

YRC JOURNAL

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club

Mountaineering, caving etc.

Series 13 - Issue 7 Summer 2009



CLIMBING "SEA MIST" ON SADDLE HEAD
PEMBROKE MEET

ARTICLES

GREAT WALKS IN THE LAKES

PICTORIAL RECORD OF LHAKHANG

THE SNOW LEOPARD

SOQOTRA ISLAND

NEW CALEDONIA

CALDERDALE

MOROCCO, THE ANTI ATLAS

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YOUR JOURNAL

The journal has been published twice yearly for some years now and is both a journal of the activities and proceedings of the club and a source of articles on a range of subjects provided by the membership from their great range of interests.

The journals over the years have included articles on climbs, caving exploits, skiing, sailing, expeditions; natural history, archaeology, folklore and many other similar subjects.

It is supplemented by our periodic mailings of internal club affairs but in itself is designed to be a permanent record of our activities and a shop window to the wider world.

Our electronic record of the journals goes back to summer 1994 but cannot provide the permanence of the written form. Earlier journals can still be accessed for information and go back to the formation of the club in 1892.

Our journals go to several learned bodies, clubs and libraries And one is lodged with the British Library as a permanent record.

The journal has evolved over the years and its format is under fairly constant review. We switched to an A4 size back in the summer of 1994 and in recent years have made increasing use of colour. Feedback from members is always welcome as are suggestions for further improvement.

This edition sees a few more changes and as editor I hope the membership approves.

We are a Club with long traditions which must be honoured but change can reflect new techniques and modern approaches without losing those traditions we seek to conserve.

Traditions are to a large extent perpetuated by word of mouth, often as we recharge our batteries after a long day on the hill or underground, but as time goes by and memories dim, it is back to the written word that we can turn for confirmations of earlier exploits.

If members in the future are going to be able to do likewise it is essential that what we are doing today is properly recorded. Club meets are recorded in the journal but most members are out and about doing sterling things alone or with groups of friends and these activities are of equal interest to fellow members.

The journal is only as good as the material you send in for publication so please find time to record what you are up to.

I quote a fellow member who classed himself as one of the silent majority of members and who wished to remain anonymous —

“The production of a Club Journal has given us, the silent members of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, the longed-for opportunity to express our appreciation of the many strange tales our more venturesome fellows have told us of their wanderings among the wrinkles of Mother Earth.

They have scorned to selfishly hide their talents in a napkin, but have used them freely for our delight. Many folios of foolscap and countless lantern slides — eloquent witnesses to much burning of the midnight oil — have compelled our gratitude. Poetic fervour and subtle wit, burning eloquence and kindly humour, have ministered to our pleasure.

Recent books of travel, with their weird story of savage wanderings and Homeric exploits, make us suspect that even modern travellers tell strange tales. Our travellers feared to taint our simple minds with guile, and told us only plain tales from the hills. We have been spared the usual preliminary columns in the press ere they embarked upon their perilous adventures, and with the night of their recital their narratives have passed into silence. With beautiful self-denial they have resisted the wily publisher, and his insidious designs upon our attenuated purses.

A President of the Alpine Club (the writer mentions him with due reverence) has spoken of us as "a mild body."

Could he have known these Yorkshire Ramblers, or has he judged them by their modesty? To us, at least, remains a record of silent heroism, which has carried us speechless through nearly a decade of meetings with Spartan courage. While turning deaf ears to the voice of the charmers in the chair, who have invited us to make fools of ourselves, we have privately encouraged members to believe in their literary ability. With sympathetic tact we have eulogised their elocutionary attainments, and prophesied for them a dazzling career on public platforms. Yet, with a modesty as singular as it is unanimous, they remain content with the common round, the daily task, and an occasional private display of their brilliant possibilities.

We have listened with the uplifted hair of unwavering belief to the deeds of "derring do" narrated by our rock-climbers. Our hearts have thrilled with the difficulties of jammed stones, the terrors of face-climbs, and the dangers of holds for feet and hands — so scant that only the nail of a boot or the tip of a finger could find a purchase.

Indigestion by suggestion has troubled us as we heard of traverses which, like pills, were frequently and painfully stomachic. We have fidgetted in our chairs while they backed in here, ventured on the face there, or stood — unflinching veterans — under a heavy fire of falling stones. A stern sense of duty, or perhaps a desire to conciliate the Philistines who don't climb, has induced many of them to make involved scientific observations under many and great

difficulties, and we have forgiven them. Their doubtless necessary, if violent, declamation of those idiots who violate all the laws and canons of the art of treading where the foot of man was never meant to tread, has carried conviction with it. Our premature ice-axe will never know the eternal snows; relegated to the coal cellar it has, in other hands, become a domestic implement of much utility.

We have gaped at the foolish hardihood of men, apparently respectable, who sought adventure in caves and pot-holes. Have we not heard how, when standing on the brink of some great abyss, magnesium ribbon and a plumb-line revealed a depth exceeding — twenty feet !!!

The bottomless pool beneath, with scum and froth swirling upon its horrid surface, has failed to cover even a Rambler's foot. Reassured, we carried tins of paraffin and solid baulks of timber incredible distances and at unheard of hours to other pot-holes.

We cut multitudes of sandwiches and made gallons of tea for intrepid explorers, and thankfully gnawed the mutton bones they left us. Disillusioned our hearts have hardened, and we are going to submit to the comforts of home a little longer, despite a consuming passion for fireworks and a fierce desire to be called speleologists.

In spirit we have wandered through the pillared aisles of many churches. We have seen countless Norman naves standing on a similar number of Saxon crypts. We have deplored the absence of the triforium, and even criticised the stained glass by judicious references to "Murray." We have pondered deeply on the state of Sir Rufus Robbair's liver when he gave three carucates of land to the Abbey of St. Dufferus for ever.

We have recognised the latent poet in members who veiled the commonplaces of lunch in such charming phrases as "lubrication of the tonsils" and "distortion of the alimentary canal." We still reserve our judgment upon the expediency of port wine and brandy for the former operation, and upon the wisdom of performing the latter with the sausage of modern commerce; but we have never failed to give the heroic survivors their mead of applause.

With others we have foolishly slept on rock ledges in Norway, spent arduous days on ice-slopes, and chased legions of furtive fleas in the climbers' huts and chalets of Switzerland. With De Foe we have made the ascent of Cheviot, viewed, like Moses, the climbers' Promised Land from Scafell, and the Pillar Rock from Pispah, and, unlike Moses, been permitted to pass the Jordan.

Up the Dolomites with scarpetti'd feet we have been dragged on double ropes. We have shuddered upon the verge of the Stygian courses of hidden rivers, and sung Christmas carols in snow-drifts. In the Yosemite Valley avalanches of quotations from the poets have overwhelmed us. We have exhibited an intelligent interest in the Parallel Roads of Glen Roy, and become mildly

enthusiastic over a plaster model intended to represent them.

In caves and pot-holes innumerable garments have been spoiled, and countless geological specimens brought forth for our edification. The Grepon Crack has become our own familiar friend, and bids fair to oust from our affections our quondam boon companion, the Napes Needle.

Some compensations have been granted us. Few, if any, Ramblers know Gaelic. When they return from "Caledonia stern and wild" their tremendous adventures lack location, and our share in them is but shadowy.

We have also discovered an impressionist school of photo-graphic art, and with some success seen the artists' meanings in their mysterious pictures. We have learned to look unflinchingly upon photographs of our familiar friends clinging like flies to stupendous rock faces, well knowing the foreground has been removed for our pleasure and their glory.

In earlier days we listened with patient resignation to speeches relevant to everything but the matter under discussion. Some of these, if irrelevant, had evidently a purpose and a warning, but we have never been able to decide upon the state of mind which induced a speaker to declare "the beauties of Canterbury make it incumbent upon every right feeling member to spend Christmas and Easter in the Lake District."

By the help of an exhibition of scientific Alpine equipment, held in the Club-room, we have attained at least some knowledge of the things not needed for a pleasant holiday.

When "the winter of our discontent is made glorious summer," we shall seek the happy shores of dear old Scarborough.

There, by the summer sea, conscious of a duty discharged, of gratitude expressed, our strained minds will relax, and we shall return to listen with increased zest to those wonderful tales our brother Ramblers tell us of their marvellous adventures by flood and field, on peak and glacier."

Forsooth me thinks twer well sed! - Editor

These sentiments were taken from our journal of 1899

I have one or two spares of most editions going back to 1994 if any member has lost one or if a newer member would like to make up a set.

The Club has further spares held centrally and if any member would like any for promotional purposes please contact either myself; the Secretary or the Librarian.

GOGARTH

On a beautiful Monday in April, Tim Josephy and I went to Wen Zawn at Gogarth and climbed this 3* HVS route. It was a superb outing.

The guide book describes it as two pitches, starting well above sea level at a stance reached by a diagonal abseil from the start of better known 'Dream of White Horses' route. However, at low tide it is possible to start from sea level in the bed of the zawn and make it a three pitch route. As the tide was out and we could see the rocks in the bed of the zawn, this seemed a good idea. An abseil on my 50m rope at full stretch just got us to the rocks at the bottom, where the tide was already beginning to come in. We had to boulder hop between waves to cross the Zawn to the start of the route, and both got wet. As these rocks are only exposed for a short time around low tide it was fairly important to be able to climb the route, (most other climbs from there are harder than we could contemplate - and swimming wasn't a very attractive option).

The bottom of the Zawn is a chilly, shady place and the sea usually covers the start of the route, which goes up a steep chimney. The start was somewhat greasy and holds were not too apparant. Just a couple of metres up, I couldn't work out what to do and resorted to pulling on a friend I'd placed (just for one move.....honest!). The wall to the left of the left leaning chimney was vertical; slightly overhanging and devoid of usable holds, so just staying on the rock was tiring. Jams in the back of the crack were good, but wet and often too far away to be useful. It was a struggle. A somewhat plaintif cry from Tim urged me to find a stance 'soonish' as the sea was advancing on his position.

Another 20ft of easier climbing lead to a small but decent stance and belay. Once belayed and in sunshine I watched



IN PRAISE OF CALDERDALE

I started drafting this article in 2005 and now that a Club meet in the area is proposed for October this year, I thought it appropriate to update it.

The article is not simply a diary of the activities of the author and his friends, and neither is it a description of any of the abundant walks to be found in what is usually described as The South Pennines. Maybe the TV series "Last of the Summer Wine" will come to mind as it does to many of the people who hear of our Thursday exploits.

I retired from the daily toil in 1998 to find, but not immediately, that lots of subtle things, which I now realised had been important in my life, had disappeared. I refer to imponderables such as motivation and intellectual reward, the daily interactions, of all kinds, with other people.

Adrian Bridge

an Irish ferry sail past on its way to Holyhead. Ten minutes later, when Tim was well up the pitch, four or five large wake waves arrived and engulfed the start of the route.... a lucky escape.

The second pitch was a delight, a leftward diagonal rising to the arete followed by a steep crack in the slab to a bulge.

The rock was white and crystalline, shiny in the bright sun. Holds were generally small but good, though at the overhang bulge they looked to be stuck on rather than integral with the cliff, a little worrying, but all good. The stance above was small but quite comfy, in the bed of the concrete chimney. There was an old peg with only a thin eye remaining (left from Pete Crew and Joe Brown's first ascent in 1967?), fortunately there were other belay options too, which relied on the 'solid rubble' filling the chimney.

Someway above this second stance, there was an airy step left onto a nose, with nothing between us and the sea in the Zawn, more than a couple of hundred feet below.

Fortunately large holds prevented undue heart racing and the so called overhanging groove above proved relatively easy. A scramble up the final earthy slope lead to good belays in proper rock - not always the case with the climbs at Gogarth.

Being a Monday, we'd seen very few people since leaving the car park and no other climbers. Not a bad thing, this semi retirement!

No pictures tho', too gripping to be able to take any!

Frank Wilkinson

These other people may fill this gap in all sorts of ways; but as a YRC member, high on my list was some form of walking or climbing activity.

My predecessors in the club have met this challenge by evolving a mid week walk based on Lowstern, but from my perspective, this option has always had severe limitations compared with our activities in Calderdale; and by the time you have read this article, I hope you will appreciate why.

Now for almost a decade, my friends and I have arranged a weekly, full day, expedition, usually on Thursday and preponderantly in the South Pennines. It began, by going on a short walk restricted by time. When you are free of the bonds of the job market, ironically one seems to have even less time. The time available seemed only to be that

between the morning and late afternoon rush hours. Rush hours we had quickly learned to avoid and which were now an anathema. This of course was simply because we drove everywhere. The idea of using public transport was never considered, because the car seemed much more versatile. A regular lengthy drive to Lowstern seemed a chore and we resorted to closer alternative options and had even resorted, somewhat below our dignity as mountaineers and not rambblers, to researching local walks from the public library: but ideas were running out.

Then came the Foot and Mouth disease.

For a while we were then restricted to public parks and were then even forced to consider, and even walk on the canal side. In its way this was the goose that laid the golden egg. There are several canals in West Yorkshire. They follow the rivers and radiate out from Castleford and do not lend themselves to circular walks. We were forced to find some way of returning to our starting point, but in the valleys alongside the canals are both roads and railways; urbanisation of course, but with the benefit of public transport. Here was our means of closing the circle, but not only that, then came the realisation that as OAPs, we were entitled to a bus pass, and for the then princely sum of 20p could close the loop.

Early in the period of FMD, Calderdale Leisure Services started producing leaflets of allowed walks. We snapped them up as anything had to be an improvement on the canal side, and thus we discovered, or perhaps more truthfully, rediscovered, Calderdale.

We then had the ability to travel within West Yorkshire for only a few pence each way. From Leeds, the hills are in the west. Our metro passes allowed us to use the Ilkley railway line to its terminus, the Airedale line as far as Steeton before entering North Yorkshire, the Calderdale line all the way to Walsden near the Lancashire border and the Huddersfield line as far as Marsden. We could easily walk between two points on the rail network without having to close the circle; and the time spent travelling was not in rush hour road traffic, but in a different environment surrounded by a cross section of real life in West Yorkshire.

More recently, our bus passes have been extended to allow us to use local buses beyond the confines of West Yorkshire. This now allows us to venture further westward, into Lancashire, and visit Thameside, Rossendale and the West Pennine moors.

Open up a copy of Explorer OL21, The South Pennines. The first impression is of rural conurbations hemmed into the valleys, with their arteries of the roads, railway and canal. Most people see nothing else. But look for the green lines of the public rights of way. In the areas bounding the Calder valley they are everywhere. This is a result of the fairly unique combination of geology and the influence of man.

The part of the Pennines we are talking about lies between the limestone areas of the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

These two regions have their own type of scenery, which has led to the growth in popular tourism. The South Pennines has no limestone. It is poorly drained and the vegetation on the higher tops is a mixture of heather and bog. The ice age left its mark, but at the end, the rapid run off of glacial melt water scoured out the present valleys, which are steep sided and gorge like. In the middle ages, the bottoms of these valleys were liable to flooding and the major communication lines of the packhorse trails went across the tops. A shelf like region, presumably an old glacier bed, above the valley floor but below the tops and capable of being farmed was heavily developed and populated. The enclosures act led to the area being divided into walled fields with a multitude of interconnecting lanes and paved footpaths or causeys.

The embryonic woollen industry, of the cottage variety was subsequently developed by using water power. Ruins of old water mills are found in the most unlikely places. Then the real industrial revolution came, and the valley floor was opened up. The canals were built and later the railways. The population moved towards the valley and the hillsides remain as a fossilised remnant of a foregone age. The dales and peak district are not like this. Walking in the valley is restricted by farm land to relatively few paths, and walkers aim for the higher ground where open access is expected.

A day's walk in the South Pennines, Calderdale especially, can be a mixture of semi urban life with its facilities (pubs, etc.), steep sided valleys, green lanes, woods, paved footpaths, and the open moor, and all this repeated perhaps three times in the day, giving a continuous change in panorama. Accumulated ascent can almost rival the three peaks.

All the many hours spent walking since I retired have led to a renewed questioning of why I climb mountains, or in a broader context, why I go walking. There is no simple answer. Each person has his own reason, even if he does not fully understand it. And I have realised that one's reasons change both with circumstances, but especially with age. The desire to reach the top, which was always paramount as a young man, has been diluted by many other gratifications, which come simply from observing the world around one. The subtle effects a change in weather and season can bring to the same location. The way man has changed his environment and yet how nature always fights back. Yes there is a reward in fighting across a rain lashed moorland in near zero visibility, but as they say, variety is the spice of life, and Calderdale seems to supply it better than more popular areas.



Hardcastle Crag

Club meet
in October

OF WALKS AND WALKERS AND TIMES GONE BY

GREAT WALKS IN THE LAKES

Jeff Hooper

In the early 1860s, the Reverend Julius M. Elliott completed his circuit of the fells; Dr A. W. Wakefield did his twenty-four hour circuits in 1904 and 1905; the Bob Graham Round came into being in 1932. More recently in the nineteen-sixties the Lake District 3000 Footers event was first organised by the Ramblers' Association but what happened regarding long walks in the mountains of the Lake District between the mid-nineteenth century and the events of the twentieth century?

In the circle of climbing and mountaineering clubs, some men are still talked of; their names having been passed down by word of mouth and in the few articles written at the time. Names such as Robinson, Pilkington (but which one?), Dawson and Broadrick (confusion surrounds which of the three brothers). Books written in the mid-twentieth century have further added to the confusion surrounding the events that took place between 1860 and 1905. R. Wilfred Broadrick is one of those mountaineers known to only a few people caught in this confusion and, in my opinion, not given his rightful place among the record breakers. He was a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club and left an account of his most notable walk in the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal Vol.1 No. 4 in 1902. His achievements have been over-looked by twentieth-century writers.

Broadrick's account, 'A Record Fell Walk', caught my imagination and fuelled my ambition many years ago and later I read 'High Peak' and was again encouraged and entertained by the feats of 'Colonel' Dawson. Broadrick's account of his walk on 14 September 1901 refers to his companion as Dawson giving no personal details and it was only recently that I became convinced that 'Colonel' Dawson, and the Dawson who walked with Broadrick were one and the same person. I realised that the two walkers who had inspired me at different times, had together performed what I believe is an over-looked achievement of high quality, recorded in one of my favourite pieces of writing.

The two men were, I believe, similar in age, at the time of performing this record fell walk Broadrick; was twenty-nine and Dawson one or two years younger. Broadrick was a rock-climber, alpinist and oarsman whilst Dawson had made his name as a fast and tireless road walker before moving to the mountains and moors.

Many people who enjoy activity in the British mountains have an urge to test themselves against the elements. They have pondered the questions of how far they could travel on foot in any given time or how far they could go until exhausted or, what would be the minimum time in which they could complete a route marked by pre-determined points. Also, could they find their way around a pre-designated route in the mountains in adverse conditions; darkness, mist or snow?

It has usually been a personal matter, only important to the walker concerned.

A sense of achievement can be attained by attempting a long route, even if the route is not completed, or if it is completed in a slower time than some other person's performance. The same sense of achievement cannot be gained if only short distances are attempted. There can however be the resolution to 'have another go' and 'to do better next time'. Much enjoyment can be obtained from the detailed planning for the next attempt; so much so that the actual attempt can be an anti-climax.

Mountaineers such as Robinson and Broadrick were only interested in what they could achieve for their own satisfaction; for example, Broadrick returned home after creating new routes in the Alps and immediately went off on his own to see what he could do in the Lake District.

John W. Robinson in a letter to A.W. Rumny in written in November 1892, (published in the FRCC Journal Vol.3 1913-15) says that people ask him why he of all people, who has always condemned others for doing too much in one day, should attempt a twenty-four hour walk. He admits that it is perfectly true; that he has condemned people many times, but that somehow during the last two years the idea has got into his head that he would like to see how many mountains he can do in a day. He wrote that he was a slow walker and would never dream of attempting a record.

I believe that as long as men have moved among the mountains there has been such urges, but in recent times in the Lake District, it is said that the first such journey was in the early 1860s, completed by the Reverend Julius M. Elliott.

Some writers, possibly for no other reason than that they lack first hand experience, refer to long, timed walks in the mountains as fell running, and the participants as fell runners but this really is not a true description of the events or the people. Although, from the 1870s onwards some of the mountain walkers ran when on favourable ground, but they were conscious of the necessity of preserving and equalising the output of energy over the whole distance and the greater risk of accidents when running. Alan Hankinson in his book 'The First Tigers' credits Lawrence Pilkington with inaugurating what he calls, 'the masochistic sport of fell running' and recording 12,900 feet of ascent in the Lake District in twenty-one hours and ten minutes. In my opinion this was not fell running as we know it today and fell running as a sport is only masochistic if the runner is not fit enough to enjoy it. To be a fell runner requires supreme hardiness, toughness and fitness, attributes that I would have thought most mountaineers would value.

Because few of the early walkers, whose mountain journeys became to be regarded as 'records' wrote accounts themselves and because they were seldom interested in attempting to accurately measure the distance of the routes covered it is difficult now to say who did what, and when. The times in which the walks were completed were

obscured in different ways, not deliberately, but because the walkers did not think that anyone else was interested. On one occasion the walkers stopped for a meal on the way home; quite understandable after a day of that length. Another group walked back to the starting point by a more enjoyable round-about route. In one case the lone walker cycled from Windermere to the Old Dungeon Ghyll to start his walk. The walks became subject to speculation and exaggeration. A letter written by J. W. Robinson takes up this point: he writes that he cannot make the walk of the three Tucker brothers', into seventy or seventy-five miles, as stated; he says he can only measure it on the Ordnance map to fifty, and then if he adds ten per cent for up and down, it may be possible to say that it was 60 miles. Robinson adds that Arthur Tucker told him that it was estimated at sixty miles at the time. Robinson and Rumney both estimate it at between fifty and sixty miles after adding a percentage to allow for ascents and descents.

The idea of adding ten per cent to the level measured distance to account for the inclines seems to have been used without much thought being given to its accuracy. If anyone cares to calculate it or draw a diagram it will be found that to increase the distance as measured on the map by 10 per cent, inclines of approximately 1:2 are required for the entire walk, both up hill and down, with no level sections or lesser slopes. Suppose a walk of sixty miles is measured on the map and thirty miles is up hill at an incline of 1:2 and thirty miles is down hill at the same slope, the measured distance along the inclines would be 66 miles and a height of seventy-nine thousand feet would be ascended!

In 'In Lakeland Dells and Fells' (1903), W. T. Palmer developed a complicated system of comparison. He took the mileage as measured on the map and then by the use of different factors, for different types of terrain, estimated the energy required to cross every type of terrain. He then used those figures to calculate the distance that would be covered during a walk on the level using the same amount of energy. It sounds complicated: it is, and I am sure it is not accurate, but I can follow Palmer's line of thought. I believe that this theory and the one of adding ten per cent to compensate for inclines, have been responsible for many of the exaggerated distances reported.

Describing his book Palmer writes that one chapter may be described as a collection of the 'fell walking' records of Lakeland, with as much comparison in facts and figures as may interest the general reader. He emphasises that they are not competitive events as commonly understood when using the word 'record'; but primarily, they were carried out 'that men might look back in after-years to the time when they were strong and active, and could climb mountain after mountain'. Palmer goes on to say that no account can be absolutely accurate when comparing the walking and climbing powers of different men, as no two groups take precisely the same routes in their walks, as they avoid scree, boulders, crags and bogs. The amount of energy saved or lost by making these detours is estimated differently by other men. The mixture of road and fell over which these walks have been taken is not given to exact calculation. A point-to-point record, involving a considerable stretch of

level, is not so great a task as a twenty-four hours' walk exclusively over fells. The weather is a further element that is an important factor towards success or failure, the effect of which is difficult to estimate.

So far I agree with Palmer but at this point, to my mind, he begins to go astray. He then writes that while miles walked on the road may be classed as units, the energy expended on each mile over mountain-land varies considerably. He quotes an 'eminent authority' who opines that the average fell mile is equal to two by road. Then, if scree or boulders are negotiated, each mile is more difficult; and when great ascents are climbed, the unit may equal as many as four ordinary miles. The energy required in crossing grassy moors may only equal road walking, but he believes that this terrain should be counted as requiring from one and one-eighth to one and a half times level walking according to slope and climatic conditions. Boggy stretches after a wet period are as exhausting as the hardest ascents; but in dry times are easy. On record attempts some men run down all favourable slopes, others, to save shocks to foot and leg muscles, walk down such slopes. Here Palmer believes that the fatigue mileage must be increased by one-half to compensate. He gives an illustration of his theory. Someone's walk over almost eight hours was measured at 10,507 feet of ascent and a distance of forty-eight miles; equivalent on the level to seventy-four miles!

It seems to me that many commentators have quoted the enhanced 'level' distances given by Palmer for 'record' walks either because they only glanced at his book without bothering to read the explanation of his equivalent energy theory, or, simply because they wished to tell a good story. It was reading Broadrick's account of his walk with Dawson that started me on this trail. From my experience of long distance walks this one seemed exceptional, but I had never seen it referred to elsewhere. I had read of Eustace Thomas, A. W. Wakefield and J. W. Robinson but among those great achievements regarded as records, the walks done by Broadrick and Dawson both together and individually were over-looked. I believe that the September 1901 walk is among the best of them. It was completed in the spirit of the YRC. It was before an attempt was made to regulate fell walking records, by stipulating the starting and finishing places, and the hour of starting. Most subsequent attempts to break records relied on teams of pacemakers who also guided the competitor and carried food and equipment for the record breaker with footwear and clothing specially chosen.

Broadrick and Dawson walked principally on their own, Broadrick's brother, Henry, after meeting with them at Grasmere deserted them for food. Other pacemakers mentioned were of a chance nature coming and going as they pleased. Lehmann Oppenheimer offered to keep them in sight from Wasdale Head to the Old Dungeon Ghyll, as a witness, and Lehmann Oppenheimer's brother walked with them from there to Grasmere. A Mr Evans helped for some of the time. In general it seems to have been a light-hearted affair without a team of organised pacemakers as used in record breaking attempts after 1902. From Broadrick's account clothing consisted of trousers and light jacket, with

light footwear much of the time. Meals were booked in advance and eaten at inns, supplemented with snacks they, or their occasional companions carried. Time was taken to bathe in tarns as they passed.

The following publications include over forty differing accounts touching on 'record' walks in the Lake District after 1860 to the early part of the twentieth century.

Fell & Rock Journal, including letters written 1892, Vol 3, 1913-15

Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal; Vol 1 No 4, 1902

Byne, Eric and Sutton, Geoffrey, High Peak, Secker & Warburg, 1966

Chapman, F Spencer, Memoirs of a Mountaineer, Chatto and Windus, 1945

Clark, Ronald W and Pyatt, Edward C, Mountaineering in Britain, Phoenix House Ltd., 1957

Clark, Ronald, The Victorian Mountaineers, B T Batsford, London 1953

Hankinson, Alan, The First Tigers, J M Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972
Palmer, W.T., In Lakeland Dells and Fells, Chatto and Windus, 1903

Smith, Bill, Stud Marks on the Summit, SKG Publications, Preston. 1985

How accurate are these accounts?

When there is more than one account of the same event which is the most accurate? Can the truth be sifted from them, given the lack of publicity at the time and the confusion caused by hearsay evidence, and 'rule of thumb' additions to distance?

Palmer divides the record attempts into two groups, those when a circuit of pre-set points completed in a time and those when a walker attempts to go as far as possible, and to ascend as many feet as possible in twenty-four hours. He makes the point that it must be remembered that long walks such as these only attract a few men in a generation, and whole decades have passed without anything noteworthy being done.

