



Crystal Peak  
4572

Crystal Lake  
4372

4200

3704

11000

2800

3000

4050

2000

10500

4176

19500

12000

10000

0000

Hello Everyone,

Here it is then. This is the second magazine I have had the pleasure of putting together. And it has been a pleasure - no, honestly, it has. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

Bill Beddard probably travelled furthest and tells the story of his working trip to China. Joe Brennan graphically describes the highlights of his trip to the Karakoram with Steve Harvatt. Graham Spencely went to Nepal to paraglide from a 20,000 ft. peak and your knuckles will whiten as you read of a death defying confrontation in a Dhaka hotel. (It was the hotel staff who were dicing with death).

Graham "Sooty" Sutton delves deep into his personal archives and comes up with a couple of little gems; ski touring in the Austrian Alps and climbing in the Channel Islands. Derek Grimmitt provides an introduction to more archive material, a history of the Club to 1965 by Mary Kalin and Tony Daffern reprinted from the Club journal of that year.

Mark "Mitch" Mitchell's article will have you and the rest of the Ceunant heading for sunbaked, bolted French limestone next Easter. And you will be adequately insured if you read the report on the benefits of B.M.C. affiliation by Nick "Dangerous" Oldfield. Why "Dangerous"? Read Nick's other piece; a glimpse into the psychology of the rock climber. As is Mark Applegate's poetry although the style is very different.

Two Ceunant firsts are included; a record time was set for the Aonach Eagach traverse as described by Adrian Casey and the London to Cambridge cycling expedition is ably recorded by Angus Murray who also offers words of wisdom on climbing safely. Its probably just as well though that Jim Fairey and friends were not burdened with Angus' advice or they might never have attempted the Old Man of Hoy, given their average age.

It was great to have articles from people who haven't contributed before. Not everyone has the awesome mental organisation of the regular contributors whose pieces are immaculately word-processed and Tippex-free of course. But equally welcome are cassette tapes or hand-written items. Everyone has at least one good story, an opinion, a joke etc. etc. so send me yours now or at least as soon as you've read this issue for inspiration.

Cheers,

Sue Traynor.

In 1989 I happened to be working on some machinery for dispatch to China. Little did I know that, twelve months later, I would be asked to follow it to carry out some modifications. It did not take me many minutes to make up my mind. So, in early 1990, my good friend Kevin McNaulty and I found ourselves with our bags packed waiting at Heathrow for the flight to take us, via Paris and Karachi, to Beijing.

When we arrived after a long and boring flight I was amazed by the numbers of people at the airport; thousands and thousands of Chinese people, all with black hair, all milling around and all waving, tickets, banners, signs, anything. Totally confused and knackered, we were met and taken to our hotel by a Chinaman. He spoke no English. No-one we were to meet for the first few days spoke any English.

The drive from the airport to the hotel in the centre of Beijing took about three quarters of an hour and it was getting dark so we did not have much sense of the hugeness and strangeness of China. But I couldn't help noticing, as a long avenue of trees faded away and we entered the suburbs, that on every corner under a light there was a game of pool in progress, on a full sized pool table surrounded by youngsters. Apparently there is a total police ban on this activity because it causes so many problems!

The hotel was beautiful and completely different from what I had expected. In the middle of a reception area that was half the size of a football pitch was a grand piano and a full orchestra playing light classical music. Black-clad girls with complexions like porcelain surrounded the orchestra, waiting to wait on us. We were shown to our rooms and later we found a bar so, after a few drinks, we retired totally exhausted.

The following morning we headed for the first of the tourist spots we'd decided to see whilst we were in Beijing; the Great Wall of China, about an hour and a half away by taxi. The taxi threaded its way through the hundreds of thousands of bicycles, cars, lorries, tricycles pulling carts, donkeys pulling carts and people and more people. Gradually, the road wound its way out through the suburbs towards the countryside, through shanty towns

and eventually to a stretch of good road. We learned later that this had been built for the Queen's visit when she went to see the Great Wall. Anyway, all we could see as we approached the Great Wall were millions and millions and millions of people. Unbelievable! I couldn't get over how many there were and at the Wall itself there were even more. I suppose they were Chinese tourists, they were all Chinese anyway.

So we paid a few coins to go up onto the Wall. It seemed to be in very good repair as it had all been cleaned up and rebuilt with the bricks and stones nicely relaid for the benefit of the tourists. Once up on the Wall, we walked along and it seemed to stretch for ever. We could see it going over mountains and hills and into the distance in both directions. There did not seem to be any towns or villages on the other side of the Wall, so we walked along it for a bit.

After a couple of miles or so, it was less neat and tidy, less in good repair. Eventually, it seemed to crumble away and disappear. We could see the remains of the Wall carrying on and crossing the mountains but it had been left in what I suppose must have been its natural state after thousands of years of weathering. We had a good look around, picked up a few small stones as souvenirs and strolled back. We were amazed to see how the Wall had been built on the sides of the hills. The joints of the brickwork or stones were not level, they seemed to follow the contours of the land. It must have been very hard to lay stones on a  $45^{\circ}$  slope, I could imagine them sliding off the wet cement. Anyway, the Chinese obviously know how to do it.

We were about an hour from the Ming Tombs so we decided to go to have a look at them. We drove through barren, wasted, desert landscape until we came to the valley where all the Emperors of the Ming Dynasty are buried. Apparently, only two of the dozen or so tombs are still unopened, the rest have been excavated and plundered. The approach is a walk of at least a mile and a half along an avenue of life sized statues of lions and elephants. Every twenty yards, a stone elephant! The cutting and chiselling and carving of each one was a feat in itself but there were hundreds of them!

Eventually we came to the tourist section of the Ming Tombs and went in. Its like an iceberg, only the tip shows above ground, most of it is below and is laid out like an underground pyramid. Huge staircases led down to great chambers guarded by massive stone doors. These were six inches thick

and 20 feet high, beautifully carved and expertly hung. I wondered at the methods they might have used to get these onto their solid stone hinges. They're still there anyway.

Already it was late afternoon so we headed back to the hotel to get ready to be up and out early the following day because we were going to see the Forbidden City. It is not far from Tianmen Square which has since seen some very sinister events. But on our visit, we were absolutely gobsmacked at the beauty of the place and the amount of work involved in building it and in keeping it in its original state. All the Emperors of China and their families lived there and, if you have seen the film 'The Last Emperor' you will have some idea of the atmosphere of the place. The ordinary people were not allowed to cast their eyes upon the Emperor, this was punishable by death so if the Emperor came walking along the street in the Forbidden City, everyone dived down and pressed their heads to the floor.

It is a marvellous and wonderful place with buildings of great beauty with their highly decorated and carved pagoda roofs. We could have spent a week there and not seen everything. As it was, we spent most of the day drifting around and saw far too many things to describe here. I was impressed though by some massive cauldrons which had originally been gold plated until, during the Boxer Revolution, all the gold had been scraped off by British soldiers. Its still possible to see the scrape marks.

Back at the hotel, we put some food together for the next stage of our journey, our train was due to leave at midnight. Beijing railway station, 12.00 at night; I have never seen so many people in my life. It was impossible to walk across the station without stepping on someone. They were laying all over the floor, on bundles in corners, in piles four or five deep under duvets or old coats, they were strewn all over. It was like a battlefield.

After much to do, we got onto our train with 200 million Chinese people. We had got our 'soft sleeper' booked and paid for so we found it, got in there and settled down. A soft sleeper is the luxury way to travel in China. It is a compartment with four bunks, a small table, two large Thermos flasks of hot water, four cups and that's it. Two Chinese people had also booked our

compartment apparently so we shared it with them. Neither could speak English and, since we couldn't speak any Chinese, there was no conversation at all.

The train set off at a very slow pace with passengers crammed into every bit of space. We walked up and down and discovered that we were the only Europeans on it. We also discovered the dining car so we thought we would have a drink or two. Eventually we made it known that we wanted a drink. They didn't have any beer or anything like it so we knocked the tops off a couple of bottles of Chinese wine and gave it a whirl. It was pretty foul tasting stuff but I hoped that after a few bottles, anything would start to taste good so we carried on drinking it. Soon, the train's cook came out of his kitchen which adjoined the dining car to join us. Then the railway guard and the chap whose job it was to test the train's wheels, the wheeltapper, complete with his hammer arrived too. They all seemed very friendly so we offered them some drinks, they accepted and we started some diplomatic relations going. No-one understood what was going on but we were all drinking and generally having a good time.

The cook asked us if we wanted something to eat. We didn't really but, rather than abuse his hospitality, we said yes, we would try his food. Off he went to his kitchen in which was a large range, like an Aga with flames licking out of the top. At the other end, was a big boiler with steam and fire belching out of it. He got a wok and put it on top of the range until it was glowing red then he carried it to the boiler, put some water in it, swizzled it round and swished it towards me through a hole in the floor. I had wondered where all the noise and draft was coming from but it was just the cook's waste disposal chute which went straight through the floor and onto the tracks. Now he began stirring and chopping in earnest so I had a look around the kitchen. It was unhygienic to say the least so I retired back to the dining car. Our meal arrived a few minutes later. It was a dark, clear soup with what looked like a cabbage leaf and two fried eggs. Its very hard to eat fried eggs and soup with chopsticks if you've never used them before but we ate it as best we could.

After dinner and another bottle of wine, the cook and the guard and the wheeltapper all wanted to try arm wrestling with us. We found that this was one of the favourite pastimes of most of the Chinese people we were

to meet and on the train we passed a few hours having fun in this way. We seemed to beat them all the time. Perhaps we were stronger, they were very small built people. But they wouldn't leave it alone; first the right arm then the left, then try the right arm again.

The train journey went on forever. If you ever make a long train journey in China, make sure you take plenty of toilet rolls, then avoid going to the toilet at all if possible. Its a harrowing experience. The toilet is built on the same lines as the waste disposal chute in the kitchen; its a hole in the floor. When you go it goes down onto the rails and gets splashed along the track. That's if the wind is in the right direction. If it isn't it blows back up through the hole and splatters the room and everything in it. Anyway, that's enough of that story, just be very wary of the toilets on Chinese trains.

Much later, we were met at a small town called Jonjo by our interpreter, the first person we had met who could speak Chinese and English which was a relief. We were taken to the International Hotel in Jonjo. It sounds impressive but it is not impressive at all. We just stayed for breakfast then we set off for Nanyang in a small minibus that looked like those Iraqi jeeps. We started the journey of about 150 miles at 10.00 a.m. through the suburbs of Jonjo on poor, basic roads that got steadily worse until they faded into a two-way dirt track. We saw several wrecked vehicles at the side of the road or, if a wreck was too big to move, it was left in the middle of the road, the traffic being directed around it. It was impossible to do any speed because of the conditions, the obstacles, the millions of bicycles, people and donkeys. After a long, long time, we arrived in Nanyang. It was about 7.00 in the evening.

