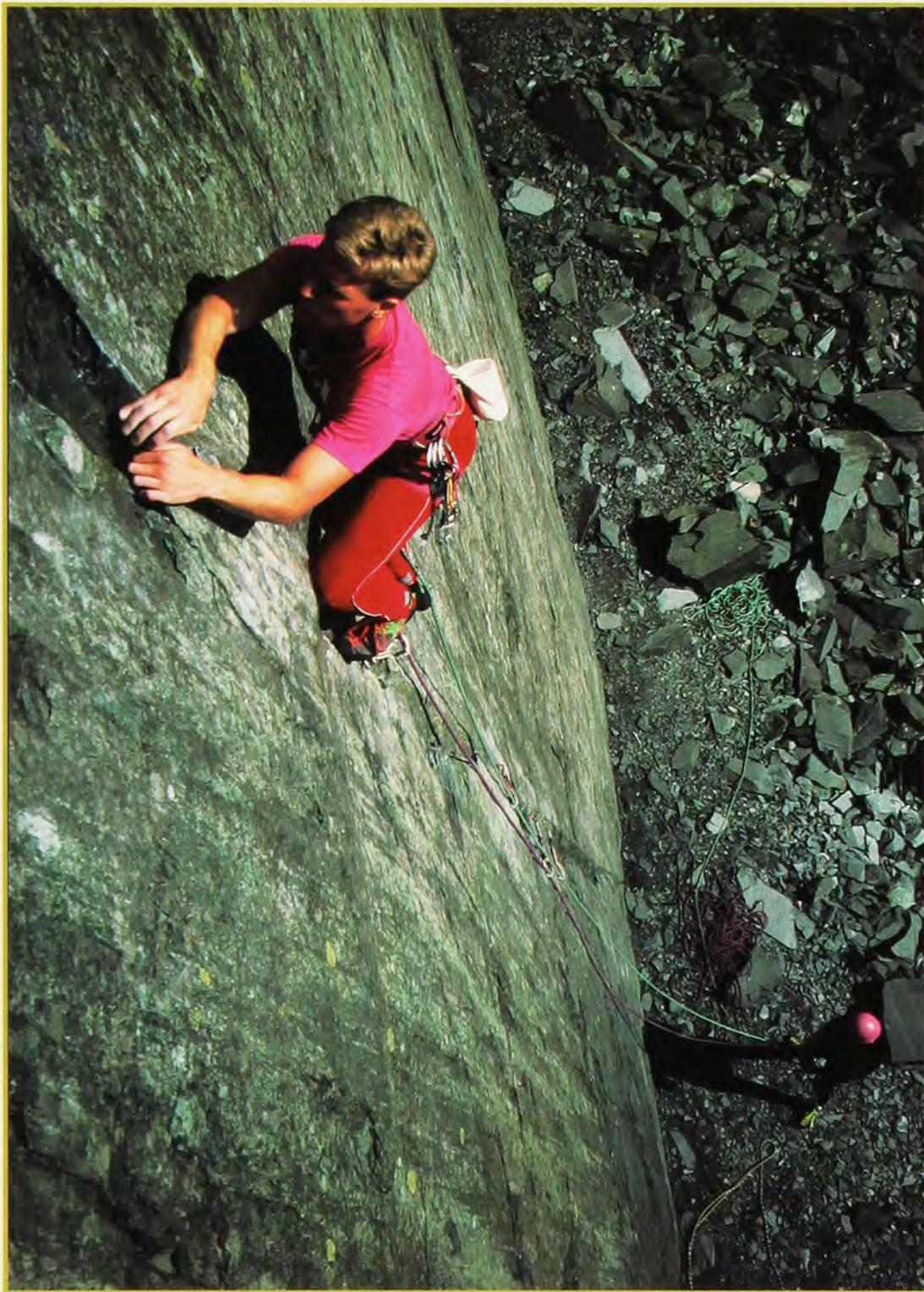




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*THE JOURNAL OF THE ARMY MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION*



Autumn 1996

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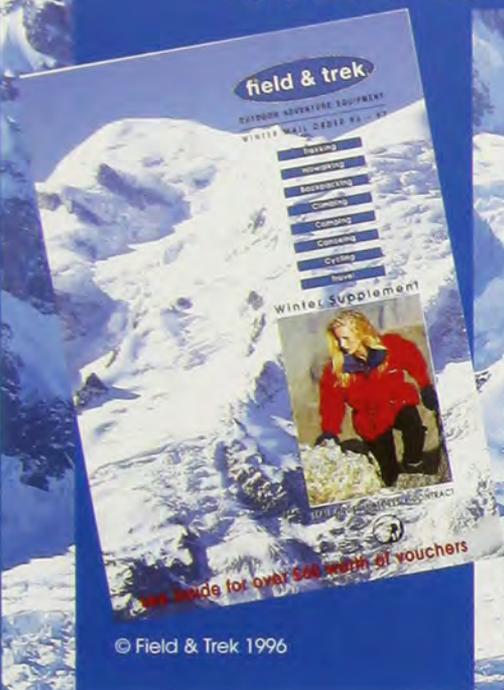
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# ARMY MOUNTAINEER



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THE ARMY MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION

Autumn 1996

## Chairman

*Brigadier NJ Cottam OBE*



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## Spring 1997 edition

Please send your contributions for the Autumn 1996 edition to the editor by the end of 4 April 1997. Photographs and slides (which will be returned) should be accompanied by a suitable caption.

Sketches, maps and cartoons are also welcomed and article subjects can be off-beat as well as main stream climbing/mountaineering.

**ON THE COVER: COMPETITION WINNER**  
Seamstress Slab HVS 5A, N. Wales.  
Sgt M Wilson, R Sigs.

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# The Autumn 1996 Edition

*Maj P L Fish RLC*

As many of you are aware there have been several changes in the committee since the last edition of the Army Mountaineer. The main change being the loss of Col Chris Field as our Vice Chairman, as he has been posted to Australia. We thank him for his contribution to the AMA and wish him and his family well for their next tour. The position of Vice Chairman was filled at the AGM by Maj Martin Bazire who has a wealth of mountaineering experience. An article he produced on the recent successful Joint Services Gasherbrum expedition appears towards the centre of the journal. The current committee details are at the front of this publication.

The Climbing Competition held in Gloucester was very successful and as part of the day a photographic competition was also held. The three winning photographs are published in this edition, one on the front cover, one in the centre pages and one on page 21. The front cover photograph normally comes from an article submitted for the journal. However if anyone thinks they have one suitable for the cover please submit it for consideration.

It has been a year since I requested input from the members. After the success of the Spring 96 edition it seemed that the point had been made. Unfortunately, once again members have to be reminded that the journal can only contain articles that are submitted. Therefore remember the deadline date, the next is the 4 APR 97 (put it in your diaries now!) and submit your articles. Also please note PXR's go to the Expedition Advisor and are then forwarded

to the Archives at Twywn. Articles for the Army Mountaineer need to be submitted to the Editor on disc with hard copy. The articles should be ready for publication, including slides or photographs (not colour photocopies), however, the editor retains the right to edit.

## SUCCESSFUL EXERCISES

The editor has seen PXR's for the following Exercises but no articles have been received for publication in the Army Mountaineer. Copies of these PXR's are held at Twywn if required.

**Exercise Cockney Cowboy** - This exercise took place in Sep 95 and provided an opportunity for 8 members of the Household Cavalry to climb in the mid west states of the USA. It was successful.

**Exercise Desert Climb** - This was a successful exercise led by 238 (London) Signal Squadron for several apprentices to climb routes in the Arches National Park, Moab, USA in Apr 96. They encountered initial problems due to the nature of the aid required on some of their chosen routes, which resulted in a review and reselection of the routes they eventually climbed.

**Exercise Yosemite Diamond** - No prizes for guessing where the team from 23 Engineer Regiment went climbing in May 96. The exercise aim was achieved and everyone gained in experience from the challenging setting of the Yosemite valley.

## AREA REPS AS AT SEPTEMBER 1996

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| Germany                         | WO2 A Fowle, 28 Engr Regt, BFPO 31   | Hameln Mil 341   |
| South France (Provence)         | Pat<br>Mr P Heffron, Cherry Tree, Barnier, 26110 VINSOBRES, France   | BT 01033 75276829                                      |
| Gibraltar                       | Vacant   |  |
| Bosnia                          | Andy<br>SSgt A Gallagher, 23 Para Fd Amb Fwd Sqn, Gornj Vakuf, BFPO 548  | Until Feb 97 then vacant                               |
| Lake District                   | Andy<br>Capt A J Parry, 23 Pioneer Regiment, St Davids Bks, Bicester, Oxon OX6 0JU   | 724 3036   |

# IF THIS IS ROCK AND ROLL I want my old job

*Ex Desert Dragon - Capt A Clark RRW*

As we drove into Castle Valley, the elegant pillar of Castleton Tower came into view. You could not help but be impressed by the imposing statue perched atop a huge scree slope dominating the desert below. This view, first seen in a TV advert in which a Volkswagen car was lowered by helicopter onto the summit, had inspired the expedition in which we were now involved.

The team made up of Capt Andy Clark (RRW), WO11 Dave Whittel (RTR), Sgt Bob Eardley (RA) and Sgt Martin Good (REME) was drawn from the Cadet Training Teams in Wales; all were competent climbers, but our experiences and abilities varied considerably, from V Diff leads in Snowdonia to 6a bolted routes in El Chorro Spain.

So far we had spent a week in the USA climbing in the Nevada Desert at Red Rocks near Las Vegas, Zion National Park, Arches National Park and Potash Canyon near Moab in Utah, slowly improving our desert crack climbing skills. Now we were camped at the base of scree slope in the shadow of the Tower weathering a num-



*Andy Clark on Solo Slab 5.6 in the Canyons of Red Rocks, Nevada*

ber of violent desert storms interspersed with a beautiful orange sunset illuminating the east face of the objective.

After much discussion around the camp fire (our bravery aided by the Budweiser!) we reached the decision that Andy and Bob would make the attempt the next morning, both climbing to the limits of their abilities. Dave and Martin kindly offered to take photographs and call the emergency services should they be required (thanks guys!).

The next morning we set off on the one and a half hour scramble up the scree slope. The classic four pitch "Kor Ingalls" route (5.9), one of the Cenotaph Corners of North America (blasphemer!), was our chosen route and although a strong breeze was blowing the clear blue skies filled us with confidence. I had just completed the first pitch and Bob was on his way up when the first storm hit us. The gale force winds and golf ball hailstones threatened to knock us off

our exposed positions forcing us to take cover in a narrow chimney. As suddenly as it arrived, the desert storm has passed, tranquillity descended and Bob completed the pitch.