With Wakefield's 1905 round a further parameter is brought in namely, the number of peaks that could be included. Three variables make comparison almost impossible.

My personal selection of 'records', and comments on them about which, no doubt, others will argue, is given below using Palmer's groupings; i.e. for a number of pre-set points; and for twenty-four hour trials. The following selections are made up from the forty different accounts referred to above, some are amalgams of two or more sources.

Pre-set Points

Early 1860s, J. M. Elliott: 15 miles, 6,500 feet, 8 hours 30 mins., 8 peaks around Wasdale. (Start and finish Wasdale; Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Great Gable, Kirkfell, Pillar Mountain, Steeple, Red Pike and Stirrup Crag on Yewbarrow).

1870, Thomas Watson and Wilson: 48 miles, 10,507 feet, 20 hours 45 mins., 4 peaks. (Start and finish Keswick; Scawfell Pike, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

1870s, Alpine Club member and Mackereth (a guide): 41 miles, 9,000 feet, 4 peaks. (Bowfell, Scawfell Pike, Helvellyn, and Skiddaw).

1871, Lawrence Pilkington and Bennett: 60 miles, 12,250 feet, 21 hours 15 mins.

1878, The three Tucker brothers and Bell: 50 miles, 9,000 feet, 19 hours 38 mins., 4 peaks. (Start and finish Elterwater; Bowfell, Scawfell Pike, Helvellyn, Skiddaw).

1895, Dawson, Poole and Palmer: 50 miles, 19 hours 17 mins 45 secs., 4 peaks. Palmer did not finish. (Start and finish Elterwater; Bowfell, Scawfell Pike, Skiddaw, Helvellyn).

1900, R. W. Broadrick: 15 hours 26 mins., 4 peaks. (Start and finish Ambleside; Bowfell, Scawfell Pike, Skiddaw, Helvellyn).
Twenty-four Hours

1870s, Charles Pilkington and cousins and Mathew Barnes (a guide): 60 miles, 13,792 feet, 24 hours 25 mins., 8 peaks. (Start and finish Lodore; Great Gable, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

1876, Henry I. Jenkinson: 53 miles, 12,249, 25 hours, 6 peaks. (Start and finish Keswick; Great Gable, Scawfell Pike, Bowfell, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

After 1876, Leonard Pilkington and Bennett: 60, 12,900 feet, 21 hours 34 mins., 7 peaks. (Start and finish Old Dungeon Ghyll; Bowfell, Scawfell Pike, Great Gable, Skiddaw, Blencathra, Helvellyn, and Fairfield).

1883, Lawrence and Charles Pilkington and Mathew Barnes: 60 miles, 13,800 feet, 24 hours 15 mins., 7 Peaks. (Start and finish Lodore).

1893, October 27, J. W. Robinson and G. Bennett Gibbs: 56 miles, 13,840 feet, 23 hours 25 mins., 7 peaks. (Start and finish Keswick; Great Gable, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Helvellyn and Blencathra). They did not ascend Skiddaw.

1898, June, Ned Westmorland, S. B. Johnson, Strong and Ernest Beaty: 52 miles, 14,146 feet, 19 hours 35 mins., 9 peaks. Only Strong and Beaty finished. (Start and finish Keswick; Great Gable, Great End, Scawfell Pike, Scawfell, Bowfell, High Raise, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

1898, July, Ned Westmorland and Ernest Beaty: 14,150 feet, 23 hours 45 mins., 9 peaks. (Start and finish Threlkeld; Helvellyn, High Raise, Bowfell, Great End, Scawfell Pike, Scawfell, Great Gable, Skiddaw and Blencathra).

1898, September 1, R. Wilfred Broadrick: 48 miles, 13,450 feet, 19 hours 15 mins. Cycled 12 miles to the start. The cycle time and distance was never included. (Start Old Dungeon Ghyll, finish Windermere; Bowfell, Great End, Scawfell Pike, Scawfell, Great Gable, Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Dunmail Raise, Windermere).

1901, September 14, R. Wilfred Broadrick and Cecil Dawson: 67 miles, 18,500 feet, 23 hours 32 mins. (Start and finish Rosthwaite; Great Gable, Pillar, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Helvellyn, Blencathra, Skiddaw).

1902, May 28, S. B. Johnson: 67 miles, 18,000 feet, 22 hours 15 mins. (Start and finish Threlkeld; Helvellyn, Fairfield, Bowfell, Great End, Scawfell Pike, Scawfell, Pillar, Great Gable, Skiddaw and Blencathra).

1904, July, A. W. Wakefield: 64 miles, 16,000 feet, 19 hours 53 mins.

1905, A. W. Wakefield: 59 miles, 23,500 feet, 22 hours 07 mins., (Start and finish Keswick; Robinson, Hindscarth, Dale Head, Grey Knotts, Brandreth, Green Gable, Great Gable, Kirk Fell, Pillar, Steeple, Red Pike, Yewbarrow, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Dollywagon Pike, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

1916, Cecil Dawson: 66 miles, 24,500 feet, 22 hours 17 mins. (Start and finish Keswick; Robinson, Hindscarth, Dale Head, Grey Knotts, Brandreth, Green Gable, Great Gable, Kirk Fell, Pillar, Steeple, Red Pike, Yewbarrow, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Dollywagon Pike, Helvellyn, Stybarrow Dodd, Great Dodd, Blencathra and Skiddaw).

Authors have differed with Palmer over whether it was Henry C. Broadrick or R. Wilfred Broadrick who performed various feats, but I must agree with Palmer. Wilfred Broadrick refers to some of his exploits in 'A Record Fell Walk' and correspondence exists referring to him performing walks in the Lakes. Palmer was involved in the long walks himself and edited the Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal from 1910 to 1918. As both Palmer and H. C. Broadrick were members of the FRCC from the earliest days, and it seems that Palmer also knew R. W. Broadrick, it is most unlikely that he would make a mistake over which of the brothers did the walks. Regarding accounts of some of the earlier walks I feel that he is not so reliable, in the list above there is doubt about the 1871 event of Lawrence Pilkington and Bennett and the 'after 1876' walk of 'Leonard' Pilkington and Bennett. Palmer is vague about the date and I feel that the name is wrong. I cannot trace a Leonard Pilkington among mountaineers and I feel that it is Lawrence who should be credited with this walk. As I read Palmer's account I felt that he was repeating what he had heard without verifying it; 1871 is most probably the date for a walk of this description.

Palmer refers to R. W. Broadrick as a great climber who was far superior to any of his predecessors, who next attacked the record and he was able to pick a good day for the walk.

The round completed by Wilfred Broadrick and Cecil Dawson, on the 14 September 1901, was equal to anything done before. It also compares very favourably with the rounds done afterwards, by Johnson and Wakefield; especially when the light-hearted approach of Broadrick and Dawson is considered and that all subsequent record-breaking attempts were organised with pacers and carriers.

By the nineteen-thirties, some competent fit mountain athletes had the urge to prove what they could do and were encouraged by others who had set 'records' in earlier years, but accurate accounts of the earlier events seem not to have been known. More than likely there was a light-hearted cavalier approach to these things and the men

involved saw no reason for regulations to constrict their enjoyment in testing themselves on the hills. In fact, the same attitude that the nineteenth-century fell walkers showed, including Wilfred Broadrick when he set off on his own, or even started on his bicycle, to see what he could do.

This same attitude was exemplified by F. Spencer Chapman, when he decided to go in for the Fell Record. Although it does seem that he had sparse knowledge of the background of the event as he stated briefly that it was held by the man who walked or ran up the greatest number of Lake District peaks in 24 hours and it was originated by Dr Arthur Wakefield in 1911.

This seems to indicate that he was more interested in testing himself than taking regard of historic events, even though his encouragement and assistance came from Dr A.W. Wakefield himself.

Once again, as seems inevitable when discussing 'Fell Records' confusion was further compounded in Chapman's 'Memoirs of a Mountaineer'. Giving the date when Wakefield made his first twenty-four hour 'record' as 1911 instead of the correct date of 1904 and stating that was the origin of the attempts, thus ignoring the fact that men had been attempting this feat and adding to the distance since the 1870s and possibly earlier.

One paragraph needs explanation. Chapman states on page 29 that, '... the record ... was then [May 1932] in the hands of Mr Eustace Thomas ...' and on the next page writes, '... Bob Graham, the present holder of the record, waiting for me with hot cocoa'. Thomas and Graham both held the 'record', but of course, at different times. The explanation is: Thomas held the record when Chapman made his attempt but Bob Graham completed his 'round' of the fells, which Bill Smith records, 'remained unbeaten for 28 years', on 13 June 1932 starting at 01.00 hours, just four weeks after Chapman's attempt. It was at the end of the thirties when Chapman was writing what was eventually published as 'Memoirs of a Mountaineer', by that time Bob Graham was the holder of the record. From Bob Graham's appearing on the scene authentic records have been kept and the confusion of the previous eighty or so years came to an end.

Chapman was encouraged to go into training for his attempt. He was told that a long period of training was necessary, and he lived near the route for some time. He started at midnight on 17 May 1932. Unfortunately he failed by one hour to complete the circuit, from and returning to, Keswick in twenty-four hours. In 'Stud Marks on the Summit' Bill Smith records Chapman making his attempt on the twenty four hour record in 1937, but in 'Memoirs of a Mountaineer' Chapman writes that that year he was in Nepal and Tibet.

One wonders if the influence of W. T. Palmer and his equivalent energy theory was still in force in 1932, as George Abraham of Keswick estimated Chapman's route (time 25 hours) at 130 miles and 30,000 feet of ascent. This should be compared to Alan Heaton's 1960 record time of 22 hours 18 minutes for the 'Bob Graham Round' over a distance of 72 miles and 27,000 feet of ascent. From the This

LHAKHANG EXPEDITION

This is a further and largely pictorial report on the expedition last autumn. Both the alpine valley on the Kinnaur side and the rugged beauty of the high altitude desert in Spiti and Rupshu were fantastic, and none of the team will forget the mirage-like panorama across Tso Moriri as shown overleaf. The area is well worthy of further photographic recording.

Only unseasonable snowfall and the attendant avalanche risk prevented the team fulfilling all their ambitions but it was a memorable expedition for all that. The mountains around the upper Pare Chu valley and Pakshi Lamur valley certainly deserve more exploration and there are still well over a dozen unclimbed 6000m peaks in the area.



The Dover brothers at Shimla

The team flew into Delhi with the monsoon still very evident before transferring to the Kafnoo road-head via Shimla.

At the end of the expedition proper they trekked out along the shore of Tso Moriri and past various mani walls to finish up in Karzok from where they were picked up by jeeps. These took them down the Indus Valley to Leh. This capital of the area was explored at leisure before flying out to Delhi.



Mani stone

Mani stones or walls are stone plates, rocks and/or pebbles inscribed, usually, with mantra, as a form of prayer in Tibetan Buddhism. Mani stones are intentionally placed along the roadsides and rivers or placed together to form mounds or cairns as an offering to spirits.

Delhi itself was explored by most of the team before returning home.

Ghandi cremation site



QUTB - MINAR
 THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS WORLD-FAMOUS TOWER, KNOWN AS THE QUTB-MINAR, WERE LAID BY QUTBUDDIN AIBAK OF THE MAMLUK DYNASTY TOWARDS THE END OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY. THE CONSTRUCTION WAS INTERRUPTED AT THE FIRST STOREY BY HIS DEATH, AND THE REMAINING THREE STOREYS WERE COMPLETED IN MATCHING MATERIAL AND STYLE BY HIS SUCCESSOR ILTUTMISH COMMONLY KNOWN AS ALTAMASH IN A.D. 1230. IN A.D. 1368 THE MINAR WAS DAMAGED BY LIGHTNING. LATER, FIRUZ SHAH TUGHLUQ (A.D. 1351-88) REPLACED THE TOP STOREY BY THE EXISTING TWO STOREYS FACED WITH MARBLE. SIKANDAR LODI (A.D. 1489-1517) ALSO EXECUTED SOME REPAIRS TO THE MINAR IN A.D. 1503, WHEN IT WAS AGAIN INJURED BY LIGHTNING. THE TOWER HAS A DIAMETER OF 14.32 M. AT THE BASE AND OF ABOUT 2.75 M. AT THE TOP WITH A HEIGHT OF 72.5 M. AND ASCENDED BY 379 STEPS, IT IS THE HIGHEST STONE-TOWER IN INDIA AND A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF MINAR KNOWN TO EXIST ANYWHERE. THE VARIEGATED PLAN OF ITS THREE LOWER STOREYS, THE PROJECTING BALCONIES WITH STALACTITE PENDENTIVE BRACKETS AND ORNATE BANDS OF INSCRIPTIONS ON ITS FACADES HEIGHTEN ITS DECORATIVE EFFECT.

Amongst the sites visited were Raj Ghat where Ghandi was cremated and the Qutb complex which is an array of monuments and buildings at Mehrauli, the most famous of which is the Qutb Minar. This is the tallest brick minaret in the world, and an important example of Indo-Islamic Architecture. The Qutb Minar is 72.5 metres (239 ft) high. The diameter of the base is 14.3 metres and the top floor measures 2.7 metres. It is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Leh as pictured was the capital of the Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh, now the Leh District in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, India. It stands at 11,500 feet above sea level. Right includes the expedition liaison officer.





Tso Moriri



Camp beside Tso Moriri below Lungser Kangri



Crossing Pare Chu to enter Pakshi Lamur valley



Upper Bhaba valley



Bhaba River valley



Himalayan Blue Poppy



Ki Gompa gateway



Fording the Pare Chu River



Indus Valley



Pare Chu Valley



Pakski Lamur Valley



The full team

The locals





Parang La Pass

Ascent

Descent



Descent from Pin-Bhaba Pass



Pin Valley



Keeping feet dry



Lhakang under fresh snow



Kibber Village



NATURAL HISTORY SNIPPETS



WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DALES CRAYFISH FIGHT BACK

A fond memory of my time living in Wharfedale when my children were younger was cooling my feet after a long walk by paddling in part of the river Wharfe near Burnsall when I turned over a few small boulders having a nosy, as you do, and found a white-clawed crayfish. Severely threatened by the spread of disease ridden and aggressive American cousins these creatures are now rare in the waters in the midlands and south but are still holding out in the rocky streams of the Pennines. The immigrants have brought in a fugal disease which the locals have little immunity to.

Our native crayfish only grows to about one inch in length whereas the American signal crayfish is about nine inches long. The immigrants are causing problems as they not only feed on any creature smaller than themselves, including their own kind, but do considerable damage to river banks. They burrow to such an extent that banks have been known to collapse. New regulations now permit the catching of crayfish and the larger ones make a nice snack which might help keep their numbers down.

Attempts are being made to help the native species. 250 native crayfish were caught in Wiltshire where they are competing with the incomers and are being relocated to cleaned up streams in the Mendips where there are at present no Americans.

Another project in the Yorkshire Dales has been running since 2003. It has ring fenced the natives to try and keep out the invaders and is being augmented by a captive breeding programme. 300 young were produced by the programme last year and sampling suggests that 60% of these have survived.

PM QUESTION TIME

Extinct or not extinct, that is the question?

15 years ago the Pine Marten was declared extinct in England and Wales but pronouncements of their demise were a little premature.

Extremely elusive, this quite vicious predator had been persecuted by humans and had seen its habitat shrink and was thought to have been banished but it is staging a comeback.

Related to polecats, stoats, weasels and badgers they have recently been sighted in the Lakes, Northumberland, Wales, Yorkshire and parts of the Midlands in particular Cannock Chase.

There is a fairly solid population surviving in Scotland and northern Ireland.

Not universally welcomed, this once common creature feeds on small rodents, insects birds and their eggs. They were poisoned by gamekeepers who feared their activities with game birds but they have been legally protected since 1988. It is difficult to work out how wide spread they are given they live in trees and are active at dusk and in the night but DNA sampling of droppings confirm their presence.

As previously reported where the pine marten thrives the red squirrel does better. The marten finds catching greys easier given they spend more time on the ground.

Efforts to restore natural areas and create new woodlands are providing opportunities to allow such creatures to increase their populations.

I recently spotted a large white mammal and watched it for some time whilst walking a woodland edge in Leicestershire. There had been reports earlier in the week about sightings of a white animal which it was thought might have been a stoat although as these only turn white in winter in the northern reaches of their territory, it seemed unlikely. There, they do go white as winter camouflage apart from the tail tip, in which state the stoat is known as ermine.

This creature I saw was about two foot long I am convinced it was a ferret which had escaped and gone 'wild'. The ferret is a domesticated version of the polecat once nearly extinct in England but now also slowly making a comeback. These fearsome killers are normally dark brown with a yellow under-fur and normally hunt the edges of woodland near water which is exactly the sort of terrain this creature was in. Like the pine marten, the polecat was thought, until recently, to be only surviving in Scotland and part of mid Wales but a number of road casualties and sightings have shown that it has re-colonised woodlands in much of central and southern England. With suitable habitat these creatures quickly fill any environmental niche as they are prolific breeders.

These wild 'ferrets', with their masked faces, have large litters of kits, often of a dozen or even occasionally more and being voracious killers, should help keep the population of rabbits down and perhaps more importantly the rapidly expanding population of rats. There is estimated to be a population of about 65,000 now, up from about 15,000 ten years ago. They will interbreed with escaped ferrets so our white visitor may yet find a mate.

ANOTHER RED BASTION

England's latest red squirrel reserve has been created in the Yorkshire Dales. 5 years ago a surviving group of these endearing creatures was discovered in the 1000 or so acres of the Greenfield Forest and this has now been designated together with 3 other nearby havens as part of a protected reserve for the Reds.

WHERE EAGLES DARE

After an absence of about 200 years a wild sea eagle has been seen in Cumbria.

Whilst living wild, this nine month old female is actually one which was part of a release scheme in Fife and has a satellite tracking tag.

Cumbria was the home of the last breeding pair of sea eagles in England, way back in 1794 and whilst this specimen was almost certainly just ranging far and wide seeking food in a harsh winter it is cause for some encouragement that they may return to inhabit the Cumbrian area. This bird was patrolling the coast of the Solway Firth.

In a similar vein it is encouraging that the pair of immature Osprey which set up home near Keilder Water have fledged three chicks and seem to be doing a good job of bringing them on.

These are the first such birds to nest in this area for 200 years and are thought to be of the expanding Scottish population.

PUFFIN PROBLEMS

Scientists are tagging Puffins to find out why their numbers are declining around Britain's coasts although they fear they know the answer.

This bird is particularly exposed to many risks not least predation.

The population on Ramsay off the Pembroke coast was wiped out by rats but these have themselves now been eradicated and the puffin is being enticed back by slightly larger than life model puffins scattered by appropriate nesting burrows. Quite an odd sight as I recently sailed round the island.

It will at best be a slow process. The birds live about 30 years in normal conditions and are slow breeders. The female lays a single egg in the roughly one metre-long burrows they inhabit and the chicks are mainly fed on sandeels which appear to be migrating further north as our waters warm. Puffins reach sexual maturity in one year, but tend not to breed until five or six years old.

A high mortality rate among adults over a few years can quickly destabilise the population.

The population of puffins on the Farne Islands, one of the UK's key colonies has fallen by a third since 2003 and as this is the largest puffin colony in England it is of particular concern. It was a bit puzzling as food in the waters around the Farne Islands was thought to be plentiful and they appeared to be breeding well, with good numbers fledging but the birds were not coming back after the winter period.

Birds are being fitted with tiny GPS recorders which will record the position of the bird every minute for a few days, during when the birds will have been out on a foraging trips. They are attached with temporary glue that weakens after about four days, allowing the recorders to be recovered and downloaded. This will show how the birds dive for fish and their foraging behaviour during the summer months but we do need to know where they go during the winter as this appears when many puffins perish. To this end some birds are being fitted with geolocators, which are much smaller than GPS loggers and can be permanently fitted to a bird's leg ring and as long as it comes back at some point they will be able to get a record of where it has been. These measure light levels; recording when dawn and dusk occurs each day allowing researchers to calculate day length, when midday occurs and the daily longitudinal and latitudinal co-ordinates for the bird.

The UK's largest puffin colony on the Isle of May, in the Firth of Forth, recorded a similar fall in numbers over the same period

Sea temperatures are suspected as the major cause whether one off due to unusual weather or as part of global warming generally. Only time will tell but hopefully the research will assist. Sea changes can affect plankton growth, which would have had a knock-on effect on sandeels.

Puffins
(Sea Parrots)
on the
Farne Islands



Photo RJD

DRINK MORE DRAMS

Whilst on the subject of Scotland we have more good news. For those of us partial to a wee dram we have a new excuse. A recent deal by the RSPB means that for every bottle of Black Grouse sold 50p will be given to that organisation to help fund protection of this endangered species.

I'll drink to that.

CAVING

Judson D. (2009) 'Cymmie' Eli Simpson 1884-1962 the speleo-collector par excellence and the British Speleological Association 1935-1973 as rediscovered from the BCRA: Simpson Archive.

BCRA: Cave Studies Series: 18; 64pp, A4, 95 illustrations.

ISBN: 0-900-265-34-5.

PUBLISHER: British Cave Research Association,
The Old Methodist Chapel,
Great Hucklow, Buxton SK17 8RG.
publications-sales@bcra.org.uk

Eli Simpson was probably the most active speleologist that Britain has ever seen. From his first recorded cave exploration in 1901, until his death in 1962, Cymmie maintained an interest in caves. During his lifetime he amassed an enormous collection of books, photographs, meet reports, surveys, correspondence, newspaper and magazine cuttings, old mine reports and surveys, and other ephemera. Indeed anything to do with caves, and with old mines, that came his way was kept in dozens of loose leaf files, of which 64 related to Yorkshire. Others dealt with the Peak District, Mendips, Devon, Wales, Ireland and overseas.

In 1935 Cymmie founded the BSA (British Speleological Association), the country's first truly national caving organisation, which in 1973 merged with the Cave Research Group to form the British Cave Research Association. He was the Librarian and Recorder until his death in 1962, and kept these items in his home.

In his will Cymmie left everything to his housekeeper and executrix, Chris Rawdin. There was the inevitable dispute over what belonged to the BSA and what to Cymmie. Rawdin, being in possession, sold the books to Messrs. Hollett of Sedbergh. Fortunately for the historian the archives were not sold, and remained in Cymmie's house in Commercial Yard, Settle.

In 1971 I took a week's leave and, by courtesy of the late Ian Plant, spent the time looking at the remains of the BSA library and records. The archives, which date back to 1383 (graffiti in Yordas Cave), include the BSA minute books. They are so vast that it would have needed much more time, even with modern technology, to do justice to the collection. Nevertheless I recorded what I could, and made a mental note to return later which I was unable to do.

In 1973, following the merger of the BSA with the Cave Research Group, the archives were moved and became inaccessible. Now, a generation later, the archives are in the process of being digitised and professionally kept at the British Geological Survey outside Nottingham.

This has enabled David Judson, a former member of the YRC and one of the few remaining cavers who knew Cymmie, to look in detail at the BSA archives and to write a well illustrated appreciation thereof.

He looks at Cymmie's origins in Ossett, subsequent moves to Leeds, Mickley, Scarborough, Austwick and Settle, and army service in Mesopotamia. It is well known that Cymmie had a difficult personality, and antagonised many people with whom he came into contact. Judson suggests that Cymmie was a "control freak", and hints that there may have been more than that. Having now added Judson's research to mine, I am wondering if Cymmie had a mild paranoid personality disorder.

Judson has found in the archive, and in other sources which he lists, a few records of Cymmie's social life and dealings with the opposite gender. He confirms that for much of his later life Cymmie was living without visible means of support, and suggests that he was being financed by Adelina Montague for whom a chamber in Lancaster Hole was named. She did leave Cymmie £5000 in her will - a large sum of money in those days. Another possible sponsor, unrecorded in the book, is May Johnson (1879 - 1963) of Bradwell. Cymmie used to visit her regularly until the late 1950s.

One misinterpretation of the archives is Judson's dismissal of the early cave explorations of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club members as, "a somewhat grotty activity that might be OK to fill up the remainder of a spare Sunday, after going to church". The list of the YRC discoveries, 170 between 1895 and 1939, does not support this conclusion. But we must remember that Cymmie may have been biased - he had been refused membership of the YRC.

The bulk of this well produced book gives good insight into the politics of the BSA, mainly but not exclusively in Yorkshire and Derbyshire. Much previously unpublished material is presented about the Mossdale / Grassington Moor caves and mines, and about the Lancaster Hole / Easegill discoveries et al., together 102 brief biographies of various people who are named in the archives. It is profusely illustrated with photographs, surveys, documents and pamphlets, and deserves to be in every club library and on every caver's bookshelf.

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MOUNTAINEERING

Isserman M. & Weaver S. (2008)
Fallen Giants

A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes
pp. xii + 579 (Yale University Press); photographs, maps & index.

This is the best and biggest book about Himalayan exploration that I have ever read. It records exploration and invasions from that of Alexander the Great who crossed the Khyber Pass in 326 B.C. to the briefly mentioned, and embarrassing for South Africans, 1996 disasters on Everest.

Not only are the facts recorded, the authors discuss the politics, and the inevitable disputes which marred many expeditions.

Solo attempts to climb Everest occurred well before Reinhold Messner's well publicised 1980 success when he left his girl friend at Base Camp to await his return.

YRC members will be interested to read about the failed attempt in 1934 by Maurice Wilson of Bradford. He bought a single-engined aeroplane, flew to India, then trekked into Tibet. Not having modern lightweight equipment he predictably failed. His body was found and buried by the 1936 British expedition, and again in 1960 by members of the disputed Chinese expedition.

Most importantly of all the authors, being academic professors of history, list the sources of their information. No less than 111 pages are devoted to the references, and a further 14 pages to the index.

Inevitably a book of this size and content will contain errors.

One I spotted credited the 1960 Chinese expedition with finding two bodies. The relevant author graciously received my correction which will be incorporated into the forthcoming paperback edition.

This indicates that the book is deservedly selling well. It should be on the shelves of every mountain club and major



CLUB MERCHANDISE

Rob Ibberson has just taken delivery of a new batch of YRC zipped kit bags resplendent in the new YRC livery.

These new bags are available for just £34 if collected - contact Rob to reserve yours at wribberson@freenet.co.uk or call 0113 250 2133.

Carriage is extra if you want it posting to you.

A wide range of outdoor and leisure clothing is also available. The range includes Tee-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, fleece jackets of several grades and designs, knitted jumpers, cagoules and parkas.

There is a full range of sizes from S to XXL.

Discuss your requirements by contacting Rob or better still; see him at a meet, where he will be able to show you the samples and illustrated catalogues showing all the items available.



HOW MANY POUNDS IN AN OUNCE?

Roy Denney & Alan Linford

The Ounce, otherwise known as the snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) is a medium sized cat weighing between 60-120 pounds. They range from about 3 feet to just over 4 feet in body length and their tails can be almost as long again! It stands about two foot tall at the shoulder and males are generally about a third larger than the females.

One of the most beautiful of the cat family, these creatures are exceptionally athletic and strong. They can bring down prey almost three times their own size and are capable of making huge leaps over ravines. The cat is well adapted to its habitat; its heavily muscled, barrel-shaped chest gives it the strength to climb the steep slopes and its longer, muscular hind legs enable it to leap up to 10 yards in pursuit of its prey.

The long tail that served as a muffler to keep the snow leopard warm during the winter also helps it to keep its balance as it leaps among rocky outcrops and narrow ledges after its agile prey. Snow leopards are usually found between 3,000 and 5,500 metres above sea level and prefer broken terrain of cliffs, steep slopes, rocky outcrops and ravines which provides good cover and clear views to help them stalk their prey.