There was a crowd of people waiting for us and a party or banquet had been planned which was the last thing I needed. I needed a wash and a good sleep, in that order but, after rinsing off the dust, we were ushered in. We shook hands with the people we were going to work with; the directors of the Second Factory of China, Mr. Chan, the electrical engineers, the mechanical engineers, the chemists and the Mayor of Nanyang so it was quite an important party. We all sat down at a large circular table which looked very inviting with all sorts of food and dishes on it. In the centre was a large disc which held a huge plate containing a complete turtle garnished with quails' eggs. The disc was spun round in what is, apparently, the customary fashion

to find the lucky person who has the honour of starting the meal. The turtle went round and round and its head went past me a few times but it ended up stopping opposite my friend Kevin. Being the good sport he is, Kevin got stuck in with the chopsticks and gouged out a big piece of the turtle's head while everyone clapped.

We all settled to enjoy the feast surrounded by Chinese serving girls who kept us supplied with a colourless liquor called maltai. It might look like vodka or gin but it has a foul taste which is like nothing I can describe. Its purpose is to be thrown down the throat in one go after each of the short speeches that were being made. Then you show your glass to everyone so that they can see that it really is empty, and you promptly put it down on the table where it is promptly filled up again by one of the serving girls who keep running around doing nothing else. Everyone made a little speech washed down with maltai so it was not long before we were all very merry. The taste did seem to improve as the night wore on and the maltai seemed to have the effect of lifting the language barrier. Chinese and English merged.

I woke up the next morning in the hostel where we were staying with a clear head but no memory of the night before. My bed was O.K. but I had a sandbag for a pillow. We were there to do a job though this and this was the day we were going to the factory. So I got up and got ready to be reunited with the machine I'd worked on 12 months ago.

I don't want to dwell on the working side of the visit, its not very interesting. But on the factory site they were intending to build another factory and, since finding the terra cotta army at Xiang, its their practice to test the ground for ancient hidden treasures. And while we were there, we watched a group of youths all with long canes checking an area the size of a football pitch. They gradually worked their way across it drilling holes in much the same way as when searchers look for avalanche victims. Later, after we returned home, we heard from a friend who went to work there that they have since found 28 burial chambers on this piece of ground. These all contained stone coffins held together with steel bands which had traces of chromium plating although they were over a thousand years old. Nothing I learn about China's past or present will ever cease to amaze me.



But back to the job in hand. Kevin and I were both supplied with a company vehicle so that we could travel in comfort from the hostel to the factory. These were single gear, single speed Flying Pigeons, no 28-speed mountain bike technology for us. But it was only half a mile or so across a flat area so, over the next five or six weeks, these served us well as we shuttled forwards and backwards.

On weekends we were entertained by the factory workers, the engineers, the director Mr. Chan, the chemist and some of the fitters. Mr. Lee became a great friend. They had another factory some distance away in the mountains. Unfortunately we weren't able to visit it, but we were taken to the Jade Mountain; an outcrop of rock probably about 1500 feet high and riddled with the quarries from which the jade is removed. This semi-precious stone is carved and polished and I brought some pieces home.

The top of the Jade Mountain is the highest point in China that we reached and when we went there was a celebration of some anniversary going on. You could not see the top of the bloody mountain for people, it was like an anthill. Right on the top there was a monkin a small building like a garden shed. Outside his door was a raging fire and incense and prayer sheets were being burned. We went up to his door through the clouds of incense and paper smoke and through the crowds of people waiting to touch the holy person.

From the top we could see across the flat countryside surrounding Nanyang. There were tea plantations and an enormous cloud of dust from the road we had travelled along. It had been like driving through a thick fog, there had been so many people and vehicles throwing up dust. On the way back down the mountain, it was interesting to go to the workshop where the jade was carved.

Nanyang is famous for its contribution to medicine so we spent a day in the medical museum where our interpreter explained some of the discoveries to us. We also enjoyed a fishing trip even though it seemed to take forever to find the lake. We didn't catch any fish either but it was interesting to see the rural side of China. People in this area live in stone and mud huts but all the roofs, whether they are straw or mud or tiled, curve beautifully up at the bottom into the unique pagoda shape. Even the smallest of huts has this type of roof and attractive horseshoe shaped doors and windows.

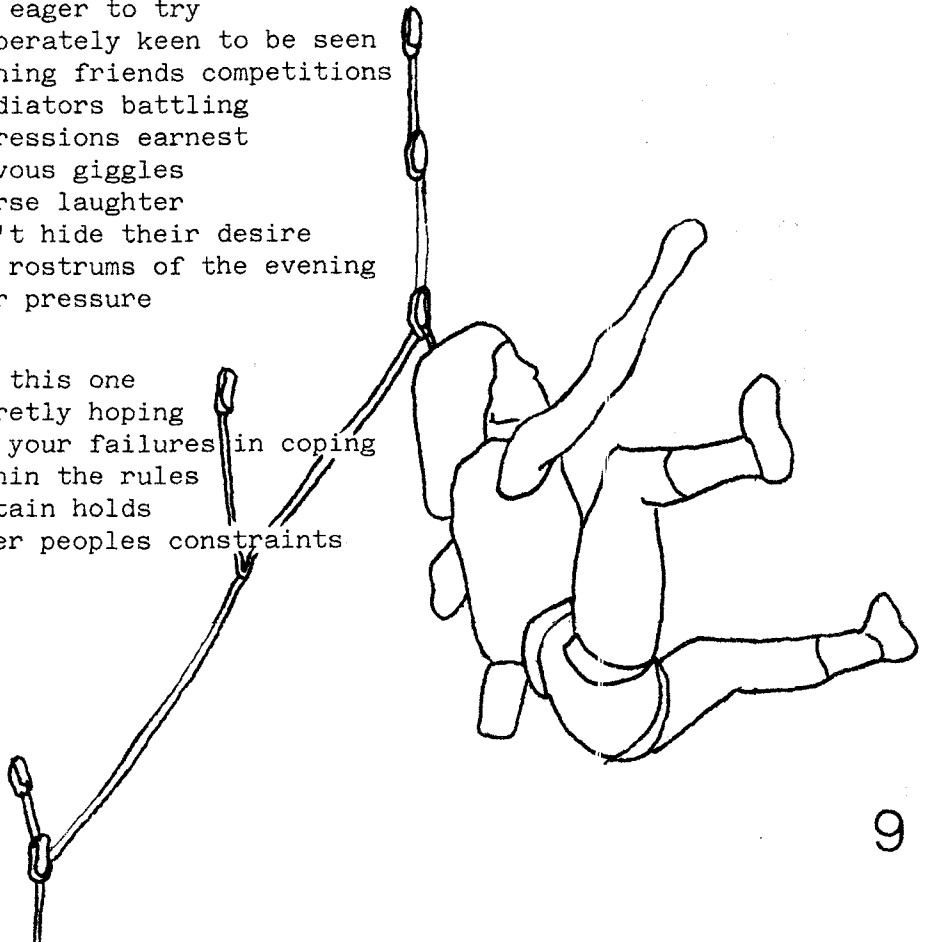
The job we had come to do was finished all too soon unfortunately. We had enjoyed some great times because of the wonderful hospitality of our Chinese friends and, whilst we were travelling homewards more speedily than we had arrived thanks to a train that took us straight to Beijing, we knew that we would never forget them.

EVENINGS ON THE WALL

Mark Applegate

You wouldn't expect the silence  
The grave faces  
Hushed mutters  
Contained grunts  
Sadistic smiles  
Sideways glances  
Do I look slick?  
In my ripped down 'T' Shirt  
No warm greetings  
In those cold eyes  
Snigger of harsh laughter  
As another pundits fingers slip  
Grasping lungs inhaling chalk  
All eager to try  
Desperately keen to be seen  
Winning friends competitions  
Gladiators battling  
Expressions earnest  
Nervous giggles  
Hoarse laughter  
Don't hide their desire  
for rostrums of the evening  
Peer pressure

Try this one  
Secretly hoping  
For your failures in coping  
Within the rules  
Certain holds  
Other peoples constraints



A trip made by Steve Harvatt and Joe Brennan in the Summer of 1990.

LEAVING THE FIRST WORLD

I drove to the climbing shop in Betws y Coed for some odds and sods for the holiday and parked in front of some neat cottages. Lost as usual in some idle daydream, I sat for a while. Cliff Richard was warbling his little heart out on the radio like some ageless, pickled budgie. Suddenly a sound even less melodious shook me from my reverie. A large peroxide blond thundered towards me, caterwauling and waving an umbrella.

"YAU'VE BLOCKED ME PASSAGE!"

"I beg your pardon, we've not even been introduced."

"ME GATE!"

"You could get a Welsh male voice choir through here."

"ITS NOT THE POINT; ITS THE PRINCIPLE!"

"Do you play trivial pursuits?"

Red faced she started to beat the car with her umbrella and as she did so her whole body quiveredred in undulations of excess baggage.

STEPPING OUT

A 1950's time warp, Rawalpindi streets were ajostle with old Morris Minors and large, on-road steel bicycles. This was a boys' own monosex world. Where was the local talent? Under wraps, uptight and out of sight for sure. A visiting extraterrestrial biologist would have to conclude that reproduction was a non-sexual matter. An alien David Attenborough might whisper through the microphone to his gallactic TV audience: "This (pause) - is Homo Sapiens Islamicus. This (pause)- facinating species apparently regenerates asexually. It is true that there are young females about but they all seem to expire just before reaching maturity. A strange sub-species without a head wanders around totally in black."

Despite this all-male biosphere the place was friendly and cheerful with a lot of street banter, noise and movement.

## REAL TRAVEL

The bone shaker with the broken welded springs rattled out of the bus station at 2.00am at the start of a 450 mile vibratory experience; a body jarring, white knuckling, heart popping, arse breaking, mind boggling, gut wrenching, nerve jangling, dust blown 20 hour endurance test.

The mean part of this helter skelter, pell mell of a journey is the Indus Gorge. The Grand Canyon is 6000ft deep. Here, from the summit of Nange Parbat to the river, the drop is 23,000ft and reputedly the second deepest defile on Earth. The Karakoram Highway ("The KKH, man") is a narrow pock marked ribbon etched into the side of the Gorge. There is no room for error. The edge of the road is the edge of the drop. One step off the road would be two feet in the grave.

Pakistan's answer to Nigel Mansell put on a driving display of breathtaking daring and panache. Back end drifting on the narrow single track, opposite locking on the edge of a 2000ft drop, trusty Klaxon blaring to anything round blind bends to dematerialise or else, we plunged through rockfall, avalanche debris and collapsing road surface. Nothing stood in our way. Everything was overtaken anywhere at any time; oncoming vehicles were avoided literally by inches on occasion. Mohammed will provide. This chappie definately inhabited his own space/time continuum, a sort of third world, fourth dimensional indestructability.

At one time a loud bang signalled a blow out as we hammered sideways round a bend on the edge of the abyss. Flawlessly the bus was brought to a shuddering halt amongst flying stones and dust. Move over Clive, this boyo is my new driving hero.

