

# The ULGMC at 50

A Celebration of the University of London  
Graduate Mountaineering Club



1950 - 2000

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## A Celebration of the University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club

Edited by Jill Bennett

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**ULMC Skye meet 1949 - Sgurr a' Mhadaidh**

(L to R) Norman Jones, Laura Ford (Hampton), Susan Paskell, Stella Chapman (Berkeley)  
Harold Rowlands, Bernard Scanlan, Mike Futrell. Photo taken by Jean Smith (Jones)

Caseg Fraith, below Tryfan. (Photo by Stella Berkeley)

## Preface - Phill Williams

Why is ULGMC still here, fifty years on? Other organisations have withered and perished, but we have survived and flourished. Why is that? The articles that comprise this small volume offer some of the answers. But first consider the circumstances in which our club began.

Fifty years ago, we climbed under difficulties. By today's standards, equipment was antediluvian. Specialist climbing gear was not available, and if it had been we could not have bought it, since clothing was just coming off "coupons", i.e. rations. Gas capes, ex-army boots, commando rucksacks and various other bits of redundant material from the services were pressed into use. Muggers, clinkers and trikes were essential accoutrements. These were not villains, varieties of coke and vehicles, respectively, but nails for climbing boots! Smoking hemp might well have been an illegal activity, but if our hemp smoked we worried - for it meant that friction on the rope was causing it to char, a rare (and possibly apocryphal) event. These were cumbersome days; the convenience of truly breathable fabrics, moulded rubber soles and nylon ropes was yet to come.

The conditions, too, were far from propitious. Travel to meets was not easy, as the following article describes. Food was rationed too, so that catering on meets had to be a communal activity, with meals that varied between the superb and the frankly hilarious. Members of an early Brackenclose meet were treated to a breakfast in which custard powder was inadvertently substituted for dried egg, and then reconstituted before frying with bacon - edible, but hardly cordon bleu!

The ULMC of the late 1940s, the parent of the eventual ULGMC, was a very mixed group, with a rapidly changing membership. It included a number of older ex-servicemen, some of whom were unusual characters, with unusual motives for climbing. There were those who sought to recapture the dangerous thrills of wartime on the high crags; there were others who thought the peace of the hills would help to heal deep emotional scars left by their experiences. Both sorts came, usually joined for a few meets, and then disappeared. But they certainly enlivened club activities in memorable ways, best not recorded in print!

We were left with a small group of climbers whose university days were finishing and who were about to scatter to various locations. In spite of these various hindrances we were determined to climb together, and in 1952 we planned our first Alpine meet. By that time, equipment was beginning to improve slightly, but otherwise conditions were still difficult. The country was poor, and recovering from the war - and there was an annual limit of fifty pounds of foreign currency per person! But this was enough to enable five members to meet in Austria, in order to climb in the Silvretta. Travel was of course by ferry and overnight train, but the pleasures of unrationed Switzerland - who could forget the fresh rolls and cherry jam on Basle station - were ample compensation for any hardships suffered on the journey.

We had a good start to the expedition, climbing - among other peaks - the Dreiländerspitze and the Fluchthorn. We also had our defeats, notably on the Schattenspitze, a name which produced various ribald alternatives. Unfortunately this was the one mountain on which our lack of progress had been monitored by a local mountaineer, who had binoculars trained on us through the day. He was duly christened the "bergwatcher". Shortly afterwards the weather broke, and we retreated early to Innsbruck and the opera.

As the years have passed so that small group has grown, until today, on our fiftieth anniversary, it has matured into a club of some two hundred members, who have climbed in ranges all over the world, and who run two climbing huts, a splendid meets programme and a vibrant newsletter. ULGMC has indeed survived and flourished.

Those who planned this volume wisely decided to avoid a sequential history. Instead of an uninformative chronology of events, this history consists of a selection of vignettes from the past fifty years, all the more telling since the authors write at firsthand. And the answer to the question raised earlier, shines from the glimpses of club activity they afford. The club has grown and prospered because for half a century we have been fortunate in enjoying the dedication of so many members, new and old alike, who have devoted such a significant portion of their leisure lives to the club. The extracts show their endeavours, and the enjoyment that their efforts have produced.

"The light of history is a lantern on the stern, which shines only on the waves behind us." Our history cannot offer a view of the future, but it does suggest very clearly why the piloting has been successful so far. In turn, this offers the great hope that the same willingness to contribute will steer ULGMC through the climbing years to come. Then, reading this volume, there may be someone who will be able to say in 2050, at our centenary: "I remember the fiftieth anniversary. I was there."



**Phill Williams in Nant Ffrancon, Llyn Bochlywd meet, Whitsun 1952**  
(Photo courtesy of Stella Berkeley)

## *Travelling with Difficulty* - Stella Berkeley

In 1945, I took my bicycle north on the train to Windermere, and set out to see the Lake District, staying at youth hostels. I managed to walk up Helvellyn (and descend by Striding Edge), Great Gable and Conistone Old Man - a wonderful introduction to the Lake District mountains. I knew how to read a map, so route-finding didn't bother me, though almost the whole of the route from Honister to Great Gable was in mist, and mountain paths were not the worn tracks that we see to-day. Somewhere on Brandreth I met three other walkers going in the opposite direction, who assured me they were going to Gable, and made strenuous efforts to persuade me that I was going the wrong way. I knew they were wrong, but could not persuade them - they seemed to take the attitude that because they were three and I was alone, I must be the one who was mistaken! I duly arrived at Green and then Great Gable I often wondered where they went after we parted!

The following year I went to North Wales, but left my cycle at home and invested in a pair of boots - difficult to get in 1946 as most clothes and shoes remained rationed but having small feet I could take a boy's size, which needed less coupons. This was a wonderful trip, again staying at youth hostels, I crossed the mountains from Ffestiniog to Caernarvon, taking in parts of the Sarn Helen, Moel Siabod, Tryfan and the Glyders, and then crossing Snowdon up via Crib Goch and down to Snowdon Ranger. When I came to LSE in 1946, I was thrilled to find a Mountaineering Club, which had plans to organise a meet in North Wales during the Christmas vacation. My parents were less pleased. The mountains would be dangerous in winter, with snow and ice. And - even worse - I proposed hitch-hiking there! Except for the few students whose families could assist them financially, this was the only way most of us could travel to the mountains. Not everyone had a grant - much depended on where you lived and some local authorities gave only meagre loans - and even a 'full' grant didn't rise to train fares to the other end of the country. There were few (if any) long-distance buses, and these didn't go to desirable places like Capel Curig or Langdale.

Nowadays few students risk the obvious dangers of hitch-hiking, and few drivers will stop for hitch-hikers. But the years between the end of the war and the early 1950's were a world away. Though my first few hitch-hiking forays were made with other club members, I later made many long trips alone, and never had the slightest trouble, only once was I even propositioned. I once estimated that I must have hitch-hiked well over a hundred thousand miles. On that first winter trip to Capel Curig and Idwal, 3 of us (all novices) decided to hitch only in daylight and (to avoid being benighted at the roadside) to stay overnight at youth hostels. Traffic was sparse (petrol remained rationed until the Spring of 1950), few people had private cars, and most lifts were therefore in lorries - and slow. On our first day we reached Lichfield, the nearest place with a youth hostel, and Llangollen on day two, arriving at Capel Curig early the following afternoon. Such slow progress seems unbelievable now, but with no by-passes or motorways, driving was very slow. And there could be long waits (or walks) between lifts; it wasn't that people wouldn't stop - the traffic just wasn't there. Most lorry drivers would pick hitch-hikers up for company, as journeys were slow and tedious. Car drivers often welcomed hitch-hikers because they usually had a map! All maps had been withdrawn during the war, and sign-posts removed, in the hope of confusing parachuting enemy spies or invaders. Printing maps and replacing sign-posts (many lost over the years) was not exactly a pressing priority after the war. Whilst there were sign-posts on the main roads, if you made a long cross-country journey, a map was essential.

Over the next few years, travel gradually improved, although not until February 1949 did I reach Ogwen in one day from London. Whilst traffic had increased, petrol was still rationed, and it was wise not to 'thumb' slow-looking lorries but to try for lifts in cars, they were usually more comfortable too. Wales in a day was still hard work, and the Lake District impossible. It meant being on the A5 north of London at first light - and I first had well over an hour's journey across London to get there!

Difficulty of getting to the mountains also illustrates why, with rare exceptions, our visits were confined to the long vacations, and we could never come anywhere near the standard of fitness of modern-day climbers. Students at Manchester, Sheffield or Leeds had the Peak District accessible at week-ends but, for those in London, almost the only option for climbing was at Harrison's Rocks. By 1949 we were going there once or twice a term, cycling or taking the train to Groombridge. Some of us hated Harrison's - the girls especially - as the climbing was strenuous and mostly hard. But there was nothing else.

By 1949 I joined the ULMC and attended the first of many happy meets at Maes Caradoc in April. For several years Maes Caradoc was almost the spiritual home both ULMC and later, of ULGMC - until the Caseg Fraith hut. Though we could now travel further afield to the Lakes (I remember a long approach walk from Gosforth to Wasdale Head), Glencoe, Skye and more remote parts of Scotland, two contrasting journeys remain in my memory.

The first concerns one of the last meets of the LSEMC that I attended, in Skye in September 1948. I hadn't been able to get a long summer job that year to help pay for the trip, so I set off to hitch-hike to Scotland with just about enough money (as I thought) for hostel fees, food and the ferry to Skye. My memory of this trip starts at Fort William, so all must have gone well until then. I aimed to cross to Skye from Kyle of Lochalsh, rather than Mallaig, as the ferry would cost less, and it would probably be impossible to get a lift from Armadale to Broadford or Sligachan. So, aiming for Kyle, I got a lift up the Great Glen to Invergarry, with the intention of heading west. Before the flooding of Glen Loyne, the A87 ran west from Invergarry to Tomdoun, then north to Cluanie and west to Kyle; Loch Loyne and the present road round to the East are new. I sat on the parapet of the bridge at the road junction (this is still there) trying for a lift, for about 4 hours until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. During that time only four vehicles passed, two going north, and two going South - not a single vehicle went west in the direction I wanted to go. Even I can hardly believe this now! Then, soon after 2 o'clock, a police car stopped and offered me a lift. They were going west, but to Loch Hourne, so they offered to take me to Tomdoun to see if I could get a lift on from there. They weren't very optimistic, however, and said that they would be coming back about 5 o'clock and, if I hadn't got a lift by then, they would bring me back and take me to Loch Lochy youth hostel for the night. And that is exactly what happened. On this occasion I had a sleeping bag, and scouted round the Tomdoun area (not much more than a farm and couple of houses) to see whether there was anywhere I could bivouac for the night, but I couldn't find any shelter.

By morning I realised that I wasn't going to be able to hitch-hike to Kyle of Lochalsh, so the only option now seemed to be the train to Mallaig. I forget how much was the fare, but the additional expense worried me, although (like everyone else who has taken this journey) I was enthralled by what has often been described as the most magnificent train journey in Britain. I had to take the bus to Sligachan, but then realised that I couldn't also afford the ramshackle bus that ran to

Glen Brittle. By now it was almost dusk and starting to rain, so I couldn't cross the Bealach a'Mhaim to Glen Brittle until the following day. Where to bivouac? There was nothing round the hotel, but a couple of miles down the road I found an old Nissen hut (long since disappeared) which would have to do. Our meet was at the youth hostel, so I hadn't a stove, and couldn't even make a hot drink. It took me most of the following day to walk over the Bealach a'Mhaim with a full pack, including much of my food for the week - and I was two days late for the meet.

Contrast this miserable journey with another, on the way back from the wonderful ULGMC meet at the Steall hut in Glen Nevis at Easter 1950. Tom Fletcher was leaving at the same time and, while in Fort William earlier, he learnt that a lorry left the depot every morning at 2 am, bound for Glasgow, and if we were there at that time we could have a lift. We left the hut in the evening to walk the 7 miles down to Fort William but when we arrived, found that the lorry had broken down earlier and never left Glasgow. We spent a very cold night trying to sleep on the concrete floor of the depot, and were out on the road by 6.30 am. But then our luck changed, we were picked up by a car with a single occupant, going all the way to Darlington! Tom advised that the best route was via Glasgow, the A74 to Penrith, then across the Pennines to Scotch Corner and go north to Darlington. This was good advice, bearing in mind the poor state of the route via Edinburgh then, but it also had the advantage of leaving us on the A1 at Scotch Corner, in a good position to get south. This was the longest 'hitch' that either Tom or I ever succeeded in making, although I believe it has been bettered by a (very) few others. Our luck held even further. At Scotch Corner we picked up a lorry going to London or, more correctly, he picked us up. The driver even turned off the A1 to drop Tom in his home village in Nottinghamshire, and then took me right into the forecourt of Victoria Station in London! It must have been about 2 or 3 am, but I lived on the Bromley line, which ran hourly services through the night for newspaper staff, who needed to get home at all hours.