Very elusive, they are creatures of myth and very few of us who spend time in the high mountains will ever be lucky enough to see one in their natural environment but there are about 600 of these cats in zoos around the world. If they are determined not to be seen they can merge into their background faultlessly. They have a thick, smoky-grey coat with dark grey open rosettes and blend perfectly with the rocky slopes where they are normally found, making them virtually invisible. The pictures recently captured by the BBC wildlife photographers were a delight.

Unfortunately they are an endangered species and our chance of spotting one reduces year on year. Snow leopards are listed as such under the C.I.T.E.S. treaty (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) which makes it illegal to transport any snow leopard parts across international borders. Snow leopards live throughout the mountains of Central Asia where unfortunately their bones and other body material are prized for traditional medicine. Their attractive pelts are also very valuable.

They are fairly opportunist and will eat whatever creature comes their way which means different prey in different parts of their range but mostly wild sheep and goats. They eat slowly, often taking several days to consume a sheep or goat. During that time, the cat remains near the kill to protect it from scavengers such as vultures and ravens, eating every few hours until the carcass is clean.

Snow leopards also take small prey including marmots, pika, rabbits and hares and they also hunt larger birds like pheasant, partridge and snow cock. Unfortunately they will

attack any livestock they come across particularly in winter months when they follow their wild prey down to lower altitudes where they are more likely to come in contact with humans and their domestic livestock.

This increases the possibility of retribution killings by shepherds. For no apparent reason Snow Leopards eat more vegetation than other cats.

The numbers surviving in the wild are difficult to confirm given snow leopards are so difficult to see, and researchers have to rely on other evidence of their presence to study them. Scrapes, scent marking and droppings are the best indications. Researchers estimate that there are between 3,500 and 7,000 left in the wild. In an international project in Mongolia a few are now being captured and collared so that they can be tracked using a GPS. Mongolia probably supports the second highest number of the rare cats anywhere in their vast Asian range. The comprehensive study is expected to run for at least 15 years and provide the type of information needed to enable conservation efforts for snow leopards have a chance of succeeding.

The creature makes the most of the summer interlude raising young and stocking up its reserves to enable it to survive the harsh winter. They may have a lot of mouths to feed as cubs normally stay about 18-22 months before they can live independent lives. Given they have been known to have as many as 5 cubs at a time it can be quite a challenge and survival rates are probably low. For obvious reasons they only mate every second year.

During the autumn when snows are beginning to fall, the snow leopard grows a thick winter coat to keep it warm through the freezing months ahead. It can be as much as 5 inches long with a woolly undercoat. It has comparatively huge, broad paws which act as snowshoes and help it walk on top of the snow and it has long fur between its toes to protect them from frostbite. Its long, bushy tail is often used like a scarf to keep its body and face warm when resting.

Such is its near mythical status in Asia that there is actually a Snow Leopard Award. Within the range of this creature and located in what was the Soviet Union, there are five Mountains over 7000m. The award was given to very experienced mountaineers, Masters of Sport in Russia, who climbed all 5 peaks. One of many Soviet awards, it seems to have lost its appeal but it is still recognised by the Federation of Independent States and there was an award in 1999.

In recent times not only have boundaries of the political entities changed but the mountains have been renamed and as all lie close to a border their names are subject to several different spellings.

As part of his interest in philately Alan Linford is working on a book on mountains and mountaineering history, as depicted on postage stamps and when I expressed an interest in the animal we started comparing notes and the following extracts will form one chapter of his book in due course, covering the Snow Leopard Award

Three of the mountains are in the Soviet Pamir namely:

ISMAIL SAMANI PEAK 7495m

PEAK KORZHENEVSKI 7105m

INDEPENDENCE PEAK 7314m

The other two are in Tian Shan:

JENGISH CHOKUSU 7439m and

KHAN TENGRI 7010m.

ISMOIL SOMONI PEAK 7495m



This peak is the highest in another of the new states, Tajikistan, sometimes referred to with different spelling, Ismail Samani Peak, records show it was named after Ismoil Somoni the ancestor of the Samanid dynasty.

When the existence of this peak in the Soviet Pamir Mountains higher than Independence Peak was first established in 1928 the mountain was identified as Garmo Peak but as the result of survey work of further Soviet expeditions, it became clear by 1932 that they were not on and the same. In 1932 this new peak in the Akadeniya Nauk Range was named Stalin Peak. In 1962 the name was changed to Communism Peak and in 1998 changed to its current name.

Ismoil Somoni is a glaciated rock peak and the first ascent was made in 1933 by the Russian mountaineer Yevgeniy Abalakov

PEAK KORZHENEVSKAYA 7105m



Another of The Snow Leopard Award Peaks in the Pamir mountains of Tajikistan, it is named after Evgenia Korzhenevskaya the wife of Russian Geographer Nikolai Korzhenevskaya, due to transliteration the name is rendered in many different ways.

This peak lies close to Ismoil Somoni, it may have a lower altitude but it has a steep and severe rise above the local terrain since it is close to the deep gorge of the Muksu River.

Not available to the team of the 1953 first ascent by Russia led by A Ugarov, the base camp on the Moskvin Glacier is now accessible by helicopter. This ease of access and the fact that it is one of the Snow Leopard Award Peaks, Korzhenevskaya has been climbed many times from all directions in all seasons.

The peak provides easy access and uncomplicated routes makes this an attractive mountain, but not without its own dangers. In 1990 43 climbers died in an avalanche triggered by earthquakes.

LENIN PEAK 7134 m



The third of the Snow Leopard Award peaks in the Pamir mountains on the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border, it was recognised in 1871 and named Mount Kaufmann after Konstanti Kaufmann, .



In 1928 it was renamed Lenin Peak after the first leader of the Soviet Union.

Lenin Peak was another of the mountains wrongly identified as the highest in the Pamir until Ismoil Somoni was climbed in 1933. It has 3 snow and ice covered summits.

The peak was renamed again in 2006 but there are still over-the-border differences about the name. Russia media have the name QUILLAI ISTOQLOTL - INDEPENDENCE PEAK.

The Tajik Presidential Office give this name to a lower peak and the 7134m summit known as Lenin Peak should be called Avicenna Peak, according to the Tajik government. One of the greatest thinkers and scholars in history was the Turkish/Persian, Ibn Senna. Born AD980 in Bukhara Khorasan a modern term for ancient Persia, Bukhara is now Uzbekistan and known to the west as Avicenna.

There are references to Revolution Peak which just complicate the issue. Stanley Gibbons have the 2002 Kyrgyzstan 10c stamp as Lenin Peak. Until agreement is reached the name Lenin Peak stays.

1928 is the first recorded ascent (by a German/Russian team). In July 1990 43 climbers were lost at 5300m in an avalanche and bodies are still appearing from the glacier.

JENGISH CHOKUSU 7439M



This mountain, the hardest in mountaineering difficulty, was called and still referred to on some maps as Peak Pobeda its Russian name. In translation both names mean Victory Peak after the USSR's victory in the Great Patriotic War. (WW2).

This mountain is the highest in the Tian Shan range and lies on the Kyrgyzstan-China border and gathers another name 'Tomur' translating as 'Iron Peak' due to the iron content of its rock.

Jengish Chokusu is a massif with several summits on its summit ridge, in contrast to the massive pyramid of Khan Tengri only 10 miles away.

There may have been an ascent in 1939 but the first verified ascent was in 1956 by a Russian party led by Vitaly Abalakov. A Chinese party climbed the peak in 1997 but in the subsequent write up did not make a reference to the Russian ascent giving the impression of a first ascent. Shades of the climbs on Mt Everest and Shisha Pangma.

A steep snow and ice climb the route taken by the Russian party, and many others since, is by the South Engilchek

glacier leading on to the Zvozdochka glacier coloured red, not from algae, but the iron oxide bearing rocks.

It was not until 1946 that Jengish Chokusu was recognised as the highest in the Tian Shan range of the Pamirs. Khan Tengri at 7010m, 429m lower was thought to be higher. The Pamirs have some of the longest glaciers in the world outside the polar regions. The S Engilchek glacier some 38 miles long is the fourth longest in the world. A long walk in to Base camp!

KHAN TENGRI 7010m

Khan Tengri is one of the most beautiful and impressive mountains in the world, a massive symmetrical marble pyramid, plastered with snow and ice. At sunset the mountain glows red from the iron oxide in its rocks which earns it its Kazakhstan name 'Kan Tau' meaning 'blood mountain'. Not 'discovered' until 1847 the mountain has at least 6 other names translating to Lord of the Spirits, Ruler of the Skies and Ruler Tengri, but Khan Tengri is the preferred name.

Notorious for difficult weather and snow conditions the mountain claimed the lives of 14 climbers in 2004.

On the border of modern Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan access was restricted, and until 1946 Khan Tengri was thought to be the highest in the Tian Shan range, surprising as the first recorded ascent was in 1931 by a Ukrainian party led by Mikhail Pogrebetsky.

The ascent route uses the same South Engilchek (Inylchek) glacier. Base camp as Jengish Chokusu,

Khan Tengri only just makes a position in the Snow Leopard Award as it has a geological height of 6995m but the glacial cap is at 7010m and this is enough to have it included.

This acceptance is no different to any other high mountain elevation.





THE SNOW LEOPARD AND THE STAMPS WHICH PORTRAY IT



CHIPPINGS

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Peter Clarke read the piece about gliding in our last journal with considerable interest. When he read of Jeff Hooper having known Eric Addyman in his later years without actually realising he had been a YRC member, Peter commented "I also recall in my early days as a young Planning Officer having to deal with complaints from one Erik Addyman about some proposed development next to his house in Starbeck, Harrogate.

Having already been commissioned by Cliff Downham to pay occasional visits to chat to Roberts (he lived not far away, near to my old school - Harrogate Grammar School) I had heard of EA's cantankerous nature and, to my lasting shame I never let on to my YRC membership! I do remember seeing his glider stored in his garage."

By further co-incidence Erik gets a further mention on page 34.

MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA

As a further result of our exchange of material and through the good offices of Steve Craven we have now also received a copy of the 2006 journal of the MCSA and this is also available in the Club Library.

This is a hard-backed, full colour tome of just under 200 pages and includes much of great interest.

Ed

THE BIG CHILL

As we come out a period of heat wave and remember one of the hardest winters we have had for some time be glad you do not live on the shore of Lake Geneva.



POSSIBLE LONG WALKS?

New long distance trails are being devised all the time and recent new ones include the Ridgeway and a 34 mile circular around Corby. This may not be everybody's idea of a place to go walking but this rather off putting town is surrounded by some wonderful countryside including remnants of the ancient Rockingham Forest.

Perhaps of more interest to those of us who seek wilder places is the new LAKESIDE WAY a 27 mile trail which now makes it possible to legally walk right round the shore of Kielder Water, Britain's largest man-made lake. Further it links up with many other walks going through Kielder Forest and makes many long circulars now much more entertaining.

Ed.

SNOW LEOPARD IN GHANA

To continue our theme about this elusive creature, this is the nick name of a Ghanaian skier who has qualified for the Olympics. Actually born in Glasgow when his father was at university there, but brought up in Ghana, he returned to Britain 7 years ago as a student himself and saw his first ever snow 5 years ago.

He took a job as a receptionist at a dry ski slope in Milton Keynes and found an aptitude for the sport and after 4 winters as a pro in the Alps he has now qualified for both slalom events.

He wears a trade mark suit replicating the coat of the snow leopard, hence his nick name.

Ed.

GET YOUR DATES RIGHT!

Now, unable to tackle the long distance walking or even the driving to get to the mountains, I have started to take more interest in my nearer surroundings. It has always surprised me to find that many Cambridge people have never been in some of the college buildings when people from all over the world flock here to do just that. It is probably because they think it is not urgent and that they will get around to it one day. I have noticed the same thing in other localities. Believe it or not I met a citizen of York who had never set foot in York Cathedral.

But it has caused me to consider my way of spending my time and keeping fit. I have now started to explore my own locality. I have found an amazing amount of interest within comfortable walking distance of my home. My son, Duncan, who followed me into the club in 1972, has been instrumental in campaigning for, and then chairing a

committee, to open up what has become known as the Fen Rivers Way. It was no small project and involved the building of a 100ft span bridge over the Old West River near its junction with the Ouse. It is now possible to walk from Cambridge to Ely and then on to King's Lynn, much of the way through interesting flat lands close to the River Cam and Ouse. Both rivers had been used for 800 years to bring goods for sale up to the Stourbridge Fair which was originally organised to help a Leper hospital. The Fair became the most important trading fair in Europe and was formalised by the granting of a charter by King John in 1211. The charter prevented the development of the land and it would take an act of parliament to dislodge it. It has safeguarded Stourbridge Common, one of the important open spaces in Cambridge, for all time although the fair dwindled and was not reopened after the last war. Fen Rivers Way has become a venue for charity money raising events. Several thousand pounds is raised every year by people sponsored to walk from Cambridge to Ely. 15 miles. With hundreds taking part it has to be very well organised much of which is done by Sea and Army cadets.

One of the highest points in East Anglia lies to the south of Cambridge. The Gog and Magog Hills. 243 ft high. No-one knows for sure what the names mean but it is thought to be the names of two giants. Their heads had been carved into the hill by cutting away vegetation to expose the white limestone but had been lost and overgrown and only recently rediscovered. They are not well known and are now completely hidden from view by a forest. Similar images of giants were though found in the side of an ancient church tower in a nearby village. This has added credibility to the old story.

Within an hour I can get from Cambridge to the bay known as "The Wash". Away from caravan sites my favourite spot is near Heacham. That part of the coast is the only place in East Anglia where the sunset can be viewed over the sea. The sunsets are spectacular. On the beach I picked up a black stone with interesting white markings. I suggested it was a fossilised example of the emergence of life on earth. Some people ridiculed me for making such a silly suggestion but back in Cambridge I went into the Earth Sciences Museum where I was introduced to a professor who was surrounded by microscopes and computers and made the suggestion to him. He studied the stone carefully and then said "You are wrong, it is only four hundred million years old. Life began on earth six hundred million years ago". But, he carried on "it is though an example of a life form fossilised in peat". I was only two hundred millions years out.

In Cambridge we get swamped with visitors from abroad. A friend from California arrived bringing two young ladies. One was supremely attractive. My wife left me to look after them for a couple of days. I gave them a tour of the colleges the first day and I enjoyed the eyes turning to see what I was doing out and about with these lovely women. The next day I decided on Wimpole Hall, the

home Rudyard Kipling provided for his daughter. It was a Monday and I had forgotten that it had been taken over by the National Trust who closed on Monday's. But, I was advised the farm was open, so we went there.

My visitors enjoyed patting the noses of the assortment of animals and when we came to the rare breed sheep the stunning young lady asked "What is all that red on the back of that one?" I said "It means its been tupp'd" After a while came the question "What does tupp'd mean?". I replied "It means its been serviced" Then came "What do you mean serviced?" "It means its had a visit from the ram". "Oh! Lucky thing" she said "I haven't been tupp'd for a whole week" It wasn't an invitation. Her husband was working away in London and she had left him to visit Cambridge for a week. I am sure she would be glad when he got back.

My cousin, Brian Nicholson, introduced me to the YRC and I will always be grateful.

Perhaps it was that I was a descendant of a Highland Scot who, although born and brought up in the flatlands of East Anglia, nevertheless developed a love of the mountains. Amazingly my performance in the hills and mountains gained me membership of the YRC.

(or was it because I was a good cook and they had found me particularly useful).

Don Mackay

YUGO WE DON'T

(notes from a spottied coastline)

I have just spent 10 days relocating a yacht to a new marina further north up the Dalmatian coast.

The boat had been in winter quarters and the plan was for the owner, myself and another friend to spend 3 days servicing the engine, replacing the life raft and some electronics and carrying out several other checks to be able to have her put back into the sea. We arrived in lovely weather and got ourselves organised to live on the boat in a cradle on dry land - filled her up with diesel and water and attached a shore power line before wandering off for an evening walk and an excellent meal during which we made our plans for the following day.

Unfortunately, a Jugo (or Yugo as pronounced) blew up and roared along the coast of what had been Yugoslavia.

These winds can be quite ferocious and normally last 4 or 5 days and this one ran the usual course. One of our tasks was to fit a new Genoa, only safely done in at most 5 knots, and over three days the wind speeds steadily increased to peak at 20/30 gusting to 60 and it took a further 2 days before the marina would risk putting any boats into the water. We finally gambled on the length of a small lull and got the new sail up in about 7 knots, but could not set sail till the 6th day losing 2 days sailing in the process.

For the uninitiated the nautical mile is longer than a standard mile and wind speeds were probably reaching 65 mph.

We had planned on taking 4 days to move up the coast but with erratic weather about; once we saw how great that day was, we put in one long day to run before the winds and get to the new marina. It was just as well as the next day whilst not especially windy, was wall to wall rain.



The following day picked up and we had a good sail round the nearby islands and then we faced the final two days already allocated for us to make arrangements with chandlers and fitters to do further renewal work on the boat before the owner returned a month later for a prolonged sailing break.

Back on the boat lift and out of the water again! At least this time there was an elevated pontoon that the boats were parked stern on beside so that we could walk on board.

At the first marina we had a fifteen foot climb up a ladder to get on board, not ideal in storm force winds and especially after beer and wine when dining out.



Going to the loo in the night was also something of a challenge.

I had previously crewed the yacht round the lower reaches of the Croatian coast as reported in the journal five years ago and whilst the countryside remains beautiful there has been considerable development with marinas being enlarged, new ones created and hotels built.

On the previous trip we had been caught out in a force seven gale which was not much fun and we had to take shelter behind a small island for one night so on this occasion we were not taking chances and as conditions reached storm force 9 it was perhaps as well. We did indeed get a complete mix of weather - three lovely days, two sunny and breezy days, two very wet days and four days of out and out gales.

We did, when not in the water, manage to get some walking in on these wonderful wooded limestone islands, the people are extremely friendly and the restaurants to die for. They produce their own wines every bit as good as much else on the market and quite expensive, but very welcome.

Croatia lies along the east coast of the Adriatic Sea and stretches from the slopes of the Alps in the north-west which were still snow covered in March when we arrived, to the Pannonian Plain in the east. The country is long and thin with a land area of 57,000 square kilometres and the area of its territorial sea is 31,000. The population is only about 4.5 million.. The length of its sea coast is nearly 6000 km, including 1185 islands, islets and reefs, of which only 47 islands are inhabited. The best part of 20% of its people live in Zagreb so you can see that the coastal areas are not crowded..

There are eight national parks, four of which are located in the mountain region (Paklenica, Plitvice Lakes, Risnjak and Northern Velebit), and four in the coastal region (Brijuni, Kornati, Krka and Mljet). Besides these, certain other areas under strict nature protection – reserves, natural monuments and natural parks all making this a beautiful country to visit. Croatia's highest peak is Dinara: 1,831 m above sea level.

Krka National Park and its superb water features was reported on and pictured in my article on my last visit.

For those of a nautical persuasion the boat was a nine berth Westerly Oceanlord, 43 feet long and 70 foot from keel to mast head. She weighs in at 20 tons when rigged and provisioned (17 tons unladen weight). Her auxiliary engine is a 3 cylinder Volvo Diesel producing 43 horse power.



I know we are supposed to be in a recession but you would not think so. One wet day trying to amuse ourselves we tried to calculate the value of the boats in Marina Frapa and stopped counting at a billion pounds. The new Marina Dalmacia where we moved to was three times as big. There is an awful lot of money tied up in the Adriatic!

Roy Denney

WIND POWER FALLACY

A recent study and report by staff of the John Muir Trust has confirmed the contention of many campaigners that many of the claims made for wind power are based on incomplete data and do not stand up to proper reasoned consideration.

Richard Hill, the JMT's Climate Change Officer has summarised the report and makes some very telling observations.

The report 'Impacts of Wind Farms on Upland Habitats' concludes that the environmental impact of wind turbine installations can be as damaging as the effects of global warming they are designed to prevent.

The JMT reviewed the environmental statements of wind power development planning applications submitted throughout the Scottish Highlands and published information from the University of Stirling and the RSPB. Calculations based on the renewable industry's own figures show that the land-take for an installation of just 16 turbines impacts on an area of about 15 acres. Their installation requires the removal of large areas of habitat to build the foundations, the surrounding hard-standing for construction equipment and heavy plant, storage areas, control buildings, roads and associated drainage. The end result is that large areas of upland grassland, heather moorland and peat bog need to be cleared to allow the construction of the turbines.

Quite apart from the visually intrusive nature of these monstrosities in some of the few remaining wild parts of the country they have a devastating impact on the environment. Reducing this impact requires the successful completion of subsequent restoration works by such measures as replanting and the use of low-impact civil engineering practices such as 'floating' roads: However, on visiting sites, the Trust, in many cases, found little evidence of successful restoration or the use of low impact techniques. Evidence found confirms that habitats are not being successfully restored, any partially restored habitats do not have the same biodiversity and carbon storage value as the undisturbed original status and raises concerns about clearance of vegetation, the compaction of soils, re-profiling of slopes etc resulting in erosion damage and associated siltation within river catchments.

Ironically, these impacts on upland areas are very similar to what is expected from climate change. University of Stirling research indicated that areas which had been extensively disturbed by the construction of wind turbines, showed increased concentrations of dissolved organic carbon and sediment in neighbouring drainage systems and rivers. The research revealed that on peatlands, between 25% to 50% of the carbon that would normally be taken up each year is lost "and so adds significantly to the potential impacts of climate change":

It concluded that increases in sediment and organic matter eroded from turbine sites could also have an impact on spawning fish stocks such as salmon and trout, down-river from construction areas.

Research by the RSPB reported three factors associated with wind turbine sites which appear to have a negative impact on some peatland bird populations. Preferred locations of wind turbine developments closely correspond to habitats suitable for peatland birds such as golden plover; birds appear to avoid otherwise suitable upland habitats if wind turbines are present and the breeding density of birds appears to be lower than predicted at sites containing wind turbines.

The RSPB research suggests that lower bird numbers could be the result of birds avoiding the sites - causing displacement of populations to other sites - and increased adult bird mortality as a result of collisions with turbines. Insensitively-sited wind turbines on upland areas are exacerbating the impacts of climate change on habitats and species that they claim to be preventing. The research concludes: "bird populations that are under stress from wind farm development are likely to be more susceptible to additional pressures from climate change": A worst-case outcome could see the survival of a species under threat.

There has been a failure by successive governments in Scotland and the UK to consider properly the implications of siting wind farms in upland areas. The report is not against wind turbines. The Trust absolutely supports the government's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and effective measures to deliver those targets. It argues that wind turbines can be a sustainable part of the armoury against climate change, but only if installations are sited and operated to reduce their environmental impact. Wind turbine installations should be subject to the same standard levels of environmental protection and regulation as any other major civil engineering projects. Wind turbines should not be used as an isolated solution, but as part of a mix of other sustainable and low greenhouse gas emitting energy options. There should be a presumption in favour of small community-scale developments and a national debate about whether there is a size and scale of turbine which would be excessive anywhere in Scotland's scale of landscape.

The report concludes that it is not necessary to allow a free-for-all on our best landscapes and habitats in order to fulfil renewable energy targets. It is not enough for developers to say, "This is a green project" and then expect to get away with shoddier standards than would otherwise have been applied. Wind developments are major engineering projects and all relevant EU directives, such as the Habitats Directive, and national regulation should be applied.

Other reports have also shown that much power is lost in transmission and without major subsidies wind farms

of any size can only really be effective if close to the cities they are to provide for.

Many of us do object to individual proposals but living remote from the wild areas in question we may not hear about them until it is too late. If you do not want the wild places we love, to be disfigured by large turbines or enormous pylons marching across the landscape, perhaps the best way we can contribute is by joining and financially supporting those organisations trying to ensure proper consideration of the whole picture.

If you want a copy of the report visit the John Muir Trust website www.jmt.org

Roy Denney with kind permission of the JMT

THE BAT

Al-Ouat'Ouate means The Bat in Arabic and is the name given to the journal of the Speleo Club du Liban (Lebanese caving club).

The journal is produced regularly despite the problems in that troubled land and the current issue is the thirteenth since the end of their civil war in 1986. It is in full colour giving detailed surveys and superb photographs and is distributed to their about 200 members worldwide and to libraries and caving clubs around the world. We have just set up an exchange of journals with this club and their journal will be available in our library at Lowstern.

This latest edition highlights the troubled history of what appears to be fascinating cave which may cease to exist if things are allowed to continue as they are. If you want to arrange a visit it seems you had better not delay.

It is called Mgharet el Kassarat and is located in the Antelias Quarries and in 1960 it had no natural entrance. This means that no human knew of the existence of this cave as there was no way a person could go inside. So it lay safe and protected for effectively hundreds and thousands of years slowly allowing its concretions to develop in the safe tunnels that the flowing water was creating. The cave was only discovered when a driller from the local quarry bored a hole into the cave ceiling revealing its existence. Cavers from the Speleo Club du Liban explored the cave and discovered over 4km of passages with a large underground river.

During the Lebanese war the quarry continued to operate uncontrolled and managed to destroy the entrance of the cave while burying any remaining access to the cave for 20 years. Judging from old survey maps, about 500m of cave passages have been destroyed by the quarrying work during the civil war.

In 1996 a team from the Speleo Club du Liban and STD (Bureau 'technique et Development) combined their effort to drill boreholes in the hope of finding the cave

again and their 11th attempt penetrated into the cave. At the same time the owner of the land decided to use a large caterpillar to re-excavate near the original artificial entrance and uncovered a buried passage in the cave. Consequently, the cave had now two artificial entrances with the underground river partially flowing to the surface from the newly opened passage during the flooding season.

In 2005 after continued quarrying above the cave area the Antelias seasonal stream buried the borehole entrance under three metres of boulders and sediment that had been deposited from the surface river.

Back to one cave entrance, the winter lake entrance.

In 2006 the water flowing inside the cave was scheduled for domestic water supply by the Beirut Water Authority. A 5m hole has been drilled in the ceiling of the cave effectively destroying the fragile environmental balance within the cave. We currently do not know the impact these works will have on the cave but for sure it will not be healthy to the cave's delicate environment or even its growth on all levels, physical or biological. The cave is in serious risk of being destroyed and from the photographs in the journal it would be a tragedy.

There is a comprehensive article by Rena Karanouh pleading for the protection of the cave and describing it in detail. There is a survey of this and other nearby caves.

The journal also includes a comprehensive survey of all the bats of the Lebanon and an article on caving in North America in particular the Mammoth Cave Connection in Kentucky. There is also a piece on caving in Oman but you will have to brush up on your French if you want to digest that one. The Journal is multilingual.

For those dedicated cavers amongst us who take interest in the caves of distant parts you can arrange personal copies of this journal if you contact info@speleoliban.org.
Ed.

CAVE & KARST

In the last edition of our journal we reproduced articles (by Steve Craven and Ged Campion) that had previously appeared in Cave and Karst Science, which is a publication of the British Cave Research Association. It is that Association's peer-reviewed science journal and is published three times a year and is issued as hard copy to BCRA members who have opted to receive it, or is available to members in digital form via the BCRA Web site.

Steve and Ged are of course regular contributors to our journal, and we also have regular original contributions in a similar vein from John Middleton (including some in this edition), who seems to spend most of his time visiting parts of the world that most of us can only dream of and would struggle to locate on a map. For members with

particular interest in reports and articles of this type I would recommend consideration of joining the BCRA and/or subscribing to Cave and Karst Science.