Inside, the passengers were thrown about the wooden seats and threatened with amputation by a large truck gearbox picked up along the way and hurtling around the gangway splattering black oil in its wake.

When we reach Gilgit we shake his hand.

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Dirty, dusty, ramshakle, wild and woolley Gilgit Town is really Dodge City transplanted into Asia. Swop the local shalmar kameez for cowboy gear and it would be the perfect setting for a chapati western. After a day here we grabbed a sort of minibus arrangement for the next stage up the KKH. So began a new epic with another interesting driver who started by running straight into a pedestrian and demolishing a food stall. A little later the door fell off. Everyone had to hang on to each other so as not to fall out of the grossly overcrowded knackerwagon. Eventually we can go no further, the road is blocked by a very active, continuous and malevolent avalanche. This whole area is where the upstart Sub-continent plate headbutts the Asian plate, making the Karakoram the most convoluted and unstable place on the Earth's surface. There is a tremor every three minutes on average. A moving experince. Round here Mother Nature rules deranged.

Those who want to press on must run a 200 yard gauntlet of fridge sized rocks and their smaller helpers. Very, very tricky. If successful, any transport on the other side must be grabbed as best it can.

When someone is running, crowds on either side cheer continuously or change to warning shouts if something big is heading in the runner's direction.

I lost the toss and had to do the crossing twice to collect our third sac. Sheer terror overcomes the effects of altitude, boulder hurdling and a 25kg sac as the cheers turn to shouts. Some Gaza like swerves amidst the heavy artillery all around save me from being talked about purely in the past tense. As I grovelled gasping up disintegrating slopes willing hands pulled me to safety. I collapsed on my knees exhausted. Thinking that I was thanking Mohammed for delivery, everyone tried to swivel me round in the direction of Mecca. Through red mist and a forest of legs I glimpsed a pure white milestone at the side of the road. It was like an obelisk or grave headstone. On it, in perfectly carved crimson letters were words in English: "RELAX, HAVE A SAFE DRIVE". I began to wonder if indeed I really was still of this world.

## A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

I filled up a complete copybook diary so a few disjointed extracts will have to suffice. Our trek took just under two weeks. There were no food sources. We had two porters. It took us under Shimshal or Golden Peak whose main buttress was climbed by Mick Fowler in 1979. We may have been the first party into that area since then. There were certainly no signs of man).

### DAY 6

We were now moving close in under the really big boys, 25,000 footers. Directly ahead was Chogo Lungma, where the great Hermann Bhul said goodbye to the material world with his last steps over a cornice. Our camp was on a nice, flowery shelf overlooking the main glacier system, a huge conveyor belt for bearing the collapsing mountains towards the Arabian Sea. The moraine flowers were breathtaking with their brilliance and variety. In Britain you walk through grass or heather trying to spot the odd wild flower. Here the flowers are the vegetation, with the odd blade of grass the rarity.

As we moved into this arena the mountains spread icy veils out on either side. Ominous angels with outspread wings. Huge avalanches completely filled mile wide cirques with ice dust. Really big things were happening. Delicate ridges soared up above fluted ice faces like hanging tapestries in the sky. Just below, the massive glacier clonked, ground and crashed its turgid way towards its snout 30 miles away.

Off to the left, the main buttress of Golden Peak must be one of the most striking lines in the Himalayas. Straight as a die, a perfect right angled division of light and shade, without pause, break or deviation from base to summit. Made of the warmest, most golden granite imaginable, it is like a big Walker Spur only sharper, steeper, straighter and about 6,000 ft in its stockinged feet.

As darkness gathered, the porters became terrified of bats.

### DAY 7

It was snowing. Sadly the mountains had drawn a shroud of cloud round their ankles with only the toes of the buttresses demurely showing. We, scrambled,

very steeply at first, towards the base of Golden Peak. Horizontal snow skudded a proper Scottish day. We reached a wide and desolate pass. Beyond, in the mist, the land dropped off in the direction of Hispar La and Snow Lake, an area now sadly becoming used by the commercial purveyors of soft adventure.

We had left the porters behind. Beyond their normal grooves and in unfamiliar and steep terrain they can be a liability, both legally and literally.

Perversely Steve seemed to be enjoying himself. I was cold and soaked. My old anorak did not seem to be working anymore. Must remember to give it to the porter. This was our high point. We turned, faced into the driving snow and went down.

#### "DAY 9

The first shepherds' huts were reached on the return journey. Tall, lean and hard as knots in oak, they climb many thousands of feet each day herding and then milking the flocks and taking milk, cheese, butter, curds and whey packed in glacier ice down to the lower villages. The mixed flocks of pretty (it was day 9!) goats and sheep are owned by the village communally. Shifts of 6 men take ten days at a time in the pastures. An arcane scene, probably unchanged in hundreds of years.

The people are very friendly, kindly, generous and curious. The young lads are so intelligent I'm glad I did not have to go to school with them. If they had a garden gate they would pull you through it rather than complain of it being blocked.

Each evening we had to participate in a Himalayan Olympics with porters and shepherds. This involved sprinting, leaping, pressups, etc.. The 'Blue Riband' was a sort of slow motion limbo/somersault around and under an ice axe held by the contestant at the same time. Steve got disqualified for being unable to hold an ice axe at all.

Our best score was British Isles 2 Pakistan 17.

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Days followed through apricot orchards, marijuana terraces, Nagar, Hunza, China before England again where I found that my car had been smashed into and robbed.

Oh yes, hang on just a moment, one more thing : in order to encourage others to take all precautions against the most deadly critter in Asia, there follows the last page of my diary. Those of a squeamish disposition should not read further.

### "DAY 22 AND NIGHT 23

Downtown Gilgit again, on a hired iron bicycle and round clamorous bazaars, as yet unaware that I had been invaded by gremlins for the third time on the holiday.

Like the science fiction film 'Alien' these foreign bodies exploded in the night. Desperation stakes in the Hunza Inn. Arse on toilet with squitters major. Can't reach sink at same time for a dam burst of vomit. Caught between two stools. A half second warning, then a helpless, uncontrolled explosion out through mouth, nostrils; everything blasting at the same time, indecisive, alternately missing sink and bog, all over the floor. With vomit streaming down my face and chest, tears coursing down my cheeks, pisshit running down my legs, shalms, the big, baggy Pakistani pants, fallen round my ankles soaking up the vompissit I was not a pretty sight. Good old body is doing its best to reject antimatter. I hope. Repeat experience several times for a night to remember.

This yellow, piss like stream is not like good solid British diarrhoea. Because everything in your stomach is liquid you can hear it gurgle from one side to the other every time you turn over at night. Arse can be kept clenched during the day but whilst asleep it dribbles like a baby, necessitating improvised sanitary towels of bog paper. Farting is definately out of the question. Eating or drinking in seconds add fuel to the flow, an amazing feat of visceral processing. Before going to sleep everything must be organised for quick, incontinent dashes; doors kept open or tent unzipped.

Maybe I could rent out my stomach as a food liquidiser. Stand in the corner of someone's kitchen with collector bowl appropriately positioned. The Bible has got it wrong. Ashes to ashes; dust to dust is far too dry an ending for these parts."

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THE VERY END



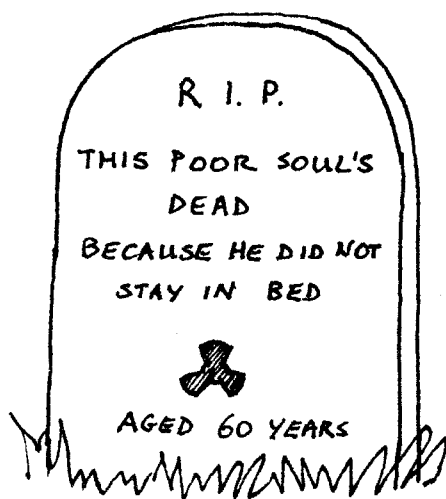
In March I attended a seminar in Birmingham on the subject of Radiation Hazards. The following statistics were provided which Ceunant members will undoubtedly find interesting and useful.

If, in the course of your lifetime, you engage in one of the activities listed below for the length of time indicated, there is one chance in a million of it causing your death. Obviously, if you engage in it for twice as long, the chances are twice as great and so on. (But don't bother to do the calculations its far too depressing).

- 1) Absorb 0.1 milliseverts of radiation (natural radiation in Cornwall is 25 times higher than this)
- 2) work in a factory for 1½ weeks
- 3) travel by car for 60 miles
- 4) travel by air for 400 miles
- 5) be aged 60 or over for 20 minutes
- 6) smoke ¾ of a cigarette
- 7) rock climb for 90 seconds

So, rock climbing is dead safe as long as these simple precautions are observed:-

- 1) DO NOT climb in Cornwall
- 2) DO NOT fly or drive to the crag
- 3) DO NOT climb with a partner who is a sixty year old factory worker who smokes.



### The Old Man of Hoy - Jim Fahey

"There's only three things in this world that smell like fish - and you're one of them" said Dennis. There was the old twinkle back in his eyes and Joe smiled. We stared upwards, necks straining to see the top of the 450ft sandstone pillar from which we had just descended. Smiling, tired but elated we packed up the gear and headed back up the cliff to rejoin the official photographer.

The standard route (East Face) of the Old Man of Hoy is on the tick list of all ambitious married climbers. Like the Old Brenva Ridge or Forbes Arete, it is long and challenging but its technical difficulties are short. However it requires organization, first class rope work and teamwork. Dennis Jordan, Joe Brennan and I tackled the Old Man last July. After warming up the previous weekend on the compact Sandstone of Northumberland (where Dennis generously reduced his brand new 50m rope into more usable lengths for belay and abseil slings) we raced northwards to Scrabster. I knew Joe and Dennis had arrived when the cloud of clutch smoke finally cleared and the order for seats at the bar to be included in the ferry tickets was heard all round the Scrabster Seafront. Dennis was already looking apprehensive.

The large passenger ferry took us to Stromness where we transferred to the short, open ferry to Hoy which landed us at the quay of Hoy village (six houses and a pub). From there it was a short taxi ride west to the Rackwick hostel. The longer ferry ride from Scrabster to Stromness had given us a tantalizing view of the Old Man from the seaward side, but now the clouds were cloaking the headlands and the glens looked truly Scottish - wet and uninviting. However, next morning proved to be calm and the clouds had lifted. By the time we had breakfasted, packed and set off the sun was promising to shine.

The approach is something that can only be experienced at first hand. After half an hour's walk the Old Man appears layer by layer, getting larger and visibly less friendly with every step towards it. The path takes you to within 20 metres of the cliff edge and until then about one third of the stack is visible. You are aware that this top third looks loose and unstable but nothing can prepare you for the final few paces to the cliff edge which reveal the stack in its entirety. It is enormous!. It is a huge pile of flat rocks of all thicknesses layered one on top of the other which look as if they will fall down before we can get down to its base and start.

