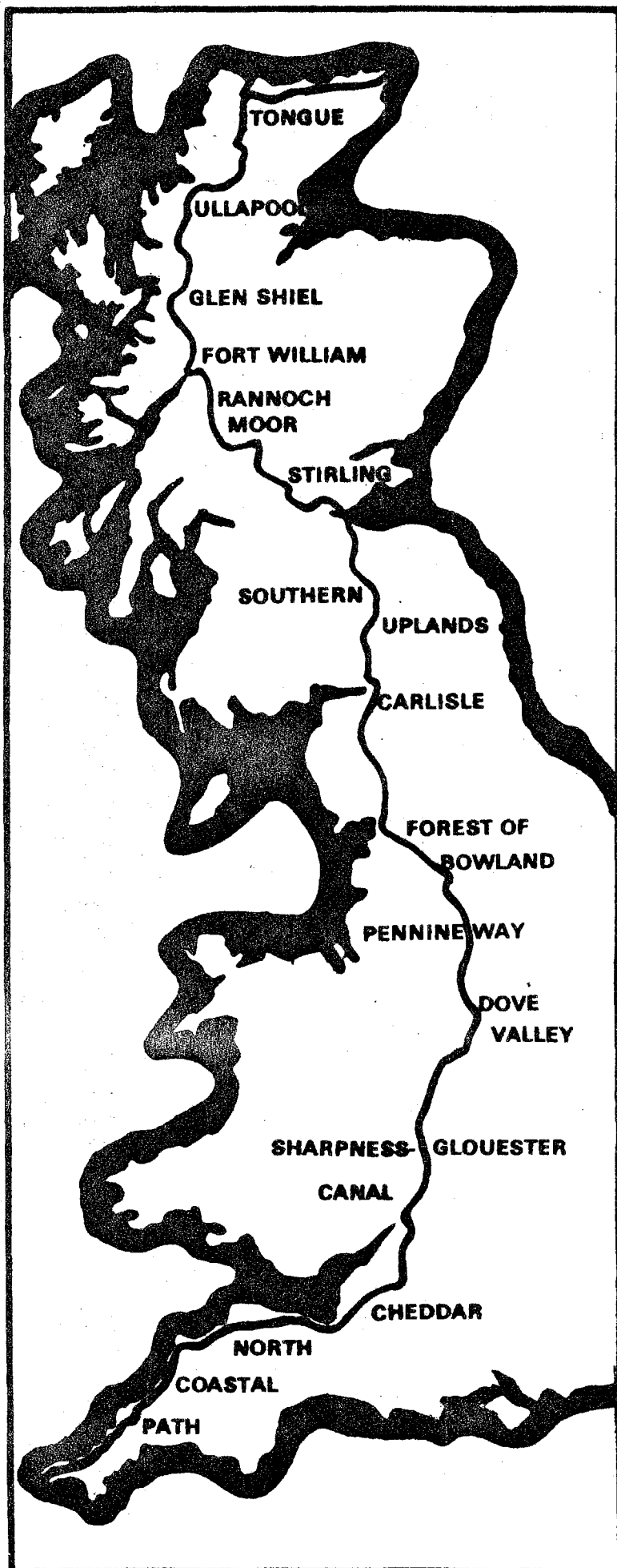
GATEWAY TO THE HEIGHTS

They lie there by the mountain side,
Row upon row, tier upon tier,
Of nature's primeaval, springs of action.
Like waves stood still, solid, line by line.
Shadows of another age, born of another time.

Solid ? solid they appear, and yet,
Each one moves like a sloth.
A metres length may take a year,
Yet think! three precious seconds lived
Could well destroy that sheer green wall,
Upon the ice falls brink.

Old, old were they when Hannibal crossed the Alps,
When Whymper rode the golden way.
Cold, cold are they, cold as a mammoth's grave,
Cold as the wind on a polar night.
Irregular as life itself, they bridge the shelf
Man's gateway to the heights.

Gordon Gadsby 1985



LANDS END TO JOHN O'GROATS -- THE WALK -- Gordon and Pauline Wright -- AFTER THOUGHTS -- Pauline Wright

The idea of The Walk began when we completed the Pennine Way and felt that it just wasn't long enough; we just wanted to carry on walking. We can't remember who first suggested Lands End to John-O-Groats, but we finally decided that that was what we wanted to do. Obviously it had to wait until retirement and then it was to be our first aim. Retirement came early for both of us but unfortunately I managed to modify my left ankle and foot in a winter climbing accident in Glen Coe, so Pauline had to wait four years before I managed to sort out foot and boot problems.

