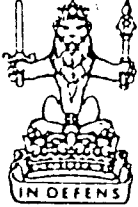


# CEUNANT MC

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1986



PROCURATOR FISCAL'S OFFICE

PO Box No 14

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Box No 26 Rutland Exchange

Telephone Inverness (0463) 224858

*Procurator Fiscal Thomas F. Aitchison*



Dear Sir

Your reference

Our reference

6235/85/TFA/ACH

Date

6 February 1986

I have received from the Police a report charging you with Fraud on 31 December 1985 at the Snow Mountain Chinese Restaurant, Unit 4, Grampian Road, Aviemore.

I am not taking proceedings against you on this occasion although there is evidence on which I could do so but I am warning you that should I ever receive in the future a report charging you with a similar offence I would really have no option but to take action against you.

Yours faithfully

Procurator Fiscal

COVER: J. Brennan 'steals' the frontispiece again!

Editorial

First off, thanks for the kind words following the last issue. I hope this one meets expectations.

Well if I'd had all the articles I'd been promised this issue would have been coming to you parcel post. Amongst the notable let downs are the Chairman's Kilimanjaro trek - he even got someone else to write his Hut article in this issue, and Steve Coughlan and Graham Spencley who have been putting an India article together for 12 months now.

Anyway its nice to see some new names in this issue even though the cover is a very old face. Dave Tonks, who writes regularly for the glossy outdoor mags, tells us about the Rum Cuillins. Our very own tribute to Mt Blanc and a very special offer is available to you this month. The clubs alpine trip, led by Steve Harratt, is chronicled by his two personal medical staff.

An intrepid weeks activity in the South of France and once again off the Livesay Trail tells of the week we should have gone to N Wales. Mr Fairey's ornithological report starts what could become a regular item telling of several close encounters with the birds. Mr Brennan in quote, unquote recalls some classic Ceunant moments and I recall a couple more. At last Roger has reported the outdoor meets and finally the club library and contents in case you never knew it existed.

May I be one of the first to wish the warmest of seasons greetings and get those pens to paper for the New Year.

MJL  


Enclosed is the latest Membership Address list - please contact Jim Fairey if you find any errors or ommissions.

J W F

# CRACKERS

With  
David  
Tonks

**A**fter no preparation worth speaking of, we met in Kendal on the eve of our departure for the Isle of Rum, a place for the birds. The concept had an easy elegance - sail to Rum and walk along the crest of the Cuillin Ridge. Simple, a doddle, but not quite doodling. You can take a ferry from Mallaig but they are few and far between and you need permission to visit the island so some careful planning is usually required. Our concept had great inherent flexibility through taking Bill's boat and through the absence of any careful preparation or planning. The boat - Crackers - is well-named. A modest day boat, it became a yacht when discussed with third parties who couldn't see it which was often the case when it was tied up alongside some sleek gin palace.

So, Crackers was floated off at high tide into the very foul harbour at Mallaig. Out in the Sound of Sleat a cold Northerly wind was blowing Force 5 so the first day was spent tied up at the pier, sorting out a mountain of unnecessary gear. Kit expands to fill the space available and the spare pillow cases had to be used to cushion the Jamaica Cake. Bill dived into a book entitled "Introduction to Seamanship". The crew launched into a poem, surrounded by a 'thousand slimy things' in that sewer of a harbour.

The next day - 1022 millibars and rising. Bill, "by his greying beard and glittering eye", took the tiller and we beat across to the Point of Sleat and then on to Rum in ideal conditions. The map of Rum looks like an illustration of bathroom tiles and is most expensive in terms of cost per unit of land area. The Ordnance Survey puts it this way - "detached parts of the Highland Region Lochaber District." It includes Eigg as well as Rum. According to the literature, the Isle of Eigg is known as Eilean nam Ban-mor in Gaelic and that translates as Isle of Big Women. This 'Wedding Guest' thought of detached parts as we continued to Rum, also known as Rhum and sometimes as Rhouma. We anchored in Loch Scresort which has Kinloch, the only settlement, at its head.

Rum is owned by the Nature Conservancy Council which purchased the whole estate in 1957 from a Lady Bullough. The Bullough family in the nineteenth century must have been afflicted with some compelling sense of one-upmanship. Most wealthy Lancashire families were content to escape their dark satanic mills for a sprawling acre or two by the shores of Windermere. Sir George Bullough acquired Rum, built an outrageous castle at Kinloch and a ridiculous mausoleum at Harris on the other side of the island. It's a wonder the revolution did not start on Rum with the remaining crofters having to live alongside such conspicuous and tasteless extravagance. The castle is open to visitors and you can pay to play at being the landed gentry if you can also pretend that the place does not look like a municipal wash-house. During the reign of the Bulloughs. Rum was a forbidden place. Now, the N.C.C. has about sixty square miles of laboratory for experiments with flora and fauna and, no doubt, for many Ph.D.s and freebies. The island is designated as a National

The Ridge up to Ainshua



Nature Reserve but walkers and climbers are not unwelcome. There has to be a conflict of interest but the N.C.C. has adopted a sensible position and you are simply asked to obtain permission prior to a visit. This seems to be readily given - "He praveth well, who loveth well - Both man and bird and beast." The lines belong in a silly seafaring section but there is an outrageous and ridiculous fit in this paragraph. Walkers, climbers and sailors are not discouraged but neither are they encouraged. Increasing numbers would probably shift the existing policy and perhaps this tale is a trespass. A place for the birds. The Manx Shearwater is primus inter pares in terms of numbers and fame but the island plays host to a variety of bird life including Golden and Sea Eagles; red deer, insects, (including ferocious midges of course), and the results of a re-afforestation programme. Some parts of the island are closed to visitors at certain times of the year and day visitors are expected to stick to the low level nature trails which are interesting but not what you might call exhilarating. The more ambitious walker who has his heart set on a traverse of the main ridge should apply for permission through the Chief Warden or the Regional Officer for North West Scotland. It is worth noting that there is only one small grocery shop, no accommodation to speak of apart from camping and no rescue facility. If all this puts you off the idea of a visit then perhaps an invisible hand is at work. However, to finish with the 'ghastly' logistics and to return to the