Joe won the toss for second pitch. The sun broke out and the sea became a beautiful flat mosaic of blue, green, aquamarine and black. The easy corner to the start of the difficulties belied the quality of the rock to follow. Jane remained on the cliff tops opposite ready with cameras and many lenses but paradoxically the excellent weather hampered taking good pictures as the East face was in shade by the time we crossed onto it and the sun from almost directly behind played havoc with exposures. To compensate for this she spent all day giving running commentaries to the small groups of birdwatchers who from time to time arrived and expressed great concern for our safety.

The main pitch lived up to its reputation. Damp and covered with loose sand, the 5a crack was a series of thutches and pulls to the safety of the small belay ledge 80ft above. The exposure was immense and direct communications (even, with little opposition from the waves) was impossible. Another advantage of having a photographer on the cliffs opposite revealed itself here as Jane could relay messages between the leader and seconds.

The next two pitches proved to be easy climbing but lacking in obvious protection. The biggest problem was the nesting fulmars with their nearly full grown chicks. It was impossible to spot their nests before pulling over the flat ledges. I was glad we'd all worn old clothes and old cagoules and we all were pleased to reach the final corner crack which lead to the top.

It was on this belay, whilst I was experiencing the elation of leading the top pitch on huge, solid holds with the sea becoming visible through firstly the left land and then the main corner cracks that Dennis and Joe had a most moving experience together. The bottom of the corner crack was home to a nest of Puffins and whilst standing there (hopefully belaying my ropes) a parent puffin returned with its beak crammed with several small wriggling fish. It landed between two ageing pairs of feet, stared up at Dennis and Joe and then calmly strutted past them and into the crack to deliver its catch. As Joe later said it was the sort of event that a dedicated twitcher would never witness during a lifetime of observations.

Five hours to the top was by no means the end. There followed four hours of descent by abseil demanding meticulous rope handling and planning. But when it was all over and we stood on the cliffs opposite for a final photo call, Dennis looked back wistfully and asked "Have we just climbed that? Amazing! - Not bad for three oldies! I wonder what our combined ages are, just for the record. You'd need a pocket calculator for that!".

"No need" Said Joe with a grin "I know how many pockets I've got".

As the more observant of you may have noticed we are affiliated to the BMC., and as you many not be aware of everything they do I thought I would run through what that is.

You can stay in the huts of other affiliated clubs on the same basis as they stay in ours, including two huts in Skye and Glencoe owned and run jointly by the BMC and the Mountaineering Club of Scotland.

In the Alps you can stay at reduced rates in huts run by or affiliated to the national Alpine club with a reciprocal rights card available from the BMC for the miserly sum of £17.50.

And getting there is an absolute breeze with cheap coach travel run by National Express with whom the BMC has negotiated for members to travel at the student rate. A typical fare would be Chamonix return for £76.

The BMC can insure you for travel, medical and rescue expenses for £38 for a 24 day trip or a whole year for £55 including UK cover.

Or better than having to claim they run courses at home and abroad on all aspects of mountaineering from basic rock climbing to alpinism and mountain leadership. We may think we know a bit about climbing but something like a glacier travel and crevasse rescue course could be a life saver.

Finally amongst the services they offer is free advice on just about everything you may want to know about mountaineering. And if they cannot help you they know a man who can.

As well as these tangible benefits of BMC membership, they are working behind the scenes looking after our interests by negotiating access agreements and working on conservation issues like bird restrictions and footpath erosion. They set and monitor standards for equipment and involve themselves in competition climbing which has ensured that British competitions will not take place on natural crags as has happened elsewhere in Europe.

So why am I telling you all this? Well, the BMC deserves our support but this costs the club money for every name on the mailing list (money we have already paid out) so if you haven't paid your subs, do it and get £2M worth of 3rd party insurance worldwide free.

4th November 1990

This is a diary supposedly about a trip to Nepal to climb and paraglide Lobuche, a 20,000' peak. But at present after 36 hours of travel we are stuck in the Purbani International Hotel, Dhaka, courtesey of Bangladeshi Airlines.

"Very good sir, don't worry sir, I fetch boiled water sir".

"Boiled water"?

"Yes sir, very good sir, boiled water sir. Cooked by the chief boss boss man sir".

(Hand held out for expected tip)

As my friend Gerry said, "it is better to travel than to arrive." I have my doubts. We were stuck in the hotel being herded around like sheep unable to look around Dhaka due to an enforced military curfew. After several attempts to escape all thwarted due to the excessive number of Bangladeshi Hotel porters blocking every door and window I decided to make the best of a bad situation and get my head down.

No chance!

As soon as my head hit the pillow; Knock! Knock!

"What! Who is it?"

"Water sir. Change your water sir."

Foolishly I let the man in and he flutters about the room, picks up the water jug and slowly disappears. I await his return so I can shut the door. No sign of the man. After 5 minutes I shut the door and lie down. Knock! Knock!

"Hello?"

"Hello sir. Water sir, clean water sir."

"Yes, Yes OK." I open the door.

This time two men enter, one brings the supposedly replenished water jug. The other flits about the room fluffing up cushions, patting the bed, flicking his duster over door handles/chair legs etc. At length they both stand by

the door. I await their departure, Hmmm. They stand looking at me. I know the game - to shame me into giving a tip they cannot ask for directly (hotel rules). I give in, anything to get rid of them.

What a mistake this proves to be.

I lie down, actually get to sleep but \_\_\_\_\_ Knock! Knock!

"What! urrgh! Yes OK." I open the door.

"Yes sir. Polish your mirror sir."

"WHAT?" - He starts to do his chore and at the same time case my room for any other possible essential tasks. Only this time I get him out sans backsheesh.

Arrrgh! Yawn and so to sleep, mmmmm! Relax!

Knock! Knock!

"WHAT? Hello?"

"Yes Sir, Sir \_\_\_\_\_."

"F\_\_\_\_ off!"

"Yes sir, open door sir, very important sir."

Slowly I get out of bed, creep to the door and open it. A combined forces attack. Two of them enter my room. One of them picks up the water jug I haven't touched yet and the other walks around spraying stinky insect repellent into the air.

"Yes sir, mosquitos sir, very poisonous sir."

"??" (I haven't seen or heard one insect yet in this room)

"Very bad, very bad sir."

"Look just go away and let me sleep."

"First sir, very important sir, clean your bath sir."

"WHAT! No leave it and go away."

"One minute sir. One minute, very quick sir."

At this point I lose my grip.

"JUST GET TO FUCK OUT OF HERE!"

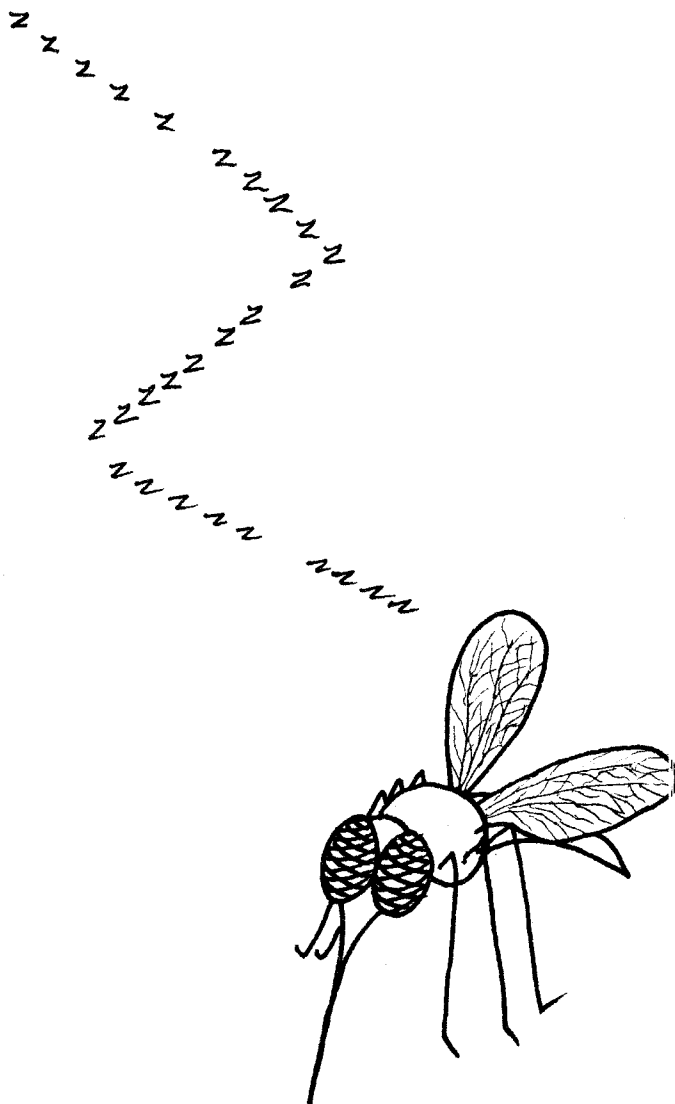
I jump up and rush towards them waving my arms. They scurry backwards and disappear through the open door. I look up the corridor. My stare is returned by 6 or 7 porters looking awe struck.

So I return to bed, feeling good, and fearing no more knock, knock, I lie there half asleep and relaxed and enjoying drifting off into my dreams.

zzzz! zzzz! zzzzzz!

"What's that?"

A bloody mosquito!



Way back in Summer 1986 six hardened drinkers, namely P. Snook, Grant and Tina Bennet, C. Delastic, P. Mahon and me G. Sutton, dragged their bulky divers all the way to the sunny holiday island of Jersey in search of new routes and the perfect surfing wave.

Having obtained Ian Smith's rough notes from the then unpublished Jersey rock guide, we felt ready to stamp our names in the history book of Jersey climbing.

Charlie and Pat came on the trip to sample the superb wind surfing the Island offers - the world championships are held there regularly. Jerseys 40' tide and great beaches certainly proved to be a big challenge. The 40' tides also produce damp seconds on sea cliffs, so bring a snorkel and flippers.

Luckily Jersey is very well served by pubs, clubs and restaurants and just to bolster everything up, work friends from St. Helier were hell bent on buying me in their local bar as payment for all the abuse I give them on the phone. So the scene was set.

The quickest way to Jersey is of course to fly. It costs about £90 return, however with all the climbing, camping and windsurfing gear we opted to take two cars. Using the Portsmouth - St. Helier ferry crossing proved to be very longwinded and expensive but still cheaper than hiring cars on the island.

Camping is confined to 3 or 4 main campsites - designed to cater for families. We camped at the cheapest site, near St. Brelade, which was still expensive. However, we managed to get on the site without paying and got away with it for two days, until my work mates left a message at the camp office and the manager came down on us like a ton of guana.

Unfortunately for us the tale-end of hurricane Charlie was passing over the area and the weather was horrendous. The very high winds, huge seas and torrential rain put paid to our climbing for the first week or so, but our gallant windsurfing boys Pat and Charlie decided that a mere hurricane was no reason to abandon the beaches.