I lead on and had just established myself on the second stance after a strenuous 5.8 crack when the wind began to pick up for a second time. This was our cue to once again bury ourselves in the nearest chimney and wait for the storm to pass. More ferocious this time, the wind and rain was accompanied by the ominous sound of thunder rattling around the canyons far below us. The cloudburst quickly disappeared however, and Bob joined me on the stance.

After some deliberation, we decided to press on, with Bob leading the 5.9 crux pitch ahead. As he clipped the bolt to protect his move over the tricky bulge the third storm hit us. With nowhere to go we had no choice but to grin and bare it. The hale lashed down and the winds screamed around our ears: and then it happened. A flash and a jolt and we were thrown against the wall as the lightning took the easiest route through the rock and arched down our rope. With our hair standing on end and each of us yelling, laughing (humour manifests itself in the strangest of situations!) and trying to find above the wind whether the other was alright, Bob was quickly lowered off.

The consensus was that it was time to be somewhere else; so with prudence winning over ambition, we abailed off over three rope lengths leaving the gale raging behind us. As we returned despondently to the tents, a fourth storm blew in, arcing forks electricity on the top of the Tower - just as we would have topped out had we carried on climbing. Although we reflected on an unsuccessful ascent of Castleton Tower, the participants in the attempt had learnt more about making difficult decisions and working quickly and safely under pressure in an extreme environment, than we would if we had been successful in perfect conditions. Not only was the expedition a great success in improving all the participants climbing abilities, but the situations we have shared and the experiences we have gained will remain with us for a very long time to come.

The horrendous weather forecast for the next day made up our minds - head back to Nevada, Red Rocks and the sunshine. Viva Las Vegas!

## NEED TO KNOW INFO.

**Money.** The whole trip cost about £650.00 per person, the individual contributing about a third of that. Once all pre - expedition expenses had been paid ( flight tickets, insurance, etc.) remaining funds were transferred to a credit card (Mastercard); Travellers cheques (American Express) and US dollars at a rate of roughly \$1.49 to the pound. N.B. Prices quoted for just about everything in the US do not include tax - add about 13%

**Insurance.** The most competitively priced and suitable policy (covering personal accident, casevac search and rescue, third party liability and personal property including climbing gear) was purchased from the British Mountaineering Council at £61.00 per person.

**Equipment.** Lightweight tents, sleeping bags, stoves, fleeces, waterproofs, walking boots, rucsacs, first aid kits were all required. A normal lead rack plus 2x9 mm ropes and at least 2 x complete sets of friends are essential for climbing desert sandstone (some vertical crack routes require 10 x 1.5 friends!)

# Bob back



Bob Eardley leads "Ragged Edges" a classic 5.8 Red Rocks, Nevada

**Documentation.** Visas are not required if in possession of a full UK passport (which is required!) A green visa waiver form is completed on check-in.

**Getting there.** Trailfinders provided the most competitive flights on American Airlines from Heathrow to Las Vegas via Chicago at £322 incl airport taxes per person.

**Transport.** Internal transport was by Ford Taurus hire car by Hertz. This was a large comfortable car but represented the minimum size for four adults and all the kit. A four wheel drive vehicle was considered, but in the event all the locations could be reached in the Taurus. This was booked with Maritz travel in the US (Tel 001 202 898 4488) at embassy (reduced) rates prior to departure. Third party and collision waiver damage comprehensive cover was purchased for an extra \$8.95 per day. Tax was not mentioned in the original quote - an extra \$44.50. The bill was paid on return of the car.

**Fuel.** Diesel was very cheap at about \$1.40 per gallon.

## LOCATIONS

### Las Vegas

Las Vegas is a 24 hours a day town of neon signs, casinos, shows and one armed bandits. Everything is designed to encourage you to gamble; this means however that everything else is relatively cheap. Accommodation can be had for as little as \$35 plus tax for a four man (two double bed) room. Fergusons Motel on 11th Street (Tel 702 - 382 3500) has a climber's discount. Holiday Motel, Las Vegas Blvd, nr the Sahara (Tel 702 - 735 6464) is in walking distance from The Strip (the main street of hotels and casinos). All you can eat buffets are available in most of the casinos for less

than it costs to buy food from the supermarket. The Sahara (Las Vegas Blvd and Sahara Av) sells a \$2.50 breakfast and a \$5 all you can eat evening meal.

Desert Rock Sports climbing shop (Tel 702 254 1143) on Charleston Blvd heading towards Red Rocks sells the most up to date guide books and will give helpful advice on everything from accommodation to gear. Equipment was very expensive in all the climbing shops we came across.

### Red Rocks

Situated 25 minutes west of Las Vegas, Red Rocks Canyon National Conservation Area is one of the premier climbing areas in the world, offering a massive variety of sandstone routes from single pitch roadside bolted sports routes to five hour walk-in, 20 pitch, free and aid climbs. The weather is hot and dry (but cold by night) for most of the year. It is comfortable to climb in Mar-May and Sept-Nov but probably too hot (and stormy) in the height of summer.

Accommodation can be had either in Vegas or at Oak Creek campground (toilets and fresh water) on State Route 159 just south of the loop road for £5 per night. The visitors centre (Tel 702 363 1921) is happy to act as a point of contact and gives advice on weather and the loop road opening times (generally dawn to dusk).

The excellent Red Rocks Select guide by Todd Swain is available in the UK, but the most recent comprehensive 2nd edition is worth buying from Desert Rock Sports. The areas visited in both Nevada and Utah (and most of the US) employ the Yosemite Decimal System of grading in which British Severe (4a) roughly equates to YDS 5.5 British HVS (5a) to YDS 5.8, British E1 to YDS 5.9 and British E5 to YDS 5.12.

The climbs are located around a 13 mile one way scenic loop road with grades ranging from 5.2 to 5.13b (3a to 7a). The main concentration of sports routes lies along the first three miles of the loop road, although some bolted routes can be found in the canyons further round. We managed to identify about 30 single pitch routes up to 5.8 (5a); but to get the most out of Red Rocks you really need to be climbing at least British VS. Some outstanding 5.3 upwards multipitch routes can be found in the Canyons; all require a single pitch (long!) vertical 5.8. crack, the most enjoyable of the trip.

### Zion National Park

Situated four hours drive north of Las Vegas, Zion National Park is a big wall aid climber's paradise whose walls are described in Ascent magazine as "...more intimidating than those of Yosemite...". The climate for climbing is cool in the Spring and Autumn, hot in the Summer and too cold in the Winter. We experienced heavy rain and thunderstorms and hot sunshine by day and freezing temperatures by night and in the early morning.

Entrance to the park is \$5 valid for seven days, and camping can be had for \$8 at night at one of the two campgrounds (toilets and fresh water) in the park. A small and expensive grocery store is situated within walking distance of the campgrounds.

*Desert Rock - Rock Climbing in the National Parks* by Eric Bjornstad is good (and covers Zion, Arches, Canyonlands and Capitol Reef) but was not available in either the visitors centre (Tel 801 772 3256) or Desert Rock Sports in Vegas. Consequently we relied on the rough hand drawn guide book in the visitors centre whose staff are happy to act as point of contact and give advice on weather, climbing and restrictions imposed due to the nesting of birds.

Nearly all the climbs listed in the guide book are big wall aid routes up to 1900 feet long although there are some long (up to 1100 feet) 5.7 upwards free routes listed. There are also a number of single pitch possibilities at the west end of the tunnel and on the east side of the canyon, south of Zion Lodge where we spent a day working on an introduction to leading and belay systems; the scope for new routes is, however, almost infinite.

## Zion - Monument Valley - Moab

A nine hour drive through the incredible landscape of Northern Arizona via routes 9, 89, 160, 163, and 191 takes you along the northern rim of the Grand Canyon and into Monument Valley. There is no climbing allowed in Monument Valley itself, but the scenery alone makes this trip worthwhile and a stopover to walk in the Grand Canyon (two days) although outside the scope of this expedition, should certainly be considered.

## Moab

The mormon pioneer town of Moab is something of an outdoor pursuits mecca with white water rafting on the Colorado River, mountain biking and, of course, climbing all vying for space in the Information Centre (Tel 801 259 8825). The town provides an ideal base from which to explore Arches National Park (20 mins); Castle Valley (45mins) Canyonlands (Island in the Sky north 90 mins); The Needles south (90 mins) and Potash Canyon (20 mins). There is enough climbing around Moab to keep even the most prolific of route tickers occupied for months.

There are banks, a 24 hr. supermarket, a post office, diners and restaurants and numerous campsites, motels, and hostels. The Lazy Lizard hostel (Tel 801 259 6057) has bunks, a self catering kitchen, TV room, hot tub and showers for \$7 per night.

Moab Adventure Outfitters (Tel 801 259 2725), located on the edge of town on the Arches road, is the best and most helpful of the climbing shops in Moab and produces the 500 select Moab Classics loose leaf guide book, a must for climbing at Potash and Castle Valley. They also sell a good (but expensive) range of gear and a number of other guide books to the area including Bjorstad's Desert Rock. Kevin Chase, the proprietor, is extremely knowledgeable and helpful about nearly all the routes and climbing locations in the area and is definitely worth a visit.

The climate is changeable to say the least. During our time around Moab we experienced days of blistering sunshine, but also a heavy frost, violent winds, hail, rain and the nearby Sal Mountains are snow covered for most of the year. Most alarming of all, however, are the sudden desert storms that arrive without warning across the open landscape, unleash their payload of galeforce winds, thunder and lightning, rain and hail stones before disappearing across the flat rock. In recent years a significant number of people in the Moab area have died after being hit by lightning.

## Arches National Park

Arches National Park (entrance fee \$4) is situated 20 minutes north of Moab on route 191 and has an informative visitors centre (Tel 801 259 8161) which provides weather reports and details of birds nesting restrictions on climbing in the park. The park's delicate wind-blown arches, rock fins, pillars and pedestals are a sight in themselves and provide outstanding stack climbing in a desert environment. Camping is available in the spectacular setting of Devils Garden Campground (toilets and water) for \$8 per night on a first come first served basis.

Climbing is forbidden on the arches and most of the routes listed in the Desert Rock guide are graded 5.9 upwards or require aid.

The two pitch "North East Chimney" route (5.7) on Off Balanced Rock presented us with a thought provoking 90 feet no pro chimney however, and "Owl Rock One" (5.8) is Arches most popular climb. For the more capable climber there is the awesome "West Face" (5.11) on the Three Gossips and "North Northeast Arete" (5.11-) on Argon Tower.