*All photos: David Tonks*

we followed the obvious trail up the Allt Sluga a' Choilich leading to a wet corrie that is best escaped to the left by heading up to the rocky finger of Cnapan Breaca. Arriving at the Bealach Bairc-mheall you can decide whether or not a detour to take in Barkeval is worth the effort. It was for us but you might not be favoured with a clear day. Leave the packs at the Bealach and the summit of Barkeval is but half an hour away. It gives spectacular views over the Orval and the more gentle slopes on the North side of the island. The track from Kinloch to Harris is seen below, a possible route for the return journey. Canna, Skye, the Outer Hebrides and the mainland are scattered around the horizon. Back to the luggage and a steady pull brings you to Hallival with clear views down to Kinloch and the magnificent Glen Harris, captured in the question mark, escaping to the West. From Hallival, the ridge narrows and becomes more interesting. In places, you encounter improbable sward draped over the crest, a consequence of the droppings of the Manx Shearwaters which nest in these high places. The N.C.C. people monitor the burrows which pepper the grassy parts of these steep edges so that you keep coming across neatly numbered streets of holes which only need milk and newspapers on the doorsteps. The ridge up to Askival offers steep gabbro which gives easy scrambling or you can avoid the offer by turning to the left. From the summit, we made a rapid descent to Bealach an Oir where water sparkled in the bright sun. A

cotton hat and a water bottle were both in the bowels of Crackers. Red deer pranced away as we clattered down to the pools to gulp water, peat and various insects that might have had some massive entomological significance. Thus fortified, we set off to Trallval where it's not hard to imagine the imps and demons having their homes. This, of course, is what the Vikings had in mind. The top of Trallval is a very steep rocky crest.

Turning to the stem of the question mark, both the descent to the Bealach an Fhuarain and the climb to Ainshval look forbidding but if you can see both then you are blessed with good weather and route finding is no great problem although it's a bit loose in places. My problem at this stage was a massive thirst as we simmered under a sun that belonged in the poem and, thereby, elsewhere in this tale - 'nor any drop to drink'. Awkward parts of the ridge up to Ainshval can be avoided to left or to right and the summit arrives sooner than expected. Now you have cracked it. The stretch to Sgurr nan Gillean is relatively easy and you can saunter with the dark depths of Glen Dibidil below and perhaps with an eagle soaring around the faces. The ridge snakes away behind you and the option of continuing to Ruinsival will be re-affirmed, resurrected or rejected. Sgurr nan Gillean itself, the stop that completes the question mark, is a fitting finale to the ridge. The ground drops away steeply in every direction and the view to the Isle of the Big Women is beguiling when you are becoming delirious through dehydration. ◊

'tale', we resided steorage in Crackers, carried the Jamaica Cake down in the holds and had a grand time.

The main ridge of the Rum Cuillins describes the shape of a question mark which is apt given the reputation for cloud cover. Bold resolution could become shrouded by doubt. Route finding is complicated in the mist. the ridge starts from Barkeval behind Kinloch and then links the peaks of Hallival, Askival (the highest at 812 metres), Trallval, Ainshval and finally Sgurr nan Gillean unless you decide to carry on to Ruinsival. Nowhere is the ridge as dramatic as the Skye Cuillins but some sections are steep and require a little scrambling if you are to keep to a direct line. All the difficulties can be avoided but, if you wish to search out technical difficulty, there is much rock climbing to be found under the ridges. Certain sections look intimidating from a distance, such as the sweep up to Ainshval, but they fall back or present easy alternatives when approached. All in all, this main ridge gives a long, high level walk with tremendous panoramas in every direction. It is a most attractive objective. A major problem, psychological if not physiological, is that the ridge is a huge switchback with some massive dips such as that at the Bealach on Oir which involves a descent of 350 metres from Askival and a climb of 250 metres up to Trallvall. You need to be reasonably fit.

Our day dawned fine and we should have recognised the likelihood of dehydration. Leaving the flies and ancient rhymes behind,



*Kinloch & Loch Scresort from the Bealach Bairc-mheall*

# DOODLING ON THE RUM CUILLINS

From here, three obvious routes can be considered for the return to Kinloch. One is to descend Leac at Chaisteil for Ruinsival and then down to Harris for the long walk back on the track. Another option would be to return the way you have come but to skirt round the peaks by traversing from the main bealachs. We dropped down to the bothy at Dibidil, arriving some ten hours after leaving Kinloch. This is probably a reasonable time to allow for the whole ridge if you want to savour the walk and the running shorts have been left behind. From Dibidil, a well-defined but wet track takes the coastline back to Kinloch and this takes another two hours if you press on as we did, eager to return to the goodies down below in Crackers.

And so, back to the briny with Barnacle Bill taking us into a 'silent sea' and more plagiarism. Sailing to Canna, we met a flat calm and the sea was a millpond dotted with puffins posing as ducks. Crackers 'tacked no more.' We arrived on the engine. Canna is an exquisite island but we didn't stay long for we had an assignment with the Skye Cuillins. Alas, in the gothic gloom of Loch Scavaig the weather quickly deteriorated and I have yet to see the place in sunshine. Cooped up below decks on a miserable day, the standard of rhetoric degenerated to grunts and meaningful glances so it was a relief, the next day, to escape and head back for Mallaig, goosewinged much of the way, sirens all around. Inspired by the day and by the memory of the Rum Cuillins, the doodling tale is told.

*Above right: Summit of Sgurr Nan Gillean with Eigg in the middle distance*



*Above: Hallival & Loch Scresort - Skye on the horizon*



*Dibidil Bothy*

## INFORMATION

**USEFUL SOURCES:**The Isle of Rum. A Short History - J. A. Love. Nevisprint, 1983.  
Rhum - Hamish M. Brown. Cicerone Press, 1972.

Rhum and Eigg. Sheet 39 - Ordnance Survey 1:50000 Landranger Series.

**USEFUL CONTACTS:**Chief Warden, Nature Conservancy Council, White House, Kinloch, Isle of Rum.

Regional Officer for North West Scotland, Nature Conservancy Council, Caledonia House, 63 Academy Street, Inverness.

**USEFUL INSPIRATION:**The Ascent of Rum Doodle - W. E. Bowman, Dark Peak, 1979. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner - S. T. Coleridge.