Indeed to prove the point they bravely headed for the biggest surf-beach and tried to set up their gear. Windsurfing in hurricanes requires zero brain power, huge amounts of skill and very very strong arms. Our lads were seriously lacking in all departments, coupled with the fact that their gear was designed more for a calm day on the Serpentine, than thirty feet bone breaking seas, - well it certainly made the local experts sit up and take notice.

They never even got in the water, the wind picked up their gear and blew it right down the beach. Chas and Pat followed in hot pursuit while the smiling locals looked on. Hurricane 1 - Lads 0.

The bad weather meant that Phil, Grant and I spent most of the time either sight seeing or boozing. My Jersey mates eventually collared me in their local and we started drinking about lunch time. The lads came down from work in relays to keep me at the bar and by early evening I was truly pissed. We then moved on to the local 'in place' where all the beautiful people gather before hitting the local disco.

Then came the set-up. Meet porno Pete they said and introduced me to a guy who had just pulled up in a Ferrari, he's a porno film maker. Fet and the lads then explained that I could be involved in the making of a film but they needed some new models. Could I try and get a few new girls from the lovelys standing nearby.

Off I went staggering among these leggy blondes inviting them to become porno queens. At the same time Phil, Grant, Pat and Charlie slipped out of the back door to the disco and my work mates were in stitches - Done up like a kipper. Porno Pete owns a printing company and went to school with the Jersey lads.

Despite all the merriment, we did get a good look at most of the islands crags. Indeed we thought we had put up about eight new routes. Unfortunately Kevin Dloury, the prolific Jersey based climber, had done most of our lines a month before, although we didn't know that until the new guide was published.

Virtually all the climbing is on Granite sea cliffs which can be affected by the very high tides and freak large waves. The rock is usually very good but the betays can be a problem on the cliff tops.

As far as I know there is no organised cliff rescue service on the islands, so take care out there.

The Jersey and Guernsey guide was published in 1987 and a subsequent interim guide to Jersey by K. E. Loury is out as well, so all the info required to have a great holiday is now available.

Jersey can offer much to a family who wish to combine climbing with a beach and tourist holiday and the weather is normally much better than the UK mainland. There's enough climbing to keep a 'good team' happy and the boozers are great.

So what about a club week over there next year?

Some useful info:

Jersey Tourist Board : 0534 78000 - All accomodation and camping information

Guide Books - Jersey and Guernsey - Cordee

- 1989 Jersey Supplement by K. E. Loury available direct  
No. 2, Como Villa, 7 Clarendon Road, St. Helier, Jersey. C.I.

Ferry : Either Sealink or Channel Island Ferries

The article following this preamble has been reprinted, almost verbatim, from the 1965 issue of the club journal, this publication, in a format never since attempted by the club, ran to nearly 100 pages and contained 9 monochrome photographs (five of them full page) all between semi-hard covers.

I have added the introductory paragraphs because many newer and younger members will be unfamiliar with such entities as the Mountaineering Association (long defunct) and most members, despite their long familiarity with North Wales, are woefully ignorant of the language of the area.

Apart from Mary Kahn, who is a life member of the club and is still seen from time to time, none of the people mentioned in the article have been members for over twenty years (though John Urwin made a brief re-appearance in the late 70's). For any information on the period pre-1965 members should consult such long served people as Joe Brennan, Tony Mynette, Harry Richards etc., I have only been a member since 1967.

#### Mountaineering Association

This was the first organised body to offer holiday courses to teach people the art of mountaineering, started, I believe, in 1949 by J.E.B. Wright. Courses usually comprised groups of about six, based in small guest houses or youth hostels, with an instructor. One could remain a member after the course and the association had an excellent hut near Llanberis (above the youth hostel) called Hafod Uchaf. The present Mountain magazine was started by the M.A., under the title of Mountaincraft and for a long time was the only magazine for climbers to appear on a regular (quarterly?) basis. Eventually the M.A. was absorbed into the Youth Hostels Association in the late sixties or early seventies. During the lifetime of the M.A. climbing clubs and climbers were few and outward bound schools almost non-existent, so for those who wished to take up climbing, without contacts in the climbing world, the association was a means of gaining the requisite know-how.

### Ceunant

A ravine or gorge: steep sided river valley in a hillside. Pronounced halfway between ki (as in kite) and kay, not as koy, I cannot think of an English word with precisely the same sound but kaynant is near enough. There is no sibilant C in Welsh it is always pronounced as k, the letter c does not exist in the Welsh alphabet. (Nor do j,q,v,x or z for that matter).

### Ty'n Lon

This is how the name of the cottage is spelled, ty'n being the abbreviated form of tyddyn (pronounced tithin - say it with the y as the 'i' in 'bin' and the dd as 'th' in 'this'). Tyddyn means small farm or small-holding and lon means lane. So Ty'n Lon is the small-holding (in the/by the) lane.

### Fen Ceunant

Fen, means 'head' or 'top' and the cottage known by that name is on the sharp bend at the top of the steep section of the road that gives access to Cwm Brwynog and 'Cloggy'. The stream that drains the cwm starts the descent of a gorge at this point, hence the name.

### CLUB HISTORY (TO 1965)

Mary Kahn & Tony Daffern

In the spring of 1953 Pete Tongue, a member of the Mountaineering Association, received a letter from J.E.B. Wright, suggesting that a local members group of the Association should be formed. After discussions between Pete and other members in the area an inaugural meeting was held at the Friends Meeting House, Bull Street in the autumn of 1953. All those invited were members of the Mountaineering Association. The first committee meeting was held in February 1954 at the Digbeth Institute under the chairmanship of Keith Holdsworth.

The group constitution was a rigid one and hampered rock climbing activities. Only members who were certified as competent leaders by the M.A.'s panel of Training Officers could lead on club meets. In 1956 the M.A. decided that only those who had passed Intermediate training courses could remain members of the Group and gave the remainder until January 1958 to obtain passes. The majority of the Group, deploring this restrictive attitude decided to secede from the M.A. and form a separate club.

The Ceunant Mountaineering Club was formed on 9th May 1956, the name being taken from the cottage, Pen Ceunant, which had been transferred from the old Group. The object of the new Club was to "provide facilities for the pursuit of mountaineering in all its aspects" but the constitution, though more flexible than the previous one, still hampered rock climbing activities. Members were classed either as 'Grade A Competent Climbers' or 'Grade B Mountain Walkers'. A 'Grade A member had to be able to "act safely as leader or second on V.Diff. climbs" and a 'Grade B' member was not allowed to climb on club meets unless he was led by a 'Grade A' member and had the meet leaders permission. One present member, while soloing Diffs., leading V.Diffs. and following Severes, was only granted Class B membership, by an inactive Rock Climbing Sub-Committee. At the 1957 A.G.M. common sense prevailed and the offending clause was removed from the constitution.

Perhaps the most memorable events in those early days were the weekends at Pen Ceunant and the coach meets. Pen Ceunant was transferred to the new Club from the old Group and, under the wardenship of Brian Ruston, became a very comfortable retreat. It was a friendly establishment though more primitive than Ty'n Lon, with tea in bed in the morning and sing-songs round the fire in the evening. The Friday night dash up the hill from the coach to secure the best beds was excellent training for the weekend activities.

As the only private transport in the Club was John Urwin's old and somewhat unreliable van, coaches were used for most weekend meets. Sometimes the Club had a coach to itself, but more often than not shared one with the Stoats (Birmingham University) or the Cave and Crag Club. Though a rather expensive and relatively slow means of travel, coach meets were very popular, the rather boring journeys being livened up by free for alls, poker schools and the Stoa's excellent repertoire of disgusting songs.

The first three Annual Dinners were held in Birmingham at the Crown, Corporation Street; the Imperial, Union Street; and finally the White Horse, Congreve Street, where the antics of one of our distinguished guests caused the demolition of half of the gents toilet. It was decided after this to hold future dinners in Wales.

Indoor meets were held at the Friends' Meeting House, Moseley, once a fortnight and it is to the great credit of the organisers that there were very few meetings without an outside speaker on some subject related to Mountaineering. One of the early Meets Sheets included the South Georgia Expedition, Trevor Jones Talking, Norway, and Slides of North Wales and the Lake District.

1957 was a most depressing year. Many of the original members were dropping out and very few new members were coming along. Membership at the beginning of the year stood at 59 and was only 60 at the end. It was realised by the majority of the Club that changes would have to be made and the Club brought up to date and in line with rival clubs. We were fortunate that at the A.G.M. in 1958 John Knight was elected Chairman. The next two years proved to be the most progressive in the Club's short history and there is no doubt that this was mainly due to John's quiet guidance.

Early in John Knight's reign the Club became affiliated to the British Mountaineering Council, thus achieving recognition in the world of mountaineering clubs and paving the way to official representation on the Council's Committee.

In April two observant members, we believe they were Stan Storey and John Urwin, noticed an empty property in Nant Peris and on making enquiries found that it was for sale for the princely sum of £150. An appeal was made for £220 to be on loan from members and such was the response that by mid-May and after some Arab-type bartering the cottage was ours for £130. It was a superb piece of one-upmanship over several rival clubs who did not move quickly enough. Possession was gained just before the August Bank Holiday and a party of stalwarts set to with great will to demolish as much of the inside of Ty'n Lon as they possibly could. This was followed by many arduous weekends of re-plastering, drainage construction, plumbing and decorating, until finally the cottage was ready for occupation during Whitsun 1958.

Another innovation, this time sponsored and edited by Mike King, was the Newsletter, which was first published on the 4th June 1958 and contained in the first lines of the editorial a quotation from Sir Ernest Shackleton's

Editorial on the "South Polar Times" to the effect that the contributions by all its readers were essential for the success of the paper. The Newsletter is still going strong now (1965) after 7 years and 24 publications.

It was at this time that the climbing standard of the Club began to improve and one member in particular did much towards raising the standard and inspiring others, this was Dan Davis, who in less than a year from starting to climb was leading the hardest of the pre-1951 routes in the area. By 1959 there were several other members regularly climbing V.S., all inspired by Dan. There was now more private transport in the Club and coach meets ended, the hire of Mini-buses however provided many eventful trips to North Wales and the Lakes.

In 1960 Colin Coleman became Chairman and carried on John's good work. By now the work of the past few years was showing reward and there was an influx of new, keen members. An inspiring Outdoor Meets programme was produced and most of the meets were well attended. Colin Coleman introduced the 'Three Thousanders' meet and more camping meets were included.

The Annual Dinner was held for the first time in North Wales at the Dolbadarn Hotel and the party was so well behaved that we were invited to come again next year.