We also had problems in getting about during meets. There were few buses, and they only ran on certain days of the week. Students did not have cars, and with petrol rationing, there were few other vehicles on the mountain roads. On Christmas Day in 1950 two of us were staying at Idwal youth hostel (prior to the Club Meet at Maes Caradoc) and decided to do the Horseshoe as it was a glorious day. Now I don't know how we did it in the time, but we walked all the way from Idwal, via Capel Curig to Pen y Pass (the final steep hill up to the pass being deep in soft, drifted snow), rounded the Horseshoe in magnificent snow conditions, had a comfortable stop on the summit (there was a 'hotel' then, and a wonderful fire burning in the grate) then down over Lliwedd, and walked almost back to Idwal. We got a lift for the last couple of miles from Capel and arrived just in time for the special Christmas dinner at the hostel.

In our early climbing days no one would have thought of stealing another's rope, or gear from a tent, yet soon there were reports of even safety ropes left for retreat from the Cornish cliffs being taken away by other climbers. Humfrey's and my first two trips to Scotland were in an open 1933 MG tourer with a soft top. All our climbing and camping gear, and food, were accessible to anyone - and we even carelessly left the rope on the roof of the car when we went back to our camp by the Meeting of the Three Waters after returning from the Aonach Eagach in Glencoe. It was still there the next morning. In fact we never lost anything on either trip - until we returned to Leeds, and the car itself was taken when left for only an hour outside my flat while we had a meal. The police found it a few days later on a car park about 15 miles away, thankfully undamaged and with only Humfrey's camera missing - but that is another story!

# REPORT OF A SUB-COMMITTEE SET UP TO INVESTIGATE

## THE FORMATION OF A SENIOR SECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

January 1950

Members: Miss J Smith  
Mr P Williams  
Mr N Jones

One meeting was held on Sat. 21 Jan. [1950] at Westbourne Gardens. The sub-committee decided to clarify the problem under the following headings.

- 1) The demand for a senior club.
- 2) The advantages & disadvantages to ULMC of its formation.
- 3) The relation between ULMC and any senior club formed.
- 4) The objects of any senior club formed.
- 5) The action to be taken.

### 1. Demand

There are at least 20 members of ULMC who have finished their University courses or who will have finished their courses in June 1950. Those who have finished and are now in employment find it difficult to fit in their much shorter holidays with ULMC meets, which rarely coincide with national holidays. It is the opinion of your sub-committee that there exists a strong feeling among these 20 people for the setting up of an organisation which will enable them to climb together at convenient times, such as over Easter, Christmas etc. This opinion was formed as a result of conversations with members of ULMC concerned.

### 2. Advantages and disadvantages

At present ULMC is affiliated to ULAU, and received from them last year a grant. It was stated at the time that ULAU objected to ex-members of the University having membership in a University Club, and that unless the ULMC constitution was amended to exclude past members, ULAU would withdraw their support. From the point, therefore, of mountaineering, official encouragement and financial aid, which your sub-committee regard as essential, there is everything to be said for a separate section of ULMC being formed. Since the club, if formed, would stem off from ULMC it is expected that a strong relation would exist, especially at first, between the two clubs. Thus ULMC might be able to draw on experienced climbers to act as leaders in their training meets, and also as lecturers at their indoor meets. The reverse relation might also hold in that the senior members of ULMC might be invited to meets of the other club both at home and abroad, where they would gain added experience. The club would of-course provide an organisation in which ULMC members could climb when they go down from the University, an organisation which at present does not exist. If a senior club is formed, ULMC would lose a large proportion of its experienced members. Since under ULAU regulations these would have to leave anyway for ULMC to continue as a University club, your sub-committee cannot consider this a disadvantage and in fact can find no disadvantage at all to ULMC in the formation of a senior club.

### 3. Relation with ULMC

The senior section would require a centre from which to climb, which would be available to them at all times. ULMC possess, or will shortly possess the hut Bryn Goch, and an agreement could be made whereby, in return for the services of leaders and lecturers outlined above, the members of the senior club could be free to use ULMC hut in common with ULMC members. Your sub-committee suggest that this point could be discussed between representatives of ULMC and of the senior club, if it is formed. The relation between the membership qualification of the senior club and of ULMC could be met in three chief ways:

- a) By confining membership to ex-ULMC and ex-University of London members, friends then being introduced as guests.
- b) Allowing the automatic election of ex-ULMC members and allowing others to be elected by nomination and voting in the usual manner.
- c) By making the club completely 'open', in which every members would be elected by nomination and voting in the usual manner.

If the club is definitely to provide an organisation for future ULMC members on leaving the University, the third choice does not strictly apply.

### 4. Objectives

The objects of the club could be regarded as:

- i) The provision of opportunity for mountaineering recreation among its members.
- ii) The encouragement of mountaineering in the University of London by maintaining liaison with ULMC.

The form in which the opportunity mentioned in i) would take, holiday meets, Harrison's meets, lectures etc would be dictated by the demand of the members. The liaison mentioned in ii) would be kept up as indicated under heading 3) 'Relation with ULMC'.

### 5. Action

Your sub-committee therefore state that in their opinion there is a strong demand for the formation of a senior club from ULMC members, and that now is the time for this demand to be translated into action. They suggest, that in view of the number of ULMC members going down in June 1950, the club should start this summer, and that the possibility of a summer meet, perhaps abroad, should be explored. They strongly recommend that a meeting of those interested be called and that notice of this meeting, which could be held after the AGM, be sent round with the AGM notices. They also recommend that a short announcement be made at the annual dinner, explaining the situation.

The question of the name of the club could be discussed at the meeting. Finally, your sub-committee emphasize that the majority of points which they have made are not even recommendations but merely basis for discussion by those who wish to become members of any club which might be formed.

*[From the original ms by Phill Williams. Ed.]*

## 50 Years of ULGMC - a Synopsis of Events

*[Notes compiled from Club Newsletters and AGM minutes, by Jill Bennett]*

**Sat. 21st. Jan. 1950** Meeting of a Sub-Committee set up to investigate the formation of a senior section of the University of London Mountaineering Club (ULMC), held at Westbourne Gardens, London. On **Sat. 20 May 1950** the inaugural meeting was held of the **ULMC (Senior Branch)** with 9 prospective members. The President was **Phill Williams**, Hon.Sec. **Stella Chapman**, Hon.Treas. **Norman Jones**. By the first AGM on 16th Dec. 1950 (at the Marquis of Granby Hotel, London) the Club had 21 members, and meets were arranged at Maes Caradoc, in December, Glencoe at Easter, and camping at Llyn Bochlywd at Whitsun. A meet was planned in the Alps, but had to be cancelled through illness. One club member made a daring climb of the **Skylon** on London's Festival site in May 1951. In August 1951 the first Alpine meet was held - to the **Silvretta** in Austria.

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### First Club Meet at Maes Caradoc, December 1950.

*[Edited extracts from the Club's first Log Book, describing meets from Dec. 1950 to April 1953. The first Meet held at Maes Caradoc, 26th - 30 December 1950, was quite dramatic. Ed.]*

Seven (of the current 18) members attended this meet, and were persuaded to participate in making a film of their first climb. This involved taking a camera and tripod up through Cwm Idwal to the foot of the Cruciform Arete, which was icy and treacherous. The film director (John Fowle) sent most of the party up the arete to be filmed in suitable positions, and Phil Gurdon obliged the camera by climbing onto the skyline, then risking his neck climbing onto the tea-table. A minor mishap proved to be a blessing when John dropped the tripod about 200 ft, with only minor damage, but in descending to retrieve it, discovered the snow slope to be an ideal place from which to shoot. Stella Chapman was then called upon to freeze in position for some time whilst filming took place. After the climbers reached the summit, Stella and John retired (eventually) to the hut to thaw out. Having lit the fire, and prepared supper, they decided that if the climbers had not returned by 8.30pm they should go in search for them. Accordingly, at 9pm they left for Idwal, one by the old road and one by the new. John quickly met up with Phil Gurdon and Geoff Smith, who reported that Inez McLaughlan had sprained or cracked her ankle, and Phil Williams had accompanied her to hospital in Bangor.

The climbing party had been up the Gribin Ridge, descended via Bristly Ridge, and traversed for over an hour in beautiful snow, before visibility worsened due to cloud and snow. The compass being found unreliable, they ended up on steep snow-covered rocks, near Glyder Fach. Rather than continue into the unknown, they decided to retrace their steps to Gribin, and by 4pm they judged (with the aid of the map and compass) they had reached the head of Cwm Idwal. A long snow slope gave an opportunity to gain from the approaching darkness, by glissading down. But while attempting to glissade, Inez caught her left foot, damaging her ankle. It was impossible for her to walk, so she was lowered down on a rope about 200ft, and then carried a further 200ft by various members. It then became clear that the party was in fact descending to Llyn Bochlywd. As darkness fell, they decided that someone should go for help, and Geoff accordingly set off for Idwal Youth Hostel to raise a stretcher party. He arrived there at 5.30pm in a battered condition himself, having slipped several times on large patches of ice, and wondering whether a 2nd stretcher party might be needed! However, he made it, and those at the Youth Hostel responded magnificently to the call for volunteers, 17 people setting out with stretcher and numerous torches, with Geoff as guide.

Meanwhile, Inez had been carried down to Llyn Bochlwyd and along the track to Idwal by the others, but was suffering from shock and the cold. By the time the two parties met at the outflow of the Llyn, (6.30pm) the two Phils had gallantly given her much of their clothing to wear, so the sight of the rescuers torches was extremely welcome! It was then discovered that the stretcher was without ropes, so the remaining rope of the climbing party was used to help lower the stretcher, with Inez, down the treacherous slope. The rescue party reached the Youth Hostel about 8pm, with much relief all round. Inez had cracked her fibula, which was duly plastered and she spent a night in hospital, thawing out. She was able to leave the next day, and re-joined the meet, having been collected by Stella and John, who drove up the old road back to Maes Caradoc. It appears that Inez stayed on, since she is reported as providing supper while the others were out walking. *[Some photographs taken during this meet are displayed at Caseg.]*

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*Synopsis continued -*

In 1952 President **Steve Hall** died in a motor cycle accident. Club membership had risen to 32. The first mention of a **Club Hut** arose in 1953, and there were suggestions for changing the name of the Club. (NL 15) At the 1953 AGM the Club was renamed the “**London Graduate Mountaineering Club**” (LGMC). One suggestion was the ‘Marchmont Mountaineering Club’ (as Committee meetings were held at a member’s home in Marchmont St). Other suggestions were the ‘London Academic Mountaineering Club’, or the ‘Senior Mountaineering Club of the University of London’.