## SUDDENLY EVERYTHING WENT BLANC

Can it really be 200 years since Mont Blanc was first conquered, thus giving rise to the Guinness Book of records as we know it today? Has this lump of ice, snow and rock really been climbed by more than 5,000 Victorian clergymen, 3,000 Edwardian ladies and a team from the Egon Ronay mountain catering research department? Do St Bernard dogs really roam the upper slopes intoxicated by the fumes from the little barrels round their necks? Does the tip of Mont Blanc really hold the record for the most sunshine hours anywhere in Europe?

The answers to these questions are; yes, probably, certainly not, and who cares? all this and much more can be found in the **Ceunant Book of Mont Blanc**, just rushed out to greet the bicentenary of the tallest mountain in France.

Did you know, for example, that a tin of pate de foie gras abandoned on the summit in 1877 was opened nearly a hundred years later and found to have gone quite rotten? Did you know that Mont Blanc is known to the Sherpas of Nepal as Little White Pimple?

Only in the **Ceunant Book of Mont Blanc** can you find such riveting facts. Only here will you find the true story of Edwina Pargeter, who in 1911 proposed to her sweetheart after they had scaled Mont Blanc together and was promptly turned down by him on the grounds that he was already married.

Only here can you discover what really happened to the illfated 1973 Natwest expedition to open a Cashpoint on the top of Mont Blanc. And only here will you find out for the first time just why the attempt on Mont Blanc by Lord Lichfield and the Twelve Most Beautiful Girls in the World came to an ill-fated end in a bar in Chamonix.

There is now a supermarket, office complex and parking for 400 cars atop this fabled peak, but once upon a time Mont Blanc was a magnet that drew the daring from all nations and a number of remarkably stupid people from Great Britain.

In 1893, the youngest son of the Earl of Truro set out to trace the source of the Blue Nile to the top of Mont Blanc, and until 1950 the remnants of his elephants could still be seen on a very clear day. More recently, the Rag Week Committee of Exeter University set out in 1959 to place a lawnmower on top of Mont Blanc, and as far as we know they are still trying.

And in the **Ceunant Book of Mont Blanc** you will also find a complete set of all the records achieved on the slopes of this fearsome range such as:-

**Slowest Ascent Ever:** Mr & Mrs Thackeray of Bicester (1886-1888)

**First Ascent from the Inside:** The Potholing Club of Skipton.

**First Ascent Backwards:** Mrs Inge Thuling of Munich who waltzed to the top with her husband in 1903, accompanied by a violin-playing guide.

**Highest Snooker Break Ever on Mont Blanc:** Don Blackwell of Leeds, with a final pink to make a total of 76.

**Most unlikely Object Ever Found on Mont Blanc:** in 1963, an unexplained launderette at 15,400 feet, which is still in perfect working order.

Now, of course, there is a four lane highway to the summit with motorway service areas every 400 yards, but in 1786 when Jean Pierre Guinness and Maximilian MacWhirter first forced their way to the top, there was little to guide them except 'keep out' signs.

The thrilling story of the first 200 year of Mont Blanc is bound to turn the **Ceunant Book of Mont Blanc** into a bestseller. So don't be disappointed. Send now for your copy of this mountaineering classic, which comes with a genuine bit of the mountain itself, **FREE** in a small plastic bag! (Please allow for meltage in transit).

**\*\* Special Offer!** If you present this article you will be entitled to one free drink at the Mont Blanc Disco at the very summit.

This offer expires 01/04/87

J W F

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Spiegeleier and Roesti

Spurred on by the lethargy of the Ceunant, two budding alpinists and their ageing sherpa 'Jeeves' set off for the centre of Victorian climbing near St Moritz. Lacking the street cred of Chamonix certain members of the Ceunant felt that it would be beneath them to come as well. Undeterred, the erstwhile 'A' team set off. Discovering at Dover from an unguarded passport that Jeeves was even older than we had thought, we were worried at having forgotten to pack the walking frame and bath chair. Luckily the feather pillow had been included although space was somewhat limited due to the inclusion of a large number of jackets belonging to Jeeves (necessary for a sherpa). With unprecedented foresight one of the stay-at-home Ceunants had thought to supply Jeeves with sufficient bromide pills to allow him to sleep peacefully for 2½ weeks.

The first week was spent training Jeeves up to our required standard (climbing of course!). Fed with an abundant supply of figs, nuts (the edible variety) and dried apricots he was put through his paces on the crags, accompanied by agonised cries of, "I need another constitutional" (crap - for those stay-at-homes). We finally decided that we had got as much out of him as we were likely to, so we set off for the high Alps, Jeeves by cable car.

Having dragged Jeeves out of bed at a very uncivilised early morning hour, we realised a major oversight, Jeeves had forgotten to order the full moon. So, partially equipped with head torches we made for the summit in pitch dark. Competently negotiating the crevasses, bergschunds and the odd ice pitch we soon reached the summit of Piz Palu as the sun rose. Two hundred yards down the west ridge a German climber failed to succeed in what must have been his attempted suicide which put a slight damper on the previously high spirits. Stopping once on the Bella Vista Terrace for a much needed constitutional a deux, we soon made it to the Marco and Rosa hut. Jeeves was knackered! Under much protest Jeeves had carried a loaf and bread up the hill, but this now came into its own as we discovered initially that no food was available.

The next day we set off for Piz Bernina and despite the attempts of two Iti's to stop us from getting there alive we made it. By this stage bromide was no longer needed - constant cries of, "steady the pace", were heard from the rear.

The following day the weather finally did the dirty on us and we were snowed in, monotony only slightly being broken by regular consumption of Spiegeleier and Ros. The storm was short lived and the next day we were soon trail blazing on the h again. This time Jeeves was sent in front in order to negotiate the multitude crevasses that had been covered up by the 12 inches of powder snow that had fallen previous day. In fairness he managed tolerably well and we were soon standing on Zupo. Having thus conquered the three highest peaks we began our descent. We bum into a party from Leicester who, hearing we were from Brum said, you must be from Ceunant (fame at last!).

Back in civilisation - beer, food in St Moritz, toilet paper and a surplus of Oz, bromide was put back to work again.