CaKS includes scientific papers and other material on all aspects of karst or speleological science, including archaeology, biology, chemistry, conservation, geology, geomorphology, history, hydrology and physics, as well as expedition reports and a "Forum" section that contains discussions, book reviews, abstracts from other journals and so on. Online access is also available on a subscription basis to non-members of the Association, with an annual and a monthly fee. BCRA will continue to offer CaKS on paper for as long as it is economically possible to do so, and each issue is currently available at a cost of £6.00 plus postage (48pp at the last count)

The BCRA produces various other publications including Speleology, which replaced Caves and Caving as the Bulletin of the BCRA. This magazine aims to cover popular science and technology related to caving, as well as expedition reports, and the activities of BCRA's special interest groups. It appears three times a year and is now a member benefit of BCA, billed as the Bulletin of British Caving and is sent to all BCA direct individual members.

The article that appeared under Steve's banner in our last journal, on the history of cave exploration in the Northern Pennines, first appeared in Cave and Karst Science Volume 34, Number 1 (pages 23-32), which is dated 2007 but actually appeared during 2008.

For more information about the BCRA see their web site: <http://bcra.org.uk> <<http://bcra.org.uk/>>

Ed.

DUE RECOGNITION

Cavers in the Yorkshire Dales are being offered £8,000 to restore pathways and tracks leading to some of the most popular pot-holes as part of a conservation initiative.

Natural England has introduced a new grant scheme to encourage them to carry out essential maintenance in and around the major cave systems. Many of the most popular are approached by paths which have been badly eroded over the years. Caving clubs have worked to keep the approaches in good order and this voluntary work has now been recognised and will be rewarded by this surface works conservation grant scheme which is to be administered by the Council of Northern Caving Clubs. The grant money is available to individuals or groups who need financial assistance to help to improve access to caves or to stabilise their entrances.

Alongside this the Northern Caves Monitoring Scheme is a joint project between CNCC and NE to thoroughly review the scientific features within the caves to ensure they are properly preserved. The caves of the Dales are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Recognition of our own efforts comes from another

source - Stephen Craven writes from Capetown, "I have just extracted this from the latest Himalayan Club e-newsletter No. 15 - Himalayan expeditions in 2008: Lhakhang (6250 m)

Team: British

Leader: Michael John Borroff

Six senior citizens (60+) from the Yorkshire Ramblers Club accompanied the leader to attempt this mountain in Spiti during the post monsoon season of 2008. They established their advanced base camp on the lateral moraines on the west of the Dhhun glacier, which allowed detailed reconnaissance of northwest face of Lhakhang. But unseasonal and wide spread snowfall on Lhakhang and all peaks in the northern Spiti caused them to abandon the climb. They reached 5660 m while exploring the glacier.

A great pity that the bad weather defeated your members". Thank you Steve, photographs from the trip appear elsewhere in this journal.

Ed.

IT'S A WHITEWASH

During the process of doing up LHG Jeff Hooper came across a letter first published in the National Trust Magazine back in Spring 1986 which he forwarded to Iain Gilmour to assist him in his labours. Jeff's suggestion was that the National Trust, our landlords, could not object to us using this technique as they had published the letter.

"Sir, I whitened our 17th-century house (brick skin, timber frame) with lime and tallow with excellent results. Cooley's Cyclopaedia of Practical Receipts ... (1872 edition) advised newly burned lime and (although any rendered down household fat would, do) boiled linseed oil at one pint per gallon of lime wash. I approached a local lime works where chalk was still being burnt in a charcoal kiln. Somewhat dubiously, I returned home what appeared to be a pile of grey stones, placed a few in a large crock and poured a little water on them. A fraction of a second later the 'stones' literally exploded into dazzling white as bits of shrapnel whipped past me. Thereafter, goggles were worn and the crock covered. The heat was immense. Into the seething lime raw linseed oil was poured short order became boiled linseed oil.

The mixture (consistency of thick custard) was slapped while hot onto and into the brickwork with a big brush. The result was marvellous - brickwork all of which needed re pointing, was covered with an even, smooth, milky whiteness. The surface had a slight sheen, presumably from the linseed content which also evidently accounted for the water repellent character of the of the surface. Rain water just ran down in rivulets (as did water from a hose) and continued to do so for the two or more years we were there. There were never any 'runs' of white below nor, incidentally, was there any increase in interior damp. The cost of rendering the house, about 66 ft x 22 ft was nine shillings, i.e. the cost of the lime, the oil being baksheesh along with the labour, a poor thing but mine own.

Although still completely intact, the appearance was ruined by subsequent owners in precisely the manner described in the article; by giving it a coat of Snowcem.

Yours sincerely, Capt. D.C. deF. Hedges "

Iain was much amused by these suggestions but the record does not show whether he was adventurous enough to have a go at following them.

CLARIFICATION - MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Whilst a member who has actually participated in, and finished, the Original Mountain Marathon (or Karrimor as it was then called) has commented as to how much he enjoyed the article on the event last year, there was a phrase included which was a little unfortunate. Comment was made that the mountain rescue teams were "paid to be there" which was not well chosen and is somewhat ambiguous given the recognised volunteer status of the UK MRTs and the valued work they do in all weather conditions. Your editor has a number of friends who have served on such teams and others who still turn out to support them and would in no way wish to question their status as amateurs. Indeed I have recently circulated a petition seeking to reinforce this by having them enjoy VAT free status as charities normally do.

The point we were trying to make was that the MRTs were routinely supporting the event anyway, rather than were turning out because this was a major "disaster".

It is our understanding that the organisers of the OMM and other such events regularly make payments to the MRTs not as a fee-for-service, but as a charitable donation in recognition of their support: the OMM website states that they donated £7000 to the MRTs. It would have been less misleading if we had said that it was worth noting that mountain rescue routinely support such events and this generates donations from the organisers and participants to support the volunteer team's normal activities.

As to the event itself, as time has allowed for proper consideration, it is obvious that the journalists were making a meal of it but for all that, the conditions on the day were appalling. I have taken part in a mountain marathon (some years ago) with only 800 competitors and understand the logistical challenges and one of this scale is an epic. Maybe it was a mistake to accept so many entries, and also to attempt a recall once the event had started.

MOUNTAIN RIVER CAVE

A joint British-Vietnamese Caving Expedition have discovered the largest cave passage found in the world to date. British cavers assisted by representatives from the

Hanoi University of Science spent five days exploring the cave in the heart of the jungle in Vietnam's Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park.

Previously unexplored, this is a tremendous discovery. The complete survey is at being analysed but initial estimates show the main passage to be at least 656 feet high in places and certain sections possibly 500ft wide.

The new cave, being called Hang Son Doong (Mountain River Cave) is probably twice the size of Deer Cave in Sarawak, Malaysia, the current record holder.

The entrance was only discovered in 1991 by a Vietnamese villager but nobody had entered it due to the terrifying wind and noise from the large underground river

It was a six hour trek through the jungle to reach the misleadingly modest cave entrance. It does however drop down into a large chamber, and after negotiating two underground rivers the team reached the dramatic main passage.

They will be returning!

UPSIDE DOWN WALKING

A tale from down under

It should have been simple, a 3 - 4 hour circular walk described in a NZ Best Walks book, up 400m to a fine view point. We set off from our campsite and followed a sign pointing "up". It soon became clear that the path and ~700 steps through the densely wooded slopes was a newly made one and not on the schematic map; no problem - still went to the top.

As forecast, fine views from the summit. It having appeared so simple, I'd not taken the book or a compass, but when we looked round, it wasn't quite like I'd expected/remembered, we had some doubts as to which way to descend. To go back the way we'd come up wasn't very satisfactory, so seeking to remember the map, we launched off down a ridge and soon entered the woods again. The route seemed to go in the right direction, but as undue time passed, her feet were hurting and the pace slowed. Then a slip and bruised bottom/jarred back and the pace slowed again. Scenery we didn't know appeared occasionally through the trees. Our campsite hadn't been shown on the map and we couldn't be sure just where we had joined the circuit, hence didn't know exactly where to head for.

Having come down a long way, then finding the path going up again with signs to the summit wasn't what we needed. I'd been "navigating" with the time and sun; it suddenly occurred to me that we were in the southern hemisphere - anxiety increased 100% - were we going

180 deg in the opposite direction? Making a brave choice in the face of certain divorce, we took a narrow overgrown branch path, keeping low, at a pace of one mph. Some while later we glimpsed a 'Pick and Pay' supermarket in the distance. Hopes were raised, we'd been to it the day before - but there are lots of them - was it even in the same district? Another 30 mins and we were sure we were OK. It should have been simple - in a way it was, but this reinforced my view that its easy to find the top of a hill/mountain - not so easy to get down!

Adrian Bridge

WINTER WANDERING

Mick Borroff did Custs Gully in early February this year as a solo effort. He set out from Seathwaite via Sty Head for an ascent of Great End by combining Skew Ghyll and Custs Gully. These were well plastered with snow as you can see and can be recommended as a classic winter mountaineering trip to the summit. He managed to time his ascent of Custs Gully to allow a photo of the following party below the chockstone.

His return was via Esk Hause, Allen Craggs and Glaramara.



ANOTHER POSSIBLE LONGISH WALK

Walked across Morecambe Bay?

Fancy walking across the Severn Estuary?

It is getting increasingly likely that you will be able to.

The Morecambe walk currently starts from Arnside and ends on Kents Bank. In previous years it has started at Hesk Bank. The reason for the change is quite simply safety. The tide is incredibly dangerous as the way the sea twists and turns into the bay changes year on year and so too do the dangers. Where you walked last year you could find yourself in deep water or quick sand.

The walk covers roughly eight to ten miles, depending on these vagaries and I understand the club did tackle it many years ago. There has been talk of possibly doing so again but nothing has come of it to date.

Another possible ten miler for the future could be to walk the proposed new barrage across the Severn.

Following consultation on ten options taking advantage of the tidal range of the Severn five options for the generation of electricity in the estuary have made a Government shortlist, including a barrage from Weston-super-Mare to Cardiff. The others include Shoots Barrage: further upstream and one seventh the width of the Cardiff Weston scheme and Beachley Barrage, just above the Wye River and the smallest barrage on the shortlist. The tidal range at 45 feet is second only in the world to the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia.

Also under consideration are radical new proposals for lagoons which impound a section of the estuary without damming it, one scheme being sited on the English shore and another on the Welsh side. It is good news that tidal lagoons will be considered as they offer large amounts of affordable renewable power at low environmental cost to the estuary.

The Severn estuary is seen to have massive potential to help achieve our climate change and renewable energy targets but many options have serious environmental downsides as the estuary is a protected environment, home to vulnerable species including birds and fish.

The government has made available £500,000 to help develop other technologies still in their infancy, like tidal reefs and fences and it promises to consider the progress of this work before any final decisions are taken.

It does mean the other five options which did not make the shortlist may still also be considered.

Opponents claim talk about tidal energy does not address having a proper energy strategy, correctly prioritised to put energy efficiency top of the list - why not insulate all homes at no cost to the occupiers, paying for itself in saved energy and thus lower bills and rapidly reduced carbon emissions.

Green groups are upset by the present intentions, claiming that the five schemes now short-listed are biased towards large business and not towards the best ecological solutions. After the first cut seven of the key environmental groups in Britain including the National Trust, WWF, and Wildfowl and Wetlands, decided to commission their own report, hiring engineers Atkins to review the ten short-listed schemes. They found the Government report had many flaws that led to the wrong choice, ultimately causing the seven environmental groups to speak up in an environmental backlash.

According to Atkins the Government report used old data, did not consider less environmentally harmful but innovative products, did not accurately account for environmentally damage from the larger schemes, and

overall did not use fair decision techniques to compare environmental value versus economical value.

The suggested 12-mile tidal reef and tidal fences would not dam the estuary like a barrage, causing less impact on its habitat. A barrage inevitably leads to silting up reducing its efficiency or costing large sums in dredging.

It concluded that the 12 mile structure of a reef would generate more electricity than a barrage because there will be more turbines working over a longer period of time. The reef would also cost less to build and last longer.

The environmental impacts of barrages are huge and amount to effective destruction of the estuary. This fails the EU Directive on Habitats and Birds.

Unlike a barrage, the 12 mile reef from Minehead in Somerset to Aberthaw, in south Wales, will be lower in the water and further down stream. It will be better for the environment because the slower moving turbines are less dangerous to migrating fish.

Other environmentalists have criticised the proposal .

The RSPB have said that the barrage would destroy the habitat of 69,000 birds and block the migration route of countless fish and it insists a tidal reef is a better idea than a barrage.

Ed.

HIDDEN VALLEY

The valley of Cwm Mynach, in the Snowdonia National Park, comprises about 1000 acres of woodland. but despite its beauty the woodland cover is predominantly conifers which block out natural light and provide limited benefits to wildlife.

The Woodland Trust have a one off opportunity to purchase almost the entire valley and gradually replace the non-native species with oak, ash and hazel. The remaining fragments of oak woodland are home to pied flycatchers which glide through the valley, as buzzards and ravens soar over the mountainous terrain. At night, calls from the tawny owl echo across the valley and otters hunt across the rocky streams. Just imagine what they could achieve with more native habitats?

They have plans to help restore the remaining fragments of ancient woodland and allow the carpets of bluebells and primroses to grow once more eventually to spread into the newly restored areas..

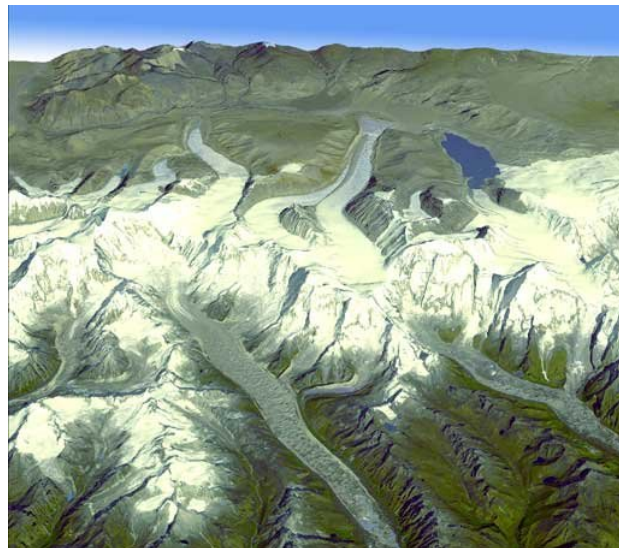
The current landowner shares this vision and has kindly agreed to sell the land for this project for considerably less than the market value, but to take up this offer they need to raise £865,000 for the purchase and the initial management of the site and need to do so by the end of this year.

See www.woodlandtrust.org.uk for more information.

LOOK BEFORE YOU GO

When planning expeditions in future we should be able to have a good look at what we can expect before we make our arrangements. The most complete terrain map of the Earth's surface has been published.

As an example this is the image of Bhutan



Comprised of 1.3 million images, produced by Nasa and the Japanese, the images were taken by Japan's Advanced Space-borne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (Aster) aboard the Terra satellite.

For this purpose, local elevation was mapped with each point just 30m apart and provides the most complete, consistent global digital elevation data yet made available to the world. The resulting Global Digital Elevation Map covers 99% of the Earth's surface, as compared to the previous best; Nasa's Shuttle Radar Topography Mission, covering 80% of the Earth's surface which were less accurate in steep terrain and in some deserts.

Nasa is now working to combine their material with the new Aster observations to further improve on the global map.

The GDEM is available for download from NASA's EOS data archive and Japan's Ground Data System.

<http://asterweb.jpl.nasa.gov/gdem.asp>

For visualizations of the new Aster topographic data, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/20090629.html> .

Data users can download the Aster global digital elevation model <https://wist.echo.nasa.gov/~wist/api/imswelcome>

and

<http://www.gdem.aster.ersdac.or.jp> .

GETTING THE WIND UP

Despite wind power been largely discredited with present technology, commercial interests are still fighting to install wind turbines given the indecent subsidies they are being offered.

The latest battle is being fought out here in the East Midlands with an application in for two 102 metre high turbines on the edge of the Peak District. Roughly twice as high as Nelsons Column these will disfigure the view for miles and planners rejected the application.

Unfortunately the inspector has overturned this decision on appeal. It has now gone before the high court with the National Park amongst the many bodies fighting against their erection.

On a mundane level they are adjacent to a popular orienteering area which would have to be largely abandoned as it is hardly a challenge to navigate with two enormous guide posts sticking up in the air.

Ed

SCOTLAND HAS THE BLUES

Whilst on the subject of renewable energy there is little argument that hydro electric schemes are as good as current technology will permit us to construct.

Unfortunately this 'blue' tinged form of green energy is threatened by legislation.

The biggest such scheme has just been completed in Scotland giving the biggest controlled fall of water in the UK . One of the great benefits of such a scheme is that it can be turned on and off at will to cover surges or problems on the network. This scheme at Glendoe beside and above Loch ness is the first large-scale hydro electric station to be built in Scotland for 50 years will generate 110 mw of energy.

It seems however that under current protective laws and with the hoops they would have to jump through it is highly unlikely that they would have gained permission for this plant in today's climate which does suggest that even if another suitable site could be found we are not likely to see another such development.

Ed

IRAN

It was way back in 1971 that John Middleton was leader of the expedition to Ghar Parau followed the next year by a team under David Judson. It is hard to accept that it is so long ago. The intervening years are not thought to have seen much work on the caves of Iran given the political upheavals in that country but cavers from Russia and Ukraine did some work there in 2004/5/6 and there is some local work being done.

Late last year a team of international speleologists went

out to train some locals in the skills of cave rescue, photography and cave exploration generally.

The tutors were drawn from Switzerland, Croatia, Belgium and three from the Caving Club of Lebanon.

It had been hoped that perhaps it may open up again shortly but the furore over their elections seems to have put paid to that.

CARBON FOOTPRINTS

There is no longer any doubt that climate change is the biggest threat to our natural world and will have huge implications for the way we live our lives.

The Met Office have confirmed that the last ten years have included nine of the ten warmest years on record.

Average temperatures worldwide are now expected to increase by almost 6°C by 2100.

We already have a badly fragmented wildlife habitat with many species in isolated islands in a sea of intensive land use. Climate change is likely to require many species to migrate and it is essential we create corridors to allow this to happen. Species typical of ancient woodland have especially poor powers of dispersal.

Nature's Calendar, the study of the timing of natural events in relation to climate, is already revealing rather staggering trends in the responses of species to these temperature changes.

Strenuous efforts are now required to ensure our natural world does not face catastrophic consequences in coming decades.

There is an urgent need to redouble efforts to cut carbon emissions drastically and to create sympathetically managed landscapes that allow wildlife to adapt and move in response to unavoidable climate change.

We must ensure that all ancient woods and other wildlife habitats are conserved and restored, new wildlife habitats are created alongside them and that the wider countryside is used less intensively.

The obvious need to reduce our impact on the environment to alleviate the effects of global warming is now accepted and most of us are familiar with the need to reduce our carbon footprint.

By reducing our consumption and re-using and recycling whenever possible we can make a difference but there are other ways we can help.

The Woodland Trust has introduced a Woodland Carbon

project which will allow them to plant and care for new native woodland here in the UK, creating valuable green spaces for people and wildlife alike.

Woodland takes in carbon dioxide but in addition to helping reduce our net greenhouse-gas emissions, creating new woodland now will provide a vital means by which wildlife and people can adapt to future climates.

Shade, shelter, protection from wind and water erosion are just some of the many benefits that trees bring, but we must act now to ensure those benefits are with us when we need them most.

They calculate that every pound will allow them to create a square metre of woodland and that 25 square metres of woodland will capture and store one tonne of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. They are of course looking for donations to help fund this project.

Another way we can help is by pressurising our local councils. If you would like to see more woods and trees in your neighbourhood the Sustainable Communities Act could help. This is an Act that enables Councils to implement ideas generated directly by their communities, using funds and resources from central government.

However councils must 'opt in' to the Act before they can take advantage of the opportunity it offers and given the pressures they are under many may not bother. We can positively influence them to do this as they are much more likely to 'opt in' if their residents press them to.

As a local resident, you can write to urge your local authority to resolve to use this new process by submitting proposals to government. For the first time we now have a law that gives local government and local communities the power to drive central government actions and policy to help promote thriving, vibrant and sustainable communities and this could involve seeking improved access to woods and more trees in your area..

Ed

ANOTHER KIND OF LONG WALK

As a club we do a long walk each year often as much as 40 or even 50 miles but almost always completed within one day. We normally contrive our own walks but we were one of the first organisations to tackle the Lyke Wake and have done stretches of the Cleveland Way and the Coast to Coast. We do not normally tackle the traditional national trails which come in different guises and are logistically more difficult to organise if accommodation is required for a good number on several days.

Something like the Pennine Way, Southern Uplands Way or Coast to Coast would offer a real challenge for the club but in reality some of the coast paths are very strenuous even if they do not go into classic mountain country.

Unless a change of Government intervenes we should have access to most of the coast in the near future and I wonder

what the appetite of members would be for a good coastal challenge.

Having not been able to go on this years Pembroke meet it reminded me that I had in fact never been to that county and on the 60th anniversary of the start of our National Parks I determined to visit my last one.

Given the nature of a family holiday I could only tackle the coast path in bite sized chunks but was very suitably impressed and if like me you choose to summit each available coastal vantage point, there is considerable climb.

By its shortest route it is 186 miles but can be extended to take in some very respectable hills commanding superb views. Coastal bus services do help in trying to get to different start points if being tackled in sections

Roy Denney.



Above - Whitesands Bay and the 593 ft Carn Llidi

Below - The reverse view with Ramsey island in the distance



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES RALPH BORLASE WINGFIELD

Earlier this year we were approached by a member of the Wingfield family who was researching places in the world named Wingfield. They had come across a reference to Wingfield's Ledge and came to us via enquiries of the CPC. Jocelyn Wingfield is doing an article for the Wingfield Family Newsletter (circulation: 400, mainly in the US including six libraries), and had been trying to find something of a Major CR Wingfield who had been something of a mystery to the family. His grandchildren were known but they had no knowledge of this gentleman but enquires turned up Wingfield's Ledge and eventually to ourselves when the CPC advised them that he had been one of our members.

Wingfield's Ledge was named in 1912 for the until now 'mystery' Major and is apparently 200 feet below the surface in the Gaping Gill midway between the Rat Hole Waterfall and the Spout Tunnel and is on a huge overhang above the 'Main Chamber'. From his research and anything I have been able to find out since it seems fewer people have stood on Wingfield's Ledge than on the Moon.

For those not familiar with the cave the Rat Hole itself is an inconspicuous entrance at the side of the main streamway of Fell Beck some 20-30 yards upstream from where it falls some 320 ft vertically into the Main Shaft of Gaping Gill. In 1908 the Rat Hole entrance was discovered after it had been washed clear by Fell Beck floodwater. In 1909 the newly discovered entrance was explored by C.R. Wingfield and E. Addyman, but they were recalled by the sound of revolver shots - the pre-arranged signal that heavy rain was falling. In 1910 the new entrance was further explored by Wingfield and others to the head of a large black void. In 1912 the new shaft was plumbed to a depth of 200ft by Wingfield, who had suggested the presence of a ledge at this depth. The Ledge appears to have been first reached by a team from the YRC in 1913 - when C.R. Wingfield and Booth, succeeded in reaching the ledge system by being pulled across on a winch wire. To reach Wingfield's Ledge cavers "do a short slanting abseil towards the SE, leading to a Y-belay in the south wall" (using 320 ft of rope to this point). Thence they can descend to enter the Main Chamber... "such a feat that it"... (recorded the Craven Potholing Club) "...gives rise to a definite respect for the climbing efforts and courage of Major Wingfield".

Surprisingly it was not until 1935 that the first successful attempt to descend the Rat Hole to Wingfield's Ledge (named in 1912) was made by Smith and Waterfall and this feat was not repeated till 1984 by Cordingley and Gough.

John Lovett knows the ledge and feels it is probably an extension of the upper porcelain band seen in the main chamber and did himself make what was probably the last descent by any YRC member of the Rat Hole as the first tight passages have been blocked for a considerable time.

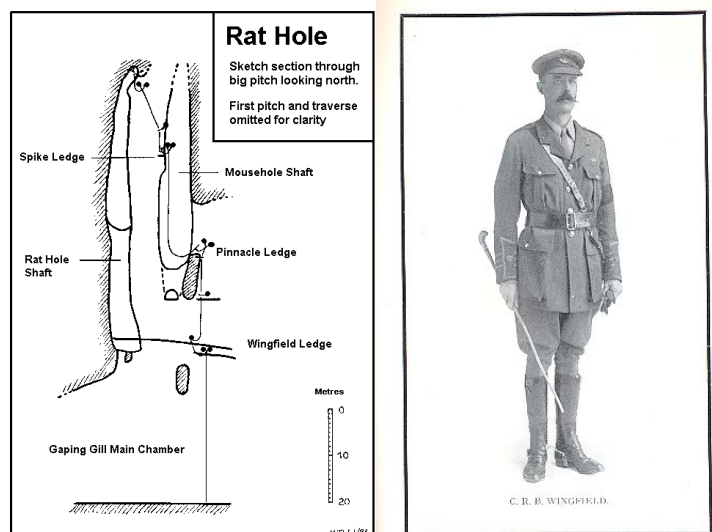
Rather than for Wingfield's Ledge, Major C.R. Wingfield is better known for his being leader of the team who in 1912

first plumbed Noon's Hole near Boho in Co. Fermanagh. Before 1826 it had been known as "Sumera" (meaning a bottomless pit), but was then renamed for a notorious highwayman called Noon(e) - on whose evidence several men were transported to Australia. Probably as a result of this, Noon was ambushed, murdered and thrown down the 270 ft shaft, then Ireland's deepest known - but now second deepest known - underground shaft in Ireland. The top half was explored by Monsieur Martel in 1895, but the bottom of Noon's Hole was first reached until 1912 - by Major Wingfield, with Baker, Dunn and Kentish, all of the YRC. Using candles in their hats and occasionally having to light magnesium strips, they climbed fearlessly down rope ladders - to find at the bottom a small "dungeon", measuring 20 ft by 6 ft with a tiny exit, which, after 20 ft was blocked by a constant deluge from the roof above them.

From our records we have been able to fill some gaps on Charles Ralph Borlase Wingfield 1873-1923], Lord of the Manor of Yockleton, Shropshire (4 miles southwest of Onslow Hall near Shrewsbury. His mother Jane was sister of Walter Clopton Wingfield, inventor of lawn tennis. (1874). He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge (1894). He was from 1892 a major in the Shropshire Militia (serving in South Africa and Ireland), was in 1914 in the 1st World War in France as a major and Second-in-Command of the 5th KSLI (King's Shropshire Light Infantry) and ended up at the front. He compared trench warfare to pot-holing.

He was a keen yachtsman, skier, fisherman, and huntsman. He was Mayor of Shrewsbury and became High Sheriff of Shropshire and died in 1923. He joined the Y.R.C. in 1908, but must have been born a Rambler. In "Members' Holidays" (Vol. III., p. 96) Wingfield tells of what was then, probably, the longest ski-run ever accomplished in this country, besides much else. It was 96 miles from Nelson to Sedburgh. He was part owner of the 60 ton yacht, Gwynfa, crewed by amateurs and frequently taken abroad. The records of our club meets of the period rarely omit his name.

His obituary appears on page 144 of Journal Vol. V No. 16, 1924



IN SEARCH OF KARST AND CAVES

John & Valerie Middleton



likely to become extinct. Life for the people has always been difficult but they have managed self sufficiency and added extras to their lives through trading frankincense, turtle shells, ghee, aloe juice, cinnabar, shark fins, meat and salted fish with passing boats and traders. Eco-tourism is about to start and this is already seeing immigration and investment from the surrounding Arabian and Indian sub-continent.