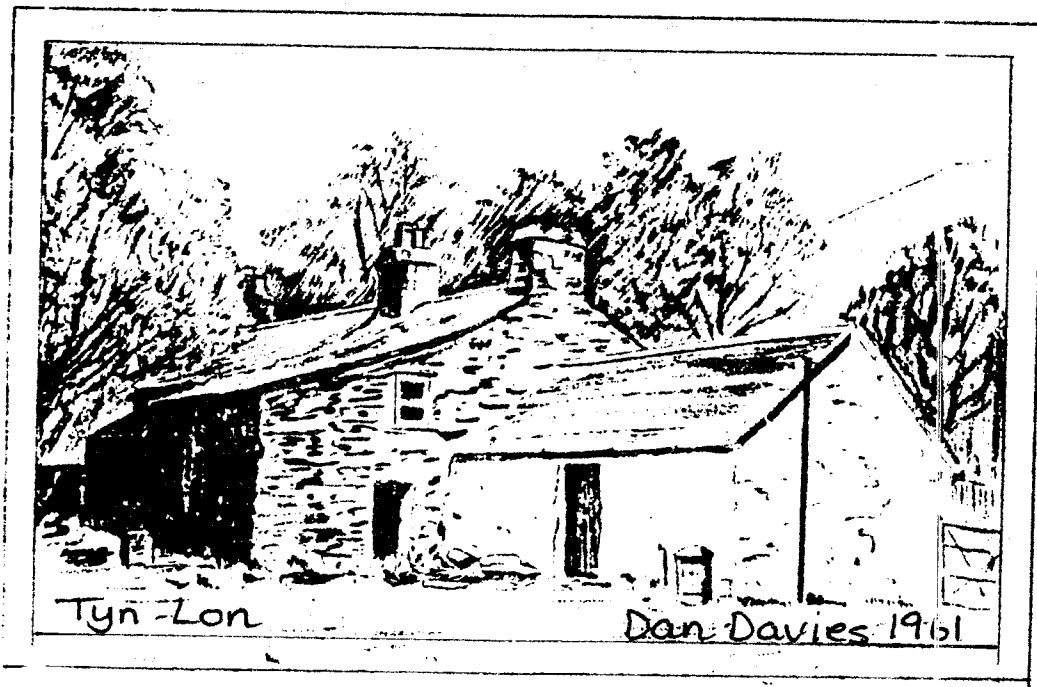
One of the schemes put forward to attract new members was that the Club should meet in more pleasant surroundings and so a room was hired, for an experimental period, every Wednesday night at the Cambridge Public House. This proved to be so popular that the Friends Institute was soon abandoned in favour of the new venue.

The highlight of the year was the organisation of a public lecture by Eric Shipton in the Midland Institute. Tickets were sold to other clubs and a reasonable profit made on the venture.

1961 saw Mike Kerby installed as Chairman. Although the general standard of climbing did not improve during this year, camping meets were well attended as more members, both young and old, bought the necessary equipment. In November 1961 we gave up Pen Ceunant and it was taken over by one of our members, Ken Reynolds.

The next year of Mike's reign was a better one with more new members coming along and Mike Connelly and one or two others climbing at quite a high standard. The first dance was organised and though not very well attended, was a social success, if not a financial one. The demand for membership was increasing and as our numbers are limited to a hundred, prospective membership was introduced.

The Ty'n Lon loan was finally paid off in 1963, five years ahead of the estimated repayment time; the Club is now firmly established in the mountaineering world and provided we can continue to attract keen, young members there is no reason why we should not continue to flourish for many years to come.







# LES



# ALPILLES

You might say, "where's that" or "sounds like too much snow", but you could be wrong. Les Alpilles is in fact an area in Southern France which may be likened to a climbing gymnasium outside in the sun! The climbing area here is excellent and the scene has moved here from Buoux and the Verdon, so expect a few comrades on busy days.

There are about seven climbing areas within Les Alpilles that currently have a high profile. Others will doubtless appear over the next few years as activity overflows from the currently developed areas. The major crags are Mouriès, Fontvielle, Orgon, Cavaillon, Aureille, Maussane and Eyguière. All of these crags lie in the Alpilles massif which is just West of the A 7 autoroute slightly North of Aix-En-Provence. (The Med is about 60 Km to the south).

All of the climbing is on solid reef limestone and is totally bolt protected so all of your wires and nuts can be left at home in their winter box. Some of the guides even tell you the number of Rolf's<sup>1</sup> that are needed for the routes. The most that we ever used was 14, this was for a 40m route and belay, an average number would be about 8 or 9. The majority of routes are less than 25m so it is possible to lead the route and then lower off. Care should be taken as the guide recommends a **60m** rope, and there are climbs where 50m ropes are a shade<sup>2</sup> on the short side. This can lead to immense fun watching other parties go through contrived rescue techniques. All of the foreigners climb on single 60m 10 or 10.5 mm rope so be prepared for some strange looks when you turn up with your twin 8.8's, it's not your bald spot they're looking at!

On my last visit to the area, Summer 89, the area was still undiscovered so I was expecting to have a quiet time this year. The Germans however had different ideas. They seem to have "done" Finale and Orco now and have moved their Easter migration to Les Alpilles. Queuing could therefore be a problem on some routes in future years over the Easter Vacation.

And so to the climbing.

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<sup>1</sup> Rolf's - Rolf Harris (Quick Draw) a short sling with two carabiners.

<sup>2</sup> Shade - 10 metres

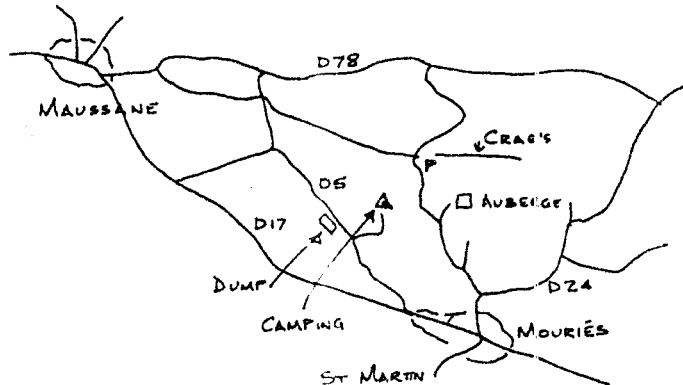
## MOURIES

I climbed here last in the Summer of 89. The routes here appear to be quite hard at first sight, unfortunately they stay that way. All of the routes on the North side are very steep but under 25m and are hard for their grade. The South face routes again are under 25m but are slabby<sup>3</sup>.

Cars should not be taken down the track, but left in the parking area on the road.

Grades: - 3+ to 8b

Location: -



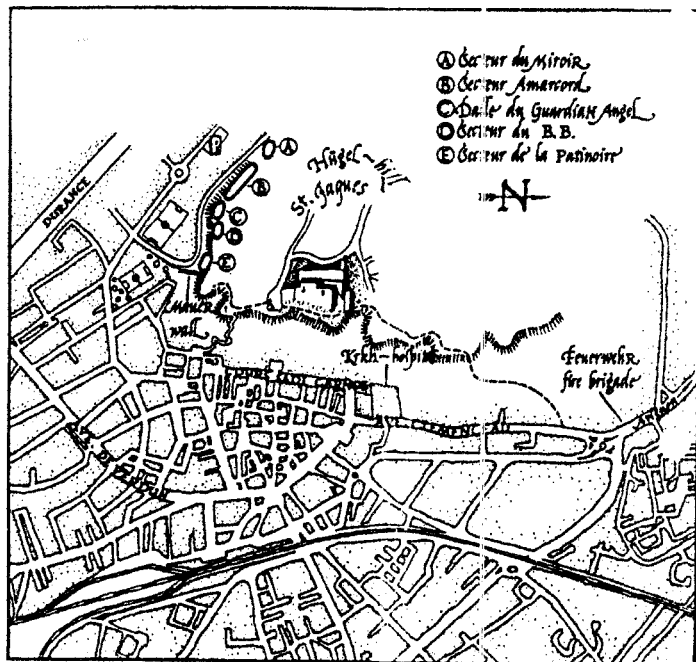
Note There have been a number of car thefts and break-in's at cars left the car park here. Keep all equipment in the boot.

## CAVAILLON

We didn't climb here, but the cliff is in the municipal park (park benches used as belays). The cliffs are apparently extremely polished, and are therefore less popular than the other area's. It may be worth a visit if the other crags are over crowded.

Grades: - 4 to 7b

Location: -



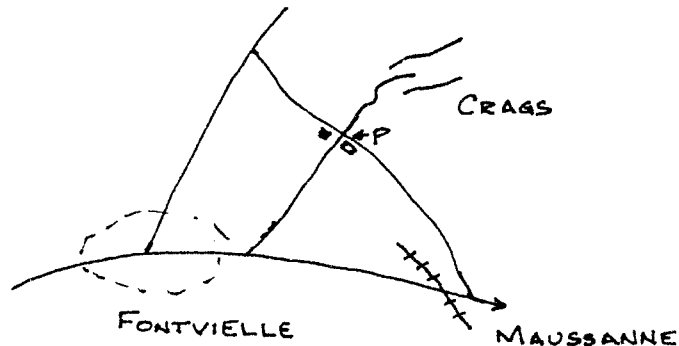
<sup>3</sup> I have never actually climbed on the South side of this cliff, probably because I've never been able to find it!

## FONTVIELLE

This crag has a great deal of potential for the future, as there are large cliffs that are as yet unexplored but with easy access. The existing climbing lies mainly on the left looking up the valley, and sports all grades of climbing. The routes here are all exceedingly good with a great deal of variety on the different cliffs.

Grades: - 3 to 7c

Location: -

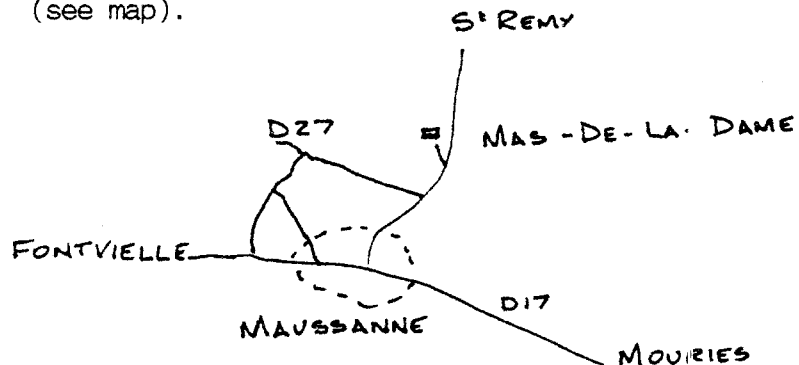


## MAUSSANNE

This was another crag that we didn't visit this time around, it looks very good. There are about 25 routes here, mainly in the harder grades, again all routes are in true sport climbing tradition so you just lower off from the top.

Grades: - 5+ to 8b

Location: - Take the D5 from Maussanne to Saint Remy, then take the track by the Mas de Dame. Follow the track to the cliff (see map).



Note The Mas de Dame is private property, so care should be exercised when parking here.

## ORGON

Orgon is perhaps the most popular of the crags in the Alpilles. The climbing takes place on the sides of a valley which lies just south of Orgon village. It is therefore possible to climb either in or out of the sun at any time of the year. This can be a great benefit as even at Easter it can get too hot to climb in the sun around midday. The climbing comprises of twenty two crags each of slightly different character, and all having brilliant routes on them.