The following day we made a quick trip to the Badle to whet our appetites for the expedition, and then it was time to come home. Stopping only to get completely arseholed for the boat trip we arrived safe and sound, Jeeves and the car in piece..... (shame didn't stay that way! - Ed).

Doc and Sub

Editors' note:

Bernina Alps in Eastern Switzerland. Most easterly of the high mountain groups peaks over 4000m. The Bernina Pass road is said to give the finest mountain glacier views of any road pass in the Alps.

Piz Bernina 4049m highest point in the Bernina Alps first climbed in 1850.  
Piz Zupo 4008m (1863), Piz Palu 3905m.

"So the guidebook, let's go up 'ers, or off the Livesey trail

This was to be it, a week of glorious South of France weather, lots of good quality climbing, no worries of protection, a few beers and a few laughs. Saturday morning still hasn't dawned and we hit the road heading for Dover. We soon hit something else, fog but you know the Ceunant drivers, they like a challenge and this was against the clock. Probably only Charlie Farley has done it faster. As we enter the dock gate at 0729 we are told we will miss the 0730. 'Huh' says Sirc. As we get out of the car the ramp closes up, time 0731.

Our immediate aim is to get to Buoux by nightfall, however excellent weather along the way persuades us to detour into the Vercors. We head for Saillons and Le Trois Colls. Now these are three very large cliffs, Livesey describes 3 routes. We can't even find his supposed campsite let alone the obvious classic line from the road. We head back into town for the night and make plans for Buoux.

After one of two pressions (did you say demi-litre monsieur - oui froggy silsvosplate!) we hit the town carnival. Some great stalls and 6a/b (english) fairground rides. Catch a goose was a favourite with the boys - chuck a hoop over a live goose's neck to win it (!) - fortunately we all missed. And, no wonder Steve has got a bad back, what a ride. Imagine being spun around at high speed in a large saucer but add in a tilt and then the sort of oscillations you would experience in the bottom of Brennan's empty beer glass. There you have it the ultimate fairground ride.

Next day having duly paid our site fees we head for Buoux. Now Livesey describes this place as 'bolt city' the more recent gazeteer says, 'the bolts are totally untrustworthy'. We find Buoux, we find a campsite and we loose most of the exhaust system. Eventually we hit the rock and with the assistance of the Livesey guide locate La Beda (5b) and a route just right given 5a. Sirc and Jimmy (Spenceley) go for La Beda. Me and Steve the easier route to start. I do the first pitch and reach the crux without problem. Lots of good in situ gear and best of all, a very warm late afternoon sun. The crux is a very balancy step on to a ramp - the ramp is at head height when you start the moves. I do it on about the sixth attempt and belay. Meanwhile Sirc is coming down from La

Beda, its a little tough for 5b (and Sirc). Steve follows me very fast only to be slowed down by the crux and then its on to pitch 2. We discard the guidebook, it makes no sense, and follow a line of gear. This takes Steve to a very fine finger crack. This is in fact the crux of another route, Franco-Belge. Given 5b, its probably nearer 5c, its a good line to the belay. Steve aids but comes down and leads through free, I find it strenuous but manage it. Meanwhile Sirc motors our previous pitch but heads off for a belay on the left. We do the third pitch of Franco-Belge which is great. Sirc and Jimmy finish on the very fine second pitch of La Beda.

Next morning was spent getting the exhaust put back on the car. We finally hit the rock in mid afternoon. Guidebooks discarded we set off exploring. Pick a line, any line and we did and both parties failed. We moved along the crag to the slabs above the special school (location of route called Brazil). Steve and me leave Sirc and Jimmy and move further along opposite the road out of Buoux. Here we found a great line. A large shallow yellow corner provided a superb pitch of strenuous bridging. Meanwhile Sirc was exceeding himself a slab route which must have been closing on 6a at the crux. Our corner was superb, especially for me because I led it. Sirc and Jimmy did it after and we all agreed it to be of classic quality.

The following day, Tuesday, was planned as our last at Buoux. An early start, we hit rock before lunch. Steve led very well up Sirc and Jim's hard route (2 routes left of Brazil). A very delicate slab with the bolts competitively spaced up to a hanging groove. The crux is just above the peg in this groove and I must admit, Coughlan with 'head on' made it look easy. I followed and found it the hardest route so far. Meanwhile Sirc and Jim did a very obvious easy layback crack off the pedestal from where the difficulties of Brazil start. A nice crack, easy, probably the only easy route at Buoux. At the top of the crack you have a choice, overhang or traverse right to belay. Sirc failed the direct option and moved right. My lead and crack was very pleasant. That ever competitive urge pushed me to try and finish where Sirc had failed. The problem is to move up into an overhanging, elephants bum of a groove. I managed to get good height and clip, very strenuously the crucial bolt, now wait for it, that took my energy and I retired to earth. Steve took up where I left off and with some very insecure laybacking cracked it. I followed and yes, it was very hard. Sirc meanwhile having failed on two very extreme lines moved in to pick up the gauntlet. With plenty of verbal encouragement, (eg "you've got no chance bograt") from the joyous A team he took his time and even came off. Finally he cracked it but it proved too much for Jimbo.



Steve and me decided to have a go at Brazil which is definitely 6a. The first part of the first pitch is superb up to the pedestal where the difficulties start. Despite the ace position I just didn't have the strength, technique, style or tights (delete as applicable) to do it. Similarly a little too testing for my partner.

Back at the campsite we cooked up, tuna fish for a change and the odd splash of vin rose. We decided that enough was enough and to head for Verdon that evening. We duly paid our campsite fees - we did, honest, the man had la grand chien! And with the odd scrape of the exhaust got on our way.

We made fairly good progress stopping at the start of the gorge, Moustiers Ste. Marie. Now Steve and Sirc swore positive that the coach always stopped here when they went skiing, I was doubtful about this claim as it would appear to be a long way round. They reckoned that when they had been here before they'd been so pissed that they couldn't recall the spectacular cliffs in which the town is nestled. We later discovered that meant a different part of the country altogether.