The ecological value of these islands has already been recognised by UNESCO and the WWF so it is hoped that such development can be controlled.

SOQOTRA ISLAND AND ITS AMAZING CAVES

Whilst not comparable with the depth or length of many Asian caves the little known but extensive karst of Soqatra does host chambers and passageways of equivalent volume together with many impressive speleothems. The notes and observations below follow a short visit by the authors in 2008.

GENERAL OVERVIEW.

(Geomorphology, people, flora, fauna and caving history.)

The four islands that make up the Soqatra Archipelago (Soqatra, Darsa, Samha and Abd al Kuri) are situated in the Indian Ocean approximately 380km south of R'as Fartak in Yemen and 90km east of Cap Guardafui in Somalia. The largest island, Soqatra, is 110km in length, 40km wide and has an area of 3,625 sq. km. The geology of the island can be summarised relatively briefly by stating that limestone of Eocene, Palaeocene and Cretaceous ages form undulating plateaux at between 300m and 800m elevation. This overlies older igneous and metamorphic rocks that are exposed in the spectacular, mainly granite, Haggeher mountain range where they reach close to 1,600m on Jebel Skand. These rocks are again visible near to Qalansiyah and the coastal valleys close to Bandar Shu'ub.

Limestone is the dominant rock on the island with the aforementioned plateaux dropping abruptly to the coastal plains in both the north and south. Caves occur in many of these cliffs whilst on the often barren plateaux above, extensive areas of karst are host to a multitude of caves, shafts, depressions, poljes, dolines, sinks, pavements and karren features. The total area for karst and cave development is estimated to be around 1,400 square kilometres.

The population of the islands is just under 50,000. The Soqotrans originate from a diverse mix of peoples but mainly from the African and Arabian seaboard. They developed their own tribal culture and have their own language, Soqotri. There is no written form for this language and unfortunately but inevitably with the advent of tourists, television, radio and other means of communication it is

The archipelago has 825 plant species (see photos 1/2) and due to its isolation and environment, a particularly high proportion are endemic (307 species or 37%, Miller & Morris 2004). The most obvious plants are the unusual Dragon's Blood Tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*), Desert Rose (*Adenium obesum ssp. sokotranum*) and Cucumber Plant (*Dendrosicyos socotrana*). Others of interest include 7 different species of Frankincense (*Boswellia*) and many succulents of the genera's *Aloa*, *Caralluma*, *Dorstenia*, *Duvaliandra*, *Echidnopsis*, *Euphorbia*, *Kalanchoe*, *Kleinia* and *Socotrella*. The publication by Miller and Morris is a masterpiece of botanical research that not only describes all the plants but it also shows the myriad of uses that the local population have for them.

The fauna has not been studied in as great detail as the flora; however here again there is a high degree of endemism.

Amongst the reptiles there are 16 species of gecko, 2 skinks, 6 snakes and a chameleon that are all unique to the island as are four scorpions, the Soqotran Baboon Spider and two freshwater crabs. Gastropods (snail family) are of particular interest as there is a 95% endemism in the almost 100 species already identified. 192 different bird species can be seen with 9 not being known elsewhere.

The diversity of marine life is equally as broad and is bound to become popular with divers. Mammals do not fare as well. There are 4 species of bat, the Ship Rat (*Rattus rattus*), the Common House Mouse (*Mus musculus*), an unidentified shrew and the Lesser Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*). The publication and website of Dr Wolfgang Wranik is at the forefront of current knowledge.

Research in biospeleology by the "Soqatra Karst Project" has yielded many new underground species and this research and results is still ongoing (De Geest).

Due to the islands inaccessibility little was known about the caves and karst until a mainly Belgium multi-disciplinary speleological expedition visited Socotra in 2000. This was named the "Soqatra Karst Project" (SKP) and was originated and subsequently co-ordinated by Peter De Geest. The exiting results of this first visit were beyond expectations

and ongoing expeditions (SKP 2/3/4 etc) have been made every year since “....The SKP team leader emphasizes that speleology should be a multidisciplinary approach whereby the results achieved are the sum of co-operation between cave explorers and scientists, and where all investigative facets contribute to a complete image of the Soqotra underground world, its protection and its sustainable use...” (Extract, page 9, SKP Report).

We can confirm the soundness of this approach not only in the results and production of the first comprehensive report but the advantages that have also been felt by the local population – additional water resources, extra work as guides etc.

CAVES AND KARST VISITED.

Hoq Cave (see photos 3/4/5) has been known and used by humanity for over 1,700 years. This fact was proven when SKP1 discovered an inscribed wooden tablet within the cave that was subsequently dated to AD258 (De Geest). Evidence of early visitors was also found almost 2km into the system. The entrance is situated at the top of a steep slope and at the base of a great cliff an hours walks from the northern coast road. The arched entrance, at an altitude of 335m, is truly awesome with a width of roughly 160m and height of 70m! Giant formations are immediately in evidence and continue to the furthest reaches of the cave. Once into the dark zone it is difficult to tell the difference between a chamber and the passageway as this gallery can be almost 100m across and 30m high. The cave heads directly into the hillside and there is only one side passage, on the left, of about 250m in length some 300m from the entrance. On the suggestion of the SKP *Hoq Cave* has been designated a “Tourist” cave and it is necessary to hire a local guide from the nearby village. Various sensitive areas have been taped off. It is possible to explore further but the standard return trip is a very satisfying 3km. The total length of the system is 3,112m with a vertical gain of 85m. This is a cave that has to be on the agenda for every visiting speleologist.

The Erher Caves (see photo 6) have entrances and a setting that is probably even more spectacular than *Hoq Cave*. Further eastwards along the coastal road the great escarpment edge becomes riddled with holes most of which prove to be just rock shelters. At an area where there are a series of great white wind blown sand dunes against the cliff there suddenly appears abundant greenery and a good spring (we spotted 90cm long eels in this water, probably *Anguilla bicolor*). At this point, in a V between the highest dunes are three caves set spectacularly one above the other. *Erher Top Cave* has a massive entrance that as at 2005 had not been visited. The central cave, *Erher Central*, can be reached by an awkward climb, is 390m long and has an entry arch almost 100m high and 75m wide. Finally, directly beneath this is *Erher Cave* itself whose entrance, whilst large, is small in comparison to its neighbours being just 10m high and 40m wide! This again leads to a great 10 to 20m wide passage up to 15m high that heads directly into the mountain. Unlike *Hoq Cave* calcite formations are none existent and there is frequently sticky mud on the floor but the clean scalloped walls are superb. About 450m from the entrance several pools are met and sharply eroded rock

sculptures rise dramatically from the floor. These can, with difficulty, be traversed but eventually a 6m drop leads to a large lake. This was the furthest point that we reached. However it is possible to scale a wall on the opposite side of the lake for 15m to a high level gallery continuing to a long terminal lake. There is just one side passage 260m from the entrance. The total length is 1,615m and vertical range +37m.

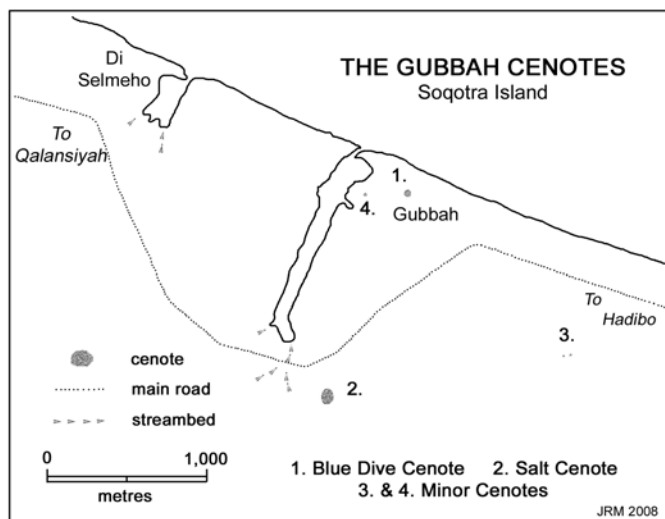
Pit Cave (see photo 7) is found on the wild Shibehon plateau at an altitude of about 480m. The scenery is one of gently undulating hills covered in bare sharp edged limestone from which many of the strange *Adenium obesum ssp. sokotranum* grow together with the occasional aloe and euphorbia succulent plants. Periodically this surface is cut by steep sided wadis. By using our GPS we spent almost half a day trying to reach this cave as we could not find a local guide or an easily traversed route. The effort however was well worth while as two large shafts about 300m apart, one almost 50m across and the other 35m descend for 60m into a series of fine chambers and passageways to -145m. The total surveyed length is 1,789m.

Dejub Cave (see photos 8/9). By following the rough track from *Pit Cave* back to the main road and then turning southwards (left) the Shibehon plateau becomes even more spectacular. We made endless stops to investigate various karst and other features before the road makes a final impressive drop down to the coastal Noged plain. Just to the east, within the steep hillside, is the enormous rock shelter of *Dejub Cave*. The entrance is more than 140m across and 25m high! This is smothered in a profusion of great stalagmites and stalactites behind which is a chamber 80m deep and a small passage 30m long. The local people use the cave as a shelter for their flocks and the floor is thick with many centuries of dry, dusty droppings! Dripping water has attracted several *Maidenhair Ferns* and a variety of attractive butterflies and dragonflies. With its views across the plain to the sea this is definitely one of the highlights of the island.

The Gubbah Cenotes. Our final speleological port of call was to the series of cenotes close to the central north coast village of Gubbah (also spelt Gubba and Ghubbah). (see photo 10)

The village and surrounding is situated on a barren coralline plateau to 5m above sea level. The main and most beautiful cenote is *Blue Dive Cenote* (1) that is found between the village and the sea. In the sunshine it is a stunning deep blue colour and has an oval measurement of 50m x 40m. The SKP divers descended to a depth of -37m in a chamber considerably larger than the surface area. There are no passageways. The water itself is brackish but it is known that fresh water does feed into it. The other large cenote is *Salt Cenote* (2) found about 1,200m away and just south of the main road. This is of larger dimensions, 120m x 90m and with a 3m drop to the variable water level. We were told that this water is also brackish but barely 2m deep and muddy. On the shallow surrounding ledges the villagers have built many small salt evaporation pans. We also spotted three more small cenotes that only just deserve the

name, two close together (3) and about a kilometre eastwards from *Salt Cenote* and one just west of Gubbah (4). All were barely 10m across and a metre deep with shallow water in.



Partially for the karst and partially for the flora we also visited the *Momi* and *Diksam* plateaux.

The *Momi* plateau is very beautiful with rolling hills and an abundance of Dragon’s Blood Trees. There are many areas of karren streaked small cliffs, dolines, depressions and quite large verdant poljes. A number of caves have been found here. *Diksam* is rather like a transition zone between the harsh barren beauty of Shibeheon and the rather more gentle and pastoral *Momi* area.

OTHER CAVES.

At the time that the “SKP (Yemen) 2000-2004” report was published 28 caves had been recorded and almost 23 kilometres of passageway surveyed. Since then, to 2008, the number and length of caves has increased dramatically with the longest currently being *Gineba Cave* at over 15km and the deepest being *Difshelai Cave* at -220m. *Gineba Cave* is now the longest known system in the Middle East (P. De Geest personal communication). It is planned that a further report, SKP 2005-2009, shall be published during 2009 with possibly an even more informative book to follow.

The majority of known caves are either very large single passageways “boring” straight into the limestone or shorter passages or shafts leading to large chambers. The former would include the caves of *Gineba*, *Hoq*, *Dilgaghai* (1,662m long, -90m), *Erher* and *Casecas* (1,190m long, -50m). Examples of the latter are *Dilhaile* (454m long, -44m and with a chamber almost 140mx65mx20m), *Iron Pole* (79m long, -26m and a chamber 70mx45mx18m) and *Erher Central* (390m long, +98m and a chamber 85mx50mx30m). No caves found so far are particularly complex and most exhibit very fine, albeit often old, speleothems.

OUR TRIP. Soqatra was an extension to our “Salt Caves of Southern Iran” trip also detailed in this journal. We, Tony and Jan Waltham, my wife Valerie and I arrived at Hadiboh from Bandar Abbas via Dubai and Sana’a. It is necessary to obtain a visa for Yemen but this can be obtained on arrival

at Immigration for \$30. The island is not the easiest place to visit having no regular boat connection with the mainland and only one flight per week. Additionally this leaves Sana’a at the rather uncivilized hour of 0500 hours and also stops at Al-Mukalla to collect many Soqotrans. Almost all of these passengers carry extra large baggage onto the plane. The flight is also frequently cancelled due to windy weather over Soqatra! It is easiest to organise a trip to your own specification through a local tour agent either in Sana’a or on Soqatra itself.

We made a base in Habido, the capital, at the small but friendly Hotel Taza where our tasty meals were taken outside in conjunction with ravenous goats, Egyptian Vultures and the frequent movement of tables to make way for 4 x 4 vehicles. We also spent as many nights camping in the mountains or by the sea. There is currently no accommodation outside Hadiboh. We hired a vehicle together with Darr, an excellent driver and Shihab, an excellent guide and English speaker. Until a year ago virtually all the few roads on the island were very poor and travel subsequently slow but on our visit a program of hard surfacing and road expansion had commenced that made life easier for us. Searching for caves still necessitates much time off road. As this is a strictly Muslim country women need to remain well covered and men are expected to wear trousers. Unlike in Iran short sleeves are acceptable. During our stay the weather was very variable with one day well into the 30’s humid and still, the next would be cloudy and we would have to wrap up well and the next would be howling gales. Apparently this is typical. We generally found all the local people that we came in contact with to be very welcoming but had to bargain very hard indeed to get local guides to assist us with cave location!

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OTHER WEB SITES

Friends of Socotra
www.friendsofsocotra.org
 Socotra Conservation & Development
www.socotraisland.org

PHOTOGRAPHS.

01. Two typical Soqotra succulent plants; left *Dendrocycos socotrana*, right *Adenium obesum* ssp. *sokotranum* both not far from Hadibo.

02. The classic Dragon's Blood Tree or *Dracaena cinnabari* on the Momi plateau.

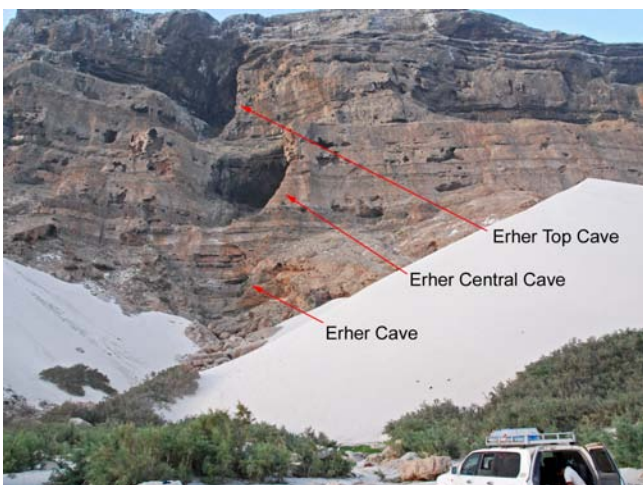
03. The inner Hoq Cave entrance looking out.

04. Typical Hoq Cave passageway.

05. Typical Hoq Cave passageway.

06. The 3 Erher Caves with giant sand dunes.

07. The wadi leading to Pit Cave. Note the barren surface and *Adenium* plants.



08. The sudden drop from the Shibehon plateau to the Noged plain

09. Dejub Cave from within

10. The Blue Dive Cenote at Gubbah.



SOME NOTES ON THE KARST AND CAVES OF NEW CALEDONIA

Following a recent visit by the authors a summary of the islands' rarely reported speleological richness and possible further potential is given.



- PHOTOGRAPHS.
- 01. Roches Notre-Dame
 - 02 Cave 2 Roches Notre-Dame
 - 03 The Koumac karst
 - 04 Lower entrance to Grotte de Koumac

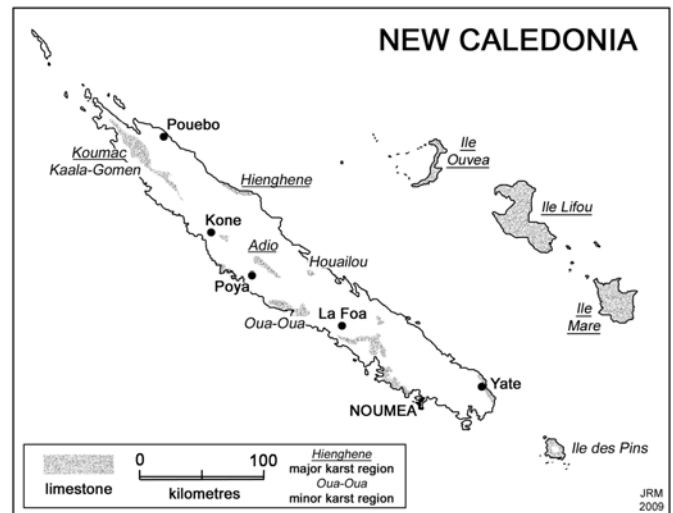
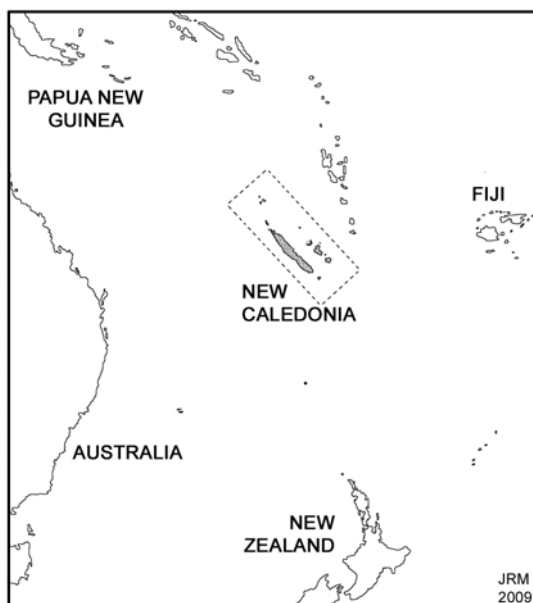


INTRODUCTION.

The use of caves by the local Kanak* population and the history of cave exploration are both very difficult to date. The former are thought to have always had an interest in caves since time immemorial but only as a place of burial whilst written detail of any modern exploration is not easy to find. Brief mention of caves and karst occurs on the internet, usually written by passing tourists, but the more valuable speleological articles are those produced by Australian cavers. They organised investigative visits to La Grande Terre in 1962/3, 1966/67 and in 1975 with each expedition adding considerable knowledge to the previous one. The most informative overall report is probably that published by Harris et al in 1976. Within French literature there is also little to be found. Even going as far back as the early 1960's we came across almost no mention of New Caledonia in any of the major journals other than a detailed report on a highly successful expedition to Lifou in 1996 (Lips, B). Locally the situation would seem to be the same apart from brief mention of the two major cave systems in tourism brochures**. We do know that occasional French cavers from abroad and local enthusiasts have made explorations into the caves and karst but it is most unusual that so little would seem to have been written up and no national caving organisation has ever existed. With this as a background together with geological maps promising a sufficiency of limestone, a potential for warmth and permanent sunshine and, of course, French croissants Valerie and I decided that it was an opportune time for us to investigate. We had valuable assistance on this trip with the addition of my son Crispin who lives in New Zealand and his partner Michelle.

**Kanak is the name given to the indigenous people of the islands by early European explorers. They are thought to be from mixed Lapita, Melanesian and Polynesian stock and currently comprise 45% of the countries population.*

***In 1987 Sophock Publications of Noumea produced the 50 page "Grottes de Nouvelle Calédonie" by Christian Thomas. This would no longer seem to be available and despite extensive enquiries we were unable to find any copy to view.*

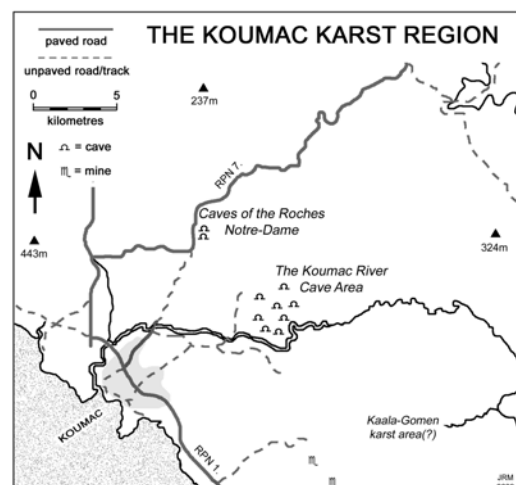


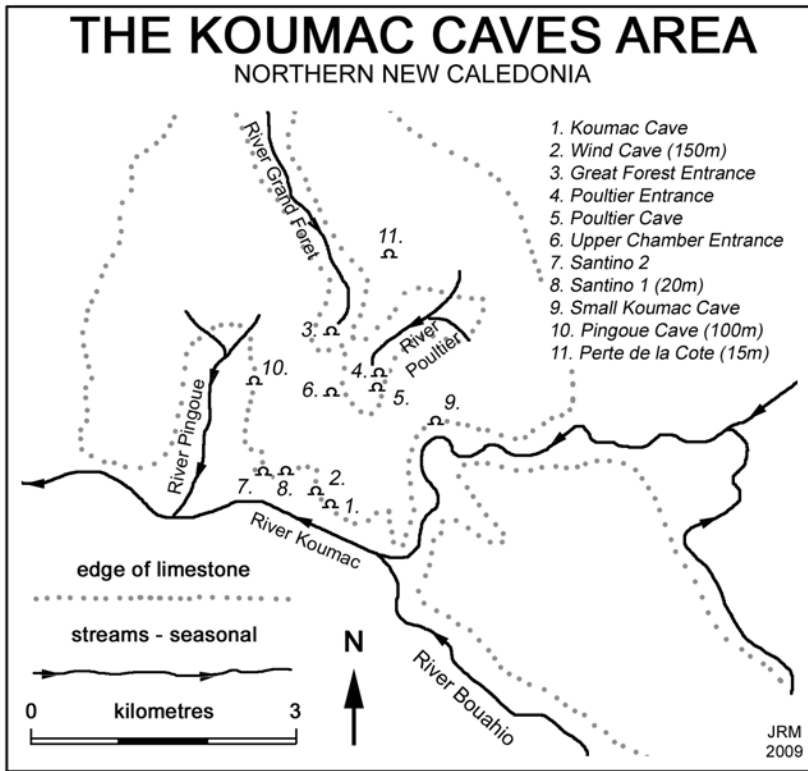
LA GRANDE TERRE.

The topography of La Grande Terre is dominated by a chain of high mountains that run down the centre of the island (Mont Panie 1,629m). To the west of this the rainfall is 1,500mm or less encouraging extensive agriculture whilst to the east it often exceeds 2,500mm with forested hills and waterfalls plunging directly into the sea. Surrounding Grande Terre is the second longest reef on earth and one that is arguably the finest. As an isolated piece of Gondwanaland the fauna and particularly flora show a very high degree of endemism. For example 80% of all plants are endemic with the island being a stronghold for the ancient pines species of Araucaria and Agathis as well as a haven for cycads and tree ferns. The island is 400km in length and just 50km wide giving a total surface area of 16,648sq km. 1,800sq km of this is limestone dating from the Palaeocene to the Lower Eocene and probably half has been karstified to some degree giving a landscape, albeit small, that is comparable in spectacle with anything similar in the southern hemisphere.

KOUMAC.

This karst region is the most continuously extensive in the country. It encompasses approximately 30sq km of rounded but steep sided hills many with exposed limestone cliffs on one side and occasional outcrops on the top. The elevation varies between 20m at the Koumac River and 408m on the Trou de Nehou. Dolines, sinks, dry valleys, pavements and other karst features abound..





ADIO

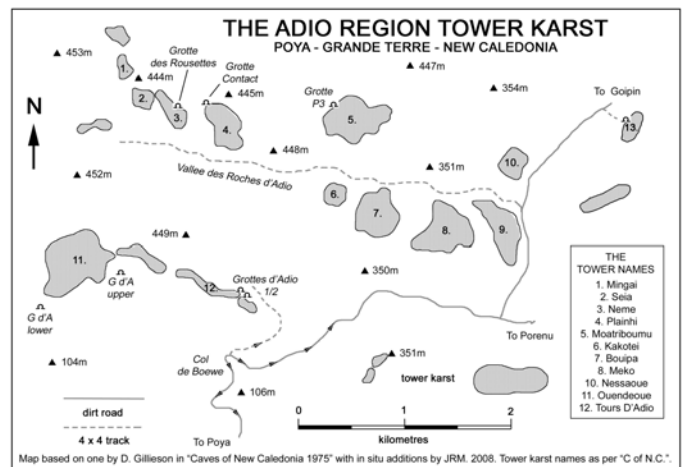
The “Adio” or “Poya” karst as it is sometimes known is found about 20km to the north-east of Poya town by the RM5 dirt road. It is a compact area of about 18sq km and what it lacks in size it adequately makes up for in visual splendour both above and below ground. This splendour can first be seen at the Col de Boewe where several of the 16 towers, (Gillieson, p23, Harris), each some 80 to 100m high can be observed rearing upwards from the lush green forest. Every tower is a sculptor’s masterpiece with deep vertical flutings on the black faces and razor sharp pinnacles adorning the top. Several of the towers that can be reached have small caves at their base – *Grotte Contact* is 150m long and 57m deep, *Grotte P3* is also 150m in extent and an unrecorded shaft we spotted in tower 13 is at least 20m deep and 40m long. Between the towers there are often dolines with one, the Eden doline being almost 300m in diameter.

Exploration by the Australians and by several of the few local cavers has resulted in at least 11 known caves many of which are associated with the 3,400m long and 125m deep *Koumac Cave System*. Whilst this is an easy cave to explore and can be traversed comfortably within 3 hours it is a worthwhile trip just for the beautiful streamway and fine formations. Much of this lower streamway also contains good examples of cemented gravel banks. Cave Swiftlets and the occasional bat can be spotted in the small roof domes along this passage. There are currently four known entrances with access from the “Upper Chamber Entry” giving the 125m depth. Several of the smaller caves by the river have been used as burial sites in the past.

This area by the River Koumac - dry on our visit - is particularly impressive as the edge of the limestone is a continuous cliff up to 50m high. The limestone continues to the south of the river but to date no further caves have been recorded. In the north-west by the RPN7 road is the very obvious Roches Notre-Dame, a 90m high degraded tower whose western face houses four short but impressively large caves (survey) as well as several minor ones.

The majority of the region is covered in forest or dense scrub making exploration difficult unless close to one of the rough 4 x 4 tracks or along a river bed in dry weather. Even with a compass and GPS we became lost several times!

Because of this there may well be potential for further discoveries although nothing is likely to be found on the scale of the *Koumac Cave System* as this takes the only two major surface streams, the rivers Poulitier and Grand Forêt.