We didn't want to miss the Alps in July so we needed to start early in the year and this made Lands End the obvious starting point; the prevailing wind would be behind us and we would be going through Scotland from mid-May onwards when it

usually has the best weather.

Several half day visits to Derby Public Library to study maps enabled me to plot a route which went through the best country and avoided roads, particularly main ones, where possible.

A cold windy overcast day in March at 4.30 pm saw us alighting from the bus at Lands End. We both admitted to each other later that our first thought as the bus drove off was "What have we let ourselves in for?" After a few photos we were on our way arriving at the Lands End Youth Hostel near St Just, 5 miles away, just before dark.

We had decided to use youth hostels wherever possible because they are convenient and make an early start easy; altogether we stayed in 28. It goes without saying that I would have preferred to stay in pubs, but although we did stay in a few, finances would not usually allow this.

After a meal an attempt to get to the pub at St Just ended in failure as the way was over fields and my torch wasn't bright enough - first job on next days shopping list - fancy spoiling the longest pub crawl in Britain for a ha'p'orth of battery.

Next day I got us lost for the first time - in the middle of St Just! I couldn't get orientated because I couldn't see the church - and I'd had a dry night previous!! We even had to ask someone the way! Ten minutes later our first rain fell and we donned our Goretex for the first of many, many times, Arms and a pint or three of Hicks Special Bitter - one of the best of the many good and not so good brews sampled on the way.

In the afternoon we came across our first bull, a magnificent Hereford racing for our stile - we beat him by a short head. A fantastic scenic walk along the cliff tops brought us to St Ives and our first night under canvas at an empty camp site. Our Ultimate Phazer Dome was a bit heavy to carry at 8lbs but very roomy and comfortable.

After 'lunch' the next day I severely tested Pauline's self control by discovering, after clambering over a mile of giant sand dunes, that I had left my camera at the Bucket of Blood at Hayle; luckily it was still there.

We camped again that night and awoke in the morning to heavy rain and gales. These accompanied us throughout most of the next fortnight through Cornwall and Devon on the North Coastal path, although we cut corners where ever possible. We discovered that our 'Goretex' were no longer waterproof and we had only had them for 5 years! so we sent an S.O.S. home to David to send our old Cagjacs and overtrousers to the Youth Hostel at Cheddar. Naturally we would have preferred better weather but we had to admit that the huge breakers made a magnificent display on the rocks below although the spray coming over the clifftop didn't do the camera much good.

The weather improved over Exmoor and the Quantocks but the following day on the moors to Bridgewater we were soaked once more and almost blown off our feet on the motorway bridge.

After collecting our waterproofs at Cheddar, sods law decreed that we had very little rain for the next fortnight. We pressed on over the Mendips to Bath, then over the Cotswolds to Slimbridge and before following the Sharpness - Gloucester canal, the river Severn and the Worcestershire-Staffordshire canal to Penkridge. This took us right past the West Midlands conurbation without using roads, and the river and canal banks gave us several easy days, apart from one point where the river path disappeared and we had to climb a 150ft earthy river cliff through brambles, nettles and bushes which gripped me out of my mind. Pauline found an iron bar which she used like an ice axe and seemed to enjoy it.

We left the canal at Penkridge and walked via Cannock Chase to Uttoxeter where we caught a bus for home so that I could attend to the garden and Pauline could wash everthing. So far we had been walking for 29 days and covered 400 miles.

We did not need the tent from now until we reached Carlisle as there would be plenty of youth hostels, etc., so we posted it and most of the camping gear to Brian, who lives at Carnforth, where we would be spending three nights. Later he would deliver it to us at Carlisle. We also mortgaged the house and

bought new Goretex jackets and overtrousers so that we could face whatever the weather decided to throw at us.

David drove us to Uttoxeter after five days at home. We planned to follow the Dove valley to Buxton and then on to Edale to link up with the Pennine Way, then we would roughly follow it until we headed West through the Forest of Bowland to Carnforth and finally through the Lakes to Carlisle.

Carrying lighter rucksacks for this section of the route we planned somewhat longer days, although daily distances were usually dictated by the location of the youth hostels. We were also hoping for warmer and drier weather as it was now late April, but were semi-disappointed as it was cold all the way to Carlisle, though now much drier - sod's law again.