## Potash Canyon

Wall Street is the ultimate roadside crag, with hordes of hard core rock jockeys belaying from inside their cars with the air-conditioning on. Three-hundred feet sandstone cliffs rise from the tarmac and numerous bolted routes are available from the crumbly "School Room" area (topped 5.5 to 5.10) to the three star "Black Horse" (5.11+). Must do's include "30 Seconds Over Potash" (5.8) and "Sibernetics" (5.8) Also climbed were "5.7 Slab", "5.8 Slab", and "Easy (ha ha!) Slab" (5.8) Guide Book - 500 Moab Classics.

Further down the Potash Canyon road lie Day Canyon and Long Canyon. These more secluded areas were not visited but according to the guide provide plenty of climbs in the 5.9 upwards range.

## Castle Valley

The imposing needle of Castleton Tower, a 450 feet high isolated stack of rock dominates the desert above Castle Valley. As you drive into the valley the Tower presents an impressive sight balanced on top of a huge scree slope. It is reached by turning right down route 128 just before you cross the river heading north on your way out of Moab; turn right again after 15 miles on the only paved road off route 128. Rough camping can be had at the base of the scree slope amongst the scrub.

Castleton Tower is incredibly exposed and as such suffers from strong winds, particularly during the frequent desert storms that assault its flanks. It is an amazing piece of rock, however, and I would strongly recommend a visit, perhaps with flexibility of time or a large window to allow for the weather, and attempt either "Kor Ingalls" (5.9) or the "North Chimney" (5.9) on the other side.

Not visited but, according to the locals, also worth a go while you are in the area are the Ice Cream Parlour area (single pitch 5.8 to 5.11); Sister Superior Spire (wit testing "Jah-Man" 5.10+) Fisher Towers (some free but mostly aided routes); Heat Wave Wall (Dead Horse Point, Canyonlands NP); and Kane Creek (again mostly aided routes listed but scope for new free routes).

## Moab - Las Vegas

The final leg of the journey was a seven hour night drive from Moab to Las Vegas down Interstates 70 and 15 stopping only to fill up with fuel, coffee and to scrape the snow from the windscreen as we crossed the Wasatch Plateau at 8000 feet.

## Summary

The scope for climbing in and around Moab is endless and could provide a focus for a whole expedition. Even more is available north towards Salt Lake City and you could fly into there and work south. I would not have missed Red Rocks for the world however, and with Yosemite to its northwest and Joshua Tree four hours south, this part of North America must be one of the most blessed climbing areas in the world.



The "Three Gossips" Arches National Park, Utah.

# Expedition

## MAGNIFICENT RUMM

Tony Rudall Major (Ret'd)

"The hills drew together until only two miles divided them: and then, towering gradually till their parallel parapets must have been a thousand feet above us, ran forward in an avenue for miles" T.E. Lawrence

The mountains in Wadi Rumm are higher and even more spectacular than Lawrence described.

I took seven pupils from my school in Limmasol there during Easter 1996. We had only 10 days. Tony Howard of Troll Wall Norway and Troll Equipment fame had been going to Jordan for ten years and still not explored all Rumm's possibilities. We met him there as he was about to try yet another route to the summit of Jebel Rumm, following the intricate routes first explored by the Bedouin, as they hunted the elusive Ibex.

Our team were not equipped for anything so ambitious yet, we followed our Bedouin guide up some wonderful scrambles. Our agile youngsters - fit from "Cyprus Horseshoe Hike" - reached the "Burdah Bridge" in record time. This rock bridge is becoming a major destination for visitors to Rumm. The Bedouin drive parties to the foot of the Burdah mountain and then lead the way up to this exposed span of rock with stunning views back across the flat desert sands to the towering vertical cliffs of Jebel Rumm and Jebel Um Ishrin.

We trekked and climbed through Rakabat Canyon and scrambled to the summit of Jebel Mayeen which is just north of the village.

Also close to the village is Lawrence's Well, a spring in the rocks which reputedly appeared as Lawrence passed by. Above are a series of Siqs (canyons) which lead onto many routes to the summit plateau. The plateau itself sounds like a strange "Lost World" sort of place. A future visit?



*Burdah Bridge' Ex Magnificent Rumm*

To find out more about this wonderful place, a region a well travelled friend described as the most beautiful place in the world, buy Tony Howard's book, "Climbs and Treks in the Wadi Rumm". Build into your itinerary a visit to Petra and the Royal Jordanian Diving Centre at Aqaba. One of our kids described her day in the "Rose Red City" as the best in her life. Snorkelling above the coral reef at Aqaba was one of the experiences of my lifetime.

Please drop me a line if you'd like to know more about our trip, I'll send you a copy of our report if you like. I'd like to hear from any old friends who have been on trips with me or from anyone who'd like to know more about the mountaineering possibilities in Equador, Czechoslovakia, Morocco, Turkey, Nepal, Mexico. If anyone has a climbing guide to Cyprus I'd love to hear from them!

### WAINWRIGHT MAPS OF THE LAKELAND FELLS:

**MAP FOUR - THE SOUTHERN FELLS. ISBN 0-9526530-0-1**

**MAP SIX - THE NORTH WESTERN FELLS. ISBN 0-9526530-1-X**

Published by Cordee at £3.99 each.

Most readers will be familiar with the seven Wainwright Guides to the Lake District. Idiosyncratic they may but fascinating for their presentation and the gems of information they contain. The many page size maps have now being collected and reproduced in normal folded map format (roughly 25"x30") and the result is much more impressive as one might expect. Rightly, since the maps have not been updated from when they were first drawn for the guides, they should not be treated as a substitute for the normal Ordnance Survey map but as pieces of *Wainwright memorabilia* they are fascinating and of interest to those of us for whom a good map is as absorbing as a good book.

# ADVENTURE

*SSgt Mick Kayser and Mr Steve Parker*

CVHQ AGC (SPS) WORTHY DOWN

Adventure to you may be climbing ANNAPURNA or AMADABLAM. It may even be walking the CHEVIOT HILLS in the Border Country - we all have our own classification of the term adventure.

Steve Parker and I started our particular 'adventure' at the Fox and Hounds way back in March '96 - a task which would be carried out in April '96. So as you see a lot of planning and preparation took place before our great adventure not! (to coin a recently fashionable phase).

Our task was to climb the three highest peaks in Mainland UK in less than 24 hours. As you probably all know this is commonly known as 'The 3 Peaks Challenge'. A task (which I might add) the Royal Marines undertook in 1990 and completed it in 7 hours 59 minutes - with the aid of a helicopter! Having decided the budget wouldn't stretch as far as hiring a helicopter we elected for the more subtle mode of transport a car!

After giving a route and time plan to the wife and promising to phone her every day between 1800 - 2200hrs (to book in) we drove to ARROCHAR on the Saturday morning and arrived there at 1730hrs the same day. Our first task was to climb Ben Ime (3318 ft) to warm our legs up and get our kit ready for the 3 peaks challenge.

Ben Ime was a challenge in itself. We got to the foot of the mountain at 2000 hrs and we decided to pitch the tent in that location. (being a complete novice at this - it was the first time I'd slept in

6" of snow and in such low temperatures). I must admit we were well kitted out for this, and had an excellent nights sleep in our Wild Country Trisar tent. We woke with a shock in the morning with an extra 6" of snow having fallen during the night, making packing the tent and getting ready for the ascent that much harder. Visibility was down to 30 metres and we were in a complete 'White Out'. This ensured going up was hard work and tested our navigation skills to the limit - carrying out pacing and good compass work all the way to the top. That was just the 'warm-up' - it was at this time we were wondering if we were going to complete this challenge - maybe we should have waited until the summer.

The second day we walked around Stob Ban (just south of Ben Nevis) at a relatively low level for a nice stroll around the Scottish Highlands - which was enjoyed immensely.

Just before we started the challenge we managed to get into Fort William for a lovely hot meal before getting ourselves to the foot of Ben Nevis at 1700hrs on Mon 15 Apr 9th. We did actually wait with baited breath at the base and in fact were very nervous. After grabbing an American tourist to take the much needed photo we set off at a blistering pace up Ben Nevis. It was very clear all the way up until the last 500m when we hit the snow line and found ourselves in deep snow wishing we'd brought crampons and ice axes - it was hard going for the rest of the climb up Nevis. We got down to the bottom at 2034hrs having run most of the way down. Feeling very confident Mr 'P' decided we deserved a three course meal (again) cooked by his own fair hand in the Car Park.



*SSgt Mick Kayser and Steve Parker fresh and raring to go - at the start.*

We left for Cumbria at 2105hrs in a very positive mood. We arrived at Cumbria at 0155hrs in a very negative mood - not only was it 2 o'clock in the morning it was raining, cold, cloudy and obviously very dark - and I wanted my bed. Nevertheless off we went following the map and constantly checking our position en route up to Scarfell Pike. It was only at 0430hrs when we realised we were geographically misplaced - not far off target I hasten to add, - but there was no doubt that the path, had in fact, gone AWOL. So we dropped the packs and did a square search looking for the so-called path which was supposed to be under foot. After 30 minutes we decided to go back to the packs get out the survival bag and went to sleep. Now this survival bag was

# GASHERBRUM EXPEDITION 1996

by Major M H Bazire MBE RLC

made a route through to the col at nearly 21,000 feet where Camp Two could be established. Nearby, the "Japanese Couloir", our chosen route, led more steeply towards the summit. Having stumbled across, and into, a number of crevasses, we were happy to move down for a rest day that was called in the light of a bad weather forecast. The marker flags proved vital as we made it back to Camp One in white-out conditions. We were utterly exhausted by the time we reached Base Camp.

The rest at Base Camp was short lived. Despite poor weather the following day, the sky cleared from the west as the evening approached. We had to take every opportunity to keep the momentum going, so we moved up to Camp One, where we dug out the tents from the heavy build-up of snow, and prepared ourselves for further upward movement.

It was so exhilarating moving again along the glacier to the upper ice-fall, with a bright starlit sky for company. We ferried a number of loads to Camp Two and "carried in" the second party of 4, who were to fix the route up the couloir this was necessary both to aid upward subsequent movement and to provide a rapid means of descent, should it prove necessary. Jon Doyle, Mark Watson and Steve Wilson then performed superbly. The going was tough up the 50 to 60 degree couloir the route-finding was difficult. Eventually, a way was found through towards a site for Camp Three.

While the route was being extended well in the front, others remained in support at Camp One. We were joined by Surg Comd Andy Hughes and Flt Lt Steve Hunt who had been preserved for the summit bid, in order to maximise chances of success. They moved up to Camp Two, and the following day were carried in to Camp Three, at over 23,000 feet, by the Camp Two party. John Doyle was going so well, that he and Sgt Dan Carroll RAF were able to remain at Camp Three with the summit pair, to attempt the summit as well. At midnight all 4 set off

The going was steady at first, but the snow conditions deteriorated, and they had to take it in turns to break step. This is utterly exhausting at such altitudes. At around 9.45 am on 10th July they all stood on the summit, with each service being represented.