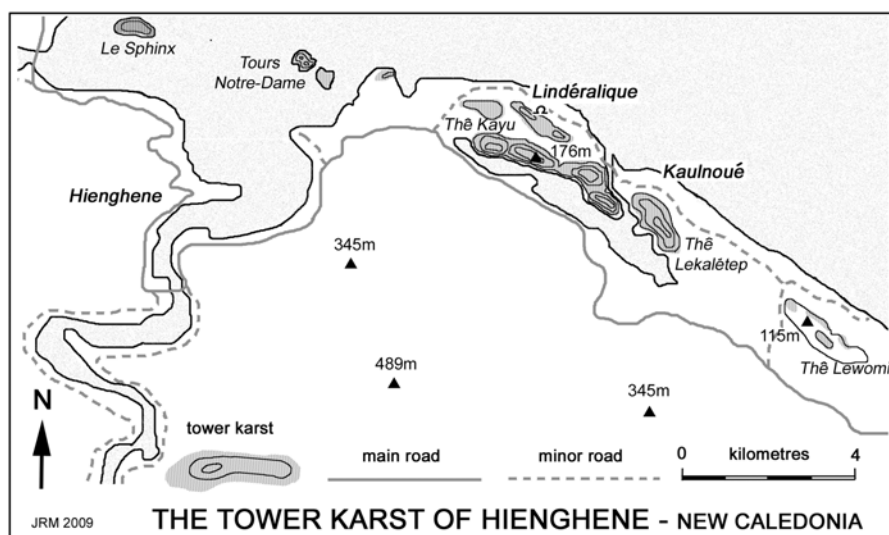
The underground highlight and probably the finest system in the country is the 3,900m long *Grotte D'Adio*.

This is normally entered by one of the two entrances close to the base of the Tours D'Adio. The short entrance series is relatively complex but quickly leads into a beautiful streamway. Here, we immediately spotted large eels, large crayfish, large spiders and bats (see note under “Logistics and Survival”). Various other insects were also noted. Upstream rapidly becomes 10m or more wide and 20m high with many old but still impressive formations in the first large chamber. Downstream is rather smaller but does exhibit fine erosion features and it is not long before “chest” deep water is met. Once this has been negotiated the passage develops into a highly sporting streamway before finally exiting into the forest after a 2km traverse (beware of then getting lost!). A forth and higher entrance is also found in the side of the Eden doline that joins the main streamway after a 25m and 40m shaft. This entry point gives a depth of 120m to the system.

The *Grotte D'Adio* has been gated and closed for "health reasons" for several years. We could not elicit from the local people what exactly these "health reasons" were but on our visit the gates had almost rusted away and caused us no hindrance.

The central Vallée des Roches d'Adio is mainly cultivated land used by the villagers for grazing and growing crops. This makes entry into the main karst area easier but the dense tangle of vegetation that is frequent around the tower bases has often prevented really detailed investigation. It is quite possible that there is potential for short caves through the limestone as well as shafts amongst the tower top pinnacles.

HIENGHENE



The spectacular tower karst of Hienghene on the east coast is really centralised around the small village of Lindéralique. Great ribs of limestone parallel the coast for approximately 12km between the island of Le Sphinx in the north and the forested hill of Thê Lewomi to the south. At no point is it more than 1km wide. Within this area there are 16 limestone towers 7 of which exceed 100m high (Gillieson, p45, Harris). These are almost vertically sided, sharply ribbed with karren and topped by jagged pinnacles.

Many of the towers rise directly from a lagoon or by the sea with the landward sides protruding from a colourful forest of palms, flowering shrubs and climbers. The area is easily accessible and has been well explored by the Australians amongst others but no extensive caves have been found.

The most notable is the *Grotte Lindéralique* itself which extends through one of the towers for 60m and includes a chamber roughly 30m across. Within this local concerts and meetings are held. The "front" entrance is 20m high whilst the rear "exit" is a lowly 4m. Other caves include the 160m long *Grotte Taphozous* again with a large chamber and the 130m long *H3* cave by the lagoon. Apart from the possibility of shafts on the top of the towers further potential is probably minimal.

MINOR REGIONS.

There are several lesser areas of karst and places where caves have been rumoured. Perhaps the most promising of these is the area to the north of *KAALA-GOMEN* (17km south-east of Koumac). We spent an afternoon here trying to reach some forested hills with tantalising limestone faces on them that we could see from the CR1 dirt road about 10km north of town. Unfortunately the road finished and divided into many minor paths with those that we explored terminating at isolated Kanak dwellings.

This area could possibly be a south-eastern extension of the *Koumac Cave* karst.

To the west of Poya there is a peninsular named *PRESQU'ÎLE DE PINDAI*. At the southern tip of this there are several small limestone pavement exposures and a cave is marked on the 1:50,000 maps. We again spent some time searching the area but apart from becoming totally lost in dense scrub we could find nothing. We assume that as the altitude is only a few metres above sea level anything here would either be a rock shelter or perhaps a cenote. About 10km east of Bourail caves have been mentioned in the *OUA-OUÉ* area, including one estimated as being 500m in length. Unfortunately we did not have time to check this out.

In the hills by the village of *NINDIAH* (just west of Houailou) several fluted limestone outcrops can be easily spotted and these were investigated by the 1975 Australian Expedition. Various minor finds were made with the longest being the two level and 100m long *N1 Cave*.

Amongst the rich red laterite soils of the *YATÉ* region in the very south-east several small caves are known the most notable of which is the 150m long *Grotte de Touaourou*. This small cave came to fame in February of 1994 when 21 persons out of a visiting party of 24 contracted histoplasmosis (Noël, M***).

***We are indebted to Dr Stephen A Craven for the detailed account.

ÎLE DES PINS.

Île des Pins is the archetypical tropical paradise. It is home to dazzling white beaches, blue sea, clear sky, exotic forest, romantic hideaways, welcoming people and a dozen or so caves. The island is a coralline masterpiece some 18km by 14km with a maximum elevation of 202m. Most caves are little more than shelters but three are worthy of a deviation. *Grotte de La Reine Hortense* in the central Touété area has a spectacular large entrance at the base of a cliff dripping with huge formations. This leads to a decorated chamber and a few hundred metres of passageway terminating in a syphon. *Grotte de La Troisième* in western Kéré is amongst dense vegetation with a steep scramble down to a flooded

chamber that can be explored by divers. *Grotte Ouatchia* in eastern Ouatchia is probably the most challenging with a narrow twisting streamway and fine formations. A small charge is levied by the nearby tribes for entry into the caves. Due to the small size of the island further cave discoveries are unlikely; however we did not find any literature containing good standard surveys. Access to this paradise is either by a twice weekly catamaran or 30 minute daily flight, both from Noumea.

LES ÎLES LOYAUTÉ.

This idyllic group of raised but low lying coralline islands lies about 100km to the east of La Grande Terre. Caves, dolines, depressions, pavements, cenotes and other karst features are much in evidence with several of the former extending to over a kilometre in length. The population is dominated by the indigenous Kanak people and therefore the atmosphere is more relaxed than on the mainland. Permission is usually needed before visiting caves or crossing land belonging to the various tribes. Definitely do not expect to get things done in a hurry! Apart from on Lifou no serious exploration or recorded surveying seems to have been done even though the potential for small to moderate finds would seem to be considerable. There are daily flights to all three main islands and a twice weekly boat service from Noumea. Accommodation is again best pre booked unless camping.

LIFOU.

Size - 55km long x 38km wide. Area coverage - 1,150sq km. Maximum elevation - 104m. Lifou is the largest island of the group and also has the greatest population (10,320 as at 2008). It is renowned for growing vanilla and for having spectacular cliff top views, beautiful beaches and a multitude of caves. These latter were intensively investigated by a French Expedition in 1995 (Lips, B). On this trip 21 caves were explored with a total surveyed length of 17,865m (including 861m of dived siphons). The longest cave, which also proved to be the most extensive in New Caledonia, is the 8,704m *La Grotte de Hnanawae* (Gaica district – see survey). The system is complex but does contain large chambers, large galleries and fine formations. Other notable caves are *Grotte d'Inegoj*, 1,710m (Losi district); *Grotte de Wanham*, 1,780m (Wetr district); *Grotte de Fetre-He*, 1,167m (Wetr district); and the show caves of *Grotte de Lenguoni*, 300m (Losi district) and *Grotte de Quanono*, 700m (Gaica district).

OUVÈA.

Size - 35km long x 6km wide. Area coverage - 132sq km. Maximum elevation - 32m. This is the most northerly island and is claimed by many to be one of the most beautiful islands in the Pacific. Rocky cliffs riddled with caves line the eastern coast whilst a stunning 25km long white beach faces west. None of the known caves are extensive but the cenote *Trou Bleu d'Anawa* near Wadrilla is particularly impressive. At -40m there is a flooded chamber of approximately 100m x 60m that includes many fine drowned formations.

MARÉ.

Size - 42km long x 32km wide. Area coverage - almost 1,000sq km. Maximum elevation - 130m. The southernmost island and the only one that shows sign of past volcanic activity (basalt). Much of Maré is surrounded by spectacular white cliffs that tumble dramatically into the equally dazzling sea. The plateau surface is covered in not too exciting scrub but there are again many interesting karst features. *Trou de Bone* (Medu district) is a 45m wide shaft that drops 40m into a chamber almost 100m across. The water is reported to be 12m deep. The nearby *Bone de Léproserie* is equally as impressive with a 25m diameter shaft dropping 50m to a chamber 140m in diameter filled with an estimated 350,000m³ of fresh water. The name of this cave refers to an old leper colony.

ROCK CLIMBING. We are no longer surprised at finding bolted routes on obscure crags in unusual countries and New Caledonia is no exception. We spotted 6 good looking single pitch routes on the cliffs by Koumac Cave; 8 routes on the impressive pinnacles by Adio caves; a number by Yaté in the south-east whilst botanising and then learnt of more on a 25m high cliff not far from Tontouta International airport. We could not find any guide but any future explorers could be advised to take their rock shoes as well!

LOGISTICS AND SURVIVAL.

From the U.K. there are no direct flights; the best route is normally via either Brisbane in Australia or Auckland in New Zealand. From the former it is a 2hr 30min flight eastwards and from the latter 3hrs north. As the islands are still under French influence there are virtually no entry formalities for British citizens. All the facilities expected in Europe are easily available except for hotel accommodation which we found to be in distinctly short supply. However camp sites and dormitory accommodation with local tribes is generally available and often very well situated. Food, whether of local or imported origin, is very expensive both in the local market and at the restaurant.

Vehicle hire is essential in order to explore the island and this together with fuel costs slightly above European rates. There are no trains and buses rarely go to the more interesting places. Taxis are only easy to find in the capital.

We never experienced any problems of access to any areas that we wished to visit although it is necessary to treat all tribal lands with respect. Here friendliness and the occasional small donation was all that was needed. The large nickel mines and cattle ranches which could be problematic never seemed to encroach on the limestone to any degree.

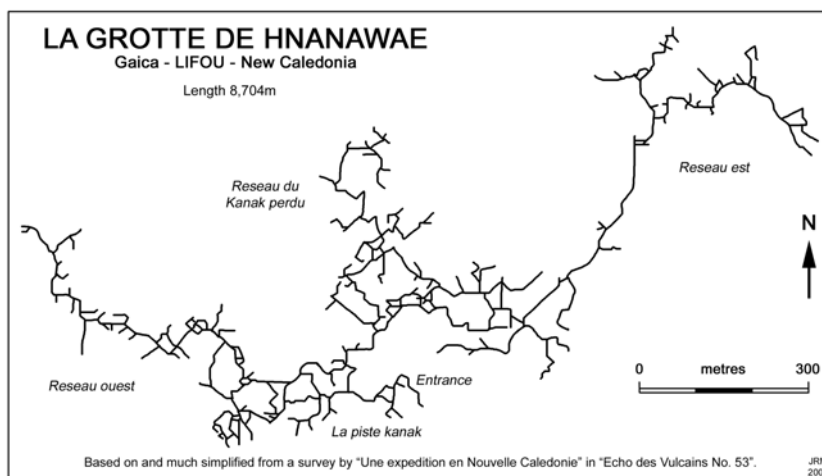
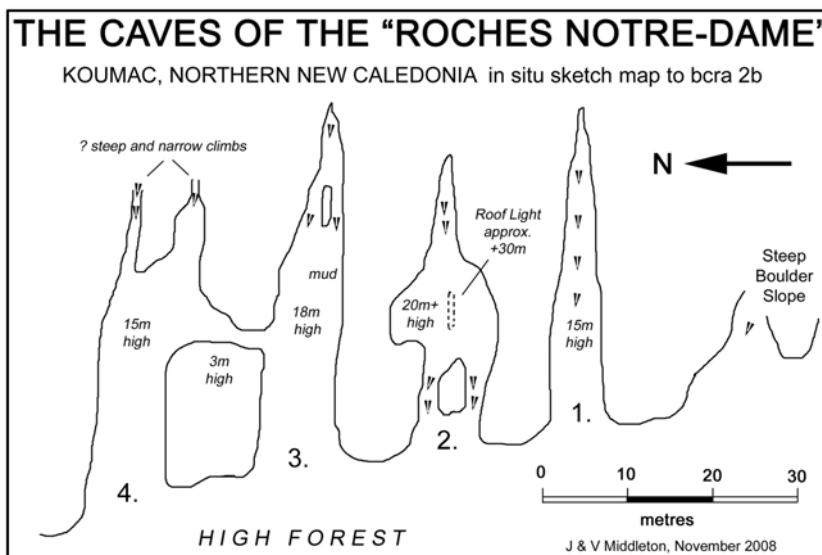
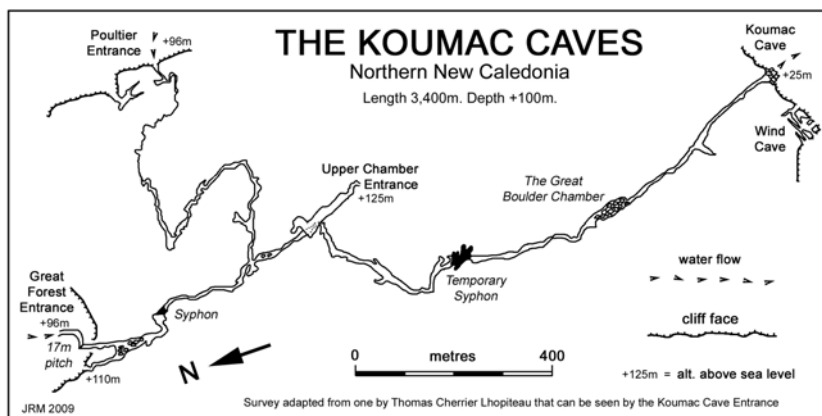
The islands have no dangerous animals other than the occasional scorpion or centipede. Diseases such as malaria have been eradicated but in the past few years isolated cases of dengue fever have occurred. Acute pulmonary histoplasmosis has also been reported from three separate caving regions involving 23 persons (Noël, M). Generally the main dangers would seem to be heat stroke, flash floods and becoming lost in the forests.

Apart from the references listed below the frequent "Tourist Information Offices" are exceptionally helpful and stock useful leaflets. Failing a Tourist Office then the municipalities local "Mairie" are again very obliging (so long as you speak French!). The excellent 1:200,000/50,000/25,000 IGN maps can be obtained quite easily from many local newsagents (or beforehand from The Map Shop, Upton on Severn or Stanfords, Long Acre, London).

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SURVEYS





First view of the Hienghene towers from the south



The Hienghene towers from the north. The island on the left is the Tours Notre-Dame.



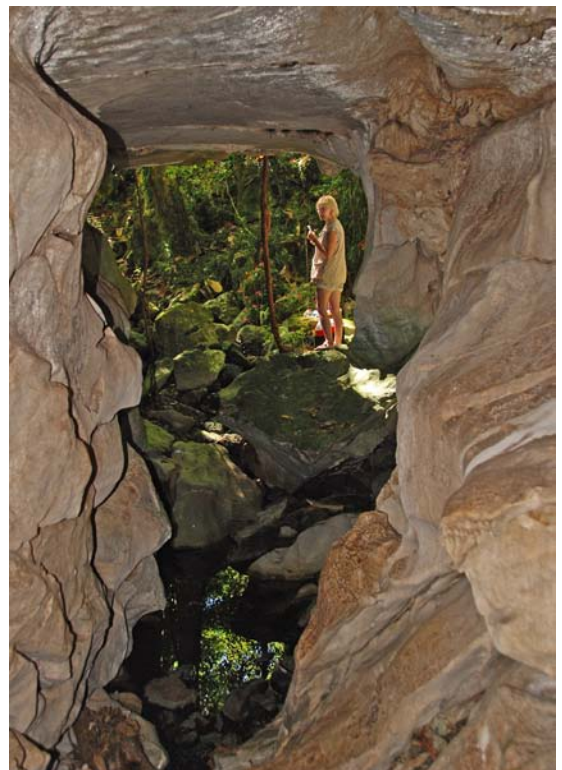
The Lindéralique tower and palms.



Towers in the Grotte D'Adio area



The Tour D'Adio



The main entrance to the Grotte D'Adio

BACKGROUND ON SOQOTRA



Since John & Valerie visited the Soqatra Archipelago much interest has been shown in this barely known location with a number of other groups considering or planning visits. It was satisfying upon receipt of a circular enquiring as to whether anyone had visited the caves on the island to be able to say that indeed our member had and an article was in hand for publication.

In the flurry of email exchanges this triggered more has come out about what appears to be a fascinating place well worth a visit if anyone else is looking for something genuinely different.

Its unique character makes Soqatra a UNESCO natural World Heritage site. It is something of a "lost world" having been separated from the rest of the world about six million years ago. It is located in the north west Indian Ocean near the Gulf of Aden, and appears as a prolongation of the Horn of Africa which is itself thought to be breaking away from the rest of Africa along the line of the rift valley.

One of the most biodiversity rich and distinct islands in the world, Socotra has been described as the "Galápagos of the Indian Ocean". The terrestrial nature sanctuaries, national parks and areas of special botanical interest encompass about 75% of the total land area. They protect all the major vegetation types, areas of high floral and faunal values, and important bird areas. The long geological isolation of the Soqatra archipelago and its fierce heat and drought have combined to create a unique and spectacular endemic flora which may, therefore, be vulnerable to introduced species such as goats and to climate change. Botanists rank the flora of Soqatra among the ten most endangered island flora in the world.

There are also marine nature sanctuaries encompassing the most important elements of marine biodiversity.

Soqatra remains, from a natural history viewpoint, one of the most fascinating places in the world. Its unique character is the result of this long period of isolation. As a result, many animals and plants that live today on Soqatra are found nowhere else on earth. The very high degree of endemism is what makes Socotra such an important place in terms of global wildlife conservation and it is believed that some of the plants and animals found on Soqatra are in fact ancient relics from the much larger land mass of Africa which have been preserved here as a result of the fact that the Haggahir or Haggheher massif has never been totally submerged.

The name Socotra, Soqotra or Suqotra is thought to be from the Sanskrit *dvipa sukhadhara* ("island of bliss") but another possible origin of the name is the Arabic "Suq" meaning "market" and "qotra" meaning "dripping frankincense".

The ancient frankincense route that went through to Jerusalem and to Europe, began on Soqatra, and the present town of Suq on the north coast near Hadiboh, was the port from which the frankincense (and myrrh and aloes) began its journey.

The islands became a British protectorate in 1886, and became an important strategic stop-over for British shipping in the area. It was an important air base for the British in World War two, and the remains of the main airfield can be seen inland from Suq. With the independence of Aden (South Yemen) from the British in 1969, the islands came under the southern government of the Democratic Republic of Yemen, and then after unification with the north in 1990, the island came under the governance of the new Republic of Yemen.

Personally having now seen both John's photographs and those in open domain on the internet I prefer the "Island of Bliss"

Many of the plants are strange-looking remnants of ancient floras which long ago disappeared from the African / Arabian mainland. Perhaps the most notable of these are the podagrics or swollen-stemmed trees.



Editor

MOROCCAN ANTI ATLAS

Somebody heard that the likes of Joe Brown, Chris Bonington et al had been spending their holidays in southern Morocco and climbing their socks off. They are considerably older even than we are, so if it works for them, it must be good enough for us. The original plan was for four of us to go there for a week's climbing in March, but the word got out and in the end sixteen members and guests enjoyed a superb trip to a fascinating and still relatively remote area.

We stayed in the local town of Tafraoute, about 100 miles SE of Agadir, at the Hotel les Amandiers. The town was dusty, dirty & busy. The hotel was cool, clean and comfortable, plus it served beer and wine, which of course had no bearing at all on the decision to stay there. It is the meeting place for climbers and there is a large new routes book behind the reception desk. We ate some meals in the hotel, relatively expensive at about £10 for dinner, and some in the town. Local restaurants were cheaper but it has to be said that a week is plenty long enough to get bored with tagines & couscous.

We had five cars so everyone was able to fit in pretty much what they wanted. One car was permanently allocated to the climbers (well it was our idea) and the others ranged far and wide, accessing splendid scrambling ridges, spectacular walking, deep gorges, pretty villages and historic buildings. The people were very friendly and seemed genuinely pleased to see us. Apart from a couple of rather intrusive carpet sellers we were never pressurised to buy things - it was all very relaxed.

THE CLIMBING

There are so many crags here it defies description. Without a bit of helpful guidance you could spend a week wandering about never making your mind up. Luckily Claude Davies has written a guidebook. This excellent publication gives directions to some of the better crags then just gives an indication of the lines of a few routes and the maximum difficulty to be expected. After that you're on your own. This means that every route is an adventure and when the going gets hard, the apprehension levels can get quite high.

The climbing is on quartzite, like Gogarth on Anglesey, generally hard and very solid but, like Gogarth, with occasional bands of scary stuff. Approaches and descents were memorable for the profusion of wild flowers, date palms and Argan trees. The cliffs are big, some of them very big, and everywhere you look there seem to be even bigger ones. The climbing is not always of star quality but the situations are superb and the whole mountaineering experience unforgettable. A classic example is the Tizgut gorge - like White Ghyll on steroids. The climbing is only average but the surroundings are awesome. Adrian and Tim had a rather dry mouthed descent involving a long traverse and a big abseil. Glynne and Neil ended up on the other side of the gorge after a long walk. The descents from some of these cliffs really need to be planned out ahead.

We climbed every day except Sunday when we joined Mick and Hilary, Sue and Adrian Dixon to ascend Jebel el Kest. Michael Smith joined us on Monday and Thursday. On the Monday we drove round to the north side of the Jebel where the crags rise up, tier upon tier, in even greater profusion than on the south side. There is just so much to do. If you want to make new routes, all you have to do is walk a bit further than everyone else and find yourself a new crag. We climbed on a roadside crag called Ksar Rock which looked about 150ft high but was nearer 500ft. Between us we climbed three severes, a VS and two HVS. On the top of the rock, as on many other tops that people visited, there was a cistern and odd kettles and glasses lying about. Clearly the locals are in the habit of walking up hills for recreation and a social chat.

Two climbs stand out above the rest. A huge crag above the village of Anergui, the starting off point for Jebel el Kest, contained a VS called Grandad's Groove. With a name like that, Adrian and Tim felt obliged to climb it. It started off with an overhang of what appeared to be stones stuck into mud and continued on better rock with minimal protection & belays for 800ft. Not brilliant climbing but a great line and a character building experience. Glynne and Neil climbed a parallel line called Naseby at HVS, which turned out to be on excellent rock & altogether a much better route. They didn't get nearly as frightened as we did though. On the last day, Glynne and Tim climbed an HVS called The White Tower. Very steep, direct and exposed, it was a fitting conclusion to a splendid week.

Climbers: Adrian Bridge, Tim Josephy, Neil Grant (G), Glynne Andrew (G)

Tim Josephy

JEBEL EL KEST

The venue for this Spring's Morocco meet was Tafraoute in the anti-Atlas mountains. It was a fascinating area to explore - geologically diverse with very varied landscape, culturally on the cusp of Westernisation in some places, but deeply traditional in others, with friendly people who liked to talk - especially to tell you which British climbing celebs they knew - and even the carpet touts weren't too persistent and took the hint eventually! Morocco at this time of year is full of splashes of colour. Wherever it is possible for a flowering plant to take root, it will do. The result is a patchwork of rich colour and, if you know your plants, botanical variety which changes completely with geology and altitude. The contrast with the pink quartzite of the Jebel-el-Kest range or the inverted sedimentary rocks nearer Izerbi is the contrast of patches of jewel colour against a stark sculptural background. And the sun shone. It was a wonderful trip and we were all privileged to be there.

Tafraoute itself is the Leeds of the region, although not much bigger than Ingleton, and more interesting than either unless you have a huge need for Harvey Nicks or Inglesport. The immediate environment is of red wind-carved granite that sits precariously in piles like a red Brimham Rocks. Jebel-el-Kest (2359m) is the highest peak in

the immediate vicinity of Tafraoute and, as such, had to be climbed. I think we pretty much all did it over the week - attacks were made on various days in various combinations. We decided that we would give it a go early in the week. "We" was Mick Borroff, Adrian Dixon, Sue Bertenshaw (guest) and me - Mick's wife, Hilary Tearle (also, obviously, guest). The approach to Jebel-el Kest is eased by the existence of a road to the last village of Anergui. "Road" is a generous term not to be confused with tarmac or two lanes or any such girly nonsense. This is a concreted track of single car width which snakes back and forth, up and down, eschewing passing places and gaining 600 metres of height from the valley floor but rewarding the intrepid with amazing views and a sense of wonder that the villagers could have been enterprising enough to put this road in at all.

There is a tiny car park in the village and we found that the climbing party of Tim Josephy, Adrian Bridge, Neil Grant and Glynne Andrew had beaten us to it. As we put our boots on, a Berber couple were walking up to their pastures accompanied by their very pretty young goat which was clearly a pet and used to attention, playing to the audience with skips and jumps and getting stroked on the head for reward. Mick, who had previously thought to exchange me for camels, was very much taken.

The start of the route took us up a valley between steep cliffs of pink quartzite to the first col. The valley lay in shade, mercifully, at that hour of the morning and we walked up the zig-zag path through meadows and endlessly varied flowers. The climbers had preceded us heading for the imaginatively named Crag A. However, as we dropped down the other side of the col, it did seem rather as though they were catching up with us and were way off route for Crag A. It transpired that they had abandoned the climb for the moment due to injury and had decided to join us on the walk instead. They went back to climb it later.

The route threaded its way along a cliff side above that rarest of things - water - before turning up the hillside beside a thin waterfall, then via rocky outcrops to a scrubby hillside that needed crossing to the next col. Route-finding is a challenge because although there are cairns and goat-paths, this isn't recreational landscape - the cairns and paths are there usually to mark territory and to facilitate the agricultural use of the land. So we made our varied way to the main col and eventually on to the rock band at the base of the "summit lump". There were two ways on - a walker's route (in the guide-book) and a scrambler's route (that wasn't). This, in my view, is where it pays not to have climbers in your party. They went AWOL and before I knew it, we were all committed to the scrambler's route. This is not my milieu and I usually emphasise that by liberal use of Anglo-Saxon. However, the name "Adrian Bridge" is now engraved on my heart for standing between me and the drops of at least 1000 feet (More like 10 feet! Ed.) so that, to my surprise, I did get up the scramble and emerge on the top alive. At some point in this I challenged these climbers to a swim in the hotel pool as a quid pro quo for the horror I was undergoing. Did they swim? I have to tell you, dear

reader, they didn't. (In fairness, the only person who thought the pool was warm was Albert and although I went in 3 times, it was an acquired taste. The Moroccans certainly thought we were mentally unsound for bothering.)

The top was furnished with shepherd's huts built against rock walls and a water cistern to collect rainwater. A group of local men who had come up for a day out were cooking lunch on a wood fire in a large tin pot. The day was hazier than we would have liked but we still had views of ridges of lower hills stretching away and Tafraoute lying dwarfed in the distance. We sat for ages in the sun, eating lunch, gazing and chatting, eventually making our way off down the walker's route via the secondary summit (to see if it was higher - it wasn't) and ultimately back to the village. That just left the drive back down that road....!