Outstanding memories are the badly disciplined school party which ruined our stay in the Ilam Y.H.; the superbly comfortable Y.H. and the friendly helpful warden at Buxton; the beautiful weather and lighting conditions over Kinder and Bleaklow which gave me some of the best slides of the walk; and the long hard day over trackless boggy ankle turning moors through the clag to Earby.

Then we had the pleasure of two days following the picturesque disused canal from Carnforth to Kendal while we stayed with Brian and Lynn. The pleasure was enhanced by very light rucksacks because Brian took us out in his car each morning and brought us back each evening.

In the Kentmere valley we almost turned back when we were assailed by exceedingly strong winds but after a while they eased and we continued over High Street in a pea souper.

Carlisle saw the end of our light packs when Brian brought us all the camping gear to add to our back packs, and further difficulty was added by the footpaths, which, were shown on the map but did not exist on the ground. The Forestry Commission added their share of confusion with the Eskdalemuir and Braik forests. In spite of the difficulties we were very impressed by the loneliness and the beauty of the scenery crossing the Southern Uplands to Edinburgh - so much so in fact that we are hoping to walk the Southern Upland Way at some future time.

Edinburgh to Stirling is not a walk I would recommend to my worst enemy. Most of it was on busy main roads as there appeared to be no alternative, but we did enjoy the Forth Road Bridge in a masochistic sort of way. You can't appreciate its colossal size unless you walk it.

From now on it got better and better as we began to enter the Highlands, marred unfortunately as far as Fort William by continuous cold, wet weather: the Goretex finally paid its way here. A disused railway track took us most of the way to Crianlarich via Callender and Lochearnhead and then we followed the West Highland Way to Fort William.

Arriving at the Kingshouse in the early afternoon we were amazed to find the bar crowded with large hairy highlanders in ancient battle dress, complete with swords, dirks, shields and helmets. They were extras for a battle scene for the film "The Highlanders." It was quite intimidating elbowing a way through them to the bar. Finally it had to close in order to get them out and back into battle.

After a very convivial night in the Kingshouse we watched and heard the battle scene next day as we ascended the Devils Staircase on our way to Kinlochleven.

Fort William saw a change in the weather, just in time for the best part of the walk through the Western Highlands to Ullapool. We even wore our shorts for three days - the only time on the trip. Unfortunately the heat woke the midges and gave us several uncomfortable evenings and mornings before the wet and cold returned and they went back into hibernation.

Although it had added considerable mileage to the walk we had crossed from the East side to the West because this was our favourite part of Scotland and we were not disappointed now that the weather had come good.

From Fort William we followed the Caledonian Canal to Loch Lochy, then via Loch Archaig, Glen Garry and Glen Quoich to Glen Shiel and Shiel Bridge where I was surprised to find that rare commodity in Scotland - real ale - just as I

was beginning to suffer from withdrawal symptoms.

Another journey through the wilderness took us via Glen Elchaig, Loch Calavie and Bearnois to Achnashellach and then over the Coulin pass to Torridon and Kinlochewe. Finally over the heights of Kinlochewe and Strath Na Sealga to Shenoval and then through Dundonnell to Ullapool by using the ferry over Loch Broom. It had now become very cold again and we had snow twice during the last two days.

From Fort William onwards the tent had become essential and we found several idyllic campsites. We also made use of bothies and bunkhouses.

North of Ullapool we were in, for us, new country. Unfortunately we suffered steadily worsening weather until we reached the North coast near Tongue. Originally we had planned to go more or less directly from Ullapool to John O'Groats, but we changed this when we realised that there were no shops on the way and it would have meant carrying 10-12 days food. Neither of us were very keen on dehydrated food so we carried tins of meat, rice, bread, cheese, cake, jam etc., which, although heavier and bulky were more to our taste. A weekend or even a week on dehydrated food may be all right but I don't think anyone would relish it for months on end. We were willing to accept the extra weight of the type of food we carried.

From Ullapool we travelled West via Glen Achall, Glen Einig and Glen Ochall to Rosehall where we turned North via Glen Cassley, Loch Shin and Loch Merkland to Strath More. When we turned North the weather became really bad and we had to pack up the tent and set off in pouring rain three days in succession. Crossing the col between Loch Merkland and Strath More developed into a "fighting for survival" experience as we walked into gale force winds, heavy rain and the coldest day of the whole walk. Luckily the rain relented before we put up the tent in Strathmore and got into our sleeping bags to thaw out.