We made camp at Couloir Samson and during the night we were woken by a serious storm. I couldn't believe the weather when we woke. Torrential rain forced us away in search of sun. We headed to St Jeunet (north of Nice) only to meet more storms. The rest of the day was spent on the coast, at the 'Casino avec cafeteria' and even a swim at St Raphael.

Back up in the gorge the weather was still bad. This was the first rain for months, we were reliably informed. The lower bar in La Palud began to make a small fortune out of us.

Thursday looked more promising and we spent the morning at Falaise Ayens (out of La Palud going east for 2-3 kms, park in woods on left and crag is below you some 10 yards in front) which has lots of short, well protected routes of all grades. (Worth a visit if the weather looks in doubt). Hopeful for a good afternoon we moved on to the big stuff. What timing Steve and me went to do Arab Dement. At the bottom of the first abseil the heavens opened and international rescue in the form of Sirc and Jimmy, came to our aid. Soon I was top roped out. Sirc, very considerately gave me a waterproof. I brought Steve up and this gave rise to the quote of the week, "Where's me jacket", Steve said. "I never brought it", Sirc says. "What, why not?", Steve says. "I thought it would get wet", Sirc says. A classic.

The bar made a fortune as we boozed ourselves silly and for one of the team, into the veritable coma and a night in the car (sorry Steve). A frantic butty session, which I still cannot recall saw off the Bresse Bleu and goodnight.

Once again the morning dawned fine. We had a short trip into the gorge through the caves and dried out all the wet gear. But just as we were packing up to go climbing the storms started again. The rest of the day was wasted.

Saturday morning and we packed for home. Yes, you guessed, the weather looked promising but the decision was made. However someone, guess who (Mr Very Keen - recently married) suggested we head home via Buoux. Of course the weather in Buoux was superb and we had a great afternoons sport.

The highlights were Sirc's lead of the week. La Ratiere - not a bolt in sight just a manky thread. It was a great lead. Jimmy fell off the crux four times - Sirc had led it with no protection in at all. Steve and me couldn't get more than 10 feet off the ground. Fortunately I think with what we know now this was good because just above the crux is a hand hold with a rat living inside it. Ugh! Absolutely true.

Steve made an almost clean ascent of La Beda and I, for the first time ever, had to be winched following. A very strenuous pitch. Sirc of course followed with ease. Following various earlier pings I got saving grace leading the second pitch.

We left Apt at 9.45 pm following one or two beers and drove through the night to Fontainbleu. Mr Keen had the idea that we might do a route or two on Sunday morning. We dosed down at 3.45 am and woke a few hours later in thick fog. We finally got out of the fog half an hour before Calais.

Back in Dover the weather was great. Mr Keen was warned, "don't even think about Harrison's". And so it ended.

Mark Lund

## Ornithological Report

Have you ever paused to consider how strange the English language is? It is derived from many native tongues including Roman, Norse, Celt and Saxon. Perhaps this is why there are times when a single word can have three or four meanings. Let me give you an example.

One bright but cool day in June this year, Steve Harvatt and I made a respectably early start for Gogarth to do 'Dream of White Horses'. This was a route we had both long cherished doing and the omens looked good. Steve led the delicate first pitch across to the hanging stance (tough luck Steve!) and I lead through to the crack of Wen. Having belayed and commenced bringing Steve across, my attention was diverted to the late arrivals on the cliff top (namely the lazier members of the club who were now congregating to view the proceedings). But to return to my original question, this cry came from Herr Harvatt.

" SHAG !! "

Well, there was instant pandemonium from the viewing gallery as Club Members strained to see who was involved and, more importantly, how it was to be achieved given the confines of the near vertical rockface.

On the other hand, I interpreted Steve's shout as a cry for the darker variety of tobacco, since his cravings for nicotine (paid for and provided by others) are well know to me.

But, in reality his intention was to draw attention to the 'PHALACROCORAX ARISTOTELIS' (commonly know as the Shag) which was flying majestically overhead.

So, here we have three meanings for one word which illustrates my point. This incident drew my attention to yet another of the divergent interests club members seem to be developing. Our Club has always been strict on who qualifies as a new member since it wants to attract climbers, not walkers, cyclists etc. More recently the committee has turned a blind eye to the growing number of Ski Fanatics on the grounds that it is a sport closely connected to the mountains and a suitable means of keeping the older members in touch with 'Regions Haute'.

However, bird watching by club members was news to me but apparently growing in popularity. Confirmation of this came a few weeks later when I made my first visit to Mother Scareys. Due to a miscalculation on our part with the tides, the abseil ledge was exposed for the whole of the day. Consequently, we could not perform the traditional U-turn in the carpark. I teamed up with Steve Coughlan and we were pointed up some HVS 5a with the description 'it goes up there'. Steve led off and after 20feet of impressive, solid rock he commenced a pattern of enormous zigzags up to the first belay.

I soon discovered that after the initial obvious line the zigzagging was essential as the remainder of the route was composed of a series of both small and large blocks held together by blades of grass, earth and guano. As I approached the belay Steve pointed out the two nesting Fulmars (FULMAREUS GLACIALIS) directly above me which had already regurgitated the contents of their stomachs over him. I was able to side step the danger area and started to lead through.

Immediately I found that the only solid piece of rock contained a recess with yet another nest with Fulmar youngster threatening to halt my progress. The characteristic billowing of the neck with beak stretched fully open warned me that I had disturbed it and revenge would follow instantly. I took a step to the side and turned to warn Steve.

Too late! I watched the finely aimed spray of golden fluid emerge from the niche and, glinting in the sunlight, fall inexorably towards my partner. Steve, sad to say, was completely restrained by the belays and fatefully had turned his head sideways towards me to heed my warning. The Fulmar's vomit streamed neatly and accurately into his ear and then down his neck to disappear into the nether regions of his underwear. His considerable surprise quickly turned to crys of disgust and then screams of abuse. I decided a quick advance was required although the dangerous condition of the 'route' above did not help. A top rope later we assembled on safe and solid ground.

Did I say assembled? Well, when Steve arrived our cliff top rescuers quickly dispersed muttering comments about "fishfingers", "codliver oil" and "who's underwear have you got on Steve?" When it came to getting him into the car, the driver refused entry until all his articles of clothing had been removed and sweet smelling substances sprayed on his head, neck and shoulders (which only resulted in him smelling like a sardine trawlerman's Saturday night dream).