Hilary Tearle

TASGUENT AGADIR

Many of the party visited Tasguent agadir, one of the best preserved examples of a fortified granary in the Anti-Atlas, situated some 50km to the northeast of Tafraoute, near Tiguermine. The agadir is a 1,000-year-old tradition, which began when the southern Berber tribes were nomadic. Communal granaries ensured a supply of staple produce when crops failed or supplies ran low, and afforded security against theft. In times of peace, they also served as market places; in times of unrest, when tribal and clan conflicts might pitch one valley against another, they became bolt holes to which entire communities could take refuge.

Tasguent Agadir is stone built and set high on an isolated hill above the three villages it serves. The agadir has the external appearance of a fortress and is said to date back to the thirteenth century. It was built in three stages, as the surrounding villages prospered and expanded. The interior of each section is built around a central elongated courtyard. One is long and narrow, another deep and shaft-like, but all are open to the sky. Projecting slabs form steps to access the higher doorways of small store-rooms on six levels built into the fabric of the building - several hundred cells in total. Secured by locked wooden doors, some are patterned with traditional symbols to ward off the evil eye.

Cats, it seems, were kept to control mice; and of the agadir's tiers of cells, the middle ones were generally favoured: the lowest rows could be damp and the top ones likely to leak with the occupiers liable for repairs; and a hole in the ceiling could funnel grain through a neighbour's floor.

In its heyday, the agadir was protected by five guards. Today, the building is still watched over by a guardian, but when he climbs onto the roof, he no longer scans the hills and valleys for brigands or marauding tribesmen, just tourists, yet he still lives in a room deep within its walls, apparently reliant on water brought up by the villagers.

We also visited Tizourgane Kasbah, an ancient fortified village, being renovated by its owners as a guest house. We

enjoyed mint tea and home-made almond biscuits on the roof terrace with its spectacular view towards the distant north side of the Jebel el Kest range.

Mick Borroff

THE SCRAMBLING

For some climbing was their intention. For others it was walking. But most got involved with the 'third way' - scrambling - and were well rewarded for their efforts. Many of my memories of scrambling in the UK involve long rough approaches to scrappy routes, wet weather and greasy rock. Taфраoute scrambling was nothing like that - sustained scrambling with excellent friction on generally sound rock nicely warmed by the sun! Here are couple of the longer routes.

Above Tizi ou-Manouz

Driving south past the granite tor of Napoleon's Hat and the turn off for Belgian artist Jean Veran's painted rocks, the road climbs to a col above Tizi ou-Manouz and a hamlet with a small school decorated with Disney comic characters (~1220m). Parking there we crossed the road and the streambed, picked our way through 100m of terraced fields and we were on the sun-kissed coarse-grained granite. This ridge ran east then curved north to a col below the higher top of Tasselt (1971m). The distinct ridge was initially narrow and rising then horizontal with gendarmes before broadening towards the col before Tasselt. The rock was generally sound and despite the guidebooks warnings of scorpions in cracks, we found none.

Scrambling can be slow progress but we soon made the first top which some chose to approach via an open corner topped by a couple of metres of ancient and precarious dry-stone retaining wall. In a nearby rift was a cistern. There was much conjecture over who stayed here, when and why. It was an ideal lookout for the plains to the south and a low line of hills bordering the Sahara.

The crest line was steep enough in places to challenge everyone, but all difficulties could be turned. We each found our own routes and kept regrouping to appreciate the views. A lunch stop was declared at the cairn marking the end of the ridge. We were diverted first by a shepherd's hut below the summit obviously used for tea-making by guided groups and then by repeated courting displays by a pair of what were almost certainly Barbary Falcons. In a sheltered spot out of the cold wind we were warm and in danger of sun burn.

From here on another day some ascended and descended Tasselt via a gully penetrating the southern ramparts, but the first group turned back west and descended the parched valley north of the ridge back to the cars. If we'd had the energy we could have continued up the other side of the col and tackled the ridge there which eventually merged into Adrar ou-Oumerreksou (2154m).

East of Tizert

Towards the head of the Ameln Valley just north of Taфраoute lies the agricultural village of Tizert below a gorge

and the quartzite cliffs prosaically named T,Y and U. Parking in the quiet village, we assumed everyone must be at the Wednesday souk in Taфраoute. Wandering up past traditional houses we passed the village water supply at the foot of the ridge. Allegedly Joe Brown was one of the first Europeans to traverse the ridge.

The scrambling soon lived up to its Claude Davis grade of 'Interesting Moderate' and there were bold moves up steep slabs and pinnacles - even a bit of back and footing through an eye to traverse round a bulging wall. Often the descents from pinnacles were as demanding as their ascents. Routes off the main crest sometimes had the additional hazard of thorny vegetation. Those who chose to bypass some difficulties on the right (the left invariably being steep or overhanging) had a harder time of it than those on the crest. Their attempts at a high traverse were repeatedly thwarted by gullies and buttresses.

Again, high on the ridge were cisterns and walling indicating occupation and terraces high up the slopes. Those flower filled terraces gave a workable line of descent from the large top at the far end of the ridge gently descending back to the village. An excellent short day.

Returning to the car we were invited by two girls to visit the women's agricultural cooperative. The chatty lasses used French and English to put us right on political, couture and cultural matters as they escorted us across the orchards to a modern building. This housed a small office, a meeting room and in a kitchen-sized room, an oil extraction press, filtration and bottling facility. They demonstrated its use with the help of a few women then sold us argan oil for culinary use and soaps and creams made from it. The oil is made from the goats' undigested pits from the berries of thorny argan trees and makes a nutty-flavoured salad dressing.

The whole area offers ample opportunities for scrambling. The above are just two examples giving hours of sustained scrambling. The 'walks' up Jebel el Kest (2359m) from Anergui or Tagdicht and up Adrar Mkorn (2340m) from Ayerhd both gave plenty of scrambling. One party starting from Anergui completed a direct scramble to the top of the Jebel from the col to the south; others mixed scrambling with the tourist path.

Other Snippets

The Tachelhit Berbers in the area mark on some roadside rocks, signs or buildings. This is aza, the distinctive final letter of their alphabet. It is symbolic at a personal level of freedom and the Berber deity. In red, representing the essence of life and resistance, it has political connotations of their independence and proud heritage. Occasionally we saw which I'm told stands for their country Imazghen as it is rendered in the Tamazight dialect.

Within a kilometre or so of the hotel was the village of Tazka with a rough pasture beyond the mosque where lay a fallen granite rock. On the smooth rock face is a 2m tall petroglyph of a gazelle supposedly of Neolithic origins. Above it stands another similar one on a vertical rock face

but this is perhaps modern. Also in Tazka is a traditional Berber house open to visitors with a simple guided tour. Many of its rural artifacts were practically identical to those seen in Yorkshire farm heritage museums. Outside young lads dared one another to trigger a rusty spring rat trap with their fingers, while girls sat watching. Adolescent lads played football but were happy to break off and talk when approached. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

Michael Smith

Eight team members, following a recommendation in the Cicerone guide, drove approximately 30 Km south from Tafroute on the way to Izerbi to find a ridge which directly overlooks a very small village at a col. "The ridge offers a very enjoyable scramble to a summit with spectacular views to the south and to the Sahara Desert." It provided almost continuous scrambling to the summit at a range of levels and angles from easy to challenging.

The way was led by Duncan Mackay, Michael Smith and Philip Dover taking a direct line whilst others sometimes followed an easier route. It provided an opportunity for Howard Humphries to give much appreciated guidance to Sarah and Paul Dover on some of the more difficult pitches. Meanwhile, Albert Chapman took a low level route and recorded the teams climb on his video. Alan Linford kept his usual considerate eye open for any members who got behind. After lunch on the summit and a debate as to the best way down we returned to a col below the summit which had a good line of cairns across the ridge and proved to be the start of an easy descent. Sadly visibility of the Sahara from the summit was obscured by haze. All agreed that the ridge provided a classic scramble.

Paul Dover

PHOTOS

Right - Napoleon's hat, Tizourgane Kasbah, Ledge traverse on Jebel el Kest and Adrian Dixon climbing Jebel el Kest and scrambling.

Left - climbers on White Tower

ATTENDING

- Adrian Bridge (President)
- Tim Josephy
- Neil Grant (G)
- Glynne Andrews (G)
- Mick Borroff
- Hilary Tearle (G)
- Alan Linford
- Michael Smith
- Sue Bertenshaw (G)
- Albert Chapman
- Howard Humphries
- Duncan Mackay
- Sarah Mardon (G)
- Adrian Dixon
- Paul Dover
- Phil Dover



UK MEETS REPORT

Lowstern 50th Anniversary Meet 12-14th December 2008

Members celebrated in style the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Lowstern Hut, Forty attending the five course dinner on Saturday.

Unfortunately the weather did not rise to the occasion, though the strong winds late on Friday evening added drama.; the wind force being strong enough to uproot a well secured marquee, temporarily place it perilously over a Land Rover and finally wrap the canvas and frame round a tree 20 yards away.

Quick action by the President got the owner of the Land Rover back from the pub to avoid damage to his vehicle, but that still left a member with the job of explaining to his son-in-law the loss of his marquee.

The wet weather did not deter members who went out on the hills and into caves although a few enjoyed the alternative of the Climbing Wall at Ingleton on Sunday morning.



The President toasted and thanked the two 'chefs' for their catering and named the twelve at the dinner who were members in 1958. John Lovett spoke of the events in and around 1958, the choice of the premises, their renovation and the opening.

A text in the dinner menu quoted parts on an article by Cliff Downham about the opening of Lowstern on November 16th 1958, extracts from which show some unchanging characteristics of the YRC.

'The idea of a second YRC Hut developed out of discussions amongst members about the establishment of a suitable memorial to Crosby Fox....'(Regard for past members)

'Not until after a fortifying meal did our Clapham member recall the old and derelict hut known as The Golf House at Clapham....'(The importance of communal catering)

'On the Hut itself opinion was sharply divided...'(Differences of opinion between independent minds)

'All the work went with a tremendous swing and great enthusiasm; super human efforts succeeded in making the Hut ready '(The willingness of members to contribute and the camaraderie that grows from working together)

At the end of his article Cliff Downham made the apposite comment, as relevant now as it was in 1958....' There is no doubt that the Hut, this building of great character, now thoroughly equipped and luxuriously comfortable, will prove a great acquisition for the Club'

Attending; The President, Adrian Bridge

1958 members;
John Lovett & Richard Kirby(Meet Leaders),
George Spenceley , Arthur Salmon, Bill Lofthouse,
Gordon Humphreys, Alan Brown, Derek Smithson,
Albert Chapman, Richard Gowing, Alan Linford,
Frank Wilkinson, John Varney.

Other Members; Mike Godden, Michael Smith, Roger Dix,
Paul Dover, John Jenkin, Dave Martindale, David Hick,
Iain Gilmour, Tim Josephy, Ian Crowther, Rob Ibberson,
Ken Aldred, John Brown, Peter Green, Mick Borroff,
Robert Crowther, Derek Bush, Barrie Wood, John Farrer,
Alister Renton, David Handley , Harry Robinson,
Harvey Lomas.

Richard Smith(PM), Alex Wood (G)

Low Hall Garth, Little Langdale 9-11 January

A reduced number of members gathered at Low Hall Garth after 12 cancellations_ some at very late notice. on the Friday. Robert and John had arrived on Thursday to prepare for the meet. Paul Dover and John Sterland arrived at midday and had a walk round Blea Tarn. Richard Josephy and Phil Dover arrived in the afternoon and went over Lingmoor Fell.

Saturday was frosty and windy with a lot of water ice on the paths and hoar frost and erglas higher up. with a cloud base of about 400 metres. The 2 Dovers headed for Grey Friars and traversed to Wetherlam passing the remains of the Halifax bomber with its wreaths on Great Carrs. Ian Crowther did a 20 mile bike ride. only falling off twice on the ice! John Sterling had a sensible low level walk to Skelwith Bridge and back. Five members headed for Crinkle Craggs from Wrynose Pass finding it very icy. Derek Bush, Barrie Wood and Richard Josephy returned by the same route. Mike Smith and John Varney continued. The Bad Step was covered in ice and so necessitated crawling below the chockstone and they continued to the Three Tarns and down the Band.

Unfortunately John slipped on the frozen turf about 300 metres above the fell wall breaking his leg. Mike went to Stool End Farm to call out the Ambleside Rescue Team to

carry him off the hill and he was taken to Lancaster Hospital to be treated.

Robert Crowther and John Jenkin had a local walk between doing breakfast and preparing for dinner. Harvey Lomas arrived in the afternoon and had a walk to Tilberthwaite.

The two Humphreys arrived to carry out more work on the barn and stayed for dinner and Albert Chapman called in the afternoon.

In the evening it warmed up and started to rain heavily and it was still raining Sunday morning and very windy. Mike Smith followed the river down to Skelwith Bridge and the Dovers with John Sterland drove to Coniston for a walk in the trees to Tarn Hows and round it.

Many thanks to Robert and John for their work in the kitchen and organisation of the meet.

PD

Attending

Derek Bush	Ian Crowther	Robert Crowther
Paul Dover	Philip Dover	Gordon Humphreys
Howard Humphreys	John Jenkin	Harvey Lomas
Mike Smith	John Sterland	Richard Josephy
John Varney	Barrie Wood	

North Ballachulish

February 26 – March 1

For some many years YRC Scottish meets in February have suffered from poor weather for winter hill walking and climbing. The picture above of Buchaille Etive Mor from the Devil's Staircase shows that this year was no exception.



Despite this the 2009 February meet proved so popular that the Alec McIntyre hut at North Ballachulish was soon fully booked and overspill accommodation was required in a bunk house a short distance away at Inchree – “a superior bunk house with its own bar and providing a simple breakfast”.

True to form the February weather prospect offered little better than a chance to test out the effectiveness of water-proofs. Conversation in the hut over tea and cake as the party assembled on Thursday evening suggested that many might be looking for an indoor alternative in bars with televisions where they could watch the rugby, football and cricket. In the event, however, true Yorkshire spirit saw everybody out on the hills although one or two did head home rather earlier than anticipated.

On Friday David Hick and John Brown had a wet and windy walk up the ridge to Sgorr Dhonuill and Sgorr Dheard. On Saturday they visited Coire Gabhail, the lost or hidden valley where the MacDonalds of Glen Coe hid their rustled cattle, a very wet but intensely dramatic and scenic walk. Then went to Fort William and drove to the end of Glen Nevis. As the weather was better on Sunday an early start gave time for an ascent from the Glen Coe ski car park to the snowy top of Meall a' Bhuiridh before the drive home.

Richard Kirby, Albert Chapman, David Handley, Roger & Stuart Dix and John Lovett walked the West Highland Way eastwards from Lochleven on Friday then over a col to the west of Mam na Guallainn and descended to the road to North Ballachulish. On Saturday four members in Ardgour walked up valley of Feath Rabicidh, over a col into Glen Gourand returned along the Glen to the coast.



Loch Leven on the route to the dam

Derek Bush and Barrie Wood went to climb Geal Charn and Creag Pitridh from Moy on Friday. After a longish walk in and having got to approx 2500' it started to pour down so they abandoned the project. On Saturday Derek and Barrie were in the same area and walked from Corriechoille in Glen Spean up the Lairig Leachach to a small bothy and climbed Stob Ban an isolated Munro at the head of the Grey Corries. Derek commented “*On the way up we met a mixed party from the Ochils M.C. Very few had ice axes or even sticks which we thought surprising considering the sort of conditions they may have encountered. The bothy was in good condition and there was a party of three staying in it on Saturday night although there was no wood for the*

stove! We saw one solitary ptarmigan on Stob Ban plus a buzzard lower down in the woods."

Derek Smithson noted that he, Michael Smith and David Large arrived in Ballachulish on the Wednesday evening whereas the rest of the club were not due until the Thursday. Derek said *"This did us little good because the weather on Thursday was fairly consistent driving rain. We drove to Mamore Lodge and walked east along the fairly level track until Michael and David branched left with the aim of doing tops from west to east while I continued along the track and took the path towards Scurr Mor Eide. A swollen stream stopped me and I wandered about looking at places with past memories and then turned back. When I stopped to rest and eat my two erstwhile companions appeared so instead of meeting at the Ice Factory cafe we went there together. The facilities for climbing both ice and wall were impressive - to watch."* Michael and David had experienced damp windy weather up from Mamore Lodge onto the Mamores ridge over a snowy corniced top and along a ridge until the prospect of turning into the wind made them 'chicken out' and descend steep grassy snow covered slopes between rocky outcrops to the track and back to meet up with Derek.

Friday was wet and windy so Derek joined up with Alan Linfoord in avoiding the weather. They crossed the Corran Ferry and went to inspect the lochans in the woods on the other side at An Amus then past Ardgour Lodge where they raised a hat to David Smith who named his house after this spot. *"We did not have a map, but received detailed complex advice from a local resident walking his dog. We met him twice as we wandered about admiring the scenery and deploring the areas where the trees had been felled. In spring it would be better with more wild life."*

Michael Smith, David Large and Aaron Oaks also crossed the Corran Ferry to Ardgour and up Garbh Bheinn in wet and windy conditions into the main corrie and failed to find the start of Pinnacle Ridge so used the normal route via the col to the summit and back down to the col and dropped off the back of the peak on steep boggy grassy terrain. By now Michael was starting to perceive a pattern to his walks on this meet.

Following their success at avoiding the weather Derek and Alan hitched a lift to Fort William on Saturday and inspected the local canal system at Neptune's Ladder then to Corpach and part of the Great Glen Walk. At the entry to the canal was a sign board advising that the canal would take them many places including 'North Sea - straight on'. *"We had lunch at The Fort and let Alan have his first walk along Fort William High Street. Alan spotted all sorts of birds and we kept reasonably dry."*

Meanwhile Michael and David went up into Corrie Adair on Creag Meagaidh to see the bottom 200ft of several climbs, slither up wet snow to The Window and over the two Munros (Stob Poite Coire Ardair and Carn Liath) to the right with some sunny spells, the odd wintry shower and steady strong wind from behind (well planned). Descended

on a rough path through stunted trees back to the farm in the valley seeing a golden eagle as we reach the buildings.

Aaron had headed off to the Mamores where he topped the Munros Am Bodach, Stob Choire a' Chairn, An Gearanach and Na Gruagaichean.

On Sunday Michael, David and Derek drove home but stopped to enjoy some sunshine on Ben Lawers and Beinn Ghlas. Derek commented *"I let Michael and David bag the summit whilst I enjoyed the scenery at a more reasonable pace."* Michael noted *"From the visitors' centre in 90 minutes with good views and a wintry shower. Lots of people for the first time this meet. Made haste home."*

Tony Dunford and Ken Roberts (G) took a preliminary look at the East ridge of Sgorr Bhan on Wednesday. On Thursday they were joined by Mervin Cramer (G) for the two Munros of Beinn a Bheithir. These were successfully topped in continuous rain and cloud. The only good views of / from them being obtained occasionally from the windows of the Alec McIntyre hut! Tony reported there is a good path most of the way up Gleann a Chaolais, but the return, from the col to the west, is vague when it enters the forest. On Monday Tony and Ken had a shorter and dryer day climbing Meall Chuaich near Dalwhinnie. *"It was enjoyable meeting old caving friend Harvey Lomas after 40 years!"*

Mick Borroff and Adrian Dixon noted that the forecast offered a prospect of better weather to the East so stopped off near Dalwhinnie on Thursday morning and traversed the featureless grassy tops of A'Bhuidheanach and Carn na Caim in cold, damp, low cloud; Mick's GPS came in useful for locating the second 'summit' which was little more than a small cairn and the remnant of a metal fence post. Mick celebrated reaching the halfway point in his Munro list with a quick stop at NevisSport for hot chocolate and cake.

Mick, Adrian and Tim Josephy went East again on Friday in search of better weather but only found more cold, damp, misty conditions and another featureless grassy top (Carn Liath) which was so indistinct that they walked well past it before falling ground and a GPS check indicated it was time to turn down towards Loch Laggan and squelch through sodden ground back to the car. More hot chocolate, coffee and cake at NevisSport.

Mervin Cramer (G) joined Mick, Tim and Adrian on Saturday for a visit to the Mamores that offered the opportunity of climbing proper peaks although still in cold, damp and misty conditions. Underfoot the snow was disappearing fast although there were icy patches to catch out the unwary (the sodden grass proved to be a more common downfall). Sgurr Eilde Mor and Binnein Beag were added to Mick's Munro list; Tim had a delayed start due to a boot problem (he'd left them in the hut) but returned to summit Sgurr Eilde Mor and then transport the team to Kinlochleven's Ice Factory for hot drinks.

Deluded by the guidebook - 'One of the easiest Munros, Carn a' Chlamain makes a good afternoon walk from the Forest Lodge in Glen Tilt.' - Mick and Adrian headed home

via Blair Atholl. The guidebook doesn't record that the road to the Forest Lodge was closed to traffic in 1996! The 1½ hour walk along Glen Tilt might be enjoyable once but we could have managed quite happily without the return walk (mountain bikes would have made life a lot easier). At least the summit was a distinct and snow capped peak above the fell.

Throughout the meet there was always a plentiful supply of hot tea and wedges of cake available to revive wet and cold souls returning to the hut and in the evenings the catering was excellent and plentiful with David Hick doing the hard work at the main hut and Alan Linford looking after the overspill. Derek Smithson commented *"Each of the evenings, after being well fed by Alan or having eaten up Michael's left-over expedition food, we went to visit the rest of the members on the meet in their inferior accommodation."*

Attending:

At Alec McIntyre hut: David Hick, Richard Kirby, Tony Dunford, Ken Roberts (G), John Brown, Roger Dix, Stuart Dix, Mervin Cramer (G), Derek Bush, Barrie Wood, John Lovett, Albert Chapman, David Hanley, Tim Josephy, Mick Borroff, Adrian Dixon, John Jaggard, Harvey Lomas.

At Inchree: Alan Linford, Aaron Oakes, Michael Smith, Derek Smithson, Laurie Partington, David Large.

Bryn Brethynau, Pont Cyfyng, Capel Curig, 13th- 15th March 2009

This nice little hut up a steep and stony track (about 200 yards walk) is one of two belonging to The North London Mountaineering Club and although less luxurious than the one reserved for the N.L.M.C. members is nevertheless well enough fitted out and quite adequately furnished and equipped. The bunks are 'mattrezenlager' style sleeping platforms, all normal services are provided and the overnight fees quite modest.

The main attendees arrive at varying times during the Friday. The first arrivals at around lunchtime occupied their afternoon with a mainly woodland walk in that area south of the AS skirting the northern flanks of Moel Siabod in overcast but dry weather.

Returning to the hut they were to find most of the remaining members now present and most of the party ate at the nearby Tyn-y-Coed Hotel.

Saturday dawned showing quite decent promise with plans afoot for various day expeditions.

Three more active members drove to Beddgelert and completed a 'round' of Moel Lefn, Moel yr Ogor (taking in Dwain Glyndwr's cave), Moel Hebog, Moel Ddu, Aberglaslyn, Nantmor & back to Beddgelert. A very good

day indeed. Another adventurous pair took in Carnedd y Filiast, Mynydd Perfedd, Foel Goch & Y Garn with a descent to Ogwen beside the Devil's Kitchen. Older members ventured onto Tryfan, Moel Siabod and Craig Wen with varying degrees of success, but a good day was had by all.

Meet organizer Chris Hilton was somewhat 'hors de combat' as a result of relatively recent medical treatment to his knee, so had to restrict himself to a valley walk, a shopping expedition and providing us all with a super evening meal and generous breakfasts, for all of which the President offered our grateful thanks.

Sunday morning brought a lovely day and everybody left the hut reasonably early to scatter themselves around Snowdonia and, in the case of one group, went to view the progress of the now almost completed narrow gauge Welsh Highland Railway restoration project. Running all the way from Caernarfon to Porthmadoc Harbour Station, where it joins its sister Festiniog Railway this is a wonderful effort which will undoubtedly be useful to many a mountain goer; and should be opened later this year.

In attendance:

President Adrian Bridge, Derek Barker (G), Mick Borroff, Alan Clare, Derek Clayton, Ian Crowther, Chris Hilton, John Jenkin, Richard Josephy, Tim Josephy (day visit), Alan Kay, Tom O'May & Derek Smithson,

Llangollen

Ladies Weekend 23 - 25 April 2009



Thirty-two assembled to dine at the White Waters Hotel overlooking the River Dee at Llangollen, all full of cheer and pleased with a day or two spent in various activities. We were not so cheerful setting off that morning given the steady rain. However, by the time we had passed Horseshoe Falls, the City of Truro (first loco to do a ton) and the taxidermists, the weather was improving. Conversation flows easily on these walks and we soon covered the towpath and fields to Valle Crucis Abbey ruins. A mile further north we lost the President who ran off to a BMC AGM in Snowdonia and made it back for dinner.

Unforgiving roads took us north to World's End where faced by a rock wall we sensibly turned tail and took the Offa's Dyke path back to Castle Dinas Bran. On that stretch we had views of the Arrans and a short hail shower.

We didn't rush so by the time we were back in Llangollen and some had relaxed in the 'Roman' bath house and changed it was time for pre-dinner drinks. There we caught up with others' days spent along the canal, at Chirk Castle, sorting out accommodation in Barmouth and the rest.

The meal restored energy levels and Sunday saw small groups spread all over the area. Some extended the weekend with visits to Anglesey, HMS Pinafore or the festival of steam.

Many thanks go to Roger for organising this meet and prompting us to visit a new area.

Attending:

Adrian Bridge, President
Dennis Armstrong, Joan Armstrong
Ian Crowther, Dorothy Crowther
Roger Dix, Gwen Dix
Paul Dover, Anne Dover
Mike Godden, Marcia Godden
Richard Gowing, Elizabeth Gowing
John Hemingway, Janet Hemingway
Gordon Humphreys, Fiona Humphreys
Tim Josephy, Elaine Josephy
Ian Laing, Una Laing
Alan Linford, Angie Linford
John Schofield, Pat Schofield
Elspeth Smith, Michael Smith
Helen Smith
George Spencely, Sylvie Nichols
Bill Todd, Juliet Todd

Cairngorms 14th – 17th May

The weather forecast for the week end was bad. Wind speed on the tops for Saturday was 35 mph gusting to 50. (Friday had been worse) Widespread overnight rain will continue into the day. Cloud base 400-700 metres. Temperature 2c with a chill factor, directly into the wind of -11 celsius. You have got the picture now read on.

The drive up on Thursday afternoon had been glorious, particularly north of Glasgow. Northern Scotland had been bathed in sunshine all week. Three of us ended the day walking in the sand on the shores of Loch Morlich with the snow riven gullies of Cairngorm as a background. Magic.

Mill Cottage where the meet was based is owned by The Mountaineering Council of Scotland. It is an excellent site at the head of Glen Feshie, sleeping fourteen but with ample camping space. It would make an excellent venue for a Scottish winter meet.

On Thursday evening after a meal in Aviemore which by Scottish standards was passable we were pleased to find John and Janet Hemingway at the cottage paying us a short visit as they were staying with their daughter and family at nearby Boat of Garten.

By Friday morning the weather had changed completely but we had not come here to lounge around the hut Tony Dunford, his guest Ken Roberts and one of our prospective members Mervyn Cramer went round and climbed Cairngorm but they were put off going further because of the high winds and conditions under foot. Derek Smithson had a more sensible walk to Loch Insh.