From Tongue we were forced to walk along roads for the final four days to John O'Groats as the few footpaths which existed went in the wrong directions. Interest waned as we only saw the coast occasionally and the moorlands between Tongue and Reay gave way to flatter grass fields with barely a tree to break the monotony. Occasional glimpses of the Orkneys gradually coming closer, peat being cut for fuel on the moors and curlew, redshanks and orchids provided some focal points until our arrival at the Lands End youth hostel for our last nights stop.

We had decided that Duncansby Head must be our destination as John O'Groats is about a mile from this farthest N E point of Britain. A 7 O'clock start brought us there at about 9.30 a.m. on a cold windy morning and with surprisingly little sense of achievement or elation. As there was no one about we photographed each other and various aspects of the view and then set off 1.5 miles back to catch the bus at John O'Groats hotel. After we had walked about a 100 yards a car arrived so we returned and persuaded the driver to photograph us together. Then we set off once again to begin the 24 hour bus and train journey home.

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Facts and Figures

Total distance 1124 miles		Accommodation	
Walking days	79	Youth Hostels	28 nights
Rest days	6	B and B (including pubs	
Total time	85 days door	hotels etc.)	19 nights
	to door.	Caravans	4 nights
Start	26th March	Camping	17 nights
Finish	18th June	Bothies	2 nights
Daily average	14.23 miles	Bunk Houses	4 nights
Shortest day	4 miles	Brian's House	3 nights
Longest day	22 miles	Home	6 nights

Well we did it, come what may. At times I do not know what kept us going. It had been an ambition for sometime, and we now had the time to set off.

The weather was most unkind a lot of the way; we could not camp as often as we intended which was disappointing as we do not care too much for bed and breakfast accommodation; most hosts do not understand the needs of walkers, few offered as much as a pot of tea or a shower on arrival. One in particular asked us to leave our rucsacs in her glory hole until we were ready to leave. What, I wonder, does she think is carried in them. And the reason for wanting to get away to an early start in the morning completely escaped most of them.

Without the Sprayway waterproof rucsac covers I am sure we would have got our gear wet through early on, and would, with the weather persistently so wet, have had to give up.

Few of the many people who asked us why we were doing the walk could understand that we simply wanted to, I suppose "because it was there", and seemed to think it was only done if you were sponsored. Another prize saying repeated time and time again was "I would love to do what you are doing but it hurts my back to carry a load". Why on earth did they think it didn't happen to us? We found everything hurt on its chosen day. Blisters were not our problem at all, and we each used the pair of boots we had started in. Gordons uppers were very much the worse for wear at the finish and my boots had almost no tread left on but were extremely comfortable. If anyone had told me I could carry at times, up to 40lbs in my rucsac I would have replied "You must be joking". Gordon carried up to 50lbs (plus a bottle of wine now and again).

All the planning and route finding was carried out by Gordon, I did the wifely things like cooking, washing and the never ending repair jobs, the sewing kit being the most important item I carried; six plastic pegs and six nappy pins for securing the washing to the rucsacs when it was a drying day ran a close second and third. It was a very slimming exercise, I lost one stone eight pounds and Gordon lost eight. I suspect the real ale had something to do with his smaller weight loss.

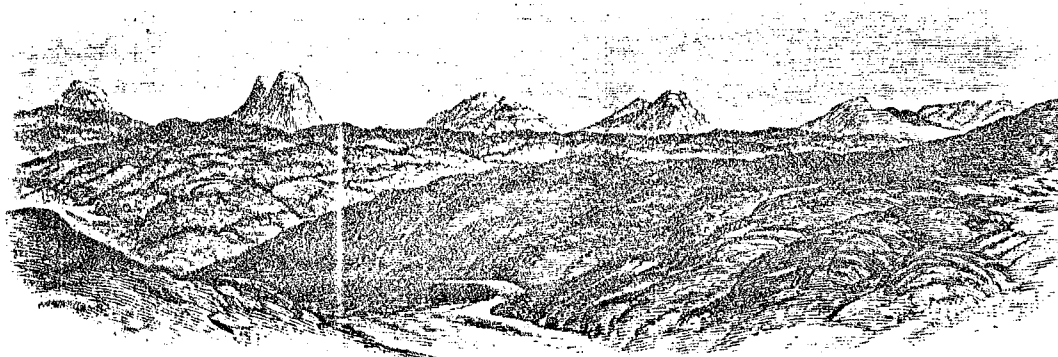
It was not our intention to break any records - the aim was simply to get there, without walking on road (main) unless forced onto them, and to walk through the most scenic countryside, hence the none too direct line we took.