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### *Extracts from the Club ‘Minute Book’*

The ULMC were already considering the possibilities of a Club Hut as early as 1953, and this was fully supported by the graduate club, whose Hon. Sec. (Laura Ford) was co-opted on to the Hut Committee. At the 4th AGM in 1953, she reported: *the Club’s attempts, jointly with the ULMC, to obtain a suitable hut for both Clubs. The Hut Committee had concentrated on attempts to secure the building of a hut in North Wales and plans of a suitable hut had been produced. It was estimated that such a building would cost £3,000, and attempts were to be made to secure grants from the University and from the BMC. Negotiations had begun with the National Trust for a suitable site in the Nant Ffrancon valley, but any progress had been made early in the year, and members expressed disappointment at the apparent lack of enthusiasm on the part of ULMC.*

At the 5th AGM in November 1954, the President, Bernard Scanlan reported that: *Membership had increased to 43 and certain older and distinguished climbers were now showing an interest in joining the Club. The Club’s relationship with the ULMC had improved during the year, and the President had accepted the chairmanship of the ULMC Hut Committee. The Christmas meet had been held at Buttermere (FRCC) attended by 12 members; five members had attended a most enjoyable meet at Easter in Glen Shiel. A number of members had visited the Alps during the summer, and two members had also been in Spitzbergen.*

By November 1955, the Hon. Secretary (Stella Chapman) reported that her: *typewriter, which she had used for a number of years in carrying out work for the Club, (& for ULMC before that) was now in need of urgent repairs, or possibly replacement, and asked that a grant be made from the Club funds for this purpose. It was agreed that the sum of £8 be granted . . . in respect of essential repairs which had now become necessary . . . and that a grant of £2 per annum be made to the Hon. Secretary for the time being . . .*

At the other end of the scale, the 6th AGM in 1955 discussed ways of raising £2,500 (with the ULMC) as the cost of building a Club Hut. Professor Huggett *had secured a promise of the last £500 towards the building of a hut, and it was now the ULMC's intention to try to raise the remaining approx. £2,500 required through its affiliated clubs and through the college of the University.*

In 1956 at the 7th AGM the President (Bernard Scanlan) commented that: *the Club did not seem to be attracting any new members from the ULMC. The reason for this was possibly due to National Service claiming members of ULMC as soon as they left University.* The Hut Fund stood at £66.2s.6d, but the estimated cost of the hut had risen to £4,000. Suggestions of a separate hut for LGMC members proved impractical due to the small membership, and the AGM in 1957 agreed that the only way to obtain a hut was by joining forces with ULMC. This might have the benefit of a closer liaison between the two Clubs and encourage ULMC members to join LGMC upon graduation.

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*Synopsis continued -*

In Sept. 1955 the Hut Committee of ULMC (Chairman **Bernard Scanlon**) began planning to build a hut in the Nant Ffrancon area of Snowdonia. The Hut Fund commenced with the promise of £500 from the University, obtained by **Professor Huggett**. (NL 23) Meanwhile, **Walter Dowlen** and others went to Norway. **Vincent Lee-Brown** planned a trip to **Maladetta Massif** of Pyrenees next summer. (NL 25) At Christmas 1955 **Tom Fletcher** and **Jerry Smith** went to the **Ruwenzori** area in Africa and climbed 12 peaks including one previously unclimbed - **The Great Tooth**. **Edward Williams** was in the **Karakoram**. **Jerry Smith** was reported still climbing VS's, and off to South Georgia for the International Geophysical Year. (NL 29)

During 1957 members made new routes in the **Cairngorms** and **Torridon**, others had been to the **Himalayas**, and **Spitzbergen**, and there were suggestions of a **Club Badge** and **Club Log Book**. (NL 31) The Club joined BMC in 1958. (NL 33) **LGMC** considered purchasing Tyn-y-Maes as a hut (for sale at £250) but it was decided to support ULMC's plan to build a hut instead. Members held a meet in the Alps in 1958, at **Chamonix**, and completed the High Level Route. (NL 34) **Stella and Humfrey Berkeley** went to Lapland - reaching the **Kebnekaise Fjallstation** the first by that route. They made the year's first ascent of the east route to **Kebnekaise**. (NL 37)

In 1959 **Jerry Smith** was killed by a fall while abseiling down from the **Pic Biche**, during the ascent of the **Aiguille Noire de Peuterey**. (NL 39) **Professor Huggett** announced at the AGM that he had obtained sufficient funds for building the ULMC hut in **Snowdonia**. The first suggestion was made for the AGM/Dinner meet to be held in the mountains rather than in London. (NL 40)

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## *The Story of Caseg Fraith* - Laura Hampton

When ULMC started in 1945, conditions were vastly different from now. Accommodation in Snowdonia was limited to Youth Hostels at Idwal, Capel Curig and Llanberis and climbing club huts owned by the Climbers Club (Helyg and Ynys Ettws) – were available to women. The Pinnacle Club (Cwm Dyli) was women only; and the MAM hut (Glan Dena), but were let out only to members and kindred clubs. The only available accommodation (privately owned but generously let out) was Maes Caradoc, the scene of early ULMC meets. Camping equipment was poor and expensive and transport was limited to trains to Bangor, and buses which went only to Bethesda and Llanberis. Right from the start of the club, therefore, the aim became to have our own hut, which could also be used as a bargaining counter, to get reciprocal rights with other clubs - with huts in either Wales or the Lake District.

In 1949 much of the land in Snowdonia was owned by the Penrhyn estate (Nant Ffrancon) and the Vaynol estate (Llanberis valley). Approaches were made to see if any suitable cottage might be available. The Vaynol estate offered Bryn Coch above Llanberis on the Snowdon railway and negotiations commenced in 1950. We were only offered a 7-year, full repairing lease and, when the cottage was badly vandalised it was felt that it was in too bad a condition to warrant further consideration. In 1952 the situation changed, when Lord Penrhyn died and left the estate to the National Trust. As soon as the club heard this, the committee decided to approach the Trust to see if any accommodation was available, or if they would let us build. John Burrows made the initial contact and we were delighted to be offered the chance to build in 1953. We were the first, and the Scouts were the second to apply. No-one else has been given permission.

At about this time, the then President of ULMC, Professor G. I. Finch, resigned and the question arose of whom to approach to succeed him. After discreet enquiries among the Senate House staff, I got the message that Professor Huggett, Professor of Physiology at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, would be an excellent person to ask. He had been involved in the inauguration of the Club and had kept an interest in it. I was deputed to go and persuade him to take on the job. I remember clearly going to see him and asking if he would be kind enough to take on the Presidency. He replied that he did not want to be a mere figurehead and asked what we wanted him to do. I took a deep breath and said "Raise the money for a Club hut". He thought for a moment and then said "Yes".

Without his support, Caseg Fraith would never have been built. He had the necessary drive and clout with the university authorities to get a loan of £4,000 from the University and to get as Trustees - Dr. Logan, the Principal of the University, Dr. Dunsheath, the Chairman of Convocation (whose wife was at that time a member of the Abinger Himalayan expedition). Sir Edwin Herbert, the University Solicitor and Alpine Club member, Sir Owen Saunders from Imperial College, Professor Huggett and Bernard Scanlon, (President of ULGMC), completed the list of Trustees. Without this powerful backing from the University we would have found it impossible to raise the money to get the hut built. The University architect designed the building and used to visit the site in his Rolls Royce to the amusement of the builders, Watkin Jones of Bangor.. He was more used to building high-rise blocks than huts in the middle of a Welsh bog! By 1961 the hut was built – the shell of a building and it was over to us to make it usable, and then add the comforts that are seen today.

The stipulation on planning was that the building should look like a cow-shed from the road and only small, high windows were permitted on the northern side. The first job was to put in Elsan toilets (with parties to dig holes to empty them each weekend) and then arrange the cooking arrangements. There was a small coal-burning stove in the centre of the room so a long aluminum covered bench was put in down the east side for people to use their primus stoves to cook on. Lighting consisted of candles stuck in beer bottles. The dining-table was from the mortuary at the UC Pathology department! Wooden bunks were put in. Electricity was later installed from a generator, which we shared with Mr. Williams at the farm, until the Electricity Board finally brought a line up the valley.

Calor gas cooking was introduced and later, in 1980, electric cookers replaced the gas. The small central stove was replaced by a bigger one from which central heating and hot water supply were run. Water always came from a spring up the hillside and a plastic pipe was run down the field – sometimes to be blocked by the odd frog! The Elsans were soon replaced by flush sanitation, a big improvement, though until quite recently there was a recurring problem of blockages, usually a feature of Easter Meets. Mike Tuson put in the cosy sitting-room when he was warden. Steadily the hut has been improved and each warden has contributed a major change. We now have a hut that has passed the fire regulations, has a toilet for the disabled, and a telephone.

In 1970 it was decided that we should seek another hut, in Derbyshire. Again, it was John Burrows who did the initial work in finding and obtaining Fallcliffe. Professor Edwin Power was President of ULMC and he led the fund-raising and obtained a loan of £1500 from the University. This time much of the money was obtained via donations and loans from members. Again, it is a story of gradual improvement and much hard work by members. The recent installation of a bore-hole has solved the perennial problems of the water supply which kept on freezing up in winter or drying up in times of drought.

As we enter the new millennium, both the huts are in good shape and get good use. They have provided shelter over the years to all sorts of groups and clubs as well as students and graduates of the University of London. We all have our memories of very happy times there and friendships formed which endure. Professor Huggett would have been pleased.

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*Synopsis continued -*

By 1960 the new Hut was built, but not habitable in time for the AGM on 26th Nov. 1960, the first held at the **Pen-y-Gwryd (PYG) Hotel**, Nant Gwynant,. (Dinner cost 15/6. Club subs. 8/6) **John Burrows** had been climbing in **Connemara** on the **Twelve Pins**. **Geoff Williams** and **Paul Rayner** had been in **Skye**. (NL 42) The official opening was fixed for the weekend of 27-29th Oct. 1961. It was to be called "**Caseg Fraith**", the name of a Llyn about a mile away.(NL 44) 50 tons of rubble were ordered for the car park and road to the hut, and working parties organised this, and other jobs. The charge was 1/6 for club members. **Derek Quested** lead a party to **Lyngen**, N. Norway, in 1962, which included **Ian Chuter** and **John Burrows**. From 2 camps at Jaegervatnet and Jiak'kevari a number of peaks were climbed including **Rundfjellet** (1413 m). **Miss E M Fawcett**, ended a successful Alpine trip by climbing the **Matterhorn**.

Sat. 28th Oct. 1961 the **Club Hut "Caseg Fraith"** was opened by **Prof. G I Finch**, followed by dinner at Llanberis. About 60-70 ULMC members slept at the hut for the weekend, on mattresses

without bunks, concrete floor, no curtains, partitions or mats. There were Elsans, but no electricity. Members were requested to donate cutlery, crockery, kitchen utensils etc, and to participate in working parties for creating shelves etc. LGMC membership was now 50. (NL 46) Subscriptions were raised to 12/6 single members, 21/- (a guinea) double membership. By next year, the Hut Warden reported the hut was heavily booked almost every weekend. Fees were 2/6 to club members, 4/- for guests. (NL 48) A generator was installed during 1962, and the hut wired for electric light - instead of paraffin lamps. However, in July 1965 the use of the hut was noted as "leaving a lot to be desired", and members were asked to comply with hut rules. (NL 55)

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## ***Guide to Caseg Fraith***

*[These climbing routes were transcribed from the "Caseg Fraith Log Book"]*

### ***Craig Caseg Fraith***

This fine crag lies some distance to the South of the ULMC Hut. The crag is not for beginners but experienced parties should find it well worth a visit. Approach from the hut is via the gate by the rubbish tip, SW of the hut. From here, strike SE across the moor until the foot of the crag is reached (20 secs. from the hut). The crag has 5 main buttresses. The East buttress is a fine rough slab with 3 routes (at present). The central buttress overhangs and has only one free route of high standard. The West buttress is again slabby and has some 3 routes of high standard. A number of other routes are to be found in the corner between the West and Central buttresses. From left to right the routes are:

#### 1) Trivial Crack. M, 10ft

Step into the crack and using foot and hand jams surmount the vertical first section. The angle soon eases and the top section is relatively easy.

#### 2) Bog Wall. Severe, 15ft

Start 2ft to the right of Trivial Crack - an obvious line of footholds - from these it is possible to make a delicate move upwards to reach good handholds above the bulge. Tall climbers will have little difficulty on this route.

#### 3) Craphouse Crack

This route was climbed in 1961 but since this ascent a hold on the lower section has broken away. It is doubtful if the route is still possible.

#### 4) Wedge Crack. VD, 15ft

Round the corner from bog wall is a crack tapering upwards towards the top. Progress is by hand and foot jamming aided by holds on the right wall. The exit is difficult.

#### 5) Rubbish Dump Wall. just VS, 15ft

Up the steep wall 3ft to the right of Wedge Crack. The overhang is difficult and the climbing above delicate for some way. The finishing holds are good. So a variant to the above route is possible. Move right at the overhang and enter the following route at half height.

6) Slab and Groove. Just severe, 15ft

An awkward slab leads to a groove at an easier angle. Straight forward to the top. Delicate. (Hardest is straight up slab, easier by using both L & R sides.)