It all seemed to happen so quickly. Having spent a long time getting to Pakistan, let alone Base Camp, we had made steady, if interrupted, progress to Camp Two, and then, after just a few more days, we had achieved our aim. The performance of those operating above Camp Two was most impressive. Fixing the Japanese Couloir, which included two rock bands, was an accomplishment in itself. The short stay at Camp Three still meant that the efforts of the summit party had to be maintained over a sustained period. Above Camp Three, the deep snow on the upper slopes made the going extremely tiring: on their return, several members fell some distance but, thankfully, without serious consequences.

I cannot do justice to the fine achievements of the summit party, since I do not have the first hand experience of those operating above Camp Two. Nonetheless, I do recognize that John Doyle showed supreme strength and determination in not only fulfilling his role in the couloir, but also in continuing, with Dan Carroll, to the summit.

It was splendid to feel that our joint efforts had been rewarded. Meryon Bridges had made the expedition happen, and we all had our part to play. However, as I said over the radio, "it ain't over until the fat lady sings", and we all had to descend in good order. The summit party returned late to Camp Two. After they and the support pair passed through to Base Camp, I remained to clear Camp One with two others. We back-carried some of the gear to Camp-half that evening, returning to Camp One as it became dark and started to snow. Thankfully, we were able to strip Camp One and move back to Base Camp the following day. Five weeks after arriving at Base Camp, we were all off the mountain safely.

It seemed ages before our porters arrived to collect our gear. We departed in the same fine weather we had enjoyed on our walk-in. For the walk-out, now that we were acclimatized, we were able to take a shorter route that involved crossing a 19,000ft pass, the Gondogoro La. This led steeply down to the upper reaches of the Hushe Valley, described by Mohammed Ali as paradise. He had a point: the green colours that greeted us after weeks of largely black and white almost strained our eyes, and the smells of the Alpine forests were intense. That was a long day (up at midnight and on the move for 15 hours), and the sweet, thick air induced a heavy sleep.

The following day was a relatively short walk to the roadhead, where we could pick up jeeps. We were then caught up in the steady move back to "civilization" Skardu again provided a pleasant stopover, where we could enjoy a cut-throat shave and a head massage, but we still had to endure the epic bus journey back along the KKH. Back in Rawalpindi we began that idle process of regaining all the weight we had lost.

It was very satisfying being part of this strong, highly-motivated, tight-knit team. We had made the first ascent of an 8000 metre peak by the services since 1976, and with some style: we did so without extra oxygen and without high altitude porters, we used only 3 main camps above base, our team of 12 was not excessive, and our length of time in-country was less than 10 weeks.

We had experienced success of a high order. We were lucky.



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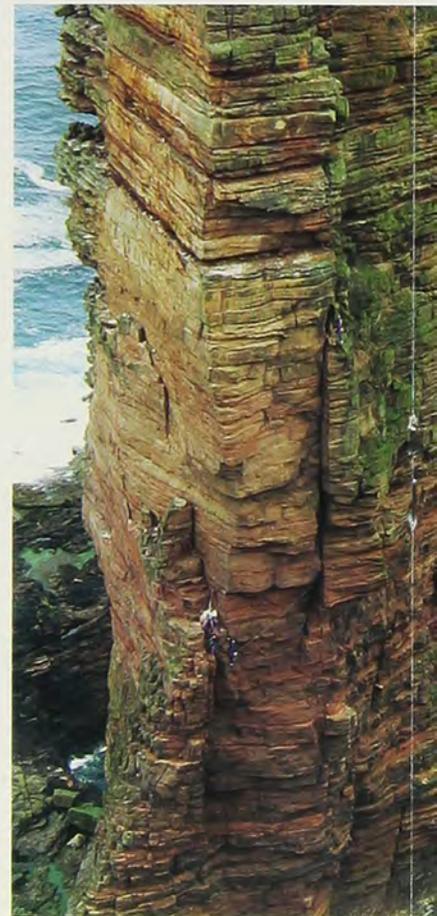
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*The Old Man of Hoy  
'Onwards and Upwards'*



*Old Man of Hoy.*



**COMPETITION WINNER**

South Ridge of Singho Chuli at 6350m.  
Hvin Choli & ABC in the background.  
Climber Andy Longuisa. Photograph  
by Tim Bird.



*Spir Rock*



*Ex Magnificent Rumm.*

# Split Rock



If you are soon to be heading for the sunny Adriatic and are to be stationed in the Split area, do not despair. There is just enough climbing and walking to prevent those fingers and legs getting too rusty.

## Walking (Map UNPROFOR 1002 522-3 Sinj)

To the North East of Split there is a small group of hills known as the Mosor Mountains. With well over fifty square kilometers of rugged limestone karst terrain, there is plenty to explore. There are several paths which criss-cross the area, but bear no relation to those marked on the map. Discovering where they actually lead to is as much fun as the normal of track navigation.

The main feature of the area is a ridge line which runs from Klis just north of Split, to Omis, approx. twenty kilometers from Split. There are several peaks over 1,000m with the high point of Vhr (Summit) Kabal 1340m. All can be reached comfortably in half a day or less.

The most enjoyable thing about the area is the almost guaranteed solitude during weekdays. Weekends are especially busy in the area of Dom. This is a small mountain hut open at weekends offering a restaurant service.

## Climbing

### SPLIT

Breaking away from Split, is a tree covered peninsular known as MARJAN. Along the southern edge of this are several small cliffs offering a large variety of limestone routes. There are at least four separate cliffs each with its own character. Most of the routes are bolted and require lowering off when completed. The whole spectrum of grades are available from UIAA 4 to 10. There is a small group of local climbers who regularly use the area, they are extremely friendly and will offer advice on the routes and grades and other climbing in the area.

### KLIS

After leaving Split on route circle the road goes into a tunnel under Klis Castle. After emerging from the tunnel, on the left is a massive limestone cliff. Despite its grandeur, the actual climbing area is only a small portion on the right hand end of the cliff. This cliff is not as established as Marajan, there are no bolts and the rock is extremely loose in parts. There are several routes and some excellent opportunities for abseiling. The area is best approached from the top where the ends of the routes can be seen, marked with green paint. An easy scramble enables the base of the cliff to be reached. Long belays are required if top-roping and beware of very sharp rock.

For further information on the opportunities available in the Split area contact WO2 (CSM) Mike Smith, GS Coy, 3BN REME, Tel : Paderborn 3734

## CIVILIAN RECOGNITION OF MILITARY MOUNTAINEERING AWARDS

The Mountain Leader Training Board has been providing training for leaders, instructors and supervisors for thirty years. Its awards are recognised by the Department for Education and by many other civilian organisations. While the services have always maintained strong links with the MLTB, the two organisations have recently been working towards harmonising military and civilian awards.

### Mountainwalking Leader Award

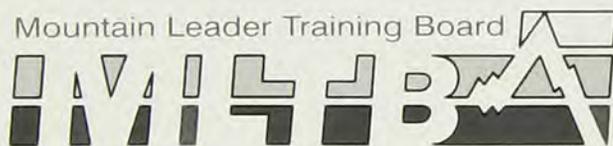
It is now possible to attend Unit Expedition Leader and Joint Services Mountain Expedition Leader courses as an MLTB candidate. Provided you have already registered with the MLTB, the UEL course will count as training for the Mountainwalking Leader Award and the subsequent JSME course as assessment. Even if you didn't register with us but have got a UEL or JSME award then you could be eligible for exemption from training for the ML scheme.

### Single Pitch Supervisors Award

The Single Pitch Supervisors Award, introduced in 1992, is available to anyone with a genuine interest in climbing and group supervision. While the military and civilian awards are not yet harmonised, JSRCI, Rock Leader or even Top Roping & Abseiling awards would be considered as part of an application for exemption from training for the SPSA scheme.

### Mountain Instructor Award

If you already have a Mountainwalking Leader Award (Summer) and substantial rock climbing and instructional experience then you can apply to register with the MIA scheme. For registration details and further information on any of these awards, complete the coupon below and send to:  
MLTB, Capel Curig, Gwynedd, LL24 0ET.



Please send me details of:

- MOUNTAIN WALKING LEADER AWARD  
 SINGLE PITCH SUPERVISORS AWARD  
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.....

# FAR FROM THE MADDENING CRAGS

Maj Duncan Stutt

A careless moment at the Committee Meeting in the Tyn y Coed and I had offered to produce a short article to help supplement our struggling journal. You don't need to have climbed a desperate route in "The Pass" or topped out on an "Eight thousander". Just share your experience and maybe you'll encourage others to follow or better still to offer their experiences on these pages. This is a short offering which describes another great day on the hill with a few friends, some dry rock and beautiful scenery.

The over-populated crags of the Ogwen drove me on a pilgrimage in search of some quiet and long forgotten corner of the Nant Ffrancon valley which I had visited very many years before. On the south side of the valley near the Bethesda quarries is a little visited cwm at the foot of Carnedd y Filiast. Climbing in Cwm Graianog has gone on since the early days of exploration and its northern side offers about 1000 ft of climbing on a vast expanse of layered slabs, known locally as Creigiau'r Rowlar. The slabs themselves are smooth lower down and the best climbing is found on the edges of each overlapping layer. Higher up the rock becomes more broken and complex and despite the generally easy angle the routes have an enjoyably committing feel about them, due to the limited protection, especially on the slabs themselves.

Access is easy from the old Nant Ffrancon which follows the south side of the valley from Ogwen Cottage to Bethesda. A direct line up the hillside leads into the cwm with the slabs rising high on the right. A plethora of Diffs and V Diffs could occupy a party for many hours and would provide an excellent playground for the aspirant leader. The Filiast Slabs are one of the few crags which face east and as others fingers freeze in the autumnal shadows of the Glyder Main Walls and Milestone you can enjoy the early morning sun on your back and turn to watch the dark clouds gather on the Glyders and the acolytes which hang around Yr Wyddfa's bulk in the south and west.