The further we walked the more difficult it became to share my thoughts, even with Gordon, and even more difficult to write my diary at the end of each day. Maybe it was the long spells of solitude and the vastness of the countryside with times of complete quiet which impressed me, at times it seemed that everything was there just for the two of us. We had moments when we fell about laughing and others when we did not.

Without Brian and David giving us their help by sending on the maps, and delivering the camping gear, the occasional lift, nights lodging and looking after our correspondence, plus paying the bills it would have been much more difficult to arrange.

It was nice to arrive home, feeling a little sad it was over, to find cards in the mail with "You've done it!" and "Congratulations".

All in all it was quite a way to celebrate our 35th wedding anniversary year; and we did with a present from David - a bottle of Champagne cooling in the fridge.



Solutions to

P E D I G R E E

P R O B L E M S

EDITOR AND
ANON



The Oread committee never have a chance to demonstrate how much time and effort goes into the running of the club. Many members I'm sure are quite unaware of the wide range of jobs undertaken on their behalf by the committee on a day to day basis. You of course would expect meetings, writing-printing and distributing circulars, organising meets and dinners, plus liaison with other clubs and the BMC, but I'm sure you would not consider solving family and social problems to be part of the job. The latter are, however, not uncommon and very serious and therefore of course cannot be passed off in a flippant manner. If so it would bring the committee into disrepute and in the long term lose members to gardening, visiting the 'out-laws' and to holidays on hot Mediterranean beaches instead of in cramped mountain tents surrounded by puddles.

The naivety of some partners leaves many a broken heart. Really! to think that the sole aim of the club is to foster climbing and mountaineering, when consumption of alcoholic beverages is needed to finance the state through taxation is less than patriotic.

However, even with such a letter the hard pressed committee man (or woman) did not throw it away nor use it in the 'quiet room'. No! He formulated a serious and calculated response, only achieved after years of dedication to the club and special training. These enabled the writer to analyse the problem and take the correct action. He offered constructive advice, took the role of medical consultant and family guidance councillor; he even thought fit to consult with other learned men to obtain a true consensus of opinion based on a broad spectrum of knowledge. The final comprehensive reply must surely have put the poor distraught person's mind to rest.

Not of ccourse did it neglect the young man. It provided information which allowed him to get out on the crag more often, to partake of strong ale instead of shandy, helped the Chancellor of the Exchequer and stilled a serious case of sexual abuse.

What more could one want or expect of our committee member. So remember, please write to the committee at any time, on any subject, no matter how serious or complicated the problem might be or how unlikely a solution might seem. You know that the Oread Committee has your interests at heart!

NAME _____ SEX _____
 STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Dear Mr. ~~Santo~~ Sant

My young man, who is unused to strong liquor, was happily partaking of small quantities of shandy when he was encouraged, nay forced, by you to imbibe a quantity of Pedigree Ale.

This had the effect of initially anaesthetising him slightly, making the journey home a fairly quiet affair. However, later, he was seized with a sort of delirium which manifested itself with much giggling, joking and poking in the ribs (mine, just as I was dropping off to sleep). Eventually he fell into a drugged sleep.

On Thursday morning he arose rather sluggishly, and on following him downstairs, I was puzzled by the unnatural quiet (normally, he has the radio playing at about 1,000 decibels). He was a pale shadow of his normal self, pasty-faced and with over-sensitive hearing and complained of a pain in his brain. It is obvious that he has a profound allergy to this Pedigree poison, and I blame you entirely. Perhaps in furture, you would restrict your activities to ruining your own liver (and bowels, from the effects I have observed in my unfortunate young man) with this fluid.

Yours crossly,
Disgusted of Derby.

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Dear Disgusted of Derby,

I am pleased that your young man enjoyed himself so much on Wednesday last. However, I would like to comment on one or two points raised in your letter.

You refer to certain effects which this fluid had on your young mans' bowels - from this I deduce that we got him just in time. To explain, this fluid is like a cleansing or purging agent and it is quite obvious that your young man had an acute blockage of the bowel (possibly caused by a partially digested nut cutlet) and thanks to the miraculous properties of Pedigree Ale this has now been relieved.

Secondly, you mention that the journey home started off as a quiet affair, only to degenerate into a bout of hysterical giggling and rather boisterous banter. You should have guessed from these symptoms that an insufficient quantity of ale had been consumed. I suggest that another two or three pints may have rendered the journey quite peaceful.