7) Bailey's Effort. Hard V.S. 12ft

The only weakness in the terrific overhangs of the central buttress lies at the L H side. Bailey's Effort follows this line. The overhang is surmounted by an unusually strenuous mantleshelf on indifferent holds. This leads to a good stance but no belay. An easy slab on the left leads to the summit.

8) The Corner. VS, 12ft

Start at the extreme R H of central buttress. Step up awkwardly. Make an extremely delicate mantleshelf round the corner to the right. A direct start might be feasible.

Led 4th June 1963 by W A Towlson

Routes 1-6 East buttress area

7-8 Central buttress

9-11 West buttress (pages missing)

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***The Girdle Traverse*** (Or "What the Butler never saw")

6-7th Sept. 1963

One bivouac was made, after a retreat via the Tyn-y-Coed, and was held on a comfortable ledge under the north corner.

1) Starting from Death Bivouac in the entrance couloir climb the detached pillar until it is possible to make a bold step on to the fierce South wall. Traverse along the line of niches beneath the overhanging roof to the SW (Bognatti) pillar. Protection on the pitch, as on the whole route, is negligible. Grade 7, rubbers essential.

2) *The Bognatti Pillar*

From the recess of the immense cave at the foot of the south face of the pillar, move with difficulty, or possibly ease, on to the notorious West face. (Close proximity to the usual bivouac site in the area) This pitch which ends at the "*Breche a dormir*" has been compared with the Piz Badile by some, and by others to a pissy deal. Grade 8, rubber balls.

3) *The West face of the ULU Grande.*

This pitch represents the upper limits, artificial climbing, and is next only to the Elan Grooves as a fierce lead. 300ft of rope absolutely essential. 3 pitons enable a move on to the fiercely overhung recessed North face, to be made. A5 & Grade 9, VD in the extremities.

4) *The Nordwand*

Traverse at the level of the overhang to the drainpipe gully at the far East of the wall. The strenuous nature of the overhang renders possible a limited number of ascents only. Grade 10, rubber trousers.

5) Traverse easily along the East wall to the high slate belt at the SE corner (Fissure Black). Descend from this to the Ramp. A nearly horizontal belt of white stonnonns rock whose origin is shrouded in low cloud. Grade 11, rubber whatsits.

*Synopsis continued -*

During 1965 membership rose to 67. **Reg Monks** traversed several Alpine peaks including **Mont Blanc**, **Mont Blanc de Tacul** and **Mont Maudit**, but despite being swept off the **Col de la Fourche** by a wet snow avalanche, finished the holiday by doing the **Grandes Jorasses**. (NL 59) On Sat. 23rd Oct. 1965 **Stan Smith** was killed in a fall on Tryfan, on the day of the 16th AGM. During the meeting, it was suggested that an alternative venue be found for the next AGM, to allow for 40 members. Calor gas was to be installed in the hut, and they discussed creating separate accommodation for women. **14th May 1966** was the first '**London Dinner**' at 'The Havelock' Grays Inn Rd, (cost £1.1s per head) a "general meeting to discuss next season's meets, and allow members to get to know each other". It was attended by 31 members, and planned to repeat the event. The AGM was held at Dolbadarn Hotel, **Llanberis** on **Sat. 8th Oct. 1966** - cost 19/6, and 50 people attended. Income from the hut was estimated at £400 pa, and the remaining £200 owing to the UL Senate was to be paid off in June 1967. Thereafter money would be available for hut improvements. A memorial to **Stan Smith** was proposed, in the form of a library of mountaineering books in the hut - now kept in the small sitting room.

1967 Club membership was now 92. The possibility of **LGMC ties** was investigated, as ULMC already had them. The loan remaining on Caseg to UL Senate was repaid, and ULMC were now interested in acquiring a **further hut**, possibly in **Derbyshire**. (NL 67) On 27th May 1967 electricity cables were laid to the hut, and the work was written up in the **Caseg Log Book** as a climbing route, called **Butler's Eliminate** [see following page] That summer, four LGMC members visited **Kenya (John Burrows, John Coote, Monty Avis and Hugh Gair)**. Several climbs around **Mt Kenya** culminated in an ascent of the **Batian** summit of Mt Kenya. The ascent of **Kilimanjaro** had to be called off due to poor weather conditions. (NL 68)

The **1967 AGM** on **Sat.28th Oct.** was held in the Lake District, at **Grasmere**, with 40 members. There were comments that official meets are mainly attended by "the same small group of faces"! **Dave Lindsay** had been climbing in **Yosemite**, California, and the **Grand Teton** in Wyoming. ULMC wished the income from Caseg to go towards acquiring a second hut - in Derbyshire. A possible property was located at Stoney Middleton, and LGMC put forward suggestions of raising the money needed, via donations and loans from members. Winter 1967-68 saw a severe outbreak of **Foot and Mouth disease** which curtailed the Club's meets, and meant the closure of Caseg Fraith for some months, while mountain areas such as the Peaks, North Wales, Lake District etc. were closed to visitors. (NL 70-72)

The first Whitsun meet camping at **Trevedra Farm, Sennen, Cornwall**, was held in 1968. LGMC members were then planning an expedition to **East Greenland**, and a cottage between Hathersage and Grindleford was being investigated as a possible Club hut. (NL 73) On 21st July 1968 **Prof. A G Huggett** died in Edinburgh. As President of ULMC 1952-62, he was largely responsible for the raising of money to build Caseg Fraith. (NL 74) The 1958 AGM on 12th Oct. was held at Grindleford, Derbyshire. Membership was now 108. **Derek Fordham** gave an account of his expedition to **Greenland**; **Heather Wheeler** recounted a family meet canoeing in the **N Stauning Alps of Greenland**; **Stella Berkeley** showed photographs of **Yosemite** and the **New Zealand Alps**. **Edward and Helen Thomas** wrote from **Sialkot**, W Pakistan - they had been in the **Kagan Valley**. **Colin Hyde** wrote from the **Punjab**, having been over the **Rohtang Pass**, and mountaineering with a Sherpa. The death was announced of **Hugh Gair**, who fell on Clogwyn du'r Arddu in July. (NL75)

***Butler's Eliminate*** New Route  
470ft. Exceptionally Severe 27th May 1967.

Boots advisable. 500ft cable required. Not recommended for small parties.

Start by hut doorway.

- 1) 15ft Easy spadework from storeroom to wall.
- 2) 100ft. Easily under the wall. This leads to an exceptionally severe group. Hand pick work leads in 50ft to an infinite boulder. Around this by a shallow traverse to the left. Somewhat easier work to stance by wall in 30ft.
- 3) Under the wall with some difficulty. Pleasant spade work for some 200ft to within sight of the finish. Stances etc plentiful.
- 4) Heavy spade work down to the stream. The route follows an obvious weakness but is usually wet and greasy. Strenuous but of no technical difficulty.

First ascent 26-27 May. R Bailey, M Esten, P Owens, B Cunningham, W Towlson, J Coote. Alternate leads.

There remains an obvious finishing patch across the stream. This is at present unled.

The first party were overcome by exhaustion at the end of the 4th patch and traversed off abandoning 400ft of cable. It is proposed that the abandoned cable be used to convey electricity to the hut from the generator at the farm but the idea seems rather far fetched.

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*Synopsis continued -*

In Sept. 1969 the Club was **re-named the University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club (ULGMC)** following adoption of the new Constitution. (NL 80) The next AGM on Sat. 18th Oct. reported further delays in the purchase of Fallcliffe cottage. A **Club Log Book** was obtained to replace the original, lost some years before. Some details of the purchase of Fallcliffe cottage as a Club hut were given. (NL 82).

At the London Dinner on 15th May 1970 (at Hatfield) **John Burrows** showed slides of his trip to the Central Sahara, where he climbed **Dj. Telertheba** (2455m), crossed the **Arak Gorge**, and walked the **Tassili Plateau**. During 6-7th June 1970 about 15 members did the **Lyke Wake Walk**, 40 miles across the Yorkshire Moors, in under 24 hours.. (NL 84) By the 21st AGM at Beddgelert, on 17th Oct. 1970, contracts had been exchanged on **Fallcliffe** cottage, and the first working party had been there to survey what jobs needed tackling. The idea of a **Club Tie**, and **badge**, were debated. (NL 86)

The **21st Anniversary of the Club** was celebrated at Caseg on 15th May 1971 with 10 founder-members present, and marked by a special issue of the Newsletter. (NL.88) In April 1971 **Derek Fordham** had been on an Anglo-Danish expedition to cross **Greenland**. **Mike Tuson** had taken his converted MFV 'Ice King' to East Greenland, where he went to climb **Ingolfsfaeld**. **Dave Lindsay** and others were planning a trip to **Peru** to climb in the **Urubamba** area. (NL87)

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## A Brief History of ULGMC

Laura Hampton and John Burrows

*[This first appeared in "Mountaineering", the official journal of the BMC, 1970, vol.5, no.7]*

This year, the University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club holds its 21st Annual General Meeting and dinner. Between 40 and 50 members, men and women, will probably be present and attend the meet, which this year will be held in Wales.

Membership, which is open to graduates, teaching staff, post graduates and members of the University of London, together with wives or husbands, as the case may be, is now about 150 and the number has been gradually growing during the last few years - in particular since 1961, when the University Graduate Club built and opened Caseg Fraith, their Hut in the Ogwen Valley, an occasion which has undoubtedly had a catalytic effect on the membership of the Graduate Club, which is affiliated to the former.

In January 1950, a small group of friends who used to climb together and who were in their final year, formed themselves into a committee to investigate the formation of a Senior Section of the University of London Mountaineering Club, in order that they might continue to meet after they came down from London. This was the beginning of the ULMC (Senior Branch), to be later known as the London Graduate MC, and by the end of the second year, membership was over 30, there had been at least two marriages within the Club, and also a birth. Membership however remained around the 40 mark throughout most of the 1950's.

The desire to continue climbing and to keep in touch with friends was the primary reason for the formation of the Graduate Club. ULMC, itself formed only 1945, initially drew its support from the smaller colleges as the larger ones and many of the teaching hospitals had clubs of their own, many with a long history. Being a new club, there was no link with existing senior clubs as could be found with Oxford and Cambridge University MC's and the Climbers Club, and it was difficult to get into most of the senior clubs without such contacts. But the desire to keep in touch with the University Club was of equal concern: as the Undergraduate Club was still in its early stages there were many ways in which it was felt that graduate members could help - by assistance in the training of new members and, even more important, in the acquisition of a hut. This latter had been an objective for some time and it was realised that in the care and administration of a hut, the graduate section could be of great help. This has proved to be the case and it was the Graduate Club who obtained the site of the present property, provided some of the Trustees, helped finance the building and ever since has provided the Hut Warden. Now a second hut is a possibility and the Graduate Club will help in the same way once again.

Thus, for the first 10 years membership remained small, but comprised a dedicated group, who by virtue of post graduate work and teaching posts abroad, travelled far and wide and indeed climbed throughout much of the accessible world. South America was financially not accessible in those days, but nevertheless a former Vice-President of ULMC worked in Peru for 2 years and climbed there extensively. South Georgia came within the range of one member, and the Himalayas, Karakoram, East Africa and the North Continent of America were all visited.

The very nature of the club membership ensured that it was, on the one hand a group of friends,

but on the other hand a club for highly individual personalities, so if 6 people turned-up for a club meet in Scotland, this was thought well attended. Meanwhile, in twos and threes, members would leave their mark all over Europe, including, even then, Iceland, Spitzbergen and the Pyrenees and other fringe countries. Had the Soviet Union not declined at the time, someone's boot might have trod the Caucasus in 1954.

Throughout the 1950's, the LGMC as it was then known, regarded itself as a London based club, holding indoor meets and dinners at the Marquis of Granby, the Bricklayers Arms, or some West End pub. Only with the growth in membership and the full realisation that just as many of them lived well away from London, were annual dinners held in North Wales, and later other climbing areas. And with this growth had come the universal opportunity in the 1960's for easier travel, the two ingredients bringing about modest sized expeditions - to East Greenland in 1969 and Mt Kenya in 1967.