My lonely pilgrimage back in time was cancelled as I was delighted to be joined by Anne, Duncan, Rosie and her dog Mischa. A great time can be had on your own but sharing days in the mountains makes for an equally enjoyable time and enables you to recall those experiences as you reminisce in future years. The bright, low, morning sun shone warmly as we wandered up to the foot

*Duncan on top with Foel Goch in distant mist*



*Rosie with Nant Ffrancon Valley beyond.*

of the slabs, stopping to take photos and cool off on the way. Mischa bounded on ahead covering more than twice the distance of her heavy legged keepers. After climbing the wall which splits the cwm we looked up and chose a long Moderate scramble on the edge of the large slab and we began the 1000 ft journey on The Ridge. Mischa managed well until the intermittent heather terraces gave way to steeper rock and after a few feet of being hauled, coaxed and finally carried across, my arms she decided a traverse off into The Runnel was the best option for all (bright dog!).

The crisp, calm, clear weather stayed with us throughout the route and it wasn't until we turned to look towards Foel Goch from near the top of the route that we saw the blanket of grey covering the higher summits. After a short break we moved off to complete the day with a southwards traverse to Y Garn, a journey which took us ever nearer the crowds of Ogwen. But first we passed the grand pyramid-like appearance of Elidir Fawr, seen at its best from Mynydd Perfedd. Its impressive east facing pyramid proves to be a transitory illusion, its south side soon revealing the long scree covered ridge leading up from above the Dinorwic Quarries. Our first meeting with other hillgoers was on Foel Goch at about mid-day, three hours after we first stepped over the stile at the Nant Ffrancon Road!

The image of the spectacular light and shadow effects seen on the Nantlle Ridge in the south west remained with me as we began the descent of Y Garn, passing many people making their own pilgrimages up the broken path, which now characterises much of Snowdonia.

We climbed nothing hard, we broke no records but we shared a rare day in quiet beautiful surroundings. Take a wander up into Cwm Graianog sometime, take a couple of friends, but not too many. Oh and ssshhh! Don't tell everyone.



The Old Man of Hoy.

*S/Sgt  
A. Phillips*

The giant monolith of rock stands over 400ft high, expelled from Hoy Island some 100 years ago after a huge landslide. For many years it caught the imagination of mountaineers, but it was not climbed until the 18 July 66 by T. Patey, R. Baille and Sir C. Bonnington. The sandstone sea stack was originally graded HVS 5a, but over the years the combination of the elements and climbers alike have eroded the delicate rock, and it is currently graded E1 5b. The climb has earned a reputation for catching

# THE OLD

experienced climbing parties out, along with a few not particularly well versed in their craft. This reputation of high adventure is what attracted JSMTTC (Scot) to climb it for a staff training weekend.

Come Friday 12 O'Clock, the buses were packed to the hilt with climbing equipment and mountain bikes, the bikes I'll explain shortly! The journey north went like clockwork, a four hour drive to Scrabster, then off loaded the kit for the ferry to Stromness. It was quite a sight to see, ten members of JSMTTC cycling onto the ferry looking like an Hells Angel chapter of Quazi Modos. Two hours later we docked at Stromness on Orkney, the epic journey was far from over.

Stage three was a thirty minute tug boat ride to Linkness on the Hoy Island. During the journey we passed the wreck of a large ship, which we think was purposely scuttled during the war to act as a sentinel to Scapa Flow.

Was this the final stage? Not quite. The Tour de Hoy was under starters orders. Head torches on, and we were off, with pre-race favourite S/Sgt Andy Phillips falling by the wayside with a malfunction to his machine (-the chain fell off). The race was now left wide open, well! wacky race that is. The cronky pelaton shot into the night, destination Youth Hostel six miles away. This night was not a good night for the fauna on the roads of Hoy, as Capt Mac Mackay took out a defenceless rabbit en route, with proof of his

## AREA MEETS DETAIL 1997

| AREA                           | DATES        | ACCN  | REMARKS/LOCATION   | CONTACT   |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---|--|---|
| Scotland<br>(Northern Corries) | 24-26 Jan 97 | Inverdrurie B&B                                     | Numbers soonest to book beds   | Dave Rowe 01250 875774                                |
| Scotland (Arran)               | 23-25 Aug    | Glen Rosa Campsite                                  | Numbers required for ferry bookings.<br>Tpt available from Kilmarnock. | Dave Rowe 01250 875774                                |
| North Wales                    | 23-25 May    | TBC   | Poss based at Llanwrst   | Kev Edwards 746-8624                                  |
| Peak District                  | 28-31 Mar    | North Lees Campsite<br>GR SK 255832<br>(0433 50838) | Stanage, Burbage, Millstone.   | Andy Parry<br>01869 243486 or 7775125<br>(after Xmas) |
| Lakes                          | TBC          | TBC   | TBC  | Brian Crossley 01274 607715                           |
| Lancs                          | 12-13 Apr    | Basic!  | Gritstone quarries,<br>hard and loose but something<br>for all.        | Andy Parry<br>01869 243486 or 7775125<br>(after Xmas) |
| Peak District                  | 26-27 Apr    | Hope Campsite                                       | Curbar etc,  | Andy Parry 01869 243486<br>or 777 5125 (after Xmas)   |
| South West                     | 26-27 Apr    | TBC   | Swanage  | Damien Plant 01985 222405<br>738 2405/2237            |
| South West                     | 4-5 Oct      | TBC   | Lundy  | Damien Plant 01985 222405<br>738 2405/2237            |
| Southern                       | 17-19 Jan    | TBC   | Bristol  | Graham Coff 01344 22918                               |
| South Wales                    | TBC          | TBC   | TBC  | Rosie Stone 727 4243                                  |

# MAN OF HOY



*The Old Man of Hoy.*

prey still impaled on his tyre the next day. The Youth Hostel bunk house was superb, enough beds for eight, with two guys sleeping on the floor. Cooking, showering and toilet facilities helped make our stay very comfortable.

06.00 hrs and the porridge was on the hob, 06.30 hrs the initial team of four were out of the door, walking down the path towards the western cliffs of Hoy. Standing on the mainland cliff looking towards the Old Man, a strange silence came upon us, suddenly the peace was broken by someone asking "How the F\*@\$ do we get down?" The very steep grass slopes presented our first obstacle, not so easy wearing army Spitfire trainers. The first pair to start were Sgt's Ian Nicholls (RAF) and Adi Cole (RM), with Ian taking the first pitch of 4b, which is actually more like very difficult. Myself and S/Sgt Kim Hewitt (APTC) following immediately afterwards. Because of the need to abseil off the route, all the main stances have pre-placed piton anchors and yards of abseil tat. We counted six pitons on the first ledge, so in true mountaineering fashion we added three bits of our own.

Pitch two is the crux pitch of 5b, Adi went first around the corner, along the ledge and up through the overhang. We three stooges - Harry, Larry and Mo - were on lookers with handy hints and comic remarks. At this point I must add that Adi had left half his lead rack with his second. Kim followed up the steep corner crack, protecting his lead in much the same way as Patey would have on his first ascent, with the wooden wedges still in place. A rope also needs to be fixed from this point to the latter, to make the return possible.

The next two pitches are a little disappointing, with loose, dirty and yet fairly steep rock. The fifth and final pitch is superb, a steep 4c corner crack, 90ft long to the summit. The sky was blue,

the sun warm and we four friends hadn't a care in the world. Photographs were taken and the RAF Mountain Rescue visitors book was duly signed.

The descent, always more hazardous than the ascent, had even more tat secured and left on the anchor points. As we abseiled down, we passed the other three pairs on their way up, there were ropes all over the place. Somebody whispered they had seen Henry Methold crossing the traverse ledge on his hands and knees! The penultimate abseil was the most fun, free hanging above the sea whilst using the fixed rope to pull oneself back onto the haven of the final ledge, and then to the ground.

We all felt rather smug with ourselves as we watched the others reach the top and duly descend again. I'm sure they all have stories of their own!

There was a fine air of friendliness and comradeship as we posed for the pictures on the cliff overlooking the Old Man. We chatted contently as we strode back to the hostel, with thoughts of what was going to be our next venture together.

Members of the party were: Capt Mac Mackay (APTC); Flt Sgt Jim Morning (RAF); S/Sgt Kim Hewitt (APTC); S/Sgt Andy Phillips (APTC); Sgt Adi Cole (RM); Sgt Ian Nicholls (RAF); Miss Heather Rich (Civ Inst); Mr Henry Methold (Civ Inst); Maj Fergus Murrey (ACF); Mr Nick Neman-Carter (Civ).

## MOUNTAIN BASIC FIRST AID

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Course Tuturs: Brian Wright and Graham Percival

**COURSE FEE £122 (incl costs & certificate)**

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# BRAVE NEW

- authors name supplied to the Editor

This is story of a day out on the crag; well actually it was about 20 minutes in the middle of the night. I did not climb, Jimmy was the climber - there was only time for one person to do the route and clean the gear without being apprehended by the Ethics' Police. But it is still worth recalling the thrill and excitement of the planning, the route itself, getting away with it and being able to push a rigid digit up the cavernous nose of the establishment and its supporting faceless pseudo intellectual bureaucrats.

The initial idea of joining the growing number of Rogue Route Runners came to Jimmy, Pole Cat and myself as we walked along the viewing path at Stanage. None of us had booked a route; we could have afforded the 50 Ecus for a lead complete with obligatory insurance and regulation equipment hire, but the three months in advance booking requirement had put us off. We had to settle with watching the climbers moving through documentation appraisal to the mandatory safety briefing to the supervised warm up and then onto their route. A two hour process before you could start climbing. You then had thirty minutes of climbing before the scrubbers were in to prepare it for the next clients. The Ethics' Police; in their regulation pressed T shirts, slacks, and corporate clip boards ensured a continuous flow of clients passed through the system in an economical and safe process before they were ushered into the merchandising kiosk. This was climbing in 2017; totally sanitised, commercial and most importantly totally risk free.

On that day we watched the climbers throwing themselves at the routes in order to maximise their time on the rock. They clipped the bolts and then fell on them with confidence. After all, natural gear had been the first casualty of the European directive on climbing. It was just too risky to allow personal skill, judgement and a willingness to court danger in the sanitised world of The Climbing Corporation. The potential of injury to a client was just not on the agenda. At the crag The Ethics' Police watched on with a bored familiarity. After all, it was just a job to them; they did not need to be interested in climbing and participating during free time was considered positively unhealthy by The Central Scrutiniser. The only risk was that of getting wet if they were unfortunate enough to be working an area that had not been enclosed yet. Two incident free years on the outdoor facilities and an Ethics' Police Person could be running their own indoor facility - controlled tanning facilities, piped music, no weekend work and by default the bonus of membership to a incestuous nepotic club with an excellent pension.

We watched the climbers on route A223G/A. A route previously known as Flying Buttress Direct. The occupying climber was lurching from the holds with an increasing desperation as his strength failed. He eventually relaxed and fell in the required position, as previously demonstrated in the safety brief by the safety "instructor"; a correctly executed braking procedure was completed by the belayer. The supervising Ethics' Police Person recorded the appropriate details with a bored diligence on his data sheet for later perusal and com-

ment by The Central Scrutiniser before the data was added to the individuals climbing log book.