Nevertheless, I was impressed by yet another club member's knowledge of bird life and no doubt this latest interest of Club members will continue to flourish. Anyone interested should preferably (a) be named Steve and/or (b) enjoy sea cliff climbing but please do not let the Committee become aware of this obvious distraction from the real purpose of the Club.

J W F

Ceunant Reliability

- \* "See you in Grindieford Caff, Saturday 10.00am." Coughlan, Mynette, Sirhc. They finally turn up .....on Wednesday night in the Old Crown , Broad St.
- \* "Yes definitely, I'll do it. NO sweat.It'll be ready for next Wednesday evening. Great. Super." .....Roger Haworth promising article on Pic Du Europa, September 1985.

Great Comebacks

- \* "I hope to hit the rock again this year." .....Patrick Keeley, June 1983.

Dramatic Changes of Lifestyle

- \* "At last. I've found it, a job I like. I'm going to be a professional golfer." .....Sirhc, August 1986.

Considered Opinions

- \* "Why go to Anglesea to end up as red pulp at the bottom of the cliffs ?" ..... Steve Coughlan as he switches the autopilot to Tremadoc. Summer 86
- \* "Tremadoc is the best climbing area in the world, best routes, best rock, most variety." ..... Sirhc, Summer 86.

Pearls of Wisdom

- \* "Its raining! That's it! Its a waste of time, you watch. The skiing is going to be a washout now for the rest of the week." ..... Roger Evans on day one of a super week in Mirabell, Easter 86.
- \* "Why should I believe in fail safe - everything they have ever made has leaked." .....Member of that rare species, an anti-nuclear Cumbrian.
- \* Police Sergeant: "You're not making it easy for yourself. It would be much better to confess!"
- Me: "Is this how Scottish justice operates ? Pleading guilty to a crime makes it much easier in a Scottish Court ?"

Police Sergeant: Its a disgrace, you people coming up here and doing this. Its not even as if you're from Glasgow!" ..... Police cell in Aviemore, New Year 85/86.

Classic Crux Avoidance

Guidebook;takes the obvious direct line through the bulge (crux).  
 Me - "Why did you traverse around the bulge."  
 Joe - 1. "That was the route."  
 or - 2. "It was the obvious line of difficulty."  
 alternatively - 3. "The guidebook got it wrong" (especially popular excuse in Pembroke)  
 and finally - 4. "Another HVS under the belt and one for the boys." .....  
 ..... Climbing with Joe, anywhere, anytime, any place. Ed

Great Discoveries

- \* "Look! There's land out there! Is that France, Martin?" ..... Allison, gazing out South Westwards from Sennen Cliffs, Summer 86.
- \* "What a place to learn how to tie a bowline!" ..... Dennis Jordan, halfway up The Curver, Castell Cidwm, October 86.

Further Education

- \* "That George Michael is a clever pratt, you know. He even sings his own vocals" ..... Steve Coughlan, October 86.
- \* "It can't fly! I can't do it! It'll jump off and kill itself. No, I can't have that on my conscience." ..... Martin Jolley, chickening out of an encounter with a young cormorant, Escaliber, Bosistow Lawn, Cornwall, July 86.

Great Expectations

- \* "What's the matter with this club? No one seems interested in the Alps anymore." ..... Anne the Doc, puzzling over the general lack of enthusiasm in the Club for high altitude snow walking. Summer 86.
- \* "Bollocks to snowploughs and all that crap. Let's go straight onto parallels." ..... Mark Lund, strapping on skis for the first time. Aviemore, New Year 85/86.
- \* "You go on ahead, I'll catch up with you later. I'll just sit here a while ... feeling a bit dizzy. Too many bangs on the head". ..... Mark Lund, later the same day.

And more ..... from the Editor

More Ceunant Reliability

Me - "OK, I'm just going to the bog, when I come back let's run for it".  
 I get up and reach the bog door, looking back and what was a full table of friends now looks like a scene from the Marie Celeste - lots of hot food but no one to eat it.  
 Daley Thompson would have been proud of my hurdling.  
 Still justice was done! .....  
 ..... Snow Mountain Restaurant, Aviemore, New Year 86.

## H a p p e n i n g s a t t h e H u t

Just a few lines to let you know what has been happening at Tyn Lon and what else we hope to do by March '87 under the direction of Hut Fuhrer "Sirch".

Our first aim has been to make the hut watertight again. Both gable ends have been re-rendered and other parts of the walls re-rendered where necessary. The joint between the two cottages which form Tyn Lon has been sealed. Only time will tell whether this new seal is effective!

A new drain has been constructed to prevent flooding in the kitchen. (Please throw your tea leaves in the bin and not the sink to prevent further problems). The kitchen has also had a new lick of paint to complement the good work done by Martin Jolley last year.

You may have noticed, the stove has been missing for a couple of months. A major refit has just been completed by Derrick Grummitt which has converted the stove to turn only coal which is now cheaper than wood. In the meantime, Ian Sayers has made an excellent job of refurbishing the alcove where the stove is sited. The stove will return to Tyn Lon very soon and although externally it will not look much different to start with, new castings are on order from Belgium which when received and bolted into place should make the stove right for a good few years.

At this years Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that we would aim to improve the bedrooms this year. We are going to renew about half of the worst mattresses with new foam and get new covers for all the mattresses and pillows. We hope to have these installed by the Bonfire Night (8 November).

Further work we need to do to the bedrooms includes, repairing the bed shelves and boxing in the front of these shelves to keep the bedrooms cleaner. The bedroom walls could do with a bit of filling and a lick of paint would not go amiss. Anyone able to help out please see SIRCH.

At the beginning of '87 we hope (funds permitting so please pay up early) to refit the small front bedroom in alpine style. The aim being to make the room cleaner and reduce maintenance for many years to come.

Finally, although you can't please everyone all the time (because there is still plenty of things left to be done) we hope to have pleased at least some of you some of the time by the end of the year. My thanks go to all who have given their time so freely to improve our place.

TONY MYNETTE

PS We can get pillow cases at "the right price", however a lot of our pillows have gone missing over the years. If you are able to donate a pillow please let John Pettet know and he'll arrange for it to be covered.