Probably more than half the membership of the club is made up of medics and the teaching profession, and a very large proportion of the remainder are in some branch of the sciences or one of the professions. Because of the number who are lecturing, it is possible to hold meets of a week's duration, and a feature in recent years has been meets in Cornwall at Whit, and Scotland at Easter, and in addition to normal weekends, one or two families usually manage to organise themselves into a family meet. But the 1970's open up new prospects, with more and more new members and with children of some of the original members now well into their teens.

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*Synopsis continued -*

By Sept. 1971 much work had been done on Fallcliffe cottage [*see pp21-24*] Members had also been busy elsewhere; **Mike Esten** had skied the **Haute Route**; **John Burrows** had been ballooning again; and **Derek Fordham** wrote about the Anglo-Danish Trans Greenland Expedition. Twelve club members had taken part in an Expedition to the **Steebstrubs** area of **East Greenland** [*see pp29-33*] Another 7 members climbed in **Peru**. [*described on pp25-6*] (NL 89) **Bill Renshaw** had been climbing the **NE face of Piz Badile**, in the **Bregalia**, camping at the **Rosengarten**, and other climbs. **John Coote** wrote from **Venezuela** of climbing the local peak **Pico Avila**, 7,000ft. He was then heading for the **Andes** where he climbed a 15,000ft peak with 2 others, both of whom subsequently had fatal falls on the way down. (NL90)

**Fallcliffe** cottage was opened on 11th Dec. 1971 by **Sir Jack Longland**, with **Prof. Edwin Power** and about 50 members and guests. **Mike Warden** wrote from the **Falkland Is.** where he was finishing his 2-year term with the British Antarctic Survey. **Derek Quested** was walking in the **Hardanger Plateau** of Norway. (NL 91) **Bob Cunningham** had been climbing in New Zealand - the first winter traverse of the 3 peaks of **Mt Cook**. **Tim Marshall** was badly injured in a fall at Birchens Edge, and **Chris Smith** was killed in an avalanche while attempting the second winter ascent of **Mt Edith Cavell** in Jasper National Park, Alberta. (NL92) **Alison Onyszkiewicz** (née **Chadwick**) was part of a team who climbed a new 5,000ft route on the SW face of **Noshaq** (24,580ft) which put 7 members on the summit. They also climbed other peaks. Dr **Noel Dilly** was awarded the **George Medal** for rescuing a man from a crevasse in Greenland. **Bob Nunn** had climbed the **NE face of Piz Badile**, **Spigolo Giallo** route and others in the **Dolomites**. (NL96)

## The Acquisition of Fallcliffe Cottage - John Burrows

Our first hut, Caseg Fraith, was officially opened by Professor Finch in October 1961. It was to prove popular and a steady source of income, so much so that the loan made by Senate towards the cost of construction was repaid by 1967, and it seemed a good idea to repeat the exercise somewhere else. This was the gist of my brief when, in summer 1967 during a Froggatt meet, Bill Towlson, then Club Secretary, asked whether I would be willing to look around for a likely cottage in Derbyshire. I did after all, live in the adjoining county, and I was in the business of estate agency. Valuable time was lost at the beginning because I was off to Mt. Kenya, but on my return, started house hunting in earnest. The Old Police House at Stoney Middleton (price £1950) was an interesting possibility; sufficiently interesting for me to lodge a planning application for change of use (later granted) and a number of Club surveyors, (Tuson, Renshaw and Campbell) inspected in October. But none of us were happy with the lack of car parking and the property was sold to someone else.

Callow Bank Farm with 16 acres, just below Stannage, enjoyed a super position, but it had a horrific settlement crack in the gable end. Some lucky purchaser got it for £1600. I inspected 8 properties the following spring - notable for the worst outbreak of foot and mouth disease the country had ever experienced - before stumbling upon Fallcliffe Cottage. I was to find out later that it had been given up by the signalman at Hathersage Station because of the lack of water.

The Club's team of surveyors were again summoned (Graves, Warden, Nunn, Lindsey) and towards the end of May we conducted an in-depth inspection, which included a visit to Leam Hall to investigate the source of water. Many official enquiries then followed. The provision of a piped water supply and septic tank drainage were the main essentials; mains gas and electricity were already connected. A planning application was made, a water sample sent for analysis to Will Butler, and a feasibility study submitted to the Club Committee. I had been informed that the asking price was £1600, and I estimated the cost of essential repairs and connection to services would be £800. Edward Williams, then President of ULMC, had negotiated a loan from Senate of £1500, so consequently we made a conditional offer of £1600, only to be told that the Leam Estate had already received offers of more, and £1750 was the least they would now accept. Far more problematic was the Planning Authority. Our application had already missed two meetings and was about to miss a third because the County Surveyor was steamed up about the potential traffic hazard. The cottage seemed ideal and would fulfill all our needs - but we were in danger of losing it.

The Club AGM was in Derbyshire that year (1968) and members were able to see the cottage and judge it for themselves. Without planning consent to use it as a Club house, we could not justifiably commit ourselves, so some hectic telephoning amongst the Club's legal members ensued, and we discussed the possibility of some of us buying it privately and then inviting Club members to stay as guests, thereby avoiding any contravention of planning law. Meanwhile, after responding to more questions about numbers and frequency of use, a letter was received at the end of October 1968 indicating that the Planning Authority would recommend our use for one year - on a trial basis - but emphasising there would be no guarantee that this would continue, and the question of full planning permission, was to be considered in the light of experience; did I agree? This was a curious letter, as they were asking if I would agree to their decision before they made it.

Throughout October I had been in constant touch with the agent for the Estate, discussing the possibility of additional car parking, and anxious not to miss out on the purchase. There were three other interested parties, and it was clear that the price had to be about £1850, which I considered fair. It was therefore no surprise when I was asked to submit a sealed bid with our final offer, and this I did on the same day as I agreed to the Planning Authority's curious request. The offer made was £1904. Also that day, I received a detailed 4-page assessment from Paul Graves on the likelihood or otherwise of Betterment Levy becoming liable under the 1967 Land Commission Act. Provided we could play the 'charity card', we could probably steer clear of this exercise, but older surveyors may remember something of the time-consuming calculations that became necessary following the grant of a 'change of use'. Negotiations for a drainage easement over the adjoining field ensued.

It was, nevertheless, the first week of January 1969 before our offer was accepted and I was able to write to solicitors, and although another 2 months had gone by, we still had no formal planning consent - even for the offered period of one year. It was March before they dispatched a decision, and when it came it was a refusal, on the recommendation of Bakewell RDC. It had taken 7 months for them to make up their minds.

Within 2 days of this there was a break-in, and the police were in touch. No draft contract had been received by our solicitor and I was in negotiation with the Peak Park Authority, suggesting we could demolish the stable and extend the parking area. I was also in touch with the agent, asking if he would be willing to include more land in the sale so that we could extend the parking. He meanwhile, had been instructed to look for another purchaser, not surprisingly! My letter to the Peak Park Authority was passed to the County Surveyor, and then the Chief Constable, and still nothing happened despite regular chivvying and letters expressing my outrage at their inability to reply. In October, the agent confirmed that the property was still available, and in November the Peak Park Planning Board (the professional planners, who had never been opposed to our proposed use) invited me to a site meeting with members of the Planning Committee (Bakewell RDC). I was there, waiting for them when they arrived. Six cars - all parked in the road - admittedly they did not stay long. With one acclaim, they agreed with my suggestion for additional parking, and thought our proposed use of the cottage was a first class idea. Since the suggestion involved additional land, this meant a new planning application.

When I got home, there was a letter from the agent to say that the trustees had received a more substantial offer and they were going to sell elsewhere. I don't think this was posturing, but nevertheless, the next weekend I looked at a few disused railway stations on the Darley Dale line, just in case we had to start again. A few days later, having told the agent of my progress with the planners, he enquired if I was interested in proceeding at £2000.

December 1969, and a new planning application. I re-affirmed our offer to purchase at £1904, bearing in mind the deterioration which had occurred, and lo and behold, planning consent for 3 years was granted on 6th January 1970. Two days later there was a letter from Bakewell RDC with a Closing Order under the Housing Act, as they considered the property unfit for human habitation.

January 1970 was quite a busy month, and included a site meeting with the agent in order to agree boundaries; a site meeting with our own Club experts (Bob Nunn, Andy Freeman and others); applying to the Trent River Authority for their consent to a septic tank; writing at length

to the RDC Surveyor and of-course our own Club officers; re-instructing our solicitor; plus exercising my mind over security shutters and drawing-up floor plans. Then followed a lengthy exchange of correspondence with solicitors, approval of plans (not always correct) concerning the water and drainage agreements, and submitting our scheme for improvements to the RDC Surveyor (including plans under Building Regulations). Time was also spent in searching for a reliable builder and obtaining alternative quotations, and lining-up gas and electricity services.

With the advent of summer holidays and five trustees to sign, we eventually had an exchange of contracts in October 1970, just in time to announce the fact at the Club AGM, and - with the agent's approval - we had a small work party to make the place secure. This enabled us to get electricity re-connected, as we needed to use an electric drill. Then a real stroke of luck - the blacksmith in my own village quoted £30 to make 2 pairs, and 3 single steel-shutters, complete with hinges and fasteners, for our ground floor windows. Completion of the purchase was forecast for 9th December 1970, so the first 'official' work party was geared-up for the weekend of 12/13th, and the builders instructed to commence work on the roof. Our first priority was to fit the metal shutters, and to lay a pipe down the hillside before yet another winter froze the ground. Twenty five people, plus others for shorter periods, attended that weekend, including a squad of boys from Tom Hodgkinson's school, camping in the garden. The only snag was, we had not completed the purchase - but we carried on all the same - probably unknown to the agent. Completion eventually took place on 21st December 1970. By the following Sunday, we had laid the water pipe down through the wood.

Throughout 1971, there was seldom a weekend without a working party in action. Bill, Monty and others built bunk-beds, Ron Bailey and Bob Parker re-glazed all the broken windows. Andy had done most of the re-wiring by May, and the contractor had excavated for the septic tank and dug out the car park. During this time, we had a 'builders electricity supply', but what was unusual was that the mains gas supply was still connected even though we had no meter. Tom Hodgkinson had brought an old gas cooker from Birmingham, and we simply plugged it in.

There was an exciting weekend in June 1971, when Readymix concrete was poured for the septic tank and the new floors. This was followed by building the Gibson Ingol septic tank - a sort of 3-dimensional jigsaw puzzle - a most satisfactory exercise. These working parties were thoroughly enjoyable, and - possibly because of the diverse skills possessed by Club members - my recollection is that, having announced in advance what were to be the various tasks for the weekend, members simply got on and did whatever they felt they were most suited for. An added enjoyment to all these weekends was the break for lunch at The Plough, just up the road.



We were determined to have the cottage officially opened by the end of the year. The AGM had come round full-circle and was in Derbyshire again, but this was too soon for work to be complete. Basins and loos, fitted furniture in the sitting room, followed by decorations, were still needed. Delivery of foam rubber mattresses and final adjustments to the kitchen were only done on the morning of the official opening by the

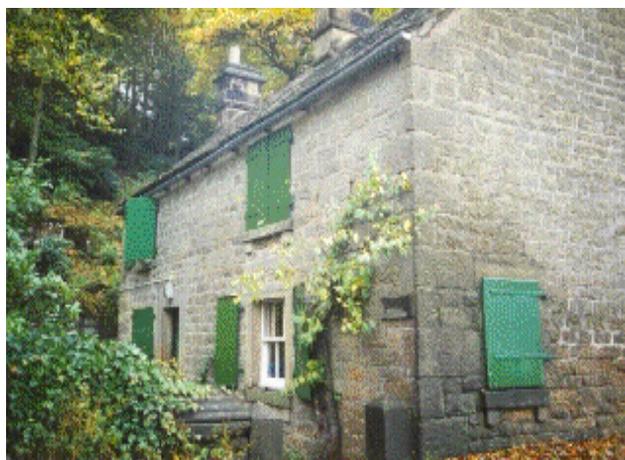
well known mountaineer, broadcaster and educationalist, Sir Jack Longland, on 11th December 1971 - one year exactly since the first official working party. Jack Longland was the obvious choice to invite to the opening, as he was also a resident of Derbyshire, and Chairman of the Peak Committee of the BMC. His formal welcome and speech are preserved on tape, recorded by Alison Chadwick. The rose *Albertine*, by the front door, was planted by Peggy Longland.

