

EDITOR'S NOTES

Sorry about the long wait for this edition folks, but as usual the deluge of stuff I keep expecting failed to materialise.

SOCIALS

15th August	Treasure Hunt *	Dave Earle
5th September	Boozy Bike Ride	Dave Laycock - Meet at Buccaneer 7.00 pm.
19th September	Audio Visual Extravaganza	Dave Earle, at the Buccaneer, 8.30 pm.
3rd October	Slide Show - Sailing to the Hebrides	Don Rutter at the Buccaneer, 8.30 pm.
* Venue for Treasure Hunt - Council Offices Car Park Garstang, 6.30p.m. onwards		

FUTURE MEETS

4/5 August	Members' Meet, Stair	George Parker on Cleveleys 856426
11/12 Aug.	Welsh Meet, Llanberis	Dave Westby on Cleveleys 854745
25/27 Aug.	Family W/E, Stair	
25/27 Aug.	Scot Rock Camping	Martin Dale
8/9 Sept.	Ladies Meet, Stair	Mary Aspin, F/wood 6785
15/16 Sept.	Welsh Meet, Vags Hut	Dave Greenhalgh on Fleetwood 5030

HUT AVAILABILITY

28th July	Vags Hut, Llanberis Stair Hut (8 beds only)
4th Aug.	Stair
11th Aug.	Chester Hut, Llanberis
18th Aug.	Stair
25th Aug.	Little Langdale; Family W/E, Stair
1st Sept.	Little Langdale
8th Sept.	Stair
15th Sept.	Vags Hut
22nd Sept.	Stair; Family W/E, Little Langdale
29th Sept.	Little Langdale

John Wiseman may be unavailable throughout much of August, Teachers' holidays and all that. In his absence hut bookings should be made with Dave Westby on Cleveleys 854745.

SIMOND COUGUAR ICE AXE

After failures of this ice axe laboratory work has revealed a fault in design and inadequate quality control.

The axe is considerably weaker than it could be. The axe is described by Simond as a walking axe but their literature guarantees the head will ensure placement in the hardest ice. The 1984 Wild Country Catalogue describes it as an all purpose ice tool.

It is recommended that this model should NOT BE USED for climbing or self arrest on shallow snow. Nor should it be used on hard or mixed ground. Doesn't sound too good.

The manufacturers have indicated improvements will be made. It is not known whether these improvements will be visible to distinguish the old from the new.

There are no offers to replace these axes.

Prospective purchasers may care to bear this in mind when considering the purchase of equipment made by Simond.

D.A. Earle, Secretary

#### Newsflash

The Club Secretary can no longer be reached on Poulton-le-Fylde 890283.

He has however started a new job working days only, and can be reached at Hesketh House in Refunds Section, on Fleetwood 77123, Ext.454. The extension number is liable to alteration eventually, a further note will then be issued, but the Section - Refunds - will remain the same.

Anyone thinking the Government owes them some money is invited to ring in!

D.A. Earle, Secretary

#### GURU'S CORNER

There are three rockclimbs in Great Britain worth doing. All of the others are a complete waste of time and energy which could be spent pursuing far greater goals, such as health wealth and happiness. Before I let you into the secret of their location, let me add that I have arrived at this conclusion by a carefully followed course of study involving many years of research and a reasonably high degree of dedication and application. Many people have assisted in this study and at this point I would like to thank my many employers, the DHSS and the Lancashire Education Authority for their financial help; Andy Dunhill, Dave Sharples, Mick Tolley, Martin Dale, Gary Nuttall and many others for their studious support. Several ladies notably Trudy Hoyle for their tolerance (and others for the lack of it); the F.M.C. for their research facilities in the Lake District, where much of the early fieldwork was done and finally Mum and Dad without whom none of this would have been possible.

Special mention should perhaps be given to the equipment manufacturers of Britain and those in Europe and America whose developments had to be imported for the sole use of this project.