Grades: - 4b to 7c+

Location: - The easiest way to find the crags is to follow the signposts for the campsite (bottom of the valley) or to the Notre Dame de Beauregard (top R.H. side)

### OTHER CRAGS

The other crags doubtless have excellent climbing, but are currently not fully developed or have difficult access. I have therefore left these crags out of this article, with the hope the you can go there and write the next chapter for this truly magnificent area.

### CAMPING

There are camp sites, all of which are signposted, at Orgon, Maussane, and Mouriès.



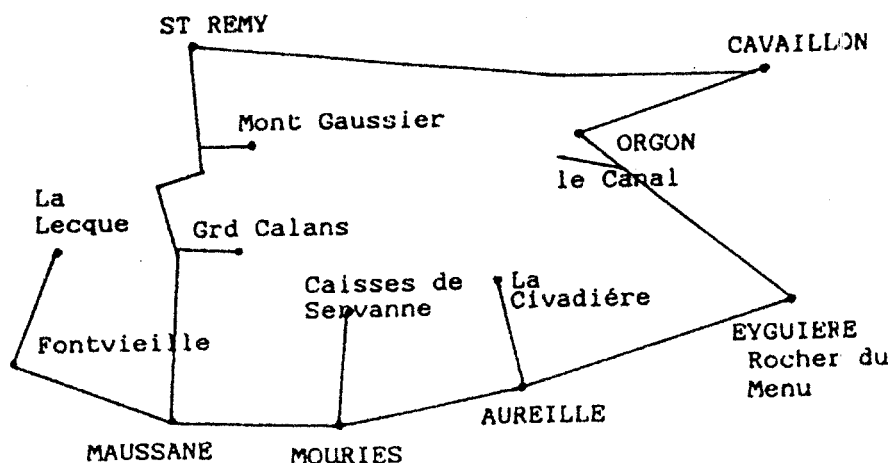
The Mouriès camp site seems to be a bit of a rip off, as they charge you for a minimum of seven days, for people, cars, tents, cars again, water, air, etc. Also it's quite a way into the middle of the village for a draught of amber nectar (or vino).

Camping at Orgon seems to be almost civilised, right beneath the climbing arena, furthest climbing not more than 10 minutes walk away. The swimming pool doesn't look too inviting as the water hasn't been changed since the parting of the Red Sea. Also quite a walk ( $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 Km to the village for provisions). This is probably the best place to be if you're short on transport.

The most desirable place to camp is at "Les Romans" camp site in Maussane. This is a 5\* pitch, with free hot water for showers, cooking, sinks for washing up, a clothes washer and a number of "barbies" for campers use. The site is adjacent to the swimming pool and close to the village amenities. These include a bar with local colour and a pizza restaurant, both are highly recommended.

### MAPS

The area is fully covered by Michelin maps 83 & 84. A general map of the area given below. This is intended to show the general location of the crags to the villages.



## GUIDEBOOKS



Guidebooks now exist for most of these crags, although the Mouriès guide is now out of print. The local guides can usually be obtained from the bar that is nearest to the crag. These include "Le Pub" - Cavaillon, "Bar du Cours" - Orgon, the only bar in Mausanne and the climbers bar in Mouriès. An area guide is also available, this is useful for getting a feel for the different cliffs, but suffers with its descriptions for getting to the crags. (Yes, they are worse than mine.

All of the guides are available from the large sport shops in Cavaillon, and they also hold vital equipment eg chalk, ropes etc.

## BEST TIME OF YEAR

The area is far enough South to "suffer" from a Mediterranean climate, this ensures that climbing at Easter and in the Autumn is usually very good. However the Summer months will usually be too hot, unless you get up at the crack of dawn "pull in" a few routes then pop down to the bar for lunch.

## PROBLEMS

Like the rest of the South of France there have been problems with parked cars. This is especially true of Mouriès where cars have to be left a long way from the climbing. Fontvielle could also suffer this problem in the future, as cars should be left on the main road. The best advice is probably to put everything in the boot and leave the rest of the car empty. Passports could probably be left at the campsite with the owners, or managers. Some of the crags have suffered from a couldn't care less approach from climbers. This has resulted from restricted access, for Mouriès, however other crags could also suffer. Please park sensibly and maintain a fairly low profile at secluded crags.



## GRADES

All of the grades used in the guides for this area are "French". A rough guide to obtain the British technical grade would be to subtract  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . This is further complicated by the use of the a/b/c and +/- symbols. It is unusual in France to find route up to grade five to be given the a/b/c divisions, the routes are usually given the bracket of 5-/5/5+. However, some guides do give these grades as 5- = 5a, 5 = 5b, 5+ = 5c. The routes above grade 6 use the a/b/c symbols and also the +/- symbols, this is solely to confuse foreigners.

So I wish you all a bon grimpe,

*Mitch*

In a cold and dreary Saturday morning, John (Bignose) Russell, Tanker myself and A.N. Other set out for Cambridge. Tanker (Mike Tolson for those who don't know him) was navigating, as he had the "patent" Tanker map bracket on his handlebars. We went here - we went there - we went this way and that way, up hill and down dale, through fords and on tracks until after 2 hours of continuous cycling we arrived at a pub ½ mile from our starting point. Tanker's comment - "there seems to be a slight error with the navigation"!

Tanker tracked several miles to a road which seemed to lead in the Cambridge direction, and apart from getting the contours wrong, so we had a long uphill slog where he'd promised a nice freewheel downhill, we eventually got to Cambridge. At least the weather had improved. Cambridge Youth Hostel was very good indeed, excellent food (we didn't self cater) and small 4-bed rooms. That's 4 beds per room not 4 bedrooms. That evening we managed to find the worst pubs in Cambridge - mind you - we had to walk quite a long way to find them. Next day started as cold, damp and dreary as before, only this time it didn't improve. At least we missed the heavy rain as we'd stopped at the Imperial War Museum, Doxford at the time. I got my usual puncture back wheel as usual - so my hands got dirty from the chain). All in all a most enjoyable week-end.

We're cycling round the Isle of Wight in May (another Ceunant first!) - providing we can find it, that is.



Following a brief introduction to ski touring on a Fred Harper course in Chamonix, a small group of us decided to attempt a ski tour in the Otztal Alps Austria. The plan was then to drive south and meet up with other club members in Finale Italy for a weeks rock climbing.

Having shoe-horned huge amounts of gear into my car, Messrs Brennan, Jordan and Mynette drove into the heart of London to pick me up. I eventually caught up with them on the wrong floor of my works building attempting to chat the drawers off a 50 year old receptionist - who, it must be said prefers older men.

A quick blast overnight found us in Sölden Austria. The main plan of our trip was to roughly follow a 7 to 8 day ski tour outlined in Peter Cliff's book, Ski Mountaineering.

We needed to hire touring equipment and transceivers. This proved more difficult than anticipated, but we eventually obtained everything in Veng where we also found a very reasonable hostel owned by an old mountain guide and his family (gasthof pension gsbrein).

Sunday morning dawned claggy and there had been light snowfall overnight. After packing our sacs weighed about 25/30 lb each - too heavy really, but we erred on the side of safety and took quite a bit of emergency gear.

The first day of the tour required an ascent of a long steep-sided valley to the Martin Busche Hut. This on the map looked like an easy day, but with the unfamiliar gear and heavy packs it proved a much more tiring trip. Old avalanche debris crossed our path on six or seven occasions - a timely reminder that transceivers were a very worthwhile bit of kit.

The Martin Busche Hut, like most of the local huts has three levels of accomodation, all good with the cheapest being, alpine dossing like Tyn Lon. The food at this and all the huts was excellent and there was plenty of it.

On Monday we all woke early to the Jordan/Mynette morning chorus of snoring and grunts - exactly what you need to start the day fresh and even tempered.

The plan was to go up to the Similaun Hut then ascend Similaun Peak dropping back to the hut at the end of the day. It is good practice to follow other people's ski tracks where-ever possible , because they do all the hard work breaking the trail. It is also good practice to make sure the trail you are following is heading where you want to go, hence we found ourselves on the top of Hanslabkogel at 3403m. Great mountain but the wrong one. After a quick discussion it was decided that all blame rested on Joe's shoulders - because he deserved it.

The plus side of this slight balls up was a superb run back down to the valley - it was our first test in deep snow with packs on and once we got going it wasn't too difficult.

The day finished with a long slog up to the Similaun Hut, a total of 4'h000 feet of ascent.

Overnight a blizzard hit us and morning dawned with high winds and near white-out conditions.

During the previous evening Dennis had befriended an Italian chap who turned out to be a "border guard" and ex-mountain guide. He had to make the traverse to the Bella Vista hut our next objective also, so we teamed up with him, which was much safer because the conditions were atrocious and navigations very difficult.

Silvano, the guide had made the traverse dozens of times but he still had difficulty finding the way.

From the hut we skimmed up to a pass, climbed down a short gulley and skied rather nervously past crevases and seracs and down to the valley floor. We then entered the Kurzras Piste area. Here we parted company with Silvano and made the final run across the valley floor to the Bella Vista hut. The views over the Grave Wand were spectacular - the Bella Vista is very well named.

That afternoon we had a transceiver practice session. Statistics show that if you reach a buried person within 30 minutes there's about 70% chance of



their survival. Well in the Tony Mynette big bumper book of avalanches victims have a 70% chance of fossilisation - admittedly, a large generator next to the search area meant that the deaf old git couldn't hear the beeps.

Overnight, another foot of snow fell, in the morning it was white out and the barometer was still falling - time to head south for the sun.

It took most of the day to descend to Veut. We crossed glaciers in white out conditions past the Hochjoch Hospitz and walked out the last 4 miles down the dangerous Titzentalerweg path. It was a shame to cut the tour short but a great experience anyway.

Plan 'B' was to drive south via the Bernard pass and pick up a couple of days skiing in the Dolomites.

At the border post we were able to obtain all the relevant ski resort info from the very impressive Italian tourist office - computer aided.

Using this info we skied for a day at Val Gardina. We had a great day skiing both on and off piste with fabulous views around the Sassolungo and Selfa peaks.

The resort however was for lower intermediate grade skiers with most runs in the Green/Blue categories.

That evening after three hours drive we arrived in Maddance de (\_\_\_\_), a resort ideally suited to mainstream Ceunant tastes - every woman was draped in furs, all cars were Italian exotica and the hotels were hideously expensive, all except the Hotel Giora which was where we stayed. This hotel is so infamous that any mention of the name to locals causes instant laughter, and Dennis told everybody he met.

As with many of the flash places, the skiing runs were mainly green/blue very boring but ideal for posing in your furs.

For our last night in town we hit a local pizza parlour. The place was full of glamorous beauties tucking in heartily. In strolled this tall Italian Stallion, with women draped all over him. Cool as a cucumber.