Once the opening was over, there was pressure for us to pay rates, although there were numerous services still incomplete. A new rating proposal arrived, and we applied for relief under the General Rate Act. This was not straightforward, and it took until February 1973 before the RDC Treasurer agreed to 50% relief. Meanwhile, there was a drainage agreement to formalise with the County Council and a renewal of our planning consent which expired at the end of 1972. This triggered off enquiries as to why we had not complied with all the conditions that had been imposed - like surfacing the car park and building a retaining wall at the back. I had to point out that we had only legally owned the property for just over a year, during which time we had concentrated on its restoration, and now we had exhausted our funds.

May 1973 saw a renewal of our planning consent for one more year. On a tight budget, we could not rush into doing something, and as far as the car park was concerned, I had to take up with the County Surveyor whether he wanted kerbstone edgings, or any particular kind of surface. Also to explain why our opening to the road was more than 20 feet wide, when he had specified that it should not be less than 20 feet wide!

There was also the insurance to review, and it became apparent that the existing policy was inadequate as it did not cover the risk of impact from vehicles. In no time, it was April 1974 and the planning consent needed renewing again. This time, by August, we achieved a consent which, although restrictive, is permanent.

There is seldom an end to a story. History is a long-running saga, with Club stalwarts doing sturdy work to improve on existing conditions, cope with vandals and break-ins, and deal with officials who are reluctant to advise you of your entitlements. The Hut Wardens bravely shouldered all sorts of responsibilities - to all those members of the Club who showed so much enthusiasm for the job - a big thank you - and I suspect you enjoyed what you did.



## Cordillera Urubamba Peru, July/August 1971 - Mike Esten

Seven members of ULGMC (M.C.Avis, F.W.Barnes, M.J.Esten, D.C.Lindsey, M.Mason, W.A.Towlson and R.J.Woollett) spent some five weeks in Peru, ten days of which were spent climbing from a base camp in Quebrada Pampaminas between the Plateriyayoq and Palanganayoq groups of the Cordillera Urubamba. Another climbing party comprising J.Monks, M.Higgins and T.Welling also shared the same base camp for most of this period. The objectives were to attempt some of the few remaining unclimbed peaks in the Palanganayoq group, also the Punta de Lanzadera in the Plateriyayoq group which had been attempted without success in 1963. These were rather scattered and suggested a compromise base camp in Quebrada Pampaminas. From Lima we travelled to Cusco in four days by way of Huancayo, Ayacucho and Abancay using train and bus. This mode of transport was adopted because of our desire to see something of the countryside and to acclimatise gradually and painlessly. However the pain experienced by the nether regions due to the incredibly rough roads, together with the almost complete lack of visibility caused by the clouds of dust which the bus created, nullified both of these advantages! Flying is to be recommended as a quicker, more comfortable and much safer alternative. From Cusco we travelled by bus via Calca and Amparaes to Paucarpata where ponies were hired for the journey to Quebrada Pampaminas, which took four easy days via Ccachin and Ccochayoq. Base camp was established on August 7th.

After a day of reconnaissance, August 9th. brought success in the form of three first ascents. Pariq (15,700ft \*) was climbed by Lindsey and Esten and later the same day by Mason, Barnes and Woollett. The climb was entirely on sound granite along the east ridge followed by the north ridge. Awqa<sup>+</sup> was climbed by Towlson and Avis using the east ridge to gain the glacier to the south-west and then via rock to the summit. Its height was estimated to be approx. 15,500ft. Welling, Higgins and Monks meanwhile had made the first traverse of the ridge containing the summit Naranqa<sup>+</sup> and estimated its height to be approx. 15,500ft.

On August 11th, two parties left base camp with provisions for four days. Barnes, Esten, Lindsey and Towlson were to make an attempt on Punta de Lanzadera from its southwestern glacier, while Avis, Mason, and Woollett together with Higgins, Monks and Welling were to attempt the impressive rock pinnacle Reluq Turi<sup>+</sup> some 200ft high on the ridge to the north of Q'emi. The first party decided to approach Punta de Lanzadera from the south, and camped the first night in Quebrada Nuesta in poor weather. The second night was spent in a bivouac in bad weather and next morning a heavy plastering of fresh snow killed any hope of success and only a short outing was made before retreating to Camp 1. The party returned to base camp next day, making the third ascent of Q'enti Oeste (16,650ft \*) on the way.

The other party - to Reluq Turi - had set up camp, but were similarly frustrated by bad weather. They were stopped some 30ft short of the summit, by a block of granite which appeared, in such weather conditions, to be quite featureless. After a rest day the weather improved and two parties set out again - Mason, Barnes and Woollett with Welling, Monks and Higgins climbed Q'enti Oeste; while Esten, Avis, Lindsey and Towlson made the first ascent of Altu Nuna (15,900ft \*) via the glacier to the east, finishing up the rocky north ridge.

This latter party then made an attempt on a most impressive rock pinnacle, about 250ft in vertical



By April 1977 Caseg required underpinning, and work started making a path to the hut. *(NL 107)*  
In Sept. 1977 **Phyllida** and **Paul Roberts** were in the **Kulu Valley, N India**. From **Dio Tibba** base camp they climbed a 16,000ft peak, and from **Beag Kund** climbed **Ladaki Peak**, top camp 18,300ft. *(NL 110)*. The first Yorkshire Dales weekend was on 23-25th June 1978, based at the **Parkinson's** home. **Derek** and **Jeni Fordham** had been ski-mountaineering in **Colorada, the Grand Tetons**, and **Yellowstone**. They later climbed in the **Santa Cataline** mountains in Arizona, and descended/ascended the **Grand Canyon**. **Derek** became Club rep. on the **Mount Everest Foundation Committee**. **Alison Chadwick** was off to **Annapurna**. **Bob Cunningham**, as deputy leader of the **New Zealand Everest Expedition**, took part in an 8-man team, who did their own carrying above base camp. *(NL 111)*

In Oct. 1978. **Alison (Chadwick) Onyszkiewicz** was killed while climbing steep ice below Camp V at 24,600ft on **Annapurna**. She was making a summit attempt with Vera Watson when they fell. Alison was an experienced high-altitude mountaineer, and had reached the summit of **Gasherbrum III** (25,090ft) with a Polish female team. *(NL 112)* The **Alison Chadwick Memorial Fund** was set up to provide financial assistance to women undertaking serious climbing projects, in memory of Britain's leading female high-altitude mountaineer. It was to be administered by the Mt Everest Foundation. **Eleanor Cairns** died whilst out for a day on her own on Ben Cruachan. *(NL 113)*

In Sept. 1980. **Mike Tuson** sailed for the **Falkland Is.** on his boat MV 'Copious' to run trips round West Falkland to see the unique wildlife. *(NL 115)* The Huts Sub-Committee proved worthwhile, and Trustees were found, deeds, and various paperwork etc unearthed. *(NL116)* In 1981 **Richard Berry** was in a party of 6 climbers who topped 23,410 **Nun** peak in the **Ladakh Himalayas** by the difficult East Ridge, **first British ascent**. *(NL 118)* **Laura** and **John Hampton** had been in the **Himalayas**, and ascended to 19,000ft on **Everest**. **Janusz Onyszkiewicz** was imprisoned with other members of **Solidarity in Poland** - Club members were urged to write letters reinforcing his importance as a mathematician and mountaineer. The death was announced of early member **Freddie Smith** on Feb.14th 1982. *(NL 120)* **Ruth** and **Ray Greenhall** were appointed Deputy Hut Wardens for Caseg in 1983, making regular visits.

Founder-member **Norman Jones**, first Club Treasurer, was drowned in Malaysia during 1983. The death also occurred of **Ian Elmer** in a plane crash in Scotland. It was decided that loans made by members to help buy Fallcliffe cottage, should be converted to donations, or repaid, as desired. *(NL 125)* **Alan Cunliffe** died in a fall on Dow Craig near Coniston, in 1984. *(NL 129)* Membership records were computerised in 1985. *(NL 131)* There were requests for a **Club tie**, but insufficient numbers to make it worthwhile. A reciprocal agreement was proposed with **Fylde MC** for using their huts in return for use of Fallcliffe. The London dinner was first held at member's home, instead of hotel, due to costs. *(NL 134)*

The **25th anniversary** of Caseg was celebrated on 17-19th Oct.1986, with a buffet meal at the hut, and the AGM. **Pyers Pennant** et al climbed **Mont Blanc**. Former Caseg hut warden **Andy Brazier** died. Reciprocal rights for hut use with Fylde MC commenced for a trial year. *(NL 137)* At a winter meet in **Wasdale**, members climbed most surrounding summits before moving on to **Glencoe**, and **Ben Nevis**, **Carn Mor Dearg**, **Stob na Broige** and other peaks. *(NL140)* **Margaret** and **Geof Batten** spent 6 weeks in USA, mostly camping, and climbed up to **Camp Muir** (10,500ft) and **Mt Rainier** (14,400ft). *(NL142)* In 1989. **Hwyel** and **Ingram Lloyd** were

ski-touring in the **Italian Alps** and **Val d'Isere**, having climbed the **Gran Paradiso**, to the **Roc Basagne** (3,220m). **Phyllida** and **Paul Roberts** spent some time in New Zealand, where they trekked in several National Parks including **Abel Tasman**, **Mount Aspiring**, **Mount Cook** and others. (NL 143) During 1989 **Graham Elson** was on **Mts Kenya** and **Kilimanjaro** in February, and climbed **Mt Mera** (6,450m) in the Nepal Himalaya in November. **Nigel Bowen** (living in New Zealand) climbed **Mt Mania** - over 400m straight out of the sea. The newsletter asked for news of founder-members of the Club for the forthcoming 40th AGM. (NL 146)

In 1990 **Derek** and **Jeni Fordham** were in **Greenland** again, camping at -30 C, dog-sledging and ski-touring. In August they were in the **Pyrenees** at +40 C, explored the mountains around **Pics Canigou** and **Carlit**, making ascents in tropical weather. (NL 148) The 40th AGM and dinner was held 19-21st Oct.1990, with 55 members and guests, including 6 founder-members. **John** and **Valerie Burrows** had been walking in **Greece**, spending 4 days in the **Pindus** mountains, John climbed **Mt. Pergos** (2,000+m). They also got to **Mt Olympus**, via smaller peaks **Scala** and **Mitikas**. (NL149) In Nov.1990 **Graham Elson** crossed **Tilman's Pass** and climbed the north ridge of **Naya Kanga** (5846m) Langtang, Nepal. The **Hampton's** were also in Nepal, and did a trek up the Hinku valley to **Mera Peak**, camping at 19,000ft above the **Mera La**, within sight of five 8,000m peaks. **Geof** and **Margaret Batten** walked again in the **Alpes Maritimes**. The **Peter Pearce** Memorial seat was installed outside Caseg. (NL 150)

The assets of the **Alison Chadwick Memorial Fund** were passed to the **Mount Everest Foundation**, for expeditions in which there were both Polish and British women. (NL 151) In May 1991 a 'Midlands dinner' was held, chez **Battens**. **Janusz Onyszkiewicz** (now Defence Minister in Poland) was in Leeds to receive an honorary degree. It was reported that **Ron Bailey** died of cancer during the summer. (NL 152)

The early days of Fallcliffe were written up by **John Burrows**. [see separate article] **Mary** and **Geoff Williams** spent 3 weeks in the **High Atlas** with Hamish Brown, going over the **Tizi mountains** and onto the **Tichka plateau**. Earlier, Geoff had backpacked the GR20 in Corsica. He hoped to do the **John Muir Trail** the next year. **John Terry** had been in **Alaska**. (NL 153) Members who made loans towards the purchase of Fallcliffe cottage were invited to claim their repayment. A frog (deceased) caused the 3rd water failure at Fallcliffe by blocking the inlet to the water tank! **Duncan Parkinson** had been in **Nepal**, and **Andrew Parkinson** in **E Africa**. **Clive Martin** wrote up the Christmas/New Year 'meet' at **Chamonix**, **Ian Chuter** sent details of his trekking in **Nepal**, and **John Terry** reported on his trip to **Alaska** in 1990. (NL 154)

**Nigel Bowen** wrote from New Zealand about the traverse of the **Tangihuias**, and the **Panekiri** range of mountains. The **Fordhams** had been in **West Greenland**, then Derek went to N Spain ski-mountaineering, camping in the **Picos d'Europa**. He was leading a tour for Arcturus Expeditions later in West Greenland, and then another tour to make the 5th ascent of **Petermann Bjerg** in NE Greenland. (NL 155) **Derek** also took an expedition to **Spitzbergen**. **Margaret** and **Geof Batten** spent 6 weeks in the **USA** and **Canada**, walking 110 miles with about 19,000ft of ascent. (NL 156) The 1992 AGM reported £90 repaid to 8 members, and another 8 members had waived repayments of £160 on their **Fallcliffe loans**. No other requests for repayment had been received, nor for free hut use. The constitution was changed to establish **Honorary Vice Presidents**, and **Laura Hampton** being the first HVP in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Club, from the first meeting in her room in 1950! The death was reported of **Syd Corrigan**.