PPS Chairman's per-ks include the services of a ghost writer! Many thanks to Tanker the Banker for this ?

## A COUNTRY DIARY

THE LAKE DISTRICT: Two or three feet from the holds on one of the climbs on Grey Crag above Buttermere is a fine example of the least (or dwarf) willow — the smallest tree in Britain, no more than a couple of inches high. The plant could hardly have survived on a popular crag, suggesting that Birkness Combe is perhaps becoming an old-fashioned climbing ground nowadays. Revisiting the corrie after a long absence the lack of erosion on the faint track through the boulders and up the screes and scant sign of regular use of the climbs seemed to confirm this. Perhaps the climbs — apart from the few very

severe ones — are too easy for today's highly-technical experts and, sited so high above steep fellsides, not nearly so convenient as roadside crags. So we had the combe to ourselves although wet rocks, drizzle and thick cloud confined our activities to simple pottering. I was reminded of a far worse day many years ago when two of us came upon three elderly gentlemen in rough tweeds and nailed boots repeating the climbs they themselves had pioneered fifty years earlier. We had decided that conditions were far too bad for climbing but, meeting them, felt shamed into following them up one of their routes. All were famous of climbers and one, a nationally-known figure, told me that even on a miserable day Birkness Combe could be "the most wonderful place in the world." His devotion to the haunts of his youth has long been an inspiration to me. There are few more dramatic and beautiful corners in Lakeland than this high, crag-encircled hollow and, with the mists swirling round unseen depths, I had to agree there is far more to Birkness Combe than tipping up the summit rocks (Grey Crag) on a windy summer morning.

A. HARRY GRIFFIN.

O u t d o o r M e e t s 1 9 8 6

I'd like to tell you about what aims I've had for the Outdoor Meets this year and the extent to which I feel we have achieved these aims.

Unlike many clubs we don't go in for having a meet every weekend. We do however aim to have a meet every month or two which is well attended and services as a focus for club activities. I have attempted to keep the meets within the reach of all club members that is to say I have chosen venues which are reasonably easy to get to and have routes to suit climbers of all abilities. I have also borne in mind that not everyone in the club climbs so I have kept clear of areas with limited walking potential such as Bolton Quarries and Avon Gorge.

I feel strongly that the role of the Outdoor Meets should at least in part be to introduce climbers to areas which they don't habitually visit. Hence the inclusion of Gower, South Devon and Dartmoor and Yorkshire Limestone into this year's programme.

Having said all this I'd now like to report on the meets which have happened and look forward to those which have yet to come.

Cornwall - West Penrith 28th March - 1st April. Strong winds and some rain greeted the 20 or so club members who made it to Trewellard Camp Site on the evening of Friday 28th March. The weather remained unsettled but climbing was possible on Saturday as well as Monday and Tuesday. Saturday saw a good turn out at Sennen while activity on Monday was concentrated at Bosigran and on Tuesday at Chair Ladder. The weekend was marred by an accident to Tim Fryer while climbing on Commando Ridge on Sunday. He has made a good recovery and has recently returned from a successful trip to the Alps. My most vivid recollection of the meet was an ascent of the classic, Little Brown Jug at Bosigran with Mark Applegate in brilliant sunshine on the Monday.

Lake District - Borrowdale 3rd - 5th May. This meet saw an excellent turn out of over 30 club members at Hollows Farm Campsite in Grange. The weekend was punctuated with frequent, heavy and highly radioactive showers but between them we blitzed the popular classics at Shepherds and Black Craggs. This weekend saw the introduction to climbing of Mick the headband who I'm sure we'll be hearing a lot more about.

South Wales - Gower 7th - 8th June. Brilliant venue, brilliant weather - unfortunately only 8 of us turned up! Climbing on Saturday was at Three Cliffs and Pennard and on Sunday at King Wall and Boiler Slab. I did 12 routes and ended up absolutely shattered! Maybe the best meet of they year. Contrary to popular rumour (J Brennan) its not 20 feet high and all choss!

Lake District - Wasdale 19th - 20th July. Another good turn out in particular a welcome return of Mick from Scotland. Unfortunately climbing on the mountain crags was out of the question so Saturday was spent quite pleasantly at Mallowbarrow Crag. Other Mick (the headband) led his first VS 2½ months after taking up climbing. On Sunday most of the meet departed to Matlock but those of us who stayed on enjoyed climbing in brilliant sunshine on Castle Rock of Friermain.

North Wales - Tyn Lon 23rd - 26th August. The August Bank Holiday Meet was well attended with lots of children present at the hut, a bar-b-q and Sirhc's works on the cottage. Climbing was in The Pass, at Idwal, at Gogarth and on Sunday at the Moelwins. Unfortunately Monday and Tuesday were deleted by a passing hurricane! A great pity as a good crowd was down there.

South Devon and Dartmoor 20th - 21st September. Brilliant settled weather prevailed throughout the meet and 20 members had a memorable weekend. Saturday was at the Dewerstone on Dartmoor and Sunday at the Daddyhole and Headfoot quarry at Torquay. Gates of Eden at Daddyhole must be one of the best routes of its grade in the Country as I am told is Moonraker at Berry Head. It only takes 2½ hours to get to this excellent climbing area and I'm sure following this meet many club members will be going there regularly.

The remaining two meets I've planned are at Malham (Yorkshire Limestone) on 11th and 12th October and at Pembroke on 18th and 19th October. The Yorkshire Limestone meet is as I have said earlier to introduce members to an area which they haven't been to or don't know well. Let's hope for a good turnout.

The second meet of the year at South Pembroke is to allow climbing on areas subject to a birds nesting ban until late summer.

I have it in mind to organise a week in Scotland in February - probably based in Bunkhouse/self catering accommodation in The Ben/Glencoe area. I'd be very interested to hear from members who would be wanting to come.

Overall I feel fairly satisfied that the meets programme is being successful in achieving its aims. If only the weather had been better it would have been brilliant.

Roger Havorth  
Outdoor Meets' Secretary

## Club Library

From Roger Lavill, Librarian.