The initial hypothesis on which this work was formulated was that "Any hill in Great Britain has an easy side which grandies could push prams up. Rockclimbing therefore is a completely pointless pastime". Moreover this idea has been developed to include the facts that it is also painful, strenuous, dangerous and likely to induce baldness in 35 per cent of known addicts.

To test this initial hypothesis a Null or opposite hypothesis was formulated which if true or false could be said to either reject or support the initial hypothesis viz. "British Mountains can only be climbed by bronzed gods with copious hair". This was tested one Bank Holiday on Scafell and the lack of vitality, general paleness and lowly stature of those approaching the summit deeply depressed this researcher. The Null hypothesis was rejected outright in favour of the initial one at the same time throwing up a few points worth considering.

1. Fell runners may inherit the Earth.
2. Dave Earle may inherit the Earth.
3. Rockclimbers rarely visit the summits of British Mountains.

Wishing to consider this last point in more detail the researcher devised a questionnaire which was circulated to the rock-climbing community in general.

Typical questions were:-

- Q.1 Why do you rock-climb? (100% answered "Because it is there")  
 Q.1a What is it?  
 (This question inserted in questionnaire Mk 2)  
 (100% answered "What is what?")
- Q.1b What is what?  
 (This question inserted in Questionnaire Mk 3)  
 (100% of answers unprintable)
- Q.2 Does it give you satisfaction?  
 (100% of answers unprintable.)
- Q.3 Why do rock-climbers rarely visit the summit of British mountains?  
 (30% said walking in E.Bs causes ingrowing toenails.)  
 (30% said they rarely succeeded in even reaching the top of the crag.)  
 (30% were "don't knows".)  
 (10% threatened to sue if this information reached the ears of the club meets secretary.)

In general terms it could be said that these responses bear out the hypothesis, especially the bit about ingrowing toenails.

The final attempt to try and find some point to rock-climbing threw up the most interesting results. Using the equation.

$$\text{worthwhileness of Route} = \frac{L}{D} (j.k . p . EL) Bk$$

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- Where:-
- L = length of time feet are crammed into E.Bs.
  - p = distance from top of climb to nearest mountain summit
  - jk = keenness factor.
  - EL = sum of length of routes previously climbed.
  - D = difficulty of route.  
 i.e. E1 = -1 E3 = -3 VS = +2.  
 Based on HVS being worth most value for least effort.  
 Also +1 for Classic Rock and -2 for Hard Rock.
  - Bk = Baldness Factor.

Using this equation it is possible to work out which climbs are worthwhile and which are not. Cenotaph Corner it seems scores low, due to lack of (p). Whilst Brown Slabs Arete is dead easy, it is also a long way from any source of negative (p). Such classics as Gimmer Crack or Centurian come close to being worth doing if you have a high (Bk). Thus the only truly worthwhile routes in Great Britain seem to be:

1. The Inaccessible Pinnacle (Easy Side)
2. Bowfell Buttress
3. A Boulder Problem, discovered by Stuart Gascoine, on a tiny crag above the East Buttress, Scafell.

No doubt further research, possibly including a ridge factor, might improve on these conclusions, but without a further grant this researcher finds such a study impossible.

### SKYE MEMORIES 1984

Many Scottish spring pilgrimages have come and gone, none more unforgettable than this year's based at the homely Sligachan cottage. Having stepped out of the door one is in the Cuillin.

Ascending Pinnacle Ridge with the mist receding, down the West Ridge with the famous Gendarme, over An Basteir in brilliant sunshine and finally stuck on top of the Tooth with the mist threatening to descend again; whether to abseil down King's Cave Chimney, would one member get through the hole?; eventually climbing back to An Basteir using combined tactics to get George up, Alan pulling, Mike and myself pushing, and two slings for extra footholds.

Into Corrie Lagan and scrambling to Bealach Mhic Coinnich, climbing King's Chimney, a sensationally situated Diff and traversing the ridge towards An Stac and the Pinnacle with abysmal drops on the right into the depths of Coireachan Rhuada. Ascending the Pinnacle and abseiling off. Getting lost in Coire Banachdich and descending an almost perfect staircase of basalt amongst acres of gabbro.