# Expedition to the Steenstrups Area of East Greenland 1971

## **Introduction**

*This expedition was particularly interesting for its mode of transport. James Webster, who was in charge of land based operation on the expedition, explains the background in his introduction in the General Report of the expedition:*

The first seeds of the expedition were sown in February 1970, when Michael Tuson purchased m.v. Provider which was an old Scottish fishing boat then lying, in a forlorn state, on a mud berth at St. Osyth, Essex. The ship had to be given a new name, due to registration regulations, and in July, 1970, after months of painting and fitting out, Michael and I sailed the renamed Ice King to the Lofoten Islands with a party of climbers. This expedition proved that the ship was capable of such ventures and our thoughts turned to a more elaborate plan in 1971. Two venues suggested themselves - Spitsbergen or a return to East Greenland which Michael had visited in the 1968 and 1969 University of London Graduate Mountaineering Club East Greenland expeditions. I was also on the 1968 expedition. The lure of the still unclimbed Ingolfsfjaeld, together with the probability of better weather on land and more favourable winds at sea, encouraged us to risk the pack ice off the East Greenland coast and return to the area around the Steenstrups glaciers.

It seemed logical to make a further attempt on Ingolfsfjaeld. John Coote, who had attempted to climb the mountain with Michael Eston on the 1968 University of London expedition, lived a few miles from me in Birmingham and was the only person who could provide first-hand information on the south and east faces of the peak. Since we were using our own boat, there would be no difficulty over transporting our climbing equipment. The 1969 University of London expedition had looked east from Steenstrups Nordre Brae to some interesting mountains running inland from a fjord known as Tasilaq. These would provide a second climbing objective after we had finished climbing in the Ingolfsfjaeld area. Information gleaned from maps and aerial photographs indicated that Tasilaq should provide suitable shelter for the boat and a glacier running into the west side of the fjord appeared to provide easy access inland to the mountains we planned to climb.

We intended to widen the scope of the expedition beyond mountaineering, but we were anxious to avoid burdening ourselves with an overambitious scientific programme which we might be unable to fulfill. Michael's association with the Aquatic Club and the fact that two of the members, Christopher Wood and Philip Anfield, were anxious to join the expedition suggested that diving work be included in the programme. Marine specimens were collected for the North Atlantic Research Association and the Natural History Museum. The 1969 University of London expedition had made a botanical collection on behalf of Dr. Geoffrey Halliday of Lancaster University but, unfortunately, part of this had had to be abandoned and we felt that it would be fitting to make further collections around Ingolfsfjaeld and then in the Tasilaq area. A collection was made also for the Natural History Museum.

Having decided on our aims, we were pleasantly surprised to experience little difficulty in finding personnel. We considered that a total of eleven or twelve people would be a suitable number and ended with twelve: Michael Tuson as skipper of Ice King, myself in charge of land operations, six other climbers, two divers and two, very hardworking, general assistants.

Our plans had crystallised by early January and it was possible to arrange several week-ends in Wales which gave the seven climbers a chance to get to know each other and to discuss detailed plans and equipment. At the same time, everybody helped with further fitting out, repair and painting work on the boat and, during a trip to Belgium and Holland over Easter, had the opportunity to experience travel in a small boat.

## **The Outward Journey**

*The members of the expedition were Mike Tuson and James Webster as joint leader; the mountaineering party was Steve Chadwick, Colin and Janet Grime, Tony Mercer, Steve Olivant, and Steve Poulton; Mike Rutland was the doctor. They were accompanied by Robert Coulter as botanist and Philip Anfield and Chris Wood as divers. (There was also a young 'stowaway' not mentioned in the reports who is still a member of ULGMC.)*

**Colin Grime** described the outward journey:

The Ice King left her moorings in the early hours of Saturday 10th July, bound for Greenland. Everybody had arrived in time and the boat was packed from stem to stern with provisions for the two month long expedition.

The sea was kind for the first three days, which was a relief to those of the crew who were not experienced sailors or any sort of sailors. The routine was set with four-hour watches, interspersed with two-hour dog watches. This system meant that each person was on watch either six or twelve hours each day. Sleep was broken into short stretches and one or two of the party tended to be tired and seasick.

South of Peterhead, three warships appeared on the starboard bow like a scene from a film but without the music. On rounding North Ronaldsay, the wind rose and, with it, the sea and after leaving the shelter of Orkney, the Ice King headed into the North Atlantic and battled her way to the Faroes. At one stage, three porpoises provided an escort; three flashing green, submarine ghosts breaking the surface and leaping in unison, they provided much compensation for being seasick.

At night the bow wave produced sparkling phosphorescence in the churning water and the wooden boat creaked and groaned in a terrifying manner as the wind increased to gale. There was a great impression of speed, even at five knots the sea crashed on the bridge roof but, at the helm, the sense of exhilaration was tremendous and steering the boat over giant waves was like a boyhood dream.

A night in the Faroes was bliss after the battering gale. A good meal at the seaman's hostel in Torshavn and a good sleep refreshed the crew. The journey to Iceland was smooth, and; true to its name, the first landfall was a giant ice cap. The boat hugged the rugged South Coast and eventually tied up in Heimaey in the Vestmann Islands. There we were given more fresh fish than we could eat. Leaving Heimaey the same afternoon, the sea stayed calm and the sun shone. Ten killer whales came close to the boat, their high black dorsal fins cutting wickedly through the water. Later, an Icelander said they were harmless and that divers could swim right up to them; however, he had drunk several glasses of whisky!

On the morning after leaving Heimaey, the engine overheated and stopped, and it refused to start since two of the six cylinders had filled with water through a crack in the cylinder head. Removing the cylinder head was a novel experience but luckily the crew could sunbathe as the boat drifted with the sails hanging limp. The crack in the head was filled with haematite and the engine fired. An unscheduled stop of four days was made in Keflavik. By a miracle, a new cylinder head appeared from England. Icelandic hospitality and cream pancakes were worth sampling.

In the Denmark Strait, the first ice was encountered dramatically in thick fog at the very instant the Captain was demonstrating how to reverse the boat in an emergency. Twenty four hours of daylight helped in spotting icebergs. Greenland burst through the curtain of fog, a continuous ribbon of mountains, Navigating through the ice proved easy - a relief in a wooden boat. Greenlanders in a red motorboat, escorted us and gave a friendly wave.

The Ice King tied up at Angmagssalik seventeen and a half days out from England. The quay was lined with round-faced Greenlanders; seal skin kayaks and a pile of polar bear skins set the scene, together with the mournful, haunting howl of the huskies. The first stage was successfully over.

## **The Ingolfsfjaeld Area**

*The expedition sailed on to the Ingolfsfjaeld Area where, as **James Webster** explains, they discovered they had been beaten to the first ascent of the main peak:*

Kangertivatsiaq (originally Kangerdlugssuatsiaq) lies some 130km. north of Angmagssalik and penetrates 36 km. north west into the coastal mountains. A long mountain ridge, of which Ingolfsfjaeld is the highest point, rises from near the northern corner and the magnificent Glacier de France discharges into the head of the fjord. Mountain ridges, with glaciers filling the intervening valleys, rise steeply from the south-west side.

We sailed from Angmagssalik at midday on Wednesday, 28th July, and arrived at Kangertivatsiaq at 0500 the following morning. Our journey north was without serious incident; ice conditions were reasonably good and our echo-sounder warned us of an unexpected shoal in Kangertivatsiaq in time for evasive action to be taken. Future navigators should note that this rock shoal lies in the centre of the Narrows about halfway up the fjord and it is best passed by keeping to the north-east shore.

We had heard in Angmagssalik that the 1st Croatian Mountaineering Expedition had arrived in the area about two weeks earlier and feared that they would have climbed the easiest route up 'our mountain'. The Yugoslavs pitched their shore camp at the foot of the valley which led from the fjord to the southern approaches of Ingolfsfjaeld. As soon as we had dropped anchor, everyone started the task of ferrying our equipment ashore in the two rubber boats and a shore dump was established just above the Yugoslav camp. Hard work on the previous day sorting out food and equipment paid off because, in a short time, all was ashore and we had made up eight loads of essential equipment for the base camp. By this time, we had awoken those Yugoslavs who were residing at their shore camp and learnt that they had climbed the northeast ridge of Ingolfsfjaeld. This was one of our two proposed routes and we gathered that they considered it far easier than the alternative south ridge. We decided that it would be futile to repeat a climb

made only one week earlier and so a summit attempt via the south ridge became our goal. Back-packing up the pleasant valley was simple and endangered only by rubber straps flying off one member's pack frame. After lunch, we headed north out of the valley floor and trudged up steep moraine to find an ideal base camp site at the foot of the glacier which lies below the superb south-west face. While Mike (R), Steve (O), Robert and I levelled off sites for the four tents, Tony, Colin, Steve © and Steve (P) set off to reconnoitre a suitable route. In the meantime, we navvies returned to the boat for the night. Mike (T) had taken Ice King up the fjord to the 1969 ULGMC base camp and collected some valuable equipment which had been abandoned when they were lifted out by helicopter.

The following day, Mike (R), Steve (O) and I climbed back up to base camp with more supplies while Robert and Janet settled in at the shore dump and started work on the botanical collection. Meanwhile some test dives were made from Ice King in order to check the behaviour of the diving equipment in arctic conditions.

Up at base camp we spent the next three days in the routine of climbing, fixing ropes and moving up equipment. We reached the first bivouac ridge and hoped to be in the right position for a light-weight summit attempt by Tony and Colin. It was not successful because we had underestimated the length of route outstanding. They succeeded in fixing a further 490 metres of rope to the second bivouac ridge but had to retreat off the Great Tower leading from this to the summit ridge. The repulse led to a reappraisal of the situation and we decided to carry climbing equipment and food and water for five days, up the fixed ropes to the second bivouac ridge so that Tony, Colin, Steve © and Steve (P) could try to push a new route up the Great Tower and thence along the summit ridge.

At this stage (Thursday, 5th August), Colin and I returned to the shore in order to collect the additional climbing equipment (which included about 60 pegs generously donated by the Yugoslavs) and find out news about the boat. The latter was not encouraging. They had set off north, together with three unemployed members of the Yugoslav expedition, in order to make some preliminary exploration in our northern climbing area, but had been forced to retreat by brash ice which had calved off the end of Steenstrups Nordre Brae and was blocking Ikerssuaq. After a sociable night spent in Tugtilik (Watkins' Fjord), where they entertained some Greenlander fishermen as well as a Danish botanical party who were spending two weeks in the fjord, they returned to Kangertitivatsiaq where further diving work was carried out.