Pole Cat quietly said, "I once did this route," he paused and then added, "you know, before all of this." He meant of course the now familiar Climbing Corporation, The Central Scrutiniser, Ethics' Police, centrally held climbing performance data and the portion controlled servings. Pole Cat continued with a visibly increasing enthusiasm, "It was a really good route, three star, pumpy with good gear if you could pause long enough to get the gear in. It would be tremendous to do it as it used to be. "We gazed up and imagined. Just imagine placing gear, skill, judgement and fear. As one we said, "Why not, sod the system, let's do it."

So that was it. The rest of the afternoon we gazed up and noted where the cast sealing plugs had been inserted into the cracks to prevent the use of traditional gear. We noted the position of the trip sensors that we would have to by-pass on the route to avoid alerting The Ethics' Police. The likely locations of the security plugs was assessed. These would be positioned by the Ethics Police when the crag was secured at the end of the day to prevent climbers making unregulated ascents. Modern climbing was a function of security, commerce and safety.

Three weeks later 20 of us walked across a moor bathed in the soft light of a full moon to the top of Stanage. It was just after midnight when we started setting the ropes up at the top of the crag. The hard drinking "Ollie Reed" and his team would abseil down the ropes and remove the cast sealing plugs (where the natural protection could be placed), the security plugs (that freed up the holds) and try to neutralise the previously identified sensor alarms. *note: abseiling is a historically used technique to make a controlled decent down a rope. It was outlawed in 2010 on safety ground. when a girl caught her hair in the rope and broke a fingernail in the process of freeing herself.*

Ollie's team took ten minutes with the wrenches, electro grinders and power cleaners. The route was now ready. Restored to natural rock and ready for a free ascent with traditional choices like hold selection and gear placement. The door to danger had been unlocked but that meant that the gates to the adrenalin garden were swinging open and the path through them was clear. Jimmy was ready to climb. The Assassin was going to belay him; he had a reputation on the Rogue Route Runners circuit as one of the most experienced and reliable belayers. He had after all been doing this ever since the start and he free climbed for years before that. Pole Cat had organised the security, well more early warning. Nobody would take on The Ethics Police with their steroid and implant boosted physiques. I was the historian and photographer for this trip. Every Rogue Route Ascent had one; rather like the BASE jumpers of the 80s and 90s.

Jimmy was on route now. A pause for thought, a dip into the chalk and a couple of short moves and he drifted up the slab. A little hesitation and he placed a piece of protection and then

# WORLD

another, this time with more confidence. Good work I thought, go for it, God, he was really doing it, he really was free climbing with traditional gear on a route with hold choice and even danger, real danger. He swung up into the roof and paused again, a heel hook, a dip, a look into the next break and then an increasingly frantic fumble to place a piece of gear. After two incorrect selections he placed a size 2 friend. He visibly relaxed and then moved up. Jimmy's confidence grew. He positively attacked the next overlap and pulled himself into balance. Two more bits of gear and he cruised through to the top. It was poetry to watch.

"Hey man, aren't you takin pics?" the Assassin growled.

"Yes yes," I said and snapped away at a rope trailing through the gear. My hands, my whole body was shaking with excitement. I was buzzing from head to foot, this was total WOW, total crazy crazy out of control. Ollie's team moved into clean the route. The Assassin relaxed and turned to me and paused for a moment. He was thinking, deciding whether to speak.....

He then very deliberately said, "The Army started this you know, I used to be in the Army, before all this Climbing Corporation crap. Climbing and stuff they called adventure training was big in the Army."

I was having difficulty believing this. The Army starting the end of climbing! I tried to hide my surprise and compose myself. "What happened I asked?"

*"They handed over the running, control and organisation of the sponsored activities to people who did not care, just were not interested. Just a job, do it and go home. They, as in they who did not care but preached subject matter expertise, then infiltrated the higher echelons of control from the people who understood and then brought it all into the gym. And that was it. The totally safe climbing without risk system was created. You were not allowed to climb outside, every body had a log book, they had the data base and total control. The Europeans observed and then modelled the Climbing Corporation on the Army's climbing system. They appointed a former sanitary towel production manager as the Central Scrutiniser and the rest is history. Real climbing is history."*

I was shaken out of my paralysed stance by the rising scream of an alarm. One of Ollie's men had tripped a previously unidentified sensor. We all burst out from the crag heading off into the heather and safety. Our escape was easier than it should have been. Despite the resources available to The Ethics' Police they really were not motivated towards catching us, why should they be? Their promotion, bonus, and pension was not indexed to catching climbers; not yet anyway.

Well, as an after note, the pictures did not come out but if you doubt this account visit route A223G/A and you will see that it has been concreted over. The holds are bolted on by the scrubbers prior to and ascent. Jimmy was very ill for a week, he is not really fully recovered yet after six weeks. It was probably the combination of the uncontrolled natural adrenalin mixing with fear. He is still injecting synthetic adrenalin before he climbs but only in the recommended doses. He does not think he could cope with the real thing. Neither does the Central Scrutiniser.

Those who need to ask, will never understand the answer. Those who understand the answer will never need to ask!"

Wally Herbert The British Trans Arctic Expedition 1968.

"We who enter the Adrenalin Garden through choice now that the flowers of danger and fear grow amongst the lilies of satisfaction and fulfilment. Don't lock the gate to the Garden or block the path to it for we are wearing the shoes of understanding and acknowledgement."

Rouge Route Runners of the future now.

**Editors note: This is fiction, the opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and in no way reflect those of the Establishment. In fact they are diametrically opposed.**

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# EXERCISE LANGTA DRAGON



The team  
on an  
unnamed  
peak  
above  
Kyangjing  
Gompa.

By WO1 (RSM) C P Longrigg RLC

An expedition from the Hong Kong Logistic Support Regiment to Naya Kanga and Yala Peak in the Langtang region of Nepal.

#### Expedition Members:

Lt John Kerner RLC Team Leader  
 WO1 (RSM) Chris Longrigg RLC Deputy Leader  
 Exped organiser  
 Maj Harry O'Hara RLC  
 Capt Ken Nicoll RM  
 Capt Colin Riddell RLC Treasurer  
 W02 Claude Pereira RLC Rations  
 W02 Sam Woodger RE  
 SSgt Steve Rogers REME  
 Cpl Peter Atkinson RLC Equipment  
 Cpl Bob Evans RLC  
 LCpl Terry Harrop RAMC Medic  
 LCpl Chun Keung Wong RLC  
 Dvr Milan Gurung QOGTR  
 Dvr John Cheung RLC

In March 95 a casual conversation between myself and Lt John Kerner led to the idea of a Regimental expedition to Nepal, consisting of personnel from the three ethnic groups that make up the Regiment.

With planning well under way, it began to become apparent that if the expedition was to be a success and more importantly our objectives achieved safely, we would need another two experienced mountaineers and an expedition medic. After advertising and approaching several units, Captain Ken Nicoll (RM), W02 Sam Woodger (RE), and LCpl Terry Harrop (RAMC) were invited to join the expedition.

On 2 November, an advance party left Kai Tak airport for Nepal. This consisted of myself, W02 Claude Pereira and Cpl Bob Evans. On our arrival at Kathmandu we were met by our trekking agent,

Maj (Retd) Ramprasad Gurung, who having retired from service with the Gurkha Transport Regiment had set up a successful trekking agency, "Himalayan Envrapro". He could not have been more helpful or sympathetic to our needs.

The next four days were administration days; buying last minute items and preparing the loads which would be carried by our 30 porters. We also met our Sirdar, Pasang, who would accompany us on Naya Kanga and Yala Peak.

On 7 November, the remainder of the team arrived at Kathmandu. After a days administration, we departed the following morning for the road head at Sundarijel. It was anticipated that the walk-in would take eight days, allowing the team to acclimatise and improve their fitness. On arrival in the Langtang region we would have a week to attempt Naya Kanga and Yala Peak before a short walk out to Syabru Bensi. This would finally be followed by a bus ride back to Kathmandu.

The terrain for the first day was generally up hill with very little flat or down. As the day progressed, the weather seemed to deteriorate, and by the time we arrived at the village of Pati Bhanjyang (our first nights stop) the rain was falling hard. That night, as we ate our evening meal in a somber mood, it felt more like a wet weekend in North Wales than an expedition to the Greater ranges.

Good weather failed to materialise for a further 36 hours and heavy rain meant a great deal of snow would be deposited on the high ground and that wasn't good news! We progressed northwards along the Thara Danda and started the ascent of the Laurebina pass (4,600 m). The affect of altitude and the previous bad weather conditions were starting to effect several of the team, so it was decided that an early stop was necessary before attempting the crossing the following day. Despite this, the porters continued, with several making the crossing in darkness. After a good nights rest, we continued over the pass to Laurebina, only to find that our sirdar and cookboy had slipped and fallen whilst descending it the night before in two separate accidents. On regaining consciousness, they both made their way to the lodge at Laurebina where they rejoined the rest of the porters.

# ANG

## 2-29 Nov '95

Naya  
Kanga  
Irom  
Tserko  
Peak



The reduction in altitude as we descended into the Langtang valley and the gradual ascent to our base camp at the village of Kyangjing Gompa aided the teams acclimatisation. This left everyone enthusiastic for the next phase of the expedition.

The first mountain attempted was Yala Peak. This gave the less experienced members the opportunity to practice their snow and ice skills, before attempting the more technical route of Naya Kanga. After breakfast at Kyangjing Gompa, we spent the next eight hours ascending to a group of yak huts known as Yala Base Camp. On our arrival we settled ourselves into the huts, made brews, checked kit, and set about preparing the evening meal. At 0400 hrs the following morning, we set off for the summit, only to find that progress was painfully slow. The snow cover was a thin weak crust that collapsed under foot, sinking us waist deep into granulated snow. After two hours of exhausted effort we called off the attempt and made our way back down to Kyangjing Gompa.

The snow that had affected the region eight days previously had certainly made conditions difficult, and it was thought that similar snow conditions would be encountered on Naya Kanga making an attempt just as unsuccessful. We decided upon other objectives and the next few days were spent ascending an unnamed peak at 4773m and Tserko peak at 5000m. Exploration of the upper Langtang valley was also carried out, all of which restored group moral and gave the expedition members a feeling of achievement.

On 23 November we left Kyangjing Gompa, having recruited local porters for our two day walk-out to the road head at Syabrue Bensi in the Trisuli valley. On completion of a ten hour spine racking bus ride back to Kathmandu, we were left with a couple of days in which to explore the flesh pot, before returning home.