Cloch Direct and Integrity. To the right the massive slabs, walls and overhangs of Sron na Ciche where it looks like you could get lost for ever. Me asking Dorothy whether she'd done much climbing and watching her on the overhangs and realising she was out of my league, eventually discovering she'd climbed with Joe Brown on the television.

Harta and Leta Corries, an easy walk by Skye standards with the scenery dramatically unfolding; first the Pinnacle, then the weird shapes of Bidein Druis nan Rann and eventually the Tooth and Gillean. In brilliant sunshine ambling by fantastically sculptured rock pools, stunningly beautiful, far grander than any human construction, and scrambling for hundreds of feet up gabbro slab. We never saw a soul all day apart from a solitary ptarmigan. Finally the long pull up to Bealach nan Tice dwarfed by the Basteir Tooth, looking more and more threatening in the gathering mist. Surely sometime we can do Naismith's Route, only a Diff, but with dreadful exposure.

Alan and Dorothy traversing Clach Glan and Blaven and Dorothy threatening to return via the Druis nan Rann Ridge and half the Cuillin Ridge and Alan dissuading her.

Walking down Glen Sligachan with the fantastic shapes of Gillean flanked by the spiky Pinnacle and West Rann, finally sitting down on Sgurr Nain, surely the ultimate viewpoint. Below Scavaig and Coruick glistening in the sun, all around the Cuillin, mist occasionally descending on one or other peak but then rising again, sitting there for an hour spell-bound.

Skye holidays are made of adventures like this. One hour, the mist shrouds everything and body and mind are cold and pessimistic; the next, the mist clears, everything is revealed, one is intoxicated by elemental sun, rock and water; in a while the gloom will return again.

One of the big books says "The Cuillin is a ragged chaos of broken black rocks. Nobody could call it beautiful." This is probably true. However, it has a unique power to perpetually inspire and fascinate, and sometimes frighten. Once having experienced it, nothing else is ever quite the same.

Many thanks to George Parker and to the rest of the party for their wonderful companionship.

CLUANIE LODGE 1984

For those who now return year after year, Cluanie Lodge exists more as a dream than a reality. A strange irrational anachronism courtesy of the puzzling but welcome benevolence of Lord Burton, Landowner, Peer of the Realm and F.M.C. benefactor. As for the third year in succession the small cortege of members' cars turned northwest from the Great Glen, crossed the Highland watershed and came once again to that now familiar country where mountains hold a special enchantment and a visionary of an architect placed Cluanie Lodge on a wooded promontary by the lochshore.

Time does try to catch up with the old place; the solid fuel age is now gas fired and the outside has been given a facelift but the inside remains firmly rooted in 1924 and provides its own special welcome. The weather too was good and after an indifferent day or two hot summer came to the west highlands and we were blessed indeed.

To record who did what, when and with whom is surely unnecessary. Mountain, loch, glen, sea and sky were all about us. Days were long and blended one with another separated only by the briefest twilight which began at midnight and was banished three hours later by the pink flush of dawn.

Hills were climbed, ridges were walked, munros were ticked off and far mountains smouldered in distant heat haze. Ben Nevis to the Cuillin, The Cuillin to Torridon and then nearer, yet so strangely more remote, the rough bounds of Knoydart.

Everyone said it was the best yet. We made the ritual trip to Glenelg for hamburgers and belhaven. Martin Pickup fell in love with the barmaid at the Kintail Lodge; Derek Smith and Tommy Turner led Dave Laycock astray in the Cluanie Inn and his brave little wife scarcely said a word; Cherry Greencarle and young master William looked after Eric splendidly - he was no trouble at all; and although I have a vague idea the Nelsons produced a cassette player from somewhere, I feel sure I must be mistaken.

In the Highlands a week is only a moment and a moment is soon a memory. Kind thoughts to Lord Burton and here's to next year.

The Meet Leader