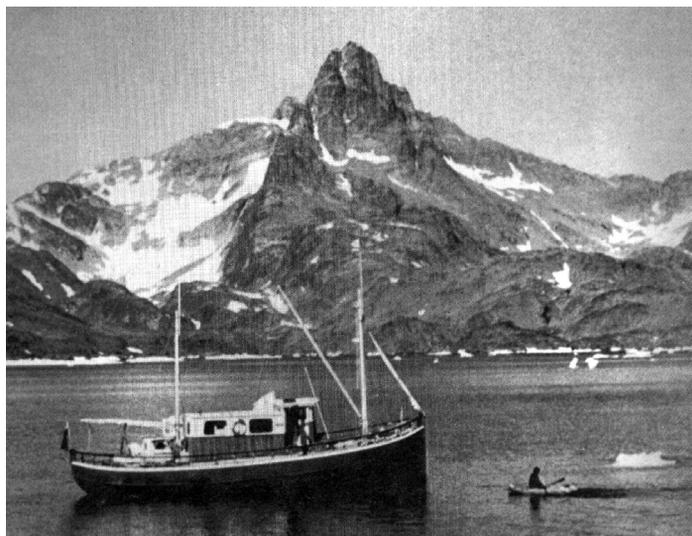
Colin and I walked back up to the base camp on the Thursday evening, but that night the weather broke and on Friday the face was shrouded in cloud. In the afternoon the rain eased off and the clouds started to disperse, so we planned to start climbing the following morning. Chris, Philip and Janet came up from shore dump with more food and I returned with them to the boat for the night, in order to bring up extra essential stores such as tobacco and a bottle of whisky. My hopes of a peaceful night's sleep on Ice King were shattered at about midnight when an enormous iceberg started to disintegrate a short distance from the boat. Faced with a line of ice approaching at 4 knots, we were even more disturbed when we found that exceptional spring tides had left the boat just aground and most unwilling to move from her perilous position. Eventually all was well and with those on board staving off ice with broom handles, boathooks and spars in the best Shackleton style, we moved to clearer water. I decided that life on dry land, even if harder, was more peaceful and returned to base camp early on Saturday morning.

At base camp, preparations were advanced for the final assault. Mike (R), Steve (O) and I were to carry heavy loads of equipment, water and food up to the end of the fixed ropes and then return to base camp while Colin, Tony, Steve (P) and Steve © followed us up the ropes and started the final climb (estimated at four days work) after bivouacking the night on the second bivouac ridge. By midnight, this logistical operation was complete and wearily we three porters jumared down the fixed ropes.

Two days later the attempt was abandoned and on Tuesday, 10th August, we started the task of removing climbing equipment from the face and carrying it back to shore dump. On Wednesday, Mike (T) sailed on a second visit to Angmagssalik with Chris, Philip, Steve (P), Mike (R) and Colin. Steve (P) in the hope of returning to England by air (as he only had four weeks holiday) and Mike (R) in order to attend upon Colin, who was suffering from a virus infection. We cleared the remaining equipment from the face and, by Friday night, everything was at shore dump and organised for the rather different climbing we envisaged in the northern area. Ice King returned on the Saturday morning. Colin was fully recovered and Steve (P) unsuccessful in his attempt to find a suitable flight.

There was no time for reflection on the past sixteen days, equipment was loaded on board and we sailed down the fjord wondering if we would find a way through the ice that had repelled Ice King a fortnight earlier. Our thoughts lay in the unknown area which awaited us.

*The ship sailed to the fjords north of the Steenstrups Nordre Brae Glacier, where a number of successful ascents were made including, Janbjerg, Breubjerg, and Wenbjerg. In addition some ski journeys were made, and further scientific work was completed. On 23rd August the party dried and stowed their equipment in preparation for the return to England.*



Ice King in Long Oscars Havn (*Photograph Mike Tuson*)

*Synopsis continued -*

**Tim Marshall** was awarded an **MBE** at the New Year Honours in 1993, for his services to sport for the disabled. **John Burrows** had been trekking in **Nepal**, including a circuit of the **Hinku valley**, **Hunku Drangka** and back down the **Lhotse valley** and **Everest** trail through **Namche Bazar**. **Graham Elson** had also been in **Nepal**, climbing **Pokalde** and **Island Peak**, and planned a ski-mountaineering trip to **Morocco**. **Geoffrey Williams** had been backpacking in the **White Mountains of Crete**, and asked for information on routes walked in the **Arans**, to help establish rights of way. **John Hampton** was presented with a gold badge to mark 40 years membership of the **Swiss Alpine Club**. The death was reported of **Chris Briggs** of the **PYG**. The **Berkeleys** reported on their trip across **Canada to Alaska**. (NL 158) **Geof** and **Margaret Batten** camped in the **Ecrins National Park** in the **Dauphiné**. (NL 161)

**Sir Jack Longland** died in November 1993. (NL 162) In April 1994 **Derek Fordham** lead an expedition to **Spitzbergen**, to ski from sea level and climb the highest mountain - **Newtontoppen**. **Geoff Williams** described trekking in New Zealand, and **John** and **Valerie Burrows** went to see some of the volcanoes of **Indonesia**. (NL 164) During Sept. 1994 **Phill Williams** walked through the **Northern Pindos**, and ascended Greece's 2nd highest peak, **Smolikas**. **David Roche** wrote of his ascent of **Mont Blanc**. (NL 165)

At the 1994 AGM **Mike Parkinson** reported progress on the **Trusteeships** of **Caseg** and **Fallcliffe**, with the same 6 members as trustees for both huts. (**William Butler**, **John Hampton**, **Tim Marshall**, **Mike Parkinson**, **Mike Warden** and Prof. **Edward Williams**) Responsibilities were delegated to a Hut Management Committee of the **ULGMC** Committee and the hut wardens. **Bernard Scanlon** was made an **Hon. Vice President** in recognition of his contribution to the Club, especially the hut fund. During summer 1995 the **Hamptons** were in **Borneo** (en route to Australia) and ascended **Mt Kinabalu** (13,455ft). **The Battens** walked in the **Queyras** area of SE France, reaching several 3,000m+ peaks. **Les Bailey**, **John Parsons** and **Bill Towlson** made another trip to the **Vanoise**. The death was reported of **Derek Quested**. (NL 168)

1995 AGM **John Burrows** was made an **Hon. Vice President**, in recognition of his role in the purchase of Fallcliffe. **Will Butler** referred to old papers which he had and suggested the club should consider establishing an archive, **Michael Parkinson** also held papers and asked members to send contributions to him. The **50th anniversary** of **ULMC** was celebrated on 16th March 1996 at the Alpine Club, organised by **ULGMC**. The reciprocal arrangement with **Fylde MC** for use of huts was suspended. (NL 171) **Tim Marshall** celebrated his 50th birthday with a wheelchair descent of Snowdon. **Colin Grime**, with **William** and **Nadine Jeffcoate** took part in the **Scottish Is. Three Peaks Race**, combining sailing and fell-running. **Margaret** and **Geof Batten** had been in the **Alpes Maritimes**, and then walking the **Appalachian Trail** in New Hampshire. 'History of Fallcliffe' by **John Burrows** was issued with the Newsletter. (NL 172)

**Derek Fordham** and **Graham Elson** were members of a ski-mountaineering expedition in to **Gunnbjornsfeld** the highest peak in Greenland, in Summer 1996. **Dave** and **Liz Lindsey** walked in the **Queyras 'Parc Naturel'**. The Club papers were being collected into an Archive. (NL 173) **Michael Hetheron** ascended the **Matterhorn** in July 1996. The **25th anniversary** of **Fallcliffe** cottage was celebrated at the AGM on 28th Oct. 1996. (NL 174) In March 1997 **Ted Booth** finished his round of the 2,000ft peaks of England and Wales (408 summits since 1983).

The **Parkinsons** reported on their visit to New Zealand. **Graham Elson** lead walking parties in the **High Tatras (Slovakia)** and the **White Mountains of Crete**. In December he was climbing in **Argentina**, and more recently on the upper slopes of **Mt Etna**. The **Battens** sent a report of their trekking in Australia and New Zealand. (NL 175)

In July 1997 **Colin Grime** and **Michael Hetheron** completed the Bob Graham Round in 23hr 45mins. which included **Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Scafell Pike, and Gt Gable**. (NL 177) In Aug. **Dave** and **Liz Lindsey** were in the **Julian Alps (Slovenia)**, and **Stella Berkeley** wrote of their return visit to **Iceland** in 1997. (NL 178) **Chris Nightingale** died in a fall on the Castle Ridge of Ben Nevis, in June 1998. The **Battens** trekked again in New Zealand. **Hywel** and **Ingram Lloyd** visited the **Cordillera Blan, Peru**, making several ascents over 5,000m. **Tom Bryson** wrote of a walking trip in the **Canadian Rockies**. (NL 180) **Derek Fordham** was in **Greenland** again, in a party which climbed 12 summits, 10 of them first ascents, including **Petermann Bjerg** via the south ridge. Attempts on **Shackleton Bjerg** had to be abandoned due to increasing wind and low temperatures. Ten club members visited the **Slovenian Alps** and climbed various peaks in the **Julian Alps** and **Kamnik-Savinja Alps**. The **ULGMC website** was established by **Duncan Parkinson**. [now changed. Ed] (NL 181) During the 1998 AGM members discussed the **National Trust's Snowdon** appeal, and decided to contribute. During 1998 **Graham Elson** led a climbing party on the **Manang Circuit** of the **Annapurnas**, crossing the **Thorong La Pass** (5,400m). Twelve members held an unofficial meet skiing in **Chatel, Portes du Soleil, Duncan Parkinson** skied in the Southern Alps (**Serre Chevalier**). (NL 182)

During Jan. 1999 **Michael Hetheron** competed in the **INFERNO Ski Race** from the top of the **Schilthorn** down to **Winteregg** between Murren and Lauterbrunnen, a spectacular event in the shadow of the N Wall of the Eiger. (NL 183) In August 1999 **Margaret** and **Geof Batten** were camping and walking in **Alaska**. (NL 185) The 1999 AGM discussed the situation of the huts, which both belonged to ULMC, and suggested a meeting be held of the Hut Trustees prior to the ULGMC 50th anniversary celebration in May 2000. **John Bevis** sent a design for a possible **Club badge**, in Feb. 2000. **Michael** and **Liz Parkinson** reported on their trekking in Nepal in 1999, when they reached **Mera Peak**, the **Hinku Valley**, **Mera Glacier** and ascended a high camp at about 19,000ft, returning via **Zatrwa La** (15,000ft). (NL 186)

20th May 2000, the **50th anniversary of ULGMC** held at the Alpine Club in London.



## Appendix: Officers of the Club 1950 - 2000

	President	Secretary	Treasurer / Membership Sec.	Meets Secretary
1950	Phill Williams	M Stella Chapman	Norman Jones	
1950-51	John Fowle			
1951	Stephen Hall			
1951-52	John Fowle	Laura Ford		
1952-53	Phill Williams			
1953-54	Bernard Scanlan	Stella Chapman	Alan Williams	Geoff Smith
1954-55				John Dennis
1955-56			Norman Jones	Alan Williams
1956-57		John Dennis		
1957-58				Reg Monks
1958-59	John Hampton			
1959-60	Norman Jones	John & Laura Hampton	Ian Chuter	Paul Rayner
1960-61			Geoff Williams	
1961-62	Ian Chuter	Paul Rayner		Derek Qusted
1962-64			Mary Noyes	David Collin
1964-65	Paul Rayner	Geoff & Mary Williams	Mary Williams (nee Noyes)	Mike Esten
1965-66	Pat Owens	Geoff Williams		Derek Fordham
1966-67		Bill Towlson	John Bevis	
1967-68		John Burrows		
1968-70	Geoff Williams			Trefor Owen
1970-72	John Burrows	Monty Avis		Tim Marshall
1972-74	William Butler	Geof Price	Geof Price	
1974-76			James Webster	
1976-79	Monty Avis	Mike Warden		
1979-80	Laura Hampton			
1980-81			Andrew Warde	
1981-82		Edward Lightfoot		
1982-83	Dave Corfield			
1983-84			Nigel Bowen	
1984-87	Colin Grime	John Terry		Mike Bennett
1987-88		Mark Russell	John Terry	
1988-89				Mike Parkinson
1989-91		Geof Batten	Les Bailey	
1991-93				Bill Bristow
1993-95	Michael Parkinson			
1995-96		Mike Bennett		
1996-97				Bill Towlson
1997-2000	John Bevis			

## **Hut Wardens 1961 - 2000**

### ***CASEG FRAITH***

1961-1965	William Butler
1965-1970	Mike Tuson
1970-1977	Bob Nunn
1977-1980	Mike Bennett
1980-1981	Andrew Brazier
1981-1982	Howard Davies
1982-1991	Laura Hampton
1991-1994	John Terry
1994-1998	Liz Parkinson
1998-	Elsbeth Howell

### ***FALLCLIFFE COTTAGE***

1971-1972	Bob Nunn
1972-1973	Trevor Young
1973-1976	Dave Musson
1976-1980	Mike Lewis
1980-1995	Ivor Delafield
1995-	David Jacob