Disappointment over not achieving our original aims of climbing Yala Peak and Naya Kanga were soon put into perspective when the realization of recent tragedies became apparent. The prolonged period of bad weather had caused the tragic avalanches in the Everest region, and it wasn't until our return to Kathmandu that we became fully aware of the situation.

### Competition Winner

The Manta HVS 6a Belthan Door, Northumberland.

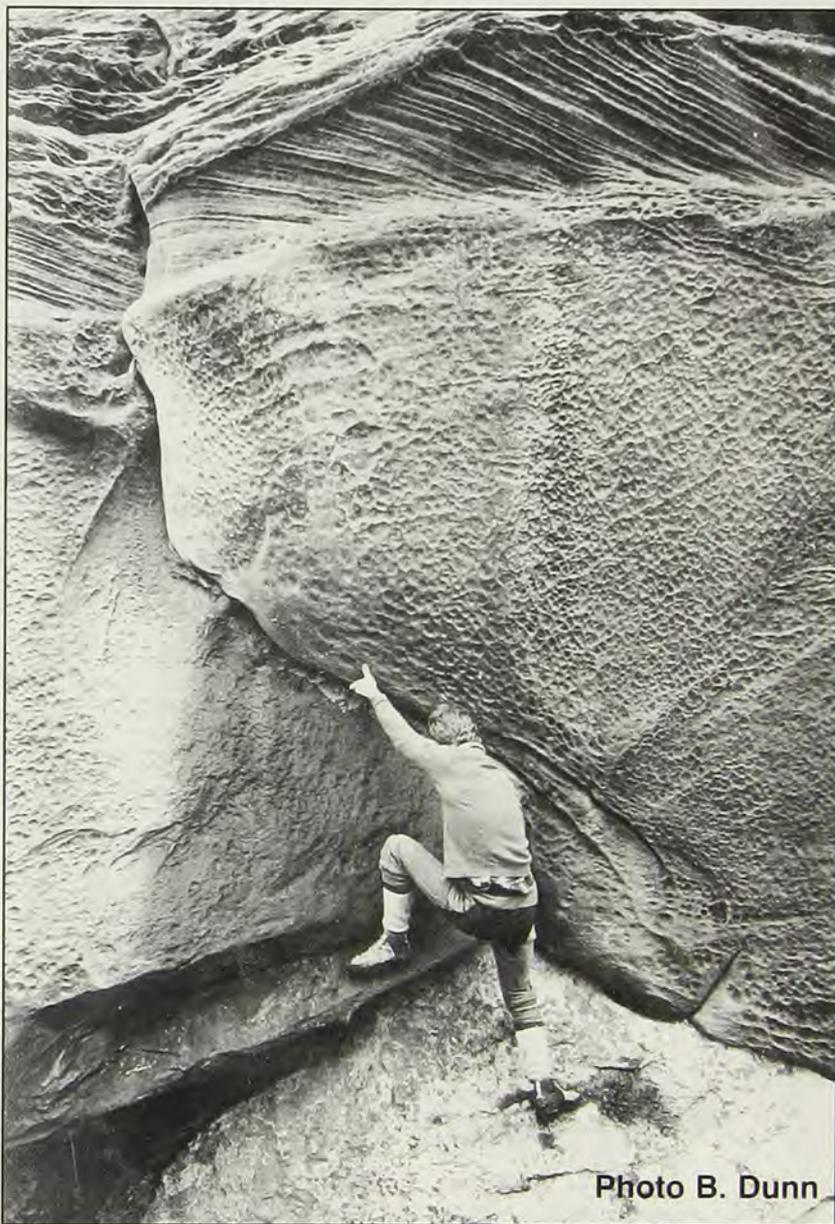


Photo B. Dunn

# DON'T USE A ROPE

by

JOHN MUSTON.

December 1977 found me in Belize with my sword drawn ready to fight off the raving hordes of Guatemalan invaders. A battalion of the RRW and four Harriers were also there to assist me in this task. As December progressed it became clear that the plans of most of the garrison were to sink into an alcoholic haze on 23 December and not emerge until about the 2 January. The only possible variation to this were those proposing to sample the dubious delights of the ladies in the Big C in Belize City, always assuming that the excess of alcohol had not induced a severe case of brewer's droop. However there was a ray of light in all this gloom in the shape of a young Sapper captain called Graham Smith.

Graham was planning to hire two Landrovers and motor up to Mexico to climb some of the volcanoes there with a party of lads from his squadron. Now, on the whole, I can get on with Sappers so I was delighted when Graham extended an invitation to me to join the party. When it comes to anything requiring brute force they are the boys to have around and it looked as if brute force might be useful on this escapade. Two thousand miles on Central American roads, a couple of 17000' peaks and a bit of R & R all to be done in 10 days was definitely in the brute force field. I will gloss over the state of the hired Landrovers except to say that anyone contemplating a repeat of the journey should have a VM capability rather than a VS capability.

We duly arrived and camped at about 7000' in an idyllic woodland glade above the village of Amecameca. It was Christmas Day and as a hardened mountaineer I could think of no better place to be than on the lower slopes of a peak. Even the prospect of Christmas dinner from a 10-man compo pack could not blunt my enthusiasm. When posted to Belize I had done a mountaineering appreciation and decided that iceaxe, crampons and big boots would be a little out of place so had not taken them, but Popocatepetl had not been a factor considered in my appreciation. All I had was DMS boots, OGs and a Smock, Foul Weather. However the village shop came to my rescue and hired out to me an iceaxe (vintage 1935) and crampons of a similar antiquity. The crampons had no straps and my limited Spanish could not cope with explaining that normally straps were a necessary part of crampons. I tied them on with paracord. With the rest of the party similarly equipped we set off driving to about 12000' where we left the vehicles and continued to the hut at 14000'.

## - IT'S DANGEROUS !

Mexican mountain huts are basic and comprise four (if you lucky) walls and a roof. If you go at fiesta (!) time locals will come into the hut at half-hourly intervals throughout the night, fall over everyone and then have to go out again to vomit up the excess of alcohol they have recently imbibed. The hut which could comfortably take eight had 30 in it by morning. Delightful! However, as mentioned earlier, our party was strong on brute force and we set off the following morning for the summit. Careful readers of this piece will have noted by now that we were planning to go from the lowlands to 17000' in two and a half days. For the benefit of younger readers I must explain that in the '70s anyone who wittered on about AMS was called a wimp and told that it was all in the mind. This is what made it so easy for Sappers to ascend so rapidly. Now I believe they take pills for it - like girls with a pregnancy capability.

Popocatepetl is a fairly regular volcanic cone with ice and snow covering the last 2000'. On reaching the snowline Graham and I debated the question of roping up. In all normal circumstances this would have a prudent decision especially with a novice party. The results of a slip would probably not have been terminal but could have been painful. However, appreciate the situation if you will. We counted at least 56 Mexicans scattered across the slope, most in various stages of inebriation and rope linkage. I would not dare describe them as roped up. There was much gesticulating and shouting but very little attention to good rope-handling techniques. Graham and I reckoned that there was high chance of at least one of these so-called ropes peeling off and coming down the slope with the same effect that South American gauchos have with their three-balled (aren't they lucky) bolas - or should it be boli? We took the decision that we would be safer unroped so that each individual could run for his life if the need arose without a thought for anyone else on his rope. The idea worked. None of us fell off but some of the Mexicans did. We got to the top, looked into the steaming cauldron, descended and went off to climb another volcano two days later. The moral? Don't always do what they tell you on your JSMEI, JSRCI or whatever. Act on the circumstances at the time.

### Book Review

#### Mountaineering First Aid

Fourth Edition 1996

Although aimed primarily at the north american reader (for example only USA snakes are covered under snakebites!), this 140 page book has achieved international status as the definitive, basic guide to mountaineering first aid. It spans more or less everything from hypothermia to HACE; fractures to frostbite and allergies to arthropods. It does so in a way that is simple to read and easy to understand with diagrams and checklists where appropriate. The symptoms and signs of each problem are described, then the corresponding first aid, so that even the most inexperienced reader can follow what to do. All the advice is soundly based.

There are sections on preparation, immediate action and planning evacuation/rescue. This fourth edition also adds sections on animal bites and first aid for children.

There are a few gripes. The index is barely adequate and some subjects might have been given fuller treatment. For example, you will not find Rabies in the index: it will eventually be found under a section called Infectious Disease From Wild Animals in the chapter entitled Other Miseries - along with blisters and lightning strikes! There is advice on avoidance of rabies but nothing on first aid or the need for early medical treatment. Gaps like that are a little irritating but most subjects are covered and you could always find fault with a basic guide. At the price it is good value and at a pinch it could double as a domestic first aid book.

Copyright The Mountaineers 1996. Published by the Mountaineers, Seattle; 144 pages with diagrams, tables and forms; price 7.95; distributed by and available from, Cordee.

Tim King

## THE ARMY MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION

### 1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the Association shall be the Army Mountaineering Association. The official address of the Association shall be:  
 Army Mountaineering Association  
 Army Sport Control Board  
 Clayton Barracks  
 ALDERSHOT  
 Hants GU11 2BG

### 2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the Association shall be:
- To encourage mountaineering in the Army and to promote among members a high standard of mountaineering competence by:
    - Organizing climbing meets and supporting expeditions to mountainous areas.
    - Giving advice and assistance to units and individuals on all aspects of mountaineering.
    - Providing a link between active mountaineers.
  - To advise Headquarters Adjutant General on mountaineering matters.
  - To represent the interests of Army mountaineers on the British Mountaineering Council, through the Joint Service Mountaineering Committee.

### 3. Presidents

- 3.1 The Association shall have one President and one or more Vice-Presidents.

### 4. Committee

- 4.1 The affairs of the Association shall be managed by a Committee, which shall meet at least 4 times a year. Except as otherwise shown in this Constitution, the Committee shall have power to act on behalf of the Association.