You may be interested to know that I have sought a second opinion on these problems and consulted Dr. K Gregson (a well known authority on the subject) and he fully agrees with my views on this matter.

To ensure that there are no hard feelings (not that there would be many after six pints of Pedigree) perhaps you and your young man would join me for a pint or three at the Bell and Castle sometime around Christmas.

Yours incoherently
R Sold

BETTER OUT THAN IN 'ROCK' HUDSON



August, yet the descent from the hut through snow and a cold raw mist produced wintry conditions. Even below the canopy of sullen grey mist which hung just above the ground the snow continued blotting out the landscape. The wind-driven snow lay deep, choking out the colour and life of the summer flowers, drifted against rocks and plastered the slopes. At the road head above the Moiry Reservoir the few remaining cars wore a thick coat of snow.

On reaching my car the three of us, Colin myself and a student - picked up at the hut because he desperately needed to catch a bus in the valley - quickly unhitched rucksacks, removed outers and boots then slung everything into the boot before jumping into the car's warmer and drier interior. Not long before it's tea and cake back at the campsite I thought, though in my mind a little apprehensive about the car starting in such cold, damp conditions. However, it fired first time - great! Nothing to be seen until swishing wipers cleared the windscreen and lights penetrated a little through lines of snow flakes.

After 100 metres on a narrow blind corner the car stalled! Weak battery? Switch off the lights and heater. Turn the key, but only a whine. Nobody will see me here and I imagined a mega pile-up, so tried the ignition again and again but the engine turned over even more slowly. Can't be anything serious as it fired before. Don't panic! A push start will do the trick. Colin and student stepped out into a semi-blizzard, while I stayed bravely at the helm - good move that.

"Shove!" The speed picked up and I dropped into gear, but no luck. They pushed harder and longer, but no exhaust appeared. Encouraged by an increased slope they put everything into it - still nothing. Though soaked they now donned waterproofs, no doubt thinking this would help. Shove again! The 46th attempt resulted in yet another failure. Lights advanced from behind, then retreated down valley, but I've no idea whether to left or right for the windows were covered in snow. The two 'Yeti' men were doing a fine job - still pushing with no complaints (mind you I wasn't listening) - albeit with flagging spirits trying to overcome a slight incline. I too was doing a fine job, steering and listening to the engine for signs of life.

Through snowy windows I could detect condensed breath forming a rime around their mouths, while they slithered and skidded, lost their footing and aquired frozen hands trying to grip the car more firmly. The ice crystals stung their eyes -alpinists with no goggles handy! So they peered at their feet only to step or wade through every puddle as these appeared from beneath the wheels and the resulting spray drenched them to the bone.

What's that in the road? Sharp left! This had Colin bouncing along the road, bruised and hands grazed, before nose diving into a soggy snow drift - at least it slowed him up. The student continued forwards, fell over hidden boulders and plunged into a deep water-filled ditch, but was seen to porpoise beautifully before fetching up on the far shore; unfortunately below a waterfall. They regrouped and I took pleasure in informing them we had already done 2.5km of the 16km needed to reach the campsite and not a thimble of petrol used! (Scotty please note). Not wanting any snow inside the car I just 'cracked' the window to peer out at cascades of mush sliding from heads and shoulders of bedraggled doll like figures. Keen as mustard they informed me they would keep pushing for a day or two longer. However, after a further 86 attempted jump starts I stated they were bloody useless for not once had they

been able to get up to anything like 25km/hr, though neglecting to let on that I had not released the hand brake! I believe Colin indicated he would try twice more! Loosing heart at their lack of perseverance I told them to look under the bonnet. They found nothing out of place - typical. They stood around idly waiting for me to turn the key at ten minute intervals. While waiting I had the good fortune to find some of that 'quiet' type food which prevents you having to offer it around. Because they couldn't find anything wrong I would have to come up yet again with a bright idea.

For no apparent reason the hitch hiker was impatient to be gone. I was not sorry, for he was always hindering Colin's efforts, and my concentration. By luck he obtained a lift from what we thought must be the last car down this summer. So after a 100metre lift and an exhilarating 3km jog through potentially beautiful scenery he left without saying thankyou. Ungrateful bugger. The tail lights disappeared; the gloom deepened; drifts built up around my car, while spin drift poured from the cliffs above. I had to force Colin inside!