~~We started~~ talking to a table full of other girls. Jealousy was rife and ~~she~~ got the hump and rushed out, down the road. We all shouted and ~~laughed~~ as the cool dude shot off down the road after her - but nobody ~~else~~ in the place reacted at all. Half an hour later he returned with a ~~different~~ girl and four minders, who promptly sat around us and started to ~~talk~~. The rest of the evening was spent with Dennis giving us a run down ~~on~~ the bouncers were staring at now. We never found out if he was Mafia ~~or~~ a film star but we were glad to see them leave.

~~At~~ 2am we're pissed - very pissed and the manager of the 'Gloria' had said ~~we~~ by midnight. The hotel door was locked, well wedged closed with a ~~wood~~ handle. One good kick from Joe saw the door off its hinges, Joe and ~~wood~~ handle on top of it and Dennis, Tony and me disappearing up the road ~~in~~ mystics. The noise woke up the fat manager who opened the inner door ~~in~~ his underpants just in time to see me propping the door back up with ~~the~~ handle, but he didn't realise it was off its hinges.

~~In~~ the morning we hurriedly left for Finale by another door. I am sure the ~~manager~~ got a nice surprise when he moved the broom handle later in the day. South to Finale and the Europa campsite. You can camp here for nothing if you are clever - so it cost us £5 per day.

Having met up with Sirhc, Steve, Spiney and Zoe (all camping free) some excellent routes were done on various crags in the area. All route info is readily available from the climbing shop in Finale. Routes were mainly bolt or peg protected on steep solid limestone. The only draw-back was the international rock jock scene with the crag plastered with Brits and Germans. The weather was not so good and a torrential thunderstorm saw us pack up and head for Chamonix. The thunderstorm turned to hail and snow which severely affected the Autostrada surface. Four inches of hail was all it took to ~~write~~ the car off. The worst injury being Joe's head connecting with a flying ski boat. We made Chamonix for lunch the following day - in a Fiat. A quick repack at Dover and we were home - a great holiday.

The ski tour was a great success - try it.

POSTSCRIPT

Upon phoning Sutton College the following Tuesday, I was informed that Mr. Brennan had been involved in a motoring accident and was convalescing at home for a week or so. Convalescing in the Peak District more like. Skiving old git.

INFO

Otztaler Alps 1:25000 maps  
Gurgl 30/1  
Wildspitze 30/6  
Weibkugel 30/2

Most info contained in Peter Cuff's book - Ski Mountaineering.  
FINALE Rock Climbing Guides available in Finale Shop.

THE AONACH EAGACH RIDGE IN A MERE  
TWENTY AND A HALF HOURS -  
FEBRUARY 11TH 1991

Adrian Casey  
(footnotes : Sue Traynor)

What was I doing? It was 5.15 am. and the alarm was ringing. It only seemed ten minutes since Nick and I were in the Roy Bar agreeing to accompany Zoe and Sue on the Aonach Eagach Ridge.

To be fair, they had told us that it would be a long day and that they did not want<sup>1</sup> to walk fast but a 5.15 start seemed a bit keen.

Rucksacs were pre-packed and, dressed for the hill, we went silently to the kitchen for breakfast and traipsed out to the car. It was frosty and clear, perfect weather. A gentle drive through Fort William and then Glen Coe brought us to Alltna-Reigh where the car was parked and rucksacs were put on.

It was 7.40 am and we were walking! Only long distance lorries already on the road down in the Pass disturbed the frozen silence. Everyone else with any sense was still asleep.<sup>2</sup>

The easy path leads to the first summit of Am Bodach and the first refreshment stop for us. It was 10.30<sup>3</sup>, the day was clear although wisps of cloud obscured parts of the ridge and Stob Coire Nam Lochan had a plume of cloud. We had now been caught up by the first of numerous<sup>4</sup> teams to pass us.

1. Not true! We always want to walk fast but our plans are determined by a realistic assessment of our abilities and an aversion to pain.
2. Foolish! Anyone who isn't a Ceunant member knows that dawn is the best bit of the day anywhere.
3. ...and who is this blue, shivering figure heading down the hill towards me offering to carry my rucsac to the top? Its Ade. Afraid that he'll develop hythermia if he has to wait for me any longer, he's tempting me to sell out my feminist principles. I agonise for all of 2 nanoseconds and hand the sac over.
4. An understatement. If the Sioux nation had had dayglo Goretex and rucsacs, then the Trail of Tears would have looked like this.

"The descent from Am Bodach is an early test of nerve." says the guidebook. Although not technically difficult, large drops loom either side to accomodate the unwary. The team ahead of us had set up a safety rope which Sue and Zoe freely<sup>5</sup> took advantage of.

The ridge is a slow scramble to Stob Coire Leith, constantly losing and gaining height. Again, there are noticeable drops on both sides. The worst section under the conditions prevailing that day was the Broken Pinnacle section. Security was again found in the rope especially where rocks had acquired a veneer of ice from the passage of ungloved hands. Cameras clicked and ungainly progress was made and crowds<sup>6</sup> could be seen queuing to descend from Am Bodach.

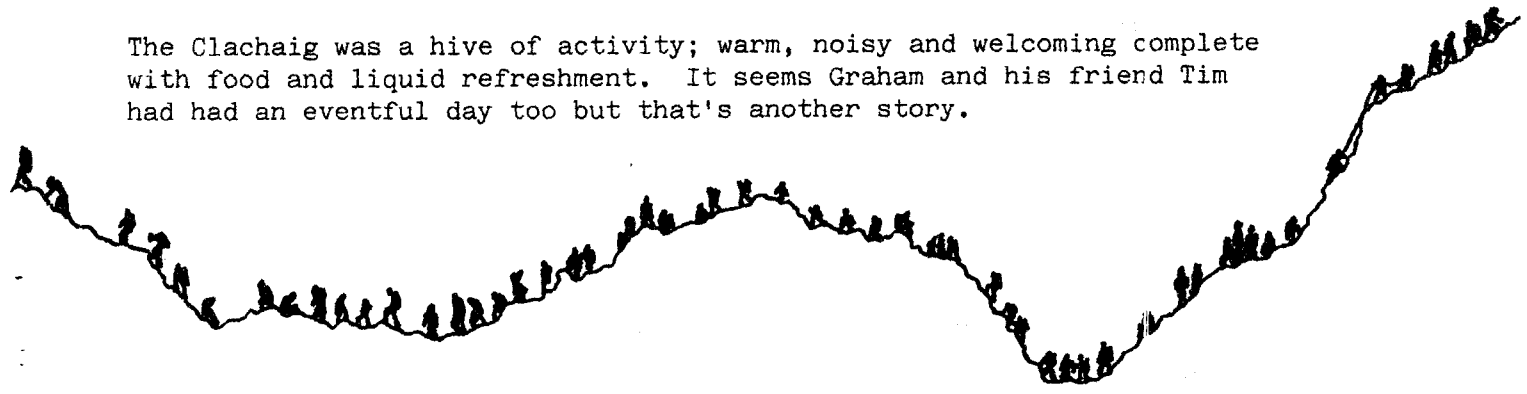
Clouds were rolling in relentlessly, obscuring our view of the Ben, Blackwater Reservoir and beyond. Time was also pressing and it was 4.30 pm. when we finally got to the ridge's last summit, Sgor-Nam Fiannaidh. Drinks and sandwiches finished, we decided on our descent path; not Clachaig Gully but North-west to the Pap of Glencoe. Only a slight wind was blowing but in the thick mist it would have been easy to walk over a cornice. Wind slab was also forming on leeward slopes.

Descending through thinning mist, we suddenly emerged from the cloud to grey and overcast views of North Ballachulish, sodium lights picking out the roads like a barium meal does intestines. The light was fading fast, Zoe and Sue were both suffering from blisters. The snow was receding, crampons were removed and headtorches put on.

Nick went on ahead<sup>7</sup> to the Clachaig to get the first round in and advise Graham Spencely who was awaiting us with transport that all was well and that we would be some time yet. A slow and meandering descent ensued in the sleet and finally rain until a van was reached on the road to the Clachaig and four-wheel drive took over from Shank's Pony.<sup>8</sup>

5. Not entirely. I was moved to promise these helpful souls a drink later at the Clachaig. Of course they were completely pissed by the time I arrived much, much later and didn't remember the offer (or their own names) but they accepted happily.
6. Another understatement. If Moses and the Israelites had shopped at Climber and Rambler then the Exodus.....etc.
7. Actually, he sprinted off with a gleeful demeanour that was distinctly irritating.
8. The bemused driver had been patiently waiting for his party when Zoe leapt into his van and hijacked it with the cool aplomb of an international terrorist.

The Clachaig was a hive of activity; warm, noisy and welcoming complete with food and liquid refreshment. It seems Graham and his friend Tim had had an eventful day too but that's another story.



OUT CROP

Mark Applegate

Rock of ages  
Warm from the sun  
My back gratefully  
Lent, tiredly propped  
Upon this outcrop

You have seen us all  
Come and gone  
Sometimes cold  
Iced with hoar frost  
Green with lichen  
Quartz glimmers  
In the zenith of the sun

What have you thought  
Of our flesh and blood  
Stealing peace  
Shelter from the weather  
Tired minds slumped  
Not recognising your importance  
A statue  
Milestone of creation

Against you we are  
But small pieces  
In creations jigsaw  
We're not here for very long  
You've seen our destruction  
Stripping away  
'Till all barren  
Left looking at our watelands

Yet you still  
Let us shelter  
Under your wrigs  
Getting a breather  
Sipping our coffee  
Smoking tabs  
Unconscious of  
The Prince of Ages  
In our company

I was visiting my brother down in Dorset, and, his appetite having been whetted by the Ackers (God knows why) he had suggested a spot of climbing on the local crag.

After a fairly standard crack of midday start we arrived to find one, possibly two, school-type minibuses. Undaunted we carried on to the bottom of the crag and homed in on the suitably macho sounding "Scar" at Hard Severe. Twenty feet up without any gear and no protection cracks I thought to myself,

"If only I had a No.1 Friend I could put it in that pocket I've got two fingers in ..... if only I could bring myself to take my fingers out".

Five feet further up there was a tree stump I could put a sling round. Two desperate moves and I grabbed the stump..... It moved. Pause for thought putting as little weight as possible on the tree.

"Er, James, I think we're on the wrong route, I'll come down".

Fortunately there was another party where I thought the route went so we went to try "Barn Owl Crack" now that it was free from brats. The first half went OK but the top part was one of those where you had to back and foot and perform a 180 degree turn half way up. This was absolutely desperate as it had been polished to a fine sheen by the hordes of flailing trainers, which caused much amusement to the assorted bystanders.

When we returned to the bottom James's friend, Nick Fennell, who had expressed an interest in climbing, had turned up for a baptism of fire. So, with initials like NF, "Wogs" seemed a good one to do, added to which I had the advantage of having done it before. As I neared the stance James, who was standing 30 feet out from the bottom keeping the rope tight called up,

"All your runners have fallen out!"

The triangle of force strikes again.

"That's alright I'm near the top". I called back as I scabbled nonchalantly for safety. I don't know what it is about abseiling that attracts novices but both lads insisted on abseiling back to the ground from the stance rather than scrambling through the ivy.