- 4.2 The following persons shall comprise the Committee:

#### a. Officers. The following shall be Officers of the Committee:

|                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chairman           |                                |
| Vice-Chairman      | Membership Secretary           |
| Journal Editor     | Newsletter Editor              |
| Expedition Adviser | Meets Coordinator              |
| Publicity Officer  | Sports Climbing Representative |
| UKSC (G) Chairman  | Secretary                      |

Further full members may be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

- Elected Members. The Committee may from time to time appoint up to 4 Elected Members.
  - Non-voting Members. The Committee shall have power to invite up to 6 non-voting members to attend meetings, these would normally include the Treasurer, the Memorial Fund Account Holder and representatives from the Army Sport Control Board, Headquarters AG and the Joint Service Mountain Training Centres, including the British Alpine Centre Bavaria.
- 4.3 All Officers of the Committee and Elected Members shall be member of the Association. Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and must be elected annually.
- 4.4 Persons wishing to propose member for election to the Committee shall forward details of the person to the Secretary at least 14 days prior to the Annual General Meeting. The details shall include the names of those proposing and seconding the nomination and the written agreement to serve of the person being proposed.
- 4.5 The Committee shall have power to fill, until the Annual General Meeting, any vacancy occurring from among its members.
- 4.6 At an authorized meeting, 3 shall be deemed to form a quorum, an authorized meeting shall be one for which the Secretary has circulated the date, time and place to all members of the Committee at least 7 days beforehand.
- 4.7 The Committee shall have the power to appoint sub-committees for any specified purpose and to dissolve such sub-committees upon completion of the task for which they were appointed.

### 5. Membership

- 5.1 Membership is open to:

- Serving officers and soldiers of the Regular Army.
  - Serving officer and soldiers of the Reserve Army.
  - Retired officers and soldiers of the Regular and Reserve Army provided they have previously been a member during their service and have continued their membership.
  - Servicing officers and soldiers of Commonwealth or Foreign armies who are attached to a British Army unit for any reason.
  - Civilians employed by the Army Department and currently on the strength of a unit or establishment.
  - Retired civilians who have been employed by the Army Department and have previously been members during their service and have continued their membership.
  - The spouse and/or children of any member qualified under any part of this paragraph.
- 5.2 The Honorary Membership may be granted to anyone who, through past or present activities, has rendered or is rendering outstanding service to the Association. Such membership shall be approved at the Annual General Meeting on the recommendation of the committee. No subscription shall be payable by an Honorary Member.

- 5.3 The Committee shall be empowered to withdraw membership from any member should it be considered desirable.

- 5.4 Except for Honorary Members, there shall be one level of subscription. The level of subscription for each following year shall be approved at every Annual General Meeting. Subscriptions shall be payable on joining and thereafter on 1 January annually. The subscription paid by new members joining after 1 October will cover the period to the end of the following year. Members who have not paid their subscription by 31 March shall be deemed to have resigned their membership.

### 6. General Meetings

- 6.1 Annual General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting shall, in addition to any other business:

- Receive the Secretary's report.
- Receive an audited statement of the accounts.
- Establish the level of subscription for the following year.
- Elect or re-elect members of the Committee.

The Secretary shall give 28 days notice of the annual General Meeting.

- 6.2 Extraordinary General Meeting. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called either:

- On the decision of the Committee, or
- Upon the Secretary receiving a request to that effect signed by not less than 15 members and specifying the object for which the meeting is to be called. The meeting shall be held within 42 days of such a request being received by the Secretary.

The Secretary shall give 28 days notice of such a meeting.

- 6.3 The Chair at General Meetings shall be taken by the Chairman or, in his absence, by the Vice Chairman. Should neither the Chairman or Vice-Chairman be present, the Committee is empowered to elect a Chairman for the Annual General Meeting.

- 6.4 Only paid-up members may vote at General Meetings.

- 6.5 The Constitution of the Association may be altered by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting at the Annual General Meeting or at a Extraordinary General Meeting called for that purpose.

### 7. Army Training

- 7.1 It is the policy of the Association to encourage members to take part in the mountaineering training organized by the Army and to obtain appropriate qualifications sponsored by the Army.

### 8. Affiliations

- 8.1 The Association is affiliated to the Joint Service Mountain Training Centres in Scotland and Wales. Members may approach the respective Commandants direct regarding accommodation, messing and advice.

### 9. Joint Services Mountaineering Committee

- 9.1 The Association shall be represented on the Joint Services Mountaineering Committee, normally through the Vice-Chairman.

### 10. British Mountaineering Council

- 10.1 The Association is a member club of the British Mountaineering Council and as such enjoys its privileges. The Association shall represent the interests of Army mountaineers on the British Mountaineering Council, normally through the Joint Services Mountaineering Council.

### 11. Mountain Leader Training Boards

- 11.1 It is the policy of the Association to encourage members to obtain various certificates of these boards where appropriate.

### 12. Environmental Issues

- 12.1 The Association considers the environment in which its activities take place to be a valuable and irreplaceable asset. All expeditions and meets sponsored by the Association shall give due consideration to their impact on the environment and ecology of the area in which they are run. Sponsored expeditions shall endeavour to leave no evidence of their activities.

### 13. Branches

- 13.1 Subject to the approval of the Committee, branches in specific geographical areas may be established. Such branches shall be financially self-supporting, and shall draw up a constitution in line with the Constitution of the Association.

### 14. Publications

- 14.1 A Journal shall be published regularly to record articles submitted by members, the main means of communication within the Association shall be a Newsletter published as required. The views expressed in the Journals and Newsletters shall not be deemed to express any official view of the Association or of the Army unless this is specifically stated.

### 15. Finance

- 15.1 The funds of the Association shall be utilised by the Committee for the purpose of furthering the objects quoted in paragraph 2 above and, at the discretion of the Committee, may be denoted to other mountaineering Associations. The powers of the Committee in financial matters shall be by resolution at the annual General Meeting.

- 15.2 In the event of the Association ceasing to exist, any funds remaining after settling all outstanding liabilities shall be paid to the Army Sport Control Board for the furtherance of other Army sports.

### 16. Information

- 16.1 Anyone requiring further details should direct their query to the Secretary of the Association via the ASCB.

## TWO NEW WALLS SHOW DR CLIMBING MILITARY MIGHT

### *Innovation & Design Put To The Test*

DR Climbing Walls reputation for innovation and design was really put to the test by the British Army & Navy when asked to design and build one wall for each. The first, a wall for Alanbrooke Army Barracks Gymnasium and the second, a wall for the Navy at the Nuclear Submarine Base HMS Drake.

DR Climbing Walls, the inventors of the artificial climbing wall, have now built in excess of 160 walls, each one unique, since the first climbing wall at Leeds University in 1964. This, however, does not diminish founder, chairman and technical director Don Robinson's contagious enthusiasm for building bigger, better and more exciting walls.

#### **An Opportunity Relished**

As ever, DR's designers and builders relished the opportunity and challenge of working for the British Military. According to Don Robinson, the results speak for themselves.

"We have built two walls that are unique in every sense of the word. Each one has met the detailed brief given to us by the military. We are delighted with them and we are confident that the climbers using the walls will be also."

The wall at the Alanbrooke Barracks was funded by GOC 1 (UK) Armoured Division and is only one of a number of initiatives being implemented across the Garrison to improve the training, sports and recreational facilities for use by both military and civilian residents.

The brief from Lieutenant Colonel West, the Garrison's Deputy Commander and British Army (Germany) AMA Chairman, was for a wall that could teach a wide range of climbing skills to soldiers and their families. It also needed to accommodate the more experienced military climber, who would need plenty of interesting challenges, and encouragement to come back for more.

#### **A Wall Packed With Features**

The result - a compact wall measuring 11 metres in length and 7 metres high, packed with features for all skill levels. DR Climbing Walls have incorporated within the wall, features that you may normally expect in a climbing wall, as well as those that are not usually associated with indoor walls.



Either way, the DR designers have made the features interesting and unique.

The wall has two variable width chimneys, narrowing at the higher section. There is a slab section for beginners with a passageway at the top leading to a belay ledge within a cave entrance, for abseiling back to earth - and starting again.

In effect, the wall will become an adventure wall, providing excitement and adventure for the younger with a relatively low skill level.

For the more experienced climber there are two overhanging sections.

One with a less steep, uniform angle and the second, designed to be challenging for the more experienced climber, in a competition style, has a steeper overhang.

To increase the interest and level of skill required, the wall has three different textures. The competition section relies on moveable holds with few built in features. The easier sections are made of high relief rock coat panels with more permanent features and one or two holds.

The incline slab, which is for mid skilled climbers, is made of a surface that falls in between the competition surface and the heavily textured beginners surface. It provides

some natural features with a medium use of holds.

The three different surfaces add to the uniqueness of the wall and increase its ability to play host to a range of climbers of varying skill levels.

There are also other features including finger jamming cracks and hand jamming cracks that are climbed using fingers and hands for support and little else. As well as an off width chimney which, due to its lack of width, proves a real challenge to climb, requiring the use of a combination of Bridging and Jamming techniques.

Finally, the bottom section of the overall wall has been reinforced to be able to take an impact from a high speed projectile - a hockey ball. The gym that houses the wall also plays host to many other sports including indoor hockey!

DR Climbing Walls' Don Robinson summed it all up "We have provided a general purpose wall that can be all things to all people. We were chosen because of the quality of our walls and because of the unique features only DR Climbing Walls can build in to a wall."



#### **A Delighted Lieutenant Colonel**

Lieutenant Colonel West commented "We are all delighted with the completed training facility. We had wanted a wall which would provide a challenge for the Garrison's more experienced climbers, and which could be used to attract beginners and develop their climbing skills. In addition to the Garrison's 4,500 military personnel, we hope that some of the 5,500 wives and children will also make use of it.

"DR Climbing Walls' innovative design has managed to incorporate a belay ledge and abseiling facility into the structure, which will permit a number of different skills to be taught."

Lieutenant Colonel West finished "An important requirement of the design was that the wall should not limit the use of the gymnasium for any other sport or activities, and DR Climbing Walls have met all requirements with the minimum of disruption."

#### **HMS Drake, Plymouth**

The wall recently finished at HMS Drake, Plymouth, is similar in many ways to the Alanbrooke Barracks wall. The distinguishing feature for this wall is an overhanging arete, which can only be described as an upside down pyramid. The arete is made of contour resin laminate and forms a fourth textured surface to the wall.

The wall also has a comprehensive belay system to enable lead climbing and top roping to take place.

Don Robinson concludes "All of our walls are totally unique and handmade by climbers for climbers. We are particularly proud of the two military walls we have just completed. They gave us a perfect opportunity to express our unique design ability, whilst working to an interesting and challenging brief. We have a wealth of climbing experience that we draw upon to design and build totally individual walls, for the fun and enjoyment of all climbers, no matter what age or skill level."

For more information about the new innovations from DR Climbing Walls contact them at

**DR Climbing Walls**  
International

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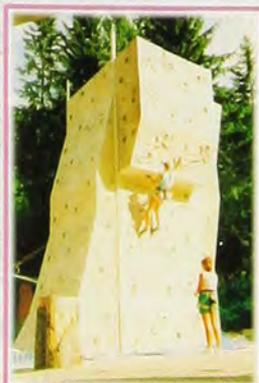
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