Violent contortions were needed to remove his frozen clothes. Alas, he had forgotten to close the bonnet and being well acclimatised he readily and without hint of complaint responded to my polite request to shut it again - no wonder the car wouldn't go! Another vehicle? Quick get out! Well one of us at least. I can't speak the lingo. Colin can, but in the rush forgot to reclothe himself. (how do these people get triple 1st class degrees from Oxford) A Dutchman asked as what was the problem, but after fiddling about with the engine found no solution. Through a 2cm gap, for I was a little cold, Colin told me that he would get a lift down and try to organise a snowplough, chopper or sleigh with mechanic - not a Santa. I did the honorable thing and offered to keep the car safe.

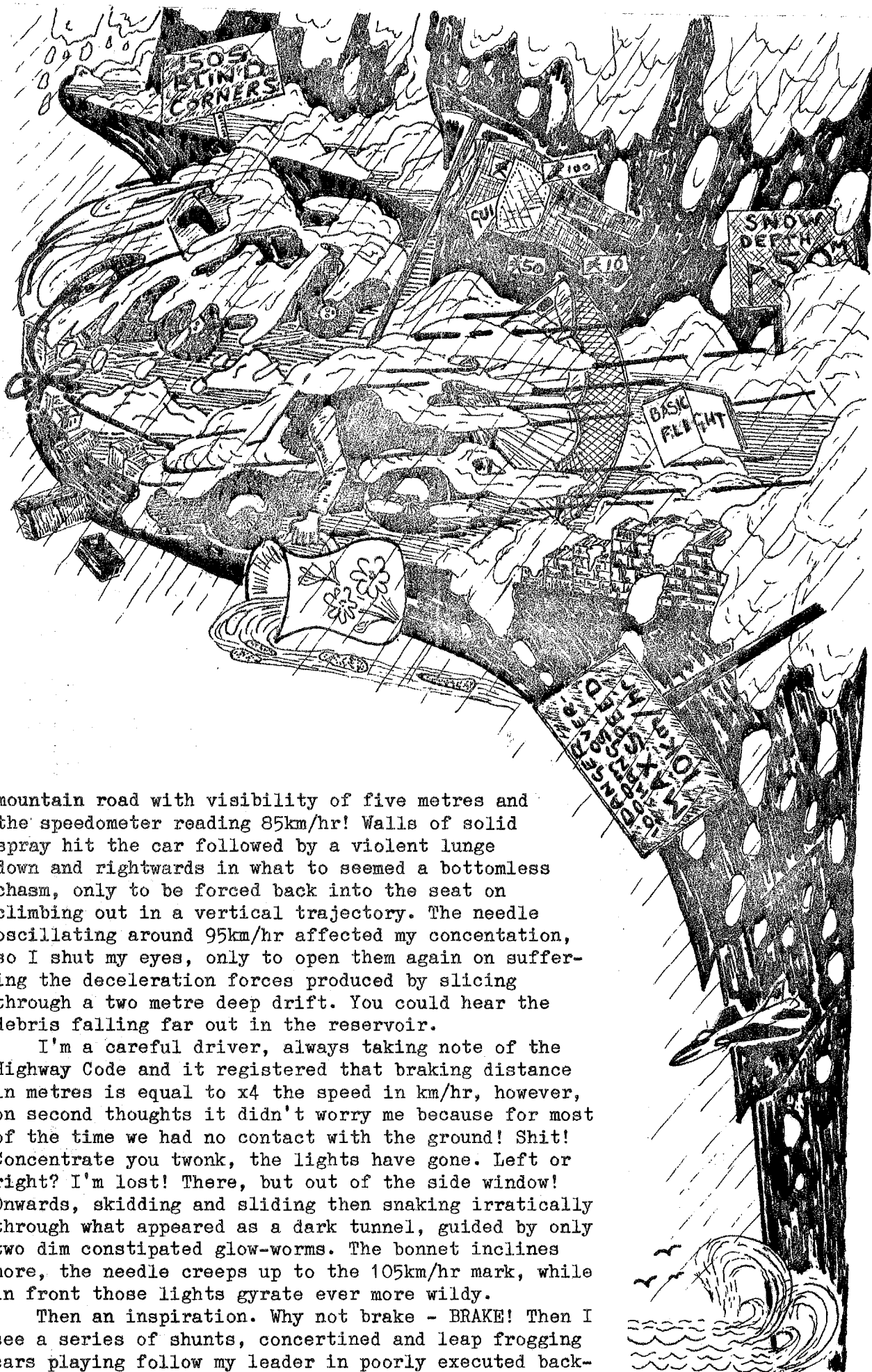
Alone. What if Colin was offered something better, anything other than an Alpine Holiday with a rock tapper and Ford Crap-mobile. In the cold my mind started to wander. If winter's started, it's a long wait from August to June and only the left-overs to eat from a two day trip. My last grey cell ran wild, it might be the start of a new Ice-Age. Can I struggle on for 25,000 years. (All right, I know it's better than going to work!)