The Club library is now at my house, 9, Clarence Road, Moseley. B13 9SX. If you wish to borrow books you can write or telephone 449 7989 in an evening. I will bring the book(s) into the club on a Wednesday evening. If you want to borrow a book in a hurry, you can call to collect it but please telephone first.

As you can see, the library is not large so I would ask members to borrow only one or two books at a time unless you are writing a thesis or something.

Also please return books promptly - two weeks should be long enough for a loan and four weeks absolute maximum.

Finally two requests; first, if you have any library books outstanding, even from years ago, please return them now. My second request is for more books. If you have any you no longer want, why not make a donation to the Club, after all you could still borrow them again!

If you come across any new titles which you think would interest a lot of members, please let me know as we hope to add a few new books from Club funds.

### 1. The Himalaya.

Doctor on Everest - P. Steele.  
Everest the Challenge - F. Young Husband.  
Everest - M. Morin.  
The Innocent on Everest - R. Izzard.  
The Ascent of Everest - J. Hunt.  
The Story of Everest - W. H. Murray.  
The Ascent of Dhaulagiri - M. Eiselin.  
Annapurna - M. Herzog.  
Annapurna II - Captain R. H. Grant.  
Nanga Parbat - K. Herrligkoffer.  
The Last Blue Mountain - R. Barker.  
The Ultimate Mountains - T. Weir.  
The Kangchenjunga Adventure - F. S. Smythe.

### 2. The Alps.

The Alps - A. Lunn.  
The Matterhorn - G. Rey.  
On the Heights - W. Bonatti.  
The Dolomites.  
The Alps - R. L. C. Irving.  
Summer Holidays in the Alps 1898-1914.  
They Came to the Hills - C. E. Engel.  
Mountaineering Holiday - F. S. Smythe.

### 3. Rest of the World.

Rock Climbing in Britain - J. E. B. Wright.  
Sea Cliff Climbing in Britain - J. Cleare/R. Collomb.  
Mountaineering in Scotland - W. H. Murray.  
The Scottish Peaks - W. A. Poucher.  
Snowdonia Through the Lens - W. A. Poucher.  
Companion into Lakeland - M. Frazer.  
Odd Corners in English Lakeland - W. Palmer.  
The Black Cliff - Crew/Soper/Wilson.  
Spitzbergen - H. Nunlist.  
Camps & Climbs in Arctic Norway - T. Weir.  
The Conquest of Fitzroy - M. Azema.  
Mischief in Patagonia - H. W. Tilman.  
White Mountain & Tawny Plain.  
The Crossing of Antarctica - Fuchs/Hillary.  
Shackleton's Voyage - D. Barr Chidsey.  
Seventh Continent - A. Scholes.

### 4. Journals.

The Alpine Journal 1974.  
Mountain World 1955.  
Mountain World 1962-63.  
Climbers Club Journal 1967.  
Birmingham University M.C. Journal 1967.  
Ceunant M.C. & Cave & Crag Club Newsletters 1958-1977.  
Mountain Craft Magazines 1955-67.

### 5. Guide Books.

#### WALES-

Snowdon South.  
Llanberis North.  
Llanberis South.

#### LAKE DISTRICT-

Anglesey-Gogarth.  
Rock Climbing in the Lake District.  
Buttermere.

#### CORNWALL-

Borrowdale.  
Lake District North.  
Great Langdale.  
Cornwall Vol. 11

#### OTHERS-

Chair Ladder.  
Bosigran.  
Selected Climbs in the Range of Mont Blanc.  
French Rock Climbs.  
Glencoe & Glen Etive-Rock & Ice.  
Lundy.  
Cuillin of Skye.  
Yorkshire Limestone.  
x Avon Gorge.  
x Wye Valley & the Cotswolds.  
x Stoney Middleton Dale.

x = These are very old and abridged versions.

### 6. Biographies, Autobiographies, Etc.

The Hard Years - Joe Brown.  
One Mans Mountains - Tom Patey.  
Portrait of a Mountaineer - Don Whillans.  
I Chose to Climb - Chris Bonnington.  
Rope Boy - Dennis Gray.  
High Adventure - Edmund Hillary.  
Memoirs of a Mountaineer - F. Spencer Chapman.  
Conquistadors of the Useless - Lionel Terray.  
Snow Commando - Mike Banks.  
The Mountain Vision - F. S. Smythe.  
This My Voyage - T. Longstaff.  
Sweep Search - H. MacInnes.

### 7. General.

International Mountain Rescue Handbook - H. MacInnes.  
Mountain Rescue Techniques - W. Mariner.  
Two Star Red - C. Moffat.  
Climbing - H. MacInnes.  
On Climbing - Evans.  
Teach Yourself Mountain Climbing (1958) ! - G. Francis.  
Artificial Aids in Mountaineering - G. Sutton.  
Big Wall Climbing - Doug Scott.  
Mountair Photography - C. D. Milner.  
A progress in Mountaineering .  
The Delectable Mountains - D. Busk.  
The Romance of Mountaineering - R. L. Irving.  
Give me the Hills - M. Underhill.  
A Treasury of Mountaineering Stories - Talbot.  
We Learned to Ski - Sunday Times.  
Ski Racing by the Experts.  
The Mountains of Youth - A. Lunn.  
The Big Walks - Gilbert/Wilson.

Messages

Thanks to you all very much for the wedding present. But, when does the other half arrive? Mr and Mrs Lund.

\* \* \* \* \*

To Mr and Mrs Farles - have a good trip to Aus and the States. And, you better keep a diary for the magazine!

\* \* \* \* \*

To the member of your club who insists on attempting to demolish my garden wall;

I don't care if it is only a company car, please do not do it again!

Angry Inhabitant, Croyde, Devon

\* \* \* \* \*

Nant Peris Body Scanner Appeal

Is there life in Nant Peris? (or indeed, North Wales). Now is your chance to help find out. Why not make a donation to the Gwynedd Hospital Body Scanner Appeal, to whom your cheques should be made payable. Then send to:

Mrs M Roberts (Treasurer)  
Cerrig-Y-Drudion  
Nant Peris  
Caernarfon  
Gwynedd LL55 4UN

Mr C Morris  
248 Moseley Road  
Bilston  
West Midlands  
WV14 6JQ