The largest party comprising the President plus Josephy, Welch, Dover(P), Collins, Wood and Bush went down Glen Feshie with a view to bagging two Munros, Mullach Clach a Bhlair and Sgor Gaoith. How innocent we were! We started walking from Achlean but in true YRC fashion the fast party was away (you can all guess who) and wished to do their own thing so the four more sensible slower members carried on along the track recommended in the Munro book. This was a long Landrover track which took us almost to the summit plateau. We were sheltering having lunch when that description turned into reality Down below was trundling up a Landrover! At first we thought it was an estate worker looking for wild life but much to our amazement it was packed with six to eight occupants who all waved frantically as they passed. It was hard to decide which party was the daftest as there was clearly nothing to see on the top for either of us. When we did hit the plateau all hell let loose. Still on a track we had perhaps a kilometre to walk in thick mist with the wind blowing us sideways before we turned off for 300 yards across the tundra to a small cairn. Once there we traced our steps back to the main track and to our amazement came across the same Landrover wandering across the several paths which crisscross the top. I wonder how much they paid for the privilege although when they saw how much we were being blown about I am sure they thought it was worth it. We rapidly sought the protection of the track below the plateau and to round the day off we made a small ascent of a Corbett which would have made an excellent viewpoint in different conditions.

The walk back to the car along the river bank made a very pleasant end to the day. We met an elderly couple who were doing a west to east challenge walk. They had to be in Montrose by the following Thursday. They were hoping to stay that evening in a bothy further down the glen. Perhaps some of us might take it up when we get a bit older. Back at the cottage the fast party had returned having also just done our top, approaching and returning on a route which did not cross the one we took. It says something about the conditions that they also had abandoned the second Munro.

Saturday was supposed to be the *raison d'être* for the whole week end, the round of the Cairngorm 4000 ft mountains. Our three intrepid members i.e. the President, Tim and Nick were away by 4.00am picked up a guest in Aviemore managed to get up Braeriach with some difficulty because of high winds and bad snow conditions and found it prudent to leave the project for another day

The 'slower party' went back down the glen to complete the munro Sgor Gaoith which they had missed out on the previous day. The weather was slightly better than Friday but we had to be careful with our route finding from the first top Carn Ban Mor to the summit. A feature of the summit was that it was perfectly calm. We had a lunch stop there but as soon as we dropped a hundred feet or so the wind was at us again. Mick and Mervyn who had started with us soon left us behind and then went on to Mullach Clach a Bhlair going even further on to do an extra top and then finding an exciting track zigzagging down through

some cliffs to the valley floor. They were quite late back. On our way down quite close to the valley floor we met a group of bird watchers hoping to get high enough to see ptarmigan. We told them we had seen several pairs and they got quite excited by the prospect. It turned out they all came from East Lancashire - Burnley, Accrington, and Oswaldtwistle would you believe. Our late friend David would have got quite excited. Whether they got high enough to see them we will never know.

Meanwhile further to the west Tony Dunford and his guest Ken Roberts did a splendid round of the three munros above Newtonmore, Carn Dearg, A'Chailleach and Carn Sgulain. An excellent effort especially considering Ken is due to go in for an operation on his knee in a few weeks time.

On Saturday evening we were joined by Adrian's friend Vince Greenaway and his partner Natalie for dinner. Natalie had provided the puddings for the dinner plus a copious supply of cake. Our thanks to her.

On Sunday although most of us made our way south the meet still went on. Paul and Mick did a round of Ben Macdui, Cairn Lochan and Cairn Gorm from the Coire Cas car park. Tim, Adrian and Nick climbed Cairngorm via the Fingers Ridge between Corrie Sneachda and Corrie Lochain.

Both parties said it was very cold with an icy wind but excellent sunshine.

Barrie and the writer went to Loch Insh bird watching and also had a look at the ruins of Ruthven Barracks which was quite interesting. In addition to the ptarmigan we also saw Goosanders, Lapwings, three pairs of Snipe, Red Grouse, Swallows and various other small moorland birds which the writer has not a clue about!

It was also nice to see red squirrels and Derek Smithson was fortunate to see a baby Reindeer being brought down by a park ranger followed by its mother.

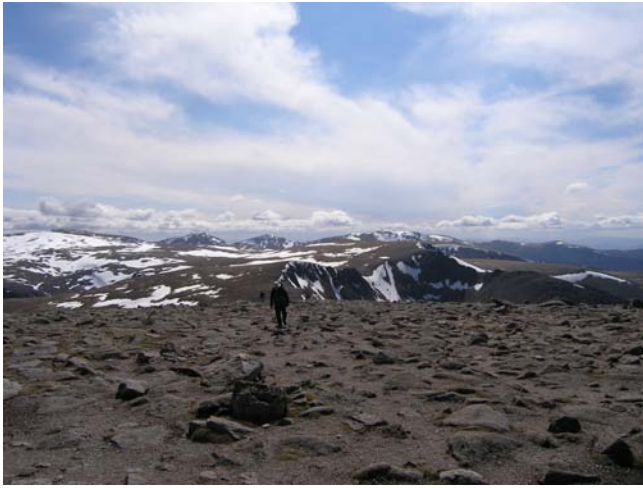
Altogether an excellent meet and one which showed you must never be put off by any weather forecast you hear from three hundred miles away!

Derek Bush

In Attendance:-

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| The President-Adrian Bridge | Paul Dover |
| Tim Josephy | Tony Dunford |
| Nick Welch | Mervyn Cramer (P.M.) |
| Barrie Wood | Ken Roberts(G) |
| Derek Smithson | Vince Greenaway(G) |
| Derek Collins | Natalie (G) |
| Mick Borroff | Derek Bush |





Photos -
 Above, Paul approaching Cairn Gorm Summit
 Previous page top,
 Cairn Toul and Braeriach panorama
 Previous page lower,
 Ben Macdui

LOWSTERN May 22- 27th

This semi-formal but now traditional family meet was once again a great success.

Alan Linford kindly co-ordinated the latest Dads, Lads and Lassies gathering over the Whitsun weekend and a bit beyond for some. He arrived early having spied out a site for a meal stop on the forthcoming Long Walk and then went to Norber to find suitable climbing and abseiling locations.

Ian Crowther and Roger Dix arrived on cycles from Lancaster via LHG and Ravenstonedale. Ian's 'lad in law, Jim' and two grandchildren Ella and Daniel, both 11 joined the group, Paul Dover attended with his grandson Billy aged 10 and I attended along with my two, Lizzie another 10 year old and Matthew aged 8. After the final late arrivals on the Friday due to bank holiday traffic, a chat and discussion about plans took place before a good nights sleep. Billy had decided to camp and persuaded Daniel to share his tent.

On the Saturday we split into two groups. Alan supervised Lizzie and Matthew on the indoor climbing wall in Ingleton with me providing support of sorts. It was Matthews first look at climbing so Alan's patience was much appreciated. Lizzie was able to show some of what she has learnt wall climbing in Rugby.

The other group of Ian, Jim, Ella and Daniel along with Paul and Billy headed off in search of a place in the queue for the winch down Gaping Gill. More patience was required here as a 6 hour wait was necessary before descending. Three hours of exploration eventually followed before they were winched back to the surface and returned two and half hours late for Bangers and Mash at Lowstern where we were also joined by Ken Aldred.

Sunday saw Saturdays caving group attend the climbing wall whilst Lizzie, Matthew and I parked at Horton in Ribblesdale and ascended Penh y Gent in glorious conditions from Bracken bottom, returning via the Pennine Way decent.

Ian & Roger departed for Lancaster on their bikes with the remainder of Saturday's caving group attending the climbing wall where the youngsters showed considerable enthusiasm. After climbing Ian's family moved on with other commitments and Alan returned home after lunch. Paul and Billy went round Norber returning via Long Lane and they, Lizzie, Matthew and I took advantage of the surprisingly good weather and decided to stop on. The plan for Tuesday was to take them over Ingleborough from Chapel le Dale, leaving a car there, and walking back to Clapham past Gaping Gill and the gathered crowd awaiting their turn in the winch chair. Whilst there it gave the children the opportunity to cool off toes in the Gill before continuing down.

After evening refreshments in front of the fire at Lowstern the plan was hatched for the following day to get all up Whernside, not Billy's favourite mountain. As we did not wish to push the children too far the decision was taken to take advantage of the exclusive parking facilities at Scar Top Farm where we were invited in for a drink prior to starting our walk. The children took advantage of a guided tour LLOYD Grossman style. From Scar Top we walked up over the fields behind to join up with the path ascending Whernside to the summit. Much windier and cooler conditions were prevailing but still clear sky gave great views of Morecambe Bay, Langdale Pike and the Howgills etc.

Our decent then took us across to follow the rail line in a circular walk to return to Scar Top to a first class reception where Sammy and Albert laid on a sumptuous spread for tea to reward the children for their efforts. After devouring the feast, they then set about enjoying the bathing facilities within the grounds. Once again our thanks to Albert and Sammy for their hospitality and in making it a memorable day for the children. I'm not sure how I will get them motivated next time, how do you follow that?



On the Wednesday morning we said our farewells for this time and set off for home with Paul and Billy intent on investigating Skipton Castle on route (but didn't) and my two checking out Skipton shops for a memento for mum who had stayed at home.

Thanks again to Alan for pulling the meet together.

Martyn Trasler

The David Smith Memorial Long Walk 19th - 21st June

As participants gathered at Lowstern Friday tea time, a local goatherd and his friendly dog called by, he (the goatherd) sporting the latest Carnaby Street attire, thereby possibly undermining the later efforts to sell the more staid YRC apparel.

The Long Walk has probably taken numerous formats over the years but that adopted on this occasion appeared to suit the group profile with variable age and fitness. It was advertised as having routes of 42, 33, and 26 miles, but in practice because of the common support points, walkers could adopt a pick 'n mix approach.

Leg one of the planned routes was common to all, starting at Ribbleshead and taking the Pennine way to the first support point at Hardraw.

After that the longer walk went north to Great Shunner Fell before striking south to the second support point at Stonehouse, then via the summit of Whernside and possibly tea at Scar Top before traversing Ingleborough and back to Lowstern, whereas the shorter route turned south after Hardraw making for transport left at Ribbleshead via Widdale, Stonehouse support point, Blea Moor and Scar Top.

There were numerous variations from the original planned routes, one being increased distance on the long route due to a grouse regeneration scheme, others being either by conscious choice, such as traversing Dodd Fell off the Pennine Way, or Harvey Lomas starting at Dent (but as a result missing the support point at Stonehouse), or by less conscious choice by not paying sufficient attention to the instructions and/or map, e.g. missing the turn off for Blea Moor Tunnel.

21 people participated, 15 walking, one cycling (Ian Crowther to Stonehouse), and five, including Albert, in support.

After an early breakfast at Lowstern the start from Ribbleshead was lead by Michael Smith, Richard Josephy, and Nick Welch shortly after 4 am, and a further eleven were on the road by 4.30 am.



Our intrepid cyclist

This being the writer's first Long Walk he expected the support points to provide flask coffee or tea out of a plastic cup, drunk standing up, so was more than pleasantly surprised, not to say astonished, to find the five star

arrangements actually provided. Eleven miles into the walk at Hardraw a second breakfast, with fresh tea and coffee, bacon butties and other options, was available, cooked and served from a kitchen tent and consumed sitting on picnic chairs.



Eight miles later (for those on the "shorter" walk) lunch at Stonehouse was equally impressive, and must have been an even more welcome sight to those doing the much longer second leg. The main course (there was a pudding!) included the option of a banana sandwich, said to be a David Smith favourite. Kieran is said to have opted to have his also with a cheese slice and honey; not a combination that would immediately spring to mind, but he no doubt enjoyed it.

After Stonehouse walkers had to find the path, very easily missed if not paying attention, branching off the road and leading to the start of Blea Moor Tunnel. Before the steep rise up to Blea Moor a small farm has to be passed. The correct route is probably bearing left through the farm yard, where a discussion with the farmer about Turkey breeding may be required, but the signage suggests bearing right on a path in between the farm and a wide stream which itself has to be negotiated.

After this, having ascended Blea Moor, any walkers hoping that the calorie burn outstripping intake would improve their waistlines would have their hopes dashed on arrival at Scar Top, where Albert and Sammy had laid on mounds of scrumptious sandwiches and cakes, of a quality to rival Betty's of Harrogate. Even with the prospect of an excellent evening meal not much later at Lowstern, most people's resistance failed.

Notwithstanding this gastronomic catalogue we had no difficulty in doing justice to the evening dinner, shared with us by John Lovett and Ged Campion, of shepherd's pie, summer pudding, and a cheese course. At the end of which, Adrian still being "out on the hill" completing some 45 or even more miles, Mike Godden thanked the organiser and the support team for all their efforts which had made it such a success, achieved through excellent planning and preparation and support effort on the day.

The weather was not quite as the organiser promised (although it depends on the meaning of "exceptionally

good"), but it was not a problem so it would be churlish to criticise, perhaps even to mention.

Participants were:

Mick Borroff
Adrian Bridge
Derek Bush
Ged Campion (dinner only)
Albert Chapman (visitor & support)
Ian Crowther
Iain Gilmour
Mike Godden (support)
Richard Gowing
Peter Green

Mike Hartland
David Hick (support)
Jeff Hooper
Richard Josephy
Tim Josephy (organiser)
Alan Linford (support)
Harvey Lomas
John Lovett (dinner only)
David Martindale (support)
Michael Smith
Derek Smithson
Kieran Toon (guest)
Nick Welch



Adrian Bridge, Keiron Toon and Tim Josephy on summit of Whernside

MEETS PHOTO MONTAGE

John Varney on Crinkles before his accident and more from family meet





This panorama and remarkable reflection was taken by Mick Borroff at Llyn Arennig Fawr on our meet last year. It has been deemed the best submission to the journal and qualifies for the prize of a laminated OS map as offered in the competition detailed in the last edition.



Christmas festivities at the Lowstern 50th Anniversary Meet in December



Morocco, Anti Atlas meet - Wild flowers and the Tizgut Gorge



Valley behind
Jebel el Kest
"There must be one here
that'll fit the crack!"

Informal gathering
John Lovett's 80th
birthday celebrations



OBITUARIES

It is with regret we have to report the deaths of two long standing members, Chris Renton who until his sudden death was our webmaster and member of committee and Jack Holmes who had not been out with us for a long time, but is remembered as a solid supporter when he was a regular, with a typical YRC sense of humour. An appreciation of Jack from John Hemmingway follows.

Your editor recalls Chris with fond memories of the seventies when we were both comparatively young. My wife and I used to frequent the folk clubs where she sang from time to time and Chris and his brother also performed as part of a group known as Art Bart and Fargo. We used to cross paths socially when we lived in the Wharfedale and many was the occasion on a meet, when, at the end of a day, Chris and / or Kevin would produce an instrument and they and many of the then younger members of the club would entertain the occupants of some country pub or other, whether they wished us to or not.

We are indebted to David Handley for pulling together this appreciation of Chris.

Christopher G Renton 1963 – 2008

Chris's sudden death was a shock to both his family and the Club following so shortly after the passing of David Smith, his mountain mentor and close family friend.

Born and bred in Bradford Chris did not move further away than Kendal where he lived for the last years of his career. His working life was entirely within the diverse sections of the engineering industry, starting as an apprentice and eventually holding several senior positions, including MD, in various prominent firms.

In the 60's Chris won an 'apprentice of the year' award which was to take him to the Ullswater Outward School where his love of the mountains was kindled. He joined the YRC in 1963 and formed lifelong friendships with David Smith, Alan Linford, Richard Gowing and Roger Allan. Visiting the Alps several times he had vivid memories of the traverse of the Zinal Rothorn with David. It was the first ascent of the season and without guides. Much more recently he attempted the Allalinhorn but without success. In the 70's Chris climbed frequently with David and Alan notably Main Wall and B route on Gimmer. In much later years Alan offered Chris the opportunity of repeating Main Wall if he got his weight down!

Jeff Hooper recalls he and Chris teaming up on the 1964 long walk from Kirk Yetholme to Byrness. This consisted of 30 miles of unremitting slog. They finished, exhausted, together, whilst some other members got lost in an adjacent valley.

From 1967 to 72 Chris was warden of LHG and in succeeding years was a considerable help to David in keeping the place shipshape. Though of quiet demeanour Chris had strong

views on many things which showed through more recently when he joined the Committee in 2002.

He could be very stubborn.

By 2007 there were plans afoot to refurbish our property, LHG and develop the adjoining barn. Chris played a prominent part in seeing the former project through cooperating closely with the then warden Iain Gilmour. His proximity to the project was immensely helpful.

In other fields Chris had active interests particularly in all aspects of caravanning where he served for some years as a national tutor and judge in caravan manoeuvring.

The David Smith family and the Rentons were very close. It has been said that their respective weddings were more akin to YRC meets. Alister Renton's more recent wedding followed this tradition. When the Club, ever ready to move with the times, embraced the new technology Chris was just the man to create and run the Club's website.

Summing up Chris gave much time and effort to the Club over four decades. His practical abilities were often put to good use and his IT skills were often called upon by members of the Tuesday Walks Group which he became active with after his retirement.

Chris was essentially a private man, strongly family orientated, but with a great love of the Club and its activities. He recruited his brother Kevin and his son, Alister, to the Club ranks. He will be much missed!

The funeral was held at Brigsteer church overlooking the

Lythe Valley and possibly one of the finest locations of a parish church in the whole of England.

Our deepest sympathy go out to his wife, Joyce, and sons Alister, who has become a very active climber and potholer, and Neil.

David Handley

John A Holmes (Jack) 1949 - 2009

With Jack's death the Club has lost one of its longest serving members. He was a member for 60 years..

Jack was born in Hunmaby in north Yorkishire in 1918 and was educated at Bridlington Grammar School.

He went on to qualify as a Textile Chemist although after qualification in 1939, he went straight into the Army and saw service in Egypt, France and India.

In 1946 he joined Yorkshire Dyeware as a Research Chemist and continued with them for the rest of his career, although due to takeovers, mergers etc. the name changed many times and eventually became Carrington Vyella.

During this period he developed a method of the water-proofing of man-made fibres which received international acclaim and, indeed, at that time many Y.R.C. men took advantage with tents and anoraks made from 'Jack's Fabric'.

He was an active and keen Rugby player with Headingley Old Boys.

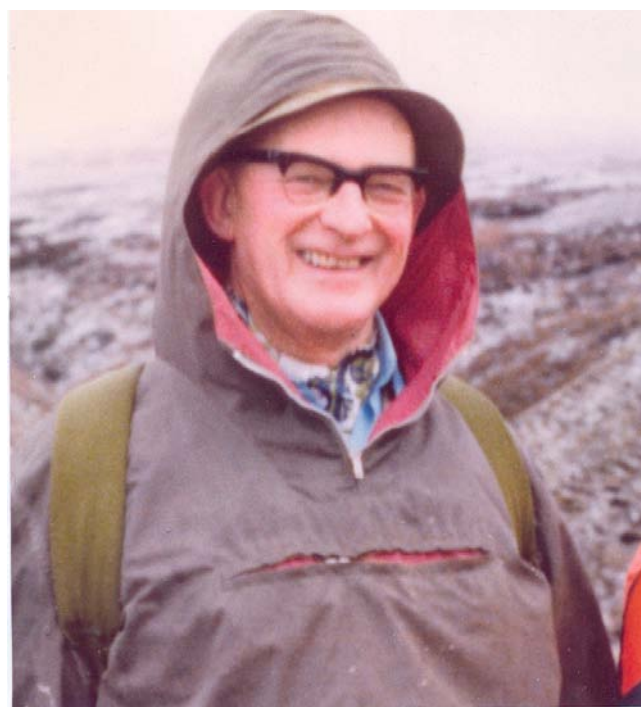
He moved to Dundee in 1949 and spent all his spare time in the hills and at that period joined the Y.R.C.

A very strong walker and climber he spent most weekends on the hills along with his wife Sheelagh.

A very keen potholer, he was on many of the early trips to Ireland where he has a cave he discovered named after him.

At the peak of his pot-holing days he bottomed Lost John's Pot, no mean achievement. Jack rated this one of the best days of his life.

After moving to Surrey, his main contacts with the Club were at the A.G.M. weekend and the traditional Scottish Whit. meet. Indeed, he was part of the famous "Grand Hotel" along with Jack Dosser, Bob Chadwick and Harry



Stembridge, which were distinguished by long and hard days and good food.

He moved to Whalley in Lancashire. in 1974 and was fairly active with the Clitheroe Wednesday Group. He was still a very good goer and left many younger members following in the rear.

In Yorkshire Ramblers terms he initiated the monthly luncheon meet for retired members normally held at Appletreewick in Wharfedale, which were well attended and still continue to this day

It serves to keep less active members in contact with the Club.

In later years he suffered a grievous illness which curtailed all his activities, but he continued to remain a very dedicated Y.R.C. man.

He is survived by his wife Sheelagh and two sons.

He enjoyed keeping in touch and took great please from me reading the journal to him in his final months.

In total a true gentleman who it was very good to have known.

John Hemmingway

USEFUL WEB SITES

AA	theaa.com	Peak District National Park	peakdistrict.org
Access Land CSS & ESAS	countrywalks.defra.gov.uk	Public transport information.	pti.org.uk
Access land in England	countrysideaccess.gov.uk	Public transport information.	traveline.org.uk
Access land in Scotland	outdooraccess-scotland.com	R.S.P.B.	rsppb.org.uk
Access & Conservation Trust	accesstrust.org.uk	RAC	rac.co.uk
Alpine Club	alpine-club.org.uk	Rail enquiries	nationalrail.co.uk
Amtrak rail travel	amtrak.com	Rail Europe	raileurope.co.uk
Bowline Club	bowline.f9.co.uk	Ramblers Association	ramblers.org.uk
Brecon Beacons National Park	breconbecon.org	Royal Geographical Society	rgs.org
Brittany Ferries	brittanyferries.com	Scotlands National Heritage	snh.org.uk
British Orienteering Federation	britishorienteering.org.uk	Scottish avalanche forecasts	sais.gov.uk
British Waterways	britishwaterways.co.uk	Scottish Mountaineering Council	mountaineering-scotland.org
Cairngorm Club	cairngormclub.org.uk	Ski Club of Great Britain	ukskiclub.co.uk
Caledonian Macbrayne ferries	calmac.co.uk	Snowdonia National Park	eryri-npa.gov.uk
Carlisle Mountaineering Club	carlislemc.co.uk	Southern Uplands way	dumgal.gov.uk/southernuplandway
Coast to coast walk	coast2coast.co.uk	Speyside Way	speysideway.org
Countryside Agency	countryside.gov.uk	Summits information	peakware.com
Countryside Council for Wales	ccw.gov.uk	The Climbers Club	climbers-club.co.uk
Crag access database	climbingcrags.co.uk	Translation service	freetranslation.com
Cyclist Touring Club	ctc.org.uk	Travel guide- Lonely Planet	lonelyplanet.com
DFDS Seaways	dfdsseaways.co.uk	Travel guide- Rough	roughguides.com
Duke of Edinburgh Awards	theaward.org	Traverse Holidays in Pyrenees	traverseholidays.co.uk
English Heritage	english-heritage.org.uk	Trekking - Himalayan Kingdoms	himalayankingdoms.com
Europe route planning	theaa.com/travelwatch/planner	Trekking - K E Adventure	keadventure.com
Fell & Rock Club	frcc.co.uk	Trek America (and OZ/NZ)	trekamerica.com
Fell Runners Association	fellrunner.org.uk	Visitor information - Australia	australia.com
Foreign & Colonial Office	fco.gov.uk	Visitor information - Canada	keepexploring.ca/travelcanada
Forestry Commission	forestry.gov.uk	Visitor information - New Zealand	purenz.com
Fylde Mountaineering Club	fyldemc.org.uk	Visitor information - USA	visitusa.org.uk
Fjord Line	fjordline.co.uk	Walking in Scotland	walkingwild.com
Grampian Club	grampianclub.org	Walking in South West	cornwall-devon.com
Greyhound Buses	greyhound.com	Walking in the Lakes	lakedistrictoutdoors.co.uk
Gritstone Club	gritstoneclub.org.uk	Weather BBC	bbc.co.uk/weather
Guides	lonelyplanet.com	Weather forecasts	accuweather.com
Historic Houses Association	hha.org.uk	Weather UK & Worldwide	weathercall.co.uk
Historic Scotland	historic-scotland.gov.uk	West Highland way	west-highland-way.co.uk
Irish Ferries	irishferries.com	Wild life trusts	wildlifetrusts.org
John Muir Trust	jmt.org	Wolverhampton M'tn'tneering Club	wolverhamptonmc.co.uk
Locations and routes	multimap.com	Woodland trust	woodland-trust.org
Long Distance Walkers Assoc.	ldwa.org.uk	World Health Organisation	who.int/en/
Maps & books	cordee.co.uk	Yorkshire Dales National Park	yorkshiredales.org
Maps & books	stanfords.co.uk		
Maps & books	themapshop.co.uk	ACCOMMODATION	
Maps & Books	guidepost.uk.com	Holiday Cottages	holidaycottage.cc
Maps - Ordnance Survey	ordnancesurvey.co.uk	Holiday Cottages	sykescottages.co.uk
Maps - Harveys	harveymaps.co.uk	Holiday Cottages	theholidaycottages.co.uk
Maps - Live local	maps.live.com	Holiday Cottages	cottagesdirect.com
Maps - Anquet	anquet.co.uk	Holiday Cottages	cottageguide.co.uk
Maps - Cassini Historical	cassinimaps.co.uk	Holiday Cottages, world wide	cottages4you.co.uk
Maps - Google	maps.google.com	Dales Holiday Cottages	dales-holiday-cottages.com
Medical advice	high-altitude-medicine.com	English Country Inns	englishinns.co.uk
Meteorological Office	meto.gov.uk	Farm Stay UK	farmstayuk.co.uk
Michelin Guides	viamichelin.com	Old English Inns	oldenglishinns.co.uk
Midland Assoc. of Mountaineers	themam.co.uk	Premier Inns	premierinn.com
MOD- access to military land	access.mod.uk	Pub guide (Roy Denney)	charnwood.me.uk
Mount Everest Foundation	mef.org.uk	Scottish Holiday Cottages	scottish-holiday-cottages.co.uk
Mountain Biking	trailquest.co.uk	Travelodge	travelodge.co.uk
Mountain Heritage Trust	thebmc.co.uk/mht	Youth Hostels Association	yha.org.uk
Mountain Rescue Council	mountain.rescue.org.uk		
Mountaineering Council Scotland	mountaineering-scotland.org.uk	KIT	
National Cycle Network	sustrans.org.uk	At the Mountain	atthemountain.co.uk
National Express	gobycoach.comcnp.org.uk	Compasspoint	compasspoint-online.co.uk
National Health Direct	nhsdirect.nhs.uk	Cotswold Outdoors	cotswoldoutdoors.com
National Trails	nationaltrail.co.uk	Craghoppers	craghoppers.com
National Trust	nationaltrust.org.uk	Daleswear	daleswear.co.uk
National Trust for Scotland	nts.org.uk	Escape2	escape2.co.uk
Natural England	naturalengland.org.uk	Field and Trek	fieldandtrek.co.uk
North York Moors National Park	moors.uk.net	Go Outdoors	gooutdoors.co.uk
Northumberland National Park	nnpa.org.uk	Safariquip	safariquip.co.uk
Nikwax	nikwax.co.uk	Ultrasport	ultrasport.co.uk
Open Spaces Society	oss.org.uk		
Oread Mountaineering Club	oread.co.uk		

The Yorkshire Ramblers Club

Established 1892 - www.yrc.org.uk

The mountaineering and caving club

The Club's aim is to organise caving, mountaineering, walking and skiing expeditions, to encourage the exploration of caves and potholes and the more remote parts of the world and to gather and promote knowledge of natural history, archaeology, folklore and kindred subjects

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the YRC or its Officers.

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Club Properties

Low Hall Garth
Little Langdale
Cumbria



Lowstern
Clapham
North Yorkshire