Some millenia later... I noticed ghostly spots traverse the windscreen, brighten and enlarge before stopping. By now I was suffering from a serious ailment, that of laziness, so just sat and listened to the voices. Plugs and leads checked - O K. Spark and fuel checked - O K. Switch on! Only a weak whine. Alpine mechanics must be used to this, we'll soon be down in the valley so I found myself a more comfortable position in the seat and congratulated myself on getting things sorted out - yet again!

Aghh! The shock to the body as Colin the Yeti opened the door. "Don't drip all over the seats you little git" I commanded him. "He says a tow is the only solution" came the responce. Tow? The word sank slowly in.

Panic! No lights or wipers and the snow plastered windows allowed only vague shapes to be discerned outside. I turned to Colin, to tell him I wasn't at all happy about being towed. A wild sound of a revving engine hit me. Red lights diminished in a microsecond, a white line tensioned as if Atlas was playing Yo-Yo with the Earth. Hit by ten G's of acceleration, lift off, a soaring sensation, a circling horizon, floating and I imagined a Tiddler being plucked from the sea by a Whale Catcher. Instant grounding, crumpled body, flattened face, arms and legs wrapped round seats and wheel. What about the poor old car?

I noted the 65km/hr in only 1.2sec. and the needle still rising. I nearly did, but managed to control the reflexes. How to steer? By the lights. Keep them central. Left, right, more-more, now hard over. What's in the road? Car, drifts, boulders, or holes, but in a split second before any avoiding action could be taken a different configuration of these had appeared. Now vibrations, I'm off the road! Swinging the wheel, black shiny cliffs leap out on one side, but a slight opposite movement gives a solid stone wall. I tighten my grip on the wheel, stare in front, keep those lights in view, don't oversteer or make sudden corrections, but what should one do on a narrow



mountain road with visibility of five metres and the speedometer reading 85km/hr! Walls of solid spray hit the car followed by a violent lunge down and rightwards in what seemed a bottomless chasm, only to be forced back into the seat on climbing out in a vertical trajectory. The needle oscillating around 95km/hr affected my concentration, so I shut my eyes, only to open them again on suffering the deceleration forces produced by slicing through a two metre deep drift. You could hear the debris falling far out in the reservoir.

I'm a careful driver, always taking note of the Highway Code and it registered that braking distance in metres is equal to $x4$ the speed in km/hr, however, on second thoughts it didn't worry me because for most of the time we had no contact with the ground! Shit! Concentrate you twonk, the lights have gone. Left or right? I'm lost! There, but out of the side window! Onwards, skidding and sliding then snaking irrationally through what appeared as a dark tunnel, guided by only two dim constipated glow-worms. The bonnet inclines more, the needle creeps up to the 105km/hr mark, while in front those lights gyrate ever more wildy.

Then an inspiration. Why not brake - BRAKE! Then I see a series of shunts, concertined and leap frogging cars playing follow my leader in poorly executed backward summersaults with pikes, before the rope snaps, then casts us far beyond the shoulders of that elephant holding up one corner of terra firma. While

in the distance is heard a quietly spoken sports commentator giving only 3.2, 3.6, 3.9 for musical interpretation.

What about Colin? Quiet. Very quiet. In fact hiding, or was he using all those rolls of Andrex stacked beneath the seat. His only comment, was that he thought the tow rope was a " bit short at 5 metres". The Andrex was all used up.

After many kilometres and an era later I noticed the sky brighten, a raindrop on the windscreen, the slope eased, then the needle dropped and on coming to a halt the engine was ticking over nicely.

"Who in the hell was driving that bloody towing car?" I asked Colin.

"All right now?" inquired Chris Ayers walking towards us.

"Do you always drive like that?" I asked her.

"No, only since I've been given a car for my new job, which is in gardening. You know, planting out flowers etc." answered Chris.

"In that case, thank God you aren't planting out forests of Giant Redwoods!" I replied.



